

MINNESOTA

**BLACKDUCK AND  
BUENA VISTA STATE FORESTS**

**BLACKDUCK STATE FOREST**  
125,533 ACRES • ESTABLISHED 1935  
**BUENA VISTA STATE FOREST**  
122,336 ACRES • ESTABLISHED 1935

**FOREST LANDSCAPE:** With rolling terrain and many lakes and rivers, these scenic forests located northeast of Bemidji are easily accessible for many recreational pursuits, including cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, hunting, fishing, boating, and birdwatching.

**A WORKING FOREST:** From year to year, you may see changes in these forests. The DNR manages the trees, water, and wildlife in state forests to keep them healthy and meet recreational, environmental, and economic goals. Trees are harvested to make a variety of products, such as lumber and building materials, pulp for making paper, pallets, fencing, and telephone poles. Through careful planning, harvesting, and planting, land managers work to improve wildlife habitat. The DNR manages state forests for everyone to use, while preventing wildfires and ensuring forests continue to keep air and water clean.

**HISTORY:** People have lived, hunted, fished, and collected wild rice in the area northeast of Lake Bemidji for at least 1,000 years. Archeologists have found several artifacts, such as pottery shards, tools, and evidence of encampments in the area. One particularly rich archeological site has been put on the National Register of Historic Places and is located in Beltrami County's Three Island Park. In the mid- to late-1700s, Ojibwe people drove out the Dakota from the area. Later in 1847, treaties granted sections of indigenous lands to the United States and established the Leech Lake Reservation in 1855.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries timber barons removed millions of board feet of pine timber from the area. Some of the timber went to the mill in the town of Blackduck and was used to build homes for arriving settlers who came to farm the newly cleared areas.

The Camp Rabideau National Historic Landmark in the Blackduck State Forest/Chippewa National Forest represents one of the best preserved Civilian Conservation Corps camps in the nation where hundreds of young men were employed in the 1930s to build roads and plant trees. Today, this camp rests on 112 acres adjacent to Benjamin and Carls lakes, with a 1-mile trail and interpretive displays.

**TREES:** Aspen, maple, ash and balsam fir cover much of the forest. White, red, and jack pine grow on sandier soils. Other conifers spruce, fir, cedar, and tamarack.

**WILDLIFE:** Game species include white-tailed deer, black bear, ruffed grouse, waterfowl, and wild turkey. Other species include gray wolf, bobcat, beaver, fisher, pine marten, trumpeter swan, mink, muskrat, otter, snowshoe hare, American bittern, and wood frog. More than 200 species of birds have been found in the area.

**PUT THIS MAP ON YOUR DEVICE**  
This map is geo-referenced.  
Download an app such as the free Avenza app on your device and use it to open the geoPDF. The app will place a blue locator dot on the map wherever you take your phone, even if you are out of cellular range.

The information in this map is dynamic and may change over time. The Minnesota DNR is not liable for improper or incorrect use of the data described and/or contained. The data and related graphics are not legal documents, and are protected by copyright.

**RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY**

Many state forests contain private land within their boundaries, so know where you are. Watch for posted "No Trespassing" and "No Hunting" signs and stay off private property. You must have permission before entering private land, even to cross it to access public land. Trespassing is a misdemeanor. If convicted, you could lose your license to hunt. All conservation and peace officers enforce trespass laws.

**KNOW WHERE YOU ARE**

Blackduck and Buena Vista state forests are a patchwork of state-managed land within areas of federal, county, and privately managed land. Rules may change as you cross boundaries. For information about hunting, off-highway vehicle use, snowmobiling, camping, and other recreation, visit [www.fs.usda.gov/chippewa](http://www.fs.usda.gov/chippewa) (Chippewa National Forest) and [co.beltrami.mn.us](http://co.beltrami.mn.us) (Beltrami County).

**ALWAYS STAY ON SIGNED TRAILS**

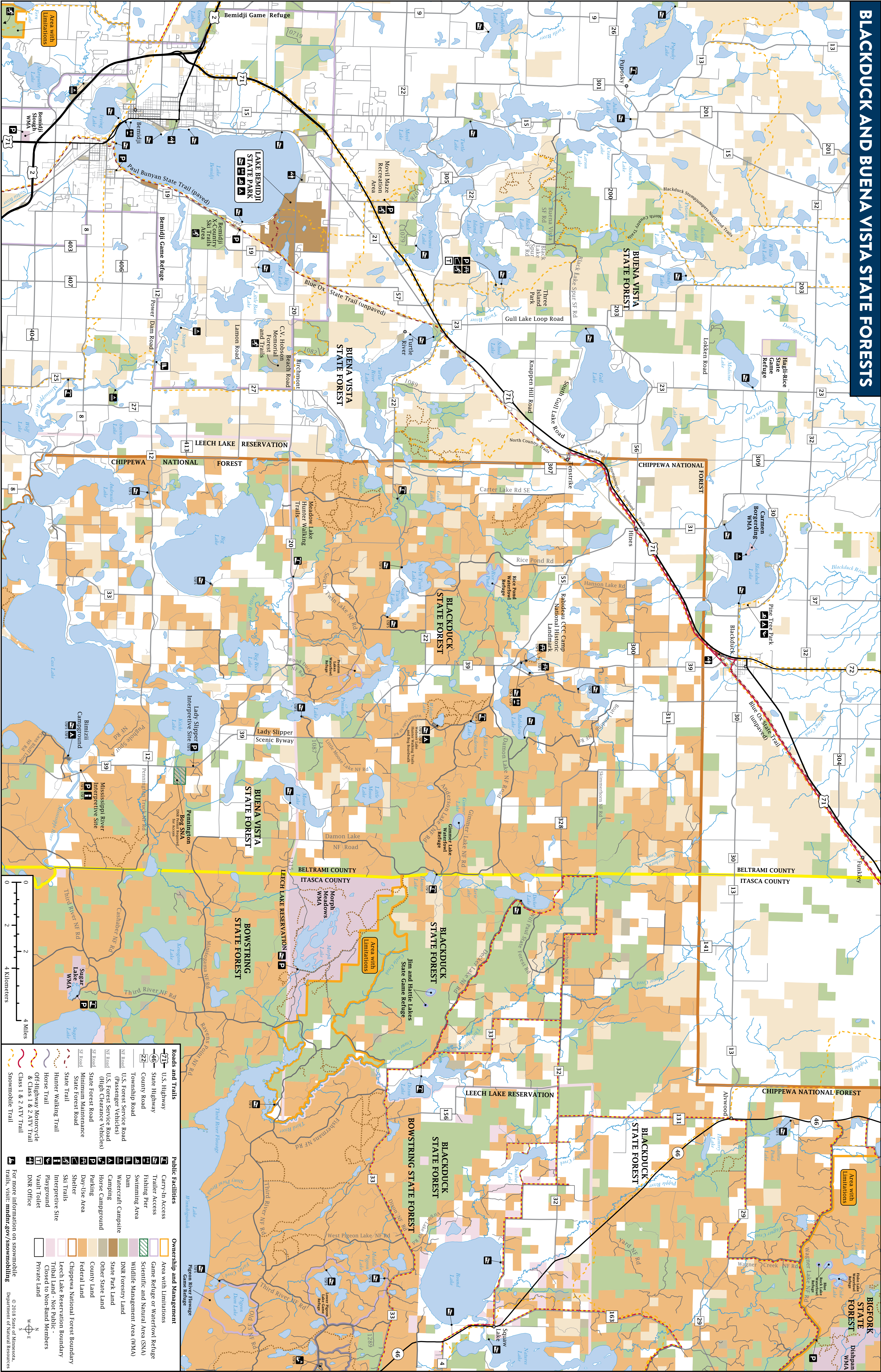
Whether you're riding or walking, tread lightly on the land. Be courteous to others, respect private property, and obey the law.

**AREAS WITH LIMITATIONS**

These areas are designated to protect unique natural resources and provide other non-motorized recreation opportunities. Motorized vehicles may not operate off designated trails within "Areas With Limitations" for any reason, including retrieving big game.

**LEAVE TROUBLE BEHIND**

- Help prevent the spread of invasive plants and animals.
- Clean your gear before entering and leaving the recreation site.
  - Remove mud, seeds, and plants from clothes, pets, boots, gear, vehicles, and watercraft.
  - Stay on designated trails.
  - PlayCleanGo.org**



SCAN TO  
DOWNLOAD MAP

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CAMPING

Dispersed camping with no amenities or fees is allowed on state forest and federal land that is at least 1 mile away from a designated campground. In Wildlife Management Areas, camping is allowed only in designated overnight-use areas or with a permit from the DNR wildlife manager.

There are some dispersed campsites along the Mississippi River State Water Trail and several within the Chippewa National Forest. Most dispersed sites do not have fire rings, toilets, or picnic tables. Please practice the “Leave No Trace” camping ethic and follow state forest rules.

Additionally, there are several developed campgrounds with several amenities nearby.

LAKE BEMIDJI STATE PARK

This campground has 95 campsites, camper cabins, showers, flush and vault toilets, a swimming beach, and naturalist programs. RV and group campsites available. Reservations required. Fee. [mndnr.gov/state\\_parks/reservations\\_campsite.html](#)

PINE TREE PARK – CITY OF BLACKDUCK

This 60-acre park located 2 miles west of Blackduck offers 14 modern RV campsites with electricity and water, 19 rustic pull-up campsites, and access to trails that are open to hiking, biking, and cross-country skiing. On-site facilities also include a playground, toilets, boat ramp, dock space, slips, and swimming in Blackduck Lake.

BIMIZII LAKE CAMPGROUND – U.S. FOREST SERVICE

This campground has 14 campsites, a well, toilets, fishing platform, and boat ramps providing access to Cass Lake and the Mississippi River. This campground was known as the Knutson Dam Campground until the dam was removed in 2015.

NORWAY BEACH RECREATION AREA – U.S. FOREST SERVICE

This area has 171 campsites, interpretive trails, swimming beaches, paved bike trail, boat ramp, picnic shelter, and visitor center. Reservations required. Fee.

WEBSTER LAKE CAMPGROUND – U.S. FOREST SERVICE

This campground has 15 campsites, access to Webster Lake, a picnic area, and trail system. RV sites available. Fee.

DISPERSED CAMPSITES IN CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST

If you enjoy getting back to the basics, find a backcountry campsite in the Chippewa National Forest. Many of these backcountry campsites are located along rivers and lakes, allowing good opportunities to explore the waterways. Other sites see the most use during deer hunting seasons. Extensive hunter walking trail systems provide more opportunities for hunting, trapping, and fishing. Campsites have a vault toilet and fire ring. Some have picnic tables. No fee. Tread lightly on the land and pack out what you pack in.

For more information about camping on land managed by the U.S. Forest Service, visit [recreation.gov](#)

BOATING

Popular water accesses are found on Beltrami, Big Bass, Cass, Gull, Sandy, and Turtle lakes among several other boat landings.

Canoeing and kayaking is popular along the Mississippi River State Water Trail.

[mndnr.gov/watertrails/mississippiriver](#)

Register your watercraft at [mndnr.gov/licenses/watercraft](#)

TRAILS

All trails and roads are open to hiking, mountain biking, fat biking, and horseback riding, unless posted closed for their use.

Off-trail hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing are allowed.

PAUL BUNYAN STATE TRAIL

Beginning south of Highway 20, this flat, paved trail extends 115 miles south to Crow Wing State Park in Brainerd and is open to snowmobiles, skiers, inline skating, bicycles, and hikers.

Map: [https://go.usa.gov/xQmfM](#)

BLUE OX STATE TRAIL

Beginning north of Highway 20, this flat, unpaved trail is open to off-highway motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, horses, bicycles, hikers, snowmobiles, and skiers. Skiers should use caution—trails are designated for snowmobiles. [mndnr.gov/maps/ohv/blue-ox.pdf](#)

C.V. HOBSON FOREST TRAIL

With special appeal for beginning and intermediate skiers, 7 miles of double-tracked ski trails wind through red and white pine, a tamarack bog, and along a lake. This forest is managed by Bemidji State University and is a designated school forest.

BUENA VISTA SKI AREA - BELTRAMI COUNTY

Located near Lake Julia and Larson Lake, this trail complex offers 25 miles of groomed cross-country ski trails for intermediate and expert skiers. Buena Vista is home to the Minnesota Finlandia and Snowjourn ski races and the Earl Dickinson Nordic Ski Center. To get there from Bemidji, drive approximately 12 miles north on County Road 15. Parking is just east of County Road 15 and south of Lake Julia. [bvskiarea.com](#)

MOVIL MAZE RECREATION AREA - BELTRAMI COUNTY

Located 5 miles north of Bemidji, this 913-acre recreation area offers 14 kilometers of multiple-use trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and snowmobiling, and groomed cross-country ski trails. Map: [go.usa.gov/xQmfM](#)

THREE ISLAND PARK - BELTRAMI COUNTY

This 2,915-acre park on Three Island Lake offers spectacular views and diverse plant ecology. It is a major hub to various recreational trails and contains an archeological site listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The 28 kilometers of trails are open to horseback riding, hiking, and hunting in the summer. Winter trails include 28 kilometers for cross-country skiing and 7 miles for snowmobiles. [go.usa.gov/xQmfw](#)



BLACKDUCK AND BUENA VISTA

STATE FORESTS



STAR ISLAND TRAILS – U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Six miles of hiking trails on the largest island in Cass Lake. Map: [go.usa.gov/xQmf7](#)

MEADOW LAKE HUNTER WALKING TRAIL – U.S. FOREST SERVICE

Looping 14 miles through low-lying cedar swamps and upland aspen and pine, this trail is a favorite of hunters. Users may ride off-highway vehicles on developed roads only, unless posted closed.

WEBSTER LAKE TRAILS – U.S. FOREST SERVICE

With 7 miles of trails winding through woods of balsam fir and bogs, this trail also includes a 2.7-mile bog walk with interpretive signs. Open for hiking in the summer and hunting in the fall. Users can ride off-highway vehicles on developed roads only, unless posted closed. Located 10 miles south of Blackduck on County Road 39.

Great Minnesota Ski Pass required on all cross-country trails. [mndnr.gov/licenses/skipass](#)

Minnesota Horse Pass required on state and federal land.

[mndnr.gov/horseback\\_riding/horsepass.html](#)

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

Winter visitors can enjoy dozens of miles of marked snowmobile trails. The Buena Vista Trail connects to the North Country and Northland snowmobile trails. These trails provide groomed routes to the cities of Nebish, Blackduck, Turtle River, and Bemidji, as well as connections to the Hubbard and Cass County grant-in-aid trail systems.

Snowmobile trails are open only between December 1 and March 31. Some parts of the trail may be groomed and other parts may be plowed for logging activities. Trails are marked with orange signs.

- [mndnr.gov/snowmobiling/interactive\\_map](#)
- Snowmobiles must be registered. [mndnr.gov/regulations/snowmobile](#)

Visit [fs.usda.gov/recrea/chippewa](#) for more information and maps about the Chippewa National Forest.

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE TRAILS

There are no off-highway vehicle (OHV) trails in the Blackduck or Buena Vista state forests. OHV riders may use state forest roads.

No motorized use is allowed off roads and trails.

CLASSIFICATION: LIMITED, MANAGED

All trails on state-managed lands are classified regarding motor vehicles.

Buena Vista State Forest is classified as “limited,” which means that off-road vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, and off-highway motorcycles may operate only on open, signed roads and trails.

Blackduck State Forest is classified as “managed,” which means that OHVs are allowed on roads, routes, and designated trails, unless posted closed. Off-road traffic is prohibited, except when needed to retrieve big game when hunting and trapping during the proper season and with the proper license.

Highway-licensed vehicles are allowed on all state forest roads.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING

The Blackduck or Buena Vista state forests have habitat for hunting and trapping. In the appropriate season, licensed hunters can hunt for white-tailed deer, grouse, and other game.

[mndnr.gov/hunting](#)

FIREARMS AND BOWS

Firearms must be unloaded and cased and bows must be unstrung and cased while in or within 200 feet of a state recreation area (campground, day-use area, parking area, boat launch, etc.). Exception: During seasons open for hunting, licensed hunters may carry an unloaded, uncased firearm or strung bow from a forest recreation area to hunt outside of the area.

Cutting shooting lanes is not allowed.

Building any permanent structures, including deer stands, is prohibited.

For regulations about hunting, trapping, firearms, bows, limits, seasons, and deer stands on state-managed land, visit [mndnr.gov/regulations/hunting](#)

For regulations about shooting in the Chippewa National Forest, visit [fs.fed.us/visit/know-before-you-go/shooting](#)

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) are managed to provide quality wildlife habitat for a variety of species, especially game, wetland wildlife, and species found in young forests. WMAs provide opportunities for public hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife observation. Hunting is allowed with the proper license and during the proper season in all WMAs.

MORPH MEADOWS WMA

This 4,928-acre WMA was established to improve waterfowl habitat by creating a 1,500-acre pond within a complex of upland aspen forest, sedge meadows, lowland brush, and beaver ponds. Visitors may view wildlife along 2 miles of dikes and several hunter walking trails. The eastern part of the unit is a major deer wintering area. No motors allowed in the impoundment. Permits are required for trapping beaver and otter.

SUGAR LAKE WMA

At only 382 acres, this WMA offers opportunities for observing wetland wildlife and trapping aquatic furbearers, particularly beaver, in and around Sugar Lake. Trapping permits required.

WMA maps: [mndnr.gov/maps/compass](#)

WMA information: [mndnr.gov/wmas](#)

FISHING

Anglers may find muskies and walleye, largemouth bass, and panfish in area lakes. There are no special provisions or restrictions on fishing in state and national forests. You must have the proper license and abide by the same rules and seasons as anywhere else in Minnesota.

Avoid spreading invasive organisms such as earthworms, zebra mussel larvae, and spiny waterfleas by not transporting lake or river water, including in bait buckets. Unused bait and live worms should be disposed in trash containers or packed out where they can't reach water or soil.

Visit [mndnr.gov/fishing](#) for up-to-date regulations.

SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREAS

Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs) protect natural features of exceptional scientific or educational value including native plant communities, rare species, and significant geological features. Visitors may enjoy the undisturbed natural quality of these sites, however, most SNAs have no trails, restrooms, or drinking water. SNAs do not allow camping, vehicles, or collecting plants and animals. SNAs do allow birding and wildlife watching, hiking, photography, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.

PENNINGTON BOG SNA

Located within the Blackduck State Forest, Pennington Bog is a virtually undisturbed tract of coniferous forest, providing critical habitat for a diverse array of plants. A wide assortment of unusual plant species, including a variety of orchids, grow beneath a dense canopy of white cedar, balsam fir, and black spruce. It is important to tread gently. The delicate vegetation is easily damaged from visitor use. Special DNR permits are required for entry.

OTHER NEARBY RECREATION

LADY SLIPPER SCENIC BYWAY

Winding over the river and through the woods, this designated scenic byway is named for showy lady's slipper orchids—Minnesota's state flower—that populate the boggy areas, especially around Pennington Bog Scientific and Natural Area. The byway itself is 28 miles of County Road 39 between the towns of Blackduck and Cass Lake. It runs past several campgrounds and the Norway Beach Visitor Center in the Chippewa National Forest.

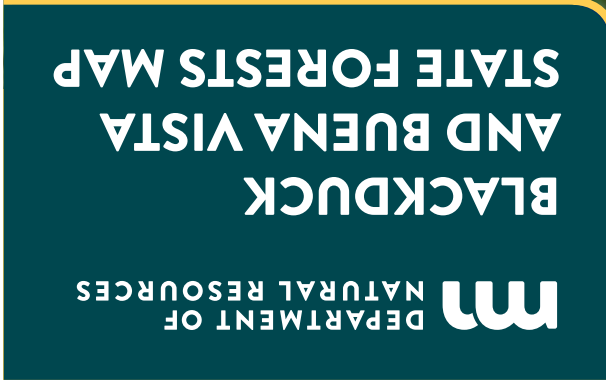
CAMP RABIDEAU CCC

During the 1930s, President Roosevelt created several thousand Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps nationwide to employ young men in conservation work and end the Great Depression. The workers planted millions of trees and built roads, campgrounds, and parks. The Camp Rabideau CCC camp south of Blackduck was recently awarded Landmark status as the best preserved CCC camp in the U.S. The site also includes a picnic area, boat launch, and a swimming beach on Benjamin Lake. Guided tours are available Memorial Day through Labor Day.

GENERAL STATE FOREST RULES

- Whether you are camping, hunting, riding, geocaching, skiing, or gathering berries, take care to leave the forest in good condition.
- Forest lands are open at all times unless otherwise posted.
  - Dispersed camping with no amenities is allowed on state and federal forest land at least 1 mile outside of campground areas for no fee.
  - Summer camping on state forest land is limited to 14 days. Winter camping is limited to 21 days between the second Sunday in September and the first Saturday in May. Camping in the Chippewa National Forest is limited to 14 days, year-round.
  - Pack out what you pack in. Remove all personal property. Do not burn litter or garbage.
  - Don't leave equipment unattended for more than 24 hours.
  - Building any permanent structures, including deer stands, is prohibited.
  - Use firewood sold by the DNR, or harvested in Minnesota and certified by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture or USDA, or from vendors who harvested firewood in the same county as the state forest. Bring your receipt. You may also collect dead fuelwood on site. Kiln-dried, unstained, unpainted dimensional lumber free from metal or other foreign objects is also permitted. It is illegal to bring in any other firewood. These rules are to prevent accidentally introducing harmful pests such as emerald ash borer. [mndnr.gov/firewood](#)
  - Fireworks are prohibited on all state, county, and federal lands.
  - Keep campfires no larger than 3 feet wide and 3 feet high. Attend the fire at all times. Completely extinguish fires before leaving the area. It should be cold to the touch.
  - Bury human waste (if toilets are not available) and animal parts such as fish guts at least 150 feet from a water body and away from areas where it could cause a nuisance or hazard to public health.
  - Collecting berries, mushrooms, wild rice, or dead fuelwood for personal use while in the forest is OK. However collecting large amounts of these items to take home for personal use or sale requires a permit or license from your local DNR forestry office. [mndnr.gov/areas/forestry](#)
  - Non-tribal and non-resident members collecting or buying wild rice within reservation boundaries must have a permit from the Leech Lake Reservation office in Cass Lake.
  - This is a partial list of rules. For more information, visit the website listed below.

mndnr.gov/forestrules



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
[info.dnr@state.mn.us](#)  
651-296-6157 | 888-646-6367  
TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf)  
651-296-5484 | 800-657-3929

**TIP LINE (Turn in Poachers)**  
800-652-9093

**EMERGENCY SERVICE - DIAL 911**

**BELTRAMI COUNTY SHERIFF**  
218-333-9111

**ITASCA COUNTY SHERIFF**  
218-326-3477

**NEAREST HOSPITAL SERVICES**  
Bemidji Sanford Medical Center  
1300 Anne St. NW  
Bemidji, MN 56601

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