

**BURNTSIDE AND BEAR ISLAND STATE FORESTS**

**BURNTSIDE STATE FOREST**  
**74,817 ACRES • ESTABLISHED 1963**

**BEAR ISLAND STATE FOREST**  
**179,594 ACRES • ESTABLISHED 1963**

**FOREST LANDSCAPE:** Located near and within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCANW), these scenic state forests feature boreal forests of pine, spruce, and aspen. Parts of the forest borders the 7,134-acre Burntside Lake, a popular lake for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing.

**A WORKING FOREST:** From year to year, you may see changes in this forest. 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:** The area's signature exposed rocks, boulders, and numerous lakes are a result of the underlying geology. The bedrock formation, called the Canadian Shield, is some of the oldest rock on earth formed by volcanic action approximately 2.7 billion years ago. Later, ancient seas laid down the valuable iron ore that is still mined in the area today. Further volcanic activity swept away the seas and formed two mountain ranges. The advancing and receding of glaciers and millions of years of erosion have worn the mountains down, resulting in the present rugged landscape.

This area was first occupied by numerous groups of Dakota, Lakota, and Anishinaabe who harvested wild rice, collected berries, produced maple syrup, fished, and hunted. Beginning in the late 1600s, French, then British, then Americans arrived to harvest fur pelts for sale in the eastern United States and Europe. As Indian populations and fur industry declined, loggers moved in and removed much of the virgin timber through the middle of the 20th century. In 1904 the U.S. Congress granted 20,000 acres to the state for the Burntside Forest Reserve for experimental forestry. In 1915, Minnesota Forest Service planted 200,000 three-year old trees in what is now the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness—representing one of the largest tree plantings of the time. In 1963, the Minnesota Legislature designated that state forests to be managed for timber production, wildlife habitat, recreation, and water quality. Writer and wilderness activist Sigurd Olson lived on the southeast shore of Burntside Lake. Olson helped draft the Wilderness Act of 1964, which designated much of the area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. In 1978, the Minnesota Legislature created the BWCANW, adding acres and amending the national Wilderness Act. These laws set aside much of the area as a recreational wilderness for camping and canoe travel.

In 2018, 700 acres north of Burntside Lake underwent a prescribed burn to increase production of blueberry.

**TREES:** Look for aspen, and jack, red, and white pine. Black spruce grow in the upland and lowland areas. You also may find stands of white spruce, white cedar, balsam fir, paper birch, and other boreal forest species.

**WILDLIFE:** Game species include moose, bear, and ruffed and spruce grouse. Other species include gray wolf, lynx, bobcat, beaver, fisher, pine marten, mink, muskrat, otter, snowshoe hare, and wood frog. Birders may spot various warblers, owls, osprey, common loons, hooded mergansers, and ducks (goldeneye, ringneck, and black ducks).

**PUT THIS MAP ON YOUR DEVICE**  
Download this map to your mobile phone or tablet to track your current location. Visit [mndnr.gov/geopdf](https://mndnr.gov/geopdf) for more information.

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**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.

**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.

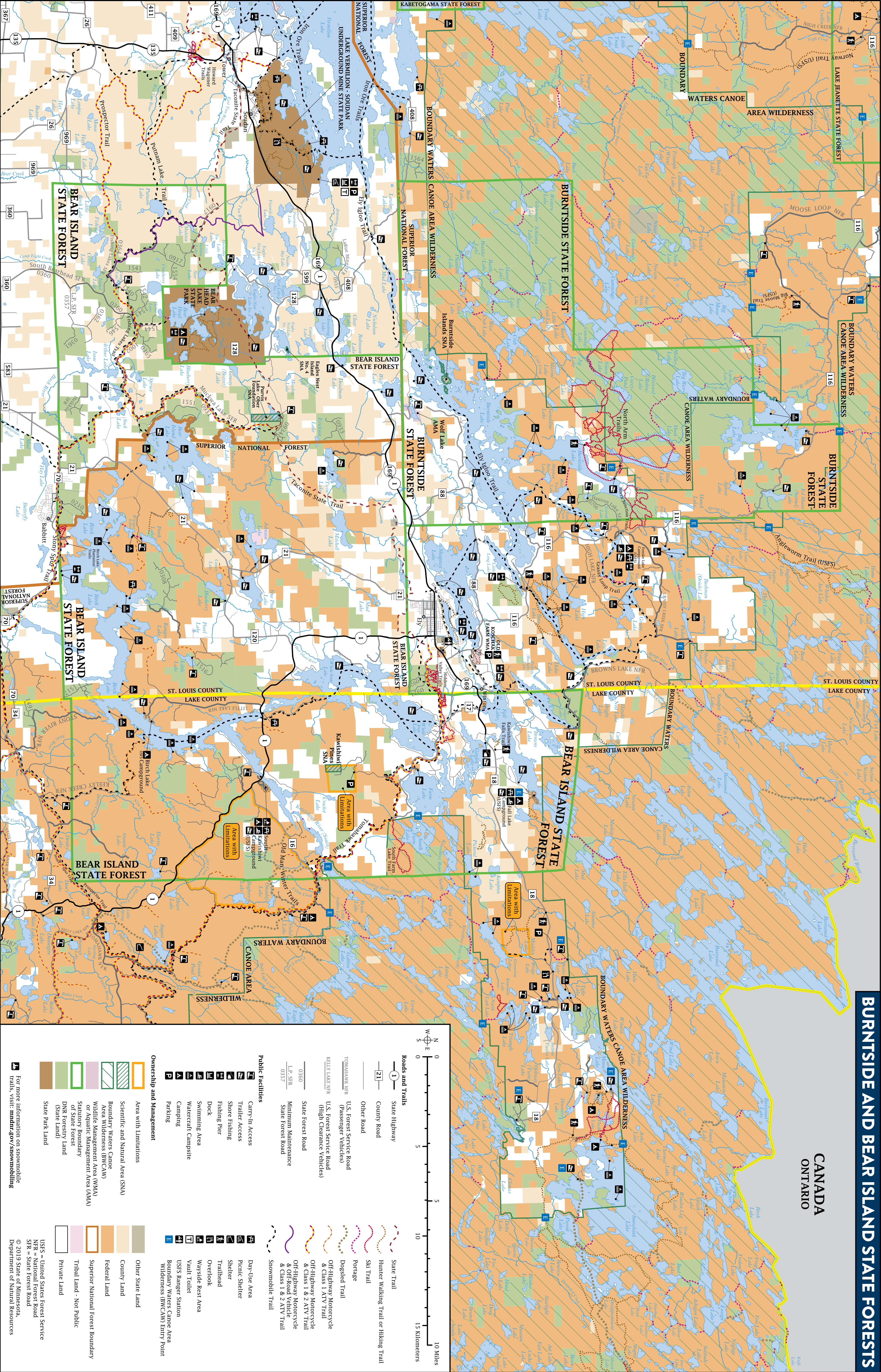
Trespassing is a misdemeanor. If convicted, you could lose your license to hunt. All conservation and peace officers enforce trespass laws.

**KNOW FEDERAL LAND USES AND REGULATIONS**  
Burntside and Bear Island state forests are a patchwork of state-managed land within areas of federally managed and private 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/superior](https://www.fs.usda.gov/superior). More resources for the Superior National Forest are at the U.S. Forest Service Office, 320 U.S. Highway 53, Cook, MN 55723, 218-666-0020.

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

**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](https://www.playcleango.org)



**BURNTSIDE AND BEAR ISLAND STATE FORESTS**

CANADA  
ONTARIO





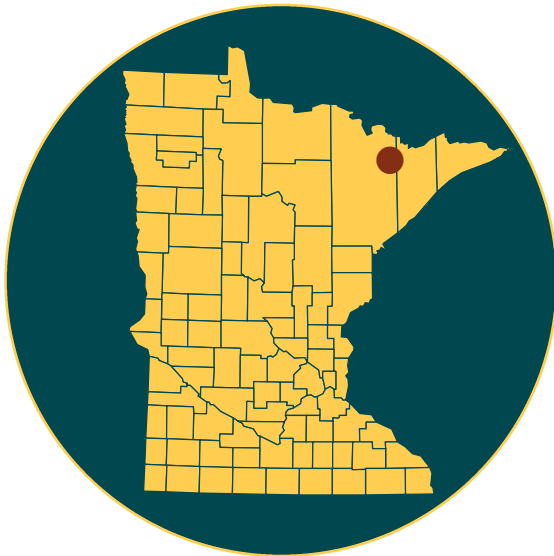
GENERAL STATE FOREST RULES

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 is allowed on state forest land at least 1 mile outside of campground areas for no fee.
- On state forest land, summer camping is limited to 14 days, and winter camping is limited to 21 days between the second Sunday in September and the first Saturday in May. For rules about camping on federal land within the Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), visit [recreation.gov](#)
- 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 purchased from vendors who harvested firewood in the same county as the state forest or harvested in Minnesota and certified by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture or USDA. 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 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. Ashes 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, 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. Get permits from your local DNR forestry office. [mndnr.gov/areas/forestry](#)
- Collecting wild rice requires a permit. [mndnr.gov/regulations/wildrice](#)
- Hiking, horseback riding, and off-road biking are allowed on all trails except groomed ski trails.
- This is a partial list of rules. For more information, visit the website listed below.

[mndnr.gov/forestrules](#)

BURNTSIDE AND BEAR ISLAND STATE FORESTS



SPECIAL BWCAW RULES

Whether camping, canoeing, kayaking, skiing, hiking, hunting, or trapping, all visitors to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness must have a visitor permit. [https://go.usa.gov/xnu9r](#)

CAMPING

Dispersed camping with no amenities is allowed on state forest land, without fee. Camping is limited to 21 days between the second Sunday in September and the first Saturday in May. 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.

Please practice the “Leave No Trace” camping ethic.

Motorboats are allowed on all lakes outside the BWCAW.

STATE PARKS

Bear Head Lake and Vermilion Lake-Soudan Underground Mine state parks offer several camping opportunities, including sites with electric hook-ups, group sites, cabins, and canoe campsites. [mndnr.gov/state\\_parks](#)

U.S. FOREST SERVICE BACKCOUNTRY CAMPSITES

The Forest Service manages several backcountry campsites outside the wilderness area. Some campsites are accessible by foot or canoe only. Camping on National Forest Service Lands is limited to 14 days in one location. For more information about camping on land managed by the U.S. Forest Service, visit [recreation.gov](#)

BOATING

The lakes in the area are open to canoes, kayaks, and motorboats. Boaters should watch for rocks. Canoeists can use the many portages in the area to travel between lakes.

BWCAW visitors must have a permit and may use canoes or kayaks only. Portions of Fall Lake and Farm Lake are within the BWCAW and have a motor restriction of 25 hp.

There are several public water access points, including canoe landings on Moose River, Agassa Lake, and Slim Lake, and boat landings on Fenske Lake and on the north shores of Big Lake and on the North Arm of Burntside Lake.

Register your canoe, kayak, or motorboat at [mndnr.gov/licenses/watercraft](#)

TRAILS

All trails and roads are open to hiking and mountain biking. Off-trail hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing are also allowed.

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

Bikes and wheeled recreational equipment are not allowed in the BWCAW.

Where trails enter the BWCAW, visitors need a permit. [https://go.usa.gov/xnu9r](#)

TACONITE STATE TRAIL

This natural-surface trail stretches 165 miles from Grand Rapids to Ely and is open to hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and snowmobiling. Snowmobiles must be registered or have a snowmobile state trail sticker.

NORTH ARM SKI AND HIKING TRAILS – U.S. FOREST SERVICE

An extensive 42-mile, single-track cross-country ski trail system winds though state forest and BWCAW land northwest of the North Arm Bay of Burntside Lake. Skiers entering the BWCAW need a permit, usually available at a self-serve kiosk where the trails begin off the North Arm Road. Detailed map: [https://go.usa.gov/xmDjx](#)

HIDDEN VALLEY AND TREZONA SKI AND HIKING TRAILS – CITY OF ELY

With 15.5 miles (25 km) of trails groomed for skate and classic skiing, the Hidden Valley Trails are located in Hidden Valley Recreation Area 0.3 miles east of Ely city limits. The Trezona Trail is located just north of Ely around Miner’s Lake. Trails are groomed in winter. Dogs allowed in winter on Trezona Trail only. Detailed map: [elynordic.org/alj/](#)

HOWARD WAGONER SKI TRAIL – CITY OF TOWER

This 7-mile (13 km), groomed trail system winds through gentle terrain and is ideal for beginning skiers. Located 1 mile south of Tower on Highway 135.

BIRCH LAKE SKI TRAILS – CITY OF BABBITT

This 5-mile (8-km) trail system is groomed for classic skiing. Park in main golf course parking area.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE TRAILS

The U.S. Forest Service maintains several trails in the area. Visit [fs.ushs.gov/recrea/superior](#) for maps and more information about the Superior National Forest.

**Highlight: Big Moose Trail**  
The Big Moose Trail is a 2.5-mile one-way trail that follows an old roadbed, then follows piles of rock cairns as it jogs through forests of jack pine and aspen. Map and compass skills are recommended for this trail. [https://go.usa.gov/xmF4B](#)

**Highlight: Angleworm Hiking Trail**  
This 12-mile rugged hike loops around Angleworm Lake. The trailhead and parking are 17 miles north from Ely on the Echo Trail. Map and compass skills are recommended. Most of this trail is within the BWCAW (permit required). [https://go.usa.gov/xmF4N](#)

**SNOWMOBILE TRAILS**  
Snowmobile trails (state trails and grant-in-aid) are open and groomed between December 1 and March 31. Use caution at all times as logging operations often share the trails. Trails are marked with orange directional signs.

**Highlight: Grassy Loop and Putnam-Fishing Lakes Snowmobile Trails**  
The Grassy Loop Trail traverses Burntside Lake in the winter and connects to other



grant-in-aid trails in the area as well as the Taconite State Trail. The Putnam-Fishing Lakes Snowmobile Trail connects Tower to the south end of Bear Island Lake and winds through numerous types of forests.

- Snowmobiles are not allowed in the BWCAW.
- Snowmobiles must be registered [mndnr.gov/regulations/snowmobile](#)
- Detailed trail maps are on [mndnr.gov/state\\_trails/list.html](#)

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE TRAIL CLASSIFICATION:

**LIMITED AND MANAGED**  
All trails on state-managed lands are classified regarding motor vehicles.

- Burntside State Forest is LIMITED.
- Bear Island State Forest is MANAGED outside of Superior National Forest, and LIMITED within the Superior National forest.

A “limited” designation allows off-road vehicles (ORVs), all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and off-highway motorcycles (OHMs) to operate only on roads and trails posted open. Highway-licensed vehicles are allowed on forest roads.

A “managed” designation allows highway-licensed vehicles on all roads unless posted closed, and ATVs, ORVs, and OHMs on all roads, routes, and designated trails. No motorized use is allowed off roads and trails.

- Unless posted closed, the Echo Trail and local forest roads are open to ATVs, off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and OHMs.
- OHV trail seasons vary and roads may close temporarily. [mndnr.gov/regulations/dnr](#)
- No motorized vehicles are allowed in the BWCAW.

PROSPECTOR’S LOOP ATV TRAIL SYSTEM

Parts of the Prospector’s Loop stretch across the southern portion of the Bear Island State Forest with parts overlapping existing roads and the Stony Spur ATV trail. Most of the trail is natural surface. All of the trail system is open to OHMs and ATVs class 1 and 2. Additionally, ORVs are allowed between the Murray Spur Minimum Maintenance Road and Camp Lake.

SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST ROADS AND TRAILS

- Detailed U.S. Forest Service maps showing allowed uses in Superior National Forest roads and trails are available on [https://go.usa.gov/xmu3p](#)
- ATVs and OHVs are not allowed for cross-country travel, including retrieving game or accessing tree stands.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Burntside and Bear Island state forests provide 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 and bows must be unloaded and cased while in or within 200 feet of a state recreation area (campground, day-use area, parking area, boat launch, etc.) or 450 feet of a national forest recreation area. Exception: During seasons open for hunting, a person 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 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 on federally managed land, visit [fs.fed.us/visit/know-before-you-go/shooting](#)

FISHING

Anglers may find black crappie, bluegill, burbot, lake trout, lake whitefish, northern pike, smallmouth bass, and walleye. There are no special provisions or restrictions on fishing in state 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 zebra mussel larvae or spiny waterfleas by not transporting lake or river water, including in bait buckets. Pack out and dispose unused bait and live worms in trash containers where they can’t reach water or soil.

- Visit [mndnr.gov/fishing](#) for up-to-date regulations.
- Visit [mndnr.gov/lakefind](#) for current information on specific lakes.

WOLF LAKE PONDS AMA

The Wolf Lake Ponds Aquatic Management Area (AMA) is open to angling, hiking, wildlife observation, hunting, and trapping.

NEARBY RECREATION

BEAR HEAD LAKE STATE PARK

Bear Head Lake State Park offers camping, 23 miles of lakeshore, hiking, fishing, and wildlife watching. Lodging consists of more than 70 semi-modern sites in a wooded area, 45 electric sites, 4 backcountry campsites, 1 group camp, and 5 camper cabins.

LAKE VERMILION-SOUDAN UNDERGROUND MINE STATE PARK

This park offers the unique opportunity to travel one-half mile underground and tour Minnesota’s first iron ore mine. Tours run between Memorial Day through September and weekends into October. Above ground, visitors can also hike trails featuring geological formations and a boardwalk overlooking the deepest mine pit. Camping available.

KAWISHIWI FALLS HIKING TRAIL – SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST

This scenic 0.5-mile round-trip hiking trail leads to Kawishiwi Falls, the Winton power dam, and the Garden Lake-Fall Lake portage.

U.S. FOREST SERVICE CAMPGROUNDS

Four campgrounds offer more than 100 additional campsites: Fall Lake, Fenske Lake, Birch Lake, and South Kawishiwi River. Fall Lake Campground is close to the BWCAW where permits are required. Visit the Kawishiwi Ranger District website for information on campgrounds, backcountry campsites, and other recreation in this area: [https://go.usa.gov/xmMaC](#)



BURNTSIDE AND BEAR ISLAND STATE FORESTS MAP  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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

NEAREST HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ely Bloomenson Community Hospital  
328 W. Conan St.  
Ely, MN 55731  
218-365-3271

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