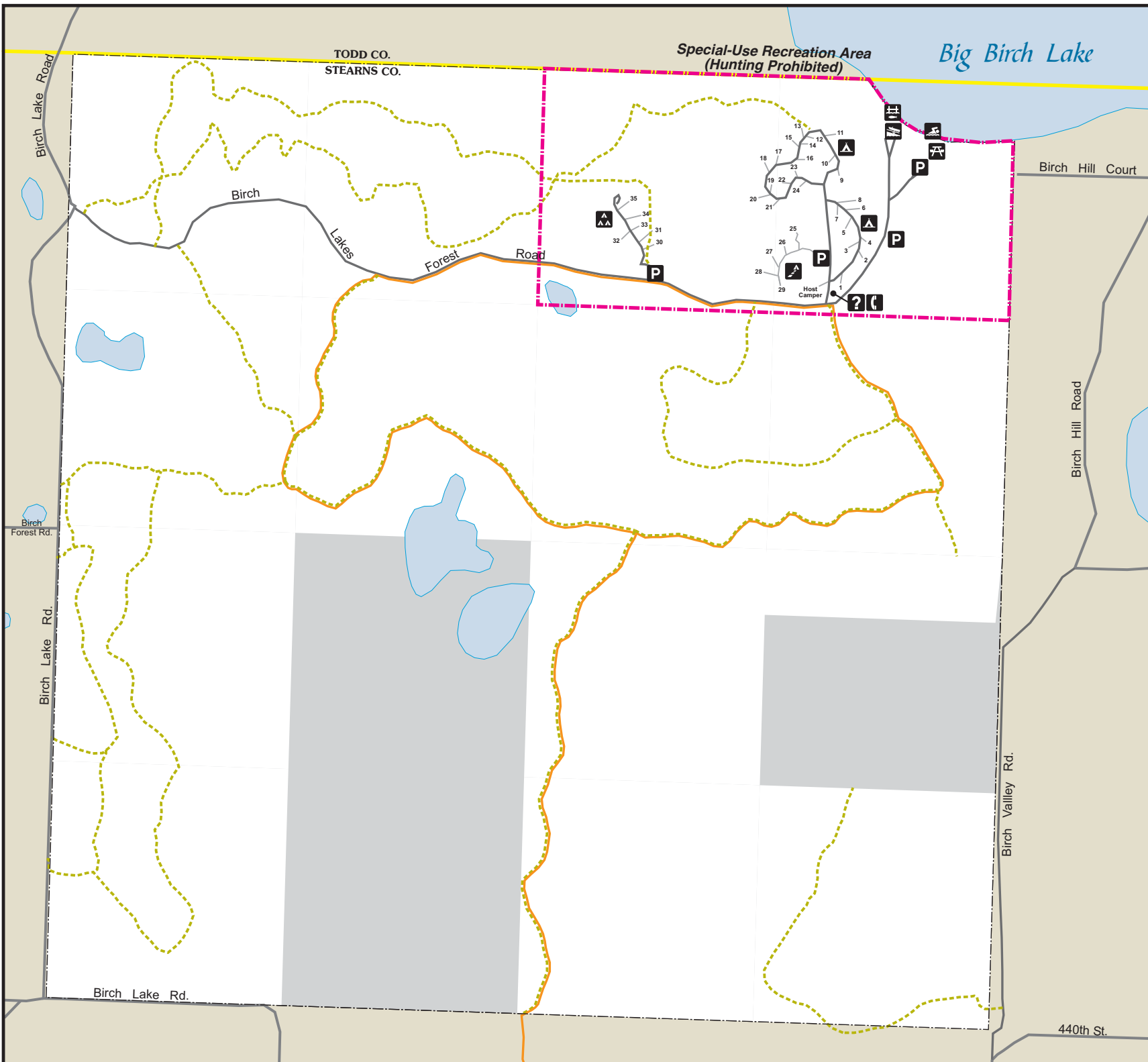


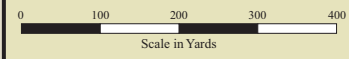
# Birch Lakes State Forest



- TRAILS**
- Multi-Use Trails (mountain biking, hiking, skiing)
  - Snowmobile Trails

- FACILITIES**
- Information & Registration
  - Parking
  - Picnic Area
  - Campground
  - Walk-in Camping
  - Primitive Group Camping
  - Vault Toilet
  - Boat Launch
  - Fishing Pier
  - Swimming Beach
  - Telephone

- OWNERSHIP**
- Public Land Within the Forest
  - Private Land Within the Forest
  - Land Outside Forest Boundaries



**Is It Trespassing?**

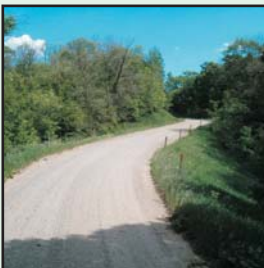
On private land, the simple and best answer is, **Ask First!** Signs are posted by the landowners, and they will state, "No Trespassing," or similar words in two-inch letters and the signature or name and telephone number of the landowner, lessee, or manager. There can be civil and criminal penalties for violation of the trespass laws.

Civil penalties start at \$50 for first offense and range up to \$500 and loss of license or registration for a third offense, within three years. All conservation and peace officers enforce trespass laws.



# Birch Lakes State Forest

A guide to recreational opportunities in Minnesota state forests



This publication is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by calling 651-296-6157 (Metro Area) or 888-MINNDNR (Toll Free) or Telecommunication Device for the Deaf/TTY 651-296-5484 (Metro Area) or 800-657-3929 (Toll Free TTY).

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Photos provided by DNR

## About the Forest

Size: 640 acres

Year Created: 1959

**Forest Landscape:** Birch Lakes State Forest is located in the Minnesota's deciduous forest biome which means the plants and animals that live there are adapted to the area's average annual temperature, precipitation and growing season. The topography is rolling to hilly and was created by glacial deposits. Hills surrounding shallow depressions containing water are common. The highest elevation is one quarter mile west of the lake 176 feet above the lake shore.

**Management Activities:** Minnesota's state forests are managed to produce timber and other forest crops, provide outdoor recreation, protect watersheds, perpetuate wildlife, and perpetuate rare and distinctive species of flora and fauna. Due to its small size, Birch Lake State Forest is managed primarily for recreation. The forest also produces timber, provides habitat for wildlife, and is used to demonstrate forest management principles. Aspen and other deciduous trees have been harvested to benefit wildlife and regenerate naturally through root and stump sprouting. Some fuel wood has and will continue to be harvested in areas of stress from drought, insects, and disease. Scattered areas of pine and spruce have been planted to add to the biodiversity.

**History:** Birch Lakes, one of Minnesota's smallest state forests, was established by the Legislature in 1959 with the support of local citizens who had promoted the area as a state park.



## Look for ...

**Predominant Tree Species:** The dominant forest type is oak (bur, red, and northern pin) mixed with elm, green ash, red maple, basswood, paper birch, and aspen. Ironwood is a common understory tree. Black ash and tamarack occur in some wetlands.



**Wildlife:** Common wildlife species in this wooded hilly moraine area include gray fox, and red squirrels, ruffed grouse, raccoon, red fox, white-tailed deer, short-tailed shrew, eastern cottontail, eastern chipmunk, woodchuck, beaver, coyote, striped skunk, white-footed mouse, meadow vole, muskrat, and wild turkey. Other wildlife species likely present include black bear, pheasants, little and big brown bats, arctic shrews, prairie deer mice, eastern moles, timber wolves, and gray fox. Amphibians and reptiles present in or near the area include the blue-spotted salamander, tiger salamander, gray tree frog, western chorus frog, northern leopard frog, wood frog, red-bellied snake, garter snake, snapping turtle, and painted turtle.



Bird watchers may find:

**Shorebirds:** Canada goose, wood duck, blue-winged teal, loon, double-crested cormorant, great blue and green herons, sora, and sandhill cranes

**Raptors:** Red-shouldered hawk, red-tailed hawk

**Songbirds:** Killdeer, mourning dove, yellow-billed cuckoo, ruby-throated hummingbird, belted kingfisher, red-bellied woodpecker, northern flicker, pileated woodpecker, eastern kingbird, yellow-throated vireo, warbling vireo, red-eyed vireo, northern rough-winged swallow, bank swallow, sedge wren, marsh wren, blue-gray gnatcatcher, eastern bluebird, veery

wood thrush, cedar waxwing, golden-winged warbler, yellow warbler, chestnut-sided warbler, American redstart, ovenbird, common yellowthroat, scarlet tanager, chipping sparrow, rose-breasted grosbeak, indigo bunting, red-winged blackbird, yellow-headed blackbird.

**Recreation:** Big Birch Lake is classified as a walleye lake and has 2025 acres of surface water, 12.5 miles of shoreline, and a maximum depth of 77 feet. Other fish that may be found are crappie, bluegill, largemouth bass and northern pike. Water clarity is considered good to excellent. There is a swimming beach, fishing pier, and boat access available on the lake for users to enjoy.

In the summer, there are 5 miles of trails good for hiking and mountain biking. The campground in the forest has 24 nonreservable drive-in sites and 5 walk-in sites. A reservable group camp is also available. The campground is open May through September. For group camp reservations or other campground information call Charles A. Lindbergh State Park at 320-616-2525.

In the winter, skiing is allowed on the hiking trails, and there are also several miles of snowmobile trails managed by the DNR and maintained by local snowmobile clubs. For more information on snowmobile trails in the area, visit [www.mndnr.gov/snowmobiling](http://www.mndnr.gov/snowmobiling).



## Keep Trees a Healthy Part of Your World!

Plant trees. Make sure they are right for the site.

Help keep trees healthy. For example: Water trees during dry periods; avoid wounding bark with lawn mowers and weed whips; stake small-diameter, newly planted trees to give them added support; mulch trees to help retain moisture in the soil.

Celebrate Arbor Day and Arbor Month. In Minnesota, Arbor Day is the last Friday in April and May is Arbor Month.

Join or establish a local tree committee or board.

Go to [mndnr.gov/treecare](http://mndnr.gov/treecare), Minnesota's one-stop Web site for information on trees, tree care, and tree-related organizations.



## The Value of Trees

Trees help humans and other living things in many ways. Among them, they:

- Remove carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas) and other pollutants from the air.

- Produce oxygen.

- Provide food and shelter for wildlife.

- Add beauty to the landscape.

- Provide a pleasant environment for recreation.

- Help reduce residential energy consumption by shading homes in summer and sheltering them from wind in winter.

- Help protect streams and lakes by reducing runoff.

- Reduce noise pollution by absorbing sound.

- Increase property values.

Research has shown that trees can provide up to \$7 in benefits each year for every \$1 invested in caring for them. Benefits include increased property values, pollution control, and energy savings.

## Two Kinds of Trees

Minnesota is home to 52 native tree species and they can be divided into two main types: deciduous and coniferous.

Deciduous trees drop their leaves each autumn. Deciduous trees are sometimes called angiosperms, broadleaf trees, or hardwoods. Oaks, maples, and elms are deciduous trees.

Coniferous trees are trees that produce seeds without fruits or nuts. Most coniferous trees bear seeds in cones, have needles instead of broad leaves, and keep their needles in winter. Coniferous trees are also called gymnosperms, evergreens, or softwoods. Spruces, firs, and pines are coniferous trees.

To learn more about Minnesota's native trees, check out the following:

- "Trees of Minnesota." Minnesota's Bookstore, order number 9-1, phone: 800-657-3757, [www.minnesotabookstore.com](http://www.minnesotabookstore.com)
- "Minnesota Trees." Minnesota Extension Service, order number BU-00486-GO, phone: 800-876-8636, [www.extension.umn.edu](http://www.extension.umn.edu)
- "Nature Snapshots: Trees & Shrubs." [www.mndnr.gov/trees\\_shrubs/index.html](http://www.mndnr.gov/trees_shrubs/index.html)

## Snowmobile Laws

Alcohol, nighttime driving, and high speeds are the main causes of snowmobile fatalities. Conservation officers remind snowmobilers:

- Operating a snowmobile while intoxicated is unlawful.
- 50 miles per hour is the maximum legal speed for snowmobiling on frozen public waters and DNR-controlled lands (conditions permitting, when no other restrictions apply).

For complete legal information see "Minnesota Snowmobile Safety Laws, Rules, and Regulations," available from DNR Information Center and DNR Licensing Bureau.



## The Grant-In-Aid Trail System

Through efforts of snowmobile club volunteers across the state, Minnesotans enjoy more than 20,000 miles of groomed snowmobile trails. The maintenance of 90 percent of these trails is the responsibility of local snowmobile clubs and Minnesota United Snowmobilers Association (MnUSA).

Stay on the trails with the help of orange reassuring blazers, which are posted along the route.



## Minnesota Snowmobile Trails

Locations of Minnesota's snowmobile trails have been mapped for NW, NE, SW, and SE Minnesota and copies are available from DNR Information Center and other locations. The same information is available on the DNR Web site, [www.mndnr.gov](http://www.mndnr.gov).

## Hunting

Hunting in state forests is allowed during the appropriate season and with the correct license. State forests do contain private holdings within their boundaries, many of which are signed "no hunting." Hunting on private land within a state forest is subject to state trespass laws.

### Firearms, deer stands:

Firearms must be unloaded and cased and bows must be unstrung and cased while in or within 200 feet of a forest recreation area (campground, day-use area, etc.). The only exception is during an open hunting season when a person may carry an unopened and unloaded firearm or strung bow to hunt outside of the recreation area. Temporary and portable deer stands are allowed in state forests.

For more information on hunting and trapping, go to: [www.mndnr.gov/hunting](http://www.mndnr.gov/hunting)

## Fishing, Trapping

There are no special provisions or restrictions on fishing or trapping within state forests. Participants in these activities must have the proper license and abide by the same rules and seasons as anywhere else in the state.

For more information on fishing, go to: [www.mndnr.gov/fishing](http://www.mndnr.gov/fishing)

## OHV Use on State Forest Lands

State forest lands are classified by the commissioner for purposes of motor vehicle use.

The DNR is conducting a review of state forests that currently permit off-highway vehicle use. Following the review, these forests may be reclassified as either "managed," "limited," or "closed" to OHV use.

For up-to-date information, check [www.mndnr.gov/input/mgmt/plans/ohv/designation/index.html](http://www.mndnr.gov/input/mgmt/plans/ohv/designation/index.html)

## BIRCH LAKES STATE FOREST IS CLASSIFIED AS CLOSED

Motor vehicles and snowmobiles are not allowed except:

- Vehicles licensed for highway use may use forest roads that are not posted or gated closed.

- Vehicles may operate on frozen public waters where it is not otherwise prohibited.

- Snowmobiles may operate on designated trails.

Forest Is Closed for Off-Highway Vehicle Use

## SMOKEY SAYS~



## Be Safe With Campfires!

- Let your fire burn out completely to ashes or very small coals.
- Drench the fire with water, stir the ashes and coals, and wet again.
- Make sure any food, plastics, or foil is packed out as garbage.
- When your fire is extinguished completely, it should be cold to the touch.

