



INSULA LAKE
610 ACRES • ESTABLISHED 1963

LAKE ISABELLA
639 ACRES • ESTABLISHED 1963

FOREST LANDSCAPE: These two state forests are located within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCW). The rugged terrain contains large boulders, rocky outcroppings, and several interconnecting lakes, beaver ponds, and streams. Lake Isabella is located near one of the few places with easy car access to the BWCW.

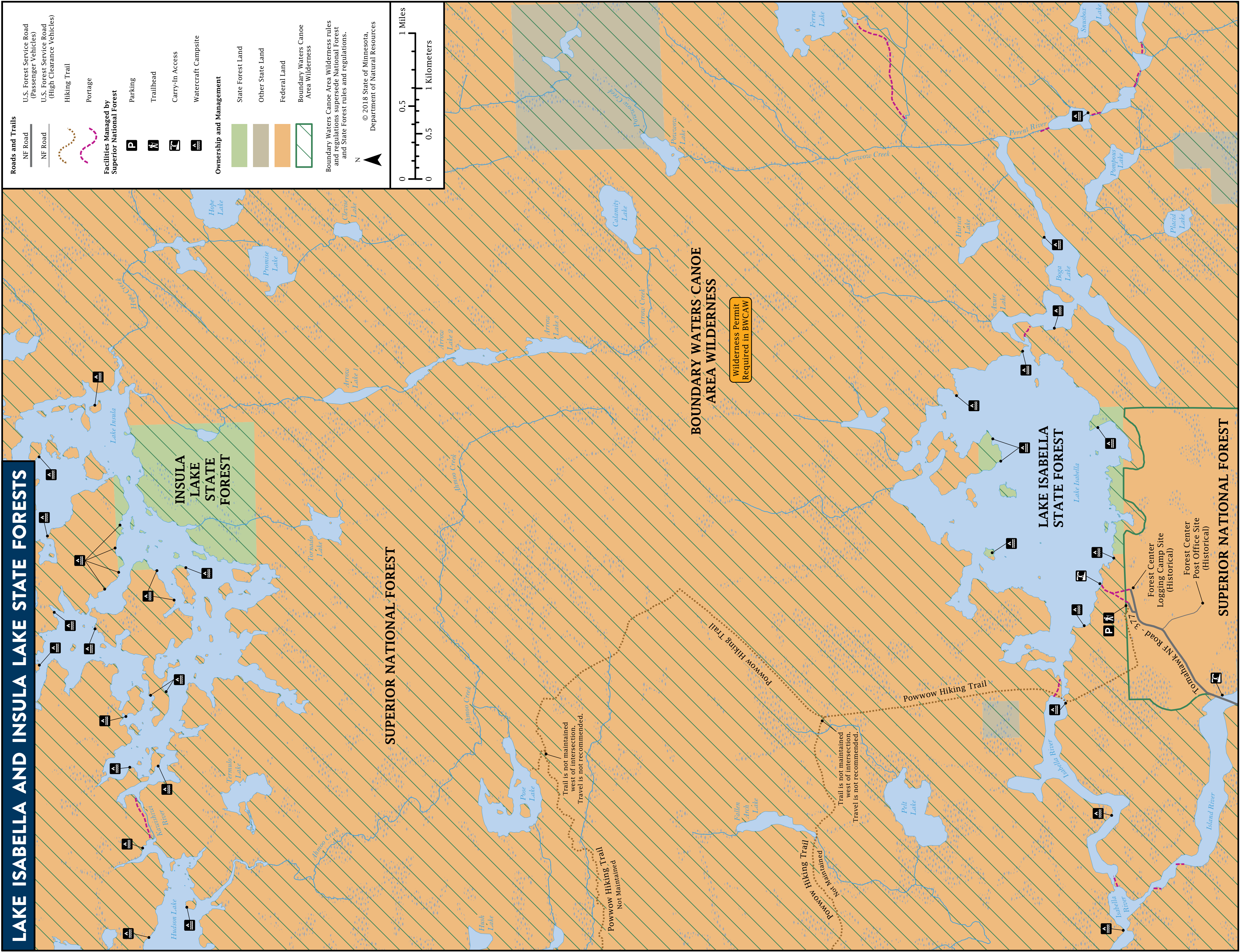
A WORKING FOREST: You may see changes in these forests from year to year, as natural forces of disturbance and regrowth continually affect the number and types of trees and wildlife populations. The DNR monitors the trees, water, and wildlife in state forests to keep them healthy and meet recreational, environmental, and economic goals. In state forests outside of the BWCAW, trees are harvested to make a variety of products, such as lumber and building materials, paper, pallets, fencing, and telephone poles. Through careful planning, harvesting, and planting, land managers work to improve wildlife habitat, prevent wildfires, and keep our air and water clean.

HISTORY: The logging village of Forest Center once existed between 1949 and 1964 on Lake Isabella's southwest shore and processed up to 150,000 cords per year. In 1978, the Minnesota legislature created the BWCAW to set aside the area as a recreational wilderness for camping and canoe travel. In 2011 a large, intense fire swept through the Pagami Creek area, triggering a total reset back to early succession, fire-dependent forests. In the decades to follow, these stands will return to a mature boreal forest of pine, fir, and spruce.

TREES: Aspen and jack pine are abundant in burned areas. Black spruce grow in lowland areas. You may find stands of jack, red, and white pine; cedar; white spruce; 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, and snowshoe hare. Birders may spot common loons; hooded mergansers; and common goldeneye, ring-necked, and black ducks. Black-backed and three-toed woodpeckers, and boreal and great gray owls use burned-over areas.

LAKE ISABELLA AND INSULA LAKE STATE FORESTS



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 device, even if you are out of cellular range.

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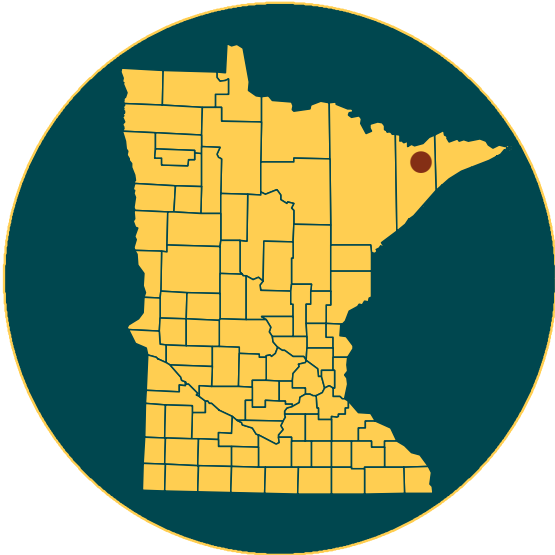
GENERAL STATE FOREST RULES

Whether you are camping, hunting, geocaching, skiing, or gathering berries, take care to leave the forest in good condition.

- Forest lands are open at all times unless otherwise posted.
- These forests are entirely within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and U.S. Forest Service rules apply when accessing these forests. No motorized or wheeled travel is allowed on BWCAW land or water.
- No camping allowed outside of designated BWCAW campsites.
- 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 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 forest and BWCAW land.
- Use fire rings and keep campfires no larger than 3 feet wide and 3 feet high. Attend the fire at all times. Completely extinguish fire 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, or dead fuelwood for personal use while in the state forests 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
- This is a partial list of rules. For more information, visit the website listed below.

mndnr.gov/forestrules

INSULA LAKE AND LAKE ISABELLA STATE FORESTS



GETTING THERE

Accessing either state forest requires travel through the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). If you are planning an overnight stay at the BWCAW between May 1 and September 30, you must get a wilderness permit. Entry is limited, first-come, first-served. Visit **recreation.gov** or the Superior National Forest office to request a permit. Fee charged.

To get to Insula Lake State Forest from Ely, drive east on Fernberg Road 20 miles until it ends at Lake One, Entry Point 30. From the entry point, paddle approximately 12 miles east through the Lake One chain of lakes on the Kawishiwi River.

Lake Isabella State Forest can be accessed from Tomahawk Road (FS 377) 18 miles south of Ely on Highway 1. On the southwest shore of Lake Isabella there is a parking lot and Entry Point 35 used by canoeists entering the BWCAW.

CAMPING

There are no campgrounds or campsites in these state forests.

The BWCAW has designated canoe-accessible campsites with a cleared area, fire rings, and a latrine. Overnight visitors to the BWCAW need a visitor permit. All campsites are maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. Visit **https://go.usa.gov/xnu9r**

Please practice the “Leave No Trace” camping ethic.

TRAILS

There are no trails in Insula Lake or Lake Isabella state forests.

The Powwow Hiking Trail can be accessed from the trailhead at the parking lot located southwest of Lake Isabella. Travel is only recommended from trailhead to Pose Lake (5.9 miles). The rest of the trail will not be maintained until the forest recovers from recent fires. Managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

Off-trail hiking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing are allowed. Bikes and wheeled recreational equipment are not allowed in the state forests or BWCAW. Groomed cross-country ski trails are available in the Ely and Isabella areas.

BOATING

This area is popular to explore by canoe and kayak. No motorized boats are allowed. Visitor permits are required to enter the BWCAW.

Register your canoe or kayak at **mndnr.gov/licenses/watercraft**

SNOWMOBILE TRAILS

There are no snowmobile trails in these state forests. The BWCAW does not allow motors of any kind. There are snowmobile opportunities closer to Ely and Isabella.

Snowmobile trail maps: **mndnr.gov/snowmobiling/interactive_map**

Snowmobiles must have current registration. **mndnr.gov/regulations/snowmobile/index.html**

CLASSIFICATION: CLOSED

All trails on state-managed lands are classified regarding motor vehicles. The Insula Lake and Lake Isabella state forests, as well as the BWCAW, are classified as “closed,” which means that off-road vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, and off-highway motorcycles are prohibited in these forests.

There are no roads or off-highway vehicle trails in these forests.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Hunting and trapping are allowed within the Insula Lake and Lake Isabella state forests and the BWCAW. In the appropriate season, licensed hunters and trappers can hunt for small and big game including white-trailed deer, grouse, woodcock, and waterfowl. Trapping opportunities are available for mink, fisher, pine marten, bobcat, otter, and beaver. The Isabella River offers good waterfowl habitat in a remote, wilderness setting.

FIREARMS AND BOWS

During seasons open for hunting, a person may carry a firearm or bow to hunt on state land.

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, visit **mnnldr.gov/regulations/hunting**

FISHING

Insula Lake supports walleye, northern pike, lake whitefish, and cisco. Lake Isabella can produce large walleyes and even some trophy-size northern pike.

You must have the proper license and follow the same rules and seasons as anywhere else in Minnesota. The lakes are also open to whitefish sport gill netting in the fall. A whitefish netting license is required.

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 unused bait and live worms or dispose of in trash containers where they can’t reach water or soil.

mndnr.gov/invasives/ais

Visit **mndnr.gov/fishing** for up-to-date regulations, restrictions on invasive species, and lake survey reports.

SCAN TO DOWNLOAD MAP



USFWS



KNOW WHERE YOU ARE

Rules may differ when traveling between state forests and adjacent lands.

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**

MAP
ISABELLA STATE FORESTS
INSULA LAKE AND LAKE
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

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

**BWCAW PERMIT RESERVATION
HOTLINE - 877-444-6777**

EMERGENCY SERVICE - DIAL 911

LAKE COUNTY SHERIFF
218-834-8385

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

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