HILL RIVER AND WAUKENABO STATE FORESTS

HILL RIVER ESTABLISHED 1963, 2000, 2001
124, 207 ACRES

WAUKENABO ESTABLISHED 2000
15,689 ACRES

FOREST LANDSCAPE: The Hill River and Waukenabo state forests are located on gently rolling hills in north-central Minnesota. With an array of public trails and expansive habitat for white-tailed deer and other wildlife, these forests are popular destinations for hunting, fishing, off-highway vehicle riding, and boating.

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 create a variety of products, such as lumber and building materials, pulp for making paper products, fencing, and utility poles. Through careful planning, harvesting, and planting, land managers work to improve wildlife habitat. The DNR manages state forests for everyone, while preventing wildfires and ensuring forests continue to keep air and water clean.

HISTORY: Rolling hills, especially in the western and northern portions, are the result of past glacial activity. The Hill and Willow rivers flow through the forest before emptying into the Mississippi River. Reflecting the language of the people who have lived in the area for hundreds of years, “Waukenabo” is the Ojibwe word for a broth made of moss or milt when faced with starvation. During the late 1800s, millions of board feet of virgin red and white pine were cut from the highlands in the northwest parts of the forest. The logs were rafted down the Hill, Willow, and Mississippi rivers to sawmills in Brainerd. In the 1920s, a network of ditches was constructed in an attempt to drain the marshes for cultivation, but much of the land proved unsuitable for agriculture, leading to many abandoned farms in the 1930s. Many of the roads providing access today were constructed on these ditch banks.

TREES: Northern hardwood stands comprised of maple, oak, ash, elm, and basswood, along with aspen and paper birch, grow on higher land. The islands support black spruce, tamarack, and white cedar.

WILDLIFE: Wildlife includes white-tailed deer, black bear, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, woodcock, waterfowl, gray wolf, bobcat, beaver, fisher, snowshoe hare, otter, mink, muskrat, trumpeter swan, and eagle.

PUT THIS MAP ON YOUR DEVICE
Download this map on your mobile phone or tablet to track your current location. Visit mndnr.gov/geopdf for more information.

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CAMPING AND DAY-USE AREAS
Please practice the “Leave No Trace” camping ethic.

MOOSE WILLUM CAMPsiTES
There are three designated campsites in the Moose Willow Wilderness Demonstration Area (WWDA). No reservations or fees required. First-come, first-served.

AITKIN CAMPGROUND – AITKIN COUNTY
Located on the banks of the Mississippi River, this campground has nine campsites, with access to fishing, showers, drinking water, and picnic grounds. Reservations required. Fees charged. co.aitkin.mn.us/departments/Land/recreation/Jacobson.html

JACOBSON CAMPGROUND – AITKIN COUNTY
Located on the left side of the city of Jacobson, this park offers 15 campsites, two camper cabins, ATV and snowmobile access to the Aitkin River, showers, and drinking water. Reservations and fees charged. co.aitkin.mn.us/departments/Land/recreation/Jacobson.html

BOATING
The Mississippi River in this area is an easy 12-mile paddle with launching access at Berglund County Park and Highway 169. Several boat accesses are located on area lakes and on the Mississippi River. Visit mndnr.gov/store/templates/riverinteractive_map for up-to-date information.

HUNTING AND TRAPPING
A short spur trail leads to an overlook and picnic area. Open to Class 2 and 4 OHVs. mndnr.gov/boating/trails/mississippi-river

SMOKEWILDLIFE
Smokeable trout and trout-in-a-bag are allowed and permitted between December 1 and April 1 depending on snow conditions. Use caution at all times. Logging operations can sometimes be accessibility issues for hunting and trapping. In the appropriate season, use caution when hunting and trapping. Bowhunting, trapping, firearms, bows, limbs, seasons, and deer stands on state-managed land, visit mndnr.gov/hunting

FISHING
Firearms must be unloaded and cased and large game

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State Forests

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