WELCOME TO BLACK RIVER HARBOR

GENERAL AREA INFORMATION

BLACK RIVER HARBOR DAY USE AREA

Tall hemlock and pine surround the Black River Harbor day use area. A boat launch, picnic tables, grills and an accessible vault toilet are available to visitors, as well as an enclosed pressurized water system which can be reserved for special events. Tables, a fireplace and flush toilets are also available in the pavilion. Access to the beach and North Country Scenic Trail are made by crossing a suspended foot bridge. Highlights of the area, this foot bridge were built by the Civilian Conservation Corp in the late 1930’s. A daily use fee is charged per vehicle. Payments are made at the self-service fee registration stations.

CAMPGROUND FACILITIES

The Black River Harbor campground is located just a short distance south of the picnic area, on the west side of County Road 513. The campground offers vault toilet facilities and a pressurized water system. Thirty-nine campsites can accommodate tents, trailers, and motor homes. Seven campsites provide an overlook to Lake Superior. Each campsite is buffered by vegetation providing privacy for a quite, enjoyable experience. A daily camping fee is charged. Payments are made at the campground self-service fee registration station.

DOCKING FACILITIES

The Black River offers one of the area’s few access points to Lake Superior, with boating a major summertime activity. Parking for trucks and trailers is ample. Visitor docking is available on the far north side of the dock. A daily docking fee is charged according to boat size. Payments are made at the docking self-service registration station.

OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE

Black River Harbor Suspension Bridge: Original construction of the Black River Harbor suspension bridge began in 1914 and was completed one year later in 1915. The construction of this truly unique feature was completed by the Norris CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) Camp in Ironwood. The bridge also was worked on the roads and facilities for the day use area and picnic area. In order to build the bridge, a sawmill was set up on-site. The best possible lumber was selected for the bridge. Each arch for the suspension cables consists of four tons of concrete (which was transported in wheelbarrows). The bridge was re-constructed in 1968 and was upgraded one again in 2009.

History: In 1864, land surveyor William A. Burt completed a survey of the land containing what we now know as the Black River Recreation Area. His findings included a “wagon road” going from the mouth of the Black River, to the Copper Falls Mining Company location at Chippewa Hill, which is now known as Upper Peak.  By 1904 the State of Michigan constructed a “wagon road” from Bessemer, Michigan to Lake Superior. A portion of this road is now the Black River National Byway. Once a small commercial fishing village, Black River Harbor was home to many adventurous fishermen who would prepare their nets, fish their engines, and set out on one of the most treacherous of the Great Lakes. Fishing was an integral part of the local community and it’s economy for the 1920’s.

Lake Superior: Lake Superior is the largest freshwater lake in the world and encompasses 23,000 square miles (approximately 5% of all the earth’s water is on Lake Superior). West side harbor visitors can enjoy Swimming, sunbathers, campers, rock collectors, fishermen and more. The sunsets on Lake Superior can be beautiful!

You won’t want to miss out on the Black River watersfalls—some for the majesty of the falls themselves or for others, just the experience of getting there. There are three distinct and picturesque waterfalls within the Black River Harbor recreation area. All are accessible by traveling County Road 513 or by hiking the North Country National Scenic Trail. The North Country Scenic Trail provides a unique opportunity to view the river from above as you walk through a majestic hemlock forest. Observation platforms and a boardwalk trail systems are located from trailheads off of County Road 513 and offer spectacualr views of the falls. Whichever route you choose, hiking to the falls can be both challenging and rewarding.

Gorge Falls: Located 11.5 miles north of Highway US-2, off of County Road 513, this 1/2-mile hiking trail will drop steadily as you near the riverbank. At the falls, the river separates into two sections, falling 40 feet around an island of conglomerate rock, giving the falls its name. Old growth hemlock and hardwoods add to the natural beauty of the area.

Potawatomi Falls: Located 3 miles west of Bessemer, Ml, at the mouth of the Black River. His findings included a “wagon road” going from the mouth of the Black River, to the Copper Falls Mining Company location at Chippewa Hill, which is now known as Upper Peak. By 1904 the State of Michigan constructed a “wagon road” from Bessemer, Michigan to Lake Superior.

Potawatomi Falls can be reached from Great Conglomerate Falls, by hiking north 1/3-mile via the North Country Scenic Trail.

Great Conglomerate Falls: Located 13.5 miles north of Highway US-2, off of County Road 513, this 3/4-mile hiking trail will drop steadily as you near the riverbank. At the falls, the river separates into two sections, falling 40 feet around an island of conglomerate rock, giving the falls its name. Old growth hemlock and hardwoods add to the natural beauty of the area.

Potawatomi and Gorge Falls are located just over 12 miles north of Highway US-2, off of County Road 513. A 1/4-mile hiking trail will drop steadily as you near the riverbank. The falls, the river separates into two sections, falling 40 feet around an island of conglomerate rock, giving the falls its name. Old growth hemlock and hardwoods add to the natural beauty of the area. Potawatomi Falls can be reached from Great Conglomerate Falls, by hiking north 1/3-mile via the North Country Scenic Trail.

The Black River is home to many adventurous fishermen who would prepare their nets, fish their engines, and set out on one of the most treacherous of the Great Lakes. Fishing was an integral part of the local community and it’s economy for the 1920’s.

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) partners with public assistance programs (not all programs listed apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-6270 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

For More Information

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