Road Closures in the Sylvania Wilderness Perimeter Area, Summer 2014

A major road construction project is taking place this summer in the Sylvania Wilderness perimeter area to provide safer roads and an improved driving surface. This project consists of culvert replacement, improved drainage and shoulder work, repairing the road surface, and paving the roads, parking lots, and campground loops. This project will provide a safer and more sustainable road system for the entire area, providing an overall better experience for our visitors into the future.

During this construction period, the Ottawa National Forest will be closing roads to the Clark Lake area and the Crooked Lake boat landing as necessary for public safety and to facilitate the completion of construction activities. These closures are tentatively planned for the entire 2014 summer season. We will provide updates throughout the summer as the project progresses.

All backcountry campsites in Sylvania Wilderness will be OPEN for the summer. All hiking trails in the Wilderness are open for use. The Sylvania Wilderness Area is not closing, only the roads and facilities listed below will be closed.

Road and Facility Closures

All roads beyond the Sylvania Entrance Station, including:
FR6360 to Day-Use Building
FR6363 to Clark Lake Boat Landing
FR6362 to the Clark Lake campground
FR 6361 to Crooked Lake Boat Landing (after June 15)

These sites and facilities will remain closed until the road construction is complete: Clark Lake Campground, Clark lake Day-Use Building, Clark Lake boat landing and parking lot, Crooked Lake boat landing and parking lot, and the vault toilet at Crooked Lake.

No potable water will be available at the hand pumps at Crooked Lake or Clark Lake boat landings when the road closures are in effect.

Sylvania Entrance Station

The Sylvania Entrance Station will be open throughout the summer, from May 15-September 30. All backcountry campers must register at the Entrance Station to receive their backcountry camping permit. Facility fees ($5 daily fee) will be charged for vehicle access beyond the Entrance Station when there is public vehicle access to the Crooked Lake boat landing. The vault toilets at the Entrance Station will remain open for public use. No overnight parking is allowed at the Entrance Station. No foot traffic will be allowed beyond the Entrance Station.

The Entrance Station will be closed for a short period of time to allow for road construction around the building. During this time, the Entrance Station staff and operations will be based out of the Ottawa Visitor Center in Watersmeet.

Access Points into Sylvania Wilderness

There are multiple trailheads in the Sylvania Perimeter Area that offer parking and access to the Wilderness. These trailheads are shown on the Sylvania Map. Below are our recommendations for access.

Day-Use hikers for the Clark Lake Trail: Park at the Snapjack-Long Lake Picnic Area and walk to GOG-535 (Thousand Island Lake Road). Cross the road to access a temporary trail to Clark Lake beach. This trail follows an old road bed. It is approximately 1 mile from the Snapjack-Long Lake parking area to the Clark Lake beach along this route. There will be signs marking this temporary trail.

Access to backcountry camping sites:

If you would normally utilize the Clark Lake Boat Landing, please consider this access:

If you have canoes or kayaks to drop off, you can utilize the canoe landing at Helen Lake. Vehicle parking for this access point is available at the Snapjack-Long Lake Picnic Area. It is approximately a 1.2 mile hike along GOG-535 (Thousand Island Lake Road) from this parking area to the landing on Helen Lake. Please use caution when walking next to roads. Paddling from north to south, it is approximately .6 miles from the canoe landing to the 2 southern bays of Helen Lake. From the 2 southern bays of Helen Lake, the portage is approximately 24 rods (400 ft.) to Clark Lake beach. There will be signs marking this temporary trail. From Clark Lake, paddle and portage along your normal route to reach your destination.

You may also access Clark Lake along the temporary trail from Snapjack-Long Lake to the Clark Lake beach.

If you would normally utilize the Crooked Lake Boat Landing, please consider this access:

Utilize the Helen Lake to Clark Lake route mention above.

Park at the West Bear/East Bear Lake Trailhead along FR 6320 and hike and portage to your destination.

Developed Campgrounds in the Vicinity

There are several developed campgrounds in the Watersmeet area that can serve Sylvania visitors while the Clark Lake Campground is closed.

Marion Lake Campground: This campground, consisting of three main camping loops with a total of 39 campsites and a well-used group camping site, provides drive-in sites that can accommodate tents, trailers, and motor homes.

From Watersmeet, Mi., take US 2 east approximately 4 miles, turn left onto FR 3980 and travel approximately 2 miles to FR 3985, turn right onto FR 3985 and travel approximately ¾ mile to the campground

Imp Lake Campground: This campground consisting of two camping loops, with a total of 22 campsites, provides drive-in sites that can accommodate tents, trailers and motor homes.

From Watersmeet, Mi., travel east on US 2 approximately 5 miles, turn right onto FR 3978 and travel approximately 1 mile to the campground.

Robins Pond and Burned Dam campgrounds also offer several camping sites. For a complete listing of developed campgrounds on the Ottawa, please visit our website

Additional Information

Please remember that group size in Sylvania is limited to 10 people, so please plan your trip accordingly.

Please park only at designated parking areas and trailheads in the perimeter area. Please do not park along county roads to access Sylvania Wilderness. Parking along county roads is unsafe, can block access for emergency vehicles and law enforcement, and can interrupt normal traffic flow for local residents and private resort guests.

For more information, please call the Sylvania Entrance Station (Open May 15) 906-358-4404 or the Ottawa Visitor Center 906-358-4724.