



Porcupine Mountains Visitor

2025 Printed by the Friends of the Porkies

Michigan.gov/Porkies

WELCOME TO THE PORCUPINE MOUNTAINS

Chasing the Northern Lights

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park is Michigan's largest state park at nearly 60,000 acres. Within the boundaries of the park are many beautiful views to take in, from the massive old-growth trees and tiny wild flowers to the energetic critters and breathtaking waterfalls there is always something to see and experience.

While many of our visitors come to the park to go camping, hiking, fishing or waterfall chasing, a surprising bonus that many are thrilled to experience is to take in a fantastic display of the Northern Lights.

The Northern Lights, also known as the Aurora Borealis, are a natural display of lights in the night sky with a range of colors including green, pink, yellow, blue and violet. They often appear in the shapes of clouds, streamers, and rippling and dancing curtains across a clear night sky.

The creation of these lights starts beyond the Earth. Interactions from the Earth's magnetic field and the charged particles from the sun, called solar flares bouncing into each other are what create these spectacular views.

Some of these dazzling shows can happen with little to no warning, while others can span multiple days. Using satellites, scientists can measure times and intensity of solar winds and can predict occurrences of the Northern Lights.

Check out the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website at [noaa.gov](https://www.noaa.gov) for a 30-min forecast as well as a 3-day forecast for light shows.

With the occurrence of a solar flare, the possibility for viewing Northern Lights increases with a dark and clear sky, most often facing north. Locations in the park that are great places for stargazing are in Union



Photographer Alex Nielsen captured these Northern Lights over Lake of the Clouds.

Bay along the sandy beach or day-use areas, Presque Isle on the beach across the suspension bridge and any open spaces along the Lake Superior shoreline where people may be camping.

For those looking to experience another wonder while in the park, sometimes the best thing to do is step outside your tent at night and take a peek. You may or may not get the Northern Lights, but on a clear night in the Porcupine Mountains, you will always have something spectacular to look at.



Aurora
30-min forecast

BE PREPARED FOR WILDERNESS

The Porcupine Mountains are a beautiful but wild place.

Each year, there are multiple emergencies that happen in the park. From injuries to lost hikers, each response typically requires a team of six to ten people to hike in and resolve the incident.

Some emergencies cannot be avoided, and accidents do happen, but there are several steps you can take before your trip to help avoid dangerous situations.

Pack appropriately for your trip. Bring enough water and supplies for everyone in your group. Wear proper shoes and have a plan of where you are going before entering the woods.

Make your trip one to remember for the right reasons.



Park staff practicing an emergency rescue at Lake of the Clouds.



ENJOY WINTER IN THE PORKIES

- Downhill Skiing
- Cross-Country Skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Fat Tire Biking
- Winter Camping
- Cabin/Yurt Rentals

Scan the QR Code to find out more.



Winter Sports Complex Events

- Lantern-Lit Trail
- Guided Snowshoe Hikes
- Telefest
- Snowburst

*Time and dates – TBD
Follow our facebook page for updates.

www.facebook.com/SkiThePorkies

GUEST SKI PATROLLERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

Contact us for more information



Lake of the Clouds

Standing along the top of the steep escarpment, you look out over the beautiful Lake of the Clouds, surrounded by thick forests and dramatic mountains. On clear days, you can see over 20 miles away. It is easy to see why this is the most visited site in the park.

Located at the end of M-107, this amazing view is only a short, 100-yard walk up a paved trail or accessible boardwalk. Due to limited parking, it is recommended visitors drop trailers and campers off in the middle ski hill parking area, located off M-107, on summer and fall days.

Summit Peak

At 1,958 feet tall, Summit Peak is the highest point in the park. From the parking area, there is a half-mile, packed dirt trail that winds through huge hardwood trees, with benches stationed along the route. The trail leads to wooden stairs, walkways and a viewing tower that access two breathtaking, panoramic views.

The turn-off for this site is located halfway down South Boundary Road. A turn-around and parking area is situated at the end of the entrance road. It is recommended visitors drop trailers and campers off in the designated lot located as you exit South Boundary Road before heading up the mountain.

Presque Isle River

The Presque Isle River is located on the far west side of the park. Here, there is a rustic campground, pavilion in the day-use area and three of the biggest waterfalls in the park. From the day-use area, a hiking trail leads to wooden stairs and walkways that take you to the falls. At the river mouth, a beautiful suspension bridge spans the fast-flowing water. The trail leads to Lake Superior, the perfect spot for sunsets.

Take the flat, gravel trail behind the DNR’s Presque Isle contact booth for the shortest and easiest access to view one of the waterfalls, Nawadaha.



WHAT IS HAPPENING TO THE TREES?



Surveyor looking for ash trees in the spring.

The emerald ash borer beetle is an invasive species that attacks and kills its host, native ash trees. First detected in Michigan in 2002, this beetle has slowly spread across the state, killing tens of millions of ash trees. It spreads naturally but advances by people moving infested firewood across county lines.

Unfortunately, last summer, Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park confirmed the presence of EAB within the park boundaries. Nearly 12% of the Porkies forests and 70% of Lake Gogebic State Parks forest are composed of black, white and green ash trees.

How are we helping?

Park rangers are “inoculating” the trees, with a type of insecticide that can treat the ash trees for two to three years before reapplying. This is done in the late spring, by drilling small holes into the bark and injecting the insecticide while the sap is flowing through the tree. Trees at the Union Bay, Presque Isle and Lake Gogebic State Park campgrounds, as well as some legacy trees in the interior of the park, are the primary areas of focus.

The Porkies was originally founded as a state park in 1945 to save the trees. Here we are 80 years later, still trying to protect

them. Funding for this first round of treatments came from several sources, a generous grant from STIHL (Hearts of STIHL), the Michigan DNR and the Friends of the Porkies.

How can you help?

Don’t move firewood! Purchase firewood locally or buy kiln-dried wood. The insecticide is \$500 per pint, which treats 24 trees with 10-inch diameter. Donations can be made at the Porkies or to the Friends of the Porkies to re-treat and “Save the Trees” again in 2027-2028.

Mike Knack
Park manager, Porcupine Mountains



You may find these tags on trees that were saved by inoculation.

MOOSE STUDY IN WESTERN U.P.



A collared moose is shown having its vital signs taken by a research team.

This article was adapted from the original version written by Rachel Lincoln and John Pepin of the Michigan DNR.

The moose population in the western Upper Peninsula has been a subject of great interest and conversation for decades. People want to know how many moose there are, where they are located and whether there will ever be an opportunity to hunt them.

This curiosity stems from Michigan’s efforts to restore moose to the region and the iconic status of the animal – a species many people have never seen.

Once on the verge of disappearing from the state, moose were successfully reintroduced in the western Upper Peninsula from Canada in the mid-1980s.

Forty years later, their population has grown but failed to reach the goal initially hoped for of 1,000 animals by the year 2000. The population grew steadily between 1997 and 2007 before slowing significantly.

The 2023 biennial aerial survey estimated 426 moose.

To better understand why the population has faltered, researchers recently embarked on an exciting study to investigate the movements and mortality of moose in the western U.P.

In late February, wildlife researchers from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and Northern Michigan

University fitted 20 moose with GPS collars to track their location.

With the help of a skilled helicopter crew and fixed-wing spotter planes, the moose were located among snow-covered wetlands and forests.

“It was incredible,” said Tyler Petroelje, northern Michigan wildlife research specialist for the DNR. “In just 13 hours, the team successfully captured, collared and released the moose. Now, we have valuable data to refine our population model and frequent location updates that offer deeper insight into the life of a Michigan moose.”

The effort will continue next winter, when 40 more moose will be collared.

This collaborative U.P. moose study is the first of its kind in Michigan to investigate cause-specific mortality to help uncover why the moose population growth has become stagnant.

Since the collars were attached, moose have already transmitted more than 10,500 GPS locations, detailing their movements.

“This GPS data allows us to monitor the moose’s well-being after handling and provide insight into their response post-capture,” Petroelje said. “In the long run, their location data will reveal the causes of mortality, habitats they rely on and their distribution across the land.”

When combined, this data could reveal why the moose population remains below 500 animals.

WILDERNESS VISITOR CENTER REMODEL



Wilderness Visitor Center showing new walls and windows being installed this winter.

The Porcupine Mountains Wilderness Visitor Center has been on-site since 1984. For the first time since its creation, we are able to do a total remodel of the inside of the building.

With new bathrooms, outdoor water-filling stations, check-in areas and exhibit displays, the visitor center has undergone some big changes!

Funding for this project comes from a federal funding source called the American Rescue Plan Act. Money awarded to Michigan in response to the large increase of visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic helps support parks infrastructure.

This is just one of many projects that took place at the Porcupine Mountains as a result of this available source of money.

Parking lot pavings, sewer upgrades and walkway infrastructure improvements all were among projects completed using this funding.

Let’s Celebrate!
This year is the
Porkies
80th Anniversary!
1945 - 2025

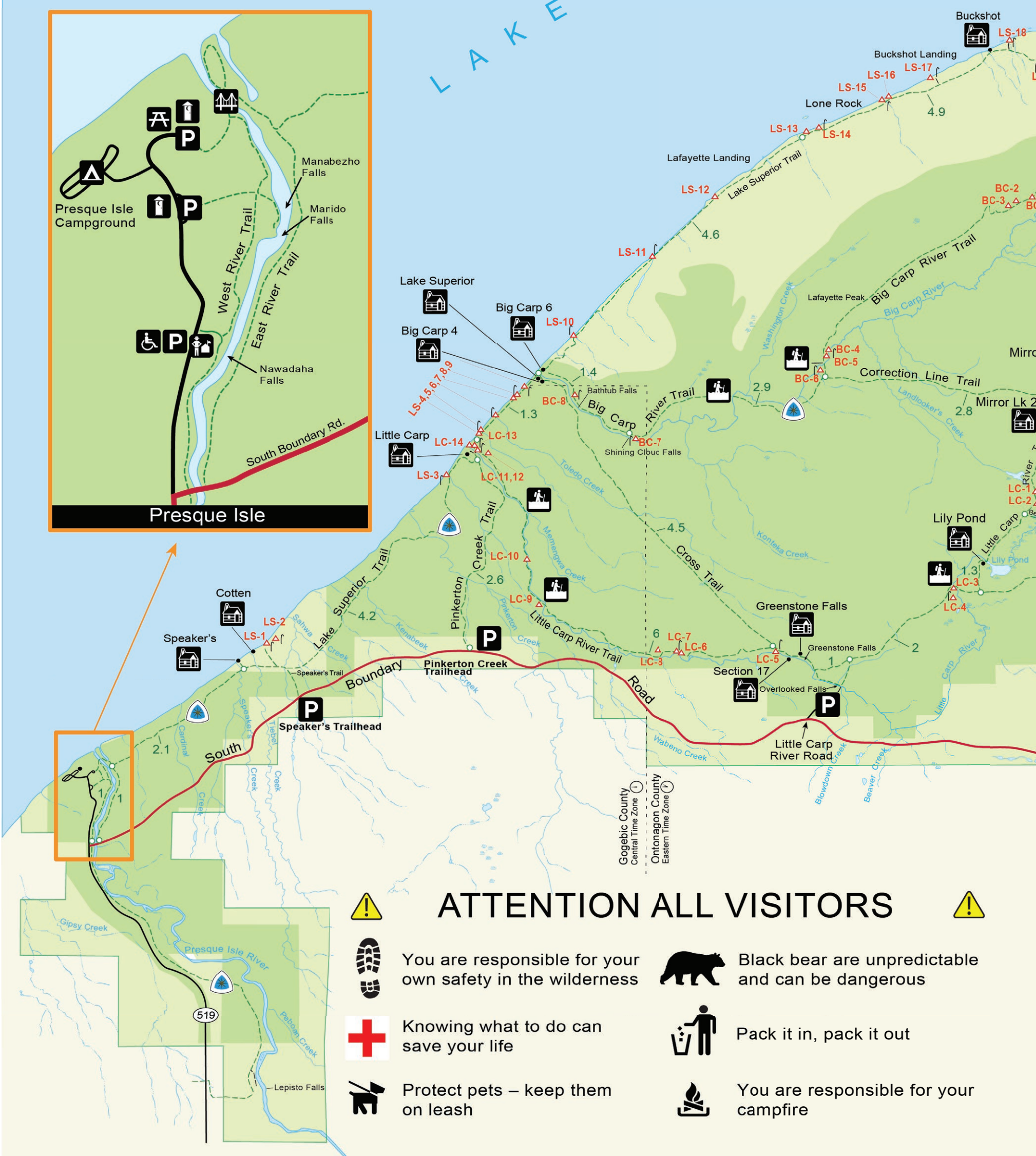


Get outside and enjoy
Michigan’s largest State Park
with your friends and family!

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park



L A K E S U P E R I O R



ATTENTION ALL VISITORS



You are responsible for your own safety in the wilderness



Black bear are unpredictable and can be dangerous



Knowing what to do can save your life



Pack it in, pack it out



Protect pets – keep them on leash



You are responsible for your campfire

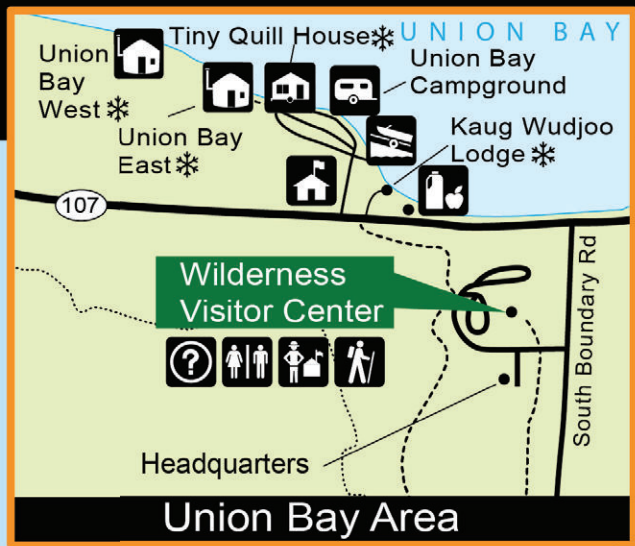
Plan ahead and prepare

Check your gear and fill your water bottles at the Visitor Center.

Be considerate of others

Respect other visitors by maintaining appropriate noise levels.

ke of the Clouds Scenic Area



- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Accessible area | Lookout tower | Scenic area | Cross country ski trail |
| Backcountry cabin | Modern campground | Suspension bridge | Distance in miles |
| Backpack campsite | Modern toilets | Tiny house | Hiking trail |
| Bear pole location | Parking | Un-bridged river crossing | North Country Trail |
| Boat launch | Picnic area | Warming shelter | Primary forest |
| Camp store | Ranger station | Winter lodging | Park land |
| Hiking trailhead | Rustic campground | Yurt | |
| Information | Rustic toilet | | |

Respect wildlife Never feed or approach any wild animal.	Travel and camp on durable surfaces Stay on the trail and camp at designated campsites.	Leave what you find Never move natural or historic objects.
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Summer nature programs

During your stay at the Porcupine Mounatins, don't miss out on the fun programs that go on all summer long. Learn to shoot a bow, collect aquatic insects, take part in a guided hike, find a constellation or tell stories around a campfire and much more.



Check out the weekly schedule at the Visitor Center, campground office or online at Michigan.gov/PorkiesVC.

Building (*also in winter)	Number of occupants	Trailhead parking	Route	Distance	Distance in winter	Pet - friendly
Big Carp 6 Cabin	6	Pinkerton	Pinkerton to Lake Superior Trail East	4 mi		
Big Carp 4 Cabin	4	Pinkerton	Pinkerton to Lake Superior Trail East	4 mi		
Buckshot Cabin	4	Lake Superior	Lake Superior Trail	3 mi		
Cotten Cabin	8	Speakers	Speakers Creek Trail	1 mi		
Crosscut Cabin*	2	Union Spring	Union Spring Trail	2 mi	3 mi	Yes
Gitche Gumees*	8	Gitche Gumees	East of South Boundary on M107	Drive in	Drive in	Yes
Greenstone Falls Cabin	4	Little Carp River Road	Little Carp River Trail	1 mi		
Kaug Wudjoo Modern Lodge*	12	Kaug Wudjoo Lodge	West of South Boundary on M107	Drive in	Drive in	Yes
Lake of the Clouds Cabin	4	Lake of the Clouds Overlook	Escarpment Trail to North Mirror Lake Trail	1 mi		
Lake Superior Cabin	4	Pinkerton	Pinkerton to Lake Superior Trail East	4 mi		
Lily Pond Cabin	4	Summit Peak Parking	Beaver Creek to Little Carp Trail South East	1.5 mi		
Little Carp Cabin	4	Pinkerton	Pinkerton to Lake Superior Trail Intersection	3 mi		
Little Union River Yurt*	4	Union Spring	Little Union River Yurt Trail	1 mi	3 mi	Yes
Lost Creek Yurt	4	Lost Lake Trail	Lost Lake Trail	1 mi		
Mirror Lake 2 Cabin	2	Summit Peak Parking	Beaver Creek to Little Carp Trail North West	2.5 mi		
Mirror Lake 4 Cabin	4	Summit Peak Parking	Beaver Creek to Little Carp Trail North West	2.75 mi		
Mirror Lake 8 Cabin	8	Summit Peak Parking	Beaver Creek to Little Carp Trail North West	2.75 mi		
Quill 4 Tiny House*	4	Union Bay Campground	West end of Union Bay Campground	Drive in	250 yds	
Section 17 Cabin	4	Little Carp River Road	Little Carp River Trail	1 mi		
Speakers Cabin	4	Speakers	Speaker Creek Trail	1 mi		
Union Bay East Yurt*	4	Union Bay Campground	West end of Union Bay Campground	Drive in	250 yds	Yes
Union Bay West Yurt*	4	Union Bay Campground	West end of Union Bay Campground	Drive in	250 yds	Yes
Union River Cabin*	8	Union Spring	Union Spring Trail	1 mi	3 mi	Yes
White Birch Cabin*	2	Whitetail Parking lot	Deer Yard Ski Trail	1 mi	1 mi	Yes
Whitetail Cabin*	8	Whitetail Parking lot	Deer Yard Ski Trail	1 mi	1 mi	Yes

Backcountry cabins/yurts

These items listed below are supplied by the DNR for each cabin and yurt.

- water-boiling pot
- wash basin
- cooking pot and pan
- can opener
- water-gathering bucket
- bow saw
- ash bucket and scoop
- broom and dustpan

*Toilet paper is **NOT** provided!
Cabins that originally had rowboats now have canoes, paddles and lifejackets.
*Axes and firewood are **only** provided to winter cabins open Dec.1 - May 15.

Rustic Lodging and Backcountry Camping

Check-in must occur during regular business hours and at designated check-in stations:

- May 15- October 14:**
Check in at the Visitor Center, open daily
8 a.m. - 8 p.m. ET
 - October 15 - May 14:**
Check in at Park Headquarters, open daily
8 a.m. - 4 p.m. ET
- *Including Holidays and weekends

RUSTIC LODGING

If you are looking to stay at one of the park's 23 backcountry cabins or yurts, there are few things you should know.

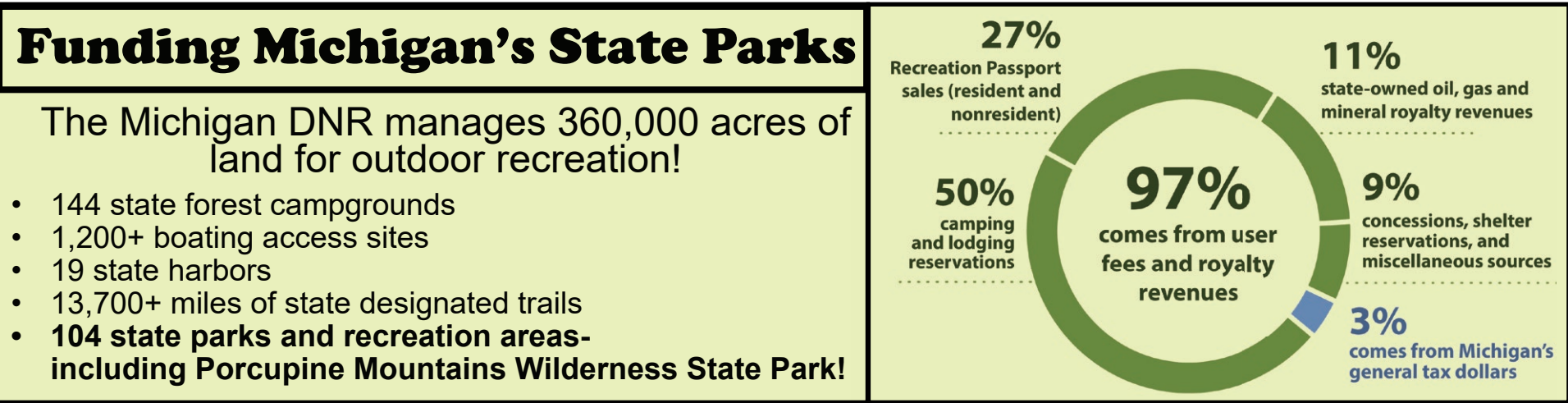
The rustic lodging is spread out throughout the park. Use the chart above to find a place to stay that is located at an appropriate distance for your group. The park is open year-round, and so are some of our rustic lodging options. Renters enjoy snowshoeing or cross-country skiing to their lodging in the winter.

Trees that are dead and lying on the ground can be collected for firewood. In the winter months (December-March), firewood is provided for the use of heating the cabins only, not for outdoor fires.

There are 9 pet-friendly cabins currently available at the park, starting November 2025 an additional 14 will allow pets. For an additional \$10/night/pet you can bring your furry friends into several of the park cabins (up to two pets allowed at a time). *Modern lodge is an additional \$15/night/pet. Check the chart above to plan your next pet-friendly trip.



Lily Pond Cabin



SUPPORTING THE PARK IN 2025

The Friends of the Porkies is a nonprofit organization whose mission is “connecting people to the magic of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park.” With help from visitors and others dedicated to supporting the park, the Friends can provide funding via donations and grants.

This past year, our board updated the Friends’ strategic plan we are now busy implementing various action items. Look for future updates as we move forward with the plan.

Our youth sticker contest was great fun!
The winner was Aili from Jeffers High School.





Lake of the Clouds Sunset
Michelle Lutke DNR Photo Ambassador

Check out our programs in the Visitor and on our website at porkies.org. All our programs are run by volunteers. Watch for announcements on our website and Facebook page to stay up to date on volunteer opportunities including trails maintenance and clearing days, the Porcupine Mountain Music Festival and other events.

You can support the park via the Friends in several ways – become a member, donate or volunteer. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to get up-to-date information and volunteer opportunities.



Enjoy the park!
Joanie Hawley
President, Friends of the Porkies
 **FriendsOfThePorkies**



Individual	\$25
Household	\$40
Business	\$50
Lifetime	\$300
Pet**	\$10

**Owner must be a member.

Membership includes:

- A collective voice with park users to express your ideas.
- Subscription to the bimonthly equill and Quill Annual Report featuring accomplishments and future plans.
- Invitation to the annual membership meeting in October.

porkies.org P.O Box 221, Ontonagon, MI 49953

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

The Friends of the Porkies’ Artist-In-Residence Program, established in 2007, hosts artists for two or three-week residencies. While living in Dan’s Cabin, artists have an opportunity to explore and absorb the vast wilderness of the Porkies.

Their creative impressions have been captured in their medium, and each artist donates a piece of art to the Friends’ permanent collection. Stop in the Visitor Center to see a selection of artwork displayed. The complete collection is found in the online gallery at www.porkies.org.

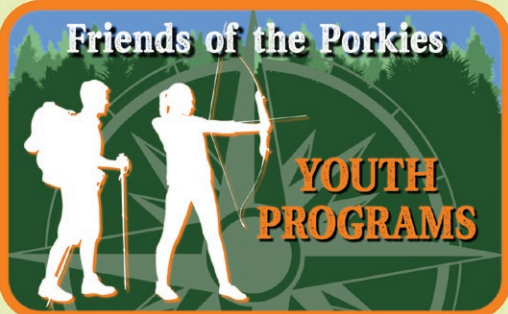
This year our volunteers will be making improvements to Dan’s Cabin including a new compost toilet and replacement windows, funded by the Friends and a DNR grant. Come to the open house later this year to see the improvements.

Join us for a free artists’ presentation. Events can be found at www.porkies.org or @FriendsofthePorkies Facebook page.



Escarpment Trail
Kelly Meredith
Oil on canvas 2023

- 2025 artists:
- **Roxanne Everett**, landscape acrylic art, Seattle, Washington *Presentation August 14th, 2025*
 - **Ed Buonevecchio**, plein air oil painting, Arizona *Presentation: August 28th, 2025*
 - **Joanna Walitalo**, pyrography, Houghton, Michigan *Presentation: July 3rd, 2025*
 - **David Berg**, reduction printmaking, Marquette, Michigan *Presentation: October 9th, 2025*
 - **Nikki Kazmar**, watercolor botanical painter, Chicago, Illinois *Presentation: July 17th, 2025*

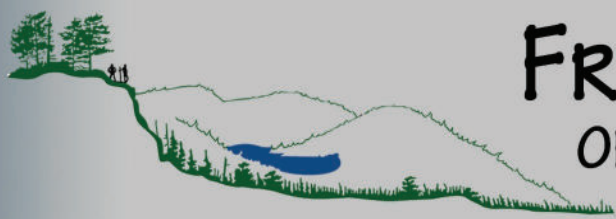


FRIENDS OF THE PORKIES introduces Youth Programs

The Friends love the perfect outdoor classroom where local students can learn about geology, copper, outdoor skills, animal characteristics and so much more.

Park interpreter Katie Urban is uniquely qualified to adjust any lesson to the grade level visiting. Visit www.porkies.org to learn about DNR youth programs.

Last school year, the Friends paid for 10 school bus trips to the Porkies, thanks to donations from members.



FRIENDS OF THE PORKIES

P.O. Box 221
Ontonagon, MI 49953
906-884-7663 • porkies.org

THE PORKIES FOLK SCHOOL: COME TO MEET, GROW, HAMMER, STITCH, CRAFT AND BE INSPIRED!



*Excited students showing off their hand carved
Greenland Kayak Paddles.*

Who teaches the Folk School classes?

Classes are taught by very talented instructors from near and far who are passionate about their work and teaching it to their students.

Are there classes for children?

Some of our classes are applicable for children. One of our art classes is specifically geared for 10 to 14-year-olds. The minimum age requirement is located in the details of the class offering on the website.

SUPPORT THE TRAILS!



Buy an annual trails supporter decal and help the Friends and the park maintain and improve trails.

All funds raised through sales of decals and other donations will be used for projects to repair and maintain hiking, cross-country skiing, interpretive, and multi-use trails, or to improve accessibility.

Purchase your 2025 decal for \$25 at porkies.org or mail a check to the Friends. We are also looking for volunteers to help with trail repairs or maintenance. Look for upcoming volunteer trail maintenance days to be posted at porkies.org.

PORCUPINE MOUNTAINS MUSIC FESTIVAL

The 19th Porcupine Mountains Music Festival Aug. 22 and 23

The Porcupine Mountains Music Festival, presented by the Friends of the Porkies, will be held Aug. 22 and 23 at the Winter Recreation Area (Ski Hill) of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. This activity is supported in part by an award from the Michigan Arts and Culture Council.

The festival made state history in 2005 as the first music festival held in a Michigan state park. Throughout the years, the festival has earned a reputation for showcasing variety and quality musicianship onstage.

This year's main stage lineup features headliners SCYTHINAN (Friday) and BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO JR and the IIs Sont Partis Band (Saturday), along with Damn Tall Buildings, The Slambovian Circus of Dreams, Jeffrey Foucault, Miss Tess, Erik Koskinen, Charlie Parr, Ivy Ford, Caleb Caudle, Gizzae, and The Bootstrap Boys.

Two additional stages round out a full musical experience: the indoor Chalet Stage, and the all-natural (no amplification) "Busking Barn" stage, where performers play for tips and anyone can join in on its daily jam sessions. The colorful "Kid's Tent" located on the festival grounds is always bustling with crafts and activities for the young audience members.

For tickets, how to volunteer and more info, visit porkiesfestival.org.

What is the Porkies Folk School?

The Folk School is a cooperative environment encouraging lifelong learning and community building while promoting traditional knowledge, arts, skills and culture from the Lake Superior region.

What kind of classes are offered?

The Folk School offers a variety of classes from June through October. Try your hand at watercolor painting, sketching, glass fusion, fiber arts, basketry, broom making, woodworking, and knitting.

How do I register for a class?

Register online at porkies.org/events or call 906-884-7663. Classes fill up quickly, so early registration is recommended.

Can I register on the day of the class?

Most classes have a registration deadline of one week prior to the class, but some instructors will accept in-person registration on the day of the class. Check the website for details.

SAVE THE DATES!



Summer Solstice Celebration

Friday, June 20
6 to 8 p.m. ET

Folk School Open House

Sunday, July 6
3 to 5 p.m. ET



© Dave Braithwaite

The Porkies Winter Recreation Area allows attendees ample space to unwind, relax and enjoy the musical experience.