



# Governor Knowles State Forest Visitor



Governor Knowles State Forest

Grantsburg, WI 54840

715-463-2898

www.dnr.wi.gov

## The State Forest

Established in 1970 as the St. Croix River State Forest, the forest was re-designated the Governor Knowles State Forest in 1981 to recognize former Governor Warren P. Knowles for his administration's progress in conservation.

The forest acts as an extended resource protection zone for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. The forest is 55 miles long and up to two miles wide, and encompasses 32,500 acres. Four thousand acres were donated by the Northern States Power Company in 1971 to form the nucleus of the forest.

A primary objective of the state forest is the preservation and protection of the St. Croix River and its valley; however, management of the forest provides multiple benefits. Management practices emphasize scenic beauty, water quality protection, wildlife habitat, forest production and recreation. A designated wilderness zone buffers the Riverway throughout the length of the forest. Six designated State Natural Areas within the forest preserve unique biotic communities.

**Hiking the River Valley**—Two hiking trails stretch along the St. Croix River, one on the north end and one on the south end of the property with parking lots at major road intersections. They meander along the top of the bluffs overlooking the St. Croix River and occasionally swing down onto the banks of the river. There are two trails that pass through unique biotic plant communities: the Cedar Interpretive Trail and the Brandt Pine Interpretive Trail. They represent two of our six natural areas on the Governor Knowles State Forest. Steep climbs or descents, short foot bridges, and stairways may be encountered.

**Camping**—The **St. Croix Family Campground** is a rustic campground with 30 sites. It is located on Highway 70 just east of the St. Croix River bridge. Sites are available on a first come—first serve basis with self registration and fee required. The **Sioux Portage Group Campground** serves larger camping parties and is located on the northern end of the state forest. It is available by reservation only through state forest headquarters. The **Trade River Equestrian Campground** is on the south end of the forest and has traditionally been used by horseback riders. The site is primitive with minimal facilities. There is a fee, and self-registration is required. **Backpack Camping** is allowed at developed sites by getting a Special Camp Registration Permit at the forest headquarters. The sites are primitive and located along both the north and south segments of the Gov. Knowles State Forest Hiking Trail.

**Sustainable Forest Management**—Forests continue to grow, age and evolve over time. We strive to maintain a healthy vigorous forest by managing the resource through thinning, harvesting and reforestation. The maturing forest produces an annual harvest of pulpwood and lumber. These wood products provide raw resources for the paper and lumber industry, which ranks among the top three in northern Wisconsin in providing jobs



Trade River Horse Trail

and income. The management practices are selected to produce forest products in a manner compatible with recreation, aesthetics, wildlife, fisheries, and watershed protection.

**Fall Colors**—Mid-September through the end of October is the period when cool dry weather signals the approach of winter. Oaks, ashes, maple and aspen cease the production of green tinted chlorophyll, during this time. The naturally present reds, yellows, and browns show through to produce a myriad of beautiful colors. Viewing is enhanced by finding an elevated overlook or traveling down back-country roads.

**Winter Recreation**—During the winter months the Brandt Pines trails become cross-country ski trails winding through rolling hills and river valleys. The southern half of the state forest has 32.5 miles of snowmobile trail which serve as the main connection between Burnett and Polk counties' trail systems. For snowshoers, the primitive areas offer solitude and tranquility surrounded only by the forest's winter inhabitants.

**Canoeing the St. Croix**—The St. Croix River winds its way through a wild and scenic countryside from its origin in a Spruce-Tamarack swamp near Upper St. Croix Lake. The river system varies from swift and rocky whitewater to placid flowages.

A typical day of canoeing will take you about 20 miles, that is, unless you decide to explore an island or two, or wet a fishing line in some of the quiet bays and backwaters. Primitive campsites can be found along the shore and on many islands. Water must be purified before drinking and firewood is scarce.

### Emergency Information

**For Emergencies**  
In Burnett and Polk Counties  
call **911**.

**Sheriff's Department:**  
Burnett County (715) 349-2121  
Polk County (715) 485-3131

#### Disturbances

In case of a civil disturbance, notify the campground host, DNR office, or if necessary phone the Burnett Sheriff's Office. Be sure to write down auto license numbers, make and model of cars, campsite numbers, etc.

### Information

Please contact the state forest office if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions.

**Governor Knowles State Forest**  
325 Hwy 70, P.O. Box 367  
Grantsburg, WI 54840  
Phone: (715) 463-2898

**National Park Service**  
P.O. Box 708  
St. Croix Falls, WI 54024  
Phone: (715) 483-3284, ext. 638



Sioux Portage Group Campground



## Governor Knowles Staff

The staff on the Governor Knowles State Forest consists of 3 full time employees: the Forest Superintendent is responsible for the over-all management and supervision of the forest, a Forester handles the forest management program, and a Ranger works with the recreation and law enforcement on the

forest. The state forest also has 3–5 seasonal employees. The staff primarily focuses its efforts towards customer service and safety. The state forest staff hopes that your visit to the Governor Knowles State Forest is an enjoyable one. If you have any questions, please contact us at the forest headquarters.

## “Remember...Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!”



**Safe Campfire:** Solely used for cooking and warming. Only clean dry wood is allowed!



**Unlawful Campfire:** Used for eliminating garbage or trash. Oily substances, plastic, rubber, aluminum, treated paper or cardboard is not allowed!

## Campfire Safety

If a fire is desired and conditions are favorable, use an existing fire ring or charcoal grill.

1. Keep tents and gear at least 10 feet away from the fire.
2. Never leave your campfire unattended and always have a shovel and bucket of water on site.
3. When finished, drown your campfire thoroughly with water and stir the ashes.
4. Scrape all embers off of the partially burned sticks and logs.
5. Check the entire area outside the campfire circle for any hot embers. Remember that it only takes one spark or ember to start a forest fire!
6. Add more water to your fire and stir again until it's cold.

This publication is available upon request in alternate formats for visually impaired persons. Please contact the Division of Forestry at (608) 267-7494 to request an alternate format.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to: Equal Opportunity Office, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240



## Bald Eagles

The Governor Knowles State Forest is home to a large population of bald eagles. You'll likely catch a glimpse of one of these magnificent birds while hiking along the shores or canoeing on the river.

Bald eagles are large, dark brown birds of prey that do not acquire the distinctive white head and tail until they are adults at five years of age. Bald eagles in Wisconsin weigh eight to fourteen pounds, with a wingspread of up to seven feet. Eagles have keen vision (four to eight times greater than ours), are swift and agile flyers, and possess powerful beaks and talons. All of these features combine to make the eagle a highly successful predator.

**When And Where Do They Nest?**—Adult bald eagles return to build and repair nests from February to March. One to three eggs are laid in March and April. The eggs hatch usually in early May after thirty-five days of incubation. The young eagles remain in the nest eleven to twelve weeks before they take their first flight; the last of the young leave the nest by late July or mid-August. For about two months after their first flight, the young still frequently return to the nest site and receive food from their parents.

Bald eagles build their nests in tall trees that tower above the forest, located close to a river or lake. Their nests are usually in white pines, but other tree species are used as well, such as red pine, yellow birch, maple and aspen.

The nest is a large mass of sticks about three feet deep and five feet across, placed near the top of the tree. Some bald eagles will use the same nest every year, while others will alternate from year to year among two or three different nests in their breeding territory. Some breeding territories have been used for over fifty years.

**What Do Bald Eagles Eat?**—Wisconsin's lakes and streams provide an abundant supply of fish—the favorite food of bald eagles. Suckers, bullheads and northern pike make up most of their diet, but bald eagles are resourceful hunters and will feed on waterfowl, shorebirds, and even turtles. They may also take mammals such as baby muskrats and beavers. In winter, eagles scavenge winter-killed deer and small fish provided by ice fishermen. While hunting their prey, bald eagles will perch in trees along the shorelines of rivers, bays, marshes, lakes and ponds.

**Management**—Bald eagles are sensitive nesters that require undisturbed conditions during late March, April and May. The state forest works to protect eagle nests by routing recreation trails and facilities away from eagle nests. Timber sales are planned to protect nest sites and provide abundant perch trees.

**Surveys**—Each April a DNR aircraft surveys all known eagle nests to determine which nests are being used. In mid-June the aircraft returns to count the number of young in each nest.

**Research**—Laboratory analysis of eagle carcasses, unhatched eggs and molted feathers shows if nesting eagles are healthy and relatively free of environmental contaminants. Eagles serve as bio-indicators; a healthy eagle population reflects a healthy lake and stream environment.

**Future**—With careful land management and pollution control, eagles will continue to be a common sight on the state forest. We can all be proud of the fact that eagles have now been removed from the endangered species list and are now a threatened species. For more information on eagles, reporting eagle nest locations, and information on ways people can help eagles, contact the state forest office at P.O. Box 367, Grantsburg, WI 54840, (715) 463-2898.

## The Northern State Forests

There are remote places in the Governor Knowles State Forest where one can fish, hike and canoe in absolute solitude. All five of Wisconsin's northern state forests—Northern Highland, Black River, Brule River, Flambeau River, Peshigo River and Governor Knowles—have this same attribute. Together they comprise more than 428,000 acres—enough to provide something for everyone year-round.

Collectively, there are more than 1,000 family camping units, hundreds of miles of hiking and canoe trails, primitive and backpack camping areas, beautiful picnic grounds, thousands of acres of water to fish, plus hunting opportunities galore. In winter, there is cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, ice fishing, winter camping, snowshoeing and much more.

More than two million visitors “get away from it all” every year in Wisconsin's

northern forests. Aside from solitude, they provide some of the most spectacular canoe trails in the nation. In many cases developed campsites are available. On the other hand, the person who chooses wilderness camping can often be the only human being on a whole lake. Backpackers find the forests ideal and there are many trails and campsites for them. In addition to wilderness camping, there are high quality family and group campgrounds available on many of the northern state forests. There are picnic areas and swimming beaches that range all the way from small, relatively isolated areas to large popular beaches.

After Labor Day, recreational activities slow down. However, in autumn sightseeing picks up. The yellows, reds and browns of the hardwoods accent the greens of pine, spruce and fir. Reflections of these colors in the clear lakes and streams are

sights not soon forgotten. The marked nature trails become particularly inviting during this time.

In fall, wildlife becomes more active. Deer fawns lose their spots and adults change color from the red of summer to the gray of winter. The goldfinch turns line-stripped and olive and the snowshoe hare grows patches of white.

In winter, the forests pay extra dividends to those hardy enough to seek them out. There is cross-country skiing on thousands of old logging roads and abandoned railroad grades as well as nearly 100 miles of developed and marked ski trails, many of which are tracked and groomed. Tobogganing is available on nearly any hill, and ice fishing almost every place there's summer fishing. For snowmobilers, there are more than 500 miles of marked and groomed trails, and winter campers find a lot less competition in December.

**Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest**, 8770 Hwy. J, Woodruff, WI 54568. Phone: 715-356-5211.

**Black River State Forest**, 910 Hwy. 54 East, Black River Falls, WI 54615. Phone: 715-284-5301.

**Brule River State Forest**, Box 125, Brule, WI 54820. Phone: 715-372-4866.

**Flambeau River State Forest**, West 1613 County W South, Winter, WI 54896. Phone: 715-332-5271.

**Governor Knowles State Forest**, Box 367, Grantsburg, WI 54840. Phone: 715-463-2898

**Peshigo River State Forest**, N10008 Paust Lane, Crivitz, WI 54114. Phone: 715-757-3965

# A Feeling of Wilderness

By Jean Van Tatenhove, National Park Service Ranger

Several of the young teenagers perched on the boulders under the bridge stared expectantly at the bright green insect. As the dragonfly slowly pulled its wet body out of the crispy brown larval skin, the boys witnessed a cycle in nature. Other boys from the group were carefully wading in the shallow water, small dip nets in hand. With a swift movement, another crayfish was in the bucket to become an appetizer at the evening campfire.

These urban teens from the Twin Cities were having the experience of their lives. I asked about their three-day canoe trip and what they thought about it. Many replied that they were surprised to find wilderness so near to their city. The group had discovered one of the significant qualities of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

Time and again, visitors to the Riverway tell me of the beauty they see here. They describe how it revives them from the hassles of daily life and how the river provides opportunities to see nature in action. How does this ordinary river make people think they are in wilderness? How does it revive their spirits and spark their interest?

The boys I met up with under the bridge might answer these questions with responses about the recreational opportunities found at the Riverway. Paddling and floating the river are popular activities. A series of Class I rapids—the easiest type—north of Highway 70 provide adventure. The stretch south of Highway 70 is quieter and slower. Even though the St. Croix is crossed by roads and dotted with areas of development, the group had opportunities to canoe wild places.

Fishing is another common pastime here. Anglers find smallmouth bass,



Canoeing the St. Croix River

northern pike and catfish to challenge their prowess in the St. Croix. The novelty of catching and eating crayfish transported the boys far away from their city life.

Something in the way eagles fly and wolves howl leads perhaps to another answer to the questions posed. The chance to watch an eagle catch its supper or to hear a wolf pack communicate their location is real on the St. Croix. Even watching dragonflies emerge can tease a sense of wonder out of people.

Being the teenagers they were, the boys would not describe the scenery of the river as beautiful. However, they did hike to the Sandrock Cliffs and described it as “an awesome place.” All of their experiences lead them to conclude that they were in wilderness. Even though the Riverway is not a wilderness by the legal definition, it does possess some of the important qualities that these young

people associate with wilderness.

The National Park Service invites you to discover the significant qualities of the St. Croix. A good place to start your experience is to visit the Riverway website at [www.nps.gov/sacn](http://www.nps.gov/sacn). You'll find detailed river maps to download. Read about camping, hiking, and how you can help prevent the spread of zebra mussels.

Call Riverway staff who can answer questions. Phone numbers are listed below. The Riverway visitor centers offer exhibits, a fifteen-minute movie about the Riverway, bookstores and brochures. Groups can make reservations at the visitor centers and the Marshland Education Center. Attend an educational program presented by park rangers. Call a center to find out about schedules and locations. Look for park staff on the river. We are there to assist you in your own discovery of the nature, the beauty and the qualities of the St. Croix River.

**St. Croix National Scenic Riverway**  
St. Croix Visitor Center  
401 Hamilton Street  
St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin  
715-483-3284 ext. 638

**Namekagon Visitor Center**  
Highway 63,  
half mile east of Highway 53  
Trego, Wisconsin  
715-635-8346

**Marshland Education Center**  
Highway 70 at the St. Croix River  
Pine City, Minnesota  
320-629-2148

## Carry In-Carry Out

Welcome to your state forest! You'll notice a change in the picnic areas, shelters, beaches, and other day-use areas...no garbage or recycling bins.

From now on, when you visit many Wisconsin state parks, forests, and recreations areas, you'll need to take your garbage and recyclables home with you.

Why the change?

Home away from home: The parks and forests belong to all of us and just like home we need to care for them and keep them clean.

Less mess: Removal of the garbage and recycling containers eliminates the smells and mess they create. It also cuts down on yellow jackets and other pests.

Reduce, reuse, recycle: Wisconsin state law requires us to recycle many materials we used to throw away. Better yet, we can make new choices of what to bring with us. The more reusable things we pack, the less garbage we'll create. It's good for us and for our earth home.

Thanks for helping out by carrying out what you've carried in.



Reforestation on the forest

## Forests for the Future

The Governor Knowles State Forest practices sustainable forestry. This means that the forest is managed according to its natural capability to provide a wide array of benefits for today and the future. Ecological benefits of sustainable forestry include protection of soils, water quality, native biological diversity and aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat. Sustainable forestry also benefits visitors to the forest who enjoy the diverse recreational opportunities. Wisconsin's economy is dependent on our sustainable forest practices for quality wood products, continuous wood supply and employment to support the second largest industry in the state.

The forest has an active timber management program to ensure the health of the state forest for years to come. The way trees are cut and managed on the forest range from clear-cutting, for some species needing full sunlight to regenerate, to select cuts for encouraging growth in the remaining trees. Many times, the purpose

of select cutting is to remove stunted, deformed and weak trees. This allows the healthier trees to grow better.

Usually following a cutting, the reforestation process begins. On the Governor Knowles, over the past 25 years, more than 2.5 million trees have been planted. Most of the trees planted have been pine species such as red pine, jack pine, white pine, and spruce. These plantings provide critical protection for wildlife in the winter and nesting opportunities for many birds. Northern pin oak, which makes up most of our hardwood stands, regenerates itself after being cut through stump sprouting. Aspen grows in full sunlight and is great for wildlife by providing food and cover.

Forests are a renewable resource and that is why we strive to manage a sustainable forest. Through our present management practices, future generations will enjoy the same ecological, social, and economic benefits we have today.

## Poison Ivy

Poison Ivy (*Rhus radicans*) is a member of the Cashew family of plants. It grows as a small creeping plant, a climbing vine, or as a shrub. The stems are woody. The leaves alternate and always consist of three glossy to dull dark-green leaflets, often wavy-edged or lobed (but sometimes smooth-edged). From mid-summer through winter many poison ivy plants support dense clusters of pea-size white berries.

Poison ivy is found throughout the forest and in fields and waste places, fence rows, and the edge of the woods.

The oil urushiol is contained in the leaves, flowers, fruits, stem bark, and roots of poison ivy.

On contact with the skin, the oil causes irritation, inflammation, itching, and swelling, often followed by yellowish, watery blisters. People vary in sensitivity to the plant's oil.



Some individuals are very susceptible to its effects and others seem to be immune. Symptoms usually appear within 24 hours, and sometimes several days after exposure.

First aid treatment starts with the removal of contaminated clothing. All exposed skin areas

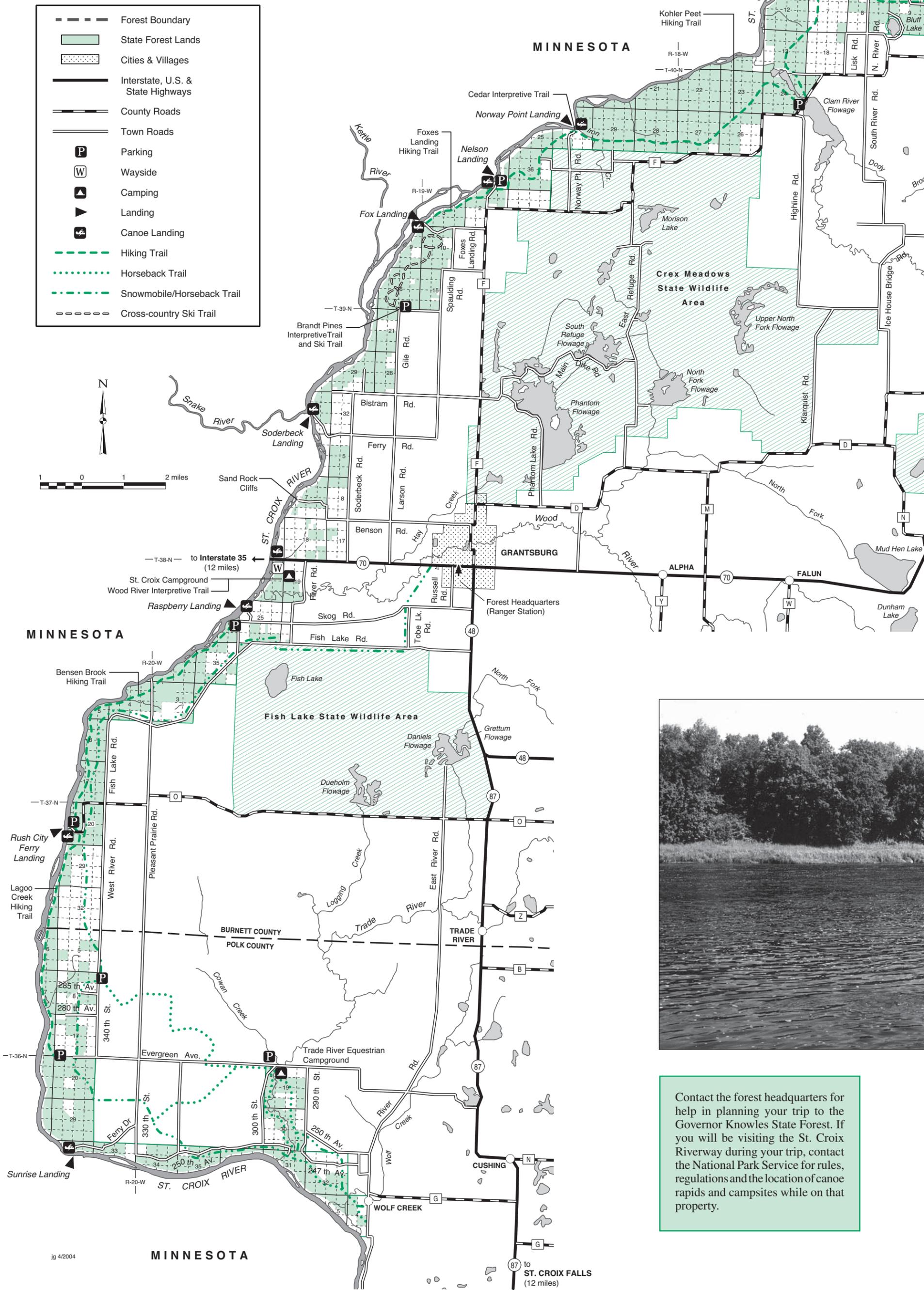
should be washed thoroughly with soap (Alkaline laundry soaps are best) and water, followed by rubbing alcohol. Calamine lotion or another soothing skin lotion may be applied if a mild rash develops.

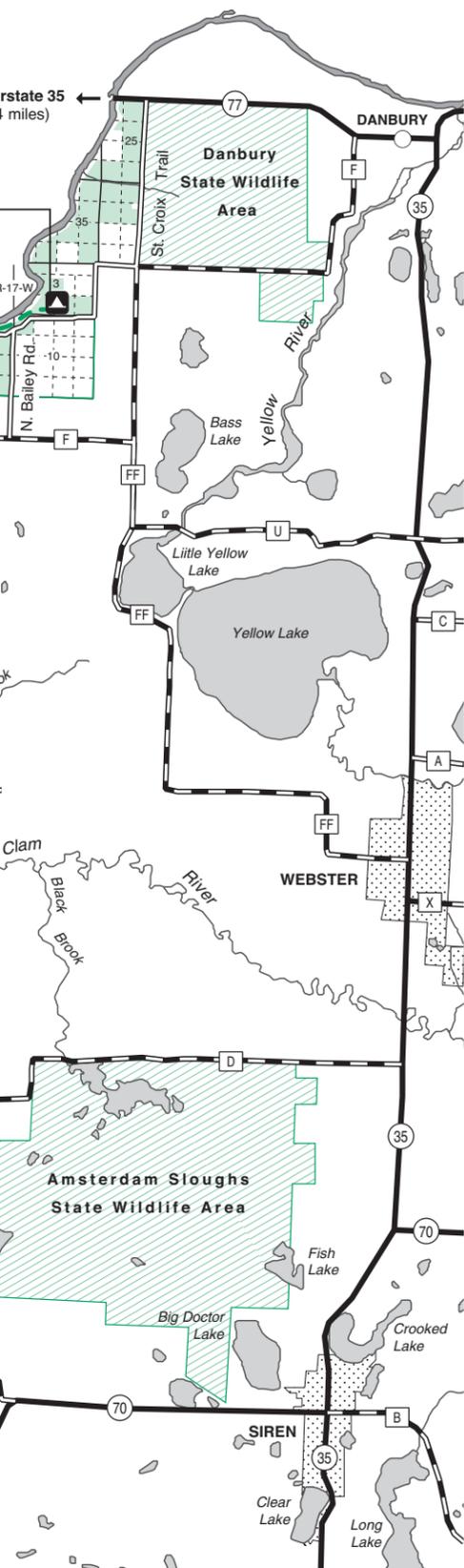
A severe rash is characterized by redness, blisters, swelling, and intense burning and itching. The victim may also develop a high fever and may become very ill. Medical help should be obtained if a severe reaction occurs or if there is a known history of previous sensitivity.

Learn to recognize poison ivy and avoid an unpleasant experience.

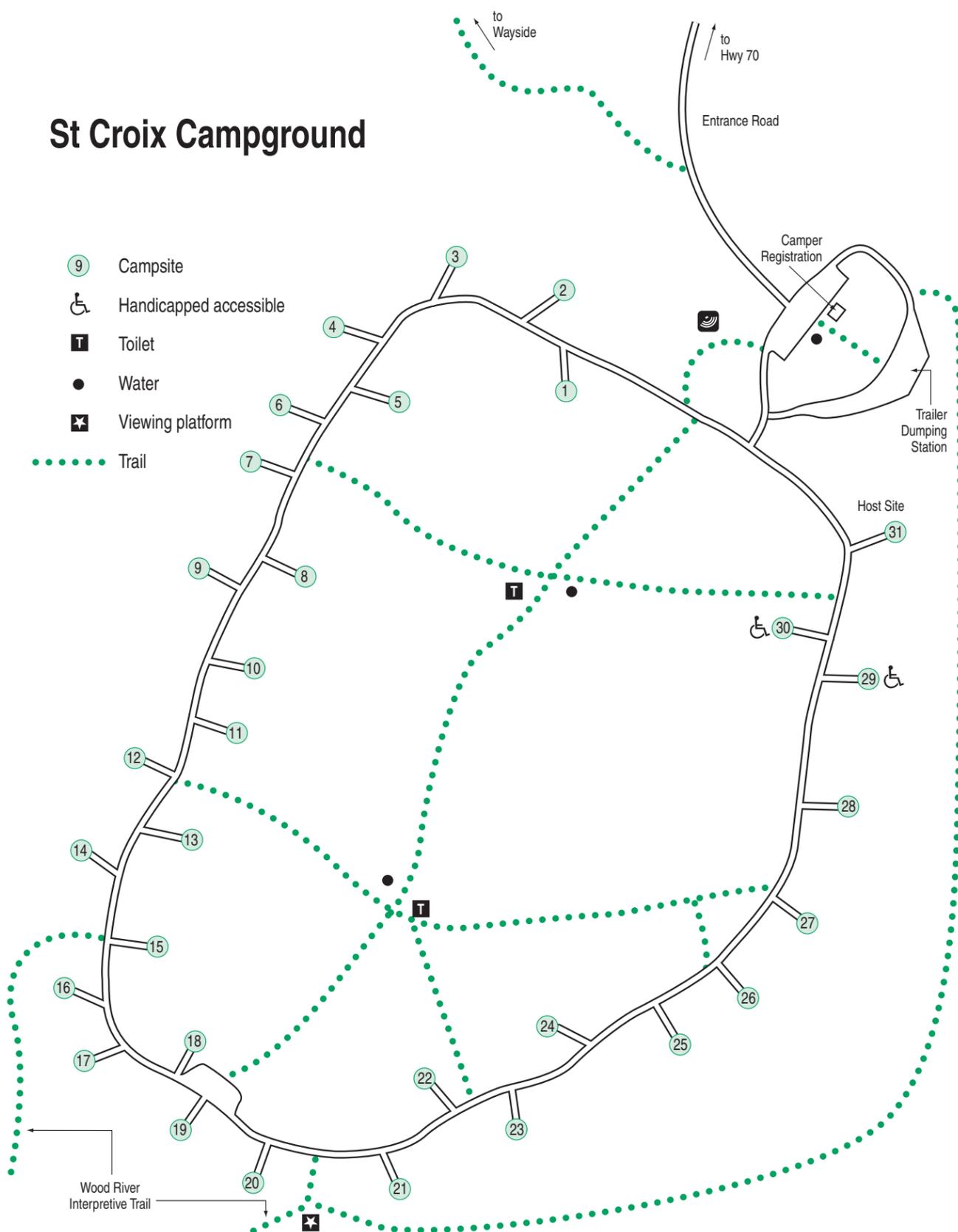
# Governor Knowles State Forest

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources





## St Croix Campground



## Our Concern—Your Safety

The safety of forest visitors is a priority so please be careful at all times and please impress safety precautions on your children. Following are some precautions to keep in mind.

**Swimming**—Swim safely. Don't swim alone, at night, or in unfamiliar places. Use caution when wading in unknown waters, as water depth may change abruptly. Closely watch small children near the water.

**Boating/Canoeing**—Every boat and canoe must carry a Coast Guard approved lifesaving device for each person aboard, and passengers should wear lifejackets at all times. Don't overload your craft. When boating, be aware of your wake and stay well away from swimmers.

**Hiking**—Hike safely. Be aware that trails vary in difficulty. Not all trails are surfaced. There may be steep climbs, descents, or stairways. Watch small children closely. Trail surfaces can become slippery when wet or covered by leaves and pine needles, or where there is loose gravel. Branches or trees may temporarily obstruct a trail. You may encounter wet areas, and unless you are wearing water-proof shoes or boots, your feet may get wet.

**Biking**—Be a smart cyclist. For your protection, wear shoes, pantleg clips and a helmet when bicycling. Wear reflective clothing for bicycling at night. Keep your bike under full control at all times. Pull off the road or trail to view wildlife, flowers or scenic views. Be cautious in areas with loose gravel or sand, wet leaves, or other

loose material. Always be alert to traffic. Park and forest roads follow the terrain and often have steep grades, corners and intersections. Trails are not designed for high-speed travel. They can become soft and wet and can erode quickly during heavy rain. Burrowing animals may leave bumps and holes in the trail. Bikes are not allowed on developed nature or hiking trails.

**Campfires**—The goal of a campfire is to provide you with plenty of heat for cooking and warming cold campers, while using the least amount of firewood. You don't want to get smoke in your eyes or endanger people, trees, plants or equipment. Be sure sparks can't get on flammable materials. Put the fire out if wind changes cause concern. Don't put cans, aluminum foil or glass in the fire; they won't burn and only will leave a mess for later campers. Once you've put a match to a fire, don't use charcoal starter or any other flammable liquid. Watch children very closely near fire. Make sure the fire is completely out and the grill or fire ring cool before leaving the area.

**Plants**—Never eat berries or plant parts unless you are certain of their identity.

If you injure yourself or become ill, contact the Forest Headquarters at 715-463-2898.



### Is Your Pet Along?

By state law, pets are not allowed in picnic areas, buildings, or on nature trails. If visiting for the day, it is best to leave your pet home rather than tied up or left inside your vehicle.

Dogs and other pets are allowed in camping areas, on roads, and in undeveloped areas. They must be on a leash no longer than eight feet and be under control at all times.

Your pet is your responsibility. Please be courteous to your fellow visitor and clean up after them.

## Calling All Birders!



Birders who enjoy tying on a backpack will find Governor Knowles State Forest to their liking. Thirty-eight miles of hiking trails wind through a variety of forest habitats, which are home to hundreds of bird species and other wildlife. Visitors have documented as many as 300 species of songbirds.

Bluebirds are found in the burned over areas in the old snag trees. They nest in woodpecker holes and other tree cavities and feed on ground insects in open areas. Northern flickers may be seen feeding on small insects at the forest floor near burned and logged over areas.

The hermit thrush is a year-round resident throughout the forest. This bird can be located by listening for its beautiful song, which consists of a series of musical phrases, each with a distinct pitch. The thrush feeds on insects on the ground.

The pileated woodpecker, a large, noisy character, can be found in the dense woodlands along the river and bordering wetlands. This wary creature usually stays out of sight. Most often, you can see it during its low, dropping hops among pines and hardwoods.

Saw-whet owls are found in the pine areas. These small, nocturnal feeders eat small rodents and nest in abandoned woodpecker holes or other tree cavities.

Swainson's thrush, once called the "olive-backed" thrush, inhabits pines and hardwoods close to the river. It feeds on insects on the ground.

Tennessee warblers can be found in the high treetops of aspen and spruce. However, their grassy nest is near the ground.

There are three-toed woodpeckers, too. These northern birds inhabit burned, logged, and swampy areas of the forest. Like pileated woodpecker, ol' three-toed nests in cavities, but its holes are usually lower on the tree. And like others of its kind, it is a noisy feeder, hammering on trees and snags in search of insects.

Winter wrens hop amid dense brush, brambles and thickets on the forest floor in search of food. The birds build a nest of twigs and moss.

Fall is the time when waterfowl respond to the timeless urge to migrate south at the approach of winter. We see large numbers of Canadian geese, mallards, wood ducks, teal, and ringneck ducks stopping on their way south. Adjacent to the state forest are two large wildlife areas: the Fish Lake Wildlife Area south of Grantsburg and Crex Meadows Wildlife Area to the north. Both are excellent places to view the waterfowl. Hunting for waterfowl is also permitted in most areas.



*Wild turkeys feeding on acorns*

### This Paper Aims To Help You Enjoy Your Visit

The *State Park/Forest Visitor* is published by the Department of Natural Resources to help you enjoy your visit. This paper answers visitor's most commonly asked questions about the Forest. If you have other questions, ask the manager or staff at the Forest office.

The *Visitor* is distributed without charge to Forest visitors. Any material in it may be reproduced as long as the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is acknowledged. Please don't throw the *Visitor* away. Take it home for future reference or pass it on to a friend. If you must discard it, use a container—don't litter. Better yet, recycle the *Visitor*!

## Forts Folle Avoine

If you are looking for an opportunity to step into the past and relive the fur trade of 1802, visit Forts Folle Avoine, located between Webster and Danbury on the Yellow River. "Folle Avoine," a French term meaning "wild oats" or "wild rice", is an appropriate name for the site. Because of the abundance of wild rice in the region, the North West Company called the St. Croix River drainage the "Folle Avoine."

Forgotten for 185 years, Forts Folle Avoine, which includes previous headquarters for the XY Company and the North West Company, has been painstakingly unearthed by archaeologists from the Burnett County Historical Society. The thousands of artifacts, animal bone fragments, food and architectural remains, together with writings of the traders who were actually at the site, offer information from which the lifestyles of the traders and Indians have been recreated.

Besides the reconstructed companies and an Ojibwa Indian village, the area includes a visitor center, which houses a museum, gift shop, and dining area which serves food periodically. There are also two outdoor amphitheatres which host a variety of special events and programs.

The facility is open daily mid-May through mid-October. Admission fees are required. For more information, call (715) 866-8890.



The Trade River Horse Trails are located on the southern half of the Governor Knowles State Forest in northwest Polk and southwest Burnett Counties. There are two trail heads. One is located at the Trade River Campground on Evergreen Avenue, five miles west of Highway 87. The other trail head is located on 340th Street at the Northwest Parking Lot, four miles south of County Highway O.

There are 40 miles of maintained and marked trails which wind through a variety of terrains and different forest types. The main trail is the Barrens loop (brown signs). For a shorter ride there is the Sunrise Shortcut (green signs), which divides

the Barrens loop in half. The Wolf Creek Trail (red signs) loops East from the main trails towards Wolf Creek. The Multiple Use trail (north of the Northwest Parking Lot) takes the rider toward Grantsburg a distance of 18 miles.

The Trade River Campground is an undeveloped camp which has been used by horseback riders for over 45 years. Water and sanitary facilities are provided. Group camping in a landscaped area is permitted. Self-registration is required.

Please carry out all refuse and leave the site clean for the next camper. Detailed maps and trail logs are provided at both trail heads for your convenience.



*Trade River Horse Trails*

## Wild Turkey Hunting Returns to Northwestern Wisconsin

After an absence of more than 150 years, wild turkeys are back in huntable numbers in the forests of the St. Croix River watershed.

In the 1800s, there were few concerns about licenses, seasons, or zones. Wild turkeys virtually vanished from Wisconsin during this time. Regulations have been enacted as part of the wild turkey restoration program to insure that turkeys do not disappear again.

The wild turkey range in Wisconsin is divided into 39 zones, in addition to 11 state park zones. The zones distribute turkey hunters throughout the turkey range in proportion to the distribution of turkeys. Harvesting is limited to a safe, sustainable level. Zone 38, which includes the Governor Knowles State Forest, will be open for wild turkey hunting.

The spring turkey season is also divided to distribute hunter effort. There are six Wednesday through Sunday hunting periods beginning in April. Hunting hours are from one-half hour before sunrise to noon each day. No hunting is allowed on Mondays or Tuesdays. Even during the open season, other users of the State

Forest are not likely to encounter turkey hunters, as the number of permits is kept quite low in proportion to the amount of available land.

Governor Knowles State Forest lies well to the north of Wisconsin's optimum wild turkey range. The heavy snows that often occur at this latitude can result in serious winter losses, but the forest does have some habitat features that give turkey flocks a survival edge over flocks that pioneer into other parts of northern Wisconsin. The St. Croix River escarpment has a multitude of spring seeps, or areas where ground water is channeled to the surface. The warm water melts the snow, exposing seeds, roots, earthworms, and insects that the birds feed on throughout the winter. Acorns are a vital food source for wild turkeys and the forest has mature stands of all four of the oak species that occur in northern Wisconsin, enabling the birds to find at least one species bearing acorns each autumn.

If you would like more information about wild turkeys, contact your local wildlife manager.

## Watch Quietly for Wildlife

As you camp or hike in the Governor Knowles State Forest, you may see very few mammals and assume that they are very scarce. Actually, there are many species of mammals present in the forest, some found in very large numbers.

Mammals by nature are very shy. Many mammals become more timid during hunting season. Many species are difficult to observe because they are only active during the night.

Opossums and skunks are two mammals often seen in the forest. Opossums are the only North American mammal that carries its young in a pouch, much like the kangaroo. At birth, young opossums are no larger than the size of honeybees!

Yellowstone National Park is noted for its mischievous bears. The Governor Knowles State Forest, on the other hand, has pesky raccoons and bears! If you are camping, be sure your food is properly stored or these thieves will think you left it out for them!

Black bears are one of the largest forest animals. They can weigh up to 500 pounds! White-tailed deer are also very large animals and are frequently seen. Large bucks may weigh 250 pounds. Does usually have twin fawns in late May, June, and early July. Watch for these tiny spotted cuties.

Four kinds of squirrels inhabit the wooded tracts. Fox squirrels like the open woodlands, whereas gray squirrels and flying squirrels like the more dense woods. A newcomer to the forest is the tiny red squirrel. They are found more notably in the pine plantations.

The rare badger lives in open fields and prairies. Badgers catch small mammals for food by digging their prey out faster than they can dig away. Another common tunnel engineer is the chunky dark-brown woodchuck.

In the marshes and along streams you may see an occasional mink. The dome-shaped houses made of cattails and mud in the wettest marshes and in the shallow ponds are made by muskrats.

There are chipmunks, cottontail rabbits, many kinds of mice, shrews, and bats here also, often in large numbers. Small mammals are kept in balance by red foxes, gray foxes, occasional coyotes, and two kinds of weasels. The red fox is most frequently seen.

If you want to observe mammals, it's best to go afield early in the morning or at dusk and walk quietly, using brush and trees to hide behind as you stalk along. It helps to pick a spot near water, as many mammals will visit such sites for a drink, or to look for food along the shoreline.



*Crex Meadows*

## Enjoy our Wildlife Areas

Are you looking for a location to observe waterfowl and other wildlife? The Grantsburg area may be the place for you, as it is the home of the Glacial Lake Grantsburg Wildlife Complex. The wildlife complex is composed of four state wildlife areas, including Crex Meadows, Fish Lake, Amsterdam Sloughs, and Danbury, and totals nearly 50,000 acres of public land.

Crex Meadows contains 27,500 acres of wetlands, prairies, and forests intensively managed for wildlife. Management has focused on restoring wetlands and prairies which historically occupied the area. Since its purchase in 1946, twenty-nine flowages have been constructed and 7000 acres of prairie have been restored.

The combination of wetlands, prairies, and forests provides habitat for a large variety of wildlife. Over 265 species of birds have been observed in the area. Canadian geese were reintroduced in 1957 and the resident flock of giant Canadians now contains over 3000 birds. Twelve species of ducks nest here as well as eagles, ospreys, sandhill cranes, loons and a host of other birds. In early spring, the sounds of displaying sharp-tailed grouse can be heard rolling across the vast prairies. Deer, bear, coyote, beaver and other mammals are also abundant.

Most visitors come in the spring and fall when wildlife is especially abundant. During the fall migration, thousands of ducks and geese stop at Crex to feed and rest. In addition, up to 3000 sandhill cranes use Crex as a fall staging area.

Over 40 miles of roads provide excellent access and most wildlife can be observed from the car. Self-guided auto tour booklets, bird lists, and other pamphlets are

available at the Crex Headquarters to help the visitor better enjoy the area.

Fish Lake Wildlife Area, located three miles south of Grantsburg, contains over 13,000 acres of forest, large sedge marshes, and old fields. Once intensively farmed, the area is now being managed to create habitat for waterfowl, sharp-tailed grouse, deer, ruffed grouse, and squirrels.

Attractions include a colony of double-crested cormorants, nesting bald eagles, and yellow-headed blackbirds. It is an ideal spot to see wildlife during spring and fall migrations.

Amsterdam Sloughs Wildlife Area is located east of Crex Meadows and northwest of Siren. A huge marsh, from which Amsterdam Sloughs gets its name, is surrounded by aspen and oak woods. Within this area, Black Brook Flowage is an excellent spot to view wildlife, including a great blue heron rookery and nesting osprey. Bald eagles also nest on the flowage.

Danbury Wildlife Area is the smallest of the four Glacial Lake Grantsburg Wildlife properties. It is located west of the village of Danbury and consists of a large marsh surrounded by aspen woods. Danbury provides prime habitat for deer, ruffed grouse, woodcock and snowshoe hares.

All four wildlife areas are open year-round for viewing wildlife. With the exception of the wildlife refuges, they are open to public hunting and trapping. Hunting opportunities include ducks, geese, grouse, woodcock, squirrel, deer, and bear.

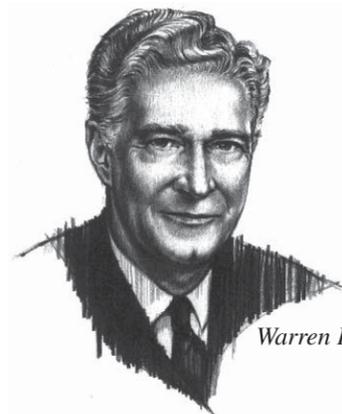
For more information, contact: GLG Wildlife Complex, PO Box 367, Grantsburg, Wisconsin 54840; telephone (715) 463-2899 or 463-2896.

## Lyme Disease and Ticks

There are two types of ticks you might see in the forest. The larger one is called a wood tick and the smaller one is a deer tick. Lyme disease is an illness caused by a bacterium that is transmitted to people and animals through a deer tick bite. Not all deer ticks carry the disease. The first symptom of the disease is a red circular rash. This does not develop in many cases. Other early symptoms include fever, chills, headache and fatigue. Lyme disease is treatable with antibiotics.

Don't let fear of Lyme disease spoil your vacation. By following these simple precautions, you will reduce the chance of a tick bite.

- ✓ Conduct thorough tick checks on yourself, your children and your pets.
- ✓ Remove any ticks as soon as possible by grasping it near the skin with fine tweezers and gently pulling it straight out. Check to see whether mouth parts broke off in the wound.
- ✓ Wear light colored clothing so it's easier to find ticks.
- ✓ Tuck pants into boots or socks; wear long-sleeved shirts, buttoned at the cuff.
- ✓ Apply tick/insect repellent to pants, socks and shoes.
- ✓ Walk in the center of mowed trails to avoid brushing up against vegetation.



*Warren P. Knowles*

## Warren P. Knowles (1908-1993)

Warren P. Knowles, for whom the state forest is named, was above all an outdoorsman. Even as Governor of Wisconsin, he never missed an opportunity to get out and enjoy Wisconsin's magnificent natural resources. He coupled this love for the outdoors with an unwavering commitment to conservation.

Knowles was elected to the Wisconsin State Senate in 1940, serving continuously until 1955 when he was elected Lieutenant Governor. Knowles promoted a conservation agenda in both of these positions. He was a major force behind the original Outdoor Recreation Act Program (ORAP) in 1961, which generated funds for land acquisition.

In 1964, Knowles was elected to his first of three terms as Wisconsin Governor. While Governor, Knowles initiated efforts to reduce water pollution and expanded ORAP funding to increase the acquisition of land for conservation purposes. He also founded the Governor's Fishing Opener in 1968, to focus attention on all that Wisconsin offers for anglers. He participated in this event both as Governor and for many years after he left public service. In fact, Governor Knowles died during a break from fishing on opening day in 1993. It is in tribute to Governor Knowles and his conservation accomplishments that this forest is named in his honor.



*Cross-Country Skiing in the Brandt Pines Natural Area*

## Brandt Pines Interpretive Trail



Brandt Pines is an old-growth stand of large red and white pine along the St. Croix River estimated to have originated in the mid 1890s. It was established as a State Natural Area in 1979. There are a total of 10 miles of cross-country skiing and hiking trails and a 2.5 mile interpretive trail. A shelter is available along the trail to rest at and to enjoy a picnic.

The area is dominated by red pine with white and jack pines, Hill's oak, basswood, large-toothed aspen, and white birch. On the elevated terrace above the pines is a dense forest of small oaks while a more mature swamp hardwood forest of oak, black ash, and red maple occurs on the ravine below the pines. There are two groups of oaks --red oak (sharply pointed lobes on the leaves) and the white oak (leaves with rounded lobes).

Brandt Brook, a steep sloped, sandy-bottomed stream deeply cut into the ravine flows through the site. Fed by numerous seeps, the narrow cold water stream supports native brook trout.

Throughout much of the trail, you will either be on the top overlooking the ravine, or right down in it. Be watchful! This area is very active with many different types of wildlife. Animals use the ravine as a path to travel to find food and mates; its shelter provides a safer trip than open areas.

As you walk or ski the trail, stop and listen to the beautiful songs sung by the birds. Two uncommon birds you might see are the black and white warbler and yellow-throated vireo. More common species include the Brown Creeper, Red Breasted Nuthatch, and Evening Grosbeak.

The ravine is also very important for certain plants. Since the ravine is sheltered from wind and severe temperatures, it can be considered a "microclimate". During a good breeze, a dancing mass of fernery may be seen. Look for these ferns: bracken (large three-part leaf on tall stalk), spinulose wood ("fern of the oak wood"), ostrich (symmetric clumps that are 3-5 feet in height), and marsh ferns (each frond rises individually 9"-36" tall).



*Wood River from the interpretive trail*

## Wood River Interpretive Trail



This trail is part of a trail system at the St. Croix campground on the Governor Knowles State Forest. It leaves the campground between sites 20 and 21, travels about ¾ mile and returns to the campground near site 15 (see campground map). The Wood River is below a handicap accessible viewing platform at the beginning of the interpretive trail. The trail descends down the escarpment, by way of

steps, to the bank of Wood River. As the trail follows the river for a distance, you can enjoy the geological features remaining from the time when massive amounts of water flowed through the Wood River Valley into the St Croix River. You can see evidence of the constant change to the landscape along the river as it erodes the high banks and causes the bank to slide down into the river and causes trees along its banks to fall.

## State Natural Areas



What are "natural areas"? Ecologists generally define natural areas as tracts of land or water that represent the last vestiges of Wisconsin's native landscape as it existed prior to the 1830s, before intensive European settlement began. They harbor natural features essentially unaltered by human-caused disturbances or that have substantially recovered from disturbance over time. There are 409 State Natural Areas (SNAs); five of these are on the Governor Knowles State Forest and one on the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. Public use of the SNAs are for scientific research and compatible, low-impact recreation such as hiking, bird watching, and nature study. To learn about the SNA program, directions to the areas, and guidelines for visiting the sites, visit: [www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/sna).

The natural areas on the Governor Knowles State Forest and Riverway are:

**Kohler-Peet Barrens & Cedar Swamp:** Travel this flat expanse of sandy, open barrens on the hiking trail that starts from the Clam River Flowage parking lot on Hwy F. Watch for a flash of blue; the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly enjoys this open habitat.

**Norway Point Bottomlands:** Learn more about this area by hiking the Cedar Interpretive Trail. (see article this page)

**Brandt Brook Pines:** Visit this area in summer by hiking the Brandt Pine Interpretive Trail or ski the gently rolling trails in winter. (see article this page)

**St. Croix Ash Swamp:** Explore this extensive low swamp-land and find the small spring-fed streams and seepages that have eroded small pockets and tributary valleys in the wooded river valley wall. Park at the North Benson parking lot to hike through this area.

**St. Croix Seeps:** View this 4-mile stretch by canoeing the St Croix River to see a flowing seepage with a shady overstory of old-growth sugar maple and eastern hop-hornbeam. Look quickly, you might see the Green-faced clubtail dragonfly or lake sturgeon. Park at County O parking lot to hike the area.

**Sterling Barrens:** The southwest facing slope is called a Goats Prairie and contains unusual prairie species. These rolling barren openings are interspersed with common prairie species, too. Occasional prescribed burning will be used to maintain the native prairie species.



*Cedar Interpretive Trail*

## Cedar Interpretive Trail



The Cedar Interpretive Trail winds through a State Natural Area called Norway Point Bottomlands. The area was designated in 1979 and encompasses five major lowland plant communities including a southern and northern wet-mesic forest, shrub carr, northern sedge meadow and a .3 mile reach of Iron Creek.

We have developed this trail system through the area so you can study and observe it without harming the fragile environment. Please stay on the trail and refrain from taking samples of the plants, as numerous visitors picking samples may eventually eliminate them.

As you walk along the boardwalk and the marked path, you will encounter unique

plants and points of interest common to this cedar stand. In studying this area, one will find species not common to drier upland sites. There are also a variety of springs and water seeps along the trail.

The interpretive trail wanders through the cedar stand for approximately 2000 feet. You will need to return on the same route or arrange for a pickup, as the Kohler Peet Route continues for 6 miles to the Clam Flowage Parking Lot.

As a result of beaver and weather activities, you may encounter wet or uneven terrain. We recommend wearing proper footwear, taking caution, and watching for exposed roots, holes, and wood debris on the trail.



*Making wolf print casts with the NPS Ranger*