



Backcountry Guide

Craig Lake State Park

Great Lakes, Great Times, Great Outdoors

851 County Road AKE

Champion, MI 49814

(906) 339-4461

www.mi.gov/craiglake

www.michigan.gov/dnr

Introduction

This manual provides you with important information concerning backcountry camping/boating in Craig Lake State Park from May through October. It is essential that you and all members of your party read this information before your trip. After reading it, make a



**On the shores of
Craig Lake**

careful and honest evaluation of your party's abilities. Once you enter the backcountry, **you are responsible for yourself and your group's safety**. Please be aware that backcountry travel can be dangerous. Backcountry camping can be a very rewarding way to see and experience the park. Some of the park's most scenic areas are accessible only by hiking trail or by non motorized boat. The remoteness and serenity of backcountry camping is what draws many people to this area; however, those same reasons are why careful planning and preparation are essential.

Trip Planning

1. The first step in planning your trip is to determine the abilities of your group. You have a variety of options. When choosing a route, consider the distance and terrain to the location.
2. Backcountry campsites are first-come, first-served. Have an alternative route planned, especially if you visit in the busy months of July or August.
3. Consider weather and other environmental factors when planning your trip. In spring or during wet weather you may want to call ahead to confirm the condition of the road into the park. Craig Lake is located 7 miles off the paved surface. During dry periods, the road is navigable in a sedan; but high clearance vehicles are recommended.
4. Upon arrival to the park, stop at the self registration kiosk to register your group. Place your registration receipt on the dash of your vehicle. In addition to your camping fee, a state park motor vehicle permit is required for all vehicles entering the park.
5. If planning to travel by boat, the portage distance from the parking lot to the boat landing is about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile.

Additional information

- Camping is not permitted on any of the park islands, or within a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of any cabin, or road.
- Maximum group size is 12 persons, except to renters of the large cabin.
- "Bushwhacking" and off-trail camping is to be avoided.
- Campfires are allowed only in designated fire rings at established sites.
- Review the suggested equipment list. Make sure everyone in your party is properly prepared.
- Before leaving, always tell a relative or friend where you are going, your route and when you plan to return.

Mechanical or Motorized Vehicles

Motorized vehicles (or motorized equipment) are *not* allowed in the backcountry. Mountain bikes are not permitted on hiking trails.

While on the Trail or Lakes

The journey is not only about the destination. Enjoy the beauty and scenery of your travels, but also take the following into consideration and plan for an adventure. *Several of the lakes are large enough to be affected by weather and can be rough enough to capsize a boat or make travel difficult. Be aware of incoming weather.* Foot trails are rugged. You may encounter steep

hills to climb and streams to cross (with or without a bridge), along with obstacles that may block the trail. Always carry a map and compass and know how to use them. Trails are marked, but nighttime travel is not recommended. Be considerate of other people on the trail. Do not dampen the experience of others. While in the backcountry:

- Let nature's sounds prevail by traveling in small groups, and avoid making excessive noise. Sound travels much farther across water.
- Pick up any litter you may drop or find.
- Minimize trail impact by staying on designated trails, not cutting switchbacks and walking through muddy spots or puddles so as not to widen the trails.

Fish Remains

- Dispose of all fish remains by traveling well away from shorelines, campsites, trails, and portages.

Lifejackets

- Vessels less than 16 feet (including canoes and kayaks) must be equipped with one Type I, II, III or IV PFD for each person on board.
- Michigan law requires all children under 6 years of age to **wear** a USCG approved Type I or II PFD when riding on the open deck of any vessel.

Water

The only potable water in the park is a hand pump located at the large cabin about 2 miles from the parking area. All other drinking water should be boiled or filtered through a 0.5 micron filter. Some commercial chemicals or treatments may also work.

Campfires

Campfires are allowed only in designated metal fire rings at established sites. All wood must be taken from "dead and down" trees and branches.

Fishing

Generations have enjoyed fishing the waters of the park but special regulations exist, see the current DNR fishing guide for details. Help us to protect this special area from invasive species.

Use artificial bait only.

Firearms

Discharging a firearm is prohibited within 150 yards of a campsite, cabin, or occupied area; in unsafe manner or location that places people or property at risk. State game laws apply at Craig Lake State Park. Fireworks of any kind are illegal.

Hanging Food

Bears have historically not been a problem at Craig Lake State Park but a healthy population does exist. Outside of the cabins, bear country protocol should be followed. All food and scented items must be stored in a bear-proof container or secured properly in "bear bags". Bear bags must be suspended at least 12 feet above the ground and far enough from the tree to prevent an animal from reaching or jumping on it. Creativity often is needed because the right tree is difficult to find. Bear bags can be hung from a single tree, suspended between two trees, or by using multiple rope combinations. Practice before entering the backcountry.



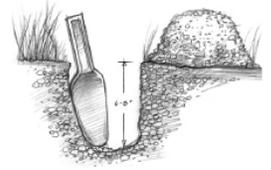
Trash

Please haul out what you haul in, including all food scraps. Trash from your trip can be disposed of at Van Riper State Park. It only takes a simple commitment to pack out all that is

packed in and encourage others to do the same. Do not burn any garbage in the fire pit. To minimize waste, repackage food items into smaller, more easily packed containers. For example, repackage boxes of macaroni and cheese into a Ziploc®-type bag and retain the directions. Canned goods can be repackaged into doubled Ziploc®-type bags. Do not carry glass bottles into the backcountry. Reducing waste prior to your trip not only saves on the amount at the end of the trip, it also makes your pack lighter on the trail or your boat easier to portage.

Dispose of Waste Properly

Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished. Pack out diapers and hygiene products.



Hygiene

To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

Insects

Expect plenty of insects (especially from late May through the middle of July). Repellants, head nets and protective clothing may help.

Pets

Pets are not allowed in any state-owned buildings (except service dogs); they must remain on a 6-foot leash at all times and may not be left unattended at any time.

Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, exposes them to predators and other dangers, and causes them to lose their natural fear of humans.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, or when raising young.

Black Bears



Bears normally are afraid of you and will leave quickly. If you see a bear near the trail, move away from it or turn back. Give bears with cubs plenty of room. Do not confront or feed any bear. To minimize any bear encounters, keep all food and scented products stored in an appropriate bear bag. Keeping a clean site goes a long way in reducing any unwanted animal encounter.

Weather

Average summer temperatures range from highs in the low 70s to lows in the low 50s, but plan for variable weather conditions and expect some rain on your trip. Hypothermia, the dangerous chilling of the human body, can be a threat any time of the year. Do not underestimate the danger of being wet during cold or windy weather. Whenever possible, canoe close to shore. If in a lightning storm on the water get to shore. National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration weather radio may be received on the frequency of **162.550 or 162.400 MHz**.

Safety

Medical assistance is not available at the park and may be hours away. In case of an emergency, call 911 and the park headquarters at (906) 339-4461. Cell service is available in some areas but don't plan for it. The closest public phone is located at the Michigamme Market 1 mile east of the park on U.S 41. When you dial have the following ready:

- A detailed list of the injury(ies)
- How the injuries occurred, if known
- An exact location of where rescuers can meet the injured party
- Other personal information about the injured party (allergies, age, physical condition, known ailments, etc)

Everything you do in the backcountry should be done carefully. Use common sense and care at all times. Always carry an up-to-date, well-stocked first aid kit with the knowledge to use it appropriately. Most importantly, never take unnecessary risks and think through your actions. **Remember, you are responsible for your actions.**

Suggested Equipment List

This equipment list is provided to help you prepare for your trip. Dressing in layers is the best choice for outdoor activities. As you get warm you can take off layers, and as you cool down during breaks, you can put them back on. Please photocopy this equipment list and pass it on to all members of your party.

Personal Equipment:

Each person should have

- hiking boots
- sleeping bag
- backpack
- sunglasses*
- headlamp or small flashlight*
- matches in a waterproof container*
- lighter and fire starter*
- high-energy trail snacks*
- emergency whistle*
- large water bottle*
- Park map and/ or
- USGS topographic
- Quadrangle maps of the area*
- compass*
- small knife*
- personal toiletries
- personal medications
- watch

Clothing:

Underwear

- underpants (2-3)
- light-weight synthetic,
- wool or blend top and bottoms
- wool or synthetic socks (2 pairs)

- sock liners (optional)

Middle wear

- wool or fleece pant and jacket
- wool or fleece sweater or shirt

Outerwear

- windproof jacket and pants
- waterproof or waterproof/
- breathable pants and jacket
- hat

Optional:

- sleeping pad
- carabiners
- camera
- binoculars
- biodegradable soap
- backpack cover
- tarp
- garbage bag
- flashlight batteries and bulb

Group Equipment:

- food
- food bag for hanging food
- 60 feet of bear rope
- cookstove and fuel
- cookware and utensils
- tent or shelter
- trowel
- toilet paper
- insect repellent

- sunscreen
- water filter
- first aid kit that includes:
 - first aid book
 - moleskin
 - gauze rolls
 - chemical heat pack
 - ace bandage
 - 2" first aid tape
 - assorted bandages
 - butterfly
 - triangular bandages and sterile pads
 - antacid tablets
 - anti-diarrhea medication
 - strong pain medication
 - ibuprofen tablets
 - antiseptic wound cleaner
 - body thermometer
 - latex gloves
 - tweezers/scissors/nail
 - clippers
 - small mirror
- emergency and repair kit that includes:
 - small roll of duct or strapping tape
 - stick-on nylon repair patches
 - nylon cord
 - safety pins

If boating remember your life jackets!

* Items with an asterisk should be placed in a small "survival" pack and always carried when in the woods.