



Tahquamenon Falls VISITOR



Summer 2021



First winter photograph published of the Upper Falls, taken by outdoor writer Ben East in 1929.



The group of men snowshoed 25 miles to the Upper Falls and stayed the night in an abandoned camp.



The Chesbrough Lumber Mill was located near the mouth of the Tahquamenon River.

Making the case for a state park

Prior to becoming Michigan's second-largest state park, Tahquamenon Falls were known only to locals. Native Americans, missionaries and fur traders were the only people to witness the 50-foot drop of tannin-stained water tumble over the sandstone ledge at the Upper Falls.

Famed state geologist Douglass Houghton canoed up the Tahquamenon River to the Upper Falls in 1840. He noted signs of native life along the river, including well-worn portage trails and a large clearing near the Lower Falls, likely used for farming. Houghton wrote in his journal, "The route bears evidence of being frequently traversed...for the portage path is deeply worn and there are remains of Indian lodges at both ends. The Indians residing upon the banks of the Tequomenon formerly numbered vastly more than at the present day."

Survey work of the great swamp of the Tahquamenon began in 1840. William Austin Burt and his crew traversed the area throughout two summers, marking the township and range lines. Clouds of mosquitoes swarmed the men, who resorted to covering their skin with a mixture of pulverized charcoal and grease. "This is the best remedy that I can find against the flies," Burt wrote in his journal. This difficult work laid the foundation for the upcoming logging operations that would continue for the next 50 years.

Early lumber operations relied on swinging axes, pusing and pulling crosscut saws, hauling with teams of oxen over ice roads to get the timber to the edge of the Tahquamenon River. Once the snow began to melt and the river swelled, the logs would be slid into the water and floated toward the sawmill at Emerson, near the current Rivermouth boat launch five miles south of Paradise.

Small communities developed around sawmills and lumber operations in the Tahquamenon area. The Chesbrough sawmill constructed the town of Emerson, which included thirty houses, a company store, post office, boarding house, blacksmith shop and school.

Emerson was isolated; all supplies came in via boat once every two weeks. In 1891, a 16-mile road was cut south, connecting Emerson to the train station at Eckerman, providing a connection to the rest of the Upper Peninsula. This road is now M-123, a paved roadway providing year-round access to Tahquamenon Falls State Park.

The timber industry began to fade in the early 1900s. Small communities near the towns of Paradise and Newberry began searching for another way to make a living. It was clear lumbering was no longer an option, as most of the big pine was gone.

Newspaper articles from 1935 show an interest by community leaders to set aside land for a state park. The small communities were again looking to use natural resources as the next economic driver. But rather than logging and sawmills, these people sought to use the beauty of Tahquamenon Falls and tourism as the next economic boost.

Community leaders held public meetings to rally support for the idea. Creation and development of a state park would be the key attraction. Articles in the Newberry News argued "the people should own the Falls and a large tract around it".

It wasn't until a group of men successfully snowshoed to the Upper Falls in 1929, and published images with their story, that Tahquamenon Falls became more widely known. The group of six men included outdoor writer

and photographer Ben East, who spearheaded the effort. "The party snow shoed approximately 50 miles, part of the trip being made on the ice of the river", says an article from The Escanaba Daily Press in 1929. "The photographs of the upper and lower falls being the first newspaper pictures to be taken of the falls in winter time." These images paved the way for public involvement to begin acquiring land around the Tahquamenon River.

Most notably, 2,200 acres around and including the Upper and Lower Falls, owned by Cleveland Cliffs Iron Co., came up for sale in 1936. The State of Michigan did not have the funds to purchase the land, so the U.S. Forest Service agreed to buy the land for \$198,000. The Forest Service agreed to trade the coveted piece of property for state-owned land within the Manistee and Huron National Forests in Lower Michigan.

Other lands were acquired through gifts, tax delinquency and exchanges. In January 1947, the state park commission officially dedicated 17,000 acres as Tahquamenon Falls State Park.

The park has since grown to over 49,000 acres, and continues to attract visitors from around the world. Today's park features include accessible paved walkways, four campgrounds (one stays open all winter), rowboat and kayak rental, 35-miles of hiking trails and special events year-round.

While small improvements have been made over the years, the core concept of keeping the falls wild and undeveloped remains intact today. The view of the Upper and Lower Falls is the same as it was generations before. Tahquamenon Falls State Park continues to be a spectacular natural resource attraction.

Depending on how much time you have to spend, there are numerous activities and sightseeing locations here to keep you busy.



Half Day

Upper Falls - For those on a tight schedule, the must-see locations are the Upper and Lower Tahquamenon Falls. The Upper Falls feature a half-mile paved walkway that provides accessible viewing of the 50-foot-tall, 200-foot-wide waterfall. Take the 94 steps down to the brink for an up-close experience or the 116 steps down to the gorge for a panoramic view.

Lower Falls - The entrance to reach the Lower Tahquamenon Falls is located 4 miles east of the Upper Falls along M-123. These falls are easily viewed from the paved walkway. A half-mile boardwalk will take you through thick forest, ending up at the viewing platforms where you can feel mist from the waterfall. Keep following the boardwalk upstream and you will find easy access to wade in the river and get your feet wet.



Well-behaved dogs are welcome on the rowboats.

One Day

River Trail - Many hikers come to Tahquamenon to tackle the challenging "Trail Between Da Falls." This 4-mile trail is one of the more difficult trails in the park, due to exposed tree roots and hilly terrain, but this trail is also one of the park's most scenic routes. Make sure to have plenty of water, snacks and bug spray along for the hike. A private shuttle service operates from Memorial Day through Labor Day for a fee. Check the schedule before you head out as times vary by season.

Whitefish Bay - If hiking isn't your thing, take a trip out to Whitefish Bay, where the Tahquamenon River meets Lake Superior. The Whitefish Bay Picnic Area offers a shallow water and a sandy beach. Enjoy the view of Canada and the northern shore of the eastern Upper Peninsula from the many benches and picnic tables. Grills and outhouses are also available at this location.



Hiking the River Trail.

Two Days

Clark Lake - Walk or bicycle down Clark Lake Road to access the hiking trail to Clark Lake. This remote inland lake is a great location for a picnic or a quick snack as you enjoy the breeze on the bordering ancient sand dunes. Continue along the trail to complete the 5-mile loop through upland forest and peat-land habitat. Clark Lake Road is an unimproved two-track with occasional two-way traffic; use caution and drive slowly.

Paddle the Tahquamenon - Rent a kayak from the Rivermouth Campground office and put in at the Rivermouth Boat Launch, located 5 miles south of Paradise along M-123. Paddle against the gentle upstream current around Marsh Island to take in the beautiful river scenery. Ducks, turtles and beaver are often seen in this area. Adventurous paddlers can head out to the shallow water of Whitefish Bay and explore the Lake Superior shoreline.



Clark Lake is surrounded by wilderness.

Spending time in outdoor spaces has become more important than ever. Yet these unusual circumstances mean that all of us, from seasoned outdoor enthusiasts to families heading out to their local park for the first time, could use a little guidance about how to stay safe.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO



Check the status of the place you want to visit. If it is closed, don't go. If it's crowded, have a Plan B.

PLAN AHEAD



Prepare for facilities to be closed, pack food and bring essentials like hand sanitizer and a face covering.

PLAY IT SAFE



Choose activities to reduce your risk of injury. Search and rescue operations and health care resources are both strained.

LEAVE NO TRACE



Respect public lands and waters. Take all your garbage with you.

#RecreateResponsibly



Jordan's Shuttle Service

Hike & Ride

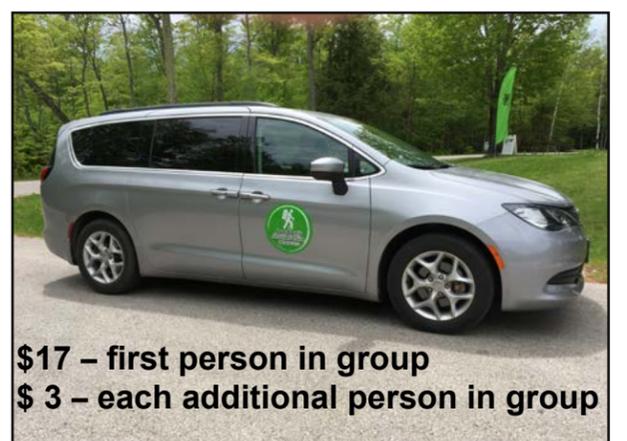
Tahquamenon River Trail

A privately-operated shuttle service is available for people who only want to hike the popular River Trail between the falls one-way.

Pick-up locations are at the Lower Falls boardwalk and Upper Falls parking lot. No reservation required.

Shuttle runs continuously from 12-8 p.m. every day June 21 - Sept. 6.

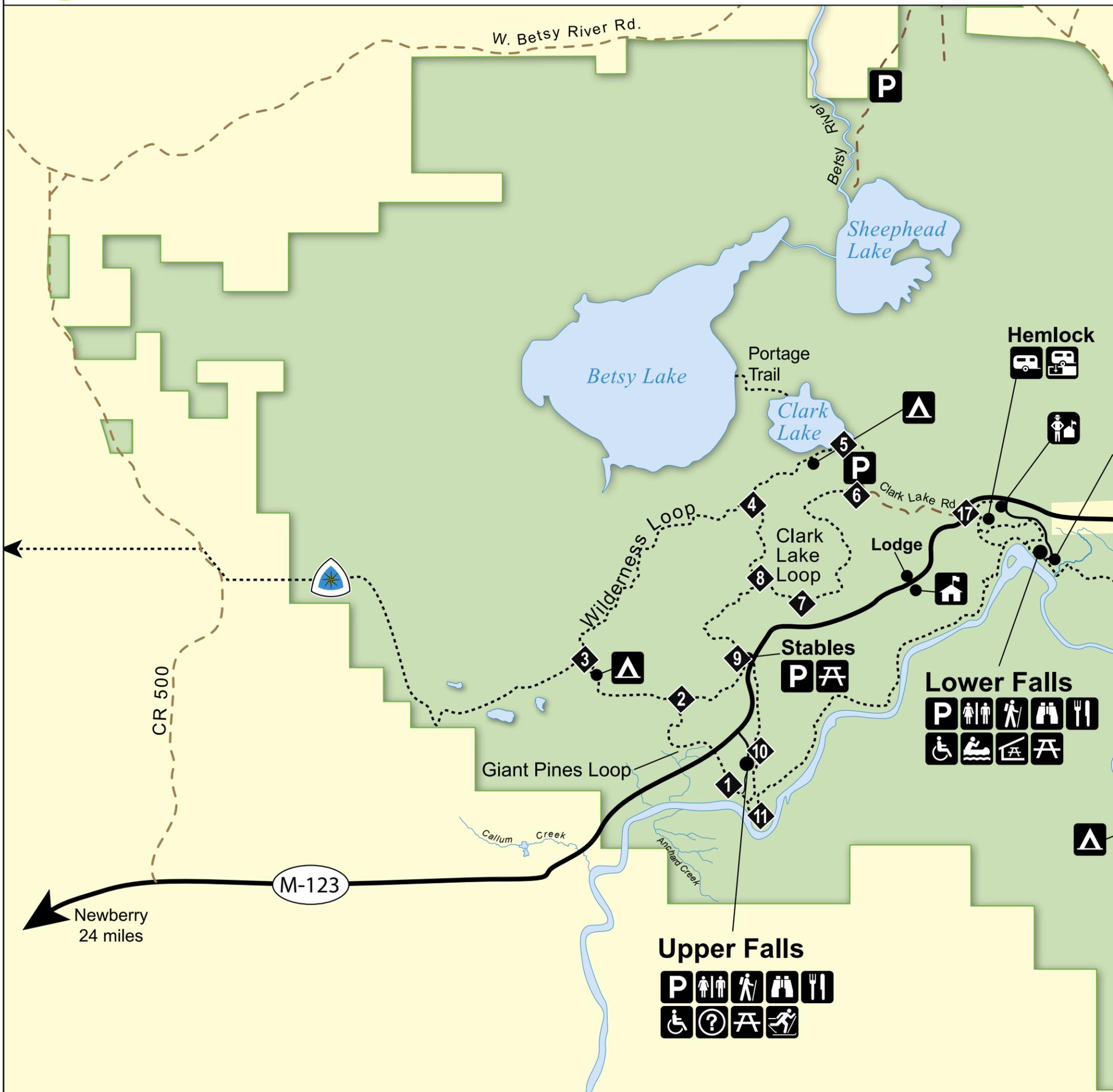
Weekends from Sept. 18 - Oct. 23.



\$17 - first person in group
\$3 - each additional person in group



Tahquamenon Falls State Park



	Accessible		Cross country skiing		Restaurant		Dirt road
	Backcountry campsite		Information		Restroom		Hiking trail
	Boat launch		Park headquarters		Sanitation station		Highway
	Campground		Parking		Scenic view		North Country Trail
	Campground office		Picnic area		Swimming		Park land
	Canoe launch		Picnic shelter		Trailhead		Private land

Know Before You Go



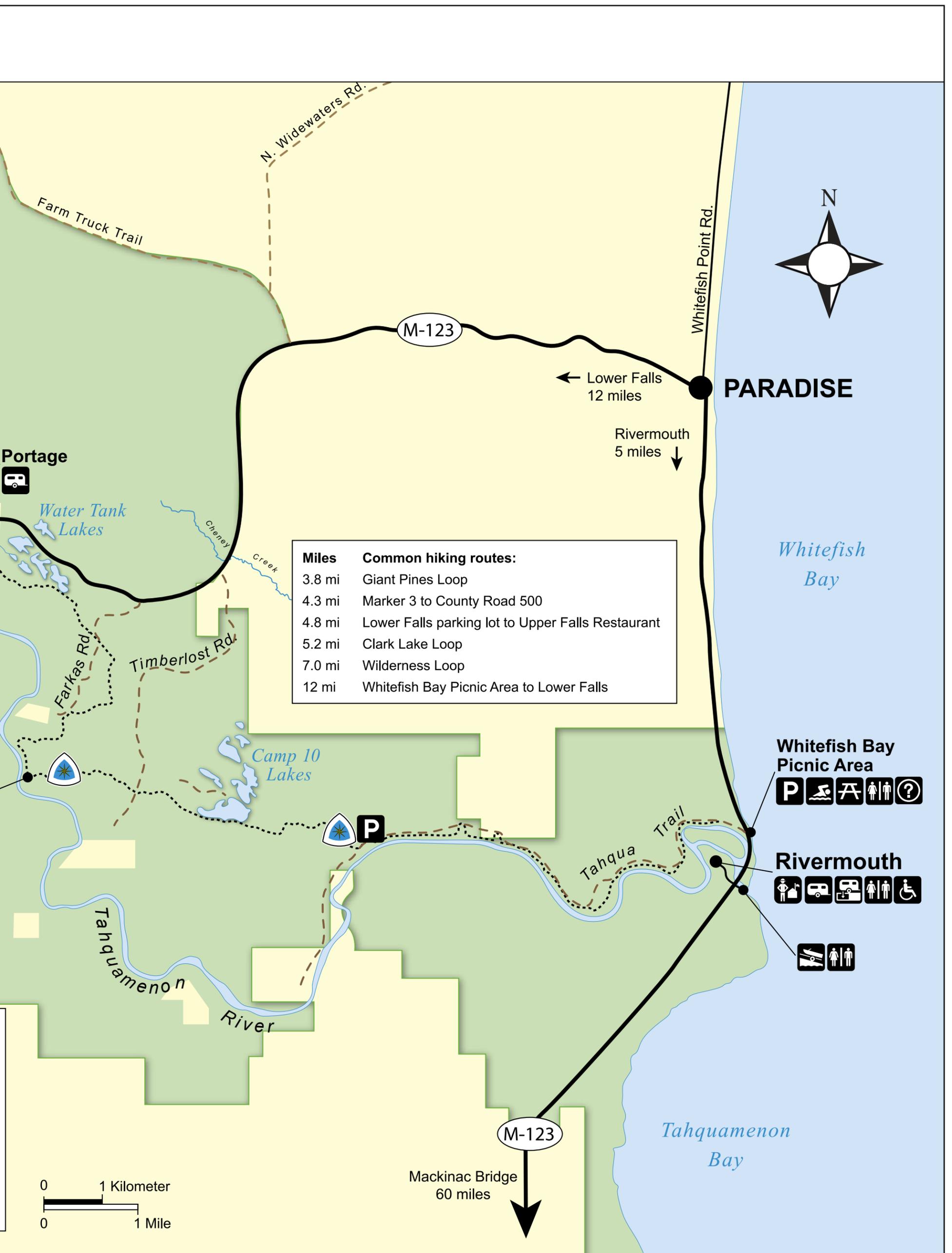
Cellphone service is limited within the park. Talk to your group and make a meeting plan. Do not rely on texting to find each other.



Well-behaved, leashed dogs are permitted on all trails. Owners are expected to clean up after their pets.



Dogs cannot be left unattended. Please do not leave your pet in your car or tied up while you eat at the restaurant. Pet owners will be ticketed.



5 Hiking Essentials

Water - Drink 20 ounces per hour.

Food - Eat one salty snack per hour to provide needed electrolytes.

Proper shoes - Wear footwear with traction and ankle support; no sandals or flip-flops.

Map - While many trails are well-marked, seasonal flooding can wash away sections of trail.

Flashlight - Allows you to hike out should your trip take longer than expected.

2021 Special Events

Two Hearted Trail Run

June 26 – Muskallonge Lake and Upper Falls

Scenic long-distance run along the North Country Trail, with the 50K and marathon distances beginning north of the park and finishing at the Upper Falls. Half marathon course starts and ends at the Upper Falls. Register online at greatlakesendurance.com.



Finisher medal from trail run.

Tahqua Trail Run

Aug. 14 – Upper Falls

This popular 25K trail race follows the North Country Trail along the Tahquamenon River, beginning near the Rivermouth and ending at the Upper Falls. A 10K race will also take place, starting at the Lower Falls and ending at the Upper Falls. These races are sponsored by Great Lakes Endurance. Register online at greatlakesendurance.com.



Two trail races are held at the park each year.

Wilderness Canoe Race

Sep. 12 – Lower Falls

This 17-mile professional canoe race begins at the Lower Falls and finishes at Whitefish Bay near the Rivermouth Campground. The event is hosted by the Michigan Canoe Racing Association and the Paradise Chamber of Commerce. Visit miracing.com for more information.

Harvest Festival

Sep. 25 – Lower Falls

Join us for the annual Halloween event! We hope to offer numerous activities this year including pumpkin decorating, campsite decorating, hayrides, trick-or-treating and more. Both Lower Falls campgrounds (Hemlock and Portage) are included during Harvest Festival events. Make your campsite reservation early; this weekend books fast.



Harvest Fest is back for 2021.

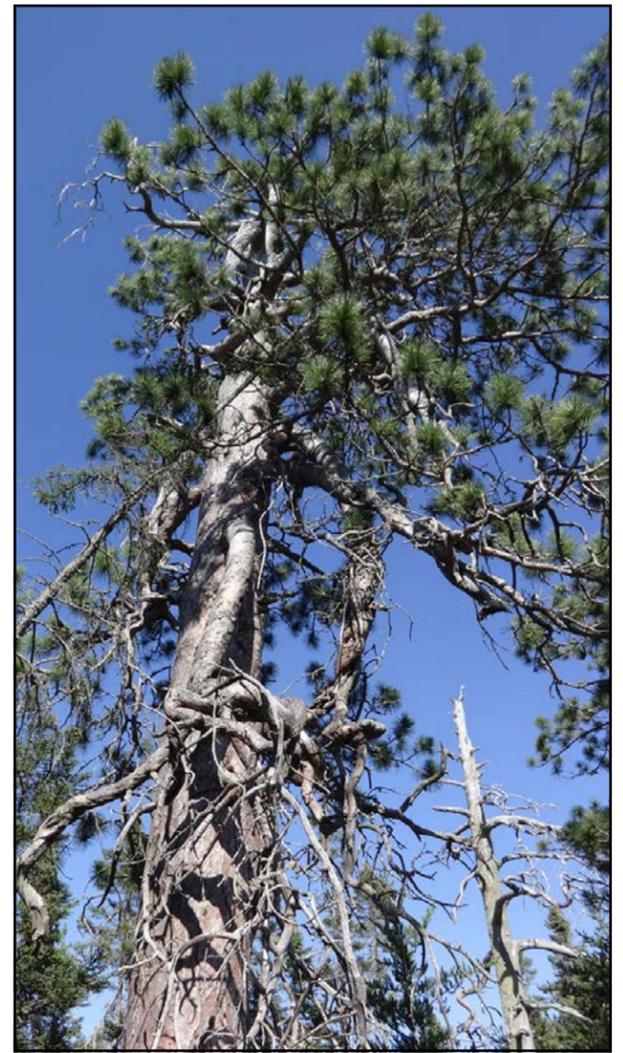
Upcoming 2022 Events

Snowshoe Hikes and Lantern-lit Trail Every Saturday in February – Upper Falls

Come out and borrow a free pair of snowshoes or take part in a guided afternoon snowshoe hike. We hope to offer a 1-mile lantern lit snowshoe trail, along with the usual 4-mile groomed cross country ski trail, marked snowshoe trails, and a packed walking trail to view the falls without snowshoes. Warm up by the bonfire, and complete your visit with a trip to the Tahquamenon Falls Brewery and Pub, open all winter.



Over 70 kerosene lanterns light the trail.



400 year-old red pine discovered

Josh Cohen, lead ecologist with the Michigan Natural Features Inventory, immerses himself every summer into the beauty of Michigan's ecosystems. Last summer, Josh and his team came to Tahquamenon Falls State Park to inventory the largest muskeg in Michigan.

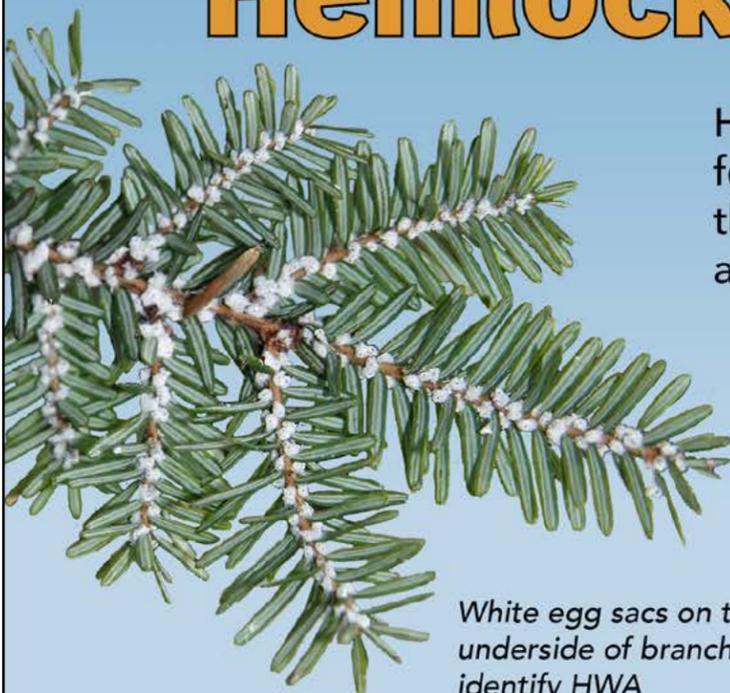
Amuskeg is a nutrient-poor peatland characterized by acidic, saturated peat, and scattered or clumped, stunted conifer trees set in a matrix of sphagnum mosses and heather shrubs. Basically this is the area north of M-123.

During the inventory, Josh came across a giant, gnarled red pine nestled amongst the muskeg. Evidence of a lightning strike and numerous fire scars tell a story of survival.

"I am humbled to be able to be able to explore such amazing places and strive for their conservation and stewardship."

Hemlock woolly adelgid

Hemlock woolly adelgids are tiny, invasive insects that feed on the sap from eastern hemlock trees. Over time, the growth of the hemlock slows and takes on a gray appearance. Eventually, the infested tree dies.



White egg sacs on the underside of branches identify HWA



Egg mass with young adelgids

Lorraine Gransy, Bartlett Tree Experts, Bugwood.org

-  Check trees near your site for white masses.
-  Avoid brushing your camper against hemlock trees.
-  Report sightings to park staff

Rock stacking discouraged

Rock stacking has become a widespread activity. All over the world, people are stacking rocks and stones in all shapes and sizes. Some find it to be a relaxing, meditative activity. Others stack rocks as an art form for their social media.

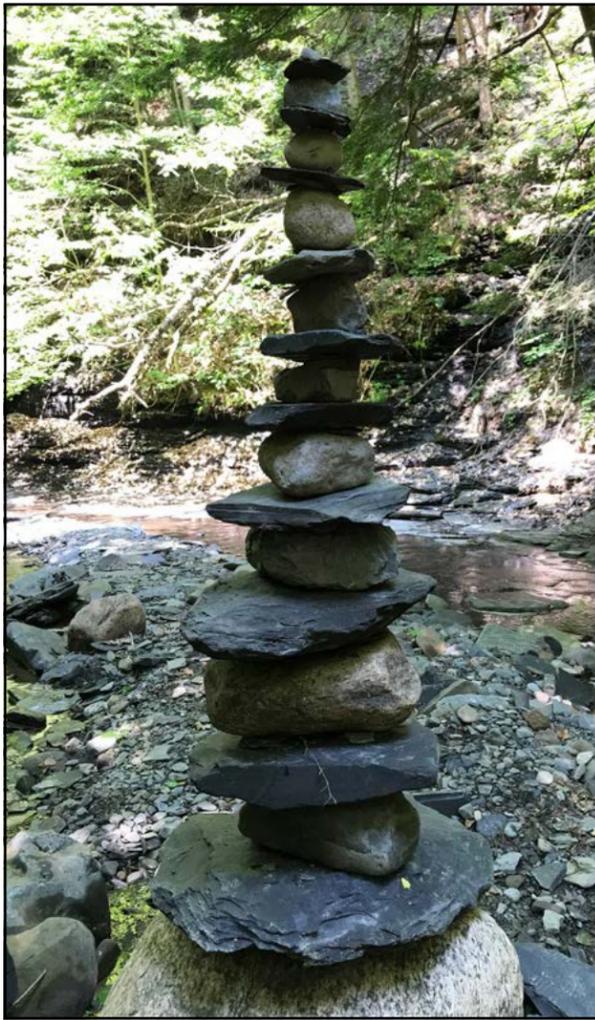
The official use of rock stacking – cairns – are as memorials or landmarks. Land managers use cairns to mark trails in mountain or desert regions to aid in navigation. Cairns are also used for rituals, burials and memorials in places where the soil is too hard to dig.

Whatever the reason, stacking rocks in and along the Tahquamenon River is discouraged for a number of reasons:

Safety – Rocks are heavy. Toes and fingers are fragile. The closest hospital is an hour away.

Damaging – Moving rocks from the river displaces important structure for fish and insects. Many fish lay eggs in rock crevices, and moving those rocks causes the eggs to wash away.

Unightly – Though it may represent a spiritual connection to the place for the builder, it may ruin the aesthetics of the area and destroy the sense of discovery for the next visitor.



Tall rock stacks, such as these, can be dangerous.



Stonefly larva cling to rocks in fast-moving water.

Consider connecting with the river in another way. Instead of making art, look for art in the natural landscape. Watch how the river moves around logs, or how the water churns near a boulder.

If you still feel the need to stack rocks, take your photos, make your memories and then put everything back the way it was. Do your part to leave no trace and keep the Tahquamenon River beautiful for everyone to enjoy.

Ranger Spotlight



Park ranger Jake Slossen

Looking for advice on where to hunt and fish in the park? Jake is your guy.

The park's most avid (and secretive) hunter and fisherman, Jake is the poster child for the U.P. lifestyle. He has worked at Tahquamenon since 2004 and lives nearby with his beautiful wife and son.



Bark peeled from a birch tree does not grow back, and exposes the tree to harmful bacteria.

Lower Falls summer construction

Construction projects at the Lower Falls, postponed in 2020 due to COVID-19, will continue this summer. Projects include a boardwalk extension and installation of a bridge to the Lower Falls island. These projects continue to increase accessibility to the natural features, while protecting the shoreline. A 300-foot boardwalk extension will connect the existing boardwalk to the new bridge site. The wooden base will be 6 feet wide, suitable for wheeled devices.

A bridge connecting the mainland to the Lower Falls island is anticipated to be installed at the end of the summer. The bridge will be located at the end of the boardwalk, upstream from the viewing platforms.

The rowboat rental will continue to be offered this summer as water levels allow. Cost is \$7 per person or \$20 per family group. No reservations are required.



The new bridge at the Lower Falls will be similar to this bridge constructed in Idaho.

Saving paper birch

Having a campfire is a requirement for many who stay the night in one of our campgrounds. The warmth from a crackling fire is relaxing and sets the stage for memories to be made.

Park staff encourage campers to use sticks and wood they find on the ground to start campfires. It is illegal to cut or break off limbs from standing trees (even if they are dead).

The best firestarter – dry pinecones. These sap-filled cones are a sure way to generate heat to quickly ignite small twigs and sticks.

The worst firestarter – paper birch bark pulled from a living tree. While still attached to the tree, birch bark provides a protective, damp coating for the delicate inner portions of the tree.

Bark pulled from a white birch does not grow back. Not only does it permanently scar the tree, but removing the protective layer introduces bacteria and fungus. These illnesses can kill the tree within a few years.

Pro tip: expand your search for kindling beyond the campground. There are plenty of sticks and pinecones you can collect in the forest throughout the park.



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