

Cross-country Skiing & Snowshoeing

The Smrekar and Wildcat Trails of the Black River State Forest provide easy, intermediate, and difficult terrain for cross-country skiers. A warming cabin is located at the Smrekar trailhead and is open during the winter months for skiers. Ski loops are designed for one-way travel but trail links are two-way. Trails are groomed for both traditional and skate skiing after new snow fall or heavy weekend use. A day use or annual trail pass is required for all skiers 16 years of age and older. Snowshoeing, hiking, and pets are not allowed on groomed trails. Snowshoeing is allowed on the Pigeon Creek Nature Trail.



Canoeing and Kayaking

The Black River and East Fork of the Black River offer excellent canoeing and kayaking opportunities. East Fork is scenic with some mild rapids and moderately rocky areas. Canoeing or kayaking on the East Fork when water levels are low is not recommended.

The Black River from Lake Arbutus to North Bend on Highway 54 is an excellent canoeing river from late spring through fall. The river provides a scenic trip through sparsely populated areas and great opportunities for fishing.



Swimming

Pigeon Creek Campground and Robinson Beach both have sand beaches, picnic areas, drinking water and toilets. Swimming at Lake Arbutus is also available at East Arbutus Park (Jackson County) and Lake Wazee.

None of the State Forest beaches have lifeguards. Swim safely and please do not swim alone, at night, or in unfamiliar places.



Snowmobiling, ATVs & Motorcycling

A network of snowmobile trails joins Jackson County Forest trails to total 150 miles of trails. The trails are groomed after snowfall.

Thirty-four miles of ATV and motorcycle trails in the state forest link with Jackson and Clark County Forest trails to total approximately 230 miles of trail.

Contact the WDNR Black River Falls Service Center or Forest Headquarters for supplemental brochures and information on trail conditions, parking, lodging, etc.



Hunting and Fishing

Public hunting is allowed in the Black River State Forest but NO hunting is allowed in the following areas; 1) Campgrounds or day use areas. 2) Other areas that are signed and designated as closed. 3) On private lands within the state forest boundary unless permission is expressly given by the land owner with the exception of private tax law lands designated as "open."

The Forest supports numerous huntable wildlife species. White-tailed deer, black bear, raccoon, bobcat, ruffed grouse, woodcock, turkey, and waterfowl are all found throughout the property. In addition, the area offers trapping opportunities with a healthy population of fisher, bobcat, otter, and beaver.

Camping is available at campgrounds year round. When hunting, camping outside campgrounds is permitted ONLY during the 9-day deer gun season starting the Thursday prior to opening day and requires a permit.

The Black River is a great fishery for walleye, northern pike, smallmouth bass, muskellunge, and catfish. The East Fork of the Black River is also good for smallmouth bass, muskellunge, and walleye fishing.

