

lost forty



CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST

BLACKDUCK DISTRICT

www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa

218-835-4291

HISTORY

The year is 1882. Josiah A. King and his three-man survey crew travel 40 miles from the nearest white settlement "the Grand Rapids of the Mississippi." For a month, canvas tents are their homes and flour, pork, beans, and dried apples their rations. Josiah and his crew are finishing the last of three contracted townships in one of the first land surveys of Minnesota's north woods.

November winds swirl snow around the hearty men as they survey the six square mile area between Moose and Coddington Lakes. Perhaps it was the chilling weather, or all the desolate swamps that caused the crew to plot Coddington Lake about a half mile further northwest than it actually lies. Josiah's error is our fortune. Since the towering pines were mapped as being under water, this mapping error caused the virgin pine of the area to be left behind by loggers. The Lost Forty is 144 acres.

Like our National Monuments in Washington, D.C., the old growth pines of the Lost Forty bear witness to our heritage. These white and red pines are 300-400 years old, originating when the pilgrims came to America. The trees remain as remnants of the natural resources that drew people to new frontiers; shaping America's character.



Photo of Lost Forty survey crew

LOCATION

Experience the forest of old at the Chippewa National Forest's "Lost Forty". From Blackduck, take County Roads 30/13 to Alvwood, travel north on State Highway 46 for 1/2 mile to County Road 29. Follow 29 east for about 11 miles to Dora Lake and County Road 26. Travel 2 miles north on 26 to Forest Road 2240. About 1 1/2 miles west of this intersection you will find a sign for the Lost Forty.

MANAGEMENT

Most of the mature red and white pine is found on the east end of the Lost Forty. These trees are up to 350 years old and between 22 and 48 inches in diameter. In other areas of the Forest, white pine is managed for pulp (paper), lumber, wildlife and aesthetics, and the trees are harvested at about 80 to 150 years. Biologically, pine can live up to 500 years. Most of the aspen growing in the area is about 60 years old and is beginning to deteriorate. Aspen reaches its biological old age at about 85 years. Old growth such as the Lost Forty is valuable for wildlife, including bald eagles, a number of hawks and woodpeckers, red squirrels, weasels and numerous other species.

The Lost Forty is considered a unique area in the Chippewa National Forest and will be managed to maintain its old growth character. Today, less than two percent of the Minnesota's forested land is considered old growth. The Lost Forty stands as a proud monument of its legacy.

FACILITIES

A one-mile self-guided trail winds its way through the majestic pines of the Lost Forty. Carry-in boat access is located on the north side of Coddington Lake. The lake offers northern pike fishing, mallard and wood duck hunting and wild ricing.

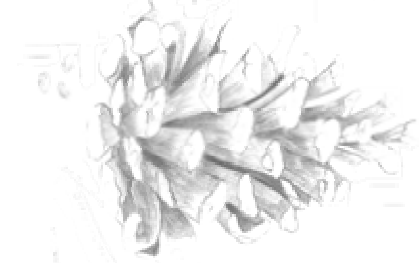
You may camp anywhere on National Forest System land, but if you prefer a developed campground, Noma Lake Campground is located just 5 miles east and 2 miles north of Wirt on County Road 31.

1. Green Cathedrals

The trees all around you are considered old growth or virgin pine. This area has never been cut as the area you drove to get here was.

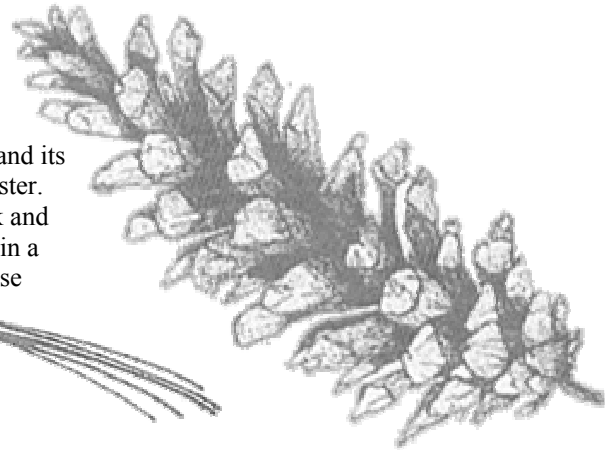
The pines are 22 to 48 inches in diameter and about 350 years old. Pine forests like the Lost Forty regenerate naturally after catastrophic forest fires.

The Lost Forty survived numerous fires in the mid-1800's. About half of Minnesota's pine forests were old growth when settlers arrived in the 1870's.



2. A Pair of Pines

White pine has corky gray bark and its soft needles contain five in a cluster. Red pine has pinkish scaly bark and its longer stiff needles have two in a bunch. Can you find both of these trees?



3. Generation Gap

From this spot you can view two ages of pine. Behind you, towards the trailhead, is the virgin red and white pine which is about 350 years old. In front of you is younger red pine, which sprouted after a fire around the turn of the century. If you travel on the north loop you will see a younger stand of red and jack pine, balsam fir and aspen which resulted after logging about 55 years ago. Look around. Where do you find the greater variety of types and sizes of trees and shrub?



4. Tomorrow's Forest

These small trees are white pine, balsam fir, and white spruce seedlings. Can you find the ground cedar? This plant is actually in the fern family and not a tree at all!

(Hint: white pine has clusters of 5 soft needles, balsam fir short flat needles, and spruce short sharp needles.)

5. White Pine

Look for the young white pine with the dead top. This tree has white pine blister rust. Most of the white pine east of Minnesota was logged by the late 1800's. White pine was the prize of all trees due to its straight trunk and large size. Initially, white pine was reserved for English ship masts. Its straight trunk also makes it easier to cut in early sawmills. In an attempt to reforest the tree, German seedlings were imported to the U.S. in the 1800's. These young trees contained a disease – white pine blister rust. Many pines have been lost and research continues to develop disease-resistant trees.

6. Life By Fire

The upside-down V-shaped groove at the base of this tree is a fire scar. The thick bark of red and white pines usually insulates the trees from damage from fire. Large fires were part of the natural cycle before white settlement in this area -- occurring about once every 30-50 years. Fires prepare a seed bed needed for young red pines to establish. Can you tell the direction a fire was traveling from the fire scar? Flames wrap around trees, creating a "V" on the opposite site.

7. Wading in Wetlands

This vista overlooks Moose Brook. Once thought of as wastelands, wetlands are now recognized as the richest environment for wildlife and in maintaining water quality. In Minnesota, only 20 percent of the original wetlands remain. The Chippewa National Forest is one of the few places with the same wetlands today that were present 100 years ago.

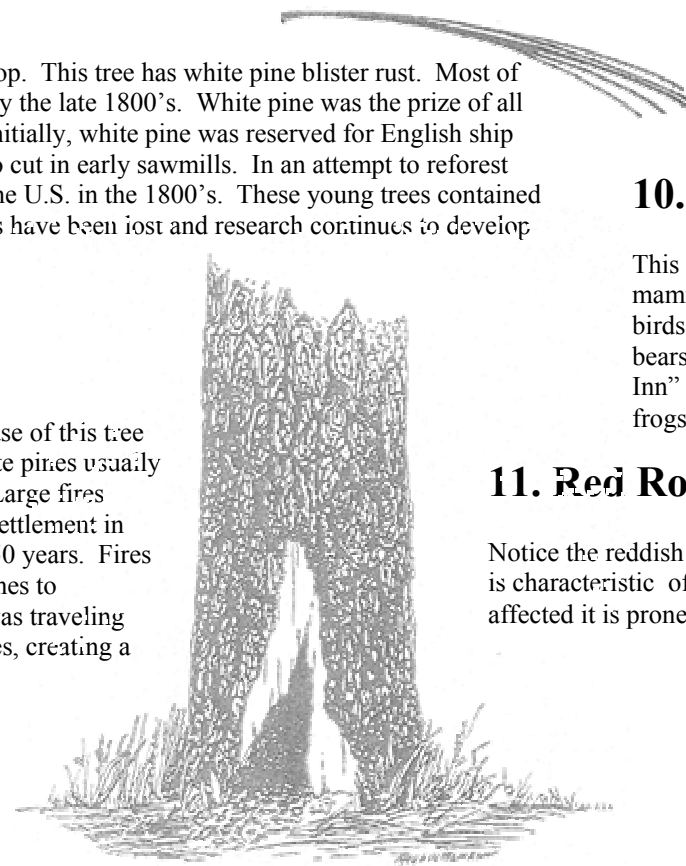
Being located along the Laurentian Divide, lakes and wetlands on this forest influence the watersheds from Hudson Bay to the Gulf of Mexico. Can you imagine that the flowing waters of Moose Brook might make a thirsty polar bear grin?



8. Down Logs

Down Logs are important in the ecology of old growth forests. Decaying wood acts like a sponge with water and nutrients to maintain water quality. As a log decays, it builds soil for new plants to grow on. Rotting logs are host to a special fungus called mycorrhizae. Mycorrhizae's cottony threads connect rotting material and roots of living trees and plants. These threads act as roots gathering critical nutrients.

If dead and dying material is removed from a forest floor, plant and animal life decreases by 20 percent!



11. Red Rot

Notice the reddish brown inside the snag in front of you and the down log to your right. This is characteristic of red rot – a fungus which naturally inflicts older pines. Once a tree is affected it is prone to blowing down, creating new habitat as a snag and rotting log.



12. Old Growth Food Chains

Look at the base of this white pine and see the small burrows in the roots and pine cone fragments. A busy red squirrel spent time here, munching on its favorite snack – pine seeds. Red squirrels are among the most common animal of conifer (needle leaf) forests. Red squirrels in turn supply a bonanza of meals for hawks, owls, weasels, bobcats and pine martens. You will probably see a red squirrel while touring the Lost Forty or at least hear its noisy chatter.

13. Bald Eagles

Look through the trees, you may be lucky enough to spot a soaring bald eagle! Bald eagles nest in this area and feed on fish from Coddington and other nearby lakes. The Chippewa National Forest has one of the highest breeding populations of bald eagles in the lower 48. Along with maintaining fish populations, forest management, aimed to protect nesting areas and old growth pines like these, ensure eagle habitat for the future.



You are invited to stroll through this grove of 300-400-year-old white and red pine. Numbered posts along the route correspond to the numbered section of this brochure and the map on the back.

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