

Some recreation ideas for a change of pace....

Hiking to Lake Agnes, etc.

Caribou Lake is right on the door step---actually several doorsteps---of the Superior Hiking Trail. There is parking at the public landing and along Cty Rd 39 for access. The trail west passes a nice little Lake Agnes---no fish DNR says---and up and down to Lutsen Ski area. A spur leads to White Sky rock (see later text).

Going east the trail goes downhill, then over a beaver pond and continues as far as you wish well past Grand Marais with numerous access points. Up to date maps are available. Hiking on roads and other trails is also available for short-term exercise.



Biking on Roads and Cross Country

Often there is little or no traffic on many of the dirt roads up the Caribou Trail making for a pleasant bike riding experience. Just riding up the Caribou Trail until the pavement ends and back can be a nice way to get some exercise without spending too much time. Or, for the more adventuresome, riding up the Caribou Trail and west along either the Honeymoon Trail or the Clara Lake Road can make a longer but pleasant ride. You can go west on the Clara Lake Road to the Pancore Lake Road, across to the Sawbill Trail, south to the Honeymoon Trail, and finally back east to the Caribou Trail and home.

Wildlife, including moose and bear, have been seen on most of these roads. There are many variations for rides cross country and on forest service roads just off the Caribou Trail. Take your time and it can be a peaceful, enjoyable experience.



White Sky Rock

We live close to the Superior Hiking Trail and one of our favorite things is to hike to White Sky Rock in the early morning. This is a particularly great pastime with a dog or a child or grandchild who likes to get Up early. There is something special about that early morning time. We are

White Sky Rock (contd)

at our most relaxed and always find something new or wondrous on the hike. Then too, there is the great feeling of arriving back at the cabin, having had an adventure while the rest of the crew is still in bed.

The trail is a spur off the Superior Hiking trail. Follow the hiking trail up the hill from the parking lot located on County Rd 4 (Caribou Trail)



at its junction with White Sky Trail. The spur trail is to your right at the top of the hill. It leads to a wonderful overview of Caribou Lake and fall is an especially spectacular time.

Berry Picking

Cook County fresh wild berries are hard to beat. Raspberries come early and stay a while. They're everywhere, especially along roads -- a little dusty-- and in open areas. Strawberries? Yes, we have them but they're very small. They're wild and you get all the taste of a domestic in one tiny little berry. They're around in many open areas and close to the ground. Blueberries---the Crown Jewel of wild berries--- when we find 'em we never tell a soul where.



Caribou to Finland (?)

Travel the Back Roads

A great way to get some exercise and experience the views, smells, sounds and even wildlife of the great north woods, is to travel from Caribou Lake to the village of Finland by bicycle. The back roads provide panoramic views, rushing river scapes and lake-side resting spots. Set your own pace and enjoy the scenery. You can plan this 50 mile trip to take you from 6 to 8 hours, so pack a lunch and plenty of water; or a car ride is another option.

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Caribou to Finland (?) Travel the Back Roads *(contd.)*

Go north on the Caribou Trail (County 4) till Honeymoon Trail (Forest 164) and take a left (west) onto it. The Honeymoon Trail is a sparsely traveled meandering road through dense forest. You'll pass by lake accesses for Christine and White Pine. You'll cross the Poplar River and numerous streams. You'll also encounter panoramic ridge views.

The Honeymoon Trail ends at the Sawbill Trail, turn left. The journey continues mostly downhill, giving you an



effortless speedy ride. Keep an eye out for Forest Rd 166 on your right. You'll see it as you approach the Temperance River. Turn right crossing the bridge. This stretch has a lot of uphill pedaling and is the most strenuous, so take your time and

enjoy the scenery. You'll be going up Heartbreak Hill, noted as such with signage at the top which also tells the story of its name. You'll traverse the Cross and Two Island Rivers.

Running into County Rd 7, turn left on it (southwest). This takes you past Hare and Ninemile Lakes. Ninemile Forest Service Campground provides a relaxing and scenic resting spot. Next you'll pass Cramer Lake, the Manitou River, the East Branch of the Baptism River before arriving in Finland.

Have someone pick you up at Finland. While you wait, have a refreshment at one of the local establishments. Another good meeting spot is the forest service campground that you would have passed on your left as you just came into town.

Cascade River Upstream – a Hike

This is one of the best short or long hikes in the area. It begins at the bridge over the river on the road to Pike Lake.

There's parking at the access to the Superior Hiking Trail and one can go up or down stream along the river. Going down stream about 15 minutes or so you will have walked through a deep canyon and beautiful old cedar forest to a couple of river access points---not obvious but manageable. Walk, sit, lunch, enjoy being right on the river---except in the early spring. Then stand back and enjoy and marvel at the kayakers shooting the rapids and falls, usually on weekends.



In summer and fall, walk on as you wish and consider a walk all the way down to the state park for your other car. It's a lot of big ups and downs to cover hiking down to the park.

BWCA Access

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area is within half an hour or so of Caribou Lake north on the Caribou Trail. Go straight ahead at the Grade Road. A big lake like Brule or smaller waters are accessible for day trips or camping trips. Day trips let you get a taste of this wilderness with a short paddle or kayak row and a lunch on an outcropping of rock or at an established campsite. Permits are needed for either day or camping trips and are available at lake side.



Winner of the 2012 BWCA Photo Contest - Viewfinder

Caribou to Bigsby Lake and Murmur Creek

Murmur Creek flows out of Pike Lake upstream from Caribou Lake, winds its way to Bigsby Lake which feeds Caribou Lake through a narrows in the northwest corner. This narrows is passable by anything propelled by people power—rowing or paddle. Canoes and kayaks work very well to gain access to Bigsby Lake. This lake is over grown with cattails and similar water plants and there are a couple of cabins to be seen. A path through these plants is open for water craft and and the trip feels like you're leaving the developed world behind as you traverse Bigsby. You then enter Murmur Creek which is a new adventure of winding creek with shoreline at your side and windfalls that let you pass until a certain point where continued progress will involve difficult portaging and/or paddling and It's time to turn back. This is an interesting change of pace and setting for a day---a tow to the Bigsby access works with a tieoff for your boat on Caribou shore line.

Hikes and Great Lake Views

The area offers numerous ridge-top hikes, providing spectacular panoramic views of Lake Superior and the forests below. A premier hike is Oberg Mountain with its nine overlooks. Go south of Lutsen on 61 then right on the Onion River Rd for 2 miles to parking and the trailhead. The 2-1/4 mile roundtrip hike starts with a moderate ascent, then you'll have an easy loop— also a great fall hike.
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Hikes and Great Lake Views *(contd.)*

Carlton Peak offers views of Lake Superior and Temperance River valley. From 61 in Tofte take the Sawbill Trail for 2 miles to a parking lot on the right. It's 3-1/2 miles of hiking and climbing roundtrip to the peak or a little over 5 miles to a second scenic lookout and back.



If you have some extra energy and want to stand on Minnesota's highest peak, take the 7 mile trip, moderate grade, hike up Eagle Mountain. It's in the BWCA (self registration required at the entry point) and on a clear day enjoy views to the west of Shrike, Eagle, Crow, and Zoo Lakes, Lake Superior, Misquah Hills to the north, and the Brule Lookout Tower on Brule Lake to the northwest. To the trail head, take the Caribou Trail north to the Grade Rd (Forest 153), then east (right) on the grade for 4 miles to a parking area on your left.

Fall Colors

Like so much else in Cook County, it is the best. Just drive the Caribou Trail and you'll see. But there's more. Drive County #38 and #39 off the Trail; park and walk Superior Hiking Trail to see, smell and feel fall in its glory. A quick trip



on #39 and Ward Lake Rd turn---not the one at the bottom of the big hill -- the second one to Deer Yard Lake. Take the right side of the "Y" to

the end and walk to the lake shore for a "truly spectacular" view of the lake and a ridge in full color.

Of course, on this subject timing is everything. The colorful leaves of Cook County don't hang around very long.

A Request: Your CLPOA Board welcomes suggestions for future Newsletter content

Snowshoeing

You can snowshoe just about any place you want in the winter but the established trails make it easier to enjoy a walk especially in deep snow. If you're new to this, a helpful hint is to bring along ski or hiking poles. They help you move along. Places to go and things to see include a walk on Caribou Lake for sure and the Superior Hiking Trail. The trail to Lake Agnes is very special; start at the public landing or from So Caribou Dr parking just off Cty Rd 4, the Caribou Trail. A half hour in to the Lake and then walk around on it and across to the woods which are inaccessible all summer. Or, keep going up to a great overlook and on toward Lutsen ski hill. Bushwacking is a favorite activity and just out your backdoor or down the road apiece. Suggestion: when you're snowshoeing, stop and listen to the quiet of winter in the beautiful outdoors of Caribou Lake.



Cross Country Skiing

It gets no better than Cook County and Caribou Lake area has some of the best. For groomed trails, maps will help. There is a great little trail right off the Caribou Trail about 3 miles up from Hwy 61 on the west side where a driveway and parking area mark one access. It's a good ski for that first day out, groomed rolling trail west all the way to the Lutsen ski hill road---about 20 to 30 minutes each way.

For a longer more interesting ski---two cars needed---go across Cty 4 and the trail continues along and down toward Hwy 61 for 3 or 4 miles.

Other near by skiing is at Sugarbush and Moose Fence off the Sawbill Trail, Oberg Mountain area, Cascade State Park and further away up the Gunflint Trail. The lake is a nice ski when we're short of snow or when we just want to get outdoors.

Another Winter Option---Snowmobiling

There are set trails galore near Caribou Lake to travel as far as you wish into the winter fun and beauty of Cook County.

Health Food for a Happy Day

Drive about 24 miles to the county seat, that's Grand Marais, and have a "best in the world" experience. Yes, for a happy day try a donut, skizzle or pastry at the "World's Best Donut Shop". It is and you will become emotionally healthy, i.e. happy.