



Black River

The Black River area was officially dedicated as a National Forest Scenic Byway in 1992 in recognition of its exceptional natural beauty and recreational opportunities.

The Black River National Forest Scenic Byway comprises 15 miles of Black River Harbor Road (CR 513) from Bessemer to Black River Harbor. A popular travel route due to its scenic beauty including numerous waterfalls, old growth eastern white pine, hemlock and the historic Black River Harbor Village. There is ample opportunity for hiking the **North Country National Scenic Trail** and camping along the byway. The Black River Harbor provides excellent Lake Superior charter fishing.

Background and History

During 1848, William A. Burt, a U.S. Land surveyor, completed a survey of what today is the Black River Recreation Area. His map shows a wagon road going south from the mouth of the Black River to Chippewa Hill, today's **Copper Peak Ski Flying Hill**. Also, a supply trail led from the river's mouth to iron mines on the Gogebic Range. By 1904, the State of Michigan had built a wagon road from Bessemer to Lake Superior. This road is now the Black River Scenic Byway.

Bessemer

At the south end of the byway, the city of Bessemer lies nestled among large rock outcrops of the Gogebic Range. Attractions include **Bluff Valley Park**, the red sandstone **Gogebic County Courthouse**, and **Steiger Little League Field**, the "most scenic Little League

baseball park in America." Bessemer is known for its huge Fourth of July celebration and October Pumpkinfest.

Black River Harbor

Black River Harbor is popular throughout the year and is the only harbor within the National Forest System. It sits at the mouth of the Black River on Lake Superior, and is composed of three recreation areas: the harbor boating facilities, day-use picnic area, and modern campground.

Summer boating on Lake Superior is popular and the harbor boasts one of the area's few boat launches. The Black River Harbor boat ramp can accommodate almost any craft trailered, with ample parking and no launching fee.

An on-site concessionaire offers docking space for transient boaters. Docking is first-come, first-serve with a daily fee. The concession stand offers fuel and boat sewage pumping. Limited supplies for boaters and visitors are available during regular business hours.

Tall hemlock and pine surround the Black River Harbor day-use area. Picnic tables and grills are available, as well as an enclosed pavilion with fireplace.

Black River Campground

A modern facility with 40 paved camping spurs with several overlooking Lake Superior, campsites can accommodate

tents, trailers and motor homes. Modern amenities include pressurized water, flush toilets and a sewer dumping station.

Copper Peak

Ten miles north of Bessemer, **Copper Peak** rises 364 feet on the east side of the byway. At the peak is the largest ski jump in the western hemisphere: Copper Peak Ski Flying Hill. Volunteers are working to bring ski flying back to



POTAWATOMI FALLS



HARBOR DOCK

Copper Peak, but in the meantime visitors can ride the chair lift and 18-story elevator to the top, for a view never to be forgotten.

Black River Water Falls

As the Black River flows through areas of large pine, hemlock, and hardwoods it spills over a series of scenic waterfalls as it drops to meet Lake Superior. The waterfalls are located along the final 3 miles of the byway. National Forest trailhead signs and parking areas allow



access to five distinct and picturesque waterfalls; Great Conglomerate, Potawatomi, Gorge, Sandstone, and Rainbow Falls. From the parking areas, you'll find trails, boardwalks, and stairs to viewing platforms near each fall.

The **North Country National Scenic Trail** follows the Black River and also provides access to view the waterfalls, as well as wildlife, the river, and people fishing for trout and salmon.

North Country National Scenic Trail

The longest National Scenic Trail in the United States (4,600 miles when complete) passes through the byway with almost 1,500 miles in Michigan. Follow the trail over the suspension bridge from the day-use area and continue on to Rainbow Falls. Or take a shorter trail that leads to the beach on Lake Superior. The southernmost trailhead to the **North Country National Scenic Trail** on the byway is located just north of Copper Peak and has signs to mark its location. The trail can also be accessed using any of the waterfall trailheads.



BRIDGE TO TRAILS



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PLANNING TIPS

GETTING THERE: The Black River National Forest Scenic Byway is also known as Black River Road and CR 513. Take US-2 to the city of Bessemer (between Ironwood and Wakefield). Turn north at Powderhorn Road and left on to CR 513.

GAS, FOOD AND LODGING: Bessemer, Ironwood and Wakefield are full-service communities. Consider visiting a local bakery and picking up a traditional U.P. pasty. Black River Harbor Campground, at the north end of the byway, offers 40 campsites open spring to fall.

BYWAYS THAT ARE NEAR: Iron County Heritage Trail

LOCAL RESOURCES:

- Ottawa National Forest www.fs.usda.gov/ottawa
- Western U.P. Convention and Visitors Bureau www.explorewesternup.com
- Bessemer Chamber of Commerce www.bessemerchamber.org/visit.html
- Copper Peak www.copperpeak.com
- North Country Trail Association northcountrytrail.org/trail

DRIVING DISTANCE	15 MILES
DRIVE TIME	30 MINUTES
PLAN TO SPEND	1 DAY
BEST SEASONS	SUMMER/FALL
TOP ADVENTURES	