



2026

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



Bear Island Lake Trail

Minnesota



Bear Island Lake Trail

Minnesota

Much of Bear Island Lake Trail passes through Bear Island Lake State Forest in Minnesota's northern reaches, near Superior



wouldn't know it since the landscape doesn't change much and the trail remains in some of Minnesota's more remote areas. Nearby towns include Soudan, Babbitt, and Ely.

On the western end, Bear Island Lake Trail meets the [Iron Ore Trail](#); on the east end, Bear Island Lake Trail meets a spur of the [Taconite State Trail](#).

Much of Bear Island Lake Trail passes through Bear Island Lake State Forest in Minnesota's northern reaches, near Superior National Forest and Boundary Waters Canoe Area. The lake itself is huge, with Bear Island in the middle. The surrounding hills of Vermilion and Mesabi give depth to the landscape.

The trail, part of which is an old logging rail corridor, winds among smaller lakes and through forests of white and red pine, balsam fir, white spruce, aspen and birch. Open views punctuate the wooded rolling hills. The trail is popular with snowmobiles in winter. The trail is also open for cross-country skiing, hiking and mountain biking.

The trail branches in a few places and the western end leaves the state forest just west of Putnam Lake. But you



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States: Minnesota

Counties: St. Louis

Length: 21.7miles

Trail end points: Kahtava Road (Soudan) to
Bear Island Lake Road (Bear Island State Forest)

Trail surfaces: Ballast

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Fishing, Mountain
Biking, Snowmobiling, Walking, Cross Country
Skiing

Parking & Trail Access

Parking and access is at the boat launch at Bear Island Lake off Bear Island Lake Road (CR 490). From Babbitt, take County Highway 21 north to CR 904 and turn west. Turn north on Bear Island Lake Road (CR 490) and follow the signs to the lake and boat ramp.



Bear Island Lake Trail

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Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

TrailLink.com