

Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway

Like nature's table of contents, the lakes and woods of the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway are chapters filled with many recreational opportunities and adventures just waiting to be discovered. With the wink and wit of Paul Bunyan lore slipped in for fun, sites and events turn easily into sparkling memories.



Length: 54 miles / 86.4 km

Time to Allow: 1.5 hours to drive or four to six hours to enjoy

Local Information

Brainerd Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce

218-829-2838

800-450-2838

Legends and Lore of the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway

Visit this website and listen to podcasts from the byway.

Visitor Services

Bicycle/Pedestrian Facilities



Portions of CSAH 66 and 11 have paved shoulders.

Camping



Operated by the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Cross Lake Dam and Recreation Center provides excellent camping. Situated along the wooded shores of Cross Lake, the Recreation Area allows campers to experience nature within walking distance of local amenities.

Food



Food services can be found in the towns of Breezy Point, Crosslake, Pequot Lakes, and Ideal Corners.

Gasoline



Gasoline is available at either end of CSAH 16, along the south loop on CSAH 66, at the Breezy Point gates on CSAH 11 and at the west end of CSAH 15 at the intersection of 371 and 1. Pine River is a full-service community with four gasoline stations.



Information

The staff of the Pequot Lakes, Crosslake, and Pine River Chambers of Commerce buildings have byway maps, "Birds of the Byway" brochures, Inkslinger newsletters, and information on day trips. They know the people and stories of the byway and can help byway users with specific requests. Travelers can also find out where to rent bikes or boats, find lodging, learn about tall tales, hire a fishing guide, locate hiking trails, get a tasty meal, and find a bathroom.



Lodging

Resorts, townhomes, and hotels can be found along the byway route.



Restrooms

Restrooms are available at either end of CSAH 16, along the south loop on CSAH 66, at the Breezy Point gates on CSAH 11 and at the west end of CSAH 15.



Retail

There are places to shop along this byway.

Special Considerations

Travelers should be watchful for deer crossing the road, day or night. Don't leave valuables in the car.

Restrictions

The entire route can be easily traveled by handicapped-equipped vehicles such as large vans.

Seasons

Best Time to Drive

The beautiful fall colors makes an autumn drive a must. However, the quiet, snow-white winter landscape is a beautiful backdrop as well. Spring and summer both carry their own fascination for birders, photographers, and sight-seers.

High Season

Summer is the busiest season in the area, but the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway is always a pleasant drive in any season.

Map and Directions



Legend:

Point of Interest	Campground	Featured Byway	Water	State Border
Park	Picnic/Rest Area	America's Byways	Wildlife Refuge	Urban Area
Mountain	Interstate	Other Byway	Wilderness Area	Tribal Nation
City	U.S. Highway	Other Road	Other Federal Lands	Military Base
Capital	State Highway	Trail	Other State Lands	

Driving Directions

Loop 1 (South Loop)

- Starting at the south end of the byway at the intersection of CSAH 11 and Highway 371, travel east on CSAH 11 for 10.7 miles to CSAH 3.
- Turn north on CSAH 3 for 4 miles where it turns into CSAH 66 at Crosslake.
- Continue north for 3 miles to CSAH 16 intersection and turn west onto 16.
- Follow CSAH 16 for 12.7 miles back to Highway 371.
- (South on 371 for 2.2 miles returns travelers to the starting point at 11/371 intersection).
- Travel 2.2 miles north on 371 to the next byway loop at the intersection with CSAH 15.
- Highway 371 is not part of the officially designated byway route.
- The route is gapped wherever it joins Highway 371.

Loop 2 (North Loop)

- Turn northeast onto CSAH 15, traveling 7.1 miles to CSAH 1.
- At CSAH 1, turn east for 8.1 miles to CSAH 66, then south for 3.1 miles on 66 and west 12.7 miles on CSAH 16.
- (Because CSAH 16 is part of the South and North Loops it is referred to as the Spine of the byway.)
- At the intersection of 16 and 371, turn north on 371 and travel 7.4 miles into Pine River.
- Highway 371 is not part of the officially designated route.

Loop 3 (Extension Loop)


- At the stoplight in Pine River turn right and follow Barclay Ave through town, across the bridge and then sharply to the right.
- Follow CSAH 1 for 14.1 miles until it intersects with CSAH 66.
- Take 66 south to the intersection of 16 and 66.
- Go west on 16 for 12.7 miles to return to Highway 371. (This loop can be made into a short version by following CSAH 1 for 6 miles, then turning west onto CSAH 15 for 7.1 miles to the intersection with 371.)
- From the 15/371 intersection it's 6 miles north on 371 to return to Pine River.

Getting to the Byway



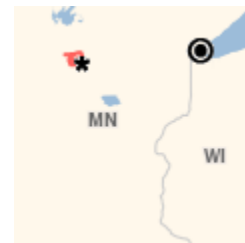
Nearby cities

Duluth, MN (113 miles / 181.86 km, 2 hours 14 minutes)

Start:  I-35 southbound, Duluth, MN
[N 46.775° W 92.111° \[?\]](#)

- Take I-35 southwest past Cloquet.
- Get on MN-210 and follow it to Crosby.
- Turn north on MN-6 and follow it to County Rd. 11.
- Turn west on County Rd. 11 and follow to its intersection with County Rd. 3 where you enter the byway.

Junction with byway: * Intersection of CR-11 and CR-3
[N 46.617° W 94.132° \[?\]](#)



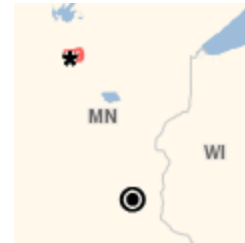
Minneapolis, MN (151 miles / 243.01 km, 2 hours 35 minutes)

Start: ⊙ I-94 northbound, Minneapolis, MN
N 44.982° W 93.287° [?]

Directions:

- Take I-94 northwest to St. Cloud.
- Get on MN-15 going north.
- Merge onto US-10 and go north to Little Falls.
- Take MN-371 to 2 miles north of Pequot Lakes.
- Turn east onto County Rd. 16 and enter the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway.

Junction with byway: * Intersection of MN-371 and CR-16
N 46.631° W 94.325° [?]



Road Trip: Truth and Tales Tour-Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway

Departure: Pine River Information Center, Minnesota

Destination: Cross Lake Dam Recreation Area, Minnesota

Time to allow: 1 day

This chain of stops exhibits all the natural beauty and local folklore of the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway.

Day 1

- **Start: Pine River Information Center**

The Pine River Information Center has recently been made an official state tourism information center. Filled with local art, local historic artifacts, a white buffalo head, and Paul Bunyan memorabilia, including Paul's baby boots, the log building's contents are as intriguing as the building itself. Filled with information on recreational activities such as racing, horseback riding, canoeing, and good old sight-seeing, travelers will have a hard time deciding whether to go do it all or stay and hear another story about it from staffer John Wetrosky.



- **Stop 1: Uppgaard Wildlife Management Area**



From previous stop: 30 minutes / 21.1 mi (33.8 km)

Directions: Follow CSAH 1 east to CSAH 66 (14.1 miles). Turn south on 66 to the intersection with CSAH 16 (3 miles). Turn west onto 16 for almost 4 miles. Uppgaard Wildlife Management Area is on the south side of the road. There is a class 5 parking area.

Suggested time at this stop: 45 minutes

Designed to attract several different species of wildlife, the Uppgaard Wildlife Management Area also offers well-paved trails for bikers, hikers, and cross-country skiers.

- **Stop 2: Gateway Gazebo Activity Area**



From previous stop: 10 minutes / 8.5 mi (13.6 km)

Directions: From Uppgaard Wildlife Management Area, continue west on CSAH 16 for another 8.5 miles. The Gateway Gazebo is at the intersection of CSAH 16 and Hwy. 371.

Suggested time at this stop: 20 minutes

The area surrounding the open-air Gateway Gazebo features several recreation opportunities, including golf, restaurants, and historic cutouts of Paul Bunyan.

- **Stop 3: Pequot Lakes Information Center**



From previous stop: 3 minutes / 2 mi (3.2 km)

Directions: From the Gateway Gazebo, travel 2 miles south on Hwy. 371 to the intersection of 371 and CSAH 11. At the stoplight, turn east onto 11 for 1 block, then turn right to the end of the block to access the parking lot for the Pequot Lakes Information Center.

Suggested time at this stop: 30 minutes

A re-creation of a railroad depot, the Pequot Lakes Information Center offers visitors information about many of the areas attractions, including resorts, dining, retail shops, and lodging.

• **End: Cross Lake Dam Recreation Area**



From previous stop: 15 minutes / 14 mi (22.4 km)

Directions: Head west on Main St. toward MN-371 S. Take the first right onto MN-371 N. Turn right onto Co Rd 16. Turn right onto Co Rd 66. Take the first left onto Daggett Pine Rd. Watch for the Corps of Engineers Campground signage, which actually says Robert Louis Cloutier Recreation Area. The Corps office building is straight ahead and then to the left, as you enter the campground driveway.

Fifty years after Joseph Nicollet's survey of this site in 1836, the first dam, originally built of wood, was put into service to raise water levels in the Whitefish Chain to ease the transport of logs. Today the high water is maintained for recreational purposes and the site has been transformed into a nationally renowned Corps of Engineers camp grounds and recreational area on Cross Lake, part of the Whitefish Chain of Lakes. Boat launches, public beaches, playgrounds, hundreds of campsites, and a large interpretive display of artifacts taken from excavation at this very site, plus many other historic items are all a part of this popular Corps of Engineers Dam and Recreation Area. Future plans for this site include an Interpretive Center that will result from the recently formed partnership between the USACE and the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway Association. For the traveler who's still interested in more, right across CSAH 66 and also on Corps property is the Historic Log Village. The Village is run by a volunteer group from the Crosslake Historical Society. Visitors are always welcome to stroll through and around the Village, but interiors of buildings are only available for public viewing when the Village is staffed.

Totals for Day 1

Total Distance Traveled: 45.6 miles / 73.0 km

Total Travel Time: 58 minutes

Total Stopping Time: 1 hour 35 minutes