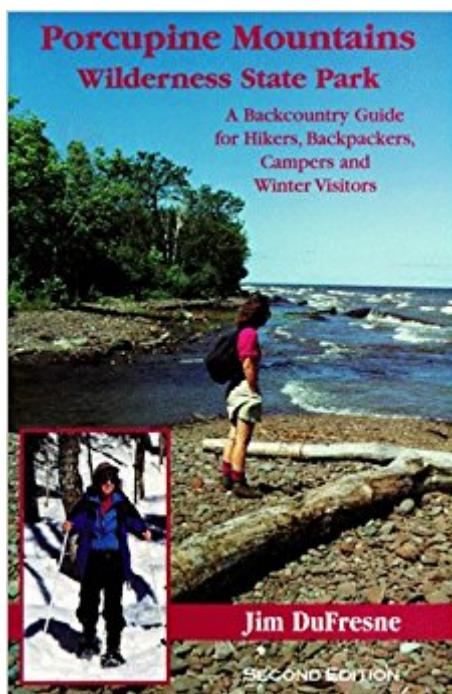


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# Porcupine Mountains: Wilderness State Park, A Backcountry Guide For Hikers, Backpackers, Campers, And Winter Visitors



## Synopsis

The Porkies, the beloved mountains of the Midwest, are the scenic and rugged heart of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. This 60,000-acre park features entire rivers, 25 miles of undeveloped Lake Superior shoreline, dozens of waterfalls, wildlife from bald eagles to black bears, and the most extensive virgin forest between the Adirondacks and the Rocky Mountains. The Porkies also offer some of the best hiking in the Midwest. Day hikers and backpackers have more than 90 miles of trails to explore, plus 16 wilderness cabins that can be rented in advance and 50 walk-in campsites. Hikes range from a stroll to nearby waterfalls to a six-day trek that covers 40 miles. In the only guidebook devoted to the Porkies trail system, Jim DuFresne provides backpackers, hikers, campers, cross-country skiers, and snowshoers with all the information they need to plan a perfect trip. Trail descriptions include mileage, where to camp at night, difficulty, and highlights along the way, corresponding to more than 20 detailed maps. Other chapters cover history, the park's fauna and flora, fishing opportunities, and visiting the park in winter. The only trail guide to Michigan's largest state park, Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park includes: A complete guide to the 90-mile network of foot trails, along with access, difficulty, hiking time, and trail descriptions. More than 20 maps, backpacking itineraries, and separate chapters on the park's waterfalls and fishing. Descriptions of all 16 rental cabins, campgrounds, backcountry shelters, and walk-in sites. Complete information on cross-country skiing, down hill skiing, snowshoeing, and winter cabin rentals.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

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This is outdated, but provided a good overview of the park and the trails. I liked the format the author used and he has a good writing style. I am not sure that the book is completely necessary given the world of internet searches that we live in.

Recently I wanted to find some information on doing some hiking in the Porcupine Mountains of Western Michigan. After using the internet searching on this topic, I came across the book "Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park" by Dufresne. After having looked at a lot of web sites and other information, I found that this book has the best and most useful information on the Porcupine Mountains. I would recommend this book to anyone who is considering going to the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. In looking for the book, was one of few places that had the book. Within a couple of days of my order, it was at my front step, typical of other products I get from .

Accidentally took a 20 mile hike in the Porkies. Dead tired at the end of the day but just marveled at the beauty of the place. I decided to get this book so I can keep my hikes to 10 miles or less the next time. It's a great good about a really unique place off the beaten path and a super place to keep secret - Oops!

OK

We are headed to the Porcupine Mountains in August of 2012. We found this book very helpful with determining which trails to hike. We are staying in a cabin here at the Porkies, and found all of the information very helpful in this book. Loved it!

Thanks to this guide, I made it out of the Porkies alive! For a novice hiker, I found this very helpful.

The Porcupine Mountains (Porkies) are a beautiful place. Like other "mountainous" places in the Midwest, there's not much elevation here -- about 1000 feet in total -- but there's a lot of up and

down, and I find that I work as hard there as on the Teton Crest. The forest is dense and soaring vistas are few, but the North Woods have their own charms. In addition, the crowds are small. I saw one party every two hours on Friday, about one party every hour on Saturday and Sunday. That's a far cry from the wildernesses in most national parks (this is a "state wilderness park")Having been to the Upper Peninsula before, I expected bugs, and I went in mid-August to miss the worst of them. That worked out fine. I also knew that the UP was a pretty soggy place-it's basically all wetland-but I thought that the Porkies, being "mountains," would be well-drained. That was only half true. Even though it hadn't rained for several days, long stretches were pretty soggy. Bring the right boots, and also bring trekking poles and gaiters if they add to your comfort.The park headquarters sells a nice topographic map for about ten dollars. It's suitable for framing because it comes all rolled up - - in an ideal world there would be a fold-up version for hiking. That map shows the campsites, as does a free pamphlet that comes with your backcountry permit. The pamphlet (but not the map) also shows which sites have bear poles.None of these maps show you which sites have water and which ones do not. Did I mention that this is a soggy place? That means that most places do have water - - but three very pretty sites atop the escarpment do not. You can probably guess that fact from the map, as they are . . . well, on top of an escarpment, and there are no streams or springs nearby. Still, putting fresh water symbols on the map would be nice.Well, that's a long introduction, and I haven't even talked about Dufresne's book yet. You can probably tell that maps are important to me.

Dufresne's book has maps - - they are good enough for your planning, but only just. There's one map of the whole park in the front of the book, with some high-use sections bifurcated by the page seam. That map labels the trails and provides topographical information. The chapters on each trail come with a trail map, with more fine-grained topo lines shown only as they cross the trail. This means that you can't tell directly whether you're walking around a mountain or a valley or whatever - - only whether you're going up or down. His maps do show campgrounds but do not show bear poles or water sources. Also, Dufresne's maps show a shelter on the Superior Trail that is now a pile of lumber awaiting removal.Like his book on Isle Royale, Dufresne organizes this book around trails and not around routes. He puts the long trails first, short trails last. I've never understood the logic of this. When I backpack, I hike routes - - and, more often than not, I have to hike a loop or a lollipop because I only have one car. (Apparently, there are some shuttle services available if you schedule them in advance - - call the park headquarters; Dufresne's book does not mention this possibility.) Planning your own route therefore requires that you flip back and forth between different chapters as you patch together a bit of this trail and a little of that. This is annoying but not a deal-breaker.The trail descriptions are accurate for the trails that I hiked. He warned me about

soggy stretches, and I used his guide to avoid the even soggier North Mirror Lake trail. He didn't tell me about how overgrown the Superior Trail was north of the Big Carp River, but that may just be a late-August thing. He provided enough information for me to plan my visit, and I got what I expected on the trail. The book also includes other useful information for non-backpackers, including a discussion of the waterfalls, wildlife, backcountry cabins, fishing, and winter skiing. There are also a lot of pictures of his family hiking through the park, which is an acceptable indulgence. The park's hike-in cabins are an interesting idea, and seem to attract dog owners (doubtless because of the black bears in the park). The presence of cabins reminds you that this is a \*state\* wilderness area, not a federal wilderness in which "man is a visitor who does not remain." Information about these things, which falls into the category of all-purpose tourism information, makes up about half of Dufresne's book. As far as I know, it's the only guide to the Porkies. For that reason, it's essential, and it does the job. But there is room for an even better guide yet to be written. If you've gotten this far, GO. Bring this book -- and maybe write a better one.

As the title says, this is the best trail guide I could find for the Porkies. I used it to plan a 5-day solo backpacking trip. There could be more detail regarding locations to get water. The maps are not the finest detail, but suffice. This guide is not specifically for backpacking.... day hikes and side trips are also included, as is information about winter activities, rental cabins, etc. There is better detail for all of this information available at the Wilderness Welcome Center and Headquarters, but not all in one package like this book.

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