The Taconite and Arrowhead State Trails were authorized by the Minnesota Legislature in 1974-5. These long-distance trails were developed primarily for winter use. As a result, sections of these trails may be impassable during warm weather months when the ground is soft. Mountain bikers and horseback riders are urged to call the nearest Trailhead and Waterways Area office before leaving for their destination to inquire about local trail conditions and amenities.

**PARKING AVAILABLE**

All communities along the Taconite and Arrowhead trails have food, fuel, lodging and retail areas available to campers.

- Grand Rapids
- Tower
- Ely
- Side Lake

**ARROWHEAD COMMUNITIES:**

- Tower
- Cook
- Orr
- International Falls

**THE ARROWHEAD TRAIL** is relatively flat between International Falls and the Ash River. The higher ground is mainly forested with aspen; lower ground has a mix of spruce, tamarack, black spruce, ash and muskeg.

A variety of game fish including walleye, northern pike, trout and smallmouth bass are found in the area's large numbers of lakes and rivers. The landscape of the area is a result of the underlying geology. The area's bedrock formation known as the Canadian Shield is some of the oldest rock on earth. It was formed by volcanic action approximately 2.7 billion years ago. Later, ancient lands were lifted up into a fold and fault zone, then re-formed into mountain peaks. Glaciers moved across the region, grinding and smoothing the landscape along some parts of the trail.

**Natural Features**

The trail links three state parks: Bear Head Lake, Soudan Underground Mine and McCarthy Beach State Parks.

THE ARROWHEAD TRAIL is relatively flat between International Falls and the Ash River. The highest ground is forested with aspen; lower ground has a mix of spruce and ash. The trail goes through many areas that have standing water in the summer which makes some portions of the trail muddy to walk.

The southern part of the Arrowhead is very different from the northern part. It features rolling hills with numerous lakes and streams. Many of the hills have large areas of exposed rock and coniferous forests. This part is heavily timbered with a mix of hardwoods and conifer.

The mix of trees on the Arrowhead is spectacularly colorful in autumn.

The trail may use a ridge of solid white pine changing to a tamarack of mixed hardwoods, then a ridge of aspen, birch and basswood blended with maples.

Over 100 varieties of birds live in the area. Some birds, like the grosbeak, meadowlark, chickadee and jay are migratory. Subtropical birds that nest in the area year-round migrate south from the arctic for the winter, the bald eagle, osprey, loons and the common loon migrate north to this area for the summer.