

Rock Creek Felsenmeer

Difficulty: Moderate on Trail/
Difficult off Trail
Distance: 3.25 Miles

Topo: Strickland 7.5'

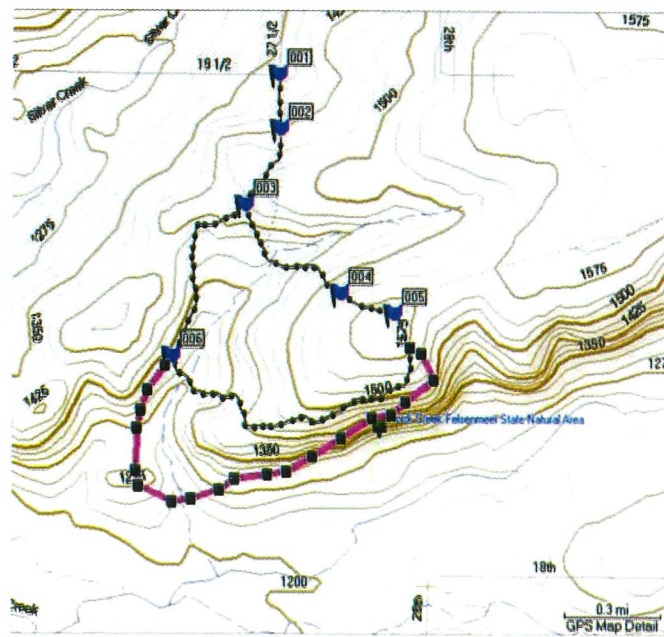
Description:

Last year we described the Blue Hills and Spring Creek Felsenmeers in western Rusk County (felsenmeer means sea of rocks). Rock Creek is the third area felsenmeer and it is located in eastern Barron County. It is a Wisconsin State Natural Area because of its unique geology and plants. There are steep slopes with rock talus facing south towards Rock Creek. Unlike the other two felsenmeers, the rock slopes are only on one side of the valley.



Driving Directions: From Rice Lake go 9.5 miles east on Highway 48 from the intersection with Highway 53, then south on County NN 2.3 mi then east and south 1.2 mi on County C, then south on 27 1/2 St to the gate at the corner of 19 1/2 Av (.5 mi). From the Blue Hills Inn, drive 5 miles west on County O, which becomes County C, to the corner of 27 1/2 St and turn south to the same parking spot.

Hiking Directions: Park by the gate (Waypoint 001, N45° 29.216', W91° 35.478'). Hike south to the Pipestone Quarry Trail sign (002 0.17 miles N45° 29.075' W91° 35.469') then follow green blazes for the Felsenmeer Trail. Continue to 003 (.44 mi, N45° 28.867' W91° 35.605') take the trail branch left, SE. At 0.62 mi cross a stream and continue to the trail intersection at 004 (.91 mi N45° 28.648' W91° 35.233') and turn left. At 1.09 mi there are two intersections in a meadow; at the first go left and the second go right continuing to follow green blazes (N45° 28.596' W91° 35.026'). Follow the trail, which is sketchy at times, south and then west at the crest of the ridge overlooking the felsenmeer. For better views go south of the trail to the edge of the rocks. The trail crosses a stream at 2.13 miles and intersects with another trail at 006 (2.24 miles N45° 28.486' W91° 35.883') Follow the trail to 003 and the parking area. The purple route shows how our group cut along the top of the open talus before intersecting with a trail at the base of the hill.



Crooked, Rough, and Muddy

Difficulty: Easy

Distance: 9 Miles Bicycling

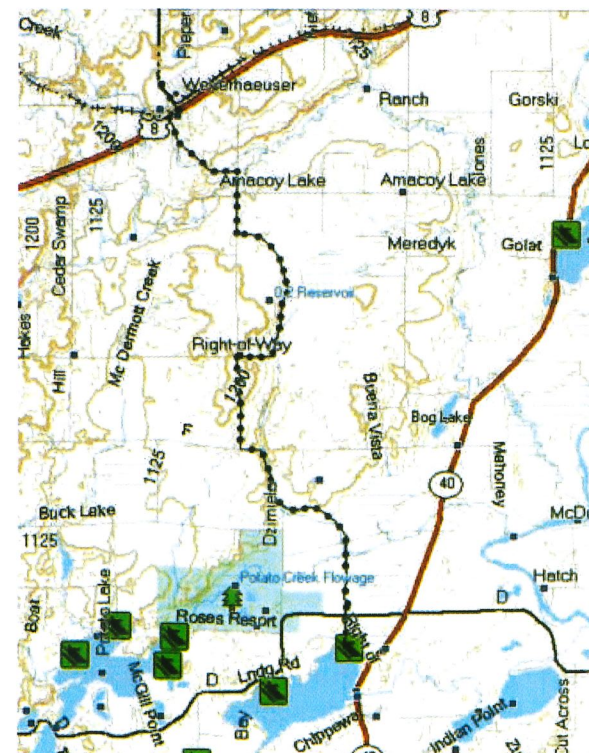
Topos: Weyerhaeuser and
Chain Lake 7.5' Maps

Historic Bike Route

Description: This biking route is on paved and gravel roads roughly following the route of the older Chippewa River and Menomonie Railroad (originally the Mississippi River Logging Co. RR) which earned the nickname: the Crooked, Rough, and Muddy. The southern end of this railroad was at the big bend of the Chippewa River, near the mouth of Potato Creek. Timber was unloaded here to float downriver. Later the tracks were moved north to the location of the current Fire Lane Rd in the Rusk County Forest.



Driving Directions: We started the ride from Weyerhaeuser High School (which will close July 1, 2010, due to consolidation with Chetek School District). You could also park at the Weyerhaeuser Village Park on County F or at the boat landing on Island Lake, .4 miles west of Highway 40 on Willy's Road.



Biking Directions: Start at Weyerhaeuser H.S. Stop at the Historic Marker on Highway 8, just west of town. Turn left/south on Historic Road. At 1.68 miles turn right on County F. At 2.43 miles turn left on Right of Way Rd. You will pass a small lake on this road. There is a local legend that a locomotive from the logging era is sunk here. This was disproved one winter about 30 years ago, when the lake was surveyed with a powerful metal detector on the ice surface. Continue to the intersection with F and go left/south (4.7 miles). At 5.7 miles, go straight south at the curve and intersect and go left on Pondell Rd (5.8 miles). At 6.0 miles, turn right on Right of Way Rd. At 6.8 miles angle left, not straight on Dzielmela Rd. At 7.2 miles, pass Kramer Rd and then cross Potato Creek. (The railroad turned east here and reached the Chippewa River near the end of Mahoney Rd.) We finished the ride continuing south, crossing County D (8.65 miles) and ending at the Island Lake boat landing (9 miles).

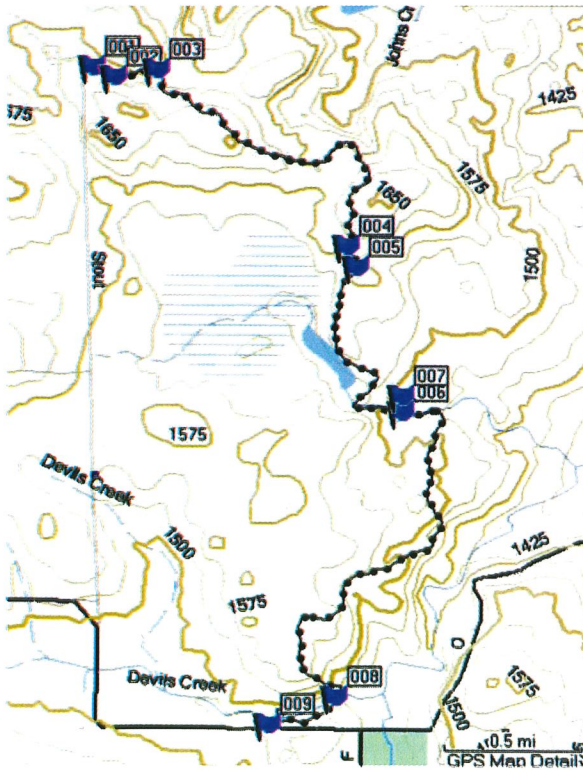
Ice Age Trail

Stout Road to Cty Hwy O/F

Description: Last year we hiked the Hemlock Creek section of the Ice Age Trail. This year we hiked another section of the Trail from Stout Rd to Cty O/F. It is in hilly terrain, follows along a small lake, crosses several bridges with the largest one over Devil's Creek. There is a side trip to a pond with a blue heron rookery and a large beaver lodge. There are yellow blazes marking this non-motorized trail from the Minnesota border to Lake Michigan with more information at www.iceagetrail.org.



Driving Directions: From Weyerhaeuser go 6.5 miles north on County F to the intersection with Cty O. Go west .4 miles to the Ice Age Trail crossing (this is the south end of the hike). Then go west and north 1 mile on O/F to the intersection with Stout Rd and drive 2 miles north to the end of Stout Rd. Park in the circle just to the east of the road. This hike can be done with a vehicle shuttle or as an out and back hike.



Hiking Directions:

Start hiking east from the parking place (Waypoint 001 N45° 32.350' W91° 27.567'). At 003 (.28 miles N45° 32.339' W91° 27.276') intersect with the current IAT and turn right. At 1.25 miles you hike on a ridge with an overlook of a small lake. At 1.81 miles you hike along a gravel road for about .1 mile; keep a lookout for the trail continuing to off the right (004 and 005). At 2.72 miles you cross the first of several bridges. At 006 (2.91 miles N45° 31.141' W91° 26.152') there is a small sign pointing north to an overlook of a beaver pond with dead trees and a blue heron rookery (.07 miles off the trail). Descend a steep section of trail to the largest bridge which crosses Devil's Creek (008 4.75 miles N45° 30.147' W91° 26.477'). Cross the stream and continue southwest to the trailhead at Cty O/F (009 5.06 miles N45° 30.050' W91° 26.747').

Difficulty: Moderate

Distance: 5 Miles One Way

Topo: Bucks Lake 7.5'

Red Canyon

Difficulty: Moderate

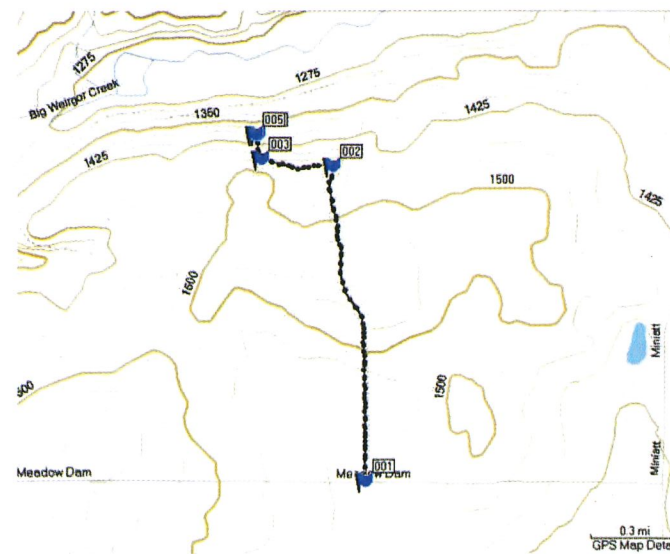
Distance: 3.1 Miles

Topo: Becky Creek 7.5'

Description: This is a small cliff area south of Big Weirgor Creek. The red comes from the quartzite rock that forms the canyon walls and most of the Blue Hills. In the summer there is just a trickle of water over mossy rock but by late winter an impressive frozen waterfall forms. This is a good winter snowshoe hike but other times of the year can be quite wet. When we visited after a rain in June, 2010, our group had to walk through 18" deep standing water in one place. The lush vegetation and fog reminded the students of Jurassic Park.



Driving Directions: Drive north of Bruce on Highway 40 for about 3 miles. Turn left and go north on County H for about six miles turning left/west on Meadow Dam Road. Drive 3 miles, parking at the gated logging road one mile west of Miniatt Road. If approaching from the west, park on Meadow Dam Road 3.4 miles east of Fire Lane Road.



Hiking Directions: Start at 001 on Meadow Dam Road by a gated logging road (0.0 miles N45° 35.765' W91° 19.139') walking north. Continue walking north past trail intersections at 0.55 mi and at 0.72 mi. At 1.0 mi, angle left (north) rather than northeast for the most direct route. In June, 2010, the next stretch of trail had standing water in places. At 002 (1.12 mi, N45° 36.696' W91° 19.281') intersect with a snowmobile trail and go west. At 003 (1.37 mi, N45° 36.718 W91° 19.578) follow a small intermittent stream north. At 1.47 miles you reach the top of the waterfall (004 N45° 36.789' W91° 19.578'). Work around the top of the cliff to right/east and then down to the canyon and the base of the falls (1.56 mi). Return by the same route, for 3.1 miles total.

Five Man Cave (via the Boulevard)

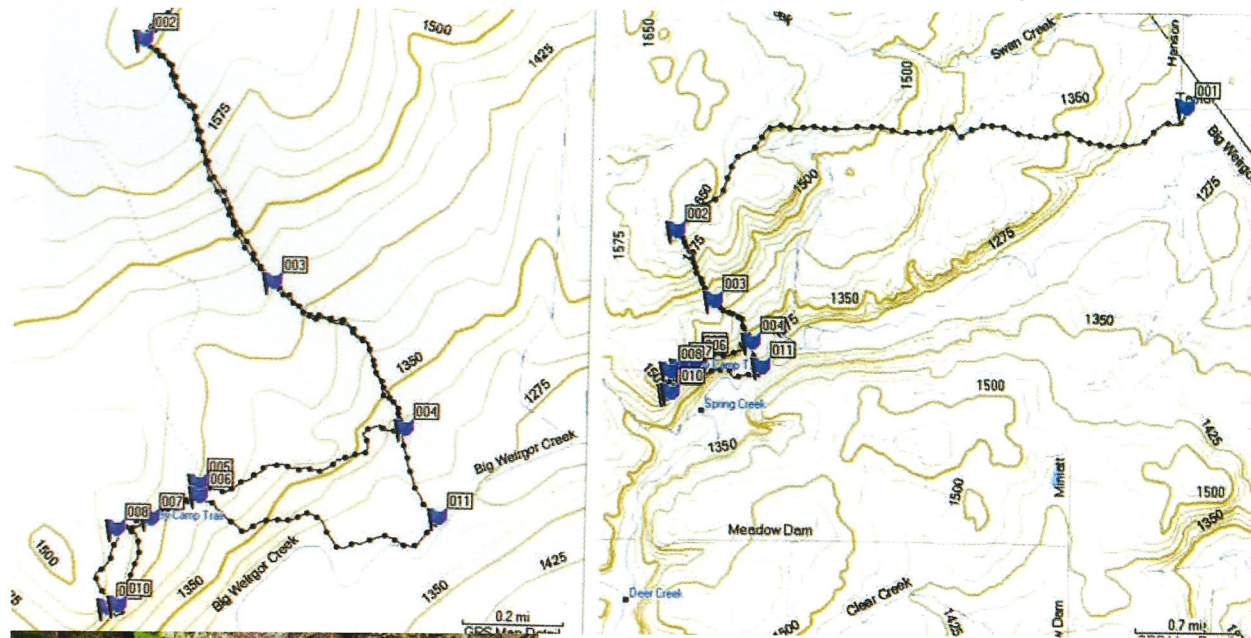
Difficulty: Difficult

Distance: 4.1 Miles

Topo: Becky Creek 7.5

Description: There is a legend of a cave in the Weirgor Creek area that was discovered with the mummified remains of five men and valuable artifacts.

One theory is that a game law violator from the area made up the story to avoid sentencing. His claim was that the cave was 681' long. This has never been substantiated and the Quartzite rock in the Blue Hills is not known for having deep caves (unlike limestone). There is a cliff band we found that has several caves, with one about 10' deep that had room for two Weyerhaeuser students.



Driving Directions: From Bruce go 2 miles north on Hwy 40, then 7 miles north and east on Cty H. Turn north on Reichel Rd for 4 miles and west on Taylor Rd for 1 mile to gated Weirgor Creek Rd at the corner of Hanson Rd.

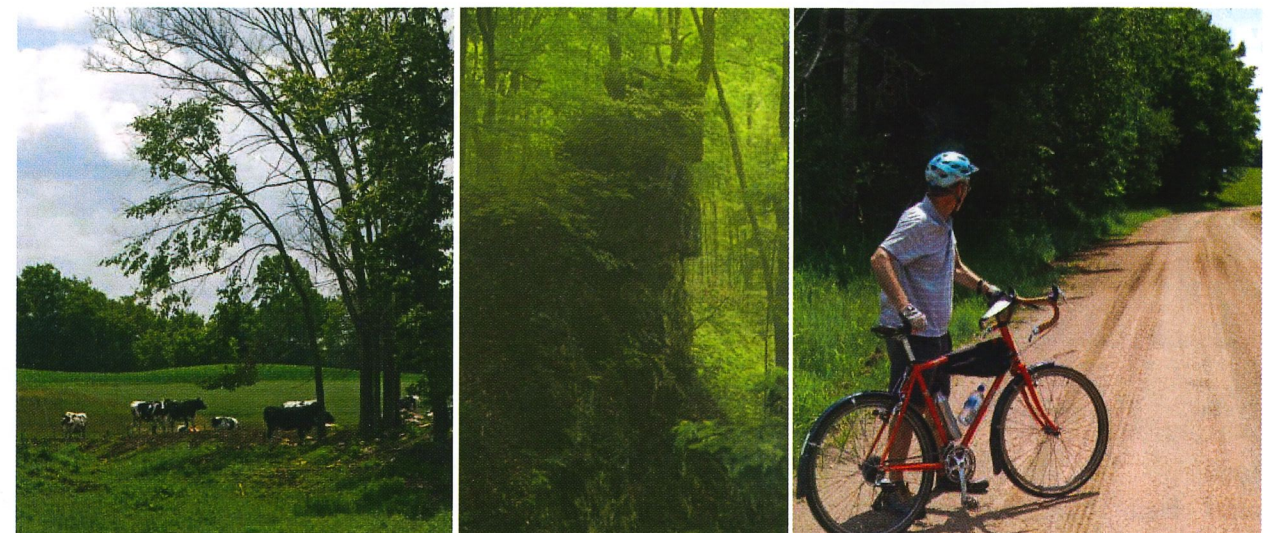
Hiking Directions: Start (Waypoint 001, N45° 38.332' W91° 16.916') at the gate for Weirgor Creek Rd, known locally as "The Boulevard". If open, drive for 4.15 miles to parking at the end of the road (002 N45° 37.573' W91° 21.299'). Hike SSE .56 miles on an ATV trail to an intersection with a grassy trail heading west (003, .56 miles, N45° 37.170' W91° 20.968'). Continue SE to a point by stream (004 at .98 miles N45° 36.926' W91° 20.638'). We left the trail, crossed the stream, and headed off trail WSW to 005 and turned left at a junction with a defined trail (1.50 miles N45° 36.827' W91° 21.143'). At 006 (1.54 miles N45° 36.806' W91° 21.141') intersect an ATV trail and go right, WSW. At 008, 1.71 miles (N45° 36.746' W91° 21.343'), turn left, south, on a faint trail. 009 is at the top of the cliff band that runs NE to SW for about 80 yards (1.95 miles, W45° 36.612' N91° 21.362'). Work down around the NE end of the cliff band and up over boulders to find the deepest cave (010, N45° 36.619' W91° 21.336'). Work SW along the base of the cliffs to find slot type caves in the cliffs. You can return the same way or head E on an established ATV track to 011 (2.94 miles, W45° 36.777' W91° 20.551') to an intersection with an ATV trail that will take you back to your parked vehicle (4.14 miles). It would also be possible to return setting a GPS course from 005 to 003.

Alternate Routes and Another Site

Five Man Cave can also be reached from the west following Serley Camp Trail. This is longer, about 5.4 miles round trip, but would be an option if the gate on Weirgor Creek Rd is locked.

The Red Canyon route can be extended by hiking downstream from the canyon, going right/east on an old grade in the Weirgor valley, then intersecting the snowmobile trail, climbing SW out of the valley, and returning to the parking place. This would be about 4 miles total length.

The Pipestone Quarry is located in the western Blue Hills and is important historically and as a cultural site for Native Americans. Pipestone (Catlinite) was mined here and traded over a wide area. Pipes were carved from the soft stone. This pit is fairly small and more fragile than the other sites in our guides; we have followed local tradition in not giving specifics about its location.

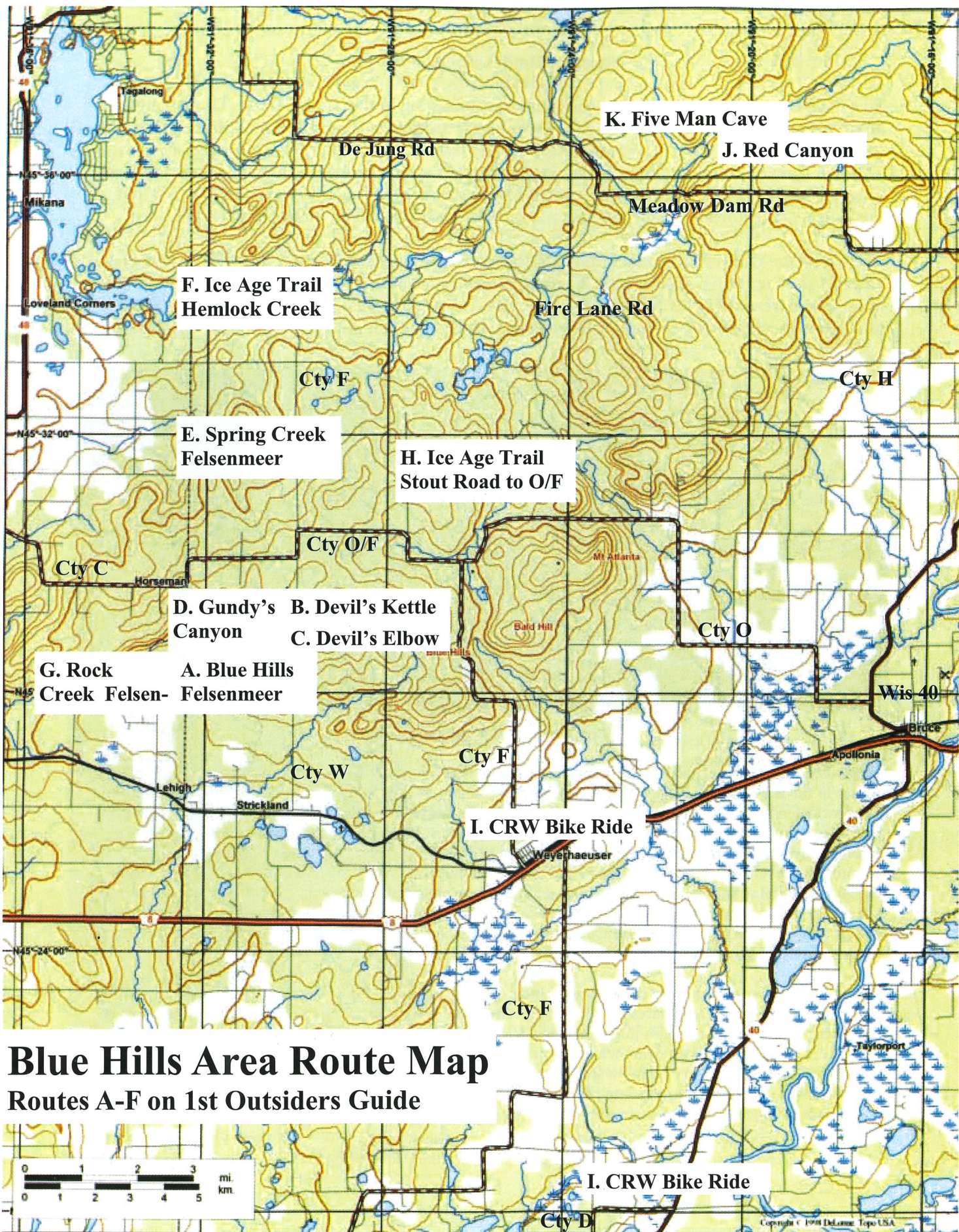


The Outsiders' Hiking Guide Project

The Outsiders are Weyerhaeuser High School Students who do outdoor projects including mapping outdoor routes in the Blue Hills of Rusk County and Barron County, WI. In 2009 and 2010, the students wrote and were awarded grants by the Rusk County Community Foundation, providing financial support for this project. The grant writers for the two years included Joey Bates, Katrina Bauspies, Jammie Beres, Angel Brueske, Lynette Niznik, Kevin Swenson, and Satin Eiffler (both years). 2010 field work and design for the second brochure were done by Erin Breezee, Ashley Pfeifer, and Satin Eiffler, and instructor Pete Olson. Other staff helping with hikes/rides were Rene Wagenaar and Andrea Herzan, who also helped with the brochure. Other students participating in a hike or helping with the publication were Sam Hamholm and Travis Sewilo. Thanks to Shirley Benson and John Terrill for historical information. For questions or suggestions, contact Mr. Olson at apolson@centurytel.net or 715/415-1812.

Reminders: These routes were completed in June, 2010. Conditions may vary, new logging roads may be put in or get overgrown, so routes may look different in the future. Be prepared for ticks and mosquitoes, especially in late spring through mid-summer. Wet rocks can be slippery and sturdy hiking boots are recommended. The students question leaving a perfectly good trail to go cross country. They suspect that when Mr. Olson says we are taking a short-cut, it really means we are lost. The format we used for GPS coordinates was degrees and minutes to three decimal points. If your GPS uses degree/minutes/seconds, visit www.geocaching.com and use their converter.

This is a Trusty Swiss Army Knife Production, MMX



Blue Hills Area Route Map

Routes A-F on 1st Outsiders Guide

