



**NORTH
COUNTRY
TRAIL
RELAY**

Trail and Driving Directions

GETTING TO THE START:

FROM CADILLAC: Follow M-55 west from US131 for 20.9 miles to the corner of M-37 and M-55

FROM THE INTERSECTION OF M-55 AND M-37: Head west on M-55 2.7 miles to N Warfield Rd. Turn right on N Warfield Rd for 5.0 miles to Coats Hwy. Turn left on Coats Hwy for 2.1 miles to Upper River Road. Turn right on Upper River Road. We will have parking attendants to direct you to parking; you may not park in the road.

FROM MANISTEE: Follow M-55 east from US31 for 23.0 miles to N Warfield Rd. Turn left on N Warfield Rd for 5.0 miles to Coats Hwy. Turn left on Coats Hwy for 2.1 miles to Upper River Road. Turn right on Upper River Road. We will have parking attendants to direct you to parking; you may not park in the road.

Leg 1 – Manistee River Trail

Distance: 8 Miles **Difficulty:** Gut Buster+ **Elevation:** Gain 1741 / Loss 1856 **Total Miles: 8 miles**
Scenery: Visually Orgasmic

Trail Directions:

- Run north on Upper River Road about 0.5 miles.
- Loop around an island of trees then follow the power lines back to Upper River Road.
- Continue south on Upper River Rd. to the Manistee River Trail (MRT).
- Turn Right and follow the MRT for 0.2 miles to the top of the hill where the MRT meets the North Country Trail.
- **Turn left** and follow the NCT for 6.7 miles to the edge of the bluff overlooking the Manistee River.
- Turn left following the spur trail for 0.2 miles to the exchange at the road.
- At 1.7 miles you will cross Coats Hwy., which is a busy paved road, watch for traffic.
- At 7.4 miles you will cross Dilling Road, another busy paved road. Continue diagonally across Dilling Road for another 0.6 miles to the exchange.

We are using the beginning section on Upper River Rd to spread the runners out before entering the trail, we will have volunteers directing you where to turn. As an added benefit the road section will add a couple of nice down hill sections to get your legs turning over. The first half of this leg will get your heart rate up; enjoy the gorgeous views of Tippy Dam Pond.

Road Directions:

- Head south on Upper River Road 0.1 miles to Coats Hwy.
- Continue South on Upper River Road from Coats Hwy for 4.2 miles to a stop sign.
- Turn right for 0.1 miles to a second stop sign.
- Turn right on Dilling Road for 0.6 miles to the Sawdust Hole Recreation Area.
- You will find a 2-track on the right with plenty of area where you can pull off the road to park.

This is a popular area for fishing, so there can be traffic at a high rate of speed. Stay off the road and keep watch for traffic. To get to the exchange you will need to walk to the exchange from the parking area. Turn left on FS8799 for 0.3 miles to the edge of the bluff the, runners will come down the trail from the right to the exchange on the road. Do not drive into the Sawdust Hole Recreation Area.

Leg 2 – Sawdust Hole

Distance: 7.71 Miles **Difficulty:** Gut Buster+ **Elevation:** Gain 916 / Loss 982 **Scenery:** Visually Orgasmic

Total Miles: 15.71

Trail Directions:

- Head back out the trail retracing the direction of the incoming runner.
- Follow the trail along the bluff 0.2 miles until you reach the North Country Trail marker.
- Stay left (straight) and follow the trail – 2.8 miles.
- Make a sharp left turn after running up a hill on a short section of an old two track road.
- At 4.4 miles you will come to a 2-track road with signage indicating the trail has been re-routed.
- Turn right and follow the 2-track, at 5.1 miles you will come out to High Bridge Road (a paved road).
- Stay left (straight) run down the hill along the left side of High Bridge – 5.8 miles.
- Stay on the walkway inside the guard rail - **do not run on the road.**
- Turn right at the end of the guard rail and cross the road.
- Run around the guard rail on the opposite side through the parking area and look for the trail marker along the river bank.
- Follow the trail to the next exchange point. The trail will merge onto a gravel road (Chicago Avenue).

A collection of flats and climbs, the views on the ridge along the Manistee River will help you to forget the switch-backs. Yield to traffic when crossing High Bridge Road. Use care on the boardwalks, they are slippery. The re-routed section of the trail leading to High Bridge is marked with blue diamonds attached to trees. You may notice some pink flagging along the two-track, ignore them, they are for some future trail improvements.

Road Directions:

- Continue down Dilling Road 2.1 miles to Coates Hwy.
- Turn left on Coates Hwy for 3.4 miles to High Bridge Road.
- Turn left on High Bridge Road for 3.7 miles to Chicago Avenue (at 2.8 miles you will cross the Manistee River).
- The far side of the bridge runners will be crossing High Bridge Road please be careful. **YOU MAY NOT STOP AT THE RIVER**, continue on to the exchange).
- Turn right on Chicago Avenue for 1.3 miles to the exchange where the trail merges with Chicago Avenue on the right hand side of the road.
- Park before the exchange. **Both sides of the road in this area are private property you may not trespass or use the woods as a rest stop.**

Leg 3 – Chicago Avenue

Distance: 4.54 Miles **Difficulty:** Easy **Elevation:** Gain 508 / Loss 536

Total Miles: 20.25

Scenery: Scenic

Trail Directions:

- Continue on Chicago Avenue 0.2 miles to Michigan Avenue.
- Turn left on Michigan Avenue for 1.1 miles to Cedar Creek Rd.
- Turn right on Cedar Creek Rd. for 1.0 miles to Huff Road (no sign).
- Turn left on Huff Road for 0.3 miles to where the trail re-enters the woods on the right hand side. (do not run across Huff Road into the power lines)
- At 0.1 miles Huff Road crosses Pine Creek, continue up the road for another 0.2 miles and look on the right hand side for the point where the trail re-enters the woods).
- Follow the trail for 1.2 miles to M-55. Cross M-55 and continue straight down Firetower Road for 30 yards to where the trail re-enters the woods on the right hand side of the road.
- Follow the trail for 0.7 miles to the exchange at FS5502. **Use caution crossing M-55, this is a busy road - you must yield to traffic.**

Road Directions:

- Continue straight on Chicago Avenue for 0.8 miles to Huff Road.
- Turn left on Huff Road for 1.2 miles to Pine Creek.
- Turn right on Pine Creek for 1.2 miles to Horseshoe Bend.
- Turn left on Horseshoe Bend for 0.5 miles to M-55.
- Turn left on M-55 for 0.3 miles to Firetower Road.
- Turn right on Firetower road for 0.7 miles to FS5502.
- Park on Firetower Road before or after FS5502, walk 0.1 miles (to the right) down FS5502 to the trail.
- **You may not wait for your runner at M-55 and Firetower Road**, watch out for runners crossing M-55 at this intersection from left to right. The trailhead at M55 has a bathroom for those that wish to use it.

Leg 4 – FS5502**Total Miles: 26.39****Distance:** 6.14 Miles **Difficulty:** Gut Buster **Elevation:** Gain 754 / Loss 705 **Scenery:** Visually Orgasmic**Trail Directions:**

- Follow the trail 5.0 miles until you come to a gravel road.
- Follow the trail across the gravel road and back into the woods.
- At 5.4 miles the trail will come out to a paved road - Udell Hills Road.
- Turn right on Udell Hills Rd for 30 yards to the intersection of S. Skocelas and Udell Hills Rd.
- Turn left on S. Skocelas Road for 0.5 mile to Riverside Drive.
- Turn left on Riverside Drive for 0.2 miles to the exchange where the trail re-enters the woods on the right hand side of the road. You will negotiate some major ups and downs on this leg.

Road Directions:

- Continue down Firetower Road for 5.0 miles to Riverside Drive.
- Turn left on Riverside Drive for 0.2 miles to the exchange where the trail re-enters the woods on the right hand side.
- At 0.7 miles stay right.
- At 1.0 miles stay right.
- At 1.6 miles go left on FS8190.
- At 2.2 miles stay left
- At 2.4 miles go straight.
- At 2.9 miles go right
- At 4.1 miles continue straight on the paved road (this is S. Skocelas Road)
- Go another 0.9 miles to Riverside Drive.
- Turn left on Riverside 0.2 miles to the exchange where the trail re-enters the woods on the right had side of the road.
- At 4.1 miles the trail crosses the road from right to left, watch out for runners.

Leg 5 – Riverside Drive**Total Miles: 31.51****Distance:** 5.12 Miles **Difficulty:** Challenging **Elevation:** Gain 431 / Loss 402 **Scenery:** Gorgeous**Trail Directions:**

- Follow the trail for 5.1 miles to the exchange at FS5203.
- Just enough variation to make this a fast leg, careful on the boardwalk it can be slippery.

Road Directions:

- Continue on Riverside Drive for 4.1 miles to FS5331 (sign says 10 1/2 Mile Road).
- Turn right on FS5331 for 0.8 miles to FS5203.
- Turn left on FS5203/Tyndall Road for 0.3 miles to the exchange where the trail crosses the road.

Leg 6 – FS5203**Total Miles: 34.04****Distance:** 2.53 Miles **Difficulty:** Easy **Elevation:** Gain 192 / Loss 320 **Scenery:** Scenic**Trail Directions:**

- Follow the trail to Freesoil Road
- Cross the road to the exchange at the sign in the trailhead parking area.
- Just enough elevation change to be interesting but no major climbs.

Road Directions:

- Continue straight on FS5203 for 1.9 miles to Freesoil Road.
- Turn left on Freesoil Road for 0.6 miles to FS5327 (no sign).
- Turn Right on FS5327, the exchange is at the trailhead on the corner of Freesoil Road and FS5327.
- Park along FS5327, do not park in the trailhead parking area.

Leg 7 – Freesoil Road**Distance:** 4.07 Miles**Difficulty:** Easy**Elevation:** Gain 429 / Loss 380**Total Miles: 38.11****Scenery:** Scenic**Trail Directions:**

- A relatively flat section, follow the normal trail markings to the exchange at 5 Mile Road.
- **WATCH** - The trail follows a abandoned 2-track for 0.3 miles then the trail turns right off of the 2-track.

Road Directions:

- Continue straight on FS5327 for 3.8 miles to 5 Mile Road.
- Turn left on 5 Mile Road for 0.2 miles to the exchange where the trail comes out onto the road. **The property on the right side of the road in this area is private property you may not trespass or use the area as a rest stop.**

Leg 8 – West 5 Mile Road**Distance:** 5.77 Miles**Difficulty:** Easy**Elevation:** Gain 519 / Loss 706**Total Miles: 43.88****Scenery:** Scenic**Trail Directions:**

- The trail turns left and follows the road for 2.3 miles at this point the trail re-enters the woods on the right had side of the road.
- Follow the road directions below.
- Once you re-enter the woods follow the trail for 3.5 miles to the exchange at 3 Mile Road.
- The 2 miles on the paved section of 5 Mile road have some rolling hills that can be busy with traffic, run on the shoulder against traffic. The second section of the leg has some challenging hills with a nice downhill finish to the exchange.

Road Directions:

- Continue straight on 5 Mile Road for 0.3 miles to the stop sign. 5 Mile Road turns to pavement.
- Turn left on 5 Mile Road following the pavement for 2.0 miles to the point where the trail re-enters the woods on the right side of the road.
- At 1.0 mile on the section of paved road you will come to a stop sign at the intersection of 5 Mile Road and Bass Lake Road.
- Stay right following 5 Mile Road. **Caution, runners will be running along 5 Mile Road reduce your speed, please drive with care.**
- You may aid your runner in finding the turn into the woods or continue on to the exchange.
- From the point where the trail re-enters the woods continue straight on 5 Mile Road for 2.7 miles
- At this point 5 Mile Road turns to the left; continue straight on 3 Mile Road which is a gravel road. (At 2.1 miles on 5 Mile Road the road turns to the right and changes names to Brooks)
- Follow 3 Mile Road 2.2 miles to the exchange where the trail crosses the road.

Leg 9 – 3 Mile Road**Distance:** 6.20 Miles**Difficulty:** Gut Buster**Elevation:** Gain 1146 / Loss 981**Total Miles: 50.08****Scenery:** Visually Orgasmic**Trail Directions:**

- Follow the trail crossing several two track roads to the exchange at 8th Street.
- If you missed out on some of the early legs of the day then here is your chance to experience some of the best running of the day. The section along McCarthy Lake will allow you to almost forget the climb you have to make up after the downhill finish on leg 7.
- At 2 miles you will cross Mac Road, which is being used by the support vehicles use caution when crossing.

Road Directions:

- Continue straight on 3 Mile Road for 0.7 miles to Mac Road (no sign).
- Turn left on Mac Road for 2.3 miles to stop sign (FS5196). (At 1.5 miles on Mac Road the trail crosses the road please watch out for runners.)
- Turn left on FS5196 for 1.0 miles to FS5441.
- Turn right on FS5441 for 2.0 miles to 8th Street.
- Turn right on 8th Street for 0.5 miles to the exchange where the trail crosses the road, turn your vehicle around.

Leg 10 – 8th Street**Distance:** 4.89 Miles**Difficulty:** Challenging**Elevation:** Gain 1498 / Loss 2233**Total Miles: 54.97****Scenery:** Gorgeous**Trail Directions:**

- Follow the trail to the exchange at Wingleton Road.
- At 3.1 miles you will come to a Y where the NCT meets a spur trail leading to Timber Creek Campground, go left following the main trail.
- At 3.2 miles you will come to US 10, **use caution crossing this busy road, you must yield to traffic**; follow the trail across the road.

Road Directions:

- Go back 0.5 miles to FS5441 (at the corner FS5441 changes to FS5197).
- Turn right on FS5197 for 1.9 miles to US-10.
- Turn right on US-10 for 3.9 miles to Tyndall Road (map says Hamilton Road).
- Turn left on Tyndall Road for 0.5 miles to Stevenson Road.
- Turn left on Stevenson Road for 1.2 miles to W. Wingleton Road (at 0.9 miles Stevenson Road turns to the right and changes names to S. Branch Road).
- Turn left on W. Wingleton Road for 0.7 miles to the exchange where the trail comes out onto the left side of the road.
- Turn your vehicle around and park before the trail.

Leg 11 – Wingleton Road**Distance:** 3.31 Miles**Difficulty:** Challenging**Elevation:** Gain 583 / Loss 626**Total Miles: 58.28****Scenery:** Gorgeous**Trail Directions:**

- Turn right on Wingleton Road for 0.7 miles to South Branch Road.
- Turn left on South Branch Road for 0.4 miles.
- Shortly after crossing the Pere Marquette River veer left where the trail re-enters the woods.
- Follow the trail another 1.7 miles to 40th Street.
- Turn left on 40th Street for 0.5 miles to the exchange where the trail re-enters the woods.
- The beginning and ending are pretty easy with a fairly good climb in the middle.

Road Directions:

- Go back 0.7 miles to S. Branch Road.
- Turn left on S. Branch Road for 1.2 miles to 40th Street.
- Turn left on 40th Street for 1.5 miles to the exchange where the trail re-enters the woods.
- At 0.4 miles on S. Branch Road the trail re-enters the woods
- You may aid your runner at this point to ensure they make the turn into the woods.

Leg 12 – 40th Street

Total Miles: 63.13

Distance: 4.85 Miles

Difficulty: Challenging

Elevation: Gain 576 / Loss 647

Scenery: Visually Orgasmic

Trail Directions:

- Turn right and follow the trail for 3.1 miles
- Cross 56th Street (a busy paved road) and go for 2.9 miles.
- Continue straight on the main trail – DO NOT FOLLOW the spur trail that branches off to the right
- Continue straight across 56th Street (again)
- Following the trail for another 1.3 miles
- Turn left on the spur trail leading to Bowman Bridge Campground.
- Continue 0.4 miles to the finish

*For the last 0.4 miles you will be following **white blazes** instead of blue. This leg crosses 56th street two times. This last leg of the day has a little of everything, you will be able to cool off in the Pere Marquette River when you are done, enjoy!*

Road Directions:

- Continue straight on 40th Street for 2.6 miles.
- Follow 40th street to the right to 56th Street (no street sign). You will come to a stop sign.
- Turn left on 56th Street for 0.9 miles to Bowman Bridge Campground.
- Turn left into Bowman Bridge Campground
- Take the first road to the left up the hill and follow it to the back of the campground to the finish area.
- Double park in the group site 3 & 4 parking areas or along the right hand edge of the circular drive at the end of the road. Make sure to maintain an open lane for traffic.

For access to the river continue straight instead of taking the first left after turning into the campground and follow the drive to the river. If you want to park down by the river you must purchase a vehicle parking permit from the pay station.

When driving in the campground you must observe the posted speed limit of 15 MPH. Please watch out for runners and campers. We do not have a lot of space at the finish area for parking; please do not park more than one vehicle in the area. If you have individuals meeting you at the finish they will need to park down at the river parking area.