

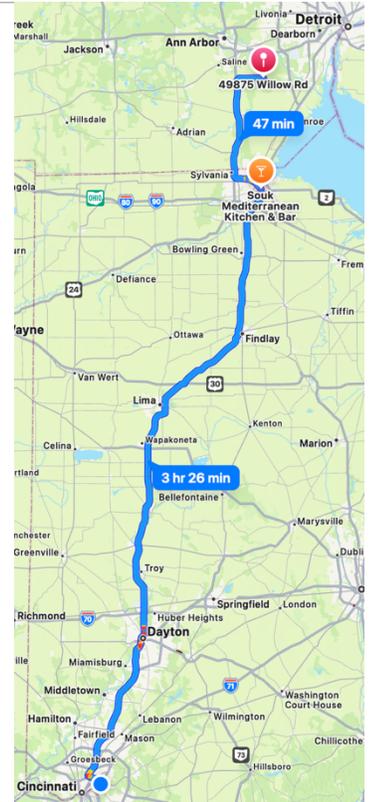
Northern Michigan & Voyageurs National Park Adventure

September 6-18, 2025

Saturday, September 6

Cincinnati to Five Solas Farm (Belleville, MI)

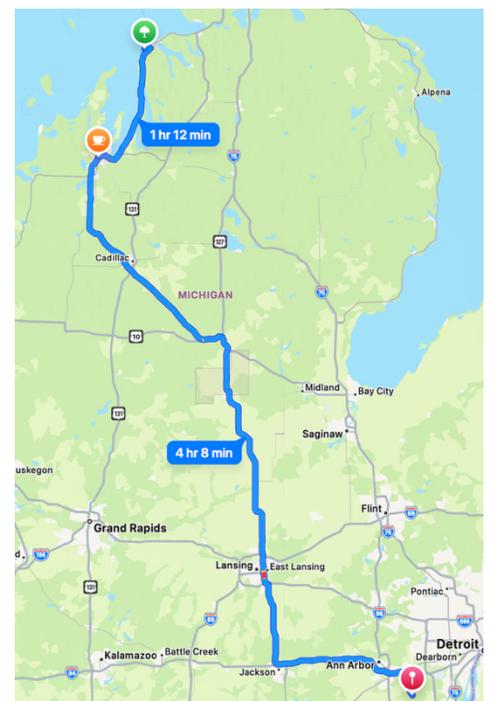
- **Total Drive Time:** 4 hours (260 miles)
- **Route:** I-75 N through Ohio into Michigan
- **Lunch:**  SOUK Mediterranean Kitchen & Bar - 139 South Huron Toledo, Ohio 43604
- **Arrive:** Five Solas Homestead and Farm, Belleville
 - **Harvest Host:** 49875 Willow Road, Belleville, MI
 - Farm store with soaps, jams, organic produce
 - Call ahead to confirm arrival time
 - Purchase from farm store as courtesy
- **Evening:** Relax at farm, early rest for tomorrow's drive
- **Dinner:**  at camper



Sunday, September 7

Five Solas to Fisherman's Island State Park *** site 10 – Rustic

- **Total Drive Time:** 4 hours (240 miles)
- **Route:** US-23 N to I-75 N to US-31 N
- **Coffee Stops:** 
 - Traverse City: Higher Grounds Coffee (socially conscious roaster)
 - Alternative: Hexenbelle (vegetarian/Arabic comfort food & specialty coffee)
- **New Food Scene Alert:** Farm Club TC - 90% of vegetables grown on-site, many items can be made vegan/vegetarian
- **Lunch Options in Traverse City Park:** 
- **Campground:** Fisherman's Island State Park - Site 10 (reserved)
- **Evening:**  Kayaking at Lake Michigan (weather permitting) or  hike on the beach
- **Dinner:** Campground 



ASTRONOMY OPTION - EXCELLENT NIGHT

- **Location:** Beach area away from campground lights
- **Targets:** Saturn at opposition Sept 8 (rises at sunset, brightest all year!)
- **Astrophotography Setup:**
 - **Milky Way Core:** Setting in SW around 9-10 PM
 - **Camera:** Canon R5 with 14-35mm at 14mm
 - **Settings:** ISO 3200, f/2.8, 20-25 seconds (no tracker)
 - **With SkyTracker:** ISO 1600, f/2.8, 60-90 seconds

Monday, September 8

Fisherman's Island - Full Exploration Day with Charlevoix Visit

- **Morning Options:**
 - Dawn beach photography
 -  Fisherman's Island Nature Trail: 5.9 miles (if time allows)

MIDDAY EXCURSION TO CHARLEVOIX (45 minutes away):

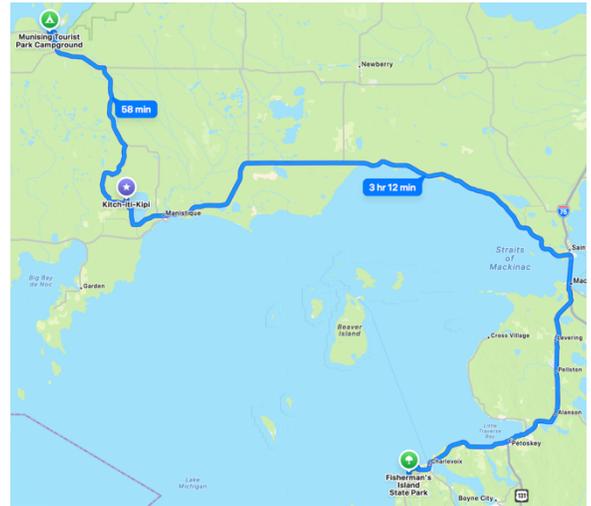
- **Lunch Options with Frida:** 
 - Bridge Street Taproom - has ten dog-friendly tables, thirty-two local Michigan beers and ciders on tap
 - Bier's Inwood Brewery - Dogs welcome in the expansive outdoor area, artisan brewed beer and 10-inch pizzas with panoramic views of Lake Michigan
 - Small Batch Local - European-inspired bakery items, dogs welcome at outdoor tables
 - The Villager Pub - six umbrella-shaded tables on their patio, famous for Great Lakes whitefish
- **After Lunch:** Walk downtown Charlevoix, visit the mushroom houses
- **Pet-Friendly Beach:** Fisherman's Park has TWO areas that allow dogs off leash for swimming
- **Return to Fisherman's Island:**
 - Evening Petoskey stone hunting
 - Dinner 
 - Prepare for tomorrow's departure

Tuesday, September 9

Fisherman's Island to Munising with Afternoon Hike *** site 76 – Full connection

- **Morning:** 
 - Early departure from Fisherman's Island
 - Coffee: Roast & Toast, Petoskey
- **Kitch-iti-kipi (Big Spring) - 45-minute detour**

- Crystal-clear 40-foot deep spring
- Self-operated observation raft
- Picnic 🍎🍷
- **1:30 PM:** Arrive Munising Tourist Park - Site 76
 - Quick setup at waterfront full hookup site



AFTERNOON HIKE (Pet sitter available today):

- **Chapel Falls Trail** - 2.4 miles round trip 🚶
 - Easy hike along old roadbed through maple forest
 - 60-foot Chapel Falls viewing platforms
 - Leave Frida with pet sitter
 - Start by 3 PM to avoid crowds
- **Coffee/Treats:** Falling Rock Café & Bookstore
- **Dinner:** 🚚

🔭 ASTRONOMY NOTE ★★★★★

- Some light pollution from town
- Beach access for Pictured Rocks star silhouettes

Wednesday, September 10 🍷🍎🚚

Pictured Rocks Day 1 - Ultimate Kayaking Adventure

- **Early Morning:** Quick coffee and light breakfast
- **9:30 AM:** Arrive at Pictured Rocks Kayaking
 - Address: 1348 Commercial Street, Munising
 - Check-in for 10:00 AM tour
- **10:00 AM - 3:00 PM:** Ultimate Kayak Tour (Reserved) 🍷
 - 5-hour adventure visiting 13 points of interest
 - Safety boat accompanies for comfort
 - Frida staying with Rover pet sitter
 - Pack snacks and water (lunch may be included - verify)
- **Post-Kayak:**
 - Late lunch/early dinner at 387 Restaurant (homemade pie!) 🚚
 - Rest at campground - you'll be tired!
- **Evening:** Relaxation after full day on water

Thursday, September 11

Munising to Porcupine Mountains

- **Morning Options with Frida:**

-  Wagner Falls - easy 1-mile trail, 10 min from camp
- OR Miners Beach for morning photography  Depart Munising by 11 AM

- Coffee: Dead River Coffee, Marquette 

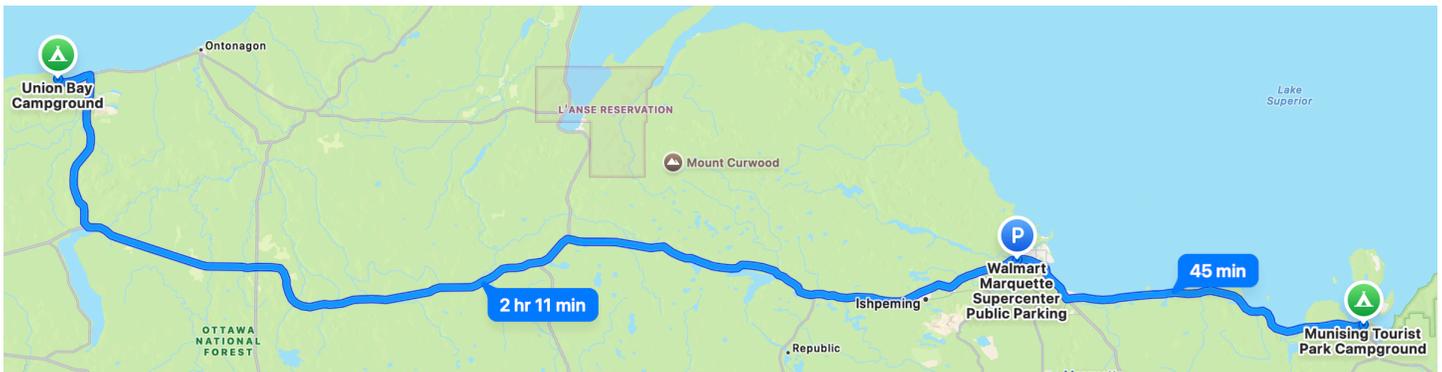
- Resupply at Walmart (3225 US-41, Marquette, MI 49855) 

- Lunch in Marquette (TBD) 

- **Afternoon:** Arrive Porcupine Mountains - Union Bay Site 15

- **Evening:**

- Set up camp
-  Hike Union Mine Trail (1.10mi)
- Dinner 



Friday, September 12

Porcupine Mountains - River Trails & Waterfalls

- **Pre-dawn:** Lake of the Clouds sunrise
- **Hike:** West/East River Trail Loop 
 - 2.7 miles with river crossings
 - Old-growth trees, multiple waterfalls
 - Black bears active pre-hibernation
- **Afternoon:** Presque Isle River waterfalls trilogy  

- **Coffee/Supplies:** Antonio's Restaurant, Ontonagon 🍷
- **Dinner at camp:** 🚐

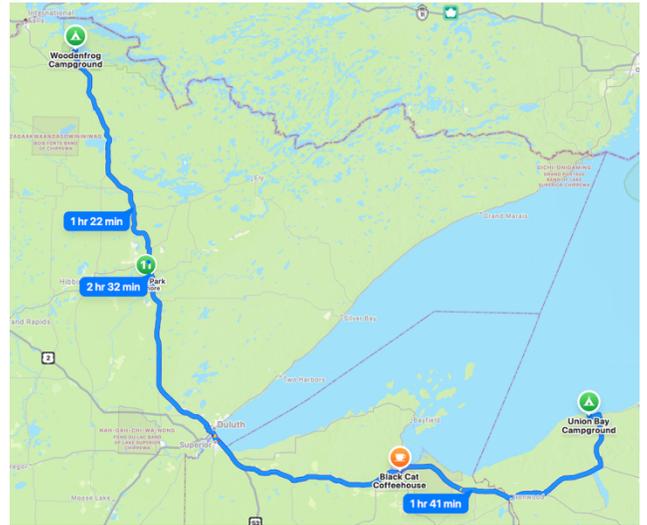
🔭 ASTRONOMY - BEST DARK SKY ★★★★★

- **Targets:** Saturn overhead, M31/M33 galaxies

Saturday, September 13 🍷 🍏 🚐 ✂️

Journey to Voyageurs - Woodenfrog Campground

- **Total Drive:** 5 hours (300 miles) through Wisconsin forests
- **Coffee/Breakfast:** Black Cat Coffeehouse, Ashland, WI (1.5 hours in) 🍷
- **Route:** Through Duluth, then US-53 North through Virginia
- **Lunch: Picnic at Olcott Park in Virginia, MN** (4 hours in) 🍏
 - Right off US-53/169 in downtown Virginia
 - Pavilions and picnic tables available
 - Easy parking for RV/camper
 - Minimal walking required



- **3:00 PM:** Arrive directly at Woodenfrog State Forest
 - First-come, first-served - arrive early on Saturday!
 - Secure campsite (sites near entrance avoid twisting through whole campground)
 - Cell service adequate for working/streaming
- **Evening:** 🚐
 - Set up camp
 - Explore Lake Kabetogama by kayak
 - Listen for wildlife at dusk

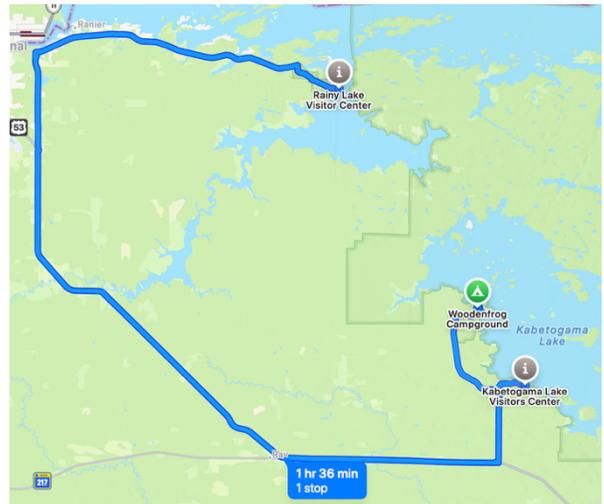
Sunday, September 14 🍷🚐🚶🏃

Voyageurs Day Trip from Woodenfrog

- **Morning:** Early coffee and breakfast at camp
- **Drive:** 45 minutes to Rainy Lake Visitor Center
- **Noon:** Grand Tour from Rainy Lake VC
 - Check-in 11:30 AM
 - 2.5-hour cruise
 - No food on boat
 - Little American Island gold rush history
 - **Note:** Frida stays at Woodenfrog campsite
- **3:00 PM Return:** Back to Woodenfrog area

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES NEAR WOODENFROG:

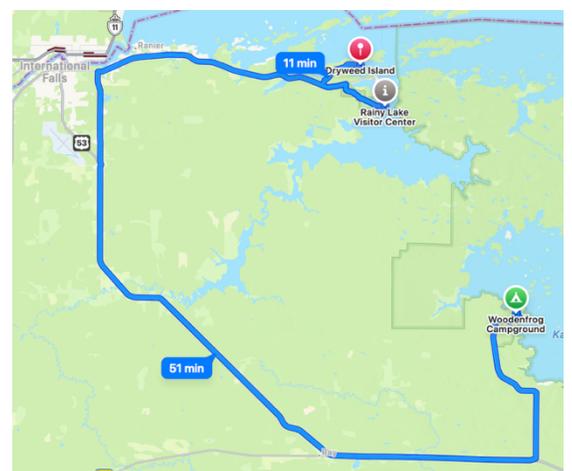
- **Ellsworth Rock Gardens** (10 minutes by boat from Kabetogama)
 - Historic folk art garden on an island
 - Accessible by kayak or rental boat
- **Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center** (5 minutes from campground)
 - Exhibits and short trails
- **Gold Portage Trail** (near visitor center)
 - Easy 2-mile loop through forest
- **Evening:** Sunset paddle on Lake Kabetogama



Monday, September 15 🏕️🏃

Woodenfrog to Dryweed Island Adventure

- **Morning:**
 - Pack up campsite
 - Last-minute supply run if needed
- **Drive:** 45 minutes to Rainy Lake Visitor Center
 - Park car & camper (free overnight for backcountry campers)
 - Organize gear for water taxi
- **Afternoon:** Meet Voyageurs Outfitters for water taxi
 - Transport to Dryweed Island North Side site
 - **Aurora advantage:** North-facing site for potential northern lights
- **Evening:**
 - Set up island camp
 - Explore your private island
 - Listen for wolves at dusk



ISLAND ASTRONOMY ★★★★★

- **Premium dark sky opportunity**
- **Aurora Watch:** North side positioning ideal
- **Moon Phase:** Building toward new moon (Sept 21)
- **Consider:** Leave telescope in locked vehicle

Tuesday, September 16 🍷 🚗

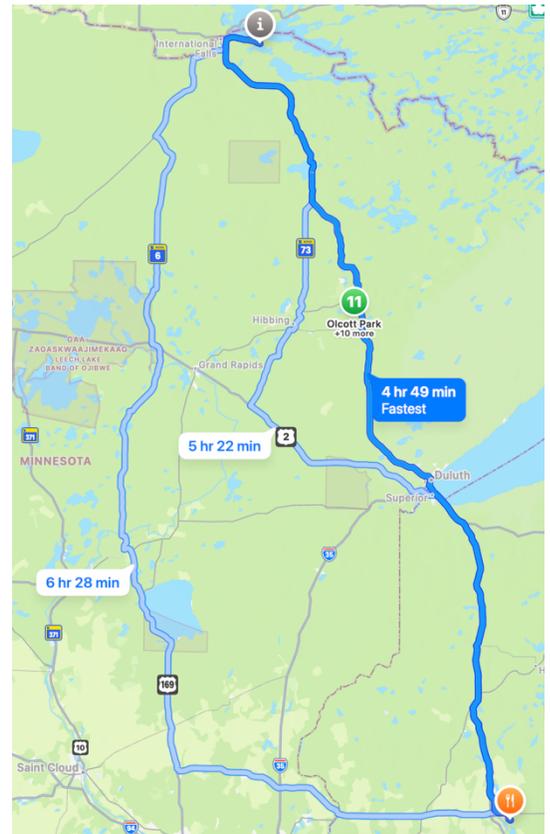
Tuesday, September 16

Island Morning to Fire Away Roadhouse

- **Dawn:** Morning mist photography from Dryweed
- **Morning:** Pack up island camp
- **10 AM:** Water taxi return to mainland
- **10:30 AM:** Depart Rainy Lake VC
- **Total Drive:** 6 hours (380 miles) to Cameron, WI
- **Route:** Through Duluth and scenic Wisconsin

DULUTH STOP (2.5 hours from Voyageurs):

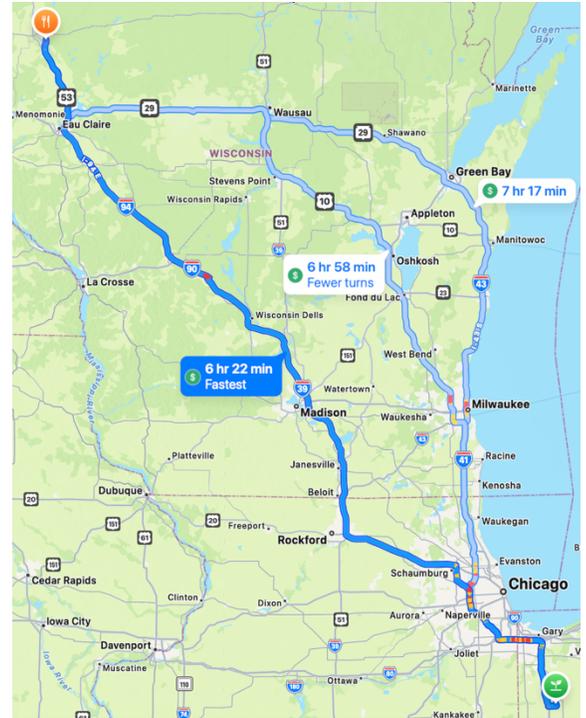
- **Lunch Options:**
 - Vikre Distillery - dogs welcome inside and out
 - Little Angie's Cantina - popular with dogs
 - Canal Park area restaurants
- **Quick Activities:** Lakewalk if time allows
- **YMCA:** 302 W 1st St (if shower needed)
- **Evening:** Arrive Fire Away Roadhouse & Rest Camp
 - **Harvest Host:** 1190 25th St, Cameron, WI
 - Veteran-owned rural bar & restaurant
 - Purchase dinner as Harvest Host courtesy



Wednesday, September 17

Fire Away Roadhouse to Perkins' Good Earth Farm

- **Total Drive:** 7 hours (433 miles) to DeMotte, IN
- **Morning:** Thank hosts at Fire Away
- **Route:** Through Wisconsin into Indiana
- **Lunch Options:**
 - Eau Claire, WI area
 - La Crosse, WI (on Mississippi River)
- **Afternoon:** Continue through Wisconsin
- **Evening:** Arrive Perkins' Good Earth Farm
 - **Harvest Host:** 8301 W 1000 N, DeMotte, IN
 - Certified organic CSA farm with farm store
 - Grab-and-go soups & salads, organic produce
 - Electric hookup available for additional fee
 - Hiking trails on property



Thursday, September 18

Final Leg Home to Cincinnati

- **Total Drive:** 3.5 hours (215 miles)
- **Morning:** Thank hosts, grab coffee in DeMotte
- **Route:** I-65 S to I-74 E
- **Lunch:** Lafayette area if needed
- **Afternoon:** Home to Cincinnati!
- **Total Trip:** ~2,500 miles of adventure

Astrophotography Technical Guide

Canon R5 M2 with iOptron SkyTracker Setup

Basic Milky Way (No Tracker)

- Lens: 14-35mm at 14mm
- ISO: 3200-6400
- Aperture: f/2.8
- Shutter: 20-25 seconds (500 rule)
- Focus: Live view on bright star, magnify 10x

Tracked Milky Way (Best Quality)

- Lens: 14-35mm at 14-24mm
- ISO: 800-1600
- Aperture: f/2.8

- Shutter: 60-120 seconds
- Multiple frames for stacking

SkyTracker Alignment Tips

- Use Polaris for alignment
- Phone apps: PS Align Pro, Polar Scope Align
- Level tripod crucial - bring bubble level
- Allow 10 minutes for alignment

Milky Way Visibility Times (September 6-18)

- Core visible: Sunset to 11 PM
- Best photography: 9-10:30 PM
- Moon phases: First Quarter Sept 11, building to New Moon Sept 21
- Saturn at opposition Sept 8 - photograph with telephoto!

Best Locations Priority

1. **Porcupine Mountains** - Lake of the Clouds (Sept 12)
2. **Dryweed Island** - Zero light pollution (Sept 13)
3. **Fisherman's Island** - Beach setting (Sept 7-8)
4. **Woodenfrog** - Lake reflections (Sept 14-15)

September Sky Highlights

- **Saturn:** At opposition Sept 8 - best viewing all year
- **Jupiter:** Rising progressively earlier each night
- **Andromeda Galaxy:** Well-placed in evening sky
- **Aurora Season:** Check aurora-alerts.uk daily
- **Hawk Migration:** Peak at Brockway Mountain

Wildlife & Photography Focus

September Wildlife Activity

- **Bears:** Fattening for hibernation - active but wary
- **Moose:** Best at dawn in marshy areas (Voyageurs)
- **Wolves:** Most vocal at dusk/night (Dryweed Island)
- **Hawks:** Migration peaks mid-September (Keweenaw)
- **Deer:** Active at dawn/dusk all locations

Best Photography Trails

- **Fisherman's Island:** Nature Trail - 5.9 miles
- **Pictured Rocks:** Chapel Loop - 10 miles
- **Porcupines:** Lake of the Clouds - sunrise essential
- **Voyageurs:** Blind Ash Bay - 2.5 miles

Notable Dining Updates

Traverse City (Sept 7)

- **Farm Club:** 90% vegetables grown on-site, vegetarian options
- **Hexenbelle:** Vegetarian breakfast/lunch, Arabic comfort food
- **Spanglish:** Only certified green restaurant, vegan tamales
- **The Cooks' House:** Farm-to-fork fine dining
- **Taproot Cider House:** Earth to Table menu

Throughout Route

- **Marquette:** Co-ops and vegetarian cafes
- **Grand Rapids, MN:** Forest Lake Restaurant
- **Look for:** Farm-to-table spots, ethnic variety with veggie options

Coffee Highlights (Supporting Local)

- **Higher Grounds Coffee, TC:** Socially conscious roaster
- **Dead River Coffee, Marquette:** Woman-owned
- **Golden Leaf Café, Menomonie:** Roasts in-house
- **Phoenix Coffee, Eau Claire:** Specialty shop
- **The Jampot, Eagle River:** Monk-made pastries

Essential Reminders

- **Mosquito netting** for September bugs
- **Bear spray** for Porcupines
- **Dry bags** for island camping
- **Cash** for state forest campgrounds
- **Printed permits** for Dryweed Island
- **Red headlamp** for astronomy nights
- **Lens cleaning kit** for astrophotography
- **Hand warmers** for long exposures
- **Binoculars** for hawk migration
- **Call ahead** to all Harvest Hosts
- **Reserve Castle Mound Campground ASAP!**

