

Timberland Wilderness Segment (Atlas Map 26f)

SNAPSHOT

3.9 miles: Tower Rd. Northern Trail Access to Tower Rd. Southern Trail Access

2 This very remote segment through hardwood forests features ice-walled lake plains, ravines and several small streams.



From several small intermittent streams/creeks.



Portions overlap with logging/forest roads.

TRAIL ACCESS AND PARKING

Tower Rd. Northern Trail Access: From Merrill at the intersection of I-39/USH-51 and STH-64, take STH-64 west for 3.0 mi to the junction with STH-107. Continue west on STH-64/107 6.6 mi. At CTH-M continue west for 10.9 mi. At Tower Rd. turn right and go north 9.0 mi to the parking area on the west side of the road. From Rib Lake at the intersection of STH-102 and CTH-D, take STH-102 east for 2.0 mi. At CTH-C turn right and go south 7.0 mi. At CTH-M turn left and go east 8.0 mi. At Tower Rd. turn left and go north 9.0 mi.

Tower Rd. Southern Trail Access: From Merrill at the intersection of I-39/USH-51 and STH-64, take STH-64 west for 3.0 mi to the junction with STH-107. Continue west on STH-64/107 6.6 mi. At CTH-M continue west for 10.9 mi. At Tower Rd. turn right and go north 7.0 mi to the Trail access on the east side of the road. Roadside parking. No overnight parking. From Rib Lake at the intersection of STH-102 and CTH-D, take STH-102 east for 2.0 mi. At CTH-C turn right and go south 7.0 mi. At CTH-M turn left and go east 8.0 mi. At Tower Rd. turn left and go north 7.0 mi.

THE HIKE

This segment passes through a 35,000-acre privately owned property that is a large undeveloped tract. Timber production and harvest have not hindered the eastern timber wolf, black bear, bobcat, deer, red fox or fisher populations. The signs of wildlife and the isolation of the region make for a true wilderness feeling. The state purchased a linear easement on this property to permanently protect the Ice Age Trail in 1999 and in 2002 the state purchased a Forest Legacy Easement over the entire 35,000 acres that prevents the land from being developed or subdivided.

The segment starts off from a point on Tower Road directly across from the Wood Lake Segment Trail access and crosses a grassy forest road after a quarter mile. This is the first of four crossings of logging roads. Logging operations have occurred in the recent past moving generally from the south to the north. Some clear-cutting of aspen and the timber stand improvement cutting of hardwoods are evident along the route. Prior to more recent logging operations, this area was last logged in 1938.

After the second logging road crossing, the segment passes through an area with several trailside erratics then traverses the top of a crescent-shaped ridge before reaching an old railroad grade.

As the segment makes its way southeast, it follows the edge of an ice-walled lake plain (LI35). Hikers can peer through the forest to see creek-filled ravines and forested lowlands of mature hemlock, balsam fir, white cedar and yellow birch. Pass a Leopold bench dedicated to Herb Schotz, volunteer and former

coordinator of the Ice Age Trail Alliance's Northwoods Chapter, as the segment turns to the southwest.

The segment crosses a two-plank native material bridge (LI36) made on-site that spans a gully. Here steam engines moved timber via the old railroad grade to the main line south and east.

After crossing the third logging road (also an old railroad grade) the segment follows rolling ridges of two more ice-walled lake plains before crossing the final logging road and reaching its terminus at Tower Road.

Mobile Skills Crew project site, 2004, 2007

AREA SERVICES

Rib Lake: See Rib Lake Segment, p. 84. From the Tower Rd. southern Trail access go south and west ~9 mi. Also see Trail Access and Parking directions, below.

Medford: See Pine Line Segment and East Lake Segment, p. 80. From the Tower Rd. southern Trail access go south and west ~30 mi.

Merrill: See Turtle Rock Segment and Grandfather Falls Segment, p. 101. From the Tower Rd. southern Trail access go south and east ~27.5 mi. Also see Trail Access and Parking directions, above.



I have a deep sense of gratitude for those who had the vision to establish this Trail and for those who selflessly and quietly maintain the quality of it. I know that our state is enhanced by its presence. It is a corridor of beauty and adventure for many people and a corridor of connection for wildlife of all kinds. Hiking it is a treasured gift which I hope to re-gift to others. As I found on a billboard in Hatley, "Sometimes the best things are right in your backyard."

CHRIS MILLER (AKA "DANCING DOVE"), ICE AGE TRAIL THOUSAND-MILLER