

Great Rides

Wisconsin Wandering

Wind your Paint through the sandy trails of the Governor Knowles State Forest.

By RACHEL FLORMAN

As the weather gets hotter, the shade and calming sound of rushing waters makes the Governor Knowles State Forest in Northwestern Wisconsin the perfect destination for a summer excursion with your Paint.

Established in 1970 and re-dedicated in 1981, the Governor Knowles State Forest honors the conservation work of former Governor and avid outdoorsman Warren P. Knowles. Primarily located along the St. Croix River, the forest's 34,000 acres offer plenty of room to roam with your Paint. More than 40 miles of soft, sandy trails wind through the forest, and the accommodating Trade River Horse Campground sites means you can spend a whole weekend exploring.

Five trails make up the system, with distances ranging from two to 20 miles. Take the 21-mile Barrens Loop to tour the outskirts of the forest. Enjoy riding under tall pines and hardwoods, and keep an eye out for lively animals; dragonflies, Bald Eagles, swans, foxes and many more creatures call the St. Croix River and the forest their home.

For a challenge, take the Black Trail for a three-mile excursion to the river bottom. This short route takes you to scenic overlooks and down steep embankments. This trail connects with Barrens Loop and other paths; make it a short ride or add it on to a longer route.

Looking for companionship along the ride? The Equestrian Friends of Governor Knowles State Forest are active in supporting the forest and its equine ventures. Join the group to meet up with fellow riders, participate in trail challenges and help keep the trails open for years to come. **PHJ**

○ Governor Knowles State Forest

WISCONSIN

If You Go:

Best Times: The Governor Knowles State Forest is open year-round, though winter temperatures close down water and restroom accommodations. Day riding is available from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Trail Amenities and Fees: Forty campsites are offered at the Trade River Horse Campground on a first-come first-served basis. Water, restrooms, tie lines and fire rings are available.

All riders 16 and older must have a Wisconsin trail pass; annual passes are \$20 and day passes are \$4. Passes may be purchased on-site at the Trade River Campground. Riders who are camping must also purchase a vehicle sticker, which can be purchased annually or for a day. Overnight camping fees are \$12 per night for Wisconsin residents and \$14 per night for out-of-state visitors. Day riders may park at the Trade River Day Use Area without a vehicle sticker.



For More Information: The Equestrian Friends of Governor Knowles State Forest have compiled all the information you need to plan your perfect Wisconsin getaway. Visit governorknowles.org to learn more, including horse health requirements.