



Highbanks Trail • AuSable River Water Trail (Cooke Dam Pond)



Watch the mystical waters surge out of the hillside at Iargo Springs.

Highbanks Trail

Witness some of the most spectacular scenery in all of Lower Michigan on the 7-mile Highbanks Trail in Huron National Forest. The trail follows the edge of a steep bluff overlooking the AuSable River and Cooke Dam Pond from Iargo Springs to Sid Town.

Considered a sacred place by Native Americans, Iargo Springs is a must see. From the scenic overlook, a 294-step stairway leads you down to a series of boardwalks along the springs. Watch the mystical waters surge out of the mossy bluff to form several streams flowing down to Cooke Dam Pond.

The 4-mile hike from Iargo Springs to Lumberman's Monument passes by more scenic overlooks and Canoer's Memorial Monument, which commemorates the river's most famous paddlers. At the Lumberman's Monument Visitors Center, see the 14-foot Lumberman's Monument, and interpretive displays about the history of Michigan's

lumber industry and life of the lumberjacks. A short hike to Sand Dune Overlook offers more amazing views. Camping is available at the Monument Campground, near the visitors center, or at Sawmill Point near Sid Town. You'll find lodging, dining and shopping 15 miles east in Oscoda.

AuSable River Water Trail (Cooke Dam Pond)

Voted "Michigan's most popular river for paddling" in a 2015 MDNR survey, the AuSable River flows more than 120 miles from Grayling to Lake Huron and the port city of Oscoda. Home to the annual AuSable River Canoe Marathon, watercraft access is nicely developed all along the river, especially at Cooke Dam Pond.

The Cooke Dam Pond section of river runs through Huron National Forest, offering 4 water access sites and a wide range of recreational opportunities, including fishing, swimming, boating, paddling and 42 riverside campsites. The pond was created when the Cooke Dam was constructed in 1911, the first of six dams built by Consumers Energy along the AuSable River. The pond is managed by the Michigan DNR and considered a good fishery for pan fish, walleye and northern pike.

The 7-mile paddle from Pine Acres Landing to Cooke Dam is fun way to explore the waterway and observe the seasonal waterfowl and bald eagles that call this area home. For more information about canoe and kayak rentals and spotting services, visit: www.Oscoda.com



View of Cooke Dam Pond from the scenic overlook at Lumberman's Monument Visitors Center.