Take a 'Walk-in- the-Water' at Oakwoods Metropark

You've heard of hiking trails, bike trails, ORV trails and horse trails.

How about a canoe trail?

There's one not far from here on the lower Huron River. It's in Oakwoods Metropark, near Flat Rock in southern Wayne County.

Naturalist Bob Wittersheim calls the

Oakwoods, one of the 11 Huron-Clinton Metroparks, doesn't provide canoes, but you can rent them at nearby liveries.

To follow the trail on your own, there is a series of floats, each containing an interpretive message about the river environment. The Huron, even in its lower reaches, has an abundance of wildlife although it's not far from 1-275.

IF YOU'RE the sociable sort, try the "Lazy River Cance Float" from Willow Metropark to Oakwoods this weekend. Wittersheim will lead the flotilla down the river beginning at 1 p.m. Sun-day, July 5. He plans a two-hour trip.

outdoors

Pack your own canoe but plan to take the shuttle service to get back to your car at Willow. To register, call the Oakwoods nature center at 697-9181. As usual, the program is free, but you'll need a vehicle entry permit. This canoeist took the jaunt last year in early spring and can assure you it's a good jaunt. The crowd was sociable with a good age range, which is a dis-

MICHIGAN'S least-known road is the North Country Trail, which winds through 800 miles of the northern low-er peninsula It's part of a 3,200-mile national trail.

probably that no one makes money from it.

Backpackers aren't your biggest spenders, at least not when they get to the north country. If there were souvenir shops, ice cream stands and motels with heated pools along the way, the trail would become known overnight.

State Sen. Joe Mack, whose great cause is Cleveland Cliffs mining company, once said he would just as soon keep backpackers out of the upper peninsula because "they bring a \$10 bill and one set of underwear and in two weeks don't change either."

A nonprofit group is seeking to pro-tect, publicize and improve the trail.

It's called the North Country Trail Association (NCTA), and its state leader is Virginia Wunsch, Box 311, White Cloud, Mi. 49349. There really is a White. Cloud, up around Muskegonway. She, says it's the midpoint of the entire trail.

She says there's a need for trail building tools, trained leaders to supervise volunteer trail building, literature to explain the trail to the public and just general tender loving care.

Anyway, if you send the NCTA a buck and a self-addressed stamped envelope, they promise to send a trails bulletin called "How to Pack Your. Backpack." And it will no doubt get you on their mailing list.

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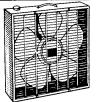
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