

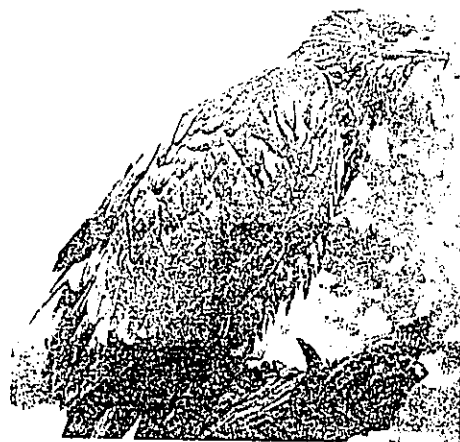
Riding-hiking trail has variety

By GORDON CHARLES
Record-Eagle outdoor editor

Hiking and horseback enthusiasts can get a real double-dip of their favorite sport in the Grand Traverse Region. All they have to do is seek out a portion of the Michigan Shore-to-Shore Riding-Hiking Trail.

In this area, the trail splits, with one segment running through Benzie County and the other wandering up into Leelanau County. The trail branches near the Benzie-Grand Traverse county line. One part ends up at Empire while the other comes out at Elberta, both on Lake Michigan.

Autumn is the ideal time of year to take advantage of the Shore-to-Shore Trail which stretches all the way across the Lower Peninsula from Lake Michigan to Lake Huron at East Tawas. On this west end of the long trail, the route touches all but Antrim County in the five-county region.



Crossing Michigan on the Shore-to-Shore Hiking and Riding Trail you are apt to see eagles and ospreys. Chances are though you won't get this close to even an immature bald eagle, above, but are more likely to see a flying osprey or fish hawk.



The trail travels through some of Michigan's most beautiful wild country, crosses streams and passes by many lakes. It is laid out through state and federal forest lands, as well as across private property which has been leased. In places it follows

some established highway rights-of-way. Boy Scout councils and troops have helped in construction and maintenance of portions of it.

Public trail camps, as well as private facilities and services, are available for trail users. This makes it possible to follow as much, or as little, of the long trail as wished. Indeed, a number of hikers and riders have crossed the entire state on this trail by doing it a little bit at a time.

In addition to trail camps at Empire and Elberta, good ones are found at Gerry Lake, Walkin, Mud Lake, Schecks, Kalkaska and Goose Creek. All are located on state forest lands and tend to be rather primitive in nature. Most hikers and riders, however, are self-sufficient and enjoy the rare solitude of a near-wilderness camping experience.

For those enjoying a little more civilization, there are plenty of ranches servicing the trail. Ranch Rudolf in the Boardman River Valley has served trail riders and hikers for many years, but it is a good idea to check first and, if possible, make reservations.

Recreationists following this unique trail are likely to see a variety of wildlife too shy to remain along the more-heavily-

traveled highways. Bald eagles, ospreys and Kirtland's warblers are some of the rarer forms of wildlife, along with the more common raccoons, foxes, coyotes, deer, squirrels, rabbits, ruffed grouse, woodcock and perhaps even a bear can sometimes be seen.

As is the case with other hiking trails, the Shore-to-Shore Riding-Hiking Trail is off-limits to motorized vehicles, except where it has to use part of a highway right-of-way. In winter, portions of the trail are also popular with cross-country skiers.

Maps of the complete trail, along with additional information on it, are available at most offices of the Department of Natural Resources, including ones in Traverse City, Cadillac and Lansing.

Churches listed

TRAVERSE CITY — The Grand Traverse area has many churches, some of them of historical import, others of artistic significance, but all make the traveler welcome.

The area hotels and motels have lists of churches and times of services available for the traveler.

Area serves up wide range of fare

TRAVERSE CITY — The clear, zesty air of the north woods can bring on a hearty appetite.

And the region has a wide variety of eating places to appease the hunger of the visitor and resident alike.

They range from fast food and carryout establishments to gourmet. Patrons can find ethnic foods.

Restaurants can be found in woodsy settings. They can be found "downtown." Some overlook the lakes and bays, others are rooftop dining rooms.

These may be only four or 10 stories but the vistas rival views from some of their loftier metropolitan brethren.

Price ranges, too, can satisfy any pocketbook.

Many places take credit cards and some accept reservations.

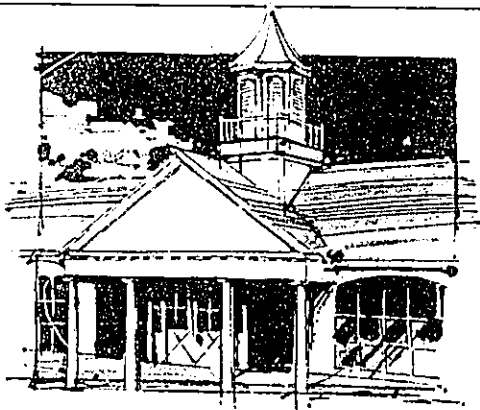
Several, however, are open for the summer season only and the season can run from April to November or May to October. A few close on Labor Day. A wise suggestion is to call ahead if you've eaten at a restaurant during the summer and plan to return.

Dress is casual at the majority of restaurants and many have entertainment.

Color tour time also is a good time to taste the many varieties of special fare available in the Grand Traverse region.

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