

# Take a Hike

## Plenty of places to strike out on foot and view the fall colors

BY KAREN NORTON

**S**o long, beach chair. Hello, hiking boots. For those who love to be outside, the best days of the year are here. If you're looking for a free family-friendly activity, here's a great tip: find a forest and walk in it.

In northern Michigan, this is pretty easy to do. Following is a by-no-means-complete list of some places to find great fall hiking. Included are self-guided and interpreter-guided hikes and events.

### SAND LAKES QUIET AREA

A good place to start is the Sand Lakes Quiet Area off Broomhead Road near Williamsburg. Well-marked trails used by cross-country skiers in the winter make wonderful paths for those seeking color on an autumn afternoon.

The trails skirt several small lakes in a peaceful setting. It's a good place to sit, listen to birdsong and put some distance between you and the raking that needs to be done at home.

### SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

If you prefer to hike where you'll catch views of the September sun glinting off Lake Michigan, head out to the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. No ranger-guided hikes or events are planned in the lakeshore this fall, but trails are open to those who don't mind heading out on their own. (See Leelanau Conservancy information for guided hikes in the national park.)

Trail maps are located in boxes at each trailhead. A word to the wise: stop at the Visitors Center in Empire to pick up your trail maps because the boxes are sometimes empty. The Center is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily through the end of October.

If you like to do your hiking behind the wheel of your car, the Pierce Stocking Drive in the lakeshore remains open until the middle of November and offers



Record-Eagle/John L. Russell  
Catch scenes like this one while walking the region's trails as colors change and leaves begin to fall.

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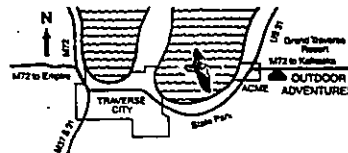
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