



Black Mountain Pathway

Formed by glaciers during the last ice age, Black Mountain is a heavily forested dune complex soaring 950 feet over Black Lake and the surrounding wilderness in Black Mountain Forest Recreation Area.

Developed by the Michigan DNR as a Nordic sports complex, Black Mountain Pathway offers over 30 miles of interconnected cross-country skiing trails, including a 5.9-mile skate-skiing loop. The trail system forms a series of loops, allowing you to choose the trail loops that best suit your skill level. These nicely designed two-way trails are extra wide with a firm grassy surface. Each intersection is numbered and includes a map showing you where you are, so you don't have to worry about getting lost. The entire trail system is open to hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding during the non-winter months. It's one of our favorite year-round trail destinations.

Equestrian use is permitted April through November on all two-tracks and nonmotorized pathways in the recreation area. A rustic equestrian campground is located just south of the Twin Lakes Trailhead with vault toilets and a water pump, and open to non-equestrian campers, as well.

Black Mountain also includes over 60 miles of ORV trails and two-tracks, including a 65-acre scramble area for ATVs. The ORV trails are completely separate from the nonmotorized trails. Both trail systems are clearly marked. Only the nonmotorized trails are shown on our map.

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If you'd like to explore the trails on your mountain bike, as we did, we highly recommend the 18-mile outer loop. To take this route, we suggest starting at the Twin Lakes Trailhead and making a series of right-hand turns at each intersection. The outer loop guides you past some of the most scenic sections of the trail system and through some challenging ravines.

If you prefer hiking the trails, we recommend starting at the County Line Trailhead (at a higher elevation) and taking the trails east for panoramic views of Black Lake and Lake Sixteen. On a clear day, you can even catch a glimpse of Lake Huron off in the distance (near intersection 11).