

# Ice Climbing & Winter Camping

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



In recent years ice climbing and winter camping have become popular winter sports within the Lakeshore. Due to ample lake effect snow, numerous waterfalls, porous sandstone cliffs, and the water which seeps out of the rock layers, curtains and columns of ice are common along the Sand Point Road area of the park.

## When is snow & ice available?

Snow and ice generally are present by the second or third week in December and remains until late March. While ice frequently forms along the Pictured Rocks Cliffs above Lake Superior, these areas are not recommended for climbing due to hazardous exposure to the lake. Other popular areas for climbing are

on Grand Island National Recreation Area which is administered by the Hiawatha National Forest. Always call for ice conditions as it changes from year to year.

## Climbing locations & safety



The most accessible ice columns are found along the Pictured Rocks escarpment between Munising Falls and Sand Point along Sand Point Road. Additional columns are located at Miners Falls and on the east side of the Miners Basin. *Please note that Munising Falls is closed to ice climbing.*

**Miners Falls** is a 40 foot column. Access requires a three mile ski or snowshoe trek in from the end of the plowed road at the junction of Carmody and Miners Castle Roads.

**Miners Basin Falls** is located 1.2 mile north of Miners Falls on the east side of the escarpment. Travel to this column is over land.

**Sand Point Columns** and blue ice curtains from 20-50 feet high are found along Sand Point Road between Munising Falls and the Lakeshore's headquarters. Parking for the Sand Point curtains and columns is located at Sand Point Beach or at Munising Falls. The

Sand Point road is narrow with no shoulder. *Parking is prohibited along Sand Point Road.*

**Grand Island** ice curtains are accessed from Grand Island Landing off M-28. Travel between Sand Point and the thumb portion of Grand Island is not recommended due to frequent hazardous ice conditions caused by lake currents.

## OTHER INFORMATION

When setting belay points from above remember it is your responsibility to preserve and protect vegetation and other natural features. Secure belay ropes to trees with a diameter larger than 8 inches and growing well back from the edge.

If you have any questions about ice climbing locations, contact the **Lakeshore Visitor Information Center** at 906 387-3700.

## Winter camping is permitted under the following regulations:

- A backcountry permit is required. The fee is \$5 per person, per night (\$15 reservation fee).
- A snow depth of 6" or more is required for these rules to take effect.
- Winter camping is permitted in drive-in campgrounds without charge.
- Winter camping is permitted off park roads beyond a distance of 100 feet.
- Use of stoves is required - campfires are not permitted unless you build them in firerings in developed front or backcountry sites.
- Winter camping is permitted beyond 100 feet of a creek, river or lake.
- Overnight camping in parking lots is not permitted.

## The following Lakeshore areas are closed to winter camping:



1. Sand Point area: All that portion of Sand Point described as the area below the top of the bluff in Sections 19 and 30, T47N, R18W, and that area situated within the corporate limits of the City of Munising, including the Sand Point Road.

2. Developed public use areas:

The area within 150 yards of the Miners Castle overlooks, paved walkways, and vehicle parking lot. Also 100 feet from the centerline of the paved Miners Castle Road, and the area within 100 feet of Miners Falls parking lot, trail, and associated platforms.

The area within 100 feet of the Chapel Falls parking lot.

The area within 100 feet of the Little Beaver backpacker parking lot.

The area within 100 feet of the Twelvemile Beach picnic area parking lot.

The area within 150 yards of any structure at the Au Sable Light Station, and within 100 feet of the trail between the lower Hurricane River Campground and the Light Station.

The area within 100 feet of the Log Slide parking lot, platforms, and walkways.

The area within 100 feet of the Grand Sable Lake picnic area and parking lot, the Grand Sable Lake boat launch and parking lot, and the Grand Sable Lake overlook parking lot.

The area within 150 yards of the Sable Falls parking lot and building, to include the viewing platforms and associated walkway system to the mouth of Sable Creek. Also included is the area 100 feet from the centerline of the paved Sable Falls Road.

The area within 150 yards of the Grand Sable Visitor Center parking lot and barn.

The area within 150 yards of the structures comprising the Grand Marais quarters and maintenance facility.

The 8.6 acre tract comprising structures and lands administered by the National Park Service on Coast Guard Point in Grand Marais.