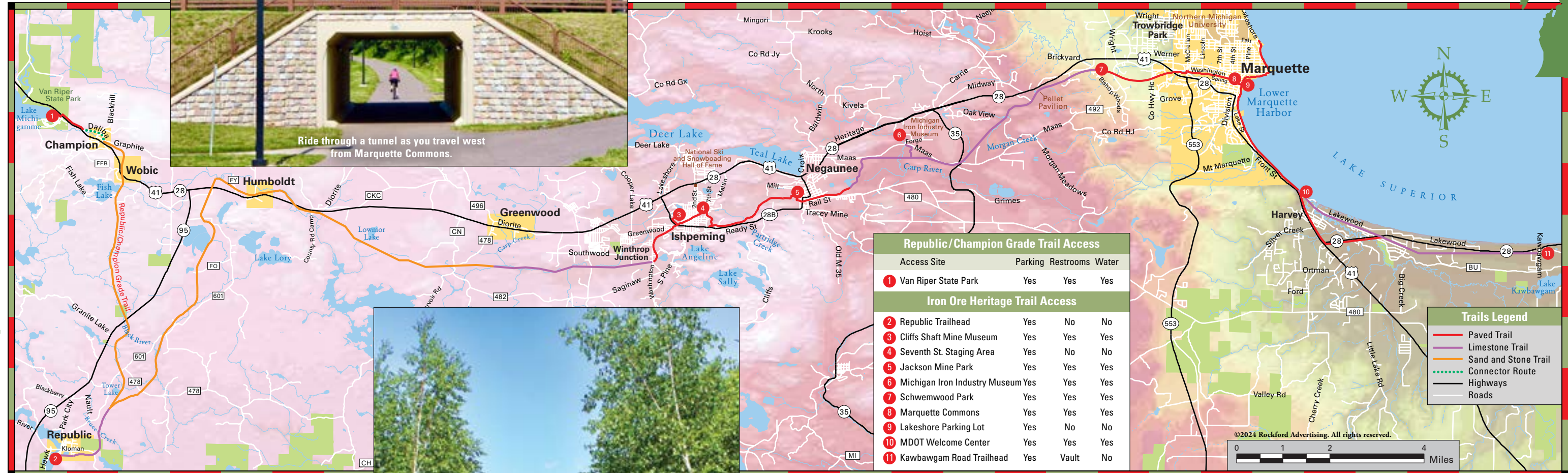


Ride through a tunnel as you travel west from Marquette Commons.



The "Pellet Pavilion" protects the trail from taconite balls that occasionally fall from passing rail cars. Stop and pick up some free souvenirs.

Iron Ore Heritage Trail

Explore the history of Michigan's iron mining industry on the Iron Ore Heritage Trail. This 47-mile "path through the past" runs from Kawbawgam Road to the former mining town of Republic on an abandoned stretch of the Duluth, South Shore & Atlantic Railroad. The eastern section of trail follows along the Lake Superior shoreline from Kawbawgam Road to the historic iron ore dock in Marquette harbor. It then travels west on a gradual uphill grade to the mining communities of Negaunee and Ishpeming, passing by several museums, abandoned mines, historic sites and scenic natural areas. A series of interpretive signs keep you informed along the way. If you don't have time to ride the entire trail, but would like to experience the most historic sections, we recommend the 38-mile round trip (19 miles each way) from the Marquette iron ore dock to



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2 Location on map.

Winthrop Junction and back. It's mostly uphill on the way there and mostly downhill (easy) on the way back. The paved path begins at Marquette Commons. After a couple of miles, the trail surface changes from asphalt to finely screened limestone. The uphill grade begins to level out as you reach "Pellet Pavilion," a pitched roof under a railroad trestle that protects the trail from iron ore pellets (taconite balls) that occasionally fall from passing rail cars. West of M-35, a spur of the trail takes you about a half mile north to the Michigan Iron Industry Museum. You must travel a short distance north on Forge Road (around Negaunee Cemetery) to reach the museum entrance.

The trail surface changes to asphalt as you approach Negaunee. Follow along Rail Street to Jackson Mine Park where you will come to the site of the Jackson Mine, the first open pit iron mine in the Lake Superior region. Stop and check it out. As you arrive in Ishpeming, you will see three towering mine shafts dominating the landscape. At Lakeshore Drive, a northern spur of the trail takes you to the Cliffs Shaft Mine Museum. The paved trail continues west of Ishpeming for another two miles to Winthrop Junction. Here you will come to an observation deck overlooking a lake. This is the flooded remains of the Section 16 Mine. As you gaze across the water, you will see the mountainous tailings of the mighty Empire Mine (still in operation) off in the distance – the world's largest open pit iron mine. West of Winthrop Junction, the limestone path travels through a lush landscape of woodlands and wetlands on its way to Republic. For more information about the trail and its historic sites, visit: IronOreHeritage.com

Republic/Champion Grade Trail

The 11.5-mile Republic/Champion Grade Trail goes from Republic to Champion (former mining towns) on an abandoned railroad grade, ending at the beach at Van Riper State Park. One of our favorite rides, this multi-use trail is exceptionally scenic and a pleasant ride on a fat tire or mountain bike. It travels along the Black River, several creeks and wetlands, passing by Tower Lake and Fish Lake. You'll see lots of beaver lodges and dams along the entire trail. Camping is available at both ends of the trail.



The trail crosses a bridge over Silver Creek just east of the MDOT Welcome Center.

Iron Ore Heritage Trail • Republic/Champion Grade Trail

Iron Ore Heritage Trail • Republic/Champion Grade Trail