

HIKING NORTH/CENTRAL MICHIGAN



A VIEW from NORTH/CENTRAL

BY: **Mark Wilson** - Director at Hiking North/Central Michigan - Hiking Michigan

What an amazing summer it's been! Things have gone in just about every direction, and none of those directions were really planned, but they sure have been filled with excitement and adventure for me. It started this spring when I was introduced to the Green Pine Lake trail by my friend Hal. This is a 16 mile trail system in Clare County that we are slowly losing back to the State Forest because of absolutely no maintenance on the part of the state. Hal and I spent days searching for old markers and trying to figure out places where the trail was nearly indefinable. By mid-summer all but a 2.5 mile section of the trail had a solid GPS track.



The trail intersects with the Lost Lake Scout Reservation property and in July Jeff Hanft was attending Scout Camp with his troop at Lost Lake. Jeff had expressed interest in the trail as well, and Jeff and I were able to hike a good part of the eastern section of the trail where we were able to get a solid GPS track of the remaining untracked 2.5 miles of trail.

Now with the mapping skills of Rob Golda and all of our combined efforts, Hiking Michigan has produced a beautiful map of the Green Pine Lake Trail and Lost Lake Scout Reservation. The trail still needs much work, but the most exciting part of this entire project is that upon visiting the trail now, I can see that people have started to use the trail, and that's a great thing!

As most of you know I spent some time as a National Park Service Volunteer this summer as well. I worked one week on South Manitou Island and 2 weeks on North Manitou. I can honestly think of no more of a fulfilling experience than to work as a volunteer on these islands. The NPS truly loves its Volunteers and treats them like gold. For me it was a great experience and I was able to meet some truly amazing people.

Manitou Island



Manitou Island

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A VIEW from NORTH/CENTRAL CONTINUED

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One part of me wanted to strap on my backpack this summer and just melt into the woods not to be seen for weeks, but looking back on this summer I'm so very thankful that I chose to volunteer my time. If you ever have the time and the means to do it, it's a great experience.

Most importantly this summer has given me the opportunity to make contacts and lay the ground work for some future events for Hiking Michigan. We have the basic plans laid out for a trail clearing expedition to North Manitou Island in 2013, and we also have similar plans for the Green Pine Lake Trail. These are not sweat dripping work projects, but rather fun filled adventures that will allow us to give a little back

while having a great time.

What started out as a bad situation with losing my job, really turned into the best summer that I've had in years. All summer I've been trying to remember a quote that I heard about working hard and missing out on the Natural world, but I can't seem to come up with it. The general premise of the quote was something like this: Every time I talk to someone who is financially successful I feel quite sure that happiness is no longer a possibility in life. Yet when I enter the forest and talk with nature, I'm convinced quite the opposite.

I look forward to seeing everyone at some of our upcoming events.

Mark Wilson



Pine Forest Trails



Join Hiking North/Central the Spring of 2013 for Trails restoration at Green Pine Lake



Hal on the Trails



Many Ponds