

LAKE VERMILION - SOUDAN UNDERGROUND MINE STATE PARK

1379 Stuntz Bay Rd., P.O. Box 335, Soudan, MN 55782

March 2020

Dear Boy Scout Troop/Trip Leader,

As you plan your trip to the BWCA, I encourage you to visit Lake Vermilion - Soudan Underground Mine State Park, home of the Soudan Underground Mine. The Soudan Underground Mine is a National Historic Landmark, which means it played a major role in the history of the United States of America. The iron ore mine operated from 1882 to 1962. The facility became a state park in 1965, at which point we began offering tours of the underground.

During the mine tour, visitors travel in a "cage" half a mile underground to the 27th level. From here they travel by train three-quarters of a mile to the former working part of the mine. While on tour, visitors see the tools that were used in mining, experience the mining process of 1962, and learn how underground mining has changed over the years. This is an incredible opportunity to experience history first hand and it helps satisfy part of the Boy Scout Citizenship in the Nation Merit Badge (visiting a National Historic Landmark). The tour lasts approximately 1.5 hours and we can accommodate up to 33 individuals per tour time slot.

We are offering a new tour this year that would allow scout to earn the majority of their Mining in Society Merit Badge. The tour is called the walking drift tour. It takes visitors to the 27th level, but instead of riding the train into the mine, participants walk the entire distance; just like the miners. On the tour the scouts will explore geological features found underground and learn about mine exploration. Upon reaching the former mining area, the group then takes the train back to the start. This tour last 2 hours, costs \$20 per person, and requires an early start (9 am at the latest). The tour is geared toward individuals ages 10 and older and it is not accessible, as participants walk over uneven ground.

If you are traveling from the Twin Cities or Duluth or Giant's Ridge Resort you will pass right by the park. We are approximately 35 minutes from Giant's Ridge and another 25 minutes from Ely (45 minutes from the Boy Scout camp). To assist Boy Scout groups, we have begun offering mine tours (by reservation only) at 9:30 am. This should enable Scout groups to visit the park, travel to Ely for lunch (DQ, Subway, other local establishments) and still have time for shopping before their scheduled arrival time at the Boy Scout camp. As an added bonus, we offer Scout groups, who reserve the mine tour at least **15 days** in advance, a two dollar discount (mine tour only) for each adult ticket (ages 13 and above). In 2007, we eliminated the requirement for visitors to purchase a vehicle permit for our park, so your tour tickets are your only expense.

During the summer (Memorial Weekend to Labor Day) we offer public mine tours at least every hour from 10 am to 4 pm. Therefore, if the 9:30 am tour time does not fit your schedule, we can make other arrangements. Tours fill quickly; so if you are interested in reserving a tour or if you have questions, please call me at 218-300-7005 or email me at lakevermilion-soudan.statepark@state.mn.us. Attached is a brochure that provides more information about the mine tour. I look forward to working with you. Have a safe and enjoyable trip.

Sincerely,

*James Pointer*James Pointer
Interpreter Supervisor

Attachment: Soudan Underground Mine Tour Brochure