



## Duluth MN Hiking - Arrowhead Country September 20-28, 2013

### **Why go to Duluth Minnesota?**

Grandma's Marathon is in Duluth and said to be one of the most beautiful marathons. *But I stopped doing marathons.* Lake Superior is said to be the largest lake in the world and very beautiful. *But I was on the other side of Lake Superior in June at the Paradise marathon.* One of my hiking companies offered a six-day hike along the Lake Superior Hiking trail. *But it is otherwise known as the SHT trail and who wants to hike on SHT.* Six days of new terrain hiking sounds a lot better than a one day event. Despite all those counterpoints, I happened to have an empty spot in my calendar.

### **Some highlights**

- A day in Old Town Duluth
- A brewery and brew pub historical tour that included tastings
- A van full of compatible and friendly hikers
- Two hotels with lake views and one with the sounds of waves it was so close
- Surprising trails that were not just lakeside but rather high up on the cliffs
- An old historical lighthouse high on a cliff
- Waterfalls and streams and rivers
- Next to perfect weather all hiking days
- The beginning of bright bold fall colors

### **Don't be jealous**

- Only two of the six hikes were very interesting.
- Most were primarily just putting on miles.
- The lake is as much like a never-ending ocean.
- Hotel pre-and post-tour as well as the second hotel were not much better than a Comfort Inn.
- It is just plain not easy to fly to Duluth.

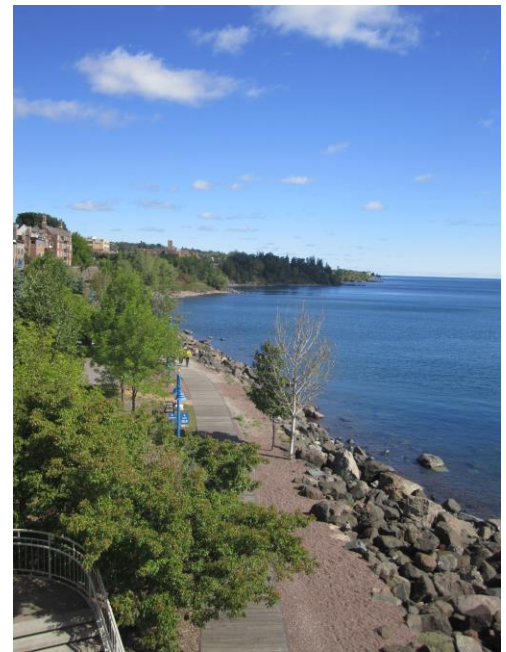
### **Think Appalachian Trail**

While there are some magnificent and dramatic sites on the Appalachian Trail and even on the Pacific Crest Trail, we all realize that the majority of these trails are just mileage. This is probably the case for the SHT also. But we don't know; we are just guessing and this was just the first one third of the SHT. Yet many of the hikers offered that they would not be signing up for parts 2 or 3.

I'm glad I came on this Lake Superior Hiking trail also known as the SHT but it would be hard to recommend it knowing there are so many other dramatic good week-long hikes available in the country. I also don't think this section nor the next were checked out fully or they might have chosen differently; but that's the disadvantage of going on a lower cost hiking tour and even more so going on an inaugural hike.



**Why Duluth?** I really don't know except it's said to be lovely, their marathon is top rated (over-rated?), and I had a hole in my calendar when this 6-day hiking trip was offered. I was on the other side of Lake Superior in Paradise Upper Peninsula Michigan in June and sort of thought then that the lake was more like an ocean and I live near to one of those.



**Getting to Duluth is no easy task.** One has to change planes in Minneapolis or Chicago and the connecting plane is a tiny one. In this case I guess it was too tiny to take our luggage as many of us were left standing at the baggage carousel until we realized something was wrong.

**Yes, lost luggage.** For a large group of little teen twits it was just that they didn't know to collect their gate check baggage at the next gate so they all lined up ahead of me to claim lost baggage. Why the baggage handlers couldn't just dump all ten or twelve of their bags onto the claim carousel I don't know but each had to make a claim and an airline rep had to go get their luggage, returning it to cheers and then another claim. Over and over until I got Ugly-American and asked if they weren't going to honor the Premier Elite line. My lost luggage was only my hiking gear and trekking poles so I wasn't terribly upset but after it missed the next three flights I was worried and starting to make alternate plans. It arrived mid-morning the next day. The airline reps told me that Chicago had some serious issues. No joke.

**Lost afternoon but found evening:** there was a Mayan Mexican restaurant about a 10 minute walk away which cost me a zillion calories. After I realized it was happy hour and I had a marguerite I was double happy.

**Hotel was somewhat better than expected.** This tour group doesn't waste money on hotels and Comfort Inn types are common. This was fortunately new; unfortunately out of the way of anything. I didn't get this pictured room with a whirlpool in the room but it did seem to represent the type of folks who would like such a thing. The breakfast room was full of kids and all 8 or 9 were from the same family. Lots of pick-ups in the parking lot. Had there been a Hampton Inn or a Fairfield Inn within the vicinity, I'd have stayed there instead all of which should tell you the quality.



### **Brewery and history tour**

<http://www.theduluthexperience.com/> I'd like to give these boys some publicity but I don't know how many of my friends will be going to Duluth. They are well educated and in top finance positions and yet

the four of them are doing these tours in their spare time. They only began 8 weeks ago.



From their website: *The Duluth Experience is a full service tour and sightseeing company headquartered in Duluth, MN and servicing the Lake Superior Region. Our knowledge of, and experience in, the local craft brewing scene – along with our expertise*



in tourism, a shared passion for Duluth's rich historic tradition, and a deep appreciation for the unique ecological setting of northern Minnesota synergize to create personalized interactions with the history and cultures of Duluth's past, present, and future. Our competitive rates and focus on (1) entertainment, (2) education, (3) esthetics, and (4) escapism will prove that we are the go-to team for enriching your Duluth Experience.

The brewery tour was five hours which was far too long to stay sober as it was tastings all along the way. It began at an old block-long brick factory along the river walk where a huge brewery existed years ago and is now a shopping and restaurant complex. We had a nice 14 passenger bus and two guides who educated us on beer brewing, took us through one brew-house (Fitger's), another brew pub (Bent Paddle Brewing Co.), and another small run facility out past Two Harbors (Castle Danger) on the water front. We had a local white fish dinner at Carmody 61 in Two Harbors closer to town. All the while we learned about Duluth's history and saw some tourist sites.



**Bob Dylan's hometown is Duluth** so the main street is Bob Dylan Way and there are four Dylan inspired manhole covers. Sister Beverly collects pictures of manhole covers so how perfect is that!



He must be a very old man now. I remember him being rather old when he was singing at Sandy Hook NJ for the Clearwater Festival (to clean up Hudson River.)

The streets are absolutely lined with pubs. It would be easy to have an actual pub crawl sort of like Louisville has an Urban Bourbon Trail. I didn't notice so many churches like one finds in the south or small boring Midwest towns so I wonder if the Duluth folks worship beer instead?



This young fellow followed a sterling education with taking up bar tending and then beer making and he claims his parents are fine with his choice. Beer making can be pretty high tech but it still takes cans or dark bottles and still results in overflow foam.

### ***More Duluth tourist***

This is one of the largest inland seaports in the world. There are all these grain elevators and docks and shipyards and mines. There has been trading in the region and in Duluth in particular since sometime in the 1700s.

Most people know in Duluth by its Canal Park which is right next to its aerial lift bridge. Maybe more known is what is called the North Shore which seems to be a lot of big expensive Lakefront homes as well as many parks.

North Shore Drive extends all the way from Duluth up to Thunder Bay in Ontario, Canada. Some know it as Highway 61 made famous by Bob Dylan. Downtown Duluth even has a 'Bob Dylan Way' and some manhole covers that are inspired by Bob Dylan. If you haven't guessed: he grew up here. Yet he got old in our area of New York City and Sandy Hook when he used to sing for the Clearwater Festival specializing in the Hudson River cleanup.

Split Rock Lighthouse is not very far up the road and it sits on top of the sheer rocky cliff about 150 feet above the lake. Yep we climbed every bit of that. We would also see Two Harbors Lighthouse station which is one of the oldest operating lighthouses on Lake Superior. Coincidentally it was only in June that I saw the Whitefish lighthouse in Upper Peninsula Michigan that was built about the same time because of all the ships that went down and in particular the Edmund Fitzgerald loss.

The Depot in downtown is their cultural center and museum area. It's within an easy walk.

<http://www.duluthdepot.org/contact.html>

Canal Street new development is closer to the river and all pretty new with the famous Grandmas Café which has now expanded to other areas. There's also a big ship of some historical significance that is a haunted house; not exactly what I travel to see so I didn't bother. There's a lovely and well-rated aquarium that is a modernistic building.



### ***Two Harbors tourist***

This town that does sit on two harbors of Agate Bay and Burlington Bay was founded a bit later but it really was a shipping point for iron mines. We learned about taconite pellets that were delivered to the docks from the mines via rail and then dumped into iron boats. We even learned about how many of those boats sank until light houses were built. All due to the rocky cliffs that we so enjoyed climbing on.

One evening prior to dinner I had a quick run through the town and saw The Old Depot Museum with the historical trains parked outside which were needed for the mines in early days. Some of my fellow hikers had a big laugh about my need to do that 15 to 20 minute walk while they did dinner.

### ***Silver Bay tourist***

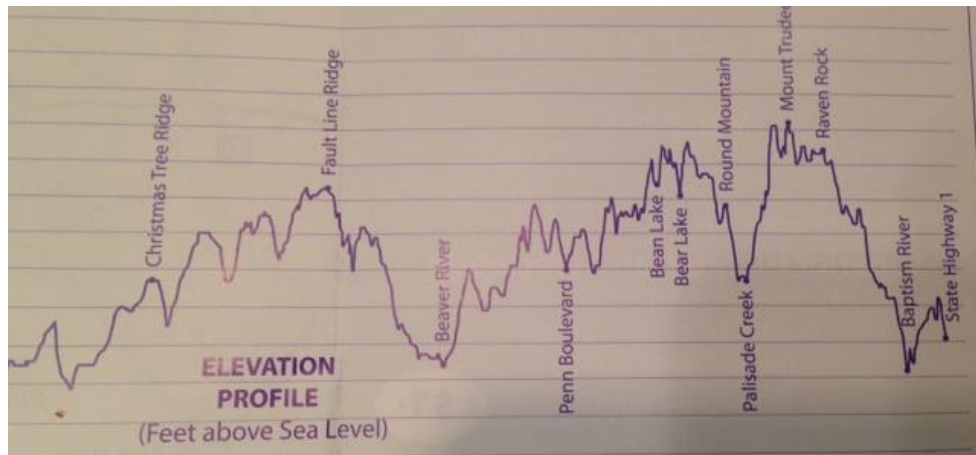
Oddly this little town where we spent our last two nights is on a hill but not a Bay. It's not even on the edge of the lake. But from our hotel we could see the lake. Oddly this hotel was listed as being better rated than the one before and I couldn't disagree more. It did have a huge indoor pool with a large water slide that seemed to be the fashion mode in the area. Slide down 48 times and that equals 1 mile and gives you your picture on the trophy board. I'm not joking. (Don't tell some of my marathon friends or they will try to get that headline too.).

### ***Some Lake Superior facts***

It is the largest freshwater lake in the world and holds 10% of the world's surface fresh water.



- Surface area of 31,700 square miles
- East to west is 350 miles
- North to south is 160 miles
- The amount of water is three quadrillion gallons of water
- Enough to cover all of the United States with 1 foot of water
- To circle the lake would take 1300 miles



**Surprise! Big elevation**

One of the trails was called The Drainpipe for good reason. We were on our butts and/or holding onto trees and limbs for a while. See picture below.

**The hike itself aka the reason for the trip**

Or maybe it was in honor of the retiring hiking company owners? Yet we've said that for about ten hikes now (this being about my 21<sup>st</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> hike with the company) but we say it again – let's all hike with Carol and Dick for their last hike! Sweethearts and even older than ME!





*From Timbertours: Forever in search of a new adventure, Timberline invades Minnesota's Arrowhead ready to tackle the remarkable Superior Trail. Conceived in the mid-1980 as a through hiking trail extending from Duluth to the Canadian border, often along the ridgeline overlooking Superior's North Shore, the trail is 286 miles. No, we're not hiking the entire length of the Superior Trail this season. But .... We plan to conquer it over the next three seasons, really! For the season ahead, the first segment of our Minnesota Arrowhead Country Hiking Tour will be a 6-day program focusing on selected segments, capturing much, of the trail's scenic excitement. We'll also strive to convey a significant sense of hiking an extended through trail that many believe rivals, if not surpasses in quality of experience the better-known Appalachian and Pacific crest Trails.*

### Along the way



If some hiking themes are waterfalls, and some are wildflowers, this one was mushrooms with a multitude of different types.











Day 1: Van shuttle to Reeves Rd Two Harbors; hike to Castle Danger - 12 miles

Hotel was Grand Superior Lodge in Two Harbors for 3 nights - <http://grandsuperior.com/>

From website: *Located on the North Shore of Lake Superior, just about 3 hours from either Minneapolis/St. Paul or from Thunder Bay, Ontario, this prime lakefront resort is the perfect all-season getaway destination. Our grand and luxurious authentic log resort hugs the shore of this inland sea amongst aged pines and mature birch and aspen. It is classic "Northern Minnesota" in its north woods location and all of the cabins, log homes, lodge rooms and lakeside suites surround you in a charmingly warm, north woods décor. But don't think rustic...you'll find all modern conveniences here. And if you seek new resort lodging, take a look at Grand Superior's Lake Homes North, just built in 2007. From the moment you enter our welcoming lodge with its wood burning fireplace, you'll feel right at home. And, our resort team is here to make sure that your home away from home delivers a lifetime of fond memories. Looking for outdoor activities? Just a short mile or two outside your door is an adventurer's paradise. Explore Gooseberry Falls State Park, The Superior National Hiking Trail, the new Gitche Gami Bike Trail and Split Rock Lighthouse State Park. Hiking, biking, golfing, canoeing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and cross country skiing are all close enough to enjoy on your getaway vacation.*

(Are these days mixed up? Probably!)

Day 2: Castle Danger to Gooseberry Falls State Park – 9 miles

Day 3: Gooseberry Falls State Park to Split Rock Wayside; Split Rock Lighthouse – 11 miles



There really is a Gitche-Gami Trail! Plus there really are a zillion steps up and down to the lighthouse. The fog we encountered reminded us of the need for a lighthouse when ships didn't have navigation systems.



Day 4: Split Rock to Silver Bay - 16 miles fortunately turned into much less  
Hotel was Americinn Lodge & Suites of Silver Bay for 2 nights. This was another of those pick-ups in the parking lot and lots of kids so they could use the huge slide into the pool.  
<http://www.americinn.com/hotels/MN/SilverBay>



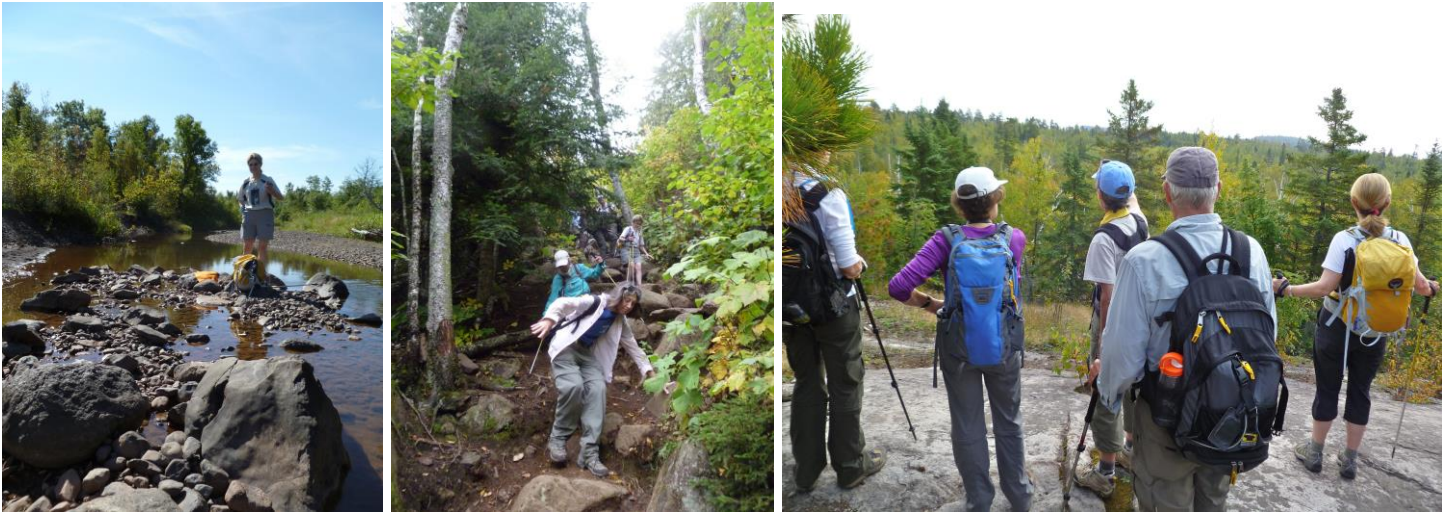
Day 5: Silver Bay to Tettegouche State Park - 11 miles

Day 6: We just can't resist one last hiking adventure. A few miles east of Grand Marais to rendezvous with the Devil Track River Trail. We'll hike initially to the bridge that spans awesome Devil Track river Canyon, Minnesota's deepest gorge, and beyond to the summit of Pincushion Mountain. The awesome views of Superior from Pincushion's crest are an appropriate finale to an extraordinary week - 10 miles followed by a late lunch (early dinner?) in Grand Marais and return to Duluth where our Minnesota Arrowhead Country Hiking Tour concludes.

***Pictures from Kathleen and Erroll***







***My Favorite – The End***

This was especially good and humorous since I'd asked Kathleen to pick and choose, sending me a couple pictures where I 'looked' the best and when this one came in first I had a big laugh. The BK (Big Kahuna – Mr. Jerry) commented that he looked good here too.



### ***Miscellaneous notes and emails to Tom***

Sunday - 6 miles thru woods for under 3 hours

Monday – Like a walk to trail which was pretty boring. Then 9.1 miles castle danger to Gooseberry Park. Garmin showed closer to ten miles. Hike along Gooseberry River and lots of waterfalls then split Rock River. Major gorgeous views were continuous. It made the walk across pastures at first worth it. While waiting for others to come in did the fast 30 minute lake loop with lots of elevation and three bridges. Garmin showed 3,000' elevation but we are doubtful. Very nice visitor center and movie.

Tuesday - Breakfast at hotel took 50 minutes to get coffee and one hour to get food. Ugh. Always easy hours. 8 am for breakfast then fix lunch. Hike 11 miles to split rock then a loop. Many waterfalls. 2600' elevation per Garmin. Lunch on the river. This was maybe the premier hike. Weather perfect.

Wednesday - Lighthouse super. 174 steps down to water. Garmin says 7 1/2 miles but boring walk along bike trail and we had to remember that we voted for it in order to visit the lighthouse. Nice bakery afterwards.

Thursday - 12 miles with a believable 4400 feet of elevation. Lovely though heavy fog. Overlooked lakes. The Drainpipe was a bit tough and many of us were on out butt.

Friday - Earlier start and on trail at 8:50 so one of the hikers could make their airplane reservation. 5-6 miles with overlooks. Garmin ran out of battery but an iPhone said about 600' descent and 800' ascent. As usual a point to point hike and as usual not much exciting. Lovely fall colors but overlooking a mine and near to the highway. At end of day and on the way back to Duluth the promised rains came.



## ***Itinerary***

### **Fri Sep 20**

11:00am Depart Newark EWR via UA#798  
12:23pm Arrive Chicago ORD for plane change

1:54pm Depart Chicago ORD via UA#5319  
3:22pm Arrive Duluth DLH

Host Hotel Country Inn & Suites by Carlson – 2 nights  
4257 Haines Road, Duluth North, MN 55811 Tele: 218 740 4500  
<http://www.countryinns.com/duluth-hotel-mn-55811/mndulnor>

Free hotel shuttle; refrigerator yes; coffee pot yes; free WiFi yes; [www.visitduluth.com](http://www.visitduluth.com) for tourist info

### **Sat Sep 21**

9:00am Pick up at hotel by The Duluth Experience Tour Company – prepaid  
132 West 12th Street, Duluth, MN 55806 Tele: (218) 464-6337  
[info@theduluthexperience.com](mailto:info@theduluthexperience.com), <http://www.TheDuluthExperience.com>

9:30am Historical tour starting at The Depot  
Lunch at Fitgers Complex with a number of choices  
Noon Brewery and city tour with food and tastings to 5pm

### **Sun Sep 22 – Day 1**

9:00am Start of hike – meet in hotel lobby ready to hike

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Received from Timberline in May 2013: MINNESOTA'S ARROWHEAD COUNTRY

Day 1: Van shuttle to Reeves Rd Two Harbors; hike to Castle Danger - 12 miles

Hotel Grand Superior Lodge – 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 nights  
2826 Hwy 61 Two Harbors MN 55616 Tele 218 834 3796 or 800 627-9565  
[info@grandsuperior.com](mailto:info@grandsuperior.com) <http://grandsuperior.com/>  
Wi-Fi free; Yes coffee pot, refrig and microwave in room; in main lodge

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**Mon Sep 23 - Day 2:**

Castle Danger to Gooseberry Falls State Park – 9 miles

Hotel            Grand Superior Lodge – 2<sup>nd</sup> of 3 nights

**Tue Sep 24 - Day 3**

Gooseberry Falls State Park to Split Rock Wayside; Split Rock Lighthouse – 11 miles

Hotel            Grand Superior Lodge – 3<sup>rd</sup> of 3 nights

**Wed Sep 25 - Day 4**

Split Rock to Silver Bay - 16 miles

Hotel            AmericInn Lodge & Suites of Silver Bay – 1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights  
150 Mensing Drive, Silver Bay, MN 55614 Tele 218 226 4300  
<http://www.americinn.com/hotels/MN/SilverBay>  
WiFi free; coffee pot, microwave and refrigerator yes

**Thu Sep 26 - Day 5**

Silver Bay to Tettegouche State Park - 11 miles

Hotel            AmericInn at Silver Bay – 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 nights

**Fri Sep 27 – Day 6**

Tettegouche State Park to County Road 6 - 7 miles

5:00pm        Van Shuttle return to Duluth airport

Host Hotel    Country Inn - same as above

**Sat Sep 28**

Hotel has free shuttle

10:44am      Depart Duluth DLH via United #5349  
12:14pm      Arrive Chicago ORD for plane change

1:00pm        Depart Chicago ORD via United #1271  
4:17pm        Arrive Newark EWR

**Participants**

Mr and Mrs Jerry/Gerrie from Queens  
Angela M from Bronx  
Pat from Allentown  
Paula from St Paul area  
Dick and Carol leaders then Rick and Sara came to finish the week  
Diana  
Russell from K.C.



From website but not correct?

Day 1	Group assembles early morning in Duluth; van shuttle to Gooseberry Falls State Park. Hike along the Gooseberry River	8 miles
Day 2	Superior Trail - Bread Loaf Ridge to Split Rock River	11 miles
Day 3	Silver Bay - Superior Trail - High Falls of the Baptism River - Tettegouche State Park	11 miles
Day 4	Cross River - Temperance River State Park - Carleton Peak	11 miles
Day 5	Cascade River State Park - Hike Cascade River	8 miles
Day 6	Devil Track River Trail - Pincushion Mountain, van shuttle to Duluth	10 miles

**Total Hiking Mileage - 59 miles**

Summary of Minnesota Arrowhead Country Hiking – from [www.Timbertours.com](http://www.Timbertours.com)

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We'll assemble in Duluth early morning of Day 1 and van shuttle to Gooseberry Falls State Park, where we'll join the Superior Trail. We'll spend the better part of the day hiking along the meandering course of the Gooseberry River within the park with outstanding views of several dramatic waterfalls as the river plunges toward the lake (8 miles). We'll spend our first of two overnights.

Hotel            Grand Superior Lodge – 1<sup>st</sup> of 2 nights

### **Mon Sep 23 – Day 2**

We'll return to the park and rejoin the trail this morning. We'll climb initially to the crest of Bread Loaf Ridge and continue along the ridge with its stunning views of Superior, descend to Split Rock River and spend the afternoon hiking along the river as it cascades over sheer red rock on its way to Superior (11 miles).

Hotel            Grand Superior Lodge – 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2 nights

### **Tue Sep 24 – Day 3**

Early morning, we'll shuttle to Silver Bay and rejoin the trail in time to enjoy one of its most challenging sections. Lots of up and down on the hike this day, but count on some of the best views of Superior, adjacent bluffs and the dramatic High Falls of the Baptism River. We'll hike into and through Tettegouche State Park and spend the night in Little Marais. (11 miles)

Hotel            In Little Marais or 3<sup>rd</sup> night at Grand Superior Lodge?

### **Wed Sep 25 – Day 4**

For Day 4, we'll hike from Cross River in Temperance River State Park, hike along the deep chasm through which the Temperance flows, and then scramble to the top of Carleton Peak, with its astounding views of Britton Peak and Raven's Ridge above Tofte (11 miles).

We'll shuttle to Tofte and an overnight at the beautiful Bluefin Resort on the shores of Superior.

Hotel            AmericInn at Silver Bay or Bluefin Resort?

**Thu Sep 26 – Day 5**

From the Bluefin early on Day 5, we'll shuttle east to Cascade River State Park and hike from the park along the cascading waterfalls of Cascade River. We'll complete the hiking of the river loop that returns to the park and settle into the Cascade Lodge within the park for our final night (8 miles).

Hotel            Cascade Lodge or AmericInn at Silver Bay?

**Fri Sep 27 – Day 6**

No early flights home on this final day because we just can't resist one last hiking adventure. We're headed a few miles east of Grand Marais where we'll rendezvous with the Devil Track river Trail. We'll hike initially to the bridge that spans awesome Devil Track river Canyon, Minnesota's deepest gorge, and beyond to the summit of Pincushion Mountain. The awesome views of Superior from Pincushion's crest are an appropriate finale to an extraordinary week (10 miles).

We'll have a late lunch (early dinner?) in Grand Marais and return to Duluth where our Minnesota Arrowhead Country Hiking Tour concludes.