

Tahquamenon Falls State Park



Tahquamenon Falls State Park encompasses close to 50,000 acres stretching over 13 miles. Most of this is undeveloped woodland without roads, buildings or power lines. The centerpiece of the park, and the very reason for its existence, is the Tahquamenon River with its waterfalls. The Upper Falls is one the largest waterfalls east of the Mississippi. It has a drop of nearly 50 feet and is more than 200 feet across. A maximum flow of more than 50,000 gallons of water per second has been recorded cascading over these falls. Four miles downstream is the Lower Falls, a series of five smaller falls cascading around an island. Although

not as dramatic as the Upper Falls, they are equally magnificent. The falls can be viewed from the river bank or from the island, which can be reached by rowboat rented from a park concession. The island walk affords a view of the falls in the south channel.



This is the land of Longfellow's Hiawatha - "by the rushing Tahquamenaw" Hiawatha built his canoe. Long before the white man set eyes on the river, the abundance of fish in its waters and animals along its shores attracted the Ojibwa Indians, who camped, farmed, fished and trapped along its banks. In the late 1800's came the lumber barons and the river carried their logs by the millions to the mills. Lumberjacks, who harvested the tall timber, were among the first permanent white settlers in the area.

Rising from springs north of McMillan, the Tahquamenon River drains the watershed of an area of more than 790 square miles. From its source, it

meanders 94 miles before emptying into Whitefish Bay. The amber color of the water is caused by tannins leached from the Cedar, Spruce and Hemlock in the swamps drained by the river. The extremely soft water churned by the action of the falls causes the large amounts of foam, which has been the trademark of the Tahquamenon since the days of the voyager.

