

MANISTEE RIVER TRAIL TEST HIKE

Coach Gunn



SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 2026

- TIME: 7:30AM** Caravan departs from the *Comfort Inn* parking lot to the trail head.
8:15AM. Long Hikers meet at the trail head parking for a **day pack inspection** (first ribbon).

LONG HIKERS (*Enchantments* qualifiers)

- 8:30 am.** All 26.4 mile hikers will leave the parking lot on the course. (7.5 – 8.5 HOF)

SHORT HIKES (Destination hikers)

[Some drop offs may be available. Carpool with other hikers to the start.]

- 8:40AM** 16.6 miles – Carpool to your trail head.
9:00AM 11.2 miles – Carpool to your trail head.
9:20AM 5.6 miles – Carpool to your trail head.

A COURSE ORIENTATION with maps will be held at the start. **All hikers will sign out at the start and in at the finish.** Fill water bottles and bladders prior to arrival. Carry a **full day pack** load (3 – 5 liters) as you will for your 21 mile *Enchantments* hike. Plan to use your **water filter** kit during this hike. Refer to the *Day Pack Check List* (website “Lecture Notes” page) to verify that you have everything required for a successful hike. You must rely on your day pack for this hike to simulate what you will do during *The Enchantments* hike in Washington.

All hikers will sign in at each checkpoint and refill with water if needed. **Colored day pack tags** will be handed out at each checkpoint. Long Hikers, you must place these bands on your day pack and **show them at the finish** to verify course completion for qualification.

- ◆ **All hiker’s arrival time and physical condition will be monitored at each checkpoint.**
- ◆ **We would like all hikers off the course by 6:00 pm** (5:00 pm to qualify).

This is a tremendous training opportunity that will allow all candidates to evaluate and prove their conditioning level to your coach, but more importantly for the confidence it gives you.

CHECK POINTS: Long Hike candidates must collect all ribbons at checkpoints on the course.
NOTE: Checkpoint times are guidelines. Coach Gunn will use all factors to determine qualification.

DAY PACK INSPECTION	First Ribbon	[QUALIFICATION GOAL]
CHECKPOINT 1	YELLOW will be at: 16.6 miles to go.	[by 11:42 am]
CHECKPOINT 2	GREEN will be at: 11.2 miles to go.	[by 1:24 pm]
CHECKPOINT 3	BLUE will be at: 5.7 miles to go.	[by 3:12 pm]
FINISH	RED, WHITE & BLUE	[by 5:06 pm]

ENCHANTMENTS HIKERS: This **TEST HIKE** is **MANDATORY** if you wish to be a candidate for *The Enchantments* hike. **Please be at the trail head on time.** You will not be permitted to start early or late. Set two alarm clocks, electric and battery, and secure reliable transportation. It is always a good idea to have a friend call to double check if you are up and going. Candidates **must finish this TEST HIKE strong and in the time allotted** in order to qualify. We have **your safety in mind** and wish to maintain our perfect record of successful hikes. The *Enchantments* hike will be tougher than this *Test Hike*. If you can’t do the *Test Hike* you will have trouble with the *Enchantments* hike, our most adventurous and challenging hike yet. Our *Test Hikes* are a proven barometer of the fitness level required for very challenging hikes.

DIRECTIONS & MORE ON NEXT PAGE

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A HIKE FOR EVERYONE: I highly encourage all *Team Orcas* hikers to attend this hike and all *Training Partners* are welcome to participate. The course is beautiful and allows for starts at **16.3, 11.2 or 5.6 miles** to go. One of the neat aspects of this group is the **fellowship and camaraderie** that is developed on these outings. [Details at website page MANISTEE, under HIKE TRAINING.]

RECEPTION: The reception for all hikers and support staff will be held at the host hotel on **Friday from 5:00-6:30PM**. I hope that everyone will join us during this exciting time on the eve of our big hike. **Everyone is encouraged to attend.** [Host Hotel: Comfort Inn, 1650 S. Mitchell street]

CUSTOM SHIRTS: Free to Training Partners. \$15 Guests. The *Manistee River Valley* is an excellent venue for our final training hike. In appreciation of your extra effort in getting to this *Test Hike*, we are awarding **custom T-shirts to all pre-registered participants** at the finish of the course. This hike has been very well received now for over 20 years. It is a beautiful hiking experience and is well worth the trip. (**To register, email Thom** with name, hike distance and (men's) T-shirt size **by 10 August** to: Thom@CairnStoneTours.com - Thank you.)

GUEST PAYMENTS: Bring your \$15 check to Manistee [Pay to: *Cairn Stone Tours*] Give it to Coach Gunn at the Friday night reception or before you hike on Saturday.

HOST HOTEL: Our host hotel is beautiful *Comfort Inn* complete with complimentary breakfast, pool, and Jacuzzi. We have a **\$169.00 rate** (plus 11% tax). Use the **link in the email** to book online or call **231-779-2900** to make your reservation. Our block is reserved under group code **Gunn Hikers**. All rooms have 2 Queen size beds (call to request a King size bed with small up charge). The *Comfort Inn* is located at 1650 S. Mitchell street (Bus. 131) just north of US131, exit 177.

TEST HIKE LOCATION: We will meet at **8:15AM in the Hiker's Parking Lot** just off of Coates Hwy about one mile west of the Coates Hwy Bridge across the Manistee River. The DNR does not want us to park in the lot at the bridge. Please drive up the hill about a mile and look for a sandy drive on the right side marked by an *Upper River Trailhead* sign.



DIRECTIONS (From Cadillac):

- **Take M-55 west to Warfield Rd.** (about 13 miles; 2 miles after M-37 intersection)
- **Take Warfield Rd. north to Coates Hwy.** (about 4 miles)
- **Take Coates Hwy. west about 3 miles to the Upper River Trailhead** (about 1 mile west of the Manistee River)

COST: Training Partners - FREE Guests - \$15 (checks to Cairn Stone Tours)

YOUR ACTION ITEMS - RESERVATIONS, GOAL & CARPOOL:

- 1) **Reserve your room before August 7th**; Call 231-779-2900, Group code **Gunn Hikers**. [Highly recommended to reserve now to get one of the 22 rooms at group rate]
- 2) **Email by 10 AUG:** your name, distance and (mens) T-shirt size to: Thom@CairnStoneTours.com.
- 3) **Carpools & Roommates:** Everyone is responsible for their own transportation to Cadillac and to the trailhead. If you need a roommate, a ride or have seats available in your car email Thom; he will help coordinate and communicate. Thom@CairnStoneTours.com

CONTACT NUMBERS (for safety during Training Hikes.)

Coach Gunn 574.215.4779, Thom 269.462.0683, Gary 616.915.3059 Marty 574.361.2624