

## *O*n and off the trail: Indian Dance Rings

*Editor's note: This story is written by long-time resident, Slug Radtke, whose knowledge of the area and keen story-telling has entertained generations of visitors. Slug can be reached at Bear Point Yacht Club & Motel on the Menominee River in the Wausaukee area at 715-856-5092.*

To me a trail can be a river, road, path, or snowmobile trail. This trip will take us from Hwy. 141 near Wausaukee to little known Indian Dance Rings, and back to 141 by way of County Hwy K.

Start at the "BP" Gas Station east of the Marinette County fair grounds, located on Hwy. 141 (Main St.) and Fairgrounds Road. Set your odometer to "0" before leaving Wausaukee. Take Fairgrounds Road east to Cedar Street.

Turn left on Cedar Street, and take that north to Pike River Road. Turn right on Pike River Road, going east again. Drive 4.2 miles to Bridge Road.

At one time you could cross the river to go to Stephenson, Michigan. Ice in the twenties took the bridge out and it was never

rebuilt. Notice there are still some pillars in the river.

At 5.2 miles is the State Timber Forest – a demonstration of good forest management. When I was a kid in the 60's some men who worked for the DNR "planted" turkeys there.

They had small lean-toes for the winter to help them survive, but we were told they didn't make it.

Seven miles out on the left is an old sawmill. Many logs were sawed on mills like this in Marinette County.

Notice the old farm houses along the way. Also most of what are now pine plantations were fields.

At 8.5 miles is the Pike River. Lots of logs went down this river to saw mills in Marinette in the 1800s.

Turn right on Squaw Creek Road. At 12.8 miles (Summer Cloud Road) turn right, go about 200 feet and look left.

The story reads, "Between the years of 1634 and 1923 the area known as White Rapids was occupied by the Menominee Indians and the Forest Potawatomi. Sometime during their

occupation, the Indians erected the two dance rings on this site by banking the earth into circular mounds. The rings are 33 and 66 feet in diameter with entrances to the south."

A drummer would sit between the rings, with a master of ceremonies in each ring.

Only peaceful dances were performed here, such as Maple, Strawberry, Green Corn, Tobacco, Deer, Medicine Lodge, Thanksgiving to the Great Spirit, Return and Friendship dances for visitors and white settlers.

These historic rings remain as a monument to the rich culture of the American Indians of our area. As you leave, travel north on Squaw Creek Road 2 miles.

Turn left on Hwy K. Nine more miles takes you past Bull Falls, toward Hwy. 141. Total trip: 24 miles. Enjoy!

*Final note: Indian Dance Rings are sacred places to be viewed from a distance with respect. Please honor this heritage and respect the land as those that dwelled before have done.*