

Portage Lake Trail



Gillespie Lake Overlook

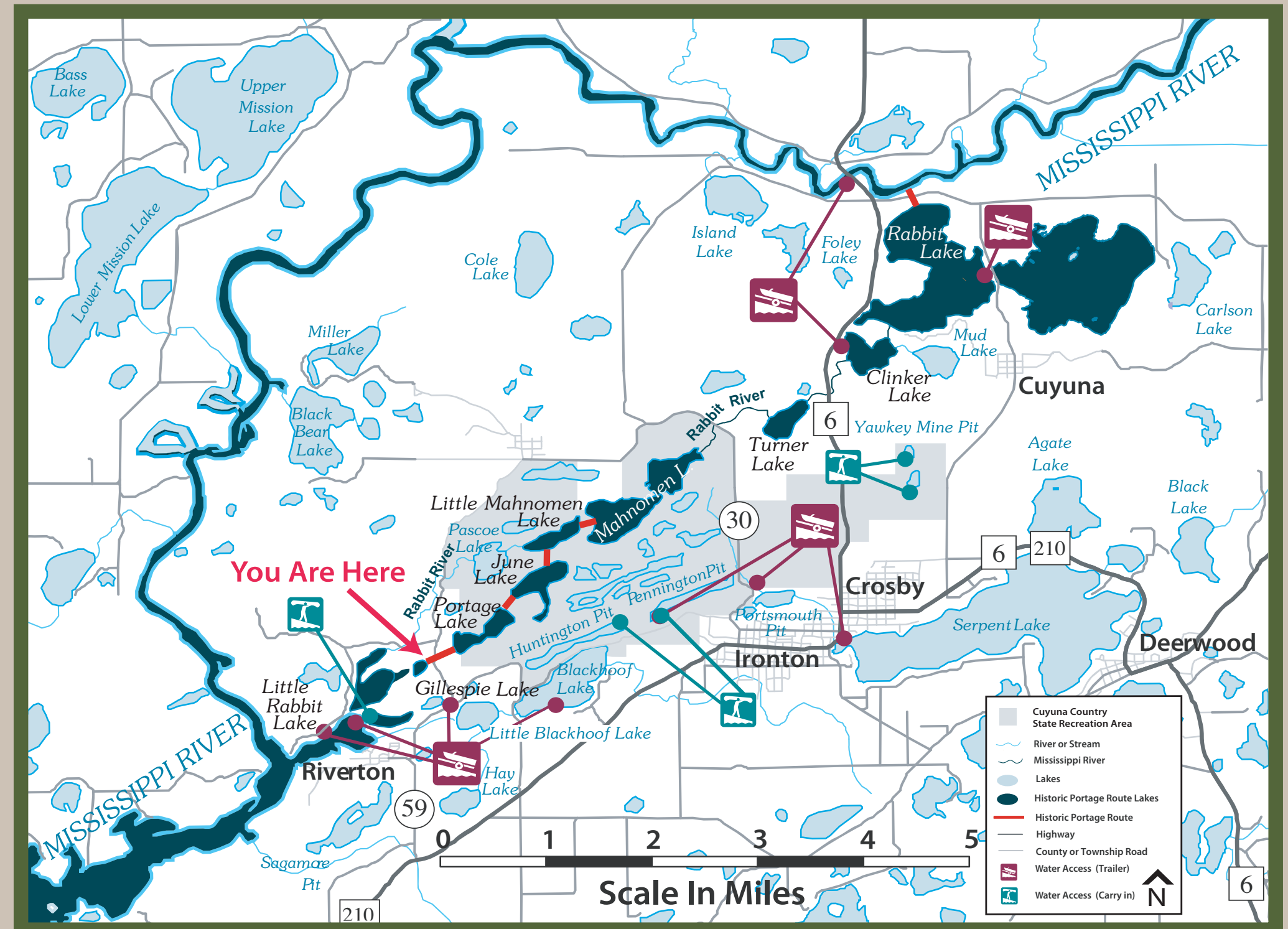


You are facing southwest



The body of water in front of you as you look southwest toward Little Rabbit Lake was once a lowland area with a ridge of higher ground running northwest-southeast. Beyond Little Rabbit Lake is the Mississippi River. The dashed line on the photo above shows the placement of a trail that served as a portage route from the Mississippi River, through Little Rabbit Lake, to Portage Lake. From Portage Lake, canoe travelers continued northeast through a chain of small lakes and along the Rabbit River as a Mississippi River upstream “shortcut” to Rabbit Lake. From lakes along this route travelers also took other historic portage routes and overland trails to Serpent Lake and southward to Mille Lacs.

In the late 1950s, this lowland area was excavated to explore for iron ore deposits. Ore was not mined here and the exploratory pit filled with water, becoming what we now know as Gillespie Lake.



On this map the lakes and river along the old Rabbit River Portage route are highlighted in a darker blue and the historic overland portage trails are marked in red. You are welcome to paddle in any of the waters on this historic route, but be aware that some of the shore land is private. There are no formal landings or portages beyond the Portage Lake Trail. Be respectful of private lands. If public portages are developed they will be clearly marked.



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