

# Mantario Trail Section Descriptions

NOTE: The times given from one location to the next are only a guide. Your time will depend on weather, trail conditions, physical abilities and stamina.

Trail distances are approximate.

Because most hikers travel the trail from south to north, the section information is organized in that direction.

## **South Trailhead to New Caribou Lake Junction**

**Duration: 3 hours**

**Distance: 8.5 km**

The Mantario Trail originates at Provincial Road 312 between Caddy Lake and West Hawk Lake, near the Whiteshell Fish Hatchery. Parking and non-modern washrooms are located here.

The trail follows an old logging road for a few hundred metres then turns north (right) through the forest. Hikers then ascend and descend valleys and cross the Whiteshell River by a new aluminum footbridge (2026). These steep valleys are a challenging portion of the trail.

This area of the trail was affected by a wildfire in 2016 and is still regenerating. The trail weaves through woodlands and a swamp borders to the south.

Expect to cross two sets of CPKC rail tracks – one set here and one further north. *Exercise caution when crossing rail lines, as both the CN and CPKC rail tracks are in active use. Do not enter the railway tunnel, adjacent to the trail, on the second set of CPKC tracks north of Caddy Lake, as it is extremely narrow and designed to accommodate trains only.*

The trail continues to remnants of an old airfield tower foundation and the former junction to the West Caribou Campsite. This former route to West Caribou was decommissioned following the 2025 wildfire and *all hikers must keep right on the main trail to the new junction.* Do NOT hike on the decommissioned route.

At the new junction, head left to go 1.2 km to the West Caribou campsite. The route to West Caribou is an eight hour return hike from the south trailhead which can be experienced as an enjoyable day trip or overnight excursion. Those hiking the entire Mantario Trail will continue along the main trail east (right) towards the East Caribou campsite.

## **Caribou Lake Junction to East Caribou Campsite**

**Duration: 0.75 hours**

**Distance: 2.7 km**

This section had extensive wildfire activity in 2025. Along the main trail, the route climbs a steep bank and descends to a creek crossing. This creek represents the approximate boundary of Ontario. Heading north into Ontario the trail crosses an overgrown portage route between Caribou and Rice Lakes. The trail stays close to the east shore of Caribou Lake and then crosses the border back into Manitoba to a campsite on Caribou Lake.

### **East Caribou Campsite to Marion Lake**

**Duration: 2.5 hours**

**Distance: 6.7 km**

Heading north, the terrain is fairly easy to cross. This southern half of this section was burned in the 2016 wildfire, and the entire section was extensively burned in the 2025 wildfire. The trail passes a control survey mark set into the rock. Shortly beyond the survey mark, the trail crosses the CN railway track. Look north of the railway track for the remains of an old railway camp featuring a stone baking oven. The trail intersects with the Marion-Ann lakes portage route following it east (right) for 50 metres before heading north again. Enjoy the spectacular view in this area. The trail winds on down to a campsite on the shore of Marion Lake.

### **Marion Lake to Peggy Lake**

**Duration: 3 hours**

**Distance: 7.7 km**

The south part of this section had extensive wildfire activity in 2025 up to the north end of Marion Lake and then was completely spared all the way to the Peggy Lake campsite. Northwest bound, the trail traverses a series of jack pine ridges and intermittent streams. Leaving Marion Lake, the trail joins the Marion-Shirley Lakes portage route heading north. While on this portage route the trail climbs to the top of a ridge where a series of humming power lines spans east-west. The trail continues north for another 300 metres, sharing the portage route, and then branches off west (left), continuing down into a marsh and a beaver dam crossing where wet feet may be unavoidable. Climbing out of the marsh and back up onto ridges the trail descends again, crosses the Doreen-Peggy lakes portage route (which travels east-west), and climbs again. The trail then crosses another marsh with a creek signaling the Peggy Lake campsite. Cross the creek using the large rocks as stepping platforms to the campsite on the north side.

### **Peggy Lake to Moosehead Lake**

**Duration: 2.25 hours**

**Distance: 5.8 km**

Most of the section saw moderate wildfire activity in 2025. Heading north about 1.5 km, another campsite exists at Alice Lake on the east (right) side of the trail. The trail meanders through several wet areas and then climbs and descends a steep ridge at Olive Lake. The trail traverses the base of the steep ridge at Olive Lake so watch your footing in this area. A new wood footbridge (2026) exists to cross Olive Lake. A campsite is located at Olive Lake to the east (right) of the main trail. The trail leaves Olive Lake and crosses a large beaver dam. The trail emerges at the shores of Moosehead Lake where several campsites exist. Moosehead Lake is the approximate halfway point of the Mantario Trail.

### **Moosehead Lake to Mantario Lake**

**Duration: 3.5 hours**

**Distance: 7.4 km**

Fill your water bottles and prepare to climb – this can be one of the most demanding sections of trail. Following the shores of Moosehead Lake, the trail goes east, then north. This shoreline can be difficult – you may have to detour from the trail to avoid floodwater and deadfall. Watch for the blue and white arrow markers. The trail traverse's granite ridges providing excellent viewing of the area. There was extensive wildfire activity along this section of trail in 2025. However, since much of the trail is on exposed, high rocky ridges, it did not greatly affect the trail. As the trail nears Mantario Lake, steep and rugged valleys emerge. The trail then meets the junction of the Hop-Mantario Lakes

portage route. If you require water, travel east (right) to Mantario Lake to fill up. The trail again climbs and descends through a series of steep valleys. Here, hikers are advised to slow their pace and use caution. One final descent brings the trail to the north shore of Mantario Lake and a campsite. On a clear morning enjoy the sunshine here.

### **Mantario Lake to Ritchey Lake Junction**

**Duration: 4 hours**

**Distance: 7.0 km**

Before leaving, fill your water bottles, as access to water is difficult during this section of trail. Prepare to get wet feet at two bog crossings just north of the Mantario campsite. As the trail travels north, a steep valley leads down to a beaver dam crossing, then climbs again. This section had extensive wildfire activity in 2025 from the Mantario campsite to just south of the beaver dam crossing. Near Two Lake a steep climb through thick forest leads to a high peak, providing a spectacular view to the south. A new climbing rope (2026) is secured to the rock with steel bolts. A swamp north of One Lake may result in wet feet. Just a few metres north of the swamp, a junction exists which leads to Ritchey Lake campsite – a 280 metre spur east (right) from the main trail.

### **Ritchey Lake to Hemenway Lake**

**Duration: 2.5 hours**

**Distance: 6.1 km**

The trail traverses the high ground on the west side of Ritchey Lake. North of Ritchey Lake the trail descends crossing the Big Whiteshell-Ritchey lakes portage and gradually climbs to the Big Whiteshell-Crowduck lakes portage. Stay alert and do not get misled by the portage routes. Four hundred metres north of the portage on the trail is Hemenway Lake campsite.

### **Hemenway Lake to North Trailhead**

**Duration: 3.5 hours**

**Distance: 9.5 km**

The trail winds through thick forest along the east shore of Big Whiteshell Lake. Sections of the trail are subject to flooding during high water. The trail meets Crowduck Lodge Road, heads east (right) along the road for 25 metres, and then travels north again. From Crowduck Lodge Road the trail follows an abandoned roadway around the north shore of Big Whiteshell Lake to the North Trailhead and the end of the journey. No services exist at the North Trailhead.