

Wilderness News

FROM THE QUETICO SUPERIOR FOUNDATION SPRING 2006



The Quetico Superior Foundation, established in 1946, encourages and supports the protection of the ecological, cultural and historical resources of the Quetico Superior region.

“One winter night I stood and listened beneath the stars. It was cold, perhaps twenty below, and I was on a lake deep in the wilds. The stars were close that night, so close they almost blazed, and the Milky Way was a brilliant luminous splash across the heavens. An owl hooted somberly in the timber of the dark shores, a sound that accentuated the quiet on the open lake, Here again was the silence, and I thought how rare it is to know it, how increasingly difficult to ever achieve real quiet and the peace that comes with it, how true the statement “Tranquillity is beyond price.”

— Sigurd F. Olson, *The Singing Wilderness*



Wilderness News

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The schooner Hjördis. Photos courtesy of The North House Folk School.

North House Folk School

By Charlie Mahler, *Wilderness News Contributor*

This month, students in Bill Lane’s saw-whet and boreal owling class at North House Folk School in Grand Marais won’t just be tromping through the wet Minnesota woods hoping to hear, see, and checklist owls like more typical birders. In the spirit of the hands-on ethic of the school, and in just the sort of synergistic relationship that North House seems to foster between the landscape where it is set and the traditional northern crafts it has taught to so many students in the school’s nearly 10 years of existence, Lane’s students will connect themselves to owls and owls’ landscape through their hands, as well as their eyes and ears.

Students in the one-day class will build nest boxes during the class’s daytime hours, learn the essentials of the owls’ breeding and nesting habits, and then, in the evening, venture into the forest to observe owl courtship and nesting behavior at already-established nest-boxes in the forest.

“Northern ecology that incorporates your hands, your heart, your mind,” North House Program Director Scott Pollack hoots about the class. “How about a ‘Habitat for Non-Humanity’ project! Why not build nesting boxes and get into the field, hang them and observe their behavior all at the same time?”

Lane’s class is just a more direct example of the connection North House students often make between themselves and the beloved Quetico-Superior landscape. North House classes in, say, shelter building, canoe and paddle-making, basketry, or tool-making can all serve to dissolve the barriers between a lover of the northwoods and the woods themselves.

Or, for that matter, develop a greater understanding for the big water that laps against North House’s Lake Superior shore location. Just as the traditional craft classes offer new realizations about how the land behind the school works its magic, learning to sail Superior on North House’s 50-foot gaff-rigged schooner Hjördis opens an understanding of the moods of the wind and water of Gitchi Gummi like few others.

“For me, life is enriched when I broaden and deepen my understanding of the places I experience,” North House Executive Director Greg Wright offers, “and I think this is a feeling shared by many North House students. Clearly, traveling by canoe is an enriching experience for many people. Would making the same trip using a paddle you hand-crafted, or better yet a canoe you built, deepen the experience? Each journey – of traveling, of building – impacts and affirms the other.”

Call it portaging to a new pool of understanding.

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The Mission

Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig probably didn't think of folk schools in exactly this way in early 1800s Denmark. Grundtvig however, a poet, philosopher and theologian and the father of the folk school movement, did see the need for an educational model separate from the elitist, Latin-based formal education of the time. Social and political changes taking place then prompted a need for an educational form to meet the needs of the newly democratized and increasingly nationalistic population of the Scandinavian countries.

By the late 1800s folk schooling was popular and schools that were originally developed by socially-conscious university educators soon became the domain of grassroots groups like local farmers or labor unions. The movement is credited by some as fostering the first rural democratic civilization in Denmark.

“Grundtvig envisioned schools that would bring people together, that would celebrate culture, where everyone would be a teacher because the learning would be shared,” Wright explains. “Education would focus on the conversation – the living word – the exchange between people rather than the written word – which he interestingly called the dead word – because he believed that the exchange of passion in life mattered more than anything else.”

Centuries later in northern Minnesota, Mark Hansen – like Grundtvig, the son of a pastor – would, along with others in the community, see the need for a folk school-style learning in his culture.

“I was a really poor student because I was so bored with what was going on,” Hansen recalls from his youth. “You’ve got people that only teach a certain way in public schools. They were good at sitting in rows and learning rote information and puking it out on a piece of paper, and I was completely shut down on that.”

Hansen, a boat-builder and jack-of-all-skills with wood, was drawn to the folk school ideal because he nonetheless loved to learn and liked to learn from people who build things. “They think like I do,” Hansen continued. “I ended up going to college and graduate school for some reason – I wasn’t dumb – I just know that I stared out the window and thought about what I was going to build when I got home.”

Informed by that experience, Hansen gathered like-minded people around his ideas of an inclusive, non-competitive, learn-for-the-sake-of-learning educational setting. Wright names local bead and fiber-artist Jo Wood, wood-block printer Betsy Bowen, and artist and wood-fire bread-maker Toni Mason as part of the circle of people critical to the establishment of the school. Wright attributes rise of North House to that critical mass of talented artists and crafts-folk in the Grand Marais area and the strong “commitment to humanity” embedded in the community.

Since its inception in 1997, the school has grown in its mission “to enrich lives and build community through the teaching of traditional northern crafts.” The non-profit institution

supports itself by tuition, memberships, and foundation grants. The campus which was established on the Lake Superior shore at the foot of the old Gunflint Trail in former Forest Service warehouses is quickly bursting its seams. Last year the school offered some 300 courses, taught by 90 different regional artisans, educating some 8,500 students in classes lasting anywhere from two hours to two weeks. The school offers courses to the general public through its catalog as well as custom courses for primary school, secondary school, and college groups.

“The goal for North House isn’t to grow and get big; it’s to achieve our mission,” Wright notes. “We’re not going to do that by becoming the Wal-Mart of folk schools. That’s not what it’s about. That said, our mission calls us to touch people’s lives. And this campus is going to be too small, over time.”

Current course listings include courses in basketry, boatbuilding, clothing and jewelry, fiber arts, foodways, knitting, music, northern ecology, outdoor skills and travel, painting and photography, sailing, shelter, sustainable living, timber framing, tool-making, traditional crafts, woodcarving, and woodworking.

Special Events

Regularly scheduled special events are instrumental in drawing first-timers to the school and to offer the impetus to bring regulars back to campus. Annual events at North House include the Winterer’s Gathering and Arctic Film Festival each November and the Wooden Boat Show each June. The school also partners with local businesses and organizations for special programs. Last winter, North House and the Sivertson Gallery of Grand Marais hosted Inuit carver Ohito Ashoona who taught a soapstone carving class at the school. North House instructor John Zasada’s Celebrating Birch exhibit at Grand Marais’ Johnson Heritage Post was celebrated with a weekend-long “opening” in February. The Wooden Boat Show this year, scheduled for June 16-18, will feature a wooden boat display, a “Boats-to-Tools” auction, films, seminars, workshops, and demonstrations. There’s also a summer solstice puppetry pageant.

Featured guests at the event this year are Garrett and Alexandra Conover. Like Bill Lane with his owling class, the Conovers personify the connection between traditional skills and crafts and the natural landscape that helps define North House. The Maine couple leads wilderness trips – in all seasons – traveling by traditional means and with traditionally made equipment and clothing.

“Engagement with the natural world with a small community of fellow travellers balances the estrangement fostered by our usual surroundings,” Garrett Conover has said. “Traditional trips upon the waterways allow for grace, thoughtfulness, and a pace that favors observation and connection.”

The same ethic that builds nesting boxes to know owls better and travels traditionally through nature to better connect with it, makes North House Folk School one with its human and ecological community. □



Music on the lake.



Timber framing.



Canoe building.



Paddle making.



Solo paddling.



For more information on the North House Folk School go to: www.northhouse.org or via US mail at North House Folk School, P.O. Box 759, Grand Marais, MN 55604-0759.

Paths

Editor's note: Laura Puckett led a group of five young women on a twenty-one day canoe trip starting at Gulliver Lake near Ignace Ontario travelling south through the Quetico Provincial Park and finishing by paddling the Pigeon River to Lake Superior. Ellen Saliars, a sixteen year old member of the group, reflects on her experience. Photo courtesy of Laura Puckett.

Along the most northern border of Minnesota, stretching from the Pigeon River to Lake Superior, is a path. The Pigeon River is shallow and very muddy. It marks the beginning of the Grand Portage, a path used by French fur traders. Thick stretches of pines line the nine mile trail. For many people the Grand Portage is a rite of passage, something you do the summer after you've turned sixteen. Maybe it is hard to understand; maybe it is simply something that you have to experience for yourself, but the Grand Portage is something that has changed my life. July 10, 2005—I woke up very early, so early there were no traces of sunlight through the green vinyl of our tent. It was dusky outside as the sun slowly began to rise. When we started, it was before six o'clock.

One of the things I remember best about that day was that everything was extraordinarily green and alive. The heat was oppressive and, in the morning, the insects were incessant. As the day wore on we would remove layers of clothing only to need to add more bug repellent. Sweat dripped off our noses and ran down between our shoulder blades.

I wasn't afraid of the Grand Portage, and neither was the rest of my group. After spending twenty days together I felt like we could take on the world. After traveling so far what was another nine miles? Every step I took was filled with wonder—I traversing the same trail the voyageurs did. I felt so much kinship to those men as I walked down the path carrying my load. What really connected me to them was the feeling of indomitable strength and courage. Nothing could stop me.

As we went through our portage rotations, we grew more tired, and it was harder to continue our conversations. It would have been so easy to just give up and focus on the pain and exhaustion, but we didn't. Each of us did what was needed to keep the other going, no matter the personal sacrifice.

We had heard that after we crossed the highway, we'd have a mile left. You can imagine our bliss when the faint roaring of cars was heard off in the distance. All of the exhaustion and soreness in my body was gone. We crossed the highway quickly and continued on. Joy is the only word to describe what I felt. At the beginning of our trip a mile might have seemed long, but at that moment it felt like a walk across the street.

We prepared for our last rotation. The end was so near, and I could picture the great expanse of Lake Superior in my mind. Each step drew us closer to the end and the pride of accomplishing the Grand Portage. Near the end the trees thinned somewhat, and there was a rickety bridge over a small

gorge with a tiny creek. The sight of water nearly drove me crazy. Besides being very dehydrated, I knew that creek had to lead to Lake Superior!

The path just kept going and going until, bursting onto a road, the Grand Portage Monument stood in front of us. We screamed and crossed the road. Nine miles of toil and pain were behind us. The single focus of my being was flipping down our canoes in Lake Superior. We carried everything to the very end and threw down our packs. Following the canoe carriers into the lake, we flipped down. The frigid water soothed my hot, tired body. My heart felt like it would burst; I was so happy. I could hardly believe I had gone so far. The funny thing was that I felt like I could do it all over again.

My group signed our names in the Grand Portage guest book. It felt so good to write my name there with those who had supported and needed me; to have some testament of my strength and fortitude for all to see. It felt like I was a part of a group of voyageurs who had just finished the Grand Portage.

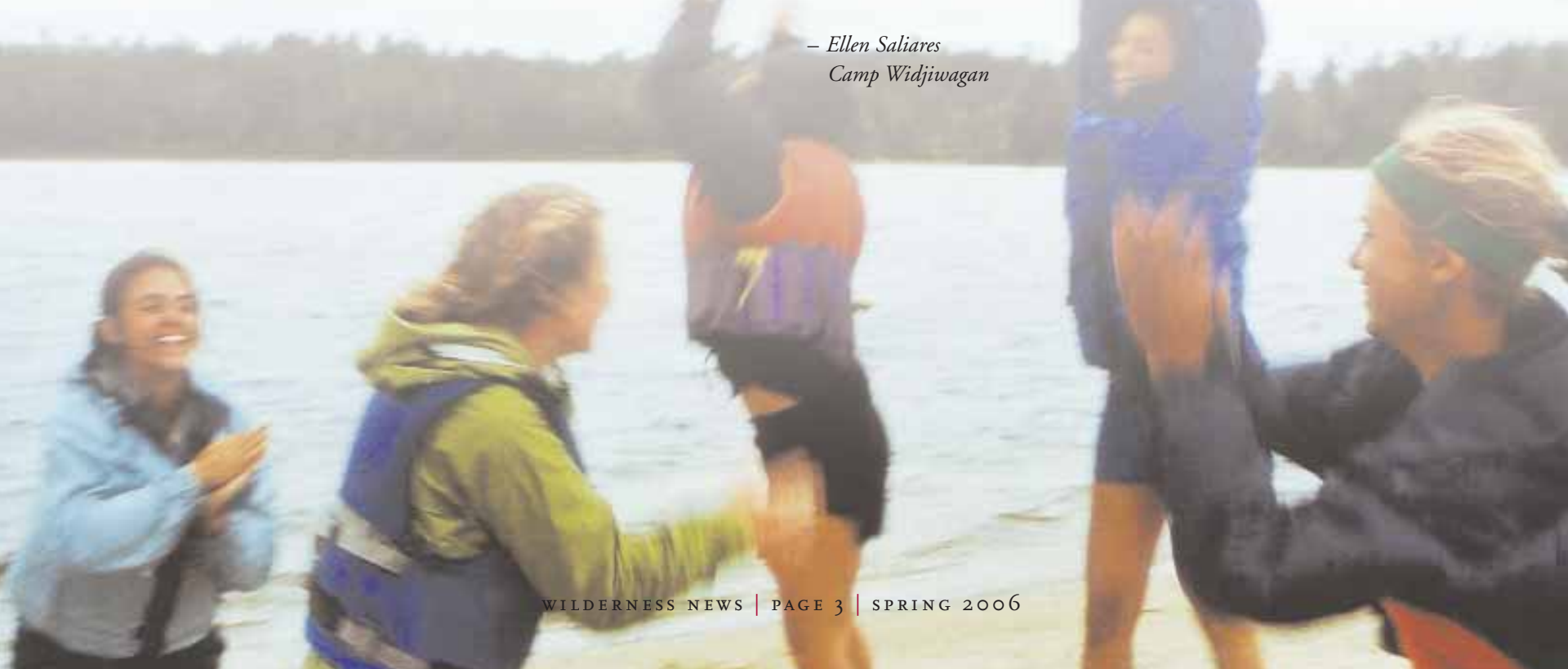
Even though I was very happy to have done the Grand Portage, I don't think I was really prepared for the end. The minute we left the parking lot, it felt like everything was over. Suddenly it felt like I was very much back in the "real world," a phrase that Laura hated. She said that being in the wilderness was as real as it got. I had been with these girls for almost a month and now it felt like life was tearing us apart. This "real world" created a tight feeling inside of me like something squeezing me from all directions. How could I ever explain? Soon we'd have to go home. Even Grand Marais seemed like a scary dream to me. It felt like I was just taking a break, like all of us would be heading back to Canada really soon.

I wanted to see my family, but I wasn't sure if I was willing to give up being with my group to do that. That was it, plain and simple, we were a group. In the city, I was just me. I am more me in the woods than anywhere else, and my group helped me realize my strengths. Why couldn't we just stay here forever? I didn't have to go home, and neither did they.

Going home happened. We each had to go our separate ways, but I will never be the same. The women I spent those twenty-one days with will forever be my friends, and I will always remember the strength and capability I had that day. I received this quote as a gift from Mary Gehrz during our trip and I feel like it completely describes my feelings: *"If I have seen farther than other men, it was because I was standing on the shoulders of giants."*

The Grand Portage was not just another portage; it was an end and it was a beginning. I started out on the path, but it only led to another one. I hope that I can continue to traverse the paths of my life with the same courage and optimism as I did that day.

— Ellen Saliars
Camp Widjiwagan





Bill Hansen

Seeing first hand the long term wisdom contained in the Wilderness Act.

Bill Hansen has had a unique relationship with the Quetico Superior region. Raised on Sawbill Lake, he saw a transition the region made after the passage of the Boundary Waters Act in 1978 and stayed to develop a successful canoe outfitting business. His interests in environment and community prompted a life-long commitment to community involvement.

Charlie Mahler/Wilderness News interviewed Hansen in fall 2005.

WN: Your parents were outfitters prior to the 1978 Boundary Waters Act. Can you describe what life was like for you in your youth and what your corner of what is now the BWCAW was like back then?

My parents, Frank and Mary Alice Hansen, started Sawbill Canoe Outfitters in 1957. Our neighbor, Sawbill Lodge, still had the airplane that they had been using for several years to fly to inland lakes before the air ban. They also had some of the wood and canvas canoes, although they were using the new, lightweight Grummans that were popular then.

Although I loved canoeing and wilderness camping from the start, I spent the majority of my youth in a motor boat. I had my own boat and motor when I was seven, and gradually increased horsepower over the years. Eventually I had a racing hydroplane that topped 35 mph.

It was a wonderful life of fishing, hunting, camping and exploring. I had an endless supply of friends from the lodge and campground, many of whom remain good friends.

WN: I've heard that initially you weren't pleased with the restrictions that came to the Sawbill area after 1978. How did you go from that attitude to being a wilderness proponent now?

I supported the wilderness improvements in 1978. But the loss of motors was a business and personal loss. I had to give up a personal tradition of motor-boat fishing and snowmobiling, along with three lucrative businesses: towing canoes, motor repair, and boat/motor rental.

After the BWCA Wilderness bill passed in '78, the lost business was replaced very quickly by non-motorized visitors. The wilderness qualities of the area, especially near Sawbill, improved immediately. It was quieter, people saw more wildlife, fishing improved and the water was cleaner.

I've seen first hand the long term wisdom contained in the Wilderness Act. I consider it one of the great pieces of legislation in American history. It is on the same level as the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote, the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act, and the Bill of Rights.

WN: The wilderness designation was and is a contentious issue in northern Minnesota. Is time healing the divide, or are there sticking points that could really flare up tensions again?

Time is improving the local attitude toward wilderness. The wilderness pays a strong economic dividend to the local economy. It also gives us a relatively intact eco-system, providing clean air, clean water, and outstanding recreation opportunities. These are now viewed as important assets by most people who live near the wilderness.

WN: You made two unsuccessful runs for the State Legislature recently, and have a long resume of community involvement in the Grand Marais area. What prompted you to be so involved in your community?

My parents have always been deeply involved in community activities. Also, in a small community, you are almost obligated to take your turn, if you have any interest at all.

WN: You're also known as a successful businessman. Is canoe outfitting in northern Minnesota a good way to earn a living?

It is the most wonderful way to make a living. It probably involves more bathroom cleaning than most people imagine, but we get to live in a place where we look at beauty every day.

WN: I've heard your talk about sustainable and non-sustainable enterprises in the northwoods. What direction do you think business enterprises in the north need to pursue?

Business everywhere must become sustainable. The choice is whether we plan for an orderly and rational path to sustainability, or wait for our unsustainable practices to lead us into crisis. The BWCA Wilderness is the only resource in Minnesota that is deliberately managed for long term sustainability. It can act as a model for planning the sustainability of other resources. Given the painful and difficult history of making the wilderness sustainable, it does not bode well for the future sustainability of manufacturing, agriculture, and settlement, to name a few.

WN: As busy as you seem to be, do you get to spend much of your own time deep in the wilderness? Where are your favorite places to go?

I never get to spend enough time in the wilderness. I strive to be out at least twenty days a year. I consider it continuing education for an outfitter. I can't name a favorite place, although I did travel the Louse River route in the BWCA Wilderness twelve times in twelve years in the '70s and '80s. □

CALENDAR

April 22—

Listening Point Foundation celebrates the 50th Anniversary of Listening Point—St. Paul, MN. For information or reservations call Paul Monson before April 17th at 1-952-929-5029

April 28, 29, 30—

Outdoor Adventure Expo—Minneapolis, MN. For information call 1-612-339-3433 or go to: <http://www.midwestmtn.com>

May 19, 20—

Kab-Ash Trail clearing; Voyageurs National Park. For information call 1-612-333-5424 or email: vnpa@voyageurs.org

June 2, 3, 4—

7th Annual Birders Rendezvous—Voyageurs National Park. For information call 1-612-333-5424 or go to: <http://www.voyageurs.org>

June 16, 17, 18—

Wooden Boat Show & Summer Solstice Festival; North House Folk School—Grand Marais, MN. For information call 1-888-387-9762 or go to: <http://www.northhouse.org>

July 13, 14, 15 —

Annual Assembly of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association (WCHA)—Keuka College, Keuka Park, NY. For information contact Tom or Karen McKenzie at 1-864-296-6051 or go to: <http://www.wcha.org>

August 11, 12, 13—

Grand Portage Rendezvous and Pow Wow—Grand Portage, MN. For information call 1-218-387-2788 or go to: <http://www.nps.gov/grpo/rendez.htm>

August 19—

Memorial service for Joe Seliga—Camp Widjiwagan; Ely, MN. For information call 1-651-645-6605 or go to www.widji.org

WILDERNESS PERMITS

BWCAW—

Wilderness permit reservations on line: <http://www.bwcaw.org> or call 1-877-550-6777

Quetico Provincial Park—

Wilderness permit reservations on line: <http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/quet.html> or call 1-807-597-2735

Voyageurs National Park—

Wilderness overnight camping permits required. Information on line: <http://www.nps.gov/voya.org> or call 1-218-286-5258

Woodland Caribou Park—

Wilderness permit reservations on line: <http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/wood.html> or call 1-807-727-1329

Beyond Grassroots— The Nature Conservancy of Canada

By Charlie Mahler, Wilderness News Contributor

“This area is not remote,” says Ilka Milne of the Nature Conservancy of Canada talking about the vast sweep of wild land that she is responsible for as the Program Manager of NCC’s Northwestern Ontario Program.

“It’s actually at the nerve center, because this incredible area is the headwaters of three huge North American watersheds – the Mississippi, the Great Lakes, and the James Bay drainage. I think we should all be really concerned about how we protect the land. If you think about something contaminating your water, it doesn’t feel that remote, does it? We’re close to the homes of a lot of people then, I suppose.”



Ilka Milne.

It is in this spirit that the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), which is about to celebrate its second year of operations at the Fort Frances regional office that Milne runs, seeks to secure and manage lands in areas that support high levels of biodiversity and that face the greatest threats from what it sees as incompatible land use. The organization is currently targeting for preservation critical habitats along Lake Superior’s Canadian North Shore. In the western part of her program area, Milne and area conservation partners are doing the preliminary planning necessary to identify which habitat parcels warrant the Northwest Ontario Program’s focus in the near future.

“We’re further along toward the actual procuring of strategic parcels along the Western Lake Superior Coast because [NCC’s] Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint has been done and we have all the background. On the rest of my program area we need to get that conservation planning done,” Milne offers.

Along Lake Superior, NCC is in a race against creeping vacation cottage development in efforts to protect shoreline areas it sees as vital to a wild and biologically diverse North Shore.

“The habitat that we’re trying to protect is peregrine falcon habitat and alpine and arctic disjunct habitat,” Milne explains. “Things like butterwort, pearlwort, and black crowberry that have ranges on the North Shore of Lake Superior and then nothing until you get up to James Bay.”

Second-home development is subdividing more and more of Superior’s Canadian shore lands. While the Canadian North Shore is generally less developed – apart from the cities and towns that dot the shore – than that of Minnesota, the availability of Canadian land at bargain prices relative to the US market has NCC concerned.

“It’s not to say that we’re against any development on the Shore either, it’s just that we have the opportunity to develop intelligently for long-term needs,” she notes. “Subdividing, that’s kind of a one-time need, biodiversity is a long-term benefit.”

NCC hopes to protect critical parcels of land along Gitchi Gammi in a manner not unlike its acquisition of a 750 acre parcel on the Canadian side of the Pigeon River recently. There, with the help of its US sibling The Nature Conservancy, it transferred the ownership of what is known as the Horne Falls Property from a Milwaukee family to Ontario Parks for inclusion in LaVerendrye and Pigeon River Provincial Parks. NCC raised \$355,000 toward the cost of purchase. Contributors to the purchase included the Quetico Superior Foundation.

The partnering strategy NCC used to procure Horne Falls is reflected in the general operations of Milne’s Fort Frances office. Her Northwest Ontario Program is supported by an Ontario “home office” of scientists and stewardship leaders in Guelph, and, “another step away,” the NCC national offices in Toronto. Closer to home, the Fort Frances office partners with TNC’s Minnesota chapter, which has a long history in the eco-region, as well as with smaller organizations like the Rainy Lake Conservancy and the Rainy River First Nation Watershed Program.

“I think what NCC brings to the table is experience and leadership with grassroots groups who want to be responsible for their legacy,” notes Milne. “We’re here to provide conservation leadership for people and be an outlet for their own needs to leave a legacy.”

In the western stretches of the Northwest Ontario Program’s area, NCC is eager to protect areas that are productive to some of the provincially rare southern and western prairie species that make a home in the area. Islands in both Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods are of special concern since they are valuable for both recreational use and for promoting biodiversity. NCC expects the strategic use of conservation easements to be instrumental in meeting its conservation goals in the west.

Those remote islands, one way or another, are part of the greater Ontario and Minnesota backyards.



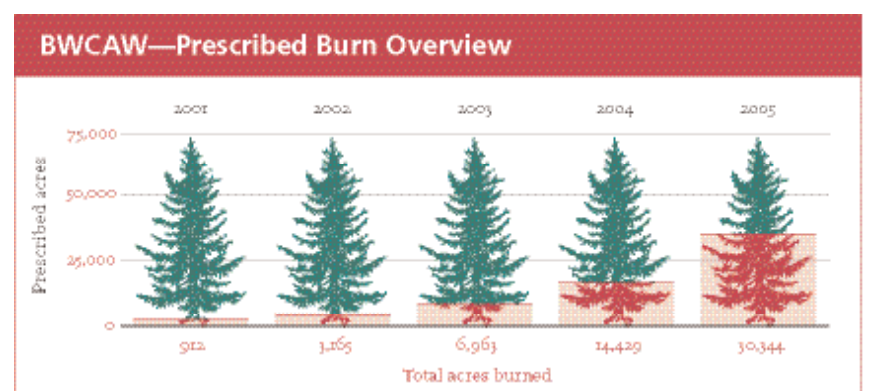
Pearlwort.



Butterworts.

BWCAW Prescribed Burns

In the aftermath of the July 4, 1999 blowdown in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), an estimated 30 million trees were toppled onto the forest floor. Some 75,000 acres affected by this wind storm were prescribed for burning. According to the Environmental Impact Statement signed into law in September 2001 the prescribed burns were to be completed over a five-to-seven-year time frame. Now, after five years, more than 60% or 44,650 acres remain to be burned. For information on the planned burns scheduled for the spring and fall periods of 2006 visit the Forest Service web site at: www.fs.fed.us/mn.



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CONSERVATION ISSUES UPDATE

South Fowl Lake Snowmobile Trail— In February 2006, the US Forest Service made its decision to replace the illegal South Fowl snowmobile trail with the proposed Alternative 2 trail skirting the BWCAW boundary along the Royal River and Royal Lake bluffs. Opponents of the this route say it will intrude on the wilderness, threaten rare plants, and claim it will be unsafe if built on the loose talus rock along the river bluff. Environmental groups plan to appeal the decision.

BWCAW motorboat permits— The 8th Circuit US Court of Appeals ruled in February that the US Forest Service acted wrongly in 2002 when it increased the annual motorboat permits on lakes chains bordering Park boundaries from 2,376 to 6,892 permits. However, the appeals court did say that the Forest Service does have the right to change the levels from those set when the BWCAW was created. It appears, then, that the Superior National Forest, which manages the BWCAW will have to come up with a new way to figure the number of motorboat permits available on the Moose-Newfound-Sucker, Birch-Farm and Saganaga-Gull Lake-Sea Gull River chain of lakes.

Isle Royale— Families of recreational cabin life-lease-holders on Isle Royale, in an effort to have their residency on the island extended beyond the terms of the original leases with the Park Service, have met with aids to US Senator Debbie Stabenow and Congressman Bart Stupak. According to Grant Merritt, Vice-President of the leaseholder's advocacy group, up to 20 lease-holding families could qualify for permanent residence in the park, if legislation the group hopes to have sponsored by the Michigan Democrats is introduced and passed. The lease-holders claim their continued presence on the island, which is largely managed as wilderness, is critical to the preservation of the cultural history of the park.

Logging the Roadless Areas— It appears the Minnesota DNR's decision to log 260 acres of state land in northern Minnesota, rather than the Bush Administration's repeal of the Clinton-era Roadless Area Conservation Rule, will be the action which puts an end to the hopes of conservation groups to set aside 62,000 acres of forest around the BWCAW from logging and road-building. While the Bush Administration's action opened the door for the Forest Service to log in the area, the state is poised to rev their chainsaws first, by including the acres in its new Border Lakes forestry plan. Environmental groups including the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, Audubon Society, and Izaak Walton League urged the DNR avoid the roadless areas so they might someday be protected. The forest industry applauded the DNR's decision.

ATV's— As anticipated, All-Terrain Vehicle discussion during the legislative session so far has centered around the proposed opening of the North Shore State Trail to ATV use. A DNR study placed the cost of preparing the trail for ATVs at \$700,000, which includes costs for culverts, "treadway alterations," and the grading of approximately 100 hills. Bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate to authorize and fund the opening of a third of the trail – beginning outside Duluth – in this session. The North Shore State Trail runs 146 miles from Duluth to Grand Marais and is a popular snowmobile trail during the winter months.

ALONG THE TRAIL



Kazan River inuksuk. Photo by John Skemp.

In the Image of Man

Inukshuk (ee-nook-shook) is an Inuit word meaning "in the image of man". For those who travelled across the vastness of the Arctic, inukshuks acted as directional markers to guide those who saw them. Each inukshuk had a specific meaning or purpose, depending on their appearance and location. While some had only one arm pointing toward the correct route, others had a peep hole in the center so travellers looking through the hole could see the next inukshuk on the horizon. Still others were used to deceive caribou and lure them into areas where they could be easily hunted. And, while functional for so many reasons, people would sometimes build inukshuks for no other reason than to break the loneliness and simply leave a sign of their passing.

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Add your name to our mailing list, send us comments, feedback, or story ideas:

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