



2017 Issue 3

Wolf's Eye

Newsletter for the Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association

IRKPA celebrates 60 years!

Happy 60th anniversary to the Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association! With support from its members, IRKPA has been producing educational materials and providing funding to the parks for 60 years. Thank you for your membership, donations, and involvement with this beneficial organization. Here's to the next 60!

Name Change? It's Up to YOU!

This newsletter was originally named "Wolf's Eye" in reference to Isle Royale's position in Lake Superior, which resembles a wolf's head. Now that IRKPA represents both Isle Royale NP and Keweenaw NHP, we're attempting to choose a name for the newsletter that unites the parks and IRKPA's role in supporting both of them. Join us in a friendly contest to find a new name! Submit your ideas to susanna@irkpa.org

Searching for Holiday Gifts?

Consider supporting IRKPA by giving a gift membership to a friend or family member. Also, check out irkpa.org for a full selection of sales items. IRKPA will also have a booth at two local events: "Home for the Holidays" on Nov. 25 and "Poor Artists" on Dec. 2.

Fall Patrol on Isle Royale

By Mike Ausema

It's late October on Isle Royale, and Mott Island is abuzz with last-minute activity. The small group of remaining NPS employees are packing up their gear and hurrying across the gangplank onto the *Ranger III*. A long, deep whistle cuts through the crisp morning air. Moments later, I cast off the lines and wave goodbye, eager to experience true solitude on this wilderness island. One other ranger from the Protection Division and I are left to do a final security check of all the buildings around the island and provide visitor and resource protection, when needed, for any late-season visitors.



The Ojibway Tower offers excellent views of the island's changing colors. (M. Ausema)

The Greenstone Ridge, which was covered in brilliant red and orange leaves just a week ago, is now mostly gray. Several moose have begun rutting behavior on Mott Island. A huge bull wandered past my lodging a few days ago, and at this time of year, the best thing to do is stay out of their way. The days are growing shorter, a distinct difference on a daily basis. The winds are less predictable and a deep chill is in the air.

As the *Ranger III* glides down the channel and disappears from view, we set about the task of physically checking each building to make sure the doors and windows are secure. Once this is complete, we load all of our gear, including food, water, spare boat parts, a spare generator,

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Author and vessel *Goshawk* on the final patrol of the season (E. Wells)

(Continued)

and equipment necessary for emergency medical response, law enforcement, search and rescue and survival onto a 27-foot NPS patrol boat. The final stage of Fall Patrol has begun!

After stops at Davidson Island and Rock Harbor, we head toward the North Shore. Along the way, we check each of the campgrounds. We visit with the few remaining late-season visitors and ensure that they're prepared for self-rescue in this potentially dangerous and variable autumn weather. We also make sure that the campgrounds are clean and ready to go for the following spring season.

We spend a night at the Amygdaloid Island ranger station, where we rely on the wood stove for heat. The next day, we continue along the North Shore. We stop at the campgrounds with docks and hike into more distant campgrounds on our way to Windigo, where we will be based until the end of the month.

Getting set up in Windigo is no small task. We are without electricity until we can get a small, portable generator going. There is no running water, so we haul all of our water from Lake Superior to our living quarters. As showers will be non-existent for the next week or two, we appreciate the sauna even more! We get the propane set up for cooking and chop some wood to get a warm fire going in the wood stove. A second generator is hooked up at "the Comm Shack." With this generator running, we are connected to the outside world... phones, a base station for our radios so that we are in contact with park dispatch, and even internet.

This will become very important, as we will be poring over marine weather information, which will dictate when and where we can patrol the open water of Lake Superior surrounding the island.

The final days of October slip by in a blur. We contact the last few visitors that have bravely crossed to the island in their personal boats. The island is growing wilder and wilder. The steel gray of winter is fast on our heels as we close down our operations at Windigo.

The marine forecast shows a break in the wind, a calming of the waves. It's time to cross back to the mainland! On our final morning, we are greeted by five moose, including a very large bull. It's time to leave the island to the moose and wolves, letting wildness settle over everything that remains. It's time for a long winter's nap.

KNHP Celebrates 25 Years!

All were welcomed to the Calumet Visitor Center on Saturday, October 28, for live local music, coffee, tea and sweet treats, to celebrate the park's 25th anniversary.

Local musicians included the Milkman Jam and Friends (NPS photo below) with Mark Davis, Mary Lou Pesola, Steve Kangas, Cathy Isaacson & more.

This event was made possible by a donation from IRKPA, which supports education and interpretation efforts at both parks.

*Please note: Winter hours are in effect from November 1 – May 30. The visitor center will be open from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.





A partnership between tribal youth and NPS researchers resulted in the capture of Northern Pike, which will be analyzed to determine mercury contamination of Isle Royale's inland lakes. (NPS photo)

Tribal Youth Assist with Fish Sampling

By Lynette Potvin

This summer, youth from the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa spent two weeks working with the Natural Resources Division on Isle Royale, in a two-part effort to introduce tribal youth to natural resources research in national parks and provide an opportunity to connect to a landscape with ancestral heritage.

Isle Royale biological technicians, along with two interns and a crew leader from the Grand Portage tribe, sampled fish for the Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network's Eastern National Parks Fish Mercury Study.

The crew camped at Moskey Basin, portaged a canoe two miles to Lake Richie, and caught 15 Northern Pike. Those fish will be analyzed for mercury concentrations and mercury isotopes, and contribute to a comprehensive study assessing bioaccumulation of persistent organic contaminants across the Great Lakes region.

Three lakes on Isle Royale are part of this ongoing study: Lake Richie, Lake Harvey, and Sargent Lake. The partnership with the Grand Portage youth will continue; next year's projects will focus on small mammal surveys and continued fish sampling.

Geoheritage Book Signing Party!

Join *How the Rock Connects Us* authors Bill Rose and Erika Vye at the Carnegie Museum in Houghton, MI, on Thursday, Dec. 14 at 6:30 p.m. Enjoy some nibbles and conversation and have your book signed—or purchase a copy, hot off the press!

Your Chance to WIN!

IRKPA's annual sweepstakes offers great prizes, and YOU could be the next winner! Tickets are available until December 15 for a suggested donation of \$5 each or 3/\$10, at the KNHP Visitor Center in Calumet, or the IRNP Visitor Center in Houghton. The drawing will take place on Dec. 18.

1st prize: 2 nights lodging for 2 at the Keweenaw Adventure Company's Cottage in Copper Harbor

2nd prize: a sunset cruise for 2 on the *Isle Royale Queen IV*, Copper Harbor

3rd prize: winner's choice of any two IRKPA publications

Speaking of WINNERS, let's congratulate the 2016 Sweepstakes winners:

1st prize: Mark Stanke, Marinette, WI; 2nd prize: Glen Kivela, Ishpeming, MI; 3rd prize: John Zeitler, Des Moines, IA

Ranger III Ticket Prices



The *Ranger III*, the National Park Service's ferry to and from Isle Royale, has

been sailing under the same fare structure since 2013. Isle Royale National Park is now proposing to update the *Ranger III* passenger and freight fares for 2018, and encourages the public to comment on these proposed changes before a final decision is made. The comment period is open until December 8, 2017.

For the full *Ranger* proposed fare structure, visit: <https://www.nps.gov/isro/> and search for "Ranger III."

Comment at the Houghton Visitor Center Monday-Friday, 8:15 am to 4:15 pm, or go online: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/ranger3fares>

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IRKPA is the membership-based nonprofit partner of Isle Royale National Park and Keweenaw National Historical Park. Gifts, bequests, memorials, and membership are U.S. tax deductible.

Membership Categories

Individual \$25 Household \$35
Supporting \$50 Sustaining \$100
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*may be paid in four annual installments

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IRKPA received donations in memory of William Denison, who, during his lifetime, felt a special connection with Isle Royale NP. The donation funds were used in a Cultural Resources project, stabilizing the boathouse at the historic Sivertson Fishery in Washington Harbor. IRKPA extends a heartfelt thank you to William Denison’s family and friends for their support of this place that meant so much to William.

Feeling renewed? If not, your IRKPA membership may be expiring soon! Our memberships run through the calendar year, expiring December 31. Watch for our mailing or renew online (irkpa.org) to receive your membership premium! Need a 2018 calendar? Act now to receive the official Isle Royale 2018 calendar, with photos by the acclaimed Carl Terhaar.

Would you like to share a story about your experiences at Keweenaw NHP or Isle Royale NP? Do you have comments about the new layout of the Wolf’s Eye? Is there a specific topic that you would like to read about in an upcoming issue of the newsletter? Please contact Wolf’s Eye editor Susanna Ausema at susanna@irkpa.org. Thank you!

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