



waabizheshi (American marten)

Waabizheshi (American marten) is a member of the weasel family. Martens are important animals. They are a clan animal of the Anishnaabe. In northern Minnesota martens are at the southern edge of their range, which extends into Canada and Alaska. If conditions here change too much, they will move north. This would be a sign that the land around Grand Portage is becoming a different kind of forest.

Historically, martens were valued for their fur in fashion. Like beavers, they were trapped to near extinction in Europe and over-harvested in North America during the fur trade era. Also, they lost their homes when this area was logged in the late 1800s. To thrive, martens need a forest floor cluttered with brush and debris, as well as dense tree coverage. They do best in northern forests with a lot of snow, away from human disturbance. In winter they stay warm in the air created by brush or roots covered with snow, where they also can find small rodents to eat.



