



The Grand Portage Guide

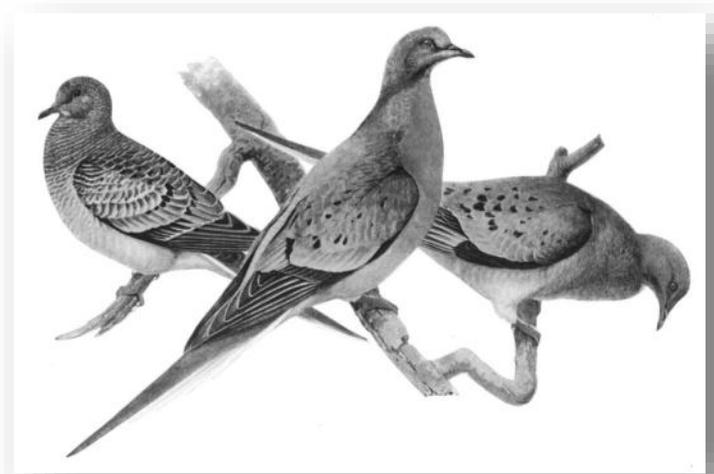


Grand Portage: Great Change and Persistence

Superintendent Tim Cochrane

Much has changed at Grand Portage through time. And some of the change has been dramatic and lasting. Not long ago, for example, millions of passenger pigeons would fly along the North Shore in the spring. And yes, this is the origin of the name Pigeon River, on the border to the north of us here at Grand Portage. And when conditions were right, hundreds of pigeons were caught in aerial nets strung up in the fly-way. They were eaten with great relish.

Or perhaps you've noticed that Caribou is a relatively commonplace name in these parts – Caribou Lake, Caribou Point, and Caribou Trail. During the height of the fur trade here, moose and deer were virtually extirpated, or gone from here. Woodland caribou hung on in smaller numbers for many years and when killed provided a welcome change in meat from the many kinds of fish that can be caught in the lakes, streams, and Big Lake. Woodland caribou survived in part because they were



Passenger Pigeon *Ectopistes migratorius*
 Juvenile (left), male (center), female (right)
 Image by Louis Agassiz Fuertes

widely dispersed, never in great numbers (like the passenger pigeon), and thus harder to severely deplete in a relatively short period of time. While mostly gone from the Arrowhead Region by 1920, the last wayward pair came south to Hovland two decades ago. The lack of moose, deer, and few caribou created a local problem during the fur trade, namely, a shortage of leather for moccasins and webbing for snow shoes. Shoes then were imported to here!

The great and destructive cutting of the Great Lakes pineries dramatically changed the composition of trees. Pioneering loggers also cut a great deal of tamarack, which to this day are rarer in the woods than when immigrants first came here. But there were even smaller changes afoot earlier still. The fur traders introduced wooden barrels to hold (and cure) salted fish for the long hungry days of winter. Straight grained white pine were sought out to be cut and made into barrel staves. And when iron was precious, early barrel makers used spruce

(Continued on page 13)

Table of Contents

Grand Portage National Monument

Welcome and Map of Site.....	2
Daily Activity Guide.....	3
Self-Guided Activities.....	4
Books Worth Browsing.....	4
Special Events.....	5
Alcohol: Social Lubricant, or Imperial Weapon?.....	5
Erasing the Evidence: Archaeological Site Preservation and Why it is Important.....	6
The Grand Portage: A Pull Out Map and Guide.....	9
<i>Ojibwemodaa: Let's Speak Ojibwe</i>	13
Grand Portage: The Great Carrying Place.....	14
Mercury Contamination Update Grand Portage National Monument.....	16
Area Information.....	18
Kid's Page.....	19
Tips and Reminders.....	Back Cover

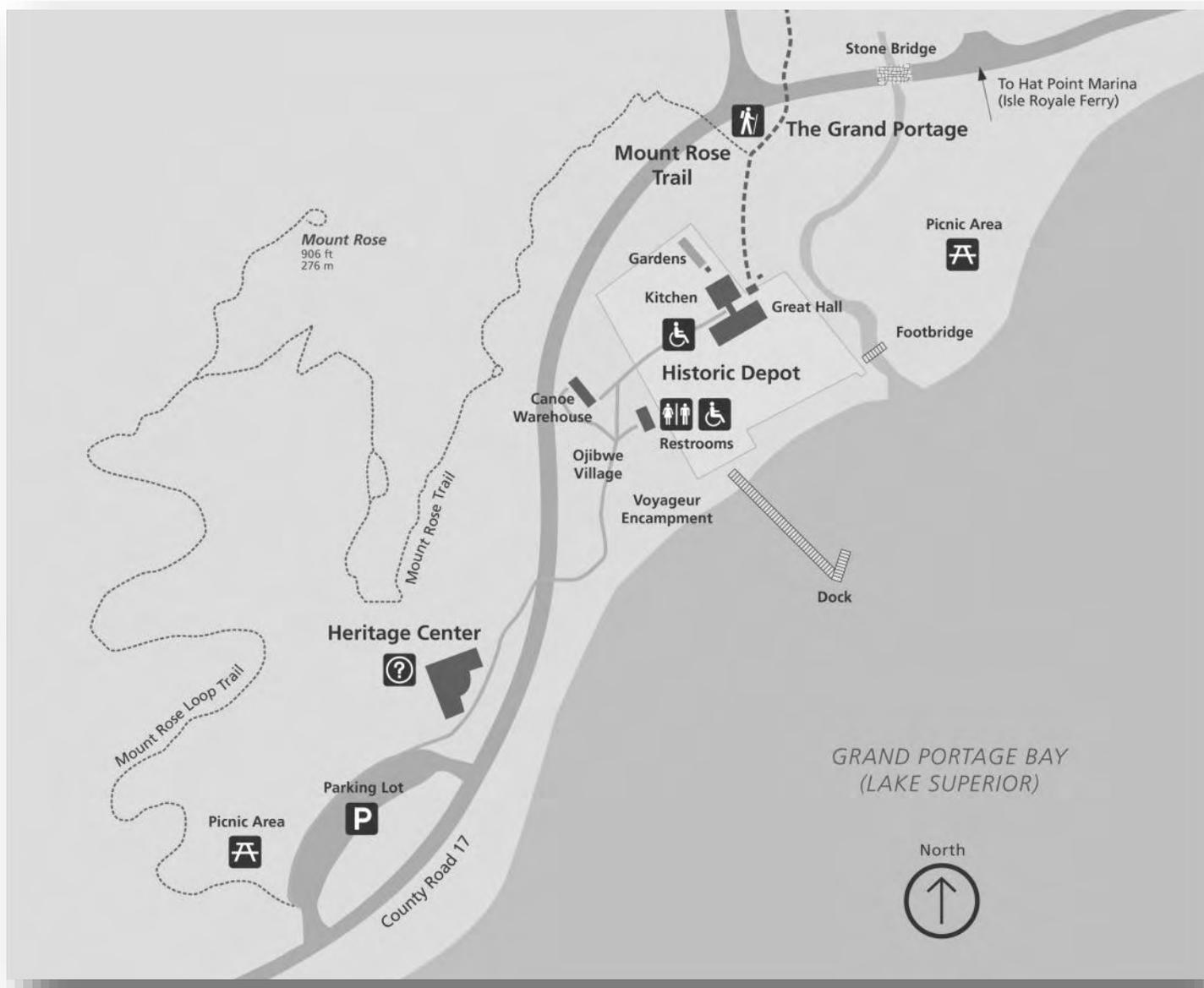
Boozhoo Bonjour Welcome

Welcome to Grand Portage. We are pleased you are here and exploring “Portage” with us. There is much to see and do. Please join our interpreters and participate in the past. Please ask us about the fur trade and its ingenious technology, or its novel customs. Or come and learn about the intrinsic links between the fur traders and the nearby residents, the Grand Portage Ojibwe.

The Staff of Grand Portage National Monument

A GUIDE TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY AT GRAND PORTAGE NATIONAL MONUMENT

More than 200 years ago, the North West Company concentrated its business activities in and around the stockade. Four of the most important structures have been reconstructed on their original foundations: The Great Hall, kitchen, warehouse, and gatehouse. National Park Service employees and Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs) staff these buildings. You will find rangers and VIPs wearing dress appropriate to the period, or in the NPS uniform.



ACTIVITIES & RANGER-CONDUCTED PROGRAMS

LIVING HISTORY DEMONSTRATIONS

Come to the Voyageur Encampment and Ojibwe Village, where you will see demonstrations of Ojibwe and voyageur life in the late 1700s. While there, see our American Indian Three Sisters garden, and view a North West Company trade gun.

Visit the Great Hall, historically furnished circa 1790s. Also in the Great Hall, there is a Try-It-On historic clothing exhibit where *you* can fit into history!

Follow your nose to the kitchen, where you can see period cooking and baking demonstrations from mid-June through early September. Don't miss our historic heirloom garden and outdoor bake oven located just behind the kitchen.



Historic Encampment, 2013

RANGER-CONDUCTED INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

History comes alive when you take part in an interpretive program here at Grand Portage. Park rangers will transport you back in time, where you can become part of the story that unfolds before you!

These programs range in length from 20 minutes to 60 minutes. Be sure and check the “Program” sign in the Heritage Center or ask information desk staff for program topics, locations, and starting times. Please note: Our program schedule is subject to change without notice due to staffing or weather conditions.

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS

Video programs are offered regularly in the Heritage Center classroom. There are several to choose from. *Please see , Notes“ below - Schedule subject to change.*

“Rendezvous With History: A Grand Portage Story” – Running time is 23 minutes. - *Note: Shown on the hour.*

Short Subjects: “Our Home: The Grand Portage Ojibwe,” “The Men of the North West Company,” “The Gift of the Birch Bark Canoe,” “A Gap in the Hills: Geography of Grand Portage” - Running time 24 minutes—*Note: Shown on the half hour.*

SELF-GUIDED ACTIVITIES

HIKING TRAILS

The Grand Portage: The 8.5-mile *Grand Portage* is open for hiking. Two campsites are available for camping at Fort Charlotte. A free permit is required, and can be obtained at the Heritage Center or online at <http://www.nps.gov/grpo/planyourvisit/permits.htm>. For more information about camping at Fort Charlotte please see page 12.

Mt. Rose Trail: The Mt. Rose trail, located across from the historic depot, is a paved ½-mile-long nature trail which climbs 300 feet for a spectacular vista of the depot and Lake Superior. Approximate hiking time is 1 hour. A self-guiding trail brochure is available at the trail head. The new Heritage Center accessed Mount Rose Loop Trail (see map page 2) will open in 2014.

BROCHURES AVAILABLE

We offer several brochures for your use and enjoyment:

- NPS Grand Portage Official Map and Guide
- Ojibwe Lifeways
- Historic Garden
- Bird Checklist
- Mt. Rose Trail

JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM

Become a Grand Portage Junior Ranger! This program, for kids ages 7 to 13, is free. Activity guides can be picked up at the Heritage Center and Great Hall. You should allow at least 1½ hours to complete this activity. When finished, kids are awarded a Junior Ranger badge and a voyageur's contract. This is a family activity and we encourage parents to get involved and enjoy the program with their kids! Children under the age of 7, or those with special needs, will require the assistance of an adult.

BOOKS WORTH BROWSING

To help alleviate the isolation of winter posts, the North West Company provided reading materials. Daniel Harmon, a North West Company clerk wrote,

"Most of our leisure moments (and which is nearly nine tenths of our time) will be spent reading, and conversing on what we have read."



The following titles may be found in *your* local library:

- "The Ojibwe Journals of Edmund F. Ely, 1893-1840" edited by Theresa M. Schenck, 2012. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, 487 pg.
- "The Creator's Game" by Art Coulson, 2013. The Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN 46 pg.
- "Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask" by Anton Treuer, 2012. Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, 184 pg.
- "Original Local: Indigenous Foods, Stories, and Recipes from the Upper Midwest" by Heid E. Erdrich, 2013. The Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, 264 pg.
- "Ancient Earth and the First Ancestors: A Cultural and Geological Journey" by Ron Morton & Carl Gawboy, 2011. Rockflower Press, Duluth, MN, 213 pg.
- "The Minnesota Book of Skills" by Chris Niskanen, 2012. Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, 206 pg.
- "Dutch Oven" by Carsten Bothe, 2012. Schiffer Publishing Company, Atglen, PA, 174 pg.
- "Powwow Summer: A Family Celebrates the Circle of Life" by Marcie Rendon, 2013. The Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, 44 pg.
- "Freshwater Passages: The Trade and Travels of Peter Pond" by David Chapin, 2014. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, NE, 376 pg.
- "Before and After the Horizon: Anishinaabe Artists of the Great Lakes" Edited by David W. Penny and Gerald McMaster, 2013. National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C., 128 pg.
- "Modern Spirit: The Art of George Morrison" by W. Jackson Rushing III and Kristen Makhholm, 2013. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 182 pg.

These books are also available at the Eastern National bookstore in the Grand Portage National Monument Heritage Center.

The Grand Rendezvous

Ranger Karl Koster

The hustle and bustle of summer activity peaked with the North West Company Rendezvous held here at Grand Portage. This was the time when furs from wintering posts, which reached into Canada, were delivered down the historic *Grand Portage*. The annual Rendezvous is still celebrated here during the second full weekend of August. The event is held in conjunction with the Rendezvous Days and Powwow, sponsored by the Grand Portage Band of

Lake Superior Chippewa. The annual gathering is our biggest and grandest celebration of the year, a time when Grand Portage comes alive and reflects on its rich heritage. Re-enactors from across the country and Canada gather to camp and challenge each other. This is one event you do not want to miss! Music, dancing, craft demonstrations, and hands-on workshops ensure an exciting weekend at the national monument.



Alcohol: Social Lubricant, or Scourge?

Ranger Ashley Brown

For thousands of years alcohol has been an integral part of many societies. Historically alcohol was a multifunctional substance used as a beverage and for its antiseptic and medicinal qualities. Unlike today, where many people drink alcohol socially, many Europeans consumed alcoholic beverages on a regular basis due to the lack of fresh water and that tradition carried over to North America. During the Great Lakes Fur Trade, liquor was heavily traded by the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies for the acquisition of animal furs, such as the considerably sought after beaver pelt. The gentlemen of the company, voyageurs, and natives all consumed alcohol.

The most common types of alcohol available during the fur trade were rums, fortified wines like Madeira and port, and fewer amounts of brandy, whisky and gin. With these particular alcoholic beverages, people could produce

different flavored wines, shrubs, cordials, punches, and toddies. High wine was the most common liquor available for trade. High wine is high-proof undiluted rum, which is then diluted with water for trade. Alexander Henry the younger mentions in his journal about the dilution of high wine for the native tribes,

We do not mix our liquor so strong as we do for tribes who are more accustomed to use it. To make a nine-gallon keg of liquor we generally put in four or five quarts of high wine and then fill it up with water. For the Crees and Assiniboines we put in six quarts of high wine, and for the Ojibwa, eight or nine quarts

Many men of the North West Company engaged in the

(Continued on page 8)

Erasing the Evidence: Archaeological Site Preservation and Why it is Important

Chief of Resources Management Bill Clayton



Careful Excavation of Shoreline Site, 2013

NPS Photo

Welcome to Grand Portage National Monument. We're a 710-acre historic park within the National Park Service system dedicated to preserving the rich cultural heritage here at Grand Portage. It's a heritage that goes back at least as far as 9,000 years ago, close to the centuries of the last Ice Age, when the mile-high, continental ice sheet known to geologists as the Laurentide ice sheet, was in the process of melting back to its point of origin in what's known today as Hudson's Bay. Nine thousand years. Think about that. That kind of deep time-depth means many human groups in the past once called this area home.

Hundreds of generations of nomadic hunter-gatherer groups settled here and used this area as a transportation route to and from Lake Superior and as a place to hunt, fish, harvest, quarry and convert natural resources into food, clothing, medicine, shelter, transportation, and tools. The end of that long period of settlement came with the intrusion of European explorers, clergy, and fur traders. Beginning with the French by at least the early 18th century, the Grand Portage area became a transshipment focal-point and base of operations for fur traders and explorers. More importantly, it became a core settlement area for an aggregation of Algonquian-speaking clan groups from northern Lake Superior that eventually became known as the Anishinaabe or Ojibwe—a people that reside at Grand Portage to this day.

No matter what time period, people leave traces of their passing on the landscape just like here at Grand Portage. These traces come in many forms such as tell-tale rock fragments left over from making stone tools. Another common trace found in archaeological sites comes in the

form of burnt seeds often found in the charcoal deposits left over from ancient campfires. Broken clay pipe fragments tossed in the woods along a portage by a weary voyageur after suffering the misfortune of dropping the delicate and thought to be necessary object on a rock, is often a common trace from the period of the European arrival. There are many examples of these traces but when located on or in the ground, they tell us we're not the "first to pass" that way. They also tell us an archaeological site is nearby... and it's time to call an archaeologist in to investigate.

Archaeology is a forensic science. Think of the long-running television series CSI. To any avid fan of the show (the author unfortunately has only seen one episode), CSI stands for "crime scene investigation" and that is a perfect analogy for our science, except switch the "crime scene" for something on the order of, "camp site." Archaeologists are forensic scientists that investigate ancient sites where humans "did something" and left traces of that "something" activity. Traces that eventually found themselves buried in the soil. When they can, just like a forensic crime scene investigator, archaeologists attempt to tell the tale, based on the traces or evidence left, of what happened at that site long ago.

Hopefully, it didn't involve a crime.

Let's switch topics for a moment. For those who drive vehicles, have you ever wondered why law enforcement or insurance claim professionals get annoyed when people immediately move their cars from the scene of an accident site? Most people know the answer to this, but I'll say it because it's a central theme in archaeological rea-

soning. It's because the position of the vehicles involved in an impact, as well as all the detritus from the crash, "contain" information useful to crash site investigators to re-construct the crash and determine who was at fault. The point here is the position of the traces from the crash, whether it's shatter fragments from a windshield or broken tail-light on the ground, or a tree that some unfortunate driver ran into during an icestorm, often contain information that will help tell the tale of the unfortunate event with some accuracy.

Now, back to Sherlock Holmes. The arrangement of objects, blood stains, and weapons in a room of a crime scene, as well as hair, stopped clocks, powder burns or for that matter, bullet holes, all have information potential to tell the story of a crime. If the investigator is lucky, the traces left behind can answer specific questions about the crime, such as what day and what time of day the crime occurred, the sequence of the event, how many people were involved or what kind of weapon was used, sometimes even what specific weapon was used. Again, the point is, the kinds and arrangement of residues, objects or traces of an event, may contain information that, when pieced together by a trained investigator, give us a good approximation of an event that occurred in the past. Straight out of a 19th century Sherlock Holmes mystery.

Now... bury those traces and residues in the ground for a couple of thousand years or so and you have an archaeological site.

So why am I beating this horse to death? Because archaeological sites, like crime and accident scenes, will lose their information potential when they get disturbed by people. When an archaeological site gets bulldozed under for a new strip mall or "swiss-cheesed" by pot-hunters looking for their "discovery" fix, or the next morsel of profit from an Internet sale, the information potential of that site is forever lost to time. It's gone. The potential story of the people that used or lived at that site will never be told, simply because the forensic evidence got messed up. That's a tragedy that's probably immeasurable in my book.

Fortunately that tragedy was "immeasurable" enough for the U.S. Congress to pass the Antiquities Act in 1906 and then replace it with a legal "up-grade" in 1979 known as the Archaeological Resource Protection Act or ARPA, both of which make damaging archaeological sites on federal lands illegal and carry consequences that can include misdemeanor or felony penalties for those convicted. Those laws and other "historic preservation" laws along with the implementation of historic preservation pro-

grams in federal agencies designed to protect and preserve archaeological sites on federal lands have gone far, but not far enough. Despite efforts of federal land managers, law enforcement personnel and of course, archaeologists there is still a lot of damage being done to sites within federal land boundaries.

We still have a ways to go in preserving those portions of our national heritage still in the ground and you, dear visitor, can help us accomplish that goal. Whenever you visit one of the thousands of your public land units around the U.S. whether it be a National Park, National Forest, or Bureau of Land Management unit, or other type of federally administered public land unit, please refrain from excavating, disturbing, defacing, or removing any kind of archaeological find either in or above ground. This includes any object of antiquity (50 years or older), archaeological deposits, battlefields, ruins, rock art, building remains, pictographs or petroglyphs on rock walls. If you



Systematic Excavation of a Portage Site, 2012 NPS Photo

see anyone doing the above please report it to the land manager/park ranger office as soon as you can. When you do so, please make sure to provide accurate descriptions of everything you see, including the location of the activity and the persons involved. Whatever you do, please don't add to the disturbance.

It's a huge task protecting our national heritage – there's a lot of it out there on the landscape. Each site is forensic evidence of someone who lived and passed through that way long ago. To destroy that evidence is to "delete" that person or group from history. For good. Again, I think that's a tragedy. Help us keep that from happening. Thank you for listening, and enjoy your time here at Grand Portage.

(Continued from page 5)

trading of alcohol, such as high wine for other provisions, horses and furs. The main thought was “if the British controlled the liquor trade in the area, they would monopolize the fur trade there.”ⁱⁱ It was also a custom to give the natives alcohol and other trinkets to cement a relationship between the company, traders and the natives. Alexander Henry the younger revealed in his journal that he was once offered a wife by Old Buffalo who, “brought me his eldest daughter, about nine years of age, and insisted upon my taking her for a wife, in hopes I would give him a keg of liquor; but I declined the offer.”ⁱⁱⁱ Traders cited in their journals the effects of alcohol on the native populations. Duncan M’Gillivray on his way from Grand Portage to Fort George mentioned in his journal that he found

8 Lodges of Seateurs at the Pas in the midst of a drinking match; they behaved exceedingly well tho’ their minds were irritated after a quarrel in which 2 men were stabbed, one of whom was already dead and the other mortally wounded.^{iv}

During the fur trade, heavily traded liquor was detrimental to the North West Company’s voyageurs and natives. Excessive drinking amongst the voyageurs and their masters caused problems like late departures, fighting, and loss of goods. Colonel George Landmann even made note that the bourgeois Alexander Mackenzie and William McGillivray continued their “drunken frolics” one night after everyone had gone to bed, which led to a late departure the next morning.^v The Hudson Bay Company criticized The North West Company for exploiting their workers; they encouraged the men to spend their wages on rum, or even paying the men’s “wages in rum at highly inflated prices.”^{vi} Many of the voyageurs would squander their pay during the rendezvous in Grand Portage at Boucher’s Tavern.

With all the problems, that alcohol brought to the trade not all Nor’ Westers supported the company’s stance on supplying alcohol to the native populations of northwest Canada. Certain individuals, such as David Thompson refused to carry alcohol to trading posts in his company because of the effects it had on the natives. In one instance the gentlemen that he was traveling with “insisted upon alcohol being the most profitable article that could be taken for the Indian tribe. . . I placed the two Kegs of Alcohol

on a vicious horse; and by noon the Kegs were empty, and in pieces, the Horse rubbing his load against the rocks to get rid of it.”^{vii} As a result of Thompson’s actions no “further attempt was made to introduce spirituous Liquors” west of the mountains. By 1801, the North West Company issued an agreement to penalize any wintering partners or clerks that were unable to complete their duties because of alcohol. Any man found guilty of such allegations would “forfeit his wages for the current year.”^{viii}

Alcohol played an important part in the Great Lakes Fur Trade. It fortified relationships between traders and natives, but also caused great turmoil and hurt. The prohibition of alcohol in the trade during the early 1800s made negotiations near impossible for some traders; though later companies would resume use of trading alcohol.^{ix} As trade of alcohol ended so began the hopes of societal improvement.



Hand blown glass wine bottle found at Fort Charlotte, from the GRPO museum collection. NPS Photo

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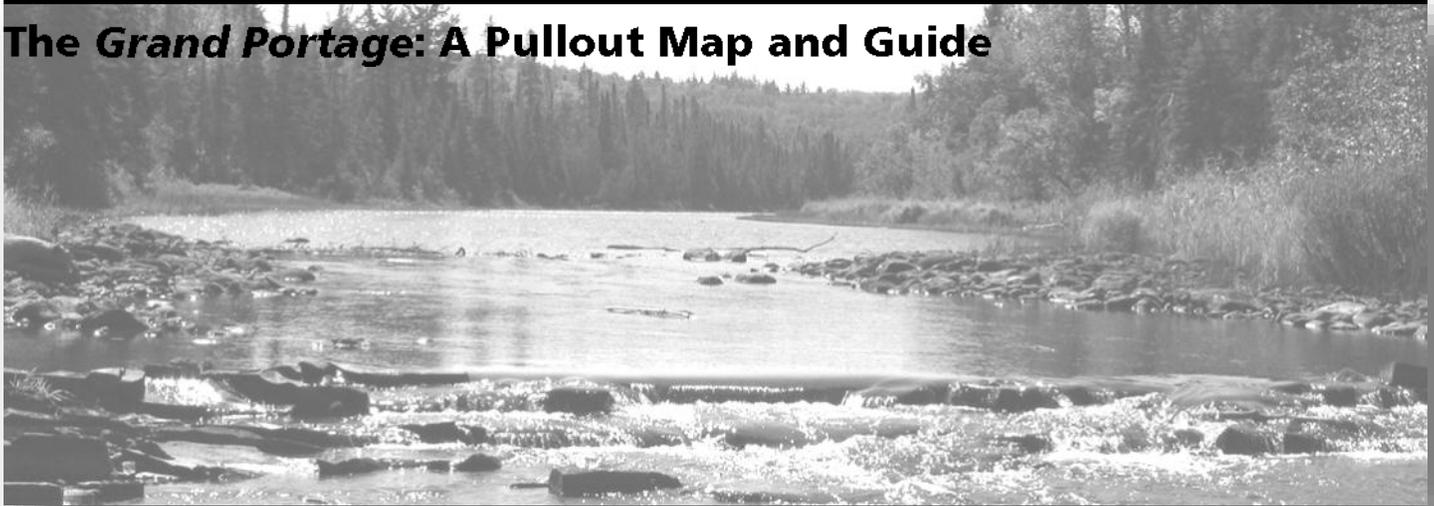
- i Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 164.
- ii Alexander Henry, David Thompson, and Elliott Coues, *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry, fur trader of the North West Company, and of David Thompson, official geographer and explorer of the same company, 1799-1814; Exploration and Adventure among the Indians on the Red, Saskatchewan, Missouri, and Columbia Rivers*, (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1965), 65.
- iii Duncan M’Gillivray, and Arthur Silver Morton, *The Journal of Duncan M’Gillivray of the North West Company at Fort George on the Saskatchewan, 1794-5*, (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1929), 13.
- iv Carolyn Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 170.
- v *Ibid.*, 45.
- vi D’Jarcy Jenish, *Epic Wanderer: David Thompson and the Mapping of the Canadian West*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 142.
- vii J.C. Stewart, *North West Company Minutes*, (Grand Portage, June 30, 1801).

Grand Portage

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The Grand Portage: A Pullout Map and Guide



History

Indian people have traveled this footpath between the Pigeon River and Lake Superior for centuries. The Ojibwe called the *Portage* “*Gichi Onigaming*,” The Great Carrying Place. *Gichi Onigaming* or the *Grand Portage*, to those from Montréal in the colony of New France, enabled Ojibwe and other Indian peoples to conduct trade with neighboring tribes and to access local hunting and gathering areas. Ojibwe people frequently traveled the *Portage* carrying birch bark canoes and baskets, fish from Lake Superior, garden seed, wild rice, raw copper from Isle Royale and flint from Gunflint Lake.

In the late 17th century, as French trade with woodland peoples expanded, explorers such as Daniel Greysolon, *Sieur Du Lhut*, may have learned about the *Grand Portage* through contacts with Ojibwe, Cree or Assiniboine families. Explorers possibly traveled across the portage with Indian guides but no written account of such use has been uncovered.

The first documented travel along the *Grand Portage* was made in 1731. Explorer and trader Pierre Gaultier, *Sieur de la Vérendrye*, sent a son and nephew across the *portage* with instructions to establish a post on Rainy Lake. *La Vérendrye*'s account indicated that the *Portage* was well known by native people. He described it as being from three to three and a quarter *lieues* (7.5-8.1 miles). He also noted, “*all our*

people, in dismay at the length of the portage... mutinied and loudly demanded that I should turn back.”

After *La Vérendrye*, other explorers and traders traveled the Grand Portage to access the *pays d'en haut*, the vast unknown “up country,” of the northwest. By 1763, after conclusion of the French and Indian War, the British had wrested control of the fur trade from the French, and trade with Ojibwe and other woodland and plains Indians continued to expand. The North West Company, in 1784, began building its summer headquarters at the eastern terminus of the *Portage*. For the next 25 years, voyageurs, clerks, guides, interpreters, wintering partners and agents of the NWC, the fractious XY Company and smaller firms routinely used the *Grand Portage*.



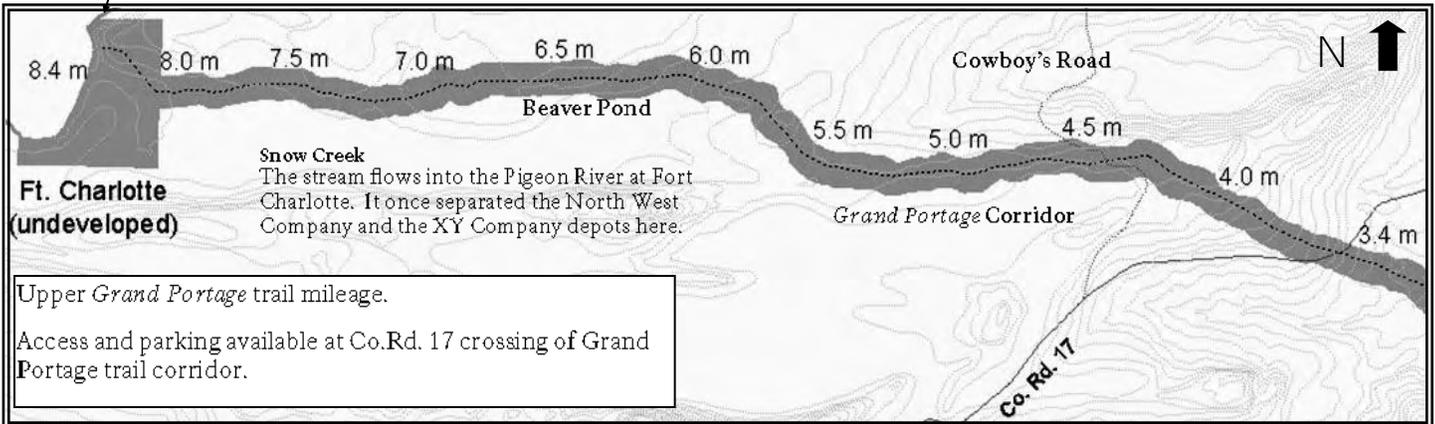
The Grand Portage goes through a gap in the hills

Pigeon River

The Pigeon River is the western terminus of the *Grand Portage* and forms part of the international border between the United States and Canada. From Fort Charlotte the river flows 22 miles east over hazardous rapids, cascades and waterfalls finally emptying into Lake Superior. To avoid these obstacles, Indian people portaged their canoes across the *Grand Portage* between the river and Lake Superior long before Europeans arrived.

Fort Charlotte

The North West Company and later the XY Company built stockade depots here. They enclosed warehouses and support buildings to temporarily store and secure trade items and furs being transported across the *Grand Portage*. Fort Charlotte was named after the wife of King George III.



During the 1790s, Fort Charlotte was such a busy depot that winterer Mr. Donald Ross was called "the governor," due to his long tenure there. Fort Charlotte watercolor by Howard Sivertson (View original in Heritage Center at top of stairs)

Distances

Distances along the *Grand Portage* are indicated in miles by travel in both directions on the *Grand Portage* is shown below.

From Fort Charlotte to Lake Superior		From Lake Superior to Fort Charlotte
0	Fort Charlotte	8.5
2.5	Beaver Pond	6.5
4.4	Co. Rd 17	3.4
7.8	MN Hwy 61	.6
8.5	Lake Superior	0



Parking

Portage users may park vehicles at the Heritage Center parking lot or at the County Road 17 crossing. If your plans include camping at Fort Charlotte, please obtain your free permit at the information desk in the Heritage Center. Please inform a park ranger if you intend to leave vehicle(s) overnight in the parking lot.

What is a Portage?

A portage is an overland trail or pathway which permits the transport of materials such as canoes, supplies and cargo from one body of water to another.



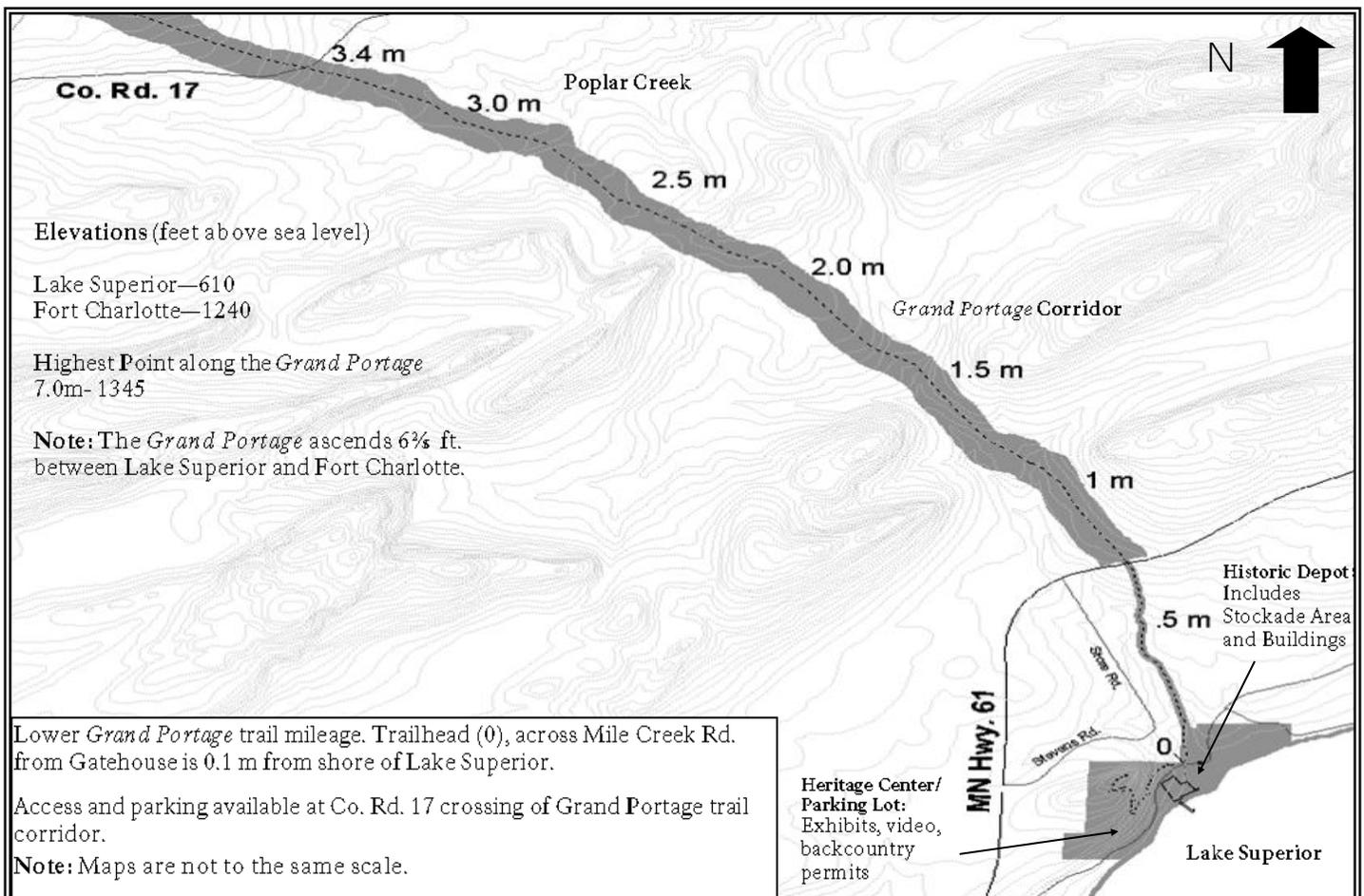
Majestic old growth eastern white pine along the Grand Portage.

Poses

During fur trade times the *Grand Portage* was divided between 16 to 18 *poses* or resting places. Such rest stops were usually located near a difficult section of a portage such as a hill or marshy area and frequently near sources of fresh water. Here voyageurs unloaded their heavy packs, waited for their strength to return and enjoyed a drink or brief smoke of their pipe before continuing.

Poses also served as temporary collection points for packs of valuable merchandise. All packs and materials being carried across a portage were assembled together before moving to the next *pose*. By moving the packs in this organized way, any loss was minimized.

The length of a portage was frequently defined by the number of *poses* it contained. They were generally one-third to one-half mile apart depending on the difficulty of the terrain. The location of a *pose* probably changed over time as the conditions in that particular area changed.



Camping/Hiking and Skiing

The *Grand Portage* is open year round for hiking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. You may access the *Portage* from the Heritage Center parking lot overlooking Lake Superior, MN Hwy 61, Co. Road 17 or from Fort Charlotte on the Pigeon River.

The *Grand Portage* climbs 630 feet between lake Superior and the Pigeon River. Round-trip hiking time from the depot is approximately 10 to 12 hours.

Co. Road 17 crosses the *Grand Portage* at its approximate mid-point and is about 11.5 miles from the Heritage Center parking lot. Take MN Hwy 61 south from Casino Road, travel about a quarter mile to the junction of Co. Road 17. Turn right on Co. Road 17 and follow it until it meets Old US Hwy 61. Co. Road 17 continues to the right, passes Mt. Maud road on the right, and Partridge Falls road on the left eventually crossing the well marked Grand Portage mid-point trailhead.

Safety

The *Grand Portage* is often wet and muddy during late spring, summer and early fall. Terrain is uneven and there are exposed rock surfaces and tree roots. Boardwalks have been constructed over some of the wettest places, but large areas of standing water frequently remain throughout the year. Sturdy, waterproof footwear is recommended.

- Carry plenty of drinking water.
- Mosquitoes and black flies are abundant from late spring until mid-summer. Take repellent with you.
- Please stay on the *Portage*. Old logging roads and animal trails crisscross the *Grand Portage* and may lead you astray.
- Do not disturb wildlife or archeological remains.

Camping at Fort Charlotte

- Two campsites at Fort Charlotte will accommodate up to 10 people.
- Reservations for a free camping permit can be made ahead of time by calling for assistance during business hours or online.
- More information is available online at: <http://www.nps.gov/grpo/planyourvisit/permits.htm>.
- Please inform a park ranger if you plan to leave your car in the parking lot overnight or longer.

Leave No Trace Camping

- Carrying a backpacking stove is recommended.
- Campfires are permitted only in fire grates.
- A pit toilet is located nearby.
- There is no safe drinking water at Fort Charlotte, so water must be filtered, chemically treated or boiled before drinking.
- Please pack out what you pack in. Do not bury trash or place it in the pit toilet.
- Use only dead and downed wood for campfires.
- Do not cut down trees near the campsites or peel bark from them.



Prohibited on the Grand Portage:

- Motorized Vehicles
- Motorcycles
- ATVs (All-terrain vehicles)
- Snowmobiles
- Bicycles
- Horses

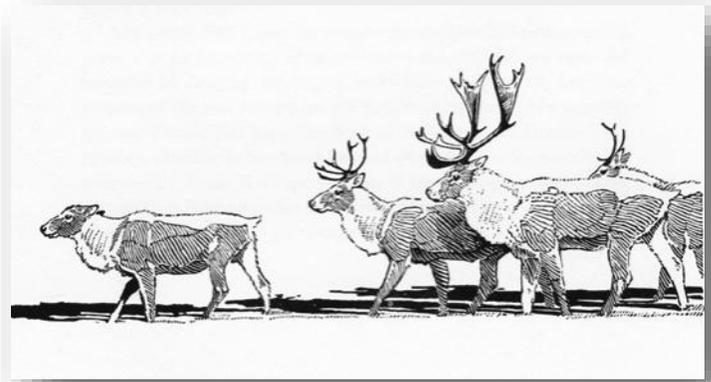
(Continued from page 1)

roots wrapped around the barrel staves in place of hoops. (Anishinaabeg used split spruce roots to stitch together birch bark canoes. A heavier root was used in lieu of the metal hoop.) Imagine traders scouring these grounds looking for white pine for barrel staves!

And the scenery of Grand Portage has changed as well. Plenty of wood was used to build the fur trade structures and heat those drafty structures in the winter time. The cold winters meant an ever present need for firewood, which meant longer forays to trees worth their while in cutting. The result was Grand Portage was much more open then than now. A resting spot on the Grand Portage, called the Parting Trees, was quite a way inland, but with the opening you could see the lake from quite a way away. And some Anishinaabeg and fur traders would burn the meadows to keep them open, freer of pests, and made up more of grass than woody plants. A more open village would keep breezes moving through making it harder for clouds of mosquitoes to get settled and bite.

So much has changed and yet, fortunately, some important “things” have stayed the same. Standing on the front porch of the Great Hall at the historic depot the view across the bay towards Hat Point remains largely unchanged. It is the view the hungry, irritated, bored, or even satisfied traders repeatedly gazed towards for a canoe brigade or a North West Company schooner to round the point. New arrivals meant their acute isolation of the winter was broken with the appearance of mail, new foods or a new pair of pants, and fresh gossip.

Also unchanged is the route of the Grand Portage trail –



Woodland Caribou

Rangifer caribou

Image by Francis Lee Jaques

an ancient trail that linked great riverine water routes and the Great Lakes across the continent. Travelers along the route might carry medicinal herbs, cloth, kettles, different types of knives, and keepsakes along this watery route punctuated with portages. But even the ancient trail was not totally unchanging, it would move slightly when the portagers would avoid a muddy stretch, steep incline, or sharp rocks that would tear leather shoes. Each year it would swerve a little bit to “seek” drier, better, and easier ground to walk upon.

That is our job here too, to take care of what is important, what the American people found worth making into a national park unit here at Grand Portage. We need to find the right mix of preserving what is important, but also in innovative ways – to sometimes swerve to make our protective efforts better. Please help us in protecting this place. Let us know what you like or do not like. Or ask us questions about what you see. Welcome to Grand Portage – a place of great change and also great persistence!

Ojibwemodaa: Let's Speak Ojibwe

Ranger Jeremy Kingsbury

These phrases can be seen around Grand Portage, or can be used during your visit here.

Boozhoo: (Boo–Zhoo): Hello (slightly formal)

Aaniin: (Ah-Neen): Hi

Mii Gwech: (Me –Gway-ch): Thank you

Biindigen: (Been-dig- ain): Come inside

Awegonen?: (Away-gon-in): What is it?

Aaniindi?: (Ah-need-dee): Where is it?

Ganawaabi: (Gah-nah-wah-bee) Look

Ikwe: (Ick- way): Woman

Inini: (in- in- ee): Man

Abinoojiih: (Ah- Bin-oooh-jee): Child

Bajjish ka'ogaa: (Bah-Jeesh-ka-oh-gahn): Conical Lodge

Wiigiwaam: (Wee-gih-wahm): Wigwam

Nisawa'ogaa: (Nih-sah-wah-oh-gahn): Peaked Lodge

Gigawaabamin Minawaa: (Gih-gah-wah-bah-min Meen -ah-wah): See you later

Grand Portage: The Great Carrying Place

Ranger Beth Drost



Photo Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

Annuities: Grand Portage tribal members received payments of goods and/or money biannually in exchange for their ancestral homelands from the Canadian border to south of Duluth, Minnesota. The payments lasted for less than 20 years.

Great gatherings occurred at Grand Portage. Families, hunters, explorers, traders, and varied others gathered here. Like your visit today, those who came before often were only passing through, but they came every year. They saw Isle Royale in the distance. They looked out over the seemingly never-ending water beyond Pete's Island. This small, secluded bay protected them while they were here. Most will visit for a short time, then move on to complete the annual cycle.

Native Americans gathered in Grand Portage for many reasons. Ojibwe, Cree, Assiniboine, and Ottawa, among others, came to sing, dance and drum, bargain, sell and trade, feast, celebrate and mourn. Native groups have met each other on the shores of the small secluded bay on Lake Superior for centuries. Most gathered during the warm months of the year, from June to September. They came to meet European traders from the east. They came to rest, to work, and to play.

What brought you to Grand Portage? Historically, people came to Grand Portage to pass through its namesake trail, the "Grand Portage." The Ojibwe call it *Gichi Onigamiing*, or the great carrying place. The Grand Portage is the 8.5-mile portage from Lake Superior to the Pigeon River. Its purpose is to bypass the dangerously treacherous last 20 miles of the Pigeon River as it foams, cascades, and plunges into Lake Superior.

Lake Superior, on the eastern end of the Grand Portage, was like a canoe super-highway. On the Lake, travelers could paddle 60 or more miles in a day. The western end of the Grand Portage, at the Pigeon River, is the setting-off point of a series of lakes and rivers spanning the continent. Like Minnesota's Highway 61, the Grand Portage and Lake Superior bring people to and through the small village on the bay.

Grand Portage has been a gathering place for thousands of years. The first groups to travel through Grand Portage may have done so on the edge of glaciers, over 10,000 years ago. Evidence of indigenous people in close proximity of today's portage route shows definite use for at least 2,000 years and perhaps up to 10,000 years. Early native people came to trade food and medicine with other groups, to reach stone tool quarries to the north, or to paddle to copper deposits and prime hunting and fishing on Isle Royale. These early native groups may have only passed through, as many still do, but they may have lingered because of its central location to the resources they sought.

Many native groups have at one time called Grand Portage home including the Ottawa, Cree, and Assiniboine. The Anishinaabe arrived in Grand Portage in the mid-1600s, and they are still here. Their seasonal lifeways brought them to the Big Lake in late spring and fall mostly to fish, but also to gather. Summer was a time of plenty. Survival came easier, and they celebrated with dancing, drumming, and singing on the shore of the bay. Imagine the sounds of the drum bouncing off the Island and the surrounding hills. It was a good time. There were marriages and funerals. Carolyn Gilman wrote about the Ojibwe seasonal gathering at Grand Portage,

"Some summers were spent in the sugar camp, but more often the band gathered at Grand Portage Bay. There people might spearfish by torchlight on Wausaugoning Bay, set lines or dip fish in the Pigeon River, or make an occasional hunting trip to Isle Royale. . . The temporary summer village at Grand Portage was the focus of ceremonial, political, and (on rare occasions) military activities."

The Ojibwe “shared” the bay area with the North West Company and other small fur trading companies from the late 1700s to 1802. Grand Portage was the location of the British Company’s annual meeting. Ojibwe women worked in the Company kitchen and provided small services for the fur company. Men could hunt or fish for the Company to receive credits in trade. Ojibwe women were invited to social events within the wall of the depot. It was a cross-cultural, transcontinental gathering.

The “General Rendezvous” of the North West Company continued from June to July. It was like a business retreat for the company agents and partners. Canoe brigades reached Grand Portage from distances as far as 1,500 miles. Furs arrived from the north and supplies arrived from the east. To the fur traders, the rendezvous was weeks of business and meetings. Daniel Harmon was a clerk with the North West Company beginning in 1800. He describes his first Rendezvous below.

June 13, 1800. This is the Head Quarters or General Rendezvous, for all who trade in this part of the world; and therefore, every summer, the greater part of the Proprietors and Clerks, who have spent the winter in the Interior, come here with the furs which they have been able to collect, during the preceding season. This, as I am told, is about the time when they generally arrive; and some of them are already here.

Tuesday, 24. Almost every day, for some time past, people have been flocking in from the Interior, with the returns of the season.

More than 500 people were known to be at the General Rendezvous of the North West Company. Alexander Mackenzie lists the Montrealers as “five clerks, eighteen guides, and three hundred and fifty canoe-men... for the summer season in going from Montreal to the Grande Portage, in canoes.” In addition, they were meeting approximately 150 Northmen from the interior posts. The North West Company’s General Rendezvous met for almost 20 years and the smaller gatherings slowed as well.

Until reservations were created, Ojibwe families moved continuously throughout the year. Reservations were created by the Treaty of 1854. The Treaty diminished the hereditary, tribal lands of the Ojibwe to reservations and boundaries. In exchange for their land, the band members received payments. When the agents came, it was once again time to gather at Grand Portage.

Agents for the federal government traveled to Grand Portage twice a year, usually in June and sometimes in September, to make the payments. Members traveled from scattered settlements. Many tribal members lived away from the reservation, it was a time to re-unite with family and friends, kindle new relationships, and come “home.” Over 1,000 people gathered to receive their payments. This gathering lasted only 19 years.

In the 1960s, among concerns of losing important Anishinaabe traditions, there was a resurgence of the gathering at Grand Portage. The new Grand Portage National Monument sought to recreate historic events of Grand Portage through re-enactments.

The tribe had been hearing of other Minnesota tribes putting on an annual celebration of singing, dancing, and drumming, a powwow. The result was “Rendezvous Days.”

The very first Rendezvous Days was held July 28th and 29th, 1962. The celebration was held “to commemorate the rendezvous of the old trading posts of Voyageur days held each year about this time.” There was a parade, bagpipes, canoe races and canoe jousting, a voyageur arrival reenactment, softball tournament, “Indian dancing,” and a Queen of the Reservation pageant.



Powwow: Gatherings were often held in the level “Meadow” area near the Catholic Church. Anyone can participate or watch these intertribal gatherings.

The modern Rendezvous Days is held during the second weekend in August. The Grand Portage National Monument organizes the voyageur re-enactment and the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa organizes the intertribal powwow. The village-wide event resembles a combined county fair and family reunion. Thousands of people come to visit for the weekend, more than quadrupling the tiny village’s population. The gathering is full of re-enactments, reunions, games, weddings, dancing, celebrating, gambling, and feasting. The people of Grand Portage gather to celebrate the generations past and those yet to come.

The time that people gathered has changed through history. Native groups were known to gather on the bay in late spring and fall. Fur traders rendezvoused in early summer. Treaty and annuity payments usually happened in the spring and fall. Today we celebrate in August, the time of year that fur traders would be long gone to their wintering posts and the Anishinaabe would be traveling for the wild rice harvest.

You may have traveled in a car instead of a canoe. You may not have planned to stop. But for many, Grand Portage is a welcome sight on their journeys. Whether staying to join the gathering, or passing through, Grand Portage has welcomed many. You should feel welcomed here, too.

Mercury Contamination Update 2014

Grand Portage National Monument

Biological Science Technician Brandon Seitz

Research indicates the southern boreal ecosystem of Grand Portage is highly sensitive to mercury deposition.

Grand Portage is Sensitive?

The landscape encountered along the 8.5-mile of the Grand Portage trail is often perceived as a pristine forest ecosystem- a forest not unlike the one that would have been encountered by 18th century Euro-American fur traders and Ojibwe alike. However, upon closer investigation it has been revealed that methyl mercury, a severely toxic form of mercury, is present in the water, soil, and aquatic organisms. While the landscape from Voyageurs National Park, through the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness to Grand Portage and beyond to Isle Royale may have similar amounts of mercury deposition, the amount of methyl mercury at Grand Portage is substantially higher than many other lakes and streams of the western Great Lakes region. One main reason methyl mercury is more prevalent at Grand Portage is because there are more wetlands contributing methyl mercury and dissolved soil humus to the water. Mercury is deposited on land and water in dust and precipitation (Figure 1). Wetlands provide the necessary environment to chemically change inorganic mercury to toxic methyl mercury. The dissolved humic substances bind to mercury in the water and sediment and transport it through our watersheds. The unique character of this interface between water, soil, and wetlands makes the southern boreal ecosystem of Grand Portage highly sensitive to mercury deposition. One indication of mercury sensitivity is the color of the water. Deeply stained waters the color of tea are more likely to be sensitive to mercury deposition, while sky blue waters are likely less sensitive.

What Harm Can Methyl Mercury Do?

Methyl mercury biomagnifies in organisms, increasing in concentration as it moves up the food chain (Figure 1). Therefore, methyl mercury becomes very toxic to high-level predators such as eagles, loons, and even people. What is not well known is that there are many other organisms at risk. Songbirds, for example, accumulate high levels of methyl mercury simply by feeding on spiders and insects with aquatic larval stages. Recently it has been found that dragonfly larvae at Grand Portage harbor high enough concentrations of methyl mercury to put these birds at risk. Like people, the diet of pregnant songbirds is transferred to the developing embryo, which is the most sensitive life stage. This is why human fish consumption guidelines are so important and why they are more restrictive for child-bearing women. When it comes to environmental pollution, fish, wildlife and people are all critically linked. Unfortunately, fish and wildlife cannot protect themselves from mercury poisoning. However, by following federal, tribal, and/or state fish consumption guidelines, the people in Grand Portage and across the country are protected from foodborne mercury poisoning due to eating fish.

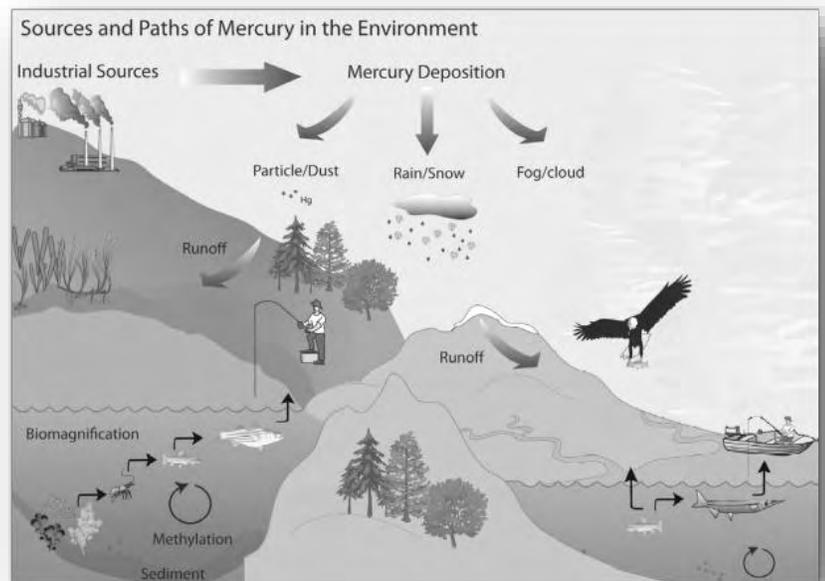


Figure 1. A very small amount of mercury can contaminate an ecosystem and become a significant health threat to humans and wildlife. Through a process called methylation, naturally occurring bacteria act on mercury to create methyl mercury, which bioaccumulates in organisms, magnifying in concentration as it rises through each level of the food chain.

What is the Source of Mercury Deposition?

Mercury has natural sources in the environment, but they are very small. The dominant source of mercury in the Great Lakes region is deposition from industrial emissions such as taconite production and coal burning power plants. While these emissions sources can be very local and have local impacts, often their mercury air pollutants can traverse the globe before being deposited as many as two years later.

Are Mercury Emissions Increasing?

The Clean Air and Clean Water Acts created pollution control laws in the United States that were implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency and carried out by individual states and tribes. As a result, substantial reductions in mercury emissions and environmental contamination were recorded across the United States from about 1977 to 2000. While this was great progress, it may be relatively short-lived. Researchers are again finding upward trends in mercury contamination.

What Will the National Park Service do to Help Protect People and the Environment From Mercury?

The National Park Service (NPS) employs scientists across the country to inventory and monitor natural resource conditions. Scientists working in parks, and in networks of parks, collaborate with universities and other agencies to gather information on mercury pollution. This scientific information tracks trends in environmental degradation that the NPS can share with the public as well as other federal, state, and tribal agencies in charge of regulating air pollution.

What Is the Monument Doing Now to Help Protect People and the Environment from Mercury?

The Monument has planned a number of research projects since we first learned in 2012 that mercury contamination was an issue. First, we began evaluating potential changes in air pollution deposition by using lichens as passive air monitors. In 2012 we learned that air pollution hasn't changed significantly enough to reduce the biodiversity of lichens since they were first studied in 1992. Then, we began investigating the risk mercury-contaminated aquatic browse poses to beavers and moose. As it turns out, a type of insectivorous aquatic plant called a bladderwort can bioaccumulate mercury much better than can fish or many other species. In areas of high concentration like riverine ponds, bladderwort can present a risk to herbivores like moose and beavers. Lastly, in 2015, we will endeavor to identify sources of mercury pollution by analyzing characteristic mercury variants found in the soil and water. You can look forward to the results of these and other scientific investigations in newsletters to come.

What Can I Do?

- READ and follow federal, state, and tribal fish consumption guidelines—especially women and children.
- REDUCE the amount of energy you use, both electricity and fuel.
- REUSE energy-expensive consumer products; give a second thought to disposable items.
- RECYCLE everything, including electronics, steel, fluorescent bulbs, and thermometers.
- and SHARE your new knowledge of mercury with others.

Where Can I Find More Information?

1. Biodiversity Research Institute, The Extent and Effects of Mercury Pollution in the Great Lakes Region
<http://www.briloon.org/mercuryconnections/greatlakes>
2. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Basic Information on Mercury
<http://www.epa.gov/hg/about.htm>
3. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Fish Consumption Guidelines
<http://www.epa.gov/hg/advisories.htm>
4. Minnesota Department of Health, Fish Consumption Guidelines
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish/>
5. Grand Portage Environmental Department, Guide to Eating Fish

-Send inquiries to: Grand Portage Environmental Department
27 Store Road, PO Box 428
Grand Portage, MN 55605

AREA INFORMATION:

There are a few places nearby to purchase light meals, snacks, gas, and other necessities. *The food and lodging information provided here is for the convenience of our visitors, and is not an endorsement by the National Park Service.*

SERVICES:

Grand Portage Trading Post, & Rendezvous Grill, Post Office & SPUR Gas – Drive about 1/2 mile west (a right hand turn out of Heritage Center parking lot) on Mile Creek Road. The Trading Post, Post Office and SPUR gas station are on the right between Mile Creek Road and Highway 61. Phone: 218-475-2282

Grand Portage Lodge/Gift Shop/ Island View Dining Room – Drive about 1/2 mile west on Mile Creek Road. The Grand Portage Lodge 100-room facility is on the left at the stop sign. Phone: 218-475-2401

Ryden's Border Store, Cafe Hotel & Phillips 66 Gas – Located 3 miles north of Grand Portage National Monument on Highway 61. At any junction to Highway 61 in Grand Portage, turn right (east) on Highway 61. Follow Highway 61 to Ryden's on your left. Phone: 218-475-2330

Voyageurs Marina – Located about 1½ miles from the monument. Follow Mile Creek Road east over stone bridge. Follow County Road 17 to your left, up over the hill and past the church and school. Continue to follow County Road 17 1½ miles, to the east side of the bay. The marina will be on your right. Under new management. Phone 218-475-2476

CAMPGROUNDS:

Grand Portage Marina & Campground – Marina Rd. (adjacent to Grand Portage Lodge & Casino), Grand Portage, MN, 55605. Phone 218-475-2476

Judge Magney State Park – 4051 E Hwy 61, Grand Marais, MN, 55604. Phone: 218-387-3039

Grand Marais Recreation Area – Highway 61, Grand Marais, MN, 55604. Phone: 218-387-1712

LOCAL STATE PARKS:

Grand Portage State Park – 9393 E Hwy 61, 5 miles east of Grand Portage. Offers a scenic trail to the spectacular Pigeon Falls. The park has a visitor contact station and sales area. There are no camping facilities. Phone: 218-475-2360

Judge C.R. Magney State Park – 4051 E Hwy 61, 14 miles west of Grand Portage. Offers trout fishing and white-water kayaking on the Brule River. There are 6 miles of summer hiking trails and 5 miles of winter ski trails. A well-maintained trail winds along the river to the Upper and Lower Falls and the Devil's Kettle, a large pothole into which half of the river disappears. Phone: 218-387-3039

Cascade River State Park – 3481 W Hwy 61, 45 miles west of Grand Portage. Offers spectacular waterfalls along the Cascade River. There are also scenic overlooks of Lake Superior. There are 18 miles of trails through a birch and spruce forest. The park has a 40-site campground, picnic facilities, and plenty of lake and river fishing. Phone: 218-387-3053

Need Special Assistance?

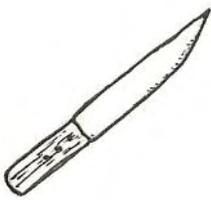
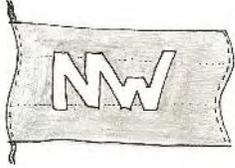
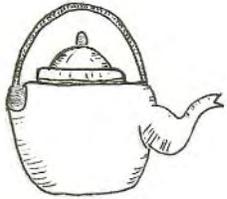
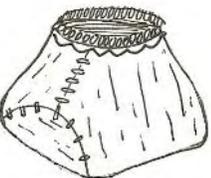
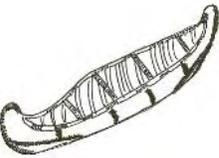
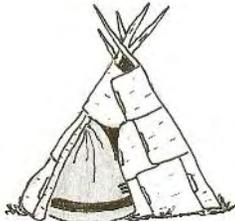
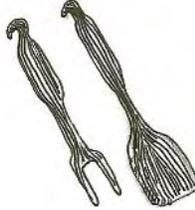
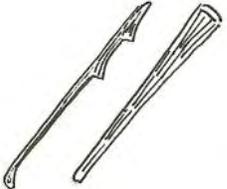
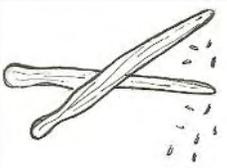
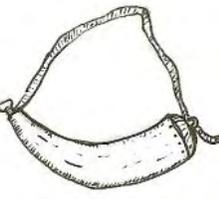
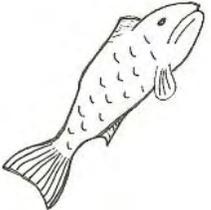
*For help or questions
concerning accessibility
at the park,
please contact
any park ranger, or
Chief of Interpretation,
Pam Neil.*

218-475-0123 Voice/TDD

GRPO_interpretation@nps.gov

KIDS PAGE: FUR TRADE BINGO

Circle objects you see in the Heritage Center, Ojibwe Village, Voyageur's Encampment, Warehouse, Kitchen and Great Hall as you tour Grand Portage National Monument. Find five objects in a row vertically, horizontally or diagonally and you win!

B	I	N	G	O
				
				
				
				
				

A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU ENJOY YOUR VISIT

Safety Officer Sharon Walker

- Wear sturdy footwear when walking on Monument trails. Please stay on the trails. Watch closely for roots and uneven ground to avoid tripping.
 - Do not drink water from streams or lakes unless you first boil or treat it.
 - Never hike alone. Always tell a friend/relative where you are going, and when you plan to return.
 - When hiking in the backcountry during summer months, the use of insect repellent and/or head nets is strongly recommended.
-

REMINDERS AND HELPFUL INFORMATION

- Notify a park employee if you encounter any situation you feel is unsafe.
 - All plants and animals within Monument boundaries are protected. Please help us protect them by not feeding animals or picking plants.
 - Pets and smoking are not permitted inside the stockade walls or inside buildings.
 - Please keep bicycles out of the stockade and secured to the bike rack provided at the Heritage Center. Do not lock bicycles to sign posts or trees.
 - A picnic area is located east of the palisade across Grand Portage Creek, and may be reached by walking the path between the creek and the palisade and crossing the footbridge.
-

VISITING ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK

For information about ferry service to Isle Royale National Park please ask park staff.

For more information about Grand Portage National Monument, contact:

Superintendent, Grand Portage National Monument

P.O. Box 426, 170 Mile Creek Road, Grand Portage, Minnesota, 55605.

Voice/TDD: 218-475-0123

Visit our website at www.nps.gov/grpo,

or contact us by e-mail at: grpo_interpretation@nps.gov

This document can be obtained in alternate formats.

Please contact the park's accessibility coordinator to make a request.