



The Grand Portage Guide



Gichi Onigaming: Discover, Consider, Reflect

Superintendent Tim Cochrane

Welcome to Grand Portage! Thank you for joining us in the effort to learn more about Grand Portage (or in the Ojibwe language: *Gichi Onigaming*). The story here is ancient and contemporary, spans much of the continent, and involves Scottish traders, Native Americans, French Canadians and a cast of many others. Through time, all kinds of languages -- Cree, Gaelic, English, Ojibwe, French, and German -- were spoken here. Layers of "history" occurred here and eventually you will be standing on soil that bore up a few fur trade "forts," Ojibwe village, fisheries, fox farm, La Crosse playing field, school, homes, barns, U.S. Indian agents and treaty payments, gardens, a crisscross of trails and so on. There is much to learn, ponder, and reflect upon. Better yet, perhaps, there is much yet to be discovered and some of these mysteries are not likely to be solved soon. One of the most significant puzzles is the missing



Archaeological survey work at Grand Portage. NPS Photo location of the XY Company fur trade post. The XY Co. was a short lived collective of traders that banded together to compete against the hardnosed North West Company. They fought hard, but eventually were absorbed into the NWCo. To be more exact, there are two missing XY Co. posts both somewhere east of Grand Portage Creek. The historical accounts of the location of the posts are confusing, inexact, and sometimes conflicting. Archaeological efforts to date have not established where the first XY Co. post was (nearer to Lake Superior) or the second one "above the hill." Nor do we know if the second, larger, post was completed before the two companies merged. This mystery, or mysteries, may be with us for quite some time as some candidate locations for where the posts were located have now been used for other purposes.

Some quandaries are thankfully, on occasion, resolved. For years I have wondered why a Mary La Duc was born on Isle Royale in 1804. As far as

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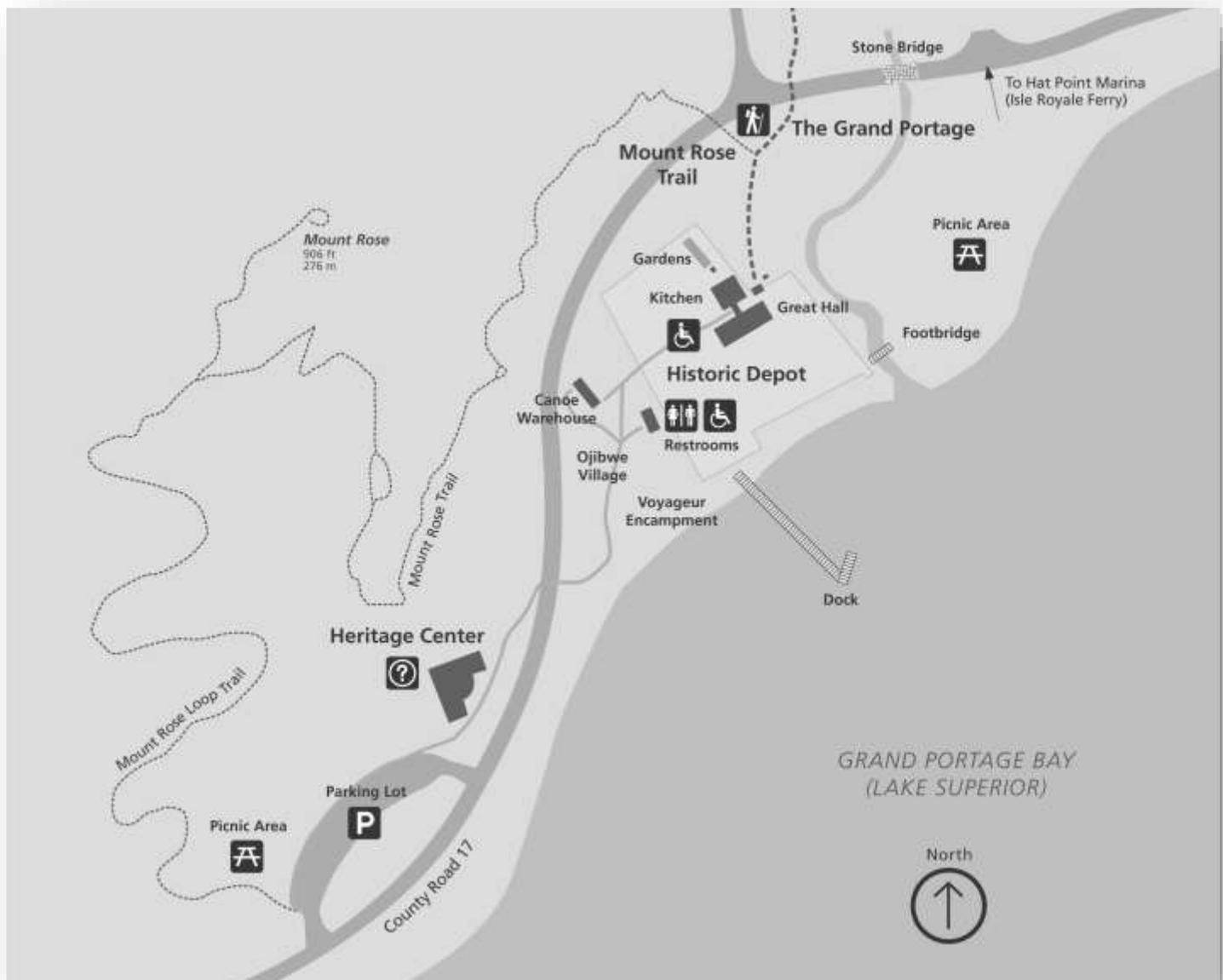
Boozhoo Bonjour Welcome

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.



Kitchen chef has prepared beef & barley in standing crust.

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: www.nps.gov/grpo/playourvisit/permitsandreservations.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 ¼-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 Mount Rose Loop Trail (see map page 2) begins at the west end of the parking lot in the picnic area.

BROCHURES AVAILABLE

We offer several brochures for your use and enjoyment:

- NPS Grand Portage Official Map and Guide
- Ojibwe Lifeways
- Historic Gardens
- Bird & Wildlife Checklists
- Mt. Rose Trail
- Grand Potage Rocks

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:

- "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teaching of Plants" Robin Kimmerer, 2015. Milkweed Editions, Minneapolis, MN, 408 pg.
- "The Creator's Game" by Art Coulson, 2013. The Michigan State University Press, St. Paul, MN 46 pg.
- "French and Indians in the Heart of North America" edited by Robert Englebert & Guillaume Teasdale, 2013. Minnesota Historical Society Press, East Lansing, MI, 256 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.
- "Talking Sky: Ojibwe Constellations as a Reflection of Life on the Land" by Carl Gawboy & Ron Morton, 2014. Rockflower Press, Duluth, MN, 114 pg.
- "North Shore: A Natural History of Minnesota's Superior Coast" by Chel Anderson & Adelheid Fischer, 2015. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 632 pg.
- "The Writings of David Thompson, Volume II" edited by William E. Moreau, 2015. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA, 310 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 & 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 & 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.



Bloodsuckers and Heroes: A True Tale about Bats, Part One

Chief of Resources Management Bill Clayton

Greetings inquisitive visitor and welcome to Grand Portage National Monument. I want to take a moment of your time and rant a little about our biting, blood-sucking bugs of the north woods. And then I want to talk about how immensely fun and satisfying it is to watch them get eaten. Prior to “coming over” to the National Park Service around four years ago, I had the unique honor to serve for almost 14 years as an archaeologist for the U.S. Forest Service on the Superior National Forest. I spent the majority of that time working on archaeological surveys, site excavations and restoring historic buildings in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. During those years, we would spend a good portion of the spring, summer and fall months, in

two-person crews, paddling the lakes and streams of the Boundary Waters on week-long work trips. Lots and lots of time spent paddling and surveying lakeshores, fire scars, “blow-down” and the hills around the lakes, watersheds not to mention miles of portage trails. We spent evenings in camp under the most intense “star shows” most modern day suburban victims of sky-pollution ever get to see. On many occasion we would wait out epic thunderstorms or stare up for hours at glorious, sublime displays of the aurora borealis.

And I remember . . .

There were also those countless hours my

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The little brown bat, abundant in northeastern Minnesota, includes mosquitoes and flies in its diet.

PD-USGOV-INTERIOR-FWS

bloodless colleagues and I had to endure, being fed upon by millions and millions of blood sucking bugs. Determined cloud-swarms of critters, pre-programmed by years of adaptive evolution with an intense bloodlust. Black flies that grant you the boon of injecting an anticoagulant in your skin before taking a bite out of it and lapping up your life fluid. Female mosquitos, although not technically carnivores, out to find blood in order to provide protein for healthy egg development. Horse-flies. Deer-flies. Skin cutters and blood-lappers. All out for a chunk of us.

“How many stars are in our own Milky Way Galaxy?” is a common question some inquisitive children eventually get around to asking a cornered and dumfounded parent at some point during their all-too-short careers as little ones. My answer to that age-old question when it finally came to me was something like (in a very assured yet slightly quavering voice), “well my daughter, whatever that number is, it’s gotta be profoundly less than the number of mosquitos on any given Boundary Waters campsite, on any given day, in any given month of June.”

Or July. Or early August. Sometimes late August. Into September some years.

But the month really doesn’t matter in the end. For most of our southern boreal summers, they’re just here. And we, their hapless food source, have no place to run from their relent-

less feeding frenzy, except to our humble tents. Tents which, after a few hours of slaughtering engorged mosquitos to prepare for a night of uneasy sleep, begin to look like a splatter scene from any low-budget, B-movie zombie film. I have bought many a shiny brand-new back-pack tent as my home-away-from-home while working in the Boundary Waters - all, overly expensive, “ultra-light” tents that by the end of the first inaugural trip look, from countless blood-engorged mosquito-smashes and smears, as rust-colored on the inside as that rusty-red hammer head sitting uselessly on the corner shelf in my garage.

Ecologists, scientists who study groups of living things and how they interact in one particular landscape or region, like to tell us that all living things are “connected” and related in some complex “web of life” at different levels of scale. They like to tell us that because it very much seems to be true. Years and years of scientific research into numerous ecosystems all over our planet seems to bear that notion out. Science is funny that way. Part of that vast web of relationships has to do with how life-forms go about getting a meal. I believe the term ecologists use for it is something like “trophic pathway” or “food web.” Scientists have their own language which includes many interesting-sounding words to describe what they’re studying. On rare occasion, it pays to pay attention to those

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words and find out what they mean, in order to understand what the science is trying to tell us about the world in which we live.

But I digress. Food. Connections between life-forms.

In the end, we're all food. Like we are a delicacy for the female black fly. And likewise, the black fly, as well as the mosquito, and other small blood-lappers and blood-suckers, is a standard food of fare for that most prolific of mammalian species, (and probably the most weird looking), the bat.

Actually that's what I'm here to talk about. Bats. If you spend enough time in the Boundary Waters, slogging it out with the bugs day after day and night after night, you eventually get to appreciate the misunderstood and needlessly feared bat. Each evening without fail, they would appear out of the deepening gloom of the wood line, swooping, weaving and speed-diving around the lake shore scooping up any bug they can get a bead on. They were like an avenging air force, in some heroic modern war movie, coming to save the day for beleaguered ground troops slugging their way through some losing battle. As pathetic as it sounds (it does to my daughter anyway), we would weakly cheer as they came zipping out of the gloom along with their flitting and hovering, bug-eating compatriots, the dragon flies. The satisfaction we felt at knowing the tide was temporarily turned - the consumers of our flesh were themselves getting munched on - was beyond satisfying for surly field crews who clearly spent way too much time in the woods searching for archaeological sites year after year.

Indeed. Bats are misunderstood and wrongly feared. The primary reason being an extremely nasty form of virus (rabies), and the human need to construct fairy tales about critters and other natural phenomena instead of doing the brave thing and finding out about the way the world works.

Here's one such story for you. Once upon a time there was a weird-looking, unsettling little mammal with wings, that like every other respectable fairy tale monster, comes out primarily at night, is dark in color, possesses sharp teeth, beady little eyes, and likes to live in dark spooky environments such as caves, attics, creepy old barns, and buildings. What's even more disturbing, our little winged fairy tale critter has evolutionary cousins that live in the tropics who occasionally like to consume the blood of other animals, by biting. This is a habit that's gotten the whole species unfairly, and universally tapped as a "symbol" for another fairy tale monster that lives on blood - and bites - the "shimmering" Vampire of western pop-culture. On top of all this is a common observation that bats like to fly super-fast at night, in wildly unpredictable, seemingly crazy, flight patterns. Patterns that often times bring them "dangerously" close to our vulnerable noggins, and of course, potential hair entanglement. At least for those of us who have hair (that wouldn't be me).

I think most importantly as far as "bad press" goes, those creepy places where bats like to live? Those places tend to be warm and moist, a seemingly good environment for diseases to live. Speaking of disease, let's add one more ingredient to the fairy-tale stew we have brewing here. Let's add the fact that there are several nasty fungal and viral critters that occasionally like to hang out in the bodies of mammals such as bats. Critters that are getting passed around out there in those dark warm secret places, relatively nasty little things we can't see, like the deadly virus known as "rabies," or a certain fungus known by



Mosquito in flight, watch out!

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the evil-sounding term, “histoplasmosis” that show up in the droppings of bats and birds.

My friends, we are in unique position to witness together, the making of a fairy tale or myth, and play victim to it. Like most fairy tales there is an element of truth, or so they say. In our case, like all critters on this planet including us, there are diseases associated with bats, but it becomes a question of how many are infected and how frequently they get infected. The answer to that is, not very many, and not compared to other mammals that share the same ecosystems, like skunks. The real issue isn't panic over a poorly understood mammal, the issue is simply minimizing exposure to those disease risks that all animals pose, including us, but doing so without harming what actually is not a creepy, flying fairy-tale monster. It is in fact a well-adapted, very, very unique order of small mammal known as Chiroptera.

Yes. I know. Another science term. But it's a fun one. Say it. Chir-op-tera.

At some point in the near future, in another park newsletter, I would like to cook up another story for you. This time, a non-fiction tale, about these remarkable warm-blooded critters that continually spare us having to endure even higher populations of biting, blood-consuming bugs on our Boundary Waters trips than we already do. I will tell you, based on scientific research, what they're really like. How they live. What they eat. Their place in the “web of life.” And how they *can actually* “see” in the visible light spectrum, but also how they also see in “sound” using the remarkable sensory adaptive trick known as “echolocation.” This seeing allows them to fly like banshees through the night and do so without getting snarled up in anyone's new hair-do.

More importantly I'm going to spin for you a really sad tale about something really, really important to the health of those ecosystems of which the bat is a prime player. The gist of that sad tale is, we're losing our bat populations

around the world. So the evil monsters in this next Tale of Terror are known as “habitat loss” and human-caused, or “anthropogenic” disease, which goes by the less horror-inducing name of “white nose syndrome.” Another fungus among us, but a bad one.

Until then, get informed about bats. Take some time and read up about them. Stop fearing them and start understanding them. Enjoy them even. And whatever you do, quit thinking about them as “vermin.” They're simply not. Take a trip in the Boundary Waters and allow yourself to get consumed by swarms of tiny blood-consuming, REAL monsters, so you can experience the satisfaction of watching them get eaten. And eaten. And eaten. By the true heroes of my tale.

Bats.



Stylized illustration of various bat face types, from Ernst Haeckel's 1904 natural history opus, *Kunstformen der Natur*.
Wikimedia Commons

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*.



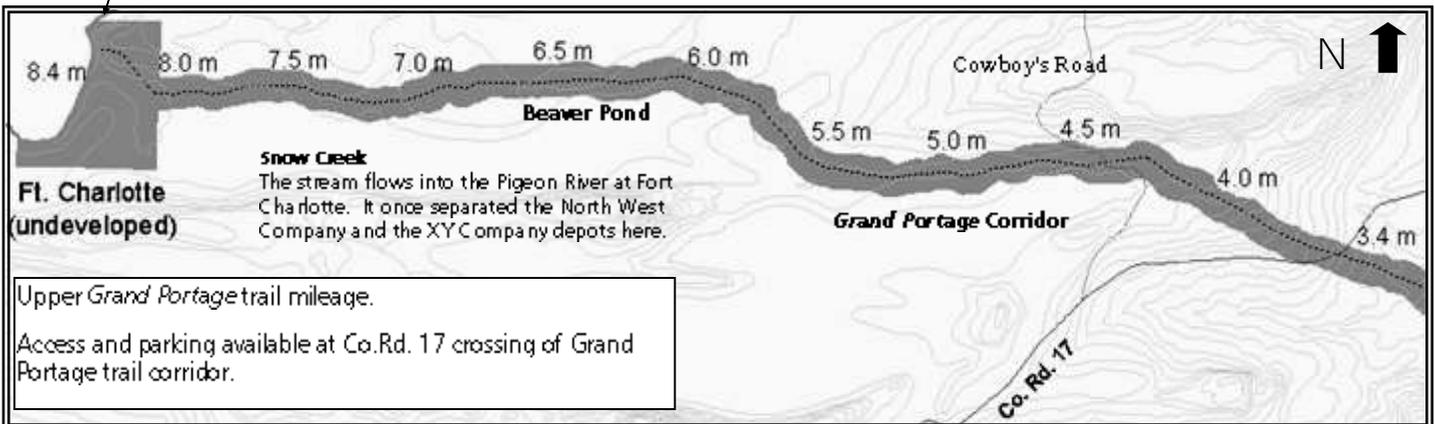
The *Grand Portage* goes through a gap in the hills

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	MIN 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.



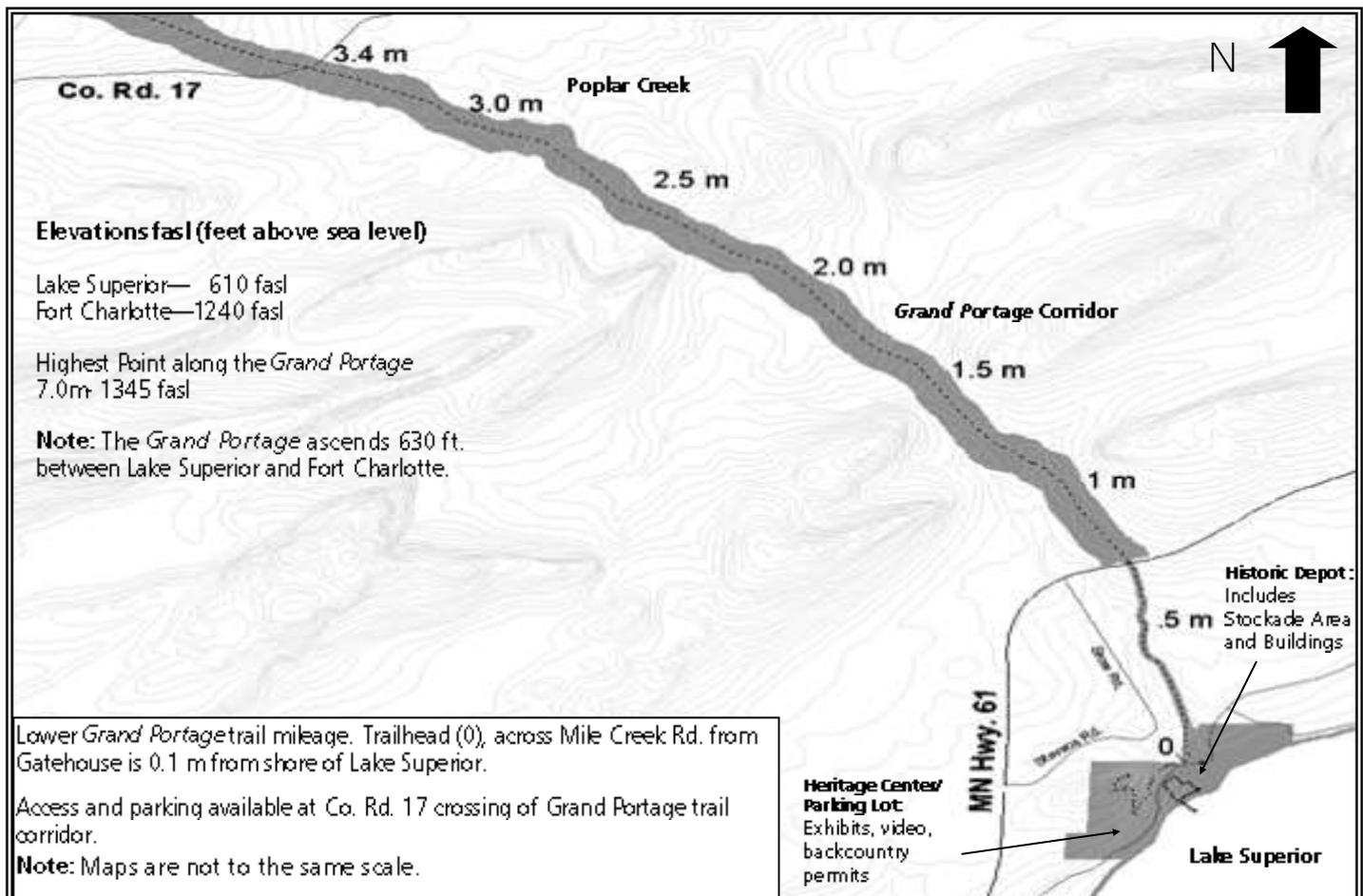
Majestic old growth eastern white pine along the Grand Portage.

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: www.nps.gov/grpo/planyourvisit/permitsandreservations.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

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anyone knew, “nothing” was going on at Isle Royale at this time. Further, little was known about the island archipelago (you can see the southwest end of “the Island” on a clear day from here) among Americans of the day. And except for one record in an obscure 1839 government document – “A List of the Mixed-Blood Chippewa of Lake Superior” – we could only conjecture why a baby girl with a French-Canadian name was born there. Putting together family genealogical information and a new website listing thousands of voyageurs (<http://www.shsb.mb.ca/en/voyageurs-database>) we were able to make a little sense of this. Mary La Duc’s mother was an unnamed Grand Portage Ojibwe woman who had a child with a voyageur named Bruneau. Using the voyageur database we were able to identify the likely father, a voyageur by the name of Alexis Bruneau. Turns out, Alexis Bruneau was from the parish of Maskinonge outside of Montreal and he worked for the XY Company. So far so good, we could place Alexis Bruneau in Grand Portage at the right time.

But did we merely exchange one quandary for another? New questions kept popping up. Was Bruneau with the Grand Portage Ojibwe woman when their child was born? Did the XY Co. have an operation on Isle Royale (that would be real news if so)? What was Mary Bruneau La Duc’s mother doing on Isle Royale at that time? The season for making maple sugar – when the tree sap is “running” – was over by her daughter’s June 10, 1804 birth date. Early fishing for lake trout, when the waters are

warming up in the harbors and bays would be good, but wouldn’t last a long time. Maybe the XY Co. employees were fishing for sturgeon which move into shallow waters to spawn at this time. Sturgeon are very large fish and catching them would mean a plentiful food source. This would also be remarkable because we have no knowledge of such an operation and sturgeon no longer spawn at Isle Royale. If they were catching fish were they salting them in barrels to keep for winter consumption? Does this possibility match up with a long told story of a fur trade fishery at Isle Royale? In learning more, we moved from one set of questions to another. But the subsequent set of questions become more attuned to these places and more specific to the potential of each place.

We are very actively trying to learn more about Grand Portage. We have on-going archaeological, historical, geological, biological, and environmental studies. This summer will be the year of archaeological investigations as we will have three crews here doing work mostly east of the Grand Portage Creek. Who knows, maybe we’ll learn some new things that might help establish exactly where one of the XY Co. posts are located.

We are delighted you are here to learn about Grand Portage with us. Take some time to look around, ask questions, and maybe discover a mystery or two of your own. Help us wonder about this place – ask those questions! I hope you will come to see a part of Grand Portage as I do; Grand Portage is good to think about and try to re-imagine. Enjoy your visit with us.

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 Gweech: (Me-Gway-ch): Thank you

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

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

Aaniindii: (Ah-neen-dee): Where is it?

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

Ikwe: (Ick-way): Woman

Inini: (in-in-ee): Man

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

Bajishka'ogaan: (Bah-Jeesh-ka-oh-gahn): Conical Lodge

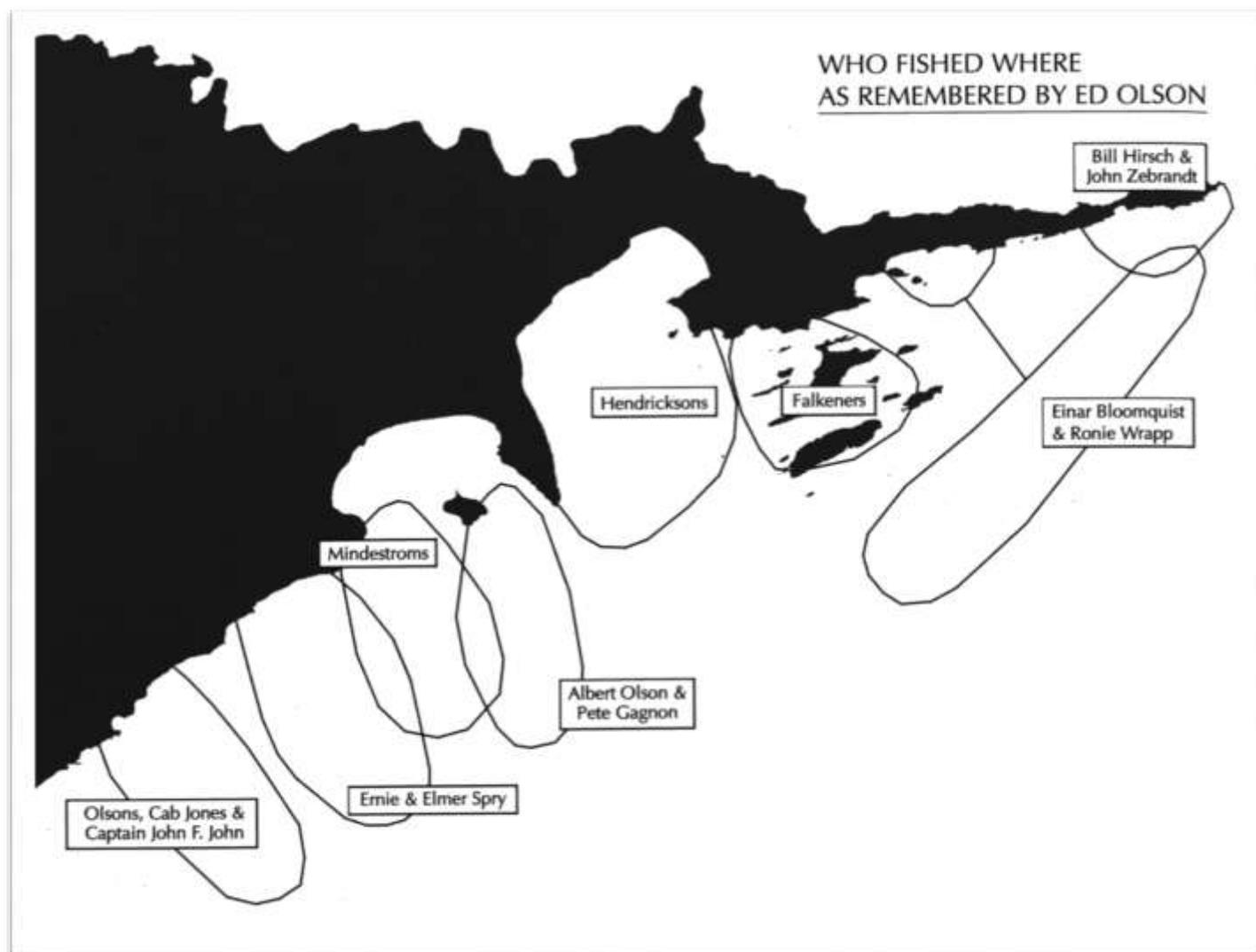
Wigiwaam: (Wee-gih-wahm): Wigwam

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

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

Grand Portage: Fish is in Our Blood

Ranger Beth Drost



Edward Olson, a retired local fisherman, remembers fishermen at every harbor up and down the North Shore in the 1930s and 1940s. Fishermen set their nets close to home, if they can. They can be territorial too, rarely setting nets outside their usual boundaries.

A visit to the North Shore will not be complete without a meal with fresh Lake Superior fish. Where was the fish caught? Who caught it? When was it caught? Chances are if you ask, someone will know all of these answers when you buy fresh fish on the North Shore. It is as local as you are going to get. Fishing is a part of life for many on the North Shore.

My dad, Curtis Gagnon, is a retired Ojibwe commercial fisherman, and he makes the best smoked fish I have ever had. My brother, Pete, also has his own commercial fishing business, maybe he will catch your fish! I grew up fishing, I spent a lot of time fishing along the banks of streams, along lake shores, or from a boat. When I think of Grand Portage, I think fish. I would like to share a little of what I know about fishing in Grand Portage with you today.

Long before Europeans arrived in Grand Portage, fish

was a staple in this area. Sometimes it was the only food. Native people used gill nets on Lake Superior and the smaller lakes in the area. In summer they were set from birch bark canoes; in winter, nets were set under the ice. There are countless ways to catch a fish, but nets could catch a lot of fish in one set, could be left overnight without supervision, and were easy to make and mend. Made from plant fibers, the nets were constructed much like the monofilament nets commercial fishermen use today. They were sunk with weights and suspended in the water with "floats." The net could be sunk deep or shallow in the water depending on where the fish were.

The Grand Portage Ojibwe have been commercial fishermen for centuries. They know the waters and where to find the fish. They know that during certain seasons, fish are close to shore and they know when

the fish are in deep water. They know when the lake currents will change and the effect it will have on each species of fish. Early businessmen and explorers at Grand Portage depended on this local knowledge to survive here.

Fishermen in Grand Portage today are just as knowledgeable. They work for themselves or for fisheries, or both. They still know where the fish are and how to catch them. In the 1920s and 1930s there were fishermen in every bay up and down the North Shore. Today, there are less than a dozen commercial fishermen left in Grand Portage.

In the late 1700s, Ojibwe fishermen caught fish for the North West Company post, they brought lake trout, whitefish, and herring. Nor'Westers were perhaps the first to employ the Ojibwe fishermen's knowledge of the big Lake. The American Fur Company's operation at Grand Portage and Isle Royale from 1836-1841 employed Ojibwe fishermen, too. For five short years the company employed as many as 20 Ojibwe fishermen in Grand Portage and many more on Isle Royale. They were paid by the barrel. Lack of demand and trade routes (not a lack of fish) forced the business to end operation on Lake Superior in 1841.

From 1848-1857 another fishery was determined to get a share of the Lake Superior market. Hugh H. McCullough's company bought fish from Ojibwe fishermen, also by the barrel. The fishery bought fish from fishermen up and down the North Shore and at Isle Royale. Again, the company did a fine job of catching fish, but without a wider market to ship the fish to and a line to ship on, McCullough also failed to be prosperous.

A new railroad to Duluth, finished in 1870, opened the fishery to the world. In 1871, wholesale fisheries began to appear in Duluth. The new railroad connected Lake Superior to the Mississippi River, allowing Lake Superior fisheries to sell to distant markets. Fishermen could send their catch on a steamship to the Duluth fisheries where it could then be sold to buyers located beyond the Great Lakes.

News of the booming fisheries brought Scandinavian immigrants to the north shore of Lake Superior. These fishermen were used to big ocean waters, Lake Superior's north shore was almost like home for them. They used nets spanning more than 350 feet. They could take hundreds of pounds of fish at once. Local Ojibwe became concerned that they, the Scandinavians and the fisheries were overharvesting the fish.

More and more fisheries meant more and more fish harvested, the lake trout population felt the strain. Our grandparents, those alive during the fishing boom, tell us stories (yes, fish stories) of the fish being so thick all you had to do was dip a net in the water



Curtis Gagnon works on one of his gill nets, circa 1990. The nets are cleaned of algae and sticks, mended of holes and tears, and dried to prevent mold. Fishermen will have many nets that they set in different locations. Sometimes two or more nets are strung together.

and you could fill a whole boat. But, by the 1950s, the invasive sea lamprey and the over-harvesting decimated lake trout populations to near destruction. Today, although the lake trout numbers have never returned to what they were--we fish, we catch fish, and we eat fish in Grand Portage.

Today if you look out on Grand Portage Bay, in the morning or evening, you will see a Grand Portage tradition. It's a Grand Portage fisherman heading out to his nets. Although the catch isn't what it used to be, they still go out hoping to catch enough to feed their families and maybe a little extra to give away or sell. Future fishermen and fisherwomen are born every year. The tribe now has its own fish hatchery. We fish because we love to eat fish, but I think it's more than that—we fish because it is in our blood.



When drying meat, a smoky fire was used to keep the bugs and birds away. The process of removing the moisture from the fish while leaving the good fat in took about two days. Preservation could be done without salt, sometimes maple sugar was added to help preserve it and add flavor.

Did the North West Company Leave an 18th Century Environmental Legacy?

Resource Assistant Brandon Seitz

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

Grand Portage National Monument (GRPO) has had some disturbing environmental news of late. Together with partners at University of Wisconsin and the NPS Great Lakes Network we have discovered that there may be an environmental link to our past, namely mercury.

Quicksilver, as some would call it, can take many forms. Often it is emitted into the air as a byproduct of burning coal for energy or baking taconite for processing. These are our most significant modern sources. But there are many other smaller sources too. In order of least amounts of mercury to most are: the fillings in your teeth, compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFL's), thermometers and thermostats. Thermostats contain as much mercury as 600 CFL's. Given all these sources of mercury, it really was no surprise that mercury was found in the environment at GRPO. What was surprising was the amount captured in the soil- as much as 3 times that found in the western Great Lakes and the Experimental Lakes Area in Ontario, Canada. Also high in concentrations were mercury in fish, water, sediment and dragonfly larvae from GRPO streams. These high concentrations of mercury have important consequences.

First, 79% of fish that would make up the diet of belted kingfishers exceeded the dietary benchmark that indicates harm to health and reproduction. For mink, the dietary benchmark was exceeded in 23% of the fish that form the basis of their food. What about fish-eating people? As it happens, the streams of GRPO either don't

have the types of fish people eat, or in the case of Grand Portage Creek, have fish like trout that are protected from mercury bioaccumulation (accumulating mercury in higher concentrations than are found in the environment) by their life cycle. Large portions of life in the big blue waters of Lake Superior and a diet of organisms from the base of the food chain contribute to much lower concentrations of mercury in species such as rainbow and coaster brook trout.



Belted kingfisher with fish

Photo Howard Cheng Wikimedia Commons

So where did the extra mercury come from? Why has it accumulated in concentrations as much as three times greater than elsewhere? The answer could be in the trade patterns of the 18th century. Vermilion, a synthetic mercuric sulfide pigment derived from cinnabar ore, was a principal trade item and gift during the height of the fur trade. The supply of vermilion at GRPO was large enough that one 1797 invento-

ry of trade goods left over from a season of trade listed more than 100 pounds. Also left over were galipots (gallon pots) of mercurial ointments rubbed into the skin to cure what ailed you in the 18th century. How is it that people survived this way? How could they slather themselves with mercurial ointments and paint their skin vermilion? Fortunately for us, most sources of mercury (all of those listed above) produce mercury in its inorganic form. This mercury can pass right through us causing relatively little harm. But, if that mercury is methylated in the environment, or changed into a form that is easily accumulated in the fat and muscle of organisms- like in a lake, wetland, stream, swamp or bog it takes on a very harmful bioaccumulative form. This methylated mercury accumulates in organisms and damages health and reproduction. To protect yourself, be sure to read consumption advisories that are



Mink with fish. Photo Bjorn Tennoe Wikimedia Commons

posted about fish, eat fish low on the food chain and go fishing primarily in sky blue waters rather than those stained the color of tea.

More research is planned this summer to identify the specific sources of mercury and assess bioaccumulation in marsh-dwelling song birds; watch for updates 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/mercury-in-the-great-lakes-region>

2. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Basic Information on Mercury

<http://www.epa.gov/mercury/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, Post Office & SPUR Gas/Diesel – Drive about 1/2 mile west (a right hand turn out of Heritage Center parking lot) onto 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 about 4 1/2 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 1 1/2 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 1 1/2 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, five 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 six miles of summer hiking trails and five 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?

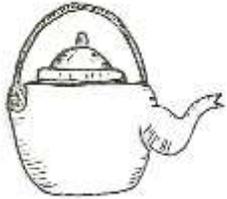
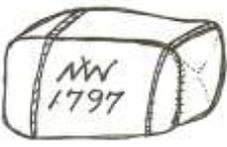
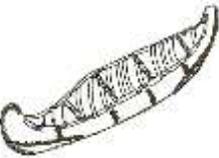
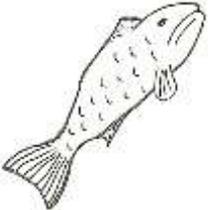
*For help or questions
concerning accessibility
at the park,
please contact
any park ranger, or
Chief of Interpretation,
Pam Neil.*

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.
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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 or injuring 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 at the west end of the parking lot at the Mount Rose Loop trailhead stairs. Another is east of the palisade across Grand Portage Creek, and may be reached by walking the path between Grand Portage Bay and the palisade and crossing the footbridge.
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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: <http://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.