

WOLF'S EYE



Isle Royale Natural History Association

Spring 1996

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of IRNHA will be on **Sunday, July 14, 1996** at Rock Harbor. Several events have been scheduled. These include a canoe trip with Terry Lindsay and a nature walk with Bob Janke. If scheduling permits, John Reynolds, Deputy Director of the National Park Service, will be our meeting speaker. Put this changed date on your calendar and join us on this special weekend.

ISLE ROYALE'S FUTURE?

This is the first article in a series submitted by Isle Royale National Park. The park is celebrating 1996 as the 50th year since its dedication in 1946 and the 20th anniversary of the passage of the wilderness legislation for Isle Royale National Park in 1976. It is our goal to educate the public about the park and to present some considerations for the future.

As Superintendent of Isle Royale National Park, I have had my peace of mind disturbed many times when I have contemplated the future of this wonderful national park and the national park system as a whole. What is the national park system but the collective wisdom of our nation's leadership on what is and should be preserved, to ensure that our nation's heritage is saved? That heritage must be saved so that we can collectively examine how we, as a people rich in history, culture, and resources, have viewed and will view ourselves. What is our heritage worth as we accomplish our national will to spend within our means? What is it worth to our children, grandchildren, and generations unborn to have their her-

itage preserved?

I fear for the National Park Service and for Isle Royale National Park because I am privy to the daily pressures of dwindling resources available to maintain this piece of our heritage. The casual visitor to Isle Royale and most parks will not recognize the deterioration of those parks: the unsafe dock, the aging equipment, the lack of a familiar friendly face under a Smokey Bear hat. Long-term visitors, though, will notice these things more and more.

At Isle Royale this year it appears that we will be able to maintain most of our programs. We will be able to do this because we anticipated future lean budgets last year and made some very painful cuts in the operation of the park. These cuts have carried over to this year. We will have four trail crew members to clear and maintain 165 miles of trail. We will cut the period of employment for park rangers. We will not be presenting as many interpretive programs. We will begin asking visitors to assist in maintaining privies and campground shelters.

Assuming there's no increase in funding in next year's budget cycle, I expect that Isle Royale will need to consider halting most of our support of the resource management program, including the wolf/moose study. This is the longest-running study of large ungulate/predator relationships in the world. Isle Royale, as an International Biosphere Reserve, encourages research. Can we, however, sustain research while neglecting basic safety and operational issues? In 1997, I would further expect to have to drop most trail and campground maintenance, relying instead on users to cut windfall, clean toilets, and pick up garbage. There will be fewer seasonal rangers and maintenance personnel. Responses to medical or boating emergencies

will be available, but may be very delayed. The Edisen Fishery will close, and only emergency maintenance will be performed. We will fall back to our basic mandate of protecting the resources for future generations and will maintain minimal services. This is a grim but realistic picture.

How did we get this way? Over several preceding years the National Park Service has received regular increases in national budgets. Still, these increases have never covered the increase in the cost of doing business (increases in costs of supplies, materials, goods, and services). Base budgets have "absorbed" these increased costs. Anticipated budgets in fiscal year 1996 and beyond are to remain static. The base budget at Isle Royale National Park is approximately 2.2 million dollars per year. Figuring a very conservative 5% inflation per year in the cost of doing business, the park must absorb slightly over \$100,000 in costs out of the base budget. After we pay fixed costs we have very few discretionary funds remaining. At a real dollar decrease of \$100,000+ per year, we are looking at tough choices. I should emphasize that Isle Royale is not unique. Every Superintendent in the National Park System faces the same prospects.

What are some of the remedies? To simply say that this or any other park should be transferred to another agency is short-sighted. No matter who is responsible for management of a piece of public property, there are always costs associated with the management of that property. Congress will respond to the will of the people concerning funding priorities. Beyond that, many people have strongly expressed the thought that the users should pay. We are already working hard to solve some of our basic problems through volunteers and public/

private partnerships similar to the highly successful Isle Royale Employees Housing Initiative. More of these initiatives will follow.

Isle Royale is a vital piece of our nation's heritage. It is a resource quite unlike any other in the lower 48 States. It is many things to many people. To some it is a cooling, unhurried oasis in which to refresh the spirit. To others it represents the wonderful challenge of bone and muscle against an untamed piece of nature. Still others view it as a return to their deepest roots, be those roots cultural or spiritual.

All of us understand the pressures that accompany the renewed spirit of America's commitment to bring our national priorities into focus and to deal forthrightly with these priorities. I would assert that our heritage has been and should remain a national priority, one

that we can no longer take for granted. Can we—should we—allow this heritage to be lost? I do not believe the American public can or will allow this to happen.

Douglas A. Barnard
Superintendent, Isle Royale National Park

CALL FOR PHOTOS

Christina Watkins, the designer of our new book *Superior Wilderness* (a revised and enlarged version of *The Life of Isle Royale*) has given us a list of photos needed for the book. The transparencies have to be of reproduction quality. We will give photographers credit for their work but will not be able to pay a royalty for photographs used.

If you would like to contribute the use of your transparencies, please send them to Gayle Pekkala, IRNHA, 800 E. Lakeshore Dr., Houghton, MI 49931. Put your name on all your material so they can be properly returned to you. The due date is April 30, 1996.

Scenic

view from Middle Island Passage
 Greenstone Ridge
 sea arch - Amygdaloid Island
 Suzy's Cave
 lighthouse, Menagerie Island
 Lake Superior, liquid or frozen
 fog - June, July
 driftwood, debris on shore
 Burnt Island
 Chippewa Harbor
 Malone Bay
 reddish rocks on shore near Grace Harbor
 sand beaches, Siskiwit Bay
 Washington Creek delta
 Huginn Cove, Little Todd Harbor,
 Todd Harbor
 big waves "outside"
 Belle Isle
 Tobin Harbor Cottages
 small islands between Blake Point and
 Scoville Point (arctic/alpine vegetation)
 middle section Greenstone Trail (birch/
 aspen, charred stumps)
 Raspberry Island, Mott Island - old
 man's beard on trees
 tree seedlings on rotting logs, stumps, or
 mossy rocks

lakes -Siskiwit, Desor, Sargent, Richie,
 Lily
 Raspberry Bog
 opening on Greenstone, Minong, and
 Feldtmann Ridges
 winter

Geology

stones
 ancient beaches
 volcanic basalt
 pits on Stoll Trail
 bands of sandstone and conglomerate

Specific scenes

Thunder Bay pulp mills or other pollut-
 ing industry
 diver on wreck -America or Emperor
 low-impact fishing
 moose browse
 experienced birders
 aerial of beaver ponds

Plants

3-toothed cinquefoil
 harebell
 trailing juniper
 birdseye primrose
 yellow mountain saxifrage
 black crowberry
 alpine blueberry
 grasses
 fireweed
 pearly everlasting
 large-leaved aster
 thimbleberry
 wild sarsaparilla
 white-flowered bunchberry
 bluebead lilies
 ferns
 horsetail
 cattail, rushes
 pondweed
 red-berried elder
 broad-leaved skunk cabbage
 starflower
 wild lily-of-the-valley
 fringed polygala
 calypso orchid
 spotted coralroot
 yellow pond lilies
 touch-me-nots
 loosestrife
 Joe-Pye weed
 raspberry
 bunch honeysuckle

**ISLE ROYALE NATURAL HISTORY
 ASSOCIATION 800 E. Lakeshore Dr.,
 Houghton, MI 49931
 Telephone: (906) 482-7860**

A nonprofit membership organization that assists Isle Royale National Park by publishing and selling educational materials to park visitors. Gifts, bequests, memorials, and memberships are U.S. tax deductible.

Membership Categories

Individual Membership.....\$15.00
 Family Membership.....\$20.00
 *Supporting Membership.....\$50.00
 **Life Membership.....\$500.00
 ***Corporate Sponsor.....\$1,000.00
 ***Corporate Patron.....\$5,000.00

Life Memberships may be paid in two annual installments of \$250.00 each.

*Includes a gift of a royal blue canvas rolled bag.

**Includes a gift copy of *Isle Royale: A Pictorial History*.

***Includes a gift of a beautifully framed photo of Isle Royale (16"X20").

Board of Directors:

George Anast, Chair, John Anderson,
 Alfred Angeli, Doug Welker, William
 Rose, John Dunn.

Staff:

Gayle Pekkala, Executive Director &
 Wolf's Eye Editor
 Lori Honrath & Lauren Rastello, Mail
 Order & Membership Specialists

Forests:

white spruce/balsam fir
old aspen/paper birch
sugar maple/yellow birch
swamp forest
black spruce, white cedar, and fir
sugar maple seedling
balsam fir blowdown

Mammals

moose
wolf
beavers/lodges/dams
marten
fisher
muskrat
lynx
snowshoe hare
red fox
red squirrel
deer moose
tracks of any animal

Fishes, Reptiles, Amphibians

sea lampreys
lake trout
rainbow trout spawning
brown trout
turbot mussels in shallow water
northern pike
yellow perch
tadpoles
newts
painted turtles
frogs: green or chorus
snakes: red bellied or garter

Birds

double-crested cormorants
ravens
herring gulls
sharp-tailed grouse
starlings
robins
olive-sided flycatcher
cedar waxwings
kingfishers
ovenbirds
osprey
bald eagles
kestrels
broad-winged hawks
warblers:
 yellow-rumped
 Nashville

magnolia
blackburnian
black-throated green
black and white
black-throated blue

Swainson's thrush
blue, gray jays
black-capped chickadee
chipping sparrows
loons
loon with chicks
goldeneyes
mergansers
mallards
teals
grebes
song sparrows
great blue heron
red-breasted nuthatch
winter wrens
white-throated sparrows
sedge wrens

ISLE ROYALE WOLVES MAKE A COMEBACK, BUT MOOSE SUFFER HEAVY LOSSES

The wolves on Isle Royale National Park appear to be making a strong comeback after several years of chronic low numbers, according to researchers from the National Park Service and Michigan Technological University.

During this year's annual winter survey, the university/park service study team reported seeing 22 different wolves, the highest number observed in more than a decade on the island park. Last winter biologists recorded only 16 wolves during their six-week study, though two died by the time the survey was completed.

Most of this year's increase came as a result of good reproduction in the park's Middle Pack, according to Project Leader Dr. Rolf Peterson of MTU's School of Forestry and Wood Products. "There are pups surviving in all three territorial packs for the first time since 1987," said Peterson. "There is one pup in the West Pack, two in the East Pack, and four in the Middle Pack. This is the largest number of pups surviving to winter since 1984."

"We are extremely encouraged by this news," said Isle Royale Park Superintendent Douglas Barnard. "Nature has a way of surprising us, and this is certainly a welcome surprise."

But while life is looking brighter for wolves, the park's moose are doing poorly this winter, according to Peterson and park officials.

"Even in January we noticed moose with substantial hair loss due to tick infestation," Peterson said, "and this situation is just getting worse. In early February we found two bulls on Grace Island (a small offshore islet) that had died of starvation and both contained large numbers of ticks. The deep snow has aggravated the extreme shortage of winter browse, and many moose are simply walking shorelines, where there is less snow, and feeding on the tops of leaning trees. They also look for trees that have fallen over."

Moose mortality so far in 1996 is almost twice that recorded in the 1980s and early 1990s. Wolf predation has accounted for almost one moose death per day, while the remaining mortality is due to accidents, such as falling off cliffs while looking for browse, and starvation.

"Given the high incidence of ticks, deep snow, and the greater number of wolves, there will be substantial reduction in moose this year, mostly from starvation in winter and spring," said Peterson. "In fact, during our midwinter moose census, we estimated the population to be just under 1,200 animals—about half of last year's estimate! I expect there will be no calves surviving this winter, and already in February the proportion of calves in the herd, at 5 percent, was lower than in any of the last 38 years."

National Park Service officials are hopeful that this die-off will improve the health of the moose herd. With the reduction in moose numbers the impact on moose browse will be less, and there should be more available food. With a smaller moose population, wolves will have a greater chance to begin balancing moose numbers once again.

Peterson said the moose die-off has followed a period of substantial popula-

tion growth caused by reduced wolf predation that accompanied the crash in wolf numbers that occurred in the early 1980s. Biologists believe the decline in wolves during the '80s was caused by canine parvovirus, a disease inadvertently introduced on hikers' feet or by dogs arriving on privately-owned boats.

The Isle Royale wolf/moose study is supported by funds from the National Park Service, Earthwatch, National Science Foundation, and the Robert Bate-man Endowment Fund.

Jim Lutzke, MTU

Terry Lindsay, Park Naturalist

MILFORD RIDES THE MOOSE

This is another excerpt of the oral history tape of Milford Johnson. Milford and Myrtle were commercial fishermen on Amygdaloid Island. The tape was made in 1974.

Milford: And he (Dr. Oastler) kept egging me on to ride one. [laughter] And he gave me 50 dollars to ride a moose. Well in those days 50 dollars were 50 dollars, they aren't any more, you know. [laughter; Ranger: that's for sure.] And boy, I didn't know what to think of it and he called me chicken and everything else. He got me so roiled up, that I thought, by golly, even it kills me I'm going to try.

So then one day, it was about a three

year old bull, I guess it was [someone: Uh, huh] in the water and we got close up to him and I jumped on. In those days I could jump, but now I can't jump too good. By golly, he started for shore, you know, like crazy. And I was just wondering how deep the waters was until he got footing. Well I got off of him before he touched bottom. He got ashore..... He got on the bottom and he walked a little ways and he turned around and he looked at me and I thought, oh boy. What's going to happen now. And the old man had gone away, too far with the canoe. He was quite a little ways. And I yelled at him to come, you know. And I started sweating. [I suppose.] Of course, the moose decided to go down the shore a ways, down in the water.

I never want to earn 50 dollars like that again. My hair stuck straight up from my head but he paid me the 50 bucks. Oh yeah, there was no hesitation in that fella, he sure did. He paid the 50 bucks.

IN MEMORIUM

Betsy Cawthorne

In August, 1965, we shared the Duncan Narrows campsite with a delightful couple, Colonel Templar Cawthorne and his wife Betsy, thus beginning a long and treasured friendship. Betsy and Tempie fell in love with the Island on their first visit and came back each year. They be-

came acquainted with every little niche and bay and all the beauties to be found wherever they looked. Betsy enjoyed providing fish for their table and photographing wildflowers. An album of her orchid pictures is in the Mott Island Library.

The Colonel delved into the history of the Island, trying to visit important sites to "envision" life as it was there. Together they visited all the residents and the Spendrft II became a familiar and welcome sight each summer as they spread their special glow. Every dock and campsite area was carefully swept of even their footprints when they traveled on. "We feel it is so necessary to leave this beautiful Island even better than we found it" was Betsy's creed. In 1979 the Colonel spent his last summer doing what he loved most, being on Isle Royale.

Now, sadly, we have received word of Betsy's passing on Jan. 16, 1996. We send our condolences to her family. She was a very special lady.

Nadine Janke

NEW BOOK

Howard (Buddy) Sivertson will have a new book out in June. The title is *Tales of the Old North Shore*. It is being printed by Lake Superior Magazine and will sell for \$24.95.

WOLF'S EYE

Isle Royale Natural History Association

800 E. Lakeshore Drive
Houghton, Michigan 49931-1895

Address Correction Requested



PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Houghton, Michigan
Permit No. 45