

Wolf's Eye



Isle Royale Natural History Association

SPRING 1998

IN THIS ISSUE

Superintendent's message	1
1998 Wolf Numbers	1
Annual Meeting	2
Journal Workshop	2
Herbarium Donation	2
Junior Ranger Program	3
1998 Election & ballot	3
Artist-In-Residence	4

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

When do you normally come to Isle Royale? Most of you will readily answer that you come in the last two weeks of July or the first three weeks of August. Why? Because the weather on the island is the nicest then, the city is so confounded hot that you cannot stand it one more day, or the "it is almost time to get the kids back in school and we NEED a vacation." All good reasons to visit this wonderful park.

Now, let's ask why you should NOT go then. Well, for lots of reasons. OK, what are they? June and September are our "shoulder seasons." June is the promise month. We promise you wildflowers galore. Pink and yellow lady slippers, calypso orchids, gaywings, serviceberry and others. We promise you breeding colors on the neo-tropical (warblers) birds. We promise you that campsites away from the main developments will be plentiful and you may well have a campsite such as Malone Bay or Wood Lake all to yourself. We promise you cloudy weather that will delight an artist, and challenge a boater. Yes, we even promise you bugs! Maybe lots of them! But, what are challenges for?

continued inside...

MAJOR DROP IN 1998 WOLF NUMBERS

Wolf-moose researchers on Isle Royale have reported that half of the timber wolves present on the island last year have died. Thirteen of the 24 wolves seen in the park during the winter '97 survey have since succumbed, marking one of the steepest declines recorded since wolves first migrated to the island during the winter of 1947-48. "We had predicted a modest increase in wolf numbers this year," said Supt. Doug Barnard. "Mother Nature is unpredictable."

This winter's survey showed 14 wolves in the park, including three pups born since the completion of the 1997 survey. Biologists aren't certain what caused the decline, but suspect it may be tied to a sharp drop in the available food supply since the island's moose population suffered a major die-off in 1996 due to a severe winter and a very late spring.

According to research director Rolf Peterson, "One thing that has happened is that we've moved to a completely new generation of

wolves. All of the wolves in the park now are less than five years old. Their reproductive performance will be of great interest, since they are even more in-bred than their parents."

Of the 10 wolf pups alive on the island last summer, only three have survived. That leads biologists to wonder if canine parvovirus is again present in the population. "We plan to live-capture some of the wolves this spring and take some blood samples to see if that's the case," Peterson said.

Isle Royale's moose herd is up to about 700 this year, an increase of almost 200 from the number recorded last year. According to Peterson, the moose are in good shape because competition for food is not nearly so fierce as it was when the herd numbered 2,500.

For a copy of the complete Annual Report of the 1997-98 Wolf-Moose Study please send a check made out to IRNHA for \$3.95 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling to IRNHA, 800 E. Lakeshore Dr., Houghton, MI 49931. You can also order by calling us at 800-678-6925 or visiting our web page at www.portup.com/irnha.

WOLF AND MOOSE POPULATION DYNAMICS

Year	# of Wolves	# of Moose
1980	50	664
1981	30	650
1982	14	700
1983	23	900
1984	24	811
1985	22	1062
1986	20	1025
1987	16	1380
1988	12	1653
1989	11	1397

Year	# of Wolves	# of Moose
1990	15	1216
1991	12	1313
1992	12	1600
1993	13	1880
1994	15	1800
1995	16	2400
1996	22	1200
1997	24	502
1998	14	700
1999	?	?

Superintendent's Letter continued...

September is the golden month. Yes, it starts getting windy. The fishing starts to pick up too. The leaves start to turn and by the end of the month put on a show from the water or from the top of the ridges that is unparalleled. I remember one fine day at the end of the month at the Feldtman Fire Tower that presented a panorama of color that took my breath away. But, we promise you no bugs (or darn few). We promise you mostly empty trails and backcountry campsites. We promise you that the staff can take a deep breath and take more than a few moments to fill you in on some of their favorite "spots."

Try us in the shoulder seasons. You'll like it.

*Doug Barnard
Superintendent*

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING 1998

Rock Harbor, Isle Royale

Saturday, July 11

9:00am - 3:00 p.m.

Group Interpretive Walk.

Meet at Rock Harbor Visitor Center.

Bring your lunch!

8:30 - 9:30 p.m. Annual Meeting Speaker:

Napier Shelton, author of IRNHA's newest book, "Superior Wilderness: Isle Royale National Park," and its predecessor, "The Life of Isle Royale," will discuss the changes that he has seen at Isle Royale in the twenty year-span between the two books. Rock Harbor Auditorium. Book signing following.

Sunday, July 12

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Annual Business Meeting and Reception. Rock Harbor Auditorium.

8:30 - 9:30 p.m. Annual Meeting Speakers:

Photographers Ann and John Mahan will give a multi-media presentation "Lake Superior: Story and Spirit." Through photographs, music, sound effects and narration, they explore Lake Superior and its watershed. Rock Harbor Auditorium. Book signing following.

Monday, July 13

2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Board Meeting.

Rock Harbor Auditorium



JOURNAL WORKSHOP & READING

IRNHA members are invited to join us in Houghton on Aug. 7 for what promises to be a very interesting workshop and reading. Robert Root, former artist-in-residence at Isle Royale, and Professor of English at Central Michigan University, will be in the Copper Country for the day to share with us some of his work on a new book "Time By Moments Steals Away": The 1848 Journal of Ruth Douglass, which will be published by Wayne State University Press this summer. Ruth Douglass was the wife of C. C. Douglass, a prominent copper mining pioneer, geologist and surveyor. Her journal takes her from Detroit to Wisconsin and finally to a mining site on Isle Royale. During the day on Friday, Root will lead a workshop on preserving, editing and publishing family diaries, journals, and letters. This workshop will be attended by IRNHA staff and board members, NPS staff from both Isle Royale and Keweenaw parks and representatives from local libraries and historical associations. Although this workshop will not be open to the public, IRNHA members are welcome to attend. There is no charge for the workshop, but we ask that you phone us to make your reservation for this workshop by July 1. That evening Root will give a reading from the Ruth Douglass journal and from his work in progress Recovering Ruth: The Lives of a Text, which Root describes as "a book about the search for Ruth Douglass's identity and the discoveries an editor makes about his craft and his life in the process." This reading will take place at Ft. Wilkens State Park in Copper Harbor at 7:30 p.m.

Robert Root's programs are being funded by a Creative Artist Grant from ArtServe Michigan.



HERBARIUM DONATION

A donation to IRNHA of \$1300 from John and Joyce VanWestenburg of Chassell has made possible the creation of an herbarium exhibit for the new Windigo Visitor Center. The exhibit will be unveiled when the new center opens this July.

According to Supt. Barnard, "Exhibits such as these have been quite popular in other parks, as they give folks a chance to identify plants they have seen through displays of pressed local plants, along with illustrations and informative text."

This display takes the first step toward outfitting Windigo Visitor Center with a series of interactive

exhibits exploring the local natural and cultural history through a theme of change, exploring how Isle Royale's isolation has, over time, influenced people, animals, and plants.

The park hopes to find future donations and grants to complete the exhibits at Windigo Visitor Center, and this donation from the VanWestenburgs is a major first step toward achieving that goal. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible contribution toward this important interpretive project at Windigo, please contact IRNHA Executive Director, Jill Burkland for information and gift suggestions.

JUNIOR RANGER PROGRAM AT ISLE ROYALE

Matching funds from Isle Royale Natural History Association and Isle Royale National Park have made it possible to initiate a Junior Ranger Program in the park this summer.

The program focuses on children ages six through twelve. A variety of challenging activities teach children about the natural and cultural history of

Isle Royale, while connecting these principals globally. The activities also speak to safety and low impact practices, working toward an educated stewardship ethic.

A ten-page Junior Ranger Workbook is at the heart of the program. Children can purchase the workbook from IRNHA, then complete activities on route to the park and during their stay on the island. Activities are divided into those for younger and older age groups. You will not find crossword puzzles or word

searches among the problems, but rather real world depictions where children can trace the courses of nature and time. Some of the problems do not have absolute answers, but lend themselves to interpretation and discussion, as in the real world.

Once the workbook is completed and all required activities are signed off by a child's parent or a ranger, the child and a ranger review the work. Then comes graduation, where each child receives a badge and certificate as well as public recognition.

1998 ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Following is information excerpted from letters from the four persons who have been nominated to stand for election this year. All members of IRNHA are eligible to vote in this election. Please select from among the following THREE individuals you believe will best serve on our Board of Directors for a proposed three-year term. To vote, please use the ballot below. To be valid, ballots must be postmarked by **June 15**.

GREGG BLUTH

*(Hancock, Michigan)
Associate Research Professor,
Dept. of Geology, Michigan
Technological U.
BA — Geology, U.C. Berkeley
MS and Ph.D. — Geochemistry,
Penn State U.*

I believe that I am qualified to serve on the IRNHA Board because of my interests in protecting pristine regions like Isle Royale, my background in the geosciences, and my experience in project management. As a research scientist I have many years experience in developing projects to support both myself and student researchers, financial management, writing and editing, and both developing and seeing through worthwhile projects. I hope to use these skills as a Board Member to help the IRNHA achieve and maintain its objectives to protect and enhance Isle Royale's natural resources.

CHRISTINE MANNINEN

*(Livonia, Michigan)
Project Manager,
Communications and
Information Management,
Great Lakes Commission,*

*or
Biological Sciences,
Michigan Technological U.
MA Candidate—Journalism,
Michigan State U.
Growing up in the Upper
Peninsula of Michigan, I was
introduced to Isle Royale*

National Park at an early age. My first trip to the island was in 1975 when I was just eight years old. These trips have continued over the years... My most recent visit was in 1994 for a 38-mile hike in three days.

Through my work at the Great Lakes Commission, I have a broad array of contacts in the region and am familiar with every aspect of Great Lakes water and land management. My expertise lies in writing, editing, and web page and publication design. Since joining the Great Lakes Commission, I have also written several articles on the island: one published in Michigan Out-Of-Doors and the other in the Commission's ADVISOR newsletter.

But maybe my most important attachment to the island is the fact that my maternal grandmother, Fanny Solmonson Laine, was one of only a handful of people actually born on the island in the late 1800s while her father was a miner on the island. I feel I have many talents to offer the Isle Royale Natural History Association.

STEVE MERRITT

*(Marquette, Michigan)
First Officer, Skyway Airlines
Attended University of
Minnesota*

I feel I would be most qualified for a position on the

board of directors based on my years spent on Isle Royale. With a family lease on an island in Tobin Harbor, I virtually grew up on Isle Royale during summer months. On family vacations spent fishing and exploring, I found all of the things that make it such a naturally beautiful and exciting place to go. Through admiring the stories told by my grandfather and father, I learned all of the things that make it such a fascinating and pioneering place to visit as well.

I choose to be more active in the issues that involve Isle Royale at this time, as I am concerned with some of the most recent changes that the park is undergoing, and their

impact on its visitors. I have many friends and family who visit the park and wish to preserve its natural and historic values for the generations to come.

Before college I had the opportunity to work all summer for the National Park Concessions. I have also been exposed to the History Association over the years through attending the meetings up on Isle Royale and in Houghton with my family, so I do understand the important role it plays.

DOUG WELKER

*(Pelkie, Michigan)
Elementary Special Education
Aide, Houghton-Portage
Township Schools
Past Work Experience as*

*Geologist, Energy Surveyor,
Wilderness Ranger
BS and Ph.D. — Geology
Associate Degree — Solar
Heating and Cooling Technology
In my spare time I am
involved in a variety of environmental- and natural
resources-related activities
such as trail layout and construction and monitoring a
variety of wildlife species.
I feel I am well qualified to
be an IRNHA board member
because of my background in
natural resources, extensive
involvement on the boards
of non-profit organizations
(including 3 years on the
IRNHA board), and my
experience developing and
maintaining the IRNHA
website.*

ISLE ROYALE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION 1998 ELECTION BALLOT

Vote for No More Than 3

Please check your choices below

- ☐ Gregg Bluth--Hancock MI
☐ Christine Manninen--Livonia MI
☐ Steve Merritt--Marquette MI
☐ Doug Welker--Pelkie MI

Please mail your ballot to IRNHA,
800 E. Lakeshore Dr, Houghton, MI 49931, by June 15, 1998.

— Thank you for your participation —

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Houghton, MI 49931-1895

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1998 ISLE ROYALE ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE

This year's Artists-in-Residence for Isle Royale have been selected. One hundred and sixteen applicants were juried and six artists were selected for this year's program. This year's Artists-in-Residence are:

- **George Provost**, photographer from Anchorage, Alaska
- **Joyce Koskenmaki**, oil painter from LaCrosse, Wisconsin
- **Jennifer Williams**, painter from Madison, Wisconsin
- **Jan Zita Grover**, writer from Duluth, Minnesota
- **Deborah Eddy**, pastel artist from Soquel, California
- **Amy Arntson**, watercolorist and photographer from Lake Mills, Wisconsin

Each of these artists will spend a two to

three week residency in a rustic cabin on the island. During their residency, artists share their experiences with the public by demonstration, talk, or other means. Artists are asked to contribute a piece of work which represents their stay at Isle Royale. Look for the work of past Artists-in-Residence in the Houghton and Windigo visitor centers, and if you are in Rock Harbor this summer, we encourage you to attend one the artists' programs.

Isle Royale's Artist-in-Residence Program is funded through donations from Park visitors and IRNHA members. The program is sponsored by IRNHA, Copper Country Community Arts Council, and Isle Royale National Park.

Isle Royale Natural History Association

800 E. Lakeshore Drive
Houghton, MI 49931
Tel: 906-482-7860 or 800-678-6925
e-mail: irnha@portup.com

IRNHA is a non-profit 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	\$15
Household	\$25
Supporting	\$50
Sustaining	\$100
Life Membership	\$500*
Corporate Sponsor	\$1,000
Corporate Patron	\$5,000

**Life memberships may be paid in 5 annual installments.*

Board of Directors

John Dunn, President, Charles Boyle, David Duchamp, Nancy Leonard, Bob Linn, Gary Pethe, Bill Rose, Doug Welker, Charles Zamzow.

Staff

Jill Burkland, Executive Director & Wolf's Eye Editor; Lori Honrath and Lauren Rastello, Mail Order and Membership Specialists.

ISLE ROYALE NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

1998 ELECTION BALLOT

(Place in an envelope with postage and mail to IRNHA)

