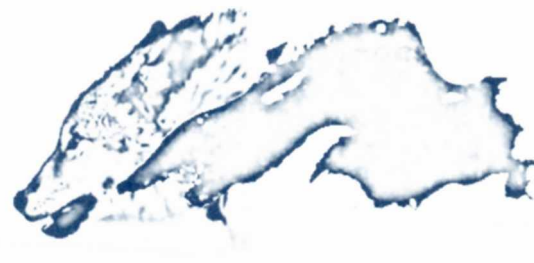


Wolf's Eye



Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association

2017 No. 1

Coming Home Again to Isle Royale

by Susanna Ausema

My family moved to Isle Royale in 1981, when I was just a toddler. For the next 11 summers, Isle Royale was my home, and I developed deep connections with the land and water. In those days, there was no television in the housing, of course no internet, and just a shared landline, so we were very isolated. There was no way to stay in touch with friends on the mainland, and rarely were there other children on Mott Island, so we (my sister and I) had to entertain ourselves in different ways.

We spent hours combing the beaches for colorful stones, and we painted the black ones to look like wild animals. We made murals by gluing feathers, flowers, and leaves to the cardboard boxes that our groceries had been delivered in. We picked berries by the bucketful. Being young and energetic, the cold water temperatures didn't keep us from frolicking in Lake Superior. One of the park employees fed squirrels via a series of ramps leading up to his kitchen window, so they became habituated to humans, and we were very excited to feed them right from our hands (obviously a practice that has not been allowed to continue!)

As I got older, my parents allowed me to explore further on my own. I created a magic kingdom in the forest, complete with moss carpets and fairies. One day as I entered my "castle" in the woods, I was surprised to see a bull moose lying down right in the middle of my wonderland. He must have felt that it was a special place, too. I kept a list of moose sightings, and averaged about eight per summer.

The island was a very safe place to grow up. I didn't fear anything, as far as I can recall. The animals kept to themselves, and I kept my distance as I admired them. I spent hours by myself bushwhacking, circumnavigating Mott Island, and watching the waves crash against the rocky shorelines. I loved this freedom and solitude. The island seeped into my soul and became an important part of who I was to become.

When I was 12 years old, I created a time capsule. I put several items that were important to me inside a little yellow margarine dish and put the lid on, and then buried it underneath a tree near our apartment. That winter, while snow piled up at the foot of that tree, my dad broke the news to us that we would be moving across the country as soon as the school year ended. I didn't have a chance to say goodbye to my special island. My heart was broken.

Years later, I returned to the island as a seasonal interpretive ranger. I was beyond excited to spend another summer on Isle Royale, a place that still resonated within my heart. That summer, I met a ranger who would eventually become my husband. Together, we explored parts of the island that I hadn't seen as a child.



Above. Susanna Weber (left) and her sister as aspiring backpackers growing up on Isle Royale. Below. Susanna and husband Mike Ausema with their son Jasper following in Mom's footsteps.

continued on p. 2

Coming Home, from p. 1

We spent many evenings at Hidden Lake, crouched underneath a spruce tree, waiting for moose to arrive at the mineral lick. We marveled at the magic of the northern lights dancing overhead. We hiked until our feet were blistered, then picked up the canoe paddles and continued exploring, full of youthful energy.

One day, I went in search of my time capsule. I had a good idea of its location, but was disappointed to discover that new park housing had been erected in that very location. I never did manage to find that little yellow dish, but I'm sure it's still there, somewhere.

After another summer on the island, I graduated from college with a

degree in wildlife biology and Spanish, and accepted a position as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guatemala. Those two years were full of challenges and personal growth, newfound knowledge in the fields of interpretation and environmental education, and rich cultural exchanges.

Before leaving Guatemala, I received an invitation to be the lead interpreter at Rock Harbor, and I jumped at the chance! Another summer in paradise, followed by two years of graduate school. Fast forward several years, past my first permanent job with the NPS in Colorado, my wedding day, and a move to California for my husband's job. We were living happily near the Pacific Ocean

and Redwood National Park, embarking upon our newest adventure: parenthood. We had talked countless times over the years about returning to Isle Royale, but just couldn't bring ourselves to go, knowing that the visit would be short. So when we heard that Rock Harbor had an open ranger position, we jumped at it!

Our little boy will have a childhood similar to my own, full of fresh air, beautiful scenery, trails, berries, and boats. He has a giant backyard, a place where his imagination can soar with the eagles and his boundless energy can find fruitful release.

Isle Royale is our home once again, and we're grateful every day.

Superintendent Transition at Keweenaw National Historical Park

Wyndeth Davis, a 27-year veteran of the National Park Service (NPS), became superintendent of Keweenaw National Historical Park on September 12, 2016. After receiving a master of science in anthropology/archaeology from the University of Oregon, Wendy began her career with the NPS as an archeologist in the Alaska Region. Finding herself spending more time with the public than in the field, she began developing K-12 curricula and designing interpretive publications and exhibits.

Wendy transitioned to Washington D.C., where she helped lead the expansion and improvement of the Junior Ranger program as service-wide education coordinator. She was most recently the associate manager for interpretive planning at the NPS Harpers Ferry Design Center in West Virginia.

"We are pleased to welcome Wendy as the superintendent of Keweenaw National Historical Park," said NPS Regional Director Cam Sholly. "She has a proven track record of accomplishment, along with the leadership and partnering skills necessary to guide the park into the future."

While working on an interpretive planning project with the Keweenaw Heritage Sites a few years ago, "I immediately fell in love with the place and the people, and with the story of copper mining in the Upper Peninsula," Wendy said of her appointment. "I look forward to working with the community, the park's Advisory Commission, the park partners and the dedicated park staff to share this important part of our country's heritage."

Davis has spent her entire NPS career building and maintaining unique partnerships to accomplish shared goals and create new ways of doing business in the Service. She is an award-winning interpreter who has enhanced the field of interpretation and education for the NPS. Relocated to the Keweenaw with her husband, Arthur LaRue, and greyhound Rosie, Davis looks forward to gardening, weaving, and painting in her free time.

Mike Pflaum, who had been superintendent at Keweenaw since January 2011, left to become superintendent of Badlands National Park in August 2015. During part of that time, he also served as superintendent of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

"We leave Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula with great memories of the people, places, and our experiences here. We've had a wonderful four-and-a-half years near the shores of Lake Superior and want to express our gratitude and best wishes to the outstanding staff and park partners at Keweenaw National Historical Park," said Mike. He and wife Barbara still own a home in the area, as well as maintain their IRKPA membership.



Your Dues and Donations at Work for our Parks!

It may be the “off season,” but that doesn’t mean IRKPA is hibernating. Here are some of the ways we put member dues and donations to work for our parks year round.

Outreach Events Since Thanksgiving

IRKPA staff and volunteers had sales and information booths at Michigan Tech’s Home for the Holidays Sale, the Copper Country Community Arts Center’s Poor Artists Sale in Calumet, and the Quiet Water Symposium in East Lansing. We also paid expenses for IRKPA’s Susanna Ausema to help two Isle Royale National Park employees staff a booth at Canoeopia in Madison, Wisconsin, with additional volunteer help from two IRKPA board members.

Wolf Management Plan Open House

As part of Isle Royale National Park’s annual Aid to Parks request, IRKPA paid room and refreshment costs for National Park Service staff to hold an open house in Duluth, Minnesota, for the draft Environmental Impact Statement to address the Presence of Wolves on Isle Royale.



Printing of Park Newspapers

As always, IRKPA staff helped edit and proof the 2017 Greenstone, along with paying to print 12,000 copies of that newspaper and 30,000 of Keweenaw National Historical Park’s Keweenaw Guide. (Members in IRKPA’s database as requesting copies of the Greenstone each year will receive them by early April. Keweenaw Guides will be sent in late April to those who have asked for them.) The Greenstone is also posted now at www.nps.gov/isro under the “plan your trip” tab: maps and brochures.

Experience Works Staffing

Thanks to an IRKPA board member, an Experience Works/AARP worker has been helping IRKPA and both parks since late November at no cost to us. In addition to general help in both offices, she has assisted the Isle Royale Artist-in-Residence Program and staffed Keweenaw National Historical Park’s Calumet Visitor Center every Friday and Saturday, which has freed NPS staff for a new Children’s Storytime. She also handles sales and inventory there.

Keweenaw NHP Project Support

Last year IRKPA donated books to ten high school libraries for the Local History Smackdown and to the park interpretive staff’s library. We paid for entertainment and refreshments at Youth Historian, Founder’s Day, and Holiday Open House events, and also supported the Centennial SEEDS Youth Conservation Corps crew that worked for the park and Heritage Sites. This year, we purchased two laptops for the GRACE Project (more on that later).

IRKPA Offers Three New Workshops and One Old Favorite for 2017

The Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association is once again sponsoring four workshops in our parks, three on Isle Royale and one in the Keweenaw.

Isle Royale Botany Workshop June 5-10

Back for its 11th year, this popular Rock Harbor-based workshop is open to anyone with beginning or intermediate knowledge of plant identification. Participants will explore early-season plants in varied habitats on field trips led by botanist Janet Marr, the co-author of IRKPA’s *Island Life: an Isle Royale Nature Guide*.

NEW! Isle Royale Field Ornithology Workshop June 13-17

Experience four days in Lake Superior’s Isle Royale National Park this June and July to identify the breeding birds of Isle Royale by sight and sound. A lifelong birder, instructor Zach Gayk has many years’ experience studying native birds across Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. He

is currently researching the behavioral ecology of neotropical passerines (perching birds that are mostly songbirds) migrating along Lake Superior.

NEW! Keweenaw Botany Workshop July 25-27

Learn to identify plants that include boreal species and rare arctic disjuncts, while enjoying the natural and historical surroundings of Michigan’s Keweenaw Peninsula from a base in Copper Harbor. Experienced field botanist Janet Marr will guide adults with beginning or intermediate knowledge of plant identification through diverse habitats of the area’s rugged bedrock shorelines, ridges, forests, and wetlands.

NEW! Isle Royale Night Sky Photography Workshop September 12-16

Beginning and intermediate photographers are invited to join Lake Superior Photo’s Shawn Malone for this nature photography workshop with particular

emphasis on capturing images of the night sky over Isle Royale. Workshop activities will include instruction and photography excursions around Rock Harbor.

Isle Royale workshop registration is \$699 or \$674 for IRKPA members. The fee covers instruction, round-trip transportation on the *Ranger III*, meals from Tuesday lunch through Saturday lunch, daily park entrance fees, and camping at a group site. Anyone accompanying a workshop participant may sign up for round-trip transportation, park entrance fees, and meals with the group for \$250.

The Keweenaw botany workshop registration fee of \$375 (\$350 for IRKPA members) covers instruction only. Meals, lodging or camping, and transportation between sites (carpooling encouraged) are at participants’ expense. See details at irkpa.org/get-involved/workshops/ or call IRKPA.



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2017 Bob Linn Scholarship

IRKPA and the George Wright Society once again are sponsoring a \$500 scholarship in memory of Bob Linn, who co-founded both organizations. The application process is simple, and the deadline is April 15.

Graduating high school seniors in the Copper Country Intermediate School District and children or grandchildren of IRKPA or GWS members are eligible. They must be accepted at a college, with plans to major in natural resources, forestry, biological, earth or environmental sciences or a related field. Application forms are available at irkpa.org (under Get Involved > News) or by emailing kbradof@irkpa.org or calling 906-482-7860.

Annual Meeting July 28

Save the date for IRKPA's annual membership meeting and picnic at Rock Harbor, Friday evening, July 28. We'll post details at irkpa.org under "Events" as we have them. We are hoping to arrange a presentation and geoheritage tour via *The Sandy* with Erika Vye to celebrate the publication of our new geoheritage guide. Full details will be in the May newsletter. A group campsite is reserved for the weekend. Hope you can join us!

iGive.com Helps IRKPA

Help IRKPA earn extra funds at no cost to you when shopping or searching the internet via iGive.com. What difference does it make? Over five years, IRKPA has received \$788 in extra donations with only 7 currently active supporters. Imagine how much more we could earn if more members sign up! It's easy—just select Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association as your cause, and install the iGive button in your browser. Then donations accrue automatically at a percentage determined by each retailer. It's a way for them to let customers help guide their charitable giving. Please consider joining the 350,000+ iGive members who help their favorite causes with every purchase and search.

Call for Committee Members

Are you interested in doing more for our parks? Join an IRKPA committee! That's also how we recruit prospective board members. Join the Membership & Fundraising, Publications & Marketing, or Finance Committees, depending on your interests and background. Staff also rely on—and greatly appreciate—help with events, mailings, and everyday tasks!

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IRKPA is the membership-based nonprofit partner of Isle Royale National Park and Keweenaw National Historical Park. Supporting OUR national parks! Gifts, bequests, memorials, and memberships are U.S. tax deductible.

Membership Categories

Individual \$25	Household \$35
Supporting \$50	Sustaining \$100
Patron \$250	Life \$1,200*

*may be paid in four annual installments

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