



2018 Issue 2

Wolf's Eye

Newsletter for the Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association

Annual Meeting and Service Projects

IRKPA's annual membership meeting will take place at the Calumet Visitor Center, Saturday, July 28th, at 1 PM. Biologist Isaiah Messerly of the National Park Service Great Lakes Exotic Plant Management Team will discuss invasive plants and their impact on cultural resources. Refreshments will be provided. All members are welcome to attend.

We also have some great service project opportunities in conjunction with the meeting. Find out more on page 3.

YOU could WIN! Sweepstakes 2019

1st Prize - Round trip for two on the *Isle Royale Queen IV* from Copper Harbor, MI, and two nights' lodging for two at the Rock Harbor Lodge, Isle Royale NP (2019 season, July 4 or earlier)

2nd Prize - Round trip for two on the *NPS Ranger III* (2019 season)

3rd Prize - Your choice of any two of IRKPA's own publications

Drawing will be held December 14, 2018. Need not be present to win. Winners will be notified. Donation not tax-deductible.

Your donation supports OUR National Parks!

Winter Study on Isle Royale

By Lynette Potvin

Winter Study at Isle Royale National Park is part of the longest running continuous predator-prey research project in the world, and is focused on the wolves and moose of the island. While the park is officially closed from November 1 to April 15, researchers head to the park for seven weeks in the winter to observe wolf behavior and count moose from two passenger planes on skis. This year, park personnel swapped out after four weeks. I joined the crew on the southwest side of the island for the remaining three weeks.

I arrived on Isle Royale via helicopter on the 12th of February. As we left the mainland I was surprised to see open water. An ice bridge from Canada to Isle Royale had been reported just a couple days before, but the wind must have broken it up after only a few days of being intact.



Just slightly above 0 degrees F upon arrival at Winter Study (Photo by author)

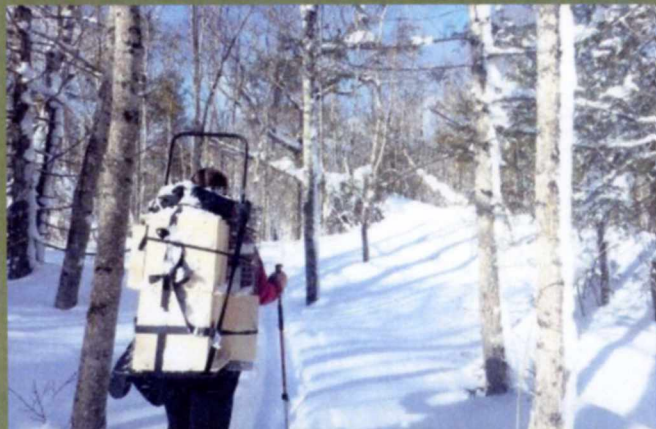
Week One is cold. The trails packed by the previous crew are extensive, but they are basically icy ruts. The conditions outside of the packed trails are strange. No base has set, which typically forms with warm conditions followed by freezing. As soon as I set foot off of the trail, I sink into snow with the consistency of sand. I still cover a lot of ground, scouting for marten tracks and setting up amphibian monitors, which are set to turn on in the spring.

There are four of us staying in the cozy Ghyllbank cabin—Rolf, the team leader, head baker, and sauna stoker; Sarah, a researcher with Rolf, whose vegetarian dishes are winning; Don the pilot

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whose grandfather supported Winter Study operations at the very beginning (and still flies the same plane!), and me, the National Park Service representative and human trail groomer.



The author, grooming the Greenstone Ridge trail

Week Two brings two feet of fresh snow, covering up all my hard work tracking trails. I'm in a battle against snow, and snow is winning. I still manage to track out the areas I explored in Week One, but it's slow going.

A few moose sightings, but with the heavy snow I'm guessing they are mostly bedded down. A cow and a set of twins spend an afternoon outside the cabin. It's great to watch them out the window munching away on pretty much anything they see. They are ravenous ungulates. I often come across huge swaths of balsam fir that are only a few feet above the snow but are likely to be 30-40 years old. It makes for easy movement through the forest.

Week Three: I'm hoping a crust develops, as conditions off trail are still extremely challenging—I now sink in up to my thighs. We are set to leave a week from today—hoping the weather cooperates with that plan. It looks like a big system is on the horizon. My week will be spent hauling marten traps to remote sites (a crew is coming out after us with the hope of trapping and collaring marten), breaking trail, and enjoying time away from a computer. Speaking of time away, it's time I sign off and get outside.



Author Lynette Potvin is Isle Royale National Park's ecologist. An extended version of her article was originally published online.

Keweenaw Ranger Programs!

Want to learn more about the history of the Keweenaw? Join one of the ranger-led activities to get outdoors and celebrate summer! Most are free. Here's a sample:

Monthly Adventure Hikes Across the Keweenaw
Calumet Community Guided Walks

Historical Keweenaw Waterway Tours Aboard *Ranger III*
(4 Thursdays July-Aug., \$30/\$15; call 906-482-0984)

Quincy Mine Surface Ruins Exploration Hikes



Photo: Kristine Bradof

For a full description of activities, check out:
www.nps.gov/kewe/planyourvisit/calendar

Great New Products!

There's a lot of behind-the-scenes action at IRKPA's offices. One example is in the design and selection of new products for our sales line. Alison Pontynen has been in charge of our merchandise for the last three years, and she's done a great job adding distinctive items that educate our visitors, inspire us all to care about our parks, or serve as a neat reminder of our experiences. Recently, she was traveling in Hawaii and brought back the idea for these cool wood-brimmed caps!



www.irkpa.org/shop

Isle Royale Service Trip

July 31-August 4, 2018

Space is limited to 10 participants

Join us! Our focus will be invasive species eradication near Daisy Farm and Rock Harbor. IRKPA membership is required (starting at \$25/year). *Participants must be able to bend and/or stoop repeatedly and hike up to 4 miles.* Includes free *Ranger III* transportation, a shared group camping spot, daily entrance fees, tools, and instruction. Participants must provide their own food and camping gear.

To reserve a spot on this worthwhile service trip or for more information, please contact Sandy Wilhoit, IRKPA membership and fundraising chair, at (269) 462-3982 or upnorthigo@aol.com.



A colorful, but non-native, flower on IR

Keweenaw NHP Service Project

IRKPA is also sponsoring a volunteer opportunity at Keweenaw NHP. We'll assist with woody invasive plant management around a ruin near the intersection of US-41 and No. 2 Road. The project will help expose a foundation ruin similar to residential ruins near the dry house, advancing cultural landscape preservation interests on NPS lands.

When? Thursday, July 26, 2018 from 9 am to noon and 1-4 pm

Bring: Lunch and snacks

Provided: Shade canopy, water, tools/equipment and Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE). NPS staff will also provide an orientation for the IRKPA volunteer crew. No previous invasive species management experience is necessary.

Reserve your spot in advance so that we have the correct number of tools and PPE for all participants. There is no fee to participate and you do not have to be an IRKPA member.

For more information or to sign up, contact Darcy Rutkowski at 906-869-1390 or mqtbob@gmail.com.

"Lucky Match" on Isle Royale

Isle Royale holds a special place in the hearts and minds of many of its visitors, although not everyone who visits is guaranteed to find true love! Such was the case for two of IRKPA's life members, but if not for a twist of fate, they might never have met at all. If you've planned a trip to Isle Royale, you might be aware that logistical challenges can get in the way of even the best-laid plans.

Back in the summer of 1986, Dennis Lakomy was on a waiting list for one of our workshops, the Island Folklore Seminar. Just days before the seminar was to start, he received a letter saying, "Today's your lucky day!" as a cancellation meant he was able to squeeze into the class. He met some of his classmates at the park headquarters, and bonded with one in particular during the six-hour ride aboard the *Ranger III* to the island.

Unluckily, that special person, Darlene Frederick, was whisked off the island the next day aboard the seaplane, due to a family emergency. After quite a bit of behind-the-scenes searching, Dennis was able to get in touch with Darlene, and the rest is history. They were married in September of 1988, and gifted each other life memberships in the Isle Royale Natural History Association (now IRKPA). We thank them for sharing their story!



Photo: Dennis Lakomy

Do you have a story to share about your experiences on Isle Royale or at Keweenaw NHP? Contact susanna@irkpa.org and it might be published in a future issue of the *Wolf's Eye*!

Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association

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

Membership Categories

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

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 Susanna Ausema, Rock Harbor sales manager & newsletter editor

Wolves are coming to Isle Royale! The National Park Service released its Record of Decision approving the Final Environmental Impact Statement to Address the Presence of Wolves at Isle Royale National Park on June 7. For more information, see <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/isrowolves>. Working out the details of the reintroduction process are the next step.

Keweenaw NHP hosts a history "Smackdown" competition for local high school students each year. The park requests that IRKPA donate specific books to high school libraries to help competitors prepare. The books also serve as question sources. IRKPA donated five books each to ten school libraries this year as part of KNHP's annual Aid-to-Parks request.



Are you interested in flower identification? Check out the new reference guide, "*Berries & Blooms of Northeastern Isle Royale*," at the Rock Harbor VC.

Printed on recycled paper



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