



The Grand Portage Guide



Bold Explorers

Superintendent Tim Cochrane

During the glory years of the fur trade, Grand Portage was synonymous with the idea of exploration. Today we hope your visit will continue that historic association – please explore the ancient pathway – the Grand Portage – or explore the fur trade depot that served as a doorway to the North West. We are pleased you are here and willing to explore and learn anew about this historic place.

The association of exploring and Grand Portage continues today. Last November when ice was forming on the edge of Grand Portage Creek, a young man and his canoe emerged from the Portage trail. Alexander B. Martin had paddled 3,000 miles from Astoria, Oregon to here. He made a modern day “portage” from the Missouri River to the Red River watershed by pedal power, pulling his canoe on a mini-trailer from his bike.

The last sixteen days through the Boundary Waters – the Voyageur’s Highway - he paddled and camped without seeing another person as he rushed to “make” Grand Portage as the days grew shorter and nights colder. Appropriately, this winter we stored his canoe under the great Montreal Canoes in our Canoe Warehouse that would have been used on such lengthy journeys. This year Martin will recommence his trip here bound for Portland, Maine, the last leg of 1,200 miles.

Occasionally, others like him still stream by this place carrying canoes and large packs down the eight and one half mile Grand Portage. Last year, Erik Simula, park ranger, went on his own voyage of discovery in his 13-foot birch bark canoe. Traveling with Kitigan, his amazingly calm sled dog, Erik traversed much of the area you have just driven through. And like all Grand Portage travelers, Erik experienced the winds and seas of the Big Lake making him “wind bound” for days. Erik too had uninvited visitors to his camp in the middle of the night -- a bear and mountain lion. He finished his trip lugging his gear and canoe down the Portage, including his sawed off toothbrush – cut off to reduce weight. Other canoe trippers from North Woods camps sometimes, too, make a pilgrimage down the Grand Portage arriving at the depot and celebrating with a plunge into the cold waters of Lake Superior. We know this because we can hear their screams from the Heritage Center.

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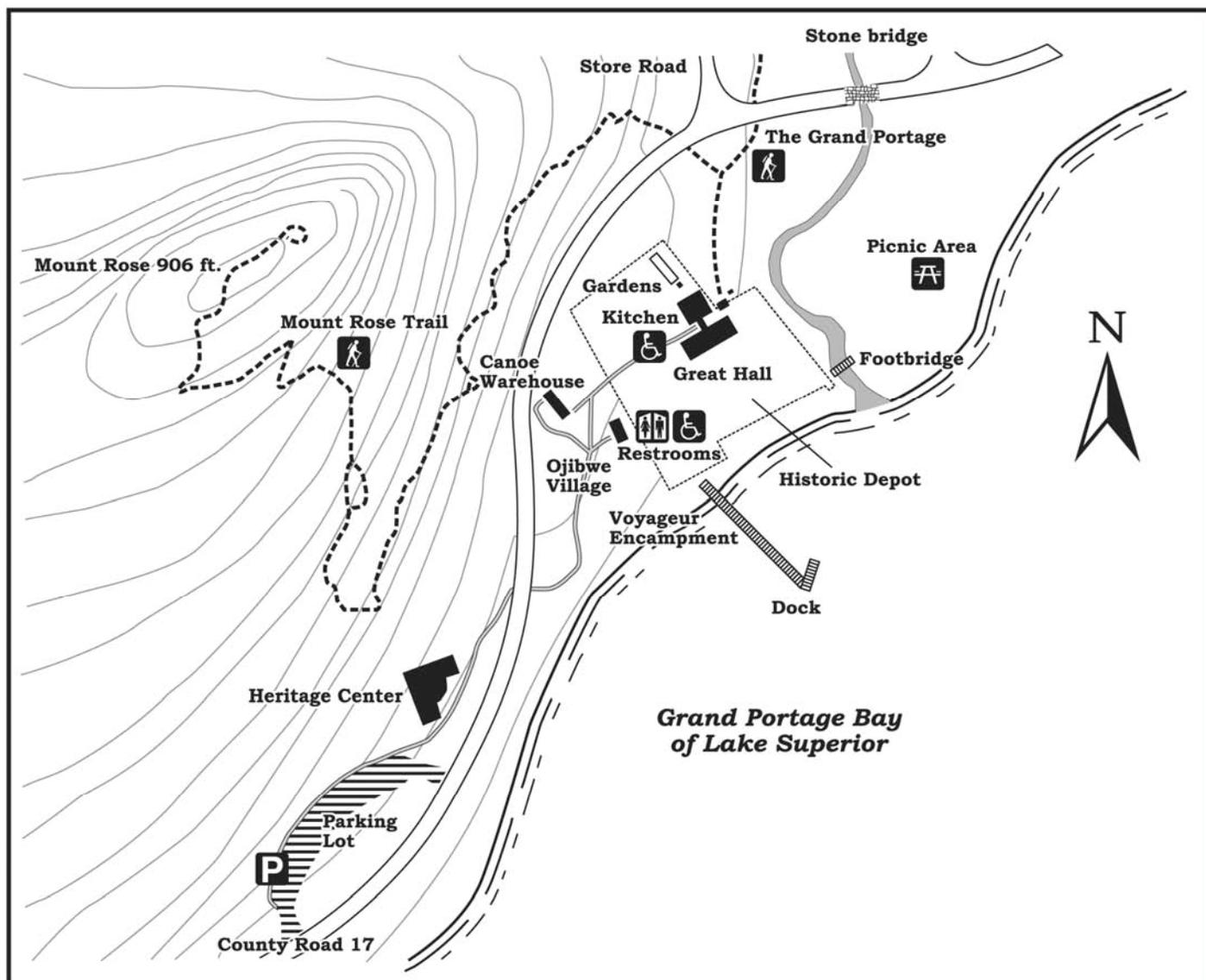
Boozhoo Bonjour Welcome

A GUIDE TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR WAY AT GRAND PORTAGE NATIONAL MONUMENT

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.

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.

The Staff of Grand Portage National Monument



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 witness the firing of 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.



A *gouvernail* paddle takes shape in the warehouse.



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.*

- Northwest Passage: The Story of Grand Portage – Running time is 10 minutes. - *Note: Shown on the hour.*
- The Voyageur – Running time is 20 minutes. - *Note: Shown on the half-hour, except 10:30 & 2:30.*
- The Birch Bark Canoe Builder – Running time is 30 minutes. - *Note: Shown at 10:30 & 2:30.*

SELF-GUIDED ACTIVITIES

HIKING TRAILS

The Grand Portage: The 8½-mile *Grand Portage* is open for hiking. Two campsites are available for primitive camping at Fort Charlotte. A free permit is required, and can be obtained at the Heritage Center or at one of three registration boxes located along the Grand Portage.

Mt. Rose Trail: The Mt. Rose trail, located across from the historic depot, is a paved ½-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.

BROCHURES AVAILABLE

We offer several brochures for your use and enjoyment:

- NPS Grand Portage Official Map and Guide
- Ojibwe Lifeways
- Historic Garden
- Bird Checklist
- Mt. Rose Trail

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:

“Native American Clothing: An Illustrated History” by Theodore Brassler, 2009. Firefly Books, Buffalo, New York, 368 pg.

“Minong - The Good Place: Ojibwe and Isle Royale” by Timothy Cochrane, 2009. Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, Michigan, 285 pg.

“Ojibwe In Minnesota (People of Minnesota)” by Anton Treuer, 2010. Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN, 112 pg.

“John Beargrease: Legend of Minnesota’s North Shore” by Daniel Lancaster, 2009. Holy Cow Press, Duluth, MN, 173 pg.

“Roadside Geology of Minnesota” by Richard W. Ojakangas, 2009. Mountain Press Publishing Company, Missoula, MT, 370 pg.

“Fingerweaving Untangled: An illustrated Beginner’s Guide Including Detailed Patterns and Common Mistakes” by Carol James, 2008. Published by Carol James, Fiber Artist, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 64 pg.

“Birchbark Brigade: A Fur trade History” by Cris Peterson, 2009. Calkins Creek, Honesdale, PA, 136 pg.

“Profit & Ambition: The Northwest Company and the Fur Trade 1779-1821” by David A. Morrison, 2009. Canadian Museum of Civilization, Gatineau, Quebec, Canada, 64 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.



The Crossroads of Nature and Culture

By Ted Gostomski, NPS Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network

Visiting Grand Portage National Monument is like a trip back in time. Voyageur and Ojibwe (*Anishinaabeg*) traders appear as they did during the heyday of this fur trading depot. You will see and hear about beaver pelts, birch bark canoes, and the 8½-mile long foot path from Lake Superior to Fort Charlotte on the Pigeon River. If you walk up Mt. Rose, or if you follow the portage path to begin your own adventure on the fur trade route, you will notice plants and animals that are common to the “north country.” Maybe you came here with a specific idea of how a northern outpost should look. Maybe you are just learning about it for the first time, but the trip here probably gave you some idea of what to expect. Places like Grand Portage become part of the National Park System for their historic and cultural values, but natural resources play an important role in

setting the tone for historic and cultural experiences. Consequently, it is equally important to monitor and manage the natural resources as it is to maintain the look and feel of a historic fur trade site.

The National Park Service strengthened its commitment to science in the parks when it issued its “Natural Resource Challenge” in 1999. Among the many positive changes to come out of the Challenge was the creation of an inventory and monitoring (I&M) program. Across the National Park System, 270 parks were grouped into 32 I&M networks based on their geography and shared natural resources issues. Grand Portage National Monument became part of the Great Lakes Network (GLKN), which includes eight other park units in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana.

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Fur Traders on facebook

Ranger Jeremy Kingsbury

The fur traders of the North West Company would gather face to face at Grand Portage once a year; from here they would spread out to the far reaches of the continent. Bringing the partners of the company to this summer meeting were express canoes. These canoes could cross from Montreal to Grand Portage in less than three weeks, and it was said by 1814 they could cross from the Pacific Ocean to Montreal in 100 days.

Once the men returned to their far-reaching posts it was the job of the winter express to carry letters and news of their trading season by snowshoe, toboggan and cariole through all the districts eventually arriving in Montreal, with reports and prospects on the current trade season. Just communicating with the nearest neighbors for the clerks and voyageurs meant sending out expeditions of, in some cases, half your work force risking, and suffering from injury, starvation, or death. Obviously communication was key to the success of the company, the Nor'westers main competition, the Hudson's Bay Company, held their meetings in London, extending their gaps in communication even longer.

It goes without saying that communication is much faster now, thanks to the Internet, not to mention telephones and the modern postal service, fewer people must risk their lives to carry a simple message from one person to the other. It is even difficult to consider an era where it could take two weeks to get a response from someone who is less than 100 miles from you.

For the sake of this article I'd like to imagine how the founding partners of the North West Company would have used two popular websites, facebook, and twitter.

In case you're not familiar with the two websites I'll explain them briefly. Facebook was invented at Harvard in 2004, and soon after grew into a social networking site for college stu-

dents, and eventually anyone over 13. On facebook you make a profile page of your information, and hobbies, and then ask other people to be your friend on the website, allowing you to comment on their posted pictures or stories, and allowing them the same action. Most of these posts and comments are on what is called the wall, a sort of personal chat room, or message board.

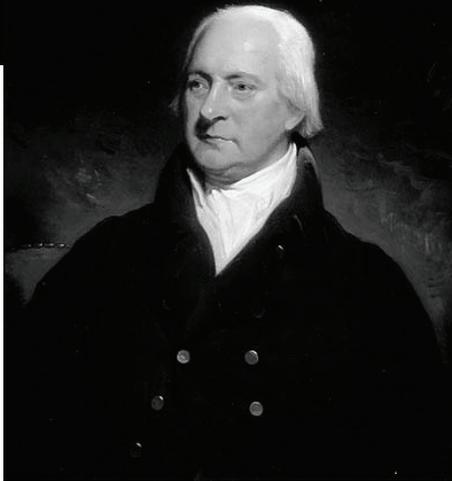
Twitter is a website that allows people to comment on events as they happen, these comments are referred to as tweets. Other people with twitter accounts can follow whomever they like, then as you look at your twitter homepage it shows all the tweets of people that you are following. Often tweets are cutting news, or comments on trends in popular culture, or personal activities.

The two partners I'm using are Simon McTavish, founder, and chief shareholder of the NWCo from 1779-1804, and Peter Pond, a veteran of the French and Indian War who was the first to discover the company's wealthy Athabasca District.

For Simon McTavish's facebook page I present his profile, and wall posts. On his wall, I've added a second column of historical background to the various people he's communicating with and things he's doing. I've done the same thing for Peter Pond's twitter page, on the left showing a light interpretation of what Peter's thoughts and comments on milestones might have been, and background on the right.

So, add Simon as a friend on facebook, and follow Peter Pond!

Editor's Note: The following articles are written as they would appear on the internet, in reverse chronological order, though some comments appear to be written out of order, the most recent activity or writing is at the top with the oldest at the bottom.



Simon McTavish of Dunardry

is hoping to return to London updated 206 years ago

Networks: Montreal Canada, Dunardry Scotland, London England

Sex: Male

Relationship Status: Married

In a Relationship with: Marie-Marguerite Chaboillez

Looking for: Networking, Friendship

Hometown: Stratherrick Scotland

Political Views: God Save the King

Religious Views:

Mini-feed displaying 11 stories

-  Simon Wrote on Alexander MacKenzie's Wall
-  Simon Plans to attend the Beaver club meeting at Dillons
-  Simon joined Group: Beaver Club
-  Simon wrote on Dillon's Tavern's Wall:
-  Simon wrote on Dugald MacTavish's wall
-  Simon wrote on Isaac Todd's wall
-  Simon is nearly finished with his mansion!
-  Simon wrote on McTavish and Fraser Co's wall
-  Simon wrote on NWCo's wall
-  Simon and The Duke of Argyll are now friends
-  Simon and John Jacob Astor are friends (John Jacob Astor is new to express-book, help him get started)

Personal Information

Interests: Wine, Oysters, Pretty Girls, Heraldry, Travelling by carriage, Construction, Business, Seignury, Clan MacTavish, Multi national Business deals

Acting: The Duena, The Beggar's Opera, Oscar and Malvina

Books: Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect by Robert Burns, The History of Great Britain by David Hume, Le Morte Darthur Two Treatises on Government by John Locke, The Life, Adventures and Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton by Daniel Defoe, The Montreal Gazette, The Gentleman's Magazine, Le Morte Darthur.

Music: Joseph Hayden, George McKay, The Piper O'Farrell

Simon McTavish's Wall

Alexander MacKenzie wrote on Simon's wall:

I'm a Knight now, so you will address me as such, and stop insulting me in this manner.

Simon wrote on Alexander MacKenzie's wall:

Why don't you just go back to Scotland and quit pretending to be a fur trader.

John Jacob Astor wrote on Simon's wall:

I'll see you on Wednesday, danka schön for the Invite!

Simon wrote on John Jacob Astor's wall:

Why don't you come by Dillon's Tavern on Wednesday night if you're in port for the Beaver Club meeting, I'll host you.

Isaac Todd wrote on Simon's wall:

By Jove it'd be great to see you, let's meet at Beaver Hall. It'd be nice to see Joe anyway, and he always has the best food.

Simon McTavish wrote on Isaac Todd's wall:

It's been too long Isaac, let's not wait for December to get together.

McTavish & Fraser Co wrote on Simon's wall:

Yes, the arms were finished, and look nice, and Thomas said he could put them on the case for you, should be ready for next year's shipments.

Simon wrote on McTavish & Fraser Co's wall:

Did my arms get attached to my carriage yet? See if Chippendale can copy it over to a case for matched pistols.

NWCo wrote on Simon's wall:

The Agents Quarters are quite nice, larger than the ones at the old fort, and naturally all your needs would be tended to. ~ Roddy

Simon wrote on NWCo's wall:

Is the Mess house equipped with furniture and the like at the new fort?

Dugald MacTavish wrote on Simon's wall:

Thanks kindly for the opportunity, I'm getting sick of tracking down Highwaymen

Simon wrote on Dugald's wall:

I contacted Ferrier and you can start apprenticing next week.

After Alexander MacKenzie reached the Pacific he was made agent for the NWCo. While agent he and McTavish had a falling out, which resulted in him leaving the company and returning to Britain for a time to publish a book of his travels. Upon returning to Montreal he entered into politics, and backed the NWCo's fiercest competition, the XY company.

In order to skirt export laws Simon organized a partnership with German born American John Jacob Astor sending American ships to China. John Jacob Astor was among many of the Honored Guests at the Beaver Club, a fraternal society for fur traders wintering in Montreal.

Isaac Todd, and his partner James McGill were two of the original members of the North West Company, but left to focus more on trading operations at Michilimackinac. In his old age, another early fur trader, Alexander Henry, wrote that Isaac "is always complaining when his intestines are empty, but after Dinner recovers wonderfully." Beaver Hall was the name given to Joseph Frobisher's house, another mostly retired fur trader who took a significant interest in food during his retirement.

The McTavish Fraser Company was based out of London, and largely responsible for outfitting the NW company in Montreal. One could say that the North West Company was just a name for the combined McTavish & Fraser Company, and the McTavish & Frobisher Company, Simon being heavily involved on both sides of the ocean. During Simon's stay in London from 1792-1793 he got in contact with the acting Chief of Clan MacTavish, in order to get his arms writing "people here are becoming such slaves to fashion that every man who is supposed to afford it, must either keep a carriage or be thought a mise." Simon went on to say that he had one finished but for want of arms to decorate the side.

NW Co

In 1803 the Northwest Company moved its inland headquarters to Thunder Bay, building what would eventually be named Fort William. It is very unlikely that Simon ever visited the new fort. Roddy is Roderich MacKenzie, who was overseeing construction of the new fort, and with his passion for writing and documenting the company's history is the person who would most likely have been named WebMaster for the NWCo, if it were around today.

Dugald MacTavish:

Dugald was the son of Lachlan MacTavish, former chief of clan MacTavish. Simon took an active interest in his clan's well-being, and the well-being of the chief's sons. Simon brought John George MacTavish into the fur trade, and John George's brother Dugald, Simon helped arrange an apprenticeship with a local lawyer, Mr. Ferries. Simon bought the ancestral MacTavish lands of Dunardry estate from Cambell's after Lachlan had been forced to sell it. This purchase seemed to have led him to become chief of the clan, fueling a debate which continues to this day. In the meantime he was acting as chief, and taking care of his clansmen.



Peter Pond, The Captain

He did it, the young lad did it! I bet he'll not give me any credit!

tweeted 1793

What can I say they made me an offer I couldn't refuse, though I was hoping to keep on collecting in retirement.

tweeted 1790

Apparently Cook's river doesn't flow out of Slave lake... what? you're naming it the MACKENZIE RIVER!? BUT I'M THE ONE WHO... well I suppose calling it the Pond River would be a bit confusing.

tweeted 1789

And so ends my stint in the Northwest, retirement here I come! Hope the redhead can keep it under control.

tweeted 1788

New Apprentice, sniveling kid, doesn't like the Athabasca country, EARTH TO ALEX, THIS IS THE FUR TRADE KIDDO, IT'S COLD AND HARD!

tweeted 1787

Between my contacts and Cook's maps I'll be dining on beets and vodka with Empress Catherine in no time, I should make her a present.

tweeted 1786

Waddens invited me over for dinner... I should probably bring something (like my pistol!)

tweeted 1782

What's a good problem to have? 6 1/2 tons of beaver on an 11 mile portage. Note to self, hire more voyageurs.

tweeted 1779

Found Carver's House...Shoddy.

tweeted 1773

On July 22nd, 1793 Alexander MacKenzie reached the Pacific Ocean, a goal and ambition of Peter Pond. Pond gave several maps to MacKenzie, who did acknowledge Pond's contributions to his journeys.

In 1790 Peter's share in the NWCo was taken over by William McGillivray. Peter was not only an essential part of some of the earliest British fur trading operations in the interior of Canada, but he was also linked to the careers of the next great generation of traders and owners, William McGillivray and Alexander MacKenzie.

In 1789 Alexander MacKenzie reached the Arctic Ocean, likely using Peter Pond's maps for reference. Alexander named the river that took him to the Arctic Sea, the River of Disappointments, it was later renamed the MacKenzie.

In 1788 Peter Pond left the Athabasca district in charge of Alexander MacKenzie and never returned.

Alexander MacKenzie worked under Peter Pond in the winter of 1787-1788. MacKenzie wrote to a friend saying he wanted to undertake an expedition to the Pacific Ocean to be promoted faster, and not have to spend so much time in the interior.

Peter Pond's initial maps predicting where rivers flowed were quite accurate, but when he saw Captain Cook's charts of the West Coast he predicted the river that is now called the MacKenzie would turn west above the mountains and connect with the Cook's River, which was actually only an inlet. He was confident enough to make a map of the northern Pacific Ocean for Catherine.

Jean Marie Etienne Waddens was the second of three deaths in the interior that Pond was associated with, the first being an unknown man he dueled, and the next two, Waddens, and John Ross in 1787, the deaths of both men were partially the motivation in the merging of companies to form the North West Company.

Representing many of the Montreal traders that would form the North West Company, Peter Pond headed into the Athabasca in 1778, using the 11 mile Portage La Loche, and traded for more beaver than he could carry in his canoes, by Pond's estimate 12,600 pounds.

Pond traveled through and traded in much of the same area that Jonathan Carver traversed from 1766-1767, including setting up a fur post on the Minnesota River trading with the Dakota. Pond didn't think much of Carver, saying he could have completed Carver's whole tour in six weeks.

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Other times “adventures” find the explorer such as fur trader Alexander MacKenzie’s experience at Grand Portage in 1789. Standing on the Grand Portage shore on one of his trans-continental explorations a Lake Superior phenomenon stunned him. While he watched, the lake “...water withdrew with great precipitation, leaving the ground dry that never before been visible, the fall equal to four perpendicular feet and rushing back with great velocity above the common mark. It continued



Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society



America’s Rivers Expedition Alexander B. Martin

thus falling and rising for several hours....” He had just witnessed one of the most dramatic lake “seiches” ever

recorded on Lake Superior. Seiches are natural phenomena in which atmospheric pressure creates a tide-like wave that can surge water dramatically. Small seiches on Isle Royale occasionally startle moose which were complacently eating aquatic plants in streams and harbors until the tide of water rolls in.

For some exploring can be linked to taking a dare, such as voyageurs deciding to “run” a dangerous rapid in fragile bark canoes. If they survived, legends sometimes grew from those experiences (and were often amplified in good measure through time). For those who “almost” made these runs, an experienced canoe man in the group would be forced to repair their canoes before going on. New birch bark panels might be sewn on and “pitched” to make it water tight or broken canoe ribs replaced from a straight grained cedar tree found nearby.

Locally, there are stories of such dares, for example, of men “riding moose” while it is

swimming across a lake. I have heard this legend in Alaska, Minnesota, and Isle Royale. Sometimes, the rider is paid handsomely for this derring-do. “Pictures” of the event are often spoken about, but not found, until I stumbled across this photo. If you are ever fortunate enough to hear these legends, they often tell about how to safely “eject” from the moose before it reaches shore and is able to take its vengeance out on the rider. Another young man duplicating this feat recently was caught by a game warden and had to pay a hefty fine.

While you are here we don’t expect you to ride a moose, see a four-foot seiche, or paddle across the continent. We do hope you will experience some pleasant surprises while exploring here.

We also hope you can call on your imagination, and your willingness to explore the past as it made its mark here, and also



Arrowhead Journey Erik Simula

be a little daring – ask us about what you are seeing. Grand Portage is still about exploring and learning about a history we might have thought we knew before, or, knew nothing about prior to coming here by canoe or car. Welcome!

Wild Rice

Ranger Bernard Olker

While visiting Grand Portage National Monument, you will have the opportunity to experience and learn a lot about the North West Company, Native Americans, Voyageurs, fur pelts, trade goods, and canoes. In the Ojibwe Village, a wild rice display can be easily overlooked and may seem insignificant. This display takes on real significance, however, when reading fur trade era journals and the traders' concerns about obtaining food that would allow them to survive the long, harsh winters in the fur trade country. Starting with the very earliest journals in the 1660s, travelers to the Great Lakes area of the upper Midwest and Canada tell about the vital role wild rice played in their lives as well as the Native Americans' at this time. The story behind this display reveals a very interesting plant, how people historically used this plant as a very nutritious food, how they harvested its seeds, processed it, and the important role it played during the fur trade era.

Wild rice, *zizania aquatica*, is an annual aquatic grass that can be found growing in the muddy parts of shallow lakes and rivers from the Atlantic coast to the Rocky Mountains and from the Gulf of Mexico almost to the Hudson Bay area. The climate and growing conditions in the upper Midwest surrounding Lake Superior are especially favorable for wild rice, and large beds of this staple of life, even today, can be found growing here. Because wild rice requires pollution free water, the range in which it can be found today has been steadily shrinking. To the French, the area in northwest Wisconsin was known as *falle avoine* or wild oats area because of the vast quantities of wild rice that grew there.

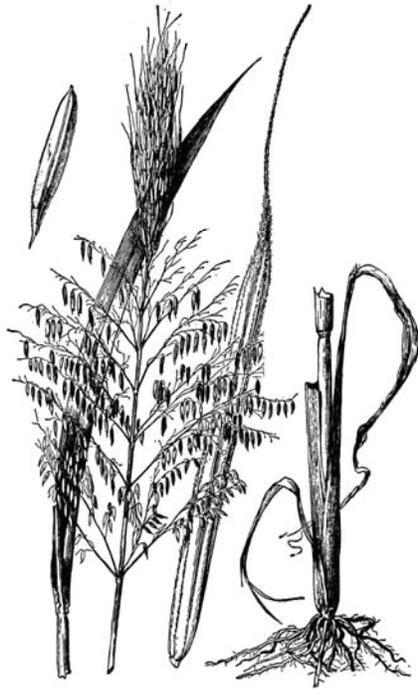
The wild rice plant will grow anywhere between two to eight feet above the water and by late August or early September its seed head will begin to ripen. Not all of the kernels in the seed head ripen at the same time, but the ripening process will occur over a period of about two weeks. Because it is such a nutrient rich food, migrating birds and humans have depended

upon it as a food source for thousands of years.

Wild rice seeds have been found in lake bottoms near Lake Superior that date back 12,000 years. Archeologists have also found evidence of Native American people using wild rice as far back as the Late Archaic

to the Early Woodland Period which is from 400 – 600 BC. The climate in this area was not as favorable for growing agricultural crops as it was farther south and the people here had to lead a seasonal semi-nomadic life style following nature's changing seasonal food sources as they became available throughout the year. Their annual cycle was one of hunting and fishing year around, making maple sugar in the spring, gathering of roots, berries, and gardening in the summer, and in the fall there was the harvesting of wild rice. Like any other grain crop, the amount of wild rice available to be harvested varied from year to year due to the weather and many other factors. It is generally accepted that in a four-year period, there will be one good crop,

two average crops, and one bad crop of rice. Because this processed rice could be easily stored for a number of years without spoiling, it could be used when one or more of the other food sources failed. Wild rice is extremely rich in carbohydrates, thiamin, riboflavin, and vitamin B. It is ranked above oats, barley, wheat, and rye as a nutritious food source. The Indian diet of wild rice, combined with maple sugar, deer, fish, and other varieties of meat was a very rich diet. The importance of this staple part of the daily Ojibwe diet as a food source cannot be overstated. In fact it held such an important part in their lives that in the Ojibwe language wild rice was called *manoonim*, meaning "good berry" and late summer and early fall was known as the wild ricing season. Then, as now, the Ojibwe consider wild rice as sacred and it holds an important part in their legends and culture. Early French fur traders and explorers such as Radisson and Groseillier in the 1660s talked about the many large beds of wild rice growing in the Great Lakes re-



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gion and how dependent the Native Americans, as well as they themselves, became dependent upon it as a year round food source. Because the fur traders were limited in how much cargo they could carry with them they chose to carry mostly the valuable trade items relying upon the Indians for their food. To the Ojibwe, wild rice quickly became a valuable trade commodity and, by using the large kettles obtained from the traders, they were able to process even larger quantities of wild rice with less effort than ever before.



Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society

Harvesting wild rice begins in late August and early September. This is done by two people in a canoe. One stands in the stern using a long pole with a forked end to push the canoe through the wild

rice bed. The second person, in the bow, uses two specially made, hand-held, wooden sticks called “knockers.” One knocker is used to gently bend the rice stalks over the side of the canoe while the other knocker is moved in a light brushing motion along the tops of the bent stalks and over the seed heads. This causes only the ripe seed in the seed head to fall into the bottom of the canoe. This newly harvested rice is called green rice because the rice kernels contain a large amount of moisture. In a good year, it is possible for a pair of experienced harvesters to gather 300 pounds or more of green rice per day. After it is processed, this will yield about 100 to 150 pounds of processed rice.

Wild rice processing has been demonstrated here at Grand Portage National Monument in early September for the past several years. This very labor intensive processing procedure can be broken down into the four basic steps of drying, parching, threshing (jigging), and winnowing.

Step 1 Drying: The freshly harvested green rice is spread out on mats or tarps in the sun to dry it as soon as possible. This will reduce its moisture content to keep it from molding. This rice will also contain other detritus such as wild rice plant leaves, and stems, rice worms, and other insects. Some of the kernels may also be infected with the ergot fungus which must be

removed before it can be used. Here Beth Drost is drying the rice on tarps and picking out all the unwanted matter. To make sure the rice will dry evenly, about every hour or so she will turn the rice over.



Step 2 Parching: The parching process further dries the rice and loosens the kernel from the inedible paper-like husk that surrounds the kernel.

This will allow the rice to be threshed which will be the next step. It will also destroy the germ within the kernel and thus prevent the kernel from sprouting. This is why wild rice can be stored for years if it is kept in a dry storage area.

As can be seen in the picture here, about a half bushel of previously dried rice is placed in a cast iron kettle which has been propped up on its side over a low burning fire. In this two person process, one person will use what looks like a short canoe paddle to slowly and constantly turn the rice in the kettle to keep it from burning.

The second person will tend the fire to make sure that it produces the right amount of heat. During this process, which usually takes between 45 to 55



minutes, they will be constantly listening for the sounds of popping rice. A sound much like that of popping popcorn is a warning that the rice in the kettle is getting too hot and that the fire tender must immediately reduce the heat. After about 40 minutes of parching, a kernel of rice is removed from the kettle for sampling. If the kernel once bent, snaps in two cleanly and the center of this kernel is not milky, the parching step is done. The rice is then quickly scooped out of the kettle into a birch bark basket and allowed to cool.

Step 3 Threshing: In this step the hull that surrounds each kernel of rice, which was loosened by parching, will now be removed.

This process is also known as dancing or jiggling the rice. Before the process begins a pit needs to be dug about two and one half feet wide and about 12 or so inches deep. This pit is then lined with a tarp. To make sure that no foreign material such as dirt, rocks, leaves, etc. gets tracked into this pit, the area surrounding the pit is also covered. A tripod of forked poles placed around the pit will be used to support the person doing the jiggling. About half a bushel of parched rice is placed in this pit to be jiggled at a time. The person doing the jiggling puts on clean moccasins and steps into the pit. Using the tripod as support, the jigger will rotate on the balls of his feet so his heels rub the rice against the sides of the pit. It takes time and practice to become proficient doing this jiggling step. Here Erik Simula is demonstrating this process. This is a very physically demanding job and it takes about an hour to process a batch of rice. Hulls, when freed from the kernels, are called chaff and the pit will appear to be filled with it. The jiggling process is done when a sample taken from the pit shows that more than 90% of the rice kernels have been separated from their hulls.



This rice can now be stored away for future use and as long as it is stored in a dry location, it will keep for an almost indefinite time. During the fur trade era, a family would usually store their rice in a number of large sealed birch bark baskets called makuks and placed in pits dug about six feet or so deep located in a dry sandy, well drained area. The space between each of the makuks as well as each layer of makuks would be cushioned with grass. This pit would be filled to within about two feet of the surface and a layer of logs would then be placed over the top of the pit. The remainder of the pit would then be filled in with dirt and the area camouflaged to prevent its being discovered by anyone else or by any animals. This storage pit kept the rice from freezing during the winter acting much like a modern root cellar.

It is easy to see that the traditional way of processing wild rice is a very time consuming, labor-intensive task. Today, anyone wishing to process his wild rice will be happy to know that much of the labor can be avoided. Harvested green rice, fresh out of the canoe, can be taken directly to a wild rice processor who will use modern methods to dry, parch, thresh, and winnow the rice. Wild rice can also be purchased in stores all along the north shore of Lake Superior. Here you will find two types of rice. Wild rice that has been hand harvested and a genetically modified, mechanically harvested variety of rice generally referred to as “paddy” rice. Although paddy rice is usually cheaper to buy, many people believe that it does not taste as good, that it was not organically grown, and that its nutrient value is far below that of naturally grown wild rice.

Step 4 Winnowing: This final step separates the kernels of rice from the chaff. This was traditionally done



by taking the rice out of the pit and putting it in large birch bark winnowing tray.

On a windy day the rice will be either poured from one tray to another as being demonstrated here by Margaret Plummer-Stein, or by using the one tray to throw the rice up into the air and catching it again with the tray. The chaff, being very light,

will drift away on the wind and the heavier rice will fall back into the tray.

All season long a wild rice exhibit can be seen in the Ojibwe village at Grand Portage National Monument. In early September, the Ojibwe Village becomes one of the few places where wild rice processing, using the traditional fur trade era methods, can be seen. Harvesting and processing your own wild rice, however, will give you a real appreciation for the historic methods as well as helping to keep history alive.

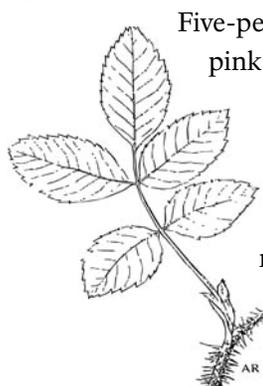
The following sources were used as a references for this article: *Thomas Vennum Jr.’s book “Wild Rice and the Ojibway People,” Bruno Schultz’s book “The Wild Ricer’s Guide: The Practical Handbook for Gathering, Growing, and Marketing Wild Rice,” Susan Carol Houser’s book “Wild Rice Cooking, Harvesting, History, Natural History, and Lore with 80 Recipes.” I also interviewed National Park Ranger Erik Simula, who teaches a hands-on wild rice harvesting and processing class each fall.*

What's That Plant?

North American Ojibwe people traveled through country abundant with vegetation in diverse states of bloom and maturity of fruit. They were astute observers of nature and used knowledge of plants handed down from generation to generation. Early European immigrants and the voyageurs, guides, clerks and partners of the North West Company learned North American plant uses from Ojibwe people and other tribes along the routes. Europeans also brought plant seeds either on purpose or by accident. Look for plants both familiar and new as you discover Grand Portage National Monument, but please, take only pictures and stay on paths so that our other visitors may enjoy the plants as you have. Please note: line drawings are not to scale.

Prickly Rose (*Rosa acicularis*)

Take a walk over to the picnic area or near the warehouse in June. Your nose will soon detect an intense fragrance near thickets of these pink-flowered, waist-high shrubs.

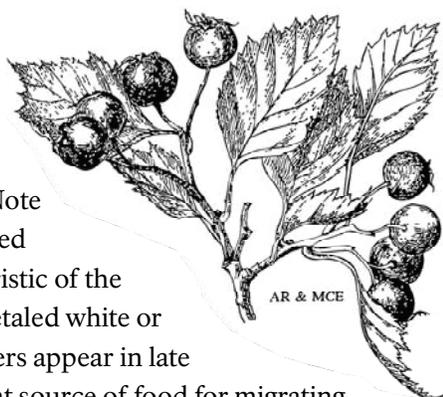


Five-petaled white or pink flowers laden with

numerous stamens are characteristics common to all members of the rose family. Ojibwe children ate the red-orange fleshy vitamin C-rich rose hip fruits after scooping out dry "furry" seeds. Ojibwe people call the shrubs O-GINII-mi-NAGA-wunj or Rose-Tree.

Fireberry Hawthorn (*Crataegus chryso-carpa*)

Thorny shrubs about 15 feet high just north of the three sisters garden are Hawthorns, O-GIN-ik in Ojibwe. Note the frequently toothed leaves also characteristic of the Rose family. Five-petaled white or pinkish flower clusters appear in late spring. An important source of food for migrating birds, groups of three or four dark crimson "apples" develop in the fall. Ojibwe people crafted awls from the thorns of the local hawthorn species.



Caraway (*Carum carvi*)

Introduced from Europe, these biennial plants grow from deep taproots. Widespread around the palisade and picnic area, botanists are not positive whether fur trade gardeners introduced these plants or they escaped from settlers' gardens. White flowers appear during the summer. Used to season foods, caraway seed fruits are mature by fall.



Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*)

Ablaze in purple, Fireweed often grows profusely in clearings where fire has passed and along roadsides or singly around campsites and portages. Four-petaled flowers bloom beginning at the bottom of the spike up from mid-summer into fall. A single plant may have buds on top, blossoms in the middle and newly formed slender seed-pods on the bottom. Ojibwe people used poultices of oja-cid-JII-bik leaves on bruises and to remove slivers.



Wild Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*)

Common in unmowed areas around the palisade and along roadsides, Wild Buttercup is originally native to Europe. Note the deeply lobed palmate or “crowfoot” patterned leaves placing buttercups in that family. Five to seven bright yellow overlapping petals bloom from May to September. Ojibwe hunters used the seeds of a related native species as a hunting medicine.



Orange Hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*)



Also called King-devil and Devil’s Paintbrush, this low perennial forms orange-red patches along roads and in clearings. Elliptical basal leaves are adaptations for the alpine habitats of its Eurasian homeland. Common in northeastern Minnesota, orange dandelion-like flowers bloom from mid-summer through autumn. Ojibwe hunters used the yellow flowers of the similar native Canada Hawkweed (*H. kalmi*) for hunting charms.

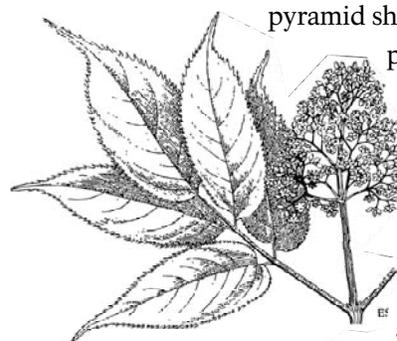
Bird’s-Foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)



This European legume is often planted in disturbed areas to control erosion. Note rounded clusters of flowers that mature into “bird’s feet” of slender erect pods. Look for the showy yellow flower patches near the lakeshore about mid-summer.

Elderberry (*Sambucus pubens*)

In 1988 efforts to control shoreline erosion included the placement of rock boulder barriers. Upon placement of the barrier, PA-pash-kisi-GANAK, Elder-Trees in Ojibwe, were planted on the rocky banks to help stabilize them. In early spring the small yellowish-white flowers bloom in



pyramid shaped clusters. Compound leaves with five to seven sharply serrated leaflets are characteristics common to the elders. Avoid the poisonous bright red fruit, mature in late summer and autumn.

Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*)

The Ojibwe’s misk-WAZI-wusk is a native shrub in the Rose Family that grows well on shores and rocky banks. Horticultural varieties were planted along the shore in 1988 for erosion control. Toothed leaves are oval or three-lobed and the bark peels off in strips. White flowers bloom in mid summer producing pale-brown fruits in clusters of two to five that persist into the winter. In traditional Ojibwe medical practice, the root was used to induce vomiting.



Discover beautiful vistas of the lake and to familiarize yourself with more Northwoods plant life, take a self-guided Mount Rose Trail brochure from the box at the trailhead. Did you notice plants not identified in the available literature? A notebook containing plant names and photographs is offered in the Heritage Center. Just ask a National Park Ranger in uniform or period dress for help! Planning to look for wildflowers along the Grand Portage? Before you go, take a look at the wildflower and tree books in the nature section of our Eastern National store.

Line art from *Illustrated Companion to Gleason and Cronquist Manual*, N.H. Holmgren, 1998, and *Canoe Country Flora*, M. Stensaas, 1996.

(Continued from page 5)



Vegetation I&M

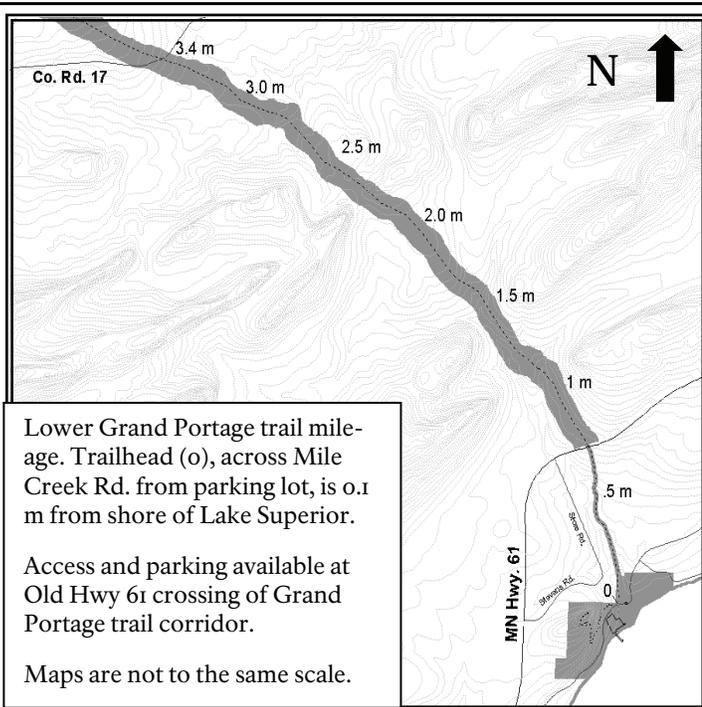
The I&M program was designed to work with managers from the Network parks to identify the most critical resources

in need of regular, long-term monitoring. Parks do a lot of resource monitoring on their own, but long-term monitoring can be difficult to sustain because of cost and because of staff changes. The I&M program provides biologists who carry out these long-term monitoring programs that parks do not have time, money, or staff to do on their own, and we do so with a goal of providing reliable scientific data that the parks can use to guide their management

decisions.

Three long-term monitoring projects have been implemented here: forest vegetation, breeding land-birds, and contaminants in fish from Grand Portage Creek, Snow Creek, and Poplar Creek. Why do we care about these? First, we care because we want to make natural resources information from Grand Portage comparable to other national parks in the region. Grand Portage is a cultural site that also happens to have some important natural resources. By monitoring here, we provide a baseline against which we can compare parks with more development in or around them. Conversely, we can also compare Grand Portage to those other places so that we can understand the “health” of the natural resources here.

Second, we care because we want to maintain a historic look and feel at the monument, and we want to maintain the cultural connection the Ojibwe people have to this place. Part of the monument’s appeal is



A Rough Guide to the Grand Portage

0.5 to 1.0 m

The Grand Portage crosses through time, and across MN Hwy 61, along this stretch. Trader journals mention the “parting trees” near this area, where they entered the woods and lost sight of Grand Portage, the Bay and Lake Superior. It is still where you enter the woods of the voyageurs.

1.5 m

A gap in the steep highlands was an important landscape feature that determined the location of a suitable portage. It developed along a geological fault zone, where erosional forces could remove materials more easily than from the surrounding ridges.

1.5-2.5 m

This section of the Grand Portage has short steep slopes where the trail passes through two smaller gaps and stream drainages.

3.0 m

A footbridge carries the trail across Poplar Creek. Analysis of surveys from the 1820s and recent field research provide evidence that today’s trail is closely aligned with the historic Grand Portage at this point.

3.4 m

Registration boxes at the trailheads on both sides of Old Hwy 61 make it easy for hikers to check in or leave comments, whether headed to Ft. Charlotte or Lake Superior.

Mile 0

There was probably no single trailhead for all the traders spread along Grand Portage Bay. The most direct route from the Grand Portage possibly ran to the lake on the east side of the stream.

0 to 0.5 m

During the 1930s and 1940s, several Village structures were relocated from the lakeshore area of the Monument to sites farther inland. This first section of the Grand Portage passes through the heart of the modern Anishinabe community.

its ability to make visitors feel they have walked into an 18th century fur trade depot. How would Grand Portage look different to the modern day visitor if there were palm trees growing here? That's an extreme example, but scientific data show that as the climate changes, so too will the forest community change in ways that will be much different from what has been here throughout history. Some of the natural resources here are important for cultural reasons; they are materials traditionally used by the Ojibwe for food or other practical purposes. Fish (*giigonh*) and trees such as sugar maple (*aninaatig*), white cedar (*giizhik*), and paper birch (*wiigwaasimigit*) – are demonstrating their vulnerability to contamination (fish) and to climate change (northern tree species). How will we know what is changing if we do not start doing regular check-ups (i.e., monitoring)? And what would their disappearance mean to the Ojibwe who have lived here for centuries? The natural resources here are probably not the rea-

son you chose to visit Grand Portage National Monument, but they play an important role in how you perceive the historical experience you did come here for. The resource managers here and at the Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network are working to ensure that we detect changes early, and that may be what we need to ensure that this places that was once known as the “crossroads of the continent” also continues to be a crossroads of nature and culture. For more information on I&M see, <http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/units/glkn/index.cfm>



Measuring streamflow on Grand Portage Creek.

Mile 03.4 to 4.5 m

A few large red pine are scattered among the aspen-birch-spruce-fir forest as the Grand Portage gradually ascends a ridge. A historic pose (rest spot) may have been located along this grade.

4.5 to 5.5 m

Distant highlands can be glimpsed through the trees as the trail passes along the crest of a ridge. Large white pine are found amid ancient white cedars, which were well grown trees even when the voyageurs passed here.

6.0 m

The 1820s surveys indicate the Grand Portage cut through a dry “beaver meadow,” instead of the pond-wetland complex found today. Beavers were driven nearly to extinction by the fur trade, but today a 1/8th-mile-long footbridge tops an actively maintained dam, and passes within a few feet of the resident beaver's lodge.

6.5 to 7.0 m

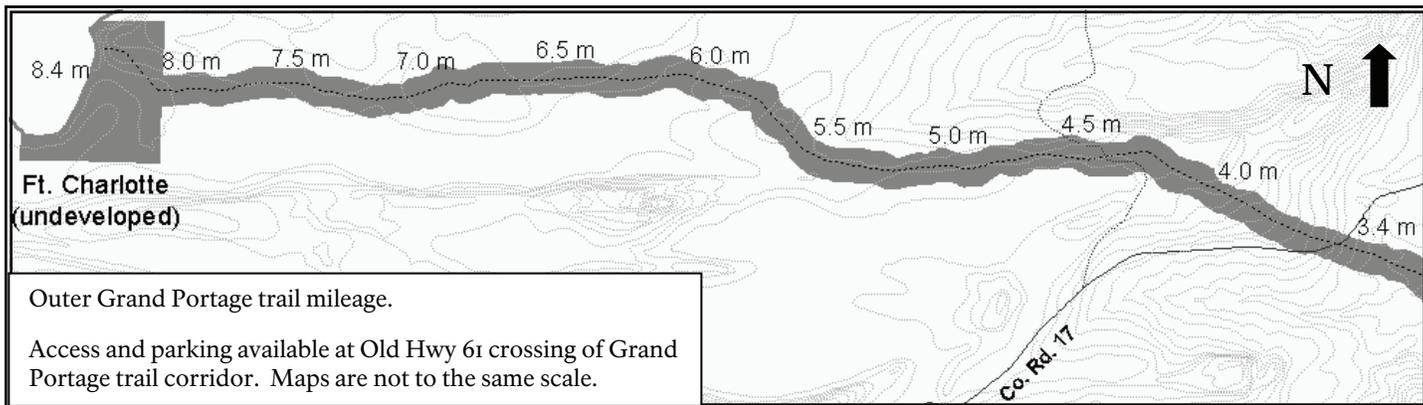
The outer portage is shielded from the moderating effect of Lake Superior by the ridges and highlands it passes through. As a result, both daily and seasonal temperatures are more extreme than along the eastern sections of trail. It can be 25-30°F warmer near Ft. Charlotte than on the lakeshore during the summer.

7.0 to 8.0 m

The distance from roads and other sources of disturbance makes evidence of wildlife more abundant along the outer portage corridor. Watch for moose and bear, and listen for wolves.

8.4 m

Canoeists still use the Pigeon River and the Grand Portage to complete journeys from the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Two group sites and a latrine are provided for overnight campers.



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, & Rendezvous Grill, Post Office & SPUR Gas – Drive about 1/2 mile west (a right hand turn out of Heritage Center parking lot) on 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 3 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 1½ 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 1½ 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, 5 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 6 miles of summer hiking trails and 5 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?

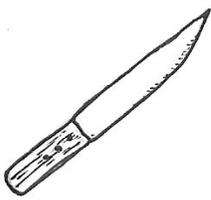
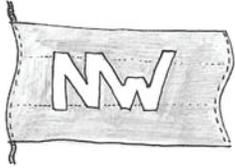
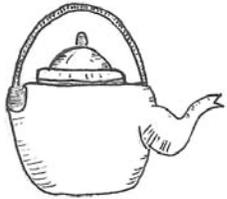
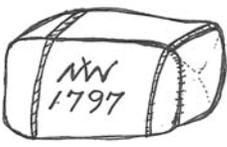
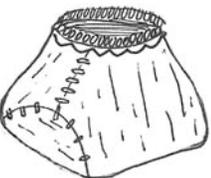
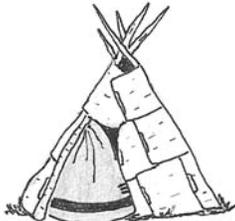
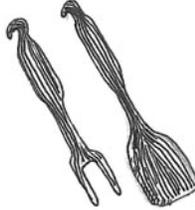
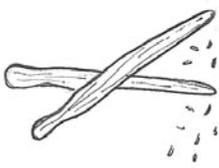
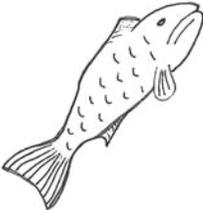
*For help or questions
concerning accessibility
at the park,
please contact
any park ranger, or
Chief of Interpretation,
Pam Neil.*

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.

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 animals or picking plants.
- Pets and smoking are not permitted inside the palisade walls or inside buildings.
- Please keep bicycles out of the palisade and secured to the bike rack provided. Do not lock bicycles to sign posts or trees.

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 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.