

Co-Managing Gichi Onigaming – “The Great Carrying Place”

Administrative History of Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota

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Diane L. Krahe**



**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
2023**

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Grand Portage National Monument, September 2021. (Authors photo.)

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Table of Contents

Document Approval Page	i
Introduction	1
Chapter One – Home of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	7
Chapter Two – Preservationist Ideas and Actions, 1931 to 1960	37
Chapter Three – A Partnership Built on Promises, 1960 to 1995	65
Chapter Four – A Partnership Built on Shared Interests, 1995 to the Present	115
Chapter Five – Interpretation	163
Chapter Six – Resource and Visitor Protection	205
Chapter Seven – Cultural Resource Management	223
Chapter Eight – Natural Resource Management	253
Bibliography	283
Appendix A. Act of September 2, 1958	293
Appendix B. Superintendents	296
Appendix C. Visitation	297
Appendix D. Interpretive Themes in 1981, 1993, and 2005	298
Appendix E. Maps in Erwin Thompson’s Historic Resource Study, 1969	302
Index	305

Introduction

At Grand Portage National Monument, the National Park Service (NPS) is a newcomer in an area that has belonged to the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa since time immemorial. The monument's core tract of land, which takes in the site of the historic North West Company depot on Grand Portage Bay of Lake Superior, lies in the heart of the Grand Portage tribal community. The monument's linear segment, which takes in the historic Grand Portage Trail from Grand Portage Bay to the Pigeon River on the border with Canada, lies within the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. The NPS has been an invited guest here since 1958, when Congress enacted legislation designating the national monument and creating the opportunity for numerous cooperative arrangements between the NPS and the sovereign Grand Portage Band.



Grand Portage National Monument on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, Minnesota.

As cooperative management was an unfamiliar mode of park administration in the National Park System, an effective partnership was slow to develop. Indeed, the NPS's concept of cooperative management, practically nonexistent in 1958, would evolve over the next half century and beyond. During those years, the Grand Portage Band gradually became more persistent in having a stronger role in its partnership with the NPS. The Indian Self-

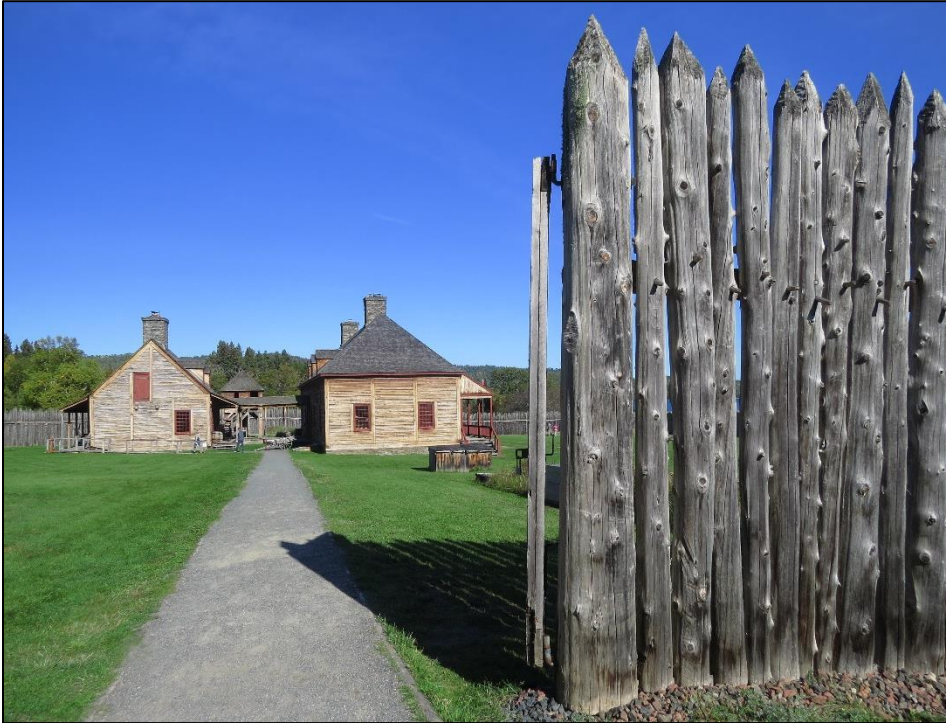
Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 and amendments to the act in 1988 and 1994 became important catalysts in empowering the Band. The Tribal Self-Governance Act of 1994 (TSGA) led to the watershed agreement between the Band and the NPS by which the Band assumed responsibility for the park’s maintenance operation. Two events in 1990 helped lay the foundation for the TSGA agreement. The Band developed a casino, which gave it a stronger economic base for self-governance, including the stewardship of reservation resources. And Congress passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), which prompted the NPS and the Band to communicate more closely than before. The sensitive matters addressed by NAGPRA contributed significantly to a change in federal-tribal relations generally, which would prove instrumental in the negotiation of the TSGA agreement at the end of the decade.

The slow emergence of cooperative management in this partnership park is the primary theme of this administrative history. One of a small number of National Park System units existing within an Indian reservation, Grand Portage National Monument tested the NPS’s ability to work effectively with a local tribal community and to share administration with a tribal government. With the completion of the TSGA agreement in 1999, Grand Portage National Monument moved into the forefront of NPS experimentation with co-management. Since enacting the TSGA agreement in compliance with the legislative mandate, Grand Portage National Monument has been enriched by the co-management. Co-management has reframed all park operations (not just maintenance, but also interpretation and cultural and natural resource management) in ways that make them more meaningful for the park, the Band, and the American people.

While the making of co-management is the primary theme of this study, the making and remaking of the park’s interpretive story is an important secondary theme. All parks, it may be said, are cultural creations whose reasons for existence will change as the culture changes. In the case of Grand Portage National Monument, one is drawn to the language in the establishing act where it states that the national monument was established to preserve “unique historical values.” Of course, historical values are culturally defined, and as American culture changed in the latter part of the twentieth century, the park’s historical values changed with it. This administrative history tracks how the interpretive story changed to accommodate change in the park’s historical values.

When Grand Portage National Monument was established in 1958, the park’s historical values reflected the cultural values of Cold War America. It was a time of

Introduction



Reconstructed stockade and buildings, September 2021. (Authors photo.)

American triumphalism, a period of heightened nationalism around the global struggle against Communism, and of excessive pride in the American way of free market capitalism. Many Americans felt unbridled admiration for the “great men” in history who had led the nation in business, government, and letters. This era saw the rise of a “consensus school of American history,” in which class conflict was minimized and unifying cultural values were viewed as having shaped a singular “American character” or “American mind.” In this vein, white historians were unapologetic in their focus on white Americans. In keeping with the temper of the times, Grand Portage National Monument appeared to preserve historical values that aptly reflected the national story of westward expansion.

For many years following the park’s establishment in 1958, park managers laid emphasis on fur trade history. Interpretation focused on the exploits of the North West Company. While the Ojibwe people were integral to the fur trade story, they did not receive as much attention. Resource management focused on protecting the historical reconstructions and the storied Grand Portage Trail once trodden by voyageurs. Although park managers were aware that the national monument includes the area identified as the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Grand Portage village site, it was not until

recent times that the history of the village and the ground that it once occupied – an area now called the East Meadow – were given close attention.

As American society changed in the late twentieth century, park managers recognized that the historical values at Grand Portage National Monument changed, too. In the 1960s and 1970s, the black civil rights movement, women’s liberation, the Native American rights movement, and other social justice movements threw a spotlight on marginalized groups in American society. America’s debacle in Vietnam broke the spell of American triumphalism. The environmental movement cast a new light on the national story of westward expansion. All of these forces of change led to rebuttal of the consensus school



Entrance to the Ojibwe Village. (Authors photo.)

of American history and put a new focus on the nation’s multiculturalism. “Great man history” was rejected in favor of understanding social forces and the roots of conflict and change in the collective experience of common people. Most important for Grand Portage National Monument, there was a flowering of interest in American Indian history. Building on the so-called “New Indian History” of the 1970s, a “New Western History” emerged in the 1980s that took the Eurocentric or white perspective of a triumphal nineteenth-century westward movement and turned it on its head by emphasizing the bitter experience of the various peoples who had been pushed aside or exploited in the making of the

American West. The seminal work was *The Legacy of Conquest* (1987) by Patricia Limerick. The book shined a light on the lasting, deleterious impacts of conquest for indigenous peoples.

Against that backdrop of historical revisionism and social change, the historical values expressed at Grand Portage National Monument underwent significant modification. By the 1970s and 1980s, park managers saw a need to rebalance the interpretive park story so as to illuminate the native role in the fur trade. By the 1990s, park managers went further

Introduction

(partly at the urging of the Grand Portage Band) and saw the need to interpret Ojibwe history and lifeways before and after the fur trade era. Stated another way, the interpretive park story tightened its geographical focus down to the Ojibwe at Grand Portage while it widened its temporal focus to span hundreds of years of site occupation. The older attention to the North West Company's vast continental scope of operations – and the fur trade's connection to exploration and empire – was not forsaken, but it was recalibrated.¹

An administrative history of Grand Portage National Monument was prepared previous to this one by NPS historian Ron Cockrell in 1983. Now forty years old, that previous history reflects a time in the park's history when the historic reconstructions were newly built and the interpretive program was still heavily trained on North West Company operations at Grand Portage in the period 1783-1804. The park's Foundation Document, completed in 2016, identified a need to update the park's 1983 administrative history to reflect the evolving working relationship with the Band.

This update of the park's administrative history is organized in two parts, each divided into four chapters. Part One is a chronological account of the making of co-management. Chapter One briefly describes the significance of Grand Portage in the fur trade and the history of Ojibwe occupation of the place to 1930. Chapter Two chronicles the growth of interest in Grand Portage as a historic site from the 1930s until its establishment as a national monument in 1958. Chapter Three traces the development of NPS relations with the Grand Portage Band from the beginning of park administration in 1960 through the end of the NAGPRA process in 1995. Chapter Four details how the TSGA agreement came to be and how it established a new framework for co-management since 1999. Chapters Three and Four, it should be noted, cover the important story of park development – the design and construction of buildings, roads, trails, and physical plant. The chapters also cover the park's relations with other partner organizations.

¹ Readers will note that historians refer to “revisionist history” impartially, without the negative spin that the term sometimes has when it is used in popular discourse. Historians accept that our understanding of history is perpetually undergoing revision; therefore, revisionist history is a natural outgrowth of social change. Still, the term “revisionist history” can sound more loaded than it really is; it is sometimes used to imply misrepresentation or distortion of facts to advance an ideology or a political agenda. Perhaps for that reason park managers have consciously avoided the term. The words “revisionist history” do not appear anywhere in the park's interpretive prospectus or long-range interpretive plan or any other document addressing the park's interpretive program. Therefore, we do not use the words in this administrative history either. We have used the word “pivot” to describe the park's conscious effort to revise or at least refocus the park's interpretive story.

In Part Two, Chapters Five through Eight treat the administrative functions other than the planning, construction, maintenance, and external relations functions covered in Part One. These are: interpretation, resource and visitor protection (as traditionally defined in the park’s early years until the ranger division was abolished in 1999), cultural resource management, and natural resource management.



Reenactors making a sail. (NPS.)

Chapter One

Home of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

The wedge-shaped Grand Portage Indian Reservation occupies the northeast tip of Minnesota. It is bounded on the north by the international border with Canada, on the southeast by Lake Superior, and on the west by state forest. A few miles farther to the west lies the expansive Superior National Forest and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

The Grand Portage Band is one of several bands of Lake Superior Chippewa whose reservations are located on or near Lake Superior in Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Other closely related bands are located around the northern shore of Lake Superior in Canada. Historically, the Lake Superior Chippewa formed a distinct culture group within the large nation of Chippewa-speakers and even larger family of nations who were Algonquian-speakers. The Lake Superior Chippewa moved around the shore regions of the huge lake they called Gitchi Gami, found spiritual connection and sustenance in the lake waters, and had a material culture uniquely adapted to the environment and resources found in and around Lake Superior. In modern times the Grand Portage Band's affiliation with other Lake Superior bands continues.¹

The Grand Portage Band is a sovereign Indian nation recognized by the United States government in the Treaty of La Pointe of 1854. The Treaty of La Pointe established the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. The Grand Portage Band reserved rights to hunt, fish, and gather on the lands in northeast Minnesota that were ceded to the United States under the treaty. Today, the NPS recognizes that those treaty rights also apply in part to the national monument.²

¹ The website for the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; the website for the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission; Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., *The Chippewas of Lake Superior* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 6-25.

² U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *Foundation Document, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota* (Omaha, NE: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, 2016). The NPS document stipulates that specific details and limits of treaty rights within the national monument boundaries have not been legally defined (p. 11).

In 1858, Minnesota acquired statehood, whereupon the Grand Portage Band became one of numerous Chippewa bands situated in the state of Minnesota. In 1922, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) formed the Consolidated Chippewa Indian Agency to serve six bands in Minnesota and the trust resources on their reservations. The six were the Grand Portage, Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, White Earth, and Mille Lacs bands. In 1934, the six bands formed the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and established a constitution under the Indian Reorganization Act. Federal recognition of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe did not supersede federal recognition of each separate band. As a result, the Grand Portage Band and the other constituent bands are somewhat unusual in the fact that they are self-governing tribal nations within the larger sovereign entity. At the National Congress of American Indians, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe effectively is entitled to seven votes, one by each member band and one by the whole tribe.³

Over time, the Chippewa have been referred to by several different names. Ojibwe (also spelled Ojibway and Ojibwa) was the name given to them by their neighbors. It was probably derived from *o-jib-i-weg*, meaning “those who make pictographs” in reference to their symbolic markings on birch bark scrolls. The French called them *Saulteurs* (also spelled *Saulteaux*), or “People of the Rapids,” since their first encounter was around the tumbling outlet of Lake Superior known as Sault Ste. Marie. The name “Ojibwe” became “Chippewa” among English speakers, and that was the name used in nineteenth-century treaties with the United States as well as federal statutes. The Chippewa name for themselves is *Anishinaabe*, meaning “native” or “person.” The plural form, *Anishinaabeg*, might be translated into modern usage as “indigenous people” or “first nation.” Many *Anishinaabe* self-identify as such today; however, Ojibwe and Chippewa both remain in common usage, and the Grand Portage Band’s official name is Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.⁴ The name most often used at Grand Portage National Monument is “Ojibwe” spelled with an “e.” The official website of the Grand Portage Band also uses that spelling. So that is the name and spelling used in this report.

Before the Grand Portage Indian Reservation was established in 1854, the Lake Superior Ojibwe were a seminomadic people who traveled extensively by birchbark canoe,

³ The website for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe; John Morrin, interview by Theodore Catton, September 21, 2021.

⁴ Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 7; Timothy Cochrane, *Gichi Bitobig, Grand Marais: Early Accounts of the Anishinaabeg and the North Shore Fur Trade* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 9-10.

navigating the shores of Gichi Gami, paddling on inland lakes and streams, and portaging between watersheds as they made their seasonal rounds. They were a “fish people,” procuring fish by various methods in a variety of habitats in all seasons of the year for a major portion of their food economy. They caught fish using gill nets in still waters, setting weirs in streams, spearing through ice, using hooks and line from canoes and from the shoreline, and seining at the wide mouth of the Kaministiquia River. For another major portion of their food consumption, they gathered wild rice, collecting the tiny grains off the grassy stalks that grow in the shallows of inland lakes and streams. They also hunted big game in the forest, though there was not a great abundance of large mammals to be found along the northern shore of Lake Superior.⁵

The name Grand Portage derives from the Ojibwe’s mode of transport: by canoe. The Grand Portage Band’s name for its homeland is Gichi Onigaming or “Great Carrying Place.” The Ojibwe who made their home in the area around Grand Portage Bay made a long portage between the bay and the Pigeon River using a valley that cut through a range of low ridges behind the bay. These Ojibwe shared their knowledge of the long portage with early French explorers and fur traders who were intent on finding a path from Lake Superior to the west. It is not known when the knowledge transfer happened. Possibly Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Du Lhut was informed of the portage and traversed it as early as 1679, but the evidence is inconclusive. For the next forty years, the French focused their interest on another portage route to the north that utilized the Kaministiquia River. In 1722, a French officer known only as Pachot described the Pigeon River portage in a dispatch, claiming it was a better route than the Kaministiquia. The first traverse of the Pigeon River portage by the French that is known to have occurred for sure was that of Pierre Gaultier de la Vérendrye in 1731, following the directions of a Cree hunter named Auchagah. After that crossing, the French called the route the Grand Portage, and their dispatches began referring to the local Ojibwe there as the Grand Portage Indians.⁶

Ojibwe groups living eastward of Grand Portage began to trade with the Huron for European-made weapons, tools, and utensils early in the seventeenth century. In 1641, the Ojibwe were invited by the Huron to a great Feast of the Dead in Georgian Bay on Lake

⁵ Cochrane, *Gichi Bitobig*, 106-07.

⁶ Ron Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota: An Administrative History* (Omaha, NE: National Park Service, 1982), 5-7; Erwin N. Thompson, *Grand Portage: A History of the Sites, People, and Fur Trade* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1969) 6-11; Solon J. Buck, “The Story of the Grand Portage,” *Minnesota History Bulletin* V, no. 1 (February 1923), 15-16; Melissa Hendricks, “A Turnaround at Grand Portage,” *National Parks* 82, no. 2 (Spring 2008), 54.

Huron, where they met Jesuit missionaries. Direct trade relations between the Ojibwe and the French soon followed. Much as the Ojibwe came to prize European goods, the French sought the Indians’ furs for export back to Europe. By the eighteenth century, the Ojibwe became important trade partners with the French, for the Ojibwe were skilled hunters and their lands held an abundance of fur-bearing animals. The French capitalized on the Ojibwe’s interest in acquiring guns in particular. When the Ojibwe were armed with guns, they expanded their territory to the south and west and solidified their important place in the fur trade.⁷

While this part of Ojibwe history is well known from both Ojibwe and European sources, historical detail concerning the Grand Portage Ojibwe and the Gichi Onigaming locality is lacking. Precisely when Ojibwe bands who lived in the vicinity of Grand Portage Bay entered into trade relations with the French, or when they formed a winter village on the bay, cannot be easily determined from oral memory, nor is it documented in the scant written record of the period. The NPS contracted with archeologist Caven Clark to undertake an analysis based on the current level of archeological and historical knowledge. His excellent report, “Late Prehistoric Cultural Affiliation Study, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota” (1999) is quoted at length here. It suggests that the village formed sometime in the eighteenth century and contextualizes the process by which it occurred:

The advent of the fur trade and its impact on native culture has been hotly debated, some asserting that it disrupted and destroyed native practices, others that it was simply grafted onto a native system. A revisionist interpretation stresses the lack of impact by the fur trade and European culture in general on native society and the longevity of traditional practices. Trends already underway, including dispersals due to local overpopulation, and hypothesized shifts towards larger clan based villages, may have been amplified by the coming of the whites....

That change occurred is undeniable.... Bruce Trigger presents a plausible middle ground in the debate, worthy of mention; although his argument pertains more directly to the Huron, it has general applicability to the Algonquians as well. The adoption of tools of European manufacture has been referred to as a “dependency.” Whether sudden or gradual, the

⁷ Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 26-40.

replacement of tools to those acquired through trade “developed because native peoples clearly recognized that the possession of certain classes of European goods made life easier and more secure for them. Once they became familiar with the range of goods that the Europeans had to offer, they sought to obtain goods of considerable technological value....”

The participation in the fur trade was a means to make life easier, more convenient, and more pleasurable. The shifts in traditional lifeways were not dramatic changes, but adjustments to an ancient system of seasonal movements, and a seasonal redirection of effort towards fur-bearers rather than meat producers. It was now necessary to bring the winter’s furs to the depot to obtain goods in the spring, and to obtain the necessary supplies in the fall to insure a good harvest of pelts. This may account for Woolworth’s (1998:73) statement that, “In early historic times [prior to 1805], the Ojibwe Indian winter village was at the east end of Grand Portage Bay where Mount Josephine sheltered it from the harsh winter winds.” This is contrary to the typical pattern of winter dispersal of small family groups in the interior away from Lake Superior, but may reflect a new settlement type as a point of contact with the traders. In addition, it provided the context for the coming together of a diverse mix of native and non-native cultures.

By the mid seventeenth-century Neutral and Five Nation Iroquois attacks on the Algonquian speakers in southwestern Ontario and Michigan’s Lower Peninsula caused the Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo, Mascouten, Miami, and Potawatomi to move west of Lake Michigan, leaving the land between lakes Huron and Michigan virtually uninhabited. It was also during this period, between the 1660s and 1690s, that the French increased their presence in the Upper Great Lakes with the building of missions, forts, and trading centers. Changing social configurations found the development of multi-ethnic populations around the social and economic nuclei of these French establishments....

Apart from proselytizing the faith, the exploration of the upper country was strictly a means to an end: the discovery of the route that would open direct trade between Europe, Cathay, and Japan. Eventually, the region came to be appreciated on its own merits by Europeans who sought to

exploit its vast resources rather than merely use the land as a base for seeking a waterway through the continent to the fabled *La Mer de l'Ouest*. As French and Spanish commercial interests in the interior of the North American continent increased, the eighteenth century witnessed fierce mercantile competition between the British and the French. French control of the St. Lawrence waterway and the Great Lakes region ended with the military defeat of the French and the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763 that ceded that vast region to Great Britain. With the French eliminated as a political power in North America, British and Canadian merchants vigorously exploited the fur resources of the interior, aided by a workforce of largely Indian, French, and French-Canadian extraction.

On August 26, 1731, the French trader, La Verendrye, arrived at Grand Portage Bay. A few men were sent on to Rainy Lake where they established Fort St. Pierre. Most of La Verendrye's party retreated to Thunder Bay for the winter, returning to Grand Portage the following year. They continued west that summer to establish Fort St. Charles at the Lake of the Woods. Although never a post as such, Grand Portage was probably traversed regularly by French traders until the area fell into British hands at the conclusion of the French and Indian Wars.

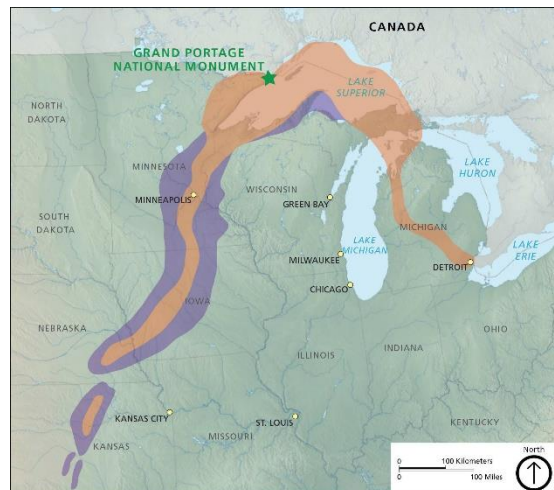
In about 1768, John Erskine [Askin] put up a stockade and post at the east end of the portage. A merger of several trading partners in Montreal was effected in 1783, and the North West Company was born. For a time, Fort Michilimackinac at the northern tip of Michigan's Lower Peninsula was the western outlier of the fur trade and its voyageurs could make the trip between there and Montreal within the scope of a single ice-free season. As the trade moved west and the distance lengthened, a second administrative center was established at Grand Portage. Here was the depot where the great cargo canoes and *bateau* exchanged their westbound loads of trade goods for eastbound bales of *castor gras*, arriving in the smaller and lighter canoes of the inland waterways of the west.⁸

⁸ Caven Clark, “Late Prehistoric Cultural Affiliation Study, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” report prepared for the National Park Service, Cultural Resources Report No. 111, (Tempe, AZ: Archaeological Consulting Services, Ltd., 1999), 32-34. The citation to Woolworth is

Grand Portage's Geologic and Geographic Setting in the Fur Trade Era

The history of Grand Portage in the fur trade era needs to be related to some very expansive geography as well as some relatively localized geology. The geology of the northern shore of Lake Superior and the expansive geography of the fur traders' main transportation route across Canada are fascinating stories in their own right, each one forming valuable context for our understanding of the significance of Grand Portage in the fur trade era, and each ultimately providing context for appreciating the administrative history of Grand Portage National Monument from 1958 to the present. Here we will touch just briefly on Grand Portage's geologic and geographic settings since these stories are amply covered elsewhere.⁹

Directly behind the Heritage Center at Grand Portage National Monument rises the sharp promontory of Mount Rose. From the summit of Mount Rose, one sees a distinct gap in the ridge on the skyline to the northwest where the portage trail takes the lowest route westward. Just beyond the horizon, the portage trail passes through more gaps as it crosses a close set of ridges that run roughly parallel to the shore of Lake Superior. Farther down the northern shore to the southwest, the ridges are higher, forming the Sawtooth Mountains. This range of ridges or small mountains runs the whole length of the lake's northern shore. Similar rugged uplands are found along the lake's south shore in Michigan and Wisconsin. All of these ranges are part of the Midcontinent Rift System. They formed about 1.1 billion years ago when the North American plate began to split apart. The rift ultimately failed as the North American plate held, but not before molten magma worked its way upward from the Earth's mantle to erupt



The Midcontinent Rift System, part of the geologic story behind the obstructions to water navigation in the Grand Portage area. (From Thornberry-Erich, *Grand Portage National Monument Geologic Resources Inventory Report*.)

from Alan R. Woolworth, *The French Presence at Lake Superior and at Grand Portage, c. 1740-1805* (Maplewood, MN: Woolworth Research Associates, 1998).

⁹ See Trista L. Thornberry-Erich, *Grand Portage National Monument Geologic Resources Inventory Report* (Denver: National Park Service, 2019). Also see reports prepared for the NPS by Brian A. M. Phillips, "Geomorphological and Historical Observations in the Grand Portage National Monument" and "Water Level History and Shoreline Change – Grand Portage National Monument, MN."

onto the surface in large lava flows, which came to form long ridges of hard igneous rock now observable on both the north and south shores of Lake Superior. Lake Superior, the greatest freshwater lake in the world by area, now fills the wedge-shaped basin formed by the rift. North America’s Midcontinent Rift System extends for 1,200 miles in an arc around Lake Superior, with the east arm extending southeastward into Ohio and the west arm extending southwestward into Kansas. Most of the igneous intrusions of the Midcontinent Rift are buried in layers of sedimentary rock that were laid down in subsequent geologic periods; its ridges are only prominent in the Lake Superior region.¹⁰

The significance of this geology for the fur trade is that the ridges along the northern shore of Lake Superior formed a barrier to canoe travel. The French had plied a water route all the way up the St. Lawrence River and through the Great Lakes to the far side of Lake Superior, but there they struck an obstacle. Only three rivers offered a way through the mountain barrier: the Kaministiquia in the north, the St. Louis River in the south (its mouth at present-day Duluth) and the Pigeon River in the middle. Of the three, the Pigeon River presented the most direct route to the navigable inland waterways on the other side.¹¹

However, the Pigeon River was not passable for canoes from its mouth because in its last twenty miles its foaming waters surge down narrow chutes and plummet over high falls. The spectacular Pigeon Falls is the highest waterfall in Minnesota. Here the present-day landforms are tied to the Midcontinent Rift System in a slightly different way. The Pigeon River in its lower stretch is cutting across a swarm of dikes composed of hard, durable diabase rock. The dikes were formed where magma rising in the Midcontinent Rift did not reach the Earth’s surface as lava but instead cooled beneath the Earth’s surface in cracks and sills in the country rock. The country rock was a much softer metasedimentary rock called the Rove Formation. This Pigeon River Diabase formation remained encased in the Rove Formation below the Earth’s surface for eons until the Pleistocene glaciations. Then, during successive glacial periods, lobes of ice from the great continental ice sheet spread southward into the Lake Superior basin, flowing heavily over the landscape that is now the northeast tip of Minnesota. The massive glaciers gouged up the softer metamorphosed sedimentary rock of the Rove Formation, while they left the more resistant

¹⁰ Thornberry-Erich, *Grand Portage National Monument Geologic Resources Inventory Report*, 2-8; Grand Portage National Monument, “Resource Management Plan, Grand Portage National Monument,” 1995, Grand Portage National Monument, Central Files (hereafter CF), N files., pp. 22-23.

¹¹ Thompson, *Grand Portage*, 5-6.

diabase dikes remaining as ridges. Between glacial maximums, swollen Ice-Age rivers further sculpted the land. Through the Ice Ages, the Pigeon River cut a deep, narrow gorge through the softer rock formation. At Pigeon Falls the river flows over a sill of diabase that is resistant to erosion. The river plunges over the sill, cutting a deep trough through the softer rock below. The Grand Portage is a pathway through this exceptionally rugged topography. Starting at the lakeshore at Grand Portage Bay, the trail runs up an ancient pre-glacial streambed cutting through the ridges, and joins the Pigeon River at a point inland. All of this mix of geology and history is majestically brought into view from the Mount Rose summit. The Mount Josephine summit offers another spectacular vantage point of the glacially sculpted landscape around Pigeon Point.¹²



The Grand Portage Trail follows the path of an ancient river where it cut through ridges. The first of those gaps is clearly visible from the top of Mount Rose. (Library of Congress.)

To put Grand Portage and the voyageur canoe route in geographic context, it is helpful to consider a few things about the geography of Canada. If we imagine zooming out and taking a satellite view of interior North America, we see that north and west of the St. Lawrence River valley, bent like a horseshoe around enormous Hudson Bay, lies a vast plateau known as the Canadian Shield. Geologically, the region is the oldest part of the North American continent and constitutes the largest mass of exposed Precambrian rock found anywhere on the globe. Most of the shield is made up of hard crystalline bedrock of ancient volcanic origin. During the Ice Ages, continental glaciers covered the land, scouring the surface down to bedrock and carving out depressions that became lakes as the ice sheets melted back. Today the western rim of the U-shaped shield features a chain of massive lakes of ice-age origin, stretching from the Great Lakes in the south to Great Slave Lake and Great Bear Lake in the Far North. Other big lakes in the far-flung chain include Rainy Lake, Lake

¹² Thornberry-Erlich, *Grand Portage National Monument Geologic Resources Inventory Report*, ix, 9; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 6.



Exhibit in the Mackenzie Bedroom of the Great Hall. (Authors photo.)

of the Woods, Lake Winnipeg, and Lake Athabaska. Throughout this region soils are thin, outcroppings of bedrock are numerous, and drainage systems are geologically young and not well defined. The land is laced with an intricate maze of large and small lakes, rivers and streams, and sprawling boglands (muskeg).

First the French, then the British, devised an elaborate transportation system to exploit the Canadian Shield's remarkable network of inland rivers and lakes. Adapting the birchbark canoe technology of the Indians (and building canoes larger so that they could carry up to three tons of cargo) the traders started from Montreal with their trade goods and supplies and transported everything by canoe. British traders, pushing even farther westward than the French before them, consolidated operations under the North West Company in the early 1780s and went on to establish a vast network of trading posts and water routes stretching from Montreal to Fort Chipewyan on the shores of remote Lake Athabaska. The system employed around 1,000 voyageurs (mostly French Canadians) and involved hundreds of canoes. Flotillas of canoes were called "brigades," and their cargoes were identified as "inbound" or "outbound." The system not only transported European goods in one direction

and furs in the other, but it also provided communication and passenger service between posts.¹³

The central feature of this transportation network was a relay system by which the British traders and their large force of voyageurs passed the baton – exchanged inbound and outbound cargoes – at the Grand Portage depot during the summer rendezvous. From Montreal came the big *canots du maître*, each one paddled with a dozen voyageurs. These men worked for the company only seasonally. They were nicknamed “pork-eaters” by the tough, proud voyageurs who worked for the company year-round in the interior of the continent. All the big Montreal canoes were packed with trade goods and other supplies, and they came up the St. Lawrence River to Lake Ontario, then via rivers and lakes to Lake Huron, then up the St. Mary River and around the rapids at Sault Ste. Marie to Lake Superior. Hugging the northern shore of Lake Superior in case of rough waters, they continued around to Grand Portage.

Meanwhile, from the many posts in the interior the “winterers” set out in the spring in their smaller *canots du nord*, each one laden with bales of furs collected over the winter. Coming down the Saskatchewan, the Assiniboine, the Red, and other rivers that eventually feed into Hudson Bay, the many brigades of winterers entered Lake Winnipeg. But rather than following the outlet of that lake to Hudson Bay, the Nor’Westers paddled to the southeast corner of the lake and turned upstream, ascending the Winnipeg and Rainy rivers to Rainy Lake. From there, they traversed the chain of smaller rivers and lakes that staircase over the Height of Land between the Hudson Bay and Great Lakes watersheds (the region known today as the Boundary Waters), which brought them finally down the Pigeon River with its portage at the end. At the rendezvous, cargoes were exchanged for the return trips. Among the northbound brigades, those with the longest journeys set out first. Brigades departed at two-day intervals to avoid backups at the many portages.¹⁴

The Nor’Westers refined the system for hauling cargo over the Grand Portage. Whereas the French traders and their canoemen portaged their canoes along with their packs of furs between the Pigeon River and Grand Portage Bay, the Nor’Westers built a post, Fort Charlotte, on the western side of the portage, where the many *canots du nord* might be

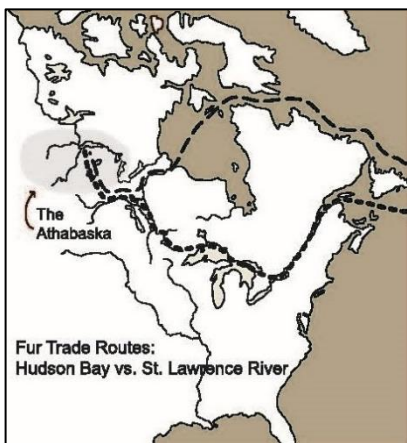
¹³ Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1930), 237-38.

¹⁴ Marjorie Wilkins Campbell, *The North West Company* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1957), 35-36, 112-14; David Thompson, *Travels in Western North America, 1782-1812*, Victor G. Hopwood, ed. (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1971), 120.

stored during the month-long rendezvous. From Fort Charlotte the brigades marched on foot, carrying two 90-pound bales of furs apiece on their backs. At the end of the rendezvous the voyageurs made that eight-and-a-half mile trek back to Fort Charlotte, now with inbound trade goods and supplies on their backs. Spared the necessity of carrying their canoes, they could accomplish the arduous journey much faster. The French parties had taken days to cross the Grand Portage or great carrying place, making camps along the way. Under the North West Company’s more businesslike regime, the voyageurs would make that crossing in a single day, pausing for a rest and a smoke at regular intervals along the well-trodden path.¹⁵

The Grand Portage depot saw heavy use by the North West Company from the early 1780s until 1803. The period marked the peak of the North West Company’s influence. Although the company never achieved monopoly control over its competitors, it certainly captured the lion’s share of the European trade with American Indians, built the most posts of any concern, and had the most voyageurs under contract. During its rise to dominance the North West Company’s most serious rival was the XY Company, also known as the New North West Company. That outfit formed in the late 1790s under the charismatic leadership of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, a former partner in the North West Company. The XY Company merged with the North West Company in 1804.

While the geography of the Canadian Shield had allowed the North West Company to grow into a continental enterprise, it was equally important in bringing about the North



Two routes to the Athabasca.

West Company’s demise. The North West Company faced another rival in the Hudson’s Bay Company, which, although much smaller, was in possession of a much easier route to the interior of North America. Under a royal charter made in 1670, the Hudson’s Bay Company had exclusive right to trade with North American Indians who lived around the shores of Hudson Bay. Despite Hudson Bay’s high latitude, the enormous bay afforded the Hudson’s Bay men a relatively easy approach to the heart of the continent.

¹⁵ Alan R. Woolworth, “An Historical Study of the Grand Portage, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” report prepared for the National Park Service by the Minnesota Historical Society, 1993, pp. 8-9, copy retrieved from npshistory.com; David Cooper, interview by Theodore Catton, October 1, 2021.

The Hudson's Bay Company's supply ships sailed from England across the North Atlantic up the Labrador Coast and through Hudson Strait into the bay, where they offloaded men and trade goods on the beach and picked up furs for the return voyage. For the first century of the Hudson's Bay Company's existence, that was all the transporting that it needed to do, for it relied on Indian middlemen to bring peltries overland to its several forts situated on the bay. When the Hudson's Bay Company did begin moving its operations inland toward the end of the eighteenth century, it did not have as far to go.¹⁶

As the center of the fur trade migrated westward into the Athabaska District, the two alternative routes to the Athabaska led to bitter competition between the two companies. Although the North West Company was much the larger enterprise in the late eighteenth century, the Hudson's Bay Company's position on the bay gave it an overall advantage. Years of strife finally ended in 1821 with a merger of the two companies. The consolidated enterprise took the name of the smaller company so as to maintain possession of the valuable royal charter. Using the sea lane into Hudson Bay in preference to the long canoe route starting at Montreal, the new Hudson's Bay Company retired the old relay system centered on the northern shore of Lake Superior.

Occupation of Grand Portage by the North West Company

Over the twenty-odd years that the North West Company maintained its operation at Grand Portage Bay, the Nor'Westers grew increasingly dubious about the location. Their great entrepôt on Grand Portage Bay stood on territory claimed by the newly independent United States of America. In the Treaty of Paris of 1783, Britain ceded its claim to territory west of Lake Superior and south of the Pigeon River. While British officialdom was in no hurry to abandon the region to the Americans, the young republic gradually pressed its claim. Eventually, the Nor'Westers decided not to risk a confrontation with the United States and chose to move their operation north to the Kaministiquia River. There they built a new post they named Fort William after William McGillivray, the company's principal director. So, in 1803, Grand Portage saw its last rendezvous; henceforth, the big event took place at Fort William instead.

¹⁶ Douglas McKay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1936), 47-48; Eric W. Morse, *Canoe Routes of the Voyageurs: The Geography and Logistics of the Canadian Fur Trade* (Ottawa: Royal Canadian Geographical Society, 1962), 9; Theodore Catton, *Rainy Lake House: Twilight of Empire on the Northern Frontier* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), 116.

The historic reconstructions that are at Grand Portage National Monument represent the depot as it existed from 1783 to 1803. Here is a brief description of chronological physical development of the place drawn from the cultural landscape report for the monument (2009):

1783 – The stockade and the Great Hall already existed, perhaps having been built around 1779 or 1780. At the other end of the Grand Portage route, the North West Company built Fort Charlotte, occupying the entire frontage from the mouth of Snow Creek to the first downstream rapids on the Pigeon River.

1785 – The North West Company began making intensive use of the area near the mouth of Grand Portage Creek. A kitchen was built near the Great Hall. At the other end of the Grand Portage route, rivals of the North West Company built a “hangard or store.”

1793 – The North West Company is documented as having had sixteen buildings within its stockade. Livestock maintained at the site may have been kept in barns, stables, pens, or corrals. The 75-ton sloop *Otter* came into use.

1794 – Boucher’s Fort (named after its proprietor, John Boucher) was built on the lakefront across Grand Portage Creek to the east of the stockade.

1798 – The rival XY Company formed and began operating near Fort Charlotte. The North West Company by this time employed 50 clerks, 71 interpreter-clerks, 35 guides, and 1,120 voyageurs.

1799 – There were by this time two wharves and four boats available to service the *Otter*.

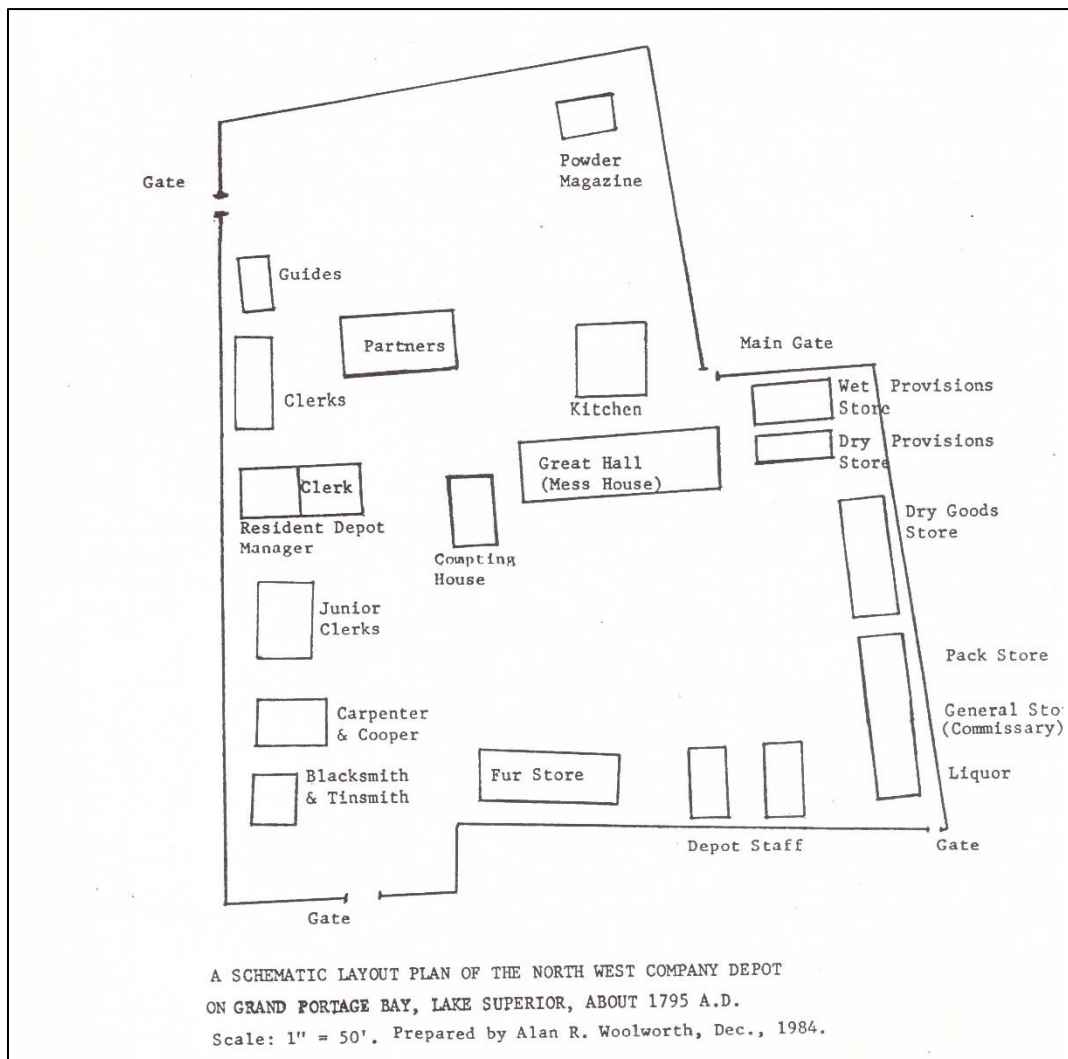
1800 – Documents indicate that the shallowness of Grand Portage Bay inhibited ships with a heavy cargo from docking.

1803 – The North West Company abandoned its Grand Portage depot. The XY Company briefly moved into and occupied the abandoned post before it, too, abandoned the site the following year (when it merged with its rival).¹⁷

¹⁷ Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects in association with John Milner Associates, Inc., *Grand Portage National Monument, Grand Portage, Minnesota: Cultural Landscape Report*, report prepared for the National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, Nebraska (Lincoln, NE: BVH/John Milner Associates, Inc. 2009), History Chronology 1731-1804 following page 2-26.

Home of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Company officials did not think of the site as the permanent home of the Ojibwe people who resided nearby. While traders had some comprehension of native ideas about land tenure, they also perceived their Indian trading partners as in some sense their dependents. Sometimes when Indians moved long distances the traders assumed that they did so because the traders urged them to do so. After the North West Company moved its operation north of the Pigeon River, it encouraged the Ojibwe who lived on Grand Portage Bay to move there also so as to be counted as "British Indians." (Some of the Ojibwe at Grand Portage did relocate, and there are extended families who straddle the international border to this day.)



Schematic layout plan of North West Company depot, circa 1795, as prepared by Alan Woolworth, 1984.

Grand Portage after the Fur Trade Era

After the North West Company vacated the Grand Portage site, the company's fur brigades no longer used the trail, while its depot, being abandoned, soon started to disintegrate. It is possible the North West Company dismantled some of the depot buildings, transported the logs north, and reassembled them at Fort William.¹⁸ The local Ojibwe may have dismantled some buildings for scrap as well. Fire and natural decay took their toll on whatever was left. After a few years, the American Fur Company came and took over the moldering remains of the installation. By 1810, it was said there was a thriving community of family dwellings, bachelors' quarters, and a store there. After the War of 1812, an emboldened United States outlawed the British from trading with Indians in American territory. Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory urged the federal government to station troops at Grand Portage to enforce the American law. No troop deployment was made, however, and the American Fur Company soon found it expedient to withdraw from the area as there was not enough trade to be worthwhile. It returned to the northern shore of Lake Superior in 1823, placing a person at the site of present-day Grand Marais, but the venture failed after two years. Game animals were scarce, and as a result there were too few Ojibwe in the neighborhood to sustain a trading post. Traders relied on native peoples to hunt the furbearing animals, prepare the pelts, and sell them the prepared pelts. With too few natives living in the area, the traders saw the place as impoverished. According to Indian agent Henry R. Schoolcraft, “persons in the service of the Hudson Bay Company carried off in trains the band of Chippewas, living near old Grand Portage...after the arrival of the American trader.” Schoolcraft implied that the Hudson Bay Company persuaded at least some of the resident native population to relocate north of the border – partly so they would hunt for the British company and partly so as to deprive the Hudson Bay Company's competitor on the American side from having an adequate number of hunters in the area to sustain a trading post at Grand Portage Bay or even farther south at Grand Marais.¹⁹

The number of Ojibwe living in the Grand Portage area in the early nineteenth century has been estimated as about 150 people. They were identified by the fur traders

¹⁸ Archeologist Alan Woolworth inferred that this may have happened. Archeologist William Clayton believes the evidence is too scanty to support this assertion.

¹⁹ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 8-9; Carolyn Gilman, *The Grand Portage Story* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1992), 102; Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 69; Cochrane, *Gichi Bitobig, Grand Marais*, 81-82; Buck, “The Story of Grand Portage,” 24-25.

according to their leaders' names. There was a leader named Espagnol who inhabited the area near Grand Marais. To the north there was another band led by Peau de Chat, and a third band led by Grand Coquin.²⁰

Missionary efforts among the Ojibwe started in 1835 with the arrival of Father Frederic Baraga at La Pointe, Wisconsin. Baraga traveled by canoe around the northern shore of Lake Superior, visiting the different bands. The first "black robe" assigned specifically to the Grand Portage Band was Father Francis Pierz. He arrived in 1838 and stayed nine months, baptizing sixty-four people. Bishop Frederick Baraga oversaw Pierz's mission along with other Catholic missions around Lake Superior. The Grand Portage parish began to have itinerant priests after the construction of a log church in the Grand Portage village in 1863. The Holy Rosary Catholic Church survives today as the oldest log church in Minnesota (its log walls long since covered by weatherboard siding).²¹

Although little has been written yet about the missionary period at Grand Portage, the NPS has sponsored translation of Jesuit diaries and correspondence from the Pigeon River Mission dating from the mid-nineteenth century, which could encourage scholarly investigation in the future. Historian Susan Sleeper-Smith has written on this subject more broadly in *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes*.²² Focusing on native women converts to Catholicism, her work points to where future research and interpretation of this subject might lead.²³

²⁰ Gilman, *The Grand Portage Story*, 93-94.

²¹ Danziger, *The Chippewa of Lake Superior*, 82-83; Gabriel Menager, "One Hundred Years Old," *The Indian Sentinel* 8, no. 8 (October 1938), 123-24.

²² Susan Sleeper-Smith, *Indian Women and French Men: Rethinking Cultural Encounter in the Western Great Lakes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

²³ Here are some provocative findings from Sleeper-Smith's book: At p. 102: "Catholicism became an important refuge for those Indians who opposed removal westward. These converts turned to Catholicism because it was a means of accommodation rather than transformation." At p. 21: "Catholicism had important social and cultural consequences and often served as the means through which Native women enhanced their own prominence and authority. It was women who the Jesuits recruited and trusted to become catechizers, instructors, and interpreters. Some Native women became devout Catholics, but Christianity did not uniformly transform gender-egalitarian societies into communities where male authority prevailed." At p. 113: "Encoded in Indian Catholicism were familiar behaviors of adaptation and accommodation."

Grand Portage in the Reservation and Allotment Eras

The Ojibwe were pressured into making land cessions in treaties with the United States in 1837 and 1842. In the 1837 treaty concluded at St. Peters, Minnesota, the Chippewa nation ceded a large tract of what is now eastern Minnesota south of Lake Superior as well as a swath of what is now north central Wisconsin. The Chippewa nation reserved the right to hunt, fish and gather in the ceded area. In consideration for the land cession, the U.S. government would pay the Chippewa nation certain amounts in cash, goods, and services. However, part of the cash would be used to pay off debts to traders. In the aftermath of the treaty, various Chippewa bands were denied payment as the United States came to differentiate between Chippewa Indians of the Mississippi and Chippewa Indians of Lake Superior and to hold that the latter were not party to the treaty. In the 1842 treaty, both groups of Chippewa bands were included. Several bands were identified by specific geographic location; others were called “Lake Bands.” By the terms of the 1842 treaty the Chippewa bands collectively ceded what is now northern Wisconsin and the western part of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Once again, the United States paid cash for the land cession but most of the money went to retire debts owed by Indians to traders.

By 1850, miners and lumbering interests were moving into the ceded lands and the Ojibwe faced new demands for removal from Minnesota altogether. However, missionaries helped Ojibwe bands avoid removal, and ultimately they were spared that fate by a timely change in federal Indian policy. In 1851, the U.S. government passed the Indian Appropriations Act, which created the reservation system. On reservations, tribes were confined to areas sometimes within their homelands where they were administered by U.S. Indian agents, provided with schools, and taught how to farm like white people. Usually, reservations had a white farmer attached to the agency who demonstrated farming techniques, while farm tools and seed were dispensed with treaty annuities so that individual tribal members could take up farming in the same manner as whites. All of this government aid was touted by so-called Indian reformers as an alternative to “extinction.” When tribes were deemed by the U.S. government as ready to assimilate, their reservation lands were then to be broken into individual allotments. Each tribal member would be assigned his or her allotment, with nuclear families aggregating their allotments into a single family farm. The ultimate goal of reservation policy was to assimilate American Indian peoples into the broader American society. The expectation of policymakers was that each male head of a

family would develop an interest in owning private property on the way to becoming a voting, law-abiding, tax-paying U.S. citizen.²⁴

In 1854, the U.S. government made another treaty with the Chippewa of the Mississippi and the Chippewa of Lake Superior at La Pointe, Wisconsin. Four principals signed for the Grand Portage Band. The Treaty of La Pointe established the Grand Portage Indian Reservation along with the Fond du Lac Indian Reservation. From the American standpoint, the fact that the Grand Portage Indian Reservation sat on the border with British America (Canada) signified that the Grand Portage Band lived entirely within United States territory. But from the sovereign Band's standpoint, neither the community of people nor the people's homeland stopped at the U.S. border (a perspective that persists to this day). Another notable feature of the treaty was its pledge of \$300 per year to the Grand Portage Band for maintenance of a school in their village. The treaty guaranteed delivery of annuities for all the Ojibwe at four locations including Grand Portage. The treaty annuities were necessary because the reservations were too small for the people to sustain themselves by traditional resource gathering alone. Moreover, as the fur trade companies faded away, treaty annuities took the place of supplies that Ojibwe had formerly obtained at the trading post.²⁵

The U.S. government began allotting reservation lands to individual Ojibwe on an experimental basis as early as the 1860s. However, as the lands were forested and needed to be cleared before they could be farmed, the amount of farming was limited. As conversion to farming proved more difficult than anticipated, the U.S. government held up allotment and shifted its emphasis to "civilizing" native peoples by other means such as school instruction and missionary work.²⁶

²⁴ Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 88. On the change in federal Indian policy, see Robert A. Trennert, Jr., *Alternative to Extinction: Federal Indian Policy and the Beginnings of the Reservation System, 1846-1851* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975).

²⁵ Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 88; Charles J. Kappler, ed., *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties 2* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 648-52.

²⁶ Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 92-93, 111; Edmund Jefferson Danziger, Jr., *Great Lakes Indian Accommodation and Resistance during the Early Reservation Years, 1850-1900* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 46-56.



View of Grand Portage in 1857, painted by Eastman Johnson.

From the rather infrequent reports made by missionaries and government agents, it seems that by 1854 many Grand Portage Ojibwe lived in log houses, dressed like whites, sent their children to school, and attended Christian church services, while others living west of the village kept to more traditional ways. Over the next two to three generations, more and more Ojibwe entered the lumbering, mining, and fishing industries. Wage jobs on or near Grand Portage Indian Reservation were scarce. Grand Portage Ojibwe worked as packers and guides in assisting whites who were moving into the Iron Range mining districts, while a few worked in the iron mines themselves. Many members of the Grand Portage Band lived in Chippewa City, a community outside Grand Marais, where Ojibwe men initially found work on a harbor improvement project. Younger members of the community were more apt to move off the reservation in pursuit of wage work, while the very old and very young tended to remain behind.²⁷

The pressure for Indian allotment grew in the latter part of the nineteenth century as white Americans continued to insist, naïvely and ethnocentrically, that the white man's culture was superior, and that American Indians must be assimilated into American life

²⁷ Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 92, 95; Grand Portage Tribal Council and Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association, *Grand Portage Chippewa: Stories and Experiences of Grand Portage Band Members, Oral Histories Collected and Introduced by Donald J. Auger and Paul Driben* (Grand Portage, MN: National Park Service, 2000), 72, 80, 105, 111; Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1880* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880), 173.

through the total erasure of their traditional culture. The Nelson Act of 1889 aimed to relocate all the Ojibwe in Minnesota to the White Earth Reservation. Ostensibly the act was for the “relief and civilization” of the Ojibwe, but the underlying interest of the lumbering industry to get access to Ojibwe forest resources was perfectly apparent. After the Nelson Act was passed, logging on the Ojibwe reservations in Minnesota intensified. The Grand Portage Band succeeded in holding onto its reservation, seizing upon a loophole in the act that allowed each band to accept allotment of the reservation instead of being relocated to White Earth. In council with U.S. commissioners, the leaders for the Grand Portage Band consented to allotment while making three requests of their own. First, they pressed their people’s claim to Isle Royale. Second, they asked that 400 acres be withheld from allotment for purposes of maintaining a community center around the church and school. Third, they wanted the reservation’s eastern boundary to be rectified. The eastern boundary line ran from a point on the Pigeon River to Hat Point, which left Pigeon Point out of the reservation contrary to expectations in the 1854 treaty negotiations, they said. (The anomaly would finally be corrected when Pigeon Point was added to the reservation in 1982.)²⁸

On the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, 304 allotments were designated in the first decade of the twentieth century. As anticipated, allotment on the several Minnesota Chippewa reservations (and the Chippewa reservations in Wisconsin and Michigan as well) spurred what historian Edmund Danziger has called “a Northlands timber boom involving native families.” Allottees received cash payments for the lumber sold on their allotment, which gave them short-term economic relief. Unfortunately, harvesting timber in a checkerboard of individual allotments was not cost-efficient, so not much money got passed down to allottees.²⁹ Nonetheless, the Bureau of Indian Affairs encouraged lumbering on allotments in order to clear the land for farming. Logging operations on the Minnesota Chippewa reservations began in the 1880s and expanded over the next two decades. Grand Portage Indian Reservation was the last in line, its forested area being the smallest and most out of the way. The last commercial cutting occurred in the winter of 1929-30 when a final 9,230 cords of pulp wood was removed.³⁰ The old forest was destroyed, and a new forest

²⁸ Gilman, *The Grand Portage Story*, 119; U.S. House, *Chippewa Indians in Minnesota*, 51st Cong., 1st sess., H. Ex. Doc. 247, 1890, 176-79.

²⁹ Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 98; Danziger, *Great Lakes Indian Accommodation and Resistance*, 108-09, 118.

³⁰ “State Department Community Survey for Grand Portage Community Grand Portage, Minnesota, made by Erwin F. Mittelzholtz Principal, Grand Portage School, Minnesota, assisted by Alice C. Oldon, Teacher, Grand Portage School, Grand Portage, Minnesota, September 1938 to March 1939,

composed of a different mix of species started to grow in its place. There was little appreciation at the time by the American government of what a devastating loss this represented for the indigenous people.³¹

Allotment had disastrous consequences for native land tenure on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation as well. Allottees received trust patents for their land parcels. Each allotment was supposed to be held in trust by the federal government for twenty-five years, but subsequent laws shortened the trust period and hastened the process by which the BIA certified that an allottee was “competent” to be issued a fee patent in place of the trust patent. Once the allotment was held in fee it became taxable and alienable property; it could be sold to anyone or forfeited to the county over failure to pay taxes. Allottees who were beset with grinding poverty were desperate to sell. On the Grand Portage Indian Reservation as on other reservations in northern Minnesota, most of the fee allotments passed quickly into non-Indian ownership. Those alienated reservation lands had to be repurchased with tribal moneys after the allotment policy was rescinded, and a tribal loan program was instituted under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.³²

Ironically but not surprisingly, none of the cutover lands on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation was turned into productive farmland. The rocky terrain, thin soils, and cold climate made farming utterly impractical there. By the early 1930s, around 40 percent of Grand Portage families had gardens, but most made a living by fishing, trapping, hunting, and working in wage-earning jobs. Very few native families on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation were persuaded to take up farming as their primary occupation, even though that was the misplaced goal that had underlain federal Indian policy from the start of the reservation era.³³

Grand Portage Enters the Automobile Age

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Grand Portage Ojibwe lived mainly in two villages: the main village of Grand Portage on Grand Portage Bay, and a second village of Chippewa City that was located thirty miles west of the reservation. Chippewa City was

and Supplemental Survey, September 1941, Appended,” typescript, file copy in library vertical files, Grand Portage National Monument (hereafter GPNM).

³¹ Mark A. White and George E. Host, “Historic Disturbance Regimes and Natural Variability of Grand Portage National Monument Forest Ecosystems,” report prepared for the National Park Service, April 2003, GPNM, p. 4, copy provided by Brandon Seitz.

³² Danziger, *Great Lakes Indian Accommodation and Resistance*, 95-120.

³³ *Ibid*, 118.

really more of a suburb of the predominantly white town of Grand Marais. Around one hundred families resided in Chippewa City during its heyday in the 1890s, when many Ojibwe moved there from the reservation to work on the Grand Marais harbor construction project. There was a Jesuit mission at Chippewa City from 1855, and the Francis Xavier Church was erected in 1895. The population of Chippewa City declined in the early decades of the twentieth century and by the 1930s only a half dozen or so families remained. The Francis Xavier Church in Chippewa City closed its doors in 1936. Decades later, at the end of the twentieth century, many elder residents of Grand Portage still had memories of Chippewa City from their childhoods, and the church is preserved as a historic site.³⁴

A census made by the superintendent of the Grand Portage Agency in 1915 enumerated 316 Grand Portage Ojibwe. Another census made by the principal of Grand Portage School in the late 1930s recorded that there were 199 band members living on the reservation, with perhaps another 100 members residing at Grand Marais. The latter census also noted that the white population on the reservation stood at thirty, of whom twenty-five lived in the Grand Portage village. The whole population of Grand Marais was then around 800.³⁵

The Grand Portage Ojibwe still lived by fishing, hunting, and other means of food gathering. Families still had their favorite places to harvest wild rice and collect maple sugar. The community participated in the cash economy in a limited way. Jobs for wages were mostly seasonal and located off the reservation. Besides employment in the commercial fishing industry, there were seasonal jobs in the logging industry. Pierre LaPlante (1882-1971) worked as a log driver on the Pigeon River when log drives were made in the spring. He also worked as a hunting guide in the fall in the Gunflint area and in Canada.³⁶

Even though Grand Portage had its own post office and day school, it remained isolated from the outside world at the turn of the century. Access to Grand Portage was mostly by steamship. Grand Portage Bay was too shallow for steamships to enter, so Peter

³⁴ Grand Portage Tribal Council and Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association, *Grand Portage Chippewa: Stories and Experiences of Grand Portage Band Members*, 21, 32, 46, 64.

³⁵ "Census of the Grand Portage Chippewa Indians," June 30, 1915, GPNM, Record Group 1 (hereafter RG 1), Box 24, H22; "State Department Community Survey for Grand Portage Community Grand Portage, Minnesota, made by Erwin F. Mittelzholtz Principal, Grand Portage School, Minnesota, assisted by Alice C. Oldon, Teacher, Grand Portage School, Grand Portage, Minnesota, September 1938 to March 1939, and Supplemental Survey, September 1941, Appended," typescript, file copy in library vertical files, GPNM.

³⁶ Grand Portage Tribal Council and Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association, *Grand Portage Chippewa: Stories and Experiences of Grand Portage Band Members*, 47, 58.

Gagnon built a dock and trading post on Grand Portage Island (Pete’s Island), and steamboat passengers disembarked there and crossed the bay in a skiff.³⁷

There was an old mail route that ran the whole length of the northern shore of Lake Superior from Duluth to Canada. It was known as the “Old Dog Trail,” and was traveled chiefly by dog sleds and horse-drawn sleighs in winter. By 1900, much of this route had been turned into a stage road, but its east end beyond the town of Grand Marais remained little more than a narrow path. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, some of the communities east of Duluth along the lakeshore started working on improving the stage road so it would be passable by automobiles. The Grand Portage Indian Reservation lay beyond those developments.³⁸



Grand Portage village, circa 1920. Note the location of the BIA dock east of Grand Portage Creek. (NPS.)

³⁷ Gilman, *The Grand Portage Story*, 116.

³⁸ Gilman, *The Grand Portage Story*, 122; “Highway 61 (Old Highway 1)” at <http://zenithcity.com/archive/north-south-shore/highway-61-old-highway-1/>; Alan R. Woolworth to Ellen Green, May 2, 1983, GPNM, RG 1, Box 26, H3015; Kenneth B. Simmons, undated memorandum, GPNM, RG 1, Box 24, H14.

As there were no roads or automobiles in the village of Grand Portage, footpaths led all over the place. Elders in the late twentieth century recalled how the network of footpaths reached along the shore of Grand Portage Bay and crossed over Grand Portage Creek on numerous footbridges. The footpaths snaked behind all the log houses where they stood in an uneven line along the waterfront, because the log structures afforded a modicum of shelter from cold winds coming off the bay.³⁹

There are few written descriptions of what the village of Grand Portage looked like at the dawn of the automobile era. In the late 1890s, George Bryce, a prolific author, historian, and later president of the Royal Society of Canada, sought out the mostly forgotten fur trade site while doing research for his great work on the fur trade in Canada. “It is with peculiar interest a visitor today makes his way to Grand Portage,” he wrote in the book.

The writer, after a difficult night voyage over the stormy waters of Lake Superior, rowed by the keeper of a neighbouring lighthouse, made a visit a few years ago to this spot. Grand Portage ends on a bay of Lake Superior. It is partially sheltered by a rocky island which has the appearance of a robber’s keep, but has one inhabitant, the only white man of the region, a French Canadian of very fair means. On the bay is today an Indian village, chiefly celebrated for its multitude of dogs. A few traces of the former greatness of the place may be seen in the timbers down in the water of the former wharves, which were extensive. Few traces of forts are now, a century after their desertion by the fur traders, to be seen.

The portage, consisting of a road fairly made for the nine or ten miles necessary to avoid the falls on Pigeon River, can still be followed. No horse or ox is now to be found in the whole district. The solitary road, as the traveler walks along it, with weeds and grasses grown up, brings to one a melancholy feeling. The bustle of voyageur and trader and Indian is no more.⁴⁰

³⁹ Jay Sturdevant, notes from interview with Delma Grand Louis, June 24, 2015, GPNM, file copy in superintendent’s office, File: Ethnohistory project.

⁴⁰ George Bryce, *The Remarkable History of the Hudson’s Bay Company Including that of the French Traders of North-Western Canada and of the North-West, XY, and Astor Fur Companies* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), 96.

Grand Portage’s isolation ended when Minnesota built an automobile highway up the lakeshore all the way to Canada. Completed in 1925, the road was originally designated Minnesota Highway No. 1, later U.S. Highway 61, and then Minnesota Highway 61. It was also called the North Shore Scenic Drive. From the outset the state’s highway project was promoted as a part of the state’s tourism appeal. The Land of Ten Thousand Lakes offered “free motor highways and hikers’ trails, free automobile camp sites and splendid hotels and inns, and every imaginable enjoyment for those who want a happy vacation,” wrote one travel writer.⁴¹ Tourism developers began to see economic opportunity in the natural beauty and historical interest located in the state’s northeast tip.

In 1922, Dr. Solon J. Buck, superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS), launched a campaign to promote and protect Minnesota’s early fur trade history and historical sites. Acting on a tip from a Grand Portage resident that private property owners were fencing off a portion of the historic Grand Portage route, Buck dispatched the society’s field secretary, Cecil W. Shirk, together with a writer for the *Minneapolis Journal*, Paul Bliss, to survey the condition of the historic trail. Following up on the report by Shirk and the story by Bliss in the *Minneapolis Journal*, Buck engaged two young men, artist E. Dewey Albinson and his assistant Alvin C. Eastman, who were spending part of the summer at Grand Portage, to investigate and map the site of Fort Charlotte at the far end of the



Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Hendrickson with Lloyd Hendrickson, Solon Justus Buck and Alvin C. Eastman at the Hendrickson home at Hat Point. (Minnesota Historical Society.)

historic Grand Portage route. The two spent several weeks on the archeological survey and managed to trace the outlines of two large stockades and more than a dozen buildings. While their work was in progress, Buck called on two of the society’s staff, Mary E. Wheelhouse and Livia Appel, to help him prepare a historical paper on Grand Portage, which he presented at the society’s annual convention

⁴¹ Marguerite A. Salomon, “Are You Seeing America First?” *Outlook*, May 24, 1922, 174.

held that year in Duluth. The members of the society then passed a resolution calling upon the state legislature to establish a state park that would include the historic Grand Portage route and building sites together with Split Rock Canyon and the falls on the Pigeon River.⁴²

Buck next approached state auditor Ray P. Chase on the need to establish a department of state parks. A bill was drafted, and a proposal was made to establish “Fort Charlotte State Park.” The state parks initiative resulted in the establishment of the Minnesota Department of Conservation in 1925 (the name was later changed to the Department of Natural Resources). A Division of State Parks within the department was established ten years later. However, Buck’s goal of preserving Grand Portage and the Fort Charlotte site within a state park was foiled because both areas belonged to the Grand Portage Ojibwe.⁴³

The MNHS continued to foster Minnesotans’ historical interest in Grand Portage. As Buck pointed out, the North West Company had invested in Grand Portage “more than thirty years before the founding of Fort Snelling, which we are wont to look upon as the real beginning of Minnesota history.” Grace Lee Nute, a Harvard Ph.D., became curator of manuscripts at the MNHS and embarked on her long study of French exploration and exploits in Minnesota. Her first book, *The Red River Trails*, was published in 1925; her classic work, *The Voyageur*, appeared in 1931. That year also marked the bicentennial commemoration of De la Vérendrye’s expedition, which the MNHS used to bring further attention to Grand Portage. The society organized a historical tour of sites along the northern shore of Lake Superior, which would culminate in a public celebration at Grand Portage held in conjunction with the Cook County Historical Society (CCHS). The event was planned for August.⁴⁴

In preparation for this celebration of early Minnesota history, the two historical societies raised funds and assembled a volunteer workforce to undertake the first historic reconstruction at the site. Historic reconstruction began with a replica of the North West

⁴² Buck, “The Story of the Grand Portage,” 14, 27; Minnesota Historical Society, *Twenty-Second Biennial Report for the Years 1921 and 1922* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1923), 29; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 11-12; Paul Bliss, “Back Two Centuries Over Minnesota’s Oldest Highway to Oldest Fort,” *The Minneapolis Journal*, July 16, 1922.

⁴³ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 12; “Minnesota’s State Park System,” at <https://www.auditor.leg.-state.mn.us/ped/pedrep/0002ch1.pdf>. For a history of Minnesota state parks, see Roy W. Meyer, *Everyone’s Country Estate: A History of Minnesota State Parks* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1991).

⁴⁴ Buck, “The Story of the Grand Portage,” 14; Theodore C. Blegen, “The Minnesota Historical Society in 1931,” *Minnesota History* 13, no. 1 (March 1932), 55-56; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 14.



Mike Flatte displaying peace medals on the porch of the Crawford cabin. (NPS.)

Company dock built on what were presumed to be the original pilings. Grand Portage Ojibwe residents cut the timber for the cribwork while the Minnesota Highway Department donated surplus planking from a dismantled bridge.⁴⁵

In addition, the MNHS purchased a log cabin at Grand Portage (with the help of \$2500 raised by the CCHS) to be used as a historical museum. This building was the Crawford cabin, named for the Crawford family of Scott and Elizabeth and their two sons William and Samuel, who had moved to Grand Portage from Duluth about 1890. Before the cabin could be put to use as a museum, it had to be moved about a hundred yards and repaired. The Crawford cabin had in fact been moved before, in 1909, to make way for a new school, at which time the building was lifted up and dragged several hundred feet from its original location. As the Crawford cabin needed repairs, the MNHS purchased a second cabin for salvage material. The latter cabin was once the Grand Portage post office and later the home of Joe Louis Maymaushkowaush. The rehabilitation of the Crawford cabin and the demolition and removal of the latter structure all took place just weeks prior to the public event. The immediate plan for the museum following the event was for the CCHS to set up a “complete collection of exhibits to show Indian life.”⁴⁶

The MNHS- and CCHS-sponsored event drew an estimated one thousand people. That was a very large crowd for such a small village without restaurants, lodging, or gas station facilities of any kind. Indeed, the place had not seen such a big gathering since its last fur trade rendezvous in 1803. Such a gathering of casual visitors was only made possible by the new car culture, which enabled hundreds of urban residents from Duluth, the Twin Cities, and cities and towns in Canada to participate. “For a day Grand Portage was the Mecca for Minnesotans interested in the historical backgrounds of the upper Northwest,” the MNHS gleefully reported. There was a very full agenda of public addresses by historians and civic leaders, followed by a pipe ceremony and traditional dances put on by the Grand Portage Ojibwe, and a greeting in Ojibwe by Chief Nahbahgahdoway, translated into English by another band member, which, oddly enough, was put last to close out the program. While most visitors left that afternoon, some stayed another day to walk the historic Grand Portage route.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 13-14.

⁴⁶ David C. Hsiung, “Historic Structure Report: Samuel Crawford Cabin, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” July 1984, GPNM, RG 1, Box 7, H30.

⁴⁷ “Historical Exploring in the ‘Arrowhead Country’: The State Historical Convention of 1931,” *Minnesota History* 12, no. 3 (September 1931), 281-96.

The event on that day in August 1931 demonstrated the economic opportunity presented by tourism. In the future, Grand Portage Ojibwe might find employment as guides, showing visitors from the city around the historic site, as well as taking them out fishing or hunting on the reservation. They might earn a little cash making handicrafts to sell in the rising “Indian curio” trade. But bringing tourism to such a quiet place as Grand Portage was always going to be a devil’s bargain. The coming of automobile roads and cars and the onslaught of casual visitors was intrusive. Along with new economic opportunity came further challenges to a native community already beset by the pressures of the modern world.



Voyageur canoe with sail, 2016. (NPS.)

Chapter Two

Preservationist Ideas and Actions, 1931 to 1960

In the 1930s, federal Indian policy dramatically reversed course. The disastrous program of Indian assimilation, which had provided a rationale for a relentless assault on native culture and tribal sovereignty for more than a century, was discredited. When Franklin D. Roosevelt became President of the United States, he picked a leading crusader for Indian reform, John Collier, to head the Bureau of Indian Affairs. FDR's pick for Secretary of the Interior was the Progressive Republican and civil rights activist Harold L. Ickes. Both Collier and Ickes served through the whole Roosevelt administration from 1933 to 1945. Their reforms were crucial in laying the foundation for the future relationship between the Grand Portage Ojibwe and the National Park Service. Besides the about-face in federal Indian policy, another significant development for the Grand Portage Band and the future Grand Portage National Monument during the Roosevelt administration was the establishment of Isle Royale National Park in 1940.

The Grand Portage Band, with new assurances of self-governance through the Indian New Deal, took an active role in welcoming further moves toward historic preservation at Grand Portage in the post-World War II era. Planning studies for Grand Portage, which were conducted largely by the NPS, promised a way forward that would protect historical values while bringing new construction and good-paying jobs to the reservation. Talks between the NPS, the Grand Portage Ojibwe, and other interested parties culminated in the establishment of Grand Portage National Monument in 1958.

The Indian New Deal and the Grand Portage Band

The Indian New Deal had two major objectives. One was cultural revitalization. This broad effort aimed at restoring native morale, protecting native language, and encouraging cultural practices that sought to preserve what was left of traditional lifeways and religion. One of Collier's first acts upon becoming commissioner of Indian affairs was to issue two executive orders to protect Indian heritage by limiting missionary influence in

Indian education and religious life. The reverse course was nearly too late. By this time, the process of acculturation was well advanced, as many elements of native heritage had been suppressed for a long time. All of the Grand Portage Ojibwe occupied frame or log houses and wore much the same clothing as white people. Most attended Catholic church services. About half of Grand Portage Ojibwe adults were fluent in English, while use of the native tongue was waning. Children attended grade school in the village and received medical care there, which augmented and in some ways undermined traditional Ojibwe teachings and medicine. Various culture-based arts that had once been a vital part of Ojibwe life were not being passed down generation to generation as they had been. While many band members were employed in the commercial fishing industry and continued their ancestors’ orientation to that resource through newer forms, hunting and gathering activities no longer held the esteem they once had. After decades of cultural oppression, many Ojibwe were afraid to show their Indianness. Concerned individuals who were intent on reforming federal Indian policy saw hopelessness and despair taking hold in Indian communities. They wanted to end the American nation’s long assault on Indian identity that had been perpetrated under the federal government’s failed assimilation policy. Embracing a new vision of cultural pluralism, these Indian reformers wanted to preserve Indian values for the unique lessons that they offered for all humanity.¹

The Indian New Deal’s second major objective was to provide support for the restoration of tribal self-governance. It aimed to put tribal governments on a footing that would allow them to deal with other governments at the local, state, and federal level, and to enable tribes to engage with the modern economy. The Indian reformers sought to revive the federal-Indian trust relationship and the basic tenet of federal Indian law that recognizes tribes as “domestic, dependent nations.” While the plan of cultural revitalization came from new currents of thought in anthropology and sociology, the plan for Indian reorganization rested on law. Legal scholar Felix S. Cohen joined the Roosevelt administration to help write the Indian New Deal’s centerpiece legislation, the Wheeler-Howard Act or Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. Collier’s success in promoting the formation of new tribal governments, and Cohen’s masterful compilation of federal Indian law, *The Handbook of Federal Indian Law* (1942), helped to sustain the federal government’s commitment to tribal self-governance long after the Roosevelt administration came to an end.

¹ Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 145-53; Gilman, *The Grand Portage Story*, 123-25.

The principle of democratic home rule was at the heart of the Indian Reorganization Act. Across the United States, every federally recognized tribal community was informed about the law and invited to opt in or opt out of the law's self-governance provisions by a majority vote of its members. The Grand Portage Band voted solidly in favor of opting in, as did all the other Ojibwe reservation communities in Minnesota except the Red Lake Band. After these elections were held, the six participating bands then adopted a constitution and bylaws to constitute the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. Included in the constitution was the principle that each reservation would have its own separate governing body to oversee local affairs. The constitution and bylaws for the Tribe as well as the separate charters for each band had to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior, acting as representative of the federal government's enduring fiduciary trust responsibility over Indian affairs. Being thus reorganized, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and its constituent bands received access to loan funds and other benefits under the Indian Reorganization Act.²

The Grand Portage Band received its charter from the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe on October 8, 1938, and it was ratified by the members of the Band in a popular referendum on February 15, 1939. The governing body for the Grand Portage Band under its charter was the Grand Portage Reservation Council, also known as the Reservation Business Committee (RBC). It was initially composed of seven members elected by the members of the reservation. In 1964, the name of the Band's governing body was officially changed to Reservation Business Committee and was reduced in size to five members, under an amended tribal constitution and bylaws. The five members consisted of a chairperson, a secretary-treasurer, and three district representatives. Today, this same five-member body is called the Reservation Tribal Council (RTC).³

The Indian Reorganization Act also ended the policy of allotment and determined that restoration of tribal lands would be a key underpinning of tribes' future success. Since the establishment of the Grand Portage Indian Reservation in 1854, about half of its acreage had been alienated from Indian ownership. Land had been lost in two ways. One was

² Leah J. Carpenter, "Tracking the Land: Ojibwe Land Tenure and Acquisition at Grand Portage and Leech Lake," (dissertation, University of Arizona, 2008), 56-57.

³ U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Constitution and Bylaws of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, Minnesota, Approved July 24, 1936* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1936); Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 134-35; Provisional Overall Economic Development Plan for Grand Portage Indian Reservation, Grand Portage, Minnesota, no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 3, A42; website for Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa; "Chapter Four: Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Structure and Powers," at <https://www.llojibwe.org/legal/mctGovStuBook/MCT%20Government%20Student%20Handbook%20-%20Chapter%204.pdf>; 1-9.

through sale or forfeiture of individual allotments, as noted previously. The other was through entry and disposition under the homestead laws. After the reservation was allotted, so-called surplus lands had been treated as public domain and opened to entry by non-Indians. By these two means combined, over half the land area of the reservation had been alienated from Indian ownership by the 1930s. The process of rebuilding the Band’s land base started with a land order in 1935 that restored to trust status about 9,000 acres of “unentered” or “undisposed” surplus lands. That part was easy; it was accomplished by a single action. Much harder was the effort to acquire those former allotments and surplus land parcels that were now owned by non-Indians. The Grand Portage Council and the Minnesota Chippewa Tribal Executive Committee had to negotiate land purchases one tract at a time. One of the most determined leaders was Alton Bramer, chairman of the RBC in the 1940s and 50s, who kept a close watch on land sale notices. The process went on for years; it was ongoing when the national monument was established. Ultimately, some 22,213 acres would be repurchased under provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act, bringing about four-fifths of the reservation land area back into Indian ownership. Notably some of those recovered lands were acquired by the Grand Portage Band and some by the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. The tendency as time went on was for the latter to acquire them. The land buyback was more successful on Grand Portage Indian Reservation than on other reservations of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, where a greater proportion of lands had been alienated from Indian ownership.⁴

The Indian New Deal also provided economic relief for reservations stricken by the Great Depression. Actually, the Depression did not impact Grand Portage Ojibwe as sharply as it did most rural Minnesotans, because the Band was already inured to extreme poverty and high unemployment before the Depression hit. But as band members were living on the edge, federal relief came as a great boon. A community survey made in 1938 found that over half the community’s total income came from federal relief. Commercial fishing, wildlife activities, and wage earnings accounted for another fourth of the total. The rest came through farm production, arts and crafts sales, firewood sales, and rent on allotments. The average annual family income on the reservation was just \$292, which was about a third of the average family income for the rural population in nearby counties.⁵

⁴ Carpenter, “Tracking the Land,” 60-62, 73-75, 209-10, 212, 230; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 35; the website for the Grand Portage Lodge & Casino.

⁵ Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 153-54; “State Department Community Survey for Grand Portage Community Grand Portage, Minnesota, made by Erwin F. Mittelzholtz Principal,

Soon after FDR established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), BIA officials prevailed on the new organization to form an Indian Division (CCC-ID) to accommodate the special conditions found on Indian reservations. While the CCC was set up to enroll young men and put them to work on conservation projects located mainly in the national parks and national forests, the CCC-ID was organized differently, enrolling adult males of any age and putting them to work on projects close to home on Indian reservations. Employment by the CCC-ID was typically a day job; enrollees did not necessarily go away to camps as did their counterparts in the CCC. However, the arrangement on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation did involve a camp at Mineral Center. Jim Wipson was an enrollee there, and he recalled many years later that he was paid \$30 per month, plus room and board and clothing.



The CCC-ID at Grand Portage. (NPS.)

The CCC-ID provided valuable employment on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation for several years. While its focus was on natural resources development, CCC-ID crews were also assigned to various construction projects. The stone bridge across Grand Portage Creek was completed by the CCC-ID in 1938 and is now listed as a historic structure on the National Register of Historic Places.⁶

Grand Portage School, Minnesota, assisted by Alice C. Oldon, Teacher, Grand Portage School, Grand Portage, Minnesota, September 1938 to March 1939, and Supplemental Survey, September 1941, Appended," typescript, file copy in library vertical files, GPNM.

⁶ Calvin W. Gower, "The CCC Indian Division: Aid for Depressed Americans, 1933-1942," *Minnesota History* 43, no. 1 (Spring 1972), 3-13; Grand Portage Tribal Council and Sugarloaf

Sometimes BIA officials took a more expansive view than the CCC administrator of what types of projects the CCC-ID might do. In September 1935, Collier outlined a plan for the CCC-ID on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation to build a historic reconstruction of the North West Company depot at Grand Portage. The plan had been jointly conceived by the superintendent of the Consolidated Chippewa Agency and the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS). The director of the CCC, Robert Fechner, approved an initial small expenditure for the project, but he balked when the project grew in size. After Fechner visited the site in July 1936, he appeared to look favorably on the project, but later he canceled the additional funding. Despite the uncertainty around the project, the MNHS sponsored archeological investigations in 1936 and 1937, and construction of the historic reconstructions occurred from 1938 to 1940.⁷

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was another New Deal relief agency that provided economic benefits to members of the Grand Portage Band. One of the WPA's projects in Grand Portage village was to foster handicrafts. Band members who were involved with that project prepared exhibits for the reconstructed Great Hall.⁸

The Historic Reconstruction

The CCC-ID cleared the historic Grand Portage route in 1933 mainly for purposes of fire control. The foot trail or truck trail was brushed to a width of sixteen feet. There was no knowledge at that time of recreational use of the portage by canoers. The rehabilitation of the old portage route spurred conversations between the MNHS and the Consolidated Chippewa Agency about preservation of the historic site. The MNHS wanted to build a historic reconstruction because it would draw public interest as well as ensure protection of the historic resource. Superintendent Mark Burns of the Consolidated Chippewa Agency took the proposal to Fechner, the CCC director, who approved it. In spring 1936, the MNHS sent two staff members, W. M. Babcock and Ralph D. Brown, to examine the stockade site and look for any physical trace of the original structures. All that was visible on the ground surface were two furrows where the north and west stockade walls had once stood. Brown,

Interpretive Center Association, *Grand Portage Chippewa*, 23; National Park Service, Historic Preservation Training Center, *Grand Portage Bridge Repairs*, *Grand Portage National Monument*, *Grand Portage, Minnesota: Historic Structure Treatment Record* (Frederick, MD: Historic Preservation Training Center, 2018), 2.

⁷ Gower, “The CCC Indian Division,” 10-11; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 14-15.

⁸ Barbara W. Somer, *Hard Work and a Good Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Minnesota* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2008), 120.

an archeologist, returned in June to direct a crew of six in making initial test excavations. The goal was to locate the position of the stockade walls, gates, and blockhouses and possibly the foundation lines of some of the buildings. The crew made a good start, but they came upon some perplexing finds such as traces of what appeared to be a palisade or protecting wall running through the middle of the stockade. That led to a request for more funds and then Fechner's visit to the site in July.⁹

The NPS also became involved at this time under its broad history-advising and recreational-planning authorities. Assistant historian Edward A. Hummel of the NPS's new Region Two office in Omaha, Nebraska was dispatched to Grand Portage to inspect the archeology project. Hummel's report began with an appraisal of the site's historical significance. He concurred with the MNHS that it was an important historic site, but he was critical of the archeology being done. "To erect a palisade which is now planned, on the information that is now available, would mean not only that the reconstruction would be, in all probability, historically inaccurate, but it also may destroy valuable information regarding the history of the area which can be gained by careful archeological excavation." He urged that the work cease until more historical research was done and a more thorough approach to the archeological investigation was permitted. Significantly, he also suggested that the NPS get involved in planning for the area so that proper protection of Grand Portage's historical values could be coordinated with plans for the forthcoming Isle Royale National Park.¹⁰

Whether the NPS report influenced Fechner's decision to put more resources toward the project is not known. The MNHS resumed the dig in August using a more comprehensive approach. The crew of six laborers was enlarged to nineteen, and two more archeologists from the MNHS joined the effort. The dig was interrupted when the CCC-ID crew was called away to fight forest fires, but it resumed in late August and continued into early October. Recovered artifacts were cleaned, repaired, and labeled inside the Crawford cabin.¹¹

⁹ National Park Service, "North Shore – Lake Superior, Analysis of Existing and Potential Recreational Travel, Facilities and Requirements," October 1940, GPNM, RG 1, Box 11, D18; Ralph D. Brown, "Archaeological Investigation of the Northwest Company's Post, Grand Portage, Minnesota, 1936," *Indians at Work* (May 1937), 37-43.

¹⁰ Edward A. Hummel, "Historical Report from Investigation at Grand Portage, Minnesota," July 6, 1936, GPNM, RG 1, Box 4, A42.

¹¹ Brown, "Archaeological Investigation of the Northwest Company's Post, Grand Portage, Minnesota, 1936," 39-41.

During the 1937 field season, the MNHS archeologists identified the location of thirteen structures including the Great Hall. They also identified four distinct building methods, recovered some of the original building materials including sections of pickets that revealed the type of wood and their diameter, and even found evidence of what color the buildings were painted through the discovery of a discarded paint can. These findings, combined with an examination of historical descriptions of the depot, formed the basis for historic reconstruction of the stockade and the Great Hall.¹²



The stockade and blockhouse in the first historic reconstruction. Grand Portage Creek is in the foreground and Mount Rose is in the distance. (Photo by Jack E. Boucher, GPNM, Series G, No. 055.)

While these first historic reconstructions would later prove to be inaccurate in many respects, they were a good effort by the standard of the times. Grand Portage Band members who worked on the project later recalled how meticulous the effort was. George Morrison recalled how the workers fashioned wooden pegs to use instead of nails to hold the structure together. The men started with dowels and whittled them to size with a point on the end. Jim

¹² Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 15; Somer, *Hard Work and a Good Deal*, 119-21; Gilman, *The Grand Portage Story*, 128-29.

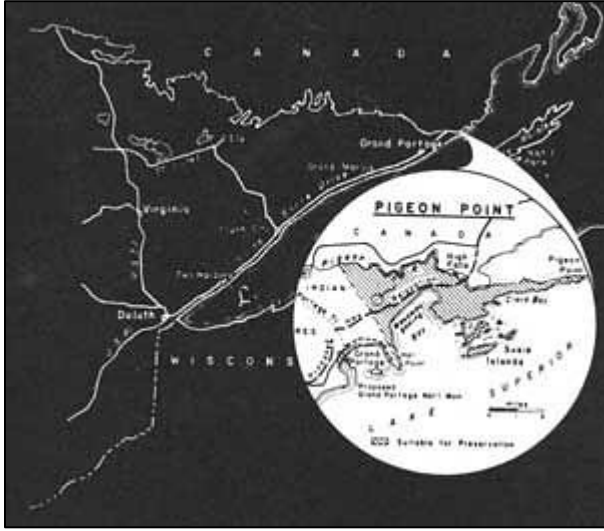
Wipson remembered that he and his fellows worked under the supervision of an “excellent carpenter” named Claude Johnson. “We were young fellows ourselves, who didn’t know Adam and Eve as far as building was concerned, but he showed us just what to do.” The community took pride in this first reconstruction as it was largely built by community members.¹³

The Emergence of Wilderness Values

Grand Portage National Monument lies at the threshold – or some might say the back door – of the world-class Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). The BWCAW covers more than a million acres within the Superior National Forest. Its northern edge runs along 150 miles of the international border – the historic voyageur route – from Voyageurs National Park on the west to the Pigeon River on the east at a point only about six miles upstream from the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. Receiving some 200,000 visitors annually, it is the busiest wilderness area in the United States. Every year, a small portion of Boundary Waters recreationists conclude their long-distance canoe trips by following the voyageur route down the Pigeon River to the Fort Charlotte site, then portaging the last eight and a half miles to Grand Portage.

The movement to protect the extraordinary wilderness values of the Boundary Waters area began in the early twentieth century. By the 1920s, the area was becoming a popular destination for recreational canoeing, boating, hunting, and fishing. In 1926, a large area of national forest was administratively designated as roadless wilderness area by the Secretary of Agriculture. From the beginning, the wilderness movement in northern Minnesota was transnational, with efforts on the Canadian side focused on the Quetico Provincial Park. In 1927, preservationists on both sides of the border formed the Quetico-Superior Council to push for an international treaty. They envisioned a wilderness designation that would protect both sides of the border all the way to Pigeon Point. Separately, Congress authorized Isle Royale National Park in 1931 (leading to the park’s establishment in 1940). Reviewing these developments, the head of the MNHS superintendent Solon J. Buck predicted that when Isle Royale became a national park the NPS would look to Grand Portage Bay as the nearest point of access for taking visitors and supplies from the mainland to the island. In this view, the Pigeon Point area was the linchpin

¹³ Somer, *Hard Work and a Good Deal*, 119-21; Grand Portage Tribal Council and Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association, *Grand Portage Chippewa*, 23.



Map of Pigeon Point in *Great Lakes Shoreline Recreation Area Survey* (1959), a National Park Service study.

between Isle Royale and the Quetico-Superior protected area: wild and scenic, it was still vulnerable to private exploitation. It must be remembered that the Pigeon Point area was not part of the Grand Portage Indian Reservation at this time. (It would be added to the reservation in 1982.) Buck wrote, “If the state or interested private agencies would acquire the land in the region and present it to the national government it is probable that Congress would gladly establish it as a national monument. This

would ensure the protection and appropriate development of the area and would fit in with larger plans for the great reservation along the border.”¹⁴

Wilderness crusader Robert (Bob) Marshall joined in Buck’s assessment of the Pigeon Point area. A professional forester by training and a wilderness explorer, thinker, and crusader by avocation, Marshall served as chief of forestry in the BIA from 1933 to 1937. In June 1935, he spent three days in Grand Portage. While inspecting the forest resource and evaluating the forestry program there, he also assembled land ownership data on and adjacent to the reservation and considered the region’s wilderness values. Marshall met with fellow wilderness thinker Ernest Oberholtzer, who made his home on Mallard Island in Rainy Lake. Oberholtzer was a leader in the transnational campaign to preserve the Quetico-Superior wilderness. Marshall learned from Oberholtzer how important the Pigeon Point area was to the larger project of protecting the whole Quetico-Superior wilderness. Marshall also visited a lodge overlooking Teal Lake and probably hiked from there to the top of Mount Josephine for the magnificent view it afforded over Pigeon Point. Notwithstanding the fact that the area was all cutover land, Marshall thought that when the forest regenerated it would be “the most beautiful part of the whole Grand Portage country and would be of considerable value to the Indians if they had a resort business.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Solon J. Buck, *The Story of Grand Portage* (Minneapolis: Cook County Historical Society, 1931), 16. This pamphlet was essentially a reprint of Buck’s article published in the *Minnesota History Bulletin* in 1922, with the latest developments toward preservation summarized at the end.

¹⁵ Robert Marshall to William Zimmerman, June 22, 1935, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

Three months later, Marshall submitted his “Grand Portage Land Acquisition Project” to his boss, Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier. The plan proposed the purchase of 47,858 acres in four blocks or “sites.” Site 1, about half of the total acreage, covered all of the reservation north of a section line running east to west just south of Mineral Center. Site 2, with 6,305 acres, covered the Pigeon Point area east of the reservation; it would add that area to the reservation. Site 3, with 6,240 acres, would add lands to the reservation on the west side by moving the reservation boundary from the Reservation River to the next township line to the west. Site 4, with 9,896 acres, covered the rest of the existing reservation that was not in Site 1. The total of 47,848 acres included 11,030 acres in trust allotments still in Indian ownership; in other words, part of the plan was to purchase lands from individual Indians and convey them back to tribal ownership. The total acreage also included 9,096 acres on the reservation that Marshall classified as “vacant ceded lands” (the same lands described elsewhere as “unentered” or “undisposed” surplus lands), which did not have to be purchased but simply transferred back to Indian trust status. Nearly all the remainder had to be purchased out of private ownership. Marshall’s plan was acted upon.¹⁶

The land acquisition project brought protection to the Pigeon Point area as most of the private tracts were soon purchased and held in trust for the Grand Portage Band. The Band always maintained that the Pigeon Point area had been left out of the reservation by error, so they pushed relentlessly for an explicit change in the reservation boundaries. The change was finally made official in a secretarial proclamation dated May 14, 1982 – nearly a half century after the land acquisition project began.¹⁷

While he was visiting Grand Portage, Marshall waded into another controversy, a proposed rerouting of Highway 61. As originally built in the early 1920s, the highway crossed the Reservation River near the Lake Superior shore and then went inland and northeastward, striking the Pigeon River and the Canadian border approximately three miles due north of Grand Portage village. Early in 1935, the Minnesota Highway Department proposed rerouting the highway so that it would continue to hug the scenic lakeshore all the way to Canada. There were two major implications. First, the highway would very nearly pass through Grand Portage village. And second, it would cut right through the Pigeon Point

¹⁶ “Grand Portage Project Plan,” no date, and Regional Director to Director, November 7, 1960, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18; Carpenter, “Tracking the Land,” 60, 348.

¹⁷ Ibid.

area. Proponents of rerouting the highway said that the Grand Portage community and the whole state would benefit because the Grand Portage historic site and the scenery around Pigeon Point would stimulate tourism and recreation. The wilderness defenders, meanwhile, thought the highway rerouting would be a huge setback to their project of protecting wilderness values all the way from Rainy Lake to Isle Royale (notwithstanding the fact that the highway already cut through the area west of the falls on the Pigeon River). The wilderness defenders’ prospects for blocking the project might have appeared hopeless except for one thing: the state of Minnesota had to get a new right-of-way across tribal lands from the U.S. Department of the Interior. Secretary of the Interior Ickes was philosophically disposed to protecting wilderness as well as guarding Indian lands. Anyone familiar with the area today knows that Highway 61 did get rerouted as proposed in 1935. Less apparent is how long it took. In fact, the project got held up for many years, initially because Secretary of the Interior Ickes would not allow it. The rerouting was not completed until 1962.

Marshall sowed the seed for the Secretary of the Interior’s long intransigence over rerouting the highway. He hiked the proposed route and described the lay of the land to his superior William Zimmerman, assistant commissioner of Indian affairs, whom Marshall knew to be sympathetic to his views on wilderness. Marshall, always a maverick, did not communicate his views dispassionately as most bureaucrats were trained to do, but indulged in a full-bore rant against the encroaching car culture:

The portion of the right-of-way lying east of Grand Portage seems to have been located with the objective of destroying the maximum amount of primitive scenery. For about one half of its length it runs to the north of the Mt. Josephine Ridge where it completely ruins the present splendid wild feeling one gets in the valley of Teal Lake.... About one-half way down the length of the first ridge back of the coast the scenery in the deepest recesses of Waws-way-we-ning bay becomes most superb so the route is brought across the ridge to spoil every notion of wildness for this beautiful bay. Then, to make the destruction complete, it has to smash its way across the base of the 90-foot high falls of the Pigeon River, which today can only be reached by foot. The prospect, therefore, is to substitute for the present feeling of wildness one gets when listening to the boom of the falls and delighting in the deep green spray-drenched vegetation under the rocks, the

noise of back-firing motors and a gang of raucous tourists snapping pictures of the spray. After all, the automobilists have the whole fine coast from Duluth to Reservation River. They have a lovely view of the rapids at the present road crossing. They have the interesting and rugged topography on the Canadian side of the line. They have 3,600,000 miles of road in the United States. It is not fair for them to ask for the whole world. It is not fair to those who really do like to get back to the wilderness above all else, and it is not fair to the Grand Portage Indians who would profit much more by a wilderness resort industry than by a first-class highway thru the town.¹⁸

It is a fair question to ask, did Marshall really have the Grand Portage Ojibwe's interests in view or was he using the Indian reservation and his position in the BIA to crusade for wilderness? Marshall always maintained that Indian values and wilderness values aligned with one another. In this same candid letter to Zimmerman, he wrote:

Grand Portage is nothing as a town along the highway. It is merely one of innumerable dinky, dilapidated places. Its whole value comes in its remoteness from present civilization. This is a value which I believe the splendid people of Grand Portage could well capitalize but if you put a main highway thru the town, it would just be another Walker or Elbowwoods or Chiloquin or Mescalero and hardly any traveler allows his car down below forty miles an hour when passing such places. However, if Grand Portage is continued in its primitive state, I believe that many tourists who want to get back to a less mechanical age would come and stop there and pay money to a co-operative Indian resort industry or a co-operative guide association.¹⁹

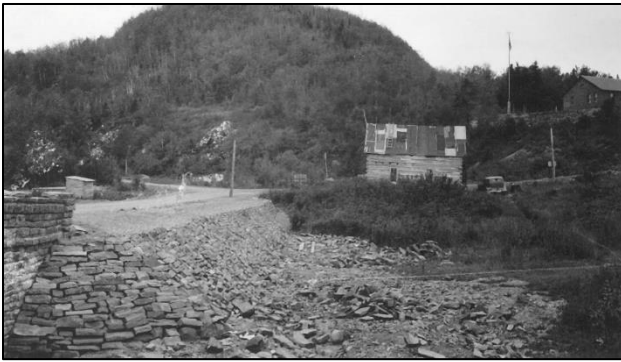
Marshall discussed these matters with community members. Apparently, the Grand Portage Band had already passed a resolution in support of rerouting the highway. Marshall informed Zimmerman that in his conversations with community leaders Paul Cyrette and Mike Flatte,

¹⁸ Robert Marshall to William Zimmerman, June 22, 1935, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

¹⁹ Ibid.

both men declared that local traders had talked the native community into supporting the proposal and that the people now regretted it.²⁰

Marshall perhaps overstepped his authority as chief of BIA forestry two years later when he recommended an administrative action to designate most of the Grand Portage Indian Reservation as two “wild areas.” The two areas, one on either side of the old Highway 61 alignment, were so delineated by secretarial order in 1937. The Grand Portage Ojibwe objected to the order, thinking it would unduly inhibit timber harvesting. Members also wondered if the wild-area designations would deprive them of firewood or prohibit



One end of the stone bridge is visible in this view toward Mount Rose, circa 1938. (NPS.)

them from planting food crops on the few tracts that had been previously cleared of forest and recently returned to tribal ownership. Zimmerman tried to allay those concerns, saying that the intent was mainly to prevent more road construction and not to force abandonment of existing improvements and resource use; however, it was clear that the order would limit commercial

timber sales if not prevent them altogether. The Grand Portage Ojibwe were unpersuaded and tried to get the order modified, but to no avail.²¹

Marshall’s ideas for the reservation were soon amplified by another rising voice for wilderness protection, that of Sigurd F. Olson of Ely, Minnesota. A writer, teacher, and canoe guide, Olson prepared a detailed “Recreational Plan for the Grand Portage Indian Reservation” in 1936.²² Many of Olson’s proposals would later come to pass. He suggested that the Band could profitably develop a resort hotel and cabins, a trading post, and a museum. He proposed the development of various hiking trails, including one to the summit of Mount Josephine and another to the summit of Mount Rose, as well as improvement of the historic Grand Portage route with interpretation along the way and perhaps an overnight

²⁰ Robert Marshall to William Zimmerman, June 22, 1935, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

²¹ Diane L. Krahe, “Last Refuge: The Uneasy Embrace of Indian Lands by the National Wilderness Movement, 1937-1965,” (dissertation, Washington State University, 2005), 126-32; Regional Historian to Assistant Regional Director, June 4, 1951, GPNM, RG 1, Box 24, H14.

²² Sigurd F. Olson, “A Recreational Plan for the Grand Portage Indian Reservation,” no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18. A memo from Associate Director to Regional Director, November 22, 1960, same file, gives the date of Olson’s report as July 2, 1936.

shelter at the Fort Charlotte site. Under a subheading "Local Color," Olson described an early vision for cultural demonstrations and historical re-enactments:

During the summer months, some of the families construct large teepees to live in. It would add a great deal to the general atmosphere if a few teepees could be placed on the grassy flat near the location of the Old XYZ [sic] Trading Post. It would also lend color to have a few birch bark canoes on the beach and to have people actually living in the teepees. Tourists are vitally interested in the authentic and if some of the women outside the teepees could actually be making basket ware or snowshoes, the picture would be very attractive. In connection with this idea, it might also be worth while to construct a Chippewa dance teepee or council house and occasionally in the evenings hold pow-wows or dances. Great care would have to be exercised here however, not to make such exhibitions commonplace or strictly commercial as they are so often in the west. This could well be part of the entertainment program of the cooperative resort and could be put on for guests purely as an accommodation.²³

The proposal to reroute Highway 61 through Grand Portage and the Pigeon Point area soon drew the attention of the NPS. A large multi-agency committee was formed to investigate. Conrad L. Wirth, assistant director for the NPS Branch of Planning, headed the NPS team of seven, which included assistant regional historian Ed Hummel and Charles Shevlin, forester for Isle Royale. The BIA contributed eight members to the committee, the Minnesota Highway Department contributed five, and the Minnesota Conservation Commission dispatched its director of state parks, H. W. Lathrop. A state senator and a judge took part as well. The committee inspected the whole length of the route by automobile, foot, and boat. The committee refrained from making a recommendation but laid out advantages and disadvantages. Notable was the committee's acknowledgement that

²³ Sigurd F. Olson, "A Recreational Plan for the Grand Portage Indian Reservation," no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

“modern motor vehicle travel” threatened the opportunity to preserve “the vast Grand Portage Indian Reservation wilderness character.”²⁴

Their case somewhat strengthened by the report, the wilderness defenders succeeded in building support for a “compromise route.” According to this plan, the new Highway 61 alignment would hug the lakeshore from the Reservation River only as far as Grand Portage and at that point it would turn inland and proceed northward to the existing point of crossing of the Pigeon River. That is, it would leave the Pigeon Point area roadless.²⁵ Ultimately, the compromise route was discarded, and Highway 61 was built along the alignment that Marshall so abhorred. Yet it is significant that the Highway 61 project was held up for many years. Meanwhile, the NPS became more and more engaged with recreational planning on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation as Isle Royale National Park became a reality.

The Isle Royale Connection

By 1939, the NPS had established an office of the superintendent for Isle Royale National Park in Houghton, Michigan, and planning for this unusual new unit in the National Park System was well along. The NPS chose to locate park headquarters in Houghton on Michigan’s Upper Peninsula because Isle Royale belonged to the state of Michigan, and it was believed that the passenger railroad service from Chicago to Houghton would be important in bringing visitors to the park. Even though the boat ride from Houghton to Isle Royale was much longer than the boat ride from Grand Portage, the roads leading to Houghton from the south were much more traveled than the North Shore Road to Grand Portage. So, the outlook was that Grand Portage would see little of the action when Isle Royale National Park became developed for visitors.²⁶ However, in the summer of 1939 two private boat operators began carrying passengers from Grand Portage to Isle Royale, prompting the BIA and the NPS to get together in the fall to reconsider the matter. The question arose whether the boat service would be a suitable tribal enterprise for the Grand

²⁴ Lee Brown and Kenneth F. Mitchell, “Grand Portage Area, Minnesota, Report on Field Inspection of Proposed Relocation for United States Highway No. 61, June 24, 25, 26, 1936,” GPNM, RG 1, Box 24, H14.

²⁵ William Zimmerman to S. Rex Green, July 6, 1936, and John E. Palmer to Sewell T. Tyng, March 5, 1937, GPNM, RG 1, Box 23, H14.

²⁶ Regional Landscape Architect to Regional Director, July 23, 1940, GPNM, RG 1, Box 23, H14.

Portage Band, and if so, should the tribal enterprise include overnight accommodations as well.²⁷

The meeting in 1939 led to a general recognition by both the BIA and the NPS that Grand Portage and Isle Royale were tied together, and that the two agencies should coordinate planning and development of those two areas. The NPS became very interested in developing Grand Portage as a second mainland base for Isle Royale, or maybe even establishing it as the mainland headquarters instead of Houghton, Michigan. The NPS sought the BIA's input when it produced a master plan for Isle Royale National Park. The BIA, for its part, started treating Grand Portage more like a park area. One of the BIA's first priorities was to buy out private holdings that fronted on Grand Portage Bay. Four key tracts were targeted, belonging to the Thompson, Parmer, Olsen, and Lendhaul families. A second priority was to purchase the McLean property and take down the somewhat marginal tourist cabins there, clearing the way for an unfettered tribal enterprise in its place. The NPS and the BIA coordinated plans for improving the dock facility at Grand Portage. They talked about jointly preparing a master plan for the Grand Portage area. The BIA insisted, and the NPS agreed, that the master plan would emphasize a) the historical importance of the Grand Portage area, and b) the economic welfare of the Grand Portage Band.²⁸ In 1940, Superintendent George Baggeley of Isle Royale National Park wrote enthusiastically as well as patronizingly:

If one's imagination is allowed free reign the most ideal situation would seem to be for the National Park Service to have supervision over the entire Indian Reservation allowing the Indians to continue living there and maintain their present way of life, hunting, etc. They could be used as guides and employees in various tourist activities in so far as possible, thus increasing their income to some extent.... If the Park Service were to participate in the development and administration of the Grand Portage area

²⁷ Office of the Superintendent [Isle Royale National Park], "Memorandum Report," November 13, 1939, GPNM, RG 1, Box 23, H14.

²⁸ Office of the Superintendent [Isle Royale National Park], "Memorandum Report," November 13, 1939, Regional Landscape Architect to Regional Director, July 23, 1940, Superintendent to Regional Director, August 28, 1940 and January 30, 1941, Superintendent to the Director, September 30, 1941, Associate Director to Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, March 6, 1942, Acting Regional Director to the Director, October 20, 1944, Regional Director to the Director, May 27, 1942, Regional Director to Regional Coordinator, Office of Indian Affairs, July 18, 1942, and Regional Landscape Architect to the Files, March 24, 1944, GPNM, RG 1, Box 23, H14.

it certainly should include the entire area. If it were then developed with public use facilities similar to those of Isle Royale it would in effect become a fourth stop and point of interest on one’s trip to Isle Royale and could be included in a round the Island boat service the same as Belle Isle, Rock Harbor, and Washington Harbor at the Park. If this were done the entire area could be administered as one unit with considerable advantage to the public and each area would complement the other.²⁹

The joint BIA and NPS master plan for the Grand Portage area never materialized. The close cooperation between the BIA and the NPS ended around the time World War II ended. Interagency planning, a hallmark of the New Deal’s holistic approach to natural resources management, lapsed at the end of the FDR administration. The NPS had more pressing concerns as the nation returned to a peacetime economy and national park visitation all across the country rebounded.³⁰

Furthermore, the NPS gave up its enthusiasm for making Grand Portage its base of operations for Isle Royale when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers made a study of the bay’s potential as a small boat harbor and determined that the bay was too shallow to operate a large boat service there. NPS officials also developed misgivings when the Grand Portage Band considered developing a resort in the pristine Wauswaugoning Bay instead of at Grand Portage. After a meeting with the BIA and the Band on this matter, one NPS official expressed frustration over the Band’s apparent lack of leadership. “Some local organization work seems necessary before further planning is carried on, and certainly before a construction and development program is started,” he wrote.³¹

In the spring of 1946, the BIA and the NPS exchanged several memoranda in an effort to reach agreement on a lease of tribal land at Grand Portage where the NPS could develop a dock, warehouse, and employee housing for Isle Royale operations. Unable to agree on term of a lease, the NPS looked past Grand Portage to the town of Grand Marais

²⁹ Superintendent to Regional Director, August 28, 1940, GPNM, RG 1, Box 23, H14.

³⁰ Clayton R. Koppes, “Environmental Policy and American Liberalism: The Department of the Interior, 1933-1953,” *Environmental Review* 7 (Spring 1983), 19; Donald C. Swain, “The National Park Service and the New Deal, 1933-1940,” *Pacific Historical Review* 41, no. 3 (August 1972), 330-32.

³¹ Acting Regional Director to the Director, October 20, 1944, Superintendent to District Engineer, June 25, 1945 and August 6, 1945, GPNM, RG 1, Box 23, H14.

and its small boat harbor another forty miles down the lakeshore – the future site of headquarters for the national monument.³²

The Draw of Tourism Again and Beginnings of Co-Management

With or without NPS involvement, the Grand Portage Band decided it would invest in tourism development as soon as World War II was over. The prospect that tourism could be an economic boon for the Grand Portage Indian Reservation had first arisen, as we have seen, when Grand Portage was connected to Minnesota's paved highway system and drew the attention of state parks and tourism officials. The Great Depression and World War II quelled those hopes of tourism development for a while, but the return of peace and prosperity reignited them. In 1945, the Grand Portage Band applied for a loan of \$139,000 to start a resort enterprise.

With diminished zeal to offer the BIA much cooperation, the NPS's Region Two assigned regional landscape architect Frank E. Mattson to review the BIA's "Report on the Proposed Resort Development at Grand Portage, Minnesota." In contrast to NPS input of a few years earlier, Mattson threw cold water on the idea that the Grand Portage historical site would attract much interest, or that Grand Portage's wharf facilities would be a significant launch point for travel to Isle Royale. If tourism development at Grand Portage were to pay, Mattson advised, it would be in the form of a roadside trade in gasoline, meals, and lodging for through travelers as well as sales of fishing equipment and guide service for a limited number of sportsmen coming to the area. Mattson's comments on the report were the full extent of NPS input.³³

The Grand Portage Band and the BIA went forward with the planned recreational development, establishing a small fisherman's lodge and general store in the village. Also, with assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, fish stocking was initiated in lakes and streams on the reservation.

As the recreational development brought only a modest bump in tourism revenue, the Band and the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe pressed the BIA to arrange a timber sale on the

³² Regional Landscape Architect to Regional Director, December 17, 1945, Acting Director to Division Engineer, March 19, 1946, Acting Director to Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 13, 1946, Assistant Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Acting Director, April 16, 1946, Forest Supervisor to Superintendent, June 13, 1946, and Superintendent to District Engineer, July 13, 1946, GPNM, RG 1, Box 23, H14.

³³ Regional Landscape Architect to Regional Director, December 17, 1945, GPNM, RG 1, Box 23, H14.

reservation. In the late 1940s, the BIA finally acceded to the Band’s and the Tribe’s wishes and approved a timber sale contract for clearcut logging on the Swamp Lake Timber Unit. The unit overlapped with the Fort Charlotte Wild Area. The contract allowed clearcutting in the wild area but required the logging company to leave a strip of timber around each pond.³⁴

Meanwhile, the Band renewed its interest in the potential tourist draw of the old North West Company trading post site and the historic Grand Portage route. On June 9, 1950, the Grand Portage Reservation Council passed a resolution raising the possibility of establishing a national historic site on the reservation that would be under joint local and NPS administration. The resolution invited NPS representatives to come and discuss the proposal with council members. The council’s action may have sprung in part from renewed interest in preserving historic values, perhaps spurred by concern that logging activity on the Swamp Lake Timber Unit threatened those historic values. Later, NPS officials would state that Sigurd Olson, the wilderness preservationist, was instrumental in this initiative, maybe putting the Band up to it. Whether the council acted with or without Olson’s input, its members were ambivalent and somewhat divided about the proposal, because the Band was still trying to undo its two wild-area designations that had been made without the Band’s or Tribe’s approval more than a decade earlier. Even though the NPS had had nothing to do with the wild-area designations – it had come from the BIA’s Bob Marshall – the Band assumed that the NPS now had a stake in keeping the designations in place. Members knew that wilderness preservationists like Olson wanted to protect wilderness values all the way from the Quetico-Superior protected area across the Indian-owned lands to Isle Royale. So, from the Band’s standpoint the NPS might be a wily partner for establishing a national historic site on the reservation: on one hand, the NPS would surely be able to help the reservation’s bid to attract tourism; on the other hand, the NPS was not to be trusted on the wilderness matter.³⁵

Later that summer, two NPS representatives from the regional office in Omaha, regional historian Merrill J. Mattes and regional chief of land and recreation planning George F. Ingalls, met with representatives of the councils of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Grand Portage Band to explore options. In a loose sense, the concept pointed toward

³⁴ Krahe, “Last Refuge,” 130-31.

³⁵ F. J. Scott to Lawrence C. Merriam, June 29, 1950, GPNM, RG 1, Box 23, H14; Merrill J. Mattes and George F. Ingalls to Assistant Regional Director, June 4, 1951, and Regional Director to Director, June 11, 1951, GPNM, RG 1, Box 24, H14; Ron Cockrell, “An Interview with Historian Merrill J. Mattes on Scotts Bluff, Agate Fossil Beds, Grand Portage National Monuments, and other areas, Littleton, Colorado, May 24-25, 1983,” p. 44, copy provided to authors by Ron Cockrell.

a cooperatively managed site. In that era, national historic site designations did not imply federal ownership of the land. National historic sites on state-owned land or private land were fairly common. Apparently, there were no precedents of national historic sites designated on Indian-owned land, at least not within Region Two of the NPS. So, the parties had to consider how a national historic site designation would meld with the Indian trust doctrine and Indian land ownership. Basically, they found that the NPS interest in preserving the site's historic integrity for the inspiration and enjoyment of the people and the Band's interest in developing the historic site as a draw for tourism could be aligned in a way that would be mutually beneficial. The parties reached an understanding that the NPS would prepare a proposed cooperative agreement for submission to the tribal council and the band council.³⁶

Nearly a year went by before the same two NPS representatives, Mattes and Ingalls, met with the Grand Portage Band a second time to finalize a cooperative agreement that would lead to a national historic site designation by the U.S. President. Prior to this second meeting, the NPS circulated two draft agreements to the BIA and the Grand Portage Reservation Council. The meeting took place in the community house at Grand Portage on March 23, 1951. There were numerous people present. Representing the Band were John Flatte, chairman of the council; Paul LeGarde, Wilfred Montferrand, Kenneth Sherer, Alex Bushman, and Albert Duhaime, all members of the council; and Alton Bramer, who was assistant to the BIA superintendent of the Consolidated Chippewa Agency. Lyzeme Savage, business manager of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribal Executive Committee, was present for the Tribe. BIA officials at the meeting were area director Don Foster, assistant area forester Ted Holt, superintendent James Kauffman, and Lyle W. Chisholm and Charles Bullard, forester and assistant forester for the Consolidated Chippewa Agency.³⁷

Flatte and the other band members went over the agreement with great care. Mattes reported afterwards that the meeting lasted from one in the afternoon until midnight. He thought that he and Ingalls received a grilling. "Every word and paragraph of the agreement was extensively examined and required lengthy and patient explanation on our part," Mattes

³⁶ A. E. Demaray to James W. Kauffman, April 30, 1951, GPNM, RG 1, Box 24, H14; Cockrell, "An Interview with Historian Merrill J. Mattes," p. 44; "Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of the Interior, and the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Grand Portage Band of Indians relating to the Establishment of Grand Portage National Historic Site," August 1, 1951, GPNM, RG 1, Box 36, W30.

³⁷ Merrill J. Mattes and George F. Ingalls to Assistant Regional Director, June 4, 1951, GPNM, RG 1, Box 24, H14.

wrote, but he also came away feeling satisfied by what was accomplished. In an interview many years later, Mattes stated that he did not think he and George Ingalls were given sufficient recognition for their achievement, considering what an arduous negotiation it was. About six or seven hours into the marathon session, Flatte and the rest of the council decided they would sign the document provided that a number of changes were made to it. Mattes and Ingalls then went next door to the schoolhouse, found a typewriter, and painstakingly retyped the agreement with the agreed upon changes over the course of some three hours. (Fast typists they were not.) Meanwhile, the Band’s leaders and the BIA officials waited patiently for their return, discussing forestry matters. At last Mattes and Ingalls came into the community house with six clean copies of the agreement, whereupon the six copies were carefully re-examined by all present and then signed.³⁸

The eight-page agreement set out terms that differed from the later national monument designation in some crucial respects, but closely resembled it in other respects. Just like the eventual national monument, it set aside three parcels of land for the North West Company Trading Post site, the Fort Charlotte site, and the Grand Portage route, creating the barbell-shaped preserve lying across the reservation. But unlike the eventual national monument, the Tribe and Band retained ownership of the land and covenanted use of the land for purposes of a national historic site, the agreement being effective for twenty years and renewable for additional twenty-year periods at the option of the Tribe and Band. Individual allotments within the area were to be exempt from the agreement unless covered by easement or acquired by the Tribe or Band.

The NPS pledged to erect two official national historic site markers, provide other signage as needed, and publish literature about the site. The NPS also pledged to cooperate with the Tribe and Band on a number of other matters. These included assistance with the key administrative functions of development planning and resource management, as well as cooperation “in encouraging the production and sale of native handicraft objects, through consultation and advisory assistance.” Finally, the NPS was to cooperate with the Tribe and Band “in giving employment preference to members thereof in projects related to the preservation, maintenance, development and interpretation of the historic site, including all sale of goods and services.” These terms basically matched up with terms for the later national monument except that they called on the NPS “to cooperate with the Tribe and

³⁸ Merrill J. Mattes and George F. Ingalls to Assistant Regional Director, June 4, 1951, GPNM, RG 1, Box 24, H14; Cockrell, “An Interview with Historian Merrill J. Mattes,” p. 45.

Band.” As would later become evident, a pledge to cooperate is not as binding as an outright charge of responsibility.

The Tribe and Band, for their part, pledged to permit the NPS to undertake archeological work, including archeological excavation on lands owned by the Tribe and Band within the historic site, in order to develop a fuller understanding of the site’s history. Recovered artifacts were to remain the property of the Tribe and Band.

Historic reconstruction, circa 1951. Note the interior stockade wall running past the CCC-built Great Hall. (GPNM, purple index series, unnumbered photo.)



Both parties pledged to encourage the Minnesota Historical Society to participate in the national historic site project in whatever way that organization and the parties might see fit. This was another feature of the national historic site designation that did not get carried into the later national monument designation. Apparently the NPS and the Grand Portage Band hoped they were creating the framework for the state to take an active role in developing the site. However, as it turned out, the state was as shy as the NPS when it came to committing funds to a project where it did not own the land.

Dedication ceremonies for Grand Portage National Historic Site took place on August 9, 1951. President Truman sent a message, which was read aloud. The premier of Ontario and the head of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe spoke of the importance of Grand Portage to the development of the U.S. and Canada. Ronald F. Lee, an NPS associate director and previously the agency’s senior historian, spoke on behalf of the agency. Dr. Grace Lee Nute, historian with the MNHS and a preeminent authority on Minnesota fur

trade history, gave the keynote address. The MNHS’s previous efforts to document and promote the site were highlighted. Grand Portage Indians dressed in their ancestral clothing and performed traditional dances and songs.³⁹

Within a year of the formal dedication the Grand Portage Band and the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe grew impatient with the national historic site, believing it was the NPS’s role to initiate development. Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota, a Democrat, wrote to NPS Director Conrad L. Wirth on the Indians’ behalf, inquiring about the NPS’s plans for the site. In his reply to the senator, Wirth stated that the NPS had to be careful allocating funds to a site where it did not have title to the land. As the Band and the Tribe had refused to relinquish the property, the NPS role at Grand Portage National Historic Site would be minimal. President Truman, in approving the site, had stipulated that the NPS could not spend more than \$2,200 per year. As with any national historic site that was not federally owned, the NPS’s purpose was “focusing public attention on the site and giving technical guidance in preservation and use.”⁴⁰

On June 8, 1953, the Grand Portage Band Reservation Council, after anguished debate, agreed to cede precious land for a national monument in hopes that park development would bring economic opportunity. The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe signaled its interest in conveying land title to the government for tribally owned parcels, provided that it could be accomplished through congressional legislation. Also, a law could make explicit the preferential employment privileges and other features favorable to the Indians that were already contained in the cooperative agreement for the national historic site.⁴¹

But no action on the national monument was taken for several more years, until 1958, because the land conveyance was a hard sell to the people of Grand Portage, especially for those who would be displaced from their current homes. Plus there were other distractions. The Eisenhower-era policy of “termination” – the drive to extinguish federal trust responsibility over Indian tribes – sent a chill through Indian Country. Public Law 280, aimed at moving the policy forward, extended state law jurisdiction over Indian lands in five states, including Minnesota. The school in Grand Portage ceased to be a BIA day school and became part of the Cook County Public School District based in Grand Marais.⁴²

³⁹ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 30.

⁴⁰ Letter dated February 29, 1952 cited in Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 32.

⁴¹ Beth Drost, “National Park Service: Steward of America’s Special Places,” *The Grand Portage Guide* (2016), 14-15; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 32.

⁴² John Morrin, interview by Theodore Catton, September 21, 2021.

Meanwhile, tribes faced a threat to tribal sovereignty from another direction. Wilderness advocates pushed for an act of Congress to establish a national wilderness preservation system. The Grand Portage Band along with a dozen other tribes fought legislative proposals that would have taken designated roadless or wild areas on Indian reservations like the two on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation and put them in the proposed national wilderness preservation system. The Eisenhower administration ultimately sided with the tribes on that issue, and most of the areas, including the two wild areas on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, got delisted at the end of the 1950s.⁴³

The legal challenges to tribal sovereignty aside, the Grand Portage Indian Reservation was a quiet place in the 1950s, economically depressed and out of the way. Logging on the reservation continued, and numerous band members worked as lumberjacks. But timber sales brought minimal income for the Band. In 1958, timber sales brought in \$6,787. In that same year, the sale of fishing and hunting permits on the reservation came to \$53,358. Band leaders thought outdoor recreation and tourism still showed the best prospects for lifting the standard of living in the community.⁴⁴

Establishment of Grand Portage National Monument

Senator Edward John Thye of Minnesota, a Republican, introduced a bill to establish Grand Portage National Monument on February 26, 1958. The senator introduced his bill, S. 3362, at the request of the Grand Portage Band and the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. In his brief remarks, he noted that the national monument would center on the previously designated national historic site in the village of Grand Portage, and that it was anticipated that with the national monument designation the NPS would enhance the historic reconstruction and furnish a museum at the site. He made a plea for passage of the bill that year, the centennial of Minnesota statehood.⁴⁵ He made a second plea for the bill on the Senate floor in May, calling attention to a letter he received from the village of Grand Marais in support of the legislation.⁴⁶

The Senate referred the bill to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. The chairman of the committee, Senator James E. Murray of Montana, a Democrat, requested a report on the bill from the Secretary of the Interior. Roger Ernst, assistant secretary of

⁴³ Krahe, "Last Refuge," 180-205 and Appendix C, p. 297.

⁴⁴ Danziger, *The Chippewas of Lake Superior*, 158.

⁴⁵ *Congressional Record*, February 26, 1958, p. 2818.

⁴⁶ *Congressional Record*, February 26, 1958, p. 2818, and May 22, 1958, p. 9264.

Interior, sent Senator Murray a favorable report on the bill on June 17, 1958. The Department of the Interior projected that the cost of land acquisition would be \$15,000, the cost of development would be \$300,000, and the recurring annual administrative cost would be about \$35,000. Interior’s report was accompanied by a report from the Bureau of the Budget stating that it had no objection to the bill.⁴⁷

Congressman John A. Blatnik of Minnesota, a member of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, introduced the equivalent bill in the House. The bill, H.R. 11009, was referred to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. Ernst sent an identical report on the bill to the House committee, and the House committee recommended to the full House that it enact the bill with a few minor changes of wording. The House and Senate passed the bill in August, and President Eisenhower signed it into law on September 2, 1958.⁴⁸

The bill passed easily through Congress only because the difficult matter of the land transfer to the NPS was worked out beforehand. Three local individuals prevailed on the governing councils of the Band and the Tribe to support the land transfer. The first was Judge C. R. Magney of Duluth. A distinguished and trusted jurist, a former associate justice on the Minnesota Supreme Court, Magney was also a great advocate for Minnesota state parks and the beautification of the Minnesota’s whole Lake Superior shoreline, with its growing identity as “the North Shore.” Earlier, he persuaded the Grand Portage Reservation Council to endorse the rerouting of Highway 61 through Grand Portage, and his reputation for fair dealing held up. The second individual was Effie McLean of Hovland, a longtime resident of the North Shore who was known to the Grand Portage community as a former teacher at the BIA day school in the 1920s. Alton Bramer, the third individual, was a council insider who had worked on land repurchases in the past decade. Sigurd Olson also lobbied for it. Despite his ties to the wilderness movement, he was a trusted and respected figure. These people brought with them the solid backing of the MNHS, the Cook County Historical Society, and Congressman John Blatnik, the representative for Minnesota’s Eighth Congressional District covering northeast Minnesota.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ U.S. Senate, *Providing for the Establishment of Grand Portage National Monument, Minn.*, 85th Cong., 2d sess., Report No. 2475, 1958, 1-4.

⁴⁸ U.S. House, *Providing for the Establishment of Grand Portage National Monument, Minn.*, 85th Cong, 2d sess., Report No. 2242, 1958, 1-4; *Congressional Record*, August 1, 1958, p. 16023.

⁴⁹ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 35.

The law that established Grand Portage National Monument, Public Law 85-910, took 710 acres on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation and created a unit in the National Park System. It was not the first unit in the National Park System to be carved out of an Indian reservation, but such a land transfer was a rarity. The Grand Portage Band agreed to it conditionally, with the expectation that the national monument would be a cooperative enterprise. Perhaps no other NPS unit's establishing legislation is so expressly aimed at cooperative management with an Indian tribe or band as is Public Law 85-910.

The provisions in P. L. 85-910 pertaining to cooperative management basically followed a list of ten stipulations spelled out in Resolution No. 9 of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. This undated resolution, which was passed by a unanimous vote of the tribal council presumably in 1958, declared that "the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians hereby approves and recommends that the Grand Portage National Monument be established by the Congress of the United States to be administered by the U.S. National Park Service in accordance with the following plans involving Indian interest on the Grand Portage National Monument." It then listed ten items, the first three of which dealt with a description of the land to be included in the monument and the process of transfer.⁵⁰

In P. L. 85-910, Sections 4 through 10 very nearly correspond to items 4 through 10 in the tribal resolution, demonstrating the close cooperation between the Indians and the lawmakers. Section 4 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to "grant recognized members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe the preferential privilege to provide those visitor accommodations and services, including guide services, which he deems are necessary." Section 5 provides that tribal members are to be given preferential employment "in the performance of any construction, maintenance, or any other service within the monument for which they are qualified." Section 6 states that tribal members are to be encouraged to produce and sell native handicrafts at the monument while the Interior Department pledges not to "interfere with the operation or existence of any trade or business of said tribe outside the boundaries of the national monument." Section 7 promises that tribal members will not be denied the right to traverse monument property for the purposes of "logging their land, fishing, or boating, or as a means of access to their homes, businesses, or other areas of use, and they shall have the right to traverse such areas in pursuit of their traditional rights to hunt and trap outside the monument." The Secretary does, however, reserve the right to regulate the conditions under which monument property may be traversed if it should affect the

⁵⁰ Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, "Resolution No. 9," undated, GPNM, RG 1, Box 36, W30.

monument’s preservation and interpretation of its unique historic features. By Section 8, the Department of the Interior is to construct and maintain docking facilities “subject to the availability of appropriated funds,” with tribal members having use of this marina free of charge. By Section 9, the Department is pledged to provide “consultative or advisory assistance” to the Band for development projects on lands adjacent to the monument. Section 10 states that the Secretary of the Interior is to administer the area according to the laws of the National Park System – a slight but significant variance with the Tribe’s and Band’s stipulation that the monument would not interfere with any trade or business adjacent to the monument. Finally, Section 11 of the law states that should the monument ever be abandoned by the federal government, title to the property will revert automatically to the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Grand Portage Band.⁵¹ This section is a rewording of item three in the tribal resolution. There could be no clearer statement of the position that the NPS receives land tenure inside the Band’s homeland only because the arrangement is supposed to work to the advantage of the Band as well as the NPS on behalf of the American people.

After the law was passed, transfer of land from Indian trust to NPS ownership proceeded according to plan. The Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Grand Portage Band passed resolutions approving the transfer, and the Secretary of the Interior gave his approval on January 27, 1960, thereby establishing the monument. A public notice on the establishment of the monument was published in the *Federal Register* on March 31, 1960.⁵²

The NPS traditionally marks the time of a unit’s establishment from the date on which on-site unit administration is initiated. This distinguishes between when a unit is merely “authorized” and when it is actually “established.” (By this definition, a site’s actual establishment entails not only execution of a land transfer, but also a commitment of agency funds and personnel, or establishing “boots on the ground” as the saying now goes.) The NPS appointed Eliot Davis to serve as the unit’s first superintendent, with headquarters in Grand Marais. Davis’s administration began on August 21, 1960.⁵³

⁵¹ An Act to Provide for the Establishment of Grand Portage National Monument in the State of Minnesota, September 2, 1958, P.L. 85-910, 72 Stat. 1751.

⁵² Office of the Secretary, “Minnesota: Notice of Establishment of Grand Portage National Monument,” *Federal Register* 26, no. 63 (March 31, 1960), pp. 2747-48.

⁵³ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 37.

Chapter Three

A Partnership Built on Promises, 1960 to 1995

Few units in the National Park System are as closely tied to a native community as Grand Portage National Monument. The land base for the national monument was entirely carved from within the exterior boundaries of the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. The core area of the national monument was taken from the very midst of the Grand Portage village. The establishing act recognized the fact that the Band willingly gave up this small yet vital acreage in order to get something valuable in return: good jobs and more economic development. Numerous provisions in the law were aimed at forging a partnership between the NPS and the native community that would help bring forth economic development.

Eventually the partnership would be defined as a partnership of equals, with government-to-government relations providing the framework, and co-management of the national monument being the end goal. But in 1960 the resources of the Band and the NPS were anything but equal, and the conceptual ideals of government-to-government relations and co-management still lay several decades in the future. Tribal governments were small and faced many challenges, and NPS superintendents had scant experience working with American Indians at any level of government; indeed, NPS superintendents in 1960 were used to operating within a bureaucracy that was almost exclusively white, male, and oriented to a white, middle-class public. If the NPS in 1960 had a model for partnering with a native community, it was the BIA's antiquated model of paternalism, which was rooted in decades of federal Indian policy. Superintendents at Grand Portage National Monument soon moved away from paternalism, yet it would be more than three decades before they embraced co-management. From 1960 to 1995 they were mostly in limbo between the two, and they tried to get by mostly with promises.

Monument and Band Leadership Through the Years

From 1960 to 1997, Grand Portage National Monument was led by eight superintendents. Their average length of tenure was four and a quarter years. All were career NPS people with prior experience as park rangers at the supervisory or district level; two

came with prior experience as park superintendents. One had a college degree in history, another in anthropology, most others held degrees in forestry or a related field. All were white males.

Eliot Davis served as superintendent from August 5, 1960 to January 30, 1965. A native of Boston, he had a bachelor of arts degree from Antioch College in Ohio. He was a veteran of World War II, having served as a major in the infantry with the occupation forces in Japan. He had experience as a district park ranger in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and was chief ranger at Isle Royale National Park prior to his appointment to Grand Portage.¹

The monument’s second superintendent, Raymond L. Nelson, came to Grand Portage from Pea Ridge National Military Park, Arkansas, on June 15, 1965. He held the post just a little over one year until August 31, 1966, when he transferred to the Stephen Mather Training Center at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.²

William Bromberg occupied the post for nearly two and a half years from November 6, 1966 to April 20, 1969. A native of Roxbury, Pennsylvania, he had a degree in anthropology from Mexico City College in Mexico. An experienced park ranger, his resume included posts in parks in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Georgia, and more recently a stint at Isle Royale. He was assistant superintendent at San Juan Island National Historic Site in Washington state for nearly two years prior to coming to Grand Portage. Bromberg left Grand Portage to become superintendent at Virgin Islands National Park.³

Richard S. Tousley was superintendent for a little over two years from June 29, 1969 to July 10, 1971. A native of Joliet, Illinois, Tousley spent his early NPS career as a ranger at Mount Rainier National Park. He came to Grand Portage from Muir Woods National Monument, California, where he was superintendent. While at Grand Portage, he had an important ancillary duty as keyman for the future Voyageurs National Park. Less than a month after Tousley arrived at Grand Portage a fire destroyed the CCC-built Great Hall. Tousley led the monument through the difficult aftermath. From Grand Portage he went on to become superintendent at Dinosaur National Monument, Colorado and Utah, followed by other senior administrative positions.⁴

¹ “Eliot Davis Named Supt. of Grand Portage Monument,” *Cook County News-Herald* (Grand Marais, Minnesota), August 4, 1960.

² Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 132.

³ “New Grand Portage Supervisor Named,” *Duluth News-Tribune*, November 22, 1966.

⁴ “Richard S. Tousley, New GP Monument Superintendent,” *Cook County News-Herald*, June 26, 1969.

A Partnership Built on Promises, 1960 to 1995

Sherman W. Perry was superintendent at Grand Portage for four years from September 5, 1971 to October 26, 1975, during which time much of the historic reconstruction in the stockade was completed. He was supervisory historian or chief historian at two national historical parks prior to serving as superintendent at Stones River National Military Park in Tennessee, from whence he transferred to Grand Portage. He transferred from Grand Portage to the Chicago Field Office (an adjunct to the Midwest Regional Office in Omaha) and subsequently served in the Midwest Regional Office.⁵

Ivan D. Miller followed Perry as the next superintendent, serving for nearly five years from March 14, 1976 to December 13, 1980. A native Minnesotan, Miller's NPS career began in 1963. He held ranger jobs in such "crown jewel" national parks as Yosemite, Glacier, and Denali before doing a stint in the Washington Office



Park headquarters in Grand Marais, 1976. The promise of moving headquarters to Grand Portage was not fulfilled until 2007. (GPNM, RG 1, Box 5, File 39.)

prior to his appointment to Grand Portage. An experienced planner with a master's degree in forestry, he resigned rather abruptly to accept a foreign assignment to Saudi Arabia to help establish the Saudi kingdom's first national park.⁶

Anthony Andersen was selected to be the monument's next superintendent and entered on duty on January 25, 1981. A native of Salem, Oregon, Andersen held bachelor's degrees in natural science and biology from Seattle University and a master's degree from the University of Washington. At age forty, he had over a decade of experience working his way up the ranger ranks in Mount Rainier, Olympic, and Yosemite national parks as well as National Capitol Parks in Washington, D.C. Andersen held the post for five and a half years, and transferred to Saint Croix National Scenic River in June 1986.⁷

⁵ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 135.

⁶ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 136; Theodore J. Karamanski, *A Nationalized Lakeshore: The Creation and Administration of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* (National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 2000) at nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/slbe; "Millers to Saudi Arabia," *GRPO Special Edition Newsletter* (Grand Portage National Monument), no date; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1980 and 1981, Harpers Ferry Center (hereafter HFC).

⁷ "Miller's Successor Chosen for Park Superintendent," *Cook County News-Herald*, January 8, 1981; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1986, HFC.

Dean Einwalter became the eighth superintendent at Grand Portage on September 14, 1986, and served until his retirement in 1997. Raised in Waterloo, Iowa, and a graduate of the University of Iowa at Cedar Falls, his thirty-year career with the NPS included ranger positions at Curecanti National Recreation Area, Colorado, and Ozark National Scenic Riverways, Missouri. His nearly eleven-year tenure at Grand Portage culminated with overseeing the planning and fundraising efforts for the visitor center.⁸

The superintendents were the primary point of contact between the NPS and the Grand Portage Band. For the Band, the transfer of superintendents in and out of Grand Portage and the personalities and resumes that came with each new appointment were always of interest. At smaller NPS units like Grand Portage, the NPS must often contend with a local perception that the unit is not getting the very best administrators the agency has to offer, or that the superintendency is being treated like a turnstyle for mid-level leadership training and career advancement opportunities. There were periods of fairly high turnover at Grand Portage, but over the long duration the average length of tenure of four and a quarter years was not out of the ordinary for a small NPS unit. The superintendents who were assigned to Grand Portage from 1960 through 1996 were by and large successful in their roles. However, in developing close working relationships with the Band all of them were hindered by the fact that headquarters was located thirty-eight miles from the monument in Grand Marais. Even though the Band complained about the remote location of headquarters, no superintendent addressed the problem until the late 1990s.

Each time a superintendent transferred out, there was a gap of one to six months when the monument was headed by an acting superintendent. The interim from when Davis left to Nelson’s arrival was the longest gap at six months; the interim from Miller to Anderson was the shortest at one month. Acting superintendents usually filled the void for about two months while the regional office found a suitable replacement. In five out of seven cases when the monument was between superintendents the chief ranger stepped into the acting superintendent role. After Bromberg, the regional office sent a series of acting superintendents to the monument on two-week rotations. Between Andersen and Einwalter, the regional office appointed Janice Wobbenhorst to serve as acting superintendent. Serving in the role in 1986, she was the first female administrator to head the park.

Over the first three and a half decades of the national monument’s existence the Grand Portage Band had a revolving leadership, too, as the composition of the five-member

⁸ “Dean Clark Einwalter,” *Cook County News Herald*, December 31, 2021.

governing body changed frequently. The Band's leadership at the top was remarkably stable, however, with James Hendrickson serving as chairman of the Grand Portage Reservation Council or the Reservation Business Committee (RBC) in most years from 1954 to 1993. The Band's leadership was predominantly supportive of the monument project; therefore, it wanted the partnership with the NPS to succeed. But when the federal government appeared not to deliver on its promises to the Band, leaders differed on how to respond and how to work with the superintendent.

Paul LeGarde was one who called for a guarded relationship with the NPS. Prior to the congressional act of 1958, he opposed transferring land to the NPS and insisted that the ground should be leased to the NPS instead. After the transfer was made against his advice, he eventually moderated his position so that he could work with the NPS, but he remained suspicious that the NPS would attempt to acquire additional land in the Pigeon Point area that properly belonged in the reservation.

Paul Cyrette, chairman of the RBC in 1970, took a confrontational line with the NPS when the Band's disappointment approached a breaking point after the CCC-built Great Hall was destroyed by fire in 1969. In a letter to the director of the NPS, Cyrette recounted how the Grand Portage Band gave up nearly 800 acres on the reservation with the understanding that the national monument would contribute substantially to the reservation economy and the livelihood of the community. "Among other promises," Cyrette wrote, "it was assured that: (a) The Monument offices and headquarters would be located at Grand Portage following a temporary location at Grand Marais. (b) A new museum, library, and visitors center would be constructed on the Monument. (c) Residential housing for Park Service personnel would be constructed on the Monument. (d) A canoe yard and replica facilities would be provided at Fort Charlotte on the Pigeon River. (e) A fully interpretive restoration on all buildings and facilities existing within the stockade area in fur trade times would be provided." Since 1960, Cyrette continued, the NPS had delivered on not one of these commitments.⁹

At this time, when the NPS was deliberating over how to proceed after the 1969 fire, Superintendent Tousley had to acknowledge that NPS relations with the Band were troubled. He wrote to Fred C. Fagergren, director of the Midwest Region: "James Hull, Business Manager, called me to say that the Reservation Committee has asked him to draft a resolution for them. Essentially, the resolution will condemn the National Park Service for

⁹ Paul Cyrette to National Park Service, April 11, 1970, GPNM, RG 1, Box 24, H14.

failing to develop the monument during the past twelve years.” Tousley conceded to Hull that the agency was behind in its construction program, citing the competition for construction funds across the whole National Park System. Cyrette’s and Hull’s pressure campaign succeeded to the extent that Fagergren reprogrammed \$350,000 for reconstruction of the Great Hall.¹⁰

James Hull was another leader who remained a steadfast champion of the monument project even though the NPS frustrated him mightily. His personal relations with monument staff were sometimes contentious. Once, early on, when a job vacancy appeared on the monument staff, he informed the chief ranger David Stimson that he would like to apply for that position. All too quickly, it seemed, the position was filled by someone else, a non-Indian. Hull then claimed that he did not really want the position; he was merely testing the monument administration’s commitment to the Indian hiring preference – and in his view it had clearly failed the test.¹¹

Hull wrote a scathing indictment of the NPS to Superintendent Miller in 1976. Hull prefaced this long letter by saying he had no complaint against Miller personally. (Miller had been superintendent for less than a year then.) Hull felt compelled “to complain about the indifference, the negligence, and the constantly abrasive non-cooperation of the National Park Service in its promised development of the Grand Portage National Monument.” One paragraph from the letter will be quoted to show Hull’s view of the NPS’s supposed bad faith:

The substance of the promises offered by the Park Service at that time [1957] included prompt construction of a new visitors center incorporating offices, a small museum and a library. It was assured that housing for Park Service personnel would be constructed on the Monument at an early date. Following necessary archeological digging and historical research, several additional structural replicas of fur trade activity would be built within the stockade area. Concurrent with this development, a summer-long program of live historical interpretation with costumed principals was assured. Behind all of this, was the promise that total staffing of the Monument,

¹⁰ Superintendent to Regional Director, April 17, 1970, GPNM, RG 1, Box 24, H14; “In Days Gone By,” *Moccasin Telegraph* (July 2001), 10.

¹¹ James Hull to George Fry, April 18, 1960, GPNM, RG 1, Box 24, H14.

including offices and administration, would move promptly and surely toward full Indian involvement through recruitment of qualified individuals and training of others applying for jobs. Needless to say, none of these commitments have been honored during the seventeen years since they were made.¹²

Another recurrent source of strain between the NPS and the Band developed around the 1958 act's Section 9, which pledges "consultative or advisory assistance" to the Band for development projects on lands adjacent to the monument. To the Band, Section 9 implied that the NPS would partner with it in the redesign of water, sewer, and power utilities spanning the monument area in Grand Portage village, since the NPS property lay practically in the heart of the village. However, the NPS insisted on taking a narrow view of Section 9, underscoring its language that such aid would be given "to the extent that appropriated funds and personnel are available therefor." In 1972, Mid-Atlantic regional director Chester Brooks informed James Hendrickson, the chairman of the Reservation Business Committee at the time: "we cannot fund any portion of your project that is not on National Park Service land or for National Park Service purposes."¹³ Such a narrow reading of Section 9 would render that provision virtually useless as far as the Band was concerned. That was unacceptable to the Band because Section 9 was clearly intended, along with numerous other provisions in the law, to foster a partnership.

James Hendrickson, the long-serving chairman of the Band from 1954 to 1994, who occasionally served on the Minnesota Chippewa Tribal Executive Committee as well, was a steadfast supporter of the national monument. He was secretary-treasurer on the Grand Portage Reservation Council in 1953 when the Minnesota Chippewa Tribal Executive Committee went on record in favor of creating Grand Portage National Monument in place of the ineffectual Grand Portage National Historic Site. Hendrickson was born in Grand

¹² James Hull to Ivan Miller, December 3, 1976, GPNM, RG 1, Box 16, D34.

¹³ Chester L. Brooks to James Hendrickson, November 3, 1972, GPNM, RG 1, Box 33, L34. Brooks was regional director for the Mid Atlantic Region. Grand Portage National Monument came under the administration of various regional offices as the NPS realigned its regional boundaries. Grand Portage was in the Midwest Region, with the regional office located in Omaha, Nebraska, through most of the 1950s and 1960s – just as it is today. However, from July 1955 to July 1960 it was in Region V (the name changed to Northeast Region in 1962) with the regional office located in Philadelphia. After reverting to the Midwest Region in 1960, Grand Portage was once more moved to another region in November 1971. This was the former Northeast Region, realigned and renamed the Mid Atlantic Region, with regional office in Philadelphia still. After another realignment in January 1974, Grand Portage was once more returned to the Midwest Region.

Portage in 1928 and served in the U.S. Navy from 1946 to 1948 onboard the *U.S.S. Kerrsarge*, returning to his native village to make a modest living in commercial fishing. His younger brother, Herman, also worked seasonally in commercial fishing, and was on the park staff as maintenance foreman from 1972 to 1984. Herman’s wife, Mary Ann Hendrickson ran the coffee shop concession in the early 1970s. James and Herman’s mother, Cecilia (LeSage) Hendrickson worked for the park seasonally as a cultural demonstrator.¹⁴

Despite the Band’s intense disappointment over the slow pace of development, and the NPS’s sometimes arms-length approach to its partnership with the Band, there was never any serious move by either party to terminate their joint project. The monument’s and the Band’s leaders in the period 1960 through 1996 managed to maintain functional if cool relations so that the monument would endure and eventually prosper.

Historic Reconstructions

When the NPS began administration of Grand Portage National Monument in 1960 the historic reconstructions were showing their age. The CCC-built Great Hall and stockade had not seen any maintenance since the late 1930s. The building had a leaky roof, and



Archeological dig of sump along south wall of stockade, July 1963. (NPS photo by Edmund J. Bucknall.)

sections of the stockade were leaning precariously where the post butts had rotted in wet ground. The 250-foot dock had received \$500 in repairs following an ice storm in the 1950s. The only other NPS funds invested in the property in the 1950s was a \$1,000 allotment for clearing the Grand Portage route and installing footbridges. The first major work performed at the newly designated national monument consisted of a

maintenance package that included replacement of the roof on the Great Hall, repairs to the stockade, and reconstruction of the CCC-built Mount Rose Trail, as well as obliteration and

¹⁴ “James Stanley Hendrickson,” *Duluth News-Tribune*, April 6, 2009; “Herman Hendrickson, 1930-2014” at <https://doughertyfuneralduluth.com/obituaries/herman-hendrickson>; Pam Neil, “A Monumental Task: Grand Portage National Monument Celebrates 50 Years,” *The Grand Portage Guide*, 2008, pp. 14, 19.

landscaping of a former parking area in front of the Great Hall and cleanup of the shoreline outside the stockade. The maintenance package was completed in 1963.¹⁵

The NPS followed up that effort two to three years later by completely replacing the stockade and adding an elevated gatehouse and two sets of heavy gates at the rear (east) entrance, or “east gate.” This new historic reconstruction followed four seasons of archeological investigation by the Minnesota Historical Society working under contract to the NPS. (For more about the archeology preceding these various historic reconstructions, see Chapter Seven).¹⁶

The Great Hall – Destroyed and Rebuilt

On July 15, 1969, the Great Hall burned to the ground in a lightning-caused fire. Two campers reported the fire early in the morning. By the time fire crews arrived, flames engulfed the old wooden building and it could not be saved. Hundreds of artifacts – Ojibwa costumes, birchbark canoes, paintings, and archeological finds – were consumed in the fire. Fortunately, part of the monument’s museum collection was housed in the Crawford cabin located in the opposite corner of the stockade, out of the fire’s reach. Also, the fire was suppressed before it spread to the adjoining east gate complex.¹⁷

The loss of the Great Hall was a huge setback for the monument. Just as the place began to attract more visitors, the Grand Portage community lost its key tourist attraction. The loss added to the Grand Portage Band’s growing disappointment over the NPS’s slow pace of development of the national monument. As we have seen, the Band applied pressure on the NPS to get moving on a development program, and the NPS responded by redirecting construction funds to rebuild the Great Hall as soon as possible. Furthermore, the NPS initiated preparation of a master plan for Grand Portage National Monument, which was completed in 1973. As the master plan was overdue by this time, the NPS took the unusual step of moving ahead with reconstruction of the Great Hall even before the master plan was approved.

¹⁵ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 33, 39; Completion Report, North West Company Area, Restore Stockade, July 23, 1963, National Park Service, Technical Information Center, electronic (digital) files (hereafter cited as ETIC).

¹⁶ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 19, 39.

¹⁷ Richard S. Tousley to Russell Tabbert, October 14, 1970, GPNM, RG 1, Box 30, K54; Douglas Birk, “Grand Portage National Monument,” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File D Birk Nomination. For more about the cause of the fire and the extent of damages see Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 47-50.

If the NPS was forced to move ahead with the reconstruction rather precipitously, it still controlled the process. From the NPS’s standpoint, the total loss of the building was not an unmitigated tragedy. Rather, it presented an exceptional opportunity to redo the historic reconstruction to a higher standard. The CCC-built structure was not historically accurate. Although archeological work in the 1930s had revealed the location of the palisade walls and the original placement of the building within the stockade area, the reconstructed building itself was not done well. Rather than a fort of the North West Company, it looked more like a frontier fort of a later period. Now the NPS could conduct more archeological work as well as historical research before proceeding with the second historic reconstruction.

NPS historian Erwin N. Thompson prepared a historic structure report for the Great Hall, while Alan R. Woolworth, archeologist with the Minnesota Historical Society, led the archeological investigation of the building site under NPS funding. On the basis of these



The Great Hall as rebuilt in 1972, after the first historic reconstruction burned in 1969. (GPNM, purple index series, No. 97.)

studies, construction of the new Great Hall started in 1971. The building was complete and opened to the public in 1972. Although the interior floor plan and exterior facades were somewhat conjectural, they were much more authentic than the earlier reconstruction. Significant new touches – all of which were indicated in the historical

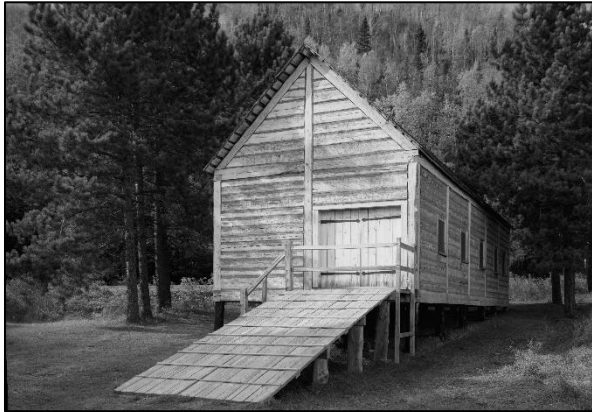
and archeological record – included the addition of a long front porch facing the lake, the use of an exterior paint scheme that incorporated a “Spanish brown” color, and the association of the Great Hall with a separate kitchen building that stood immediately in its rear.¹⁸

¹⁸ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 50-51; “Grand Portage Shows Traders Lived Well,” *Daily Journal* (International Falls, Minnesota), August 31, 1970. Note that the Spanish brown paint was not applied until 1977 (Ivan D. Miller to Alan Woolworth, December 13, 1976, GPNM, CF, H3015. See also Erwin N. Thompson, *Grand Portage National Monument, Great Hall, Historic Structure Report, History Data Section* (Philadelphia: National Park Service, Office of History and Historic Architecture, Eastern Service Center, 1970); Alan R. Woolworth, *Archeological Excavations*

Kitchen Building and Canoe Warehouse

The historic reconstruction of the Great Hall led directly into preparations for completing a historic reconstruction of the separate kitchen building. Thompson prepared a historic structure report for the kitchen building and Woolworth's team did the preliminary archeology work. Construction on the kitchen building was started in 1973 and was finally completed after delays in 1978. An interior furnishings report was completed the next year, and the elaborate furnishings followed after that.¹⁹

While the kitchen building reconstruction was stalled, the NPS built the canoe warehouse outside the west entrance to the stockade. The existence of this structure was already known from the archeology performed in the 1930s, but Woolworth's team provided further detail. The building, with its valuable interior interpretive space and canoe displays, was opened to the public in 1973.²⁰



Canoe warehouse, completed in 1973. (Library of Congress.)

The Great Hall, the kitchen, and the canoe warehouse cost about \$1.1 million. These three historic reconstructions went a long way to fulfilling the promise of developing the national monument in partnership with the Grand Portage Band as outlined in the 1958 establishing legislation. The monument's master plan, which was completed with input from the Grand Portage Band in 1973, envisioned still more historic reconstructions inside the stockade area, but NPS historians torpedoed the rest of the package. Merrill J. Mattes, the former regional historian now with the Denver Service Center, prepared a memorandum for the Midwest regional director recommending cancelation of what was called "Reconstruction Phase II" at Grand Portage. With the backing of other NPS historians

of the North West Company's Depot, Grand Portage, Minnesota, in 1970-1971, by the Minnesota Historical Society (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1975).

¹⁹ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 54-55, 60; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1979, HFC. See also Erwin N. Thompson, *Historic Structure Report, Kitchen, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota* (Denver: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1973); Alan R. Woolworth, *Archeological Excavations at Grand Portage National Monument in 1973* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1975).

²⁰ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 54.

including Erwin Thompson, he said there was not enough historical information to do it well. Indeed, Mattes informed the regional director that Robert M. Utley, associate director for park historic preservation, had strongly objected to the reconstruction of the kitchen building and the canoe warehouse for the same reason; however, those projects had been allowed to go forward on the basis of fairly good archeological data. Even with more archeological investigation in the stockade area, Mattes wrote, he and his team doubted that there would ever be enough archeological data to overcome the dearth of historical information about the other buildings.²¹



East gate and kitchen.
(Library of Congress.)

Furthermore, Mattes pointed out, Fort William over the border in Ontario was being reconstructed totally, so Grand Portage visitors could go to Fort William to see the variety of structures. At Grand Portage, the NPS should stick with what was most authentic. Mattes and his colleagues rejected the view that more “interpretive structures must be built if we are to tell the complete story.” It should be done through other interpretive devices.²²

At this time the NPS was moving toward a more restrictive policy on historic reconstructions. Utley prepared a policy statement for Director Ronald H. Walker, which was issued in 1974. The more restrictive approach was carried into the *Management Policies* published in 1975. An even stronger statement on historic reconstructions was included in

²¹ Manager, Historic Preservation Team, to Regional Director, February 20, 1974, GPNM, RG 1, Box 26, H3015.

²² Ibid.

NPS-28, the *Service's Cultural Resource Management Guideline*. It declares that “the Service does not endorse, support, or encourage the reconstruction of historic structures.”²³

Some people continued to advocate for more historic reconstructions inside the stockade.²⁴ Since the master plan called for more historic reconstructions, it was plausible that the NPS would make an exception to policy and add more of them to the ones already built.

The Master Plan of 1973

The master plan called for not just more historic reconstructions, but also a visitor center and headquarters complex, a road bypass around the historic stockade area, an employee residence area on the bypass road, and a new maintenance facility, plus coordination with the Band on construction of utility systems.²⁵ All of that additional physical plant for the monument remained in the offing at the end of the decade, and in fact did not get built for another three to four decades. The bypass road did not get built at all. So, despite the great strides in completing most of the historic reconstructions in the national monument during the 1970s, there was much development outside the stockade area remaining to be done.

The master plan was supposed to provide an impetus for park development, but it was denigrated by the NPS almost as soon as it was completed, so it lost that influence. NPS historians were not the only ones to take issue with it. The Midwest Regional Office took the view that the plan was defective because it lacked an environmental impact statement as was newly required in NPS planning policy; therefore, the plan was no longer operative. The master plan was also found to be flawed because it did not take account of the Grand Portage Band's new resort enterprise, which was in the planning stage at the same time the NPS was at work on the master plan. (The master plan was approved in January 1973 and the Band broke ground on the new resort enterprise the following August.) For all these reasons, the

²³ Barry Mackintosh, “To Reconstruct or Not to Reconstruct: An Overview of NPS Policy and Practice,” *Resource Management Bulletin* 9, no. 1 (1990), 7.

²⁴ Curtis L. Roy to Dean Einwalter, October 10, 1990, GPNM, CF, H3015; Phone conversation notes with Mr. Ian Stewart, Deputy Director, Minnesota Historical Society, July 2, 2001, and Phone conversation notes with Mr. Scott Anfinson, SHPO Archeologist, Minnesota Historical Society, July 2, 2001, GPNM, Central Files, File “GMP.”

²⁵ “Grand Portage Master Plan Discussion Set,” *Duluth News-Tribune*, September 19, 1971; National Park Service, *Master Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota* (Denver: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1973), 2.

Midwest Region decided to downgrade the master plan to a resource document rather than treat it as the monument’s approved master plan.

When a team from the regional office conducted an operations evaluation at Grand Portage National Monument in 1976, it found that the park staff still regarded the master plan as operative, which was contrary to the regional office’s impression that the plan had been set aside. The regional office was especially doubtful about the master plan’s vision of a redesign of the road network around the national monument. The operations evaluation team called for clarification on the status of the master plan. It appeared to suggest that a fresh look at planning issues would be beneficial, and that it ought to take cognizance of the new resort in Grand Portage village and involve the Band more fulsomely the next time. However, apparently in deference to the superintendent and park staff, the team stopped short of recommending a complete do-over of the master plan. Flawed or discredited though it might have been, the master plan of 1973 was not replaced.²⁶

There was within the NPS a narrow view and a broad view of how the partnership with the Grand Portage Band in this partnership park ought to work. In the narrow view, the partnership needed to focus on the area of the national monument; everything else was outside the NPS’s jurisdiction, and therefore outside the purview of the partnership. In the broad view, Grand Portage National Monument was embedded in the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, so the NPS and the Band had overlapping interests. In a sense, they were two communities existing in a shared space. In this view, the partnership needed to consider all of the monument’s and the village’s common interests over a wider area: from signage on U.S. Highway 61, to pedestrian safety on village roads in and around the monument, to development of the local tourism economy. The clash between the narrow view and the broad view seemed to come up whenever there was costly infrastructure under discussion, such as when the Band wanted NPS help in relocating water and sewer lines, or when the master plan called for a major realignment of roadways.

²⁶ National Park Service, *Master Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 30; Operation Evaluation Report, Grand Portage National Monument, June 1976, GPNM, RG 1, Box 5, A54. According to a later regional office memorandum (1987), the exact status of the master plan was not resolved. The 1987 memorandum stated, “Our files indicate that, while the Master Plan was approved in 1973, a decision was made in 1976/1977 not to refer to the 1973 document as an approved plan, mainly due to the Service’s failure to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. Since 1977, the plan has, therefore, been considered to be a resource document which provides direction to area management and development.” (Acting Regional Director to Manager, Denver Service Center, August 24, 1987, GPNM, RG 1, Box 33, L76.

The Road Plan

The road plan was perhaps the most ambitious feature of the master plan. It came closer to implementation than the skeptics in the regional office ever thought it would, though, as they predicted, it ultimately did not come to pass. County Road 17 runs through Grand Portage village and goes right past the rear of the stockade. The road plan was to reroute this road segment and to build a bypass around the historic site. The new road alignment would have gone around the back side of Mount Rose, crossing Grand Portage Creek via a new bridge located about 1500 feet upstream from the existing stone bridge. The segment of County Road 17 behind the stockade would have been removed and turned into a foot trail. Rerouting the traffic on County Road 17 to go around the back of Mount Rose would have been an obvious benefit to the national monument, allowing the NPS to restore the area adjacent to the stockade to a more historic appearance. It would have been a benefit to the park and the village to eliminate the congested T intersection at the stone bridge as well as the hazardous pedestrian crossing between the stockade and the foot of the Mount Rose Trail. On the other hand, it would have made the two wings of the village located on either side of Grand Portage Creek a little less accessible to one another.

The road plan was an expensive proposition. Before Congress would appropriate money for it, the NPS would have to obtain the approval of several partners as well as a clear title to the existing roadway. Oddly enough, it was not clear who owned this section of County Road 17. The road segment had been part of Highway 61 until the state built a bypass around the village. The county claimed the road according to the Minnesota state law that says when a state highway is abandoned it goes to the county. The BIA claimed this segment since it was on the reservation. The NPS claimed control since it traversed the national monument. But no party wanted to press its claim in court, so the ownership remained unclear. The Band approved the road plan in principle, but it recognized there would be several partners involved and it did not want to see the road system at the heart of the village get tied up in knots if one partner or another decided to hold up construction. The RBC agreed to the master plan with the following stipulation, “No roads presently existing, will be closed, until new roads are located and completed, and new road alignment is approved by the Grand Portage RBC.”²⁷

²⁷ National Park Service, *Master Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 30; Tim Cochrane interview by Theodore Catton, September 20, 2021.

Superintendent Miller looked into the ownership of the road right-of-way when the NPS was preparing to install a new culvert across the road at the T intersection. County engineer Pat Hines informed Miller the county had no objection to the culvert, but as to the ownership of the right-of-way there was no answer.²⁸

In 1984, Superintendent Andersen proposed a joint project by the NPS and the BIA to complete the bypass as envisioned in the master plan. As the proposal developed, it was agreed that the NPS would provide the right-of-way for the bypass to the BIA if the BIA oversaw the road construction. The county’s role in closing the short segment of County Road 17 was mooted. The cost for construction, including planning and design, was set at \$1,693,000. (This included an appreciable outlay for a 100-foot bridge span across Grand Portage Creek.) The project hit a snag when the NPS determined the need for an environmental impact statement to assess the adverse impact of building a road bridge across the Grand Portage Trail, a historic resource. However, the proposal appeared to get clearance around that issue, and it was anticipated that the BIA would move ahead on construction in 1987. A cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs was drawn up, though perhaps never signed. For reasons that are unclear, the project fizzled out.²⁹

Separate from the plan for changes to County Road 17, the NPS also wanted to see a realignment of the western terminus of BIA Road 5, also called the Lower Bay Road, where it ran along the lakeshore through the eastern portion of the national monument. While not as consequential as the plan for County Road 17, the minor realignment of BIA Road 5 was integral to the NPS’s overall project of eliminating all roads from the national monument area. It was mentioned in passing in the 1973 master plan. As most of the NPS road plan floundered, this minor road realignment came to fruition. In a cooperative agreement between the NPS and the BIA in 1988, the NPS granted a right-of-way so that the BIA could construct a road across the northeast corner of the national monument. The minor realignment of BIA Road 5 was 7,200 feet long and just nicked the corner of the national monument for a 1,000-foot stretch of the new roadway. The realignment went around the east and north edges of what is now called the East Meadow, whereas the original alignment

²⁸ Superintendent to Files, January 4, 1979, GPNM, RG 1, Box 14, D32.

²⁹ Superintendent to Regional Director (with attachments), February 14, 1984, Anthony L. Andersen to Bill Richard, August 15, 1985, and Superintendent to Regional Director (with attachments), March 30, 1987, GPNM, RG 1, Box 13, D30; Superintendent to Associate Regional Director, June 5, 1985, and Regional Director to Manager, Denver Service Center, April 21, 1986, GPNM, RG 1, Box 14, D30; Acting Regional Director to Area Engineer, March 11, 1988, GPNM, RG 1, Box 33, L30.



East Meadow.
(Authors photo.)

went along the lakeshore in front of the East Meadow. After construction was completed, the original road segment was vacated. The NPS maintained part of it as a service road to the maintenance crew's boneyard, and obliterated the short section from there to the national monument boundary.³⁰

Other Development of the National Monument

After the strong investment in rebuilding the Great Hall and building the canoe warehouse and the kitchen building, the park received a smaller stream of development funds through the 1980s with which to complete the interiors of the Great Hall and kitchen building, pave the visitor parking lot, and accomplish other sundry infrastructure development. In the early 1980s, the NPS rebuilt the top three feet of the kitchen building's chimney; later, it installed underground drainage pipe to solve a problem of excessive moisture and frost heave around the structure. It also replaced much of the stockade wall, performing the work to a higher standard of authenticity and durability than before.³¹

³⁰ Superintendent to Regional Director (with attachment), March 3, 1988, and John Kawamoto to James Hendrickson, March 18, 1988, GPNM, CF, File "National Park Service Parcel No. 2 BIA Road 5."

³¹ Anthony L. Andersen to Friends of Grand Portage January 17, 1985, GPNM, RG 1, Box 3, A38; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1984, 1986, and 1987, HFC; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 65; Superintendent to Associate Regional Director, March 31, 1989, GPNM, RG 1, Box 15, D32; Don H. Castlebury to Don Klima, March 11, 1989; Grand Portage National Monument Proposed Development Briefing Statement, November 5, 1982, GPNM, RG 1, Box 12, D22.

Infrastructure development extended to the trail system. A footbridge was built across Snow Creek in 1981. Another footbridge was built across Grand Portage Creek right outside the stockade in 1983.³²

In 1984, it rehabilitated the Elmer Spry house for use as a ranger residence. The Elmer Spry house sat on Home Site Lot 5 located between County Road 17 and the lakeshore just inside the west boundary of the national monument. Technically the lot came under the jurisdiction of the NPS and therefore was not an inholding but rather a “life tenancy vested interest” belonging to Elmer Spry only. When Mr. Spry agreed to sell the property to the NPS, Superintendent Andersen became very interested in acquiring it since it was the “one remaining outstanding interest in Grand Portage National Monument” and there was need for a house for a superintendent or chief ranger residence. An independent appraiser placed the value of the lot and the house at \$23,000. On the recommendation of Superintendent Andersen, the NPS secured an additional allotment of \$5,900 for the acquisition – \$5,400 for the remaining life estate (for Mr. Spry’s subsequent rental costs) and \$500 for Mr. Spry’s relocation costs.³³

After Mr. Spry vacated, a regional architect visited the park and prepared plans to renovate the house. With a further investment of around \$17,000, the NPS repaired the building’s foundation and renovated its electrical wiring, plumbing, insulation, and flooring. The house became the lead park ranger residence.³⁴

Another significant, if not very visible, type of development involved upgrades to utility lines, sewer systems, electrical systems, and the water supply. The national monument needed water and sewer for three main purposes: seasonal employee residential housing (house trailers were brought in as a temporary measure), public toilets for visitors to the stockade (an old comfort station was replaced with a new one outside the stockade in 1978), and for fire suppression. Initially, the national monument’s water, sewer, and electrical systems were tied into those for Grand Portage village. But rising park visitation as well as new housing and resort development in the village pointed to the need for utility system

³² Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects in association with John Milner Associates, Inc., *Grand Portage National Monument, Grand Portage, Minnesota, Cultural Landscape Report*, prepared for National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office (n.p., n.p., 2009), p. 3-33.

³³ Chief, Land Resources Division, Midwest Region to Superintendent, June 25, 1982, Marlene Dahlgren to Tony Andersen, February 6, 1984, Superintendent to Regional Director, February 8, 1984, and Chief, Land Resources Division, Midwest Region to Chief, Land Resources Division, Washington Office, February 23, 1984, GPNM, RG 1, Box 31, L1425.

³⁴ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1984, HFC; Restoration Specialist to Associate Regional Director, November 1, 1984, GPNM, RG 1, Box 27, H4217.

upgrades. The work on the water supply was initiated in the 1970s and culminated with the installation of a 100,000-gallon water storage tank in 1982. The new water supply, which would cover both the monument's and the village's needs, was built by the NPS on land provided by the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe under a perpetual easement.³⁵

With all that construction activity, there were still four major development items in the master plan that were pushed off through this period. First and most importantly, the master plan called for a combined headquarters, maintenance, and visitor interpretive facility to be built on the site of the Isle Royale visitor parking area. The multipurpose structure would replace the present headquarters in Grand Marais as well as the existing maintenance area and the maintenance crew's boneyard. The visitor interpretive part of the facility would replace a temporary visitor information center and ranger station that occupied what was called the Mount Maude building. The Mount Maude building was a former BIA structure on Mount Maude that was brought to the site in the early 1970s and placed just outside the stockade's east gate.³⁶

The second item was to build a residential housing complex for park staff. The master plan contemplated that residential housing would accommodate the superintendent, chief ranger, park historian, maintenance foreman, and seasonal employees. It would be developed at the same time as the visitor center, since the park staff would be relocating from Grand Marais.³⁷

The third item was to eliminate the existing maintenance area and seasonal housing area. The existing maintenance area was poorly located within the historic area. It occupied ground near the site where the XY Post once stood. The seasonal housing area together with the maintenance crew's boneyard occupied ground at the east end of the national monument,

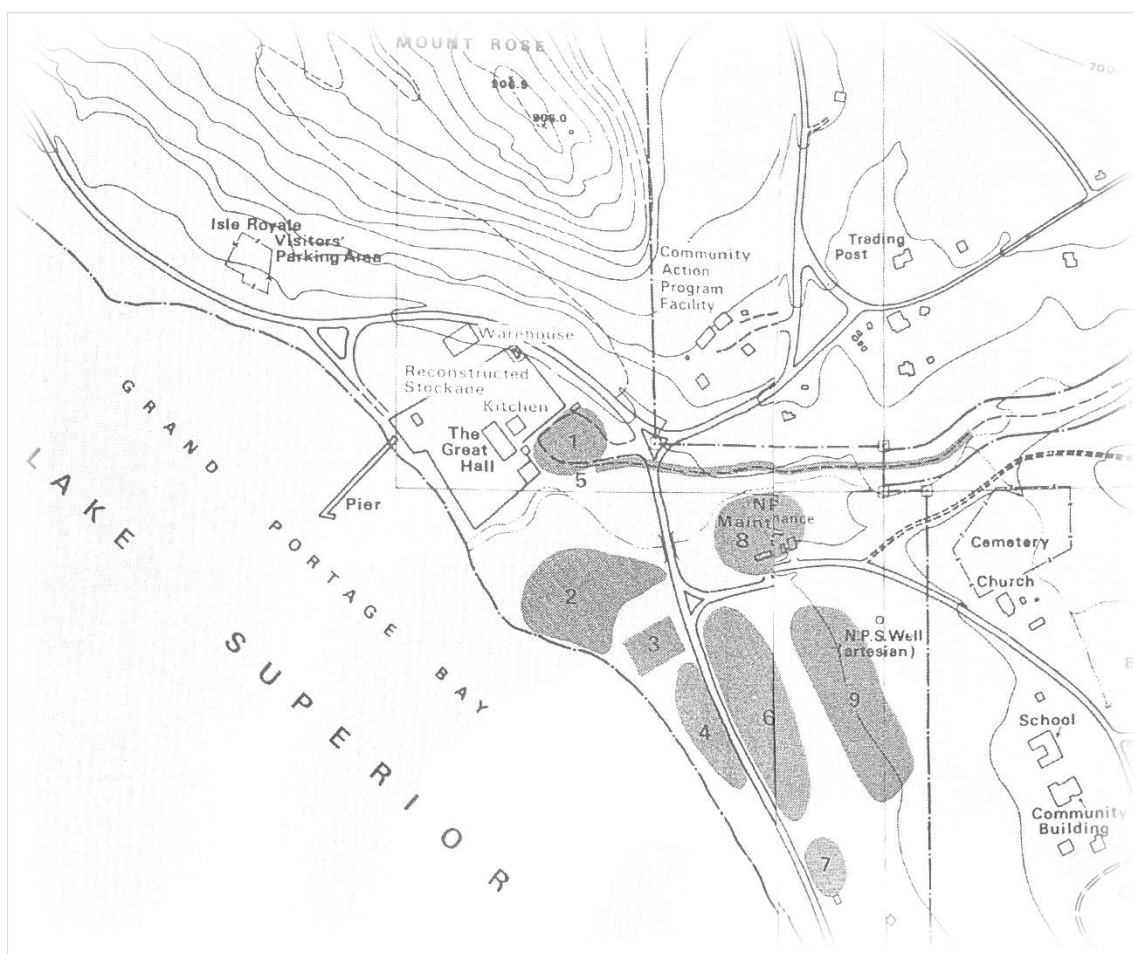
³⁵ Completion Report [for] Demolition of old Comfort Station and construction of new Comfort Station, October 16, 1978, and Fact Sheet for Completion Report [for] Water and Sewer Extensions, Waste Water Disposal System, Grand Portage, December 19, 1974, GPNM, RG 1, Box 13, D26; Ivan D. Miller to James Hendrickson, October 3, 1978, Superintendent to All Employees, August 9, 1979, Superintendent to Regional Director, August 15, 1979, Review of Alternatives, September 26, 1979, Park Ranger to Files, May 22, 1980, and Completion Report [for] 100,000 Gallon Concrete Reservoir and Water Connections, no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 20, D50; Anthony L. Andersen to Jim Hendrickson, June 16, 1982, and Acting Superintendent, Minnesota Agency to Superintendent, Grand Portage National Monument, June 21, 1982, GPNM, RG 1, Box 19, D50.

³⁶ National Park Service, *Master Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 15; Pam Neil, "A Monumental Task: Grand Portage National Monument Celebrates 50 Years," *The Grand Portage Guide*, 2008, p. 15.

³⁷ National Park Service, *Master Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 15.

where the BIA school once stood. The master plan called for removing two house trailers, cleaning up the site, and doing archeology where the XY Post was thought to have been.³⁸

The last item was to reconstruct the dock. Built when the original Great Hall reconstruction was done, the dock was meant to evoke the historical scene where the North West Company had once tied up its schooner. But the dock did not qualify as a historic reconstruction under NPS standards. It was used to board passengers on the MV *Wenonah* for transport to Isle Royale, and it also served as a village dock. Section 8 of the establishing legislation states that the “Secretary of the Interior, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, shall construct and maintain docking facilities at the North West Company area for



Detail from an “Existing Conditions” map in the Master Plan of 1973 shows “historic sites” (shaded areas) outside the reconstructed stockade, keyed as follows: 1) fur trade structures, 2) voyageurs’ camping and Indian burials, 3) Boucher’s Little Fort, 4) Indian burials, 5) start of trail, 6) Indian agency, 7) Indian agency school, 8) XY Company Fort, 9) Chippewa grounds.

³⁸ National Park Service, *Master Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 17.

use by the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and its recognized members, without charge to them, under regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary.” The master plan proposed that the Isle Royale operation would be moved to another site and the dock in front of the stockade would be reconstructed.³⁹

Superintendent Andersen summarized what had been accomplished and what remained to be done in a five-page briefing statement in 1982. It all came down to one major item – the need for one multipurpose building in which to house headquarters, maintenance, and visitor interpretive facilities. Unfortunately, the timing for obtaining line-item construction funds for such a project was unfavorable. The Reagan administration aimed to reduce the size of the federal government, and in the new political climate of budget retrenchment a request for a visitor center was a big ask.⁴⁰

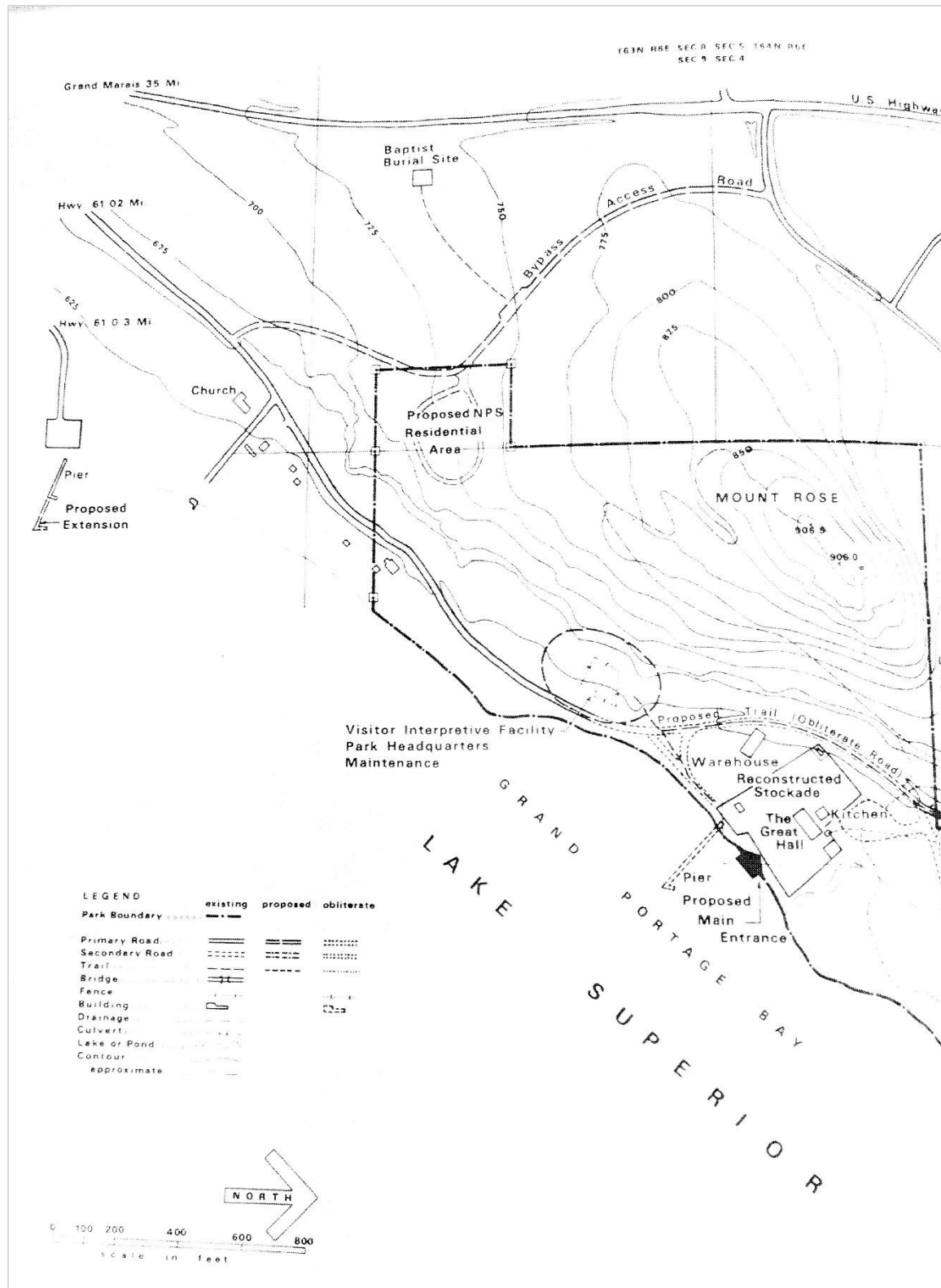
Andersen briefed Senator David Durenberger of Minnesota, a Republican, on the park’s development needs at a conference at park headquarters in Grand Marais on September 26, 1982. Durenberger tried to include \$102,000 for planning for the visitor center in the Interior appropriations bill for the 1983 fiscal year. He was unsuccessful. Andersen took the matter to the Friends of Grand Portage, who lobbied the senator and convinced him to keep trying. The Grand Portage Band also lobbied Minnesota’s other Senator Rudy Boschwitz, a Republican, and Representative James L. Oberstar, a Democrat. The members of the Minnesota congressional delegation after two more tries finally secured an allotment in the appropriations bill for 1986. The allotment was \$275,000. With the money in hand, the NPS commissioned the Denver Service Center to oversee the planning and design. As Andersen neared the end of his tenure in May 1986, he remained somewhat hopeful that the planning effort then getting underway would lead expeditiously to construction of the much needed facility perhaps in 1987 or 1988, even though the drive by the administration and by Congress to reduce federal spending showed no signs of abating.⁴¹

³⁹ National Park Service, *Master Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 16; An Act to Provide for the Establishment of Grand Portage National Monument in the State of Minnesota, September 2, 1958, P.L. 85-910, 72 Stat. 1751.

⁴⁰ Grand Portage National Monument Proposed Development Briefing Statement, November 5, 1982, GPNM, RG 1, Box 12, D22.

⁴¹ Superintendent to Regional Director, September 27, 1982, GPNM, RG 1, Box 16, D34; “Senator Durenberger Visits Grand Marais,” *Cook County News-Herald*, September 30, 1982; James L. Oberstar to William S. Corcoran, June 6, 1984, and Mary Lou Grier to James L. Oberstar, July 18, 1984, GPNM, RG 1, Box 26, H36; Superintendent to Regional Director, May 21, 1986, and Gary Hurrelle, “Task Directive Design and Construct Visitor, Administrative, and Maintenance Facilities Grand Portage National Monument Minnesota,” May 1987, GPNM, RG 1, Box 16, D34. See also extensive correspondence with congressional members and Friends of Grand Portage in Box 3, A42.

Co-Managing Gichi Onigaming – “The Great Carrying Place”



Detail from the “General Development Plan” in the Master Plan of 1973.

The planning effort soon ran into problems. One problem was the shaky status of the park's master plan and with it, the uncertain outlook for the road plan. It was hard to detach planning for the visitor center complex from the road plan. Another problem arose from poor communication between the Denver Service Center, the architectural firm that developed the building design, and the Harpers Ferry Center. The latter was very critical of the design and did not get effectively heard in the planning and design process. Still another complication was the environmental compliance work that was needed. The proposed development was unable to piggyback on an environmental impact study for the master plan, since none had been completed. For all these reasons the proposal lost steam.⁴²

Yet another obstacle was the government's tight-fistedness. It was suggested that at least a portion of the construction cost could be provided through fundraising in the private sector. The Friends of Grand Portage was not organized to do fundraising and said it would only take that on reluctantly. Ironically, in the brave new world of public-private partnerships Superintendent Einwalter was already a trailblazer, having coordinated an innovative public-private partnership with Anheuser-Busch when he was superintendent at Ozark National Scenic Riverways. But seeking help from the private sector at Grand Portage National Monument was another matter. Being located on an Indian reservation with a small population and low per capita income, a long way from a big city with wealthy donors, the park was in no way well situated to accomplish park development through private donations.⁴³

As prospects for a visitor center dimmed, the Department of the Interior considered turning over Grand Portage National Monument to some other organization and removing it from the National Park System. The shocking proposal was made in an audit report by the department's inspector general, "Review of Selected Administrative Activities, Midwest Region, National Park Service." Along with Grand Portage, three other national historic sites were included in the hit list. More than a dozen members of Congress signed a letter to

⁴² Gary Hurrelle, "Task Directive Design and Construct Visitor, Administrative, and Maintenance Facilities Grand Portage National Monument Minnesota," May 1987, Architect to Associate Regional Director, December 15, 1987, Natural Resource Specialist to Assistant Manager, Central Team, Denver Service Center, December 23, 1987, Superintendent to Regional Director, October 17, 1988, Superintendent to Regional Director, March 3, 1989, and Regional Director to Manager, Denver Service Center, June 5, 1989, GPNM, RG 1, Box 16, D34.

⁴³ Superintendent to Regional Director, GPNM, RG 1, Box 16, D34; Dean Einwalter to Friends, January 2, 1989, GPNM, RG 1, Box 4, A42; "Dean Clark Einwalter," *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis), April 3, 2022.

Secretary of the Interior Donald Hodel requesting that he immediately withdraw the proposal.⁴⁴

Superintendent Einwalter tried to keep the visitor center project in front of the regional director and high on the NPS priorities list. At his urging, the NPS belatedly completed an environmental assessment for the proposed developments in the old 1973 master plan.⁴⁵ But due to all the problems surrounding the proposed visitor center complex, the project never rose to the top of the NPS priorities list. Einwalter would not let it go, and eventually handed it off to his successor. In the end it was determined that the park needed a new general management plan first before it could move ahead with the long overdue visitor center development.

Park Concessions and Tourism Development on the Reservation

The minimal concession activity at Grand Portage National Monument was supposed to provide economic opportunity for the Grand Portage Band and the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. Section 4 of the establishing act states that members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe will receive preference for providing visitor accommodations and services, including guide services. No one could foresee precisely how Grand Portage National Monument would improve the local economy for the Grand Portage Band – whether it would provide direct employment for band members, or create new business opportunities on the reservation by stimulating tourism, or perhaps offer lucrative concessions for the Band to operate. In the long run the monument’s concessions proved to be of little economic benefit to the Band compared with other ways in which the monument helped the reservation economy. Much more important would be the monument’s effect in stimulating tourism for the reservation’s tourism-based economy, as well as the federal job opportunities and spending that were the direct consequences of having a national monument located on the reservation. But the monument’s concessions were the initial focus. In the reservation’s hardscrabble economy, even a minor concession operation held promise.

⁴⁴ Alan Wheat, Bruce Vento, and Ike Skelton to Donald Paul Hodel, June 6, 1986, Lawrence Summer to Hodel, June 2, 1986, and Charles L. Roy to Dave Durenberger, May 23, 1986, GPNM, RG 1, Box 3, A42. The other units named were Harry S Truman National Historic Site, Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, and Homestead National Monument.

⁴⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, “Environmental Assessment: Construct Proposed Master Plan Developments, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” draft report prepared by Denver Service Center, 1991, file copy at GPNM, CF, D18.

Park Concessions

Grand Portage National Monument had three concession permits issued in 1973. One was in connection with a boat service between Grand Portage and Isle Royale National Park. The company with the boat service was Sivertson Brothers Fisheries (later Grand Portage-Isle Royale Transportation Line, Inc.) of Duluth, Minnesota, and the concession permit dealt with the company's use of the government-owned dock and a nearby parking lot. (See Chapter Four for a historical summary of this concession.) The other two concession permits were with the Reservation Business Committee (RBC). The first of these permits was for providing an attendant at two parking lots, one lot used by Isle Royale visitors taking the boat to Isle Royale, the other lot used by monument visitors as they toured the stockade area. The second concession permit held by the RBC was for operating a coffee shop.⁴⁶

Special event
held in the stockade area,
circa 1970s. (GPNM,
purple index series, No.
248.)



The coffee shop was originally located inside the CCC-built Great Hall and predated the national monument designation. With the advent of NPS administration, the coffee shop operation came under NPS concession policy. About 40 percent of the floor space in the Great Hall was given to exhibits; the rest was taken up by a dining area, kitchen, pantry, and souvenir shop, as well as “living quarters in the north east end of the building...for the manager.” The concession permit required the holder to pay a small annual concession fee and to maintain the building premises. The RBC objected to paying a concession fee and did not want to be held responsible for maintenance of the building when the concession only

⁴⁶ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1972, HFC.

occupied a portion of the interior floor space. The negotiating back and forth over a concession fee and who should maintain the building was an irritation for both the NPS and the RBC. Superintendent Davis discussed the matter in a letter to the regional director in 1962. His patronizing words about the Indian concessioners are perhaps revealing of an attitude that was not helpful for forming good relations between the monument and the Band: “We could take a hard line and tell them that they can take it or leave it,” Davis wrote, “and we could point out that a smart operator, from outside the reservation, could make ten times what they are making and do it more efficiently.” Despite his sarcasm, however, Davis wanted to placate and stand by the RBC, especially in view of Section 4 of the establishing act, so he advocated waiving the concession fee and the building maintenance requirement, and the regional office concurred. Subsequently, James Hull took over management of the concession operation. Under his capable management, the coffee shop survived and the souvenir shop sold Indian handicrafts, which provided another modest source of income for a few Grand Portage families. The arrangement lasted until the building burned in 1969.⁴⁷

The coffee shop was restored in 1972 in a separate building outside the stockade. Now described as a “short order food service,” it struggled to turn a profit. In its second year of operation it netted a meager \$265. Mary Ann Hendrickson of Grand Portage operated the food service in 1973 and 1974 and turned it into a profitable concern once more. But it remained very minimal, and in 1975 it was discontinued by mutual agreement. The building, which had been brought to the site from Mount Maude, then served as a ranger station and visitor information center.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, the parking lot concession carried on. Starting in 1972, the RBC employed a concession manager who doubled as a security guard. The number of car break-ins dropped to a fraction of what they were. Generally, the concession’s single employee parked around a thousand cars for around two thousand parking days over the summer season. After 1980, this operation focused solely on the lot for Isle Royale boat passengers. The RBC, as the concessioner, was required to carry insurance and pay an annual franchise

⁴⁷ William Bushman and Paul LeGarde to Eliot Davis, July 17, 1961, Bushman to Davis, February 1, 1962, Superintendent to Regional Director, February 5, 1962 and April 23, 1962, Building Use Permit, 1962, and Eliot Davis to Chairman, Grand Portage Business Committee, November 4, 1964, GPNM, RG 1, Box 7, C38.

⁴⁸ Sherman W. Perry to Mrs. James Hendrickson, May 7, 1973, Special Use Permit, May 1, 1974, and Superintendent to Acting Regional Director, December 13, 1974, GPNM, RG 1, Box 7, C38; Regional Director to Superintendent, September 17, 1975, GPNM, RG 1, Box 7, C3823; Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1983, HFC; Pam Neil, “A Monumental Task: Grand Portage National Monument Celebrates 50 Years,” *The Grand Portage Guide*, 2008, p. 15.

fee of \$100. Gross receipts rose from about \$2,500 per annum in the 1980s to double that in the 1990s.⁴⁹

The Reservation Economy

The Band had much bigger aspirations for developing a tourism-based economy than what the small food service concession or parking lot concession ultimately afforded. Prior to the monument's establishment, the Band initiated its own business enterprise under the name of the Grand Portage Trading Post. The operation included a general store, tourist cabins, a restaurant, and two gasoline stations. In 1961, the Grand Portage Trading Post had a payroll of approximately \$7,750. It employed two full-time managers year round and a part-time crew during the summer tourist season.⁵⁰

The Grand Portage Trading Post was a start in developing a tourism-based reservation economy. It gave the RBC experience in the tourism industry, but the operation was too small to provide sufficient employment or alleviate the reservation's impoverished living conditions. In the late 1960s and early 1970s there were around 200 band members (men, women, and children) residing on the reservation and the number was falling as people moved away to find jobs or better housing or schools and medical services off the reservation. Due to chronic unemployment and a dearth of social services, approximately 150 band members made their homes off-reservation in Grand Marais, Duluth, and other places. Families living on the reservation mostly got by on seasonal employment. Around six families were engaged in commercial fishing, around twelve families made a little income by home manufacture and sale of handicrafts, and some others collected and sold maple syrup. Others found seasonal work on road construction. About ten band members worked seasonally for the monument mostly in the maintenance crew. The Band sought to generate much more employment opportunity on the reservation by developing a thriving tourism industry. It had been an aspiration since the 1920s, but now the movement toward Indian

⁴⁹ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1981, 1983, 1985, HFC; Statement of Requirements, December 13, 1984, GPNM, CF, C3827; Superintendent to Chief, Concessions Management (with attachment), November 30, 1993, GPNM, CF, C38; NPS Concessioner Annual Overall Rating, September 27, 1994, GPNM, CF, C2621; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 52-53.

⁵⁰ Provisional Overall Economic Development Plan for Grand Portage Indian Reservation, Grand Portage, Minnesota, no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 3, A42.

self-determination together with new federal assistance programs made tourism development a realizable goal.⁵¹

In 1967, the Band began to formulate a plan for a new resort enterprise near Raspberry Point on the south edge of Grand Portage Bay. The Band worked with the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, the Economic Development Administration in the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Minnesota State Planning Agency, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1972, as the \$6.5 million development plan took shape, it called for a 100-unit hotel, snowmobile trails, and golf course near Raspberry Point, as well as a reconstructed Ojibwe village display located within the monument.⁵²

The NPS participated minimally in this plan. Superintendent Perry consulted with Jack Arnold of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) about the proposed Ojibwe village display. The architectural firm under contract to the EDA shared its plan for the Ojibwe village display with Grand Portage National Monument, asking for comment. The plan featured about eight different lodges, some with birch bark covers, some with reed mat walls. One, a “Chief’s Lodge,” was conical in shape, others were dome-shaped, while two, including the “Mide’wigamig Great Medicine Lodge,” were of very long dimension. At the center of the proposed Ojibwe village display an octagon-shaped “Log Dance Hall” would house a refreshment stand, souvenir shop, and museum. According to the architect, this building would represent “a late type of tribal structure [showing] considerable white-man influence, however it will be ideal as a reception structure.” There was also a fence around the whole complex that the architect acknowledged to be “probably anachronistic also, but it is necessary to restrict admission.”⁵³ While the architects’ plan was in some respects ahistorical, in other respects it anticipated the Ojibwe village interpretive display that would be added to the monument grounds under NPS auspices some twenty years later.

The NPS was opposed to locating the Ojibwe village display within the monument at this time, but Superintendent Perry indicated that the NPS could support this development in an area adjacent to NPS land. As Perry noted to regional director Brooks, “The fur trade

⁵¹ Family occupations are described in Provisional Overall Economic Development Plan for Grand Portage Indian Reservation, Grand Portage, Minnesota, no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 3, A42. The reservation population of the Band fell from 225 in 1961 to 189 in 1975. The latter figure is from “Chapter Four: Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Structure and Powers,” op. cit., p. 105.

⁵² “Indian Complex Efforts Run Into PCA Roadblock,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 26, 1973; Superintendent to Regional Director, March 3, 1972, GPNM, RG 1, Box 33, L34.

⁵³ Robert H. Goodin to Grand Portage National Monument, February 29, 1972, GPNM, RG 1, Box 33, L34.

story and the Indian story would then complement each other.” Further, Perry suggested that “If the Indians become adamant on using NPS land it might be possible to negotiate a permit to let them use some of the NPS land included in the dash circle” (an area marked on a map that did not survive with the letter).⁵⁴

Over the next year, the plan for the resort enterprise went through some critical changes. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency became involved and determined that the proposed site for the hotel near Raspberry Point was too swampy, posing challenges for the protection of water quality. The development site was moved inland from Raspberry Point nearer to the village. It was also pared down to a \$5 million project. The Ojibwe village display was jettisoned. Finally, Hilton Hotels Corp. was brought onboard to partner with the Band’s Grand Portage Development Corporation. The Band’s investment would be about \$1.6 million.⁵⁵

Construction of the resort complex started in August 1973. Before the project was completed, Hilton Hotels pulled out of the deal and Radisson Hotels, Inc. stepped in. The hotel opened for business in 1975. The partnership with Radisson Hotels ended in 1980, and Grand Portage Development Corporation took over sole management responsibility. The resort went through more big changes when a casino was added in 1990. The casino was the first in Minnesota. The name was changed to Grand Portage Lodge and Casino. Besides the lodge and casino, the enterprise came to include a campground and RV park, boat marina, and later, guest cabins at Hollow Rock. Through dedication and hard work, the Band ensured that the enterprise succeeded and thrived. In the early 1990s the casino was enlarged: the ceiling was raised and the floor space was modified to accommodate 400 slot machines, eight blackjack tables, and a bingo hall. In 1995, the Band marked the twentieth anniversary of the hotel with a mortgage shredding ceremony. By then it had a payroll of 239 employees. Grand Portage Reservation Council Chairman Norman Deschampe stated that profits from the casino helped to pay for another 117 jobs in government services and operations. Unemployment on the reservation was practically eliminated. Tourism revenues helped to pay for a new community center and provide health care to everyone in the Band.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Superintendent to Regional Director, March 3, 1972, GPNM, RG 1, Box 33, L34.

⁵⁵ “Indians to by-pass PCA in request for Superior motel,” *Minneapolis Tribune*, March 27, 1973; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 53.

⁵⁶ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 54; “Gichi-Onigaming/Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa,” at <https://mn.gov/indianaffairs/grandportage-iac.html>; “Grand Portage Lodge and Casino,” *Cook County News-Herald* (Grand Marais, Minnesota), July 17, 1995.

The Grand Portage Lodge and Casino’s strong economic performance caused the population of Grand Portage to rebound as members moved back to the reservation. In 1980, the population of the village stood at 294. It increased to 321 in 1990 and 557 in 2000. Despite a persistent housing crunch, the number of households in Grand Portage rose from 131 in 1990 to 247 in 2000. A study by the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission found that “much of the growth in Grand Portage can be attributed to the casino and the revenue it has created, allowing the reservation to expand employment in community, health and human services provided on the reservation.”⁵⁷

If gambling was at the heart of what the Grand Portage Lodge and Casino offered, Grand Portage National Monument was part of the draw, too. Business manager and band member Don Hoaglund said that the enterprise marketed the whole North Shore experience. “There’s x-c skiing, islands, history, fishing, a national monument, a state park,” he said. “We’re the only casino on the North Shore. We can sell the ambience.”⁵⁸

The NPS applauded the improved economic conditions on the reservation, but it sought to balance its support for the Band with its essential mission to protect the national monument’s natural and cultural resources and provide for the public’s enjoyment. Over the same period of economic growth on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, the population of Cook County grew by more than 25 percent, which was the fastest growth rate of any county in Minnesota. As the North Shore entered boom times, the NPS began to see signs of what it saw as reckless development. Superintendent Einwalter expressed the NPS’s position in a letter to the North Shore Management Board in 1996, stating: “While development may be appropriate to accommodate needs, we see no point in promoting it along a landscape where beauty and sustainability are important qualities to be maintained. Development should not be a goal. Rather, it should be a part of the process of achieving much more important and long-lasting goals, and only then where it is appropriate.”⁵⁹

Land-Use Plans and Issues

The evolving partnership between the NPS and the Grand Portage Band in managing Grand Portage National Monument focused mainly on the area of the national monument

⁵⁷ “Grand Portage Community Profile,” no date, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File “ARDC.”

⁵⁸ “Grand Portage Lodge and Casino,” *Cook County News-Herald* (Grand Marais, Minnesota), July 17, 1995.

⁵⁹ Dean C. Einwalter to North Shore Management Board, April 22, 1996, GPNM, CF, N16.

within the Grand Portage village, but the NPS and the Band addressed points of mutual concern along the Grand Portage Trail section of the national monument and beyond the national monument area around Pigeon Point as well. There were two main issues: first, how to protect and develop the beautiful section of lakeshore from Grand Portage Bay to the U.S. border with Canada, and second, how to coordinate reservation timber sales with the protection of historical values along the Grand Portage Trail.

The Proposed Indian Park

The proposed Pigeon Point Indian Park was an interesting idea that never bore fruit. Even though it never came to pass, it is significant to the administrative history of Grand Portage National Monument because all through the years that it was strongly considered – from about 1960 to 1970 – it reflected the Band’s and the NPS’s thinking about land and resource development and it affected the Band’s relations with the NPS.

In September 1960, Canada opened the last section of highway around the northern shore of Lake Superior (between Wawa and Sault Ste. Marie), completing the Circle Route for automobile tourists to drive all the way around Lake Superior (a 1,300-mile loop). This created a significant new stimulus for North Shore tourism development almost at the same time that the NPS began its administration of Grand Portage National Monument. Sig Olson, the longtime wilderness advocate of Ely, Minnesota, shared his concerns about potential undesirable tourism development at Pigeon Point with the new superintendent, Eliot Davis. Olson still had his eye on protecting wilderness values from the Boundary Waters Canoe Area all the way across the northern part of the Grand Portage Indian Reservation to Pigeon Point and out into Lake Superior to Isle Royale. Davis was already well informed of the longstanding interest in the Pigeon Point area by wilderness advocates, developers, the Band, the BIA, and the NPS. In Davis’s back-and-forth with Olson over various rumored development plans, the superintendent informed Olson that “all the information I get relative to development goes to Region Two at once, and they in turn pass it on to Washington.”⁶⁰

Officials in the Department of the Interior had concerns about Pigeon Point as well. One senior official stated that the growing volume of auto tourism along the Lake Superior shoreline could “provide an excellent opportunity for the Indians to develop facilities to cater

⁶⁰ Sigurd Olson to Eliot Davis, December 21, 1960, and Davis to Olson, December 23, 1960, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18. See also Regional Director to the Director, November 2, 1960, and Associate Director to Regional Director, November 22, 1960, same file.

to and benefit from the tourists. Without orderly planning, however, such development could result in a hodge-podge situation which would impair the natural scenery.” Already, this official noted, a private resort developer with questionable intentions was talking to the Band about a 60-acre lease in the Pigeon Point area.⁶¹

With these concerns in view, the NPS’s Region Two (Midwest Region) was tasked to prepare a recreation land-use plan for the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. The study area included Pigeon Point, where most of the land had been purchased and put in Indian trust status back in the 1930s under the land acquisition plan devised by Robert Marshall. By 1961, the Pigeon Point area was treated as de facto reservation land even though it remained legally outside the reservation until the Secretary’s Order of May 14, 1982 changed the reservation boundary to include it. The NPS viewed the recreation study as part of its responsibility to partner with the Band in the development of Grand Portage National Monument.⁶² Section 9 of the establishing act states that “To the extent that appropriated funds and personnel are available therefor, the Secretary of the Interior shall provide consultative or advisory assistance to the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota, in the planning of facilities or developments upon the lands adjacent to the monument.”⁶³ Adjacent could be read two ways: as referring to the Grand Portage village or the whole Indian reservation. In this case, the NPS read it as meaning the latter. There was a precedent for this; the recreation study followed in the wake of NPS and BIA cooperation in the 1940s, when the two agencies attempted to produce a master plan for the whole Grand Portage Indian Reservation. At that time the NPS was exercising its broad recreational planning authority under the Park, Parkway, and Recreational Area Study Act of 1936.

The resulting 1961 study by the NPS, *A Recreation Land Use Plan, Grand Portage Indian Reservation, Minnesota*, divided the study area into four subareas: the Grand Portage village, Grand Portage National Monument, the proposed Pigeon Point Indian Park, and the balance of the reservation. Crucially, it suggested that the Pigeon Point area should be managed for recreation and tourism while the balance of the reservation outside of the Grand

⁶¹ Assistant Secretary, Public Land Management to Commissioner, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Director, National Park Service, no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

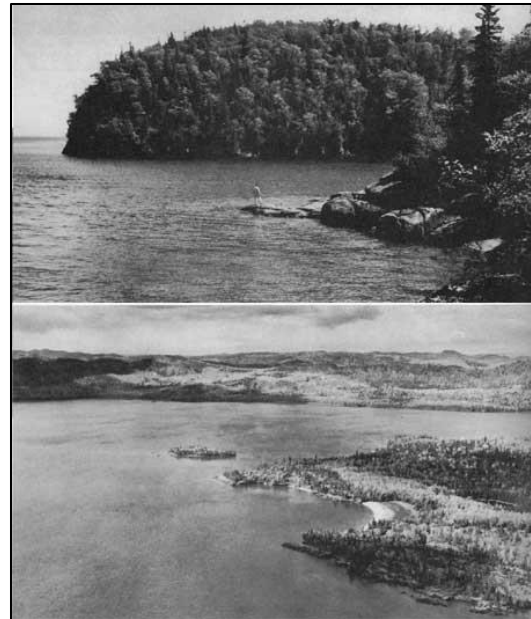
⁶² Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 38.

⁶³ An Act to Provide for the Establishment of Grand Portage National Monument in the State of Minnesota, September 2, 1958, P.L. 85-910, 72 Stat. 1751.

Portage Bay area should be managed for a variety of land uses other than recreation such as timber production, limited agriculture, hunting, and trapping.⁶⁴

Superintendent Davis reported that the Band's response to the recreation plan was mixed. On one hand, there appeared to be strong support for establishing a Pigeon Point Indian Park. On the other hand, there appeared to be some suspicion that the NPS was laying the groundwork for a land grab. When the Band held a meeting on November 4, 1961 to discuss the plan no one from the monument staff attended the meeting because they were not invited. Davis reported to the regional director that the plan caused a "small upheaval in the community [after] the Indians passed the word that they plan to buy up all the privately owned, white lands in the reservation and there has been a threat of condemnation."⁶⁵

Two views of Pigeon Point included in a Great Lakes Shoreline Recreation Area Survey conducted by the NPS in 1959.



In the following year, the NPS, the Band, and the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe drafted an agreement stating their mutual interest in establishing a Pigeon Point Indian Park. This agreement was passed up the chain for review by the NPS and the BIA on the way to being submitted to the Secretary of the Interior for approval. It is unclear where in this review process the agreement got held up. The BIA had qualms about the NPS recreation plan – chiefly that it did not lay out clearly how the Indians would be involved in park management – and it may have been responsible for blocking the agreement. The BIA contracted with a

⁶⁴ National Park Service, Region Two, *A Recreation Land Use Plan, Grand Portage Indian Reservation, Minnesota*, July 1961, file copy at GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

⁶⁵ Superintendent to Regional Director, November 7, 1961, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

consulting firm in Duluth to produce another recreation study for the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. The BIA-commissioned study differed from the Pigeon Point Indian Park proposal as outlined by the NPS in that it would allow timber harvesting within the area. Sharp differences also emerged over the suitability of a resort development on Wausaugoning Bay after a separate investigation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers found that a small harbor development there was feasible.⁶⁶

To resolve the differences and bring the parties together, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall appointed a task force to develop yet another proposal for establishing an Indian Park. This task force was appointed in May 1965. It was headed by the respected conservationist Harold C. Jordahl, Jr., the major figure behind the creation of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin. The task force made its report two years later. It proposed a sideways-V-shaped “Grand Portage Indian Park” centered on Pigeon Point with one narrow arm of the park extending down the reservation’s lake shore and another narrow arm of the park extending up the U.S. side of the Pigeon River. Administration of the park would be by a seven-member board principally comprised of members of the Band with one representative of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, one representative of the NPS, and one representative of the BIA. The proposal called for public investment of about \$6 million for land acquisition, development, and operations over the first five years. It called for an Indian hiring preference, and it included an interesting provision for the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program for training members of the Band or the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe so that in about five to ten years the Indians could take over protection, development, and administration of the Indian park. Even though none of this eventuated, the vision of a federally sponsored park administration giving way over time to a more indigenous form of park administration resembled what would actually begin to ensue at Grand Portage National Monument many years later.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ “Creation of National Park Agreed for Grand Portage,” *Cook County News-Herald*, March 21, 1962; “Grand Portage Park Given Nod,” *Duluth News Tribune*, March 22, 1962; Director, Resources Program Staff to Secretary of the Interior, no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18; U.S. Department of the Interior, *A Task Force Report on a Proposed Grand Portage Indian Park and the Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 1967, at <https://npshistory.com/publications/grpo/task-force-rpt.pdf>; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 44-45.

⁶⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, *A Task Force Report on a Proposed Grand Portage Indian Park and the Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 1967, at <https://npshistory.com/publications/grpo/task-force-rpt.pdf>; Associate Solicitor to Members, Task Force on Grand Portage Indian Reservation (with attachment), March 1, 1968, Regional Coordinator to Paul Knight (with attachment), November 3, 1967, and Regional Coordinator to William Bushman, Jim Hull, and Paul LeGarde (with attachment), November 16, 1967, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

Why this proposal did not succeed is not entirely clear. It was thoroughly vetted with the Band, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, the NPS, and the BIA, and more or less won support from all quarters, though with reservations. The BIA wanted more discretion in forest management for the Indian park, insisting that forest cutting, prescribed burning, and salvaging timber that was damaged by fire or pests were all necessary tools for maintaining a healthy forest (and it cited the famous 1963 Leopold report to back up its claim).⁶⁸ The proposal was converted into a draft bill for Congress, and was once more vetted with all parties. But the legislative proposal went nowhere.

Although the Band's leadership publicly endorsed the Indian park idea, Superintendent William Bromberg reported mixed signals. Bromberg informed Representative Oberstar that band members showed strong support at a meeting held in Grand Portage on March 21, 1968. He said it was "the largest turnout of Indians yet" and that the question-and-answer session had provided "an opportunity to dispel the fears of some that they were going to lose their land." Bromberg further stated that "Council members and Indians who favor the proposal are now carrying the ball and promise results." However, over the course of several more meetings Bromberg formed a different impression. He thought there was widespread opposition to the Indian park in the Grand Portage community. He tried to organize a field trip to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota for band members to inspect an Indian park there, and he suggested that some of the more vocal objectors should be on the bus.⁶⁹

Bromberg felt the Grand Portage National Monument was caught in a Catch-22. Development of the national monument was being postponed until it was known whether the Grand Portage Indian Park would be established. But one of the Band's main objections to the Grand Portage Indian Park was that the NPS was moving so slowly on developing Grand Portage National Monument.

A memorandum titled "Short Resume on Grand Portage," dated March 1969, gave a doubtful forecast for the proposal's chances. Bromberg probably wrote it as he prepared to transfer out of the park and leave the situation to a successor. In a dozen dense paragraphs, the memorandum described the Band's history of ambivalence around tourism development

⁶⁸ Commissioner of Indian Affairs to Assistant Director for Federal Coordination, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, October 18, 1967, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

⁶⁹ J. William Trygg, State Representative to James Hull and Paul LeGarde, Members of Grand Portage Tribal Council, February 14, 1968, open letter published in the *Cook County News-Herald*, February 22, 1968; William Bromberg to James Oberstar, March 26, 1968, and William Bromberg to the Citizens of Grand Portage, October 23, 1968, GPNM, RG 1, Box 10, D18.

and Band leaders’ warranted frustration with the federal government’s interminable land-use planning efforts.

A silent fear of change grips many of the town people. Most are not happy with what is happening to their former peaceful village, but some see opportunity for jobs and economic growth based on services to the ever-increasing influx of tourist visitors. The advent of large numbers of tourists was predicted and widely discussed, yet their physical presence was necessary before the local people could appreciate the changes that are occurring. A certain restlessness, internal conflict and silent fear of change seems to continue. It crops up in the form of local petitions and changes in the council membership, both through elections and resignations....

Most of the community leadership see tourism as opportunity for local development. They have sought help and outside advice. This assistance has been given to them enthusiastically and in generous amounts. Perhaps too generously, for community reaction to change has prevented acceptance of most action-oriented proposals....

Less patient people long ago would have quit trying, but not so at Grand Portage. Their leaders realize tourism will continue to effect change on their reservation and in their village. They want to be part of the change and direct it to bring maximum benefits to their people.⁷⁰

In 1970, Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel inquired with NPS Director George B. Hartzog, Jr. about the possibilities for establishing an Indian national park somewhere in the United States. Hartzog replied with reference to the NPS’s current interest in Big Thicket, Texas (which became a national preserve in 1974). Midwest regional director Fred Fagergren then wrote to Hartzog to remind him about the stalled effort to create Grand Portage Indian Park. Fagergren summed up the situation by saying that the proposal was set aside on account of the Band’s opposition. “During the course of the task force study and meetings with the Indians it was quite apparent that the Indians basically mistrusted the motives and intent of those involved in the study,” Fagergren wrote. “There were general feelings expressed that this was another method of taking away their lands.” Fagergren

⁷⁰ “Short Resume on Grand Portage,” March 1969, GPNM, RG 1, Box 10, D18.

averred that his office still believed that the Indian park idea had considerable merit, and he supposed that the Band might turn in favor of it once the NPS had completed its development of Grand Portage National Monument.⁷¹

The historic Saint Francis Xavier Church in Chippewa City was restored in 1970-1974. (Authors photo.)



Timber Sales and the Grand Portage Trail

Since the Grand Portage Trail cut across forested land on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, it was inevitable that the park administration would have to work through problems of forest management with the Band and the BIA foresters working on the Band's behalf. The issues were not very nuanced in this period. The national monument had a no-cut policy, while the Band wanted to harvest timber right up to the monument boundary. If logging activities were to impinge on historical values, then which resource would have precedence? Section 7 of the establishing act provided a fairly clear answer: "Recognized members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe shall not be denied the privilege of traversing the area included within the Grand Portage National Monument for the purposes of logging their land...."

Two separate timber sales, the first in 1977 and the second in 1988, put the matter to the test. The first timber sale involved 300 acres adjacent to the national monument, where the most feasible access road to the site would cut across the historic trail. A solicitor's opinion found that a logging road across the trail was permissible. The NPS proposed an

⁷¹ Director, NPS to Secretary of the Interior, July 2, 1970, and Director, Midwest Region to Director, National Park Service, September 1, 1970, GPNM, RG 1, Box 10, D18.

alternate access route, but the BIA forester deemed that it would be too expensive. Another solicitor’s opinion held that the provision for logging access in the establishing legislation superseded requirements in the National Historic Preservation Act to perform a Section 106 review of impacts on the cultural resource and require mitigation. All that the NPS was able to obtain by way of mitigation was for the BIA to put a clause in the timber sale contract that the purchaser would “use more than normal caution in preventing damage to soil and vegetation and other natural resources on the Trail.” Damage to the site would be corrected and paid for, and where feasible, the site would be restored to its original condition. The BIA pledged to add this special provision to any future timber sale contracts with a similar issue.⁷²

In the second instance, the Grand Portage Band’s Forest Resources Management Division (which had taken over forestry on the reservation from the BIA) informed the park that it intended to make improvements to the Cowboys forest access road, which crossed the historic trail in Section 25 of Township 64 North, Range 5 East. The aim was to provide a permanent, gravel haul road for forest harvesting operations north of the national monument. While no specific timber sale was in the offing this time, the plan called for future timber cutting in stands that were rapidly succumbing to disease and insect losses.⁷³

Once again the park suggested that alternate routes be considered, or that road use should be restricted to winter months when the ground was frozen. The Band’s forestry staff examined alternatives and once again found that there were none. However, the reservation forester R. J. Novitsky did present a few concessions to afford the trail some protection. The width of right-of-way through the national monument would be reduced from twenty feet to twelve. The gravel topcoat would be reduced to around six to twelve inches depth over the same stretch. A minimum of trees would be removed, perhaps ten. The park put those stipulations into a memorandum of understanding between the NPS and the Grand Portage Reservation Business Committee. It added many more, including a stipulation that the road

⁷² Superintendent to Acting Regional Director (with attachment), January 10, 1975, Field Solicitor to File, January 24, 1975, Briefing Statement, Proposed Logging Road Across Grand Portage Trail, December 30, 1976, and Superintendent to Lands, March 29, 1977, GPNM, RG 1, Box 13, D30; Elmer T. Nitzschke, Field Solicitor to George V. Goodwin, Area Director, January 31, 1977, and Merrill D. Beal, Regional Director, to Robert Garvey, Executive Secretary, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, February 15, 1977, GPNM, RG 1, Box 11, D18.

⁷³ R. J. Novitsky, Reservation Forester to Superintendent, February 20, 1987, GPNM, RG 1, Box 13, D30.

would be closed from about April 15 to about September 1 each year. (The Band required use of the road in the fall for moose hunting.)⁷⁴

Unfortunately, even though the NPS and the Band came to terms over the Cowboys Road, it still caused lingering hard feelings. Superintendent Einwalter summarized his own feeling about it to the regional director this way: “We do not favor this road improvement across the historic portage and would prefer another route but recognize that the language of the Grand Portage enabling legislation probably requires us to develop a cooperative agreement and act in an expedient manner to assist the Grand Portage Band in this project.”⁷⁵

Employment Opportunity

The promise of jobs at Grand Portage National Monument was important to the Grand Portage Band. When NPS officials discussed the national monument with the Band in the mid to late 1950s, the prospect of employment at the park was a strong inducement for the Band to give up land to the NPS to form a partnership. Numerous men in the Band could recall working for the CCC-ID and participating in the construction of the Great Hall. Several women in the community could remember being paid by the WPA to make handicrafts for the Great Hall’s interior exhibit space. The historic site represented not just a connection to the fur trade era of their ancestors but a creation of the contemporary Grand Portage community as well. They were proud of the stockade and Great Hall standing so prominently in the midst of the village, and they wanted the tourist attraction to thrive and produce more jobs for the community.⁷⁶

According to James Hull, NPS officials stated in meetings in 1957 that members of the Band would be recruited and trained so that they could work in all areas of administration in the new national monument. Band members heard similar promises made when federal officials discussed the Grand Portage Indian Park proposal with them some ten years later. The 1958 act to establish Grand Portage National Monument did include a hiring preference, though it did not promise a job training program, and it suggested that job

⁷⁴ Dean Einwalter to R. J. Novitsky, March 20, 1987, Novitsky to Einwalter, May 1, 1987, Einwalter to Jim Hendrickson, May 14, 1988, and Memorandum of Understanding Between National Park Service and Grand Portage Reservation Business Committee, no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 13, D30.

⁷⁵ Superintendent to Regional Director, June 20, 1988, GPNM, RG 1, Box 27, H4217. The memorandum of agreement was replaced by a general agreement “permitting road access across the Grand Portage on Cowboys Road Access” in 2005. The new agreement required reaffirmation, modification, or termination after five years. (GPNM, CF, A44.)

⁷⁶ Timothy Cochrane, “Making the Tribal Self Governance Act Work at Grand Portage,” draft chapter shared with the authors.

opportunities would be centered in the maintenance division of park operations at least initially. Section 5 states that “The Secretary of the Interior shall, insofar as practicable, give first preference to employment of recognized members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe in the performance of any construction, maintenance, or any other service within the monument for which they are qualified.”⁷⁷

Starting in the 1960s, Grand Portage National Monument employed several members of the Band as well as a few members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe who were from other reservations. The jobs included trail crew, maintenance crew, and the large construction crew needed for rebuilding the Great Hall. The community was proud to be integrally involved in the rebuilding of the Great Hall, as they had been in its earlier construction. Superintendent Tousley later recalled,

The present Great Hall was built by the Service with its own Chippewa day labor crews. While a heavy-duty woodworking shop was erected and furnished for the purpose, there was a great deal of hand work required to maintain authenticity.... The crew accepted a tremendous challenge and took quiet pride in its work. The building is a monument to the crew’s skill and dedication.⁷⁸

One year after the federal government began affirmative action recruiting as mandated by the Equal Employment Opportunities Act of 1972, Superintendent Miller stated in his annual report that 88 percent of the seasonal staff at Grand Portage National Monument were American Indians, and 50 percent were female. The permanent staff of five in 1973 included one band member, so it was 20 percent Indian.⁷⁹

Some band members found short-term employment working on archeological crews at Grand Portage National Monument. Most archeological work was through the Minnesota Historical Society, which was contracted by the NPS. Most of the job-intensive

⁷⁷ James Hull to Ivan Miller, December 3, 1976, GPNM, RG 1, Box 16, D34; Regional Coordinator to Paul Knight (with attachment), November 3, 1967, and Regional Coordinator to William Bushman, Jim Hull, and Paul LeGarde (with attachment), November 16, 1967, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18; An Act to Provide for the Establishment of Grand Portage National Monument in the State of Minnesota, September 2, 1958, P.L. 85-910, 72 Stat. 1751.

⁷⁸ Towsley writing in 1983 as quoted in Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 51.

⁷⁹ Pam Neil, “A Monumental Task: Grand Portage National Monument Celebrates 50 Years,” *The Grand Portage Guide*, 2008, p. 14; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 39; Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1973, HFC.

archeological work occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. Other band members derived a bit of income from cutting and trimming poles to be used in the stockade.

While there was no policy that reserved the park's maintenance operation for Indian employees, the pattern was for a band or tribal member to occupy the post of maintenance foreman and to recruit the seasonal maintenance crew mostly from inside the community. The first maintenance foreman was Grand Portage native Peter Gagnon. He died in February 1963. Elmer Spry, a member of the White Earth Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, and a seasonal maintenance worker under Gagnon, was promoted to maintenance foreman in 1963 and held the job through the summer of 1965. Grand Portage native Gordon LeGarde was the next maintenance foreman, serving from May 1966 to June 1972, when he transferred to Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Wisconsin. After that, Herman Hendrickson held the post for a dozen years, and after Hendrickson resigned, Melvin Gagnon, the son of the park's first maintenance foreman, was selected and served from 1984 to 1989 and again from 2000 to 2020. Other maintenance foremen included Michael Peter Spry and Paul Duane Spry, sons of the second maintenance foreman Elmer Spry, and Lester Day, also of Grand Portage.⁸⁰ All were either members of the Band or connected to the Band through kinship by way of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, and all were well positioned to recruit members of the Band to fill out the seasonal maintenance crew of around four to five people.

A few members of the Band worked on the park staff as cultural demonstrators. Cultural demonstrators were a specialized kind of interpreter; they performed native craftwork where park visitors could observe them and ask them questions. From the 1960s to the 1980s, the park had a fairly robust cultural demonstration program that was run out of a corner room in the Great Hall or the Crawford cabin. The program ran from mid-June to early September and usually employed about five or six women. In 1980, there were five female cultural demonstrators on staff: Martha Bushman, Sophie Crawford, Ellen Olson, Rose Porter, and Liza Thibault. They did their craftwork, interacted with visitors, and sold their products from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day. One man, Walter Caribou, also worked many seasons as a cultural demonstrator in the canoe warehouse, making paddles and other cultural items. In 1983, the park administration had difficulty filling vacancies in the

⁸⁰ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 131-37; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1985, HFC; and Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1990, 1995, ETIC; "Andrew Lester Day," *Duluth News Tribune*, December 6, 2005; Melvin Gagnon interview by Theodore Catton, September 27, 2021.

program and had to advertise three times before all the positions were filled. It augured a gradual waning of interest in the program over the next two decades.⁸¹

Members of the Band or the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe were occasionally hired into positions in administration at park headquarters. In 1974, Margaret Plummer, a seasonal park ranger and Ojibwe, was brought into the headquarters office at Grand Marais to fill a vacancy when the park historian transferred out. Plummer worked as a seasonal park ranger or park technician at Grand Portage for many years, occasionally taking on other assignments at headquarters in Grand Marais in the off-season. Many years later, still working as a seasonal park ranger, she was on the team to develop the *Long-Range Interpretive Plan* for Grand Portage.⁸²

In 1986, Rose Novitsky was hired as administrative secretary. She resigned a year later because she was persuaded to return to her former job as a controller for the Band, doing its accounting work and financial reporting. After fifteen years in the Band’s employment, she returned to Grand Portage National Monument in 2002 as the administrative officer, a position she would hold for more than twenty years.⁸³

The NPS took its responsibility to hire Indians seriously and worked at it assiduously. However, the Grand Portage Band was a small population to draw from. In 1982, the NPS began an outreach program to attract more American Indian applicants for job openings at Grand Portage National Monument, and to target members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe in particular. Recruiters were dispatched to the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, the University of Minnesota at Duluth, and the University of Minnesota at Twin Cities. In the first summer, two Ojibwe were successfully recruited into seasonal ranger positions using a special hiring authority. Stimulated by affirmative action authorities as well as the national monument’s establishing legislation, the outreach program continued for many years. In 1997, park staff developed a more explicit Minnesota Chippewa tribal hiring policy with input from regional solicitors. The policy stipulated that members of six bands of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe were to receive preference when they were qualified for any job opening (not just construction and maintenance jobs).⁸⁴

⁸¹ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1979, 1980, 1983, 1986, HFC; Virginia Danfelt, “Walter Caribou, Cultural Demonstrator at Grand Portage,” no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 29, K3415.

⁸² Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1974 and 1980, HFC.

⁸³ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1986, 2002, ETIC; Rose Novitsky interview by Diane Krahe, September 22, 2021.

⁸⁴ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1982, HFC; Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1997, ETIC.

Toward a New Form of Partnership

Over the course of three and a half decades of national monument administration – from when the national monument was established in 1960 until it stood on the threshold of co-management in 1995 – one could see a gradual shift occurring in the character and substance of the partnership between the NPS and the Grand Portage Band. As the Band steadily increased its capacity for self-governance in the modern era, and as the Grand Portage Lodge and Casino provided more employment opportunity and a crucial revenue stream for revitalizing the Grand Portage community, the partnership between the NPS and the Grand Portage Band changed in two distinct ways. The character of the partnership began to shift from one that was built on promises to a new form of partnership based on shared interests. Whereas the old pattern of engagement between the NPS and the Band was inherently paternalistic, as it was rooted in white privilege and Indian disempowerment (which hung on from an earlier time), the new mode of engagement was intentionally reframed as a relationship between co-equals. If no one could see that change happening from day to day, anyone could see it happening over the long span. How that vital change in the character of the partnership turned into policy and true co-management will be taken up in the next chapter.

Meanwhile, there was also a parallel change occurring in the substance of the partnership as it shifted focus from economic issues primarily in the 1960s to an ever-deepening consideration of cultural issues in the 1970s and 1980s. Of course, this change was not unique to Grand Portage but was happening all across Indian Country and the National Park System in these years. From the Native American rights movement in the early 1970s, to the redress of American Indian religious freedoms and the push for sacred sites protection in the 1980s, to the difficult reckoning over past mistreatment of American Indian human remains that took place in the early to mid-1990s, these decades saw a gradual but profound consciousness-raising around the American Indian experience. As those movements and reforms played out across the nation, Grand Portage National Monument was slowly and inexorably drawn into a new cultural context thirty-five years on from when it was established. Whereas the national monument story in 1960 was primarily focused on the exploits of the North West Company, and so it treated the Grand Portage Band only peripherally, by the end of the period the national monument story was significantly revised; now the fur trade was principally viewed as a meeting place of cultures, which made the indigenous people's experience central. Moreover, the presence of the modern Grand

Portage village surrounding the historic site on three sides was now more than just a curiosity for tourists; it was honored and respected as a living example of the Pan-American Indian story of cultural survival and adaptation.

For the Grand Portage Band, the long road back to self-governance passed a major milestone when the Band opened its own casino in 1990. Revenue from the casino gave the Band the financial capacity to hire consultants, lawyers, and lobbyists and acquire the technical assistance needed to move expeditiously toward entering the self-governance program that had been laid out in federal legislation, first in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (ISDEAA), and subsequently in the ISDEAA amendments of 1988 and the Tribal Self-Governance Act of 1994 (TSGA). Under the self-governance program, the Grand Portage Band could contract with the BIA to administer the BIA-sponsored Indian assistance programs that were already present on the reservation. Most germane for Grand Portage National Monument was the BIA forestry program, which was still strongly oriented toward forest products and timber sales. The Band took over forest management on the reservation and made it more conservation oriented. By 1995, the Band ran a suite of other programs on the reservation as well: health services, social services, education, community services, tribal courts, a volunteer fire department, emergency medical services, and GIS services. In 1994, the Band built a community center partially funded by revenue from the casino.⁸⁵

If the Band had a golden goose now in its casino enterprise, it had only come by that gift through dint of long and careful community effort. Band members sometimes called the casino their “sawmill,” because back in the early 1970s when the Band chartered the Grand Portage Development Corporation to manage the lodge and resort enterprise (before the casino was part of it), numerous other tribes were making similar charters and taking out similar loans with which they were developing reservation sawmills as their main tribal enterprise. Only a handful of tribes built a lodge instead of a sawmill, and not one of those other lodge enterprises lasted. Perhaps the Grand Portage Band had a better understanding of the tourism industry than most, having been involved with efforts to attract tourism to Grand Portage since the 1930s. As Timothy Cochrane has observed, “Grand Portage has a long history of crafting and leveraging actions, of Native agency, to empower their future.”⁸⁶

⁸⁵ “Tribal Profile: Grand Portage Band of Chippewa,” *Sovereign Nations Newsletter*, in GPNM vertical files.

⁸⁶ “Grand Portage Lodge and Casino, Cornerstone to a growing community,” *Cook County News-Herald*, July 17, 1995.

Another milestone on the Band's long road back to self-governance came in 1990 with its purchase of a tract to protect manidoo giizhikens, a 300-year-old twisted cedar tree also known as the Witch Tree. Perched on rocky shoreline and visible from the waters of Grand Portage Bay, the little tree had great significance to generations of Grand Portage Indians and mariners on Lake Superior. When the landowner of the site notified the Band in 1987 that he was interested in selling, the Band went into action to raise money, acquire the property, and place this cultural resource under the Band's custody. Some of the Friends of Grand Portage donated money. The protection of the Witch Tree property had a galvanizing effect on the Band, illustrating the shift toward cultural preservation as a motivating force to achieve self-governance.⁸⁷

Grand Portage State Park

While the Band was raising money for the Witch Tree property it was also eyeing a state park proposal at Pigeon Falls that would be co-managed by the Band and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The proposal started with the Minnesota Parks and Trails Council in 1985, when it suggested making a state park which would encompass the scenic High and Middle Falls on the Pigeon River and complement Ontario's Pigeon River Provincial Park. State officials were receptive and began discussions with the Grand Portage Band as well as Grand Portage National Monument and Cook County Commissioners. The Minnesota Parks and Trails Council raised \$250,000 in donations and acquired about 300 acres, which were conveyed to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in 1988. The Minnesota state legislator authorized the state park in 1989.⁸⁸

The Grand Portage Band wanted to co-manage the state park with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and secure an Indian hiring preference for the state park staff who would be employed there. It took another five years to make that a reality. Through a complicated negotiation process, the state conveyed the 300 acres to the BIA in trust for the Grand Portage Band, and the land was leased back to the Minnesota Department

⁸⁷ Superintendent to Regional Director, no date, GPNM, CF, D18; Dean Einwalter to Friends of Grand Portage, January 2, 1990, GPNM, RG 1, Box 4, A42 "Gichi-Onigaming / Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa," at <https://mn.gov/indianaffairs/grandportage-iac.html>. On the cultural significance of the witch tree see Silvester John Brito, "The Witch Tree Complex," *Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters* 70 (1982), 61-67.

⁸⁸ Mark and Joan Strobel to David Coons, March 30, 1988, and Curtis L. Roy to Strobel and Strobel, April 8, 1988, GPNM, CF, File "Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Grand Portage State Park."

of Natural Resources for \$1 annually. The park was opened to the public in 1994, with band member Curtis Gagnon being appointed the first park manager.

The NPS was only marginally involved in the effort. It had a keen interest in the new state park because it would be another tourist attraction near Grand Portage National Monument, with the potential to steer travelers to the national monument. Indeed, since the Pigeon Falls were the reason for the historic Grand Portage on the voyageur route, it was important to show the relationship between the two sites in interpretive exhibits and area maps. The NPS offered some assistance with studying the geology of the Pigeon Falls and getting it listed as a National Natural Landmark. Had the national monument enjoyed better relations with the Grand Portage Band at this time, it might have integrated planning and development of the Grand Portage State Park with the national monument more effectively. But the Band was not interested in partnering with the NPS at the Grand Portage State Park.⁸⁹

NAGPRA

In 1990, Congress enacted the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). This law addressed longstanding grievances over the treatment of Indian burial remains housed in museum collections distributed all around the country. The law required federal agencies and museums, as well as state and local museums and educational institutions that received federal funding, to inventory their collections for the presence of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony; report the findings to tribes that might be culturally affiliated; and repatriate those items to a tribe at each tribe’s request. As Grand Portage National Monument had jurisdiction over the archeological resources that came from the site, it was a collections holder and needed to complete an inventory under the law. Recognizing that the process of inventory and repatriation would be very involved, the law allowed collections-holding institutions five years to complete their inventories, and it required that they consult with tribal governments and traditional leaders.⁹⁰

The NPS did not have a strong collections management program before the passage of NAGPRA. The law and the systemwide inventory that the law set in motion would have a

⁸⁹ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1990, ETIC; Timothy Cochrane interview by Theodore Catton, September 20, 2021.

⁹⁰ Theodore Catton, *American Indians and National Forests* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016), 153.

huge effect in causing the NPS to upgrade its collections management program, but for the time being it had to manage with what it had. The NPS received two deadlines for compliance with NAGPRA. First, the NPS was to provide a summary of pertinent items by November 16, 1993, and second, it was to provide an inventory of all pertinent items by November 16, 1995.⁹¹ The NPS needed all that time and more before it was able to file a notice of inventory completion for Grand Portage National Monument.⁹²

A relatively small portion of archeological collections from Grand Portage National Monument was housed at the headquarters in Grand Marais. Another portion was housed at the NPS's Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC) in Lincoln, Nebraska. The largest portion was held at the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS). While most of the material in these various collections was associated with European culture in the fur trade era, some of it was associated with American Indian culture. Records maintained by MWAC indicated that during the MNHS's archeological investigations around the historic site in 1962 four human burial sites were unearthed. When the NPS inquired with the MNHS about those human remains, it learned that MNHS had returned two of the human remains with associated funerary objects to Grand Portage National Monument in 1968, and the material had burned up in the fire in 1969. The two other human remains and associated items had been transferred to Hamline University in 1992. The transfer of the human remains and associated objects from MNHS to Hamline University had been made without the NPS's knowledge or permission, even though the NPS thought it had jurisdiction over them. That caused some consternation among NPS officials. However, MNHS officials insisted that the transfer was made pursuant to a Minnesota law and was not prompted by NAGPRA.⁹³

⁹¹ Theodore Catton and Thomas Thiessen, *An Administrative History of the Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, Nebraska*, report prepared by the Organization of American Historians for the National Park Service (Lincoln, NE: Midwest Archeological Center, National Park Service, 2019), 162, 166.

⁹² Notice of Inventory Completion for Grand Portage National Monument was published in the *Federal Register* on April 22, 1996. For the whole National Park System, the inventory process identified 4,982 human remains from 100 different parks. Of those, 1,170 human remains were considered culturally identifiable and subject to repatriation. (Roger G. Kennedy to Norman W. Deschampe, May 25, 1996, GPNM, CF, H4215.)

⁹³ Abby Sue Fisher to Marcia Anderson, September 29, 1992, Superintendent to Acting Regional Ethnographer, September 7, 1993, Acting Regional Ethnographer to Superintendent, October 8, 1993, Dean Einwalter to Nina Archabal, November 3, 1993, Einwalter to Norman Deschampe, November 15, 1993, Acting Chief, Midwest Archeological Center to Superintendent, November 24, 1993, Anderson to Fisher, March 11, 1994, and Acting Assistant Regional Director to Superintendent, November 10, 1994, GPNM, CF, H4215.

In the assessment of NPS experts, the human remains represented the physical remains of at least two individuals of American Indian ancestry who were buried sometime around 1800 to 1825. Furthermore, it was determined that approximately 11,000 (mostly tiny) objects found in the four burials in 1962 were reasonably believed to have been placed with or near the individuals at the time of death or later as part of the death rite or ceremony. The NPS proposed to repatriate the human remains and associated objects to the Grand Portage Band.

Superintendent Einwalter wrote to newly elected chairman of the RTC, Norman Deschampe, on November 15, 1993 to inform the Band of the NPS’s summary findings (the first stage in its two-stage inventory). Einwalter wrote a follow-up letter to Deschampe two months later in which he invited him to come to headquarters in Grand Marais and inspect the cultural objects held there. After that, Einwalter copied Deschampe in correspondence with the Hamline University, but relations between the superintendent and the RTC had become strained. Einwalter was unsatisfied by whatever communication, if any, he received back from the RTC on the matter. For the superintendent, the prospect of needing to certify to a proper and complete tribal consultation now loomed. By this time, NAGPRA had exposed countless federal officials to a more nuanced experience with tribal consultation as well as concepts of cultural patrimony than anything in their prior experience, and Einwalter was no exception. In March 1995, Einwalter posed a set of questions to the regional office:

1. What is our line of action should the Grand Portage Band of Minnesota Chippewa not show active interest in looking at objects? If no action is taken by the Band, do we need a letter from them stating that they don’t have the staff or time to deal with this? Apparently, they are being contacted by numerous museums, etc.
2. How do we seek out people who can do this? The Ojibwa themselves seem unsure as to what objects they should physically handle, etc.
3. If the Band does not address this issue this year but later on decides to reclaim objects or begin that process, what is our obligation?

Einwalter did not get a direct reply to his questions, but in other communications later that year he was informed that in the absence of a formal request by the Band to have the human remains repatriated from Hamline University to the reservation, the disposition of

those items might be decided instead by the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, in accordance with established procedures under the Minnesota law.⁹⁴

Through the fall of 1995, Einwalter and Deschampe communicated about the NAGPRA process largely through representatives: the national monument's chief of interpretation Myra Dec and the Band's Curtis Gagnon, who Deschampe informally named as the Band's representative with regard to NAGPRA. Part of the Band leadership's reticence on this issue, Gagnon explained to Dec, was due to its needing "to decide the spiritual ramifications of dealing with those objects." The RTC was not inclined to rush this sensitive matter, whereas the NPS had a deadline to meet under the law. Indeed, the NPS's Washington Office was poised to publish a notice of inventory completion for Grand Portage National Monument in the *Federal Register*.⁹⁵

Einwalter wrote another letter to Deschampe on December 18, 1995, but did not get a reply. On January 9, 1996, Dec telephoned RTC councilman Gilbert Caribou to ask for a meeting between the park and the RTC but she was unsuccessful. Einwalter and Dec were still trying to arrange a meeting with the RTC when they learned that the Washington Office had gone ahead and published the notice anyway. Einwalter was embarrassed, because the notice stated that the NPS had made its assessment "in consultation with representatives of the Grand Portage Reservation Business Committee" when he was on record still seeking further consultation with the Band. The NPS legal affairs team looked at the published notice and the record of what had transpired and found that "consultation" for purposes of complying with NAGPRA could mean "attempted consultation." Reluctantly, Einwalter approved the notice in a statement drafted two weeks later. However, he pointed out to his superiors the strain that it put on NPS relations with the Grand Portage Band. "Our ongoing and sincere attempt to build a government-to-government, professional relationship with the Grand Portage Band is damaged by the use of language such as this," he wrote.⁹⁶

Einwalter finally got the long-sought meeting with the RTC on April 11, 1996. Even though the notice was already published, Einwalter offered that the NPS could still retrieve the objects from Hamline University and hold them in secure storage until such time as the

⁹⁴ Tom Thiessen, Memorandum of Telephone Call (Dean Einwalter to Thiessen), August 30, 1995, GPNM, CF, H4215.

⁹⁵ Dean Einwalter to Curtis Gagnon, September 6, 1995, GPNM, CF, H4215.

⁹⁶ Dean Einwalter to Norman Deschampe, December 18, 1995, Myra Dec, Phone Record (Dec to Gilbert Caribou), January 9, 1996, Dec, Phone Record (Michelle Watson to Dec), January 10, 1996, Superintendent to Grand Portage Tribal Council, January 11, 1996, Einwalter to Watson (email), January 23, 1996, Michael J. Evans to Superintendent (email), January 24, 1996, GPNM, CF, H4215.

Band wanted to reclaim them. Deschampe was noncommittal.⁹⁷ Five days later, the NPS published the final notice in which it stated that the human remains “retained by the Minnesota Historical Society represent a minimum of two individuals,” and that “this notice has been sent to officials of the Grand Portage Reservation Business Committee.” The Grand Portage Band was given the option for repatriation.⁹⁸ Months later, the RTC notified the MNHS that it wanted to proceed with repatriation of the human remains. As for the funerary and sacred objects associated with the burials, it did not wish to take possession of them yet since it did not have a place for them. Rather, it wanted the MNHS to hold them indefinitely.⁹⁹

NAGPRA dealt with a painful problem. The long, drawn-out process for attempting to rectify the problem inevitably stirred a lot of anguish and rancor. NAGPRA unfolded at the very time when many tribes, including the Grand Portage Band, were moving forward on self-governance. As a result, many individuals such as Dean Einwalter and Norman Deschampe were learning the ins and outs of tribal consultation and government-to-government relations in the supercharged atmosphere of holding negotiations over the repatriation of human remains. Einwalter, despite good intentions, could not navigate those stormy, uncharted waters smoothly, and so he lost whatever respect the Band once had for him.

Fortunately, Einwalter had reached an age to retire. When the Band informed him of its intent to pursue a compact with the NPS under the Tribal Self Governance Act, he saw it was time for him to step aside. “After considering this carefully,” he wrote to his superior, “I believe...it behooves us to get the next superintendent in on these early communications. I believe all such communications should be delayed until the new superintendent is on board.” He argued that it would be better for the next superintendent to get in on the start of the negotiations, which would likely have a “major impact on Grand Portage National Monument.” That was a brave admission, and it served the park well.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Superintendent to Files, April 16, 1996, GPNM, CF, H4215.

⁹⁸ National Park Service, “Notice of Inventory Completion for Native American Human Remains and Associated Funerary Objects in the Control of Grand Portage National Monument, National Park Service, Grand Marais, MN,” *Federal Register* 61, no. 78 (April 22, 1996), p. 17720.

⁹⁹ Nina M. Archabal to Curtis L. Roy, December 12, 1996, GPNM, CF, H4215.

¹⁰⁰ Superintendent to Director, Midwest Field Area, January 27, 1997, GPNM, CF, File “Tribal Self-Governance.”

Chapter Four

A Partnership Built on Shared Interests, 1995 to the Present

Grand Portage National Monument entered a new era when the NPS and the Grand Portage Band reached an accord on how the Band would compact with the NPS to take over the maintenance operation in the park. The historic agreement, the first of its kind in the National Park System, became effective on November 15, 1998. It signified the start of true co-management at Grand Portage.¹ It followed two years of negotiations between the Band and its legal representation on one side and the NPS and Department solicitors on the other. The Band launched its compacting initiative in 1996 after nearly two years of crucial adjustments in federal-tribal relations in 1995-96. At the crux of it all was a carefully laid, well thought-out reset of the way tribes asserted, and the federal government handled, the fundamental principle of tribal sovereignty.

In the last chapter we saw how the Grand Portage Band strove, over a span of many years, to improve the reservation economy and consolidate its return to self-governance, with those efforts culminating in the mid 1990s with the Band's assumption of programs on the reservation formerly run by the BIA, such as forestry, health service, and school administration. Many other tribes across the nation were reaching a similar point around the same time. The Clinton administration was supportive of these trends. President Clinton issued executive orders aimed at empowering tribes to fight for sacred sites protection, pursue environmental justice, and advance other concerns of unique interest to Indian peoples. The centerpiece of Clinton's federal Indian policy was Executive Order 13175, announced by the president before a gathering of American Indian leaders in a Rose Garden ceremony on April 29, 1994, which promised to honor and respect tribal sovereignty through "two simple steps." First, all federal agencies would henceforward work directly with tribal governments. Second, they would consult tribal governments prior to taking any action that might affect tribal trust resources. The dual instructions contained in this memorandum

¹ Robyn Dalzen, "Historic Agreement at Grand Portage National Monument," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1999), 5.

constituted Clinton’s reformulation of the unique historical relationship between the federal government and American Indians. Clinton sought to build a more effective day-to-day working relationship between federal agencies and tribal governments based on renewed respect for tribal sovereignty. At the same time, the operative word in his memorandum, “consult,” maintained the federal government’s superior standing in these government-to-government relations.²

The transition to a new era at Grand Portage National Monument was helped along by a change of leadership on both sides of the negotiating table. For the Band, the new person in charge was Norman Deschampe. Born and raised at Grand Portage in a traditional family, Deschampe was just twenty-three years old the first time he was elected to the tribal council. He was not yet forty when he became chairman in 1993. He would serve as chairman for the next twenty-six years until his death in 2019 at the age of sixty-five.³

Deschampe defined tribal sovereignty for the Grand Portage Band as the ability to make decisions free of outside influence. One prime example of how the Band exercised its sovereignty, Deschampe said, was to adopt its own zoning rules for the reservation. The RTC prepared a land ordinance and the people voted it into effect in 1995. Another example was the Band’s decision to develop a casino. Minnesota could regulate gaming everywhere in the state except on Indian reservations, where tribes held that power. It was the Band’s sovereign choice to feature gaming on the reservation and to invest the casino’s profits back into the community to provide health services, natural resources protection, and other community needs.⁴

Not long after the Band concluded its historic agreement with Grand Portage National Monument, Deschampe explained the new relationship with the NPS this way:

The Monument is a National Park that is entirely on our reservation and was formed with lands donated by the Band over fifty years ago with the

² Theodore Catton, *To Make A Better Nation: An Administrative History of the Timbisha Shoshone Homeland Act*, reported prepared under Cooperative Agreement with Rocky Mountain Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit for Death Valley National Park, California (Missoula: University of Montana Printing and Graphic Services, 2009), 12. Note that copies of the executive order and guidance from the BIA were distributed to Grand Portage National Monument and may be found in CF, File “Tribal Self-Governance.”

³ Dan Kraker, “Grand Portage mourns the loss of its longtime leader,” *MPR News*, February 14, 2019, at <https://mprnews.org/story/2019/02/14/grand-portage-mourns-loss-longtime-leader-norman-deschampe>.

⁴ Norman Deschampe interview by Jay Anderson, no date, at <https://ampers.org/mn-art-culture-history/norman-deschampe-on-tribal-sovereignty-and-more/>.

promise of jobs and economic development for tribal members.... The greatest obstacle we faced was learning to communicate in the same language. By that we mean the Band and the Park Service needed to identify what each other's interest were and how our respective bureaucratic cultures differed. We ultimately agreed to disagree on several matters, but we built enough trust in each other through constant communications that we learned the disagreements are more theoretical than practical.⁵

On the NPS side, outgoing park superintendent Dean Einwalter offered some wise words with reference to the new framework of government-to-government relations. As the NPS Midwest Region gathered input from the field on the formulation of new "National Park Service Policies and Action Plan for Carrying Out the Government-to-Government Relationship with American Indians," Einwalter urged that the section in the draft version about technical assistance to Indian tribes needed to be completely recast. He wrote:

This section...indicates a degree of arrogance we can't afford. There are tribes who no longer need our assistance. With their ample source of casino wealth, many of the tribes seek the best in private consulting firms. We may need their assistance more than they need ours. I suggest we go carefully here and use such words as cooperating, more so than developing, preserving, protecting, and providing. Let's use terminology that alludes to interdependence and cooperative relationships, rather than that which makes the National Park Service appear as the giver or provider.⁶

The new superintendent, Tim Cochrane, was cut from a different cloth from all the superintendents at Grand Portage who had come before. He had a Ph.D. in folklore with minors in history and environmental studies. Prior to his appointment as superintendent, his career path in the NPS led to one of the NPS's new regional cultural anthropologist positions – in the Alaska Region – which he held from 1992 to 1997. In Alaska he was immersed in issues around Alaska Native subsistence use in the national parks, a management regime that

⁵ Quoted in "Tribal Profile: Grand Portage Band of Chippewa," *Sovereign Nations Newsletter*, in GPNM vertical files.

⁶ Superintendent to Tom Thiessen, Midwest Archeological Center, July 11, 1995, GPNM, CF, File "Tribal Self-Governance."

was somewhat akin to co-management. Cochrane’s experience and education prepared him to work closely with a tribal government and it gave him an acute awareness of the differences in “bureaucratic cultures” that Deschampe was talking about. Cochrane brought a fresh perspective and a strong commitment to make the national monument relationship with the Grand Portage Band flourish. Years later when he considered his own role in bringing about the historic agreement in 1998, he wrote: “I had learned from my work with tribal communities nearby Glacier Bay and Katmai National Parks in Alaska never to promise anything that I couldn’t deliver.”⁷

The Tribal Self-Governance Act and the 638 Compact

The agreement that the Grand Portage Band has with the NPS is known as a “638 compact.” This name comes from the original authorizing legislation, P. L. 94-638, or the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. In 1988, Congress amended the ISDEA to accelerate efforts by tribes to take over BIA administered programs on tribal lands and run them themselves. Tribe by tribe and program by program, a tribal government would contract with the federal government under the amended law, receiving the federal funds through BIA to provide whatever service the BIA had been providing. These contracts negotiated by tribes and the BIA were called “638 contracts.” In 1994, Congress amended the law again to include Title IV, which provided for tribes to compact with other agencies in the Department of the Interior to take over other federally administered programs wherever tribes could demonstrate that the program had a “special historical, cultural, and geographic significance” to the tribe. Such agreements became known as “638 compacts,” with the one at Grand Portage being the first one of its kind in the National Park System.⁸

NPS leadership predicted that the agency would be among the first Interior agencies tapped under the new law, because several units in the National Park System had that “special historical, cultural, and geographic significance” to tribes that the Tribal Self-Governance Act identified as a threshold condition for compacting. Consequently, NPS

⁷ Cochrane, “Making the Tribal Self Governance Act Work at Grand Portage.”

⁸ Catton, *To Make A Better Nation*, 17. For an in-depth treatment using Grand Portage as a case study, see Mary Ann King, “Co-Management or Contracting? Agreements between Native American Tribes and the U.S. National Park Service Pursuant to the 1994 Tribal Self-Governance Act,” *Harvard Environmental Law Review* 31 (2007), 475-530. If any 638 compacts in the National Park System predated the one at Grand Portage, it was of a different sort, being limited to a project rather than dealing with a park operation on an ongoing basis.

leadership called a national meeting on the TSGA to discuss implications. The cultural anthropologist for the Midwest Region, Tom Thiessen (his official title was acting regional ethnographer), attended the meeting in Las Vegas and took copious notes, producing a detailed record in his trip report.⁹

One of the questions discussed was what would happen if two tribes, each with a cultural affiliation or so-called “nexus connection” to a given park unit, both sought to compact. Would this be a competitive bid situation? (Another NPS unit in Minnesota, Pipestone National Monument, appeared to be a plausible candidate for such a scenario.) Another question, closer to the mark of how the compacting would actually unfold at Grand Portage, was which park operations were compactible? Concessions, construction, and maintenance were obvious candidates. What about interpretation? Or some aspects of law enforcement? Some at the meeting expressed concern that a tribe might want to take over visitor center operations at a given unit. These concerns led into a discussion of what park operations would remain off-limits to tribes, or in the language of the act, “inherently Federal.”¹⁰

Another practical question was which tribes in the Midwest Region, and thus which NPS units, were apt to be impacted first. The law gave precedence to twenty-nine tribes that were already self-governance tribes (meaning that they had taken over 100 percent of BIA administration on the reservation). The law allowed up to twenty more tribes to be declared eligible for participation in the self-governance program each year, provided they had formally applied for the program. The Grand Portage Band was not in the first group but it could be in the second. Thiessen, in his trip report, listed seven units in the Midwest Region that were most likely to receive a request for compacting. Grand Portage was at the top of the list. Most were located on the shores of Lake Superior or Lake Michigan or nearby. (The 1995 reorganization plan for the NPS was about to add Arkansas and the Dakotas to the Midwest Region. Thiessen noted that another seven units in the Dakotas were likely candidates for compacting as well.)¹¹

The significance of the Las Vegas meeting is that it shows that from the very start the NPS was proactive in its approach to the TSGA. Rather than stonewalling tribes’ efforts,

⁹ Acting Regional Ethnographer, Midwest Archeological Center to Acting Assistant Regional Director, Anthropology/Archeology, Midwest Archeological Center, March 31, 1995, GPNM, CF, File “Tribal Self-Governance.”

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

the NPS aimed to work constructively with tribes to optimize new ways of carrying out park operations within the changing political environment. That proactive posture was evident at all levels of the organization: in the Washington Office, in the Midwest Region, and among the park staff.

At the Washington level, NPS Director Roger Kennedy created an American Indian Liaison Office (AILO) in 1995. The new office was established at the very time that the NPS was reorganizing offices and regions at all levels with the overall aim to downsize central offices and move upper management staff out to the field. So, the establishment of the AILO in the midst of the reorganization was a further sign that the NPS was strongly committed to improving NPS relations with tribes. That commitment built on other recent experiences of the NPS, such as its NAGPRA effort (described in the previous chapter) and its fostering role in the startup of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, which were authorized under 1993 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act.¹²



The stockade and Grand Portage Island, September 2000. (Authors photo.)

The Midwest Region was also proactive in responding to the TSGA. The Midwest Region contains numerous midcontinent cultural sites with ties to American Indian history and archeology. Few other NPS regions are the home of so many tribal nations who actively maintain their connections with their homelands and heritage. The Midwest Archeological Center in Lincoln, Nebraska, with its specialized staff of archeologists and ethnographers, gave the Midwest Region something of an edge in tribal relations.¹³ Regional ethnographer Thiessen, who was on the center staff, gave considerable attention and thought to evolving NPS policy on the TSGA, digesting obtruse solicitors’ opinions and sharing his

¹² Catton, *To Make a Better Nation*, 16-17.

¹³ Catton and Thiessen, *An Administrative History of the Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, Nebraska*, 111.

perspectives with Superintendent Einwalter as well as the regional directorate and the new head of the AILO, Dr. Pat Parker.¹⁴

At Grand Portage National Monument, Superintendent Einwalter admitted that his relations with the Band were strained. More and more, he delegated communications with the Band to the chief of interpretation, Myra Dec. When the Band moved to compact with the NPS, Einwalter announced his plan to retire around the beginning of 1997. While Einwalter did not get much involved with the negotiations, he supported the evolution in principle. Dec did, too. She represented the park in the initial negotiations before Cochrane arrived; then she prepared to vacate her position because she was sure that the Band would assume control of the interpretive program as well as maintenance. (She transferred to Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in the latter part of 1997.)¹⁵

Einwalter first learned of the Grand Portage Band's intent to compact with the NPS by way of a law firm in St. Paul called Johnson, Hamilton and Quigley. A member of the law firm telephoned the national monument in late August 1996 to request information about the legislative history of Grand Portage National Monument. Einwalter replied to the law firm by letter, asking that it contact Band officials and "request the tribal chairman to forward a letter to me notifying the National Park Service of the intent."¹⁶

One month later, the RBC passed a resolution to enter into negotiations with the NPS for a "Compact and Annual Funding Agreement for assumption of the operation of the Grand Portage National Monument." The annual funding agreement was the recognized instrument for transfer of federal funds. The resolution cited P. L. 94-638 as well as P. L. 85-910, the Grand Portage National Monument establishing act, with its direction to give "preference for the employment and involvement of the Grand Portage Band and its members in the operation and administration of the monument."¹⁷

Another six weeks passed, and then Deschampe sent a letter dated November 5, 1996 to Pat Parker in Washington formally notifying the NPS of its request to assume operation of programs at Grand Portage National Monument. Deschampe stated in the letter that the request was made under authority of P.L. 94-638. "The Grand Portage Band,"

¹⁴ Acting Regional Ethnographer, Midwest Archeological Center to Field Director, Midwest Region (with attachments), May 23, 1995, GPNM, CF, File "Tribal Self-Governance."

¹⁵ Myra (Dec) Foster interview with Theodore Catton and Diane Krahe, October 1, 2021.

¹⁶ Dean C. Einwalter to Michael Wacker, August 28, 1996. GPNM, CF, File "Tribal Self-Governance."

¹⁷ Grand Portage Reservation Tribal Council, Resolution 45-96, September 25, 1996, GPNM, CF, File "Tribal Self-Governance."

Deschampe wrote, “is interested in negotiating an annual funding agreement that would allow it to operate the Monument in all essential aspects not considered inherently federal.”¹⁸

Over the next few months, Deschampe reframed the Band’s request by saying it would approach the takeover of park operations incrementally. It would start with just the maintenance operation. Deschampe also reframed the Band’s effort in another way: the Band wanted this not just for the money and jobs, but for community pride and the opportunity to partner with the NPS in a meaningful way. “Our overall goal,” Deschampe declared, “is to be the best damn park in the whole country.”¹⁹

Einwalter sought to push off negotiations until after he retired and a new superintendent was in place. Deschampe consented to a slow start up in order to build trust, but excessive delay, he said, would add unduly to the Band’s transaction costs. A compromise was reached and a first negotiation was held at Grand Portage in early April 1997, two months before Cochrane was due to take up duties. Later meetings were held in St. Paul where the negotiations were free from distractions. At this initial negotiation, Einwalter stayed in Grand Marais and sent Myra Dec to Grand Portage to represent the park staff. Assistant regional director Jim Loach was the NPS team lead. Other people on the team were Billy Davis from regional contracting and Al Kashinki from the Office of the Solicitor. The Band’s negotiating team consisted of Tribal Chairman Deschampe, tribal members Ken Sherer, Tony LeSage, Arvid Dahl, Gilbert Caribou, and Joanne Lhotka, and the Band’s attorney Jim Hamilton.²⁰

This meeting and the next few meetings went poorly. The NPS acted as though it feared a degradation of park standards. Prior to the first meeting the Band asked for a description of the park’s maintenance operation – a start toward negotiating an annual funding agreement. The NPS gave the Band a thirty-two-page draft description of maintenance activities, a how-to list for everything from mowing the lawns to cleaning the restrooms. The tribal chairman did not like the level of detail in this document. Considering the fact that the Band already ran a lodge and casino, it hardly needed instruction on how to

¹⁸ Norman W. Deschampe to Pat Parker, November 5, 1996, GPNM, CF, File “Tribal Self-Governance.”

¹⁹ Norman W. Deschampe to Bill Sinclair (with attachment), March 24, 1997, and Meeting Minutes, April 28, 1997, GPNM, CF, File “Grand Portage Band – Maintenance Division.”

²⁰ Maureen Finnerty to Norman W. Deschampe, December 4, 1996, William W. Schenk to Deschampe, December 9, 1996, and Superintendent to Director, Midwest Field Area, January 27, 1997, GPNM, CF, File “Tribal Self Governance,” and Meeting Minutes, April 28, 1997, GPNM, CF, File “Grand Portage Band – Maintenance Division.”

clean restrooms. There was also friction over meeting protocols. Several band members were accustomed to smoking during meetings; several on the other side found it hard to sit at the negotiating table and breathe. Al Kashinski threatened to withdraw from the negotiations if the group could not resolve this immediate problem. The smokers finally agreed to desist, but only with the addition of frequent breaks so they could smoke outside.²¹

When Superintendent Cochrane arrived in July 1997, he found the two sides at loggerheads. Cochrane had been in plenty of negotiations before – in Alaska he was frequently tasked to mediate dispute resolutions between park staffs and Alaska Natives – but this was his first superintendency, and indeed his first management position. Jim Loach was the lead negotiator and Cochrane was not about to challenge that. So, when Cochrane joined in the talks there was no abrupt change in tenor; rather, as Cochrane would recall, the negotiating teams “just kept at it.” Deschampe’s “incremental approach” became the driving force.²² And as the Band’s attorney Jim Hamilton stressed to the group again and again, the Band had the law on its side. “Remember,” Hamilton would interject, “this is a government-to-government negotiation and not a standard contract.... What we are doing is an experience that the Park Service has never had and the statutes...are unfamiliar.... These are not contract laws but self-governance.” Government-to-government relations required “a level of discretion and trust” not present in contractual relations.²³

As time went by, Cochrane became more involved because from the NPS perspective the agreement would be precedent setting, with implications for the national parks beyond Grand Portage National Monument, so his gathering experience as a site manager became important. Cochrane advised Parker as she worked toward a rulemaking on how the NPS would address future actions under the TSGA. He explained to other park superintendents what the NPS was doing at Grand Portage. Together with Deschampe, he informed Minnesota’s congressional delegation and Cook County commissioners about what was taking shape at Grand Portage and assured them that the TSGA was a “great fit” for the national monument.²⁴

One sticking point that had to be overcome was how to deal with NPS employees’ concerns that if they changed employers and went to work for the Band they could lose the

²¹ Meeting Minutes, April 28, 1997, GPNM, CF, File “Grand Portage Band – Maintenance Division,” Cochrane, “Making the Tribal Self Governance Act Work at Grand Portage.”

²² Cochrane interview.

²³ Meeting Minutes, April 28, 1997, GPNM, CF, File “Grand Portage Band – Maintenance Division.”

²⁴ Superintendent to Chief, American Indian Liaison Office (email), April 21, 1998, GPNM, CF, H32; Cochrane, “Making the Tribal Self Governance Act Work at Grand Portage.”

federal job benefits they had accrued through years of federal service. Ultimately, two longtime NPS employees went to other parks rather than convert to employment by the Band, while another on the maintenance crew was permitted to stay on the federal payroll for another four years to protect his investment in a federal retirement plan. Meanwhile, the Band tried to match wages and benefits paid by the NPS to make the transition as seamless as it could. One big benefit that maintenance workers found in working for the Band was that they were no longer furloughed in the fall when they reached the maximum number of hours allowed as NPS seasonal employees. Instead, they could be employed on indoor project work in lieu of outdoor maintenance work through the cold winter months.²⁵



Kitchen, September 2000.
(Authors photo.)

Another sticking point was how to pay for contract support costs. Negotiating an annual funding agreement (AFA), transferring the federal funds, and tending to the AFA throughout the year all involved a certain amount of paper shuffling and administrative time. The BIA simply absorbed those contract support costs, but the NPS did not have the same stake in tribal self-governance that the BIA did, so the question arose: how to cover those costs? Fortunately, the NPS moved expeditiously to resolve that problem. It added \$32,000 to the park’s base funding. It was a relatively small increase, but any base increase had to go into the NPS budget for Congress’s approval, and Cochrane was astonished by the way it got expedited.²⁶

²⁵ Gagnon interview; Cochrane, “Making the Tribal Self Governance Act Work at Grand Portage.”

²⁶ Pat Parker, Note to Deny Galvin and Maureen Finnerty, January 12, 1999, Superintendent to Regional Director, January 14, 1999, and Superintendent to Pat Parker, Cathy Damon, and Bill Schenk (email), January 14, 1999, GPNM, CF, File “AFA.” See also Cochrane, “Making the Tribal Self Governance Act Work at Grand Portage.”

Perhaps the weightiest issue that the negotiators confronted was the question of what constitutes an “inherent federal function” under the TSGA. Put another way the question became: what was the Band’s endgame? If the Band first took over maintenance and later on it took over interpretation, what would come next and where would it stop? Deschampe’s disarming “incremental approach” tended to mute those concerns, but the question could not be ignored altogether. NPS officials came to define the inherent federal functions at Grand Portage National Monument as consisting of 1) the leadership role of the superintendent, 2) the fiscal responsibilities of the administrative officer, and 3) the law enforcement authority of the chief ranger. But the NPS concept of “inherent federal function” was never put into official policy. It did not go into the NPS rulemaking for the TSGA. Cochrane warned that by leaving the concept undefined it would be a potential source of acrimony wherever the TSGA was applied in the National Park System. The difficulty was that the concept of an “inherent federal function” was unique to the TSGA so there was no precedent on which to draw.²⁷

The NPS and the Band reached an agreement in August 1998, almost two years after the Band initiated the effort. A ceremony to conclude the agreement was scheduled for October 30. It was to include a traditional Ojibwe blessing by the Grand Portage Band, and to conclude with the raising of the Grand Portage Band of Minnesota Chippewa flag over the national monument alongside the flag of the United States. Nine days before the scheduled event, the agreement got temporarily derailed and the event was canceled. Congress passed an omnibus budget bill that included a moratorium on all new or expanded TSGA agreements. Solicitors for the NPS found that the moratorium applied to the Grand Portage agreement. The Band’s attorney argued to the contrary, saying that the Grand Portage agreement was essentially concluded in August prior to the moratorium. He informed Representative Oberstar’s office, and then Oberstar prevailed on the NPS to proceed as planned and assume the moratorium did not apply. The agreement formally took effect on November 15, 1998, with the ceremony taking place sometime afterwards.²⁸

²⁷ Superintendent to Chief, American Indian Liaison Office (email), April 21, 1998, GPNM, CF, H32; Cochrane, “Making the Tribal Self Governance Act Work at Grand Portage.”

²⁸ Dalzen, “Historic Agreement at Grand Portage National Monument,” 5; National Park Service, “Grand Portage National Monument and Grand Portage Band Hold Ceremony to Commemorate New” (press release), October 20, 1998, GPNM, unfiled; Superintendent to Congressman James Oberstar, November 13, 1998, and Oberstar to Kitty Roberts, Director, Congressional Affairs, November 20, 1998, GPNM, CF, A44; Jim Hamilton to Grand Portage RTC, December 14, 1998, GPNM, CF, File “AFA.” The moratorium is contained in P. L. 105-277, Section 328. See also Cochrane, “Making the Tribal Self Governance Act Work at Grand Portage.”

The Annual Funding Agreements in Operation

Melvin Gagnon was maintenance foreman when the agreement took effect. He had a maintenance crew of six, all band members. The maintenance workers donned a new uniform when they went to work for the Band. Instead of the NPS green and grey, they wore a brown and tan uniform with the Grand Portage shield stitched on it. The round shield has images of a turtle, arrow, pipe, and woodland caribou representing the Band’s heritage, with the words “Grand Portage Chippewa” in a semicircle below and the words “Grand Portage National Monument” encircling around the outside. Gagnon was assigned a desk in the accounting office of the tribal government, while the maintenance shop remained at the same location on monument land. The change of employers went smoothly. In essence, the maintenance operation comprised about a quarter of the national monument’s annual budget and that amount was turned over to the Band. The crew performed all the duties it had performed when it was employed by the NPS.²⁹

In the lead up to each year’s AFA, Gagnon worked on the maintenance budget with the superintendent. Then the superintendent met with the tribal government to get its input and approval. The final AFA always bore three signatures: the tribal chairman’s, the superintendent’s and the regional contracting officer’s – after it was circulated to the regional office prior to approval. The transfer of funds under each AFA, meanwhile, was handled locally by the administrative officer. Ordinarily the AFA was timed to take effect at the start of the federal fiscal year. If, as often happened, Congress did not pass an annual appropriations act by October 1, and the NPS had to get by on funding under a continuing resolution until Congress could literally get its act together, then the national monument would transfer funds to the Band based on the previous year’s AFA pending the approval of a new budget, simply replicating the stopgap arrangement at the local level.³⁰

The yearly budget meetings between the superintendent and the tribal chairperson fostered a spirit of cooperative management like no previous experience in the national monument’s history. When the park and the Band had to work through fiscal problems together, those exercises built trust. Rose Novitsky rejoined the national monument staff in 2002 as its administrative officer. Having worked in the accounting office of the tribal government for many years, Novitsky knew that the Band’s accounting system was top

²⁹ Gagnon interview; Hendricks, “A Turnaround at Grand Portage,” *National Parks* 82, no. 2 (Spring 2008), 56.

³⁰ Gagnon interview; Craig Hansen interview by Theodore Catton, September 22, 2021; Annual Funding Agreements for the years 1999, 2001, 2004, GPNM, CF, File “AFA.”

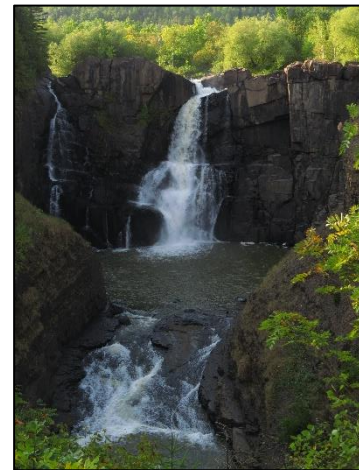
notch. It had to be in order to deal with the frequent audits that came with the Band's involvement in the gaming industry. As a result, Novitsky was able to give Cochrane valuable assurances that the Band would hold up its end of the accounting process when the AFAs began to get incrementally more complicated about a decade out from the start of the agreement.³¹

The base funding allocation for the maintenance operation increased slightly from year to year. Over the first four full years of implementation it rose 6.34 percent:

2000	Base agreement = \$205,000
2001	Base agreement = \$209,100
2002	Base agreement = \$212,000
2003	Base agreement = \$218,000

In the early 2000s it was about one fourth of the park's base funding. Twenty years later, it was between one quarter and one third of the park's base funding. This did not include special projects, which were funded separately under AFA amendments. There was generally one or two amendments added to the AFA per year, with each amendment listing a number of special projects. While the base agreement rose incrementally, the number of special projects rose spectacularly after about 2008. By FY 2016, the AFA amendments carried upwards of \$2.5 million in special projects each year.³²

Most special projects emanated from the NPS's Project Management Information System (PMIS), the agency's central clearinghouse for prioritizing and authorizing projects that are discretionary or outside the scope of parks' base funding. The AFA amendments became an effective mechanism for getting project funds dedicated in a timely manner – for instance, when managers had funds to “use or lose” at the end of a fiscal year. As the AFA demonstrated its effectiveness year after year, the array of special projects handled under the AFA grew in multiple ways: in number (from a few to a few dozen each year), in



Pigeon Falls. (Authors photo.)

³¹ Rose Novitsky interview by Diane Krahe, September 22, 2021.

³² Grand Portage National Monument/Grand Portage Band of Chippewa, Indian Self-Governance Act Agreement Projects by Year, Base Budget and Special Projects, GPNM, CF, File “’05 AFA,” and The Indian Self Governance Act Annual Funding Agreement (digest of AFA annual reports 1999-2020), printout provided to the authors by Superintendent Craig Hansen.

size (from under \$10,000 to upwards of \$300,000), and in scope (from strictly construction and maintenance projects to more and more cultural and natural resource projects).³³

Around 2011, the AFA amendments began to include project work for Isle Royale National Park on a regular basis. The Band thought that was fitting since it had ancestral ties to Isle Royale. The agreement was also used sporadically to fund one or two projects for Voyageurs National Park and other units in the Midwest Region. On first blush it might have seemed that this grew the scope of the agreement beyond what the TSGA intended, or that the Grand Portage Band was slipping into the role of an NPS contractor. However, Superintendent Cochrane insisted that that was not the case. The Band had an interest in every special project that it approved in the AFA amendments, and it had the discretion to turn down any project proposal that was brought to it. As one example of the Band’s interest, an AFA amendment was used to fund a study of the threat of invasive aquatic species spreading in Lake Superior waters by way of ballast water carried in lake-going vessels. The research supported efforts to protect native lake trout at Isle Royale. While the natural resource staff at Isle Royale National Park had the lead on this project, the Band’s natural resource staff had a hand in it, too. The Grand Portage Band was deeply interested in maintaining native fish resources not only in Grand Portage Bay and Grand Portage Creek, but out in the lake and on Isle Royale. The Band was only too happy to increase its involvement with natural resource management in Isle Royale National Park.³⁴

The 638 compact between the Grand Portage Band and the NPS elevated Grand Portage National Monument’s profile within the National Park System. In February 1999, Cochrane sought an increase in the park’s base funding across three areas: resource management, visitor services, and development planning/construction. Cochrane linked the request directly to the 638 compact. For instance, in arguing for more base funding for resource management he wrote: “There is a lack of cultural & natural resource baselines (archeological, ethnographic, rare plants, cultural landscapes, historic scene). Without accurate data to guide park actions & the Band’s work, resources are at serious risk.” While the initiative coincided with the startup of a systemwide inventory and monitoring program (I & M), most parks had to rely on project funding (through the NPS Natural Resource

³³ Cochrane, “Making the Tribal Self Governance Act Work at Grand Portage.”

³⁴ Ibid.

Challenge) to beef up their natural resource management, whereas Grand Portage obtained the base funding increase that it sought and created a new natural resource division.³⁵

Representative Bruce Vento, a Democrat, requested a base funding increase of \$100,000 for Grand Portage National Monument, citing the historic agreement with the Grand Portage Band in his letter to the chairperson of the Subcommittee on Interior Appropriations. He made the request, Vento wrote, “in order for Grand Portage National Monument to fully achieve the goals as set forth in this agreement.”³⁶

The increase in base funding was only the beginning as millions of dollars in special project funding would flow to Grand Portage National Monument by way of the AFA amendments over the next two decades. What was behind the dramatic increase in support? Nowhere was an official answer to that question to be found, but Cochrane had an idea of it. He became convinced over the years that the increase in funding stemmed directly from the 638 compact with the Grand Portage Band. Before 1999, he thought, the NPS Midwest Region had an entrenched view of Grand Portage National Monument as a “Podunk” unit that should not be prioritized. Once the AFA had proven its merits, the Midwest Region changed its view.³⁷



Great Hall. (Photo by seasonal park ranger Tyler Gordon, courtesy of Pam Neil.)

³⁵ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 2000, ETIC.

³⁶ Bruce C. Vento to Ralph Regula, April 16, 1999, GPNM, CF, File “10FS.”

³⁷ Record of conversation between Bill Clayton and the authors, September 13, 2021.

Completing the Park Development

The Band was pleased to get the TSGA agreement in place in 1999, but afterwards the unfulfilled promise of a visitor center still loomed large in the Band’s partnership with the NPS. Until the construction of the visitor center was well in hand around 2004, the Band’s disposition toward the national monument could be characterized as one of expectancy with guarded optimism. Even after the Heritage Center was completed in 2007, there were still other park developments awaiting construction – principally a maintenance shop and residential staff housing, items that the Band thought should have been accomplished long before then. The long-awaited completion of the park development occurred in three phases: a planning phase around the General Management Plan from 1999 to 2003, then the push to get the Heritage Center built, and lastly the other park developments, which came to fruition in 2009-2011.

The General Management Plan

When the Band and the NPS entered negotiations in 1996 to compact under the TSGA it led to a turnover of key personnel on the national monument staff. In 1997 there were two staff changes. Chief of interpretation Myra Dec transferred to Apostle Islands, while maintenance foreman Lester Day left federal service. In 1998, chief ranger Rick Yates transferred to Great Basin National Park. Dave Cooper was hired as chief of interpretation in 1997, but when Yates left the next year Cochrane asked Cooper to move into a new role as resource manager. Pam Neil was then hired into the chief of interpretation position. In a couple more years Mel Gagnon returned to the staff as head of maintenance, and Rose Novitsky returned as administrative officer. Those four – Cooper, Neil, Gagnon, and Novitsky – would form a strong and stable leadership team under Cochrane for many years.³⁸

The turnover gave Cochrane the opportunity to devise a staff reorganization. (As Cooper commented, this was a meaningful development, not just an exercise in rearranging the deck chairs.) Under the old organizational structure, the chief of interpretation handled the interpretive program plus cultural resources and the chief ranger handled visitor protection plus natural resources. The chief of interpretation supervised a lead park ranger together with a seasonal staff, and the chief ranger supervised a seasonal park ranger. The

³⁸ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1997, 1998, ETIC; Cochrane interview.

problem with this organization, Cochrane found, was that everyone was focused on visitors, so resource management got short shrift. Under the new organizational structure, Cooper took over cultural resources management and supervision of a museum technician. While Neil and the park ranger contended with the visitor onslaught each summer, Cooper was given a relatively free hand to focus on cultural and natural resource management. The staff reorganization left Grand Portage National Monument without a year-round law enforcement presence, but Cochrane found that that did not matter much.³⁹

As this new leadership team found its footing, the team's discussions around the immediate and future needs of the national monument created the impetus to do a general management plan (GMP). Once Cochrane got the Midwest Region behind the effort and funding was in place, he started to roll out the planning process in the spring of 1999 with an announcement of public scoping sessions to be held in Grand Portage, Grand Marais, and St. Paul, and appeals for public participation directed to the Grand Portage Band, other key stakeholders, and the general public who lived on the North Shore and throughout the state. An announcement carried in the *Moccasin Telegraph* listed some key questions that would be posed in the sessions: "What do you think about Grand Portage National Monument? Where should the monument headquarters be? What 'stories' should we be telling visitors to the monument? How should we tell the maritime history of the site? Should we build a visitor center? How should the Band's interests be represented in the future operations of the monument?"⁴⁰

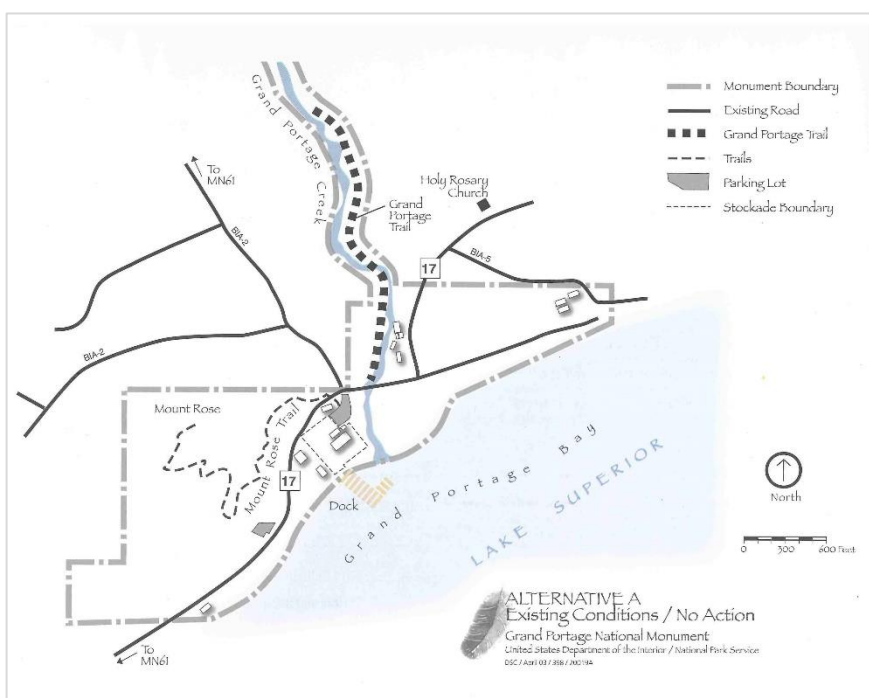
Between the internal discussions and the public scoping, the major outlines of the GMP soon became clear. First, it would address the major development project that was promised in 1957 and described in the 1973 master plan but never completed: namely, a park headquarters/visitor center/maintenance facility complex. Second, it would revisit the ambitious plan for relocating roads in and around the national monument. Third, it would consider different approaches to the interpretive story, putting more emphasis on the Ojibwe

³⁹ Dave Cooper interview by Theodore Catton and Diane Krahe, October 1, 2021; Grand Portage National Monument Organizational Charts, 1996, 1997, 1998, GPNM, CF, A6427. See also Superintendent to Regional Director, July 15, 1999, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant's Office, File "1999 Reading Files."

⁴⁰ "Grand Portage Band & National Park Service Seek Local Input for Monument's General Management Plan," *Moccasin Telegraph* (July 1999), 1; National Park Service, "Become a Part of History by Helping Plan the Future of Grand Portage National Monument (news release), May 25, 1999, GPNM, CF, File "GMP," Cochrane interview.

heritage than before. And fourth, it would consider adding more historic reconstructions to enhance the historic scene.

A few pivotal issues were dealt with early in the process, and so they were not highlighted in the five alternatives that eventually got enshrined in the GMP. One key issue was the location of park headquarters. Some in the NPS wanted to keep the headquarters in Grand Marais, mainly because most NPS staff who were not members of the Band preferred to live in Grand Marais. But the Band was adamant that the headquarters should be in Grand Portage. Cochrane agreed. The idea was that one party or the other must face a 38-mile drive, and the onus should not be on the Band to go to Grand Marais either to work or conduct business with the national monument staff. Rather, if national monument staff wanted to live in Grand Marais, they should accept the 38-mile commute to work. Relocating the headquarters to Grand Portage would make the national monument a more enticing workplace for band members, and it would bring national monument administrators into closer proximity with the tribal government. Relocating the headquarters to Grand Portage was included in all the alternatives in the GMP except, of course, the no-action alternative.⁴¹

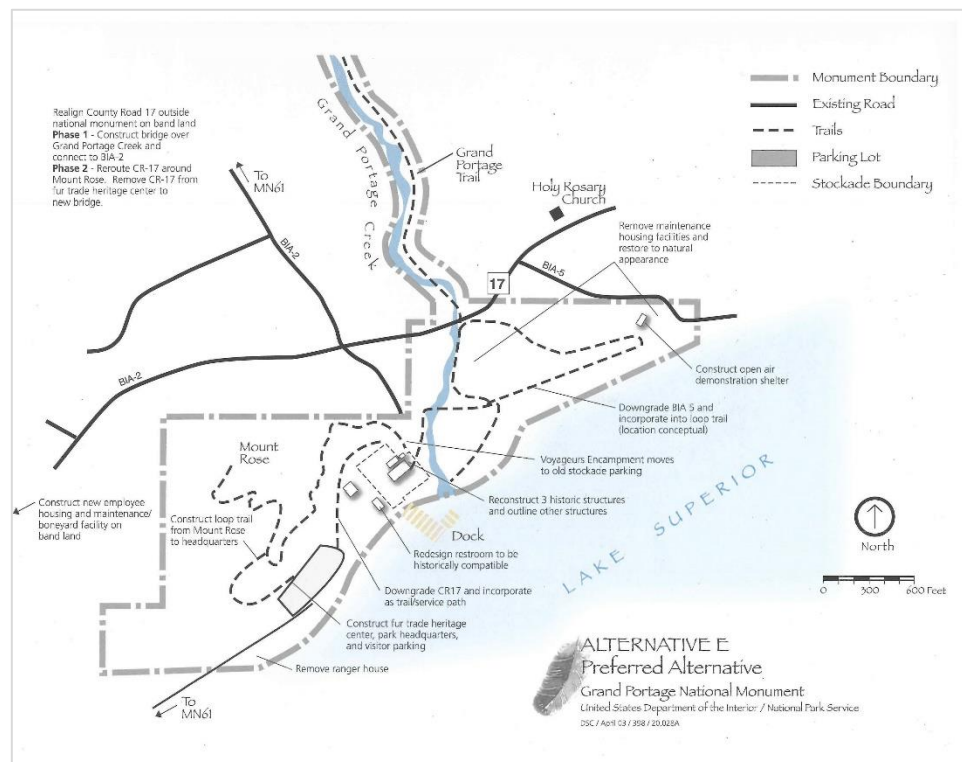


Existing Conditions as shown in the General Management Plan, 2003.

⁴¹ Cochrane interview; Novitsky interview; “Rationale for Heritage Center at Grand Portage,” no date, GPNM, CF, File “GMP – NPS communications.”

A Partnership Built on Shared Interests, 1995 to the Present

Another issue settled early (or more accurately, set aside to be dealt with later) was what to do about residential staff housing. The 1973 master plan contemplated a residential housing complex on the south side of Mount Rose – shoehorning this development into practically the only available space in the national monument where it would not intrude on the historic scene. The proposed development was predicated on developing a “bypass access road” around the west side of Mount Rose just outside the national monument boundary. Superintendent Einwalter revived the plan in the mid-1990s, but it once again faltered over the need to construct an access road on land owned by the Band. Then in 2002 the NPS did some experimental drilling for water at the proposed residential area and found that water wells would be prohibitively expensive, so that nixed it. As the GMP planning process was well along by then, the NPS simply dropped the proposed residential housing area from the plan and vaguely indicated that residential housing would be located somewhere offsite on leased land with the exact location to be worked out with the Band at a later time. Likewise, in the GMP the long-awaited headquarters/visitor center/maintenance facility complex was simplified to a headquarters/visitor center complex, with the understanding that a new maintenance facility would be pursued separately and would be



Preferred Alternative from the General Management Plan, 2003.

built at some offsite location as well. The GMP called for removal of the temporary seasonal housing, maintenance shop, and boneyard once the offsite residential housing and maintenance areas were secured.⁴²

Another tricky issue that did get hashed out in the GMP was where to locate the headquarters/visitor center complex, henceforth called the Heritage Center. Three options emerged. The one selected was the same one proposed in the Master Plan of 1973: at the base of Mount Rose on the north side of the road. The main drawback to the site was that the space was limited and required some blasting into bedrock. One alternative site was on the lakeshore across the road from the selected site. Its main drawback was that the Heritage Center would intrude on the historic scene. The other alternative was to put the Heritage Center outside the national monument on MN 61. For a while in the mid-1990s this site received a lot of attention. The idea was to build a visitor center that would serve not only the national monument but also the Grand Portage Lodge and Casino and the Grand Portage State Park. One alternative presented in the GMP proposed the MN 61 location, but by the end of the GMP process the Band notified the NPS that it would like to drop that location from further consideration.⁴³

The issue of road changes was unavoidable, but Cochrane steered the GMP process away from getting overly involved with road changes in case they should become a sticking point. As Cochrane explained, the road changes were a “sticky element” because the Band leadership certainly saw the merits of what the NPS wanted to do but it doubted that a majority of the community would be supportive of changes. The overall goal remained what it had been in the 1973 master plan: to eliminate roads inside the national monument.⁴⁴

The interest in revising the interpretive story to put more emphasis on Ojibwe heritage came from the Band, the national monument staff, and the general public in the scoping sessions. Cochrane had strong feelings about it. The existing interpretive panels and exhibits, he thought, told an “elitist” story of the North West Company. A visitor could read

⁴² Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1997, ETIC; Superintendent to Folks (email), February 3, 2000, GPNM, CF, D18 GMP.

⁴³ Cochrane interview; Tim Cochrane to Craig Cellar (email), November 12, 1999, GPNM, CF, D18 GMP; Superintendent to Files, no date [memorializing a March 16, 2001 meeting], and Norman Deschampe to Cochrane, December 7, 2001, GPNM, CF, File “GMP – NPS Communications.”

⁴⁴ Cochrane interview; Tim Cochrane to Craig Cellar (email), November 12, 1999, GPNM, CF, D18 GMP. The RTC also had concerns about the NPS getting “stuck” and unable to deliver on its commitments. RTC members informed Cochrane that in the 1970s the Band went along with closing the road to the boneyard but the NPS did not complete its part of the bargain, never delivering on the promised new bridge across Grand Portage Creek. (Superintendent to Files, no date [memorializing a March 16, 2001 meeting], GPNM, CF, File “GMP – NPS Communications.”)

about the exploits of great men – explorer Alexander Mackenzie, cartographer David Thompson – but could find only scraps of information about the unique locale, the portaging experience, the native presence. The site appeared to be all about the Europeans; there was virtually no sign of the Indian contribution.⁴⁵

Members of the public were not as passionate on the subject as Cochrane, but they, too, expressed a desire for the national monument to say much more about the indigenous people. Non-Indians' intellectual curiosity about American Indians was much greater in the 1990s than it had been a generation earlier. The change was evident in everything from the spread of Native American Studies programs and university courses on American Indian history and culture, to the discovery of American Indian artists and writers by the popular media, to the emotional response of moviegoers to a movie like *Dances with Wolves*. Therefore, not only did the inherent history of the national monument support a change of focus in the Grand Portage story, but so did the times.

The Grand Portage Band clearly favored the increase in attention to Ojibwe heritage, although they had a range of ideas about how to do it. Tribal Chairman Deschampe commented to the superintendent in 2001, “We have talked in some detail about the Heritage Center and we continue to have discussions about how best to present, and who should present Ojibwe heritage to visitors.”⁴⁶ While a handful of band members had worked as cultural demonstrators over the years, other band members tried to work for the park as seasonal interpreters but found the costumed interpretation awkward for them and not to their taste. Sharing Ojibwe heritage with park visitors was always going to be a mixed bag and had to be approached thoughtfully.⁴⁷

The desire to update the interpretive story became the organizing theme for the three, and then four, alternatives that were developed through the GMP process. The alternatives offered different sets of management prescriptions that would influence resource conditions and the visitor experience over the next ten to twenty years. Each alternative (after Alternative A, the no-action alternative) was named for the unique interpretive emphasis it would offer.

Alternative B aimed to emphasize the maritime component of the site. It proposed a historical reconstruction of the wharf together with the North West Company's schooner,

⁴⁵ Cochrane interview.

⁴⁶ Norman W. Deschampe to Tim Cochrane, April 26, 2001, GPNM, CF, File “GMP – NPS Communications.”

⁴⁷ Beth Drost interview by Theodore Catton, September 28, 2021.

Otter, plus three more buildings inside the stockade. Alternative B would have situated the Heritage Center nearby overlooking the lake, with the headquarters in a separate building. Visitors would approach the stockade from the Heritage Center along the lakeshore, passing through a “bustle of maritime activity around the lakeside gate just as newly arrived fur traders would have done.” To help create that ambiance, “replicas of small historic watercraft and associated activities such as fishing, cargo handling, warehousing, boat and canoe building, and maritime transportation would provide a more authentic setting for the stockade.” This alternative maximized the historic zone and prioritized replication of the historic scene. It proposed interpretation of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ojibwe village in what is now called the East Meadow Area. While the other alternatives would have the visitor center open year round, this one proposed a seven-month season of operation. Largely because of its proposed reconstruction of the *Otter*, and notwithstanding the shorter season of visitor center operation, Alternative B was the most expensive development alternative.⁴⁸

Alternative C proposed a multi-faceted visitor experience with three centers of interpretive activity: one at the stockade, another at a new open-air cultural demonstration building to be developed where the maintenance shop was currently located, and another at the new Heritage Center to be located on MN 61. Interpretation at the stockade would focus on the fur trade, while interpretation at the other two locations would feature Ojibwe history and culture. The stockade and cultural demonstration areas would be oriented to the summer season, the Heritage Center to a winter season.⁴⁹

Alternative D gave emphasis to the Heritage Center, which would be located on MN 61 and would be “designed to attract visitors from the highway and provide a multimedia interpretive/educational glimpse into the history of the Grand Portage and its inhabitants. It would have exhibits, live demonstrations of Ojibwe crafts, films, and interactive displays, a modern library with computer terminals, and a space for interactive talks. At the stockade there would be costumed interpretation for five months of the year. No new historic reconstructions would be built.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, *Grand Portage National Monument / Minnesota, Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (Denver: Denver Service Center, 2003), 42-43.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 44.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 50.

Following input from the Band and the public, the NPS developed Alternative E drawing on attractive elements from alternatives B, C, and D. It proposed a combined headquarters and Heritage Center located at the base of Mount Rose to be open all year and to include an interior space for cultural demonstrations. The Heritage Center would include museum exhibits, and public access to library and museum collections with a focus on “heritage education.” This alternative included the three additional historic reconstructions in the stockade that were proposed in Alternative B. The Heritage Center and the extra buildings in the stockade would underpin “an ‘integrated interpretive story’ that builds together Grand Portage Ojibwe heritage and fur trade history. This would ‘expand’ the time period and significant events visitors would learn about, beginning with pertinent prehistoric use of the Portage and ending with the 19th and 20th century Grand Portage village site which is included in Monument boundaries.”⁵¹

The GMP planning team gave careful thought to the blending of fur trade history and Ojibwe cultural heritage in the revised interpretive framework. They found that it was consistent with the park’s establishing legislation as well as the public’s desire. A briefing statement recounted, “The proposed GMP wrestled with the general direction of the historic site, as the enabling legislation mentions only ‘unique historic values.’ Public comment and staff recommendations support a management philosophy that commemorates the fur trade as intertwined with Ojibwe heritage, continental exploration, and pioneering business stories.”⁵² Cochrane reported, “People in our meetings frequently expressed hope for further reconstructions, a maritime alternative, and a further ‘blend’ of Ojibwe heritage with the fur trade story.”⁵³ In this “blending” of stories, two goals intertwined: one, to provide education on local Ojibwe history, heritage, and culture; and two, to contextualize the fur trade story within the long duration of European-American Indian contact and American Indian cultural adaptation. As the NPS record of decision described this change of focus, “The fur trade zenith and Ojibwe heritage would be the bullseye of the Monument’s interpretive message, but other events in earlier and later time periods would also be interpreted.”⁵⁴

⁵¹ National Park Service, “Record of Decision; Final General Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” no date, GPNM, CF, D18.

⁵² Planning Document Briefing Statement, August 2003, GPNM, CF, File “GMP.”

⁵³ Superintendent to Regional Director, June 18, 2001, GPNM, CF, File GMP – NPS Communications.”

⁵⁴ National Park Service, “Record of Decision; Final General Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” no date, GPNM, CF, D18.

The NPS’s government-to-government consultation on the GMP was thorough. From 1999 to 2002, the NPS met officially with the RTC six times. The superintendent also met four times with the tribal chairman, three times with Curtis Gagnon, director of the Trust Lands Division of the Grand Portage Band, and twice with the Grand Portage Museum/Interpretive Board. In addition, the superintendent consulted with leaders of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe more than twenty times.⁵⁵



Ojibwe Heritage Center.
(Authors photo.)

The Ojibwe Heritage Center

Despite strong public consensus around the GMP and solid backing by the Band, the Ojibwe Heritage Center still faced hurdles. It had to get approved by the NPS, pushed to the top of the national priorities list, and funded by Congress. In getting the project over those hurdles, the NPS partnership with the Band was a huge asset for the national monument. Tribal Chairman Deschampe could telephone Representative Oberstar or Representative Paul Wellstone of Minnesota (a Democrat), remind them that the visitor center was something that had been promised to the Band some fifty years ago, and those members of Congress would respond. However, both the NPS and members of Congress balked at the price tag for the building. To NPS officials, the cost seemed high for a visitor center in a “small park.” To members of Congress, the main concern was that it was a large expenditure

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, *Grand Portage National Monument / Minnesota, Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*, 142; National Park Service, “Planning Document Briefing Statement,” August 2003, GPNM, CF, File “GMP.”

relative to the number of annual visitors and the unit's "FTEs" (full-time equivalent staff positions). The original cost estimates for the project ranged from \$7.7 million to \$8.72 million. After some back and forth between the NPS and congressional staffers, the appropriation was capped at roughly half the original amount, or \$4 million.⁵⁶

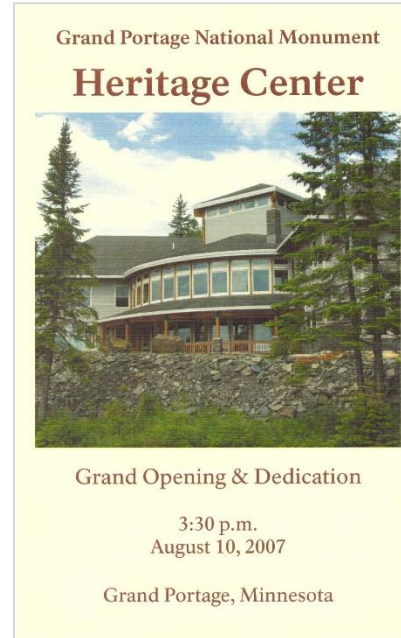
The Heritage Center design plans had to be modified to stay within the budget cap. Cochrane listed his goals for a scaled-back project. He was willing to trade "enhancements" for space. He did not want to skimp on exhibit space or museum storage space, nor did he want to scale down or "miniaturize" any other visitor service components, including the cultural demonstration area. Instead, he jettisoned the audio-visual treatment and park film, reasoning that it could be added later with other funding. The excavation into bedrock was scaled back in favor of allowing the structure to have a higher profile above grade, since there were no zoning or community restraints on building up. Ultimately, the cost per square foot was significantly reduced from original estimates so that little in the way of interior space had to be sacrificed.⁵⁷

The building was designed by Patrick Pauley, architect at the Midwest Regional Office. It was built by T. L. Construction Company, Inc. of Floodwood, Minnesota. The building's exterior design elements gracefully combined rounded and angular facades and rooflines to reflect the meeting of American Indian and European cultures in one place. Even though the building stood taller than was first planned, it appeared to nestle into the base of Mount Rose and was harmonious with the surroundings. Trees screened it from view from the stockade area. The cupola structure atop the circular central portion of the building provided a lofty and welcoming interior space for cultural demonstrations. This area, as well as the visitor reception area and exhibit room on the ground floor, were flooded with natural light. The large projection room, and indeed some of the staff offices on the second floor, had magnificent views of the lake.

⁵⁶ Tim Cochrane to Warren Brown, September 19, 2001, and Regional Director to Superintendent, June 6, 2002, GPNM, CF, File "GMP – NPS Communications;" Norm Coleman, Mark Dayton, and Jim Oberstar to Conrad Burns, Byron Dorgan, Charles Taylor, and Norman Dicks, October 23, 2003, GPNM, CF, File "Line Item," and Oberstar to Fran P. Mainella, June 3, 2003, GPNM, CF in Superintendent's Office, File "DAB;" B. Larsen, "Money being sought to build Grand Portage Heritage Center," *Cook County News-Herald*, April 5, 2002; U.S. Senate, *Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2003*, 107th Cong., 2d sess., Report No. 107-201, 2002, 27.

⁵⁷ "Post Budget Cap Goals and Realizations," March 13, 2003, GPNM, CF, File "GMP;" Norman W. Deschampe to James L. Oberstar, November 25, 2003, GPNM, CF, File "GMP-NPS Communications."

The grand opening and dedication was held on August 10, 2007. Dave Cooper gave a welcome, and then Gilbert Caribou, the Band’s drum keeper, introduced Grand Portage Traditional Drum. The drum song was followed by a pipe song and then a message from Superintendent Cochrane. Park rangers Jeremy Kingsbury and Shane Ausprey followed with a traditional bagpipe selection, and then there were speeches by regional director Ernest Quintana and Tribal Chairman Deschampe. Grand Portage Traditional Drum then did an honor song. Representative Jim Oberstar offered a few words, and the ceremony ended with a dedication song by Grand Portage Traditional Drum.⁵⁸



Program cover. (GPNM files.)

Changes to Visitor Circulation

With the completion of the Heritage Center, pedestrian visitor circulation through the historic area was revamped. Instead of parking in a parking lot north of the stockade and entering the stockade through the gatehouse, visitors now parked at the Heritage Center and approached the stockade by way of the Ojibwe Village exhibit. The old asphalt parking lot was removed in 2008 and the area was regraded, reseeded, and planted with a mix of native vegetation and a non-native blend of fine fescues the following year. Pedestrian circulation inside the stockade was redesigned to accommodate the flow of foot traffic coming from the Heritage Center. A spur trail was completed in 2009 to connect the gatehouse area to the Mount Rose Trailhead. Pedestrian crosswalks were installed at two locations along County Road 17 to improve pedestrian safety.⁵⁹

Revising the road network so that all roads through the national monument would be relocated around the exterior of the national monument remained an aspirational goal. But minimal effort was expended toward making it happen. Cochrane described the road

⁵⁸ Grand Portage National Monument, “Heritage Center Grand Opening & Dedication” (program), 2007.

⁵⁹ Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects in association with John Milner Associates, Inc., *Grand Portage National Monument, Grand Portage, Minnesota, Cultural Landscape Report*, prepared for National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office (n.p., n.p., 2009), p. 2-26.

situation as a “nightmare.” Ownership of the road rights-of-ways remained ambiguous, and the BIA was not interested in spending money on expensive realignments. The old problems of pedestrian safety and intrusion of vehicular traffic on the historic scene remained, even though these problems had been mitigated by the relocation of visitor parking and the addition of crosswalks.⁶⁰

Seasonal Employee Housing

When Grand Portage was a national historic site in the 1950s it seems that modest quarters were provided for seasonal employees at two locations on site: one within the CCC-built Great Hall where the caretaker and café operator had a small apartment for use; and another outside the stockade where a couple of Airstream trailers were permanently parked, probably for intermittent use by grounds crew. Four years after the NPS began administration of the site, the NPS took away the aging and unoccupied Airstream trailers and replaced them with two brand new house trailers. The first NPS seasonal employee to live onsite was Jack Smith, a seasonal historian who worked there in the summers of 1964 and 1965, and who recalled these facts to Superintendent Cochrane in the year 2000.⁶¹

The two house trailers at Grand Portage National Monument (which became a trio when a third one was added sometime in the early to mid-1970s) were a vestige of pre-Mission 66 housing conditions. Under the austere conditions that the National Park System faced after World War II, shoddy and makeshift employee housing was allowed to develop in many national parks. The NPS’s Mission 66 aimed, among other things, to improve housing for park personnel, but Mission 66 missed Grand Portage National Monument entirely. After the wave of construction under Mission 66 concluded in 1964, poor housing had been eliminated in many National Park System units, replaced by one-, two-, and three-bedroom single-floor dwellings built to standard designs. While Mission 66 housing was never loved by park personnel, it did set a higher standard over what had come before. The vestigial trailers at Grand Portage were by no means the only ones that lasted long after Mission 66, but they were certainly representative of the kind of rural run-down employee housing that the NPS had wanted to eradicate.

⁶⁰ Cochrane interview.

⁶¹ Jack Smith to Tim Cochrane (email), June 30, 2000 and July 1, 2000, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File “Administrative History.”

The NPS overlooked the substandard quality of employee housing at Grand Portage for decades. The master plan of 1973 barely touched on the need to replace the temporary



This trailer was the first seasonal employee housing unit. Although seasonal employee housing was moved to a screened area by the 1970s, substandard trailer housing was allowed to persist into the 2000s. (NPS photo by David G. Stimson, June 1961, GPNM, Series C 05.3 No. 001.)

seasonal housing with something better. An operations evaluation in 1976 ignored the situation as did statements for management prepared in 1976 and 1985. Apparently, superintendents decided that the national monument was in no position to request upgraded employee housing when it was still scrapping for new construction funds to get a decent visitor center built in the national monument.⁶²

By the 1980s, however, the trailers were decidedly an embarrassment. They were given fresh paint in 1980, and plywood skirting around the foot in 1982, but they remained homely and unpleasant. The trailers developed mold problems and bad odors. The worst offender of the three was removed in 1987. Another was replaced with one from Voyageurs National Park. Superintendent Einwalter oversaw the preparation of a housing management plan in 1992, and presided at a public meeting on the matter, but nothing came of those efforts.⁶³

In the 1990s, the remaining two trailers were each able to accommodate two to three seasonal interpretive rangers without families. As Amber Pfeil recalls, one was white and one green; usually one housed men and the other housed women. The lighting in one trailer was very poor, and the whole area including a next-door maintenance shop was infested with mice and squirrels. Pfeil's sense was that seasonal employees mostly took the poor living conditions in stride. The maintenance workers were very attentive to maintenance problems

⁶² Polly Welts Kaufman, *National Parks and the Woman's Voice: A History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 114-15; William C. Everhart, *The National Park Service* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 156-57; National Park Service, *Master Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 16; Grand Portage National Monument, *Statements for Management*, 1976 and 1985, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

⁶³ Superintendent Annual Reports, 1982, 1985, 1987, HFC; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1992, ETIC.

in the trailers as they arose, because the trailer residents were, after all, the maintenance workers' fellow employees. But if seasonal employees were not too terribly dissatisfied by their living conditions, the NPS had another concern about the trailer compound. From the start, the NPS was displeased that the temporary housing and maintenance area sat on or near the ground where the historic XY Company post once stood. By the 1990s, there was growing regard not just for the site of the XY Company post, but for the meadow where the Ojibwe village was centered in the nineteenth century. So, adding to the NPS's longstanding concerns around the substandard quality of the trailer housing, it now showed mounting concern over the protection of archeological resources in what is now called the East Meadow.⁶⁴

In 1998, the NPS paid a consultant to look at housing alternatives for Grand Portage National Monument. Superintendent Cochrane was dumbfounded when the consultant suggested that the NPS look for employee housing over the border in Canada. Granted there was an acute housing shortage on the reservation, but the legal complications that would go with providing employee housing over the border were too much. Not only would it be burdensome for employees to go through the border stations twice each day, and for NPS administrators to deal with housing matters in a foreign country, it would be an insult to the Grand Portage Band. "We should live near the Monument so we can develop a strong working and informal relationship with the Band who retain certain reserved interests in park management," Cochrane wrote.⁶⁵ Still, the mere suggestion that the national monument should seek staff housing in Canada revealed what a problem there was.

In the spring of 2001, the park faced a critical shortage of seasonal employee housing. It had eleven seasonal employees in need of park housing while the trailer capacity was capped at six. Isle Royale National Park asked Grand Portage National Monument to provide space for three more seasonal employees who would assist with sending visitors from Grand Portage to Isle Royale, which brought the total number of NPS seasonal employees to fourteen. And beyond the fourteen, the national monument desperately wanted to find housing for one Eastern National Parks Association employee, a handful of Student Conservation Association (SCA) crew members, volunteers, and an archeological crew who would be coming for part of the summer. Fortunately, the Grand Portage Band offered a partial solution. The Band had purchased a property at Hat Point that it hoped to develop into

⁶⁴ Amber Pfeil interview by Theodore Catton, September 28, 2021.

⁶⁵ Timothy Cochrane to Phyllis Taylor, May 21, 1998, GPNM, CF, File "98 Pending Files."

a new marina and ferry terminal for the ferry to Isle Royale. On this property across the road from the marina was a six-unit motel called the Voyageurs Marina Motel. It contained five bedroom units and one bunkhouse unit together with a kitchen. The band offered to lease it to the NPS for employee housing. It had a capacity for ten residents. Cochrane secured a three-year lease. The arrangement proved to be a good stopgap. In 2002, the temporary residential housing area in the national monument was finally removed. When the three-year lease of the Hat Point property neared expiration, the NPS secured another multi-year lease. The Hat Point housing unit sufficed for Grand Portage National Monument until the NPS finally developed its own residential housing complex in 2011.⁶⁶

Once it was determined that the NPS should develop residential housing outside the national monument but at a place nearby on the Indian reservation, the next problem was to find a suitable parcel and secure a long-term lease from the Band. The NPS would not spend public funds to construct buildings on land it only held under short-term lease. But for years the Band would not consent to making a long-term lease to the NPS any more than it would consent to giving up more land to the national monument. It was only after the Band was satisfied that it had become a full partner in co-managing the national monument that it changed its position. After the visitor center was completed, Cochrane and Melvin Gagnon discussed long-term lease options with Deschampe and other members of the RTC. In 2009, they achieved a breakthrough. The Band owned a two-acre parcel on Store Road called the Pole Barn Site that was a suitable location for both a residential housing complex and a new maintenance complex. The parties agreed to a lease under the following terms:

- 25-year lease, with option to renew it for an additional 25 years
- NPS to retain ownership of the buildings until the lease expires
- NPS to pay utilities
- NPS to abide by tribal zoning ordinance and permit requirements
- The Band to waive the lease bond as well as administrative fees
- A rental charge of \$1.00 per year

⁶⁶ Superintendent to Associate Director, Operations, Washington Office, April 30, 2001, Superintendent to Grand Portage Tribal Council, January 8, 2003, and Superintendent to Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands, Washington Office (with attachment), March 19, 2004, GPNM, CF, “GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant’s Office, “Reading Files” for 2001, 2003, and 2004.

Underscoring the mutualism that characterized the new partnership, the development would include a large solar array and any excess power generated would be donated to the power supply for the village.⁶⁷

A project proposal to develop a seasonal housing apartment building was entered in the PMIS in February 2009. Its estimated cost was \$841,624. The regional office reviewed and approved the project and pushed it to the top of the national priority list with remarkable speed. Tribal Chairman Deschampe put his shoulder to the wheel to obtain support for the project in Congress. Deschampe wrote to the NPS leadership in Washington “to reaffirm our total commitment to the successful partnership between the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa and the National Park Service.”⁶⁸ Funding was obtained through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Building construction was overseen by the park’s maintenance division, now part of the Grand Portage Band’s government, with local contractors supplying most of the labor. The building was LEED certified by the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. Construction was completed in 2011.⁶⁹



The new seasonal employee housing. (Authors photo.)

The Maintenance Facility

The history of the maintenance facility parallels the history of the seasonal employee housing facility. For decades, two metal prefab buildings stood at a maintenance site near the present Grand Portage Trailhead. These consisted of a Butler Manufacturing Panel-Frame Steel Building with 640 square feet of interior space, which was erected in 1965, and a

⁶⁷ Tim Cochrane to Norman Deschampe, no date, Deschampe to Ernie Quintana, June 12, 2009, and Acting Regional Director to Comptroller (with attachments), July 10, 2009, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File “2010 lease.” On the solar array, see “Grand Portage Band and Park Service partner on housing project,” *Cook County News-Herald*, January 1, 2011.

⁶⁸ Printout of PMIS 152409, March 16, 2009, Norman W. Deschampe to Ernie Quintana, June 12, 2009, and Acting Regional Director to Comptroller (with attachments), July 10, 2009, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File “2010 lease.”

⁶⁹ Grand Portage Band and Park Service partner on housing project,” *Cook County News-Herald*, January 1, 2011; Grand Portage National Monument, “Your Dollars at Work,” at <https://www.nps.gov/grpo/learn/management/your-dollars-at-work.htm>.

Cuckler Steel Building with 1056 square feet of interior space erected in 1970. A covered lumber storage rack was added in 1990. The buildings were not well insulated, and as they did not have poured concrete foundations the floor surfaces were uneven. There was also a boneyard for doing automotive repair and other outdoor work that was located at the east end of the national monument. There were several sheds for tool storage, some as much as a mile distant. As the sheds were unheated, paint and other cold-sensitive items had to be moved into the main building in winter.⁷⁰

The 1973 master plan noted that the maintenance area was ill-placed in an area with archeological resources and called for relocating it to the same location proposed for a visitor center and headquarters (the present site of the Heritage Center). But a few years later



Former maintenance shop. (NPS.)

it was determined that that site was not big enough, so an alternative site was sought. The proposed residential housing site on the south side of Mount Rose was considered and rejected as being too small. A site on the lakeshore was considered and rejected as too conspicuous. Another site, close to

the existing boneyard, was found to be too wet. In 1988, Superintendent Einwalter negotiated a proposed lease agreement with the Band that would have moved the maintenance area to a 1.38-acre lot adjoining the national monument in the area downhill from the school. The RBC approved the superintendent's request for a lease on a motion by then-committee member Norman Deschampe. But the regional office rejected the proposal on advice from the regional solicitor.⁷¹

As with the seasonal employee housing project, the breakthrough came when the NPS and the Band were able to agree on a long-term lease. The maintenance facility would occupy the same Pole Barn Site with the new apartment building. The project proposal,

⁷⁰ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1990, ETIC; Printout of PMIS 152312, no date, in GPNM, CF in Superintendent's Office, File "Maintenance Shop."

⁷¹ Acting Superintendent to Files, May 5, 1978, GPNM, RG 1, Box 12, D24; Superintendent to Regional Director, October 17, 1988, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18; Regional Solicitor to Regional Director, November 8, 1988, and Minutes of Special RBC Meeting Held on August 23, 1988 at Grand Portage RBC Office, GPNM, RG 1, Box 16, D34; Superintendent to Regional Director, February 3, 1992, GPNM, CF, D18.

which was entered in the PMIS at the same time as the housing proposal, stated that it would raze “the park’s functionally obsolete, unsafe maintenance facility” and replace it with “a new 5200 square foot maintenance facility in a new location minimizing resource degradation.” The cost estimate was for \$1,530,072. Cochrane indicated it was the national monument’s top priority project in the PMIS. For purposes of environmental compliance, this project was combined with the housing project and an environmental assessment was completed in July 2009. The regional office approved a Finding of No Significant Impact in November 2009. Project funding was expedited under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The completed building featured two big work bays, one for woodworking and one for engine and vehicle maintenance, and offices in between.⁷²



The new maintenance facility. (Authors photo.)

The Dock and the Boat Transportation Concession

Superintendent Tousley stated in a memo in 1971 that the dock was built by the BIA in the 1930s. The park’s cultural landscape report (2009) states that the dock was built by the Cook County Historical Society in 1931 as a “conjectural replica” of the North West Company’s dock, replacing an earlier dock built by the BIA in 1914.⁷³ Whichever entity built the dock, it became NPS property when the national monument was established in 1958. By then it was badly in need of repairs. Section 8 of the establishing act states:

⁷² Printout of PMIS 152312, no date, in GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File “Maintenance Shop;” Grand Portage National Monument, *Grand Portage Maintenance Facility and Seasonal Housing, Environmental Assessment*, prepared for Grand Portage Reservation Tribal Council (Grand Portage: National Park Service, 2009), S-1; Grand Portage Maintenance Facility and Seasonal Housing Finding of No Significant Impact, approved November 2, 2009, downloaded from Electronic Technical Information Center (hereafter E-TIC).

⁷³ Richard S. Tousley to David A. Armour, March 2, 1971, GPNM, RG 1, Box 28, K14; Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects in association with John Milner Associates, Inc., *Grand Portage National Monument, Grand Portage, Minnesota, Cultural Landscape Report*, prepared for National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office (n.p., n.p., 2009), p. 2-21.

The Secretary of the Interior, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, shall construct and maintain docking facilities at the Northwest Company area for use in connection with the monument. Such facilities shall be available for use by the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and its recognized members, without charge to them, under regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary.⁷⁴

The NPS rebuilt the dock around 1960.⁷⁵ Soon thereafter, Duluth resident Stanley Sivertson began using the dock to ferry park visitors from Grand Portage to Isle Royale. Sivertson named his sole-proprietor business the Grand Portage-Isle Royale Transportation Line, Inc. Sivertson was a commercial fisherman who made his catch in waters around Isle Royale, and the passenger service began as a sideline to his commercial fishing enterprise. The NPS issued a concession permit to Sivertson for the use of the government-owned dock at Grand Portage. In 1963, the NPS asked Sivertson to expand his operation as the NPS had plans to expand visitor facilities at Windigo on Isle Royale. In 1964, Sivertson responded to the NPS request by purchasing a larger boat, the *Wenonah*, which could accommodate up to 150 passengers. According to Sivertson, the NPS did not carry through with its plan to develop Windigo because the Mission 66 funds dried up in that year. Sivertson had a further setback when the Windigo Inn closed in 1974. His passenger count dropped from around 5,000 in 1973 to around 2,000 ten years later. Nonetheless, Sivertson kept in business. In 1984, he had two vessels making the daily run between Grand Portage and Isle Royale: the *Wenonah* and the smaller *Voyageur II*.⁷⁶

The NPS issued Sivertson a two-year renewable concession permit in the 1970s and changed it to a five-year permit sometime before 1990. The permit allowed use of the dock as a short-term loading and unloading area and a place to berth the *Wenonah* overnight from about June 15 through Labor Day. It included an electrical hookup. The *Wenonah* left Grand Portage at 9:30 every morning and returned at approximately 5:30 every afternoon.⁷⁷

In 1990, the year that the casino opened, Sivertson started taking Grand Portage Lodge guests out on a two-hour evening cruise to the Susie Islands on Fridays and

⁷⁴ An Act to Provide for the Establishment of Grand Portage National Monument in the State of Minnesota, September 2, 1958, P.L. 85-910, 72 Stat. 1751.

⁷⁵ Richard S. Tousley to David A. Armour, March 2, 1971, GPNM, RG 1, Box 28, K14.

⁷⁶ Stanley Sivertson to Ivan Miller, March 13, 1979, and Sivertson to J. L. Dunning (with attachments), February 18, 1982, GPNM, RG 1, Box 7, C3823.

⁷⁷ Acting Superintendent to Regional Director, January 30, 1976, GPNM, RG 1, Box 33, L76.

Saturdays. The Grand Portage Lodge hoped to turn it into a dinner cruise in the following summer. The national monument staff requested that Sivertson discontinue the evening cruises as the NPS did not want to allow that additional public use of the dock when its long-range plan for the dock was undetermined. However, when the Grand Portage Lodge manager Don Hoaglund asked the superintendent to reconsider, Superintendent Einwalter backpedaled and allowed the service to resume. Since the request came from the Band, Section 8 of the establishing act was operative. The records do not indicate how long the experimental evening cruises or the use of the dock for that purpose went on.⁷⁸

By this time, the NPS was interested in removing the dock and running the ferry service to Isle Royale from one of Grand Portage Bay's other docks. Besides the NPS dock, there was a dock and marina at Hat Point owned by Keck Melby of Hovland, Minnesota, as well as a boat marina with twenty-seven slips located in front of the Grand Portage Lodge and Casino. The latter development, however, was in a part of the bay that was too shallow for the *Wenonah*, so attention focused on the Hat Point facility. Melby was interested in expanding the facility if the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would build a breakwater. At one time the Corps looked at options, such as constructing a breakwater from Grand Portage Island across the bay to Raspberry Point. The NPS and the Band objected and made moves to list Grand Portage Bay as a Traditional Cultural Property, whereupon the Corps dropped those plans. Melby sold his property to the Band. The Band was interested in developing the Hat Point facility, but the financing was slow to materialize. Meanwhile, the NPS came to view the dock in front of the stockade as more of a liability than an asset. Even without a breakwater, the Hat Point location was more sheltered than the stockade location where storms could blow straight up the bay and do significant damage to the dock – as one did in 1986, for example.⁷⁹

Moreover, the dock in front of the stockade was not historical. Although it was reminiscent of the wharf at that approximate location in the fur trade era, the NPS insisted that it did not qualify as a historical reconstruction. At one time the dock was listed on the NPS List of Classified Structures but subsequently the listing was deemed to have been in error and it was taken off the list. In 1995, Einwalter posed to Norman Deschampe the

⁷⁸ Dean Einwalter to Stan Sivertson, July 27, 1990, Don Hoaglund to Einwalter, July 30, 1990, and Einwalter to Hoaglund, August 7, 1990, GPNM, RG 1, Box 7, C38; "New Cruises – Sunset in the Susies," *Cook County News-Herald*, July 30, 1990.

⁷⁹ Cochrane interview; Tim Cochrane to Phyllis Green and Larry Kangas (email), July 9, 2005, GPNM, CF in Superintendent's Office, File "GP Dock;" Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1986, HFC.

possibility of removing the dock. Deschampe was noncommittal. Given Section 8 in the establishing act, the Band held the trump card on this issue. When the GMP was in development, alternatives “B” and “C” called for removing the dock and replacing it with a historic reconstruction (as much as a historic reconstruction was possible when there was little in the historical record on which to base it on). Under alternative “D” the dock would simply be removed. Community members did not favor removing the dock. Alternative “E” – the selected alternative – retained the dock as is. Around the time that the GMP was finalized the Isle Royale ferry operation was mostly transferred to the Hat Point terminal with the understanding that the dock in front of the stockade would remain available for emergencies.⁸⁰

The dock was damaged by another storm in September 2004 and the concessioner was held liable. The circumstances were somewhat complicated. The *Wenonah* transited from Isle Royale to Grand Portage as the storm began. It dropped its passengers at the stockade dock, then went to the Hat Point facility to take on fuel, and then returned to the stockade dock to tie up for the night. As the storm gained force and the motion of the boat put strain on the piling at the outer end of the dock, the crew moved the lines to other pilings. The *Wenonah* rode out the storm without significant damage but the dock took a beating. The concessioner thought the damage was mostly due to the storm and existing weaknesses in the pilings, whereas the NPS insisted the damage was mostly caused by the *Wenonah*. Eventually, the concessioner agreed to pay for damages. The national monument’s maintenance division practically rebuilt the dock again, just as it had following the storm damage in 1986, even though all parties had come to agreement that the Hat Point marina was “the best long-term location for ferry service to Isle Royale.”⁸¹

External Relationships and Partners

One of the most important roles of a park superintendent is to manage the park’s external relationships. The most important external relationship at Grand Portage National

⁸⁰ U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, *Grand Portage National Monument / Minnesota, Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*, 72; Hansen interview.

⁸¹ Tom Caine to Stuart Sivertson, September 15, 2004, Phyllis A. Green to Sivertson, March 24, 2005, Tim Cochrane to Jim Oberstar (email), July 12, 2005, Sivertson to Cochrane, July 30, 2005, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File “GP Dock.” See also Sivertson to Cochrane, June 2, 2005, Cochrane to Green and Kangas (email), June 3, 2005, and Green to Sivertson, June 8, 2005, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File: “Sivertson.”

Monument is, of course, the NPS relationship with the Grand Portage Band that this history focuses on. Various other external relationships have been discussed already: the national monument's relationship with the BIA and the Minnesota Historical Society to name the two most prominent ones. While managing a park's external relationships has been one of the most important roles of a park superintendent from the beginning, arguably it has grown more important over the past quarter century or so as the federal land manager's job has changed to require more emphasis on interagency cooperation, more reliance on public-private partnerships, and more effort put into collaborative approaches to solve seemingly intractable resource management challenges. This section discusses Grand Portage National Monument involvement with a few key partners and collaborative organizations.

The Friends of Grand Portage

The Friends of Grand Portage was formed in 1984. Its first and longest serving president was Curtis L. Roy, a Duluth native and lawyer with a keen interest in history. Prior to leading the Friends, Roy served as president of the board of directors of the Minnesota Historical Society from 1980 to 1983. Curtis built a strong membership organization to work on behalf of Grand Portage National Monument, and his efforts were recognized in 1997 with a Citizen's Award for Exceptional Service bestowed by Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt.⁸²

The Friends of Grand Portage was singularly focused on helping the national monument secure funds to develop a visitor center. Its long efforts culminated with the construction of the Heritage Center. When that great effort was completed, the Friends of Grand Portage lost its main purpose and the organization faded.

Another factor that led to its demise was the aging of its membership. Curtis built the membership largely around Minnesotans' appreciation of fur trade history and the legendary voyageur. His message appealed to an older generation who had discovered the pleasures of canoeing in the 1950s and 60s and who had celebrated, with Sigurd Olsen, Minnesota's wilderness heritage in the Boundary Waters. By the 1990s, the Friends membership was mostly elderly and the group had a hard time attracting younger members. The Friends put on a yearly event with a featured speaker; Cochrane observed that the audience members were predominantly male and white-haired. The Friends group tried to

⁸² Superintendent to Field Director, January 30, 1997 and Citation for Citizen's Award for Exceptional Service, GPNM, CF, A34.

draw in new, younger members by reaching out to the reenactor community, but the two groups were too different in their interests and social makeup. So the Friends group sputtered out around 2010.⁸³

The National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation

To fill the void when the Friends of Grand Portage was defunct, the national monument obtained the patronage of another national parks support foundation, the National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation. This fundraising partner was founded at the behest of two park superintendents in 2007 and represented five U.S. national park sites on Lake Superior: Isle Royale National Park, Keweenaw National Historical Park, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, and Grand Portage National Monument. Cochrane brought the board members to Grand Portage National Monument and thought they were sufficiently impressed by the place; however, in his view the group remained focused principally on Isle Royale.⁸⁴

Around 2018 the organization went through a period of growth and reorganization, aimed to connect with larger donors, elected a new president, and hired a new executive director, Tom Irvine. Formerly located in Marquette or Houghton, Michigan, the organization is now based in Irvine’s St. Paul with board members in Minneapolis, Detroit, and Duluth as well as the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Its fundraising has doubled and tripled. With its attention spread across five areas, it remains partial to Isle Royale, where it can most easily fundraise around popular causes such as wolf research.⁸⁵

Eastern National Cooperative Association

National park cooperating associations have their origins in a federal law approved August 7, 1946, which provides authority for NPS field personnel to serve or assist nonprofit scientific and historical societies engaged in educational work in the national parks. Grand Portage National Monument has had a long relationship with the largest such cooperating association, Eastern National, which serves more than 125 areas. It began as Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association, shortened its name to Eastern National Parks

⁸³ Cochrane interview.

⁸⁴ Konnie LeMay, “Reflections on Supporting Our Five U.S. National Parks,” *Lake Superior Magazine*, April 21, 2022; Cochrane interview.

⁸⁵ Konnie LeMay, “Reflections on Supporting Our Five U.S. National Parks,” *Lake Superior Magazine*, April 21, 2022; Hansen interview.

Association, and is now simply Eastern National. Grand Portage came under Eastern National's purview in 1965. The earliest mention of Eastern National in the superintendent's annual reports is in 1974: "The ENP&MA agency added two items for sale this past season, they were; a medallion and a Voyageurs pamphlet both of which sold well. Sales for 1974 increased over 1973 sales by \$400."⁸⁶

Until the 1980s, Eastern National and other national park cooperating associations focused on producing and providing interpretive literature and maintaining solvency. As visitor centers expanded and bookstore and giftshop sales grew, cooperating associations increased their revenue and they were able to assist parks with purchase of A/V equipment, props for living history interpretation, and sundry items for the interpretive program. By the 1980s, the NPS was asking cooperating associations to contribute even more to costly endeavors like infrastructure development and research projects. A heavy lift for cooperating associations, this big ask proved to be the impetus for the formation of parallel "friends" organizations, with the latter being strictly focused on fundraising for the national parks. However, cooperating associations still had the dedicated space for sales of merchandise and literature in visitor center gift shops, so the NPS continued to look to each park's cooperating association as a moneymaking partner that could augment the park's operations, especially its interpretive program.⁸⁷

Annual reports on Eastern National's operation at Grand Portage by the superintendent provide a detailed record of how this partner assisted the national monument over the years. Each report discusses the visitor season and its impact on sales, the Eastern National employees onsite, new sales items, and Eastern National's sponsored programs at Grand Portage.⁸⁸

Annual gross sales were under \$50,000 in the years before the Heritage Center opened; they were up about 50 percent a decade later. With the opening of the Heritage Center, Eastern National shop gained about twice the display space in its outlet that it had

⁸⁶ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1974 and 1979, HFC.

⁸⁷ Theodore Catton, *Mountains for the Masses: A History of Management Issues in Great Smoky Mountains National Park*, prepared for Great Smoky Mountains Association (Gatlinburg: Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2014), 233-34.

⁸⁸ Fiscal Year Annual Reports for 1998 and 2006, GPNM, CF, A42; Fiscal Year Annual Report for 2017, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant's Office.

before. The annual report for 2017 has the park visitation and sales data back to 2000 and shows the strong correlation between the two.⁸⁹

Initially there was one Eastern National employee at Grand Portage; starting around 2000 there was a shop manager plus one or two store associates. Mavonne Dahl was hired as shop manager in 2002 and stayed for several years. The superintendent reported in 2006 that Dahl “is quite an asset because she has been able to draw more local people into the outlet resulting in increased sales; this did not seem to occur so readily under past shop managers.”⁹⁰

Eastern National employees sometimes required housing. A few started in the Volunteers-in-Parks (VIP) program and were then hired by Eastern National as store associates. Usually they resided in their own motor homes which were parked in the VIP trailer pads. The superintendent commented, “Our ability to hire VIPs who can fill in as store associates helps alleviate overcrowding in the seasonal housing units.”⁹¹

New items were constantly added to the gift shop inventory because they tended to boost overall sales. Some items were original and brilliant, such as when the park staff’s Margaret Plummer-Steen, who was in charge of the historic garden, packaged heirloom seeds to sell in the outlet. These included Hidatsa Red Beans, Soldier Beans, Bear Island Chippewa Corn, and Seneca Sunflower Seed, among others. More recently, a recipe book for wild rice dishes sold very well one year.⁹²

The cooperating association contributed a few thousand dollars annually to the interpretive program. In its search for useful sponsorships, it tended to focus on Rendezvous Days. In 2016, Eastern National spent \$4,774 on a dozen distinct activities connected with Rendezvous Days. Most were \$350 honoraria paid to individuals to demonstrate a particular art or craft.⁹³

Heart of the Continent

The Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP) is a coalition of land managers and local stakeholders working on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border. It features dialogue and

⁸⁹ Fiscal Year Annual Report for 2006, GPNM, CF, A42; Fiscal Year Annual Report for 2017, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant’s Office.

⁹⁰ Fiscal Year Annual Report for 2006, GPNM, CF, A42.

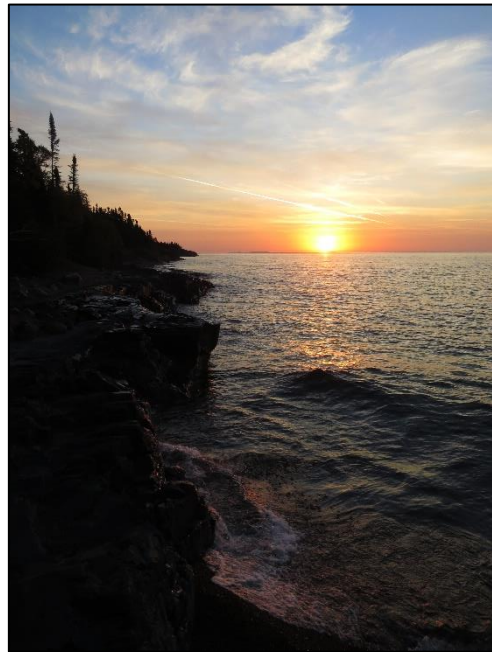
⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Fiscal Year Annual Report for 2002, GPNM, CF, A42; Fiscal Year Annual Report for 2017, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant’s Office.

⁹³ Fiscal Year Annual Report for 2017, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant’s Office.

teamwork on cross-border projects that promote the economic, cultural, and natural health of the lakes, forests, and communities in northeast Minnesota and western Ontario. In partnership with the National Geographic Society, the HOCP also brings attention to the region's natural and cultural heritage with a website aimed at stimulating geotourism. *National Geographic* defines geotourism as tourism that sustains or enhances the distinctive geographical character of a place – its environment, heritage, aesthetics, culture, and the well-being of its residents.⁹⁴

Superintendent Cochrane helped to establish the organization around 2008, and subsequent superintendents have participated in the regular meetings sponsored by the organization. In the spirit of nurturing a collaborative partnership, the organization kicked off with an eighteen-day canoe expedition in 2009. Sixty partners took part in paddling a 27-foot canoe over a 350-mile route in celebration of the centennial anniversaries of Superior National Forest and Quetico Provincial Park. The experience helped to cement relationships. Participants who thought they were opponents on certain issues found themselves paddling side-by-side, building rapport, and finding room for agreement on the issues that separated them. One recent project of the Heart of the Continent is its Dark Sky Initiative, which aims to get member organizations certified by the International Dark Sky Association in order to bring greater commitment and coordination to preserving the region's relatively low level of light pollution. So far, Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Voyageurs National Park have been certified, while Quetico, La Verendrye and Pigeon River provincial parks are working toward it. In 2021, Grand Portage National Monument was in a "holding pattern" on that issue.⁹⁵



Sunrise over Isle Royale as seen from the North Shore. (Authors photo.)

⁹⁴ The Heart of the Continent, Case Statement, 2017, at <https://heartofthecontinent.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/HOCP-Case-Statement-2017.pdf>; *National Geographic*, "Geotourism," at <https://nationalgeographic.com/maps/topic/geotourism>.

⁹⁵ The Heart of the Continent, Case Statement, 2010, at https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5201002.pdf; The Heart of the

In 2011, the Heart of the Continent spun off another organization, the Sister Sites Arrangement, which embraced five protected areas: Quetico Provincial Park, La Verendrye Provincial Park, Grand Portage National Monument, Superior National Forest, and Voyageurs National Park. Later the Northeast Region of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources joined as well. One principal focus of the group is on coordination of fire management and suppression. During the initial COVID-19 lockdown in the spring of 2020 and again during the period of extreme fire danger in late summer of 2021, the members coordinated on recreational use closures and reopenings so that they were not merely diverting recreational users from one protected area to another, combating a situation in one area only to make it worse in another.⁹⁶

These cross-border initiatives build on a long tradition of international cooperation in the region. Not only is the history of wilderness protection along the Minnesota-Ontario border a long and storied one, going back to the 1920s and earlier, there are other examples of collaboration along this border going back to the early-twentieth-century International Joint Commission on managing the boundary waters and even back to the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 with Britain that protected rights of “water-communications” along the international boundary.⁹⁷

Recent Developments

In the last half decade or so many new faces have appeared in the partnership between the NPS and the Grand Portage Band. There was one passing, a couple of retirements, and also some transfers, new hires, and new elected leaders.

The long-serving chairman of the Grand Portage Band, Norman Deschampe, died at his home of a heart attack on February 9, 2019 at the age of sixty-five. A visionary leader, he was a key individual in building the first-of-its-kind compact between the Band and the NPS. He served more than forty years in tribal leadership, twenty-seven as tribal chairman. He had a strong commitment to education that showed through his strong support for the Head Start program and tutoring and financial aid assistance for all tribal members and direct

Continent, Dark Sky Initiative, at <https://heartofthecontinent.org/heart-of-the-continent-dark-sky-initiative/>; Hansen interview.

⁹⁶ Signed Sister Sites Arrangement, 2012-1 at <https://heartofthecontinent.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/SisterSites2011lowResx3.pdf>; Hansen interview.

⁹⁷ Sister Sites Arrangement, no date (signed by Tim Cochrane on November 8, 2016), GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File “Sister Sites Arrangement, 2017.”

descendants through the secondary and post-secondary stages of education. His accomplishments included securing off-reservation treaty rights and forging strong relationships on a local and international level through serving on numerous boards and committees. Through his tenure he was successful in strengthening self-governance, creating jobs, building innovative partnerships, and helping to ensure that Grand Portage was a place where people were able to live happily.⁹⁸

Band member Beth Drost, a park ranger at Grand Portage for twelve years, ran in the special election for tribal chairperson held in July 2019 and won, replacing the interim chairperson Marie Spry. She was the first woman ever elected to the position. Her father, Curtis Gagnon, was an activist for off-reservation hunting, fishing, and gathering rights in the 1980s and served as park manager of Grand Portage State Park in the 1990s. Her grandmother worked as a cultural demonstrator at the national monument. Drost served one year as head of the RTC and did not win re-election. In that year she engaged with the park superintendent in the annual funding agreement process and signed two amendments totaling more than \$1.5 million in project funds. A portion of that money went toward furthering efforts to provide job training and experience to young people in the Band, an initiative Drost strongly favored.⁹⁹

Robert “Bobby” Deschampe was elected tribal chairman in June 2020 and took office two months later. Previous to becoming tribal chairman he was a Cook County commissioner, the first Grand Portage Band member to hold that seat. One project he was soon involved with as tribal council chairman was the rebuilding of the dock at the Hat Point marina. The Band had wrestled with getting the proper financing in order for many years. The national monument superintendent assisted the Band in obtaining some federal money for ferryboat terminals through the Economic Development Administration, and in the fall of 2020 the work was set to proceed. Use of the Grand Portage-Isle Royale ferry increased as Isle Royale National Park utilized the AFA and the Grand Portage Band’s personnel and facilities for more and more projects. Meanwhile, the Grand Portage Band enjoyed that

⁹⁸ Dan Kraker, “Grand Portage mourns the loss of its longtime leader,” *MPR News*, February 14, 2019, at <https://mprnews.org/story/2019/02/14/grand-portage-mourns-loss-longtime-leader-norman-deschampe>; Anna Deschampe, comments on draft, March 2, 2023.

⁹⁹ Dan Kraker, “Grand Portage Band elects first woman as tribal chair,” *MPR News*, July 4, 2019, at <https://mprnews.org/story/2019/07/04/grand-portage-band-elects-first-woman-as-tribal-chair>; The Indian Self Governance Act Annual Funding Agreement (digest of AFA annual reports 1999-2020), printout provided to the authors by Superintendent Craig Hansen; Beth Drost interview by Theodore Catton, September 28, 2021.

Co-Managing Gichi Onigaming – “The Great Carrying Place”



Mel Gagnon, facility manager.



David Cooper, chief of resource management.



Superintendent Tim Cochrane and Tribal Chairman Norman Deschampe.



Rose Novitsky,
administrative officer.



Pam Neil, chief of interpretation.



Interpretive rangers Erik Simula
and Karl Koster.

A Partnership Built on Shared Interests, 1995 to the Present



Superintendent Ivan Miller.



Steve Veit, interpretive ranger and museum curator.



Superintendent Dean Einwalter.



Beth Drost, park ranger.



Superintendent Craig Hansen.



Bill Clayton, chief of resource management.



Brandon Seitz, resource assistant.



Visit by Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland. L-R: Toby Stephens (Grand Portage Tribal Council), Marie Spry (GPTC), Agatha Armstrong (GPTC), Robert Deschampe (GPTC), Superintendent Heather Boyd, Bryan Newland, Anna Deschampe (head of interpretation), April McCormick (GPTC).

growing connection with Isle Royale. On July 23, 2019, Isle Royale, or Minong as it is known to the Ojibwe people, was designated a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The Band delivered a flag to the park on that day but the NPS did not fly the flag until Bobby Deschampe followed up with the new superintendent at Isle Royale, Denice Swanke. There was a flag-raising ceremony attended by around thirty to forty band members.¹⁰⁰

Superintendent Tim Cochrane retired on December 31, 2016, having served at Grand Portage National Monument for nineteen and a half years. That was an exceptionally long tenure for a park superintendent and a testament to Cochrane’s dedication to making the first-of-its-kind partnership a success. Over the years, Cochrane and Norman Deschampe developed a strong friendship and excellent rapport with one another. They had a disarming style, sometimes starting a meeting, for example, by joshing each other over who was taller, a comic routine between two fairly short men. Cochrane retired in Grand Marais, as had Dean Einwalter before him.¹⁰¹

Craig Hansen was selected to be the next superintendent and took up duties in January 2017. Born and raised in rural western North Dakota, where he grew up hunting and fishing and enjoying the outdoors, Hansen decided in high school that the park management profession was his calling. He earned a degree in recreation, parks, and leisure services at Minnesota State University, Mankato and got his first ranger position with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in California before joining the NPS and returning to his home state at Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site. There, he was promoted from education specialist to chief of interpretation and cultural resources and then to park superintendent.¹⁰² Knife River Indian Villages is another unit with strong connections to the indigenous people, the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation. Hansen brought his interest in education outreach and youth engagement with him to Grand Portage (as discussed in

¹⁰⁰ Brian Larsen, “Robert (Bobby) Deschampe to be the new Grand Portage Tribal Council Chairperson,” *Cook County News-Herald*, June 12, 2020; Brian Larsen, “Grand Portage begins work to redevelop Hat Point Marina and Ferry Terminal,” *Cook County News-Herald*, November 13, 2020; Robert “Bobby” Deschampe interview by Theodore Catton, September 21, 2021.

¹⁰¹ Brian Larsen, “Grand Portage National Monument superintendent to retire,” *Cook County News-Herald*, December 31, 2016; Record of conversation between Melvin Gagnon and the authors, September 21, 2021.

¹⁰² Hansen interview.

Chapter Five). Hansen served at Grand Portage for five years, transferring to Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway in February 2022.¹⁰³

During Hansen's tenure there were two staff changes with large implications for the NPS-Grand Portage Band partnership. The first came with the retirement of Mel Gagnon in February 2020. He had served in the maintenance lead position for many years, mentoring numerous band members, and helping the superintendent and the tribal chairperson make the AFA into a well-oiled machine. Gagnon had big shoes to fill, and the hiring process for his replacement was a test of the partnership. The pool of applicants included both non-native and Grand Portage Band members but level of experience was a concern, especially in light of the fact that the maintenance division had had significant turnover in the preceding couple of years and needed strong leadership. Hansen was invited into the interview process by the Grand Portage Reservation Council, and the council and the NPS selected Shawn Smith, who was not a member of the tribe, to the position. Smith had excellent credentials with his knowledge of water and sewer systems, small engine mechanics, and facility maintenance, and the council reasoned that he could support the Band through mentoring tribal employees, thereby increasing the Band's capacity in these areas. But the selection was made in spite of some people's preference for a member of the Band or Tribe to hold that position. Being a community outsider, Shawn Smith came on board facing a challenging situation as he sought to propel the maintenance division forward while continuing Mel Gagnon's legacy of recruiting and mentoring young band members.¹⁰⁴

Just months after the turnover in the facility manager position, there was turnover in the chief of interpretation position. Fortunately for the health of the partnership, this time the change went the opposite way as non-Indian Pam Neil transferred out (to Gettysburg National Military Park, Pennsylvania) and Grand Portage Band member Anna Deschampe was hired in her place, the first band member in that role. Her credentials were excellent. She was former principal of Grand Portage's charter school, having headed up interpretation at Grand Portage State Park before that. Band members were energized by her selection for the position at the national monument, anticipating that she would encourage more employment of band members as interpretive rangers.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ National Park Service, "Craig Hansen selected as superintendent of St. Croix National Scenic Riverway" (news release), January 10, 2022 at <https://www.nps.gov/sacn/learn/news/2022-01-11-chansen-superintendent.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ Gagnon interview; Drost interview.

¹⁰⁵ Drost interview; Morrin interview.

The long-serving administrative officer Rose Novitsky retired in March 2022. Grand Portage Band member Sarah Deschampe was hired to fill the vacant position in May 2022. Sarah Deschampe worked previously for the RTC accounting office.¹⁰⁶

Heather Boyd was selected as the next superintendent of Grand Portage National Monument in June 2022. She is an enrolled member of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and a fourteen-year veteran of the NPS. Before joining the NPS in 2008 she worked for the BIA in realty and tribal operations. Her first position in the NPS was as a career seasonal administrative support assistant for Isle Royale National Park and Keweenaw National Historical Park. After completing a B.S. in Community Development and Public Administration at Central Michigan University, she stepped into the position of Administrative Officer for those two parks, the job she held when she was tapped to go to Grand Portage.¹⁰⁷

Boyd said she was thrilled to be in a place that would allow her to tell the Anishinaabe story, her people’s story. She came to Grand Portage at an auspicious time in the national monument’s history. For one thing, her tenure practically began with the Rendezvous in 2022, which was the first one held in three years due to COVID-19 prevention measures during the previous two summers. The event drew about 250 reenactors and an estimated 3,100 visitors, a strong turnout following the hiatus, and it seemed to Boyd that the whole community responded to the event as a welcome return to normalcy. Another thing that had people on the staff and in the community looking ahead was the fact that the national monument and the Band would celebrate twenty-five years of co-management two years hence in 2024.¹⁰⁸

It seemed that the experiment in co-management that had begun in 1999 had succeeded and firmly taken root. Midwest regional director Cameron Sholly expressed this view wholeheartedly in a letter to Norman Deschampe in 2016: “The Band is an incredible partner with the National Park Service (NPS) and the relationship truly sets a national example for trust and collaboration.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Heather Boyd, comments on draft, March 2, 2023.

¹⁰⁷ National Park Service, “Heather Boyd Selected as Superintendent of Grand Portage National Monument” (news release), June 2, 2022 at <https://www.nps.gov/grpo/learn/news/heather-boyd-superintendent.htm>.

¹⁰⁸ Lake Superior Podcast, “Heather Boyd, Grand Portage National Monument,” October 15, 2022 at <https://podopolo.com/podcast/lake-superior-podcast-3498736/s3-e5-heather-boyd-grand-portage-national-monument-1000090534720>.

¹⁰⁹ Cameron H. Sholly to Norman Deschampe, March 10, 2016, Midwest Regional Office files, copies provided to the authors.

Chapter Five

Interpretation

Interpretation always ranked near the top of management priorities at Grand Portage National Monument. Even though the park was much delayed in getting a bona fide visitor center, it had the historic reconstructions to orient visitors and to center an interpretive program. In 1976, when the historian position on the staff was vacated and it seemed that the interpretive program might be downgraded, the move brought about this crisp exchange between the MNHS and the NPS, which put the importance of the interpretive program in sharp relief:

MNHS: Grand Portage ranks very close to the top of the list of historic places in Minnesota and the entire Upper Midwest area. It is extremely important that Grand Portage be faithfully preserved and fully interpreted for the enjoyment and education of the public. In our opinion, the greatest importance should be attached to interpretation. If construction funds [for a visitor center] are not available, the money which is available should be used for bold and creative interpretation.

NPS: We agree that interpretation is of extreme importance. However, we are charged with an overall responsibility, and therefore believe that while interpretation should be a key part of the operation of Grand Portage, the primary emphasis must be on *preservation*. Unless we obtain the staff, funds, and facilities to preserve the resources, we will be negligent in carrying out the National Park Service mission.¹

¹ Committee on Federal Relations, Minnesota Historical Society to Ivan D. Miller, Superintendent, December 17, 1976, and Miller to Curtis L. Roy, Committee on Federal Relations, Minnesota Historical Society, January 13, 1977, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18. Emphasis in original.

The Grand Portage staff usually included one permanent staff member who was responsible for developing and supervising an interpretive program, plus seven or eight seasonal ranger interpreters, plus five or six cultural demonstrators. In addition, the interpretive program was augmented by a small contingent of volunteers.

The title of the chief interpreter position has changed over the years. First it was historian, then chief interpreter, and then chief of interpretation. Robert J. Riley was historian from 1962 to 1966. Ross R. Hopkins held the position in 1966-1967, Roger Pearson until 1970, Kathy Kirby until 1973, and Susan A. Kopczynski until 1976. After Kopszynski transferred out, the historian position was eliminated and the interpretive program suffered from lack of direction that summer. Later that year, supervisory park ranger Norman D. Hellmers was given the additional job title of chief interpreter. When Hellmers transferred out in 1982, supervisory park ranger Donald Carney was hired and held the title of chief interpreter. Carney left in 1990, and three more supervisory or lead park rangers, Jon Sage, Debra Sanders, and Mark Bollinger, served as chief interpreter in quick succession over the next four years. Myra Dec served as the national monument’s first chief of interpretation from 1994 to 1997. David Cooper was hired in 1998 but moved into another staff position as resource manager one year later. Pam Neil held the position for nearly twenty years from 1998 to 2019, and Anna Deschampe was hired after Neil transferred to Gettysburg National Military Park.

This chapter starts with a chronological overview of the development of the interpretive program, emphasizing such milestones as the first and second interpretive prospectuses in 1964 and 1981 and the long-range interpretive plan in 2005, the addition of the Ojibwe Village, and the boost to the interpretive program provided by the completion of the Heritage Center. Several key components of the interpretive program are addressed in subsequent sections as they have evolved over a longer time span. These include the national monument’s distinctive cultural demonstration program and its various special events such as Rendezvous Days.

The Interpretive Program in the Early Years

Historian Robert J. Riley prepared the park’s first interpretive prospectus in 1964. The focus at that time was on developing more information through historical research and archeological investigation. Detailed information about the site was needed not only to provide good site interpretation but to guide further development of historic reconstructions.

Interpretation

The prospectus acknowledged that the CCC-built Great Hall was a flawed historic reconstruction. The prospectus stated: “Today the persons visiting Grand Portage National Monument come away with only a meager, possibly distorted, and certainly fragmentary knowledge of this historically significant area.” When the Great Hall burned in 1969, it was not long before NPS personnel pointed out a silver lining in that devastating event. Although in the short run the loss of the building crippled the interpretive program, in the long run it gave the NPS an opportunity to rebuild the Great Hall to a higher standard of historical accuracy. When the second historic reconstruction was completed in 1972, it provided interpreters with a much superior stage prop for “bringing to life” the fur trade era.²



Flintlock demonstration by seasonal historian Miriam Erickson, 1967. (GPNM, Series C, No. 075.)

In those early years before the new Great Hall was completed, the interpretive program struggled. The 1969 fire not only took out the national monument’s central feature, it destroyed the interpreters’ best props. One trade musket, which was used for demonstration firing, was lost in the fire and not immediately replaced. Likewise, three period costumes, worn by the park historian and two seasonal aids, were destroyed. Superintendent Tousley commented that the loss of the latter was not as impactful as it might have been because the summer aids, both members of the Band, had shown a “pronounced reluctance” to “mingle freely with the visitors, relating the story of Grand Portage and showing their costumes to best advantage.”³

² Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 39-40, 50-51.

³ Superintendent to Regional Director, September 19, 1969, GPNM, RG 1, Box 28, K1817.

At the same time, Tousley commented dolefully on the national monument’s cultural demonstration program, which he thought was of marginal worth to park visitors. “It has provided a fairly good source of income for a few members of the Grand Portage Band and limited returns to several others,” he wrote. “Most of the crafts sold are modern adaptations rather than traditional objects. A few quality items are sold quickly and the remaining items lend a souvenir shop atmosphere to the program.” Perhaps judging what he saw against unrealistic expectations, Tousley stated that the visitor could not “feel that he is witnessing a period demonstration of Indian craftsmanship.”⁴

The NPS dispatched interpretive planners from the Washington Office and Harpers Ferry Center to Grand Portage to examine how the interpretive program might be improved. One bright spot was the acquisition of a fiberglass replica of a Montreal birchbark canoe for outdoor exhibit. Yet the national monument was largely expected to get by on relatively little. In 1970, a ranger station was moved from Mount Maude to the site to serve as a “temporary” visitor center. Inside this small visitor contact station, interpretive rangers provided short oral programs on the history of the fur trade and the role of Grand Portage in it. The interpretive staff scrounged together a few props: canoe paddles, a replica ninety-pound pack, and some period costumes.⁵

After the new Great Hall reconstruction opened in 1972, the interpretive program was improved year by year as the national monument acquired items for display inside the Great Hall and added more historic reconstructions. The canoe warehouse, discovered by archeologists in 1963 and rebuilt in 1973, was supplied with large birchbark canoes that became a big aid in telling the Grand Portage story. The canoes were built by famed canoe builder Bill Hafeman of Bigfork, Minnesota, who learned the craft in the 1920s from a resident Scotsman.⁶

The superintendent’s annual report for 1973 described interpretive operations in the summer that the canoe warehouse opened:

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Superintendent to Regional Director, June 30, 1971 and November 26, 1971, GPNM, RG 1, Box 28, K1817.

⁶ Neil, “A Monumental Task,” 15; Sally Sedgwick, “Hafeman Boat Works produces handmade birchbark canoes,” *Business North*, June 8, 2018 at http://www.businessnorth.com/businessnorth_exclusives/hafeman-boat-works-produces-handmade-birchbark-canoes/article_41ce8a5e-6b34-11e8-8f0c-ab83149b22ba.html.

Interpretation

Park technicians were stationed in the building to interpret the exhibits. The Great Hall contained four new temporary exhibits of archeological artifacts found at Grand Portage dating from the historic period. An audio station for the map exhibit in the stockade was installed at the beginning of the travel season.... Tours of the stockade, movies on the fur trade, demonstrations of Indian crafts, a self-guiding nature trail continued as in previous years.⁷

Ranger-guided tours of the stockade area were begun as early as 1966. Interpretive rangers conducted a total of 4,357 visitors on walking tours in 1979, representing 13 percent of total park visitation that year. Interpretive rangers also provided roving interpretation as they took turns circulating between the Great Hall, the kitchen, the Crawford cabin, and the information center or ranger station after it was moved to the site in 1970. Interpretive rangers did double duty providing interpretation while also keeping watch over items that were on display and subject to theft.⁸

The first park orientation film was shown in 1978 and other short documentary films about fur trade history were soon added to the park's audio-visual offerings. Films were shown in both the Great Hall and the information center but more often in the latter. In 1980, the park's film collection was converted to videotape and audiovisual equipment was



Crawford cabin. (NPS photo by Jack E. Boucher, September 1961, GPNM, Series G, No. 050.)

⁷ Superintendent's Annual Report, 1973, HFC.

⁸ Neil, "A Monumental Task," 13; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1979, HFC.

purchased to show the films on a large television monitor. That year, ten different films were shown to more than 10,000 visitors.⁹

The scope of personal services was ramped up at the start of the season and wound back down at the season's close to match a fluctuating volume of visitors. Generally the stockade and buildings were open to the public from mid-May until about the fourth week in October. Over the course of the whole season of operation, building hours could vary according to the level of staffing and anticipated volume of public use. At the peak of the summer season, the stockade and buildings might be opened at 8 a.m. and closed in the early evening; in the shoulder seasons, hours and staff were reduced. Summer hours usually ran from Memorial Day weekend in late May through Labor Day weekend in early September, but both the start and end dates could be pushed back into June and October respectively. Sometimes the interpretive program was formally segmented into a Spring Program, a Summer Program, and a Fall Program, with calendar dates assigned to each. The vagaries of the shoulder seasons notwithstanding, the park always received its peak visitation in July and August.¹⁰

Interpretive rangers were mostly GS-05 seasonal park technicians and GS-04 and GS-02 seasonal park guides. Each year, the national monument recruited from seven to ten of these seasonals to staff the interpretive program. Usually there was a high return rate from the previous year's roster, but the return rate did vary considerably. In one year, three out of ten returned; in another, it was seven out of seven. Of course, the program benefited when individuals returned year after year. Program leaders cultivated that continuity as best they could. One year, “seasonal training and morale received a boost” with the inclusion of a two-day canoe trip on a section of the historic voyageur route. Another year, the training included a four-day trip to Isle Royale.¹¹

An unusual feature of working at Grand Portage was that most of the seasonal staff lived and worked onsite while most of the permanent staff lived and worked in Grand Marais. Grand Portage was an attractive place (the dilapidated seasonal housing notwithstanding) and morale among the seasonal interpretive staff generally stood high. Over the years there were a number of individuals who bonded with Grand Portage in a way

⁹ Ivan D. Miller to Robert C. Wheeler, February 16, 1978, GPNM, RG 1, Box 2, A38; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1979, 1980, HFC.

¹⁰ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1979, 1980, HFC; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 2000, ETIC.

¹¹ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1973, 1982, 1984, HFC; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1993, ETIC.

Interpretation

that kept them returning for seasonal employment for many years on end. Some of those individuals became tremendous assets to the park, as they became extremely knowledgeable not only about park operations but also about the park subject matter.¹²

Living History and Old Fort William

The Grand Portage interpretive program developed in the 1970s against a backdrop of heightened interest in “living history” in the interpretation field. Grand Portage interpretive rangers dressed in period costume as an aid for interpreting daily life at a fur trade post and a prop for “bringing to life” the fur trade era. The 1982 superintendent’s annual report stated that the interpretive staff dressed in period costume about 75 percent of the time, prompting “a very favorable visitor response.”¹³ However, the national monument did not adopt *first-person* living-history interpretation in which the interpreter role-played a historical character; rather, it stuck with *third-person* interpretation in which the interpreter spoke as a subject-matter expert even while dressed in period costume. That approach provided a worthy contrast with Old Fort William (now Fort William Historical Park), a true living-history site, where many of the interpretive staff were young actors with only a tenuous command of the history content they were providing to visitors.¹⁴

Over the years, site managers and staffs at Grand Portage National Monument and Fort William Historical Park maintained a friendly rapport with one another. In many years the two parks made interpretive staff exchanges, enabling staff to learn and understand the history of the “sister” site and observe or experiment with interpretive techniques used at the other site. Often the Canadian site sent a party of costumed interpreters to participate with reenactors in the annual Rendezvous. In more recent times, the connection faded somewhat. One reason was that Fort William Historical Park hit hard times and had to restructure and alter its interpretive programming. Another reason was that getting a party across the international border became more of an administrative and logistical hassle than before. Perhaps, too, the sister parks became more and more committed to their respective approach to living history interpretation as time passed. Superintendent Cochrane, for one, was critical of the first-person approach, noting that visitors who came to Grand Portage from Fort

¹² Pfeil interview; Pam Neil interview by Theodore Catton, December 29, 2022.

¹³ Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1982, HFC.

¹⁴ Committee on Federal Relations, Minnesota Historical Society to Ivan D. Miller, Superintendent, December 17, 1976, and Miller to Curtis L. Roy, Committee on Federal Relations, Minnesota Historical Society, January 13, 1977, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.



Living history interpretation inside the Great Hall. (Photo by Dick Frear, GPNM, purple index series, No. 33.)

William sometimes complained that they became bored with the “make-believe” vibe they got from first-person living history at Fort William, or that they grew frustrated when the historical actors stayed so much in character that they did not answer the visitors’ questions.¹⁵

The Interpretive Program in the 1980s and 1990s

If the 1960s and 1970s were a formative period for interpretation at Grand Portage, the next two decades saw a middle stage of development when the interpretive program had a more robust set of offerings and underpinnings but it still lacked a bona fide visitor center. Furthermore, these two decades were a time in which interpretation at Grand Portage started to pivot from an early focus on the European actors in the fur trade to a greater recognition of the fur trade as meeting place of cultures, as well as a dual emphasis on Grand Portage Ojibwe history and lifeways before and after the fur trade. That important pivot was only barely evident in the interpretive prospectus prepared in 1981. The interpretive prospectus listed as one objective: “to give the visitor a better understanding and appreciation for the people who were and are involved with activities at Grand Portage, including the resident Chippewa Indians.”¹⁶ Yet the 1981 document still focused intensely on the European side of the story, making the most of the historic reconstructions that naturally cast the visitors’ eye

¹⁵ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1993, ETIC; Neil interview; Tim Cochrane email to the author, sent in follow-up to conversation at September 2000 fur trade history workshop held at Grand Portage, undated printout in author’s possession.

¹⁶ National Park Service, Grand Portage National Monument Interpretive Prospectus, January 1981, ETIC.

Interpretation

on the North West Company's role at Grand Portage above all else. Not until the reconstruction of the Ojibwe Village in 1993 did the national monument possess infrastructure for presenting Ojibwe lifeways more fulsomely.

Year by year through the 1980s, more historic interior furnishings and outdoor exhibits were added that gave interpretive rangers new venues and props and enhanced the visitor experience. Some of the most popular additions in that decade included the Alexander Mackenzie bedroom in one corner room of the Great Hall (1984), the replica Quebec oven (1985), and the historic garden (1989).¹⁷ The park's interpretive development reached another milestone with the installation of more than a dozen wayside exhibits in and around the stockade. This was accomplished in conjunction with the Harpers Ferry Center in 1984 and 1985, with the staff putting considerable effort into ensuring historical accuracy in the text and illustrations.¹⁸

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the interpretive staff experimented with baking bread in the oven and growing vegetables in the garden. Visitors were treated to the smell of fresh-baked scones or wild rice bread as they stepped over the threshold into the kitchen. During the Voyageur Encampment special event, visitors were enticed by the aromas of stew simmering over an open fire. Food items were shared with visitors. With regret, Superintendent Einwalter put a stop to this practice in 1994 because the national monument was unable to follow U.S. Public Health Service guidelines. The national monument did not have facilities to keep ingredients at correct temperatures, nor could it properly sanitize dishes.¹⁹

However, the staff continued to raise garden vegetables and to harvest the produce under some fairly stringent guidelines. Produce could be used in cooking demonstrations or in stationary displays as long as it was not eaten. Some produce was harvested to provide seeds for the next year. Other produce could be harvested and given to the Grand Portage community organization for public benefit. For a while, seasonal employees harvested a portion for their own use but that was determined to be a violation of government ethics standards, or at least it might be seen as such, so that practice, too, was ended in 1994. All

¹⁷ Anthony L. Andersen to Friends of Grand Portage, January 17, 1985, GPNM, RG 1, Box 3, A38; Neil, "A Monumental Task," 16.

¹⁸ National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, "Grand Portage National Monument Wayside Exhibit Proposals," April 24, 1984, GPNM, RG 1, Box 20, D62. For further information, see correspondence in this file.

¹⁹ Superintendent to All Employees, July 6, 1994, GPNM, CF, K18.

produce not harvested for legitimate purposes was picked and added to the garden compost pile.²⁰

Despite the official trepidations over serving food to visitors, the various food-oriented demonstrations continued minus that element because the sight and smell of food was an effective way to connect visitors with the past. Costumed interpreters continued to bake bread in the kitchen, drawing visitors with the good smell and talking to them about period cooking. When heirloom seeds from the colonial era were packaged and sold in the gift shop, they became a popular item. In 1994, the national monument added a historic gardener interpreter position. Interpretation around the garden not only brought to light historic gardening practices, it also modeled organic food production.²¹



Interior of the kitchen.
(Authors photo.)

The public visited Grand Portage National Monument in growing numbers. In the late 1980s, visitation jumped by around 50 percent. Starting in 1988, it topped 70,000 for three years in a row. There were multiple causes. Touring the shore of Lake Superior became more popular, and as numerous state parks, hiking trails, and resorts sprang up along the North Shore, there was much more for Grand Portage visitors to do in addition to visiting the historic site. Grand Portage State Park was dedicated in 1990, and Pigeon Falls became one

²⁰ Superintendent to All Employees, April 13, 1994, GPNM, CF, K18.

²¹ Neil, “A Monumental Task,” 16; Pam Neil, “Living History/Demonstrations,” *The Grand Portage Post* (Summer 1999).

Interpretation

of the popular sites for sightseeing nearby. The Grand Portage Casino was another attraction, and the Witch Tree drew sightseers as well. Fall color tours of the North Shore became popular. With more casual travelers driving Highway 61, better signage alerted people to the existence of the national monument just off the main road.²²

A statement for management in 1992 delved into the visitor-use pattern at Grand Portage, summarizing data drawn from a visitor survey made by a cooperative park studies unit in 1991 and a visitor survey made by observational methods over the years 1990-1992, as well as cumulative annual visitation data. The average length of stay for a visitor was approximately 30 minutes to an hour, spent mostly within the stockade area. Visitors typically toured the historic reconstructions; some also hiked the self-guiding Mt. Rose Trail. The small number of wintertime visitors generally spent around two hours in the national monument, mostly ski touring. Around 90 percent of annual visitors came during the months of June, July, August, and September, with fully 60 percent appearing in July and August. Visitation tended to increase in hot summers when more people flocked to the North Shore for the cooler lakeside temperatures. As most visitors to Grand Portage came from hundreds of miles away, weekend traffic was not significantly greater than weekday traffic.²³

Around 50 percent of visitors were Minnesotans and nearly half of those were from the Twin Cities. Approximately 10 percent came from Wisconsin, and another 15 percent from Michigan, Illinois, or Iowa. Around 5 percent came from Canada reportedly, but that estimate was probably low. Less than 3 percent came from other foreign countries.²⁴

The 1991 visitor survey revealed more information about park users. Fully 85 percent of visitors were family groups with or without children. Some 8 percent were individuals or friends, and 6 percent were educational or tour groups. Three-quarters of visitors were first-time visitors and one-quarter were returning visitors. The survey found that 95 percent of visitors spent twenty minutes in the Great Hall, 86 percent of visitors spent six minutes in the kitchen, 61 percent of visitors spent five minutes on the stockade grounds, and 48 percent of visitors spent twelve minutes in the canoe warehouse. In terms of attendance at interpretive programs, the survey found that 19 percent of visitors attended a

²² Statement for Management, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota, August 1992, GPNM, CF, D18.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid. The percentage of visitors from Canada may have been an average over several years. The 1991 survey recorded that 12 percent of visitors came from Canada. (Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, Grand Portage National Monument, 1993, ETIC.)

program if one was offered, 15 percent did not attend if one was offered, and 66 percent reported that no program was offered at the time of their visit.²⁵

Grand Portage National Monument scored well on visitor satisfaction cards.²⁶ In the year 2000, it received 100 percent visitor satisfaction in a visitor survey. The high rating was all the more notable as it coincided with an increase in the entrance fee that year. The fee was set at \$3 per adult or \$6 per family. Total fee collection came to \$31,357.88, and thanks to a change in the law the park was allowed to keep a significant percentage of fees collected for reinvestment in the park.²⁷

The Ojibwe Village

In April 1993, Superintendent Einwalter signed his name to an annual statement for interpretation and visitor services. This blandly titled document was in fact much more than an annual statement; it crystalized a change in the interpretive program that was years in the making. The document began with a listing of interpretive themes and objectives that utterly revised the interpretive themes described in the Interpretive Prospectus of 1981. It charted the national monument’s pivot from a focus on the European side of the fur trade to a more balanced view that fully considered the role of indigenous peoples in the fur trade. It laid stress on Ojibwe cultural heritage and included the story of the Grand Portage Ojibwe in more recent times. The authorship of this document was unrecorded, but a letter in the files makes it clear that the initiative for the new interpretive themes came from Einwalter. “For several years,” Einwalter wrote, “I have wanted to give very careful consideration to our interpretive themes. This year I have finally made the effort and the attached include much of what I want you to project in your programs.” He attached the list of themes with his letter and they were inserted verbatim into the “SFI” or statement for interpretation.²⁸ As the so-called SFI (really more of an interpretive prospectus) was under preparation, the park staff initiated discussion with the Grand Portage Band over creating a replica “Ojibwe Village” outside the reconstructed stockade. The Ojibwe Village was to be the most important

²⁵ Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, Grand Portage National Monument, 1993, ETIC.

²⁶ GRPO Resource Management to GRPO Superintendent, GRPO Chief Interpreter (email), January 29, 2001, GPNM, CF, File GMP; Drost interview.

²⁷ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 2000, ETIC.

²⁸ Superintendent to Chief Interpreter Mark Bollinger and Lead Park Ranger Jon Sage (with attachment), March 25, 1993, GPNM, CF, K1817; Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, Grand Portage National Monument, 1993, ETIC.

Interpretation

physical manifestation of the change in interpretive focus until the Heritage Center was finally completed in the following decade.

The concept of a replica Ojibwe Village was not new. The concept arose the first time in 1972 in connection with planning for the Grand Portage resort enterprise (see Chapter Three). At that earlier point in time, the NPS opposed construction of an Ojibwe Village inside the national monument but supported it in principle outside the national monument as a complement to the historic reconstruction of the North West Company depot. The proposed Ojibwe Village in 1972 was dropped from the Grand Portage Band's development plan for lack of funds. No mention of the 1972 proposal appears in the discussion documents surrounding the development of the Ojibwe Village in the early to mid-1990s, but the earlier initiative must have been known to Grand Portage Band leaders if not NPS personnel as well.

When the Ojibwe Village was still in the development stage, an operations evaluation team visited the park (in September 1992). In follow-up, acting regional director Edward Carlin wrote to Einwalter:

The team was very impressed by the park's development of a new interpretive theme involving the local tribe and the concept involving onsite construction of the wigwam with participation by the Grand Portage Band, as well as the Maintenance and Interpretive Divisions. We were particularly pleased to learn of the team work that this project fostered and of your future plans to add an additional wigwam and winter huts.²⁹

Einwalter formed an Ojibwe Village committee to shepherd this initiative along. The eight-person committee included a number of individuals who worked on the park staff and were also members of the Band. One individual, Margaret Plummer-Steen, was an interpretive ranger and a Lake Superior Ojibwe whose family of origin lived just across the border in Canada. Since her roots were in Canada, she was not a member of the Grand Portage Band. Another individual, Rose Porter, was a band elder and cultural demonstrator. Three others, Mickey Spry, Wally Deschampe, and Lester Day, were band members who worked in the

²⁹ Acting Regional Director to Superintendent, November 30, 1992, GPNM, CF, A54.

Maintenance Division. The remaining three committee members were Einwalter, park ranger Jon Sage, and chief interpreter Mark Bollinger.³⁰

In February 1993, the National Parks Association awarded the park a \$7,500 grant for interpretive development of the Ojibwe Village. With \$2,500 of this grant, the park contracted with Josephine Barber to write an interpretive plan for the Ojibwe Village. Barber was a member of the White Earth Band of the Minnesota Chippewa who was working on a master’s degree at the University of Minnesota Duluth. In June, Barber came to Grand Portage and met with band members to gather their ideas. A few weeks later she submitted a draft. In the latter half of the year she received the committee’s comments, revised the plan, and submitted a final version. Einwalter sent the plan to twenty-three community residents, most of whom were members of the Grand Portage Band.³¹

While Barber was engaged in writing the plan, work went forward on building the first major feature in the Ojibwe Village: a cone-shaped or tepee-style wigwam. All building materials for the wigwam – birch bark, cedar boughs, spruce root – were harvested on the Grand Portage Reservation with the permission of the Band. Wally Deschampe and Margaret Plummer-Steen took the lead in recruiting volunteers from the community to harvest the building material and actually build the structure. The wigwam was completed in September and interpretation of the Ojibwe Village began immediately thereafter. Soon, probably in the following year, a longhouse, a men’s work shelter, and a women’s work shelter were added to the complex.³²



Ojibwe Village in September 2000. (Authors photo.)

³⁰ Ojibway Village Committee Minutes of the Meeting, June 17, 1993, GPNM, CF, File Ojibway Village – Planning Development.

³¹ Wilke E. Nelson to Dean Einwalter, February 25, 1993, Einwalter to Rose Porter, June 23, 1993, Einwalter to Ken Sherer (with enclosure), September 19, 1993, and Einwalter to Files (with attachment), March 31, 1994, GPNM, CF, File Ojibway Village – Planning Development.

³² Ojibway Village Committee Minutes of the Meeting, June 17, 1993, GPNM, CF, File Ojibway Village – Planning Development; Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1993, ETIC; Resource Management Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, 1995, GPNM, CF, N files.

Interpretation

Around the same time that the wigwam was under construction, Andy Rockwood of Traverse City, Michigan spent a month in the park demonstrating construction of a fourteen-foot birchbark canoe using traditional building techniques, materials, and tools. Rockwood worked in an area near the canoe warehouse. This anticipated a later canoe-building program launched in the 2000s in which Erik Simula, a master birchbark canoe builder, built a canoe onsite every summer. The canoe building demonstration aptly tied together the Ojibwe Village with the canoe warehouse, vividly making the point for visitors that the birchbark canoe, so fundamental to the fur trade, was a native invention. As a practical matter, both the canoe-building demonstration and the Ojibwe Village came to require an annual harvest of birchbark and other forest products from the Grand Portage Reservation.³³

An individual service plan for the Ojibwe Village, written in 1993 and presumably based on Barber's interpretive plan, envisioned that "costumed personnel" would provide "oral presentations and demonstrations." The individual service plan stated that "strong efforts" would be required "to recruit and hire Ojibway peoples to staff the village." It would not be the first time that band members worked as seasonal interpreters, but there would be more and they would help the Ojibwe Village showcase interpretive themes surrounding native history and culture. Margaret Plummer-Steen was assigned to oversee recruitment and training and develop the Ojibwe Village's interpretive programming. She suggested that the park proceed on this quest slowly: first test how the Grand Portage community and the general public responded to the Ojibwe Village and this new component of "Native interpretation" before hiring more interpreters.³⁴

As Plummer-Steen well knew, "Native interpretation" was a new and upcoming thing not just at Grand Portage but at many historic sites in the Great Lakes Region both in Canada and the United States. Native interpretation referred to the project of employing native staff at historic sites to interpret the historic role and presence of native peoples. The aim was to bring a mostly white visitation face-to-face with indigenous persons in order to increase cultural understanding and to counter negative stereotyping. The Native interpreters

³³ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1993, ETIC; Neil interview; National Park Service, *Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Grand Portage National Monument* (n.p. National Park Service, 2005), 31; Alissa Johnson, "Meet Erik Simula, Birch Bark Canoe Builder," *Quetico Superior Wilderness News* (Fall-Winter 2013), at <https://queticosuperior.org/blog/meet-erik-simula-spotlight-on-ymca-camp-widjiwagan-and-reconstructing-the-past-in-the-quetico-superior>.

³⁴ Ojibway Village Committee Minutes of the Meeting, June 17, 1993, GPNM, CF, File Ojibway Village – Planning Development; Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, Grand Portage National Monument, 1993, ETIC.

unfortunately had to endure rude questions and insensitive remarks from ignorant visitors – the more so when they demonstrated Ojibwe traditional lifeways in the Ojibwe Village setting. But the uncomfortableness in doing Native interpretation was part of the intent, for the high-minded aim of Native interpretation was to break down that public ignorance over time. As bluntly stated in the individual service plan for the Ojibwe Village, the “why” of this project was to “dispel stereotypes of American Indians, develop a closer appreciation for the Earth and its resources, and demonstrate the oftentimes ignored significance of native people’s contributions.”³⁵



Work shelter in the Ojibwe Village, with canoe warehouse beyond, 2021. (Authors photo.)

Canadian anthropologist Laura Peers studied the advent of Native interpretation at Grand Portage, Old Fort William, and three other historic sites in the Great Lakes Region in the 1990s. All five sites featured historic reconstructions of fur trade posts (or in one case, a Jesuit mission) where a reconstruction of a native encampment had been recently added to the site to balance the Eurocentric focus of the reconstructed buildings. In an article titled “‘Playing Ourselves’: First Nations and Native American Interpreters at Living History Sites,” published in *The Public Historian* in 1999, Peers observed,

³⁵ Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services, Grand Portage National Monument, 1993, ETIC.

Interpretation

Native interpretation has become a priority at reconstructions where the official themes and training manuals now emphasize Native-White economic and political interdependence, particularly the reliance on Native peoples for food....The best of a new generation of critical scholarship has been pressed into service as the foundation for Native interpretation programs, and the new emphases at these sites have created a much deeper and more inclusive portrayal of history than such places previously presented.³⁶

Peers described in her article some of the challenges that Native interpreters dealt with in talking to a public that was still largely influenced by old myths of the dominant society surrounding frontier conquest and Indian savagery. Peers found that Native interpreters, in confronting those adversities, had developed a unique style of interpretation which she called “playing ourselves.” In Peers’ research, some Native interpreters thrived in this occupational role while others found it confusing or exhausting. The point of all this for Grand Portage National Monument was simply to underscore that Native interpretation was going to be difficult. The Grand Portage Band supported this move into Native interpretation in principle. But it remained for members of the Band to want to take it on personally through their own individual employment at the park.

The vision for the Ojibwe Village in the mid-1990s was that the Ojibwe Village would be mostly run by the Band in partnership with the NPS. In 1995, the Band was awarded a \$50,000 grant by the Historic Preservation Fund (a fund established in 1977 under the authority of the NHPA and administered by the NPS) to develop an interpretive staff specifically tied to the Ojibwe Village. The fund would pay for a project manager for six months and four interpreters for four and a half months. There was also about \$5,000 in the grant for period clothing and other supplies. The funding was for one year only, with the prospect that the Band could request that the grant be funded from year to year after the first year. The vision for the Ojibwe Village Grant program in future years included establishment of a mentoring program involving elders and youth, an oral history program,

³⁶ Laura Peers, “‘Playing Ourselves’: First Nations and Native American Interpreters at Living History Sites,” *The Public Historian* 21, no. 4 (Fall 1999), 41.

and a commitment to translating the park brochure into the Ojibwe language by the summer of 1997.³⁷

Unfortunately, the grant came through at a time when relations between the Band and the park deteriorated. Despite the superintendent’s good intentions to work with the Band and bring out the native story in the interpretive program, Einwalter had an increasingly difficult time communicating effectively with the Band leadership. When Myra Dec became chief of interpretation, she too had every intention of cultivating the partnership yet found her efforts falling on sterile ground. As a result, the Band did not act on the grant and the money was eventually redirected to another tribe.³⁸ The Ojibwe Village held much promise, but its full potential could not be realized until there was a change of leadership and the TSGA agreement was secured in the late 1990s. Once the partnership between the NPS and the Band was revitalized, the idea for the Ojibwe Village proved its mettle.

The Interpretive Program in the Twenty-first Century

Superintendent Tim Cochrane was hired in 1997 to find a way to make the TSGA work. While wholeheartedly committing himself to that project, he brought a clear understanding that the national monument had to do better in telling the Grand Portage Band’s story and that the Band would be essential in making that effort a success. Cochrane soon had the opportunity to hire new people into two key staff positions: chief of interpretation and chief of resource management. He hired archeologist David Cooper first, then one year later he asked Cooper to accept a lateral move from chief of interpretation over to chief of resource management. He then hired Pam Neil into the chief of interpretation position vacated by Cooper. These three people together with Melvin Gagnon at the head of the Maintenance Division formed a cohesive management team for nearly twenty years.³⁹

In Neil’s job interview in 1999, Cochrane laid out his vision for what was ahead. In the coming years, the chief of interpretation would help with framing a general management plan, and then a long-range interpretive plan. The park would finally get a visitor center, and

³⁷ Ojibway Village Grant and attachments, GPNM, CF, A4035.

³⁸ Dean C. Einwalter to Norman Deschampe, February 5, 1996, GPNM, CF, K1817; Superintendent to Files, April 16, 1996, GPNM, CF, A4035; Joe Wallis to Superintendent (email), September 17, 1996, GPNM, CF, File Ojibway Village – Planning Development.

³⁹ Tim Cochrane email to the author, sent in follow-up to conversation at September 2000 fur trade history workshop held at Grand Portage, undated printout in author’s possession; Neil interview.

Interpretation

it would get a new park film. These things did in fact become the major developments for interpretation over the next twenty years.⁴⁰

In 1999, Neil already had fifteen years in the NPS. With a bachelor's degree in history, she got her first job as a seasonal interpreter at Gettysburg National Military Park near her hometown in 1984. After one year as a seasonal, she accepted her first permanent position at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia. After one year there, she transferred back to Gettysburg and worked in various positions in interpretation and education until 1999. In taking the job at Grand Portage, she was looking for an opportunity to play a larger role in shaping a visitor services and interpretation program. She loved being a supervisor and looked forward to passing along some of the outstanding mentoring experience she had benefited from at Gettysburg. When she got to Grand Portage, she enjoyed the new feel of working in a small unit where there was a great deal of teamwork between division heads and the superintendent.⁴¹

Not long into her nearly twenty years at Grand Portage, Neil came to view the partnership with the Band as a vital ingredient in the success of the interpretive program. On her arrival, the number of cultural demonstrators in the cultural demonstration program had shrunk to three and there was just one interpretive ranger with Ojibwe heritage: Margaret Plummer-Steen. There was a reticence on the part of the community to work for the NPS or get very involved with the national monument. Some of the children in the community, on the other hand, liked to hang out with whomever was on duty in the Ojibwe Village. And the feeling in the community toward the NPS was changing. One thing that helped to nurture a stronger partnership was that the community began to see that the park's management team was stable and not going anywhere. "I think there had been a fairly regular turnover in staff prior to that," Neil would later recall. "Once they understood we were there, we were investing, we weren't going anywhere, they wanted to be part of that."⁴²

The General Management Plan

Interpretation was central in developing the general management plan. The planning alternatives basically revolved around alternative thrusts for a retooled interpretive program. In the first draft of the GMP, there were three alternatives besides the obligatory no-action

⁴⁰ Neil interview.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

alternative. Alternative B would have enhanced the historic scene in the fur trade era with a new maritime emphasis, including the addition of replica small scale watercraft. Alternative C would have emphasized Ojibwe heritage by among other things including a new structure for cultural demonstrations separate from the Heritage Center. Alternative D would have provided a Heritage Center focus, allowing for an all-season facility that would have stood outside the village beside Highway 61. Input from the Band and the general public on these three alternatives led to a fourth, preferred alternative in the final GMP that combined elements from the other three. Notably, the preferred alternative called for a new blending of fur trade and Ojibwe history, with more attention given to Ojibwe cultural heritage, and it placed the Heritage Center at the foot of Mount Rose and made it an all-season facility.⁴³

During the discussions around the GMP, it was apparent that the Band was in favor of more historic reconstructions. The management team at the national monument wanted more historic reconstructions, too, notwithstanding the fact that NPS policy generally frowned on introducing new historic reconstructions. Cooper and Neil both argued strenuously in internal discussions and memos that more historic reconstructions inside the stockade area would enhance interpretation and the visitor experience. Cooper contended that the present stockade area too often gave visitors the “misguided impression of a large, grassy, and sleepy stockaded fort, missing the historical reality of a bustling, crowded commercial depot of international significance.” He insisted that “a quality reconstruction is as much a part of the interpreter’s toolkit as accurate costuming and an engaging style of presentation.” The interior of the building could provide “a physical setting that establishes a sense of time, place, and function that cannot come from a static exhibit,” while the exterior of the building could “add to the authenticity of the cultural landscape.”⁴⁴ The national monument’s management team appeared to lose this battle. The final GMP gave an oblique nod to the addition of more historic reconstructions in the stockade area, but actual funding to complete that development never materialized. The expectation that those structures would ever get built seemed to fade over time. However, the debate around historic reconstructions was likely to continue as staff interest shifted to the possibility of obtaining a different historic reconstruction instead – one depicting the BIA day school that once stood in the East Meadow Area.

⁴³ U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, *Grand Portage National Monument / Minnesota, Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*, vi-vii.

⁴⁴ GRPO Resource Management to GRPO Superintendent, GRPO Chief Interpreter (email), January 29, 2001, GPNM, CF, File GMP.

Interpretation

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan

In 2001, the park initiated planning to produce a long-range interpretive plan. With the TSGA agreement in place, the GMP in progress, and a realistic expectation that the Heritage Center would be built a few years hence, the time was ripe to prepare a long-range interpretive plan. In generic terms, the purpose of the long-range interpretive plan was to lay out a vision for interpretive development over a period of seven to ten years. It was to assist managers and staff over a stretch of years when an interpretive program was due for a significant retooling or change in focus. In the Grand Portage setting, the long-range interpretive plan was intended to guide interpretive development through the period when the national monument at long last obtained a visitor center. The Heritage Center would be a huge asset in telling the park story, and the long-range interpretive plan would ensure that the national monument made the most of it.

The park entered an agreement with the Harpers Ferry Center to guide this planning effort. It was to be a team effort, with Neil and her staff writing large portions of it. The Harpers Ferry Center fumbled the project in the first two years, so obtaining the end product was grossly delayed. The final document was not completed until 2005. Though the delay was highly exasperating at the time, it did not matter much in the end because the plan was still timely, being completed two years ahead of the construction of the Heritage Center. As Neil would later recall, “We used that plan; it did not sit on the shelf.... That long-range interpretive plan was a huge guiding document to me and to my staff.”⁴⁵

One of Neil’s major aims was to increase the amount of roving interpretation by interpreters in period costume. Already the interpretive division took up the biggest share of the park’s annual budget, with most of the money going to salaries but a sizeable fraction going to the purchase of period clothing as well. All that was to increase. In 2005, the interpretive staff consisted of the chief interpreter, one permanent GS 09 interpretive specialist, six seasonal GS 04/06 park rangers, one seasonal GS 02 student temporary, and a yearly complement of GS 01 cultural demonstrators. More staff were needed to cover visitor services in the Heritage Center and to fulfill Neil’s goal of enlarging the “footprint for interactive programming.” The plan called for six more positions: two permanent GS

⁴⁵ Project Agreement 03-040 Long-Range Interpretive Plan Grand Portage National Monument (April 2003), Brief on Project History (no date), and Pamela S. Neil to Gary Candelaria, March 9, 2005, GPNM, CF, K1817; Neil interview.

05/07/09 interpreters, one permanent GS 09/11 curator/archivist, and three seasonal GS 04/05 park rangers.⁴⁶

The flip side of interactive programming was the provision of fixed interpretive media such as exhibits, publications, and audiovisual presentations. The plan referred to these two complementary pieces of the interpretive program as “personal services interpretation” and “non-personal services interpretation.” The plan laid out expectations for museum exhibits in the forthcoming visitor center. It also called for a new batch of outdoor “wayside” exhibits. Ultimately, the plan paved the way for a big push on waysides that resulted in forty-four being installed throughout the national monument mostly in the stockade area and on the Grand Portage and Mt. Rose trails.⁴⁷

Preparing the long-range interpretive plan provided an opportunity for Neil and her staff to go over the park’s interpretive themes again. By now Grand Portage National Monument was well along in its pivot to a greater emphasis on native history and culture, so the plan reflected not so much a revision of interpretive themes as their refinement and elaboration. Indeed, the plan restated seven broad themes that had been recently developed and presented in the GMP. Under each one, the plan listed critical story elements, interpretive objectives, and resources and sites related to the theme. For instance, the last of the seven themes was crystalized in the statement: “The fur trade was a catalyst for cross-cultural encounters between native peoples and Euro-Americans that variably affected both populations.” The plan then took inventory of resources and sites that assisted with interpreting that theme: the people of the community and park staff, the Grand Portage



Roving interpreter Eleni Hatzis in period costume on assignment at the kitchen. (Authors photo.)

⁴⁶ National Park Service, *Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Grand Portage National Monument*, 50, 89; Neil interview.

⁴⁷ National Park Service, *Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Grand Portage National Monument*, 55-57; Pam Neil, personal communication with the authors, December 29, 2022.

Interpretation

Indian Reservation, the park's museum collections, the Ojibwe Village and canoe area, the Grand Portage itself, the canoe warehouse and canoes, all the historic reconstructions, contemporary native art, names and place names, the Ojibwe language, historic costumes, and the garden and its plants.⁴⁸

The long-range interpretive plan offered an up-to-date analysis of visitors. Annual visitation now ranged from a high of 91,439 in the year 2000 to a low in recent times of 61,670 in 2004. It averaged around 73,000. The vast majority of visitors continued to appear during the months of May to October. The national monument did not have newer visitor survey data to substitute for the visitor survey data from the early 1990s, but it did have the observations of veteran park staff. These were distilled in fifty-two bulleted statements such as "some visitors expect campgrounds and full food concessions," and "a few visitors expect research and museum facilities." Taken altogether, these statements showed that visitors were a diverse lot with many conflicting expectations and misperceptions. But there appeared to be a few strong patterns as well. For instance, there were these two statements: "Most visitors come from Minnesota," and "Most Minnesota visitors know at least basic fur trade information."⁴⁹

The long-range interpretation plan included a detailed section on existing conditions. As the Heritage Center opened two years after the plan was completed, this section of the plan now provides an excellent historical record of how things stood when the national monument finally got a proper visitor center. Notably, the description of existing conditions is revealing of how awkward it was for the interpretive program when park headquarters was in Grand Marais and the seasonal interpretive rangers were duty-stationed in the national monument with no adequate building in which to do their prep work or receive visitors. All they had was the little unprepossessing ranger station that had served as a "temporary visitor center" since 1970. How were the interpretive rangers able to prepare their material when all they had were a couple of file cabinets, with the park library mostly out of reach thirty-six miles away in Grand Marais? How were the interpretive rangers able to orient visitors to the site when some visitors had no idea that this "unattractive and unwelcoming" little building was one they could enter? If visitors did recognize the ranger station for what it was, they did not find much for them inside. At one time, it contained a bookstore and a film room, but by 2005 there was only an information counter, a wall rack with brochures, and a small

⁴⁸ National Park Service, *Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Grand Portage National Monument*, 16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 18-20.

whiteboard where weather information was posted. Behind the information counter there were four desks that were shared by all the interpretive and law enforcement rangers. A locked storage area contained black powder weapons and first aid supplies. While veteran park staff would one day feel a bit of nostalgia for the humble ranger station, no one was sorry when it was demolished in 2007.⁵⁰



The ranger station served as a temporary visitor center from 1970 until 2007. (GPNM, RG 1, Box 5, File 39.)

The Ojibwe Heritage Center

The opening of the Ojibwe Heritage Center in August 2007 was a watershed moment for the park’s interpretive program. Now the permanent and seasonal staff were brought together in one building. The park library and museum collections were transferred from Grand Marais to Grand Portage. Historic costumes and other props for living history were stored in one place in the basement. At last the national monument had a proper visitor center with a big, welcoming information desk for providing visitors with an orientation. Eastern National finally had a good space for selling books and other items. There was a nice room with adequate seating for showing the park film, and a much improved indoor space

⁵⁰ National Park Service, *Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Grand Portage National Monument*, 28; Neil, “A Monumental Task,” 13.

Interpretation

for cultural demonstrations. At long last the park had a bona fide museum space with exhibits.

The Heritage Center brought other changes to the interpretive program. The building was open all year, so the interpretive program now extended all year as well, insofar as the program included staffing the information desk and showing the park film through the quiet winter months. And what was most consequential, the Heritage Center brought about a complete change in the way visitors flowed through the historic site. Instead of parking by the stockade and entering the historic area through the east gate, now visitors parked by the Heritage Center and entered the historic area through the Ojibwe Village. Viewed on a map, the flow pattern was virtually flipped. Neil would later explain its significance this way:

We kind of had a backwards way into our story without the visitor center....People would arrive, they'd park in the asphalt parking lot right outside the Great Hall. They'd walk in, boom, there they are: the Great Hall, North West Company, and eventually they'd make their way out to the Ojibwe Village. And when we built the Heritage Center we had this great opportunity to have visitors enter the historic site through the Ojibwe Village, through the story of the First Peoples, and to learn about their culture and their lifeways before ever seeing the North West Company post and the Great Hall and all that.⁵¹

The park worked with its longtime partner the Minnesota Historical Society for the design and fabrication of exhibits. The MNHS had a trove of artifacts, photographs, and documents, and it had subject-matter experts; the NPS had a genius for interpretation, and national monument staff knew the site the best and had a direct line to the Grand Portage community. The two staffs worked hand-in-hand. This was not an instance of the NPS outsourcing the work; rather, Neil remembered, she and the superintendent and other staff members "were in it up to our elbows."⁵²

The park obtained much gratifying assistance from the Band, too. The park heard from Grand Portage community members who worked at the park and others who attended public meetings. It consulted with elders as well as a tribal representative on the project,

⁵¹ Neil interview.

⁵² Ibid.

Rick Anderson. These people contributed ideas about what objects to exhibit and in some cases helped with the preparation of text and graphics. Tribal members even contributed some of their own objects to place on exhibit on a loan basis. There were a few items that community members wanted to include that the park thought were too frail. One frail item of high interest was a collection of cedar mats. The park had work done to stabilize them and prepare them for display on a rotation schedule that would limit their exposure to light.⁵³



Exhibits in the Ojibwe Heritage Center.
(Authors photo.)

Over a third of the exhibits focused on telling the Ojibwe lifeways part of the park’s story. A timeline with historic photographs showed the evolution of the Grand Portage village, and voice recordings provided first-person narrative from village residents. There were life-size manikins and dioramas depicting winter lifeways and the fur trade. There was considerable space given to the Grand Portage itself, a key resource that did not get enough attention. There was a rich display of cultural items and archeological artifacts, many derived from the decades-long involvement of the MNHS with Grand Portage archeology. Dave Cooper recalled that the MNHS and the NPS shared the same philosophy: “that people come to a museum to see artifacts, not to see a picture of an artifact, or to see you talk about an artifact.” It resulted in “a very object-rich exhibit there that the community and the visitors really value.”⁵⁴

The creation of the museum exhibits in the Heritage Center had a knock-on effect for the historical reconstructions in the stockade area. Now the park had the opportunity to

⁵³ Pam Neil email to the author, March 7, 2023.

⁵⁴ Neil interview; Cooper interview.

Interpretation

move some essential visitor services out of corner rooms in the Great Hall – three corner rooms were heretofore used for an office, a bookstore, and a film room – and create further exhibits in those rooms. The park aspired to develop a treatment plan for each of the Great Hall’s freed corner rooms. As Neil would later relate, “We put a lot of time and resources into successful PMIS projects to fund historic reproductions of period pieces that could be used on a daily basis in our programming.” Thus, the Heritage Center opened a new chapter in the national monument’s decades-long project to furnish the Great Hall with authentic reproductions of period furnishings and to make those interior spaces maximally informative.⁵⁵

Space limitations in the Heritage Center put some constraints on the exhibit design. The space did not lend itself to interactive, audiovisual media because it would have created too much overlapping sound. Similarly, the space did not allow for much hands-on stuff for kids. Neil took the view that families with kids mostly came in the summer months when they could quickly move on to the outdoor exhibits in the Ojibwe Village as well as indoor exhibits in the Great Hall where there was lots of kid-oriented, hands-on interpretation.⁵⁶

When the budget for the Heritage Center was arbitrarily capped and lopped in half (see Chapter Four), some interpretive functions had to be scaled down. Instead of a dedicated theater space for showing the park film, the Heritage Center had a multipurpose room where staff trainings or community meetings could be held or films shown. The big room had a tremendous view of Grand Portage Bay, and with the press of a button heavy blinds descended over the long bank of windows to darken the room for a film showing. The automatic projection system was one of the most state-of-the-art in the National Park System. The room saw a lot of use. For a time, the park hosted movie nights with popcorn and many of the kids in the village came.⁵⁷

Working with the reduced budget, Cochrane prioritized a few key things in the building design that had importance for the interpretive program. The exterior façade of the

⁵⁵ Neil interview; National Park Service, *Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Grand Portage National Monument*, 90; Pam Neil, personal communication with the authors, December 29, 2022. In 1989, three of the four corner rooms were used for visitor services; one was used as an office, one as a sales room, and one as an audio-visual room; the fourth had the Alexander Mackenzie bedroom exhibit. By 2007, one additional corner room may have been converted to an exhibit room. The decades-long evolution of visitor services and exhibits in the four corner rooms in the Great Hall, as well as furnishings in the central area, is a complicated story beyond the scope of this administrative history. Steve Veit is knowledgeable about it. Also see correspondence in GPNM, RG 1, Box 20, D62, and in Box 26, H3015 and H3020, and in 2nd Accession, Box 7, K1817.

⁵⁶ Neil interview.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

building was impressive yet welcoming to the visitor. The interior entry was equally impressive and welcoming with skylight windows, a large fireplace, a curved staircase leading to upstairs offices, and a spacious circular information desk in the center of the room. The basement provided an abundance of storage for period costumes and other living history props.⁵⁸

A New Park Film

A new park film, completed in 2012, added another critical piece to the contemporary interpretive program. Neil attested that the film by Great Divide Pictures had a “HUGE impact on visitor understanding and appreciation of the park’s stories.”⁵⁹

Historical documentary filmmakers Chris Wheeler and Sonny Hutchinson of Great Divide Pictures started work on the project in March 2010. While Pam Neil and Tim Cochrane served as Wheeler’s primary contacts at the park, several other NPS staff were closely involved. Park ranger Beth Drost was a key source on Ojibwe cultural perspective, and park ranger Karl Koster was a key consultant “on all things voyageur.” Koster, besides bringing his detailed knowledge of voyageur clothing and equipment to bear, provided a crucial liaison between the filmmakers and the reenactors who participated in the project. Band member and artist Travis Novitsky offered input as both a representative of the Grand Portage Band and as a talented still photographer who had a keen interest in the film’s visual impact.⁶⁰

Neil’s and Cochrane’s vision for the film was that it would not be an “orientation film” but rather a compelling and emotional telling of the Grand Portage story. The staff also insisted that the film showcase the Grand Portage Trail, and that it feature the Ojibwe experience in the fur trade.⁶¹

A review of the park’s original orientation film “Northwest Passage,” an oldie produced by the Minnesota Historical Society in 1978, offered a glimpse of what a challenging order it was for the filmmakers to present the Grand Portage story in a fifteen-to-

⁵⁸ Neil interview; Cochrane interview.

⁵⁹ Pam Neil, personal communication with the authors, December 29, 2022.

⁶⁰ Interpretive Film Meeting Summary, Grand Portage National Monument, March 9-10, 2010, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File Film Agreement; Rhonda Silence, “A red carpet premiere of Rendezvous with History: A Grand Portage Story,” *Cook County News-Herald*, November 12, 2011.

⁶¹ Interpretive Film Meeting Summary, Grand Portage National Monument, March 9-10, 2010, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File Film Agreement.

Interpretation

twenty-minute film. (The final cut of “Northwest Passage” came in at twenty-four and a half minutes.) The park staff pointed out that the 1978 film lacked awe-inspiring footage and did not show any voyageurs or native people. It did not attempt to explain the complexities of the cultural relationship between Europeans and natives. It did not provide the geographic context of a vast and intricate system of waterways leading to the Canadian Northwest. Visitors came to Grand Portage expecting scenic beauty, the park staff said, and they were surprised by the fur trade story and often shocked to learn that the remote North West Company post at Grand Portage was once *headquarters* for continental fur company operations. The park staff wanted all this to be conveyed in the new film.⁶²

The filmmakers were remarkably successful. They created a personal narrative story using the device of a young Ojibwe man telling the history of the Grand Portage and his people. They did about 100 hours of filming in numerous locations from the Lake Superior shoreline to Fort Charlotte and along the Grand Portage Trail as well as in the Grand Portage State Forest and around Wauswaugoning Bay. The final product was replete with winter scenes, aerial shots, extensive use of reenactors and a lush soundtrack filled with natural sound and overheard French and Ojibwe speakers. The NPS produced both English- and Ojibwe-language versions.⁶³

The Teen Ranger Program

In 2011, the park initiated a youth mentorship program with the creation of one position, then two more, for student interns to work in the Heritage Center primarily at the information desk. Young people from the age of sixteen to twenty-five were eligible, and the park recruited heavily in the community to fill the available slots. The park provided inductees with NPS uniforms, and it became known as the Teen Ranger Program. Grand Portage youth signed up for it and their families were supportive and the youths’ presence in the Heritage Center built more community support for the national monument. It was hoped that the Teen Ranger Program might seed interest in some participants to pursue a ranger career after college, which could further knit the national monument and the community together. Around 2015, the program attracted more funding and applicants as the Midwest

⁶² Interpretive Film Meeting Summary, Grand Portage National Monument, March 9-10, 2010, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File Film Agreement. Correspondence around the making of the 1978 film is in GPNM, RG 1, Box 2, A38.

⁶³ Rhonda Silence, “Community invited to rendezvous with history Grand Portage National Monument hosts a movie premiere,” *Cook County News-Herald*, October 29, 2011.

Regional Office as well as the community saw its merits. A decade after the program was initiated it continued to thrive.⁶⁴

Special Events

The park hosted one or two special event days each summer and sometimes more. Special events brought out specific interpretive themes, generated publicity, and broadened the park’s appeal. The big one was the Rendezvous held in August. It became Rendezvous Days when it grew into a two- or three-day event held in conjunction with the Grand Portage Band’s annual Powwow. Another special event was the Voyageur Festival or Encampment usually held on July Fourth. More recently, a Winter Frolic special event was added to the calendar featuring a dog sled race. Other special events revolved around commemorations such as the fortieth anniversary of the national monument’s establishment (held on September 2, 1998) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the TSGA partnership (to be held in 2024).



Rendezvous Days, 1989. (GPNM, Series S, No. 089.)

⁶⁴ Hansen interview; Neil interview; The Indian Self Governance Act Annual Funding Agreement (digest of AFA annual reports 1999-2020), printout provided to the authors by Superintendent Craig Hansen.

Interpretation

The first Rendezvous was held in 1972. The single day event was described by Superintendent Perry in his annual report:

This past summer we inaugurated a program in which we hope to increase not only in visitation but also in activities in the coming year. This was the “Rendezvous,” which also involved the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Canadians, people from Chicago, and other interested canoeists. This special event marked the beginning, we hope, of a canoe race yearly with the Montreal or North Canoe, a canoe race in two-men canoes and, of course, the greased pole which is so very popular with the younger generation. In cooperation with the Grand Portage Band, the Band sold mooseburgers, and also, had a series of Indian dances performed in the evening with prizes donated by the Indian Council.⁶⁵

Public attendance at the Rendezvous grew year by year and reached an estimated 1,500 people in 1979. The following year, the Rendezvous was combined with the Grand Portage Powwow and the attendance hit perhaps 3,000. As reported in the superintendent’s annual report:

Participants for the powwow came from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Ontario. Voyageur brigades came from Grand Marais and Thunder Bay. A highlight was the participation by over 50 costumed interpreters from Old Fort William. Grand Portage National Monument provided most of the support services to carry out this event. Two law enforcement rangers came from Isle Royale National Park to assist Monument personnel in patrolling the area. There were no accidents or major incidents associated with this year’s event.⁶⁶

The estimated 3,000 attendance in 1980 set a record that appeared to stand for a long time. Estimated attendance in 1986 was 2,000. In 1992 it was 2,500. However, the Rendezvous in 2022 set a new record with an estimated 3,100 people attending. It was the first Rendezvous

⁶⁵ Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1972, HFC.

⁶⁶ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1979, 1980, HFC.

in three years following a hiatus of big public gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Superintendent Heather Boyd described that year’s event as healing for the Grand Portage community.⁶⁷

The first Voyageur Festival was held on July 4, 1981. It drew approximately 150 reenactors, who set up an authentic voyageur encampment in the actual camping site of the original voyageurs on the east side of Grand Portage Creek. Around 700 visitors came to view the one-day encampment. The Voyageur Festival became a semi-annual event held in July, usually on the Fourth of July, featuring the celebrated arrival of voyageur brigades by canoe, and various voyageur entertainments on land such as barrel rolling; axe throwing, fire-starting and pipe-lighting contests, pack races and relays; and Indian wrestling; as well as canoe races in the lake.⁶⁸

There was considerable overlap of interpretive programming in the Rendezvous Days and Voyageur Festival events, but there were differences, too. Rendezvous Days originally drew on Minnesotans’ enthusiasm for recreational canoeing as well as fur trade history and featured canoe races as the main event. The Voyageur Festival, on the other hand, was first and foremost a show put on by reenactors. As the reenactor community grew in the 1980s and 1990s, costumed reenactors came to assume a conspicuous presence at both events. In 1994, the park worked with multiple reenactor groups and historical societies to plan, organize, and officiate at voyageur competitive events. In 1997, some 175 reenactors took part in the Rendezvous Days. As the Rendezvous coincided with the Grand Portage powwow, reenactors at the Rendezvous shared the limelight with powwow dancers dressed in Indian regalia. Sometimes a smaller powwow was held in conjunction with the Voyageur Festival.⁶⁹

The superintendent’s annual report for 2000 stated that the Rendezvous that year drew more reenactors than ever before. There were many new demonstrations. For example, one reenactor demonstrated blacksmithing, and another exhibited heritage breeds of pigs and horses. The Grand Portage Traditional Drum performed in an opening ceremony. A

⁶⁷ Lake Superior Podcast, “Heather Boyd, Grand Portage National Monument,” October 15, 2022 at <https://podopolo.com/podcast/lake-superior-podcast-3498736/s3-e5-heather-boyd-grand-portage-national-monument-1000090534720>.

⁶⁸ Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1981, HFC; Grand Portage National Monument, Voyageur Festival (program), July 4, 1982, file copy in library vertical files, GPNM.

⁶⁹ Standard Operating Procedures for Rendezvous Days, January 1994, GPNM, CF, File Rendezvous Days – Schedules, Planning, etc.; Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1997, 1998, ETIC; Pfeil interview.

Interpretation



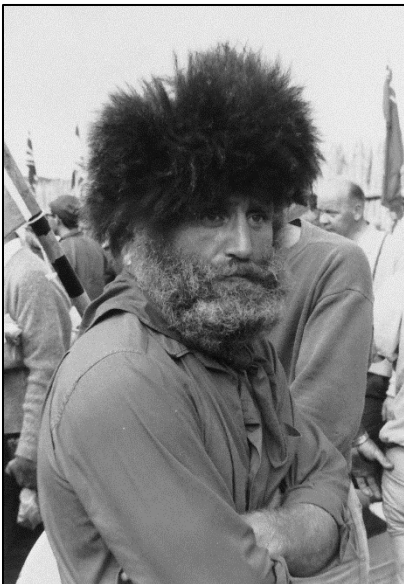
Powwow dancers. (GPNM, purple index series, No. 120.)



Ojibwe dancer
William Blackwell Sr.
in full regalia, August
17, 1972. (Photo by
Dick Frear, GPNM,
purple index series,
No. 30.)



Voyageurs
Encampment. (GPNM,
purple index series,
No. 246.)



Reenactor, July 1967. (GPNM, Series
G, No. 086.)



Reenactors. (GPNM, purple index series, No. 245.)

report on the 2006 Rendezvous listed the following historical demonstrations: eighteenth-century tin smithing techniques, eighteenth-century navigation and mapmaking techniques, a hands-on exhibit featuring the French period of trade at Grand Portage, a living history demonstration of the role of North West Company clerks at work, eighteenth-century blacksmithing techniques, eighteenth-century shoemaking, and musical programs featuring military fife and drum and voyageur songs.⁷⁰

Park staff put many hours of labor into arranging with demonstrators, preparing exhibits, advertising the event, and organizing volunteers. Volunteers played a big part in running the events. The park’s cooperating association was often a key sponsor for events. Honoraria for demonstrators and prizes for contestants could add up to several thousand dollars. In 2016, Eastern National contributed \$4,774 in support of Rendezvous Days.⁷¹

Efforts to draw more winter visitors with a special event came to center on the Winter Frolic, a three-day event in January that dovetailed with the Grand Portage Passage Sled Dog Race. The Grand Portage Passage Sled Dog Race was held five years in a row from 1999 to 2003. Organized by Doug Seim, Curtis Gagnon, and Matthew Brown, it was one of the premier races in the Lower 48, drawing mushers from far away to compete. The race route started in Grand Portage and went via Gunflint Lake to White Fish Lake in northwest Ontario and back to Grand Portage. The organizers named it a “passage” to commemorate the seasonal passages of the Grand Portage Band as it had once made its seasonal rounds across this territory. Before the start of each race the mushers were welcomed into the community and everyone “broke bread” together.⁷²

The park worked directly with the race committee to develop the theme: “a way of life remembered.” Cochrane reported: “This event offered visitors and community members alike opportunities to learn about the winter life-ways of Native Americans, the history of dog sledding and how it was used by Native Peoples as well as Europeans during the fur trade era. Additionally folks had the chance to learn about winter life at a North West Company post.” The Winter Frolic successfully combined visitors’ interest in the dog sled

⁷⁰ Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2000, ETIC; Superintendent to Eastern National, December 1, 2006, GPNM, CF, A42.

⁷¹ Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2003, ETIC; Superintendent to Eastern National, December 7, 2017, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant’s Office, GPNM.

⁷² Martha Marnocha, “Moments in Time: The Grand Portage Passage sled dog race,” January 19, 2016, at <https://wtip.org/archives/moments-in-time-the-grand-portage-passage-sled-dog-race/>.

Interpretation

race with park interpretive themes. Unfortunately, when the sled dog race event went away the Winter Frolic could not be sustained on its own.⁷³

The Cultural Demonstration Program

The cultural demonstration program was formally begun in 1968 to provide visitors with a live demonstration of native crafts indigenous to Grand Portage, as well as to provide employment for the community. For decades, the program revolved around the seasonal employment of a complement of up to ten cultural demonstrators who made traditional crafts in a dedicated public space, interacting with visitors and supplementing their NPS wages with sales of their crafts.

The establishing act for Grand Portage National Monument does not specifically mention or mandate a cultural demonstration program per se. It does, however, say that members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe shall be encouraged “in the production and sale of handicraft objects within the monument.”⁷⁴ This feature is not unique to Grand Portage National Monument; the NPS has provided for local American Indian craftwork and sales at numerous units in the National Park System. Wherever it has done so, the NPS has adhered to standards set by the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. The Indian Arts and Crafts Board was established in 1935 to protect authentic Indian arts and crafts from being driven out of existence by the mass production of imitations. The Indian Arts and Crafts Board had the broader aim of supporting cultural revitalization among American Indian tribes. This was a goal shared by the NPS wherever a unit such as Grand Portage National Monument had a close cultural affiliation with an American Indian tribe. As a result, cultural demonstration programs evolved in many units in the National Park System, all having the same goal of supporting native arts and crafts making, and allowing for their traditional manufacture to be part of the park’s interpretive program.⁷⁵

The program at Grand Portage was often accompanied by a note of ambivalence. There were concerns that the program was inauthentic, mirroring public wants and cultural

⁷³ Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001, ETIC; Neil interview.

⁷⁴ An Act to Provide for the Establishment of Grand Portage National Monument in the State of Minnesota, September 2, 1958, P.L. 85-910, 72 Stat. 1751.

⁷⁵ The cultural demonstration program at Pipestone National Monument, Minnesota, makes an interesting comparison with the one at Grand Portage, since it is in the same state and features the ancient pipestone quarry used by American Indian tribes in the making of sacred pipes. See Theodore Catton and Diane Krahe, *The Blood of the People: Historic Resource Study, Pipestone National Monument, Minnesota* (n.p.: National Park Service, 2016), 352-61, 392-97.

stereotypes rather than traditional Ojibwe lifeways. In the early years, male cultural demonstrators wore feathered headdresses of a type historically worn by some Plains Indian tribes but not Ojibwe. Site managers and other NPS officials questioned whether the making of arts and crafts was commercial or exploitative or gave the appearance of a commercial enterprise. Cultural demonstrators sometimes had similar qualms especially in later years. The program faded away in the early 2000s, but park managers maintained a goal thereafter of reviving the cultural demonstrations program in a new, modernized form. What that would look like remained to be seen.⁷⁶

The cultural demonstration program began experimentally in 1967 with one man demonstrating native craftwork in a wigwam that was built onsite and open to public entry. The experiment was not very successful as the cultural demonstrator chose to participate just four days out of the whole summer. However, it stimulated thought about the types of crafts that might be demonstrated and the raw materials and staging facilities that would be needed to launch a successful program, and most critically, the terms of employment for cultural demonstrators. Park historian Ross Hopkins wrote, “I do not think the program will work at all if the demonstrators are not paid a wage. This would have to be separate from any money they might receive from the sale of souvenir-type crafts.” The following season the park formally initiated a cultural demonstration program, employing several Grand Portage Ojibwe men and women at a GS-01 level.⁷⁷

Superintendent Perry described the activity of the nine women and one man who took part in the cultural demonstration program in 1974:

They make and sell handmade items such as beaded necklaces, pendants, bracelets, headbands, watchbands, and purses; dolls; toy birchbark canoes; wooden totems and hatchets; plus a few other items. These are made mostly on the monument grounds during working hours. The demonstrators are permitted to keep any profit they make on the items and are required to purchase their own materials and pay sales tax.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Neil interview; Cochrane interview; Hansen interview.

⁷⁷ Historian, Grand Portage to Regional Chief, Interpretation and Visitor Services, November 20, 1967, and Superintendent to Regional Director, April 9, 1974, GPNM, RG 1, Box 28, K18.

⁷⁸ Superintendent to Regional Director, April 9, 1974, GPNM, RG 1, Box 28, K18

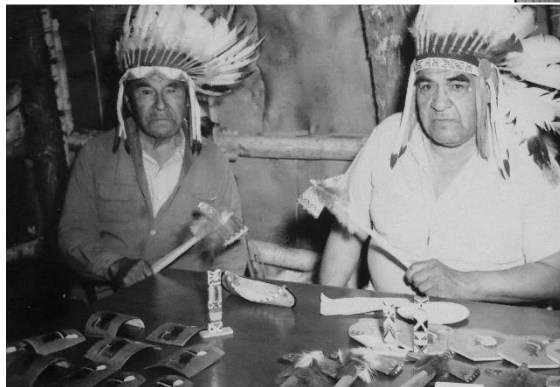
Interpretation



Mrs. Alex Posey, circa 1962. (GPNM, purple index series, No. 190.)



Cultural demonstrator Cecelia Hendrickson. (GPNM, purple index series, No. 31.)



Cultural demonstrators Alexander Bushman and John Flatte, July 1968. (Photo by William Bromberg, GPNM, Series C, No. 064.)



Wigwam used for cultural demonstrations, July 1968. (Photo by William Bromberg, GPNM, Series C, No. 084.)



Cultural demonstrators at work inside the wigwam. (Photo by William Bromberg, GPNM, Series C, No. 082.)

In 1976, there were still ten cultural demonstrators, evidently all women. They were primarily engaged in beadwork.⁷⁹

The number of cultural demonstrators employed each summer gradually declined. The superintendent’s annual report for 1980 listed five cultural demonstrators by name: Martha Bushman, Sophie Crawford, Ellen Olson, Rose Porter, and Liza Thibault. In 1982, these five returned and one more joined. In 1983, five returned from the previous year and there were two more. The superintendent’s annual report for that year noted difficulty in filling the positions. There were seven cultural demonstrators again in 1984 and 1985 and six in 1986. The number was not recorded again until the superintendent’s annual report in 1992 noted there were five. There were five again in 1993, then just three in 1995. Pam Neil remembered there were three cultural demonstrators when she joined the staff in 1999. Those three all retired over the next few years. Neil hired a few more cultural demonstrators after that, but none worked for more than a season or two. In the program’s last few years, the number of cultural demonstrators shrank from three to two to one, and the last person, Sharon Vogel, did not enjoy being the sole cultural demonstrator. It became a lonely job. Vogel’s last year may have been in 2005 or 2006, and then the program folded up.⁸⁰

The cultural demonstrators worked in multiple places. Initially they worked in the wigwam. The women worked in the ranger station in the early 1970s, then in one of the corner rooms in the rebuilt Great Hall, then in the Crawford cabin until it was removed, and finally back in the Great Hall again. Meanwhile, the few male band members who were hired as cultural demonstrators relocated from the wigwam to working in outside spaces or in the canoe warehouse.

Walter Caribou was a longtime cultural demonstrator who was stationed in the canoe warehouse and did woodcarving there. He made canoe paddles ranging from small ornamental ones to larger ones for use. He also made ricing sticks, diamond willow lamps, and other items. He loved to talk to visitors, telling them about the large Montreal canoe and shorter North canoes in the building. He also regaled visitors with stories of his life, such as how he had learned from an older brother how to collect ash wood for making snowshoes. He peppered his stories with self-deprecating humor and laughter. Caribou added “a richness of the Ojibway culture to the story of Grand Portage,” according to Tony Andersen,

⁷⁹ Operations Evaluation Report, Grand Portage National Monument, June 1976, GPNM, RG 1, Box 5, A54.

⁸⁰ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, HFC; Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1992, 1993, 1995, Neil interview.

Interpretation

superintendent in the 1980s. “In the present interpretive programs, the cultural demonstrator gives monument visitors the opportunity to visit and chat with representatives of the Indian culture that made the North West Company possible.”⁸¹

The predominantly female spaces always had a somewhat improvisational quality. Some thought the cultural demonstration room in the Great Hall was out of character with the historic scene. Others were critical of the “sale of demonstration items” signs. One NPS official thought the women’s handmade items ought to relate more closely to the fur trade story. Another suggested that Grand Portage should model its program after the one at Pipestone National Monument where cultural demonstrators (all male) worked in a specially designed, dignified space and product sales were handled through the cooperating association.⁸² More recently, doubts about the cultural demonstration program focused as much on the wage scale as the working conditions. The GS-01 pay grade was not very attractive when the reservation job market improved and the cost of living rose in the 1990s and 2000s. Another concern, which harkened back to the Native interpretation associated



Seasonal interpreter Robert Kroenig inside the canoe warehouse. (Authors photo.)

⁸¹ Virginia Danfelt, “Walter Caribou, Cultural Demonstrator at Grand Portage,” no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 29, K3415.

⁸² Committee on Federal Relations, Minnesota Historical Society to Ivan D. Miller, Superintendent, December 17, 1976, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18; Operations Evaluation Report, Grand Portage National Monument, June 1976, GPNM, RG 1, Box 5, A54.

with the Ojibwe Village, was that cultural demonstrators were inevitably subjected to racist attitudes on occasion.⁸³

Former Superintendent Cochrane, when interviewed for this study, remarked that the cultural demonstration program, currently in abeyance, would be good to bring back but it is a culturally sensitive issue.

We’re in a day and age where there’s less interest in having a Grand Portage elder standing up and talking to a white visitor about beading, or about tanning, or about.... There’s just less interest in that. And there’s less economic need. That is the other part of it.⁸⁴

Cochrane expected the program to continue and thrive when the Ojibwe Heritage Center was built. The round, skylit, cupola room in the center of the second floor was intended to serve as a “centerpiece of Ojibwe cultural demonstrations and exhibit gallery,” and to provide a “new and appropriate venue to educate visitors about the role of Ojibwe knowledge and technology in the North American fur trade.”⁸⁵



Mackinaw boat.
(GPNM.)

⁸³ Laurel Sanders, “Cultural Demonstration Programs, National Park System Units,” no date, GPNM.

⁸⁴ Cochrane interview.

⁸⁵ Operations Formulation System worksheet, March 7, 2005, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File 10FS.

Interpretation

When the cultural demonstration program ran out of cultural demonstrators around the time that the building was erected, park staff prepared a temporary static exhibit to stand in for the live cultural demonstrations. The exhibit presented the roots of the cultural demonstration program in the 1958 legislation and profiled many of the longtime cultural demonstrators through photographs and biographical information. The exhibit opened in 2011.⁸⁶

Around 2016, interpretive specialist Beth Drost prepared a project statement for a wintertime cultural demonstration program. The park organized a mitten-making class and a moccasin-making class. Drost's goal was to get parents and children working together to learn a new skill. Drost had eight mother-and-daughter or father-and-son pairs sign up for the two classes – “a great turnout” she said. “We were full.” Each person made a pair of mittens or moccasins during the class and received extra material with which to make more at home to give to someone else. The idea was to keep those traditional craft skills alive, and to honor the cultural tradition of “sharing what you make, or sharing what you get....passing down knowledge through the generations, and then passing it into the future.”⁸⁷

Superintendent Hansen stated in 2021 that he was hopeful that the cultural demonstration program would soon see a revival. He expected it would be a priority over the next few years. He emphasized that it would look different from what it had been in the past. It would need to flow from the Grand Portage Band's own cultural revitalization efforts. It might be oriented to a younger generation this time. Possibly it would feature new forms of studio art or performance art; perhaps it would reflect a fusion of traditional and modern influences. The NPS would assist with presentation, but the new forms of cultural activity would, of course, all come from the Band.⁸⁸

Hansen's appointment of Anna Deschampe to lead the interpretation division in April 2020 signaled that the park was truly invested in promoting cultural demonstrations again. Deschampe a proud member of the Grand Portage Band and daughter of the late Norman Deschampe, came to the NPS from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources where she served as park naturalist at Grand Portage State Park. She held a bachelor's degree in sociology and anthropology from St. Olaf College. While attending college in 2004 she did an internship and worked as a park interpretive ranger at the national

⁸⁶ Untitled memorandum on temporary exhibit for the second floor of the Heritage Center, no date, GPNM, CF in Superintendent's Office, File Ojibwe Heritage Program.

⁸⁷ Drost interview.

⁸⁸ Hansen interview.

monument. She contributed research to a white paper on cultural demonstration programs in other NPS units prepared by Laurel Sanders. Her research showed that cultural demonstration programs were still popular in the National Park System, with programs existing in at least twenty-three other units.⁸⁹ Deschampe said that her goals in taking the job with the NPS were to “work with a great team to broaden partnerships and respectfully gather the knowledge of current staff members, community, and band members to tell the story of Grand Portage.”⁹⁰



Seasonal interpreter
Sarah McGann.
(Authors photo.)

⁸⁹ Laurel Sanders, “Cultural Demonstration Programs, National Park System Units,” no date, GPNM. While this paper detailed how a variety of current programs were both viable and popular, it also brought out the fact that the former program at Grand Portage of employing cultural demonstrators at the GS-01 grade level and expecting modest craft sales to help incentivize the work was definitely outmoded and not a viable model anymore.

⁹⁰ “Anna Deschampe selected as new Chief of Interpretation of Grand Portage National Monument,” *Cook County News-Herald*, April 17, 2020.

Chapter Six

Resource and Visitor Protection

The national monument's first chief ranger was David G. Stimson, who came over from Isle Royale in 1960 a few months ahead of Superintendent Davis and was the first park manager on the ground at Grand Portage. Stimson left Grand Portage in 1961 to become superintendent of Capulin Volcano National Monument in New Mexico.¹

There were a total of eight chief rangers after Stimson. They were Edmund J. Bucknell (from 1961 to 1965), C. Newton Sikes (1965-1968), Robert J. Schumerth (1968-1970), Arnold Long (1970-1972), John Welsh (1972-1973), Michael Quick (1973-1977), Bernard Gestel (1977-1992), and Rick Yates (1992-1998).² The ranger division was generally a one-man show in the off season; then from June through early September, a number of seasonal employees joined the national monument staff. The number of seasonals went up and down a bit but held relatively steady at around twenty through the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. They were apportioned between the ranger division, the interpretive division, and the maintenance division. The ranger division was also called the "resource and visitor protection division." Ranger division personnel performed a variety of functions and specialized tasks directed at preventing harm to natural and cultural resources and ensuring visitor safety.

The national monument's last chief ranger was Rick Yates. After Yates transferred out, the chief ranger position was eliminated, and the ranger division was downsized to one permanent park ranger at a lower grade (GS 09 instead of GS 11) and one seasonal park ranger (GS 04/05). The switch left Grand Portage National Monument without a supervisory or chief ranger, but it was found that the national monument could get along without one.

¹ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 131.

² Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 132-136, Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1973-1998, HFC and ETIC.

The cost savings from downsizing the ranger division allowed the national monument to add a resource manager position and establish a separate division of resource management.³

In staffing the unit with the most advantageous array of positions, the chief ranger position became problematic long before 1998. The national monument had a personnel management evaluation performed in 1986. At that time, the national monument was found to be “overstaffed.” It had two positions in the GS-09 Park Ranger, Division Chief classification: a chief ranger and a chief interpreter. The evaluator recommended that “a move to consolidate these two positions into one would be both efficient and cost-effective.” The evaluator based his opinion on the fact that Grand Portage National Monument was a seasonal operation with relatively small visitation. “Many parks within the Midwest Region, some with year around operations of identical staff size, effectively operate with one GS-09 Division Chief to cover both program areas (Interpretation and Resource Management),” the evaluator wrote. Superintendent Einwalter apparently disagreed and resisted the move.⁴

While it was true that Grand Portage National Monument was essentially a small unit at 710 acres and well under 100,000 annual visitors, it differed from many other small



The Pigeon River where it flows past the Fort Charlotte site. The Fort Charlotte District gives the national monument a component of backcountry management. (Authors photo.)

³ Cochrane interview; Dave Cooper interview by Theodore Catton, October 1, 2021; Grand Portage National Monument Organization Chart, 1998, GPNM, CF, A6427. The GS-09 park ranger was Jon Sage. Though he had a law enforcement commission, he did not have the required paygrade to head a ranger division, so technically Sage reported to the chief ranger at St. Croix National Scenic River who reported to Cochrane. This arrangement worked because Sage knew the chief ranger and Cochrane knew the superintendent at St. Croix. When Sage retired, Grand Portage had one more law enforcement ranger for a few years and then the position was vacated.

⁴ Earl Carnagey, “Personnel Management Evaluation, Grand Portage National Monument, Midwest Region, Grand Marais, Minnesota,” October 5-9, 1986, GPNM, RG 1, Box 5, A5427

units in important ways. While park operations necessarily focused on the stockade area, the national monument included a backcountry component replete with a remote campsite and several miles of hiking trail. So, there was backcountry management albeit in small quantity. And with the park's linear segment along the Grand Portage Trail, park operations also



Mushrooms on Grand Portage Trail. (Authors photo.)

included forest management and wildland fire management. And, if park visitation was essentially seasonal, the ranger division did have to keep a winter watch on the park, monitoring such things as snowmobile use across park land and winter storm damage along the lakeshore. Another feature of Grand Portage National Monument that complicated park operations was the fact that park headquarters was located thirty-eight miles from the national monument. All of these factors must have contributed to Einwalter's decision to hang onto the chief ranger position.

Six years after the personnel management evaluation was performed, Grand Portage's chief ranger position was reclassified as GS-11 Chief Ranger. Rick Yates was hired, replacing Bernard Gestel, who retired in 1992 after fifteen years at the head of Grand Portage's ranger division. Gestel, a Minnesota native, had worked his whole NPS career as a ranger at three Lake Superior parks: Pictured Rocks, Isle Royale, and finally Grand Portage. While Yates brought a more diverse experience and a higher level of law enforcement training to the job, it was soon evident that he represented more law enforcement capability than the national monument needed.⁵

After the ranger division was downgraded in 1998, ranger division personnel continued to provide resource and visitor protection in the traditional areas of trail management and backcountry management, while the new resource division took over responsibility for other areas of natural and cultural resource management. This chapter focuses on those traditional ranger activities such as visitor protection, law enforcement, and backcountry management. Chapters Seven and Eight will cover the park's decades-long involvement with cultural and natural resource management (which, with the exception of

⁵ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1992, ETIC; Grand Portage National Monument, Staff Meeting Minutes, September 29, 1992, October 19, 1993, and March 1, 1994, GPNM, CF, A4031.

archeology and historical research, was pretty rudimentary before the establishment of the resource management division in 1998.)

Visitor Protection

The chief ranger and seasonal protection rangers were responsible for the safety of visitors and employees. The rangers addressed safety hazards around the construction site when the historic reconstructions were built. They monitored hazardous material storage and disposition. They advised visitors on canoe safety. Sometimes, as in 1989, the rangers underwent training in cardiac pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). In most years, the park logged a perfect safety record in which there were no “lost time accidents” among employees and no tort claims by visitors. In 1987, Bernard Gestel received recognition as Midwest Region safety employee of the year. In 1989, park secretary Karen Evens, serving as head of the park’s safety committee, was honored with the same award.⁶

Search and Rescue

With its small amount of backcountry, Grand Portage had few search and rescue incidents. In 1982, park personnel in the maintenance and protection divisions received training in how to rescue and evacuate persons stranded on rocky cliffs. In 1986, park rangers teamed with other agency staff in the emergency evacuation of a boy from the Fort Charlotte backcountry campsite after the boy received serious burns.

A four-day search was conducted for a missing person in early October 1989. The individual, James G. Swanson, was camped with a companion, Arlan P. Dohrenburg, at Fort Charlotte on the evening of October 4, when Swanson disappeared while taking photographs along the cliff area of the Pigeon River known as the Cascades. Dohrenburg reported Swanson’s disappearance to park ranger Don Carney at the stockade area at about 2:30 in the afternoon on October 5. Carney notified the Grand Portage Reservation game warden and the Cook County Sheriff’s Office. An initial search was conducted in the waning daylight hours of October 5 by the game warden and local volunteers using all-terrain vehicles. A full-scale search was organized on October 6 that included seven members of the national monument staff. The intensive search effort also included the Minnesota Search and Rescue Dog Association, the Cook County Sheriff’s Office, Lakehead Search and Rescue (SAR),

⁶ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1972, 1979, 1984, 1987, 1989, 1990, HFC.

and the Minnesota State Police. The last two organizations flew aircraft over the area. Altogether about forty people took part in the field. When Swanson was not found, the matter was turned over to the Cook County Sheriff's Office and the Duluth Police Department.⁷

A month later, on November 11, 1989, Swanson's body was spotted in the Pigeon River gorge caught in a logjam about one hundred yards downstream from cliffs on the American side of the river. The following day, a team was assembled to recover the body. The operation involved climbing down to the location, securing the body with rope so it would not be swept away, and then removing it by helicopter to Partridge Falls where it was transported by vehicle to a hospital in Grand Marais for medical examination. Park rangers participated in the operation together with Cook County Sheriff's Office deputies, the Cook County SAR unit, Lakehead SAR, and volunteer climbers from Canada and the United States. The Minnesota State Patrol provided the helicopter. This incident stands as the only SAR incident of its kind at Grand Portage.⁸

Fire Prevention and Suppression

The chief ranger made an annual fire and safety inspection of all buildings and was responsible for keeping the park's fire plans current. Park personnel periodically received training in structural fire suppression. Now and then the chief ranger or the protection rangers participated in joint wildfire training with the BIA or the Forest Service. Sometimes Grand Portage rangers were called off to fight fires in other parts of the country. Grand Portage National Monument has not yet had a wildfire anywhere in the Grand Portage Trail corridor, but the lightning-caused structural fire in 1969 was devastating.⁹

In 1977, the NPS installed a Halon 1301 fire suppression system in the Great Hall and kitchen building. At that time, Halon gas fire suppression systems were considered state-of-the-art for protecting valuable assets such as historic buildings and museums where water suppression would result in unacceptable water damage. Fire Watch, Inc. of St. Paul installed the protective equipment, which included gas tanks and lines and spray nozzles that were recessed discreetly into the ceiling of the Great Hall, as well as mobile fire extinguishers in cabinets. Unfortunately, just a few years after the system was installed

⁷ Jon Sage, Case Incident Record, October 14, 1989, and Richard Hoaglund to Dean Einwalter, November 21, 1989, GPNM, CF, L2621.

⁸ Bernard J. Gestel, Supplemental Case Incident Record, GPNM, CF, L2621.

⁹ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1974, 1979, 1980, HFC.

Halon gas was found to be corrosive to the Earth’s ozone layer and the fire suppression system fell out of favor. Halon gas was not only bad for the environment, it became hard to procure when new installations ended in the United States in the 1980s. Nevertheless, the system remained at least partly operational until 1994 and was not completely removed until 2004.¹⁰

Besides the disenchantment with Halon gas, the Grand Portage staff also had to contend with false alarms and accidental gas discharges. In the first six months of 1997 alone there were three accidental discharges that completely emptied the tanks. When the tanks emptied, they were expensive to refill. When the fireplace in the kitchen building was first put to use there were chimney fires that set off the system. Apparently, too, the winds coming down off Mount Rose could cause a backdraft in the chimney that would trigger the fire suppression system when there was no real fire danger. The rangers tinkered with timers and other workarounds to cope with the malfunctioning system.¹¹

With the completion of a 100,000-gallon water storage tank in 1982, the park installed fire hydrants in the vicinity of the historic buildings. Grand Portage National Monument entered a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Grand Portage Fire Department in 1985. The basic plan for suppressing a fire then revolved around bringing up a fire truck with a qualified fire crew, which would have the assistance of park staff. The superintendent or a designated representative would serve in guiding the fire crew to adhere to the NPS’s unique fire-fighting procedures around protection of resources. The MOU was renewed every five years.¹²

A new fire suppression system using overhead water sprinklers was installed in the Great Hall, the kitchen, and the canoe warehouse in 2004. The Halon gas system was finally removed. The \$200,000 project was financed through fee demonstration project funds.¹³

¹⁰ Staff Museum Curator to Associate Regional Director for Operations, Midwest Region, August 17, 1977, GPNM, RG 1, Box 18, D50; J. W. Farrel to Dean C. Einwalter, August 10, 1994, GPNM, CF, Y14; Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 2004, ETIC.

¹¹ Superintendent to Files, November 11, 1977, Bernie Gestel to Files, April 26 and July 12, 1983, and Supervisory Park Ranger to Superintendent, September 7, 1984, GPNM, RG 1, Box 18, D50; Contractor, Collections Management Plan to Acting Superintendent, June 30, 1997, GPNM, CF, H26.

¹² Grand Portage Reservation Business Committee, Resolution No. 8-83, and Memorandum of Understanding, February 1985, GPNM, RG 1, Box 4, A44; Memorandum of Understanding between Reservation Business Committee (Grand Portage Fire Department) and Grand Portage National Monument, February 1992, GPNM, CF, A44.

¹³ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 2004, ETIC.

Visitor Counting

Protection rangers were responsible for gathering data on park visitation. Usually a park technician performed the task of recording visits in a monthly public-use report. Numerous such examples are preserved in the park's museum collection. The data were compiled by various methods: direct observation, an electric-eye counter at the stockade gate, car counters where cars entered the parking lot, trail registrations, backcountry-use permits, and counts of visitors taking the boat to Isle Royale. Of course, every method carried the risk of undercounting or overcounting.¹⁴

A memo from Superintendent Cochrane to lead park ranger Jon Sage about counting visitors is suggestive of how much guesswork and care had to go into counting visitors. There were no fewer than nine parameters involved in summing each year's official visitation tally. One was counting the number of visitors who used the Grand Portage Trail. "The Portage count is perhaps the most troubling," Cochrane wrote, "because we have a very low level of compliance in signing in." Cochrane thought the park was counting only



Visitors embark from the dock in replica birchbark canoes, June 27, 1971. (Photo by Lewis Koue, GPNM, purple index series, No. 14.)

¹⁴ Monthly Public Use Reports are in GPNM, RG 1, Box 1, A2615.

about one in six visitors. Cochrane suggested taking the trail registration data and multiplying it by six.¹⁵

Another problem area for counting visitors at Grand Portage National Monument was whether or not to count visitors who went to Isle Royale via Grand Portage. Although most of those boat passengers were to all intents and purposes visitors to Isle Royale rather than Grand Portage, they did park their car in the lot and boarded the *Wenonah* from the national monument boat dock. Many sought information about Isle Royale from the national monument staff. The general policy was to count those visitors until the boat service began running out of the Hat Point marina. Even after that, the Heritage Center continued to field lots of questions from people on their way to Isle Royale.

Visitation data were important for observing trends and justifying new staff positions and increases in the park’s base operating budget. Indeed, Grand Portage’s generally low visitation – largely attributable to its geographically remote location – tended to frame Congress’s and the NPS leadership’s view of the park. Visitation data were analyzed and summarized in the Statement for Management, which was periodically updated.¹⁶

Traditionally, visitation to Grand Portage was highly seasonal, with around 90 percent of annual visitation occurring in June through September. Peak visitation consistently fell in the second week of August during Rendezvous Days. Over 60 percent of annual visitation occurred in July and August, with a rapid fall-off in the last week of August. Nearly half of visitors originated in Minnesota, and about one-fifth in the Twin Cities.¹⁷

One important variable in the visitation pattern was how many Canadians came to Grand Portage each year. The number fluctuated due to a variety of factors: gas prices in both countries, the monetary exchange rate, the local attraction of the casino at Grand Portage and another one over the border in Thunder Bay, operations at Fort William since it was an analogous historic site to Grand Portage, and closure of the international border in the pandemic that began in 2020.

¹⁵ Tim Cochrane to Jon Sage (email), September 27, 2004, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File: “Counting Visitors.”

¹⁶ Statements for Management for 1977 and 1987 are in GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18. Statement for Management for 1992 is in GPNM, CF, D18.

¹⁷ Statement for Management, 1987, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

The traditional pattern of visitation was likely to change under the influence of a warming climate. Prognosticators anticipated that the shoulder seasons, becoming milder, would see an increase in visitation, which would potentially put pressure on the park to lengthen the time when seasonal staff were present.¹⁸

Law Enforcement

Protection rangers exercised proprietary jurisdiction at Grand Portage National Monument and issued citations for everything from felony and misdemeanor crimes that were committed on park premises to park violations like camping without a permit. Fortunately, felony crimes were extremely rare. There was an assault of a park employee in one of the NPS seasonal employee housing units in 1984. There were a few cases of drug interdiction. There was a case of arson to private property in 1983. Much more often, the year passed without any incidents of major crime. Lesser crimes such as auto larceny and vandalism were recorded as case incidents. There were sixty-four case incidents in 1992, possibly a record high number for the national monument. Often the number was around forty. A large fraction of case incidents – perhaps a third – involved vandalism of government property. Superintendent Cochrane claimed that the amount of petty crime fell off when relations between the NPS and the Grand Portage Band improved. “Once the community understood that we were part of the fabric here, then the petty larceny and spray painting and that became very, very rare,” he said.¹⁹

In the early 1970s, auto larceny in the parking lot for the Isle Royale ferry was prevalent. The value of reported stolen items exceeded \$1000 in 1970 and 1971. That became the impetus to start a concession for a parking lot attendant service. The NPS contracted with the Grand Portage Band for a lot manager, and the national monument managed the concession permit. The concession largely solved the auto larceny problem, although it did not completely go away.²⁰

¹⁸ National Park Service, “Recent Climate Change Exposure of Grand Portage National Monument” (resource brief), 2014, at <http://npshistory.com/publications/grpo/rb-climate-change-2014.pdf>; National Park Service, “Grand Portage National Monument: How might future warming alter visitation?” (resource brief), 2015, at <http://npshistory.com/publications/grpo/pb-climate-change-2016.pdf>.

¹⁹ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1983, 1984, HFC; Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1992, ETIC; Cochrane interview.

²⁰ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1972, HFC.

Law enforcement at Grand Portage was hindered by the separation of headquarters from the national monument. The chief ranger worked in Grand Marais and generally went to Grand Portage only for specific tasks, such as a safety inspection. Seasonal protection rangers provided a measure of law enforcement presence on national monument lands, but the presence was minimal. In the wintertime, the chief ranger might do an occasional patrol of the stockade area or the Grand Portage Trail to check on snowmobile use and other winter activity.



While the Grand Portage Trail is an important park resource, it receives a relatively small amount of visitor use. Park rangers have patrolled the 8.5-mile Grand Portage Trail intermittently. (Photo by Robert J. Riley, June 21, 1965, GPNM, Series V, No. 055.)

Law enforcement generally focused on the stockade area where visitors and park assets were concentrated. Intermittently, the park scheduled foot patrols of the Grand Portage Trail, but diverting law enforcement to that little-used section of the park was questionable. In 1976, the park experimented with making a daily foot patrol of the entire trail – a seventeen-mile roundtrip. Even with the rise in backcountry use in the 1970s, however, an operations evaluation team recommended that the practice be discontinued because the work hours could be used more effectively elsewhere.²¹

In 1985, lead park ranger Craig Sheldon, who had become a permanent staff member, completed the basic law enforcement training course at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in the spring and occupied the new ranger residence, the

²¹ Operations Evaluation Report, Grand Portage National Monument, June 1976, GPNM, RG 1, Box 5, A54.

renovated Spry House. The superintendent reported: “Having this commissioned ranger living at the monument has increased the protection of the site throughout the year.”²²

Law enforcement training usually took forty hours or more of the ranger’s time each year. In-service training programs included firearms training. Bernard Gestel, who served as chief ranger from 1977 to 1992, earned his law enforcement commission in 1981.²³

Protection rangers aided U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents by providing boat inspections when boats crossed the international border and docked at the national monument. Protection rangers made around twenty boat inspections per year in the early 1980s when the program was initiated. The number of boat inspections declined to around a half dozen a year by the end of the decade.²⁴

The national monument entered a memorandum of understanding with the Cook County Sheriff’s Department in 1985. Article II of the MOU stated that “the Cook County Sheriff’s Department will have full authority to enforce state civil and criminal statutes within the National Monument, according to authority granted by state and federal law.” At the same time, it held that “National Park Service Law Enforcement Rangers will have the authority to enforce all applicable federal laws and regulations to maintain law and order, protect persons, and their property and protect park resources within the National Monument.” These terms were consistent with the national monument’s proprietary jurisdiction. The MOU provided for backup. It was routine, but it was significant because the Cook County Sheriff’s Department took on a larger role several years later.²⁵

For a while, in the 1990s, Grand Portage had two commissioned law enforcement rangers: chief ranger Rick Yates and park ranger Jon Sage. When Yates left and the chief ranger position was eliminated, that left Sage acting alone in the law enforcement capacity. Law enforcement always functioned better when there was a team and a ranger could call for backup if needed. So, the situation for the single remaining law enforcement ranger was less than ideal. After Sage retired, Grand Portage had one more GS-09 law enforcement ranger. When that person transferred out, Cochrane tried an alternative approach to law enforcement. He contracted with the Cook County Sheriff’s Department to provide a law enforcement presence at the national monument. By the terms of the contract, the Sheriff’s

²² Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1985, HFC; Superintendent to Friends of Grand Portage, January 17, 1985, GPNM, RG 1, Box 3, A38.

²³ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1981, HFC.

²⁴ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1981, 1982, 1987, HFC.

²⁵ Memorandum of Understanding between National Park Service and Cook County Sheriff’s Department, April 30, 1985, GPNM, RG 1, Box 4, A44

Department would assign one seasonal sheriff’s deputy to patrol the national monument over a six-month period from late spring to late fall. Renewed periodically, the contract continued while Craig Hansen was superintendent. The contract was the first of its kind in the NPS Midwest Region. It was regarded skeptically by the NPS law enforcement community, because now there was no one on hand with specialized training to enforce resource protection laws like the Archeological Resources Protection Act, for example. But the arrangement lasted through a dozen years and more without any major problems.²⁶

Backcountry Management

At 710 acres, Grand Portage National Monument fell far short of the 5,000-acre minimum-size parameter for Wilderness Area designation under the Wilderness Act. Nonetheless, the Fort Charlotte end of the Grand Portage Trail corridor served as a portal to one of the premier wilderness areas in the United States, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. That meant the area received a fair amount of recreational use and ranked high in wilderness values (with a lower case “w”). Moreover, protection of the area’s wilderness values doubled as protection for its historical values associated with the Fort Charlotte site and the Grand Portage Trail.²⁷

The Fort Charlotte District

In the 1960s, the national monument maintained a wilderness-type campground near the Fort Charlotte site. Protection rangers monitored its use. As the popularity of wilderness recreation and canoe trips increased, the campground began to show signs of overuse. In the fall of 1972, rangers relocated the campground.

Around this time the NPS introduced its first backcountry management plans in many national parks where fragile backcountry areas were being “loved to death.” Shorelines around subalpine lakes were particularly susceptible to damage from excessive trampling, erosion, soil compaction, and vegetation loss. While the Fort Charlotte area was not a subalpine environment, the edge of the Pigeon River at that spot was classically vulnerable to despoliation in the same way that popular subalpine lakes in Mount Rainier, Glacier, or Grand Teton National Parks were vulnerable. The riverbank was a fragile area,

²⁶ Memorandum of Understanding between the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service and the Cook County Sheriff’s Department, Minnesota, Regarding Law Enforcement Assistance, 2009, GPNM, CF, W2621; Hansen interview; Cooper interview.

²⁷ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1972, HFC.

and wherever people landed their canoes or pitched their camps the soil and vegetation were easily impacted. Accordingly, Grand Portage National Monument prepared its own backcountry management plan in 1973 to protect the area from overuse.

The backcountry management plan stipulated to several new restrictive measures. Camping was limited to one area with two designated sites, each with one firepit. Each site had a ten-person limit per night. A permit system was instituted, with permits issued at the Great Hall by backcountry patrol rangers. The plan called for those rangers to spend one third of their workweek doing backcountry patrol to check that wilderness users were following guidelines and to perform ecological monitoring. The ecological monitoring followed new backcountry management procedures that the NPS was developing in that period around recreational carrying capacity and so-called limits of acceptable change.²⁸

Wilderness users were also expected to adhere to so-called “leave-no-trace” norms, which had become standard in the 1960s. All non-burnable garbage had to be packed out. All firewood had to be collected from dead and down material, and all campfires had to be in the firepits provided.²⁹

Violators could be fined. Park ranger Bruce C. Lupfer issued citations to a camping party for camping at the Fort Charlotte site without a permit, building a campfire outside of the designated pit, cutting down green saplings with which the party made its own bench seats, and leaving these items behind when they left. Altogether, Lupfer found the group in violation of four sections of the Chapter 36 Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR), all aimed at enforcement of leave-no-trace camping ethics. The total fine for all four violations was \$175.³⁰

Once backcountry campers were required to register for a permit, the park got a better handle on backcountry-use trends. The level of use increased through the 1970s. There were 621 registered campers in 1978, possibly an all-time high as the number fell by nearly half in 1979 and leveled off at 465 in 1980.³¹ In response to the growing use, rangers relocated the pair of campsites again in 1974. When ecological monitoring revealed that the area was still getting degraded, the park decided on a more drastic move. Following

²⁸ “Plan in Brief,” no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 34, N2215.

²⁹ Ibid. See also James Morton Turner, “From Woodcraft to ‘Leave No Trace’: Wilderness, Consumerism, and Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America,” *Environmental History* 7, no. 3 (July 2002), 462-84.

³⁰ Bruce C. Lupfer to Fred Rolstad, Jr., August 26, 1987, GPNM, RG 1, Box 36, W3415.

³¹ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1978, 1979, 1980, HFC. In 2015, there were 400 to 500 registered trail users, not all of whom camped. (Foundation Document, p. 23.)

archeological investigations to determine the location of historic Fort Charlotte, the dual campsite was moved 150 meters to the north. The existing pit toilet and firepits were removed and the ground was prepared for revegetation. At the new site about one hundred square meters of vegetation was cleared (which included the removal of six mature trees) and a new pit toilet and two new firepits were installed. A new canoe landing site was designated.³²

Superintendent Andersen took a keen interest in backcountry management. Under his watch from 1981 to 1986, the Fort Charlotte campsite saw further improvements. The canoe landing site was hardened as were many sections of the Grand Portage Trail.³³

The U.S. Border Patrol thought that the shallow riverbed at the Fort Charlotte site and the Grand Portage Trail from time to time attracted drug smugglers in search of a good border crossing route. Superintendent Einwalter asked for nighttime electronic sensing equipment to monitor for that activity. It is not clear if any such equipment was ever installed.³⁴

From the 1990s onward, the national monument continued to manage its Fort Charlotte District with occasional ranger patrols and ecological monitoring. Even though backcountry use appeared to taper off, the pit toilet still had to be moved from time to time, and hazardous trees had to be taken down.³⁵ In 2011, the Fort Charlotte campsite still had a



The Fort Charlotte backcountry campsite in 2021. Tent platforms are in the bottom left and beyond the tables. (Authors photo.)

“beat up” look, according to a park assessment. Furthermore, the fact that campers literally camped on top of an archeological site seemed increasingly anomalous. Superintendent Cochrane lined up another archeological project in 2009 to give backcountry managers a clearer picture of archeological site boundaries. Then, in 2011, the camping area was once again relocated and rebuilt, this time substituting raised tent platforms for earthen

³² Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1974, 1978, 1979, 1980, HFC; Regional Director to Central Files, September 26, 1980, GPNM, RG 1, Box 26, H42.

³³ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1984, 1985, HFC.

³⁴ Superintendent to Regional Director, March 28, 1991, GPNM, RG 1, Box 36, W34.

³⁵ Environmental Screening Form, December 7, 2009, GPNM, CF, H4217.

ones. Interpretive exhibits were also installed for the dual purpose of educating visitors and soliciting their cooperation in preserving the archeology.³⁶

Hardening the Grand Portage Trail

The 8.5-mile Grand Portage Trail crosses streams and passes through boggy areas, making it a difficult trail to maintain. Over the years, protection rangers hardened the trail with extensive bridging and planking. There seems to have been two main efforts, the first in the mid 1980s when Superintendent Andersen had planking laid down over many miles of trail tread, and the second in 2009 when much of the original planking had rotted and needed replacement. In the latter effort to harden the trail, the project called for 608 linear feet of boardwalk. The original cedar planks and cross members were replaced by sixteen-foot lengths of four-by-twelve-inch pressure-



Boardwalk and wayside, Grand Portage Trail. (Authors photo.)

treated Douglas fir planks and eight-inch diameter cedar supports. The improvements included a length of boardwalk over a beaver pond and staircases descending to Poplar Creek, as well as reinforcement of the riverbank at the Fort Charlotte site.³⁷

Snowmobile Use

As backcountry camping and canoeing took hold in the 1960s, so too did two new forms of winter recreation: cross-country skiing and snowmobiling. In Minnesota, snowmobiling quickly gained popularity, with 200,000 snowmobiles registered in the state by 1972.³⁸ Cross-country skiing had a longer tradition in the state, with Minnesota high schools recognizing Nordic skiing as a team sport as early as the 1930s, but it was in the

³⁶ Tim Cochrane to Brandon Seitz (email), January 3, 2011, GPNM, CF in Superintendent's Office, File: "Fort Charlotte."

³⁷ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1983, 1984, 1985, HFC; Model Form for Assessment of Actions Having an Effect on Cultural Resources (Project Name: Replace Boardwalk Planks), prepared by David Cooper, May 1, 2009, GPNM, CF, H4217.

³⁸ Arnold J. Long to Dr. Robert Linn, January 6, 1972, GPNM, RG 1, Box 33, L34.

1960s and 1970s that cross-country skiing became widely popular. Clubs formed and groomed trail systems started to appear.

Snowmobile users and cross-country skiers clashed – especially in protected areas like national parks where the latter group sought nature enjoyment as well as outdoor recreation. The noise and fumes caused by snowmobiles offended the sensibilities of cross-country skiers, who were usually in search of a quiet, contemplative experience. Furthermore, snowmobiles obliterated the useful parallel tracks laid down in the snow by skiers. People who thought snowmobile use was inappropriate in a national park setting also pointed out that the machines were perfectly capable of going off-road (in violation of wilderness regulations), and that their loud two-stroke engines probably stressed wildlife at a time of year when most animals were struggling to survive.³⁹ People who took a benign view of snowmobiles, on the other hand, pointed out that the machines gave the winter recreationist an opportunity to travel over unplowed backroads and enjoy spectacular winter scenery.

Public sentiment against recreational snowmobile use built during the early 1970s. President Nixon issued Executive Order 11644, which directed agency heads to develop regulations to govern off-road vehicle use on public lands. Two years later, in 1974, the NPS promulgated 36 CFR 2.34, which closed all National Park System areas to snowmobile use except on designated routes. Such designated routes had to be opened by public notice in the *Federal Register*. Superintendent Ivan Miller was not in favor of designating any routes, so snowmobile use was effectively prohibited in the national monument.⁴⁰

In 1976, the Grand Portage Band proposed to develop a snowmobile trail in the northern sector of the reservation, crossing the Grand Portage Trail near the Fort Charlotte site. Since Section 7 of the 1958 establishing act made allowance for members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe to traverse the trail, Miller informed the Band’s Curtis Gagnon that he would authorize construction of the snowmobile trail across the Grand Portage Trail at the specified point, reminding Gagnon of the park’s “deep concern for any potential effects or damage that may result to the Grand Portage Trail and the Fort Charlotte vicinity.” Essentially, the park’s consenting to the snowmobile trail crossing was analogous to the

³⁹ Malcolm F. Baldwin, “The Snowmobile & Environmental Quality,” *Trends* 6, no. 2 (April 1970), 15-17.

⁴⁰ Environmental Assessment, Snowmobile Use, Grand Portage National Monument, no date, GPNM, RG 1, Box 36, W46. See also Michael J. Yochim, “Snow Machines in the Gardens: The History of Snowmobiles in Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 53, no. 3 (Autumn 2003), 4.

park's consenting to a logging road crossing: in both cases it had little choice in the matter but saw the winter condition of snow cover as a major mitigating factor that would tend to protect the resources.⁴¹

In 1978, the Grand Portage Band asked the NPS for permission to run a snow groomer on the Grand Portage Trail. This would amount to use of a snowmobile for the purpose of towing a unit that would groom the trail for cross-country ski use. It would be just one vehicle making one pass, but it would repeat the pass whenever the trail needed grooming again. Consistent with NPS policy, chief ranger Norman D. Hellmers replied to the Band that the park could not grant that request.⁴²

In 1982, the NPS came under pressure by the Reagan administration and the snowmobile industry to relax its snowmobile policy. Superintendent Andersen and chief ranger Gestel prepared new snowmobile regulations for Grand Portage National Monument. They prepared an environmental assessment, put a notice of the new rule in the *Federal Register*, gave the public thirty days in May to comment, and announced the new rule effective on November 11, 1982. The rule named five designated routes where snowmobile use was permitted. They included two logging roads, an abandoned road, a trail, and a powerline right-of-way where each one crossed the Grand Portage Trail. The rule had the effect of opening up snowmobile routes on the reservation that crossed the historic trail for use not only by tribal members but by the general public as well. A comment letter from the National Snowmobile Industry Association approved of this rulemaking, saying that it “would allow people of all ages to enjoy the area in winter, just as they are able to enjoy it in other seasons. In fact, encouraging such winter use of this national monument is in keeping with the Park Service’s commitment to increase wintertime enjoyment of its parks.”⁴³

In 1998, Grand Portage National Monument once again came under pressure to allow a new level of snowmobile use. This time the pressure came from the Band and the Minnesota DNR as the latter sought to build a recreational snowmobile trail from Duluth up the lakeshore as far as the Grand Portage Indian Reservation boundary. The Grand Portage Band proposed to build the last link to the Canadian border. Proponents of the trail project

⁴¹ Superintendent to File D30 Grand Portage Trail, October 12, 1976, and Ivan D. Miller to Curtis Gagnon, October 14, 1976, GPNM, RG 1, Box 13, D30.

⁴² Norman D. Hellmers to Files, August 9, 1978, GPNM, RG 1, Box 13, D30.

⁴³ National Park Service, “Grand Portage National Monument Snowmobile Regulations” (news release), no date, Regional Director to Associate Director (with attachment), August 3, 1982, and Roy W. Muth, Executive Vice President, National Snowmobile Industry Association to Superintendent, May 24, 1982, GPNM, RG 1, Box 36, W46.

anticipated that as many as 8,000 to 12,000 snowmobilers would ride the trail each year. Many North Shore residents opposed the development on grounds that it would disturb wildlife and the peace and quiet they so valued. A lawsuit was brought against it, and Superintendent Cochrane was called to testify. Cochrane’s testimony against this development, though narrowly focused on how it would impact the national monument, was nonetheless viewed as a key piece in halting the development.⁴⁴ The North Shore State Trail did get built eventually, but only as far as Grand Marais.

When the threat of that large-scale winter recreation development receded, snowmobile use within the national monument settled into more of a local matter. Cochrane guessed that approximately 100 snowmobilers crossed the Grand Portage Trail on designated routes each month. The use was almost exclusively by members of the Band. Indeed, there were residents in the village who commuted to work at the Grand Portage Lodge and Casino by snowmobile, passing by the stockade area as they went to and from their job. Given the nature of the snowmobile use, the national monument made little effort to manage it. Winter patrols looked for illegal use of snowmobiles in restricted areas of the park. Telltale tracks showed that snowmobilers would sometimes pass through the historic area where they were not supposed to go. Sometimes the park put up temporary snow fencing to discourage it.⁴⁵

On direction from the Washington Office, the park monitored the level of snowmobile use in the national monument in the winter of 2000-2001. Snowmobiles were counted both by visual observation and traffic counter at selected times and locations, and then a total count was extrapolated from the sampling data. The total count came to 598 over a one-month period, which was considerably more than Cochrane had guessed, but still a lot less than what was present in other National Park System units in the Great Lakes region. If Grand Portage had 2,400 snowmobilers over a four-month winter season, that was one-sixth the volume of use at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, for example. Cochrane’s sense was that Grand Portage National Monument did not have a problem of excessive snowmobile use.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ “September decision due on North Shore Snowmobile,” *Cook County News-Herald*, June 15, 1998; Cochrane interview.

⁴⁵ Superintendent to Associate Director, Park Operations and Education, Washington Office, January 26, 2000, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant’s Office, File: “Reading Files 2000.”

⁴⁶ Suzanne Gucciardo to Tim Cochrane, April 27, 2000, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant’s Office, File: “Snowmobile Monitoring.” The monitoring continued through the winter of 2002-03.

Chapter Seven

Cultural Resource Management

Since 1999, the cultural resource management program has been under the direction of the national monument's resource manager. Two professional archeologists have held the resource manager position: David Cooper from 1999 to 2011, and William Clayton since 2011. Both men were recruited by Superintendent Cochrane from outside the NPS. Cooper, an expert in underwater archeology, came into the NPS from the Wisconsin State Archeologist's Office. Clayton, a former Forest Service archeologist on the Superior National Forest, came with professional training in heritage management and managerial experience with the specialized team carpentry involved in historic preservation.¹

Prior to 1999, the national monument did not have a formal cultural resource management program. In the national monument's first four decades of administration from 1960 to 1999, the historian or chief interpretive ranger performed historical research or cultural resource management as a collateral duty of heading up the interpretive program. The national monument's first historian, Robert J. Riley, who was on staff from 1962 to 1966, did yeoman service in founding the library and researching two history reports as well as writing the first interpretive prospectus. There were three park historians over the next decade and no historian on staff after 1975. Two supervisory park rangers, Norman Hellmers and Donald Carney, provided minimal cultural resource management oversight while heading up the interpretive program from 1975 to 1982 and from 1982 to 1990, respectively. Myra Dec, chief of interpretation in the mid-1990s, held a bachelor's degree in archeology and got her first job in the NPS as an archeologist, but by the time she came to Grand Portage she had found her career path in interpretation and that was her focus at Grand Portage.²

Prior to Cooper and Clayton, the experts who provided the most direction on cultural resource management were people in positions outside the national monument staff. Alan R.

¹ Cooper interview; Clayton interview.

² Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 131-37; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1975 to 1999, HFC and ETIC; Foster interview.

Woolworth, archeologist with the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS), was the national monument’s de facto lead archeologist for many years, serving as principal investigator on numerous projects from the early 1960s to the 1980s and as a senior consultant on into the 1990s. Woolworth’s extensive work for Grand Portage is summarized in Vergil E. Noble’s 1989 report, “An Archeological Survey of Development Projects within Grand Portage National Monument, Cook County, Minnesota,” and in reports by Caven Clark and Jay T. Sturdevant.³ Douglas Birk, another pioneer Minnesota archeologist and erstwhile employee of the MNHS, also conducted archeological studies at Grand Portage. After Woolworth and Birk left the MNHS, the NPS drew on the Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC), in particular Vergil Noble, a specialist in historic archeology and fur trade posts. NPS historian Erwin A. Thompson, who has been previously mentioned, contributed to the national monument’s early involvement with managing historic resources.

As cultural resource management gained more prominence in the NPS in the 1970s and 1980s, it took shape around five subdisciplines: archeology, historic preservation, museum collections management, ethnography, and cultural landscape management. This chapter summarizes developments in each subdiscipline, with an emphasis on the period since 1999.

Archeology

Archeology at Grand Portage began with the MNHS’s excavations in 1936 and 1937 under the direction of Ralph D. Brown. The main goals were to locate the site of the North West Company depot, delineate the stockade perimeter, and reveal the locations of the Great Hall and other buildings in the stockade area. Altogether thirteen structures were identified in the stockade area. The archeology provided the basis for the historic reconstructions of the stockade and Great Hall built by the CCC-ID from 1938 to 1940.⁴

³ Vergil E. Noble, “An Archeological Survey of Development Projects within Grand Portage National Monument, Cook County, Minnesota,” open file report, (Lincoln, NE: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 1989), 15-18; Clark, “Late Prehistoric Cultural Affiliation Study, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” 37-38; and Jay T. Sturdevant, “Archeological Inventory of Testing of New Pathways, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” *Midwest Archeological Center Technical Report No. 105* (Lincoln, NE: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 2008), 7-10. See also the finding aid for the Alan R. Woolworth papers held at the Minnesota Historical Society. The papers contain considerable material specific to Grand Portage National Monument.

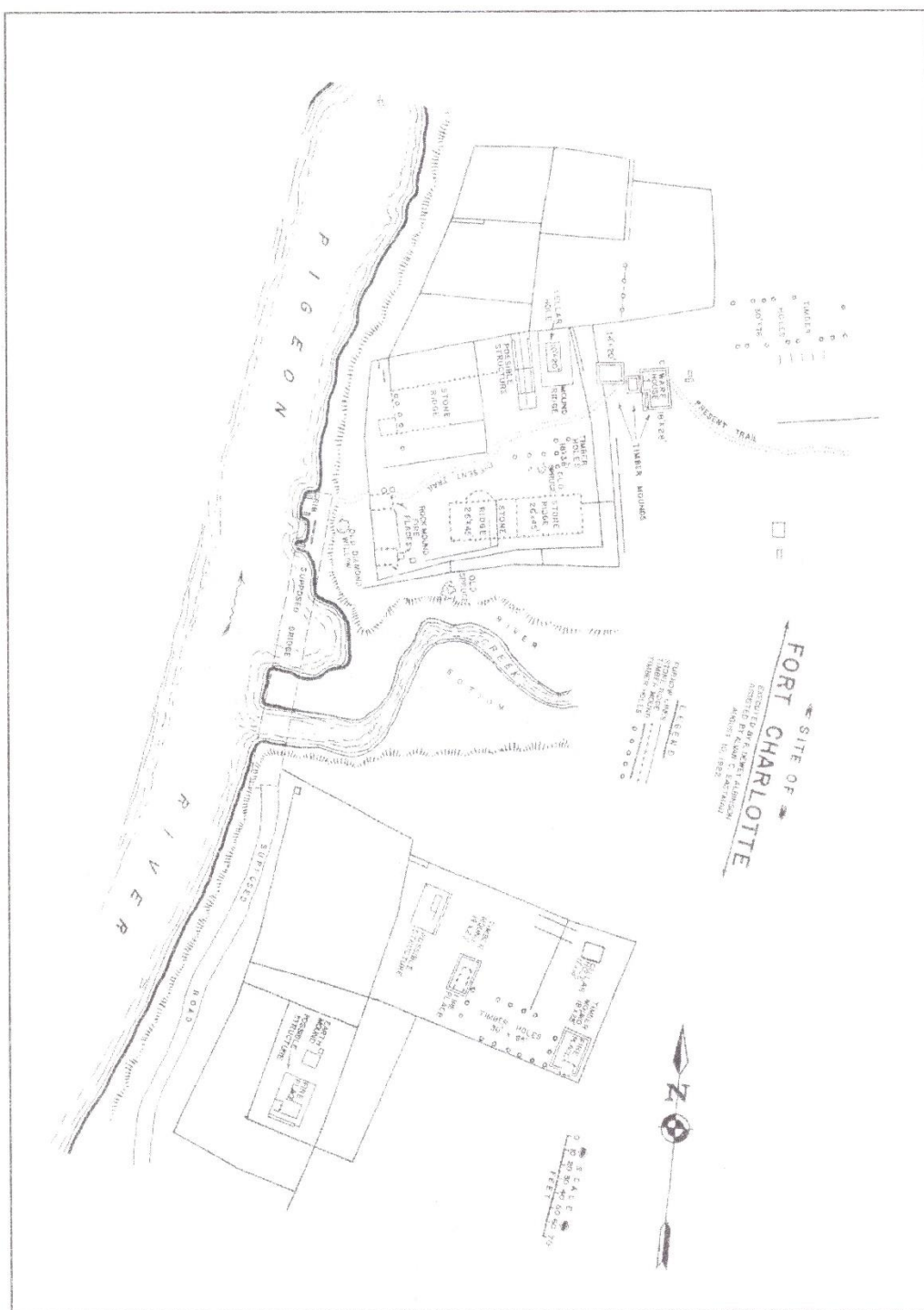
⁴ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 14-15; Noble, “An Archeological Survey of Development Projects,” 15.

With the establishment of the national monument, the NPS pursued further archeological investigations through the MNHS. Now the goal was to identify additional archeological resources within the national monument boundaries to inform development planning. Woolworth investigated the site of the XY Company post east of Grand Portage Creek in 1961 and 1962. Apparent confirmation of the archeological resources there knocked that area out of contention as a place to locate the visitor center. (Later on, doubts emerged as to whether that really was the site of the XY Company post, but no alternative has yet been found.) Woolworth conducted more intensive archeological investigations of the stockade area in 1963 and 1964, and again in 1970 and 1971, with a view to doing more historic reconstructions (and rebuilding the Great Hall historic reconstruction after it burned in 1969.) The latter helped to refine what was known about the original Great Hall, which allowed for a more accurate and authentic historic reconstruction when the structure was rebuilt in the early 1970s. Chief findings included the orientation of the building, the existence of a porch facing the lake, and the existence of an external kitchen building directly behind the Great Hall. Woolworth led further investigations in the mid-1970s aimed at identifying archeological resources in areas proposed for development in the master plan, including the proposed employee residential area.⁵

From 1971 to 1976, the MNHS sponsored Doug Birk's underwater archeology in the Pigeon River where it flows past the site of Fort Charlotte. Archeologists were interested in recovering artifacts that were carried in fur trade canoes and were dumped in the river. Birk's efforts constituted some of the most sophisticated underwater archeology in North America to that point in time.⁶ Some of the recovered artifacts are on display in the Heritage Center. The national monument was interested in this project although the project area lay just outside the national monument boundary, since the state of Minnesota owns the riverbed of navigable waters in the state. A few years later, MWAC archeologists Bruce Jones and Ralph Hartley conducted an archeological survey of the Fort Charlotte site on land. Their purpose was to test the accuracy of the site map made by Albinson and Eastman in 1922 (see

⁵ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 19-20; Tim Cochrane, "Gichi Onigaming: Discover, Consider, Reflect," *Grand Portage Guide* (newsletter), 2015, p. 1; Noble, "An Archeological Survey of Development Projects," 16-17.

⁶ Douglas A. Birk, "Recent underwater recoveries at Fort Charlotte, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration*, 4, no. 1 (1975), 73-84; Cooper interview.



Map of Fort Charlotte site from Dewey Albinson's 1922 Map. (From Sturdevant et al., "Terrestrial Archeological Resources at Fort Charlotte, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota.")

Chapter One), and to give managers data for relocating the campsite away from archeological resources.⁷

In the 1980s, MWAC archeologists Susan Monk and Mark Lynott carried out archeological projects in advance of other development projects such as proposed road realignments. When drainage problems in the stockade area jeopardized the structural integrity of the reconstructed kitchen building, necessitating the installation of a subsurface drainage system to protect the building, MWAC conducted a more extensive archeological investigation in the stockade area led by Vergil Noble. The 1988 study also took another look at other areas proposed for development in completing the park's physical plant. The 1988 study reinforced the already existing view that the small area of the national monument was rife with archeological resources, leaving few areas suitable for development of a visitor center, residential area, or maintenance facility.⁸

By the 1980s the NPS was thoroughly committed to "conservation archeology" or the project of preserving archeological resources in an undisturbed condition in the ground rather than digging them up. The theory of conservation archeology is that digging up artifacts, no matter how meticulous the record keeping is, inevitably destroys some of the information contained in the archeological resource where it is lying undisturbed or *in situ*; therefore, the present generation owes it to future generations to preserve archeological resources *in situ* for a future time when archeologists have more sophisticated tools and techniques (and new questions) with which to investigate the resource. Knowing that the Grand Portage Trail corridor surely contains archeological resources, park managers thought to harden the trail in the 1980s for resource protection. Planking the trail not only preserved the actual trail tread underneath the planking, which was itself a cultural resource, but also tended to keep hikers on the trail, giving protection to archeological sites that might be located just off the trail.⁹

Conservation archeology formed part of the justification for other efforts to harden heavily foot-trafficked areas in the national monument. A footbridge near the mouth of Grand Portage Creek just outside the stockade received a lot of attention. In the fur trade era,

⁷ Chief, Midwest Archeological Center, to Superintendent, September 22, 1981, GPNM, RG 1, Second Accession, Box 6, H30; Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 22.

⁸ Archeologist, MWAC, to Chief, MWAC, August 10, 1988, GPNM, CF, H24; Superintendent to Associate Regional Director, March 31, 1989, and July 17, 1989, and Alan R. Woolworth to Dean Einwalter, July 17, 1989, GPNM, RG 1, Box 12, D24; Noble, "An Archeological Survey of Development Projects," 19-22, 33-34.

⁹ Cooper interview.

a footbridge connected the stockade with the voyageurs’ encampment area on the other side of the creek. While the look of the historical footbridge was not known and there was no attempt to replicate it, resource managers wanted to install a footbridge in the location of the historical footbridge in order to facilitate and control foot traffic through an area rich with archeological resources. A desire to protect archeological resources *in situ* also featured in the park’s efforts to stabilize the banks along the last stretch of creek where it runs by the stockade, as well as stabilize the shoreline along Lake Superior. Concern for archeological resources also prompted redevelopment of the backcountry campsite in the Fort Charlotte District (Chapter Six).¹⁰

There was a qualitative change in the archeology at Grand Portage after 1999. All the archeology done between 1960 and 1999 was performed in connection with development projects. Being development driven, the projects were limited in scope. The investigations in the 1960s were made in advance of reconstructing the stockade and Great Hall or preparing the master plan, while all the projects in the 1970s and 1980s were made in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The latter, sometimes described as compliance archeology, tended to yield good information as far as each project went; however, project boundaries were often linear and shaped by present-day development needs. That was not ideal from an investigative standpoint, as research questions had to be posed opportunistically and spatial coverage of the national monument was uneven. When Cooper was put in charge of a new resource management division, he and Cochrane put their heads together on what a research- or management-driven archeological program might look like. They decided it was important to learn more about prehistoric and historic use of the eight-and-a-half-mile Grand Portage itself, where the archeological resources had never been investigated before. The Grand Portage was among the most significant portages on the continent, and it had never been surveyed. All that was known about it came from historical records.

To design the project so that it could compete for internal NPS funding, Cochrane and Cooper recognized that it had to relate to a management purpose. Preferably it had to do

¹⁰ Randall R. Pope to Russell W. Fridley, June 29, 1983, GPNM, RG 1, Box 13, D30; Grand Portage National Monument, “Environmental Assessment, Construct Foot Bridge, Grand Portage National Monument,” undated, GPNM, RG 1, Box 27, H4217; Noble, “An Archeological Survey of Development Projects,” 17.

more than identify archeological resources for protection. So the project was framed as being foundational to producing a management plan for the Fort Charlotte District.¹¹

Doug Birk, now working as a public archeologist with his own institute, was contracted to head up the study alongside Cooper. This worthy study soon attracted the interest of academics and graduate students at regional universities as well.¹²

One key consultant to the team was Dr. Brian Phillips, a retired geology professor who lived in Thunder Bay. Part of the methodology that Cooper and Birk developed was to read the landscape in a way that they could reasonably predict where the voyageurs might have chosen to make their regular rest stops. From the historical notes of North West Company surveyor David Thompson, it was known that the Grand Portage had been studded with regular rest stops or *posés* where the men rested, smoked, replenished their canteens, maybe adjusted their loads – and doubtless mislaid items that would be telltale to the archeologist. As Cooper and Birk sleuthed the Grand Portage Trail in search of these sites, Phillips helped them to see or imagine the subtle changes in terrain, soil, and vegetation that might have influenced the location of *posés*.¹³

Shovel testing was impractical to recover artifacts over such a wide area, so they turned to metal detectors. They adapted the techniques developed by NPS archeologist Doug Scott at Little Big Horn National Battlefield in Montana to the heavily wooded environment found along the Grand Portage Trail, where trees obstructed metal detection over much of the ground.¹⁴

The survey unfolded in three phases from 2000 to 2008 and revolved around a targeted survey approach based on reasonable guesses as to where the historic route and *posés* were to be found. Numerous sites were identified and mapped. Birk and Cooper completed three detailed reports, one on each phase of the work, and presented two conference papers.¹⁵

Ultimately, the archeology allowed for a fine-grained reconstruction of how voyageurs transported their cargoes over the trail. Prehistoric use of the Grand Portage was

¹¹ Cooper interview.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Cooper interview; Brian A. M. Phillips, “Geomorphological and Historical Observations in the Grand Portage National Monument,” report prepared for the National Park Service, Grand Portage National Monument, June 2003, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.

¹⁴ Cooper interview.

¹⁵ Douglas A. Birk and David J. Cooper, “Grand Portage National Monument Grand Portage Trail Survey 2005-2008 Report,” prepared for National Park Service, Grand Portage National Monument, June 2010, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.



David Cooper and Doug Birk using metal detectors to survey for archeological resources along the Grand Portage Trail. (From Birk and Cooper, “Grand Portage National Monument Grand Portage Trail Survey 2005-2008 Report.”)

not a main focus of the study, but the paucity of prehistoric material that was recovered tended to support Cooper’s and Birk’s view that it was only the heavy loads of the fur trade that made this route so preeminent.

Before the fur trade, the pattern of portaging in the region was probably diffuse.¹⁶

Most important for managing the resource, the team formed a clearer understanding of where the modern trail deviates from the historic route and where the archeological resources lie. The historical trail falls marginally outside of the national monument corridor in some places; the NPS informed the Band of those places and sought protection for the archeological resources in those locations. And finally, as the NPS acquired

data on the extent of the archeological resources, it also acquired the credibility to request the visiting public’s cooperation in protecting those known archeological resources.

Interpretive wayside exhibits installed on the trail and near the site of Fort Charlotte conveyed a conservation message as well as historical information about the voyageurs’ use of those areas.¹⁷

Following the portage survey, the national monument secured funding for more archeological survey, this time focused on the Fort Charlotte site. MWAC archeologist Jay Sturdevant conducted a mapping and metal detector survey in 2009 and 2010. The investigation identified additional fort features as well as more archeological resources beyond the fort’s footprint. The study pointed to there being a rich collection of archeological resources at this unusually pristine fur trade site.¹⁸

¹⁶ Douglas A. Birk and David J. Cooper, “Grand Portage National Monument Grand Portage Trail Survey 2005-2008 Report,” prepared for National Park Service, Grand Portage National Monument, June 2010, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.

¹⁷ Cooper interview.

¹⁸ Cooper interview; Jay T. E. Sturdevant, Andrew LaBounty, David J. Cooper, and Ashley J. Barnett, “Terrestrial Archeological Resources at Fort Charlotte, Grand Portage National Monument,

Meanwhile, Sturdevant led a four-person crew from MWAC in performing another Section 106 survey in the stockade area. This survey, performed in 2006, preceded the development of new footpaths connecting the new Heritage Center and the stockade area as well as the relocation of some footpaths in the stockade area.¹⁹

The latest archeology focused on the East Meadow Area. Sturdevant once again headed a crew from MWAC. As the area is a wetland, the project involved magnetometry so as to locate resources with minimal ground disturbance. The subsurface remains of numerous homesteads, already known from historic photos, were located precisely.²⁰

Historic Preservation

Historical research conducted for Grand Portage National Monument has focused on two primary management goals: supporting an interpretive program and providing data for historic reconstructions.

The first park historian, Robert J. Riley, focused on researching and writing history to underpin the interpretive program. He wrote “Fur Trade Metropolis of the Past” in 1962 and another report the next year, followed by the interpretive prospectus in 1964. Combing through extant secondary sources on the fur trade, Riley found there was a crying need for more historical information specific to Grand Portage. Notwithstanding the CCC’s reconstruction of the stockade and Great Hall, visitors to Grand Portage in the 1960s found relatively little there to give them an informed picture of why the place mattered. “The persons visiting Grand Portage National Monument come away with a meager, possibly distorted, and certainly fragmentary knowledge of this historically significant area,” Riley stated.²¹

NPS historian Erwin A. Thompson’s work in the late 1960s and early 1970s bridged the two primary management goals of historical research. First, building on Riley’s work, he prepared the national monument’s first handbook, a multi-chapter account of how the Grand Portage site featured in the fur trade during the French, British, and American periods of occupation. The 183-page report provided a synthesis of information from primary and

Minnesota,” *Midwest Archeological Center Technical Report No. 149* (Lincoln, NE: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 2021).

¹⁹ Jay T. Sturdevant, “Archeological Inventory of Testing of New Pathways, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” *Midwest Archeological Center Technical Report No. 105* (Lincoln, NE: National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, 2008), 1.

²⁰ Clayton interview.

²¹ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 40.

secondary sources in an accessible format for the general public.²² Second, he compiled historical data from primary sources for two historic structure reports, one for the Great Hall and another for the kitchen.²³ Those reports formed the basis for historic reconstructions that, while still involving some conjecture, were certainly more authentic than the CCC-built structures, and were generally deemed to be more authentic than the ambitious historic reconstruction of Old Fort William (since renamed Fort William Historical Park) over the border in Canada. Old Fort William was replete with forty-two structures and designed as a living history museum with costumed historical interpreters acting in the roles of fort inhabitants in 1816. Old Fort William opened to the public in 1973 nearly at the same time that the NPS completed its redux of the Great Hall.²⁴



Historical research and archeology in the 1960s provided data for a more authentic historic reconstruction to replace the original shown here. (NPS.)

Through the 1970s and 1980s, park staff contributed historical research to the ongoing effort of furnishing the Great Hall and the kitchen and creating exhibits for the

²² Erwin A. Thompson, “Grand Portage: The Great Carrying Place,” June 1969, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz. The handbook was adapted from Thompson’s technical report on the historical significance of Grand Portage in the fur trade. (Superintendent to Regional Director, December 3, 1969, GPNM, RG 1, Box 29, K3819.

²³ Erwin N. Thompson, *Grand Portage National Monument, Great Hall, Historic Structure Report, History Data Section* (Philadelphia: National Park Service, Office of History and Historic Architecture, Eastern Service Center, 1970); Thompson, *Historic Structure Report, Kitchen, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota* (Denver: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1973).

²⁴ For early comparisons of the authenticity of Grand Portage and Old Fort William, see “Skipper” Roberson to Merrill Mattes, August 23, 1973, GPNM, RG 1, Box 26, H3019, and Committee on Federal Relations, Minnesota Historical Society to Ivan D. Miller, Superintendent, December 17, 1976, GPNM, RG 1, Box 9, D18.

canoe warehouse. Notably, historian Sue Kopczynski prepared the exhibit plan for the canoe warehouse in 1974 and worked on the kitchen furnishing plan. The latter was finally implemented five years later.²⁵

As time went on, park staff encouraged other historical studies aimed at broadening and deepening the historical information around Grand Portage's place in the fur trade. Alan and Nancy Woolworth were contracted to produce a study of Grand Portage in the French period. Doug Birk made a study of overland travel between Grand Portage Bay and Old Fort William in the latter fur trade era. Birk also conducted a historical investigation of land ordnance survey records preliminary to the archeological investigation of the Grand Portage Trail. Minnesota historian Bruce White wrote the most detailed history of the Grand Portage depot yet undertaken. White turned his study toward the Ojibwe side of the trading relationship, a growing interest by this point in time.²⁶

As the interpretive focus of Grand Portage National Monument shifted toward a greater emphasis on the Ojibwe, national monument staff saw a need for a new handbook. For this, the NPS turned to its longstanding partner at Grand Portage, the MNHS. In 1989, the NPS contracted with the MNHS to produce a "comprehensive handbook on Grand Portage National Monument." It was understood that the author would be the MNHS historian and museum curator Carolyn Gilman. Gilman had already established her reputation as a talented writer (and she would go on to write numerous nonfiction books and science fiction and fantasy novels during a career that eventually took her to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC). The contract stipulated to the approximate page length, dimensions, and appearance of the handbook and provided a general outline for the text. Besides covering the French, British, and American periods of the fur trade, it would also treat "the positive role Native peoples had in the fur trade and how the interaction affected both cultures." And it would describe the archeological work that had been done at Grand

²⁵ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 140; Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1979, HFC; Acting Manager to Regional Director, May 30, 1974, GPNM, RG 1, Box 26, H3015; Ivan D. Miller to Susan Kopczynski, October 4, 1976, GPNM, CF, H3015.

²⁶ Woolworth, *The French Presence at Lake Superior and at Grand Portage, c. 1740-1805*; Douglas A. Birk, "The Hudson Bay Trail: A Study of Nineteenth Century Travel Routes Between Grand Portage, Minnesota, and Fort William, Ontario," in *Institute for Minnesota Archaeology Reports of Investigations* 466 (1998); Birk, Douglas A. Birk to David Cooper, June 29, 2001, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz; Bruce M. White, *Grand Portage Trading Post: Patterns of Trade at "the Great Carrying Place,"* (Grand Marais, MN: Grand Portage National Monument, National Park Service, 2005). See also White, *Grand Portage National Monument Historic Documents Study* (St. Paul: Turnstone Historical Research, 2004).

Portage, including “techniques and methods, increased knowledge and artifacts uncovered or discovered.”²⁷

Gilman wrote *The Grand Portage Story* as an elegant and scholarly book (more than a handbook) and it was published by the Minnesota Historical Society in 1992. Professional reviewers praised the work as being well grounded in new scholarship and primary source material yet eminently readable. It achieved what it was supposed to achieve, which was to flag the national monument’s efforts to recast the interpretive story at Grand Portage in light of the New Indian History in academia and the new public taste for more insight into native perspectives. As one reviewer wrote, “It is perhaps the manner in which a vast amount of material has been marshalled that most recommends this book. Gilman reveals that she is well aware of the substance of recent debates and she has judiciously incorporated the results into her narrative.”²⁸

By the turn of the century, Grand Portage National Monument’s efforts toward advancing historical and archeological knowledge were being recognized. In the year 2000, the park was gifted a 71-volume set of *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (with approximate value of \$10,000) for the park library. In a related development, that year the national monument joined with various Canadian partners in a collaborative effort to translate early to mid-nineteenth-century Jesuit diary records. The Jesuit diary records were beyond the temporal scope of the already translated *Jesuit Relations*, which focus on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As Cochrane noted, the Jesuit diary records had potential to yield valuable new information about Ojibwe connections to Isle Royale. National monument staff made copies of thousands of pages of mission diary entries and made a start on translating them from French to English.²⁹

Historic Property Listings

Historic preservation included maintaining a formal record of historic properties. The NPS had an internal system for listing historic properties in its register known as the List of Classified Structures (LCS). In 2020, the LCS was merged into a more

²⁷ Ann Regan to Dean Einwalter, August 30, 1989, and Einwalter to Regan, September 6, 1989, GPNM, RG 1, Box 29, K3819; Scope of Work, no date, GPNM, CF, A44. See also Memorandum of Understanding between the National Park Service and Minnesota Historical Society, same file.

²⁸ Graham A. MacDonald review of *The Grand Portage Story* by Carolyn Gilman in *Manitoba History* No. 26 (Autumn 1993) at

http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/26/grandportagestory.shtml.

²⁹ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 2000, ETIC.

comprehensive database known as the Cultural Resources Inventory System, which combines historic properties with previously separate listings for archeological sites and cultural landscape inventories. The NPS also lists its historic properties in an external inventory system, the National Register of Historic Places. The historic properties at Grand Portage were first recorded on the National Register in 1976. The National Register registration form was redone and the National Register listing was revised in the early 2000s.

The NPS initially recorded eighteen structures on its List of Classified Structures. The structures included historic and non-historic buildings, structures, and objects. In 1976, Thomas P. Busch, historical architect at the Midwest Regional Office, prepared the National Register nomination for Grand Portage National Monument, listing five historic reconstructions as buildings or structures that were “contributing” resources to the overall historic property. They were the Great Hall, the gatehouse, the canoe warehouse, and the kitchen (buildings) and the stockade (structure). The Crawford cabin, built in 1895, was also listed, as were the Grand Portage Trail and the Fort Charlotte site, for a total of eight contributing buildings, structures, and sites. Two more structures were listed as non-historic (non-contributing): the public restroom and the dock.³⁰

Busch recorded the fact that the reconstructed fur trade post had once included two watchtowers. The two watchtowers were built in the 1930s and dismantled in the 1960s as they were considered unsafe and not historically accurate.³¹

Busch initially listed the NPS dock as historic, but the regional director insisted that the dock be listed as non-historic (“non-contributing”) and that it be removed from the List of Classified Structures as well.³² This call was made in spite of the fact that preservationists in the 1930s thought the dock contributed to the historic scene.

Even though the Crawford cabin was listed on the National Register as a historic resource, that did not stop the NPS from removing it from the stockade area a few years later. The NPS justified removing it on the grounds that the 1895 cabin was not a part of the historic scene in the fur trade but dated from another era.

³⁰ The 1976 registration form is reproduced as an appendix in Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*. The registration form references the LCS listing.

³¹ Busch’s statement about the watchtowers is in Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, p. 117. According to a site map in the park’s *Cultural Landscape Report* (2009), one of the watchtowers was positioned at the southeast corner of the stockade.

³² Regional Director to Associate Director, Management and Operations, Washington Office, December 27, 1976, GPNM, CF, H3015.

Over time, the NPS tightened its policy on historic reconstructions, and as it did so, the agency preferred to classify most historic reconstructions as interpretive exhibits (modern fabrications) rather than historic resources. Grand Portage’s key historic reconstructions, having been listed on the National Register in 1976 as contributing, were deemed to be historic resources until the early 2000s, when the National Register listing was revised. At that time, the five key historic reconstructions listed above – the Great Hall, the gatehouse, the canoe warehouse, the kitchen, and the stockade – were all changed to non-historic or “non-contributing” resources. That left the Grand Portage National Monument with just three “contributing” resources: the Fort Charlotte Site Complex, the Grand Portage Site Complex, and the Grand Portage Trail. The revised National Register listing included a total of twenty-one “non-contributing” resources. These included various mid-twentieth century elements of park infrastructure (trails, footbridges, buildings, parking lots). Notably, the dock and the stone highway bridge (built by the CCC-ID in 1938) were both listed as “non-contributing.”³³

Historic Reconstructions

Throughout the National Park System, historic reconstructions are treated as somewhat problematic. The Historic Sites Act of 1935 directs the NPS to “restore, *reconstruct*, rehabilitate, preserve, and maintain historic or prehistoric sites, buildings, objects, and properties of national historical or archaeological significance.” Thus, historic reconstructions are long established as one tool in the toolkit of historic preservation. But NPS historians were skeptical of the practice from the outset. As early as 1937, the NPS adopted the policy of using historic reconstructions as a tool of last resort. Those opposing most historic reconstructions argued that they were inauthentic and usually ill-advised. Not only did the historic reconstruction inevitably fall short of being an exact replica of the original, the act of reconstructing also seemed heavy-handed or interventionist insofar as it privileged the simulated look of one time period over others. (The choice to remove the 1895 Crawford cabin at Grand Portage illustrates the point well.) NPS policy on historic reconstructions became progressively more stringent as the decades passed.³⁴

³³ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File: “D Birk Nomination.”

³⁴ Barry Mackintosh, “To Reconstruct or Not to Reconstruct: An Overview of NPS Policy and Practice,” *CRM Bulletin* 13, no. 1 (1990), 5-7, 14. Italics supplied in the article by Mackintosh, not in the legislation.

The establishing act for Grand Portage National Monument hinted at building more historic reconstructions, while the master plan in 1973 carried that expectation forward. After the kitchen and canoe warehouse were completed, national monument staff and various stakeholders advocated for still more historic reconstructions. The stockade and the reconstructed buildings provided a staging area for vivid interpretation of the past, and interpretive rangers generally agreed that more historic reconstructions would be better. Indeed, the stockade appeared confusingly devoid of smaller buildings to some visitors, especially if they had visited Old Fort William in Canada, with its forty-two standing structures and living-history-simulated bustle.³⁵

The historic reconstructions from Mount Rose. Managers differ on whether the historic site would be improved by adding more reconstructed buildings in the stockade area. (Authors photo.)



The question of whether or not to build more historic reconstructions was thoroughly vetted when Grand Portage National Monument embarked on a general management plan around the turn of the century. One alternative in the plan called for more historic reconstructions. Ultimately, it was not selected as the preferred alternative. Cooper, Cochrane, and chief interpreter Pam Neil were all enthusiastic about historic reconstructions

³⁵ Resource Manager to Superintendent and Chief Interpreter (email), January 29, 2001, GPNM, CF, File “GMP.” In this discursive, three-page memo arguing the case for more historic reconstructions, Cooper wrote: “Currently, only three of the depot’s sixteen buildings have been reconstructed at Grand Portage. This leaves most visitors with the misguided impression of a large, grassy, and sleepy stockaded fort, missing the historical reality of a bustling, crowded commercial depot of international significance. Visitors arrive (and often leave) with a vague sense of backwater frontier European militarism: a complete misinterpretation of a non-military site devoted to a story of cultural interaction, assimilation, exploration, and international commerce.”

but recognized the reality that NPS policy as well as cost considerations militated against doing more. In lieu of doing more historic reconstructions, the park experimented with “ghosting” techniques aimed at delineating the footprints of buildings without actually erecting those structures. Ghosting techniques could be as minimalist as leaving a rectangle of lawn unmown. Or they could involve some kind of physical foundation or low walls. None of these options was entirely satisfying.³⁶

In recent years, the conversations around historic reconstruction took a new turn as managers considered doing a historic reconstruction of the early-twentieth-century BIA day school that once stood in the East Meadow Area. The exact location and footprint of the building were known, and architectural plans were available, so there would be much less conjecture involved in doing this historic reconstruction compared with the fur-trade era structures. Some of the other philosophical objections to historic reconstructions still pertained, however. Where the conversations would finally lead remained unclear.

The CCC-ID Stone Bridge Repair

A routine bridge safety inspection in 2017 disclosed weaknesses in the stone bridge. The bridge was found to be structurally sound but in need of repairs where a section of wall was failing and a piece of the east abutment was being undermined by the creek.

The bridge was a beloved cultural feature in the national monument, since members of the community were in the CCC-ID crew that constructed the bridge in 1938. Indeed, the bridge stands as the only known example of a bridge built by the CCC-ID in Minnesota. The park arranged with the NPS’s Historic Preservation Training Center to provide a work crew and use the bridge repair as a learning exercise. The project occurred over the summer of 2018.³⁷

The community embraced this project and the Band took the lead on it. Park staff performed the Section 106 compliance ahead of the actual bridge repair. For the bridge repair, one master stonemason and a crew of three from the Historic Preservation Training

³⁶ Tim Cochrane, phone conversation notes with Mr. Ian Stewart, Deputy Director, Minnesota Historical Society, July 2, 2001, and phone conversation notes with Mr. Scott Anfinson, SHPO Archeologist, Minnesota Historical Society, July 2, 2001, GPNM, CF, File “GMP;” Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 2002, ETIC; Cochrane interview. See also Curt L. Roy to Dean Einwalter, October 10, 1990, GPNM, CF, H3015, arguing in favor of the “low wall” technique for ghosting buildings within the stockade in light of its use at similar historic sites in Canada.

³⁷ National Park Service, Historic Preservation Training Center, *Grand Portage Bridge Repair, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota, Historic Structure Treatment Record* (Frederick County MD: National Park Service, Historic Preservation Training Center, 2018), 3-4.

Center were joined by three local band members who were hired specifically for the job under the AFA. The Minnesota Conservation Corps Youth Group also participated.³⁸ The work was performed according to the *Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Museum Collections Management

Grand Portage National Monument's museum collection predates the national monument. It began with the collection of artifacts from archeological investigations by the MNHS in the late 1930s, as well as fur trade and ethnological items contributed by the Cook County Historical Society and the Grand Portage Band over the years before 1960. The archeological artifacts were mostly accessioned by the MNHS and stored in the MNHS archives. The Cook County Historical Society gave its Grand Portage museum collection to the NPS in 1960. It consisted of 258 items in eight glass cases plus several boxes of artifacts from an archeological dig circa 1937. Ethnological items included two large and three small birch bark canoes and snowshoes.³⁹

During the national monument's first decade, the quantity of archeological artifacts recovered from the site grew significantly as the MNHS conducted further archeological investigations. Each federal contract or purchasing order with the MNHS for archeological work resulted in another accession by the MNHS. In all, the procurements numbered ten from 1962 to 1982. All told, the MNHS accumulated around 40,000 items in archeological accessions from Grand Portage National Monument. All this material came under NPS jurisdiction but was held in MNHS custody for many years, until a broad national reform of archeology collections management began in the 1980s and culminated under NAGPRA, which resulted in the transfer of everything at MNHS connected to Grand Portage National Monument over to NPS custody. In the interim, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, management of this burgeoning archeological and ethnographic collection did not greatly concern the park administration, with the exception of its handling of select items that were retained at the national monument for exhibit. Those items came to number around 700 by

³⁸ Hansen interview; Gagnon interview.

³⁹ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 36; Marcia Anderson to Don Castlebury, May 27, 1987, GPNM, CF, H24.

1984, of which some were kept on display and some were stored offsite at the headquarters in Grand Marais.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, the museum collection that was always held at the national monument came under the purview of the park historian or chief interpreter. The 1964 interpretive prospectus gave some direction to the museum collection, but there was no museum collection plan nor was there a furnishings plan for the Great Hall until 1972. Still, the park had made a start on adding to the museum collection when the Great Hall burned to the ground in 1969. Some of the museum collection was lost in the fire and some was preserved in the Crawford cabin. Among the items that were lost were three birchbark canoes, decorative baskets, deerskin clothing and accessories – all manufactured by Grand Portage Band members in the 1930s – as well as some specimens of European trade goods recovered from the site. The NPS had also begun to furnish the park with period items or reproductions used for interpretation or display. These included flintlock muskets and powder horns, a lacrosse set, and an exhibit of toys that native children might have played with when the North West Company was in operation.⁴¹

As the national monument worked to install exhibits and historic furnishings in the rebuilt Great Hall, the kitchen, and the canoe warehouse in the 1970s, the museum collection grew to include materials from other locations dating from the fur trade era, as well as more



Hat display inside the Great Hall. The museum collections include many items on display. Some items are historic and others are authentic reproductions. (Authors photo.)

ethnological items. The latter were mostly Ojibwe items but included a few Cree items as well. The museum collection also came to include so-called “green card” objects; these were materials and objects usually not more than fifty years old that were similar to those from the historic period. In some cases, they were new reproductions made specifically for the national monument. The purpose of these objects was to graphically interpret the historic fur trade at Grand Portage; they could be used for display or

⁴⁰ Don H. Castleberry to Nina M. Archabal, April 16, 1987, GPNM, CF, H24; Craig Sheldon, Collections Questionnaire, January 24, 1984, GPNM, RG 1, Box 20, D62.

⁴¹ Cockrell, *Grand Portage National Monument*, 48-52.

in reenactments and in most cases they could be handled or operated by interpreters or visitors.⁴²

Reform efforts aimed at achieving stronger control over recordkeeping, safe storage, and preservation started at Grand Portage National Monument in 1983. That year, museum technician Diane Peterson joined the staff from April 25 through November 18, with most of her time being given to numbering and cataloguing artifacts. She also did some work toward preserving artifacts and improving museum storage. The next year, lead park ranger Craig Sheldon picked up where Peterson left off. Over the next two years, Sheldon continued cataloguing until the accession files and supporting documentation were reportedly 99 percent complete. However, this was before NAGPRA instigated a more thorough-going effort to get museum collections in proper order.⁴³

While the park worked on eliminating its backlog of museum collection cataloguing onsite, further archeological investigations at Grand Portage – now conducted by MWAC rather than MNHS – continued to add to the park’s museum collection accessions held offsite. Those latter accessions were stored at MWAC in Lincoln, Nebraska. By 1990, they were five in number.⁴⁴ NAGPRA became law in 1990, and two years later the Midwest Region began to press Grand Portage National Monument for an inventory of its entire museum collection, including all those offsite accessions that were heretofore of not much concern to the park staff. Whereas the park’s museum technician in the mid-1980s took technical direction from the NPS Harpers Ferry Center, now the park turned to MWAC for assistance. Over the next two years the park participated in the NPS systemwide effort to establish sound recordkeeping for all museum collections, many of which were housed in university or state archives, bring all of them back into NPS custody (either physically or by formal agreement with the institution where the objects were held), and repatriate pertinent items to each park’s culturally affiliated tribes. In the case of Grand Portage National Monument, this meant coordination with the MNHS as well as MWAC in Lincoln, Nebraska, to identify all items needing to be offered for repatriation to the Grand Portage Band. Basically, NAGPRA forced the NPS and other federal agencies to admit that past treatment of museum collections was at best too lax and at worst illegal. It gave the NPS five years to clean up its act. With archeological investigations predating the national monument

⁴² Craig Sheldon, Collections Questionnaire, January 24, 1984, and Grand Portage National Monument, Scope of Collections Statement, March 1984, GPNM, RG 1, Box 20, D62.

⁴³ Superintendent’s Annual Reports, 1983-1985, HFC.

⁴⁴ Acting Chief, MWAC, to Superintendent, April 30, 1990, GPNM, CF, H34.

by nearly a quarter century, Grand Portage had a tough row to hoe; it finally got its museum collection into compliance with NAGPRA in 1996. (Chapter Three treats this in more detail.)

In the course of meeting the requirements of NAGPRA, Grand Portage’s museum collections management was cleaned up and professionalized in other ways. Lead park ranger Jon Sage prepared a museum access plan for Grand Portage in 1989. The plan spelled out security measures and rules of access for the museum collection storage area at the park headquarters in Grand Marais. It defined terms for commercial use of the collection. It



Tabletop exhibits in the Great Hall need careful watch and upkeep. (Authors photo.)

described procedures for the protection of objects kept on display in the Great Hall, the kitchen, and the canoe warehouse.⁴⁵ In the early 1990s, the park’s collections at MWAC were catalogued by MWAC staff, each item being entered into the NPS’s new Automated National Catalog System (ANCS).⁴⁶ In 1993, national monument staff completed a scope of collections statement. This key document for

collections management defined the types of items to be acquired in the national monument’s museum collection, highlighting current needs as well as pointing out types of items that should be added with discretion or excluded. Items could be acquired by gift, purchase, exchange, transfer, or field collection. In general, adding to the collection was discouraged unless the objects were relevant to the purpose, goals, and scope of the collection and the park had the space and means to store, protect, and preserve them.⁴⁷

A resource management plan in 1995 stated that museum collections were housed in five separate locations at that time. The MNHS held approximately 20,000 items by formal

⁴⁵ Grand Portage National Monument, Museum Access Plan, December 1989, GPNM, CF, H1817.

⁴⁶ Chief, MWAC, to Superintendent, March 29, 1990, and Acting Superintendent to Regional Director, March 15, 1991, GPNM, CF, H34.

⁴⁷ Grand Portage National Monument, Scope of Collections Statement, March 1993, GPNM, CF, D18.

agreement. MWAC held another 4,600 archeological items. The park headquarters in Grand Marais housed another 2,200 artifacts. Finally, there were two exhibit cases in the Grand Portage Lodge with items on loan from the national monument museum collection. The exhibit cases were equipped with humidity strips to monitor the environment inside the cases.⁴⁸

In 1998, a new storage facility for the national monument was developed at Grand Marais by adapting a former U.S. Coast Guard garage for the purpose. It tripled the available storage space. The design and construction of the Heritage Center further enhanced museum collection storage. After the Heritage Center was completed, the scope of collections statement was revised in 2010. Museum technician Steve Veit wrote the revised plan with input from the regional chief of museum collections Carolyn Wallingford and Superintendent Cochrane.⁴⁹

As a result of taking control of all accessions linked to Grand Portage National Monument and properly cataloguing them, the national monument's museum collection in 1998 amounted to approximately 28,000 objects and 16,000 paper records. Twenty-five items that were inappropriately accessioned and catalogued were deaccessioned.⁵⁰

The last key document for museum collections management was a collection management plan, prepared by contractor Brian Ramer in 1998. Preparation of the plan highlighted some of the challenges that were ongoing at Grand Portage National Monument. Substantial portions of the museum collections were on display in the Great Hall, the kitchen, and the canoe warehouse, as well as in the exhibit area of the Heritage Center; these items had to be protected from undue handling and touching by visitors. Since many of these items were displayed as props, it would not do to put them under glass. Unfortunately, some items were prone to theft. Roving interpreters had to provide part of the museum collection's security. The fact that these items were constantly on display meant that they did not have the usual protection of temperature and humidity controls. Other items from the museum collection were on display at Grand Portage Lodge and Grand Portage State Park, even further removed from optimal controls.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Resource Management Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, 1995, GPNM, CF, N files.

⁴⁹ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1997, ETIC; Grand Portage National Monument, Scope of Collections Statement, December 2010, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant's Office.

⁵⁰ Superintendent's Annual Reports, 1997, ETIC.

⁵¹ Contractor, Collections Management Plan to Acting Superintendent, June 30, 1997, GPNM, CF, H26.

Ethnographic Resources

NAGPRA prompted the NPS to establish an Ethnography Program in 1994. Actually, the agency had been taking incremental steps in that direction for well over a decade. Prodded by another important American Indian rights law, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the NPS appointed a cultural anthropologist, Dr. Murial Crespi, to develop an applied cultural anthropology program in 1982. She became an early champion for integrating local peoples and traditional knowledge into certain parks’ resource management programs, and moving toward cooperative management with tribal governments where appropriate. In the 1980s, Crespi initiated a first wave of park-specific ethnographic investigations called “rapid ethnographic studies.” In follow-up to each of those, she advocated for a more comprehensive study, an ethnographic overview and assessment. Those larger efforts began to get underway about 1994. That year, the Anthropology Division became the Ethnography Program. In a related development, the American Indian Liaison Office was established in 1995. Dr. Michael Evans, a member of Crespi’s staff group, was put in charge of assisting all units in the National Park System with meeting NAGPRA requirements. Around the time the initial deadlines for NAGPRA compliance were met, Evans moved into the slot of cultural anthropologist for the Midwest Region formerly held by Tom Thiessen.⁵²

The Midwest Region was prominent in the NPS’s systemwide Ethnographic Program. Many park units in the Midwest were closely affiliated with American Indian tribes, others were located nearby Indian communities. In the upper Midwest, Ojibwe and other tribes had off-reservation treaty rights that extended to park lands. As the Midwest Region helped individual parks to develop their project proposals for conducting an ethnographic overview and assessment, Grand Portage National Monument was high on the priority list because of its close ties to the Grand Portage Band and its location on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. Also pertinent to Grand Portage, the Ethnographic Program in the Midwest Region forged ahead with an Ojibwe Treaty Rights Project to obtain a better grasp of Indian treaty rights overlapping several parks, including Grand Portage National Monument, Voyageurs National Park, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Isle Royale National Park, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Sleeping Bear Dunes National

⁵² Catton, *To Make A Better Nation*, 15-17; Field Director to Superintendents, no date, GPNM, CF, H30.

Lakeshore, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and Mississippi National River and Recreation Area.⁵³

When the Ethnography Program first got going in 1994, Superintendent Einwalter submitted a development/study package proposal for oral history. The proposal was to contract with an ethnographic historian to conduct oral history interviews with elderly members of the Band. This project did not materialize for several more years, but it brought attention to Grand Portage National Monument's ethnographic resources and need for an ethnographic study.⁵⁴

In 1996, Tim Cochrane was tapped to prepare the park's ethnographic study. Not yet superintendent then, Cochrane was the cultural anthropologist in the Alaska Region. He had prior experience at Isle Royale and had done research and writing on Isle Royale ethnography, so he was well qualified for the task. However, after Cochrane became superintendent of Grand Portage he found himself too busy to complete the ethnography study and handed it off to a respected colleague and longtime archeologist at Isle Royale, Caven Clark. At the same time, the ethnographic study was allowed to transform into something else, a cultural affiliation study that would identify which American Indian groups today could potentially claim cultural patrimony over human remains or funerary objects turned up at Grand Portage National Monument. In terms of the management issue at hand, the cultural affiliation study did not turn up any surprises. Although the Grand Portage Band could not be tied to the prehistoric archeological record in the area, the Ojibwe had clearly resided there for a long time. "Given the nature of the fur trade Depot at Grand Portage, human remains found there could conceivably belong to any of the American Indian/First Nation groups who participated in the trade as employees or independent traders, although in terms of overall probability Ojibwe/Cree would be the most likely," Clark wrote. "It is also probable that claims of cultural affiliation could be made with First Nation groups now residing in Canada."⁵⁵

⁵³ Acting Regional Director to Chief Anthropologist, Washington Office (with attachments), April 28, 1994, GPNM, CF, H30; Michael J. Evans to Superintendents at Voyageurs National Park, Grand Portage National Monument, Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway, Isle Royale National Park, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, and Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, May 10, 1996, GPNM, CF, H36.

⁵⁴ Dean Einwalter, Development/Study Package Proposal No. 833 to Conduct Oral History Interviews, March 24, 1994, GPNM, CF, H36.

⁵⁵ Caven Clark, "Late Prehistoric Cultural Affiliation Study, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota," report prepared for the National Park Service, Cultural Resources Report No. 111, (Tempe, AZ: Archaeological Consulting Services, Ltd., 1999), 47; Scope of Work, Late Prehistoric

Clark’s cultural affiliation study reflected the fact that he is an archeologist rather than a cultural anthropologist or ethnographer. Clark is an expert on Late Woodland Stage ceramics in the Lake Superior Basin. His scholarly report provided valuable insight on the late prehistoric distribution of Algonquian peoples in the Lake Superior region and likely Ojibwe ethnogenesis around the time of European contact. Resource manager Clayton read Clark’s report as soon as he joined the national monument staff and found it helpful. Indeed, it offered useful context for an exciting archeological find on Isle Royale that occurred some years later. The object was a small copper effigy, perhaps 3,000 years old. Showing very intentional working, the effigy is suggestive of Mishipeshu, the water panther. In Ojibwe mythology, Mishipeshu is the great water spirit of Lake Superior and guardian of the sacred copper. The discovery created some buzz around the matter of cultural patrimony, particularly in light of the 2019 official designation of the whole Isle Royale archipelago as a Traditional Cultural Property. In this way, Clark’s cultural affiliation study demonstrated its continuing relevancy to park management even with its long fetch back into Late Prehistoric times.⁵⁶

As Clark completed his cultural affiliation study, the oral history project finally went forward. Donald J Auger, an educator and member of the Pays Plat First Nation, and Paul Driben, a professor of anthropology at Lakehead University, conducted the interviews and wrote an introduction to the collected oral histories. The work was published as a joint project of the Grand Portage Reservation Council and the Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association with assistance by the NPS. Superintendent Cochrane shepherded the project to completion, sensing its importance to the NPS-Band partnership just as the TSGA agreement was getting implemented. An attractive publication, the NPS presented every family in Grand Portage with a copy.⁵⁷

Ethnography at Grand Portage took on greater significance as the interpretive program pivoted to put more emphasis on Ojibwe history and culture. A growing commitment by park management to develop interpretive exhibits in the East Meadow Area,

Cultural Affiliation Study for Grand Portage National Monument, no date, and Caven Clark to Tim Cochrane, January 25, 1999, GPNM, CF, H24; Foster interview, Clayton interview.

⁵⁶ Greg Seitz, “Prehistoric copper mines and long human history earns Isle Royale national historic designation,” *Quetico Superior Wilderness News*, March 22, 2019, at <https://queticosuperior.org/blog/prehistoric-copper-mines-and-long-human-history-earns-isle-royale-national-historic-designation/>; Clayton interview.

⁵⁷ Donald J. Auger and Paul Driben, *Grand Portage Chippewa: Stories and Experiences of Grand Portage Band Members* (Grand Portage, MN: Grand Portage Tribal Council and Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association, 2000); Cochrane interview.

Cultural Resource Management

perhaps featuring a historic reconstruction of the early-twentieth-century BIA day school, placed a higher premium on conducting oral history interviews with elders before they passed. Preliminary research in the National Archives by two seasonal staff resulted in the collection of BIA documents pertaining to the early twentieth century history of the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. The cache of material included an architectural plan for the school – vital information should the NPS undertake a historic reconstruction.

The NPS contracted with Dr. Brenda Child, professor of American Studies at the University of Minnesota, for the park's ethnographic study. A distinguished scholar with an endowed chair, author of the influential book *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940*, and member of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa, Child was tasked with writing an ethnography of the Grand Portage Band. In particular, the national monument staff hoped to garner more information about the social and physical history of the village to help with interpretation as well as cultural resource management. Unfortunately, the project did not turn up much new information. An oral history project component was quietly dropped. It seemed that Child's initial impulse to tell individuals' personal stories did not go over well with some community members. So the project was, in many ways, a disappointment.⁵⁸

Cultural Landscape Management

The NPS cultural landscape program got going around the same time as the NPS ethnography program. The NPS's *Management Policies 1988* formally identified "cultural landscapes" as a type of cultural resource in the National Park System. *NPS-28 Cultural Resource Management Guideline* was revised in 1994 to include direction on the management of cultural landscapes. The cultural landscape program took shape around the production of two key documents for each park: first, a cultural landscape inventory (CLI) to define the resources; and second, a cultural landscape report (CLR) to provide site history, existing conditions documentation, analysis and evaluation, and a treatment plan. The CLI for Grand Portage National Monument was done in 2005 and the park's CLR was completed in 2009. Today, resource manager William Clayton and natural resource specialist Brandon Seitz agree that the cultural landscape program is an excellent fit for Grand Portage National Monument conceptually. The cultural landscape provides a framework for managing natural

⁵⁸ Clayton interview.

resources. It is a useful counterweight to the National Register of Historic Places, which lays so much emphasis on the built environment. It has helped the park to complete the pivot from its early, relatively narrow focus on fur trade history to its contemporary emphasis on the heritage and lifeways of the Ojibwe people in the fur trade era and beyond.⁵⁹

Before the NPS developed its cultural landscape program, park managers tended to treat cultural landscape features such as vegetation or earthworks as subsidiary features to historic buildings and structures. The National Register of Historic Places tended to reinforce that management bias. The original National Register registration form for Grand Portage, prepared in 1976, described the buildings and structures in detail but generally ignored the cultural landscape. Similarly, the 1973 master plan did not have much to say about cultural landscapes. Prescribing landscape treatments only minimally, it stated that insofar as practicable, “non-historic” roads would be relocated away from the stockade area and unsightly powerlines would be removed in order to recreate a semblance of “the historic scene of 1800.” It noted that existing forest regrowth along the Grand Portage Trail corridor would be preserved. Consistent with an older view of parklands that tended to overlook or minimize American Indians’ historic role in shaping the environment, the master plan stated that the Grand Portage Trail traversed an area of “second-growth woodland, showing no evidence of human habitation.” Although “the original virgin forest” known to the voyageurs had been logged off in the years since the fur trade era, the NPS would preserve the regenerated forest such that it would appear “much as it must have been two centuries ago.”⁶⁰ Of course, this management prescription completely ignored Ojibwe cultural use of the forest as if it never existed or was of no consequence, and it more or less dismissed post-logging-era changes to the forest’s composition and structure. Those were blind spots that would be redressed by the later cultural resource program.

Don Carney, supervisory park ranger, prepared the park’s first “landscape plan” in 1985. By later standards, this was more of a vegetation treatment plan than a cultural landscape management document. Carney assembled what meager historical documentation there was pertaining to the way the landscape might have appeared in the fur trade era. His main research finding was that in the fur trade era the ground was probably cleared of trees and brush for a considerable distance around the stockade. Not only were trees chopped down for construction material and fuel wood, the ground was also largely cleared of brush

⁵⁹ Clayton interview, Brandon Seitz interview by Theodore Catton, September 27, 2021.

⁶⁰ National Park Service, *Master Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota*, 8, 15.

to prevent accidental fire. So, to recreate the historic scene, the landscape plan called for removing all trees and brush from most of the historic stockade area. However, some trees and brush were to be left for screening. For instance, the existing vegetation around the maintenance shop and seasonal employee residences was to be left standing to provide a visual screen of those intrusive structures as viewed from County Road 17. And in consideration of aesthetics as well as cost, the prescription to clear the vegetation would not extend across the road; trees and brush would be allowed to grow mostly undisturbed on Mount Rose and around the terminus of the Grand Portage Trail, and brush (but not trees) would be allowed in the area now called the East Meadow Area. Minor exceptions would be made for vista clearing near the top of Mount Rose and for the removal of hazard trees along trails.⁶¹

This 1985 landscape plan was never approved. The Midwest Regional Office found that the plan was inadequate to qualify as a cultural landscape plan under new management guidelines. The park submitted a project proposal in 1987 and 1988 to get help in preparing a qualified plan but it did not get the requested funding. The regional office informed the park that it did not have the staff or funding to assist the park in completing a bona fide CLR, though it commended the park for its efforts in trying to develop a plan on its own. Meanwhile, the regional office opposed the idea of removing all vegetation from around the historic stockade. It cautioned that before such a vegetation treatment could be put in effect the NPS would need to study the implications for surface runoff and soil erosion – in other words, it would need to make a formal environmental assessment.⁶²

Through the 1990s, park managers showed a growing appreciation of cultural landscape qualities associated with Mount Rose and the East Meadow Area. In the early 2000s, staff desired more information about the past vegetation cover. During the archeological survey of the Grand Portage Trail, managers and researchers began to form a clearer impression of how much the forest of today on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation differs from what existed before the logging era. Examination of historic records and photographs revealed new information about CCC tree plantings around the stockade area and potato fields that once existed in the East Meadow Area. Overall, managers developed a view of a more layered cultural landscape than was formerly recognized. In the mid-2000s,

⁶¹ Supervisory Park Ranger to File, November 21, 1985, GPNM, CF, File “Landscape Plan.”

⁶² Superintendent to Regional Director, March 2, 1988, and Regional Director to Superintendent, July 14, 1988, GPNM, CF, File “Landscape Plan.”

Grand Portage finally obtained the funding to complete a more rigorous analysis of its cultural landscape by way of the CLI and CLR. Geoffrey Burt, historical landscape architect with the Midwest Regional Office, completed the CLI in 2005. That paved the way for completion of the CLR. The final spiral-bound report, replete with numerous foldout maps, chronologies, and historic photographs, was produced in December 2009. The CLR was prepared by a team composed of the Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects in association with John Milner Associates, Inc. and NPS staff at the national monument and in the Midwest Regional Office.⁶³



The mouth of Grand Portage Bay with Isle Royale in the distance. Part of the cultural landscape, this view from the village has not changed in three hundred years. (Authors photo.)

In some ways, the NPS cultural landscape program brought the NPS back to its roots in landscape architecture. Landscape architecture was one of the oldest and most esteemed professions in the NPS organization. But of course, the NPS landscape tradition came out of the tradition of the designed landscape aesthetic, not a “vernacular landscape” aesthetic emanating from the type created at Grand Portage. The NPS landscape tradition brought forth an approach to national park design rooted in the formal parks of eighteenth-century Britain and Europe and uniquely adapted to the open spaces and scenic splendors of the American public domain. The NPS’s modern cultural landscape program was rooted in landscape architecture, but it was also interdisciplinary with lines to archeology, history, and the natural sciences. At Grand Portage, the cultural landscape reflected a layering and blending of fur trade influence, longtime Ojibwe occupation and use, and twentieth-century park development.

⁶³ Cooper interview.

For Cooper, the CLR for Grand Portage was a learning exercise for the whole CLR team. Although the landscape architects on the team had produced other CLRs for other national park units, they were not prepared to analyze the forest vegetation along the Grand Portage Trail in the fine-grained manner that the national monument staff wanted. The landscape architects' training was geared toward the designed landscape rather than the vernacular landscape, and their knowledge of vegetation was oriented toward artificial plantings and ornamental trees rather than ecological succession of forest communities under the variegated influence of human activities that included edible plant harvesting, intentional burning, land clearing, and commercial logging. Cooper, as well as Brandon Seitz, the national monument's biological science technician, wanted to know what species were missing from the overstory and what species were culturally significant or missing in the understory. There was a new impetus in the NPS to conduct ethnobotanical restoration – to tap traditional ecological knowledge as a means to improve forest restoration efforts. Cooper and Seitz wanted the CLR to interface in a useful way with the forest species inventory and monitoring that was right then getting started under the NPS's new systemwide inventory and monitoring program. Seitz also was keen to coordinate efforts with the Grand Portage Band's forestry program. As a result, the CLR study team was expanded to include forest ecology specialists. There were limits to how much the CLR could do, however. Notwithstanding the CLR's last chapter on implementation, with its fifty pages of vegetation treatments for various species and for specific places in the park, the final document proved to be more of a starting place for further inquiry than a resource with all the answers. As such, the CLR became one of the national monument's key management documents after national monument staff got over some initial disappointment with it.⁶⁴

The CLR helped to bring the East Meadow Area of the national monument into clearer relief. Before the CLR was produced, the usual conception of the national monument land base was that it was an amalgamation of three blocks: the 102-acre Fort Charlotte site, the 78-acre Grand Portage Bay site, and the 530-acre linear parcel along the 8.5-mile Grand Portage Trail, which forms a corridor linking the other two parcels. That conception of the national monument remained useful, and it corresponds well to the distinctive barbell shape of the national monument as viewed on a map. However, the CLR offered a useful refinement as it broke down the dense and complicated Grand Portage Bay site into a cluster of subareas. The CLR called this area the Grand Portage Bay Complex and highlighted the

⁶⁴ Cooper interview; Seitz interview; Clayton interview.

fact that Grand Portage Creek more or less partitioned the historic depot area from the former village area, the latter adjoined by the East Meadow Area. These were the national monument’s core areas, each rich in historical and archeological resources, one side of the creek being dominated by the fur trade history theme, and the other side being ripe for interpretation of the Ojibwe heritage theme.



East Meadow.
(Authors photo.)

After Clayton took over from Cooper as resource manager, the East Meadow Area became a major focus for resource management and interpretive planning. In 2015, the NPS prepared a plan for interpretive development of the East Meadow Area. Development is complicated by the fact that the area is a wetland area and needs to be afforded that protection as well as protection as an archeological site. Besides surveying the archeological resource, the NPS has delineated the wetlands and conducted an environmental assessment. Meanwhile, the development plans for the East Meadow Area continue to evolve.

Chapter Eight

Natural Resource Management

In the early years, Grand Portage National Monument focused mainly on three natural resource management concerns: logging activity on the edge of the Grand Portage corridor, the beaver population, and shoreline erosion. Since 1999, the range of natural resource management concerns has grown much more diverse. The new overarching concern is with the looming effects of climate change on the ecosystem. Directly related to that, Grand Portage is involved in the NPS mission to inventory and monitor fauna, flora, soils, and water quality in its natural-area parks in order to establish baseline information for preserving natural conditions before climate change alters ecosystems to the point that baseline information is no longer recoverable.

As with cultural resource management, the big change in natural resource management occurred following the installation of a new management team and a staff reorganization at the national monument. Those changes accompanied the major event in the national monument's administrative history: the promulgation of the TSGA agreement with the Grand Portage Band in 1999. Those signal events were largely responsible for bringing a new level of commitment and energy to the program after 1999. Grand Portage National Monument is the only unit in the National Park System where the NPS co-manages natural resources with a resident Indian tribe. As such, it is a beacon of light and unique source of interest. The park coordinates with the Band's natural resource management staff on virtually all management actions and research initiatives. The park employs young members of the Band in a native youth corps, or what it now calls the Gichi Onigaming Conservation Crew.

The year 1999, coincidentally, also marked the start of the Park Service's systemwide upgrade of natural resource management known as the Natural Resource Challenge. The Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network was formed, providing another layer of scientific research and management guidance capability on top of what the park could do with its limited staff and budget. The Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring

Network serves Grand Portage National Monument along with eight other units located in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana.¹

Before 1999, the resource management program was managed primarily by the division chiefs of the interpretation and ranger divisions (with *natural* resources being mainly addressed by the ranger division). Coordination of cultural and natural resource management was therefore minimal. As stated in the 1995 resource management plan, “This fragmenting of resources management duties [was] less than desirable.”² Furthermore, resource management generally got short shrift as interpretation and visitor protection claimed most of the division chiefs’ attention. The 1995 resource management plan suggested that it would be better if the cultural and natural resource programs were combined within a separate resource management division so they would receive their due. Superintendent Cochrane acted on that recommendation and executed a staff reorganization in 1999. David Cooper became the park’s first chief of resource management. As an archeologist, Cooper focused on cultural resources while relying on resource assistant Suzanne Gucciardo, who held a doctorate degree in the natural sciences, to be the lead on natural resources. Half a decade later, Gucciardo transferred to the Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network, and Brandon Seitz, an experienced field biologist, was hired in her place. Half a decade after that, Cooper left and William Clayton became the chief of resource management. Clayton and Seitz fell into the same arrangement as Cooper and Gucciardo, with Clayton focused on cultural resources and Seitz on natural resources. Prior to taking the job at Grand Portage, Seitz worked for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the U. S. Forest Service, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Seitz has now been at Grand Portage for more than a decade and a half, marking another instance in which Grand Portage has benefited from a long tour of duty by a dedicated staff member.³

As natural resource management changed significantly after 1999, this chapter is divided into two sections covering “the early years” before 1999 and “recent times” since 1999, with subsections cataloguing the many natural resource concerns in each period.

¹ The Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network serves the following units: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Grand Portage National Monument, Indiana Dunes National Park, Isle Royale National Park, Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, St. Croix National Scenic River, and Voyageurs National Park.

² Resource Management Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, September 1995, GPNM, CF, N files. Quotation at p. 32.

³ Cooper interview; Clayton interview; Seitz interview.

The Early Years

The entire land area of Grand Portage National Monument was zoned as historic area, so natural resource management in the early years was oriented to the protection of historic and archeological resources. Park managers were concerned with shoreline erosion along the lake frontage as well as streambank erosion near the mouth of Grand Portage Creek because these were areas where archeological resources were at risk. They were also concerned with logging activity on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation that would encroach on the forested Grand Portage Trail corridor. The beaver population was also of interest, not only because of the beaver's iconic role in the fur trade, but also because beaver dams had the potential to flood sections of the Grand Portage Trail.⁴

Shoreline Erosion

A resource management plan in 1981 identified shoreline erosion as the primary natural resource concern in the park. The water level of Lake Superior fluctuated by several inches seasonally and by as much as a foot or two across the years. At high water, the wave action was constantly eroding the shoreline. Storm events brought even more erosive action.

Waves batter the rocky shore
south of Two Fish House Beach,
Grand Portage Indian
Reservation.
(Authors photo.)



As a 1990 study of erosion hazards along Minnesota's lakeshore observed, Lake Superior could be "as smooth as glass one day, and have 20 foot high waves another." Easterly winds brought the most destructive storms to Minnesota's Lake Superior shoreline. The 1990 study mapped high and low erosion potential for the entire lakeshore from Duluth to Canada. Virtually all of the shallow, east-facing Grand Portage Bay shoreline was mapped as "high,"

⁴ Grand Portage National Monument, Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, 1981, GPNM, RG 1, Box 11, D18.

while most of the shoreline from Hat Point to Pigeon Point was mapped as “low,” and over half the shoreline from Grand Portage Bay west to the Reservation River was mapped as “low.” Grand Portage National Monument lay in an exposed position relative to Lake Superior shoreline erosion. After the park identified shoreline erosion as a major concern in 1981, it set up monitoring points in the following year. There was some question whether erosion rates were accelerating, perhaps as a result of a slight rise in the average water level since the start of water level regulation at the Soo Locks in the early twentieth century.⁵

In 1984, the park determined that the rate of erosion was accelerating along the banks of Grand Portage Creek near its mouth, threatening archeological resources there. The streambank erosion may have been related to higher-than-average lake levels causing the formation of new bars in the final reach of the creek, with the bars in turn causing the creek to migrate laterally. In 1986, a fall storm caused significant erosion of the shoreline east of the creek as well as damage to the dock. Based on these observations, a three-phase shoreline stabilization project was undertaken. Altogether, a section of shoreline 400 feet in length was reinforced with rock rip-rap underlain with specially designed filter cloth. The streambanks of Grand Portage Creek near the mouth were also reinforced. The last phase of this project was completed in 1988, a year in which the level of Lake Superior was helpfully about a foot below average.⁶

Forest Protection

As stated in the 1981 resources management plan, the aim of forest protection was “to perpetuate, to the degree possible, the forest vegetation and the general setting that existed during the historically significant period and to minimize the adverse effects of past and present human activities on these resources.”⁷ In the 1970s and 1980s, managers were

⁵ Grand Portage National Monument, Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, 1981, GPNM, RG 1, Box 11, D18; Carol A. Johnston, “Erosion Hazard of Minnesota’s Lake Superior Shoreline,” *Minnesota Sea Grant Research Bulletin* 44 (1990); Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1982, HFC; Brian A. M. Phillips, “Water Level History and Shoreline Change – Grand Portage National Monument, MN,” paper prepared for Grand Portage National Monument, May 2001, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.

⁶ Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1988, HFC.; Superintendent to Regional Director, March 24, 1986, GPNM, RG 1, Box 33, L76; Dean C. Einwalter to Lauren Larsen, December 10, 1986, and Larsen to Einwalter, January 2, 1987, and COTR to Contracting Officer (attaching completion report), December 18, 1989, GPNM, RG 1, Box 15, D32; Trista L. Thornberry-Ehrlich, *Grand Portage National Monument, Geologic Resources Inventory Report*, Natural Resources Report NPS/NRSS/GRD/NRR – 2019/2025 (Fort Collins, CO: National Park Service, 2019), 32.

⁷ Grand Portage National Monument, Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, 1981, GPNM, RG 1, Box 11, D18.

concerned about logging activity on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation near or adjacent to the national monument. Since the Grand Portage Trail corridor portion of the national monument is linear, it made forest protection difficult. Furthermore, since the corridor bisects the reservation and the 1958 establishing act provides for access through the corridor to facilitate logging operations on the reservation on either side, the linear shape of the national monument added that complicating factor. The NPS negotiated with the Grand Portage Band to minimize logging impacts near or on the edge of the national monument (see Chapter Three).

All wildfire was suppressed in Grand Portage National Monument until a new wildfire plan was written in 1995. The park coordinated for fire protection with both the BIA and the Forest Service. From at least 1978, the park had memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with BIA forestry on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation and with the Gunflint Ranger District of the Superior National Forest. These MOUs were renewed every five years. All three federal agencies were united in their policy of total fire suppression. The policy aimed at protecting “forests and structures from fire insofar as possible.” The NPS was primarily interested in protecting historic resources, and that included the forest along the Grand Portage Trail, which formed part of the historic scene in that area of the national monument.⁸

The NPS began to rethink its fire policy in the 1960s in light of its mission to preserve natural conditions and its recognition that natural fire is an important agent in forest ecology. The NPS redoubled its efforts to reform fire policy after the big fire season in 1988. The first sign of a new direction in Grand Portage National Monument came with the visit of ecologist Walter L. Loupe, an ecologist at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, in October 1988. Loupe inspected the forest resource and conducted a review of the literature on fire ecology relevant to Grand Portage National Monument.⁹

The linear form of the park and the way it was embedded within the Grand Portage Indian Reservation still made it difficult to abandon the old and increasingly discredited fire exclusion policy. However, as tribal governments began to retake control of forest management from the BIA, the movement to reform fire policy spread across Indian

⁸ Memorandum of Understanding, The Gunflint District, Superior National Forest, Grand Portage National Monument, 1983, and Memorandum of Understanding, between the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Park Service for Grand Portage Indian Reservation and Grand Portage National Monument, 1983, GPNM, RG 1, Box 4, A44.

⁹ Ecologist, Pictured Rocks to Superintendent, Grand Portage, March 3, 1989, GPNM, RG 1, Box 34, File N22.

Country. Fire ecologists had long known that American Indian peoples once shaped forest ecology across much of North America through their intentional burning practices. Now, as sovereign tribes regained control over their forests, there was a further impetus to reform fire policy. When the Grand Portage Band took over forestry on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, it aimed to restore fire on the landscape so that certain forest resources important to the traditional culture would thrive again. For example, the reservation’s natural resource managers wanted to re-establish a fire mosaic to increase the moose population. That change in fire policy on the Indian reservation was the paradigm shift that the NPS needed in order to write a new fire management plan for Grand Portage National Monument.¹⁰

The 1996 fire management plan for Grand Portage began with a full acknowledgement of the role that lightning-ignited fires and aboriginal burning had played in shaping the North Woods landscape over the past 10,000 years. “Fire has been a major factor controlling nutrient cycles and energy pathways, and in maintaining the diversity, productivity, and stability of the whole ecosystem,” it began. The plan went on to note that the policy of fire exclusion was fully in effect in the area by the 1940s and that the NPS joined with the BIA and the Forest Service in suppressing fires after the national monument was established in 1958. The effects of fire exclusion were layered on top of earlier changes in the forest that came about during the logging era. “Effective fire suppression and prevention programs since the 1940s, in conjunction with large-scale logging and market and subsistence hunting, have dramatically altered [the] terrestrial ecosystem from its original pre-European conditions.”¹¹

The first objective of the new fire policy was stated as follows:

Utilize management-ignited prescribed fire as a professional management tool to restore and perpetuate the natural environment, its processes, and the historic scene. To the extent possible, management-ignited prescribed burns will be used to simulate the effects of lightning fire-maintained natural mosaic of climax, subclimax, and seral forest vegetation, as well as reducing hazardous fuels.

¹⁰ National Park Service, Midwest Region, “Environmental Assessment for the Fire Management Plan, Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” December 1996, ETIC.

¹¹ Ibid.

While the 1996 fire management plan clearly articulated the new paradigm for wildfire management, its implementation was gradual. The 1996 plan was soon superseded by another fire management plan in 2004. The re-introduction of fire on the landscape really only got underway after 1999, so that topic will be taken up in the next section.

Beaver Ecology

The 1981 resource management plan cited beaver management as an important issue. As with shoreline erosion, the park arrived at this concern by way of its chief concern with protecting cultural resources. It described the significance of beaver to the park through a kind of back-door explanation:

It is a management objective “to provide protection and preservation of the historic resources and to provide for visitor protection and safety.” One of these historic resources is the Grand Portage Trail which was used by the voyageurs during the Fur Trade Era of (1730-1804) and is maintained today as a route for portaging canoeist[s] and hikers. There are a number of streams and low swamp areas along the length of the trail which are inhabited by beaver. Through dam building activity of the beaver the trail becomes flooded and nearly impassible periodically. Historically, the beaver were trapped from the area, now, however, this activity is prohibited on the monument but allowed on adjacent reservation lands.¹²

It was, of course, ironic that the very mammal that was once at the center of the fur trade should now pose a risk to the historic Grand Portage Trail. Managers were torn whether to breach beaver dams and remove beaver from the area to protect the historic resource, or conversely, to protect the beaver population and avoid disruption of “the natural ecosystem of the beaver” and relocate the trail around beaver ponds. The recommended course of action was to pursue both courses at once! In those instances where the trail did not have to be moved very much, the beaver activity would be accommodated; in other instances where moving the trail would be costly, the beaver would be relocated.

¹² Grand Portage National Monument, Resources Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, 1981, GPNM, RG 1, Box 11, D18.

In 1987, the NPS contracted with two biologists, D. W. Smith and R. O. Peterson, to study beaver ecology in Grand Portage National Monument. The biologists examined twenty beaver colonies in or nearby the corridor area. Eleven were active and nine were inactive. They found that the beaver ecology in Grand Portage was in line with the beaver ecology elsewhere in northern Minnesota and in three other parks in the region: Voyageurs, Isle Royale, and Apostle Islands. Regionally, beaver populations were at a low ebb until the



Beaver lodge on the Superior Hiking Trail north of Hovland.
(Authors photo.)

1930s, having been trapped out and further injured by habitat loss through the removal of the forest in the logging era. As the forest returned, beaver populations recovered. Return of aspen was especially key. Water quality and fairly constant stream flows were also important natural conditions for beaver to thrive. Where beaver colonies thrived, other wildlife benefited from the beavers' water impoundments and associated

changes to habitat. In their month-long survey in Grand Portage, the biologists observed the usual complement of wildlife species that benefited from the presence of beaver: mink, muskrat, otter, ungulates, and many species of birds. Since the size and characteristics of the beaver population in the area was consistent with what was found in other natural area parks in the region, and since beaver ecology was an important component of the ecosystem, the biologists recommended against removing any beaver colonies in the corridor area. If it became necessary to turn sections of the historic trail into boardwalks and bridges, then that was the proper management action. At the same time, the biologists recommended that the current amount of trapping of beaver on the reservation adjacent to national monument land did not pose much threat to the beaver population, so the NPS should not attempt to establish a buffer zone there. Park management basically followed this prescription.¹³

¹³ Douglas W. Smith and Rolf O. Peterson, “A Survey of Beaver Ecology in Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota,” 1987, ETIC.

Recent Times

Starting in 1999, natural resource management broadened in scope to consider the total environment. The change was underpinned by a cluster of new perspectives that all gained currency around the same time. These new perspectives were synergistic. Together, they brought about a decisive change in natural resource management.

First, there was the fact that the TSGA agreement opened a new era for the partnership between the NPS and the Grand Portage Band. It was an auspicious time for a new beginning for co-management of natural resources, because the Grand Portage Band was then a few years into expanding its own natural resource management program on the reservation. Natural resources on the reservation were largely under the control of the BIA until the Band developed casino revenue in the 1990s, enabling it to manage its natural resources for itself. Perhaps the watershed event in the Band's rising involvement with resource stewardship came in 1995 when the RTC passed a land-use ordinance covering the entire reservation. At the time, the NPS raised concerns with the RTC over how the ordinance did or did not take account of NPS jurisdiction over national monument land within the reservation. Following this exchange, NPS officials saw that the ordinance strengthened the RTC's hand for managing natural resources surrounding the national monument, thereby helping to establish a stronger foundation for co-management of resources by the NPS and the RTC. In 2000, the Band won an important legal case in the Tribal Court of Appeals that demonstrated its new clout. The case originated in 1997 when the RTC brought suit against a non-Indian resident property owner for failure to comply with the ordinance. The decision by the Tribal Court of Appeals upheld the RTC's authority to enforce the ordinance on non-Indian-owned private property located within the exterior boundaries of the reservation. In the meantime, the property owner appealed the matter to federal district court and the federal judge refused to take the case. At stake in this suit: stopping construction of a large, metal building at a highly visible spot near Hat Point. These developments revealed how the RTC was determined to use zoning and other tools to protect the natural environment in the homeland.¹⁴

¹⁴ Norman W. Deschampe to all Band members, landowners and others, May 3, 1995, Superintendent to Chief Interpreter, May 12, 1995, Superintendent to Regional Director, May 12, 1995, Field Director to Superintendent, June 14, 1995, and William W. Schenk, Field Director, to Norman Deschampe, Chairman, July 17, 1995, GPNM, CF, File Grand Portage Reservation Land Use Ordinance; "Band wins Melby suit," and "Zoning and lawsuits in Grand Portage," undated clippings in file "Grand Portage Indian Reservation" in library vertical files, GPNM.

The NPS reciprocated when it prepared the park’s GMP in the early 2000s. The GMP zoned the national monument lands into “primitive trail,” “*resource trust*,” and “interpretive historic” zones. (The area zoned as “resource trust” comprised about 95 percent of the total area.) “Resource trust” is an unusual designation in a national park area. “Trust lands” and “trust resources” ordinarily receive that designation as a product of the federal trust relationship with Indian tribes. The NPS coined the term “resource trust” for areas in Grand Portage National Monument so that stewardship of those areas would be in line with stewardship of areas outside the national monument which were under the direct care of the Band’s Trust Lands and Natural Resources Office. The thinking behind the term “resource trust” was recorded on pages 21-22 of the GMP where it was acknowledged that lands comprising the national monument were to be held in trust and would revert to the Grand Portage Band should the national monument ever be disestablished. Here the GMP went on to declare that “Grand Portage National Monument is public property managed by the National Park Service, and the Grand Portage Band did not retain any property rights that would constitute a legal trust responsibility.” Nevertheless, the Band had other rights to the land spelled out in the establishing act, and “those rights” the GMP stated, “will be honored.”¹⁵

Another new perspective that was emerging by 1999 was the view that natural resources in Grand Portage National Monument were closely tied to Ojibwe lifeways and heritage. To a large degree, the natural resources that mattered most for the NPS were the ones that mattered most to the Grand Portage Band. When resource managers learned from community elders, for example, that their people used to gather sweetgrass in the East Meadow Area, then the restoration of sweetgrass became a natural resource management priority. Since the Ojibwe had resided at Grand Portage for countless generations and had shaped the ecology through their cultural use of the environment, it followed that restoration of culturally important plant species was key to the NPS mission of preserving natural conditions at Grand Portage (or in more modern terms, its mission of enhancing ecosystem resilience). The management term of art is “ethnobotanical restoration.” Managers seek to obtain traditional ecological knowledge about a resident people’s historic cultivation,

¹⁵ U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, *Grand Portage National Monument / Minnesota, Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*, 21-22.

propagation, and harvesting of plants so that the managers can restore, to the extent possible, former plant distributions and associations.¹⁶

Another new perspective on Grand Portage National Monument was afforded by the Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network as it set up shop in the early 2000s. The mission of the network is to track trends in wildlife and plant populations, landscape conditions, and air and water quality. The manager of the Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network, Bill Route, was the person chiefly responsible for determining that Grand Portage National Monument would be included in the network. That is to say, Route decided that the natural resources in Grand Portage made the area a worthy addition to the network. Other historical areas (for example, Keweenaw National Historical Park in Michigan) were not included in the network because they lacked the requisite natural resources. Although Grand Portage National Monument is just 710 acres, its land area stretches from the shore of Lake Superior to the Boundary Waters. From an ecological inventory and monitoring perspective, the Grand Portage Trail corridor forms a valuable transect across a swath of southern boreal forest on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. So, Grand Portage National Monument joined eight other units dotted around the Lake Superior basin in the NPS's new initiative to identify what it called "Vital Signs" for measuring ecosystem health. The network's relationship to the parks is basically one of give and take: it gives the parks a layer of scientific study that they would not otherwise have, and it takes those findings from the field to chart how all the national parks – and by extension, the whole biosphere – are holding up to the stresses of environmental change.¹⁷

The "Vital Signs" metaphor that was adopted by the NPS Inventory and Monitoring Network around the turn of the century proved to be apt. Over the first two decades of the twenty-first century, earth scientists' dire warnings about the "cascading effects" and "feedback loops" of climate change became more and more frequent. The world had to adjust to a new reality in which weather disasters became more frequent and potential "ecosystem collapse" hovered on the horizon. Not only did the evidence from the field

¹⁶ Seitz interview. Seitz described ethnobotanical restoration as putting people back with plants – recognizing humans as part of nature, and cited the pathbreaking work of ethnobotanist M. Kat Anderson, author of *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

¹⁷ Record of conversation between Brandon Seitz and the authors, September 14, 2021; National Park Service, *Natural Resource Information Division, Inventory and Monitoring Program Annual Report Fiscal Year 1996* (Fort Collins, CO: National Park Service, Natural Resource Information Division, 1997), 1-2, 67; "Parks for Science, Science for Parks," Great Lakes Inventory & Monitoring Network at <https://www.nps.gov/im/glkn/index.htm>; Clayton interview.

continue to mount, it was coupled with repeated failures by the international community to meet target goals to slow the release of greenhouse gases so as to limit global warming. As a consequence, natural resource managers began to rethink their priorities and strategies. For instance, in planning for heavy rains and potential flooding on lower Grand Portage Creek, they asked if it was appropriate to drop the 100-year flood-event marker and pick up the 500-year marker instead. Recently, the U.S. Geological Survey installed a sophisticated new stream gauge in the creek to measure water depth and flow and, when it becomes necessary, temperature and water chemistry as well, gathering baseline data to prepare for “what’s coming.” Alluding to that more apprehensive outlook that was starting to reshape the program, chief of resource management Bill Clayton did not mince words. Much of the current field research, he said, aims at “putting down baseline information for the coming ecological catastrophes we’re facing.”¹⁸

The Beginnings of Ecological Monitoring

The NPS initiative to institute more systematic ecological inventory and monitoring across all the national parks actually began in the early 1990s and slowly gained momentum over the decade, culminating in the formal creation of the Inventory and Monitoring Network at the end of the decade. In 1989, in response to a data call about the level of inventory and monitoring then in existence around the National Park System, Superintendent Einwalter noted that the national monument had made a fragmentary start on inventory and monitoring with surveys and mapping of vascular plant species in the mid-1980s. The plant surveys were chiefly for the purpose of identifying species that were listed as endangered, threatened, or of special concern at the federal or state level. The park was also continuing to monitor beaver activity.¹⁹

Early inventory and monitoring research in the parks was opportunistic, often piggybacking on university-based researchers’ interests and research designs. In 1992, for

¹⁸ Clayton interview. On Grand Portage Creek, see Faith Fitzpatrick, “Grand Portage Creek Historical Watershed Geomorphic Assessment Work Plan Draft,” April 10, 2013, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office, File Grand Portage Creek Study. See also letter reports from Michael Martin to Superintendent, January 10, 2008, and July 10, 2009, copies provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.

¹⁹ Superintendent to Regional Director, April 25, 1989, GPNM, RG 1, Box 34, N26. For a review of the early plant survey work, see David B. MacLean and L. Suzanne Gucciardo, *Vegetational Analysis of Grand Portage National Monument from 1986-2004* (Ashland, WI: National Park Service, Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network, 2005), 1-35. Four vegetation plots were established in 1986 and sampled again in 1992, 1999, and 2004.

example, Clifford M. Wetmore, a professor of botany at the University of Minnesota, carried out a lichen study project in Grand Portage National Monument in response to growing concerns about acid rain, because lichens were known to be very sensitive to low levels of atmospheric pollutants. Specifically, there was concern about sulfuric acid pollution emanating from the recently reactivated coal-fired power plant at Taconite Harbor, located about sixty-five miles west of Grand Portage. Wetmore's study was funded through the U.S. Forest Service and run through the Great Lakes Cooperative Park Studies Unit at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Wetmore was assisted by park personnel. The study found no indication that lichens in Grand Portage National Monument were being damaged by air pollution. The study provided a baseline for future monitoring. Wetmore recommended limited annual monitoring and a complete restudy of the lichen flora in five to ten years.²⁰

A faunal survey was conducted at Grand Portage National Monument in the fall of 1992 and the summers of 1993 and 1994 by three biologists with the Department of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. This project aimed at making a complete inventory of all bird, mammal, reptile, and amphibian species found in the park along with a preliminary determination of each species' residency status, abundance, and distribution. The study was made in direct response to the NPS's initial call for systematic biological inventory of national park lands. Altogether more than a thousand hours were spent conducting the inventory. A total of 102 bird, 27 mammal, 8 amphibian, and 1 reptile species were inventoried. This baseline inventory found that Grand Portage National Monument contained "the majority of species characteristic of mature boreal and mixed deciduous forest ecosystems."²¹

Monitoring of water quality in Grand Portage National Monument began in 1994-1995. Three stations were established: one on Poplar Creek, another on the right fork of Grand Portage Creek, and the last one 100 meters above the mouth of Grand Portage Creek. Researchers Terence P. Boyle and Ann Richmond collected data on water chemistry and temperature and inventoried macroinvertebrates occurring at each location. They were most interested in dissolved oxygen levels, which are affected by water temperature and turbidity,

²⁰ Clifford M. Wetmore, "Lichens and Air Quality in Grand Portage National Monument," report prepared for the National Park Service, June 1992, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz, pp. 2, 16-17.

²¹ Jennifer L. Graetz, Robert A. Garrott, and Scott R. Craven, "Faunal Surveys of Agate Fossil Beds and Grand Portage National Monuments," report prepared for the National Park Service, January 1995, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz, p. 65.

and are critical to the health of cold-water fisheries and specifically the population of brook trout that had been lately reintroduced in Grand Portage Creek. The placement of the second station was intended to monitor the effect of a low-head dam located up the creek outside the national monument corridor.²²



Middle Falls on the
Pigeon River.
(Authors photo.)

Rare plant surveys were conducted in 1997, 1999, and 2000 under the direction of Gary B. Walton. Among other species, the surveys identified three species of fern found on crumbling cliffs on the side of Mount Rose.²³

All these baseline inventories predated the establishment of the Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network. In 1999, the NPS’s I & M initiative gained a huge head of steam when Congress funded the Natural Resource Challenge, promising a service-wide budget increase of over \$100 million for natural resource management over the next five years.²⁴

While baseline inventories were an important first step for I & M, setting up monitoring for the long term proved to be a bigger task. First, the I & M Network had to be formed to design and execute the nationwide program. Some 270 National Park System units were grouped into 32 networks based on geography and ecological likenesses. Three networks in the Midwest Region were designated as the Great Lakes, Northern Great Plains, and Heartland Inventory and Monitoring Networks. They had main offices in Ashland,

²² Terrence P. Boyle and Ann Richmond, “Report on the Monitoring of Two Streams in Grand Portage National Monument,” report prepared for the National Park Service by the Biological Resources Division, U.S. Geological Survey, Fort Collins, CO, March 1997, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz, pp. 1-8.

²³ Gary B. Walton, “Rare Plant Species of Grand Portage National Monument” (letter report), August 18, 2000, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz, p. 29.

²⁴ Timothy Cochrane to Curtis Gagnon, December 15, 1999, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant’s Office, Reading File 2000.

Wisconsin; Rapid City, South Dakota; and Republic, Missouri, respectively. All three reported to a coordinator in Omaha. The Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network, established in 2000, encompassed nine units of which Grand Portage National Monument was the smallest in land area. The network assembled a staff from its constituent units as well as from the U.S. Geological Survey, where scores of former NPS scientists were at that time sequestered having been moved out of the NPS into the short-lived National Biological Survey in the mid-1990s. Next, each network held scoping sessions to select “Vital Signs.” Vital Signs ranged across five broad subject areas: air and climate, geology and soils, water, biological integrity, and landscapes (ecosystem patterns and processes), and each network made a selection that would best reflect the health of ecosystems found across all the units in that network. Each vital sign was linked to a protocol that defined how the long-term monitoring would be performed. In the early going, some protocols proved to be unrealistic; a lot of retooling was necessary to arrive at something that was rigorous yet sustainable.

The Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network completed its Long-Term Ecological Monitoring Plan in 2006. The network plan included twenty-one Vital Signs linked to sixteen protocols. Nineteen of the twenty-one Vital Signs would be monitored in Grand Portage National Monument. Those nineteen Vital Signs were named as follows: Air Quality, Weather, Core Water Quality Suite, Water Level Fluctuations, Advanced Water Quality Suite, Aquatic/Wetland Plant Communities, Fish Communities, Plant and Animal Exotics, Land Use/Cover Coarse Scale, Land Use/Cover Fine Scale, Terrestrial Plants, Problem Species (white-tailed deer), Terrestrial Pests and Pathogens, Succession, Soils, Bird Communities, Trophic Bioaccumulation, Species Health and Reproductive Success, and Amphibians and Reptiles.²⁵

For each Vital Sign that was to be monitored in Grand Portage National Monument, the network developed a protocol that was specifically tailored to the area. Thanks to the improved relations between the NPS and the Band, the potential now existed to expand the scope of the monitoring activity to include some or all of the Grand Portage Indian Reservation where appropriate. For example, the initial run of water quality monitoring in Grand Portage National Monument through the year 2006 was combined with water

²⁵ Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network, *A Decade of Science and Stewardship, 2006-2016* (Ashland, WI: National Park Service, Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network, 2016), 3; Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network, *Long-Term Ecological Monitoring Plan, Great Lakes Inventory & Monitoring Network*, Natural Resource Report NPS/GLKN/NRR – 2007/001 (Fort Collins, CO: National Park Service, Natural Resource Program Center, 2006), 60-61.

sampling data from fifteen lakes and eight streams on the Grand Portage Indian Reservation. The report was co-authored by two scientists with the NPS and one scientist with the Grand Portage Trust Lands Environmental Department.²⁶ The cooperation was in welcome contrast to the NPS’s first effort to gather baseline water quality data from the Band in 1998, prior to the TSGA agreement, which had met with the Band’s refusal.²⁷

Inventory and Monitoring Continued

As the Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network set up its systematic long-term monitoring project, the national monument actively pursued more inventory and monitoring both on its own and in conjunction with the network. In 2001, park staff obtained funding for no less than six separate studies:

- An inventory of moth species found in the park; 82 species were identified through live capture.²⁸
- A contracted fire history study; park staff assisted by supplying the contractor with historic background information, aerial photographs, and GIS coverage.
- An inventory of fish species present in a beaver pond within the Grand Portage Trail corridor; park staff cooperated with Grand Portage Band Trust Lands and Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff on the study.
- A contracted study of historic Lake Superior water levels within the national monument area.
- A study in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey about bedrock geology in the national monument area.
- Monitoring of snowmobile activity within the national monument, focused on the powerline crossing area of the Grand Portage Trail.²⁹

²⁶ Brenda Moraska Lafrancois, Margaret Watkins, and Ryan Maki, *Water Quality Conditions and Patterns on the Grand Portage Reservation and Grand Portage National Monument, Minnesota: Implications for Nutrient Criteria Development and Future Monitoring*, Natural Resource Technical Report NPS/GLKN/NRTR 2009/223 (Fort Collins, CO: National Park Service, Natural Resource Program Center, 2009), 3.

²⁷ National Park Service, Water Resources Division, *Baseline Water Quality Data Inventory and Analysis, Grand Portage National Monument*, Technical Report NPS/NRWRD/NTR-98/195, March 1999, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz, p. v.

²⁸ David B. MacLean, *Initial Inventory of the Moths of the Grand Portage National Monument, Cook County, Minnesota* (Grand Portage: Grand Portage National Park, 2002), pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz, p. 2.

²⁹ This and the other five projects are listed in the Superintendent’s Annual Report, 2001, ETIC.

In the next year, the park had an additional five inventory and monitoring projects underway. These included a night-caller bird survey, a breeding bird survey, a carabid beetle survey (an extension of the moth survey), an amphibian and small mammal survey (taking inventory of those critters caught in the carabid beetle traps), and an expansion of its vegetation monitoring (with the establishment of five new vegetation plots co-located with the carabid beetle trap sites).³⁰

Mercury and Other Bio-accumulative Contaminants

As the years went on, monitoring threw a spotlight on various environmental pollutants and invasive species. A curious example was mercury. Monitoring of soil and water quality revealed traces of mercury at four times the concentration found in other NPS units in the region. As mercury can be toxic to animal life, the elevated levels were not just a curiosity but a concern. Further investigation led to the conclusion that the mercury contamination dated from the fur trade era; the mercury came from vermilion, a red pigment that was transported along trade routes and was used and traded at fur trade posts. Similar elevated levels (with similar chemical signatures) were noted at other centers of fur trade activity such as Michilimackinac. Although the mercury had become embedded in the food web, scientists concluded that the existing level of mercury pollution found in Grand Portage National Monument was not enough to be a significant risk to fish or the fish's predators such as mink or fish-eating humans. Meanwhile, it was reassuring (and interesting) to learn that this environmental toxin, unlike so many others, was an artifact of the fur trade era rather than a new and threatening byproduct of the modern age.³¹

The network's initial assessment of bio-accumulative contaminants was not limited to mercury. Other contaminants analyzed included lead, the insecticide DDT and its metabolites DDE and DDD, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs and 72 congeners),

³⁰ Superintendent's Annual Report, 2002, ETIC. See also L. Suzanne Gucciardo and David J. Cooper, *Night-calling Bird Survey 2002-2004, Grand Portage National Monument*, Natural Resource Technical Report NPS/GLKN/NRTR 2008/134 (Fort Collins, CO: National Park Service, Natural Resource Program Center, 2008).

³¹ Dave Cooper, "Field Notes," *The Grand Portage Guide* (2009), 13; Kristofer R. Rolhus, James G. Wiener, Roger J. Haro, Mark B. Sandheinrich, Sean W. Bailey, and Brandon R. Seitz, "Mercury in streams at Grand Portage National Monument (Minnesota, U.S.A.): Assessment of ecosystem sensitivity and ecological risk," *Science of the Total Environment* 514 (2015), 193, 199; Maris Fessenden, "The 18th Century Fur Trade Polluted Lake Superior's Shore With Mercury That's Never Gone Away," *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 23, 2015 at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/historical-fur-trade-blame-high-mercury-levels-lake-superior-shore-180954388/>.

perfluorochemicals (PFCs and 9 analytes), and polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs and 9 congeners). The study used five selected stream sites in Grand Portage National Monument. The study included Grand Portage along with five other national park areas.³²

Spongy Moth

One invasive species that attracted much notice was the spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*, formerly known as the European gypsy moth). This species was introduced in Massachusetts in the nineteenth century and had been slowly increasing its range westward ever since, just a few miles per year. The slow rate of spread is owing to the fact that the female spongy moth is flightless. Increasingly, however, its spread was abetted by human mobility – as when, for example, spongy moth eggs were inadvertently carried in a load of firewood in the trunk of a car. In 1999, the spongy moth was detected in places along the northern shore of Lake Superior. While spongy moth infestations can result in massive defoliation in certain forest types, the initial assessment by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources was that it did not pose too big of a problem for the forests along the lakeshore. Resource assistant Brandon Seitz assessed the hazard for Grand Portage National Monument and concurred with the MDNR opinion. Those assessments were based primarily on the effect the spongy moth was having on similar forest types in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. However, some in the U.S. Forest Service and Minnesota state forestry were less sanguine in their risk assessment for the North Shore region, because they based their analysis on what the spongy moth was doing to forests farther east. They advocated use of an integrated pest management strategy already in use in the Northeast under the Forest Service’s Slow the Spread Program.³³

Grand Portage National Monument initially proposed that the pest controls be excluded from riparian corridors and wetland areas (including the East Meadow Area) so as to avoid impacting other moth and butterfly species. In particular, Seitz raised concern for the Baltimore checkerspot (*Euphydryas phaeton*), a species rare in Cook County, which

³² James G. Wiener, Roger J. Haro, Kristofer R. Rolffhus, Mark B. Sandheinrich, Sean W. Bailey, Reid M. Northwick, and Theodore J. Gostomski, *Bioaccumulation of Contaminants in Fish and Larval Dragonflies in Six National Park Units of the Western Great Lakes Region, 2008-2009*, Natural Resource Data Series NPS/GLKN/NRDS – 2013/427 (Fort Collins, CO: National Park Service, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science, 2013), xi.

³³ MacLean, *Initial Inventory of the Moths of the Grand Portage National Monument, Cook County, Minnesota*, 3-4; Brandon Seitz, “Resource Management 2006-2016” (memo to file), pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.

would likely be extirpated in the East Meadow Area if pest controls were applied there. Moreover, Seitz argued more generally that managers should limit the application of biological control agents in the region and await developments. There was evidence in the Northeast that naturalized pathogens might soon emerge as an adequate control for spongy moth populations there, and heavy use of biological control agents in the North Shore region could have the undesirable effect of suppressing the emergence of those naturalized pathogens. Behind Seitz's argument was his concern that the spongy moth could become more prevalent in the region as the forest changed in response to global warming. Therefore, managers needed to be focused on the efficacy of naturalized controls that would be more acceptable in the region over the long run. Yet despite those concerns, the NPS faced pressure to be a team player on conservation strategies whose success depended on a high degree of interagency cooperation. Threading that needle, Grand Portage National Monument became a partner in the interagency Cook County Invasives Team Management Plan, while at the same time it reached a compromise with foresters who were keen on implementing the Slow the Spread Program: the treatments were excluded from riparian corridors, wetlands, and the whole area of the national monument south of Highway 61.³⁴

Bat Diversity and the Bat House

The Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network, after making its sweep of scientific literature in the early 2000s, determined that a relative dearth of information about temperate bats and a sense that they were key components of northern Great Lakes ecosystems made them a high priority for the inventory and monitoring program. Grand Portage National Monument was selected along with Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore for a baseline inventory. The inventory took place in the summer of 2003 and was performed by focusing on selected foraging areas and making combined use of three survey methods: mist netting, roost searches, and acoustic sampling. Seven species were found to be present: northern long-eared bat, little brown bat, big brown bat, red bat, silver-haired bat, hoary bat, and eastern pipistrelle. Preliminary assessments were made of their abundance. A few years after this baseline inventory was performed, the

³⁴ David B. Maclean, *Potential Impact of Btk (Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki), Used to Slow the Spread of the Gypsy Moth (Lymantria dispar Linnaeus), on Non-target Lepidoptera at Grand Portage National Monument, Cook County, Minnesota* (Grand Portage, MN: Grand Portage National Monument, 2009), vii; Irene M. Borak to Steve Cinnamon, February 3, 1994, GPNM, CF, N1429; Brandon Seitz, "Resource Management 2006-2016" (memo to file), pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.

network commissioned a reanalysis of the acoustic data to refine the preliminary findings about abundance.³⁵

Preservation of habitat, especially roosting sites, was long considered key to the bats’ success. Since 2006, however, the predominant threat to bats has come from the emergence of white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease spreading through bat populations across North America. The northern long-eared bat was especially hard hit. It was listed as threatened by the Fish and Wildlife Service. In 2022, the listing changed to endangered.³⁶

When the Heritage Center was built, bats moved into the attic spaces where they became a nuisance to visitors and staff. The park put up screens to exclude bats from the building, but at the same time it erected a bat house to mitigate for the habitat loss. Interestingly female bats of different species will roost together, kicking out the males and rearing their pups communally. So, the bat house provides an opportunity to monitor species diversity. In the meantime, the network stepped up bat monitoring. Just in the past decade the park and the network detected a decline in diversity.³⁷



The bat house.
(Authors photo.)

³⁵ Laura Kruger and Rolf Peterson, *Occurrence of Temperate Bat Species at Three National Parks in the Great Lakes Region*, Natural Resource Technical Report NPS/GLKN/NRTR – 2008/128 (Fort Collins, CO: National Park Service, Natural Resource Program Center, 2008), xi, 1-2; Bruce W. Miller, *Revised Relative Abundance Estimates and Temporal Activity of Bats at Three Great Lakes National Park Based on Acoustic Data*, Natural Resource Technical Report NPS/GLKN/NRTR – 2010/178 (Fort Collins, CO: National Park Service, Natural Resource Program Center, 2010), 1-2.

³⁶ Clayton interview; Seitz interview; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, “Northern long-eared bat,” <https://www.fws.gov/species/northern-long-eared-bat-myotis-septentrionalis>; White-nose Syndrome Response Team, “What is White-nose Syndrome?” <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>.

³⁷ Tony Sullins to Tim Cochrane, July 17, 2013, Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, to Bat Conservation Partner, July 26, 2013, and Brandon Seitz to Jill Utrup (email), August 27, 2013, GPNM, CF in Administrative Assistant’s Office; Katy R. Goodwin, *Bat Monitoring Protocol for the Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network* Natural Resources Report NPS/GLKN/NRR –

Emerald Ash Borer

By 2016, the most significant threat from an invasive species came from the emerald ash borer (EAB). Probably introduced in North America in the 1990s by way of lumber imports, this East Asian beetle bores into ash trees with very destructive results. First detected in southern Michigan in 2002, within two decades the EAB had spread to thirty-six states and the District of Columbia. It arrived in Grand Portage National Monument from two directions at once, coming down the shore from Thunder Bay and up the shore from Duluth. Two species of ash in the national monument are vulnerable: black ash, which is a species of large cultural significance to the Band because the wood is used in basket weaving, and green ash, which is present at the Fort Charlotte site and rare in Cook County.³⁸

Nationally, efforts to control EAB infestations began with biological controls. Four natural enemies of the EAB in Asia – four species of stingless wasps, three from China and one from Russia – were released in the United States to prey on the EAB. At best, the wasps reduced the EAB populations by 20-80 percent in young ash trees, allowing some stands of ash to withstand attack or regenerate. The other method devised for saving ash from EAB infestations was to locate naturally resistant ash trees and propagate those genome types. Roughly one percent of black ash trees showed that tendency and were informally called “lingering ash.” Or, alternatively, the lingering ash were crossbred with Manchurian ash. As long as the efficacy of propagating lingering ash or a hybrid remained undetermined, however, still another approach was to mitigate the loss of ash trees by selecting an entirely different tree species to replace them with. In the most aggressive instances, the ash would be removed before it became infested, slowing the EAB spread while speeding along the stand replacement.³⁹

At Grand Portage, strategies for dealing with the EAB embraced some of these approaches and not others. EAB biological controls remained in the offing in the Grand Portage area. As of 2022, the nearest releases of biological control agents had occurred at

2020/2126 (Fort Collins, CO: National Park Service, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science, 2020), ix, 1-5, 10; Seitz interview.

³⁸ USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, “Emerald Ash Borer,” January 5, 2023, at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases/emerald-ash-borer>; Brandon Seitz, “Resource Management 2006-2016” (memo to file), pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.

³⁹ USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, “Questions and Answers: Biological Control for Emerald Ash Borer,” at https://www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/plant_health/faq_eab_biocontrol.pdf.

Duluth and in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Locating and propagating resistant specimens of black ash was a more favored approach by the NPS as well as the Grand Portage Band. However, cross-breeding black ash with EAB-resistant Manchurian ash was probably not an acceptable approach, because the resulting hybrid tree did not have the same quality of wood for basket weaving. The park and the Band’s foresters held a workshop on black ash, which led to a partnership with the North House Folk School to investigate these possibilities with the Band further. Meanwhile, Seitz was interested in identifying other tree species for stand replacement. Candidate species included tamarack and yellow birch. The interest in tamarack was spurred in part by the concern over effects of global warming on the forest more generally.⁴⁰

Forest Restoration

The NPS commissioned more and more natural science studies of the national monument’s limited forest resource. There were a number of management considerations driving the new level of research. For one thing, the NPS continued to deepen its commitment to a more enlightened approach to wildfire. Even though the national monument has less than 710 acres of forest – mostly in a corridor that is not easily managed – the national monument was nonetheless subject to the Director’s Order 18 that “each park with vegetation capable of burning will prepare a fire management plan to guide a fire management program that is responsive to the park’s natural and cultural resource objectives and to safety considerations for park visitors, employees, and developed facilities.” This 1998 order provided the impetus for a study of fire history and other “historic disturbance regimes” by forest ecologist Mark A. White and landscape ecologist George E. Host in 2003, followed by the preparation of a new wildfire plan by resource assistant Gucciardo in 2004, with prescribed fire to follow.⁴¹

The newly strengthened partnership with the Grand Portage Band was another driver of forest ecology research. Both the Band and the NPS were interested in managing the

⁴⁰ Brandon Seitz, “Resource Management 2006-2016” (memo to file), pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz; Seitz interview.

⁴¹ Mark A. White and George E. Host, “Historic Disturbance Regimes and Natural Variability of Grand Portage National Monument Forest Ecosystems,” report prepared for Grand Portage National Monument, April 2003, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz; Grand Portage National Monument, *Wildland Fire Management Plan* (Grand Portage, MN: Grand Portage National Park, 2004), 1; Beaver Dam Burn Plan, no date, GPNM, CF in Superintendent’s Office; Cooper, “Field Notes,” *The Grand Portage Guide* (2009), 12-13.

reservation forest and the national monument corridor as seamlessly as possible. To be sure, the Band and the NPS had different management objectives, but their objectives were much more aligned than they were in the days when BIA forestry managed the reservation forest resource essentially for commercial logging and the NPS managed the corridor forest resource essentially for the protection of the Grand Portage Trail. After 1999, the corridor became a transect. If park managers could regard the reservation forest as something of a buffer zone for the national monument, the Band's forest managers could regard the corridor as something of a research zone cutting across the reservation forest. The partnership's newfound effectiveness improved research opportunities for each, while the new level of research clearly benefited both parties. As stated in the park's new wildfire plan, management of the corridor "must be compatible with forestry use of surrounding reservation lands."⁴²

View from Mount
Maude Lookout.
(Authors photo.)



A third driver of forest ecology research was the imperative to build ecosystem resiliency ahead of climate change impacts. While the Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network had this goal in view, there were other climate change initiatives at work, too. The NPS deployed climate change modelers Bill Monahan and Nicholas Fisichelli to assess "climate change exposure" at each national park in the system, including Grand Portage. Underlying that effort was a new vision of identifying "desired future

⁴² Grand Portage National Monument, *Wildland Fire Management Plan*, 1; Record of conversation between Brandon Seitz and the authors, September 14, 2021. In 2001, cultural anthropologist Jennifer Kuzara held a temporary position at Grand Portage National Monument and studied the national monument's ethnobotany. See her report, "The Ethnographic Significance of Grand Portage Plants, with Supplementary Source Materials," 2001, copy of file report provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.

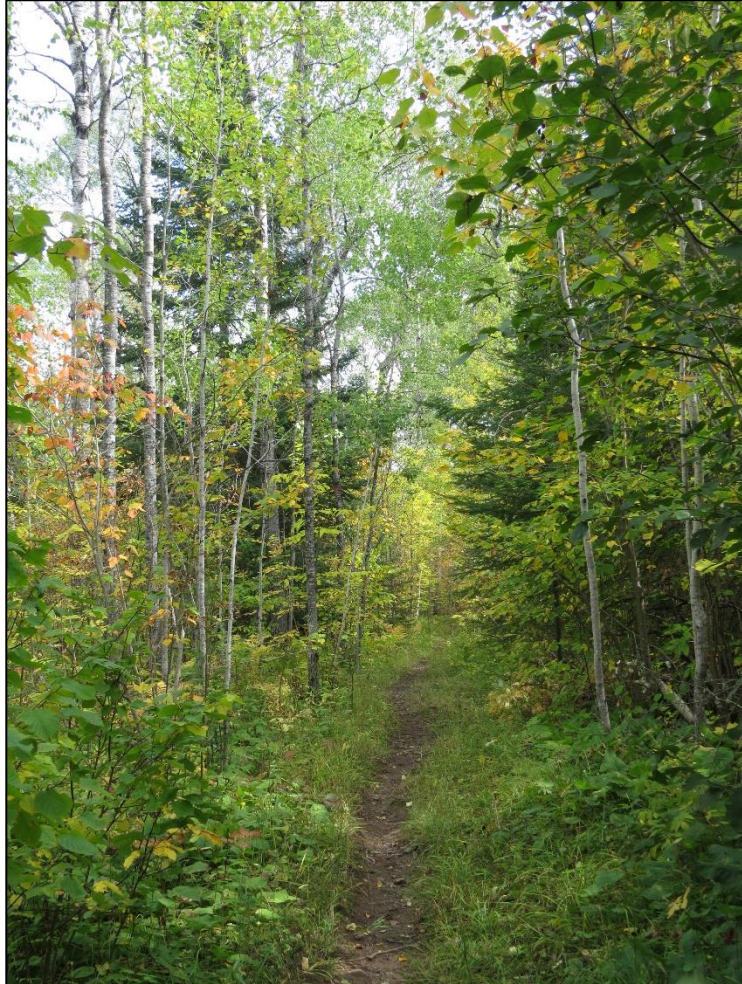
conditions” to deal with climate change. The idea was to build adaptive silviculture strategies into natural resource management so as to improve ecosystems’ chances of changing without too much calamity in the face of climate change stressors. This was a significant modification of the older vision of restoring natural conditions in national parks as nearly as possible to what they were in the past. The park commissioned a study in 2010 aimed at modeling how forest succession at Grand Portage might evolve in a warming world. Ecologists Jim Drake, Shannon Menard, and Don Faber-Langendoen prepared a report, “Review of Successional Pathways and Disturbances of Forests in the Grand Portage National Monument Area,” which was completed in August 2011.⁴³

Altogether, then, forest managers looked to the past, the future, and the cultural perspective of the Grand Portage Band when they considered management options. Regarding the Ojibwe cultural perspective, resource assistant Seitz wrote: “Because of our focus on the Ojibwe people as well as the fur trade, their cultural perspective is the starting point for forest management at Grand Portage National Monument.” Indeed, Grand Portage’s resource managers had to form a workable synthesis of all three ecological perspectives – the backward looking, forward looking, and indigenous perspectives – even as they assigned first priority to the indigenous perspective. As was noted in Chapter Seven, the cultural landscape was the best conceptual model they could come up with to provide some clarity for how to manage the national monument’s forest resource. Seitz called their new forestry project “regenerating a cultural landscape.”⁴⁴

Grand Portage’s forest resource is southern boreal forest. It lies along the border between the boreal forest made up predominantly of conifers and the northern hardwood forest made up predominantly of broadleaf deciduous trees. As the climate warms, ecologists expect to see a conspicuous change in southern boreal forest as deciduous trees extend their range northward and propagate in forest openings created by disturbances such as fire and infestations. According to climate change models for northern Minnesota, as the region becomes warmer and drier it may lose many southern boreal forest species altogether. White

⁴³ National Park Service, “Recent Climate Change Exposure of Grand Portage National Monument” (resource brief), 2014, at <http://npshistory.com/publications/grpo/rb-climate-change-2014.pdf>; Jim Drake, Shannon Menard, and Don-Faber-Langendoen, “Review of Successional Pathways and Disturbances of Forests in the Grand Portage National Monument Area,” report prepared for Grand Portage National Monument by NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia, August 2011, pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.

⁴⁴ Brandon Seitz, “Regenerating a Cultural Landscape,” in *Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network, A Decade of Science and Stewardship, 2006-2016*, 22-23.



Forest and
Grand Portage Trail.
(Authors photo.)

pine, black spruce, and tamarack may disappear and be replaced by such species as black and white oak and black cherry.⁴⁵

Seitz outlined three broad management alternatives for responding to the new climate influences. One alternative would be to accept the change in forest succession as a novel development and manage the “new forest” for maximum biodiversity regardless of its implications for preserving Ojibwe lifeways or the historic scene. Seitz called this alternative “eco-centric” because it would more or less imply an intent to let nature take its course. Another alternative would be to manage the forest as a “historical garden” in which an attempt was made to weed out invaders and preserve the forest within the national monument area more or less in a condition known in the fur trade era. Seitz called this alternative “ethnocentric” in the same sense that wilderness preservation might be termed

⁴⁵ Seitz, “Regenerating a Cultural Landscape,” 22.

ethnocentric. A third alternative was “to invest in an aggressive program to propagate, restore, and regenerate those native species that are predicted to persist in greater numbers than they do now, species such as sugar maple, tamarack, red and white pine, and bigtooth aspen.” This was Seitz’s preferred alternative, and he termed it the “pragmatic” option. “Nurturing this suite of species will create forests that are more resilient to climate-induced changes and maintain a reasonable amount of cultural and ecological integrity,” he wrote.

The park began with white pine restoration. This species, once common across the Great Lakes States, had drastically declined through logging, white pine weevil infestations, fire suppression, and the scourge of white pine blister rust. But recently white pine silviculturists had staged a promising start for a white pine comeback. The cultivators gathered seed from white pine trees that had survived blister rust and planted them in U.S. Forest Service nurseries in Michigan and Minnesota. The nursery seedlings were then planted in some of the hardest hit blister rust areas in northern Minnesota. Several thousand trees grew to maturity and proved tolerant to blister rust. Grand Portage National Monument, using the seed stock from those trees, then started its own white pine regeneration project. The park planted 700 seedlings in the spaces between existing white pine stands or healthy individuals so as to reinforce the genetic stock already in the national monument. It also removed competing vegetation from around approximately 2,000 young white pines to assist them in growing to maturity. Describing the work in progress in 2016, Seitz wrote, “It is important to note that these management actions do not directly restore the relative abundance of white pine but rather facilitate the restoration by increasing and maintaining seed rain and genetic diversity.”⁴⁶

After making a promising start on white pine restoration, Seitz hoped to proceed with tamarack and red pine restoration. In 2016, there were just three tamarack trees left in the national monument area, yet historical research indicated that tamarack was likely a common species in uplands in the region prior to Euro-American settlement. Tamarack would be brought back in the same way as white pine: “with a lot of hard work and a little luck.” Red pine, meanwhile, had a relationship to low intensity ground fire in the area that would require more research.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Brandon Seitz, “Resource Management 2006-2016” (memo to file), pdf provided to the authors by Brandon Seitz.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

The East Meadow and the Pines

Management of the East Meadow came to exemplify ethnobotanical restoration and co-management at Grand Portage. Traditionally, the Grand Portage Band burned the meadow each spring to cultivate sweetgrass and other desirable plants and attract deer. The practice ended after the area came

under NPS management and the NPS introduced mowing instead. Based on discussions with the Trust Lands staff, and with the help of the Band's fire crew, spring burning was reintroduced in 2010. The park delineated a meadow burn unit of five acres and ran the prescribed burn through the required NEPA and NHPA

compliance and fire safety screening.

Stated goals for the prescribed burn

included re-establishment of "desirable cool season species," and restoration of "cultural fire regime by burning semi-annually." Following the burn, the park and the Band planted 4,000 plugs of sweetgrass. The burn was conducted semi-annually thereafter.⁴⁸



East Meadow burn, with Rosary Church beyond. (GPNM.)

Between the East Meadow and the lakeshore is a grove of pines that were planted by the CCC-ID. Park staff came to appreciate that the pine grove is a meaningful place for the contemporary village community. The site is used for weddings and remembered as a burial site as well. Seitz added the pine grove to the park's cultural landscape inventory. The pines are now managed as a stand that contributes to the cultural landscape.⁴⁹

The Gichi Onigaming Conservation Crew

In 2017, the park and the Grand Portage Band embarked on a novel experiment, standing up a "Native Youth Crew" to support native young adults up to the age of thirty-five in the development of natural resource management skills. Funding for the project

⁴⁸ Meadow Burn Plan, no date, GPNM, CF in Superintendent's Office; Cooper, "Field Notes," *The Grand Portage Guide* (2009), 12-13; Seitz interview.

⁴⁹ Seitz interview.



Rainbow and calm waters, Grand Portage Indian Reservation. (Authors photo.)

started with an allotment of \$38,000, and the project was included in the second amendment to the AFA for that year. The next year the funding was increased to \$90,000. Since the project was run through the TSGA, the Band was responsible for hiring and paying crew members. The park, meanwhile, provided seasonal housing.⁵⁰

In 2018, the park and the Band renamed the Native Youth Crew the Grand Portage Conservation Crew, and in 2023, they renamed it the Gichi Onigaming Conservation Crew. Not all crew members came from the Grand Portage Band, but the initiative came under the Ojibwe hiring preference in the national monument’s establishing legislation, and there was an expectation that community members and tribal members would generally fill out the roster. As with the Teen Ranger Program, it was hoped that the Gichi Onigaming Conservation Crew would inspire a few ranger careers.⁵¹

Park managers were enthused about the conservation crew as it proved to be an excellent fit within the co-management framework. The Grand Portage Band’s forestry staff was pleased to use the crew on reservation forest projects. Seitz commented that the conservation crew was a great partner for the NPS and the Band because it could work easily

⁵⁰ Hansen interview; The Indian Self Governance Act Annual Funding Agreement (digest of AFA annual reports 1999-2020), printout provided to the authors by Superintendent Craig Hansen.

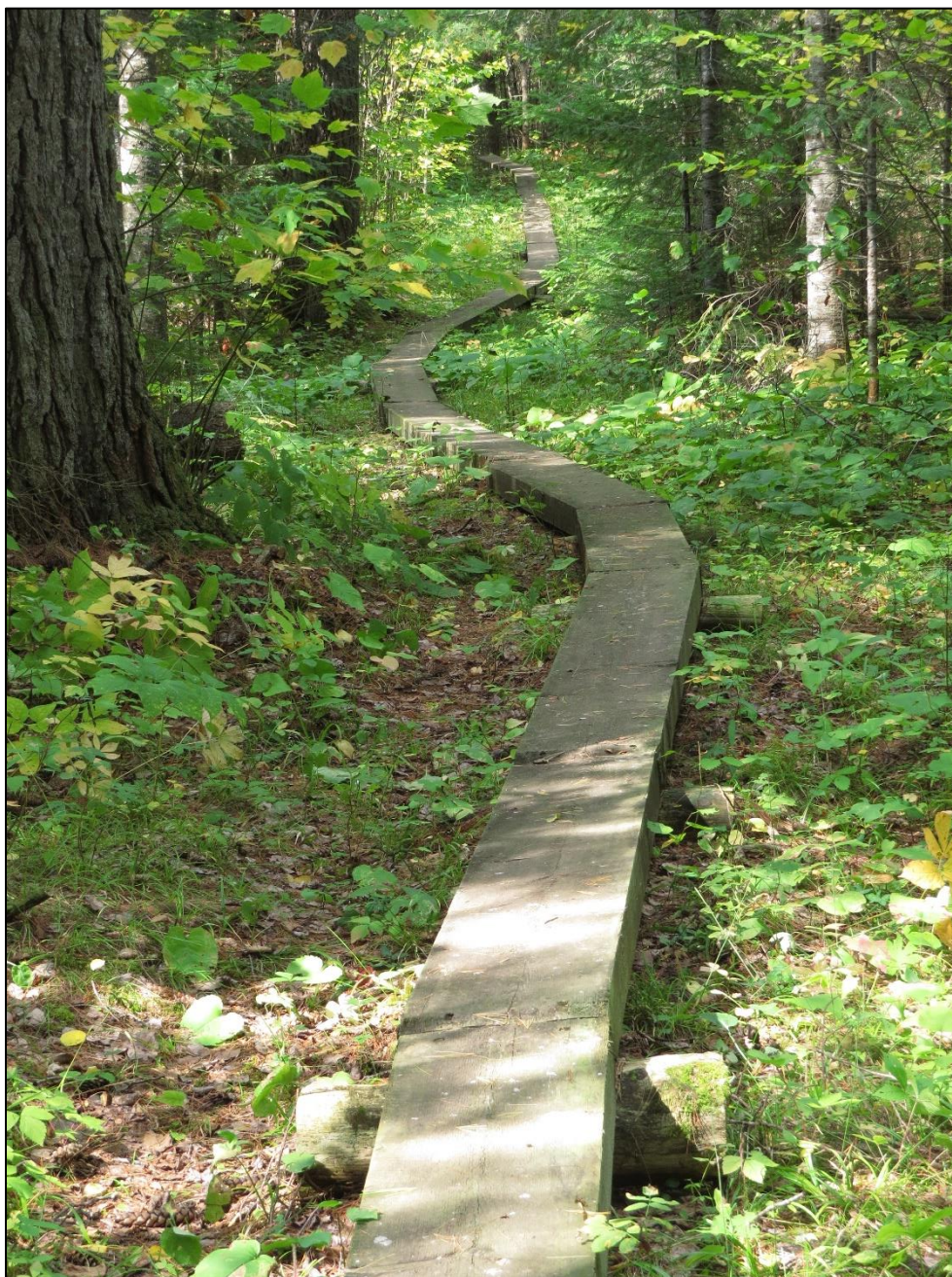
⁵¹ Hansen interview.

back and forth between national monument and reservation land. As the crew was paid under the TSGA annual funding agreement, time sheets could be signed and applied to either budget. Seitz called the arrangement “fluid and easy.”⁵²

By 2021, the conservation crew was being deployed to Isle Royale National Park as well. Notable projects included putting in mine exclosures on Isle Royale, making the Mount Rose Trail into a loop trail, and planting vegetation around the riprap on the Grand Portage National Monument shoreline.⁵³

⁵² Seitz interview.

⁵³ Hansen interview; The Indian Self Governance Act Annual Funding Agreement (digest of AFA annual reports 1999-2020), printout provided to the authors by Superintendent Craig Hansen.



Grand Portage Trail. (Authors photo.)

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Appendix A. Act of September 2, 1958

Public Law 85-910

AN ACT

To provide for the establishment of Grand Portage National Monument in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes.

September 2, 1958
[H. R. 11009]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That, for the purpose of preserving an area containing unique historical values, there is hereby authorized to be established, in the manner hereinafter provided, the Grand Portage National Monument in the State of Minnesota which, subject to valid existing rights, shall comprise the following described lands:

Grand Portage
National Monument,
Minn., es-
tablishment.

NORTHWEST COMPANY AREA

Tract numbered 1 beginning at a point about 28 feet from the water line of Lake Superior and on the east boundary of the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 4, said point marked by a brass plug numbered I; thence northerly along said boundary line a distance of 273.70 feet to a point marked by a brass plug numbered II; thence in a westerly direction parallel to the south one-sixteenth line of section 4 a distance of 1,320 feet to the intersection of said line with the north-south quarter line of section 4, said point of intersection being in the bed of a stream and witnessed by an iron pipe located 60 feet southerly from said point and on the north-south quarter line, and on the west bank of said stream; thence southerly along said north-south quarter line a distance of 120 feet to the point of intersection of said north-south quarter line and the south one-sixteenth line of section 4 marked by an iron pipe set in concrete; thence westerly along said one-sixteenth line a distance of 120 feet to a point in path marked by brass plug numbered IV; thence southerly in a direction parallel to the north-south quarter line of section 4 a distance of 660 feet to an iron bolt in road intersection; thence westerly parallel to the south one-sixteenth line of section 4 a distance of 1,200 feet to the point of intersection of said line with the west one-sixteenth line of said section 4 and marked by a brass plug numbered VI; thence southerly along said west one-sixteenth line a distance of 1,760 feet to a point marked by a brass plug numbered VII; thence easterly along a line parallel to the north section line of section 9 a distance of 486.21 feet to a point marked by an inclined iron pipe, said point being the point where the said iron pipe enters the concrete; thence along the said line extended a distance of approximately 39 feet to the water's edge; thence along the shore line of Lake Superior to the point where said shore line intersects the east one-sixteenth line of section 4 extended; thence northerly along said one-sixteenth line to place of beginning, all being located in sections 4 and 9, township 63 north, range 6 east, in Grand Portage Indian Reservation, State of Minnesota. Right-of-way for existing Bureau of Indian Affairs roads within the above described parcel of land is excluded therefrom.

NORTHWEST COMPANY AREA

Tract numbered 2 beginning at the point on the west one-sixteenth line of section 9 marked by brass plug numbered VII referred to in the description of tract numbered 1 above, thence westerly along a line parallel to the north section line of section 9 a distance of 275 feet to a point marked by an iron pipe; thence northerly along a line parallel to the west one-sixteenth line of section 9 a distance of 443.63 feet to a point marked by an iron pipe; thence easterly along a line parallel to the north section line of section 9 to the point of intersection of west one-sixteenth line of section 9; thence southerly along said one-sixteenth line to point of beginning, all lying in section 9 of township 63 north, range 6 east, in the Grand Portage Indian Reservation, State of Minnesota.

FORT CHARLOTTE AREA

The northeast quarter, section 29, township 64 north, range 5 east, or such lands within this quarter section as the Secretary of the Interior shall determine to be necessary for the protection and interpretation of the site of Fort Charlotte.

GRAND PORTAGE TRAIL SECTION

A strip of land 100 feet wide centering along the old Portage Trail beginning at the point where the trail intersects the present road to Grand Portage School, and continuing to the proposed United States Highway 61 right-of-way relocation in the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter, section 4, township 63 north, range 6 east, a strip of land 600 feet wide centering along the old Portage Trail as delineated on original General Land Office survey maps, from the north side of the proposed right-of-way to lands described at the Fort Charlotte site.

Establishment of the foregoing areas as the Grand Portage National Monument shall be effective when title to that portion of the aforesaid lands and interests in lands which is held in trust by the United States of America for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota, has been relinquished in accordance with section 2 hereof to the Secretary of the Interior for administration as a part of the Grand Portage National Monument. Notice of the establishment of the monument as authorized and prescribed by this Act shall be published in the Federal Register.

Publication in
F.R.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to accept, as a donation, the relinquishment of all right, title, and interest of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota, in and to any of the lands described in section 1 of this Act which is now held in trust by the United States of America for the said tribe or band; the executive committee of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the tribal council of the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota, are hereby authorized to execute such instruments of relinquishment in favor of the United States; and acceptance of the relinquishment by the Secretary shall operate as a transfer of custody, control and administration of such properties for administration and as a part of the Grand Portage National Monument: *Provided*, That upon the acceptance of any donated lands and interests therein the Secretary shall recognize, honor, and respect, in accordance with the terms thereof, any existing life assignments on such properties.

SEC. 3. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to procure any and all other lands or interests therein within the monument, including, but not limited to, any and all nontrust lands therein owned in

fee simple by the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota, and the council of said band is authorized to sell and convey such nontrust lands to the United States of America.

SEC. 4. The Secretary of the Interior, under regulations prescribed by him, shall grant recognized members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe the preferential privilege to provide those visitor accommodations and services, including guide services, which he deems are necessary within the monument.

SEC. 5. The Secretary of the Interior shall, insofar as practicable, give first preference to employment of recognized members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe in the performance of any construction, maintenance, or any other service within the monument for which they are qualified.

SEC. 6. The Secretary of the Interior shall encourage recognized members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe in the production and sale of handicraft objects within the monument. The administration of the Grand Portage National Monument shall not in any manner interfere with the operation or existence of any trade or business of said tribe outside the boundaries of the national monument.

SEC. 7. Recognized members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe shall not be denied the privilege of traversing the area included within the Grand Portage National Monument for the purposes of logging their land, fishing, or boating, or as a means of access to their homes, businesses, or other areas of use and they shall have the right to traverse such area in pursuit of their traditional rights to hunt and trap outside the monument: *Provided*, That, in order to preserve and interpret the historic features and attractions within the monument, the Secretary may prescribe reasonable regulations under which the monument may be traversed.

SEC. 8. The Secretary of the Interior, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, shall construct and maintain docking facilities at the Northwest Company area for use in connection with the monument. Such facilities shall be available for use by the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and its recognized members, without charge to them, under regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary.

SEC. 9. To the extent that appropriated funds and personnel are available therefor, the Secretary of the Interior shall provide consultative or advisory assistance to the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota, in the planning of facilities or developments upon the lands adjacent to the monument.

SEC. 10. When establishment of the monument has been effected, pursuant to this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall administer, protect, and develop the monument in accordance with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes" approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), as amended.

16 USC 1.

SEC. 11. In the event the Grand Portage National Monument is abandoned at any time after its establishment, title to the lands relinquished by the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota, pursuant to section 2 hereof shall thereupon automatically revert to the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe and the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota, their successors or assigns. In such event, the title will be taken in a fee simple status unless the United States holds other lands in trust for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe or the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota, in which event the title shall revert to the United States in trust for the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe or the Grand Portage Band of Chippewa Indians, Minnesota.

Approved September 2, 1958.

Appendix B. Superintendents

Elliot Davis	August 5, 1960 to January 30, 1965
Raymond L. Nelson	June 15, 1965 to August 31, 1966
William Bromberg	November 6, 1966 to April 20, 1969
Richard S. Tousley	June 29, 1969 to July 10, 1971
Sherman W. Perry	September 5, 1971 to October 26, 1975
Ivan D. Miller	March 14, 1976 to December 13, 1980
Anthony L. Andersen	January 12, 1981 to July 5, 1986
Janice A. Wobbenhorst (Acting)	July 6, 1986 to September 13, 1986
Dean Einwalter	September 14, 1986 to 1997
Tim Cochrane	June 1997 to December 31, 2016
Craig Hansen	March 19, 2017 to February 27, 2022
Heather Boyd	June 2, 2022

Appendix C. Visitation

Attendance figures before 1974 are of questionable accuracy due to the method of counting used. Memoranda during this period between the park and the statistical unit verify this observation.

1961	27,585	1992	54,292
1962	32,179	1993	61,372
1963	32,446	1994	70,016
1964	56,405	1995	75,810
1965	70,587	1996	71,746
1966	75,082	1997	69,752
1967	103,458	1998	75,227
1968	65,288	1999	71,746
1969	92,947	2000	92,017
1970	85,778	2001	82,092
1971	70,587	2002	70,330
1972	62,014	2003	63,181
1973	79,419	2004	62,030
1974	29,678	2005	62,973
1975	37,537	2006	53,571
1976	37,378	2007	68,050
1977	40,058	2008	78,721
1978	42,218	2009	76,544
1979	36,931	2010	116,206
1980	43,229	2011	103,873
1981	41,404	2012	99,190
1982	36,068	2013	88,533
1983	36,261	2014	88,986
1984	45,669	2015	91,631
1985	46,488	2016	94,291
1986	46,782	2017	94,880
1987	47,251	2018	94,137
1988	74,372	2019	94,985
1989	75,673	2020	66,426
1990	72,250	2021	83,708
1991	67,597	2022	93,108

Appendix D. Interpretive Themes in 1981, 1993, and 2005

In 1981 – from the Interpretive Prospectus

- Animals adapted to cold climates were vulnerable to human needs and desires.
 - As an adaptation to cooler climates, land mammals evolved fur for survival. One land mammal, *Homo sapiens*, used ingenuity and technology to adapt to the cold. He soon discovered the benefits of, and means for, the exploitation of those mammals that evolved natural fur coats. Once the basic needs for warmth were met, fashion demands fueled the desire for exploitation. Once technology made possible the adaption of natural fur for human use, such as the manufacture of felt for hats, the desire for exploitation was further multiplied.
- Trading, perhaps the most basic form of commerce, is as old as mankind. Trade broadens our horizons, enables us to share knowledge, and unites us with our fellow man around the world.
 - In the mid-1600's, the earliest contacts between Europeans and Native Americans on the Atlantic Coast and along the St. Lawrence River involved trade. As this trade grew, new worlds opened for both cultures. Indians, eager for French knives and kettles, offered everything they possessed, including the furs off their backs.
 - The French, and later the British, came to rely upon the Indians' skills and labors to meet the demand for furs on the European market. The fur trade made the world smaller – gentlemen in Paris wore hats made of beaver fur from the Canadian Rockies, and Athabaskan Indians decorated their headdresses with glass beads made in Italy. It was a global enterprise.
- The exploration of unknown territory is motivated either by the desire to discover the unknown or the promise of financial reward.
 - The fur trade represents a mixture of these motives. Initially furs were merely a by-product of exploration (the search for a water route to the west), but eventually fashion made furs an end in themselves.
 - In the history of the trade, some men, like David Thompson, were drawn to the blank spaces on the map and were consumed by the desire to fill them in. Others, like William McGillivray, were driven by the profit motive. Adventure had its price – ambition its reward. Thompson died a pauper. McGillivray became one of the wealthiest men in Canada.
- Competition is a natural component in the world of commercial enterprises. Competition can lead to conflict.
 - Competition was part of the fur trade for most of its history. There was continuous competition and conflict between French licensed and free traders, between the French and the British, and between British rivals.
 - Competition between the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company led to armed conflict and to the declining fortunes and eventual demise of the North West Company. In 1821, it was taken over by the Hudson's Bay Company, which soon enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the

Canadian west. The oldest company proved the strongest. Hudson's Bay Company, chartered in 1670, is the oldest continuously operated corporation in North America.

- As with any natural system, business is a complex web of producers and consumers, processes and relationships. Our social and economic structures are as much a part of our environment as any other natural system.
 - The fur trade was a complex economic system. It encompassed a broad range of people, products, logistics, and economic processes.
 - The trade was a varied mixture of people and lifestyles, from Indian trappers in the wilderness to mad hatters in London. It created the voyageurs, who had little rank or authority, but who emerged as the colorful symbol of the fur trade era. There were traders, clerks, interpreters, guides, and the middlemen, the Scots who created fur trading empires. Their returns were in dollars, not in glory.
 - The trade was a triumph of logistics. Transportation systems, the role of support services, and the concept of the rendezvous at Grand Portage are all stories unto themselves.
 - The trade was a model of capitalism at work. It was an intricate web of investment, risk, and profits, of goods and marketing, and of the law of supply and demand.
- Any enterprise drawing on the earth's raw materials for its existence will in some way affect those resources and the earth's natural processes. People are one of the resources and their activities are a part of the processes.
 - The fur trade had its effects on the land and the people who lived there. Canada was opened, and vast wildernesses tamed. Only the natural resiliency of the beaver kept it from extermination.
 - Indians, at first attracted to and later addicted to European ways and goods, were changed forever. The Europeans became Americans, with new values and new dependencies. Canada was left with a mixture of French, British, and Indian cultures – a mixed heritage that persists to this day.
- Environmental factors such as geography, climate, and the nature of the resources will always determine the uses man can make of an area.
 - At Grand Portage, people have come and gone, but all of their activities have been intimately tied to the natural world.
 - The geography of the area still dictates some uses. Modern canoeists must still portage around the lower Pigeon River; Grand Portage Bay – just as shallow as it was 200 years ago – still limits the size of boats able to dock there; and the usually rocky, sometimes swampy terrain discourages agricultural activity.
 - Long, hard winters also have their effect. Just as in fur trade days, the greatest influx of visitation to Grand Portage comes in the summer.
 - The nature of the resources at Grand Portage is still the key to its economic base. The residents of the area, now more permanently settled than their ancestors, still log the woods, still hunt the game, and still fish at night by the light of fires.

In 1993 – from the Annual Statement for Interpretation

- Exploration and Mapping
 - Grand Portage was a base for explorers seeking the Northwest Passage which led to the discovery and mapping of many important water routes.
 - The fur trade developed in conjunction with exploration. Exploration encouraged a market in furs. The market encouraged exploration.
 - Exploration led to mapping, commercial opportunity, settlement, and eventual establishment of political boundaries.
 - Fashion and profit encouraged exploration.
 - Exploration was dependent on native peoples.
- The “Golden Age of the Fur Trade”
 - The fur trade changed North America.
 - The North West Company was a giant in the fur trade. Its origin and base were at Grand Portage for much of the company’s history.
 - Competition dominated the activities of the North West Company and others. First there was competition between small-scale traders, but eventually competition took on a continental and even global scale.
 - Competition can and did lead to conflict and violence.
 - Fashion and the characteristics of fur-bearing animals adapted to the cold climates made the fur trade highly profitable.
 - Some men of considerable stature were based at Grand Portage or used the Portage during their careers.
 - Geologic events made the Grand Portage the best route and affected the course of history.
 - The fur trade decimated some animal populations and affected biotic systems.
 - Voyageurs and guides were the backbone of the fur trade.
- Native Peoples and Their Cultural Heritage
 - Trade using the Grand Portage existed long before European use of the area.
 - Adaptive technology of native peoples made the fur trade, as we know it, possible. This technology includes items such as canoes, snowshoes, pemmican, wild rice use, dog sleds, moccasins.
 - Native peoples as guides and providers made “exploration” via the Grand Portage possible.
 - Native peoples of many tribes participated in the fur trade associated with the Grand Portage.
 - Trade goods changed the lives of native peoples.
 - Alcohol and disease brought by Europeans had devastating effects on native peoples.
 - The Ojibway, with their wide distribution as a people, were major players in the fur trade.
 - In order to be successful, early European traders needed good knowledge of native cultures.
 - The Ojibway are a distinct people with distinct cultural characteristics which are alive and well today, including here at Grand Portage.
 - The Ojibway have a proud heritage deserving of much respect.
 - Grand Portage was a place where two worlds met. Both were changed.

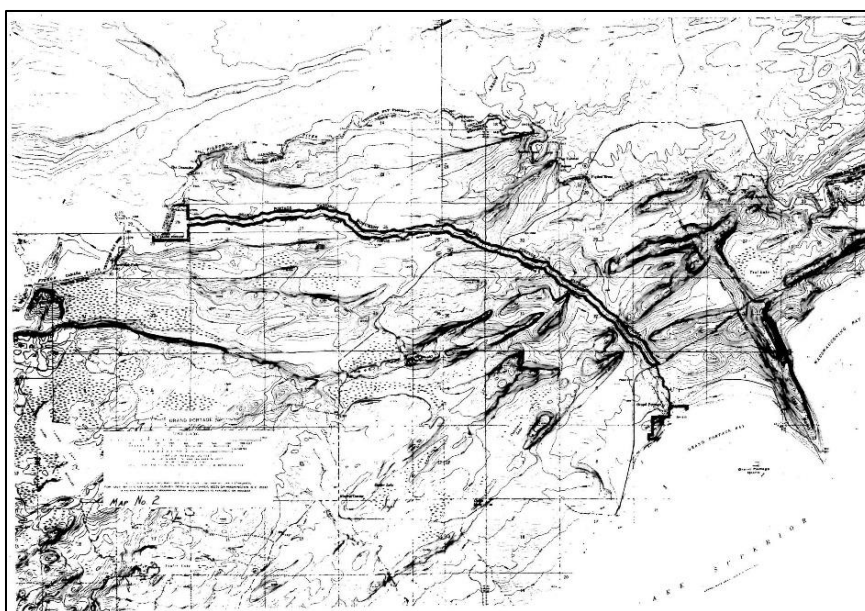
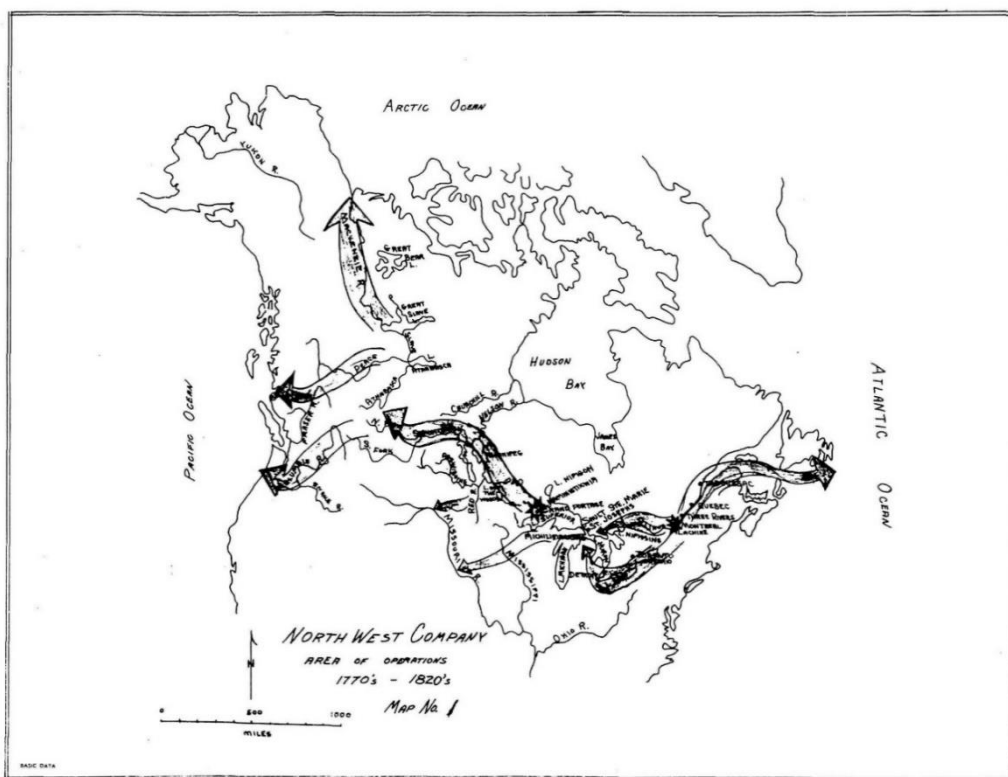
Appendices

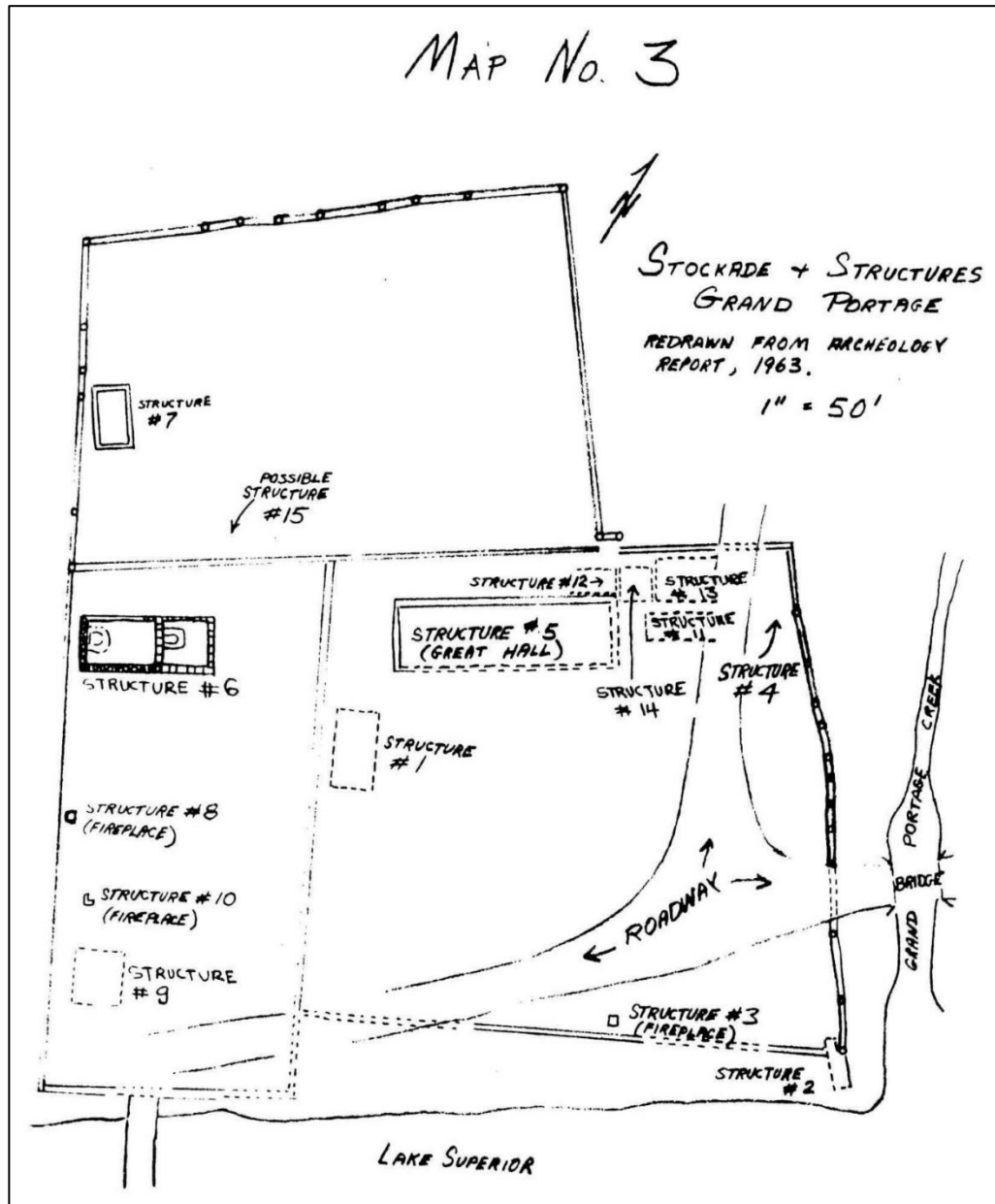
- Grand Portage in Recent Times
 - The Grand Portage Ojibway donated much of the land for Grand Portage National Monument. The Monument is bounded on all sides by Grand Portage Reservation lands. The Grand Portage people live and work here today.
 - Much of what is known about the past can be learned through archeology.
 - The Minnesota Historical Society has been very active and helpful in discovering and preserving the cultural resources of Grand Portage.
 - The National Park Service manages many of the nationally significant natural and cultural resources of the United States. The mission of the National Park Service is to conserve these resources unimpaired for the use and enjoyment of future generations.
 - Grand Portage National Monument preserves one of the premier fur trade sites in North America.
 - Grand Portage is part of a spectacular Lake Superior North Shore Region with outstanding geological, biological, and recreational resources.

In 2005 – from the Long-Range Interpretive Plan

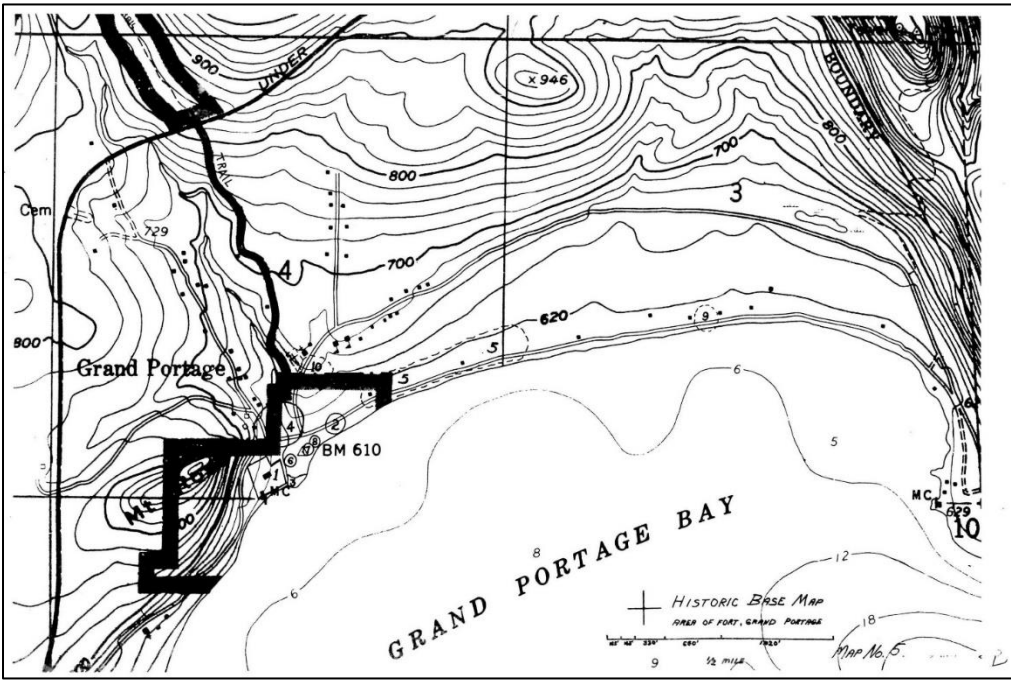
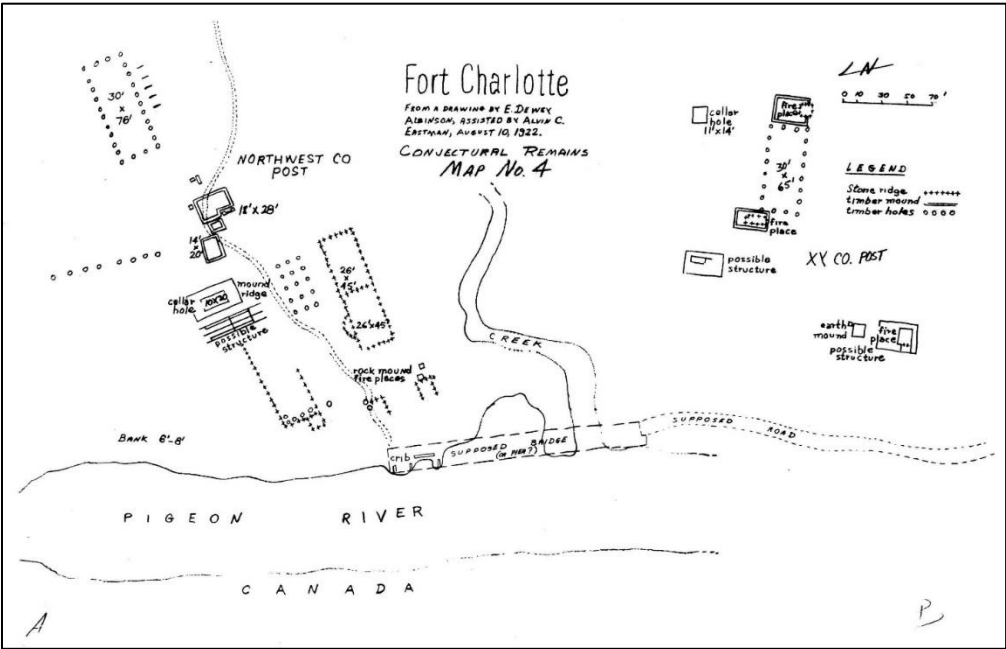
- The Grand Portage was a vital part of both American Indian and fur trade transportation routes because of the area's geology, topographic relief, natural resources, and strategic location between the upper Great Lakes and the interior of western Canada.
- The fur trade was a driving force for the exploration, mapping, and early settlement of much of North America by European Americans, and it also played an important role in setting the boundary between the United States and Canada. It was part of an effort of several European countries to expand their colonial holdings worldwide.
- The Grand Portage Ojibwe, a people with a distinct culture and proud heritage, have lived for centuries on or near Grand Portage where their culture thrives today.
- The fur trade industry was an important part of the international economy, involved a complex transportation system, involved both American Indian and European American technologies and practices, and had extensive impacts on the natural resources and native cultures of North America.
- The extensive archeological resources of Grand Portage National Monument represent not only the fur trade, but also thousands of years of American Indian life.
- The fur trade flourished during a time of unrest with native nations and colonial powers, each struggling for power and occupancy of the land and its resources.
- The fur trade was a catalyst for cross-cultural exchange between native peoples and European Americans that invariably affected both populations.

Appendix E. Maps in Erwin Thompson’s Historic Resource Study, 1969





Co-Managing Gichi Onigaming – “The Great Carrying Place”



Index

- Albinson, E. Dewey, 32, 225
allotment (policy), 24-28
allotments (individual), 39-40, 58
American Fur Company, 22
American Indian Liaison Office (AILO), 120-21
American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, 244
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), 145, 147
Andersen, Anthony, 67-68, 80, 82, 85, 200, 218-19, 221
Anderson, Rick, 188
annual funding agreement (AFA), 124, 126-29, 157, 239
Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, 98, 130, 152, 244, 260, 271
Archeological Resources Protection Act, 216
Archeology (or archeological investigation or survey) 32, 43, 59, 73-76, 84, 218, 224-25, 228-31, 239, 241
Arnold, Jack, 92
Auger, Donald J., 246
Ausprey, Shane, 140

Babbitt, Bruce, 151
Babcock, W. M., 42
backcountry management, 216-17
Baggley, George, 53
Barber, Josephine, 176-77
bat house, 271-72
beaver, 255, 259-60, 264, 268
BIA day school, 60, 62, 84, 182, 238, 247
BIA Road 5, 80
Birk, Douglas, 224-25, 229-30, 233
Blatnik, John A., 62
Bliss, Paul, 32
Bollinger, Mark, 164, 176
Boschwitz, Rudy, 85
Boucher's Fort, 20

Boundary Waters, 17, 45, 263
Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, 7, 45, 95, 155, 216
Boyd, Heather, 162, 194
Boyle, Terence P., 265
Bramer, Alton, 57, 62
Bromberg, William, 66, 68, 99
Brooks, Chester, 71, 92
Brown, Matthew, 196
Brown, Ralph D., 42-43, 224
Buck, Solon J., 32-33, 45-46
Bucknell, Edmund J., 205
Bullard, Charles, 57
Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), 8, 28, 37, 49, 51-55, 57, 79-80, 92, 95, 97-99, 102, 108-09, 115, 118-19, 124, 141, 147, 151, 209, 257-58
Burt, Geoffrey, 250
Busch, Thomas P., 235
Bushman, Alex, 57
Bushman, Martha, 105, 200

Canadian Shield, 15-16, 18
canoe warehouse: canoes, 166, 177, 185, 233, 240; cultural demonstration, 105, 200; fire suppression, 210; historic reconstruction, 75-76, 81; museum collection, 242-43; visitor circulation, 173
Caribou, Gilbert, 113, 122, 140
Caribou, Walter, 105, 200
Carlin, Edward, 175
Carney, Donald, 164, 208, 223, 248
casino, 108, 116-17, 122, 212
Child, Brenda, 247
Chippewa City, 28-29
Chisholm, Lyle W., 57
Civilian Conservation Corps-Indian Division (CCC-ID), 41-43, 224, 231, 236, 238, 279
Clark, Caven, 10, 224, 245-46
Clayton, William, 223, 246-47, 252, 254, 264

- climate change, 253, 263, 275-76
 Clinton, Bill, 115-16
 Cochrane, Tim, 117-18, 122-24, 127-28, 130-32, 134-35, 137, 139-41, 143-44, 151, 155, 160, 169, 180, 189-90, 196, 202, 211-13, 215, 218, 222-23, 228, 237, 243, 245-46, 254
 Cockrell, Ron, 5
 Collier, John, 37, 42, 47
 co-management (or cooperative management), 1-2, 5, 55, 57-59, 63, 65, 107, 109, 118, 126, 162, 253
 concession (or concessioner), 88-90, 119, 148, 150, 185, 213
 conservation archeology, 227
 Consolidated Chippewa Indian Agency, 8, 42, 57
 Cook County Historical Society (CCHS), 33, 35, 62, 147, 239
 Cook County Sheriff's Office, 208-09, 215
 Cooper, Dave, 130-31, 140, 164, 180, 182, 223, 228, 230, 237, 251-52, 254
 County Road 17, 79-80, 82, 140, 249
 COVID-19, 156, 162, 194
 Cowboys Road, 102-03
 Crawford cabin, 35, 43, 73, 105, 167, 200, 235-36, 240
 Crawford, Sophie, 105, 200
 Crespi, Muriel, 244
 cross-country skiing, 219-20. *See also* ski touring.
 cultural demonstrations (or demonstrators), 51, 105, 135-36, 164, 166, 181, 187, 197-98, 200-04
 cultural landscape, 128, 182, 247-50, 276, 279
 Cultural Resources Inventory System, 235
 Cyrette, Paul, 49, 69-70

 Dahl, Arvid, 122
 Dahl, Mavonne, 154
 Danziger, Edmund, 27
 Dark Sky Initiative, 155
 Davis, Billy, 122
 Davis, Eliot, 64, 66, 68, 90, 95, 97, 205
 Day, Lester, 105, 130, 175
 Dec, Myra, 113, 121-22, 130, 164, 180, 223
 Deschampe, Anna, 161, 164, 203
 Deschampe, Norman, 93, 113-14, 116, 118, 121-23, 125, 135, 138, 140, 144-46, 149-50, 156, 160
 Deschampe, Robert, 157, 160
 Deschampe, Sarah, 162
 Deschampe, Wally, 175-76
 dock, 35, 54-55, 64, 84, 147-50, 212, 235-36
 Dohrenburg, Arlan P., 208
 Drake, Jim, 276
 Driben, Paul, 246
 Drost, Beth, 157, 190, 203
 Duhaime, Albert, 57
 Durenberger, David, 85

 east gate, 73, 187. *See also* gatehouse.
 East Meadow, 4, 80-81, 136, 143, 182, 231, 238, 246, 249, 251-52, 262, 270-71, 279
 Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association (or Eastern National), 143, 152-54, 186, 196
 Eastman, Alvin C., 32, 225
 Einwalter, Dean, 68, 87-88, 103, 113-14, 117, 121-22, 133, 142, 149, 171, 174, 176, 180, 207, 218, 245, 264
 emerald ash borer, 273
 Equal Employment Opportunities Act of 1972, 104
 Ernst, Roger, 61-62
 ethnobotanical restoration, 262
 Evans, Michael, 244
 Evens, Karen, 208

 Faber-Langendoen, Don, 276
 Fagergren, Fred C., 69-70, 100
 Fechner, Robert, 42-43
 Fisichelli, Nicholas, 275
 Flatte, John, 57
 Flatte, Mike, 50
 Fort Charlotte: archeology, 32, 218, 225, 228-30, 235-36; backcountry campsite, 45, 51, 208, 216-18, 228; built, 17-18, 20; district, 58, 191, 216-219, 220, 229, 251, 273; proposed reconstruction, 69
 Fort Charlotte State Park (proposed), 33
 Fort Charlotte Wild Area, 56
 Fort William (historical), 19, 22, 233
 Fort William (reconstructed), 76, 169-70, 178, 193, 212, 232, 237

Index

- Foster, Don, 57
Francis Xavier Church, 29
Friends of Grand Portage, 85, 87, 109, 151-52
fur trade, 3-4, 10-11, 107, 137, 166, 170, 184, 190, 202, 233-34, 250, 255, 259
- Gagnon, Curtis, 110, 113, 138, 157, 196, 220
Gagnon, Melvin, 105, 126, 130, 161, 180
Gagnon, Peter, 29-30, 105
garden, 171, 185
gatehouse, 236
general management plan (GMP), 130-32, 134, 138, 149-50, 181-82, 184, 237, 262
Gestel, Bernard, 205, 207-08, 215, 221
Gichi Onigaming Conservation Crew, 253, 279-80
Gilman, Carolyn, 233-34
Grand Portage (depot), 13
Grand Portage (historic route of portage), 12, 15, 20, 31, 32-33, 35, 42, 50, 58, 72, 228-29
Grand Portage (historic site of depot), 33, 37, 42-43, 48, 55, 58, 166, 171, 191
Grand Portage (village, community): auto tourism, 48-49, 51, 62, 73, 78, 94-95, 100, 103, 107-08; Heritage Center, 187-88; Isle Royale ferry, 52-54, 89; mentioned, 46-47, 57; national monument, 61, 65, 73; Ojibwe Village, 176-77; pre-auto tourism, 22-23, 28, 31-32; proposed Indian park, 99; roads, 79; school, 60; utilities, 71, 82; WPA, 42
Grand Portage Band (or the Band): co-management, 2, 37, 56-65, 68-69, 71, 75, 90, 101, 109-10, 115, 118-19, 121, 125-26, 129, 132, 134, 137-38, 145-146, 149-51, 156, 176, 190, 213, 221, 230, 238, 253, 257, 261, 267-68, 275-76, 279-80; cultural demonstration, 35, 166, 176, 203; economy, 42, 49-50, 52-57, 61, 73, 77-78, 88, 91-94, 107-08, 116, 157, 175, 220; employment, 36, 106, 135, 166; forestry, 257-58, 274-76, 279-80; historic preservation, 37, 56-60, 62-63, 68-69, 75, 238-39; indigenous people, 1, 7-9, 25-29, 38, 109, 244-46, 279; interpretation, 5, 107, 135, 174, 179-81, 239-40; Isle Royale, 128, 160, 246; land owners, 33, 40, 47, 58-59, 62, 69, 133-34, 143-46, 220-21, 262; Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, 39, 56, 60, 62; NAGPRA, 112, 114, 241, 244-45; proposed Indian Park, 95-99; sovereignty, 1, 25, 39, 116, 125, 262; special events, 193-94, 196; stakeholder, 131, 137, 182
Grand Portage Bay, 1, 10-12, 20, 29, 31, 45, 54, 109, 128, 149, 189, 255-56
Grand Portage Creek, 20, 31, 41, 79-80, 82, 128, 194, 225, 227, 252, 255-56, 264-66
Grand Portage Development Corporation, 93, 108
Grand Portage Indian Park, 99-100, 103. *See also* Pigeon Point Indian Park.
Grand Portage Indian Reservation: allotment, 27-28, 39; CCC-ID, 41-42; economy, 55, 94, 96, 98; established, 8, 25; geography, 7, 30, 45-46; logging, 249, 255, 257; national monument, 65, 78, 101, 176-77, 184-85, 244; natural resource management, 258, 263, 267-68; repurchase of allotments, 40; school, 247; wilderness values, 50, 52, 61, 95
Grand Portage-Isle Royale Transportation Line, Inc., 89, 148
Grand Portage Lodge and Casino, 93-94, 107, 134, 149, 173, 222, 243
Grand Portage National Historic Site, 56-57, 59-60, 71
Grand Portage National Monument: backcountry, 217; boundary waters, 45, 95; budget, 129; cultural landscape, 247; development, 70, 73, 78, 87, 99, 101, 141, 143-44, 237; establishment, 61, 63, 71, 197, 237; ethnography, 244-45; external relationships, 150-52, 155-56, 169; fire, 209-10, 257-58; geology, 13; Grand Portage Band, 65, 70-71, 88, 94-96, 98-99, 101, 103-04, 106, 108, 114-16, 121, 123, 128-29, 262, 276; historical values, 3, 20, 72, 107, 163, 165, 224, 231, 236, 255; inholding, 82; interpretation, 163, 170, 179, 184, 197, 233; Isle Royale National Park, 37, 89, 212; jurisdiction, 213, 239; National Park System, 87, 123, 128; natural resources, 253-58, 260, 262-63, 265, 267, 270-71, 273, 276, 278; Ojibwe,

- 8; snowmobiles, 221-22; staffing, 65, 131, 160, 162, 193, 205-06; visitation, 172, 174, 212; within Indian reservation, 1-2, 65, 110, 209, 262
- Grand Portage Passage Sled Dog Race, 196
- Grand Portage Powwow, 192-94
- Grand Portage Reservation Council (GPRC), 39-40, 56-57, 60, 62, 69, 71, 93, 161, 246. *See also* Reservation Business Committee (RBC) and Reservation Tribal Council (RTC).
- Grand Portage State Forest, 191
- Grand Portage State Park, 109-10, 134, 157, 161, 172, 203, 243
- Grand Portage Trading Post, 91
- Grand Portage Traditional Drum, 140, 194
- Grand Portage Trail: archeology, 227, 229, 233; corridor, 1, 207, 209, 216, 227, 248-51, 255, 257, 263, 268, 275; external threats: 80, 95, 101-02, 220-22; hardening, 218-19, 227; interpretation, 184-190-91; patrol, 214; resource, 3 190-91, 227, 235-36, 259; visitor counting, 211
- Great Divide Pictures, 190
- Great Hall: archeology, 44, 224-25, 228; built, 20; burned, 66, 69, 73; concession, 89, 141; cultural demonstration, 105, 200-01; fire suppression, 209-10; historic reconstruction, 165, 232, 235-36; interpretation, 166-67, 171, 189; museum collection, 240, 242-43; reconstructed by CCC-ID, 42, 44, 72, 103; reconstructed by NPS, 70, 73-75, 81, 104, 165; visitor circulation, 173, 187, 217, 231
- Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network, 253-54, 263, 266-68, 271, 275
- Gucciardo, Suzanne, 254, 274
- guide service, 63
- Hafeman, Bill, 166
- Hamilton, Jim, 122-23
- handicrafts, 36, 42, 63, 90, 103, 166-67, 197-98
- Hansen, Craig, 160-61, 203, 216
- Hartley, Ralph, 225
- Hartzog, George B. Jr., 100
- Hat Point, 27, 143, 149-50, 256
- headquarters, 55, 64, 68-69, 77, 83, 85, 131-33, 137, 214, 240, 243
- Heart of the Continent Partnership, 154-56
- Hellmers, Norman D., 164, 221, 223
- Hendrickson, Cecilia (LeSage), 72
- Hendrickson, Herman, 72, 105
- Hendrickson, James, 69, 71
- Hendrickson, Mary Ann, 72, 90
- Heritage Center: archeology, 231; bats, 272; construction funds, 138-39; development milestone, 130, 183; Eastern National, 153; exhibit design, 135, 188, 225; Friends, 151; interpretive program, 164, 175, 182, 185-87, 189, 191, 202; location, 134, 136-37; museum collection, 243; visitor circulation, 140, 212. *See also* visitor center.
- Hickel, Walter, 100
- Hines, Pat, 80
- hiring preference. *See* preferential employment.
- historic reconstruction: archeology, 224-25; call for more, 77, 132, 135-36, 182, 237-38, 247; CCC-ID, 42-44, 72; dock, 33; historical research, 231-32; interpretation, 163-66, 170, 185, 188; National Register, 236; NPS redo, 74-75; period of significance, 20; policy, 76-77, 182, 238; visitor circulation, 173
- Historic Sites Act of 1935, 236
- Hoaglund, Don, 94, 149
- Hodel, Donald, 88
- Holt, Ted, 57
- Hopkins, Ross R., 164, 198
- Host, George E., 274
- housing (employee), 69, 82-83, 133-34, 142-46, 168, 213
- Hudson’s Bay Company, 18-19, 22
- Hull, James, 69-70, 90, 103
- Hummel, Edward A., 43, 51
- Humphrey, Hubert H., 60
- Hutchinson, Sonny, 190
- Ickes, Harold L., 37
- Indian Arts and Crafts Board, 197
- Indian New Deal, 37-38, 40
- Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, 8, 28, 39-40

Index

- Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, 1-2, 108, 118
- Ingalls, George F., 56-58
- interpretation (or interpreters, interpretive program): attention to Ojibwe lifeways, 170, 174-77; early years, 164-68; financial support, 154; historical research, 231; importance, 163; leadership, 161, 164; living history, 169; *Long-Range Interpretive Plan*, 183-86; middle years, 172-74; Native interpretation, 178-80; Ojibwe Heritage Center, 186-90; park film, 190-91; proposed by Sigurd Olson, 50; proposed for East Meadow, 136, 252; proposed for national historic site, 58; protected by establishing act, 64; recent years, 181-84; special events, 192-97; staff reorganization, 130, 180, 223
- Inventory and Monitoring Network, 264
- inventory and monitoring (I & M) program, 128, 251, 253, 263-64, 268-69
- Irvine, Tom, 152
- Isle Royale, 27, 46, 48, 56, 84-85, 95, 128, 144, 148, 150, 160, 168, 234, 246
- Isle Royale National Park, 37, 45, 51-55, 89, 128, 143, 152, 157, 162, 193, 205, 207, 211-12, 244-45, 260, 281
- Jesuit diary records, 234
- Jones, Bruce, 225
- Jordahl, Harold C. Jr., 98
- Kashinski, Al, 122-23
- Kauffman, James, 57
- Kennedy, Roger, 120
- Kingsbury, James, 140
- Kirby, Kathy, 164
- kitchen building: archeology, 225, 227; baking, 171-72; fire suppression, 209-10; furnishings, 233, 240, 242-43; historic reconstruction, 75-76, 81, 232, 235-37; visitor circulation, 167, 173
- Kopczynski, Susan, 164, 233
- Koster, Karl, 190
- Land Use Ordinance, 261
- LaPlante, Pierre, 29
- Lathrop, H. W., 51
- Lee, Ronald F., 59
- LeGarde, Gordon, 105
- LeGarde, Paul, 57, 69
- LeSage, Tony, 122
- Lhotka, Joanne, 122
- Limerick, Patricia, 4
- List of Classified Structures, 149, 234-35
- living history, 169, 190, 196, 237
- Loach, Jim, 122
- logging, 27, 56, 61, 63, 99, 101, 221, 257-58, 275
- Long, Arnold, 205
- Loupe, Walter L., 257
- Lupfer, Bruce C., 217
- Lynott, Mark, 227
- Magney, C. R., 62
- maintenance: compact, 115, 119, 122, 126; concession responsibility, 89-90; early days, 72-73; former siting, 81, 142, 146; hiring preference, 104-06; intended new facility, 77, 83, 85, 131, 133-34, 227; national historic site, 58; new facility, 145-47; Ojibwe Village, 175-76; operation, 142, 180, 205
- Marshall, Robert, 46-50, 52, 56, 96
- master plan, 73, 75, 77-79, 83, 85, 87-88, 134, 146, 225, 228
- Mattes, Merrill J., 56-58, 75-76
- Mattson, Frank E., 55
- McLean, Effie, 62
- Melby, Keck, 149
- Menard, Shannon, 276
- mercury, 269
- Midcontinent Rift System, 13-14
- Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC), 111, 120, 224, 227, 230-31, 241-43
- Miller, Ivan D., 67-68, 70, 80, 104, 220
- Mineral Center, 41, 47
- Minnesota Chippewa Tribal Executive Committee, 40, 57, 71
- Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, 8, 39-40, 55-56, 58-64, 83, 85, 96-99, 101, 104, 106, 138, 148, 197
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 33, 109, 156, 203, 270
- Minnesota Highway Department, 35, 47

- Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS), 32, 35, 42-43, 59, 62, 73-74, 104, 111, 114, 151, 163, 187-88, 190, 224-25, 233-34, 239, 241-42
- Mission 66, 141
- Monahan, Bill, 275
- Monk, Susan, 227
- Montferrand, Wilfred, 57
- Morrison, George, 44
- Mount Josephine, 11, 15, 46, 50
- Mount Rose, 13, 15, 50, 79, 133-34, 139-40, 146, 182, 210, 249, 266
- Mount Rose Trail, 72, 79, 173, 184, 281
- Murray, James E., 61-62
- MV *Wenonah*. *See Wenonah*.
- National Biological Survey, 267
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), 102, 120, 179, 228, 279
- National Park Service (NPS): and BIA, 53-54; CCC-ID, 43; concession policy, 89; employment, 106, 181, 197, 203-04; and Grand Portage Band, 1-2, 37, 55-62, 65, 69-71, 78-90, 92, 94-99, 101-03, 106-07, 111-14, 116-17, 121-24, 134, 137-38, 143-46, 151, 156, 161-62, 179-81, 213, 221, 230, 246, 257, 261-62, 267-68, 274-75, 279-80; historic reconstruction, 76-77, 81, 165, 235-36; interpretation, 166, 187-88, 191, 203-04; Isle Royale National Park, 45, 52-53, 148-50; land ownership, 1, 72, 83, 116, 146; NAGPRA, 110-14; national historic site, 56-60; Pigeon Point, 51, 56, 95-99; planning and development, 69-70, 73, 77, 79, 81-82, 88, 133-34, 137-38, 141, 143-45, 232; resource protection, 163, 209, 213, 215, 217, 220, 230, 234, 244, 248, 251, 253, 257, 262, 267-68, 274-75, 279-80; rotation of superintendents, 68; TSGA, 115, 118-20, 123-25, 246
- National Park System, 1-2, 63-65, 70, 87, 107, 115, 118, 125, 128, 141, 189, 197, 204, 220, 236, 244, 253, 264, 266
- National Parks Association, 176
- National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation, 152
- National Register of Historic Places, 41, 235-36, 248
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), 2, 110-14, 120, 239, 241-42, 244
- Native interpretation, 177-79, 201
- Natural Resource Challenge, 128-29, 253, 266
- Neil, Pam, 130-31, 161, 164, 180-84, 187, 189-90, 200, 237
- Nelson Act of 1889, 27
- Nelson, Raymond L., 66, 68
- Noble, Vergil E., 224, 227
- North West Company, 1, 3, 5, 12, 18-22, 33, 42, 56, 74, 84, 107, 134, 147, 171, 175, 187, 191, 196, 201, 224, 240
- Novitsky, R. J., 102
- Novitsky, Rose, 106, 126-27, 130, 162
- Novitsky, Travis, 190
- Nute, Grace Lee, 33, 59
- Oberholtzer, Ernest, 46
- Oberstar, James L., 85, 99, 125, 138
- Ojibwe Heritage Center. *See* Heritage Center.
- Ojibwe Village, 92-93, 140, 164, 171, 174-81, 185, 187, 189, 202
- Olson, Ellen, 105, 200
- Olson, Sigurd F., 50-51, 56, 62, 95, 151
- Otter* (schooner), 20, 136
- Park, Parkway, and Recreational Area Study Act of 1936, 96
- Parker, Pat, 121, 123
- Pauley, Patrick, 139
- Pearson, Roger, 164
- Peers, Laura, 178-79
- Perry, Sherman W., 67, 92-93, 193, 198
- Peterson, Diane, 241
- Peterson, R. O., 260
- Pfeil, Amber, 142
- Phillips, Brian, 229
- Pigeon Falls, 48, 109-10, 172
- Pigeon Point, 27, 45-48, 51-52, 69, 95-96, 256
- Pigeon Point Indian Park, 95-98. *See also* Grand Portage Indian Park.
- Pigeon River, 1, 9, 14-15, 19, 21, 27, 33, 45, 48, 52, 109, 208-09, 216, 225
- Pigeon River Mission, 23
- Pipestone National Monument, 119, 201
- Plummer (Plummer-Stein), Margaret, 106, 154, 175-77, 181

Index

- Poplar Creek, 265
Porter, Rose, 105, 175, 200
preferential employment (or hiring preference), 60, 63, 70, 98, 103-04, 106
- Quick, Michael, 205
Quintana, Ernest, 140
- Ramer, Brian, 243
Ranger Station, 167, 185-86, 200
Rendezvous Days, 154, 162, 192-94, 196, 212
Reservation Business Committee (RBC), 39-40, 69, 71, 79, 89-91, 102, 113-14, 121, 146. *See also* Grand Portage Reservation Council (GRPC) and Reservation Tribal Council (RTC).
Reservation River, 47, 49, 52, 256
Reservation Tribal Council (RTC), 39, 112-13, 116, 138, 144, 162, 261. *See also* Grand Portage Reservation Council (GPCRC) and Reservation Business Committee (RBC).
Richmond, Ann, 265
Riley, Robert J., 164, 223, 231
Rockwood, Andy, 177
Route, Bill, 263
Rove Formation, 14
Roy, Curtis, L., 151
- Sage, Jon, 164, 211, 215, 242
Sanders, Debra, 164
Sanders, Laura, 204
Savage, Lyzeme, 57
Schumerth, Robert J., 205
Scott, Doug, 229
Seim, Doug, 196
Seitz, Brandon, 247, 251, 254, 270-71, 274, 276-78, 280
Sheldon, Craig, 214, 241
Sherer, Kenneth, 57, 122
Shevlin, Charles, 51
Shirk, Cecil W., 32
Sholly, Cameron, 162
Sikes, C. Newton, 205
Simula, Erik, 177
Sivertson, Stanley, 148-49
ski touring, 173. *See also* cross-country skiing.
- Sleeper-Smith, Susan, 23
Smith, D. W., 260
Smith, Shawn, 161
Snow Creek, 82
snowmobiling (or snowmobile), 219-22, 268
southern boreal forest, 276
spongy moth, 270-71
Spry, Elmer, 82, 105
Spry, Michael Peter, 105, 175
Spry, Paul Duane, 105
Stimson, David, 70, 205
stone highway bridge, 41, 50, 79, 236, 238-9
Student Conservation Association (SCA), 143
Sturdevant, Jay T., 224, 230-31
Swanke, Denice, 160
Swanson, James G., 208-09
- Teen Ranger Program, 191, 280
termination (policy), 60
Thibault, Liza, 105, 200
Thiessen, Tom, 119-20, 244
Thompson, Erwin N., 74-76, 224, 231
Thye, Edward John, 61
Tousley, Richard S., 66, 69-70, 104, 147, 165-66
traditional ecological knowledge, 251, 262
Treaty of La Pointe of 1854, 7, 25
Treaty of Paris of 1783, 19
Tribal Self-Governance Act of 1994 (or TSGA agreement), 2, 108, 118-20, 123, 125, 130, 180, 183, 192, 246, 253, 261, 268, 281
- Udall, Stewart, 98
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 54, 98, 149, 160
U.S. Border Patrol, 218
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 55, 254, 268, 272
U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service), 209, 224, 254, 257-58, 265, 270, 278
U.S. Geological Survey, 264, 267
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, 215
U.S. Public Health Service, 171
Utley, Robert M., 76
Veit, Steve, 243

- Vento, Bruce, 129
visitor center, 68-70, 77, 85, 87-88, 90, 131,
133-34, 136, 163, 166, 185-86, 227. *See*
also Heritage Center.
Vital Signs, 263, 267
Vogel, Sharon, 200
Volunteers-in-Parks program, 154
Voyageur Encampment (or Festival), 171,
192, 194
Voyageurs National Park, 45, 66, 142, 155-56,
244, 260
- Walker, Ronald H., 76
Wallingford, Carolyn, 243
Walton, Gary B., 266
Wausaugoning Bay, 54, 98, 191
Wellstone, Paul, 138
Welsh, John, 205
Wenonah, 84, 148-50, 212
Wetmore, Clifford M.
Wheeler, Chris, 190
White, Bruce, 233
White, Mark A., 274
White-nose syndrome, 272
wilderness, 45-46, 48-49, 52, 56, 61, 95, 156,
216-17, 277
wildfire, 209, 257, 259, 274
Winter Frolic, 192, 196-97
Wipson, Jim, 41, 44-45
Wirth, Conrad L., 60
Witch Tree, 109, 173
Wobbenhorst, Janice, 68
Woolworth, Alan R., 74, 223-25, 233
Woolworth, Nancy, 233
Works Progress Administration (WPA), 42,
103
- XY Company or XY Post (site), 18, 20, 51,
84, 143, 225
- Yates, Rick, 130, 205, 207, 215
- Zimmerman, William, 48-50



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