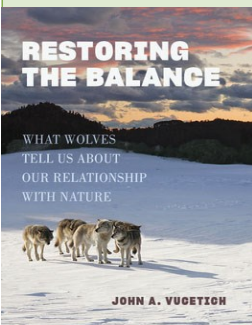


Restoring the Balance

IRKPA is proud to offer *Restoring the Balance, What Wolves Tell Us About Our Relationship With Nature*, by John Vucetich.



This fascinating book is an examination of the 63 year long predator/prey study of the wolf and moose populations on Isle Royale, as it relates

to human interaction with the environment. Vucetich combines field-work, conservation policy, science, history and philosophy with the observations of a skilled and passionate naturalist.

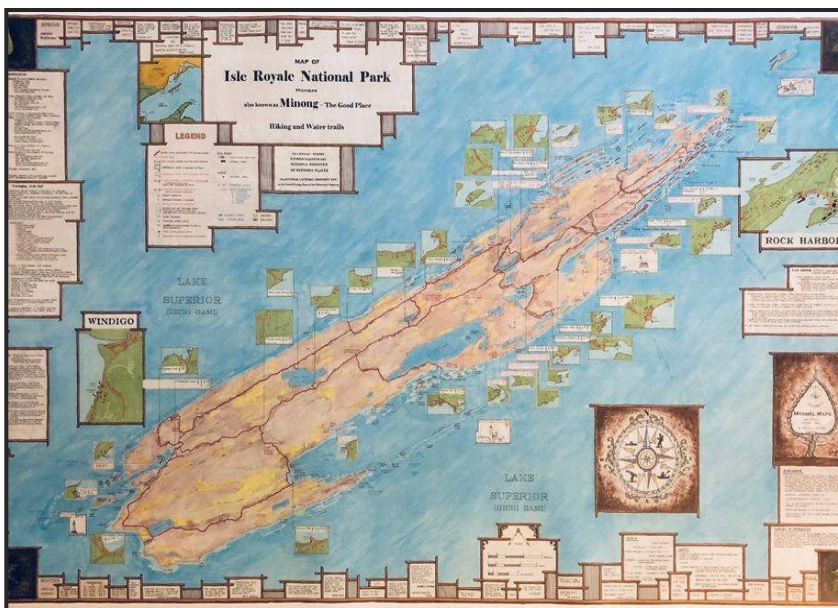
The book is available at all IRKPA gift shops and online at irkpa.org/shop

IRPKA returns to face-to-face annual meeting



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the past two annual membership meetings of the Isle Royale and Keweenaw Parks Association were held virtually. This year's annual meeting marks a return to an in-person face-to-face meeting.

The 2022 annual meeting will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturday, July 16 in the Keweenaw National Historical Park Headquarters in Calumet.



Myrmel Map of Isle Royale Available

The IRKPA gift shops at the Isle Royale headquarters in Houghton and at the Visitor Centers at Windigo and Rock Harbor now offer a hand-drawn map of Isle Royale in Lake Superior by renown Minnesota artist Keith Myrmel.

This waterproof map is the only complete map showing every campground and all the information for shelters, tent sites, toilets, fire options, number of nights and much more.

There are pieces of trivia and interesting quotes around the edge of the map. The map was recently honored by the Cartography and Geographic Information Society

Beloved Friend of IRKPA, Grant Merritt Passes Away at Age 88

Grant Merritt, a beloved friend of IRKPA and Isle Royale National Park, passed away Wednesday, May 18. The Duluth, Minnesota native, author of *Iron and Water; My Life Protecting Minnesota's Environment*, was 88.



John Kaul, Afton-Films

Merritt, an attorney, was a champion of several environmental cases and is best known for his part in legal battles against Reserve Mining in the 1970s.

Merritt's relationship with Isle Royale was a life-long love affair. His family has had a cabin on the island for decades and he was founder of the Isle Royale Families and Friends Association. Merritt spent many summers throughout his lifetime on Isle Royale. Merritt's wife of more than 60 years, Marilyn, said her husband "Lived and breathed Isle Royale."

"His father would always say, 'If you're going to marry a Merritt, you must love Isle Royale,'" Marilyn Merritt said. While she wasn't born into the Isle Royale family, that quickly changed when she met and eventually married Grant. "My first visit was two years before we were married. I spent the night alone in a cabin. It didn't take long to fall in love with the place."

Because of their affection for the park, it was natural that the Merritts became active in the Isle Royale Natural History Association (now the Isle Royale and Keweenaw Parks Association). The couple are Life members, marking 30 years of membership this summer. Like their involvement in the Park, membership in IRKPA was a family affair. "Oh yes," Marilyn said. "He (Grant) was a past board member, I was on the board and so was our nephew. We were very active."

She said she has fond memories of gatherings on the island. "We would have great meetings with coffee and wonderful food afterward. Many of us (members) would gather together and listen to his stories. Everyone said he was the best story teller. He got that from his father."

In addition to his involvement with Isle Royale, Merritt served on the board of directors of the Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota and was presented with the council's Reuel Harmon Award in 2018 in recognition for his lifetime work on behalf of the Great Outdoors. In addition to his wife Marilyn, Merritt is survived by his daughters Carolyn and Linda. He was preceded in death by his son Steve.

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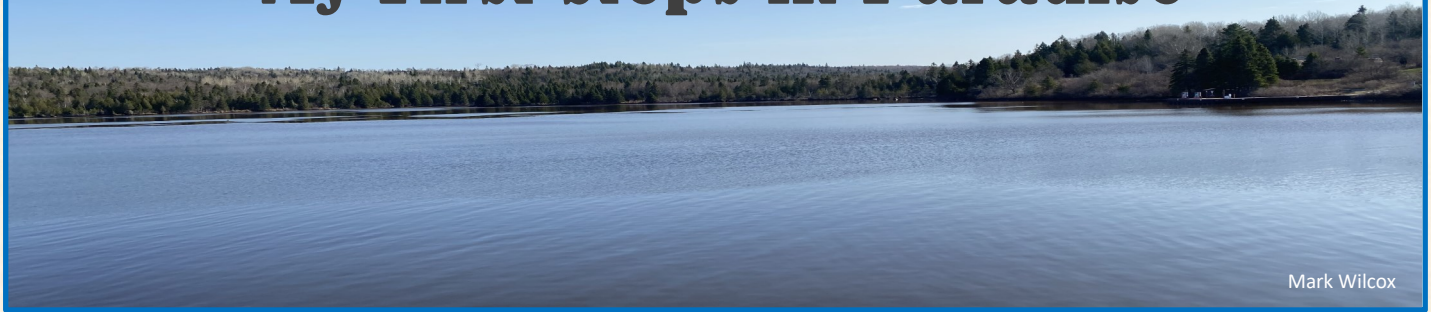
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THANK YOU to each of our members!

We apologize for any errors or omissions in this list. Please let us know if there's a discrepancy and we'll correct it in the next edition.



My First Steps in Paradise



Mark Wilcox

I would be exaggerating if I said visiting Isle Royale was on my “Bucket List,” you know, the list of things that you just *had* to do before you “kicked the bucket.” But visiting the park, however briefly, had been something I’ve thought about since I moved to the Keweenaw nearly 33 years ago. It always seemed so daunting to me. Maybe I was put off by tales of folks running off the Ranger III full tilt into the woods, sleeping bag in one hand and bug repellent in the other, just to get a coveted camping spot.

Despite my trepidations, I still hoped to visit one day. Like many Yoopers, I have a sense of pride and ownership when it comes to Isle Royale. This is OUR park. I now believe there are two types of people. Those who have been to Isle Royale, and those who have not been to Isle Royale ... yet. And in May my time had come.

On making my first visit to paradise, I accompanied IRKPA Retail Sales Manager Sharon Kisiel to assist her and National Park Service staff in setting up the gift shop at the Windigo visitor center.

I know it sounds corny, but as the Ranger III navigated her way through the many smaller islands that make up the archipelago, something in me changed. I be-

came aware I was in the presence of something greater than myself. And I wasn’t the only one. That’s the amazing thing. There were just few of us on the Ranger and it appeared that everyone was feeling what I felt. A handful of us were making our first visit while others, like my neighbors Rolf and Candy and some NPS staff have been making regular trips for decades. Yet we were all caught up in the majesty of this very special place. Most of us stood on the deck just taking in the majesty.

Then I got it. I understood why Isle Royale is considered the most re-visited of all the national parks. Why people return year after year. It was at that moment I realized what a special job I have and how very lucky I am to be in this position.

The more than 600 members of IRKPA share an affection and appreciation for this island paradise. And they’ve placed their trust in me, Sharon and our board of directors to help support our two amazing national parks.

Not only am I very lucky to have this job, I am also very fortunate that I came on the scene at a very opportune time. My friends, IRKPA is doing well.

In 2019 our retail sales set a record at more than \$203,000. Then COVID-19 came along and our

2020 sales plummeted to \$65,516. Now, with COVID-19 numbers falling throughout the region, things are re-opening and we have rebounded. In 2021 we set another retail sales record. During the year we sold more than 31,000 items for gross sales topping \$232,500.

Sharon has been extremely active in stocking the shelves in our four gift shops and she’s done a great job introducing new merchandise while seeing to it that some of our all time best sellers remain in stock.

Speaking of new merchandise, we have in stock “Subpar Parks,” a collection of one-star reviews of many of America’s national parks by some less-than-impressed visitors.

As we approach normalcy in a post COVID world, we’ve been able to bring back our summer workshops that were suspended last summer.

Our annual membership meeting will be face-to-face for the first time in a couple of years. We’re busy making plans for the meeting at Keweenaw National Historical Park headquarters. I hope you can make it.

I’m looking forward to meeting many of you and telling you how proud and happy I am to help you support our two very special parks.

IRKPA Gift Shops Ready for the Season



The summer season on Isle Royale National Park has begun and the IRKPA gift shops in the two visitor centers, Windigo and Rock Harbor, are ready for the throngs of visitors. We've got plenty of new items; books, apparel, toys, games, maps and cards, as well as many of your all-time favorites.

Our gifts shops at ISRO headquarters in Houghton and the Keweenaw National Historical Park Visitor Center in Calumet are open as well.

Remember, anything available at our gift stores can be purchased online at irkpa.org. If you are heading out to the island, remember purchases can be made with debit/credit cards only.



Looking Back: Moonrise on Isle Royale

The story from which this article is excerpted originally appeared in Isle Royale Tales 2, published in January 1971. "Night Watch at Rock Harbor," was written by former Isle Royale night watchman Russell Tabbert.

On evenings when the moon was to be full, I would go to the Guest House porch at dusk, just as the sun was going over the ridge and watch for the moon to appear from behind Raspberry Island. If you didn't watch the center of Raspberry Island closely you would miss the first signs of the moon — tiny specks of orange scattered among the trunks and limbs of the thick fir trees like Christmas bulbs being lit.

As soon as the moon rose free of the island, its color changed from red-orange to a deep yellow and then finally to a glowing golden-white, and the lane on the water gradually changed too into a brilliant silver and widened until the whole harbor was light.

I would always make the Guest House porch one of my regular stops to check the progress of the moon. Its arc was towards the southwest almost directly down the center of Rock Harbor so that as it moved through the night, the whole length of the harbor was alight, but in a way that it never was in the day-time. The surface of the water was alive with flecks of light glimmering all across and down, washing against the dark outlines of the main shore and of the islands opposite, whose various daylight greens were now muted to a velvet black. There was not a boat to be seen or a motor heard. Even the occasional shriek of a distant loon was softened and seemed to float slowly and gently down the harbor, like a shadowed echo, instead of piercing shrilly as in hard sunlight.

The best mornings were those when a full moon was setting just as the sky in the northeast was starting to grow light from the undawned sun. Then the new light coming in at one end of the harbor and mixing with the fading moonlight at the other end filled the whole harbor with a thin blue light that made everything lovely and strange, like a dream of a night in summer on an island silent in a timeless sea.



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IRKPA is the membership-based nonprofit partner of Isle Royale National Park and Keweenaw National Historical Park.

Gifts, bequests, memorials, and membership dues are U.S. tax deductible.

Membership Categories

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