

# The Sugarloaf Interpreter

A Publication Of The  
Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association

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31 W. Superior St., #401 218-733-9938



Winter, December 1997,  
Duluth, MN 55802

## TWIN POINTS-SUGARLOAF PROPERTY EXCHANGE

In November SICA delivered deeds, tax payments, well disclosures and a collection of other documents and resolutions to the State Attorney General's office in order to complete the transfer of title of a portion of the Twin Points Resort to DNR. SICA has met all its obligations to complete the land exchange. By press time for the Interpreter it is expected that the State of Minnesota will have completed the filing of the documents transferring 27 acres at Sugarloaf to SICA. SICA sought and obtained the addition of protective covenants to the Sugarloaf deeds which will insure the property will always be used for public purposes.

SICA continues to own the Twin Points acreage north of Highway 61, and looks forward to receiving input from the membership and the board as to what should be done with this property.

To purchase the Twin Points Resort, a grand total of about \$810,000 was raised from 85 contributions ranging from \$10 to \$225,000. The extra \$60,000 over the purchase price of \$750,000 was needed to cover interest, insurance, taxes and other expenses connected with the effort.

## IONA'S BEACH DEDICATION

For 60 years Iona Lind was the guardian of the red granite beach, the prominent feature of the Twin Points Resort. Thanks to the contribution of the Lind Family and the hard work of SICA volunteers, on October 4, Iona's Beach became an addition to the Minnesota Scientific and Natural Area program.

formal dedication of the site took place in a ceremony at the Beach with representatives of SICA, DNR, and Alden Lind on behalf of the Lind family all making presentations. Dr. John Green, SICA Board member and UMD Geology professor, explained the geologic process that created and continue to shape Iona's Beach.

Scientific and natural areas are afforded the highest degree of protection of any state-owned land in Minnesota and are sometimes not particularly accessible to the average citizen. However, Dr. Green explained, at Iona's Beach anyone will be able to observe geologic forces at work or just stop and throw a rock into the lake.

## NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRS ANNOUNCED

At the November 15 Board of Directors meeting the following committee chairs were appointed:

*Finance* - Greg Koschinska

*Membership* - Vacant

*Program and Public Relations* - Carrie Anderson

*Publications* - Emily Andersen

*Shorelink* - Carrie Anderson

*Nominations* - Steven Pihlaja

*Ad Hoc personnel* - Steven Pihlaja

*Newsletter* - Merlin Berg

*LCMR Projects* - Nancy Nelson

*Building* - Robert Bruce

*Grounds* - Gene Clark

In an organization such as SICA, it is imperative that committees take positive leadership in SICA affairs. We have formidable tasks ahead and only effective and energetic committee efforts will accomplish our goals. WE MUST GO FORWARD! Committee chairs should furnish information on date and place for committee functions to Merlin for inclusion in the *Interpreter*. All committees should furnish written reports on their activities promptly to BJ.

# Shorelines

Explore the winter North Shore on March 21. A hike is planned - meet at the Sugarloaf parking lot at 1 p.m. SNOW-SHOES WILL BE PROVIDED. Wear warm clothes and good boots. Call the office in Duluth (218/733-9938) for reservations before March 18. FREE.

The University of Minnesota Press has just published *The Life of Sigurd F. Olson - The Wilderness Within*, by David Backes. Truly a lifelong wilderness advocate, Olson is portrayed as one who was devoted to his craft and love of the outdoors but one who was beset by unhappiness in the face of early rejections of his writing. The 432 page hardback is sated with Northern Minnesota and national environmental history. Sig lived most of his life in Ely, Minnesota, where some resented his environmental views - he was once hung in effigy for his stance. A very readable book about one of Minnesota's great men.

The SICA program committee has materials (new displays, slide programs, etc.) for your group meetings or events. Call the SICA office to make arrangements and dates.

*SHORELINK*, a creation of SICA in 1993 to provide networking among North Shore educators and interpreters has grown and has developed into an ongoing agency to share strengths and ideas. An organization with similar goals, the Northeast Region of the Minnesota Association for Environmental Education (MAEE), and Shorelink have elected to meet together. The first joint meeting on November 20 consisted of a presentation on adult learning styles. It was held in Jay Cooke State Park.

## NELSON FRENCH JOINS BOARD

At the November 15 Board of Directors meeting, it was announced that Nelson French, former Executive Director of The Minnesota Nature Conservancy has agreed to fill a vacancy on the Board of Directors for the term 1996 - 1999.

## President's Column

### BJ Smith Kohlstedt

In 1992, a small group of visionary people formed the Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association (SICA) to address the preservation of a unique natural site called Sugarloaf Cove on the North Shore of Lake Superior, 73 miles northeast of Duluth. Although the site had seen commercial use as a Consolidated Paper storage and shipping operation from 1942 to 1972, that impact had left much of the point, beach, and cliffs unmolested. Since 1972 the site had been used mostly as a getaway for those seeking solitude and rejuvenation.

SICA's mission is to protect the site, establish a facility and forum for the interpretation of North Shore natural and cultural history, and to obtain funding for its needs. Since its inception these have been accomplished through ongoing memberships, a newsletter, and programs.

A major interpretive effort was initiated in June 1995, when a \$100,000 site assessment and interpretation project was approved by the Legislative Commission for Minnesota's Resources. The project provided for research and documentation of the site's natural and cultural heritage, as well as for an interpretive trail and displays. Another \$90,000 project on the life of the Ojibway in the history of the North Shore has

been funded for 1997-1999.

Preservation of the land began in 1992 when the DNR designated 3-1/2 acres as a Scientific and Natural Area. In 1996 the SNA was extended to 7 acres. The remainder of the 34 acre site was preserved in 1997 by SICA's extraordinary effort in purchasing a separate piece of land (Twin Points Resort) for \$750,000 and transferring it to the DNR in exchange for 34 acres at Sugarloaf. This resulted in SICA ownership of the land with a conservation easement in perpetuity, yet permitting the establishment of an interpretive building and programs.

These are tremendous accomplishments for a fledgling organization in its first five years. In the coming year we will address the issues of an interpretive center, public access, and education, and land management. Members are encouraged to serve on committees of their interest to further these objectives. All board and committee meetings are open to members. The next board meeting will be at 10 a.m., February 21, 1998, at the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Minneapolis. We'd like to see you there.

Officers and board member phone numbers are listed the back of this newsletter. Please contact them with your comments and questions.

# The Dynamic Community of Sugarloaf Cove

**Nancy Nelson,**  
**S. A Board Member**

(Adapted from paper funded by Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources and SICA)

The North Shore of Lake Superior is a rugged and beautiful place. Long cold winters, brief summers, pounding waves, rock outcrops, and poor soil make it a difficult place to survive. Yet many living things call this area home. The constant interaction among these living things and their physical environment defines the day-to-day life of each community along the shore.

Sugarloaf Cove is a place where visitors may learn about the rocks, water, plants, insects, animals, and people that make up one of these communities. They also learn that the Sugarloaf Cove community is characterized by change; some changes, like erosion, take place slowly, over thousands of years, while other changes, like forest fires, take place quickly, in a matter of hours.

Changes in the physical environment result in changes to the living community of plants and animals. When existing plants are completely removed by drastic changes, such as storm erosion or human development, the plants and animals that return to the disturbed area are not the same ones that lived there before.

From the 1940s through the 1970s, Sugarloaf Cove was used by Consolidated Papers, Inc. as a place to collect logs before rafting them across Lake Superior to Wisconsin. Much of the forest at Sugarloaf was cleared for this operation. When the paper company stopped using the site about 25 years ago, pine and spruce trees were planted in regularly-spaced rows in several areas to cover the bare soil that was left behind. These areas are called **plantations**.

In disturbed areas that are not replanted, the sequence of returning plant life is called **succession**. Each plant alters its surroundings as it grows, and the changes caused by a growing plant can actually make the environment less favorable or its own offspring and more favorable for other kinds of plants. For example, here in the boreal forest of northeastern Minnesota, birch and aspen grow on disturbed land. But young aspen trees need lots of sunlight, and as the first trees grow tall and begin to shade the ground below, the next generation of aspen die from lack of sun. Within 30-40 years, other

species that can grow in shade, such as white spruce or balsam fir, begin to dominate the forest.

Unlike most of the Sugarloaf Cove site, little disturbance has occurred on Sugarloaf Point. Surrounded on three sides by Lake Superior, the plants and animals that live on the Point are tolerant of cold temperatures, strong winds, powerful waves, and abrasive winter ice. They survive together through a complex set of interrelationships, and they have reached a mature stage of succession known as a **climax community**.

One of the most unique plant communities at Sugarloaf is found on the low rock outcrops at the end of Sugarloaf Point. In summer, the waves of Lake Superior wash over the rocks, and in winter, sheets of ice grind back and forth, scouring away soil and most plants that try to grow here. When not covered by ice or waves, the rocks are very dry. **Lichens**, which are composed of a green algae and a fungus, are one of the few living things able to survive on the rocks, because the nutrients they need are absorbed from air or from raindrops instead of from soil. Lichens are very sensitive to air pollution, and they grow very slowly (millimeters per year). The lichens on Sugarloaf Point are probably hundreds of years old.

Sugarloaf Cove is also home to many **bryophytes**, a special group of small, inconspicuous plants that do not have true leaves, stems, or roots. Mosses and liverworts are perhaps the most familiar members of this group. Most bryophytes live in moist places and are able to withstand very cold temperatures. Dr. Jan Janssens identified three species of mosses at Sugarloaf Cove that have never before been found in Minnesota and a total of sixteen mosses never before found in Cook County. He also located one species of liverwort that is known from only one other site in Minnesota.

Because animals choose their homes based on neighboring plants and animals as well as the temperature, amount of light, and the availability of water, each plant community at Sugarloaf Cove is home to a different collection of animals. Birds spotted at Sugarloaf include loon, downy woodpecker, blue jay, chickadee, cedar waxwing, warblers, and many sparrows. Mammals that live at or visit Sugarloaf Cove include black bear, moose, coyote, white-tailed deer, red squirrel, chipmunk, and small rodents such as voles, mice, and shrews.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

|                    |              |                          |              |
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Dec. 27 - Jan. 1

Wolf Ridge ELC  
Family vacation Elderhostel  
Grand winter adventure

Feb. 13-15, 1998

Wolf Ridge Winter Weekend  
Info: 218/353-7414; 800/523-2733

Feb. 21, 1998

SICA BOARD MTG.  
MN VALLEY NATL WILDLIFE REFUGE, MPLS

Mar. 21, 1998

Winter snowshoe hike at Sugarloaf

## SICA Membership Application

I like the idea of interpretation on the North Shore. I certainly believe that the important Scientific and Natural Area of Sugarloaf Cove, Beach and Point should be protected and not be endangered.

Please enroll me as a member of the Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association in the category I have indicated. SICA is an educational, nonprofit 501 (c) (3) Minnesota Corporation. As a new member, please send my free copy of John Green's new book, "Geology on Display" (geology of the state parks).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 Student/Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> \$10 Individual         |
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Payment Herewith  Please Bill Me

Make checks payable to Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association and mail to SICA, 31 W. Superior St., #401, Duluth, MN 55802. This membership will expire December 31, 1998. Thank you.

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~ SICA officers:

President, BJ Smith Kohlstedt, Finland, 218/353-7745  
Vice President, Steven Pihlaja, Minneapolis, 612/788-5157

Secretary, Robert Bruce, Duluth, 218-525-2016  
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31 West Superior St. #401  
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