

Interpreter

A Publication of The Sugarloaf
Interpretive Center Association
244 Marks Road, Esko, MN 55733
218-879-4334

A Gift to the Future

Do you ever wonder about the future of Minnesota? Will our great Lake Superior look the same in 10, 50, 100 years? Will our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren throw rocks into the lake from the cobble beach at

Sugarloaf Cove, hike the Superior Hiking Trail, and camp at the same favorite spots we enjoy today?

Will the forests where our children play still be there for their grandchildren to enjoy, or will they be converted to private homes and luxury resorts?



wendy strombeck

For many folks, planning for retirement is a hard enough task. Trying to influence future land use policies is an even more difficult burden. But it's easy for you to influence the future of Sugarloaf Cove.

Many folks who know me probably think I oversimplify from time to time. It has worked for me so far, so I'll likely continue to do this. So, allow me to oversimplify about planning for SICA's future.

To ensure that Sugarloaf Cove remains undeveloped "forever," a conservation easement was written and permanently attached to the property. The conservation easement prohibits building anything not essential for the unobtrusive study of and education about the ecological, geological, and cultural characteristics of Sugarloaf Cove. Motorized vehicles such as snowmobiles and ATVs can never be used on the property; there can be no removal of native plants or rocks; there can be no construction of roads on the Sugarloaf property. The conservation easement is held and enforced by the DNR.

SICA's VISION is a healthy Minnesota North Shore of Lake Superior where an informed citizenry takes personal and group responsibility to ensure that natural and ecological systems and human economic and social systems coexist in a fashion sustainable into the future.

But what about the financial resources needed to manage and maintain the protected property "forever?" This is a whole different question, and for SICA it is best answered by establishing a savings account that is so large that we can "forever" pay for all operational costs from the interest earned, thereby never touching the principal. (By the way, this is the best-case scenario for retirement as well.) This type of fund is often called an Endowment, and it is not usually just a standard savings account at a bank. Rather, it is invested in mutual or other funds that offer a safe and predictable rate of return (e.g., 7-10 % would be great). Contributions from people like you are needed in order to build the SICA Endowment Fund. Contributions can come all at once, or they can come over a period of time. They can be in the form of cash, a stock transfer, an assignment in a will, or the transfer of real property.

The SICA Board of Directors established a goal for our endowment fund of \$1,000,000 (yes, that's one million dollars). Sounds like a lot of money, but it would insure the protection and management of Sugarloaf Cove essentially forever! What a great thought and a great relief.

Inserted in this newsletter you will find a form that I hope you will take a moment to fill out and return to me. The wonderful thing about endowments is that you don't have to be rich to make a difference. You just have to be willing to make a contribution! If you have questions about the endowment, or would like to help in any way, please let me know.

On behalf of all the future generations who will visit and appreciate Sugarloaf Cove, I thank you for all your past, present, and future support!

All the best,
Terri Port Wright

Thank You

Site Hosts Needed



Now that the Sugarloaf Interpretive Center is completed, SICA will start a "Volunteer Site Host" program. Beginning in summer 2001 we will need people who are interested in spending one or more days at Sugarloaf Cove. The volunteers' responsibilities will be to open the interpretive center building, greet visitors, and provide information about SICA and Sugarloaf Cove. Hours will be 12-4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, June through September. Other days are available if requested. What a great way to help

out SICA while enjoying a day on the North Shore!

For volunteers who want to act as site hosts but don't live near Sugarloaf Cove, there are many options for places to stay overnight. Lamb's Resort in Schroeder has cabins or camping space, and Temperance River State Park near Schroeder or Tettegouche State Park near Little Marais both have great campgrounds. Some nearby resorts include Superior Ridge in Schroeder or Bluefin Bay in Tofte.

Please contact B.J. Kohlstedt at 218-353-7745 or bjjohn@lakenet.com for more information or to reserve a date.

SICA's Mission

When organized in 1992, SICA's mission was to preserve and protect the land at Sugarloaf Cove, to establish a public interpretive forum, and to erect a building to facilitate that interpretive forum. With acquisition of the land in 1998, construction of the Sugarloaf Cove Interpretive Center in 2000, and ongoing interpretive programs, these goals have essentially been met. As a result, following an all-day strategic planning session in November 2000, the SICA Board of Directors created a new mission statement for SICA.

*The Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association is dedicated to:
the preservation and restoration of the Sugarloaf Cove site for public enjoyment of its natural characteristics,
interpretation of and education about the natural and cultural significance of the Sugarloaf Cove site in relationship to the North Shore; and
conscientious stewardship and protection of the Sugarloaf Cove Scientific and Natural Area.*



SICA People

Welcome to SICA's newest Board member, Mike Zins.

Mike Zins is a long-time friend to northern Minnesota and is building a retirement home near Grand Marais. He has extensive training and experience in horticulture and works at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in

Chanhasen. Mike was instrumental in creating Minnesota's Master Gardening program. Mike's specialty is trees, and he teaches undergraduate classes in "Woody Landscape Plants" and "Landscape Operations" on the St. Paul Campus of the University of Minnesota.

On the Move

The SICA office has moved from downtown Duluth to rural Esko. SICA's new contact information is:



244 Marks Road
Esko, MN 55733
Phone: 218-879-4334
Fax: 218-879-4371
sugarloaf@qwest.net

Cove

by John Kohlstedt

A warmish Saturday in March. Snowflakes in the air. Over 3 feet of snowpack on the trail. I figured maybe six souls would show up for this 4.5 mile snowshoe trek up the Caribou River, along the birch ridges, then down Sugarloaf Road to the interpretive building at Sugarloaf Cove. As we prepared at the starting point, the expected six souls showed up early and soon swelled to 23 hikers holding 23 various styles of snowshoes ready to try them on the trail. With Bill Maier from Hartley Nature Center in Duluth serving as the naturalist, and Jim Kustritz from Finland (MN) fixing ropes in advance and sweeping the rear, we headed out.

Woe to those who lost a snowshoe or left the trail! A misstep by Tom while descending one ravine swallowed his left leg, then his left arm, and subsequently swallowed his two would-be rescuers. I prudently kept myself in reserve during the emergency by keeping my distance and taking pictures of the fiasco.

Lunch was a "snowshoe on" affair on the brink of Crystal Creek ravine, watching Jim set up some ropes to assist us up the other side. The Superior Hiking Trail Association's new director, Gayle Coyer, forsook the ropes and made an exhausting series of traverses up the side of the ravine. Look out folks, she's kind of a maverick!

Bill helped us interpret the winter signs-mink tracks along the river; pine



John Kohlstedt



John Kohlstedt

marten, snowshoe hare, white-tailed deer tracks in thicker woods; and some moose signs in the clearcut that showed they had feasted on young birch and aspen.

The snowflakes subsided and bright sunshine accompanied us as we boot-walked the downhill mile to Sugarloaf Cove. After we snarfed cookies, peanuts, cider, and juice in the almost-completed interpretive center and said our good-byes, about a third of the group waded through deep snow down the hill to the beach. (We weren't about to torture our tenderized snowshoeing muscles further by strapping on those cursed webs again.) The beautiful waves, ice floes, icicles, and rock formations took up our attention for another hour before we climbed stiffly into vehicles and headed home.



Sugarloaf Cove

From Industrial Site to Natural Area

HOME TO PULPWOOD AND PEOPLE

When you visit Sugarloaf Cove today, there are few obvious reminders that just thirty years ago the land was a busy industrial site. In the 1940s, Consolidated Water Power and Paper Company (now Consolidated Papers Inc.) purchased land at Sugarloaf Cove for use as a pulpwood landing—a place where logs were stored before being shipped to a processing plant.

Beginning in 1941, Consolidated harvested pulpwood from various sites in Cook County during the fall and winter. The pulpwood was hauled by truck to Sugarloaf Landing and stacked in stockpiles 200-300 feet long and about 10-15 feet high. In the spring and summer, logs were dumped down an 80-foot chute into Lake Superior where storage booms held them inside the cove. Three or four times each summer, several thousand logs were assembled into rafts covering about 40 acres. The log rafts were towed across Lake Superior to Ashland, Wisconsin, for processing.

At the peak of the operation, nearly 100 people worked at Sugarloaf Landing. The site was home to fourteen buildings (homes, garages, offices, maintenance buildings, and storage buildings), a road, a loading dock, a log storage area, a log chute, five underground storage tanks, a root cellar for food storage, and four drinking water wells.

When Consolidated Papers decided in the 1970s to transport pulpwood by rail instead of

water, the operation at Sugarloaf Landing was abandoned. Most of the buildings were left standing. Red pine trees were planted on about three acres as a way of reclaiming the most heavily disturbed land. The rest of the land was left alone to return to its “natural” state.

RESPITE

Between 1978 and 1990, Sugarloaf Cove was a quiet place. The land was left alone by humans, except for occasional short-term visitors. The buildings and other artifacts remaining from the pulpwood landing operation slowly deteriorated. Weeds took over areas once occupied by buildings, while alder, birch, and aspen grew densely in other areas. Tough garden shrubs like lilac and rose—lovingly planted by those who lived briefly at Sugarloaf Landing—continued to bloom in a forest that was returning to the wilderness.

The land ultimately ended up in the hands of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Other than removing most of the buildings, the DNR made few changes at the site. In the 1980s

the DNR was assigned the task of identifying sites for harbors of refuge along the North Shore of Lake Superior, and Sugarloaf Cove was chosen for development of a marina. To many people, it seemed like an ideal site for this kind of human activity. But many others saw Sugarloaf Cove as a unique and beautiful place with geological and ecological features worth preserving.



By Smith Kohlschtedt

NEGOTIATING THE FUTURE OF THE LAND

In 1992, the Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association (SICA) was organized for the purpose of working with the DNR to find an alternative location for a harbor of refuge and to promote the recognition of Sugarloaf Cove as a place that should remain undeveloped. SICA's efforts were successful. The harbor of refuge was relocated a few miles farther northeast at Taconite Harbor, and 7.5 acres at Sugarloaf Cove were designated as a Minnesota State Scientific and Natural Area (SNA)—the highest level of protection given to land in Minnesota.

In 1998, SICA took over ownership of the remainder of the land at Sugarloaf Cove, creating a unique partnership between SICA and the DNR. A conservation easement, enforced by DNR, ensures that future use of the land at Sugarloaf Cove will be limited to preservation, restoration, and interpretation. The organizations work together for the continued protection of Sugarloaf Cove, an excellent example of a successful public-private partnership.

NURTURING THE LAND

Once protection of the land was accomplished, SICA worked to refine the vision of how Sugarloaf Cove could best be used for education while still preserving the natural characteristics that make the site special. A self-guided interpretive trail was created so visitors could learn about the natural and cultural history of the land. An extensive natural resources inventory was completed, resulting in the identification of



By Smith Kohlschütter

three species of mosses never before found in Minnesota, and the discovery of a population of the small flower "Hudson Bay Eyebright," which is listed as a State Species of Concern.

Remaining buildings and roads were removed. A wetland was restored within the SNA. Despite the small size of the wetland, this was a big undertaking, because no one had ever before tried to recreate a coastal wetland within the forest of northern Minnesota. Disturbed upland areas were also restored by removing invasive weedy plants and reintroducing native plants. A modest interpretive center was built on a carefully chosen unobtrusive location. The land and its native ecosystems were nurtured.

WHAT THE LAND CAN TEACH US

The land and the lake remain the most important features at Sugarloaf Cove, and Sugarloaf Cove remains the heart and soul of SICA. The organization continues to focus on serving as an educational resource by sharing what has been learned about "restoring" the land and by interpreting the natural and cultural significance of Sugarloaf Cove in relationship to Lake Superior's North Shore. The newly completed interpretive center will serve as the location for programs, displays, and short-courses, as well as a place to relax, picnic, and enjoy the land.

The most important feature of SICA remains the dedicated people who are members, supporters, visitors, and learners. Without all of these people, who knows what might exist at Sugarloaf Cove today. Some folks look at the land at Sugarloaf Cove and see a "pristine" site; others look at it and hear the voices of the people who have lived and worked there over the years. Perhaps when you visit next, you will feel the peace and quiet, watch a bald eagle soar overhead, and listen for the stories that the land can tell.



wendy strombeck



Linda Morris

SICA Outreach

On March 2-3, the "Million Acres in Minnesota" conference in Duluth celebrated the fact that more than one million acres of privately owned woods in Minnesota are now involved in the Forest Stewardship Program. This voluntary program provides professional forestry advice to private landowners with 20 or more acres of land. Landowners work with forestry experts to improve the recreational, wildlife, and economic benefits of their land, while at the same time protecting valuable natural resources. The conference brought together forest land owners, government agencies, the University of Minnesota Extension Service, and a variety of

nurseries, forestry organizations, and private groups. Nearly 1,000 people spent a day-and-a-half learning about forest management and related issues.

As part of SICA's ongoing outreach efforts, Executive Director Terri Port Wright set up the Sugarloaf Cove Restoration Project display at the Million Acres conference. In addition to the display, SICA also has brochures and a slide show available for use at group meetings. If you are interested in receiving copies of the restoration brochure or in scheduling a slide show presentation, please contact Terri Port Wright at 218-879-4334 or sugarloaf@qwest.net.

e-mail Updates

If your e-mail address changes, don't forget to send a note to Terri (sugarloaf@qwest.net) so she can keep you updated on SICA activities.

Grand Portage Oral History

After three years of hard and rewarding work, the Grand Portage oral history project is finally complete. In December 2000, selected oral history interviews were published as a 140-page book. Titled *Grand Portage Chippewa: Stories and Experiences of Grand Portage Band Members*, this wonderful soft-cover book includes almost 175 stories from Grand Portage Band members, fifteen maps, several genealogies, and many wonderful photographs. This book is the first to document the oral history

of the Grand Portage Band and is available (at cost) for \$30 by contacting Terri Port Wright at 218-879-4334 or sugarloaf@qwest.net. The price of the book pays only for design and printing; no profit is made on the sale of the book.



TRANSITIONS...

Sadly, February brought the passing of Art Pihlaja, a dear friend and supporter of SICA and father of SICA attorney Steve Pihlaja. Art loved attending events at Sugarloaf Cove and thoroughly enjoyed all the activity and happiness.

Art was our informal "guard" at Sugarloaf Cove and, perhaps like many members, took the preservation of the land and access to the lake as a very serious commitment. Art will be greatly missed.

SICA ACTIVITIES

APRIL 2

7 p.m. Schroeder Area Historical Society meeting at Schroeder Town Hall.

SICA Executive Director Terri Port Wright will speak about the Grand Portage Oral History project. Copies of the book "Grand Portage Chippewa: Stories and Experiences of Grand Portage Band Members" will be available for purchase.

APRIL 14

10 a.m. Interpretive Hike at Sugarloaf Cove. Topic: Sugarloaf Creek water sampling.

MAY 12

10 a.m. Interpretive Hike at Sugarloaf Cove. Topic: Wetland and Upland Restoration, one year later.

1 p.m. Work party at Sugarloaf Cove. Bring your work clothes and lunch, and help finish the inside of the new building.

JUNE 19

10 a.m. Interpretive Hike at Sugarloaf Cove. Topic: Wildflowers at Sugarloaf Cove.

JULY 14

10 a.m. Interpretive Hike at Sugarloaf Cove. Topic: How Consolidated Papers used the land at Sugarloaf Cove.

JULY 22

11 a.m. -1 p.m. Fourth Annual "Celebrate Lake Superior" Day Fishboil Luncheon at Sugarloaf Cove. Cost is \$5 per person.

AUGUST 18

Annual Membership Meeting; details in next newsletter.

All Interpretive Hikes begin at 10 a.m. in the parking area at Sugarloaf Cove. For further information, contact Terri Port Wright at 218-879-4334 or sugarloaf@qwest.net.

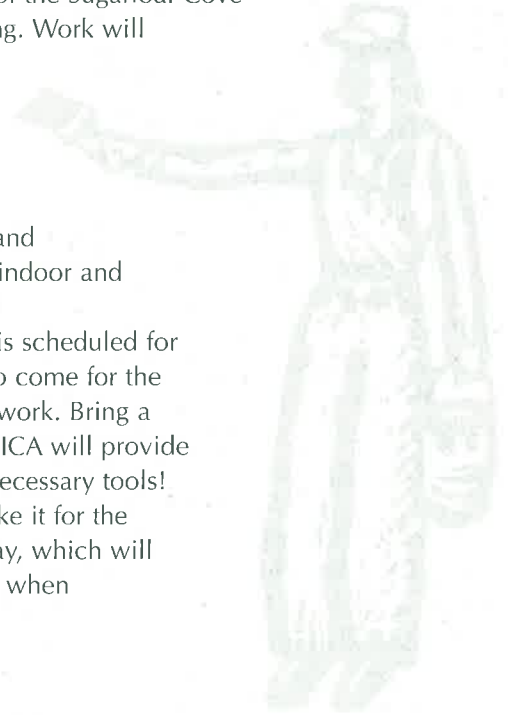


Help Finish the Sugarloaf Cove Interpretive Center

On Saturday, May 12, volunteers are invited to help finish the interior of the Sugarloaf Cove Interpretive Center building. Work will include applying multiple coats of polyurethane to the window frames, painting the bathroom and maintenance room walls, assembling tables, and applying polyurethane to indoor and outdoor furniture.

An interpretive hike is scheduled for the morning of May 12, so come for the hike, and stay for the fun work. Bring a lunch and work clothes. SICA will provide paintbrushes and all the necessary tools!

Even if you can't make it for the hike, come for the workday, which will start at 1:00 p.m. and end when everyone is tired!



*"THE LAND OFFERS US GOOD READING,
OUTDOORS, FROM A LIVELY, UNFINISHED
MANUSCRIPT. RECORDS, PROPHECIES,
MYSTERIES ARE INSCRIBED THERE,
AND CHANGES—ALWAYS CHANGES.
EVEN AS WE READ FROM SOME SELECTED
PAGE, WHETHER MOUNTAINTOP, FOREST,
FURROW, SCHOOLYARD, DUNE, OR BOG,
WE SEE CHANGES: IN STIRRINGS AND
SILENCES, FLAVORS AND TEXTURES, SPACING,
TOLERANCES, AND CONFRONTATIONS
AND TENSIONS AT THE EDGES."*

*FROM "READING THE LANDSCAPE OF AMERICA"
BY MAY THEILGAARD WATTS*

Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association
244 Marks Road
Esko, MN 55733

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membership
APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member of the Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association in the category I have indicated.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

M E M B E R S H I P
C A T E G O R I E S

- \$ 25 Contributing
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New Renew

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T H A N K Y O U !