

# Interpreter

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

## Sugarloaf Cove – Outdoor Classroom

*Tom Beery, University of Minnesota Extension Service*

As an environmental educator in Northeast Minnesota I have worked to promote the use of Lake Superior watershed national, state, and

provincial parks as premier outdoor education facilities. These parks offer access—access to quality trail systems, access to phenomenal geologic formations,

access to our region's rich cultural history, access to exciting wildlife observation, and—perhaps most spectacularly—access to our great Lake Superior itself. It is primarily through this access that the parks promote respectful understanding.

Judge C.R. Magney, for whom Magney State Park was named, described the role of Minnesota State Parks as... to serve as a part of everyman's country estate. I adapt Judge Magney's idea a little to read... to serve as everyone's environmental education center!

Sugarloaf Cove is a partner with all of the other watershed parks in providing precious public access to the Lake. The interpretive efforts at Sugarloaf Cove present the unique story of cultural and natural history and help create an informed public.

Youth regularly see undeveloped land claimed for new homes, roads, parking, and commerce. Seldom do they see evidence of developed land nurtured in order to reclaim a lost measure of environmental integrity—but young people do see this at Sugarloaf Cove.

I have brought youth groups to the Cove on a number of occasions. They have planted a

variety of trees and forbs, they have worked to remove exotic plants, and they have charted first-year survival rates for many of the planted species. The work of these young people has been enhanced by the educational materials, instruction and interpretation, and by time spent exploring the Cove itself. The work has been enjoyable and enriching. The youth teams involved have come away with a pride in participation and with a respect for the overall efforts. The work has generated discussion on topics such as ... How do we distinguish native, naturalized, and exotic species? What is a healthy ecosystem? What is the human role in both promoting and discouraging exotic species in our wild landscapes?

Access is vital if our goal is to help young people develop a strong bond of respect and appreciation for Lake Superior. A deep bond with the Lake starts with significant experience. This bond may grow while searching for agates



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along a pebble beach, while watching peregrine falcons soar over the lake, or while planting trees along its shore. A strong connection is developed via direct, meaningful experience. Sugarloaf Cove has provided these young people with a unique access to Lake Superior as participants in its preservation. I look forward to bringing many more youth groups to one of Lake Superior's most unique outdoor classrooms—Sugarloaf Cove.

*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.*

## Funding Received!

SICA has been awarded a Lake Superior Coastal Program grant for 2002. SICA will work with the Ecological Services Division of the MN DNR on the following projects:

- 1) Complete the existing boardwalk in the Scientific and Natural Area, so that the wetter parts of the trail can be traversed without impacting the soil.
- 2) Build a trail and elevated boardwalk into the restored wetland so that visitors can observe the upland, transitional, and wet zones and learn what types of plants are typically found in each zone. A bench will be installed at the end of the boardwalk so that visitors can observe the area comfortably. Interpretive signs will also be posted along the trail.
- 3) Update the existing trail guide to reflect the construction of the Sugarloaf Cove

Interpretive Center, the wetland restoration project, and the removal of the last building that remained from the Consolidated Papers era.

All work on this project is scheduled to be completed by the end of summer 2002. If you have any suggestions about the trail or trail guide, please contact Terri at 218-879-4334 or [SUGARLOAFINT@msn.com](mailto:SUGARLOAFINT@msn.com).



wendy strombeck

## Another Change

Please note that effective immediately, the e-mail address for the Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association will be [SUGARLOAFINT@msn.com](mailto:SUGARLOAFINT@msn.com).

And if you are not currently receiving

e-mail updates about SICA activities and would like to, or if you have changed your own e-mail address in the last year, please contact us at [SUGARLOAFINT@msn.com](mailto:SUGARLOAFINT@msn.com) and we'll add you to the list.



wendy strombeck

## Summer Fun

While it may seem like winter is just

setting in, we are already planning our volunteer host program for the summer of 2002! Volunteer hosts are needed at the Sugarloaf Cove Interpretive Center for Saturdays and Sundays during the summer from noon until 4 p.m. Volunteer hosts need no special knowledge of the site - we will provide all the training you

need in order to answer questions. Responsibilities include opening the Interpretive Center, greeting guests and encouraging them to sign the guest book, and answering questions. If you are interested in having a great excuse to spend a day at Sugarloaf Cove, please e-mail either Terri Port Wright at [SUGARLOAFINT@msn.com](mailto:SUGARLOAFINT@msn.com) or BJ Smith Kohlstedt at [bjjohn@mail.cpinternet.com](mailto:bjohn@mail.cpinternet.com).

# N O R T H E R N   W H I T E   C E D A R

Northern White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) is a familiar tree along the North Shore of Lake Superior. It is shade tolerant and prefers cool, moist conditions, but it survives in many different microclimates. White cedar prefers to grow in wet, spongy soils amid the deep humus of decay, often in dense tangles of roots, trunks, and fallen trees that make walking difficult. But it also thrives on rocky sites, where it is often seen balanced precipitously on narrow rock ledges or clinging to bare rock where there is no apparent soil for rooting. At Sugarloaf Cove, northern white cedar are found on Sugarloaf Point, on the hillside, in the wetland restoration area, and near the parking area.



Sugarloaf Point

Terri Port Wright

Like all trees and shrubs that call northern Minnesota home, the northern white cedar is adapted to survive the dry cold of winter. As a conifer it has needles instead of leaves, but the cedar's needles are not long and thin like pine needles. Rather, cedar needles appear as tightly locked scales that completely cover the tips of the twigs. Less than 1/4-inch long, the overlapping scales keep the twig from drying out and help

limit snow build-up on the branches. The scales have a pleasant scent when crushed. The small oblong cone of the white cedar is usually about 1/2-inch long with 6-12 scales. Cones are borne singly or in large clusters on the ends of branches. Ripening in the fall, the cones produce small seeds that germinate best on rotting logs and stumps.

The cedar typically has a pyramidal shape and can grow to a height of 60 feet with a diameter up to 36 inches. The fire-resistant bark is gray to

reddish-brown and shreds into long, narrow vertical strips. The cedar's twisted trunk often splits into two or more main stems, making individuals look more like a clump of trees. Photographers are irresistibly drawn by the visual impact of ancient gnarled cedars seeming to grow out of solid bedrock, like the Witch Tree near Grand Portage.

With its tough and twisted wood, the white cedar can live for 200-300 years. The cedar's other name is "arborvitae," which means "tree of life." This name may have originated in the 1500s when explorer Jacques Cartier, on his voyage up the St. Lawrence River, learned from local Indian tribes that the boiled bark and leaves could be used as a remedy for scurvy (caused by a deficiency of vitamin C). But an equally good reason for the name "tree of life" is the cedar's ability to continue growing long after it has fallen over. Although the tree may be lying flat on the ground with its roots exposed, new roots will grow down from the horizontal trunk or from branches and the tree will continue to thrive for many years.

A major threat to cedars in northern Minnesota is the white-tailed deer. Deer eat the young, growing tips of cedar seedlings when other food is sparse, usually in late winter and early spring, and a large deer population can severely damage young cedars. The new plantings in the wetland restoration at Sugarloaf Cove have been surrounded by enclosure fences in an attempt to protect the seedlings from deer browsing.

## S I C A   A C T I V I T I E S

*Interpretive Hikes are held on the second Saturday of every month.*

*All "Second Saturday Hikes" start at 10 a.m. from the Sugarloaf Cove Interpretive Center.*

*For details about hike leaders and topics, watch your local newspaper or contact Terri Port Wright at 218-879-4334 or SUGARLOAFINT@msn.com.*

Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association  
244 Marks Road  
Esko, MN 55733

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*Annual memberships are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association, and mail to SICA at 244 Marks Road, Esko, MN 55733. SICA is an educational, non-profit 501(c)(3) Minnesota Corporation.*

**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

MEMBERSHIP  
CATEGORIES

- \$ 25 Contributing
- \$ 50 Supporting
- \$ 100 Sustaining
- \$ 500 Patron
- \$ 1000 Benefactor
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other

- New
- Renew

Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Assoc.  
244 Marks Road, Esko, MN 55733  
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THANK YOU!

**2 0 0 2 M E M B E R S H I P S U R V E Y**

January 8, 2002

Dear SICA member:

Your Board of Directors works hard to carry out the mission of the Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association. We strive to plan for the future, meet the needs of SICA members and North Shore visitors, and implement quality interpretive programs. As we move forward, it is helpful to periodically determine what our members really want. Please take a few moments to fill out this survey, fold it into a self-mailer, add a first class stamp, and let us know what you think about these important issues. Thanks.

Barb Liukkonen, President

**1. What are the TWO most important reasons you visit Sugarloaf Cove? (Check only TWO)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to Lake Superior                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Second-Saturday interpretive hikes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building amenities (restroom, etc.)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Studying geology, ecology, etc.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking or snowshoeing the trail          | <input type="checkbox"/> Throwing rocks in Lake Superior    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observing birds, wildlife, natural world | <input type="checkbox"/> Visiting the wetland restoration   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peace and solitude                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Photography, drawing, creating art       | <input type="checkbox"/> I haven't ever visited the site    |

**2. To help protect the sensitive Scientific and Natural Area, our site management plan restricts access to Sugarloaf Point. If you aren't allowed to visit the Point, how much does that diminish your enjoyment of the site? (Circle ONE)**

Completely                      Quite a bit                      Somewhat                      Not at all

**3. What would be the best way to let visitors know that Sugarloaf Point is "off limits?" (Check ONE)**

- Fencing or physical barrier of some sort
- Signs prohibiting visitors (e.g., "Keep Out")
- Signs describing WHY people should stay off the Point
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**4. As a SICA member, how important are the following to you?**

NOT IMPORTANT ► ESSENTIAL

Regular issues of the newsletter, "The Sugarloaf Interpreter"	1	2	3	4	5
Educational programs at Sugarloaf Cove	1	2	3	4	5
Monthly hikes at Sugarloaf Cove	1	2	3	4	5
Interpretive materials available at no cost	1	2	3	4	5
Interpretive signs or displays at Sugarloaf Cove	1	2	3	4	5
Environmental or social research related to the North Shore	1	2	3	4	5
Having the building open and staffed several days a week	1	2	3	4	5
Having an endowment fund for a secure financial future for SICA	1	2	3	4	5

**5. We don't yet have a sign on Highway 61 to mark the entrance to Sugarloaf Cove. How important do you think it is to put up the sign so that visitors know where the site is? (Circle ONE)**

Very important                      Somewhat important                      Not important - don't put up a sign

**6. If you have other comments, please write them on the back.**

**7. Would you be interested in serving as a member of the Board of Directors? YES NO**

If yes, Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

*Barb Liukkonen  
President, SICA  
2367 Pinewood Circle  
Moundsview, MN 55112*

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Additional Comments: