

Interpreter

A Publication of The Sugarloaf
Interpretive Center Association
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Schroeder, MN 55613 218.740.2755

North Shore Naturalist Programs continue this winter

Who learned...

"About the inter-relatedness of plants with soil, climate, events and one another."

"More than I can possibly remember."

"That it's fascinating how nature interrelates."

"How much more there is to learn."



Explore Sugarloaf Cove in winter at our North Shore Naturalist weekend workshops.

Participants in our inaugural North Shore Naturalist weekend workshops, that's who!

Twenty-seven people from across Minnesota participated in our three workshops, combining classroom time and field experience on the North Shore. Thanks to a grant from Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program, Sugarloaf was able to start up these new programs, providing in-depth study of unique North Shore coastal phenomena.

We've learned that these programs work. Now Sugarloaf is pleased to announce a new series of programs, through the coming winter.

NORTH SHORE WINTER ECOLOGY with Mike Link

JANUARY 24 AND 25

Join renowned Minnesota naturalist Mike Link for a weekend studying winter ecology on the North Shore. Learn how plants and animals survive winter, especially the unique challenges of the North Shore. Participants will ski or snowshoe through a variety of North Shore environments. Mike is the director of the Audubon Center of the North Woods, in Sandstone, and the author of many regional nature books. Mike has also been involved in seminal research on North Shore deer and wolf populations.

\$100 Sugarloaf members, \$110 others. Housing available for \$30-\$50 per person per night at Superior Ridge Resort.

NORTH SHORE NATURE WRITING with Larry Weber

SATURDAY, MARCH 20

9:00-3:00

Larry Weber is well known and well loved as a naturalist, teacher, author and radio personality. His columns on Northland natural history are featured weekly in local newspapers, and his books on "backyard nature" are regional favorites. Join Larry for a daylong exploration of nature writing and how it helps us understand the North Shore. Participants will read and write about nature and explore it at Sugarloaf Cove. Larry will also discuss the value of photography and sketching in keeping a nature journal.

\$50 Sugarloaf members,
\$60 others.

Denise Carlson and Serine Ege of Little Marais, "on the ice" at Sugarloaf Cove in March 2003.



Also, be sure to join us for our regular Second Saturday free interpretive programs.

January 10, 2004

Current lynx studies with Chris Burdett, University of Minnesota.

February 14, 2004

Snowshoe hike on the Superior Hiking Trail from Caribou River to Sugarloaf, co-sponsored with the Superior Hiking Trail Association.

March 13, 2004

Lake Superior: On the Ice.

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.

Cove

Let's compare Silver Bay's taconite facility and Sugarloaf. What's to compare? The first is a large materials handling facility and loading point and the second is...well...a former materials handling facility and loading point. Both serve an extractive industry, both have been exceedingly disruptive to the immediate surroundings and posed short and long term threats to habitat and environment. Both did and continue to house small endangered flora on geologically interesting offshore rock outcroppings.

So they actually do have a lot in common. The differences lie in the time frame. Sugarloaf is one, perhaps two, generations ahead of the taconite plant having completed the phases of abandonment and initial restoration.

Sugarloaf demonstrates nature's great ability to heal and recover, particularly when given a helping hand. In its heyday, Sugarloaf was managed as a log landing and loading facility, with a typically distant ownership, whose primary interest was in relieving the adjacent forests of their remaining tree cover in the fastest and most efficient means possible.

They were driven by efficiency and economics. Pulpwood rafting was a response to changing transportation systems and the transition of forest products from high-grade lumber to pulp chipping for paper. The process damaged the land and shoreline. In leaving, however, they did demonstrate some compassion for nature in removing many of the buildings, planting red pine plantations and most importantly, transferring the ownership of the land to the Nature Conservancy as the start of an enormously interesting chain of title that ultimately led to SICA.

If you had driven up the old Arrowhead Scenic Highway from Duluth to Grand Marais in the late 1920s or early 1930s you might have been shocked to look out the window of your Model T or your Packard Roadster. The visions of birch and evergreen forests that cover the hills and dales as far as you can see today were not there. Most of the ancient forests of white and red pine had been logged, and the loggers had left huge piles of slash on the bare properties that were rapidly falling into tax delinquency and subsequent sheriffs' sales.

The dry slash piles were easy sources for fire and at least twice during the 1920s, out-of-control fires swept the cut over lands endangering the homes and

farms of those few people determined enough to be living in the area. Tourism was just beginning, and while that industry was developing, fishing, small farming and some marginal lumbering were the North Shore economy. Slowly but surely, during this period of little pressure on the forest, the woodlands recovered. This time the forest was essentially birch, although there were extended patches of alder in the boggy places, and occasional groves of maple where it was neither too wet nor too cold. Spruce became a major constituent of the new forest as the burgeoning deer herds assassinated the few surviving cedar.

Now we are faced with another change in our scenery as the birch forest, exceeding its normal lifespan and under stress from civilization, is in its turn dying out. What will nature give us next? Probably a fairly dense spruce forest with interspersions of other hardwoods. There will be a not-so-subtle evolution of this new forest as a by-product of global warming. Savanna type open spaces may well be a part of the next generational vista.

Spruce are nice to look at (as for that matter are the tall pines and the crown maple forests) but do not provide the understory needed to feed and shelter birds, deer and smaller wildlife. If our children want some signs of life in their woods, they will need to manage their forests.

We hope that programs at Sugarloaf will help visitors and natives understand some of these dichotomies and to appreciate that 120 years ago this part of Minnesota was a significant old growth forest, that 80 years ago it was a wasteland, and that now it is a semi-restored forest in the midst of change under pressure. It is a forest capable of restorative regrowth if we offer some help and get out of its way.

What do you suppose the taconite plant at Silver Bay will look like in 50 years? Will it be recovering from industrial use as Sugarloaf Cove is? Do you suppose that some entity will have provided the resources to tear down the plant or will it be a dangerous rusting monument? In 100 years, Silver Bay may be the snowmobile recreational capital of Minnesota or it may be a first generation birch forest. Do you think it would make a difference if Silver Bay had a forest planner on payroll? Probably not - but I'd always bet on Mother Nature.

DICK SLADE, SICA BOARD PRESIDENT

Snow Rules!

by DAVE CARLSON

North Shore snow is a topic of conversation all year. Beginning in September people start asking when it's going to snow and how much. Every day during the Split Rock season visitors from around the world ask what the average annual snowfall is, usually followed by comments about how cold it must be living on the shore.

We were told a few rules when we first bought our place in Little Marais in 1993. You don't want to be here in November or April stands out in my memory. I added to the lore myself with weather presentations at Sugarloaf Cove and the Little Marais Community Club. Ten years of statistics thru 2001 show a 30-40 percent chance of snow every day from December 10 thru February 5. January 17 has the peak chance. Two Harbors averages about 70 inches during that period, Wolf Ridge 81, and Lutsen 90 inches. Unfortunately, there were too many gaps in the daily reporting, and differences of a day here and there between these three examples of good reporting. I didn't find the great Halloween Blizzard of 1991 (the Perfect Storm) recorded by any of the three.

Skip Lamb (SICA Board member) of Schroeder gave me more information the other day. Along the Caribou (he didn't say whether Caribou Trail or the Caribou River) the snow accumulation is the greatest and has been known to strand dogsleds on the John Bear Grease event. He also witnessed the greatest single daily snowfall in Minnesota; 54 inches at Finland.

Several of us met at Sugarloaf Cove in November to discuss "interpretation" on the North Shore. My favorite topic, of course, is the weather. I would like to have us collect the data from all kinds of sources. We do have the human resources at hand and could attract some people who are not already involved at Sugarloaf. At least a couple of us are capable of analyzing it to death and providing useful information from it.

"Snow Rules!" is a project of the State Climatology Office, headed by Jim Zandlo. He

has developed an extensive grid of official snow observers. Pete Harris, at Wolf Ridge, and I are recruiting more observers. We're trying to fill in the gaps on the map to observe and study Lake Superior lake effect on both sides of the Superior Ridge. Pete is an official contact for new observers and for those who do not have the capability to report their own data online. I

understand that Rebecca Wiinanen does the same at Grand Marais.

This month Jim will be distributing weather sensors the size of a dime, called Thermochron I-Buttons, to be mounted on the Snow Boards we use for daily measurements, on the ground, and in all kinds of places that we'll identify by latitude and longitude using GPS. The sensors collect up to

30 days of temperature readings that can be recorded with handheld PDAs and transmitted or mailed to his office.

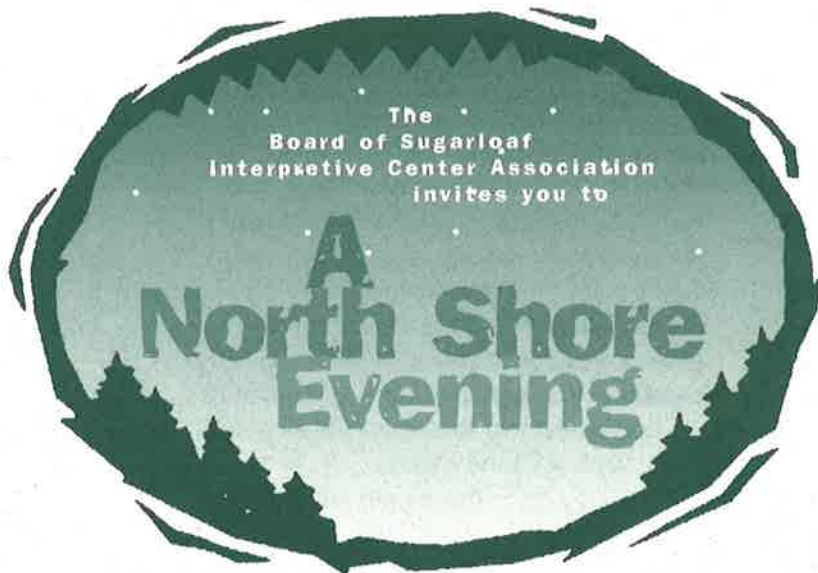
Incidentally, Jim is Sugarloaf's next-door neighbor, having purchased land immediately adjacent to Sugarloaf Cove on the west.

An excellent article was published in the Cook County Herald this week, December 5, 2003. Frank Hansen, who writes the West End News column, covers the territory around Schroeder, including Sugarloaf Cove. He too is an official snow observer. At that moment he reported 10 inches of snow on the ground at his place at Sawbill. I have 1 inch at the shore with a hard crust on top. What he calls trivia says 10 inches of undisturbed snow provides the equivalent of 6 inches of fiberglass insulation, and that's what we need to keep our septic systems from freezing. Also, 36 inches of snow on your roof weighs about the same as three elephants.

If you are interested, the Snow Rules! Web site is <http://climate.umn.edu/snowRules>.

Dave Carlson of Little Marais is a member of the SICA board and serves as Second Vice-President. He is retired from 3M and works seasonally for Split Rock Lighthouse.

nature notes



Howard and Bettye Olson
 Brett Peterson
 Marge Peterson
 Helen Ringham
 Kathryn Ringham
 Henny Schoeller
 George Slade and Janet Bisbee
 Jamie Slade
 Nick Slade
 Richard and Ella Slade
 Sheila Smith and Perry McGowan
 Betsy and Glen Swanson
 Jay and Ellen Doll Swanson
 Jack and Mary Taylor
 Dode Wonson

The Night the North Shore Came to Town

Thanks to the following folks for attending our first annual "North Shore Evening" event November 12 in Minneapolis. And special thanks to Jack and Kirsten Driscoll for hosting the event in their beautiful south Minneapolis home! Participants enjoyed delicious soups prepared by new SICA board member Margit Berg, watched a wonderful slide show by Randy (Rudi) Hargesheimer, and bid on unique North Shore items. The event raised over \$5,000 for Sugarloaf.

Also, heartfelt thanks to the following donors to the silent auction:

Bluefin Bay /
 James Waldo and Wendy Strombeck
 Judith McGrann and Friends
 Karen Lane
 Satellites Resort
 Craig Blacklock
 Andrew Slade
 Richard Slade
 Lutsen Resort
 Marcy Harris
 Barb Liukkonen

Tom Becken
 Margit and Tom Berg
 Tim and Barbara Brown
 Rob and Jan Buntz
 Mollie Dean
 Barb and Scott Godin
 Glen and Donna Hambleton
 Marcy Harris
 David Hartwell and Elizabeth DeBaut
 Karen Lane
 Nan Lightner
 Chance and Searcy Lillehei
 Barb and Robert Liukkonen
 Nancy Martin
 Mark and Tammy Magney
 Phil and Julie Magney
 Bob and Helen Mairs
 Bill and Judy McGrann
 Jeff Mikkelson
 Bill and Chouhei Mullin
 Jim and Fran Mullin
 Bob Nelson



Donna Hambleton, Judy Stern, Rudi Hargesheimer and Glenn Hambleton enjoyed Sugarloaf's "North Shore Evening" in Minneapolis, November 12. Rudi later presented wonderful slides taken on the shore.

Are you on-line with us?

Sugarloaf is moving, slowly but surely, on to the Web.

Thanks to Duluth designer Sally Rauschenfels and the Minnesota Lake Superior Coastal Program, the Sugarloaf website is now up and running. Our web address sounds like an Italian pastry.

Check us out at:

www.sugarloafica.org

Also, we have an active e-mail list announcing all of our programs, volunteer opportunities, etc. If you aren't already receiving these but would like to, please drop Andrew a line at sugarloaf@lakenet.com.

Summer site hosts: Free camping now available

It's not too early to start thinking and planning about next summer.

The summer months are the busiest time of the year at the site, both for people and for nature. We are always looking for ways to maintain a human presence at the site, to help guide visitors, work on stewardship projects, and protect our resources. Volunteer site hosts are a critical link between SICA and our visitors.

Anyone who has been on the shore on a summer weekend will tell you that campsites and hotel rooms are hard to come by. Thanks to a special dispensation from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, volunteer Sugarloaf site hosts can pitch a tent at our new, secluded campsite. What a great way to spend a weekend on the North Shore, camping in the pines and helping protect Sugarloaf Cove at the same time!

If you're interested in selecting a choice summer weekend, let Andrew know in the Sugarloaf office.



Sugarloaf Board 2003-2004

Richard Slade , Mpls/Little Marais	President
Jim Mullin , Mpls/Little Marais	1st VP/Pres.Elect
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Ethan Perry	Duluth
Andrea Peterson	Grand Marais
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Elmer Andersen	Founding Director
Andrew Slade	Executive Director
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Thanks, Pam!

If you visited Sugarloaf on a Thursday or Friday this summer, or attended our fabulous fishboil, you probably met Pam McDougall of Lutsen, our summer site manager. Pam (right above, with Andrew Slade, left) is a friendly, outgoing person who brings a nice homey touch to the interpretive center. Pam will be around Sugarloaf more in 2004, helping with site hosts and weekend programs.

Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association
9096 Highway 61, PO Box 63
Schroeder, MN 55613

S I C A A C T I V I T I E S

J A N U A R Y 1 0

Second Saturday at Sugarloaf – Lynx on the North Shore with researcher Chris Burdett

J A N U A R Y 2 4 - 2 5

North Shore Naturalist weekend workshop:
North Shore Winter Ecology, taught by Mike Link. \$100 for SICA members.

F E B R U A R Y 1 4

Second Saturday at Sugarloaf – Snowshoe hike from Caribou River to Sugarloaf. Co-sponsored by Superior Hiking Trail Association

F E B R U A R Y 2 1

SICA Board meeting, Duluth-all welcome

M A R C H 1 3

Second Saturday – Lake Superior: On the Ice

All Second Saturday programs start at 10 am at the Sugarloaf Cove Interpretive Center.

Address Correction Requested

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Annual memberships are tax deductible. Please make checks payable to Sugarloaf Interpretive Center Association, and mail to the SICA office at 1040 Minnesota Avenue, Duluth, MN 55802. 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 _____

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

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

New Renew

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T H A N K Y O U !