

Interpreter

A Publication of Sugarloaf:
The North Shore Stewardship Association
9096 Highway 61, PO Box 63
Schroeder, MN 55613 218.740.2755

Sugarloaf to facilitate North Shore Parks coalition

On January 20-21, 2006, Sugarloaf was a co-host of the historic North Shore Parks and Trails Leadership Summit. Seventy leaders from 26 organizations representing a diverse cross

The loss of park interpreters has also been dramatic, according to Willford. There used to be 2.5 full-time-equivalent interpreters on the shore, and now there is just one.

As the Parks and Trails Council wrote, "the North Shore is also home to growing development and population pressures, declining state natural resources funding and an ever-increasing diversification of community stakeholders."

Of the 26 organizations at the Summit, a core group of seven nonprofits, three North Shore businesses and four government agencies came together a second time to move the process forward. This core group of nonprofits engaged in North Shore parks and trails issues includes:



Andrew Slade, standing left, and Judy Erickson, standing right, facilitate the brainstorming session at the North Shore Parks and Trails Leadership Summit.

section of North Shore interests convened at Lutsen Resort. The main topic was the dire need for local support to help North Shore state parks and trails

According to the Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota, the lead sponsor of the event, "The North Shore of Lake Superior is home to glorious adventure, breathtaking natural scenery, assorted wildlife, robust forests and an abundance of park and recreational opportunities."

In the morning, colorful introductions of Paul Sundberg's photography and Grant Merritt's personal recollections set the stage.

Then regional park manager Jim Willford spelled out the bad news: North Shore state parks, with 1.7 million visitors per year, are starved for funds, especially in the face of increasing usage, rising health costs and significant maintenance backlogs. Willford pointed out the dying birch forests that need hands-on care to change over to cedar, pine and spruce. Judge Magney State Park, named after one those visionary citizens, has no visitor contact anymore: people visit, hike and camp without any park rangers around.

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.

Gitchi Gami Trail Association
Grand Portage Lodge & Casino
Lutsen Mountain
North Shore Scenic Drive Council
Split Rock Lighthouse Historic Site
Sugarloaf
Superior Hiking Trail Association
Two Harbors Area Chamber of Commerce

As a coalition of community groups, advised by park managers, this group will further focus the concerns of North Shore parks and work collaboratively to address them.

Of all these nonprofits, Sugarloaf is the one organization whose mission and current activities most closely matches the current pressing needs of the state parks. Sugarloaf's mission, to protect and restore the North Shore's unique environment, fits right in. Andrew Slade, Sugarloaf executive director, was asked to lead this newborn coalition through its initial phases. "It was an offer I couldn't refuse," Andrew said. "Supporters of Sugarloaf are supporters of North Shore parks and trails, and this is important work."

Cove

Skiing through the dying forests of Gooseberry

I have seen the future, and I don't like it.

One day this winter, after a meeting inside the wonderful Gooseberry Falls visitor center, I went off for a ski on the state park trails. A cold front was coming in, and I wanted to get out before the deepest chill set in. What a privilege it is to live and work where I can combine my professional obligations with my passion for outdoor recreation.

I headed out into the woods, crossing the river on the funky underpass under the Highway 61 bridge. I was looking forward to the trails on the northeast side of the park, a wonderful web of intermediate trails. I had last been there ten years ago. Then, I found the forests here dark and full, even in winter, and I had fond memories of coming across fresh wolf kill in snowy woods.

Everything had changed.

The old trees were going, going gone. The birch trees that still were standing had stumps for limbs, their upper parts damaged or killed by drought, disease and old age. But worse, there was very little coming up to replace them. What had been a dark old forest was now practically open fields.

I've been studying North Shore forests and working on their restoration for a lot of years. Sugarloaf is actively engaged in helping landowners with the transition to a conifer forest. I know intellectually about the problems. Yet the change in the Gooseberry forests stunned me.

As expected, the only conifer coming up through the heavy grass and hazel shrub was white spruce, a prickly thing the park's ravenous deer don't eat.



Here and there, park managers had built fencing to enclose tree plantings. In these sanctuaries from the deer, white pine was doing pretty well, and I think I saw some cedar in there as well.

My meeting that afternoon in the visitor center had been about North Shore parks and trails and their need for increased public support. But I had never before seen or felt the need in the gut like I felt it on the ski trails. These woods are dying, and it will take major work to restore the native conifer forest.

Maintaining adequate funding from the state is one important step, so that park managers can keep up. But the scale of the problem in the parks, especially in the backcountry like this, will require the sort of large-scale hands-on work that only a committed community can provide. Gooseberry alone will need legions of volunteers off in the woods planting native conifer trees and building fences to protect them.

There's a lot of work to be done.

ANDREW SLADE

Sugarloaf Highlights in 2005:

- Changed name to Sugarloaf: The North Shore Stewardship Association
- Finished Forest Stewardship Plan for Sugarloaf Cove and implemented it at three major demonstration sites
- Visitor center was open seven days a week in the summer months
- Completed ShoreLink directory of interpretive organizations
- Completed first summer of ShoreLink learning cart
- Increased membership to 294.
- Visitation increased from an estimated 4800 in 2004 to an estimated 5800.

Association Members

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Arrowhead Electric Trust
 Duluth-Superior Area Community Foundation
 Elmer L. and Eleanor J. Andersen Foundation
 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
 Minnesota DNR Environmental Partnership
 Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program

2005 FINANCIAL REPORT *Note: Figures not final or audited.*

INCOME

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Contributions Income | 26,667.36 |
| Dividends | 155.94 |
| Grants | 61,177.10 |
| Membership Dues | 17,940.00 |
| Program Fees | 1,505.00 |
| Sales | 1,066.85 |
| Total Income | \$108,512.25 |

EXPENSE

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Equipment Purchase | 541.06 |
| Advertising | 875.66 |
| Bank Service Charges | 71.00 |
| Contract Labor | 18,155.92 |
| Dues and Subscriptions | 374.26 |
| Insurance | 3,873.56 |
| Internet access | 1,088.33 |
| Miscellaneous | 275.63 |
| Office Supplies | 821.34 |
| Payroll Expenses | 45,000.35 |
| Postage and Delivery | 2,226.60 |
| Printing and Reproduction | 6,013.66 |
| Program Expense | 4,380.90 |
| Retail COGS | 533.64 |
| Telephone | 867.23 |
| Training | 450.05 |
| Travel & Ent | 5,020.59 |
| Visitor's Center Costs | 7,825.31 |
| Total Expense | \$ 98,395.09 |

Change in Net Assets **\$10,117.16**

North Shore Naturalist Workshops: Summer 2006

Learn More About the Shore

Sugarloaf's North Shore Naturalist workshops offer small group experiences led by enthusiastic experts. Based at Sugarloaf Cove, they use the whole shore as the classroom. Watch for official registration materials coming soon, but you can reserve your place now by e-mailing sugarloaf@lakenet.com.



Jim Miller (center) will be back this year to help discover "What's this Rock?"

Digital Wildflower Photography with Craig Blacklock

JUNE 17, 8:00 TO 4:30 \$80, \$70 Sugarloaf members.

The North Shore in June is blooming with color. Learn from the renowned photographer how to capture the beauty of wildflowers with your digital camera. Session includes field work at Sugarloaf Cove and computer lab time. Any digital camera may be used, but digital SLR cameras are highly recommended. Tripods required. Hikes of under 1 mile.



The Ecology of Color with Chel Anderson

JUNE 24, 9:00 TO 4:30 \$60, \$50 Sugarloaf members.

One of our most popular classes. The North Shore is home to a unique range of wildflowers and their habitats. Not just a wildflower identification class, this goes into the way these beautiful species fit into the unique ecology of the Shore. Chel has spent her career on the shore studying these habitats and is a delight to learn from. Hikes of under 1 mile.

What's this Rock? North Shore Geology with Jim Miller

JULY 15, 9:00 TO 4:30 \$110, \$100 Sugarloaf members.

Ever wonder what all those great rocks on the beach are, or where they come from? Jim tells the whole story, through entertaining presentations and fascinating field trips. Sugarloaf Cove is an ideal base for this program, but field trips will take you up and down the North Shore. Hikes of under 1 mile.

North Shore Waterfalls with John Green

JULY 22-23
\$110, \$100 Sugarloaf members.

Join the ultimate North Shore naturalist on an educational tour of these scenic gems. As a geology professor, John's research forms the foundation of what we know about North Shore geology. But he is also a terrific naturalist who can tell you about the trees and flowers and birds of the Shore. Join John on informative hikes to at least six North Shore waterfalls, from the famous to the out-of-the-way, and learn about just about everything along the trail. Hikes of up to 3 miles.



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A P R I L 8

Second Saturday: Lichens

M A Y 1 3

Second Saturday: Waterfalls of the North Shore

M A Y 2 0

Sugarloaf board meeting, Sugarloaf Cove

J U N E 1 0

Second Saturday: Special double program
(Fishing, Hummingbirds)

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

Address Correction Requested

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