

2004 Labor Weekend Trip Report

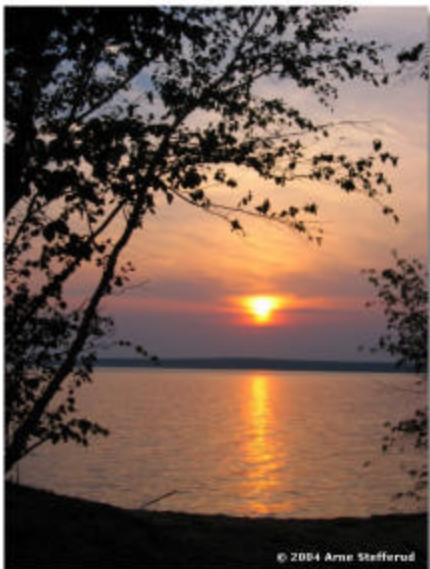
by Jill Wroblewski and Arne Stefferud



The weather on Saturday was outstanding, a day that one is thankful for on Lake Superior if it is July, and a day that is amazing when it falls in September. We were dunking into the lake at each stop to cool off!

We meandered our way to the Ironwood Island campsite on Saturday, with a stop at the Manitou fish house & a visit with John the volunteer.

When we arrived at our site, there was a note on a log from Steve Skorvan and his friends who had stopped by to check out our site when they passed from Rocky to Outer earlier in the day. During happy hour we were visited by a few flies that really liked the sweet mustard dip for our pretzels.



The sunset Saturday night was picture perfect.

We laughed all night with stories that probably don't translate well out of the moment, but suffice to say that the "multipurpose" tool has new connotations!



Sunday morning we awoke to a thunderstorm out of the west and some agitated water. After breakfast, the waves weren't too bad so we took off to the north west heading towards Rocky. We explored Outer Twin and then scooted around Rocky to take a peak at Devils. The water on that side of the islands was GLASS! After some discussion, Sue, Ron & Jill headed home while Arne & Mike went out to explore Devils. (Both groups had radios and appropriate safety gear, so we were all comfortable with the decision to split the group.) The threesome explored the east side of Rocky and then cut for home. We arrived back at Ironwood about 4:00 p.m.



Our adventuresome two returned at about 6:00 with stories and pictures to make all three of us terribly jealous for not having continued with them to the sea caves. Pristine conditions made for easy thorough exploration of the island.

Fiesta night was a huge HIT! We started with appetizers of chips, salsa and bean dip. We not only had two kinds of tequila, but Mexican beer and MARGARITAS in a bag.

As we began to partake of the drinks, we all agreed that the main course was going to be simplified from Mexican Pizza with black beans and rice on the side to a large pot of



beans, veggies and rice topped with cheese for simple ease of preparation. Dessert?--well we couldn't wait to eat the Mexicanö apple pie that Sue brought, so that had been consumed the night before! However, we did partake in a round of tequila shots to cap off the meal



We were wind bound on Monday with insane winds and waves and small craft advisories. No one felt bad to stay an extra day, although we did find it hard to fill the time with little beach left for combing given the water conditions and no options for paddling.



Jill picked blackberries, Sue found a heart shaped rock some pretty glass bottles & picked flowers to decorate our campsite that was moved two levels into the woods for protection. Mike even made use of his emergency blanket for a little nap prior to us deciding to stay put and re-set camp.

We took a tromp through the woods looking for the other side of the island, meandering through the old logging trails but gave up after a bit and decided it was cocktail hour.

Thankfully we had plenty of alcohol for an extra day :). Although food was a hodge-podge of pickings, we made a pretty nice spread including a can of cheetos found in the front of Mikes kayak--apparently from 18 months or so before!

Dinner itself was what we endearingly called beef-stew-goulash--a dehydrated beef stew pack (compliments of Ron),



leftovers from the Fiesta night (brown rice, salsa, bean dip), cheese and mystery seasoning from Arne's kitchen pack.

The paddle on Tuesday was exhilarating, physically challenging and towards the end, mentally challenging. But on the whole, fairly controlled and safe.

Having made it through the three and then FOUR foot waves with a feeling of security, stability and control in my boat, we gained a better appreciation of our paddling skills. Forty-five minutes for the crossing from Ironwood to Manitou, an hour and 15 minutes to cross to Oak all with constant HARD paddling into the wind--seven hours from launch to finish with three breaks. It was a tough paddle!



After landing at Red Cliff and loading our boats, Sue treated us to wonderful creme brulee at Maggie's. We then had juicy burgers and fries to finish our post trip meal. It was a wonderful trip!!