

STREET SCENE

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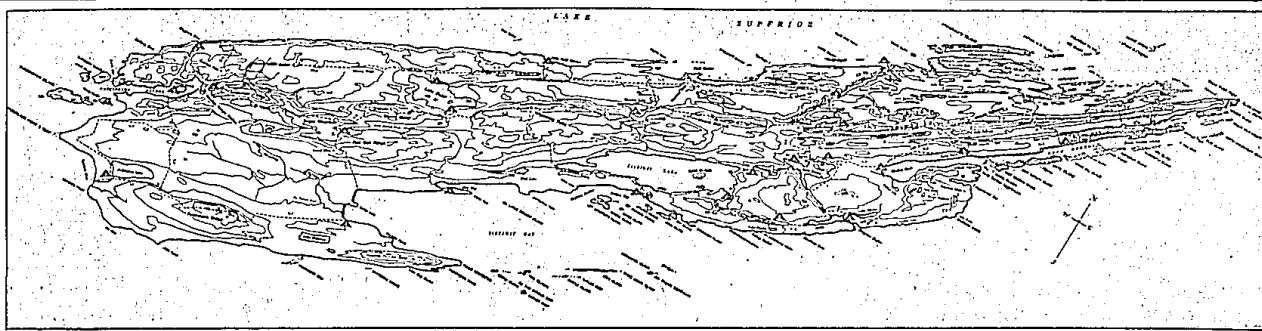
A touch of class

Think of yachting, and you immediately associate it with "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." Monstrous boats that make your speedboat look like a dinghy are cruising the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair. And, for a price, you can experience such a lifestyle. Find out how on Page 6D.

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ISLE ROYALE

Michigan's gemstone island

By Jeff Counts
staff writer

Isle Royale is Michigan's gem in the rough. For those who venture to the island that sits in the west end of Lake Superior, it offers a chance to spend time away from the civilized world.

There aren't any roads or cars on the 45-mile-long island, but that doesn't make it another Mackinac Island.



A clear sky and a clear lake was too much for vacationer Jeff Counts to resist, so out came the rod and reel for a bit of fishing.

There aren't any bridle paths, horses, bikes or fudge shops. The only way to get around is by boat or foot. Also, Isle Royale isn't for the day tripper. It's for the devoted. There's one lodge, one restaurant and one gift shop. You can see them all in about 15 minutes.

It's the rest of the island that attracts those who venture by boat and plane to the national park. The main attractions are the stately moose, the wolves who prey on the moose, the greenstones — Michigan's official gem — and the scenery. The island has 1,400 moose and 11 wolves.

But it's the relationship between the moose and the wolves that attracts biology students and academics to the island. The two animals are in ecological balance and depend on each other for their survival.

The wolves kill and feed on the weaker moose, keeping their numbers in check. That way the island isn't over populated by moose. If there were too many moose, their sources of food would quickly be depleted.

MOOSE SPEND much of their time in the inland lakes and swamps of Isle Royale, and those are the destinations for backpackers in quest of moose.

It may seem like a lot of work, but seeing a moose in its natural habitat or hearing a wolf howl is worth the effort. For those who may be afraid to walk around an island with wolves on it, park rangers say there's nothing to fear. Few people are even lucky to see a wolf.

During the last 20 years, I've made five trips to the island, and each trip has been different, even though I've seen some of the same country more than once.

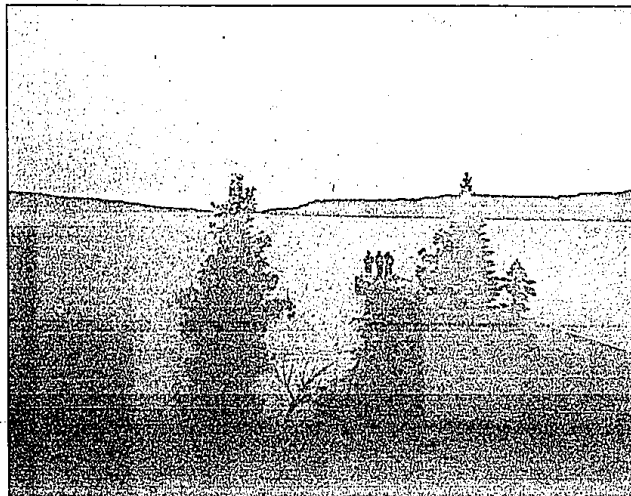
The weather and my companions have changed, but I feel the same thrill at seeing a moose or hearing the howl of the wolf as I first did at 19 years of age.

Hearing that howl or watching a moose pull its head out of the water to look at you is worth the aching muscles, sweating and work that is backpacking.

But while backpacking has its devotees, it's not the sport for everyone. For those who don't choose to spend a week without a shower and their dinner hours eating freeze dried foods, there is a lodge, housekeeping cabins and boat trips. There are also marinas on the island for those with large enough boats to make the trip from the mainland to the island.

Rates for rooms at Rock Harbor Lodge start at \$65 per day, while the rates for housekeeping cabins start

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The pristine beauty of Isle Royale can be seen even at the end of a dock jutting out into one of its many inland lakes.

Getting there is such fun

Getting to Isle Royale National Park is part of the fun.

Because it's an island, get ready for either a boat ride or a plane trip. Both have their advantages.

Here's a round-up of the transportation options from Houghton:

• The M.V. Ranger III is a 155-foot, 123-passenger boat that sails from Houghton to Rock Harbor Lodge at Isle Royale on Tuesdays and Fridays each week during the lodge season and returns the next day. The lodge season is from mid-June through early September.

The boat, operated by the National Park Service, leaves at 9 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time and the trip takes six hours. Advance reservations for passage should be made with the superintendent, 87 North Ripley Street, Isle Royale National Park, Houghton 49931. For more information call (906) 482-0984.

• The Isle Royale Queen III, an 81-foot, 90 passenger boat that sails from Copper Harbor to Rock Harbor Lodge from mid-May through September. The boat leaves Copper Harbor 8 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time and leaves Rock Harbor Lodge at 3:30 p.m. The trip takes about 4½ hours. For more information contact the Isle Royale Ferry Service, Copper Harbor 49918, or call (906) 289-4497.

• Isle Royale Seaplane Service Inc., the on demand charter service to Isle Royale operates from mid-May through September from Houghton. For more information, call (906) 482-8850. While most Michigan residents tend to travel to Isle Royale from

either Houghton or Copper Harbor, there is the Minnesota connection. Here's the line up from that state:

• M.V. Voyager II, a 63-foot, 49-passenger craft makes two-day round trips from Grand Portage, Minn., to Windigo and Rock Harbor Lodge on Isle Royale each Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. The boat leaves the mainland at 9:30 a.m. Central Daylight Time. The boat remains overnight at Rock Harbor Lodge, departing at 9 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays for Windigo and Grand Portage. For more information write or Sivertson's Grand Portage, Isle Royale Transportation Lines Inc., 1332 London Road, Duluth, Minn., 55805, or call (218) 728-1237.

Warp Factor

Karlos Barney

... HARD TO BELIEVE WE FIRST HEARD THAT CONVERSATION TEN YEARS AGO... NEXT A TOP TEN PHONE CALL FROM 1966... RIGHT AFTER LAST YEAR'S WEATHER AND A CHART TOPPING TRAFFIC REPORT FROM 1972...



By Jeff Counts
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Golden Oldies Talk Radio.

The white water way to see nature

By Iris Sanderson Jones
contributing travel editor

Q: Do you have any information on how I would start researching white water rafting trips? I'm interested in programs for novices as this will be my first trip.

S.B.,
Plymouth

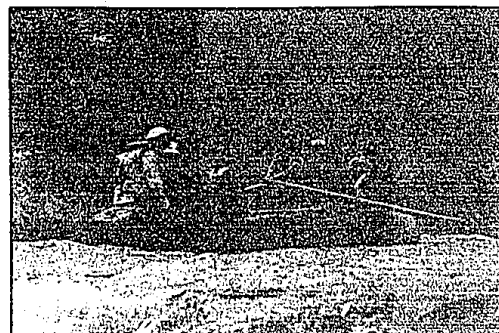
A: I got my feet wet briefly on the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park, Texas, and have always wanted to pursue it further. That trip was run by Far Flung Adventures (P.O. Box 31, Terlingua, Texas. Call (915) 371-2492).

I can tell you that it was great fun to take a day trip with half a dozen on each of several rafts in the Elena Canyon, with a riverside lunch along the way.

I also visited Jim and Jeanine Greiner, who run Wildwater Ltd. Rafting on the Chattooga River, right on the border of Georgia and South Carolina (Wildwater Ltd. Rafting, P.O. Box 100, Long Creek, S.C. 29658. Call (803) 647-9387). An entirely different rafting style than you'll find in the west.

There are several large adventure-travel companies. I talked to Rick McMahon, vice president of operations for American Wilderness Experience, (AWE) which advertises itself as "the civilized way to rough it." (P.O. Box 1486, Boulder, CO 80306. Call toll-free (800) 444-0999.)

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MICKY JONES

White water rafting can be found throughout the United States, including on the Rio Grande in the Big Bend National Park in Texas.