

## TRAVEL

## Visit Drummond Island for a no-fuss outdoor getaway

BY DOUG FUNKE  
STAFF WRITER

Don't go to Drummond Island off the eastern end of the Upper Peninsula if:

■ You need to vacation in the lap of luxury.

■ You need to shop 'til you drop.

■ You need to be constantly entertained.

Do consider a visit to the 22-by-12-mile gem of the Huron if you like to be outdoors hiking, boating, bicycling, swimming, fishing or hunting.

It's also a good place to recharge the batteries by slowing down, reading, playing cards and board games, taking naps, watching sunrises and sunsets, charting passing ships and pondering the inponderables of life.

"Go down to the ferry dock, sit a half hour and you're bound to see a freighter," said Kirk Astie, a clerk at Drummond Island Outfitters. "Wildlife is anywhere."

Outfitters, open mid-May

through September is a good source of maps and rentals of canoes, kayaks and bicycles. The helpful staff can direct where exactly to search for flora, fauna and rocks.

You can drive to many parts of the island on paved roads. But the best way to actually see things is to walk, especially along off-road vehicle trails.

During a visit the first week in August, wildflowers including Queen Anne's lace, clover, daisies, a variety of asters and phlox abounded. Raspberries, in season, late July and early August, are delicious right off the bramble.

Smelt and perch run in spring, perch in summer, salmon and perch again in fall.

Birders go nuts on Drummond. Hawks, woodpeckers, blue jays, cardinals, ducks, geese and owls take flight, some easier to spot than others. Loons greet the dawn with their mournful calls. Butterflies flutter about.

Deer, difficult to encounter on

trails (they aren't tame here like at Kensington Metropark), occasionally meander to open fields or paved roads at the edge of woods.

The island is home to bear, too, but I've never seen one. My son says he and some of his buddies have glimpsed and heard coyote late at night while bonding around the campfire.

Earl Slusser, a retiree, has spent a lot of time on Drummond since 1976. He suggests that kids would enjoy swimming at Rig Shoal Beach (free) and hunting gemstones at Marble Head on the eastern end of the island.

"For adults, rest," he added. "No phones. Get away from the TV."

The Drummond Island Historical Museum, open Memorial Day through September, is a worthy destination at any time, but especially on a rainy day. Admission is free, but donations are accepted.

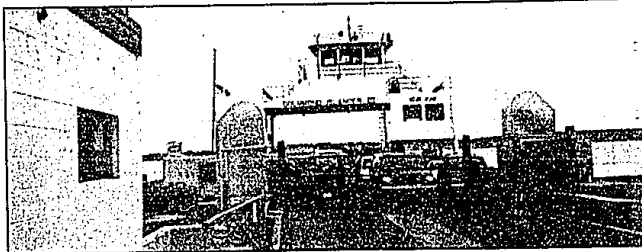
All kinds of artifacts — pictures, books, medical equipment, farming and lumbering tools — actually can be handled there.

Audrey Seaman Moser, 68, museum curator, is descended from the first permanent non-native American settlers on the island.

"It seems like there's no in-between about Drummond. Either people love it or they don't like it," she said. "It's quiet here. Most summer people don't even have a telephone installed."

"You know what I like here — watching sunsets over the water," Moser said. "It's so gorgeous. It goes down so fast, too."

"We have a lot of snow," she conceded, "but we're prepared for it. There's places to push it."



Getting there: The vast majority of vacationers who visit Drummond Island arrive by car ferry and a neat little ride across the St. Mary's River.

The car ferry, a one-mile, 10-minute ride across the St. Mary's River from DeTour, runs year-around. Round trip fare is \$8 for car and driver, \$2 for each additional adult passenger. Visitors also can arrive by private boat and small, private airplane.

The fall color change peaking in late September/early October is spectacular. The scent of the pine trees complements the pastels.

Snowmobiling is popular in winter.

Some summer visitors book cottages the same time every year, cultivating friendships for themselves and their children. About half of the cottages close for the winter months.

Phil Stiles has owned Wa-Wen Resort for nearly 20 years. Over time, he's built an outdoor swimming pool, basketball court and shuffleboard court for his chil-

dren, now grown, and guests. "Sixty-seven percent of the land is still state-owned," Stiles said. "It's peaceful, quiet, safe, low-key, less stressful. That would sum it up. If you feel trapped, you probably don't belong here."

Tennis are especially drawn to the Teepee ice cream stand at the Four Corners in town and the bowling lanes at Woodmoor. Both are fairly inexpensive diversions.

Two golf courses, a few tennis courts, several restaurants, a couple of gas stations and grocery stores, a hardware store, medical clinic, credit union and Lutheran, Catholic and Congregational churches serve the needs of nearly 1,000 permanent

residents and visitors.

Drummond is an hour away from the Soo Locks and casinos of Sault Ste. Marie and the sites and sounds of the Straits of Mackinac.

The island never feels crowded, even at the peak of summer vacation. The folks really seem friendly. Be prepared to wave back at the driver of virtually every vehicle you encounter while walking. And don't forget to smile.

You can contact the Drummond Island Tourism Association by phone at (800) 737-8666 or on the Internet at [www.drummond-island.com](http://www.drummond-island.com). (Next week, more UP adventures.)



Surprise encounters: Domesticated horses and cows live here, as well as wildlife such as deer, coyote and bears.

## GREAT ESCAPES

Great Escapes features various travel news items. Send news leads to Hugh Gallagher, assistant managing editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax them to (313) 591-7279.

## WAY UP NORTH

"Brethren Days" are held in the small northwest Michigan town of Brethren (Manistee

County), Sept. 5 and 6. Events include fishing contest, polka party, country and western music and fireworks (Sunday night); (616) 477-5636.

## WALK THE BIG MAC

You can join the thousands who make the annual trek across the Mackinac Bridge on Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 7. The walk begins in St. Ignace and ends in Mackinaw City. Walkers

may start any time between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m.

No one can start after 11 a.m. Roller skates, bikes, wagons, skateboards and animals are all prohibited. Seeing eye dog are allowed, however.

Vehicular traffic flows even during the walk as southbound lanes are kept open. Walkers park free at the Bridge View area adjacent to the start point;

buses are available in Mackinaw City for \$1.50 to transport walkers back to their car. Some walkers choose the ferries to St. Ignace where free shuttles provided by the ferry lines get you back to Bridge View. Information can be obtained at (906) 643-6950.

## European Tour Night

Join U.S.A.'s 38th Annual, 15-day, fully-escorted tour featuring Holland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, & France

For more information, please join us...

Tuesday, September 15  
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DESTINATION:  
CRANBROOK

Take a day to visit Cranbrook with family and friends! There's more to explore than ever before at Cranbrook — more exhibits, more tours, more fun. Jump-start your imagination at our newly expanded science museum. Take a three-hour tour of our National Historic Landmark campus. Stop for a picnic near the science museum or hike lush nature trails. At Cranbrook, you'll find something for everyone to enjoy this summer — rain or shine.

## Institute of Science

Check out our newly expanded museum and summer blockbuster exhibit, *The Robot Zool*. Larger-than-life robotic beasts, including a giant squid with 18-foot tentacles, demonstrate how animals function in the natural world.

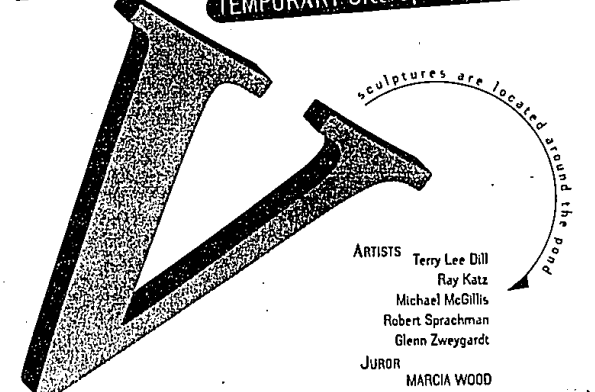
Only through September 7 — don't miss it!

## Art Museum

Explore an array of contemporary art exhibitions featuring photography, sculpture, ceramics and more. The museum also offers fascinating tours of historic Saarinen House as well as one of the country's finest outdoor sculpture collections.

## Cranbrook House and Gardens

Wander more than 40 acres of spectacular gardens surrounding the home of Cranbrook founders George and Ellen Scripps Booth, open daily this summer. Cranbrook House is available for guided tours on Sundays and Thursdays at various times.

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