



# DEEP PORTAGE

## Learning Center

### Summer 2026

### Deep Portage Learning Center

2197 Nature Center Dr. NW  
Hackensack, MN 56452  
Phone: (218)-682-2325  
[www.deep-portage.org](http://www.deep-portage.org)

### Our Mission:

Through the exploration of woods, water, and wildlife, Deep Portage prepares and inspires learners of all ages to sustain and celebrate our natural world.

### Who Are We:

We are a nonprofit overnight environmental education center located on more than 6,000 acres of lakes, bogs, rivers, and woodlands. For nearly fifty years, we have provided extraordinary outdoor experiences for school groups, campers, families, and all who love the great outdoors.

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### Social



## Deep Portage Bogs

A bog is a wetland characterized by its acidity, unique vegetation, and its deposition of dead plant material that changes into peat. This fascinating ecosystem introduces concepts such as photosynthesis, nitrogen fixation, and plant adaptation to severe environmental conditions. Deep Portage has two main bogs that you can walk to from the main campus buildings. One of them even has a board walk in which you can immerse yourself into the bog. Our tamarack bogs contains pitcher plants, cranberries, sundews, leatherleaf, bog laurel, and sphagnum moss. Pitcher plants and sundews are carnivorous plants that lure their food in with sweet nectar and trap them. Come check these wonderful ecosystems and the variety of plants and animals that live in them.



Sundew



Pitcher Plant



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## DONATE TO DEEP PORTAGE

There are a few ways you can help support Deep Portage. Please take a look at the different donation methods below. Your contribution goes towards educating kids about the environment and other programs in environmental education, resources management, conservation, recreation, and community services.

Deep Portage Learning Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and donations are tax-deductible.

### “BRICK BY BRICK” DONATION

The donation for a brick in our brick hallway has increased to a donation of \$150. This gift of a personalized, engraved brick will be displayed at Deep Portage as a reminder of your support of our environmental education programs.



### \$75 MUG DONATION

Each year Deep Portage puts out a collectible mug with a critter you might find at Deep Portage. The 2026 art features an ermine block print created by Rachel Pace, a multimedia artist out of northern Minnesota. Get yours today either online or in person.



### MATCHING GIFTS

Double your impact! Does your employer match gifts? View a list of Minnesota companies that have matching gift programs [here](#).

### IRA GIVING

If you are the age of 70 1/2 or older, you can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) annually from your IRA account. You can donate up to \$108,000 total to one or more non-profits each year. This will avoid income taxes on the funds you give directly to Deep Portage.

### STOCKS, BONDS, MUTUAL FUNDS

You can gift stocks, bonds, or mutual fund shares to a non-profit while avoiding the capital gains taxes. You can also receive a federal income tax deduction for the current value of the gift.

### DONOR ADVISED FUNDS

Make charitable gifts over time by creating a donor-advised fund. In most cases, you can earn a tax deduction. These are offered at investment firms and community foundations such as St. Paul and Minnesota Foundation.

We are truly inspired by those who put their resources to work for young people and the outdoors. On behalf of the Deep Portage Family, Thank You!

# Summer Public Programs



Come join us this summer for some fun and exciting activities that will have you floating on Big Deep Lake, journeying through the woods finding birds, scaling a 35 foot wall, painting a beautiful nature scene, cooking a delicious pizza, or even building your skills in archery. For full information, visit our website and look under public programs. Please RSVP on our [website](#), walk-in spots are not guaranteed. Free-will donations for activities unless otherwise specified.

## JUNE

### **16th - Canoeing** 10am-12pm/2pm-4pm

Go for a spin in our canoes! You're welcome to bring fishing gear, or join our staff for a paddle around Bass Pond and even across the portage to Big Deep Lake.

Ages: 8 and above if using Deep Portage life jackets, younger must bring their own

Cost: Free will donation

### **18th - Birding** 9am-10am/2pm-3pm

Deep Portage is one of the best birding spots in Cass County, so join our naturalist for a guided birding experience. We'll take to the trails, see what we can see, and learn more tricks for identifying birds.

Ages: 7 and up in morning and ages 3-6 in the afternoon

Cost: Free will donation

### **23rd - Orienteering** 10am-12pm/2pm-4pm

Join us for one of our most popular classes, Charlie to Base! You'll start by getting a crash course in orienteering, then will be given a map, a compass, and a walkie talkie as you try and find your way along a course in the Deep Portage woods.

Ages: 8 and up

Cost: Free will donation

### **25th - Nature Painting** 10am-12pm/2pm-4pm

Try your hand at capturing the beauty of Deep Portage on canvas. We'll grab acrylic paints and find a scenic spot.

Ages: All

Cost: \$10 per person

### **30th - Climbing Wall** 10am-12pm/2pm-4pm

Come push your limits on our 35 foot climbing wall! Trained staff will belay you, making this one of the safest activities at Deep Portage. We have many routes of varying difficulty, so there's something to fit everyone.

Ages: 7 and up

Cost: Free will donation

# Summer Public Programs

## JULY

### **2nd - Campfire Cooking** 11am-1pm

Learn and taste 3 levels of campfire cooking; from camping staples to cabin cuisine. Omelette in a bag, Tin Foil Packets, Cinnamon Sugar Stick Bread

Ages: All

Cost: \$15 per person

### **3rd - Tower Open**

Get the best view around from our 55 foot observation tower. Follow the signs from the parking lot on your own time.

### **3rd - Scavenger Hunt** 2pm-4pm

Celebrate the holiday with a good old scavenger hunt! Each team will get a list of items, and then it's a race to see who can collect the most within the allotted time. The winning team will get a prize!

Ages: All

Cost: Free will donation

### **7th - DIY Camo w/ Foraged Dyes** 1pm-4pm

Using foraged plants, we'll create a dye bath over the campfire to color t-shirts. You'll learn a technique called ecoprint as well, using plants that have soaked in an iron solution to decorate the fabric and make a camouflage effect.

Ages: All

Cost: Free will donation

### **9th - Guided Bog Hike** 10am-12pm/2pm-4pm

Hike through the woods to our bog with our naturalist. Learn about carnivorous plants, bog mummies, and more.

Ages: All

Cost: Free will donation

### **10th - Tower Open**

Get the best view around from our 55 foot observation tower. Follow the signs from the parking lot on your own time.

### **10th - Canoe Boy River** 1pm-4pm

Starting from our own Bass Pond, we'll journey across Big Deep Lake and down the Boy River. We'll go past an eagle's nest and a plethora of tamaracks, and up and over a couple of beaver dams.

Ages: 10 and up

Cost: Free will donation

# Summer Public Programs

## JULY

### **14th - Archery** 10am-12pm/2pm-4pm

Unlock your inner Robin Hood! Learn to shoot our compound and recurve bows at our archery range.

Ages: 10 and up

Cost: Free will donation

### **16th - Raspberries + Stick Bread** 9am-12pm

Learn to identify raspberry plants, then it's off to the woods! We'll harvest for a time, then go to the campfire to cook them down to eat with our stick bread - which we'll also learn to make! Please let us know if you have any dietary restrictions.

Ages: 8 and up

Cost: Free will donation

### **21st - Climbing Wall** 10am-12pm/1pm-3pm

Come push your limits on our 35 foot climbing wall! Trained staff will belay you, making this one of the safest activities at Deep Portage. We have many routes of varying difficulty, so there's something to fit everyone.

Ages: 7 and up

Cost: Free will donation

### **23rd - Birch Stars** 10am-12pm/2pm-4pm

Learn to make birch bark stars, starting from properly harvesting the bark to learning to weave the stars

Ages: 12 and up

Cost: Free will donation

### **28th - Woodfire-Oven Pizza** 11am-1pm

Join us for lunch as we make pizzas in our woodfire-oven.

Ages: All

Cost: \$10 per pizza, each is personal sized to be enough for an adult meal

### **30th - Orienteering** 10am-12pm/2pm-4pm

Join us for one of our most popular classes, Charlie to Base! You'll start by getting a crash course in orienteering, then will be given a map, a compass, and a walkie talkie as you try and find your way along a course in the Deep Portage woods.

Ages: 8 and up

Cost: Free will donation

# Summer Public Programs

## August

### 4th - Clothing Swap 2pm-4pm

As a conservation reserve, we're all about being eco-friendly. One of those ways is to slow fast fashion, so we're having a clothing swap! Bring clean clothes in good condition that you no longer need before 2:30, and receive a ticket for every item you bring. Take a quick hike on a trail or up to the tower while our staff get everything ready, and then the shop is open at 3. Each ticket can buy one item! Remaining items will be donated to Tossed & Found in Longville.

### 6th - Archery 10am-12pm/2pm-4pm

Unlock your inner Robin Hood! Learn to shoot our compound and recurve bows at our archery range.

Ages: 10 and up

Cost: Free will donation

### 11th - Canoeing 10am-12pm/2pm-4pm

Go for a spin in our canoes! You're welcome to bring fishing gear, or join our staff for a paddle around Bass Pond and even across the portage to Big Deep Lake.

Ages: 8 and above if using Deep Portage life jackets, younger must bring their own

Cost: Free will donation

### 13th - Pond Life 10am-12pm/2pm-3pm

Get suited up in our rubber boots (or bring your own) and we'll head to the pond to learn about aquatic life as we see what we can find.

Ages: All in the morning and 3-6 in the afternoon

Cost: Free will donation



# Deep Portage Trail Cams

Deep Portage has operated trail cameras in remote areas of the Deep Portage Conservation Reserve since the spring of 2021. Animals such as wolves, black bears, bobcats, otters, racoons, deer, and many types of land animals and birds have all been observed living their day-to-day lives in 1080p HD videos.



Our most popular series, the beaver dam sets, have always been the hot ticket items for critters and provide the best video footage. Connected land masses over water, such as beaver dams, are crucial in creating healthy ecosystems for land-based animals. Regardless of whether they swim or not, it becomes an easy place for animals to cross and serves as a geographic landmark for their navigation. Besides crossings, many animals use them for food and raising young.



Besides the beaver dam sets a few other highlights have been:

- Ruffed grouse drumming log set displayed a terrific view into a male grouse's behavior during drumming season
- A winter camera set on a fresh deer carcass with a black bear out enjoying a winter snack on New Years Eve
- Male white-tailed deer leaving ruts and scrapes just feet away from the camera



# Deep Portage Trail Cams

We now have 3 cameras set up in the Reserve in different types of habitats. Sometimes we place them near the building, but often we need a vehicle and lots of hiking to reach remote places. The further away from human disturbance, the



better the footage. We check them every few weeks, depending on the weather and location. Dry, warm conditions are best times to check because you'll leave less scent in the area for critters to be alerted. We use Browning Spec Ops Elite HP5 cameras on t-posts for all our sets, and all cameras and equipment have been purchased with donations specifically given for trail cameras.



We hope you enjoy these videos as much as we do. If you want to see more footage, please consider making a donation to help supply more cameras and equipment!

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## 2026 Summer Rendezvous

Our annual fundraising banquet "Meet Us in the Forest" Summer Rendezvous will be on **Saturday, August 15, 2026** at 4pm to 7:30pm. Join us for an amazing time socializing, enjoying music, eating delicious food, and supporting Deep Portage! Music by local musician Debbie Center and food from Wings Café in Brainerd, MN. Tickets go on sale on July 1st, 2026 on our website.

4pm-6pm: Social Hour

Raffles and Silent Auction Open  
Music

6pm: Dinner

7pm: Raffles and Silent Auction Closed and  
Announced

