



DEEP PORTAGE

Learning Center

Fall 2026

Deep Portage Learning Center

2197 Nature Center Dr. NW

Hackensack, MN 56452

Phone: (218)-682-2325

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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Deep Portage Pontoon

We are incredibly grateful for the generous support of Bruce Bomier and the Environmental Resource Council, whose contributions made it possible for us to purchase a new fishing pontoon, trolling motor, and lift/canopy!

This new boat will be a tremendous asset to our fishing and aquatic science programming. With ample space to safely accommodate students, it opens up so many new opportunities for hands-on learning and exploration on Big Deep lake.

We've already put the technology on board to work, creating a detailed and incredibly useful map of Big Deep Lake.

A huge thank-you to Bruce Bomier and the Environmental Resource Council for helping make this possible. We are so appreciative and excited for all that's ahead!



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Want to be more involved with Deep Portage?

Consider joining our Advisory Board! Advisory Board members help champion Deep Portage in their communities, lend their skills and connections, volunteer for special projects and events, and help shape our future. We welcome anyone interested in being more involved, and we currently have particular gaps in building/facilities experience and Indigenous community representation. Members typically participate in two meetings per year, with plenty of opportunities to get involved as your time and interests allow. Reach out and we would be happy to provide more information!

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.

Public Programs Wrap-up

We've been busy this summer! There's truly been a range of public programs for everybody, all ages and interests, and it's been fun to meet all of the different families and individuals that have participated. For the artsy folks, we took to the woods and painted a scenic spot, patiently wove birch stars, and used sumac leaves and an iron solution to make our own tie-dye over the fire. For those willing to break a sweat, they raced around the woods for our scavenger hunt, scaled the climbing wall, found their way through the woods by map and compass, and showed off their skills with bow and arrow. We've had nature lovers over to canoe the Boy River, soak up the view from the tower, and hike to the bog. And for those who were just up for a good meal, we cooked lunch over the campfire, as well as made tasty pizza and bread in the woodfire oven. Last but not least, we hosted a clothing swap that filled the Great Hall and can hopefully happen again. In total, we had over 350 participants this summer, so a huge thank you to everyone who joined us and for your donations!



Another Great Camp Season

Another great season of summer camp has come and gone! We had over 300 campers this year learning firearm safety, catching some amazing fish, building shelters and fires in the woods, increasing their skills with a bow and arrow, canoeing over beaver dams, climbing up our 35' tall indoor rock wall, making turkey calls, growing their team work, exploring the surrounding wetlands and forest , and so much more. Check out the pictures below to see all the fun the campers had! Please keep an eye out on our website in January 2027 for next years summer camp registration opening.



1st Annual Mindfulness Wonder Walk

Saturday, September 19th, 2026

11am-2pm

Join the Cass County Local Mental Health Advisory Council (LAC) at Deep Portage for the 1st Annual Mindfulness Wonder Walk - stroll, breathe, and soak in the moment together! This event includes an opportunity to hike Deep Portage's new Mindfulness Wonder Walk trail, a free lunch for attendees, craft vendors, door prizes, and a presentation by Jode Freyholtz-London (Member of State Local Advisory Council & CEO of Wellness in the Woods).

Register Here



New Handheld Microscopes

A huge thank you to the Hackensack Lakes Area Community Foundation for these awesome handheld microscopes! Their grant allowed us to purchase a class set that's perfect for our Water Canaries class. We can't wait for the school year to start so we can get these in the hands of our students and bring the little details of our aquatic macroinvertebrates to light. Or the giant eardrums of frogs!



Continued Accessibility Upgrades

Accessibility work continues! This summer, we added a wildlife observation shelter at the end of the paved path, offering beautiful views of Big Deep Lake and Bass Pond. It's also a prime spot for warbler migration and a great place to watch for all kinds of birds. The shelter is accessible by a ramp and located at the end of the paved path, making it a welcoming destination for visitors with a variety of mobility levels.



We also repaved the path and slightly rerouted and paved the short trail from the Interpretive Center to Bass Pond, making it easier for more people to explore and enjoy this part of the campus.



And check out this photo of some cousins/brothers enjoying a hike together! You can spot the Deep Portage track chair, the newly paved path, and even the wildlife observation shelter in the background. We love seeing these improvements help more people enjoy the outdoors together!

Funding for the paving and wildlife observation shelter was generously provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).



IWLA Awards and Celebration Invitation

TWO Reasons to celebrate - both Deep Portage and Dorothy Harrington are receiving Izaak Walton League of America Recognition!



Dorothy Harrington receives Hall of Fame Award!

Dorothy Harrington has been selected by the National Izaak Walton League of America to receive the **Hall of**

Fame Award - the League's highest recognition for a lifetime of extraordinary leadership, service, and commitment to conservation.

This year, only five individuals nationwide have been selected for this prestigious honor.

For more than seventy years, Dorothy has exemplified the very best of the Izaak Walton League. Her vision, leadership, and unwavering commitment to conservation have left an enduring legacy - not only through her role in helping establish Deep Portage Conservation Reserve, but through a lifetime spent building institutions, mentoring others, supporting environmental education, and inspiring generations of conservationists. **Her impact reaches far beyond any single project, it lives on in the thousands of young people, families, volunteers, and community leaders whose lives have been shaped by the places and programs she helped create.**



Deep Portage as a part of the ELC coalition receives National Honor Roll Award!

The Minnesota coalition of Outdoor Schools has been selected by the National Izaak Walton

League of America to receive its **National Honor Roll Award**, one of the League's highest honors for organizations making significant contributions to conservation, environmental education, and public stewardship.

Rather than recognizing a single center, the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League chose to honor the Coalition's remarkable commitment to collaboration. As the nomination noted, **"Any one of these institutions could merit national recognition. The greater achievement, however, is that they chose to build something larger than themselves."**

For decades, these Outdoor Schools have introduced hundreds of thousands of young people to Minnesota's forests, wetlands, prairies, lakes, wildlife, and conservation. Together, they have built one of the nation's strongest environmental education networks. Deep Portage is proud to be part of this legacy.



You're invited to celebrate these achievements at the Minnesota Division Awards Celebration!

Friday, October 23rd, 2026 at 5:30pm

Minnesota Division Offices

6601 Auto Club Road, Bloomington, MN 55438

Hosted by the Minnesota Valley Chapter