



DEEP PORTAGE

Learning Center

Fall 2025

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 residential 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



Front Entrance Garden Project

Master Gardener, Jane Anderson, installed a new native plant pollinator garden in our main entrance area this summer with the help of David Johnson, their intern. The plants' bloom time will stagger throughout the year with the heights of the plants being varied from back to front. The project utilized environmentally friendly resources including free wood chips from Crow Wing Power, recycled edging, and cardboard boxes.

Some of the plants that were planted are listed below.

- Showy goldenrod
- Orange butterfly weed
- Anise hyssop
- Liatris blazing star
- Joe Pye weed
- Great blue lobelia
- Golden Alexandria
- Gallery blue lupine
- Purple coneflowers
- White obedient plant
- Dense blazing star
- Brown-eyed Susan
- White yarrow
- Path rush
- Calico aster
- Coreopsis
- Wild Bergamot



Thank you to Jane Anderson, David Johnson, and the UofM Extension Master Gardener Program.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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2024-2025 STAFF

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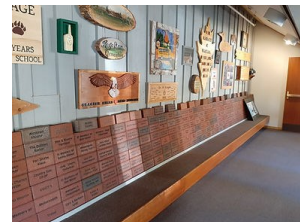
DONATE TO DEEP PORTAGE

There are a few ways you can help support Deep Portage by donating. Please take a look at the different ways 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 new mug with the year and a critter you might find at Deep Portage. The 2025 mug is an Eastern tiger swallowtail designed by Ryan Forster, current staff and former 5th grade field trip student attendee several years ago!



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 \$100,000 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.

2025 Summer Camp Recap

By: Marissa Olsen (Education Manager/Assistant Camp Director)

Summer 2025 has come to an end. This summer we had over 320 campers come through out Deep Portage camps, making lots of memories along the way. Our staff this year came from 4 different countries, sharing their culture and growing as camp professionals.



My personal highlight from the summer was our Forkhorn 3 camp. This is our highest level Forkhorn camp where returning campers can really hone their hunting skills and try new camp activities - like camping out in tents! This year we had a small, but enthusiastic crew of ten Forkhorn 3 campers. It's always fun to see those familiar smiling campers coming back for another fun summer experience!

In addition to Deep Portage summer campers, we also hosted roughly 300 FFA campers and for the first time ever, we had campers with Northeast 4-H come for a week. We enjoy these partnerships and look forward to continuing working with these organizations in the future!

We're already looking forward to next summer and hoping to get our Young Women in Science Camp up and running. This camp is geared for girls who are interested in learning about different branches of science and participating in hands-on experiments and data collection. Watch for information about this camp and all our other camps on our website in December!



2025 Summer Rendezvous Recap

On Saturday, August 16th, over 80 people came to Deep Portage for our 2nd annual "Meet Us in the Forest" Summer Rendezvous Banquet. Our MC, Larry Bryngelson, welcomed everyone to the event and kept us updated on what was happening throughout that evening. The event started off with a social hour that included music by Charley Wagner and Mama Wags. While people enjoyed the music, they were putting raffle tickets in bags for over 40 raffle prizes and bidding on 20 silent auction items. We all enjoyed some fantastic appetizers which included smoked prairie chicken that was donated by one of our awesome board members. At 6pm, everyone sat down and ate dinner from Passport in Brainerd, MN. At the end of the night we called all the winners for the raffles and silent auction. We want to thank all the sponsors and people, organizations, and businesses that donated for our event. We hope to see more folks at next years Summer Rendezvous. Keep an eye out on our website for when that will be.



New Mural at Deep Portage: Ojibwe Star Map!

Stop by Deep Portage to see our newest hallway art installation! This summer, a beautiful Ojibwe Star Map Mural was completed in the upper dormitory hallway at Deep Portage. Designed and painted by Sharon Nordrum (Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians), this piece celebrates the celestial traditions of the Ojibwe people.



The mural features five constellations you can spot in the sky: Maang (Loon), Ajijjaak (Crane), Mishibizhiw (Water Panther), Gaa-bibooniked (Wintermaker), and Ojiig (Fisher).

Funding for this project was generously provided by the Five Wings Art Council.

Come take a closer look and experience how art and Indigenous knowledge come together to inspire and educate!



Building Project Update

Now that the roof and other major exterior projects have been completed, we continue our sights on interior projects. During our spring break in March, our staff repainted both the 600 and 500 wing bedrooms and added trim boards to prevent bunk beds from damaging any walls. The 400s and 200s will see similar projects this winter. These are the first steps in other major upgrades for all dormitory rooms coming soon.



At the end of summer, we had a concrete pad and fence enclosure installed for our garbage and recycling dumpsters. No more easy midnight snacks for the raccoons and bears!



Lastly, Kensack Karpets (Hackensack) just completed a major carpet project installation. They installed carpet tiles all the way from the Great Hall to the brick hallway. This area covers the Great Hall, 600s hallways and lounges, Classroom 3 and 4, and into the brick hallway. This transformation brings a whole new feel to this half of the building. Besides being much more aesthetically pleasing, the new carpet feels cozier and is much quieter under your feet. Yearly carpet installation will continue as we look to replace much of the building carpet over the next couple of years.

2026 Critter Mug Art Contest

We are now taking submissions for the 2026 Deep Portage Annual Critter Mug artwork contest!

Each year Deep Portage puts out a special mug available for those you who donate \$75 to support our organization. This year, you could be the one to create an image that will be on the 2026 mug! We are picking one critter this year for the contest and choosing the artwork for that critter to be on the mug.

Contest Guidelines:

- Submissions due: **Sunday, October 26th, 2025**
- Winner chosen on Monday, November 3rd, 2025
- Critter must be an Ermine/Short-tailed weasel
- Artwork should be 1 color
- Size printed on the mug is about 2"x2"
- Email digital files to office@deepportage.org or mail paper submissions to 2197 Nature Center Drive NW, Hackensack, MN 56452
- Winner will receive two mugs with their artwork



Past Years Mugs



Purple Martins

By: Macy Elfering (Education Staff)

Although I was only five, I still remember the time my family set up our first Purple Martin house. My grandpa had worked on the green and white houses in his workshop for what felt like weeks. Finally, they were ready. My dad spent the day welding pieces together and making sure everything lined up just right while my mom picked out the perfect spot. It was starting to get dark outside by the time the pole was up, but my dad said there was one more task that he needed my help with. He scooped me up so I wouldn't have to get my feet wet from the dew and placed my hand in the still wet concrete at the base of the pole. Now, from the beginning of April to around the middle of August, the sounds of purple martins echo throughout our yard. We currently have three poles raised for a total of six houses, and it still seems like more birds appear every year.

The reason why it is so important for people to provide nest boxes for Purple Martins is because they are secondary cavity nesters. This means they do not hollow out their own cavities and will only use pre-made structures such as abandoned woodpecker holes or rock formations. In the southwest, martins will even use saguaro cacti as their home. As people started inhabiting the land, they slowly switched to using human made cavities. It is thought that people thousands of years ago started supplying hollowed out



gourds for the birds because they eat flying insects and can even protect livestock from birds of prey. Purple martins are now one of only three birds in the U.S. that completely rely on human provided structures.



Conservation wise, Purple Martins are a species of low concern, but their numbers decline a little each year. This is due to habitat loss, competition from invasive species, and their sensitivity to cold weather. Humans are combating this by putting more houses up yearly. On the other hand, new studies have shown that this practice is declining because many of the people putting up these houses are over the age of fifty. My recommendation to help the Purple Martin population is to make them more known. A

lot of people do not even know what this bird is, let alone how to help them. So, if you are interested in the conservation of martins, spread the word and do some research. Find out if your area is suitable for Purple Martins and if you are able to put up houses for them. Who knows, maybe you will make some new memories that will last a lifetime.

