

# DEEP PORTAGE

## Learning Center

Winter 2023

### Deep Portage Learning Center

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Hackensack, MN 56452  
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[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 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



## Deep Portage Song

Written by 2 educators from 2022-2023  
(Sung to the tune of "The Marine's Hymn")

### "Oh We Love DPLC"

From the tower and the woodyard  
To the shores of Big Deep Lake  
We hiked the trails and learned so much  
No you can't make no mistake  
In the summer we canoe and fish  
In the wintertime we ski  
No matter what the time of year  
Oh we love DPLC

Every day when we are in the woods  
From dawn to setting sun  
How we love to play camouflage and flood  
Always ready for either one  
The woods is home to furry friends  
Watch close, listen, and see,  
Red squirrels, blue jays, and grey wolves  
Oh we love DPLC

In the morning we have pancakes  
And our lunches are bussin' too  
Just please make sure to clean your plate  
Use the spatula to scrape that goo  
We're so glad to be at campfire  
Song, skits, wouldn't you agree?  
Of all the places in the land  
Oh we love DPLC!



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## Eagle Point 2023 Trip Pictures





# Upcoming Events

## 2024 Winter Rendezvous

The 45th Annual Winter Rendezvous Event will be held on **January 20th, 2024** at Deep Portage Learning Center! You'll get the opportunity to participate in multiple amazing events including axe throwing, Northwoods curling, rabbit sticks, and much more. More information on the event will be coming soon, so please keep an eye on our [website](#) and social media for updates.



## Sporting Clays Fun Shoot

The Deep Portage annual Sporting Clays Fun Shoot will be Saturday, **May 4th, 2024** starting at 10am! Two rounds of 50 clay targets and lunch will be provided. This is a non-competitive event, bring the family! More details including cost will be provided in early April.



# Annual Meeting



On Saturday, November 18th, 2023, staff members, board members, and community members were invited to Deep Portage for the Annual Meeting. During this meeting, the board president, staff, and the chairs of the committees gave updates of how everything has been going in the past year and what we are looking forward to in the next year. Some highlights included wrapping up and celebrating our 50th year, sharing some thank you cards from students, new signage coming for trails and the main entrance, electing 3 new members to the Board of Directors and 12 new members to the Advisory Board, and adding new items to the time capsule which will be opened at Deep Portage's 75th Anniversary in 2048! After the meeting, we had Charley Wagner play songs while folks enjoyed making their own pizza and cooking it in our outside brick oven. Thank you to everyone who came and made this a great event to cap off our 50th Anniversary!

# Donald H. Nelson Gift



Donald Nelson generously included Deep Portage in his final wishes and gifted the organization \$330,000 after his passing January 2023.

Don's legacy will lie on through the many organizations he remembered in his final wishes. At Deep Portage, there is no doubt that this gift will be instrumental in helping accomplish our mission of preparing and inspiring learners of all ages to sustain and celebrate our natural world for many years to come.

## Donald H. Nelson

*September 27, 1925–January 13, 2023*

Nelson grew up in Minneapolis, served as a Sergeant in the Army in WWII, and spent a successful career as an orthodontist. During his childhood, he enjoyed regular visits to a family farm near Nerstrand. Soon after his move to Rochester in 1960, he spent many evenings exploring the countryside, rekindling his attraction to farming. He soon purchased a farm on the east side of Rochester, where he lived for many years, and later bought a second farm near Rock Dell, southwest of Rochester. In 1982, Don and his brother, Dick, bought the Engeseth farm in Nerstrand when no other family members could keep it going.

Don devoted his retirement to his passions for conservation, his 3 farms, and his trees. He planted thousands of seedlings and was particularly fond of walnuts. By the time he reached his 80s, Don felt strongly that he wanted his farms to be used for conservation, public enjoyment, and environmental education—forever. He worked to convert his farms to three WMAs that total 860 acres, now enjoyed by wildlife and people alike. Don devoted the last decade of his life to philanthropy, making substantial current and planned gifts to colleges and organizations.



# Bass Pond in Winter

*Tis the season for Bass Pond in Winter fa la la la la, la la la la!* When winter temperatures grip the landscape and the ice thickness on Bass Pond is safe to walk on, students participate in a unique winter season class at Deep Portage called Bass Pond in Winter! Students explore what happens to water under the ice on Bass Pond using the five step method: *Ask a question, create a hypothesis, do the experiment, collect data, draw conclusions, and share!*

The class begins indoors, splitting the class into three or four scientific teams. Next,



students learn about the data variables they will be measuring on the pond: *surface temperature, bottom temperature, visibility, ice thickness, snow depth, and air temperature.* Lastly, instructors go over the equipment students will use and out the door they walk, heading out on Bass Pond in full winter gear.

Students need good teamwork in their small groups to drill a hole into Bass Pond with their hand ice auger. By the time late winter rolls around, they may have to drill through 25" of ice! Once their hole is drilled out and scooped clean of slush, the measurement tools are used to collect the variables. A yard stick is used to collect snow depth and ice thickness, while a thermometer on a rope measures temperature of liquid water. A Secchi disk (small disk painted white and black) is lowered into the water checking the water visibility. Once all groups wrap



up gathering data, they head back into the classroom to share their results, make conclusions, and learn the importance water density plays in how lakes freeze. Students get a perplexed look on their face when they realize that the warmest water in the lake in winter sits at the bottom of the lake, not at the top like summer. The lightbulb moment goes off when they deduce that if ice sank to the bottom, no plants or lake life would exist!



This class introduces limnology basics and the scientific method to Deep Portage students, but it is much more than that. For many students, this is their first time on a frozen lake or drilling a hole with an ice auger. Many kids learn the hard way not to stick their gloves or boots into the hole or wet slush. We hope this class helps students grow their curiosity and knowledge of our lakes and rivers. No matter the temperature or season, there's always a fun science experiment to explore!

# 3 Ways to Enjoy Winter at Deep Portage!

## Snowshoe to the South Bog

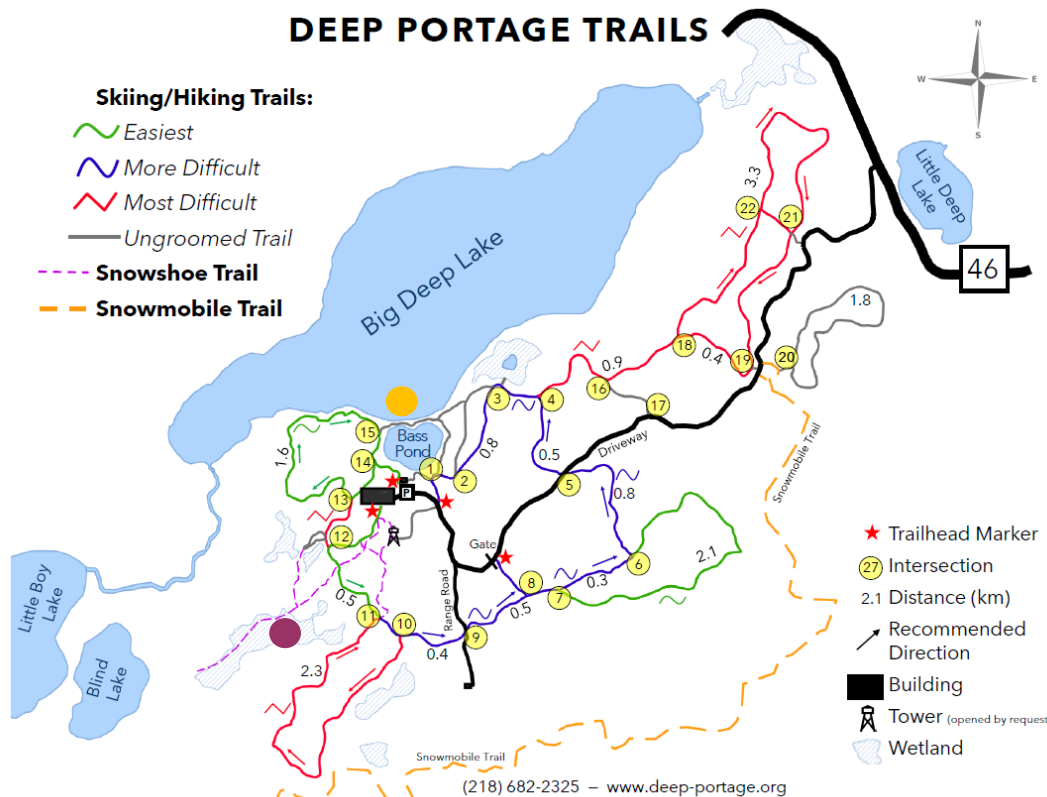
Grab a pair of your snowshoes and head out on a frozen bog adventure! Starting from Intersection D south of the main building, head down the trail to Intersection 12, then head north and get on the “Poet’s Loop” trail. At the end of this trail, the snowshoe trail will continue south all the way to the South Bog—an open area with tamaracks scattered in the middle. The whole bog is an amazing place to explore. Animal signs abound and this is a particularly great spot to find evidence of wolf activity. When the sun is hinging, it’s as good as being at the beach!

## Ski the Shores of Big Deep Lake

Put on your cross country and head out on the frozen lake! Following the south shore of Big Deep Lake is sure to provide you with amazing, expansive views of the Northwoods. If you head out on a full moon on a calm night, you won’t even need a headlamp. \*Ice is never 100% safe. Please use caution and follow ice safety guidelines!\*

## Have a Winter Picnic

Next time you’re out skiing or snowshoeing, make a day out of it and make a thermos of soup, or have a fireside lunch! You might be motivated to go a little deeper in the woods if you know you have a hot meal to break up your adventure. As you sit for a while, you’ll probably find some chickadees and squirrels nearby to socialize with. Just be sure to “leave no trace” when you head out!



Once we get enough snow, our ski trails will be groomed and all ready to be enjoyed. Our snowshoe trails will also be open. Try out our new trail, the Fay Harrington Izaak Walton League Memorial Trail, which is located between intersections 17 and 19 off of the driveway. We also have a snowmobile trail on our land. You can get to it on our driveway across from intersection 19.