



Summer 2023

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



School Year Wrap Up

By: Marissa Olsen (Education Manager)

May is a time of new beginnings: spring ephemerals blooming, fawns being born, birds migrating back. May also marks the end of our school year here. This has been a very successful school year and has felt much like a return to "normal" after a couple somewhat atypical years during the covid era. Looking back on the last several months, its fun to reflect on the reach of our educational programs and what we have been able to accomplish this year.

Here is an overview of the 2022-2023 school year:

- We welcomed over 5300 participants with visiting schools to hike, ski, climb, and more
- 60 schools came on overnight trips and another 11 schools planned day visits
- Six school groups came to Deep Portage for the first time this year
- We had our first groups from North Dakota this year—a homeschool group from the Fargo area and 7th graders from Grand Forks
- Royaltown 7th graders who missed their 5th grade trip in 2020 were able to come in March to get their Deep Portage experience



Throughout the year, our education staff developed skills to help them become better outdoor educators, contributed to our class curriculum, and spruced up the building with new murals and informational signs. They even had the opportunity to share some of their personal skills and interests with each other, including

swing dancing and pasta making.

When one school year comes to an end, I'm already looking forward to the next. Seeing the joy of the students as they try new things and discover natural wonders never gets old. Some of my own favorite memories from this year



include the student who declared, after having been here for only an hour, that he is either going to work at Deep Portage or play in the NHL when he grows up. Or the student that told me they had a TV in their dorm only to then point to the window where they had been watching all the

exciting goings on outside—better than Netflix!

I feel fortunate to work at a place that has such a tremendous impact on so many students throughout the year and to be able to work with incredible people that care deeply about each and every child that walks through our doors. Here's to another great school year!



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Pine River DAC

2023 Summer Camps

Deep Portage offers a wide variety of summer camps to suit almost any interest. Whether a child is interested in fishing, hunting, canoeing, or expanding their scientific horizons, we have a camp for them. Campers learn a lot, have fun, make new friends, and grow in their appreciation for all the Minnesota great outdoors has to offer.

These Camps are Still Open for Registration

Forkhorn 1 Session 3:

July 2-July 7, 2023
Ages 11-16
\$500 or \$475 for MDHA members

Forkhorn 1 Session 4:

ALL GIRLS
August 6-11, 2023
Ages 11-16
\$500 or \$475 for MDHA members

Forkhorn 3:

July 23-28, 2023
Ages 13-17
Prerequisite: MN DNR Firearms Safety Certificate
\$550 or \$525 for MDHA members

Fishing Camp:

July 30-August 2, 2023
Ages 10-14
\$350

Upland Bird Camp:

July 30-August 4, 2023
Ages 12-16
\$525

Izaak Walton League Family Camp:

August 13-18, 2023
Ages 9 and up
\$500 per individual, \$900 for duo, or \$1700 for group of 4

For more information about Deep Portage's summer camps go to [deep-portage.org](https://www.deep-portage.org) or call Deep Portage at 218-682-2325. All camps require a non-refundable \$100 deposit.

REGISTER HERE

Upcoming Events

Public Programs

We are having multiple public programs this summer! Please join us for some fun activities including pizza making in our brick oven, bread making in our brick oven, climbing wall, archery, and orienteering. Please register at least a day in advance for a program. You can register online [HERE](#) or call 218-682-2325. Space is limited.

Pizza Making

- Tuesday June 27th, 2023
- 1:30pm-3pm
- \$15 per pizza (pizzas serve 1-2 adults)

Climbing Wall

- Thursday June 29th, 2023
- 9am-11am
- Free will donation

Archery

- Thursday July 6th, 2023
- 9am-11am
- Free will donation

Bread Making

- Saturday July 15th, 2023
- 2pm-5pm(ish)
- \$15 per person

Pizza Making

- Tuesday July 18th, 2023
- 1:30pm-3pm
- \$15 per pizza (pizzas serve 1-2 adults)

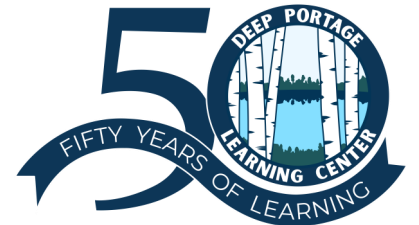
Orienteering

- Thursday July 20th, 2023
- 9am-12pm
- Free will donation



50th Anniversary Summer Events

We are excited to host these special gatherings to celebrate our 50th Anniversary with teachers, chaperones, staff alumni, and everyone who has supported us over the years! Join us for some summer fun—food, Deep Portage trivia, door prizes, and more. \$1 for every beer sold goes to support programming at Deep Portage. We hope to see you there!



June 28th, 2023 - [Fat Pants Brewing Company](#)

8335 Crystal View Road, Eden Prairie
5pm-8pm



August 10th, 2023 - [Utepils Brewing](#)

225 Thomas Ave N, Minneapolis
5pm-8pm



Recent Happenings



50th Celebration

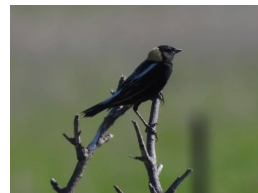
We had an extraordinary day on April 22 celebrating 50 years of learning at Deep Portage Learning Center! Although it felt a little more like winter than spring, we still had a great time enjoying the outdoors. During the first part of the day, visitors had the opportunity to participate in a number of fun activities, including guided bird hikes, renewable energy tours, archery, climbing wall, amphibian hikes, and orienteering. We all gathered together mid-afternoon to hear a bit about the Deep Portage history and to celebrate Dale Yerger's retirement and Lynne Harrington's long tenure as president. The day culminated with live music by The Soul Shack—singing, dancing, and merriment was enjoyed by all!

Throughout the day, the hallways and forest buzzed with positive energy and community spirit. When nearly 250 folks show up, both new friends and old friends, very involved and hoping to be involved, kids and retirees, local and out-of-staters, all here for the purpose of celebrating Deep Portage, you can't help but to feel the "magic." We are so thankful for the local food trucks, event sponsors, raffle prize donors, staff/board, and entire community for helping us pull off this superb event. We can't wait to see what the next 50 years brings.

Birding Big Day

On Saturday May 20th, eleven Deep Portage staff and volunteer birders went out all around Cass County to see how many species of birds they can see in one day for our annual fundraiser. This year we saw/heard **123 species** from sunrise around Bass Pond to dusk by the Little Boy River. Our route took us north to Battle Point Boat Launch all the way to Walden Township in the south. Some of the most notable species included northern goshawk at Deep Portage, a pair of dancing Wilson's phalarope at the Walker water treatment ponds, many bobolinks, meadowlarks, black-billed magpies in McKinley Township, and nearly 20 species of warblers countywide.

This fundraiser had people pledge donations for many different things including number of species, waterfowl mating pairs, woodpecker species, and more. We raised over \$2,000! Thank you to everyone who pledged for our Cass County Birding Big Day. The contributions help support Deep Portage programming, which delivers outdoor education to nearly 7,000 participants per year.



New Donation Site & 2023 Mugs!

We have a new donation platform on our website! This will be a more streamlined process for donors and Deep Portage. Staff.

Additionally, our 2023 Critter Mugs are in stock! This year's 50th anniversary mug is a snazzy insulated travel mug featuring the 50th anniversary logo and trumpeter swan artwork by our very own Food Service Director Tamie Fairbanks. Look for the classic ceramic mug back in 2024!

As we move away from memberships, a \$50 donation is what gets you the annual mug. You may make a donation in person and bring home your mug, or make the donation online or by check (specify that you wish to receive a mug) and we will ship it to you. Donate by clicking the "Donate Here" button or visit www.deep-portage.org/donate.



[Donate Here](#)

Wish List

We now have a wish list available on our [website](#). Check the list below for specific ways your donation could impact the Deep Portage campus or programming. Whether you are a long-time donor, chaperone, former camper, trail user, or community member, we hope you find an area of impact you'd be excited to support.

Water Bottle Filling Stations	\$8000	Thousands of students fill up water bottles in our building and with these would be easier, quicker, and more sustainable
Weather Station	\$800	Updates for students and chaperones on their trip for long-term meteorological data
New Mattresses for 1 Dorm Room	\$1000	Added comfort for guests
New Canteen Furniture	\$6500	The canteen is used daily by adult chaperones and frequently by weekend guests. Upgraded furniture would make this more inviting and pleasant space for those who visit
Chronolog	\$1000	Long term monitoring of our land
New Trailcam	\$400	Deep Portage trail cams are wildly popular, and also contribute to our understanding of wildlife populations
Table/chair carts	\$1000	These tools would make moving tables and chairs throughout the building easier and safer
New Yurt Cover	\$8000	Originally constructed in 2002, the yurt has provided an amazing remote classroom space and the weather has taken its toll on it.

A Mosquito's Importance

By Marissa Olsen (Education Manager)

Mosquitoes—often jokingly referred to as the unofficial state bird of Minnesota, these little suckers serve an underappreciated role in the ecosystem. I'll admit, it's challenging to write this article as my peaceful evening outdoors in the beautiful May weather was cut short by swarms of the buzzing insect descending upon me. But when I remind myself of what a world without mosquitoes might look like, it helps me form an appreciation—or at the very least, a tolerance—of the critter.



Dragonflies quickly became my favorite insect as a child, in part because of the service they provide by eating numerous mosquitoes. Nothing beats the magic of looking up at the sky on a summer evening and seeing dozens of dragonflies darting around. Without their primary food source though, dragonfly numbers would likely see a steep decline. The same would go for many birds that rely on insects as a food source, especially warblers. Our forest would turn into a quieter, less colorful place.



Then I consider the cascading effect the loss of one species can have on an ecosystem. Without dragonflies and small birds as a food source, we would see the loss of other animals such as frogs and raptors. For the fisher folk out there, mosquito larvae serve as an important food for fish fry. And, of course, you can't forget bats. Many bats will eat mosquitoes as a tasty treat, but they will also feed on larger insects like moths and grasshoppers that may otherwise cause damage to crops and forests.

It has become common practice in urban areas to spray for mosquitoes. Whenever I visit my parents in the Twin Cities, the lack of mosquitoes on a summer evening is very noticeable, but so is the lack of songbirds and pollinator insects. I can understand the desire to eradicate mosquitoes that cause itchy welts and may transmit diseases (although in Minnesota we are fortunate that severe mosquito borne diseases are uncommon), but the same spray being used to kill mosquitoes might also be harming beneficial critters as well.



There are lots of mosquito repellants that use natural ingredients like lemon, lavender, eucalyptus, and tea tree oil. Lighting a few citronella or lavender candles on your deck can be enough to deter them in small spaces. Certain plants also work as mosquito repellent. Try planting marigolds, lavender, catnip, rosemary, or lemon thyme around your house or using cedar mulch for landscaping. Removing areas of standing water in your yard also takes away potential breeding grounds.

While mosquitoes are certainly most people's least favorite part of summer, I hope we can recognize the value they provide and overlook some of their annoyances. Maybe putting up some extra swatting is worth helping the pollinators that give us beautiful wildflowers and the birds that fill our summer days with lovely songs.