

Superior National Forest - Heritage

Did you know...?

Tofte Ranger District contains the most national forest land adjacent to Lake Superior for which the Forest was named. The word, **Tofte** is of Norwegian origin. The local community shares this name with a town in Norway.

Laurentian Ranger District, based in Aurora, is named for an ancient range of mountains that divided the continent millions of years ago. Although much reduced in height, the **Laurentian** Divide exists as a long ridge that cuts across the Forest generally in an east-west direction.

In native Ojibwe, the word “**kawishwi**” means “river full of many beaver or muskrat houses”. The bounty of fur-bearing animals in the area that is now the Kawishwi Ranger District made it very popular with fur traders.

The French word “**la croix**” translates loosely as “of or by the cross”. It is a frequent French-Canadian surname and also the name of the large lake which lies partly on the LaCroix Ranger District and partly within Ontario, Canada.

The Gunflint Trail on the Gunflint Ranger District was originally no more than a rough and rocky route from Grand Marais to Gunflint Lake where **gunflints** were quarried. Today, it is a federally-recognized scenic byway and historic route. Chik Wauk historic stone lodge, at the end of the trail, has been restored to serve as an historic interpretive center.



To address new issues, Forest Service programs have expanded to include new skills and new technologies such as air quality monitoring..



Planning & Responding

1999-Today

Computerized mapping, infrared aerial photos, GPS -based wildlife telemetry and other modern technology allows employees to understand forest resources to an extent never before possible. When called to respond to natural disasters and other challenges, the Forest Service is able to create solutions that would have been impossible before.

2009

Superior National Forest Turns 100!

Imagining & Challenging

The Future

From global warming to recreation to housing to conservation, managers on the Superior National Forest remain committed to the mission embarked upon 100 years ago. We continue striving to balance all the uses of the land in a way that will enable people to continue to use and enjoy the Forest through the next 100 years and beyond.

For more information, go to www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior on the web or contact:

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Heritage

Centennial Edition



SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST HEADQUARTERS DULUTH, MN

History of the Land and the People...

There are many stories to tell about this boreal landscape and the people living here. Take time during your travels to explore the rich and unique heritage of the Superior National Forest. To get you started, this guide provides an overview of Forest history and points out a few of the interesting sites you can visit. Stop in at or contact one of our Forest offices listed on the back for more information.



Big Rice Lake Archeological Site: This site on the Laurentian Ranger District has been a particularly significant ricing location beyond memory. Thousands of pottery fragments along with pieces of stone and copper tools tell the story of a site used by native people for 2,000 years. An interpretive sign at the site provides more detail.



First Peoples

Before recorded history

The origins of the land we now know as the Superior National Forest lie in geologic events that took place 1.1 billion years ago. Volcanoes created mountains that were carved by glaciers. As the glaciers retreated, melt waters filled new lake beds, soils formed, trees and other vegetation took root and animals moved in.

Trading & Trapping

1600 - 1800

Native Americans were the first people to live on what would become the Superior National Forest. There are signs which suggest that people lived here as long as 10,000 years ago. While local tribes may have changed, the forest continues to be an important part of tribal traditions.

From the mid-1600's to the early 1800's, Voyageurs canoed trading routes, visited native settlements, and exchanged trade goods for beaver pelts. Throughout the 1700's, Hudson's Bay Co. and the Northwest Co. maintained competing fur trade empires. Except for trading posts, the voyageurs had little impact on the land, traveling over it without settling onto it.

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Throughout time, people living here have been tied to the unique natural resources that set this place apart. Thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans, native Americans traveled the watery maze of lakes and streams to follow seasonal changes and foods to supplement the plentiful fish and game. Spring was spent at maple stands for sugar and syrup, summer at blueberry patches, and fall at wild rice beds.

Europeans recognized different resource values in the area beginning with beaver pelts which were shipped back to Europe for manufacture into felt hats that were in high demand. Eventually, the fashion for beaver felted hats passed. Two new resources, iron ore and timber, became important in northern Minnesota and continue to be a major social-economic influence. The lakes and streams became corridors for transporting logs, powering mills, and providing water to the mining industry. As technology improved, railroads reached into the forest to bring out ore and timber.

Industrial jobs brought more people into the area, this time to settle on the land. Land passed from the Ojibwe to the government to private hands. No longer valued as trading partners, native Americans saw their land dwindle to a few reservations.

By the time the Superior National Forest was established most commercial timber was gone and mostly brush was left behind. The first 50 years of management on the Forest emphasized inventory, planting, restoring productivity, and protection. Some of the first harvests of the “new” forests was by the Civilian Conservation Corps for building projects. During the last half of the century the tourism/outdoor recreation industry became more important. Multiple uses on the Forest brought controversy between different interests, often with a focus on the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). A growing national environmental conscience lead to a multitude of new federal regulations with direct implications for forest managers.

Camp #8 of the St. Croix Logging Company—

Interpretive way-side: This site at the junction of Hwy 1 and Hwy 2 on the Kawishiwi Ranger District was used in 1906 as a winter logging camp and also for several seasons as a spring camp for log drivers.



Paulson Mine:

With hopes of discovering a lucrative iron ore source, miners dug several test pits in this area on the Gunflint Ranger District between 1888 and 1893.



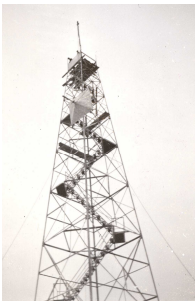
Only one railroad car load of ore was ever actually produced. Six test pits associated with the Paulson operation may be viewed from the Centennial Trail which follows a section of the

Kekekabic Hiking Trail before switching over to the old Port Arthur Railroad bed. (Photo of pail used in excavation-courtesy of Todd Lindahl)



FIRE LOOKOUT TOW-ERS

were constructed approximately six miles apart on the highest points across the Forest. From the top, Forest Rangers used an Osborne Fire Finder to pinpoint the location of a fire (pictured below). Communications from one tower to the next was accomplished by ground telephone lines in the early years, radios later. By the mid 1970's, all of the federal fire towers in Minnesota had been removed while aircraft took on fire detection. Between 1938 and 1958, a steel tower similar to the photo above stood at the Skibo Fire Lookout Site, 8 miles south of Hoyt



Lake, on the Laurentian Ranger District. Today, you can drive to where an interpretive display marks the site.



THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

(CCC) put men to work on public lands at a time of 70% unemployment in Minnesota and 25% in the U.S. (crew pictured left) You will find many outstanding examples of CCC contributions across the Forest, including: **South Kawishiwi River Pavilion:** This beautiful historic log structure (pictured below) is located at the South Kawishiwi Campground, 10.3 miles south of Ely via State Highway 1. It continues to serve its original purpose as a community building and is available for rent through the Kawishiwi Ranger District Office. **Jeannette Lake CCC Camp,** located on the LaCroix Ranger District along Echo

Trail, 32 miles northeast of Orr, today is one of the most popular campgrounds on the Forest.

Sawbill CCC Camp Complex on Tofte Ranger District was constructed and then occupied by members of CCC Camp F-10 at the end of the historic Sawbill Trail. **Isabella Ranger Station Historic District,** located along Hwy 1, approximately 23 miles from Lake Superior, originally housed CCC crews. The site served as a District Office for many years until the district was combined with the Tofte Ranger District. Although half of the site has been conveyed into private ownership, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Elephant Lake Trestle: (pictured at left) At the time the Superior National Forest was designated, railroads criss-crossed the Forest connecting operations with shipping ports and markets. Elephant Lake railroad trestle, located off of Forest Road 203 on the LaCroix Ranger District, is a remnant of this era.

