



1990-2015 Grand Island NRA

Celebrating Twenty-five Years

Cross Over to Adventure!
Celebrate
Grand Island Day
August 8, 2015

- Tours
- Special programs
- Rental equipment
- See our beautiful beaches, soaring cliffs, historic landscapes and structures, and more!

In 1990, Congress designated Grand Island National Recreation Area in recognition of the outstanding features of this Lake Superior gem. Throughout the spring and summer of 2015, the U.S. Forest Service's Hiawatha National Forest and our local community will celebrate the 25th anniversary of that momentous occasion. Our celebrations will culminate in "Grand Island Day" on Saturday, August 8, 2015, during which special activities will be available for those who visit.

In the late 1980s, a diverse group of citizens and interests envisioned Grand Island – a lovely green jewel situated in Lake Superior just offshore of Munising, Michigan -- as a publicly owned National Recreation Area. Acting upon this vision, on May 17, 1990, Congress designated Grand Island National Recreation Area, defining its purpose thus:

...to preserve and protect for present and future generations the outstanding resources and values of Grand Island ... for the purposes of providing for the conservation, protection and enhancement of its scenery, recreation, fish and wildlife, vegetation and historical and cultural resources, there is hereby established the Grand Island National Recreation Area ... These resources and values include, but are not limited to, cliffs, caves, beaches, forested appearance, natural biological diversity and features of early settlement.

As a first step toward administration of this federally-designated area, the US Forest Service and a citizen Advisory Committee developed a comprehensive Management Plan with public input. That plan has guided management of the island to this day, with a focus on drawing visitors to "cross over to adventure" -- the sense of adventure often equated with islands *and* the adventure of trying special interest activities in a beautiful, rustic maritime setting.

Grand Island's general interest visitors are often first attracted by the easy ferry access and bus tour. After a short ferry ride across the West Channel of Munising Bay, visitors arrive at Williams Landing. There, depending upon their interest and sense of adventure, visitors may explore the exhibits at the landing, take the bus tour, take walks of various lengths, or "cross over" to special interest activities. Equipment rentals and guide services (such as for hiking, mountain biking, sea kayaking, and boating) can be arranged in advance. There are multiple ways to experience the island's beautiful beaches, soaring cliffs, and sheltered bays.



Over the years, US Forest Service staff has worked toward implementation of the Grand Island NRA vision. In keeping with strategic planning efforts, the Forest Service has made many investments to:

- ◆ restore natural resources and historic places;
- ◆ create sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities which connect citizens to the land;
- ◆ provide infrastructure to protect resources across boundaries and provide for recreation use; and
- ◆ increase accessibility of island features to all visitors.

When you visit Grand Island, you might experience these improvements in a variety of ways. On the bus tour, you will see historic buildings such as the Visitor Contact Station and Stone Quarry Cabin, both of which have been stabilized, re-purposed and interpreted. You will travel on boardwalks installed to provide accessibility and to protect fragile ecosystems. Boating in Murray Bay, you might enjoy lunching at the day use site. On a mountain bike tour of the north end, you might cross the new North Light Creek Bridge as you pass between viewing decks and overlooks. Accessibility has been a focus; a public transportation system has been developed, including a passenger ferry and bus tours. Roads have been repaired and trails have been designated for use by hikers and mountain bikers.

Partners have played important roles in many of these efforts, such as restoration of historic structures, eradication of non-native species, management of black bear and special events such as Grand Island Marathon, archaeological field schools and youth education events. Since that 1990, the efforts of

many people and organizations have come together in order to bring the Grand Island NRA vision to life. But don't just take our word for it! As we celebrate a quarter century of Grand Island National Recreation Area – and look forward to the next quarter century – the U.S. Forest Service invites you to explore this national treasure! Come on over and check it out!

As you plan your visit to Michigan's Upper Peninsula, we hope you will consider joining us for the August celebration! But even if you aren't able to travel to the Island this summer, we encourage you to mark this anniversary by strolling with us down memory lane. For starters, check out the timeline of the National Recreation Area's genesis in the text box below. For more information about Grand Island National Recreation Area, visit our webpage (www.fs.usda.gov/hiawatha) or call Munising Interagency Visitor Center at 906-387-3700.



Grand Island History Timeline

Prehistoric and Historic Native American Era 3000 BC – 1650: Archaeological evidence shows Native Americans made stone tools, hunted, fished and gathered plant foods on the Island.

Fur Trading Era 1822-1845: Europeans visited & small trading posts were established in the area. Native Americans who were members of the Ojibwa (Chippewa) National had settlements and agricultural fields on the island and fished, hunted, trapped fur-bearers, & made maple sugar on the island.

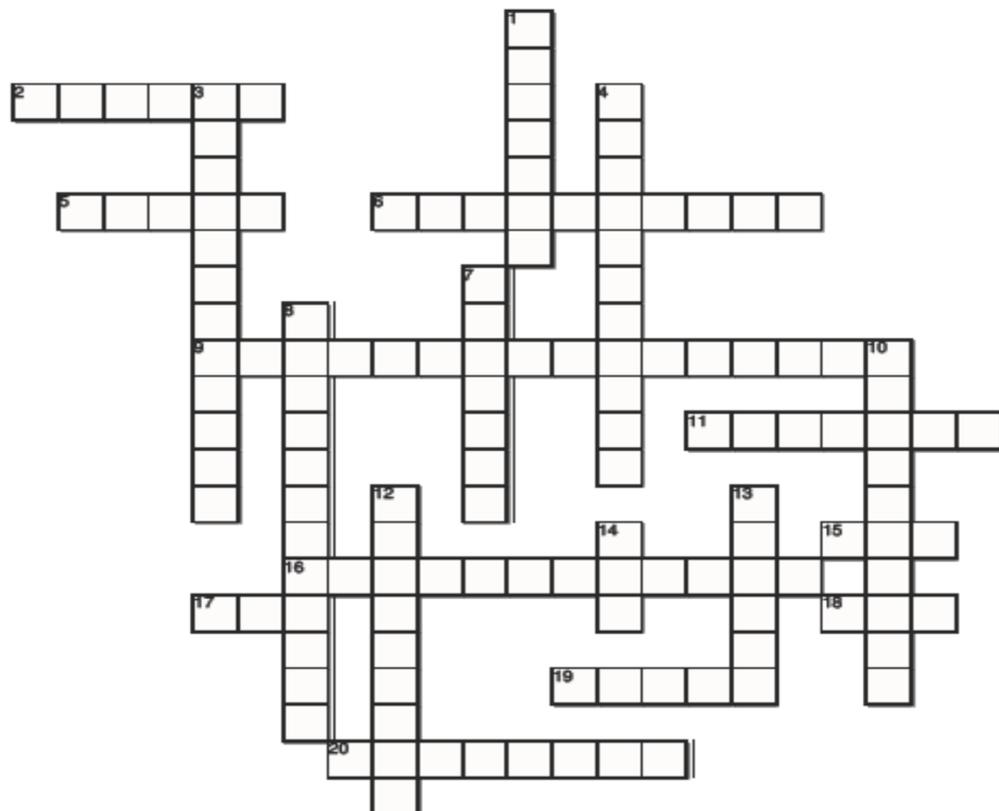
Williams Era 1840-1900: Abraham Williams and his family were the first permanent European settlers on Grand Island. Williams built several houses, traded with the Native Americans, farmed, & cut wood for passing steam ships. Local Ojibwa band members continued to spend considerable time on the island until the 1870s.

Resort Era 1900-1953: Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company (CCI) began to purchase Grand Island real estate in 1900. President William Mather oversaw the island's development into a vacation resort and game preserve.

Logging Era 1953-1990: CCI selectively harvested the forest on Grand Island, building a network of logging roads throughout much of the island.

National Recreation Era 1990-Present: When CCI decided to sell Grand Island, many people who wanted to see the island available for public recreation urged the federal or state governments to buy the island.

25th Anniversary Crossword Puzzle



Across

2. William Gwinn _____, president of CCI, oversaw purchase and development of the Island in 1900.
5. _____ Light sits atop a nearly-300 foot cliff overlooking Lake Superior.
6. _____ was the native American encampment located near present day Williams Landing.
9. First permanent European settler on Grand Island
11. After Mather passed away, CCI's interests turned to _____ hemlock and other trees.
15. In 1990, Congress designated GI a _____ (acronym)
16. This rustic cabin was built _____
17. Trust for Public Land (acronym)
18. Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company (acronym)
19. Grand Island _____ Service provides passenger access to and from the mainland.
20. During the resort era, roads were built to allow _____ rides

Down

1. _____ Flats is a lovely Forest Service campground on the island's west shore.
3. _____ Light guards the eastern entrance to Munising Bay.
4. This pinkish sandstone dates back over X years
7. This geologic feature connects the main body of the island with the Thumb.
8. A 13,500-acre gem on Lake Superior's south shore
10. Several of these lie in the waters of Alger Underwater Preserve, around GI's shores
12. Located north of Murray Bay, this bay hosts a 1 mile long beach.
13. _____ Bay was named for an early island school teacher, John _____.
14. Today, AllTran provides _____ tours of the island's scenic and historic highlights.

Charting the Course

A lot of planning and effort have made Grand Island NRA what it is today. Here are some highlights:

- ◆ March 1989 -- U.S. Congressman Dale Kildee of Michigan introduced legislation on Capitol Hill to make Grand Island a National Recreation Area.
- ◆ While Congress penned the final draft of the legislation, a group called Trust for Public Lands (TPL) purchased Grand Island from CCI. TPL buys land and holds it until government agencies can acquire the land for public use. This is necessary because it often takes a long time for federal and state governments to appropriate money to buy land.
- ◆ Some cabins and both lighthouses on the island already belonged to private individuals. TPL believed that families who traditionally rented cabins year after year from CCI were an important part of Grand Island's culture. Because it wanted to see this culture preserved, TPL gave the families who rented those cabins the option to buy them, but not the land on which the cabins sit. Only one family did not exercise the option to purchase.
- ◆ January 1990 -- Congress appropriated \$2.5 million to purchase Grand Island. The Hiawatha National Forest amended its Land and Resource Management Plan on January 8, 1990, to incorporate Grand Island into the land base of the National Forest and to provide temporary management guidance.
- ◆ May 17, 1990 -- Congress passed the Grand Island National Recreation Area legislation, which outlined the purposes of the NRA and directed the Forest Service to develop, with public involvement, a comprehensive management plan for the island. That plan was signed by Forest Supervisor Bill Spinner on July 1, 1994.
- ◆ 1994-present, -- U.S. Forest Service personnel have worked diligently with partners, volunteers, the local community and other stakeholders to move toward the "rustic development" envisioned by that management plan.

Development Highlights

Since its designation, attention to detail and collaboration have resulted in a variety of changes to the island's infrastructure and recreation opportunities. Many projects have been undertaken toward implementation of the island's management plan. For instance:

Facility/Service Improvements

- ◆ Campsites, Day use areas, accessible boardwalks and viewing decks, beach access, trail signing and interpretive exhibits.
- ◆ Restoration of the road and trail system
- ◆ Establishment of public transportation system (including passenger ferry, accessible ferry dock, and bus tours)

Partnerships

- ◆ With the help of our partners, the Forest Service has overseen
- ◆ Restoration of several historic structures
- ◆ Creation and expansion of partnerships to protect ecosystems, eradicate non-native species, manage black bear, and support tourism
- ◆ Special events such as GI Marathon
- ◆ Archaeological Research
- ◆ Public education programs including Youth Archaeology Workshops, Artist in Residence, Life of Lake Superior, and more.



CROSS OVER TO ADVENTURE



HIAWATHA National Forest



PROVIDED BY THE HIAWATHA INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION