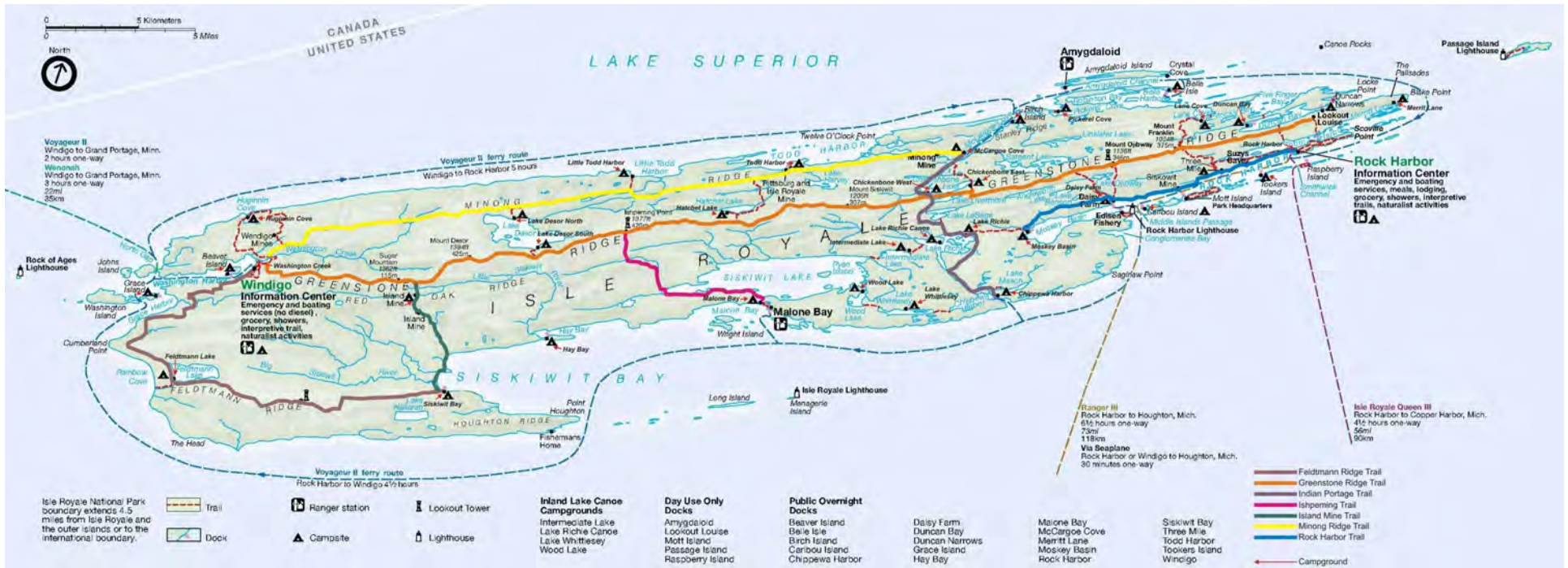


Isle Royale Info

Section 3: The Long Trails



Overview:

These trail descriptions are divided into sections with campgrounds and/or trail junctions marking the divisions. They vary in difficulty, but are typically harder going north to south versus east to west. They are typically very well marked, but can be hard to follow in the spring, before the trail crews have been out and the ground has been cleared by people walking on them. Also, before the trail crews have been out, you will most likely find many downed trees across the trails which will slow you down.

At the beginning of each trail description is a chart with details of the trail as described below. There is a complete chart for all of the short trails available in Section Twelve: Reference Charts under "Chart of the Long Trails".

About my Notes and Descriptions:

Rating: Trail difficulty is based on a scale of 1-10, a 1 difficulty being a walk on a paved flat road, to a 10 difficulty being the trail between Little Todd Harbor Trail to Lake Desor North Trail, in the rain. I consider this the most difficult trail section on the island. Difficulty will vary based on the season and the weather conditions. All of my ratings are based on what it would be like to walk in wet, slippery, cold or hot, i.e.; worst conditions.

Map Miles: Map miles are from the 1994 Trails Illustrated topographic map, which is based on USGS topographic maps modified and revised by Trails Illustrated.

GPS Miles: Are based on my actually walking the trail and usually averaged based on multiple readings.

Maximum (Max) and Minimum (Min) Elevation in feet: These are calculated using various sources based on the trail and the data I have accumulated. This data comes from my GPS, Suunto Watch, Maps, MyTopo Terrain Navigator™ and Google Earth™. This data has been analyzed and presented as my best guess.

Gain / Loss: Total amount of feet gained and lost over the duration of the trail. This has been calculated from MyTopo Terrain Navigator™ and/or Google Earth™ based on my tracks.

Elevation Difference: The difference between the Gain and Loss. This is, in effect, the amount of feet going up versus going down. If positive, there are more ascents than descents and, if negative, vice-a-versa.

Percent Maximum (% Max.) Grade: The maximum grade going up or down. A positive number represents uphill and the negative downhill. This has been calculated from MyTopo Terrain Navigator™ and/or Google Earth™ based on my tracks.

Percent Average (% Avg.) Grade: The average grade going up or down. The positive number represents uphill and the negative downhill. This has been calculated from MyTopo Terrain Navigator™ and/or Google Earth™ based on my tracks.

Overview: The general description of the trail.

Key Points: The highlights and/or landmarks on the trail.

Details: A detailed description of the trail with elevations, grade and miles.

Relative Campgrounds: A listing of the adjacent campgrounds to go to or come from.

Google Earth™ View: If listed, will link to a picture captured from Google Earth™.

Note: The trails on the island are always changing and my descriptions are an accumulation of walking them several times with verification based on the last time I walked them. Keeping that in mind, they may be different in some way.

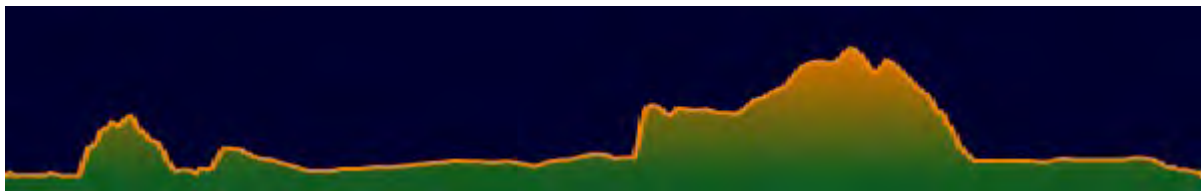
The Maps: The maps shown at the beginning of each section showing an overview of the full route are not to scale and are at different sizes to simply represent the route. The detail maps are captured from maps at 1:24000 scale and reduced to 60% unless indicated differently. When the detail map is selected, the link will bring up a detail map at full 1:24000 scale.

Feldtmann Ridge Trail - CCW

Rating		Miles	
Direction	Reversed	Map	GPS
7	6.5	19.00	18.81



COMPLETE TRAIL PROFILE.



Overview: The Feldtmann Ridge trail is easily done from Windigo, around to Windigo in a loop with Island Mine Trail and the last section of the Greenstone Ridge Trail, in either direction, in 4 days, but can be done in 3 days bypassing Island Mine Campground. I prefer to do it in 6 days, with full days spent at Feldtmann Lake Campground and Siskiwit Bay Campground. It provides a good cross section of the island. The trail passes through lowland areas with wetlands, lakes with good moose viewing, a ridge with magnificent vistas, and a bay on Lake Superior, and via the Island Mine Trail, up to the Greenstone Ridge Trail. It is a good first time trip for people with some backpacking experience.

Windingo to Feldtmann Lake

Counter-Clockwise

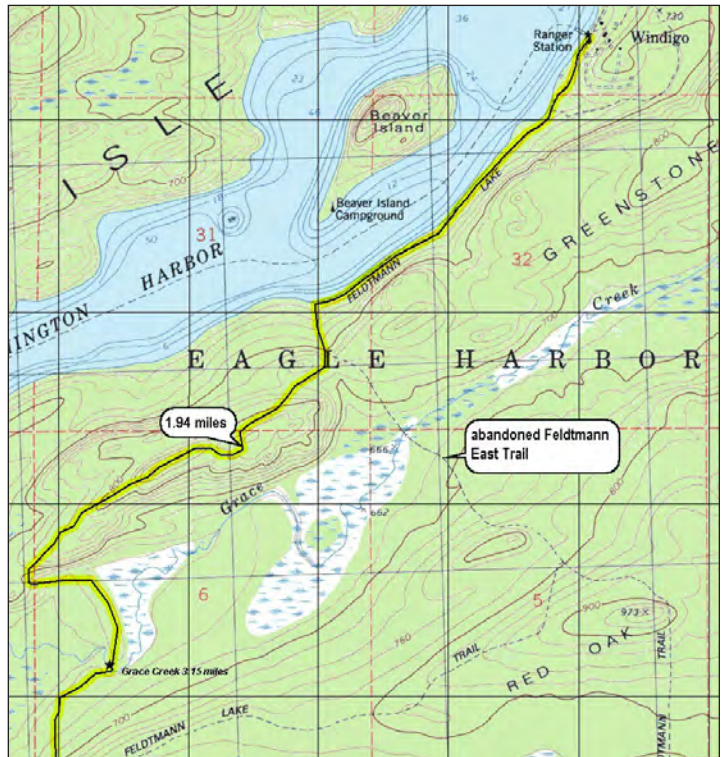
Rating		Miles		Max. Elev.	Min. Elev.	Gain	Loss	Elev. Diff.	% Max. Grade	% Avg. Grade
Direction	Reversed	Map	GPS							
6.5	6.5	8.80	8.64	850'	612'	548'	-502'	46'	18.7/-18.1	2.4/-2.3

Overview: This trail is relatively easy and a very nice walk. The hardest part is climbing up a ridge, which is completed within the first 2 miles. After that, there is one more minor climb and there are some rock and root sections that can be dangerous if wet, and a couple of sections of boulders on the trail. It provides a good cross section of the Western end of the island.



NORTH SECTION.

This trail is one of the newer trails on the island and has been re-routed quite a few times. As late as 1985, the trail did not climb the ridge that it does now, and went farther south, going over Grace Creek early and going south until Red Oak Ridge, before turning west towards Lake Superior. At this junction, where it went west, there was another trail called the “East Feldtmann Trail” that continued south and bypassed Feldtmann Lake meeting the Feldtmann Lake trail east of the lake and at the beginning of the Feldtmann Ridge proper. The current trail shows up in 1987 and the East trail was abandoned in about 1991 do to it being very wet and hard to maintain.



Key Points:

- 0.00 - Windigo Dock
- 1.15 - Cuts inland away from harbor
- 1.94 - Top of the ridge (Grace Ridge)
- 3.15 - Grace Creek
- 8.64 - Feldtmann Lake campground

Details:

The trail leaves Windigo following the shore of Washington Harbor. When immediately leaving from the dock heading west, the trail reaches a fork. You want to stay on the trail near the harbor. The other fork is a dirt two-track leading to park service buildings and the moose enclosure. Leaving the fork the trail climbs a mellow 25’ ascent then goes back down and reaches the west end of the Windigo Nature Trail at 0.25 miles. It continues to follow along Washington Harbor and comes to board steps, leading to a bridge over a small creek at 0.31 miles, then begins cutting inland a bit, and while going up another 20’ only to go back down and follow near the lake again. The trail then becomes relatively level with no major changes in elevation until 0.7 miles, when it begins a short ascent of 30’ and goes back down gently and stays very close to the shoreline. It follows the shore until 1.19 miles, when the trail cuts south, away from the harbor, just west of the head of Beaver Island. The dock for Beaver Island Campground can be seen about 1500’ across the water from there. Heading away from the harbor, the trail begins an ascent of 120’ at a 10 to 15% grade until 1.36 miles, when it levels out for a bit only to climb again at 1.46 miles. This ascent is 70’ at the same grade as the previous until 1.56 miles, when it is almost on the ridge. The trail mellows out enough to catch your breath here then begins a steep climb

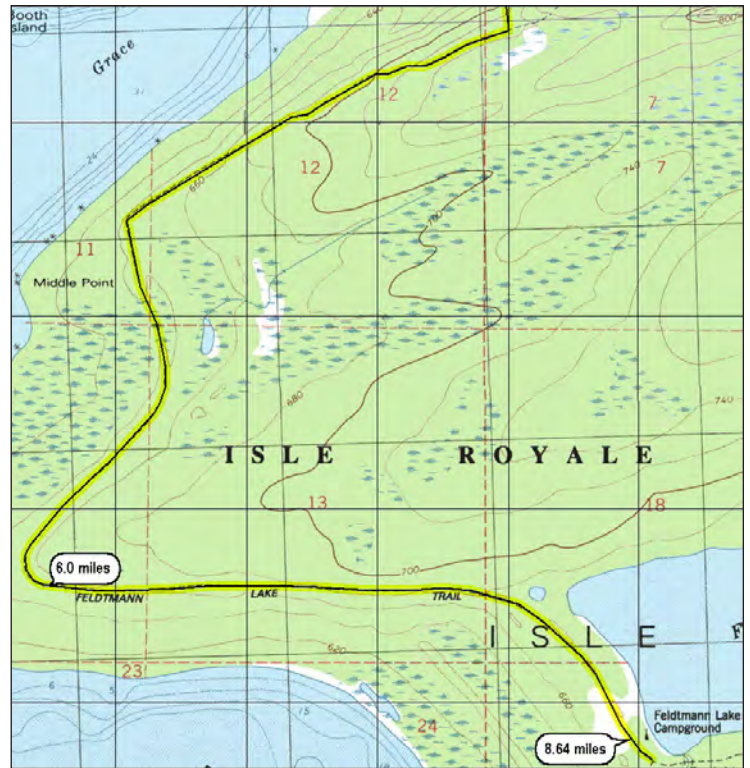
VIEW FROM THE RIDGE.



of 30' at a 15% grade until reaching the Grace Ridge (my name) at 1.73 miles. Once on the ridge, it climbs an additional 20' until reaching the highest point at 1.94 miles. The total ascent from where the trail cuts in is 275' over 0.78 miles. From this ridge looking south, you can see some wetland areas, Grace Creek and Lake Superior in the distance. It tends to be windy up here, but if the weather is nice, it's a great place to plan lunch or at least a stop. This completes the hardest part of this section of the trail. About three-quarters of the way along this first ridge, there is a trail that heads down, I have not gone down it and do not know where it leads. It could be another old trail from a re-route. From here, the trail follows the ridge with a few minor descents and ascents until being on another ridge at 2.0 miles. After this last ridge, the trail begins a 250' descent down until 2.63 miles. This descent is pretty much continuous with a couple of sections at a 15% grade. After the descent the trail becomes relatively level. At 2.85 miles, the trail is made up of round rocks for a while, that I believe to be the ancient beach line when Lake Superior was once higher (Lake Nipissing). After leaving these rocks, the trail returns to normal and after a slight 20' descent, comes to Grace Creek at 3.15 miles. Grace Creek has a good size footbridge with railings. The flow through the creek depends on the time of season you go, but is a dependable source of water if needed. Leaving the creek, the trail turns west and climbs a slight hill before leveling off, then starting a climb at 3.27 miles of 80' at a 6 to 8% grade until 3.54 miles. This is the last uphill on this section of trail. From here the trail turns southwest. At this point, you are approaching Grace Harbor. In the springtime, it and Lake Superior are easily seen as you approach it. In the fall, I could not see either. The trail starts dropping slowly at 3.7 miles, at a 1 to 4% grade dropping a total of 90' until 4.75 miles. During this stretch, the trail passes through some wetland areas and there is another small stream at 3.85 miles. In the spring, this is a definite source of water. In the fall, it is questionable. From here, the trail turns south and follows along another old beach line of round rocks. In the springtime, from here, you can see Lake Superior. In the fall, I couldn't. It follows the old beach line from here and is relatively flat until beginning a very slight ascent of less than 1% gaining only 30' from there until 6.0 miles, when the trail turns east and increases its ascent, slightly gaining 30' until 7.15 miles, when it becomes relatively flat all the way to the campground. The end of the trail is almost boring in the fact that it changes so little, but it is very pretty and almost no work. You reach the Feldtmann Lake Campground west sign at 8.64 miles. The west post at the campground says "Windigo 9 miles".

Relevant Campgrounds: Feldtmann Lake and Washington Creek

SOUTH SECTION.



GRACE CREEK AND BRIDGE.

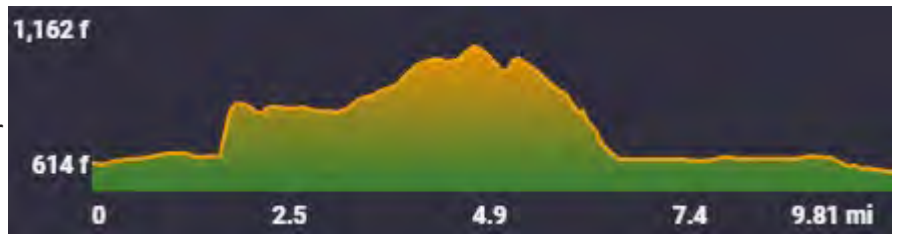


Feldtmann Lake to Siskiwit Bay

West to East

Rating		Miles		Max. Elev.	Min. Elev.	Gain	Loss	Elev. Diff.	% Max. Grade	% Avg. Grade
Direction	Reversed	Map	GPS							
7.5	6.5	10.20	10.18	1161'	612'	750'	-806'	-56'	41.2/-18.1	3.0/-2.7

Overview: This trail features a rather tough climb up a ridge, with spectacular views of the very western side of the island and Lake Superior, along with a tower for a high view of the area. It remains on this ridge, until slowly going down, then walking road grade to the end, at beautiful Siskiwit Bay.



WEST SECTION.



Key Points:

- 0.00 - Feldtmann Lake Campground
- 1.80 - On the ridge
- 4.70 - Tower
- 5.10 - Old tower
- 5.90 - Coyote Ridge
- 6.40 - Old Siskiwit road grade
- 10.18 - Siskiwit Bay Campground Trail / Island Mine Trail junction

Details: The trail leaves the campground and immediately passes the Rainbow Cove Trail before going slightly down to a bridge over Feldtmann Creek at 500'. Leaving the creek, the trail begins a slight ascent of 30' until 0.65 miles, the trail begins to follow a very small ridge with a slight incline until 0.9 miles, when the incline increases slightly only to level out and go slightly down and start a relatively level to slightly rolling section until 1.54 miles, when the trail then begins a series of pretty steep climbs (This is the point where the old East Feldtmann Ridge Trail junction used to come in from the east). This ascent gains 220' at a 20 to 40% grade taking you up to the Feldtmann Ridge at 1.8 miles, and at just over 900' in elevation. Once on the ridge, there is a steep drop on the edge of the ridge and there are some magnificent views of Feldtmann Lake and Lake Superior. If coming from Windigo, you can see the area you have walked so far. If going the other way, you can see what you have ahead. Besides the vistas of the lakes, there are some beautiful meadows and trees up on the ridge. It's a great place to take a few minutes, pull out your map and take some pictures. Leaving this first high point, the trail descends about 50' while cutting away from the edge of the ridge until 2.0 miles, only to climb right back up another 25'. From here the trail stays on a relatively level ridge, gaining and losing no more than 20' until at 2.9 miles, the trail comes to a waterfall with big rocks and good water. Just before that, there are beaver dams off on the south side of the trail. They look like old ones, but I would guess there is fresh activity somewhere in there. From here the trail begins a long ascent of 125', starting at a mellow 2% grade and ending at a little steeper 6% grade until 4.13 miles. This ascent is not bad and has some short left breaks and dips, but can be very exhausting when you combine the original climb with all the added minor descents and re-ascents. The views are spectacular though. If you look ahead, you should be able to see the Feldtmann Tower. The trail becomes

LAKE FROM THE RIDGE.

