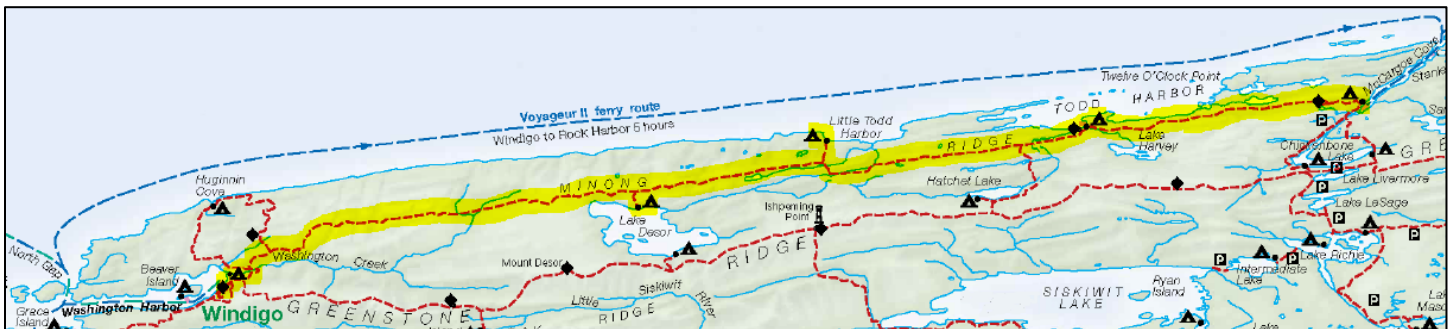




Isle Royale Info – Trip Packages

The Minong Ridge Trail



Total Miles	31.9
Difficulty East to West	7.718
Difficulty West to East	7.668

[Based on all itineraries except "Short" which is 30.7 miles]

This trail runs along the entire length of the northern most ridges on the west side of the island, called the Minong Ridge. It stretches from McCargoe Cove Campground to Washington Creek Trail, and is considered by most, to be the hardest long trail on the island. It is also the most remote on the island and has the most wilderness feeling to it. It can be extremely hard in wet conditions, due to slippery rocks and leaves, and when hot, the sun can be warm due to the height and lack of shade. It has a lot of ascents and descents with exposed rock surfaces in between the two. It passes over a minimum of two major beaver dams, and can be wet throughout the lowland areas.

It is usually hiked east to west, starting at McCargoe Cove and ending at Windigo. The two sections nearest Washington Creek are by far, the hardest sections and starting out on the east end, you are lighter and more "in shape" by the time you hit the worst sections. They can also be a killer if you hurt yourself in any way (blisters, pains, etc.), on the first two sections.

This trail features a popular, yet nice campground on a beautiful cove, two campgrounds along the north shore of Lake Superior, a serene inland lake campground and spectacular views for most of its length.

This description and itinerary starts from McCargoe Cove by taking the Voyageur from Grand Portage, Minnesota to Windigo then to McCargoe Cove from there. It is also possible to book the seaplane from Houghton to land in Windigo and then book the Voyageur to take you to McCargoe Cove. It is also possible to take the boats from Copper Harbor or Houghton, Michigan, then schedule the Voyageur from Rock Harbor to Windigo, but that would add at least 2 days and additional cost to the trip. If coming from Michigan, the best way to do this trail is to hike from Rock Harbor to McCargoe Cove to start, then book the Voyageur to take you from Windigo to Rock Harbor for your return trip.

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Sample Itineraries

Short

Days	Nights	Total Miles	Avg. Miles/Day
4	3	30.7	7.68

Day One:

Ferry from Grand Portage (leave 8:30 Eastern) to McCargoe Cove (arrive 2:00 Eastern)
McCargoe Cove to Todd Harbor Campground – 6.6 miles

Day Two:

Todd Harbor Campground to Desor North Campground – 11.2 miles

Day Three:

Desor North Campground to Washington Creek Campground – 12.0 miles

Day Four:

Washington Creek Campground to Windigo – 0.3 miles
Ferry from Windigo (leave 2:00 Eastern) to Grand Portage (arrive 4:00 Eastern)

Medium

Days	Nights	Total Miles	Avg. Miles/Day
5	4	31.9	6.38

Day One:

Ferry from Grand Portage (leave 8:30 Eastern) to McCargoe Cove (arrive 2:00 Eastern)
McCargoe Cove to Todd Harbor Campground – 6.6 miles

Day Two:

Todd Harbor Campground to Little Todd Harbor Campground – 6.7 miles

Day Three:

Little Todd Harbor Campground to Desor North Campground – 5.7 miles

Day Four:

Desor North Campground to Washington Creek Campground – 12.0 miles

Day Five:

Washington Creek Campground to Windigo – 0.3 miles
Ferry from Windigo (leave 2:00 Eastern) to Grand Portage (arrive 4:00 Eastern)

Long

Days	Nights	Total Miles	Avg. Miles/Day
6	5	31.9	5.32

Day One:

Ferry from Grand Portage (leave 8:30 Eastern) to McCargoe Cove (arrive 2:00 Eastern)
Day hike to Minong Mine – 1.2 miles each way

Day Two:

McCargoe Cove to Todd Harbor Campground – 6.6 miles

Day Three:

Todd Harbor Campground to Little Todd Harbor Campground – 6.7 miles

Day Four:

Little Todd Harbor Campground to Desor North Campground – 5.7 miles

Day Five:

Desor North Campground to Washington Creek Campground – 12.0 miles

Day Six:

Washington Creek Campground to Windigo – 0.3 miles
Ferry from Windigo (leave 2:00 Eastern) to Grand Portage (arrive 4:00 Eastern)

Week Long

Days	Nights	Total Miles	Avg. Miles/Day
7	6	31.9	4.56

Day One:

Ferry from Grand Portage (leave 8:30 Eastern) to McCargoe Cove (arrive 2:00 Eastern)
Day hike to Minong Mine – 1.2 miles each way

Day Two:

McCargoe Cove to Todd Harbor Campground – 6.6 miles

Day Three:

Todd Harbor Campground to Little Todd Harbor Campground – 6.7 miles

Day Four:

Little Todd Harbor Campground to Desor North Campground – 5.7 miles

Day Five:

Desor North Campground to a backcountry site – 6.0 miles

Day Six:

Backcountry site to Washington Creek Campground – 6.0 miles

Day Seven:

Washington Creek Campground to Windigo – 0.3 miles

Ferry from Windigo (leave 2:00 Eastern) to Grand Portage (arrive 4:00 Eastern)

Relaxing Long

Days	Nights	Total Miles	Avg. Miles/Day
8	7	31.9	3.99

Day One:

Ferry from Grand Portage (leave 8:30 Eastern) to McCargoe Cove (arrive 2:00 Eastern)

Day hike to Minong Mine – 1.2 miles each way

Day Two:

McCargoe Cove to Todd Harbor Campground – 6.6 miles

Day Three:

Todd Harbor Campground to Little Todd Harbor Campground – 6.7 miles

Day Four:

Little Todd Harbor Campground – 0 miles

Day Five:

Little Todd Harbor Campground to Desor North Campground – 5.7 miles

Day Six:

Desor North Campground to a backcountry site – 6.0 miles

Day Seven:

Backcountry site to Washington Creek Campground – 6.0 miles

Day Eight:

Washington Creek Campground to Windigo – 0.3 miles

Ferry from Windigo (leave 2:00 Eastern) to Grand Portage (arrive 4:00 Eastern)

Very Relaxing Long (perfect trip)

Days	Nights	Total Miles	Avg. Miles/Day
9	8	31.9	3.54

Day One:

Ferry from Grand Portage (leave 8:30 Eastern) to McCargoe Cove (arrive 2:00 Eastern)

Day hike to Minong Mine – 1.2 miles each way

Day Two:

McCargoe Cove to Todd Harbor Campground – 6.6 miles

Day Three:

Todd Harbor Campground – 0 miles

Day Four:

Todd Harbor Campground to Little Todd Harbor Campground – 6.7 miles

Day Five:

Little Todd Harbor Campground – 0 miles

Day Six:

Little Todd Harbor Campground to Desor North Campground – 5.7 miles

Day Seven:

Desor North Campground to a backcountry site – 6.0 miles

Day Eight:

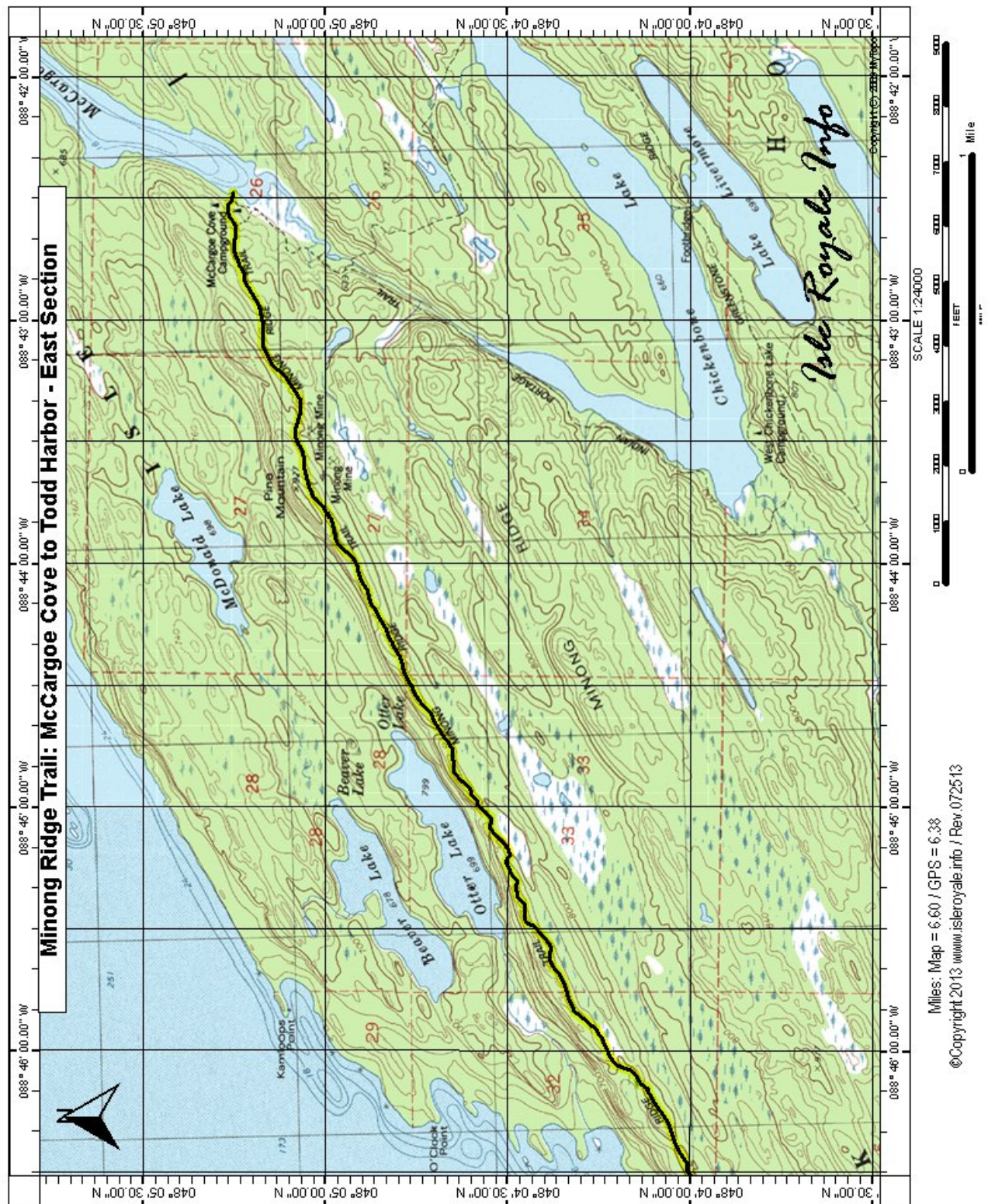
Backcountry site to Washington Creek Campground – 6.0 miles

Day Nine:

Washington Creek Campground to Windigo – 0.3 miles

Ferry from Windigo (leave 2:00 Eastern) to Grand Portage (arrive 4:00 Eastern)

Minong Ridge Trail: McCargo Cove to Todd Harbor – East Section



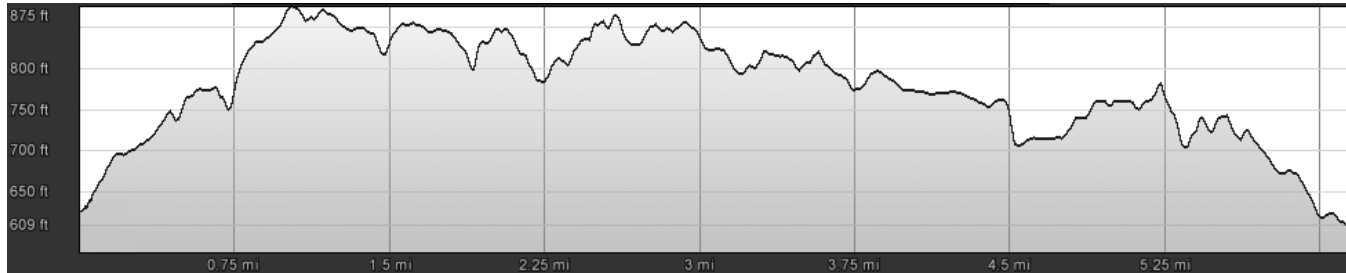
Route Descriptions

Note: The detail maps are captured from maps at 1:24000 scale and reduced to 45%.

Minong Ridge Trail: McCargoe Cove Campground to Todd Harbor Campground

East to West

Rating		Miles		Max Elev.	Min Elev.	Gain	Loss	Elev. Diff.	% Max Grade	% Avg. Grade
Direction	Reverse	Map	GPS							
8	7	6.60	6.38	875'	609'	831'	-830'	1'	22.3/-26.8	4.8/-4.6



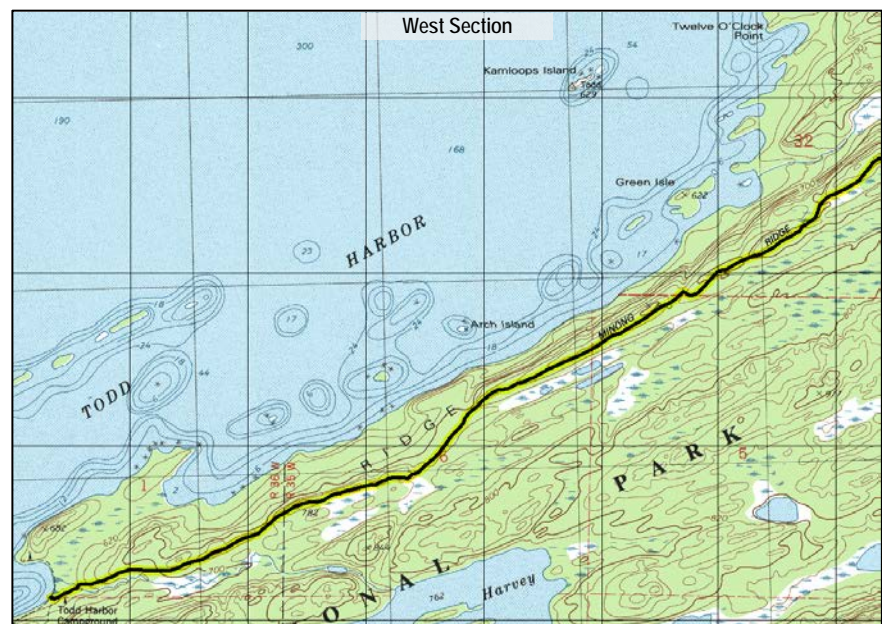
Overview: This is a very nice trail with a little bit of everything. If doing the entire Minong Ridge Trail, this section gives you a good idea of what is to come, without being too difficult.

Key Points:

- 0.00 - McCargoe Cove Dock
- 1.20 - Minong Mine site
- 1.39 - First ridge vista
- 6.46 - Todd Harbor CG

Details: Starting from the dock, you pass the fork for the group sites at 0.04 miles. The trail is almost entirely uphill coming out of McCargoe Cove until 0.79 miles, with the worst being at the beginning. It then levels off and you come to a manmade (I believe) hole (square) on the left. At 0.87 miles, there is a trail that heads west to the mine. This trail follows slag piles before coming to the mine. Very soon after at 0.92 miles, it begins going up the ridge until 1.2 miles, there is a post marking the Minong Mine Site. The trail to the mine goes down south, while the main trail goes north up. If you have time, this is well worth the short walk down to explore. There are some shafts (horizontal?) to the left on the way up there (I think 3 or 2). At 1.39 miles, the trail reaches the ridge and begins what will become routine, climb ridge, walk a bit, go down to forest, walk a bit, climb ridge, etc.

At 2.61 miles, there is flowing water just before climbing a ridge with a large rock surface on the right. It then descends this ridge and comes to a wetlands area on the south and enters a woodland area. This concludes the hardest part of this section, as it is the last rock ridge, and the trail stays in woodlands for the rest of the way. There are several tall hills to go up and down but not as bad as the ridges. At 3.38 miles, there is water flowing, but slowly. It is draining a good size standing water wetland/swamp. It then enters some wooded areas and crosses another stream



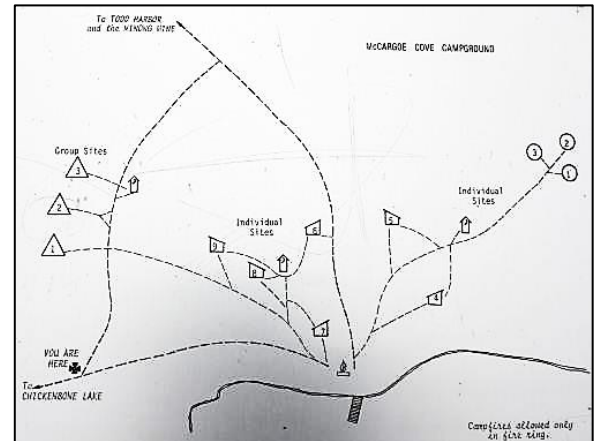
crossing a small creek, then some boards, for a total descent of 60' until crossing Washington Creek and the water gauging station at 1.09 miles, and 0.49 miles from the Greenstone trail post. It then starts on a moderate uphill of 50' in a western direction, until coming to the post that marks the start of the Minong Ridge Trail and the Huginnin Cove West Trail post at 1.18 miles, and 0.57 miles from the Greenstone trail post.

Campground Descriptions

McCargoe Cove Campground

Shelters	Tent	Group	Fires	Tables	TP	Gen	Dock	Wild	Elev.
6	3	3	C	Y	Y	N	7'	6	618'

The Campground is located along a beautiful cove. It is truly one of those special Isle Royale views. There are usually people here because it is a drop off and pickup point, and is at the possible terminus of quite a few trails. But, even with people, it is a wilderness campground in feel. There is a campground map located along the shore, at the east entrance, to the group site and at the dock. There is also a post at the entrance coming off the Minong Ridge Trail. The post says the campground is 0.8 miles, GPS says 0.7 miles, to the campground map at the dock.



The Shelters here have nice views of the lake. Some views may be limited depending on foliage.

Shelter #4 is about 200' from the lake and a bit more private than #7, but does not have as nice view. It is semi-private with easy lake access.

Shelter #5 sits up on a hill 35' higher than the lake and is private with a very nice lake view. However, it is 300' away from the dock.

Shelter #6 is up on a hill about 35' higher than the dock, overlooking the lake with a great view. It gets nice sun all the time. However, it is only 50' right behind #7.

Shelter #7 is the "lakefront condo" about 200' from the dock. It is the closest to the lake, and the fire ring. It has the best view of the cove, but is the least private, due to that location. This shelter is usually taken.

Shelter #8 is a bit of a walk up and kind of surrounded by shelters, but private nonetheless. Leaves limit its lake view in the summer to the southern end of the cove. It has a short walk to the outhouse.

Shelter #9 is a walk up and not real easy to get to being about 400' from the dock. This also makes it the most private shelter. It is about 50' south of #8 and has limited lake views during the peak of summer similar to #8.

The Tent Sites are on the northern end of the campground. They sit up on a hill about 60' higher than the dock and about 400' from the dock. However, being so far from the dock, they are very private. They might be okay in the spring for a view and protection from the wind off the water.

Tent #1 has 2 tent pads and can fit 3 to 4 tents. It is a long way from the harbor, but at least has a minimal view. In the spring it would be okay and protected from the elements.

Tent #2 has 2 tent pads and can fit 2 tents or, maybe 3, if squeezed. It has no view of the lake.

Tent #3 has 2 tent pads where you could squeeze 4 tents. It has no view of the lake.

Shelter #7 from near the dock in the fall.



View of McCargoe from Shelter #9 in the spring.



Tent #1



Tent #2



Tent #3



Points of Interest

Minong Mine

The mine site is located on a side trail off the Minong Ridge Trail on the section between McCargoe Cove and Todd Harbor. The first side trail is 0.87 miles from the dock at McCargoe Cove Campground. This trail has been used less recently. The main one is at 1.2 miles and has a new post and the plaque at the right. The trail goes south and comes to a plaque describing the site 248' from this junction.

The mine site is well worth a stop if going along the trail or, worth walking to if staying at the campground. It is the best site on the island to see remnants of mining as there are still many artifacts remaining, but they are slowly deteriorating into the land. Among these are some short gage tracks, wheels, log cabin remains, barrel straps and other things. There are two nice horizontal shafts you can go into. One of them has train tracks in it.

I found this listing in the National Registry of Historical Places with the following information:
Minong Mine Historic District (added 1977 - Keweenaw County - #77000153)

Located: Address Restricted, Isle Royale National Park (2750 acres, 1 building, 1 object)

Historic Significance: Event, Information Potential

Area of Significance: Industry, Prehistoric, Historic - Aboriginal
Cultural Affiliation: not available

Period of Significance: 1500-1999 BC, 1000-1499 BC, 500-999 BC, 499-0 BC, 499-0 AD, 1000-500 AD, 1499-1000 AD, 1749-1500 AD, 1900-1750 AD, 1875-1899

Owner: Federal

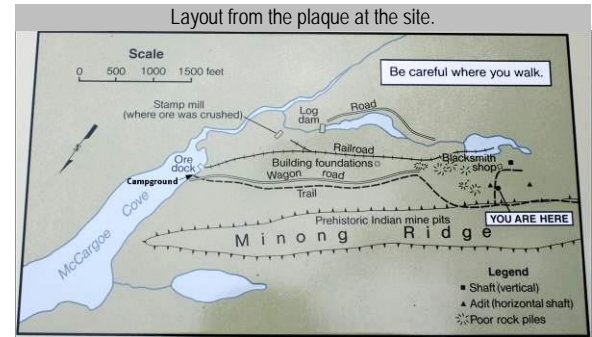
Historic Function: Domestic, Industry/Processing/Extraction

Historic Sub-function: Manufacturing Facility, Village Site

Current Function: Landscape

Current Sub-function: Park

From the plaque at the site: "For ten years Minong (Mine) bustled. Workers built an ore dock, wagon road, railroad, stamp mill, dam and blacksmith shop. Miners blasted large open pit quarries and dug horizontal and vertical shafts. The mining community included a school, store and homes. Enough people lived here and at Island Mine, 18 miles west, to form a separate Michigan county – Isle Royale County. By 1879, however, production began to fall. The ore's copper content dropped and in 1885 Minong Mine closed."



Tracks inside horizontal shaft east of sign.

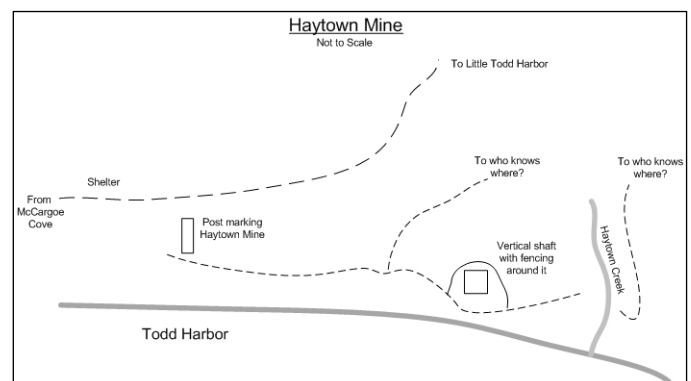


Some remnants of the mine.



Haytown Mine

It is also known as the Pittsburg and Isle Royale Mine. It is located 0.17 miles, down a trail by the beach leading from west from Todd Harbor Campground. A post marks it saying 0.2 miles. It consists of a shaft with a fence around it and slag piles going out towards the lake. This is a beautiful walk with a couple of little waterfalls that, I imagine, look even more beautiful in the spring. The trail continues past the shaft leading to a stream 175' beyond I call "Haytown Creek". It is quite pretty and is flowing very well, even in the fall. In the spring, I have seen fish running up it. It looks like the trail goes over the creek and might follow the creek. something on it.



It might be worth checking out. There might be

Contacts

Isle Royale National Park

The headquarters for the park in Houghton, Michigan.

Phone: 906-482-0984 / Fax: 906-482-873 / Emergency: 800-727-5847

Website: www.nps.gov/isro / Email: isro_parkinfo@nps.gov

800 E. Lakeshore Drive, Houghton, MI., 49931-1869

Isle Royale Queen IV

Boat from Copper Harbor, Michigan to Rock Harbor on Isle Royale.

Phone: 906-289-4437 / Fax: 906-289-4952

Website: <http://www.isleroyale.com> / Email: captaink@pasty.net

The Isle Royale Line Inc., P.O. Box 24, Copper Harbor, MI., 49918

Ranger III

Boat from Houghton / Hancock, Michigan to Rock Harbor on Isle Royale.

Phone: 906-482-0984 / Fax: 906-482-8753

Website: www.nps.gov/isro/planyourvisit/fares-and-reservations.htm

Email: isro_ranger3reserve@nps.gov

On-line Reservations: www.pasty.com/~isro/nps3.php

Isle Royale National Park, 800 East Lakeshore Drive, Houghton, MI., 49931-1869

Royale Air Service

Seaplane service from Houghton to Windigo or Rock Harbor.

Phone: 877-FLY- ISLE (359-4753) or 218-721-0405 / Fax: 218-721-0409

Website: www.royaleairservice.com / Email: RoyaleAirService@aol.com

Royale Air Service Inc., P.O. Box 15184, Duluth, MN 55815

Sandy

Boat operated by the Rock Harbor Lodge as a water taxi, between Rock Harbor and Malone Bay, on the south shore, and Rock Harbor and McCargoe Cove on the north shore.

Phone: 906-337-4993 (May-September), 866-644-2003 (October-April)

Website: www.isleroyaleresort.com / Email: isleroyaleresort@starband.net

Summer: P.O. Box 605, Houghton, MI., 49931-0605

Winter: P.O. Box 27, Mammoth Cave, KY., 42259-0027

Voyager II and Sea Hunter III

Boat from Grand Portage, Minnesota to Isle Royale.

Phone: 218-475-0024 (May thru Oct) / 651-653-5872 (Oct thru Apr)

Website: www.isleroyaleboats.com / Email: mailto:reservations@isleroyaleboats.com

(Formerly: www.grand-isle-royale.com)

Grand Portage-Isle Royale Transportation, P.O. Box 10529, White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Notes & Credits

All maps miles are based on the 1994 Trails Illustrated topographic map, which is based on USGS topographic maps modified and revised by Trails Illustrated. Isle Royale National Park #210. © 1994 Trails Illustrated.

All GPS miles are based on my actually walking the trail and usually averaged based on multiple readings.

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 to Lake Desor North Campground 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. The total difficulty is based on the individual difficulty, times the miles, added together, then divided by the total miles.

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Windigo Layout by the National Park Service, Public Domain.

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Captured and Edited by Mike Tremblay.

“Google Earth Views” are from Google Maps™. Website: www.googleearth.com. They are based on adding my GPS coordinates and generating Google Earth Views based on them. Captured and Edited by Mike Tremblay.

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