



Isle Royale Info – Trip Packages

Washington Harbor Area - Paddling



Total Statute Miles	11.73
Total Nautical Miles	10.19
Average Danger	4.988

[Based on 4 or 5 day itinerary]

This route takes in the area and campgrounds in Washington Harbor and the entry of the harbor at the western end of the island. It is relatively well protected from the open waters of Lake Superior and the shorelines in this area are accessible if there is the need to go to shore in case of dangerous conditions or an emergency. It should be done by those with intermediate level experience or better because it does take in the Lake Superior waters and there are a couple of short open water sections. It is a good route for those with no open water experience to learn and practice before doing long open water routes.

The area this route covers is relatively busy with boats coming in and out and fisherman may dock overnight at both of the campground docks. It features two campgrounds on islands and many historical structures on Washington and Barnum islands along with the "America" wreck which is visible from the surface.

This description and itinerary starts from Windigo by taking the Voyageur or Sea Hunter from Grand Portage, Minnesota to Windigo. 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 1 day and additional cost to the trip.

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Sample Itineraries

Three Day

Days	Nights	Total Miles	Avg. Miles/Day
3	2	10.54	3.51

Day One:

Ferry from Grand Portage (leave 8:30 Eastern) to Windigo (arrive 10:30 Eastern)
Windigo to Grace Island Campground – 4.42 miles

Day Two:

Grace Island Campground to Washington & Barnum Island – 1.22 miles
Washington Island to America wreck at North Gap – 1.27 miles
North Gap to Beaver Island Campground – 2.49 miles

Day Three:

Beaver Island Campground to Windigo – 1.14 miles
Ferry from Windigo (leave 2:00 Eastern) to Grand Portage (arrive 4:00 Eastern)

Four Day

Days	Nights	Total Miles	Avg. Miles/Day
4	3	11.73	2.93

Day One:

Ferry from Grand Portage (leave 8:30 Eastern) to Windigo (arrive 10:30 Eastern)
Windigo to Grace Island Campground – 4.42 miles

Day Two:

Day Trip to Washington & Barnum Island – 1.22 miles (one way)

Day Three:

Grace Island Campground to America wreck at North Gap – 1.24 miles
North Gap to Beaver Island Campground – 2.49 miles

Day Four:

Beaver Island Campground to Windigo – 1.14 miles
Ferry from Windigo (leave 2:00 Eastern) to Grand Portage (arrive 4:00 Eastern)

Five Day

Days	Nights	Total Miles	Avg. Miles/Day
5	4	11.73	2.35

Day One:

Ferry from Grand Portage (leave 8:30 Eastern) to Windigo (arrive 10:30 Eastern)
Windigo to Beaver Island Campground – 1.14 miles

Day Two:

Beaver Island Campground to Grace Island Campground – 3.28 miles

Day Three:

Day Trip to Washington & Barnum Island – 1.22 miles (one way)

Day Four:

Grace Island Campground to America wreck at North Gap – 1.24 miles
North Gap to Beaver Island Campground – 2.49 miles

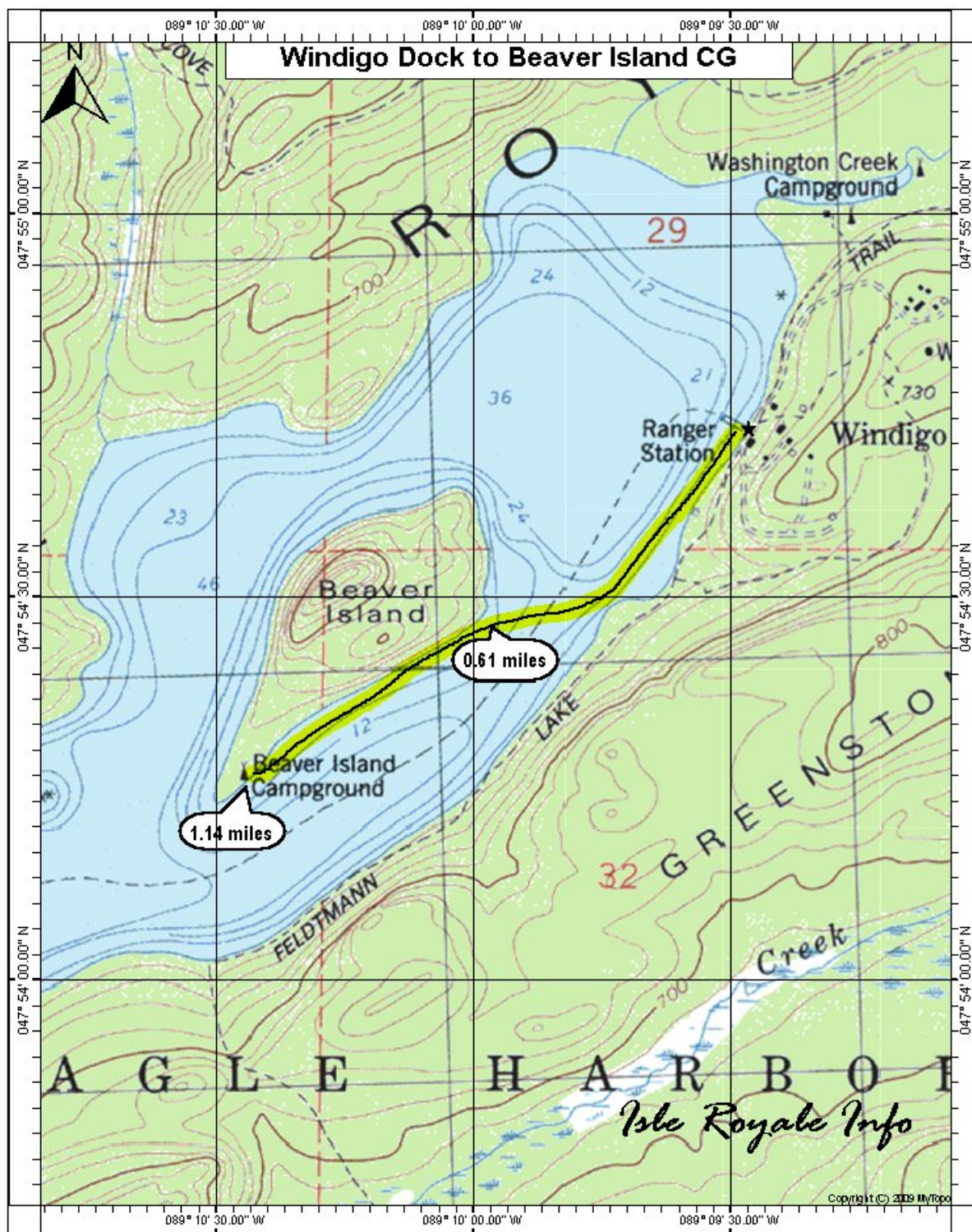
Day Five:

Beaver Island Campground to Windigo – 1.14 miles
Ferry from Windigo (leave 2:00 Eastern) to Grand Portage (arrive 4:00 Eastern)

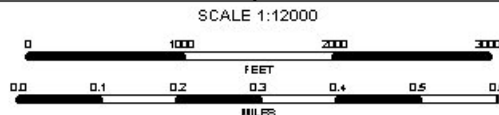
Trip Maps

Miles shown on maps are statute miles.

Windigo Dock to Beaver Island Campground



Statute Miles = 1.14 / Nautical Miles = 0.99
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Information presented to the best of my knowledge. I am in no way responsible
for personal injury with the use of this document.



Route Descriptions

Note: The detail maps are captured from maps at 1:24000 scale and reduced to 60%. Miles shown on maps are statute miles.

Windigo Dock to Beaver Island Campground

East to West

Statute	Nautical	Danger
1.14	0.99	3.0

Overview: This is a short and safe paddle that is protected most of the way depending on wind direction.

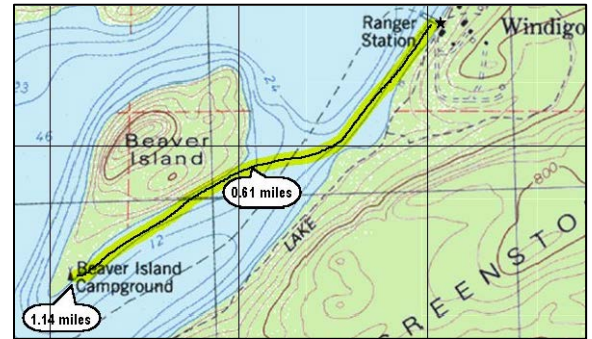
Key Points:

- 0.00 – Windigo Dock
- 0.61 – Southeast edge of Beaver Island
- 1.14 – Beaver Island Campground dock

Details: Leaving the dock at Windigo and following the south shore of the harbor, you come to a slight bay at 0.21 miles, where the shore cuts in about 300', coming to the other side at 0.38 miles, with the northeast side of Beaver Island almost directly to the northwest of you. From here, cutting across the south side of the harbor towards Beaver Island, you reach the south shore of Beaver Island at 0.61 miles. Continuing along the shore of the island, the shoreline is relatively steep until leveling out at 0.87 miles, before coming to the Beaver Island Campground dock at 1.14 miles.

GPS Miles: 1 mile

Paddle Time: 25 minutes with slight winds and a few waves



Beaver Island from Windigo dock with Voyageur II.



Beaver Island Campground to Grace Island Campground

East to West

Statute	Nautical	Danger
3.28	2.85	6.0

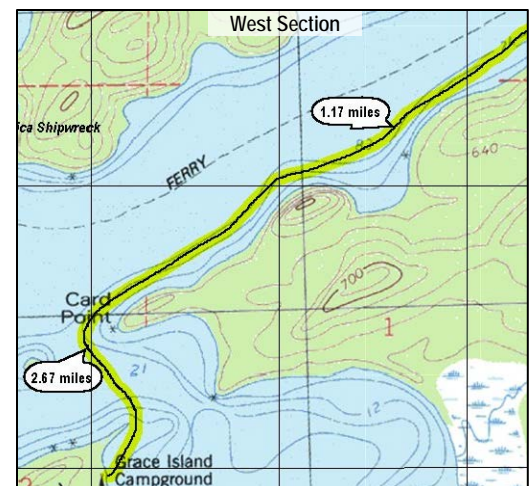
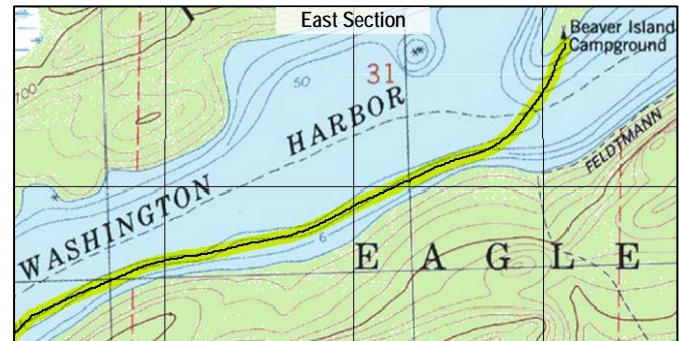
Overview: This is a very nice paddle that goes almost the entire length of Washington Harbor. It ends at the mouth of the harbor and cuts south toward the protection of Grace Island. There are some fairly open sections that can be rough when the wind and waves are coming from the west or southwest. The last section, at the mouth of the harbor, and going south around Card Point, can have some very interesting currents and can be dangerous in a west wind.

Key Points:

- 0.00 – Beaver Island Campground dock
- 1.17 – Beginning of small cove to south
- 2.67 – West end of Card Point
- 3.28 – Grace Island Campground dock

Details: Leaving the dock from the campground, it is usually good to cut across to the south shore of the harbor, unless conditions allow you to paddle right down the center of the harbor. Cutting south from the dock, you reach the shoreline at 0.33 miles. Once along the shore, the shoreline is relatively straight until 1.17 miles, when there is a small inlet of about 700', lasting for only 900'. It then becomes relatively straight again coming to Card Point, and making a turn straight to the south at about 2 miles, and ending up due west of the point at 2.67 miles. Heading south from here, the west point of Grace Island is 0.2 miles away. The west point of the island is a sand bar, and once around it, the campground dock is about 0.2 miles away.

GPS Miles: 2.75 miles



shore to the northeast, you pass the sandbar at the northeast point of the island at 0.16 miles. Turning north and entering open waters, the west side of Card Point is reached at 0.42 miles. From here, you have to cut across the open waters of Washington Harbor, until getting to some protection in the lee of Thompson Island and the main island at approaching 1.0 miles. You come to the America wreck, just under the water, at 1.07 miles. The currents in here can get a bit tricky and they continue until crossing through the North Gap and arriving at the Beacon at 1.24 miles. There are some landing places in here, but you are better off to go through the gap to a small cove just east of it.

Side Trips: The America Shipwreck is along the way. During the busy season, it is marked by a buoy. According to archeological studies, there are Native American sites around the North Gap, but I do not know where.



Campground Descriptions

Beaver Island Campground

Shelters	Tent	Group	Fires	Tables	TP	Gen	Dock	Wild	Elev.
3	0	0	N	Y	Y	Y	2-5'	3	607'

The Campground is located on the southwest corner of Beaver Island, in Washington Harbor. It is a nice campground, but it attracts many boaters and you may hear generators running at the dock here, plus the sounds of Windigo. Walking to the west point of the island, past Shelter #1, there are rocks along the shore that make for a great place to sit and offers views up and down the harbor and north of the island.

The Shelters all sit just a few feet from shore. They all have a nice view and offer good privacy.

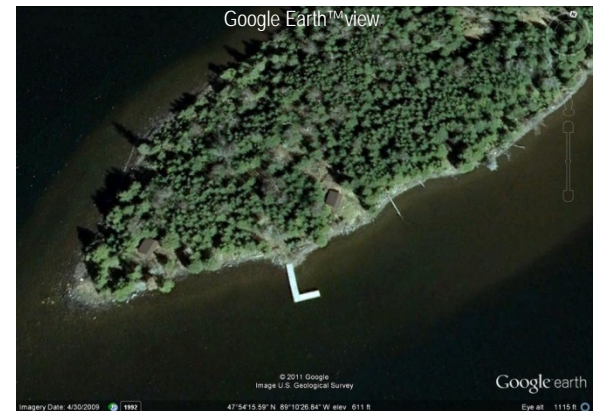
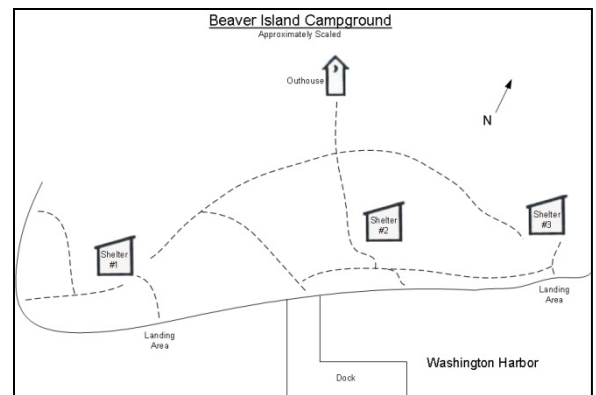
Shelter #1 sits west of the dock on the western most end of the island, with a wonderful view down Washington Harbor. It offers the most privacy. It is also the most prone to wind.

Shelter #2 sits almost directly back from the dock. It is farther from the water than the others shelters and the views and water access is not as good. However, it is well protected from the wind.

Shelter #3 sits east of the dock down a lovely shoreline trail, right on the shoreline. It has a peaceful view of the water and forest on the other side, and with just a few steps, a view up and down the harbor. It is well protected and also private.

Site Ratings: Shelter #1, Shelter #3, Shelter #2

Side Trips: A short paddle directly across from the dock is Feldtmann Ridge Trail. From this point on the trail, it is 0.64 miles up to a scenic view on a ridge.



Points of Interest

[In alphabetical order]

America Shipwreck

The S.S. America was a 182' passenger steamer built in 1898 owned by the Booth Company. It carried passengers and freight along the north shore from Duluth to Forth William with stops at Isle Royale docks from 1902 until 1928. The ship went down on the night of June 7, 1928, in the North Gap coming out of Washington Harbor. All crew and passengers were rescued with the only loss being a dog. It is a very popular site with divers as it lies only 4' below the water line. It can be seen from a canoe or kayak below the water. When it is calm, it is very clear.

Barnum Island

This was also once known as John's Island. It is located on the west end of the island at the mouth of Washington Harbor. It lies a short 270' northeast of Washington Island. It is about 1000' long by 300' wide at its widest point. There are several buildings including the Johns Hotel, two fish houses, three docks and five cottages among other structures, boats and fishing equipment. The island is still used by families so please respect their privacy.

On my last visit to this island in fall, 2012, many of the trees on this island and neighboring Washington Island had been blown down and the islands looked somewhat barren. This can be seen when comparing the panorama picture to the picture of John's Hotel.

History: George Barnum, a wealthy grain merchant from Duluth, was one of the first to establish a summer compound on Isle Royale. In 1889, Barnum visited the Island and stayed at the Johns Hotel. Barnum returned, and in 1902 he bought the Island, after having Johns and his son build him a cabin on the Western end of what he renamed Barnum Island. George Barnum then invited a number of his friends to build cabins on his island, employing his carpenter, Ole Daniels from Duluth. In relatively short order, Daniels built frame cabins for the Andrews, Ray, and Dunwoodie families, as well as a common dining room on the Eastern end of the Island. By the 1920s, Barnum Island was a busy place, and in that decade Daniels put up five more buildings, including the Ray Cottage and outhouse and two Andrews' cottages and privy. Barnum Island also has two boat houses, a large one built in 1910 and a smaller one in the early 1930s. [Source: "Cultural Resources on Isle Royale National Park - An Historic Context"]

History: An Archaeological Survey identified a Native American site on Barnum Island on the East end near the present location of the Johns Hotel. [Source: "Archeological Survey and Testing Isle Royale National Park, 1987-1990 Seasons".]

Cottages on Barnum Island. Fall, 2012



Google Earth™ view



Barnum Island panorama. Fall, 2012.



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

Statute and Nautical Miles: are the miles calculated by tracing the route with MyTopo Terrain Navigator™.

Danger: Paddling danger is based on the area paddled and the threat of the lake. Each route is rated on a scale from 1 to 10, a 10 being the most dangerous. The basis for this is a 1 being paddling across Lake Livemore and a 10 being paddling from Duncan Narrows Campground to Merritt Lane Campground or, Huginnin Cove Campground to Little Todd Harbor Campground. Danger will of course vary based on the water, wind speed and wind direction. There are locations where it is impossible to get on shore in case of an emergency. Most of these are concentrated on the north shore of the island. "Average Danger" is calculated by multiplying the individual danger rating times the individual miles then, totaling them and dividing by the total miles.

GPS Miles (if listed): are based on my actually paddling the route. They take into consideration the actual route taken based on conditions and where I felt like paddling (i.e. wanting to see something or going to a shore to avoid wind and/or waves) and they are averaged if there is more than one reading.

Paddle Time (if listed): is based on actually paddling the route and include conditions when paddling. This is to give some idea of the difficulty and time based on conditions.

Side Trips (if listed): Places on the way or nearby that may be of interest.

All pictures by Mike Tremblay except:

Barnum Island: "Cabin #1", Photo by Roger Kuras © 2012

Barnum Island: "Cabin #2", Photo by Michael T. Tremblay © 2012

John's Hotel: "John's Hotel under restoration, fall, 2012" Photo by Michael J. Tremblay © 2012

Washington Island: "Inside S.Sivertson House" Photo by Roger Kuras © 2012

Washington Island: "Partial Layout of Buildings on east end of Washington Island", by Dena Sanford 1995, in Franks and Alanen (1999:83). Taken from "The Isle Royale Folkefiskerisamfunn – An Ethohistory of the Scandinavian Folk Fisherman of Isle Royale National Park", by Rebecca S.Toupal, Richard W. Stoffle, M. Nieves Zedeño. Page 158, Figure 5.23

Windigo Layout by the National Park Service, Public Domain.

Detail maps are from MyTopo Terrain Navigator™, © 2010 MyTopo. Website: www.maptech.mytopo.com. 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.

"Historic Structures at Isle Royale National Park". Franks and Alanen. Quoted as a reference in "Cultural Resources on Isle Royale National Park - An Historic Context". Philip V. Scarpino. I am unable to find a copy of the original book.

"Archeological Survey and Testing Isle Royale National Park, 1987-1990 Seasons". Clark, Caven P.

"Fishing the Great Lakes: An Environmental History, 1783-1933". Bogue, Margaret. University of Wisconsin Press. 2000.

"Place Names of Isle Royale, The", Smitty Parret and Doug Welker. © 1999 Isle Royale Natural History Association.

"The Isle Royale Folkefiskerisamfunn – An Ethohistory of the Scandinavian Folk Fisherman of Isle Royale National Park". Rebecca S. Toupal, Richard W. Stoffle, M. Nieves Zedeño. Prepared for the National Park Service Midwest Regional Office and Isle Royale National Park. 2002. Various histories of places as indicated where used.