

Monthly Explorer

www.marylandoutdoorclub.org

Volume 5 / Issue 7

Adventure Sports • Travel • Social
MARYLAND
Outdoor Club
P.O. Box 652, Columbia, MD 21045

Strike a pose...



MOC members take a photo break while hiking Kelly's Run & Tucquan Glen. The temperature climbed up to 90 degrees, but MOCers were able to cool off in a nearby stream

Inside This Issue

- 2 Cruising Da Yoop
- 4 Upcoming Events

Monthly Explorer Contributor:

John Fogle

© 2006

Interested in contributing? Send articles, story ideas and general comments to explorer@marylandoutdoorclub.org

MOC News & Updates

Thanks Jesse! Thanks Jeff!

MOC extends a special thank you to both Jesse Allen and Jeff Schneider for all their hard work and dedication as Club Officers. Both Jesse and Jeff are stepping down from their officer slots. For the past two years, Jesse helped coordinate and plan preservation events while Jeff worked on enhancements and upgrades to the Web site.

Katie Stofer will take over the role of Preservation Coordinator, which was previously shared by her and Jesse. MOC is looking for candidates to take on Jeff's role as Web Developer. Contact MOC if you are interested in taking on an open officer role.

Don't Forget the Annual Picnic

Yum, BBQ. That's what MOCers will be enjoying at this year's Annual Picnic, to be held at Downs Park on July 22nd. Registrations are currently being accepted through Saturday, July 15th.

Fill Up the Tank and Go

It's about 100 miles, you've got a full tank of gas and you're wearing sunglasses. Sounds like you might be ready for a road trip. For those who want to get a little further outside the city, there are a number of hikes within a two hour drive of the Washington, D.C. area.

1. Appalachian Trail - Harper's Ferry to PenMar, MD. This area is chock-full of hikes. Annapolis Rocks offers a moderate day hike of about 5 miles. Or, you can see the first monument to George Washington at Washington Monument State Park. Weverton Cliffs offers a challenging hike, rewarded with views of the Potomac and Harper's Ferry area.

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/at.html>

2. Catoctin Mountain Park. Twenty-five miles of trails wind through Catoctin Mountain Park and Cunningham Falls State Park, offering hikes for those looking for an easy jaunt or a strenuous challenge. There's an even an option for whiskey enthusiasts: on scheduled weekends, there are

Continued on page 4

Cruisin' "Da Yoop"

Michigan's Upper Peninsula isn't the first place that comes to mind when folks in the mid-Atlantic plan a vacation. But the UP, dubbed by locals as "the Yupe" or "da Yoop", is the very heart of the upper Great Lakes region. It offers much to the outdoors enthusiast ...and to the aspiring road-tripper.

I'd visited the area very briefly 15 years before but had always wished to return. So on the first Sunday of June my girlfriend and I flew to Detroit. Most of a day was spent driving north to Mackinaw City, which sits at the very tip of Michigan's lower "mitten" and is the gateway to the Upper Peninsula. Here we dined Sunday night at a place called Audie's and sampled a regional favorite: locally caught whitefish filet in a sandwich. The next morning we crossed over into the Yupe itself on the Mackinac Bridge, which joins the two parts of Michigan at the Straits of Mackinac. After hitting a couple of hole-in-the-wall tourist traps at the town of St. Ignace (avoid "The Mystery Spot"; the only mystery is why you'd pay to see it), we headed west on US Route 2 along the top of Lake Michigan. Following a simple lunch of cold cuts and crackers at a roadside picnic area, we turned northeast and for much of the warm, sunny Monday afternoon drove on secondary roads past sparsely populated farms and forests. We noticed fragrant lilacs were very popular with the natives; the large bushes were everywhere and in still in peak bloom at that latitude.

By 5 PM we had reached Sault Saint Marie at the UP's northeastern tip. Sault is home to the famous "Soo" Locks, which are vital to Great Lakes shipping as they compensate for the difference in elevation between Lakes Huron and Superior. That evening we explored part of the historic town and learned more of the history of the Locks. Even better, we had the chance to see a huge thousand-foot ore freighter enter the Locks from Lake Huron, be raised 20 feet, and pass through to Lake Superior. This was all seen close-up from a public viewing platform that gives the observer a great bird's-eye view!

By Tuesday, our second day on the Yupe, I was ready for some hiking! After a morning visit to a museum in Sault (housing among other artifacts two wrecked lifeboats from the famous *Edmund Fitzgerald*), we left town and headed west to Tahquamenon Falls State Park. The plan was to visit both lower and upper falls and then hike a circuit of several miles. The falls are quite impressive. Water in the Tahquamenon River is tinted by large amounts of naturally occurring tannins, giving it a brownish yet strangely clear



Da Yoop. One MOC member spent five days exploring the area.

appearance. The thundering falls resemble nothing so much as a huge never-ending iced tea spill from the pitcher of some giant. Our intended hike, however, was cut short by the fierce Yooper mosquitoes. Wearing shorts turned out to be a mistake. Swarming in malicious clouds, these vampires of the north set upon us with great persistence and great relish. We'd applied two different kinds of repellent, which the pesky insects blithely ignored just as they ignored our comically ineffective swatting motions. Finally we gave it up and the intended circuit hike was aborted less than one-third complete.

Our next destination to the west was the little town of Grand Marais on the shore of Lake Superior, where we hoped to stay Tuesday night. Meaning "Great Pond", "Great Harbor", or "Great Marsh" (depending upon which translation you like), Grand Marais is another of those communities named by early French settlers. It is far from other towns and in early June still quite serene and charming. We registered at nice little motel of just 10 rooms on a bluff overlooking the harbor and needn't have worried about the lack of a reservation. That night we were their only guests ...and so had a monopoly on the guest hot tub!

Early on an overcast Wednesday morning we strolled around town while reading bits of a historical pamphlet and stopped at the only place open for breakfast, the Sportsman's Grill. I felt a touch of déjà vu as I'd eaten breakfast in this same establishment on my trip all those years before. As Grand Marais lies at the eastern edge of the famous Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, I had hoped to drive all the way through the park as I'd done on my 1991 visit. As it happened, the road in question was closed a little west of town. We were able to go as far as the Grand Sable Dunes and see the pretty Au Sable Falls by taking a short trail. But then a backtrack was in order; that meant driving the long way around to reach the other end of the National Lakeshore ...a detour of some 60 miles. The town at the other end is called Munising. From here boat tours of the Pictured Rocks are offered and the afternoon tour would normally have been hard to pass up. But the closer we got to Munising the thicker the fog seemed to be. Preferring not to

Continued on page 3

Share your Road Trip Stories

Did you love sharing tales of your summer vacation in grade school? The good times don't have to end. Send them to explorer@marylandoutdoorclub.org.

Road-tripping on Michigan's Upper Peninsula

plunk down \$30 apiece for a shipboard view of ...well, nothing, we instead trekked to yet another nearby waterfall (no shortage of these in da Yoop!). Then it was time to resume our westward drive.

Late in the afternoon the sun came out brightly as we drove roughly 150 miles from Munising to the northwestern corner of the UP. That evening found us in the town of Ontonagon, which lacked the charm of Grand Marais. Ontonagon is part of what was once a major copper producing region and gives one the impression of a mill town far past its prime. However, our cabin for the night outside of town was in a lovely wooded setting less than 75 yards from a near-deserted beach on Lake Superior's shore. From here we were able to watch a Yooper June sunset at around 10 PM.

Thursday morning dawned absolutely gorgeous and we headed to Porcupine Mountains State Park not far away. "The Porkies" with their 60,000 acres must surely rank among the region's true gems. There were three park areas we chose to visit, the first of which was Lake of the Clouds. I'd wanted to visit here since seeing a picture of it when I was a kid. Nestled in a protected valley and shielded from the north by a high escarpment, Lake of the Clouds' placid waters are rarely disturbed by so much as a ripple despite Lake Superior's often fierce winds. We went to the much-visited overlook on the escarpment, racing a senior tour bus group in what proved a futile effort to be the day's first visitors. But the view was every bit as good as advertised. Our second stop was Summit Peak. On paper the third highest peak in Michigan, the addition of an observation tower makes it in effect the state's highest point. The vista from the tower was terrific, encompassing not only mountains and the park's backcountry but also a huge swath of Lake Superior and some of the Apostle Islands to the northwest.

Back in the car, we drove toward our third and final destination in the park; glibly confident the day's highlights were behind us. The Presque Isle River Unit would be anticlimactic, we assumed. Not so! Its scenery was breathtaking. Though lacking in far-off vistas, the Presque Isle River yielded up a marvelous array of waterfalls, rapids, and striking rock formations just prior to emptying into Lake Superior. We hiked a circuit trail that followed both sides of the river, rarely losing sight of its iced-tea colored waters (yep, tannins again). But that wasn't all: the river courses through the heart of a rare and beautiful old-growth

forest. The state park was created in 1945 to protect this last old-growth stand in Michigan. We marveled as we walked; dwarfed by towering hemlock, white pine, and hardwoods of indeterminate age. It was, in a word, magnificent. Not even the resident mosquitoes were able to spoil the experience. By early evening I reluctantly bid farewell to the Porkies, as it was necessary to reverse our course and head east. We drove nearly as much as on the previous day and ultimately chose lodging at the Marquette Super 8 out of sheer convenience. However, there was time to relax in the motel's pool before it closed for the night.

Friday, our fifth and final day on da Yoop, we headed back to Munising while joking about Super 8's "continental breakfast": coffee and a stale doughnut. Our spirits were high; there was no fog and perhaps we'd have a second chance at that Pictured Rocks boat tour! Unfortunately a front had moved through overnight and the temps, well in the 70s the day before, now struggled to reach the 50s. Worse, the wind off Superior was sufficiently strong that rough water caused the cancellation of Friday's boat excursions. We had thus been thwarted twice in our hopes to see the Pictured Rocks from offshore.

I instead decided to check out (by land) a Pictured Rocks formation known as Miner's Castle. I'd seen it years before, but earlier this spring one of its "turrets" had broken off from long term weathering and so its appearance was now altered. Then my girlfriend suggested, offhandedly, checking out Miner's Beach. This turned out to be a great call and a nice consolation prize in lieu of the boat trip. Walking the low bluff above this mile-long stretch of sand offered up a great sweeping view of a restless Superior, as well as impressively shaped and colored rocky headlands beyond the beach's end. It was easy to understand how the Pictured Rocks got their name upon seeing even a sampling of the shoreline; more difficult to tear ourselves away from the scenery. It was late afternoon when our parting glimpse of Lake Superior, or *Gitchee Gumee* ("All-Powerful Lake" in the native Algonquin tongue), was finally taken.

The rest of the day was spent driving back toward the Straits of Mackinac, with a brief stop at the Seney National Wildlife Refuge. Our luck here was good enough to spot a few cranes. We eventually crossed the Mackinac Bridge once more after having spent five memorable days, driven over 1,000 miles, and seen countless interesting sights on da Yoop. Back in Mackinaw City for the final night, we had dinner at Audie's again. I ordered the very same entrée as before: whitefish sandwich deluxe. Perhaps this added an element of symmetry to a great road trip. In any case, I just plain liked the whitefish.

- John Fogle

Monthly Statistics

3,751 – Total Members to Date
59 – New Members in June
60% – Female Members
40% – Male Members
34 – Average Member Age

Upcoming Events

To see our full list of upcoming and events in the works, visit the MOC Web site: www.marylandoutdoorclub.org. Interested in something that's not on the list? Why not organize an event? See the organizer section on the MOC Web site, or speak with an officer.

Want to share organizer duties? You can use the new Member Forums or post on the Message Board to find a co-organizer.



Social Hour

Tuesday, 7/11

Moderate / Difficult Hike in Maryland Heights

Saturday, 7/15

Moderate Hike Up Bull Run Mountain

Saturday, 7/15

Happy Hour & Cosmic Bowling

Saturday, 7/15

Easy Hike & Outdoor Brew Experience

Sunday, 7/16

Easy / Moderate Savage Hike Park

Sunday, 7/16

4th Annual Picnic & Anniversary Celebration

Saturday, 7/22

Let's Dish! Meal Preparation Party

Wednesday, 7/26

Great Grapes Arts & Wine Festival

Saturday, 7/29

Moderate Hike in Gunpowder Falls State Park

Saturday, 8/5

Day Trip to Ocean City

Saturday, 8/5

Backpacking on the C&O Canal

Saturday, 8/5 – Sunday, 8/6

Singletrack Mountain Biking

Sunday, 8/6

Kayak in Gunpowder Falls State Park

Saturday, 8/12

Join MOC: Visit www.marylandoutdoorclub.org and click on any of the "Join Now" buttons you'll find throughout the site. Signing up is a short process and will save you time when you sign up for events. MOC does not sell or share your personal information with any third parties. MOC conducts all administrative tasks through our Web site to cut down on processing time and costs.

Officers

Amy Pickwick

Founder, President & Web Coordinator
apickwick@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Kate Buck

Historian
kbuck@marylandoutdoor.club.org

Chuck Hildenbrand

Treasurer
childrenbrand@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Laura Paszkiewicz

Event Accountant
payments@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Colin Babb

Event Coordinator
cbabb@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Carrie Graff

K-9 Coordinator
cgraff@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Ian Wright

Social Coordinator
iwright@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Web Site Committee:

Chuck Hildenbrand, Web Assistant
Matt Toerper, Message Board Monitor

John Putman

Event Coordinator
jputman@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Katie Stofer

Preservation Coordinator
kstofer@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Jennifer Adach

Newsletter Editor
jadach@marylandoutdoorclub.org

Want to be more involved? Officer and volunteer positions are still available!

Let's Go: Area Hikes

Continued from page 1

whiskey-making talks at the Blue Blazes Whiskey Still. No word on whether or not they have a tasting schedule.

<http://www.nps.gov/cato/recr/trails.htm>

3. Harper's Ferry. Both Maryland Heights and Loudon Heights offer stunning views of the area. Climb up to Jefferson Rock, where Thomas Jefferson stood upon and wrote a description of the view that appeared in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (published in 1785). You can stroll along the C & O Canal, or head over to the AT and hike to Shenandoah State Park.

<http://www.nps.gov/hafe/home.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/hafe/jeffrock.htm>

4. Shenandoah National Park - North District Matthews Arm / Elkwallow boasts two waterfalls and one swimming hole, perfect after the strenuous workout you'll get hiking this trail. Knob Mountain and Jeremy's Run also allow for a challenging day hike. Reviewers on localhikes.com say to time the hike with the Mountain Laurel in the spring or wait for fall to see the leaves change.

<http://www.nps.gov/shen/2b.htm>

5. Shenandoah National Park - Central District. PATC refers to the Central District of Shenandoah housing the "Crown Jewels" of hikes: Old Rag and Whiteoak Canyon. In addition to those two hikes, the Corbin Cabin / Nicholson Hollow trails give a glimpse of how settlers lived.

<http://www.nps.gov/shen/2b.htm>

Trail listing courtesy of REI / College Park