

# Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

## Troop 598's High Adventure Backpacking Trip 2021



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2021

Written and compiled by Steve Lohmueller

Photographs provided by:  
Steve Lohmueller  
Tim McGrath  
Brad Wilkens  
Nick Young



*“‘Mostly flat’ means ‘somewhat billy’.”*



# Troop 598

## Backpacking High Adventure

### Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

June 4 – 11, 2021

#### Introduction

Several years ago, the Troop began a push to establish a high adventure program for the older Scouts. The first big high adventure camping trip was a backpacking trip to the Smoky Mountains in 2018. A long-range vision for the high adventure program formed when, in May 2019, the Patrol Leaders Council laid out the first five years of high adventure. The Troop would go sailing at the Florida Sea Base in 2020, backpacking at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in 2021, backpacking at Philmont Scout Ranch in 2022, adventuring at the Summit Scout Reservation in 2023, and canoeing in Northern Tier in 2024. It was Declan McGrath's idea to go to Pictured Rocks, as he had been there several times with his family.

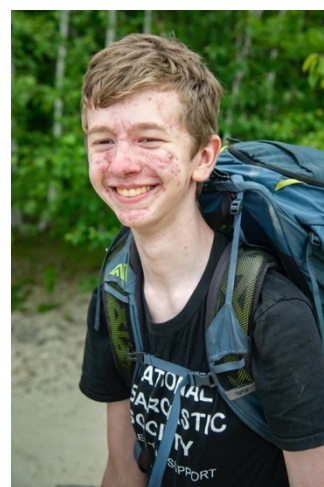
Nine Scouts and 4 adults participated in the backpacking trek:



Ben Adkins



Wesley Anglin



Nate Booher



Isaac Lohmueller



Declan McGrath



Sam Noble



Toby Rainey



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young



Mr. Steve Lohmueller



Mr. Tim McGrath



Mr. Brad Wilkens



Mr. Nick Young

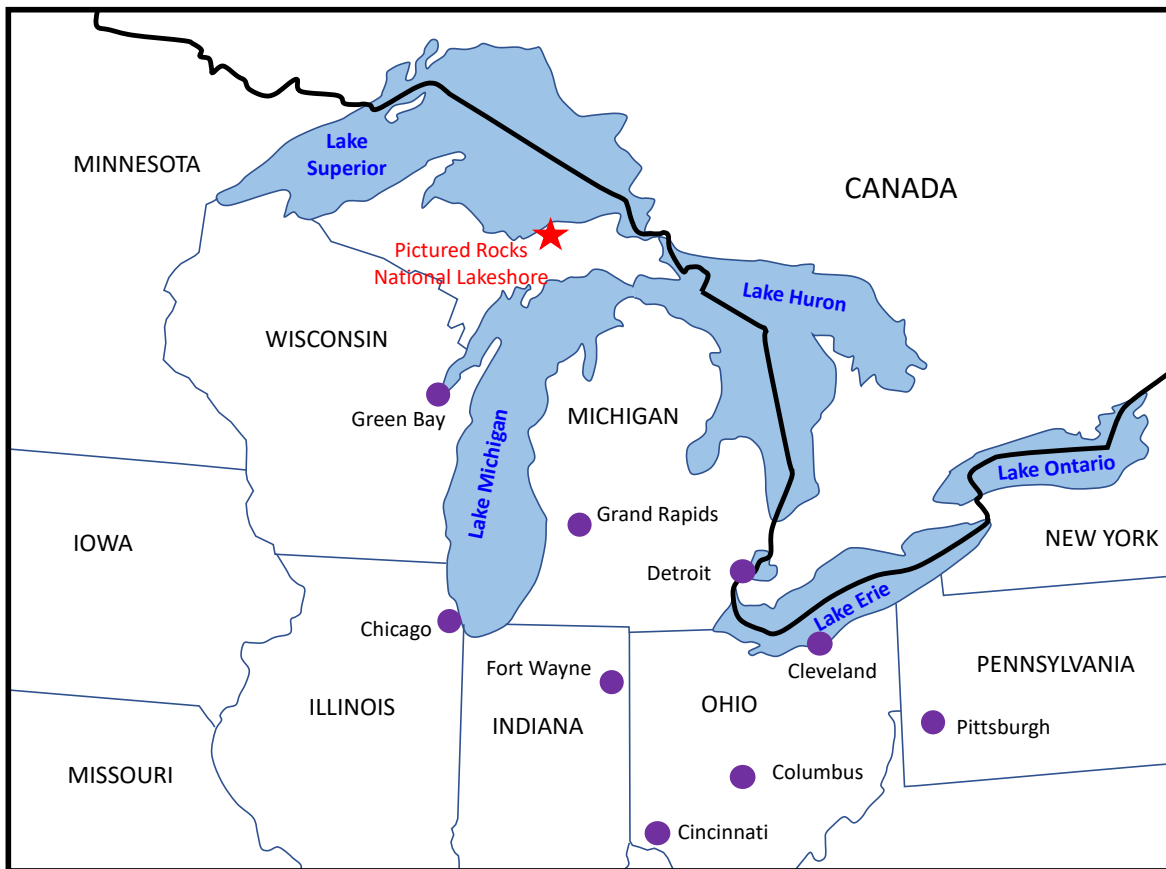
This was the first backpacking trip for Sam. All the other Scouts have had several weekend backpacking trips at Zaleski State Forest, which is located east of Chillicothe, OH.

## History of Pictured Rocks

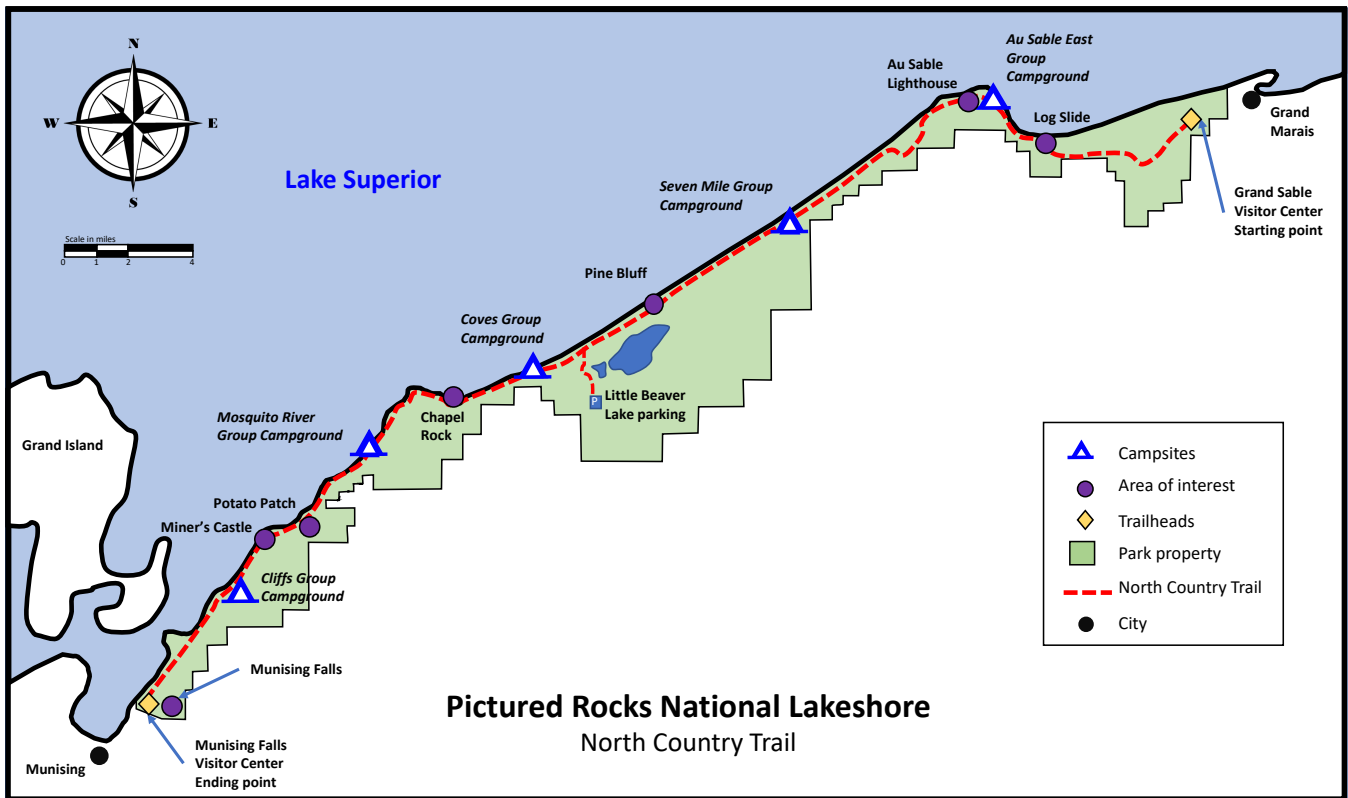
The Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore was established to preserve a section of shoreline along Lake Superior in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The name of the park is based on the colorful sandstone cliffs present in the park. Many of the rock formations contain a bright range of colors, which are created by the large amounts of minerals present in the rocks. The park contains 42 miles of shoreline and preserves spectacular scenery of the hilly shoreline between the cities of Munising and Grand Marais. The terrain contains various rock formations, natural archways, waterfalls, and sand dunes. The park was formed in 1966 and is the first designated National Lakeshore in the US. The park is administered by the National Park Service.

The park also contains the Au Sable Lighthouse, which was built in 1874.

The park is located on the southern shore of Lake Superior in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.







The Troop hiked along a portion of the North Country Trail. This is a 4,600-mile trail that extends from Vermont to North Dakota and passes through the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. The Troop hiked from the Grand Sable Visitor Center on the east side of the park to Munising Falls on the west side.



North Country Trail marker

**Miles Covered**

	Backpacking	Hiking
Saturday, June 5	7.1	0.5
Sunday, June 6	7.3	
Monday, June 7	8.8	3.0
Tuesday, June 8	7.2	
Wednesday, June 9	5.6	2.4
Thursday, June 10	6.4	2.5
<b>Total miles</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>8.4</b>
	<b>50.8 miles</b>	

**Friday, June 4**

Everyone met up at the BTAP early Friday morning, and after getting the vehicles loaded, were on the road heading north by around 8:15. Mr. McGrath, Mr. Wilkens, and Mr. Young drove.

Around noon the call was made to stop for lunch. The caravan stopped at McDonalds, but the restaurant had a very limited menu as they were out of lots of food. The caravan then drove to a second restaurant, and this time there wasn't indoor seating. Finally, a Culvers was found that was open and had indoor seating. Finally, it was time to stop and have some lunch.



Nathan Young, Isaac Lohmueller, Toby Rainey, and Mr. Young on the ride up



Petey Wilkens, Mr. Wilkens, Nate Booher, Nathan Young, Mr. Young



Petey Wilkens, Isaac Lohmueller, Nathan Young, and Nate Booher

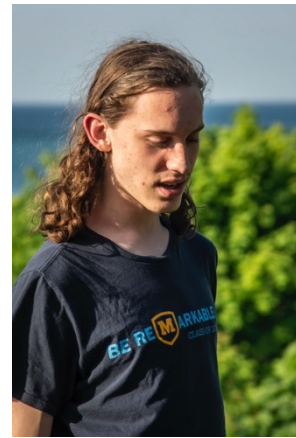
The drive was long but uneventful. The Troop arrived at the campground in Grand Marais late in the afternoon. They found their campsite and got everything set up. There was a small playground near the campsite and some of the boys went over there to hang out for a bit. One attraction that got their attention was a merry-go-round. Although they enjoyed playing on it, the common consensus was that it wasn't fast enough.



Petey Wilkens



Ben Adkins



Isaac Lohmueller



Ben Adkins taking a turn spinning the merry-go-round



Nate Booher taking it easy in the center of the merry-go-round



Sam Noble and Petey Wilkens taking a turn spinning the merry-go-round



Isaac Lohmueller taking a turn spinning the merry-go-round



Nathan Young taking a turn spinning the merry-go-round



Ben Adkins on the swings

For dinner, Mr. McGrath drove into town and bought some bread, deli meat, and chips. After dinner, the Scouts were able to head down to the beach. They spent some time skipping rocks and making rock towers. They were able to get a sense for how cold the water is in Lake Superior. During June, the water temperatures are typically between 40-50° F. Once the sun set, they just hung out on the rocky beach and talked for a while, before finally heading back to the campsite.



Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Young



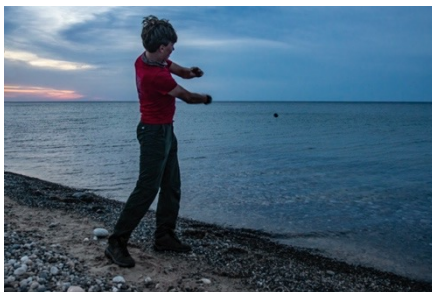
Hanging out on the beach



Hanging out on the beach



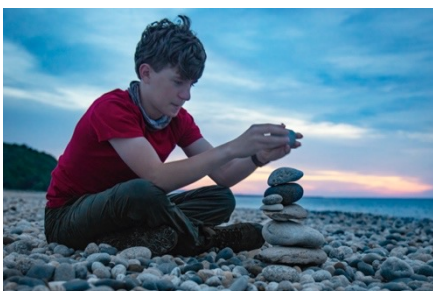
Ben Adkins testing the water temperature



Petey Wilkens skipping rocks



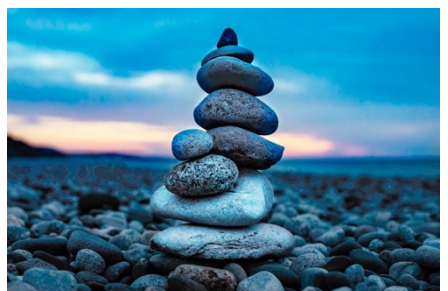
Petey Wilkens skipping rocks



Petey Wilkens building a rock tower



Celebrating success



Petey Wilkens's rock tower



Ben Adkins building rock towers



One of Ben Adkins' rock towers



Hanging out on the beach after sunset

Later in the evening, the local community center hosted a movie night, with the outdoor screen right next to the campground. Several scouts went and watched the movie *The Princess Bride*.



Watching the movie, *The Princess Bride*

**Saturday, June 5**

Before breakfast, several scouts headed down to the beach to do some exploring.



Dramatic cloud cover over Lake Superior



Toby Rainey on the beach



Coastline of Lake Superior looking west

While taking down the tents, the wind picked up with some strong gusts. Wesley's tent caught a gust and became airborne, flying down the hill towards the lake. Fortunately, it got caught in some trees and Wesley was able to recover his tent.



Wesley Anglin retrieving his tent

After cleaning up the campsite, the Scouts had a bit of free time before heading to the trailhead. There was a 1-gallon milk jug left over from breakfast, and Ben decided that it would make a reasonable soccer ball. Several of the Scouts played an ad-hoc soccer game with the jug. The scouts also spent some time at the playground and playing a card game.



Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens, Declan McGrath, and Nate Booher



Nate Booher, Declan McGrath, and Ben Adkins



Isaac Lohmueller, Nathan Young, Petey Wilkens, Sam Noble, and Nate Booher



Nate Booher, Petey Wilkens, Wesley Anglin, Nathan Young, Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath

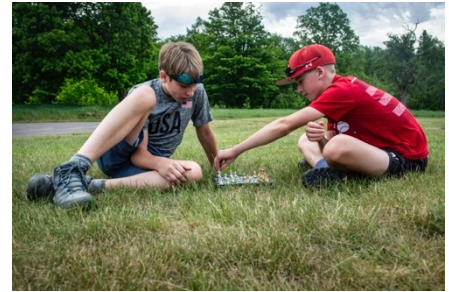
Once everything was cleaned up and all the gear stowed in the vehicles, the Troop drove to the trailhead at the Grand Sable Visitor Center. Unfortunately, the visitor center was closed due to COVID. Mr. Lohmueller and the Scouts hung out at the trailhead while the other 3 adults staged the vehicles. One car was left at the Little Beaver Lake trailhead parking lot to serve as a resupply for food and the second was left at Miner's Castle. The 3 adults then brought the third vehicle back to the trailhead. While the vehicles were being staged, the Scouts played chess and several card games to pass the time. Isaac taught everyone how it is possible to play Uno with a standard deck of cards.



Nathan Young, Isaac Lohmueller



Isaac Lohmueller



Ben Adkins, Declan McGrath



Sam Noble and Petey Wilkens playing a game of slapjack



Ben Adkins, Nate Booher, Declan McGrath, Petey Wilkens, Wesley Anglin



The Scouts played a game of Uno



Ready to start the trek:

Mr. McGrath, Nate Booher, Mr. Lohmueller, Nathan Young, Ben Adkins, Toby Rainey, Declan McGrath, Sam Noble, Wesley Anglin, Isaac Lohmueller, Petey Wilkens, Mr. Wilkens

Once the adults came back, everyone got their packs ready, and, by around 12:30, started hiking. After about 1 mile of hiking the Troop stopped for lunch at the Grand Sable Lake overlook. It was during lunch that Mr. McGrath issued the Scoutmaster Challenge for this trip. In order to earn the gold Scoutmaster Challenge bead, a Scout would have to fully submerge themselves in the waters of Lake Superior on two separate days. The water temperature is fairly cold, so Mr. McGrath figured anyone could do it once, but the real challenge is to get into the lake on the second day knowing how cold it was on the first day.



The trail passes through a grassy field just before passing by Grand Sable Lake



View along the trail



False Solomon's Seal flower



The trail traveled along side the road for about half a mile



Lunch at the Grand Sable Lake overlook



Nate Booher taking a break along the trail



Breaktime



Petey Wilkens taking a break



Along the trail



Backpacking down the trail



Ostrich fern



Sam Noble



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young



A trailside sign that was an omen of things to come

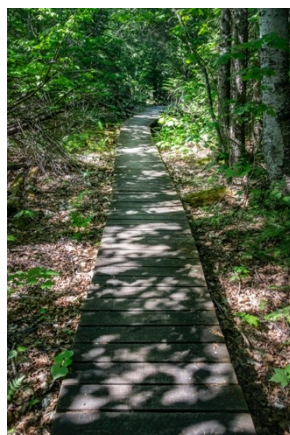


Trillium flower

In several spots the trail includes some rolling hills. The Scouts were giving Declan some good-natured grief over having to hike up hills because, during the planning sessions for the trip, Declan mentioned several times that the trail was mostly flat. In Declan's defense someone took a quote by Miracle Max in the movie from the night before and modified it, saying that "mostly flat means somewhat hilly".



View along the trail



Boardwalk along the trail



Ben Adkins





View looking westward along the shore of Lake Superior



Nathan Young



Mr. Lohmueller taking a picture of the shoreline



View looking eastward towards Grand Sable Dunes



View along the trail



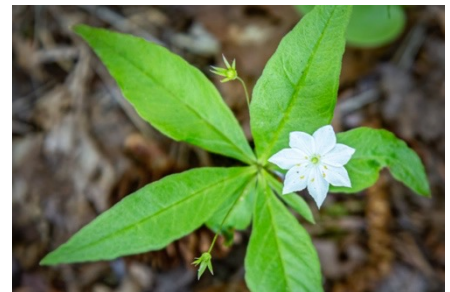
Using a bridge to cross a ravine



View of the shoreline of Lake Superior



Toby Rainey

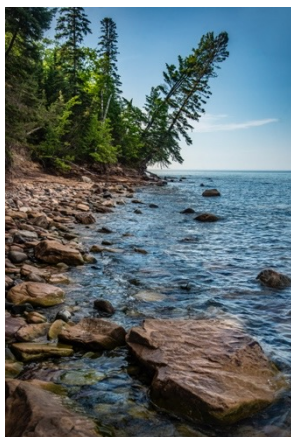


Starflower

The Troop arrived at the Au Sable East Group campsite by midafternoon, where they stayed the first night. Everyone put on their swimming trunks and headed to the lake for the first opportunity to do the Scoutmaster Challenge. Most of the Scouts started the challenge, with a few opting to pass at this time. The Scouts had some amazing facial expressions immediately after coming up from the cold water.



Campsite marker



Shoreline



Petey Wilkens



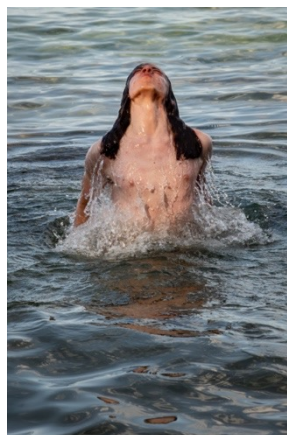
Wesley Anglin



Isaac Lohmueller



Isaac Lohmueller



Isaac Lohmueller



Isaac Lohmueller



Nathan Young



Nathan Young



Ben Adkins



Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens



Sam Noble



Sam Noble



Sam Noble



Declan McGrath



Declan McGrath



Declan McGrath



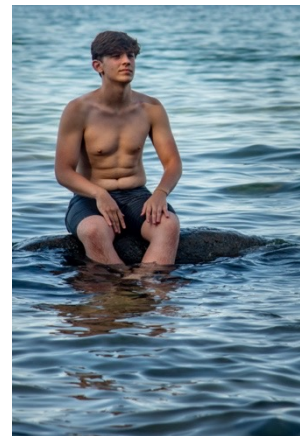
Declan McGrath



Mr. McGrath



Mr. McGrath



Toby Rainey



Scouts hanging out on a rock in the lake



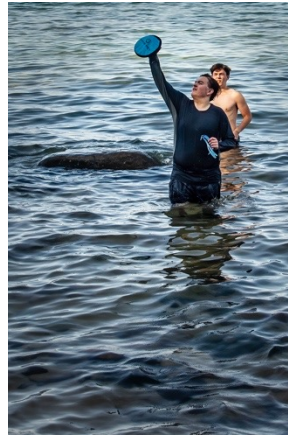
Sam Noble



Having fun in the lake



View looking east towards the sand dunes of Sable Beach



Wesley Anglin catching a frisbee



Hanging out along the shoreline



Playing in the water



Petey Wilkens out in the lake

After playing around in the water for a bit, the Troop went back to the campsite to get into dry clothes. Everyone rounded up their water bottles and headed back to the lake to filter water. The Scouts created a bucket brigade line to pass the empty bottles down to the lake level to be filled and then to bring the full bottles back up to the trail.



View of the campsite



View of the campsite



Isaac Lohmueller



Water bottle brigade



Water bottle brigade



Wesley Anglin and Mr. McGrath purifying water from the lake



Many of the water bottles the Troop was using



Wilderness restroom



Wildflower

For the meals the Troop broke into 3 separate groups. All 3 groups had the same menu, but each group was responsible for cooking their own food.



Toby Rainey making dinner



Petey Wilkens making dinner



Declan McGrath and Ben Adkins making dinner



Isaac Lohmueller finishing off the last of the tortilla chips



The Scouts were keeping a log of the trip for Backpacking Merit Badge

After dinner, the Troop hung around the campsite before finally calling it a night

Daily miles backpacked:	7.1 miles
Daily miles hiked:	0.5 miles
<hr/>	
Total miles to-date:	7.6 miles

**Sunday, June 6**

For breakfast, the Troop tried a new recipe that involved toasting sesame seeds in olive oil and using the seeds as a base for scrambled eggs. While stirring the seeds, Ben Adkins was using Mr. Lohmueller's plastic backpacking spoon. Apparently, the oil got hotter than the spoon could handle, and the spoon started to get very soft and flexible, which permanently deformed the tip and encrusted it with sesame seeds before anyone noticed.



Ben Adkins cooking breakfast



A somewhat deformed spoon



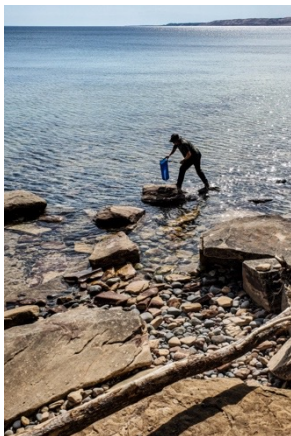
Metal bear boxes are used to protect the food from bears and other animals



Breakfast time



Breakfast time



Mr. Wilkens getting water to purify for drinking



Water purifying system in operation



Nate Booher

After hiking for a bit, the Troop came to the Au Sable Lighthouse. The Au Sable Lighthouse was built in 1874 to help protect ships against the Au Sable Point reef, which is a shallow ridge of sandstone that in places is only about 6 feet below the surface of the water and which extends nearly 1 mile into the lake. In the 1800s, this stretch of coastline was known as the “shipwreck coast” due to its deadly nature. The lighthouse is still an active lighthouse and is operated by the United States Coast Guard.



Au Sable Lighthouse



Hiking past the Au Sable Lighthouse



Hiking past the Au Sable Lighthouse



Au Sable Lighthouse

It was about this time in the trip when the stable flies started to bite. The bite is somewhat painful, and unfortunately, the flies are not deterred by bug spray. The best defense is long pants and sleeves.

The Troop arrived at Hurricane River Campground where there were public bathrooms available. Several Scouts commented about how nice the facilities were – they were clean and didn’t have any flies. Toby jokingly added the restrooms into his list of top three best parts of the trip so far. The other two top items were the beauty of the coastline and the wide range of biodiversity in animal and plant life that he was seeing.



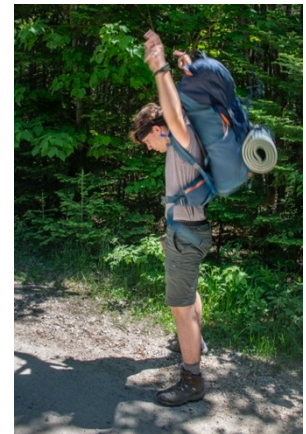
Nice facilities



Declan McGrath, Wesley Anglin, and Ben Adkins



Toby Rainey’s unique “over the head” method to put his backpack on







Nate Booher



Another bridge across a small stream



Mr. Lohmueller found something interesting to photograph



Mushroom on a fallen birch tree



The trail started to go up hill for a bit



Pink lady slipper orchid



Fringed polygala wildflower



Canada mayflower



Pink lady slipper orchid



Bunchberry wildflower



Trailside rest break



On multiple occasions, the trail traverses the sand dunes



The trail followed a gravel road for awhile.



The trail passed through a stand of pine trees near the shoreline



View along the trail near the shore



Lunch at the Twelve Mile Campground



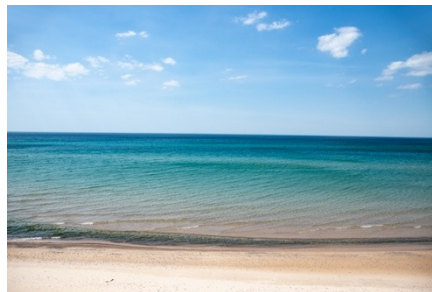
Mr. Lohmueller



Panoramic view of the trail



View through the stand of trees towards the lake



View of the beach and lake



The trail turned away from the lake for a bit



View looking down the shoreline



Lone tree on the sandy beach



The trail ahead

The Troop had lunch at Twelve Mile Campground. By mid-afternoon they made it to Seven Mile Group Campground. After setting up camp, everyone donned their swim trunks and headed down to the beach for day 2 of the Scoutmaster Challenge.

The day was hot and humid, so the water didn't feel as cold as the day before. This provided the encouragement to those who didn't start the Scoutmaster Challenge yesterday to take the plunge today.



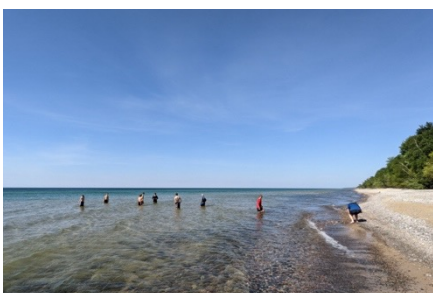
Entering the water to do round 2 of the Scoutmaster Challenge



Round 2 of the Scoutmaster Challenge



Round 2 of the Scoutmaster Challenge



It was a beautiful day to be playing in the water



Nathan Young took a break inside a rock pile the Troop found on the beach



Wesley Anglin, Petey Wilkens, and Isaac Lohmueller taking a break on the beach



The beach was covered with lots of colorful rocks

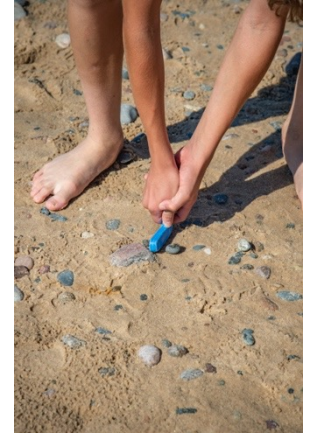


The beach was covered with lots of colorful rocks

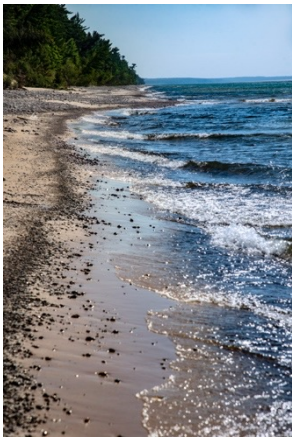


The colorful rocks under the water created an abstract look

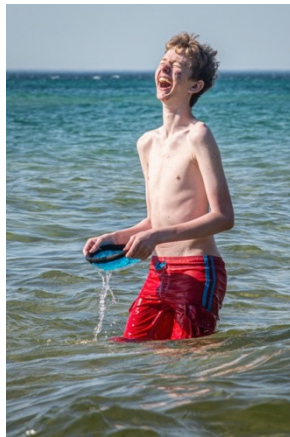
While playing on the beach Declan found the plastic head of a toy golf putter. He set up a golf hole and, using a small pebble as the golf ball, played mini golf.



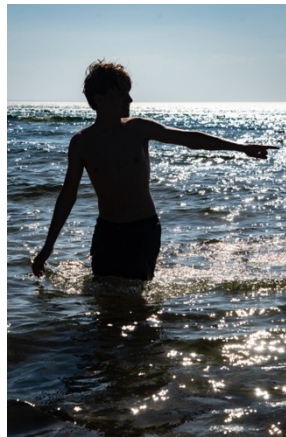
Declan McGrath playing mini golf with a plastic golf club he found on the beach



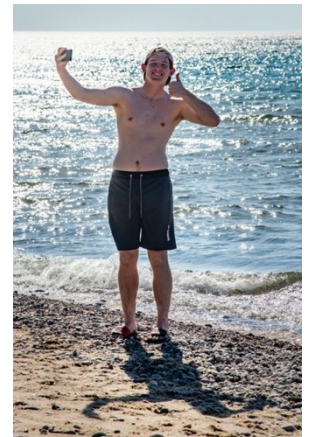
Down the shoreline



Nate Booher



Petey Wilkens



Sam Noble



Petey Wilkens, Nate Booher



Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young, king of the rock pile



View taken from the trail from the campsite to the beach



Mr. McGrath



American toad found on the beach



Mr. Young, Mr. Lohmueller, Wesley Anglin, Toby Rainey, Nathan Young, Mr. McGrath, Sam Noble, Isaac Lohmueller, Ben Adkins, Petey Wilkens, Declan McGrath, Mr. Wilkens, Nate Booher

Most of the scouts were working towards Backpacking Merit Badge and part of the requirements is to keep a log of the backpacking trips they have to take. The boys spent some time before dinner writing their logs. While doing so, they found several cabbage white butterfly caterpillars crawling around the campsite, which the boys found amusing. They spent some time playing with the caterpillars.



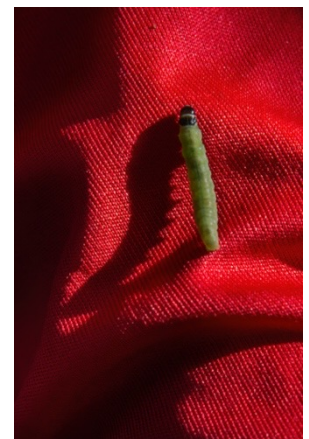
Ben Adkins



Petey Wilkens and his caterpillar friend



Petey Wilkens and his friend



Caterpillar crawling up Isaac Lohmueller's shirt



Declan McGrath



Mr. Young



Caterpillar crawling up Ben Adkins' arm



Mr. Young taking a nap in the campsite



The campsite for the night



Hanging out around the campfire ring

During dinner that evening, Petey was trying to convince everyone that he was a master chef.



Nathan Young, Isaac Lohmueller, Toby Rainey, Petey Wilkens, Declan McGrath, and Wesley Anglin making dinner



The beginnings of dinner



Dinner – pizza in a pot



Wesley Anglin, Declan McGrath



Mr. Wilkens, Wesley Anglin, and Petey Wilkens relaxing after dinner



Nate Booher, Isaac Lohmueller, Mr. Lohmueller and Mr. Wilkens relaxing after dinner



Turtle found on the beach



Feather



Isaac Lohmueller and Declan McGrath walking along the beach



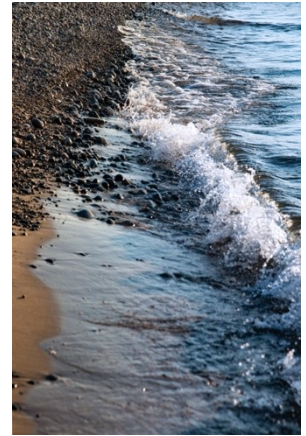
A small group of yellow swallowtail butterflies were fluttering together on the beach



Petey Wilkens



Isaac Lohmueller

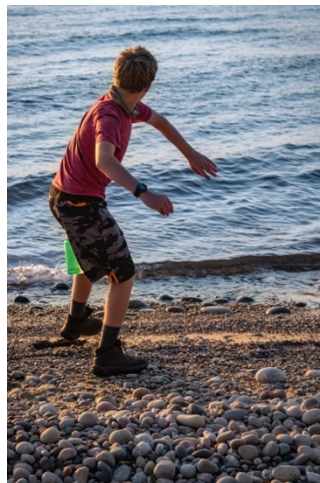


Wave crashing on the shore

On several previous occasions on this trip, Petey Wilkens tried his hand at skipping rocks on the surface of the water, but without a lot of success. This evening Declan McGrath provided some guidance on how to do it, and after some practice, Petey was gleefully skipping rocks across the water.



Isaac Lohmueller, Declan McGrath, and Nate Booher were hanging out on the beach while Petey Wilkens practiced skipping rocks



Petey Wilkens skipping rocks

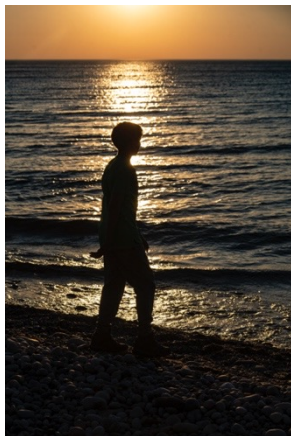


Petey Wilkens and Nate Booher

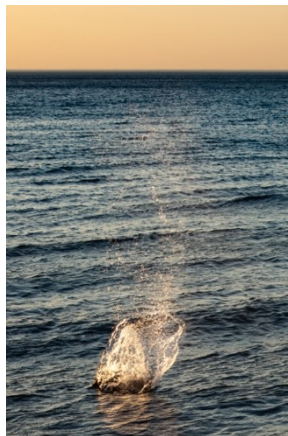
In the evening, the Troop headed down onto the beach for the sunset. Everyone hung out on the beach for a while before finally heading off to bed.



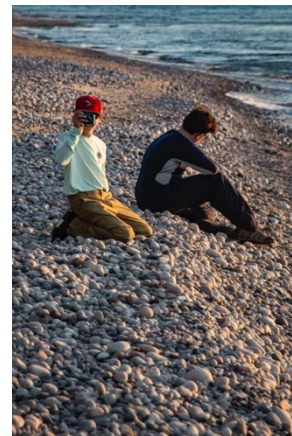
Mr. Wilkens filling the water bag to purify drinking water



Ben Adkins



Splash!



Declan McGrath and Wesley Anglin



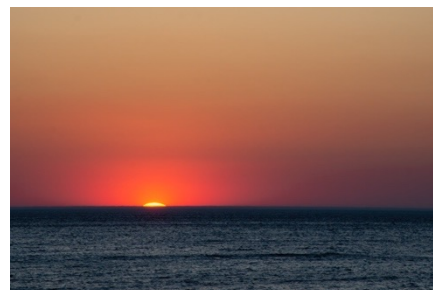
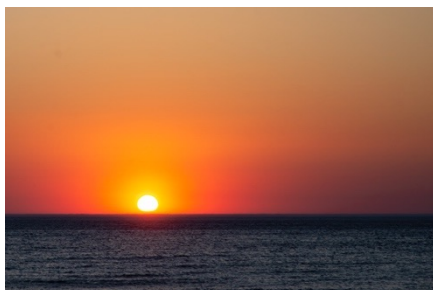
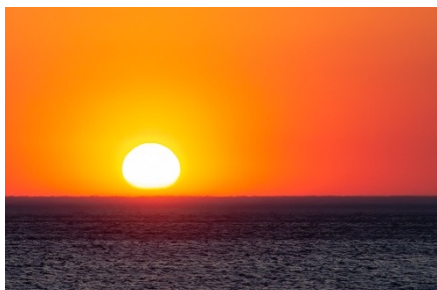
Ben Adkins' rock tower



Ben Adkins building a rock tower



Ben Adkins' rock tower



The last few minutes of sunlight for the day as the sun quickly sets below the horizon





Hanging out on the beach as the sun sets



Petey Wilkens skipping rocks



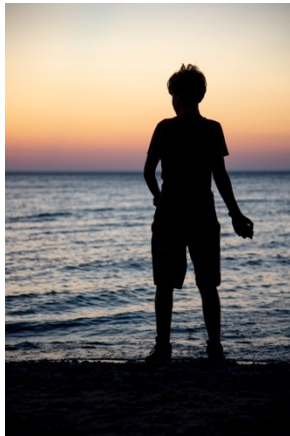
Nate Booher and Petey Wilkens



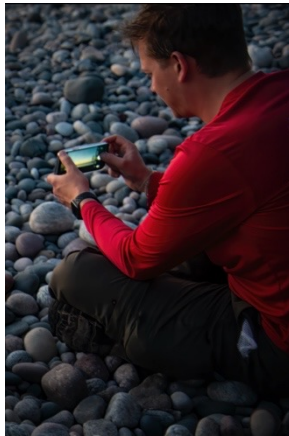
Ben Adkins, Nate Booher, Petey Wilkens



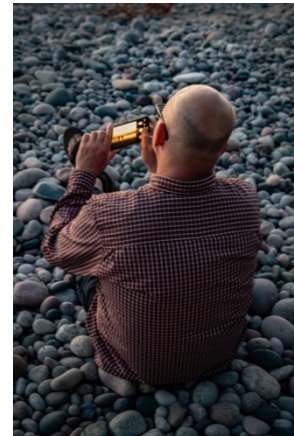
Declan McGrath, Wesley Anglin, Ben Adkins, Petey Wilkens, Nate Booher



Petey Wilkens



Mr. Young taking a picture of the sunset



Mr. Wilkens taking a picture of the sunset

Daily miles backpacked:	7.3 miles
Total miles to-date:	14.9 miles

**Monday, June 7**

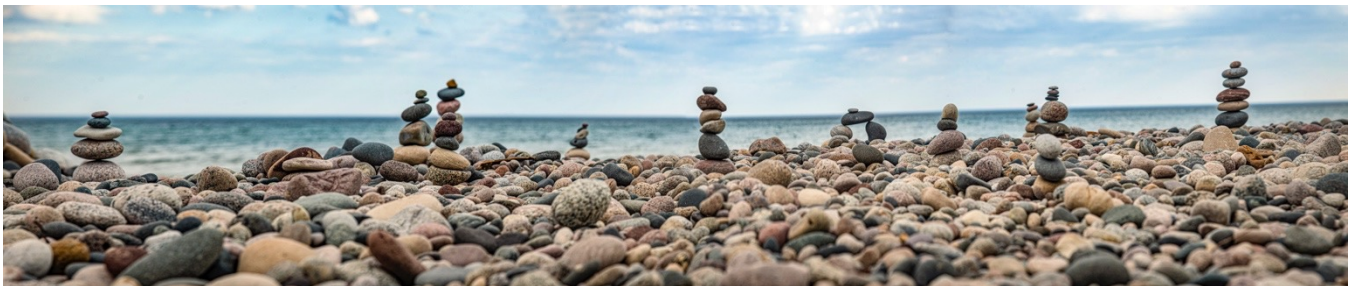
The morning started off with a dramatic sunrise over the shoreline of Lake Superior.



Sunrise over the shoreline



Sunrise over the shoreline



Mr. Lohmueller had some time before the Scouts got up in the morning, and he spent the time building rock towers on the beach



Seven Mile Group campsite



The Troop had a chipmunk visitor



Nathan Young



Campground marker



Eastern garter snake

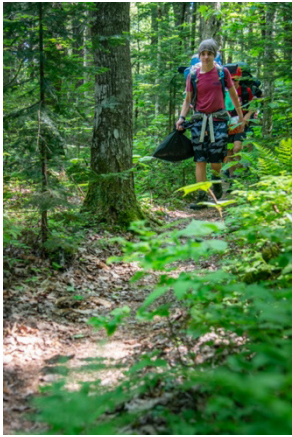


Nate Booher

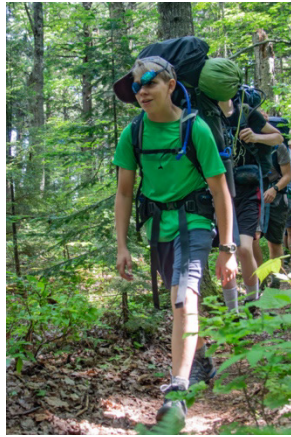


Sitting around the campfire ring

The Troop left camp around 10:30 and made it to Pine Bluff for lunch. The area had a lot of flies swarming, but fortunately they were not biting too badly.



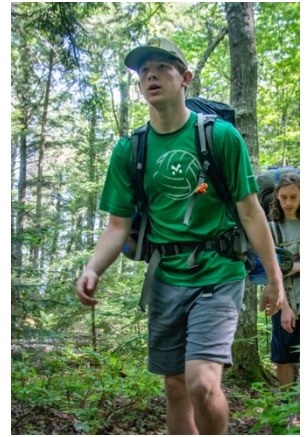
Petey Wilkens



Ben Adkins



Toby Rainey



Sam Noble



Isaac Lohmueller



Nathan Young



Wesley Anglin



View of the lake



Section of the trail that is heading up a sand dune



View along the trail



Nathan Young, Toby Rainey, Isaac Lohmueller



Steep portion of the trail as it climbs to the top of a cliff



View of Lake Superior



View along the trail



View along the trail



Break time

Along the trail the Troop came across an old, abandoned car in the middle of the forest. The car is a 1940 Plymouth P10 automobile. Research after the trip on the history of the car turned up nothing.



Front view of a 1940 Plymouth P10



Inside view of a 1940 Plymouth P10



Side view of a 1940 Plymouth P10



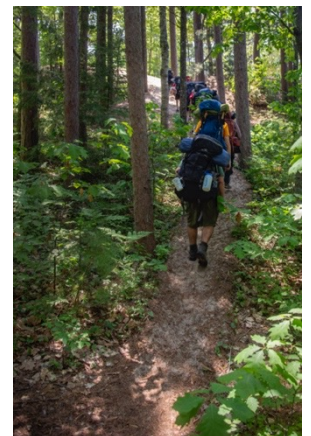
Pink lady slipper orchid flower



View along the trail



Isaac Lohmueller



Another uphill climb along the “mostly flat” trail

Later in the afternoon, Toby started singing the sea shanty “Row, Boys, Row”, which is a call-and-response style of song. After singing the real verses of the song he started singing impromptu, making up the song as he went. After a while, the rest of the Scouts took turns making up new verses for the song as well. The singing eventually evolved to include several other songs. The singing went on for over an hour.



Hiking atop a sand dune



The trail ran along Beaver Creek for a while



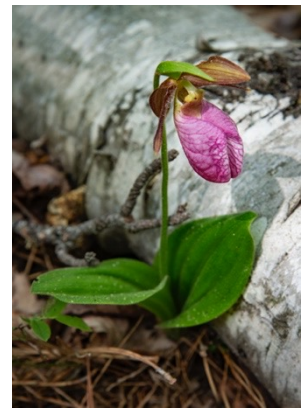
Another uphill climb



Bridge over Beaver Creek



View along the trail



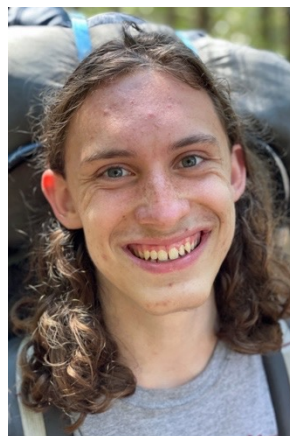
Pink lady slipper orchid



Panoramic view of the trail as it passed through a sandy area



Sam Noble



Isaac Lohmueller



Toby Rainey

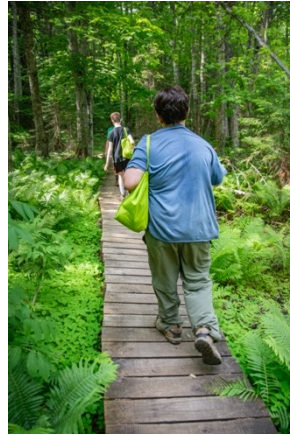
Once the Troop made it to the trail to Little Beaver Lake, they took a break. At that point, the Troop split into two groups. The first group was willing to do a side hike to the parking lot to pick up the food resupply that was in one of the cars there. The rest of the group preferred to just hang out and wait. Sam Noble, Wesley Anglin, Nate Booher, and Declan McGrath volunteered to get the food, along with Mr. McGrath and Mr. Lohmueller. The parking lot was about 1.5 miles away. The Scouts agreed that it was a neat trail. The trail followed a stream for a while and had several boardwalks. Along the way, the Scouts came across a big rock outcropping with a small cave. The group took a break at that point to allow the Scouts to explore the cave.



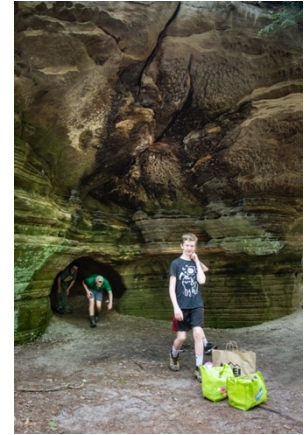
Mr. McGrath



Break time



Returning with the resupply food



Exploring the cave



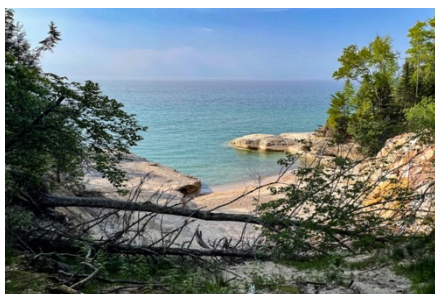
Somehow Mr. Lohmueller's backpack ended up in a tree while he was helping to retrieve the resupply food



Sam Noble



Mr. Young



A view of a small cove along the shoreline

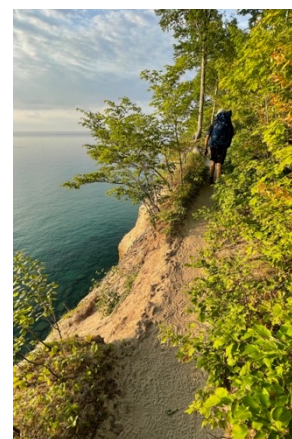
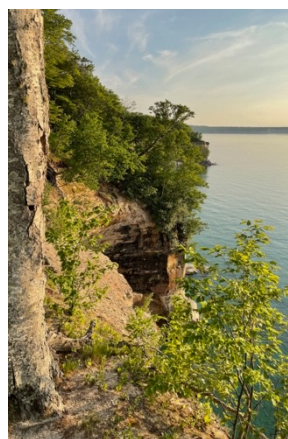


Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. McGrath

The Troop was planning on staying at the Coves Group campground for the night. Once at campground the Troop made the discovery that there wasn't an obvious water source near the camp. The camp is located high on a cliff over Lake Superior. Although it might have been possible to make it down to the lake, it seemed a bit too risky to try. The map showed that the trail crossed Spray Creek about 1 mile further down the trail, so Mr. Wilkens and Mr. Lohmueller set out with all the water bottles to check it out. It was a good water source, and after a while, the two came back to camp with lots of clean water.



Campsite marker



Views of the shoreline bathed in the warm evening sunlight, along the trail to Spray Creek, during the water run



Waiting for dinner



Wesley Anglin, Declan McGrath, and Sam Noble making dinner

Daily miles backpacked:	8.8 miles
Daily miles hiked:	3.0 miles
<hr/>	
Total miles to-date:	26.7 miles

**Tuesday, June 8**

The morning presented another beautiful sunrise.



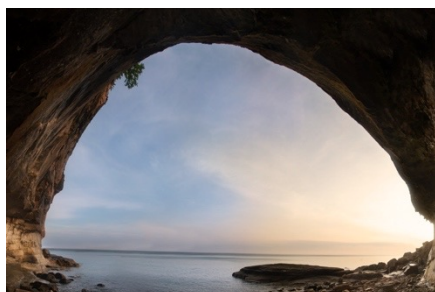
Looking east along the shoreline



Looking west along the shoreline



Looking west along the shoreline



Beneath the cliffs

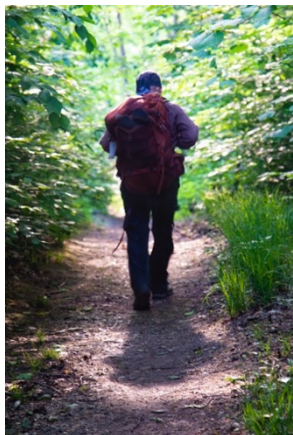
As the Scouts were getting out of their tents in the morning, Mr. Wilkens and Mr. Lohmueller made a return trip to Spray Creek to filter water for the day's hike. They were able to filter enough water for everyone to drink throughout the day. The Troop had 2 gravity-fed filter systems for purifying the water.



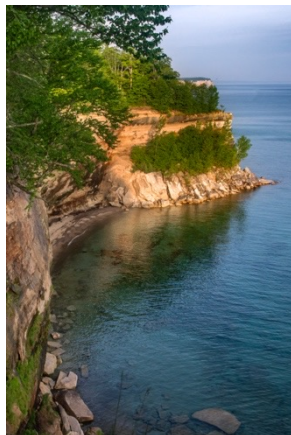
Mr. Wilkens getting water from Spray Creek to purify



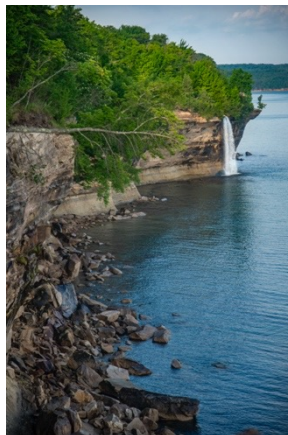
Mr. Wilkens using the water filter



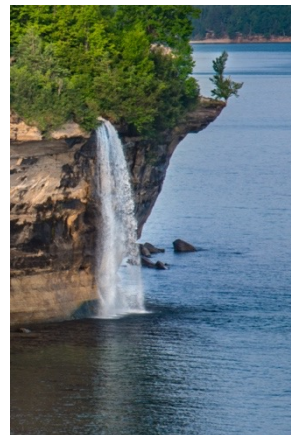
Mr. Wilkens heading back to camp with a backpack full of water bottles



Early morning view of the cliffs along the shoreline



View of the cliffs and Spray Creek waterfall



Waterfall of Spray Creek cascading into Lake Superior





Nathan Young making breakfast

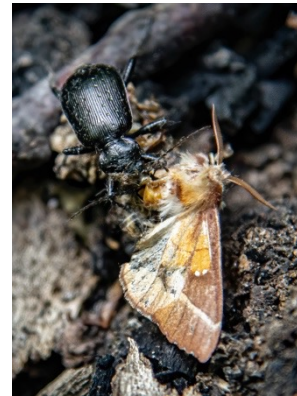


Toby Rainey, Isaac Lohmueller, and Nathan Young making breakfast



A chipmunk visited the campsite

The Troop was sitting around the campfire ring during breakfast, and someone noticed a small commotion within the ring itself. Upon closer inspection it was noticed that a moth was in a battle for its life with a ground beetle. The beetle had the moth locked in its jaw and the moth was frantically trying to escape. Eventually, the beetle won the conflict, and the moth became lifeless, the next meal for the beetle.

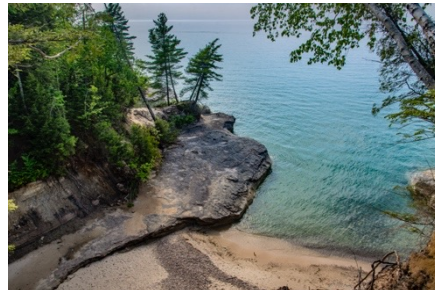


Ground beetle vs. moth

Partly due to the delay associated with filtering the water, the Troop didn't leave the camp until around 11:45. As the Troop was getting ready to leave the campsite, it started to rain lightly, but it didn't last long.



A view looking east along the coast



A view looking into one of the coves along the coast



A look at the trail ahead



A view of one of the coves along the shoreline



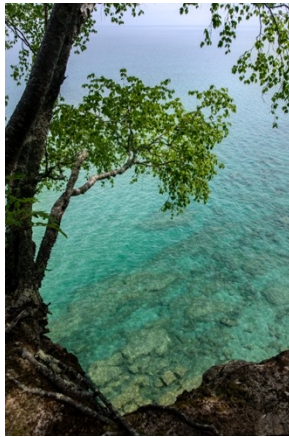
An uphill climb to get atop a cliff



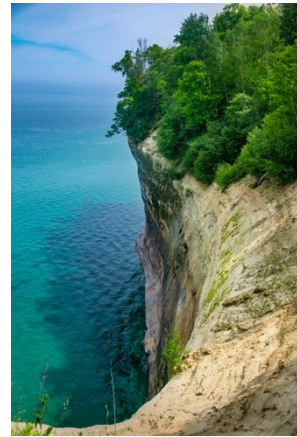
Fern



In several locations the trail came very close to the cliff's edge



The color of the water was amazing



Large cliff right at the edge of the trail



At first glance this view looked like a beach at water's edge. It is really the top of a tall cliff



A view of the tall cliffs that form a small cove



Isaac Lohmueller, Petey Wilkens



Nathan Young and Petey Wilkens enjoying the dramatic view



A chipmunk came around us looking for food



Mr. McGrath, Ben Adkins



Great view of the cliffs and lake



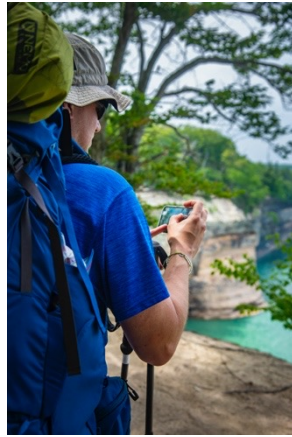
Break time at a scenic overlook



Scenic overlook



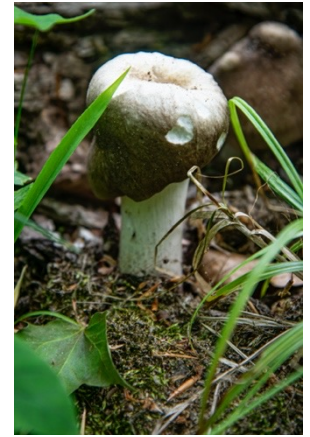
Toby Rainey



Mr. Young



On the trail



Mushroom

The Troop took a break at Chapel Rock. Chapel Rock is a free-standing pillar of rock along the shoreline. There was once an archway connecting the rock to the mainland cliffs, but the arch collapsed in the 1940s. A lone white pine tree is growing on the top of the pillar and is estimated to be about 250 years old. Roots from the tree crossed over along the archway. After the collapse of the archway, the roots were strong enough to freely span between the tree and the mainland.



Chapel Rock



Chapel Rock with the tree roots that span the gap between Chapel Rock and the mainland



Back side of Chapel Rock



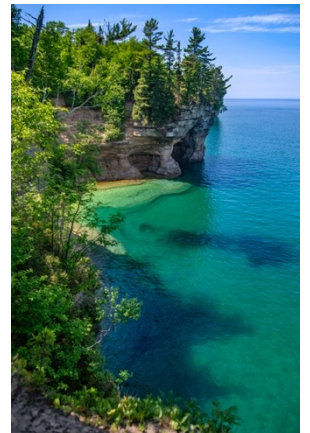
Break time



Break time



Nathan Young



Scenic overlook



View looking west along the coast



Small cliff and cove at Chapel Beach



Bed of Bunchberry wildflowers

Further down the trail the Troop came across Grand Portal Point. This is a large outcropping of rock that provides excellent views of the surrounding cliffs and Lake Superior. The Troop spent some time exploring the area.



Scouts exploring the views of the surrounding cliffs and Lake Superior from atop Grand Portal Point



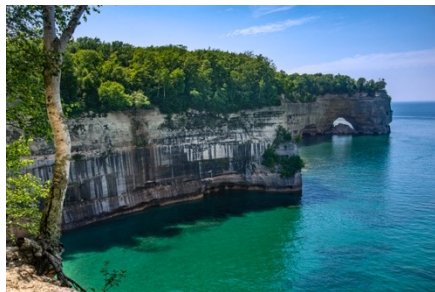
View from atop Grand Portal Point



View from atop Grand Portal Point



Nathan Young sitting on Grand Portal Point

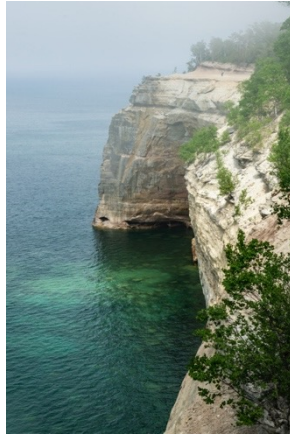


Cliffs along the coast as seen from Grand Portal Point

Shortly after leaving the Grand Portal Point the Troop took a break. At that point fog started to roll in off the lake, even though it was mid-afternoon by this time. The Troop did have to hike for a short while in a light rain.



Cliff face just west of Grand Portal Point



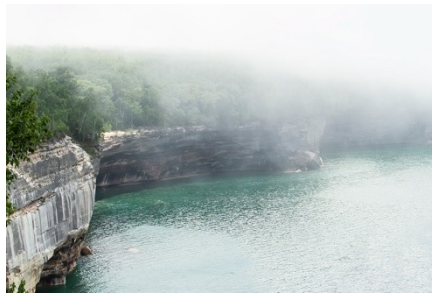
Ten minutes later fog rolled in from the lake



Foggy view



Foggy view of the shoreline



Foggy view of the shoreline



Foggy view of the shoreline



Birch trees are very common in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and are distinguished by their characteristic white bark. The tree bark has an interesting pattern.



Wesley Anglin checking the map



Petey Wilkens



Toby Rainey had expressed a fascination with ants



The area around Pictured Rocks has a lot of biodiversity. These are some of the types of fungi that were seen along the trail



Ferns

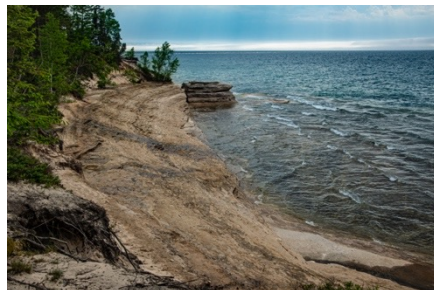


Canada mayflower

The Troop made it to the Mosquito River Group campground for the evening. After setting up the campsite, everyone took a short hike down to the lake. The shoreline is on the bedrock, with very little sand. The air temperature was fairly cool, and a thunderstorm was brewing in the distance, so the Scouts did not get the opportunity to get into the water.



Crossing the Mosquito River before heading into the campsite. The river was the water source for the Troop



The beach at the Mosquito River Campground



Waving to a passing cruise ship



Petey Wilkens checking out the water temperature



Clouds over Lake Superior



The beach at Mosquito River is all rock

That evening the Troop was standing around the bear boxes while dinner was being prepared. Nonchalantly, Petey Wilkens points and calmly said, “Hey, there’s a bear.” His demeanor was no different than if he pointed out that there was a cute bunny rabbit near the campsite. Everyone turned around towards the direction he had pointed, and lo and behold, there was a black bear. The bear looked to be a year or two old. Mr. Lohmueller and Mr. McGrath quickly rounded up all the Scouts around the bear boxes for safety. The bear was about 50 yards away and slowly walking down the trail towards the campsite. As it got closer to the camp, everyone started yelling and making noise. All the ruckus startled the bear, which stopped walking for a bit. It then started again towards the campsite. Once at the edge of the campsite, it started to walk along the edge towards the back of the site, sniffing tents as it went. At one tent it started to paw at the fabric. The bear stopped, turned, and started walking back along the edge of the campsite.



Isaac Lohmueller making dinner as the Troop was unaware that a black bear was approaching



The bear on the perimeter of the campsite



The bear enters the campsite to sniff a tent



Black bear

At that point, the bear must have caught the scent of the Troop’s garbage bag and he entered into the campsite. About 10 feet in, he started sniffing and pawing the garbage bag. Mr. Lohmueller, armed with two water bottles, launched one at the bear, hitting the bear squarely in the front shoulder blade.

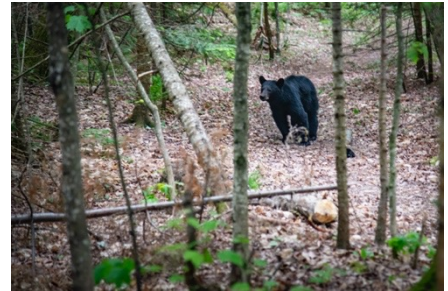
The big concern at that point was that the bear could get a hold of human food. It only takes a couple of instances for the bear to associate humans with food. This causes them to lose their desire to naturally hunt for their food, leading them to become aggressive towards humans in an effort to get food.

Immediately the bear ran out of the campsite and up the trail about 50 yards. It stopped and looked back towards the campsite. After a bit, the bear started walking parallel to the edge of the campsite through the trees, always keeping around 50 yards distance. It walked back and forth several times. Finally, the bear lost interest and sauntered off into the woods. A few minutes later the bear was spotted walking away along the main trail into the campsite. Normally, this wouldn't have been a problem except for the fact that during this entire interaction, a scout and two adults were a few minutes' walk away washing their clothes in the creek, in the direction that the bear was now heading. To give them a warning about the bear, Mr. Lohmueller cautiously proceeded down the trail after the bear, hoping to see the others before they encountered the bear. A short way down the trail, the bear turned off the trail and climbed a tree.

Mr. Lohmueller was able to quickly get past the bear and met up with the three. By the time the four of them made their way back to camp, the bear was gone for good.

It turned out that Mr. Lohmueller had used Petey Wilkens' water bottle when he scared the bear off. Petey was proud that his water bottle had been used as bear ammo.

For the rest of the evening, the Scouts kept a wary eye out in case the bear came back, which about 2 hours later, he did. He came to within about 50 yards again. Everyone started shouting at him and Toby Rainey led the Troop in a loud rendition of the sea shanty "Wellerman". The noise was enough to scare the bear off. After the Scouts had gone to bed but before the adults called it a night, the bear then came back a third and final time but was scared off again by noise.



The bear as it headed out into the woods



The bear climbing a tree

Daily miles backpacked:	<u>7.2 miles</u>
Total miles to-date:	33.9 miles



**Wednesday, June 9**

There was a bit of rain overnight and it was still overcast once the morning came around. Mr. Lohmueller and Mr. Young explored the beach for a bit before the Scouts started getting up. The skies quickly cleared up shortly after sunrise



View of the beach



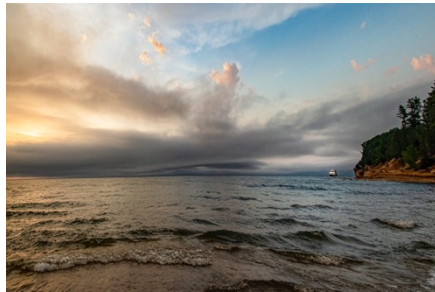
There was a sunrise cruise on the lake



Small pool of water on the beach



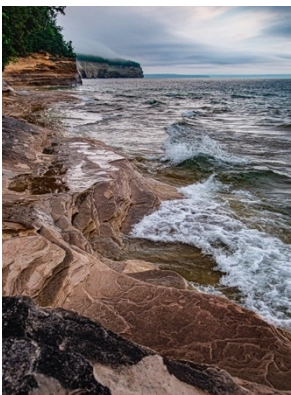
View of the beach



Passing storm clouds



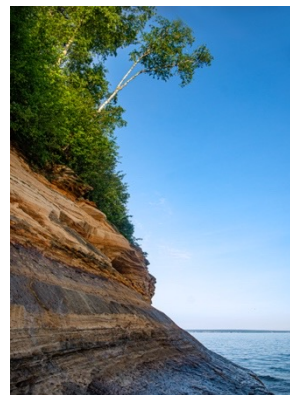
Rocky shoreline



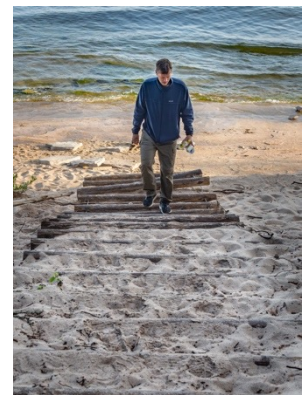
Rocky shoreline



A lot of the shore was solid rock



View of a rocky cliff



Mr. Young



Quiet campsite before the scouts got up



View of the campsite from the entrance



Toby Rainey

While the Scouts were making breakfast three park rangers stopped by to investigate a string of bear encounters along the trail in the past few days. Mr. McGrath related to them the details of the Troop's encounter the night before.



Isaac Lohmueller using the water filter



Petey Wilkens, Nate Booher, Sam Noble

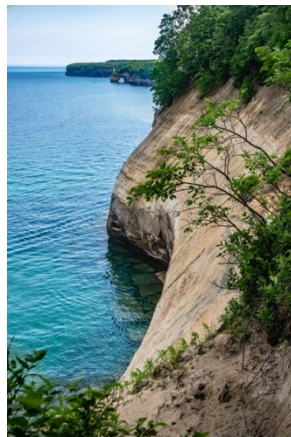


A luxury campsite toilet, as it has a privacy wall

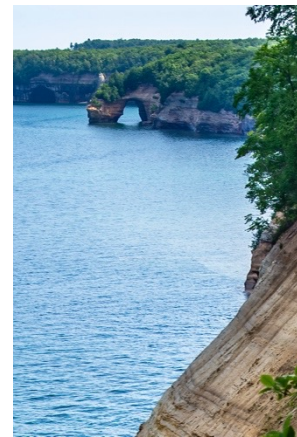
The Scouts finished packing up the campsite and were on the trail once again around 11:00 am.



Small cove on the shoreline



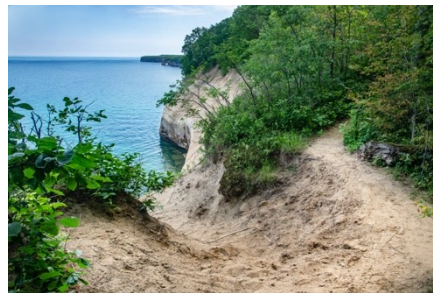
View looking eastward



One of the stone arches



Toby Rainey



Trail side overlook



Sam Noble



Break time

After backpacking for awhile, the Troop took a trailside break. After a bit, Mr. McGrath hiked up the trail around a bend and was out of sight. After about 5 minutes he came back and told the scouts to leave their packs and to follow him. They went a few minutes down the trail and came across an opening in the trees that provided a neat overlook out over the surrounding lake. Grand Island was visible on the horizon.



Packs but no people – the Troop was exploring an overlook during a break



Taking a break at an impressive overlook. Grand Island is visible on the horizon



Taking a break at an impressive overlook.



Wesley Anglin



The trail leaves a small clearing and enters in a stand of trees



Lunch near Potato Patch Campground



Shelf fungus growing on a tree



Shelf fungus growing on a tree



View on the trail



Miners River as it drains into Lake Superior

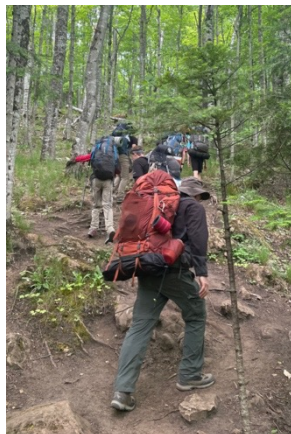


Backpacking along Miners River



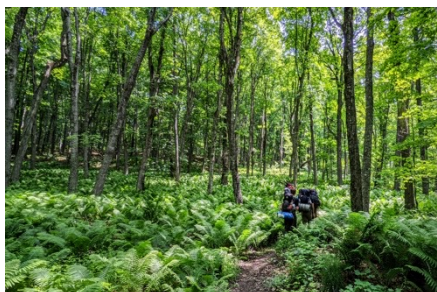
Crossing over Miners River

The most difficult stretch of trail on this trip was a section leading up to the Cliffs Group campsite. It was a steep section of trail but fortunately it wasn't too long. After a break at the top of the hill, the Scouts pressed on towards the Cliffs campsite. There is a side trail off the North Country Trail that leads up to the group campsite. This side trail passes through a large field of ferns under the canopy of the trees. The Scouts nicknamed this area Fernville.



Steep hill on the way to Cliffs Group Campground. This was the most difficult section of trail along the entire trip.

Campsite marker



Backpacking through Fernville

Fernville

After setting up tents, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Wilkens, and Mr. Young left to better stage the vehicles for departure the following day. Meanwhile, Mr. Lohmueller took the Scouts back down the trail to Miners Beach. The Scouts had a lot of fun playing in the sand and lake, as well as Miner's Creek, which drains into the lake near the beach. Several Scouts took advantage of the warmer water and air temperatures and completed the Scoutmaster Challenge. In the end all Scouts completed the challenge.



Toby Rainey and Sam Noble having a light saber battle while waiting to leave



Hiking around the mouth of the Miners River



Looking down the shoreline along Miners Beach



Declan McGrath tossing rocks into Miners River



Pety Wilkens, Ben Adkins, Nate Booher, and Isaac Lohmueller entering the water



Toby Rainey making a dramatic entrance into the water



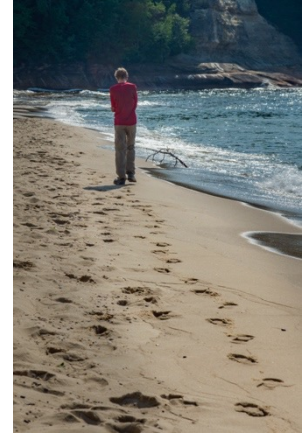
Nate Booher



Isaac Lohmueller



Declan McGrath



Nathan Young



Still waters of the mouth of Miners River before draining into Lake Superior



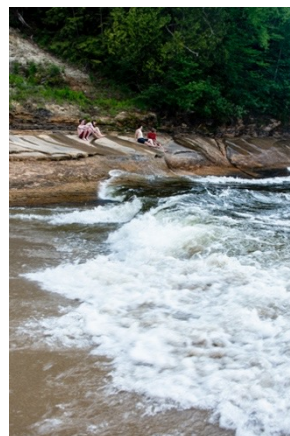
Declan McGrath



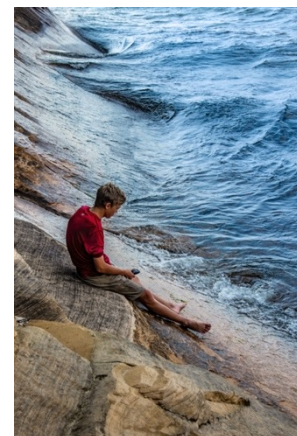
Nathan Young



Wesley Anglin



The waves were strong



Nathan Young



Declan McGrath and Wesley Anglin walking along the beach



Returning to the campsite through Fernville



A clump of ferns in Fernville

The Scouts went back to camp to get on dry clothes and to grab the cooking gear and food for dinner. The plan was to meet up with the other 3 adults back at Miners Castle and make dinner there. While waiting for the adults to come back after shuttling the vehicles, the Scouts took the opportunity to check out the 3 overlooks to explore Miner's Castle. Miners Castle is a small outcropping of rock at the tip of a point of land that juts out into the lake. The geological feature was named by the employees of English explorer Alexander Henry when they were exploring the area for minerals in 1771. Though no extractable minerals were ever found, the name "Miners" has endured.



View of Miners Castle and the cove that it forms



View of Miners Castle



View of Miners Castle from the other side

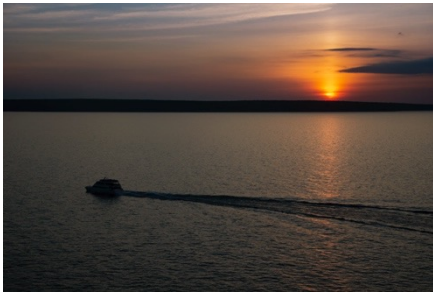
When the adults made it back from staging the vehicles Mr. McGrath surprised all the Scouts by showing up with pizzas and Gatorade. The Scouts really enjoyed the treat. After dinner, the Troop hung out on an overlook and watched the sunset.



Pizza!



Mr. McGrath setting out the pizza



Sunset cruise returning home



Sunset



Sunset



Mr. Young taking a picture of the sunset

It was dark by the time the Troop made it back to camp, so everyone called it a night.

Daily miles backpacked:	5.6 miles
Daily miles hiked:	2.4 miles
<hr/>	
Total miles to-date:	41.9 miles

## Thursday, June 10

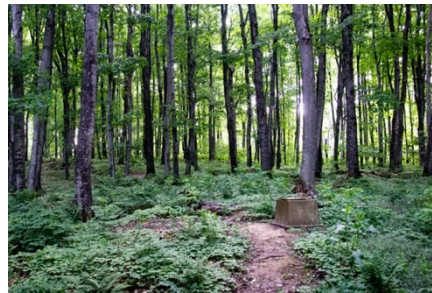
The Scouts started the day with an air of excitement as they were looking forward to getting back to civilization.



View of the Cliffs Group Campground



Declan McGrath



Campsite toilet, out in the open



Mr. Wilkens, Mr. Lohmueller, and Mr. McGrath ready to start hiking



Starting the morning by passing through Fernville

Once again, the Scouts passed several miles away while singing. Mr. McGrath contributed to the fun by leading the Troop in a customized version of an old classic Scouting song. It was a repeat-after-me type of song.

*The other day  
We met a bear  
At Mosquito River  
A way out there*

*He looked at us  
We looked at him  
He sized up us  
We sized up him*

*He entered camp  
And sniffed around  
He checked us out  
We held our ground*

*He smelled some trash  
And his hopes rose  
Then a water bottle  
Exploded in his nose*

*He scrambled back  
Into the wood  
But he'd return  
If he only could*

*We hope he's learned  
To stay away  
So that he can live  
Out all his days*

*That's all there is  
There ain't no more  
Unless we meet  
That bear once more*

*The end the end  
The end the end  
The end the end  
The end the end*





On the trail



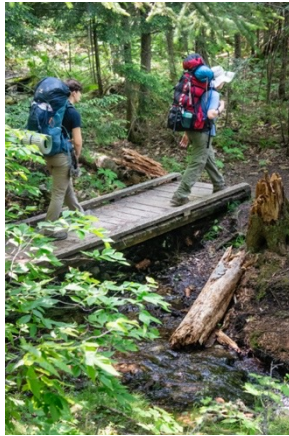
Hiking along a boardwalk



Stable fly, the nemesis of the Troop



Mushroom



Toby Rainey and Wesley Anglin crossing a bridge



The making of a "true hiker"



Ben Adkins



Declan McGrath



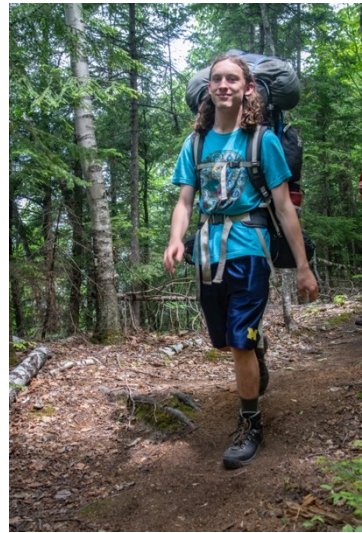
Wesley Anglin



Toby Rainey



Nathan Young



Isaac Lohmueller



Petey Wilkens



Nate Booher



Sam Noble



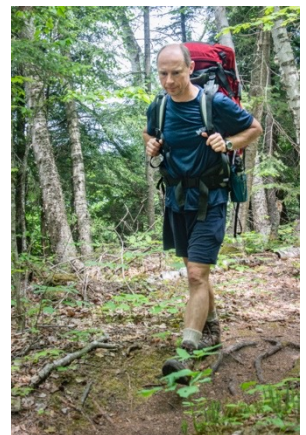
Mr. Wilkens



Mr. McGrath



Mr. Young



Mr. Lohmueller



Scarab beetle



A line of backpackers



The Troop was hiking along the North Country Trail

The Scouts maintained a pretty good pace, averaging about 3 miles per hour. Spirits were high as the Scouts entered into the parking lot at the end of the trail. The Troop moved over to the park sign for a group photo.



Mr. Lohmueller, Mr. Young, Toby Rainey, Declan McGrath, Ben Adkins, Nathan Young, Isaac Lohmueller, Sam Noble, Petey Wilkens, Nate Booher, Wesley Anglin, Mr. McGrath, Mr. Wilkens



Nate Booher found a good spot to take a rest



Petey Wilkens was excited to show off his water bottle that was used to ward off the black bear earlier in the week

Mr. McGrath, Mr. Wilkens, and Mr. Young then left to retrieve the car that was left at Miner’s Castle. Meanwhile, Mr. Lohmueller and the Scouts took a short trail to see Munising Falls. Munising Falls is a 50-foot waterfall that cascades over a sandstone cliff.



Munising Falls



Sam Noble



Nathan Young

Once all the gear was loaded in the vehicles, the Scouts said farewell to Pictured Rocks as they headed into town. The Troop stopped at an ice cream/souvenir shop.



Ice cream was a welcome treat after six days on the trail



Enjoying ice cream together



Source of the ice cream



Yum!



Toby Rainey

After the refreshing ice cream, the Troop drove eastward to Tahquamenon Falls. Tahquamenon Falls are two separate waterfalls on the Tahquamenon River prior to the river draining into Lake Superior. The Lower Falls is a series of 5 smaller falls cascading around an island in the middle of the river. The Upper Falls, located 4 miles upstream from the Lower Falls, is around 200 feet across with a drop of around 48 feet. During the late spring runoff when water levels are at the highest, the river drains as much as 50,000 gallons of water per second, making it the third largest waterfall east of the Mississippi River by volume, after Cohoes Falls in New York State and Niagara Falls. The water is characteristically brown in color, due to the tannins leached from the cedar swamps from which the river drains. The Troop stopped first at the Lower Falls and took a short hike to see the falls.



Lower Falls



Lower Falls



Observation deck at the Lower Falls



Part of the Lower Falls on the far side of the river

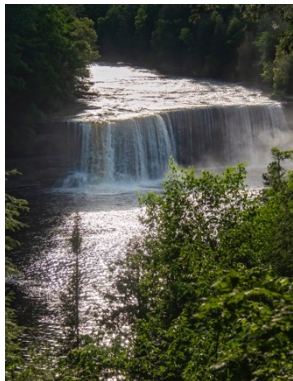
From there they drove up to the parking lot for the Upper Falls. It was getting close to dinner time, so Mr. McGrath surprised everyone by telling them that they were going out to eat for dinner that night at the restaurant in the park.

Several of the Scouts chose the Italian Hoagie for dinner, as the menu said in a disclaimer “Not for those with a small appetite!”. They felt up to the challenge, but the consensus after the meal was that it wasn’t really that big. Several other Scouts tried the pasty. Mr. McGrath mentioned that these are a regional favorite, so the Scouts adopted the “when in Rome” mentality. A pasty is a pastry shell stuffed with ground beef and vegetables, lightly seasoned with only salt and pepper, and served with gravy. The pasty’s connection to the area came about in the early 1800s during a major boom in copper mining, during which a major onslaught of laborers came from Cornwall, England. The laborers brought the pasty with them from England and favored the food due to its portable nature that could easily be taken down into the mines. The consensus by the Scouts was that they were very delicious.

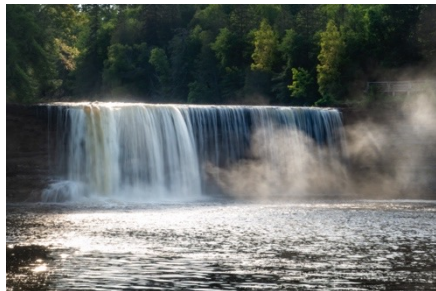


Inside the restaurant for dinner

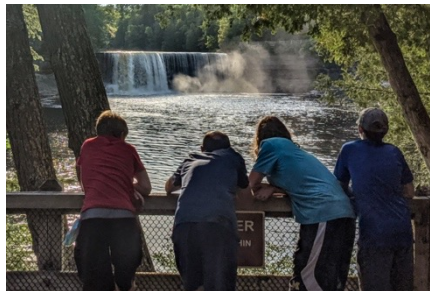
After dinner, the Troop took a walk down to the Upper Falls of the Tahquamenon River.



View of the Upper Falls from the trail



View of the Upper Falls from an observation deck at river level



Petey Wilkens, Mr. Lohmueller, Isaac Lohmueller, and Ben Adkins looking at the Upper Falls



Hiking back from the falls

Afterwards the Troop drove to the campsite for the night. Once at the campground, they encountered a problem when they found the entrance to the group campsites locked with no one around to open the gate. Mr. McGrath eventually got in touch with someone who told him to simply grab two open family sites.

After setting up the tents everyone got the chance to take a hot shower, which was enjoyed by all.

Back at the campsite, everyone quickly went to bed. Shortly after that, it started to rain.

Daily miles backpacked:	6.4 miles
Daily miles hiked:	2.5 miles
Total miles to-date:	50.8 miles

**Friday, June 11**

It had rained overnight so everything was wet, but the storm had passed by the time the Scouts got up in the morning.



The campsite was right next to the Tahquamenon River upstream of the falls



View of the campsite

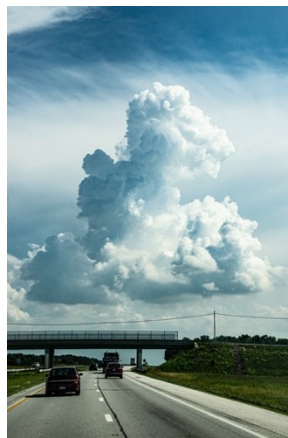
The Troop had breakfast, cleaned up the campsite, and began the long, and fortunately uneventful, trip home.



Approaching the Mackinac Bridge, which spans the connection between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron



Crossing the Mackinac Bridge, which connects Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas



Dramatic cloud on the trip home

## **Fifty Miler Award**

All of the Scouts were able to earn the Fifty Miler Award.

This award is designed to stimulate interest in outdoor adventure and to promote activities that improve personal fitness, self-reliance, knowledge of the outdoors, and a connection to conservation.

To earn the patch participants have to complete a minimum 50-mile, 5-day trek by an unmotorized means, such as biking, boating, hiking, or canoeing. Each participant also needs to complete 10 hours of conservation. The Troop picked up litter along the trail every day for the conservation hours.





## Personal Notes

**Personal Notes**

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