

ISK Spring Rendezvous 2018

by Bernie Graham



We held the annual Spring Rendezvous on Memorial Weekend at Little Sand Bay on Lake Superior. Attendees included Rob Alexander, Peter Lindell, Peggy O'Neal, Paula La Frenierre, Kevin Jelle, Patrick Elliot, Fred Linehan, myself, Bernie Graham, with a cameo appearance by Tony Schmitz. Rob got the award for furthest drive, traveling all the way from Peoria, Illinois.

We had the group campsite with the pavilion so it was handy for meals and planning our paddling trip each day. The normal launch site was closed due to storm debris (from last fall) scattered on the beach. Also, the National Park Service is constructing a new building next to their old one by the breakwater and some of that area is closed off. So, the City of Russell has opened their swimming beach to launch our kayaks and it was much appreciated.



On Saturday we made a trip to Sand Island and viewed a lot of downfall by the shoreline and some scattered timbers from park property here and there. We had intended to have lunch at the lighthouse but the winds picked up, as did the waves, so we went back to the dock to eat. Another group told us the stairs to the lighthouse were damaged in the storm so they had to scramble up rocks to get to the lighthouse.



We returned to Little Sand Bay afterwards and toured the damage to the Hokenson Fishery next to the breakwater. The old dock was extensively damaged but the fish house, which was moved before the storm, was spared. As we were taking our boats out we ran into Tony Schmitz who had been fishing out of his kayak. He had been successful and caught a nice trout and he and Peggy drove into town to get some vegetables and fixed a wonderful dinner for all who were interested.

On Sunday we did a circumnavigation of Raspberry Island. We stopped at the sandspit and hiked to the lighthouse and had lunch on the picnic tables on a sunny day. Some flowers in the garden were in full bloom and the place looked beautiful. Tours don't begin until June so we had to suffice with walking the grounds on our own. While paddling we still saw sections of ice on the rocky shoreline that had not yet melted, a testament to how cold it was until recently.



We returned to Little Sand Bay in very calm waters and enjoyed the nice weather. There was little pleasure boat traffic during the weekend, just the occasional fishing boat and stray sailboat, so we didn't have to dodge a lot of traffic. The water temperature was 51 degrees and the air temperatures during the day were in the 60's and 70's. During the weekend we worked on navigation and paddling skills and had a good discussion on how to paddling in rough water. It was quite a shock to see 100 degrees displayed on my car thermometer as I returned to the Twin City area!