



# Madeline Island

## Wilderness Preserve News

Summer 2005

**Yes, We Do Need Your Continued Support!**

From Tom Kromroy, President

Last fall, I received a call from a longtime member who asked what the Preserve was doing with the funds they donate each year, and whether or not we continue to need their financial support. I quickly responded with a strong yes and proceeded to review the annual program that our organization completes each year. I think my response was what the member was looking for because a few weeks later we received their donation. The question was a good one and it made me sit back and take a look at what our organization actually accomplishes each year, and how we communicate those accomplishments to our membership.

Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve was formally established in 1987 by a handful of Island residents with environmental foresight and a common goal of preserving the natural beauty of the Island for the benefit of future generations. The Preserve was organized as a non-profit Land Trust, with corporate By Laws that require the business of the organization be managed by a volunteer Board of Directors for the benefit of the membership.

Our organization currently has over 400 active members and an annual operating budget of \$26,000. Since The Preserve is not for profit, all member donations are 100% tax deductible. Through the efforts of our members, and our investment in conservation on Madeline Island, we have been able to permanently protect over 2,500 acres of beautiful natural areas. This year we were fortunate to receive two land donations, one five-acre parcel near the Marina and a forty-acre parcel north of Middle Road. Both parcels contain wetland and have natural elements that complement our landholdings. We are thankful for these very generous contributions.

What do we do with the money? Lots! First and foremost we work to continue the non-profit status of the organization, while overseeing and maintaining our land holdings. We have developed and managed a trail system for hiking in the summer and skiing in the winter. This year our Trails Committee collaborated with year-round residents to establish an Island-wide trails program. This

group worked hard to make improvements to the Capser Trail, including a new parking area off Middle Road and a wooden foot bridge to help ford the stream without getting wet. As always, our lands are open to the public at no charge, and in the fall they are open for hunting.

The MIWP Board continues to monitor the Island real estate market, identifying parcels that may fit well with our current holdings. Our philosophy is to concentrate on environmentally significant parcels that are close, or adjacent, to our existing land. By doing this we preserve large tracts of natural habitat and prevent the negative effects of landscape fragmentation. Our annual operating budget is modest; it does not include funds for land purchases. When a parcel is identified that fits our profile, we make a specific fund-raising appeal to our membership. We also apply for government grants--matching funds that are available for the purchase of environmentally-significant lands. We are fortunate to have a very generous membership, and all of the land the Preserve owns is owned outright and without debt.



Madeline Island lakeshore in winter

(‘Support’ continued on page 6)

## 2005 MIWP Summer Program

**Saturday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 9-11:00 a.m.**

### **"Spring Bird Hike at Big Bay"**

Join seasoned birders *Peter Hudleston* and *Victoria Erhart* for an ornithological exploration of the varied habitats of Big Bay Park -- right at the peak of spring bird migration. Peter is Professor of Geology at the University of Minnesota; Victoria is a MIWP Board Member and Island summer resident. Meet at the Big Bay Town Park parking lot and bring binoculars and bird guides. Free.

**Sunday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30 a.m.**

### **MIWP Spring Luncheon & Program**

#### **"Madeline Island and the Changing Face of History"**

Historian and forty-year Island resident *Rhoda Gilman* will reflect on her encounters with the Island story (both ancient and modern) and how she has seen the nature of that story transformed with changing times and new perspectives on the past.

(See detailed announcement on page 3.)

(At The MIMC Clubhouse; \$27 per person)

RSVP: Call Russ Fridley at (651) 484-1542

**Thursday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m.**

### **"Sustainable Sweden and the Chequamegon Bay"**

With *Mary Rehwald* of Ashland, WI

(At the Madeline Island Historical Museum. Free)

Mary Rehwald lives in Ashland, WI and traveled to Sweden last year. This adventure spawned her development of an active movement called "Eco-Comm." Her topic is "the Buzz in the Bay area," reports Ruth Oppedahl, Executive Director of the Bayfield Regional Conservancy. Mary is an excellent speaker and will show slides of her project. Come and find out all about it.

**Saturday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 9-11:00 a.m.**

### **"The Beaches & Bogs of Big Bay"**

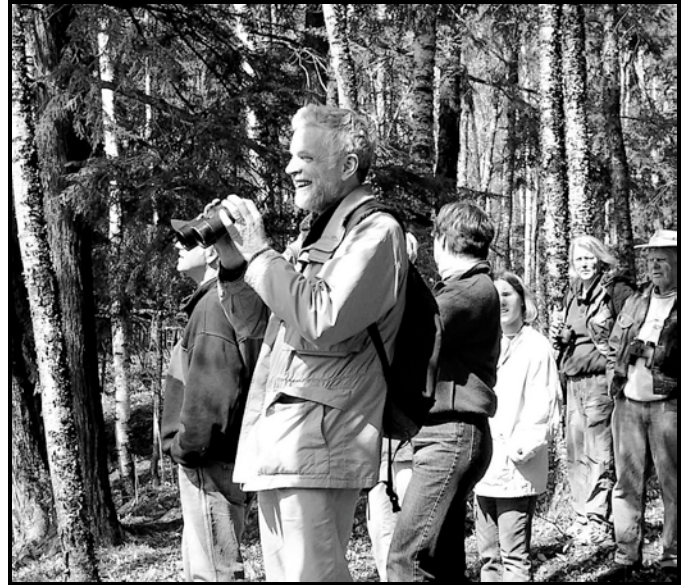
Hike the beach ridges and floating bogs of Big Bay lagoon with *Dan Engstrom*, Director of the St. Croix Watershed Research Station of the Science Museum of Minnesota. Learn how lake-level changes shaped the history of Big Bay and see rare and exquisite orchids, insectivorous plants, and more. Meet at the Group Camp near the Big Bay Town Park. Wear boots or old sneakers. Free.

**Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.**

### **"Canoe Summer: Wisconsin to Wollaston"**

With *Julie Buckles & Charly Ray* of Washburn, WI

(At the Madeline Island Historical Museum. Free)



Spring Birding with Peter Hudleston and Victoria Erhart

In 1999, Julie and Charly paddled 1,700 miles in a hand-crafted wood and canvas canoe. They went from Lake Superior to Wollaston Lake in northern Saskatchewan--about the same distance between Chicago and Cuba—and then settled in for the winter. Through slides and stories Buckles and Ray will tell listeners about the people they met and the places they saw. Julie is finishing a book about her journey; Charly is the manager at the Living Forest Cooperative and a lifelong wilderness paddler.

**Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 9-11:00 a.m.**

### **"Edible and Medicinal Plants of Madeline Island"**

Join *Marina Lachecki*, plant expert and Pastor of St. John's Church, for a botanical hike at Eagle Point Trail on Hagen Road. Identify forest plants and flowers, including many that are edible or medicinal. Free.

**Thursday, August 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.**

### **"Conservation in the Great Lakes: A Global Treasure"**

The Apostle Archipelago is part of the world's largest collection of freshwater islands. *John Andersen*, Great Lakes Director of The Nature Conservancy, will discuss their mandate to protect this unique ecosystem from habitat destruction, invasive non-native species, and alterations to the natural water flow patterns in the lakes. Of additional interest: John's Grandma Sylvia was a teacher at the Island's one-room schoolhouse. (At the Madeline Island Historical Museum. Free)

# 17<sup>TH</sup> SPRING LUNCHEON AND ANNUAL MEETING

The Wilderness Preserve will be hosting its 17<sup>th</sup> Spring Luncheon and Annual Meeting this coming Memorial Day weekend, Sunday May 29<sup>th</sup>, at The Clubhouse on Madeline Island. As with past luncheon events, we invite our members and friends to rekindle their ties to the Island, share in a gourmet meal, and hear a fascinating presentation on the natural history of the Lake Superior region by a guest speaker. Many thanks to the Madeline Island Music Camp for providing The Clubhouse for this event. This year's luncheon buffet (menu below) will be provided by Twin Gables Café Catering of Brule. A social gathering begins at 11:30 a.m., with seating for lunch at noon.

## “Madeline Island and The changing face of history”

By Rhoda R. Gilman

Senior Research Fellow, Minnesota Historical Society (retired)

Madeline Island has a history—both ancient and modern. Find out how the nature of this story has been transformed with changing times and new perspectives on the past.

Rhoda Gilman holds a BA from the University of Washington and an MA from Bryn Mawr College. She spent 34 years with the Minnesota Historical Society as an editor, researcher and administrator. She has edited two anthologies and written several books and numerous articles. American Indians and the fur trade history have been of special interest to her, sparked by her almost 50-years' residency on Madeline Island. She helped found the Green Party of Minnesota and was its candidate for Lieutenant Governor in 2002.



## Spring Luncheon Menu

### *Antipasto Tray*

Marinated olives, roasted peppers, roasted garlic artichoke hearts, and fresh mozzarella cheese

### *Salad*

Crisp mixed greens topped with roasted pecans, pears, sweet onion vinaigrette and Wisconsin white cheddar

### *Choice of One Entrée:*

Cornmeal-crusted Lake Trout, served with roasted garlic Aioli, baby red potatoes and fresh vegetables

or

(Vegetarian Entrée)

Roasted Portobello stuffed with roasted peppers and Feta cheese, served with wild rice and fresh vegetables

### *Dessert*

Chocolate Pot de Crème, served with fresh whipped cream, mint, and small cookie for garnish

### *Gourmet Coffees and Teas*

Twin Gables Café 'Private Estate Blend' Coffees (regular & decaffeinated)

Assorted Hot Teas

## The price of the Spring Luncheon and Program is \$27 per person.

Reservations can be made (through May 25<sup>th</sup>) by contacting MIWP Treasurer Russ Fridley, 740 Amber Drive, Shoreview, MN 55126 ☞ (651) 484-1542 ☞ Email at [jlfb@earthlink.net](mailto:jlfb@earthlink.net).



## Hiking Trails Improved

By Margie Frederickson

The Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve lands are crossed by several trails which are open to hiking in summer and cross-country skiing in winter. For the past few years the trails, which were part of the old logging roads, had little maintenance. This winter a new Trails Committee was formed, as a subcommittee of CAPP. In addition to MIWP Board Member Margie Frederickson and her husband, Carl, other members of this committee are Town of La Pointe Road Supervisor Keith Sowl; teacher Carol Sowl; EMT Mary Ross; Town Treasurer Carol Newbauer; the Chamber of Commerce's Lee Ann Merrill; Mark Eggelson from Big Bay State Park; Jim Ryder; and Ed Kale. The goal of this committee is to enhance and maintain the trails for the safety and enjoyment of the general public.

This past winter the north end trails, which may be accessed off North Shore Road across from the

Burroughs Trail, were groomed and set for cross-country skiing. Windfalls had been cleared by volunteers in the fall, prior to the first snow. Snowshoers are also welcome to use these trails and walk along the side of the ski tracks.

The Capser Trail has a new parking lot off Middle Road, making it much more accessible from that end of the trail. A bridge was constructed to span the creek, which ran fairly high with water through the winter. The trail has been widened and will get new signage this spring. This trail can be used by dogsledders and snowmobiles in winter when adequate snow cover allows.

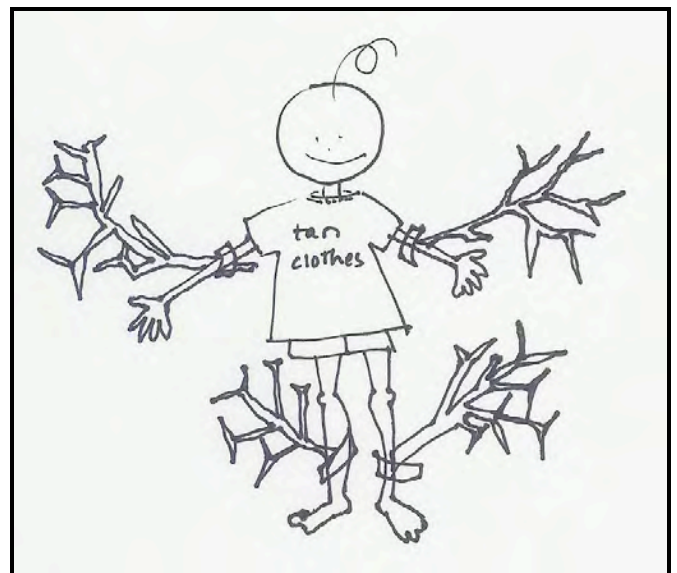
To keep the trails open for hiking, no bikes, ATVs, or other motorized vehicles are allowed. A trail brochure with maps will be available at the Madeline Island Chamber of Commerce.

## Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve's Fourth of July Parade: Join in the fun!

By Toria Erhart

Alright, so last year's Fourth of July parade was not exactly our shining moment. Could it have been the rain? The early parade start? Our multiple technical failures? The dearth of marchers (rain does that)? But we are a proud and tenacious group and, like the phoenix, plan to rise from the ashes of our failures and move on to greatness. Come share the greatness with us. We invite each and every one of you to join us as we amble in the 2005 Madeline Island Fourth of July parade. The MIWP's theme this year is "Tree Huggers". The idea is that you are a Birch Tree, so wear white or tan clothes and cover yourself, as possible, with birch branches. We will provide a limited number of *cool* birch masks! Yes, some people view this term as a kind of low-grade environmental insult, but we plan to wear the name PROUDLY and LITERALLY, and go out and do a lot of hugging. Meet us at the Marina under the MIWP banner one-half hour prior to parade start (approximately 10:00 a.m.). (Parades usually start at 10:30 a.m., but check with the Chamber of Commerce for any possible changes.) Costume is as pictured, but if you want to join us at the last minute, come just as you are. And, as always, the MIWP welcomes any 2- or 4-legged species as long as they know the princess wave,

are well-behaved, can walk a straight line, and don't bite. See you there!



You could look like this in the Fourth of July Parade!

# The Rise and Fall of Lake Superior

By Dan Engstrom (Past President of MIWP, and Director, St. Croix Watershed Research Station, Science Museum of Minnesota)

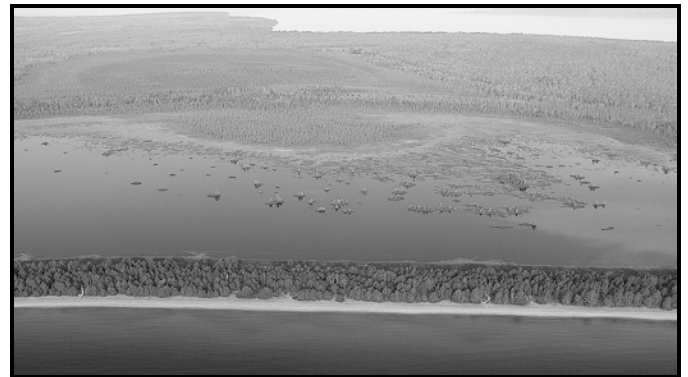
Each spring when our family returns to Madeline Island, one of the more important rituals is to go down to the beach and see what Lake Superior has done to the shape of the shoreline over winter. Will the beach be steep or gradual, wide or narrow? Will the rocky promontories be the same, or will some have shifted or broken off into car-size chunks? This yearly tradition gathered into a family oral history tells us that the interface between lake and land is dynamic and ever-changing. Some of the changes we see – like a steeply eroded beach slope – are the consequence of a single violent winter storm, while others – the 15 feet of old fence line dangling over an eroded bank – are testament to the steady and irreversible attack of lake on land.

Although the shape of the shore is hard to predict from one spring to another, one of the more reliable omens is the elevation (level) of the lake. High lake levels bring retreating beaches, eroding banks and toppled boulders – and the reverse, low levels, bring a reprieve of sorts. This most important predictor of the shape of our Island has fluctuated within fairly narrow bounds (between 599.5 and 603.4 feet above sea level – just 3.9 feet) during the 87 years of record keeping by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Most of this fluctuation – year to year, decade to decade – is a natural consequence of climate (rainfall and evaporation), with only modest effects from outlet regulations at Sault Ste. Marie. So if the Island shoreline has changed as much as it has in this period of stable lake levels, what might we expect to happen if climate really shifted – think global warming – and the lake rose or fell to historically unprecedented levels?

Well, the answer to that question is literally *all around us*, because Lake Superior has occupied “unprecedented levels” in its geologic past and has left us a wealth of evidence in the form of ancient shorelines – features such as cobble beaches, wave-cut benches, and eroded cliff faces. So as I stand on the edge of a steeply wooded hill-slope looking down on the roof of our sauna below, I’m really perched on the edge of a 5000-year-old shoreline, and the wide pine-covered sand-flat where the sauna sits exists only because lake-level is now about seven feet lower. This same shoreline can be traced all around the Island, and is beautifully preserved as cobble beaches on the backside of Big Bay (my favorite exposure is near the State Park group campground), or as wave-cut benches – one of these on the inland side of

Bog Lake looks much like a man-made road, overgrown with ancient hemlocks. These geological artifacts are there, not simply because Lake Superior was higher in the past, but because it stayed there long enough (a thousand years or so) to erode its tell-tale marks into the Island landscape.

So 5000 years ago Big Bay was just that – a big embayment – as was Bog Lake, and Lake Superior’s waves lapped on shorelines now hundreds to thousands of feet inland. And those beautiful beaches, which now enclose boggy lagoons, were also far from their present locations. One of them can be traced by taking the State Park hiking trail that begins just behind the group campground (near the Town Park entrance); this trail partially traverses an earlier (higher) barrier beach that formed as lake level fell from its 5000-year old high-stand.



Aerial view of Big Bay showing an ancient beach ridge (formed at higher lake-level) running along the backside of the lagoon.

But there’s also evidence that Lake Superior has been even higher than this 5000-year bench mark, as well as lower than the present day. Roughly 10,000 years ago, as the massive Laurentide ice sheet began its final retreat from the Lake Superior basin, glacial melt-water, ponded between the ice-margin to the north and highlands to the south, rose and overtopped the divide between the present-day Brule and St. Croix rivers. At an elevation of 1075 feet, the high spillway meant that this proto-Lake Superior (known as Glacial Lake Duluth) stood some 470 feet above the lake’s present-day level. All of Madeline and all of the other Apostles would have been submerged, save for the topmost six feet of Oak Island, where sandy beach deposits attest to the Noachian dimensions of the ancient lake.

(‘Lake Superior’ continued on page 6)

### ('Lake Superior,' continued from page 5)

Now fast-forward a couple thousand years and you'd have found Lake Superior sitting some 200 feet below its current level and Madeline and most of the other Apostles co-joined with one another and the mainland. To understand how this came about, you have to consider what happens to the Earth's crust when it's loaded up with several thousand vertical feet of glacial ice – it gets pressed downward. So when the great ice sheet finally retreated from the Superior basin and the big lake found other outlets to the east, these spillways (such as the Ottawa River) were much lower than those of today – some 200 feet lower.

But being rather elastic (if you can imagine it), the earth's crust began to rebound with the removal of all that glacial mass (it's still rebounding slowly today). The eastern outlets flexed upward, and the lake level rose, eventually reaching the 5000-year old high-stand – the Lake Nipissing stage – which cut the ancient shoreline below our family cabin and washed the cobble beaches on the back-side of Big Bay lagoon.

Well, from there on it was a battle between glacial rebound and downcutting of the eastern outlets. At first

#### Further reading:

*A Guidebook to the Geology of Lake Superior's Apostle Islands National Lakeshore*, Edward B. Nuhfer and Mary P. Dalles. (2004) Revised edition. Eastern National, Fort Washington, PA. 141 pp. ([www.eparks.com/eparks/](http://www.eparks.com/eparks/))

US Army Corps of Engineers, Great Lakes Water Levels website: ([www.lre.usace.army.mil/greatlakes/hh/greatlakeswaterlevels/](http://www.lre.usace.army.mil/greatlakes/hh/greatlakeswaterlevels/))



### ('Support,' continued from page 1)

We undertake special projects as the need arises. For example, this past year the Wilderness Preserve completed the development of a GIS (Geographic Information System) database mapping system for Madeline Island. This system can layer different maps of the Island showing roads, buildings, aerial photos, plat maps, vegetation cover, slope and contour, and wetlands. We presented this system to the Town of La Point and the County of Ashland for their use in land management and Smart Growth Planning efforts.

MIWP sponsors a series of lectures and hikes during the summer season to benefit of Island residents and visitors. These are offered free of charge. Every Memorial Day weekend we sponsor The Spring Luncheon and Annual Meeting at the MIMC Clubhouse. We invite MIWP members and friends, for a nominal

the downcutting was more rapid, and Lake Superior fell – to something like 5-10 feet below its current level. And it was probably during this most recent low-stand that Madeline's present-day barrier beaches, sand spits, and lagoons began to take form. Ultimately (by about 2000 years ago) rebound caught up – especially at Sault Ste. Marie, where a bedrock sill was raised across Superior's outlet to Lake Huron – and Lake Superior began a gradual rise toward its official "long-term average" elevation of 601.8 feet above sea level.

So right this moment (April, 05), according to the US Army Corps of Engineers, Lake Superior is sitting at 601.2 feet – just an inch shy of its long-term April average. A year ago at this time it was five inches lower. And each year the lake rises and falls with a predictable oscillation of about a foot – lowest in March, highest in September. This then, is our frame of reference for what's normal. Yet, if earth history teaches us anything, it's that what we think of as "normal" has a very short frame of reference – about as short as our own lives. That lesson is clearly written here on the shorelines of Madeline Island.

charge, to share in a gourmet meal and hear a fascinating lecture on the natural history of the Lake Superior region by a guest speaker. Once a year we publish this newsletter, and we are in the process of upgrading our website to better serve our members. Just for fun, we enter the annual Fourth of July parade, and have won first and second place in two of the last three years! All are welcome to parade with us!

As you can see, the MIWP does a lot with your contributions. We don't have a paid staff, so our twelve-member, all-volunteer Board of Directors is busy all year. Our Board is loyal, dedicated and committed but, yes, we do need your continued support so *together* we can preserve the natural beauty of Madeline Island for generations to come.

## Is Our Forest Healthy? It's Time To Think Ahead.

By Kathy Kromroy

My introduction to Madeline Island occurred almost forty years ago. A dear friend invited me to accompany her on her annual visit to her grandparents' summer place on The Island. Always fascinated with Lake Superior, I found The Island to be a northland paradise. I returned almost every summer until 18 years ago, when our family had the good fortune to become part-time residents of this special place. As a plant pathologist, my understanding and appreciation of the natural areas of The Island have grown over the years, but, so too, has a sense of urgency about the need to protect these areas and the richly varied life they support. For this reason, I am a member of the Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve (MIWP). Since its beginning in 1987, the MIWP has secured over 2500 acres of forests, wetlands and open areas, and is working in a variety of ways to protect these resources; minimizing landscape fragmentation and managing some of the forest stands are two important components of this effort.

Fragmentation is the breaking up of large areas into smaller areas; the smaller the area, the greater the influence of external factors. Landscape fragmentation can have many consequences including reduced biodiversity, altered stream flow, and reduced stream quality. Increased "edge" means that more of the natural area is exposed to human activity and invasion by unwanted plants, animals and microbes. Fragmentation results in loss and reduced connectivity of interior habitat, becoming less able to support some animals. By retaining the majority of secured lands in two large tracts, the MIWP has minimized fragmentation of these natural areas, and increased the likelihood that they will retain their ecological integrity for years to come.

A second way in which the MIWP is protecting The Island's natural areas is by managing some of its forest stands. Forest stands can be

managed for animal habitat, watershed protection, aesthetics, recreation, timber, reduction of wildfire threat, and reduction of damage from insects and diseases. Some stands are managed for one objective, but most are managed for multiple objectives.



Madeline Island Forest

There are probably no forest stands on The Island that have not been influenced by humans. Ojibwa lived here for hundreds of years before Europeans arrived, managing the forest vegetation to meet their needs. Many of the present forest stands are the result of fires and logging that occurred in the early to mid 1900's. While we currently have many species of trees in our overstory, sugar maple seedlings dominate the floor of many stands. Unless we practice some kind of management to favor other species, large areas of our future forest will be stands of almost pure sugar maple. Presently, eight stands of MIWP forest lands are being managed. The plan for each stand is different, depending on its size, current vegetation, soil type, moisture regime, and the regeneration

(['Healthy Forests' continued on page 8](#))



**(‘Healthy Forests’ continued from page 7)**

potential of different species. While selected trees will be removed from some stands, the overall objective for most stands is to implement practices that will favor currently underrepresented species, and increase age and structure diversity. Forest stands of mixed species and mixed ages are generally more resilient to damage from diseases, insects, and weather events and more sustainable over time than the less complex stands which will develop in many areas if no management is applied. By preventing fragmentation and applying carefully planned forest management practices, the MIWP is

protecting a significant portion of Madeline Island’s natural areas. A recently completed U.N. sponsored study – the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment - found that 60% of our planet’s lakes, rivers, farmlands, grasslands and forests have been depleted. While just an estimate, it highlights the dismal condition of the world that our children are inheriting. As an organized group of people who share similar goals and visions, the MIWP has both the opportunity and the obligation to protect this small piece of our planet - Madeline Island - for the well-being and enjoyment of future generations.



LaPointe shortly after ice-out, May, 2003

**Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve**

P.O. Box 28, La Pointe, WI 54850 • [www.miwp@miwp.org](mailto:www.miwp@miwp.org)

***MIWP is a local land trust dedicated to the protection of natural areas on Madeline Island for the enjoyment of all.***

***Board of Directors:*** Thomas Kromroy, *President*, Laurel Lein, *Vice President*, Daniel Bryant, *Secretary*, Russ Fridley, *Treasurer*;

***Bob Benjamin; Dan Engstrom; Victoria Erhart; Margie Frederickson; Phil Greenberg; Fred Koerschner; Leslie Livingston***

***Advisory Council:*** John Coffin, Kevin Dooley, Robert Parker Coffin, Sheldon Sturgis



**The Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve is looking for people who care about the environment and are willing to serve on the Board of Directors. We meet six times a year. If you are interested in volunteering for a three-year term, please contact Tom Kromroy, President, at 715)747-2065, 651-766-8080 (W) or 651-292-9222 (H).**