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# Arrowhead

## Self-guiding Trail



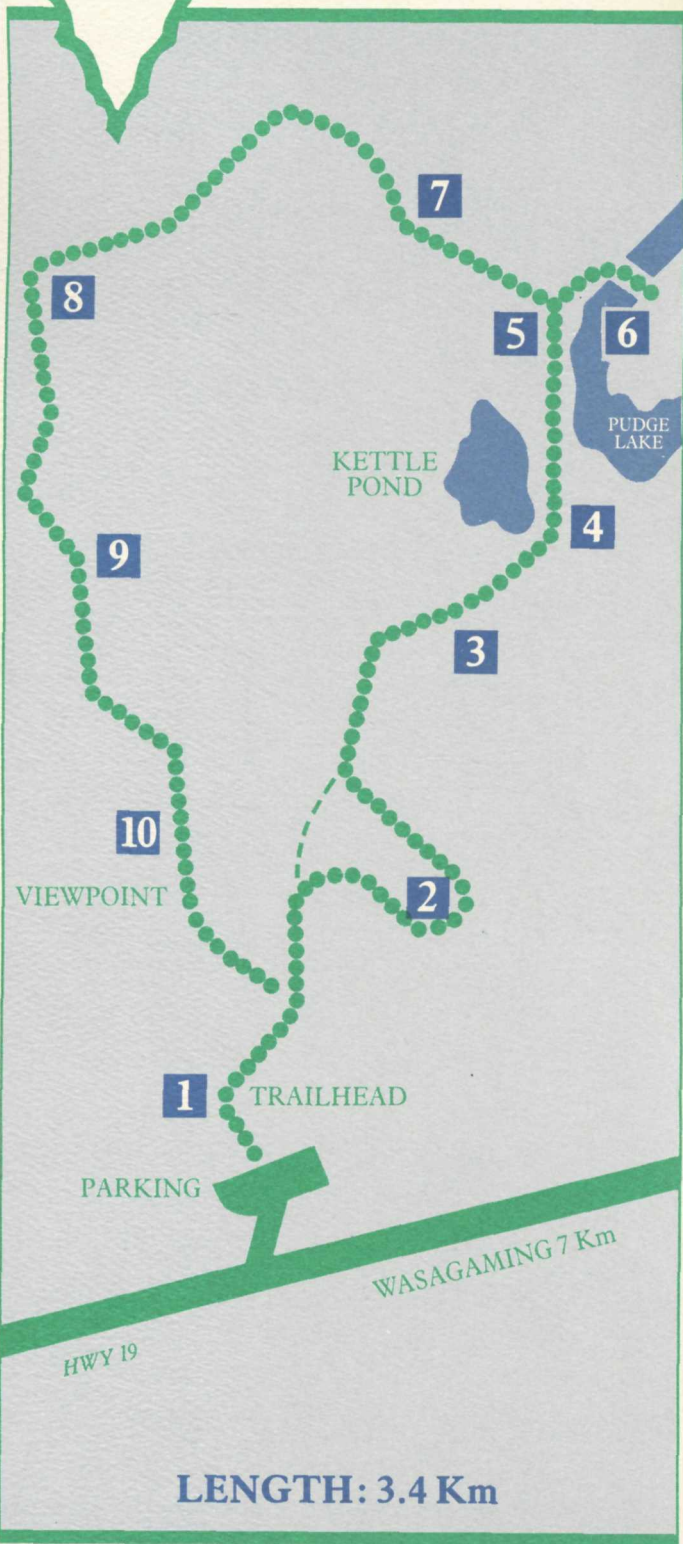
Riding Mountain  
National Park

Illustrations by Jim Carson



# Arrowhead

## Self Guided Trail



*The beauty of this area lies in its subtleness—the quiet murmur of aspen leaves, the dark broodiness of a spruce forest, the signs of wildlife along the path.*

*If you are in a rush, perhaps this trail is not for you. For those willing to take the time and walk softly, this is a special place...*

*Come.  
Arrowhead awaits you.*

This loop trail is 3.4 km long, and will take about 1½ hours to walk. It is located 7 km east of Wasagaming along Highway #19. It forms roughly the shape of an Arrowhead, hence its name.

Numbered posts along the way correspond to the numbers in the brochure.

*Enjoy your stroll, and thank you for not littering or picking plants along the way.*



## 1

## A STROLL THROUGH TIME

Whether you stand here on a bright summer day as a gentle breeze rustles the aspen leaves, or you glide on skis over the winter snow through the shadows of the sleeping forest, this landscape is alive.



JACK PINE  
*Pinus banksiana*

It was “born” many thousands of years ago as a vast glacier advanced and retreated, carving the features of this land. When the sea of ice melted 12,000 years ago, it left behind a rumpled blanket of hills and valleys, streams and lakes.

As the Arrowhead Trail winds through the highland of Riding Mountain, it tells the story of the changes in this land since the glaciers left.



SMOOTH ASTER  
*Aster laevis*



BLACK-EYED  
SUSAN  
*Rudbeckia serotina*

## 2

## FLOWERS AND FORESTS

The rolling hills of this area have created a variety of plant communities. The wildflower meadow in front of you, the grove of aspen trees to your right, the spruce forest ahead... all grow where they do because of different soil and drainage conditions. Spruce trees require lots of soil moisture. Grasses and grassland wildflowers, such as goldenrod, asters and brown-eyed susans, require well drained soils high in calcium. Aspens are well adapted to rolling hills and a range of light conditions. Which community appeals to you the most? As you continue along the trail, look for “clues” left by wildlife. These will show which areas they prefer.

SHORT-STEMMED  
THISTLE  
*Cirsium drummondii*



ASPEN  
*Populus  
tremuloides*



**Shadows • Coolness • Moisture**

Black spruce and tamarack thrive on this damp, spring-fed hillside. But although they flourish here, most wildlife does not. Look into the forest. What would it be like to travel through country like this? In order to do so, you would need to be very small, and agile enough to fly, run or hop easily under branches... like a gray jay, ruffed grouse or red squirrel.

If you look closely, you might see the paths made by snowshoe hares as they travel through these woods...

**RUFFED GROUSE***Bonasa umbellus***GRAY JAY***Perisoreus canadensis***SNOWSHOE HARE***Lepus americanus*

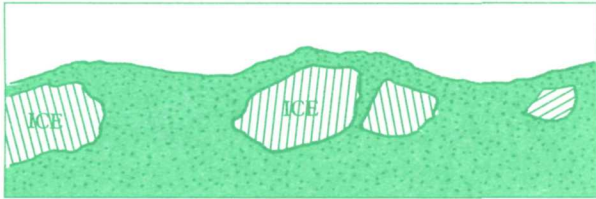


## POND OR PUDDLE?

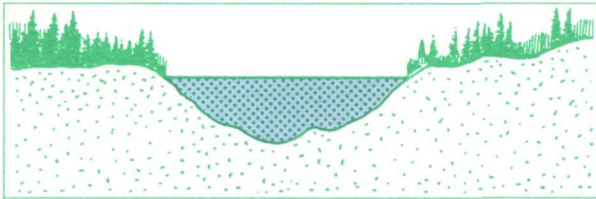
Sunlight streams in. Water. Plants and animals. A different world than the one you just left.

This shallow pond, known as a kettle, was formed when a large block of ice was left behind as the glacier slowly melted. No creeks feed or drain this area. Any water in the pond comes from rainfall and evaporates during dry periods, leaving only a puddle.

During periods of high water, muskrats or ducks may make their home here. Even when water levels are low, deer, lynx, coyotes and wolves come here for an occasional drink. A secure, sheltered area. A kettle pond.



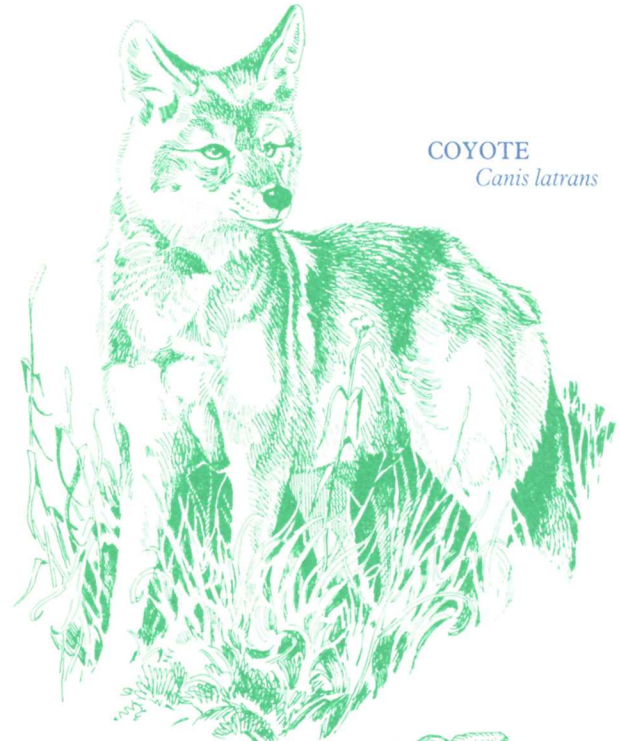
*Ice Embedded in Rubble*



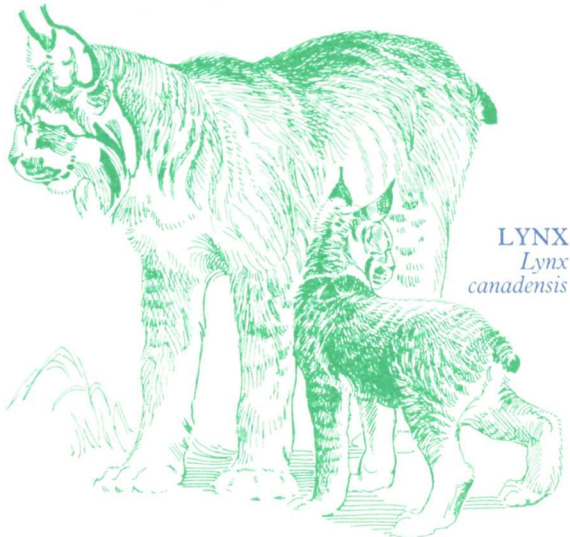
*Knob and Kettle Landscape*



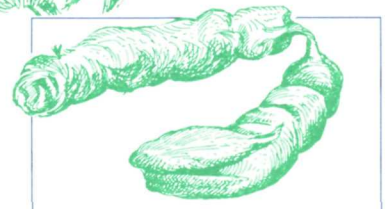
WHITE TAILED DEER  
*Odocoileus virginianus*



COYOTE  
*Canis latrans*



LYNX  
*Lynx canadensis*



*Coyote Droppings*

## 5

## WILDLIFE AHEAD

This side trail leads to Pudge Lake, a pond created by beaver activity. Walk softly. Your quiet approach will help keep the ducks and loons within viewing distance...



## 6

## PUDGE LAKE

Pudge Lake wasn't always here. When the glacier was melting, this area was simply a drainage channel leading to Clear Lake. In recent times, beaver have considerably changed things by damming the outlet. When their supply of aspens and willows runs out, they'll move on to a new home.

Across the lake you can see the beaver lodge; if there are freshly cut branches on top, it is still occupied. The dam creating the lake is on the far left.



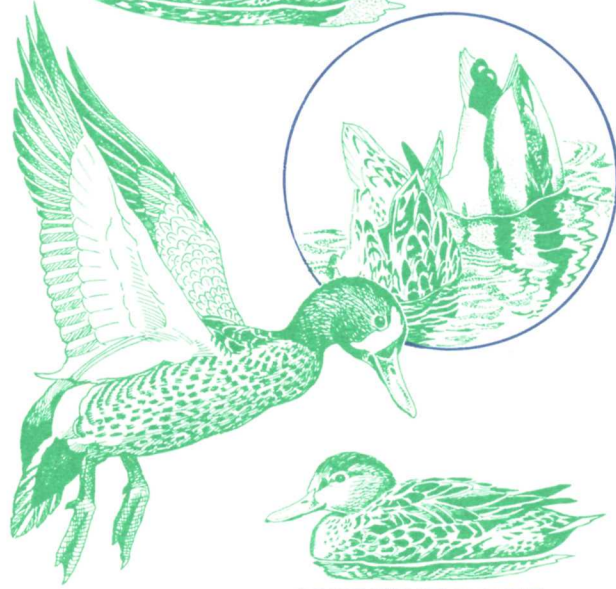
**BEAVER**  
*Castor canadensis*



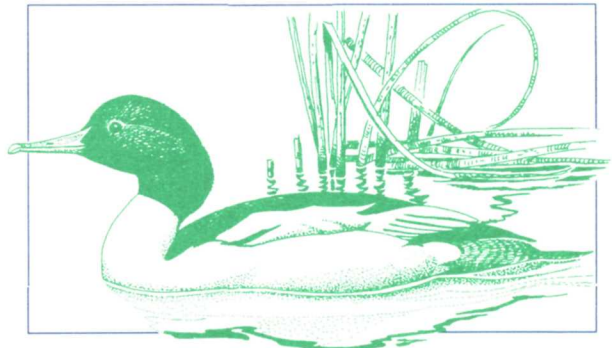
Diving birds such as loons and mergansers often nest here.

They search for minnows by plunging deeply into the lake. Occasionally, you will see surface-feeding ducks such as mallards and blue-winged teals. Watch as they tip forward, scooping up insects and plants.

**MALLARD**  
*Anas platyrhynchos*



**BLUE-WINGED TEAL**  
*Anas discors*



**COMMON MERGANSER**  
*Mergus merganser*



Glaciers were the forces of the past; wind, rain, fire and disease all work to alter the landscape today. Snapped by violent windstorms, these fallen trees stand as silent testimony to nature's power. A waste? Not by nature's standards. Through death and decay, these trees will return their nutrients to the soil, to be reused as nourishment for new life.

In national parks, this cycle of life constantly repeats itself, uninterrupted by human activity.



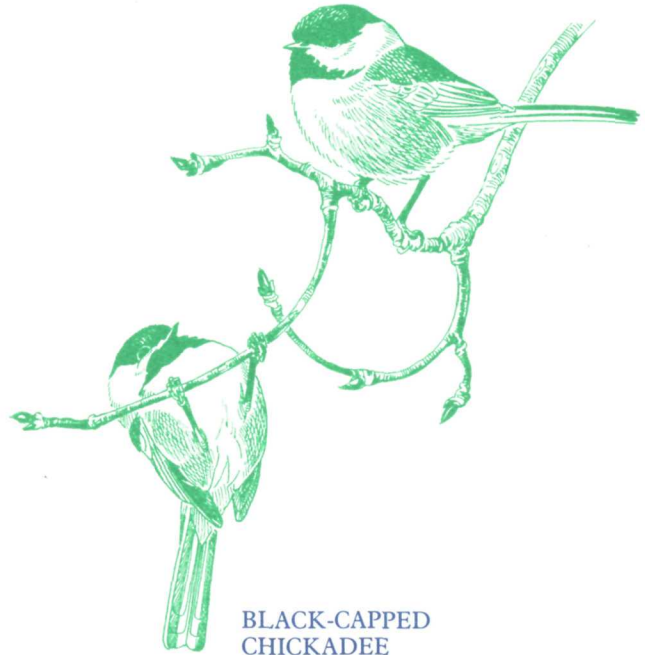
**BROAD-WINGED HAWK**  
*Buteo platypterus*

Pause and catch your breath...you can thank the glacier for this hill! Below you lies the remains of an ancient kettle pond.

As the water evaporated, plants colonized the area. Some day this will be a forest similar to the one on the hillside facing you. Like the other kettle pond, this opening in the forest is used by wildlife. A keen-eyed hawk in a nearby tree has likely postponed his hunt until you pass through his territory.



**DEER MOUSE**  
*Peromyscus maniculatus*



**BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE**  
*Parus atricapillus*

In the distance are the waters of Clear Lake. The color and clarity of the lake are due to its depth (over 30 meters), cold temperature and lack of incoming streams. As a result, it looks today much as it did after being formed by the melting glacier, thousands of years ago.

Relax here, and enjoy the view.

Henry David Thoreau wrote: "We need the tonic of wildness." That is what National Parks are all about. Places such as this are protected forever, so that they may be enjoyed by you and others that follow. Take time to enjoy nature. It is one of our most precious resources.

“ The needs of the planet are the needs of the person. And, therefore, the rights of the person are the rights of the planet. If a proper reverence for the sanctity of the Earth and the diversity of its people is the secret of peace and survival, then the adventure of self-discovery stands before us as the most practical of pleasures. ”

—Theodore Roszak

We hope that you have enjoyed hiking the Arrowhead Trail. Other parts of the glacial story are told at the Beach Ridges Trail and at Agassiz Tower. If you wish to keep this brochure as a souvenir of your visit, please do so. If not, kindly return it to the dispenser box at the trailhead. Thank you, and please come again.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Thoreau, H. *Walden*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854
2. Roszak, T. In *Chop Wood, Carry Water*. Ed. Fields, R. et al. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1984



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