

King Air

A MAGAZINE FOR THE OWNER/PILOT OF KING AIR AIRCRAFT

JANUARY 2025 • VOLUME 19, NUMBER 1 • \$6.50



Travelogue:

**A pilot's guide to
Isle Royale National Park**

Contents

22

EDITOR

MeLinda Schnyder

EDITORIAL OFFICE

2779 Aero Park Dr.,
Traverse City MI 49686
Phone: 231-946-3712

Email: melinda@kingairmagazine.com

PUBLISHERS

Dave Moore
Village Publications

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Rachel Coon

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Mike Revard

PUBLICATIONS DIRECTOR

Jason Smith

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Jenna Reid
King Air Magazine
2779 Aero Park Drive
Traverse City, MI 49686
Phone: 816-699-8634
E-mail: jenna.reid@vpdcs.com

ADVERTISING ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR AND REPRINT SALES

Betsy Beaudoin
Phone: 1-800-773-7798
E-mail: betsybeaudoin@villagepress.com

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

Rhonda Kelly, Mgr.
Jessica Meek
Jamie Wilson
P.O. Box 1810
Traverse City, MI 49685
1-800-447-7367

ONLINE ADDRESS

www.kingairmagazine.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

King Air is distributed at no charge to all registered owners of King Air aircraft. The mailing list is updated bi-monthly. All others may subscribe by writing to: King Air, P.O. Box 1810, Traverse City, MI 49685, or by calling 1-800-447-7367. Rates for one year, 12 issues: United States \$15.00, Canada \$24.00 (U.S. funds), all other foreign \$52.00 (U.S. funds). Single copies: United States \$6.50, Canada/Foreign \$9.00.

COVER PHOTO

Courtesy of Textron Aviation

2

King Air Gathering –
Agenda Revealed &
Registration Open

by MeLinda Schnyder



8

Insurance –
Navigating the Changing Tides of
the King Air Insurance Market

by Kyle White

14

From the Training Center –
What Is This MON Thing Anyway?

by Pete Marx

20

Value Added



22

Travelogue –
Unspoiled: Flying to and touring
Isle Royale National Park

by Matthew McDaniel

32

Advertising Index

King Air is wholly owned by Village Press, Inc. and is in no way associated with or a product of Textron Aviation.

King Air (ISSN 1938-9361), USPS 16694 is published monthly by Village Press, Inc., 2779 Aero Park Drive, Traverse City, Michigan 49686. Periodicals Postage Paid at Traverse City, MI. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to King Air, Village Press Inc., P.O. Box 1810, Traverse City, MI 49685. Telephone (231) 946-3712. Printed in the United States of America. All rights reserved. Copyright 2025, Village Publications.

ADVERTISING: Advertising in King Air does not necessarily imply endorsement. Queries, questions, and requests for media kits should be directed to the Advertising Director, King Air, P.O. Box 1810, Traverse City, Michigan 49685. Telephone 1-800-773-7798.

MANUSCRIPTS: King Air assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs, or art work. While unsolicited submissions are welcome, it is best to query first and ask for our Writer's Guidelines. All unassigned submissions must be accompanied by return postage. Address queries and requests for Writer's Guidelines to the editor.



Unspoiled

Flying to and touring Isle Royale National Park

by Matthew McDaniel





The author and his family with the Isle Royale Seaplanes' De Havilland DHC-2 Beaver after arriving at Tobin Harbor. Seaplane service from the UP of Michigan is offered in Beavers and Cessna 206 aircraft.

PHOTO CREDIT: MATTHEW MC DANIEL



It's late June and we're standing on the dock of Isle Royale Seaplanes' home base, Torch Lake, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Our pilot is chatting with his six waiting passengers while passing out life vests. He's trying to sort out who should be seated where within the vintage De Havilland DHC-2 Beaver that will carry us across Lake Superior. Noting my aviation-themed hat, he asks if I am a pilot. When he learns I'm an airline pilot, he quips, "I usually put all airline pilots in the back row!" Learning I'm also an active general aviation pilot and instructor, he softens his stance though the teasing continues. Meanwhile, the baggage is loaded into the stowage areas within the floats.

In the end, I'm assigned the copilot seat (which has rudder pedals but no yoke due to the Beaver's single throw-over yoke design). Behind, my wife and our two teenagers occupy the middle row, while a young couple has the three-seat aft row to themselves. As we don headsets, the Pratt & Whitney R-985 radial starts and falls into a gentle chugging idle. Without brakes, we are immediately water taxiing to the takeoff area while completing pre-takeoff checklist items. As the throttle is opened for takeoff, all 450 horsepower are unleashed and the corresponding noise and vibration envelop us. Climbing at a sedate 500 feet per minute, we're soon crossing the southern shoreline of Lake Superior on our way to one of the least developed, most remote and most pristine national parks in the continental U.S. – Isle Royale.

The unique Isle Royale archipelago

Situated in the northwest corner of Lake Superior, Isle Royale is within Keweenaw County, Michigan, despite being more than 50 miles across the water from the Keweenaw Peninsula. Oddly, the island is closer to Minnesota and Ontario, Canada, than to the state it is officially part of. Some of its associated islands are less than 10 miles from small Canadian islands also within Lake Superior.

Over the course of roughly a million years, hundreds of eruptions from deep within the earth released lava here, which hardened into basalt. Thereafter, equally powerful

geological forces cracked and shifted the basalt, creating the tilted layers that today protrude from Lake Superior to form the Isle Royale archipelago. Copper and wooden artifacts and tools found within Indian mounds have been carbon-dated to more than 6,500 years old. Ancient people appear to have used the island for hunting, fishing and copper extraction for millennia. Reaching the island would have required a canoe journey (or an ice crossing during winters cold enough to create ice bridges). For such journeys to have been as short as possible, they would have landed on the island's northwest shores after no less than a 13-mile crossing from modern-day Minnesota or Ontario mainland. Nonetheless, cross they did, leaving evidence of their copper mining activities in the form of hundreds of pits and trenches, some dozens of feet long.

In more modern times, Indigenous people referred to the island as Minong, as noted in the writings of visiting missionaries as early as 1669. Ojibwa and Chippewa tribes both laid claim to Minong, while Great Britain became the first non-native nation to do so and named it Isle Royale. Great Britain gave Isle Royale to the United States in 1783, but it wasn't until the mid-1840s that the Ojibwa and Chippewa officially ceded all claims to the island to the U.S. via a series of treaties.

Neither Native Americans nor early Americans settled on Isle Royale year-round. Both used the island for copper and fish, but mainly during the short summer season. While industrial copper mining was attempted in the mid-19th century, small deposits combined with harsh and

Isle Royale is an island in the northwest corner of Lake Superior. It is part of Michigan, though it's closer to Minnesota and Canada.



PHOTO CREDIT: ADAM JOHNSON | BROCKIT INC.



The red fox is often seen on trails and near campgrounds within Isle Royale National Park.

holds many freshwater lakes of its own, some of which have islands within them as well. Protection exists as a national park, as a national wilderness area and as a UNESCO biosphere reserve. As a result, the island rebounded from deforestation a century ago and now hosts roughly 20,000 visitors a year.

So close and yet so far

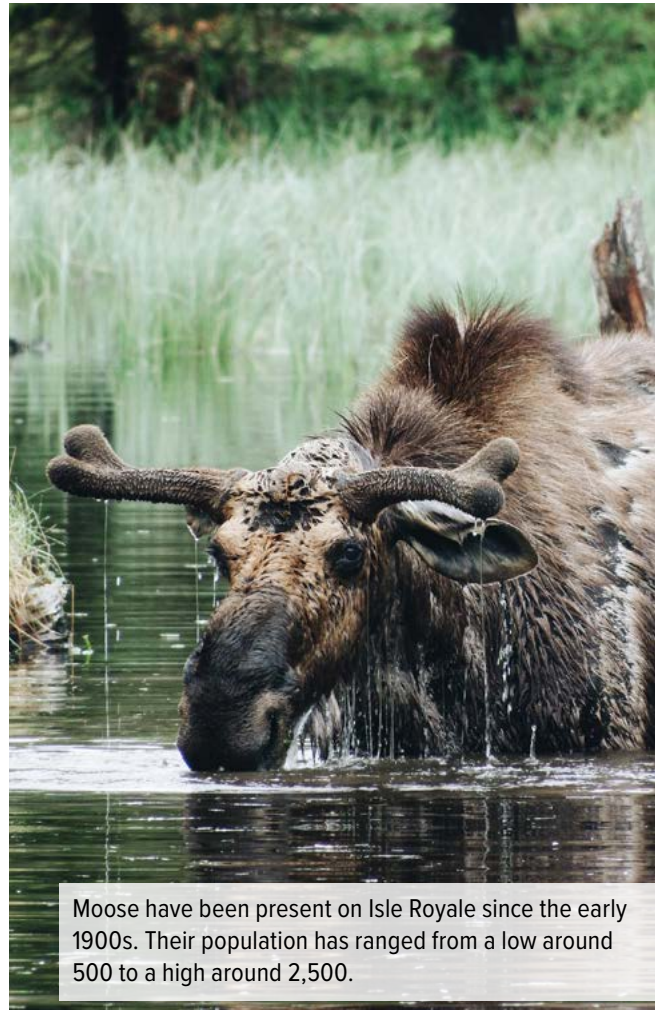
Early in our parenthood journey, my wife and I agreed it would be great to get our two kids to all the official national parks within the continental U.S. However, one of the closest to our Wisconsin home kept eluding us. We were 18 years and 46 parks into our journey before neighboring Michigan’s Isle Royale National Park finally fell into place for us.

Visiting IRNP can be challenging because one cannot simply drive through its gates. No major airline hubs are nearby and even proximate general aviation airports are limited. The challenge is compounded by the very short season in which the northern Lake Superior park is open. Officially open April 16 through Oct. 31, it is more realistic to consider the typical tourism season to be early June through Labor Day. Outside of those dates, services are still spooling up or are already winding down for the

remote conditions soon caused the copper companies to leave. Commercial logging was beginning around the same timeframe. The island became heavily deforested by the early 1900s.

Fisheries have been Isle Royale’s most lasting commercial endeavor, with lake trout, lake herring and whitefish plentiful around the island. The industry remained active on Isle Royale for nearly 200 years. Evidence is still present all around the main and surrounding islands. Old fishing boats, shanties and fish houses sit abandoned, slowly succumbing to the elements. Today, one fishery is preserved intact for historical reasons (Edisen Fishery, which operated commercially from 1910 to 1975).

In April 1940, under the Franklin Roosevelt administration, Isle Royale officially became a national park. The park encompasses 850 square miles, of which 209 square miles are land consisting of Isle Royale itself (206 square miles) and more than 400 small surrounding islands. At 50 miles long and 9 miles wide, Isle Royale dwarfs the adjacent islands in the archipelago. In fact, it is the fourth largest lake island in the world and the second largest within the Great Lakes. The main island



Moose have been present on Isle Royale since the early 1900s. Their population has ranged from a low around 500 to a high around 2,500.



PHOTO CREDIT: MARINA ALEXANDER/ISLE ROYALE SEAPLANES

season. This is true of the limited accommodations on the island and the various boats and seaplanes that can get you there. Thus, it is not unusual to call before the park is even open for the year and learn that everything was booked months ago. We learned that lesson the hard way in years past.

The first challenge is getting to a point where you can launch across Lake Superior to the island. To do so means getting to one of two areas: the north shore of Michigan's Upper Peninsula (situated above Wisconsin, not lower Michigan) or the eastern point of Minnesota's Arrowhead region (the extreme northeastern portion of the state). If airlines are your only option, you really only have one choice: Upper Michigan's Houghton County Memorial Airport (KCMX). There are also no interstate highways in those regions; rather, there are mainly U.S. or state highways and most are two-lane roads. Thus, GA is the key to easing the pain of reaching Isle Royale. Still, even your personal or chartered King Air will only get you so close. Realistically, the King Air will take you to one of two airports and you'll have to choose how to make the final leg out to IRNP from there.

The Michigan choice: KCMX is the only full-service airport available in the area. It offers 6,500-foot and 5,200-foot runways, multiple instrument approaches (including ILS and LPV options), full FBO and fuel services, and rental cars (plus other ground transportation options).

Isle Royale Seaplanes offers the most scenic way to get to Isle Royale NP. They operate in Michigan during the summer, then the team and some aircraft relocate to Marco Island, Florida, where they transform into Salt Island Seaplanes.

Plan now for Isle Royale travel

Transportation and lodging reservations are limited and fill quickly for Isle Royale National Park. Seaplane, ferry and camper cabin reservations open in early January each year. Upper Peninsula Travel and Recreation Association (UPTravel.com) suggests booking your Rock Harbor lodge rooms and cabins six months to one year in advance.

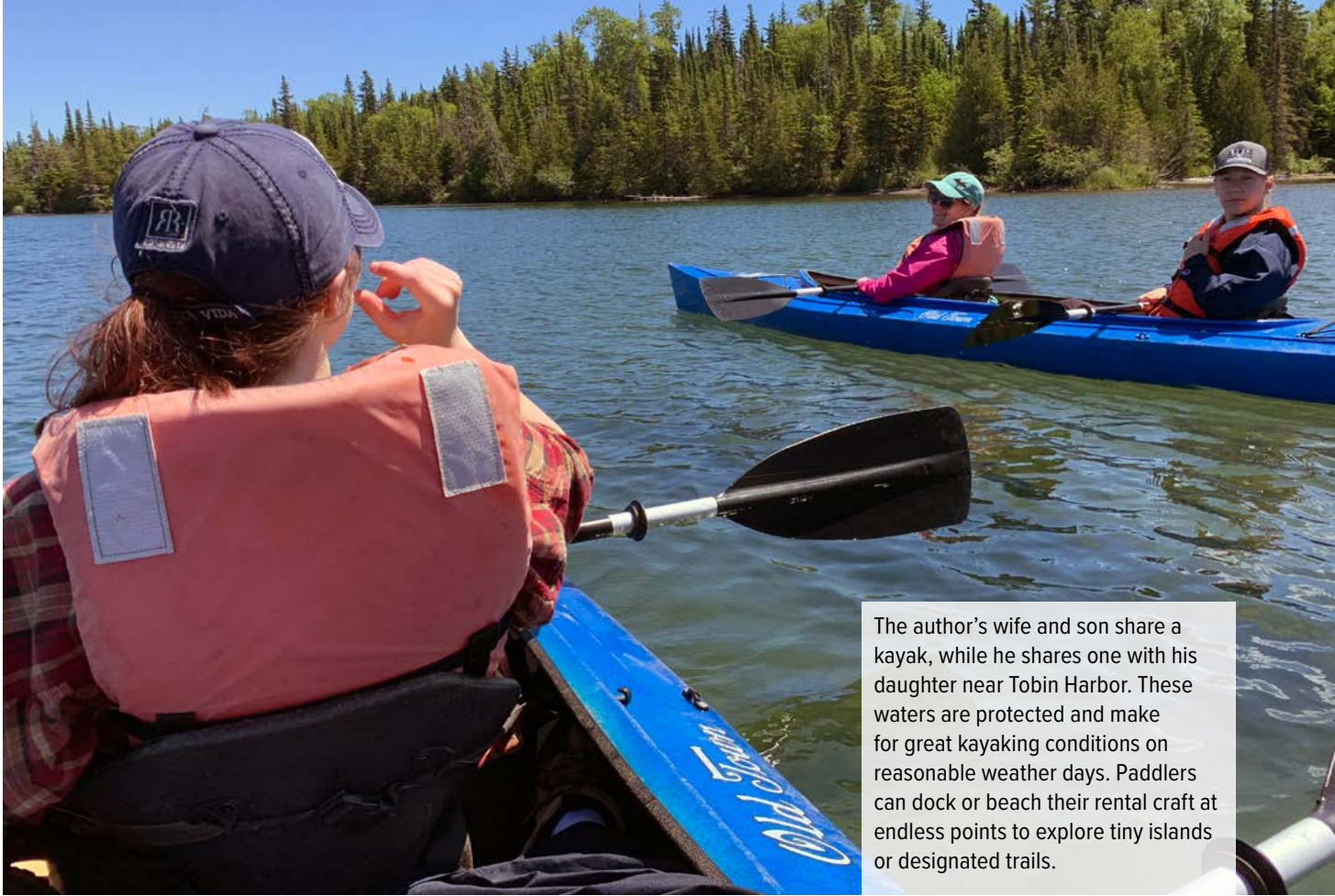


PHOTO CREDIT: MATTHEW MCDANIEL

The author's wife and son share a kayak, while he shares one with his daughter near Tobin Harbor. These waters are protected and make for great kayaking conditions on reasonable weather days. Paddlers can dock or beach their rental craft at endless points to explore tiny islands or designated trails.




Break through with Ice Shield® Wing De-Ice Boots



High Quality, Reliable Wing De-Ice Boot. Contact an authorized Distributor today for purchase!

IceShield.com • 800-767-6899 • info@iceshield.com



Additionally, it is only minutes from Torch Lake Seaplane Base, where scheduled flights to IRNP depart for the 30- to 45-minute crossing to the park. A few additional minutes down the road, in downtown Houghton, is the mainland IRNP headquarters and the home port of the IRNP ferries.

If using seaplane services to/from IRNP – which I highly recommend – Michigan is your best bet. While Isle Royale Seaplanes have historically flown to/from the Minnesota shores to IRNP, those flights will be discontinued as of the 2025 season. However, flights are scheduled and predictable from their Torch Lake base in Hubbell, Michigan. Using both Cessna 206 and Beaver seaplanes, they operate throughout the park's open season, conditions permitting. Be advised though, they book up early and each passenger is limited to 45 pounds of baggage (yes, your bags will be physically weighed at check-in).

The downside of the Michigan choice is if you've decided to take one of the park ferries for economic reasons or because weather has scuttled seaplane operations for the day, only one ferry operates to/from Houghton. While it accommodates the most passengers, it is also the slowest and typically takes six hours to cross. Another Michigan ferry option is the four-hour cruise to/from Copper Harbor. However, doing so requires that you have ground transportation arranged (rental car or for-hire car service) to get you to/from KCMX, roughly an hour's drive.

The Minnesota choice: In the Arrowhead of Minnesota, the Grand Marais Cook County Airport (KCKC) is a pilot-controlled field offering a 5,000-foot runway and a RNAV-GPS approach into both ends (each with WAAS minimums for aircraft appropriately equipped). The field has a full-time FBO (not 24-hour) with maintenance services and Jet-A fuel available. Rental cars are not offered, but various car services are available, which you'll need to reach the ports in nearby Grand Portage.

From the Minnesota side, some lake ferry routes have significantly less distance to travel. Ferry rides are only 90 minutes from Grand Portage to IRNP's western port of Windigo. However, it'll take an additional five-plus hours on the ferry to continue to IRNP's southeastern port of Rock Harbor. Yet, the routes from Minnesota do tend to be in more protected waters and, thus, less likely to induce seasickness.

Limited lodging options

IRNP offers two choices for overnight stays: Rock Harbor Lodge & Marina on the southeastern shore or camping.

Hardy outdoor folks flock to IRNP, all too happy to carry their lodging on their back. They explore the island by pulling up stakes in the morning, hiking, then pitching their tent at another of the park's 36 campgrounds at the end of the day. By doing so, many hike the nearly

Decarbonizing IRNP

The National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation, in partnership with the National Park Service, has launched the Decarbonize the Parks Project to transition Isle Royale National Park and four other nearby national park units from fossil fuel to clean electricity.

With 10% of the world's freshwater, Lake Superior is vulnerable to climate change; it is one of the fastest warming lakes in the world. As a remote wilderness park, IRNP relies on fossil fuel-powered generators for most of its power. The project team is working with park facilities managers and electricians to plan for rebuilding a previous solar system at Rock Harbor, the main access point for visitors to the island, and installing new solar at Mott Island, the summer headquarters and operations center for the park. Read about their progress at nplsf.org/decarbonize-the-parks.

Funded through grants and private donations, the foundation provides financial support for projects and programs that preserve the natural resources and cultural heritage of the five National Park System sites in and around Lake Superior: Isle Royale National Park, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Grand Portage National Monument, Keweenaw National Historical Park and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

50-mile length of the island, departing at the opposite end from which they arrived. That itinerary is not for the day hiker or the casual tourist, though. Isle Royale is true wilderness, where moose and wolves roam year-round, bald eagles soar overhead, beavers work busily



PHOTO CREDITS: MATTHEW MCDANIEL

Wildflowers bloom throughout the summer in many areas of IRNP.

in the lakes and streams and mosquitoes can make a night outdoors miserable for the unprepared.

Rock Harbor Lodge offers lodge rooms and cabins. Lodge rooms have one or two double beds and offer lakeside views via relaxing balconies. The cabins are more secluded, in wooded areas away from the main lodge and with views of Tobin Harbor. The cabins are popular with larger parties or for longer stays. All choices are rustic, lacking telephones, televisions or Wi-Fi. Cellphones typically don't work anywhere on the island and Wi-Fi is only available in a couple of public buildings at the lodge. One of the best things about visiting IRNP is the ability to truly unplug from the world and reconnect with nature.

There is one in-between option, which is a step up from tent camping. A few camper cabins on the southwest end of IRNP at Washington Harbor lack indoor plumbing but offer access to shared outdoor facilities and public toilets.

Soaking it in

Planning far enough ahead was challenging, but choosing which way to go was easy. We traveled directly to KCMX, then we enjoyed a smooth 35-minute seaplane flight to IRNP's Rock Harbor. It was a short walk to the lodge from the dock. Our bags were already waiting for us, and it wasn't long before we were enjoying the views south and east across Lake Superior's pristine waters from our room.

Isle Royale is not your typical national park, though stays in the park can be tailored to match individual fitness levels and interests. There are no trams, buses, scenic drives or museums. IRNP is wilderness – unspoiled and untamed. The gift of such a park is the ability to go out and be among natural beauty, far from crowds. This can be achieved via long or short hikes, water taxi rides to various points on the island or personal water exploration using rental kayaks and canoes. We



Tilted basalt layers make up most of Isle Royale.

only had two full days on the island and knew it would be impossible to see it all. Thus, we elected to sample a bit of each activity. Maybe that was just to feel more accomplished after the long travel just to get there. More likely, it was to allow us to determine what we enjoyed most so that we might narrow our focus should we ever return for subsequent visits.

IRNP is a hiker's paradise, whether casual day-hiking or through-hiking the island's full length. There are more than 165 miles of trails on Isle Royale. After our morning arrival, we had enough time to complete the 5-mile Stoll Memorial Trail, which heads east from the lodge to Scoville Point. Along the way we spotted bald eagles in flight, an eaglet high in a massive nest awaiting dinner, a lone moose and ancient copper mining pits. All but a half-mile of the trail can be done as a loop, and around every corner is a new sweeping vista of varied spits of land jutting out into Lake Superior.

On Day 2, we took advantage of the calm, clear morning to kayak across Tobin Harbor and then hike up to Lookout Louise, where you can see Minnesota and Ontario on a clear day. We then connected with the Greenstone Ridge Trail. After about 6 miles of hiking, we were back at the dock for a leisurely picnic lunch before getting back in the kayaks for more water touring within the protected harbor. This included many opportunities to stop and watch seaplane arrivals and departures from only a short but safe distance. After returning the kayaks, we headed west from the lodge on foot to Suzy's Cave and other points of interest along connecting loop trails. The network of trails makes it easy to avoid backtracking. By the end of the day, we'd put in well over 10 miles on foot and many more miles paddling. The quaint Lighthouse Restaurant at Rock Harbor Lodge quelled our appetites. They will even cook your day's catch.

Day 3 dawned cool and drizzly. While not ideal, it allowed us to enjoy water taxi rides to points farther west. We paid attention to the location of the various water taxi docks as we hiked. Timing was critical, as missing a boat could mean a long wait for the next one or many more miles on the trail than planned. We joined a crowd of damp campers and hikers for lunch back at the lodge's Greenstone Grill. Many were checked out of the lodge, like us, and waiting for rides back to the mainland.

We'd been unable to secure seaplane tickets for our return to Michigan, so we boarded the "faster" ferry option to Copper Harbor. After pitching and rolling in moderate waves for four-plus hours, we finally arrived with two of us feeling fine and two wishing not to see a boat again anytime soon! The car service we'd arranged had waited patiently for our ship's late arrival. Less than an hour after arriving, we were back at the seaplane base and our rental car.

Departures

Isle Royale's terrain varies dramatically from the bare and tilted basalt rocks of the east end to the highly vegetated glacial till of the west end. In a single hike of only an hour or so, you'll likely experience ridges and uplands, valleys and steep slopes, swamps and lakes, warm open fields of wildflowers and cool densely shaded forests. The peaceful surroundings, filled almost exclusively with the sounds of nature, seem to be enhanced beyond your ability to absorb them fully.

Conditions can vary dramatically from day to day, even at the height of summer. Carrying clothing for wide temperature ranges is a must. Lodging is a throw-back experience whether you choose the lodge, cabins or tent camping. Transportation can be challenging, exciting, unpredictable and exhausting. However, when you add it all together, the total experience is certainly greater than the sum of its parts. Isle Royale is worth the wait – and the effort. 📷

Copyright 2025, Matthew McDaniel

First publication rights granted to Village Press for *King Air* magazine. All other rights reserved by copyright holder.

Matthew McDaniel is a Master & Gold Seal CFII, ATP, MEI, AGI/IGI and Platinum CSIP. In 35 years of flying, he has logged nearly 23,000 hours, including 6,000+ instruction-given hours and 2,500+ hours in various King Airs and BE-1900D. He owns Progressive Aviation Services, LLC (progaviation.com), where he specializes in technically advanced aircraft and glass cockpit instruction. He also is a Boeing 737-series captain for an international airline, holds eight turbine aircraft type ratings and has flown more than 140 aircraft types. Matt is one of fewer than 15 instructors in the world to have earned the Master CFI designation for 11 consecutive two-year terms. Reach him at matt@progaviation.com or 414-339-4990.