



The View From Listening Point

NEWSLETTER *of the* Listening Point Foundation, Inc.

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www.listeningpointfoundation.org

Sig as Scientist

By Kevin Proescholdt

The following short article by Sigurd Olson marked his first piece published in any of the scientific journals. It was published more as what we might now call a “Note” in one of the scientific journals rather than as a full article with citations and footnotes. Nonetheless, Sig’s article documented an unusual biological phenomenon based on his keen observations in the field.

Sig had begun graduate school at the University of Illinois in the fall of 1931, and his family moved from Ely to be with him during his graduate studies. Sig’s major professor was Victor Shelford, one of the early leaders in the study of ecology, and active with the Ecological Society of America. Shelford influenced Sig’s own thinking of ecology, and helped transform Sig’s views of predators like the eastern timber wolf from one of killers of deer (as Sig wrote about in his 1930 *Sports Afield* article, “The Poison Trail”) to one of predators playing their natural and needed role in the ecosystem.

Sig’s master’s thesis, “The Life History of the Timber Wolf and the Coyote: A Study in Predatory Animal Control,” became one of the very first ecological studies ever done on wolves. Two longer articles from his master’s thesis appeared in 1938 in other scientific journals, *Ecology* and *Scientific Monthly*. Sig and his family returned to Ely in June of 1932, shortly after this article on fish-eating deer appeared in print.

Beyond the important scientific value that this article on fish-eating deer provided, it also provides some interesting insights on Sig himself. Sig’s keen powers of observation in the wilderness are quite evident in this piece, of course. The article also provides a glimpse into his early guiding summers, and tells us exactly where the 28-year-old Sig was on that May day in 1927, and where he was heading on that canoe trip in Quetico.



Fish-Eating Deer

By Sigurd F. Olson

published in *Journal of Mammalogy*, (Feb. 1932)

In the February, 1924, issue of the *Journal of Mammalogy* (pages 64-65), is an article on fish-eating deer by Thornton W. Burgess, of Springfield, Mass. In this article Mr. Burgess tells of deer in the Maine woods stealing trout from his camp. Although he did not actually see the deer taking fish, he had every reason to believe, from tracks and other signs, that such was the case. He mentions an instance in which a companion reported seeing a deer take fish from a canoe but gives no actual first hand experiences of his own. He draws the conclusion that the deer hanging around the Maine camps have perhaps developed a taste for fish offal on account of the salt in it.

According to Mr. Burgess: “The question is, just how generally are deer eaters of fish? Probably the liking for fish is an acquired taste confined to a few individuals. My own theory of the matter is that these particular animals had hung around camps picking up scraps of food and in this way had probably eaten some cooked fish for the sake of the salt. In this way, they had acquired a taste for fish for its own sake. Of

Continued on page 5

A Trip to Sig's House

I was in the car with my friend Mike Link, in his 30s and old as the hills. I was in my 20s and green as the hills. It was a late October morning, 5:30 a.m. Jupiter and Saturn were paired in the dark eastern sky.

Up through the Iron Range we went—Mesabi, Giants Ridge, a dusting of snow on the ground. We talked about ecology, geology, time, and Loren Eiseley's "Unexpected Universe." But I found it hard to concentrate. We were going to Sigurd Olson's house. I was going to meet my literary hero.

We reached Ely and turned down the small, one-lane "street." Then we were clambering out of the car, I with my guitar, which Mike had insisted I bring. A few steps down the stone path, and a deep voice called, "Hi, Mike." The voice came from the door of a small, green shed. Or garage. Or something. This, I would learn, was Sigurd Olson's "Writing Shack."

In we went and Mike introduced me, spoke of my music. "Yes, I remember," said Sig, who had heard me a time or two before. I had also sent him several letters, and had been thrilled, each time, to receive a warm, personal reply. But now I was having trouble believing that I was in Sigurd F. Olson's Writing Shack, the place where the books magically happened—where the words and ideas that had touched my heart and so many others' were somehow put together.

We were surrounded by books, magazines, stacks of papers, file cabinets, rocks, pictures, and mementos gathered over a lifetime. An old typewriter stood as if in a place of honor. This is what a writer's room looks like, I thought to myself.

"Sit down," said Sig. As we were short a chair, I sat on my guitar case. We began talking. No, that's not right. I don't believe I said a word. Just listened. And looked. And soaked things up. Mike spoke of a new environmental education book he'd nearly finished writing, and read the dedication—To Sigurd F. Olson.

"That's beautiful. You have a way with words, my friend," said Sig.

More talking. More listening. It was cold. Sig and Mike were dressed warmly. I had left my coat and sweater in the car. But I wasn't about to go get them now. I might miss something.

Eventually the topics of conversation shifted to Sigurd's adventures and travels. Hudson Bay. The Coppermine and Churchill Rivers. The Fond du Lac, Lake Athabaska, and Great Slave. Just names to me—great, romantic names. But Sig's deep baritone cast a spell and I was transported, helped along by the pictures and memorabilia on the walls.

This is the way a writer talks, I thought. These are the things that matter.

Sig spoke of old friends now gone, of the only man he'd ever lost on a canoe trip – an editor for *Maclean's Magazine*, drowned in a rapids in the far North, and of the bronze cross they'd erected for him there. He talked of the dangers of big waters, of Superior, Winnipeg, Reindeer, Wollaston, and the tides of Hudson Bay, and of the challenges all "canoemen" face.

Also discussed were the wild and venomous BWCA hearings in Ely several years before, in which Sig was vilified. It obviously still troubled him to have been the object of such hostility. But he had no regrets. This is how a writer lives, I thought. These are the stories of a person who's lived a "real life," who didn't miss out or settle.

At some point, Elizabeth called on the Writing Shack phone, inviting us all into the house for "goodies" and coffee. Hot coffee. Yessss!! In the house the conversation continued, and Mike spoke of a chapter in his new book that referred



Doug Wood Illustration

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This and That...

- **LPF's second annual Northwoods Dinner**, held in Ely, was a resounding success with 100 attendees—four more than last year's dinner. Jim Klobuchar, our keynote speaker, gave a very moving talk about Sig's influence through out Jim's life. There was a lot of interest in the Silent Auction that included a framed photo of Sig—purported to be the last photo taken of him. The night ended with the drawing for kevlar canoe. The winner, a woman from Chicago, decided not to keep and asked us to draw another ticket. We did, and Beckie Prange (artist from Ely) won the boat! By the way, each woman bought only ONE ticket!

- **Numerous groups visited the Point** this past summer. The Northshore Writers' Guild was one, pictured here in the cabin. The group spent the day at the Point. Robbie Tietge is the Chair of the group and took the photo.

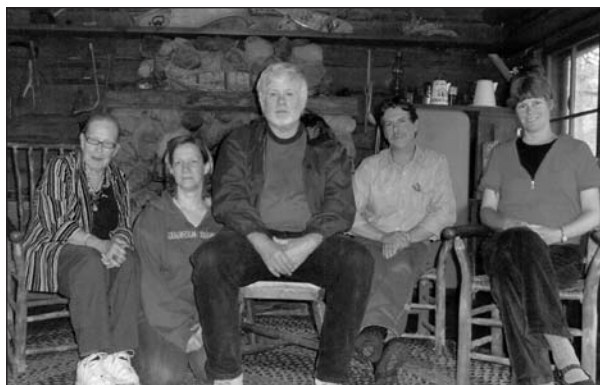
In May, a group visited that was led by Carol Orban, instructor at Vermilion Community College.

Carol writes: "Last May, an excited group of students, from my Environmental Literature class, walked around Listening Point and listened to Chuck Wick's fascinating stories about Sigurd Olson. As part of their course, they had read *Listening Point* and written personal reflections and a paper about the book and author. They were unanimous in their admiration for Sig's way with words and images.

"Sig's history at Vermilion (formerly Ely Junior College) added more of a sense of connection to him. One of the most interesting revelations was that a couple of students who had grown up in Ely had not heard of Sig. We couldn't have had a more lovely day at the Point. We all thanked Chuck for his very entertaining and educational tour."

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events in 2012:

- 14th Annual Birthday Luncheon to be held April 28 in St. Paul
- Blueberry Arts Festival, July 27-29 in Ely, Minn.
- Northwoods Dinner, Sept. 7 in Ely, Minn.



Robbie Tietge photo

Members of the Northshore Writer's Guild visit the Point.



LPF photo

VCC visitors to the Point—Front row: Chris Henningsen, Carol Orban, Rachel Haaverson. Back row: Sandy Leinen, Tiroshah Oltman, Sabrina Hancock, Adam Greve, Cheryl DeWitt, Kristen Laue, Nik Prenevost, Chuck Wick.



LPF photo

John Wilke at Listening Point

Welcome John Wilke

We're excited to announce that John Wilke has joined the board of the Listening Point Foundation. John writes: "I am a lifelong fan of northern Minnesota canoe trails, beginning with YMCA Camp Widjiwagan—as camper and staff. It was through Widji that I met Sig Olson (in 1958), while preparing for a Churchill River canoe trip similar to Sig's 1956 trip. On that trip, I befriended Fr. Louis Morand, priest of the Churchill River natives—whom Sig wrote about in *The Lonely Land* and *Reflections of the North Country*."

My family, wife Jan and three children—Jenny Hagberg, Julie Newman and David Wilke—have had a cabin on Burntside Lake for 40 years and maintained a friendship with Sig and Elizabeth for many years. The northern wilderness provides me the opportunity to exercise my favorite Bible verse: "Be still and know that I am God."

I am retired from 30 years in the investment field, following graduation from Carleton College and Stanford University." ●

Restoring Sig's Canoe

By David Osborn

A strange set of circumstances led me to a Border Lakes Outfitting canoe, purchased by Sig Olson in 1935.

I had traveled from my then home, Rockford, Ill., to Fargo, ND, for a business meeting. In the Fargo airport, I struck up a conversation with a man from another company that had attended the same meeting. I mentioned my restoration hobby and passion for vintage wood/canvas canoes. His eyes lit up and he stated that he had a wooden canoe that he wanted to sell.

After seeing photos via e-mail, I struck a deal with the man and drove to the Minneapolis area the following weekend to pick it up. In the meantime I contacted the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association (www.wcha.org) for information on the serial number that he provided. The folks on the forum at the WCHA website found and posted a copy of the original Old Town Canoe Company build record. To my surprise the record stated that it was sold to Mr. Sig Olson, Mgr. Border Lakes Outfitting, Winton Minn.

What a find! While not Sig's personal canoe, it could well be one that he used for family outings. In a conversation with Bob Olson, Sig's son, at the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum, Bob confirmed that BLO canoes were used regularly by the family. Bob also stated that, "Dad always left a couple of Border Lakes canoes out in the fall for duck hunting."

After purchasing the canoe, it was shelved for a while and paddled once before restoration began. The interior was stripped of old varnish and the fiberglass skin on the hull was removed. It stayed in that condition for a few years. In the meantime I had moved it with me to northern Wisconsin, where I now reside as a full time restorer of wooden canoes and small boats.

Alan Craig, curator of the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage museum, had heard that I had this canoe. Alan contacted me about finishing the restoration and loaning it to the museum for the 2011 season where there were, in addition to the canoe, numerous Sig Olson objects including his tent, paddle, cookware and pipe, exhibited in a tribute called *Sig Olson, Wildness in the Soul*.

It was pretty rough, as you might expect for a wooden outfitters canoe to be in the Quetico-Superior region. The restoration included fiberglass removal, new gunwales, planking replacement, rib repairs, new canvas, paint and varnish.

Once the restoration was completed, and prior to loaning the canoe to the Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum, I was able to fulfill my dream of returning the canoe to the waters of the Ely area and paddling Burntside Lake to Sig's Listening Point. It was something that I wanted to do ever since acquiring the canoe. In preparation to paddling to Listening Point, I contacted Alanna Dore at the LPF and made arrangements to see and experience the point and the shack.

Arriving at the point, seeing and entering the shack was exhilarating! After looking around at all of Sig's stuff for a while I looked at the guest register and noticed that the last visitor wrote, "Sig Lives!" It couldn't have been truer for me that day! ●

—Dave Osborn resides in Boulder Junction, Wis., and owns Little Lakes Canoe Restoration and Guide Service, specializing in the restoration of wooden canoes and small boats. He also guides anglers on small back country lakes, using a vintage wood/canvas canoe. www.littlelakescanoe.com
<<http://www.littlelakescanoe.com>



Nancy Swanson photo

SHIPPED June 28, 1935		Canoe No. 115660
To Border Lakes Outfitting Co. Mr. Sig Olson, Mgr. Winton, Minn.		Our Order No. 4797
		Your Order No.
Via		
Length 16	Half Built MAR 26 1935	
Grade A1	Model Jumbo	Completed MAR 26 1935
Planking W.C.	Hull Varnished MAR 27 1935	added
Gunwales Open Africa	Canvassed MAR 27 1935	
Decks Wood	Filled MAR 28 1935	
Thwarts	Stored	
Seats	2nd Filled MAY 28 1935	
Half Ribs	Stored	
Finish Rails	Railed JUN 18 1935	Calamy
Keel JUN 20 1935	Fitted JUN 20 1935	
O. S. Stems	Colored JUN 22 1935	
Floor Rack	1st Varnished JUN 22 1935	
Spoons	2nd Varnished JUN 24 1935	
Color Maroon Greenleaf	Stored	

At top, David Osborne paddles a restored Border Lakes Outfitting canoe originally purchased by Sigurd Olson. The purchase receipt above is dated June 28, 1935.

Fish-Eating Deer *(Continued from page 1)*

course this is pure speculation but it seems to me the most logical explanation.”

The longer one observes animal life and the specific reactions of the individual as compared with that of the group, the less is one sure that individual behavior can ever be depended upon. Although the majority of individuals of a known group will react much alike under average conditions, it becomes increasingly apparent that one can never tell what certain individuals may or may not do. Whether or not deer eat fish habitually is a question still far from settled, but the experience I am going to relate took place far from civilization and camps, in an area of wilderness where the animals in question could not possibly have developed an appetite in the way suggested by Burgess. In this case it was purely a natural reaction, a case of an animal or a number of animals willfully varying their natural vegetable diet with fish.

On May 22, 1927, I was paddling down Cecil Lake in the Quetico Provincial Park of Ontario on my way to Lake McIntyre. It was about noon when I noticed in a small bay a short distance ahead, a doe and a fawn. Approaching carefully, I discovered that both animals were standing in the rocky bed of a small creek flowing out of the lake at that point. Fortunately, I was perfectly screened from their view by a dense reedy point, so was able to paddle to within forty feet without being seen. I might explain that it was the season of the year when the black suckers, *Catostomus commersonii*, were running up the small streams to spawn. This particular creek was so shallow that the

suckers, which I could plainly see, were throwing themselves clear out of the water in order to get up the rocky bed of the stream.

The doe was busily stamping around and to my surprise I saw that she was doing her utmost to impale some of the suckers with her fore feet. Finally she succeeded in killing one and immediately took it up in her mouth. While the fish was still flopping strongly she oriented it as any fish-eating animal would do, and munched it down head first in the same identical fashion she would manipulate a clump of grass. The fawn made no effort whatever to eat any fish or trample on them but gambolled up and down the creek while its mother was feeding. The sucker eaten was about fourteen inches in length. No sooner had the tail of the first fish disappeared, than the doe began trying to get another. This was not difficult because there were dozens of suckers of all sizes flopping and jumping around her feet. In a short time she had trampled another, picked it up in her mouth and begun chewing at the head end. Just about that time, she noticed me, gave a startled leap and disappeared into the brush still holding the sucker in her mouth.

Pushing ashore at the source of the creek, I found tracks which indicated that not only had the doe been there repeatedly but that other deer, among them a huge buck, had been there within the last twenty-four hours. This particular place was not a drinking hole, nor was it a spot to which deer would come for the aquatic vegetation of which they are fond. The only excuse for their coming at all must have been to obtain the fish. ●

Listening Point Foundation Contribution Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

E-mail _____

My contribution is in *(select one)* honor/memory of:

CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> (other) _____ |

Please send your check payable to
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Listening Point Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 180
Ely, MN 55731

Listening Point Foundation is a 501(c)3 educational organization that welcomes charitable contributions that support its educational mission and preservation efforts. Gift types include annual support, memorials, in-kind donations and planned giving. For more information on giving, please contact us at 218-365-7890.

Letters from Sig

By Genevieve Neumann

After reading “The Singing Wilderness,” the first of Sigurd F. Olson’s books, published in 1956, we felt as though we had met a kindred spirit, someone who appreciated nature the same way we did, and could write about it so beautifully that you felt you were enjoying his experiences with him.

We continued buying his books, “Listening Point” in 1958 and “The Lonely Land” in 1961.



Ginny Neumann at 91 years of age, on her first visit to the cabin

I first met him in person in the book department at the Dayton’s store in Minneapolis in 1963 when he was there to autograph his new book “Runes of the North.” I can still remember the long line of people waiting to have their books signed.

This was followed by “Open Horizons” and “The Hidden Forest,” both published in 1969, and “Wilderness Days” in 1972. All three of these books brought me the pleasure of meeting him at book signings.

After reading “Reflections from the North Country,” published in 1976, and again reading his other books, I wrote Sig a letter telling him how much we enjoyed the books and expressing our thanks for all his efforts to protect our environment.

After reading Sig’s reply, my husband immediately suggested that we frame it and set in on the bookshelf where we kept our collection of Sigurd Olson’s books. And that is where it has stood all these years. I am very happy to share it with you.

And yes, “Of Time and Place” was published posthumously in 1982 and added to our collection. ●

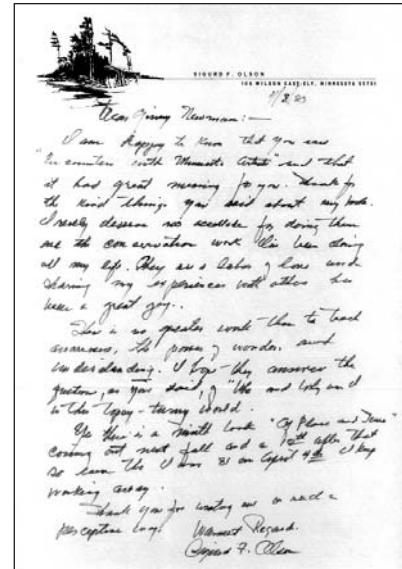
My Summer at the Point

By Gretchen Weis

Before I started giving tours of Listening Point, I had no idea who Sigurd Olson was—but upon completing my summer I felt like I knew Sig personally. This process was a lot of work from reading his books, to talking with people, hearing stories, and getting to know both Listening Point and the writing shack. It was all worth it.

I was very nervous on the first tour I did, just hoping I could remember a few facts about Sig. But I soon realized people felt honored just to be on the Listening Point property and see the cabin. As the summer went on I did start to remember more and more facts and stories and my tours got better and better. I got to the point where I did not need cheat sheets to remind me of the things I wanted to talk about.

In each tour I always gave everyone a chance to reflect on their own lives and for them to think of their own “listening point,” because that is what Listening Point was: a place to sit and think. I am so honored to have learned about Sig and to have given these tours. ●



4/8/80

Dear Ginny Neumann: --

I am happy to know that you saw “Encounters with Minnesota Artists” and that it had great meaning for you. Thanks for the kind things you said about my book. I really deserve no accolade for doing them and the conservation work I’ve been doing all my life. They are a labor of love and sharing my experiences with others has been a great joy.

There is no greater work than to teach awareness, the power of wonder and understanding. I hope they answer the question, as you said, of “who and why am I in this topsy-turvy world.”

Yes there is a ninth book “Of Place and Time” coming out next fall and a 10th after that so even tho I was 81 on April 4th I keep working away.

Thank you for writing me in such a perceptive way.

Warmest regards,
Sigurd F. Olson



Gretchen Weis on tour at the Point

Homage à Anne LaBastille

By Robert K. Olson

The loss of Dr. Anne La Bastille, an original LPF International Advisory Board member, is a personal and spiritual loss to the Foundation and her friends. She will be difficult, if not impossible, to replace.

Like Sigurd Olson, she was both a passionate proponent of wilderness and a prolific author—16 books, 150 articles, and two dozen scientific papers. Like Sigurd Olson, she sought a life of wilderness tranquility but pursued an active and controversial life fighting for the Adirondacks, Lake Atitlan in Guatemala, and threatened places around the world.

Like Sigurd Olson, Anne is best known in this country for her four autobiographical *Woodswoman* books sharing with her readers her life of simple living in her own “Listening Point” log cabin in the Adirondack woods.

She was a frequent correspondent and visitor to Ely, to Listening Point, and to friends in town. She will be missed. One thing that says it all—in the writing shack, Sig has photos of old friends with whom he shared his life of wilderness work. The only woman to be so included and honored was Anne La Bastille. ●



A Trip To Sig's (Continued from page 2)

to Sigurd Olson as a “bridge” between the days of the Voyageurs and pioneers to the modern day environmentalists. Sig puffed on his pipe and thought quietly.

“Well, if I’m a bridge,” he said, “I’m very flattered, and humbled.” Now that’s the way a real writer would respond, I thought. And it helps to smoke a pipe.

Mike asked me to share a song I’d written about the Voyageurs. When I’d finished, Sigurd clapped his hands together in delight and exclaimed, “By golly, you really caught them!” And I felt my heart swell. No praise could have meant more.

Well, it’s been a long time now. A lifetime. And I’ve never forgotten that day. Things have changed, though. Sig and Elizabeth have passed, and now the Listening Point Foundation strives to honor their work and memory. I am now decades older than my “old” friend Mike was when he brought me along on that wonderful trip. I have paddled the Churchill, the Cree, the Sturgeon Weir, the Fond du Lac, Athabaska and Wollaston. I’ve had some adventures, and I have a study cluttered with books, magazines, stacks of papers, file cabinets, rocks, pictures, and mementos. I’ve written some books.

And I’ve learned a couple of things: That the most important journeys and adventures happen on the inside, not the outside. That there’s no one way to be a writer, of course. Or a human being, which is more important.

But if you set your bow toward a point on the horizon, and keep paddling, and don’t give up, you’ll get to someplace beautiful and worthwhile.

Maybe you’ll call that place Listening Point. Maybe you’ll just call it home.

—Douglas Wood

Red Pine Retreat Lake Ojibway, Minnesota

Yes, this my favorite listening point, and I will tell you why.
There is peace and quiet. You can see eagles high in the sky,
Riding the thermals with grace, barely fluttering a wing.
How this makes your heart sing!
The sound of the wind blowing through the trees;
Watch the branches and leaves dance in the breeze.
The song of the white-throated sparrow,
The whirr of the hummingbird’s wings.
What joy all of this brings!
The sound of the waves lapping against your canoe,
Suddenly a loon pops out of the water into view.
The mournful cry of the loon in the night,
Calling to the stars ever so bright.
Moonlight shimmering across the lake,
Such beauty in nature for all to partake!
So when you are down and feeling blue,
Go to your listening point your spirits to renew.
Thank you Beth and all of our friends of Lake Ojibway.
This is a very nice place to rest and play.

Doug Lewis – June 23, 2011



Doug Lewis reads his poem on Ojibway Lake. Doug, now 93, is a founding member of a canoe club in Fort Wayne, IN and for decades wrote rhymes about their various trips and adventures. He started reading Sig’s books in the 1970s and found a kindred spirit. Now he and his wife, Irene, live in Minnesota and enjoy regular visits to Ely.

LPF photo

What Would Sig Say About the Pagami Creek Fire?

By Chuck Wick

The smoke has not cleared as I write this, but we all wonder how Sig would respond to a major event like this. Back in the 1970s, Bud Heinselman was finishing up on his monumental fire history research in the BWCAW. He and Sig collaborated often then because of the upcoming 1978 legislation. Bud, undoubtedly, would not pass up an opportunity to discuss his work as well as the political questions.

So, Sig was well aware of the dominant influence of fire in boreal forests. Bud's work determined that fire would visit on the average of once in every 100 years. In 1863-64, fire covered about half of the Boundary Waters or about 500,000 acres. The Pagami Fire is a little over 90,000 acres today. Many other fires since the 1600s were larger than Pagami.

One of the great tenets of the wilderness concept is that nature will be able to function as closely to a natural setting as possible. Wildfire is an unruly and unpredictable part of this equation. The esthetics of a burned forest to the untrained eye do not compare to the virgin old growth forest we often associate with wilderness. Bud Heinselman, however, taught us that the forest **MUST** burn in order to regenerate itself. Natural fire is a little like predation in that it is not pretty at the time, but it is necessary for a healthy system.



Ray Thielbar photo

The Pagami Creek Fire

So, I think Sig would be very comfortable with whatever outcome the Pagami fire gives us. No lives were lost, no private structures were lost, only two major canoe routes are significantly affected, the moose are especially pleased, next May the forest floor will be green again, a whole host of plant life will have a new beginning. These are all good things.

We should all be thankful that Forest Service policy has room for major unpredictable events like this. A healthy vibrant ecosystem requires it. ●

International Lure of the North Woods

By Hidehiro Otake

It was in May, 1999 that I first came to Ely, Minnesota from Tokyo, Japan with dreams of becoming a nature photographer. This is one of the greatest places where nature still rules in the world. It has given me wonderful opportunities to take photographs since then.

A wild wolf which has been extinct in Japan for 100 years is still wandering the deep forest here. It is great to feel their existence by finding tracks even though it is very hard to see them in the wild. This beautiful lake and forest country is so vast that you can feel solitude which I think is a very important element of a wilderness experience. And there is an unique tool of canoe travel which is so quiet and intimate that you can feel nature very closely.

I fell in love with this area so much that I have kept coming back for over 10 years. Photographing the Northwoods—the boreal forest of North America—has become my life's work very naturally.



Chuck Wick photo

Hidehiro Otake at the writing shack

It took six years to publish my first book "A Life in the Northwoods" in Japan. This was a photo book with short stories written for children and a first step for my dream come true to be a nature photographer. Fortunately, I have been able to publish two more photo books after that. One is about a canoeing adventure in northern Ontario and the other is a book about animals of the Northwoods.

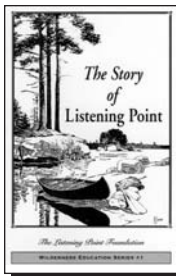
This May, I started writing a serial story about my first journey to Ely, for the website of National Geographic Japan. The story is about why I chose this place, what I experienced here and who I met along the way. In addition to that, I started writing my fourth children's book. The theme will be the reason I am so attracted to keep going into the deep woods again and again. In this book, I would like to try to express the significance and simple joys you can find in the wilderness here.

How can I find a better place than Sigard Olson's writing shack in Ely to write those stories? I am sure this special and spiritual place will give me an great inspiration. ●

Gift Shop

Share the spirit of Listening Point with friends and family with one of these gift items that celebrate Sigurd Olson and Listening Point.

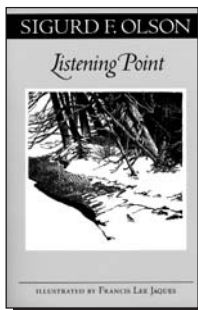
Great ideas for holiday gifts!



The Story of Listening Point

This 28-page booklet, written by Sig's son Robert K. Olson, tells the inside story of how Listening Point came to be and why, what it meant to Sigurd Olson, and what it continues to mean to wilderness lovers and loyalists. Features dozens of historical photos and images.

..... \$5



Sigurd Olson Classics

Attractive paperback versions of seven of Sigurd Olson's most loved books.

- ❖ *The Singing Wilderness*
- ❖ *Listening Point*
- ❖ *The Lonely Land*
- ❖ *Runes of the North*
- ❖ *Open Horizons*
- ❖ *Reflections from the North Country*
- ❖ *Of Time and Place*

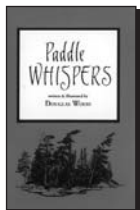
..... \$15 each



The Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson DVD

A digitally remastered version of the classic film "The Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson" includes more than two hours of conversations with Sig as he speaks about the craft of writing and life in the wilderness. You'll also hear Sig's wife Elizabeth and their son Sig Jr. speak candidly about Sigurd, his profession, and life in the north woods.

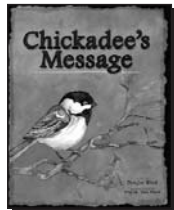
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Paddle Whispers

An illustrated, nonfiction meditation about the human soul encountering itself through the soul of the wilderness on a canoe trip through the rocks, woods and water of the North Country.

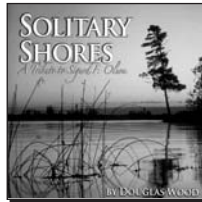
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Chickadee's Message (hard cover)

Doug Wood's retelling of a Lakota Indian legend about chickadees' strong spirit and boundless good cheer. The story is accompanied by Elly Van Dies's stunning watercolor illustrations that make this an appealing book for readers of all ages.

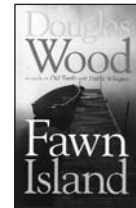
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Solitary Shores CD

First recorded in 1983, *Solitary Shores* was Douglas Wood's musical tribute to Sigurd Olson. All of the songs have a strong North Country flavor, and there is even a segment of Sig reading from one of his own essays.

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Fawn Island (hard cover)

Fawn Island is not merely a charming wilderness hideaway; it is the entry to realms of thought and meaning as well. Author Doug Wood probes for meaning into the nature of neighborliness and independence, of community and solitude.

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Paddling With Sig

By Doug Wood

We stood beneath the last, fading embers of a dying sunset, on a high granite dome overlooking the Isabella River. This was the final night, the final campsite, of our first LPF “Paddling with Sig” canoe trip.

The trip had been a dandy. We had felt Sig’s presence as we paddled waters we knew he’d traveled many times, as we portaged beneath white pines that were old long before Sigurd Olson was born. We had read favorite Olson essays around the campfires at night.

Now we were trying for one last bit of Canoe Country magic. “Let’s see if we can howl up some wolves,” my co-leader Chuck Wick had suggested. “Have you ever tried that?” Jim and Gordon, Sean, Randy and Stuart shook their heads. And I was almost embarrassed to admit that, after literally scores of canoe trips, I’d never tried it either. Always seemed a little... I don’t know, presumptuous? I never quite felt qualified to pretend to be a timber wolf. Maybe I just needed permission.

Anyway, Chuck started in. A long, swooping vocalization that sounded... not that much like a timber wolf to me. But I joined in. My best, deepest, wildest, inner wolf. Our voices rang up the river valley and over the forest. “Wait,” whispered Chuck. “Listen.” We waited and listened. Nothing. Someone spoke. “Shhhhhh!” said Chuck. More waiting. “Well, no luck tonight, I guess,” said Chuck. Feet shuffled. Conversations started.

Suddenly Gordon motioned everyone to be quiet. And there it was, the “call of the wild,” echoing down the Isabella. Then another voice, and another, and another. “It’s a big pack,” whispered Chuck. “At least eight, maybe a dozen.”

Finally the voices died away into the dusk. I thanked Chuck for the moment, for the “lesson,” and waited for the hairs to go down on the back of my neck. I looked at the faces around the campfire. Everyone was smiling. Somewhere, I thought, Sig was smiling, too. ●



All packed up: from left—Chuck, Doug, Stuart, Randy, Jim, Sean and Gordon ready to head out on the first LPF “Paddling With Sig” canoe trip.

LPF photo

Quote from Sig:



“While we are born with curiosity and wonder and our early years full of the adventure they bring, I know such inherent joys are often lost. I also know that, being deep within us, their latent glow can be fanned to flame again by awareness and an open mind.”

— from Listening Point

Looking for Paddlers...Again!

“Paddling with Sig–2012”

Join Douglas Wood for the second annual “Paddling with Sig” LPF canoe trip, spanning four days and three nights during summer 2012. Exact dates will be determined shortly. The trip will begin at the Listening Point cabin and explore a part of the wilderness that Sig knew well, with stories and writings from Sig as inspiration along the way.

All transportation, camping gear, canoes, packs, paddles, and meals will be provided. You bring your personal gear, a spirit of adventure and a willingness to share a wilderness exploration of the legacy of Sigurd Olson. No experience necessary. Seven spots are available.

The trip is for adults only. Cost is \$1095. To reserve a spot, or if you have questions, please contact the Listening Point Foundation at 218-365-7890 or email: info@listeningpointfoundation.org.



*Listening Point
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