



VOSBURGH'S

Custom Cabin Rentals

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On the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness...

Custom Cabins November 2018 eNews

November is often a month of great anticipation in the Ely area. Sure the holidays are just around the corner with family, food, and that satisfaction that comes with reflecting on the year, but simple events in November can have long reaching effects into the rest of winter. This all may sound somewhat foreboding, but it really comes down to ice and how it's formed.



New ice forms in the west end of Moose Lake. The shallowest part of the lake is often the first to freeze.

In the springtime many look forward to the date and time that the lakes will shed their icy shells, but many are paying close attention in early winter as our temperatures begin to plummet.

An ideal situation would look like this: after a warm and glorious fall that brought us brilliant fall foliage with warm days and cool nights, the temperatures begin their steady decline and the lakes begin to cool off. Towards the middle of November the smaller, shallower lakes will begin to form ice, and towards the end of the month we'd get a cold snap. Temperatures would plummet for several days if not a week and the wind wouldn't blow. Larger, deeper lakes would expel their final degrees of warmth and be covered by a smooth, clear, black layer of ice. If we're lucky the cold snap will persist and we'll receive three, four, or maybe even eight inches of strong clear ice.

These are ideal conditions, and if we're lucky, we'll get them every eight to ten years. Last year was one of those years:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6zUYhAyFsU0&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR17bBjS-AADspZaXy5b81niAjRxTD40eR4eJmq4DI6Ad5OGmcS71yp7tVE>

So those are the ideal ice forming conditions. In a more average winter, we'll start to cool off through mid November, some snow will fall, and then we finally ice-in.



We awoke November 20, 2019 to a fresh sheet of ice on Moose Lake.

Following our first freeze we could receive a warm-up with high winds and the fragile shell of ice may break apart to form again days later. This year we've been fortunate enough to form our ice early and continue to build upon it. The problem comes as we start to get snow on that new, thin, and flexible layer of ice.



The weight of fresh snow presses down on the new ice, forcing water up through the cracks.

The weight of the new fallen snow presses down on the ice, forming cracks that allow water to seep out upon the surface to freeze again making the surface rough for travel. This cycle can go on through out the winter. New ice is continually forming from above and below all while new snow falls.

The problem comes with the snow-it acts as a great insulator. Snow layers will bear tremendous weight down on ice, causing cracks that water seeps through, but because of the depth of the snow, the water will not completely freeze and remain as slush for days, weeks, or even months. Even the most frigid of temperatures, nights reaching 25 to 30 degrees below zero, cannot penetrate deep enough to freeze these slush pockets.

Throughout these transitional days of early winter where the lakes aren't yet safe for travel, we find chores to keep ourselves amused around the resort.



Exposing the hillside between Hilltop and Kirk's cabins. Moose Lake is visible in the upper left corner of the photo.

Maintaining defensible space around our structures has always been a priority in an area prone to wildfires, but in light of the recent fires in California, we decided to spend more time removing less desirable tree species such as balsam fir as well as brush. This not only removes understory fuels from the property, but it also opens the view of the lake as well as making room for planting new trees.

As we look forward to the summer of 2019, we want to remind all of you again that the lottery for day use motor permits has been eliminated and has been replaced by the "go live" system. On January 30, 2019 at 9:00 CST the permits will become available on the reservation.gov website. We do not have the full details yet, but we will keep you updated as we learn more. Expect to receive an email in mid January detailing the process to procure permits. We appreciate your patience and understanding as well all work to navigate this new system.



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