

Neys Provincial Park - Nature at its finest

by KAREN PARK
If anyone had asked me where Neys Provincial Park was last week, I would have looked at them questionably. Being new to the immediate area, I could not have told you where to buy the cheapest gas let alone tell you where to camp, hike or enjoy the great outdoors.
But thanks to a diligent M.N.R. employee, I was soon to find out. Superintendent of the Neys Provincial Park, John McGrath, phoned the office to ask if we would be interested in doing a story on the

roadway, leading into the Visitors Information Centre, I noted that none of the campsites were visible. This could only add to the peacefulness of the park.
But don't let the peaceful surroundings fool you ... there's lots to do; for the entire family. If you can't find it - ask for it. Everything from hiking, walking, boating, picnicking, swimming and camping are available, plus much, much more.
John suggested that a stroll along Lake Superior would be a great place to snap a few

Another feature of the park is the botany. Various plants ranging from the 'tiger-lily' to the recently planted red pines, just seem to add to the personality of this unique park.
The Park hosts two hiking Trails - The Dune Trail (1 km) and the Lookout Trail (2 km). The Dune Trail is different in the sense that the vegetation is somewhat uncommon to the area. As you walk along the trail, one can spot the many red pines which are there to stabilize the shifting windblown sands, that were pre-

short distance between Pic Island and the Mainland, the herd has on occasion, swam the distance in the summer months or have travelled across the ice in the winter months. But caribou aren't the only wildlife that are present in the park. Neys is abundant with ruffed grouse, spruce grouse, common loons, great blue herons, moose, bear, wolves, fox, deer, beaver and squirrels. Don't worry about the wildlife though. Park officials see that none of these animals pose a problem to your visit at the park.
After spending an hour or so, just sight-seeing, John informed me that I was to be taken on the P.O.W. hike; just one of the many evening events which are scheduled for the parks' visitors. Tour guide, Ann Marie was to be our escort for the evenings' function.
The tour takes about an hour to complete but time slips by as you are led into the vast red pines to view such artifacts as an 'escape tunnel', the water tower and guard tower, plus a variety of other structures which are still visible to the eye, although they were actually torn down around the early 1960's. Many of the foundations of the prisoner barracks are still there and if you're uncertain about their authenticity, the 'Visitors Centre' has actual photographs of the P.O.W. camp which was in full operation back in the early '40's.
The P.O.W. camp



Neys Provincial Park boasts of its splendid fishing plus its' top notch scenery.



Sitting high on a point are the P.O.W. boats. Worse for wear, they still portray the history of the Park.

park. Inquisitive as I am I answered yes, and that set the ball to rolling.
Now I have visited numerous Provincial Parks in my days. Canoeed in them. Froliced in them. And even stayed for long periods of time in them. I have seen some dandies. But I was in awe at the beauty, the serenity and the natural surroundings of Neys.
Upon entering the gate, one is greeted warmly by the gate superintendent. This doesn't occur in all parks. Some places take your money and set you on your merry way. This young lady was cheerful as well as helpful. As John drove down the

photos and just to enjoy the scenery as well as to gain an understanding of the park's circumference. The shoreline is approximately one mile long and boasts of rocky islands, at times large waves and an abundance of washed up logs, etc. The water was indeed cold but for Lake Superior, this should be expected.
Towards the end of the shoreline, John pointed out a special feature which attracts thousands of visitors to the park each year. They were the old P.O.W. boats which were used by the prisoners of war for transportation on the river during the war years.

viously cleared in days gone by. What is unusual about these pines, is the fact that none of the trees have any lower limbs left. A few years ago the pines contracted a fungus, which badly affected the lower branches of the young trees. In an attempt to control this disease, the lower limbs had to be pruned and then burned, in order to prevent the fungus from spreading further.
Neys Provincial Park has on many occasions been the roaming grounds of caribou. The caribou have taken up residence on nearly Pic Island, and as many as 40 have been counted at one time. Because of the

which was used for the Germans, held about 500 prisoners and 100 guards. The area housed about 27 buildings, including two hospitals. Those who were willing to work, took over the cutting for the Pigeon Lumber Co. at 50 cents per cord per day and \$2.00 for every cord over six a week. For recreation, they had baseball and soccer matches, as well as animal training (a bear trained in the German language as their mascot). Apparently there were few escapes from the camp although records show that at least two attempted the feat.
When the war ended all the German prisoners were returned home to their own country but that didn't stop many from returning to

the beauty of the north shore. The park has had many visitors over the years, who were actual prisoners during the war years. The stories which are related to the park officials only enforce much of what was only speculation.
The park is certainly worth your while to explore. It's only about a forty minute drive from

the Terrace Bay area and what more could you ask for your dollar than fresh, clean air, gorgeous scenery, and a courteous park staff. Hop in the car and take the family out even if it's only for the day use facilities.
Neys Provincial Park will make it worth your effort!



Fence posts wrapped in miles of barbed wire are still visible around the compound area of the P.O.W. camp.

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