

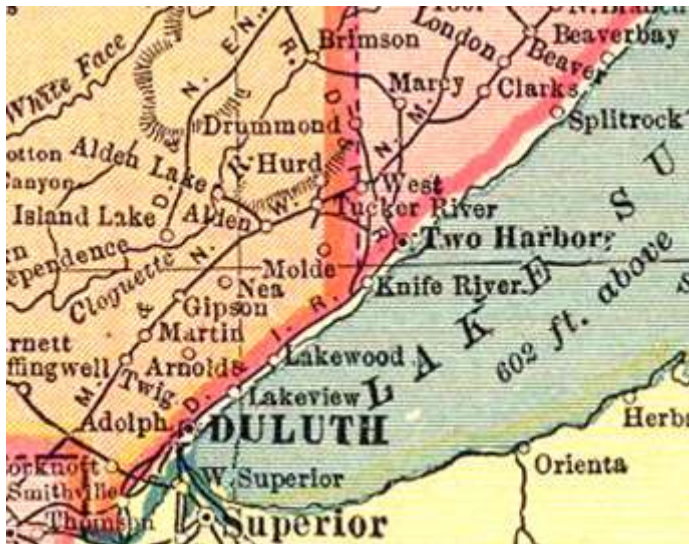


## Logging and Forestry at Namebini

Logging at Namebini has a distinct and interesting history. Located in the upper portion of the Sucker River watershed, the area contained the greatest concentration of large white pine trees in the entire state of Minnesota. From beginning to end, the initial logging period only took a few years. However, the effects are still in evidence even today.

### Logging Railroads and the Alger Smith Company

By the 1890's the land rush north of Duluth was on and the land here at Namebini was included in it. Because of the value of the white pines on the land, ownership changed hands many times. In 1898 the Alger Smith Company chartered a railroad company, the "Duluth and Northern Minnesota Railway." In



1899 they constructed a railroad line, the "Mud Branch" from the town of Knife River to reach the property. By 1900, the company was in control of the land, and tickets could be bought to take a railroad trip from the town of Knife River to where Namebini sits now. The railroad crossed the Sucker River at the southern border of our property, where a large grade still exists. On the east bank, a logging camp housed the men that logged the property. At the peak of logging operations, four different railroad lines converged and met here on the property at Namebini. After the logging was completed, the railroad rails were removed, and the property sold.

**Local Ghost Towns:** Settlements were constructed and then disappeared quickly in the logging era. This 1908 map shows many local towns in our area. Namebini is between Nea and Molde, two towns that no longer exist.

### Continued Logging

Initial logging by the Alger Smith Company focused only on white pine trees. After the property was sold, additional logging occurred, removing some of the large white cedar trees on the property. These are the stumps that are still the most visible around the property, since they resist rot and decay. One large stand of white cedar trees, on the blue blazed trail loop, was not logged. Visit it while hiking to get an idea of what a cedar forest might have looked like in 1900. Nearby ash trees were also not logged, and are very slow growing. A two-foot diameter tree might be 150 years old. If you would like to visit our largest remaining white pine tree, it is along the Sucker River downstream (southeast) of the River Cabin. It is over three feet in diameter and over 100 feet tall! Other old growth trees on the property include stands of yellow birch near the River Cabin and white cedar near Maple Brook.

## **Forest Fire!**

Sometime in the early 1900's, around 1918, a large forest fire swept through Namebini. It is still evident on some remaining white cedar stumps and downed logs along trails. Look for charred wood on old cedar stumps to find remnants of the big fire.

## **Reforestation**

Following the fire, reforestation of the area occurred naturally. Fast growing tree species including balsam fir and quaking aspen dominate the areas where this new growth occurred. Some trees even sprouted on the stumps of old pines. Look for the balsam fir tree that began growing on top of an old pine stump. One is along the blue blaze trail on the east side of the river in the floodplain north of the second trail bridge.

## **High Elevation Forests**

If you take the time to hike to the top of the big hill on the west portion of the property, you will climb to nearly 1000 feet above Lake Superior. Here, deciduous forests dominate the landscape on the south slope of the hill. Red oak, sugar maple and basswood trees make up the canopy, with ironwood filling in much of the understory. Beautiful colors can be found and wildlife comes from miles around to feast on acorns in the fall. Spring brings maple syrup season and lots of hard work tapping trees in this area and boiling down the sap.

## **Pasture?**

There are some indications that portions of the forest near McQuade Road were used by free-roaming cattle and hogs in the 1960's or 1970's. While the property was never fully fenced, keep your eyes sharp to find remnants of old fencing projects, primarily on the west side of the river.

## **Continuing Nearby Logging**

Public land owned by St Louis County is adjacent to Namebini. If you hike off of our blue blaze trail heading to the east, you will enter an area that was logged in 1993. Note how quickly the quaking aspen have regrown from old original roots. Logging on other nearby public lands continues, primarily using aspen, birch and spruce to produce pulp for paper products.

## **Today's Native Tree Restoration Project**

Beginning in 2007, white pine, red pine, white spruce, red oak and sugar maple trees have been planted on the property to help restore the pre-logging forest community. We've expanded our plantings with additional trees including white cedar, silver maple, tamarack, white spruce and hemlock. To date, over 4500 trees have been planted throughout the forest in areas best suited to each species. Differently colored flags represent different planting years or tree species. In season, different practices occur to benefit ongoing forest restoration. Please ask questions if you want to know more!

## **Arboretum & Fruit Orchards**

If you are interested in learning more about native tree species, ask for a tour of the arboretum area near the north field. We currently have a wide variety of tree species native to the Midwest and North America we are growing for educational use. These include American chestnut, pecan, hickory, buckeye, swamp white oak, tulip poplar, persimmon and other trees. Multiple fruit orchards are also found at Namebini. Plantings include apples, cherries, plums, pears, apricots and more. Ask for a tour if you are interested, or find them on your own!