

# Hegman Lake Pictographs



SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST

KAWISHIWI DISTRICT

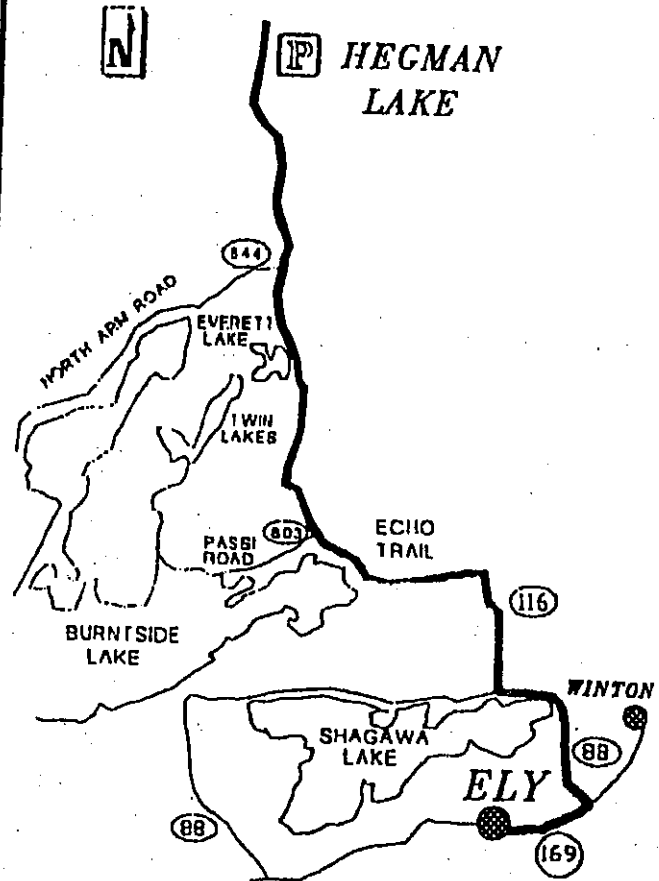
ELY, MN 55731

218-365-7600

## NATIVE AMERICAN PICTOGRAPHS



## LOCATION



## FEATURES

- One of the finest examples of original Native American Pictographs.
- Probably painted within the last 500 to 1000 years.
- Pigments most commonly used were hematite for red, soot for black, and guano or white clay for white.
- Few references to cliff paintings appear in the wealth of literature that exists on pictographs in North America.
- Located within the BWCA Wilderness. Permits are required.

Hegman Lake is 15 miles northeast of Ely, Minnesota, on the Echo Trail

- From the junction of Highway 1 and 169, continue east on State Highway 169 (1/2 mile).
- Turn left onto St. Louis County Road 88, proceed north and east 2.3 miles.
- At the junction of County Road 116 turn right, continue north for 11 miles to Hegman portage.



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# PICTOGRAPHS TRANSPORT PADDLERS TO THE PAST

The intrigue and mystery of Native American rock paintings, known as pictographs, still cast a spell of wonder on today's traveler in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) Wilderness.

Although there are at least 30 pictograph sites in the Superior-Quetico region, Hegman Lake is probably one of the finest examples of original Native American Pictographs to be found.

Native American occupation of the Hegman Lake area dates back at least 9,000 years. These pictographs may represent a continuation of an earlier culture, however, it is probable that they were painted within the last 500 to 1,000 years.

Fifty percent of the red ochre drawings (bound with fish eggs or bear grease) are indecipherable abstractions beyond contemporary Native American understanding. Ten percent of the symbols represent human-made objects, 10 percent depict other human subject matter, 10 percent are mythological creatures, 10 percent are animals and birds, and the last 10 percent are hand-prints.

The majority of pictographs sites have at least two things in common. Almost all drawings are red (a sacred color characteristic of aboriginal rock painting worldwide), and they are always near water, usually 2-5 feet above water level, suggesting they were painted by someone standing in a canoe.

The pictograph site at Hegman Lake shows a clearly drawn moose flanked by a dog or wolf, a maymayguaysih figure (man-like) and several canoes. Unlike most other drawings, these were probably done by someone sitting on a rock ledge, perhaps accounting for their sophisticated craftsmanship.

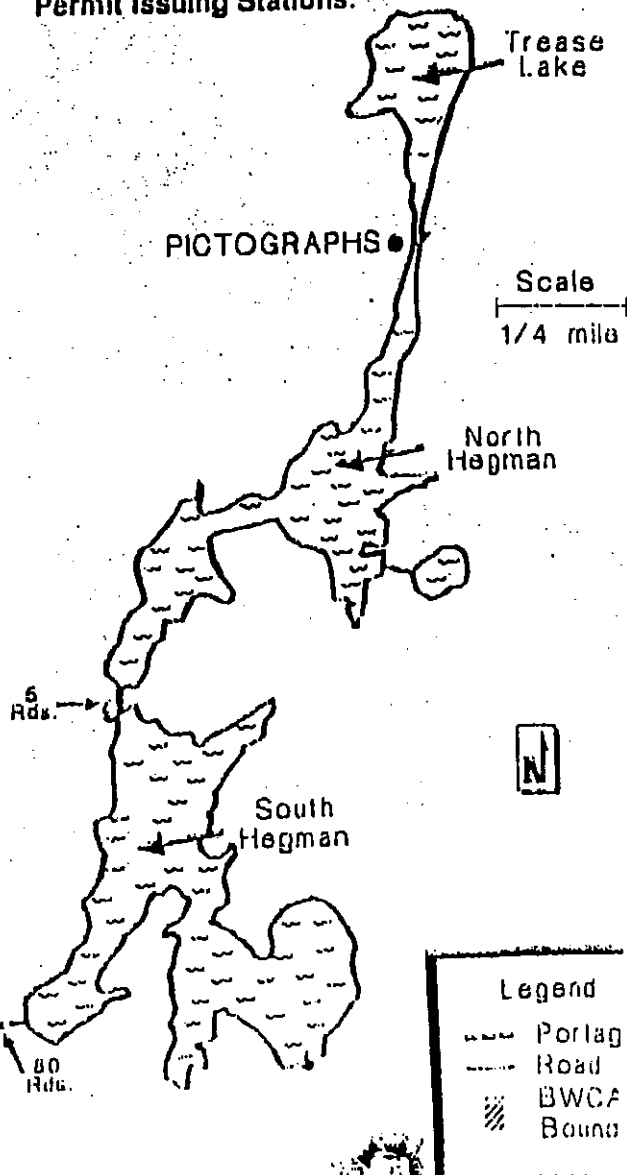
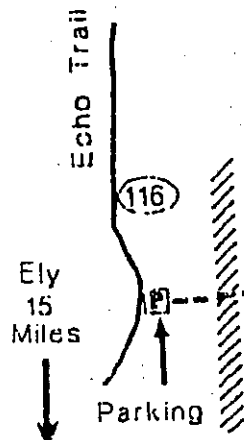
Take time out of your day to appreciate this display of a culture we know so little about. Please remember rock paintings are very fragile and can be damaged or destroyed easily. Take only photographs of what you wish to remember...and leave no trace.

The Hegman Lake area is within the BWCA Wilderness. Be sure to follow regulations. Permits are required and are available at Forest Service Permit Issuing Stations.



## HEGMAN LAKE AREA

For more information contact:  
 Kawishiwi Ranger District  
 Superior National Forest  
 118 S. 4th Ave. E.  
 Ely, MN 55731  
 218-365-7600  
 TTY Numbers  
 218-365-7681 5/1-9/30  
 218-365-7692 10/1-4/30



**Hegman Rock Paintings**, this is a popular half day trip to see some of the nicest pictographs in the BWCAW. There is a half mile portage from the car to South Hegman, a 1 mile paddle, a short portage, and another