



## **Our Neck of the Woods: Exploring Minnesota's Wild Places**

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What are the odds of finding Minnesota's tiniest orchid? Why take a Breathalyzer test to study frogs? How does ice fishing warm the heart? Who would live in such a cold, lean region? *Our Neck of the Woods* takes on these and other urgent (and sometimes quirky) questions, showcasing writers' own experiences in the best-loved places in Minnesota, including the North Shore, Lake Bemidji, the western prairies and grasslands, the Boundary Waters, and the Mesabi Iron Range.

The outdoor experiences described here range from sweeping natural history observations to adventurous tales of coming-of-age camping and hunting trips. We follow notable writers and conservationists Sigurd F. Olson, Paul Gruchow, Bill Holm, Jan Zita Grover, Greg Breining, Laurie Allmann, and many others as they descend a frozen river toward Lake Superior, explore a crystalline palace at minus 20 degrees, and trace a family's history along the Mississippi River. Writing on such themes as embracing winter, making camp, and finding wildness even amid development, these authors tell of hunting, fishing, birding, canoeing, and other great outdoor activities that help define what it means to be Minnesotan.

Drawn from the pages of *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer* magazine-published by the Department of Natural Resources since 1940-these writings evoke a strong sense of place and suggest that the outdoor experiences we share with others come to mean the most to us. With rich observations and spirited tales, *Our Neck of the Woods* beckons Minnesotans to work, play, and explore in the natural places close to their homes and hearts.

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