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Foreword

For years, we have hiked the trails of the Minnesota North Shore for pleasure and inspiration. We have led groups, explored in all seasons and developed a love that can only come from the real intimacy of placing one foot in front of the other and pausing to see the designs in the rocks, plants and landscape. We have explored the parks and the backpack trails, walked the Gitchi Gami bike trail, and enjoyed the loops that connect the various resorts.

When Andrew asked us to review this book and make comments, Mike thought, "This will be easy, I'm sure I have walked all the trails that are in the book and I can just say, 'Good job, Andrew.'" We are the old "coots" and Andrew was once one of Mike's college students, so what could he show us? Sure he was practically born on a North Shore waterfall, and yes he cut his baby teeth on icicles hanging from stone arches, but he is a young guy with lots of things to occupy his mind and time.

We thought this would be a book of reminiscences. And it was. In September 2010 we completed a 1,550-mile walk around Lake Superior. Andrew was with us on the first day walking down Minnesota Point and on the last when we returned to Duluth. (Thanks, Andrew, for including a note and photos on page 31 and 35 about our walk.)

But it's not just a book of reminiscences. In reviewing this new book we found new places to explore. Andrew did it. He was so thorough that even the most dedicated of North Shore trekkers will find new trails to occupy future years of wandering. And Kate is anxious to try the Spirit Mountain Alpine Coaster!

Like an unexpected gift under the Christmas tree, here are 50 trails waiting for our feet. Andrew really explored this landscape and we really appreciate it. Just open up the book randomly and put your finger on a page and you have the guide to adventure and discovery. Like a true naturalist Andrew was inspired by all that he saw, whether a new bird, a new flower, wolf scat, a quirky mushroom, or the view from a rocky overlook. With your eyes wide open, there was no such thing as a boring walk.

During our walk around the lake, we depended on local knowledge to help us find our way. People were very kind and anxious to help, but we discovered that many of them only had a rough idea of what the shoreline or trail might be like. They had obviously not walked it for some time, if at all. You don't have to worry about that when you use this guide. Andrew has ground truthed each and every trail. We once wrote a book about hiking trails and we know the dedication