

Voyageurs

NATIONAL PARK • MINNESOTA

The forested lake country along Minnesota's northern border was once the scene of an epic chapter in North American history. For a century and a half, French-Canadian voyageurs, led or assisted by Indians, plied this maze of lakes and streams in frail bark canoes, transporting vast quantities of furs and goods between Montreal and the far Northwest. Hardy and energetic, these canoemen became the mainstays of the fur trade, a major industry on the continent during the 18th century.

The voyageur's "canoe has long since vanished from the northern waters," Grace Lee Nute wrote, "his red cap is seen no more, a bright spot against the blue of Lake Superior; his sprightly French conversation, punctuated with inimitable gesture, his exaggerated courtesy, his incurable romanticism, his songs, and his superstitions are gone."

Though the colorful voyageur is gone, his land is not. From the water this stretch of lake country

looks today much as it did during the voyageur days of the late 1700's and early 1800's. It has all the wildness and immense scale associated with the northern lakes region: a land surface shaped by continental glaciation into an endless system of internal waterways, and a sense of vastness, reinforced by the uniformity of the forest mantle.

Voyageurs National Park will encompass some 219,400 acres, of which about 80,000 are water. The main body of land will be Kabetogama Peninsula, containing about 75,000 acres. It is heavily forested and relatively undeveloped. Stands of fir, spruce, pine, aspen, and birch reach down to

the water's edge, broken here and there by bogs, sand beaches, and cliffs. The peninsula is accessible principally by water, and its interior holds a number of lakes that can be reached only by foot.

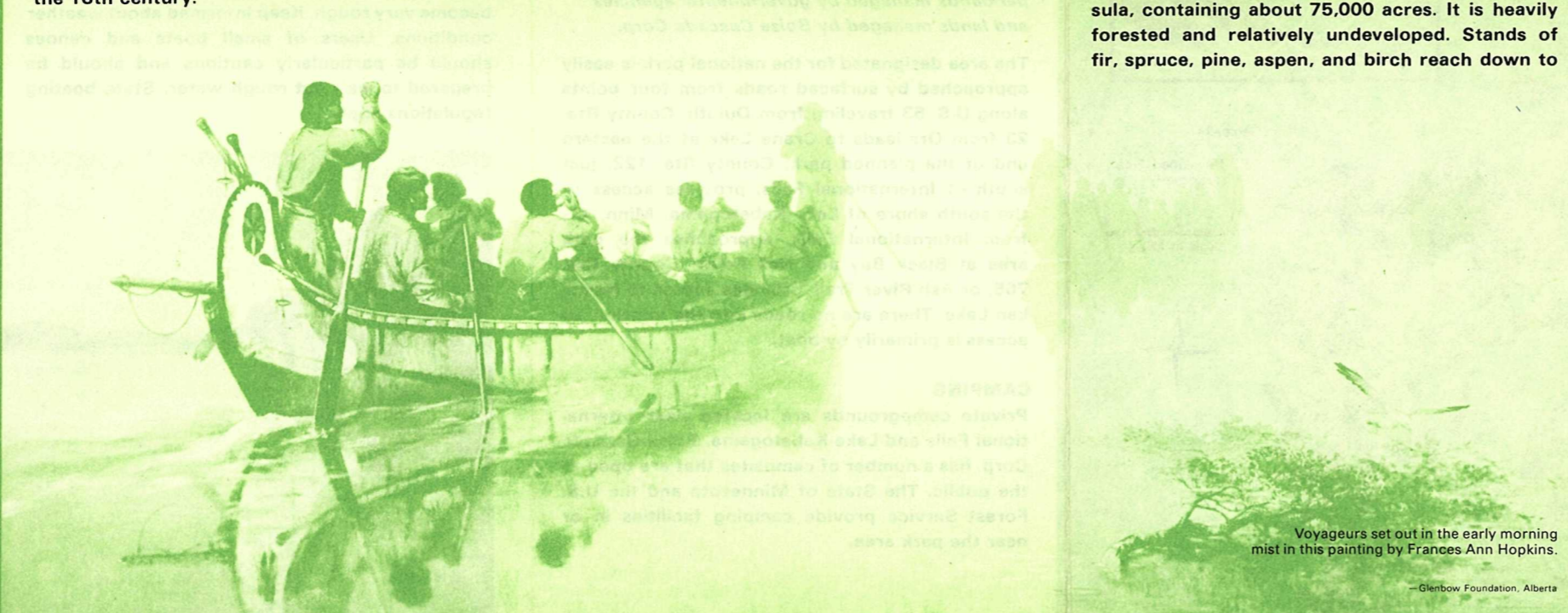
The north shore of the peninsula has a sharply broken front, with many small bays and hidden coves. Numerous small islands lie off the south shore, and along both shores are many places with smooth, glaciated rock, well suited for camping and picnicking.

The waters surrounding the peninsula range from narrows of less than 100 feet in width to lakes several miles across, irregular in shape, dotted with islands, and accented with rocky points and promontories. Four lakes dominate the park area: Namakan, Kabetogama, Rainy, and Sand Point.

The trading posts and forts of the fur companies were located a few miles west of the park, near International Falls. These posts served as the link between Grand Portage, a trading terminal on Lake Superior that is now preserved as a National Park System area, and the remote Northwest.

Altogether, this is a land and water environment of great character, high esthetic interest, and considerable recreational potential. Voyageurs National Park will offer visitors, especially canoeists, a wilderness experience in an historical setting—the world of the voyageurs.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

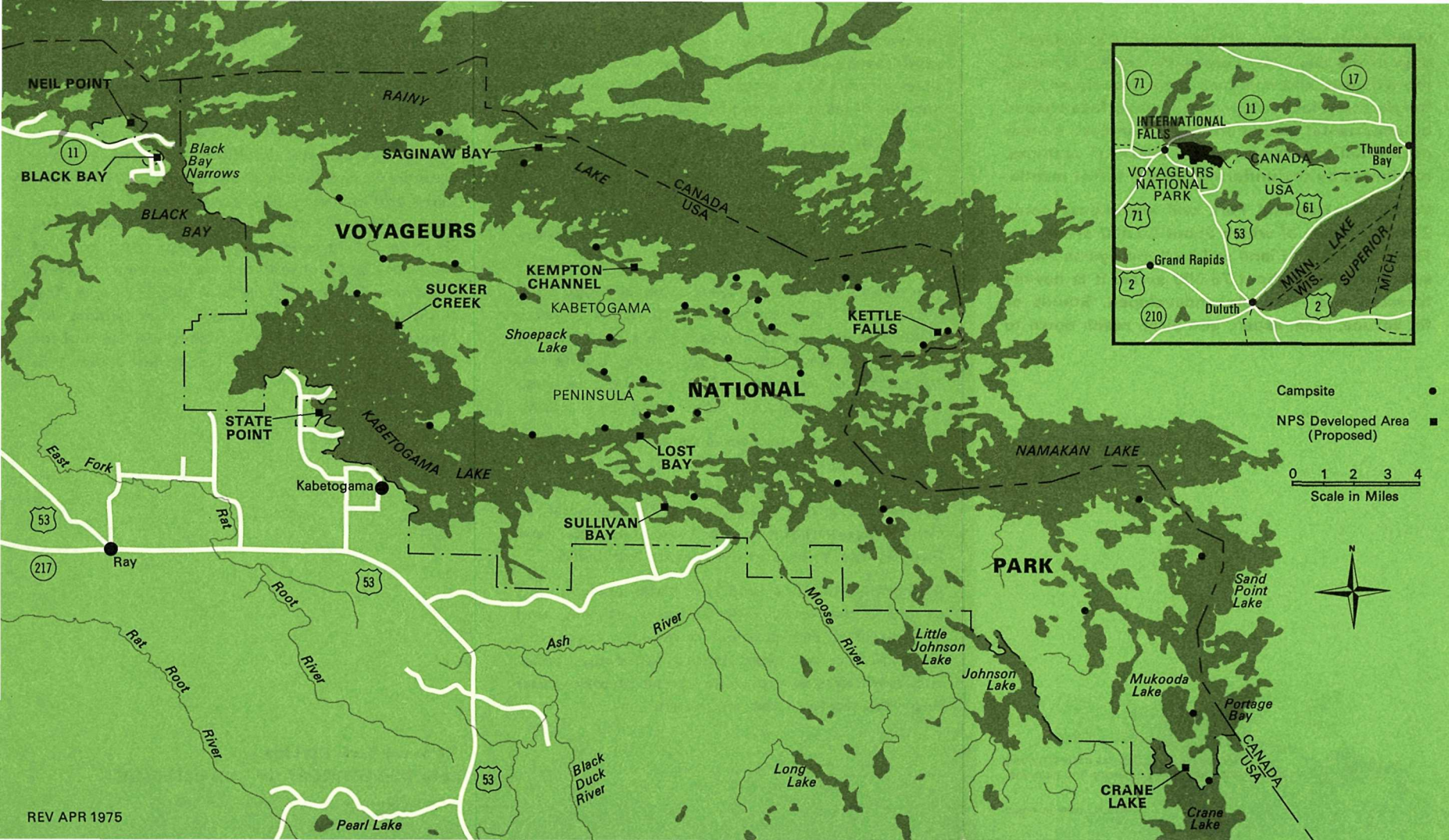


Voyageurs set out in the early morning mist in this painting by Frances Ann Hopkins.

—Glenbow Foundation, Alberta

National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

☆ GPO: 1975-585-462 /85 REPRINT 1975



VISITING THE PARK

In 1971 Congress authorized establishment of the park along the U.S.-Canadian border east of International Falls, Minn. Land acquisition, development of visitor facilities, and formal establishment of the park have not been accomplished.

Some of the land is privately owned, and there are many private cottages. Please respect the rights of these property holders, but you can visit parklands managed by governmental agencies and lands managed by Boise Cascade Corp.

The area designated for the national park is easily approached by surfaced roads from four points along U.S. 53 traveling from Duluth. County Rte. 23 from Orr leads to Crane Lake at the eastern end of the planned park; County Rte. 122, just south of International Falls, provides access to the south shore of Lake Kabetogama; Minn. 11, from International Falls, approaches the park area at Black Bay and Neil Point; County Rte. 765, or Ash River Trail, provides access to Namakan Lake. There are no roads into the interior, so access is primarily by boat.

CAMPING

Private campgrounds are located near International Falls and Lake Kabetogama. Boise Cascade Corp. has a number of campsites that are open to the public. The State of Minnesota and the U.S. Forest Service provide camping facilities in or near the park area.

FISHING

The northern Minnesota area has long been noted for its sports fishing opportunities, especially for walleye, northern pike, trout, and bass. State fishing regulations apply.

BOATING AND YOUR SAFETY

Boaters not familiar with the waters should obtain the services of a guide or obtain charts, which are available locally. The large lakes can quickly become very rough. Keep informed about weather conditions. Users of small boats and canoes should be particularly cautious and should be prepared to wait out rough water. State boating regulations apply.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES

Resort, motel, and hotel facilities are nearby. Boat and canoe rental services are available. Resorts, hotels, and other visitor facilities have or can arrange for guides. Flights to remote lakes and excursion boat rides also are offered.

ADMINISTRATION

Voyageurs National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A project manager, whose address is P.O. Box 50, International Falls, MN 56649, is in immediate charge.

