

# Voyageurs National Park

## Community Newsletter January / February 2023



### Employee Spotlight

Each newsletter we will spotlight a different park employee. January/February spotlight is Tawnya Schoewe, Lead for Resource Education and Visitor Services.



Tawnya joined the National Park Service (NPS) in 1996 at Fossil Butte National Monument, Wyoming and came to Voyageurs in 1998. She started her career in the field as the District Supervisor for Rainy, Kabetogama, and Ash River Visitor Centers and became Team Lead in 2009.

While the majority of her NPS career has been at Voyageurs, prior to coming to the NPS, Tawnya taught college and owned and operated an Environmental Education business.

In her current role, Tawnya is the park's Lead for Partnership Coordination, Public Information, Reservation / Overnight Permits, Interpretation, and mentor in the Federal Women's Mentorship Program. Tawnya enjoys planning and designing interpretive media so visitors can learn more about the stories of the park. One of the most recent projects was developing the interpretive media across from the Gateway Store in Kabetogama.

While out and about in the park, you can see her recent media work when you visit any of the 12 Visitor Destinations such as Kettle Falls, Ellsworth Rock Gardens, Oveson's Fish Camp, or trails such as the Rainy Lake Recreation Trail.

She is also raising a vivacious teenager with her husband and in her off time enjoys hiking, sewing, reading, and swimming.



### Superintendent's Office

Bob DeGross; bob\_degross@nps.gov; (218) 283-6606

Below you will find the information from our various teams for the month of January / February. We are working on making improvements to the monthly park newsletter in the coming issues and will be continuing to use the monthly newsletter to keep our community in the loop on all things Voyageurs. For updates and monthly newsletters go to: <https://www.nps.gov/voya/learn/management/stateofthepark.htm>

Laura Bellasalma was selected as the new Supervisory Facility Operations Specialist Lead and will start in May. Laura is coming from Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. She is currently a student in the National Park Service's (NPS) Facility Managers Leadership Program (FMLP), graduating in April.

### Administration and Business Services

Lead, Beth Lowthian; beth\_lowthian@nps.gov; (715) 779-9101

The team continues to seek temporary leasing for a summer apartment in International Falls. If you know of anyone who may be interested in working with the park have them contact Beth Lowthian.

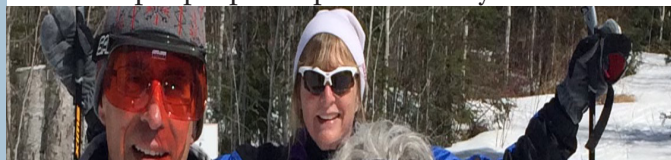
### Visitor and Resource Protection Team (VR&P)

Lead, Josh Wentz; josh\_wentz@nps.gov; (218) 283-6658

We know many of you have followed the news about last year's law enforcement incident at the park. We have received requests for records relating to this interaction, which are being processed by the National Park Service Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) office in accordance with applicable law and policies. We don't have a timeline on when that will be completed.

Team members assisted with a snowmobile accident on Gold Portage. There were no life threatening injuries, but alcohol was a factor.

A joint partnership was created with the Polar Polers Ski Club and a 3-day ski event was co-hosted by the rangers on February 24 - 26 where more than 100 people participated. Mark your calendars for 2024.



First Annual Voyageurs / Polar Polers Ski Event

Photo: Polar Polers Ski Club

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### Did You Know....

Park staff strive to educate people, young and old on the preservation of national parks. This may happen in a multitude of ways such as an official education program or seasonal career work. So far this year:

The Education Team connected with more than 19,000 students U.S wide and the school year is only halfway done!

The Maintenance Team has hired more than 20 summer seasonal positions with the people from the park's gateway communities.

The Law Enforcement Team has connected with more than 300 youth and adults on water safety and outdoor recreation skills.



### Interpretation, Education, and Reservations Team

Lead, Tawnya Schoewe; [tawnya\\_schoewe@nps.gov](mailto:tawnya_schoewe@nps.gov); (218) 283-6670

January's International Falls Icebox Days Night Light Snowshoe Hike had 87 attendees. It was windy and cold but still a great turnout at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center.

The team collaborated with six agencies / partners to bring the first annual winter Boreal Stargazing Week to Minnesota. It was held February 19 - 24. More than 19,000 students engaged across the country for a live event on the Rainy Lake Ice Road. Also included were multiple evening snowshoe hikes, an evening ski event, a film showing in the Twin Cities, and a Winter Stargazing Event on Ice. The team is identifying ways to improve next year's event so mark your calendars for February 2024.

Environmental Education snowshoe programs were held in February with more than 200 students from the park's gateway communities attending.

The team will be offering a Night Snowshoe Hike March 3, 6 - 7:30 pm.



### Facilities Management Team

Acting Mark Denker; [mark\\_denker@nps.gov](mailto:mark_denker@nps.gov), (218) 283 - 6624

The team has several projects they are in the midst of; Kettle Falls camper cabin planning, dock removal at Ash River Visitor Center boat ramp and the construction of a new one in its place, along with the continuation of grooming the snowmobile trails, tracking ski trails, and plowing ice roads.

The Lake Kabetogama Boat Launch Ramp is planned to be replaced in the summer of 2023. More information will be forthcoming related to the planning for this project as it moves forward. This project will likely occur in the August / September timeframe.

The park hosted the Facility Managers Leadership Team (FMLP) in February for a week long training. This is a group of career minded individuals who go through a rigorous year long training to become Facility Managers in the National Park Service. In exchange for assisting with training Voyageurs will receive a review of the park's maintenance operations and ways for better improvement moving forward.

The latest Winter Trails Report can be located at: <https://www.nps.gov/voya/planyourvisit/conditions.htm>

### Natural and Cultural Resources Team

Lead, Brian Harmon; [brian\\_harmon@nps.gov](mailto:brian_harmon@nps.gov); (218) 283-6674

Aerial moose surveys were conducted this month with the assistance of the United States Forest Service and Isle Royal National Park.

Cultural resources is planning for Ellsworth Rock Garden work for the 2023 summer season.

The team is hiring three Field Fellow Intern along side the Voyageurs Conservancy. These are paid internships that enhance careers and assist the park in field work.

Prescribed burns in wetland will occur April / May to reduce cattail vegetation.