



The Voyageur Messenger

Remembering the Past, Celebrating the Future

On April 8, 1975 Voyageurs National Park was authorized. This year, the park will celebrate its 35th anniversary. To commemorate this anniversary, Voyageurs is hosting or conducting 35 activities in partnership with different organizations.

There are many things to see and do in the park and we want you to visit and celebrate with us. To find a complete list of activities visit the park's website at www.nps.gov/voya.

Ken Burns Film

Come and view the Ken Burns Film: *The National Parks: America's Best Idea*. This six part series will be shown each night starting Sunday, April 18 through Friday, April 23, 2010 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. Popcorn and refreshments provided. **Sponsored by Voyageurs National Park Association.**

Voyageurs National Park Scavenger Hunt and Commemorative National Park Service Passport Cancellation Stamp

Visitors are encouraged to explore the park by going to all three visitor centers and completing unique scavenger hunts at each location. This activity starts Saturday, May 22 and runs through Saturday, September 25, 2010. Once visitors



complete all three scavenger hunts, they may stamp their National Park Service (NPS) passport or other souvenir with a special 35 year commemorative NPS cancellation stamp.

National Park Week Open House and Art Contest Awards Ceremony

Help kick-off National Park Week at Voyageurs National Park during an open house at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center on Saturday, April 17, 2010 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Special activities and an awards ceremony will highlight this event. **Sponsored by Voyageurs National Park Association & the Friends of Voyageurs National Park.**

Starwatch Cruises

To commemorate the park's 35th anniversary, Voyageurs is hosting a series of Starwatch Cruises aboard the *Voyageur* tour boat on Rainy Lake.

Minnesota Governor's 2010 Fishing Opener on Kabetogama Lake

Join the National Park Service in celebrating the Governor's Fishing Opener and the 35th Anniversary of the park on Friday, May 14, 2010. The public is invited to the Governor's Fishing Opener Community Picnic. Participants can play voyageur games, and paddle back in time aboard a 26-foot North Canoe. The picnic and activities run from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on May 14, 2010 at the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center. Sign up for North Canoe rides begins at 4:00pm.

Photo Contest

Calling all amateur photographers! Submit up to three photos of your choice to Voyageurs National Park. The public will judge the winners in September. For contest rules, visit the park's website at www.nps.gov/voya.

Trail Updates

The Kab-Ash trail, a 26 mile trail that links the communities of Kabetogama and Ash River, is the longest trail in Voyageurs National Park that is accessible by car. The trail meanders through beautiful stands of pines and over rock ridges with expansive views of the Minnesota northwoods landscape.

Trail clearing started in 2000 in cooperation with park staff and with the Minnesota Conservation Corps. Funding from the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, Public Land Corps, Quetico Superior Foundation, Voyageurs National Park Association (VNPA) and Voyageurs National Park made this trail possible. The National Park Service opened the trail in August 2002. Since the trail opened, it has been maintained by Minnesota Conservation Corps crews when the park received funding through the Public Land Corps program.



VNPA has also organized trail clearing events. Through their efforts many volunteers have donated time clearing this trail.

In 2009 the park was hosted a 7-week Minnesota Conservation Corps crew. The crew members concentrated their efforts on the trail's west end between Salmi Road and the trailhead access on the Ash River Trail. The crew brushed and removed windfalls along this 7-mile section of trail. Park employees took over where the Minnesota Conservation Corps left off and were able to complete brushing and removing windfalls on the entire Kab-Ash trail system as well as the Cruiser Lake and Locator Lake trails.

The park has received funding in 2010 to host a Minnesota Conservation Corps crew and a Student Conservation Association crew. Both youth groups will continue to enhance the visitor experience by maintaining the trail systems within the park. In 2010, trail crews will focus on the Beast Lake Trail, Echo Bay Trail, and the Kab-Ash Trail.

Beaver Research Conducted in Voyageurs National Park

Beavers (*Castor canadensis*), America's largest rodent, require water to access food and provide an underwater, predator-proof entrance to their lodges.

Beavers are perhaps best known for building dams in streams to create ponds with relatively stable water conditions they desire. Beavers also live and build lodges in lake environments, such as those that dominate the landscape in Voyageurs National Park.

Beavers do not build dams in lakes but instead are subject to natural fluctuations that lakes experience over the course of a year. In the case of the large lakes in Voyageurs National Park, beavers are also subject to unnatural fluctuations that the lakes experience as a result of the manmade dams at International Falls and Kettle Falls.

Water level fluctuations can have dramatic effects on beavers, especially when water levels are drawn down over the winter,

a critical period for beaver survival and reproduction.

Biologists from Voyageurs National Park have been studying the effects of artificial water level management on aspects of beaver ecology since 2006. Since then, nearly 500 individual beavers have been live-trapped and affixed with uniquely numbered ear tags. Each beaver was carefully measured and weighed to assess body condition (i.e., how fat and healthy are they), age, and sex. Ninety-eight of these beavers were also outfitted with radio transmitters to monitor behavior and survival in relation to winter drawdowns. Results from this research will be used to evaluate water level management strategies put in place in 2000 to reduce negative impacts to Voyageurs National Park aquatic ecosystems.

For more information contact Dr. Steve Windels, Terrestrial Biologist, Voyageurs National Park: steve_windels@nps.gov, 218-283-6692.



Biological Science Technician Bridget Henning with a newly ear-tagged beaver captured in Voyageurs National Park as part of a National Park Service project to study the effects of artificial water level management on beaver behavior, survival, and reproduction.

Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Program

In 2007, the National Park Service started the *Teacher to Ranger to Teacher Program*, which allows teachers across the nation to become park rangers for a summer. This program links national park service units to teachers from underserved urban and rural school districts. Teachers spend the summer working and often also living in a park. The parks provide a uniform, housing (if available), and a supplementary payment for the teachers.

Teacher-Rangers perform various duties depending on their interests and the needs of the park. They may develop and present interpretive programs for park visitors, staff the visitor center, develop curriculum-based materials for the park, or take on special projects.

In April, during National Park



2009 Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Mike Barnes

Week, Teacher-Rangers wear their NPS uniforms to school, discuss their summer as a park ranger, and engage students and other teachers in activities that relate to America's National Parks.

This past summer Voyageurs National Park participated in this program for the first time. Voyageurs' first Teacher-Ranger was Mike Barnes. Mike is a History teacher at Bloomington

Kennedy Public High School (ISD #271) in St. Paul, Minnesota. Mike worked for eight weeks at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. He gave tours aboard the Borealis Tour Boat, led North Canoe Programs and presented evening campfire programs.

This April, during National Park Week, Mike will be presenting a hands-on program about Voyageurs and his experience at the park to various grades within his school district.

If you are a teacher or might know of one who would be interested in participating in this program please have them contact the park at 218-283-6670 to begin a new experience.

www.nps.gov/voya/ForTeachers



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Voyageurs National Park was authorized by an Act of Congress on January 8, 1971 (84 Stat. 1971) "to preserve, for the inspiration and enjoyment of present and future generations, the outstanding scenery, geological conditions and waterway system which constituted a part of the historic route of the Voyageurs who contributed significantly to the opening of the Northwestern United States." The park was established in 1975.

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Newsletter Title: During the fur trade, the Hudson's Bay Company transported mail in packet boxes from London by ship and then overland to fur trade posts. **Messengers** – often a voyageur – distributed the packets from fur trade posts to their destination.

New Park Headquarters Planned for 2011

Facility planning and design work continues for the leasing of a new park headquarters and maintenance complex under the guidance of the General Services Administration.

The City of International Falls has recently been awarded a 20 year lease agreement to construct a 38,500 sq ft headquarters complex on a 10 acre site located about 2 miles east of the city on the shores of Rainy River.

The headquarters facility will be built to meet a silver level of LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) and is to be an initial corner stone building for other private and public riverfront development expected in the years ahead. The design theme of recreation, area history, and the northwoods lifestyle sets the stage for this site development.

The headquarters will have a 20,400 sq ft administration building housing numerous offices, file storage, reception area, conference/training room, museum archives storage, curatorial office, library/research room, information computer tech service, phone/radio equipment room, and small employee lunch room and fitness center. The nearby maintenance building will have trade shops for auto and boat repair, carpentry, metal/welding fabrication, vehicle washing, and repair parts storage. A biology research laboratory will be included in the building. A cold storage garage will be built for vehicle indoor parking and general storage. An outside secured fenced area will be 37,000 sq ft and have a asphalt driving surface.

Access to the Rainy River and boat docks will be provided from the headquarters building for employee and visitors alike through a network of trails.

The headquarters facility is scheduled to be completed and operational during the spring of 2011.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Voyageurs National Park
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The Voyageur Messenger is produced bi-annually by the staff of Voyageurs National Park.

What's coming in the Fall/Winter Issue?

Aquatic research studies
 Ellsworth Rock Gardens Update

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Maintenance Accomplishments for 2009

Historic Properties - Maintenance crews completed a two year project restoring the historic Casareto cabin on Crane Lake. Crews also installed facilities to make this site an accessible Day Use site.

In 2009, maintenance crews started two year rehabilitation/restoration projects at the Hoist Bay resort and the IW Stevens properties. Both properties are located on Namakan Lake. The park will complete these projects in 2010.

On Namakan Lake, the park installed a new roof on the historic Kaukola cabin. Crews also completed some minor structure stabilization.

Docks - Maintenance crews constructed new docks at the Casareto Day Use Site on Crane Lake, at Hoist Bay on Namakan Lake and Shoepack Beach Day Use site on Kabetogama Lake.

Buildings - The park installed new steel roofing on all of the Whispering Pines housing units (11 cabins) prior to the quarters opening for the summer season.

Campsites - Crews constructed three new campsites and ten new houseboat sites on Rainy Lake. The park also rehabilitated five houseboat sites on Rainy Lake.

Maintenance crews started the rehabilitation of 38 campsites in the Namakan basin last year and will complete that project in 2010.

Utilities - The Kettle Falls Hotel and Villas received a replacement to the wastewater spray fields, which keeps the park in compliance with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency regulations.

Contractors installed new fire alarm systems at the Kabetogama and Rainy Lake Visitor Centers as well as a new intrusion alarm system at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center.

Hiring - Voyageurs NP hired 20 new seasonal maintenance employees last year to work on all types of maintenance projects ranging from campsite and trail rehabilitation to historic structure stabilization and rehabilitation.