



The Voyageur Messenger

Park to Occupy New Headquarters in 2011

About 50 National Park Service employees responsible for managing and operating Voyageurs National Park look forward to moving into the new leased headquarters administration building and maintenance facility on the shore of Rainy River just east of International Falls in March 2011.

The complex has been a three year joint effort and partnership between the National Park Service, General Services Administration, and the City of International Falls.

The headquarters will have a 20,400 sq ft. administration building housing numerous offices; file storage; reception area; conference rooms; museum storage; archives; curatorial office; library; computer, phone and radio equipment rooms; and a small fitness center. The nearby maintenance building will have trade shops for auto and boat repair, carpentry, metal and welding fabrication, vehicle washing, and parts storage. A biology research laboratory is also located in this building. The complex has a cold storage



garage for vehicle indoor parking and general storage. The park will store equipment in a 37,000 sq ft. secured and fenced outside area with an asphalt surface.

The City of International Falls will provide access to the Pat Roche Boat Landing and boat docks on the Rainy River behind the headquarters building for visitors and employees alike.

The City of International Falls was awarded a 20-year lease agreement in 2009 to construct the 38,500 sq ft. headquarters complex on the 10 acre site. The mutual, agreed upon design

theme of recreation, area history, and the North Woods life style set the stage for the exterior visual appearance of the facility. The headquarters building was built to meet a silver level of LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) and is to be the corner stone building for other private and public riverfront development expected in the years ahead.

The strong effort and cooperation of many people representing the city, park, design firms, and contractors have provided an outstanding headquarters complex that should serve park management for many years.

A dedication ceremony for the new building along with the amphitheater will be held by the City of International Falls on July 2, 2011. Please contact the city for more information.



New park headquarters under construction, located on Highway 11 east.

Travel Grants Offered for Educational Field Trips

National Parks are outstanding outdoor classrooms! Field trips to Voyageurs National Park provide an important experiential learning opportunity for young people, and allow students of all ages to make deep and lasting real-world connections to our shared history and environmental resources. Unfortunately, transportation costs for groups can be expensive, especially to remote locations like Voyageurs National Park.

In 2011, Voyageurs National Park Association is providing travel grants to schools, Scout troops, homeschoolers, and other groups that provide outdoor education experiences for youth, in order to offset the cost of visiting the park for field trips. Thanks to a generous grant made by the Donald Weesner Foundation's Yellow Bus Fund, teachers and group leaders may apply for a grant to cover 50% of field trip travel expenses, and some may be eligible for full expense coverage.

These grants are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Fill in an application today! Visit <http://www.nps.gov/voya/forteachers/index.htm> to apply, and to learn more about the Environmental Education Programs offered at Voyageurs National Park.

I.W. Stevens Visitor Destination

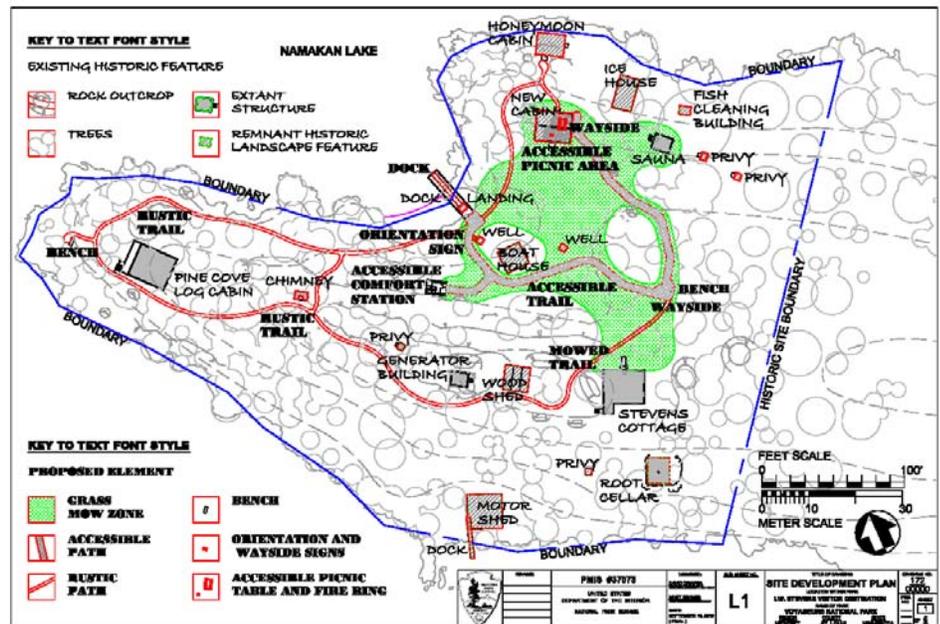
In 2010, the park completed a site design for development of facilities at the I.W. Stevens Visitor Destination on Namakan Lake. Ingvald Walter Stevens, or "Steve" as he was called by his friends, was one of few people who lived in what is now Voyageurs National Park year-round. The purpose of this destination is to provide visitors with the opportunity to learn about

year-round life on an island and to reflect on the challenges associated with self-sufficiency.

Facilities will eventually include a dock, accessible and rustic trails, an accessible picnic site, and wayside exhibits to interpret the history of the site. To date, park staff has rehabilitated Steve's house and constructed an accessible comfort station.



I.W. Stevens' home after rehabilitation, 2010



Concept plan for I.W. Stevens Visitor Destination

Ethno-Botanical Garden

Over 100 years ago, the wiginogans of Chief Shay Shay Wi Gishig oke's band dotted Sha-Sha Point and the islands of Black Bay on Rainy Lake. Wild rice and wild hay grew in the shallow waters of the bay. This area, once inhabited by the Ojibwe Indians, is now dominated by visitors, boaters, and cabin dwellers enjoying Voyageurs National Park and nearby resorts. However, visitors will soon be able to take a step back in time to when the Ojibwe people called the area now known as Voyageurs National Park, home.

Adjacent to the Rainy Lake Visitor Center, site preparation has begun on an Ojibwe summer encampment and ethnobotanical garden. "Ethnobotanical" refers to the importance of native plants to human societies. The goal of the garden is to restore native plants to the site and recognize their importance to Ojibwe culture. Plant markers showing the names and uses of native plants will be displayed along an accessible trail



Accessible path under construction at the gardens near the Rainy Lake Visitor Center.

weaving through the garden. The Bois Forte Heritage Center is assisting with the wayside exhibits. Park visitors may view interpretive signs and enjoy naturalist-led garden tours after the garden's completion.

In September 2010, local boy scouts and Voyageurs National Park Association (VNPA) volunteers, along with park staff, helped break ground on the project.

Construction of the trail system and fire ring area helped to establish

the site before winter. A few native trees and shrubs were also planted. Previously, the garden site was covered in reed canary grass and other very invasive, exotic plants. These unwanted plants had wiped out most of the native plants living in the area. By restoring native plants, in time, visitors will be able to understand the importance and meaning of plants to Ojibwe people.

Eventually, a trailhead will be located near the tour boat dock. The trail will lead visitors to an Ojibwe summer shelter (the wiginogan), continue through the garden and merge with the Oberholtzer Trail for a quarter mile.



Tarp laid by park staff to irradiate Reed Canary Grass.



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.

Operating a Business in the Park

Once you enter a National Park Service (NPS) site, you enter an area that is managed differently than the lands and waters adjacent to it. National Parks are the most protected of all Federal lands and waters. The rules and regulations that govern resource protection and visitor use in NPS sites is different than those for other areas. Voyageurs National Park follows Minnesota State law for fishing and boating regulations, but there are other regulations that are specific to the park.

One regulation that applies in NPS sites, but not outside the park, is a permit requirement to conduct business in the park. In order to ensure the quality of services offered to visitors, the NPS requires commercial users to get a permit. What is a commercial operation? How do you get licensed? What are the requirements?

A commercial operation is any activity provided in the park for which a person is compensated. Some activities are straightforward, such as fishing guides, fish house rentals, or shuttle services. The guide is being compensated directly for providing a service in the park; this requires a Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) permit.

What about activities where the provider is not being directly compensated? For example, a resort owner takes guests out fishing as a service to them because they have had a difficult time catching fish. If these people are staying at the owner's resort and are paying customers, then the trip is commercial and the guide needs a CUA permit. The reason for the permit is that the business is benefitting by providing this service even though they may not get paid directly for it. This type of activity, where a business is providing a service in the park for their customers also requires a Commercial Use Authorization.

A CUA is relatively simple to get. The requirements for a CUA depend on the type of service that will be provided. In general a business has to be insured in order to protect the provider and the customers from liability in the event of an accident or injury. To get more information or to apply for a Commercial Use Authorization, contact Chief Ranger Jim Hummel at 218-283-6600.



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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?

- Fire History
- Trail Updates
- Ellsworth Rock Gardens
- Park Partners

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Did You Know?

The highest water levels ever officially recorded for Rainy Lake occurred during the summer of 1950. In late June and early July the lake peaked at nearly 1113.0 feet above sea level, a full 4.5 feet above what many consider high water.

The high water was caused by a combination of heavy snow accumulation, spring rains, and most importantly, the latest spring breakup ever recorded. There was just too much water coming too quickly for the rapids and dams to handle.

Highway 11 east was submerged from Crystal Bay to the Jackfish Bay Bridge and walleye were caught in the Jespersen fields along Highway 11. Boaters could navigate the Lost Bay Portage to Saginaw Bay and visitors to the Kettle Falls Hotel could tie their boats to the railings of the front steps.

Even the famous Rainy Lake Mermaid became modest with water up to her chin.

Oddly enough, during flood events the river level in front of the new headquarters is low. Water can pass through the dam in International Falls faster than it can pass through the Ranier Rapids.

The other notable flood years on Rainy Lake happened in 1916, 1941, 1968, and 2002. All had the common denominator of a lot of winter snow coupled with heavy spring rains.

Could the level of Rainy Lake ever get so high again? With the right circumstances, most definitely.