



The Journal of
VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION

40th Anniversary Edition
 Spring 2006

Voyageurs National Park Association recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. This special edition of the newsletter focuses on the proud history of the organization and our collective hopes for the next 40 years.

From Hope to History...From Dream to Reality

We the undersigned support the National Park Service proposal to establish the VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK in the Kabetogama Peninsula area of Minnesota.

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Governor Wendell Anderson with former governors Harold Levander, Elmer L. Andersen, and Karl Rolvaag and Representative John Blatnik at the passing of the Voyageurs National Park bill. (MN Historical Society)

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- ◆ Interviews with Kate Miller, Park Superintendent, and Cory MacNulty, VNPA Executive Director

And much more!

From Hope to History, From Dream to Reality

By Greg Seitz, VNPA Board Member

In the 80 years between when a national park was first proposed in the Kabetogama Peninsula area in 1891 to the day in 1971 when President Richard M. Nixon signed the legislation authorizing the creation of Voyageurs National Park, citizens battled to preserve the area for no motivation other than to see its wild beauty safe for future generations.

"It was only because we had wonderful people like Elmer Andersen, Sigurd Olson and Conrad Wirth, that the Park was created," says author and historian Dr. Fred Witzig. "You didn't have people from the East Coast saying we should have something there... [park advocates] really believed in it because they lived up there."

No sooner had Voyageurs National Park been proposed than it became obvious that park advocates needed to organize if they had any hope of seeing their vision become a reality. Voyageurs National Park Association (VNPA) was that organization.

In the early 1960s, Martin Kellogg was working with Lloyd Brant, then the public relations staff of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, on the Committee of Tourism and Outdoor Recreation. Kellogg called Andersen, who had recently lost his bid for re-election by a close margin, and asked him if he had any thoughts on developing outdoor recreation in the state. "Yes, I do," Kellogg recalls him replying. "There should be a Wild and Scenic River designation for the St. Croix River and there should be a national park up there in northern Minnesota on the Kabetogama Peninsula."

Andersen's recommendations were included in the committee's overall proposal, which the Chamber of Commerce adopted unanimously. Kellogg believes that the reason Andersen was so ready with his recommendation because of the influence of Judge U.W. Hella, who later went on to become the director of the state park system. "In the 1940s," Kellogg says, "Hella was sent to look at a proposal to put a road on

the Kabetogama Peninsula. He went up there and looked it all over and said 'No, this ought to be a park.' And when Elmer Andersen was elected governor, Hella told him about the idea."

Working Together

Once word of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce's proposal reached International Falls, locals Judge Mark Abbot, Wayne Judy and George Eslinger contacted Kellogg and said, "We hear you're in support of this park," Kellogg recalls them saying. "We've heard about it too and we'd like to join in some way to promote it."

In Washington, D.C., National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth (a native Minnesotan), convinced that the Kabetogama Peninsula area was worthy of a park after touring the region by boat one day in 1961 with Andersen and others, supported the proposal. In Minnesota, long-time activist and organizer Rita Shemesh tirelessly worked to gather support for the Park from PTAs, American Legion organizations, sportsmen's and gardening clubs and other citizen groups around the state.

As Martin Kellogg describes it, it was Elmer Andersen who had originally voiced the idea in the 1960s of a national park on the Kabetogama Peninsula to other influential Minnesotans, and who, upon seeing the breadth of the people who expressed interest in working to create the Park, suggested the formation of VNPA.

And so VNPA was born 40 years ago. Kellogg was elected treasurer, Tom Savage was elected secretary, and Judge Ed Chapman of International Falls was elected president. The group had plenty of work to do. The challenges that faced park advocates were formidable. Opponents were many, well-funded and vocal.

Earlier Efforts to Preserve the Area

Before Judge Hella visited the region and concluded that it deserved national park status, Ernest Oberholtzer's Quetico-Superior Council had worked in the late 1920s to preserve the entire border lakes region, in both Canada and the United States. They had seen much success with the creation of the Superior National Forest and similar designations in Ontario, but the Kabetogama area had eluded their efforts.

The failure to protect the Kabetogama region was most notable in the 1930s, when the government was forced to pass on opportunities to purchase private lands held by the Minnesota-Ontario Paper Company and others, and available Depression-era tax forfeit lands. At the time, local politicians rallied constituents against the idea of federal ownership of the lands and a state law was passed prohibiting the state from selling land to the federal government.

Even after the land seemed to slip from their grasp, Witzig says Olson, Oberholtzer and others held on to hope that the "voyageurs highway" could someday be preserved and returned to the state it was in when the French-Canadian *voyageurs* had traveled from Grand Portage to Rainy Lake and points beyond.

The decades of dreaming and work culminated in the 1960s, when the Park proposal finally built up widespread support.

VNPA Founding Board Members:

Many residents of the area around the Park didn't like the idea of their "backyard" being handed over to the federal government; and despite the advocacy of northern Minnesota residents such as Abbot, Judy and Esslinger, the battle for Voyageurs National Park was frequently portrayed as locals against outsiders, northern against southern Minnesota, rural against urban.

Some of those perceptions could have killed the Park before it even got to Congress, but the voices of a few courageous local citizens in the International Falls area were essential to bridging the divisiveness.

"People like Wayne Judy took a terrible beating, and there were others like him," says Witzig. "But they spoke up anyway because they all knew that there were people who wouldn't speak up and they gave voice to them."

Judy and other citizens saw that their "backyard" was not to be taken for granted, and that by advocating for the Park they were advocating for the beautiful lake region to be preserved so that future generations of people from their hometowns and from all over the country could come to love it too.

People have been battling for that same thing for those same reasons ever since.

The Park Today

Challenges still face VNP and the Association. Simple awareness of the Park and what it offers has been a continuous challenge. As Witzig says, "The Park has a lot of things, but the very thing that preserved the whole area, its isolation, is still there." Many people in Minnesota aren't even aware that a national park with the same standards of excellence as Yellowstone and Yosemite exists in the state.

Original board members named in articles of incorporation on May 5, 1965:

Governor Elmer L. Andersen
Judge Edwin P. Chapman
George Esslinger
Wayne M. Judy
Samuel H. Morgan
Glenn W. Ross
Lloyd L. Brandt
Martin N. Kellogg
Thomas C. Savage

Board members added Aug 5, 1965:

Sigurd F. Olson
Roger Preuss
George O. Ludcke
James W. Wilkie
Julius F. Wolff
Norman H. Baker
Sherwood O. Berg
Charles Doell
Judge Levi Hall
Nobel Shaddock
Arthur Tomlinson
Raymond A. Haik

Many of those who originally opposed creation of VNP have since tried to lessen the degree of protection the Park enjoys. In the years since its inception, there have been lawsuits about property, water rights, federal jurisdiction, snowmobiles and other issues.

But today, there are reasons to be hopeful. As the Duluth News Tribune noted in an article earlier this year ("Not Just a Walk in the Park," Jan. 22, 2006), "For the first time in recent memory no lawsuits are pending against the Park. No one is demanding the Park be dismantled. No rallies are scheduled to protest park regulations on snowmobiles, wolves or waterbikes... Some folks say this relative peace came, in large part, because of the new sheriff in town [Kate Miller, recently-appointed Superintendent of VNP]." It is a sentiment that many others have echoed.

"Kate Miller is a marvelous person to be in charge up there... She's been working on this sort of thing for a long time," says Witzig.

The same reasons to hope for a positive future for the Park are good reasons to recommit to Voyageurs National Park Association and its goals: the capability of a passionate group of citizens to effect change.

In his remarks at VNPA's 40th anniversary celebration on Jan. 26, Martin Kellogg affirmed that there is still and will always be a vital role for the Association in the preservation of the lakes, woods, and wildlife of Voyageurs National Park:

"After the Park became established, there was a general thought by some people that we really didn't need this association any more and that the Park Service would take care of the Park. I wasn't so sure of that. One year I called upon Sigurd Olson to come to a meeting of the VNPA and he came and gave a talk, a talk that was just outstanding... Sigurd Olson said there is no piece of land that is natural or wilderness that is safe. And it is not safe just because there is a park established. There is no end to the number of people that will think that land should be something else. Wilderness should be a timberland or so forth."

"That Park can not remain a park, nor can the BWCA remain a wilderness, by virtue of it being under the Forest Service or the National Park Service. It will only remain protected ... if citizens like you and me will do something about it in some organized way that comes to the table."

- Many thanks to Dr. Fred Witzig, Martin Kellogg and Jim Hudson

Sigurd F. Olson, The Voyager's Voyager

By Robert K. Olson, President Emeritus, The Listening Point Foundation

This country is full of place names which call to mind special persons who somehow epitomize them. Mark Twain and the Mississippi, Thoreau and Walden Pond, John Muir and the Sierras, Annie Dillard and Tinker Creek, and many more. For Voyageurs National Park, it is indisputably Sigurd Olson.

Sig was the image of the voyageur and spent much of his life canoeing the old trade route of the boundary waters from Grand Portage to Rainy Lake and beyond. His writings of the value of wilderness and of living in Minnesota shield country have voiced the feelings and thoughts of all those who love that land.

Few may be aware of the central role that Sig played in the creation of Voyageurs National Park. There were many who deserve credit and recognition: four Minnesota governors beginning with Elmer Anderson; Walter Dayton and Martin Kellogg; members and staff of the Voyageurs National Park Association; Don Fraser; Senators Mondale, John Blatnik, and Henry Jackson; Dr. Charles C. Mayo; and celebrities like Charles Lindberg and Justice William O. Douglas, to name a few. But Sig's vision has been at the very core of the Park and its mission since years before it was born.

In 1962, as consultant to the Secretary of the Interior and the Director of the National Park Service, and former President of the National Parks Association, Sig accompanied a group led by National Parks Director Conrad Wirth on a tour of the area. At this point, the only question left was what to call the proposed park. Several names were suggested and rejected. Then, Sig suggested "Voyageurs." Wirth slapped his knee and exclaimed, "That's it!"

It is no wonder that when it came to naming the Park, Sig thought of "Voyageurs." In his own words it was "because I felt the area was part of the ancient voyageurs highway along the border."

In a word it says it all, brings it all together, past, present, and our hopes for the future. No wonder native Minnesotan Connie Wirth jumped at it.



Sigurd F. Olson
Minnesota Historical Society
by Eugene Debs Becker

Sig had already been active in promoting the idea of the Park. He had joined the official inspection tour the summer before. During the next ten years leading to the final creation of the Park by President Nixon in 1971, Sig used his central position and growing reputation to good effect. He lobbied hard both in Minnesota and in Washington, D.C. converting the skeptical George Herzog who had replaced Wirth in 1964. He and Elmer Anderson saw the Park through its congressional hearings.

In the words of Connie Wirth, "I doubt very much if the Voyageurs National Park would have been established if it had not been for Sig. He not only explained and recommended it, but followed his concept through to its establishment. Of course he had help, but he was the spirit behind it."

Unfortunately, as Sig once said, the battle for the wilderness never ends. Voyageurs National Park after 35 years is still under attack and will, undoubtedly, continue to be for years to come. But the Sigurd Olson legacy provides a foundation for its defense as enduring as the rocks of the Laurentian Shield, as simple to understand as the human spirit's need for sacred places where the spirit can revive and know reality. It is no wonder that Sigurd Olson continues to epitomize Voyageurs National Park just as Thoreau does Walden Pond or as Muir the Sierras. Each in his way has through his fragile words given his country its immortality.

Quotations cited are from The Wilderness Within, David Backes, University of Minnesota Press, 1997: Wirth p.323; and Voyageur Country, Robert Treuer. University of Minnesota Press, 1979, Sigurd Olson, p. 106.

The Listening Point Foundation was established in 1998 by Sigurd and Elizabeth Olson's family and friends to preserve Listening Point for the inspiration of future generations and to continue Sigurd Olson's life work of wilderness understanding and preservation. For further information, consult www.listeningpointfoundation.org or contact Executive Director Alanna Johnson at The Listening Point Foundation, PO Box 180, Ely, MN 55731, Tel: (218) 365-7890, email alanna@cpinternet.com. The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization.

A Celebration to Remember: Voyageurs National Park Association's 40th Anniversary



Jim Stowell



Martin Kellogg



Kate Miller

Photographs by Kevin Johnston

On January 26, 2006, Voyageurs National Park Association celebrated its 40th Anniversary at the Town and Country Club in St. Paul, Minnesota. The event featured a very special presentation by actor and playwright Jim Stowell. Stowell gave an entertaining and energetic performance of a scene from a play he is writing about Ernest Oberholtzer, mixing in dramatized dialogue with asides about the arts of playwriting and acting.

Over 125 people attended the dinner, including Deputy Regional Director Dave Given of the National Park Service Midwest Region and Dr. Fred Witzig, author of the book, *Voyageurs National Park: The Battle to Create Minnesota's National Park*. Kate Miller, Voyageurs National Park Superintendent, took the stage after dinner and talked about the Park's future and her goals as the Park's leader. Martin Kellogg, founding board member of VNPA, shared with the audience his memories of the fight to create the Park and his visions for why, and how, the Park must continue to be protected. Representative James Oberstar sent a special video message recognizing the extraordinary efforts of Minnesota citizens in establishing Voyageurs National Park.



Dave Given



Max Shemesh, Lloyd Brandt, & Martin Kellogg



Fred Witzig

Voyageurs National Park Association would like to extend a special thank you to the event's sponsors:

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A Celebration of Voyageurs National Park

By Chris Holbeck, Chief of Resource Management, Voyageurs National Park



Forty years ago, Voyageurs National Park Association set out to preserve a little corner of northern Minnesota. Together with thousands of other Minnesotans, they helped change – in a fundamental way – how the land was being managed. But what may be more extraordinary is what remains unchanged due to the establishment of Voyageurs National Park.

What has not changed is the unbroken shoreline, providing a native visual landscape unseen in much of the rest of the state. The Park is a place where natural processes are allowed to exist; where humankind is but a visitor. The Park is a place where all Americans can recreate, regardless of economic status. What has not changed is the dark night sky, the natural quiet and the mirrored reflection of wetlands on the water. It remains a refuge for eagles, wolves and lynx, as well as for all the other less dramatic creatures that make up the web of life; equally protected through the mission of the National Park Service to protect and provide for future generations.

What has changed, however, is that there are fewer buildings occupying the shoreline. Development has been on the fringes of the Park, rather than in the heart. There are now campsites that provide visitors a rustic, contemplative experience; campsites that were selected and constructed with resource-protective measures in mind. There is a trail network that provides visitors with a wonderful back-country experience.

There's been the reintroduction of fire and the cessation of logging – an industry that drove forest type conversion from pine to aspen. Natural fire and succession should return the forest to spruce, fir and pine in 100 years or so. There's been a revision of the rule curve (a set of federally regulated target lake elevations) – from one in 1970 that we found was detrimental to aquatic systems, to one in 2000 that is designed to favor aquatic systems.

Finally, what has changed is that there are now 44 full-time employees dedicated to providing a fantastic park experience for visitors while protecting resources unimpaired so that future generations can experience it in the same way. Though Park managers face many challenges in fulfilling this mission, it is important for all of us to pause at these milestones and celebrate the successes.



Photograph courtesy of Voyageurs National Park

The Math Behind the Land

Voyageurs National Park encompasses 218,054 acres. Some comparisons with other parks may help to put this in perspective.

- ◆ Minnesota's largest state park, St. Croix River State Park, has 33,895 acres – roughly one-sixth the size of Voyageurs.
- ◆ The smallest national park, Hot Springs National Park in Arkansas, totals only 5,550 acres
- ◆ The largest national park, Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska, totals a massive 13,187,000 acres.
- ◆ Of the 45 national parks outside of Alaska, 21 are larger than Voyageurs – two of which are mostly water. Isle Royale National Park, for example, includes 428,008 acres in the heart of Lake Superior. Its land area is only 133,782 acres. Voyageurs National Park, by comparison, has 134,265 acres of land and 83,789 acres of water.
- ◆ The combined acreage of adjacent protected land in the border lakes region, including Voyageurs National Park, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Quetico Provincial Park, La Verendrye Provincial Park and Sandpoint Island Provincial Park, encompasses 2,484,494 acres. That exceeds Yellowstone National Park by 264,703 acres. In fact, outside of Alaska and western Canada, there are very few areas with as much contiguously protected land in North America.

Establishing Voyageurs National Park: The Process of Acquiring Land

By John Roth, Executive Director, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

When the creation of Voyageurs National Park was authorized by Congress in 1971, very little of its land and water was actually owned by the U.S. government. Most was owned by the State of Minnesota, the Boise Cascade paper company and numerous other private parties. By 1975, the State of Minnesota donated its property within the Park boundaries to the federal government, a prerequisite to moving forward with establishment of the national park. The National Park Service (NPS) began the task of purchasing remaining private lands. \$26,014,000 was appropriated through the enabling legislation in 1971 for that purpose. The most recent funding received by Voyageurs National Park to acquire land occurred in 1998. The Park received \$650,000 but was limited to acquisition of private property only from willing sellers. Since 1998, Congress has not appropriated moneys for land acquisition.

Most of the private land, except for Boise Cascade's property, was vacation or recreational property. Private cabins were scattered throughout the Park and many of the owners had long histories with their property. Very understandably, they also had strong emotional attachments to their land and few wanted to sell. Thankfully, however, over the years the vast majority of private owners agreed to sell their property for inclusion in the national park.

When negotiating for the purchase of private property, the NPS sometimes obtained immediate possession of the property. A large number of sellers, however, were granted as part of their compensation the ongoing right to use and occupy their cabins for various periods of time. Most of those use and occupancy leases have

already expired, but 26 remain in place. Nine leases expired in 2005. Five will expire this year. Twelve will expire upon the death of the leaseholder and eight will expire between 2007 and 2026. With the expiration of the use and occupancy leases, the NPS will take full possession of those properties and start the costly process of removing the cabins and restoring the cabin sites.



Voyageurs National Park in 1975
Minnesota Historical Society

The High Cost of Inholdings

Not all private landowners have agreed to sell. At this date there are still 55 parcels of private land, totaling 916 acres, within Park boundaries. In addition, there are 17 parcels owned by other governmental units, such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the State of Minnesota, totaling 447 acres.

While the total inholdings represent only 0.62% of the Park area, they represent significant challenges. For example, even though hunting is prohibited within the Park, it is allowed on private lands, posing a management problem for Park rangers and the potential to adversely impact wildlife research. Some of the inholdings, furthermore, have cabins and structures that are incompatible with the Park's purpose and wild character. Even more worrisome, though, is the fact that private landowners retain various development rights to their property. While commercial development of private lands within the Park has not occurred thus far, it will continue to be a potential threat as long as the private lands remain.

The problem with inholdings is not unique to Voyageurs. Private property in Wrangell - St. Elias National Park and Preserve, for example, totals 1.4 million acres. While the NPS works hard each year to purchase park inholdings, it is limited in terms of what it can do. With each passing year, the price for inholdings increases, sometimes dramatically, and Congress has never given the NPS sufficient funds to purchase all of the available land.

For Voyageurs, it is difficult estimating what it would cost to purchase the remaining inholdings. Half of them are on Rainy Lake while the others are scattered about the rest of the Park. The inholdings near the Rainy Lake Visitor Center are easily accessible, so undoubtedly will be very costly to purchase. Four acres on the Kabetogama Peninsula across from the Rainy Lake Visitor Center was purchased in September 2005 by the NPS for \$125,000. While some of the other private parcels may be worth less due to their remote locations, the total cost of purchasing them all will be significant...if and when the owners are willing to sell.

Looking forward at Voyageurs: An interview with Kate Miller, Superintendent



What are some changes you expect to see in visitor services over the next 5 to 10 years?

Visitor demographics are changing. Aging boomers are seeking different kinds of experiences than when they were in their 40s, and young people tend to favor urban activities. These trends are not unique to VNP; every park is looking at a similar scenario. In response, we are partnering with the gateway communities to make the Park a more comfortable and inviting place to our visitors. We encourage private development of the tourist infrastructure – accommodations, restaurants and shops. We would like to see more private vendors providing boats, canoes and kayaks, as well as a shuttle service in each basin. A high priority is to restore guided tour boat service in both basins so that everyone can enjoy the Park. We are currently seeking a concessioner to provide this service in the Namakan basin with the Park's new 22-passenger pontoon boat. Providing a guided tour boat service on Rainy Lake remains a top priority.

What do you see as key future factors in the ecology of VNP?

In my opinion, the future ecology of the Park is being shaped less by factors within the immediate area and more by subtle changes in global environment. We currently devote significant resources to gathering baseline data and measuring the effects of changes over time in an effort to understand possible future scenarios and target conservation and political efforts effectively.

Global warming, for example, could have a significant impact on VNP. The Park is located on the edge of the northern boreal forest, which means that a slight shift in climate zones to the north would mean changes to the region's forest and wildlife. Fewer moose and more white-tailed deer

would be among the more obvious changes. Our awareness of toxic pollutants in the Park's air and water is increasing through research and monitoring conducted by the National Park Service, DNR, and partners in academia. We are beginning to document the effects of these substances on the ecology of lakes within the Park.

We keep the Park's waters under close scrutiny – both the quantity and quality. Fluctuations in water levels affect shoreline nesting birds such as loons, as well as other plant and animal species. The current monitoring program targeting five indicator species affected by water levels directly supports the International Joint Commission's efforts to understand the effects of lake level regulation and improve basin conditions. Another factor in the future ecology of the Park is the growing threat of exotic aquatic species. The increase of invasives in the waters outside the Park is a cause for concern and call for coordinated action among public and private partners.

Wildlife has thrived in the Park over the years. The eagle population has recovered and may even have reached its carrying capacity. Wolves have rebounded under the protection of the Endangered Species Act and have filled their niche. What's remarkable about these successes is that they have happened with very little active wildlife management. The act of establishing the Park was enough to allow species to recover and thrive.

How do you plan to leverage your historical and cultural background at VNP?

One of my goals is to build a stronger awareness and appreciation in the minds of visitors and the public for the history of the Park; for example, how the fur trade evolved and shaped

the environment we experience in the Park today. The superficial image of the jovial, singing Voyageur doesn't begin to capture the rich and dramatic history of the region. Since we don't have visual signposts such as forts and trading posts, we need to bring the stories to life in other ways through exhibits and interpretation.

We recently proposed a significant project to develop several historic and cultural destination sites within the Park. The rich human history of this area gives us so many opportunities to tell great stories, and at the same time recognize contributions of those who have shaped the region – indigenous people, fishermen, miners, loggers, homesteaders, resort owners, and others who lived on these lakes. We are working closely with the Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe to understand and interpret sites in the Park related to their history and culture.

Are you seeing progress in resolving some long-standing disputes that have plagued VNP for 40+ years?

Yes and no. I strongly believe that our issues are solvable, and my number one priority is exercising the leadership needed to move solutions forward. But not all stakeholders have reached agreement on the fundamental purpose of the Park. Until we reach public accord on this issue, it will be difficult to flourish – or even survive – as an entity. What helps me most is keeping focused on the big picture, and what helps me stay focused on the big picture is the partnership and support of VNPA and other organizations and individuals that are committed to a sustainable future for the Park.

Looking Forward at VNPA: An interview with Cory MacNulty, Executive Director



What are some of the changes you hope or expect to see in visitor services in the next 5 to 10 years?

VPNA has advocated for wider diversity in tourism to the Park. Traditionally, the emphasis was on boating, fishing and snowmobiling. But the Park also offers amazing opportunities to explore the backcountry and connect with wilderness. To promote this diverse potential, we've publicized the Park's extraordinary recreation opportunities, particularly for birding, kayaking, hiking, skiing and snowshoeing. VNPA is dedicated to working with the Park to ensure the full range of recreation opportunities is accessible to visitors, even in the face of National Park Service budget shortfalls. For example, we're sponsoring a volunteer trail-clearing project in collaboration with the Park and the Kabetogama Tourism Bureau designed to maintain the Kab-Ash trail system and attract visitors to the area.

Also, we would like to see more boat tours and shuttle service to the Park's interior hiking trails and protected bays for paddling. Voyageurs is a water-based park. First-time visitors don't always comprehend the fact that most recreational opportunities are on the water or accessed by water, so we fully support expanding these types of transportation options.

Another long term idea is to work with the gateway communities to develop programs that teach visitors outdoor skills, for example winter

survival, and then send them out to the Park to put their learning to practice. We feel that such programs would attract visitors and increase the economic sustainability of the region. Our priority is working with the Park and the communities to develop programs that work for everybody.

How might you leverage your background and expertise at VNPA?

My background in conservation biology gives me the basis I need to understand and advocate for the types of resource protection issues that are important to our organization. But I think that my education and experience plays an even more important role by helping me understand that there will always be a wide range of people and perspectives on any given issue, and the key is to identify common interests and figure out ways to move forward.

Everyone wants the local communities to be successful. Everyone wants to protect our resources for our children. We may have different ideas on how to go about achieving these goals, but I think we eventually will succeed by maintaining focus on what we have in common.

Are you seeing progress in resolving some long-standing disputes that have plagued VNP for 40+ years?

From what I have learned about the history of the Park, I believe there is more potential today to move beyond these disputes than we have seen in a number of years.

Superintendent Kate Miller has made great strides in building relationships in the gateway communities and opening lines of communication with people invested in the future of the Park. In meeting with people in the Park's neighboring communities where many of the past disputes were centered, I hear that attitudes toward

the Park are shifting and support for the Park is growing. I hope we will see more evidence of this shift when results from the gateway community survey, conducted by University of Minnesota researchers in fall 2005, are released later this year. Even if we don't see this pattern now, the survey is designed to gather information about how the Park can build trust with its neighbors.

There are some recent, positive examples of the Park, its gateway communities, and VNPA working together toward common goals. At the end of February, Superintendent Miller, Chief of Interpretation, Kathleen Przybylski, and five representatives from International Falls attended a gateway community workshop organized by the National Park Service. Through the workshop, the group developed a Gateway Community Team to implement goals aimed at increasing tourism in International Falls and ensuring visitor accessibility to the Park. Another example I mentioned earlier is the volunteer trail-clearing project sponsored by the Park, the Kabetogama Tourism Bureau and VNPA.

While these collaborations may not resolve long-standing issues, they are steps toward refocusing our efforts and resources on goals that will benefit the Park and the communities, rather than divide them. I believe the number of people willing to set aside differences regarding the Park and focus on common interests is growing, however, I am afraid it will take only a handful of determined people to take us back to the cycle of dispute. I am concerned that the prolonged controversies around Voyageurs National Park played out through the media have been influential in shaping the public image of the Park and its gateway communities. It will take a number of positive stories to counteract this history.

News from Friends of Voyageurs National Park

By Jo Kallemeyn, *Friends of Voyageurs National Park*

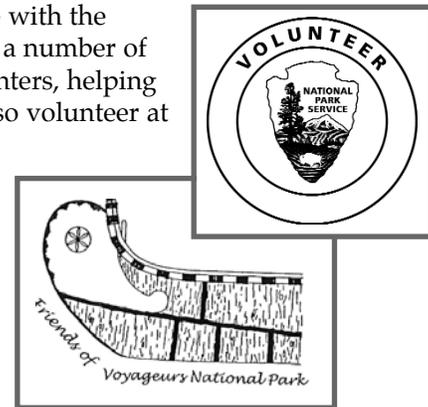
The Friends of Voyageurs National Park (Friends) recently established a partnership with the Voyageurs Volunteers In Parks (VIP) program. This connects Friends members with a number of volunteer opportunities at the Park, such as assisting visitors at one of the visitor centers, helping with research projects or grooming trails. Many board members from the Friends also volunteer at Voyageurs National Park (VNP), so this partnership is a natural fit.

For over 11 years, the Friends has had a hand in many projects related to our mission to support natural, historical and educational activities at Voyageurs National Park. Some of the projects the Friends have funded are:

- ✓ installing bike racks and recycling bins at all visitor centers
- ✓ funding to build the Echo Bay Trail at Kabetogama
- ✓ repair of the Kettle Falls Nickelodeon
- ✓ printing costs for some VNP publications, park signage and a Synthesis of Aquatic Research at Voyageurs
- ✓ completion of an analysis of eaglet plasma collected to evaluate ecological contaminants at VNP
- ✓ purchase of cross-country skis and snowshoes for winter programs at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center.

Recent budget constraints have given an opportunity for the Friends to step up with funding to help maintain VNP seasonal interpretive programs. Over the past several years the Friends have sponsored the successful "Get the Lead Out" non-toxic tackle exchange at VNP, educating the public about the dangers of lead tackle ingestion in wildlife.

The Friends of VNP make sure most of their membership donations are used to support VNP projects, maintaining and enhancing the Park for future generations. Our new partnership with the Voyageurs VIP program is a further step toward supporting this goal.



In Memory of Harriet Lykken, 1924 - 2005

By Lee Barthel, *VNPA Board Member*

Harriet Lykken, President of Voyageurs National Park Association from 1983 to 1987, died November 8, 2005, at age 81.

Harriet was a legend in the local environmental community for her efforts on wildlife issues and protecting Minnesota wetlands and the Boundary Waters Wilderness. She was instrumental, for example, in initiating the 1978 court action against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which forced them to comply with their own rules for wolf management. In 1996, the Minnesota Wilderness and Parks Coalition named her a Minnesota Environmental Hero, and in 1984 she received the Sigurd Olson Award, naming her as Environmentalist of the Year by the Sierra Club North Star Chapter.

Harriet maintained an unwavering dedication to the environment. Many changes in Minnesota policies were forged through her profound link to the natural world. Harriet's first victory for wildlife was a bill passed in 1975 protecting the lynx in Minnesota. Her efforts in subsequent years led to legislation protecting bobcats, eagles, badgers, and bears. She could do this because, even as a "non-professional" volunteer, she based her work on solid science; informed by her passion for and knowledge of animals and their habitats.

"The greatest mentor in the world," is how VNPA's former Executive Director Jennifer Hunt remembers Harriet. She showed young environmental leaders that one person can make a difference. Harriet took Jennifer, then in sixth grade, to precinct caucuses where she remembers Harriet introducing a resolution to protect the gray wolf, and introducing Jennifer to a "new level of environmental thinking." Harriet's work on the Issues Committee of VNPA; her cogent writings on vital matters; all helped make VNPA a credible presence.

Harriet's work on wolves, wilderness and natural resource management helped mold the character of Voyageurs National Park – not to mention other environmental concerns that she handily addressed through her efforts in other organizations. Harriet Lykken's life improved the lives of all of us. She leaves a void that will take many hands to fill.

Voyageurs National Park Spring Trail-clearing Weekend, May 18-21

You are invited to help make the Kab-Ash Trail, the most extensive trail system in the Park, safer and more accessible for visitors. At the same time, you can explore the Park, meet new people and have fun!



Crews of up to 8 volunteers each, led by experienced National Park Service (NPS) personnel will clear sections of the Kab-Ash Trail on Friday, May 19 and Saturday, May 20. All trail work will be done with hand tools so no prior experience is necessary. To ensure a safe and productive experience, volunteers are required to participate in an onsite training Friday morning to learn trail clearing techniques and natural resource protection measures. Hand tools will be provided. Volunteers should come prepared with personal safety gear

(goggles, work gloves and boots) and be physically fit for a 4 mile round trip hike and a strenuous work day. We are also looking for people interested in working closely with the NPS crew leaders to learn the skills necessary to lead a crew during a fall trail event or in subsequent years.

The spring trail weekend is not all work and no play!

Teri Tucker, Education Specialist, will introduce you to the Park Thursday night through a lively presentation, explore on your own Friday evening and celebrate the group's accomplishments during a picnic dinner and campfire on Saturday. Join us Sunday morning for an adventure in the Park where we will head out on the water to explore Voyageurs from a different perspective.

Everyone is welcome and we encourage families to participate. The trail weekend is free for those who do not need accommodations and meals. Costs with food and lodging for out of town guests range from \$65 to \$140 per person for the three day, three night weekend depending on the accommodations and number of meals you choose. Resort accommodations are limited so register early to reserve your room. Contact VNPA at vnpa@voyageurs.org or 612-333-5424 for details and to register by May 12. If you cannot attend the whole weekend, contact us and we will work to accommodate your availability.

This event is organized and sponsored by the Kabetogama Tourism Bureau, Voyageurs National Park and Voyageurs National Park Association. The project is made possible through funding from the Quetico Superior Foundation and discounted accommodations provided by Arrowhead Lodge and the Northern Lights Resort in Kabetogama, MN.

Can't make it for the May weekend but want to help?

Contact VNPA to receive information about the fall trail event to be held in September or make a tax-deductible contribution to VNPA to support our efforts to maintain Park trails.

Photograph courtesy of Voyageurs National Park

An Exciting Summer Ahead

We have an exciting summer of activities and programs planned at VNPA. At the helm to guide the organization this summer will be new VNPA board member, Jim Hudson. Jim will be Interim Executive Director during Cory MacNulty's maternity leave from approximately mid-May to mid-August.

Though Jim officially joined the board in February, he has been an active volunteer for over a year as chair of VNPA's membership committee. Jim offers a wealth of knowledge and expertise with a background in Information Technology and consulting. He is currently completing a thesis for his MBA focused on environmental dispute resolution.

A New Look for VNPA



After 40 years with the same logo, VNPA decided it was time for a change, but knew it was important to maintain a link to our proud history. Our new logo still portrays a voyageur paddling his canoe, representing the fur trade history and the extraordinary lakes preserved in Voyageurs National Park.

Bob Anderson of A. D. Associates and Terrapin Technologies created a new design that represents the evolution of VNPA to meet the current and future needs of the Park. The paddler could just as easily be a modern figure experiencing the Park today, paddling into a secluded cove or toward the sunset, ready to face a new adventure.

Voyageurs National Park Association

Protecting and promoting the natural, recreational and historic resources of Voyageurs National Park

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Donald Nightingale
❖ Greg Seitz

❖ VNPA welcomes three new directors to our board elected by our members on February 25, 2006. Watch for our next newsletter for further introductions.

VNPA is a proud member of the



Calendar of Spring & Summer 2006 Events:

May 18-21 Voyageurs National Park Spring Trail Weekend

See page 11 to learn more about this exciting opportunity to help maintain the Park's Kab-Ash Trail and explore the Park. Volunteers will be based in Kabetogama, MN.

Jun 2- 4 Birders' Rendezvous Weekend

Watch for the return of migrating birds, listen to special speakers, and go on guided hikes, canoe trips and boat tours in VNP, MN. For more information contact District Naturalist, Tawnya Schoewe at 218-286-5258, Tawnya_Schoewe@nps.gov or visit the Park's website at www.nps.gov/voya/special%20events/birders.

Jun 18-Aug 12 Voyageurs National Park Naturalist Programs

Explore the Park with knowledgeable naturalists during regularly scheduled north canoe trips, guided walks and boat tours leaving from the Park's three visitor centers. The complete schedule can be found at www.nps.gov/voya.

Jun 23-Aug18 Voyageurs National Park Friday Night Speaker Series

Each Friday night from 7:30-8:30 pm guest speakers will present enjoyable and educational presentations at the Woodenfrog Campground historic refectory building in Kabetogama, MN. Call 218-875-2111 in June for a list of speakers or contact Tawnya_Schoewe@nps.gov.

Experience the Park like the Voyageurs

Join Wilderness Inquiry on one of their four guided trips in Voyageurs National Park this summer. Paddle the path of the 18th century French-Canadian fur traders in 24-foot cedar strip canoes. 2006 Dates: Jun 7-11, Jul 12-16, Aug 9-13, Sep 12-16. For more information, contact Wilderness Inquiry at 800-728-0719, or info@wildernessinquiry.org.



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