

## Star Party at Voyageurs National Park Things to Know Before You Join Us!



This three-day Star Party celebration at Voyageurs National Park will support the continued protection and enjoyment of our incredible night skies. Although light pollution threatens dark skies across the globe, Voyageurs National Park hosts some of the darkest skies in the region. Come celebrate and enjoy the night with us at Voyageurs.

Voyageurs National Park became a Certified Dark Sky Park in 2020 by the International Dark Sky Association. [Learn more about the Dark Skies of Voyageurs.](#) The Voyageurs Star Party is one great way to enjoy the area's night skies. The event is FREE and open to all. There is no entrance fee to Voyageurs National Park and no pre-registration for the Star Party is required.

The Voyageurs Star Party has both daytime and night-time programs you can attend. The dark sky viewing elements of the program begin at 9 PM, for best viewing of the night sky (sunset for mid-August at Voyageurs National Park is approximately at 8:30 PM, but astronomical twilight is around 10:00 PM).

This late night event ends at midnight when telescopes are taken down. However, on nights with clear, calm skies, you are welcome to stay beyond the official program. Please note that National Park Service and Voyageurs Conservancy Staff will leave the site after the event and you will be responsible for your safety while in the park.

**Star Party programs vary year to year. A full schedule of events is available online at [Voyageurs.org/starparty](https://voyageurs.org/starparty)**

### Planning! What to bring and wear to the Star Party

- Dress in layers. Temperatures drop quickly after sunset—even during summer months.
- Bring a chair or blanket for night sky viewing. No seating is provided.
- Parking is very limited at the visitor centers. Carpool if you can and give yourself extra time to find a spot or be prepared to walk from overflow areas.
- Bug spray is highly recommended, as mosquitoes are very active in the park around sun-down.
- Please plan to eat dinner before the event - support a local business! If you'd like to eat dinner at the park, bring a picnic dinner or order a to-go meal from one of

the area resorts. There will not be food or beverages available on-site for purchase. Please plan to pack out any trash with you.

- Restrooms will be available at the visitor centers during the Star Party event.
- Leave yourself extra time to park and carpool if you can. Parking is limited and you may have to wait in line or be prepared to walk from overflow parking areas.

### **Light Etiquette - Darkness is our friend!**

- During night-time programs do not use cell phone lights, flash photography, or any white flashlights. We ask that no white light flashlights be used due to their negative effect on night vision. After using a white light, it can take well over thirty minutes for your eyes to begin to readjust to the profound darkness of Voyageurs. **Instead, bring a red flashlight! You can make a red flashlight by:**
  - Covering any flashlight with red cellophane, a limited supply of cellophane and rubber bands are available at the welcome tent
  - Painting the flashlight lens with red nail polish or a red magic marker.
  - For more on why red flashlights are helpful, and how the human eye works after dark, [click here](#).
- Please follow the wayfinding paths marked with our red lights and red rope lights. These red posts will also mark uneven depressions on the ground, as well as the water's edge.

### **Enjoying the wilderness above our heads**

- The moon will be in its Waning Crescent phase with 13%-29% illumination (less moonlight), night sky viewing includes the Milky Way, Pleiades, other constellations, planets (including Jupiter and Saturn) and depending on solar storm activity, the Northern Lights.
- One question we get asked a lot is how to take photos of the night sky from a cellphone like an iphone. [Download a Night Sky app](#) and set your phone to a long exposure to capture the Northern Lights and other celestial objects.

### **Be Weather-Wise!**

- In the event that inclement weather requires canceling outdoor events, we will post an update to [voyageurs.org/starparty](http://voyageurs.org/starparty) no later than 5:00 PM the day of the event.
- In the event of mild weather disruptions or cloudy weather, some programs will be adapted, moved indoors, or continue as is. Even if we can't see the stars together, we promise to do our best to share stories and science with you!
- Remember that weather can shift rapidly in this area of the country and can vary on one end of the park or lake vs. another.

- [Local weather for Kabetogama VC](#)
- [Local weather for Rainy Lake VC](#)

## **Accessibility**

- If you require accommodations at a Voyageurs Conservancy program, like sign language interpretation, please contact us right away so we can do our best to make arrangements: 612-333-5424; [contact@voyageurs.org](mailto:contact@voyageurs.org).
- The National Park Service is committed to all practicable efforts for making its facilities, programs, services, information, employment, and meaningful work opportunities accessible to all people. Contact the park directly for accommodations at 218-283-6600.

## **Getting to Voyageurs National Park**

- By car: Voyageurs National Park is approximately a 4 ½ hour drive (295 miles) from the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and a 2 ½ hour drive from Duluth (130 miles).
- By plane: Fly to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP), rent a car and drive to Voyageurs National Park OR fly directly to International Falls Airport (INL) and [rent a car in International Falls](#).

Your first visit to Voyageurs? Be sure to check out [additional considerations when visiting Voyageurs National Park](#)

## **Lodging and Accommodations**

Please arrange your lodging accommodations early! Camping on-site at the event is not permitted. It is a 45-minute drive between International Falls and Kabetogama, partly on an unlit two-way highway in a remote area at night.

*International Falls*

[International Falls, Rainy Lake and Rainier Convention and Visitors Bureau](#)

[Explore MN - International Falls, Rainy Lake, Rainier](#)

[Reserving a campsite in Voyageurs National Park](#)

Please note: All front and backcountry campsites within Voyageurs National Park are only accessible by boat (keep in mind returning to your campsite safely on the water at night).

*Kabetogama*

[Kabetogama Lakes Resorts and Lodging](#)

[Camping at Woodenfrog](#) (just outside Voyageurs and administered by the Minnesota DNR, and in close proximity to the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center).

[Reserving a campsite in Voyageurs National Park](#)

[Accommodations in the nearby Ash River area](#)

Please note: All front and backcountry campsites within Voyageurs National Park are only accessible by boat (keep in mind returning to your campsite safely on the water at night).

### **Thank you for Protecting and Exploring Dark Skies at Voyageurs**

This Voyageurs Star Party is brought to you by Voyageurs Conservancy, the National Park Service, Starry Skies North, Wilderness Inquiry, North Mallow, Bell Museum, Backus Community Center, Ranier Days, and International Falls Library.

In December 2020, Voyageurs National Park became [officially certified as an International Dark Sky Park](#). This certification from the International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) recognizes Voyageurs for the exceptional quality of its dark skies and its ongoing commitment to preserving darkness and educating the public about the night sky. Voyageurs Conservancy, the official nonprofit partner of Voyageurs National Park, was proud to help secure this certification by funding key light fixture changes and hosting night sky educational programs.

Voyageurs Conservancy and Voyageurs National Park host the Dark Sky Classroom - a suite of engaging programs and events to educate youth and the public on the significance of our dark skies. This includes weekly Dark Sky Programs, Dark Sky Virtual Field Trips for elementary students, and the Voyageurs Star Party.

**You can support the Voyageurs Star Party and Dark Sky Classroom with a donation at [voyageurs.org/give](https://voyageurs.org/give).**

**Sign up to receive future emails from Voyageurs Conservancy at [voyageurs.org](https://voyageurs.org).**

