

LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN

Voyageurs National Park

2005

Prepared by:

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This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) provides a vision for the future of interpretation and education at Voyageurs National Park. The intended life span of the LRIP is five to seven years. The plan defines why we provide interpretation and education programs and materials, describes the current program, and identifies what the park staff is working to achieve in the future.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Voyageurs National Park — located in northern Minnesota — is administered by the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS protects 218,054 acres within the boundaries of Voyageurs National Park that include roughly 134,000 acres of woodlands, 84,000 acres of water, 655 miles of undeveloped shoreline, and more than 1,000 islands. In 2005, the park's permanent interpretive staff is composed of a Chief of Interpretation, two District Naturalists, and an Education Specialist. Management, administration, maintenance, resource management, and law enforcement are provided from headquarters and other locations.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) provides a vision for the interpretive future of Voyageurs National Park. The LRIP was created through a goal-driven process that describes desired visitor experiences and recommends appropriate means to achieve them while protecting and preserving the park's natural and cultural resources.

The first section of this LRIP, from pages 1 to 10, confirms the foundations of the park: its legislative background, mission, purpose, significance, and management goals. The second section, from pages 11 to 35, reviews the basis for the park's interpretation: its primary interpretive goals, interpretive themes, interpretive stories, visitor experience goals, visitor/audience profiles, and the park's issues and influences.

The LRIP's third section, from pages 36 to 167, describes the interpretive program's existing conditions and recommends future actions to be taken over the next 5 to 7 years to improve the personal services program, education program, and interpretive media. A series of matrix charts, from pages 177 to 230, organizes all the interpretive program information and outlines an achievable implementation plan.

Highlights of this LRIP's Future Interpretive Program include:

Non-Personal Services (Interpretive Media)

- Develop identical orientation kiosks/bulletin boards (and interpretive panels) with self-service permits and brochures at all boat launches
- Write a comprehensive Publications Plan that addresses in-house free items and professionally produced items sold in park bookstores
- Finalize a Historic Furnishings Plan for the Kettle Falls Hotel
- Evaluate and update the park's sign program to improve the signs' messages, clarity, locations, consistency, design, and NPS identity
- Develop a new parkwide Wayside Exhibit Proposal, then seek funds to plan, design, and fabricate new wayside exhibits for the park

Personal Services:

- Continue to offer Boat Tour programs, Canoe Trips, and Costumed Interpretation in the north canoes, but with greater emphasis upon and connection to the park's interpretive themes
- Develop drop-in, hands-on activity stations at the visitor centers
- Complete a curriculum-based Education/Outreach Plan in conjunction with park partners that is tied to the park's interpretive themes
- Expand the park's Junior Ranger program to target age-specific groups with age-specific booklets
- Increase time spent by interpreters roving throughout the park

Gateway and Park Sites:

- Work with gateway communities and request opportunities to review their publications and visitor information
- Create a semi-annual or quarterly park newsletter about current park events and projects for public distribution
- Host an "open house" once or twice a year to inform local businesses and residents about what is happening in the park
- Hire a GS-3 Visitor Use Assistant on intermittent status to help staff the Orr Information Center desk one day a week during peak season
- Purchase a modern, attractive traveling exhibit about Voyageurs National Park to use at community events and other off-site venues
- Improve/replace interpretive media in all three park visitor centers to ensure they cover all six park interpretive themes (see page 13), yet concentrate on the themes most appropriate for each visitor center
- Upgrade the trailhead information and trailside interpretation at all the park's primary trails
- Plan and develop interpretive media and personal services for each of the park's "Visitor Destination" sites

The achievement of the recommendations on these two pages (and others listed in detail within this LRIP) are based on the timely receipt of funding and the park's coordination efforts with its partners.

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Part 1: Introduction

Foundation for Planning

PARK SETTING

Voyageurs National Park is a land and water environment of great beauty, exceptional natural and cultural resources, and abundant recreation opportunities. Located in the lake-country of northern Minnesota, the park protects 218,054 acres that include roughly 134,000 acres of woodlands, 84,000 acres of water, 655 miles of undeveloped shoreline, and hundreds of islands. The park's 55-mile northern boundary is the international border between the United States and Canada.

This forested lake country along Minnesota's northern border was once the scene of an epic chapter in North American history. The park's complex system of waterways includes an important segment of the "transcontinental highway" traversed by French-Canadian voyageurs during the late 1700s and early 1800s. For more than a century, voyageurs plied the maze of lakes and streams in birch bark canoes and transported vast quantities of furs and goods between Montreal and the Canadian Northwest. The economic impact of the fur trade during this era was immense, as was the effect on natural and social systems. Although the park is named for the voyageurs and their role in the North American fur trade, there are other human stories here — from the native peoples who lived on this land beginning about 10,000 years ago, to the gold miners and settlers of the past century.

The rocks tell the oldest story here. Lying in the southern portion of the Canadian Shield, the bedrock of Voyageurs National Park is between 2.1 and 2.8 billion years old, some of the oldest exposed rock in the world. Younger rock formations do not appear here. Perhaps they never existed; but more likely a series of glaciers removed them. Those glaciers — ice sheets two miles thick — also gouged out the lake and river beds here and set the stage for vast forests.

Voyageurs is a place where the southern boreal forest meets and mixes with the northern hardwood forest. Wildlife thrives here. Voyageurs is one of only two national parks in the continental United States with an indigenous population of Eastern timber wolf. Bald eagles, black bears, moose, beavers, river otters, loons, and many other animal species also live here.

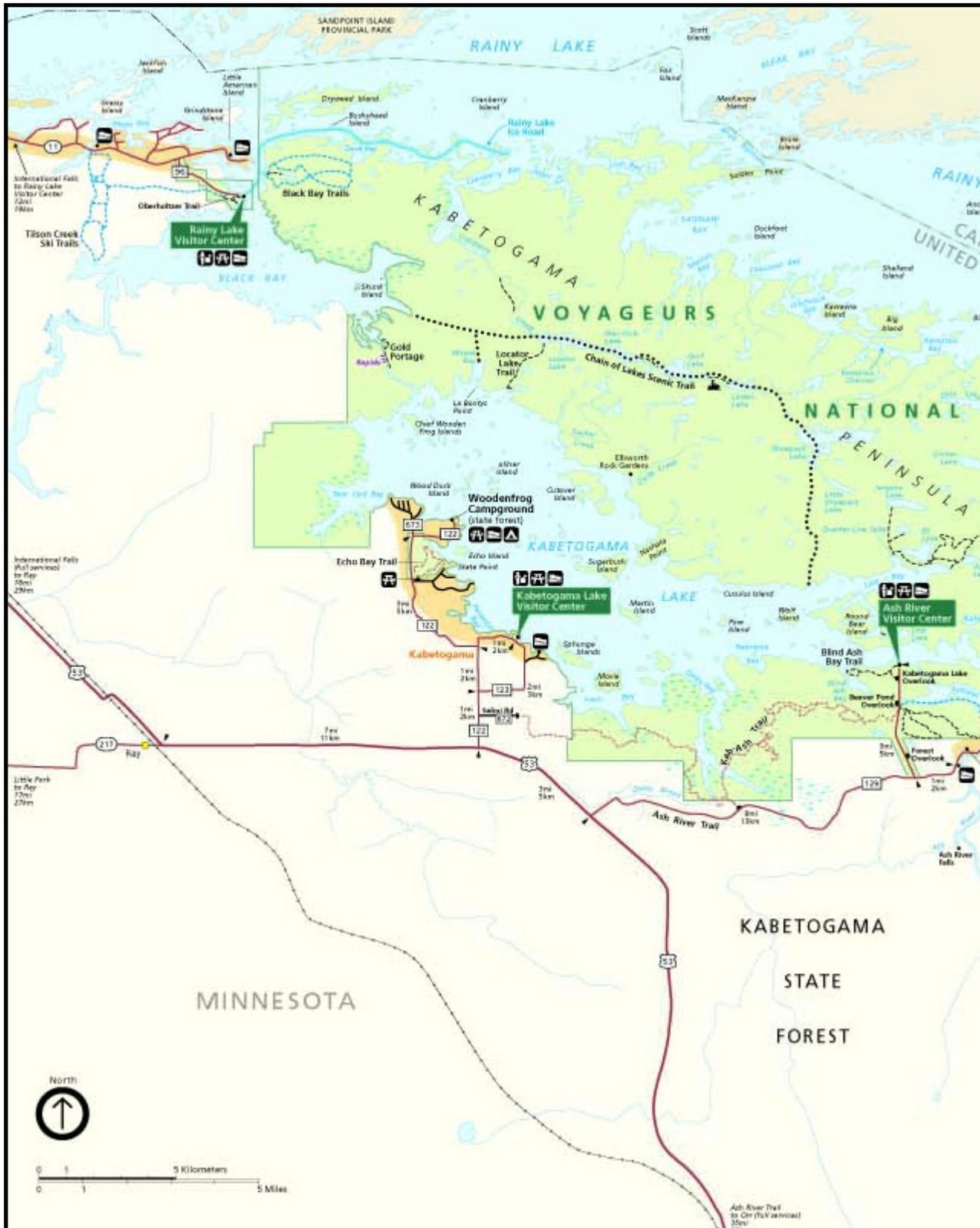
But it is water that dominates the Voyageurs National Park landscape. Within its boundaries more than 30 lakes fill glacier-carved rock basins. Once visitors arrive at one of the park's four entry points, most of them leave their cars behind and set out by water, much as the voyageurs did centuries ago. Today park visitors can still enjoy those same waterways and sense the spirit that beckoned Native Americans and French-Canadian voyageurs.



Most visitors to Voyageurs National Park see and enjoy its resources on the water (above). Many visitors also enjoy the park by snowmobiling (below), skiing, and hiking park trails.



MAP OF VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK



LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Voyageurs National Park (VOYA) 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.

LEGISLATION APPENDIX A: LEGISLATION

An Act to authorize the establishment of the Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes. (84 Stat. 1971)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the purpose of this Act is 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.

ESTABLISHMENT

Sec. 101. In furtherance of the purpose of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") is authorized to establish the Voyageurs National park (hereinafter referred to as the "park") in the State of Minnesota, by publication of notice to that effect in the Federal Register at such time as the Secretary deems sufficient interests in lands or waters have been acquired for administration in accordance with the purposes of this Act: Provided, That the Secretary shall not establish the park until the lands owned by the State of Minnesota and any of its political subdivisions within the boundaries shall have been donated to the Secretary for the purposes of the park: Provided further, That the Secretary shall not acquire other lands by purchase for the park prior to such donation unless he finds that acquisition is necessary to prevent irreparable changes in their uses or character of such a nature as to make them unsuitable for park purposes and notifies the Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs of both the Senate and the House of Representatives of such findings at least thirty days prior to such acquisition.

Sec. 102. The park shall include the lands and waters within the boundaries as generally depicted on the drawing entitled "A Proposed Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota," numbered LNPMW-VOYA-1001, dated February 1969, which shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Within one year after acquisition of the lands owned by the State of Minnesota and its political subdivisions within the boundaries of the park the Secretary shall affix to such drawing an exact legal description of said boundaries. The Secretary may revise the boundaries of the park from time to time by publishing in the Federal Register a revised drawing or other boundary description, but such revisions shall not increase the land acreage within the park by more than one thousand acres.

LAND ACQUISITION

Sec. 201. (a) The Secretary may acquire lands or interests therein within the boundaries of the park by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange. When any tract of land is only partly within such boundaries, the Secretary may acquire all or any portion of the land outside of such boundaries in order to minimize the payment of severance costs. Land so acquired outside of the park boundaries may be exchanged by the Secretary for non-Federal lands within the park boundaries. Any portion of land acquired outside the park boundaries and not utilized for exchange shall be reported to the General Services Administration for disposal under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (63 Stat. 377), as amended. Any Federal property located within the boundaries of the park may be transferred without consideration to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary for the purposes of the park. Lands within the boundaries of the park owned by the State of Minnesota, or any political subdivision thereof, may be acquired only by donation.

(b) In exercising his authority to acquire property under this section, the Secretary shall give immediate and careful consideration to any offer made by any individual owning property within the park area to sell such property to the Secretary. In considering such offer, the Secretary shall take into consideration any hardship to the owner which might result from any undue delay in acquiring his property.

Sec. 202. (a) Any owner or owners (hereinafter referred to as "owner") of improved property on the date of its acquisition by the Secretary may, if the Secretary determines that such improved property is not, at the time of its acquisition, required for the proper administration of the park, as a condition of such acquisition, retain for themselves and their successors or assigns a right of use and occupancy of the improved property for noncommercial residential purposes for a definite term not to exceed twenty-five years, or, in lieu thereof, for a term ending at the death of the owner, or the death of his spouse, whichever is later. The owner shall elect the term to be retained. The Secretary shall pay to the owner the fair market value of the property on the date of such acquisition less the fair market value on such date of the right retained by the owner.

(b) If the State of Minnesota donates to the United States any lands within the boundaries of the park subject to an outstanding lease on which the lessee began construction of a noncommercial or recreational

MISSION

During the course of creating the General Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement for Voyageurs National Park in 2002, a park mission statement was composed that states:

Voyageurs National Park preserves the landscapes and scenic waterways that shaped the route of the North American fur traders and defined the border between the United States and Canada. The park and its diverse resources provide outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation, scientific study, sport fishing, education, and appreciation of the northwoods lakecountry setting.

PARK PURPOSE

Park purpose is the reason or reasons for which a park was established. The basic purposes of Voyageurs National Park were identified in the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement of 2002. The purpose statements listed below reflect that planning team's analysis of the 1971 Act that created Voyageurs National Park, its legislative history, and comments received in public meetings.

The purpose of Voyageurs National Park is to:

- Preserve the scenery, geologic conditions, and interconnected waterways within the park for the inspiration and enjoyment of people now and in the future.
- Commemorate the voyageurs' routes and fur trade with the native peoples of the north, which contributed significantly to the opening of northwestern North America to European settlement.
- Preserve, in an unimpaired condition, the ecological processes, biological and cultural diversity, and history of the northwoods lake-country border we share with Canada.
- Provide opportunities for people to experience, understand, and treasure the lakecountry landscape — its clean air and water, forests, islands, wetlands, and wildlife — in a manner that is compatible with the preservation of park values and resources.

General direction of the park's purpose comes from the National Park Service's Organic Act of 1916 which states that the purpose of the NPS is "*...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.*"

PARK SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of a park is summarized in statements that capture the essence of the park's importance to our natural and cultural heritage. Knowing the park's significance helps to set resource protection priorities and identify primary park interpretive themes.

As stated in the park's 2002 General Management Plan, Voyageurs National Park is significant for the following reasons:

- The park's waterways include one of the most important segments of the fur trade route used in the opening of northwestern North America.
- Located near the headwaters of the Arctic watershed of Hudson Bay, the park's lakes — rather than land — have been the primary travel route throughout history. The lakes continue to shape transportation and recreational uses of the area today.
- The park's exposed rocks and landscape exemplify the glacial activity of the Pleistocene epoch and some of the most complete and extensive Precambrian geologic features in the United States.
- The park preserves the timeless beauty of woods, rocks, water, and sky that invite people to renew themselves through a variety of outdoor activities.
- The designation of Voyageurs as a national park is integral to the protection of the boundary waters ecosystem by both the United States and Canada. Along with Quetico Provincial Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Voyageurs was and remains at the heart of a major conservation effort to protect the boreal forest landscape, its interconnected waterways, and associated wildlife.
- The park holds vital evidence of the continuity of 10,000 years of human relationships with the environment uniquely dictated by the interconnected waterway system. The park provides an exceptional, largely unstudied storehouse of knowledge for the future and preserves resources associated with a long period of use, including those representing the fur trade, native Americans, logging, and recreation.

MANAGEMENT GOALS

The interpretive program goals are consistent with the park's Strategic Plan that was drafted in 2002 in accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA). The GPRA Strategic Plan defined the following primary goals for Voyageurs National Park. The interpretive program works to help the park achieve these goals:

- Natural and cultural resources and associated values at Voyageurs Nat. Park are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.
- Visitors at Voyageurs National Park safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.
- The National Park Service at Voyageurs National Park uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.
- The National Park Service at Voyageurs National Park increases its managerial capabilities through initiatives and support from other agencies, organizations, and individuals.
- Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and resources for this and future generations.

Within the Strategic Plan's goals, the following two address park visitors:

Mission Goal IIa: Visitors at Voyageurs NP enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.

Under this mission goal, the long-term goal for Visitor Satisfaction is: By September 30, 2008, 95% of park visitors are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

Mission Goal IIb: Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of Voyageurs National Park and its resources for this and future generations.

Under this mission goal, the long-term goal for Visitor Satisfaction is: By September 30, 2008, 80% of visitors understand and appreciate the significance of the park they are visiting.

The park measures how well it is achieving its GPRA goals each year through surveys coordinated by the University of Idaho. These surveys reflect visitor opinion about park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities, as well as measure visitor understanding and appreciation of the park's significance. For the results of the most recent surveys at Voyageurs National Park, turn to the Appendices of this LRIP.

Basis for Interpretation

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

In 1916, the National Park Service was created by Congress with the passage of the Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 2 3, and 4). This law states that the purpose of the National Park Service is, "*to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.*"

This legal mandate to both protect park resources and provide for their enjoyment has consistently challenged park managers over the years. At Voyageurs National Park, the purpose of the interpretation and education programs is to provide visitors not only with information about the park's outstanding natural and cultural resources that will foster understanding, caring, and support for the protection and appropriate use of the park, but also with the basic information that they need to safely navigate and enjoy the park. The interpretation and education programs are needed to foster communication and understanding among park visitors, area residents, and park staff to provide for the conservation and enjoyment of park resources.

Four main goals were identified for Voyageurs' Interpretation and Education Program to help guide the future development of the program, and evaluate what the park has done to date. The four primary goals for interpretation and education are to:

1. Effectively orient visitors to the park.
2. Provide information for a successful visit that covers safety, stewardship, rules and regulations, opportunities, and pre-visit planning.
3. Provide opportunities for visitors to form intellectual and emotional connections to the park's resources, thereby facilitating understanding and appreciation.
4. Educate the public about resource management issues and to facilitate informed stewardship.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Primary interpretive themes are ideas about park resources that the park would like each visitor to comprehend in order to better understand, enjoy, and care for the park. They are based on the park's legislation, mission, purpose, significance, and primary resources. The following theme statements were developed by park staff and partners through a collaborative planning process to provide the core subject matter for all interpretation at Voyageurs National Park. The primary interpretive themes should be used to develop future personal services programs and interpretive media.

It is the responsibility of the park staff and volunteers to provide opportunities for visitors to Voyageurs National Park to form intellectual and emotional connections to park resources. The interpretive themes are listed in the order that they appear in the park's legislation and significance statements. They are numbered for reference purposes.

1. Geology

The rocks of Voyageurs reveal a 2.8-billion-year story of plate tectonics, continent building, and glaciation.

2. Water

Voyageurs is a complex mosaic of interconnected lakes, ponds, and wetlands that shapes and sustains life.

3. Scenery

Throughout the year, the timeless beauty of woods, rocks, water, and sky invite people to renew themselves through a variety of outdoor activities.

4. Voyageurs and the Fur Trade

The voyageurs who traveled, traded with native people, and wintered here were the strength of a global system of trade that brought change to the people and environment they found here.

5. Plants and Animals

Voyageurs is a place of transition where southern boreal forest and northern hardwood forest meet and support diverse plant and animal species.

6. People

The place that is now Voyageurs National Park has attracted, challenged, and sustained people over time, influencing their lifeways, traditions, and beliefs — as it does today.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS

Visitors come to parks seeking something of personal value. Visitor experience goals describe a range of visitor opportunities and suggest how interpretation may change the way the public, including organized groups, will think, feel, or act as a result of their park experience. The visitor experience goals below were developed during the General Management Plan (GMP) planning process.

- Visitors to Voyageurs National Park have many opportunities to experience solitude and tranquility, to appreciate the expansive and undeveloped lakeshore and wetlands, and to see and enjoy the abundance and diversity of native plants and wildlife.
- Visitors continue to find a diversity of quality opportunities in Voyageurs, allowing each person to enjoy the park in a safe and respectful manner, with only minimal conflicts between visitors.
- People with disabilities have opportunities to use visitor facilities and to experience park attractions and resources in many areas of the park.
- Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the significance of Voyageurs, and they support the preservation of the park and its resources for this and future generations.
- Park programs facilitate an understanding and appreciation of Voyageurs' natural and cultural resources and human history.
- Visitor experiences are enhanced by a unified partnership between the park, park concessionaires and incidental business permit holders, and adjacent private and public entities that understand and appreciate the significance of the park and its surrounding lands and people.
- Tourism activities and related educational programs are encouraged and supported by the park when they are compatible with the park purposes.
- Visitors are well informed about the susceptibility of the park's resources to damage and comply with regulations to ensure resource preservation and a quality visitor experience.

Park Management Areas – Visitor Experience Goals

The following descriptions are from Voyageurs' 2002 GMP. Interpretive planning should adhere to these descriptions.

Developed Area

Developed areas are set aside for visitor facilities (such as visitor centers, contact stations, or group campsites) or for park operations (such as administrative offices, maintenance facilities, or employee housing). The rehabilitation of historic properties is generally more acceptable in developed areas than in other land management areas. Cultural resources in developed areas are fully accessible to the public.

Visitor Experience — Facilities are convenient and accessible. These areas provide many social experiences through visitor contact and interpretive programs. The probability of encountering other visitors and park staff is high.

Lakecountry Area

This area includes the shoreline and islands of the four major lakes that are within the park as well as the north shore of Crane Lake.

Visitor Experience — The natural setting is the dominant experience, but visitors have access to developed park facilities. The lakecountry area offers a moderate to high degree of challenge and adventure for visitors. The probability of encountering other visitors and hearing noise is moderate to high during certain times of the year. A moderate level of interpretation is offered.

Backcountry Trail Area

This area includes hiking, cross-country ski, and snowshoe trail corridors, where visitors can enjoy the park's natural environment.

Visitor Experience — Visitors feel immersed in a natural landscape. Natural sights and sounds dominate, but human sounds can be heard. Visitors experience a high degree of challenge, adventure, and solitude. The probability of encountering others is low to moderate. Some interpretive media and ranger-led interpretive programs are offered.

Primitive Area

Primitive areas consist of both proposed nonwilderness and proposed wilderness in the park's backcountry except for trails, including areas recommended for wilderness designation. Visitors can expect a "wild" experience, with few facilities.

Visitor Experience — Visitors feel fully immersed in nature. Primitive areas offer a high degree of challenge and adventure and a low probability of encountering other visitors. Human sounds are infrequent. No interpretive programs are offered.

Park Management Areas – Visitor Experience Goals

Integrated Use Area

This area includes the four major lakes, the special use zone on Kabetogama Lake, the Chain of Lakes on the Kabetogama Peninsula, and other interior lakes currently open to motorized uses.

Visitor Experience — A feeling of nature often dominates this area, but human sights and sounds can be expected. The potential to encounter other visitors is moderate to high.

Interpretive programs are provided through a variety of boat tours.

Nonmotorized Use Area

This management area includes interior lakes surrounded by primitive areas or proposed wilderness where motorized use is not appropriate.

Visitor Experience — Visitors feel immersed in nature and experience a high degree of tranquility, quiet, and solitude. Human sounds are low to moderate. Few to no interpretive programs are offered.

VISITOR/AUDIENCE PROFILES

To develop effective interpretation programs and create successful interpretive opportunities, interpreters must know their audience. About 240,000 visitors come to Voyageurs each year. The following visitor/audience profiles give general descriptions of people using the park, and should be used by park staff to develop personal services programs and interpretive media appropriate to their audience.

Summer Visitors (S)

Visitation between May and September accounts for approximately 60% of the park's annual visitation, with June, July and August being the busiest months. Voyageurs is a water-based park where the majority of visitors travel through the park in watercraft ranging from houseboats and motorboats to canoes and kayaks. Motorboats are the most common method of travel. Summer visitors primarily come to the park to fish, but also enjoy a variety of other activities including camping, visiting historic areas, viewing wildlife, and sightseeing. They stay at resorts, hotels, nearby campgrounds, or overnight in the park.

Visitors who are unfamiliar with Voyageurs National Park are often surprised to learn that it is mostly a water-based park. These visitors depend on the park's tour boat and canoe programs to provide access to some park sites. Some come to the park specifically for a tour boat program. Some seek out a boat rental, but many do not feel comfortable doing that. Visitors without a boat usually stay for one day or less.

The University of Minnesota collected visitor use data at the park during the summers of 2002 and 2003 as a means to develop a model to estimate summer visitation. The data showed the following:

- average group size was 3.4 people
- 69% of visitors were from Minnesota, 5% from Illinois; 4% from Wisconsin; 22% were from 31 states, Canada, and other countries
- most Minnesota residents visiting the park were from Northeast Minnesota or the Twin Cities Metro area
- average length of stay for groups was four days
- 30% of visitors stayed for one day; 70% visited for more than one day
- 70% of all groups operated or used watercraft
- 65% went to a visitor center; 55% went fishing; 20% went hiking
- 31% of groups stayed at a resort for an average of 4.1 nights
- 23% were local residents and did not use overnight accommodations
- 22% of groups camped in the park for an average of 3.6 nights
- 14% of groups stayed in private cabins

Winter Visitors (W)

During the winter, snowmobiling is the primary activity of park visitors. These visitors usually stay overnight at a hotel or resort and travel through the park; very few camp in the park. Some snowmobilers come to the visitor center to warm up and seek information, but most do not. Other winter activities include ice fishing, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and sightseeing along the seven-mile-long, park-maintained ice road.

Residents (R)

Residents from the surrounding communities are frequent visitors to Voyageurs National Park. In addition to year-round residents, a number of seasonal residents also utilize the park. Residents live in towns, in resort communities, or in privately owned parcels within the park. Local residents are the primary participants in the park's winter programs. Summer residents often attend interpretive programs and bring their guests to the park. Many area residents have a long history with the area that is now Voyageurs National Park. The establishment of the park changed the way many residents use this area (e.g., no hunting, logging, or trapping), resulting in wide-ranging perspectives on the most appropriate use and management of park resources.

Youth/School (Y)

The park has an active education program that helps students learn about and connect with park resources both onsite (in the park) and off-site (in classrooms). Youth/School groups are generally from the local area, although some travel for several hours to visit the park. Some groups travel more than 60 miles to come to the park. The park's current focus is on elementary school children, although older students participate to a lesser degree as well.

Virtual Visitors (V)

This visitor category addresses people who visit the park website, as well as those who are learning about the park from a distance and requesting written park information. The park receives numerous information requests from students doing projects about the park. These students receive information packets via mail and are informed about the park's website.

Issues and Influences

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Effective interpretation is an integral part of park resource management. Interpretation not only provides factual information to park visitors regarding resource management issues in the park, it can also serve as a catalyst for shared stewardship. When park visitors form their own intellectual and emotional connections with the meanings of park resources they are more likely to care about and care for the conservation of those resources, to support resource management decisions, and to make appropriate choices when visiting the park.

This section of the LRIP describes core resource management issues that were identified in the park's General Management Plan and Interim Resource Management Plan. Resource management issues should be integrated into interpretive programs and materials to foster greater understanding and caring for park resources, thereby providing a public forum for civic engagement about these issues.

Fire Management

Fire is a natural disturbance that helps determine the composition and structure of forests, and affects the health and functioning of forest systems. The National Park Service manages fire and forest fuels to promote healthy, natural forests while ensuring the safety of neighboring communities, in-holders, visitors, and park staff. Fire management activities at Voyageurs National Park include the use of prescribed fire to mimic natural fire and manage forest fuels. The park manages naturally occurring (started by lightning) fires as wildland fire use fires to benefit natural resources. Wildland fire-use fires are allowed to move through the landscape if they stay within safe prescriptions and continue to reach resource management objectives. Interpretation can help visitors to understand the role of fire in the forest, how ideas about fire management have changed over time, and how park visitors can prevent unwanted fires by acting responsibly when using fire in the park.

Managed Lake Levels

The advance and retreat of glaciers created the system of lakes that characterize the border waters area. Voyageurs National Park is at the lower end of a large watershed called the Rainy Lake Watershed. Most of this watershed lies in Ontario, Canada. This arrangement makes the park susceptible to land use activities over which it has little control.

Today, two dams control the water levels of the larger lakes within the park. One dam outside the park provides electricity for industrial use. Human induced changes in lake levels have had many effects on the natural systems protected in Voyageurs National Park, as well as the plant and animal life that exists here. The lake levels are managed by the International Joint Commission with members appointed by the governments of the United States and Canada. A new rule curve (water level limits) was established in 2000 to more closely match natural lake level fluctuations. The park is conducting research to determine what effect, if any, the new rule curves have on park loons, muskrats, benthic invertebrates, wetland vegetation, and fish communities. Interpretation can help park visitors to understand how the park environment has changed over time, and the challenges resource managers face when working to protect the long-term health and sustainability of park resources. Managed lake levels also provide visitors an interpretive opportunity to consider the impact and meaning of human intervention in natural processes.

Mercury

The level of mercury in the park's ecosystem is an issue at Voyageurs because of concern over the potential health effects on people who consume fish containing a high level of mercury, and the effects on wildlife within the park. Research has shown that mercury enters the park from atmospheric deposition. The elemental mercury is altered to become methyl-mercury, a form that can accumulate in body tissues and cause problems for living organisms. Interpretation can help visitors to understand the sources of mercury contamination, the effects of mercury on park systems and wildlife, and the potential for risks to people from mercury, and the scientific process used to study mercury contamination.

Black Bears/Proper Food Storage

Black bears are abundant at Voyageurs National Park. Bears are opportunistic feeders that will take advantage of visitors who do not properly store their food and other scented or food-related items. Black bears that have successfully acquired food from human sources quickly learn to associate people with food, leading to problems at park campsites. The only way to avoid this problem is for park visitors to understand the importance of not feeding bears, or other park wildlife, and for them to take responsible and appropriate actions to ensure their food is stored properly. Interpretation should play a vital role in communicating this important message to park visitors and providing opportunities for visitors to consider the potential impacts of humans in parks on wildlife.

Wildlife Area Closures

At times the park closes certain areas in the park in order to avoid negative human/wildlife interactions. For example, the park may close a campsite where repeated bear activity has occurred, or it may close an area where an active bald eagle nest exists and where public use may contribute to the failure of the nest. Other wildlife issues may lead to public area closures. Interpretation is important in each case to help visitors understand why the closure has been implemented, and to encourage visitors to actively protect the park's wildlife by complying with the area closure.

Protecting Plants and Animals

Voyageurs National Park was established to protect the landscape within its boundary, and the plants and animals that exist here. Some park visitors do not understand this, which at times results in the destruction of park resources. Interpretation must help park visitors to understand the park's mission so that they will share in the responsibility of protecting and caring for the Voyageurs landscape, and the plants and animals that make it home.

Exotic Species

Exotic species of plants and animals exist in Voyageurs National Park. Some exotic species are invasive, and may place native plant and wildlife species at risk. Some exotic species of concern in Voyageurs are purple loosestrife, Eurasian milfoil, and earthworms. Interpretation is important in helping people understand what exotic species are, and what can be done to avoid the introduction of new species, as well as to control the spread of existing exotics. Interpretation can also encourage visitors to consider the impact of exotic species back in their home environments.

Forest Health

The forests of Voyageurs National Park have changed over time. Interpretation can help visitors to understand the ecological significance of Voyageurs' forests, and can help them to make decisions that support the health of the forest. For example, park visitors should understand why it is not appropriate to cut living trees, and to only collect dead and downed wood. They should also understand why it is important not to import firewood from outside of the regional area to minimize the risk of importing exotic species.

Fishery Management

Sport fishing is one of the primary reasons visitors come to Voyageurs National Park. Interpretation can help visitors to understand issues related to fishery management, and to know what the regulations are, and abide by them.

Climate Change

Voyageurs National Park is located at the intersection of the southern boreal forest and northern hardwood forest. The park's geographic location makes it an ideal place to study the effects of climate change on the area's landscapes and wildlife. Interpretation can help to introduce park visitors to the issues surrounding climate change, connect them to research that occurs in the area, and provide an opportunity for civic engagement about this topic.

Water Quality

Maintaining good water quality is important for park resources and the people who enjoy them. Interpretation can help visitors to understand water quality issues, introduce them to work related to water quality, and help them to understand the choices that protect water resources, both in the park and back at home.

Air Quality

Visitors to Voyageurs National Park expect to find an area with good air quality. Interpretation can help visitors to understand work being conducted to monitor air quality as well as create an understanding of regional air quality issues. Air quality issues provide an opportunity for visitors to consider multiple perspectives on this topic.

Effects of Past Land Use

The landscape now within the boundary of Voyageurs National Park has been influenced by thousands of years of human occupation. Past uses of the land have contributed to the composition, structure, and function of park ecosystems. Interpretation can help visitors understand how past use of the land can provide insight into management of the land today.

Protecting Cultural Resources

Voyageurs National Park contains physical evidence of past human use and occupation in the form of archeological sites, ethnographic resources, cultural landscapes, and historic structures. The park also contains tangible and intangible resources that are traditionally associated with living peoples and communities. Artifacts, historic properties, traditional sites, and other evidence of the past are protected by law. Interpretation can help visitors to understand the significance of Voyageurs' human history and culture, and foster a sense of stewardship that will result in better protection of cultural resources.

Use of Historic Properties

Some historic properties within the park are managed for use by park staff and visitors. Interpretation can help park visitors to understand management decisions related to these properties, and the importance of their preservation.

Monitoring Interior Lakes

Voyageurs has 30 interior lakes located on the Kabetogama Peninsula or mainland of the park. A visit to an interior lake requires one to hike in or fly in. Because of their locations, the interior lakes are challenging to monitor. Issues of concern on the interior lakes include wildlife disturbance, potential for overfishing, and people moving fish between lakes. Interpretation can help visitors understand the importance of giving wildlife adequate space to feed and nest and the importance of knowing and following fishing regulations.

VISITOR PROTECTION ISSUES

Effective interpretation helps to ensure that visitors have a safe and enjoyable visit to the park. Interpretation not only provides factual information to park visitors regarding recreation and safety issues in the park, it can also serve as a catalyst for responsible behavior. This section of the LRIP describes visitor protection issues that were identified during park planning processes. Visitor protection issues should be integrated into interpretive programs and materials to foster greater understanding and safe and responsible enjoyment of park resources.

Public safety

Visitors to Voyageurs National Park must have the opportunity to learn how to safely explore and enjoy the park. Interpretation can play a vital role in providing safety information to park visitors.

Navigation

The waters of Voyageurs National Park invite exploration, but require preparation and responsible behavior. Visitors need to understand how to properly navigate using charts, maps, buoys, and other aids to navigation to move safely through the park without getting lost or damaging their equipment on submerged rocks. Interpretation can help visitors to appreciate the complexities of navigating park waterways and encourage them to learn how to safely explore and enjoy park waters today. This includes providing information about aids to navigation and applicable boating rules and regulations.



Intense Cold

Voyageurs National Park is a popular winter destination for people who enjoy snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ice fishing. Interpretation can help park visitors to understand that travel through the park during the intense cold of winter requires appropriate preparation and behavior to ensure that park visitors are safe and that park resources are protected.

Appropriate Behavior (including disposal of human waste)

Park visitors need to understand that the actions they take while visiting the park have a direct impact on the health and integrity of the very resources that they come here to enjoy. Interpretation can provide park visitors with basic information related to appropriate behavior, and can also work to foster a sense of personal responsibility in park visitors that leads to appropriate actions that further the protection and health of park resources.

Campfires

Visitors are allowed to use dead and downed wood for campfires. Despite this rule, some visitors cut down live trees or cause significant damage by hacking at trees with an ax. Interpretation plays a key role in informing visitors about the consequences of their actions and fostering stewardship of the park's resources.

Weather

Voyageurs' large lakes can experience dramatic weather changes in a short period of time during the summer months. Visitors need to know how to watch for and react to changing weather conditions. Interpretation can provide weather forecasts at the visitor centers and information about how to seek safe harborage.

OUTREACH AND INTERPRETATION ISSUES

Gateway Communities

Voyageurs National Park is adjacent to the town of International Falls and the resort communities of Kabetogama Lake, Ash River, Crane Lake, and Orr. Establishment of the park was controversial in the surrounding communities because some residents perceived it as a threat to their lifestyle. Others were angered by the end of hunting and logging in the park. Some considered increased visitation a threat and feared overdevelopment. Tourism is a primary economic factor in the smaller resort communities, and correct information about recreation opportunities and park management are essential for people to understand, support, and contribute to the sustainable use and enjoyment of park resources. Maintaining contact with leaders of local organizations and visitor bureaus can help to further these goals.

Multiple Jurisdictions at Crane Lake

Crane Lake is outside the park boundary, but is a major access point into the park. The National Park Service (NPS) has no facilities in the resort community of Crane Lake to serve visitors and there are no interpretive programs offered by the NPS in the Crane Lake area. This lack of facilities and services causes confusion for some visitors. The NPS leases housing for a Law Enforcement Ranger at Crane Lake and maintains an information bulletin board. Voyageurs' General Management Plan identified the need for a multi-agency facility at Crane Lake that would be jointly used by the National Park Service, Department of Homeland Security (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and Customs and Border Protection), USDA Forest Service, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to provide visitor services for people using the area.

Private Landowners

Not all private landowners within the park's boundary understand or agree with the mission of the National Park Service or the establishment of Voyageurs National Park. Outreach is needed to understand the concerns and perceptions of these people, to provide correct information where misunderstandings based on misinformation have occurred, and to build support between these populations and the park through improved communications.

Interpreting both Natural and Cultural Resources

Interpretive programs and materials should seek to explain the connections and intersections between the park's natural and cultural history. There is concern among some park staff that visitors may perceive the park's natural and cultural resources as competing, rather than complementary interests. The park's Biologist (Education Specialist) serves as an effective liaison between the divisions of interpretation and resources management.



PARK PARTNERS

Voyageurs National Park works with a variety of partners to accomplish resource management, visitor enjoyment, and interpretation goals. Park partners include federal, state, and local agencies, as well as a number of private organizations. Primary partners include:

The Friends of Voyageurs National Park

The Friends of Voyageurs National Park is a non-profit membership organization that supports park operations through sponsorship of events and funding projects such as wayside exhibits, park newspaper printing, and wildlife research. The Friends group is an important part of the park's interpretive program that has provided funding for park research, visitor services, special events and interpretive programs. The Friends group raises money through memberships, donations, and special fundraisers. The park will continue to partner with the Friends group for projects and funding support, and will seek ways to expand and improve the partnership through brainstorming and discussion.

Lake States Interpretive Association

The Lake States Interpretive Association (LSIA) is the cooperating association that manages the retail operations and offers sales items at all three of the park's visitor centers. LSIA provides funds that support the publication of specific interpretive materials and provides support materials for interpretive functions such as supplies and materials for interpretive programs. Through discussion, the park will explore opportunities to expand and improve the partnership.



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Voyageurs National Park has a general agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for cooperation in management of park resources. Voyageurs and the DNR are developing a cooperative agreement for the management of Woodenfrog State Forest Campground. The park and DNR work together on issues related to sport fishing within the park and to research natural resource issues, including the health and abundance of local bear populations. The DNR also has an active environmental education program that may complement work being done by the park. Opportunities for additional partnering should be explored.

USDA Forest Service

The USDA Forest Service manages the Superior National Forest lands adjacent to the southern boundary of Voyageurs National Park near Crane Lake, including the nearby Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Visitors to both Voyageurs National Park and lands and waters managed by the Forest Service use the Crane Lake area as an entry point. Opportunities to partner with the Forest Service to meet interpretation and resource management goals should be explored.

Voyageurs National Park Association

Voyageurs National Park Association (VNPA) is a membership organization based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. VNPA has played a variety of roles in interacting with the park. It has acted as a park advocacy organization and provides financial support. VNPA has contributed support to park interpretive projects, including the annual Birders Rendezvous and printing the park newspaper. VNPA has also funded trail crews to maintain park trails. Opportunities to expand the partnership between the park and VNPA are being pursued.

Gateway Communities' Tourism Bureaus

The tourism bureaus in the park's gateway communities financially support printing of the park newspaper, distribute park information, and promote lodging and other visitor services available in their communities. The Chief of Interpretation sits on the Board of Directors for the International Falls, Ranier, and Rainy Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau and attends monthly meetings. The area's four tourism bureaus are: Kabetogama Tourism Bureau, Ash River Tourism Bureau, Crane Lake Visitor and Tourism Bureau, and International Falls-Ranier-Rainy Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau. Opportunities for additional partnering should be explored (e.g., Birders Rendezvous and Autumn Rendezvous).

Orr Visitor Information Center

The Orr Visitor Information Center is located outside the park on Highway 53 just south of the turn-off for the park's Crane Lake entrance. It is 26 miles from Crane Lake. The Center is operated by the City of Orr and seven group members. The Center is the only travel information center remaining in Northern Minnesota along Highway 53. Since Voyageurs National Park does not have a visitor center at Crane Lake, this location serves as a point of contact for park visitors who enter the park via Crane Lake. Voyageurs National Park contributes \$4,200 a year to the Center for non-park personal services.



Minnesota Office of Tourism

The Minnesota Office of Tourism distributes park information at travel information centers and allows Voyageurs National Park to list information on its website.

Rainy River Community College

Rainy River Community College (RRCC) is part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System. Voyageurs National Park depends on RRCC for hosting training courses and renting rooms in the dormitory to seasonal employees. Park and college staff work together to offer conferences and research forums. Some college faculty use the park as an outdoor classroom. The park and RRCC purchased replica north canoes for interpretive programs. Park and college staff should continue to explore additional ways to partner together and share information.

Quetico Provincial Park

Quetico Provincial Park, a wilderness canoe park similar to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, participated in reciprocal site visits for staff enrichment. Quetico is a member of the review team for interpretive planning documents.



Resource Partnerships

The following organizations partner with the Division of Resources Management at Voyageurs National Park to conduct research and review plans; they are a source of information for interpreters.

- Bois Forte Band of the Ojibwe — Nett Lake, MN
- Hibbing Community College — Hibbing, MN
- Michigan State University — East Lansing, MI
- Michigan Technological University — Houghton, MI
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources — offices statewide
- Minnesota Historical Society — St. Paul, MN
- Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office — St. Paul, MN
- National Park Service Midwest Archeological Center — Lincoln, NE
- Natural Resource Research Institute — Duluth, MN
- The Nature Conservancy
- Northern Michigan University — Marquette, MI
- Ontario Ministry of Environment
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR)
- Science Museum of Minnesota — St. Paul, MN
- University of Minnesota School of Forestry
- University of Minnesota — Duluth, MN
- University of Minnesota — St. Paul, MN
- Bell Museum — University of Minnesota — Minneapolis, MN
- University of North Dakota
- University of Wisconsin
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S.D.A. Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Vermilion Community College — Ely, MN

EXTERNAL AND SERVICEWIDE ISSUES

Some external factors influence how Voyageurs National Park accomplishes its interpretive goals. These include laws, regulations, policies, trends, and other items outside the park's realm of control. This section of the plan highlights these challenges.

Funding Issues

The federal appropriation cycle makes it difficult for agencies to plan very far in advance for the use of discretionary funds. This poses a challenge for planning and publicizing programs that depend on seasonal hiring or new supplies and materials.

Federal agencies are in a period of flat budgets that is likely to continue for several years. Although Congress has provided some increases to the NPS operating budget, fixed costs are growing at a higher rate than the park's budget authorization. The annual decrease in discretionary funds affects the park's ability to hire seasonal interpreters.

Also, there are few funding sources targeted specifically for interpretive projects. There is stiff competition for limited funds, and servicewide funding priorities are currently focused on safety and maintenance backlog, so it is difficult to obtain funding for new interpretive media (e.g., bulletin boards, wayside panels, and exhibits). The park needs to incorporate interpretive media into its cyclic and repair/rehabilitation fund planning.

Canada

The park is located on the Canadian border, which provides unique challenges and opportunities. One opportunity is the potential to jointly research and interpret the fur trade history.

Tour Boat Concessions

Since Voyageurs National Park is mostly a water-based park, providing opportunities for visitors who do not have a boat to experience the park's lakes is essential. One way that Voyageurs can provide these opportunities is with a concessioner-operated tour boat in each basin (Rainy Lake and Namakan Lake). To make the tour boat concession operations more attractive and successful, the NPS plans to provide a tour boat for each basin. The NPS is acquiring a new tour boat for the Rainy Lake basin and intends to acquire a new boat for the Namakan Lake basin, which will provide tour boat service starting in 2006.

Part 2: Existing Conditions and Future Program

INTRODUCTION

Visitors to Voyageurs National Park have a variety of opportunities for discovery. Just as the voyageurs and the Ojibwe before them, visitors today can traverse these waterways and shores. This sense of discovery should be preserved and fostered. Although most visitor services in the park are centered around the three developed areas of Rainy Lake, Kabetogama Lake, and Ash River, other sites and stories can be interpreted through a variety of means and with minimal impact upon the cultural and natural landscape. Emphasis should be placed upon the site's national significance — the outstanding scenery, geological conditions, and the voyageurs and their waterway transportation system.

One of the interpretive challenges at Voyageurs National Park is to ensure that visitors understand the many opportunities to connect with and experience the park's resources. The importance of visitor orientation as the first step to a quality experience cannot be overemphasized.

Within Voyageurs National Park's boundaries, individual sites and their interpretive opportunities should complement each other and enhance the visitors' experiences. Interpretive efforts should strive to create different opportunities for learning that weave the whole story together. A hierarchy of information should be available for visitors, so they can explore each park theme to the breadth and depth that they choose.

This part of the plan outlines the existing conditions and proposed future of Voyageurs National Park's interpretive program. It begins with an introduction of current interpretive staffing and functions. After the introduction, this section is organized in three broad categories: **Non-Personal Services**, **Personal Services**, and **Gateway and Park Sites**.

The **Non-Personal Services** category outlines the interpretive products that provide information and interpretation to park visitors (e.g., audio-visual and exhibits). Each description of a non-personal service summarizes the existing conditions and proposals for the future.

The **Personal Services** category outlines the existing and proposed interpretive programs and services provided to visitors by park staff (e.g., boat tours, interpretive talks). Each description of a personal service summarizes the existing conditions and proposals for the future.

The **Gateway and Park Sites** category includes the existing and proposed interpretive media (non-personal services) and personal services for specific sites near and in the park.

Each entry states the interpretive purpose and interpretive themes addressed by each service or at each site. *Unless noted, all existing conditions will continue. The implementation of proposed media and services and the continuation of existing conditions depend on funding and staffing.*

INTERPRETIVE STAFF SUMMARY

Interpretive Staff

The Interpretive staff at Voyageurs National Park consists of four permanent employees, 4-8 seasonal employees during the summer, and 10-16 volunteers. The division is organized with a Chief of Visitor Education and Planning (Interp.) and Biologist (Education Specialist) stationed at the park's headquarters office in International Falls, a Rainy District Naturalist stationed at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center, and a Namakan District Naturalist stationed at the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center in the summer and the Rainy Lake Visitor Center in the winter. The Biologist (Education Specialist) position is a shared position between the divisions of interpretation and resources management; the split is 75%/25%, respectively.

Volunteers are essential for the park to be able to offer daily visitor center operations. Voyageurs' volunteer program is funded mainly by Volunteer-in-Parks funds. The park received two grants for special research projects conducted by volunteers. Included in the number of volunteers is at least one Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern. The SCA intern conducts interpretive programs and staffs the visitor center desk. In 2002 and 2003, Voyageurs received two Ford Transportation Interpreters through a partnership program with the Ford Motor Company, Student Conservation Association, National Park Foundation, and National Park Service. The Transportation Interpreters led programs on one of the park's tour boats. Although Voyageurs did not receive Transportation Interpreters in 2004 or 2005, the park will continue to request two positions every year.

Interpretive staff are responsible for the obvious duties associated with interpretation — interpretive programs, education programs, visitor services, visitor center operations, information requests, exhibits, website maintenance and development, and publications to name a few. Some duties are not so obvious but require a significant amount of time. The interpretive staff is also responsible for the following:

- Boats on Interior Lakes program — the park rents boats (canoes and rowboats) cached on some interior lakes.
- Reports — staff complete a variety of reports each year.
- Fee Collection — staff manage the fee collection program for the Boats on Interior Lakes, the North Canoe programs, and sometimes the tour boat programs.
- Volunteer program — the Biologist (Education Specialist) is the coordinator.
- Lake States Interpretive Association — each district has a seasonal site coordinator for LSIA sales who works closely with the general manager.
- Overnight Permit System — staff stock permit boxes, collect permits, order permits, and assist with database management.
- News Releases — the Namakan District Naturalist oversees the news release program and distributes most news releases.

Current Interpretive Staff

In FY 2005, the interpretive staff at Voyageurs National Park was:

<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>FTE*</u>
Chief of Interpretation	Permanent	GS-12	1.0
District Naturalist	Permanent	GS-9	1.0
District Naturalist	Permanent	GS-9	1.0
Biologist (Education Specialist)	Permanent	GS-11	0.75**
Seasonal Park Ranger	Temporary	GS-5	0.2
Seasonal Visitor Use Assistant	Temporary	GS-3	0.4
Seasonal Visitor Use Assistant	Temporary	GS-3	0.4
Seasonal Visitor Use Assistant	Temporary	GS-3	0.3
Seasonal Visitor Use Assistant	Temporary	GS-3	0.2
Seasonal Visitor Use Assistant	Temporary	GS-3	0.1

Totals: 4 permanent employees; 6 temporary employees; 5.35 FTEs

*FTE stands for 'Full-Time Equivalency,' (one work-year; 2,080 hours)

** The Biologist (Education Specialist) is a Full-Time (1.0 FTE) employee at Voyageurs National Park. The position is split as follows: 75% Education Specialist and 25% Biologist.

Volunteers: The paid employees at Voyageurs National Park are supported by up to 16 volunteers (one of whom is a Student Conservation Association intern) who contribute more than 4,000 hours of their time each year, mostly to help the park staff its three visitor centers.

Staffing Analysis

Voyageurs' division of Visitor Education and Planning (Interpretation) will implement this plan as workloads and staffing allow. The core positions of Chief, District Naturalists, and Educational Specialist should be maintained if possible. The implementation of the proposed actions in this plan would progress more quickly with the addition of a GS-5/7 park ranger. This ranger could focus on staffing the visitor centers, leading programs, and developing publications. A GS-1 information receptionist (part-time or full-time) would provide support for administrative tasks such as information requests and news releases. With these additions, the District Naturalists could focus on more involved projects such as wayside exhibit planning, interpretive program development, and writing other plans identified in this LRIP.

The park would benefit from having a full-time Education Specialist. When the current Biologist (Education Specialist) position is vacated, the park should review the pros and cons of this split position. Volunteers will always play a critical role in providing visitor services. The park should maintain an active volunteer program and, when appropriate, expand the opportunities available to volunteers.

NON-PERSONAL SERVICES/ MEDIA

Non-personal services, or “media,” are interpretive products that provide information and interpretation to park visitors. Voyageurs National Park utilizes a variety of non-personal services to orient visitors to the park, to provide basic information, and to interpret park resources.

Audiovisual (AV)

Audiovisual is the term used to describe media that allow visitors to see and hear information or interpretive material.

Park orientation slide show/video

Existing:

The park received Fee Demonstration funding to make a new orientation film. Work on the film began in 2003 and was completed in 2004. The park's new film is approximately 11 minutes long and is shown in VHS or DVD format at the Rainy Lake, Kabetogama Lake, and Ash River Visitor Centers. The film addresses interpretive themes #3 - Scenery, #4 - Voyageurs and the Fur Trade, and #5 Plants and Animals.

Proposed: none

Non-park, but related videos

Existing:

At each visitor center, the park offers a variety of other videos for visitors to view. Some titles include: *Voyageurs*, *The Message of the Eagle*, *Leave No Trace*, *Camp Marston*, *The Legacy of the Mound Builders*, *Last Lumberjacks*, and *Northwest Passage: The Story of Grand Portage*. On poor weather days, visitors like to view additional videos, particularly at Ash River, where the viewing room is cozy on a cool, windy day. Offering this service is not labor intensive and provides an additional opportunity for visitors. The videos address themes #4 - Voyageurs and the Fur Trade, # 5 - Plants and Animals, and #6 - People.

Proposed: Continue offering these videos; add only relevant videos.

Audiovisual (AV)

PIX interactive computers

Existing:

Each visitor center and the Orr Information Center (in Orr, Minnesota at the turnoff to Crane Lake) has a PIX interactive computer. The PIX computers provide visitors an interactive means to explore the park virtually. Each year park staff update pertinent information and then download it to each PIX computer. The information on the PIX computers address all interpretive themes.

Proposed:

Although the interactive feature is attractive to visitors, the amount of use and the quality of the program does not warrant much investment of staff time or funding for equipment replacement. The park will maintain the PIX computers, but will not replace those that fail.

Other interactive computers kiosks

Existing:

none

Proposed:

Staff should explore alternatives for an interactive computer kiosk that provides park information, weather forecasts, and other appropriate resources. Options for after-hours access by visitors should be explored.

Bulletin Boards (BB)

The park maintains a system of bulletin boards that provide visitors with written information, maps, and images that help to orient them and provide information about the park. Most bulletin boards also have a brochure rack. The bulletin boards near boat launch areas have an overnight permit station.

Park staff change the bulletin board information twice a year. Summer information is posted by mid-May and winter information is posted by November. In 2004, staff updated the bulletin board panels to meet the NPS Graphic Identity standards.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The interpretive purpose of the bulletin boards is to provide information to visitors about safety, wildlife closures, park regulations, interpretive programs, and opportunities available. The bulletin boards do not have interpretive text; therefore, they do not address any themes.

Evaluation

The bulletin boards are an important source of park information for visitors, especially those who arrive after hours. The effectiveness of the bulletin boards' locations and appearance has not been thoroughly examined, but they seem to meet the needs of those who use them.

Professionally produced bulletin boards would improve their appearance and effectiveness. Before new bulletin boards are installed, the park staff needs to evaluate the effectiveness of current locations.

Existing:

The park has 12 bulletin boards at these locations: Rainy Lake Visitor Center (RLVC), RLVC boat launch, RLVC dock, Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center (KLVC), KLVC boat launch, Ash River Visitor Center boat launch, Crane Lake Ranger Station, Woodenfrog State Forest Campground boat launch and check-in station, Park Headquarters, and Kettle Falls Hotel - Rainy Lake and Namakan Lake side.

Interpretive Media

Existing: 12 bulletin boards

Proposed:

- Develop identical year-round orientation kiosks that have self-service features for permits and brochures, where needed.
 - Show connections between park resources and interpretive themes.
 - Identify habitat types with symbols to show different types that people can visit; refer to this panel at trailheads and overlooks.
 - One panel needs to be changeable for program and park information.



Education Trunks (ET)

Existing:

The park has compiled lesson plans and support materials on the history of the fur trade, and the biology and ecology of wolves. These lesson plans and support materials are stored in containers that educators may borrow to use in their classrooms. Park naturalists and the park education specialist may also present these materials on request. The park has 5 wolf education trunks and 5 trader's cassettes (fur trade trunk).

Park staff field tested the activities included in the education trunks in 2001; the activities were well received. With educator feedback and funding from a Parks as Classrooms grant, the park's education specialist is finalizing the education trunks for distribution.

The education trunks address themes #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade and #5: Plants and Animals.

Proposed:

Do not develop any additional education trunks until the Education Plan is complete.

Exhibits (EX)

Exhibits are both two and three dimensional displays of informational and/or interpretive material that may include text, maps, images, models, replicas, artifacts, or interactive components. Voyageurs has a wide spectrum of exhibits from professionally produced to in-house hand-made exhibits.

The following locations in the park have exhibits — Ash River Visitor Center, Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center, and Rainy Lake Visitor Center. For a description and evaluation of each location's exhibits please see the section on visitor centers starting on page 98.



Interactive Materials (IM)

Interactive materials are stand-alone items that help to convey information and resource meaning to park visitors. Each visitor center has a touch table with interactive materials such as pelts, skulls, and antlers. Each visitor center also has a children's table with activities that result in a take home item for the visitor. Activities range from making wildlife magnets to trinkets for trade.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

Touch tables provide visitors the opportunity to see and feel pelts, antlers, and other specimens. The touch tables are well-liked and often generate questions for park staff. Park staff try to change out the items on the touch tables to add variety for repeat visitors.

The interactive materials address themes #1: Geology, #2: Water, #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade, and #5: Plants and Animals.

Evaluation

The park introduced children's activity areas in all visitor centers in 2002. Before 2002 the Rainy Lake Visitor Center had a children's area, but it did not offer a seasonal variety of activities. The activity areas have proven to be exceptionally popular with visitors of all ages. The park relies on the Friends of Voyageurs National Park and other park donations to fund the supplies used at the activity tables.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Interpretive materials -- touch tables and children's activity areas at each visitor center.

Proposed:

- Continue to provide the touch tables and children's activity tables, but with greater emphasis upon the park's interpretive themes.

Publications (PUB)

The park's size, access issues, variety of uses, and number of stories to tell make publications an effective method of interpretive delivery. Publications are a means for getting information to diverse audiences through a variety of formats. Voyageurs needs a comprehensive Publications Plan that addresses items produced in-house and professionally produced items that would be sold in the visitor center bookstores. The planning process should be used to analyze relevancy, accuracy, and effectiveness of current offerings, and the need for additional materials based upon park themes, visitor experience goals, and management initiatives and objectives.

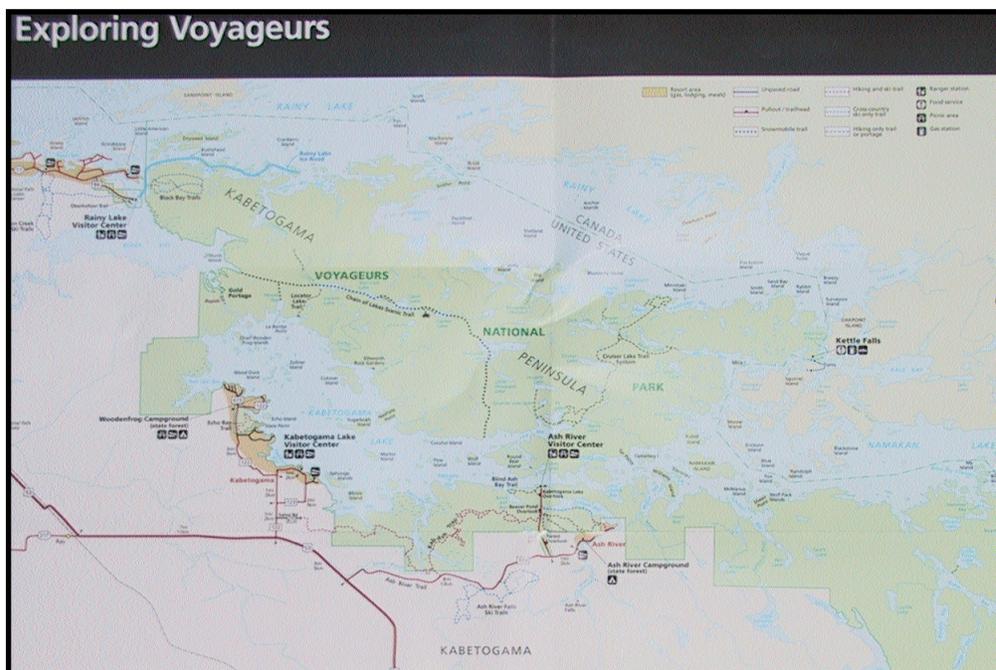
All brochures, site bulletins, maps, and other publications should have consistent NPS graphic identity standards to further enhance NPS and Voyageurs National Park identity. A standardized map should be used in all publications requiring a map, as well as other media, such as way-side exhibits. It is critical that park identity be addressed comprehensively. Also, park publications should be printed on recycled paper.

Interpretive Media

Existing: see entries below and on following pages.

Proposed:

- Publications
 - Convert appropriate park fact sheets into site bulletins.
 - Create a semi-annual or quarterly park newsletter for public distribution.



Publications (PUB)

Unigrid Brochure -- free

Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) developed the park's first unigrid brochure in a B-4 format in 1979, which was converted to digital format in 1999. The park brochure was updated by HFC and reprinted in 2003; a supply of 50,000 brochures was delivered to the park in July 2003. In 2005 HFC once again updated and reprinted the park brochure. The park received 48,800 copies in July 2005.

The top of the brochure's front side features a piece of original color art of the French-Canadian voyageurs for whom the park is named. The front side's middle section has a large text block of ten paragraphs. The rest of the front side has a row of photographs of the park and text blocks on "Visiting Voyageurs National Park" and "Park Regulations."

The brochure's back side contains a large map showing the park in its entirety, its three visitor centers, roads, trails, and various visitor destination sites. The back side also contains text blocks that describe "Traveling in and around the Park" and "Aids to Navigation."

The function of the official park brochure is to provide visitors with a consistent parkwide summary of the park's stories, destination sites, recreational opportunities, regulations, and other basic information. The unigrid brochure is available at the park's three visitor centers and other visitor facilities and is included in some information requests. Park interpreters refer to the brochure's map and information during boat tours and other programs. Visitors' reactions to the brochure's map and content have been positive.

The unigrid introduces themes #1: Geology, #2: Water, #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade, and #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing: unigrid brochure

Proposed:

- Publications
 - Develop a distribution plan for the current supply of the unigrid.
 - When the unigrid brochure needs to be reprinted, the park will work with Harpers Ferry Center to update it to include all visitor destination sites and facilities available at the time of the reprint.
 - Consider changing the cover photograph.
 - Develop a rack card to replace the unigrid brochure currently distributed in travel information centers (A rack card is a one panel, two-sided pamphlet. It is less expensive to produce and is a better alternative for information centers far from the park.)

Publications (PUB)

Park Newspaper -- free

The park publishes ~40,000 copies of its newspaper, *Rendezvous*, annually in February or March. This 16-page newspaper includes: basic visitor contact numbers; a wildlife almanac; an interpretive program and special events schedule; a park map; rules and regulations; a list of area accommodations and commercial services; and information about points of interest, camping and houseboating, winter activities, and park partners. The newspaper functions as a pre-visit planning document as well as an on-site orientation/information publication.

The *Rendezvous* is distributed in the park's visitor centers and to many local information centers and tourism bureaus. It is also included in each information request packet and is on the park's in-depth web site. Park staff use the *Rendezvous* consistently during the summer when assisting visitors.

Every year, the park's cooperating association requests donations from area tourism bureaus and businesses to help with the design costs of the newspaper. Donations have ranged from \$2,700 to \$3,000 a year. This support is critical to ensure the printing of the newspaper. The total cost for design and printing averages \$6,900 annually.

The *Rendezvous* addresses theme #5: Plants and Animals through the wildlife almanac. The rest of the newspaper provides information only.

Interpretive Media

Existing: park newspaper

Proposed:

- Annually evaluate the content of the newspaper.
- Consider expanding the newspaper to include interpretive articles and information related to natural and cultural resources management and visitor use impacts; change out information annually.
- Consider pulling some information and putting it in site bulletins.
- Explore the suggestion by the Minnesota Office of Tourism to develop a full-color, glossy visitor's guide paid for by advertisements; the Office of Tourism would coordinate the advertisement section and the park would coordinate the content of the guide.

Publications (PUB)

Site Bulletins -- free

Voyageurs National Park, like other parks, has many specific topics that are best presented in site bulletins. Most of the park's current Site Bulletins have been updated to the NPS graphic identity format. The Site Bulletins are distributed at the visitor centers and in response to information requests.

The proposed Publications Plan should outline site bulletins needed for Voyageurs. Existing site bulletins should be reviewed for relevance to park interpretive themes and updated to incorporate or reflect those themes. They should also be redesigned to meet current NPS graphic identity standards.

The existing site bulletins address all interpretive themes.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Site Bulletins
 - Introduction to Voyageurs National Park
 - Ecosystem & Ecology
 - Geology
 - Climate
 - -Fauna
 - Flora
 - Rainy Lake Gold Rush
 - Bald Eagles: Masters of Flight
 - Ernest Oberholtzer

Proposed:

- Publications - through the process of writing a Publications Plan, determine what topics still require site bulletins (e.g., voyageurs, beavers, water resources, vegetation, trails, wolves).

Publications (PUB)

Other Agencies' and Organizations' Brochures -- free

Park staff distribute the brochures of its cooperating association — the Lake States Interpretive Association — and the Friends of Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Historical Society, and Gateway Communities visitor guides. The park does not print or fund any of these brochures. No personal services are involved or are proposed for these publications.

Topic Specific Publications -- free

Over the years, park staff developed a variety of topic-specific publications for visitor distribution. Some of these brochures had a consistent design, but most did not. As staff update and reprint publications, the designs are changed to incorporate the NPS graphic standards.

These publications serve a variety of functions for Voyageurs' interpretive program. Some information and orientation publications such as the Camping, Houseboating and Day Use map help visitors have a safe and enjoyable visit. Other publications advertise and inform people about special events and programs taking place in the park. Based on feedback from visitors and attendance at special events and programs, these publications are effective.

Some publications address themes #4 - Voyageurs and the Fur Trade, #5 - Plants and Animals and #6 - People.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Current brochures, posters, and information sheets include:

Information/Orientation Publications

- Camping, Houseboating, and Day Use Map
- Boats on Interior Lakes (BOIL) brochure
- Winter Programs brochure
- Black Bay Ski Trail brochure and map
- Special Speakers Series and poster
- Autumn Rendezvous and poster
- Birders Rendezvous and poster
- Summer Interpretive Programs poster
- Wildflowers and Trails brochure
- Artist-in-Residence flyer
- Park Fact Sheets
- Trail maps
- Snowmobile Trail Map
- GPS coordinates information

Publications (PUB)

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Current brochures, posters, and information sheets include:

Interpretive Publications

Echo Bay Trail Guide \$

Ellsworth Rock Gardens Brochure \$

Ellsworth Rock Gardens self-guided brochure \$

Living with Black Bears (out of stock, 2005)

Locator Lake Trail Guide \$

Oberholtzer Trail Guide \$

Vignettes of Time (history brochure, out of stock, 2005)

Voyageurs: Their History, Clothing, and Canoes

Junior Ranger booklet

\$ = small fee charge; for sale in park bookstores

Proposed:

- Publications - through the process of writing a Publications Plan, evaluate the park's current topic specific publications and determine if all should be maintained and what new ones are needed
 - Consider the following brochures: Voyageurs National Park rack card, Visitor's Guide to Visitor Destinations; specific visitor destinations that need their own brochure; boater's guides to various topics; Watchable Wildlife Guide; Fur Trade History, including a map of fur trade routes; Winter Use Guide; guide to historic properties.
 - Write age-specific Junior Ranger Booklets.
 - Reprint Vignettes of Time and Living with Black Bears brochures.
 - Existing topic specific brochures should be reviewed for relevance to park interpretive themes, updated to incorporate or reflect those themes, and be redesigned to meet current NPS graphic standards.

Publications (PUB)

For Fee Publications

For-Fee Publications are written materials available for sale. The park has books and trail guides for sale in the visitor center bookstores and at trailheads. Lake States Interpretive Association (LSIA) is the park's cooperating association that manages the bookstores in all of the park's visitor centers. Using proceeds from sales of their publications and other sales items, LSIA grants funding for aid requests. LSIA grants most aid requests for publications that would be sold in the bookstore because they bring in funding. LSIA has also provided funding for free park publications and special events.

The LSIA publications address all interpretive themes.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications -Park specific publications published by LSIA and sold in the bookstores include:
 - 50 Years in the Minnesota North Country: Excerpts from the Diaries of I.W. Stevens
 - Gold Town to Ghost Town: Boom and Bust on Rainy Lake
 - Geology of Voyageurs National Park (in production)
 - Kettle Falls: Crossroads of History
 - Ojibwe Tales
 - Voyageurs National Park Water Routes, Foot Paths & Ski Trails
 - Voyageurs National Park book

Proposed:

- Publications - Annually, the interpretive staff compiles and submits a 5-year plan for aid requests to LSIA. Staff members use this plan to assess which types of publications the park needs.

Historic Furnishings (HF)

The only location in the park with historic furnishings is the Kettle Falls Hotel. Historic furnishings help park visitors to see and understand what the building may have looked like to people that visited or lived there in the past. Voyageurs has a draft Historic Furnishings Plan for Kettle Falls. See pages 150-152 for additional information and proposals for the Kettle Falls Historic District.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- draft Historic Furnishings Plan, 1996.

Proposed:

- As interpretive planning progresses for the Kettle Falls Historic District, park staff will finalize the Historic Furnishings Plan.



Wayfinding (WF)

Although not technically considered wayside exhibits, wayfinding signs assist motorists driving to Voyageurs National Park and visitors within its boundaries. The importance of adequate signs cannot be underestimated. The ability of visitors to locate the park's visitor facilities, trails, and destination sites is critical to a quality visitor experience.

Wayfinding is a challenge at Voyageurs because it has many access points, no entrance stations, and a confusing array of islands and waterways.

At present, there are problems with the existing park signs' messages, clarity, locations, consistency, design, and identity with the National Park System. The park should continue to evaluate and update its sign program to ensure standardization throughout. As the park staff changes signs so that all are marked with the NPS arrowhead, they should be in contact with the Strategic Initiatives Office at HFC (that oversees the NPS Identity Program and NPS Sign Program) to ensure compliance with Director's Order 52B: Graphic Design Standards and Director's Order 52C: Park Signs.

Since wayfinding signs affect visitors and their experience, they are evaluated below and on the following pages.

Highway Signs

There are highway signs directing visitors to all park visitor centers and entry points. The Federal Highway sign regulations note that mileage on signs are to the turnoff leading to the site destination, not the mileage to the site destination itself. For example, a highway sign from Kabetogama Lake to Rainy Lake states 25 miles; so, 25 miles down that road, the visitor turns onto the highway that goes to Rainy Lake and sees another sign that states 10 miles to Rainy Lake. This sign regulation has caused some visitors to be late to tour boat programs because they assume they will reach the destination in 25 miles, not 35 miles.



Wayfinding (WF)

Highway Signs

The park is in the process of changing highway signs to include the NPS arrowhead. In the past the park used a logo. Currently, park directional signs are a mix of those containing the NPS arrowhead and those with the old park logo. The condition of signs ranges from good to poor.

Trail wayfinding markers and signs

The standard wayfinding sign for park trails is a metal sign of the trail map with an indent marking the hiker's location. Some of the trail maps are hard to understand. Some trails do not have consistent trail markers, thereby confusing some hikers.

Trail routes are marked using cairns or diamond shaped confidence markers. Occasionally bears knock the cairns over while seeking insects, which results in less guidance for hikers. Due to funding constraints, the park cannot consistently maintain trails, which results in confusion if there are not enough confidence markers along the trail. Additional confidence markers are needed along some park trails. Some trails need clearer directional signs at intersections.

At the Rainy Lake Visitor Center, visitors interested in hiking the Oberholtzer trail often have difficulty finding the trail. The way to the trailhead is not clearly identified from all directions.



Interpretive Media

Existing: highway signs, trail signs, trail markers

Proposed:

- Publications - park staff need to work closely with others in the region to ensure that accurate information about the park is included in maps distributed to the public
- Wayfinding -
 - Develop a comprehensive sign plan that addresses all wayfinding signs used to direct visitors and that conforms with the NPS Identity Program described in Director's Order 52B: Graphic Design Standards.
 - Evaluate the park's sign program regularly to ensure standardization.
 - Improve and standardize wayfinding markers - cairns (Voyageurs symbol); improve directional signs to some trailheads (Black Bay, Blind Ash Bay, and Oberholtzer); see the section on primary trails for additional recommendations for individual trails.
 - One sign committee member will be an interpreter.

Personal Services

Existing and Proposed:

- Information Desk - park staff will continue to clarify directions for visitors; park staff will explain to visitors what the mileages stated on the highway signs mean.



Wayside Exhibits (WE)

Wayside exhibit is a term used to describe a free-standing exhibit, generally outdoors, that provides information and interpretive material, usually in the form of text, maps, or other images.

1987 Wayside Exhibit Plan

In 1987 a wayside exhibit plan was completed for Voyageurs National Park by Harpers Ferry Center, and all materials needed to produce the exhibits were acquired and stored. At the time of the completion of the plan, funds were not available to produce the exhibits. Ultimately, only two exhibits were produced from that plan (an orientation exhibit and a bulletin case for the Kabetogama Lake boat launch ramp), but they were not installed.

Park staff should review the exhibits proposed in the 1987 plan to determine the relevance of individual panels. If staff feel that some of the exhibits are still valid, they could possibly be redesigned and produced through Harpers Ferry Center's technical assistance program; the technical assistance program is designed to help a park obtain a small number of exhibits (seven or fewer). Otherwise, wayside exhibit planning and development for Voyageurs National Park should start anew when funding looks promising. However, even if the 1987 wayside exhibits themselves are no longer valid, some of the ideas and many of the graphics from that project could be of use.



Wayside Exhibits (WE)

Existing:

There are ten wayside exhibits in the park. The locations of the wayside exhibits and their associated interpretive themes are as follows:

- Little American Island in Rainy Lake - Rainy Lake Gold Rush
3 panels - themes #1 - Geology & #6 - People
- Voyageurs Forest Overlook* - forest transition and logging
1 panel - theme #5 - Plants and Animals
- Beaver Pond Overlook* - beavers as agents of change
1 panel - themes #2 - Water & #5 - Plants and Animals
- Kabetogama Lake Overlook* - lake beauty and the voyageurs route
1 panel - themes #2 - Water, #3 - Scenery, and #4 - Voyageurs & the Fur Trade
- Ellsworth Rock Gardens on Kabetogama Lake - gardens' history
1 panel - theme #6 - People
- Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center boat launch ramp - air quality
1 panel - #5 - Plants and Animals
- Rainy Lake Visitor Center viewing dock - the voyageurs
1 panel - theme #4 - Voyageurs and the Fur Trade
- Kettle Falls dam overlook - the voyageurs
1 panel - theme #4 - Voyageurs and the Fur Trade

* overlooks located along the entrance road to Ash River Visitor Center

All of the wayside exhibits have a standard NPS "traditional" base and have screen-printed, fiberglass-embedded panels. All of the existing wayside exhibits are acceptable in content and condition. The park replaced most of the panels in 2002 and 2003 through the Harpers Ferry Center wayside exhibit replacement program. Harpers Ferry Center produced the voyageurs panel located at Rainy Lake Visitor Center and Kettle Falls in 2003. It is the only wayside exhibit formatted to meet the new NPS Graphic Identity Program.

Wayside Exhibits (WE)



Wayside Exhibits (WE)

Proposed:

Parkwide wayside exhibit development for Voyageurs National Park should start with a new parkwide Wayside Exhibit Proposal. The park should seek funds to plan, design, and fabricate parkwide wayside exhibits. As funding is sought for a parkwide wayside exhibit plan, park staff should move forward with developing ideas for wayside exhibits and field testing panels.

Wayside exhibits are described, evaluated, and proposed by location in the Gateway and Park Sites section of this part of the plan. During implementation planning, park staff will prioritize all proposals.

Website (WEB)

The park maintains a Park Profiles website [www.nps.gov/voya] and an In-Depth website [www.nps.gov/voya/home.htm]. The websites contain information and interpretive materials related to Voyageurs National Park that are accessed by a large number of people each year.

The park's website coordinator, the Biologist/Education Specialist, updates the website regularly to keep the information accurate. In 2002, park staff added the park's newspaper, *Rendezvous*, to the website so that viewers can get information about interpretive programs, accommodations, commercial services and other park information. In 2003, park staff added links to the following park brochures: Camping, Houseboating, & Day-use map, Vignettes of Time, and Living with Black Bears. The park website includes links to park partners' websites. Unofficial websites that appear to be managed by Voyageurs National Park cause some confusion for visitors as they may state incorrect information.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the park's websites is to inform visitors about the park and to provide interpretive information for them to learn about the purpose and significance of the park. The websites also serve as a valuable resource for students doing research projects.

The website addresses all interpretive themes.

Evaluation

The park receives a small number of emails from the Park Profiles website. Some people ask questions while others inform the park of errors or problems they encountered while using the website. Sometimes the park receives compliments about the websites. Based on conversations that occur during interpretive programs, some visitors use the website to begin planning their trip.

The website coordinator is developing the park's natural resources profiles pages. In November and December 2004, the website coordinator created an attractive and easy-to-navigate website. In early 2005, the NPS decided to redesign the nps.gov park profile pages and park expanded website (i.e., in-depth website) using a new program called Content Management System. This decision will result in a significant workload increase for the website coordinator and a loss of creativity for individual parks.

National Park Service

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Voyageurs

National Park
Minnesota

Rainy Lake Visitor Center
October 2, 2005 to mid-May, 2006 Wed-Sun, 10 am-5 pm

Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center
CLOSED October 2005 through mid-May 2006

Ash River Visitor Center
CLOSED October, 2005 - May, 2006
[View all Facilities »](#)

Fee Information
[View all Fees »](#)

The park lies in the southern part of the Canadian Shield, representing some of the oldest exposed rock formations in the world. This bedrock has been shaped and carved by at least four periods of glaciation. The topography of the park is rugged and varied; rocky outcrops are interspersed between bogs, beaver ponds, swamps, islands, small lakes and four large lakes. In the years since the last glaciation, a thin layer of soil has been created which supports the boreal forest ecosystem, the "North Woods" of Voyageurs National Park.

This land is rich in human history. Named for the Voyageurs, French-Canadian canoe-men who traveled these waters in their birch-bark canoes from the Great Lakes to the interior of the western United States and Canada. Modern voyageurs continue to ply these waters. The water, accompanying scenery, geology and rich cultural and natural resources that give Voyageurs its national significance, merits its protection for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

On the northern edge of Minnesota's border, 55 miles of the park meander along the Canadian border with Ontario. Voyageurs is about 15 miles east of International Falls, MN and 300 miles north of Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN.

Search

Search this park
 Search nps.gov

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Accessibility

Activities

Education Programs

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History & Culture

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Management Docs

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Plan Your Visit

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National Park Service



Voyageurs In Depth

National Park Service

Park Profile

In Depth Home

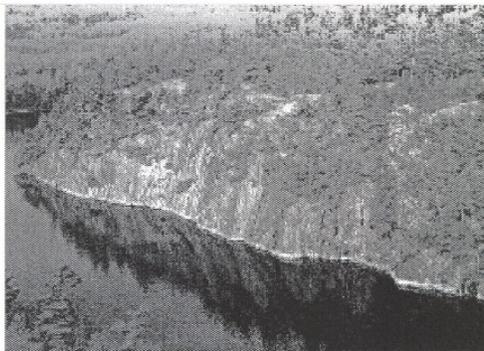
Press Releases

Park Basics

- Safety
- Visitor Centers
- Things to Do
- Camping
- Special Events
- Volunteer
- Rules & Regulations

More Info

- Nature and Science
- History
- Education Programs
- Jobs
- Park Newspaper (PDF)
- Park Partners
- Lodging (PDF)
- Artist in Residence Program



Voyageurs National Park

Voyageurs National Park is located on the northern edge of Minnesota, where the United States borders Ontario, Canada. The border between the two nations, and 55 miles of the park's northern boundary,

was a portion of the historic water route of the voyageurs during the Fur Trade. The park is approximately 300 miles north of Minneapolis-St. Paul, and may be accessed by car on Highway 53 from the south, and on Highway 11 from the west. There is no entrance fee at Voyageurs National Park.

Summer Activities

Planning a visit to Voyageurs National Park this summer? You've come to the right place! Be sure to check out the links on the left side of this page to learn more about how to enjoy your stay at the park. **Click here for a schedule of ranger guided programs, including canoe trips and guided walks.**

A Northwoods Destination

Voyageurs National Park contains 218,054 acres, with 134,265 acres of land and 83,789 acres of water. Voyageurs provides outstanding opportunities for year-round recreation. Most visitors come during the summer to fish in one of the many lakes within the park, or to explore the interconnected waterways by motorboat, houseboat, canoe or kayak. Autumn is the ideal time for hiking, when crisp cool weather and beautiful fall colors make exploring the park's trails most enjoyable. Winter brings extreme cold to northern Minnesota, transforming the park into a glittering land of ice and snow. Visitors to the park enjoy snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and ice fishing during this special time. Spring provides renewed opportunities for watching wildlife as thousands of migratory birds return to the park to prepare for the summer breeding season, or to rest on their journey further north.

Park Map (pdf)

CAMP SITE MAP (page 1) (pdf)

Website (WEB)

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Website - the park's website coordinator, the Biologist/Education Specialist, maintains the park's NPS ParkNet and in-depth webpages

Proposed:

- Website -
 - Develop a maintenance plan for the Park Profiles page.
 - Complete and maintain Natural Resources and Cultural Resource Profiles pages.
 - Add campsite GPS coordinates.
 - Add education programs online.
 - Add the updated Junior Ranger program.
 - Convert brochure files from pdf files to html.
 - Web design training to develop reservation systems.
 - Automate information requests.
 - Add relevant fact sheets and site bulletins.
 - Add frequently asked questions.
 - Include more interactive features: activities.
 - Add web cameras for visitors to view scenery, wildlife, air quality, and/or weather conditions.

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.

PERSONAL SERVICES

Personal services are interpretive programs and services provided to park visitors by park staff. Voyageurs National Park provides a variety of personal services to orient visitors to the park, to provide basic information, and to interpret park resources.

With the permanent and temporary staff listed on page 39, Voyageurs National Park offers the following personal services programs. Summer interpretive programs begin in mid-June and end in late September. The frequency of programs decreases after mid-August.

Overall Recommendations

Personal services at the park should encourage visitors to be active participants rather than passive receivers when learning about the park's stories. All personal services programs should relate to the park's interpretive themes and have clear goals and objectives to meet the needs of specific audiences. Personal services should offer visitors multiple opportunities to make their own intellectual and emotional connections to the park's resources. Such opportunities should include multiple perspectives and universal concepts to broaden the relevance of programs to a diversity of visitors with a variety of interests and motivations for visiting the park.

The interpretive staff will continue to offer a variety of year-round programs linked to the park interpretive themes, with an emphasis on curriculum-based programming and outreach in the low visitation spring and winter months. Personal services should take advantage of natural and cultural resources research and data collection and utilize the special knowledge and talents of researchers, partners, and staff.

The park should explore expanding its interpretive offerings to have the Ojibwe bands associated with the park develop and present interpretive programs and cultural demonstrations. Establishing partnerships in this area will greatly enhance visitor understanding of the past and present American Indian connections to the park. The bands should also be actively involved in the planning and design of interpretive media related to their history and current lifeways.

Boat Tours (BT) (summer only)

The park provides tours with concessioner or National Park Service operated boats departing from the Rainy Lake and Kabetogama Lake Visitor Centers each summer. These tours provide an important service to park visitors who do not have access to a boat. Tours are conducted by district naturalists, seasonal interpreters, volunteers, and other appropriate park staff.

Boat Tours (BT) (summer only)

Rainy Lake Boat Tours

When a tour boat is in operation, the park offers programs on Rainy Lake from mid-June to mid-August; the number of programs offered varies each year. The park strives to have a uniformed park interpreter on each tour boat trip. Tours offered in 2004 included:

Gold Mine Tour -- 1.5 hours (includes a 30-minute stop at Little American Island)

Discovery Cruise -- 2 hours

Sunset Cruise -- 2 hours

Full Moon Cruise -- 1.5 hours (offered twice during the summer)

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of these tour boat programs is to give visitors the opportunity to view park wildlife, to visit historic areas within the park, and to experience the park first hand and learn about its resources. Tour boat programs are critical to providing opportunities for visitors, especially those without a boat, to get out on the water in the park. All tour boat programs should offer interpretive opportunities connected to the primary interpretive themes specified for the programs.

The Gold Mine Tour addresses themes #1: Geology and #6: People. The Discovery and Sunset Cruises address all of the park themes. The Full Moon Cruise addresses themes #2: Water and #3: Scenery.

Evaluation

Concessioners or the National Park Service have offered tour boat programs on Rainy Lake since 1984. In 1999 the concessioner sold his boat and ended his tour boat service. In 2000 the park did not have tour boat programs on Rainy Lake. In 2001 and 2002 the park leased a boat for use on Rainy Lake. In 2002 the Namakan District concessioner ran the tour boat operation. In 2002, 2003, and 2004, due to a lack of a concessioner, the National Park Service managed the tour boat operation on Rainy Lake. Voyageurs received funding in 2004 to build a new tour boat for Rainy Lake. The new boat is scheduled to arrive in 2006. The park will seek a concessioner to run the operation. If a concessioner is not found, the park will operate the boat similar to previous years. As park staff learned in 2000, tour boat programs are necessary to provide visitors the opportunity to connect with the park.

Although both tours are well attended, visitors prefer the Discovery Cruise because it travels through more of the park and it has a broader focus than the Gold Mine Cruise.

After monitoring the tour boat programs on Rainy Lake for three years, park staff learned that visitors prefer the boat tours that last 1 1/2 to 2 hours as opposed to 3 or 4 hours. Visitors also prefer to take tours that start in the afternoon. See proposed personal services on next page.

Boat Tours (BT) (summer only)

Kabetogama Lake Boat Tours

When a tour boat is in operation, the park or a concessioner offers boat tours on Kabetogama and Namakan Lakes from mid-June through mid-August; the number of programs offered varies each year. The park strives to have a uniformed park interpreter or Student Conservation Association intern on each tour boat trip. Tours offered in 2004 included:

Kettle Falls Cruise (day/evening) - 5.5 hours

Sunset Wildlife Cruise - 2 hours

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of these tour boat programs is to give visitors the opportunity to view park wildlife, to visit historic areas within the park, and to experience the park first-hand. Tour boat programs are critical to providing opportunities for visitors, especially those without a boat, to get out on the water in the park. All tour boat programs should offer interpretive opportunities connected to the primary interpretive themes specified for the programs.

The Kettle Falls and Sunset Cruises address themes #1: Geology, #2: Water, #3: Scenery, #5: Plants and Animals, and #6: People.

Evaluation

Concessioners have offered tour boat programs on Kabetogama Lake since 1978. The concession operation has been steady and reliable for many years. In 2003, the concessioner purchased a 49-passenger boat; the old boat held 20 passengers. At the end of the 2004 season, however, the concessioner decided to end tour boat operations in the park. The park sought, but failed, to attract a new concessioner for the 2005 season. Voyageurs National Park is considering different ways to resolve this tour boat issue.

On Kabetogama Lake, the 5 1/2-hour Kettle Falls Cruise is very popular because it has a clear destination and goal as it takes visitors to a historic site in the park. This trip to Kettle Falls is not offered on Rainy Lake, however, because it takes at least 8 hours. The Sunset Wildlife Cruise is also quite popular because it provides visitors with the means to view park scenery and wildlife and to tour the Ellsworth Rock Gardens destination. The concessioner and park staff found that middle-of-the-day cruises offered in previous years were poorly attended, so those boat tours have been dropped from the schedule.

Boat Tours (BT) (summer only)

Personal Services

Existing: Park staff on every tour boat program.

Proposed:

Tour boat programs on Rainy Lake and Kabetogama Lake should continue with interpreters on board, but with greater emphasis upon and connection to the park's interpretive themes. Permanent staff should develop stories for each theme and have other park staff review them. Seasonal interpreters could then use the stories to prepare for their programs. Current resource management research should be incorporated into programs. Time frames and topics which have proven successful, such as the 2 hour boat tour from Rainy Lake and the 5.5 hour boat tour from Kabetogama Lake to Kettle Falls, should continue.



Canoe Trips (CT)

Canoe trips provide visitors the opportunity to explore the park in a non-motorized boat. The park provides canoes, paddles, life jackets, instructions, and a guide. Canoe trips provide an opportunity for visitors without their own boat to experience and enjoy the park while learning about park resources. The canoe trips are free. The number of programs offered varies between lake basins and depends on staffing.

Canoe trips began on Rainy Lake in 1997. Over the years the park offered 2-hour canoe trips in the morning and evening. In 2004, the Rainy Lake programs were a combination of a paddle trip across Black Bay and a hike along the Black Bay Beaver Pond trail.

Canoe trips began on Kabetogama Lake by 1982. These canoe trips travel to a scenic area known for its wildlife viewing. The park starts the programs at Woodenfrog State Forest Campground boat launch because there is no adequate launch area at the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center. The canoe trips have always been offered in the morning and afternoon, but not the evening.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the canoe trips is to introduce visitors to the park, to provide opportunities for water-based exploration in the park for visitors without a boat and to experience the park's natural resources first hand. For many visitors, participation in these programs is their first time in a canoe. During the trip they have outstanding scenery and wildlife viewing opportunities. Canoe trips provide interpretive opportunities connected to the listed themes.

The canoe trips address themes #1: Geology, #2: Water, and #5: Plants and Animals.

Evaluation

The canoe programs on Rainy Lake have inconsistent attendance with no clear patterns or reasons. Those that do attend are appreciative that the National Park Service offers the opportunity to canoe in the park. Park staff need to compare attendance records from previous years to determine if the program times and days should change or if the programs on Rainy Lake should continue at all.

The canoe trips on Kabetogama Lake are well-attended and should continue. As staffing allows, the park should consider adding additional trips to the schedule.

Canoe Trips (CT)

Personal Services

Existing: staff on every canoe trip

Proposed:

- The canoe trips should continue to be offered because they provide visitors with an alternative opportunity to paddle like the voyageurs. Permanent staff should develop stories for each theme and have other park staff review them. Seasonal interpreters should use the stories to prepare their programs. These stories would also ensure that staff provide consistent information to visitors. These voyages are one of the few no-charge programs for visitors.
- Organize an annual 'follow the voyageurs' route' paddle trip.
- Consider implementing a kayak program that includes instructions and is conducted primarily by volunteers; use easy to maneuver sit-on-top kayak.



Community Programs (CP)

Community Programs are scheduled programs and activities that occur off-site that help area residents to learn about and enjoy park resources while building understanding and support within the community that results in the shared stewardship of park resources.

The park willingly participates in community events to show support for and involvement in the community. The personal services invested in various community events, presentations, and education programs is necessary to continue to build a positive relationship between the park and its gateway communities.

The park participates in the International Falls 4th of July parade and Ranier Festival and parade. If a gateway community hosts the annual Governor's Fishing Opener or Governor's Snowmobile Ride, the park participates. Law enforcement rangers staff a water safety learning station at Outdoor Education Days (a public school event) every year. On occasion, interpretive staff host information booths at community or school events. Although there are more community events in which the park could participate, staffing levels determine the degree to which Voyageurs gets involved. Park staff from other divisions give presentations for organized groups upon request.

Evaluation

It is difficult to measure the effectiveness and outcomes of participation in community events, but participation as a community member is most important.

Personal Services

Existing: participate in parades and festivals and continue presentations as staffing allows

Proposed: none

Costumed Interpretation (CI)

North Canoe Programs are presented by park staff or volunteers in period dress/costume and take visitors on a paddling trip in a 26-foot-long north canoe. The program helps visitors to learn first-hand about the life and times of the voyageurs through direct experience.

The north canoe voyages last 1.5 hours and cost \$4 for adults and \$2 for children ages 5-16. Children under the age of 5 are not allowed to participate because they are not able to paddle the canoe. The park tries to offer voyages two days a week, two programs a day, from the Rainy Lake and Kabetogama Lake visitor centers.

Costumed Interpretation (CI)

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the north canoe voyages is to give visitors the opportunity to experience a part of the life of the voyageurs. Through costumed interpretation and reenactment, visitors gain an appreciation for the difficult work of the voyageurs.

The north canoe voyages address theme #4: Voyageurs & Fur Trade.

Evaluation

In 2003, the park offered north canoe voyages from all three visitor centers instead of just the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. In 2004, due to fewer staff members the park offered the voyages at two visitor centers. The park started charging a fee for the north canoe voyage in 2003 using the 16 USC 1a-2(g) fee authority. If new NPS fee legislation ends the use of the 16 USC 1a-2(g) fee authority, the park will lose this way to replace equipment and fund part of the interpreter's salary. These costs (\$300-\$400) would need to be absorbed by the park. The north canoe programs are led by and require two staff members or volunteers. When staffing levels decrease, these staff-intensive programs are more susceptible to cuts than other programs.

Attendance for the programs at Rainy Lake Visitor Center has slowly decreased from 2001-2004. The decreased attendance may correlate to the park offering this program at other visitor centers and/or the implementation of program fees. The Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center canoe programs usually have at least 4 participants and are often full.

Personal Services

Existing: 1.5 hour north canoe programs

Proposed:

- North Canoe programs should continue and be offered at each visitor center.
- Expand the north canoe voyages to include a visit to a landing place with trading era props.
- Consider changing the program schedule at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center as an attempt to increase visitation.
- Permanent staff should develop stories for these programs and have other park staff review them. Seasonal interpreters should have these stories to prepare their programs. These stories would also ensure that staff provide consistent information to visitors.

Education Program (ED)

Education programs are curriculum-based walks, talks, tours, lectures, and other activities that help students to form ideas, learn about and appreciate park resources, and facilitate caring within a broader context of learning. Education programs connect park interpretive themes to state and national learning standards.

See Part 3: Education Program on pages 162-167 for more information.



Evening Program (EP)

Evening programs are talks, slide shows and other presentations that interpret park resources, management issues, and other appropriate topics. Talks are given by resource specialists, guest speakers and park staff. Evening Programs are typically given at the Woodenfrog State Forest Campground in the Refectory building.

In 2004 the park offered one evening program, the Special Speakers Series, on Friday nights at the Woodenfrog State Forest Campground Refectory; each program lasted 1 hour.

The Special Speakers Series brings in a different guest speaker every week. The park offers the programs to attract state forest campground campers, resort guests, and residents.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the evening program is to bring visitors together to learn about a specific park-related topic at a level of detail greater than any provided by current park interpretive media.

Special Speaker topics vary but all relate to the park's interpretive themes.

Evaluation

In 2004, due to decreased staffing, the park reduced the number of evening programs offered at the Refectory from three to one per week. Attendance at the one evening program was higher than previous years. Two explanations for the increase may be that attendance was forced to consolidate to the one night offered and/or that the series of guest speakers simply attracted a greater audience this year.

Personal Services

Existing:

Annually review the effectiveness of evening programs at Woodenfrog State Forest Campground to enhance the visitor experience, address park themes, and meet the needs of the visiting public. The frequency with which these programs are offered and the times they are presented should be evaluated to ensure maximum participation and staffing efficiency.

Proposed: none

Information Desk (ID)

Voyageurs National Park information desk staff provide orientation, information, and informal interpretation to park visitors at the Rainy Lake, Kabetogama Lake and Ash River Visitor Centers. Non-park employees also provide information at the Orr Visitor Information Center. The Crane Lake Ranger provides visitor information when in the office. Visitors typically need maps, directions, and information about where to go and what to do. Information desk staff also help visitors to complete camping permits, sign-up for the Boats on Interior Lakes Program, and register for other park interpretive programs.

Interpretive Purpose

The primary purpose of having information desk staff is to provide visitors with assistance before and during their visit to the park. Information desk staff also conduct informal interpretation when talking to visitors.

Information Desk staff may address any park interpretive theme while speaking to visitors.

Evaluation

The seasonal Information Desk staff who work solely at the desk and do not lead interpretive programs can answer visitor questions, but they cannot comfortably interpret the park's significance. The information desk staff who also lead interpretive programs obtain a greater knowledge of the resource. This knowledge allows them to take advantage of opportunities for informal interpretation.

Personal Services

Existing: the park staffs information desks at all visitor centers

Proposed:

- Develop training techniques that test the information desk staff's knowledge about the park's resources in an attempt to have them go beyond basic information.
- Consider requiring all information desk staff to lead one interpretive program as a method to increase their knowledge of the resource.
- Provide training in the Informal Interpretation competency. Encourage staff participation in the peer-review certification program for this competency.

Interpretive Talk (IT)

Interpretive talks are short patio talks, illustrated programs, and other presentations that interpret park resources, management issues, and other appropriate topics.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of interpretive talks, particularly patio talks, is to give visitors the opportunity to learn about park resources without investing a large amount of their time.

The Interpretive Talks address all interpretive themes.

Evaluation

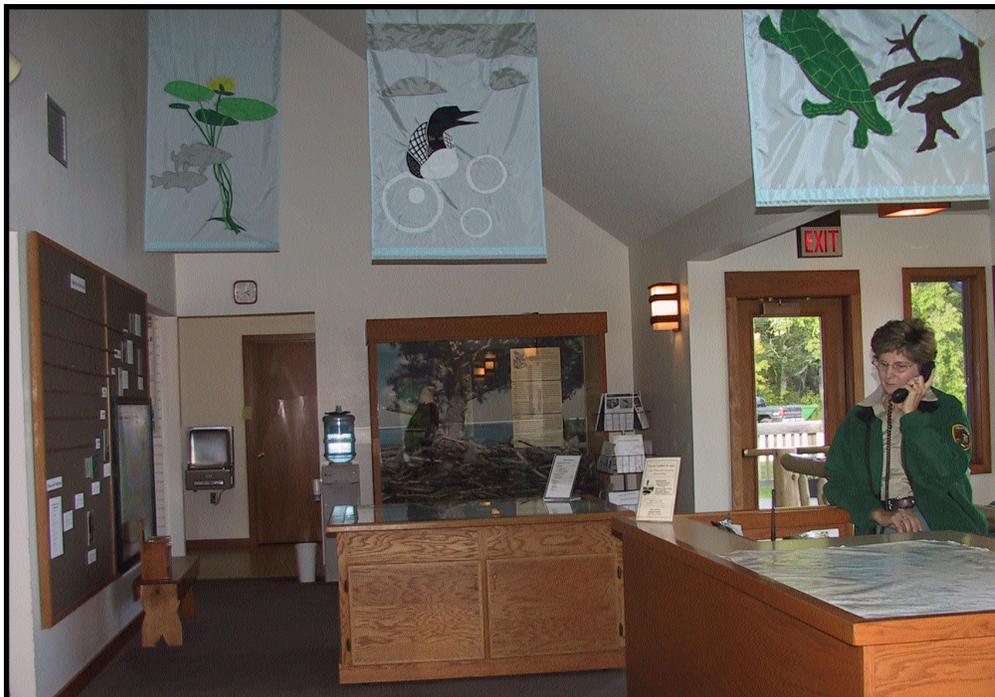
For those visitors who miss the scheduled programs or do not want to spend two or more hours on a boat, the park needs short drop-in programs based at the visitor centers.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

To meet the needs of visitors who only have a short period of time to visit, program planners should consider drop-in, hands-on activity stations at the visitor centers. The activity stations could be inside or outside the visitor center and should have a specific focus (e.g. voyageurs or wetlands) based on the park's interpretive themes.



Interpretive Walk (IW)

Interpretive walks are guided explorations that provide the opportunity for park visitors to enjoy a walk while learning more about park resources from a park interpreter.

Voyageurs offers a one-hour program for children called Voyageurs Adventures for Kids. The programs are held at the Woodenfrog State Forest Campground. Interpreters create a program for children that focuses on the significance of the park. Formal Junior Ranger programs may be offered as part of the program.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of interpretive walks is to provide visitors the opportunity to engage with and learn about the park's resources through an informal, yet structured setting. In particular the Voyageurs Adventures for Kids provides an opportunity for children to experience and learn about the park through hands-on activities.

The children's programs address themes #1: Geology, #2: Water, and #5: Plants and Animals.

Evaluation

Participation numbers are not high, but the children's program reaches a specific audience that may not go on a tour boat or canoe program. The park hosts these programs at Woodenfrog because there is no adequate program area at the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center.

Personal Services

Existing: one children's program

Proposed:

- When staffing allows, reinstate a program at the Beaver Pond Overlook. The interpretive program should be offered at least once a week during the day or evening. Since the beaver pond appears to be in a transition state, the program focus could change from beavers to the transition of beaver ponds to meadows.
- Although naturalist-led interpretive hikes have had poor attendance in the past, they should be considered annually as an alternative to water-based programming.
- Consider applying for a Geo-Scientist in the Park volunteer/intern for summer programs.

Junior Ranger Program (JR)

Voyageurs' Junior Ranger program consists of a 6-page booklet that requires children to draw, answer questions, and interview a park ranger. Upon satisfactory completion the participant receives a Junior Ranger badge and certificate. The park distributes hundreds of the Junior Ranger booklets at the visitor centers every year, mostly during the summer. To address the need for age-specific programs, staff developed a Junior Ranger program for 7-10-year olds. Visitors will field test the program during the 2005 summer season. Staff will incorporate visitor comments in the fall and then finalize the program.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the Junior Ranger program is to provide young people with a structured activity that teaches them about the park.

The Junior Ranger program addresses theme #5: Plants and Animals.

Evaluation

Voyageurs' Junior Ranger program is in need of a major overhaul. A few parents have told park staff that the booklet is too easy and that it does not teach their children enough about the park compared to other Junior Ranger programs. The park needs age-specific programs to better serve its young visitors.

Personal Services

Existing: free, photo-copied Junior Ranger booklets that children complete on their own

Proposed:

- A formal naturalist-led Junior Ranger program, with scheduled times, should be considered for specific age groups.
- Revise the existing Junior Ranger booklet and develop a series of age-specific booklets.
- Follow NPS Servicewide standards for Junior Ranger publications.



Roving (R)

Park employees and volunteers make unscheduled visitor contacts in the field to interact with visitors, helping to provide orientation, information and informal interpretation. Roving is an effective way for the park to communicate with park visitors that do not come into park visitor centers or attend scheduled interpretive programs. Roving provides an opportunity for park staff to help visitors better enjoy the park by providing personalized information relevant to the needs and interests of the people being contacted.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of roving is to assist visitors and to seize opportunities to interpret the park's resources to visitors.

Roving can address all interpretive themes. The actual theme addressed varies by interaction.

Evaluation

Park management understands the value of roving and tries to provide resources for it. The District Naturalists who manage the visitor centers schedule roving time for staff and volunteers whenever possible. The park concentrates most roving efforts around the boat launch areas, on mainland trails, and at Kettle Falls and Ellsworth Rock Gardens.

Personal Services

Existing: Roving near boat launches, mainland trails, Kettle Falls and Ellsworth Rock Gardens as staffing allows.

Proposed:

- Schedule someone to rove regularly at the Ellsworth Rock Gardens during peak visitor use times.
- Increase time spent roving throughout the park.

Site Hosts (SH)

Site hosts are volunteers who live in the park to provide visitor services and basic caretaking and facility maintenance at visitor destinations like the Ingersoll and Casareto properties. They will also rove their assigned site to monitor resource conditions and make informal visitor contacts.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

Site hosts provide information to park visitors, as well as informal interpretation.

The Ingersoll Estate addresses themes #3: Scenery and #6: People. The Casareto destination addresses themes #1: Geology, #3: Scenery, and #6: People.

Evaluation

Both the Ingersoll and Casareto properties provide convenient housing for a site host. Both sites are in the southern part of the park where there is no visitor center. The presence of a site host should provide protection for the buildings and service to the visitors.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Start a site host program at Casareto and Ingersoll during the summer visitor season (June through August).

Special Event (SE)

Special Events are scheduled programs and activities that take place at the park and provide opportunities for park visitors to interact with staff and volunteers to enjoy, experience and learn about park resources.

National Park Week

At the end of National Park Week, park staff host an open house at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. The open house consists of an award ceremony for an art contest and interactive activities. In addition to the open house, park staff conduct programs for school groups during the week.

Birders Rendezvous

This three-day event is held in early June and focuses on bird watching. The majority of the activities are based at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. Guided bird walks, led by park biologists and regional ornithologists, take place on many park trails. The coordinator plans land-based and water-based activities for the event. Since early June is a slow time at the visitor centers, this special event attracts people who probably would not have otherwise come.

Autumn Rendezvous

This is a weekend event held during the last weekend in August. One day is held at the Ash River Visitor Center and one day is held at the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center. Activities may include boat tours, canoe rides and arts and crafts. Each year the event focuses on a different interpretive theme.

Interpretive Purpose

The purpose of special events is to highlight specific park resources through interpretive programs, informational booths, and guest speakers. Special events provide visitors the opportunity to learn about the park's resources in more detail because the activities and information presented are more in-depth. Special events also build community relations.

The Birders Rendezvous addresses themes #2: Water and #5: Plants and Animals.

National Park Week and the Autumn Rendezvous address a different park interpretive theme every year. In 2003, the Autumn Rendezvous addressed theme #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade. In 2004, it addressed theme #1: Geology. In 2005, it addressed theme #3: Scenery.

Special Event (SE)

Evaluation

The Birders Rendezvous event attracts birders from across Minnesota as well as the country. This special event demands the greatest amount of staff time, but planning efforts become more efficient every year and attendance continues to increase.

The National Park Week event attracts mostly local residents because it occurs in April when the ice is beginning to break up on the lakes, snow is melting, and visitation is at a low point. The park uses this event to build community relations through a youth art contest and open house at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center.

The park offers the Autumn Rendezvous event for the end of the summer visitors and area residents. The event attracts 150 to 250 people.

The park relies on the Friends of Voyageurs National Park and the Lake States Interpretive Association to fund these events.

Personal Services

Existing: Birders Rendezvous, NPS Week, and Autumn Rendezvous

Proposed:

- Consider offering a Scout Day event for boy and girl scouts to work toward badges that relate to the park's interpretive themes.
- Participate in the David Thompson bicentennial celebration in 2007.



Winter Program (WP)

Winter programs are talks, walks and other activities that are scheduled during the winter season from mid-January through March. Winter programs are typically based at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center, and may be given by park naturalists, volunteers, or community members.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of winter programs is to provide opportunities for winter visitors to learn about park resources through a variety of activities.

Winter programs address all park interpretive themes; they vary each year.

Evaluation

After a few years of trial and error, park interpretive staff have determined that Sunday afternoon is the best time for winter programs. Attendance has also shown that older participants like to listen to local and regional guest speakers and that families like hands-on activities. Attendance has increased steadily from 2002 to 2005, with some of the same visitors attending numerous programs. The park relies on the Friends of Voyageurs National Park to fund this program series.

Personal Services

Existing: Winter programs

Proposed: Improve the winter program series by more clearly defining the overarching theme.



Personal Services Summary

At the end of each year, the park interpretive staff evaluates the attendance of the previous year's interpretive programs and makes adjustments for the following year. The park is at a stage where "staple" programs such as tour boat programs, north canoe programs, and regular canoe programs are the best use of personnel and resources. Each year park staff offer a variety of programs to ensure that return visitors have something different to experience. However, the variety of program choices is dependent upon staffing levels.

In total, the park's personal services programs cover all interpretive themes.

In 2004 Voyageurs' interpretive personnel served the following number of visitors:

Visitor Centers - 28,936

Informal Interpretation (roving) - 499

Formal Interpretation (e.g. boat tours) - 2,900

Demonstrations (e.g. canoe programs) - 273

Junior Ranger Program - 517

Special Events - 377

Education Programs - 1,391

total of above = 34,893

The number of visitors who came to the visitor centers and participated in programs equals approximately 14.5% of overall park visitation, which averages 240,000 people.

GATEWAY AND PARK SITES

Pre-Visit Information

Potential visitors to Voyageurs National Park should have convenient access to accurate information about the park's resources, activities, programs, and interpretive themes, while at home, as they travel, and upon arrival at the park. The park will continue to make pre-visit information available through the park website, by answering written and phone requests, printing information in the park newspaper, and by ensuring that accurate information is available at nearby lodging facilities and local tourism bureaus.

Information Requests

The park processes hundreds of information requests each year. Requests come from individuals, students completing class projects, organizations, and information centers that distribute park brochures. Information packets include the park newspaper, unigrid brochure, and other specialized brochures relating to the request.

During the winter the GS-9 Namakan District Naturalist completes the information requests, with assistance from a GS-5 dispatch operator. During the summer a seasonal employee and volunteers complete the requests. Throughout the year, the Superintendent's Secretary responds to numerous e-mail information requests.

Phone Calls

The park receives hundreds of phone calls from people planning visits to the park. Many of these calls are answered at the visitor centers, while others are answered at park headquarters.

Information from Non-Park Sources

Businesses and information centers in gateway communities such as International Falls, Rainy Lake, Kabetogama, Ash River, Orr, and Crane Lake provide some information about the park. Park staff work with these groups to make sure they have accurate information. District Naturalists or volunteers visit resorts at the beginning of the summer and once during the summer to inform owners of interpretive programs and to provide general park information.

Website

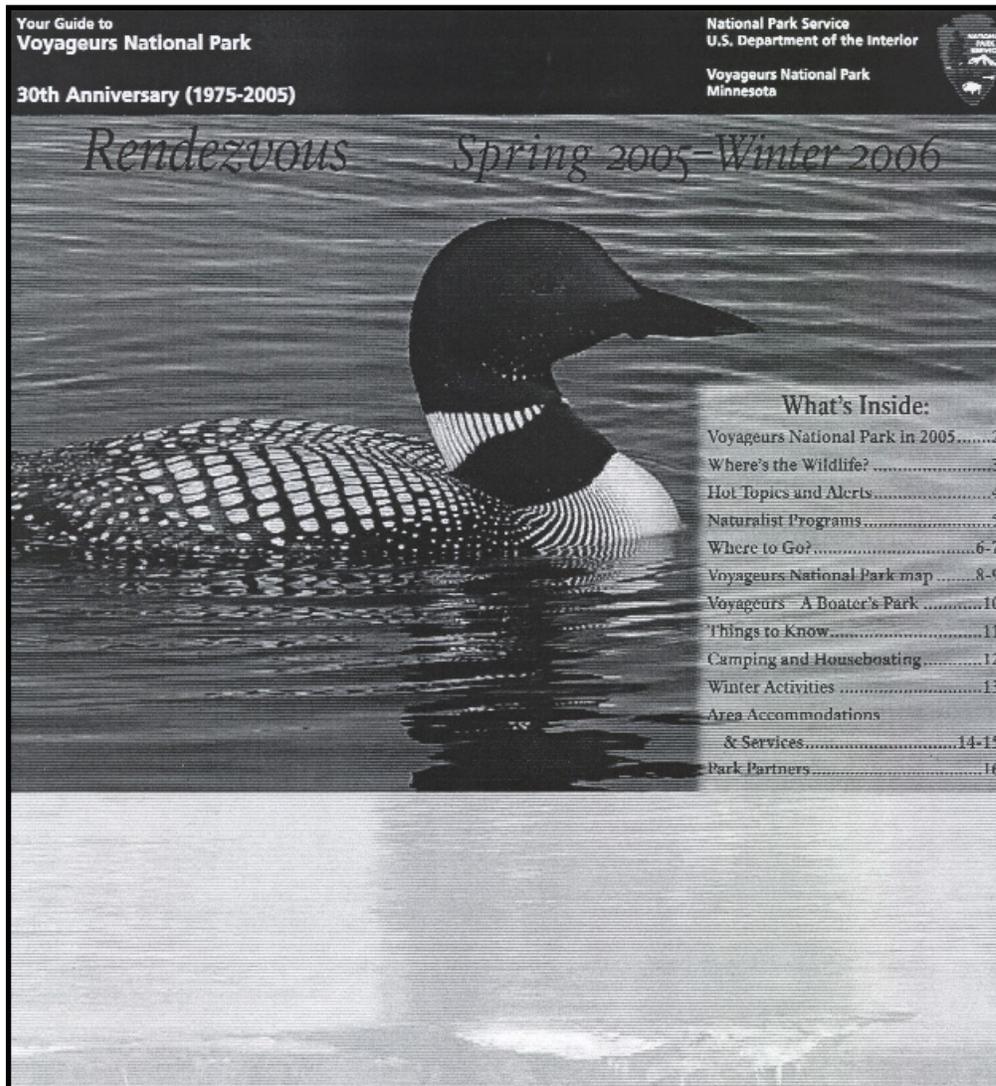
The park's website is a critical source of trip planning information for visitors. The park's website coordinator, the Biologist/Education Specialist, updates information regularly.

Interpretive Media

Existing: information packets, phone calls, park newspaper, website

Proposed:

- Park interpreters should evaluate the park's pre-visit packet of information to ensure that publications meet the National Park Service graphic identity standards.
- Park interpreters should review the information disseminated by concessioners, tourist bureaus, resorts, and park partners to ensure that they provide accurate park information.
- Park interpreters should continue to update and reprint the park newspaper, *Rendezvous*, and distribute it at all in-park venues as well as appropriate outside-the-park locations.
- Develop a Voyageurs National Park rack card as a pre-visit information tool.



Gateway Communities

Voyageurs National Park has four gateway communities that provide visitor services and facilities: Ash River, Crane Lake, International Falls-Ranier-Rainy Lake, and Kabetogama. Each community has lodging, camping, and dining establishments as well as common services such as groceries, bait, fishing licenses, and gasoline. Each community also has a tourism bureau or convention and visitors bureau that conducts advertising specifically for attracting visitors to the area.

The park relies on the gateway communities to provide accurate information about the park to visitors. The Chief of Interpretation is on the Board of Directors for the International Falls, Ranier, and Rainy Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau. This role allows the Chief to promote park events and to keep Bureau members informed of park activities.

Gateway Communities

This section lists the interpretive media and personal services maintained or provided off-site.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes covered at this site

The Gateway Communities serve the need to provide information to travelers and visitors. The main goal of the Gateway Communities is to provide information not interpretation. The interpretive purpose of the park's participation in special events and education programs is to make people aware of the park and to educate students about the park's significance and natural and cultural resources.

Evaluation

Although Voyageurs National Park was established in 1975, information about the park is still somewhat scarce in the gateway communities. Tourism Bureaus post park information on their bulletin boards and a variety of businesses display the park newspaper, but major traffic areas like the International Falls airport are void of prominent information about the park.

The park willingly participates in community events to show support for and involvement in the community. The personal services invested in various community events and education programs is necessary to continue to build a positive relationship between the park and its gateway communities. Although there are more community events that the park could participate in, staffing levels determine the degree to which Voyageurs gets involved. No additional personal services are proposed to increase participation in community events.

The education programs address all of the interpretive themes. The community events vary in the degree to which an interpretive theme is presented. The common focus is theme #4, Voyageurs & the Fur Trade.

Interpretive Media*Existing:*

- Bulletin Boards - Tourism bureaus and area businesses post park information in their bulletin board cases.
- Publications - Tourism bureaus and area businesses distribute park publications in person or via brochure racks.

Proposed:

- Exhibits - Consider installing the exhibit about the park (park map, artifacts, plant specimens) from the now defunct International Falls Travel Information Center in the mall or airport.
- Props - Move the north canoe from the college to a site where it would be seen by or attract potential park visitors (e.g., the airport or International Mall) or Rainy Lake Visitor Center.
- Publications -
 - Work with gateway communities and request opportunities to review publications and visitor information.
 - Create a semi-annual or quarterly park newsletter about current park events and projects for public distribution.

Personal Services*Existing:*

- Community Outreach - Each year Voyageurs National Park participates in the International Falls 4th of July parade. If a gateway community hosts the annual Governor's Fishing Opener or Governor's Snowmobile Ride, the park participates. On occasion, interpretive staff host information booths at various community events.
- Costumed Interpretation - When requested, Voyageurs offers north canoe voyages at the Ranier Festival.
- Education Programs - Voyageurs' Education Specialist conducts numerous programs in the schools. Law Enforcement Rangers conduct activities at the local school district's Outdoor Education Days event and for individual classrooms. Interpretive staff participate in Arbor Days at Ironworld in Hibbing, Minnesota.

Proposed:

- Special Event - Host an "open house" once or twice a year to inform local businesses and residents about what is happening in the park.

International Falls -- Ranier -- Rainy Lake

International Falls Airport

The International Falls airport is a major transportation hub for the area, especially during the summer.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes covered at this site

The airport's interpretive purpose is to provide information to travelers. No interpretive themes are addressed at the airport.

Evaluation

The only interpretive media at the airport is the park newspaper that is stocked in the brochure rack. The airport terminal could house a professional exhibit about the park. If the airport commission remodels the terminal, there may be an opportunity to install a park exhibit. The park misses contacting hundreds of potential visitors every day because of a lack of prominent information in the terminal.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - The park pays a fee to have the park newspaper, *Rendezvous*, stocked in the Chamber of Commerce's visitor information brochure rack.

Proposed:

- Exhibits - Install the exhibit about the park (park map, artifacts, plant specimens) that was at the now defunct International Falls Travel Information Center in the airport terminal; consider wall signs, similar to advertisements, that promote the park.
- Consider stocking the brochure rack with a rack card instead of the *Rendezvous* park newspaper.

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.

Smokey Bear Park

Smokey Bear Park is the heart of community events in International Falls. The park features a bandshell, picnic pavilions, green space, a statue of Smokey Bear with two cubs, and the Koochiching County Historical Museum and Bronko Nagurski Museum.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes covered at this site

The interpretive purpose of Smokey Bear Park would be to provide information to visitors. If a panel is developed it would address the park's significance but no particular interpretive theme in depth.

Evaluation

The park misses contacting potential visitors because of a lack of information about the park at this location.

Interpretive Media

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Wayside Exhibit - work with the city to install a 2-panel exhibit near the Smokey Bear statue that addresses the role of wildfire and the difference between the different land agencies in the area -- USDA Forest Service, State Forest, County Forest, and National Park Service.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Costumed Interpretation - work with arts groups to present voyageur-themed performances during the summer (e.g., music, theater).

Kabetogama

Woodenfrog State Forest Campground

The Woodenfrog State Forest Campground is located on the shores of Kabetogama Lake in the middle of the Kabetogama resort area. Minnesota State Parks operates and manages the campground. The campground has 61 campsites and a public use area that consists of a beach, picnic area, boat launch, and a historic stone and wood Civilian Conservation Corps building called the Refectory.

The Namakan District Naturalist works with State Parks staff to maintain the bulletin board cases and brochure racks at the campground. State Parks staff also provide security for park staff by escorting employees at the end of evening programs.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes covered at this site

Since Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center does not have adequate places for land-based outdoor programs, the park uses the campground's public use area for a variety of interpretive programs. Woodenfrog provides direct access to Kabetogama Lake for canoe programs.

The variety of interpretive programs held at Woodenfrog cover all park interpretive themes.

Evaluation

Woodenfrog State Forest Campground is a valuable resource for park staff and visitors. The boat launch provides easy access to Kabetogama Lake and a storage area for canoe programs. The Refectory building works well as a program venue, both day and evening, and for storage. The campers participate in interpretive programs; interpreters rove through the campground before programs. The Department of Natural Resources staff support park staff and work cooperatively to provide visitor information.

In 2004, due to decreased staffing, the park reduced the number of evening programs offered at the Refectory from three to one per week. Attendance at the one evening program was higher than previous years. Two explanations for the increase may be that attendance was forced to consolidate to the one night offered and/or that the series of guest speakers simply attracted a greater audience this year.

The number of programs the park offers at Woodenfrog has varied over the past five years due to funding and staffing changes. The programs conducted in 2004 should be considered the minimum number of programs offered at this location. A decrease in programming would not meet the needs or expectations of park visitors or the Kabetogama Lake community. The park should evaluate the use and interpretive programming of this area more wholistically.

Woodenfrog State Forest Campground

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Bulletin Boards - Orientation and information cases with brochure racks and overnight permit station; bulletin boards contain information on Voyageurs NP and Woodenfrog State Forest Campground.
- Publications - Voyageurs NP publications available in a brochure rack
- Wayside Exhibit - A small wayside exhibit about the Woodenfrog Refectory at the base of the steps to the building was produced by the Northern Lights Tourism Alliance as part of a Northern Minnesota Wild Heritage program; it does not follow NPS designs.

Proposed:

- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Develop a year-round orientation kiosk that has self-service features for permits and brochures like those at boat launches; a changeable panel should include State Parks information.
 - Show connections between park resources and interpretive themes.
 - Identify habitat types with symbols to show different types that people can visit; refer to this panel at trailheads and overlooks.
- Develop a wayside exhibit that covers the history of the Woodenfrog Campground and the origin of the name: theme #6 - People.
- Develop a 'what you see from here' orientation panel for the picnic area point; labeled map; place name descriptions.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Canoe trips - Canoe programs depart from Woodenfrog.
- Evening Program - The Woodenfrog Refectory is used for evening programs. Every Friday from mid-June through mid-August the park presents a guest speaker as part of the Special Speakers Series.
- Interpretive Walk - The park offers the Voyageurs Adventures for Kids program at the Woodenfrog beach and picnic areas. Some interpreters conduct a Junior Ranger program for this activity.
- Roving - Park staff walk around the campground and public use area prior to interpretive programs to advertise them; staff also walk around the area when stocking brochures and permits.

Proposed: No additional personal services

Ash River

Ash River Minnesota Dept. of Nat. Resources Boat Launch

The Ash River Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) boat launch is located in the community of Ash River, a short distance past the entrance road to the Ash River Visitor Center. Boaters use Ash River to enter Kabetogama Lake which is inside the park. In winter, snowmobilers access the Ash River from the boat launch area.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes covered at this site

The purpose of interpretive media at this site is to inform visitors about Voyageurs National Park and possibly about aquatic exotics.

The sign at this boat launch would meet the interpretive goal of providing information not interpretation.

Evaluation

This boat launch is used regularly by people who end up entering the park. Since there is no information about the park, including no overnight permit station (removed due to vandalism), visitors who launch from here do not get current information.

Interpretive Media

Existing - none

Proposed:

Wayside Exhibits - Partner with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to install an orientation panel/bulletin board at the DNR boat launch; the orientation panel will let people know that they will be entering the park and to indicate the location of the Ash River Visitor Center; it could also address the issue of aquatic exotics

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.

Crane Lake Ranger Station

See Crane Lake Ranger Station on pages 105 and 106.

Crane Lake and Orr

Orr Visitor Information Center

Located about 60 miles south of International Falls, the Orr Visitor Information Center (Orr VC) is a multi-party information center. Members include Ash River, International Falls-Ranier-Rainy Lake, Crane Lake, Kabetogama, Orr Chamber of Commerce, Pelican Lake, and Voyageurs National Park. The City of Orr owns and maintains the building. Tourism bureaus pay dues to have their brochures stocked and distributed. A representative from each paying organization is on the Board of Directors. The Board addresses issues related to tourism, the information distributed at the Orr VC, and how dues are spent.

The Orr VC is open daily from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. from Memorial Day through Labor Day, daily 9:00 am to 5:00pm Labor Day through September 30, and Thursday - Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from October 1 through Memorial Day. During the summer the Orr VC is staffed with one full-time and two part-time employees. For visitors, the Orr VC has a visitor information desk, an exhibit room, small bookstore, and extensive brochure racks. The exhibit room contains mostly taxidermied animals and a large Voyageurs National Park map.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes covered at this site

The Orr VC provides information to travelers and visitors entering the park at Crane Lake. Since the park does not have a visitor contact station in the Crane Lake area, Orr VC is a valuable resource for the park. If the park establishes a regularly staffed contact station in Crane Lake, it will need to evaluate the cost-benefit of supporting both facilities.

The PIX interactive computer program in the Orr VC touches on all of the interpretive themes; however, the main goal of the Orr VC is to provide information, not interpretation.

Evaluation

The Orr VC's staff tours the park's gateway communities during seasonal training to get current information. The park sends news releases to Orr VC to help keep them up to date about park activities.

Hundreds of people visit Orr VC during the summer. Although the park has not surveyed the people who visit Orr VC, general impressions are that most visitors to Orr VC do not visit the park. With this in mind and the increasing cost of printing park brochures, the park needs to determine which brochures it will distribute at Orr VC.

Park staff have identified the potential for personal visitor contacts at the Orr VC. Occasional staffing by NPS uniformed personnel — be it permanent, seasonal, or VIP — would further strengthen NPS and park identity with the local community and visitors to Orr VC.

Orr Visitor Information Center

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Audiovisual - Park provides an interactive computer program (PIX).
- Exhibits - Mostly taxidermy specimens; large Voyageurs park map.
- Publications - Each member organization has a brochure rack dedicated to it; Voyageurs stocks most of the park's brochures at this site.

Proposed:

- Publications - Limit the types of brochures distributed at this location to the park newspaper, rack card, and unigrid brochures.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Information Desk - Voyageurs NP attempts to have an interpreter assist at the Orr VC information desk every other Saturday in July and August (except when boat charters need an interpreter).

Proposed:

- Information Desk - Use a GS-3 Visitor Use Assistant on intermittent status to staff the desk one day a week (on its highest visitation day).

Vermilion Gorge

Vermilion Gorge is part of the Superior National Forest. A trail begins in Crane Lake near the NPS ranger station and leads to the gorge.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes covered at this site

The site is outside the park. Interpretive media recommendations would provide information for a safe visit.

Evaluation

The USDA Forest Service manages this trail. The wayfinding signs to the trailhead are nearly non-existent, causing visitor frustration.

Interpretive Media Recommendations

- Publications - Make trail maps available at the Ranger Station, and recommend that the Forest Service install a map box at the trailhead.
- Wayfinding - Forest Service install wayfinding signs to the trailhead.
- Wayside Exhibit - Forest Service to install an informational wayside exhibit at the trailhead.

Personal Services

There are no personal services because this site is outside the park.

Parkwide Interpretive Media

Parkwide

Parkwide interpretive media includes those items that apply, as the name implies, to the entire park. Because personal services vary throughout the park, they are not applicable to the parkwide category.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Parkwide publications are distributed at visitor centers or contact areas, at orientation bulletin boards, and in response to information requests. This category includes publications with an information/orientation focus or an interpretive focus. Some publications are free and others are sold in the visitor center bookstores.
- Exhibit - The park has a traveling exhibit that is archaic compared to industry standards and is bulky to transport and maneuver.
- Website - The park's website coordinator maintains the park's official National Park Service website and Voyageurs' in-depth website.

Proposed:

- Exhibit - Buy a modern, easy-to-transport exhibit about Voyageurs National Park to use at community events and other venues

Personal Services

Not applicable to parkwide because they vary throughout the park.

Camping, Houseboating, and Day Use Sites

Voyageurs National Park has 220 developed tent sites, houseboat sites, and day use sites. All of these sites are accessible only by water. Most tent sites have metal food lockers for campers to use to store their food and other gear at night to minimize conflicts with black bears.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Park newspapers and unigrid brochures are placed in the food lockers at the tent sites.

Proposed:

- Exhibit - Evaluate whether or not staff should post additional interpretive or informational messages on the food lockers.
- Consider collaborating with the bear awareness program at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.

Visitor Centers/Ranger Station/Boat Launches

Visitor Centers

The function of a visitor center is to orient visitors to the park and its resources, services, and attractions. Another purpose of a visitor center is to interpret the park's stories and provide opportunities for personal connections to resource meanings and significance as described by interpretive themes. Visitor Centers emphasize those story elements that are best told by indoor interpretive media. Visitor centers provide a human point of contact and spacial and visual identity for the park. The park's three existing visitor centers at Rainy Lake, Kabetogama Lake, and Ash River fulfill these basic purposes for visitors.

Voyageurs is not the "typical" national park experience of scenic drives, front country trails, and controlled entry points. Access to the lakes and islands is difficult without a boat, and requires extensive logistical planning. Consequently, opportunities for mainland-based interpretation are centered around the park's three visitor centers: Rainy Lake, Kabetogama Lake, and Ash River. Only the Rainy Lake facility is open year-round. The average stay at one of the park visitor centers is approximately one hour.

The existing visitor center structures are adequate to meet park needs. Some redesign may be necessary to implement recommendations. Interior spaces should be carefully examined to utilize space most effectively and establish functional areas.

Keeping in mind that most visitors do not travel to each visitor center during a visit, all visitor centers should introduce each of the park's six interpretive themes. Each of the three visitor centers will present each of the park's six interpretive themes to a different degree. The primary interpretive focus of each visitor center will be as follows:

Ash River Visitor Center -- # 1: Geology, and # 3: Scenery (especially recreation)

Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center -- #2: Water (especially wetlands), #5: Plants and Animals (especially wildlife), and #6: People (especially forest management)

Rainy Lake Visitor Center -- #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade

Interpretive Media and Personal Services

In an attempt to better orient and serve visitors, the planning team proposed standardized interpretive media for the visitor centers and the boat launch areas (including Woodenfrog State Forest Campground, Crane Lake, and Kettle Falls).

Boat Launches

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Bulletin Boards - each boat launch area has an informational bulletin board with brochure rack and overnight permit station (see Bulletin Boards in Non-Personal Services category for more information.)

Proposed:

- Wayside Exhibits - develop identical year-round orientation kiosks that have self-service features for permits and brochures.
 - Show connections between park resources and interpretive themes .
 - Identify habitat types with symbols to show habitats that people can visit; refer to this panel at trailheads and overlooks.
 - One panel of the kiosk needs to be changeable for program and park information.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Roving - Infrequent and only on an as available basis.

Proposed:

- Roving - Schedule active and frequent roving during peak visitation times.



Conditions and Proposals for all Visitor Centers

Interpretive Media

Existing: See individual visitor center listings on following pages:

Proposed:

- Address or introduce all six themes through interpretive media in varying degrees.
- Audiovisual - Install an interactive weather station via the internet; install web cameras or other remote cameras to view the weather or wildlife activities.
- Exhibits
 - Install standardized orientation/trip planner panels inside each visitor center with the following features:
 - * pictures of destinations.
 - * how much time you need to do different activities.
 - * interactive components (lights up to show destinations or other information to make it interactive).
 - * include the voyageurs route on the map.
- Wayside Exhibits
 - Install botanical garden type labels or mini-panels with illustration and line of text by a variety of plants.
 - Develop an information panel with receptacle for fishing line, hooks, and lead sinkers.

Personal Services

Existing: see individual visitor center listings

Proposed:

- Costumed Interpretation - Conduct north canoe programs at all visitor centers.
- Information desk - Offer a binocular check-out service.

Conditions and Proposals for all Visitor Centers

Any future improvements to the park's visitor centers should try to ensure the following components are maintained or added:

- Information desk equipped with telephone, storage for literature, and space for the cooperating association's sales outlet cash register.
- Room to accommodate groups and provide orientation.
- Interactive exhibit areas for permanent and changeable interpretive displays (with artifacts and touchable items as appropriate); could range from simple mechanical devices to high tech computerized activities.
- Cooperating association sales outlet, including storage.
- Comfortable seating in a lobby area.
- Storage for interpretive props, demonstration materials, and literature
- Adequate offices and work spaces.
- Theater
- Dedicated space for education programs, such as a multi-purpose room (at least at the year-round Rainy Lake Visitor Center).
- Indoor program area

Ash River Visitor Center

Located 43 miles southeast of International Falls, Minnesota and the park visitor center closest to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul, the Ash River Visitor Center (ARVC) is the third most visited visitor center at Voyageurs National Park. ARVC is usually open daily from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. in the summer only (from late May through September 30); it is closed during the winter (October through late May). ARVC is staffed with volunteers, seasonal employees, and an occasional permanent employee, which makes it susceptible to schedule changes. In addition to the visitor center, the park maintains a boat ramp for motorized boats, a boat launch area for paddlers, three parking lots, public day-use docks, and a picnic area.

The Ash River Visitor Center is a rehabilitated historic lodge (Meadwood Lodge) dating back to 1935. It is a very comfortable facility with a rustic ambience. The visitor center contains exhibits produced in-house about the lodge and the park's Artist-in-Residence program. The exhibits in the Ash River Visitor Center do not have the quality that is expected at a national park.

In 2002, Voyageurs completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and site development plans for the Kabetogama and Ash River developed areas. At Kabetogama, the EA evaluated alternative ways of providing additional space for ranger and interpretive operations and continuing maintenance operations at West Kabetogama. For Ash River, the EA evaluated alternative ways of improving operations facilities because they do not meet federal safety requirements. The park selected an alternative that would improve park operations, provide better living conditions for the NPS ranger stationed at Kabetogama, and enhance visitor contact and experiences. The park has not completed the interpretive components identified in the preferred alternative.

The main interpretive focus of the Ash River Visitor Center area will be interpretive theme #1: Geology and #3: Scenery (especially recreation).



Ash River Visitor Center

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Audiovisual - Theater for park video and other videos, interactive computer program about park information (PIX).
- Bulletin Boards - One visitor orientation and information case with a brochure rack and overnight permit station at the boat launch (none at the visitor center); an overnight permit station is also located at the nearby paddle access launch area.
- Exhibits - Develop a display area with exhibits produced in-house that focus on the historic building, wildlife, and the Artist-in-Residence program.
- Interactive Materials - A children's activity area (Eagle's Nest).
- Publications - Voyageurs National Park publications are distributed via brochure racks and information desk staff.
- Publications - Lake States Interpretive Association sells Voyageurs National Park specific publications in its visitor center sales outlets.

Proposed:

The proposals below identified by 'EA' are from the West Kabetogama Ranger Station Historic District and Ash River Developed Area Environmental Assessment.

- Exhibits - develop outdoor exhibits (interpretive nodes) that focus on the recreation and scenery theme (EA); develop a professional exhibit inside the visitor center about the building and recreation era.
- Publications -
 - Develop a site bulletin about the building - type of wood, floorplan, how it was built, and who built it.
 - Develop a self-guided geology tour brochure.
- Wayfinding - Provide area maps and directional signs near parking lot (EA).
- Wayside Exhibit - Develop a small wayside exhibit that interprets the historic sauna from the outside (EA); to guide visitors using the self-guided geology tour label rocks accordingly.
- See overall visitor center recommendations on pages 98-101.

Ash River Visitor Center

Personal Services

Existing:

- Education Programs - Water-based education programs on the concession-operated tour boat begin at ARVC in May 2000; the programs focus on the natural history of bald eagles and beaver ponds as well as a brief introduction to the park's cultural resources.
- Information Desk - Information desk staff orient and inform visitors and when possible interpret the park to visitors in the visitor center; distribute Junior Ranger booklets; and distribute maps and permits for overnight camping and boats on interior lakes; information desk is staffed during all operating hours.
- Roving - Park staff occasionally walk around the ARVC complex area (boat launch, parking lots, and picnic area) and interact with and assist visitors; staff working at the information desk do not rove outside the building.
- Special Events - One of the two days of the Autumn Rendezvous takes place at ARVC.
- Other visitor services: Cooperating Association bookstore and gift shop.

Proposed:

- Canoe trip -offer naturalist-led canoe programs from ARVC.
- Costumed Interpretation - offer north canoe programs; expand the north canoe voyages to include a visit to a landing place with trading era props.
- Information Desk - strive to expand the information desk staff's ability to interpret the park and not just give information.
- Interpretive Walk - provide visitor activities inside the historic sauna (EA); offer a rock talk program.

Visitor and Park Operations Facilities

- Construct an amphitheater for outdoor programs (EA).
- Develop trails between outdoor interpretation nodes and amphitheater (EA).
- Rehabilitate the cabin next to the visitor center (building #14) as offices for interpretive staff (EA).
- Landscape the south side of the visitor center to provide better accessibility (EA).

Crane Lake Ranger Station

Located almost 100 miles south of International Falls, Minnesota, the Crane Lake Ranger Station (CLRS) is the least visited visitor facility at Voyageurs National Park. The visitor contact area is a small office attached to the Crane Lake Ranger's living quarters. CLRS' "open" hours in both summer and winter vary with the availability of the ranger. CLRS is staffed by a permanent park ranger, when available.

One of the first issues to be addressed at this site is the sign system. Current signs do not state that visitor services are not available on a regular basis. Visitors who happen to travel down the 25-mile road to this site will find minimal information with which to plan a quality park experience. The ranger station needs better identification to avoid visitor confusion. National Park Service (NPS) and Voyageurs identity need to be strengthened at this site, which would benefit from utilization of NPS graphic identity standards.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Bulletin Boards - One visitor orientation and information case with a brochure rack and overnight permit station is located near the ranger's house; overnight permit station also at nearby Department of Natural Resources (DNR) boat ramp
- Publications - Voyageurs National Park publications are distributed via a brochure rack

Proposed:

- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Partner with the Minnesota DNR to install an orientation panel/bulletin board at the DNR boat launch.
 - Partner more broadly to develop a kiosk with DNR, USDA Forest Service, and U.S. Customs near the Ranger Station.
- See overall recommendations on pages 98-101.



Crane Lake Ranger Station

Personal Services

Existing:

- Information Desk - When available, the park ranger orients and informs visitors and distributes maps and permits for overnight camping.

Proposed:

- Interpretive Walks/Talks - Offer interpretive programs in the Crane Lake community that address theme #1: Geology and #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade.

Visitor Facilities

- Consider a self-serve facility with vandal-proof exhibits to convey information and interpretation.
- Voyageurs' General Management Plan identifies the need for a multi-agency facility at Crane Lake (see page 28); when the opportunity arises, pursue this facility.

If funding for visitor facilities in Crane Lake materializes, the main interpretive focus would likely be themes #1: Geology and #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade.



Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center

Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center

Located 23 miles southeast of International Falls, Minnesota, the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center (KLVC) is the second most visited visitor center at Voyageurs National Park. KLVC is usually open daily from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. in the summer only (from late May through September 30); it is closed during the winter (October through late May). KLVC is staffed with seasonal employees, volunteers, and an occasional permanent employee, which makes it susceptible to schedule changes. In addition to the visitor center, the park maintains a boat ramp, parking area, public day-use docks and a picnic area.

The Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center has a bald eagle display, aquarium, and temporary exhibits. The exhibits in this visitor center do not have the quality that is expected at a national park. KLVC's current exhibits do not adequately interpret the park's natural resources, critical issues, and ongoing research efforts. Voyageurs National Park received Fee Demonstration funding in 2004 to replace the exhibits.

The visitor center is within the Kabetogama Ranger Station Historic District. There are a number of nearby historic buildings that are not interpreted or used for interpretive programs.

The interior of the visitor center is awkward and has limited floor space. The visitor center has insufficient lighting. The interior needs to be redesigned to better utilize space, establish functional areas, and improve visitor flow. The building's viewing window and seating spaces should be used interpretively. Exhibit spaces should be distinct from those spaces serving an orientation function.

Effective exhibits at the visitor center would be interactive, with objects on display, moving images, and possibly audiovisual elements interspersed with static text. A discovery area for children would be quite suitable for this visitor center, containing objects that can be touched and interactive elements that can be manipulated.

In 2002, Voyageurs completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Kabetogama and Ash River developed areas. At Kabetogama, the EA evaluated alternative ways of providing additional space for ranger and interpretive operations and continuing maintenance operations at West Kabetogama. For Ash River, the EA evaluated alternative ways of improving operations facilities because they do not meet federal safety requirements. The park selected an alternative that would improve park operations, provide better living conditions for the NPS ranger stationed at Kabetogama, and enhance visitor contacts. The park has not finished the interpretive components in the preferred alternative.

The interpretive focus of the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center area will be: themes #2: Water (especially wetlands), #5: Plants and Animals, and #6: People (especially forest management and the historic district).

Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Audiovisual - Theater for park film and other films, interactive computer program about park information (PIX).
- Bulletin Boards - Two visitor orientation and information cases with brochure racks; one is located by the boat launch and has an overnight permit station; the second is located by the visitor center.
- Exhibits - Display area with exhibits produced in-house that focus on forests, wildlife, and the voyageurs; a professionally produced display about bald eagles; an aquarium; and a changing exhibit space.
- Interactive Materials - A children's activity area (Ladyslipper Corner)
- Publications - Voyageurs National Park publications are distributed via brochure racks and information desk staff.
- Publications\$ - Lake States Interpretive Association sells Voyageurs National Park specific publications in its visitor center sales outlets.
- Wayside Exhibit - One on air quality is near the public boat launch.

Proposed:

The proposals below identified by 'EA' are from the West Kabetogama Ranger Station Ash River historic District and Developed Area.

Environmental Assessment:

- Audiovisual - Install two wildlife spotting scopes on the back deck or jetty; one wheelchair-accessible, and one higher scope.
- Consider installing an Aqua-view camera in the marina basin.
- Exhibits - Using Fee Demo money awarded in FY2004, develop permanent exhibits that focus on water, wetlands, wildlife, and forest management; develop some degree of exhibits (e.g. photo panel, a sign) for the Historic Boathouse and Historic Patrol Cabin (EA).
- Publications -
 - Develop a walking guide to the area that interprets the Kabetogama Ranger Station Historic District (history and use of buildings & other structures) and the wildlife and wildflowers found there - theme #5: Plants and Animals and #6: People.
 - Develop a site bulletin about the ladyslippers that bloom near the visitor center; use theme #5: Plants and Animals.
- Wayside Exhibit - Develop small wayside exhibits for an interpretive pedestrian route that connects the visitor center to the historic boathouse and historic patrol cabin (EA) to interpret the historic oil house (EA) and the historic privy near the historic patrol cabin (EA).

Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center

Interpretive Media

- See overall recommendations on pages 98-101.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Boat tours - A concession-operated tour boat service usually offers programs from mid-June to mid-August; a park interpreter is on board each program.
- Costumed Interpretation - Naturalist-led replica north canoe programs usually depart from KLVC two days a week, two programs per day.
- Information Desk - Information desk staff orient and inform visitors and when possible interpret the park to visitors in the visitor center; distribute Junior Ranger booklets; and distribute maps and permits for overnight camping and boats on interior lakes.
- Roving - Park staff walk around the KLVC complex area (boat launch, picnic area) and interact with and assist visitors.
- Special Events - One of the two days of the Autumn Rendezvous takes place at KLVC.
- Other visitor services: Cooperating Association bookstore/ gift shop.

Proposed:

- Costumed Interpretation - Expand the north canoe voyages to include a visit to a landing place with trading era props.
- Information Desk - Strive to expand the information desk staff's ability to interpret the park and not just give information.
- Interpretive Talk - Offer short patio talks on the deck that overlooks the water - theme #2 - Water.

Visitor and Park Operations Facilities

- Develop an interpreted pedestrian trail that connects different features of the historic district to the visitor center (EA).
- Assess visitor use patterns in the ladyslipper bloom area to protect the plants.
- Construct visitor-access dock at the historic retaining wall (EA).
- Once maintenance staff move to a different office location, expand interpretation offices on the second floor of the visitor center (EA).
- Develop a paddle only launch area.

Rainy Lake Visitor Center

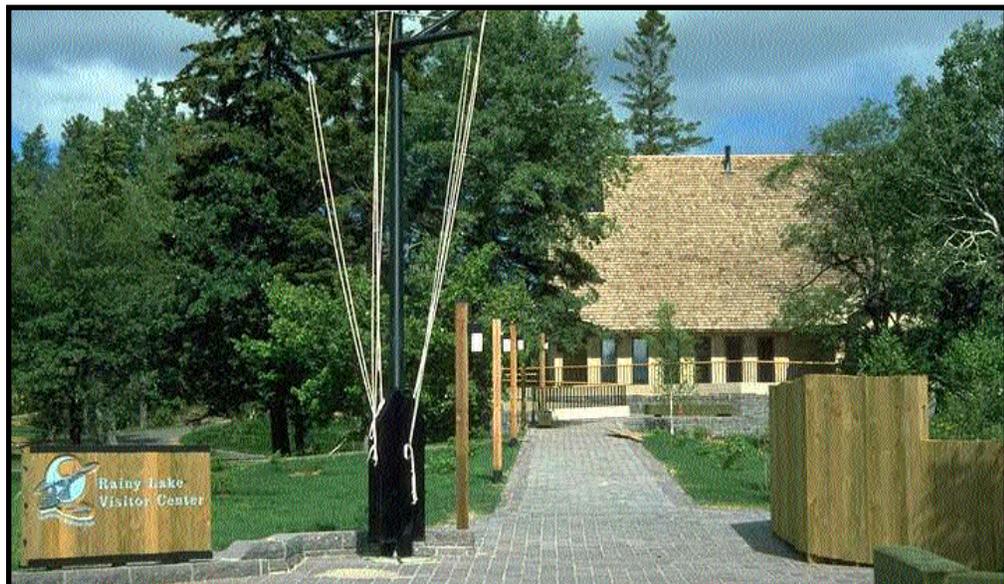
Located 10 miles east of International Falls, Minnesota, the Rainy Lake Visitor Center (RLVC) is the only year-round visitor center at Voyageurs National Park. RLVC is usually open daily from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. during the summer (mid-May through September 30), and Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. during the winter (October through early May). RLVC is staffed by seasonal and permanent employees during the summer and by permanent employees in the winter. In addition to the visitor center, the park maintains a boat ramp, two parking lots, public day-use docks and a picnic area during the summer and a seven mile ice road in the winter.

The Rainy Lake Visitor Center (RLVC) has permanent exhibits that were planned and designed by Harpers Ferry Center, and produced and installed in 1987. The current exhibits are well maintained, with artifacts and reproduction items in good condition.

RLVC's current exhibits focus on the transportation history of the park, although this focus is not quite clear until one has explored the entire exhibit. There is an exhibit about the voyageurs that includes a voyageur, Indian woman, north canoe, and fur trade items. There is also some natural history information presented in the exhibits along with the display of several taxidermied animals; however, these elements need to be tied to the rest of the exhibit as they seem to be an afterthought to satisfy the need to interpret the natural environment and are not placed in context.

Rainy Lake Visitor Center also has a temporary exhibit space where the park staff changes exhibits one to three times a year.

The main interpretive focus of the Rainy Lake Visitor Center will be: theme #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade.



Rainy Lake Visitor Center

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Audiovisual - theater for park film and other films; interactive computer program about park information (PIX).
- Bulletin Boards - three visitor orientation and information cases; one is at the boat launch and has a brochure rack and overnight permit station; another one is located by the front door and has a brochure rack; the third one is along the viewing dock area.
- Exhibits - display area with professionally produced exhibits that focus on the voyageurs, transportation over water and ice, and wildlife and plants; a life-size Bull Moose; and a changing exhibit space.
- Interactive Materials - interactive touch tables and a children's activity area (Voyageur Outpost).
- Publications - Voyageurs National Park publications are distributed via brochure racks and information desk staff.
- Publications\$ - Lake States Interpretive Association sells Voyageurs National Park specific publications in its visitor center sales outlets.
- Wayside Exhibit - A wayside exhibit about the voyageurs is located on the observation dock; the Friends of Voyageurs National Park funded the panel; it was installed in 2003.

Proposed:

- Audiovisual - Install two spotting scopes on the observation dock by the water to view wildlife; one wheelchair accessible and one higher scope.
- Bulletin Boards - Install an outside after-hours kiosk with a passport station near the visitor center entrance.
- Exhibits - Purchase or build a display stand for temporary art or other exhibits used during special events.
 - Rehabilitate the permanent exhibits to reduce visitor confusion about the exhibits' focus.
 - Pursue funding to replace the exhibits.
- Publications - Develop a walking guide to the exhibit area that provides additional information about the artifacts and displays.
- See overall recommendations on pages 98-101.

Rainy Lake Visitor Center

Personal Services

Existing:

- Boat tours - A concessioner or the park offers tour boat programs mid-June to mid-August and possibly from late August to mid-Sept.
- Canoe trips - Naturalist-led canoe programs usually twice a week.
- Costumed Interpretation - Naturalist-led north canoe programs usually depart from RLVC two days a week, two programs per day.
- Education Programs - Land-based school field trips occur at RLVC in September.
- Information Desk - Information desk staff orient and inform visitors and when possible interpret the park to visitors in the visitor center; distribute Junior Ranger booklets; and distribute maps and permits for overnight camping and boats on interior lakes.
- Roving - Park staff walk around the RLVC complex area (boat launch, picnic area) and interact with and assist visitors.
- Special Events - National Park Week events (April) and the Birders Rendezvous (June) take place at RLVC.
- Winter Programs - All winter programs (indoor and outdoor) begin or end at RLVC (mid-January - March).
- Other visitor services: Cooperating Association bookstore and gift shop; ski rentals and free snowshoe loan.

Proposed:

- Community Outreach - Work in cooperation with Rainy River Community College to move the planetarium from the college to a location near the visitor center; light pollution impacts viewing at the planetarium's current location.
- Costumed Interpretation - Expand the north canoe voyages to include a visit to a landing place with trading era props.
- Education Programs - Conduct water-based field trips from RLVC.
- Information Desk - Extend visitor center hours to 7:00 or 8:00pm in the summer to accommodate visitors arriving late in the day at lodging establishments; strive to expand the information desk staff's ability to interpret the park and not just give information.
- Interpretive Talk - Offer short patio talks on deck overlooking water.
- Recreational Opportunities - provide canoes for visitors to use during the day or establish a partnership with community education or Rainy River Community College to provide canoes.

Rainy Lake Visitor Center

Visitor and Park Operations Facilities

- Develop a paddle only launch area; complete environmental compliance first.
- Build a dock for canoe programs; complete environmental compliance first.



Overlooks

Overlooks in Voyageurs National Park are places that offer scenic views of particular settings. Voyageurs has three formal overlooks; all of them are located along the entrance road to the Ash River Visitor Center. Each overlook has a trail and a wayside exhibit.

For all overlooks and possibly park trails, develop the idea of covering habitat types at each site in a consistent type of wayside exhibit graphic depicting habitat cross sections.

Beaver Pond Overlook

The Beaver Pond Overlook has a .2 mile trail to one overlook atop a granite outcrop. The first portion of the trail, before the climb up the rock outcrop, is wheelchair accessible. There is one wayside exhibit along the first portion of the trail; there is no wayside exhibit at the key overlook. The existing wayside exhibit interprets beavers as agents of change, which visitors can see at this point on the trail. There is a comfort station at the trailhead.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

Beavers are one of the most abundant and historically significant animals in the park. They leave visible signs of their presence, which visitors can easily observe. The purpose of this overlook is to give visitors the opportunity to see a beaver pond and its associated wildlife in an area accessible by car.

This overlook addresses themes #2: Water and #5: Plants and Animals.

Evaluation

The park has not monitored the amount of visitation at this overlook. The overlook trail and existing wayside exhibit work well to introduce visitors to beavers and their activities. At the overlook the bench needs to be raised. If visitors sit on the bench, the railing is usually in their line of view of the beaver pond. At the overlook, information about what visitors see would enhance their viewing experience.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Wayside exhibit - There is one wayside exhibit along the first portion of the trail. The wayside exhibit explains how beavers are agents of change. There are no wayside exhibits at the overlook.

Proposed:

- Wayside exhibit - add an interpretive panel at the overlook that focuses on the beaver pond; use the proposal from the 1987 Wayside Exhibit Plan or a new Parkwide Wayside Exhibit Proposal as a starting point; the 1987 proposed panel text interprets how a beaver pond also provides habitat for many other species of wildlife; it also has a wildlife viewing tip about when to watch for beavers.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Roving - Park staff hike the trail and interact with and assist visitors.

Proposed:

- Interpretive Walk - Offer weekly interpretive program during the day or evening; change focus from beavers to another topic such as plants, succession or geology - themes #1: Geology and #5: Plants and Animals.

Visitor Facilities

- Raise the bench so visitors can see over the railing.
- Keep view in front of the wayside exhibit clear.



Kabetogama Lake Overlook

The Kabetogama Lake Overlook has a .2 mile trail through a forest to an overlook of Kabetogama Lake. The entire trail to the overlook is wheelchair accessible. There is one wayside exhibit at the overlook with a statement about the beauty of the lake, the voyageurs history of the area, and a map of the voyageurs' route. The Kabetogama Lake Overlook trail joins the Blind Ash Bay trail near the overlook.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes covered at this site

Voyageurs National Park has many scenic vistas. The purpose of this overlook is to provide visitors the opportunity to see one of the park's main lakes from a scenic point and to think about the voyageurs who may have paddled through the area.

This overlook addresses themes #2: Water and #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade.

Evaluation

The existing wayside exhibit is adequate. As funding becomes available, the park should consider developing a new wayside exhibit that better interprets the specific scene.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Wayside exhibit - There is one wayside exhibit along the trail to the overlook. It focuses on the beauty of the lake, the voyageurs history of the area, and a map of the voyageurs' route. - themes # 2: Water and #4 : Voyageurs and the Fur Trade.

Proposed:

- Wayfinding - Resolve confusion between overlook and Blind Ash Bay trail.
- Wayside exhibit - Consider developing a new wayside panel that better interprets the specific scene that visitors view.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Roving - Park staff hike the trail and interact with and assist visitors.

Proposed:

- No new services. Roving will continue.

Voyageurs Forest Overlook

The Voyageurs Forest Overlook has a .5 mile trail through the forest. There is one wayside exhibit at the beginning of the trail. The focus of the wayside exhibit is forest, logging, and regrowth. There is a comfort station and day use picnic area at the trailhead.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes covered at this site

Voyageurs' forests show transitions between the types of trees that grow in different soils. The park's forests also show evidence of logging that occurred in the past. The purpose of this overlook and trail is to provide visitors with the opportunity to view a forest and to hike through its different zones in a location that is accessible by car.

This overlook addresses theme #5: Plants and Animals.

Evaluation

The park has not monitored the number of visitors who use this overlook. The existing wayside exhibit is a good introduction to the area, but once on the trail visitors find no interpretive information about what they see. To enhance the visitor's experience the park should update the trailhead panel and install small interpretive panels along the trail.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Wayside exhibit - There is one wayside exhibit at the beginning of the trail. The focus of the panel is forest, logging, and regrowth.

Proposed:

- Wayfinding - Change the name to Forest Overlook or Forest Pullout (more appropriate because there is not much of a view there).
- Wayside exhibit -
 - Similar to primary trails, develop an orientation trailhead.
 - Update the wayside exhibit and include an aerial photo of the area showing the trail or habitat areas to show transitions.
 - Develop three small interpretive panels that focus on forest transition zones for along the trail.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Roving - Park staff hike the trail and interact with and assist visitors.

Proposed:

- No new services. Roving will continue.

Primary Trails

Primary Trails

Voyageurs National Park has approximately 48 miles of hiking trails, 110 miles of snowmobile trails, 33 miles of cross-country ski trails, and six miles of tracked snowshoe trails. Primary trails are designated as the most frequently used and maintained trails in the park.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

Park trails provide visitors the opportunity to get off the beaten path and to experience the park at their own pace. Interpretive trail guides give visitors the opportunity to learn more about the specific trail they are hiking.

The themes addressed by the primary trails are listed on the following pages under the individual trails.

Evaluation

Currently the park has a standardized look to the trail map signs placed along the trail, but there are no standardized trailhead orientation signs. The park has a free brochure titled "Hiking Trails and Wildflower checklist" at all the visitor centers.



Anderson Bay Hiking Trail

The Anderson Bay hiking trail is located on the east end of Rainy Lake. The trail is a 2 mile loop that travels through forest and atop granite cliffs. The trail connects to the Cruiser Lake Trail System.

The Anderson Bay trail addresses themes #1: Geology and #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - mileage and location information about the Anderson Bay trail is listed in the park's newspaper, the Rendezvous, and the Hiking Trail brochure.

Proposed:

- Wayfinding - Improve and standardize wayfinding markers and directions to trailheads; consider developing a unique cairn arrangement for the park and call it the Voyageurs symbol.
- Wayside Exhibits - Develop an orientation and interpretive kiosk at the Cruiser Lake Trail System trailhead at Anderson Bay.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Roving - Park staff will occasionally visit the site and interact with and assist visitors.

Black Bay Beaver Pond Hiking Trail

The Black Bay Beaver Pond hiking trail is located on the west end of Rainy Lake, a short distance across the bay from the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. The trail is .66 miles one-way. The trail travels through forest and over rock outcrops to a scenic beaver pond. There is a dock at the trailhead and a comfort station where the hiking trail and ski trail cross.

The Black Bay Beaver Pond hiking trail addresses themes #1: Geology, #2: Water, and #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - mileage and location information about the Black Bay Beaver Pond hiking trail is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*, and the Hiking Trail brochure; a trail map exists.

Proposed:

- Interactive Materials - develop a Discovery Pack for this trail (backpacks for check-out with activities and materials to explore the trail).
- Wayfinding - Improve and standardize wayfinding markers and directions to trailheads; consider developing a unique cairn arrangement for the park and call it the Voyageurs symbol.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Standardized orientation trail head sign.
 - Wayside exhibits on trail; do not create a trail guide.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Roving - park staff hike the trail and interact with and assist visitors.
- Special Events - park staff and area birders lead bird walks on the trail during the Birders Rendezvous in June.

Proposed: none



Black Bay Ski Trails

The Black Bay cross-country ski trail system is located on the west end of Rainy Lake, a short distance across the bay from the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. The trail system offers 6 miles of groomed ski trails. The trails travel through forest and over a scenic beaver pond. The ski trails are accessible only by the Rainy Lake Ice Road, which begins at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. A parking lot is plowed at the trailhead. There is a comfort station near the trailhead.

The Black Bay ski trail does not address any interpretive themes. The ski trail provides the opportunity for visitors to experience the northwoods winter, but there are no interpretive media along the trail.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Bulletin Boards - A visitor orientation and information case with a brochure rack is at the trailhead.
- Publications - Mileage and location information about the Black Bay ski trails is listed in the park's newspaper, the Rendezvous; a trail map brochure exists.

Proposed:

- Bulletin Boards - Relocate the bulletin board with brochure rack to the intersection of the ski and hiking trail.
- Wayfinding - Correct distance markers.
- Wayside Exhibits - Standardized orientation trailhead sign.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Winter Programs - The park hosts a candlelight skiing event annually as part of the International Falls Icebox Days; the interpretive staff hosts this event and assists participants.

Proposed: none

Visitor Facilities

- Consider building two shelters along the trail; complete required environmental compliance process prior to construction.

Blind Ash Bay Trail

The Blind Ash Bay trail is located near the Ash River Visitor Center. The trail has two entry points. One is in the upper parking lot and the other is via the Kabetogama Lake Overlook trail. The trail is a 2.5 mile loop. Most of the trail is one-way with a small loop at the end that overlooks Blind Ash Bay. Each visitor center distributes this trail map upon request or via a brochure rack.

The Blind Ash Bay trail addresses theme #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Mileage and location information about the Blind Ash Bay hiking trail is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*, and the Hiking Trail brochure; a trail map exists.
- Wayside exhibit - There is one wayside exhibit along the trail at the Kabetogama Lake Overlook, which is close to where the two trails intersect. The wayside exhibit has a statement about the beauty of the lake, the voyageurs history of the area, and a map of the voyageurs' route.

Proposed:

- Interactive Materials - Develop a Discovery Pack for this trail (back-packs for check-out with activities and materials to explore the trail).
- Wayfinding - Improve and standardize wayfinding markers; signs to trailhead.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Standardized orientation trail head sign.
 - Wayside exhibits on trails; do not create a trail brochure.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Roving - park staff hike the trail and interact with and assist visitors.

Proposed: No new services. Roving will continue.

Cruiser Lake Trail System

The Cruiser Lake Trail System transects the Kabetogama Peninsula from north to south. The trail system is 9.5 miles long one-way across the peninsula. There are loops and spurs off the main trail for further exploration of the Peninsula. There are trailheads on both the north and south ends of the trail. The northern trailhead is in Anderson Bay on Rainy Lake. The southern trailhead is in Lost Bay on Kabetogama Lake. Visitors use this trail system to access two of the Boats on Interior Lakes rental boats (Ek and Cruiser Lake).

The Cruiser Lake trail addresses themes #2: Water and #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - mileage and location information about the Cruiser Lake Trail System is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*, and the Hiking Trail brochure; a trail map exists.

Proposed:

- Wayfinding - Improve and standardize wayfinding markers; consider developing a unique cairn arrangement for the park and call it the Voyageurs symbol.
- Wayside Exhibits - Standardized orientation trail head sign.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Roving - Occasionally, park staff hike the trail and interact with and assist visitors.

Proposed: none

Echo Bay Trail

The Echo Bay trail is on the mainland in the Kabetogama Resort Community, which makes it available to non-boaters. The trail is approximately 3 miles from the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center. The trail is a 2.5 mile loop through forest and wetland. There is an overlook of a beaver pond mid-way along the trail. The trail is both a hiking and cross-country skiing trail. There is a comfort station and picnic table at the trailhead.

The Echo Bay trail addresses themes #2 - Water and #5 - Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Mileage and location information about the Echo Bay trail is listed in the park's newspaper, the Rendezvous, and the Hiking Trail brochure; a trail map exists.
- Publications\$ - At the trailhead, visitors can pay a nominal fee for a trail guide or return it at the end of the trip. The trail guide is also sold in the visitor center bookstores.

Proposed:

- Interactive Materials - Develop a Discovery Pack for this trail (back-packs for check-out with activities and materials to explore the trail).
- Publications\$ - Keep trail guide.
- Wayfinding - Improve and standardize wayfinding markers; consider developing a unique cairn arrangement for the park and call it the Voyageurs symbol.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Standardized orientation trail head sign with brochure rack if appropriate.
 - Consider wayside exhibits on the trail; keep current trail brochures at the visitor center and/or trailhead.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Roving - Occasionally, park staff hike the trail and interact with and assist visitors.
- Special Events - Park staff and area birders lead bird walks on the trail during the Birders Rendezvous in June.

Proposed: none

Locator Lake Trail

The Locator Lake trail is on the Kabetogama Peninsula. The trail is two miles one-way across the Peninsula. The trailhead is on the north shore of the west end of Kabetogama Lake. The trail is a north-south path through forest and wetland habitats that ends at Locator Lake, one of the interior lakes that is part of the Chain-of-Lakes. There is a comfort station and day use picnic area at Locator Lake. Most of the rental boats for the Boats on Interior Lakes program are cached at the end of the Locator Lake Trail.

The Locator Lake trail addresses themes #2: Water and #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Mileage and location information about the Locator Lake trail is listed in the park's newspaper, the Rendezvous, and the Hiking Trail brochure; a trail map exists.
- Publications\$ - At the trailhead, visitors can pay a nominal fee for a trail guide or return it at the end of the trip. The trail guide is also sold in the visitor center bookstores.

Proposed:

- Publication - Add the trail guide numbered stops to the trail map for keeping track of distance hiked.
- Publications\$ - Keep trail guide.
- Wayfinding - Improve and standardize wayfinding markers; consider developing a unique cairn arrangement for the park and call it the Voyageurs symbol.
- Wayside Exhibits - Standardized orientation trailhead sign with brochure rack if appropriate.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Roving - Occasionally, park staff hike the trail and interact with and assist visitors.
- Special Events - Park staff and area birders may lead bird walks on the trail during the Birders Rendezvous in June.

Proposed: none

Kab-Ash Trail

The Kab-Ash trail is located on the mainland; it connects the communities of Kabetogama and Ash River. The trail is 24 miles of one-way sections and loops. The trail follows an east-west path through forest and wetland habitats. There are four trailheads. The trail is both a hiking and cross-country skiing trail. There are some sections where the uses are separated.

The Kab-Ash trail addresses themes #2: Water and #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Mileage and location information about the Kab-Ash trail is listed in the park's newspaper, the Rendezvous, and the Hiking Trail brochure; a trail map exists.

Proposed:

- Audiovisual - Low-tech, inexpensive spotting scope to view wildlife at the Daley Bay bridge.
- Interactive Materials - Develop a Discovery Pack for this trail (backpacks for check-out with activities and materials to explore the trail).
- Publications - Create a map showing features, habitat types, and mileage (on standard paper) for distribution to interested hikers; this map would replace the current map.
- Wayfinding - Improve and standardize wayfinding markers; consider developing a unique cairn arrangement for the park and call it the Voyageurs symbol.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Standardized orientation trail head sign.
 - Wayside exhibits on trails; do not create a trail brochure.
 - On or near Daley Bay bridge install a wayside exhibit about wetlands as part of the Wetlands Visitor Destination.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Roving - occasionally park staff hike the trail and interact with and assist visitors.
- Special Events - park staff and area birders lead bird walks on the trail during the Birders Rendezvous in June.

Proposed: none

Oberholtzer Trail

The Oberholtzer Trail, named after conservationist and area resident Ernest Oberholtzer, is located on the mainland with a trailhead near the Rainy Lake Visitor Center; the trail is 1 mile one-way. It is one of the park's interpretive trails that can be used by visitors who do not have a boat. The trail travels through forest and wetland habitats. The trailhead is near the Visitor Center. It is tracked for snowshoeing during the winter.

Currently, the trail is interpreted with a trail brochure keyed to small graphic trailside panels. The trail brochure contains too much text and the connection between the brochure text and the graphic trailside posts is difficult to grasp. Also, the trail route consists of some odd loops that make it difficult to follow, both literally and interpretively.

The Oberholtzer trail addresses themes #2: Water and #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Mileage and location information about the Oberholtzer trail is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*; a trail map exists.
- Publications\$ - At the trailhead, visitors can pay a nominal fee for a trail guide or return it at the end of the trip. The trail guide is also sold in the visitor center bookstores.

Proposed:

- Audiovisual - Spotting scope at marsh overlook wetland destination site.
- Interactive Materials - Develop a Discovery Pack for this trail (backpacks for check-out with activities and materials to explore the trail).
- Publications\$ - Use up the current trail brochure supply and do not reprint, install small wayside exhibits instead.
- Wayfinding - Improve trail wayfinding signs near the visitor center and along the trail.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Replace the trail brochure with small interpretive panels along the trail that contain just one graphic and a quotation.
 - At the marsh overlook install a wayside exhibit about wetlands as part of the Wetlands Visitor Destination.

Oberholtzer Trail

Personal Services

Existing:

- Education Programs - School field trip activities occasionally take place on this trail.
- Roving - Park staff hike the trail and interact with and assist visitors.
- Special Events - Park staff and area birders lead bird walks on the trail during the Birders Rendezvous in June.
- Winter Program - Park staff or guest presenters use this trail during winter programs.

Proposed:

- Education Programs - Ojibwe Encampment
 - Consider an encampment along the trail for school groups to visit.
 - Conduct environmental education programs at encampment.



Proposed Bike Trail extension to Rainy Lake Visitor Center

A bike trail parallels Highway 11 and ends at the entrance road to the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. As a partner with local government agencies, Voyageurs National Park has sought funding to extend the bike trail to the visitor center.

The bike trail would provide access to the park, but is not intended as an interpretive trail.

Interpretive Media

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Wayside Exhibit -
 - Orientation, information panel that covers distances and other information such as keeping dogs on leashes and other allowable types of use on the trail.
 - Information panel about park facilities and activities.

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.

Snowmobile Trails

The park maintains 110 miles of snowmobile trails on lake surfaces and safety portages. All but the 11-mile Chain of Lakes trail are groomed as conditions allow.

While snowmobiling, visitors may see sights that support themes #1: Geology, #3: Scenery, and #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Bulletin Boards - visitor information posted on large plastic (pvc) pipes are placed at three trailhead-type areas.
- Publications - information about Snowmobiling is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*; the park is a sponsor of the area snowmobile trail map; the trail map is printed annually and distributed at visitor centers and brochure racks.

Proposed: none

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.

Snowshoe Trails

The park tracks six miles of snowshoe trails. The tracked trails are the Oberholtzer Trail, Blind Ash Bay Trail, and Sullivan Bay Trail. Park staff or volunteers track the trails to give visitors new to snowshoeing the confidence of following a known trail.

While snowshoeing, visitors may see resources that support themes #1: Geology, #3: Scenery, and #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Information about Snowshoeing is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*; trail maps exist for the Blind Ash Bay and Oberholtzer trails.

Proposed: none

Personal Services

Existing:

- Education Programs - Land-based school field trips that focus on snowshoeing occur along the Oberholtzer trail.

Proposed: none



Voyageurs' Tilson Ski Trail

Located at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center, the Voyageurs' Tilson Ski trail connects park land to the larger Tilson Creek ski trail system. The trail system is managed in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Koochiching County. The park grooms one mile of the trail that begins from the upper parking lot at the visitor center.

The Voyageurs' Tilson ski trail does not address any interpretive themes. The trail provides the opportunity for visitors to experience the northwoods winter, but there are no interpretive media along the trail.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Information about the ski trail is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*; a trail map exists and is posted along the trail.

Proposed:

- Wayfinding - Partner with other land owners of the trail system (County and State) to install permanent trail map signs.
- Wayside Exhibits - Partner with other land owners of the trail system (County and State) to install standardized orientation trailhead signs with a brochure box.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Winter Programs - Occasionally, guided cross-country ski programs are led along this trail.

Proposed: none

Secondary Trails

Secondary Trails

The park has portage trails and other short trails into interior lakes that are not used as often as the primary trails. Secondary trails are maintained infrequently.

While hiking these trails, visitors may see resources that support themes #1: Geology, #2: Water, #3: Scenery, #5: Plants and Animals.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Information about all park trails is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*; no trail maps exist.

Proposed:

- Wayfinding - Add a small hiker symbol trailhead marker with distance to lake at Little Trout, Brown, Peary, Ek, O'Leary, and Ryan Lakes; and Cranberry Bay to Locator Lake.

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.



Visitor Destinations

The idea of visitor destinations at Voyageurs National Park evolved through the late 1990s and was formalized during the park's General Management Plan process. Park staff noticed that the park newspaper, *Rendezvous*, did a good job of informing visitors about park facilities and program schedules but it did not tell visitors about other places to visit in the park. Through conversations and discussions, staff realized that the park needed an organizing principle for the other places to go and things to do in the park beyond fishing, camping, and boating. In land-based parks, roads serve the function of organizing a person's visit. At Voyageurs, with few roads and most activities occurring on the water, visitor destinations became a way to help organize a visit to the park. This is when the idea of visitor destinations began.

Different factors played into the concept of visitor destinations. One was the information gathered from visitor studies in 1995 and 1997. Generally, these studies found that visitors travel in family groups and that they want other activities in addition to fishing, camping, boating, and hiking. Second, Voyageurs completed a Programmatic Agreement with the State Historic Preservation Office concerning historic structures and which would remain in the park. These places can tell the stories that the visitor centers do not. Third, Voyageurs has many outstanding natural and cultural features that complement each other; the concept of visitor destinations allows us to provide visitors with a means to discover these sites. The natural features of interest in the park complete the connection of the relationships people have had and continue to have with the land for thousands of years.

Park staff considered some natural areas in the park as visitor destinations, but determined that they are better left without facilities. The park will develop a watchable wildlife guide and/or wild area guide to inform and direct visitors to these destinations. All visitor destinations except the wetlands destination are accessible only by water.

The main goal of interpretation is to facilitate understanding and appreciation and eventually stewardship and respect for the park's resources. To do this, visitors need opportunities to learn about the park's resources. Visitor destinations provide these opportunities.

In this section of the plan, park staff have briefly described each planned visitor destination along with its interpretive purpose, themes addressed by the site, an evaluation, and the existing and proposed interpretive media and personal services. The first proposals for interpretive media and personal services resulted from a value analysis workshop. During a Long Range Interpretive Plan workshop, park staff further defined the proposed media and personal services. The park plans to conduct more detailed planning for each visitor destina-

tion as part of a Line Item Construction Project. The media and personal services presented in this section do not represent a final plan for each destination. For background information about the natural and cultural resources at each destination, see Appendix D.

Visitor Destinations - General

Proposed Interpretive Media

- Audiovisual - Video of all the destinations with footage and short narration about each one to show at the visitor centers.
- Publications - Guide to visitor destinations booklet, brochure and/or map; guide to natural areas of interest.

Proposed Personal Services

See individual visitor destinations below.

Proposed Facilities

- Standard day use facilities including a dock/mooring aid, picnic table, fire ring, and vault toilet; complete required environmental compliance process prior to construction.



Anderson Bay (Rainy Lake)

Anderson Bay is a site that exemplifies the outstanding scenery for which Voyageurs National Park was established. The bluffs of Anderson Bay rise abruptly 80 feet from the water and provide spectacular views of the bay and Rainy Lake. There is a loop trail that takes park visitors atop the bluffs. It is one of the most photographed areas of the park. The Anderson Bay area is a popular destination for visitors. Anderson Bay is also the northern trailhead for the Cruiser Lake Trail system. Formalizing it as a visitor destination with facilities will enhance the site.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the Anderson Bay visitor destination is to provide visitors the opportunity to view the park's outstanding scenery and geologic features for which it was established. It will also serve as an information area for visitors hiking the Cruiser Lake Trail system.

Anderson Bay addresses themes #1: Geology and #3: Scenery.

Evaluation

The Anderson Bay area does not have interpretive media. During a value analysis workshop, park staff decided that the Anderson Bay loop trail should remain void of interpretive media because it would impact the scenic qualities of the trail. Instead, the park would concentrate interpretive media in the form of an information/interpretation kiosk near the trailhead.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Mileage and location information about the Anderson Bay trail is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*.

Proposed:

- Wayfinding - Improve and standardize wayfinding markers - cairns (Voyageurs' symbol), guides to trailheads.
- Wayside Exhibits - Develop an orientation and interpretive kiosk at the Cruiser Lake Trail System trailhead at Anderson Bay.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Roving - Park staff or volunteers occasionally visit the site and interact with and assist visitors.

Camp Marston (Rainy Lake)

Camp Marston is a historic site that represents the cultural theme of Recreation: Sporting Club/Education Camp. From 1922-1940, Iowa State University operated a summer camp for civil engineering students at Camp Marston in Browns Bay on Rainy Lake. Today the property contains the cabin known as "Polaris," where camp professors stayed, and the foundation/chimneys from other former camp structures.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of Camp Marston is to provide visitors the opportunity to learn about the education camp that existed here and its influence on civil engineering. Camp Marston addresses theme #6: People.

Evaluation

The Polaris cabin at Camp Marston is visible from the main channel on Rainy Lake and piques visitors' interest. There are no interpretive media at the site so visitors who land there are left to wonder about the site. To enhance this visitor destination the park plans to install interpretive wayside panels that tell the story of the site.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Audiovisual - A documentary video about the students, professors, and Camp Marston is shown upon request at all park visitor centers.

Proposed:

- Exhibits - Keep Polaris cabin open with exhibits inside about camp life.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Develop three interpretive wayside exhibits that focus on:
how do you know how deep the lake is?; surveying techniques used in the 1920s; surveying information and standards for teaching civil engineering developed here that still apply today.
 - Develop a wayside exhibit that includes the site map developed by the students as an orientation panel.
 - State that a video is available at the visitor centers.
 - Identify site features such as chimneys.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Roving - Park staff or volunteers occasionally visit the site and interact with and assist visitors.

Casareto Summer Cabin (Crane Lake)

The Casareto Summer Cabin is a historic site that represents the cultural theme of Recreation: Mid-Period Cabin (1930-1939). It is one of 3 cabins that survive in the park that represent the mid-period of recreational history. In addition to the cabin, this site has nearby geological features and a sand beach that invites family use.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The Casareto Summer Cabin will serve as a visitor contact station at the southernmost area of the park. Nearby geologic features will provide visitors the opportunity to learn about the park's geology.

The Casareto destination addresses themes #1: Geology, #3: Scenery, and #6: People.

Evaluation

The park has a ranger station in the mainland community of Crane Lake, but it is not staffed regularly enough to be a visitor contact station. Visitor information provided by the park is limited to bulletin boards and brochures in the area. A Site Host at the Casareto Cabin will provide visitor information in the Crane Lake area.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Wayside Exhibits - *Life on the Lake* sign that informs visitors that the NPS is seeking funding to preserve the property and to tell its story.

Proposed:

- Exhibits - part of the cabin open with interpretive media about the cabin and the history of recreation and possibly information about the area's natural history.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Develop 2 to 4 interpretive wayside exhibits that may focus on the following: glacial erratics, how beaches form, plants and animals of the beach, water ecology, the cabin, animal tracks.
 - Orientation panel with park map because this is the southern entry point.
 - Identify building.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Site Host - a volunteer caretaker living on site will interact with and assist visitors.

Ellsworth Rock Gardens (Kabetogama Lake)

Ellsworth Rock Gardens is a very popular visitor destination in the park. Area residents and resorts regularly take their guests to the site. The Ellsworth Rock Gardens are a historic landscape associated with a person. The uniqueness and magnitude of Mr. Ellsworth's creation, the garden's importance as a recreational destination, and its rarity in the region establish its exceptional importance at the local level. Designating the Gardens as a formal visitor destination allows the park to improve visitor facilities and interpretive media at the site.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

Ellsworth Rock Gardens provide visitors with the opportunity to experience and explore a historic landscape. Through a brochure and way-side exhibit, visitors learn about Mr. Ellsworth and the gardens. The site allows visitors to consider the commitment and dedication required for this type of project.

Ellsworth Rock Gardens addresses themes #1: Geology, #3: Scenery, and #6: People.

Evaluation

Visitor use at Ellsworth continues to grow each year. A draft Cultural Landscape Report for Ellsworth Rock Gardens outlines concerns and issues associated with visitor flow through this site. In the absence of clear wayfinding, visitors walk wherever they like and climb over the fragile rock walls and on the sculptures. The park needs to develop a visitor use plan in order to direct visitors and protect park resources.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - in cooperation with one of the park's cooperating associations, Lake States Interpretive Association, the park produces two publications about Ellsworth Rock Gardens. Both are brochures that sell for a nominal fee. One brochure is a brief history of the Ellsworths and the Rock Gardens. The second brochure is a self-guided trail brochure. Both brochures are sold at the visitor center bookstores. The self-guided trail brochure is also distributed on-site at Ellsworth Rock Gardens with a fee requested on the honor system.
- Wayside Exhibit - one wayside exhibit is at the Ellsworth Rock Gardens; the wayside exhibit tells people a brief history about the Ellsworths and the Rock Gardens; the wayside exhibit is prominently located in the middle of the meadow so most visitors walk up to it and read it.

Ellsworth Rock Gardens (Kabetogama Lake)

Proposed:

- Exhibits -
 - Guest cabin - Focus on gardening and plant identification.
 - Picnic shelter - focus on buildings, structures, pictures of people; interactive exhibit about the principles of moving rocks.
- Publications - Install new brochure rack with a donation tube for the self-guided trail guide.
- Wayfinding - Use trail markers to guide visitors through the site and to protect the landscape (from draft Cultural Landscape Report); sign asking visitors to follow a designated route; 'begin here' sign.
- Wayside Exhibit -
 - Update the wayside exhibit to reflect current NPS Graphics.
 - Identify buildings with some interpretive text - guest cabin, picnic shelter, shed, and privy.
 - Develop plant labels or small mini-panels with illustrations and line of text for plant identification in some flower beds.
 - Develop mini-panels using historic photos at key points in the garden to provide a "you are here" function and to give visitors a better feel for the historic landscape.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Boat Tours - the Kabetogama Lake tour boat usually goes to the Ellsworth Rock Gardens as part of the Sunset Cruise; an interpreter is usually on board each program.
- Roving - Park staff and volunteers visit Ellsworth Rock Gardens regularly to stock brochures and to interact with and assist visitors.

Proposed:

- Interpretive Walk/Talk - Conduct talks about Ellsworth's gardening style; the talks could be held in the guest cabin or in the gardens.
- Roving - Provide on-site presence such as a volunteer gardener/caretaker during peak visitation periods.

Other Items

- Sell Ellsworth style birdhouse in the bookstore (someone else design and package these for sale).
- Accessibility is an issue at this site because of its steep access.
- Develop a visitor use plan.

Fur Trade Route (Parkwide)

To commemorate the Fur Trade Route as described in the park's enabling legislation, a subtly marked route will guide visitors along the course that the voyageurs traveled. On a broader scale, Quetico Provincial Park and Voyageurs National Park are striving to form a partnership between public land agencies along the U.S.-Canada border to interpret the history of the voyageurs and fur trade era.

Interpretive Purpose

The purpose of the Fur Trade Route is to provide visitor opportunities to follow and experience the historic route of the voyageurs first-hand.

The Fur Trade Route addresses theme #4: Voyageurs & the Fur Trade.

Evaluation

At the visitor centers and during tour boat programs interpreters tell visitors about the fur trade routes that went through the park. Verbal explanations and books in the bookstore are the only means for visitors to learn about the fur trade route.

Interpretive Media

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Audiovisual - Make a video of the route for virtual visitors and others.
- Exhibits - Highlight the route at visitor centers in voyageurs displays.
- Publications - Develop a handout or boating guide with the fur trade route that highlights portaging, route, what lake names mean (French, Ojibwe, and English to represent the different eras of the fur trade); provide GPS points for the route and hand them out with the guide.
- Publications \$ - Create a fur trade-era map suitable for framing.
- Wayfinding - Mark the fur trade route with manufactured lob pines.



Grassy Bay (Sand Point Lake)

Grassy Bay is an area rich in natural and cultural resources. The Grassy Bay cliffs are a well-known feature in the park. A historic cabin in Grassy Bay, Mittet, represents the cultural theme Recreation: Early Period Cabin (1880s-1920s). The park will develop the Mittet cabin site as a visitor destination that is central to the natural and cultural features of Grassy Bay.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The Grassy Bay area provides examples of the three reasons why the park was established — geologic features, outstanding scenery, and interconnected waterway. The purpose of the Grassy Bay visitor destination is to interpret the Grass Bay cliffs and portages between bays and lakes in the area. Since the destination is at the Mittet Cabin, the park will interpret the cabin as well.

Evaluation

The Grassy Bay cliffs are a popular visitor destination on Sand Point Lake. During a value analysis workshop park staff decided that interpretation of the cliffs should occur away from the cliffs to maintain the scenic quality. The Mittet cabin property offers an appropriate place to interpret the cliffs and the natural history of the larger Grassy Bay area.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - the location of Grassy Bay Cliffs and a picture are in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*.
- Wayside Exhibits - *Life on the Lake* sign that informs visitors that the NPS is seeking funding to preserve the property and to tell its story.

Proposed:

- Publications - Open the Mittet cabin as a shelter with site bulletins about the history of the cabin.
- Wayside Exhibits -develop 1-3 interpretive wayside exhibits or 1 kiosk that focus on the following: Grassy Bay Cliffs; Grassy Bay Portage; Little Trout Portage (to interior lake); Staege Bay used to be a lake (water level and dams) and it has fish that grow at a different rate; and touch on recreational use (Mittet Cabin).

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.

Hacksaw Pass — the West Kab story (Kabetogama Lake)

Hacksaw Pass is the name of a day use site on the west end of Kabetogama Lake. The park will develop Hacksaw Pass as a visitor destination that is central to the natural and cultural features of the west end of Kabetogama Lake. At Hacksaw Pass the park will interpret nearby wetlands including Tom Codd Bay and Gold Portage as well as the Woodenfrog family and other Ojibwe history. This site will also serve as a place of orientation and information about Locator Lake and other points of interest in this part of the park.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The Hacksaw Pass visitor destination will provide visitors the opportunity to learn about nearby wetlands as well as the history of the Woodenfrog family. Visitors exploring the west end of Kabetogama Lake could use this destination as a starting point. This area of the park provides visitors the opportunity to view a variety of wildlife.

Hacksaw Pass addresses themes #2: Water, #5: Plants and Animals, and #6: People.

Evaluation

The west end of Kabetogama Lake has a number of interesting wetlands that are off the beaten path. Orientation information at the Hacksaw Pass day use site will guide visitors exploring this area. Visitors hear about Woodenfrog through the Woodenfrog State Forest Campground and by seeing the name on navigation maps, but there is only a small paragraph about him and his family on a bulletin board in the park.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - Location information is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*.

Proposed:

- Wayside Exhibits - Develop an orientation panel and 1 to 3 interpretive wayside exhibits or a kiosk that focus on the following: Tom Codd Bay, Chief Woodenfrog Island, and Gold Portage.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Roving - Park staff occasionally visit the site and interact with and assist visitors.

Harry Oveson Fish Camp (Rainy Lake)

Oveson's fish camp is the only remaining intact commercial fishing camp in the area. The structures represent the cultural theme of Commercial Fishing. The property consists of the Oveson house, ice house, and fish processing building. A cove near the fish camp is a watchable wildlife site with turtles, beavers, and a variety of birds. The site has become a destination for many visitors looking for a picnic or resting place on Rainy Lake. The park installed a comfort station and picnic table in response to increased use at the site since 1999.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the Oveson Fish Camp is to provide visitors with the opportunity to learn about the commercial fishing era that predated the park. The fish processing building and ice house help tell the story of commercial fishing.

Harry Oveson Fish Camp addresses themes #2: Water and #6: People.

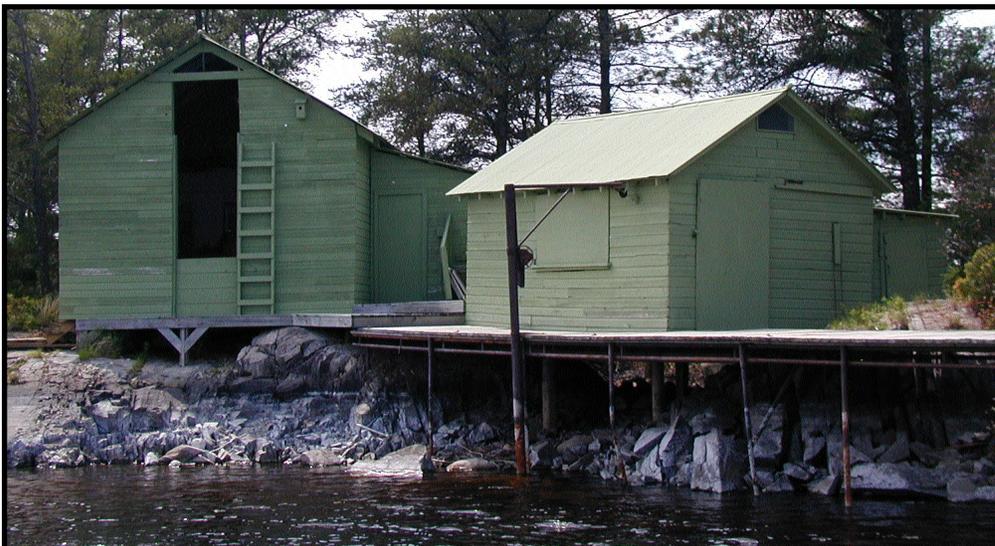
Evaluation

Oveson Fish Camp is included as a drive-by point of interest during some boat tours. Participants always ask questions about Oveson and express an interest in his life. There are no interpretive media at the site to explain what the buildings were or what happened there. Visitors who land there are left to wonder about the site. To enhance this visitor destination the park plans to install interpretive wayside exhibits that tell the story of the site.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications - the location of Oveson Fish Camp is listed in the park's newspaper, the *Rendezvous*.



Harry Oveson Fish Camp (Rainy Lake)

Proposed:

- Audiovisual - Develop a video using historic clips to show at the visitor centers.
- Exhibits - Keep the house open and have exhibits such as a picture rail inside the house.
- Props - Fill the ice house with reproduction and/or real ice with sawdust, and include replica tools.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Develop 3-5 wayside exhibits that focus on the following:
history of commercial fishing (fish taken, markets with a map, global context, sturgeon caviar, why were these fish desirable?); panel with tactile fish (relief effect), with flip ups for interactive identification; story of Harry Oveson; and ice harvesting.
 - Develop an orientation/information panel near the tour boat dock to guide visitors around the site; include text about the video available at the visitor centers.
 - At day use site, orientation panel about the site and to inform day users that the site is a tour boat destination to prevent them being surprised by groups.
 - Identify buildings.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Boat tours - The park usually offers the Discovery Cruise, which includes a stop near Oveson Fish Camp; a park interpreter is usually on board each program.

Proposed:

- Boat Tours - Regularly scheduled boat tours to this location; passengers would get out for a guided tour.

Hoist Bay (Namakan Lake)

Two major periods of history are represented at Hoist Bay-logging and recreation. Landscape features, such as the piers of the former railroad trestle, exist from the logging period and are visible today. The existing buildings are from the recreation period and represent the Resort era. Visitors frequent the site and use it for day use. Sometimes the interpretive program stops in Hoist Bay during tours to Kettle Falls Hotel. The education program uses Hoist Bay as the location for environmental education programs. There is a beaver pond at the site that serves as an outdoor laboratory for students.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of developing Hoist Bay as a visitor destination is to provide visitors with the opportunity to learn about the forests and their relationship to logging and resort/recreation eras. The site is also a good place to watch wildlife.

Hoist Bay addresses themes #5: Plants and Animals and #6: People.

Evaluation

The ice house and cabins of the resort are visible from Hoist Bay and pique visitors' interest. There are no interpretive media at the site so visitors that land there are left to wonder about the site. To enhance this visitor destination the park plans to install interpretive wayside exhibits that tell the story of the site. The four cabins, kitchen, boat-house, and ice house would be open to the public. The dining hall would be used as a shelter for interpretive education trips. One of the cabins would be used for interpretive exhibits such as the model of the hoist and trestle. A universally accessible trail would link features the park plans to interpret and day use facilities. This site would have a dock suitable for a tour boat.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Wayside Exhibits - *Life on the Lake* sign that informs visitors that the NPS is seeking funding to preserve the property and to tell its story.

Proposed:

- Exhibits - Model of hoist and trestle.
- Props - Fill the ice house with reproduction and/or real ice with saw-dust; include replica tools.

Hoist Bay (Namakan Lake)

Interpretive Media

Proposed:

- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Develop 3-5 interpretive wayside exhibits that focus on the following: logging (including use of hoist and trestle) and forest history; resort/recreation era; fish die-off in bay and eagles that feed on them; and ice harvesting.
 - Identify buildings.

Personal Services

Existing:

- Education Program - Water-based education programs on the concession-operated tour boat travel to Hoist Bay; school groups eat lunch at Hoist Bay and then hike to a beaver pond to learn about its natural history and to dip for aquatic animals.

Proposed:

- Boat Tours - The Kabetogama Lake concession-operated tour boat programs may include a visit to Hoist Bay where passengers get out; a park interpreter is on board.
- Roving - Park staff occasionally visit the site and interact with and assist visitors.



Ingersoll Estate (Sand Point Lake)

The Ingersoll Estate represents the cultural theme of Recreation: Seasonal Estate. The estate is on Sand Point Lake's main channel and is quite visible from the water. Another cabin associated with and located on the same island as the Ingersoll Estate is the Chipfield cabin. A volunteer caretaker will live in the Chipfield cabin and take care of and monitor the entire visitor destination site.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the Ingersoll Estate is to provide visitors with the opportunity to learn about a specific period of the recreation era. Visitors come to Voyageurs today to recreate and they find an interest in learning about other periods of time.

The Ingersoll Estate addresses themes #3: Scenery and #6: People.

Evaluation

The Ingersoll house is visible from Sand Point Lake but looks inaccessible perched on a high rocky point. For those who land at the site there are no interpretive media so visitors are left to wonder about its significance. To enhance this visitor destination the park plans to provide orientation at the dock and Chipfield cabin, provide an on-site presence when possible, install interpretive wayside exhibits that tell the story of the site along the path to the Ingersoll cabin, and install interpretive media inside the cabin.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Wayside Exhibits - *Life on the Lake* sign that informs visitors that the NPS is seeking funding to preserve the property and to tell its story.

Proposed:

- Exhibits - Ingersoll house open with a picture rail, waysides or other simple media inside and an interactive exhibit for people to record their memories of recreation.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Develop 3-5 interpretive wayside exhibits of varying sizes that focus on the past and present recreation story, and how the park's establishment protected the area.
 - Identify buildings.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Site Host - a volunteer caretaker living on site will assist visitors.

Ingvald Walter (I.W.) Stevens Pine Cove Resort (Namakan Lake)

The I.W. Stevens Pine Cove Resort represents the cultural theme of Recreation: Resort. The site's historic buildings are set among large scenic pine trees. The site consists of I.W. Stevens' home, a guest cabin, sauna, generator shed and root cellar. I.W. Stevens acquired the property from the Virginia & Rainy Lake lumber company. A fireplace from the company lodge still exists. The company chose not to cut the red pines on the site and many of the trees have reached a large, mature state.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The north country was often thought of as a rugged, inhospitable place for living. I.W. Stevens was one of few people who lived in the lake-country year-round. The purpose of this site 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. The purpose of the site is also to briefly interpret forest history.

Evaluation

Some of the structures on the I.W. Stevens' property are visible from the lake and look like private property without further investigation. For those who land at the site there are no interpretive media so visitors are left to wonder about its significance. To enhance this visitor destination the park plans to keep the buildings open, install interpretive wayside exhibits along a trail that tell the story of the site, and provide some interpretive media inside the house and guest cabin.



*Ingvald Walter (I.W.) Stevens Pine Cove Resort (Namakan Lake)*Interpretive Media*Existing:*

- Publications\$ - in cooperation with one of the park's cooperating associations, Lake States Interpretive Association, the park produced a second edition of the book entitled *50 Years in the Minnesota North Country: Excerpts from the diaries of I.W. Stevens*. The book is sold at the visitor center bookstores. The second edition was funded by a grant from the National Park Foundation and Lake States Interpretive Association.
- Wayside Exhibits - *Life on the Lake* sign that informs visitors that the NPS is seeking funding to preserve the property and to tell its story.

Proposed:

- Exhibits - Keep the log cabin open and have exhibits inside.
- Wayside Exhibits - Develop 3-5 interpretive wayside exhibits that may focus on the following: story of the forest and logging; Virginia & Rainy Lake company history; evolution of what first brought people here; I.W. was one of two people (I.W. and Torry) who lived here year-round before the park was established; self-sufficiency; place to see large pine trees; recreation information; resort history; establishment of the park; recipes; map of his routes to get mail and garden; how did he survive weather and get groceries.
- Develop a wayside exhibit about the natural setting along the trail connecting the buildings.
- Develop an orientation panel for day use site; include a site map.
- Identify buildings - house, log cabin, generator shed, root cellar, and sauna.
- Use quotes from the book of his diary excerpts; include articles he wrote or that were written about him.

Personal Services*Existing:* none*Proposed:*

- Roving - Occasionally, park staff visit this site to interact with and assist visitors.

Visitor Facilities

- Develop a trail that connects the buildings.

Kettle Falls Historic District (Namakan and Rainy Lakes)

The Kettle Falls Historic District is located within the Kettle Falls developed area. Kettle Falls has been a crossroad of travel for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. People of different periods — Ojibwe, voyageurs, loggers, and recreational users — traveled through, lived in, and used the natural resources of the area. The historic Kettle Falls Hotel is concession-operated. The Kettle Falls Dam represents the contending visions of industrialist Edward Wellington (E. W.) Backus and conservationist Ernest Oberholtzer about the future of the area as well as nationwide issues about conservation. The Kettle Falls Historic District is a large area with multiple historic, natural, and recreational features, access points, and types of visitors. It is a popular visitor destination and the only lodging available in the park.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The Kettle Falls Historic District provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about the different periods of use in the area — voyageurs and Ojibwe, logging, and recreation — and to experience some aspects first hand. It will also provide guests staying at the hotel with more things to do, additional activities for day visitors, augment the park's interpretive program, and give the concessioner more structured interpretation of resources within his operation.

The Kettle Falls Historic District addresses themes #2: Water, #3: Scenery, #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade, and #6: People.

Evaluation

The park needs a comprehensive interpretive plan for the whole site. The plan needs to determine the interpretive goals for this site. It needs to be sensitive to balancing changes relative to the memories people have about the site. In the meantime, the proposals below are listed to capture ideas that would be part of the plan. The proposed planning alternative for this site has a park ranger living on site in the 1945 damtender's cabin.

The park has a Historic Furnishings Report (1988) for Kettle Falls that documents furnishings and provides recommendations for their use. The park also has an interim furnishings plan to provide the concessioner some guidance on furnishings until the NPS develops an interpretive plan for the Kettle Falls Historic District.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Bulletin Boards - Visitor information cases with brochure racks are located on the Namakan Lake and Rainy Lake sides of the district.
- Historic Furnishings - Park has a draft Historic Furnishings plan.

Kettle Falls Historic District (Namakan and Rainy Lakes)

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications\$ - In cooperation with one of the park's cooperating associations, Lake States Interpretive Association, the park produced a book about Kettle Falls entitled *Kettle Falls: Crossroads of History*. The book is sold at the visitor center bookstores and at Kettle Falls.
- Wayside Exhibit - A wayside exhibit about the voyageurs is located on the observation deck at the dam; the Friends of Voyageurs National Park funded this wayside exhibit; it was installed in 2003.
- Wayside Exhibits - *Life on the Lake* sign at the damtenders cabin tells that the NPS is seeking funding to preserve the area and to tell its story.

Proposed:

- Exhibits -
 - In the Damtender's Cabin discuss the different visions and ideas of Backus and Oberholtzer about controlling water levels; role of the damtender; and why a dam is here and its impacts.
 - At the hotel - scrapbook of early advertising, listings from the guest registers, articles on the Backus and Oberholtzer debate, history of the hotel.
 - Lobby needs the ambience of the historic setting.
- Historic Furnishings - Finalize the Historic Furnishings Plan for the Kettle Falls Hotel.
- Publications -
 - Develop a self-guided walking brochure that explains the different features of the site and that also gives visitors information that relates to the site including water levels, the differing views of Backus and Oberholtzer, past guests, and explanations of furnishings, secondhand furnishings, and prohibition.
 - Provide interpretive messages in non-traditional ways such as on placemats and menus or through the use of scrapbooks or photo albums.
- Wayfinding - improve wayfinding signs to guide visitors.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Develop orientation panels with site maps to be placed on both the Rainy and Namakan sides (one on each side).
 - Identify buildings and pictures in the dining room.

Kettle Falls Historic District (Namakan and Rainy Lakes)

Personal Services

Existing:

- Boat Tours - The Kabetogama Lake tour boat offers trips to Kettle Falls; a park interpreter is usually on board.
- Interpretive Walk - As part of the Kettle Falls cruises, a park interpreter leads an interpretive walk from the hotel to the dam and back to the boat.
- Roving - Park staff or volunteers visit Kettle Falls regularly to stock brochures and to interact with and assist visitors.

Proposed:

- Interpretive Walk/Talk - With a residential park ranger regularly scheduled, interpretive programs would be offered at various places in the district.

Other Items

- Develop a comprehensive interpretive plan for the Kettle Falls Historic District.
- Construct an amphitheater for park and concession-sponsored programs near hotel; complete required environmental compliance process prior to construction.



Little American Island (Rainy Lake)

Little American Island on Rainy Lake was the site of gold discovery in 1893 that started the Rainy Lake Gold Rush. The Island has an interpretive trail with three wayside exhibits, a comfort station, and a dock. The park developed Little American Island as a visitor destination in 1993.

Interpretive Purpose and Theme

The purpose of Little American Island is to provide visitors the opportunity to learn about the 1894 Rainy Lake Gold Rush by being able to visit a mine. Little American Mine will become more meaningful as a destination once the park develops Rainy Lake City.

Little American Island addresses themes #1: Geology and #6: People.

Evaluation

Little American Island is one visitor destination that works well as it is. When funding allows and after other visitor destinations get interpretive media, the park should evaluate the wayside exhibits and decide if they need to be changed.

Interpretive Media

Existing:

- Publications\$ - In cooperation with one of the park's cooperating associations, the Lake States Interpretive Association, the park produced a book about the Rainy Lake Gold Rush entitled *Gold Town to Ghost Town: Boom and Bust on Rainy Lake*. The book is sold at the visitor center bookstores and is an excellent source of information for interpreters.
- Publication - The park has a site bulletin about Little American Island that is distributed at the visitor centers and from a brochure rack on the island.
- Wayside Exhibit - Three wayside exhibits that tell the story of the Rainy Lake Gold Rush are located along the .25 mile wheelchair-accessible trail on the island.

Proposed:

- Wayside Exhibit - Evaluate wayside exhibits and try to include other interpretive themes (e.g., geology), expand focus beyond the local gold rush story, and place it in a larger context.

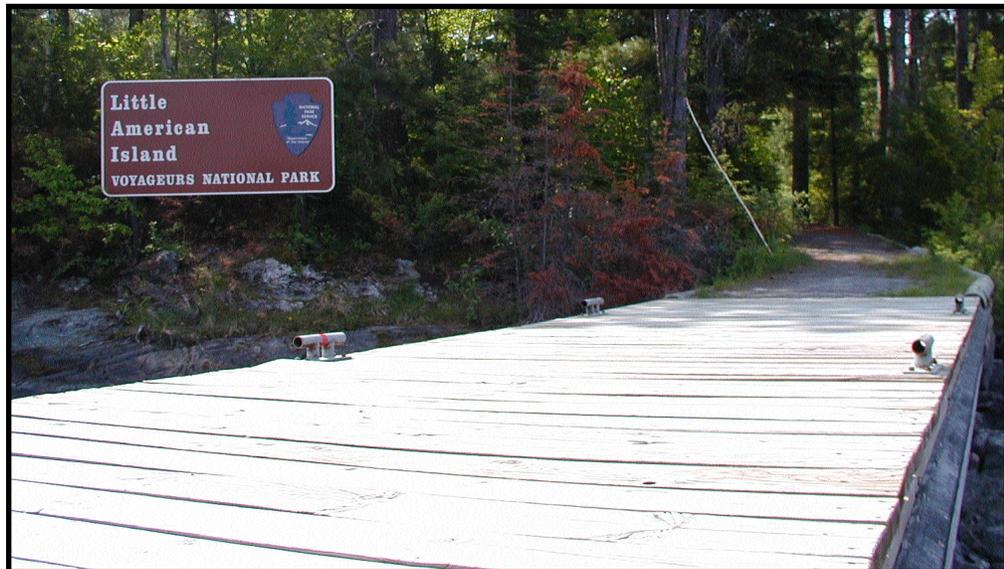
Little American Island (Rainy Lake)

Personal Services

Existing:

- Boat tours - The park usually offers the Gold Mine Tour, which includes a 30-minute interpretive walk on Little American Island; a park interpreter is usually on board each program.
- Interpretive Walk - As part of the Gold Mine Tour a park interpreter leads an interpretive walk along the trail on the island.
- Roving - Park staff visit Little American Island to stock brochures and to interact with and assist visitors.

Proposed: No new services proposed.



Moose River Indian Village (Namakan Lake)

The Bois Forte Ojibwe were the primary occupants of this area from the 1760s through the 1930s. They were integral partners in the fur trade and remained residents in what is now the park until the Nett Lake reservation was established by treaty in 1866. Five bands of the Bois Forte Band of the Ojibwe lived in the park area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the west end of Kabetogama Lake, Kettle Falls, Black Bay on Rainy Lake, Crane Lake, and the Moose Bay area of Namakan Lake. In cooperation with Bois Forte, the park plans to develop Big Sky Island in Moose Bay as a visitor destination that is in the heart of an area that has a long-term association with Bois Forte people.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The visitor destination at Big Sky island will provide visitors the opportunity to learn about the Ojibwe history and culture and contemporary connections to the park.

The Moose River Indian Village destination site will address themes #2: Water, #5: Plants and Animals, and #6: People.

Evaluation

The Bois Forte Band of the Ojibwe has told the park that they want to interpret their heritage in Voyageurs. The park has identified interpretation of the Ojibwe and their lifeways as a need. The Big Sky Island visitor destination site brings together the park's needs and the Bois Forte's desire to share their heritage with visitors. Consultation between the park and the Bois Forte Band of the Ojibwe about the location of this Bois Forte destination is ongoing.

Interpretive Media

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Wayside Exhibits - Develop 3-5 interpretive wayside exhibits that focus on the following: Indian history and culture and contemporary connections with traditional homelands in the park; use Ojibwe text on interpretive media.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Interpretive Talks - Interpretive programs or special programs about the Bois Forte Band of the Ojibwe.
- Roving - Occasionally, park staff will visit the site and interact with and assist visitors.

Rainy Lake City (Rainy Lake)

The east shore of Black Bay and specifically Rainy Lake City has been occupied continuously for thousands of years. Recent archeological investigations at the townsite revealed that American Indians occupied the site about 7,000 years ago (Richner, 1999). An Ojibwe band still lived in the Black Bay area at the time of the 1890s gold rush and were involved in the activities at the townsite and undoubtedly impacted by the sudden influx of hundreds of people during the 1894 Rainy Lake gold rush.

Rainy Lake City was a short-lived (1894-1901) boom town of the 1894 gold rush. A brief resurgence of interest in the gold rush, a significant increase in logging activities, and a budding tourism industry resulted in a small increase in population at the townsite around 1910. A saloon, dating at least to 1910 and representative of the prohibition period at Rainy Lake, is at the site and will be open to visitors. The ruins of the town were a popular destination for sightseers until the early 1920s and regularly scheduled excursions visited the site. During the late 1930s, a resort operated at Rainy Lake City for a brief period before the cabins became private summer homes.

Main Street Design, a private firm, completed an interpretive concepts plan for Rainy Lake City in 2001. The components of the plan are listed below under proposed interpretive media.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the Rainy Lake City destination is to provide an opportunity for visitors to learn about and experience the various phases of occupation and activity that occurred at this site. Specifically, interpretive planning will focus on the Rainy Lake Gold Rush, Black Bay Band of Ojibwe, and the natural history (forest and wetlands) of the site.

Rainy Lake City addresses themes #5: Plants and Animals and #6: People.

Evaluation

Rainy Lake City is a short distance from the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. Visitors could canoe to this visitor destination without much difficulty. The saloon is easily visible from the water and piques visitors' interest. For those who land at the site there are no interpretive media, so visitors are left to wonder about its significance. To enhance this visitor destination the park plans to install interpretive media that help visitors learn the site's story.

Rainy Lake City (Rainy Lake)

Interpretive Media

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Exhibits - Inside the saloon, develop graphics showing a timeline and history of the Rainy Lake City site, and changing exhibits on wall-mounted photo rails and freestanding easels.
- Props -
 - A new dock would be built with a functional loading and unloading section and a section displaying replicas of historic period bags, bales, and crates.
 - Signs to identify the historic intersections and street grid.
- Wayside Exhibits -
 - Orientation kiosk area.
 - Marked building foundations.
 - Quote panels along the discovery trail.
 - Develop one wayside exhibit for the day use site planned for this location.
 - Develop one wayside exhibit for the wetlands bridge.

Personal Services

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Boat Tours - Regularly scheduled boat tours to this location; passengers would get out.
- Education Programs - Field trips would focus on the Rainy Lake Gold Rush and the natural history of wetlands.
- Interpretive Walk - Guided walks led by park interpreters.
- Special Events - Guided bird walks for the Birders Rendezvous.

Surveyor's Island (Rainy Lake)

Surveyor's Island is a small island on the east end of Rainy Lake that international boundary surveyors used as a campsite during the boundary marking. A boundary marker also exists on the island. During the fur trade period, the voyageurs sometimes stopped at this island as they traveled along Rainy Lake. Surveyor's Island is part of the Fur Trade Route destination.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

Surveyor's Island provides visitors the opportunity to contemplate and to imagine how the voyageurs felt as they began their westerly journey across Rainy Lake.

Surveyor's Island addresses themes #2: Water and #4: Voyageurs and the Fur Trade.

Interpretive Media

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Wayside Exhibits - One wayside exhibit on the island highlighting boundary marking and surveying; interpret the "grand traverse" — the stretch of Rainy Lake from Surveyor's Island to the Brule Narrows — described by the voyageurs.

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.

Wetland Destination (mainland)

Since water and wetlands are at the heart of Voyageurs National Park, the park decided to include a destination dedicated to wetlands.

Wetland destinations will be developed along the Oberholtzer Trail near the Rainy Lake Visitor Center and along the Kab-Ash trail at the Daley Bay bridge. Both destinations are accessible by car. The Daley Bay bridge is also accessible by boat.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the wetland destinations is to provide visitors with the opportunity to learn about and experience the park's wetlands.

Through interpretive panels and a viewing platform visitors can watch wildlife and experience the wetlands first hand.

The Wetland Destination addresses theme #2: Water.

Interpretive Media

Existing: none

Proposed:

- Audiovisual - Install spotting scopes at each overlook.
- Wayside Exhibits - One wayside exhibit at both Oberholtzer and Daley Bay about wetlands, vegetation communities, and other wetlands to visit.

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.

Discovery Sites

Voyageurs' Historic Structures Management Plan identified four historic properties with structures as Discovery Sites — Garrett (Rainy Lake), Fujita (Rainy Lake), Kaukola (Namakan Lake), and Mittet (Sand Point Lake). The park plans to maintain three discovery sites — the Garrett, Fujita, and Kaukola properties. The park identified the Mittet property as a visitor destination with visitor facilities.

The National Park Service will maintain the historic structures at the Discovery Sites, but it will not develop the sites with visitor facilities (i.e., picnic table, privy, fire ring). Currently, a temporary "Life on the Lake" sign is posted at each property informing visitors that the National Park Service is seeking funding to preserve the property and to tell its story.

At this time, visitors are allowed to explore these sites, but the buildings are closed. The park does not have a map or other information to promote them. Once the park officially opens the Discovery Sites, the buildings will be open and staff will develop a site bulletin or other information booklet about the sites.

Interpretive Purpose and Themes

The purpose of the Discovery Sites is to provide visitors with the opportunity to discover places in the park that have historic significance while exploring on their own. Through a visit to the site and a publication, visitors may discover the significance of the different time periods represented by these sites.

The Garrett and Fujita Discovery sites address theme #2: Scenery (especially recreation) and the Kaukola site addresses theme #6: People

Evaluation

During tours on Rainy Lake, the boat passes by the Garrett property. Visitors usually express an interest in the story behind the cabin. This response shows some indication that visitors will appreciate having another opportunity to learn about the area's history and that an investment of personal services to develop interpretive media is appropriate.

Interpretive Media

Existing

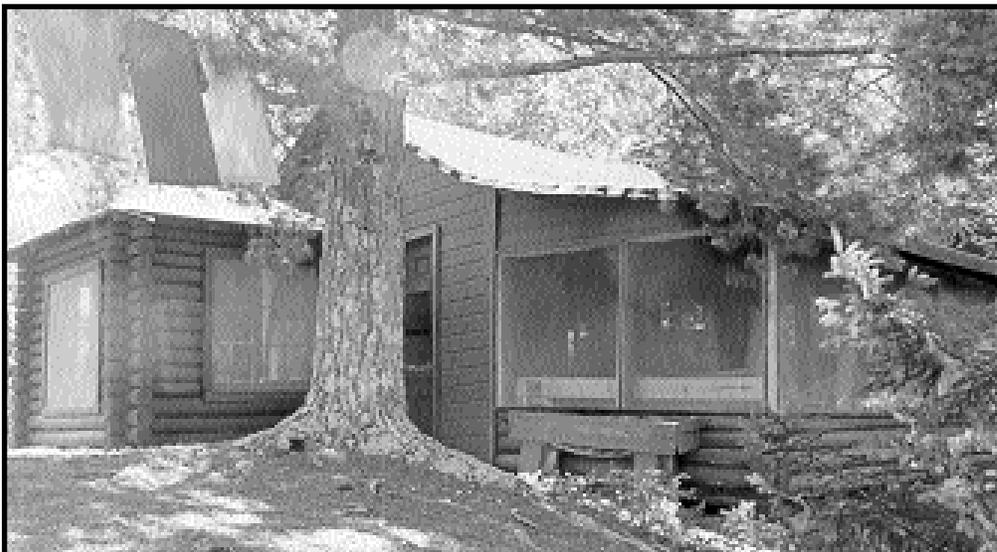
- Exhibits - small signs titled Life on the Lake are posted at each discovery site.

Proposed

- Publication - develop a booklet or brochure that includes information and photos about the discovery sites.
- Wayside Exhibits - install small informational signs to identify the buildings; post interpretive information inside the structures so that visitors who discover them can learn about the property.

Personal Services

There are no existing or proposed personal services.



Part 3: Education and Outreach Program

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

The National Park System has been called "America's greatest university without walls." Parks contain information that does not exist anywhere else. Parks are powerful resources offering unique, place-based learning opportunities. Changing demographics, emerging technologies, and national priorities suggest that we need to examine different approaches in the field of education. Educators seek both authentic learning experiences for their students and professional development opportunities to further their own knowledge and understanding.

There are exciting possibilities for educating broad sectors of society - people of all ages and ethnicities, even if they never visit a National Park Service area. Understanding different perspectives and making programs and materials relevant to diverse groups increases the potential to engage millions of U.S. citizens in learning about parks, their resources, and the importance of stewardship (NPS Education Initiative Symposium 1997).

Educators tell us that linking classroom learning with experiences in the field produces better results. When what is learned in school is connected to nature's classroom or the classrooms of historic sites, students better remember content, gain skills, and adopt new behaviors.

Learning, however, is not limited to schools and colleges and universities. It is a life-long undertaking, our formal education marking only a beginning point. Parks should be springboards for personal journeys of intellectual and cultural enrichment for citizens of all ages (Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century 2001).

Current Program

Voyageurs National Park maintains an active education program in partnership with local and regional schools to provide students with the opportunity to learn about park resources and management issues, both on and off-site. Park programs are designed to provide students and educators with opportunities for direct personal experience with park resources that increase awareness, understanding, and support for the protection of park resources. Park staff makes every effort to understand different student perspectives and make park programs and materials relevant to diverse groups.

Education programs are coordinated by the park's Education Specialist, although programs are also given by park naturalists, rangers, and resource management staff.

The State of Minnesota recently revised education standards for science and social studies, and the park is in the process of reviewing existing programs and lesson plans to ensure that they are appropriately linked to national and state standards, as well as park themes and local curricula. The park is in the early stages of developing an Education Plan to guide future program development, and initial scoping with local educators has been initiated.

At the present time, the park provides programs on request as time and staffing allow. Educators request programs throughout the year, with periods of greater interest at the beginning of the school year, mid-winter, and again at the end of the school year. The park provides several popular programs annually, including winter snowshoe excursions, spring boat-in field trips, and water safety programs. The park also participates in special events, including the Iron World Arbor Day Festival and National Park Week, among others.

Voyageurs National Park is also in the process of completing traveling education trunks that have been developed in cooperation with local educators. Voyageurs received a "Parks as Classrooms" grant to complete five wolf education trunks. The park is also developing a set of traveling education trunks related to the history of the fur trade in the area.

Proposed Program

The park, in conjunction with its partners, will complete an education/outreach plan tied to the park's interpretive themes. Consultation with local teachers and school districts will be fundamental in determining what grade levels to target, how to address education standards and curriculum requirements, and how park staff can work most effectively with school systems. This plan will also incorporate other NPS education strategies and efforts, at both the regional and national levels.

As noted in the NPS Management Policies (2001), curriculum-based education programs link park themes to national standards and state curricula and involve educators in planning and development. Programs should include pre-visit and post-visit materials, address different learning styles, include an evaluation mechanism, and provide learning experiences linked directly to objectives. Programs should develop an understanding of a park's resources in individual, regional, national, and global contexts, and of the park's place within the NPS.

Public outreach is also an important part of the park's education program. Many issues transcend park boundaries and require the support of local, regional, and national communities. Park staff will expand the park's education and outreach program to increase awareness of the park as a unit of the national park system with local residents, travel and tourism entities, and other community groups. The park will continue to develop a cooperative presence at community events and functions that includes written materials and displays — including the park's traveling exhibit that staff may bring to programs or events, or loaned to various sites for display. Public outreach efforts will encourage exploration of Voyageurs National Park and its many stories.

Several goals should be evaluated and included in the park's Education and Outreach Plan. These goals include:

- Create an Education Advisory Committee to build partnerships and advise park staff of changing education standards, philosophy, skills, and techniques.
- Develop a web-based learning resource for teachers and students.
- Work with other agency and private institutions to create appropriate education links between sites.
- Train teachers to use resource information in classrooms and present programs on site (i.e. teacher workshops).
- Develop partnership opportunities for research, internships, materials development, evaluation, and mentoring.
- Establish Summer Field Institute with Rainy River Community College.

Proposed Program

- Develop programs for upper grade levels.
- Develop programs for service organizations, such as scout groups.
- Revise existing park programs and traveling trunks to support park themes and education standards and curriculum.
- Integrate current park research with new education and outreach programs.
- Establish an interactive educational program for collecting water resource data (e.g., relationship of fish length to age by species and water transparency). Data entry kiosks would be at one or more visitor centers and the program would be accessible through the internet. (Proposal from Voyageurs' Water Resources Management Plan, 2005, pages 82-87).



Education Partnerships

The park's education specialist conducts programs for the following schools and school districts. The education specialist also works with educators to field test activities both on-site and off-site.

- International Falls - Independent School District 361
- Littlefork/Big Falls School District, Independent School District 362
- Indus/Northome School District, Independent School District 363
- St. Thomas Catholic School
- Fort Frances, Ontario schools
- Orr School District
- Area homeschoolers
- Other Schools and Districts that request park programs and outreach

Part 4: Needs and Issues Related to Knowledge of the Resource

LIBRARY, ARCHIVES, AND MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

In order for a successful interpretive program to be planned and presented, there needs to be a solid foundation of research. Resources contained in a park's library, archives, and museum collections are essential for accurate and compelling interpretation. Park interpreters use the library, archives, and museum as sources of information when researching and developing interpretive programs or media.

While most National Park Service libraries are maintained primarily for staff use, the library at Voyageurs National Park was established to serve as a place where visitors can find answers to questions inspired by their park visit, researchers can begin their search for information, or seasonal and permanent employees can find training materials. The library is frequently used by students ranging from grade school to college level, people studying genealogy, and area residents. The majority of information in the park's library pertains to the cultural and natural resources of the Voyageurs National Park region.

The park's archives are a repository for the historic and institutional records generated by park establishment and operations. Included in this collection are resource management records, organizational records, interpretation documents, land acquisition records, manuscript collections, personal papers related to the legislative and administrative history of the park, construction plans and blueprints, records of lawsuits and public hearings, and associated records for the museum collection. The archives at Voyageurs National Park are an excellent primary source of information for researchers.

The park's museum collection protects irreplaceable items. It is the least accessible collection for park employees because of the rarity and importance of the items. The museum collection includes items such as fur trade era books; objects related to logging, gold mining, and commercial fishing; ethnographic materials; and natural history specimens (flora, fauna, and rocks).

The present and future museum collection holdings of Voyageurs National Park contribute directly to the understanding and interpretation of the park's purpose, themes, and resources. The park adheres to a Scope of Collections Statement to ensure that all collecting for the museum is clearly relevant to the park. The park regularly reviews the Scope of Collections Statement to ensure that it remains consistent with park management goals and objectives.

The needs and issues on the following pages were compiled from planning team sessions and the Scope of Collections Statement.

Library, Archives, and Museum Collections Needs/Issues

Library

- Consolidate library materials (as well as museum and archives collections) in one location.
- Make the library more accessible to the public (particularly through creating an online catalog and decreasing the reprint cataloging backlog).
- Conduct additional oral history interviews on specific topics to add to the library's large oral history collection.
- Survey park staff to determine needs.
- Conduct ProCite training to assist with access to research information.

Archives

- Finish organizing, creating finding aids for, and cataloging records in the archives to make them more accessible to researchers and staff.
- Convert film footage of park activities and historic film footage of the area before it was the park to video or other useable formats.
- Reduce the many gaps in the records associated with geology and biology collections.

Library, Archives, and Museum Collections Needs/Issues

Museum

- Collect additional historic photodocumentation for historic properties, especially Ellsworth Rock Gardens and Kettle Falls.
- Complete reproduction of the Kettle Falls Hotel guest registers.
- Purchase additional copies of the rare fur trade books and journals in the museum collection and place the copies in the library to make them more available for general use.
- Digitize the photograph collection.
- Provide access to Automated National Cataloging System (ANCS+) (web version).
- Complete collection of geology specimens, including such minerals as hornblende, olivine, pyroxene, garnet, chlorite, and tourmaline and samples of major glacial features including chattermarks, polishing, and striations.
- Reduce the gaps in information on the catalog records associated with the geology and biology collections.
- Continue to collect forest and wildlife management materials relevant to the patrol cabin at Lake Kabetogama.
- Continue to collect the best-documented and best-preserved site-related objects associated with:
 - the life of the Ojibwe Indians of the park area
 - the fur trade
 - historic gold mining in this area
 - logging, especially logger clothing, blacksmith tools, and photographs and records associated with lumber companies that operated in what is now Voyageurs National Park.
 - commercial fishing, such as gill net, pound net, tarring trough, net buoys, gaff hook, dip net, caviar processing tools, and photographs and records associated with commercial fishing families in the area.
 - the Kettle Falls Hotel
 - tourism and recreation, including early maps, items from historic cabins, and advertising about resorts in or near the park.
 - the Civilian Conservation Corps
 - transportation, especially to replace objects on loan from the Koochiching County Historical Museum.

RESEARCH NEEDS

Cultural Landscape Reports

- Kettle Falls Historic District
- Hoist Bay
- I.W. Stevens Property
- Analyze cultural landscapes from historic aerial photographs

Studies or Research

- Inventory and Evaluate Historic Ojibwe Sites (in process)
- Conduct Ethnobotany Study
- Historic Structures Report for Kabetogama Ranger Station Hist. Dist.
- Document Historic Logging Camps
- Geomorphological Study (land forms and relationship to people)
- Bear Reproduction Study
- Climate Change, Air Quality, and Water Quality (mercury) Studies
- Cultural Significance of Sturgeon
- Soils Map
- Loon Research
- Synthesize Breeding Bird Survey Information
- Aquatic Insect Research
- Terrestrial Fauna Research
- Invertebrate Research
- Earthworm Study
- Synthesis of Terrestrial Research (in process)
- Historical Impact of Water Level Mgmt. on Lakes in Voyageurs NP
- Digital Disturbance History of the Park (e.g., logging and fire)
- Range of Natural Variation Study (succession)
- Historic Resource Studies
- Administrative History of the Park (1971 to present)

Research Needs

Plans

- Vegetation Management Plan
- Site Plans for Visitor Destinations (in process)
- Kettle Falls Historic Furnishings Plan
- Information Access Plan (database)
- Integrated Pest Management Plan (in process)
- Houseboat Management Plan
- Air Tour Management Plan
- Comprehensive Sign Plan
- Publications Plan
- Education/Outreach Plan
- Public Relations Plan
- Comprehensive Wayside Exhibit Proposal
- Exhibits Plan
- Visitor Use Plan for Ellsworth Rock Gardens
- Comprehensive Interpretive Plan for the Kettle Falls Historic District

Visitor Use Studies

Visitor use research is needed concerning how visitors experience the park, and what their needs are. When funding allows, Voyageurs NP will apply for a Visitors Services Project study through the National Park Service's cooperative studies unit at the University of Idaho.

Cost-Benefit Analysis for Interpretive Projects

Before interpretation is introduced to an area, analysis should be applied to sites in order to evaluate the cost per anticipated visitor contact. Studies should be undertaken to determine how many visitors currently go to a site, what they seek, the accessibility of sites, if they want the services the National Park Service is thinking of providing, and will such services be cost effective in the future.

As noted in the General Management Plan, Modified Proposed Action, visitor use and trends data would be gathered to provide information for the establishment of appropriate carrying capacities, the protection of the quality of the visitor experience, and assurances that facility development would match needs.

Part 5: Implementation Plan and Matrices

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The measure of success of any plan is the extent to which it is implemented. Implementation of this Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP), as outlined on the following pages, is an initial blueprint for change. Because funding opportunities and priorities often change, park managers need to adjust the implementation strategies to adapt to changing conditions. Therefore, this LRIP should be updated annually as Part 6 (Status of Implementation Plan) within the park's Annual Implementation Plan (AIP).

Implementation Team

Over the next 10 years, employees in the positions listed below should form an Implementation Team to guide the accomplishment of this LRIP's Implementation tasks as outlined on the following pages:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Location</u>
Superintendent, VOYA	Voyageurs NP Headquarters
Deputy Superintendent, VOYA	Voyageurs NP Headquarters
Chief of Interpretation, VOYA	Voyageurs NP Headquarters
Rainy District Naturalist, VOYA	Rainy Lake Visitor Center
Namakan District Naturalist, VOYA	Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center
Biologist (Education Specialist), VOYA	Voyageurs NP Headquarters
Regional Chief of Interpretation & Education, MWR	Omaha, Nebraska

The NPS employees filling the above-listed positions should confer annually to devise/adjust the upcoming implementation steps, funding strategies, and task assignments to ensure progress on this LRIP.

MATRICES

Themes/Media/Tasks/Locations Matrices

The matrices on the following pages were devised by the park staff to show the relationships between the park's visitor destination locations, potential audience types, visitor experience goals, and interpretive themes. The matrices also list the existing and proposed interpretive media and personal services, and target dates for accomplishing tasks.