



Heart of the Continent Partnership

Working together to sustain and celebrate the lakes, forests and communities on the Ontario/Minnesota border

Minutes

HOCP Quarterly Meeting

Jan 30, 31, 2014

International Falls

Voyageurs National Park and Destination Voyageurs National Park (DVNP) hosted a Heart of the Continent Conference (HOCP) quarterly business meeting on January 30th at VNP park headquarters and January 31st at the VNP Rainy Lake Visitor's Center.

Participants:

Kevin Adee, Koochiching County; Merv Ahrens, Independent Researcher; Annelly Armstrong, Ft. Frances Chamber; Jason Blier, Ontario Parks, QPP; John Cameron, Tourism Thunder Bay; Paul Danicic, Friends Of The Boundary Waters Wilderness; Butch Eggen, Destination Voyageurs National Park Crane Lake; Rob Eklund, Destination Voyageurs National Park Koochiching County; Deb Emes, Fort Frances Downtown Business Improvement Area; Kim Emes-Nocholson, Fort Frances Downtown Business Improvement Area; Tim Engrav, Usfs; Burgess Everhardt, Voyageurs National Park Association; Anne Flueckiger, Parks And Trails Council MN; Doug Franchot, Voyageurs National Park Association; Travis Glowasky, Studio Gibbous; Mary Graves, Vnp; Sue Hakes, Cook County; Shaun Hamilton, Trust Public Land; Jim Haskell, Friends Of Quetico; Christina Hausman, Voyageurs National Park Association; Lynda Horman, Ontario Parks; Frank Jewell, St. Louis County; Eric Johnson, Destination Voyageurs National Park; Mary Ann Kasich, I Falls Cvb; Rich Kelley, Quetico Fndn; Gord Knowles, Atikokan Edc; Holly Larson, National Park Service/RTCA; Shannon Lawr, Ontario Parks; Kurt Lysne, Voyageurs National Park Association; Samantha Manty, Ft. Frances Chamber; Shawn Mason Destination Voyageurs National Park & IF EDA; Cori Mattke, Friends Of The Boundary Waters Wilderness; Joe Mershon Destination Voyageurs National Park; Jackie Monahan-Junek, Eveleth; Kris Reichenbach, Superior National Forest Tawnya Schoewe, Nps; Pete Schultz, International Falls CVB; Ann Schwaller, Snf; Sandy Skrien Snf; Mary Somnis, Irrrb; Chris Stromberg, Quetico; Greg Thorstad, Andritz; Betsey Warrington, Destination Voyageurs National Park; Jim Wiinanen, Cook County; Ronald Wilcox; Cheri Zeppelin, MN Dept. Nat. Resources.

Day 1: VNP Park Headquarters

Welcome and Introductions were presented by St. Louis County commissioner Frank Jewell who is also the HOCP Steering Committee Chair, and Rob Eckland, Koochiching County Board Chair.

Mike Ward, VNP Superintendent, then gave a park update and also welcomed the group to VNP and the area.

There was an energetic Presentation/Discussion: “The Heart of the Continent Rocks.” Led by Interpretive Park Rangers Chris Amidon & Justin Olson in which they explored the geologic story of the heart of the continent and discuss what it meant to the people in the HOCP region (i.e. recreation, tourism, education, etc.)

Members of the HOCP Geotourism Initiative steering committee Doug Franchot, Mary Somnis, and John Cameron gave an update on the project and invited everyone to attend the Feb. 11th and 12th training secession in Duluth with Jim Dion from National Geographic.

Holly Larson of the National Park Service gave an update on the HOCP Volunteer Initiative.

Tannis Drysdale, an economic development practitioner from Fort Frances, gave a Presentation: “Economic Development in a Small Gateway Community.” And shared her experiences and insights in the implementation of programs and strategies, and invited attendees to all compare notes.

DVNP president Joe Mershon presented the Community Presentation about Destination Voyageurs National Park. He shared an exciting collaboration success story about how DVNP, a volunteer, community-based, grassroots program has worked to achieve all of the goals set out at the 2012 HOCP international congress to enhance local tourism and be the table at which all of the gateway communities of VNP can communicate at.

Day 2: VNP Rainy Lake Visitor’s center

Park Ranger Steve Mazur presented a program describing the NPS Aviation Program in VNP. He spoke about the park’s aviation program and others who have flown the skies of the area. Steve then left and returned landing the park plane on one of the ice roads. Everyone had a chance to see inside the plane.

Kris Reichenbach of the Superior National Forest led a short presentation and discussion on the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act.

To finish off the conference everyone was invited to go on a snowshoe hike. Rangers guided snowshoers on the Oberholtzer Trail, led by Lisa Maass, VNP Exotics Interpretive Ranger. Although the weather was cold many participated and enjoyed getting out to see the splendor of winter in VNP.