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HEART OF THE CONTINENT PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

Superior National Forest, and Quetico and Kakabeka Falls Provincial Parks Work Together

By Ann Schwaller and Chris Stromberg

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Saturday June 2, 2012, the Superior National Forest, Kakabeka Falls and Quetico Provincial Parks teamed up to work on the South Fowl Lake Portage in La Verandrye Provincial Park following an international meeting. Upon arrival in the area, the boat landing was teeming with several tents, camper trucks, and vehicles with boat trailers. Visitors were launching their boats to fish and recreate as the Heart of the Continent Partnership team assembled the project gear to meet the rest of the team on North Fowl Lake. There were a number of boats on the lakes fishing and sightseeing, both from Minnesota and Ontario. Several visitor contacts were made jointly.

After assessing the South Fowl portage in the afternoon, blow-down was abundant on the trail, as well as damaged rocks from snowmobile use most likely due to winter fishing trips.

On Sunday, work included sawing over 100 trees from the portage and some trail erosion prevention work. The portage itself receives a fair amount of use and the work will be appreciated by visitors. Both trailheads provide a decent entry and exit for canoes.

This beautiful area also provides a lookout trail heading up a huge cliff near the South Fowl Lake end of the portage. In order to prevent wildlife disturbance, the team did not clear the trail. This will help prevent too much visitor traffic up and around Peregrine Falcon nests which can be seen and heard around the cliffs. However, the view at the top of this trail is so outstanding, that those visitors really wanting to experience it most certainly can with a little work. Some might even say that this view is quite likely one of the gems of La Verandrye and possibly within the entire Ontario Parks system. The team was rewarded with a view of trumpeter swans flying overhead a number of times.

On Monday morning the team paddled to the Moose Portage on the other end of North Fowl lake, which was a nice wide trail. And, although there was some standing and flowing water in certain sections, it was very shallow with a firm rock base allowing for easy crossing with gear. These sections will likely be high and dry by mid-summer. The Moose Portage appeared to receive more use than the South Fowl Portage as the lake trout are rumored to be plentiful there.

Ontario Parks recommends a presence of enforcement, annual clearing of the park portages east to west, and an increase of campsite availability along the travel route. The team will also reassemble later in the summer for a joint portage project in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness on the Superior National Forest.



Chris Stromberg from Quetico Provincial Park helps clear the South Fowl Portage.

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