



Heart of the Continent General Meeting – June 10-11 2016

Voyageur National Park – International Falls Minnesota

Attendees: Trevor Gibb – Ontario Parks, Clara Butikofer, Pam Tomevi, James Aasen, A.Dawn Laybolt, Betsy Daub, Richard Periman- Acting Forest Supervisor SNF, Jim Yount, Christina Hausman-VNPA, Rob Ecklund-MHR 3A Koochiching County, Wade Pavleck Koochiching County Commission, Carol Pavleck, Lynn Cumming, Jennifer Stromberg-VNP, Noel Bialke CBP, Mike Guziec Border Patrol , Pete Schultz-Rainy Lake CVB, Tara Nelson, Tara’s Wharf, Megan Moriarty-Canada Border Services, Brian King-CBP, Marty Eide CBP, John Cameron- Thunder Bay Tourism, Kevin Adee-Koochiching County, Lisa Radosevich-Craig– USDA SNF, Frank Jewell – Chair and St Louis County Commissioner,– IRRRB, Tawnya Schoewe – NPS, John Cameron – Thunder Bay Tourism, Lynda Horman, Chris Stromberg HOCP coordinator.



The meetings started with early morning coffees and doughnuts at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. Quick hellos and we boarded The Voyageur, a 49 passenger cruise boat for a tour of Rainy Lake from Tawnya Schoewe, Melissa Sweger and Jennifer Stromberg, the staff of Voyageurs National Park. Melissa the Park Interpreter gave us a great history lesson of the early mining gold rush of Rainy Lake and a little hike on Little American Island. The lake tour took us to a restored “fisherman’s shack and icehouse” and also include points on islands where bald eagles have nests.





The afternoon had a number of presentations starting with the border patrol, U.S. and Canadian customs. All three agencies were able to explain in layman’s terms how to make the crossing of the border in remote areas legal and without too many difficulties. It was very clear that both sides were trying to make access uncomplicated and as helpful as their job permits. This was the second time that we have invited Border Patrol to our meetings. Customs officers from Pigeon River presented at Mink Mountain, they have always proved to be informative, helpful and captivate the audience. Officers Noel Bialke, Mike King, and Marty Eide from Customs Border Protection and Mike Guziec from Border Patrol representing from U.S. . Officer Megan Moriarty from Canada Border Services was representing Canada Customs.



Our next presentation was Pam Tomevi from the International Joint Commission with talks of the International Rainy and Namakan Lakes Rule Curves Study Board. Pam gave us the history and the current Lakes Rule Curve, their directive, concerns and reports. They have been putting together sound information and data collecting, and have created an advisory council that includes government agencies – USGS, MDNR, OMNRF, Department of Fisheries, SNF-USFS/USDA. Their studies have been very transparent to the public and their next public meetings will be July 26-28 with six meetings across the basin.



Our last presentation was Mark Phillips, Commissioner of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board. He presented us with the history of the IRRRB, explained the idea of the organization, the benefits of intentional planning for organizations and locally owned businesses. He talked of the collaboration and involvement of communities. “Communities can brainstorm and with small amounts of money can do significant achievements from community clean up/restoration to energy savings and

job creation. There is no one magic answer – You need to juggle 100 balls in the air at all times.” It was a great presentation and confirmed that the Heart of the Continent Partnership was on the right road for continued success.



On Saturday, June 11, Voyageurs National Park celebrated the completion of the paved Rainy Lake Recreation Trail with a day of activities at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. Special guest, Burgess Eberhardt, of International Falls led the ribbon cutting due to his long time advocacy of recreational trails and healthy activities. Following the ribbon cutting, visitors are encouraged to walk the trail, pull some plant invasive species and enjoy interpretive activities along the way. Staff at Voyageurs did a great job of acting out historical events along the way!

Our next meeting will take place in the Thunder Bay -Neebing area in October. A Recreational Tourism Summit will be included -talks of the benefits of sustainable tourism and geotourism for unique businesses and organizations. Please consider joining us.

Meetings will be posted on www.heartofthecontinent.org when details are confirmed.

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