

**Heart of the Continent Partnership General Meetings**  
**Iron Range Resources**  
**Eveleth, MN**  
**February 24--25, 2011**

**Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30 pm**  
**Presentation and Discussion**

**Attendees:**

Emily Peters – Boreal Forest and Community Resilience Project, Sarah Crow - Boreal Forest and Community Resilience Project, Paul Sandstrom – Conservation Service (US Department of Agriculture), Mike Ward – Voyageurs National Park, Kathleen Przybylski – Voyageurs National Park, Shaun Hamilton – Trust for Public Lands, Frank Jewell – St. Louis County, Lynda Horman – Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park/Ontario Parks, Cory MacNulty – Voyageurs National Park Association, Lisa Radosevich-Craig – Superior National Forest, Robin Reilly – Quetico Provincial Park/Ontario Parks, Holly Larson – Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program (NPS), Kris Johnson – Boreal Forest and Community Resilience Project, Paul Maurer – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Trails, Chris Stromberg – Quetico Provincial Park, Amy Holzwarth - Path of the Voyageur Regional Tourism, Mary Somnis – Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board, Jerry Fallos – Senator Klobuchar’s office, Lorrie Janatopoulos – AEOA, Connie Cheney – US Forest Service, Andy Hubley – Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, Paul Danicic – Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, Brad Sagan – Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, Kristian Jankofsky – Laurentian Environmental Center, Nathan Miller – National Parks Conservation Association, Kurt Lysne – Voyageurs National Park Association, Ann Schwaller – Superior National Forest, Kris Reichenbach – Superior National Forest, Johnie Hyde – Raven Productions, Sherry Enzler – University of Minnesota Sustainable Asset, Nancy Shultz – Management Planning Small Business, Lawson Gerdes – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Ecological & Water Resources), Okey Ukaga – University of Minnesota, Nancy McReady – Conservationists with Common Sense, Doug McReady - Conservationists with Common Sense, Brendan Johnson – Lakehead University Student

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Cory MacNulty, Voyageurs National Park Association, gave an overview of the Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP).

Lisa Radosevich-Craig, Superior National Forest, gave an overview of the International Community Congress and how this meeting ties into that initiative.

**Presentation and discussion:**

The topic was sharing ideas and tools for connecting communities and public lands. Panel presentations were followed by dialogue addressing the questions: How do the local community economies and public lands connect? What are the possibilities and efforts you’re involved with –or would like to see– that connect gateway community economies to public lands in a win/win situation?

**Panel Speakers** – Connie Cheney, Superior National Forest Deputy Supervisor; Robin Reilly, Quetico Provincial Park Superintendent; Mary Somnis, IRRB; Holly Larson, National Park Service Rivers & Trails Assistance program; Andy Huble, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission; Okey Ukaga, Executive Director U of M Northeast Minnesota Sustainable Development Partnership; Paul Sandstrom–Resource Conservation & Development USDA

**Connie Cheney, Superior National Forest**

- challenge everyone to think about the people and land connections and the opportunities that exist
- 5 million visits per year
- BWCA is the most heavily used wilderness area in the country
- SNF/BWCA – ecologically rich – transition zone supports diverse plants and wildlife
- SNF has large pieces of managed forest land
- economic impact
  - \$400 million/year
  - \$35 million budget
  - \$10 million/year to counties
  - 280 full-time employees
  - 6 offices
  - \$1.2 million/month in salaries paid each month – plus multiplier effect in communities
  - timber, tourism and taconite
- challenges
  - timber uses
  - invasive species
  - mining
  - partnerships – a lot of work is going to depend on partnerships
- key to conservation is two-fold
  - relationship between people
  - relationship of people to the land

**Mary Somnis - IRRRB**

- IRRB was created to plan for and provide support for the community should mining end
- economic development is the focus
- payments in lieu of property taxes because once mined, the land is gone
- Mary's focus is tourism
  - grant program – heritage and recreation
  - marketing budget – often work with area communities to pool resources for marketing

**Holly Larson** – National Park Service (NPS) Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program

- tiny part of the NPS; 2 employees based in St. Paul
- groups apply for assistance and then RTCA provide staff time for project planning (not funding for the project)
- examples: trail building (any types of trails), lakeshore development, etc.
- provide: organizational development, planning, etc.

**Andy Hubley** – Arrowhead Regional Development Commission

- regional government entity
- community project planning is the main focus
- economic development is the main focus
- coordinate funding, project planning, meetings, etc.
- transportation trails versus exercise trails
- works with scenic byways too

**Paul Sandstrom** – Resource Conservation & Development – USDA

- started as a rural jobs program
- local councils adopt projects for support
- RC& D funded with USDA funds for project support (planning, fiscal agent role) versus bricks & mortar
- natural resource management to community development
- example projects – span from a well for a community garden to plasma gasification project in International Falls

**Okey Ukaga** – Northeast Minnesota Sustainable Development Partnership

- part of the University of Minnesota (U of M)
- work with communities to identify issues and then match the issue with the resources available at the U of M
- focus on community form and infrastructure
- natural resources – quantity and quality
- agriculture – support local suppliers for producing and selling
- energy development
- tourism – provide tourism resource teams – customized teams of experts work with a community to complete plans for the community to implement

**Robin Reilly** – Quetico Provincial Park

- one can drive around the area and not know that there is a large area of public lands and waters nearby
- the communities around the area need to promote the area and identify its assets

Small groups then formed to discuss and generate thoughts and ideas; they briefly reported back.

**Group #6**

- the whole region is a cultural melting pot
- friendly border
- how to market that conversion of cultures, foods, etc.

**Group #5**

- merging & promoting special events between communities and parks
- stamps or pins who attend
- link highway signage (e.g. circle tour)
- birding, dark skies, food festivals

- tourists give back to the community – clean up, volunteer
- invite park staff to tour industry and vice versa (be proactive & regular)
- students & teachers into the park
- more energy independence
- continued growth of elected officials
- market birch syrup and buy local

#### **Group #4**

- trail systems need to be inventoried and could emphasize tours using the trail systems
- lack of infrastructure for this type of activity
- themed tours
- HOCP pass – use of different types of transportation included in the pass; pass works on both sides of the border (park reciprocity)

#### **Group #3**

- US-Canada sister cities
- connect resources - staff
- using existing outdoor facilities more often – youth camps, etc.
- building on the history and tying the area together
- education of youth – getting youth out in public lands – activities
- make resources available to teachers – supplement classroom
- birding connects the region
- common branding – pieces exist, but HOCP is the only regional brand so far
- identify unique heritage areas and tie them together
- grouping interest opportunities – themed tours (e.g. golfing, snowmobiling, skiing)

#### **Group #2**

- regional branding
- voyageur story is a connection that links all areas together
- community signage and planning efforts that connect to public lands
- easy to enforce and manage form-based zoning codes that could ease a community into connecting with the public lands – need a model
- brand specific items (e.g. pemmican)

#### **Group #1**

- bring back the Old Road project
- food –shared branding
- focusing
- regional currency
- regional passport
- recreational trails
- breaking down the barriers to doing activities that connect public lands
- traveling events that would go between communities
- highlighting cottage industry
- summer student jobs
- cross marketing signs

- reality TV shows
- 5K races in a circuit
- international research center
- hockey connection
- geocaching
- use existing groups like Scouts
- land exchange cooperation
- energy production – sustainable bio-economy

#### **Other comments**

- Mike W – would like to see more community members, tribal members and elected officials – need to keep working on broadening the audience and attendance at the meeting and reaching out to others
- Nancy M. – remote (teleconferences) may reach more people
- Cory/Lawson – Int’l Community Congress needs to think about how the communities can give input to their local community team that attends the Congress; and then how that team can reconnect with their community after the workshop

### **Friday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 8:30a – 3:00p** **General Meeting and Workshop**

#### **Participants:**

Emily Peters – Boreal Forest and Community Resilience Project, Sarah Crow - Boreal Forest and Community Resilience Project, Paul Sandstrom – Conservation Service (US Department of Agriculture), Mike Ward – Voyageurs National Park, Kathleen Przybylski – Voyageurs National Park, Shaun Hamilton – Trust for Public Lands, Frank Jewell – St. Louis County, Lynda Horman – Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park/Ontario Parks, Cory MacNulty – Voyageurs National Park Association, Lisa Radosevich-Craig – Superior National Forest, Robin Reilly – Quetico Provincial Park/Ontario Parks, Dee Kuder – Minnesota Arrowhead Association, Holly Larson – Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program (NPS), Kris Johnson – Boreal Forest and Community Resilience Project, Paul Maurer – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Trails, Chris Stromberg – Quetico Provincial Park, Amy Holzwarth - Path of the Voyageur Regional Tourism, Mary Somnis – Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board, Lorrie Janatopoulos – AEOA, Connie Cheney – US Forest Service, Beth Peterson – Eveleth City Council, Andy Hubley – Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, Paul Danicic – Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, Brad Sagan – Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, Kristian Jankofsky – Laurentian Environmental Center, Nathan Miller – National Parks Conservation Association, Kurt Lysne – Voyageurs National Park Association, Ann Schwaller – Superior National Forest, Kris Reichenbach – Superior National Forest, Johnnie Hyde – Raven Productions, Inc., Sherry Enzler – University of Minnesota Sustainable Asset, Nancy Shultz – Management Planning Small Business, Lawson Gerdes – Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (Ecological & Water Resources), Brendan Johnson – Lakehead University Student, Doug Franchot – Voyageurs National Park Association, Steve Kuennen – Superior

National Forest Laurentian District Ranger, Fritz Sobanja – Cook County Commissioner, Craig Halla – Forest Capital Partners, Butch Eggen – Crane Lake Tourism

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Doug Franchot, Heart of the Continent Partnership Chair & Voyageurs National Park Association, gave an overview of the Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP).

The rest of the day was a workshop facilitated by Sarah Crow and Kris Johnson of the Boreal Forest and Community Resilience Project.

**Mapping Workshop.**

The workshop began by having folks name the big issues. What are some issues? Is anyone working on the issue? How can we build capacity to address issues?

Then the group sorted issues into themes. Small groups each took the themes to develop a systems map, showing relationship among the issues.

**Group 1** – Tourism Opportunities – came down to jobs

**Group 2** – Regional Economic Sustainability

**Group 3** – Change

**Group 4** – Water Quality

**Group 5** – Connecting People to Public Lands

**Group 6** – Sustainable Tourism

Then groups shared some highlights, insights from their conversations, and worked together to consider possible new connections.

**Lunch Presentation:** Craig Halla, Forest Capital Partners, gave a brief introduction to the work of their organization.