

# The Heart of the Continent

International Partnership

Mission: The Heart of the Continent Partnership works to inclusively build vibrant and resilient communities that value and protect public lands in northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario

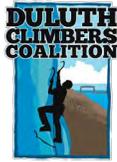
## Notes from the Roundtable

Land Managers Meeting April 5-6  
 Recreation and Tourism Summit April 6  
 Evening Presentations  
 Stewardship volunteer presentations April 7

Superior National Forest Headquarters  
 and Paulucci Building MPCA meeting room  
 Duluth MN—2017



Lori Dowling Hanson,  
 MN DNR NE Regional Director  
*"With over two million visitors recreating in the Heart of the Continent, it is vital for its stakeholders to collaborate and share resources." HOC is home of tourism, timber and taconite that provide over \$25 million dollars to school trust fund annually*



Andy Hubley, Director of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission;  
*"When attending Heart of the Continent meetings we should not expect to learn everything we need to know and solve all the region's problems in six to eight hours of meetings. The challenge is to keep the ideas rolling after the meetings are over. The Heart of the Continent offers plenty of opportunities to stay involved and help move ideas forward".*

Trevor Gibb, Superintendent Quetico Provincial Park;  
*"The Heart of the Continent Partnership builds regional spirit of cooperation. I am proud that Quetico Provincial Park is involved in this important partnership that brings land managers, businesses, municipalities and others from both sides of the border together".*

James Bennett,  
 Superintendent Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park  
*I thoroughly enjoyed the recent HOC meeting in Duluth. It was both an excellent forum and avenue to discuss public lands with many different groups*



Frank Jewell, St. Louis County Commissioner and Chair of the HOC Steering Committee;  
*"Whether in Eveleth or Atikokan, Duluth or Thunder Bay we are working to introduce people to the region as an interconnected web: a place where communities sustain the public lands and the public lands sustain the communities. Where boundaries don't stop us from working together and actually propel us to creative solutions to the problems our citizens, communities and the natural world confront".*

## Land Managers Meeting

### Attendees:

Connie Cummins—Forest Supervisor, Superior National Forest  
Richard Periman—Deputy Forest Supervisor, Superior National Forest  
Ann Schwaller—Forest Wilderness Program Manager, SNF  
Chris Stromberg—Warden, Quetico Provincial Park & HOCP coordinator  
James Bennett- Superintendent, Kakabeka Cluster Provincial Parks  
Trevor Gibb—Superintendent, Quetico Provincial Park  
Tawnya Schoewe—Chief of Interpretation, Voyageurs National Park  
Lori Dowling Hanson—Northeast Regional Director, MNDNR  
Bob Lessard—Advisor, Minnesota Department Natural Resources  
Lisa Radosevich-Craig—Partnerships and Tribal Liason, USFS

Because the Heart of the Continent is an interconnected whole, a region-wide vision is necessary to ensure its sustainability. The ecosystem's landscape is divided by all sorts of boundary lines, park and forest boundaries, county and even an international border. Over ten years ago, along with insightful stakeholders, the Heart of the Continent Partnership was founded by the land managers from the border lakes area. In 2011 agencies along the border agreed that it was beneficial to collaborate on shared common goals for the benefit of the public lands and gateway communities. A Sister Sites Arrangement was signed by representatives from Ontario Parks, United States Forest Service and the National Park Service. The management has changed over time but this year the Sister Sites Arrangement was re-signed and included the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. The collaboration continued in Duluth at the Superior National Forest Headquarters. The goal of Heart of the Continent Partnership is to serve as the "umbrella" for the talks among land managers.

Topics included but were not limited to:

- Shared research
- Connecting volunteers
- Sister Sites Arrangement
- International Joint Commission
- Funding the HOCP organization
- Joint management issues and projects
- Field projects along the border and across Park/Forest Boundaries
- Future Land Manager meetings

Around the table were some new faces and a newly revived and vested interest. A common goal to protect public lands and improve commerce in the neighbouring communities was shared around the table and across the borders.



*Connie Cummins,  
Superior National Forest Supervisor;  
"the importance of the  
"all lands approach" is to work  
together to achieve a common goal of  
maintaining strong partnerships and  
collaboration across the landscape  
and across borders."*



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## Recreation and Tourism Summit

Frank Jewell, Chair of the Heart of the Continent and St. Louis County Commissioner welcomed everyone to our afternoon sessions. Tonia Kittelson from the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness was a delightful MC for the afternoon, helping to keep us on time.

Afternoon sessions started with some of the **land managers from within the Heart of the Continent** presenting on our extensive public lands that combined make up the largest managed green-space on the continent...within the Heart of the Continent.

- Lori Dowling Hanson—Northeast Regional Director MNDNR
- James Bennett- Superintendent Kakabeka Cluster, Provincial Parks
- Richard Periman and Connie Cummins - Superior National Forest
- Trevor Gibb—Superintendent, Quetico Provincial Park

**World Café Sessions** were hosted by Superior National Forest Planner Pooja Kanwar and Ecologist Katie Frerker.

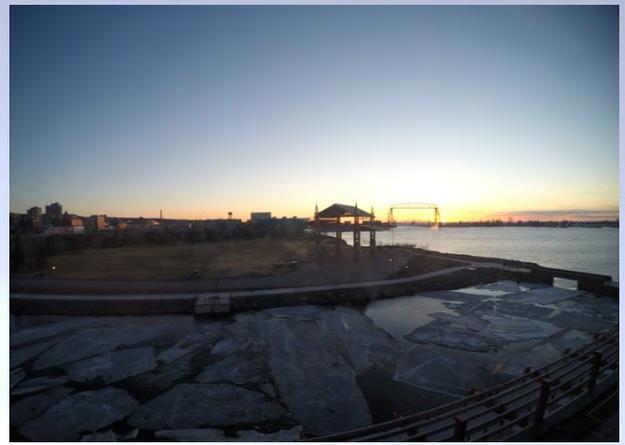
The session had people working in groups that continuously swapped up and kept things interesting and active. Questions were asked of the group to get them thinking about what makes the Heart of the Continent unique as a destination and how do we spend our free or vacation time? How does recreation and tourism contribute to the quality of life? How can we communicate these values that we hold for the area to others? What can enhance recreation and tourism in the Heart of the Continent?

The brainstorming within the workshop helped open communication and share some old and new ideas resulting in developing a richer picture to assist us in showcasing our region.

Eric Johnson, with the help of Chris Stromberg, demonstrated the ability to create a page with the **easy guide to nominating on the Heart of the Continent/National Geographic geotourism site** [www.traveltheheart.org](http://www.traveltheheart.org)

Eric was able to show how to use the site for showcasing your favourite places and for a business to promote their unique products, facilities and adventures. Chris demonstrated how pages can be linked to their own web site and how an affiliation with “traveltheheart” can be made by using the National Geographic badge links available.

Geotourism creates an authentic visitor experience and benefits its residents economically, environmentally and culturally.



Lori Dowling Hanson Northeast Regional Director MNDNR

Lori talked on among other things, tree harvesting and tourism and the million annual visitors to just the two Split Rock and Gooseberry State Parks on the north shore of Lake Superior alone.



James Bennett- Superintendent Kakabeka Cluster, Provincial Parks

James provided maps to explain where La Verandrye Provincial Park is, its non-operating status and how it is a park within the Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park Cluster. He was unable to teach folks how to pronounce it.



Richard Periman—Deputy Supervisor Superior National Forest

Richard and Connie presented on their neck of the Forest. Thousands of lakes and miles of streams, scenic byways, over miles of hiking, atv, snowmobile and ski trails make up part of the Superior National Forest.



Trevor Gibb—Superintendent Quetico Provincial Park

Trevor echoed the sentiments of others; we are sharing water, resources, wildlife and visitors. Sharing information and partnering is key to conservation management.



Forest Supervisor, Connie Cummins



SNF staff Pooja Kanwar and Katie Frerker host the world café sessions as part of our afternoon Recreation/Tourism Summit



Senator Bob Lessard and fellow land managers



People from the corners of the Heart, collaborating, sharing, thoughts during World Café Sessions



An evening at Clyde Iron Works; what a great facility! This was Heart of the Continent's second time to host presentations at **Clyde Iron Works** and it once again proved successful. The last time we were here Hansi Johnson was presenting. At the time Hansi was Upper Midwest Regional Director for the International Mountain Biking Association and he gave a great slide-show and talk on how mountain biking in and around The Heart has taken off with no sign of slowing down. During this visit to Clyde Iron we were shown the beauty and climbing opportunities of the Thunder Bay area and how climbers around Duluth turned an old quarry into a remarkable, multi purpose recreation area not far from where we were eating pizza!

The evening started with a welcome from Frank Jewell, Chair of the HOCP. Frank introduced **Mayor Emily Larson** to many of us that were visitors to the fine City of Duluth. Mayor Larson took over a city that was invigorated by former Mayor Don Ness. "Duluth saw its population of 20 somethings surge in recent years as it remade itself from a down-on-its-luck patch of tired neighbourhoods to an up-and-coming mecca of outdoor life, craft beer and mountain bike trails." Its reputation rose as Outside magazine called it "Best Town" (2014) and Lonely Planet travel guides named Duluth a top ten destination. Mayor Larson talked of the challenges and even the differences in health of the residences within some neighbourhoods has been documented. Reviving these parts of the city and the health, welfare and economy was part of the Mayor's lecture. Mayor Emily Larson was delightful to listen to and it was evident that she wasn't going to slow down Duluth's positive momentum.

**Paul Danicic** presented on an economic impact study conducted by The Friends of the Boundary Waters in partnership with Dr. Evan Hjerpe of the Conservation Economics Institute and the Quetico Superior Foundation. The study was conducted during 2016 summer tourist Season. Data shows that out-of-region visitors spent \$57 million in three surrounding counties. This led to nearly 1000 jobs and an over-all economic output of \$77 million in one summer. "We have always believed that the Boundary Waters visitor spending creates sustainable economic opportunities and jobs in the surrounding communities. The study scientifically validates that the BWCAW is critical to the economic health of Northeastern Minnesota and will continue to have a significant impact for years to come."

**Dave Pagel** presented on what he liked to call "Casket Quarry—back from the dead." Dave may think that the climbing community's name for West Duluth Climbing Park is "their" slang name but google maps differs. The story of a group of climbers transforming an old quarry and casket storage area within the city to a recreational park for the entire community was truly inspiring. This was the kind of saga that spoke of passion for an activity, engagement of a municipality and the partnering of groups and organizations to make great things happen.

**Aric Fishman** is a dedicated adventurer, the founder of Outdoor Skills and Thrills and author of Thunder Bay Climbing—A Guide to Northwestern Ontario's Best Kept Secret. Aric's enthusiasm and excitement to share his passion is always evident. He did a beautiful slide show and videos, talked about drone photography, the small but growing community of climbers in Thunder Bay and about his guidebook showcasing popular and some unknown 5 star climbing destinations within an hour and a half from Thunder Bay.



Mayor Emily Larson and Frank Jewell—HOCP Chair and St Louis County Commissioner



Mayor Emily Larson



Paul Danicic with Eric Johnson



Dave Pagel presents on Casket Quarry



Aric Fishman—Author and guide Thunder Bay Climbing



Animikii Tours and Outdoor Thrills and Skills



Chris Stromberg chats with Laurel Wilson NVC

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## Connecting Volunteers to the Heart of the Continent

S.N.F. Deputy Supervisor, Richard Periman welcomes HOCP and the representatives of the Bob Marshall Foundation that presented via video teleconference from Montana



Get on board

Executive Director, Laurel Wilson presents opportunities to gain unique experiences with Northwoods Volunteer Connection



VTC presentation by Carol Treadwell Executive Director and Fred Flint, retired Forest Service Wilderness Manager—representatives of the **Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation** gave a history of hurdles and successes of their long on-going volunteering organization in the Bob Marshall Wilderness of Montana.

Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness' Northern Communities Director, Tonia Kittelson presents on working with wilderness forest rangers as a Superior Wilderness Volunteer



From the late 90's to today, The Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation has been connecting Americans with their wilderness by providing access and stewardship to Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness System. HOCP is hoping to learn from them and the organizations that are doing great work in the border lakes region. Heart of the Continent Partnership encourages becoming stewards of the places we love and connecting people to our public lands. Not only with sweat and hard work in the backcountry, but within the hearts and minds of the people that work, live and visit the Heart of the Continent

## Attendees:

Chris Stromberg	HOCP	Trevor Gibb	Ontario Parks
Frank Jewell	St. Louis County	Andy Hubley	ARDC
Eric Johnson	VNPA	Melody David-McKnight	Youth Outdoors- Duluth Area Family YMCA
Pam Cain	Path of the Paddle Association	Kyra	Duluth Climbers Coalition
Gord Knowles	Atikokan Econ. Dev. Corporation	John Paulson	Minnesota Power
Clara Butikofer	Needing Economic Development	Cheryl Skafte	City of Duluth - Parks
Tonia Kittelson	Friends Boundary Waters Wildern.	Tony Vavricka	Sandstone Tourism Development Council
Tawnya Schoewe	Voyageurs National Park	Joshua Abraham	City of Duluth Parks and Recreation
Taylor Green	Animikii Tours	Theresa Bajda	City of Duluth
Dave Grandmaison	The Duluth Experienc3	Kim E Young	Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
Ann Schwaller	USFS	Lisa Luokkala	City of Duluth
Brian Fredrickson	MPCA	Patrick Buyck	
Pooja Kanwar	USFS	Shawn Olesewski	Outdoor Pursuit -College of St. Scholastica
Laurel Wilson	Northwoods Volunteer Connection	Connie Haugen	Audubon Center of the North Woods
Katie Frerker	USFS	JaneLaurence	Friends of the BWCAW
Lisa Austin	MnDOT	Sally Hedtke	Proctor Tourism
Paul Danicic	Friends of the BWCA	Dave Pagel- Dina Post	Duluth Climbers Coalition
Liz Taylor	Duluth Sister Cities International	Neil Caron	
Neil Glazman	Duluth Sister Cities International	Jocelyn Lena Twilight	
Jonna Stilling	Duluth YMCA - True N. A. Corps	Dave Burson	
Sally Hedtke	City of Proctor Tourism	Ronnie Morsey	
Gary Davies	Needing Economic Development	Roberta Laidlaw Schneider	Lake Superior College
Ken Gilbertson	UMD Center for Environmental Ed.	Eldon Krosch Jr.	
Pamela Page	City of Duluth, Parks and Rec.	Tim Sundquist	Northland Paddlers Alliance
Doug Franchot	VNPA	Doreen Hernesman	LSC
Karen Franchot	Friend of HOCP	Jim DeLanghe	LSC
Will Cooksey	The Trust for Public Land	Christy Meredith	
James Bennitt	Ontario Parks	Lori Dowling Hanson	MN DNR
		Connie Cummins	USFS
		Richard Perriman	USFS