



Heart of the Continent Partnership

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

Meeting Minutes

Heart of the Continent Partnership General Meeting

Ely, MN, Grand Ely Lodge

October 4, 2012; 1:00 – 5:30 pm

[Notes by Judy Ness, Superior National Forest]

Thursday: October 4th

Participants *[Thursday: October 4th]*

Jeff Bonema, Quetico Provincial Park; Paul Danicic, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness; Sue Duffy, Superior National Forest; Jill Forsberg, Ely Chamber of Commerce; Mike Forsman, St. Louis County; Doug Franchot, Voyageurs National Park Association; Shaun Hamilton, Trust for Public Land; Bret Hesla, Heart of the Continent Partnership; Lynda Horman, Sleeping Giant Provincial Park; Andy Hubley, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission; Frank Jewell, St. Louis County; Jerritt Johnston, International Wolf Center; Ian Kimmer, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness; Kurt Lysne, Voyageurs National Park Association; Judy McClure, North American Bear Center; Nancy McReady, Conservationists with Common Sense; Cory Mensen, Superior National Forest; Jackie Monahan-Junek, City of Eveleth; Judy Ness, Superior National Forest; Ardi Nurmi-Wilberg, Club Mesabi; Lynn Palmer, Lakehead University; Reshma Pattni; Jon Paulson, Minnesota Power; Paul Pepe, Thunder Bay Tourism; Lisa Radosevich-Craig, Superior National Forest; Kris Reichenbach, Superior National Forest; Brad Sagen, NE Minnesotans for Wilderness; Ingrid Schneider, University of MN—Education; Ann Schwaller, Superior National Forest; Joe Scipioni, PolyMet Mining; Carl Skustad, Superior National Forest; Mary Somnis, Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board; Kirsten Spence, Trans Canada Trail Ontario; Chris Stromberg, Quetico Provincial Park; Judy Thon, North American Bear Center.

Welcome *(Doug Franchot, Steering Committee Chair)*

Introductions by participants; attendance sheet passed around room

Overview of Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP) *(Doug Franchot, Steering Committee Chair)*

Doug gave a quick overview of HOCP. As a group we are focused on the border lakes region known as Heart of the Continent. Meetings are held around the binational region: intentionally rotating locations to increase participation. Participation is open to everyone; HOCP is interested in all people, all groups. Reminder that this organization is a non-policy, neutral forum. Neutrality is an important part of the group's record of success today. The Voyageurs National Park Association is the fiscal agent for HOCP.

Steering Committee is always interested in new members. The steering committee meets twice monthly via phone, and strives for a balanced representation across the border. New faces, new interests are welcome; please call Doug or other members of the committee if interested.

Frank Jewell: Last meeting in Neebing, we had Border Patrol agents from both countries speak to us. Today we asked a major employer and private landowner to speak with us, as well as a small businessperson.

Presentation: Celebrating Our Shared Northern Waters--John Paulson, MN Power

MN Power beginnings in 1906, serve 144,000 customers, 50% is heavy industry. Sixteen reservoirs of water, eight hydro projects. Hydro dams are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Environmental Initiatives MN Power is involved in: MP Foundation, Watershed Teacher Workshops, Dynamic Forest Teacher Workshops, St. Louis River Estuary Restoration; Land Sales or Donations, 1985 S. Kawishiwi River Sale to TNC (2000 acres), 1995 St. Louis River Watershed to State of MN (20,000 acres), Park Point Land sale to City of Duluth (200 acres), 2001 LTV Land sale of 3000 acres; Moving Water Tour, Boulder Lake ELC founded in 1993, 20 miles north of Duluth (BoulderLake.org).

Volunteer program "Adopt an Island" has been very successful.

Presentation: Path of the Paddle (*Kirsten Spence, Trans Canada Trail Ontario*)

The TC Trail, when finished, will cross the continent and touch every province. The TC Trail org facilitates the trail building and maintaining trail. Assists in the funding (through the Federal Government). Generally intended as a summer non-motorized trail with 1% motorized use grandfathered in.

Path of the Paddle Project, launched from HOCP, is unusual segment of trail for TC Trail, in that it's a water trail. The project, running on lakes and rivers through the heart of the continent, currently has legs (paddles). Deadline for completion is 2017; this is an experiential water route.

Update: International Community Congress, One year report. (*Paul Danicic and Lisa Radosevich Craig*)

Since the Congress last October (2011), we are proud to say that relationships and communications are continuing today, as ten teams pursue the initiatives they launched in the wake of the Congress. A handout was distributed which contained highlights from the Congress and the team projects.

Presentation: Steve Nelson, Spirit of the Wilderness Outfitters, Ely, MN

Family owned and operated since 1999. Hire ten to 12 people, service multiple entry points into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Open May 1-October 31, 6:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. daily.

Steven shared the services provided by his business. Customers are found through the Ely Chamber of Commerce, regional sport shows, advertisements via print, radio and internet, mailings, phone contacts.

Issues on the horizon:

- How do we get the next generation interested in the outdoors?
- What do we need to do today to protect our environment for future use?
- As budgetary constraints continue, how can we partner to serve our mutual customers?
- Regulatory compliance; what really is needed?

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HOCP's Two New Initiatives: Update and Progress Reports

1. **HOCP National Geographic Geotourism Project** (*Frank Jewell, St. Louis County Commissioner and Doug Franchot, Voyageurs National Park Association Board*). Doug Franchot gave an overview of the National Geographic project. Frank Jewell shared a draft map which demonstrates the HOC area. Discussion on the project, process and outcome continued. Tomorrow's breakout will provide more detail on our plan for moving forward, and inviting wider participation throughout the region.
2. **Connecting Volunteers Across the Heart of the Continent** (*Lisa Radosevich-Craig, Superior National Forest; Chris Stromberg, Quetico Provincial Park, and Ann Schwaller, Superior National Forest*). Lisa Radosevich-Craig described the idea behind the emerging volunteer coordination initiative, as HOCP is exploring how organizations might work together across the region to post opportunities and make it easy for folks to "voluntour" around the region. Ann Schwaller talked about the committee discussion on niche, need, review and inventory of current volunteer programs and how are volunteers utilized. Chris Stromberg described benefits such as resource awareness, cross-border engagement, help encourage getting people working in public areas with fewer public employees. Tomorrow's breakout meeting of the volunteer initiative will create a charter and identifying people who are interested in serving on the design team, which will design and implement this effort. Nancy M. suggested looking at the Voyageur's Snowmobile Trail club website.

5 October 2012: Breakout Sessions

HOCP National Geographic Geotourism Project

Issues/questions

After overview of the project, we discussed hanging questions that we need to look into as we go forward. Questions for National Geo:

1. How does the cash flow with National Geographic.
2. Is advertising sold on the home page of the website?
3. Can we access National Geographic files on our own?
4. Collect partners commitment (financial or ?)
 - a. Tiers of participation

5. Chat with Crown of the Continent folks to sense satisfaction of the output.
6. How do we keep National Geographic updated on changes in tools (maps, info, etc).
7. Can we utilize existing databases (EMT, Ontario, etc).
8. Will individual partners update their own content?
9. Are they holding the data or accessing other people's servers.
10. Reciprocal links with government sites?
11. Always get back to National Geographic when you go to local links?
12. Searching for website on national geographic.
13. Feature on national geographic with launch of HOC website; mag/tv/online.
14. What are the traffic numbers on the site,
15. What is the search engine national geographic using?
16. How much of their cost is driven by data collection?
17. Where else is national geographic looking for projects?
18. National geo have a team format from other organizations?

Project Structure:

Frank and Doug will draft a workplan and distribute to meeting participants.

Proposed Project Structure:

- Development committee
- Partner committee and levels of involvement
- Data/project management
- Promotion
- Ongoing operation
- Design team

Connecting Volunteers Across the Heart of the Continent

Team leads will be Lisa Radosevich-Craig, Chris Stromberg, and Ann Schwaller.

Others in attendance: Kirsten Spence, Cory Mensen, Sue Duffy, Lynda Horman, Ingrid Schneider, Carl Skustad, Bret Hesla.

The two topics were

- 1) assembling a design team (6-10 people to serve as task force that works to plan and implement this project), as well as
- 2) how to launch a pilot effort of some sort, to get things rolling.

Breakout participants discussed the overall plan and path forward, working through an outline of a charter for the design team to plan and implement this effort. The idea of a "soft launch" of some sort of web-hub for 2013 was considered, to be followed by end of year evaluation that would feed into a subsequent full launch.

Issues/Questions:

- research existing, like Volunteers Outdoor Colorado, Minnesota Match database, etc.

- circulate notes from prior conversations to all
- can the goal for the project overlay with HOCP mission statement
- best would be pilot launch that included a wide spectrum of organizations
- benefits to volunteers: health benefits, fun, see other places in region
- share regional vision with each vol event, to build regional awareness

Next Steps:

1. Based on today's conversation, Bret will create a draft of a design team charter (job description) and circulate via google docs. Everyone will add edits/fine tune before next teleconference.
2. Conference call in early November (scheduled via doodlescheduler/Bret), with two agenda items:
 - a. approve the charter document, (perhaps including a workplan and tentative timeline)
 - b. create recruiting plan and deadline for recruiting design team