

**Meeting Notes**  
**HOCP Quarterly Meeting**  
**Lauenetian Environmental Center**  
**Britt, MN**  
**13-14 November, 2014**

**Attendees:**

Annely Armstrong, Ft. Frances Chamber; Brian Bluhm, Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability; Garet Bodahl, Vermilion Community College; Clara Butikofer, Neebing Municipality; Erwin Butikofer, Neebing Municipality; Pam Cain, Neebing Economic Dev; Kacie Carlson, MN DNR NE Parks Trails; Jake Corty, Vermilion Community College; Paul Danicic, Friends Boundary Waters; Allison Dobscha, Friends of Boundary Waters; Heidi Doo-Kirk, Cook County Commissioner; Lori Dowling-Hanson, Mn DNR; Anne Flueckiger, Parks and Trails MN; Kristin Foster, Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability; Doug Franchot, Voyageurs NP Assoc; Bob Hamilton, Ft. Frances Chamber; Ina Hamilton, Rainy River First Nations; Keith Hamilton, Rainy River First Nations; Christina Hausman, Voyageurs NP Assoc; Bret Hesla, HOCP; Lynda Horman, Ontario Parks; Sam Horner, Laurentian EC, IRPS; Frank Jewell, St. Louis Co Commissioner; Arielle Johnson, Friends of Boundary Waters; Jerritt Johnson, Sustainable Ely; Joseph Junek, Vermilion Community College; Rita Koch, Vermilion Community College; Brian McLaren, Lakehead University; Jackie Monahan-Junek, City of Eveleth; Ardy Nurmi-Wilberg, Club Mesabi; Beth Pierce, Iron Range Tourism Bureau; Lisa Radosevich-Craig, Superior National Forest; Kris Reichenbach, Superior National Forest; Michael Rennie, Experimental Lakes Area; Lori Schmidt, Vermillion Community College; Ann Schwaller, Superior National Forest; Mary Somnis, IRRRB; Chris Stromberg, Quetico Park; Karen Warren-Seversen, Voyageurs NP Assoc.

## **Thursday Evening Session**

### **Local Partnerships Pt.1: Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability.**

(Brian Bluhm, Kristin Foster, Jim DeVries). IRPS is connecting citizens and building collaborations among diverse residents in their corner of the heart. Key to coalition: diverse and well-connected board. IRPS is dedicated to stimulating conversation into action. Defining sustainability as a three-legged stool: resources, economy, community.

Specific activities:

- 2015 Earth Fest: April 18, 2015
- 100 mile meal (all food from within 100 miles)
- turn church kitchens into community kitchens for others to use
- Green Inventors contest for 5<sup>th</sup> graders—invent something to make the world a better place
- Youth Energy Summit: create an energy action project

## Friday Day Session

### **Local Partnerships, Pt.2: Club Mesabi**

(Ardy Nurmi-Wilberg, Bob Manzoline). This coalition is uniting all the little towns in the area.

- “I don’t care if my hockey team hates your hockey team. We’re all on the Mesabi Trail.”
- Sense of Place and Geotourism: Im proud to be from Minnesota. I’m proud to be from the Iron Range. The Mesabi Trail can help us tell our story. Others can see how wonderful our place is.
- Needed to convince locals (and skeptics) of the value of this trail, so did an economic impact study funded by NMSDP.
- Key features of Club Mesabi for HOCP partners to consider:
  - Do you also work on trails? Let’s share stories, successes, failures among trail groups
  - Regional Rail Authority is a very unique partner for us. Worth thinking about for other groups also.
  - Our Web sponsor ads program might be a good model for HOCP

### **HOCP Updates:**

#### **a. Volunteer Initiative**

(Chris Stromberg, Ann Schwaller) We need events, opportunities that we can post more than we need volunteers at this point (ideas: Club Mesabi, Worldwide organic Farming).

- What is unique is the bi-National feature: this is a brand new kind of volunteering—across borders.
- Volunteer Passport Idea—as a way to get folks to go volunteer at new places for them, “voluntourism”
- Volunteer Vacations: design a vacation and promote it. This could be done part of the new functionality coming with the Geotourism website, where you can design trip.
- What if HOCP dedicated a whole quarterly meeting to a volunteer effort
- For sure we could insert an on-the-ground volunteer activity into every quarterly meeting (we’ve done this at some meetings)
- Vol opportunities to add to the web site:

#### **b. Hiring a new coordinator**

1. Doug Franchot has put together a draft of the issues involved, glad to share this with anyone interested
2. Steering committee will create and follow a process to fill this position
3. All are encouraged to get your ideas to Doug or Frank Jewell.

#### **c. Location for Next HOCP meetings**

- Feb 2015 or March: HOCP quarterly meeting will be timed to coincide with the roll out of the Geotourism website (press events in Duluth, Thunder Bay, and border)
- Other 2015 Meetings: let someone on the steering committee know if you'd like to host a meeting in your area.

## **Building Cross-Border Networks for Environmental Learning**

### **Part I: Panel.**

*Panel: Brian McLaren, Lakehead University; Jim DeVries Laurentian Environment Center; Danny Frank, UMD; Lori Schmidt, Vermillion Community College; Rita Koch, Vermillion Community College; Michael Rennie, Experimental Lakes Area, Karen Warren Severson, VNPA; Kacie Carlson, MnDNR, Chris Stromberg, Quetico Provincial Park*

#### Ideas Included:

- ⤴ Certificates: maybe create a way for students to add smaller certificates from various trainings together, and these become a something
- ⤴ Stepping stones: create a longer arc for students, who could move from a 5-6 grade field experience, then a longer 9 grade field experience, then a senior experience and project, then university students circle back to mentor 5<sup>th</sup> graders
- ⤴ Health insurance discount for going outdoors
- ⤴ Comment, Rita: we want to introduce students to new technologies and new ideas, but also still make sure they can fix things when they break.
- ⤴ Intra-personal: kids are having a hard time being with themselves. use outdoor ed experiences to also teach youth to be with themselves
- ⤴ Comment, Kacie: If you bring your kids outside, they have a great time, and it only costs a fraction of Disney World.

### **Part II: Breakout Groups Consider Two Questions:**

1. What can your organization do to build Cross-Border Networks for Environmental Learning?
2. What might HOCP be able to do to help build Cross-Border Networks for Environmental Learning?

#### Report back notes:

##### Group 1 (Kacie notes)

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- ⤴ Our organizations can:
  - Be more aware of who our user are, and better facilitate them
  - Investigate the barriers for groups to participate in outdoor ed (comfort? Transportation? Etc) then find solutions
  - Provide inviting programs and places
  - Co-promote each other's resources: each area tout it's particular strong points, so that across the region we have a variety of flavors

- ⤴ HOCP can
  - Create awareness of what's available, and help people share their stories (Geotourism Initiative is making this possible)
  - HOCP create awareness and network among ELC leaders
  - HOCP create wine/beer/chocolate tours around the heart
  - HOCP create a science fair, or a history fair event

#### Group 2 (Brian notes)

- ⤴ ELC's can partner with business. For example: Rainy River College perceived a need and reached out to businesses in Ft. FRances
- ⤴ Big idea: Outdoor private university= "Outdoor U." Could there be a role for collaboration between the various nearby colleges and universities, create a way to transfer credits and reciprocal recognition of each other's outdoor course work credits toward something?
- ⤴ Find those teacher mavericks--we need to find and support and connect those folks willing to break the boundaries and try something new
- ⤴ "It doesn't take much time to make an impact in a student's life."

#### Group 3 (Rita notes)

- ⤴ The border is a challenge
- ⤴ HOCP convene network of ELCs, and network of outdoor ed champions. K-12 trips are usually led by a champion. Can we identify those champions and create a structure/network for them to connect with each other, share ideas
- ⤴ HOCP communicate with school boards, bring board chairs together to get the word out about the importance of environmental ed within larger curriculum, help them also see the HOCP big picture and their place in it
- ⤴ Make this region a model for the importance of outdoor/environmental ed, and compile info that backs this up
- ⤴ HOCP help coordinate bus loads of students going across the border

#### Group 4 (Jerrod notes)

- ⤴ Create a committee to connect public lands and students, and make the case to school boards for this type of education
- ⤴ Conservation corps- a model that we could replicate for hocp
- ⤴ HOCP find an outside organization to do a needs assessment to find gaps and opportunities in outdoor education
- ⤴ Cross border solution: video conferencing between classrooms across the border, then the two classes meet at prairie portage, lastly they reconnect via video conference afterward
- ⤴ Create entry level experiences for kids
- ⤴ Learn our own place: how do we know where we want to go till we know where we are? So we should inventory and make a database within HOCP

#### Group 5: (Mike notes)

- ⤴ Bus kids to various ELCs. But crossing border is very encumbered,

burdensome process.

- ⤴ Rather than moving students around, perhaps have professionals, educators move around to visit ELCs, cheaper to transport only one person
- ⤴ Cross-pollinate between Lakehead and UMD, cross post each other's opportunities, and HOCP post them also
- ⤴ Share info and opportunities between HOCP groups: e.g. Youth energy summit
- ⤴ Interpretive programs and staff from various ELCs could share ideas, expertise with others in other parks around the HOCP
- ⤴ Proactive engagement with First Nations: ensuring their involvement and discussing not only post-colonial management

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**General Discussion:**

- ⤴ Keep bringing students to HOCP meetings (a cluster of students from your area)
- ⤴ Schools need to think about how this collaborating could help students and work toward that, not just their own organization's internal interests
- ⤴ Do a gathering, quarterly meeting where we focus on student groups
- ⤴ Environmental ed that leads toward a career is also needed:
- ⤴ HOCP facilitate Job Board: Env jobs in the region. HOCP can help make those connections, facilitate agencies to share ideas about their recruiting, their needs, their approaches
- ⤴ HOCP do paid internship: rotate to each of the land manager agencies, get a rotation of experience, then help find work, ideally
- ⤴ Conservation Career Fair sponsored by HOCP
- ⤴ HOCP keep this conversation going, so that it leads to something actually happening.