

Message from the Chair; My, what a wonderful and busy time it has been! We jumped into three big projects that spanned spring, summer and fall of 2019. We held a Science Symposium this spring that focused on the cultural, terrestrial and social sciences. Researchers presented on a wide variety of [topics](#) and the community-based approach promoted many great networking opportunities for future endeavors. Throughout the summer we have worked with land managers in Ontario and Minnesota on border lake portage projects and obtaining sky quality meter readings, our first steps towards having the largest designated dark sky preserve in the world. Our third big project is still going on: [Bike the Heart](#). This is a grand effort to connect people to the beautiful public lands and communities through recreational adventures. A series of eight (8) bike rides throughout summer and fall have been promoted throughout the Heart, exploring different parts of the region. Our mission continues to work towards showcasing the border lakes region and gateway communities throughout the Heart of the Continent. We celebrate the good work being done by our public land managers and collaborating organizations. Our next Roundtable is October 2-3, 2019 held near Crane Lake, MN. I hope to see you there!
Tonia Kittelson – Chair – HOCP toniakittelson@gmail.com

Recap of the last year

It has been a whirlwind of activity for the Heart of the Continent Partnership in the last year. During our last **Roundtable Gathering** in Sept 2018 on Voyageur Island near Quetico Provincial Park we had a lot on our plates to talk about. Our discussions included a series of bike rides, a dark sky designation and a science symposium, and achieving this on a tight budget. Our Co-Chairs were stepping down after a term of an admirable mission of steering our ship. During our strategic planning Tonia Kittelson stood and reminded us of the benefits of our cross border collaborations, our successes, our need to continue our relationship with land managers, the love of our public lands and the economic growth of our gateway communities. It seemed obvious that Tonia step into the role of Chair for the Heart of the Continent Partnership. Our science team was revived shortly after the meeting and started working on the **2019 symposium** that took place in Duluth. Evening poster presentations at the Duluth Folk School and Oral presentations at University Minnesota Duluth. There are many people to thank but a big hand goes out to Jesse Engebretson -UMN, Molly MacGregor –MNDNR were the driving forces and Brian Sturtevant -USFS for the morning workshop.



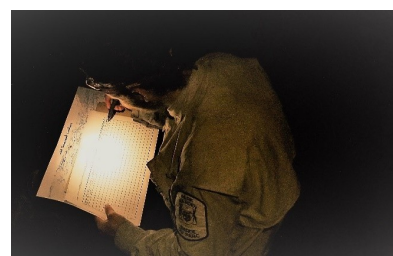
Voyageur Island



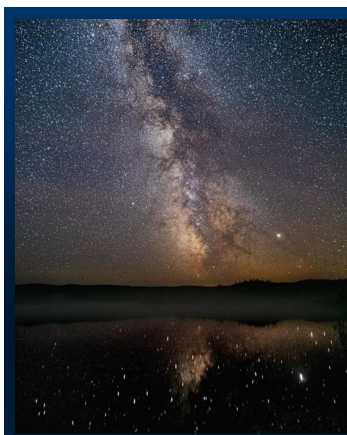
Poster night Science Symposium



Bike the Heart -Neebing ON



Recording sky quality meter readings



Preserving the Dark Skies

During July 2019, four teams of wilderness rangers/park wardens went into the woods to observe the nights of the new moon. Along with their usual assignments they were also out collecting SQM (sky quality meter) readings during the darkest hours of the evening. The Provincial Parks of Quetico, La Verendrye, and Pigeon River, along with the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) on the

Superior National Forest and Voyageurs National Park teamed up with the U.S. National Park Service’s Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division taking steps to become dark sky preserves. See article on [Ontario Parks Blog](#). Dark sky photographer [@ethan.b.allen](#) was able to capture just what the wilderness rangers were seeing and much more with time elapsed photography.

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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.



Bike the Heart—Our goal this summer and into fall was showcasing our popular biking routes and trails throughout the Heart of the Continent, by mapping and hosting an events to create awareness for locals and visitors of all the opportunities that have been created by the hardworking clubs and collaborating entities like the [Arrowhead Region Development Commission](#) have been working on. A big hand goes out to Frank Jewell for a successful series of cycling events that were held and still being held in the backcountry, state and national parks, and in the outskirts of our cities! BIKE! The Heart has been fun for those that have helped orchestrate and participated.

Information and registration for the rides can be found on our National Geographic geotourism site [BIKE THE HEART!](#)

Save The Date:
October 2-3, 2019
HOCP Roundtable Gathering
Crane Lake MN—Voyageire Lodge
Info posted soon
www.heartofthecontinent.org

