



Community Newsletter, May 2024

Superintendent's Office

Here you will find information from our various teams for the month of May. We are working on making improvements to the monthly check-in and website throughout the year and will be continuing to use the monthly check-in to keep our communities in the loop on all things Voyageurs.

For updates go to: <https://www.nps.gov/voya/learn/management/stateofthepark.htm>

On May 13th the NPS provided notice of the 30-day public scoping period related to the park's Frozen Lake Use Plan. The scoping period opened on May 28th and will close on June 28th. You can find the newsletter which outlines the new proposed action alternative, alternative 3, and other project information [here](#). You can also submit your comments online at the same site.

Work continues related to changes to the commercial use authorization (CUA) program with messaging sent in mid-June.

In May the superintendent traveled to Crane Lake for a walkthrough of the visitor center construction, held a bi-annual Voyageurs Affairs meeting with elected officials, and attended the International Falls Convention and Visitor Bureau monthly meeting and annual resort/hotel operator meeting.

Volunteer Spotlight

Each month the park will spotlight a different employee or volunteer. May's spotlight is our visitor center volunteers!

Coming from the coasts and everything in-between, our visitor center volunteers arrived the first week in May and immediately began 3 weeks of spring training alongside our seasonal rangers, in preparation for the opening of all three of the park's visitor centers on Memorial weekend.

Among an array of training opportunities, days were spent out in the field studying the geology of the park and on the water learning about Voyageurs' natural and cultural resources as the team boated to various visitor destinations throughout the park.



Our volunteers traveled to the Bois Forte Heritage Museum at Lake Vermillion, to garner an understanding of Bois Forte perspectives, the Tribal Nation upon whose ceded treaty lands the park is located.

Interested in spending your summer as a volunteer at Voyageurs National Park? Feel free to email: Mark_Miller@nps.gov and also visit: [Local Volunteers - Voyageurs National Park](#)

Administration and Business Services Team

The park's Administrative Officer led a planning team for the park's annual spring All-Employee meeting, helped complete the region's requested revisions to the park's Recreation Fee Comprehensive Plan, and continued work transitioning her role in anticipation of retiring at the end of June.

Newer staff attended Operational Leadership training and a variety of other learning opportunities to continue expanding their expertise as they assist with an increasing number of park processes.

Funding was secured to be able to hire 2 Youth Conservation Corp students for the summer. Onboarding for the park's seasonal employees was conducted as well.

Natural and Cultural Resources Team

Resources staff conducted aquatic invasive species decontamination training in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Supplies and equipment were set up at Kettle Falls in anticipation of our 3rd summer of decontamination operations for boats portaging upstream from Rainy Lake to Namakan Lake since Zebra Mussel larvae was discovered in Black Bay.

The aquatics lead presented an update on our water quality-based zebra mussel risk assessment at a multi-park invasive mussel meeting. He also continued to work on proposals for International Joint Commission (IJC) funding for research in support of lake level management performance indicators. Staff is also deploying and servicing amphibian monitoring equipment in 10 wetlands near Rainy, Namakan, and Kabetogama lakes and purchasing supplies and equipment for other 2024 field projects.



In June, the park will be conducting its annual multi-agency bald eagle survey and banding effort, Voyageurs' longest running wildlife research project spanning nearly 40 years.

Interpretation, Education, and Recreational Permits Team

Supervisors completed spring training with the park's seasonal Interpretation Rangers and volunteers alike.

Visitor centers opened in time for the busy Memorial Day weekend, and our team served a total of 2,368 visitors throughout the rest of the month. Camping season has begun as well, with nearly 2,000 campers visiting Voyageurs in the month of May. Boat tours are 50% booked for the 2024 summer season, with over 4,000 tickets being reserved thus far. Tours launch from Rainy Lake Visitor Center beginning June 16 and from Kabetogama Lake and Ash River Visitor Centers on June 18. Reserve your adventure at:

[Voyageurs National Park Tours, Voyageurs National Park - Recreation.gov](#)



In addition to our wide variety of ranger-led boat tours, Voyageurs Conservancy and Voyageurs National Park are thrilled to offer new and enhanced programs designed to deepen your connection to our national park, including these family-friendly programs and more:

- * Take a guided hike with a ranger or a park scientist to learn about their fascinating field work.
- * Discover the night sky at a Park after Dark program.
- * Paddle like a Voyageur on a 26-foot replica of a North Canoe.

For a full description and details of our Interpretation and Education programs this summer, visit: [2024 Summer Programs and Events](#)

Visitor and Resource Protection Team

Voyageurs National Park was one of seven organizations that presented programs at the Annual International Falls Outdoor Education program for kids at park headquarters. The park presented water safety training, including the importance of wearing personal floatation devices, knowing and practicing with safety equipment, understanding hypothermia, and the dangers of bow riding and carbon monoxide. Approximately 62 children from our area schools and 15 chaperones enjoyed a day of safety and Outdoor Education. The park's law enforcement rangers presented the program with four members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary who also provide vital safety services and education in Voyageurs National Park.



Law enforcement staff also completed setting buoys in place in May, held a wildland fire refresher training, and are looking forward to conducting Motorboat Operator Certification Course training for seasonal staff in June.

Facilities Team

Maintenance staff activated parkwide water systems, including replacing the well pump at Kettle Falls Hotel to restore the water for the hotel and the villas.

In the Namakan district of the park, floating dock extensions were built for Hoist Bay and I.W. Stevens Island visitor destinations. Crews also put harbor docks together for the season and cleared some of the more popular hiking trails of tree windfalls.

Wi-Fi at the Whispering Pines seasonal housing area is now set up and working in all cabins. Public Wi-Fi is now available at the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center and the Ash River Visitor Center.

Seasonal staff hiring was finished, including a water/wastewater intern position that will be in the park for 26 weeks.

Docks have been hooked up parkwide and campsites are in good condition, having been cleaned to start the season.

Voyageur tour boat inspections were conducted and passed U.S. Coast Guard certification requirements.

Restoration work at the historic Rainy Lake Saloon on Black Bay of Rainy Lake began in May, as well as work with A&E Design team on the park's main roads leading to Rainy Lake Visitor Center and Ash River Visitor Center.