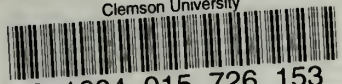


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# Voyageurs National Park

## General Management Plan



**Recommended**

Barbara West  
*Superintendent, Voyageurs National Park*

January 17, 2002

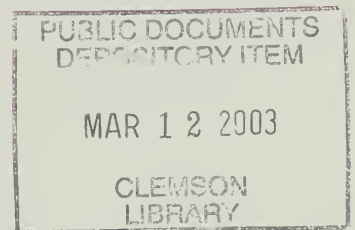
**Approved**

William W. Schenk  
*Regional Director, Midwest Region*

January 18, 2002


**General Management Plan**  
**Voyageurs National Park**  
**Minnesota**

**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**



**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**  
**January 2002**

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## INTRODUCTION





## Voyageurs National Park

The forested lakecountry along Minnesota's northern border was once the scene of an epic chapter in North American history. For a century and a half, the French-Canadian voyageurs plied the maze of lakes and streams in birch bark canoes and transported vast quantities of furs and goods between Montreal and the far Northwest. Voyageurs National Park commemorates this era of 18th and 19th century American history by protecting one of the most important segments of the "transcontinental highway" traversed by fur-trading explorers.

Encompassing 218,054 acres — including 134,000 acres of forested woodlands, 84,000 acres of water, 655 miles of undeveloped shoreline, and over 1,000 islands — the park supports abundant flora and fauna indigenous to the north woods. The park's complex system of waterways, featuring the 60th largest body of freshwater in the world, secluded bays, inlets and narrows, supports a healthy fishery that sustains both wildlife and public uses.

Voyageurs provides a spectrum of recreational opportunities while commemorating the history, culture, and wildlife of this area. Recreational uses — from hiking and cross-country skiing to motorboating and snowmobiling — are allowed within much of the park, making Voyageurs accessible to numerous people who would otherwise be unable to reach distant destinations. The most popular recreational activities focus on the park's natural environment and include fishing, viewing scenery and wildlife, day hiking, camping, houseboating, paddling, and snowmobiling. Although recreational uses occur throughout the year, the greatest levels of visitation occur during the summer between June and August.

Voyageurs is unique among national parks as an example of the southern transitional boreal forest. The region typifies Canadian Shield topography, a forested land

that has been shaped by glaciation into rolling hills and a complex system of lakes and waterways. The bedrock that underlies Voyageurs is some of the most ancient in North America. The park's major landmass is the heavily forested, 75,000-acre Kabetogama Peninsula, primarily accessed from the water. The peninsula is about 7.5 miles at its widest point and approximately 26 miles long; it is marked by numerous bogs and interior lakes that can only be reached by foot trails, canoe portages, or fixed-wing aircraft.

The park is home to a large concentration of river otter, and it is one of only two national parks in the continental United States with an indigenous population of Eastern timber wolf. In addition, it has an estimated 15–25 pairs of nesting bald eagles, 100–150 black bears, and 60–100 moose. Deer, beaver, and snowshoe hare are commonly seen throughout much of the year. Over 230 species of birds, including loons, cormorants, gulls, white pelicans, and great blue herons, may be viewed during warmer seasons. The lakes in Voyageurs support a fishery resource that is vital to the ecological food chain.

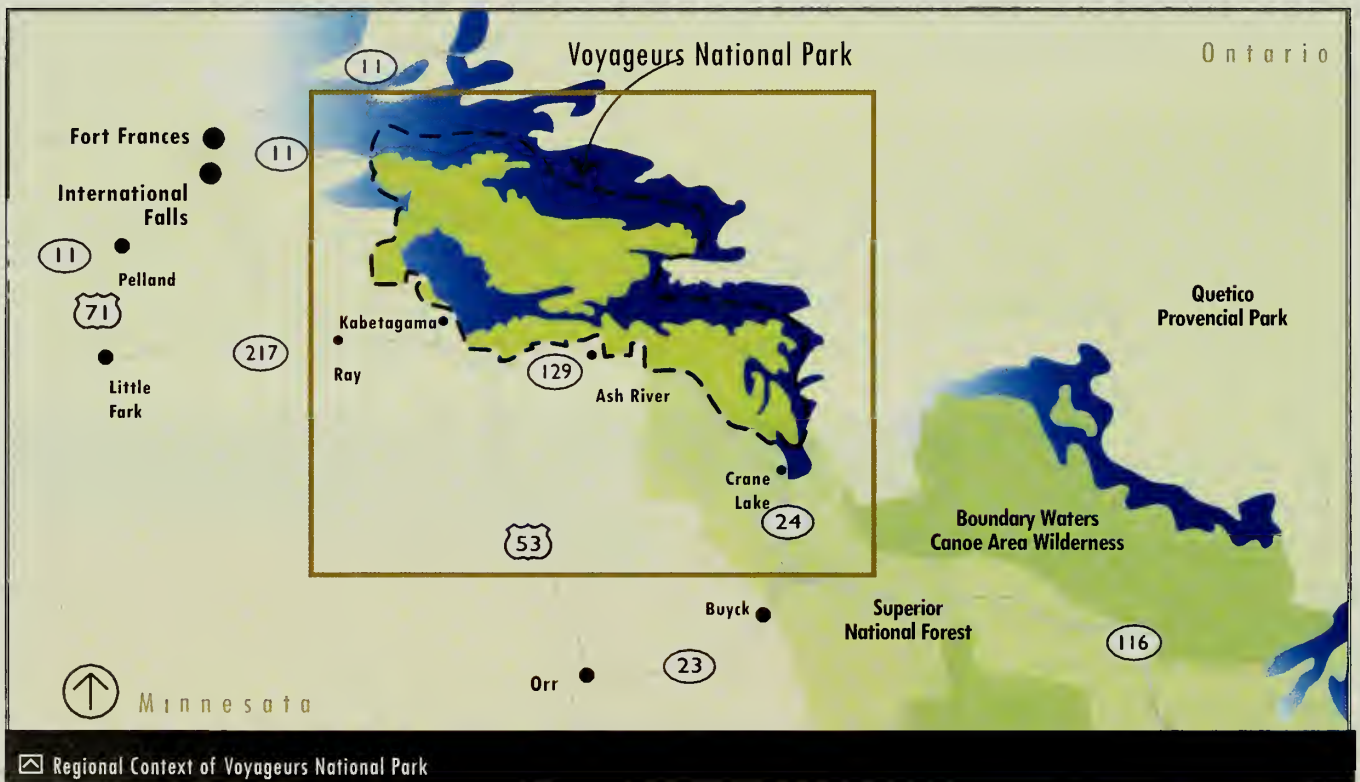
Although the park celebrates the events of the voyageurs-era fur trade, Voyageurs boasts a rich and colorful history of human occupation dating back 10,000 years. Nearly every major prehistoric and historic theme associated with human



Over 84,000 acres of water comprise Voyageurs National Park 

interaction and development of the northwestern United States is represented within park boundaries. This includes early hunters and gatherers, Native American cultures, the American homestead era, and immigrants who came to log, fish, hunt, trap, and mine. Within the park there are three historic districts (Kettle Falls, Gold Mine, Kabetogama Ranger Station), one historic property, and five archeological sites on the National Register of Historic Places. There are an additional 19 properties that have been determined eligible for the national register in consultation with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office. Other important sites may be identified as the inventory and evaluation process continues.

The park's northern boundary shares 55 miles of common border with Canada. The park is approximately 12 miles east of International Falls, Minnesota, and extends eastward for 60 miles along the U.S.-Canadian border.



## PARK MISSION STATEMENT

Voyageurs National Park preserves the landscapes and scenic waterways that shaped the route of the North American fur traders and defined the border between the United States and Canada. The park and its diverse resources provide outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation, scientific study, sport-fishing, education, and appreciation of the northwoods lake-country setting.

## PARK PURPOSES

The purposes of Voyageurs National Park, according to its legislation, are as follows:

- ♦ Preserve the scenery, geologic conditions, and interconnected waterways within the park for the inspiration and enjoyment of people now and in the future.
- ♦ Commemorate the voyagers' routes and fur trade with the Native peoples of the north, which contributed significantly to the opening of northwestern North America to European settlement.
- ♦ Preserve, in an unimpaired condition, the ecological processes, biological and cultural diversity, and history of the northwoods lakecountry border we share with Canada.
- ♦ Provide opportunities for people to experience, understand, and treasure the lakecountry landscape — its clean air and water, forests, islands, wetlands, and wildlife — in a manner that is compatible with the preservation of park values and resources.

## PARK SIGNIFICANCE


Voyageurs National Park is significant as follows:

- ♦ The waterways of Voyageurs National Park include one of the most important segments of the fur trade route used in the opening of northwestern North America.
- ♦ Located near the headwaters of the Arctic watershed of Hudson Bay, the park's lakes — rather than land — have

been the primary travel route throughout history. The lakes continue to shape transportation and recreational uses of the area today.

- ♦ The park's exposed rocks and landscape exemplify the glacial activity of the Pleistocene epoch and some of the most complete and extensive Precambrian geologic features in the United States.
- ♦ The park preserves the timeless beauty of woods, rocks,



Voyageurs National Park commemorates the historic water routes of the fur trade era. 

water, and sky that invite people to renew themselves through a variety of outdoor activities.

- ♦ The designation of Voyageurs as a national park is integral to the protection of the boundary waters ecosystem by both the United States and Canada. Along with Quetico Provincial Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Voyageurs was and remains at the heart of a major conservation effort to protect the boreal forest landscape, its interconnected waterways, and associated wildlife.
- ♦ Voyageurs National Park holds vital evidence of the continuity of 10,000 years of human relationships with the environment, uniquely dictated by the interconnected waterway system. The park provides an exceptional, largely unstudied storehouse of knowledge for the future and preserves resources associated with a long period of use, including those representing the fur trade, Native Americans, logging, and recreation.

## MISSION GOALS FOR THE PARK

The following statements are desired future conditions or mission goals for the park. These statements describe what the park should be like in the next 20 years and how it should be managed to achieve these conditions. The *General Management Plan* provides the framework for achieving these goals.

### Park Resources

- ♦ Voyageurs is restored and protected in a manner that allows natural processes, functions, cycles, and biota to be maintained in perpetuity. An adaptive, ecosystem-based approach to resource preservation has been implemented, with essential data and tools to support a scientifically based management program.
- ♦ The natural beauty of the park is unimpaired. The park continues to be a dynamic, biologically diverse environment.
- ♦ The park's viewshed is maintained to the extent possible to portray features and landscapes similar to those seen by the voyageurs.
- ♦ Park lands that have been significantly altered by land uses in the past are restored to a natural condition.
- ♦ Native plant and animal species diversity, abundance, and behavior reflect sustainable and naturally occurring conditions.
- ♦ Listed threatened and endangered species occurring in the park are stable components of the park's ecosystem.

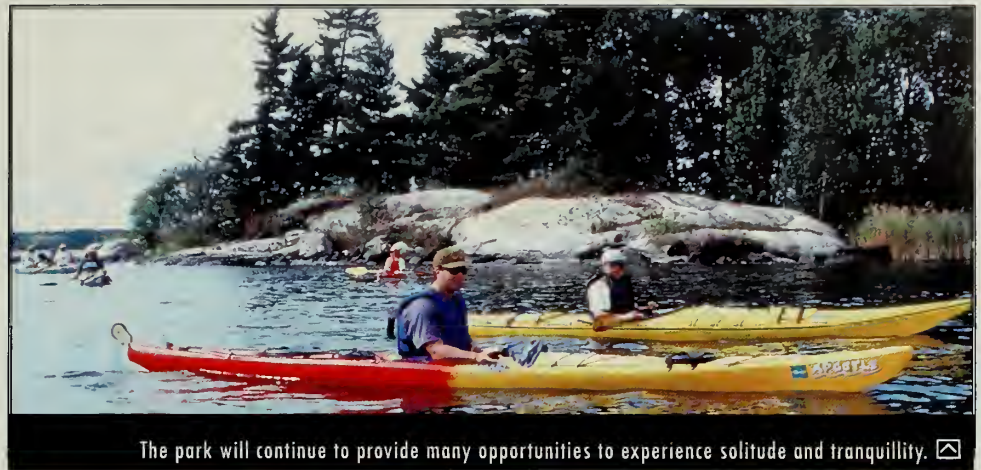
- ♦ Exotic species have been controlled to the extent that they have a minimal impact on the ecosystem or they have been completely eliminated.
- ♦ A fire management program is implemented that sustains a healthy, natural ecosystem.
- ♦ Aquatic systems within the park are healthy and biologically functional. Water quality is at least maintained or improved from existing conditions.
- ♦ The park and other entities work cooperatively to ensure that Voyageurs contains sustainable and healthy native fisheries.
- ♦ Voyageurs' class I air quality is at least maintained, with no significant degradation from current conditions.
- ♦ The park's wilderness resources, values, and characteristics are unimpaired, and its suitability for wilderness designation remains undiminished.
- ♦ Visitor impacts and natural threats to cultural resources are minimal and mitigated whenever possible to ensure the preservation of resources.
- ♦ Voyageurs' cultural resources — including archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, cultural landscapes, and historic objects that offer evidence of the long-term human relationship with the environment — are preserved.




☒ Park mission goals include maintaining healthy and biologically functional aquatic systems.

- ♦ Resources representing major events, people, or places in the area's regional, national, and international history are accessible to the public and promoted as visitor destinations where appropriate.
- ♦ Where feasible, compatible and appropriate uses are found for historic structures.
- ♦ The park recognizes and respects the unique value system, religious practices, and lifeways of Native peoples in the management of resources.

- Information, specimens, and objects reflecting the natural, cultural, and administrative history of Voyageurs National Park are collected, documented, preserved, and made accessible to the public.
- Biotic cultural resources such as wild rice, old-growth trees, and features in cultural landscapes are preserved.



The park will continue to provide many opportunities to experience solitude and tranquillity. 

### Visitor Experience, Use, and Facilities

- Visitors to Voyageurs National Park have many opportunities to experience solitude and tranquillity, to appreciate the expansive and undeveloped lakeshore and wetlands, and to see and enjoy the abundance and diversity of native plants and wildlife.
- Visitors continue to find a diversity of quality opportunities in Voyageurs, allowing each person to enjoy the park in a safe and respectful manner, with only minimal conflicts between visitors.
- Visitors have opportunities to experience predominantly natural sounds and natural surroundings in some areas of the park throughout the year.
- Facilities and services needed by Voyageurs' visitors are high quality and sufficient to accommodate day and overnight visitors without compromising park values or adjacent public and private resources.
- People with disabilities have opportunities to use visitor facilities and to experience park attractions and resources in many areas of the park.
- The park is nationally and internationally recognized for its exceptional opportunities for diverse, high-quality visitor experiences of its natural and cultural resources and its exceptional fishing.
- Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the significance of Voyageurs, and they support the preservation of the park and its resources for this and future generations.
- Park programs afford visitors with an opportunity for an understanding and appreciation of Voyageurs' natural and cultural resources and human history.
- The park is nationally and internationally recognized for its unique educational opportunities both at the park and through communications technologies.
- Visitor experiences are enhanced by a unified partnership between the park, park concessioners and incidental business permit holders, and adjacent private and public entities who understand and appreciate the significance of the park and its surrounding lands and people.
- Tourism activities and related educational programs are encouraged and supported by the park when they are compatible with the park purposes.
- Visitors are well informed about the susceptibility of the park's resources to damage and comply with regulations to ensure resource preservation and a quality visitor experience.
- The park uses a defensible statistical methodology for counting visitors.
- Qualitative carrying capacities provide effective guidelines for visitor use opportunities.

### Park Operations, Facilities, and Partnerships

- ♦ All park facilities are safe, sound, sanitary, and sustainable. Their operation has no degrading impact on the natural environment or the visitor experience. All decisions regarding park operations and facilities management and development in Voyageurs reflect principles of resource preservation and conservation.
- ♦ Park staff know and understand visitor use trends, patterns, and needs, and they strategically anticipate future issues and opportunities, based on an understanding of the park and surrounding recreational use areas.
- ♦ The park is adequately staffed to ensure that appropriate management, resource and visitor protection, and education occur.
- ♦ The park staff maintains high levels of coordination and cooperation with all entities, both private and public, whose programs affect, or are affected by, Voyageurs National Park.
- ♦ The park invites and seeks public involvement as an important part of the management process.
- ♦ Partnerships that enhance the management of the park are the norm.
- ♦ The park encourages scholarly research in the park that is pertinent to park goals and objectives.
- ♦ The park has a multidisciplinary and multi-age educational and outreach program that is curriculum based and focused on park significance.



☒ Encouraging multi-age educational and outreach programs is a mission goal of Voyageurs National Park.

## The Direction for the Plan

### LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Voyageurs National Park was authorized in 1971 and established in 1975 *to preserve, for the inspiration and enjoyment of present and future generations, the outstanding scenery, geological conditions and waterway system which constituted a part of the historic route of the Voyageurs who contributed significantly to the opening of the Northwestern United States.* (The park legislation is included in appendix A.). The intent of Congress was further defined by authorizing legislation that re-quired an examination of land suitable for designation as wilderness. In 1992, 58.4% of the park's lands and waters (127,436 acres, including 2,442 acres of potential wilderness additions) were recommended for designation as federal wilderness. Although the 1992 *Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Wilderness Recommendation* awaits congressional approval, federal policy requires that proposed wilderness be managed in such a way as to protect its suitability for wilderness designation.

The Voyageurs *General Management Plan* is unique because it is accompanied by a *Visitor Use and Facilities Plan*. In 1983 Congress passed legislation directing the park to complete such a plan:

*The Secretary shall, in cooperation with other Federal, State, and local governmental entities and private entities experienced in the fields of outdoor recreation and visitor services, develop and implement a comprehensive plan for visitor use and overnight visitor facilities for the park. The plan shall set forth methods of achieving an appropriate level and type of visitation in order that the resources of the park and its environs may be interpreted for, and used and enjoyed by, the public in a manner consistent with the purposes for which the park was established. Such plan may include appropriate informational and educational messages and materials (Public Law 97-405).*

The visitor use and facilities plan was never funded, and in 1996–97 a federal mediation process was conducted to address numerous issues about visitor use and management of the



The waterway system at Voyageurs National Park provides a resource for both wildlife and recreationists. ☒

park. As a result of this process, the mediation panel recommended that the visitor use and facilities plan could be accomplished through the NPS general management planning process. The *Visitor Use and Facilities Plan* was included with the *Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*. Both plans are based on the same available information. A copy of the *Visitor Use and Facilities Plan* may be obtained from Voyageurs National Park.

### PLAN PURPOSE

This approved *General Management Plan* for Voyageurs National Park provides overall direction for park management over the next 15 to 20 years by clearly describing specific resource conditions and visitor experiences to be achieved in various management areas throughout the park. The plan provides a framework for park managers to make decisions about how best to protect park resources, provide a quality visitor experience, regulate visitor use, and develop facilities. The plan presents a balanced management approach to resource protection and visitor use at Voyageurs National Park, and it has been developed to be responsive to public comments, many of which indicated that Voyageurs National Park should remain much as it is today with regard to existing types and levels of recreational use and it should not undergo major changes.

## NEED FOR THE PLAN

This *General Management Plan* is needed to accomplish the following:

- Determine how best to ensure that the park's purpose and significance are maintained and that its mission goals are achieved.
- Resolve issues focusing on visitor use and interpretation, visitor and resource data collection, resource impacts, and necessary partnerships with entities outside the park to ensure appropriate management.

Specifically, Congress directed the park to include the following items in its management plan:

- measures for the preservation of the area's resources
- indications of types and general intensities of development (including visitor circulation and transportation patterns, systems and modes) associated with public enjoyment and use of the area, including general locations, timing of implementation, and anticipated costs
- identification of and implementation of commitments for carrying capacities for all areas of the unit
- indications of potential modifications to the external boundaries of the unit, and the reasons therefor

## How the Plan Was Developed

### THE PLANNING PROCESS

The *General Management Plan* was developed in consultation with interested stakeholders and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act as amended, and other federal mandates and policies. At the beginning of the planning process, the National Park Service (NPS) solicited comments about the scope of the plan from the public, governmental agencies, and special interest groups through newsletters, meetings, and presentations. Most of the initial scoping comments spanned a broad range of issues facing the park or presented visions for the park's future (see "Park Problems, Issues, and Concerns" below). The planning team then developed three management alternatives showing different approaches for managing the park in the future. The alternatives were based on NPS policies and guidelines; the park's mission, purpose, and significance statements; its mission goals; and the scoping comments. Each alternative focused on a specific park management concept that responded to public desires and concerns.

The NPS distributed three preliminary management alternatives for public review, and compiled and summarized all comments on the alternatives, including ideas or proposals that had not been previously considered. The planning team subsequently refined, compared, and reevaluated these three alternatives and developed a draft proposed action. The impacts of the alternatives on natural and cultural resources, the visitor experience, the social and

economic environment, and park operations, facilities, and partnerships were fully analyzed and documented in an environmental impact statement.

The *Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan* was released for public review on June 16, 2000; the review period was extended twice and closed on October 23, 2000. Approximately 2,000 individual letters were



☒ The *General Management Plan* examines types of development associated with public uses.



received by mail and electronic mail, and verbal comments were accepted at a series of public meetings held in four communities in Minnesota July 24–27, 2000. All substantive comments were analyzed, and the text was revised where appropriate to modify the proposed action in response to public comments, to clarify information, to correct errors, and to amplify the impact analysis. The *Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*

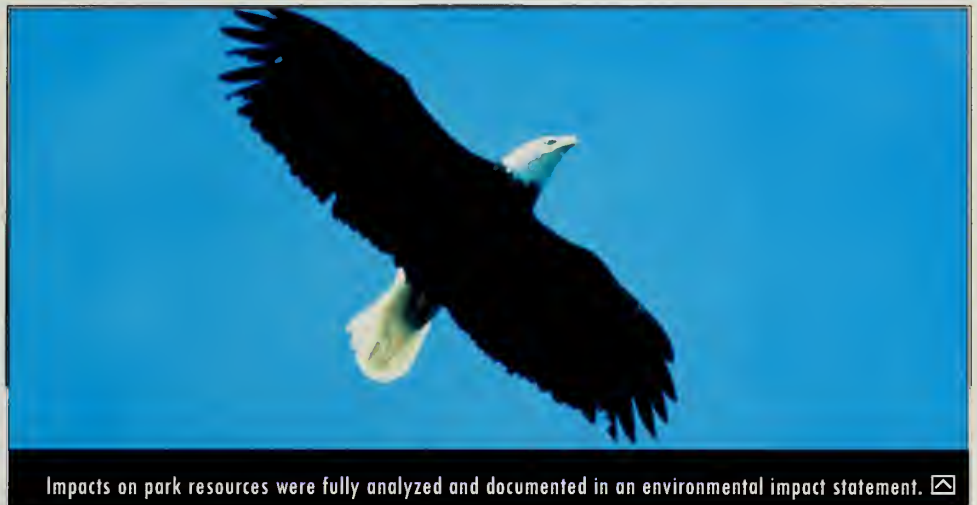
and *Visitor Use and Facilities Plan* was released on October 12, 2001, for a 30-day no-action period.


The final step in the planning process was the signing of the “Record of Decision” on January 18, 2002, by the Regional Director of the Midwest Region (see appendix B). This document summarizes the decision made, the background of the project, other alternatives considered, the environmentally preferred alternative, the basis for the decision, measures to minimize environmental harm, whether any actions in the plan constitute an impairment of park resources and values, and public involvement in the decision-making process. As stated in the “Record of Decision,” the approved plan provides the most desirable combination of resource preservation, visitor interpretation and experience, and cost-effectiveness among the alternatives considered. It is the most responsive to the legislative mission, purpose, and mission goals of Voyageurs National Park. It also best addresses the issues identified during public scoping but continues to protect important park resources and values.

A project timeline that outlines important events of the planning process is included in appendix C. Projected costs of implementing the plan are presented in appendix D.

Copies of the *Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* and *Visitor Use and Facilities Plan* may be obtained from:

*Voyageurs National Park*  
3131 Highway 53, International Falls, MN 56649  
218.283.9821 (phone)



Impacts on park resources were fully analyzed and documented in an environmental impact statement. 

## PARK PROBLEMS, ISSUES, AND CONCERNS

The public, other agencies, and the park staff raised the following problems, issues, and concerns that were considered in the development of the *General Management Plan* (see the *Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* for an in-depth discussion).

### Visitor Experience, Use, and Facilities

- Balancing recreational experiences and uses
- Providing diverse uses and activities
- Inadequate visitor use data
- Need for information about the availability of day and overnight sites
- Conflicting uses of sites
- Insufficient facilities for people with disabilities
- Conflicts with houseboat use
- Need for group campsites
- Lack of recreational vehicle camping
- Insufficient trails for nonmotorized use
- Managing boats on interior lakes
- Hazardous situations for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Inadequate parking
- Noise impacts
- Limited safety programs
- User group conflicts

### Interpretation, Visitor Services, and Education

- Insufficient visitor contact
- Underdeveloped interpretive program
- Lack of visitor center space
- Inadequate distribution of park information

### Concessions

- Insufficient strategies for economic viability

### Incidental Business Permits

- Inadequate water transportation opportunities
- Limited fixed-wing aircraft services

## Natural Resources

### Air Quality

- Regional air pollution
- Local air pollution

### Soils and Vegetation

- Visitor use impacts
- Effects of exotic species
- Fire management
- Impacts on wetland vegetation

### Water Quality and Hydrology

- Pollutants from motorized craft
- Effects of graywater from houseboats
- Effects of private septic systems near lakes
- Erosion due to visitor use and development
- Effects of managed lake levels

### Fisheries

- Coordinating fishery management
- Effects on the natural fishery

### Wildlife, Including Protected Species

- Impacts on wildlife
- Low loon reproduction levels
- Impacts on wolves
- Effects of fire suppression
- Effects of noise

### Wilderness Proposal

- Pending action on the wilderness recommendation

## Cultural Resources

### Archeological Resources

- Focus of inventory efforts
- Effects of visitor use

### Historic Properties and Structures

- Treatment needs

### Cultural Landscapes

- Incomplete inventory and evaluation
- Inadequate management direction
- Visitor use

## Collections

- Lack of access to park collections

## Ethnography

- An incomplete ethnographic resource inventory
- Providing for Native American use of native plants
- Undocumented Ojibwe ethnographic sites

## Park Operations, Facilities, and Partnerships

- Staffing shortages
- Insufficient facility space
- Inadequate maintenance facilities
- Ineffective communication systems

## Park Housing

- Insufficient staff housing

## Partnerships and Cooperation

- Limited trust and cooperation
- Limited partnerships with agencies

## Socioeconomic Concerns

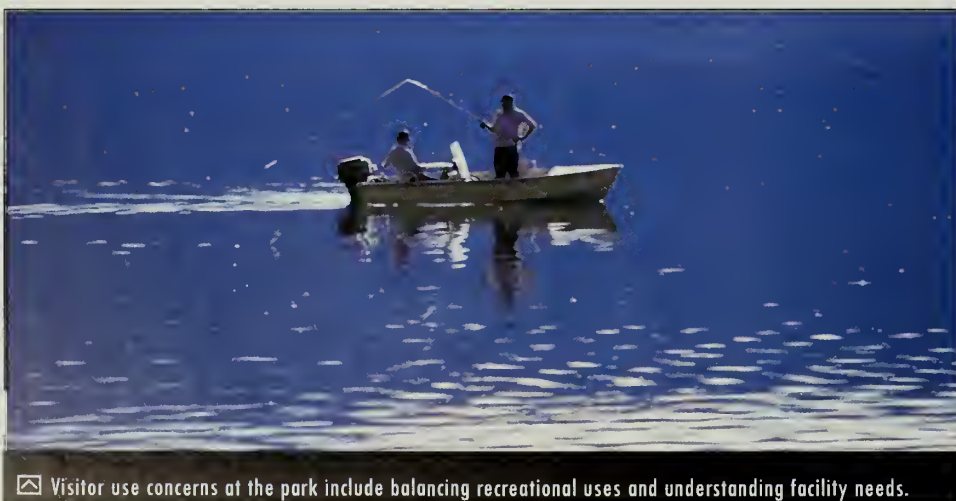
- Community marketing strategies
- Unstable year-round economy

## ACTIONS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS PLANNING EFFORT

Many important issues are addressed by the *General Management Plan*, such as resource protection, visitor experience and services, launch areas, facilities, uses on interior lakes, and overnight use. However, the following topics and issues were beyond the scope of these planning efforts and were not addressed for the reasons stated below:

*Proposed wilderness.* The court-directed 1992 *Wilderness Recommendation* is currently in the office of the Secretary of the Interior, awaiting action. According to NPS *Management Policies*, no action will be taken to diminish the wilderness suitability of an area recommended for wilderness study or designation until the legislative process has been completed. This *General*

*Management Plan* treats all proposed wilderness areas as wilderness, as required by law, and anticipates the final resolution of wilderness issues as a future action. All actions proposed in this document, as well as all subsequent implementation plans, will be consistent with NPS wilderness policy requirements. (See page I-24 in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement* for more information.)



☒ Visitor use concerns at the park include balancing recreational uses and understanding facility needs.

*The National Park Service's authority to regulate water-based activities in the park* The courts have affirmed the right of the National Park Service to regulate water-based activities in the park in *United States vs. Brown*.

*Water levels in the park's major lakes.* Water levels along the U.S.-Canadian border are under the control of the International Joint Commission.


*Modifications to the park's boundary.* No major changes have been identified.

*Life estates and use-and-occupancy reservations.* The park's legislation directed that private land in the park be acquired. When the government acquired the properties, it entered into contracts with the individual owners, some for outright sale, others for life estates or for some period of use and occupancy. These contracts are beyond the scope of the planning effort.

*Hunting, trapping, logging, mining, and the use of off-road vehicles and personal watercraft.* These uses are prohibited in Voyageurs National Park under federal law or NPS policy.

*Banning the use of houseboats, motorboats, aircraft, or snowmobiles.* These uses will continue in the park. However, uses will be managed in parts of the park to protect park resources and visitor experiences.



Water levels in the park's major lakes remain under the control of the International Joint Commission. 





**THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**



## Plan Highlights

### NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The plan will expand and intensify natural, cultural and ethnographic resource protection efforts through increased inventory and monitoring programs, partnerships, and research.

The park's fire management policy will support a broader range of resource management objectives, including reestablishing natural fire regimes without unduly reducing visitation or visitor enjoyment.

Properties that represent each cultural resource theme and that focus on the park's mission, purpose, significance, and interpretive themes will be retained.

### VISITOR USE AND FACILITIES

A no-fee, self-registration permit system for overnight summer and winter use will be implemented no sooner than 2002.

Integrated motorized and nonmotorized uses will continue on the four major lakes -- Rainy, Kabetogama, Namakan, and Sand Point Lakes — and seven designated interior lakes, including fixed-wing aircraft uses (private and one commercial permit).

A houseboat management plan will be initiated when overnight houseboat use has reached 60 boats per basin.

A total of 280 - 320 day and overnight use sites will be constructed.

Some 15 to 20 destination sites that feature special natural or cultural features that can be interpreted will be developed to enhance visitors' appreciation of the park.

In cooperation with partners, a mainland, nonmotorized summer and winter trail will be developed between the Kabetogama Lake and Ash River communities, and the feasibility of extending the trail to Crane Lake will be studied.

Several hiking trails will be built on the Kabetogama Peninsula, and some will link to visitor destinations.

Facility expansion at visitor centers will be minimized; alternative methods such as outdoor and temporary facilities will be provided, and visitor information materials and methods will be expanded.

A year-round multi-agency visitor center will be developed at Crane Lake. Year-round operations will occur at the Rainy Lake visitor center, while operational hours at the Ash River and Kabetogama Lake visitor centers will be based on demand.

### INTERPRETATION, VISITOR SERVICES, AND EDUCATION

A more comprehensive interpretive program will be provided.

Visitor services, resource protection, and emergency response will be expanded and improved with increased staffing.

A proposed educational institute will be formed through partnerships to provide special programs and to supplement the park's interpretive program.

### PARK OPERATIONS, FACILITIES, AND PARTNERSHIPS

Park operational facilities will be improved through the development of a Namakan District plan and expanded facilities at Ash River. Ranger and interpretive operations will be expanded into the Kabetogama Ranger Station Historic District.

The park will actively pursue partnerships with public, institutional, and private entities to help protect resources and provide for quality visitor experiences and facilities.

## Management Areas

Voyageurs National Park has been divided into specific management areas, each of which is identified by a specific set of desired resource conditions and associated visitor experiences. The physical location and configuration of management areas is based on the park purposes and significance, the mission goals, and the nature of resources within the park. The man-



☒ Park developed areas provide facilities for a variety of recreational and educational venues.

agement areas are prescriptive in terms of how decisions will be made by park managers in the future about protecting resources and providing for visitor uses. The plan actions are organized according to the following management areas, which are fully described below (see the *General Management Plan* maps for summer and winter for general locations of the management areas):

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Land Management Areas</b>  | developed area<br>lakecountry area<br>backcountry trail area<br>primitive area |
| <b>Water Management Areas</b> | integrated use area<br>nonmotorized use area                                   |

The following types of recreational uses are considered appropriate in particular management areas, as explained in the area descriptions:

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Motorized Uses</b>    | motorboats, electric motors, planes ( <i>fixed-wing aircraft</i> ), houseboats, snowmobiles<br><i>(the four major lakes remain open for motorized uses)</i> |
| <b>Nonmotorized Uses</b> | canoeing, kayaking, paddleboating, rowboating, sailboating, skiing, snowshoeing, hiking   |

## LAND MANAGEMENT AREAS

### Developed Area

Developed areas are set aside for visitor facilities (such as visitor centers, contact stations, or group campgrounds) or for park operations (such as administrative offices, maintenance facilities, or employee housing). The rehabilitation of historic

properties is generally more acceptable in developed areas than in other land management areas. Cultural resources in developed areas are fully accessible to the public.

- ♦ *Visitor Experience* — Facilities are convenient and accessible. These areas provide many social experiences through visitor contact and interpretive programs. The probability of encountering other visitors and park staff is high.

- ♦ *Resource Condition* — New facilities or modifications of existing facilities for visitor use or park operations are designed and implemented to be sensitive to the natural environment, the architectural character of historic properties, and cultural landscape features.
- ♦ *Appropriate Visitor Use and Facilities* — Appropriate facilities and their accompanying uses include buildings, interpretive exhibits, overlooks, concession services, paved and unpaved trails, docks, boat launches, picnic areas, roads, parking lots, small campgrounds, and park operations.

### Lakecountry Area

This area includes the shoreline and islands of the four major lakes within the park — Rainy, Kabetogama, Namakan, and Sand Point — as well as the north shore of Crane Lake.

- ♦ *Visitor Experience* — The natural setting is the dominant experience, but visitors have access to developed park facilities. The lakecountry area offers a moderate to high degree of challenge and adventure for visitors. The probability of encountering other visitors and hearing noise is



moderate to high during certain times of the year. A moderate level of interpretation is offered.

- ♦ *Resource Condition* — Natural resources are managed to maintain natural conditions. Visitor facilities are built to reduce the impact of use. Places that collectively illustrate the history of human relationships with the natural environment and the evolution of the landscape through time are preserved. Particularly sensitive or rare resources are protected from development and visitor use.
- ♦ *Appropriate Visitor Use and Facilities* — Appropriate uses include fishing, day use and overnight activities, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. The number of overnight and day use sites varies according to the subareas defined below. Snowmobile safety portages cross some of this area. Visitors have opportunities to learn more about the park's natural and cultural resources through visits to destinations that illustrate specific interpretive themes. The level of development and the kinds of facilities at visitor destinations are commensurate with the goals for the management area it is located in and the ability of resources to withstand use and development.

The lakecountry area is divided into three subareas. The visitor experience, resource condition, and uses and facilities described above apply to all subareas.

*Subarea 1 (high density):* This subarea has a high density of day and overnight sites. There may be three or more sites within a fi-mile radius. Typically, sites are found near shoreline areas that are protected from lake effects due to orientation and sheltered conditions. Generally, cultural resources are preserved in their existing condition. A greater degree of development to provide access to the public is acceptable (e.g., docks, trails, vault toilets, exhibits).

*Subarea 2 (moderate density):* This subarea has a moderate density of day and overnight sites,

specifically fewer than three sites within a fi-mile radius. Secluded areas, islands, or shallow, rocky environments are appropriate for this designation. The development for public access is less visible and may be limited to a wayside exhibit or a sign and mooring aid.

*Subarea 3 (low density):* This subarea may not be suitable for day or overnight sites, even though there may be a few areas that are suitable for low-density visitor use. The maximum site density is one site per fi-mile radius. Shorelines in this area could include wetlands that border shallow waters, islands less than or equal to 2 acres, significant wildlife habitats, visitor destinations, scenic view sites, and trailheads.

### Backcountry Trail Area

This area includes hiking, cross-country ski, and snowshoe trail corridors, where visitors can enjoy the park's natural environment.

- ♦ *Visitor Experience* — Visitors feel immersed in a natural landscape. Natural sights and sounds dominate, but human sounds can be heard. Visitors experience a high degree of challenge, adventure, and solitude. The probability of encountering others is low to moderate. Some interpretive media and naturalist-led interpretive programs are offered.
- ♦ *Resource Condition* — Natural resources are managed to maintain natural conditions along trail corridors. Management actions are taken to a high degree to ensure resource protection and visitor safety. Cultural resources in



Lakecountry areas provide for camping and boat docking at the water-land interface. ☒

the backcountry are protected from development or other situations that may impact their integrity and are not made accessible to the public.

- ♦ *Appropriate Visitor Use and Facilities* — Appropriate uses include hiking, camping, wildlife watching, picnicking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. The backcountry trail area includes unpaved hiking trails, campsites, groomed and ungroomed cross-country ski trails, and snowshoe trails.

### Primitive Area

Primitive areas consist of both proposed wilderness and non-wilderness in the park's backcountry except for trails, including areas recommended for wilderness designation. Visitors can expect a "wild" experience, with few facilities.

- ♦ *Visitor Experience* — Visitors feel fully immersed in nature. Primitive areas offer a high degree of challenge and adventure and a low probability of encountering other visitors. Human sounds are infrequent. No interpretive programs are offered.
- ♦ *Resource Condition* — These areas are managed as natural areas. Research and prescribed fires may occur, but other actions are limited. Impacts from use are low to none because of difficult access. Cultural resources in the primitive area are protected from development or other situations that may impact their integrity and are not made accessible to the public.
- ♦ *Appropriate Visitor Use and Facilities* — Appropriate uses include at-large camping, hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. A few campsites with minimal facilities may be appropriate.

## WATER MANAGEMENT AREAS

In all water areas, visitors traveling independently need marine and self-sufficiency skills. The mood and character of these areas changes according to weather and water conditions.

### Integrated Use Area

This area includes the four major lakes, the special use zone on Kabetogama Lake, the Chain of Lakes on the Kabetogama Peninsula, and other interior lakes currently open to motorized uses.

- ♦ *Visitor Experience* — A feeling of nature often dominates this area, but human sights and sounds can be expected. The potential to encounter other visitors is moderate to high. Interpretive programs are provided through a variety of boat tours.
- ♦ *Resource Condition* — Natural resources are managed to maintain healthy aquatic ecosystems, including fish, wildlife, and water quality. Management actions are taken to ensure resource protection and visitor safety.
- ♦ *Appropriate Visitor Use and Facilities* — Appropriate uses include motorized and nonmotorized watercraft, fixed-wing aircraft, fishing, swimming, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, wildlife watching, and snowshoeing. Facilities include safety buoys and navigational markers, groomed and non-groomed snowmobile trails, and a plowed ice road.

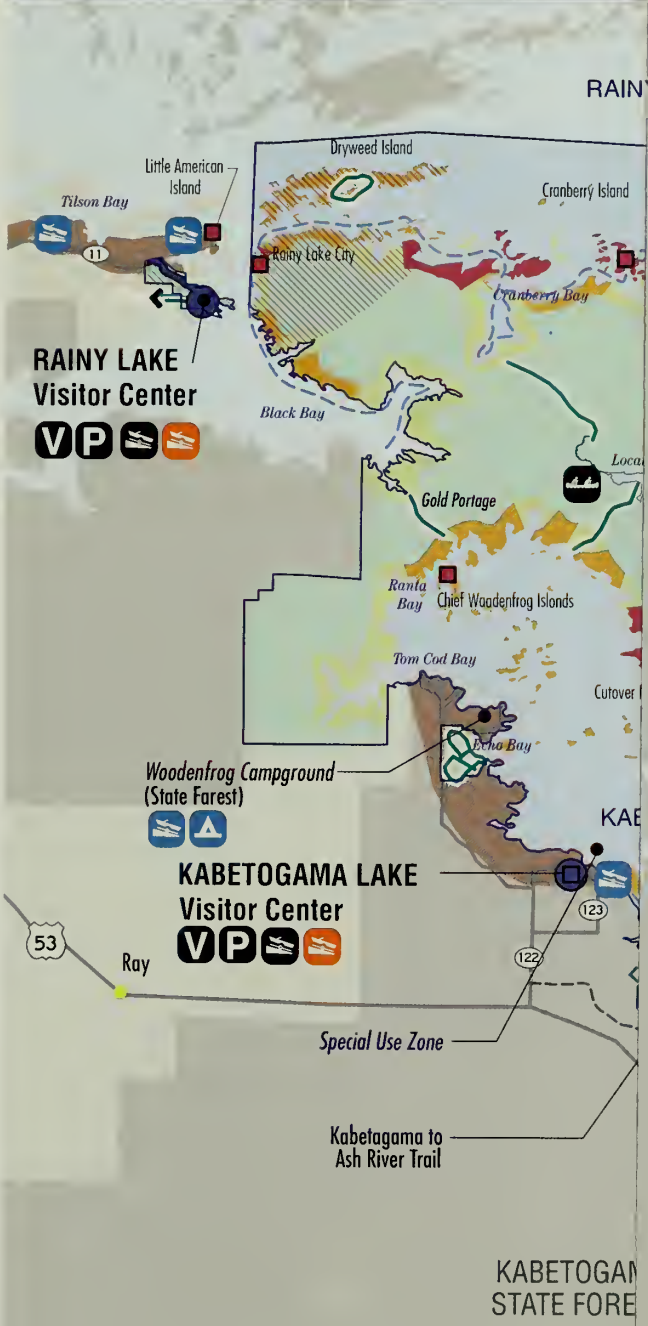
### Nonmotorized Use Area

This management area includes interior lakes surrounded by primitive areas or proposed wilderness where motorized use is not appropriate.

- ♦ *Visitor Experience* — Visitors feel immersed in nature and experience a high degree of tranquillity, quiet, and solitude. Human sounds are low to moderate. Few to no interpretive programs are offered.
- ♦ *Resource Condition* — Natural resources are managed to maintain healthy aquatic ecosystems, including fish, wildlife, and water quality. Management actions are taken to ensure resource protection and visitor safety.
- ♦ *Appropriate Visitor Use and Facilities* — Appropriate activities include paddling, fishing, swimming, and at-large cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

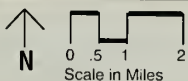
# Voyageurs National

National Park Service  
 Voyageurs National Park  
 International Falls, MN 56649



- Developed Area
  - Lakecountry Areas**
  - Subarea 1 (high density)
  - Subarea 2 (moderate density)
  - Subarea 3 (low density)
  - Backcountry Trail Area
  - Primitive Area (Proposed Wilderness)
  - Primitive Area (Non-Proposed Wilderness)
  - Integrated Use Area (water)
  - Nonmotorized Use Area (water)
  - Communities
  - Visitor Destination\*
- \* Color in box indicates Visitor Destination management area
- Visitor Center
  - NPS Boat Launch
  - Boat Launch (outside the park)
  - Non-motorized Boat Launch
  - Concession Boat Rental
  - Boats on Interior Lakes
  - Campground (outside the park)
  - NPS Parking
  - Lodging (concession)
  - Restaurant (concession)
  - Gas (concession)
  - Suggested Nonmotorized Water Route
  - Nonmotorized Trail Link (outside the park)

Temporary closures are not shown on the map since they are subject to change over time. These closures are determined necessary due to public safety, wildlife management or park management objectives. Use and occupancy leases and private land exist in the park, but are not shown on this map.



# SUMMER USE

# Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan

National Park Service  
 Voyageurs National Park  
 International Falls, MN 56649



- Developed Area
  - Lakecountry Areas
  - Subarea 1 (high density)
  - Subarea 2 (moderate density)
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- \* Color in box indicates Visitor Destination management area

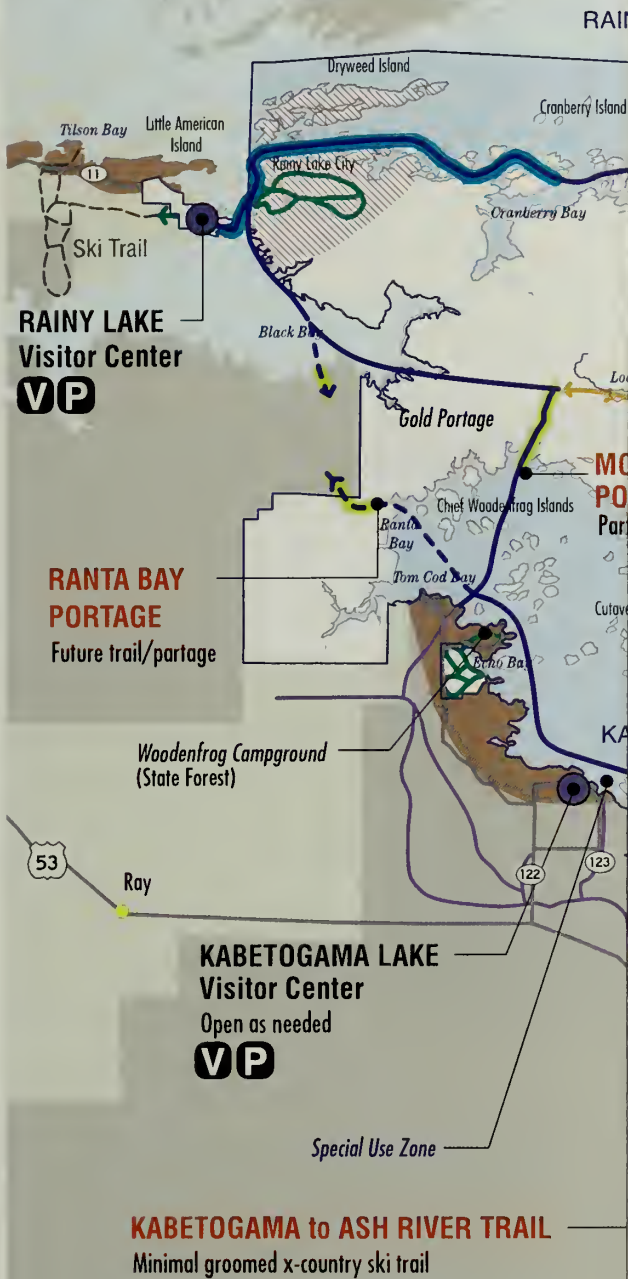
- Visitor Center
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## SUMMER USE

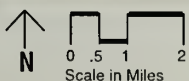
# Voyageurs National

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- Developed Area
- Motorized Frozen Lake Area**
- Ice Road
- Groomed Snowmobile Trail
- Chain of Lakes Trail
- Integrated Use Area (motorized & nonmotorized)
- Nonmotorized Frozen Lake Area
- Backcountry Trail (nonmotorized)
- Primitive Area (Proposed Wilderness)
- Primitive Area (Non-Proposed Wilderness)
- Communities
- Snowmobile Safety Portage
- Truck Portage
- Unsafe Ice
- Proposed Snowmobile Trail
- Proposed Portage
- Ski Trail (outside of park)
- Groomed Snowmobile Trails (outside of park)
- Visitor Center (open)
- Visitor Center (closed)
- NPS Parking
- Parking (outside the park)
- Lodging (concession)
- Restaurant (concession)
- Gas (concession)



## WINTER USE

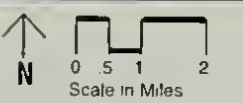
# Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan

National Park Service  
 Voyageurs National Park  
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- Developed Area
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- Proposed Portage
- Ski Trail (outside of park)
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- V Visitor Center (open)
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- P NPS Parking
- P Parking (outside the park)
- L Lodging (concession)
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## WINTER USE

# Resources Management

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### Parkwide Management

Natural resources will continue to be protected in accordance with park plans and existing laws, regulations, and policies governing the National Park Service. For example, the park will continue to follow the 1916 NPS Organic Act (16 USC 1 et seq.), which states that the purpose of national parks *is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.* The park will also continue to follow *NPS Management Policies*, which state that the park *will maintain as parts of the natural ecosystems of parks all native plants and animals* (NPS 2000, sec. 4.4.1). Further, the National Park Service *will try to maintain all the components and processes of naturally evolving park ecosystems, including the natural abundance, diversity, and genetic and ecological integrity of the plant and animal communities* (NPS 2000, sec. 4.1). Wetlands will continue

to be protected by section 404 of the Clean Water Act (which requires permission from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to fill more than an incidental acreage of wetland), Executive Order 11990 (*Protection of Wetlands*), and a *no net loss of wetlands* goal set by the Clinton administration in 1993. As a general policy, the National Park Service specifically avoids impacts to wetlands wherever possible.

Protection efforts will be expanded and intensified through research and management. Additional inventories of natural resources will be completed to provide accurate baseline data. Subsequently, a comprehensive inventory, monitoring, and research program will be developed, including a monitoring program to track resource impacts related to park use. The ability of protection staff to provide adequate resource protection and to identify trends that need special emphasis will be increased.

Vacated, nonhistoric cabins will be removed, and the sites will be restored to natural conditions. Appropriate management of historic structures will be based on the revised *Historic Structures Management Plan* (NPS 1999). The sites of any removed historic cabins will be restored to natural conditions. However, the park will retain evidence of habitation in the form of chimneys or foundations or other important indicators of human habitation when buildings are removed, unless there is a safety hazard or an unacceptable visual intrusion.



The plan recommends expanding protection of the park's ecological systems through research. ☒

Park boundaries will be defined through surveys and posted so people will clearly know where NPS lands exist and so that park staff will be able to effectively manage park resources.

Resource management plans will be revised as necessary or completed for resource management, visitor experience and resource protection, research, fisheries, water resources, vegetation, primitive area and proposed wilderness management, fire management, houseboat management, and land protection. For example, the 1988 *Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan* will be revised to reflect the actions in the *General Management Plan*.

## Wetlands

Wetlands will be identified and delineated, and restoration will be considered for damaged or degraded wetlands; adverse impacts will be avoided or mitigated.

## Threatened or Endangered Species

Park managers will informally consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to determine (1) the possible presence of any threatened or endangered wildlife species listed by the federal or state government, or (2) designated critical habitat, in areas that could be affected by construction, visitor use, or restoration activities. Any potential adverse impacts on listed, proposed, or candidate threatened or endangered species will be avoided, minimized, or otherwise mitigated. Formal consultation under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act will be initiated if an action might adversely affect such a species.

For all projects, surveys for federally listed, proposed, or candidate threatened or endangered plant species and other state rare or sensitive species will be conducted. More intensive surveys will be conducted if similar habitats are found in a project area. The intent will be to manage sensitive plant species at the population level that will ensure their survival within the park. Any sensitive plants discovered in project areas will be protected from human-caused disturbance, and the project will be redesigned to avoid direct impacts on plants and their specific habitat, if possible. Formal consultation will be initiated under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act if an action might adversely affect a listed or proposed species.

## Forest Management

The management of southern transitional boreal forest stands that are critical to ecosystem restoration will be emphasized, while still ensuring that forests are managed in a manner that will contribute to visitor use and enjoyment. Steps will be developed in a vegetation management plan that will include efforts to shorten the time it normally takes a forest to re-attain the characteristics and processes found in mature forests.

## Fire Management

The park's *Wildland Fire Management Plan* will be revised to support a broader range of resource management objectives, including the restoration of fire in forests as a natural ecological process. Natural fire regimes will be reestablished to the

greatest extent possible, without unduly reducing visitation or visitor enjoyment. Management objectives will be achieved through wildland fire use and prescribed fire.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Parkwide Management

Park staff will continue to identify, evaluate, plan for, protect, and share information about all types of cultural resources (historic properties and structures, cultural landscapes, archeological resources, ethnographic resources, and collections). Current partnerships for the preservation, protection, and use of cultural resources will be continued, and additional partnerships will be pursued.

The management of cultural resources will be more proactive than reactive, particularly through the development and implementation of treatment plans. Protection will occur through a formal monitoring program and with more concentrated public education efforts. With this alternative, preservation will be focused on the most significant resources, and a greater diversity of alternatives will be considered for other cultural resources.

### Ethnographic Resources

Because Native Americans have important cultural connections with Voyageurs National Park, documentation of historic and contemporary uses of resources will continue; park staff will seek greater involvement with Native Americans in planning, resource management, and interpretation; and cultural resources associated with the history of Native Americans in the park will be protected. The park will work with area Native American bands to determine appropriate methods for the treatment and interpretation of ethnographic resources.

### Cultural Landscapes

Cultural landscapes are defined by the National Park Service in the *Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide* as *special places - expressions of human manipulation and adaptation of the land. . . . Cultural landscapes are intertwined patterns of things both natural and constructed — plants and fences, watercourses, and buildings.* All eligible cultural landscapes in the park will be documented. Features at areas identified as potential cultural landscapes (e.g., Kettle Falls, Hoist Bay, and Kabetogama Ranger Station Historic District) will be protected from inadvertent damage or destruction. Ellsworth Rock Garden will continue to be restored as directed in the *Preservation Treatment Plan*



(NPS 1998d). The park will retain evidence of habitation when buildings are removed, except in specific cases; and landscape features (such as earthen embankments) will be protected at selected historic archeological sites. Treatment recommendations for landscapes at Ash River will be implemented. Cultural landscape reports and site development plans for the management of landscapes at visitor destinations will be completed. Recommendations in the historic

waterway study will be implemented to protect and interpret significant features along the fur trade route. Ruins will be actively managed through vegetation control to slow their decline.

### Archeological Resources


The integrity of intact archeological sites, as identified in the *Cultural Resources Management Plan* and future inventories, will be maintained. The park will also continue to inventory and evaluate archeological resources, as directed in the *Cultural Resources Management Plan*. A treatment plan for archeological resources will be completed. Efforts will be made to prevent further damage to the most significant sites threatened by erosion.

Damage to aboveground resources will be prevented through vegetation management. Impacts to archeological resources will be minimized by avoiding them or hardening the surface.

### Historic Properties and Structures

The 1990 *Historic Structures Management Plan* is being revised (NPS 1999). The revision proposes using criteria such as significance, integrity, condition, public interest, ability for the park to maintain, potential for reuse or continuing use, political considerations, interpretive potential, and other factors that might be appropriate to guide treatment decisions. Under this plan an estimated 16 - 20 properties with multiple structures will be preserved. This represents 53% to 67% of the park's historic properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Specific details and decisions concerning the treatment of his-



The Plan recommends intensifying efforts to identify and document cultural resources. 

toric properties will be made in the revised plan. Properties awaiting treatment decisions will be stabilized and protected pending decisions on treatment. The use of historic properties for park operations and interpretation will be continued.

### Collections

Objects, specimens, and records representative of the park's natural, cultural, and administrative history will continue to be collected, recorded, and safely housed. In addition, the collection will be regularly maintained and will receive conservation treatment as needed. Greater access to the collections will be provided primarily through media methods such as the Internet, publications, and exhibits.

### Public Access

Public access will be encouraged to a broader range of cultural resources, representing all periods of the park's history. Destination sites will be selected on the ability of resources to withstand increased use, the cultural theme represented, and the connection to compelling interpretive stories. The level of development will be commensurate with the goals for the management area it is located in. All other cultural resources will be protected.

## Visitor Use

### VISITOR USE AND FACILITIES

#### Parkwide Management

##### Overnight Permit System

A no-fee, self-registration permit system for overnight summer and winter use will be implemented no sooner than 2002 (use-and-occupancy residents and private landowners are exempt). The no-fee, self-registration permit system will be structured to make it easy for visitors to obtain permits and will not direct visitors to specific overnight sites. All overnight users at both developed and undeveloped sites (including overnight in-water anchoring) will be required to obtain these permits. The purpose of the permit system will be to gather information on the use of sites and to educate visitors about park conditions, activities, and rules. A feasibility study will be completed by 2005, assuming adequate funding and staffing are available, to address such issues as fees, permit distribution, regulations, and system management. The study will be developed with public input and will establish the most appropriate overnight permit system that should be used by the park. If feasible recommendations are found, the National Park Service will begin implementing a permit system as soon as approved.

No-fee overnight group permits for tent camping groups with more than 18 people will be implemented no sooner than 2002. This permit system will allow park staff to contact large groups, educate them about party size limits for different sites, encourage visitors to split into smaller groups, and gather information

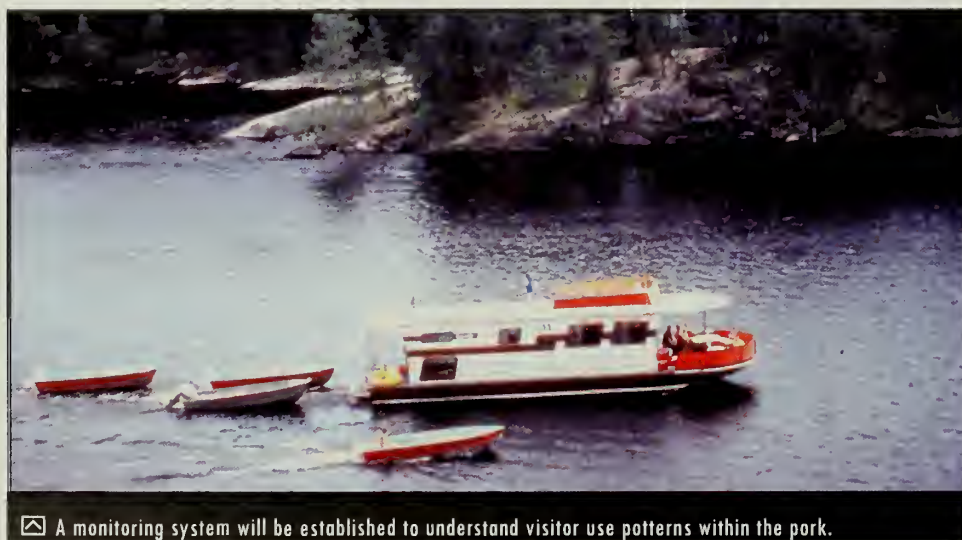
on the use of the park. No sooner than 2002 a no-fee permit system will also be required for visitors traveling together with more than two houseboats. Once the overnight permit system feasibility study (described above) is approved, any recommendations relating to groups will be implemented.

##### Facility Use Fees

The feasibility study for the overnight permit system will also examine the feasibility of implementing a fee system to use certain park facilities, such as campsites and parking areas. The study will be completed by 2005, if funding and staff are available. Recommended actions will be developed with public input. Entry fees for day use are not proposed and will not be implemented. The National Park Service will begin implementing the approved facility use fee recommendations soon after approval of the feasibility study.

##### Visitor Experience and Resource Monitoring

Park staff will establish a monitoring system to understand seasonal visitor use patterns, visitor needs and experience, resource impacts of day and overnight use, restoration needs, and other impacts. The information from the no-fee permit system and from the overnight permit feasibility study will be used as part of the monitoring program. Indicators and standards for monitoring key park resource conditions and visitor experiences during the summer and winter will be established. Visitor use and trends data will be gathered to provide information for the preservation of resources, the establishment of appropriate carrying capacities, the protection of the quality of the visitor experience, and assurances that facility development will match needs. The development of visitor facilities will be based on a strategy plan using a method such as the National Park Service's Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) methodology or a similar system that identifies current and potential visitor use patterns and demands, desired visitor experiences, and resource conditions.



☒ A monitoring system will be established to understand visitor use patterns within the park.

## Water Management Areas

### Integrated Use Area (Motorized & Nonmotorized Uses)

*Integrated Use.* Year-round non-motorized and motorized uses (including appropriate watercraft, private fixed-wing aircraft, and snowmobiles) will continue on the park's four major lakes and on the seven designated interior lakes (Locator, War Club, Quill, Loiten, Shoepack, Little Trout, and Mukooda).

To minimize conflicts between motorized and nonmotorized boat users on the major lakes, brochures and outreach programs will be developed that focus on boating etiquette. Publications will also be developed on suggested paddle routes within the integrated use areas of the park. The publications will clarify that motorized uses are allowed along suggested paddle routes.


*Overnight Houseboat Use.* The park will initiate a houseboat management plan when funding and staffing allow and the no-fee, self registration permit information shows that overnight houseboat use has reached 60 boats per basin. The plan will address topics such as commercial and private houseboat use, graywater management, users' needs and desires, and the appropriate number of houseboats at one time. Upon completion of the plan, appropriate use limits may be established.

No limited concession contracts with commercial houseboat companies will be established.

Sanitation system compliance certificates for blackwater containment will be required for all houseboats in park waters.

*Fixed-Wing Aircraft.* Commercial fixed-wing aircraft shuttles — one to Shoepack Lake and possibly one between the International Falls airport and the Kettle Falls Hotel — will continue. Private fixed-wing aircraft use will continue on the four major lakes and the seven designated interior lakes (Locator, War Club, Quill, Loiten, Shoepack, Little Trout, and Mukooda).



Integrated uses on park waters will continue, although efforts to minimize conflicts will be increased. 

If the Federal Aviation Administration notifies the National Park Service that a commercial enterprise has applied for approval to give air tours over the park, an air tour management plan will be developed before any such use may be approved. The air tour management plan, if prepared, will address such subjects as flights into, out of, within, and over Voyageurs National Park.

*Boats on Interior Lakes.* The park will continue to provide non-motorized boats on some interior lakes, but user fees will be charged beginning in the summer of 2002.

*Snowmobile Trails and Safety Portages / Vehicular Access.* To make snowmobiling safer, the Moose Bay snowmobile portage will be replaced with a portage at Ranta Bay. However, if this option is not viable due to agreements that must be made with private landowners, or if the Ranta Bay trail needs to be closed in the future for unforeseen reasons, the Moose Bay portage will be reopened. Snowmobile clubs will develop and maintain that section of the Ranta Bay trail/portage outside the park.

The Mukooda Lake snowmobile portage will be rerouted along the winter truck route. The portage will be redesigned to make it safer for motorized users and to minimize impacts to cultural resources. Only trucks with permits will be allowed to use the truck route. Truck permits will be issued in later winter after the main snowmobile season for non-recreational use only. Permits will be required no sooner than the winter of 2001-2.

*Special Use Zone.* A special use zone will be continued for intensive spectator-related recreational activities and other activities directly associated with the Kabetogama resort community. The special use zone boundary on the west is the Koochiching/St. Louis county line from the southern shore of Kabetogama Lake to a point/mile offshore; on the north/mile offshore from the parallel to the southern shore of Kabetogama Lake; and on the east a north/south line from the southern shore of Kabetogama Lake intersecting the westernmost point of Sphunge Island, to a point/mile offshore.

Special events — such as sports, pageants, regattas, public spectator attractions, entertainment, ceremonies, and encampments — will be permitted by the superintendent when (1) there is a meaningful association between the park area and the event, and (2) the event will contribute to visitor understanding of the significance of the park area. However, a permit must be denied if the event will

- ♦ impair park resources
- ♦ create an unsafe or unhealthful environment for other visitors or employees
- ♦ be contrary to the purposes for which the park was established
- ♦ or will unreasonably interfere with the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity, or the natural soundscape maintained in wilderness and natural, historic, or commemorative locations within the park; NPS interpretive, visitor service, administrative, or other activities; NPS concessioner or contractor operations or services; or other existing, appropriate park uses

The superintendent must ensure that appropriate permit conditions are imposed for special events.

Snowmobile radar runs, which are an illegal activity under 36 CFR 2.18(d) through (f), will not be permitted.

The National Park Service will not permit the public staging of special events that are conducted primarily for the material or financial benefit of organizers or participants; or that will be commercial in nature; or that will demand in-park advertising or publicity; or for which a separate public admission fee will be charged. However, park buildings or specially designated locations that are suitable and appropriate might be made available for private, *by-invitation-only* events. Admission fees for, or any other monies associated with, the by-invitation-only

event, cannot be collected by the permittee on park premises. Large-scale events will be managed utilizing the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

### **Nonmotorized Use Area**

Integrated motorized and nonmotorized summer and winter use will continue to be allowed on Locator, War Club, Quill, Loiten, Shoepack, Little Trout, and Mukooda Lakes. Only non-motorized uses will be allowed on all other interior lakes.

### **Land Management Areas**

#### **Developed Area**

*Visitor Centers.* Year-round operations will be continued at the Rainy Lake visitor center. At the Ash River and Kabetogama Lake visitor centers, hours and seasons of operation will be expanded or maintained, based on demand. At Crane Lake, the National Park Service will cooperate with other agencies in developing a multi-agency year-round visitor center, whose hours and seasons of operation will be determined by demand.

The expansion of visitor centers will be minimized, and all existing centers, along with the Kettle Falls facility, will be maintained. Outdoor exhibits and seasonal facilities will be developed, but the intent will be to minimize disturbance to resources while providing greater visitor interpretation. Visitor facilities will be sustainable and durable.

*Parking.* The expansion of parking lots will be minimized in the park. Park staff will work with partners to provide additional parking and shuttle services outside the park. At the Rainy Lake visitor center parking issues such as short- and long-term parking, as well as the need for an overflow lot, will be addressed.

*Boat Launches.* Launch areas for nonmotorized users will be developed at all visitor centers.

*Bicycle and Pedestrian Access.* Bike lanes or separate paths will be developed along entrance roads to the park's visitor centers. Park staff will pursue the development of trail connections or linkages to existing lanes/paths outside the park. An additional shoulder will be needed in some areas to provide for safe routes.

The National Park Service will work with partners to connect the bicycle trail portions of the Kabetogama-Ash River trail

system to area bike paths.

*Overnight Facilities.* No tent or houseboat sites will be provided in developed areas where there is high visitor traffic (i.e., no group tent sites at visitor centers or within the Kettle Falls Historic District).

**Lakecountry Area**

*Day and Overnight Use Sites.* In order to provide a less crowded and more secluded camping experience for many visitors, fewer developed sites will be provided than those proposed in the 1988 *Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan*. Between 280 and 320 developed sites will be planned for (including existing and new sites). To determine the number of developed sites, a monitoring system will be established to collect data regarding the visitor experience (crowdedness, site locations, distances between sites, etc.) and needs, and the *Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan* will be revised. All new tent, day use, and houseboat sites will have to meet the site selection criteria outlined in the *Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan* (e.g., latrine potential, island size, and no critical resource conflicts). While the site selection criteria in the *Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan* will continue to be used, sites proposed in that plan will not be developed if they do not meet the site selection criteria or if development will create a higher density than that established for lakecountry subareas under this plan. Sites that are not identified in the *Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan* may be developed if they meet the site selection and sub-area density criteria. Most of the lakecountry area site development will be moderate or low density (see *Density of Use* section). Day use and overnight sites will be developed as allowed by funding. Generally 5 - 10 sites per year will be built.

The highest priority will be to develop day use sites. These sites will include standard day use sites, while others will be visitor destinations, defined as special interpreted natural and cultural resource destination areas with some facilities.

To preserve the quality of the experience for visitors and to manage resource disturbance, the maximum party size at individual tent sites in the lakecountry will be 9 people at small sites and 18 people at large sites, with a maximum of 30 people at group sites (see Table 1). To provide for houseboat groups that desire to be together, houseboat

**TABLE 1 : TYPES AND CAPACITY OF DAY AND OVERNIGHT SITES**

Type of Site	Total Number of Sites	Maximum Party Size per Site
Tent campsites	129 small sites (including 1 universally accessible site in each district)	9 people
	24 large sites	18 people
Small campgrounds	2 campgrounds (5 sites each)	45 people per campground
Group campsites	3 (2 <i>Namakan</i> , 1 <i>Rainy</i> )	30 people
Houseboat sites	108	2 boats per site/ 12 people per boat
Day use sites	28 (including 1 universally accessible site in each district)	2 groups with 9 people each (tour boat excepted)
Visitor destination day use sites (interpreted sites)	15 - 20	Determined by resource sensitivity and subarea density

sites may accommodate up to two houseboats per site with 12 people maximum per boat. Use limits will be strictly enforced.

*Density of Use.* As described in the *Management Areas* section, the lakecountry area will be divided into three subareas. The subareas will range from high to low density and will define the number of day and overnight sites within a fi-mile radius. The subareas were generated based on existing density of use, natural and cultural resource conditions, relationship to development, and the desire to provide areas with a range of densities. Most of the lakecountry shoreline will be designated as moderate density. The amount of each subarea within the lakecountry area is shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 2 : DENSITY OF USE**

Subarea	Density of Use
subarea 1	high density: three or more sites within a fi-mile radius; about 130 miles
subarea 2	moderate density: fewer than three sites within a fi-mile radius); about 280 miles
subarea 3	low density: a maximum of one site per fi-mile radius; about 240 miles

*Site Condition Assessment.* Campsites that predate the establishment of the park will be examined to ensure that they meet the criteria in the 1988 *Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan*, as well as the new subarea densities. Sites that do not meet the criteria or densities will either be restored to reverse resource damage, rehabilitated with proper facilities, or closed if necessary. If the comprehensive monitoring system results in the discontinued use of undeveloped sites, then excessively damaged sites will be restored to natural conditions (see *Overnight Use at Undeveloped Sites* below).

*Day Use.* Day use will be allowed at developed tent sites until 2 P.M. Day use will not be allowed at houseboat sites since these sites are not equipped with vault toilets. Day use, with visitors being able to have fires, will only be permitted at developed sites. Day use without fires will be allowed at undeveloped sites unless an area is closed for resource protection or visitor safety. The day use of developed tent sites will be considered in the overnight permit system feasibility study.



☒ Visitor destinations, such as historic sites, will be developed to provide additional day use opportunities.

*Overnight Use at Undeveloped Sites.* The use of undeveloped sites by tent campers and houseboaters will continue to be allowed as long as they are 200 yards from a developed site and 1/2 mile from a park developed area. However, visitors will be encouraged to use developed sites whenever possible so as to reduce resource impacts.

A monitoring study will be conducted in conjunction with the no-fee overnight permit system for three years following the

approval of the general management plan, assuming adequate funding and staffing are available. This study will determine if the use of undeveloped sites is causing unacceptable resource damage (e.g., sanitation problems, vegetation trampling, or out-of-control fires). The monitoring study will separately evaluate the Rainy and Namakan basins, as well as tent campers and houseboaters. If the monitoring study finds that overnight use at undeveloped sites causes negative impacts, then that use will be phased out or other strategies will be implemented.

*Fires and Firewood.* Open fires will only be allowed in metal fire rings at developed sites starting in the summer of 2005. In 2005, the use of liquid fuel camp stoves will be required for day or overnight use at undeveloped sites.

Dead and down firewood may be gathered except where prohibited. Visitors will be encouraged to bring their own firewood or buy it from local vendors.

*Visitor Destination Sites.* Visitors and the park's gateway communities have requested a greater range of opportunities for

the public to explore and learn about the park's significant cultural and natural resources. To provide a range of experiences at sites that best exemplify the park's natural and cultural significance, to promote visitor understanding and appreciation of the park, and to provide visitor attractions, between 15 and 20 sites will be developed as visitor destinations. These sites will provide interpretation and picnic facilities that will meet park visitor

desires for active independent exploration at remote and dispersed locations throughout the park. Implementation plans that address facilities and interpretive media will be developed for each visitor destination, and sites will be carefully monitored to ensure that features will be appropriately managed. Facilities and interpretation will be tailored to each site and will be planned at a level that is appropriate and sustainable for that destination's use.

### Backcountry Trail Area

*Hiking, Skiing, and Snowshoe-ing Trails.* Existing summer and winter trails for nonmotorized uses will be retained. The following summer hiking trails, which were shown in the 1992 *Wilderness Recommendation*, will be constructed:

- Kettle Falls to Beast Lake on the Kabetogama Peninsula
- Jorgens Lake to Little Shoepack Lake on the Kabetogama Peninsula
- Loop trail near Lost Bay on Kabetogama Lake
- Mukooda Lake to King Williams Narrows near Sand Point Lake
- Dryweed Island (Rainy Lake) loop trail

In cooperation with partners, a mainland Kabetogama to Ash River trail system will be developed for nonmotorized, summer and winter use. This trail will be inside and outside the park.

The feasibility of extending the Kabetogama to Ash River trail to Crane Lake will be studied in cooperation with partners. If the extension proves feasible, it will be developed and maintained as a cooperative effort.

In addition, short interpretive trails at some visitor destination sites (geared either to cultural or natural resources) will be provided.

*Hut-to-Hut System.* No provisions will be made for developing a winter hut-to-hut system in the park.

### Primitive Area

*Camping.* Camping will be permitted throughout the park's primitive areas, with a maximum of six people per party. Starting in 2002, primitive area campers will be required to get a camping permit from a ranger. No open fires will be allowed, and campers will be expected to follow leave-no-trace practices.



The mainland Kabetogama to Ash River trail system will be developed for summer and winter uses. ☒

## INTERPRETATION, VISITOR SERVICES, AND EDUCATION Parkwide Management

### Interpretive Programs

The emphasis on visitor information, orientation, and interpretive services will increase; additional staffing will be sought to implement these programs, as well as potential reservation systems. To ensure that visitors have ample opportunities to learn about and appreciate the park's significance, a comprehensive interpretive plan will be developed to guide the expansion of programs and the development of exhibits, displays, publications, and other educational tools. Interpretation will focus on themes based on the park's mission, purpose, and significance to a depth not possible with current staffing levels. Interpretive programs and projects will provide a timely response to critical resource and visitor use issues.

### Interpretive Publications and Projects

The backlog of visitor orientation, information, and safety messages will be addressed through increased staffing and funding of publications. For example, new information might include interpretive signs at historic sites and informational brochures.

### Educational and Outreach Programs

Educational programs will be expanded to cover a greater diversity of subjects and for diverse age groups. Educational opportunities within the park, which are currently limited, will be expanded by developing new curricula beyond the present environmental education boat trips. Educational opportunities will primarily be expanded by using new communication technologies that can be used in classrooms outside the local area.

### Visitor Safety and Contact

Staffing will be added to expand visitor contact, resource protection, and emergency response capabilities. Backcountry monitoring of visitor use and resources will be limited, while rangers will be available in the lakecountry, and especially on the four major lakes, to assist visitors and monitor resources. Safety enforcement activities, such as boating safety, snowmobile speed limits, and incidental business permit compliance, will be increased. Existing visitor safety plans will be reevaluated and needs determined. The plans will be implemented consistently on an annual basis. Visitor contact and interpretive programs that provide safety education to visitors will be increased.

Staffing levels identified in the 1995 *Law Enforcement Needs Assessment* will be pursued so that the park is capable of responding to visitor emergencies in a timely manner. However, the level of response will depend on the type of experience visitors choose; for example, visitors in primitive areas will be expected to be more self-reliant than visitors in lakecountry areas. Emergency communications with the proper service providers will be improved by using up-to-date notification systems, increasing monitoring, and better coordinating activities between agencies.

### Concessions and Visitor Services

The current level of concession services (boat tours, lodging, food service, and boat rentals) will continue. Methods will be sought to increase the economic viability of these operations,



Under the plan, methods will be sought to increase economic viability of concession services.

thus making them more stable. Additional services (such as providing tour boats from other locations, and water taxi service) may also be considered.

### Water Management Areas

Interpretive programs will be expanded in the motorized use area to include maps, brochures, and other materials from a water-based perspective to show visitors the historic voyageurs' routes, geologic resources, wildlife, and other historic uses of these waterways.

### Land Management Areas

In partnership with other entities, an institute for diversified educational opportunities will be developed. The educational institute can help supplement the park's interpretive program and provide special classes, programs, and research to expand learning opportunities based on the park's mission, purpose, and significance. The institute can be held in a number of different places in order to reach a wider audience.

## Park Operations, Facilities, & Partnerships

### PARKWIDE MANAGEMENT Maintenance Program

A comprehensive preventive maintenance program will be developed and implemented to ensure that park facilities and historic structures are properly maintained.

### Staffing

Staffing will be increased as funding allows. The focus for having additional personnel will be resource preservation, visitor services, visitor and employee safety, and partnerships.

### Volunteers

Voyageurs National Park will reduce reliance on volunteers for base operations. Volunteers will be used to supplement operations and staffing.




## Partnerships

Relationships with surrounding public land, visitor protection, and recreation agencies will be strengthened. The purpose will be to enhance preservation within the park, to assist neighboring communities with resource issues, to provide a more cohesive approach to economic development, to support community recreational goals outside the park, and to provide facilities for visitors that are needed but might be inappropriate or unfeasible in the park (for example, an RV campground, a multi-agency visitor center at Crane Lake, or regional trail linkages). Partnerships with surrounding private landowners and communities will also be strengthened as a means to help provide needed visitor services, park-related education, and resource protection (e.g., septic regulations, water quality).

The National Park Service will work more closely with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), the U.S. Forest Service, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and other agencies to develop cooperative ecosystem approaches to both fisheries and wildlife management. Efforts will be made to restore native fish and wildlife populations through unified management programs. A fisheries management plan will be developed in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources. The plan will focus on managing sportfishing and developing strategies that emphasize the maintenance and reestablishment of native, self-sustaining fish populations. The Department of Natural Resources will continue to be the lead agency for fisheries management.

Partnerships with educational, institutional, or private entities will be actively pursued to ensure the preservation and maintenance of cultural resources in the park. Cooperating agencies that provide visitor safety services in conjunction with the National Park Service will be actively supported. Park staff will continue to pursue and maintain general agreements with the Coast Guard, First Responders, local sheriffs, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to help meet visitor needs.



Partnerships with park neighbors and agencies will be strengthened under the Plan. 

## LAND MANAGEMENT AREAS

### Operations and Maintenance Facilities

Park operations and maintenance facilities will continue in the Rainy District. However, should office and storage space needs exceed capacity at park headquarters, a new facility may need to be found. Also, the development plan for Kettle Falls will be revised to include a workstation for park staff.

A development plan will be prepared for Namakan District operations. The Ash River operations area will remain a maintenance hub, and the area near the building site will be used to provide facilities for maintenance, fire management, and limited field facilities for resource management. Development will be confined to already disturbed areas to the extent possible.

Office space for ranger operations, interpretation, and other uses will be expanded in the Kabetogama Ranger Station Historic District area once the majority of the maintenance operations in this area are moved to the Ash River operations area. Maintenance staff will maintain a presence at Kabetogama, and the marina at Kabetogama will serve as the main boat harbor for park operations.

At Crane Lake a satellite operations/maintenance facility will be provided in conjunction with a new multi-agency visitor center.

### Park Housing

Existing housing for NPS employees will be retained, but no new housing will be constructed in the park.

The National Park Service will pursue partnerships with businesses and organizations outside the park to provide seasonal housing for both park and private resort employees.

## Implementation Plans & Studies to Follow the General Management Plan

The *General Management Plan* for Voyageurs National Park is programmatic in nature, which means most of the policies and programs apply to large areas of the park, to certain types of recreational uses that occur in many places in the park, or to the entire park. Therefore, site-specific designs have not been developed for implementation. Various studies and implementation plans for specific actions will need to be undertaken to fully implement the *General Management Plan*. These subsequent plans may require additional impact information pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act before they are implemented.

The National Park Service will develop or revise the following plans and studies in order to implement the approved *General Management Plan* :

### Existing Plans to be Revised

- Development Plans for Park Operations Areas
- Historic Structures Management Plan
- Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan
- Land Protection Plan
- Resource Management Plan
- Trail Implementation Plans
- Wildland Fire Management Plan

### New Plans

- Air Tour Management Plan  
*(if directed by the Federal Aviation Administration)*
- Archeological Resources Protection Plan
- Comprehensive Interpretive Plan
- Disturbed Land Restoration Plan
- Education and Outreach Plan
- Facility Use Fee Feasibility Study
- Fisheries Management Plan  
*(in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources)*
- Houseboat Management Plan
- Media Development Plan
- Natural Resources Inventory and Monitoring Plan
- Overnight and Day-Use Site Monitoring Plan
- Overnight Permit System Feasibility Study
- Primitive Area & Proposed Wilderness Management Plan
- Research Plan
- Site Development Plans for Visitor Destinations
- Vegetation Management Plan
- Visitor Experience & Resource Protection Monitoring Program
- Water Resources Management Plan

While the *General Management Plan* provides the analysis and justification for future funding, the plan in no way guarantees that funding will be forthcoming. The approved plan establishes a vision of the future that will guide day-to-day management of the park, but full implementation of the plan will likely require a number of years.



APPENDIXES



## Appendix A: Park Legislation

An Act to authorize the establishment of the Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes. (84 Stat. 1971)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the purpose of this Act is to preserve, for the inspiration and enjoyment of present and future generations, the outstanding scenery, geological conditions and waterway system which constituted a part of the historic route of the Voyageurs who contributed significantly to the opening of the Northwestern United States.

### ESTABLISHMENT

Sec. 101. In furtherance of the purpose of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the *Secretary*) is authorized to establish the Voyageurs National park (hereinafter referred to as the *park*) in the State of Minnesota, by publication of notice to that effect in the Federal Register at such time as the Secretary deems sufficient interests in lands or waters have been acquired for administration in accordance with the purposes of this Act: Provided, That the Secretary shall not establish the park until the lands owned by the State of Minnesota and any of its political subdivisions within the boundaries shall have been donated to the Secretary for the purposes of the park: Provided further, That the Secretary shall not acquire other lands by purchase for the park prior to such donation unless he finds that acquisition is necessary to prevent irreparable changes in their uses or character of such a nature as to make them unsuitable for park purposes and notifies the Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs of both the Senate and the House of Representatives of such findings at least thirty days prior to such acquisition.

Sec. 102. The park shall include the lands and waters within the boundaries as generally depicted on the drawing entitled *A Proposed Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota*, numbered LNPMW-VOYA-1001, dated February 1969, which shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Within one year after acquisition of the lands owned by the State of Minnesota and its political subdivisions within the boundaries of the park the Secretary shall affix to such drawing an exact legal description of said boundaries. The Secretary may revise the boundaries of the park from time to time by publishing in the Federal Register a revised drawing or other boundary description, but such revisions shall not increase the land acreage within the park by more than one thousand acres.

### LAND ACQUISITION

Sec. 201. (a) The Secretary may acquire lands or interests therein within the boundaries of the park by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange. When any tract of land is only partly within such boundaries, the Secretary may acquire all or any portion of the land outside of such boundaries in order to minimize the payment of severance costs. Land so acquired outside of the park boundaries may be exchanged by the Secretary for non-Federal lands within the park boundaries. Any portion of land acquired outside the park boundaries and not utilized for exchange shall be reported to the General Services Administration for disposal under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (63 Stat. 377), as amended. Any Federal property located within the boundaries of the park may be transferred without consideration to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary for the purposes of the park. Lands within the boundaries of the park owned by the State of Minnesota, or any political subdivision thereof, may be acquired only by donation.

(b) In exercising his authority to acquire property under this section, the Secretary shall give immediate and careful consideration to any offer made by any individual owning property within the park area to sell such property to the Secretary. In considering such offer, the Secretary shall take into consideration any hardship to the owner which might result from any undue delay in acquiring his property.

Sec. 202. (a) Any owner or owners (hereinafter referred to as *owner*) of improved property on the date of its acquisition by the Secretary may, if the Secretary determines that such improved property is not, at the time of its acquisition, required for the proper administration of the park, as a condition of such acquisition, retain for themselves and their successors or assigns a right of use and occupancy of the improved property for noncommercial residential purposes for a definite term not to exceed twenty-five years, or, in lieu thereof, for a term ending at the death of the owner, or the death of his spouse, whichever is later. The owner shall elect the term to be retained. The Secretary shall pay to the owner the fair market value of the property on the date of such acquisition less the fair market value on such date of the right retained by the owner.

(b) If the State of Minnesota donates to the United States any lands within the boundaries of the park subject to an outstanding lease on which the lessee began construction of a noncommercial or recreational residential dwelling prior to January 1, 1969, the Secretary may grant to such lessee a right of use and occupancy for such period of time as the Secretary, in his discretion, shall determine; Provided, That no such right of use and occupancy shall be granted, extended, or continue after ten years from the date of the establishment of the park.

(c) Any right of use and occupancy retained or granted pursuant to this section shall be subject to termination by the Secretary upon his determination that such use and occupancy is being exercised in a manner not consistent with the purposes of

this Act, or upon his determination that the property is required for the proper administration of the park. The Secretary shall tender to the holder of the right so terminated an amount equal to the fair market value of that portion which remains unexpired on the date of termination.

(d) The term *improved property*, as used in this section, shall mean a detached, noncommercial residential dwelling, the construction of which was begun before January 1, 1969, together with so much of the land on which the dwelling is situated, the said land being in the same ownership as the dwelling, as the Secretary shall designate to be reasonably necessary for the enjoyment of the dwelling for the sole purpose of noncommercial residential use, together with any structures accessory to the dwelling which are situated on the land so designated.

Sec. 203. Notwithstanding any other provision of the law, the Secretary is authorized to negotiate and enter into concession contracts with former owners of commercial, recreational, resort, or similar properties located within the park boundaries for the provision of such services at their former location as he may deem necessary for the accommodation of visitors.

Sec. 204. The Secretary is authorized to pay a differential in value, as hereinafter set forth, to any owner of commercial timberlands within the park with whom the State of Minnesota has negotiated, for the purpose of conveyance to the United States, an exchange of lands for State lands outside the Park. Payment hereunder may be made when an exchange is based upon valuations for timber purposes only, and shall be the difference between the value of such lands for timber purposes, as agreeable to the State, the Secretary, and any owner, and the higher value, if any, of such lands for recreational purposes not attributable to establishment or authorization of the park: Provided, That any payment shall be made only at such time as fee title of lands so acquired within the boundaries is conveyed to the United States.

#### ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 301. (a) Except as hereinafter provided, the Secretary shall administer the lands acquired for the park, and after establishment shall administer the park, in accordance with the provisions of the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535) as amended and supplemented (16 U.S.C. 1-4).

(b) Within four years from the date of establishment, the Secretary of the Interior shall review the area within the Voyageurs National Park and shall report to the President, in accordance with subsections 3(c) and 3(d) of the Wilderness Act (78 Stat. 890; 16 U.S.C. 1132 (c) and (d)), his recommendation as to the suitability or unsuitability of any area within the lakeshore for preservation as wilderness, and any designation of any such area as a wilderness may be accomplished in accordance with said subsections of the Wilderness Act.

(c) All mining and mineral activities and commercial water power development within the boundaries of the park shall be prohibited, and further, any conveyance from the State of Minnesota shall contain a covenant that the State of Minnesota, its licensees, permittees, lessees, assigns, or successors in interest shall not engage in or permit any mining activity nor water power development.

Sec. 302. (a) The Secretary shall permit recreational fishing on lands and waters under his jurisdiction within the boundaries of the park in accordance with applicable laws of the United States and of the State of Minnesota, except that the Secretary may designate zones where and establish periods when no fishing shall be permitted for reasons of public safety, administration, fish and wildlife management, or public use and enjoyment. Except in emergencies, any regulations of the Secretary pursuant to this section shall be put into effect only after consultation with the appropriate agency of the State of Minnesota.

(b) The seining of fish at Shoepack Lake by the State of Minnesota to secure eggs for propagation purposes shall be continued in accordance with plans mutually acceptable to the State and the Secretary.

Sec. 303. The Secretary may, when planning for development of the park, include appropriate provisions for (1) winter sports, including the use of snowmobiles, (2) use by seaplanes, and (3) recreational use by all types of watercraft, including houseboats, runabouts, canoes, sailboats, fishing boats and cabin cruisers.

Sec. 304. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to affect the provisions of any treaty now or hereafter in force between the United States and Great Britain relating to Canada or between the United States and Canada, or of any order or agreement made or entered into pursuant to any such treaty, which by its terms would be applicable to the lands and waters which may be acquired by the Secretary hereunder, including, without limitation on the generality of the foregoing, the Convention Between the United States and Canada on Emergency Regulation of Level of Rainy Lake and of Other Boundary Waters in the Rainy Lake and of Other Boundary Waters in the Rainy Lake Watershed, signed September 15, 1938, and any order issued pursuant thereto.

Sec. 305. The Secretary is authorized to make provision for such roads within the park as are, or will be, necessary to assure access from present and future State roads to public facilities within the park.

## APPROPRIATIONS

Sec. 401. There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act, not to exceed, however, \$26,014,000 for the acquisition of property, and not to exceed \$19,179,000 (June 1969 prices) for development, plus or minus such amounts, if any, as may be justified by reason of ordinary fluctuations in construction costs as indicated by engineering cost indices applicable to the types of construction involved herein.

Approved January 8, 1971.

### LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

HOUSE REPORT No. 91-1552 (Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs).

SENATE REPORT No. 91-1513 (Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 116 (1970):

Oct. 3, considered and passed House.

Dec. 22, considered and passed Senate, amended.

Dec. 29, House concurred in Senate amendments.

## Public Law 97-405

### 97th Congress

## AN ACT

To revise the boundary of Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Act entitled *An Act to authorize the establishment of the Voyageurs National Park in the State of Minnesota, and for other purposes*, approved January 8, 1971 (84 Stat. 1971) is amended-

(1) in section 102 by striking out *The* after *Sec. 102.* and inserting in lieu thereof *(a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, the;*

(2) by inserting after section 102(a), as redesignated by paragraph (1), the following new subsection:

*(b)(1) In addition to such revisions as the Secretary may make in the boundaries of the park from time to time pursuant to other provisions of law, the Secretary may, according to the provisions of subsection (a)-*

*(A) delete approximately 782 acres in the Neil Point area of the park;*

*(B) add approximately 180 acres in the Black Bay Narrows areas of the park;*

*(C) add approximately 18.45 acres owned by the State of Minnesota at the Kabetogama Forestry Station;*

*(D) add approximately 120 acres owned by the State of Minnesota, being a strip of land through that portion of section 1, township 68 north, range 20 west, fourth principal meridian, which is parallel to and 400 feet on both sides of the unimproved road extending northward from the Ash River Trail as such road crosses each section; and*

*(E) subject to the provisions of paragraph (2), delete approximately 1,000 acres at Black Bay and convey such lands to the State of Minnesota.*

All of the aforementioned boundary changes if accomplished shall be accomplished such that the boundary of the park shall conform to that generally depicted on the drawing entitled *Boundary, Voyageurs National Park, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service*, numbered 172-80, 008-MWR, and dated November 1981, which shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

(2) *The Secretary may not delete or convey the lands referred to in paragraph (1)(E) unless, prior to or simultaneously with such deletion or conveyance and in consideration of such conveyance, the State of Minnesota-*

*(A) tenders a conveyance of the lands described in paragraph (1) (C) and (D) to the United States by such instrument and in such manner as are satisfactory to the Secretary, including but not limited to lease or easement: Provided, That if the interest conveyed is a lease or easement, the State of Minnesota shall substitute therefore a transfer of all right, title and interest in the land by June 30, 1987: Provided further, That if the State does not transfer all right, title and interest in such lands by June 30, 1987, the land described in paragraph 1(E) shall revert to the United States for administration by the Secretary as part of the park; and*

(B) enters into a recordable agreement satisfactory to the Secretary which provides that -

(i) the State has established a wildlife management area in the area authorized to be deleted and conveyed to the State by paragraph (1)(E);

(ii) the State has prepared a plan acceptable to the Secretary to manage all the waters of and State lands riparian to Black Bay (including all of the State-owned lands and waters of Rainy Lake) to preserve the natural resources of the area so as to complement to the fullest extent possible the purposes for which the park was established;

(iii) the State shall not transfer any right, title or interest in, or control over, any land described in paragraph (1)(E) to any person other than the Secretary; and

(iv) the State shall permit access by the Secretary at reasonable times to the land described in paragraph (1)(E).

(3) If at any time the State fails to comply with the material requirements of the agreement referred to in paragraph (2)(B), all right, title and interest in the land described in paragraph (1)(E) shall revert to the United States for administration by the Secretary as part of the park. Such reversion shall take effect upon the delivery by the Secretary of notice to the State respecting such failure to comply without further notice or requirement for physical entry by the Secretary unless an action for judicial review is brought in the United States Court of Appeals for the appropriate circuit within ninety days following such notice. In any such action the court may issue such orders as are appropriate to carry out the requirements of this subsection;

(3) by adding after the last sentence of section 301(b) the following new sentence: *The President shall, no later than June 1, 1983, advise the United States Senate and House of Representatives of his recommendations with respect to the suitability or nonsuitability as wilderness of any area within the park;* and

(4) in section 401-

(A) by inserting (a) after Sec.401.;

(B) by striking out \$26,014,000 and inserting in lieu thereof \$38,314,000; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new subsections:

(b) *The Secretary shall, in cooperation with other Federal, State and local governmental entities and private entities experienced in the fields of outdoor recreation and visitor services, develop and implement a comprehensive plan for visitor use and overnight visitor facilities for the park. The plan shall set forth methods of achieving an appropriate level and type of visitation in order that the resources of the park and its environs may be interpreted for, and used and enjoyed by, the public in a manner consistent with the purposes for which the park was established. Such plan may include appropriate informational and educational messages and materials. In the development and implementation of such plan the Secretary may expend funds donated or appropriated for the purposes of this subsection. Effective October 1, 1983, there is authorized to be appropriated for the purposes of this subsection not to exceed \$250,000, to remain available until expended.*

(c) *The Secretary is directed to study existing road access to the park and to report to Congress on the impact of park-related use of those roads and to report specific recommendations on improvements necessary to insure adequate road access to the park. The Secretary is directed to report, within one year of the date of enactment of the Act which appropriates funds authorized under this subsection, to the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the House of Representatives and to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate. Effective October 1, 1983, there is authorized to be appropriated for the purposes of this subsection not to exceed \$75,000.*

(d) *For purposes of section 7(a)(3) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 4601-9(a)(3)), the statutory ceilings on appropriations established by this section shall be deemed to be statutory ceilings contained in a provision of law enacted prior to the convening of the Ninety-fifth Congress.*

Approved January 3, 1983.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY- S. 625 (H.R. 846):

SENATE REPORT No. 97-423 (Comm. on Energy and Natural Resources).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 128 (1982):

June 10, considered and passed Senate.

Sept. 29, H.R. 846 considered and passed House; proceedings vacated and S. 625, amended, passed in lieu.

Oct. 1, Senate concurred in House amendments with amendments.

Dec. 14, House concurred in certain Senate amendments and agreed to an amendment with an amendment.

Dec. 16, Senate agreed to House amendment.



## Appendix B: Record of Decision

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### RECORD OF DECISION

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AND VISITOR USE AND FACILITIES PLAN

Voyageurs National Park  
Minnesota

The Department of the Interior, National Park Service, has prepared this Record of Decision on the final Environmental Impact Statement (final EIS) for the General Management Plan and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan, Voyageurs National Park in Koochiching and St. Louis Counties, Minnesota. This Record of Decision is a statement of the decision made, the background of the project, other alternatives considered, the environmentally preferred alternative, the basis for the decision, measures to minimize environmental harm, whether any actions in the plan constitute an impairment of park resources and values, and public involvement in the decision making process.

### DECISION (SELECTED ALTERNATIVE)

The National Park Service (NPS) will implement a slightly modified version of the proposed action described and analyzed in the draft Environmental Impact Statement (draft EIS). The modifications made to the proposed action will either not result in any additional or changed environmental impacts from those analyzed in the draft, or will result in impacts similar to those reported in the draft EIS for another alternative.

The selected alternative, referred to in the final EIS as the "Modified Proposed Action" and in the remainder of this Record of Decision as the General Management Plan (GMP) or "plan", contains elements of alternatives 1, 2 and 3 and the original proposed action as analyzed in the draft EIS, and presents a balanced approach to resource protection and visitor use. It is also responsive to public comments, many of which indicated the park should not significantly change existing types and levels of recreational use. Although very few changes to existing uses will occur, the plan includes additional trails, including one that links the communities of Kabetogama and Ash River. It will also result in a moderate increase in the number of overnight sites and new day use and visitor destination sites. It further anticipates an upper limit for the number of houseboats that may overnight in the park at one time. Houseboat use will continue at existing levels, and could increase. The specific number of houseboats permitted – the park's carrying capacity for houseboats as directed in 16 USC 1a-7(b)(3) – will be determined in a subsequent houseboat management plan. That plan will be initiated when the number of overnight houseboats reaches 60 per basin. No sooner than the summer of 2002, the park will begin to require a no-fee, self-registration permit for any overnight use in the park to gather information to guide future decisions.

The plan includes efforts intended to intensify natural resource protection through research and management. The NPS will complete an inventory of natural resources and develop a comprehensive inventory, monitoring and research program. A revised fire management plan will be developed to support a broader range of resource management objectives and to reestablish natural fire regimes without unduly reducing visitation or visitor enjoyment. The park will continue as it does now, to identify, evaluate for significance, plan for, protect and share information about cultural resources, including structures, cultural landscapes, archeological resources, ethnographic resources and collections. Historic properties that represent each cultural resource theme and that focus on the park's mission, purpose, significance and interpretive themes will be retained. A monitoring program to determine visitor use, need for resource

protection and the quality of the visitor experience will be initiated, and the information gathered from the program used for future, more site-specific planning.

## **SPECIFICS OF THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE (GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN)**

**Natural and Cultural Resource Management.** The National Park Service intends to implement the alternative identified as “Modified Proposed Action” in the final General Management Plan and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS). This alternative will expand and intensify natural resource protection efforts through increased inventory and monitoring programs, partnerships, and research. Resource management plans will be revised as needed (such as the *Wildland Fire Management Plan* and the *Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan*) or completed. The park’s fire management policy will support a broader range of resource management objectives, including reestablishing natural fire regimes without unduly reducing visitation or visitor enjoyment.

The park will continue to identify, evaluate for significance, plan for, protect, and share information about cultural resources, including structures, cultural landscapes, archeological resources, ethnographic resources, and collections. Cultural resource management will be more proactive with the development and implementation of treatment plans, a formal monitoring program, and more focused public education efforts. The park will retain historic properties that represent each cultural resource theme and that focus on the park’s mission, purpose, significance, and interpretive themes.

**Visitor Use and Facilities.** A no-fee, self-registration permit system for overnight summer and winter use will be implemented no sooner than 2002 (usc-and-occupancy residents and private landowners would be exempt). Permits will be easy to obtain and will not direct visitors to specific overnight sites. The purpose of the system is to gather information about site use and to educate visitors about park conditions, activities, and rules. A feasibility study, which will be conducted with public input, will be completed within three years to determine if a more formal overnight permit system is warranted.

Also, the feasibility of implementing facility use fees for camping and parking will be studied. Entrance fees are not proposed. A monitoring program for visitor experience and resource protection will be established and be based on information from the no-fee permit system and the overnight permit feasibility study.

Integrated motorized and nonmotorized uses, including fixed-wing aircraft (private and one commercial permit) will be allowed to continue on the four major lakes and the seven designated interior lakes. As is currently the case, only nonmotorized use will be allowed on the other interior lakes. No areas for no-wake boating will be established.

The park will initiate a houseboat management plan when funding and staffing allow and the no-fee, self registration permit information shows that overnight houseboat use has reached 60 boats per basin. The plan will address topics such as commercial and private houseboat use, graywater management, users’ needs and desires, and the appropriate number of houseboats at one time. Upon completion of the plan, appropriate use limits may be established.

The special use zone near the Kabctogama resort community will be continued, but special events will require a permit and would have to be consistent with the purpose and significance of the park.

The park will continue to provide boats on interior lakes; a fee will be charged beginning in the summer of 2002.

The selected alternative establishes an upper limit for the number of developed sites. Fewer day and overnight use sites (280–320 total sites) will be built than called for under existing plans. The effects of overnight use at undeveloped sites will be studied, and if they are found to be damaging resources or negatively affecting other visitors, these sites will be phased out or other strategies implemented to prevent such damage. Starting in the summer of 2005, fires will be allowed only in metal fire rings at developed sites.

Visitor destination sites that feature special natural or cultural features that could be interpreted will be developed to enhance visitors' appreciation of the park. The park will establish 15 to 20 such visitor destination sites.

In cooperation with partners, a mainland, nonmotorized summer and winter trail will be developed between the Kabetogama Lake and Ash River communities, and the feasibility of extending the trail to Crane Lake studied. Several hiking trails will be built on the Kabetogama Peninsula, and some will link to visitor destinations. Facility expansion at visitor centers will be minimized, and the park will use alternative methods such as outdoor and temporary facilities instead. Visitor information materials will be expanded. A multi-agency visitor center will be developed at Crane Lake. Both the Rainy Lake visitor center and the Crane Lake multi-agency center will operate year-round, while operational hours at the Ash River and Kabetogama Lake visitor centers will be based on demand.

**Interpretation, Visitor Services, and Education.** A more comprehensive interpretive program will be provided. Visitor services, resource protection, and emergency response will be expanded and improved with increased staffing. A proposed educational institute to provide special programs and to supplement the park's interpretive program will be formed through partnerships.

**Park Operations, Facilities, and Partnerships.** Park operational facilities will be improved through the development of a Namakan District plan and expanded facilities at Ash River. Ranger and interpretive operations will be expanded into the Kabetogama Ranger Station Historic District. The park will actively pursue partnerships with public, institutional, and private entities to help protect resources and provide for quality visitor experiences and facilities.

## BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

### THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning team, composed of NPS personnel and their contractors, began the planning process by first soliciting comments from the public, agencies and interest groups through newsletters, meetings and presentations. Most of this initial "scoping" was focused on issues facing the park, or visions for the park's future. These issues and those developed by the planning team were used in guiding the appropriate range of alternatives. In addition, the team reviewed NPS policies and guidelines; the mission, purpose and significance statements for Voyageurs; existing plans completed for the park; enabling and subsequent legislation for the park and any other relevant laws and regulations in defining constraints on the range of alternatives.

Each of the alternatives was developed to respond to public desires and concerns, to support the park's mission, purpose and significance, and to avoid unacceptable impacts to resources. Since the majority of commentors indicated during the scoping phase that they like the way the park is currently managed and do not feel any major changes are needed, all of the action alternatives reflect this philosophy.

No Action, or baseline conditions, is an alternative that the National Environmental Policy Act requires agencies to develop and analyze in environmental documents. The team also initially developed two action alternatives for public review. Alternative 2 (Alternative 1 is No Action) would focus on resource preservation, partnerships and balanced use. Alternative 3 would emphasize a wide variety of visitor experiences and recreational opportunities. This package was released for public review and comment in May 1999. The input received was used to craft a draft proposed action and to refine the other two action alternatives for analysis in the draft EIS. The official release of this draft GMP/EIS and its required 60-day public review began June 23, 2000 with a notice in the Federal Register. Included in this document was the draft "Visitor Use and Facilities Plan," which includes proposals identical to the proposed action in the GMP/EIS.

The interdisciplinary team responded to all substantive comments on the draft GMP/EIS, and changed the text of the GMP/EIS as necessary. It also reviewed all elements of the draft proposed action to determine whether any changes were warranted either as a result of public comments or additional information. Several small changes were made. For example, a no-fee, self-registration permit system for overnight use was added; the 60 houseboat per basin limit was changed from permanent in the draft to an interim limit in

the selected alternative; no day use will be allowed at houseboat sites; the need for a houseboat management plan was added; no entrance fees will be implemented or studied in the feasibility study; and uses of the park for special events would necessarily be consistent with the purpose and significance of the park. The selected alternative would not result in more than negligible or minor differences in impacts from those analyzed in the draft EIS.

Responses to substantive comments were organized by issue or topic and similar or identical comments were combined. These responses were indexed both by author and by topic and answered in a separate volume (volume 2) of the final GMP/EIS. These letters were also reprinted in this same volume. Volume 1 is the corrected and updated version of information released as the draft GMP/EIS. The full final GMP/EIS was released to the public for a 30-day waiting period beginning October 12, 2001. Thirty-nine comments were received. No new issues or questions were raised in public comments on the final GMP/EIS.

## PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

### Park Mission, Legislative Purpose, and Key Mission Goals

As part of the compliance requirements with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the National Park Service developed a legislative mission statement for each unit of the national park system. The Act also requires a purpose statement and mission goals be developed. These were developed in consultation with the public, the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office, the Minnesota Environmental Protection Agency, other interested agencies and organizations.

The mission statement for Voyageurs National Park is as follows:

- Voyageurs National Park preserves the landscapes and scenic waterways that shaped the route of the North American fur traders and defined the border between the United States and Canada. The park and its diverse resources provide outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation, scientific study, sportfishing, education, and appreciation of the northwoods lake country setting.

The purposes of Voyageurs National Park, according to its legislation, are as follows:

- Preserve the scenery, geologic conditions, and interconnected waterways within the park for the inspiration and enjoyment of people now and in the future.
- Commemorate the voyageurs' routes and fur trade with the Native peoples of the north, which contributed significantly to the opening of northwestern North America to European settlement.
- Preserve, in an unimpaired condition, the ecological processes, biological and cultural diversity, and history of the northwoods lakecountry border we share with Canada.
- Provide opportunities for people to experience, understand, and treasure the lakecountry landscape — its clean air and water, forests, islands, wetlands, and wildlife — in a manner that is compatible with the preservation of park values and resources.

The mission goals are desired future conditions for the park. These statements describe what the park should be like and how it should be managed over the next 20 years to achieve these conditions. The key mission goals are:

- Voyageurs is restored and protected in a manner that allows natural processes, functions, cycles, and biota to be maintained in perpetuity. An adaptive, ecosystem-based approach to resource preservation has been implemented, with essential data and tools to support a scientifically based management program.
- The park's wilderness resources, values, and characteristics are unimpaired, and its suitability for wilderness designation remains undiminished.
- Voyageurs' cultural resources, including archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources, cultural landscapes, and historic objects that offer evidence of the long-term human relationship with the environment are preserved.

- Visitors continue to find a diversity of quality opportunities in Voyageurs, allowing each person to enjoy the park in a safe and respectful manner, with only minimal conflicts between visitors.
- Visitors to Voyageurs National Park have many opportunities to experience solitude and tranquillity, to appreciate the expansive and undeveloped lakeshore and wetlands, and to see and enjoy the abundance and diversity of native plants and wildlife.
- The park is nationally and internationally recognized for its unique educational opportunities both at the park and through communications technologies.
- Visitor experiences are enhanced by a unified partnership between the park, park concessioners and incidental business permit holders, and adjacent private and public entities who understand and appreciate the significance of the park and its surrounding lands and people.

### The Need for a new General Management Plan

The park's current *Master Plan*, which was approved in 1980, is no longer adequate to address the policy and operational issues now facing Voyageurs National Park. While the *Master Plan* guided the National Park Service's initial efforts in managing the park, conditions have changed over the last 20 years, and that plan does not provide sufficient direction for protecting natural and cultural resources or providing for visitor use. The purpose of this *Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan* is to set forth a basic management philosophy for Voyageurs National Park and to provide a framework for future decision making for the next 15 to 20 years.

This project is unique because it also includes a visitor use and facilities plan, in addition to the general management plan for Voyageurs National Park. In 1983 Congress passed legislation directing the park to complete a visitor use and facilities plan, but the directive was never funded. In 1996–97 a federal mediation process was conducted to address numerous issues about visitor use and management of the park. As a result of this process, the mediation panel recommended that the visitor use and facilities plan could be accomplished through the National Park Service's general management planning process. Therefore, the *Visitor Use and Facilities Plan* has been developed in conjunction with the *Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement*. The *Visitor Use and Facilities Plan* addresses the same visitor facilities and uses in the park outlined in the selected alternative, plus it takes a more comprehensive look at the Voyageurs region related to tourism, surrounding visitor use and facilities, and opportunities for working with others outside the park. Since the *Visitor Use and Facilities Plan* proposes the same actions as the selected alternative, the environmental consequences, including cumulative impacts and impairment, are identical.

## OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The team analyzed four alternatives, including the No Action alternative which would continue the implementation of existing plans and policies. In each alternative, the park was divided into specific management areas. Land management areas include a developed area, a lakecountry area, a backcountry trail area, and a primitive area. Water management areas include an integrated use area, a nonmotorized use area, and in alternative 2, a no-wake water area. Each management area had a specific set of desired resource conditions and visitor experiences associated with it. The management areas were applied to the entire area of the park, but the locations and extent of each management area depended on the particular emphasis of an alternative. For example, one alternative emphasized more resource preservation with fewer developed facilities for visitor use, while another emphasizes the development of more visitor facilities.

In all management areas and alternatives, motorized uses include the use of motorboats, electric motors, planes (fixed-wing aircraft), houseboats, and snowmobiles. Nonmotorized uses include canoeing, kayaking, paddleboating, rowboating, sailboating, skiing, snowshoeing, and hiking. In all alternatives, the four major lakes remain open for motorized uses.

## ALTERNATIVE 1: PRESENT COURSE OF ACTION (NO ACTION)

**Natural and Cultural Resource Management.** Under this alternative the National Park Service would continue to manage the park to protect natural and cultural resources in accordance with approved current plans and NPS policies as allowed by staffing and funding. Some, but not all, of the park's historic properties would be preserved.

**Visitor Use and Facilities.** A no-fee permit for all overnight use would be required. Only limited visitor use monitoring would occur.

The four major lakes would continue to have integrated use (motorized and nonmotorized); motorized use would continue on seven interior lakes (Locator, War Club, Quill, Loiten, Shoepack, Little Trout, and Mukooda). The number of houseboats could increase without limitations.

The special use zone would remain, but snowmobile "radar runs" would continue to be illegal. All other management areas would be the same as now.

Day and overnight sites would continue to be built to meet the development criteria outlined in the approved 1988 *Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan* (about 400 sites total). The use of undeveloped sites would continue. Summer hiking trails would continue to be built as shown in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Wilderness Recommendation* (1992), with numerous small loops plus linkages to Peninsula destinations. No changes would be made to the existing winter trail system.

Existing visitor facilities would be retained; year-round visitor interpretive services would be offered at the Rainy Lake visitor center; and seasonal services would be provided at the Ash River and Kabetogama Lake visitor centers.

**Interpretation, Visitor Services, and Education.** Visitor contact, resource protection, monitoring, and emergency services would remain limited, with heavy dependence on established partnerships.

**Park Operations, Facilities, and Partnerships.** Park operations would continue in current areas with a limited preventive maintenance program and a strong dependence on volunteers. Existing partnerships would continue; however, only limited partnerships would continue related to fishery and wildlife management and for cultural resource preservation involving educational, institutional, or private entities.

## ALTERNATIVE 2: RESOURCE PRESERVATION, PARTNERSHIPS, BALANCED USES

**Natural and Cultural Resource Management.** Under alternative 2 natural and cultural resource protection would be similar to the selected alternative. However, natural fire regimes would be reestablished to the greatest extent possible, even if it caused temporary inconveniences to visitors or a temporary reduction in visitor enjoyment. For cultural resources a greater number of historic properties would be preserved, and fewer sites would be designated as visitor destinations.

**Visitor Use and Facilities.** Entry/user fees and an overnight permit system with an educational component would be implemented. A visitor experience and resource monitoring program would be established, the same as the selected alternative.

A houseboat permit system would be developed, with a total of 50 overnight houseboats allowed per basin (40 commercial and 10 private houseboats), for a park total of 100. No-wake boating areas would be designated in bays on the four major lakes. Commercial fixed-wing aircraft use would be stopped in the park, and private fixed-wing aircraft use and the use of motors would be prohibited on all interior lakes except Mukooda Lake. Boat rentals on Mukooda Lake would be discontinued.

The special use zone would be discontinued.

Fewer day and overnight sites would be built (250–275 total sites) than in any other alternative, and no overnight use at undeveloped sites would be allowed. Day use at overnight sites would be discontinued.

Fires would be allowed only in metal fire rings at developed sites. Between 10 and 15 visitor destinations, with interpretive and day use facilities, would be developed.

The proposed Kabetogama–Ash River trail would be developed as described for the selected alternative, but no additional trails would be added to the existing trail system on the Kabetogama Peninsula. A multi-agency visitor center at Crane Lake and an educational institute would be developed (the same as the selected alternative). All visitor centers would operate year-round.

**Interpretation, Visitor Services, and Education.** Interpretive programs, visitor contact, resource protection, and emergency response would be expanded, as described for the selected alternative. Under alternative 2, however, concession boat rentals would be eliminated at Mukooda Lake.

**Park Operations, Facilities, and Partnerships.** Park operation facilities and partnerships would be the same as described for the selected alternative.

### ALTERNATIVE 3: EMPHASIS ON VISITOR EXPERIENCE AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Natural and Cultural Resource Management.** Alternative 3 would build on and incorporate many of the natural and cultural resource elements from the selected alternative and most of the visitor use and facility measures identified in alternative 1. This alternative would be the most aggressive in developing visitor facilities, yet it would also enhance resource preservation efforts to ensure a quality visitor experience. Except for minor changes, natural resource preservation would be the same as the selected alternative. For example, natural fire regimes would be reestablished only when it would not reduce visitor enjoyment or visitor use. Cultural resource actions would be similar to alternative 1, except that visitor facilities and interpretation would be provided at more properties.

**Visitor Use and Facilities.** A study would be completed to determine the feasibility of an entry/user fee system. The system would only be implemented if needed to offset park operations costs. An overnight permit/reservation system with an educational component would be implemented; however, some sites would be retained for first-come, first-served use. Houseboaters would not be required to make reservations, but would need overnight permits.

A houseboat permit system would be implemented, and a total of 70 overnight houseboats per basin would be allowed (60 commercial and 10 private houseboats), for a park total of 140. The number of houseboats allowed under this alternative would be greater than under alternative 2 or the selected alternative. The four major lakes and all interior lakes would be managed the same as alternative 1, except that expanded commercial fixed-wing aircraft use would be allowed on Kabetogama Lake.

The number of day and overnight sites would be the same as alternative 1 (about 400 total sites); however, the distribution of sites would be different. There would be fewer tent sites, more small campgrounds, more houseboat sites, and more day use destination sites than under alternative 1. There would be more of all types of sites than under the selected alternative (day use sites excepted) or alternative 2. Day use with fires would only be allowed at developed day use sites; day use without fires could occur at undeveloped sites, and day use would not be allowed at overnight sites. No tent camping would be allowed at undeveloped sites; however, houseboaters could moor at developed or undeveloped sites for the night. From 15 to 20 visitor destinations would be developed (the same as the selected alternative).

All summer and winter trails outlined in alternative 1 and the selected alternative would be developed under this alternative. Visitor center expansion would be the same as the selected alternative, plus an environmental education facility would be considered at the Ash River visitor center. At the Kabetogama Lake visitor center the historic structures would be used for visitor education and interpretation, the same as the selected alternative; additional space for interpretation and rangers would also be considered. Year-round operations would be provided at all visitor centers (the same as alternative 2), plus the Crane Lake visitor center would be developed.

**Interpretation, Visitor Services, and Education.** Interpretive programs, visitor contact, resource protection, and emergency response would be expanded, as described for the selected alternative.

**Park Operations, Facilities, and Partnerships.** At Ash River facilities for park operations would be expanded the most of any alternative. Partnership development would be the same as the selected alternative.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferred alternative is defined by the Council on Environmental Quality as the alternative that best meets the criteria or objectives set out in Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act. The Council on Environmental Quality interprets these criteria as meaning the alternative that "...causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment and best protects, preserves and enhances historic, cultural and natural resources." The National Park Service is not obliged to select the environmentally preferred alternative, but is required to identify it in the Record of Decision. The planning team has identified alternative 2 as environmentally preferred.

Specific actions in this alternative that are expected to result in benefits for resources relative to the other alternatives include the restriction of overnight tent campers and houseboaters to developed sites only, build out of the fewest developed sites of any alternative; and prohibiting motorized use on all interior lakes except Mukooda. These actions would help vegetation, wildlife, water quality, air quality, species of special concern, soils, and archeological resources.

Parkwide natural and cultural resource management policies that are part of alternative 2 would also result in the greatest benefits of all alternatives to resources in the park. These include vegetation and fire management policies geared toward reestablishing natural fire regimes to the greatest extent possible, maximum preservation of historic structures, and a focus on completing cultural landscape descriptions.

## BASIS FOR DECISION

The selected alternative (or plan) was chosen because it provides the most desirable combination of resource preservation, visitor interpretation and experience, and cost effectiveness among the alternatives considered. It is most responsive to the legislative mission, purpose, and mission goals of Voyageurs National Park as stated above under "Background." It also best addresses the issues identified during public scoping but continues to protect important park resources and values.

Public comments gathered during scoping and the review of the draft GMP/EIS were used extensively by the team in defining and revising the Proposed Action. The majority of the comments indicated visitors wanted the park to offer a broad diversity of visitor experiences while at the same time providing ample opportunities to experience solitude and tranquility. While most comments indicated that visitors wanted to retain much of the existing visitor experience, they also requested additional day and overnight sites, trails, visitor destinations and interpretive and educational facilities and services. Many people indicated a concern that the park not become overdeveloped, and stated the level of development in Alternative 1 (No Action, or implementing existing plans) was too extreme. At the same time, many public comments indicated that Alternative 2 was too restrictive and did not develop an adequate number of facilities or provide a broad enough diversity of visitor experiences. The visitor uses and experiences are greater and more diverse than in Alternative 2, yet less intensive and/or more restrictive than Alternative 1. Where the team was unable to determine with accuracy whether greater or lesser visitor use was appropriate, it spelled out additional data gathering and planning efforts the park would undertake before making these decisions. No actions in the plan will impair or diminish the park's suitability for wilderness designation.

Specifically, the plan will result in more day and overnight sites than had Alternative 2 been selected (a maximum of 275 in Alternative 2 versus 320 in the plan), but fewer than Alternative 1 (~400 sites). It will also result in 3 more group campsites than Alternative 2, but 1 fewer than Alternative 1. At-large camping in primitive areas for groups of up to 6 people would be allowed; no group limit is imposed in Alternative 1, and at-large camping is prohibited in Alternative 2. Overnight use of undeveloped sites will continue to be allowed, but the park will initiate a monitoring program to determine whether traditional use has caused unacceptable resource damage, and will consider closing undeveloped sites if this is the case.



Unless the proposed *Houseboat Management Plan* shows otherwise, more houseboats will be permitted in the selected alternative than Alternative 2, but fewer will be allowed than in Alternative 1 (100 houseboats per basin in Alternative 2, 120 interim permits at one time in the plan and unlimited use in Alternative 1). Since the plan will result in the vast majority of the lakecountry area being developed at a moderate to low density, most visitors will have the opportunity to stay in an area that will feel well separated from other users. Alternative 1 would have meant many more miles of moderate to high density zoning. A reduction in the maximum group party size from 72 in Alternative 1 to 30 will also help ensure visitors have a tranquil experience.

Rather than removing the "Boats on Interior Lakes program" (BOIL) as identified in Alternative 2, the plan will continue to provide boats to visitors on several interior lakes, however a fee will be required to encourage visitor responsibility for the boats. In comparison to Alternative 2, the plan will allow more interior lakes to remain open to integrated use (same as Alternative 1); a few more visitor destinations to the park's natural and cultural resources will be provided; several additional trails will be developed; and either bike lanes or separate bike paths will be provided to park visitor centers. In the plan, the continued integrated use of seven designated interior lakes will allow diverse opportunities for visitors to experience several different backcountry areas and will not be as restrictive as Alternative 2. Trail system expansion, as identified in the plan, will afford much greater opportunities for summer and winter access to the backcountry than Alternative 2, improve linkages to park destinations and broader visitor exposure to park amenities. These diverse trails will provide access from water and land. Rather than removing the special use zone, as shown in Alternative 2, uses in this zone will continue to be allowed when they have a meaningful association between the park area and the event, and the event contributes to visitor understanding of the significance of the park area. In summary, the plan will provide visitors with diverse opportunities to utilize the park during the day and overnight while having a tranquil experience in a natural setting. The plan allows visitors to enjoy the park in a safe and respectful manner, with only minimal conflicts between users.

Interpretive opportunities will be significantly enhanced. Seasons and hours of operation at visitor centers will be expanded (as needed) and a new multi-agency visitor center will be developed at Crane Lake which is one of the largest visitor entry areas to the park and adjacent regional recreational areas. The development of an educational institute through partnering with other entities will encourage diverse visitation, research, education, and park programming. The institute will likely help expand recognition of the park and provide programs for a wide diversity of people and age groups throughout the nation. Developing a comprehensive interpretive plan focusing on the park's mission, purpose, and significance to a greater depth will help ensure that interpretive programs foster in visitors a greater appreciation of park resources. Visitor experiences will be enhanced through opportunities to navigate and understand historic trade routes and to participate in programs that focus on the history of the voyageurs. This will help focus park recreation on one of the most important reasons for the establishment of Voyageurs as a national park. The expansion of educational and outreach programs and the development of new curricula and new communication technologies will help increase visitor participation.

An increased focus on strengthening partnerships will improve communication between the National Park Service and others for the protection of resources and the development of visitor services. Closer cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the development of a joint fisheries management plan will facilitate unified management actions and enhance the park's natural fisheries. The pursuit of additional partnerships for cultural resources will increase the means and number of people available to conduct treatment and maintenance actions, as well as develop sites for visitor use. Support of cooperative agencies and partnerships for visitor safety will reduce emergency response times, provide increased patrol for everyday activities, help increase a sense of safety for park visitors, and protect resources. Active National Park Service participation in and support of other agencies' and organizations' planning, zoning, and land use activities will help protect park viewsheds and other values that affect visitor experiences.

The plan will also improve resource preservation and protection, and many of these preservation actions are the same as those spelled out in Alternative 2. However, the plan adopts a more cautious approach to decision-making until reliable data clearly justify it, and focuses instead on providing more diversified visitor use without harmful resource consequences. As examples, the plan identifies the need for more intensive study and monitoring before final management decisions are made related to overnight use at undeveloped sites, houseboat management, and facility and overnight fees and reservation systems. These issues are of significant interest to the public with strong representation on both sides of each topic, and the park requires additional visitor use and related resource impact data to make the most appropriate decisions in these areas.

Needed data will be collected via a no-fee overnight permit system to determine visitor use patterns and related resource impacts. Park staff will also be able to educate visitors about park conditions, activities, and rules when permits are issued. In addition, a visitor monitoring system will be implemented to better understand the resource impacts of day and overnight use, restoration needs and visitor use patterns and needs. Indicators and standards for monitoring park resource conditions and visitor experiences in both summer and winter will be established based on findings. The information from these studies will be used in establishing the most appropriate management procedures for natural and cultural resource preservation related to visitor use, carrying capacities, visitor needs and desires, and facility development. The results of these studies will provide much needed information to make justifiable and defensible decisions related to resource preservation and visitor management.

Implementing the plan will also have net benefits for resources in many areas of the park relative to No Action. Parkwide actions or policies (see “Measures to Minimize Environmental Harm” below) particularly will help natural and cultural resources. Some of the specific actions in the plan, such as less dense zoning, fewer overnight sites, limiting party sizes, requiring permits for overnight use, and the possibility that undeveloped sites may be closed to prevent resource damage, will also offer benefits for soils, vegetation, water quality, wildlife and archeological resources.

## **MEASURES TO MINIMIZE ENVIRONMENTAL HARM (MITIGATION)**

Many of the actions described in the final GMP/EIS for the Modified Proposed Action (e.g. the Selected Alternative, or Plan) are geared toward minimizing harm to the park’s environmental resources or values. These are listed below:

### **PARKWIDE OR POLICY MEASURES**

1. Additional inventories of natural resources in the park would be completed to provide accurate baseline data.
2. A comprehensive inventory, monitoring and research program, including a monitoring program to track resource impacts related to park use, would be implemented.
3. Nonhistoric cabins that are vacated would be removed so that the sites could be restored to natural conditions, although evidence of habitation in the form of chimneys, foundations or similar remnants would remain to preserve the cultural resource.
4. Resource management plans for fisheries, water resources, vegetation, primitive area management, disturbed land restoration, trails, developed site management, inventory and monitoring, fire management, houseboat management and land protection would be completed or revised and updated as needed to more effectively manage and protect resources and preserve the existing visitor experience.
5. The park would act to shorten the time for forest communities to retain their natural ecological characteristics and processes and would aggressively combine prescribed fire and planting or seeding of native pine and mixed wood forests to promote these species and improve conditions in park wetlands.

6. The management of cultural resources would be more proactive than it is currently, particularly through the development and implementation of treatment plans. The most significant resources would be protected through formal monitoring and public education.
7. Information about overnight visitor use would be collected via a free required permit. This information would help park managers determine how best to accommodate demand without damaging resources.
8. The requirement to have a permit for overnight use of the park would be used to educate visitors on the practices of low-impact camping and park rules and regulations regarding fire use and campsites. This would help minimize disturbance to vegetation, wildlife, and water quality.
9. The existing special use zone would be continued. However, a permit would only be issued for activities that contribute to visitor understanding of the significance of the park area and have a meaningful association between the park area and the event would be allowed. Even these activities would be denied if they would impair park resources, create an unsafe or unhealthful environment or unreasonably interfere with the peace or natural soundscape or other park values. Snowmobile "radar runs" would be prohibited.
10. Pre-park campsites would be examined to ensure that they meet the criteria to provide a particular visitor experience and avoid damage to critical resources. Sites that do not meet these criteria would be restored to reverse resource damage, rehabilitated with proper visitor facilities, or closed if needed.

## **WETLANDS**

1. Wetlands would be identified and delineated. Adverse impacts would be avoided or mitigated, as required by law and NPS policy. Restoration for damaged or degraded wetlands would be considered.

## **VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE**

1. Expansion of visitor centers and parking lots would be minimized to reduce impacts to vegetation, wildlife, the visitor experience of a natural area and other resources.
2. A monitoring study of undeveloped sites to determine whether use was causing unacceptable resource damage to vegetation, soils, wildlife habitat or other resources would be conducted for three years. If the study finds use causes unacceptable adverse impacts, the use of undeveloped sites for overnight stays would be phased out or other strategies implemented.
3. No open fires in the primitive area of the park would be allowed starting in 2002, and all primitive campers would be required to obtain a permit where they would be educated on leave-no-trace practices.

## **WATER RESOURCES AND WATER QUALITY**

1. Sanitation system compliance certificates for blackwater containment would be required for all houseboats in park waters.
2. The National Park Service will continue to collect water quality data, and will use adaptive management practices to assure continued ecosystem integrity in park waters.
3. The park will study the effects of graywater discharge from houseboats in a houseboat management plan.

## **FISHERIES**

1. The park would work more closely with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Forest Service, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and other agencies to develop cooperative approaches to both fisheries and wildlife management.
2. The park would partner with the MDNR to develop a fisheries management plan emphasizing the maintenance and reestablishment of native, self-sustaining fish populations.

## THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES

1. The selected alternative is not likely to adversely affect listed, candidate, or proposed threatened or endangered species as the "adversely affect" is defined in the regulations implementing the Endangered Species Act. The National Park Service has received concurrence on this determination from the Twin Cities Field Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. However, implementation of the plan may involve specific projects or additional plans requiring consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Any action anticipated or conducted by the park that has the potential to adversely affect any listed, proposed or candidate threatened or endangered species would require such consultation and impacts avoided, minimized or otherwise mitigated.
2. The park intends to continue to use its authorities to protect wildlife of special concern when needed.
3. Measures to protect wildlife of special concern will continue to be implemented as needed.
4. Surveys to determine the presence of any federally listed, proposed or candidate plant species or state rare or sensitive species would be conducted for projects implemented as a result of adopting the plan. Any such plants discovered in project areas would be avoided and protected from human disturbance if possible. If not, consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to mitigate impacts would be initiated.

## SCENIC QUALITY

1. While a houseboat management plan is developed, an interim limit of 60 houseboats remaining overnight in the park in each basin would be implemented to minimize the visual impact to those not occupying houseboats.

## VISITOR EXPERIENCE OF SOLITUDE

1. Fewer developed sites than called for in existing plans would be built to provide a less crowded and more secluded lakeshore camping experience. All new sites must meet criteria in existing plans designed to provide this kind of experience and minimize impacts to critical resources.
2. The park would require groups to keep the party size at tent sites to between 9 and 18, depending on the individual site. The party size of houseboat groups would also be restricted.
3. The number of shoreline miles zoned to accommodate a high density of campsite development would be reduced from 270 miles to 130 miles.
4. Camping in the park's primitive areas would be restricted to groups no larger than six people per party.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. Voyageurs National Park has consulted with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office as required and has completed compliance for this stage of the process. Individual actions referred to in *the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement/Visitor Use and Facilities Plan* will require additional Section 106 compliance.
2. The park staff would seek greater involvement with Native Americans in planning, resource management and interpretation, and cultural resources associated with the history of tribes in the park would be protected.
3. All eligible cultural landscapes in the park would be documented.
4. Recommendations in the *Historic Waterway Study* would be implemented to protect and interpret significant features along the fur trade route.
5. Cultural ruins would be actively managed through vegetation control to slow their decline.
6. Impacts to archeological resources would be prevented by avoiding the area or hardening the surface if possible.

7. An estimated 16-20 (53% to 67%) of the park's historic properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places would be actively preserved.
8. Items representative of the park's natural, cultural and administrative history would be collected, recorded and safely housed.

## VISITOR SAFETY

1. Brochures and other outreach programs to educate visitors on boating etiquette would be created to minimize conflicts between motorized and nonmotorized uses.
2. Open fires would be allowed only in metal fire rings beginning in the summer of 2005.
3. Staffing would be added to expand visitor contact, resource protection and emergency response capabilities. Safety enforcement activities would be increased.
4. Trail segments on the Mukooda Lake and Moose Bay portages would be re-routed and consolidated to provide safer snowmobile access.

## IMPAIRMENT

The NPS manages land under its care according to provisions of the 1916 Organic Act (and amendments, including the NPS General Authorities Act of 1970). The key provision of the Organic Act is considered to be the statement that the NPS will manage its lands to "conform to the fundamental purpose" of them. That purpose is defined as "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." (16 USC 1) It is considered fundamental to management of the park then, that resources and values be conserved, and that they remain unimpaired throughout time for future generations to enjoy.

A resource or value may experience an impact without being impaired, as impairing a resource means its integrity would be harmed. Although there may be limited exceptions, generally an impairment would only occur in cases where a resource or value is expected to also experience a significant adverse impact.

The NPS Management Policies (2001, section 1.4.5) provide guidance on which resources and values are more likely to be considered impaired by actions with adverse impacts. These include those resources or values whose conservation is necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation of the park or key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park or to opportunities for enjoying the park.

The act establishing Voyageurs National Park indicates the "outstanding scenery, geological conditions and waterway system which constituted a part of the historic route of the Voyageurs who contributed significantly to the opening of the Northwestern United States" are to be preserved for all generations to enjoy. The actions included in the selected alternative, or "plan," would not compromise the integrity of the scenery, geological conditions or the route of the Voyageurs, and so would not result in an impairment of these resources.

The additional resources and values considered by the team in deciding whether the potential for impairment exists are defined in the NPS management policies (1.4.6) and include natural and cultural resources, as well as elements of the visitor experience such as solitude, peace and quiet and visual quality. Many other resources evaluated as part of the GMP/EIS planning process, such as park operations, socioeconomics and aspects of the visitor experience not mentioned above are not included in the impairment finding (see NPS 2001, section 1.4.6 for more information). Only those actions taken by the NPS or under its control are included in findings of impairment.

After careful consideration of all major impacts to these resources that might result from actions taken by the park in implementing the selected alternative, the team found that no impairment of park resources or values would occur. Very few resources would be expected to experience major or significant

environmental effects (see Table 7 and chapter 4 of volume 1 of the final GMP/EIS for more information) from implementing the selected alternative (named "Modified Proposed Action" in the GMP/EIS). Where major impacts are expected, they are nearly always either localized or the result of cumulative actions outside the park's authority to control. The "integrity" of the resource or value is therefore not at stake.

Examples of localized impacts include impacts to aquatic vegetation at the Daley Bay crossing to build the Kabetogama-Ash River trail, or to soils or terrestrial vegetation at some undeveloped sites. Examples of major impacts resulting from actions partially or completely outside NPS control include artificial regulation of water levels in the park's four large lakes and its impacts on park hydrology, aquatic vegetation and fisheries; cumulative degradation of air quality in the region of the park and in particular visibility; changes in park area vegetation and wildlife as a result of pre-park actions (such as logging and fire suppression); and possibly the management of fisheries populations, which is jointly conducted by the park, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and other agencies. To date, no major impacts to the park's sport fishery have been observed, and it is expected that through the return of more natural lake levels and the use of closures, slot limits and creation of spawning habitat to manage fisheries, no impairment of this resource is expected. The change in policies regarding lake level management will also benefit park hydrology, aquatic vegetation and wildlife. The selected alternative also includes measures aimed at reestablishing fire as a natural ecosystem process to the extent possible given visitor experience and safety constraints.

Cumulative impacts to water quality from motorized use of some of the park's lakes may have moderate to major parkwide impacts from polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (ecological toxins or human carcinogens at low concentrations) released as a result of internal combustion in two stroke engines. Although testing for the presence and/or impacts of PAHs on water quality and aquatic wildlife is needed to determine precise impacts, neither the park's water quality nor its fisheries resources appear to be in danger of impairment at this time. As noted in the final EIS (see Chapter 4, Impacts of Alternative 1-Fisheries, Conclusion): "The combination of these factors (PAH concentrations and other toxins, fishing pressure, global climate change and lake level changes) could have major adverse effects on the sport fishery. However, creel surveys indicate sport harvest remain relatively high, perhaps indicating the cumulative impact is not a major one, or that impacts are mitigated somewhat through closures, slot limits, creation of spawning habitat, and changes in water levels."

In addition, the final EIS (see chapter 4, Impacts of Alternative 1-Water Quality) indicates while no data on PAH levels in the park's lakes is available, studies of other lakes have indicated concentrations are directly correlated with the level of motorboat activities. Motorboat use comparable to that in the park has produced concentrations above EPA criteria for the protection of human health for some PAHs. Despite the possibility of larger-scale impacts from the toxic effects of PAHs, water quality generally remains high in the park, and is identified by the state of Minnesota as class A- that is, an outstanding resource exhibiting exceptional recreational and ecological values. The integrity of the water quality resource in the park is therefore intact and no impairment has occurred or is expected to occur in the future at the ½% per year increase predicted to occur over the life of the plan. In addition, improvements in engine technology are likely to reduce PAH concentrations over this same time period.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

More information on the public involvement process is available by reading chapter 5 of volume 1 of the final GMP/EIS (Consultation and Coordination), and in response to issue 1 of the topic titled "Planning Process" in volume 2 of the final GMP/EIS.

In summary, the NPS initially invited the public to help scope the GMP/EIS in August 1998 through an announcement in the Federal Register and through a newsletter distributed by mail and in park visitor centers. Scoping input sessions were also held during August in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Duluth, Orr and

International Falls. Comments made during the input sessions and written comments were summarized through a press release in December 1998.

The suggestions made by the public were used with information gathered by the NPS to develop three management approaches. These alternatives were sent out for public comment in May 1999 and public open houses held in June. The comments on these alternatives were used by the planning team to develop a fourth alternative, the draft proposed action.

The impacts of each of the four alternatives were analyzed by specialists and packaged as the Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. The draft EIS was released in June 2000 and mailed to all that had returned a postcard indicating they wished to receive the document. The team conducted public open houses in International Falls, Orr, Duluth and Minneapolis/St. Paul in July, 2000. Although the comment period was scheduled to close in August, it was extended twice and closed October 23, 2000.

The team responded to all comments that questioned facts or information that were substantive. Those that expressed an opinion for or against an alternative or action in an alternative were noted. Duplicate comments were combined. Similar comments were also combined for readability into "issues" under particular topics. The first 130 pages of volume 2 of the final GMP/EIS are two indexes to the team's responses to substantive comments. One is organized by topic and the other by author. These substantive letters are also reprinted in volume 2.

Notification of the availability of the final GMP/EIS was published on October 12, 2001 in the *Federal Register*.

**Recommended:** Barbara West **Effective Date:** Jan. 17, 2002  
 Barbara West, Superintendent  
 Voyageurs National Park

**Approved:** William W. Schenk **Effective Date:** 1/18/02  
 William W. Schenk, Regional Director  
 Midwest Region, National Park Service

## Appendix C: Project Timeline & Public Participation

<b>April 1998</b>	NPS formally begins to organize the Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement process.
<b>August 1998</b>	Notice of intent to prepare a General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement is published in the <i>Federal Register</i> ; <i>Newsletter 1: Scoping Phase</i> is distributed to the public and stakeholders.
<b>August 1998</b>	NPS conducts public scoping meetings in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Duluth, Orr, and International Falls.
<b>December 1998</b>	NPS distributes a statewide press release about the summary of comments heard during scoping.
<b>May 1999</b>	Management plan alternatives are distributed in an <i>Alternatives Response Booklet</i> (second newsletter).
<b>June 1999</b>	NPS conducts public open houses in International Falls, Orr, Duluth, and Minneapolis/St. Paul to receive public input on the draft management plan alternatives.
<b>August 1999</b>	End of public comment period and review of the draft management plan alternatives.
<b>September 1999</b>	NPS issues a press release entitled <i>Public Responds to Request for Comments on Voyageurs National Park Plan</i> that summarizes public comments on the draft management alternatives.
<b>June 16, 2000</b>	Notice of availability of the <i>Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan</i> is announced in the <i>Federal Register</i> .
<b>June 23, 2000</b>	Beginning of 60-day public review of <i>Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan</i> .
<b>July 10, 2000</b>	NPS distributes a statewide press release entitled <i>Public Invited to Open Houses on the Future of Voyageurs National Park</i> .
<b>July 24-27, 2000</b>	NPS conducts public open houses in International Falls, Orr, Duluth, and Minneapolis/St. Paul to receive public input on the <i>Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan</i> .
<b>August 10, 2000</b>	Public review period extended for 30 additional days to September 22, 2000.
<b>September 22, 2000</b>	Public review period extended for 30 additional days to October 23, 2000.
<b>October 23, 2000</b>	End of public review and comment period on the <i>Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan</i> .
<b>October 12, 2001</b>	Notice of availability of the <i>Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan</i> for 30-day no-action period announced in the <i>Federal Register</i> .
<b>November 10, 2001</b>	End of public comment period and review of the <i>Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan</i> .
<b>January 18, 2002</b>	The Regional Director, NPS, Midwest Region approves the <i>Record of Decision</i> for the <i>Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement and Visitor Use and Facilities Plan</i> for Voyageurs National Park.



## Appendix D: Projected Implementation Costs

NOTE: The following costs are 2001 general estimates and are not intended to be used as a budget document. Costs of implementing the plan will need to be further refined.

	GROSS CONSTRUCTION OR PROGRAM COSTS	ADVANCE AND PROJECT PLANNING COST	TOTAL COSTS
<b>Repair and Rehabilitation</b>			
Retain Historic Properties (16 - 20)	\$1,031,414	\$148,594	\$1,180,008
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,031,414</b>	<b>\$148,594</b>	<b>\$1,180,008</b>
<b>New Construction</b>			
<b>Structures/Sites/Features</b>			
Ash River Operations Area Expansion	\$265,500	\$38,250	\$303,750
Crane Lake Multi-Agency Visitor Center	\$472,000	\$68,000	\$540,000
Kettle Falls Workstation	\$147,500	\$21,250	\$168,750
Natural/Cultural Resource Visitor Destinations (15 - 20)	\$1,391,220	\$200,430	\$1,591,650
Nonmotorized Boat Launches (3)	\$53,100	\$7,650	\$60,750
Outdoor Exhibits at Ash River Visitor Center	\$153,400	\$22,100	\$175,500
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$2,482,720</b>	<b>\$357,680</b>	<b>\$2,840,400</b>
<b>Developed Overnight and Day Use Sites</b> (additional sites to be built)			
Small Tent Sites (17)	\$200,600	\$28,900	\$229,500
Large Tent Sites (12)	\$191,160	\$27,540	\$218,700
Houseboat Sites (30)	\$28,556	\$4,114	\$32,670
Day Use Sites (17)	\$63,720	\$9,180	\$72,900
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$484,036</b>	<b>\$69,734</b>	<b>\$553,770</b>
<b>Trails</b>			
Bike Lanes (4 miles)	\$410,640	\$59,160	\$469,800
Hiking Trails (15.5 miles)	\$256,060	\$36,890	\$292,950
Kabetogama to Ash River Trail (33 miles)	\$280,840	\$40,460	\$321,300
Ranta Bay Snowmobile Portage	\$59,000	\$8,500	\$67,500
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,006,540</b>	<b>\$145,010</b>	<b>\$1,151,550</b>
<b>Renovate Snowmobile Portages</b>			
Moose Bay Portage	\$11,800	\$1,700	\$13,500
Mukooda Snowmobile Portage	\$11,800	\$1,700	\$13,500
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$23,600</b>	<b>\$3,400</b>	<b>\$27,000</b>
<b>Studies/Plans</b>			
Archeological Resources Protection Plan			\$50,000
Campsite Monitoring Study			\$135,000
Comprehensive Interpretive Plan			\$125,000
Comprehensive Maintenance Program/Plan			\$75,000
Delineate Park Boundaries			\$200,000
Disturbed Land Restoration Plan			\$50,000
Education and Outreach Plan			\$20,000
Fisheries Management Plan			\$100,000
Houseboat Management Plan			\$250,000
Inventory and Monitoring Plan			\$30,000
Lakecountry and Backcountry Site Management Plan			\$50,000
Land Protection Plan			\$10,000
Media Development Plan			\$20,000
Natural Resource Monitoring			\$300,000
Overnight Permit System and Facility Use Fee Feasibility Study			\$270,000
Primitive Area and Proposed Wilderness Management Plan			\$50,000
Research Plan			\$50,000
Resource Management Plan			\$30,000
Trails Plan			\$50,000
Vegetation Management Plan			\$100,000
Water Resources Management Plan			\$64,000
Wildland Fire Management Plan			\$55,000
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>\$2,084,000</b>
<b>Programs</b>			
Interpretation of Voyageurs' Routes			\$10,000
Visitor Orientation Exhibits (at dockside)			\$60,000
Visitor Experience and Resource Monitoring			\$300,000
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>\$370,000</b>
<b>Staffing (increase)</b>			
Full-time employees (25)			\$1,386,106
Seasonal employees (22)			\$342,581
<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>\$1,728,687</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,028,310</b>	<b>\$724,418</b>	<b>\$9,935,415</b>

Total costs reflect both initial project costs and annual staffing costs for the duration of this plan.

## Glossary

**Ash River operations area:** park operations area located along the entrance road to the Ash River visitor center; maintenance operations use this area the most, but other divisions also use it.

**blackwater:** houseboat wastewater from onboard toilet facilities.

**boats-on-interior-lakes program (BOIL):** NPS-owned rowboats and canoes located on select interior lakes for use by visitors; visitors must reserve boats.

**cultural landscape:** a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. There are four general kinds of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: historic sites, historic designed landscape, historic vernacular landscape, and ethnographic landscape.

**cultural resources:** an aspect of a cultural system that is valued by or significantly representative of a culture or that contains significant information about a culture. A cultural resource may be a tangible entity or a cultural practice.

**day use site:** a developed site in Voyageurs National Park that cannot be used for overnight stays.

**endangered species:** a plant or animal that is in danger of becoming extinct throughout all or part of its range.

**environmental education:** programs that teach students of all ages and disciplines about the park's cultural and natural resources; usually means multiple contacts with the same group of learners; curriculum based education programs are tied to state graduation standards.

**ethnography:** part of the discipline of cultural anthropology concerned with the systematic description and analysis of cultural systems or lifeways, such as hunting, agriculture, fishing, other food procurement strategies, family life festivals and other religious celebrations.

**fire use:** the combination of wildland fire use and prescribed fire application to meet resource objectives.

**fixed-wing aircraft:** floatplane or ski plane configured aircraft.

**general management plan:** the broadest level of planning used by the National Park Service; provides an overall direction for future park management, as well as a framework for managers to use when making decisions about such things as park resources, visitor use, and facilities.

**graywater:** houseboat wastewater from onboard showers and sinks (kitchen and bathroom).

**group site:** a developed tent site in Voyageurs National Park that can accommodate a group of 30 people staying overnight; houseboaters are not allowed to use large campsites.

**historic district:** a geographically definable area, urban or rural, possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, landscapes, structures, or objects, united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical developments.

**historic property:** a district, site, structure, or landscape significant in American history, architecture, engineering, archeology, or culture; an umbrella term for all entries in the National Register of Historic Places.

**houseboat:** for the purposes of this plan, a motorized vessel that a person can walk through standing upright, from bow to stern, and that has sleeping facilities, a bathroom (permanent or portable), and cooking facilities. Sailboats and cabin cruisers are not included in this definition. The proposed houseboat management plan could further address or modify this definition.

**houseboat site:** a developed site in Voyageurs National Park for overnight use by houseboaters only; tent campers are not allowed to use houseboat sites.

**International Joint Commission:** established pursuant to the terms of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 between the United States and Canada; has regulatory authority over Rainy Lake and Namakan Reservoir.

**interpretation:** a communication process designed to reveal meanings and relationships of cultural and natural heritage to the public through first-hand experiences with objects, artifacts, landscapes, or sites; facilitating a connection between the interests of the visitor and the meaning of the park by explaining the park's purpose and significance; usually a single contact with a group or individual.

**large campsite:** a developed tent site in Voyageurs National Park that can accommodate up to 18 people staying overnight in tents; houseboaters are not allowed to use large campsites.

**management area:** park zones with specific visitor experience and resource protection guidelines.

**motorboat:** a boat propelled by an internal-combustion engine.

**Namakan District:** the land and water of the southern portion of the park.

**natural resources:** things that occur in their natural state - wildlife, water, forests, etc.

**no-wake:** operating a boat at a speed that does not cause waves behind the boat.

**nonhistoric cabin:** a building that is not significant in American history, architecture, engineering, archeology, or culture.

**outreach:** to go beyond the park boundary to develop partnerships with other organizations, other government entities, and members of the general public in order to build relationships that foster stewardship; actively provides information and programs to groups or individuals who are not park visitors.

**prescribed fire:** any fire ignited by management actions to meet specific objectives. A written, approved prescribed fire plan must exist, and requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act must be met, prior to ignition. This term replaces management ignited prescribed fire.

**preservation:** the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity and materials of a historic structure, landscape, or object; generally ongoing and involving repairs rather than extensive replacement and new work.

**proposed wilderness:** land recommended for designation as wilderness by Congress, based on a wilderness study submitted by a park or region, but which has not been approved by the Department and subsequently transmitted to Congress by the President; managed as to not diminish wilderness characteristics.

**Rainy District:** the northern section of the park that encompasses all areas of Rainy Lake and its surrounding lands in the park.

**restoration:** process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a historic property for a particular period of time; may involve removing features from other periods and adding missing features from the restoration period.

**rehabilitation:** the act or process of making possible an efficient, compatible use for a historic structure or landscape through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural or architectural values.

**sanitation system:** the blackwater wastewater system on a houseboat.

**scoping:** planning process that solicits people's opinions on the value of a park, issues facing a park, and the future of a park.

**small campsite:** a developed tent site in Voyageurs National Park that can accommodate up to 9 people staying overnight in tents; houseboaters are not allowed to use small campsites.

**state historic preservation officer:** an official within each state appointed by the governor to administer the state historic preservation program and carry out certain responsibilities relating to federal undertakings within the state.

**structures:** a constructed work, usually immovable by nature or design, consciously created to serve some human activity; examples include cabins, ruins, fences, and walkways.

**threatened species:** a plant or animal that is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future.

**treatment:** work carried out to achieve a particular historic preservation goal.

**visitor destination:** point of interest in the park established for day use visitation.

**visitor education:** conducting programs for park visitors or contacting visitors at visitor centers to teach them about park rules and regulations and to eventually influence their behavior in the park.

**visitor services:** providing information and assistance to park visitors to facilitate an enjoyable experience at the park (e.g., trip planning, emergency response, and naturalist programs); multiple opportunities for visitors to make intellectual and emotional connections to the park through such things as walks, talks, informal contacts, brochures, exhibits and other media; services may be provided on-site or off-site.

**Wilderness Recommendation:** the document resulting from the process to determine the suitability of all lands and waters within Voyageurs National Park for wilderness designation.

**wildland fire:** any non-structure fire, other than prescribed fire, that occurs in the wildland. This term encompasses fires previously called both wildfires and prescribed natural fires.

**wildland fire suppression:** an appropriate management response to wildland fire that results in the curtailment of fire spread and eliminates all identified threats from the particular fire. All wildland fire suppression activities provide for firefighter and public safety as the highest consideration, but minimize loss of resource values, economic expenditures, and/or the use of critical fire-fighting resources.

**wildland fire use:** the management of naturally ignited wildland fires to accomplish specific pre-stated resource management objectives in pre-defined geographic areas as outlined in fire management plans. Operational management is described in the Wildland Fire Implementation Plan (WFIP). *Wildland fire use* is not to be confused with *fire use*, which is a broader term encompassing more than just wildland fires.

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