



Community Newsletter, May 2023

Superintendent's Office

Here you will find information from our various teams for the month of April. We are working on making improvements to the monthly check-in and website in the coming year and will be continuing to use the monthly check-in to keep our communities in the loop on all things Voyageurs. For updates go to: <https://www.nps.gov/voya/learn/management/stateofthepark.htm>

It seems that May went from ice to the throws of summer in no time flat. Staff at the park participated in the Kabetogama Lake, Rainy Lake, and Crane Lake Association meetings, and held the annual Houseboat Operators meeting in preparation for the season.

We have been onboarding many summer seasonal staff, interns, and volunteers through the month. On 5/31 we hosted an all-employee orientation / picnic, providing permanent and seasonal staff the opportunity to meet each other.

Employee Spotlight

Each month the park will spotlight a different employee. May's spotlight is Jerry Warmbold.

Jerry began his career in biology as a Voyageurs National Park intern in 2009 studying double-crested cormorants. He enjoyed his time working at Voyageurs and living in Ash River so much that he came back in 2010 as a moose climate change intern and again in 2011 as a biological technician studying water quality.

Later, he moved to the desert southwest to work with desert tortoises and endangered fish species. It wasn't long until the trees and lakes called him back to Northern Minnesota. In 2013, Jerry worked as a seasonal wildlife technician at the park, then ventured to earn a master's degree, get married, have two kids, and eventually return seven years later as the park's ecologist and wetland restoration project manager.

Jerry can be found among the cattails operating equipment or surveying vegetation and marsh birds, or, behind his computer ensuring that all aspects of the wetlands restoration project go smoothly and remain funded to continue the important work of restoring some of the most beautiful landscapes in Minnesota.

Outside of work, he enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking, and kayaking, however, most of his free time is spent raising kids and fixing things on his hobby farm.

Administration and Business Services Team

The Administrative Team has been onboarding seasonal staff this past month. They assist Interpretation, Resource Management, and Facilitates for the arrival of new seasonals, volunteers, and interns.

The team is working with other divisions in the park to facilitate an Interagency agreement with the USCG, an Agreement with the International Joint Commission and agreements with the State of Minnesota.

Natural and Cultural Resources

The team welcomed a variety of new and returning staff this summer.

Equipment is being prepped for coldwater fish habitat and amphibian monitoring. 10 wetland areas will be monitored near Rainy Lake and the Namakan Reservoir this month.

Songbird surveys are being conducted throughout the park in the early mornings.

The team is ramping up for decontamination stations at Kettle Falls this summer.



Interpretation, Education, and Recreational Overnight Permits Team

Voyageurs Conservancy worked with the park to host more than 500 students in May at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. A quote from a local teacher says it all, *“I can’t say enough good things about the programs that Ranger Jesse and Ranger Moss have created for our students. They are unmatched in student engagement, management, and learning! Keep up the Amazing work!”*

Visitor Centers opened park wide on May 26 and saw an influx of visitation over the Memorial Day Weekend. The centers will be open 7-days a week through the summer, from 9 – 5.

The team welcomed a total of 21 Interpreters and Volunteers aboard this year and spent three weeks training them on visitor center operations, boat tours, and orienting them to the resources and facilities of the park.

Boat tours start the week of June 11 on Rainy Lake and June 20 on the Namakan Basin. Reservations are highly recommended and may be booked by going to www.recreation.gov. Ellsworth Rock Garden tours depart from the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center through July. Please pay special attention to tour departure areas.

Reservations made as of June 1 for the following seasons:			
	2021	2022	2023
Camping Reservations	3893	3557	3224
Camping Visitors	19721	17872	16133
Houseboat Reservations	814	532	550
Houseboat Visitors	4729	3234	3178

Visitor and Resource Protection Team

Protection Rangers taught Water Safety at the annual Outdoor Education Days with the International Falls 6th graders.

Buoys were placed soon after ice out on all major lakes.

The team worked with the U.S.C.G. and the C.G. Auxiliary for water safety inspections at the various boat launches. Visitors were actively involved with good participation.

Staff attended and taught various required annual training opportunities.

Facilities Team

Six volunteers from the Rainy Lake Medical Center assisted the team this month with grounds clean up at the Rainy Lake Visitor Center.

Maintenance staff in the Namakan Basin have almost completed the Ash River Visitor Center boat launch docks. Final touches are being put on this month.

Floating docks have all been hooked up at campsites for the summer season.

Further campsite conditions assessments related to the 2022 flood were done this month.