

A Brief History of the Isle Royale Boaters Association

In June of 1996, a small group of dedicated boaters formed the Isle Royale Boaters Association (IRBA). From these small roots we have grown to a membership of over 750 individuals in 23 states and Canada. IRBA is a not for profit association qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

IRBA's mission, from the beginning, is to educate, represent, and promote the interests of power and sail boaters, sport fishermen, canoeists, kayakers, backpackers, and all visitors of Isle Royale National Park. We are involved in Isle Royale issues including educating the public about Isle Royale, performing neglected National Park Service maintenance, and working to preserve Isle Royale as the nation's only maritime park, as it was originally created to be.

Beginning in 1996 and during the development of the General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS) for Isle Royale National Park, IRBA representatives met with park management and submitted detailed comments. When the official comment periods for the "final" GMP were open, the IRBA submitted official written objections and substantive comments.

The Record of Decision approving the GMP/EIS for Isle Royale National Park was signed on May 11, 1999. The decision approving the plan left IRBA no choice but to bring suit against the National Park Service seeking to rectify the glaring inadequacies of the final GMP/EIS.

In June of 1999, members of the IRBA went to Belle Isle and repaired and painted the pavilion. They also made major repairs to the fireplace at the pavilion. All of this work at Belle Isle was done at IRBA's expense. In September 1999, another group of IRBA volunteers undertook similar repairs of the Daisy Farm pavilion.

In August of 1999, the IRBA filed suit against the National Park Service to block implementation of the GMP/EIS for Isle Royale National Park. Oral arguments on the case were heard by U.S. District Court Judge Gordon J. Quist on April 20, 2001, in the U.S. District Court in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

On September 30, 1999, the IRBA provided testimony to Congress on two very important bills. The first was H.R. 1864, "Public Hearing and Standardization Act of 1999" and the second was H.R. 1866, "Public Appeals Parity Act". IRBA, along with two other groups, provided background on "bureaucracies out-of-control" and the need for these two bills to become law.

On July 20, 2000, the IRBA was requested to appear before oversight hearings of the US House of Representative's Congressional Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands. The fact that these hearings are even necessary only substantiates IRBA's position of "bureaucracies out of control" and the need for the IRBA v. NPS lawsuit.

On June 6, 2001, U.S. District Court Judge Gordon J. Quist, issued an Opinion and Order which ruled against the Isle Royale Boaters Association and in favor of the National Park Service. Although Judge Quist ruled for the NPS, the Judge affirmed a major point of IRBA; namely, that the Senate Committee language of 1976 has the force of law.

On August 3, 2001, the IRBA filed a notice of appeal to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit from the Opinion and Order entered by U.S. District Judge Quist. The decision to file the Notice of Appeal was taken after the July IRBA meeting at Isle Royale.

The IRBA continues to be involved with the Isle Royale National Park. Schedules of meetings and fund raising activities, as well as recreational events, can be found on this web site.