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Newsletter June 2007

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A newsletter to inform the members of ongoing activities within the Isle Royale Boater's Association, promote discussion among its members on various IRBA issues and share members' experiences related to boating, sport fishing, hiking, canoeing, and kayaking.

NPS - LOW WATER AROUND ISLE ROYALE CALLS FOR CAUTION

By Liz Valencia - NPS

Water levels at near record lows are affecting access to docks and harbors at Isle Royale, announced Isle Royale Superintendent, Phyllis Green. "We are reminding all boaters to be extremely careful when motoring or sailing around the island this year, especially early in the season".

Park Rangers on spring patrol in late April and early May surveyed and recorded depths at docks in the park and found that that many are very shallow and have limited docking spaces available. For example, on the East end, the Tobin Harbor docks and the dock at Three Mile are very shallow. The water at the dock at Caribou Island campground is 3 to 7 ft deep. At Duncan Narrows, another campground popular with boaters, the water is only 2.5 to 3.5 ft deep. Despite the low water levels, the docks in the Rock Harbor marina are still sufficient for docking larger vessels. At the Rock Harbor gas dock the depth is 7.5 ft. At the West end of

the island, boaters also need to be careful at the docks at Grace Island campground and Beaver Island campground. The park will be posting maps and photos from spring patrol showing water depths and conditions at the docks. These maps and photos were accurate as of mid-May. They can be viewed at the park website, www.nps.gov/isro. (They can also be viewed on the IRBA website).

Along with the shallow water at the docks, boaters also need to watch for large rocks and boulders that are now at or very near the surface. Chief Ranger Larry Kangas is encouraging boaters to go slow and be very cautious when approaching docks and motoring into and out of harbors. With the water being down more than a foot from last summer, there are many spots where boaters might need to approach a dock differently than they have in the past due to large rocks and shallower shoals. Rangers are advising boaters to approach each dock as if they haven't been there before. For example, while Beaver Island has around 2.5 feet of water at the dock, there are large

boulders on the approaches to the dock that boaters really need to watch out for.

At many dock sites, cribbing is exposed and at some places there are metal or log projections underneath the docks that were submerged in previous years. Chief Ranger Kangas is recommending that boating and sailing visitors bring extra lines that can be used for spring lines, extra fenders, and especially ball fenders to keep boats from rubbing against docks.

Even at docks with sufficient water depth for docking, there can be other problems. Some of the docks have large gaps between the bottom of the sideboards and the surface of the water, so visitors with smaller boats especially need to be careful when docking or leaving a boat tied up to make sure that it will not drift up and under the sideboards. Boaters should also be aware that due to the low water, getting in and out of your boat onto the dock will require a much higher climb or drop. Use extra care and caution to avoid falls or injuries.

Superintendent Green notes that unless the water comes up measurably during the next couple of months, there will be less dockage available parkwide this summer, so visitors will need to be careful and also considerate when docking.

Low water levels are impacting the passenger ferry service operating from Minnesota. Due to shallow water in Grand Portage, the Grand Portage- Isle Royale Transportation Line is not planning to run their vessel *Wenonah* right now, and may not be able to run it for the season unless the water levels rise sufficiently. They are still operating the *Voyageur II*, however, which is a smaller vessel with a shallower draft. The larger *Wenonah's* draft is too deep to get into the shallow harbor and marina at Grand Portage. The water depth is not affecting the

Ranger III, which will be starting passenger service on June 1, or the *Isle Royale Queen IV*, which has already started providing passenger service on Mondays and Fridays. The *Queen IV* will begin their summer schedule of 5 trips per week starting June 2, with trips every day beginning July 16.

A Few Dock Pictures

By Dave Hand

Shown below are a few pictures supplied by the park service this early spring. The docking facilities are not a pretty site. As discussed above, the NPS has diagrammed the docks and measured the depths around the docks. These sketches may be very valuable when deciding where to dock this summer. We have posted them on the IRBA website for you to download and print out for your convenience. If you have problems, email me at dwhand@mtu.edu and I can send you what dock diagrams I have available.



Beaver Island Dock



Caribou Island Dock



Chippewa Harbor Dock



Duncan Narrows Dock



Birch Island Dock



Grace Island Dock



Windigo Dock



McCargo Cove Dock

IRBA SURVEY 2007
By Dave Hand

To date we have received 75 responses to the IRBA survey. I have tallied the results so far and will present them in the next newsletter. So if you have not sent your survey form back, please do so soon as possible as your voice in the organization is crucial in providing direction for the organization.

Annual Island Meeting

by Dave Hand

The IRBA annual Isle Royale Meeting this year is scheduled for Saturday, July 14, 2007, 3 PM at the new Windigo Pavilion. We have decided to have the meeting at Windigo this year to coincide with the Windigo Pavilion dedication at the meeting. The pavilion dedication will be in honor of the late IRBA member Dave Johnson. A plaque will be erected on the pavilion in his honor.

After the meeting the IRBA will hold a fish fry at the pavilion for any hungry soul on the east end of the island. It is always a great time to relax and enjoy the island, rub fenders with your fellow members, and talk about those past island boating adventures. See you there !

Fifth Annual Fishing Tournament

By Dave Hand

For you fishermen, we will be holding the 5th Annual IRBA Fishing Tournament on Saturday morning (July 14) from sunrise to 2:00 PM. The tournament is a fundraiser with a cash prize for the boat that reels in the three largest lake trout by weight. The cash prize will be one half of the tournament proceeds. Plaques will be awarded to the first and second place teams with the three largest fish and a trolling plaque for the three largest fish (Plaques courtesy of John Evans). A plaque will also be given for the largest fish caught. This year the entry fee will be \$10.00 per person.

This year we will also have a new award called the "Wooden Herring Award," which will be an award that is given to either the Minnesota fishermen or the Michigan fishermen for the three largest fish by weight. The trophy will be a traveling trophy and carry the bragging rights for the year.

Entry request must be made by 7 PM on Friday, July 13 (Yup ! Friday the 13th). Dave Hand (Dr. Trout) will be at Windigo Dock to take the entry request by marine radio or in person. The entry fee can be paid before the day of the tournament or at the time of weigh-in as long as you have made the entry request. If you have questions please contact Dave Hand.

Again this year, Buck LeVasseur from TV6 News in Marquette Michigan will be on hand to capture all the fishing excitement.

IRBA Scheduled Events

IRBA West End Fundraiser - Thursday, June 14, 2007, 5 PM (Central Time) Lakeview Castle, Duluth, MN

IRBA Annual Island Meeting - Saturday, July 14, 2007, 3 PM (Eastern Time) Windigo Pavilion, Isle Royale, MI.

IRBA Membership Renewal and Address Change

If you need to update your membership please do so as soon as possible. We value your support and input to the organization.

Articles for Newsletter consideration are welcome. ----

*Please support your IRBA
PO Box 97
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