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Newsletter

January 2005

- IR Draft Backcountry Management Plan
- High Fuel Prices on Isle Royale
- IRBA Scheduled Events
- IRBA West End News
- Second Annual IRBA Isle Royale Trout Fishing Tournament Results
- First Annual Rock Harbor Fish Fry
- IRBA Life Member Receives Park Award
- IRBA Directory Information
- The Fourth Annual Walleye Challenge

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.

IR DRAFT BACKCOUNTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN - ED GLOWACKI

On December 28, 2004 the National Park Service released the long awaited "Draft Wilderness and Backcountry Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement" for Isle Royale. This Draft WBMP/EIS is a 244 page document that will decide how the land and waters of Isle Royale are regulated in the future. The following are the two most significant areas affecting boaters.

Backcountry Permits:

A mainland based central permitting office would be established. Under this system, visitors would be required to get backcountry permits in advance of reaching the park. Permits would continue to be issued as flexible itineraries for parties of 1-6 people who were camping, anchoring out, or spending a night at a dock. However, permits would no longer be issued over a campground's [docks] capacity (pg 58).

Boaters would have 2 permit options:

- 1) Go through the advanced permitting system to get a permit to be able to use shelters or campsites [or docks],...with permits limited by campsite [dock] availability; or
- 2) If permits for shelters or campsites are no longer available, wait until within 48 hours of starting a trip and get a permit for dock space or anchoring out, without the option of using a campsite or shelter. A planned itinerary would still be required, preventing overbooking dock space (pg 58).

The NPS would explore various options for funding the Backcountry Office. Options include: 1) applying for NPS special project funds, 2) soliciting funds through the user-fee program with the NPS, 3) increasing the daily user fee at Isle Royale to cover costs (i.e. temporarily increasing the daily fee by

\$2 or \$3), and/or instituting a non-refundable permitting fee. (pg 60-61)

Visitor Use Levels:

- 1) Spring (April 16-June 15): limit the number of camping parties to not exceed 20% of park's total camping capacity.
- 2) Summer (June 16-Sept 15): visitation would be managed as necessary so not more than 5% of parties per night need to double up in overcrowded campgrounds.
- 3) Fall (Sept 16-Oct 31): visitation within the existing ferry schedules and capacities, with only one ferry transporting passengers twice a week to and from the park. This would retain the fall as a low-use time, but still allow for some increase in visitation (pg 57).

Once we have thoroughly analyzed the WBMP/EIS we will send members our assessment. The plan should soon be available at the NPS's Isle Royale website www.nps.gov/isro/planform.htm (as of 1/4/2005 it had not been posted). Also by calling Isle Royale offices at 906-482-0986 you can request a plan be sent to you.

There is a 60 day comment period on this draft plan.

HIGH FUEL PRICES ON ISLE ROYALE- DAVE HAND

In September, IRBA met with IR park Superintendent, Phyllis Green to discuss mutual interests in park issues related to boating. One of those issues was the recent SURGE in gas prices on IR. This past summer the gas price at Rock Harbor reached an all time high of \$ 4.33 per gallon. IRBA pointed out that one of the

reasons the boater traffic is at an all time low at the park is because the price of fuel is too expensive for many boaters and fishermen. IRBA asked Superintendent Green what the National Park Service (NPS) can do to help make the fuel prices more affordable. She did not know what could be done and said the \$ 0.89 per gallon hauling fee could not be picked up by the park service. IRBA suggested that maybe the park service would take over the fuel services at Mott Island or Rock Harbor. Superintendent Green thought that may not be a large savings because they would have to have a person on duty to distribute the fuel. IRBA suggested that maybe a credit card self service pump could be installed and boaters pump their own gas. A self service would eliminate the concessionaires 20 % surcharge and profit on the fuel as well as paying a full time attendant. Superintendent Green said she would look into the possibility and see if there are any regulations that would prohibit self serve gas at a dock in a National Park. IRBA has an upcoming meeting with Superintendent Green in Mid January. At the December IRBA meeting held at the Range Snowmobile Club in South Range, A Committee consisting of Fred Beiti and Dave Jukuri was formed to look into the excessive fuel charges on IR and try to find a way to reduce them.

IRBA SCHEDULED EVENTS

February 16 - 20, 2005. Stop in and see us at the joint IR and IRBA booth at the Duluth Boat Show.

March 10, 2005, 7 PM - IRBA Meeting to be held at the Range Snowmobile Club in South Range, MI. We urge you to come and participate in association business and just plain conversation.

May 2005 Annual Meeting - The date for the meeting will be determined at the March 10, 2005 meeting.

June 16, 2005 - IRBA Annual West End Dinner and Fund Raiser at the Lake View Castle in Duluth, MN. There will be more information on this event in the next newsletter.

July 16, 2005 - Annual IRBA on Isle Royale. We hope to hold the 2nd annual fish fry and the 3rd annual Isle Royale fishing tournament on this Saturday. There will be more information on these events in the coming newsletters.

IRBA WEST END NEWS - DWANE "BEAR" FALCONER

Even though the boating season is long gone and the snow is piling up outside, there is a lot that is happening in the IRBA and there's much to prepare for. Beginning February 16th and running through Sunday, the 20th, we are once again sponsoring a booth at the annual boat show in Duluth at the DECC. Members from Michigan will be joining us this year and we look forward to another informative and fun time. We encourage and hope to visit with you there!

A major focus for the Western IRBA this past year has been the planning of a pavilion at Windigo on Isle Royale. Things are moving along and the blue prints for the structure are currently being reviewed by the park service for approval. We hope to move forward quickly with this project and see it's completion by the end of this summer. There is still much planning, work and some financing which is needed. We thank you for your continued interest and support.

In June, the Western IRBA is again looking forward to the annual banquet held at the Lakeview Castle just north of Duluth. This event promises to be as entertaining and successful as those in the past. So, mark your

calendars and keep your eyes open for further details.

Finally, we are all looking forward to the annual meeting at Rock Harbor. Last year a great time was had by all, and the food was fabulous. We thank our more eastern members from the U.P. for all their efforts and hard work.

This year however, there is an additional and exciting opportunity for those planning to attend. Round trip passage to Isle Royale via the Keweenaw Star will be available once again. Many of us remember the amazing trip in 2003 and can hardly wait to ride the waves with Fred Funkey again.

If you would like to get involved, or just wish to keep informed on a more regular basis, the Western IRBA invites and encourages all members, and non members alike to attend our monthly meetings. Join us on the first Monday of every month at the Lakeview Castle beginning at 7:00p.m. All these previously mentioned events, happenings and more will be discussed. If you would like more information about upcoming events or are interested in volunteering, please contact Dwane Falconer at 218-349-5600. ---

SECOND ANNUAL IRBA ISLE ROYALE TROUT FISHING TOURNAMENT RESULTS- DAVE HAND

The Second Annual IRBA Isle Royale Trout Fishing Tournament was held at Snug Harbor on Saturday, July 17, 2004. The weather was near perfect with sunny skies, temperatures in the middle 70's and calm winds.

The rules of the tournament were each boat entered in the tournament would provide the highest total weight of three fish caught between sunrise and 2PM with weigh-in at Snug Harbor. The fish caught were donated to the fish fry at Rock Harbor Lodge (see story below). A trophy and the bragging rights were given to the boat with the highest total weight.

Trophies were given to second and third place winners, and the largest fish taken. A trophy was also given for the three largest fish taken by trolling. IRBA member, John Evans (Lanse, MI) donated trophies for the event for the second year. Thanks Much John!

Again this year, most of the fishermen headed to the east end of the island and fished between North Government Island and Passage Island with some going out to the famed Gull Rock fishing grounds. Last year's first place winner the "Miss Laurie" headed to their secret bobbing hole in an attempt to repeat as the champ. However, this year they were upset by the "Miss Conduct" and crew [Jim Markham (Captain), Rodney Markham, Joe Asiala, Scott Hyrkas and Mike McMurphy]. The "Miss Conduct" took first place with the three largest fish caught weighing 15.6, 14.8, and 14.1 lbs for a total weight of 44.5 lbs (bobbing). The "Miss Laurie" and crew [John Evans (Captain), Mike LeClaire and John Messer Jr.] took second place with their three largest fish weighing 21.1, 10.0, and 8.1 lbs. for a total weight of 39.3 lbs (bobbing). However, the "Miss Laurie" retained the trophy for the largest fish as John Messer caught a 21.1 lb whopper. The "Terra II" and crew [Biddle Almlie (Captain) and Hube Campeau] placed third with a catch of 10.1, 9.9 and 9.1 lbs for a total weight of 29.4 lbs (bobbing). In addition to trophies, cash prizes of \$ 75 (first place), \$ 50 (second place) and \$ 25 (largest fish) were awarded.

The "Dr. Trout" and crew [Dave Hand (Captain), John Kappler and Rob Fritz] took the trolling trophy with a catch of 9.2, 6.2 and 4.0 for a total weight of 19.4 lbs.



John Kappler (right) awarding the first place trophy and prize money to the Miss Conduct Captain Jim Markham (middle) and Joe Asiala (left) . .



John Kappler awarding the second place trophy to the Crew of the Miss Laurie, Mike LeClaire (right), John Evans (middle) and John Messer (left) . .



Third place winners of the Terra II, Biddle Almlı (right) and Hube Campeau (left).



John Messer holding the largest laker caught in the tournament.

Overall, the tournament was a great success with a lot of participation from IRBA members. About \$ 200 in tournament proceeds were raised for the IRBA general fund. IBRA thanks the fishermen for their participation. The

tournament is in the planning stages for third annual tourney and suggestions are welcome. ----

FIRST ANNUAL ROCK HARBOR FISH FRY- DON HANNULA

When planning the July Boaters' Association Meeting at Rock Harbor, it was decided to have the fishing tournament again. We decided to go one step further and have a fish fry after the tournament, weigh-in, and meeting. As with any first- time event, it was unknown how many to plan for. We decided to keep it simple and ordered coleslaw, tossed salad, and cold pop from the concessions; thus cutting down on the more perishable items that we would have to bring from the mainland. We brought over frozen Freedom fries, peanut oil, seasonings, fryers, and the desire to put on a heck of a fish fry.

When signing up the 10 boats for the tournament, we asked that the fishermen donate some fillets for the fish fry. They came through with flying colors. A special thanks to Scott Hyrkas for filleting all the fish for the fish fry. We also put the word out several weeks earlier that members could bring a dessert for after the meal. The lady boaters sure filled the bill. We had lemon bars, brownies, cakes, and cookies.

Thanks to John Evans and crew, Dave Hand and Don Hannula, two fryers for the fish and one for the French fries were going at full capacity. Once we had several batches done, we rang the dinner bell. Hungry people kept coming and coming. I didn't think there were that many people in Rock Harbor. The meal was open to everyone. When finished, we had fed over 80 people. One youth group from Minnesota had just come off of the trails from several days of volunteer work. They were hot and hungry. President Dave Hand invited them for seconds and they were smiling from ear to ear. When everyone ate their fill, the same group asked if

they could do the cleanup. I guess there are a lot of good kids in the world yet.

We did have an unexpected guest that was not allowed to eat - a young moose (see picture below) came within 30 feet of the fryers; kept his nose in the air smelling the hot peanut oil. After the cleanup, a mother fox and two kits came out of the underbrush and were licking the ground where the fryers were set up.



IR moose looking for handout.

It was a great meal on a beautiful day with fantastic scenery. For some reason people were too busy eating and there were not many pictures taken of the event except for one shown below of some happy boaters. In review of the event, we will make improvements for July 2005. Everyone mark your calendar, our next Island Boaters' Meeting will be held on July 16, 2005, at Rock Harbor. Bring your appetite. --



IRBA members Pat Siler, Mary Drew, Carol Drew, and Deb Hannula

IRBA LIFE MEMBER RECEIVES RECOGNITION FROM ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK

IRBA life member Dr. David H. Gilbert, retired General Surgeon, received the Presidential Volunteer-In-Park award from the National Park Service for his over 30 years of dedicated service as the Sponsoring Physician for Isle Royale National Park. The award is the highest available for such service. Dr. Gilbert has hiked and boated the park for decades.

The entire IRBA organization would also like to thank Dr. Gilbert for his many years of service to the park by helping many boaters, hikers, kayakers, canoeists and park employees in need of medical attention.



Park Ranger, Liz Valencia presenting the Presidential Volunteer-In-Park award to Dr. David Gilbert. --

IRBA DIRECTORY INFORMATION -MARK RUDE

In response to a number of member inquiries IRBA will be making an IRBA membership directory list which will be available to members at their request. The membership list will be distributed ONLY to the membership participating in the directory. Recognizing that some may wish to remain anonymous, only those

members indicating a desire to be listed would be included in the directory. Additionally, if you wish to be included in the directory only the information filled in on the enclosed form would appear in the directory. If you wish to participate in and receive the directory fill out the enclosed form and send to:

IRBA Directory
PO Box 97
Houghton MI. 49931

Only those submitting the enclosed form would be included in the directory and receive a copy. IRBA would appreciate your input, and be assured the directory would be made available only to participating members at their request.--

4TH ANNUAL LAKE WHITTLESEY WALLEYE CHALLENGE - DAVE TURNQUIST

The 4th annual Lake Whittlesey Walleye Challenge was again a success. This year, the teams decided to make it a two day event, a decision that would later haunt the team of Doctor Trout and company.

The teams consisted of the usual members for Doctor Trout and the AwggieDawg, with Doc Trout himself opting to go it alone in a kayak provided by Don Hannula. On day one, the bite was a little slow due to foul weather. A few walleyes were being caught, but most of them were small and had to be thrown back. Team Doctor Trout managed to catch a couple keepers that day, leading team AwggieDawg after a day one bust. However, an interesting event occurred on day one when Adam Downs, first mate of the AwggieDawg, managed to catch a couple small walleyes on top water plugs. I have never heard of such a thing, but after two days, Adam was able to produce 7 fish on top water plugs similar to buzz baits. Since the bite was slow, this allowed the opportunity to explore the lake beyond previous outings in search of fish.

Revealed was a mid lake hump, a deeper region on the far west end, and lots of weeds if you know where to look for them.

Day two lead both teams immediately away from non-productive areas into the "zone", an area that gave up large numbers of big fish the previous year. This region of the lake again yielded nice numbers of fish for team AwggieDawg including 2 triples, or 3 fish on at one time. The fishing was still a bit slow, but the pattern was established and it worked for most of the day. The pattern of the day was similar to last year, dead drifting jigs. The twist to this pattern came in the form of bait relationship to the bottom. The fish wanted a presentation where the jig was dragged about 2 feet off the bottom with little or no additional action added. Dragging lures directly on the bottom produced no fish, but the ultimate pattern had yet to be discovered. Doc Trout himself got caught up in the action with a nice walleye for his team, but the planets were aligned on this day, and the tables soon turned on team Doctor Trout. Later that afternoon, team AwggieDawg discovered walleyes, lots of them, in five feet of water in the weeds.

Still dead drifting, the Dawg team decided to take a chance on an area that just didn't seem good for walleyes. The day was sunny, winds were calm due to the protection of the trees, and waters were shallow and clear...not usually a good place for mid-day eyes. To this group's surprise, the walleyes were holding tight to the base of the weed beds, shooting out for a bite as the jigs drifted through them. One pass produced 6 fish for the stringer with at least that many lost on the way to the canoe. Alas, the real pattern of the day was discovered, only it was a bit too late. You see, this was the final pass for the day, and this team was on its way to the fish cleaning station at Rock Harbor. The final two day tally? Team Trout 3, Team Dawg 12.

Once again, these two teams fought a hard battle to out fish the other, but luck can play a major role in these things sometimes. The key to this kind of fishing is to quickly try everything until a pattern is established. If no pattern can be established and the bite is slow, finesse fishing with tiny jigs may be the only way to go. Don't overlook anything since there can be different patterns for different parts of the lake. Fish in deeper waters may prefer a jig bounced off the bottom while those residing in shallow waters may prefer a crank bait or fast action lure. The key is to establish the patterns early so you can exploit them over a period of time. Keep in mind, if the fishing action suddenly quits, it may be due to a change in pattern, not fish movement. Fish patterns often change by the hour, so you may need to adjust your tactics to suit the change in attitude. Either way, team Dawg has some advice for team Trout for next year...

...you need a Big Dawg in your boat.
Good fishing, we'll keep you informed of other fishing developments on Isle Royale.---

Articles for Newsletter consideration are welcome. ----

*Please support your IRBA
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