

Isle Royale Boaters Association

July 2002 Newsletter

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2002 Island Meeting

Announcement

The annual summer island meeting is Saturday, July 20th at 1:00 p.m. The meeting will be at Isle Royale's Rock Harbor Lodge with a lunch following the meeting.

IRBA Officials Meet with IR Superintendent Again

by Fred Bieti

Jim Markham, Dave Jukuri and Fred Bieti met with Superintendent Phyllis Green on May 9, 2002, at the Park Service office. When asked if she was for or against boating on Isle Royale she immediately replied she is "for" boating. Superintendent Green indicated she is concerned with the drop in boater visitation at Isle Royale favors multiple-use at Isle Royale. Superintendent Green is looking into a registration policy that would allow registration by phone or voice mail. IRBA offered to take an e-mail survey of its members. The survey showed an overwhelming desire for a more boater friendly registration process. The survey indicated a return to the practice of registering boaters at locations closer to destination campground sites and a limited use Boaters Pass of 7 to 15 days would be a welcome addition to the Annual Boaters Pass and would improve the Registration Process greatly, while, at the same time, save fuel, time and reduce the alleged "boat noise."

NOTE: Beginning May 23rd, boaters can pay their Isle Royale user fees and obtain camping permits for Isle Royale at the Gunflint Ranger Station in the Superior National Forest, located in Grand Marais, Minnesota. The Gunflint Ranger Station, located at 2020 West Highway 61 in Grand Marais.

While noting the NPS concerns about visitors, the following facts cannot be overlooked.

- Gasoline prices are higher than ever been at \$3.30 per gallon.
- The utility surtax remains unaffordable - 22% at Rock Harbor and 34% at Windigo.
- The seaplane service has been discontinued, for the first time in 37 years - or more.

IRBA Members Can Get a 15% Discount on Dockage Fees

Announcement

IRBA approached the concessions manager requesting a discount on boat dockage on Isle Royale and was pleased to announce that the concessionaire offered IRBA members a 15% discount. NOTE: You must request the discount.

Gas Prices Soar for Isle Royale Visitors

by Don Hannula

Well, hope you are sitting down. Gas prices at Rock Harbor, as of June 5, 2002 are \$3.295..per gal. I topped off my tank on Monday June 3, 2002 and paid \$2.81 per gal. Came back on Thursday and found that the price had climbed to \$3.295 per gal. First word that came to my mind? WHY?

I talked to the manager of concessions. He said a new shipment via gas barge had come in and the price is adjusted to reflect his costs. He explained that the NPS had raised their shipping price per gal. from \$.55 to \$.89. Also that this year the surcharge at concessions is 22% versus 15% last year. Gas prices at the pump here in Lake Linden are \$1.49 and in Houghton/Hancock are \$1.54. So you do the math. Looks like the boaters are getting gouged to me. Looks like a profit of \$.40 plus cents per gal!! Lets break it down a little.

Take the surcharge. The manager advised he takes the costs of utilities, water, sewage and electricity, in Houghton/Hancock and compares them with what the NPS charges him at Isle Royale and comes up with the surcharge(difference). The surcharge this year is 22%. That 22% is tacked onto everything that Concessions sells or charges for on the island.

Transportation costs: The following is how the NPS comes up with \$.89 per gal.

- 25% of wages and benefits for tug operator and deckhand - \$21,392
- Training and materials for maintenance of Greenstone Gas Barge - \$2,817
- Fuel to operate tug for 80.0 hours of gas runs - \$808
- Share of training and materials for tug maintenance (42.1% of \$9320.61) - \$3,924
- 1998 dry-dock & inspection of gas barge (\$32,779/ year 4 of 5) - \$6,556
- Subtotal of direct costs - \$35,497
- Admin. cost (15% of total direct costs) - \$5,325
- Subtotal direct cost and Admin. cost - \$40,822
- Operating cost adjustment (year 2002 wage increase of 4.52%) - \$1,845
- Total overall operating costs - \$42,667
- Total gallons transported in FY 2001.....48,000
- Visitor Cost per gallon - \$0.89

I had a conversation with a NPS person who said that park service employees do not pay the same cost as visitors to the island. They buy their gas through their Recreation Fund at a much lower rate. How can this be? Who is making up the difference?

2002 Annual Meeting Report

by Betty Bieti

The 2002 annual IRBA meeting was held in Houghton, MI, on May 11, 2002, aboard the 110 foot cruise ship Keweenaw Star. Nearly 60 people enjoyed a fine dinner meeting and three hour cruise along the Portage Waterway.

Secretary/Treasurer David Jukuri gave the Treasurer's report stating that the membership renewals and contributions from members have been overwhelming and very much appreciated.

Dwane Falconer gave a report on activities of the IRBA's Western Chapter. He said their meeting with Phyllis Green was positive and they looked forward to working with her. Dwane also reported on a planned banquet to be held in June.

Mark Rude gave a report on his meeting with Phyllis Green. He suggested IRBA work with her on the exotic species problem in Lake Superior.

Dave Hand, Chair of the election committee, explained a proposed change in the charter/bylaws of IRBA to increase the number of Directors and the members voted to authorize 15 directors. The following nominees for Directors and Officers were elected. For President, Jim Markham, Chief Operating Officer, Fred Bieti, Sec./Treasurer, Dave Jukuri, V.P. Environmental Affairs, Dave Hand, Director of Communications, Larry Durland, for Directors, John Kappler, Ed Glowacki, for Regional Directors: Tom Thornton, Cal Miller, Dave Turnquist, Jim Marshall, Woody Petersen, Dwane Falconer, Dave Miller and Mark Rude.

A raffle of lures followed as well as a 50-50 drawing. Mary Mikkola won the 50-50 drawing and generously contributed half of it to IRBA.

It was decided that the weekend of July 20, 2002, would be the IRBA meeting on Isle Royale.

IRBA Western Chapter News

by Cyndi Hartman

The IRBA Western Chapter held a very successful "Special Projects" fund raising banquet at the Lakeview Castle located on the shore of Lake Superior just north of Duluth, MN, on June 20, 2002. The evening began at 6:00 pm with a social hour during which raffle tickets were sold, the silent auction was opened and entertainment was provided by accordion players Jim and Mary Schliep. A buffet dinner was served at 7:00 pm followed by guest speaker Doug Jensen from the Minnesota Sea Grant. Master of Ceremonies and always engaging, Mark Rude, thanked all guests for coming and supporting the IRBA. The evening concluded with the raffle. With an attendance of 212, the event was a huge success. We thank all those who attended and appreciate the generosity of all those who donated items for this event.

These funds are earmarked for special projects, to be determined, i.e., improvements to docks, campgrounds, fishing, etc.. Your comments and input re projects are welcome.

Spring Fishing Report

by Dave Hand and Don Hannula

Three fishing reports are presented for the month of May and the first part of June. Two reports are from Don Hannula (Skipper) and one from Dave Hand (Dr. Trout). Both Dave and Don agree that the title is misleading and it should have read WINTER FISHING on Isle Royale, but it was spring by the calendar so we will leave it as spring.

Don's First Trip: Our May 16 through 19 fishing trip was more like winter fishing! In the twenty-four trips in the last six seasons this was the coldest by far. Twice we had a light snowfall and on the trip back to Eagle Harbor the spray was freezing on the boat. I have a "cool" picture of the icicles hanging from the downrigger and fishing rods. The nights were very cold but we were prepared for it. We did not have to fight any bugs though!

The fishing was fair. We fished many hours for the twenty-two lake trout that we boated. Had a good fish fry and still enough for the crew to take home. Our biggest was eleven pounds. We had a ten-pound fish that was pure fat. The best fishing was at Passage Island. And the best lures were the Fire-Tiger spoons made by Creative Touch Tackle.

Dave's Memorial Weekend Trip: Memorial weekend was cold and rough most of the time. Friday afternoon and all day Saturday we fished the northeast side of the island to stay away from the waves, and very cold wind (snow flurries Saturday afternoon). Most fish we charted were inside the red can near Duncan Bay. The fish located and caught were sixty to ninety feet down in eighty to one hundred feet of water. In this area, we caught about sixty fish but were all one to three pounds in size. They were red fins and we kept a few for dinner. I will say those little ones are the best eating trout! We did catch and release one larger trout inside Duncan bay that may have gone twelve pounds. On Sunday, we were able to fish Passage Island and picked up several trout on the north side fishing along the island about ninety feet down along the rock wall. All the trout caught near Passage were also small. Most all of our fish were caught using the Fire-Tiger lures. Had a beautiful sunset on the ride back to Eagle Harbor, MI on Sunday night. My crew, Dave Turnquist and Bruce Sabin admit a nice warm bed on Sunday night was better than staying the extra night and coming back on Monday morning.

Don's Second Trip: Our second trip was much better. June 2 through 8 was much warmer as we had two t-shirt days. Fishing had picked up in the Passage Island area. Also trolling near Hill Point proved productive. Again the Fire-Tiger spoons proved to be the best. We kept enough to smoke up a batch and also had two fish fry dinners. The fish were found between ninety and one hundred twenty feet of water. We ran into a fishing crew from Minnesota. They were fishing surface lines in Robinson Bay/Lane Cove area and doing quite well with barb less Bombers and releasing 99% of their catch. We also managed to catch nine walleyes in an undisclosed inland lake.

We will have plenty of Fire-Tiger and other lures on sale at the boaters meeting on July 20th at Rock Harbor. Don says he will guarantee the Fire-Tiger lures catch fish and will buy them back if you don't catch fish. These lures have been well tested on the island and are a proven success story. We hope to see you at the meeting.

P.S. We need to hear about your fishing excursions. Please tell us about some of your fishing trips by emailing Dr. trout at dwhand@mtu.edu. We will be glad to share your stories with the rest of the members.

Gadgets - Long Range Cell Phone Service

by Fred Bieti

For those interested in long range cell phone use, consider carrying a YAGI antenna for temporary use at those "hard to call from" spots. This YAGI 10db gain antenna (See photo below) will increase your calling power approximately 8 fold. I successfully transmitted this digital camera photo from Hay Bay via my "home" cell tower located near Eagle Harbor, MI.- 60 miles away. For more info visit web site:

<http://www.alternativewireless.com/cellular-antennas/yagiantennas.html>.

Legal Issues Update

by Fred Bieti

The Oral Arguments for our legal action vs. the NPS are still scheduled for this fall. Thanks to the members response terrific response to the once-a-year Membership Dues Renewal Notice, all past legal expenses are covered. We will cross the Oral Arguments expense "bridge" when we come to it.

Excerpts from Superintendents Letter

Article

Excerpted Highlights of the May 10, 2002, letter from Superintendent Phyllis Green (emphasis added)

Dear Fred:

You asked for some "what's new" at Isle Royale comments and I have enclosed an overview of just a few of the things happening in the park this year...

... Specific maintenance projects this year include:

Docks. Docks will be replaced at Wright Island and Snug Harbor. The Crystal Cove Dock will be reconstructed. **Maintenance will be performed on Siskiwit and Daisy Farm docks.** Fenders will be installed at Mott Island. There is a possibility that the park will receive funding to rehabilitate the main dock at Windigo as well. We are continuing

our efforts to get funding for a variety of other dock replacements and improvements including Tobin Harbor docks, which has a possibility of being funded in the next couple of years.

Campgrounds at Malone Bay, Todd Harbor, Little Todd, and Duncan Bay Campgrounds will be rehabilitated. Rehabilitation will be done at the accessibility restroom trail at Rock Harbor and the Merritt Lane campground shelter will be relocated to afford more privacy. The picnic area at Malone Bay will be relocated to a better location.

Trails. The Rock Harbor Trail between Three-mile Campground and the Rock Harbor Visitor Center will be rehabilitated with the use of a Student Conservation Association crew. Rehabilitation of the Scoville Point trail will take place with the assistance of the Sierra Club. Trail rehabilitation will be completed at the Feldtmann Trail, at Coyote Ridge and beach area, trail to Rainbow Cove, and trail to Windigo. An additional 6.5-miles of Hatchet Lake Trail will be rehabilitated along with rehabilitation of the Mt. Franklin, Greenstone, Lookout Louise, and Rock Harbor trails. Most of the 165 miles of trails will receive routine annual maintenance.

Buildings. Projects include: re-roofing of the Houghton Visitor Center; construction of an addition for the water treatment plant at Rock Harbor; rehabilitation of employee kitchens at Mott Island; construction of a dive tank maintenance building; The park had hoped to rebuild the residence that burned down at Windigo this year but the bids came in significantly higher than our estimates. At this time, we will be proceeding with seeking a less costly alternative, which could be the utilization of some type of pre-fab construction, or building with day labor with park staff or some combination of the two.

Boats: The park has been very fortunate in obtaining a significant sum of money to rehabilitate some of the aging boats in the park's fleet. Most of the park's boats are in excess of 25 years old and some are in need of major overhauls. We hope to at a minimum rehabilitate the four primary workboats. This will not only improve the safety and reliability of these vessels but will also attain our goals of operating engines which are less polluting, quieter and more energy efficient. Last year were able to replace a majority of the park's outboard motors with 4 stroke engines.

Planning: The park is involved in three major planning efforts. The Wilderness Management and Backcountry Plan (WMBP) is well underway as you are well aware. The WMBP will address the campground sharing issues during the peak season as well as set up of monitoring protocols for the futures. **We are just beginning the planning efforts for both a fisheries and water management plan.** The fisheries plan will be a cooperative plan with the State being a primary player due to their regulatory jurisdiction.

Natural Resources: Some other areas of emphasis will include either continuation of a study of moose herbivory impacts

Cultural Resources: In the cultural arena, the park will continue to monitor and survey archeological sites, cultural landscapes and historic structures.

Utilities. The Mott Island septic system will be upgraded. The sewage lift-station at Windigo will be replaced. The Rock Harbor fire pump replacement will be completed and two residences will be converted from fuel oil to electric.

You specifically asked to comment on any changes to the Superintendent's Compendium, areas subject to closure and the regulations regarding the operation of on board generators at anchor. First a little background as to how we got where we are. The park's approved General Management Plan (GMP) struck a compromise between the different and sometimes competing points of view held by different park user groups. **All the Lake Superior waters within the park remain open to motorized vessels.** At the same time, specific actions were taken to reduce noise in the park. These actions help protect the natural quiet and wilderness values sought by most Isle Royale visitors. **We intend to continue to implement other specific actions identified in the GMP as funding permits, such as the establishment of new boater campgrounds....**

Boaters are reminded of the Quiet/No Wake zones established by the park's GMP. Operating a vessel in excess of 5 mph or creating a wake is prohibited within these zones. The locations of Quiet/No Wake zones are shown in the park's free newspaper, The Greenstone, ...

On-board vessel generators may be operated between 6am and 10pm EDT at nine dock locations: Beaver Island, Belle Isle, Caribou Island, Grace Island, Hay Bay, Malone Bay, Rock Harbor, Windigo, and Tobin Harbor. Docks at all other overnight use facilities are closed to on-board generator use. Vessels at anchor may operate on-board generators **except** when anchored within 1/4 mile of a designated park campground.

The operation of electronic and motorized devices such as stereos, televisions, radios tuned to commercial stations, and portable generators is not permitted except in developed and open-water motorized zones. Developed areas include the Windigo developed area, the Rock Harbor developed area, and the Mott Island Headquarters area. Open-water motorized zones include Lake Superior waters outside of designated Quiet/No Wake zones.....

Upon the recommendation of both the Minnesota and Houghton arms of your association, we have agreed to implement a phone-in reservation service for annual pass holders. We need some time to work out the details of this but will notify the public and your association with the specifics in early June.

The park staff and I look forward to the possibility of engaging ourselves in some joint projects with your membership that will benefit both the visiting boaters and the park resources. I welcome any suggestions that you might have and look forward to seeing you out on the island.

Sincerely,

Phyllis A. Green
Superintendent