

## Isle Royale Boaters Association June 2000 Newsletter

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### 2000 Island Meeting

#### Announcement

The annual island meeting is Saturday, July 15th at 1:00 p.m. This year's meeting will be at Isle Royale's Rock Harbor Lodge with a lunch following the meeting.

### Executive Committee Report

by Ed Glowacki

With our membership of well over 700, IRBA has become a strong organization dedicated to our purpose. We must continue to build our organization, and there is no better way to achieve this goal than through our own members' recruiting efforts. I am sure every one of us knows of friends or associates who are not IRBA members but should be! Let's start doing some recruiting! The math is pretty simple: if each member recruited just one new member; we would be well over 1,400 members. You get the idea, now let's go get the members! It would also be very helpful if you would consider renewing your membership early. And don't be shy about making an extra donation!

As you are aware, IRBA filed suit against the National Park Service in August of 1999. As part of the lawsuit proceedings, IRBA received a copy of the Administrative Record. This record is comprised of 15,000 pages of NPS correspondence and documents that went into the formation of the GMP/EIS for Isle Royale. The IRBA Executive Committee has painstakingly reviewed all 15,000 pages! At times during the review process, we just shook our heads in amazement at the attitude of the NPS towards the owners of the park: you, the American people! At other times, we were as elated as little kids at Christmas when we found critical evidence in support of our lawsuit. In fact, we found so much evidence of wrongdoing on the NPS's part, we found it necessary to amend the lawsuit by adding additional counts.

The lawsuit now includes counts in the following general areas of law violations: the Wilderness Act; the Isle Royale Enabling Act; the Boundary Waters Treaty; the National Environmental Policy Act; Amendment V of the U.S. Constitution; the Americans with

Disabilities Act; the Administrative Procedure Act; and the National Parks and Recreation Act.

Special thanks to Mary and John Kappler for housing the 15,000 pages of the Administrative Record! Not only are they housing the Record, they have opened their home to the IRBA multiple times as we combed through the Record for the supporting evidence needed for the lawsuit. Mary has provided countless meals and wonderful treats to sustain us during our reading marathons, and I think we may have worn-out John's copier!

As we were preparing this newsletter we were told that the NPS had "found" ten missing volumes of the Administrative Record. When we receive them they will be reviewed in the same thorough manner.

## **Finance Report**

By John Kappler

The IRBA has realized \$59,600 from its members and friends since September 30, 1998. In addition, one generous donor gave stock valued at \$5,000 to the IRBA in December 1999. We have spent most of what has been received for our legal battle, efforts to improve Isle Royale's pavilions at Belle Isle and Daisy Farm, keeping members and friends up to date on our activities, website, supplies, etc. In fact, \$42,980 of our expenses has been for well-earned legal services. Essentially, our funds are getting very low and more donations are needed to continue this very solid case the IRBA has against the National Park Service's badly flawed General Management Plan. Please continue your support for this legal battle. We are very confident that the IRBA is going to win on all the counts contained in the lawsuit.

## **An Appreciative Kayaker Writes**

Letter Reprinting

February 22, 2000

Dear IRBA Members:

I have been to Isle Royale twelve times and I wish to relay to you how important the boaters have been to my experience. It has come to my attention that docks are scheduled to be removed to lessen the impact of boaters. On several trips it was the boaters who implemented emergency rescue by radio calls for help. Incidences in which I witnessed boaters help included: 1) A group of girls at Moskey Basin with the flu, 2) An asthmatic boy at McCargoe Cove who had broken his only inhaler, 3) A backpacker at McCargoe Cove who on smashing wood on a concrete slab had a piece of it impaled in his skull, 4) Offers to warm up inside the boat to a kayaker who refused and later went

into hypothermia (Caribou), 5) Calls to paramedics and treatment of a woman with a fractured knee at Caribou, and 6) Treatment of my daughter at Caribou by a boater who was an optician. My daughter had a dilated pupil and recent head injury but the problem was due to removing a scopolamine patch for seasickness and inserting a contact lens without washing her hands.

On my early trips to Isle Royale in 1960 and in 1973 there were rangers staying at the campgrounds. Now there are very few park personnel available for emergencies. It is the boaters who initiated care and have in each case I have witnessed done so willingly and without compensation. In addition, I have seen and have experienced boaters offering food to backpackers who have run short of supplies. I have greatly appreciated the water and pop boaters shared with me and even more so the fresh fish.

It has also come to my attention that several shelters are to be removed. Because of my age and physical problems I find it difficult to pitch a tent every night and live in a smaller tent as is required by the size of my kayak. On my trip to Isle Royale in late July 1999, I was unable to get a shelter four of the seven nights I was on the island. I would be much more in favor of having shelters solely for canoers and kayakers rather than removing docks and shelters.

Many people have complained about the noise of partying by the big boaters. My experience with boaters has been with intelligent helpful people. The noise issue would be completely resolved with more staff presence in the campgrounds. I am aware of the financial problems throughout America in hospitals, corporations, and government but understaffing is a core problem and a clue to mismanagement. The Isle Royale experience is degraded each year I return.

Yours Truly,

Sherrill L Kovach  
DeWitt, Michigan

## **The Foresight of Congressman Ruppe**

Article

The IRBA is now four years old, but one of our newest members, former Congressman Phillip E. Ruppe, saw the need for such a group twenty-four years ago. At hearings in 1976 on the establishment of Isle Royale National Park as a wilderness area, he said, "... with those boat owners having no voice to express their concern, no lobby so to speak to speak for them, I think their rights to continue to using the island should be wedded in concrete so management later on does not unilaterally deprive them of that right."

Fortunately for boaters today, Congressman Ruppe made sure that the boaters' concerns were heard by the congressional committee and subcommittees working on

the bill. The ultimate act establishing of Isle Royale National Park as a wilderness area is accompanied by a committee report that includes the specific language for which Congressman Ruppe fought so hard. His words live on today in that report, which shows the intent of Congress. Let's hear, in his own words, what the far-seeing Congressman Ruppe said to support our case at those hearings twenty-four years ago

On the tradition of boating at Isle Royale: " The boating public, by and large in small numbers, and operating from adjacent areas, have cruised in the Isle Royale waters for years and have used boats or well protected coves on Isle Royale. These visitors have respected the rare values the park offers and they, in my opinion, should have continued use of the national park in the same fashion as they have used it heretofore." And, "There are few places out on Lake Superior you can travel to. Isle Royale is one of them. They stick their boat along the island from time to time for protection. They have been good neighbors."

On the need for docks: "... the maintenance of boat docks on the island. No significant expansion of boat dock numbers is anticipated, but it is my strong view that the continued maintenance of these facilities is absolutely essential to the continued ease of access and enjoyment the public now associates with Isle Royale National Park." And, "I do have a rather strong feeling in the matter of the boat docks. These boat owners have used the island for years, they are good environmentalists, so to speak, they want the island to be included in the wilderness designation although I don't think they all, as non-experts in the field, understand the implications of the legislation designation of wilderness."

On the future (remember, Congressman Ruppe was speaking in 1976): "I think we should specify they would have continued use of the island as used heretofore, otherwise if the language winds up in the report or if someone says, well we will go along with it, ten or fifteen years from now then someone will take them to court or the park service will say not being in the law itself that exclusion should be terminated." Even the Assistant Secretary of the Interior Department had to agree with this assessment when he testified later, saying, "One of the fears expressed by people in the area is that if we don't make specific provision in the act for a dock, fifteen years from now there will be pressure to remove the docks there as not compatible with wilderness."

Congressman Ruppe saw the need to protect the interests of the boaters, even with the assurances of the Interior Department, and agreement that inclusion of the language in the Committee Report that, "The Committee understands that no significant expansion of boat docks numbers is anticipated, but that continued maintenance of these facilities is essential to the continued ease of access as well as the health and safety of the visitors."

But, Congressman Ruppe feared that there was no guarantee for the future of boating at the Park. In his as he saw it. In his most accurate prediction he said, "I think without

that language [relating to docks in the bill itself] you would almost end up with litigation about that practice, whether that practice should be continued."

That is where we are today. But, Congressman Ruppe's foresight with his testimony and its inclusion in the record has become a strong tool in our battle to preserve Isle Royale for all of its users. And, his interest in Isle Royale continues. In fact, Congressman Ruppe telephoned John Kappler recently to confirm that we are on the right track.

### **IRBA in *Lakeland Boating***

#### **Announcement**

The July issue of *Lakeland Boating* has a piece in their Dispatches section entitled "You Do The Math" by our own Fred Bieti. It tells the public "Who's really making all the boat noise at Isle Royale National Park?" Make sure that you pick up a copy. Look for "Isle Royale Ruckus" on the cover.

As you may recall, *Lakeland Boating* also published one of IRBA's opinion pieces in its April 1999 issue. *Lakeland Boating* has a great website, linked to the IRBA website. Visit it at [www.lakelandboating.com](http://www.lakelandboating.com).