

Isle Royale Boaters Association September 1999 Newsletter

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Executive Committee Report

by Fred Bieti

We are pleased to report that our membership is now over 600 and rapidly heading to 700 as the public becomes aware of the efforts of the Isle Royale Boaters Association. The rebuilding of the Belle Isle and Daisy Farm Pavilions and the activities to promote public awareness have garnered much support.

IRBA was contacted via attorney Grant Merritt by Rep. James Hansen's office with a request to have Grant Merritt and Fred Bieti, IRBA Legislative Liaison, appear before the House Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands. Fred Bieti and IRBA have been keeping Rep. Hansen's office abreast of issues at Isle Royale regarding the GMP. So for a second time IRBA representatives Fred Bieti and association attorney Grant Merritt will be traveling to Washington DC. On September 30th Fred Bieti will be providing testimony to congress on H.R. 1864 the 'Public Hearing Standardization Act of 1999' and H.R. 1866 the 'Public Appeals Parity Act'. As we all now know, the NPS has no appeals process through which the public can be heard when it comes to contested actions such as this recent GMP enactment. Other Government agencies such as the Forest Service do have an appeals process. Unfortunately, with the NPS, the fox is left to guard the hen house. Rep. Hansen would like to put an appeals process in place at the NPS, so the public will have some recourse, other than the courts. We applaud his efforts and would hope our Representatives would join him in this effort. Write to your Congressman.

If you would like to contribute to cover the cost of this trip to Washington, it would be appreciated. (*Can air miles be contributed?*) As you know, the lack of any appeals process regarding the GMP has forced IRBA to file suit in Federal Court. Relative to this filing attorney Grant Merritt says:

I believe it is fair to refer to this lawsuit as the most comprehensive challenge relating to a General Management Plan/EIS for a National Park. We have discovered, documented and taken to Federal Court a National Park Service plan which violates its own rules and regulations as well as several major federal laws.

... we have together laid out a compelling, indeed clear and convincing, case of government abuse and ineptitude. Our seven causes of action are presented in great detail. We welcome a thorough review by a Federal District Judge of the stewardship, or lack thereof, by our government officials.

Isle Royale was once the nation's premier maritime park but recent park actions have called into question this status. Now with the adoption of this plan we have no doubt that Americans are in imminent danger of losing what a former Superintendent referred to as the "Crown Jewel of the National Park Service."

IRBA has also heard from, and unlike the NPS, listened to a number of disabled members and friends and is convinced that the GMP, if implemented, substantially reduces the availability of Isle Royale wilderness for this segment of the public in direct violation of related statutes and the Department of Interior regulations. As stated above, the membership of IRBA includes a number of persons who are disabled.

The GMP final agency action elimination of four docks and four Adirondack shelters at the campgrounds adjacent to these docks violates Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

This law, the related Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the accompanying administrative regulations mandate the NPS to keep Isle Royale National Park readily "accessible to and usable by handicapped persons" If implemented, the GMP action substantially reduces the availability of Isle Royale wilderness for this segment of the public in direct violation of these statutes and the Department of Interior regulations.

I would like to ask the NPS planning team how many of them have tried to put a wheelchair into a dinghy, while at anchor - how many have helped parents who have had strokes get out onto the floating dock at Hay Bay - how many have tried to keep rectal morphine suppositories for their child's heart condition, safe and cold, without a refrigerator ...

And how many of us would sit idly by while an NPS Ranger on the Moskey Basin - Lake Richie trail asks that the wheelchair for my 12 year old new friend, Michelle, be removed from the trail because wheeled devices are prohibited using the "trailbikes might be next" excuse!

Your V.P. of Finance - John Kappler, MBA, CPA is using a few of his many skills to study and summarize, in spreadsheet form, the over 4300 pages -at 13 cents per page-of comment letters sent to the NPS regarding the GMP. IRBA has obtained these letter through the Freedom of Information Act. If you have sent letters regarding the plan please send copies to IRBA. John is also working through some additional 19,000 pages of information relative to this issue. He now has the pile down to approximately 3000 pages. David Hand, Ph.D. and Ed Glowacki are diligently reviewing NEPA , VERP and related environmental compliance issues.

Rose Marie Renaud of Rossport, Ont., Canada, tells us that boating traffic at Rossport has dropped significantly in recent years due to unfavorable boating conditions at Isle Royale. Specifically traffic has dropped from 145 boats in 1996, to 35 boats in 1998. As a result she states that they have changed their business from a boating supply shop to a restaurant! How is that for negative "Gateway Community" effects.

Repairing and Painting the Daisy Farm Pavilion

Article

On Thursday September 2, 1999 a repair crew led by IRBA President Jim Markham (Miss Conduct) saved another pavilion from the NPS wrecking ball. Jim and crew replaced roof sections and roofing that had deteriorated from lack of NPS maintenance. On the following Saturday, IRBA Chief Environmental Officer Dave Hand (Dr. Trout) and his crew completed the project by painting the pavilion and picnic tables. Recall that the NPS had intended to tear down both the Belle Isle and Daisy Farm Pavilions. IRBA stepped up to the plate and performed the much need maintenance so these two sites may continue to be used and enjoyed by all park users. A special thanks to IRBA members Vic and Emily Betterly of Houghton for their donation of the paint for the project.

If you would like to help defray the project expenses, just send a tax deductible contribution to:

IRBA, Daisy Farm
P.O. Box 97
Houghton, MI 49931



IRBA Painters in Action



IRBA Painters – Amanda Turnquist, Dave Hand and Philip Turnquist

Mug Shot of the IRBA Crew at Belle Isle

Picture



Mug Shot of the IRBA Repair Crew at Belle Isle. From left to right – Jason Massie, Bette Beiti, Arne Karkkanianen, Fred Beiti, Russ & Troy Ryyannen, Rod Markham, Nick Markham, Craig Hannula, Tom Thornton, Don Hannula. Jim Markham not pictured.

Park Politics and Volunteering

Article

The IRBA workers placed a sign at the Belle Isle site in recognition of the contribution by the IRBA. Unfortunately, Park Superintendent Doug Barnard ordered the sign taken down. This prompted IRBA member, Mary Ann Hand to write the following letter to James V. Hansen, Representative of Congress 1st District of Utah and Chairman of the National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee.

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Volunteers are a dying sector of humanity. Just look at the want ads and you'll see ads from Hospitals, Little Brothers Friends of the Elderly, Big Brothers and Sisters, Hospices, Long Term Care Facilities, American Red Cross, etc.

When kind acts and volunteering are done locally, there are always letters in the "Hats Off" columns of the editorial pages of our local paper applauding these efforts! On a broader scope, dinners and plaques of recognition go to those who give of their time and efforts on a volunteer level. And in the broadest scope – Betty Ford for making alcoholism & drug addiction a public awareness and opening a center for the care of these people. Lady Bird Johnson is still recognized for her "Make America Beautiful" project a reality. Then there's Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter's "Habitat for Humanity" that would *never* happen without the volunteers who donate time, money and materials for the homes they give to people who, in all probability, would never own their own homes.

Then there is the "Adopt a Highway" program that is composed, *nationwide*, of *Volunteers* who maintain our Federal Highways. These groups are recognized across the country by signs posted on the roadsides acknowledging the group by name for their volunteering efforts.

Then we come to the National Park Service, who not only refuse to recognize the volunteering efforts of the Isle Royale Boaters Association but actually have taken down the small plaque that was placed at Belle Isle in Isle Royale National Maritime Park, *on the orders of Douglas Barnard, Superintendent*. This plaque was placed at this location to show those who use these facilities that the members of the Isle Royale Boaters Association are truly interested in making the park a better place for everyone – now and for future generations. These members donated their time, materials and man-hours necessary to improve and maintain this site. There are also plans to go this fall and continue this volunteering at other sites, until all sites are up to a higher standard than what the Park Service has allowed them to deteriorate to. This is done by IRBA members from the tri-state areas (Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota) despite the fact that since 1931 when the park was founded, funds have been appropriated by the government, to the Park Service for maintenance & upkeep of Isle Royale *Maritime Park*. (Funds they chose to use elsewhere!)

The National Park Service readily recognizes the "Isle Royale Natural Historical Association" that is *also* a non-profit organization that makes their money from

donations and selling of books, art etc. The National Park Service is aware of all work the IRBA has done and their plans to continue to do so. Unfortunately, having the public aware of this work does not coincide with the NPS General Management Plan (GMP). The Federal Government needs to take a closer look at the GMP.

Is this "Personal Politics" Mr. Barnard or "Sour Grapes"? In actuality, this is blatant discrimination! Remember: This *Maritime* Park belongs to everyone! We taxpayers pay the National Park Service salaries!

Sincerely,
Mary Ann Hand
IRBA member

This letter was copied to all the U.S. congressmen, governors and state representatives from Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. Several local and national news organizations were also copied.

Despite this lack of recognition by the NPS, IRBA will continue its efforts to restore and preserve the island visitor facilities. If weather permits, the Daisy Farm pavilion is slated for repair on Labor Day weekend.

IRBA Good Samaritan Act

Article

The following Good Samaritan act was sent to us from IRBA member Roland Revello of Vulcan, MI. As you will read, Roland's good Samaritan act shows that boaters provide a factor of safety on the island that is irreplaceable.

It was Father's Day in June of 1994 and we were just beginning our annual family vacation at Isle Royale. My son, Mike and I had just left the Belle Isle dock and headed into Pickerel Cove for some fishing with our matching 24 foot Sea Rays. Mike and his crew headed east in the "Getting Any?" and I headed west with my crew in the "D Cut Too".

Within just a few minutes after putting out lines down, Mike was on the radio. He reported that he had spotted someone in the water and was headed to the area to make the rescue.

Steve Jones, a summer park employee at the gas dock at Rock Harbor, was in the water. On his day off, he had canoed into Pickerel Cove and dumped his canoe. When Mike reached Steve, he had been in the water for 20-30 minutes. Mike and my brother, Dave, pulled him into the "Getting Any". By that time, Steve was unable to speak or help himself in any way. He was suffering from hypothermia and was only moments from unconsciousness. Dave, who is a LPN, immediately recognized the problem. He

removed Steve's cold, wet clothing and began warming him as well as possible in the boat.

After determining that no one else was in the water, Mike radioed Mott Island to report the emergency and headed for the Belle Isle dock. He also notified me as to the location of the canoe. We recovered the canoe with the "D Cut Too" and also headed for the Belle Isle dock.

By the time we arrived, Steve was already beginning to recover. He said that a gust of wind had blown his hat off. When he turned to reach for the hat he tipped the canoe. He was unable to get back into the canoe quickly and within a few minutes had lost the ability to help himself in the sub 40-degree water.

Shortly after, help arrived from Mott Island. Steve was checked over and he and his canoe were returned to the other side of the island. The next day, he was back at work at the gas dock, none the worse for the experience.

Mike and Dave received letters of commendation from Supt. Barnard. Mike also received a national life saving award from the United States Power Squadron. But more important than the commendations, a life was saved. If it had not been for a vigilant boater in the right place at the right time, the park service would have tragically lost a summer employee.

Roland Revello
IRBA Member

Visual bits of Isle Royale History

Article

Remember the following picture that appeared in the June Newsletter? If you guessed the Rock Harbor Marina, you are correct.



Mystery docks where many of us have spent much time.



Can you guess where and when this picture was taken?

Winterizing Suggestions

Article

It's that time of year when we have to put our watercraft away for the winter. Here are some tips that will help prevent an unwanted spring surprise.

- For winter lay-up, drain your engine block of all water before filling with antifreeze. Do this by opening the drain plugs located on the exhaust manifolds and lower portion of the block. If you don't drain the water first you run the risk of diluted antifreeze resulting in a cracked engine block.
- Top off your fuel tanks and add fuel stabilizer. By doing so you will have a minimum of condensation forming in the tanks and the fuel will remain fresh over the winter.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect the interior of your boat. Disinfect by wiping all interior surfaces with a solution of liquid Lysol and water. By doing so you will prevent mildew from forming over the winter.
- If you store your boat outdoors build a frame out of sawhorse brackets and 2x4's. This is an inexpensive, strong and reusable frame for either a poly tarp or shrink-wrap cover. Be sure to leave adequate ventilation to prevent condensation and mildew.
- Get all of the water out of the bilge, use a sponge to get the last bit. This helps prevent condensation leading to corrosion and mildew.
- Canoes and kayaks require little in the way of winterizing but heavy snow and ice loads can break their backs! Be sure to store these craft where they won't be subjected to heavy ice and snow loads.