

# Kettle Falls Site Development Plan Voyageurs National Park



**The National Park Service is preparing a plan for the Kettle Falls area of Voyageurs National Park**

## Voyageurs NP Background

Voyageurs National Park (VOYA) encompasses 218,054 acres of land and water along the Canadian border in northern Minnesota. The park was established in 1975 with a mission to preserve, protect, and enhance resources in the Rainy, Kabetogama, Namakan, and Sand Point Lakes areas. Voyageurs is a water-based park. The main body of land within the park's boundary, the Kabetogama Peninsula, is only accessible by boat, seaplane, or snowmobile.

## Kettle Falls Background

Kettle Falls is located at the end of the Kabetogama Peninsula. The area has been used by various peoples throughout history. Native Americans once gathered and hunted at the falls, voyageurs paddled and portaged through the area with their goods and furs, and prospectors stopped at the falls on their way to gold mines at Rainy Lake.



*The Kettle Falls Hotel. Credit: NPS.*

The Kettle Falls Hotel was built during the 1910s soon after construction on the dams at Kettle Falls began. The hotel initially served those who worked

on the dam, followed by lumberjacks, commercial fishermen, trappers, and traders. As commercial fishing declined over the years, tourists became the hotel's primary patrons.

Today, Kettle Falls is a popular destination for tourists in Voyageurs National Park and has several docks, scenic trails, and lodging options. The Kettle Falls Hotel and adjacent villas operate from late May through mid-September, and are the only lodging available in Voyageurs National Park. Most of the Kettle Falls area does not meet universal accessibility standards and some structures in the area are in need of improvements.



*Map of Kettle Falls area. Credit: NPS*


## Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Kettle Falls Site Development Plan is to enhance the visitor and employee experience in the Kettle Falls area. The plan will consider a range of employee housing options and overnight opportunities for visitors, as well as improvements to recreational amenities and day-use areas, landscaping, accessibility, and wayfinding. Other issues to be taken into consideration in this plan include access for boats, houseboats, and seaplanes. Once the site development plan is complete, the compliance phase of the project will begin in which an environmental assessment will be prepared.

## Timeline and Progress

National Park Service (NPS) held a staff workshop and site visit in September 2019 to brainstorm preliminary ideas and concepts. A few of those ideas included additional concession staff housing, identifying areas and concepts for potential additional visitor overnight use, and other ideas. The park is ready to engage the public on November 5, 2019 regarding these preliminary ideas. The goal of the civic engagement event is to hear public feedback on the preliminary ideas and concepts for Kettle Falls before a NEPA process is initiated. (Check the link below for meeting updates. Note there will be no formal presentation; rather come and go as you please during the hours listed.) The public and stakeholders are encouraged to attend in person and to provide comments online at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/kettlefalls>.

This early feedback will help refine the ideas and concepts and will then inform the development of a proposed action and alternatives. Once the NPS gathers its research and develops proposed alternative(s), they will begin the process of drafting the site development plan and environmental assessment for public review and comment. The estimated timeline for this project is shown below with the red star indicating approximately where we are now in the site development plan process and the next steps.

October 2018 – December 2019  Planning Phase			January 2020 – July 2020  NEPA/Compliance Phase		
Oct 2018 – Jun 2019	Jun – Sep 2019	Sep – Dec 2019	Jan – Apr 2020	Apr – Jun 2020	Jul 2020
NPS research and develop a preliminary alternative	Outline and preliminary concepts development	Review of preliminary concepts and civic engagement  	Outline and draft Environmental Assessment	Public review and comment of plan and Environmental Assessment	Decision (FONSI assumed)

## Planning Team

An inter-divisional team that includes representatives at VOYA National Park, the NPS Midwest Regional Office, Denver Service Center, and the Washington D.C. Area Support Office meets regularly to share information and discuss goals and objectives as they work towards developing a site development plan for the Kettle Falls area.

## Contact Information

Stay in touch with the park, check for updates, public meeting notices, or get other information on the park's website at: <https://www.nps.gov/voya/> and search for Kettle Falls.

You may also contact Leigh Johnson, project manager for the site development plan, at [leigh\\_johnson@nps.gov](mailto:leigh_johnson@nps.gov) or contact Bob DeGross, Voyageurs superintendent, at [bob\\_degross@nps.gov](mailto:bob_degross@nps.gov).

Learn more and connect with Voyageurs National Park:



[/VoyageursNPS/](https://www.facebook.com/VoyageursNPS/)



[/voyageurnps](https://www.instagram.com/voyageurnps)