

Correspondence ID: 1
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,28 2023 19:12:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I appreciate creating different zones based on the number and size of shelters. As a wheelhouse owner, I see the moderate use area as an opportunity I would want to use. Granted, it's a long drive, but perhaps much like the camping reservation system used in summer, a winter wheelhouse reservation system would make it worth the drive.

This also could create a system under which there is moderate control of the number of shelters staying on the ice, which also creates a revenue stream for the NPS. Of course, there would be some potential expenses, as many wheelhouse owners might need a plow to clear them a spot. (Another revenue opportunity?) Not to mention it might help address the litter allegedly left behind by wheelhouses.

Obviously, this idea needs to be thoroughly developed and vetted before application. However, it could be a great and innovative approach that draws more people to the park in the winter.

Correspondence ID: 2
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,30 2023 07:04:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: As someone who routinely uses Voyageurs I'd very much like to see atv ohv orv access to frozen waters. More access is always a great thing and in this instance allows for more winter use for touring and ice fishing! I have a sxs with tracks that would allow for great access to fishing and sight seeing with minimal to no environmental impact!

Correspondence ID: 3
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Crane Lake Lodge Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Mar,30 2023 11:44:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: With the newer ATV and track mobiles plowing a road for autos seems costly and old school. I would rather see the resources spent on east end of the park closer to Sandpoint & Crane. Seems through the year's most resources go toward the west end and Kabetogama. Plowing roads should not be park service cost. Maintaining good trail systems for ATV's year-round and snowmobiles in season, & ski trails should be the priority.

Correspondence ID: 4
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,02 2023 14:03:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Updated and specified adjustments are needed without a doubt for the management of frozen lake access and use at Voyageur National Park. As times change and equipment used for certain activities evolves, NPS needs to evaluate these changes and manage the use of the land to ensure visitors have a safe experience, while also maintaining the precious natural environment of the park.

Given the information and diagrams provided in the newsletter, I was able to visually apply the proposal and what it entails, I feel the distinguishment of moderate to low-use zones is a beneficial way to maintain certain areas of the park while allowing for more flexible and safe visitor use. Because there were no additional alternative approaches for the proposal provided in this newsletter, I am unsure what alternatives are available. If I had to guess I would assume changing the ranges of the use zones could be an option, but overall I believe this proposal is going in the right direction.

As with any environmental policy proposal, there is a wide range of environmental and socioeconomic considerations to be made in the decision-making process. First and foremost, it is critical to consider the impact of the changes in land usage in the park on frozen lakes. Will the increase in ORVs cause a significant increase in greenhouse gas emissions? What practices will be implemented to maintain visitor safety on frozen lakes while also protecting the natural wildlife in the area? How will this change impact the local economy with more visitors attending the park? Is this proposal putting marginalized or vulnerable populations at risk in any way, for example, will this impact any native/indigenous lands? These are just a few of the endless things to consider when finalizing this proposal. If not done already, I think related research that could be useful for this proposal is the effects of safety measures to protect park visitors, and maybe some research to consider doing is the effects of wintertime frozen lake use on the summertime environment.

Overall, I think this proposal can be a great addition to park management to utilize the park to its full potential in the wintertime, while also ensuring the safety of visitors and making minor adjustments to account for that.

Correspondence ID: 5
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Island View Lodge Unaffiliated Individual(Official Rep.)
Received: Apr,07 2023 16:23:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I assume that the "plan" is already established as public comment has not frequently been considered when such changes are unpopular and unnecessary. So with that said, I find the entire rule change to be a further restriction on the use of a public MN waterway that the park service seems ever more intent on ruling without consideration of the MN regulations that have long been in place. And this will affect once again primarily older people who can then no longer enjoy fishing in permanent shelters that are put in place with pickup trucks, ATV's, SUV's and side by side off road vehicles. These are normally placed over good winter fishing spots that have little to do with where the park service may or may not decide to plow a road. And if you decide that no road is to be plowed (likely) then virtually no fishing from shelters could take place within the park as I understand the proposal.

And finally, leaving aside the newly discovered federal regulation that finds us now not in

compliance with said rule, I would like to know exactly what damage would be done if we simply left things as they are. And what good will result from these changes that can be measured and regularly reported on to the people who own this park.

Correspondence ID: 6
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,07 2023 21:12:55
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Thank you for providing me the opportunity to comment.
The NPS regulations should be followed right away, with no need for additional planning of public comments before implementing them.
The 1983 Wilderness Recommendations should be followed. The NPS Management Policies and Wilderness guidelines call for managing Recommended Wilderness the same as Designated Wilderness while awaiting the Congress to act on the Recommendation.
Night sky should be protected with no outdoor lighting allowed on ice fishing shacks.
Ice fishing shacks should have no generator use, have temporary use limits like backcountry camping, and be controlled by permits for limiting their numbers and designating their locations.
Thank you for your consideration of these comments and for protecting the park unimpaired for future generations.

Correspondence ID: 7
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,08 2023 12:33:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: No plowed roads on the lake. . Winter Camping should be done in tents / portable ice houses.

Correspondence ID: 8
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,09 2023 06:36:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: ATVs and UTVs should not be grouped in the same category as cars/trucks (ORVs). ATVs and UTVs are used in the same way as snowmobiles to access off-ice-road ice fishing opportunities (especially when tracks are used instead of wheels). In many cases, I would consider snowmobiles to be more intrusive on the natural beauty of the park (louder, faster). To limit the use of ATVs and UTVs would be unfair to those who use them to enjoy the park.

Correspondence ID: 9
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: [REDACTED] Unaffiliated Individual(Official Rep.)
Received: Apr,10 2023 09:32:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence:

I have enjoyed Kabetogama my entire life. I caught my first walleye on Kabetogama and shot my first duck on Kabetogama in 1967. Our family has been property owners on Kabetogama since 1988 and residents of Minnesota and St. Louis County since the 1800's.

I have property on Kabetogama. It is in the name of [REDACTED], owned by myself and my brother [REDACTED]. The property includes two parcels ([REDACTED] and [REDACTED]) and basically consists of a lake home, two islands and wetlands totaling approximately 42.3 acres and 3,385 feet of shoreline. It is directly West of Fin Island and North of Peterson Bay. The address is [REDACTED], but there are no roads to my property and a road or driveway is not an option due to the wetlands that surround my high ground, some wetlands owned by us and some not. The property is only accessible by water in the summer and by ice in the winter. During certain periods during the fall and the spring when the ice is not safe to travel on, it is not accessible.

I access my property in the summer by boat and in the winter by an OHV (Polaris Ranger or Yamaha Viking both with tracks) and by snowmobile. It is not practical to use a boat or a snowmobile to transport certain things, including firewood, gravel, building supplies, propane, gas, furniture, appliances, pets, certain handicapped guests, elderly and children, so I use my OHV with tracks during the winter to get this accomplished.

Not only would it not be practical or safe to access my property without an OHV in the winter, it is not practical or safe to transport the goods discussed above in the summer by boat.

Your proposal to restrict ATV's and OHV's dramatically affects my ability to not only transport people and goods to my property but to safely access my property. I know there are many others adversely affected by your proposal.

Since I have been retired I have spent approximately 90 days each winter in our Lake Home on Kabetogama, I enjoy snowmobiling, X-country skiing, snowshoeing and ice fishing and very much appreciate the people in the community, and enjoy and respect everything the Park has to offer including the beauty, the wildlife and birds, the solitude, most regulations (I wish I could hunt ducks, deer, grouse and bear) and certainly the first aid services performed so well by the Park Rangers.

Unfortunately, I am not able to make it to your public hearing on April 18th because it is not safe for me to be up here than and I am traveling out of the country.

I am not aware of an overall problem or cost with the use of ATV's or UTV's on Kabetogama or in the Park. If there is an issue, I would hope you deal with the specific issue as opposed to eliminating them all together.

Of course, if you have any questions or would like anything from me, please let me know.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and thank you in advance for your consideration.

I would very much appreciate it if you acknowledge receipt of this email.

Thanks

Correspondence ID: 10
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: [REDACTED], LLC Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,10 2023 20:24:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: My entire family has been property owners on Kabetogama our entire lives. We've lived in Duluth and the Iron Range since the 1800's. We hunted and fished on Kab for decades before the ban on hunting.

My brother and I own a cabin and property in Peterson Bay which is effectively an island. We can only access our property via Boat in the summer or UTV in the winter. We love going to Kab in the winter to ice fish, ski, etc. If this ban takes place, it will have a massive negative effect on our enjoyment of Kabetogama. Unfortunately, I am in Arizona until May so will not be able to attend your public hearing.

But as a person who has enjoyed Kabetogama I urge you to reconsider this ban.

Correspondence ID: 11
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,11 2023 04:32:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: "I use Voyageurs National Park and could not enjoy it in the wintertime without the use of an ATV or UHV. Please reconsider your position on the use of ATV's and UTV's in Voyageurs National Park."

Correspondence ID: 12
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,11 2023 05:40:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I would visit the Voyageurs National Park in the winter and could not enjoy it without the accessibility of an ATV or UHV. Please reconsider your position on the use of ATV's and UTV's in Voyageurs National Park as it would considerably hinder visitors ice access into the park. In my opinion, the use of these types of vehicles will not impact the park in any way as any evidence of their use will "melt" away every spring.

Thank you for your consideration,

[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 13
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,11 2023 06:50:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I use Voyageurs National Park and could not enjoy it in the wintertime without the use of an ATV or UHV. Please reconsider your position on the use of ATV's and UTV's in Voyageurs National Park.

Correspondence ID: 14
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,11 2023 08:35:26
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The ban of ATV/UTV's in the park is seriously detrimental to folks with property within the park. UTVs are useful beyond recreational purpose, and will limit the ability of those who do own property to maintain it. Please reconsider this bill with respect to those it will affect the most. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 15
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,11 2023 08:54:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I use Voyageurs National Park and could not enjoy it in the wintertime without the use of an ATV or UHV. Please reconsider your position on the use of ATV's and UTV's in Voyageurs National Park.

Correspondence ID: 16
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,11 2023 09:06:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Hello, I would like to express opposition to any restrictions on use of public lands by any user group. I see no environmental issue with allowing over the snow and ice travel by whatever means. I also oppose user fees on ice roads. A draw for local use of our national park is the lack of fees. I was unable to ascertain the justification for any of the proposed restrictions or fees in the short newsletter release. Thanks for your consideration.

Correspondence ID: 17
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,13 2023 09:23:30
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I use Voyageurs National Park at a friend's property in the Park and the only way during the winter months is to access it across the ice. We haul a lot of different supplies across the ice during the Winter months for the survival during the summer months, such as fire wood, dirt

and numerous other items that are need both during summer and winter months.

Please this needs to be reconsidered, and re evaluated.



Correspondence ID: 18
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,14 2023 10:59:28
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Keeping Voyageurs National Park and the surrounding area as protected as possible is in the best long-term interests of most Minnesotans. The proposed restrictions on motorized vehicle traffic and winter access to Kabetogama and Rainy Lakes are very important and useful. In fact, I think there's more that can be done, particularly in enforcement. One example of possible damage that's been in the news lately is that ice fishing villages leave lots of garbage out on the lake, which all sinks into the water at the end of the season. Strict enforcement of litter laws would help with this, along with restricting the allowed locations for these fishing houses. Also, policing snowmobiles in the "low" use areas is important. There are always a few people who want to travel too fast and go off trail. These activities are disruptive to the plants and animals of the area, and create noisy and potentially dangerous conditions for skiers, hikers, and snowshoers.
There are health benefits to a relaxing quiet environment and exercise, even strenuous activity. These benefits are reduced when there are noisy machines, even if only a small percentage of the machine operators are reckless. Lake Minnetonka in the Twin Cities area is a great example of this: with 1,000 boats on the water, it is far less relaxing and healthy.
I am reaching the age where I probably can't go all the places I have been in the past. I still want these places left undisturbed, which means accessible only with difficulty, for younger people and future generations.

Correspondence ID: 19
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,15 2023 09:06:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I use Voyageurs National Park and could not enjoy it in the wintertime without the use of an ATV or UHV to access property. Please reconsider your position on the use of ATV's and UTV's in Voyageurs National Park."

Correspondence ID: 20
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,15 2023 10:15:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Thank you for the process of managing the VNP resources. Lake of the Woods is a prime example of what may happen to the water quality in the park. Attention is necessary for protection from human waste. It is obvious to anyone visiting LOW that users have seriously abused this concept. I understand that human waste disposal is a problem for resort owners, municipal waste pick up, and private individuals as where to properly dispose. Seems the lake surface is an acceptable place to dispose this waste by many users. Even feces in biodegradable bags have been dropped in ice holes as a convenient way to dispose of feces. Out of site; Out of mind. Surely the bag and its contents will dissolve??? What about urine deposited by over 6000 users on LOW. The amount of time humans spend over all the lakes surfaces has vastly grown exponentially. We are attempting to control invasive species, yet we have NO restrictions on human waste. Seems we humans might be a bit over invasive with growing park space usage. It is time for this problem to be addressed to control further abuse. The DNR has neglected to respond to this seriously increasing dilemma. I am hoping the VNP authorities may be instrumental in bringing this issue to the forefront so that the federal management behind the park will institute and create meaningful change for all our water resources. The park eliminated jet skis in the park. It is time to regulate the vehicles that cause potential harm to the ecosystem. We certainly do not have enough outdoor(wilderness-If you can call it that anymore) space for the recreational demands of population growth. Again, I sincerely appreciate all the efforts that go into protecting the park.

Correspondence ID: 21
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,16 2023 20:30:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: - what are the current natural resource impacts right now and possibly in the future? The impacts are not clear
- strict rules will hurt tourism and businesses. We're not talking about mining in the boundary waters here and the huge risk to the resource. We're talking rules that are not clear about the natural resource gains but it will hurt business and tourism so why??
- I support greater restrictions in some more remote proposed areas
- tourism in Northern MN in Winter is tough already, don't handicap it further.

Correspondence ID: 22
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17 2023 11:42:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: By doing what you propose you will be taking this area away from the older generation who built this country everyone cannot snowmobile or walk to these areas think hard before this happens

Correspondence ID: 23
Project: 84972
Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,17 2023 12:11:56

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I strongly oppose the imposition of rules limiting or eliminating the use of ORVs and permanent ice fishing structures on Lake Kabetogama. The current use of ORVs and fish houses of any kind are low and in no way have any impact on public safety and the environment. Restricting use only to a short distance from an "official" NPS ice road will limit public access and enjoyment of ice fishing to only an extremely small percentage of the lake. The vast majority of the lake, including the best areas for fishing, will be off limits to ORVs and most ice shelters under the proposed rules. Current ice fishing outfitters will be put out of business, further reducing public access and enjoyment of the nation's least-visited national park. The proposed rules only further jeopardize the area's resort and outfitter community, which are already under enormous financial pressure to stay in business and provide access to Voyageur's National Park.

I have a cabin on Lake Kabetogama and spend a considerable amount of time on and around the lake and Voyageur's National Park. I have never observed any instance in which the use of ORVs and permanent ice fishing houses have had an environmental impact or in fact have even left any trace they have been on the ice following the end of the ice fishing season. The outfitters who provide these valuable experiences to park visitors live and work in the area and are among the park's best stewards. The notion that their current activities are somehow creating unsafe and environmentally detrimental conditions is absurd.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. I trust that a reasoned consideration of the facts will result in no further imposition of rules that are not needed and that will not further limit these non-impactful activities.

Correspondence ID: 24

Project: 84972

Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Voyageur Country ATV Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,17 2023 12:32:15

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: Please support the use of ATVs and ORV's on the frozen surfaces of Voyageurs National Park. As you know, the lakes are frozen 5 months of the year and the majority of the Park is water-based. Snowmobiles are allowed and have not produced a negative effect on the wildlife in the Park. Allowing the use of ATV's on frozen surfaces will not produce a negative impact on the resources either, it will simply allow a few local residents to operate businesses or enjoy a day of fishing. By restricting use to frozen roads (or within 300 feet) you will essentially stop winter ice fishing business completely and stop locals from enjoying a few warm days of Spring on the ice enjoying the Park, which seems unreasonable and unnecessary.

Correspondence ID: 25

Project: 84972

Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,17 2023 15:51:28

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence:

Voyageurs National Park is in many ways unique among our National Parks. To the best of our knowledge, it is the only park with residential and commercial development that has direct access to the park (i.e., access to the lakes within the park). Depriving businesses and property owners of accesses they have traditionally had under the umbrella of "alignment with regulations at other national parks" becomes less appropriate. Many national parks have unique regulations that align with a park's unique character. That is what is needed here at Voyageurs.

We think it is good that the park is looking to establish guidelines for winter use, since it is increasing. Expanding opportunities for visitors to enjoy the park year-round is wonderful; limiting them has a negative impact on both visitors and area businesses that rely on the park for their livelihood. Regulations being proposed and developed must consider traditional use of the area by all, and keep in mind that Voyageurs National Park is not a wilderness area. The park needs to be accessible to all visitors, not just those young and fit enough to ride snowmobiles.

We think the proposal is too broad regarding ORVs. Minnesota differentiates between ATVs (Class 1 & 2), off-highway motorcycles (OHMs) and larger off-road vehicles. We encourage the park to follow these guidelines in your proposal, as it better coordinates for ORV users of state trails and areas. We would encourage the park to allow ATV/UTVs (Class 1 & 2, including Class 2 with tracks which cause the ATV/UTV to exceed 65" width) ice-only access within the park in a manner similar to snowmobiles. The park could designate ATV/UTV trail routes - or corridors along the wide snowmobile trails on the lakes, etc. Snowmobiles are required to have a state sticker which in part funds trails. Having some sort of permitting system (seasonal, 1-day, weekend, one week) could generate funds to help manage ATV/UTV trails or corridors within the park. We think limiting true ORVs (Jeeps, etc.) to ice roads makes sense. And we could support not allowing OHMs for use on the ice at all (like the way jet ski personal watercraft are not allowed in summer).

We also believe the proposal is missing the mark on ice houses. Again, people have been ice fishing here for more than decades. And as ice houses have evolved, fishermen also know that their newer, fancier, heavier ice houses require more ice. They don't want to be injured or lose equipment on the ice! Ice fishing, shanties, camper shacks are a tradition in Minnesota, and should continue to be permitted to be used throughout the park.

Your page asks about impacts on several areas... we would like to address each of these. In all cases we are going to use the term "ORV" to mean "Class 1 or 2 ATV/UTV with or without tracks" in line with what we feel makes sense for safe use in the park.

"Visitor use and experience, including safety": ORVs can provide a safe method of access and travel for a broader range of park visitors. Many are transitioning to a year-round ORV over a one-season-only snowmobile. Families can travel together and more safely manage small children. They are more comfortable and safer for many senior citizens and people with physical challenges. Accommodating changing visitor preferences should be part of the proposed plan. For owners of property adjacent to the park (shoreline owners, private, resort or business), maintaining the ability to access the ice from their doorstep is important. If a resort guest is staying miles from an ice road access point, requiring them to trailer and park in a lot, or drive roads at slower speeds with an ORV, to access the ice road will diminish their experience and reduce visitors to the area. Preventing property owners from using ORVs to

pack/plow ice rinks, paths to the lake trails or ice trails for their own safe use or that of guests, maintaining/repairing their dock systems, etc. is counterproductive to the safe enjoyment of the park.

The current ice roads are typically not open until late January (or like this year, early February) while ice fishing typically begins in December and significantly diminishes by February. Areas where local outfitters place their ice fishing houses are tested by those outfitters to ensure the safety of their equipment and guests. They are required to have a concession permit and should be excluded from limitations to ice house placement. Limiting all ice houses that require a larger vehicle to be placed along an ice road would diminish visitor use and experience. Many ice houses can be placed by snowmobile but may require larger equipment to move/remove them if they are stuck.

Concentrating ice houses in one area also puts a greater weight/movement impact on just one area of the lake. The proposed ice road/ice house area on Kabetogama appears to be about 10 miles long and in part parallels the snowmobile trail. Concentrating ice houses in a "parking area" along this route would diminish the view for snowmobilers traveling that route as well as for visitors who want to use the ice road with their (road) vehicles to enjoy unobstructed views.

How does the park intend to create/maintain a significantly larger ice road area that is available during the appropriate season, when it currently can only somewhat manage a much smaller ice road (less than 1/10th of that proposed)? we see funding and staffing being used as scapegoat reasons/excuses to never achieve the ice road area proposed.

"Soundscapes": A single ORV transporting 2-4 people is quieter than 2-4 snowmobiles traveling together. Regulating ice house and vehicle sound (loud music, etc.) in line with whatever regulations currently exist for boats and campsites would probably make sense. Concentrating ice houses also potentially increases noise in that area because of generators and other equipment; this could negatively impact fishing, and certainly makes for a less enjoyable environment.

"Lightscapes, including Visual Resources": Concentrating ice houses in a small area along an ice road would increase light pollution in that area, creating a negative impact for those seeking open skies at night both on the ice and on properties along the shoreline. Even if the area is not in line-of-sight, the possibility of concentrated skyglow could be a significant negative impact. Concentrating the ice houses also has a negative visual affect on snowmobilers who enjoy riding the trail that currently parallels that area. It would create a concentrated eyesore, rather than a dotting of ice houses around the lakes. For people wishing to share views of the lake with friends via an ice road - if the road is framed by ice houses, where is the view? You are taking a unique drivable "scenic route" and turning it into a parking lot, a further diminishment of visitor experience.

Regarding ORV lighting, it would not have significantly different impact from snowmobile headlights. Any vehicle operating should be visible.

"Wildlife": Concentrating ice houses along the ice road may increase negative interactions for land-dwelling wildlife. Smells, fish/bait debris, trash, etc. concentrated in one area are likely to draw in scavenging animals and birds leading to negative consequences. Concentrated light may affect night-traveling birds and animals. How would the creation of a large parking lot area

affect the fishing in that area? Fishing pressure, increasing winter light penetration potentially increasing weed growth, algae? What does Fisheries say about concentrating fish houses to one area of the lake?

ORVs do not make any significant difference in noise or motion compared to snowmobiles that would negatively impact wildlife.

"Socioeconomics": ORVs are becoming more popular because of their multi-season capability. Requiring visitors to only access the lakes with snowmobiles shuts out families that cannot afford to purchase multiple snowmobiles, senior citizens, those with physical limitations that cannot use snowmobiles safely. Access to the ice has been a tradition among individual property owners and resorts for many generations, long since the area was converted to a national park. Preventing property owners from creating/plowing their own accesses to the lake - connecting to trails, ice road, a fish house, clearing a skating rink - causes a significant negative change to the enjoyment of the lakes throughout the winter.

The proposed regulations would effectively destroy the business for local (and long-time) ice fishing outfitters, and the trickle-down effect on all the other businesses that benefit from these winter visitors. The ice fishing outfitters on the west end of Kabetogama typically set up houses within a couple miles of their bases. Forcing them to only place ice houses in a shared area along the park ice road that is many miles from their bases of operation puts an untenable travel burden on outfitters, puts their customers further away if a problem should occur, puts these ice houses in direct competition for space with visitors bringing their own ice houses. Even ice houses that can be towed & placed by snowmobile may require larger equipment to remove if they ice in. Requiring ice houses to be only along the ice road would end these businesses, reduce visitor opportunities, and reduce business for resorts that house ice fishing guests, area restaurants and services cater to these guests. In addition, as the ice roads are typically not open until late January (or like this year, early February) while ice fishing typically begins in December and significantly diminishes by February, limiting ice houses to the ice road would further diminish potential visitor use and their experience. Lastly, the Kabetogama Ice Road provides access to the Sphunge Island sledding hill and skating area for children. Families would now need to pass through a potential corridor shanty town of ice houses to access this area rather than a scenic drive, diminishing their experience as well. Yet again you are diminishing the enjoyability of the park in winter.

"Water and Air Quality": Regarding ORVs, we believe their impact would be no different than snowmobiles. It may even improve air quality due to better/newer engines, and the ability of fewer machines to carry more people. So long as people ride safely, there should be no significantly different impact between ORVs and snowmobiles as regards to water or air quality.

Concentrating ice houses in one area could cause significant negative impacts on water and air quality in that area. A 300 ft wide area along 10 miles of ice road on Kabetogama yields less than 375 water acres for these fish houses on a lake that is over 25,000 acres. It would concentrate fishing and potential pollution to a small area of the lake, with impact on the fish and aquatic life in that area. What does Fisheries say about this? Will the ice road area also allow more light penetration that could impact plant/algae growth? Continuing to allow fish houses throughout the lake dilutes the negative impacts - the way boats all over the lakes distribute fishing pressure, sound, and noise over a much greater area.

Is there a need to explain/define where ORVs can go within the park? Yes. Is there a need to define where different weight classes of ice house could/should be placed? We think a better solution is to limit these based on ice conditions; something like "No ice house weighing over X can be placed until snowmobile trails and ice roads have at least Y ice thickness. Ice house owner is responsible for ensuring their route and location meet these requirements."

Could some sort of permitting help with this? Maybe. It would give the park a better idea of how many vehicles of what types are enjoying the ice. It would bring in some winter revenue to help with trail maintenance. And it would make winter users of the park more mindful of the safety issues associated vehicles and equipment on the ice. Summer boaters are not required to have any special permit (and we are absolutely not advocating for that). But we believe there are issues unique to winter that may make permits a more appropriate way to manage park visitor experiences.

Thank you for your consideration!

Correspondence ID: 26
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17 2023 20:05:42
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: As a lifelong outdoor enthusiast and law abiding citizen of the state of Minnesota, I have some concern over the proposal of the park rules regarding transportation and ice shelters on the lakes within the park. My dad and his friends have been fishing the area since 1991 and have always treated the lakes with respect. Most years the transportation of choice has been atvs or utvs. I have been coming to the area with my dad and his friends for 15 years. As the age of this group increases, the ability for them to get out to their 30+ year fishing spots has gotten more difficult. UTVs have made their fishing experience a lot more bearable. Recent years have seen value in more permanent ice shelters for a couple of them. A "snowmobile only" mode of transportation would put an end to most of their fishing careers within the park, which would result in less revenue for the resorts, bait shops, and other businesses in the area. I feel the water should fall under the DNR and their already established rules allowing all modes of transportation. Please don't take away these 70 year old fisherman's ability to make it out ice fishing. Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 27
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,17 2023 20:59:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The lake should be accessible to all in any way they wish to use it. It wasn't intended to only be used by those that want to view it as they wish to see it. You are taking away people's livelihood and many businesses ability to survive and exist, which helps the area in many more ways. This proposal is just plain wrong and is not the way the outdoors is supposed to be enjoyed.

Correspondence ID: 28
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18 2023 11:12:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I noticed that the Mukooda Truck portage is listed in "moderate use area" as continuing to be available by permit. But it appears that the Mukooda Truck portage is in the "low use area". The "low use area" does not allow ice roads. I think it needs to be made clearer that Mukooda Truck will remain as currently available by permit in the "low use area".

For property owners on the Canadian side of Sand Point Lake, the Mukooda Truck portage is a lifeline for hauling heavy items in via winter ice road. For safe travel to central and northern Sand Point Lake land owners must use the American side of Harrison Narrows (the Canadian side is never safe for ORVs). I recommend an allowed path around Harrison Narrows on the American side be added the map.

Further the permit for ORV on the Mukooda Truck has worked well in the past. I recommend it be continued in our new plan.

For full disclosure I own property on the Canadian side of Sand Point Lake and used a permit over the Mukooda Truck portage several times. There is always one to two weeks of safe travel by ORV just as the snow clears and good pack ice remains.

Correspondence ID: 29
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,18 2023 15:57:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please continue to allow off road vehicles on the frozen surfaces of the park. My wife, four sons, and I have enjoyed countless days of enjoyment in the beautiful park by accessing our favorite fishing spots in this manner.

Thank you

Correspondence ID: 30
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19 2023 09:23:05
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The plowed ice roads that VNP have established have been a failure due to the conditions the last few years. My opinion is the park doesn't have adequate staff , time or compassion to maintain these ice roads. So my suggestion is to not do an ice road at all. Let the people use the park "as is". If they have the means to go out with snowmobiles and tracked machine they should have that opportunity. If you have an ice shelter that people plan on leaving for the year inside the park boundary make a VNP sticker that these people can purchase as a seasonal pass. The proposal that is in the works really hampers older aged people and people with

disabilities. National parks were designed to allow people to use and enjoy them. Times have changed , technology has changed. It's time for the park to adapt to the new way of life. These rules were written over 40 years ago and your trying to make a one size fits all rule system that doesn't fit this unique area. In closing my final point would be to ban any ice roads done by the park or private individuals. It would keep the pressure off of these lakes and not turn them into a Lake of the Woods situation

Correspondence ID: 31
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19 2023 11:13:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: We love the area around Sand Point Lake. My family has three annual trips we take every year to the area. One in the summer and two in the winter. My Father has been going up to the area for almost 60 years now. Lately every winter we pack all of our fishing gear into our side by side with tracks and head to our favorite fishing spot on Sand Point. We used to make this trek on snow machines but as my father reached 80 years old last year so we bring him to the area the easiest way possible. Learning of the proposal that we would not be able to use the Makooda portage for our tracked side by side really hits home.

I'm having trouble seeing the difference in environmental impact that a tracked side by side has vs a snow machine. If this proposal passes my Father would no longer be able to make these annual winter trips.

We cherish the time spent on Sand Point Lake and I really hope we can keep the area for winter rec use the same as it has always been. I would like to see the study on how the bigger fish houses and ORV's have negatively impacted the area.

Appreciate you taking the time to read my comments.

Correspondence ID: 32
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Workrise Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,19 2023 19:23:32
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Greetings,
Despite personally wanting OHV banned from general access as well, I signed with most the Kab Association for one reason- it would hurt the very few disabled people who actually need to use one of these machines

-Just my 2 cents- I believe we are beginning to see high dollar electronics and equipment take it's toll on the fishery; and price out the average family looking to enjoy the area ... but maybe it's always been that way to an extent

Correspondence ID: 33
Project: 84972
Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,20 2023 07:35:35

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I was born and raised in International Falls and knew what the area was like before a National Park was established. I still own property close to Voyageurs and most of my family still reside in the area. To put further restrictions on the use of ORV's is uncalled for. UTV's and ATV's when driving on a lake are low impact, same as snowmobiles.

My sister owns a home on Lake Kabetogama, 95% of the traffic is snowmobiles in winter. ORV's have no impact. I don't know why your now singling out a choice of recreation for people visiting our beautiful country.

Many people have enclosed UTV's which due to limited mobility and health issues allow them to enjoy our area. Please don't take this away.

Please reconsider removing this proposed rules change.

Kindest Regards,



Correspondence ID: 34

Project: 84972

Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,20 2023 12:23:37

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: I believe the current rules for the Lake surfaces are sufficient. Mother Nature dictates what mode of transportation can be used.

We have a family cabin at Kabetogama. I've ice fished the lake pretty regularly since 2006. The general mode of transportation is by snowmobile however if the conditions allow Truck, 4-wheeler, or side by side are all options that I would like to remain available for the entire Lake.

There has been a few years where there wasn't much for snow on the lake. A snowmobile would not work as it would melt the hy-fax and overheat the motor.

The ice road only covers the South shore. There are many other areas of Kab. that you would be shutting off if you add the restrictions mentioned in the plan.

The window for actually using the ice Road on Kabetogama is pretty short. (Late Jan. & Feb.) Once ice fishing closes the usage drops significantly. If Ice fishing were allowed to continue until April 14th. like the rest of the National Park waters, the road may get more usage.

Do we really "Need" more rules???

Haven't heard of anyone abusing the current rules. The lake is generally people free. If there are a few people wanting to get out and enjoy the Wilderness. Let them do so.

Thanks for your time!!

██████████

Correspondence ID: 35
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,20 2023 12:56:59
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I attended one of the meetings on this plan in Kabetogama. There appeared to be some very concerned people there, with some logical thoughts and questions and some not so much. I agree that we would hate to have the park filled with wheel houses looking like lake of the woods and catching every fish. I think related to vehicles with wheelhouses on the ice that the plowed rd with a 300' to either side may be a good idea with an option to move the ice rds from year to year to have different fishing options available. I do not agree on limiting side by sides, fourwheelers, or other off road vehicles to that. Maybe we could work on getting a regulation put in place to legalize them on the hard surface and already made portages. That would increase access to the park as with the higher cost of equipment these days alot of people do not have both snowmobiles and off road vehicle. usually its one or the other.

I also noticed that DNR was there and it didn't seem there was a precise answer on who actually controls the water in the park being it was never deeded to park? Maybe this isn't a park issue and we can work with the state on a plan.

Another thought i have is once the park takes in all this public comment it would be nice to have another round of meetings to hear what the park got for comments. what where the most common things they had to say and some numbers on how many people submitted comments. after that the park could make changes to their proposed plan if they decide to and have another round of meetings and public comment for the people.

Now that the ice is about off we have time to work on this plan before next winter season. I don't know if you guys are replying to commets but any feedback would be great. Thank you for reading my comment, ██████████.

Correspondence ID: 36
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,21 2023 08:22:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I think this is a great time to look at the environmental impact that ice users have on our lakes. Especially if a vehicle or ice house does go through the ice. In the many years I have fished and used rainy and namican lake I have seen the water become more polluted and it worries me about what our future generations are going to be left with. This is a gorgeous set of lakes and land that unfortunately most people seem to take for granted and don't seem to understand how fortunate we all are to have the park to preserve the natural beauty of the lakes and the landscape around them!

Correspondence ID: 37

Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Town of Crane Lake Town or City Government(Official Rep.)
Received: Apr,13 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: Dear Bob:

The Town of Crane Lake reviewed your email of 3/28/23 regarding frozen lake roads in the Voyageurs National Park at our April meeting.

The Town of Crane Lake strongly supports the use of all ice surfaces for off road vehicles (ORVs) including street legal vehicles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) utility task vehicles (UTVs), and other types of non-snowmobile vehicles; as well as, snowmobiles on VNP Lakes. In other words, we wish things to remain as they are plus we would like to see the ability to use ORVs to access Mukooda and Sandpoint Lakes as well.

Because VNP is the only water/ice accessible lake in the nation, the Town feels it should be considered in its uniqueness from other national parks and should keep water/ice access open. Our area is dependent on water/ice travel both for those that live here and for our tourism industry.

The park was intended to be a place to enjoy responsibly by all. It seems like the regulations are taking away what makes Voyageurs unique. Instead of inspiring guests to come to the park and see our area we are discouraging potential guests. We encourage the administration to think strongly about the repercussions that would come if a such restrictions were implemented

The Town would appreciate our thoughts and concerns being included in your deliberations on this subject. Please feel free to contact anyone on our Board or plan to attend a future Township meeting for further discussion.

Sincerely,

Jerry Pohlman, Chair

Correspondence ID: 38
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24 2023 17:41:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I do not agree with the proposed plan.

I am a retired senior citizen and do not have a snowmobile. I do however have a side by side ORV with tracks specifically for use on snow and frozen surfaces. I ice fish directly from the vehicle so that I can stay warm and move frequently while looking for promising areas. I enjoy the park because I can always find an area away from everyone else. With the proposed restrictions I would be forced to fish in a narrow corridor along the ice road assuming the park can even get an ice road plowed.

The state of Minnesota allows the use of this type of vehicle on all other lakes in the state and their regulations should be those used for frozen lake access in the park.

Correspondence ID: 39
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,24 2023 18:01:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: To whom it may concern:

I recently attended the public forum regarding the proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan within Voyageurs National Park. During the public comment session I asked very specifically whether or not public comment ACTUALLY had the chance of swaying the direction of the proposed plan. I asked if this was a genuine approach to obtaining the public's wants, needs and opinions. I was told that it was genuine. My experience has taught me that if that were true----this comment period would have occurred BEFORE the plan proposal was made public. However, as I was publicly assured this was a genuine fact and opinion finding mission, I will have to accept that as the case.

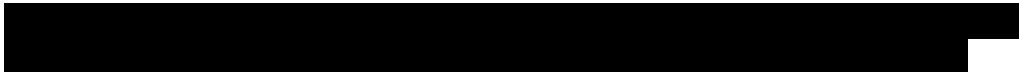
The first comment I have is regarding the proposed fee for using the ice road. I have many issues with this idea. First, being as an ice road is completely weather dependent, the park cannot come to depend on a stream of fees and income being generated from this. This ice road as it currently has been plowed and maintained is short. We're not being given access to even 20% of the park with this road. My guess is it is less than 2% access---charging a fee for that seems asinine. The amount of visitors to VNP has us ranked 48th out of 62 and my guess is it is MUCH LOWER in the winter, so the fee you propose charging would be to locals---a small pool to go after in my estimation. This is also a barrier in equity of access to all. And we all know how much that is being pushed politically.

I would also agree with the many commentators who suggested that the actual map showing the proposed moderate and low use zones need to be accurately represented. They are not accurate according to the current rules and regulations nor with the proposed ones. Please remake the map. This will also demonstrate the tiny amount of access being "given" to the common man wishing to use the park. If this change could be made and map made public?

If I had my way, I would ask this "core planning team" to go back to the drawing board and engage the State of Minnesota and other local agencies whose interests are tied up with a proposed plan like this. We have to get away from a one-size-fits-all mentality. I plan to contact my Senators and other associated representatives on this matter. There is no reason to prevent ATV's (ORV's) from utilizing the frozen lake surface within the park's boundaries. It is understandable to prevent them from accessing the land, but the frozen surface should be free game until issues arise. There is no need to punish law abiding citizens due to some interpretation of the statutes we CAN choose to be liberal on.

Thank you for your time.





Correspondence ID: 40
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,26 2023 16:03:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: As an alternate to the proposed plan, I recommend using the state of Minnesota regulations for ice use and institute a permit use fee for ice houses left overnight and for ATV/UTV use on the ice. These permits could be annual, weekly, or lifetime. Consider a slight discount for the disabled and seniors. Might generate some much needed funds for maintenance.

Correspondence ID: 41
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,27 2023 18:30:31
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: This new Frozen Lake Access and use Plan will negatively impact the Future of Voyageurs National Park and our small communities. Our small community of Crane Lake thrives from the snowmobiling, fishing and boating. Please consider keeping the park as it is and allowing snowmobiling, ATV's , UTV's, OHV's, Cars, pickups, tracked vehicles, boats and motors in the park. If this plan moves forward as currently proposed, it will be devastating for area businesses as fewer visitors would come to the area in winter (reducing income) and could potentially put some out of business entirely. It will negatively affect shoreline homeowners' ability to access the lake and property values would likely be impacted. These impacts would be felt over all of our Northland communities from Rainy Lake to Kabetogama, Ash River, Crane Lake and more.

Correspondence ID: 42
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,27 2023 18:42:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The new proposed Frozen Lake Access and Use Plan Voyageurs National Park will negatively impact the Future of our small communities. Our small community of Crane Lake thrives from the snowmobiling, fishing and boating. Please consider keeping the park as it is, allowing snowmobiling, ATV's , UTV's, OHV's, Cars, pickups, tracked vehicles, boats and motors in the park. If this proposed plan moves forward as currently proposed, it will be devastating for area businesses. Fewer visitors would travel to the area in winter (reducing income) and could potentially put some out of business entirely. It will negatively affect shoreline homeowners' ability to access the lake and property values would likely be impacted. These impacts would be felt over all of our communities from Rainy Lake to Kabetogama, Ash River, Crane Lake and more. Please consider all of the families in our small communities this plan will upset if it moves forward.
Thank you

Correspondence ID: 43
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,28 2023 05:41:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: This new Frozen Lake Access and use Plan will negatively impact the Future of Voyageurs National Park and our small communities. I am a summer resident of a Crane Lake rv park. Our small community of Crane Lake thrives from the snowmobiling, fishing, boating and camping/RVing. Please consider keeping the park as it is and allowing snowmobiling, ATV"s , UTV's, OHV's, Cars, pickups, tracked vehicles, boats and motors in the park. If this plan moves forward as currently proposed, it will be devastating for area businesses as fewer visitors would come to the area in winter it could potentially put some out of business entirely. It will negatively affect homeowners' especially lake front owners with boat /snowmobile access only. The property values would likely be impacted. These impacts would be felt throughout our communities from Rainy Lake to Kabetogama, Ash River, Crane Lake and more. With the way our economy is If you implement park fee's we would likely lose many tourists due to affordability to travel here. Please do not implement this new plan
Thank you!

Correspondence ID: 44
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,28 2023 20:10:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I grew up and spent the first 24 years of my life in International Falls, much of that time exploring as well as working as a seasonal maintenance technician for the park. I agree that some areas i.e Sand Point, Namakan, Mukooda, etc should be low use areas. There's no reason for anything other than snowmobiles and portables to be there. However, Kab and Rainy should allow vehicle travel other than snowmobiles to access the lake to fish. As Capt. Patton said, ice doesn't matter when it comes to differentiating access by state statute. UTVs with tracks are very common to fish with and the impact is no different than a snowmobile. Don't allow them on trail systems, portages, etc but they could be used anywhere else. Park users cannot rely on the park to plow a road to access areas, due to conditions on the big lake. Let anglers get out and use their UTV to fish on Kab and Rainy. It's more important for Kab to have that as winter businesses pushing for winter fishing tourism are trying to grow.

Correspondence ID: 45
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,29 2023 09:24:19
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: 1. The plan as proposed violates the riparian rights of private and public lakeshore owners. The use of the frozen lake surface to recreate is protected by the riparian rights endowed by the State of MN (see: Sanborn v. People's Ice Co. (PDF) 82 Minn 43, 84 NW 641 [1900] and Lamprey v. State (PDF), 52 Minn 181, 53 NW 1139 [1883]). The riparian owner has the right to make use of the lake over its entire surface (see: Johnson v. Seifert (PDF) 257 Minn 159, 100 NW 2d 689

[1960]). The waters of Voyageurs National Park are under the state's jurisdiction. The state never ceded the waters to Voyageurs National Park.

2. A primary consideration of this plan should be how it enhances the ability of park visitors to access and experience the park. The current plan reads as a roadmap of how to restrict access to this water-based park. There are no land roads within VNP. The only way to access and experience the Park is by water. Restricting access simply to comply with a federal regulation that was clearly not intended for a water-based park and that has gone unenforced without issue since the Park's inception is illogical and is not in the best interest of Park visitors or the surrounding community and businesses. I implore Superintendent DeGross to rethink this plan entirely. VNP leadership should be approaching this plan from the perspective of, "How can we enhance access to this water-based park and increase winter time visitorship?" If the federal regulation needs to be modified to fit the best interest of VNP, then Superintendent DeGross should champion that change.

3. Class I and Class II ATV's (whether wheeled or tracked) should be allowed anywhere on the frozen lake surface that snowmobiles are allowed. In low snow conditions, traveling on the frozen lake surface by snowmobile is unsafe due to risk of rollover accidents and impractical in that there is inadequate snow to lubricate the track and cool the machine. In these conditions the current plan would effectively restrict user access to the park beyond walking distance from the populated shoreline. Additionally, these conditions often exist prior to the establishment of the ice road due to limited ice thickness. There is no practical reason to ban the use of ATV's on the frozen lake surface. Park users should retain the freedom to choose the most appropriate vehicle for the conditions, consistent with MN state law.

4. In all use zones (Moderate and Low), ice shelters should be allowed to be left out unoccupied overnight consistent with MN state law.

5. Fishing outfitters (businesses) should be allowed to use ORV's to place and move permanent ice houses and to transport customers from a resort to and from the ice houses.

6. An exemption must be allowed for dock repair work or other lakefront work being completed with a county building permit (i.e., skid steers, vehicles hauling materials across the ice).

7. Concentrating ice fishing shelters within 300ft of the VNP ice road does not increase safety, enhance visitor use experience, reduce noise and light pollution, or improve air and water quality. On the contrary, greater dispersal of ice fishing shelters would increase safety, reduce concentrations of noise and light pollution, and enhance the visitor's use experience through a more remote fishing experience.

Correspondence ID: 46

Project: 84972

Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Apr,29 2023 13:29:03

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: The plan as proposed violates the riparian rights of private and public lakeshore owners. The use of the frozen lake surface to recreate is protected by the riparian rights endowed by the State of MN (see: *Sanborn v. People's Ice Co.* (PDF) 82 Minn 43, 84 NW 641 [1900] and *Lamprey v. State* (PDF), 52 Minn 181, 53 NW 1139 [1883]). The riparian owner has the right to make use of the lake over its entire surface (see: *Johnson v. Seifert* (PDF) 257 Minn 159, 100 NW 2d 689 [1960]). The waters of Voyageurs National Park are under the state's jurisdiction. The state never ceded the waters to Voyageurs National Park.

A primary consideration of this plan should be how it enhances the ability of park visitors to

access and experience the park. The current plan reads as a roadmap of how to restrict access to this water-based park. There are no land roads within VNP. The only way to access and experience the Park is by water. Restricting access simply to comply with a federal regulation that was clearly not intended for a water-based park and that has gone unenforced without issue since the Park's inception is illogical and is not in the best interest of Park visitors or the surrounding community and businesses. I implore Superintendent DeGross to rethink this plan entirely. VNP leadership should be approaching this plan from the perspective of, "How can we enhance access to this water-based park and increase winter time visitorship?" If the federal regulation needs to be modified to fit the best interest of VNP, then Superintendent DeGross should championing that change.

Class I and Class II ATV's (whether wheeled or tracked) should be allowed anywhere on the frozen lake surface that snowmobiles are allowed. In low snow conditions, traveling on the frozen lake surface by snowmobile is unsafe due to risk of rollover accidents and impractical in that there is inadequate snow to lubricate the track and cool the machine. In these conditions the current plan would effectively restrict user access to the park beyond walking distance from the populated shoreline. Additionally, these conditions often exist prior to the establishment of the ice road due to limited ice thickness. There is no practical reason to ban the use of ATV's on the frozen lake surface. Park users should retain the freedom to choose the most appropriate vehicle for the conditions, consistent with MN state law.

In all use zones (Moderate and Low), ice shelters should be allowed to be left out unoccupied overnight consistent with MN state law.

Fishing outfitters (businesses) should be allowed to use ORV's to place and move permanent ice houses and to transport customers from a resort to and from the ice houses.

An exemption must be allowed for dock repair work or other lakefront work being completed with a county building permit (i.e., skid steers, vehicles hauling materials across the ice).

Concentrating ice fishing shelters within 300ft of the VNP ice road does not increase safety, enhance visitor use experience, reduce noise and light pollution, or improve air and water quality. On the contrary, greater dispersal of ice fishing shelters would increase safety, reduce concentrations of noise and light pollution, and enhance the visitor's use experience through a more remote fishing experience.

Thanks,



Correspondence ID: 47
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,29 2023 16:04:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: This proposal seems geared at reducing access for commercial ice house operations. This seems an unreasonable restriction to winter angling for those who travel distances and would seem to require concentrations along the ice roads which may not be the best sites for angling opportunities.

Correspondence ID: 48
Project: 84972
Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,30 2023 11:06:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan
Voyageurs National Park
360 Hwy 11 East International Falls, MN 56649

Mr. Superintendent,

After attending the public comment meeting at Kabetogama Community Center on April 18, 2023, I'm writing in the strongest possible opposition to the preliminary proposal, or any proposal that regulates all traffic other than snowmobiles to ice roads. I oppose it for the simple reason that ice roads are, in your own words, based on weather conditions, staff availability, and funding. One should certainly add to that the most obvious one...ice conditions. The only one of these conditions that one could consider reliable is funding based on congressional spending tied to the Great American Outdoors Act of 2020. All other conditions are suspect at best. Staff shortages, weather conditions and certainly ice conditions have been so inconsistent in the last several years that only a very small fraction of the proposed miles of roads have been open.

There are other obvious issues with basing access on these largely non-existent roads. By virtue of the significant thickness of ice necessary to support a plow vehicle, these roads are not able to be opened until well into the ice season. Significant slush issues on all areas of Lake Kabetogama have closed the ice road, short as it is, very early in the spring. Additionally, the ice fishing season for game fish in Minnesota begins with early ice and ends at the end of February. A road that does not open until mid to late January leaves an unreasonably short period of time for game fishing.

In contrast, as a fishing enthusiast with a tracked side by side, I currently have ice access generally in late December and, in most seasons, I am able to access the frozen lake surface through March. This represents a significant amount of access from the calendar standpoint and, with the tracked vehicle, access to the frozen lake surface is virtually unrestricted geographically. Over the last number of years, even pre-Covid, congress has clearly enacted legislation to expand access to our national parks. With the Great American Outdoors Act, they provided significant funding to maintain our parks and make access enjoyable to all. This proposal flies in the face of increased access and seeks to restrict access significantly, especially when we consider that the proposed roads simply cannot be available most seasons for any period of time, if at all.

I understand there are considerations about protecting the park for future generations. The ATV/UTV vehicle, especially when tracked, are more emissions efficient than snowmobiles, quieter than snowmobiles, operate at much lower speeds than snowmobiles, and leave a softer footprint than a snowmobile. These vehicles on the ice are no threat to any of the resource considerations one might have that require your protection. The footprints they leave behind are erased after each snowfall and the canvas is completely reset with every Spring thaw. Each winter the frozen lake reverts to what it has looked like for generations past, and each time the lake freezes for future generations it will look the same. Restricting access to these vehicles makes no sense when you consider they are no threat.

We know that, in the northern tier states, ATV/UTV's far outnumber snowmobiles. Some say this is because snowmobiling simply does not have as many young participants as it once did, and snowmobile operators are aging. I loved snowmobiling in the day, but I've reached an age where ice fishing is my first choice for winter recreation. As a senior, a heated cab and confidence that I won't get stuck out on the lake makes frozen lake and winter activity in the park much more enjoyable. There are times when there is not enough snow for snowmobiling, but plenty of ice for fishing. My UTV solves this issue and provides a safe and comfortable environment for moving around the lake surface. The point is, these vehicles are more prevalent than snowmobiles for many reasons, and making provision for them, makes provision for additional access winter access to the American public.

You have any number of options other than a plowed road (that won't work most seasons.) For example, you could stake an un-plowed minimum maintenance road that is staked from one end of the lakes to the other. You could still plow some sections to allow access to vehicles that pull wheeled houses, but an unplowed and staked minimum access road would still give you a 'road' for ATV/UTVs. Because they would not leave a berm, they could have spurs perpendicular to the main road in a multitude of places. This would give legal 'road' access to ATV/UTV's and provide significantly more opportunities for fishing spots...presuming you can still go 300' either side of these minimum maintenance roads and spurs.

Another option...and I think the best option...is to use park resources to get a park wide exemption in Voyageurs National Park that allows tracked ATV/UTV's on frozen lake surfaces. This would be far better than using the parks resources to fight the State of MN over water rights, not to mention the national and local UTV/ATV organizations and clubs. I don't believe getting an exemption for Voyageurs National Park would be near as difficult as perhaps it once was. Congress has directed the Secretary of the Interior to work with gateway communities (like Kabetogama and International Falls) to partner in programs to expand access while protecting the resource for future generations. Fighting long drawn-out court battles that the NPS is likely on the wrong side of, wastes time, money, and creates unnecessary distrust in the leadership of the national park systems.

In summary, it might take another 5 years to come up with a better plan, but I desperately oppose this plan...a plan that simply can't work with any level of consistency. It will ultimately reduce access to our park, and that is, or should be, counter to your mandate as our superintendent. I'll finish with this quote...

"By working across government and with the private sector, we can preserve our parks for generations to come, and provide Americans with more opportunities to experience our country's exhilarating mountain peaks, calming valleys, scenic vistas, sprawling forests, and compelling historic cultural sites."

Excerpt from National Park Week Proclamation 9864, April 19, 2019 Donald J Trump, President of the United States.

Respectfully yours,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Correspondence ID: 49
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,30 2023 14:13:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

1. The plan as proposed violates the riparian rights of private and public lakeshore owners. The use of the frozen lake surface to recreate is protected by the riparian rights endowed by the State of MN (see: *Sanborn v. People's Ice Co.* (PDF) 82 Minn 43, 84 NW 641 [1900] and *Lamprey v. State* (PDF), 52 Minn 181, 53 NW 1139 [1883]). The riparian owner has the right to make use of the lake over its entire surface (see: *Johnson v. Seifert* (PDF) 257 Minn 159, 100 NW 2d 689 [1960]). The waters of Voyageurs National Park are under the state's jurisdiction. The state never ceded the waters to Voyageurs National Park.
2. A primary consideration of this plan should be how it enhances the ability of park visitors to access and experience the park. The current plan reads as a roadmap of how to restrict access to this water-based park. There are no land roads within VNP. The only way to access and experience the Park is by water. Restricting access simply to comply with a federal regulation that was clearly not intended for a water-based park and that has gone unenforced without issue since the Park's inception is illogical and is not in the best interest of Park visitors or the surrounding community and businesses. I implore Superintendent DeGross to rethink this plan entirely. VNP leadership should be approaching this plan from the perspective of, "How can we enhance access to this water-based park and increase winter time visitorship?" If the federal regulation needs to be modified to fit the best interest of VNP, then Superintendent DeGross should championing that change.
3. Class I and Class II ATV's (whether wheeled or tracked) should be allowed anywhere on the frozen lake surface that snowmobiles are allowed. In low snow conditions, traveling on the frozen lake surface by snowmobile is unsafe due to risk of rollover accidents and impractical in that there is inadequate snow to lubricate the track and cool the machine. In these conditions the current plan would effectively restrict user access to the park beyond walking distance from the populated shoreline. Additionally, these conditions often exist prior to the establishment of the ice road due to limited ice thickness. There is no practical reason to ban the use of ATV's on the frozen lake surface. Park users should retain the freedom to choose the most appropriate vehicle for the conditions, consistent with MN state law.
4. In all use zones (Moderate and Low), ice shelters should be allowed to be left out unoccupied overnight consistent with MN state law.
5. Fishing outfitters (businesses) should be allowed to use ORV's to place and move permanent ice houses and to transport customers from a resort to and from the ice houses.
6. An exemption must be allowed for dock repair work or other lakefront work being completed with a county building permit (i.e., skid steers, vehicles hauling materials across the ice).
7. Concentrating ice fishing shelters within 300ft of the VNP ice road does not increase safety, enhance visitor use experience, reduce noise and light pollution, or improve air and water quality. On the contrary, greater dispersal of ice fishing shelters would increase safety, reduce concentrations of noise and light pollution, and enhance the visitor's use experience through a more remote fishing experience.

Correspondence ID: 50
Project: 84972

Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Apr,30 2023 16:15:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Regarding frozen water access for ice fishing or other travel in Voyageurs National Park. I do not own a snowmobile, but instead chose to operate an ATV with tracks for winter use. There is absolutely no difference except semantics in the use of a snowmobile and a tracked ATV or UTV across a frozen lake. This also holds true with the use of a tracked SUVs. Please DO NOT outlaw the use of ATVs and UTVs on the frozen park lakes. There is absolutely no reason to do so. Thank you for hearing me out.
[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 51
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,01 2023 08:32:53
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I didn't think this is in the best interest of the park. Haven't had a problem in 50 years? With this plan that will change. I have watched the north woods turn into a racetrack of size by sides. Many having loud mufflers and driving recklessly. Let's keep them out of the park and leave as is. I believe the lakes get enough fishing pressure in the open water.

Correspondence ID: 52
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,01 2023 14:46:20
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The Frozen Lake Surface proposal is aimed to address concerns that are not currently apparent now or in the foreseeable future. The proposed rule will limit access to one of the most under used National Parks in the park system. Access in the winter months today actually in less than in the open water or summer months.
Currently there are no fees to access the lake in the summer months. The proposed fee to use the winter road is a barrier to entry and could and more likely will decrease access to a portion of the current users.

Currently the park maintains parking lots, hiking trails, ski trails, waterways in the form of navigational and hazard markers. No user fee is charged this service. Why target the ice road which is up to the park's discretion as to when or if it is plowed and opened.
The proposed rule to limit the placement of some ice shelters to within 300 feet of the road will actually concentrate the placement of these shelters to along the road. This would seem to actually contribute to the concern regarding crowding. I attended the virtual presentation and noticed the picture of concentrated shelter placement was from another lake not in the park. Are you looking to implement a rule that addresses crowding that does not exist now or in the future?

The access to peoples with limitations on their mobility is problematic. The park's accessibility during winter months can be difficult with current conditions. The proposed rule as written

would only increase restrictions and dampen accessibility further.

The park has numerous private property owners that access their properties in the winter months using means that would no longer be permitted. Access over ice has historically been permitted and needs to be insured.



Correspondence ID: 53
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,01 2023 15:52:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I think you should leave the winter season as is. People have businesses and make their livelihood off of ice fishing. This would ruin their business. Also home owners on lake would also be negatively effected. Leave well enough alone.

Correspondence ID: 54
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,01 2023 22:11:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The proposed frozen lake surface access changes would negatively impact businesses in the VNP area as well negatively affecting property owners rights and very possibly the property values in the area. I also believe tourism would be adversely affected as many people who come to the area to enjoy the park and their recreational vehicles will likely choose alternative destinations. I believe at the very least further review is in order.

Correspondence ID: 55
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,02 2023 09:08:22
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am strongly opposed to limiting access on the lake. Why should the fishery only be accessible to people with snowmobiles? I don't own a snowmobile and have a disability so access via pick up truck is important to me. My fishing license gives me the right to fish where I want and I agree with the DNR, you don't have authority to regulate what happens on the water.

Correspondence ID: 56
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03 2023 08:12:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: There should not be any alteration to the current regulations/ laws for the way locals and tourists visit and use VNP. Every national park in the United States is unique in their own ways,

just because other parks implemented rules against Atv's, UTV's etc. does not mean this park should follow suit. There should be no issue in Federal funding to justify charging people for parking or for using public accesses. If implemented you will see a decline in tourism, local businesses affected, and a lack of participation in many activities that occur in VNP. People do not want to spend extra money on things that have always been & should always be available and accessible to them free of charge. If that's the case they will just use Public Access to get on to the lake and do various activities outside of the park to avoid all of the unnecessary fees and excessive enforcement the park seems to hold over people.

Correspondence ID: 57
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03 2023 08:39:49
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: This is just not right! The park was put in place for the people to USE and I think that we pay enough in taxes and fees already (state surplus!!!!) You are driving people away with this insaneness!

Correspondence ID: 58
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03 2023 12:38:36
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: My family has been exploring the Lake Kabetogema area since the 1970s and I have personally experienced the area multiple times a year regularly since the early 2000s. In recent years, I have been up to our cabin at least twice a winter to explore the area with ice fishing as our primary activity. I am deeply concerned about the recent proposal to prohibit ORVs from accessing a large portion of the lake.
First off, by limiting access to snowmobile use only beyond 300 ft off of the plowed ice road, you are limiting access to the wonderful park that has been set aside for the use of people to those who have access to a snowmobile. These can be expensive and costly to maintain which limits the number of people who own snowmobiles. Lake Kabetogema is roughly 25,700 acres, the ice road only provides access to a very small percentage of that. Per the NPS website, National Parks were designed as "a public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people" which should include all people, not just those with access to certain types of transportation. Additionally, the area is becoming more popular to ORVs with the increasing in ATV trails and the area club has been doing great work in this space to expand access to ATV riders.

A lot of times the ice road itself can be an issue in accessing the lake. Many years, the ice road isn't available until late January or early February. Per the Voyageurs National Park Facebook page, in 2023 the ice roads were not open until February 4th and the Kabetogema Visitor Center was closed on March 18th which is severely limiting the ice fishing season for those with no access to a snowmobile especially for those targeting walleyes which ends the end of February. There is plenty of ice earlier in the season that is only accessible with ORV use.

Based on my experience ice fishing on Lake Kabetogema, there isn't a lot of ORV use to begin

with. Many times, the only other motor vehicles I see on the lake are snowmobiles. My family has both snowmobiles and ATVs that we use for ice fishing. We ideally use our snowmobiles, but sometimes conditions do not allow us to use them without causing damage to our machines especially in low snow years. In the last 5 years, going on 2 trips a winter to go ice fishing, I think we have used ORVs over our snowmobiles maybe twice due to the conditions but if that would be prohibited, we wouldn't have been able to complete our trip.

I also think limiting ORV use will negatively impact local businesses. Ice fishing brings people to the area which then support the local businesses. This would also significantly negatively impact the few local businesses that provide ice fishing guide services as this would prohibit the way their business is ran which is then impacting their livelihood.

Overall, I do not think that ORV use on Lake Kabetogema is a problem and by prohibiting ORV use, you are severely negatively impacting the publics right to access the park as intended.

Correspondence ID: 59
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,03 2023 15:46:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: May 3, 2023

Frozen Lake Surface Access
And Use Plan
Voyageurs National Park
360 Hwy 11 East
International Falls, MN 56649

RE: VNP Proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan

We strongly oppose the whole "proposed" Frozen Surface Access and Use Plan that was released on March 28, 2023. We oppose imposing fees for use and oppose ice road use rules or vehicle restrictions.

We understand Minnesota statute 84B.061, support it and believe it should remain in effect. We also support the DNR's position that "water is water, and they retain the water rights."

The proposed plan would restrict my family and friends' use of the lake such as transportation to and from our favorite fishing holes. For medical reasons snowmobiling is not an option.

We absolutely love the unhindered fishing that we have been accustomed to for 25 years on all the Northland lakes like Kabetogama, Namakan, Rainy and Ash River.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 60
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04 2023 06:57:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Please leave the park alone. The only reasonable change is adding a user fee for the ice road if the park service maintains it. The fee should also be reasonable. The other changes only have negative effects on folks that use the lake.

Correspondence ID: 61
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04 2023 09:52:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: As a lifetime, resident and business owner on Rainy Lake, I originally opposed voyageurs national Park, and all of their restrictions, coming to see that Voyageurs national Park was willing to work with the community and the business owners. If the park service is inclined to be in compliance with other national parks and their rules, it is up to our national park in Minnesota to object and write bylaws that allow other vehicles .
As a business owner, I have seen multiple guests come to international Falls to visit Voyageurs national park, they have ventured out onto Rainy Lake to ice fish and see the northern lights by driving their vehicles on the designated ice road.
Guests have expressed their enjoyment in driving their vehicles onto Rainy Lake to ice, fish and view northern lights, some have driven out there just to experience driving on ice and have proclaimed this as a unique experience.
Voyageurs national Park does not provide a multitude of various activities for visitors in Minnesota winters. It it has been questioned by visitors why Voyaguers offers such limited access already. Voyageurs is already the least visited National Park in the Country and guests can not venture out without owning or renting a snowmobile or boat. Elderly guests can not walk, ski, snowshoe or paddle a canoe for any distance. Let's promote tourism instead of adding more restrictions. This change is not a requirement, it is an added restriction.

Visitors have questioned why voyageurs national Park has such limited access already to the lake and lands owned by the people for the people.

As a lifelong resident, I have enjoyed snowmobiling four wheeling, using our side-by-side, ice fishing, snowmobiling, and walking the ice roads within the park. Please do not add additional restrictions to our property that is an extension of our community just because you can.

Correspondence ID: 62
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04 2023 11:18:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Our family's comments regarding the Frozen Lake Surface Plan for VNP center around the fact that in all of the literature we've reviewed, there is no mention of the problems that are driving this plan.

This topic appears to be a solution in search of a problem. Since no problem(s) can be articulated by the NPS, then we can only assume this plan's real intention is to further limit access to the VNP and surrounding area.

My family believes that the ultimate goal is indeed to make access to recreational use of VNP further restricted as it is during the Spring, Summer, and early Fall seasons. It continues to astonish our family that the VNP is one of the largest national parks, with little to zero real access to by common US citizens.

The level of destruction already done to the resorts and family properties leveled in the region just to create VNP was sad enough, but this plan appears to be another method for the NPS to further limit access and use to the area.

Please stop limiting access and recreational use of VNP. In reality, the NPS should be looking at plans that allow both private and commercial interests more access to VNP so that more people can access the region year-round. As it stands now, you can only access VNP if you have a boat or recreational vehicle (Winter months). This wasn't the case before the park was created. And now the NPS wants to further limit recreational vehicle access / use.

Thank you.

Correspondence ID: 63
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Homeowner Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04 2023 11:19:43
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Hello. I am a sixty nine year old Homeowner on Lake Kabetogama, part of Voyageurs National Park. This is the first time that I have written to the NPS, but feel very strongly about this topic. My family has owned our cabin since 1949. I have spent every summer of my 69 years there, and experienced the "takeover" of the area to establish Voyageurs National Park. Most residents were very against the takeover, and most have fared poorly since it occurred. I know many owners of resorts, restaurants and homes in the area, as my parents and grandparents did. We have paid estate and federal taxes since 1949. This latest Frozen Lake Surface measure is impending doom for the hard working businesses on Kabetogama and the rest of the park. I was one of the few people in the area to say "Well, maybe the Park coming in will be a good thing!". There have been a few "good things" about it, but this measure is going too far and will drive out so many businesses and homeowners. Having beautiful lakes to visit is an important

thing to have in a National Park. Having no places for people to stay, no restaurants in which people can dine, and no stores in which to shop will NOT be good for the area. The business owners are hard working, honest people who are barely able to keep their businesses going. Please do not let this measure pass.

Correspondence ID: 64
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,04 2023 18:09:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Do not go forward with this. This will hurt all businesses around the area and will limit access to hundreds of thousands of people that use this. And I'm sure this is only the beginning next will be motorized boats and everything else. Horrible idea. Instead of making it less accessible think of ideas on how to make it more accessible.

Correspondence ID: 65
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,05 2023 16:09:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: It would be great to have a frozen lake in Minnesota off limits to motorized vehicles and plowed for wild ice or Nordic Ice skating. We have no safe place to do this now, or very few, and one has to be seen by giant pickups and snowmobiles. If you limit vehicles there, I would love to promote the area for Nordic Ice Skating (or sometimes called Wild Ice skating), and also for skiing.

Correspondence ID: 66
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,06 2023 17:27:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern:
The National Park Service Mission Statement states it preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

Seems to me with the preliminary proposal, you are not following your mission statement. The proposal will limit people with disabilities who are not able to travel to the ice houses via snowmobile. Shame on you to limit people with disabilities.

If there is an emergency in an ice house, how are the emergency personnel to respond? UTV/ATVs are able to carry extra equipment and supplies for live saving measures.

You are proposing to limit tourism opportunities, which will eventually decrease/stop tourism totally with charging fees and limiting the resorts access to their own ice house opportunities.

So basically, you don't care about offering enjoyment, education, or inspiration of this and future generations.

I personally spend a significant amount of time during all seasons of the year at Lake Kabetogama. I love the opportunities that Lake Kabetogama has offered my family over my entire lifetime. It truly saddens me to see the proposal which would limit opportunities to the next generations. I am so thankful my recently deceased husband had the opportunity to experience the ice road before the proposed changes. If these were in place, due to medical reasons he would not of been able to experience the true Lake Kabetogama winter season.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Correspondence ID: 67
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,07 2023 18:38:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I attended the open meeting at Kabetogama.

What a huge disappointment learning about the proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan. Did some committee actually think this was a good starter?

I was part of the original request in 2017 for the park to consider to re-open the Mukooda Portage to allow access to the lakes with ATV's during low snow years or low snow times of the spring when safe access can still be available. For many folks, there is a preference for purchasing ATV's instead of snowmobiles. Many ATV's are able to be used 10 to 12 months rather than a typical 10 to 12 weeks snow mobile season.

We felt the opportunity to travers onto the VNP lakes via the portage was considerably safer than using a lake route through King Williams and Harrison Narrows.

We have from time to time since 2017 been in contact with the Park Superintendent about progress moving toward a decision to allow ATV's. Not once were we advised the Plan might be more restrictive rather than more accommodating. Such a huge disappointment. I did refer to the 2 hour meeting in Kabetogama as a JOKE, except that a joke is generally funny or humorous. This was a disaster at the least. There were more than 100 people in attendance and I do not think one person thought this was a plan with potential to find common use.

In addition to our ask to allow ATV's on Mukooda Portage, we asked about Visitor Centers and restroom facilities. On the St Louis County and Koochiching County roads, ATV's are allowed. But not on VNP roads and entrances to Visitor Centers, or to picnic grounds and services. This was not even addressed after 6 long years, Such poor communication and understanding of our questions.

Please start over! [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 68
Project: 84972

Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,08 2023 07:33:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am totally against this plan. Once again our access to the outdoors is going to be limited! I am 53 years old with terrible knees. Without this access we have I will not be able to use and enjoy the park like I have in the past. Not everyone can use snowmobiles to get to their fishing spots. As for the park fees. We pay so much for taxes already. These fees make these parks and other recreation opportunities cost prohibitive. The parks should be receiving more funding through the government!

Correspondence ID: 69
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,08 2023 10:34:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I have owned a cabin at Kabetogama since 2009. I am very disappointed and angry about the proposed frozen lake surface changes the National Park is considering. I have enjoyed winter each year since purchasing a cabin ice fishing in my portable ice shelter and my 16ft wheelhouse. Since 2009, I have seen the park service go from having an ice road from connecting the both visitors centers from Kab to Ash, some years no ice road whatsoever, and now the past few years if there is an ice road it only consists of the sledding hill. When there is no ice road, I have enjoyed renting an ice house from local business operators to support their business (very minimal options with only two rental options on Kab). The impact ice fishing in Voyageurs National Park is miniscule with very few houses out throughout the park. I am an avid snowmobiler as well and see all parts of Voyageurs and there very few ice houses compared to other popular ice fishing destinations. I strongly oppose as well as an UTV owner the proposed restrictions not allowing them as well. Again, all these proposals appear to be government overreach that are without question not necessary!!!

Correspondence ID: 70
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,08 2023 12:09:25
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: My family owns a cabin and has for years, accessible only by water. I grew up there, now my children have the privilege of growing up there as well. The entire family are avid outdoors people, work hard to clean up the environment and enjoy it for hunting/fishing camping and hiking. We would not be able to access and enjoy the cabin late fall through spring if we could not use the UTVs to get there due to having no open water for a boat, and unsafe conditions for anything else but an air boat. We believe in teaching respect for the outdoors and the only way to continue that trend for everyone's future is to bring our children up that way as well. I graciously ask you to reconsider your stance on allowing such vehicles on the ice, we are not the only family bringing little ones, or elderly people up there to continue to enjoy the cabin and the beauty of the park, who are unable to safely ride a snow machine.

Thank you
[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 71
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,08 2023 12:27:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am writing to express my strong opposition to the frozen lake access proposal in Voyageurs National Park. I have been enjoying the waters of Lake Kabetogama, Namakan and Sand Point since before the Park Service established Voyageurs Nations Park. I remember well the animosity that was created when the park arrived, and I know first-hand that some of those bad feelings remain.

Events such as the park ranger's vast overreach in the Justin Ebel incident last summer combined with the heavy-handed enforcement tactics that MANY frequent users of the park are currently complaining about do little to build trust in the local community. Why did it take nearly a year for the body cam footage to be released? That lack of transparency only further hurts the Park Service's reputation and trust.

The waters inside of Voyageurs National Park were never ceded by the State of Minnesota so for the Park Service to want to place restrictions on our use and enjoyment during the winter months makes no sense. And to state that once the water is frozen, it becomes "land" and therefore is under the jurisdiction of the Park Service is absurd.

We own property on Lake Kabetogama and often need to access the property from the ice in the winter to do maintenance and improvements. Restricting any vehicular travel on the ice is a bad idea. It seems like the Park Service is searching for a solution to a problem that does not exist. I would prefer the Park Service abandon building the ice roads (which don't always appear to be the best use of our tax dollars) and let the folks who venture out in the winter to do as we have always done to enjoy the lakes without unnecessary and burdensome restrictions.

If you begin restricting ice fishing and vehicular travel during the winter, it will only hurt the local economy and business owners. If you begin charging for parking and access, it will only hurt the local economy and business owners.

Voyageurs National Park is unique in the National Park system. There is no reason to have the same rules and regulations in each park when they represent very different experiences. For the past nearly 50 years, things have been good in the park without the need to come into compliance with general regulations of the other National Parks. With these proposed changes to the frozen lake access, things will not continue to be so good for the next 50 years and the Park Service will certainly reignite local animosity that has finally begun to subside.

Correspondence ID: 72
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: May,08 2023 19:33:47

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: As a local resident, lake property owner, and park supporter, I find the proposed sweeping changes to ATV usage on the frozen lake surface to be overzealous and unnecessary. Had the park provided clear evidence of abuse, overuse, or any rational outside of bringing this park in to compliance with other national parks I would have given consideration to those facts, but that is not the case. If there is concern about the evolution of ATVs and icehouses, there are ways to address those problems without a total ban. The park should be a sanctuary for people to enjoy the northern Minnesota outdoors in the manner of their choosing. Be it, snowmobiling, skiing, snowshoeing, ice fishing, or otherwise, any non-destructive use of the park should be welcomed and co-exist together.

Correspondence ID: 73

Project: 84972

Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Voyageur Park Lodge Reef Runner Rentals LLC Business

Received: May,09 2023

Correspondence Type: Other

Correspondence: To whom it may concern,
I'm writing on behalf of my business Voyageur Park Lodge (Reef Runner Rentals LLC) located on Lake Kabetogama. I hold 1 of 3 commercial use permits that allow my business to rent fish houses on Kabetogama. When I started my business plan years ago no other Angling houses were for rent on Kabetogama. I knew we were not allowed to plow roads, so my plan included the use of light weight aluminum spray foamed fish houses, tracked (American Track Truck Tracks) Jeep, Polaris 6x6, Polaris side by side and a trailer outfitted to transport guests when the ice is not thick enough for the use of my tracked Jeep. I have a substantial amount of time and money invested. This proposal is a direct attack on how I operate. The ice road itself is miles away from where I operate my business and fishing grounds. I met with Bob DeGross one on one and explained how I operate my business and the equipment I use to operate it. My business has had no problems with the park or state conservation officers over the many years of operation and holds liability insurance the park requires to acquire a Commercial Use Permit. I write this in good standing with the park service.


My business brings guests to our area at a time frame when not much else is going on. Snowmobile business usually runs late January through February if snow conditions are good. These same guests' frequent area restaurants, stay at other local lodging establishments and shop at local stores. Some of my guests that come here this is their first experience with the park and many come back during the open water time frames with friends and family.

If this proposed plan were to be implemented my Icehouse rental business would have to fold losing revenue that I would not be able to make up during any other time of the year.

Ideally, I would like to continue to operate as is. I leave my own private property to operate and fish an area about 2 ½ miles from my resort location Voyageur Park Lodge [REDACTED]. Another problem with the proposed plan is limited guests to operate their own equipment. I have many guests that come to my resort that have their own equipment. If they were no longer able to use that equipment the area would lose out on more revenue.

I'm available anytime to discuss how I operate my business or happy to answer any questions

that might come up. Thank you!


Voyageur Park Lodge
Reef Runner Rentals LLC
218-235-0240

Correspondence ID: 74
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Kabetogama Lake Association Business
Received: May,09 2023
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: RE: Response Regarding VNP Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan, Public Comment Period
It is the opinion of the Kabetogama Lake Association, which represents our local businesses to include Resort Operations, is opposed to the proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan. Opposition also exists from area residents of Kabetogama, along with surrounding area residents who enjoy the frozen lake surfaces of Kabetogama and adjoining bodies of water. It is our opinion that the proposed plan is contradictory to the current National Parks Plan to increase access to the Park System VS limiting access. One example of limiting access by restricting modes of travel on the ice surface is particularly concerning for our disabled area residents and Park visitors. The use of ORV's on the frozen lake surface is the safest, and in many cases, the only mode of transportation available for people with disabilities to enjoy the frozen lake surface. The proposed restrictions will also affect accessibility to private residences during the winter months.

The current VNP proposal will also have a negative impact on local businesses, to include resort operations and others. In the past three winter seasons, the ice road on Kabetogama has consisted of roughly 1.25 miles of plowed road from the Kabetogama Visitor Center and ending at the Sphunge Island sledding hill. Additionally, access to the ice road is extremely limited, being open roughly 1.5 - 2 months out of the winter season. This further limits access to the Park.

Additionally, according to the Parks Preliminary Proposal, you have cited several issues associated with ORV and ice shelter use on the frozen lake surfaces In the Park. One of these cited issues is Visitor Use and Experience, including safety. Does the Park Service have any information to share regarding this cited issue? What visitor use and safety concerns does the Park Service have? Regarding the five remaining cited issues the Park Service has identified in the proposed plan, does the Park Service have any Environmental Impact Studies available for review concluding the negative impacts of ORV usage and ice shelters on the frozen lake surface?

Another area of concern exists with regard to jurisdiction within the waters, and water beds VS the land within the Park. We would request further review of the following Minnesota State Statute #84B.061. For review, statute verbiage can be found on the following page of this 2-page document.

84B.061 STATE JURISDICTION OVER RAINY LAKE AND OTHER NAVIGABLE WATERS; DUTIES OF GOVERNOR, ATTORNEY GENERAL, AND OTHER PUBLIC OFFICERS.

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History: 1995 c 124 s 2

By way of your signature, you are expressly stating your opposition to the proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan.

Correspondence ID:	75
Project:	84972
Document:	127517
Outside Organization:	Unaffiliated Individual
Received:	May,09 2023
Correspondence Type:	Letter
Correspondence:	RE: Response Regarding VNP Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan, Public Comment Period

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History: 1995 c 124 s 2

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Correspondence ID:	76
Project:	84972
Document:	127517
Outside Organization:	Unaffiliated Individual
Received:	May,09 2023
Correspondence Type:	Letter
Correspondence:	My comment is why? This appears to be more government overreach without the right to do so. Read the agreement (law) of section 1.041. What don't you understand? Its hands off, period. These ice roads have been done and maintained for years. Its the obligation of the state to continue that in the interest of the public and business's. If you must make a plan, then fashion it around exactly what has been done for years and protect it's usual operation without changing a thing. The government has no proof that it has to change for any particular reason. Leave everything as is until you can prove it has to be changed for safety and environmental reasons. The bottom line is, the U.S. Government has no right to change anything in the first place so this should be a dead issue, a non-starter.

RE: Response Regarding VNP Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan, Public Comment Period

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History: 1995 c 124 s 2

By way of your signature, you are expressly stating your opposition to the proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan.

Correspondence ID: 77
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: I am opposed to the use plan at Voyageurs National Park for the simple reason that I don't feel it's the National Park's place to enact rules within a park without total agreement with the state(s) within which the park resides.

RE: Response Regarding VNP Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan, Public Comment Period

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Document:	127517
Outside Organization:	Unaffiliated Individual
Received:	May,09 2023
Correspondence Type:	Other
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Correspondence ID:	79
Project:	84972
Document:	127517
Outside Organization:	Unaffiliated Individual
Received:	May,09 2023
Correspondence Type:	Other
Correspondence:	We dislike the proposal simply because it is another government over-reach. The residents of the area pay taxes (as we do on our summer cottage - it has been in the family since 1956) and seems like more freedoms are being taken away little by little. Seems like the Park is overstepping their jurisdiction on this. Stop limiting people who want to enjoy their neighborhood. Not everyone can ride a snowmobile, too. What about their access? We support the local businesses.

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Document:	127517
Outside Organization:	Unaffiliated Individual
Received:	May,09 2023
Correspondence Type:	Other
Correspondence:	RE: Response Regarding VNP Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan, Public Comment Period

It is the opinion of the Kabetogama Lake Association, which represents our local businesses to include Resort Operations, is opposed to the proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan. Opposition also exists from area residents of Kabetogama, along with surrounding area residents who enjoy the frozen lake surfaces of Kabetogama and adjoining bodies of water. It is our opinion that the proposed plan is contradictory to the current National Parks Plan to increase access to the Park System VS limiting access. One example of limiting access by restricting modes of travel on the ice surface is particularly concerning for our disabled area residents and Park visitors. The use of ORV's on the frozen lake surface is the safest, and in many cases, the only mode of transportation available for people with disabilities to enjoy the frozen lake surface. The proposed restrictions will also affect accessibility to private residences during the winter months.

The current VNP proposal will also have a negative impact on local businesses, to include resort operations and others. In the past three winter seasons, the ice road on Kabetogama has consisted of roughly 1.25 miles of plowed road from the Kabetogama Visitor Center and ending at the Sphunge Island sledding hill. Additionally, access to the ice road is extremely limited, being open roughly 1.5 - 2 months out of the winter season. This further limits access to the Park.

Additionally, according to the Parks Preliminary Proposal, you have cited several issues associated with ORV and ice shelter use on the frozen lake surfaces In the Park. One of these cited issues is Visitor Use and Experience, including safety. Does the Park Service have any information to share regarding this cited issue? What visitor use and safety concerns does the Park Service have? Regarding the five remaining cited issues the Park Service has identified in the proposed plan, does the Park Service have any Environmental Impact Studies available for review concluding the negative impacts of ORV usage and ice shelters on the frozen lake surface?

Another area of concern exists with regard to jurisdiction within the waters, and water beds VS the land within the Park. We would request further review of the following Minnesota State Statute #84B.061. For review, statute verbiage can be found on the following page of this 2-page document.

84B.061 STATE JURISDICTION OVER RAINY LAKE AND OTHER NAVIGABLE WATERS; DUTIES OF GOVERNOR, ATTORNEY GENERAL, AND OTHER PUBLIC OFFICERS.

As required by this chapter and the act of Congress authorizing Voyageurs National Park, the state of Minnesota donated in excess of 35,000 acres of state and other publicly owned land for the park, roughly one-fourth of the land area of the park, at a cost of over \$5,000,000 to the state. More than 24,000 acres of this land was state trust fund land which the state condemned before making its donation. Pursuant to section 84B.06, lands donated by the state, along with other lands acquired by the National Park Service for the park, were made subject to concurrent jurisdiction by the state and the United States under section 1.041. In making these donations, none of the navigable waters within the park and the lands under them have been donated to the United States. These navigable waters include the following: Rainy, Kabetogama, Namakan, Sand Point, and Crane Lakes. Pursuant to applicable federal and state law, navigable waters and their beds are owned by the state. Ownership of and jurisdiction over these waters and their beds has not been ceded by the state, either expressly or implicitly, to the United States. Unlike section 1.044 relating to the Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge, where the state expressly granted its consent and jurisdiction to the United States to acquire interests in water, as well as land, the consent granted by the state in section 84B.06 to acquisitions by the United States for Voyageurs National Park is limited to land, only. In the discharge of their official duties, the governor, attorney general, other constitutional officers, and other public officials, such as the commissioner of natural resources, shall vigorously assert and defend, in all forums, the state's ownership of and jurisdiction over these waters and their beds and related natural resources, together with associated rights of the state and its citizens arising from the state's ownership and jurisdiction. In discharging their duties, the governor, attorney general, other constitutional officers, and other public officials shall, additionally, be especially cognizant of the free rights of travel afforded to citizens of Minnesota and others under the Webster-Ashburton Treaty (proclaimed November 10, 1842) and the Root-Bryce Treaty (proclaimed May 13, 1910) on international and associated boundary waters. Also, in furtherance of duties under this section, the commissioner of natural resources shall continue in effect the commercial removal of rough fish, as defined in section 97A.015, subdivision 43, from these waters, together with any rights to do so possessed by any person on January 1, 1995, so long as the commissioner determines that such taking is desirable to the management of the native fishery.

History: 1995 c 124 s 2

By way of your signature, you are expressly stating your opposition to the proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan.

Correspondence ID:	81
Project:	84972
Document:	127517
Outside Organization:	Kabetogama Township Town or City Government(Official Rep.)
Received:	May,09 2023
Correspondence Type:	Other
Correspondence:	Dear Mr. DeGross,

The Township Board would like to refer the park to the Minnesota State Statute #848.061 that states that the State of Minnesota owns the waters in Voyageurs National Park, the park only owns the land The Board of the Township of Kabetogama would like to express their concerns regarding the Parks proposed usage of ATV, UTV, cars and trucks on frozen lake surfaces in

Voyageurs National Park. The Kabetogama Township Board passed a resolution supporting multiple vehicle use on frozen lake surfaces in Voyageurs National Park. The Township is in favor of increased park usage and continued support for accessibility for a wide range of individuals and groups. By the Park attempting to put restraints on how Park visitors may use the waterway, rights of individuals who may be handicapped, disabled, or limited to a type of vehicle use for their access to the waterway will directly limit their use and enjoyment of the area. When the park was established, they stated that there would be no interference with local businesses, and the current proposal under review would definitely hinder resort business in the wintertime. Various businesses promote and encourage Winter Park activities and their entry into the park is other than any use of a snowmobile. We believe each park is unique and not all rules apply equally within each National Park. We see no reason to limit the use of A TV and UTV's as their use leaves no permanent footprint behind as all traces are gone when the ice melts. It is the Kabetogama Township Board position that all should be free to travel anywhere on all lake surfaces. UTV's are used for warmth and comfort for many individuals while traveling on the ice. UTV's are used for transporting fish houses, and trucks are the only vehicle that can transport larger fishing shelters. ATV and UTV's are used as a safe mode of travel on the ice surface. As the Winter days change, A TV and UTV travel may be the only way to continue to safely travel in the park. There are many residents, vacationers, etc., to whom access would be limited if the mode of transportation is curtailed by changes to the frozen lake surfaces access that currently exists.

Sincerely,

Kabetogama Township Board of Supervisors

Chairman, Larry Kee

Correspondence ID: 82
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,09 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: ATTN: Bob DeGross

RE: Lake Kabetogama
The National Park Service (NPS)

Our family has been coming up to Lake Kabetogama for generations. We purchased our property and cabin for us, our children, and grandchildren to continue to enjoy both the summer and winter beauty and activities on the lake and land.

We realize that there may need to be some policies in place to ensure winter safety and protect the area, however, we are extremely concerned as to what restrictions/limitations may impact our family's current lake and land usage.

I ([REDACTED]) have a disability which affects my legs (pain and numbness) and use a tracked side-by-side vehicle for winter access to enjoy ice fishing anywhere on the lake and to support the various Resorts anywhere on the lake to get food and/or gas. Also, our 5 grandchildren

(another upcoming generation) just love ice fishing and the lake! The side-by-side is a way to get them out on the lake in the winter to fish in our shanty, to enjoy the sledding hill, keeps them warm on the ride and creates a memorable and enjoyable experience for each of them.

We certainly appreciate what the Park Service does to ensure the beauty of the area, their time and service to make sure it remains enjoyable for all. Thank you!

Correspondence ID: 83
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,12 2023 06:47:24
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Much of the things you are trying to manage (like how long shelters can remain on the ice) is already handled by Minnesota law. I think you should abandon these plans and allow activity to continue as it is. There is no real evidence that further rules or oversight is necessary. Requiring permits to use the frozen surface is an overreach.

Follow Minnesota law and the lead of the Minnesota DNR - they manage frozen waters well.

Correspondence ID: 84
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,15 2023 10:19:33
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: RE: Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan

Dear Superintendent DeGross,

I am writing today like many other residents, community members, and resort and business owners to comment on the proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan for Voyageurs National Park. I own family vacation properties on Lake Kabetogama and we all have an immense love of this lake and the surrounding areas. No other group of people have a more vested interest in its preservation and future.

In life, regardless of the industry, business, job or family situation you are in, from finance to business to raising children or caring for elderly parents, all decisions are made by weighing the benefits against the costs of each of those decisions. After reading through the proposed plan, I admit, there are a few aspects that have some merit. Codifying a plan for ice roads and snowmobile trails and associated guidelines for using those resources for the future will provide ongoing access, funding and a valuable resource for all of those who visit, love and rely on this beautiful place.

I, like all of the local community in the area, do have some very deep concerns about the proposed plan though. The proposed plan does not have any specific information as to why any of the restrictions are necessary. There are just very vague "Potential Resource Considerations", none of which are current problems and don't take into account the uniqueness of this area. There is no problem or even a single documented complaint noted that this plan will solve. There is no benefit detailed that would improve the lake and surrounding

area or the experience of residents, visitors or businesses. It is seemingly just based on potential considerations that are far from the current reality. On the other hand, there are many obvious costs and dire consequences of these restrictions to all that are part of this community and that visit.

My first concern is the limitations the UTV restriction will put on people with limited mobility and disabled people. I know of several residents as well as a very close friend and cabin neighbor of mine, who, other than on a UTV, would not be able to access the lake in the winter. Their abilities don't allow them to use snowmobiles, the only proposed method of access and I imagine many visitors would experience the same limitations. It is not reasonable or sometimes feasible for them to have to travel great distances to access the ice roads which are mainly located in the uninhabited sections of the lake currently and puts undue restrictions on where and how they access the lake to recreate. My friend would never be able to take his children ice fishing in front of his cabin. In addition, this incumbrance could lead to litigation using the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), that would hold up the implementation of any proposed plan and would incur substantial defense costs to the National Park Service.

A fundamental issue with this plan is that it assumes that the National Park Service has jurisdiction over the hard water of the lakes included in the plan. Pursuant to applicable federal and state law, the water area of the lakes, whether frozen or not, is owned by the state of Minnesota. The state has NOT ceded these waters to the NPS, the United States or any federal entity. The statute states that the State of Minnesota should defend these rights. As such, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintains that the water, whether frozen or not, is owned by the state and retains the water rights. This means that any proposed changes to water access or use regulations must be done in conjunction and with the approval of the State of Minnesota. This proposed plan does NOT have state support and certainly doesn't have MN DNR support.

Another major concern is the well-being and health of the resorts and businesses that serve as a huge benefit, resource, and draw of visitors to the area and park. Many of these resorts rely heavily on winter recreation on the lake. Admittedly, a lot of that is from snowmobilers, but many rely on the ability to provide ice fishing opportunities as well. Restricting the lake to snowmobile access only, outside of the ice roads, cripples an important part of these real people's livelihoods. Again, most of these resorts are nowhere near the ice roads. There is no reasonable way to move ice houses or transport visitors without the use of UTV's, track vehicles or other non-snowmobile type vehicles. Many of these visitors rely on these resorts to set them up for ice fishing and transporting them to and from ice houses. These restrictions would be devastating for area businesses as fewer visitors would come to the area in the winter.

We all rely heavily on the businesses and resorts around these communities to provide a wide range of recreation, lodging, and services. I know as well that they all struggle from year to year to overcome a litany of other obstacles that press them financially. Most, if not all, are family owned and operated, and they love and care for this area more than most. It would be a travesty and a moral failure to further burden these people who have dedicated their lives to this beautiful place for a restriction that so obviously has no definable benefits, no problem it is solving and has such an enormous cost to these people in particular.

One obvious take away from the proposed plan is that the true intent is aimed at restricting the size and number of ice houses on the lakes and not the actual UTV use. The UTV restriction would be the equivalent of banning all boats on the lake and only allowing jets skis. It doesn't

make sense. In addition, using snowmobiles only on the lake can be extremely dangerous at times when there is little or no snow on the lake surface. At these times other vehicles, including UTV's, are much safer.

Finally, many of the property owners on Lake Kabetogama do not live here over the winter and have found it overly restrictive to attend the in-person comment meeting in April. I feel that for a true quorum to be heard, and for all of those who wish to comment in person, additional meetings should be held during the summer months.

With the absence of any discernable benefit and the enormous costs I've detailed, I have to ask you to please reconsider this proposed plan. The local community, and the State of Minnesota should have been involved at the very beginning of the development of any plan affecting these waters. As noted above, the NPS does not have the authority to implement any restrictions or regulations without the express approval of the state. There is no humility in changing course when faced with good reason and a community outpouring, only respect and dignity. I am thankful for your service to Voyageurs National Park and hope you will continue to be a good steward of the place and people we all love so much!

Very Respectfully,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 85
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,15 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: To Whom It May Concern:

Voyageurs National Park is unique, unlike any other, therefore wanting to bring it into "compliance" with other national parks is ridiculous. Rather, a consideration of regulations governing VNP should also be unique to this park, this area only. The idea that "ice" or "frozen water" could be considered "land" is also ridiculous by scientific definition. I am one of the older citizens who enjoys snowmobiling at VNP, especially use of the Chain of Lakes Trail for its particular beauty. Though I am retired, I am concerned for community businesses to survive, indeed prosper, which affects financial aspects of the community. If icehouses for fishing have to be removed off of the ice daily, many winter businesses would fail because this regulation would be impossible for them to comply. Total access to the park by motor vehicles for ice fishing pre-dates the creation of the park therefore is part of the area's history. However, new developments of ATVs, UTVs, OHVs, wheelhouses, etc never ends therefore size/weight restrictions could be in order.

As far as VNP fees, I would be against fees for parking in VNP parking lots, especially in winter when numbers of visitors are minimal. In general, it seems in the least "unfriendly" and "unwelcoming" for any time of the year. A yearly fee for an icehouse might be acceptable, if kept minimal.

Presently there seems to be very little effect on wildlife with present regulations. In fact, some

benefit to wildlife with our groomed trails seems evident, allowing aid to traverse in deep snow conditions.

Correspondence ID: 86
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,15 2023 19:07:04
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Frozen Lake Surface Access Plan - Voyageurs National Park.

In regards to the above proposal, I strongly disagree with most of the Frozen Lake Surface Access plan VNP presented on April 18, 2023. I'll just mention a few objections.

**We know it's unrealistic VNP can or will plow an ice road as they have indicated on the map provided. In their own words they have been unable to do so for a number of years because of weather/ice conditions, lack of staff and/or funding.

**ATV/UTV are proven to be less of a hazard than snowmobiles, leave less snow tracks than a snowmobile, are quieter and have less emissions than a snowmobile. When was the last time someone was killed going to fast in a track vehicle on a frozen lake?

**VNP is for the people to use. Not to be limited by rules that would eliminate access to those with mobility or may have handicap issues. I'm not sure we need to get involved with Minnesota Disability Organizations over this issue.

**Does VNP update their equipment? Tools? Technology? Do they stay on top of current trends? ATV/UTV's are the new equipment and new technology of current day. ATV/UTV out sell snowmobiles in recent years by far. VNP needs to embrace this future and work with the people to keep ATV/UTV's accessible and not look at them as a threat to the frozen lakes of VNP.

**The proposed Use Zones only works in favor for VNP. Please do not over restrict the National Park because there may be less than 1% that is the real issue. Which I'm not clear what the real issue is for the restricted access to the frozen lake proposal.

**How does VNP plan to keep local businesses viable if they limit accessibility? Winter activities in this region are very important to the economy and vitality of surrounding communities and establishments.

People come from many states, not just MN to enjoy winter activities in VNP. VNP should be encouraging more revenue not less. VNP can not afford to loose the respect of the people who call this area their home or their livelihood.

I believe when issues are presented one should bring suggestions for a possible solution.

**Wheeled vehicles are a problem and do leave deep tracks on the lake that can be hazardous to snowmobilers.

**Suggestion: Limit any vehicle with wheels - meaning with round tires ex: trucks, wheeled fish

houses, ATV's or other modes of transportation with wheels - must stay on plowed ice roads only.

**Suggestion: Change the law and allow ATV/UTV tracked vehicles on frozen lake surfaces. This would mean a lot less pain and suffering for all parties involved. We know the facts regarding ATV/UTV with tracks - they leave less snow tracks, have less emissions and are safer than a snowmobile.

Please take the time to consider all comments and suggestions from those of us who care. Whose lives or livelihoods VNP could ruin or devastate.

Sincerely,



Correspondence ID: 87
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,16 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent DeGross,

I am writing today like many other residents, community members, and resort and business owners to comment on the proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan for Voyageurs National Park. I own family vacation properties on Lake Kabetogama and we all have an immense love of this lake and the surrounding areas. No other group of people have a more vested interest in its preservation and future.

In life, regardless of the industry, business, job or family situation you are in, from finance to business to raising children or caring for elderly parents, all decisions are made by weighing the benefits against the costs of each of those decisions. After reading through the proposed plan, I admit, there are a few aspects that have some merit. Codifying a plan for ice roads and snowmobile trails and associated guidelines for using those resources for the future will provide ongoing access, funding and a valuable resource for all of those who visit, love and rely on this beautiful place.

I, like all of the local community in the area, do have some very deep concerns about the proposed plan though. The proposed plan does not have any specific information as to why any of the restrictions are necessary. There are just very vague "Potential Resource Considerations", none of which are current problems and don't take into account the uniqueness of this area. There is no problem or even a single documented complaint noted that this plan will solve. There is no benefit detailed that would improve the lake and surrounding area or the experience of residents, visitors or businesses. It is seemingly just based on potential considerations that are far from the current reality. On the other hand, there are many obvious costs and dire consequences of these restrictions to all that are part of this community and that visit.

My first concern is the limitations the UTV restriction will put on people with limited mobility and disabled people. I know of several residents as well as a very close friend and cabin neighbor of mine, who, other than on a UTV, would not be able to access the lake in the winter. Their abilities don't allow them to use snowmobiles, the only proposed method of access and I

imagine many visitors would experience the same limitations. It is not reasonable or sometimes feasible for them to have to travel great distances to access the ice roads which are mainly located in the uninhabited sections of the lake currently and puts undue restrictions on where and how they access the lake to recreate. My friend would never be able to take his children ice fishing in front of his cabin. In addition, this incumbrance could lead to litigation using the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), that would hold up the implementation of any proposed plan and would incur substantial defense costs to the National Park Service.

A fundamental issue with this plan is that it assumes that the National Park Service has jurisdiction over the hard water of the lakes included in the plan. Pursuant to applicable federal and state law, the water area of the lakes, whether frozen or not, is owned by the state of Minnesota. The state has NOT ceded these waters to the NPS, the United States or any federal entity. The statute states that the State of Minnesota should defend these rights. As such, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) maintains that the water, whether frozen or not, is owned by the state and retains the water rights. This means that any proposed changes to water access or use regulations must be done in conjunction and with the approval of the State of Minnesota. This proposed plan does NOT have state support and certainly doesn't have MN DNR support.

Another major concern is the wellbeing and health of the resorts and businesses that serve as a huge benefit, resource, and draw of visitors to the area and park. Many of these resorts rely heavily on winter recreation on the lake. Admittedly, a lot of that is from snowmobilers, but many rely on the ability to provide ice fishing opportunities as well. Restricting the lake to snowmobile access only, outside of the ice roads, cripples an important part of these real people's livelihoods. Again, most of these resorts are nowhere near the ice roads. There is no reasonable way to move ice houses or transport visitors without the use of UTV's, track vehicles or other non-snowmobile type vehicles. Many of these visitors rely on these resorts to set them up for ice fishing and transporting them to and from ice houses. These restrictions would be devastating for area businesses as fewer visitors would come to the area in the winter.

We all rely heavily on the businesses and resorts around these communities to provide a wide range of recreation, lodging, and services. I know as well that they all struggle from year to year to overcome a litany of other obstacles that press them financially. Most, if not all, are family owned and operated, and they love and care for this area more than most. It would be a travesty and a moral failure to further burden these people who have dedicated their lives to this beautiful place for a restriction that so obviously has no definable benefits, no problem it is solving and has such an enormous cost to these people in particular.

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Finally, many of the property owners on Lake Kabetogama do not live here over the winter and have found it overly restrictive to attend the in-person comment meeting in April. I feel that for a true quorum to be heard, and for all of those who wish to comment in person, additional meetings should be held during the summer months.

With the absence of any discernable benefit and the enormous costs I've detailed, I have to ask you to please reconsider this proposed plan. The local community, and the State of Minnesota should have been involved at the very beginning of the development of any plan affecting these waters. As noted above, the NPS does not have the authority to implement any restrictions or regulations without the express approval of the state. There is no humility in changing course

when faced with good reason and a community outpouring, only respect and dignity. I am thankful for your service to Voyageurs National Park and hope you will continue to be a good steward of the place and people we all love so much!

Correspondence ID: 88
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,18 2023 08:17:37
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Voyageurs National Park Ice and Winter Plan Public Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed winter use plan for Voyageurs National Park. As a life-long resident, business owner, CUA holder, winter outdoor enthusiast, and long time supporter of the park I hope to provide some insight on the usage during the magnificent and surreal winter beauty of Voyageurs National Park. For the sake of conciseness and clarity I am organizing my thoughts and recommendations into the following outline:

1. Background

a. My name is [REDACTED] and I am a life long resident, supporter, advocate, user, volunteer, and lover of our Voyageurs National Park. I grew up on the waters of Rainy Lake and the woods of Voyageurs learning the importance of conservation from my parents and other adults around me. During my youth I also grew a deep appreciation for the park and nature from utilizing the adjoining lands from our cabin on the [REDACTED].

As I grew into an adult I realized the potential of VNP as a tourism driver and a potential savior of the dwindling local economies. I made it a goal of mine to showcase the beauty of VNP to a wider and more diverse group of people. By doing this we will cultivate the next generation of not only park supporters but also people who will garner a lifetime of appreciation and support for our protected lands and our precious earth in general.

Voyageurs Outfitters was created in order to achieve this goal. Over the years we have worked closely with park staff to appropriately open up access for folks who wouldn't of had the opportunity to visit VNP. We have done this in coordination with VNP staff to work in conjunction for a great visitor experience, safety of our visitors, and to protect our fragile resources. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with VNP as a CUA holder and believe there is a mutual respect between myself, park staff and leadership.

I have also served the park in a number of volunteer and minimal pay positions. I have volunteered to serve as captain for the park service tour boats when finding qualified captains was difficult for park leadership. Even though the pay was very low and sparse, my time working for VNP was one of the more enjoyable and rewarding jobs I have held in my life. I have also volunteered during the winter months at the Rainy Lake Visitor's center, served on the Voyageurs National Park Association Board, served on Destination Voyageurs National Park board, currently serve on the Rainy Lake CVB (which main objective is to promote VNP), and have been a public advocate for the park and their policies.

My mention of my history is to give you some idea of my perspective and the well rounded experience and importance of VNP is to my development both personal and professional.

2. Proposed Frozen Lakes Plan

a. Historical Uses of the frozen waterways

i. It is with great appreciation the amount of time and effort that VNP has put into the proposed

Frozen Lakes Plan (FLP) and the difficult position law enforcement and leadership are in due to the outdated and cumbersome current CFRs regarding OHVs and the usage on the frozen lake surfaces. With that being said, the plan does not put enough thought and weight on the historical uses and historical vehicles that have been used on the frozen lake surfaces of Voyageurs. First of all, ice fishing all over the park has been happening since the dawn of the last millennia. First Nations people would maintain spear holes in the ice for weeks and months. To limit this usage limits this important and traditional use of the park. I understand that modern day fishing is much different but with the fishing regulations in place it would be hard to argue that limiting ice fishing is going to damage the resource provided leave no trace requirements are followed (which are already enforceable by VNP enforcement). Secondly, it would be historically inaccurate to limit the type of vehicles on the ice surface. The frozen ice surface has been used by a variety of conveyances. From horse and sleigh to mechanical conveyance since the onset of the industrial age and mechanization. The Koochiching county historical society could speak to this much better, they have a great record of an assortment of different type of vehicles that have graced the frozen ice surfaces of VNP. Again, I think it would be very difficult to argue that small tracked or wheeled vehicles on the ice, frozen lake surfaces, are a damage to the resources of Voyageurs National Park.

b. Inclusive use for marginalized people

i. The proposed FLP also does not consider for future uses and expanding opportunities for people who are less fortunate to enjoy the wintertime magic and splendor of Voyageurs National Park. Snowmobiling alone cannot serve everyone who wishes to enjoy the winter in VNP. Snowmobiling is an expensive, physical, and limiting mode of conveyance. By limiting much of Voyageurs to only be accessed by snowmobile you are cutting off access to people including but not limited to: the physically disabled, the mentally disabled, the socially and economically hindered, and people who do not understand winter travel in a very harsh environment. National Parks and protected lands ought to be open to everyone and much effort, thought, and action ought to be put into expanding use for marginalized people and not restricting it.

There ought to be options in the future for responsible CUAs to be considered and issued for vehicles that accommodate marginalized people and opens up responsible access to the frozen lake surfaces.

c. Long term sustainability

i. The proposed FLP does bring VNP into compliance with current CFRs but it fails to address the long term uses of the frozen lake surfaces of Voyageurs National Park and falls short on the evolution of winter conveyance vehicles and the implications this has. Furthermore, we live in a changing environment and need to adopt adaptive management as a cornerstone of these very important usage plans and policies. The FLP does nothing to address Climate change nor adaptive management into the future.

3. Long term, responsible, and lasting policy

a. My recommendation for moving forward to address the current deficiencies in the CFRs and non compliance of them would be to modify, re-write, or add to the current CFRs that are in place. These CRF's should be specific to the very unique considerations, historic uses, and environment of Voyageurs National Park now and into the foreseeable future. This should be done by many public meetings engaging all stake holders, gateway communities, state and local officials, federal agencies, and legal teams to write CFRs that make current use in Voyageurs compliant. These new CFRs ought to be VNP specific and address long term changes in possible useable and long term changes to the climate. Although the agency may see changes to the CFRs, and making "park specific" CFRs a slippery slope, I do not believe this to be the case. It

can be easily argued that Voyageurs is quite unique in the National Park system and that by addressing the very unique conveyances of Voyageurs during the winter months is the responsible, honest, and prudent way to solve the problem that lies before us.

Thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to the conversation moving forward and working with everyone to do what is best for all stakeholders, our park, and the communities surrounding Voyageurs. Please feel free to contact me anytime for questions or clarification.



Correspondence ID: 89
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,18 2023 13:32:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Frozen Lake Service Access and Use Plan

I have been snowmobiling and ice fishing in Voyageurs National Park for over 40 years and haven't seen a need for more regulations and, or restrictions. I feel the park is underutilized because of its remoteness, most days when ice fishing I see very few park users and when I do, a good percentage are park or Minnesota DNR employees.

My only complaint I have with the park was last year with the park's main phone contact number being unmanned. I called twice last year, the first being to ask if the lakes were still open to ice fish, I received a call two days later saying they were, the second was when my snowmobile wouldn't start while fishing on Namakan Lake, no one answered on a weekday around 2 p.m. to let the park, know that I was walking back to get help and leaving my snowmobile and fishing gear on the lake. After walking a couple miles on the main snowmobile trail back to Ash River I met one couple on a snowmobile. I was able to call a local resort to get the help I needed.

I do not see the need for the proposed Low use Zone, because it is barely used now.

As far as the Ice Roads, I haven't use them and haven't seen a problem with vehicles with large fish houses going farther than 300' off of them.

ORV use in the park. I haven't seen a problem and think that the park should allow them on the lakes and designated trails like the snowmobiles. When the park was formed ORV's were not around to be included in the regulations. If the park was formed today, they would be included from what I have seen at the first public meeting.

As I age, it is getting harder to ice fish by snowmobile, my wife has given up snowmobiling a few years ago. I thought that in the future a ORV would be an option for me to continue the sport of ice fishing.

The park should be accessible and open to all, as we do not need more restrictions that limit the use of an underutilized park.

Correspondence ID: 90
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,18 2023 15:47:39
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence:

2. Laws and Policies Allowing the Superintendent to Develop This Compendium

The appropriateness of any particular visitor use or recreational experience is resource-based and will vary from park to park; therefore, a use or activity that is appropriate in one park area may not be appropriate in another.

Will vary from park to park.....an activity that is appropriate in one park area may not be appropriate in another. That sounds like VNP, that is like NO OTHER! The frozen water surface in itself lends itself to alternative modes of travel.

4. Development of the Requirements of the Superintendent's Compendium

As outlined above, the NPS has broad authority and responsibility to determine what types of uses and activities are appropriate in any particular National Park System area.

Will the use or activity damage the park's protected natural and cultural resources and other protected values?

At meetings, there has been no indication that natural or cultural resources have been damaged.

^[1]_{SEP} Will the use or activity disturb or be in conflict with wildlife, vegetation, and environmental protection actions and values?

At meetings, there has been no documentation presented that the activity disturbs or is in conflict with wildlife, vegetation, or has created environmental concerns.

Will the use or activity conflict with or be incompatible with traditional park uses and activities?

VNP has operated with the various methods of travel being discussed/outlined in the proposal for the Frozen Water Access Plan for the past 35 to 45 years. This seems to indicate these traditional park uses and activities have a precedent in VNP and are not incompatible to the park uses and activities.

^[1]_{SEP} Will the use or activity compromise employee or public safety?

When VNP infrequently has much of a frozen surface water area to travel on, the park employees check the ice. Contrary to what VNP may think, individuals have common sense, and check ice conditions also. Living by the VNP visitor center we see time after time those going out with "other" modes of travel checking the ice by using an auger, or chain sawing for thickness.

III. 36 CFR §1.6 - ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE A PERMIT

(f) The following is a compilation of those activities for which a permit from the superintendent is required.

§1.5(d) The following activities related to Public Use Limits: ›

Disturbances to shorelines, docks, and wetlands

So....why does the park contact the DNR to do docks? And remove cattails?

If the park owns the water rights, why does the park contact the DNR for permission?

If a landowner needs to rip rap the shoreline, they contact the DNR for permitting process.

If a landowner needs a permit for a dock, they contact the DNR.

36 CFR §2.3 - FISHING

(a) The following State fishing laws and/or regulations, as noted, do not apply in the listed areas:

Fish, as defined under Section 1.4, does not include mussels (clams), crayfish, frogs, and turtles

(State law permitting the taking of mussels (clams), crayfish, frogs, and turtle species conflicts with federal law and is not assimilated as a permitted activity within the park).

State fishing guidelines are followed, with the above exception.

Makes sense.....as The state owns the water rights.

36 CFR §2.4 - WEAPONS, TRAPS, AND NETS

(a)(2)(i) Weapons (excluding legal firearms), traps, or nets may only be carried, possessed or used at the following designated times and locations:

Nets and spears may be possessed for non-commercial use within the park in accordance with State law.

State fishing regulations apply within the Park. State waters.

(b) Conditions for the disposal, containerization, or carryout of human body waste have been established as follows:

In all backcountry and front country camping settings that don't provide a park privy human waste must be: ^[1]Carried out and disposed of in an approved trash receptacle or; ^[1]Buried 6 inches or more in the ground and must be more than 100 feet away of a flowing stream, river, or body of water

Many ice houses that are larger, have chemical toilets or holding tanks for human waste while on the ice.

(a)(5) Pet excrement must be disposed of in accordance with the following conditions:

All pet excrement must be collected immediately and disposed of in a trash receptacle or removed from the park.

Very easy to do in the winter.....frozen excrement is easy to retrieve and pack out.

36 CFR §2.18 - SNOWMOBILES ›

(d)(4) Maximum speed limit:

(This is to seek enforcement consistency with the state regulations given that this area is frequently patrolled by Minnesota Department of Natural Resource officers and park rangers). Patrolling is frequently done by the MN DNR because the waters are under the jurisdiction of the State of MN.

36 CFR §4.21 - SPEED LIMITS

(b) The following speed limits are established for the routes/roads indicated:

The maximum speed limit on all designated ice roads is 30 mph; ^[1]The maximum speed limit on NPS-1 road is 35 mph, unless posted otherwise

(Due to the character of an ice road surface, limited braking, steering and traction, the allowable speed is reduced to 30 mph to enhance appropriate control of a vehicle).

Speed on the frozen lake surface should not be an issue, as the methods of transportation being discussed, especially when transporting a fishing shelter, are well within the speed limit.

36 CFR §4.30 - BICYCLES

(Electric bikes are a relatively new technology that advance Healthy Parks Healthy People goals to promote parks as a health resource by supporting a healthy park experience that is accessible, desirable, and relatable to people of all abilities, and by minimizing human impact through the expansion of active transportation options in parks. Specifically, electric bikes can increase bicycle access to and within parks, expand the option of bicycling to more people, and mitigate environmental impacts through reduced carbon emissions. The superintendent has determined that expanding access of electric bikes, per the definitions and restrictions above,

to areas in the park where bicycles are already allowed does not pose additional safety or resource protection concerns).

If electric bikes, which are a relatively new technology, have been addressed, then the past precedent of ATV's, UTV's, cars, trucks, etc., which have been in use on the frozen water surface for 40 + years, and do not have documented proof of any safety or resource protection concerns are certainly a viable option within VNP. These transportation options support a healthy park experience that is accessible, desirable, and relatable to people of all abilities, and can increase human visitation through the expansion of active transportation options in parks.

I am Personally opposed to any changes that would be made to alter the existing usage of how VNP has been able to be accessed and used for almost 50 years. As unique as National Parks are, each park should be able to offer as many Unique opportunities for visitation as well.



Correspondence ID: 91
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,18 2023 15:51:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: We have now attended all 3 of the VNP meetings on the proposed changes to the park system. Kabetogama, the virtual meeting, and the International Falls meeting.

It has become clear through these meetings that "someone" or some "entity" is indicating that Voyageur's National Park, after having been in existence for nearly 50 years, is now needing to come "in line" with National Park regulations. This someone, as voiced on the evening of April 20, 2023, at the meeting in International Falls, MN, is Bob DeGross. Voyageur's National Park is now being "directed" to provide clear regulations on what is/will be allowed on frozen ice surfaces related to street legal vehicles, ATV, UTV, or other frozen vehicle operable methods of transportation. It appears that Bob DeGross, when becoming the VNP Superintendent took on the "task" of looking at VNP aligning with all National Parks.

Having lived here since before the Park's creation, we know all that has been taken with the changing of Park Superintendents. Each one has an agenda, and they have the power to help or hinder what this area is all about.

While the National Park System comprises 423 national park sites, only 63 of them have the "National Park" designation in their names. The other sites fall into different National Park System categories like National Historic Sites, National Monuments, National Seashores, National Recreation Areas, and others. With the unique topography and diversity of each National Park, it seems that it would only make sense that each park should be evaluated on its own merit, rather than having to "conform" to blanket National Park regulations. In our world of diverse answers to every situation, there should not have to be CONFORMITY to the regulations of the National Park System, which may discriminate against peoples based on age, disability, or other protected classes to access the frozen waters of VNP.

National parks showcase natural beauty, and should provide a haven for all people to be able to access and enjoy the particular, individual attributes that each unique park has to offer.

Personally, we have been fortunate to have been part of VNP's journey before it even became a park. Family established the first resort on Kabetogama in 1916. So, seeing this area for many decades has provided much insight that can be shared with those in the park system that come and go from one park to another during their lives.

People who choose to live, work, and play in the Voyageur's National Park area are looking to protect what they have. The people in this area are stewards of the land and water and have a genuine concern for the park. The people of the VNP area are some of the most positive and biggest promoters of the Park. It has taken just shy of 50 years for VNP and residents and businesses to work together in a positive manner for the good of the park. With episodes that have transpired in VNP in the last two years, and now the frozen land access issue, a deep rooted void has surfaced. Of course, it is a sincere hope that the voices of Northern MN will ring loud and clear in the input on the frozen ice surfaces. Suggestion....Listen to those who know this area the best.

From the meetings, some interesting statements have been heard.....

In April of 1987 the first record of question of means of travel seems to have emerged about the frozen lake access.

The statement was made, by park personnel, that people do get stuck, there is a level of safety, (might go on thin ice) that can cause some concerns, but really not any problems that have been observed.

3. After research, the Border Patrol does not base their work on the "status of the lake surface." It is the method of conveyance.

4. The National Park has a responsibility to provide access to home owners.

5. The question was posed if this park was different from others? Interestingly enough the answer from the Park Superintendent, was that we are NOT different. There are other National Parks that have resort communities, commercial operators, some water access, we are NOT unique. Honestly, that is a statement that we shall endeavor to provide some comment on as this Frozen Water Access document comment continues to be presented.

The Ice Road on Kab in the last 3 or 4 years has been basically plowed to the sledding hill. There was some years the ice road has been plowed to Ash River. This is discretionary, depending on the frozen water, personnel, etc. The area being proposed to be able to be accessed is 300' off the ice road, the difference from one year to another that would apply could vary greatly. This 300' number arbitrarily was given by the current park superintendent, who was not able to give a definitive answer as to "why" this number was chosen.

Omit the parameter of 300' off the ice road. If an individual, or business wants to travel to an

area to fish, recreate, or set a stationary shelter to fish/camp on the ice surface, perhaps a fee could be charged to set up their shelter and camp. It was mentioned, by the park personnel, that campsites in the winter are not that popular here, and people are not camping on the ice surface. Monitor the individual and their area of choice for their shelter. If such individual is choosing to litter, or endanger others, deal with the individual. Do not penalize all VNP visitors for the choices of one.

If there is not an ice road, the Park has the idea to post stakes, and GPS coordinates should be used to determine the 300' parameter. How ridiculous is this? This would be "assuming" that individuals have access to GPS. Again, this 300' is an arbitrary number given by the park superintendent. Safety.....the park is concerned with safety. fPlease, most people do have some common sense, and are not going to locate themselves in a hazardous area on the lake with the intention of having a unplanned event occur.

Again, the Park states they have a responsibility to provide access to home owners, and Private land Water locked properties their access would need to be dealt with differently. It was indicated that perhaps they would get a special use permit. Maybe it is a special use permit that one applies for each year to also be able to travel with their truck, ATV, UTV, or other determined vehicle of their choice on the lake surface. Consider charging a fee.

In the low use zone proposed, that is now already used by snowmobiles, one would not be able to leave a structure overnight, unless occupied. So, travel all the way to be somewhere with greater solitude in VNP, and have to pack it all out the same day.....what harm is it to leave it until it will be removed permanently? Again, a fee could be possibly charged for the structure to be on the lake. However, since the waters belong to the State of MN, structures already pay a fee to be on the water. Many of the shorelines, and bays may not even accessed by snowmobilers, due to the fact that they realize slush exists, and they do not want to get themselves in an unsafe situation, and such areas would be questionable if even accessed at all by the other means of transportation that are being discussed for purposes of these comments.

Vets may have free access.....you indicate there is a way. Let's certainly hope so. Let's also hope that they will be given access to use the exact type of vehicles, trucks, ATV's, UTV's, or similar to enjoy the waters of VNP. Then, if you are allowing this class of individuals to enjoy the vehicle use, how do you remove this use from other individuals on a non discriminatory basis?

Adverse impacts to visitor experiences.....people are offended by everything today. A fish house on the lake with its lights on at night will NOT totally ruin the northern lights experience. What is the winter visitation rate for VNP? The impact from ATV's UTV's, trucks, cars, and other modes of transportation leave no footprint behind once the water is thawed.

Living by the Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center we see lots of happenings. We take it all in stride.

Thousands of people come to this area and a great many of them pass our home in all the seasons. We have helped people, reprimanded people, and shared the stories of this area with too many people to count. We will continue to do so. We deal with needs as they arise. The number of UTV's, ATV's, trucks, cars, or other vehicles of transportation that come out of the visitor in times of "frozen water" are far fewer than the number of vessels that leave the VNP Kab visitor center in the Summer.

Interestingly enough, every winter we see wolves in our front yard. We also see fox, eagles, pine martins, otters, thousands of birds, to mention a few.....Our snowmobiles are parked on the lake. The animals are not "bothered" by our human presence here.

In one presentation the 1984 Park Roads Standards were referenced. We have viewed the 1984 Park Road Standards Document. It supersedes the 1968 Document. It appears that this document, in itself, has not been updated for almost 40 years. Besides, many items it states.....I am not seeing where it says anything about an ice road.....it does say.....

The standards contained herein provide flexibility in the planning and design processes to allow for consideration of variations in types and intensities of park use, for wide differences in terrain and climatic conditions, and for protection of natural and cultural resources in National Park System areas.

Class IV: Primitive Park Road •

Roads which provide circulation through remote areas and/or access to primitive campgrounds and undeveloped areas. These roads frequently have no minimum design standards and their use may be limited to specially equipped vehicles .

The location and design of park roads must continue to be in accord with the philosophy that how a person views a park is as significant as what he sees, thereby ensuring that national parks remain places where people go for a unique and rewarding experience. Where people go for a unique and rewarding experience. UTV's, ATV's, trucks, cars, or other vehicles of transportation.

By regulation, the maximum posted speed limit for any park road cannot exceed 45 mph, unless a Superintendent exercises his authority to establish a higher speed limit where this maximum limit is determined to be less than is reasonable or safe (36 CFR 4.17). Interesting.....the Superintendent exercises his authority.....not possibly the same for every park.....

Another major control in geometric design of park roads is the design vehicle(s), which is based on the types of vehicles that may be permitted by park management to use the facility.

This seems to indicate that park management has some say in the types of vehicles.....

Now, let's address some of the economic issues that VNP seems to be ignoring concerning the area and the impact that ATV's, UTV's, cars, trucks, and other frozen water vehicle use brings to our area.....

Resorts with fishing, lodging, food, bait and tackle for sale

Resorts that have fish houses for rent, and ultimately their guest use various alternative methods of travel to access the fish house rentals. Or, the resort owner who transports guests in a vehicle that allows for not only the transportation of the guest, but the capability of putting the fishing "house" on and off the lake, when snowmobiles just will not complete the task.

Gas Stations who sell bait, tackle, fishing supplies, snacks,

Restaurants who sell meals and beverages to winter visitors

We are talking hundreds of thousands of dollars that these businesses depend upon to make their payments, and provide a thriving place for VNP visitors to stay and play in our Northern area.

The park service is allowed to use UTV's in the park, and groomers. And Tazers. None of which are in the regulations.....

I personally am opposed to seeing any changes made to the current activities that have been allowed by the park in the last almost 50 years of its existence. It is time for VNP to understand that the need for accessibility to the park requires many modes of travel and adaptability to allow visitors to experience the park and all it has to offer.



Correspondence ID: 92
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,19 2023 10:10:38
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I don't think we should restrict 4-wheelers,atv's,snowmobiles from going ice fishing or anything as fishing or hunting that is legal game!
If the area that has been acessable before for any means I feel that would be taking one's rights away.

Thank you for y time!

Correspondence ID: 93
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Howling For Wolves Unaffiliated Individual

Received: May,19 2023 12:36:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I and the vast majority of Howling For Wolves' supporters agree with the increased restrictions on motorized vehicles in the national parks system including Voyageurs. There are many reasons to restrict motorized vehicles even over frozen lakes. It seems that the National Park System has left open access through the most traveled places and that should be enough. This is a pristine area and quiet and limited machine presence is part of the purpose for places like Voyageurs. While sled dogging near this area, I was fortunate enough to avoid snow mobiles and cars as they would have ruined the wild ambience. We at Howling For Wolves agree with this new restriction.

Correspondence ID: 94
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,19 2023 20:07:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Legacy issues of access and tenure are notoriously difficult to manage into compliance with standards; everyone believes their local public land area is Special and should be managed differently. Please continue forward with managing for compliance with Federal policy and regulations. The current users will adjust to the new reality.

Correspondence ID: 95
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,21 2023 15:44:01
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Snowmobiles and small 4 wheeler/atvs should be allowed on ice surfaces, side by sides or large ohvs should not be.

Correspondence ID: 96
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,22 2023 10:34:58
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Dear Mr. DeGross and VNP,

My family and I have property on the shore of Kabetogama Lake and primarily utilize our place during spring/summer/fall. Currently, my wife and I do not have snowmobiles or have an adequately insulated cabin to enjoy winter activities in VNP. However, the next generation of our family enjoys snowmobiling so my interest in this Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan would have an impact on us. Additionally I anticipate tremendous hardship being imposed on area business owners that are currently recovering from perhaps the biggest economic blow ever encountered as a result of the Covid pandemic.

VNP is admittedly an unusual national park as a majority of it is water. Winter ice makes it a very special and unique park and just a few years ago a local friend revealed that it's snowmobile trails were the best anywhere and severely underutilized. He loved the fact that he

could ride all day and experience a small fraction of the trail traffic encountered elsewhere (now confirmed by others). Might not the proposed "use Plan" further limit park visitors and traffic?

I come up midwinter to check on the property and drive the ice road, conditions permitting, and have an experience that others need to have! Whether car, truck or snow machine why is there a need to limit access? Fish/ice houses dot the lake surface just like the rest of Minnesota's lakes, help support local business, and apparently have very little if any measurable impact on fishing. I would have to encourage you to consult and listen to the local DNR comments on this.

If the purpose of a "park" is to get people out of their homes and enjoy their surroundings more, I question if this plan will accomplish that or quite the opposite. I am not in support of this proposal and hope that a healthy measure of common sense be applied to any decision made, if any, moving forward.

Sincerely,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 97
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,22 2023 11:15:50
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Preliminary Proposal for the Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan.

Over time, Voyageurs has increased the miles of ice road developed in the park and accommodated the growth of ORV use and the increasing size of ice shelters. I don't believe that ORVs are allowed in any other National Park and only a few National Recreation Areas, National Preserves, and National Seashores. Voyageurs is unique in its development of ice roads and snowmobiles are allowed by legislation establishing the park, however I believe ORVs and large ice shelters are incompatible with the mission of Voyageurs National Park.

There are many recreational opportunities throughout the State for ORV/ATV enthusiasts including frozen lake surfaces and thousands of miles of designated trails. A National Park should be a place where visitors can enjoy the scenic beauty and the quiet of winter and where wildlife has a break from summer crowds. Considering Voyageurs allowed the use of ORVs/ATVs over time, the park's proposal is reasonable in that it limits the use to Kabetogama and Rainy Lakes where ice roads are already developed. For protection of resources, it is essential that ORVs/ATVs are tied to the ice roads as proposed. The park should also consider an alternative in which no ORVs/ATVs are allowed in the park.

The Mukooda Truck Portage was used in the past for access to the Lac La Croix First Nation and was to be closed once the road to the reservation was constructed. It is appropriate to allow very limited use by permit only.

I agree with the issues the park has identified to consider: visitor use and experience, including safety; soundscapes, lightscapes (including visual resources), wildlife, socioeconomics, water

and air quality. The park should also consider whether an ice road meets the definition of a road; if it meets the definition then ORVs/ATVs would not be allowed on the road.

Correspondence ID: 98
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,25 2023 09:59:10
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am a 30 year cabin owner on the Canadian side of Rainy Lake and a US citizen. For Winter access I use an RABC and the ROAM app / kiosk. Our Winter access is by snowmobile. On VERY rare occasions we have travelled by other means, primarily 4 wheel drive vehicles from the Rainy Lake Ice Road to the cabin. Primarily to deliver items / building materials not otherwise easily conveyed. Winter ice conditions (ie: Open water in channels) prevent safe access from the Canadian side.

I believe this would be prohibited under the proposed rules. Allowing a permitted exception when this is needed would be a good thing. Again, happens rarely, but an outright ban seems unnecessary.

Also, any ice road permit would be a negative to ice road use. Mostly access and not cost. Obtaining a permit need to be accessible online and immediately available.

The Dryweed loop of the ice road is appreciated and a nice addition.

It is important to note that directly to the East of 218,000 acre Voyageurs NP is a 1 million acre wilderness that offers a very primitive wilderness experience. It does not need to be duplicated in Voyageurs and it seems every new rule attempts to make the two more alike.

Correspondence ID: 99
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,25 2023 14:09:13
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: During the public information meetings held in April I learned more about the proposal that raised more questions and concerns for me. I did some additional research and had conversations with Minnesota DNR staff members.

I enjoy snowshoeing. If I want to snowshoe along the far shore of Kabetogama, this proposed regulation would only permit me to get to that shoreline by snowmobile or under my own propulsion (which is daunting and probably unsafe at my age). The proposal would effectively PROHIBIT me and others like me from enjoyable access to the Park. I would like to continue to use our side-by-side to safely cross to the far side of the lake so I can snowshoe on the ice surface while enjoying birds, wildlife and scenery along the shoreline. Having the SxS there is also safer in the event I encounter a problem, as I am fully enclosed within a heated vehicle.

Shelley Patten (MN DNR) said during the meetings that Minnesota did not cede ownership of or jurisdiction over the waters within VNP as part of VNP's creation (MN Statute 84B.061). I was

unaware of this when I wrote my first comment.

During the meetings, Superintendent DeGross said that VNP considers frozen waters to be land. Nowhere in 36CFR (or elsewhere in any NPS documentation I could find) are “frozen waters” defined as anything other than water that is frozen. This is an unreasonable attempt to seasonally change jurisdiction of those waters.

I confirmed with a MN DNR conservation officer who confirmed with US Border Patrol that it is the CONVEYANCE that permits boats to freely cross without interaction with border controls into/out of Canada on Namakan (so long as the boat does not anchor, touch any land or come close to another boat), but prohibits OTHER conveyances such as snowmobile or ORV to do so. It is not the condition of the water being frozen.

Now understanding that the major lakes within VNP are under the jurisdiction of Minnesota, I had a separate conversation with Minnesota DNR to further understand that impact on VNP as well as other shoreland owners. MN DNR stated by email that, “In Minnesota, we are considered a riparian rights state, which regardless of whether water is frozen or liquid, the waters belong to the citizens of MN. See https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/watermgmt_section/pwpermits/waterlaws.html.”

That page talks about and cites Minnesota statutes and case law related to Riparian Rights, and Riparian Duties.

In the case of Riparian Rights: “The riparian owner has the right to make use of the lake over its entire surface (see: Johnson v. Seifert (PDF) 257 Minn 159, 100 NW 2d 689 [1960]).”

In the case of Riparian Duties: “It is the duty of the riparian owners to exercise their rights reasonably, so as not to unreasonably interfere with the riparian rights of others (see: Petraborg v. Zontelli (PDF), 217 Minn 536, 15 NW 2d 174 [1944]).”

Per Minnesota Statutes, ALL riparian shoreland owners - including the public when a lake has public access - have the right to use these lakes over their entire surface without any single riparian owner (Voyageurs National Park) unreasonably interfering with those rights.

The Frozen Water Surface Proposal drafted by VNP directly conflicts with the Minnesota laws that governs the waters. It is an attempt by VNP to interfere with the rights of other shoreland owners and the public.

During the Federal Lands Subcommittee oversight hearing Committee on Natural Resources hearing held April 18, 2023 (<https://www.youtube.com/live/rgd1LWMobi8?feature=share&t=3667>), NPS Director Charles Sams echoed and confirmed Congressman Pete Stauber's statement that Voyageurs National Park is “unique”.

This National Park, with its unique history that includes current individual, business and state shoreland property owners all sharing riparian rights and duties with VNP, needs to have the governing law by Minnesota and the riparian rights and duties that come with that jurisdiction codified within 36 CFR 7.33. The case that no other National Park permits ORVs is immaterial. This park is unique. The use of ORVs and ice houses of any sort on the major waters within VNP

should run with the laws of the State of Minnesota that have jurisdiction over those waters.

Preventing people like me who do not / cannot snowmobile from enjoying VNP to the fullest extent we can with the methods and equipment we find safe and enjoyable is contrary to the purpose of a national park, and a violation of Minnesota State Law.

Correspondence ID: 100
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,26 2023 19:19:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence:

Please don't limit our access on a frozen lake. What harm does a wheeler do? The park hardly plows any roads anymore compared to past years. You can walk out with the limited roads so don't limit wheelers to that tiny area. Quit locking people out of enjoying a frozen beautiful area. How many people really take a wheeler before there is too much snow? Why the effort and concentration on 1% type activity? Wasting tax payer money maybe? Come on, focus on bigger and better things please. Don't be wasteful of time energy and attention. Be better.

Correspondence ID: 101
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: [REDACTED] Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,28 2023 10:36:51
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence:

I have enjoyed the park since the early 1980s. Have lived in the Falls on the lake for the past 14 years. Even relied on the lake for water. Have gotten to understand the local populations perspective to the point of reading the book, "Eighty years in the Making: a legislative history of VNP." Sorry, it is boring! Yet, inciteful. Still trying to understand the relationship that is slowly evolving from the days of inception to the present-day use
It is difficult to institute "regulations" in today's political environment, believing in the park staff, with their knowledge of its use, the science behind it, and just the common sense to institute necessary changes. Combined with increasing visitation and with the availability of modern-day equipment, efforts to accommodate to this usage must be addressed.

I see it as instrumental to the integrity of the small portions of protected space that if not protected diminishes its purpose in the long run.

Along with the proposed frozen land uses plan, please begin to acknowledge the need for guidance as to how human waste needs to be addressed if long term/overnight stays are anticipated. Longer stays for private as well as commercial users lack the guidance necessary to acknowledge this issue, should be addressed earlier rather than later. Consider this guidance with private and commercial use authorization permits being necessary for long term stays. It is already and has been addressed in the Quetico Provincial Parks (headwaters to the park) visitors orientation. A similar beginning will educate the frozen land users that this is and will certainly be a bigger future issue.

Along with prior park approval for Ice Shelters left "longer" (which needs to be defined), guidelines for human waste should be established. It is logical to assume the density of houses

will increase. This idea may be helpful for users to better accept the frozen land use plan.

I know the freedom of individuality is hard to restrict, yet, I fully support the plan usage developed by the people who know what is best for the park for the continued integrity of the park.

Thank you for listening and certainly continue to be the strongest voice for the environment of the park.

[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 102
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,28 2023 16:51:54
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: As a lake front property owner , ([REDACTED]), I am seriously distressed that once again the federal government is finding new ways to inhibit and control the taxpayer . This thinly veiled attempt is not acceptable from any aspect , be it taxation or more government regulation . Not to mention that the states have sovereignty in most all of these matters and do NOT need the democrat politicians continually usurping the states power in an effort to gain more control over the individual rights of our citizens . I demand and expect a response from someone in an official capacity of authority in your organization to respond and own up to their role in this . Taxpayer , veteran , and patriot , born and raised in International Falls ; [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 103
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,29 2023 09:28:46
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: Hello, my name is [REDACTED] and I own a piece of property by lake Kabetogama, [REDACTED]. I am concerned about the future of lake Kabetogama and the rest of Voyagers National Park. I looked all over Minnesota for the perfect piece of lake property to enjoy and I choose lake Kabetogama because of its unique location, park access, regulations and unspoiled nature at its finest ! There is no other place in Minnesota like it. Why ? Because it's the only National park we as Minnesotans have. That's why it's more important than ever to preserve it for the next generations to come.
I think it works perfectly the way it is. You can enjoy it in the winter on a snowmobile, portable fish house, snowshoe or skis. It's enjoying the park and lakes while still preserving all the beautiful nature and wildlife.
I have ice fished a lot of other lakes in Minnesota. Lakes like lake of the woods and red lake and Mille lacs and these lakes cater to ice fishing and wheel houses. The crowds of people leave behind garbage, feces and huge messes. It's disappointing watch some people disrespect the lakes in that nature.
I think we owe it to our kids and the next generations to take better care of our lake and parks. Minnesota has lots of lakes with plowed roads and access to fish with wheel houses. I think

VNP should have limitations on large vehicles and wheel houses, much like the BWCA has limitations on its lakes with permits. In the summer months you need a permit to camp on lake kabetogama , why not have permits to stay on the lake at night in your wheel houses with limited permits available. I think it would help preserve it while being able to enjoy it.

Thank you, [REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 104
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,30 2023
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence:

Dear Voyageurs NPS,
I own the cabin at [REDACTED] on Lake Kabetogama. It's [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] During winter property is not motor vehicle accessible via Burma Rd. Currently the only motor vehicle access is via the frozen lake. The same is true for my neighbors.

Hence, I request continued permission for motor vehicle access to my cabin via the frozen lake in the winter.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 105
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,30 2023 11:11:52
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: My Comments regarding Frozen Lake Surface:

I've been going to Lake Kabetogama and other connected lakes for 65 years.

I do not agree with the recommendations in the Plan.

We should not need to pay a fee to access these roads. Period!!

There should be no restrictions as to what vehicles can access the ice surface. Period!!!

LESS GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION!!! PERIOD!!

Wonder if you really do listen to your constituents? People are trying to make a living up there and Government must stay out of it! PERIOD!!

[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 106

Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Resident and land owner in Kabetogama Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,30 2023 13:58:09
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: • The Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan the NPS is trying to impose is in violation of Minnesota State Law, See Below.
1) 84B.061 STATE JURISDICTION OVER RAINY LAKE AND OTHER NAVIGABLE WATERS; DUTIES OF GOVERNOR, ATTORNEY GENERAL, AND OTHER PUBLIC OFFICERS.

A. As required by this chapter and the act of Congress authorizing Voyageurs National Park, the state of Minnesota donated in excess of 35,000 acres of state and other publicly owned land for the park, roughly one-fourth of the land area of the park, at a cost of over \$5,000,000 to the state. More than 24,000 acres of this land was state trust fund land which the state condemned before making its donation. Pursuant to section 84B.06, lands donated by the state, along with other lands acquired by the National Park Service for the park, were made subject to concurrent jurisdiction by the state and the United States under section 1.041. In making these donations, none of the navigable waters within the park and the lands under them have been donated to the United States. These navigable waters include the following: Rainy, Kabetogama, Namakan, Sand Point, and Crane Lakes. Pursuant to applicable federal and state law, navigable waters and their beds are owned by the state. Ownership of and jurisdiction over these waters and their beds has not been ceded by the state, either expressly or implicitly, to the United States. Unlike section 1.044 relating to the Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge, where the state expressly granted its consent and jurisdiction to the United States to acquire interests in water, as well as land, the consent granted by the state in section 84B.06 to acquisitions by the United States for Voyageurs National Park is limited to land, only. In the discharge of their official duties, the governor, attorney general, other constitutional officers, and other public officials, such as the commissioner of natural resources, shall vigorously assert and defend, in all forums, the state's ownership of and jurisdiction over these waters and their beds and related natural resources, together with associated rights of the state and its citizens arising from the state's ownership and jurisdiction. In discharging their duties, the governor, attorney general, other constitutional officers, and other public officials shall, additionally, be especially cognizant of the free rights of travel afforded to citizens of Minnesota and others under the Webster-Ashburton Treaty (proclaimed November 10, 1842) and the Root-Bryce Treaty (proclaimed May 13, 1910) on international and associated boundary waters. Also, in furtherance of duties under this section, the commissioner of natural resources shall continue in effect the commercial removal of rough fish, as defined in section 97A.015, subdivision 43, from these waters, together with any rights to do so possessed by any person on January 1, 1995, so long as the commissioner determines that such taking is desirable to the management of the native fishery.

• The Park will violate its own Federal Code by imposing this plan, The use of vehicles within a park area are governed by State Law! ATV and OHV travel is allowed on Frozen Minnesota Lakes. The NPS is violating state law by implementing this plan.

2) Title 36-Part 4-4.2 (a) Unless specifically addressed by regulations in this chapter, traffic and the use of vehicles within a park area are governed by State law. State law that is now or may later be in effect is adopted and made a part of the regulations in this part.

(b) Violating a provision of State law is prohibited.

• The Park Superintendent has the ability to avoid this Frozen Lakes Plan by simply designating that ATV's OHV's and Vehicles can drive on frozen lake surfaces, the park does not own the

water and Frozen water is Not Land! This again is a State issue.

- This Federal Rule has been on the books since 1987 but it has never been enforced. People have been using Vehicles, ATV'S and UTV's to access the lakes since before the Park had been established and since 1987 people in the area have continued to do so with no issue....until now. Why is this an issue now? There have been no specific instances or issues that the park superintendent could list at the in-person meetings where the vehicles have caused a problem. Snowmobiles cause just as much of a disturbance as other vehicles do on a frozen lake surface. There's no good reason to ban these types of vehicles.
- The plan does the exact opposite of trying to not make it look like Red Lake or any other heavily fished lake in Minnesota. The plan forces people to set up their ice fishing shelters in one specific area of the lake, instead of letting people choose where they want to fish in their wheeled ice houses. It will just look like an ice fishing city all gathered in one area of the lake. People should be able to tow their wheeled ice houses anywhere they want on the lake, people will disperse in different areas of the lake, and it will look like there are less people on the lake. It is usually impossible to tow the larger houses with a snowmobile, and it will force people with ATV's, UTV's and other vehicles to crowd along the ice road and no one wants to see that, and no one wants to fish that close to other people, especially on Kabetogama.
- The park has hardly been able to make any of the ice roads in the last 5 years, again restricting access to the park and again crowding people closer and closer together.
- This plan restricts disabled people from accessing the entire park, some people cannot drive snowmobiles. Sometimes an ATV, side by side or vehicle is the only mode of transportation for disabled people. My Father is disabled, he can't drive a snowmobile anymore to go fishing. This plan would stop him from being able to access his favorite fishing spots because he needs a Side by Side to get there. This plan is discriminatory towards disabled people.
- What about the people who can't afford to buy a snowmobile? Why can't they access the entire park through a different mode of transportation? This plan targets minorities and low-income people who may not have access to a snowmobile through systematic racism and discrimination against low-income people.
- I am a member of the Volunteer Fire Department in Kabetogama, under this plan we will not be able to respond to accidents out on the lake with our Side by Side. This puts park visitors' health and safety at risk. As a member of the Department for 5 years I can say that we have been called out for 1 ATV accident, zero UTV accidents and zero vehicle accidents out on the lake. In the same time period, we have responded to at least 10 different snowmobile accidents on the lake if not more. These other modes of transportation are not more dangerous and do not put at risk the health and safety of park visitors compared to snowmobiles.
- This plan affects resort owners, many use ATV's, UTV's and vehicles to pull out ice fishing shelters, bring guests and park visitors out ice fishing and to view the scenery, and many resort owners use other equipment such as tractors, excavators, ASV's, bulldozers, etc to work and fix their docks during the winter and springtime. This plan does away with all of this, how is that fair to them who rely on tourism and fisherman to make a living? How is this fair to guests if they can't access all areas of the frozen lakes to fish and sightsee? How will resort owners be able to fix their docks?
- At the in-person meeting in Kabetogama the park superintendent said that the park considers ice to be a continuation of land. How can this be?
The definition of ice is noun- frozen water, a state of coldness.
The definition of land is noun- the surface of the earth that is not covered by water.
These are two completely different things, and the park does not own the water in Lake Kabetogama, Namakan, Rainy, Sand Point or Crane. Water is not land, open a dictionary please!
- In closing, this plan is terrible for everyone, except maybe for the extreme environmentalists

who want to turn this area into the BWCA. It hurts local residents, fishermen, resort owners, resort guests, park visitors, people with disabilities, minorities, people of all incomes but especially low-income people, first responders and firefighters, families. It limits access to a park which already has terrible issues with access. It crowds fishermen into only certain areas of the lake. It is bad for the visual qualities of the area and causes crowding. It hurts local business who are just trying to survive. It hurts park user experiences, and it makes the park an undesirable destination during the winter. People will go to other lakes where they are free to access those lakes with any means available to them. Please scrap this plan, no restrictions on lake access, visitors to the area should only have to follow State Laws. Lastly, and this is the biggest issue, this plan violates Minnesota State Law 84B.061. The Federal Government has no right to impose rules and regulations on Minnesota Lakes. Ice is Water and NOT Land!

██████████
Resident and Land Owner in Kabetogama
██████████

Correspondence ID: 107
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,30 2023 20:19:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am a recent retiree and cabin owner on ██████████ just outside the park. My family and I have been visitors to the park for 25 years through all the seasons. We love the quietness and remoteness and often remark on how underutilized the park is especially in the winter. I currently have a sled style fish house pulled by snowmobile and as I have more time now would spend more time using it on all the lakes. As it is now I could leave it out overnight and come back the next day to fish without having to bring it back home 10+ miles. I would suggest simply continuing to follow Minnesota regulations.
The ice roads are nice if they get built, but they should not be the only way to access the lakes (other than snowmobiles). There are so many alternate methods now to travel on the snow and ice that make it easier for the elderly and disabled to get out and enjoy the park. We should be allowed to use them. Also if these vehicles are not allowed it could make it harder to get help for someone in trouble out on the lakes. Once again simply follow existing Minnesota regulations.
As I have said, the park in my observations, is underutilized as is and does not need further restrictions/management. And as a unique mainly water access park, if there are NPS regulations/rules about the frozen roads, work to change the regulations/rules to reflect the past and current uses of the frozen lakes.

Correspondence ID: 108
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,31 2023
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Subject: Comment on Frozen Lake Access and Use Plan
This so called plan violates not only common sense, but it violates the rights of the persons that supported the Park in the 1960's and early 70's. The Park Service promised the community

people living on the lakes and in the surrounding area that their land and water use of the Park area would not be impaired if we supported the Park, as I, my family and my uncle [REDACTED] did. Now we have a Park Superintendent, Mr. DeGross with his new secret plan, up until now, taking more rights from the use of the Park from the local people, from Minnesota people, from the American Indian community and from the local resorts and other businesses by proposing new use rules for the Park and new access rules to the lakes. These were secret new rules that DeGross has come up with during the past five years with no community input with his secret Plan that will completely destroy many resorts and local businesses by driving business away, break promises made to secure our support and deny the use of the park to most lower and lower middle income persons in the winter for recreational Park use, unless of course, you are from the wealthy privileged class from the metro areas.

Background of My Family

I am the grandson of [REDACTED]. My grandfather came to this country from Norway after the 1912 Olympics which he was awarded a bronze medal in the two man rowing competition and lost a gold medal in the four man crew allegedly for going out of the lane, the gold being awarded to the Sweden team where the games were being held (politics of yesteryear). [REDACTED] came from the Oslo area, and was an all-around athlete, world champion in the discus and as a speed skater, he was on the Norge national teams for rowing, track, field, decathlon, pentathlon, speed skating, cycling, hockey (played on ice, not land), swimming and ski teams.

[REDACTED] coached hockey and track at the University of Minnesota, then moving to Ely where he coached swimming teams that were nationally recognized and taught physical education for the Ely school system in the late 1920s, having and raising four daughters [REDACTED] one died after birth and my mother [REDACTED] and one son [REDACTED], a WWII Navy veteran who joined while still in high school. [REDACTED] and the author [REDACTED] were close friends and hunted and fished together. [REDACTED] started the Herseth's Vacation Camp in, I believe around the late 1920s/early 30's because during WWII that my father served in the Navy, my brother [REDACTED], Mom and me stayed at the resort during the summer and in Minneapolis and Spring Grove during the winter. The Resort consisted of around 32 cabins, other buildings, with no electricity, no indoor plumbing, ice boxes that ice (not land) had to be delivered daily to all the cabins with around 40-50 sixteen foot wood cedar boats that had to be scraped and sanded, painted and submerged in water each year during the spring before the start of fishing season. The resort office was located near a sandy beach on Kabetogama Lake, where in the fall, the Indians who lived on the other side of the lake would park their birch bark canoes and walk to Ray to get winter supplies. The lake was full of wild rice back then, especially in Lost Bay. In the winter ice was cut (not land) from the lake with large hand saws and moved to the ice shed to be stored for the summer, putting sawdust between the layers of ice. I came to the lake and resort each year from birth until [REDACTED] passed away around ten years ago. I supported the Park because they made promises to us, that the Park immediately broke in the past after becoming a National Park with our support, and now the Park Service through Mr. DeGross wants to place a dagger in our hearts, to break all the promises that were made to us. Being married to an American Indian, I am well aware of how the federal government breaks their promises to the People. I am also aware of the lack of true consultation when the government decides to do something, using a few persons to rubber stamp their plans which is not real community input or consultation.

I graduated from Chisholm High School in 1960 and St. Olaf College in 1964 majoring in biology and chemistry, with one of my four MS degrees being in biology (Mr. DeGross-water is formed by two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom, H_2O and comes in three forms, solid - ice not

land, liquid-water and gas-water vapor). I learned this about water in my science classes in the 4th or 5th grade, in my 7th grade science class, and again in high school biology in 10th grade and chemistry in the 11th, grade, and again in college chemistry and biology classes. I was a teacher and school superintendent in public schools and Indian Contract Schools before I retired in 2003. I am and was a 1st Lt in the Marine Corps, served as a forward observer for artillery in Viet Nam, am a 100% disabled VA veteran and was awarded a purple heart. My wife Esther is an enrolled member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. My brother [REDACTED] and sister [REDACTED] have cabins on Kabetogama Lake and my cousin [REDACTED] and nephew [REDACTED] own resorts on Kabetogama Lake. I have a family history and ties to the Lake Kabetogama area as far back as the 1930s. My wife's father, [REDACTED], who was born around 1885 had a wife whose family was from the Lake area before the Indians were moved to Nette Lake during the WWII years. My wife [REDACTED] has brothers/sisters buried at Nette Lake from her dad's first marriage, whose wife died during childbirth. She sold her fractionated trust land a few years ago back to the Nette Lake Band of Ojibwe, since she is enrolled in the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe and we live on the Leech Lake Reservation on [REDACTED] Kabetogama Lake along with the other lakes in the Park was Indian land that was eventually ceded to the federal government that is now part of the Park area. Points, pottery, iron and copper tools have been found that have been dated thousands of years old. Many of the Indians old camp sites and living areas were flooded over after the dam was built at Kettle Falls. I had the good fortune of having some of the many sites shown to me by [REDACTED], a WWI veteran and trapper, before he passed into the Spirit World. My mother would find artifacts on their beach in the spring when the water was low, and in the gravel pit.

First- The state of Minnesota has not given up its water rights in the Park area. The Park water area, meaning it's lakes, connecting lakes, rivers and creeks are navigable waters, and as such, the water use comes under the Statute Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and the Navigable Water Protection Rule that took effect on March 20, 2023, along with Minnesota state regulations. None of these statutes and regulations describe ice on the water as land as DeGross does, it is still solid water, H₂O. Minnesota has not given up their water rights in the area, so what DeGross is proposing must also have the approval and input from the State of Minnesota legislature, which is very unlikely, and the other federal agencies that control the water use.

I went on the internet to find Mr. DeGross's educational background, since most elementary students from Minnesota know what water is, especially in the winter, it is called ice, not land. We skate on ice, try skating and playing hockey on land. There is no reference to his educational background, only that he has worked for 25 years in the park service. I also find it illuminating that he is from Wisconsin. Kabetogama Lake and the National Park is in Minnesota, and our residents are quite different from the Wisconsin people. We like open government with transparency, not a secret plan that was going to be jammed through without input from the public, especially from those persons who live near the Park, on the lakes and the local businesses and resorts. This smells like the politics of Wisconsin, not Minnesota. If there is going to be changes, it must have open input and consultation from the State of Minnesota, the residents who live on the lakes and near the park area, the businesses that will be affected by DeGross's Plan without true public input, and from those persons that use the Park for recreation. It is not a secret federal plan to be secretly approved and shoved down our throats. If that happens, there will be lawsuits.

First- DeGross and the Park Service has already made their decision, and because the secret plan was leaked to the Public, they now want to give the Public one month to have input that means nothing, since they have already approved their plan. We were only given this month for

consultation because someone leaked the plan to the public. Most summer residents may not have even come to their residences because of their children still being in school, work, etc and will not have a chance to have any input. The plan needs to have public input and the public needs to be part of the initial planning process, not a rubber stamp that has no meaning. This Plan if passed and set into motion by the government will result in many lawsuits and have a very negative impact on our local businesses and resorts.

Second- DeGross's Plan should be scraped. A commission should be set up to discuss the changes, if any, for the use of the Park. If changes are actually needed, a paid committee should be set up to actually develop a public plan with both government Park employee's and the stakeholders that include the State of Minnesota, local residents and businesses representatives, Park recreational users, and the federal agencies that control the navigable waters. Then the preliminary plan should be open for public comment for six to twelve months, not what is being shoved down our throats by the Park Service and DeGross.

Third- The present proposed plan will have a destructive effect on the local economy, and local residents use of the Park. The idea that one can only access the Park on Park plowed roads borders somewhere between asinine and absurd. Due to lack of Park staff, many Park roads would not be plowed, that would have a dramatic negative impact on the local businesses and resorts if they are not allowed to access the lakes. The winter income is needed for these businesses to survive.

Not allowing trucks, cars, AVTs, tracked vehicles and fish houses overnight, not only breaks another government promise to the people (sounds like DeGross has dealt with treaty rights of the Indian the way he wants to break Park Service promises) of the Park area, but it will destroy local businesses who rely on the winter business income for their survival. Many persons like myself do not use a snowmobile since I am pushing 82 years, but I can use a pickup or car to get to my fish house, that is a four by six ft quarter inch shack put on the lake, not a \$20,000.00 plus fish house on wheels that many persons can not afford on their social security income. I would have a tough time removing the fish house each day as would many people who fish on the lake in the winter. People my age would have to pay someone, and many could not afford that cost on their social security income. They would not be able to use the park because of the new proposed rules. Is that the true intent of this Plan??

A common sense proposal would be to use the state guidelines for removal of the fish houses and their dates for removal, since they have not given up their water rights. Resorts, private persons and business owners could also plow roads to be used to access the lakes, and to the fish houses. Personal Example- I could have my nephew ■■■ plow a road from his resort to the Point in front of the resort and our cabins, where we always had fish houses before there was a National Park. Another words, let the resorts, private businesses and private individuals plow to access the lakes in the Park, at no cost to the government or for the Park. Also, staff your Park so that the roads could be plowed, maybe hire part time locals to plow roads, instead of outsiders which would help with the local economy during the winter. The use of ATVs, UTVs, OHVs, tracked vehicles, cars, trucks, fish house rules should continue as is unless the Park Service can show proof that there is something negative to the Park environment or that the use is destructive to the ice (frozen water (H2O)). These vehicles have been allowed in the Park since 1975. If there were negative effects, they would have been restricted long before our Wisconsin Superintendent came to work at the Park. There use on the lake should be allowed to continue until a real committee stated in an above paragraph with real public input does a real plan, not a plan shoved down our throats by DeGross and the Park Service. Again, to gain our support, the Park Service again promised that the use of these vehicles would continue to gain our support. The use of the snowmobile is not any different than the use of the wheeled/tracked vehicles. In fact snowmobiles can go where the other vehicles can not, that

could actually cause damage to the wildlife in the area. If some parts of the Park need to be restricted for wildlife protection, that could be part of a real Plan with a committee to work with the government, not the secret plan of DeGross. The Park is Minnesota water, not federal Park Service water and Minnesota residents and their guests must have input as to how the water, including frozen water is used. Keep your promises to our people. One man not from Minnesota should not be allowed to develop regulations for this unique park that is a water park, not a land park. It was the highway for the fur trade, is and was Indian land before the Caucasian came to the area.

Fourth- There should be public input on park fees for fish houses and parking fees, as well as where fish houses can be located. Again, we were made promises that we could use the lakes as was done in the past. Local residents should not have to pay fish house fees and parking fees to use their lakes. The use of cars, trucks, tracked vehicles, AVTs, OHVs, UTVs and other vehicles should be allowed to be used on the lakes and land just as the snowmobiles are allowed to be used throughout the park, with limitations concerning wildlife protection. The lakes do not have the concerns of wildlife protection and these vehicles should be allowed. Many persons do not have snowmobiles, and persons with limited incomes can not afford to buy or rent snowmobiles, that is of course, if the Park is for all people, not just the wealthy from the metropolitan areas. The local people and resorts/businesses and their clients should have special access to the Park (lakes) as we were promised for our support. With a real planning committee, a real plan for the use of the Park could be developed with meaningful community input, not some secret plan to be shoved down our throats by DeGross and the Park Service.

Unless the Park Service can prove that these vehicles really damage the lake, they should be allowed with a plan developed by the Committee listed above that considers the uniqueness of the VNP.

Fifth- The VNP is on American Indian (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe) ceded lands. Therefore, the Indian and their descendants from the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe does have hunting, fishing and gathering rights to the lands that the VNP now occupies. They have these rights under treaties signed by the federal government. I realize that some trust lands were illegally seized by the Park Service when the Park was first established (what else is new), but since then there have been court cases that have stated that Indians do have these rights. A recent case in Minnesota in 2015 that involved my nephew [REDACTED], the Court not only stated that Indians have hunting, fishing and gathering rights on the Reservation, they have these same rights on ceded lands, (The United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, United States of America v Michael D. Brown; Jerry A Reyes; Marc L Lyons; Frederick W Tibbetts on Appeal from the United States District Court for the District of Minnesota Nos. 13-CR- 0068:13-CR-0070 cert. denied). The Indians won in Court with cert. denied by the Supreme Court.

The Minnesota Chippewa Tribal members and their descendants should not be charged Park Service fees, parking fees, license fees, fishing fees, fish house fees or any vehicle fees for their use in the Park. They also have the right to hunt, fish and gather as given in the treaties. This is an individual right, not a tribal right, since tribes did not exist when the treaties were made. The treaties were made with the group as individuals, since the so called Tribe was established under the Indian Reorganization Act in the 1930s. Since the Park does not allow hunting, netting and trapping in the Park, an accommodation should be made for those persons that are allowed these rights under their treaty rights to hunt, fish and gather on ceded lands, either individually in cash or food items. They do have gathering rights, that does not affect the Park, such as berry picking, etc. that should be allowed at no cost to them, as well as to fish free with proof that they are a member or descendant of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

Sixth- Finally, we were promised duck/goose hunting rights to gain our support. This is not

hunting local game or wildlife, since ducks/geese are not local, they are migratory birds. Duck/goose hunting should be allowed in the Park, with restrictions on using lead shot that is outlawed now anyway. Bird limits are controlled by the Fish and Wildlife Department. This would also help local resorts, businesses and local residents that use the birds as food for their families. My brother and I hunted with our uncle [REDACTED], that provided food for us during the three years that my family was living with a double mortgage on our home in [REDACTED] with one income. It would bring in hunters that would help the local economy of the resorts and businesses in the fall when school is on. and the resort business slows down.

I support the hunting/trapping ban on the wildlife in the Park area, since persons come to visit the Park in many cases because of the wildlife. This is real to me since the Wolf is protected in the Park area. The wolf is a brother to my wife's people. They live in extended families (pack) like the Indian. They hunted for what they needed for subsistence and lived in harmony with nature like the Indian. They have family ties like the Indian and they had bounties placed upon them by the State of Minnesota's government like the Indian. They were hunted and killed almost to extinction like my wife's people, but still managed to survive, like the Indian. The wolf is a sacred animal to the traditional Indian, it is a brother to the traditional Indian, to my wife and grandson, who's Ojibwe name is [REDACTED], wolf in the Ojibwe language. Therefore I am in support of your hunting and trapping ban, but there are also treaty rights involved that must be addressed by the Park Service with individual Indians. The allowing of duck/goose hunting would be a good first step, not only for the Indian but for all.

There are many wilderness areas surrounding the Park that provide hunting areas for the Minnesota residents. But because of the bunting ban in some areas, it might have a negative affect on resorts and business and needs to be addressed by the Park Service. Duck hunting on the National Park's lakes, ponds and rivers/creeks in October would help some resorts and local businesses.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my views.

cc: Representative Pete Stuber

Senator Amy Klobuchar

Senator Tina Smith

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz

Correspondence ID: 109

Project: 84972

Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: May,31 2023

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Dear VNP Superintendent Ben DeGross,

My Name is [REDACTED]. My family has been at Kabetogama for over 120 years. We have always enjoyed using the lake for recreation and as a resource. My family has used every means of transportation including ice skates, boats, wind sleds, snowmobiles, A TV, UTV, cars, trucks, and airplanes. We have camped at sites that now, today, we must apply and pay for a permit for what we used to do on a whim. As I look back in the years and out at the lake today, I see no sign that we have been there! We clean up, pack out what we have packed in. We appreciate the scenery and resources we have here with no intention of spoiling what we have. This park was supposed to be a multi-use park. It wasn't designed to follow the other national parks, This park is water based. Access by water. The Business owners were promised increased use of the park, which has never been fulfilled. You want to take more accessibilities away is not going to help business owners.

I can see no good reason for your proposed regulations limiting use of other means of transportation other than snowmobiles on the frozen WATER that the state of Minnesota has not given up the rights to per Minnesota Statutes 84B.061. The UTV which is gaining more users yearly, is, as I see it, a very safe means of transportation. It isn't fast, but it, as some models do, has a heated cab. As an older man, I see it as way to get out to enjoy the winter months for more years to come as I have trouble keeping my fingers and toes warm. We are out fishing before any ice road is plowed and the road may not even be in the same place from year to year? Take away the UTV and my means of getting out on the lake is taken away also. The people that have Homes or Cabins on the lake shore cannot use a UTV to go fishing because the plowed ice road doesn't go near their Home?

Now we are putting up with some kind of heightened law enforcement harassment, yes, it is harassment! I, myself was stopped by a VPS ranger last year during the flood. I had been working filling sandbags for the Kabetogama community and hadn't been to the lake to see how much it had come up in several days. I drove my UTV to the boat landing to have a look see. It was a very short look and I wasn't driving in the water, but on my way out of the parking lot a ranger got out of his truck and motioned me to stop. He wanted to know who I was and what I was doing, where do you live? I'm not sure what kind of laws I might have been breaking? He didn't state the reason he stopped me? I surely wasn't driving fast or endangering anyone trying to launch a boat? I simply was trying to look at the water level and how high it has come up? Since then, I've heard many stories of harassment from the park rangers and have told anyone willing to listen to me, if the park service rangers are pulling up to you? Grab your phone and record! I'm not sure what they are looking for? Drug trafficking? Human smuggling? What is with the SWAT team uniforms?

I used to think of Park Rangers as a smokey Bear type, HELPFUL park employee that was out more of public relations, ensure everyone enjoyed the park person. Now it is, what the Hell did I do wrong that the SWAT team was deployed! How many laws can be broken while fishing that deserves such tactics and just plain harassment?

From my point of view, I see the Park Service, for what reason? Trying to chase people away! No, Mr. Degross, I am not in favor of your plans to limit use. I do not agree with law enforcement tactics currently in use! Change is needed alright, but it is the rangers that need changing! Get rid of all of them as they will never be trusted again and bring in a new people friendly Representation of the park service Ranger

Regards



Correspondence ID:	110
Project:	84972
Document:	127517
Outside Organization:	International Falls, Ranier, & Rainy Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau Non-Governmental(Official Rep.)
Received:	May,31 2023
Correspondence Type:	Letter
Correspondence:	Voyageurs National Park / Frozen Lakes Plan Public Comment

Thank you for the chance to gather public comments on the proposed frozen access and use plan. The International Falls, Ranier, & Rainy Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau has been a longstanding supporter and promoter of Voyageurs National Park and the beauty it offers during the winter season.

The Rainy Lake CVB actively promotes our area to attract tourists from outside the local community, hoping to encourage travel and overnight visits. What makes Rainy Lake unique among other Minnesota communities is its position as the gateway to Voyageurs National Park, the state's only national park, which makes us a desirable tourist destination.

However, in recent years, the Rainy Lake CVB has been using lodging tax funds towards promoting winter activities such as ice fishing, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling. The proposed frozen lake plan would not only limit access for local community members who use the ice but also affect business owners in the community who choose to remain open during the slower winter months. This includes lodging operators, restaurant owners, local outdoor stores, and even impacts how people choose to visit Voyageurs National Park in the winter.

Restricting access to Voyageurs National Park on the frozen lake surface seems counterproductive, especially considering it comes from the National Park itself. Furthermore, the frozen lake plan appears to disregard the fact that not everyone has a snowmobile as a means of transportation. It fails to consider the physical and mental disabilities, high costs, and visitors who lack the experience or desire to ride snowmobile. The uniqueness of this National Park not having roads throughout eliminates the ability to explore for such people. The exclusionary approach undermines the park's supposed inclusivity towards marginalized groups.

It is worth noting that people have been accessing the frozen lake for ice fishing long before Voyageurs National Park was established. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) already enforces fishing regulations on the lake including the concept of "leave no trace" when leaving the frozen lakes. Voyageurs National Park should not attempt to restrict this activity anymore beyond current regulations prohibiting the crossing of land portages by means other than a snowmobile. Requiring a conditional use permit for personal-use ice houses and regulating the types of vehicles that can be used to access the lake is an overreach of authority.

Implementing the frozen lake plan would not only devastate our lodging operators who choose to remain open during the winter but would also inflict damage on our local economy. From a tourism perspective, if people are unable to access the lake, they will not visit our community and generate economic activity both for our community and for the National Park.

Considering that Voyageurs National Park is a unique water-based national park, the Rainy Lake CVB suggests that the current deficiencies in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFRs) be addressed by modifying or adding specific regulations tailored to Voyageurs National Park. These CFRs should account for any long-term changes in park usage and be considerate of its distinct characteristics.

Thank you,
International Falls, Ranier & Rainy Lake
Convention & Visitors Bureau

Correspondence ID: 111
Project: 84972
Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: May,31 2023 12:27:24

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: We have owned a cabin on Lake Kabetogama since 1967 and our experience is that the Park has been effective and critically important in managing and protecting that wonderful area. But it seems that there are emerging problems that now must be addressed. Of particular concern are the recent development of vary large ice fishing houses (basically campers) and the negative impact they are having on other large Minnesota lakes. Unfettered access to the Park's lakes by these on-ice recreational vehicles, such as has occurred on these other lakes, would likely have a deleterious effect on other winter recreational activities in the Park, e.g. cross country skiing, snowshoeing, etc. For these reasons we support the "Frozen Lakes Access and Use Plan" as proposed for Voyageurs Park. Allowing but regulating ATV/UTVs and permanent ice fishing houses makes sense.



Correspondence ID: 112

Project: 84972

Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: May,31 2023 18:22:33

Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: To whom it may concern,

This letter is in response to the Voyageur's National Park proposed frozen lake surface and use plan. Voyageur's National Park is a unique park which has private property along the lake edge of the park. The beautiful lakes that make up the park belong to the State of Minnesota which is public water. My first question is how much jurisdiction does VNP have over MN public waters? My next question is, what is the environmental detriment that would have the need to create areas that would be off limits during the frozen water season? Science does not have anything to do with conforming to Federal regulations. Science works with the scientific method where a problem is stated, and correct solutions are ultimately adopted to fix those problems. I feel that if this plan is implemented it would be overstepping its bounds and causing hardship for local businesses and guests to VNP.

I feel that the current way of life for businesses, residents and guests should continue as follows without the worry of "bringing us to conformance". I also disagree with the definition that all frozen waters are considered land, that definition by 36 CFR & 4.10 which make ice roads NPS Class IV. The definition is also a reach since it is governed by the State of MN. The present day status is sufficient to me since I am not aware of an actual problem. I am also unaware of any environmental aspect being at risk with the status for frozen water use. The proposed plan just doesn't make sense for VNP. The park has unique aspects that other National Parks do not and plus it has public water that is out of the park that will not be conforming to this plan. The idea that developing regulations and increasing restrictions need to have a purpose that will help the environment. The proposed frozen lake surface access and use plan is cause for concern since it was developed and used for an entirely different situation than what is proposed here in VNP.

Personally, this proposed plan may impact the way I use the park or how others use the park.

Many years the snow has restricted wheeled vehicles from traveling across the frozen water. As technology gets more advanced residents and guests may utilize track vehicles in the future to move around the ice. The impacts need to be researched and reported to the public of any adverse impacts this traveling may have in VNP. This proposal may have some relevance in the future. The big issue is that it is sometimes easy to go off the correct path if you are out in the elements and Enforcement would be a large concern since the VNP have had negative press from their Enforcement Department in recent history. If you always must follow a road or fish next to a road, defeats the purpose of being outside enjoying all of nature and VNP.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Correspondence ID: 113
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: May,31 2023 21:18:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: To Whom it May Concern,

This letter is in regard to the March 28, 2023, Voyageur's National Park (VNP) released a PROPOSED FROZEN LAKE SURFACE ACCESS AND USE PLAN.

My name is [REDACTED]. I own two parcels of the lake front on Lake Kabetogama [REDACTED]. I bought it from my parents who have gone from leased to owning it for more than 25 years and then selling it to me. They still reside their and I was hoping to retire there.

As a property owner on Lake Kabetogama, I OPPOSE this plan for the following reasons:

1. Your proposal is outside of the jurisdiction and authority of the VNP. Mr. DeGross is wrong in his evaluation that frozen waters are land. Minnesota statute 84B.061 states "These navigable waters include the following: Rainy, Namakan, Sand Point, and Crane Lakes. Pursuant to the applicable federal and state law, navigable waters and their beds are owned by the state. Ownership of and jurisdiction over these waters and their beds has not been ceded by the state, either expressly or implicitly, to the United States." Per the statute I will be asking our State government, Senators and other, to defend these rights, as the statute states they should. The DNR disagrees with this plan as well.
2. This is going to have a huge negative impact to local business. Many local businesses cannot stay in business without the winter season business. There are to many to list but many of the items in this plan directly deter people from spending time on Lake Kabetogama due to all the restrictions and proposed additional costs that they will go elsewhere where it is easier, more affordable, etc. Kabetogama Lake was revived after the Canada fishing lockdown with the COVID pandemic and it was depressed for years due to VNP restrictions, we are finally flourishing and ask that you do not negatively impact this and put small family owned business to fail.

3. As a new homeowner buying my the family home from my parents I was excited about the future. This plan kills the winter plan excitement, adds not just complication but unreasonable expectations of lake front homeowners and added cost that just are wrong. Most important negative impact of it all is in the lose of home value. Stricter regulations and telling people what they can and cannot and making them pay for every little thing drives them away. That is what this plan does.

This plan is unlawful and not within the VNP's jurisdiction, and it should end right there. If you do not side with my interpretation of the law, then at least listen to the people that this plan affects most.... The businesses, home owners, etc. They will tell you no, this plan is not right. It has worked for how many years why change. I am not opposed to change as a person only if it is good change for the betterment of the people business and is lawful and this plan is not that.

I am [REDACTED], homeowner on Lake Kabetogama and I OPPOSE this plan.

Thank you for listening,

[REDACTED] 10/31/23

Correspondence ID: 114
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,01 2023 08:35:06
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: How does a person tactfully say that the public comment section/period appeared to be an afterthought? It appears that a plan was already decided upon before the public meetings took place. It also appears that there was no intent to actually listen and incorporate any of the people's concerns that attended the public meetings. This is evidenced in the fact that the public comment period was initially SO short! While the comment period was extended, I am not convinced that these comments will be heard and considered.

We have been visiting VNP for over 30 years. We come mainly during soft water but have been there during the winter. While I appreciate the purpose and intent to keep things safe and in the public's interest, I am not sure exactly where the concerns are? It appears that this proposal is more of a power grab than it is grounded in fact.

I read about the concern of the newer larger ice houses. I agree that they have evolved over the last decade or two quite rapidly. However, I do not see the difference between these and a houseboat. Houseboats are allowed to travel freely in the waters of VNP. Both have self contained black water systems. Along with that, most larger ice houses will not travel off the main trails/paths because of the possibility of becoming stuck. However, if the individual wants to go to the work of venturing out, I do not see the issue with that. Both still have the responsibility to move/remove said dwelling when and as conditions dictate.

Another concern I have is that the VNP representative stated that ice is considered ground, not water. While I do not have a degree in physics or chemistry, I can say with certainty that water and ice are the same chemical makeup! They are just in a different state of matter. What is the purpose for this distinction...could it be for a legal purpose? Is it again an end run to gain more power/control? If it is not, then you have done a poor job in convincing the people that

attended the public meetings that this is not an attempt to gain more power/control.

For clarification, we do not own property on or anywhere near the lakes (over 350:miles away). I do not understand the need to limit access to the lake by the people that do own property on/near the lakes? Again, this seems like more of a power grab/control issue than anything that is fact based causing harm. If you can show me documentation of damage that is being done by this type of access, then I would reconsider my position.

This reminds me of the changeover for campsite usage. It happened with little input from the public. While there was some abuse/misuse by a few people, the fix IMHO was not the right one.

Having read the documentation, I really struggle to see where harm has been documented? Thus, where is the immediate need to implement these changes? Don't get me wrong, I very much want VNP to remain in the condition that it is now and for future generations.

Let me be clear, I REALLY want to trust the people in charge, but it is episodes like these that make it DIFFICULT. Actually I believe that the people in charge do care about VNP but that they may have been hijacked by special interest and been indoctrinated by only one side of the issue. Please do not make this a political process or make a political decision. I implore you to listen to ALL sides of the issue, weigh the facts and consider the impact on everyone along with the park before making a final decision. Remember that having a pristine park does no one any good if people cannot access the said park.

Respectfully submitted,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 115
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,01 2023 11:00:00
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am completely opposed to this frozen access surface plan.

The NPS has a water rights issue to be resolved and a whole host of issues and broken promises to pay reparations on before it should be moving forward with any type of new access plan.

How shameful that a park touting 1MM visitors per year is trying to limit access to an already access restricted park that is lucky to have 1/3 of the visitors that were originally touted.

This has an odor to it, local gateway communities were not consulted appropriately.

Correspondence ID: 116
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: National Parks Conservation Association Conservation/Preservation(Official Rep.)
Received: Jun,01 2023 14:20:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form

Correspondence: June 1, 2023

Superintendent Bob DeGross
Voyageurs National Park
360 Hwy 11 East
International Falls, MN 56649

Re: Comments on the Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan

Dear Superintendent DeGross:

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan ("plan") shared for Voyageurs National Park ("park").

Since 1919, NPCA has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. NPCA and our 1.6 million members and supporters nationwide, including over 27,000 in Minnesota, advocate for America's national parks and work to protect and preserve the nation's most iconic and inspirational places for present and future generations.

We understand the National Park Service's ("NPS" or "Park Service") goal with the plan is to align the traditional winter recreational uses within the park with the applicable Park Service rules and regulations.

Plowing roads to access frozen lake surfaces for ice fishing is a longstanding tradition in Minnesota that predates the establishment of the park. The park's enabling legislation specifically allows for the use of snowmobiles for winter recreation, but today local residents and visitors use a variety of off-road vehicles ("ORVs") to access fishing locations away from the plowed roads, which is not provided for in the applicable federal regulations. Per the NPS Civic Engagement Newsletter, it is this operation of ORVs away from established ice roads that is "contradictory to federal regulations." See 36 CFR §4.10 ("Operating a motor vehicle is prohibited except on park roads, in parking areas and on routes and areas designated for off-road motor vehicle use.") NPS acknowledged in the April 19 online public meeting that it has not enforced this regulation because there has been confusion on how to apply it on the frozen lake surface and a large number of people utilize the frozen lake for recreational purposes.

We support establishing a winter plan developed with community input that aligns traditional uses with the applicable regulations. The plan should establish enforceable restrictions while ensuring park visitors can continue to use and enjoy the park and park resources remain unimpaired.

Plan Development

NPS has indicated we are at a "civic engagement" period of the planning process and that the forthcoming National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process will result in refined preliminary alternatives for public input. However, NPS did already release one initial alternative for public comment, which has resulted in some negative feedback about the plan. An early dialogue with the community before an alternative was developed may have been met more openly and

resulted in alternatives that were supported at the outset.

NPS should consider ways to expand its community engagement as the planning process moves forward so that it is clear community input is valued. The next version of the plan must include multiple alternatives for consideration by the community.

As management alternatives are developed to address a range of experiences, NPCA urges the park to evaluate and respond to the following questions:

Jurisdictional questions:

Public statements about the initial alternative, including by state public officials, have questioned the Park Service's authority in relation to existing state statutes. See, e.g., "Inside the fight over frozen lakes in Voyageurs National Park; ATVs, trucks could be restricted," Star Tribune, May 4, 2023.

Given that much of the community response has focused on NPS' authority over the waters, NPS should make clear under what legal authorities it is operating when it proposes to restrict activities on the frozen lake surface.

During the April 19 online public meeting, NPS stated that it views the frozen surface as an extension of the land and thus NPS has jurisdiction over the ice roads. NPS should clearly identify the legal basis for its assertion of jurisdiction to clarify its position vis-a-vis state authority.

Impacts on park resources:

In addition to developing a plan that will clearly define areas allowed for ORV use, the Park Service indicates the plan is needed because ice shelters have evolved into larger and heavier structures and need to be managed in a manner that does not overcrowd frozen lake surfaces or create resource impacts.

We support the protection of park resources and imposing limitations that will reduce any resource impacts. However, the park has not indicated what impacts these larger ice structures are having on park resources.

The proposal indicates that NPS plans to study several issues associated with ORV and ice shelter use on frozen lake surfaces, including visitor use and experience, sound and lightscapes, wildlife, and air and water quality. If not already included in these categories, we urge NPS to also study human impacts from ice fishing activities, such as buildup of trash/litter on ice surfaces, black water discharge, and fish depletion.

In the next phases of planning, NPS should clearly define what the resource impacts are so that it is clear what the plan is trying to address. This will help the public understand the need for the plan and help tailor proposed alternatives for public input.

NPS noted concerns related to overcrowding and the potential to limit the number of ice houses in the future. The initial alternative does not indicate how many ice houses on average are being left on frozen lake surfaces during the winter fishing season and if that is trending upward or downward. How will NPS determine what it considers overcrowding? What resource impacts or other factors will trigger placing limitations on the numbers of ice houses in the future?

NPS may also want to consider completing a study to determine capacity limitations much like it did prior to implementing its campsite reservation system. A similar process here could be used to show how the plan is designed to address the specific resource challenges while also allowing for traditional ice fishing activities.

Enforcement challenges:

During the April 19 online public meeting, NPS stated that the main purpose of the plan is to address current activities that are contrary to regulation by clearly defining what activities are allowed and where. This will help address enforcement challenges.

However, the initial alternative creates two management zones (moderate use and low use zones) that seem to create its own enforcement challenges. How does NPS intend to monitor and enforce uses in these different zones on two different lakes, or monitor and enforce uses in any other alternatives that are developed?

The initial alternative also creates a 300-foot buffer zone on either side of the plowed ice roads to allow visitors to reach fishing locations away from the road. How did the park determine the size of the buffer zone and how will the park enforce this buffer zone or any kind of buffer in additional alternatives?

Any and all alternatives should also address for clarity the distinction between the use of ORVs, snowmobiles, and street legal vehicles in accordance with the Park Service Management Plans.

Finally, how will NPS educate visitors about the various zones and restrictions in any proposed alternative? It may not be readily apparent to visitors where zones are and where they end when they are out on the frozen lake surfaces.

Visitor access fees:

NPCA generally supports collection of user fees in national parks to offset budget shortfalls and support staffing and programming needs of the park.

However, if the fee is meant to help fund maintenance of the road itself, there may be alternate funding sources that can be utilized in addition to or in lieu of fees.

NPS should also address how it will determine the appropriate fee and who should pay them. Will every road user be required to pay even if they are accessing private property and not fishing? How will these fees be collected? And how will NPS enforce the fee requirement?

Conclusion

We understand the challenges of developing a plan that seeks to bring traditional uses into compliance with federal regulations. The more the plan can be precisely tailored to address identified park resource impacts, the more likely visitors will support the use changes.

We look forward to continued engagement on this plan. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Christine Goepfert
Acting Regional Director
Midwest Region, NPCA

Correspondence ID: 117
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Lake Home owner Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,01 2023 17:25:17
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: June 1, 2023



RE: Proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan

I have lived on Lake Kabetogama since purchasing a resort in 1974. As a resort owner interested in the proposal of a national park in the area, I was appointed to and served as, an original member and Executive Secretary for the Minnesota Citizens Committee on Voyageurs National Park (CCVNP) established in 1975. The CCVNP committee served as a formal advisory board to the National Park Service in the planning and development of the park. As a member I provided input from the community, county and state citizens regarding access to, and control of, VNP.

VNP's control and access is very unique because it is the "only water based national park". With this unique status it was agreed that access and control would be accomplished by a joint effort between: the state of Minnesota, the US Coast Guard, and VNP.

Because MN is a riparian state, a lake property owner owns and controls the land to the waters edge, and the water from that point on belongs to all Minnesota citizens. Minnesota statues are in force to defend the rights of all Minnesotans, which includes access to all lakes within the state.

The Kabetogama, Namakan, Crane Lake and Ash River areas have, and continue to count on tourism traffic for their existence. These areas have been hard hit by the impacts of Covid 19, and recent flooding, which has also negatively affected the economic balance of these communities. The resorts, bait stores, boating establishments, local coffee, and snack shops, have closed or dramatically reduced their operations. Any further restrictions on access of visitors to VNP will have a greater negative impact. The park service's proposal CFR 4.10, "to bring us into conformance with other National Parks", is also counterproductive to Minnesota's efforts encouraging its citizens to avail themselves of the outdoors in all seasons. VNP is unlike like other National Parks - it is the "only water based national park".

The Kabetogama, Namakan, Crane Lake and Ash River areas are awesome places to have quiet, peaceful reflection. These lakes are certainly not subjected to overuse and abuse, as are Mille Lacs and Red Lake. It is my understanding that there has been no harm done to the flora and fauna within the park boundaries during the past almost 50 years of year-round use by citizens

and visitors.

In conclusion, it is imperative I stress that there be no additional restricted access to VNP. To arrive at concurrent jurisdiction a decision must reflect the needs of all involved: local land owners, resort and business operators, visitors, community organizations, county officials, DNR officials, State officials, and the NPS. This joint meeting must be held in July or August to allow attendance by all the above-mentioned parties, who would not be available during other months. There must be a concerted effort by all parties involved that reflects community participation.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I look forward to attending the next meeting this July or August.

██████████

Correspondence ID:	118
Project:	84972
Document:	127517
Outside Organization:	Unaffiliated Individual
Received:	Jun,01 2023 18:21:31
Correspondence Type:	Web Form
Correspondence:	In the Matter of Voyageur National Park, Proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access Plan

Many of my earliest experiences in VNP began at a remote cabin on Namakan - fishing and spearing. Being centrally located, trips to Sand point , Kabetogama and interior lakes were taken to fish and spear. These activities continue to the present from cabins outside the park.

Early ice access is done by walking out to the closest fishing and spearing locations using portable houses pulled on a sled or shelter that incorporates a sled with the fish house. Later in the season as the ice thickens an ATV is used to gain access to more remote locations to fish and spear and lastly snowmobiles are utilized when snow conditions become too deep for the ATV to be used. During late ice ATV's are used for access to these same sites.

Keep in mind early and late fishing and spearing is a solitude experience. Few people are encountered as well other fishing and spearing shacks. Most local resorts are closed prior to freeze up (late October) and open late December then close early March. With no place to stay the people using the lakes are local residents and cabin owners. Ice conditions change quickly and equipment is removed due to the uncertain weather conditions.

The draft plan cites two parties, The Park Service and Visitors. In reality two other parties are not represented, the State of Minnesota and land owners who own property that connects to the water. The water is available to use with license issued by the State of Minnesota. These two parties need to be part of the discussions.

It is odd a formal letter was not sent to land owners who border the lake of the proposed changes. On the county Board in which I serve, these proposed changes would rise to the level to require formal notification. We were fortunate to receive a letter about this proposal from a neighboring cabin owner. An attempt was made to secure a video of the public hearing which was not available, only a copy of the power point presentation. The public hearings are

recorded for the public to view on the county board I serve on.

The presentations photos are not representative of a Voyagers National Park fishing experience. The photos with the caption "a lake nearby" showing large groups of people fishing using trucks and large fish houses creates a false depiction of the actual fishing experience or set up in the park. Large crowds of people and vehicles fishing has not been my experience on the lakes. The comments about the fish house progressing from home -made to ice castles may have some truth. These large trucks and large wheeled fish houses did not arrive on the lake until the Park Service plowed a road on the lake. With that brought overnight visitors, with lights and noisy generators which can be heard for miles on a calm day.

Unintended consequences to consider with the banning of wheeled vehicles on the lakes :

*Docks unserviceable - how do you service or maintain shore lined docks without the use of power equipment - ATV, tractors, skid steers, trucks, excavators and other power equipment.

*Local MN DNR Enforcement - officers checking for compliance would be hampered without wheeled transportation to the lake prior to snow fall, some years snow is scarce. By the time the road is constructed the fishing and spearing is almost over.

*Interpretation of frozen water - will Minnesota be setting a precedence on other bodies of water if the Park determines once ice freezes it becomes an extension of the land?

It is my position that wheeled vehicle should be allowed consistent with Minnesota DNR rules and regulations. The ice road on Kabetogama should limit the use of the large truck and large fish house as they may cause the largest disturbances on the lake. Small portable fish house pulled by hand, ATV's or snowmobile's have very low impact on the environment - when the ice melts the tracks are gone. Most of the access to the lakes is held by private citizens. They have rights to the lake. The plan lacks real world remote fishing/spearing comprehension. In reality people wishing to experience life fishing on a remote lake are not going to show up with large trucks and fish houses in large groups.

Sincerely,



June 1, 2023

Correspondence ID:	119
Project:	84972
Document:	127517
Outside Organization:	Unaffiliated Individual
Received:	Jun,01 2023 19:39:01
Correspondence Type:	Web Form
Correspondence:	I am opposed to making any policy's that would limit the types of vehicles that would be allowed on the ice in the park. We own a cabin on Ash River and currently just have snowmobiles to get out and enjoy winter but in the future as we get older and less physically able we may want to get a different type vehicle to access the park. From my observations in the past there are very few park users in the winter so why change the way it is currently used?

Apparently there is a NPS regulation concerning road use that could and should be changed to accommodate and make legal the current vehicle uses on the frozen surfaces in the park.

I would also oppose the so called low use fishing zones proposed. Why? From my observations there are only a handful of fish houses out on the lakes and to pull them home every day and back out the next just seems pointless.

Voyageurs is a very unique national park. It is very remote and has very few visitors in the winter. Any further restrictions and fees and additional regulations will just make people want to go somewhere else.

Correspondence ID: 120
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,01 2023 23:16:34
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: We dearly love the Park area. Crane, Nam, Ash, Kab... Heading up to Kettle Falls several times every year. Soaking up the pristine surroundings of the blue sky, the white clouds, the green trees and not seeing cabins everywhere you look. The trek across the water from Crane to Kettle feeds the soul enough to last through the winter.
Reading the document posted, regarding the "issues" and the focus and purpose of this whole process has my spidey senses tingling. To me, this smells like Government Regulation, for the sole purpose of restriction and assimilation. Ick. I read, "... align park activities with established regulations and policies..." Well when it comes to this, your "one size fits all" approach is simply asinine. What is important and relevant in a national park in the Mohave, is obviously not necessarily going to be applicable to the Voy area. To say, XYZ isn't allowed in any of the other national parks; ergo, it shant be allowed here is JUST the tunnel vision and narrow scope that scares me.
What type of ice shelter used for fishing is a legitimate concern? Whether you have a tracked vehicle vs a wheeled vehicle should make a difference? You can't drive to your fish house... or maybe even HAVE a fish house? And about this claim of there being an ice road that is created and maintained... Using the "iceroad" as part of the basis for your argument should put a responsibility on the Feds. ex: if the ice road is in and maintained then here are the expectations for those using it. If the ice road is NOT being maintained, then here ar the new expectations. You can't hold everyone else accountable 100% of the time, and not hold yourselves accountable to the same degree.

I honestly believe that this started as a "pissing contest". Just because you "can", doesn't mean you "should". Trust has been obliterated between federal law enforcement and the local community. Flexing muscles right now just reinforces that lack of trust. The VAST majority of the business owners up in those areas want to make sure that their guests, neighbors and friends are safe and happy. Their safety should also be the primary focus for law enforcement. Working together will be best... digging in heels will only create a greater divide. There is no room for ego here. . . especially if you have a gun on your hip.

Correspondence ID: 121
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Voyageurs Conservancy Conservation/Preservation(Official Rep.)
Received: Jun,02 2023 05:20:39

Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: June 1, 2023

Voyageurs National Park
360 Hwy 11 East
International Falls, MN 56649

Re: Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan

Superintendent Bob DeGross and NPS Representatives:

Voyageurs Conservancy (VC) is the official philanthropic partner of Voyageurs National Park (VNP). Our members, partners, donors, and volunteers represent some of the many stakeholders (hailing from the park's gateway communities, to all over the U.S.) that enjoy and cherish the lands and waters of Voyageurs National Park and choose to invest in its ongoing stewardship. The Conservancy works collaboratively with the National Park Service (NPS) on joint programs and projects including the construction of a new Crane Lake Partnership Visitor Center, the Dark Sky Initiative, wetland restoration, and Voyageurs Classroom, but continues to operate as an independent 501c3 organization, managed by a board of directors. Through our funding, advocacy, and education efforts, we work to balance the long-term preservation of the wild character of the Voyageurs landscape with sustainable human access. It is with this mission in mind that we respectfully submit the following initial comments and questions with regards to the Frozen Lake Access and Use Plan and the park's preliminary proposal released on March 28, 2023.

Voyageurs Conservancy's organizational values include stewardship, connection, community, partnership, and generational thinking. In addressing the specific items of the proposal, we tried to use the following guidelines in addition to consideration of our basic mission:

- Balance sustainable recreation and accessibility with the preservation of the wild character of the park.
- Consider and provide equal access for a wide range of park users and visitors.
- Consider federal level regulations and consistency between winter and summer policies.
- Keep the plan as simple as possible to promote public understanding and ease of management.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The NPS proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan will be one of the most substantive proposals for how Voyageurs National Park will be managed and used since the 2002 General Management Plan. However, the park did not solicit any public input when developing the current preliminary proposal. Instead, it relied on this public comment period and the ensuing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process as the primary means of public engagement on these issues. While we acknowledge NEPA's strong requirements for "diligent" public involvement, we believe a lack of early stakeholder engagement contributed to the draft plan being largely met with surprise, confusion, and frustration by a diverse range of park stakeholders. As the party responsible for integrating the NEPA process into all regional activities, we encourage Regional Director Frost to take all steps possible to ensure a robust public involvement process moving forward.

ICE ROAD FEES

VC generally supports user fees that allow NPS to better fund park operations and manage sustainable levels of use. However, we express concerns that charging a daily and/or seasonal ice road access fee is being imposed without any surveys and will be difficult to enforce, therefore unfairly burdening visitors who abide by an honor system of compliance. If the park believes ice road creation and maintenance is not sustainable without incremental funding to support it, we suggest exploring other means that may be more consistent with how summer use fees are assessed. Fees for overnight ice shelter placement, which is a common practice at other large area lakes where access is controlled via ice roads, could be considered as part of an alternative scenario. Should the park decide to proceed with an ice road access fee, we suggest simple point of access payment methods (e.g. kiosk drop box) versus requiring visitors to pay via recreation.gov.

MODERATE & LOW USE ZONES

Given that the park ice roads are currently compliant with federal regulations, the creation of new moderate and low winter use zones within the park seems unnecessary from a regulatory perspective. An alternative scenario could eliminate the creation of the zones and instead use the park ice roads (as established each year) as the physical basis for activities currently tied to the moderate use zone in the preliminary plan. If the park feels the zones are necessary, we suggest clarifying them as "moderate and low frozen lake use zones" to be clear that they spatially delineate acceptable and unacceptable winter use on frozen lake surfaces only.

ORVs

Voyageurs Conservancy understands the park's need to comply with federal regulations pertaining to ORV travel on frozen lake surfaces and establish clear guidelines for their use. The park's preliminary proposal of limiting ORV use to park ice roads and within a 300-foot buffer "parking area" off established park ice roads is one potential option for evaluation in the NEPA process. As the park considers alternative options, we would offer the following comments and questions:

- Like snowmobiles, ORV tires and/or tracks do not physically damage a temporary frozen lake surface.
- Physical damage to frozen lake surfaces is not the only question, however, and we agree with the park's proposed resource considerations in the draft plan, including visitor use and experience, safety, soundscapes, viewscapes, wildlife, socioeconomics, and water and air quality.
- NPS needs to establish clear rules as ATV trail segments are developed in close proximity to park boundaries. While this plan is specific to frozen lake surfaces in winter, the park should also evaluate how the plan potentially informs the park's approach to ATV/UTV use on land-based park roads across seasons and be clear about those potential implications as part of ongoing public engagement efforts.
- Voyageurs Conservancy would support alternative scenarios that evaluate ORV special use permits for people with disabilities for whom snowmobile travel may not be an option, as well as private property owners directly adjacent to the park who may need to use ATV/UTVs to access their property over frozen lake surfaces or conduct shoreline property maintenance (e.g. docks).

- As snowmobiles are the only vehicle allowed to cross the park's safety land portages and the Chain of Lakes Trail, any alternative ORV scenarios would be limited to the frozen lake surfaces of Kabetogama Lake and Rainy Lake west of the Brule Narrows.

- The plan should detail how the park plans to address enforcement in all alternative scenarios. This should include a monitoring system in place to track changes in ORV use over time.

FISHING SHELTERS

Other than how ice fishing shelters are transported in the park, the preliminary plan does not propose any guidelines on ice fishing shelter types, capacity, or most overnight use on any of the park's frozen lake surfaces. The preliminary plan makes the current practice of visitors plowing their own spurs off ice roads to clear an area for their shelter compliant with regulations if the spurs remain within the 300-foot buffer, which we support. It enables all anglers to leave their ice shelters unoccupied for the entire season in the moderate use zone, if the moderate and low use zones were to be adapted, and commercial use authorization holders to do so in the low use zone, if the moderate and low use zones are to be adapted. Regular park visitors would not be allowed to leave shelters unoccupied in the low use zone under the preliminary plan. As the park considers alternative options, we would offer the following comments and questions:

- Voyageurs Conservancy seeks to balance the long-term preservation of the wild character of the Voyageurs landscape with sustainable human access. With that said, we do not support leaving unoccupied ice fishing shelters all season in the low use zone (should the park decide to establish management zones), and favor a continuation of the current practice of portable shelters transported in via snowmobile. While the number of semi-permanent shelters (i.e., small skid houses) that may be left in low use zones is likely low given the effort required to transport them in, we believe the ability to enter that part of the park and experience a truly wild, unoccupied viewscape/landscape to be an important aspect of the park experience for multiple types of park users.

- We would encourage the park to consider an alternative scenario that limits unoccupied overnight shelters to the moderate use zone (should the park decide to establish management zones). If the park moves forward with allowing unoccupied overnight shelters in the low use zone, we feel that regular park visitors should have this option as well. Limiting it to commercial use authorization holders could create a situation of inequitable access to prime fishing spots within easy access of the park's snowmobile trails.

- The park has stated that this plan is needed partly due to the evolution of ice fishing shelter types, sizes and weights and their increased use, which has led to adverse impacts on other large lakes in the region. However, the preliminary plan does not directly address any of those factors. Instead, it relies on the transport restrictions between the moderate and low use zones to provide some level of natural segregation/mitigation of shelter types and numbers. The park has also stated that future "adaptive management strategies" such as permits could be implemented in the future should adverse impacts arise.

- We would encourage the park to evaluate an alternative scenario that includes a more proactive application of those future adaptive management strategies, including permits and capacity restrictions on shelters in the moderate use zone. If this process has taught us anything it is that preventing issues before they occur is easier than changing practices after the

fact. We believe that reasonable controls should be evaluated for ice fishing shelters in the moderate use zone that would help prevent Voyageurs experiencing the types of adverse impacts seen on other large lakes in the region while maintaining robust ice fishing opportunities for visitors and gateway businesses alike.

- The plan should fully address how capacity would be defined and monitored, what metrics would be used, and how NPS would establish and implement a proactive adaptive management strategy within that threshold. A study could be done to support monitoring and assess capacity at Rainy Lake and Kabetogama on human impacts like litter, black water discharge, and fish depletion. Prior to implementing VNP's campsite reservation system, stakeholder input and a study were completed to determine capacity of each campsite, maintenance of the campsites, and park capacity during the summer months. A similar process could be used to show how management practices and visitor use guidelines will keep the wild character of the park while also welcoming ice fishing without damaging our waters and our fish population.

The plan should establish enforceable restrictions while ensuring park visitors can continue to use and enjoy the park and park resources remain unimpaired. We appreciate the challenges that come with managing a park beloved by so many with varying perspectives and opinions, and we look forward to continued dialogue and engagement on these topics with park staff and other stakeholder groups moving forward. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Submitted respectfully,

Christina Hausman Rhode Matt Mueller
Executive Director President, Board of Directors
Voyageurs Conservancy Voyageurs Conservancy

Correspondence ID: 122
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Resident and landowner in Kabetogama Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,02 2023 13:46:27
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence:

- This Plan is in violation of Minnesota State Law 85B.061

- This plan will cause crowding on the lake, people who don't have access to a snowmobile will be forced to crowd into the designated area by the park and won't be able to access the rest of the lake.
- It prohibits access to lake Kabetogama which is already terrible.
- It discriminates and is ableist against disabled people.
- It hurts business and resort owners who use equipment on the ice to fix their docks and use Atv's and side by sides to bring their guests out onto the lake.
- This plan hurts fishermen and residents who use ATV's, Side by Sides and vehicles to access the entirety of the lakes, these vehicles cause no more disturbance than a snowmobile.

- The Park Superintendent said the Federal law that is in violation has been on the books since 1987, Why are you trying to do something now?
- The Park Superintendent said that they consider Ice as a continuation of Land. Ice is not considered land according to the dictionary; Ice Noun: Frozen water, a state of coldness. The definition of Land is Noun; Portions of the earth not covered in water. How do you respond to this?
- How will local first responders, Firefighters and EMS personal access the lake for emergency calls?



Correspondence ID: 123
 Project: 84972
 Document: 127517
 Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
 Received: Jun,02 2023 13:57:46
 Correspondence Type: Web Form
 Correspondence:

With respect to the low use zone, it has been proposed that no ice structure shall be left unattended (only permitted when actively used). We fail to see how this would minimize or avoid adverse impacts to visitor experience and our natural resources. What are the issues you have identified with respect to leaving an ice house unattended in a “low use zone”? Has an environmental impact or other studies been conducted? What is the difference if a Commercial Use Authorization permit allows long term sheltering in place verses a legally licensed fish shelter left in place for long term? When a structure used for fishing is licensed and is in compliance with the state law, a “low use zone” should not negate that privilege.

Note the NPS Compendium signed on 1/29/2023 by Robert J. DeGross noted as follows.

36 CFR §2.22 - PROPERTY

(a)(2) Property may be left unattended for periods longer than 24 hours in the following areas and under the following conditions:

Structures used for fishing on frozen lake surfaces during the ice fishing season and in compliance with state laws

V. Part 7: Special Regulations in Areas of the National Park System

36 CFR §7.33 - Voyageurs National Park

(a) Fishing. Unless otherwise designated, fishing in a manner authorized under applicable State law is allowed.

These points, as written in the Supervisor's Compendium, are reasonable and should preclude any proposed changes.

The recommended changes would create a hardship, especially for our older population who would need to move the shack every time they'd leave it unattended, not to mention all the separate fishing holes that may be created in doing so.

We are not in favor of designating a low use zone and suggest that the proposed points be abandoned.

Correspondence ID: 124
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: MNDNR Unaffiliated Individual(Official Rep.)
Received: Jun,02 2023 15:41:35
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: MN Department of Natural Resources
NE Region Headquarters
1201 East US 2
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

June 2, 2023

Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan
Public Comment Submissions
Voyageurs National Park
360 Hwy 11 East
International Falls, MN 56649

To Whom It May Concern:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) thanks you for the opportunity to provide comment to the National Park Service (NPS) on the proposed Project for the Voyageurs National Park (VNP) captioned the "The Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan" (Frozen Lake Plan or Project). The stated purpose of this Project is "to guide the management of access and use of frozen lake surfaces in the park while protecting natural and cultural resources and providing for a variety of visitor experiences, consistent with the park's enabling legislation and NPS regulation." NPS-VNP, Fact Sheet: Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan Civic Engagement, at 1 (Spring 2023)

Before sharing some background and the DNR's more detailed comments, I want to convey our surprise and disappointment with VNP's decision to come forward with such a sweeping proposal without prior consultation with the DNR, riparian property owners, and the general public. There is a long history of cooperative management and active public use of the State's public waters within the boundaries of the VNP. We would have hoped and expected to have conversations about the NPS's management objectives and an opportunity to explore potential approaches to addressing those objectives. Instead, we were presented with a specific proposal that seeks to impose significant restrictions on longstanding winter uses of the State's public waters within the park.

Despite our significant concerns with the Frozen Lake Plan as presented, I also want to emphasize that the DNR is fully prepared to participate in more inclusive NPS process that engages all relevant parties, including local and tribal governments, business owners, community members, private landowners, and other park users.

Background - History of Cooperative Management

As I noted above, the DNR and the NPS have had a long and cooperative history when it comes to managing the State's public waters within the boundaries of VNP. This cooperation is essential due to the vastness of these waters, the extensive public use they receive, the private property ownership on lakes within the VNP boundary, and the fact that, although the NPS exercises jurisdiction over these waters, ownership of the waters, the beds, and the wildlife therein remain the property of Minnesota. Additionally, VNP has recognized DNR's regulatory authority to regulate private docks, aquatic plant management, and work in public waters and relies on state programs for aquatic invasive species management and regulation and licensure of anglers. Within the boundaries of VNP, DNR also manages wildlife, shares law enforcement authority with NPS and local jurisdictions, undertakes water-based search and rescue missions, and addresses wildlife issues on private lands. Further the VNP enabling legislation itself requires the NPS to allow fishing under the laws of both the state and the federal government and requires that regulations affecting fishing may only be adopted by VNP after consultation with the state.

Comments

The DNR is responsible for managing all of Minnesota's public waters for the benefit of Minnesotans, as public trust resources. From this perspective, we write to share our concerns with the NPS's proposed Frozen Lake Plan. Additionally, I want to underscore that, given the limited detail presented about the proposal, our comments reflect our most fundamental concerns about the Frozen Lake Plan, based on the information available to us and should not be construed as encompassing the breadth of concerns that we may have about the Project.

Proposal: VNP proposes to limit all all-terrain vehicle (ATV), truck and other off-road vehicle frozen water travel to the approximately 1 to 25 miles of ice roads established and maintained by VNP on the State's public waters. VNP also proposes to require users to pay the VNP to access these ice roads. The proposal would not allow ATVs and other off road vehicles free rights of travel off these roads and onto the frozen waters of Rainy, Kabetogama, Namakan, and Sand Point Lakes.

At the outset, it is important to note that while the NPS obtained jurisdiction of lakes within the boundary of the park, VNP's federal enabling act required the state to convey lands within the boundaries but not its public waters nor their bed. Additionally, at the time VNP was created, the Minnesota Legislature authorized the State to convey lands for the establishment of VNP but no authorization was granted to convey the state's public waters or the beds of the waters to the federal government (Minn. Stat. § 84B.06). Thus, while the NPS may exercise jurisdiction over these public waters, it cannot strip either the State or riparian property owners of their legal rights to access these public waters because NPS does not own them.

1. The Frozen Lake Plan's treatment of the State's public waters, when frozen, as a land mass and applying regulations to the frozen surface as if they are a land mass is contrary to law.

VNP cites as its authority to regulate access to and across the surface of the State's frozen public waters 36 CFR § 4.10, which governs the travel on park roads. The argument advanced by VNP to apply this regulation and restrict access to frozen lake surfaces is based on its mistaken belief that when a public water freezes it ceases to be a water body and is, rather a continuation of the land. This rationale is inconsistent with applicable water law.

Upon admission to the Union, Minnesota was conferred "the absolute right to all . . . [its] navigable waters and the soils under them for their own common use, subject only to the rights since surrender by the constitution to the federal government." *State Anthony Falls Water-Power Co. v. Bd. Of Water Comm'rs of Saint Paul Minn.*, 168 U.S. 349, 359 (1897). It is important to note that no U.S. Supreme Court case nor any case authored by the Minnesota Supreme Court contains a caveat to this important principle that says that "the State has an absolute right to these waters only so long as they are not frozen." In fact, such a conclusion is inconsistent with the Minnesota Supreme Court decision in *Sanborn v. People's Ice Co.*, 92 Minn. 43, 84 N.W. 641 (1900), in which the court found the taking of an excessive amount of ice from White Bear Lake to be a taking of water from the State's public water. And in *Lamprey v. Metcalf*, 52 Minn. 181, 7 N.W. 2d 342 (Minn. 1943), the Minnesota Supreme court expressly stated that the public and riparian owners' uses of the State's public waters included the public's right to skate and to cut ice for personal use. In short, the ice is not an extension of the land. The frozen water body remains a public water and does not become a land mass subject to 36 CFR § 4.10, and thus the regulations established under 36 CFR § 4.10 cannot be applied to the State's public waters to restrict access across the surface of the public water, be it open or frozen.

2. The NPS has no legal authority to strip the State or the riparian owners of their interests in the State's public waters or its beds including the right to access the frozen surface, which the Frozen Lake Plan appears to do.

For generations, when frozen, public waters within the boundaries of the VNP have been used by the public to recreate and by service businesses designed to assist the public in accessing and using the State's public waters (e.g., fishing guides and ice house rentals). These frozen public waters are also used by private property owners to access their properties and transport goods to their properties that cannot be readily transported during the open water season. Indeed, use of these frozen public waters dates back to the early 1900s, when sleds loaded with timber traversed these frozen public waters to bring timber to markets in the U.S..

When Minnesota acquired these public waters at statehood it acquired them with an express obligation - to hold ownership of these public waters as a trustee for the people, for public use. *Illinois Central Railroad Co. v. Illinois*, 146 U.S. 387 (1892) and *In re Application of Union Depot St. Ry. & Transfer Co. of Stillwater*, 31 Minn. 297 17 N.W. 626 (1883). The State is precluded from transferring title to these public waters and from relinquishing its obligations to the public to make these public waters available for public use. *Id.* Nor may the State relinquish these obligations by conveying ownership of its public waters to a third party, including the NPS. The public's rights to these public waters extend across the entire surface of each public water within the VNP boundary and include the right to fish, to skate, to swim, to boat, and the free right to travel. These are indices of State ownership and cannot be stripped from the State and its people unless the NPS had acquired the lakes and the beds. To the extent that the Frozen Lake Plan would limit this right of public access to the entire frozen surface of State public waters, it would effectively take what the State refused to convey, the rights of ownership to the public water and beds within VNP.

The DNR also notes that it has an obligation to provide access to the public at large, including an obligation to make these frozen public waters available to persons with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Snowmobiles are not an acceptable means of transportation for many people with limited mobility. The Frozen Lake Plan does not appear to

allow persons with disabilities alternative vehicles as reasonable accommodations to access the frozen lake surfaces, including remote areas - these accommodations often include cars, trucks, or Class 2 ATVs. DNR is committed to providing equitable access to its lake surfaces, be they open or frozen. The Frozen Lake Plan as proposed does not provide that access.

Finally, owners of property riparian to the State's waters, including those within the VNP boundary, have certain "usufructuary" rights that cannot be stripped from them without payment of just compensation by the federal government. *Pinney v. Luce* 44 Minn. 367, 46 N.W. 561 (Minn. 1890) and *Johnson v. Siefert*, 257 N.W. 689 (Minn. 1960). These rights extend across the entire water body and can be exercised by the riparian owner so long as that owner does not interfere with the riparian rights of others or the right to public access. *Id.* The right to access one's property over the entirety of a frozen public water and to place fish houses is a private right held by individual property owners. This right cannot be abridged by the federal government without a legal taking of that right. The Frozen Lake Plan would strip these owners of their riparian rights without just compensation.

Proposal: VPN proposes to limit the number, type, transportation of, occupancy, and weight limits on ice shelters (fish houses) on lakes within the park's boundaries. It also proposes to require a permit for any ice shelter (fish house) left on the lake overnight.

P.L 91-661 (the Voyageur Act), which established the VNP, expressly addressed fishing within the boundaries the Park. ORVs and fish houses have been used on the ice within the park boundary since well before the park was formed. The Voyageur Act expressly provides that "the Secretary shall permit recreational fishing on lands and waters under his jurisdiction within the boundaries of the park in accordance with the applicable laws of the United States and of the State of Minnesota Except in emergencies, any regulations of the Secretary pursuant to this section shall be put into effect only after consultation with the appropriate agency of the State of Minnesota." This requirement is consistent with and embodies the intent of the Root-Bryce Treaty, which requires both federal legislative and executive action "before the regulation as to fishing in international waters is withdrawn from the state within whose territory the waters may be." *State v. Dove*, 183 Minn. 272, 274, 2236 N.W. 322, 323 (Minn. 1931).

The regulation of fishing (both ice fishing and open waters fishing) includes not only harvest limits but the method, and location of harvest. For generations, Minnesotans have used fish houses for recreational fishing, many of which they leave in place during the entire winter harvest season. The placement of fish houses falls within Minn. Stat. Ch. 97C, which regulates the harvest and method of fish harvest and is a recreational fishing regulation. Minnesota Statute § 97C.355, in particular, regulates the placement of such fish houses and authorizes persons to leave fish houses unattended until March. The Frozen Lake Plan contradicts the State's fish house fishing regulation. Pursuant to the Enabling Act, the NPS is required to consult with the DNR about restrictions of this type. Furthermore, DNR does not consider the placement of fish houses by guides or the rental of fish houses to individual recreational anglers to be commercial fishing. Under Minnesota law, commercial fishing, is defined as the "taking [of] fish, except minnows, for sale." Minn. Stat. § 97A.015. Minnesota requires that each angler renting a fish house or going out with a guide hold their own recreational fishing license. Therefore, the treatment of the businesses as commercial fishing (requiring a commercial use permit) is contrary to state law and VNP must consult with the state before it imposes additional burdens on rental or guiding businesses during the winter harvest season.

Finally, DNR would again direct you to its comments above related to private riparian rights and the rights of Minnesotans. These rights entitle the public and riparian owners to place fish houses on the State's frozen public waters, and precluding these persons from placing fish houses overnight on the lake or restricting placement across major portions of a frozen lake surface would violate their rights to access the entire water body to, among other uses, fish. State v. Kuluvar, 266 Minn. 408, 418, 123 N.W.2d 699, 706 (Minn. 1963) (finding the public's right to access the state's public waters includes the right to fish).

Conclusion

After review of the Frozen Lake Plan and attending the public comment sessions, the DNR has significant concerns, as detailed above. The proposed Frozen Lake Plan would have serious adverse impacts on the State's property interest in its public waters and our obligations associated with the public waters the State owns within the boundaries of VNP. It would also have adverse impacts on property owners, Minnesotans, businesses, surrounding communities, and visitors to the area. We therefore request that the provisions related to public access and ice shelters be withdrawn.

Sincerely,

Shelly Patten
NE Region Director - MN Department of Natural Resources
CC: Bob DeGross - VNP Superintendent
Equal Opportunity Employer

Correspondence ID:	125
Project:	84972
Document:	127517
Outside Organization:	Unaffiliated Individual
Received:	Jun,02 2023 17:19:18
Correspondence Type:	Web Form
Correspondence:	Common Sense & Precedence

Which side of history do you want to be on, Superintendent DeGross?

Conformity for the sake of conformance, for the sake of checking off the last box? Or, recalibrating and thinking outside the box. You truly have a unique opportunity to set yourself apart by utilizing Federal regulation (36 CFR S7.33) as a building bridge for a more prosperous, common sense, balanced future for VNP, resorts, businesses, tourists, local communities and cabin owners.

It took VNP nearly 25 years to realize its short-sightedness in lumping Ellsworth Rock Gardens in with the other islands. Had it not been for the persistence and vision of Kab locals and the open mindedness of VNP personnel collaborating in the early 1990's, the crown jewel of VNP as the #1 site visited in the entire Park would, today, be in ruins.

Thank goodness common sense prevailed, yes?

Compare that to the ruins of the livelihoods of some Kab resorts and businesses by severely restricting access points to the lake in winter months. Winter season for some provides a slim margin of viability. They're all hanging by a thread as it is.

As a 3rd generation owner of a humble, charming 1947 cabin, I've witnessed the resorts, businesses and locals struggle for 24 years. I've spent summers, falls and worked resorts. I've also heard countless, consistent accounts about the shameful tactics our federal government too often employed during the years leading up to VPN, including a large number of generational four-season resorts being reduced over time to single-season resorts.

"Walking on water" during the winter season and looking back at my neighbors' shoreline cabins nestled among the pines and rock remains unforgettable. How will restricting winter access points affect shoreline cabin owners? Here, too, conformance is punitive - and unnecessary.

Superintendent DeGross, I hope the precedence of Ellsworth Rock Gardens will light a fire and be your guiding light that change doesn't always have to be the exact same box.

Best regards.



Correspondence ID: 126
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: private individual, homeowner Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,03 2023 04:47:07
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am strongly opposed to this plan as written. From the information available, this is a draconian solution in search of a problem. It would appear the NPS has decided to develop this plan simply because it did not have a frozen surface use plan. Simply put, no justification whatsoever has been presented that would justify restricting the use of these frozen lakes in the manner proposed by this plan. If the fishery was being depleted due to over harvesting, or there were many incidents of ATVs falling through the ice, getting stuck, getting lost, or otherwise getting into trouble which required search and rescue assistance, then such a draconian plan might begin to make some sense. In the absence of such indications for stringent restrictions, this plan makes no sense whatsoever. Please cancel this plan. Throw it out. Start over if you must, but create something that fits with current practice, or explain up front why current practice must be changed.

Correspondence ID: 127
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,03 2023 08:18:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: On April 18, 1975, my family had one of the 97 leased sites on Lake Kabetogama. Since the lease was then abolished, my grandmother, [REDACTED], and my mother, [REDACTED] bought the land and the cabin that my grandfather, [REDACTED] found, cleared, and leased

so many years before to go duck hunting. I have owned the cabin for years now, since my mother passed away, and I use it as much as possible. This is the 95th year my family has been on this land.

Like my mother and my aunts, I grew up with my cousins spending every summer and every chance we had to be on the lake. Throughout the years, we have had a family wedding and many, many visitors who stayed and enjoyed the lake. I still host a winter camp every year, for friends and family, and we all ice fish, snowmobile, and enjoy the lake.

We also support local business in the winter to help them make it through to the summer months when the area is busy again. Without fishing and snowmobiling, etc. I believe these businesses would suffer and taxes would go up for land owners.

The fees that are proposed, such as parking, I do not agree with. Everyone, regardless of income should be able to come and enjoy the park, without having to pay. Also, in the last 50 years, the use of ATV's, UTV's, OHV's, cars, pickups, fish houses, etc. have not been an issue and I do not believe any regulations are needed to govern this type of use on the lake. I also believe, as a long -time resident of the park, that at no time should water be considered land and fees should never be imposed on any lake, including those in the park.

Please consider these comments, as they are coming from someone who has spent her entire life on Lake Kabetogama, and would like for this to continue for others to have the same opportunity.

Sincerely,

██████████

Correspondence ID: 128
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,03 2023 09:42:21
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: The whole argument of a frozen surface being land is just intended to enable governing overreach. We can't allow a redefinition of water, ice, and land just to meet certain needs, wants and desires.

From Websters:

Lake (noun) - : a considerable inland body of standing water.

Ice (noun) - frozen water

Land (noun) - ground or soil of a specified situation, nature, or quality

Frozen water is still water and water is NOT CONSIDERED LAND. It is still a LAKE. Lake Kabetogama, Namakan Lake, etc. By definition a LAKE is always a lake, whether it is frozen or not. It is never LAND. In the winter it is a frozen lake.

Land is completely different. Land has ownership. Land does not melt and turn into water.

We all play by the same rules of nature. Nobody gets to redefine the word lake, frozen lake, land, ice just because they want to enforce rules in a new way. There is no science that supports land turning into water. Any need to redefine words like this means you are overstepping authority. Nothing else after that even matters.

Correspondence ID: 129
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,03 2023 09:54:08
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: What I have learned from the hearings and other materials presented, the State of Minnesota ceded the land to the National Park Service and not the water, including Lake Kabetogama and Rainey Lake and THE PARK SERVICE HAS NO JURISDICTION OVER THE WATER.

If this is not acceptable to the Park Service, THEY SHOULD GIVE THE LAND BACK.

The Park Service continues to request information on where they should build ice roads. Their history of building ice roads is extremely poor, understanding that mother nature plays a major role where it can be very challenging or impossible to accomplish.

The Park Service should build ice roads wherever it wants to in order to meet its mission and access the land it owns. BUILDING ICE ROADS IS ALLOWED BY THE STATE OF MINNESOTA, AS IT IS FOR THE PUBLIC AND ANYONE ELSE ON WATER OWNED BY THE STATE OF MINNESOTA.

FROZEN WATER IS NOT LAND, even if it was the Park Service would have any jurisdiction when the water is not frozen.

The park service should remove all of its regulations and signs related to the water on Rainey Lake and Lake Kabetogama, including the restriction on personal watercraft.

Correspondence ID: 130
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,03 2023 20:28:18
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am disappointed by the firestorm you have started. You are trying to define a regulation for a problem that does not exist. The nature of the lakes does not lend itself to ice castles or huge crowds. What you are doing is trying to end decades of traditions and time spent with family and friends on Namakan and Lake Kabetogama. I have been coming to the lake for over 30 years in early December ice fishing when there is not enough snow for snowmobiles. You will end that tradition.

Honestly, I have no idea how you even have the authority to even put this in place. Voyageur National Park is the land that surrounds the lakes. You do not own the lakes or the land under the lakes. In fact, you should not even have the authority to patrol the waters of Kabetogama, Namakan or Sand Point. Minnesota owns these waters and the DNR alone should be responsible for patrolling the lakes.

It seems like since the new law enforcement staff that was brought in, relationships between the park and DNR have gone south. Your staff thinks the park belongs to them and them only. My encounters with them have not been good. Maybe he should look in the mirror after being moved from park to park like 8 times in the last decade. Maybe it is time for him to move on

again.

In closing. You can't compare Voyageurs to other parks. There are no other parks you have to use the lake to even get to the park. When the park was established there were no atvs or utvs. If so, they would have been included. You are limiting access when you should expand it. Atvs and Utvs should be able to use the portages to explore namakan.

Hopefully you reconsider your initial recommendation. It is not good for the people and business in the lake ecosystem.

Correspondence ID: 131
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,03 2023 20:57:23
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: We would like to see the VNP team embrace the fact that this park is completely unique from other national parks.
The ice should not be considered a road(s) in the sense of applying national park road requirements to it.
Snowmobiles should be allowed to travel anywhere at their own risk when outside of plowed trails.
The park should not charge for access to the plowed ice roads and trails. You have to consider the fact that most years the roads don't even get plowed until later in the winter. At a minimum, those that own property on the lakes should be exempt from the fees.

Correspondence ID: 132
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,03 2023 23:31:03
Correspondence Type: Web Form
Correspondence: I am an occasional visitor to Voyageurs National Park (my family owns property on Lake Kabetogema) and I am opposed to the proposal to restrict motorized travel on ice within the park. It does not seem like there are any crucial/specific issues or safety concerns that would necessitate such a restriction, and at the same time the restriction would adversely affect many residents and visitors.

Correspondence ID: 133
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Littlefork City Council Town or City Government(Official Rep.)
Received: Jun,05 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: Dear Mr. DeGross and Park Decision Makers:
The Littlefork City Council opposes the proposed changes to frozen lake access and use in Voyageurs National Park.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources doesn't see an issue with ATVs, cars and

trucks dispersing on the ice for outdoor recreation. We are in agreement that viewpoint and fail to see why the size of a vehicle and whether an ice shanty is homemade or a manufactured camper makes any difference as to being allowed on the ice.

National parks are meant to be enjoyed and restricting use in the winter to only snowmobiles seems counterintuitive given the fact that no adverse effects on the park have been recorded to date because of ice travel and limiting use will deter people from enjoying the park.

We believe the proposed restrictions would be detrimental to local use and to local businesses that depend on tourism. The restrictions would discourage people from coming to the park in the winter.

Please reconsider restrictions of frozen waters within the Voyageurs National Park.

Correspondence ID: 134
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Rocky Ledge Business
Received: Jun,06 2023
Correspondence Type: E-mail
Correspondence: The Frozen Laked Proposal is ludicrous! It will definitely put The Rocky Ledge out of business. The law needs to be changed; it is old and outdated. This WATER BASED park should be JUST THAT!! We should not have the same rules as non-water based parks. Voyageur should be their own park, rules can be changed!! Bob continually stated "several issues" but refused to tell us what they were. Why are you doing this now?? If you do this all small businesses will be pushed out and no one will visit this park. You may as well just ask all of us to close. Snowmobiles went through a process to be allowed so let's fill out the forms for ATVs to do the same. The only option is to change the rules or Voyageurs National Park will no longer exist.

Correspondence ID: 135
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,06 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: There have been no issues with the current plan that is in place. We, as a society, are looking for more opportunities for outdoor recreation not less. It is imperative to have people use the park for their enjoyment and not limit access. The local communities have been great stewards of the water and deserve to have year round use of the park and its waters. We want people outdoors and teaching the next generation how to responsibly use the park. There is absolutely no need for a change in the current plan. Creating more access would be a very positive move for the future.

Correspondence ID: 136
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota Recreational Groups(Official Rep.)
Received: Jun,06 2023
Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: The All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Minnesota (ATV MN), a nonprofit State Association representing 70 ATV clubs and over 12,000 members, has reviewed the Voyageurs National Park's proposed Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan, and does not support limiting the use of All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) on the eastern two-thirds of Rainy Lake and all of Namakan, Sand Point and Mukooda Lakes.

During winters of low snow, ATVs are the best means to get around on the frozen lakes for fishing. Even during years of normal snowfall, ATVs, especially those with tracks, are a safe and environmentally friendly means to access the lakes within Voyageurs National Park, similar to snowmobiles.

Furthermore, ATV Minnesota does not support restricting ATV travel to within 300 feet each side of plowed ice roads. This is unnecessarily restrictive. During the winters of 2021-22 and 2202-23, the Park Service had less than two miles of plowed ice roads because of heavy snow. Under the proposed plan, this essentially closes the Park to winter ATV use.

Policies for winter ATV use in the Voyageurs National Park should be similar to those of snowmobile travel on the frozen lakes. Actual travel will naturally be limited by snow depth.

Correspondence ID:

Project: 84972

Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Crane Lake Visitor and Tourism Bureau Civic Groups(Official Rep.)

Received: Jun,06 2023

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: Dear Superintendent DeGross:

The Crane Lake Visitor and Tourism Bureau or "CLVTB" is based in Crane Lake, MN and has a primary focus of promoting the Crane Lake area. Our organization is following the proposed "Voyageurs National Park - Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan" and would like to submit a comment regarding the proposed changes that may or may not take place within Voyageurs National Park at some point in the future.

The CLVTB was surprised to learn that Voyageurs National Park is considering further limiting access to a National Park that is still relatively unknown, under visited and already has limited access. Although the plan may seem straightforward as proposed by the NPS, the proposed plan deviates from how the park has historically been used by those in and around the Crane Lake area going back to VOYA's inception in 1975.

The CLVTB is extremely concerned that this proposed access plan is yet another step towards limiting the access to one of the gems of Minnesota - Voyageur's National Park. Limited access is something that the Crane Lake area is familiar with. As you may or may not know - the access to much of the land and water around our community was sewed up into wilderness areas on both sides of the International Border when the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Quetico Provincial Park were formed. It can also be noted that Voyageurs National Park is claiming water rights in which legally were never ceded to the federal government by the State of Minnesota.

In closing, the CLVTB is not in favor of any change in access to Voyageurs National Park during the winter months. The timing of this issue, length of comment period and lack of

communication with the gateway communities is unacceptable and terrifying. In fact, Crane Lake was never contacted or even consulted with directly about this access plan. Our community and its businesses have already suffered dearly with the advent of voluntary closures and restrictions such as the Mukooda Lake Truck Portage, the parks limited desire to address ATV access into the park and a host of other issues that the CLV TB or its members are communicating with you on regularly.

Correspondence ID: 138
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual
Received: Jun,06 2023
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: My husband and I have lived in Kabetogama over 20 years and have purchased our property over 30 years ago. My lake front property is 2 parcels in St. Louis County. We highly oppose the proposed frozen lake surface access and use plan.

1) Voyageur's National Park doesn't have the authority and their proposal is outside the jurisdiction & authority. Mr. DeGross is wrong that frozen waters are land. MN statute 84B.061 states these navigable waters are owned by the state. The DNR disagrees with this plan as well.

2) This is definitely going to have a negative impact on businesses. We are finally flourishing and this plan will deter people from spending time here due to all the restrictions & additional costs.

The park is making itself the enemy to those that make their home on these lakes and also to those that have visited and used the lakes for many years. I would think that would not be something the park would want. We highly OPPOSE this plan.

Correspondence ID: 139
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Voyageur Trail Society, Inc Non-Governmental(Official Rep.)
Received: Jun,06 2023
Correspondence Type: Letter
Correspondence: Dear Superintendent DeGross:

The Voyageur Trail Society, Inc. or "VTSI" is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in Crane Lake, MN that is primarily involved in snowmobiling related activities in and around Voyageurs National Park. Our organization is following the proposed "Voyageurs National Park - Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan" and would like to submit a comment regarding the proposed changes that may or may not take place within Voyageurs National Park at some point in the future.

Although it appears that snowmobiling will be unaffected in this plan, the VTSI was surprised to learn that Voyageurs National Park is considering further limiting winter access to a National Park that is still relatively unknown, under visited and already has extremely limited access. Although the plan may seem straightforward as proposed by the NPS, the proposed plan deviates significantly from how the park has been used historically by those in the gateway

communities and surrounding areas during the winter months.

The VTSI is extremely concerned that this proposed access plan is yet another step towards limiting the access to one of the gems of Minnesota - Voyageur's National Park. Our organization is also concerned that a proposed plan such as this seems to be rushed and pushed upon-gateway communities who do not support these proposed access restrictions.

In closing, the VTSI is not in favor of any change in access to Voyageurs National Park during the winter months and is completely opposed to the "Frozen Lake Surface Access and Use Plan" in its entirety. Although our primary focus as an organization is snowmobiling, we feel that this access plan is a step in the wrong direction and does not support our mission statement appropriately.

Correspondence ID:

Project: 84972

Document: 127517

Outside Organization: Unaffiliated Individual

Received: Jun,12 2023

Correspondence Type: Letter

Correspondence: To Whom it may concern:

I am a lifetime resident of Koochiching County except for a few years when I was in college, law school and training with a Minneapolis firm, I've lived in or near International Falls, Minnesota.

As a youth, we were able to enjoy Rainy Lake and in particular, the area that is now encompassed by Voyageurs National Park.

In high school I, along with two of my classmates, acquired building lots on [REDACTED]. We learned the necessary lake skills which included navigating through occasional rough water.

When the National Park was formed, our cabin lease lots were tolerated for a few years. In approximately 1975 I was appointed by a Senior Judge of the Federal District Court to serve as a parttime Federal Magistrate handling primarily jurisdictional issues between national and state regulations. The outcome was joint jurisdiction, subject to conflict, which would allow national jurisdiction to trump state jurisdiction. This was the beginning of the expansion of national jurisdiction, supervision and control.

During pre-park years there was a great deal of activity in Rainy Lake. But as the park developed, more restrictions were imposed. Modernization of snowmobiles allowed individuals to really get the feel of the beauty and the wilderness provided by Rainy Lake. From what I have seen in the last decade is a beautiful area that has become a virtual wasteland with occasional "sightseers" subject to park restrictions. The early politicians expected the National Park would increase commerce, activity and general use of this natural resource. The opposite has occurred.

Government intervention has taken its normal course of progression, surviving on its disability to control and limit land use primarily for the benefit of the government.

Correspondence ID: 141
Project: 84972
Document: 127517
Outside Organization: Federal Government(Official Rep.)
Received: Jun,12 2023
Correspondence Type: Other
Correspondence: Stauber: Park plan aims to limit access

The 8th District congressman who represents northern Minnesota said he stands with his constituents who are angry about Voyageurs National Park's proposed frozen lake surface access and use plan

The comment period on the plan closed last week. It drew hundreds of people to participate in three meetings in April about the plan. The proposed plan to regulate ATVs and other non-snowmobile vehicles in Voyageurs National Park is "a direct attack on our way of life and harms our ability to recreate responsibly on our public lands and waters at Voyageurs," said 8th District Congressman Pete Stauber.

Stauber said the plan places an undue burden on people with disabilities who will now have even less access to the park. "I have heard from many constituents who are angry about the plan as written, and I stand with them," he said in a statement. "Our northern Minnesota economy is largely based on outdoor tourism, and the recreational multiple use of our public lands and waters at the park has been an economic driver for our communities for decades. I will continue to do all that I can to ensure it remains this way."

Stauber said the park is a jewel in the national park system that showcases the iconic northern Minnesota landscapes, drawing thousands of people to experience the unique outdoor recreation opportunities that exist in every season.

"Locals and tourists alike explore the park by snowmobiles and houseboats; they are even able to traverse ice roads in the winter months to get to their favorite fishing spot," Stauber said in a statement. "However, the restrictive new Frozen Surface Use Plan is currently written to limit access."
