

NORTHERN WAKE

FALL / WINTER 2023 | Voyageurs
Conservancy **V**

Voyageurs Conservancy is the
official charitable partner of
Voyageurs National Park

Learn more: voyageurs.org

FIELD FELLOWS IN THE THICK OF IT | CAMP MARTSON | STEAM WORKSHOP | THE DARK SKIES EXPERIENCE

WILD FOREVER

RAISING UNPRECEDENTED FUNDS AND PREPARING FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS

Hello friends of Voyageurs,

I hope your summer outdoor adventures brought you joy! We're excited to share in this newsletter a few highlights of what we accomplished together in Voyageurs National Park this summer, as well as what lies ahead.

Voyageurs Conservancy "Wild Forever" reaches a \$1.6 million milestone!

Working together over the past 18 months, Voyageurs Conservancy quietly launched a special \$2 million campaign to expand conservation work to preserve Voyageurs National Park's rare ecosystem, bolster education programs, and connect visitors to the park in new and innovative ways. The pillars of this work include land acquisition, wetland restoration, building the foundation for our Voyageurs Classroom education initiative and funding visitor improvements such as exhibits for the new Crane Lake Visitor Center. The campaign is focused on four key areas:

WILD VOYAGEURS	NEXT GENERATION	VOYAGEURS EXPERIENCES	CONSERVANCY RESILIENCE
Address issues of water quality, fisheries, development, biodiversity & natural darkness	Increase opportunities for children, young adults and families to connect to the park through Voyageurs Classroom	Improve visitor experiences and access to culturally relevant programming	Expand resources necessary to grow sustainably and partner with new communities

Thanks to supporters like you and important grant partners, we have already raised \$1,661,000 toward our goals and hope to complete the campaign by spring 2024. While we celebrate this moment, we invite you to join us - every gift counts toward the goal. You can learn more and contribute a special campaign gift of any amount at voyageurs.org/wildforever.

In addition, the Legislative Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources has announced its support for the expansion of our Voyageurs Classroom, recommending \$994,000 in funding from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) over three years. More details will be provided soon.

As we get ready to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Voyageurs National Park in 2025, the Wild Forever campaign will help us further enhance our efforts in connecting people and resources to our state's prized national park. Thank you for being a part of this continued voyage to keep our park wild forever!



Christina Hausman Rhode
Executive Director

More Than Just Parks

GET INVOLVED:

PINTS FOR THE PARK - MINNEAPOLIS

OCTOBER 11, 6:00 - 8:00 PM

HALLOWEEN HOWL & FILM SCREENING
FORGOTTEN STAR BREWING, FRIDLEY, MN

Grab a pint and join us for a special watch party of the recently-released Voyageurs National Park episode of "America's National Park". Members of the Voyageurs Wolf Project will share remarks before the showing and Conservancy staff will be on hand with educational activities that highlight the park's spook-tacular nocturnal species and how to enjoy night skies this fall.

VOYAGEURS MEMBER BREAKFAST

OCTOBER 27, 8:00 - 9:30 AM

THE TRAILHEAD, MINNEAPOLIS, MN & VIRTUAL

A relaxed gathering featuring coffee and conversation with friends of Voyageurs National Park. Wildlife biologist Dr. Steve Windels will join us to share what's so special about Minnesota's moose and takeaways from a 15-year moose monitoring program at Voyageurs National Park. RSVP Required.

VOYAGEURS SPRING THAW

APRIL 25, 2024

MINNEAPOLIS + ONLINE

Mark your calendars and save the date for the fourth-annual Voyageurs Spring Thaw, a signature event raising funds to protect and share the natural wonder of Voyageurs National Park. More details to come at voyageurs.org/springthaw

CHECK VOYAGEURS.ORG/EVENTS FOR DETAILS AND A FULL LIST OF UPCOMING EVENTS, INCLUDING EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK.

REMEMBERING LEE BARTHEL

Lee Barthel (1923-2023) was a Voyageurs Conservancy director emeritus who worked alongside Martin Kellogg and others as a critical volunteer to establish our organization and the park. This summer Lee celebrated her 100th birthday with a lovely party and a special \$10,000 gift to the Voyageurs Conservancy. "From the very beginning, Lee was enthusiastically committed to Voyageurs National Park and VNPA. Many challenges arose but her calm and thoughtful presence provided a steady rudder," shared Esther Kellogg. We are remembering Lee's humor, tenacity, talents, and spirit with gratitude. voyageurs.org/news/lee





Photos by Margot Dupont

IN THE THICK OF IT

Whether they are wading through wetlands, bushwacking their way to a trail camera in the backcountry, or surrounded by historic artifacts that need to be cataloged, our Voyageurs Field Fellows get a behind-the-scenes view of Voyageurs National Park's research and preservation efforts.

Investing in the next generation of conservation leaders, the Voyageurs Field Fellows program offers paid internships for students and recent graduates to develop hands-on professional experience in Minnesota's national park. Voyageurs Conservancy hosted its largest cohort yet, supporting six fellows who made lasting contributions to research and monitoring in Voyageurs National Park this summer.

Funding for this program is generously supported by the Fredrikson & Byron Foundation, The Elmer L. & Eleanor J. Andersen Foundation, and the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). The Trust Fund is a permanent fund constitutionally established by the citizens of Minnesota to assist in the protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.

MEET IAN SMITH AND FAITH JUNG, WOLF ECOLOGY FELLOWS

Ian Smith and Faith Jung served as Wolf Ecology Field Fellows under the Voyageurs Wolf Project - a University of Minnesota-led research project in the Greater Voyageurs Ecosystem that studies the summer predation and reproductive behavior of wolves.

Ian graduated from Macalester College in Saint Paul with a major in Biology and a minor in English and learned about the Voyageurs Wolf Project through his mentors in college, Dr. Stotra Chakrabarti and Dr. Joseph Bump. "[Dr. Chakrabarti] became super influential in my life, realizing I wanted to work with wildlife. The Wolf Project was one of the first wildlife projects I learned about. I was really excited to work out in the field; I grew up in cities a lot of the time and didn't get a lot of exposure to the outdoors like this, but I've learned so much in my time here."

Ian has multiple responsibilities including checking wolf cameras. He replaces the batteries, the SD card, and removes any grass or brush that's grown up around the camera's line of vision. Since the cameras are motion sensed, long grass blowing in the wind can cause the video to begin and waste precious battery and storage space. Ian plans on continuing his career in wildlife studies, hoping to travel far and wide to discover as much as he can.

Faith Jung is from the Chicago area and graduated from Lake Forest College with a double major in Environmental Studies and Philosophy. "I love being here, this [work] is what I've always wanted to do, based on my inspirations of Steve Irwin and Jane Goodall. From this project I've learned so much, how diverse the ecosystems are and how diligent wolves are... how they use their resources, hunt, and positively impact the population," says Faith.

Through this work, Faith hopes to help the public understand wolves in their natural environments. On any given day, Faith is bushwacking through Voyageurs National Park tracking wolf cluster points on a GPS. These sites may reveal killed prey, beaver hunting attempts, bed or rendezvous sites, and even wolf pups. Reaching these points requires long hikes through brush, in bogs, and on rocky cliff sides in the park. Faith and Ian's work is critical to gain a better understanding of summer wolf ecology in the Greater Voyageurs Ecosystem.



ELLEN WINDELS, CULTURE AND COLLECTIONS, FIELD FELLOW

Ellen started as a park volunteer when she was just 13 years old. She knows the park's history better than most and has a passion for archeology and discovering anything and everything. One of her favorite objects to study are prehistoric stone tools and pottery pieces. "The stone tools have flakes and come off in ridges. It is really interesting to see where it was hit, the process of making those tools," says Ellen.

Ellen has contributed greatly to the park's archives throughout the years. One of her greatest accomplishments is creating an organized card catalogue for the entire library. Ellen begins the tedious process of taking inventory of the museum the park's archives has to report annually, making sure every book, rock, bead, animal pelt, and more is accounted for. This is one big job considering the museum storage alone has upwards of 180,000 objects! Her diligent work over the years has preserved the rich cultural heritage of Minnesota's national park. This August, Ellen continued this passion and began her first semester at Yale University studying Anthropology.



MEET ALL OF OUR SUMMER FIELD FELLOWS AT WWW.VOYAGEURS.ORG/FIELDFELLOWS AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE IMPACTFUL WORK OF JOSIE, MARGOT, GEN, IAN, FAITH, AND ELLEN.

CAMP MARSTON

By Tim Shannon, National Park Service

Picture this: you're a promising civil engineer student at Iowa State College in the 1920s or 30s. You are excited to spend six weeks of your summer at a surveying camp in Northern Minnesota. You've spent two days traveling over 500 miles by train from Ames, Iowa, stopping in St Paul, Duluth, and Virginia before continuing deep into the Northwoods by boat. Across the vastness of Rainy Lake, you pass by miles of scenic wilderness before arriving at an isolated, rocky point. Here you find a few semi-permanent buildings and the surrounding landscape covered by dense forest. You've just arrived at Camp Marston. But what lay ahead?

Work lies ahead, and lots of it. Upon arrival, a small village would emerge as the cook shack was set up, the hospital tent and small sleeping tents were erected, firewood was prepared, and supplies were organized. Once set up, the students constructed a cabin. A new cabin was built each year, and students learned practical skills such as carpentry, masonry, painting, and wood cutting, waste disposal, pumping fresh water, and firefighting.

After constructing the cabin, the students' course and field work began including route surveying (for mapping potential railroad lines and highways), triangulation, plane table mapping, land surveying, and hydrographic surveying (the irregular shoreline and dipping lake bottom was ideal for contour mapping). The students were able to experiment with new instruments and even pioneered new surveying techniques.

Workdays were long, often lasting twelve hours or more, six days a week. Students worked through harsh conditions including cold rain, blazing sun, mosquitos, black flies, forest fires, thunderstorms, and wildlife encounters. A former student recalled an incident where a classmate ended up with multiple porcupine quills in his hand after trying to handle the animal. After grueling days in the wilderness, the students labored into the evening completing complex calculations, drawing maps, and writing reports. But time spent at Camp Marston wasn't 'all work, no play'.

Students depended on recreation in their free time. Horseshoes, swimming, canoeing, boating, exploring, prospecting, photography, reading, letter writing, picking blueberries, and relaxation were all undertaken. Students were encouraged to fish if they could afford the \$3 Minnesota fishing license. Wednesday and Sunday evenings were set aside for fellowship and 'musical expression' around a campfire. Boat trips were scheduled to local landmarks like Kettle Falls and Manitou Rocks in

AND "THE SPIRIT OF RAINY LAKE"

Canada. The students even formed a baseball team and would play against other teams in local events.

The summer surveying camp was a required course for all sophomore engineering students at Iowa State College. The skills learned at Camp Marston served as practical field training and application. A former student remarked that "the field work was meant to resemble an actual surveying job, and camp was operated like an actual surveying camp." But you may ask yourself: why was Rainy Lake the chosen location?

That is due in large part to John S. "Jack" Dodds, a civil engineering professor at Iowa State. Initially, many options had been proposed for an ISC surveying camp location. Professor Dodds did not believe these suggested areas were remote enough, and the lack of isolation would potentially cause distractions for his students. Dodds scouted northern Minnesota and fell in love with the Rainy Lake area. The rugged environment found in this region, which included the thick forest and rocky terrain along Rainy Lake, would offer a technical challenge for the students and mirror the rough topography they would experience in their profession. Dodds wrote in the 1923 Summer Surveying Camp report: "the almost complete isolation of the camp was one of its greatest advantages... Each man in camp learned how to maintain an engineering organization on the frontier, keeping up the morale, devising entertainments, learning to rely upon limited resources and appreciating the value of work."

Dodds ran the surveying program at Camp Marston from 1923 to 1939, with an average of 35 students attending each summer. Against Dodd's wishes, the summer surveying camp was moved away from Rainy Lake in 1939 to an abandoned CCC camp in Wirt, Minnesota. The reason for the move came from the college's Dean of Engineering, who had visited Camp Marston in 1938. He concluded it "was too remote, too archaic, and lacking the amenities a camp ought to have." The qualities that originally drew Professor Dodds to the area were ultimately its undoing. However, Camp Marston's legacy still lives on within Voyageurs National Park.

Today, Camp Marston is a designated Visitor Destination Site within Voyageurs National Park. The site is accessible by boat and is located in Browns Bay, roughly 24 miles from the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. The site provides an opportunity for visitors to explore and learn about the historical significance of the ISC.



CAMP MARSTON, 1938



CAMP MARSTON DINING HALL, 1927



TOPOGRAPHY PARTY, 1924



TOPOGRAPHICAL WORK, 1924



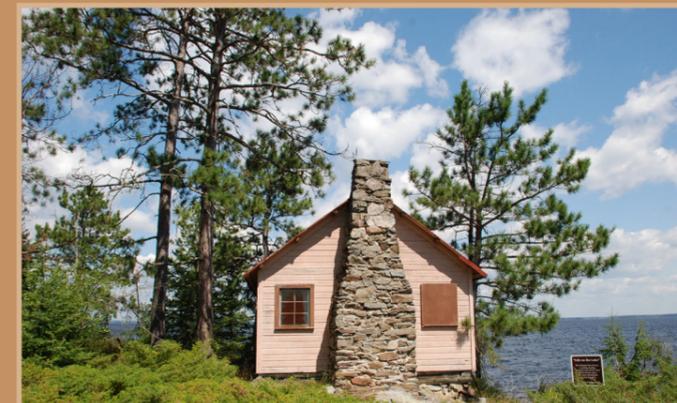
JOHN S. "JACK" DODDS



CAMP MARSTON, 1937



STUDENTS AT CAMP MARSTON, 1927



POLARIS CABIN, 2010



CONSERVANCY HOSTS STEAM IN THE PARK

Voyagers Conservancy, Expeditions in Education, National Park Service host outdoor workshop week with teachers from across the U.S.

Steve Jones

Expeditions in Education is a North Carolina-based nonprofit that connects teachers and students with national parks across the country. In February, Voyageurs Conservancy partnered with Expeditions in Education to host a livestream event with park staff from the ice roads of Rainy Lake. 8,000 students tuned in live, and the program has since been shown to close to 29,000 students! This summer we welcomed teachers from eight states to Voyageurs National Park as part of the STEAM in the Park experience and had an incredibly immersive week learning, exploring, and creating new ways to connect students to Voyageurs National Park. These teachers will be writing curriculum that will build our library of lessons for our Voyageurs Classroom Initiative, and they are now ambassadors for the wonder and learning to be found at Voyageurs National Park.

NOTES FROM DACIA PENLEY JONES, EXPEDITIONS IN EDUCATION:

We have reached the end of STEAM in the PARK, as our final camp took place at Voyageurs National Park while the summer sun begins to fade. What an incredible adventure it has been, filled with awe-inspiring moments and unforgettable experiences that have left a lasting imprint on our hearts and minds.

Our days were graced by the haunting calls of loons echoing across the tranquil waters, their melodies becoming a comforting soundtrack to our explorations. Majestic eagles soared high above, reminding us of the power and grace of the natural world.

Among the vibrant wildflowers that painted the landscape, the aster stood out with its burst of color, a testament to the delicate beauty that thrives in even the harshest environments. As we wandered through rock gardens, we couldn't help but marvel at the ancient stories etched into the oldest rocks in the world, a reminder of the profound history that this land carries within its very foundation.

Our journeys on boats were more than mere transport—they were voyages of discovery, each ripple on the water reflecting the excitement and curiosity in our hearts. With journals in hand, we penned our thoughts, capturing the essence of each moment as we tried to bottle the magic of this place with ink and paper.

Cooking over camp stoves became an art in itself, a symphony of sizzling pans and tantalizing aromas that filled the air. And what better way to end a day of exploration than by gathering around the campfire, indulging in the sweet decadence of s'mores and chocolate tacos as the stars blinked into view.

But it wasn't just the earthly wonders that captivated us. As the night sky unveiled its cosmic canvas, we were treated to the sight of meteorites streaking across the dark expanse, a reminder of the vast universe that stretches beyond our gaze. We spent several hours lying on the dock and giggling at each sight.

And who could forget the thrill of casting a line into the crystal waters, feeling the tug of a fish beneath the surface? The camaraderie that came from sharing tales of the catch brought us closer together, forging bonds that will surely endure. (PS- Actually only Karen and Rodney felt that tug but the rest of us tried)

Perhaps the greatest treasure of all, however, was the friendships we made along the way. From shared discoveries to laughter-filled evenings, we found kindred spirits in each other, weaving a tapestry of connections that spanned beyond the boundaries of the park.

As we bid farewell to this chapter of #STEAMinthePARK, we carry with us the memories of loons and eagles, red squirrels and aster, ancient rocks and cosmic wonders. Our journals may be filled, but our hearts are brimming with the echoes of this summer's adventures. Until we meet again, Voyageurs Conservancy and Voyageurs National Park, thank you for reminding us of the beauty and magic that exists in the world around us. We'll be back in 2024.

STARGAZING SPECTACLES

A GUIDE TO WINTER'S NIGHT SKY EVENTS



Jesse Gates, Voyageurs Conservancy Education Specialist

As summer comes to a close, longer nights provide spectacular opportunities to view dazzling stars, planets, meteors, and more! While winter months may bring freezing temperatures, there are advantages to experiencing dark skies this time of year. Even better, pesky bugs, including mosquitoes, are gone!

Whether you are already a night sky enthusiast or new to stargazing, our team at Voyageurs Conservancy hopes to strengthen your connection to the region's magnificent dark skies. Step outside and look up to experience awe-inspiring astronomical events this winter:

EXPERIENCE THE GEMINIDS METEOR SHOWER FROM DECEMBER 7 - 17, 2023

This meteor shower has approximately 120 meteors per hour, making it one of the most thrilling meteor showers of the year. The Geminids Meteor shower will take place December 7-17, with the peak occurring on December 13 and 14. The timing of this year's event is near the New Moon, which means the night sky will be darker. You'll likely see even more meteors zooming across the sky. Perfect timing!

CATCH THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

While the appearance of Northern Lights aren't influenced by winter itself, longer nights provide a wider window for seeing this colorful phenomenon. The earlier sunsets also allow you to begin viewing earlier in the night. To increase your chances of seeing this spectacular light show, you will want to find a location with very dark skies like Voyageurs National Park. There are two types of forecasts you want to consider to increase your chances of seeing the Northern Lights:

1) WEATHER FORECAST: Sometimes the Northern Lights may be dancing in the night sky, but if there are clouds obscuring your view - you would never know it! Avoid weeks that are scheduled to have heavy cloud coverage throughout the night.

2) NORTHERN LIGHTS FORECAST: This is like a weather forecast but for the Northern Lights. There are many apps that will provide you with this information such as My Aurora Forecast & Alerts, Aurora Alerts, and Amazing Aurora. These apps can even alert when the Northern Lights are up in the sky!

BOREAL STARGAZING WEEK

Attend our Boreal Stargazing Week February 12 - 18 to enjoy guided astronomical events throughout Minnesota and Voyageurs National Park. Join Voyageurs Conservancy, the National Park Service, and community partners for night sky activities for all ages including guided snowshoe hikes under the stars, educational lessons, telescope observations, and constellation stories. Learn more at voyageurs.org/stargazing. So layer up, grab a hot drink, blanket, and enjoy all Voyageurs' dark skies have to offer this winter!

MAINTAINING DARK SKY PARK CERTIFICATION

Sustaining Voyageurs National Park's International Dark Sky Park designation is a rigorous process involving year-round efforts from the National Park Service, Voyageurs Conservancy, and community partners. A place can lose its certification if light pollution in the area grows past a certain threshold, impacting the park's darkness readings. Learn how we work together to keep this prestigious certification from the International Dark Sky Association:

LIGHT FIXTURE CHANGES:

Existing lighting in the park is retrofitted to reduce light pollution and preserve habitats for the wildlife that call Voyageurs home. To date, over 87% of the park's light fixtures are dark sky friendly - with the goal to reach 100% in the coming years.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

Our Dark Sky Initiative brings Voyageurs' boundless night sky to anyone's fingertips. Voyageurs Conservancy education specialists host constellation tours and telescope sessions in the summer and special winter stargazing events. Our annual Star Party inspires local businesses and community members to preserve and celebrate their region's dark skies. Our goal is to educate visitors and local partners about the importance of preserving darkness.

DATA COLLECTION:

National Park Service staff travel to five locations throughout the park to record the luminance of the night sky using a Sky Quality Meter. The darkest possible sky measures 22.0 on the SQM and Voyageurs' skies average 21.45 - signaling incredibly dark skies!

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION:

Our Dark Sky Programs reach beyond the park's borders. The Conservancy brings the wonder of Voyageurs' night skies to students across the country through its virtual Dark Sky Classroom.

DARK SKY PARTNERSHIPS:

We are proud to collaborate with other protected areas and dark sky advocacy groups including Starry Skies North IDA, Friends of the Boundary Waters, Superior National Forest, and more. Together, we promote education and citizen science opportunities for the public.

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Front Cover Photo taken by Jeff Kantor who was passionate about Rainy Lake and the Voyageurs National Park ecosystem. Remembering Jeff at [voyageurs.org/kantor](https://www.voyageurs.org/kantor)

Your Donation Matched up to \$15,000

GIVEMN.ORG/VOYAGEURS | NOVEMBER 16, 2023

We need your help to ensure Voyageurs remains a wild, welcoming national park for generations. Will you join us?

On Give to the Max Day, your gift to Voyageurs Conservancy can be doubled with an exciting matching gift! Thank you for supporting critical conservation, recreation, and education programs during Minnesota's annual give-together.

Mark Oram

TO THE
give **MAX** 
Nov. 16, 2023