

Voyageurs National Park (VOYA)

Establishment: Authorized 1971.

Designations: National Park. Designated a Class I airshed. Wilderness recommendation for 90% of the park is awaiting congressional action.

Purpose and significance statements important to ecological monitoring:

- Preserve the scenery, geologic conditions, and interconnected waterways in northern Minnesota for the inspiration and enjoyment of people now and in the future.
- Preserve, in an unimpaired condition, the ecological processes, biological and cultural diversity, and history of the northwoods lake country border shared with Canada.
- Provide opportunities for people to experience, understand, and treasure the lake country landscape — its clean air and water, forests, islands, wetlands, and wildlife — in a manner that is compatible with the preservation of park values and resources.
- Voyageurs is integral to the protection of the boundary waters ecosystem. Along with Quetico Provincial Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Voyageurs was and remains at the heart of a major conservation effort to protect the boreal forest landscape, its interconnected waterways, and associated wildlife.

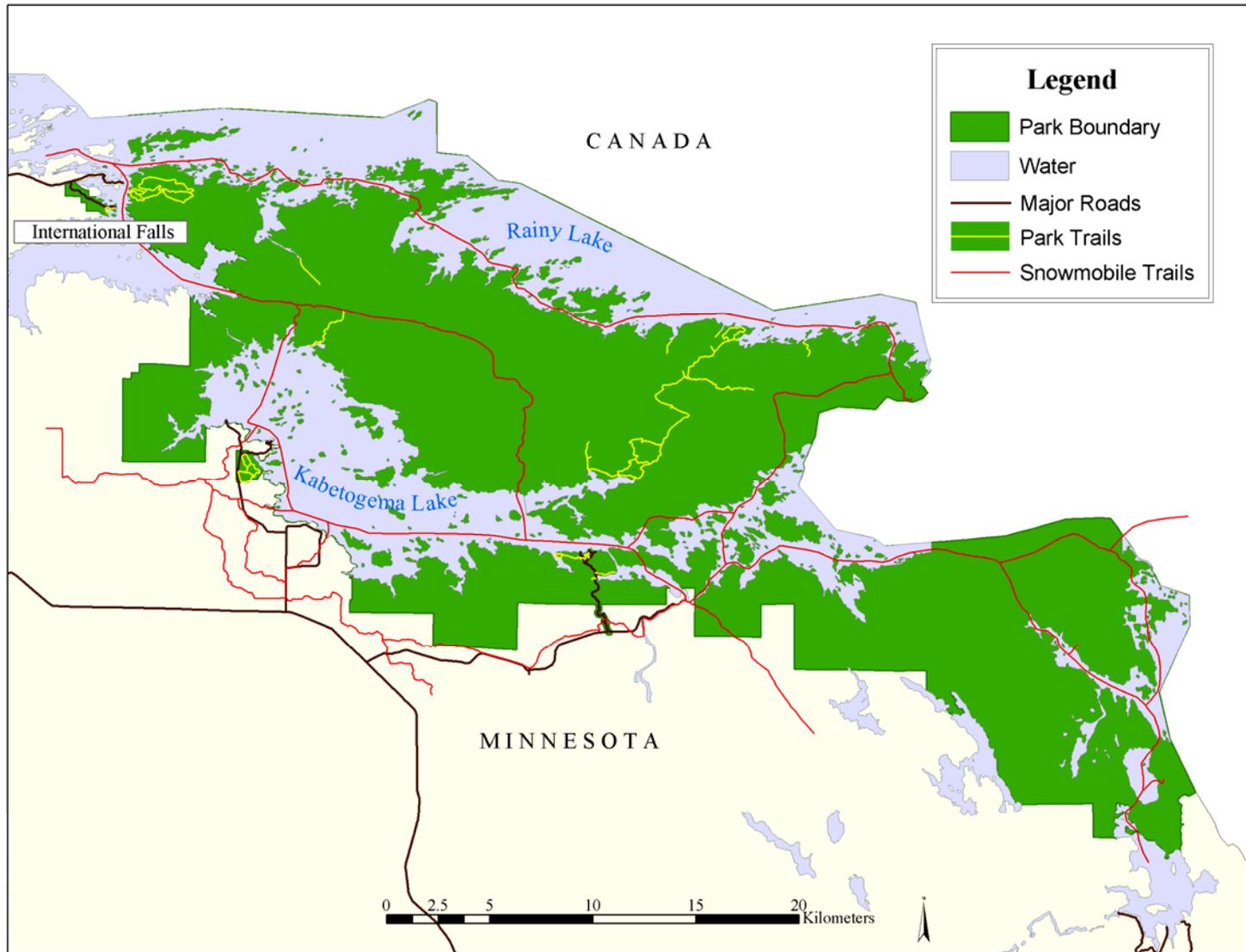
General description: Voyageurs National Park is located approximately 300 miles north of Minneapolis, Minnesota in the forested lake region along the Minnesota-Ontario border. Voyageurs comprises 218,054 acres, of which approximately 83,789 acres (38%) are covered by lakes and ponds. Two large reservoirs, with hundreds of islands, form much of the lake area, but there are 26 smaller lakes and hundreds of beaver ponds and drainage systems. The interior of the park is typical southern boreal spruce/fir forest, but deciduous trees dominate some areas.

Visitation and human use: The NPS estimates about 250,000 visitor-use days for Voyageurs annually, which has remained consistent over the last 10 years. Visitors primarily use the park for motor boating, resort living, and camping in the summer, although canoeing, kayaking, and sailing are becoming increasingly popular. Fishing is a primary attraction during summer and winter. During winter, snowmobile use is a primary activity (> 35,000 visitor-use days). Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, winter camping, and ice fishing are also popular.

Critical resources: Loons (Minnesota state bird), other aquatic-nesting birds, and bald eagles are of high concern due to regulated lake levels and aquatic contamination. Walleye is a major concern due to its importance in sport fishing. Gray wolves, federally listed as threatened, utilize park habitats. Common terns and other colonial nesting birds, which have experienced declines throughout the region, are of concern. A number of rare plant communities associated with the southern end of the boreal forest are present in Voyageurs.

Primary threats: Unnatural fluctuations in water levels, airborne pollutants, waters contaminated with toxic chemicals, invasive exotic plants and animals, diseases spread from domestic animals, disturbance from certain human uses.

Important management documents: General Management Plan (2001). Interim Resource Management Plan (2000). Draft Water Resource Management Plan (2003). Cultural Resource Management Plan (1994). Fire Management Plan (2002). Land Protection Plan (1994). Wilderness Recommendation (1991). Lake Country and Back Country Site Management Plan (1988). **For important park monitoring reports see Supplemental Document #3**



Map of Voyageurs National Park and surrounding area.