

July 20, 2008
IRFFA Summer Meeting Notes
Guest House Rock Harbor Lodge

Opening Remarks

David Barnum opened the meeting at 15:15 with a letter from Betty Strum and family to thank IRFFA and David Stokes for the tribute to Enar Strum at the winter meeting.

Present and former Board members in attendance were acknowledged along with Board members who could not make the meeting.

Cultural Landscape Update

As a follow up to the winter meeting presentation by Don Stevens from the Omaha Midwest NPS regional office, IRFFA requested a conference call with Midwest regional office and IRNP staff. The conference call occurred in May with Don Stevens, Roberta Young, and Gail Gladstone (Omaha), Liz Valencia (IRNP), Kathryn Eckhardt (former National Trust Board member and MI SHPO), and John Snell and David Barnum (IRFFA).

From IRFFA's perspective Cultural Landscapes are an important designation because they acknowledge the cultural importance of people and communities in the designated landscapes. To date, Omaha staff have identified and entered 19 Cultural Landscapes on Isle Royale. They include a parent landscape for the Island and 18 sub landscapes that are in various stages of nomination for the Historic Trust. Omaha staff is working on two draft inventory reports, one for Barnum Island and one for Tobin Harbor. IRNP and MI SHPO will review the inventories and approve or disapprove writing a more detailed cultural landscape report.

Gail Gladstone will be the point person in Omaha for this work. She will be on Isle Royale for two weeks in August to inventory Rock Harbor, Wright Island, and Fisherman's Home

IRFFA members identified additional cultural landscapes for Omaha's consideration. In addition IRFFA members suggested that several of the individual cultural landscapes could be grouped into four or five primary districts – Washington and Barnum Island, Tobin Harbor and Rock Harbor, Malone Bay and Fisherman's Home, and Crystal Cove, Belle Isle, Captain Kidd, and Johnson Island.

During the May conference call Kathryn Eckhardt asked the Omaha and IRNP staff if there was money to maintain and preserve the cultural landscapes that have been identified. Omaha and IRNP staff confirmed there is not. Kathryn asked what would be the best use of additional resources if IRFFA was able to help out. Omaha staff suggested that in house NPS staff is best equipped to prepare the inventories and

associated field work. IRFFA resources would be best directed to physical preservation efforts and assistance with the more detailed reports.

John Snell raised the question “at what point do families need to get something in writing from NPS in return for investing money into preservation efforts?” This question will need to be addressed in the near future.

Moving forward IRFFA will follow up with MPS staff to schedule another conference call to discuss the cultural landscape inventories prepared to date and NPS/ IRFFA collaboration goals for the fall/ winter.

Legislation Update

IRFFA continues to investigate opportunities to “legislate in” the remaining families beyond the current one to three year permits. Grant Merritt read the proposed Congressional bill. Debbie Stabenow (MI Senator) has offered her support. Debbie has told IRFFA that she would cosponsor the bill with Bart Stupak (MI Congressman) if he would support the bill as well. Matt, Jade, and Tom Bryan (Farmer Family), Chuck Boyle, Chris Gale, and Roy Snell have agreed to meet with Stupak if a meeting can be set up. Stupak has not agreed to meet with IRFFA yet.

Grant suggested that another possibility is to contact Jim Oberstar (MN Congressman, Chair of House Transportation Committee)

Phil Scarpino Cultural Assessment Report Update

Phil Scarpino brought the group up to date on the “Assessment of Cultural Resources” report that he is under contract with NPS to perform. His contract has been extended until January 2009 to include additional interviews and expand the scope of his work to include site visits to Picture Rocks and Sleeping Bear National Parks.

One of Dr. Scarpino’s tasks is to inventory IRNP’s cultural resource archives. Grant Merritt shared his frustration with the Park’s lack of a museum and limited access to the archive material. Dr. Scarpino has shared with NPS concerns about the cultural history archives as well. Matt Bryan shared that he did an internship in Houghton last fall with Liz Valencia cataloguing Isle Royale artifacts. Tom Gale mentioned that he submitted a request for an interpretive center on Minong Island.

Dr. Scarpino confirmed that his report will include that human activity on the island was part of the cultural landscape. He was pleased to hear that the “parent” cultural landscape was the entire island. If IRNP followed through with the current process then the final outcome will be “The Management Plan”.

Roy Snell asked “Is it possible for the whole process to end with families having continued access to the summer camps? Phil Scarpino explained who is involved in the National Register of Historic Places process and shared that if this current “endeavor” is

successful some of the 19 cultural landscapes NPS has identified would be nominated for the Historic Register. Listing as a cultural landscape would affirm that these areas were a product of human activity and not possible without human activity.

Financial Report

David Barnum reported that \$300 to \$400 will be spent to cater a reception open to the public after the meeting. David Barnum added that IRFFA has no dues and depends on voluntary contributions. The suggested contribution is \$100 per family (e.g. David, his brother, and his sister would be three families)

David Barnum – Boat House Project

David reported that he brought the “professionals” back again this summer to work on the Barnum Boathouse. Five cribs have been rebuilt at significant expense. David continues to perform this work in spite of the short term nature of his permit situation on the Island. As David pointed out – “by us maintaining these structures we are making a statement by preserving our buildings.” In addition, the opportunity exists for the remaining families to share resources. For example, David has heavy duty house jacks that he would be happy to lend.

Stu Sivertson – Commercial Fishing License Transfer Request

Stu reported back that fish researchers worked out of the Sivertson Fishery last summer. In addition, Stu has requested permission to have his name added to his Mom’s commercial fish license. He found out, there’s a note in the file not to allow a transfer of his Mom’s fishing license and was told that he needs to write a letter to Tom Gagne with this request. A motion was proposed and approved for IRFFA to write a letter of support for Stu’s request.

Related to Stu Sivertson’s request the conversation opened up to commercial fishing comments in general. Mark Rude suggested that we have to be careful not to have commercial fishing considered a “threat” or to be draining the lake of resources. Future fishing licenses should be requested for research fishing not as commercial fishing. The only way that the general public will be able to continue fishing is through assessment fishing.

Stu reported that Chuck Bronte has catch data going quite far back. He added that fishing limits (about 5,000 fish per license per year) were established in 1965. Mark confirmed that the limits have remained unchanged since 1965.

Tom Gale asked if there is any accurate data about the total fish population in Lake Superior. Mark Rude said that US Field and Wildlife puts nets down in 180 feet of water to track the fish population. Setting nets at this depth provides a consistent water temperature and similar types of fish from year to year. This approach does not provide accurate information about the quantity of fish swimming along the surface. Stu added

that a quota has been set for Herring base on the current Herring population. The quota is far about the amount of herring that is currently harvested from Lake Superior.

Other Comments

Tom Gale asked the Board and the attendees to continue to look forward with a vision of where we want this effort to be in 5-10 years and think about long range fund raising. He appreciated what has been accomplished to date and urged the Board to keep the momentum going.

Chuck Boyle asked if there was any precedence for life lease extensions? Grant mentioned Grand Island (Forest Service) and Sequoia National Park (NPS).

David Barnum closed the meeting at 16:30 in time for a group picture and the open reception. A good time was had by all.