Working TOGETHER to SUSTAIN and CELEBRATE the LAKES, FORESTS and COMMUNITIES In the border lakes region.

The Heart of the Continent

Ontario, Canada • Minnesota, USA

MISSION

The Heart of the Continent Partnership works to inclusively build vibrant and resilient communities that value and protect public lands in northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario.

SHARED VALUES

The success of the Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP) is based in trust and a fair, open communications.
The Partnership is a non-partisan forum where diverse groups can meet and work together. The partnership does not take positions nor attempt to influence the policies of participants, other than celebrating support for our public lands and our neighbouring communities.

HOCP Fact Sheet March 2014

Who We Are

The Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP) is a Canadian-American coalition of land managers and local stakeholders working together on cross-border projects that promote the economic, cultural and natural health of the lakes, forests and communities on the Minnesota-Ontario border. Within this broad coalition,

High Falls, Pigeon River Provincial Park

HOCP is developing a common identity and sense of belonging to the larger cross-border area, the Heart of the Continent, which consists of over two million hectares (five million acres) of public lands. Along with the development of a common identity is the desire to create and sustain economic stability for the communities that surround these public lands.

The Need for the Heart of the Continent Partnership

Because the Heart of the Continent ecosystem is an interconnected whole, a region-wide vision is necessary to ensure its sustainability.

The ecosystem's landscape is divided by all sorts of boundary lines: park and forest boundaries, county lines, even an international border. These divisions have historically posed barriers to collaboration. Communities could reap benefits from marketing the region as a whole. Land managers could increase cooperation on plans that make sense for the connected natural areas in a larger context.

Cooperative leadership among the Heart of the Continent Partnership is fostering increased knowledge, trust, projects, funding and effectiveness, which in turn will increase stature and sustainability of the region's public lands and communities.

Heart of the Continent Partnership Goals

- To build region-wide dialogue, cooperation and capacity among communities, public land managers, conservation, recreation and industry groups to benefit our border region and to enable vibrant communities to flourish alongside healthy public lands
- To create opportunities for groups to work together in new ways that can benefit the lakes, forests, wildlife and people of this ecosystem

ACTION STRATEGIES

Increase respect for the land and its people: Develop an identity for the region as a whole. Celebrate the region. Support economic growth and cultural empowerment.

Collaborate across boundaries: Facilitate communication, trust, respect, understanding and resource sharing between groups.

Promote scientific research and its applications: Share research to inform decision-makers. Encourage cooperative scientific activities. Promote the region as a global research opportunity.

Build awareness of and support for public lands: Expand public perceptions of this large-scale habitat. Encourage and foster a land ethic.

Share resources to benefit public lands and communities: Facilitate collaboration among groups to improve public lands and promote the balancing of nature and commerce in communities that neighbour public lands.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Geotourism Initiative—an HOCP-National Geographic Collaboration

We have a partnership with National Geographic Society to designate the Heart of the Continent as a part of a growing international network of regional geotourism destinations. The results include an interactive website and mobile app that enable visitors to see in one place the multiple attractions throughout the public lands and communities of our international region. This project is a large step in building the regional identity for and a sense of community within the Heart of the Continent.

Connecting Volunteers in the Heart of the Continent

We have created a website page to encourage and coordinate volunteering across the Heart of the Continent region.

Scientific Research Support

HOCP considers the accurate collection and use of data as crucial to making sound, regional decisions. The science committee presents lectures, hosts a database of current and past research, and assists with cooperation among partner agencies in sharing data and applications for research funding.

PAST HIGHLIGHTS

International Community Congress: ***Balancing nature and commerce in communities that neighbour public lands (2011-2013)***

The 2011 International Community Congress was a multi-day forum and training event held in Thunder Bay, ON and Grand Portage, MN. The workshop brought together community teams from both sides of the border to learn how to best take advantage of the incredible natural resources of this area while strengthening our communities. Key results include new community initiatives as well as new working relationships.

Canoe the Heart of the Continent

In 2009, HOCP organized a 18-day canoe expedition across the region as a way to meet two of its goals—build awareness of the region as an interconnected whole, and build relationships and good will among the diverse stakeholders in the region.

Sixty partners took part in paddling an 8.2 meter (27-foot) canoe along the 563 kilometer (350-mile) route in celebration of the 100th anniversaries of Quetico Provincial Park and the Superior National Forest.

Sister Sites Arrangement: In 2011 agencies along the border agreed that it was beneficial to collaborate on share common goals for the benefit of the public lands and gateway communities. A Sister Sites Arrangement was signed by representatives from Ontario Parks, United States Forest Service and the National Park Service.

Join Us

The Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP) is open to all organizations who support HOCP's mission and who have a stake in the long-term health of the lakes, lands and communities on the Ontario/Minnesota border. At this time, HOCP is not a membership organization, but a network.

- REGIONAL MEETINGS: HOCP welcomes interested organizations to attend (and consider hosting) one of its round-table meetings. These are a great opportunity to share ideas, meet colleagues and participate in HOCP's ongoing activities.
- EMAIL COMMUNITY: HOCP uses a listserve to distribute meeting announcements and opportunities for engagement. Sign up at : www.heartofthecontinent.org/get-involved/
-

214 Main Street West
Atikokan Ontario
Chris Stromberg Coordinator
Phone: 807-598-1074
Email: hocp@heartofthecontinent.org
www.heartofthecontinent.org

HOCP Steering Committee Chair
Frank Jewell (218-726-2450)

Steering Committee Members, Affiliation
Gord Knowles, Atikokan Economic. Dev. Corp.
Lori Dowling-Hanson, MNDNR
John Cameron, Tourism Thunder Bay
Ann Schwaller , Superior National Forest
Paul Danicic, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wld.
Doug Franchot, Voyageurs National Park Assoc.
James Bennitt, Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park
Frank Jewell, St. Louis County Board
Pam Cain, Path of the Paddle Assoc.
Eric Johnson, Voyageur NP Assoc.
Lisa Radosevich-Craig, Superior National Forest
Tawnya Schoewe, Voyageurs National Park
Andy Hubley, Arrowhead Regional Dev. Commission
Mary Somnis, Cook County/Grand Marais EDA
Trevor Gibb, Quetico Provincial Park
Tonia Kittelson, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wld.

Landscape—An International Treasure

The Heart of the Continent region—with two million hectares (five million acres) of public lands—includes several separately managed natural areas: Quetico Provincial Park, Superior National Forest (including the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness), Voyageurs National Park, Fort William Historical Park, Grand Portage National Monument and numerous smaller Minnesota state forests and parks and provincial parks in Ontario, all surrounded by a host of vibrant gateway communities.

Diverse Leadership

HOCP is led by an active steering committee, whose membership reflects the evolving diversity of the general partnership. Leadership includes the heads (or lead staff) of all the public land agencies, as well as community leaders and major nonprofit players. These are individuals with a long history of involvement in the region and a deep interest in the future of the Heart of the Continent region.

Broad-Based Support

More than half of our support comes in the form of in-kind contributions of staff time and travel from our participating organizations—in general meetings, steering committee work and the planning and implementing joint projects.
Partner organizations also help support HOCP operating expenses through voluntary, sliding-scale annual dues.

Regional Meetings
Representatives from participating organizations meet quarterly (and the steering committee meets bimonthly), building relationships and developing ways to work together. Heart of the Continent Partnership holds general meetings in locations throughout the region. Each gathering, open to anyone, includes a public lecture as well as a general meeting. By increasing knowledge and respect among stakeholder groups HOCP meetings have improved communications and spawned new working relationship among leaders.

The Heart of the Continent Region

The Heart of the Continent region includes the largest expanse of public green space in the center of North America: more than two million hectares (five million acres). The region spans the Ontario-Minnesota border, from Rainy Lake to the north shore of Lake Superior.

Over 120 Partner Organizations

The Heart of the Continent Partnership continues to grow as groups perceive the benefits of working together to promote the land and communities of these areas. The following organizations, listed alphabetically, have participated financially or have participated in meetings.

- Arrowhead Coalition for Multiple Use
- Arrowhead Lodge and Resort
- Arrowhead Regional Development Commission
- Ash Trail Lodge
- Atikokan Chamber of Commerce
- Atikokan, City of
- Atikokan Economic Development Corporation
- Atikokan SnoHo Snowmobile Club
- *Backus Community Center
- Beaten Path Nordic Trails
- Boreal Forest and Community Resilience Project (at the Univ. of Minn. Institute on the Environment)
- Boundary Waters Dragon Boat Club
- Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)
- Canoe Canada Outfitters
- Canoeing.com Limited
- Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center
- The Conservation Fund
- Conservationists with Common Sense – CWCS
- Cook County Board of Commissioners
- Cook County News Herald
- Cook County Public Health and Human Services Advisory Committee
- Cook County Visitors Bureau
- Crane Lake Township
- Destination Voyageurs National Park
- Duluth
- Duluth Sister Cities International
- Eaton Associates
- Ely Chamber of Commerce
- Ernest Oberholtzer Foundation
- Eskakwa Eco-adventure Co.
- Eveleth
- Forest Capital Partners
- Fort Frances
- Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce
- Fort Frances Downtown Business Improvement Area
- Fort William Historical Park
- Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
- Friends of Chippewa Park
- Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest
- Friends of Quetico Provincial Park
- Grand Marais
- Grand Portage Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa
- Grand Portage Lodge and Casino
- Grand Portage National Monument
- Grand Portage State Park
- City of Greenstone
- Gunflint Lodge
- Gunflint Trail Historical Society
- Hartley Nature Center
- Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
- *International Dental Arts
- International Falls CVB
- *Iron Range Historical Society
- Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board
- International Wolf Center
- Izaak Walton League
- Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park Cluster
- *Karen Franchot
- Koochiching County Board
- Koochiching County EDA
- Lake County
- Lakehead Region Conservation Authority
- Lakehead University
- *La Place Rendezvous
- Laurentian Environmental Center
- Minnesota Arrowhead Association
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Environmental Partnership
- Minnesota Forest Resources Council
- Minnesota Historical Society
- Minnesota Power
- Mountain Iron
- Neebing
- National Parks Conservation Association
- National Parks – Rivers and Trails
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Neebing Economic Development
- North of Superior Travel Association
- North Shore Stewardship Association
- Northeast Minnesota Sustainable Development Partnership
- Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
- Northland Foundation
- Oliver-Paipoonge
- Ontario Parks
- Ontario Trails Council
- Outdoor Skills and Thrills
- Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota
- Path of the Paddle
- PolyMet Mining
- Quetico Foundation
- Quetico Provincial Park
- Quetico Superior Foundation
- City of Ranier
- Rainy Lake Conservancy
- Rainy Lake Nordic
- Rainy River First Nations
- Raven Productions, Inc.
- Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, National Park Service
- RTO 13C Northwest Ontario
- Ryder-Walker Alpine Adventures
- St. Louis County Board
- Sandy Point Lodge
- Sawbill Outfitters
- Sawtooth Mountain Clinic
- Sierra Club
- Sleeping Giant Provincial Park
- Split Rock Lighthouse Historic Site
- Superior National Forest
- The Nature Conservancy
- Tourism Thunder Bay
- Trans Canada Trail Ontario
- Trust for Public Land
- Two Harbors Chamber of Commerce
- University of Minnesota Center for Hardwood Ecology
- Urban Connections–Twin Cities
- Visit Cook County
- Voyageurs National Park
- Voyageurs National Park Association
- Wilderness Inquiry
- Wilderness News
- Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center
- WoodsPort Cottages