

July 5, 2013

Mayor Roy Avis
City of Fort Francis
320 Portage Avenue
Fort Francis, Ontario P9A 3P9

JUL 23 2013

Dear Mayor Avis:

We are writing today to introduce the Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP) and to submit a funding request for our HOCP/National Geographic Geotourism Initiative 2013. We have enclosed some materials about the Partnership and a case statement for the actual initiative. In summary, HOCP will be partnering with the National Geographic Society Maps Division (NGS) to create and maintain a National Geographic co-branded Geotourism website and map for the Heart of the Continent region. We believe this collaborative undertaking will create a sustained public-private alliance to enhance economic vitality, develop local geotourism-based businesses and opportunities, and preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the entire Heart of the Continent region.

This collaborative effort will significantly enhance the economic impact of tourism in the HOCP region by creating a regional identity and by promoting our region globally as part of a growing network of National Geographic co-branded destinations. Superior cartographic standards, web design, content management and expertise in the geotourism approach make NGS uniquely qualified to cooperate with local partners on this project. NGS's Geotourism Map Guides promote both responsible economic development and stewardship of the resources featured on the website.

Within the HOCP region, generally, and your area specifically, this effort will:

- catalyze local participation in tourism planning and growth,
- help local residents learn about their natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources,
- promote wise destination stewardship,
- inform tourists about the distinctive attractions and qualities of the region, and
- help jumpstart the emerging tourism initiatives in your area and enhance the sustainability of gateway communities.

HOCP requests support of this important project from City of Fort Francis on behalf of the numerous organizations and businesses within your service area that will benefit from increased tourism. Specifically, we are seeking:

1. Monetary grant of \$2000 to support the project. Your funding will be used to engage NGS and to support some of the project management costs of the project. To date we have received funding commitments for two-thirds of our needed funds (see Proforma Budget, attached). Importantly, your support, along with that of similar sized organizations and communities, will be a nice balance to the larger blocks of funding we've received from larger entities on both sides of the border, and will essentially complete the funding needed to contract with NGS.

and:

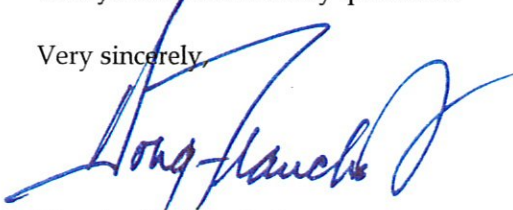
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2. In-kind support in the form of technical assistance from a staff person to either serve on or advise the Geotourism Stewardship Council as it gathers and juries content for the website/map.

We very much appreciate City of Fort Francis's willingness to learn about this important project and look forward to a positive response to our grant request. If it would be useful, we would be more than happy to meet with you at your convenience to answer any questions you might have about the Heart of the Continent Partnership or the National Geographic Geotourism project.

Someone from our planning committee will be calling you in the next several days to discuss this project with you and answer any questions.

Very sincerely,



Douglas W. Franchot
HOCP Steering Committee and
Chair, Voyageurs National Park Association
952-253-0080,
doug@franchotassociates.com



Frank Jewell
HOCP Steering Committee Chair and
St. Louis County Board
218-726-2450
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Enclosures/3

Project Case Statement: HOCP/National Geographic Geotourism Initiative 2013
Organizational Overview: Heart of the Continent Partnership
Proforma Budget: HOCP/National Geographic Geotourism Initiative 2013

Heart of the Continent Partnership

HOC/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC GEOTOURISM PROJECT

Proforma Budget

Revenue	Cash	In-Kind	Totals
Grants committed			
City of Duluth	\$40,000		
Thunder Bay Regional Tourism	40,000		
IRRRB	40,000		
Fort William Historical Park	20,000		
NMSDP	10,000		
St. Louis (MN) County	<u>10,000</u>		\$160,000
Grants submitted			
Musser Foundation	35,000		\$35,000
Other Grants under development (see attached)			\$122,000
In-Kind Contributions		\$300,000	<u>\$317,000</u>
 TOTAL PROJECTED REVENUES			 <u>\$617,000</u>
Expenses			
National Geographic Fees (Base Program)	\$170,000		
National Geographic Fees (Mobile Apps)	25,000		
HOC/National Geographic Project Management (inc. overhead)	35,000	\$50,000	
Site Nomination and Screening		200,000	
Graphics and Web Design	15,000		
Promotion	10,000	50,000	
Contingencies	<u>10,000</u>	<u> </u>	
 TOTAL PROJECTED EXPENSES	 \$265,000	 \$300,000	 <u>\$565,000</u>
 NET SURPLUS/(LOSS)			 <u>\$52,000</u>

NOTE: This projected surplus should be viewed as coverage for grants not received as opposed to actual surplus. Any actual surplus will be used for on-going maintenance of the project and will be supplemented with advertising, fees, and grants. On-going expenses are currently estimated at \$20,000 per year.

6/30/2013

The Heart of the Continent Partnership

MISSION

The Heart of the Continent Partnership seeks to sustain and celebrate the health, beauty, diversity and productivity of the natural and cultural resources of the border lakes region through collaboration to meet the needs of present and future generations.

SHARED VALUES

The success of the Partnership is based on a commitment to several core values, including:

- **Open:** HOCP promotes mutual trust through a fair, open and communicative process.
- **Neutral Forum:** HOCP is a non-partisan forum where diverse groups can meet and seek new ways to work together.
- **Non-Policy:** HOCP does not take positions nor attempt to influence the policies of participants.

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, HOCP is developing a common identity and sense of belonging to the larger cross-border area, the Heart of the Continent, which



High Falls, Pigeon River Provincial Park

consists of over five million acres (two million hectares) 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 better work together to 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.

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 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

HOCP participants have identified five broad action strategies as they work together on common goals and cross-border projects to advance the mission:

Increase respect for the land and its people: including developing an identity for—and celebrating—the transboundary region as a whole & translating this regional identity into social and economic value

Tap the power of collaborating across boundaries: including facilitating communication and trust between groups & facilitating resource sharing between groups

Promote scientific research and its applications: including sharing scientific research to inform decision-makers & encouraging cooperative scientific activities

Build awareness of and support for public lands: including expanding public perceptions of this large-scale habitat & encouraging and fostering a land ethic

Share resources to benefit public lands and communities: including facilitating collaboration among groups to improve public lands & promoting the balancing of nature and commerce in communities that neighbour public lands

CURRENT PROJECTS

Geotourism Initiative—an HOCP-National Geographic Collaboration

We are entering a partnership with National Geographic's Society (NGS) to designate the Heart of the Continent as a part of a growing network of regional geotourism destinations. The outputs of this effort will include a paper map of the region and, most importantly, a well-designed, interactive website that will enable potential visitors to see in one place the multiple attractions throughout the public lands and communities of our international region. Both will be promoted by NGS in their many venues and the website. This project will be another large step in building the regional identity of the Heart of the Continent. As we weave together our communities and stakeholders into trusting partnerships, we will significantly add to a sense of community and shared futures that will facilitate solving problems and working together for the common good.

Connecting Volunteers in the Heart of the Continent

We are convening conversations among partner groups on ways to encourage and coordinate volunteering across the Heart of the Continent region.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Regional Meetings

Representatives from participating organizations meet quarterly (the steering committee meets bimonthly), building relationships and developing ways to work together. The partnership has held more than a dozen general meetings in a variety of cities throughout the region. Each gathering, open to anyone, includes both a public lecture as well as a general meeting. Lecture topics have included: destination mountain biking, fire ecology in the forests of the HOCP region, sturgeon research in Voyageurs National Park and the history and culture of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa. By increasing knowledge of and respect among the many stakeholder groups in the area, HOCP meetings have contributed to improved communications and have spawned new working relationships among leaders.

PAST HIGHLIGHTS

International Community

Congress: *Balancing nature and commerce in communities that neighbour public lands*

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 international border with the purpose of learning how to best take advantage of the incredible natural resources of this area. Key results include the ten new initiatives, each with a commitment by its team to a timeline for completion, as well as new working relationships among the 90 leaders in attendance.



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 a 27-foot (8.2 meter) canoe along the 350-mile (550 kilometer) route.



Getting Involved

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 loose network.

- **REGIONAL MEETINGS:** HOCP welcomes interested organizations to attend its quarterly meetings, which 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



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Email: hocp@heartofthecontinent.org
Web: www.heartofthecontinent.org

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

HOCP Coordinator
Bret Hesla (612-333-1858)

Steering Committee Members, Affiliation

Tim Cochrane, Grand Portage National Monument
Paul Danicic, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wildns.
Doug Franchot, Voyageurs National Park Assoc.
Lynda Horman, Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park
Frank Jewell, St. Louis County Board
Brian McLaren, Lakehead University
Ardy Nurmi-Wilberg, Club Mesabi
Lisa Radosevich-Craig, Superior National Forest
Tawnya Schoewe, Voyageurs National Park
Joe Scipioni, PolyMet Mining
Mary Somnis, IRRRB
Chris Stromberg, Friends of Quetico Provincial Park

Landscape—An International Treasure

Several separately managed natural areas are encompassed by this landscape at the "heart of the continent," including 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, and vibrant gateway communities.



HOCP's Diverse Leadership

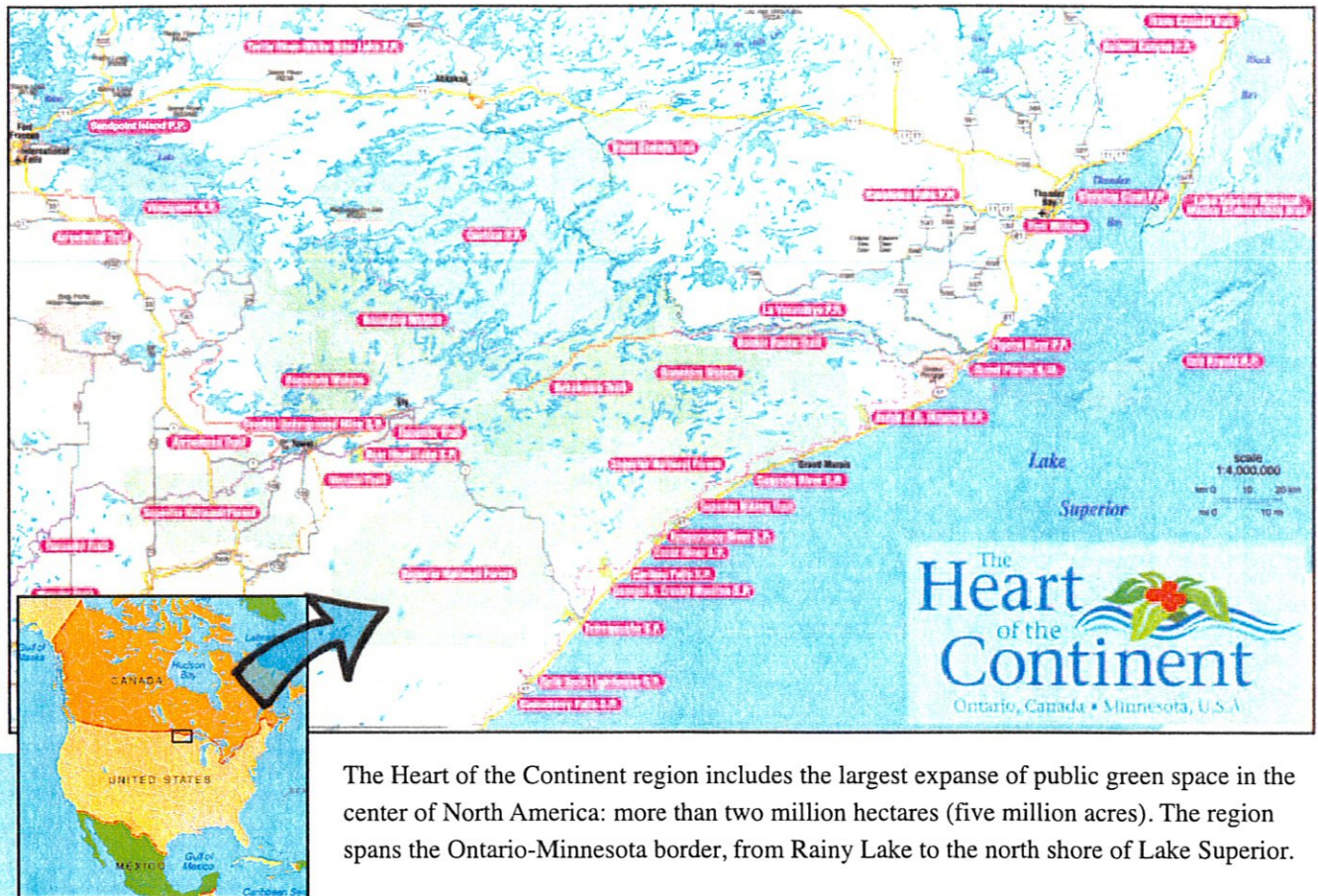
HOCP is led by an active steering committee, whose membership reflects the evolving diversity of the general partnership. The steering committee is composed of the heads (or lead staff) of all the public land agencies, as well as community leaders and major nonprofit players. These are individuals with 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.

Organizations that financially support the work and programs of HOCP include: Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, Blandin Foundation, City of Thunder Bay, Fort William Historical Park, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Minnesota Forest Resources Council, Northeast Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership of the University of Minnesota, Northeast Minnesotans for Wilderness, Oberholzer Foundation, Ontario Parks, Quetico Foundation, Quetico Superior Foundation, Rainy Lake Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, United States Forest Service, United States National Park Service, Voyageurs National Park Association

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.

Who's Involved

The Heart of the Continent Partnership collaboration continues to grow as groups perceive the benefits of working together to promote the land and communities of these areas. The following 80+ organizations, listed alphabetically, have participated in one or more meetings in the past two years:

America's Byways Resource Center...Arrowhead Coalition for Multiple Use...Arrowhead Lodge and Resort...Arrowhead Regional Development Commission...Ash Trail Lodge...Atikokan, City of...Atikokan Economic Development Corporation...Boreal Forest and Community Resilience Project (at the Univ. of Minn. Institute on the Environment)...Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS)...Canoeing.com Limited...Club Mesabi...The Conservation Fund...Conservationists with Common Sense...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 Sister Cities International...Eaton Associates...Ely Chamber of Commerce...Ernest Oberholtzer Foundation...Eskakwa Eco-adventure Co...City of Eveleth...Forest Capital Partners...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...Friends of Voyageurs National Park...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 Trail Historical Society...Hartley Nature Center...Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy...International Wolf Center...Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board...Izaak Walton League...Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park Cluster...Koochiching County Board...Lakehead University...Laurentian Environmental Center...Minnesota Arrowhead Association...Minnesota Department of Natural Resources...Minnesota Environmental Partnership...Minnesota Forest Resources Council...Minnesota Power...Municipality of Neebing...National Parks Conservation Association...Natural Resources Conservation Service...North of Superior Travel Association...Northeast Minnesota Sustainable Development Partnership...Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness...Ontario Parks...Ontario Trails Council...Polymet Mining...Quetico Foundation...Quetico Provincial Park...Quetico Superior Foundation...City of Ranier...Rainy Lake Conservancy...Rainy River First Nations...Raven Productions, Inc...Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, National Park Service...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...Voyageurs National Park...Voyageurs National Park Association...Wilderness Inquiry...Wilderness News

Heart of the Continent Partnership / National Geographic Geotourism Initiative 2013



PROJECT OVERVIEW

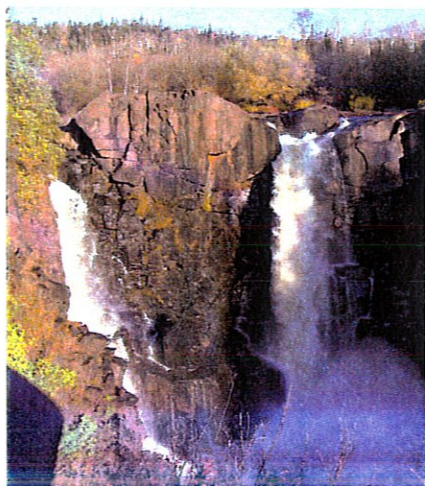
The Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP) will partner with National Geographic Society (NGS) to create a regional geotourism initiative, including a map and website. Drawing input and involvement from a wide spectrum of local stakeholders, this geotourism project will help sustain and enhance the geographical character of the region—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents—by highlighting the outstanding natural, cultural and historical resources and historic gateway communities in the Heart of the Continent bi-national region. HOCP will become a part of NGS's network of interlinked geotourism websites, gaining great visibility, visitorship, and awareness for our region—and its wonderful natural and cultural assets.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

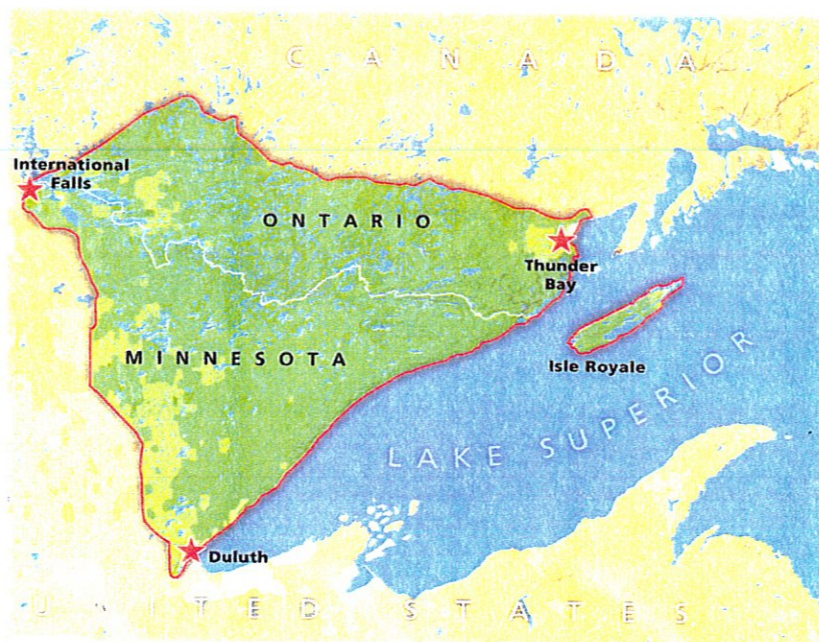
This economic development project will use a unified cross-border approach, the established collaborative structure of HOCP, and the brand power of NGS to increase visitation in the region.

Outcomes include:

- Paper Map: NGS will publish and promote a paper map of the Heart of the Continent.
- Website: An interactive map and website combines the region's opportunities is easily accessible and well used by people around the country and the world.
- Worldwide Exposure: Links between all the NGS geotourism sites will extend the reach and impact of efforts within the region. Web hits tracked.



- Increased Use: The attractions, parks, and communities promoted on the map and web site will note increased use. Measured by lodging tax receipts, number of visitors and international flights.
- Increased Community: this collaborative project will build lasting working relationships among communities and citizens who care about public lands.
- Amplified Impact: This project will amplify, not compete with existing efforts and budgets of partners.



The Heart of the Continent bi-national region

ABOUT HOCP

The Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP) is a coalition of land managers and local stakeholders working together on cross-border projects that promote the natural, cultural and economic health of the lakes, forests and communities on the Minnesota/Ontario border. Within this broad coalition, 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 5 million acres (2 million hectares) 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.

DIVERSE PARTICIPATION

Both Heart Of The Continent Partnership and National Geographic Society have strong histories of successfully engaging a broad group of citizens and stakeholders. The Design Team (planning this effort) and the Geotourism Stewardship Council (jurying content for the map and website) will each be composed of a wide spectrum of leaders from around this border lakes region: federal, state and provincial land managers, tourism officials, county/city/provincial and state elected officials, local businesses, educators, scientists and other stakeholders. The process of actively gathering content through public meetings and also via website submissions will engage all citizens who are interested.

TIMELINE

The development of this project will span much of two years, and will conclude with a public launch in the fall of 2014. Thereafter, the website and the Geotourism Stewardship Council, will be ongoing.

- Spring 2013: Appoint Design Team
- January–September 2013: Raise resources necessary to proceed
- June 2013: Sign Contract with NGS
- June 2013: Recruit and convene a Geotourism Stewardship Council
- June 2013–September 2014: Design and Development (16 months)
- September 2014: Public unveiling of project
- September 2014 and beyond: Ongoing active management of website

JOIN US

To get involved, please contact project co-leads:

- **Mary Somnis**, Outreach and Tourism, Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board & Steering Committee Member, HOCP.
218-735-3040, mary.somnis@state.mn.us
- **Doug Franchot**, Board Member, Voyageurs National Park Assoc. & Steering Committee Member, HOCP.
952-253-0080, doug@franchotassociates.com

ABOUT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Since 1888 the National Geographic Society (NGS) has been inspiring people to care about the planet and every living creature on it by promoting and funding natural and cultural conservation projects. In 2003, NGS inaugurated a constantly evolving collaborative product combining the expertise and the design capabilities of the NGS Maps Division, and the involvement of local people in tourism destinations to facilitate wise stewardship of cultural, historic, and natural resources. This Geotourism Map Guide (print, online, or both) is a catalytic tool to implement geotourism, defined as:

"tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents."

One of this effort's most powerful pieces is the collaborative effort that is developed to create and sustain the geotourism initiative.



HOCP Mission: The Heart of the Continent Partnership seeks to sustain and celebrate the health, beauty, diversity, and productivity of the natural and cultural resources of the border lakes region through collaboration to meet the needs of present and future generations.