



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Isle Royale National Park
800 East Lakeshore Drive
Houghton, MI 49931

IN REPLY REFER TO:

June 27, 2023

C38

Memorandum

Subject: Royale Air Service, Inc/Isle Royale Seaplanes Seat Fare Exemption Request

Isle Royale National Park has an operational need to quickly transport personnel between the Park and Houghton, Michigan and Grand Marais, Minnesota. The Park is only accessible by boat or seaplane. There are four ferries total with the following trip options:

- Ferry from Houghton, MI to Rock Harbor, Isle Royale = 73 miles/6 hours
- Drive from Houghton to Copper Harbor, MI = 45 miles/1 hour. Ferry from Copper Harbor to Rock Harbor = 56 miles/4 hours
- Ferry from Grand Portage, MN to Windigo, Isle Royale = 22 miles/2 hours
- Ferry from Grand Portage, MN to Rock Harbor with up to four ferry stops =75+ miles/8+ hours

The closest NPS fleet amphibious seaplane is based in Ely, MN at the USFS Seaplane Base on Shagawa Lake. The NPS has an agreement with the USFS to operate and maintain the plane, however, its availability is subject to pilot availability in relation to USFS mission. As such, planes are often committed to other projects and are not available for daily passenger flights to Isle Royale.

Royale Air Service, Inc. DBA Isle Royale Seaplanes received OAS approval for seat fares in 2018, 2020, and 2021. Previously, they maintained OAS approval for several years in the early 2000's. They have maintained an excellent safety record and provide the only flight service for visitors to Isle Royale National Park through a concessions contract and commercial use authorization. They currently maintain five aircraft and fly up to ten flights per day carrying a maximum of 48 passengers.

Isle Royale National Park and the U.S. Geological Survey request a waiver to purchase seat fares for transportation on Isle Royale Seaplanes to and from Isle Royale National Park per OPM-15. This would enable employees to efficiently get to the park and back to the mainland; each agency would be responsible for payment of their own fares.

Park Superintendent Request: _____

NPS Regional Aviation Manager Concur: _____

NPS National Aviation Manager Approval: _____

USGS National Aviation Manager Approval: _____

NPS Associate Director Visitor Protection Approval: _____

USGS Executive Aviation Committee Rep. Approval: _____

OAS Director Approval: _____