

Flying in for a mission

BY PAUL MORRALEE

IT WAS the clack . . . clack . . . clack . . . in the air that we knew our visitors would soon arrive. A Canadian Lighthouses of Lake Superior (CLLS) staff member and myself were on hand to greet 10 visitors at the Canadian Coast Guards' helipad.

On this volcanic island in Lake Superior with bending trees, the Porphyry lighthouse grounds are manicured with some added features for our fresh arrivals. New interpretive signage had been added, grass cut and everything is in position to entertain guests who have just arrived by air.

Mark Wiskemann of Wisk Air Helicopters gently settled his craft on the heliport target, painted appropriately red and white, and which playfully sits with the Sleeping Giant in the background.

The Post family had come for a 45th Wedding Anniversary and people had flown in from all over Canada for the celebration. Whether ar-

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iving by air or water there is much to explore on the island from trees, plants and rocks to our nautical history that built this country.

For those that have been to Porphyry Island before, some have been surprised to find that there is a graveyard on site; now adorned with four simple crosses. Thanks in part to CLLS Board Director, Senator Bob McKay, who showed us where their final resting-place is.

Other guest have also traveled in from many other places this past week including, England, Brazil, Finland and four boats came in from Wisconsin, invited by AlexanderPatterson of Thunder Bay.

Tourism is on the upswing here as people's curiosity has been piqued by a new sense of discovery. In the past week we have seen over seventy-visitors each bringing a different set of questions and perspective to the

"picture."

Comments have been positive and constructive. There's a sense here that this place is for sharing and not entitled to just boaters. A group of nine Outward Bound USA, kayakers arrived to say, "This is the best manicured woodlands trail" they have encountered in their fifty-day trip.

Later on in the week another set of kayakers appear this time, from the east, to share a recipe of vegetables cooked in coconut curry sauce . . . "mmm . . . taste!"

Not only are we seeing repeat visitors this season, but we are seeing people come for different reasons; one person came to take pictures for a website he is building and another came to look for Monarch butterfly.

Our lives managing and maintaining the lighthouse site gives us a great appreciation for the beautiful location in which we are passing the summer.

Lighthouses are built in location where you can see in many directions, from the tip of Porphyry we can see a stunning 275 degrees por-



PETE MCINTOSH

A Wisk Air helicopter arrives at Point Porphyry Lightstation.

trait of lake superior.

As the day moves on, many mini snap-shots are taken in our minds-eye, and we say to ourselves, how lucky we are to live here in North-western Ontario.

A cup of tea arrives as I wind up this weeks dispatch.

Now to focus back on the journey of restoring, promoting and protecting the lighthouses for future gener-

ations!

In next week's Lighthouse Dispatches I'm excited to share with you a pan-Superior boaters rendezvous.

Paul Morralee is the secretary of the Canadian Lighthouses of Lake Superior. He'll be sharing stories from Point Porphyry Island Light Station throughout the summer.