

Wilderness News

FROM THE QUETICO SUPERIOR FOUNDATION SPRING 2007

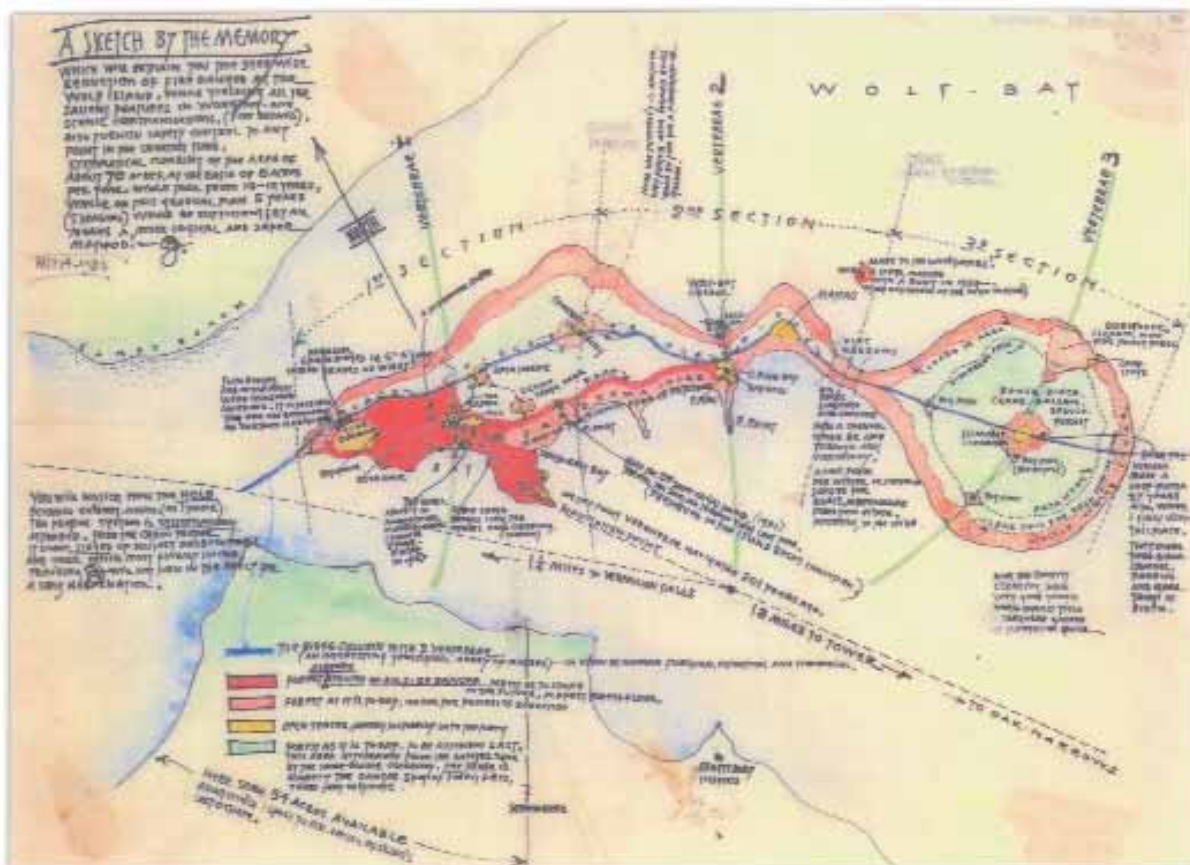


The Quetico Superior Foundation, established in 1946, encourages and supports the protection of the ecological, cultural and historical resources of the Quetico Superior region.

“Quetico in 1909 seemed to be a primitive country, a wonderful place, and it was no wonder the Indians had traditions and felt spirits in there. It had a spirituality. You felt you were in a kind of magic land.”
– Ernest Oberholtzer

Wolf Island Protected

Wolf Island is a place of legend and lore, holding the footprints of both Native Americans and Voyageurs. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has taken advantage of a one-time opportunity to protect this prominent archeological site in the middle of Lake Vermilion, one of the premier lakes located in the Minnesota northwoods. Wolf Island, also known as Knotts Island, is located at the lake’s north end where the Vermilion River flows northward from Wolf Bay.



Wolf Island Map #1, Created by John Jaeger – November, 1933.

The island was at risk of being lost to development because of its beauty and proximity to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Conserving this nearly 60-acre island was an exceptional, “once in a generation” opportunity to protect an iconic landscape on one of Minnesota’s most beloved lakes.

Wolf Island was once owned by John Jaeger, a prominent Minneapolis architect who immigrated to Minnesota from Yugoslavia and homesteaded the island after visiting it in 1906. Jaeger meticulously documented the archeological history of the island and drew a series of detailed maps highlighting the rare historic and geologic features he uncovered. His maps capture the story of a pre-settlement island well-used by both Native Americans and Voyageurs. The maps illustrate the existence of Native American burial mounds, a working indigenous canoe shop that he personally witnessed on his first visit, and a navigation point used by a Voyageur more than 200 years prior to Jaeger’s research. In total, Jaeger’s work captures the stories of this island in a rare and personal manner.

After Jaeger’s passing, the island was handed down to family friends. Most recently the island was owned by three siblings living in Michigan who wished to sell the property. The Trust for Public Land negotiated for the opportunity to find a conservation solution and purchased the island.

Generous contributions from individual members of the Dayton family, and from both the Scrooby and Quetico Superior Foundations made the purchase possible. The Trust for Public Land will continue to raise needed funds to cover costs associated with acquisition and short-term ownership of the island. It is the expectation and intention of the landowners and donors that the property be conveyed to the Superior National Forest for public use. The Trust for Public Land intends to work with the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa during its holding period to seek its interest in commenting on interim and long-term management of the property. The purchase of the island by TPL will allow the U.S. Forest Service a window of time to appropriate funding for its permanent protection, thereby

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Blazing Trails and Building Friendships in Voyageurs National Park

By Kelly Fuller, Voyageurs National Park Association

Maintaining visitor services and the full range of recreational opportunities at Voyageurs National Park can be a challenge in this time of federal budget shortfalls. In 2006, two great events in the park showed that this challenge can be addressed with creative partnerships, and that meeting it can be a lot of fun.

The events were created by Voyageurs National Park Association (VNPA) in partnership with the park, the Kabetogama Tourism Bureau, and Friends of Voyageurs National Park. Financial support came from the Quetico Superior Foundation, and discounted lodgings were provided by the Arrowhead Lodge and Northern Lights Resort, both in Kabetogama.

On two weekends in May and September, nearly 30 volunteers from all over Minnesota worked together with the park's staff and local communities to clear 11 miles of the Kab-Ash and Blind Ash Bay Trails. These hiking, skiing, and snowshoeing trails, represent nearly 20% of the park's foot-trail system. Volunteers were needed because tight budgets left the managers of Voyageurs National Park unable to maintain the park's 55 miles of trails to high National Park Service standards. Sections of the Kab-Ash Trail were hidden by tall grass and brush, prompting park employees in the summer of 2005 to advise visitors against hiking the west section of the Kab-Ash Trail, which links up with the nearby community of Kabetogama, Minnesota. Having safe, accessible trails is important not only for park visitors, but also for local communities. Business owners in Kabetogama were concerned about the potential impact of overgrown trails. The town's economy relies heavily on tourism, and the Kab-Ash Trail

is one of the few recreational opportunities in the park that does not require a boat for access.

"The volunteer program at the Park has really expanded. We really appreciate all the different kinds of people who are contributing their talents," said Teri Tucker, the park's Volunteer Program Coordinator. "The trail project was another step in the direction of managing the park through partnerships." Participating in the events helped volunteers better understand the challenges faced by the park's managers. Doug Franchot, Chair of Voyageurs National Park Association, said, "You have a whole different perspective after spending two days working with other people and the Park Service. You're not truly inside, as if you had the uniform, but after two days working with the Park Service you see what it's like."

The partnership approach is drawing positive reviews. Jim Hudson, a volunteer with VNPA, noted, "It was good to see the National Park

Service letting people do maintenance. Years ago, the idea of the Park Service letting people go out with a pair of shears was unheard of." Hudson said that volunteering also helped to strengthen relationships between local communities and park visitors. "One of the best parts was the sense of building stronger ties with the local community, doing something that wasn't controversial and benefited resort owners and non-motorized users of the park," he added.

With continued support from the Quetico Superior Foundation, the bridge-building between park users and local communities will continue. This year's Volunteer Trail Rendezvous will be arranged by a Trails Partnership of citizen groups and local business owners working with the park. Voyageurs National Park Association, Friends of Voyageurs National Park, and the Kabetogama Tourism Bureau are all Trail Partners for 2007.



Spring 2006 crew on the Kab-Ash Trail. Photos courtesy of Peggy Franchot.

STEWARDSHIP

How You Can Join the 2007 Volunteer Trail Rendezvous

This spring's Volunteer Trail Rendezvous takes place April 27-29 and the fall event is scheduled for September 28-30. Volunteers and Voyageurs National Park employees will work together this spring to maintain the Kab-Ash Trail that was cleared last year.

The Rendezvous will have plenty of opportunities for fun and service. Experienced Park Service personnel will lead two days of trail maintenance, followed by a half day of exploring the



Fall 2006 crew on the Echo Bay Trail.

Park. Saturday night will bring a celebration dinner hosted by the Arrowhead Lodge, Friends of Voyageurs National Park, and Voyageurs National Park Association (VNPA).

Everyone who enjoys the outdoors is welcome. Families with children old enough to be safe around brush-cutting tools are especially encouraged to participate. All trail work will be done with hand tools, so no prior experience is necessary. Volunteers are asked to bring their own personal safety equipment (goggles, work gloves, and boots).

Trail maintenance is not strenuous, and volunteers work at their own pace. Participants should be prepared for a four-mile round trip hike as well as an active work day. Meals will be available at the Arrowhead Lodge. Discounted lodging will be offered by the Arrowhead Lodge and Northern Lights Resort. Participants can also stay

at Woodenfrog Campground, but should be aware that night-time low temperatures in late April can get down to the twenties and thirties.

If you want to help but can't join one of the Trail Rendezvous events – plan a trip to hike the foot trails of Voyageurs National Park. The more people walking the trails, the less maintenance they need each year. The Park's 55 miles of trails travel through the boreal forest, over ancient rock outcrops with views overlooking the lakes, and past wetlands filled with wildlife.

For more information and to register by April 23, contact VNPA at vnpa@voyageurs.org or (612) 333-5424. If you are interested in participating but unable to attend the entire event, VNPA can work with you to accommodate your availability. If you are interested in participating in the fall Volunteer Trail Rendezvous, contact VNPA to receive further details.

Lake of the Woods Watershed – Pristine or Just Wild?

By Charlie Mahler, Wilderness News Contributor

In early 2008, when the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency releases its updated list of impaired waters in Minnesota, it is likely that Lake of the Woods, the massive 950,400 acre lake on the state's border with Ontario, will make the inventory due to nutrient impairment. If so, Lake of the Woods would become the first border area lake to make the list in that category.

Steve Heiskary, a research scientist for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, told attendees of the recent Lake of the Woods International Water Quality Forum in International Falls that he was “inclined to put Lake of the Woods on the draft list” to be submitted to his agency later this year. The comprehensive list includes not only nutrient-impaired waters too rich in phosphorous and nitrogen, but also those exceeding thresholds for oxygenation, turbidity (*cloudiness due to disturbance*), mercury, and fish consumption.

In a February 2007 Office Memorandum Heiskary wrote for the MPCA's Rainy River Basin Planner Nolan Baratono, which was distributed at the International Falls meeting, Heiskary noted that data collected in the summers of 1999, 2005, and 2006 showed the lake exceeding nutrient threshold values for phosphorous (one year), chlorophyll-a (two years), and transparency (all three years).

The likely inclusion of such a well-known, large northern Minnesota lake on the listing of nutrient-impaired waters, draws attention to the fact that even northern lakes with watersheds composed of largely wild country can suffer eutrophication (*an excess of nutrients which cause dense plant life growth*) problems not unlike water bodies in more southern agricultural areas. More broadly, the concerns about Lake of the Woods point to the importance of water quality issues even in seemingly pristine areas like the Quetico Superior.

The Lake of the Woods Watershed

The Lake of the Woods watershed, or Rainy River Basin, comprises 27,114 square miles of drainage area shared by the United States (41%) and Canada (59%). Its boundary approximates a rough-edged rectangle of land and water from just northwest of Lake of the Woods to just northeast of the north shore of Lake Superior. The northern edges of the area roughly parallel the international border a hundred miles to the north. Its southern frontier snakes west from above the north shore for a hundred or so miles, before turning northwest toward Lake of the Woods.

The headwaters of the basin include extensive areas of Canadian Shield topography in wild areas including the Boundary Waters Canoe



Lake of the Woods Watershed. Map illustration by Patrick Jannette.

Area Wilderness and Quetico Provincial Park. Northern Minnesota waters not flowing into Lake Superior through the north shore and waters not part of the St. Louis River watershed drain into Rainy River and Lake of the Woods. In Canada, the upper portion of the basin begins as far east as Lac des Mille Lacs and includes waters south of the drainage divide rising between Atikokan and Dryden.

The central portion of the basin in Minnesota is characterized by a collection of large lakes, including Crane, Kabetogama, Namakan, Rainy, and Vermilion, some of which make up Voyageurs National Park. Waters from the corresponding section of the drainage on the Canadian side enter the large border lakes at Namakan Lake via the Namakan River. (See Namakan River story on page 6). As in the upper basin, the topography here is largely Canadian Shield as well as isolated areas of glacial materials.

In the lowest segment of the drainage, waters in Minnesota flow into the Rainy River or directly into Lake of the Woods through the extensive wetlands located on the Glacial Lake Agassiz lake bed. Some of the watersheds in this segment include those of the Vermilion, Little Fork, Big Fork, and Baudette Rivers. In Canada, the waters flowing directly into Lake of the Woods cross mainly shield geology. The waters gathered at Lake of the Woods flow on for another thousand miles, ultimately to Hudson Bay.

The MPCA's Baratono differentiates water quality concerns within the basin in light of these geographical differences. “Basin-wide, the primary issue is protection of aquatic resources,” he said. “However, if you look separately at the upper basin (Rainy Lake and its watershed) and the lower basin (below Rainy Lake) there

are some differences. For the upper basin, the primary issue is protection. The water quality of most of the streams and lakes in the upper basin is good to excellent.”

“In the lower basin,” Baratono continued, “while protection is still important, there are many restoration needs. For example – excluding toxics like mercury – all of the basin's impaired waters are in the lower basin. We're also concerned about erosion, nutrient over-enrichment, and dissolved oxygen concentrations.

The 70 mile-long Little Fork River, in the lower basin, makes the state's list for its turbidity problems. Surprising perhaps, especially to those unfamiliar with fish consumption advisories, is the long list of BWCAW lakes that are listed as impaired for mercury and its attendant concerns. From Sea Gull to Thomas, from Snowbank to Crooked Lakes, even the wildest lakes of the region are less than pristine by that measure.

Caring for the Water

The MPCA's 2004 Rainy River Basin Plan, which was developed under the authority of the federal Clean Water Act, outlines the breadth of likely problems within the watershed. It describes the measures in place and proposals to monitor, protect, and restore water quality. The plan is a product of the collaboration of dozens of county, state, and federal agencies that are responsible for the health of the waters of the region.

The Lake of the Woods International Water Quality Forum serves as an annual information-sharing meeting of researchers, stakeholders, and agency officials in the region. It is sponsored by Rainy River Basin Water Resources Center, the Lake of the Woods District property Owners Association, the North American Lake

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Bringing Back the White Pine

In the Summer 2006 issue of *Wilderness News*, we reported on the state of white pine in the Quetico Superior region. The white pine is currently in decline as a result of deforestation, white pine blister rust, white pine weevil, and deer predation. Beginning in May 2007, the Quetico Superior Foundation will sponsor an initiative to renew the white pine that once added diversity and grandeur to our northern forests.

The Goal:

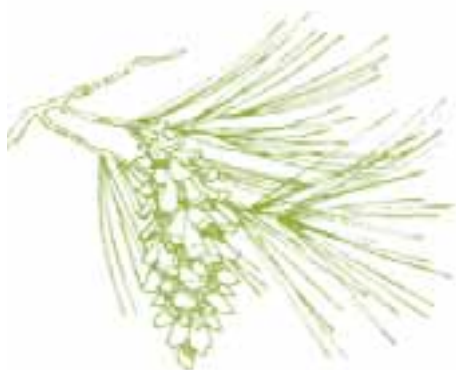
The initial goal is to plant 1 million seeds in 2007, which could conservatively yield 100,000 mature trees.

The initiative begins with a pilot program in northern Minnesota, in partnership with area camps and homeowners' associations. Camps will receive seeds in bulk and planting instructions. Campers will then plant seeds during adventure trips, and they may stage community service projects. Participating homeowners' associations may purchase multiple bags of 500 seeds for \$10 each, and distribute to their members. After the first year, participants will provide feedback on their planting results, and on the materials provided. If successful, the program would be expanded to a broader public in 2008-2009.

Jim Sanders, supervisor of the Superior National Forest, supports the program and encourages planting, but emphasizes that seeds may *not* be planted in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Planting white pine seeds is allowed in all other portions of Superior National Forest.

Dyke Williams, project organizer, says that the seeds are easy to plant, and will require little additional care. The seeds are blister rust resistant, and to further increase survival, the seedlings could be protected from deer browse. His long-term hope is to increase white pine populations, and to educate people of all ages about the species and its ecosystem.

The pilot program is seeking homeowners' associations and youth camps in northern Minnesota that would like to participate. For more information, contact: Dyke Williams at 952-473-1856, Email: Auldbear@aol.com.



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Management Society, Rainy River Community College, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, and the MPCA.

Most striking in the comprehensive Basin Plan and in the research presented at the Forum, are the myriad factors that can impact water quality in the region. From concerns about vacation property septic systems and lawn care regimes, to the expected advent of sulfide mining in the basin, there seems no end to the ways the watershed could be compromised.

In the more pristine upper basin, monitoring efforts – often in partnership with local communities and lake associations – seek to closely observe conditions around the watershed to spot potential issues before the problems occur.

Across the watershed, including the wildest upper reaches, mercury still remains a persistent problem. Larry Kallemyn, who has studied mercury in fish in Voyageurs National Park for some 30 years, analyzed trends in his presentation at the Forum. While he found fish mercury levels varied year-to-year – controlled by factors including atmospheric deposition, surface water level variations, and the abundance of certain large fish prey species – he concluded that levels were not decreasing and likely were still increasing thanks to the continued input of mercury from atmospheric source and remobilization of the element already deposited on the earth.

Exotic invasive species are also a cause for concern in the watershed. Last year, for example, spiny water fleas – tiny crustaceans with long, sharp barbed tails that originate in Europe – were found in Rainy and Namakan Lakes in Voyageurs National Park. In an effort to keep the animals from infesting the smaller “interior lakes” of Voyageurs on the Kabetogama Peninsula, park officials are currently considering banning anglers from carrying live bait into the smaller lakes, banning the movement of boats from the infested lakes to the interior water bodies, and prohibiting private planes and boats in uninfested lakes, according to media reports.

The Little Fork and Lake of the Woods

On the turbidity-impaired Little Fork River, problems appear to stem from post-settlement forestry practices in a sensitive watershed. At the 2006 Forum, the MPCA's Jesse Anderson presented research that concluded “numerous symptoms on the landscape indicate that the river has destabilized.” He cited excessive stream bank erosion, the incised shape of the stream channel, and the presence of perched culverts and small tributaries down-cut at confluence with the Little Fork which indicated a lowered main channel.

Anderson's research suggests that historic, basin-wide logging caused more water to run into the river more quickly without vegetation slowing the run-off. Additionally, trees felled in the area in historic times were floated down the river to milling sites, destabilizing the channel as they bumped and bashed their way downstream.

Anderson traces the turbidity impairment on Little Fork to sediments released from erosion of the unstable channel at high flows of the river.

Sometimes, however, the various factors – natural and human-caused – that affect water quality are more difficult to untangle. The vast, varied, and downstream Lake of the Woods, which may make the impaired list in 2008, is one such case. Algal blooms, some of which include toxic blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, appear to have increased in recent years there. But just how much of the apparent increase is due to increased shoreline development and other human factors, and how much is part of the natural regime is still a question in search of answers.



Satellite Map showing extensive algal blooms on the north basin of Lake of the Woods and Shoal Lake, Aug. 7, 2006. Photo courtesy of Jonathan W. Chipman, Space Science and Engineering Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The lake has been long known to have had significant algal blooms. Records through the 1800s note algal blooms on Lake of the Woods. As early as 1823, Major Joseph Delafield, the agent for the American survey team tasked with settling the boundaries between the United States and Canada, noted that on Lake of the Woods, “The islands were numerous and crowded, the water shoal and foul, frequently with a green scum of vegetable matter.” A proposal in 1883 for the city of Winnipeg to use Lake of the Woods for its drinking water supply was objected to because of, “...deposits of green vegetable matter” in the lake.

“Cyanobacteria blooms on Lake of the Woods are a large concern,” the MPCA's Baratono said, “however we have limited data for Lake of the Woods. The MPCA is monitoring Lake of the Woods water quality to see if the lake is experiencing nutrient over enrichment. At this time we don't have the data to determine the causes of the cyanobacteria blooms.”

It is the unenviable task, then, of the 21st Century researcher to disentangle the factors affecting today's waters. Questions still left unanswered despite recent focused study on Lake of the Woods include: whether higher water temperatures and acidity and periodic low dissolved oxygen in the lake prompt a recycling of phosphorous from the lake bed, whether or not there has been an increase in phosphorus discharge in the basin due to increased development, whether the reported increase in frequency of cyanobacterial algal blooms can be mainly attributed to phosphorus concentrations. □

THE QUETICO SUPERIOR REGION— 100 YEARS OF STEWARDSHIP BEYOND BOUNDARIES

By Kari Finkler, Wilderness News Contributor

1909 was a significant year for the Quetico Superior region of Minnesota and Ontario.

Before the well-known legislation of the 1930s that officially designated the roadless areas and parks that we know today, an important foundation was laid—on both sides of the border, in the very same year.

THE QUETICO SUPERIOR REGION was not always as we know it—managed, regulated, and clearly defined. It was once territory open for exploration, and vulnerable to exploitation.

The rapid industrialization of the 1900s fostered demand for raw materials, lumber and minerals; and for many it was a time of prosperity. Roads were built, railroad tracks laid, and it seemed westward and northward expansion could only bring a better life for all. With increasing accessibility to transportation, and to satisfy the thirst for building materials, the lumber industry logged large swaths across northern Minnesota and the Canadian border. Prospectors rushed into the uncharted wilderness seeking gold, ore and other minerals. In addition to logging and mining, trophy hunters streamed into the northern ‘frontier,’ hungry for big game.

While industrial growth spurred the turn-of-the-century economy, the cultural beginnings of a ‘wilderness ethic’ emerged. Fueled by a desire to escape the polluted cities, and return to a more idyllic time in America, people began to value the outdoors as more than a well of raw materials. For locals, the beauty and rarity of the northwoods was not an imaginary ideal, but a daily reality. Fearing a decline in moose populations and total depletion of the forests, citizens on both sides of the U.S.-Canadian border took action.

EFFORTS IN THE U.S. In the early 1900s, General Christopher C. Andrews, Forestry Commissioner of Minnesota, arose as a champion for preservation—he laid the foundation for Chippewa National Forest, and then turned his attention to the Minnesota Arrowhead region. He successfully petitioned the Federal Government to withdraw land from settlement, resulting in 3 separate allocations of land between 1902-08. General Andrews urged his counterparts in Ontario to follow suit.

EFFORTS IN CANADA As the possibility of logging and the threat of overhunting in the Quetico forest loomed, several voices emerged in



Map of Minnesota Territory, Thomas Cowperthwait & Co., circa 1850.

favor of a forest and game preserve: Ernest Thompson Seton, writer and naturalist, William Alfred Preston, Member of the Ontario Legislature for Rainy River, Arthur Hawkes of the Canadian Northern Railway, and Aubrey White, deputy minister of Lands and Forests. Their efforts, both independent and coordinated, included securing a promise from the province that Quetico would be saved if the United States also participated.

VISION BECOMES LAW On February 13, 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt signed Proclamation No. 848 officially designating the land as the Superior National Forest—an area of approximately 1,018,638 acres.

The ‘Quetico Forest and Game Reserve’ Order-in-Council was signed on April 1, 1909—comprising 1,148,000 acres; land which would become Quetico Provincial Park four years later. The Order-in-Council said that Quetico was “to be preserved and set apart as a public park and forest reserve, fish and game preserve, health resort and fishing ground; for the benefit, advantage and enjoyment of the people of Ontario, and for the protection of the fish, birds, game and fur-bearing animals therein.”

In a time when their international borders were in dispute, both countries joined in a common spirit to protect the landscape. A few visionaries spoke out for this area, valued it for its natural qualities, saw potential for tourism, and envisioned that both could be managed for perpetuity. In 1909, the Canadian and U.S. governments answered the call for preservation.

Now, nearly one hundred years later, how will we honor the landmark cross-border efforts that established the precedent for wilderness protection? 2009 represents an opportunity to celebrate the first hundred years and renew our commitment to the Quetico Superior region for another century.

Cross-Border Partnership Initiated

Government agencies and non-government organizations with an interest in the well-being of the Quetico Superior region for the next 100 years are forming an area-wide, cross-border partnership.

The Heart of the Continent Partnership, as the association has named itself, has a mission that 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. Discussions

began in late 2005 by a ‘group of fifteen’ who saw the need for sharing information and efforts across the international borders and between federal, state, provincial, and local agencies, as well as private organizations. Two years later, the group has grown to more than 50 representatives from 22 agencies and organizations.

In February, the group met and agreed on its name, mission, and operating structure. The next meeting is scheduled for May 4th in Atikokan, Ontario with the goal to identify and finalize participants for the steering committee.

The group welcomes participation—for more information: in Canada, contact Robin Reilly at <robin.reilly@ontario.ca> and in the USA, contact Cory MacNulty at <vnpa@voyageurs.org>.

Wilderness News will report from time-to-time on the group's cross-border initiatives. We congratulate the group's formation and the potential it represents for the stewardship of the Quetico Superior Region.

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CONSERVATION ISSUES

Hydro-electric Projects Planned on the Namakan River

Damming waters in the Rainy River Basin isn't just the stuff of history.

By Charlie Mahler, Wilderness News Contributor

Three planned hydro-electric projects on the Namakan River in Ontario show that the book on dams in the area didn't close with the last pages of R. Newell Searle's *Saving Quetico Superior: A Land Set Apart*.

Ojibway Power and Energy Group (OPEG), a partnership of the Lac La Croix First Nation and Chant Construction of Aurora, Ontario, hopes to build two dams on the Namakan River at High Falls and Hay Rapids, just west of Quetico Provincial Park. The projects, which OPEG hopes to follow later with a third installation at Myrtle Falls, are slated to produce 9.6 megawatts of power. OPEG hopes to complete the two initial projects by December 2009.

The proposed facilities would be "run of the river" operations, which would not involve large reservoirs or widely fluctuating seasonal water levels. According to documents filed by OPEG, the High Falls facility would include a 1.2 meter-high weir, a spillway, and a powerhouse at the crest of High Falls. Bill Lake would serve as a natural head pond and any change in river elevation would be contained below Quetico Rapids, located 2,500 meters upstream. A 2.2 kilometer transmission line would extend to the south to an existing line.

The Hay Rapids facility would include two 1.5 meter high "rubber-dam" weirs at the upstream crest of Hay Rapids, using Little Eva Lake as the head pond. An excavated intake channel would divert water to the powerhouse. The powerhouse would be constructed south of the rapids with the powerhouse tailrace situated near the bottom of the last rapids. A 1.4 kilometer transmission line would extend to the south to the existing line.

The projects come in response to the Ontario government's call for increasing the share of renewable energy production in the province by 10 percent by 2010. The plan is also hailed by supporters for its economic benefits for the nearby Lac La Croix First Nation.

The Rainy Lake Conservancy, a critic of the proposal, acknowledges the need "to generate clean energy and to help first nations communities improve their quality of life through economic partnerships," but is concerned about the environmental impact of the project on the area.

The Conservancy, in a letter to Ontario Minister of Natural Resources David Ramsay, called for inventories of the river ecosystem's flora, fauna, and forest composition, studies to track the movement of sturgeon and other fish in the system, and an independent environmental assessment of the projects.

The Conservancy also pushed for a more comprehensive approach to renewable energy production in the province which would consider other renewable sources as well as weighing the benefits to the region of the river remaining in its present state versus the benefits of its being harnessed for electricity.

The projects are currently in the Ontario Ministry of the Environment's Environmental Screening Process. You may address concerns and comments to the Honourable David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources, Room 5540 Whitney Block, 9 Wellesley Street West, Toronto, ON M7A 1W3.



Wolf Island. Photo courtesy of Superior National Forest.

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creating an incredible public resource in the middle of a very beloved Minnesota Lake.

Wolf Island is a good example of The Trust for Public Land working quickly to protect a sensitive geographic and cultural site, so that the opportunity for public ownership and access would be preserved. The acquisition and protection of Wolf Island is also a high priority in the U.S. Forest Service's new long-term plan to provide more undeveloped, easily accessible primitive recreation opportunities for visitors. In addition, the Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan identifies Wolf Lake—situated to the east of Wolf Island—as a potential addition to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Located adjacent to the Superior National Forest, this island will be protected for paddlers, boaters, and other recreationists for generations to come. The protection of Wolf Island is part of a broader initiative of The Trust for Public Land focusing on conserving iconic properties throughout the northwoods. To learn more about protecting other places near the Quetico Superior region, visit <http://www.tpl.org/northwoods>.

Contact Wilderness News

Add your name to our mailing list, send us comments, feedback, or story ideas:

Quetico Superior Foundation
Attn: Wilderness News Editors
50 South Sixth Street, Suite 1500
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1498
or email the editor: teaton@EandA.com