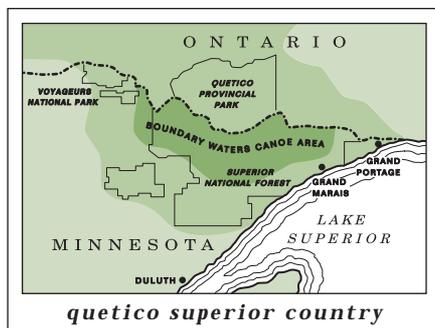


Wilderness News

FROM THE QUETICO SUPERIOR FOUNDATION SPRING 2008



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

"If we can develop love and stewardship, we can look forward to the future with hope and confidence. If we look at our land with reverence, our great knowledge could mean an age of happiness and peace. This is our greatest task, for unless we meet our ecologic crisis and solve its problems as thinking men, there will be nothing to plan for, no utopia, no paradise to regain. If we are able to do this, to look at the earth, not as pioneer exploiters, but through enlightened eyes, only then will the full measure of our evolution be realized.

*Excerpt from Open Horizons
by Sigurd F. Olson*



Wilderness News

Published by the Quetico Superior Foundation

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Summer sunrise: Voyageurs National Park. Photo by Mary E. Lysne.

Sunnier Days on Rainy Lake

By Charlie Mahler, Wilderness News Contributor

There is peace – or at least a cease-fire – in one of Minnesota’s longest-lived environmental and land-use conflicts. Leaders from Voyageurs National Park and the city of International Falls, two entities at odds with one-another since Minnesota’s only National Park was established in 1971, are not only talking politely and genuinely to each other, but also making plans to partner for the long-term.

In a community where conflict over the Park had led to a grinding enmity between townsfolk who bristled at what they considered the Park’s condescending attitude toward them and where Park employees often felt the sting of resentment as they lived and worked in the community, conflict over the 218,000 acre National Park has mellowed. And, while the widely-respected Park Superintendent whom many in the city cite as critical to the recent changes has just retired, the city is set to break ground on a new headquarters building for the Park which it hopes will ultimately spur renewed interest in the Park and in the city of 6,700.

As improbable as the events might seem to people who have followed the decades of hostility between townsfolk and the National Park, word had trickled out of “The Nation’s Icebox” recently of a change in tone between the Park and the community. International Falls, it appeared, had come a long way since the acrimonious Congressional hearing

held there in 1995 where residents, environmentalists, government officials sniped at one-another over the future of the Park in the ‘Falls’ high school gymnasium.

By all accounts, a respectful approach toward local frustrations with the Park by retired Park Superintendent Kathleen Miller, courageous reciprocation by city officials, and widespread recognition of the common ground various stakeholders in the Park shared, cleared a path for what could be a tipping point for the Park and the region.

Proof of the new relationship between the Park and the community – and fond words for Miller – is now in evidence across the city.

In the local paper’s farewell to the Superintendent, the *International Falls Daily Journal* cited, “Miller’s leadership style and empathy for the experiences of many local residents” as allowing her to “set the standard for superintendents of Voyageurs National Park.”

International Falls Mayor Shawn Mason termed what Miller achieved with the community in her short stint as the head of the Park as, “...nothing short of a miracle.”

Even City Councilor Tim “Chopper” McBride, who once co-hosted, with Koochiching County Commissioner Wade Pavleck, a provocative snowmobile drag race adjacent to the *continued on page 3*

A Man of the Trees

By Laura Puckett, Wilderness News Contributor

Jack Rajala has spent most of his life in the forest. He is well known in Minnesota forestry circles as an advocate for white pine restoration and as part of Rajala Companies, his family's business that has logged and milled timber in Itasca County for more than a hundred years. Over the last 25 years he and the company have planted nearly 4,000,000 white pine seedlings on their 35,000 acres. In addition to planting, they have also assiduously cared for each seedling and stand by hand: prepping ground, clearing brush, pruning, and stapling paper caps over each tree's new buds. In the beginning they made their share of mistakes, Rajala admits, but now, he's the author of a book on the subject, *Bringing Back the White Pine*, which explains how to successfully grow these trees despite the obstacles of invasive species, scarce seed sources, and munching deer. As one of the reigning and respected experts on white pine restoration in Minnesota, *Wilderness News* was pleased to recently pull Rajala out of the woods to find out more about what drives his unflagging devotion to the trees.

A child of the Northwoods, Rajala was born in 1939 in a homesteader's cabin, in Bustinogan Township. He grew up in the Bigfork area and then went away to St. Olaf College, where he studied economics. His family encouraged him to go out and take a good look at the world, so he set off for southern California and started a career in finance and accounting. It wasn't until his father fell ill in 1962 that he returned to the Northwoods.

Back amongst the towering pines, Jack realized just how rooted he was to the area, and hasn't left since. He now resides in an old lodge built before the turn of the century, surrounded by 6,000 acres of woodland preserve. As much as possible he shares his time and his home with his five children, four of whom live in the Grand Rapids area, and his eleven grandchildren. He travels to Finland regularly to visit family and to check up on churches he is helping to build in Karelia, the Finnish part of Russia and his family's ancestral homeland. At 69 years old, he is bustling with energy, though he admits "I don't go to a lot of meetings and rant and rave like I used to." He still serves on the Allete/Minnesota Power board of directors, which, he says, "gives me a little outside contact." More and more, Rajala focuses his energies where he's always been most passionate: the woods.

In 1965 when Rajala first began to think about planting white pine, he had to fight with the foresters. They'd tried to plant it, they said: it didn't work. There were too many obstacles, blister rust (an invasive fungus) being the main one. But Rajala looked around the forest and assessed it honestly: if his family's timber company and others like it continued to harvest white pine there would soon be no more white pine to harvest. Part of the reason public attempts at regenerating had failed was because "[public agencies] function on the short-term: short term budgets, short term timelines, short term positions." He's seen that "energy builds behind a certain issue and money gets spent, but then stops. Certain public and legislative initiatives come up, but then they fall off. Most of these things have not been sustained the way they should. The trees are on long term rotation—you can't just give it five or ten years." And so it is that he has devoted a huge chunk of his life and his company's resources to these trees.

Part of what has driven Rajala is his role as a family businessman. "White pine is still the most valuable tree in Minnesota," he says. White pine was how the Rajala Companies got started and it has continued to be their most profitable species. They have planted millions of seedlings in order to keep the species in existence, but the Rajalas are also developing the program so that, over time, they can sustain their business as well. He's honest that times aren't easy for a family owned company: "We've had to downsize a lot. We're constantly trying to find a better business model. But we're going to duke it out." He's pleased his family has been able to build a business that the community is proud of: "I'm proud I've been able to see my family stay together, stay close to something, to come back to something, and that most of us have found a great life here."

Besides the economic factors, Rajala knows "it's just a passion for it" that keeps him going. He can't articulate exactly what it is about the woods and white pine in particular that captivates him, but, he says, "The majesty of them, even when they're young—that means a lot to me emotionally and spiritually. . . . These trees have a way of responding, almost as if they were looking, saying, 'we need you, we need you.'" And so he's there, every day. He is still the company forester and logging superintendent, helping with the hard work of caring for the pines and harvesting them when it's appropriate. When it comes down to it, Rajala is honest that he'd like to retire soon, "but that just means I'll spend more time out there with the trees." It's hard to imagine him doing more than he does already: by his own admission, "What I'm riding high on right now, are two of the most important inventions humanity ever came across: a canoe and a pair of snowshoes. No one spends more time in a canoe or on snowshoes than I. I use them in both my work and my leisure." But, like with planting white pine, if it's possible to be in the woods more, Jack Rajala is certainly the man who will find a way to make it happen.



Jack Rajala. Photo by John Connelly.

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Park and who termed himself a leader of the town's "common-sense radical fringe," volunteered that he will miss Miller.

Somehow, after more than 30 years of acrimony and tension surrounding the Park, much of the rancor and animosity between the town and the park melted into the northern Minnesota soil.

"She's an incredible person," McBride said.

A Change in Tone



Shawn Mason

Kate Miller

The beginning of the change in tone surrounding the Park appears to have come from

small, genuine gestures on the part of leaders on various sides of the park and town divide.

"Kate Miller, when she came onto the scene, I was very suspicious of her," Mason admits today. But the mayor also recalls how she and Miller slowly got to know each other, at the town's Curves fitness center. At one point, unbeknownst to one-other, each had nominated the other for a free spa-pampering contest sponsored by the establishment. "There was this mutual respect which I found very intriguing," Mason said.

Still, when Miller invited Mason to attend a National Park Gateway Communities Conference in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, the mayor declined. "I didn't want to go," Mason confides. "I told people it was my schedule, that I had two small children at home and I just couldn't go. But the truth of it was, I just thought it would be a waste of time."

"There's this hesitancy on the side of a local person who just really couldn't believe what they were hearing," Mason offered. "Go all the way to the East Coast to get brainwashed by the Park Service! I just didn't trust the motives of it. I wasn't ready."

Mason, however, did think enough to send her City Administrator to the conference, which was also attended by County Commissioner Pavleck. In the end, the Shepherdstown conference proved instrumental to the new town/park relationship. Pavleck would return with a changed attitude toward what the Park could mean for the community.

Outreach



Kate Miller

Tim McBride

On a separate track, Councilor McBride's warming to the Park and its top official came

after Miller, not yet the Park Superintendent, reached out to him after he shared a story of his family's relationship with the land and the Park at an economic summit meeting hosted by Mason. McBride told of his family's presence in the area dating to 1895: how one of his great-grandfathers had come to the area in a gold rush; how another great-grandfather had witnessed gunfights in Rainy Lake City; how other members

of his family had traded with the Ojibwa residents of what is now Black Bay.

"I told a story about how I felt," McBride remembers, "and it seemed to impress upon Kate. I got down to the fact that as a little boy, I wasn't mad that the Park was here, but my dad was. Not mad, but he was concerned. But, that I was proven wrong by my dad – more and more and more restrictions, no economic impact, no marketing, more regulations on fish – followed the establishment of the Park," McBride said.

Not long after McBride told his story, Miller became the acting Superintendent of the Park. "On her first day on the job," McBride recounts, "she called Wade and I, and we met her at the Park Headquarters. And, I've never been so impressed in my life."

"She didn't make promises," McBride notes, "but she made sure to tell us that she was going to do everything in her power to break those walls down – those communication walls, the fortress mentality the National Park had."

Indeed, local officials don't point to changes in Park policy so much as note changes in tone that Park officials – starting with Miller at the top – took when addressing local leaders and citizens.

"A lot of local people felt leadership, primarily Superintendents, didn't look at us as good stewards," Mason said. "They looked at us as – I hate to say this because I don't want to offend anybody – looked down their nose at us as uneducated, as not having as much passion for the land, as they did."

A Desire to Work Together

"I had two goals when I applied for the Superintendency," Miller remembers, "and one was to do everything I could to turn around the relationship, not just with International Falls, but with other communities along the Park as well. One of my two real reasons for wanting to be Superintendent was that I saw an opportunity and a need."

Miller, a Minnesota native who believed, "if you're nice to people, they'll be nice to you," made her advances toward community leaders with a clear intent to better relations not just for local residents but for her Park employees as well. If local residents had felt the sting of condescension in the tone of Park officials, Miller herself knew the strain Park employees worked under in a community where many people resented them.

"The staff felt beleaguered after years of living and working in a community where they felt uncomfortable even wearing their uniforms into the grocery store," Miller noted. "And, having either their kids in school or themselves in social circles, clubs, and churches have to fend off hostile questions and comments, even from their friends and family."

Miller agreed that making "human to human" connections broke the ice between town and park, but stressed that the progress made in

recent years is truly rooted in common values.

"When I heard Chopper speak so passionately about his and his family's attachment to Rainy Lake and the land that is now part of the Park and the waters, I just knew we had a common core of values. So many of the people who were angry with the Park shared a deep, deep desire to protect it and preserve it for their children and grandchildren. We were just on such different wave-lengths about it."

Miller made a concerted effort to build bridges toward leaders she thought could readily see the upside of working with the Park. "My philosophy from the beginning was to work in the middle. To work, not with the fringe aspects, not try to change people's minds there on the fringe, but work with the people who could effect change and who were willing to move toward a more positive and productive relationship with the Park," she admitted.

Miller has a special respect for the courage it took Mason, McBride, and Pavleck to step forward regarding the Park. International Falls was a town, Miller noted, where business owners often avoided supporting or promoting the Park for fear of boycotts by local customers.

"Absolutely it took courage," she emphasized. "I admire them as leaders. They stepped up; they took a risk, but they believed it was the right thing to do. They've had tremendous influence. And, what their leadership did – Wade and Shawn and Chopper – was make it possible for the silent ones to relax and exhale and come forward and get involved in some of these projects."

A Change in Approach



Cory MacNulty

Shawn Mason

A decision made nearly five years ago and hundreds of miles from the Park may have

also aided the harmonic convergence of factors that allowed stakeholders in the area to see their shared values rather than their perceived differences. In the first half of the decade, Voyageurs National Park Association (VNPA), an advocacy organization based in Minneapolis, decided to modify its own approach to influencing issues regarding the Park, choosing to eschew, when possible, confrontational means.

"The Board here hired a consultant to look into the future of Voyageurs National Park Association and the role it plays in the park," VNPA's MacNulty explained. "At that time, the board really decided to shift gears a little bit and try to work in a more positive way with the local communities."

An organization better known around International Falls for its lawsuits regarding wilderness designation in the Park and protection of federally endangered timber wolves and bald eagles, took a more cooperative tact. "I would call people up, MacNulty said, "and they'd go, 'What, you want to hear what I have to say?'"

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MacNulty and VNPA, though, are still careful about getting too far ahead of community sentiment during these sensitive times. “How much we are publicly involved with things, is something we’re still navigating,” she admitted. “There’s still some resistance to the community working that closely with the Park. And there are still people who view Voyageurs National Park Association as this extreme environmental group, which we really are not. So we still have to be careful.”

One way that MacNulty and VNPA are working publicly with the gateway communities is through newly created Destination Voyageurs National Park (DVNP), a non-profit effort initiated by Mason to better market the Park to potential visitors. MacNulty serves as the chair of the DVNP board.

MacNulty sees the more agreeable tone in the Park’s gateway communities as vital for successful promotion of the under-visited Park. “When what’s in the paper is always controversy, controversy, controversy, it doesn’t make people go, ‘Oh, that’s where I want to go on my vacation!’ It doesn’t create a very welcoming atmosphere,” she noted.

“VNPA’s goal is to support the Park,” MacNulty stressed, “but also to protect and promote the resources. That’s why we’ve been focusing on these relationships, because I think they really speak to the long-term protection of the resources and moving beyond this era of controversy we’ve been in.”

“On the other hand,” she says, “we’re also very clear that our ultimate mission is to protect the resources of the Park – it matches the ultimate mission of the National Park Service. If it means disagreeing on something, we will, respectfully, disagree. And if it means, someday, using litigation we will use litigation, but it’s certainly not going to be the first tool we pull out of the tool chest.”

A New Spirit



Kate Miller



Tim McBride

The most tangible evidence of the new spirit in the area should soon grace the shore or Rainy

Lake on the east end of town. There, the city plans to erect a new Voyageurs National Park Headquarters and Voyageur Heritage Center, which would develop a neglected strip of waterfront and provide a public-sector anchor for an adjacent lodge and convention center.

“This Heritage Center is very important,” Councilor McBride stressed. “It really is the heritage of this area – the voyageurs, the Métis, the routes, the aboriginals. My family dealt with aboriginals in 1895. That’s the history of this area.”

While funding for Voyageur Heritage Center was left out of this year’s state bonding bill, city officials are hopeful funds for that portion of the project will ultimately be secured, perhaps from federal sources.

A late-summer ground-breaking for the Park

Headquarters, 2,000-seat Irv Anderson Amphitheatre, and the walking and biking trails portion of the project is expected once the National Park Service Director and the federal General Services Administration sign off on the project.

The new Park Headquarters building will be owned by the city, built to suit the Park Service, paid for with revenue bonds, and, after the bonds are paid, rent that the Park Service pays on the building will flow directly into city coffers.

The Voyageur Heritage Center, Miller noted, was initially conceived by Minnesota House Speaker Irv Anderson, of International Falls, as a way to “spite” the Park – co-opting the “Voyaguers” label but not inviting the Park to participate in the endeavor. When the project resurfaced in the new atmosphere – and with the Park in search of a new headquarters – it morphed into the partnership between the city and the Park.

“Our regional office has gone from great skepticism to wholehearted support,” Miller said of the project. “They’ve just been so impressed by how the community earnestly and diligently pursued this. That kind of commitment cannot occur in an environment that is not trusting and where there aren’t some strong mutual goals.”

“We’re going to build that Park Headquarters,” McBride asserted, “and that is an unbelievable partnership.”

Sustainable Change

Miller’s recent retirement, however, hangs a question mark over the durability of new peace. Are the good feelings between the Park and community sustainable without one of the persons critical to their initiation? The current quiet period could prove to be a mere blip in the acrimonious history of the Park and the local community. On the other hand, it could endure and act as a model for other gateway communities and Parks – or even Ely and its wilderness area.

That the détente is founded not so much on policies, but rather on the respectful attitude of the last Park Superintendent and the courage of a handful of elected officials could be a cause for concern.

Miller, though, is hopeful. “I really believe it can [endure],” she said. “Sometimes it takes the initiative of one or two people. Having overcome some of those first communication and relationship hurdles, it’s gone beyond relationships. I think it’s becoming institutionalized in a way that takes it beyond dependency on personalities. Yet, leadership style is always critical to keeping this thing on track. It’s still very sensitive.”

MacNulty, who considers the next few years critical to the relationship, questioned whether the “personalities” aspect of the new relationships was as critical as has been described. “I don’t know how much of that is really the center of the point, or if people were really looking for a change and this was a way to make the change,” she said.

Whether the new Park Superintendent, expected to be named this summer, will approach the

community with a similar attitude is also a question. City officials and others keeping a close eye on the hiring say the Park Service is aware of the need to have leadership that will continue to nurture relations between city and Park.

Miller agrees: “I know the Park Service doesn’t want to go back. They will be very careful in selecting the next Superintendent, so that the work that’s been done will continue in the same vein.”

A derailment off the current track could come from the town side of the relationship too, of course. Some local residents still feel the sting on Park matters, still mourn cabins lost in the purchase of Park land, and are still distrustful of the Park Service. This fall’s municipal elections – where both Shawn Mason and Tim ‘Chopper’ McBride will stand for re-election – could change the city’s leadership on the issue. Pavleck, who stood for re-election to his County Board post last November, however, was re-elected handily.

“People will have an opportunity to have their say on it when Shawn and Chopper run for re-election,” Miller said. “I’m sure they’re anxious to know what the referendum on this question is going to be. I believe their leadership is supported with the exception of a few voices – a couple of them fairly influential. I really think the tide has turned.”

Factors and elements outside the common ground established by city leaders and the Park could also imperil the progress made. Litigation from an environmental advocacy group could underscore the differences rather than the similarities among local stakeholders. An onerous new policy from the National Park Service hierarchy could pit the Park against the community despite local efforts to the contrary. McBride himself stressed that a barbless hook fishing regulation on Park waters, which had been rumored in the past, would prompt him to vociferously protest.

Miller and McBride, though, are generally hopeful about the future. The out-going Park Superintendent even allowed herself to imagine the relationship, well into the future and in the sunniest light.

“I just think this community and the way this Park has preceded with it, could in fact, 15 years down the road, be some kind of a model, because there were thoughtful steps taken all along the way,” she said. “And, there were good results. It was intentional; it wasn’t accidental over a couple of beers after a meeting.”

“I think the team,” Miller said, referring to all the people who met in the middle with her, “could have something to offer to other communities.”

Editor’s Note: The Quetico Superior Foundation would like to applaud the leadership of Shawn Mason, Cory MacNulty, Tim McBride, Kate Miller, Wade Pavleck, and others for creating a cooperative spirit and bringing the National Park Service and the International Falls community together on a positive outlook for the future of Voyageurs National Park and International Falls. □



High Falls on the Namakan River. Photo courtesy of Rainy Lake Conservancy.

As environmental assessment continues on two dams proposed for the Namakan River west of Quetico Provincial Park, an area conservation group is now publicly opposing the project. The Rainy Lake Conservancy, which had previously taken a neutral position regarding Ojibway Power and Energy Group's plans to build dams at Hay Rapids and High Falls, is now against construction.

"Rainy Lake Conservancy does not believe that the Namakan River should be dammed," spokesman Paul Anderson said. "In our view, the Namakan is a unique river, one of the few undammed rivers of its size in Ontario...we are not convinced that its wilderness character should be destroyed by weirs, powerhouses, sluiceways, raised water levels, roads, bridges, transmission lines and disturbance of the landscape caused by construction, in return for 9.6 megawatts of hydroelectric power."

Anderson claims the amount of power to be created and the economic impact anticipated for the local First Nation community do not offset the harms for the project, which may also include interference with the passage of sturgeon along the river.

"The 9.6 megawatts of power will contribute very little to offsetting power required that results from the potential closing of 210 megawatt coal-fired plant in Atikokan," he said. "We have been told at the hearings that the operation of the dams will provide at most only one or two long term jobs, but that the revenue from the dams will be used to stimulate economic development and create other jobs in the community." OPEG, a partnership between Chant Construction of Aurora, Ontario and the Lac La Croix First Nation, has been holding public presentations about the project in the area.

Proponents assert the project will have little environmental impact. "As indigenous people we are a Nation that has always lived and survived in a way that is consistent with the harmony of nature," Lac La Croix First Nation Chief Leon Jourdain said in a statement supporting the project. "We have been taught that we are simply a small piece of the natural environment. As a community, we are committed to ensure that this project maintains a balance of development for our community and harmony with nature."

OPEG is expected to present its Environmental Assessment Screening report at a public meeting in Fort Frances as soon as this summer. A 60-day mandatory review period will follow the report. If no significant concerns are found, OPEG hopes to begin construction on the project before December 2009. If significant concerns are noted, further, independent assessment would be undertaken by the Ontario provincial government.

2008 Brings Few Changes to BWCAW and Quetico Park Permits

For those planning trips to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Quetico Provincial Park, 2008 brings the 30th anniversary of the BWCAW and new fishing regulations to the Quetico. The camping fees for both parks have changed, but the permitting process remains the same.

Permit Fees: BWCAW permits are per trip or seasonal. For a single trip, the adult fee is \$16.00 and the youth fee is \$8.00. An adult seasonal pass is \$64.00 and a youth seasonal pass is \$32.00. The 2008 lottery ended January 10, so now permits are issued on a first-come, first-served basis. Permits are allotted by entry point. To help you plan your trip, a good entry point map available at www.canoeing.com/destinations/bwca/entrypointmap.htm. To reserve permits contact the BWCAW Reservation Center: by mail, P.O. Box 462, Ballston Spa, NY 12020; by fax, 1-518-884-9951; by phone, 1-877-550-6777; or on line at www.bwca.org.

The prices of Quetico permits are based on each traveler's nationality, age, and entry point. Fees range from \$3.00 to \$20.00 per person, per night. The full list of prices is on the Ontario Parks web site at www.parkreports.com/fees/backcountry.php?year=2008.

Quetico Fishing Regulations: Quetico Park regulations have become a bit stricter by prohibiting live or formerly live bait (minnows, worms, etc.) and barbed hooks. Barbless hooks may be purchased or conventional hooks can be adapted by pinching down the barbs. These efforts help prevent contamination of the water by invasive species and uphold the park's catch and release policy. Fishing permits are available at all entry stations.

Crossing the Border: To paddle into the Quetico from the United States a Remote Area Border Crossing (RABC) permit is required. You can apply for an RABC in person at points of entry into Canada, but also by mailing an application to Canada Border Services Agency, 201 North May Street, Thunder Bay, ON, P7C 3P4. More information and application forms are available at www.canoeing.com/destinations/quetico/parkpermit.htm.

Currently, US citizens are not required to have a passport to enter Canada, but when returning to the States they will need to present a government-issued photo ID (such as a driver's license) along with a proof of citizenship (such as a birth certificate). Another option is to present a passport, passport card, or one of various documents that are accepted under the recently enacted Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). The list of documents is posted online at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cbpmc/cbpmc_2223.html. As early as June 1, 2009, only a passport, passport card, or the WHTI compliant documents will be sufficient for re-entry.

Bill Rom the "Canoe King of Ely"

Bill Rom passed away shortly after *Wilderness News* published the 2007 Fall issue and tribute to this legendary canoe guide and environmental advocate from Ely, Minnesota.

Mr. Rom died in his home on Sunday, January 20, 2008. He was 90 years old. Born William Nicholas Rom on December 5, 1917 in Ely. Bill was a graduate of Ely High School, Ely Junior College, and the University of Minnesota. He served five years in the Navy during World War II.

"Above all else, Bill loved his family and the Quetico Superior canoe country wilderness," his daughter, Becky Rom, said after his death.

The family is planning a celebration of Bill's life on August 8, 2008 at 10:30 am – at Camp Widjiwagan's Chapel Point, set among old red and white pines, on the shores of Burntside Lake. The public is welcome.

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events



The Ham Lake Fire as performed in the North House Folk School Summer Solstice Pageant, June 23, 2007.

2008 Summer Solstice Festival

The North House Folk School, located on the Lake Superior harbor, in Grand Marais, Minnesota is celebrating the Summer Solstice with a three day Festival, Friday through Sunday, June 20-22, 2008. This year's special guest and featured presenter is John Jennings, author of *The Canoe, A Living Tradition* and his recently published book *Legacy of the Birch Bark Canoe*.

The festival is a family event with a host of fun activities including craft workshops and demonstrations, the Harbor Side Wooden Boat Display, a Lake Superior Chowder Chowdown luncheon, the Boats-to-Tools Auction, the Solstice Pageant featuring the Good Harbor Hill Players & GAMEPALAJ, a film fest and evening dance, and on Sunday morning the Wooden Boat Parade on the Grand Marais harbor. Admission to the 11th annual Summer Solstice is free.

For more information, to display a boat, or donate tools for the auction, go to www.northhouse.org and click on the special events page.

Looking Ahead to the Gunflint Green Up

In the coming weeks spring will make itself known, and residents of the Gunflint Trail area will be watching especially closely for what green things will sprout up. After last year's Ham Lake fire, which burned 75,000 acres of Superior National Forest and Ontario, the Gunflint Trail Scenic Byway Committee organized a weekend of planting to give the forest a boost towards recovery. Fire plays an important role in forest ecology, but today this northern forest faces significant challenges when regenerating. White pine trees, in particular, have difficulty re-growing without help in the face of hungry deer, invasive pests, and scarce seed sources. Last year white pine got a jump start with 6,000 seedlings, whose donation was arranged by the Quetico Superior Foundation, as part of its White Pine Initiative, which strives to restore the white pine tree to healthy and sustainable populations in the Quetico Superior region.

This year, Gunflint area residents are not just waiting to see what new trees will appear, but they have also organized a second planting for May 2 and 3, called the Gunflint Green Up. The 2007 planting drew 200 volunteers from all over the state, and this year organizers hope for 500 participants to plant the 75,000 seedlings that have already been reserved, thanks again to donations by the Foundation and also Iron Range Resources. Nancy Seaton, one of the event's organizers, stresses that the event is for all those who feel deeply connected to the Superior National Forest. "We are really excited," she says, "about how important this place is to everyone. It's not just for those that live here."

In addition to planting trees, volunteers will be treated to talks on topics such as forest ecology and Gunflint Trail history on May 2. May 3, after spending the day planting, there will be a festive dinner and dance at Gunflint Lodge to celebrate

this investment in our forest's future. Registration is important and must be done by April 22. To do so, visit the Gunflint Green Up web site at www.gunflintgreenup.com or call 1-800-338-6932.

White Pine Initiative

Visit the Quetico Superior Foundation's website to learn more about the White Pine Initiative, the many places to purchase tree seeds, seedlings, transplants and larger trees including white pine, white cedar, and most other northern species. In addition, you'll find information and suggestions on where, what and how to plant and tips for tree growth and care.

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