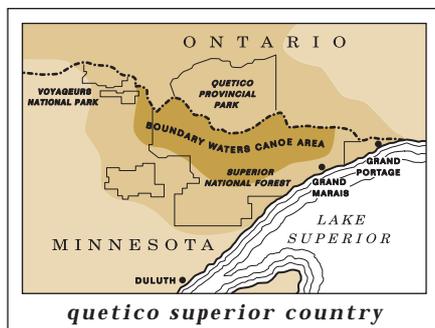


# Wilderness News

FROM THE QUETICO SUPERIOR FOUNDATION SPRING 2011



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

*“Arthur Carhart’s early wilderness thinking was often pragmatic yet his insights into the uses and psychological value of outdoor recreation remain perceptive and important today. He realized that Americans had a paradoxical relationship with the modern world, tearing down and building at a desperate pace while simultaneously dreaming of vacations in the forests and on the shores of quiet lakes. He maintained strong views on the social value of outdoor recreation and spiritual rejuvenation. He wrote, ‘Perhaps the rebuilding of body and spirit is the greatest service derivable from our forests, for of what worth are material things if we lose the character and quality of people that are the soul of America?’”*

– [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net)

## Wilderness News

Published by the Quetico Superior Foundation

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## Old Photos Provide a Peek into History

By Alissa Johnson

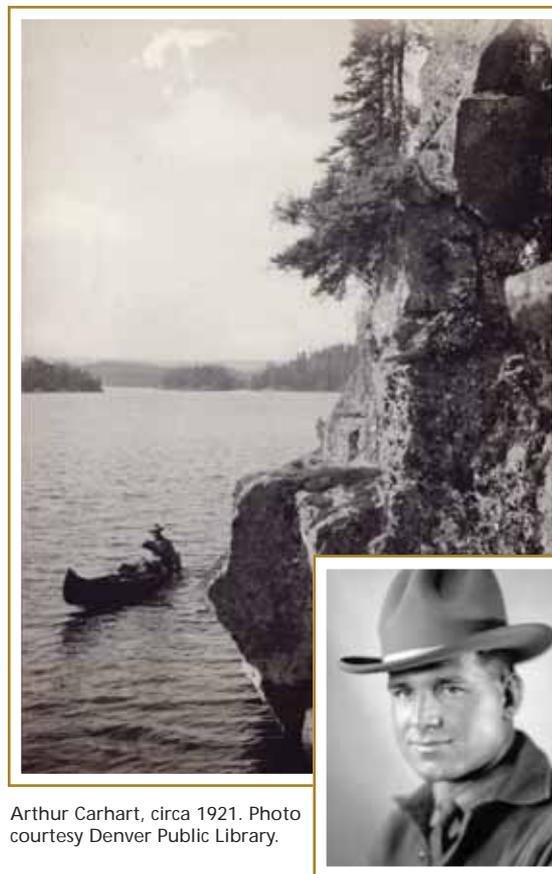
In our last issue, *Wilderness News* published photos from an album uncovered in an attic trunk. They once belonged to Big Bill Wenstrom, who was the last private landowner to leave the Boundary Waters Canoe Area when it became a wilderness in 1964. His family guessed that the photos of canoeists dated back to the 1940s. But thanks to *Wilderness News* reader Lee Johnson, Forest Archaeologist for the Superior National Forest, we now know the pictures date back to the 1920s. Wenstrom was a Forest Service employee at the time, as was landscape architect Arthur Carhart, who took the pictures. The Forest Service hired Carhart to survey canoe country just as the agency was beginning to grapple with the best way to balance ‘quiet’ sports and timber interests. His report would be instrumental in the region’s protection as a roadless area.

“I was surprised that those photos had the five to six digit numbers [on the bottom],” Johnson told *Wilderness News*. “I thought we had the only copies.”

The numbers told Johnson that the photographs had been archived at the regional Forest Service office. They’re now housed at the Iron Range Research Center, which stores about 120 bankers boxes of archival matter for the Superior National Forest Service—maps, letters and photographs, some of which date back to the early 1900s. They catalog the creation of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and include fifty to sixty photographs taken by Arthur Carhart.

Carhart was hired as a Forest Service employee in 1918, and while his service was brief—just a few years—his contribution to wilderness management in northern Minnesota is irrefutable. Together with forest Ranger Matt Soderbeck, he undertook two 24-day canoe trips through Northeastern Minnesota in 1919 and 1921, with the intent of making a management recommendation to the agency.

Established in 1905, the Forest Service was still young, and new to outdoor recreation. As told in *Saving Quetico Superior: A Land Set Apart*, by Newell Searle, in 1915 Congress appropriated money for



Arthur Carhart, circa 1921. Photo courtesy Denver Public Library.

the agency to create a forest recreation program to keep up with the increasingly popular National Parks system. The Forest Service hired landscape architect Frank A. Waugh to recommend just how to do that, and he made three recommendations: “protect natural beauty and scenery; make recreation and forest use equal to timber production and grazing; hire a landscape architect to plan the use of human resources.”

That landscape architect was Carhart. Employed out of the Denver, Colorado office, he first left his mark near Trappers Lake, where the Forest Service was contemplating building summer homes and cabins. But at Carhart’s recommendation, the agency reserved what is now known as the Flat Tops Wilderness Area for recreation and quiet sports.

Carhart’s recommendations for canoe country were similar, suggesting the area be left for canoe recreation with a “reasonable belt of timber along the edge of the water” to maintain scenic beauty. Carhart submitted his report to the Forest Service in 1922, just as the region’s development interests came to a head.

“Right after his plan there was a huge road building controversy in what is now Superior National Forest. Some cities were pushing for a road to be punched through from Ely to the Gunflint Trail, and so Carhart, I think, was obviously tuned into the politics and what was coming down the road. He got ahead of it with the first sort of policy plan,”

*continued on page 2*



May 1921 White Iron Rapids. Ranger Matt Soderbeck loading up for the 24 day trip into the Roadless Area of the Superior National Forest. Photo by Arthur Carhart, and courtesy of Iron Range Research Center collection.

Johnson said. “The little I’ve read about Carhart, he was an interesting individual, politically more on the conservative side of things. He tried not to take heavy political stances on things. He just believed at its core in the benefit of roadless areas. But yet, he took a back seat to the politics that happened after that.”

And it’s true. Carhart didn’t stick around for what became the great roads debate. Funding for his position dried up, and he left the Forest Service. But according to *Saving Quetico-Superior*, his report and departure coincided with a nationwide movement to build national highways. That movement resulted in money being set aside for the forest service to build roads in northern Minnesota, and cities across the north clamored to get in on the action. Three roads were proposed for the Boundary Waters to serve tourism and recreation: Ely to Buyck (what is now the Echo Trail) including a spur to Lac La Croix; an extension of the Gunflint Trail to Seagull Lake, and most controversial, a road to the north of the Boundary Waters that would connect Ely and the Gunflint Trail. But Carhart didn’t leave the scene without ensuring a successor of sorts to take up the fight for a roadless area in northeastern Minnesota.

According to *Saving Quetico-Superior*, he wrote a letter to Illinois landscape architect Paul B. Riis, urging him “to champion the cause because a fresh face could ‘use my lines of argument to a much better advantage than I can myself.’”

Riis accepted that charge, and became president of the Superior National Forest Recreation Association, modeled after Carhart’s San Isabel Recreation Association of Colorado, which had worked for the protection of Colorado’s Trappers Lake area. Lacking its own landscape architect, the Forest Service agreed to consult with Riis and the Superior National Forest Recreation Association as it developed roads and a management plan. But progress was impeded by public debate over the roads and a subsequent movement to increase the size of the National Forest. Finally, in 1926, after four years without any

recommendation from the Recreation Association, the agency developed its own policy modeled largely after Carhart’s 1922 report.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture William Jardine established 640,000 acres of wilderness area eventually called Superior Roadless Area. It divided the Boundary Waters into zones for automobiles, boats and canoes. Most of the area would be set aside for canoe travel, but motorized boats would be allowed on larger lakes along the international border. Cars would be restricted to areas with fewer lakes and streams, and homes and resorts would be built only where roads connected to the area. The road between Ely and the Gunflint Trail would not be built, and the only allowed developments would be waterway and portage improvements.

In many ways, the public debate over land management was far from over. Riis objected to the management of the plan, favoring fewer roads. A 1925 proposal by lumberman Edward Backus to dam parts of the Rainy Lake Watershed threatened to dramatically alter water levels in the Boundary Waters. New activists like Ernest Oberholtzer took up the fight until the passage of the Shipstead Newton Nolan act of 1930, which also echoed some of Carhart’s original recommendations. The Act withdrew all federal lands in the region from homesteading, prevented the alteration of natural water levels and prohibited logging within 400 feet of shorelines in the Superior National Forest—effectively putting an end to Backus’ plan. But the 1926 roadless policy signaled an important shift in land management—social and human uses became just as important as timber production. And as Johnson notes, Carhart’s recommendations led to “some of the first policy coming not from outside but from inside [the Forest Service], promoting the benefit of roadless areas for recreation. Knowing your readership I think it’s really important that the story of Carhart gets out there. Those photos are significant in what is now the Boundary Waters.”

*Wilderness News* can only agree.

The Iron Range Research Center in Chisolm, Minnesota curates archival matter for the Forest Service. According to Lee Johnson, Forest Archaeologist, that includes about 120 boxes of maps, letters and photographs. There are six or seven boxes alone of photographs dating from the 1900s to the 1960s, and all that information is public.

“There are a lot of books in there yet to be written,” as Johnson says. To find yours, visit <http://www.ironrangeresearchcenter.org>

**For More Information** about Arthur Carhart and the creation of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, the following resources are a good start:

Quetico Superior Foundation Web Site:  
<http://www.queticosuperior.org>

*Arthur Carhart: Wilderness Prophet*  
by Tom Wolf

*Saving Quetico Superior: A Land Apart*  
by Newell Searle

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# Devils Cove

## The Most Beautiful Place on Earth

*By Greg Breining*

Lake Superior. Photo by Layne Kennedy.

*Imagine the Coldwell Peninsula—a dark fist jutting from the Ontario shore of Lake Superior, five miles across, with rocky knuckles. Poised on one knuckle, like the stone of an oversized ring, was Foster Island. I sat between the fist and the stone, as the wind whipped the lake into a frenzy of whitecaps.*

I was partway through a two-year project—to take a series of kayak trips around Lake Superior. It was late September. I had hoped to squeeze in one last trip before autumn storms ended my kayaking for the year.

I had set out that morning, paddling to the knobby contours of Pic Island. As the wind rose, I returned to the mainland, taking shelter in the tiny bay behind Foster, and waited for the wind to drop—it usually did in the afternoon—before returning to my car. Instead, the wind blew harder. I sat in perfect calm, but to the right and left, waves pounded the cliffs. I dared not paddle through such seas. Especially alone. I hated the idea of dying anonymously.

With hills and cliffs on three sides, I could tune in the Thunder Bay marine station only by walking around the beach, holding the radio high and tilting it just so. According to the 4 p.m. report, the wind would stay in the south and build through the night and tomorrow, with waves growing to more than 6 feet.

Not far from where I anxiously paced the shore, German prisoners of war had been held at three camps. On my beach, I realized I, too, was a prisoner. With the highway several miles inland, with the wind churning Superior into a froth, where could I go? I set up my tent.

**Day Two.** The morning broke sunny and windy. Whitecaps beat the reefs beyond Foster Island. Still, I could hope. I ate breakfast, struck the tent and packed the boat with the intention of sneaking east through Devils Gap. I could reach the highway at Coldwell.

I wedged into my kayak and stretched the spray skirt over the cockpit. I trembled, remem-

bering how tense I had been in the waves yesterday. I'd feel better, I thought, if I practiced an Eskimo roll.

I pushed off into the sheltered bay. Without another thought, I hit the cold water face-first and a second later hung upside-down, staring upward in disbelief through the clear water at the deck of my boat and the silver sky.

What had I done? Screw up now—then what would happen to my confidence? It annoyed me I was this afraid. I had almost never failed to roll a kayak, even in turbulent waves. But I had not been alone. That was the difference.

I reached my paddle toward the surface, swept slowly, snapped my hips, and popped to the surface. It was that easy. Now I was ready. But as I paddled from behind Foster Island, a swell rolled beneath the boat. The horizon disappeared behind a wall of water. I looked out on a lake in pandemonium and retreated to the bay.

I set my tent again and made lunch. I brewed tea. I read. I paced from one end of my beach to the other. It was 160 yards long; five laps equaled a mile. I made a habit of walking a mile, counting each lap. If I felt anxious, I walked another mile. I cooked sausage, rice and black beans. I smoked a cigar. I listened to the 8 p.m. forecast. Bad news. The wind would continue through tomorrow, with waves of 6 to 10 feet.

As a teenager, I fancied myself a rugged loner. I imagined myself exploring wild country for weeks on end. Then one summer, after a week-end at the lake cabin, my parents drove home to work, leaving me to fend for myself for the

week. Almost immediately, a black anxiety descended, betraying my sense of myself. I remembered that so well because I felt something so very similar now.

**Day Three.** The next morning, a switchy wind cut through my bay. The radio report: waves 6 to 10 feet. Wind still from the south. Thunderstorms likely. There was no decision to be made—no decision except what to have for breakfast.

I began walking the beach early. I talked to myself, at length and with vigor. I made lunch, boiled tea and read travel stories. The 4 p.m. report: more bad news. A gale warning had been issued for western Lake Superior; winds of 40 knots or more. I dragged my kayak nearer the tent. I guyed one peak of the tent to a tree and the other to the boat. The physical preparation was easier than the mental. When would this end?

I decided to walk a mile. Then I walked a second mile. Then a third. And a fourth and a fifth. My wife would be worried. But she would be fine. Worry is not fatal. But I had to keep my mind on the tasks at hand. Don't get hurt. Keep food safe from rain and bears. And look for an opportunity. A good opportunity. That was the greatest danger: to give in to anxiety. Nothing, after all, was wrong.

**Day Four.** The 8 o'clock forecast: Gale warnings for all Great Lakes. Winds ran to 40 knots and waves to more than 13 feet. But something was different. I ran to the end of my beach and looked to the gap between Foster and Pic islands. The wind seemed to have switched

*continued on page 4*

continued from page 3

toward the southwest. If so, I might be able to sneak into Devils Gap. I decided to paddle out and look.

My hands trembled as I struck the tent. Gusts blew across the beach—but it came from the west. Yes. Blow, blow all you want. The wester the better.

I loaded the boat. I looked around camp—fondly, I would say, but my fondness depended on not returning anytime soon. I hopped into the kayak and pushed off. Rounding the point, mere swells surfed my kayak toward Devils Gap. The more dangerous waves ran far out on the lake, a long way off. As I passed between the mainland and Detention Island, the seas fell and the wind died.

Gray fog draped the black rocks and soaring hills. Devils Cove seemed not the least bit devilish, but a paradise of gorgeous wet rocks and the solid colors of creation. I had escaped from the shadows of my own loneliness and emerged, as an eagle flew overhead, into what seemed to me *the most beautiful place on earth*.

Greg Breining writes about travel, science and nature for many Minnesota and national publications. He is the author of *Wild Shore*, *Paddling Minnesota*, *Paddle North* and other books.

## online updates

Check out *Wilderness News Online* for updates to news stories in the print edition, and ongoing news coverage you might be missing. Visit [www.wildernessnews.org](http://www.wildernessnews.org) today to subscribe by email or RSS.

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## along the trail

# On the Scent of Adventure

By Rob Kesselring

***It's the smell more than anything, whether you are varnishing paddle blades in preparation for the upcoming canoe season, or spring cleaning and deliberating on whether to put an old Duluth Pack in the garage sale pile, or maybe you just unrolled a set of Fisher maps for a quick reminisce. When you catch a scent, whatever that scent is, it launches you into a daydream of adventure.***

***An old down sleeping bag put away none too clean (you didn't want to jeopardize the loft by overwashing) has a distinct odor.*** It may remind you of a morning you rose early on Oyster Lake and watched wisps of fog dance across the water, twirling and shape shifting in front of an audience of dark conifers. Thinking only of coffee, you toss back a cover from a pile of axe-split jackpine. The plastic crinkles, and from a few feet away a snort echoes through your camp. You look up to see a whitetail buck, antlers with ten pointed tines sharpened and gleaming, eyes in a wreath of steam, a black nose glistening as it twitches. Only for an instant he hesitates, and then effortlessly, from motionless to a bound, the buck vanishes into the forest. On that morning long ago it seemed as if it was a dream, but today the memory is clear, and as you breathe deeply again, the smell of old nylon and goose feathers transports you back there one more time.

***The thick, sticky scent of linseed oil brings memories of paddling.*** Rollicking down Agnes Lake, zooming with the wind and feeling powerful as the canoe lurches ahead, pulled by the force of the wave. Your hands on the paddle shaft and the palm grip tighten as you watch the water come up nearly to the gunwales before it curls away. You yell to your bowman to paddle hard as you thrust your paddle blade deep into the dark blue and pull the canoe on to the next big roller. The shoreline just a few yards away slides by in a blur. No one will ever believe how fast you came down that long lake but you remember.

***It's sometimes stored in a kitchen drawer but it doesn't really belong there.*** It's not the smell, but the heft of the fillet knife that conjures up Boundary Waters dreams. You might use the knife to slice a tomato, but your mind is somewhere else. It's up on Lac La Croix. Pink streaks in the northern sky are the last gasp of a sun reluctant to give in to the darkness. You surrender and admit it is time to paddle back to camp, but just as you begin to reel in the Lindy Rig, first a subtle tap and then another. You throw open the bail and let the fish take the line. And then, with your index finger tightly clamping the line to the cork you sweep the rod and set the hook. With a turn of the reel handle, a snap of the bail signals that a fight with an old bulldog walleye is on. You wouldn't have found the campsite if your buddies hadn't built a bright fire, but they did. It was after midnight on the blade face of an old beavertail paddle, when the Walleye relinquished its flesh to the same tomato knife in your grasp today. It was another hour before the coals of the campfire were just right and the fillets danced in the hot grease of your skillet. Was it dinner? Or was it breakfast? Who cares? It was a night you will never forget.

***The smoky tarp is pungent even after all these years.*** Somehow it is always your tarp that is strung taut over the campfire. How many days were spent under that tarp? Eyes rasped by smoke, feet wet, a chilled damp wind cutting through your jacket. But the bite of the cold was softened. Your friends were there, quick with a story, a joke, an observation. Some of those friends are gone now but their comments rattle through your brain, nicknames reserved only for camp, bonehead moves you hoped would be forgotten, but bring a smile today. Friends who teased you, saw you through the rough patches and helped you find meaning in work, satisfaction in family and fire in your belly. Good smells, good times, good friends, a good place, the wilderness of Quetico-Superior.



Photo by Dan Cooke.



Building a skin-on-frame canoe at Como Lake pavilion; from left to right, boatbuilders Soua, Cham and Kong.



UBB skin-on-frame canoes headed from Kawishiwi to Square Lake in the BWCAW.



Malberg to Koma Lake portage; standing left to right: Soua, Brian, Phil, Joe, Cody, Cham and Cole; Kong is kneeling in front.

## Building Wooden Canoes for a Rite of Passage

By Phil Winger, photos courtesy of Bob Anderson

**Picture yourself venturing out for the first time into the wilderness of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Imagine the combination of serenity and wonderment you experience as you ply these pristine lakes and rivers, knowing that you are carrying all you need to survive in a sleek, seventeen-foot, skin-on-frame canoe. Now imagine that you just built that canoe with your own hands over the course of eight days. For six teenage apprentices with Urban Boatbuilders, this was the culminating event in the summer of 2010.**

It's June 21, 2010 and the sun is just coming up. The last thing you might expect from six teenagers at this hour is bustle. But here they are, loading a truck with a steam box, block planes, and neatly stacked pieces of wood. Building wooden canoes is not new to these youths, but this time they know the stakes are higher. They are going to build two canoes at the Como Lake pavilion in St. Paul, under the public gaze of hundreds of strangers. Their goal is to launch them in just eight days. However, the true test, and the standard to which they must build, is that these canoes along with two others they'd previously built are taking them on a five day trip into the BWCAW. Most of these teens have never been camping, some have never left the city, two have never paddled a canoe, but here they are building boats that will carry them into the wilderness.

This event is an opportunity for both the apprentices and the community. These teenagers had been recruited from correctional facilities in the metro area. Building a wooden boat in public gives them an opportunity to showcase a set of unique, positive, skills to average citizens, who in turn, are exposed to an inspiring creative process— building a skin-on-frame canoe. It's public art with a social conscience. These young adults have probably never been recognized by the citizenry for something positive, which can have a lasting impact on their future choices and behavior. The public, for their part, will perhaps become more open to the possibility that wayward youth are capable of greatness when provided with the right tools.

Eight working days after the first rib was bent, a small crowd has gathered at the edge of Como Lake to witness the first real trial of these two strange vessels with lashed wooden framework and translucent skin. A few words of acknowledgment are shared, and the canoes glide out into the water, carrying the builders and their dreams. It is the first on-water experience for a couple of the apprentices, and their first step in preparing for the challenges of a wilderness trip.

Now, flash forward to August 4, 2010. The apprentices are loading gear into their newly-built canoes on the shore of Lake Kawishiwi, near Tofte. By now they've refined their paddling strokes, practiced water rescues, and even a couple mock portages in the Midway area of St. Paul. But their mentors have not prepared them for the feeling of those first few

minutes, and days, paddling out into the wild. Some things are best learned by the experience alone.

The first day out, there are four short portages, and then suddenly a race against the darkening clouds over Lake Kawaschong to find a campsite. On land, everyone pitches in to get the tents up, and soon, dinner is underway. Before the evening concludes the fishermen in the group catch five fish and Brian reads a short story with everyone huddled around the campfire. It's not exactly the scene you might picture for six youths on probation.

The next morning one apprentice assumes the role as group leader, responsible for coordinating campsite pack-up, navigation, and set-up in the evening. He is also at least partially responsible for coaxing the crew through the eight portages that bring them to an isolated spot on the Kawishiwi River. It's a long day, but each apprentice finds it within himself to go the distance, taking turns doubling back on portages to help the team, without prompting. The day ends with some well deserved plunges off a high rocky shore. The trip journal for the night reads:

*"We set up camp at this cool little beach camp. Later on Kong, Cham, Phil, Brian and I jumped off a cliff. It was scary but fun."*  
– Cole, 17

*"The stars were beautiful, never seen that much stars in my whole life. The Boundary Waters was my first real camping trip because there were no electronic devices or cars near by. We had to carry everything that we brought to the campsite...The most amazing thing was jumping off a 20 foot cliff. Man, we were crazy. It was a great experience living four days in the wilderness."*  
– Kong M., 18

The next two days of paddling, fishing, and camaraderie pass quickly. The apprentices leave the wilderness with a new sense of their own capability, and the capability of the craft they built. For these youths, the benefits are incalculable, and only time will tell if the wilderness is powerful enough to change the trajectory of a young life.

**To learn more about the Urban Boatbuilders mission, visit <http://www.urbanboatbuilders.org>**

*Editor's note. Supporting positive youth development through the building and use of boats, Urban Boatbuilders in St. Paul, Minnesota, is a youth development agency that works with teens and kids-at-risk to build new strengths in their lives.*

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## Wilderness News

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[www.queticosuperior.org](http://www.queticosuperior.org)

## Mining Update

By Charlie Mahler

While industry leaders, environmental activists, and northeastern Minnesota stakeholders await publication of the revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement for PolyMet Mining's proposed copper-nickel and precious metals mine, mining proponents and environmental activists continue to maneuver and skirmish ahead of what could be a new era in mining for the Quetico-Superior region.

PolyMet and other firms are eager to develop a rich mineral resource locked underground near the southern limit of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, near the South Kawishiwi River. Environmental activists are concerned that mining ore from its sulfide-bearing rock could cause serious acid drainage issues for northeastern Minnesota's lakes and rivers.

Ahead of the release of the new Draft EIS, expected later this year, PolyMet has tweaked its milling plans for the project. Originally, ore mined at their planned open pit mine near Babbitt, MN, was to be refined into finished copper at the operation's mill in Hoyt Lakes. In a move which would save \$127-million and reduce waste and emissions, PolyMet said, the company now intends to produce a high-grade copper concentrate at the mill. The company still intends to produce nickel-cobalt hydroxide and precious metal precipitate products as originally planned.

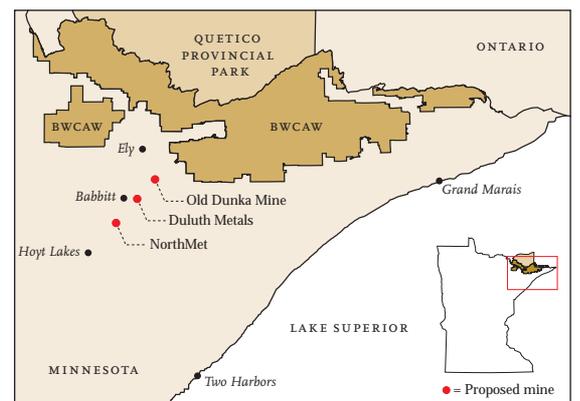
Duluth Metals, another company hoping to develop a rich deposit of copper-nickel resources just south of the BWCAW near Spruce Road, recently acquired Franconia Minerals Corporation which had itself probed for precious metals under Birch Lake on the South Kawishiwi River. Duluth Metals, is backed by Chilean mining giant Antofagasta.

Meanwhile, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce has filed suit seeking to loosen water quality standards in areas where wild rice is grown, saying current regulations are too restrictive and not based on sound science. The suit claims the limit on sulfates to 10 milligrams per liter of water in lakes and rivers where wild rice is grown is overly restrictive to the mining industry. At press time, the Minnesota House is debating a measure that would increase the standard to 250 milligrams per liter.

Environmental advocates, on the other hand, say the limits, which have been in effect since 1973 but only recently enforced, are backed by a legitimate 60-year-old study which showed wild rice stands suffering at sulfates levels greater than 10 milligrams per liter. Wild rice stands become compromised when bacteria converts sulfates into hydrogen sulfide, which damages plants.

Environmentalists are also concerned about drainage of sulfates, acid, toxic metals, and other pollutants from the waste piles of the abandoned Dunka Mine, an iron mining operation near Birch Lake that exposed sulfide-bearing rock in the 1960s. The drainage of pollutants from the site coupled with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency purportedly lax oversight of the situation has advocates concerned about the state's ability to oversee the large copper-nickel mines proposed for the area.

Mining skeptics have also called for the track record of one of PolyMet's financial backers, Glencore International AG, to be scrutinized when it considers permitting of the company's operation. According to group Water Legacy, the Swiss company founded by pardoned U.S. tax exile Marc Rich, has a troublesome history of environmental, economic, and worker-related problems that should be weighed by regulators in Minnesota.



Finally, five environmental groups are suing the State of Minnesota over a \$4-million loan that Iron Range Resources approved for PolyMet Mining. The suit claims that the loan violates Minnesota environmental law which, the claimants say, prohibits state agencies like Iron Range Resources from investing in projects prior to environmental review and permitting.

Iron Range Resources approved the loan late last year to help PolyMet buy two pieces of land it intends to swap with the U.S. Forest Service for the Superior National Forest land where they intend to develop its mine.

Issues determining the future of copper-nickel mining in Minnesota will likely return to the top of the news late this year after the redone Draft EIS is released. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources are preparing the document jointly. The rewrite of the comprehensive document comes after the federal Environmental Protection Agency deemed the initial Draft EIS "Environmentally Unsatisfactory-Inadequate."

### What do you think?

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