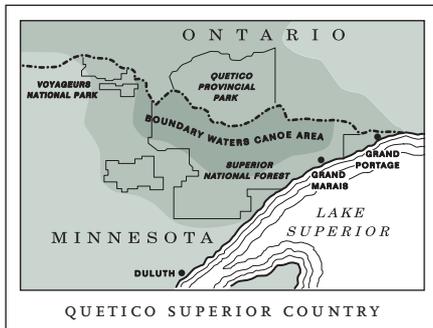


Wilderness News

FROM THE QUETICO SUPERIOR FOUNDATION WINTER 2002



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

"I named this place Listening Point because only when one comes to listen, only when one is aware and still, can things be seen and heard. Everyone has a listening point somewhere. It does not have to be in the north or close to the wilderness, but some place of quiet where the universe can be contemplated with awe."

— Sigurd F. Olson



Wilderness News

Published by the Quetico Superior Foundation
Frederick Winston, President
Charles A. Kelly, Vice President
Dodd B. Cosgrove, Secretary-Treasurer
Walter E. Pratt, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer
James C. Wyman, Treasurer

Directors

Jonathan S. Bishop	Walter E. Pratt
John P. Case	R. Newell Searle
Dodd B. Cosgrove	Dyke Van Etten Williams
Edward M. Hall	Frederick Winston
William R. Hibbs	Elizabeth W. Wyman
Charles A. Kelly	James C. Wyman

Design: Eaton & Associates Design Company
Printed on 100% recycled paper with soy-based inks

BWCA Gateway Areas and Rare Species to be Protected

By Diane Rose, Wilderness News Contributor; Photography by Robert J. Hurt/TPL

Thanks to Jim Brandenburg, other owners, and The Trust for Public Land, hundreds of northwoods acres – including sanctuaries for rare plants, areas used by wolves and moose and key entryways to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area – are expected to be transferred to the U.S. Forest Service this year and in 2003 via The Trust for Public Land's planned purchase of five privately owned parcels.



Fernberg-Snowbank crossroads; 560 acres will be protected.

Three of the parcels are owned by internationally acclaimed nature photographer Jim Brandenburg, who lives in Ely, Minn. They are:

- A key visual approach to the BWCA, encompassing 560 acres at the junction of Snowbank Lake Road and Fernberg Road, where the southern route goes to Lake One and the northern route goes to Snowbank Lake.
- 33 undeveloped acres adjacent to the 20-mile Fernberg corridor.
- A 15-acre site near Fernberg Road that had been platted for eight single-family homes, and which currently is home to a number of important and unique plant species.

Two other parcels are to be included in the TPL purchase, which will total nearly 700 undeveloped acres. They are the Lake McFarland entry to the BWCA at the end of Arrowhead Trail, which includes 1,100 feet of shoreline, and Iron Lake, a 67-acre wilderness camping area at the edge of the BWCA near the end of the Gunflint Trail.

Without the TPL's intervention, there is a high likelihood of commercial or residential development on some of the parcels. TPL expects to acquire the land between April and September of 2002 and will

hold it until federal appropriations are secured. The nonprofit organization's conservation real estate experts act as liaisons between landowners, public agencies and local businesses. Its federal affairs office in Washington, D.C. works to leverage local support with state and federal resources for land conservation.

"Much of this property was on the Forest Service's priority list, but they hadn't really pursued it," said Shaun Hamilton, TPL's St. Paul-based Northwoods Initiative director. "Thematically, these parcels make a nice package and include the largest privately held piece of land in the Fernberg corridor. We were a catalyst and a facilitator, engaging the landowners to be part of the solution. Many property owners want their land protected from future development, but they get discouraged when they discover it can take years to sell things to the government. They often want to protect their privacy and don't want these transactions to become subject to public debate and governmental hearings."

TPL can step in and provide what Hamilton calls a "land and financial bridge," entering into option agreements, working with Congressional delegations to secure federal appropriations and

continued on page 3



Rare Species Watch: The Three-Toed Woodpecker

By Muir Eaton and Andy Jones,
Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior,
University of Minnesota

The 1999 blowdown in the BWCAW damaged many acres of undisturbed boreal forest, destroying the nesting habitats for many species of birds. The Three-toed Woodpecker, (*Picoides tridactylus*) however, is benefiting from this disturbance twofold. Their preferred habitat is disturbed areas within coniferous forests, but recently-burned conifers are an added attraction. Damaged conifers become home to many insects, and this abundant food source attracts Three-toed Woodpeckers.

This species is native to the boreal forests of North America and Eurasia (the only woodpecker species found on both continents). In North America, they are restricted to the Rocky Mountains in the west and Canada in the east. One of the few places where this bird occurs in the eastern United States is here, in the Boundary Waters. This species can be difficult to locate due to its silent habits and cryptic coloration. However, placing yourself in the proper habitat with careful observation will greatly increase your chances of finding this elusive bird.



Illustration by David Sibley

The Three-toed Woodpecker has a black appearance overall, and is a little smaller than the familiar American Robin. The males sport a yellow cap (rather than red, which is seen in most other woodpeckers). Unfortunately, this species is quite similar to the Black-backed Woodpecker, which is also found in this region. As its name implies, Black-backs have an entirely black back, whereas the Three-toed has white barring on its back. Additionally, Three-toeds have two white stripes on the face; the Black-backed has only one.

On your next trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, if you see a dark woodpecker with a yellow cap and white stripes on the back, you are looking at a male Three-toed Woodpecker.

Forest Service Hopes 2002 Will be Better Year for BWCA Burns

Skiers and snowmobilers may be praying for more snow this winter, but officials in charge of the large backlog of prescribed burning in the Boundary Water Canoe Area (BWCA) say drier conditions mean greater opportunities for burning this spring.

Weather conditions will dictate progress on completing burns during 2002 and beyond, said Jean Bergerson, fire information officer for the Minnesota Interagency Fire Center (MIFC). An earlier start should increase the acreage that can be burned this year, she said.

“In absolutely ideal conditions, we would begin burning in late May or early June,” Bergerson said. “It’s impossible to speculate how things will go. The weather forecasters have been saying since September that we’d have normal temperatures and precipitation, which we haven’t had, and they’re predicting a normal spring. The unique thing this year is that it has snowed and then melted during the winter.”

In late January, snow cover in the blowdown area was at the 40th percentile, Bergerson said, which is just below normal.

First on the list for spring burning are top priority sections totaling 15,000 acres along the Gunflint Trail, as well as 2,000 acres near Crescent Lake.

Over the next several years, the Forest Service plans to burn 75,000 acres within the 375,000 acres (out of 1.1 million total acres in the BWCA) that were affected by the blowdown storm in July 1999. During that storm, highly unusual straight-line winds over 90 miles per



Iron Mash prescribed burn took place on September 27th and 28th.

hour snapped off and uprooted trees in a 477,000-acre swath that swept across the Superior National Forest, creating fuel supplies that continue to dry and add to the danger of uncontrollable wildfires.

Unfortunately, prescribed burning within the BWCA is off to a slow start. The goal for 2001 was to burn more than 4,000 acres in the BWCA, but the environmental impact statement for the burns was not approved until late summer and burning didn’t begin until late September. The burns completed last fall were 313 acres along the Brule River and a 192-acre tract at Skipper Lake, 298 acres on the Liam Grade and the 109 acre tract at Iron Mash Lake. Approximately 900 additional acres were burned outside of the BWCA boundaries. Other high-priority burns were put on hold in mid-October because of wet weather. All areas that were on the drawing board last year – including the 2,600 acre Kekakabic Lake and 2,500 acre Magnetic Lake tracts – are on hold until spring, with the larger tracts to be burned next fall.

A January 2002 storm recovery update memo from the MIFC included the following details:

- During the 2001 season, there were “a few small (fire) starts in blowdown but none exceeded a few acres thanks to quick suppression.”
- Approximately 12,000 acres of fuel burning and removal – 86 percent of the total amount planned – has been completed outside the BWCA boundaries.
- The Forest Service added fire staff and equipment to its suppression resources and increased its training and communication preparations to be “first responders” in case of a BWCA fire emergency.

This winter, Forest Service officials are continuing their work on detailed plans for the upcoming burns. The plans include resource surveys, identification of ideal weather conditions, fire behavior predictions and plans for communication, public notification, logistics, traffic, medical emergencies, traffic and post-burn monitoring.

For more information, people can visit the DNR’s Web site at www.ra.dnr.state.mn.us. □

Prescribed Burns Within the BWCA

Fall 2001	(in acres)
Completed	900
FTU 201/Liam Grade	298
Skipper Lake	192
Iron Mash	109
Brule River	313
Spring 2002	
Goal	4,900
Bower Trout	1,027
Crocodile Lake	731
Rum/Sled	398
Meads Lake	1,600
Meditation Lake	130
Three Mile Island	1,034
Long-Range Plan	
Goal	75,000

helping to handle title and legal matters and appraisals for the owners.

Brandenburg, who owns a total of 1,500 acres in the area, said Hamilton approached him last year after reading a magazine article the photographer had written. Brandenburg had purchased the land piece by piece from a family that had acquired it more than a century ago. With the goal of preserving his holdings in their natural state, he approached the Forest Service but was told they didn't have a budget for such an acquisition. He had started working with a realtor and selling small pieces to people he knew and trusted. Brandenburg praised TPL's efficiency in finding a way to help him protect the land, which he has used as a "picture farm" for decades.

"I wanted the (Fernberg) corridor to remain special and it was more land than I needed or could afford to keep," Brandenburg said. "My long-term goal is to keep some of it for my kids and grandkids and get the rest into public ownership. I care about TPL and plan to donate a good part of the proceeds to them. Also, I have a nice home and studio here known as Ravenwood that I hope will eventually become a conference center."

TPL, which is dedicated to protecting natural and historic resources for future generations, is becoming increasingly active in northern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin and Michigan's upper peninsula. The organization's Northwoods Initiative was launched in 2000. To date, TPL has helped to protect 16,000 acres within the Superior National Forest – areas which last year included a popular island in Moose Lake near Ely

and other land along the undeveloped shoreline of Iron Lake on the Gunflint Trail.

"There are a number of opportunities on the horizon that could be significant, and we're developing ways to more closely monitor parcels that may be coming on the market," Hamilton said. "Ely and the BWCA is the heart and soul of our Minnesota northwoods focus." □



Iron Lake; 67 acres will be protected on the North side including the small bog lake.



McFarland Lake; 1,100 feet of shoreline will be protected on the North shore adjoining the BWCA Pine Lake access.



Birchbark Canoes of the Fur Trade

"Kent has spent twenty years doing invaluable research, the latest example of which is a fascinating two-volume reference work, *Birchbark Canoes of the Fur Trade*. He has combined the exactitude of his training with a passion for paddling and adventure to research existing examples of ancient canoes...which should prove invaluable to builders, museums, and anyone else with a strong interest in the history of canoeing."

– *Canoe and Kayak Magazine*

Tim Kent is an independent scholar and lecturer living in Ossineke, Michigan. His published works include: *Ft. Pontchartrain at Detroit; A Guide to the Daily Lives of Fur Trade and Military Personnel, Settlers, and Missionaries at French Posts*, and *Tahquamenon Tales, Experiences of an Early French Trader and his Native Family*.



The Cabin at Listening Point

By Bob Olson; 1974 Photo by Al Cooper

Grey with age, flanked by a granite chimney, nestled in the woods beside a great moss and lichen covered boulder, the little cabin looks like part of the scenery itself, private, remote from the world of man and machine, of clocks and watches, a haven of peace and quiet. Yet, the little cabin was produced by the turmoil and tensions of its own time almost fifty years ago. And, although hidden at the base of a rocky point of land on Burntside Lake near Ely in far away northwestern Minnesota, it is, perhaps, the most famous and photographed cabin in the country.

The story of Listening Point goes back to the days when the President's Committee for the Quetico-Superior was fighting for the Air Ban, the buy-out of resorts on the border lakes, and the framing of a national Wilderness Bill in

Congress. Tempers on both sides had been worn raw from years of local opposition to what was seen as outside interference in their country, their livelihoods while the iron-range mines were beginning to shut down. The bitter battle raged between friends, families, communities, north and south, east and west, from the media to Congress, to the courts, and to national politics. By 1956 the Canadians were involved. It was a time when Sig Olson, working with the President's Committee for the Quetico-Superior, was on the front lines both in Ely and in Washington, D.C.

It was a time when Sigurd Olson sought for some sanctuary away from the conflict and turmoil. He was being vilified in the press and shunned on the streets of his own town. During 1956, he hiked the country around Ely in his spare time looking for a quiet place where he could remember and experience again what he had loved and sought to preserve of the North Country and his own soul. He eventually found it on "a bare, glaciated spit of rock" on the south shore of Burntside Lake near Ely. In a very real sense, his search was pilgrimage, the last pages of a lifelong story of the search for his own holy grail. So that he wrote about it and what it meant to him in his second book. He titled the book *Listening Point* after the name he chose for the land itself, because, he wrote, "only when one comes to listen, only when one is aware and still, can things be seen and heard."

He did not mean for Listening Point to become famous, but it has been from the begin-

ning and has remained so ever since. Indeed, Listening Point has become the Walden Pond of the North, beloved by generations. It has become a place of pilgrimage to others. People come alone, with friends, with families, and in groups, always with awe and respect.

It was not surprising that, after his death, the preservation of Listening Point became a popular cause and concern. As a result, family and friends established the Listening Point Foundation, Inc. in 1998 to which the family then donated the property. The object of the Foundation is twofold: to preserve the natural and historic integrity of Listening Point for the pleasure and education of future generations, and to continue Sigurd Olson's life work of wilderness educations.

The years of work between Sig and the Quetico-Superior Committee and its successor, the Quetico Superior Foundation have continued into the era of Preservation. After many years, the little cabin began to need repair, especially with the roof where the picturesque shakes were on the verge of disintegration. It was a job that had to be done but, for the fledgling Listening Point Foundation, an expensive one. It appealed for help and, in 2001, the Quetico Superior Foundation provided the much needed funding. That, plus the volunteer work of three young men from Hayward, Wisconsin, did the job. Now, thanks to them and the Quetico Superior Foundation, the little cabin will continue to speak quietly about the wilderness for those who come to listen.

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Minneapolis, MN
Permit No. 3479

Wilderness News

Winter 2002

BWCA Gateway Areas to be Protected	1
Update; 2002 BWCA Burns	2
Rare Species Watch.....	2
The Cabin at Listening Point	3
Birchbark Canoes.....	3
Update; Voyageurs Management Plan	4

Voyageurs Management Plan Takes Effect as Snowmobiling/Wolf Protection Lawsuit Looms

By Diane Rose, Wilderness News Contributor

It's official: a new long-term management plan for Voyageurs National Park has been signed and adopted by the National Park Service following a 30-day comment period which ended in mid-November.

Voyageurs, which is Minnesota's only national park, encompasses 218,000 wilderness acres immediately west of the much larger and more heavily trafficked Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA).

The new Voyageurs National Park General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement identifies issues that need to be addressed over the next 10 to 20 years and contains recommendations for further planning. It calls for setting up a system for people to fill out free, voluntary permits when they enter the park, in order to more accurately gauge how heavily the park is being used. The plan supports current restrictions governing snowmobiles, sea-planes and houseboats, as well as the ban on personal watercraft. Within the park, 110 miles of trails and 80,000 acres of lake surface are open to snowmobiling.

Ironically, the three-year process that led to adoption of the plan ended just as a new controversy involving restrictions on motorized craft erupted. On November 28, park officials issued a

press release stating that 11 bays within the park, or 4,667 total acres of lake surface, would be reopened to snowmobiles and other public uses because a new, unpublished study by Dr. Rolf Peterson of Michigan Technological University "found no significant correlation between wolf activity and the 11 bays closed to human use. Questions remain, however, on the value of closed lake surfaces to wildlife and the effects of human activity on wildlife."

The release quoted Voyageurs Superintendent Barb West: "Although we now know much more about park wolves than when we initiated the protection areas, what we know is not enough to warrant further closures."

On December 21, the Voyageurs Region National Park Association (VRNPA), joined by 11 other environmental groups, gave the Park Service a required 60 days notice of their intent to sue over the snowmobile policy reversal. Jennifer R.S. Hunt, executive director of the VRNPA, said her organization's opposition to reopening the bays is based on several factors, including the following:

- The agency with authority to take such action is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Species office, not the Park Service.
- Peterson's study has not been published.
- The park's news release indicated that the study found that wolves in Voyageurs have significantly higher stress levels (as measured in hormones in fecal samples) than wolves living on Isle Royale, which does not allow snowmobiles.

The bays had been closed since 1992 to 'protect lake surface areas near the shoreline where gray wolves, which are an endangered species, hunt white-tailed deer. The closures were ordered after park researchers determined in the late 1980s that snowmobile use in remote bays disrupt wolf hunting and feeding activity.

During the time the park's new management plan was being developed, a group of Voyageurs area business owners and elected officials continued their push to lift restrictions on motorized vehicles in Voyageurs and delay implementation of the plan. This group cites economic development and attracting more visitors to the park as its objectives. □

SPARKS FROM THE CAMPFIRE



Dear Sirs,

We just received the Fall Issue of Wilderness News. We are strictly opposed to lifting any ban on jet skis, snowmobiles, etc. in Voyageurs National Park. Please let us know the best way to keep motorized equipment out.

*Jim & Diane Malcolm
Princeton, MN*

Dear Sirs:

Your Fall 2001 "Wilderness News" issue achieves a beautiful and inviting new level of graphic design – crisp, large, color photos and maps; two colors of type; distribution of subjects into insets; larger size and appealing color of the paper – all together they make it a "great leap" forward. I am sure that it will significantly increase your impact and be well worth the extra cost. Bravo!

I called our local bookstore and ordered a copy of "Our Wounded Wilderness."

I want to be sure to continue to receive "Wilderness News."

Again, congratulations on your outstanding "new look." And as always I am deeply grateful for your ongoing efforts.

*Your sincerely,
Eric Carlson*

We welcome your feedback; if you have comments, or would like to request a subscription, please contact:

Quetico Superior Foundation
50 South Sixth Street
Suite 1500
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1498