



Wilderness News



FROM THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR FOUNDATION • FALL 1974

One of a Kind

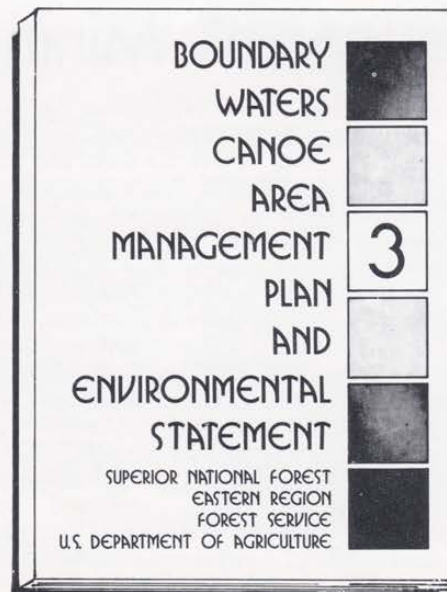
One of a Kind is the title of the new BWCA Management Plan. Environmentalists have read it as avidly as if it were a best seller. *One of a Kind* has drawn mixed reviews.

"Preserve and perpetuate the primitive character of the area, particularly the lands with unique water-related characteristics in the vicinity of lakes, streams, portages and trails," summarizes the standing Forest Service philosophy for this region. The new plan hews closely to this mark. Its main features are:

1) *Continuation of the Portal and Interior Zones* within the BWCA. About 100,000 acres now within the Portal Zone will be transferred to the Interior (no cutting) Zone in 1975. With this transfer, the Interior Zone will contain 90% of the lakes in the BWCA.

2) *Restricted Motor Use*. The 19 motorboat routes within the BWCA will remain. Increased motorized use has "complicated primitive recreation resource management," says the Forest Service. To reduce conflicting uses, the size of motors will be regulated. A few large lakes will have motors up to 25 horsepower. The remaining motor lakes restrict the size of motors to 10 horsepower or less. Under special permits, the five mechanical portages (Four-Mile, Prairie, Beatty, Loon and Trout-Vermillion) will continue to operate. No more permits for personal vehicles on the Four-Mile portage will be issued. Although motorboats remain, the snowmobile will be banned in 1979-80.

3) *Regulation and distribution of visitors in 1975*. To cope with dramatically



increasing use (25% increase, 1970-73), the Forest Service intends to limit, regulate and otherwise distribute visitors in congested areas. This will overcome crowding and help preserve the solitude that canoeists seek. The number of visitors on a particular lake will be regulated to meet its "carrying capacity." For visitors seeking a highly primitive experience, the Forest Service intends to identify "Remote Areas" that are seldom visited. These areas have few readily navigable streams and lakes, fewer trails, and no improvements.

4) *Forest management* "that results in a landscape with beauty and utility." Natural forests have both a scientific and cultural value. Within the Interior Zone, fire suppression has produced vegetational changes that might not otherwise occur. If allowed to continue, the forest will lose much of its diversity

in plants and animals. Through careful planning, the Forest Service hopes to restore fire to the forest ecosystem. First it will accelerate fire research and fire control training. Then, it will identify areas, fuels, and weather conditions where prescribed fires or wildfires can be allowed to burn without endangering public safety.

Criticism of this plan is widespread. In Ely — where "Sierra Go Home" stickers adorn truck bumpers — the plan is criticized for going too far. *The Ely Echo* headlined the snowmobile ban as: "Locals Lose BWCA Battle With Forest Service." A local lumberman advocates increased logging — even in the Interior Zone — as the only way to manage the forest. Those who oppose commercial logging, he stated, don't care "how a forest is ravaged as long as the wood is not put to any good use."

Environmentalists and organizations criticize the plan because it does not go far enough to remove the conflicting and non-wilderness uses. Of particular concern is logging of virgin forests within the Portal Zone. Some have criticized the Forest Service for its "ambivalent management philosophy."

Forest Service officers are also divided on the merits of the plan. A few of them concede that it does not go far enough toward wilderness status for the BWCA. Others simply shrug their shoulders. One officer said "it must be a pretty good plan because nobody is pleased with it." With this new plan, the BWCA will remain one of a kind. Not only is it the only canoe-country wilderness, but it is also the only wilderness area where non-wilderness uses are perpetuated.

Logging Ban in BWCA Upheld

On Monday, June 10, the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the ruling of the Minnesota District Court placing a temporary injunction on logging within the BWCA. The suit seeking the injunction was brought by the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group against a group of Minnesota paper mills which want to continue logging operations in the BWCA. The MPIRG "requested a temporary and permanent injunction against any further logging in the BWCA until the Forest Service completes an Environmental Impact Statement complying with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969." On February 2, 1973 the Minnesota District Court issued an injunction against any further logging. The companies appealed that ruling.

In a 6-3 decision the Court of Appeals sustained the District Court's decision to suspend logging in those areas of the active timber sales on the BWCA which are contiguous with the main virgin forest areas of the BWCA pending the Forest Service's completion of its new BWCA Management Plan and accompanying impact statement.

Logging has been a source of public controversy surrounding the BWCA since the establishment of the wilderness area. The proposed management plan of the Forest Service for the BWCA refers to the area as "unique, pristine, rugged, primitive, beautiful and fragile." According to the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals these wilderness qualities are directly endangered by logging. In the opinion of the six concurring judges "logging creates excess nutrient run-off which causes algae growth in the lakes and streams, affecting water purity. Logging roads may cause erosion and water pollution and remain visible for as long as 100 years; this affects the rustic natural beauty of the BWCA, recognized as unique by the Forest Service itself. Logging destroys virgin forest, not only for recreational use, but for scientific and educational purposes as well."

This action by the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals by no means brings an end to the logging controversy.

The release of the Forest Service's management plan and environmental impact statement prompted two local conservation groups to propose renewed legal action against the U.S. Forest Service to prohibit logging in the BWCA. The Minnesota Public Interest Research Group and the North Star Chapter of the Sierra Club are both considering legal action.

The new management plan includes a

Harold E. Andersen Retires



Harold E. Andersen, supervisor of the Superior National Forest, retired Friday, June 21, from the U.S. Forest Service after thirty years of service.

Andersen came to the Superior National Forest in June of 1971 from the Kniksu National Forest in Idaho, Montana, and Washington. He received the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Superior Service Award in 1970 for outstanding leadership and management of the Kniksu forest.

While supervisor of the Superior National Forest, Andersen was instrumental in drawing up and submitting for approval the BWCA management plan and environmental impact statement.

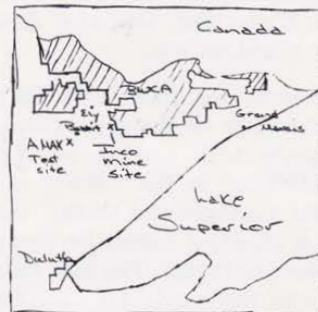
Other Forest Service action to improve the canoe country environment during Mr. Andersen's three-year administration includes the ban on cans and bottles, limitation of canoe party size, and registration of visitors.

BWCA Mining Ban Reversed

According to the Wilderness Act of 1964, the purpose of the BWCA is to provide an area "where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man is a visitor who does not remain and whose works are substantially unnoticeable, where the land has retained its primeval character and influence, where there are outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive, unconfined type of recreation and which contain ecological, geographical, and other features of scenic, scientific, educational and historical value." Conservationists contend that this purpose is constantly being threatened by incompatible recreational uses, logging, road building, overuse and most recently by proposed exploration and mining of copper-nickel ores within the BWCA.

On Friday, May 17, a three judge panel of the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a federal district court decision that banned mineral prospecting in the BWCA. This ruling reverses the decision of the late Judge Philip Neville who placed a permanent injunction on prospecting or mining within the BWCA. The injunction was sought by the Izaak Walton League of America against George W. St. Clair, now deceased. In this suit the League contended "that the Wilderness Act precludes any exercise of St. Clair's mineral rights in land within the boundaries of the BWCA." Judge Neville ruled on

provision for the continued sale of timber rights within the BWCA to private logging firms after a thirty day waiting period. This action by the Forest Service overrides the above mentioned appellate court decision. The two groups plan to ask Judge Miles Lord for a final determination of the matter.



behalf of the League and stated that mineral development "by its very definition cannot take place in a wilderness." St. Clair and the federal defendants appealed.

The appellate court's reversal of the injunction directed the Forest Service to determine whether an exploratory permit should be granted upon proper application. This decision places the added responsibility on the Forest Service of deciding whether or not to grant exploration and mining permits to commercial mining interests.

Currently, two mining firms are exploring for copper and nickel in areas adjacent to the BWCA. AMAX, Inc. is exploring for copper and nickel on a site about four miles southwest of Babbitt and has announced plans to sink an exploratory shaft for an underground mine. International Nickel Co., Inc. has asked the U.S. Forest Service for permission to create a 1,000 foot deep open pit mine less than a mile from the BWCA.

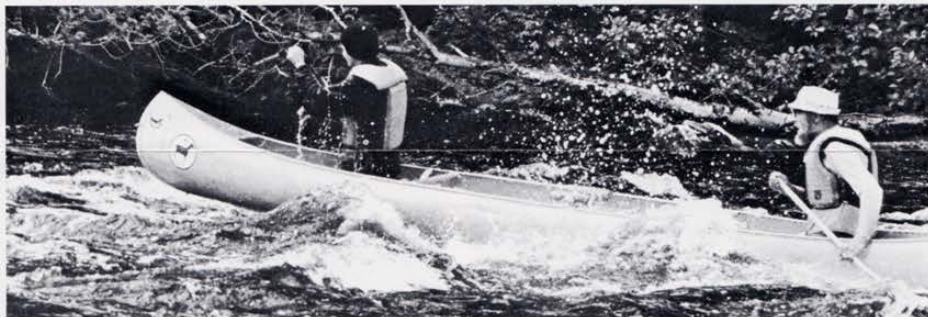
Many environmentalists have asked for a moratorium on copper-nickel development. Before copper-nickel mining becomes a full-fledged industry in northeastern Minnesota a broad scale regional study of the impact of a new copper-nickel industry must be drawn up and analyzed.

OUTWARD BOUND Spends 10th Summer in BWCA

This year 600 students from all over the country will attend Minnesota OUTWARD BOUND School summer and winter courses within the BWCA. The Minnesota OUTWARD BOUND School was the second OUTWARD BOUND School to be developed in America. OUTWARD BOUND's "homeplace" is located on a densely

urban environment. All of these people combine to create the student mix so necessary to OUTWARD BOUND.

The BWCA is an enormously important part of OUTWARD BOUND's program. The area provides the setting and the challenge for students, many of whom have never been away from the city. It has been the experience of the



OUTWARD BOUNDERS IN BWCA CANOEING AND CLEARING TRAILS

forested peninsula in the BWCA, only a few miles from Canada. The variety of student backgrounds is considerable — educators, businessmen, high school and college students, and a large number of disadvantaged young people from the

directors of OUTWARD BOUND that in addition to the growth process that occurs in the individual during the course, there also develops a real appreciation and concern for the preservation of such a wilderness area as the BWCA. As students travel through the BWCA, in addition to learning skills, they are taught the history of the area — its evolution from the ice age, its unique geology and ecology, the stories of the Indian civilizations and the primitive paintings which still appear on rock surfaces and the history of the Voyageurs.

During a standard twenty-four day summer course in the BWCA each student learns canoeing, drownproofing, camping skills, search and rescue techniques, and safety considerations from firsthand experience. Detailed studies of the boreal forest are included in expeditions and treks.

CUTTINGS: Mining and Logging

— "We believe that if you face up to the issue of whether logging interferes with the primitive character of the BWCA you will determine that it does and you must then establish a policy of no further timber cutting within the BWCA."

Response of the North Star Chapter of Sierra Club to the BWCA Draft Management Plan.

— "I have been concerned for some time about continued logging in the area. It is extremely important that the Boundary Waters Canoe Area retain its truly unique wilderness qualities for future generations."

Representative Donald M. Fraser

— "We are opposed to mining within the BWCA and have severe reservations about the implications of mining ore processing in Northeastern Minnesota."

*Allan C. Buchholz,
Izaak Walton League*

— "Given the record of environmental problems caused by the copper-nickel industry in North America over the years, a number of serious questions need to be posed and answered before development should be considered in this fragile, environmentally sensitive area of the country."

Excerpt from a letter signed by 26 environmental and church organizations statewide.

— "We aren't saying 'no' to mining — but we are asking for guidelines. We want answers to questions before the mining starts."

Scott Nessa, Minnesota Public Interest Research Group.

Congressmen, corporations, interested groups and individuals were contacted by our editor for their views concerning the issues of logging and mining. The above are responses which were received.

(editor)

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Editor Lynne Van Brocklin

BWCA Serves as Nature's Laboratory

In order to maintain and in some instances restore the ecological conditions that make the BWCA a wilderness we need to search for information and facts that will help us preserve and protect the area. Over the years research within the BWCA has been sporadic. Increased recreational use of the area, logging, and road building have all threatened the wilderness qualities of the BWCA, and have generated a new wave of research. The general aim of these research projects is to assess the impact of man, resource exploitation and com-

LARRY DUKE



Wildlife, and Robert B. Brander of the North Central Forest Experiment Station are very pleased with the results of wildlife research to date. They report that "projects on the wolf, bear and moose have been continued. Increased research on deer has begun. A forest

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Minnesota and Lewis F. Ohmann, Principal Plant Ecologist for the North Central Forest Experiment Station presented the findings of this study in an article entitled "Upland Plant Communities of the BWCA."

The first step taken in this study was a sampling of uniform vegetation throughout the BWCA. The sampling crew consisted of students, R.R. Ream, C.T. Cushwa, C.T. Brown and R.E. Lake. The crew worked in the field for four years and collected data from 106 virgin forest stands, 68 logged stands,

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WOLF, DEER AND MOOSE HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECTS OF A GREAT DEAL OF WILDLIFE RESEARCH PROJECTS IN THE BWCA.

mercial activity on animal and plant life and on the lakes and streams within the area.

In the field of wildlife research most recent studies have taken on a "systems approach" (as outlined by L. David Mech and Robert B. Brander in the Winter issue of the *Naturalist*). Such an approach integrates wildlife studies so that each project produces data useful to others and to an understanding of the general ecosystem.

Two requirements for the success of such an approach to wildlife research are: 1) wildlife research must continue over a period of several years — short-term projects are of little use to understand the workings of the entire ecosystem. 2) a "systems approach" is successful only when it is expanded to include most of the species of the ecosystem that are being investigated.

Support and funding for this integrated approach to wildlife research have come from the Ober Charitable Foundation of St. Paul, the Big Game Club Special Projects Foundation, the Weyerhaeuser Foundation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the University of Minnesota, the North Central Forest Experiment Station, and the Quetico-Superior Foundation.

L. David Mech, a research biologist with the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and

carnivore project has been set up, with work on fishers, martens, and lynxes, in addition to wolves." They further report that "Energy studies of red squirrels and snowshoe hares, fishers, and martens have started, along with population studies of small mammals. Information on bald eagles and ospreys is now being brought together from a number of sources, and a raven project is about to be launched. The role of fire is also being intensively investigated."

Mech and Brander point out that "the opportunity for wildlife research afforded by the BWCA and surrounding regions is unique and the benefits of the integrated ecosystem applied to the area are great." When the final results from these studies are analyzed the final step will be to develop an ecosystem model that can be employed by forest managers seeking to know what the effects of various broad management strategies will be on wildlife.

In order to learn more about the plant communities of the BWCA the North Central Forest Experiment Station of the U.S. Forest Service began studies in 1967 to acquire basic information relating to plant communities of the BWCA. David F. Grigal, Assistant Professor in the Department of Soil Science and College of Forestry, University of

and 33 stands near Cherokee and Frost Lakes.

The result of the sampling was that 13 major upland plant community types were identified. The 13 upland plant community types identified in the BWCA include the following: lichen, red pine, jack pine—oak, jack pine—black spruce, jack pine—fir, black spruce—feather moss, maple oak, aspen—birch, aspen—birch—white pine, maple—aspens—birch, maple—aspens—birch—fir, fir—birch, and white cedar.

The data collected by the field crew was analyzed in order to provide a general pattern of plant succession and an assessment of the role of disturbance within the plant communities. In order to assess the impact of past logging practices a comparison of virgin and logged plant communities was made. The study found that in heavily logged areas the nature of the forest system was changed whereas in areas where only pine was logged there was little change. Natural disturbances such as fire and the invasion of disease change the composition of the forest in relation to the severity of the fire or disease. The information gained from this study is a major contribution to the knowledge needed to manage an area such as the BWCA.