



FROM THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR FOUNDATION • SPRING 1987



Naturalist giving a talk using a live great horned owl.

OUTDOOR RECREATION A MATTER OF INTERPRETATION

by Steve Hoecker, Assistant Ranger, Superior National Forest

Aldo Leopold writes in his *Sand County Almanac* "Recreation is not the outdoors, but our reaction to it." This reaction, to a large degree, is influenced by our awareness, perception, understanding of the natural environment along with our expectations. What is the awareness level, perception, and understanding (i.e. the reaction) of a Forest visitor that comes from a society that is increasingly more urban and further removed from the land? To a large segment of our users, the Superior National Forest represents a foreign or unfamiliar environment. It is not at all unlike a first time visitor to a foreign country. If our theoretical visitor is unfamiliar with the country's culture and customs and does not speak the language, his experience in this new country would be a superficial one indeed. The richness of the culture, the people, and area is lost to him. Interject a guide or interpreter into this analogy, however, the whole new vistas are open to our traveler.

The challenge, then, was how to deliver interpretive services to our Forest Visitor. The solution? A network of volunteer naturalists residing at area resorts. The program is a three way partnership between the Forest Service, the resort, and the student/volunteer. The resort provides room and board to the volunteer and in return receives naturalist interpretive services for their guests. The students contribute their time, talent, and efforts and receive training from the Forest Service, experience, and sometimes college credit through an internship. The Forest Service recruits, trains, and provides ongoing technical assistance and information about natural resources and Forest Service programs.

The Quetico Superior Foundation and Northwoods Audubon Center have played an important role in the development of the naturalist program. The Foundation has provided, through a grant, low cost training to our naturalists at Northwoods. In addition,

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FOREST SERVICE PLAN BRINGS NOTICE OF APPEAL

In early June, 1986, the Forest Service released its new ten year plan for managing Superior National Forest. The plan outlines agency priorities through 1995 for management of Superior's 3.3 million acres of which the BWCA is an important part. The notice of appeal was given by the Sierra Club, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, the Defenders of Wildlife and the Wilderness Society. They outlined 13 specific issues and complaints relative to the forest service plan as presented. These dealt with mechanical portages, maintenance of dams, inclusion of certain rivers within the wild and scenic rivers act, the lease back of resorts and wolves.

In February of this year, the Regional Forester for the Eastern Region of the Forest Service agreed to modify portions of the 10 year plan for managing the forest. The Regional Forester agreed that the dams in the BWCA should no longer be maintained by the Forest Service, that the culverts on the Isabella River should be removed, and that the management plan should better address the use of pesticides in the BWCA. On other issues the forest service was not willing to yield.

A major part of disagreement centers on the continued operation of motorized truck portages at Four Mile Portage, Prairie Portage, and Trout Lake. The environmental groups feel that portages blight the wilderness with trucks, buildings, and docks. They contend that the 1978 law provided for a five year phase out of the three truck portages by Jan. 1, 1984.

After the phase out, the portages were to close if reasonable alternatives existed. In the eyes of the appellants, portage wheels on an axle provide satisfactory transportation across portages. Visitors regularly use portage wheels on the Fall-Newton-Pipestone Bay route to Basswood Lake. Environmental groups believe that the three truck portages

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WILDERNESS REHABILITATORS

The Superior National Forest in Minnesota is looking for volunteers who wish to work as naturalists, wilderness rangers, campground hosts, recreation aids, wildlife aids, timber aids, wilderness rehabilitators, cultural resource aids, journalists and as a part of wilderness trail crew. In addition, organized groups are being sought to maintain and construct portions of hiking, snowmobiling, and cross-country ski trails or to maintain campsites and portages along several canoe routes. Most of the work will be performed in or near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

Specialized skills are not required for most volunteer positions; however you must be at least 18 years old (except as part of an organized group), self-disciplined, willing to do hard work and possess a desire to learn. There is no pay, but there may be some compensation each day to help cover living expenses. The Forest Service provides shelter or free camping, professional training, supervision, all tools and materials needed to perform the assigned tasks and full medical compensation if you are injured on the job.

If you or your organization are interested in applying or need more specific information, contact one of the Forest Service District Offices in Cook, Ely, Aurora, Virginia, Isabella, Tofte, or Grand Marais, or:

Recreation Volunteer Coordinator
Superior National Forest
P.O. Box 338
Duluth, MN 55801
(218) 720-5427

Letters From Our Readers

WINTER CAMPING TRIP

by Philip W. Vieth

My winter, 1985 BWCA trip was a four day camping trip on skis in March. We skied and pulled small toboggans. In the tent we used a small wood stove which was very comfortable at 20 degrees fahrenheit. It would have been comfortable even at temperatures below zero degrees fahrenheit. The stove was used mornings and evenings but not at night. We didn't have snow shoes with us. We were lucky that there wasn't a lot of snow on the portages because we would not have gotten through.

I would like to see a one night camping restriction put on Disappointment Lake, just east of Snowbank Lake. Twice I have looked for campsites when returning from trips. None were available. It is a favorite weekend spot. People stay on the sites Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights. Anyone coming from the interior is out of luck.



Phil Vieth skiing across Ensign Lake



Tent stove used mornings and evenings

OBER'S ISLAND RETREAT

Two one week workshops are scheduled again this summer at Ober's Mallard Island starting June 21st and July 12th. Participants meet on the island with 5-10 others either to work on their own project or in a seminar.

There will be plenty of time to think, canoe, swim, or listen to the wind in the pines. Resources available include seven charming buildings and Ober's extensive book collection. The program will appeal to

anyone who loves nature and ideas and who is ready to recharge and reflect. The cost is \$300. Limited scholarships are available. For information write to:

Oberboltzer Foundation
Summer Program
Jean Sanford Replinger
300 North Hill
Marshall, MN 56258

Ober's Island, Rainy Lake





Courtesy U.S. Forest Service

ROOM WITH A VIEW NO BLACK FLIES PLEASE

This summer the Forest Service plans to use the central reservation system which was used last year. Reservations are recommended for groups which wish to be certain of obtaining a permit for a specific entrance point on a specific day, but there are very few days during the summer when the quotas for all entrance points are filled. Several entrance points began filling up on some days by mid-March last year. They included Lizz Lake, South Hegman, Mudro/Range, Bower Trout, Ham, Seagull, John and Daniels Lakes. The days that were reserved most often included the opening weekend of fishing season, Memorial Day weekend, and the first three weekends in August. If a group wishes to use a motor on lakes where they are permitted, the Forest Service suggests they make a reservation as soon as they're certain of their plans. The overnight motor quotas are the first to be reserved. Any visitor to the BWCA must have a permit between May 1 and September 30.

Reservation applications must include the name, address, and phone number of the party leader and alternate (if any), entrance and exit points, entrance and exit dates, mode of travel, estimated party size and a \$5.00 nonrefundable service fee. The fee may be paid by check, money order or with a VISA/Mastercard. Reservations will be processed at a central office in a Superior National Forest headquarters in Duluth.

To obtain a reservation write:

BWCA Reservations
Superior National Forest
P.O. Box 338
Duluth, MN 55801
or call (with a valid VISA/Mastercard):
218-720-5440.

For information contact the Forest Supervisor's Office in Duluth at 218-720-5324 or one of the Forest Service District Offices in Cook (666-5251), Ely (365-6126), Isabella (323-7722), Tofte (663-7280), or Grand Marais (387-2451).

DOROTHY MOLTER

Dorothy Molter, the last resident of the BWCA Wilderness, passed away in December at her cabin on remote Knife Lake along the international border near Ely, Minnesota.

Referred to as "The Loneliest Woman in America" by a newspaper story of years ago, Dorothy lived at her wilderness outpost under a reservation and volunteer employee agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. Her property was purchased by the United States in the late 1950's in what was to become the BWCA Wilderness. Dorothy took issue with the newspaper headline, agreeing that she was often alone, but never lonely.

Believed to be in her 80's, Dorothy had occupied the Knife Lake island home for 50 years. Since 1975 she worked for the Forest

Service as a volunteer providing information to the public on fires, bears, camping, and wilderness travel. In return, the Forest Service provided her with a radio, transportation assistance, and the right to remain at the property after the reservation agreement expired in 1975.

A registered nurse, Dorothy Molter will be remembered by many canoeists who called on her for emergency first aid. Many came to the "Isle of Pines," as she called her island homesite, to sample her famous homemade root beer, or simply to visit. Not only will she be missed by visitors to the BWCA Wilderness, but by her many friends in the Ely area.

FOREST SERVICE

continued

have already operated two years longer than the five year phase out allowed by Congress. They want the sites restored to natural conditions.

The Forest Service contends that the continued operation of the three truck portages is within the terms of the law. Also denied by the Forest Service was the claim that the BWCA visitor use levels were inappropriate and the claim that the final forest plan failed to establish priority direction for mineral rights acquisition in the wilderness. The Forest Service also said the plan provides adequate protection for the timber wolf, although they agreed that management direction for the wolf needs to be strengthened.

The environmental groups said they will have to go to Washington to ask the Forest Service's top officials to modify the management plan. If modification is not possible, they said a suit is likely.

Brian O'Neill, a Minneapolis attorney representing the environmental groups said, "If the regional forester decides that he wants to disregard what the law says, we're forced to go to the chief of the Forest Service. If we have to go into federal court, we'll go into federal court."

OUTDOOR RECREATION

continued

tion, a naturalists resource booklet, produced by Northwoods, containing interpretive techniques and natural history information specific to the Superior National Forest, was made possible by the Foundation grant. Both of these products have greatly increased the effectiveness of our naturalists.

In 1983, the first year of operation, we had five naturalists; two in Grand Marais and three at outlying resorts on the Gunflint District. The Grand Marais Chamber of Commerce provided funds for the room and board of the two Grand Marais naturalists. This year five naturalists at seven resorts on the LaCroix District have been added.

The network of naturalists, residing at resorts across the Forest, have offered a wide variety of interpretive services to the general public. Here is a sampling of a few of the activities they provided: night wolf howling expeditions, berry picking, plaster casts of animal tracks (bag your moose, wolf, or bear), nature photography, birding, nature hikes, camping skills, orienteering, ecology games, kids' fishing trips, storytelling, fire-side chats on various natural history topics, auto tours, and visits to an archeological dig.

The resort naturalists program represents a highly diversified and opportunistic approach to visitor education and information services. Through this program, we have provided personal interpretive services to over 8500 Forest visitors in the past three years.

IT'S ONLY MONEY

Taking a chapter from Ripley's "Believe It Or Not," in December a jury awarded Vic Davis \$1.37 million for his 122 acre property on Black Bay in Voyageurs National Park. The U.S. Justice Department requested that the award be reduced by \$500,000. The property had been purchased by Davis for \$154,400 in 1981. He had subdivided the property into 39 lots to sell them as home and cabin sites when the park service moved to acquire the land.

U.S. District Judge Robert Renner denied the Justice Department's appeal for the \$500,000 reduction and also denied the request for a new trial. The Justice Department termed the award "grossly excessive." Davis has threatened as a protest to chop down thousands of trees that cover the land which is just across from Voyageur's new visitor's center. Davis has gained considerable attention because of his long fight against the government's effort to acquire land for the park. He had erected two 25 foot fiber glass statues on his property next to the park.

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UP NORTH THE SAM COOK BOOK



Sam Cook

"Up North" is a collection of popular stories by Sam Cook, the outdoors writer for "The Duluth News-Tribune & Herald". Sam and his wife, Phyllis, came to the north in 1976 and lived for a time in Ely, Minnesota. Many of the stories have a can country setting. Cook's stories and columns have been widely acclaimed. Cook writes:

"Up North is a certain way the wind feels on your face and the way an old wool shirt feels on your back. It's the peace that comes over you when you sit down to read one of your old trip journals, or the anticipation that bubbles inside when you start sorting through your tackle box early in the spring."

The book can be ordered from Pfeiffer-Hamilton, 1702 E. Jefferson Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55812. The telephone number is 218-728-6807.

STATE CANOEING PUBLICATIONS

The Travel Information Center in St. Paul offers several free publications on canoeing and hiking. "Explore Minnesota's BWCA" describes the type of camping experience which the BWCA offers. The color photographs are lovely. The publication observes: "A day's canoeing brings vivid glimpses of moose along marshy shores, a bear trundling off into the woods, unexpected bursts of color blossoming at the water's edge. Challenging trips across portages carry the satisfaction of knowing you can do more than you think you can."

"Explore Minnesota Canoeing, Hiking, and Backpacking," tells how to explore Minnesota's outdoor recreation opportunities. The 16 page publication features canoeing and hiking in the Boundary Waters and Superior National Forest. The publication covers canoeing and backpacking opportunities in all areas of the state.

The publication suggests, "Explore Minnesota's back country. Pull on your hiking boots, grab your cameras, and take to the roads. Or climb into a canoe and glide along the pristine waters. Take an afternoon or a lifetime, and get to know the sights, sounds,

and smells of Minnesota wilderness firsthand."

Another publication is the "Minnesota Canoe Outfitters Directory." The brochure lists canoe outfitters with main emphasis in the Ely and Grand Marais/Tofte areas.

These publications, as well as a state of Minnesota map, are available free from the Travel Information Center, 240 Bremer Building, 419 North Robert Street, St. Paul, MN 55101. Toll free within Minnesota the telephone number is 800-652-9747. The Twin Cities telephone number is 296-5029.

The Tip of the Arrowhead Association, Grand Marais, MN 55604 publishes a guide to the northeast corner of Minnesota that includes a map of the major access points on the BWCA.

"BWCA Wilderness Visitors Information" produced by the U.S. Forest Service describes BWCA regulations, camping guidelines, and how to reserve a permit to enter the BWCA. This can be attained by contacting Superior National Forest, P.O. Box 338, Duluth, MN 55801. The telephone number is 218-720-5427.

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Wilderness News

