



QUETICO-SUPERIOR COUNTRY

# Wilderness News



FROM THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR FOUNDATION • SUMMER 1969

## WOLVES

### Friend or Foe?

A couple of restless Macalester professors have been prowling around the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) during the past three years on the trail of timber wolves — not to slay but to study them. They are Drs. L. D. Frenzel, Jr. and L. David Mech (rhymes with teach). They chose Minnesota's Superior National Forest for their laboratory because it happens to harbor the largest native population of wolves south of Canada.

The study should eventually provide a firm answer to that battle-scarred question, *Is the wolf a serious threat to the survival of deer in northeastern Minnesota?* It may also produce the first reliable census of Minnesota's wolves (best current guess: 500). Already it has compiled a fat dossier of intimate details on their personal lives and how they get along with other BWCA animals — including man.

**On the Air.** Among the professors' ingenious techniques is a tiny radio transmitter attached to the wolf by a collar — after he (or she) has been trapped and

### VANISHING SPECIES

An eminent wildlife authority from Purdue warned a group of outdoor writers in Duluth last June that "the wolf is a vanishing species." Pointing at his hosts, Dr. Durward Allen said: "By paying someone to kill wolves, Minnesota has set the clock back 20 years in wildlife management. If the Boundary Waters Canoe Area is supposed to be a true wilderness, why isn't the wolf protected there?"

tranquilized. The signals can be picked up as far away as 15 miles, and the wolf — or perhaps a pack — is then tracked and observed from a low-flying airplane. So far five radio-tagged wolves have been on the air for periods up to seven months, recording rare logs of their daily comings and goings.

Even more revealing has been the meticulous examination of carcasses of deer killed by wolves. After analyzing the teeth from 142 jawbones, Frenzel tentatively concludes that "wolf predation on adult deer in northeastern Minnesota during

winter is concentrated on the older animals that numberwise are least available."

One popular myth that is quietly being exploded by the men of Macalester is that any deer can be easily caught and killed by any wolf. Actually only the infirm and the aged appear to be really vulnerable. By permitting the survival of the fittest, *Canis lupis* may turn out after all to be the deer hunter's dearest friend.

Supporting Frenzel & Mech are private and public agencies,\* their own biology students, residents of Ely and, to help finance their technical report, the Quetico-Superior Foundation. While no official answers will be published before next year, the project has already attracted national notice in magazines and newspapers. Next November a color movie of the study shot by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer is scheduled to be shown on TV as part of an NBC documentary. Presumably you will be able to tune in on wolves being tuned in on.

\*Macalester College Faculty Research Fund, New York Zoological Society, Minn. Department of Conservation, U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries & Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service.

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WOLF MEETS MECH IN BWCA

Trapped and tranquilized, transmitted and tracked.



## Wilderness News

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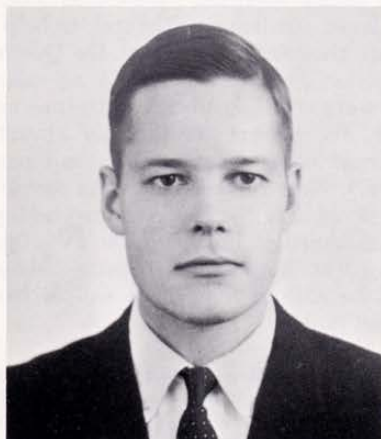
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## New President

Frederick Winston, 32, was elected president of the Quetico-Superior Foundation at the board's annual meeting. He succeeds Sen. Henry T. McKnight who asked to be relieved of the office he has held for five years. Winston, an assistant vice president of the First National Bank of Minneapolis (International Dept.), is the son of the late Frederick S. Winston, one of the Foundation's founders, and of Elizabeth Melone Winston, a director. He



FREDERICK WINSTON

*He succeeds Senator McKnight.*

was married July 26 to Eleanor Crosby, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas M. Crosby.

At the same meeting two resignations were accepted: that of vice president A. M. Blood, after 14 years of service; and that of director F. Peavey Heffelfinger, Jr., now engaged in business abroad. Charles A. Kelly, of Chicago, was reelected to the board for a second nine-year term.

## Word from Washington

The President's Quetico-Superior Committee, formed by F.D.R. in 1934, continues to function under the Nixon administration, according to Charles A. Kelly who recently made a sounding in Washington. He reports that the committee plans to meet this summer with members of Canada's Quetico Foundation to seek cures for such common BWCA headaches as airplanes, snowmobiles, houseboats and chain saws.

## NATIONAL PARK

### Chances: Excellent

Former Gov. Elmer L. Andersen told Wilderness News early in July there is "an excellent chance" Congress will establish the Voyageurs National Park on Minnesota's Kabetogama Peninsula in its current session. To support this optimistic



ELMER L. ANDERSEN

*He succeeds Judge Chapman.*

note Andersen, who follows Judge Edwin P. Chapman as head of the Voyageurs National Park Association, cited the attitudes of key Washington figures toward such legislation.

Walter J. Hickel, Pres. Nixon's new Interior secretary: "Enthusiastic."

Wayne N. Aspinall, Colo. representative and chairman of the House Interior committee which must pass upon all park bills: "Open-minded."

John Blatnik, Minn. representative whose bill for a 211,000-acre park died late in last session: "Committed."

Clark MacGregor, Minn. representative and Nixon advisor: "Strongly in favor."

Walter F. Mondale, Minn. senator: "Sees no difficulty in Senate."

A congressional subcommittee will tour the park site August 20 and hold a hearing next day at International Falls.

## LEGISLATION

### Hollow Ring

Should conservation be formally taught in the state's public schools? Minnesota lawmakers apparently think this is a fine idea — as long as it doesn't cost anything. In their last session they passed a bill proposed by Sen. Henry T. McKnight, former Q-S Foundation president, to make such instruction available, but completely erased a provision to appropriate \$375,000 to get the program started.

There is hope, however, that this bit of conservation legislation may eventually grow some teeth. As Jim Kimball noted in his Minneapolis *Sunday Tribune* column, "Even though the lack of money gives the new law a hollow ring, it still represents substantial progress. Funding will come in the future."

## RESEARCH

### Making Trees Rust-proof

Clifford E. Ahlgren, long-time director of the Quetico-Superior Wilderness Research Center, was invited to participate in the world's first international congress of plant pathology held in London a year ago. He told this august assembly how for 20 years his group has been patiently "breeding for resistance" to white pine blister rust, the dread disease that has practically wiped out an entire species in northeastern U.S. and causes timber losses of over \$5 million a year in the west. It has been rampant in Asia and Europe since the 19th century.

Ahlgren's modest conclusion: "We feel progress is being made and will continue."

The Center, on Basswood Lake in the BWCA, is the only privately supported ecology research station in America. It is sponsored by the Wilderness Research Foundation of Chicago, whose trustees include F. B. Hubachek, Charles S. Kelly, Frank H. Kaufert and Henry Clepper.

## SUPERIOR FOREST

### Tough Assignment

The three million acres of Minnesota's Superior National Forest (a third of which are in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area) are now directly under the roving eye of Craig W. Rupp. He has moved to Duluth from Caribou National Forest in Idaho to replace John O. Wernham who managed the Superior since 1966 and is now assistant regional forester in Milwaukee.



CRAIG W. RUPP

*He succeeds Supervisor Wernham.*

With 23 years of Forest Service work behind him, mostly in Utah and Idaho, Rupp (Penn State '53) comes to Minnesota well grounded in timber management and "multiple use coordination." The Superior, with its touchy BWCA problems, is the largest and most complex national forest in the eastern half of the U.S. Its new supervisor can look forward to what forester George S. James has called "one of the toughest assignments in the Forest Service."





OUTWARD BOUNDERS IN SUPERIOR FOREST CLEARING TRAILS, CLIMBING CLIFFS

## EDUCATION

### MOBS of the Wilderness

● They have just built a 30-foot snowmobile bridge over the Little Isabella River in northern Minnesota.

● During a single season they dispose of over two tons of campsite trash in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

● Each summer they devote some 4800 man-hours to clearing trails in the wilderness around Ely.

These human beavers are members of MOBS — short for Minnesota Outward Bound School. Throughout the summer young people (16-23) from all over the U.S. gladly gather in Quetico-Superior country 18 miles southeast of Ely for what *Time* magazine has called “a 26-day test of spirit, stamina and sacrifice.” Under the brave banner, “To serve, to strive and not to yield,” Outward Bound must conduct the toughest physical training course outside the Armed Forces.

While MOBS students are usually engaged in such back-breaking, breath-taking exploits as white water canoeing,

cliff climbing, rescue operations and solo survival maneuvers, they also spend exhausting hours doing conservation chores for the U.S. Forest Service — cleaning up campsites, building bridges, slashing out trails.

**Joining the Fight.** Naturally the Forest Service likes this arrangement which provides free efficient labor. Says ranger Brian Stout, who supervises the projects: “Were it not for the Outward Bound School, much of this badly needed work would never be done at all.” From the other end of the trail associate director David F. Benway points out that the school’s conservation activities cannot be measured merely in terms of trash tonnage and man-hours: “When our students — wealthy and poor alike — go home, they take with them an attitude of understanding and concern for their environment. We expect them always to be courteous, careful campers, but also hope they will join the fight for clean air and water in their communities.”

Under the guidance of an 8-man staff headed by Alan N. Hale (Dartmouth ’61,

Peace Corps ’64), MOBS is one of five such schools scattered across the country from Maine to Oregon. In the six years of its young existence it has put 2300 Outward Bounders through its mill, and was the first to offer special courses for girls. (That snowmobile bridge was put up by a crew of 44 young ladies.)

The Outward Bound idea was conceived during World War II to help British merchant seamen survive after being torpedoed by Nazi submarines. Oddly, it was a German who organized the first school in Wales in 1941. He is Kurt Hahn, founder of Scotland’s rugged Gordonstoun School, which has turned out such noted Old Boys as the Duke of Edinburgh and his son Charles, now Prince of Wales. Today, with somewhat different objectives, there are 23 Outward Bound Schools all over the world.

In case you need some exercise and would like to join up, MOBS’ Minneapolis headquarters at 224 West Franklin Ave. can give you the details. They have devised several punishing courses for older people, too.



## OUTDOOR MAN

### Love Affair

*I doubt whether there is any bit of country between the Atlantic and the Pacific that has been so argued over, so fought over, had so much blood, sweat and tears shed over, as this area right here.*

Thus spoke Sigurd F. Olson of his beloved Quetico-Superior when he testified five years ago at the Foundation's day-long symposium at the U of Minn. Since the 1920's many far-sighted, firm-minded men have been engaged in the running battle to protect and preserve this rare strip of wilderness that stretches from Rainy Lake to Lake Superior. But none has so eloquently captured in print the spirit of Quetico-Superior as Sig Olson.

Naturalist, explorer, teacher, consultant, author, he is above all a canoe man. During the past half-century he has paddled his own canoe through miles of wild waterways. Now at 70 he lives, appropriately, near Ely on the threshold of Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA). And here he writes his gently stirring outdoor classics: "The Singing Wilderness," "Listening Point," "The Lonely Land," "Runes of the North" and, just published, "Open Horizons."\*

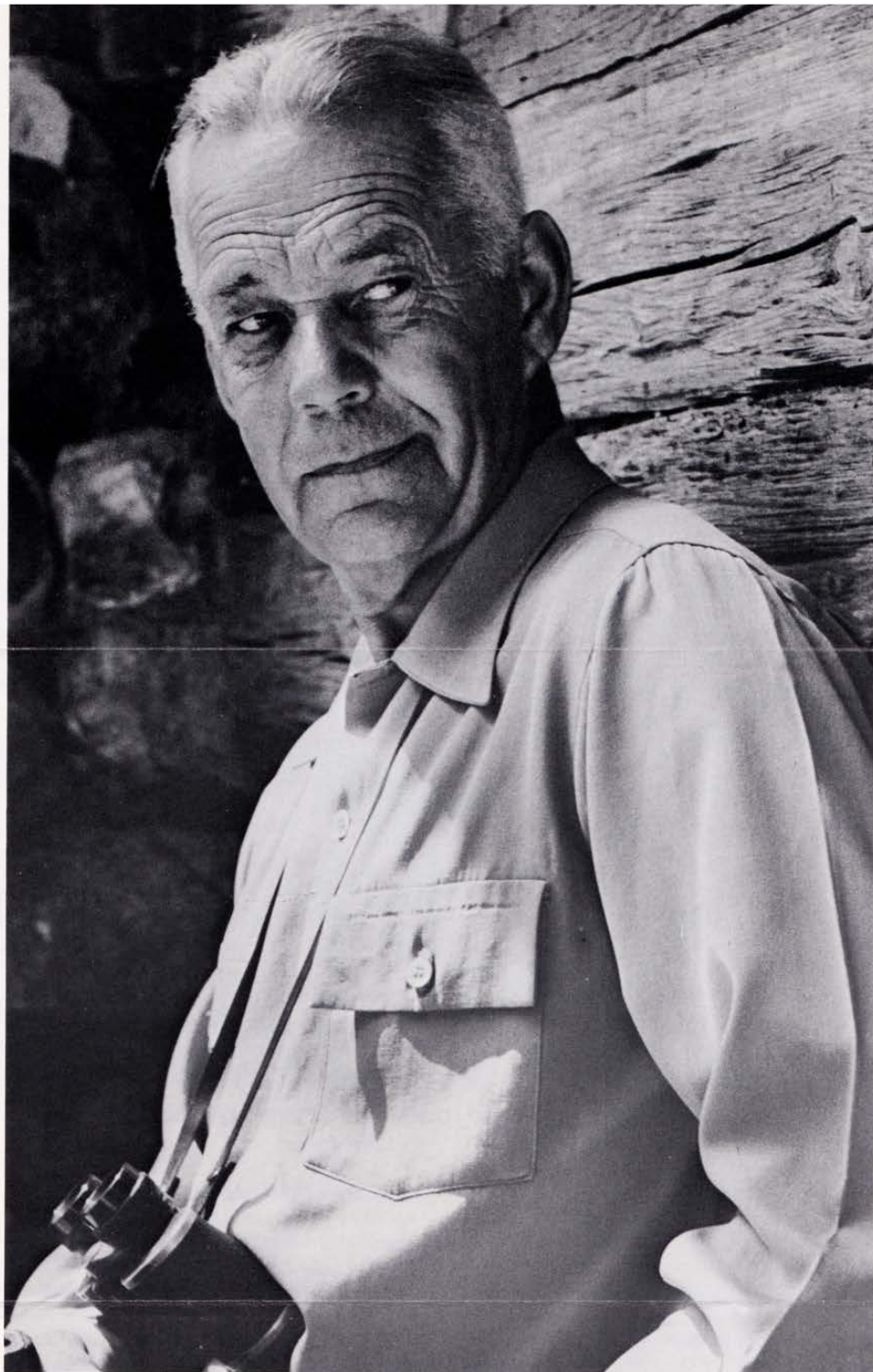
This latest book (which promptly became a bestseller in Minneapolis) is, says the jacket, "Sig Olson's story of his life-long love affair with nature." Of special interest to Wilderness News readers: Chapter X—"Battle for a Wilderness"—with a play-by-play account of Quetico-Superior's tortuous struggle for existence. Major threats:

► **Roads.** "After World War I a great road-building program was announced, one which would open up the lake country and make it accessible to tourists. . . . Finally, after seven years of effort the program was stopped and the Superior Primitive Area was established."

► **Dams.** "Another proposal was made for a gigantic power development along the international border with a series of dams and storage reservoirs that would impound some lakes as high as eighty feet. . . . For nine long years the battle went on. Then in 1934 came the announcement of the International Joint Commission." [The power project, which ignited the Quetico-Superior Council, was killed.]

► **Logging.** "The practice of cutting shore-line timber or building logging dams to flood it out was challenged. One of the most significant developments to come from all this was the appointment by President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the Quetico-Superior Committee to work toward the goal of sound resource use and the protection of wilderness on both sides of the border."

\*OPEN HORIZONS by Sigurd F. Olson. Alfred A. Knopf, 1969. \$5.95.



ALFRED EISENSTAEDT

SIG OLSON AT HOME  
He lives on BWCA's threshold.

► **Airplanes.** "During World War II a new threat developed as flyers discovered hundreds of interior lakes that made ideal landing fields for pontoon-equipped planes. We applied to President Harry S. Truman [who] invoked his famous executive order establishing the first airspace reservation in the world for the protection of a wilderness."

► **Mechanization.** "New threats have recently developed—vastly increased visitation, the growing use of mechanized travel, plus the pressures for harvesting timber close to major canoe routes. . . . Conservationists pled for the elimination

of cutting in the northern third of the Superior National Forest known as the Boundary Waters Canoe Area . . . and once again the battle raged."

► **Mining.** "Not so long ago I was snowshoeing a few miles from home on the Kawishiwi River. . . . A truck roared by in a swirl of snow and stopped by a brightly lighted drill a short distance away. A deposit of copper-nickel had been discovered some years before, and now was being prospected by several mining companies. . . . The world needs metals and men need work, but they also must have wilderness and beauty. . . . I wondered."