



FROM THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR FOUNDATION • SUMMER 1978

The Longest Portage Ever

The drive for extensive wilderness protection in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area has reached a crucial point. On June 5, the House of Representatives passed a compromise measure that would prohibit further logging as well as mining within the BWCA, ban motorboats from all but 16 lakes, and close three of those lakes over the next 30 years. The bill was drawn by Congressmen Phillip Burton (California) and Bruce Vento (Minnesota), and designed to compromise the divergent features of two other bills introduced in the House.

Since 1975 Congressman James Oberstar (Minnesota), whose district includes the BWCA, has introduced a series of bills to retain motorboats and logging in the BWCA. His original proposal would have eliminated 40 percent of BWCA from the wilderness system and transformed the lands into a national recreation area open to logging, mining, motorboats, snowmobiles, and other non-wilderness uses. The remainder of the BWCA would have received full wilderness protection.

Congressman Donald Fraser (Minnesota) introduced his own proposal in 1976, a plan that would have enlarged the BWCA slightly, eliminated all logging, mining, and motorized travel, and

given the canoe country full wilderness status. This proposal received widespread attention and had nearly 50 co-authors in the House of Representatives.

Between 1976 and 1978, the Fraser and Oberstar proposals underwent change. Oberstar's subsequent bills enlarged the portion of the BWCA devoted to wilderness but retained motorboats on the lakes currently open to them. By spring, 1978, the Oberstar plan had eliminated the national recreation area entirely, banned logging (after a phase-out period) from the BWCA, but retained motorboats on 92 of the 124 lakes where they are presently allowed.

The Fraser bill borrowed the concept of a national recreation area but restricted it to federal lands outside of, but adjacent to the BWCA. Although northern residents objected to the recreation area in Fraser's bill, they did not mind it in the Oberstar plan.

The Minnesota congressional delegation was and remains divided on the future of the BWCA. Senators Wendell Anderson and Muriel Humphrey remained noncommittal through most of the controversy. In 1977, Anderson had indicated that he would support the

bill produced by the House committee, but when it became evident the House would pass the Burton-Vento bill, he announced his support for the Oberstar plan.

The House bill dropped the idea of a national recreation area and retained motorboats on 16 lakes along the periphery of the BWCA, and permanently banned mining and logging. After defeating a last-minute proposal introduced by James Oberstar, the House passed the Burton-Vento bill by a vote of 324 to 29. Minnesota congressmen Al Quie, Tom Hagedorn, and Bill Frenzel voted for the Oberstar plan but supported the Burton-Vento bill in the final vote.

Although full wilderness for the BWCA still seems far off, some ground has been gained. Minnesotans, north and south, seem to agree that logging and mining should be prohibited within the canoe country. Most are also opposed to motorboats and snowmobiles, but opposition to the motorized ban is most vocal nearest the BWCA. A Minneapolis Tribune poll conducted in late June throughout Minnesota showed that Minnesotans solidly favor motor

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COPPER NICKEL MINING IN MINNESOTA The Present Status

by John Herman

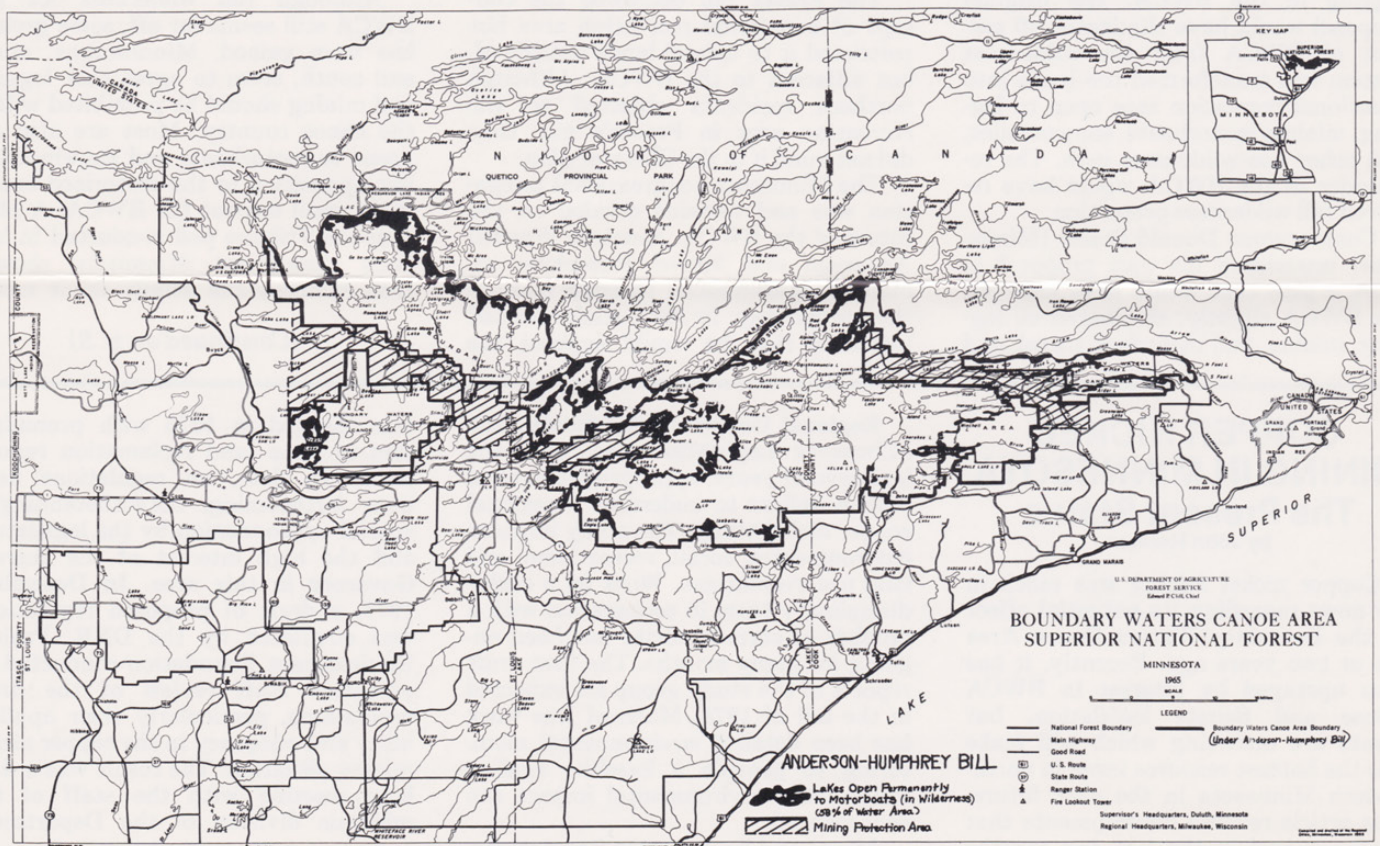
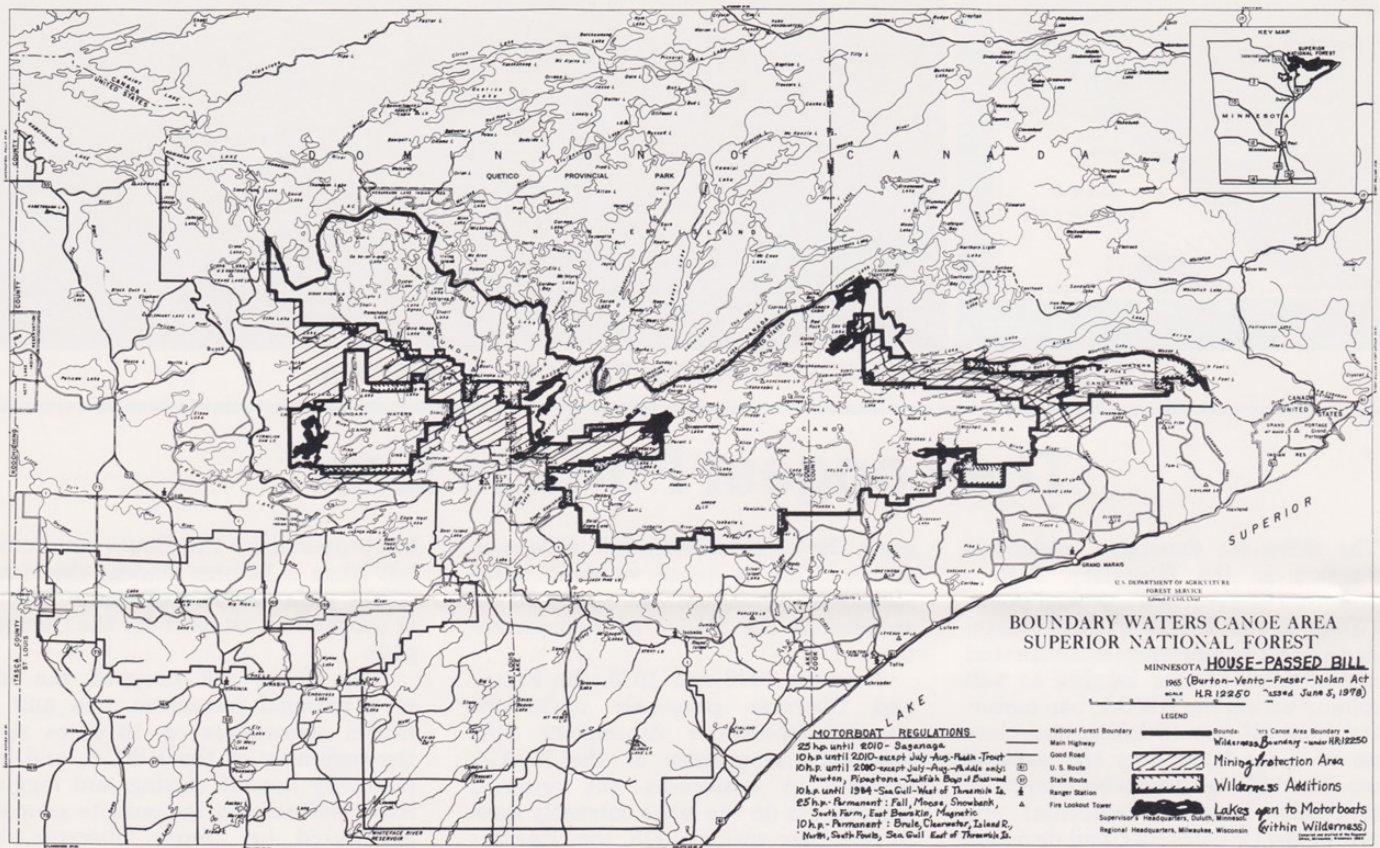
Copper nickel mining was much in the news regarding its potential effect on the Boundary Waters Canoe Area one or two years ago. Recently, it has been upstaged by interest in BWCA House and Senate legislation, but events are occurring which will make this the hottest resource issue in northeastern Minnesota in the near future. This article reviews developments that have occurred in the last few months in a number of areas.

Regional Copper Nickel Study. The Minnesota Legislature has, over the last several years, appropriated several million dollars to undertake a regional copper nickel study. The study includes environmental, social, recreational, and land use evaluations. Work by a multi-disciplinary team in cooperation with a number of state agencies has been ongoing for many months. The first draft reports of the study group are expected in the fall of 1978. Much of this work has been detailed environmental monitoring to provide a baseline against which later environmental impact can be measured.

Mine Land Reclamation Regulations. The Department of Natural Resources

was charged in 1973 with promulgation of mine land reclamation regulations. To date, no regulations have been forthcoming, notwithstanding a special appropriation by the legislature and the high interest of the current Governor in this area. In December, 1977, a draft of proposed regulations was circulated by the DNR. Project Environment Foundation conducted an extensive staff review of the draft regulations, particularly their applicability and adequacy in the copper nickel mining situation. The result was a day-long meeting with the staff of the minerals division of the Department

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NYET TO NYE

In May, William B. Nye, Minnesota Commissioner of Natural Resources, resigned. Nye had envisioned in extensive reorganization of the Department of Natural Resources that involved a central planning office which would be staffed with planning personnel who had been assigned to each of the DNR's divisions. Under Nye's plan, employees were shifted around and staffs were reduced. Nearly every move was resisted by the people involved. Several state officials familiar with the department said that the reorganization plan was a good one. However, Nye encountered problems with a number of legislators.

Nye had favored a total ban on logging and mining in the BWCA. He wrote in the Minneapolis Star, "Mining is potentially the most destructive force that must be dealt with, for if we mine BWCA, we have lost it forever." He continued, "The BWCA is the largest wilderness area east of the Rocky Mountains, and the only lake-land canoeing wilderness in the country. Its pristine lakes and virgin forests are absolutely beautiful, and we all share the important responsibility for its stewardship."

Replacing Nye as DNR Commissioner is Joseph Alexander. Alexander is a multiple-use man. He has been in the civil service for more than 20 years, and in many ways, is the antithesis of Nye. He reportedly plans to make no major changes in the way the department has approached resource problems. Alexander has said, "It's the same basic job now as 20 years ago, managing the same resources, the same land, the same water." Alexander has clearly indicated his support for motors in the BWCA.

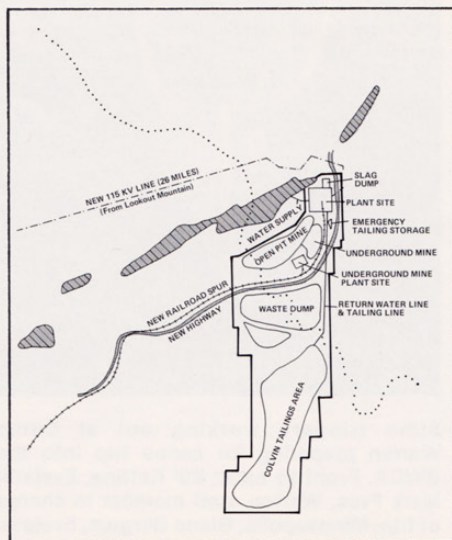
Nickel Mining (Cont. from p. 1)

of Natural Resources to review the various comments. Since that time, no formal set of rules has been promulgated for public hearing by the Agency. It is expected such rules will be noticed for hearing in the near future.

Substantively, the regulations were a grave disappointment regarding copper nickel. Although no mining is expected for a considerable period of time, it was anticipated that the regulations would differentiate between reclamation of iron mining operations and copper nickel. Instead, the regulations focused on iron mining, and failed to recognize the unique problems associated with copper nickel. Much of the PEF comments focused on this problem, and the need to devote particular attention to anticipating copper nickel reclamation problems.

Amax Development Proposal. Over the last year Amax continued work on its exploratory mine. Large scale samples have been removed and tested, and indications are that the mineral resources identified are considerably richer than anticipated. Against these favorable results must be measured the current world copper market, with its extremely low prices. Nonetheless, in late 1977, Amax put forward its tentative proposal for a full scale development. A schematic indicating this development is shown in the adjacent map.

Initially, Amax indicated its mine would be largely or completely underground. Instead, the proposal now calls for a large scale open pit mine roughly parallel and just south of the Reserve Mining pit. In addition, a large underground operation is proposed. Note, the mine are north of or straddle the Laurentian Divide. Waste rock dumps also straddle the Laurentian Divide, but the tailings basin is located south of the Divide. The plant site is located at the extreme northern portion of the site, north of the Divide and closest to the BWCA. The changes in the Amax proposal from the tentative indications of an underground mine raise a number of serious questions. First, rigorous control of water, particularly water north of the Laurentian Divide, and its capture and transportation out of the Boundary Waters' drainage system is essential. Second, the need for a smelter at the plant site is open to vigorous dispute. A number of years ago then Governor Wendell Anderson indicated a smelter within the Superior National Forest was unacceptable, for environmental reasons. Others have questioned whether this facility could better provide jobs nearer Duluth or Two Harbors. Another concern is with the effect of a smelter at this location on the Category I non-degradation air pollution requirements established in the 1977 Clean Air Act Amendments for the BWCA.



At this point, no specific permits have been sought, and the Amax proposal is at a tentative stage. Under the State Environmental Quality Board resolution establishing the Regional Copper Nickel Study discussed above, the EQB indicated no site specific mining proposal would be considered until the completion of the Regional Study. Project Environment Foundation lawyers are continuing to monitor this proposal.

In conclusion, the lack of news notice on copper nickel in the last year should not obscure the fact that major developments in this area are about to occur. Next year should be quite different in terms of the attention focused on copper nickel mining, and major environmental group involvement will be necessary to insure adequate consideration is given to environmental values.

Longest Portage (Cont. from p. 1)

limits in the BWCA. Fifty-eight percent of men and women interviewed said they favor legislation which sharply curtails motorized vehicles.

Senator Anderson on June 23 introduced a Senate bill nearly identical to the Oberstar proposal that is unacceptable to environmentalists. His aim is to get the House and Senate bills into a conference committee where he believes a compromise can be framed to retain motorboats. The future of the Anderson bill and the Burton-Vento proposal is uncertain. Congress will adjourn soon for the summer campaigns. Senator Anderson is running for election against a strong opponent who espouses the wilderness plan. Congressman Donald Fraser is running to fill a senate vacancy against two candidates who back the multiple use aspects of Oberstar's proposal. The outlook in the Senate is uncertain. By filling two senate seats in November, the voters of Minnesota may well decide the future of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

RARE II

The public has been asked to respond to ten alternative approaches of allocating the remaining undeveloped areas on national forest lands for wilderness, non-wilderness uses, or further planning. This is part of the final phase of the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation process (RARE II) that the Forest Service initiated a year ago to speed up decisions on how such areas are to be managed in the future.

These alternatives are presented in a Draft Environmental Statement and three supplements now available from the Regional Office in Milwaukee, and headquarter offices in the fourteen

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Rare II (Cont. from p. 3)

National Forests in the eastern region of the Forest Service.

The Draft Environmental Statement is based on an inventory of 2,686 roadless areas developed as a result of public workshops held nationwide last summer. The three supplements provide specific information as to how these alternatives would apply to the 127 areas in this inventory that are located in the 14 National Forests in the eastern region.

Members of the public are encouraged to review the Statements, visit areas if they wish, and submit written comments to the Forest Service. Comments must be received by the Eastern Regional Office in Milwaukee by October 1, so they can be considered in preparing the Final Environmental Statement to be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency in January. Comments may be addressed to the Regional Forester, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 633 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203.

QUETICO PROVINCIAL PARK MASTER PLAN

A plan for Quetico Provincial Park dated September, 1977, has been published by the Canadian Ministry of Natural Resources in an attractive book with color photographs. The Park's goal statement reads: "To preserve Quetico Provincial Park, which contains a natural environment of recreational and historical significance, in perpetuity for the people of Ontario as an area of wilderness that is not adversely affected by human activities."

The explanation of the goal continues in poetic prose: A wilderness is:

"A substantial area of land and/or water where the forces of nature are permitted to function freely;"

"Where the impact of man is largely unnoticeable;"

"Where the only method of travel is by historic, nonmechanical means;"

"Where there are opportunities for a wilderness experience of solitude, space, time, and a personal integration with nature."

"Furthermore, it is managed in such a way as to ensure the evolution of natural processes."

"As a wilderness park, Quetico will be totally resource-oriented. Man is not considered to be incompatible with Quetico's wilderness landscape; however, his presence is acceptable only within an ecological context whereby man's numbers and technology participate rather than dominate."

DAVID SILHA CENTER FOR OUTDOOR DISCOVERY

For the David Silha Center for Outdoor Discovery, sponsored by YMCA Camp Warren for teenage boys who live on the Iron Range, 1977 was a record year thanks to the sponsorship by the Quetico-Superior Foundation of a fifth trip. Since the program's inception during the summer of 1974, eighty-nine boys have participated in the week-long canoe trips into the BWCA at a cost of \$15 per boy. Thirty-three of those boys joined the program in 1977.

The program is named for David Silha, an eight year Warren camper and staff member who, on January 16, 1974, was lost in an avalanche while climbing at the 9,500 foot level in the Teton Mountains in Wyoming.

Its purpose is to provide at minimal cost a quality canoeing program in the BWCA. Provided by Camp Warren, the staff is expected to help the young men understand wilderness values and the land ethic. They are trained in canoeing and water skills at the camp for a day and a night prior to heading for the wilderness trail the following morning.

Mark Pree, the 1977 leader who makes his home in Bloomington, commented briefly on the program last summer: "Five different routes were taken. Some were all-out physical challenges for everyone while other trips were a chance for everyone to relax, swimming, fishing, cooking, and joking;



Silha trippers working out at Camp Warren preparing for canoe trip into the BWCA. Front to back: Bill Kaffine, Eveleth; Mark Pree, Warren staff member in charge of trip, Minneapolis; Glenn Bergum, Eveleth.

a healthy break in a hectic summer. On all the trips the sight of wildlife perked everyone up and reminded us of the unique area we traveled through, especially when no other humans were sighted. But this alone did not make the area beautiful or the trips meaningful to us. It was our effort — with sweat, mosquito bites, sunburn, wet feet, aching muscles, and blisters, but most important the work using our skills in harmony with nature — which made another lake seem like the most beautiful lake and another campsite seem like the best, custom-made for us. This was the feeling I wanted them all to experience.

"We tried to teach everyone to be competent in the woods so we could take care of ourselves as well as having a good time while preserving the equipment and the wilderness for others to use."

TIN CAN LAKE

Visitors bringing cans and bottles into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) is still the number one law enforcement problem, according to Superior National Forest Supervisor Robert O. Rehfeld. Since 1971 the possession of any nonburnable food or beverage containers, including deposit bottles, has been prohibited.

Plastic containers, vacuum bottles, paper and foil containers are permitted. Containers which are not for foods or beverages are permitted, such as toothpaste, medicine, and insect repellent.

Last year numerous citations were issued for can and bottle violations. This year visitors continue to be cited. Possession of beer and soft drink cans and bottles remains the most frequent violation.

Violators are subject to a mandatory appearance before a Federal Magistrate. The maximum penalty for violating the can and bottle rule is a \$500 fine, six months in jail, or both.

"We need the cooperation of all visitors to keep the BWCA a clean and beautiful Wilderness Area," said Rehfeld.

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