



FROM THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR FOUNDATION • SUMMER 1988

EIGHT DOWN AND FOUR TO GO



WCA solitude



Isabella Culvert

A Management Plan for the Superior National Forest had been completed by the Forest Service in June, 1986. The Plan was appealed on 12 points by an environmental coalition comprised of the Sierra Club, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, the Wilderness Society and Defenders of Wildlife. A group of more than 20 individuals and organizations from Northern Minnesota took issue with a number of the points of appeal and requested status to enter into discussions toward resolution.

The Regional Forester for the Eastern Region of the Forest Service issued a response in early 1987 wherein the Forester agreed that dams in the BWCA should no longer be maintained by the Forest Service, that logging road culverts on the Isabella River in the BWCA should be removed and that the Plan should better address the use of pesticides in the BWCA. Further issues were resolved in an oral presentation in Washington on December 16 and in a negotiating session in Duluth on January 13, 1988. The chief spokesperson for the environmentalists was Brian O'Neill of the Faegre and Benson Law Firm. Issues in addition to the issues of dams, culverts on the Isabella River and pesticides which were settled in the January 13 meeting included:

Wild and Scenic Rivers - The environmentalists agreed to a compromise which had been reached between the American Rivers, Inc. and the U.S. Forest Service on the

American Rivers' appeal of the Superior National Forest Plan.

Road Densities and the Timberwolf - Research by wolf biologists have indicated that high road densities result in high wolf mortality. The U.S. Forest Service Plan proposes a large increase in road building which will threaten survival of the eastern timber wolf.

Woodland Caribou Reintroduction - The Forest Service agreed to include a strong statement in support of the reintroduction of woodland caribou in the BWCA, contingent upon funding, in cooperation with the

Minnesota DNR.

BWCA Visitors Use Levels - Those supporting the environmental cause argued that visitor use levels in the BWCA are too high. The levels result in over crowding in certain parts during much of the summer. The Visitor Distribution Program which controls entry point quotas is operating at too high a rate of campside occupancy. The Forest Service agreed to reassess and restudy visitor levels in three years.

Minerals Acquisition - The Forest Service agreed to amend the Final Plan to develop a

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ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

Violations of the BWCA regulations appeared to be on the increase in fall of 1987. Robert Padgett of Gheen, Minnesota appeared in U.S. district Court on October 19 on charges of operating an outboard motor on Lac La Croix in the BWCA. Padgett pleaded "not guilty" to the charges. He was found guilty by U.S. Magistrate Patrick McNulty and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment or a \$300 fine, which he elected to pay.

Arrest warrants were issued on October 27 for Peter Bell of Madison, Wisconsin, Carol Bredson of Minneapolis, Minnesota and Michael Turgo of Bemidji, Minnesota

for failure to appear in court on charges of violating BWCA regulations. The violations included camping on undesignated sites, exceeding the 10-party size limit and failure to have a valid BWCA travel permit. Other persons charged with violations included Curtis Lee Sheehy of Gheen, Minnesota and David Strobe of Hibbing, Minnesota.

Citations were issued on November 9 to a group of men of Minnesota and Wisconsin. Fines totalling \$3,775 were imposed by Federal Magistrate Patrick McNulty to the party of 7 individuals who had been deer hunting in the BWCA. They were cited on 27 counts of Federal violations in the BWCA.

CAMPERS MAULED BY BLACK BEARS

Two bear attacks in the BWCA gained much attention in the fall, 1987. The attacks were within two miles of each other in BWCA. In the first attack a Tennessee man who was a participant in Outward Bound was injured at Wabang Lake, south of Lac La Croix. The bear was driven off by other members of the Outward Bound party. The man was reported in stable condition in the hospital at Ely the following day.

The second attack occurred approximately 2 miles northeast of the first incident. The second victim was bitten numerous times by a black bear, presumed to be the same bear from the prior day. The second attack occurred on Lady Boot Bay of Lac La Croix. The man's son was able to drive the bear off and the two were able to paddle for help. The man was treated in the hospital in Cook, Minnesota.

After the attack the Minnesota DNR and the U.S. Forest Service personnel dispatched airplanes to warn campers within a 5 mile radius of the attacks. Another aircraft carried DNR personnel who had been instructed to destroy the bear. The action was deemed necessary to protect campers and to determine the cause of the attacks. Such attacks have been extremely rare in the BWCA. Meanwhile people who were canoeing in the BWCA were warned to avoid Lady Boot Bay and Wabang Lake area. Lynn Rogers, a world known expert on black bears, stated that "in the last 80 years throughout North America, despite many thousands of close encounters between people and black bears, there have been only 40 unprovoked attacks and only 18 were fatal." There was speculation that the bear attacks were the result of very limited food supplies for bears in the BWCA.

Later that week a bear was shot and officials said they were convinced that it was the animal which had attacked the two campers. The evidence rested primarily on hair. "We are confident, based on the accumulation of evidence today, that we did get the right bear," said John Chell of the



Treeing food, so the bears won't tree us.

Minnesota DNR. The bear was a small female bear near the site of the attacks.

Officers who shot the bear were convinced that it was the right bear. They had spread bait around the site of the attacks and the bait failed to attract other bears than the one shot. Both men who had been attacked were eventually convinced that the identified bear was the bear which had attacked them.

PIGEON RIVER LAND ACQUIRED FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE PARK

An important tract of land beside the Pigeon River which divides Canada and the United States has been acquired by a private group. The intent of the group is to preserve the land for a possible future park. The land, which stretches more than 2 miles along the Minnesota side of the Pigeon River, includes the 130 foot High Falls and the 30 foot Middle Falls.

Indians traveling to the border lakes from Lake Superior created a 9 mile portage, called the Grand Portage, to bypass the falls.

178 acres of the tract have been purchased by the Minnesota Parks and Trails Council and Foundation for \$250,000. The remaining 129 acres have been donated to the Park Council by the owner, Lloyd K. Johnson, a Duluth attorney. The tract is across the Pigeon River from the 22,000-acre LaVerendrye Provincial Park which will stretch 80 miles along the international border to preserve the Canadian portion of the "Voyageurs Highway," the historic canoe route.

EIGHT DOWN AND FOUR TO GO *continued*

program for seeking voluntary donations of mineral rights to the Federal Government, the BWCA, pointing out the possible advantages to mineral rights owners and emphasizing the unlikelihood of mineral development in the BWCA.

The remaining four unresolved issues awaiting a decision by the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service in Washington in June, 1988 include:

Motorized Truck Portages - The 1978 BWCA Law prohibited continued operation of three truck portages in the BWCA at Prairie Portage, Four Mile Portage and Trout Portage. This issue has been a center of heated debate. It is unclear whether the Forest Service will yield on motorized portages.

Leaseback of Resorts - Environmentalists have argued that the resorts purchased under the 1978 Act should be restored to natural conditions rather than returned to commercial use. They contend that government-subsidized operations compete unfairly with remaining private resorts. The Forest Service contends that the intent of the 1978 Act was not to remove the resorts.

Below Cost Timber Sales - The Forest Service's timber program has resulted in a huge loss to taxpayers and a huge subsidy to the timber industry. The Superior National Forest is a glaring example of low cost timber sales. The sales recovered 20% or less for every dollar expended on the timber program from 1974 through 1986. The Forest Plan proposes a large increase in the timber cutting program and losses will be intensified. Roads for timber cutting threaten the eastern timber wolf and degrade the esthetic qualities of the country cut. Timber sales cut close to the heart of the U.S. Forest Service and they are a point of contention where the Forest Service is not likely to yield.

Land Classification of Homer-Brule and Timber Frear - Both areas currently outside the BWCA should be studied as a potential wilderness addition. They are appealing canoe routes with wilderness qualities which could provide a primitive canoeing experience as an alternative to the BWCA.

Jim Rogers, Planning Staff Officer on the Superior National Forest noted that the appeal process has been lengthy but certainly has provided benefits. "Perhaps the best results of these deliberations has been the interaction of groups and individuals concerned about the future of the forest," Rogers said. Clay Beal, Forest Supervisor of the Superior National Forest, said, "The appeal process is time consuming, but it can result in a better Plan." He said that number of items have been clarified as a result of the negotiations.

For environmentalists the negotiations marked a successful effort at reaching compromise and resolution without having to resort to a costly court challenge.

VOYAGEURS PARK CANOE TRIP

Grace Lee Nute in "Rainy River Country" published in 1950 writes "The canoeist on Rainy Lake or Lake of the Woods still feels a genuine bond with David Thompson, Alexander MacKenzie, Dr. John McLoughlin and John McKay. Even the common site of Indians in the powered canoes does not seem too incongruous in this setting of woods and waters. At least the canoes are still there—and the Indians are still present, despite all that has happened in the past two hundred years."

A great deal has changed since 1950. Our family departed from the Ash River ranger cabin on Kabetogama Lake in late August. In two canoes we paddled eastward into Namakan Lake through Old Dutch Bay, Blind Indian Narrows, past Cemetery Island and out to Gehering Point for rest and a welcome swim. The day changed from heavy overcast clouds and light rain to a day of hot sunshine and heavy humidity which warned us of the likelihood of much more rain in the days ahead.

Throughout our trip through the narrows into Namakan and beyond we encountered a great number of motorboats traveling at about 30 miles per hour. It might be that the bad weather had held up boats and consequently we had an unusual streak of the critters. In our entire three day trip we saw only one other canoe party whereas we encountered over a hundred motorboats and probably three dozen houseboats. A number of the motorboats were courteous to canoeers with small children aboard paddling in the bow, but a number on the other hand came close to us and seemed unmindful of what their wake might bring. In fact one group of young lads buzzed us deliberately. Suddenly they hit a rock reef which gave us some amusement until their inability to control the boat almost meant that they rammed into one of our canoes.

We camped on Mica Island just west of Squirrel Narrows. Mica Bay had a houseboat camped in its mouth for several days. Beyond our campsite the reef was very popular for fisherman who arrived and trolled for walleye pike morning to evening throughout the two days we were at the campsite. On the second day we paddled to Kettle Falls and crossed the portage in order to paddle out to Surveyors Island for a fine view of the east end of Rainy Lake looking far up into Pound Net Bay.

Our trip was lovely. We shall cherish the memories. If canoeers ask us about traveling in Voyageurs Park, we will caution them that the Park is really for motorboats and not canoeers. We know why the canoeers are staying in the Boundary Waters and not competing with the motorboats at Voyageurs. At the same time, the campsites are fine at Voyageurs, and they appear to be much less used than the Basswood Lake, Crooked Lake and Lac La Croix campsites. A number of times during our three day journey we felt, "Oh if this were only non-



Houseboats on Namakan



The Old Kettle Falls Hotel

motorized." Yet we also said in the same breath, "Thank goodness the Kabetogama Peninsula has been set aside as a National Park. If that had not happened, in the 1980's we might be seeing roads, resorts, cabins and a mini-Brainerd development." Although the land is motorized, at least it is not developed as one cruises the shores of Kabetogama, Namakan and Rainy toward Soldier Point.

The resort from which we departed broadcast as its welcome: "Bait, Beer, Pop, Burgers, Minnows, Cocktails, Gas, Boats." We can be thankful that these quintessential demands of mankind will probably never be offered in the vicinity of Surveyors Island, thanks to the establishment of Voyageurs National Park.

We were grateful as well when we traveled the busy Voyageurs Park to those Americans who had the foresight to set aside for canoes and wilderness our Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

Sigurd Olson writes in *Reflections from the North Country*: "What would the wilderness lake country of the Quetico-Superior be like with the roar of airplane motors and high powered transportation engulfing it? The charm of a canoe trip is in the quiet as one drifts along the shores, being a part of rocks and trees and every living thing. How swiftly it changes if all natural sounds are replaced by the explosive violence of combustion engines and speed. At times on quiet waters one does not speak aloud but only whispers, for all noise is sacrilege."

INTERNATIONAL WOLF CENTER

A committee for the establishment of an International Wolf Center was organized 3 years ago to study funding possibilities and select a site for a Wolf Center. After study and visits to 13 sites in 5 communities, the group selected Ely, Minnesota as the most promising location. The center would be affiliated with Vermilion Community College. The central mission of the center will be public education regarding the wolf, related species and environmental concerns. The center will offer classes for school age children, college students, educators and the general public. The center's public information program will be designed to reach the

broader public through the media, a speakers bureau, traveling exhibits and appearances at community events.

The center would be located on the site of the Voyageurs' Visitor Center, 4 blocks east of Vermilion Community College. The center would have access to the science faculty, to classrooms and to the library as well as dormitories and cafeteria facilities at the college.

In early 1988 a competing site at Hovland, Minnesota 15 miles northeast of Grand Marais emerged. The competition for a wolf center site in northern Minnesota seemed ironic to some observers because wolves have

not been the most beloved community residents for people of the north.

Harry Drabik, author and northwood guide, wrote in an editorial titled "Land O'Wolves: "People may not suddenly fall in love with wolves, but if wolves increase the cash flow they will at least be tolerated. Not too many years ago, only a dead wolf was worth any money. Now there's a growing appreciation that live wolves in the wild environment also have value. Northern communities trying to cash in on the wolf and its endangered status may not be acting on altruistic motives, but the result will certainly be to make things better for the wolves."

HERBICIDE SPRAYING IN STATE FORESTS

This spring, aerial herbicide spraying by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will be cut significantly. The DNR has sprayed herbicides from helicopters for at least 20 years to kill brush which competes with pine trees and commercially valuable trees. The spraying has involved as much as 7,000 acres a year and will be reduced to a maximum 3,500 acres by 1993. In the future the DNR will bring in crews to reach woodlots on the ground where they can spray herbicides in small amounts or cut and burn unwanted undergrowth.

The DNR has agreed to get the spraying out of the air and on to the ground. Critics of the DNR spraying program said that the new spraying program will be less random and more discriminate than former programs.

Controversy over the spraying program had gone on more than 2 years until the issue was settled by mediation in June, 1987. It was the first time mediation has been used in Minnesota to settle an important state policy battle. Environmentalists had challenged the DNR's spraying program because of the possible danger to humans and nature. The DNR and the timber industry had argued in favor of the practice calling it essential for forest management.

Although they were apprehensive about the compromise, the timber companies seem to have accepted the agreement. Attorney Rip Rapson who represented several conservation groups said, "Had we our druthers, we would prefer that no aerial spraying be done. At some point you have to trust in the professional judgement of foresters."

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