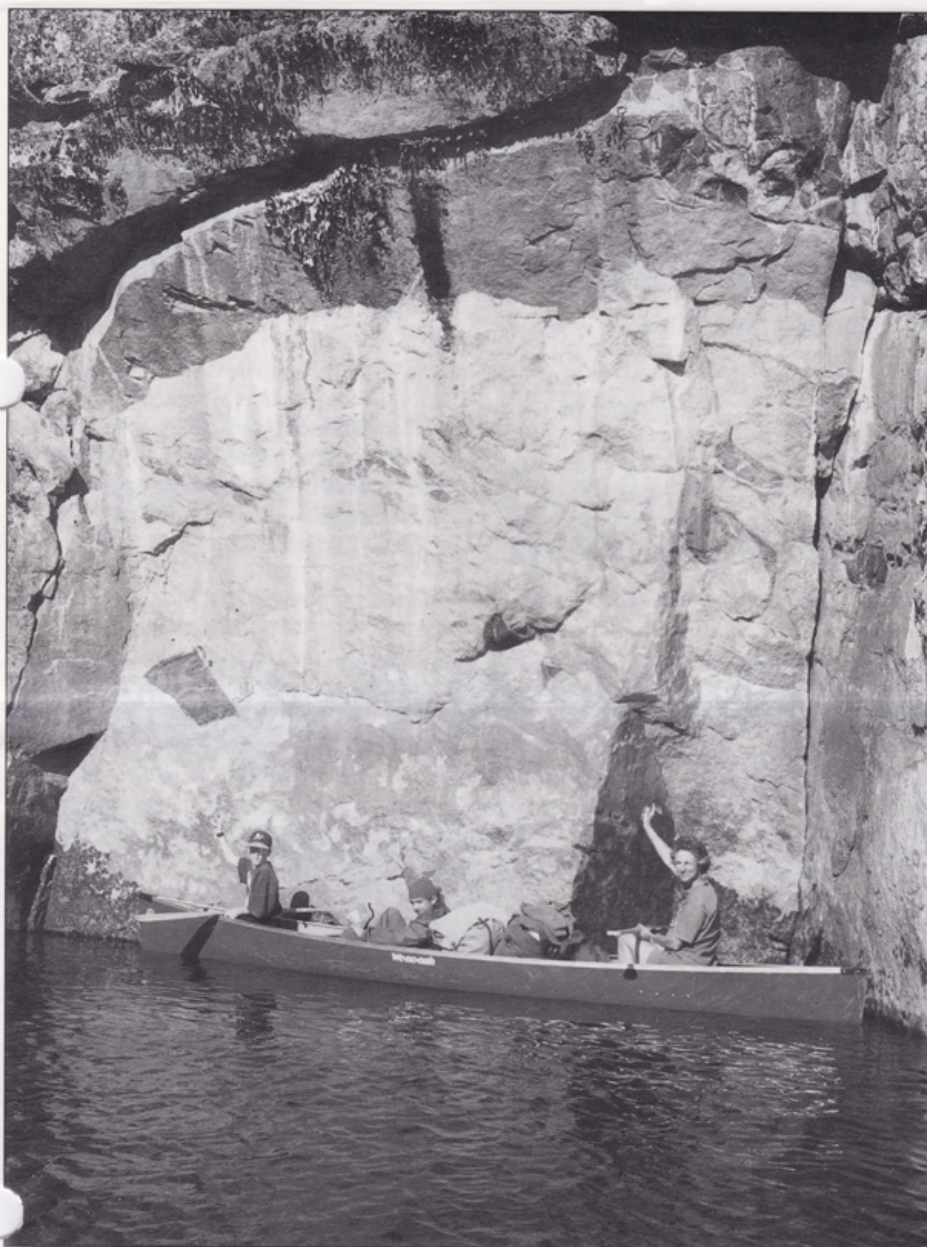




FROM THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR FOUNDATION • SUMMER 1994

QUETICO PARK AGREEMENT SIGNED



Darky Lake pictographs in Quetico Park.
The lake will be re-opened to motors.

Negotiations which began in 1991 between the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Lac La Croix First Nation community culminated in the present agreement. The government of Canada sought an improved relationship with native people of the Lac La Croix First Nation. Arriving at the present understanding has been an evolutionary process. Quetico Park itself has been in a state of evolution since its founding in 1909. The park was designated a wilderness park in 1973. Concern over rights of the First Nation people have always existed as an element in Quetico Park management, but hope for improving the relationship between the First Nation and the Park did not really emerge until the discussions started in 1991. The result of the negotiations will be a new park management plan.

Broad areas of agreement were reached between the government of Ontario and the First Nation band. The areas of agreement included the needs of the First Nation for economic diversification, cultural integrity and self-determination. Balancing that reality, participants in the negotiations agreed that Quetico is a wilderness park which will continue to set forth as its goal the maintenance of wilderness park status.

For the Lac La Croix Indian band the priority of "cultural integrity" seeks to regain the Ojibwa heritage and reduce problems such as alcoholism which have cast a shadow over the community. The desire for self-determination says that the band wants to stand on its own feet and not consider itself a pawn of the government or people of Ontario. The Lac La Croix community wants to be acknowledged as a rightful communi-

Continued on page 2

AGREEMENT, Continued



Mid-day stop on Basswood Lake in Quetico Park.

ty of people. They do not want to be considered intruders on wilderness park lands. In 1991 when the band began to seek recognition of their concerns, the community elected to proceed by negotiation rather than through the more confrontational and contentious pathway of the courts.

In determining goals for Quetico Park management, environmentalists for their part believe in the elements set forth in Quetico Park's plan: solitude; challenge; personal integration with nature; protection and wise use of the natural resources. They feel motorboats and aircraft significantly threaten the wilderness integrity of the park.

Environmentalists are concerned that the western one-third of the park has been turned over to motorized use of up to 10 horsepower by band members. Many lakes are involved, but the primary new lakes are Basswood, Crooked, Cirrus, Poohbah, Argo, Darky and Wikstead. Negative impact will likely be felt by canoeists traveling the BWCA because of the opening of Basswood and Crooked to motors. Aircraft landings at the designated entry lakes will "break the solitude." Concerns have been expressed over economic exploitation of floatplane guiding service originating at Crane Lake and Ely with landings in Quetico. There have been concerns as well over semi-permanent boat caches and camps on once remote Quetico Lakes.

Canadian environmental organizations critical of the decision are the Quetico Foundation, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and Friends of Quetico Park. The organizations felt that the Ministry of Natural Resource appeared to ignore public input on commercial motorized access.

Leadership of the Lac La Croix band is particularly concerned about the future opportunities for teenage youth residing in the community. High unem-

ployment is endemic in this group at the present time. Teenage youth are a significant percentage in total population.

The outcome of the meetings held over the last three years has been to set forth as a goal the phase-in of economic opportunity for the Lac La Croix band. These opportunities will include employment opportunities in the park with the goal of 50% employment from the Lac La Croix community. A second major goal is the long term phase-out of motors in the park.

Band members will be allowed mechanized access to any lake in the park for spiritual and cultural programs. Under a plan proposed by the people of the Lac La Croix First Nation, ten of the twenty primary lakes open to motorized use by band members will be designated each September for availability the following year starting in May. Ten primary lakes will be open and ten closed each year. The lakes will probably be rotated to help alleviate likely reduction of the fisheries. Fisheries' replenishment and management will be important in the new plan.

Trapping rights are yet to be negotiated. The agreement seeks the phase-out of mechanized guiding by a target date by 2015. The phase-out will depend on the success of employment opportunities and economic diversity for members of the Lac La Croix band.



Following the wind on Crooked Lake in Quetico Park.

REVISED MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BWCA



New Management Plan brings changes to the BWCA.

Our Fall, 1992, and our Summer, 1993, issues of Wilderness News detailed proposals for a revised BWCA management plan to be administered by the U.S. Forest Service. The final version of the new plan was released by the Forest Service on 8/19/93 after an extensive three year public involvement process. The plan reduced entry point quotas from 382 groups per night to 280. It reduced the number of people in each party from 10 to 9 and limited the number of watercraft to three per party. The new plan required visitors to obtain permits year-round to enter the BWCA. Currently campers need permits from May 1 through September 30. The plan retained campsites at 2,000, reduced motor quotas, prohibited sailboats, eliminated canoe rests and required dogs be under control. The new restrictions were proposed to protect the BWCA from overuse. Changes were designed to spread the use of the BWCA more equitably through the open water season and to improve the quality of wilderness experience for all of those who visit the area.

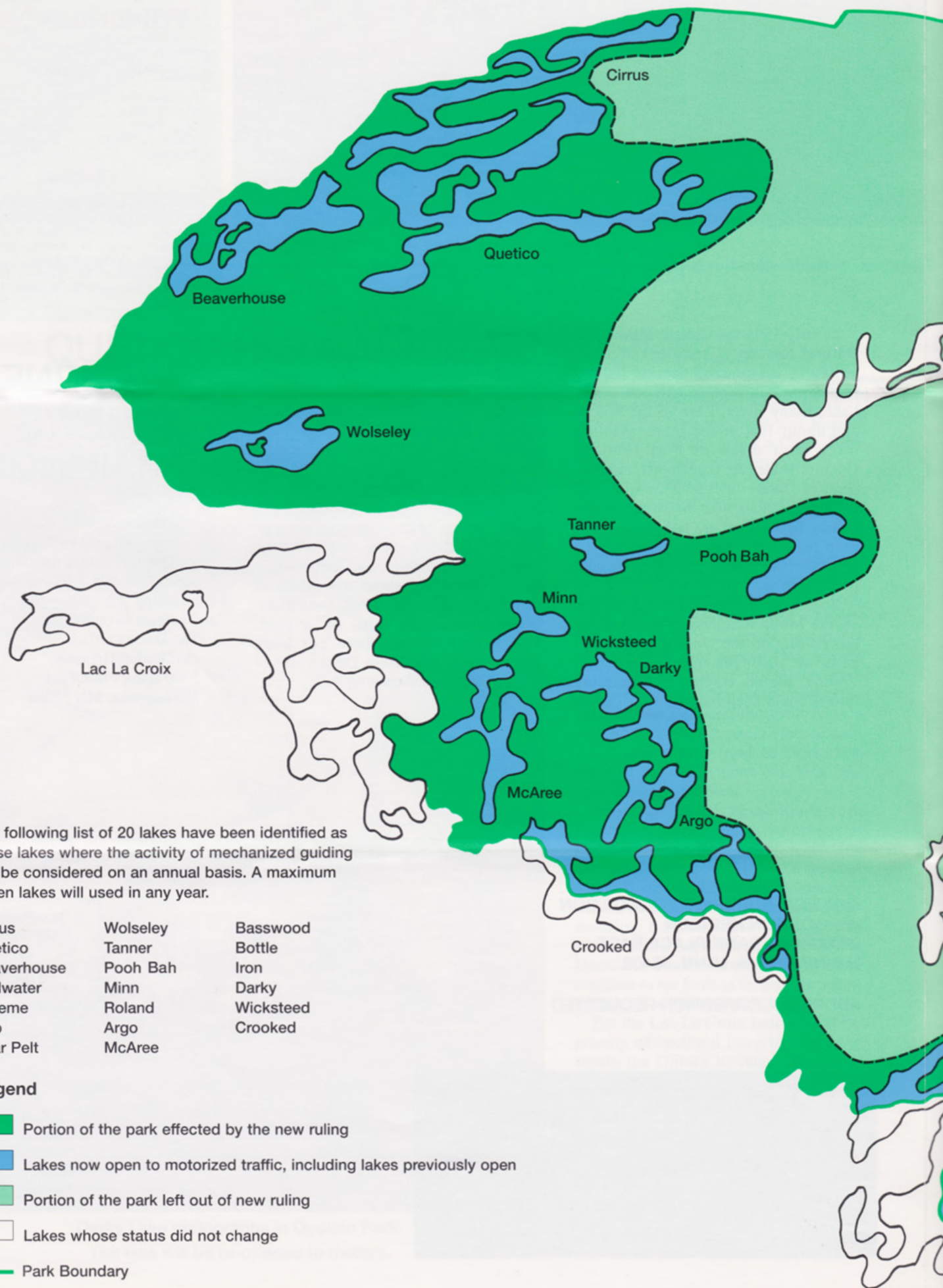
After publication of the plan in August, 1993, the Forest Service received a number of appeals to the plan. Probably the most broadly based

appeal was issued by an Ely-area group called Conservationists with Common Sense which was joined by the Ely Outfitters Association and the Grand Marais-Gunflint Trail Outfitters Association. The appeal challenged almost every change in the final plan. These organizations believe that the solution to crowding can be alleviated by opening more entry points to the BWCA and increasing campsite facilities. Their appeal objected to the reduction in the number of paddle permits issued each day. They objected to the Forest Service's goal to have no more than 67% of all campsites within a travel zone occupied. Under earlier management there have been some travel zones which operated at 85% campsite occupancy. The group opposed the reduction in the maximum group size from 10 to 9, asserting that this reduction would cost a number of jobs in the local economy. They objected to the three-watercraft limit per group and petitioned that visitors be allowed to possess motors in non-motor portions of the BWCA.

The plan was also appealed by Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, Minneapolis. Their appeal asked the Forest Service to reconsider the plan for commercial towboats.

The plan exempts commercial towboats from the day use motor quota. The Friends believe that if not reversed, this provision could allow in the future considerably more motor use than has occurred in the BWCA. The appeal expresses concern that the plan does not contain a process for monitoring future use and does not indicate specific action to be taken if quotas or recommended use levels are exceeded. Also the Friends appealed the plan for fisheries stocking in naturally barren lakes and streams contrary to Forest Service policy and customary wilderness management policy.

Regional Forester Butch Marita announced on July 19, 1994, his decision on the appeals which were filed to the final management plan for the BWCA. Subject matter of the appeals had included entry point quotas, sailboat use, canoe rests, watercraft number and group size limitations. Marita said that he had decided to affirm all aspects of the plan released in 8-19-93 plan with one exception: the limit on number of watercraft per party will be increased from three to four. Most of the provisions of the final management plan will be implemented in time for the beginning of the 1995 summer season.





WALTER PORT

In January, 1994, Walter C. Port who accompanied his friend Eric Severeid from Minneapolis to Hudson Bay (2,250 miles) in 1930, died at age 86. The trip was chronicled in Severeid's book "Canoeing with the Cree." The men were friends at Central High School in Minneapolis. Port and Severeid bought an eighteen foot canoe and named it the

"Sans Souci." They started at Fort Snelling on June 17, 1930, and paddled the Minnesota River, Lake Traverse, the Red River, Lake Winnipeg, and the Nelson River, arriving in York factory on Hudson Bay at the end of September, 1930. They returned to the Twin Cities by train on October 11.

WALLEYE WARS

In early 1994 the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources spawned the first volley in announcing special fishing regulations for nonresidents on Rainy Lake, Rainy River, Lake of the Woods and about 100 inland lakes within a three hour drive of Fort Francis, Ontario. Under the regulations, nonresidents of Ontario will be allowed to fish catch-and-release with an Ontario sport-fishing license, but are not permitted to keep fish of any species unless staying at an Ontario tourist facility or owning property in the affected area.

Beginning in May, fishermen staying on the Minnesota side of Rainy Lake but fishing on the Ontario side could keep no walleyes. On Lake of the Woods, anglers staying in Minnesota resorts could keep two walleyes caught

in Ontario waters.

Feeling baited, the Minnesota legislature in the spring attempted to counter the Ontario border-water battle by preventing most Minnesota anglers from returning to the state with walleyes and some other game fish species caught in Ontario. Minnesota's legislation was intended to put pressure on Ontario to again liberalize their nonresident fishing rules. Ontario has said that the nonresident restrictions are part of a larger effort to conserve fisheries. Ontario said it was concerned about managing its resources. The stand-off continues. Negotiations are high on a reef. Canadian officials have not been responsive to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' carping.

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