



FROM THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR FOUNDATION • WINTER 1976-77

THE FRASER BILL

In the past two issues of Wilderness News the Oberstar Bill and the DNR proposal for management of the BWCA have been described. This issue describes congressman Donald Fraser's bill to make the Boundary Waters Canoe Area a fully protected wilderness. The bill seeks to: end commercial logging; phase out use of motorized vehicles; and prohibit mineral exploration and mining.

Fraser has said "our aim is to lay to rest the endless controversies over

land use in the BWCA by protecting its remaining virgin forests and by allowing restoration of areas already damaged by logging and road building". Fraser added that his intent is to protect now and for the future our country's largest true wilderness east of the Rockies.

Fraser has attempted to moderate complaints in Northern Minnesota over the BWCA impact on the area's economy and tax base. He proposes to raise federal payments in lieu of taxes

to local governments for federal land in the BWCA.

In proposing his bill, Fraser observed that his measure will assure that the unique attraction of the BWCA will continue in the future to bring tourists and tourist income into Northern Minnesota. He noted that there are hundreds of miles of alternative snowmobile and motorboat routes and vast alternative timber supplies outside the BWCA in the three-million-acre Superior National Forest.

FRIENDS OF THE BOUNDARY WATERS WILDERNESS

The Fraser bill is supported by a coalition of state and national environmental organizations known as the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. This group includes the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, Minnesota Public Interest Research Group, Minnesota Environmental Control Citizen Association, Northern Environmental Council, Isaak Walton League of America, Minnesota Conservation Federation, Friends of the Earth, National Audubon Society and Clear Air-Clean Water Unlimited.

The group has produced a booklet titled "Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Needs Help, Now!". In this booklet the organization asks that the BWCA have equal protection under the law that other wilderness areas in the United States enjoy.

LOGGING

The Friends publication points out that very little logging occurred in the BWCA before 1948, when modern pulpwood logging expanded sharply. Pulpwood logging has resulted in clear-cutting of vast timber sale blocks of jack pine and black spruce. Artificial reforestation or no reforestation has

followed, causing severe changes in the natural ecosystem and scarring of the landscape.

The period 1948 to 1972 saw the development of a network of logging roads in the BWCA. Logging of virgin timber advanced through almost 1/2 of the BWCA until 1972, when lawsuits were filed by the Minnesota Public Interest Research Group and the Sierra Club, challenging the legality of logging under the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Little logging has occurred in the virgin forests since 1972, but on August 30, 1976, the U.S. Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the BWCA ban on logging. By December 1976, logging could begin in the BWCA's portal zone.

Friends of The Boundary Waters Wilderness agree with the finding of US District Judge Miles Lord that the cost of reforestation charged to logging companies in the BWCA has been below the actual expenses of the Forest Service to regenerate and manage the land. According to the finding, BWCA logging is not a revenue source and it is the American people who are paying the industry to log the wilderness.

MOTORBOATS

A special provision of the 1964 Wilderness Act allows the Forest Service to permit motorboats along designated routes in the BWCA. Until very recently, there were no horsepower restrictions. More than 70% of BWCA use is by paddle canoe and that percentage is growing. According to studies conducted by David Lime, Principal Geographer for the US Forest Service, St. Paul, 93% of the paddlers are irritated by encounters with motors.

SNOWMOBILES

The Wilderness Act had no provision for snowmobiles, but the Forest Service considered snowmobiles to be winterized motorboats and allowed use in the same area. In response to a Sierra Club appeal, snowmobile use was banned in the spring of 1975. Use was then extended for another year as a result of pressure from snowmobile clubs and manufacturers. In September 1976, the Secretary of Agriculture upheld the ban on snowmobiles saying that the move protects the wilderness character of the area. The Secretary said that "ample opportunity exists for recreational use of motorized ice and

(Continued on page 2)

SELECTED BWCA READINGS

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Portage into the Past; by Canoe along the Minnesota-Ontario Boundary Waters, by J. Arnold Bolz. University of Minnesota Press, 1960.

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STUDIES AND REPORTS

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Newly Developed Campsites in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, by Lawrence Campbell Merriam. University of Minnesota. Agricultural Experiment Station, 1973.

Possible Environmental Impact of Base Metal Mining in Minnesota, by William C. Brice. Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Waters, Soils and Minerals, 1972.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENTS AND PLANS

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PAMPHLETS

Birds of Superior National Forest. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service, 1973.

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The Duluth Complex in the Gabbro Lake Quadrangle, Minnesota, by W.C. Phinney. Minnesota Geological Survey, Report of Investigations 9, 1969.

Eighteen Years of Weather in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Quetico-Superior Wilderness Research Center, by Carl E. Ahlgren. Miscellaneous Report 88. University of Minnesota, Agricultural Experiment Station, 1969.

Factors Influencing Campground Use in the Superior National Forest of Minnesota, by David W. Lime. USDA Forest Service Research Paper NC-60. North Central Experiment Station, 1971.

Forest Uses, Border Area of Northeastern Minnesota: Conflict or compromise? Wood Fiber Employees and Minnesota Forest Industries, 1975.

Improving Estimates of Wilderness Use from Mandatory Travel Permits, by David W. Lime and Grace A. Lorence. Research Paper NC-101. North Central Forest Experiment Station, 1973. (Cont. on next page)

SNOWMOBILES (Cont. from page 1)

snow craft, both in the Superior National Forest outside the BWCA and on state and private lands. Conversely, areas closed to mechanical use, which can provide for growing winter wilderness use, are extremely limited."

MINING

The existence of ores of various types in the area have been known for many years. Exploratory test-drilling for copper-nickel sulfide ores outside the BWCA began in the mid 50's. Many prospecting and some mining leases were let by federal and state governments on lands outside the BWCA. In 1969 a prospecting crew hired by New York businessman George St. Clair established a camp in the heart of the interior zone of the BWCA. It was later revealed that St. Clair claimed to own or represent more than 100,000 acres of mineral rights. After several encounters with the US Forest Service, the crew stopped work and left the area in 1970.

In late 1969 St. Clair notified the US Forest Service of his intent to enter the BWCA with heavy drilling rigs for mineral exploration. The Isaak Wal-

ton League of America brought suit in Federal District Court to prevent mineral exploration, drilling or mining in the BWCA because the area is zoned as a wilderness. US District Judge Philip Neville ruled in favor of a permanent injunction against mining in 1973, but his decision was reversed by the US Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, St. Louis, on grounds that no permits had been applied for. The decision directed the Forest Service to determine whether an exploratory permit should be granted upon proper application.

SUMMARY

Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness maintain that the BWCA offers unique opportunities for recreation, wildlife, research, education, and inspiration. It is our only lakeland wilderness — a land where canoeist, hiker, snowshoer, and skier can leave the cares of urban life behind and experience nature on her own terms. It is a land of immense natural beauty — a land of rugged three-century-old pines and jutting glacially-formed cliffs, dotted with a thousand pristine island-studded lakes.

The BWCA is also the last large and relatively complete example of the northern conifer forest ecosystem in the United States. It is a land where Canada Lynx, Pine Marten, Fisher, Moose, Black Bear, Beaver, Otter, Bald Eagle and other forest animals are present in full complement to the native vegetation. The eastern Timber Wolf has its last foothold in the lower 48 states in this part of Minnesota, and several other species present are either rare or endangered elsewhere. Here, in a living biological laboratory, the relationship of these animals to their environment can be studied relatively free of man's influence.

Further information on the programs and activities of Friends of the Boundary Waters can be obtained by writing to Room 400, Christie Building, Duluth, Minnesota 55802, or telephoning in St. Paul (612) 644-2835.

The Land is Shaped — The Land is Studied — The People Use the Land — The Issues. Superior National Forest Planning Division, 1972.

Large Groups in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area — Their Numbers, Characteristics, and Impact. Research Note NC-142. North Central Forest Experiment Station, 1972.

A Love Affair with Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area, by Jim Kimball. Minneapolis Tribune, Sunday Picture Magazine, Feb. 8, 1970.

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Three Million Plus. Superior National Forest Planning Team, 1972.

PERIODICALS

"The Boundary Waters: Wilderness at Stake" by Herbert E. Wright, Jr. in *The Living Wilderness*, Spring 1974, p. 22.

"The BWCA Bottle Battle" by James H. Hulbert in *Minnesota Volunteer*, March-April 1974, p. 37.

"Can We Keep Our Canoe Country Waters Clean?" by John G. King and Arne C. Mace, Jr. in *Minnesota Volunteer*, Nov.-Dec. 1972, p. 57.

"Cutting Up in the Boundary Waters" by H.E. Wright, Jr. and Jonathan Ela in *Sierra Club Bulletin*, May 1974, p. 24.

"A Superior Forest" by Charles Edgar Randall in *American Forests*, Sept. 1971, p. 26.

"Towards a Model of Travel Behavior in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area" by C. Gorman Gilbert et. al. in *Environment and Behavior*, June 1972, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 131.

"Wilderness Besieged" by Sigurd F. Olson in *Audubon*, July 1970, p. 28.

The Naturalist:

V. 16, No. 1 (Spring 1965) "Boundary Waters Canoe Area: How Wild a Wilderness?" (evaluation of wilderness management plans).

V. 20, No. 1 (Spring 1969) "Research in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area" (research on plants, animals and people).

V. 25, No. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 1974) "Wilderness Treasure" (on copper-nickel mining, also cataloged as a book, above).

The above reading can be found at the Environmental Conservation Library located on the second floor of the Minneapolis Public Library, 300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis.



LOGGING IN THE WILDERNESS

IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE REACTION TO DNR PROPOSAL OF LAST ISSUE

The Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America has expressed its opposition to the proposal of Congressman James Oberstar for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, H.R. 10247, because, among other reasons, it would remove areas now designated as wilderness from the Wilderness Act, it would introduce a whole new concept of wilderness management into the BWCA and would repeal existing legal protections for the BWCA.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has proposed alternate legislation that has none of the serious defects of the Oberstar Bill in that it would not remove wilderness areas from the Wilderness Act, it would not change drastically the present management concept of the BWCA and would retain all existing regulatory and statutory protection measures for the BWCA; and would provide much more protection for the BWCA than that provided by the Oberstar Bill and

more than presently exists for the BWCA.

However, the DNR Bill would not provide the complete wilderness protection for the BWCA which the Izaak Walton League has consistently advocated and worked for, particularly in that it would perpetuate, by statute, logging and motorized travel within the BWCA.

The Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League commends the Department of Natural Resources and its Commissioner, Mr. Robert Herbst, for the time and effort that it has expended in reviewing the critical issues involved in the management of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, and appreciates the sensitivity it has shown towards wilderness values as evidenced by its excellent critique of the Oberstar Bill and the preparation of the DNR Bill.

Although the DNR Bill is an improvement over the Oberstar Bill, it does not meet the ultimate goal of the

Izaak Walton League of America for complete wilderness protection of the BWCA.

The Izaak Walton League for many years has favored complete protection of the BWCA as a wilderness area. This protection must include all of the following:

- (1) Continuation of existing statutory and administrative protection of the BWCA.
- (2) Inclusion in statutory form of the "wilderness zoning" concept embodied in Judge Neville's decision in the League's copper-nickel mining lawsuit.
- (3) Prohibition of motorized travel in the entire BWCA.
- (4) Prohibition of logging in the entire BWCA.



THE BEAUTIFUL, REMOTE, AND INACCESSIBLE REACHES OF THE BWCA.

SPARKS FROM THE CAMPFIRE — READERS' RESPONSES FROM OUR LAST ISSUE

The BWCA is a birthright area of all Americans and it should be a National Heritage Wilderness for every American and Canadian to enjoy. The vested interest groups do not belong in the BWCA. The vested interest groups include the mining interests, the timber interests, the fresh water interests, and the motorized travel interests. The BWCA is a Wilderness Area, it should be classified as such and, if it is to remain a Wilderness, it will be necessary to ban logging, mining and use of all classes of motored vehicles in the area.

R.E. Larson
Houston, Texas

Your last Newspaper contains items regarding rezoning the BWCA to permit some logging and some mining in the BWCA! Where is common sense these days? Would you permit anyone to come into your private garden with a shovel because he thought there might be some silver buried in it, or to remove your currant bushes because he needed the stems for weaving baskets? You would not! Those who are entrusted with our sacred BWCA wilderness should no more entertain thoughts of private enterprise entering the BWCA to remove its minerals and trees either. It is the *last* decent solitude on earth. It is a public trust. It is not for sale to spoilers.

E. Fleming
Minneapolis, MN

THE BIG BURN

Timber-dry conditions prevailed in the BWCA as in much of Minnesota from early August until late autumn. During most of September and October the BWCA was entirely closed to travel for the first time ever.

A BWCA fire which extended over more than 1,000 acres flared up in late August west of the Gunflint in the Saganaga, Seagull, and Magnetic lakes area. More than 200 campers were evacuated.

Of the roughly 350 firefighters on the blaze, 150 had been flown in from Washington and Oregon, 40 from Wisconsin, 40 from Missouri, and 20 from Michigan. World War II era B17 and B26 airplanes dumped 2,000 gallon loads of water and chemicals on the fire.

Considering the extent of the severe drought, it is a credit to the Forest Service and users that the BWCA did not experience much more extensive loss to fire in 1976.

Wilderness News

Published by Quetico-Superior Foundation
2400 First National Bank Building
Minneapolis, Minn. 55402

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