



FROM THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR FOUNDATION • WINTER 2000

## THE MILLENNIUM WIND STORM AFTERMATH

The July 4 windstorm which hit the BWCA was the center of our report in Wilderness News, Fall, 1999. Much of the blowdown occurred within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Because of the extraordinary conditions in the area affected, the use of motorized equipment to clean up portages and campsites was authorized by Regional Forester Robert Jacobs. Crews used chainsaws to clear about 50% of campsites and portages under specific guidelines. Adjacent to campsites and portages, downed trees have formed whirled stacks more than 15 feet high in places. Fire restrictions were imposed in storm-impacted portions of the BWCA.

The downed trees have created fuel loads which are much more dangerous than the loads which exist in standing forests. Dry fine fuels, which include leaves, pine needles and twigs, can result in a wildfire which will ignite and spread up to four times faster than in a standing forest. Fires can represent a serious risk to fire fighters and visitors.

The fuels assessment for the blowdown area has been extremely alarming. The hardest hit area was concentrated in the BWCA and extended 12 miles wide and 35 miles long. The blowdown created a corridor of fuels estimated at 80-120 tons per acre. US Forest Service teams of specialists have been working to provide a risk assessment of wildfire with a goal of developing alternatives for future fire suppression and fuel treatment to reduce fire risk.

Outside the BWCA the storm had the most serious

impact on the Upper Gunflint Trail Corridor. The area represents a strip of land two miles wide and thirty miles long situated at the eastern end of the BWCA. The corridor contains both private and public lands. During the summer season, 3,000-4,000 people may be on the corridor at one time in 600 homes, youth camps and resorts or campgrounds. The most devastated area of blowdown lies due west of the Gunflint Trail. A large wildfire could cut off the escape route for people on the corridor. The US Forest Service is concerned about the need to reduce heavy fuel loads surrounding the Gunflint Corridor to protect lives and property.

Fuel reduction will be accomplished through commercial timber sale, crushing or chipping of trees and prescribed burning.

On December 1, the US Forest Service issued an update on the July 4th storm. Selected portions of the report follow.

During the July 4th storm, parts of north-

eastern Minnesota experienced straightline winds exceeding 90 mph. In less than 30 minutes the storm cut a swath through Superior National Forest, causing a blowdown that impacted an estimated 477 thousand acres of the National Forest. The most heavily impacted area was in the BWCA.

The Chippewa National Forest also experienced impacts and damage from the high winds and rain that aggravated already high water levels. Approximately 9,000 feet of excessive shoreline erosion or control structure failure, 1,300 acres of downed trees, and hundreds of miles of washed out or blocked roads, trails and wildlife impoundments occurred as a result of the storm.

Though most media attention focused on the BWCA, this storm impacted the entire northeastern portion of the State of Minnesota and neighboring Canadian lands.

The storm has changed the forests for years to come and has created new risks



Aspen and birch trees were no match for the July 4 winds up to 80 mph.

and experiences for visitors and residents. There is a significant increase in the likelihood of large fires in the blowdown area. The high volume of fuels now available to burn can result in fires that start and spread easier, burn more intensely, and exceed the capability of firefighters to control. Weakened or leaning trees may continue to fall down. Fallen or leaning trees may be under tension and may snap or jump back unexpectedly if cut.

Since July 4th, the Superior and Chippewa National Forests have been working with several partners on storm recovery activities and planning to meet future needs.

This all leads to the obvious question, what is the next step? Jim Sanders, Superior National Forest Supervisor observed, "We have changed the condition of the forest. It is our responsibility to change our behavior appropriately."

**FIRE PLANNING:** Based on the information from the Fuels Risk Assessment, strategies are being developed by interagency teams to respond to specific needs identified under the following four key concerns:

- *Fuels Management* - Mitigate the negative effects of large catastrophic fire development by utilizing strategies which are both ecologically sound and economically efficient.
- *Suppression* - Provide for the safety of the public and firefighters; plan for the changed condition with regard to fire

suppression tactics and response; provide the proper skills/standards to meet fire suppression/fuels management objectives; determine the best mix of suppression resources/personnel/tools to meet the changed condition.

- *Prevention and Information* - Reduce human-caused wildfire occurrence in northern Minnesota with emphasis on fire safety in blowdown areas. Educate forest users on fire prevention methods and safety measures to reduce their risk of injury in case of wildfire.
- *Emergency Action Planning and Implementation* - Coordinate emergency planning with State, County, and local government partners and look for opportunities to support each other in funding needs; notify and support partners responsible for emergency notification and possible evacuation as soon as an escaped fire is deemed a threat to populated residential recreation areas.

The Forest Service, will continue to work collectively with representatives from State, County, and local governments and other partners to complete a plan that reduces the risk to those who live, work, and recreate in these areas.

**BWCA FUEL REDUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS):** This analysis will be conducted to address the high potential for catastrophic wildfire within the wilderness and the risk of a wildfire moving from the wilderness to adjacent private, state,

and Forest Service lands and threatening life and property. The EIS will examine options that use methods to reduce fuels that are ecologically sensitive, protect wilderness values to the extent possible, and are cost effective. A Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS was issued in the Federal Register in December 1999 with additional solicitation for public input later in the winter of 2000.

**GUNFLINT CORRIDOR FUEL REDUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS):** The Gunflint team has begun early steps toward an EIS that will reduce fire hazards and restore wind-damaged components of the ecosystem. It is a continuation of fuel reduction work started after the July 4th blowdown. Projects might include mechanical fuel reduction - (including salvage timber sales), prescribed fire, hand treatment of fuels and safe area construction. Scoping ended on December 6 and a Draft EIS will be released in the winter of 2000. The final EIS is expected in the spring of 2000.

**RESEARCH:** A steering committee that includes representatives from the National Forest System, State and Private Forestry, Northeast Research Station, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the University of Minnesota is being assembled. A workshop is planned for early 2000 to establish partnerships in research for the Superior and Chippewa National Forests. The information is posted at the Forest web sites at [www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior) & [www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/chippewa)

## SIGURD OLSON'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

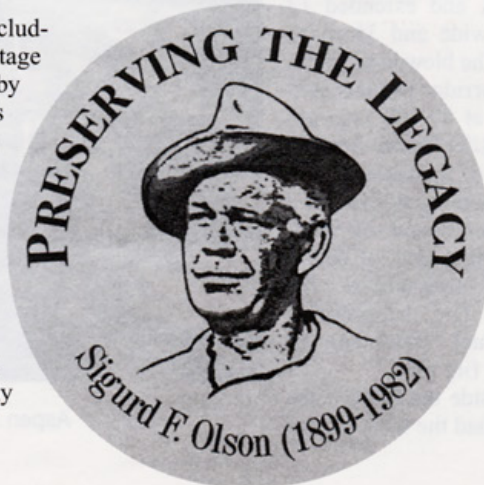
Celebrations honoring noted conservationist, educator and writer, Sigurd Olson, were held in Ashland, WI in April; in Ely, MN in July; and culminated in an Interdisciplinary Wilderness Conference at The Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, Northland College, in September.

Sigurd Olson was born in Chicago in 1899. For much of his youth his family lived in Ashland, WI. In his years of writing, he and his wife, Elizabeth, lived in Ely, MN.

The Northland College conference sought a gathering of citizens, artists and writers to state their passion for wilderness.

Topics covered during the weekend included Foundations of Wilderness, A Heritage of Wilderness Literature, Writings by Sigurd F. Olson, Original Wilderness Prose, New Wilderness Management Concepts, and a look toward Future Paths.

Special features were the re-release of the video "The Wilderness World of Sigurd Olson," commemorative booklets published by the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute and The Wilderness Society, and photographs from the Olson Family Collection in display.



# SUPERIOR NATIONAL FOREST CONSERVATION VISION

In keeping with a long-standing interest in the Superior National Forest, Quetico Superior Foundation has awarded a grant to Minnesota Audubon of the National Audubon Society. The Foundation's funding will help Minnesotans promote a more balanced, conservative management of the Superior National Forest's natural resources for human recreational and wildlife habitat.

The December 1998 grant is helping Audubon carry out public education and outreach activities to increase support for final adoption of a "Citizens' Conservation Alternative" proposal for the future management of the Superior National Forest. This document is based on a fundamentally new approach in forest management aimed at sustaining the ecological integrity of the

The impetus to develop the Citizens' Alternative came from a national requirement for the U.S. Forest Service to update its Forest Plans for each of our national forests every 10 to 15 years. The Superior National Forest Plan is currently being revised. This process provides an important opportunity to influence the future of this important resource, both as wildlife habitat and a popular recreational area.

The primary objective of the recommendations in the Citizens' Alternative proposal is to protect and restore biological diversity, based on available and reliable data. That this priority is one shared by the U.S. Forest Service is reflected in Chief Michael Dobeck's State of the Forest Address, March 2, 1998: "So our first priority is to maintain and restore the health of our ecosystems and watersheds." The proposal's recommendations are made with the recognition that human activities such as recreation, nature-based tourism, non-timber resource harvesting (e.g., cones, berries, decorative greenery, herbs and medicinals), and timber harvesting occur and have a role to play in these forests.

Our recommendations are to preserve, restore, and maintain emphasize the natural diversity of the landscape for future generations, featuring older-aged forests. Semi-primitive, motorized recreation opportunities and habitat for native species requiring older forests are emphasized.

Aesthetic, spiritual, and cultural values, as well as non-timber resource gathering harvesting (e.g., cones, berries, decorative greenery, herbs and medicinals) are also emphasized in this zone.



The fierce Winchell Lake Fire (1996) slashed forestlands (photo background), jumped the lake past a low peninsula (middle), and attacked vegetation where it fell (foreground).

**The mission of the National Audubon Society is to "conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity."**

**The Superior National Forest is one of Minnesota's most important forest resources. For over 20 years, Audubon has facilitated and encouraged strong, Minnesota-based advocacy for maintaining and enhancing the Superior National Forest and other forested areas and wilderness. With the revision of the Superior National Forest's management plan, Audubon is again working to strengthen the integrity of this area, particularly critical areas such as the BWCAW for human recreation and wildlife habitat.**

forest for wildlife and human interests.

The "Citizens' Conservation Alternative", including recommendations and maps, was developed by ecologists, conservation and recreation groups, resort owners, sporting associations, property and lake associations in the region, along with Minnesota Audubon staff and volunteers and other citizens. Minnesota Audubon coordinated the preparation of this proposal. In addition to the individuals and organizations who developed the Citizens' Alternative, thousands of citizens have already endorsed it in letters and cards to the Forest Service.



Today forest is regenerating in an area severely burned by the Winchell Lake Fire of 1996.

An important part of the recommendations is the care and attention that is given to lands surrounding the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). Although protected from direct resource extraction, the BWCAW has a high degree of interface along its borders with intensive forest management. This increasingly isolates the wilderness as a reserve island, separating it from its surrounding landscape. The recent windstorms illustrate the risks we take if all our mature forest is concentrated inside the wilderness.

The surrounding forest also affects the quality of habitat immediately inside the borders of the BWCAW. Wilderness forests directly adjacent to clearcuts may not provide the interior forest qualities needed by many species. Intensive logging along the BWCAW border also impacts the wilderness experience people seek from this place.

Minnesota Audubon is using the grant awarded by the Quetico-Superior Foundation to support efforts to get the word out to more and more people in Minnesota and throughout the nation about this Citizens' Alternative. Their energetic and diverse effort will continue over the next year with the goal of ensuring final adoption of the Citizens' Conservation Alternative.

Audubon's staff, interns, and volunteers are meeting with local governments around the Superior National Forest, area businesses and community organizations, resort owners, teachers, nature-based businesses, and recreation groups to develop support from these organizations for our Plan. Pictorial displays, slide shows, and handouts are being produced for use at public events, such as county fairs throughout the state.

Area newspapers which have covered the story include: the Duluth News Tribune, the



Healthy white cedar and yew reproduction indicates low deer density in this area of Superior National Forest.

St. Paul Pioneer Press, and the Ely Timberjay. Minnesota Public Radio produced a five-part series on the health of Minnesota's forests.

Minnesota Audubon's Forestry Director Betsy Daub leads Audubon's efforts related to this project. For more information or to find out how you might help with these efforts, please call or write her at: Minnesota Audubon, 26 East Exchange Street, #207, St. Paul, MN 55101, tel: (651) 225-1830; fax: (651) 225-4686, or email [bdaub@audubon.org](mailto:bdaub@audubon.org).



Old growth white pine and cedar like these in Superior National Forest are a rare sight anywhere in Minnesota these days.



Old growth white pine and white cedar in the Superior National Forest, showing structural and species diversity as hardwoods grow into natural breaks in the canopy which have been caused by wind throw.

# BWCA AND QUETICO PARK RESERVATIONS

## BWCA

Reservation applications are now being accepted by fax, mail, or internet for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness for the 2000 season. All applications received by January 15, 2000, will be processed randomly in a lottery on January 15. Applications received after January 15 will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Telephone reservations and interactive Web Site reservations may be made beginning February 1, 2000.

A \$12 non-refundable reservation fee is required for each permit reserved. For overnight permits, you will also pay a standard \$20 deposit toward the overnight use fee when the reservation is made. (There is no use fee for day permits.) The total amount collected when you make your reservation will be \$32 (\$12 reservation fee + \$20 use fee deposit.) Payment is accepted by check or money order made payable to BWCA Reservation Center, or by credit card (Master Card, Visa, American Express, Discover.)

The overnight use fee will remain the same as last year, \$10 per adult per trip and \$5 per child per trip. If you owe more than \$20, you will pay the additional money, based on your group size, when you pick up your permit. If your fee is less than \$20, a refund will be applied by the Reservation Center when you pick up your permit.

Windstorm damage has changed much of the BWCA Wilderness. While the portages and most campsites are open, potential fire risks may impact your trip next summer. To inquire about the storm damage, or for further information about making BWCAW reservations, please contact the Superior National Forest in Duluth, MN, at (218) 626-4300, or check the Superior National Forest website at: [www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior).

**PARTY SIZE** - The BWCA has a maximum group size of 9 people and 4 watercraft. Groups larger than 9 must split up, obtain separate travel permits, travel separately, and camp apart. More than 9 people cannot occupy any site at any time, even if traveling under two or more permits.

**CANS AND BOTTLES** - Nonburnable, disposable food and beverage containers are not allowed in the BWCA Wilderness. Containers of fuel, insect repellent, medicines, personal toilet articles, and other items which are not food and beverages are the only cans and bottles allowed in the area. Returnable beverage bottles are not permitted even though a deposit is charged. All empty containers and other refuse must be burned or packed out.

**CAMPING** - Camping is permitted only at developed Forest Service campsites having

steel fire rates and wilderness latrines or as specifically approved on the BWCAW travel permit.

**OPEN CAMPFIRE** - Open campfires during the ice-free season are permitted only within the steel fire grates at developed campsites or as specifically approved on the BWCAW travel permit. Drown your fire and stir the ashes before leaving.

**FISHING LICENSES** - People planning to fish in the BWCA Wilderness must obtain Minnesota fishing licenses, available from county auditors, bait shops, or canoe outfitters throughout Minnesota. For more information, contact:

MN Department of Natural Resources  
Box 40, 500 Lafayette Road St. Paul, MN 55155, 1(800) 452-9747.

**PERMITS** - All overnight visitors traveling in the BWCA Wilderness year-round must possess a BWCAW travel permit. Day visitors-both those who travel by motor and non motorized means - must also possess a permit. Quotas for these permits, however, only restrict permits from May 1-Sept. 30 for overnight visitors and day-use motor visitors.

The permit must be picked up in person from any Superior National Forest office or a cooperating business (outfitter, resort, camp, etc.) as early as 24 hours ahead of the planned trip. A permit will allow a group to enter the BWCA Wilderness only on the date and through the entry point specified on the permit.

**MAKING RESERVATIONS** - A reservation assures a visitor of a permit to enter the BWCA on a specific day at a certain entry point. Reservations are recommended during heavy use periods.

A \$12 non-refundable fee is required for reserving each travel permit. Any change will be considered a new reservation and will require a new fee. The deposit fee is \$20. Phone reservations will be accepted with use of a valid VISA/Mastercard from 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. daily from February to September. A user fee of \$10 per person per trip for overnight use is charged from May 1-Sept. 30, and can be paid with the reservation fee. If reserving by mail, make checks payable to "BWCAW Reservation Center."

**BWCAW RESERVATION CENTER**  
P.O. Box 462  
Ballston Spa, NY 12020  
1 (877) 550-6777  
Fax: 1 (518) 884-9951  
[www.bwcaw.org](http://www.bwcaw.org)

## QUETICO PROVINCIAL PARK

**PARTY SIZE** - Nine (9) people are the maximum allowed in a party on a campsite.

**CANS AND BOTTLES** - Like the BWCA Wilderness, cans and bottles are not allowed in Quetico except for containers of fuel, insect repellent, medicines, personal toilet articles etc.

**CAMPING** - Quetico does not maintain designated campsites as does the BWCA. Visitors may camp where they wish. But visitors may not camp on sites that are closed to camping.

**OPEN CAMPFIRE** - Campfires must be built on bare rock or bare mineral soil at least five feet from flammable materials. Drown your campfire thoroughly, stir the ashes, and drown it again.

**FISHING LICENSES** - Ontario fishing licenses are required for fishing in Quetico. Licenses are available from all Quetico ranger stations or from bait shops, resorts, or outfitters in the area.

**CANADA CUSTOMS** - All Quetico visitors must report to Canada customs before entering the park from the United States, or obtain a Remote Area Border Crossing Permit. Customs stations are not the same as Quetico Park Ranger Stations; Canada customs maintains its own station at Sand Point Lake, in addition to those along highways if you drive into Ontario. To apply for a Remote Area Border Crossing Permit, contact Ft. Frances International Bridge, (807) 274-9780.

**QUOTAS AND PERMITS** - Interior camping permits are required for all overnight trips from May 20 thru Sept 4. A Visitor Distribution program very similar to the BWCA Wilderness' regulates daily entry quotas from the six ranger stations on Quetico's periphery. An interior camping fee of \$10 per person per night (Can. funds) for US citizens or \$6 per person per night for Canadians must be paid (youth rate 6-17 years of age of \$3 per person per night; under 6, no charge).

**MAKING RESERVATIONS** - Like the BWCAW, a reservation system reserves a Quetico permit for a specific date and entry point. The reservation fee of \$6.00 (Can. funds) may also be paid with VISA or Mastercard over the telephone.

**QUETICO RESERVATIONS**  
1 (888) 668-7275 (US citizens)  
[www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/parks/quet.html](http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/parks/quet.html)  
For General Information:  
Ministry of Natural Resources  
Atikokan, Ontario POT 1CO  
CANADA 1 (807) 597-2735

# NEW RULES FOR MANAGING NATIONAL FORESTS

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman, on September 30, 1999, unveiled new proposed rules for managing the National Forests. "Today we are announcing more than just a change in policy. This is a fundamental change in philosophy," said Glickman. "It is a dramatic departure from the way we have managed national forests in the past."

The planning regulation will focus on four key areas to ensure national forests are properly managed for multiple uses. The new forest plans developed under this rule will: 1) involve the public earlier in defining the issues and goals of individual national forests; 2) ensure the sustainable use of the forests to protect the environment while fulfilling the country's economic, social and leisure needs; 3) improve the use of science in planning and projects decisions; 4) make forest planning dynamic and responsive to new information and opportunities.

The proposed regulation is based upon a report prepared for the Secretary by a Committee of Scientists, which he commissioned to review forest planning efforts to date. The Committee held a series of meetings across the country and drew many of their recommendations from public input and the agency's own success stories.

Forest Service Chief Mike Dombeck, in announcing the proposed regulation for public comment, said it is also more consistent with the goals of the Forest Service's natural resources agenda. "As we work to improve watershed health, recreation opportunities, sustainable forestry and the forests' transportation systems, we need to improve public and scientific input into the process," said Dombeck.

Existing land and resource management plans would remain in effect until amended or revised under this proposal. Plans already being revised or amended under the current regulation would have one year

from the date the proposed regulation is finalized to complete such a revision. The Chippewa and Superior National Forests are currently revising their Forest plans.

The USDA Forest Service will provide a 90-day public review and comment period for the proposed regulation. The proposed regulation, which affects all of the nation's 175 national forests and grasslands, was submitted to the Federal Register September 30, 1999. The proposed regulation will replace the existing regulation, established in 1982.

The Forest Service planned a series of public town meetings across the country to gather input on the proposed regulation. More information about the proposed regulation is available at: [www.fs.fed.us/forum/nepa/rule](http://www.fs.fed.us/forum/nepa/rule). The proposed regulation would implement statutory requirements of the National Forest Management Act of 1976.

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