

FRIENDS of the BOUNDARY WATERS WILDERNESS



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The Friends' mission is to protect, preserve and restore the wilderness character of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and the Quetico-Superior Ecosystem. The organization was founded in 1976.

Pagami Proximity

Eyewitness to one of the biggest wildfires in Minnesota history

By Greg Seitz

In early September, I headed into the Boundary Waters with three buddies on what was supposed to be a relaxing canoe trip, celebrating one friend's brief leave from Army duties in Afghanistan. We had a permit for Lake One and a plan to head to Lake Insula and spend a few days fishing and enjoying peace and quiet.

We got what we went looking for, and more.

The Pagami Creek Fire was started by lightning in a swampy area south of Lake One on August 18. Labor Day weekend, the Forest Service performed a back burn to ensure the fire did not run north toward private property on the end of the Fernberg Road. My group knew this when we went in, but nobody had predicted what the fire would do over the next several days, and the fire was not considered a threat by authorities.

The unexpected growth of the fire from 1,000 acres to nearly 100,000 acres in a few days' time was widely debated in September. Computer models used to predict fire behavior did not take into account the drought-like conditions that had set in during late August. Expected rain did not fall, and strong winds surprised fire managers.

On Thursday, Sept. 7, our party crossed the portages between



The Pagami Creek Fire seen across Lake Insula at sunset on September 10, 2011.

Lake One and Two. The area was busy with Forest Service personnel. They were monitoring the fire line where the back burn had been started and escorting canoe parties across the portages to make sure everyone stayed safe. There was no expectation that the area would be evacuated just three days later.

At Lake Two, we pushed off and headed east, enjoying calm weather and sunny skies, glad to leave the crowd behind. We reached Insula late in

the afternoon and claimed a campsite on the southern end of the lake, facing west. We watched the sun set behind a small plume of smoke on the horizon.

Necessary destruction

Fire is as much a part of the Boundary Waters ecosystem as water. In a recent article on MinnPost.com, Dr. Lee Frelich, a member of the Friends' advisory council, described what the BWCAW would look like without fire:

"You would get essentially a sea of Balsam Fir, then the budworm would come, and it goes out and kind of kills half the trees," Frelich explains. "So you'd have this kind of crappy, half-dead forest

Pagami Proximity continued on page 4.

Message from the Executive Director

By Paul Danicic, Executive Director



Whenever I send a check to an organization I support, I always ask myself, “What are these folks doing that deserve my contribution?” As a stingy Slovenian-American (ask my wife!), there have to be good reasons to warrant parting with my family assets.

In my daily work for, and as a donor to, the Friends, this concept drives me from

the other end as well. What does the Friends do to deserve the support of wilderness loving people? These individuals make up more than 80 percent of our funding. Their contributions have profound implications for our work to preserve the wilderness for future generations.

Besides our efforts to address mining in the wilderness watershed, two of the Friends' accomplishments this year earned my contribution.

Working with a brilliant pro bono legal team from Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi, we won a lawsuit against AT&T over the company's proposed 450' cell tower near Fall Lake. Our staff and attorneys worked nights and weekends to protect the wild horizons of many wilderness lakes. I was proud to take the stand in court and speak for the value of wilderness, while the other side argued “It really isn't all that special.”

Unfortunately, AT&T is appealing the case, even broadening its arguments to potentially affect all of Minnesota's revered natural areas. The Friends, graciously assisted by the same legal team, will be there to defend our wilderness and some of our state's most important environmental laws.

We have also taken a major step this year in changing how conservation action happens in northeast Minnesota by placing a person in the communities surrounding the wilderness. Ian Kimmer has been on the job since June and is building relationships with hundreds of people in the region. He is helping us correct misinformation about our cell tower lawsuit, providing support to neighbors working on grassroots sulfide mining efforts, asking how we can help maximize the economic benefits of the wilderness, organizing hands-on ecological restoration volunteer projects, and much more.

The Friends is the only organization focused squarely on protecting the BWCAW and Quetico-Superior's wilderness character. I am proud to lead our work, and I am proud to say that my family will support our work financially again this year. ●

Cell Tower Success, and Setback

Friends win decisive court case, AT&T files appeal

The Friends achieved a significant victory for the Boundary Waters this summer. On August 3, a Minnesota district court issued a final ruling in our lawsuit concerning AT&T's attempt to place a cell tower on the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

The court agreed with the Friends that the proposed 450' tower would materially impair the scenic and other natural resources of that wilderness and violate the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act. The decision prohibited AT&T from constructing the proposed 450-foot tower, yet permits a 199-foot tower which would afford similar cell phone coverage without impairing the wilderness, as proposed by the Friends.

In its ruling, the court rejected AT&T's arguments regarding the impact of the proposed tower, finding that the proposed tower would “have a significant, persistent and long term negative effect on the scenic views from numerous locations within the BWCAW.” The ruling, by Judge Philip Bush, is an excellent read on the value of wilderness. You can read the entire ruling on our website at www.friends-bwca.org.

“The scenic views and vistas from within the BWCAW are rare, unique, endangered and of great historical significance. This factor weighs very strongly against construction of the Proposed Tower.”

– Court ruling August 3, 2011.

Unfortunately, AT&T chose to appeal the decision this fall. The company's appeal is especially alarming because it represents a broad attack on environmental protections for scenic and natural areas across Minnesota.

The emphasis of AT&T's appeal is that the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act does not protect scenic vistas in places like Minnesota's beloved state parks, the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Voyageurs National Park, and many other cherished sites, as long as the visual intrusion is from privately-owned land outside the protected area. This could have far-reaching consequences.

The Friends remains supportive of expanding cell phone service in areas near the BWCAW in such a way that it doesn't impair the wild and scenic horizons of the wilderness. Together with our pro bono legal team from Robins Kaplan Miller & Ciresi, LLP, we will continue to defend the wild horizons of the Boundary Waters. A timeline for the appeal process has not yet been confirmed. ●

Wish List

Please consider the below in-kind gifts that will directly help us achieve our mission. If one of these items is within your ability, we appreciate the donation – and it is fully tax deductible.

- Portable Digital Projector - for our Northern Communities Program
- iPad - for intimate presentations
- Late model reliable car (Nice to have one with Iron Range Steel for our Northern Communities staff. He's putting on the miles!)
- Point-and-shoot digital camera

A special thank you to those of you who have recently answered our wishes by giving a microwave, GPS unit, map drawers and laptop computer! ●

Policy Update

By Betsy Daub, Policy Director

PolyMet

Release of a supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the PolyMet mining project has once again been delayed. Officials now indicate it should be ready for release in January 2012. In 2010, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took the unusual step of formally commenting on this mining project's Draft EIS, and found it to be "Environmentally Unsatisfactory-Inadequate." Supplemental work on the Draft EIS is intended to address deficiencies in the plan. The Friends remains concerned that fundamental problems with this project, such as its location in sensitive wetlands and the mountain-sized waste rock piles that will inevitably discharge pollution, may simply not be able to be sufficiently remedied.

Twin Metals

Twin Metals is the mining joint venture between Canadian mining company Duluth Metals and Chilean mining company Antofagasta, which has proposed building a sulfide mine three miles from the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. This summer, Twin Metals opened a headquarters office in Ely. The company is in the process of crafting a conceptual plan for how it proposes to develop its ore deposits in the Ely area, a plan that may be completed this fall.

Recently, the company announced it has hired two consulting firms to assist with the mine project. URS has been hired as Twin Metal's lead environmental consultant. URS is the firm sued by the State of Minnesota and victims of the bridge collapse for shortcuts taken by the firm when it inspected the I-35W bridge prior to its disastrous fall. Bechtel Mining & Metals was hired by Twin Metals to develop the mine proposal's Pre-Feasibility Study. Bechtel has designed numerous mines around the globe which have caused serious and long-lasting pollution.

In September, members of the Friends staff and board toured drilling sites with representatives from Twin Metals. Twin Metals asserted its intention to develop a mine that would be safe and protect the waters of the area from pollution. Unfortunately, Twin Metals' reliance on two firms with records of environmental and safety negligence does not increase confidence that this will be the first hardrock mine that does not pollute.

State Mineral Leases Under Private Property

Eighty-two property owners in northern Minnesota were surprised to learn that the State of Minnesota has leased mineral exploration rights underneath their private land. Many property owners are not aware that in purchasing land they do not necessarily acquire the mineral rights underneath that property. According to Minnesota law, mineral rights take precedence, and the state can lease the minerals to companies to do exploratory drilling. With the increased interest in mining copper and nickel in northern Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is increasing its mineral leasing, some of which falls under private land. Affected property owners have been horrified to learn they do not have the right to refuse entry onto their land, and that drilling activities which include road building, cutting of trees, and round-the-clock drilling noise for four to six weeks,

may impact their livelihoods (some are resort owners) and property values. The State's Executive Council, which is comprised of the Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, State Auditor, and Attorney General, must approve all state leases. Last June, the Council delayed approval on the leases after property owners expressed their dismay and cited a failure by the DNR to properly notify them. In October, the Council once again voted to delay approval on the leases for six months, following a hearing where citizen testimony expressed concern and a desire to reform state mineral leasing laws. This issue will be active in the 2012 legislature, as citizens concerned about property values, sustainable economies of northern Minnesota, and mining impacts to clean water and other natural resources, press for reforms.

Stony River Township

On September 14, the supervisors of Stony River Township did something remarkable. Stony River Township is an area of northern Minnesota where most of the recent sulfide mineral development and exploration is focused. At that September meeting, the township supervisors voted unanimously to pass a resolution calling for a Minnesota moratorium on sulfide mining and for state and federal authorities to deny all sulfide mining permits in the township.

The resolution noted that mining would transform the region from a lake district into a mining district, and that "there is no convincing, objective evidence that metallic sulfide mining for copper, nickel, and other non-ferrous metals can be done in Minnesota, without impairing the water quality of lakes, rivers and groundwater, thereby impacting aquatic species, ecological systems and human communities."

South Fowl Snowmobile Trail Project

The Forest Service released its Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed South Fowl snowmobile route. This proposed snowmobile route would connect McFarland Lake and South Fowl Lake in the eastern-most portion of the Superior National Forest. Snowmobile traffic travels between these lakes currently, but portions of the existing trail have been found to be unsafe.

In the Final EIS, the Superior National Forest proposes to construct a new snowmobile trail that would be 0.09 miles from the BWCAW. Portions of the trail would be visible from the wilderness. Snowmobile travel on the route would increase motorized sounds in the BWCAW above current levels. The preferred route also travels through an area that is biologically and ecologically unique in containing some of the rarest plant species in Minnesota.

The Friends has urged the Forest Service to adopt an alternative route that had been considered. This alternative would address safety concerns, while minimizing other impacts. It is deeply disturbing that the Forest Service chose a plan that jeopardizes both wilderness character and rare plants when a suitable alternative exists. The Friends will continue to advocate for the selection of the feasible alternative. ●



The Pagami Creek smoke seen from Lake Three on September 11, 2011, which is full of brush and branches and which is not very attractive for people or wildlife.”

Not only would the forest be unhealthy and unattractive, it would be a tinderbox. Without regular burns, when fires did happen, they would be even bigger and more out-of-control, threatening people, homes and even towns in the area.

Several iconic BWCAW species depend on fire. Jack pine cones will only open and disperse their seeds when heated by fire. Because moose like to eat new growth, biologists think the fire could create significant new habitat for the big ungulates. The flowering Bicknell’s geranium only grows when its seeds are exposed to sunlight by fire. When such flowers appeared in areas burned by the 2006 Cavity Lake Fire, Frelich says the seeds were laying dormant for 200 years, since the last fire in the region.

Peace, quiet, and evacuation

Friday night, we had walleye for dinner and after we ate, we were rewarded with a beautiful show of northern lights; it was definitely one of the finest Boundary Waters days I have known, and the high-light of the trip.

Saturday morning, we woke up to a smoky campsite. It wasn’t thick, but enough to make for a scratchy throat. By lunchtime, the smoke had lifted and it was another calm day, with puffy clouds in a blue sky. But the smoke had now formed a massive plume, reaching straight into the sky from the horizon, then flowing east over our heads. The plume had the look of a massive thunderstorm, and was in fact creating its own weather. To either side, the blue skies were visible, but it felt like we should have been racing back to camp to get in shelter before a storm hit.

The only precipitation falling was a soft and steady rain of ash. The surface of the lake was dotted with half-burned leaves that were falling out of the sky. We went out fishing late that afternoon and I took several photos of the plume. A few days later, one of these photos appeared on the front page of the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*.

We broke camp and got an early start on Sunday morning, heading back the way we came. On our first portage, from Insula into Hudson, we were buzzed by a small plane and helicopter. As we paddled across Hudson, the helicopter flew low over us again. My army friend, a

Blackhawk helicopter pilot, laughed about hearing the one noise he had come here to escape.

It was when we landed at the portage out of Hudson that another party said something about the area being evacuated. As we paddled across Lake Four an hour later, a Forest Service canoe met us and explained that yes, the Numbered Lakes and Hudson were being evacuated. They took our names and radioed it back to the landing, where someone would cross us off a list when we got out. We stopped to take a few pictures in the narrows between Lakes Three and Four. The smoke was billowing up to perhaps 25,000 feet from the south shore of Lake Three. I imagined it was like sitting at the foot of Mount Saint Helens.

The evacuation was calm and orderly. It was just a precaution. But we were very fortunate. The next day, Monday, the fire made an incredible 16 mile run east, burning over our entire exit route, including the Numbered Lakes, Hudson and the southern two-thirds of Insula. Our campsite on Insula was torched.

The fire factor

For people who live on the edge of the wilderness, such an out-of-control fire, with its massive smoke plume and exponential growth, was frightening. Fortunately, the fire ultimately burned very little outside the wilderness. The only structure burned was a Department of Natural Resources cabin on Lake Insula that was out-of-place in the wilderness anyway.

There have been some calls in the wake of Pagami Creek to revise the Forest Service’s “let it burn” policy for natural fires in the wilderness. The policy recognizes the need to balance both the important role of fire in the boreal ecosystem and the necessity of protecting human lives and property. It calls for naturally-started fires to be allowed to burn, unless they threaten people or property outside the Boundary Waters.

The Friends supports the current fire management policy. It seems apparent that updates to the forecasting tools are necessary, to take into better account current conditions and weather forecasts. But we also recognize that fire managers have to make quick decisions with imperfect information.

Fortunately, nobody was seriously harmed by the Pagami Creek Fire. Six rangers who were working to evacuate Lake Insula on Monday, September 12 came closest. Caught by the fast-moving fire, the rangers were forced to hide under their fire shelters. Four were on a small rock in the middle of the lake, two others had no choice but to float in the water, huddled under one shelter. They followed safety procedures and were fortunate to come through okay. There were a few other incidents of injury to firefighters, all of them thankfully relatively minor.

Rebirth in the burn

Photos taken in the burn zone in early October show wolf tracks, beaver activity, jack pine cones open, and even bright green vegetation poking through the ash.

Even though the fire burned more than 92,000 acres, or nearly 10 percent of the BWCAW, only 125 campsites were in the burned area (out of about 2,200 in the wilderness). Of those, officials say 69 sites were affected, and only 5-10 are expected to be closed for any length of time.

Our campsite on Insula was a real beauty. It had a 150-foot sandy beach, two points that offered broad views of the lake, and a white pine across

Thomas Flint Canoe Trips

By Doug Nethercut, director, YMCA Camp Menogyn



“Natural spaces and materials stimulate children’s limitless imaginations and serve as the medium for inventiveness and creativity,” says Nathan Moore, an international authority on design spaces for children’s play, learning and education. What better place to do this than the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness?

For the last 10 years the Friends has partnered with YMCA Camp Menogyn on the Thomas Flint Canoe Trips Program to provide these

deep wilderness experiences for under privileged inner-city youth.

Forty-five teenagers experienced the awesome beauty of the BWCAW this past summer as participants in the program at Menogyn. Without the Thomas Flint Fund trips, most of these young people would never be able to afford a Boundary Waters wilderness experience. Time in the wild, with a small group of peers, can truly change someone’s life forever.

As in past years, most of the teens on the Thomas Flint wilderness trips are from Minneapolis and St. Paul. Many have never been camping before, and almost none have been anywhere near the Boundary Waters.

It is important to consider the long-term impact of this program. Lee Vue, one of the first Thomas Flint participants in 2002, went on to progress through the Camp Menogyn program to complete a 50-day Arctic canoe trip. With nature now a firmly established factor in her life, she has gone on to work for the University of Minnesota and become a wilderness advocate and member of the Friends.

The Thomas Flint Canoe Trips are provided through a collaboration of the Thomas Flint Fund, The Bazinet Foundation, The Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, YMCA Camp Menogyn and Steve and Cynthia Snyder. Students came from the following programs: Volunteers of America Charter School, the Science Museum of Minnesota, Advancement of Hmong Women, Browning the Green and Breakthrough St Paul.

Together, these people and organizations are building the next generation of wilderness stewards. Donations may be made to the Friends specifically to continue to build this effective program for 2012. ●

On one of my portages, (which was the longest one) I was thinking to myself a lot. I don't have time like that in the city. Since, I'm hmgong and also a Female at that, I am judged for what I look' like. Now I feel more confident both- mentally and physically. I also want to live a happier, healthier life style.

the bay that towered above the surrounding forest and where a bald eagle had its nest. There were more spots to put a tent than you would ever need.

I can't help feeling a little sad that the site is now burned over. But the part of me that loves the wilderness most simply wants to go back as soon as I can and see what is different and what is the same. No matter what, I know it will be a beautiful place where the woods do what they do without much interference from us. ●

Read more at www.friends-bwca.org/pagami-creek-fire

- Maps of the burned area
- Photos of new life already appearing in the burned area
- Greg Seitz's photo slideshow and blog posts about his fire experience
- Links to articles about benefits of fire to the BWCAW ecosystem

Northern Communities Program Update

By Ian Kimmer, Program Director

Since its beginning in mid-June, the Northern Communities Program has helped the Friends grow as a regional conservation leader. We have initiated, shaped and participated in many important activities in the Arrowhead.

In my role as program director, I have met with 125 citizens, leaders and stakeholders in the region surrounding the Boundary Waters. From mayors and council members, to business owners, to teachers, to advocates, to regional developers to state elected executives, the Friends has become a key player in new ways that are only possible by being in the communities permanently. We are building trust and understanding. We are gaining recognition and leadership. We are shaping strategies on the most critical conservation issues of our time.

My work has included attending several events where I have interacted with hundreds of local residents, engaging them in the positive work we do to protect and preserve the natural treasures of the area. We have facilitated and organized volunteer partnerships with the Forest Service on forest restoration projects for wildlife habitat improvement and fire breaks, projects that are the beginnings of a new way of accomplishing critical forest work while preserving the wild, and quiet, nature of the BWCAW (see Forest Restoration article, page 7).

The Friends is now an integral part of the Leadership Development Program at YMCA Camp Du Nord, educating over 80 high school and college students on conservation and the Friends' work for the Boundary Waters. Through this, we have recruited new volunteers to work with Friends and in our conservation efforts.

The first months of our Northern Communities Program has helped us find new directions for our work by incorporating the view of the northern communities into our discussions. With increased support from local communities, our work will be increasingly successful.

Our staff and board are very excited and positive about the beginnings of the Northern Communities Program. The first months of this initiative have shown us the great potential for the program in the months and years ahead. ●

Board of Directors Changes

The Friends recently welcomed two new individuals to our Board of Directors, and bid a fond farewell to two long-time members who are leaving as their terms expire.

New Directors

Nicholas Banovetz is Public Affairs Manager for MinnCAN, a non-profit seeking to close the achievement gap in Minnesota's schools. Prior to MinnCAN, he worked at public relations and marketing agency Padilla Speer Beardsley. Originally from Duluth, Minn., he has enjoyed more than two dozen trips to the BWCAW.

Susan Hendrickson-Schurke, founder and former owner of Wintergreen Northern Wear, lives on White Iron Lake near Ely, MN and with her husband Paul, owns and operates Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge. She has enjoyed many trips in the BWCAW and Quetico over the past 32 years.

Leaving the Board

Jeff Evans recently left the Friends' board after decades of service. Jeff most recently served as Board chair and led the organization during a time of growth and success, including helping develop the Northern Communities Program, the Friends' short film "Precious Waters," and our lawsuit against AT&T over its proposed cell tower next to the BWCAW.

Jon Nelson has also left the Board after first joining it in 1990. A resident of Duluth and a nonprofit leader, Jon has provided excellent insights and guidance. Recently, he has been an important voice on the Policy Committee and assisted in hiring Northern Communities Program Director Ian Kimmer.

The entire Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness organization offers Jeff and Jon our sincere gratitude and best wishes. We are glad to report that both intend to stay involved in our work by participating in committees. Thank you for your incredible contributions to protecting and preserving "the most beautiful lake country on the continent." ●

Winter Wilderness Sampler Weekend

For the third year in a row, the Friends have put together what should be a very fun trip to YMCA Camp Menogyn on the Gunflint Trail the weekend of January 13-16 (that's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day weekend).

This will be a fantastic and affordable opportunity for Friends members to enjoy dog sledding, backcountry skiing and snowshoeing in the wilderness, with a heated cabin to sleep in at night and all the hot cocoa you can drink.

Cost:

Children age 6-17: \$90 (age 5 and under are free!)

Adults Friends member: \$175. **Non-member** (includes discounted one-year membership): \$195

Fee includes all food, lodging and equipment. Registration deadline is January 5, with only 50 spots available.

Sleeping arrangements will be in heated cabins, but attendees will need to bring a sleeping bag. Since the camp is located a half-mile across West Bearskin Lake please be prepared to pack tightly and hike or ski across pulling a sled with your gear or backpack.

Please contact Sacha Casillas at 612-332-9630 or sacha@friends-bwca.org if you are interested or have any questions. ●

Forest Service Proposes Changes to BWCAW Permit System

This fall, the Superior National Forest announced it is planning to eliminate the traditional winter lottery for Boundary Waters permits, and to allow wilderness visitors to start printing permits at home.

No More Luck of the Draw

For many years, visitors have submitted applications to a lottery during December and January for permits. This has been especially useful for popular entry points and dates (e.g., Lake One on Memorial Day weekend).

The Forest Service says improvements to the reservation website mean they can now handle reservations on a first-come, first-serve basis. According to the Forest Service, 99 percent of people applying for overnight canoe permits in the lottery receive their desired permit. Success rate for motor permits in the lottery is lower, as there are fewer available.

Permit Printing at Home?

Few details have yet been released for the plans for "self issue" permits. While the appeal of printing a permit at home is understandable, it would remove an important opportunity for education about wilderness safety and stewardship. It could also harm business for wilderness outfitters.

Currently, visitors must pick up a permit at a ranger station or cooperating outfitter. The policy requires all permit recipients to watch the 10-minute video about Leave No Trace principles and other responsible wilderness practices (the Friends collaborated with the Forest Service to produce the video in 2006). Permit recipients are quizzed about the video and have a chance to ask questions of knowledgeable outfitters and learn more about how to take care of the wilderness while they enjoy it.

The proposal is being made to free up Forest Service resources to help put more rangers in the wilderness. The drawback is that those rangers might find themselves with a lot more work to do if visitors are camping illegally outside designated sites, building fires outside fire grates, cutting down living trees, or any number of activities that harm the environment or create safety hazards.

The Friends will stay involved in this proposal to ensure there is still effective education for all wilderness visitors. The Boundary Waters is much-loved, but is always at risk of being "loved to death." We believe it is imperative to educate every single person who visits, to make sure they help take care of the place they love. ●

Leave A Legacy

Include The Friends In Your Estate Plans

If you or your advisor would like information on how to name Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness as a beneficiary of your estate or about the benefits of a planned gift, please call 612-332-9630 or email Sacha Casillas at sacha@friends-bwca.org. ●

Restoring healthy forest at the edge of the wilderness

By Ian Kimmer



The Mudro Lake forest regeneration volunteer crew at the Kawishiwi Ranger Station.

In October, the first group of volunteers in a new partnership between the Friends and the Forest Service started work on a new forest restoration project. Seventeen students, mostly from the Vermilion Community College Wilderness Club and a couple from the University of Minnesota Forestry Program, did bow saw and lopping shears duty to remove balsam fir stands in a section of forest near the Mudro Lake entry point. The purpose is to improve wildlife habitat for moose, bear and other large fauna, to create better conditions for native flora to flourish such as red and white pine and blueberries, and to create a fire break in a forest where fire is not an “if,” but a “when.”

The partnership will be ongoing for years and will be included in coursework for the University of Minnesota starting in 2012. The volunteers have a unique opportunity to work directly with Forest Service scientists and learn hands-on what it is to maintain a forest. Forest Service accomplishes its forestry goals while performing an appropriately quiet work effort immediately adjacent to the BWCAW. ●

Volunteer for the BWCAW

Love the Boundary Waters? Want to help protect it? Get involved with the Friends as a volunteer! We can use help on a one-time or ongoing basis. Volunteers can help in the office, at events, or in other ways.

Most positions are in our Minneapolis office, or can be performed from home. If you are interested, visit our website under About Us to see what positions are available and how to apply.

Currently we have ten volunteers working on projects that range from database entry to promoting our Precious Waters film. These volunteers offer administrative support that help the Friends achieve its mission by enhancing the quality and amount of work the organization is able to complete.

If you have questions or would like to learn more please visit www.friends-bwca.org or contact Sacha at 612-332-9630 or email to: sacha@friends-bwca.org. ●

Superior Wilderness Volunteer Connection



This year the Superior Wilderness Volunteer Connection (SWVC) put 118 volunteers, 65 of them youth, into the bow of a canoe with a Forest Service wilderness ranger, helping with on the ground work to make the BWCAW a safe and beautiful place to visit. This is the fifth consecutive year the Friends has worked on the SWVC program with the U.S. Forest Service and the results clearly demonstrate that it is making a difference in the quality of the wilderness.

The Friends is an essential part of this project, helping secure the grant, administer funds, and track our successes.



This program is made possible by two generous supporters; the National Forest Foundation and REI. With \$30,000 of funding, we were able to:

- Clean 1,480 campsites
- Improve 22 miles of hiking trails
- Brush/clear 20,567 rods of portage
- Dig 100 new latrines
- Train 65 youth in Leave No trace principles
- Performed 160 hours of solitude monitoring
- Survey 15 heritage sites
- Clear 395 tress. And much, much, more . . .

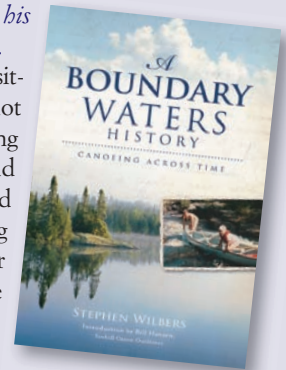
If you are interested in volunteering, please visit www.friends-bwca.org or contact Sacha at 612-332-9630 or by email at sacha@friends-bwca.org.

Excerpt from “A Boundary Waters History: Canoeing Across Time”

Stephen Wilbers' new book tells the history of the Boundary Waters region going back 10,000 years, interwoven with his own personal history of a lifetime of canoe trips.

On the last evening of our 1982 trip, I was sitting in the canoe with Dad, not fishing and not paddling to go anywhere in particular, just drifting with the breeze. The evening sun was warm and comforting on our faces. I had been preoccupied with a conflict I was having at work. I took a long breath, drawing the sweet Boundary Waters air into my lungs, and something changed inside me. The tension I had been holding for months was gone. I was ready to re-engage with the challenges and frustrations of my everyday existence, ready to recommit myself to succeeding with whatever I was trying to accomplish in life.

The next morning Dad and I awoke to a lake “held captive by nets of white fog,” in the words of Florence Page Jaques. The world was hushed and calm. Inspired by the spirit of the morning, we paddled slowly, reverently, so as not to disturb the silence. “The movement of a canoe is like a reed in the wind,” Sig Olson wrote in *The Singing Wilderness*. “Silence is part of it, and the sounds of lapping water, bird songs, and wind in the trees. It is part of the medium through which it floats, the sky, the water, the shores.” As Dad and I glided across perfectly still water, the sun began to penetrate the white shroud. At that moment, life seemed simple and elemental. Its only ingredients were the sun and the fog, the gurgle of our paddles stroking the water, and the gentle glide of our canoe. But for me it was the beginning of a glorious new day. ●



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Minnesota Environmental Fund
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Environmental Fund



If your company does not have MEF as a giving option, please contact Friends at 612-332-9630.

giveMN.org
Click. Contribute. Change Your World.

Give to the Max Day

What if you could help the Friends win \$1,000 just by giving \$10? On November 16, Give to the Max Day, you can. The Friends were the lucky winners of a “Golden Ticket” last year and would love to do it again in 2011.

GiveMN’s Give to the Max Day amplifies your giving impact in a number of ways:

- Win a Golden Ticket! \$1,000 will be given to a random donor’s charity every hour. You could be that donor!
- Put us on the Leader Board! \$15,000, \$10,000 and \$7,500 prize grants will be awarded to the top three small nonprofit organizations – with budgets under \$750,000 – which receive the most dollars on Give to the Max Day.
- New This Year: \$5,000 prize grants will be awarded to nonprofits in 4th through 10th place on the small nonprofit leaderboard.
- “Grand Golden Ticket” In addition to the 24 “Golden Tickets”—\$1,000 prize grants given randomly every hour—one \$10,000 “Grand Golden Ticket” will be randomly given at 11:59 p.m. on November 16, 2011.

As you consider your charitable end-of-year giving, please consider participating in Give to the Max Day November 16. GiveMN is easy to use, and your gift to Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness will make a huge difference to our ongoing work.

If you have questions, please contact Sacha at 612-332-9630 or email to: sacha@friends-bwca.org.

Ensure more of your support goes toward our work!

Printing and mailing this newsletter is a significant cost. Please consider signing up to receive it only via e-mail. Contact us at info@friends-bwca.org to let us know if you are interested. Thank you!