

Spring 2000

CWCS

Conservationists With Common Sense

Preserving access to and multiple-use of public lands & waters

Why CWCS continues to fight: “(We will) embark on a 10 year campaign to get every single motor out of the Boundary Waters” – Brian O’Neill, quoted in May 20, 1998 Mpls. Star Tribune

“Our rights, freedoms and liberties are continually under attack, as is evident by the numerous items listed above. It is important for all of our members to reach out and amplify our goals to new members. We need to unite now! Remember, ‘The price of freedom is eternal vigilance’ and we must remain active for the rewards are priceless.” - CWCS President, Guy Holmes

NPS Announces Knee-jerk Snowmobile Ban

The National Park Service (NPS) has issued a knee-jerk ban on recreational use of snowmobiles in all National Parks, recreational areas and monuments. The only exceptions to the ban are parks in Alaska and Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota. In these parks, legislative action specifically allowed use of snowmobiles. (Interesting.... legislative action also allows motorized use in the Boundary Waters, including the continuation of motorized transport on all five mechanical/motorized portages!)

The ban applies to 10 national parks from Acadia in Maine to Sequoia and Kings Canyon in California. Snowmobiling also no longer will be allowed in 15 national seashores, monuments, parkways, historic sites, recreational areas and scenic trails. In Minnesota and Wisconsin, this blanket ban significantly effects snowmobile use on the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, which includes parts of the Namekagon and St. Croix rivers. 95 miles of the St. Croix will now be off-limits to the machines.

Although the decisions on applying the ban to Yellowstone National Park in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming and to Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming have been delayed until November because of continuing snowmobile studies at the two parks, the NSP at Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Park has announced its intentions. The NPS appears to be leaning toward a plan, which will phase out snowmobile use by the winter of 2002 -2003.

“The time has come for the National Park Service to pull in its welcome mat for recreational snowmobiling,” Assistant Interior Secretary Donald Barry said. He called snowmobiles “noisy, antiquated machines that are no longer welcome in our national parks.”

The action came in response to a petition filed more than a year ago by the Bluewater Network and more than 60 other environmental and conservation groups. They claimed the National Park Service has not enforced its own regulations, dating to the 1970s that required close monitoring of snowmobiles and other off-road vehicles in parks and a ban if they were found to harm the environment. The Park Service cited the nearly 40,000 comments it received, many generated by Bluewater Network members, as one of the factors that caused it to adopt a no snowmobile stance.

“The Park Service is finally waking up to the lasting harm motorized thrill-craft such as snowmobiles cause to parks,” said Sean Smith of the San Francisco-based Bluewater Network and a former park ranger at Yellowstone.

CWCS wants to know where are all the environmental impact studies on ALL the parks, recreational areas and monuments. Why has a blanket ban been issued without these EISs and without public involvement and hearings?

Letter from Senator Rod Grams

Minnesota Snowmobilers:

I was outraged yesterday when the Park Service unilaterally decided to - and I quote - "pull its welcome mat from recreational snowmobiling".

When the National Park Service claims that snowmobile users - again I quote - "are no longer welcome in our national parks", they are clearly displaying a disregard for the public's right to access and Congress' multiple use mandate. There is simply no reason for the Park Service to make this decision in the dark of night and without consulting Congress, local officials or park users. I want to reassure all of you that I continue to support multiple uses on our public lands including the use of snowmobiles. In states like Minnesota, snowmobiles are not only recreational, but an important mode of transportation. I look forward to working with you on this and other important issues. I have pledged to continue my work in another term and I would like to do so with your support.

**Sincerely,
Rod Grams
United States Senator**

Wolf attacks 6-year-old in Alaska

It may be the first report of a wolf attacking a human in Alaska. A radio-collared wolf repeatedly bit a 6-year-old boy playing in a grove of alders at a logging camp northwest of Yakutat. The boy had tears on his back and puncture wounds, but he was not seriously injured.

The wolf, an adult male weighing about 75 pounds, returned to the area shortly afterward and was shot. It did not have any obvious signs of injury or trauma that would immediately explain aggressive behavior. The wolf will be tested for rabies.

The boy was with a 9-year-old friend and a dog cutting alders and playing at a logging camp at Icy Bay when the wolf appeared. Startled, the boys began to run. The wolf knocked him down.

The 6-year-old was bitten three times, once in the lower back and twice in the buttocks. All were puncture wounds, with some tears on the lower back. A camp carpenter ran out and threw rocks at the wolf, which let go of the boy. The boy was treated at the Yakutat clinic, where he received seven stitches and five surgical closure staples.

Gov. Tony Knowles contacted the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Fish and Game to request a complete investigation. State wildlife biologist Mark McNay said he knew of no documented reports of healthy wolves killing people in North America. He couldn't recall any reports of wolves attacking humans in Alaska.

History has recorded fatal wolf attacks in Europe and in India. In most cases, those wolves had become accustomed to humans.

Grams asks for emergency funding

Sen. Rod Grams, R-Minn., asked the Senate Appropriations Committee to provide \$28 million in emergency funding to help recovery efforts in Minnesota's Superior and Chippewa National Forests and the Chequamegon National Forest in Wisconsin. The request comes in response to severe forest damage by wind and rainstorms last July 4th.

Grams cited the "extreme risk of a catastrophic fire resulting from the tremendous amount of downed timber" in a letter to the committee.

The money would be used to remove hazardous fuels; suppress fire; open and restore 175 miles of hiking trails; and for reforestation and restoration of shorelines.

Ban on all campfires in BWCA

Superior National Forest has announced that campfires are banned at all times in the area hit by last July 4th's windstorm that toppled millions of trees. The downed trees are dead and drying and have added to the forest floor fuels. The dry conditions we are now experiencing could trigger unusually high fire danger.

As of now, the campfire ban will be in effect until June 30. It affects nearly half of the million-acre BWCA that was hardest hit by the windstorm. Anglers heading up north into the area for the fishing opener are advised to bring cook stoves with them. The stoves are allowed at all times in all locations. Boundary Waters visitors will have to pass on fish stories around a campfire this year.

In addition, the Kekekabic Trail east of Disappointment Lake, and the Border Route Trail and its associated connector trails, have been closed to public use. Parts of these long-distance hiking trails are located more than a quarter mile from a large body of water with concentrated areas of blown down trees between the trail and a lake. Campfires also have been banned along the Pow Wow Trail north of Isabela, but that trail will remain open.

The restrictions and a map of the campfire ban area is posted on the Superior National Forest website at www.fed.fed.us/R9/superior and is available through the Forest offices and BWCA permitting offices.

People cause about half of all wildfires in the Boundary Waters. Most of these wildfires are from campfires that have not been doused. Lightning causes other fires.

Ontario officials remind campers that campfires are banned across the southeastern portion of Quetico Provincial Park adjacent to the Boundary Waters. That ban is in effect through October.

Increased fuel loads on the forest floors throughout the Boundary Waters, along with dry conditions have created unusually high fire dangers in the Boundary Waters. PLEASE be careful with your campfires! Make sure they are completely out when breaking camp.

Let family and friends know of your Boundary Waters travel plans.

What's Next on the Enviros' Agenda?

In addition to ending all logging and mining in National Forests, National Grasslands and National Forest Management, and more Wilderness on the Black Hills National Forest..... GREENlines and Wilderness Action Alerts have highlighted the following as their top priority issues:

President Clinton's 40 million acre executive order

- Use strongest possible protection to the greatest possible amount of wild, roadless lands on our National Forests.
- Protect roadless areas from all road construction and reconstruction, commercial and non-commercial logging, mining, and **off-road motorized recreation vehicles**.
- Protect All inventoried roadless areas immediately.
- Protect uninventoried roadless areas greater than 1,000 acres.
- Do not exempt the Tongass National Forest (or any other forest) from the roadless area protection policy.
- Give immediate protection to Tongass roadless areas.

Denali National Park issues:

- Close the Wilderness core of the Park to all snowmachine use.
- Motorized access for customary and traditional uses is *not* a blank check to allow all motorized uses.
- Address All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) in the final regulations package.

Protect National Forests from ORV management policy:

- ORVs on roads and trails designated and open for ORVs, with cross-country ORV travel prohibited.
- Designation of ORV routes only ORVs will not cause environmental damage.
- ORVs prohibited area unless adequate monitoring and enforcement occurs.
- ORVs prohibited in proposed Wilderness areas, roadless areas, and other areas with roadless values, except where ORV use has been formally designated.

Grand Canyon National Park issues:

- Phasing out motorized crafts on portions of the river proposed as wilderness.
- Reduce traffic congestion by providing access to the Park by light rail and shuttle.
- Limit air tours in the Park so that the vast majority of the Park is restored to its naturally quiet state most of the time.

National Wildlife Refuge System:

Enviros oppose cattle grazing, highway construction, snowmobiling, jet skiing, and oil and gas drilling National Wildlife Refuges

Dam to be Breached:

American Rivers reports the Clinton Administration will consider the economic impacts of salmon protection measures including dam removal, restrictions on logging and salmon harvest.

Ban Snowmobiles from ALL National Parks, recreational areas and monuments

What can we do?

Contact your senators and representatives, **TODAY**, about the enviros' knee-jerk decisions before all the facts or possible solutions are in. DO NOT let these extreme preservation groups dictate public policy!

Send letters to:

c/o Representative _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

c/o Senator _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

(In Minnesota)

District 1 - REP. GIL GUTKNECHT
2 - DAVID MINGE
3 - REP. JAMES RAMSTAD
4 - REP. BRUCE VENTO
5 - REP. MARTIN OLAV SABO
6 - REP. WM. P. LUTHER
7 - REP. COLLIN PETERSON
8 - REP. JAMES OBERSTAR

SEN. ROD GRAMS
SEN. PAUL WELLSTONE

CWCS has finally updated our computer and mailing list. This may be your last CWCS Newsletter. Make sure your membership dues are received by or paid at the August 19, 2000 Annual Meeting. Your help is needed in the fight for continued multiple-use access to public lands and waters!

CWCS Annual Meeting/Picnic

Mark you calendars. Saturday, August 19, 2000 is the date set for the 11th Annual CWCS Meeting/Picnic and Fundraiser. CWCS will once again be returning to the Long Branch in Winton to share in the festivities with the Ely/Winton Rod & Gun Club's Hawg Fishing Contest. Come share your concerns about public land and water issues.

Senate & House Resource Committee Hearings

Impressed with the magnitude of support for the 1995 Senate & House Field Hearings in International Falls concerning the Boundary Waters controversy), hearings are being planned this July in Grand Rapids. Issues of concern this time around include public land management – in our National Forests, National Parks and the recent presidential roadless initiative to lock up 50 million acres.

We did it before... we can do it again. Over 1500 people attended the 1995 International Falls hearings. Let's see those numbers double! Supporters of sound science and common sense land management please attend the 2000 hearings! Look for further information about these hearings in the coming weeks.

Your CWCS Board of Directors:

Guy Holmes, President – Virginia, MN
Mike Madden, Vice President/Treasurer – Britt, MN

Nancy McReady, Secretary – Ely, MN
Ardis David, ex officio – Grand Marais, MN
Jeanne Franson – Tower, MN
Gary Gotchnik – Ely, MN
Bill Hamm – Bovey, MN
Jim Hofsommer – Palo/Markham, MN
Jim Kovich – Eveleth, MN
Jeep (Bob) LaTourell – Ely, MN
Jim Nelson – Tower, MN
Bill Sharich – Britt, MN
John Smrekar, ex officio – Ely, MN

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PO Box 1046 NEW ADDRESS!!!
Virginia Mn. 55792-1046

*CWCS encourages all visitors to the Boundary Waters to leave no trace.
If you packed it in, pack it out.*

CWCS Suggested Reading List:

Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature - Edited by William Cronon

Nature or people? The aim of legislating humans out of the wilderness is no solution to our environmental problems, argues this book - a timely reassessment of the environmentalist agenda by outstanding historians, scientists, and critics.

Undue Influence - by Ron Arnold

David Ridenour, National Center for Public Policy Research, Washington, D.C.

"Undue Influence" reveals the threat to industrial civilization posed by environmentalism. The amount of money being spent from such an unpublicized direction is cause for alarm by itself. What it's being used for -- dismantling roads, dams, logging, mining, ranching, farming, and fishing -- is truly frightening. This book should galvanize the public to action.

Green Spirit: Trees are the Answer – by Patrick Moore

Written by one of the original founders of Greenpeace, and now considered a pariah by his former colleagues for his rejection of unfounded environmental extremism. *Green Spirit – Trees are the Answer*, gives us new eyes with which to see the land, exploring the beauty, biodiversity and spirit of forests growing back after logging. Contact Moore at: patrickmoore@home.com to order a copy.

Recycle.... share this CWCS Newsletter with a friend!