There still hasn’t been any resolution to mismanaged day use motor quota system for the affected BWCA Chain of Lakes. Recent contact with U.S. Forest Service Supervisor Jim Sanders asking for a meeting date to recalculate the permit quota didn’t result in a quick answer.

The Forest Service has been involved in multiple lawsuits brought about by the Sierra Club, Izaak Walton League, Friends of the Boundary Water, Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, and other groups over the revised Forest Management Plan and the South Fowl Snowmobile Trail reroute.

The Forest Service is in the process of completing a detailed summarization for how it calculated the quota numbers for the previously exempt use on the “chains”. The process was based on the same used for the 1993 BW Plan. As soon as the summarization is completed, the Forest Service will schedule meetings with CWCS and all parties involved in the law suit. It will then finalize its calculation of the quotas for the lakes and the previously exempt day use motor use. Public involvement and the environmental process will follow.

Another factor which could potentially delay scheduling a meeting on the recalculating of the permit quotas is whether or not a lawsuit is filed against the Echo Trail Area Management Plan. CWCS looks forward to the opportunity to work with the USFS to correct this problem that both the USFS and CWCS agree needs to be resolved quickly. (Continued on Page Eleven)
Extreme preservationists at it again

The Izaak Walton League of America, Sierra Club North Star Chapter, Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness and Wilderness Watch recently released a report that states there have been motor use violations in the eastern part of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). Volunteers documented the alleged violations with photos taken over several seasons from a variety of areas in the eastern BWCAW showing snowmobiles, ATVs, chain saws, and high horsepower outboards have all been used illegally in the BWCAW.

Some of the photos appear to have been taken above the Boundary Waters at lower than the 4000-foot air restrictions over the Boundary Waters.

Kevin Proescholdt, with the Izaak Walton League of America, said some of the motor use seems to be that of the U.S. Border Patrol, and Kris Reichenbach, Superior National Forest spokeswoman, said some of the snowmobile activity documented "could very well be the Border Patrol and state conservation officers and even our own law enforcement out there."

Jim Sanders, Superior National Forest supervisor, said illegal motor use has been a problem since the BWCAW was designated as a wilderness in 1978.

"We try to keep both our summer and winter patrols up, despite our budget challenges, and we really aren’t seeing any increase. If anything there’s been some drop in those snowmobile incursions into the heart of the wilderness. But they still happen," Sanders said.

Perhaps the USFS would have the money needed to adequately patrol these areas if these extreme environmental groups would stop filing frivolous lawsuits that erode the USFS budget. Instead, it looks like the Faegre & Benson law firm is looking forward to another lawsuit. Betsy Schmeising and Kristen Gast are environmental litigators for this firm. Scott Anderegg is also a partner in the Faegre & Benson law firm and serves on the Friends of the Boundary Waters board of directors, as does Schmeising. Gast is a member of the Sierra Club executive committee, and Becky Rom, a senior partner at Faegre & Benson, is an honorary Friends of the Boundary Waters board member and on the executive committee of the Wilderness Society. There definitely appears to be a conflict of interest.

Another lawsuit will tie the hands of the USFS from doing its job of managing the forests and wilderness for everyone, not just a vocal few. And, if the judge sides with the plaintiffs, the USFS will end up paying their legal fees again, as they did in the Chain of Lakes lawsuit which still has no resolution. The USFS paid the Faegre & Benson law firm $90,000 in that case.

How many other lawsuits has the Forest Service had to make payments to Faegre & Benson, resulting in a depletion of its funds for forest and wilderness management and law enforcement? Where is the outrage from supporters of these preservation groups who want the Forest Service to do their job of managing the forest, not fight lawsuits?

South and North Fowl lakes are not wilderness lakes and snowmobile use has not been restricted since the passage of the 1978 BWCAW Wilderness Act. Whether these two lakes are in fact within the wilderness is one of the main disputes in the South Fowl Snowmobile Trail Lawsuit.

Other pictures show scraping marks on rocks, which the report says, are recent scars made by snowmobiles. How can they tell when the scars on the rocks were made? They could very well have been made decades ago, or perhaps thousands of years ago by glaciers during the last ice age.

The Cook County Snowmobile and ATV Clubs have erected signs on the old Tilbury Trail from McFarland Lake to South Fowl Lake in an effort to reduce illegal motor travel that once passed through a small portion of the Boundary Waters. This acknowledgement by local residents, of past illegal motor use has gone largely unnoticed by these extreme preservation groups as they continued to file a lawsuit against the proposed snowmobile reroute.

It is apparent that the Izaak Walton League of America, Sierra Club North Star Chapter, Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness and Wilderness Watch do not want to work together with the communities closest to the Boundary Waters, but would rather cause more animosity towards environmental organizations that once had a good reputation. These very same ‘wilderness watchers’ caused great polarization in Ely over three truck portages. Now it seems they are headed in the same direction to do the same in Grand Marais and the surrounding area.

Blue Green Coalition questionable

The Blue Green Coalition, a partnership of the Sierra Club and the steelworkers union has been getting the endorsement of the Iron Range mayors for the Mayor’s Climate Protection Agreement. Supposedly 450 cities across the United States have signed, but are they metro cities where pollution is a big problem, or are they all rural cities?

The Sierra Club’s seven point plan for the Climate Protection Agreement includes - expanded recycling, installation of energy efficient lighting, purchasing energy efficient appliances, developing car pools and alternative transportation, and planting trees. This seems like a lame seven point plan for a steelworkers union to be pushing. These are all things we already do in northern Minnesota. We don’t need the Sierra Club to tell us to do this. It’s called ‘common sense’.

The Sierra Club has been very negative about the NorthMet Project to mine copper and other minerals near Babbitt, and they are opposed to the Excel Energy project near the city of Taconite that would be far better for our environment with coal gasification than the regular coal burning plants. Both of these projects would use new, cleaner technology and follow strict environmental regulations. Yet the Sierra Club will not come out in full support for either.

The Sierra Club questions whether these operations will have unions, but that decision is up to the workers, not the employers. A question that begs to be asked is how many steelworkers are card carrying Sierra Club members? You can bet many are members of CWCS. A recent poll in the Mesabi Daily News asked if the Blue Green Coalition would be good for the Iron Range’s economy. 84% said NO!

The Sierra Club is also championing its pet energy project – wind energy. This is a very expensive energy alternative to fossil fuels with little pay back for the investment involved and few jobs.

CWCS asks – do people really believe the Sierra Club or the Friends of the Boundary Waters will allow wind turbines in northern Minnesota, close to the BWCAW where they will have to look at that ‘visual pollution’ as they call it? They don’t even want radio, cell phone or TV towers too close to the BWCAW.

A true coalition of environmental groups and unions would embrace the new, cleaner technology to be used on the proposed projects for the Iron Range which will revitalize the economy.
Message from the President

It seems like I’ve been going non-stop from meeting to meeting since the last newsletter. My husband and I attended the hearing at the U.S. District Court in Minneapolis, MN for the South Fowl Snowmobile lawsuit. Soon afterwards, the Friends of the Boundary Waters requested an additional hearing with the judge to dispute the official Boundary Waters map. You can read about these hearings in this newsletter.

With the help of Sonja Bartz, a MN member of the Blue Ribbon Coalition legal committee, CWCS and the Arrowhead Coalition for Multiple Use were able to obtain a $10,000 grant from the Action Grant for the South Fowl Legal Fund. The Action Program is a partnership of recreational vehicle manufacturers, retailers and customers. We were also awarded $2,000 from the Minnesota United Snowmobile Association for the South Fowl lawsuit.

Much of that money has already been spent, and depending on the judge’s decision in this case, an appeal will more than likely be filed by the environmental groups. A big thank you to both the Action Program and MnUSA, but our fundraising efforts will continue with the raffling of a Lund Boat, 25hp 4-Stroke Mercury Motor and Trailer.

In February I attended the Community Readiness Committee meeting to hear on the progress of the PolyMet/North/Met Project. A very interesting presentation was made, and hopefully the Iron Range will see the benefit of good paying jobs as the project continues to move forward.

In February an emergency response group put together an open forum at Vermilion Community College to discuss the lessons learned after the 1999 Blowdown. At that time, volunteers were invaluable, as was the rapid response by the Forest Service and other emergency personnel. One very positive outcome after the Blowdown was the improvement of communications with better cell phone service in the area.

For the first time, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency decided to have community meetings throughout March to hear about the various issues that are of concern to area organizations and the public in general.

This summer I’ll be conducting tour guides at the Dorothy Molter Museum again. The museum has a new director, Sarah Levar, who has big plans to celebrate Dorothy’s 100th birthday anniversary. There will be free tours of the museum on Sunday, May 6. On Saturday, May 5 there are free tours of the MINOS Lab at the Soudan Underground Mine. These are two great tours.

Extreme preservation groups put out a report on motor violations in the Boundary Waters. This has nothing to do with protecting the wilderness. It’s about oppressing the local people living around the Boundary Waters rather than working with them on wilderness issues. We’re still waiting for permits for the Chain of Lakes.

I had the opportunity to meet John Halverson from Senator Coleman’s office on his recent visit to Ely. We discussed Boundary Waters and public land issues and it was good to hear that Senator Coleman was instrumental in getting Senator Klobuchar to sign on to an increase of $15,000,000 for the U.S. Forest Service’s budget for the Chippewa and Superior National Forest. Now, if only the preservation groups don’t eat up that increase with more lawsuits if the bill passes.

Once again, look for CWCS at the Ely Blueberry Festival, the Babbitt Wall-eyewhama and also at the Ely Harvest Moon Festival. This year we will hold our annual meeting and raffle drawing on Sunday, September 9th at the close of the Harvest Moon Festival. Hope to see you there. Thank you for your continued support.

Nancy McReady
CWCS President

Conservationists with Common Sense was presented an Honor Award by the Forest Service for its participation in the making of the new Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness user video. The 25 minute video promotes the “Leave No Trace” principles and is viewed by all visitors before entering the Boundary Waters. CWCS insisted that more information be included on the allowable, limited motor use in the Boundary Waters. Forest Service Kawishiwi District Range Mark VanEvery presented the plaque to Nancy McReady, CWCS president.

With BWCAW permits getting harder to come by, be more accommodating to others. Take advantage of 9-person/4 boat limits. Ask your friends to join you on your permit. Share your BWCAW experience!
Extreme preservationists’ lawsuits hinder USFS forest maintenance

In January, the Ely Timberjay printed a lengthy article that addressed the financial burden of the agenda of the many preservation groups on the Forest Service with their filing of lawsuits. These lawsuits have very little to do with protecting the Boundary Waters and the surrounding area. It’s all about access to public lands and how they can deny or reduce access, and delay timber management.

CWCS believes the Forest Service, for the most part, is doing a good job. We may not agree with everything they do, but we don’t file lawsuit after lawsuit and have the courts micro manage what the Forest Service and other agencies should do. In fact, we have joined the Forest Service as interveners in the Chain of Lakes and South Fowl lawsuits.

There are greater issues these national environmental groups should be addressing, such as cleaning up the Mississippi River or pushing for legislation that would have American companies that take their companies to Asia and elsewhere adhere to the same strict pollution regulations as we have here in the United States. It’s that pollution that is causing much of our acid rain.

Instead, the Friends, Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, the Sierra Club, Wilderness Society and others sue over three truck portages that caused great polarization in our communities. Two of the truck portages were barely back in operation and they were challenging the Chain of Lakes permits. Then the Forest Management Plan, and now the South Fowl Snowmobile lawsuit.

It’s so much easier for these groups to bully the people who just want to enjoy the beauty and fishing on the lakes of the Boundary Waters. Attacking the use of allowable motors is easier than tackling real environmental issues that impact far more than the 200,000 people who visit the BWCA each year.

The good done by the environmental movement of the 1970s has been tarnished by all these frivolous lawsuits over the Boundary Waters and surrounding areas. While these groups waste valuable resources both on their part and those of the government that must play this unnecessary game, the big industries that they attack are actually taking more of a lead in protecting the environment. Examples of this are the use of cleaner, safer technology with coal gasification for electricity and the new mining project processes that are environmentally friendly. Even recreational industries are looking to protect the environment with 4-stroke boat motors and snowmobile engines, which are becoming more and more popular.

The Friends of the Boundary Waters listed their extreme agenda on their website – 1. Attain full wilderness protection for the BWCAW’s 1,098,057 acres. 2. Attain full wilderness protection for 90,000 additional acres of roadless areas in the Superior National Forest. 3. Develop support in northeastern Minnesota for the mission of the Friends. 4. Ensure sufficient financial and human resources to address issues 1–3. These points have since been edited off their website.

The make up of the Friends of the Boundary Waters board of directors is very questionable. Five directors are lawyers, three with the Faegre & Benson law firm, the very firm that files all the lawsuits. This is the firm the Forest Service has paid nearly $300,000 to over the past ten years in attorney recovery costs.

Did you know?

According to an article in the Minnesota Snowmobiling Magazine this winter, a one acre fire in a conifer forest emits one ton of particulate matter, nine tons of carbon monoxide, 6 tons of hydrocarbons, and .25 tons of nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide (the main cause of acid rain and ozone depletion). According to EPA data, 1040 new cars operating normally for one month (approximately 1250 miles of driving) will match the emissions from a one acre fire.

That means the pollution from a 160,000 acre fire generates 160,000 tons of particulate matter and 1.4 million tons of carbon monoxide. One such fire would be equal to 166,400,000 automobiles driving on the roads for one month.

2006 was the worst U.S. wildfire year. More than 9.8 million acres burned. And that’s just in the United States! That figures to close to 1 billion tons of carbon monoxide emitted!

CWCS and the timber industry have questioned how many of those acres were scheduled for timber harvest, but because of lawsuits brought about by environmental groups the harvests were delayed or stopped entirely.

According to the 1998 research by Darold Ward, of the U.S. Forestry Service, an estimated 6 petagrams (about 6.3 billion tons) of biomass is burned worldwide each year. He notes that about 80 percent of all biomass burning takes place in tropical countries. About 3 to 5 percent of the worldwide total—or 7 million acres—is burned annually here in the United States.

“Approximately two to five million acres are burned by wild fires in the U.S. each year,” Ward states, “while 5 million acres are burned as ‘prescribed’ fires, or fires that are beneficial in managing the ecosystems. Prescribed fires are deliberately planned and set by fire management officers for a variety of reasons.”

Now why don’t we hear the environmental groups complaining about the impact of these wildfires to our land, atmosphere and water, not to mention mention the health problems to humans? CWCS would think that this should be at least a part of the conversation in this issue and that logging should be seriously considered as a preferred option to create healthier forests rather than simply always letting dangerous wildfires burn.
Northmet Project now moving ahead with environmental review

A meeting of the Committee Readiness Committee in late February included a PowerPoint presentation on the NorthMet Project shown to an audience of fifty people gathered at the Aurora Senior Center.

PolyMet Environmental Manager Jim Scott gave the presentation that highlighted the progress of the project. The Bankable Feasibility Study, a definitive document that demonstrates both the technical and economic viability of the project to the banks, was completed last September.

PolyMet has acquired the Cliffs/Erie site and has an agreement with Minnesota Power for its power supply. They are also working on a project labor agreement with the building trade unions and with banks on the financing of the $380 million NorthMet Project.

On environmental review and permitting, PolyMet has submitted its detailed NorthMet Project Description to the State and Federal environmental regulators that lays out the extensive environmental safeguards planned for the project. The EIS, permit to mine, and water and air permits are ongoing with a target completion for the 3rd quarter of 2007.

The high metal demand and higher prices for copper, nickel, cobalt and platinum group metals make NorthMet a good project to pursue now. The process technology is a clean, energy efficient technology for low grade ore. Energy usage required for the hydrometallurgical process would be about half compared to a traditional smelter. The opportunity to “recycle” the former LTV site also makes the project more viable in the current global marketplace for base and precious metals.

The $380 million construction project will have over 700 peak temporary jobs for trade workers, over 400 permanent, long term jobs and another 500 spin-off jobs for an annual economic impact to St. Louis County of $242 million, plus State and Federal tax payments.

The large, low sulfide, low grade ore deposit would be an open pit mine similar to area taconite mines. NorthMet low grade ore contains .31% copper with low sulfur content of .88%. In comparison, the Flambeau Copper Mine in Wisconsin had 11% copper with 30% sulfur. 32,000 tons per day will be mined from the NorthMet deposit.

PolyMet would utilize the LTV crusher and concentrator and existing tailing ponds. The roads, railroads, power lines and water supplies – all needed of industry – are already in place on the site. PolyMet also purchased 120 rail cars from Cliffs/Erie.

In answering a question about possible leakage from waste rock basins, Scott said the basins would be dug to bedrock to assure a stable foundation. A constructed foundation would be laid in, and then the liner. A protective barrier above the liner would consist of sand, gravel and smaller rocks, building up layers to create a stable platform to put the mined rocks on top.

The hydrometallurgical processing plant, much like a pressure cooker, will be a new facility to be built on the site. It is a proven clean technology that does not require a smelting operation. This process is commonly used in base and precious metal processing, using recycled water.

“The process is presently used in Laos and New Zealand, the southwestern U.S. and Canada,” said NorthMet Project manager Don Hunter, “but is new to Minnesota.”

The process avoids sulfur dioxide which is associated with copper smelting and also avoids the use of cyanide and mercury associated with gold mining.

Construction is expected to start in late 2007, with the first ore shipment scheduled by late 2008 and full operation in 2009. Executive Vice President Warren Hudson said PolyMet has begun going to area schools to discuss potential jobs for future graduates. It also plans to implement an apprentice program with area colleges and technical schools.

Three products will be produced - copper sheets, nickel/cobalt in a dried powder and a precious metals precipitate. Copper will be the only pure metal produced on site while the nickel/cobalt and precious metals precipitates will be shipped elsewhere for final refining.

PolyMet plans to develop the NorthMet Project with extensive environmental safeguards to satisfy Minnesota’s strict environmental standards. Key safeguards include:

- Reuse and recycling of process water during operations, eliminating any discharge to surface waters;
- No additional tailings disposal areas;
- Mine area wetlands disturbance reduced to less than 900 acres, to 25% less than previous estimates by making use of the Dunka Road;
- All waste rock placed on liners; discharge will be monitored and treated if necessary;
- All waste rock capped to minimize oxidation and possible acid generation;
- Continuous, progressive mine site reclamation;
- Modern, clean and energy-efficient hydrometallurgical metal recovery process;
- Comprehensive environmental compliance monitoring systems; and
- Financial assurance guaranty for closure of operations, which are updated annually.

Jim Miller, a senior geologist with the Minnesota Geological Survey and an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota Duluth, specializing in the geology of Northeastern Minnesota, recently had a commentary in the Duluth News Tribune.

Miller expressed common sense when he stated, “If we don’t mine it here, it will be mined somewhere else, badly. Thankfully, most international companies conducting this search, especially those based in the U.S., Canada and Australia, adhere to stringent policies of corporate social responsibility and environmental standards (see www. e3mining.com). For many nationalized mining companies of underdeveloped countries, including China and Russia, environmental standards take a back seat to padding government coffers. As the primary consumers of these commodities and global citizens, shouldn’t we care how the environment is affected in Bangalore as much as it is in Babbitt?”

The environmental review process will include multiple opportunities for public comment period on the EIS.

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.
Pluses and minuses of Global Warming

Two documentaries that everyone should watch are An Inconvenient Truth produced and directed by Al Gore which is based on scientific consensus rather than scientific fact, and The Great Global Warming Swindle produced by Channel 4 out of the United Kingdom. This documentary disputes the gravity of global warming. You can watch the latter by going to: http://www.youtube.com:80/watch?v=wPKUvnlW8Nk Another website to check out is: http://nov55.com/gbwm.html

In watching An Inconvenient Truth, CWCS, as well as many others, questions how there can be a backwards angle in the temperature graph Al Gore presents to his audience?

Evidently all information should maybe be taken with a dose of salt, but let’s not forget the 1970s Ice Age scare. In fact, http://www.iceagenow.com/Ocean_Warming.htm states we are in an ice age now.

One fact that is certain… forecaster can’t predict the weather for the upcoming week. What makes predictions for fifty or one hundred years in the future any more reliable? http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D8OF9B00&show_article=1&cat=0

Is there climate change? Yes, constantly. Is it all because of man? Probably not. Should we try harder to prevent pollution? Definitely. Will man have to adapt to future changes? Most definitely. New, cleaner technology is key.

There is an interesting article in the 2007 Farmer’s Almanac by Evelyn Browning Garfiss. The article states the benefits of global warming – warmer weather is healthier; warmer winter temperatures save energy; warmer temperatures hold more moisture which will benefit drought stricken areas; longer growing seasons lead to increased photosynthesis because of the increase of CO2; and Arctic shipping routes will save time and energy if there is significant ice melting.

Try our suggested reading list:

The State of Fear by Michael Critchton – A fascinating book that coincidently came out weeks before the tsunami hit Thailand in December 2004, is a great commentary on today’s environmental movement.

This nonfiction thriller is fast paced and will have you questioning just what is real and what is not in the environmental movement of climate change, and the role the media has in all this.

Lob Trees in the Wilderness by Clifford and Isabel Ahlgren – The classic account of human impact on this vast wilderness area.

"A fine, perceptive exploration. . . The wilderness is the Boundary Canoe Area of northern Minnesota, and 'lob trees' are used as a poetic way to link the results of historical and ecological research in this setting. This is a well-illustrated book, built to be carried in hand or pack, as one travels through the lands under discussion.” The Canadian Field-Naturalist

"There is no one more qualified than the Ahlgrens to describe the ways human beings have affected the forest of this area." Journal of Forest History

Clifford and Isabel Ahlgren have retired from forest ecology after working many years at the Wilderness Research Foundation on Basswood Lake near Ely, Minnesota.

Changes in government agencies noted

Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty’s former legislative colleague is his new natural resources commissioner.

Mark Holsten, a Stillwater resident and University of Minnesota Duluth graduate, served in the Minnesota House 10 years before becoming the Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources nearly four years ago. He replaces Gene Merriam, whose resignation was announced Dec. 7.

Brad Moore of Mahtomedi takes over as pollution control commissioner. He had been acting Minnesota Pollution Control Agency commissioner since August. Before that, he was assistant DNR commissioner.

Cal Ludeman of Tracy becomes human services commissioner. Ludeman, 55, takes over the biggest state agency. He was acting commissioner since Moorhead native Kevin Goodno resigned last summer.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the selection of Abigail Kimbell as the 16th chief of the Forest Service. Kimbell succeeds Chief Dale Bosworth, who retired on Feb. 2 after 41 years with the Forest Service.

Kimbell served as Regional Forester for the Northern Region in Missoula, Montana, which includes northern Idaho, and North Dakota. As Forest Service Chief, Kimbell will oversee an organization of over 30,000 employees and a budget of just over $4 billion. Before becoming regional forester, Kimbell served in the Washington Office as Associate Deputy Chief for the National Forest System, with responsibility for assisting in the development of the Healthy Forest Restoration.
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released population figures and announced that the Service is removing the western Great Lakes population of gray wolves from the federal list of threatened and endangered species. The action is being taken in recognition of the success of gray wolf recovery efforts under the Endangered Species Act.

Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett made the announcement, stating, “Wolves have recovered in the western Great Lakes because efforts to save them from extinction have been a model of cooperation, flexibility, and hard work.”

Gray wolves were previously listed as endangered in the lower 48 states, except in Minnesota where they were listed as threatened. The Service’s removal of the gray wolf from the endangered and threatened species list applies only to the Western Great Lakes area, which includes Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan as well as parts of North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.

Wolves in other parts of the 48 states, including the Southwest wolf population, remain endangered and are not affected by the delisting. The Fish and Wildlife Service is considering, but has not yet approved delisting for Northern Rocky Mountain wolves, whose range area includes northern Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, the eastern one-third of Washington and Oregon, and a small part of north-central Utah.

When the wolf was first listed as endangered in the 1970s, only a few hundred wolves remained in Minnesota. The recovery plan identified 1,250 to 1,400 as a population goal for Minnesota. The state’s wolf population has been at or above that level since the late 1970s. The region’s late winter gray wolf population now numbers approximately 4,000 and occupies portions of Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota. Wolf numbers in the three states have exceeded the numerical recovery criteria established in the species’ recovery plan.

The Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources have developed plans to guide future wolf management actions. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Minnesota plan will allow wolves to continue to naturally expand their range within the state. The plan, administered by the Minnesota DNR divides the state into wolf management zones A and B. In Zone A (Northeastern MN), where 80 percent of the wolves reside, state protections would be nearly as strict as current protections under the ESA. The Minnesota protection plan goal is to keep the wolf population well above 1,600 in that zone. In Zone B (the remainder of the state), wolves could be killed to protect domestic animals, even if attacks or threatening behavior have not occurred.

Hunting and trapping of the gray wolf may or may not be authorized, depending on the state or tribal government responsible for gray wolf protection and management. Each entity must decide whether such activities will be allowed. In Minnesota, public hunting and trapping, except for depredation control, will not be considered until at least five years after the federal delisting.

Once the Service removes a species from Endangered Species Act protection, there are several safeguards to help ensure it continues to thrive, including a mandatory five-year monitoring period. The Service also has the ability to immediately relist a species on an emergency basis, if monitoring or other data show that is necessary.

The final rule removing gray wolves in the Western Great Lakes DPS from the list of threatened and endangered species has been published in the Federal Register. The rule and other information about the gray wolf may be found at www.fws.gov/midwest/wolf.
In the Ely area, tickets are available at Wilderness Outfitters, The Great Outdoors, Skube’s Bait & Tackle, Ely Shopper and LaTourell’s Resort. Aronson Boat Works in Tower. And in the Gunflint/Grand Marais area at Trail’s Center and Devil Track Resort.

Drawing time will be at 4 p.m.

- Lund CW-16’ Boat, Mercury 25 HP EFI 4-Stroke & Trailer
  (provided by Aronson Boat Works, Tower)

- MinnKota Trolling Motor
  (donated by Pike Bay Repair, Tower)

- 2-Night Stay/Dinner for 2 at Devil Track Resort
  (donated by Chris & Emily LaVigne, Grand Marais)

Drawing at
18th Annual CWCS Meeting/Fundraiser
Sunday, Sept. 9, 2007 at
Whiteside Park at close of Harvest Moon Festival

CWCS RAFFLE TICKET ORDER FORM

Name ____________________________

City ____________________________ State ______ Zip _________

Phone __________________________ E-mail ___________________

Number of raffle tickets ____________ Total amount enclosed, $5 per ticket ____________

Please enclose check, payable to CWCS. Mail to: CWCS, P.O. Box 1046, Virginia, MN 55792
Over 6,000 acres in Lake County set aside for forestry, recreation, wildlife

More than 6,200 acres north of Silver Bay in Lake County, Minnesota will be conserved for forest production, public access and wildlife habitat. The agreement ensures the forestland will continue to be harvested sustainably, providing jobs for the local community and wood supply to the mills. At the same time, it guarantees public access, including hunting, fishing, hiking, dog sledding and snowmobiling and protects important habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species.

The partnership is comprised of Lake County, the Department of Natural Resources, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy and Minnesota Power. Lake County Commissioner, the late Clair Nelson, was instrumental in making the agreement happen. In March, the Lake County Board passed a resolution naming the 6,000 acres the Clair A. Nelson Memorial Forest.

Under the terms of the agreement, Lake County purchased the property from The Conservation Fund to manage it for forest products. The Nature Conservancy purchased a conservation easement on the property, ensuring sustainable forest management, wildlife habitat and opportunities for public recreation.

In the coming months, the Conservancy intends to transfer the easement to the Department of Natural Resources for long-term management. The Conservancy is also purchasing a 220-acre in-holding from Minnesota Power and donating it to the County, subject to a conservation easement, as part of the transaction.

Aside from supplying local mills with timber, the property provides important habitat for migratory songbirds, ruffed grouse, deer, timber wolf and moose. The land also encompasses the headwaters of the north branch of the Manitou River, a prime trout stream in the region.

Across the U.S., and now in Minnesota, the shifting economics of the forest products industry and real estate values have forced unprecedented changes in timberland ownership. Forestland has become increasingly susceptible to seasonal home development rather than sustainable timber production. Large expanses of forests that people thought were protected are now being converted to small lot subdivisions resulting in degradation of habitat, loss of productive timberland and reduced public recreational access.

The fragmentation of forestland ownership is among the greatest threats faced by wildlife and it further threatens timber-related jobs. Since 1999, more than 400,000 acres of Minnesota’s industrial forestland has been subdivided and sold. As much of this is sold for second-home development, it is lost to forestry purposes and public recreation.

Making a difference

Ever wonder how the ball gets rolling on particular environmental issues? If you’re Al Gore, you get Hollywood to put your message out there. Well, in this case, it’s the man behind the wheel of an 18-wheeler that wants to make a big difference in the amount of diesel fuel used in the trucking industry that will lead to a reduction of our country’s dependency on foreign oil and reduce CO2 emissions.

Ron Tolliver, a retired truck driver from Panama City, Florida likes to play cribbage online. One of his playing partners online is Gail Server who lives in Circle Pines, Minnesota. Gail is the sister of CWCS president Nancy McReady, Ely, MN.

While the two play cribbage they chat about various topics. Ron shared his idea of making a proposal to Congress for a tax credit incentive to reduce the use of diesel fuel in the trucking industry. His idea will also lead to a huge reduction of CO2 emissions.

Server just happens to be a retired legal secretary and offered to help Ron write the proposal and get it into the right hands. She sent the proposal to Rep. James Oberstar, now chair of the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, as well as to several other Congressmen and Senators.

What would reduce the amount of diesel fuel used by truckers? The answer is the installation of a gen-pac or APU (Auxiliary Power Unit) on trucks with a weight of over 4 tons and trucks equipped with sleepers.

This anti-idle device would reduce diesel fuel usage in the trucking industry by 4.5 to 5.7 billion gallons annually; provide environmental benefits from reduced emissions; reduce noise and vibration from engine idling; and would provide a better rest period for the driver.

In August 2006, The Trucker online published an article about Tolliver’s proposal. It stated, “Anti-idling devices are manufactured by various companies, Tolliver noted, and are comprised of a generator, heating and air conditioning unit, an alternating current electrical supply to the truck cab, engine block heater and battery monitor. The anti-idling devices are fueled by diesel and use approximately two-tenths of a gallon of fuel per hour as compared to the truck’s engine using 1 to 1.2 gallons per hour while idling.”

Tolliver’s plan also suggests the implementation of a one-time tax credit of $3,000 per unit when an anti-idling device is installed. “That,” he said, “would be of great assistance to the trucking companies.”

Tolliver said each unit would cost between $7,000 and $10,000 and that the tax credit would apply to all units installed for use for the next 10 years. This period would allow time for alternative-fuel research.”

Oberstar’s office has informed Tolliver that the proposal has been given to the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit. For more information on this proposal, contact Ron Tolliver at: (765)753-0400 or for a copy of the proposal contact gailserv@aol.com.

CWCS would like to suggest people contact their Congressmen and Senators and encourage them to support this proposal. In addition to the savings truckers will see in their fuel costs, it will save billions of gallons of diesel fuel and reduce CO2 emissions.
Taconite Harbor emission project underway

Minnesota Power has enacted the AREA project-Arrowhead Regional Emission Abatement at its 110-megawatt Laskin plant in Hoyt Lakes and the 225-megawatt Taconite Harbor Energy Center. Minnesota Power is taking steps to see that those emissions are as low as possible. Thermal Business Operations Manager Paul Brunfelt recently gave a tour of the plant and the additions geared to reduce potentially harmful emissions.

The emission reduction measures are based on the work of a Swedish researcher who determined that modifying the combustion process is the most effective and lowest cost method of emission control. This technology is being implemented by MoBotecUSA of Walnut Creek, California. This is a complicated process of injecting reagents into the powerful boilers in the proper combination so the oxides of nitrogen (NOX), sulfur dioxide (SO2) and most of the mercury (hg) is absorbed out of the gas stream and chemically bonded to the ash. Using the multi-emission control technology Taconite Harbor plans to reduce NOX by 62%, SO2 by 65%, and mercury by 90%.

Brunfelt added that Taconite Harbor would be the 25th plant in the United States to employ this technology-and the only one to reduce multiple pollutants simultaneously.

Minnesota Power will hire an independent environmental assessment firm to monitor the emissions, a procedure that is not new. The Taconite Harbor Energy Center is mandated by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to test its emissions on a rigid schedule. “But we’d test before and after anyway,” said Brunfelt, with another smile. “We also want to know we’re getting our money’s worth!”

Brunfelt said trucks will deliver the reagents to the storage building where the materials will be offloaded via pipes, into the silos, and ultimately into the boilers where the heat will cause the NOX, SO2 and the mercury hg to chemically adhere to the reagents. The reagents will then be eliminated with the ash and hauled to the plant’s lined ash waste pool.

This is a relatively new process-limestone and urea have been mixed and used as reagents in other plants, but this is the first time that MinPlus, a proprietary clay-like material, will also be introduced.

Minnesota Power expects the connections for Unit 2 to be complete at the beginning of May and then testing will begin. Actual operations should start in June. After Unit 2 goes back on-line, the whole process starts again with Units 1 and 3 to follow in the spring and fall. Ductwork, fans, and an Electrostatic Precipitator need to be installed for each unit.

MPCA seeks community involvement

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has been hosting several meetings in northern Minnesota communities to gather information about the top environmental issues that are of most concern to area residents. The Grand Ely Lodge was the site of the fifth meeting held in Grand Marais. About 25 concerned citizens attended the Ely meeting. Michael Kennedy, from the Duluth MPCA office, explained the pilot project. Groups represented were White Iron Chain of Lakes Association, Conservationists with Common Sense, Listening Point Foundation, Vermilion Community College, and Vermilion Sportsman Club.

The agency wants to engage the public and hear about the environmental issues that are most important to them. The forum had no agenda, and this was not an opportunity to voice opinions on specific projects and permit processes that may be ongoing in the area now. In general, the MPCA wants to know the ‘big picture’ of environmental concerns from the public.

A brainstorming session took place with an eight-minute time limit allotted to each of three categories – water, air and land. Nolan Baratono, Anne Moore and Jennifer Groebner aided attendees, broken into three groups, in writing down the concerns under each category.

The top environmental issues concerning water were septic systems, upgrading old systems and not allowing variances; lake-shore development and adhering to setbacks; and salt, fertilizer and other chemical runoff into lakes.

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ACMU working on county ATV system

The Arrowhead Coalition for Multiple Use (ACMU) is a group formed to represent the people of the Arrowhead region for the protection and preservation of our right and privilege to use forest and water resources as we have done for generations.

ACMU supports safe use of our lands. This winter, ACMU and local mushers erected signs cautioning snowmobilers of possible dog sled traffic. ACMU members also participate in MN DNR firearm, ATV and snowmobile safety training for local youths. ACMU supports a comprehensive, enjoyable all-terrain vehicle (ATV) system in Cook County.

There are over 260,000 ATVs registered in the state of Minnesota to date. These machines are here to stay and opponents who say they “don’t want ATVs in their state or county” are not being realistic. Also, ATV owners who say they can ride wherever they want because they have been doing so historically are sticking their heads in the sand. The days of riding anywhere and everywhere are gone. Cook County, Lake County, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the USFS are working to create a safe, environmentally sound, and enjoyable ATV system.

CWCS and ACMU support the work of these agencies, however, review of the proposals shows that the plans are not adequate. There are numerous instances where a small section of snowmobile trail or forest road could be opened to create more enjoyable, longer loops. There are also no connections to services—food and/or gasoline. If the DNR and Forest Service plans are implemented in their current form, ATVers will still not be able to take ‘day rides’ as snowmobilers can do now.

ACMU has spoken out in favor of opening Cook County roads to ATVs, since these machines are just another vehicle on the road. ACMU is also gathering information on the connections that ATVers need that are not included on the DNR and/or USFS proposals. ACMU will be presenting that information to the DNR and Forest Service.

CWCS and ACMU encourage ATVers and their friends and neighbors to also submit comments supporting a comprehensive ATV plan for Cook and Lake Counties.
South Fowl hearing in District Court

(Continued from Page One)

two lakes were mistakenly listed in the Act, and that North and South Fowl Lakes should have been stricken from the legislation.

The Department of Justice attorney Pat Cangemi commended Gunflint District Ranger Dennis Neitzke for being a true guardian of the forest with his extensive, personal, hands-on environmental assessment of the proposed snowmobile trail re-route in regard to user impact and to Canadian Lynx habitat.

Oberstar argued the proposed trail re-route area and North and South Fowl Lakes are not within the Boundary Waters. He also argued that the 10hp motor limit shouldn’t have been implemented, as the Wilderness Acts do not mandate the regulation of lands and waters not within the wilderness.

CWCS, Cook County and the Arrowhead Coalition for Multiple Use hope Judge Tunheim will use common sense in interpreting the plain language of the 1978 BWCA Wilderness Act in making his decision and allow the proposed snowmobile re-route; affirm that North and South Fowl Lakes are not wilderness lakes; that they do not require motorboat quotas or banning of snowmobile use; and remove the 10hp restriction that has been wrongfully enforced on North and South Fowl Lakes.

Second hearing held on South Fowl issues

Another hearing was held in U.S. District Court in Mpls. MN January 19, 2007 to hear further arguments in the lawsuit regarding a snowmobile trail reroute in the Hovland area. The lawsuit has become as much about Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) boundaries as it is about the proposed construction of a snowmobile trail.

The major point of contention in the lawsuit is the apparent contradiction between the legislative record regarding creation of the wilderness boundaries and what was ultimately published in the U.S. Federal Register. Also being contested by the Izaak Walton League, Wilderness Watch, Sierra Club North Star Chapter, and Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, is the validity of a map of the wilderness boundaries produced by the U.S. Forest Service at its first appearance in court on December 21, 2006.

Kristen M. Gast of Faegre & Benson, attorney for those groups, wrote to Judge John R. Tunheim, submitting a challenge to the large format map produced in court “is not the map that Congress considered when it designated the Boundary Waters Wilderness, nor is it the map Congress referred to in Section 3 of the BWCAW Act.”

Gast produced a copy of the map pictured on page 255 of the legislative history, stating that the map, when viewed up close, includes the South and North Fowl Lakes within the black wilderness boundary line, on the eastern edge of the wilderness area. Gast said this map was attached to a senate report, the last iteration in the legislative history of the boundary map that was before Congress prior to the passage of the BWCAW Act. Gast also stated that the legislative history contains 25 references to North and South Fowl Lakes as wilderness lakes.

Patricia Cangemi, of the U.S. Department of Justice, representing the US Forest Service, responded by stating “Plaintiffs’ attempts to throw into doubt the boundary issue do not change the fact that the official map and boundary was prepared and filed over 27 years ago and filed in the Federal Register.”

Cangemi produced a declaration from Barbara A. Soderberg, who was employed by the U.S. Forest Service when the original map was made available for public comment, was published in the Federal Register, and was filed with Congress. Soderberg said the map presented to the court on December 21, 2006 is the one presented to the Forest Service following the BWCAW legislation, and that this map has been in her possession since late 1978 or early 1979. She said the map referred to by Gast was not referenced by the Act or provided to the Forest Service for use in preparation of the Official Map and Boundary Description.

Cangemi said, “This illustrates the problem with many “other” maps and why the legal maps are so important, not only now, 27 years after, but also in 1978 when they were put together with opportunity for viewing and public comment. This is part of the process of filing them with Congress and then printing in the Federal Register. Relying on any other map that has not followed the very same process of formal filing is inappropriate and illegal in terms of the 1978 Act.”

David Oberstar, of Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith & Frederick, represents Cook County as well as the Arrowhead Coalition for Multiple Use and Conservationists with Common Sense, who are intervening on behalf of the Forest Service on this lawsuit. Oberstar also responded to the claim that the large map presented in court does not accurately represent the boundaries of the BWCAW. Oberstar said the argument ignores two points. “First, the map referenced by plaintiffs is only 8-inches in size and lacks sufficient detail to be able to discern the boundary near North and South Fowl Lake.”

Oberstar secondly referred to the contentious history of the Boundary Waters. He said if error had been made in 1978, the parties involved in the negotiations would have immediately noticed a mistake. “Plaintiffs’ arguments with respect to this issue are simply not supported by logic,” wrote Oberstar.

Judge Tunheim is reviewing the latest round of arguments and a written order will eventually be issued by the court.

MPCA

(Continued from Page 10)

Top concerns for air were backyard burn barrels; outdoor wood burning furnaces in town and air pollution from elsewhere in the world. This last issue needs action to regulate companies building in China and Asia where no pollution restrictions and regulations are enforced, yet the pollution impact is worldwide.

On land issues, top concerns were disposal of electronic devices, recycling to reduce waste and development projects, both private and commercial.

There was an overall concern for assuring that our air and water remain as pure as it is, and enforcement of present regulations was also stressed.

Other topics discussed were litter and dumping, timber and mining projects, mercury levels in fish, global warming, the need to embrace new technology, and balancing economic development with environmental concerns. Noise pollution was also discussed, especially the after market installations on vehicles. Laws on these must be enforced.

The MPCA will compile all information gathered from the six communities. A report will be made available to the public at a later date with follow up meetings to discuss issues further.
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