

CWCS

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

Conservationists
with Common Sense



FALL 2007 NEWSLETTER

CWCS • P.O. BOX 1046 • VIRGINIA, MN 55792-1046 • www.cwcs.org

CWCS mission statement: To educate the public in order to preserve reasonable access to and sensible, multiple-use recreation of public lands and waters (**including motorized uses**) in Northeastern Minnesota, especially the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW), with care for the environment.

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 Minneapolis Star-Tribune

Another decision on South Fowl

by Rhonda Silence

United States District Judge John R. Tunheim issued a second opinion on September 28 regarding a proposed 2.2 mile snowmobile trail intended to connect McFarland and South Fowl lakes in Hovland. Judge Tunheim denied and granted claims and counter-claims brought by both the plaintiffs and defendants and sent the US Forest Service back for further study of how the sound of snowmobiles on the trail would affect the adjacent Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

Counts I and II brought forward by the plaintiffs, the Isaac Walton League of America, Wilderness Watch, Sierra Club Northstar Chapter and Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness alleged that the North and South Fowl Lakes are wilderness lakes and for that reason, snowmobiles and motor boats should be banned from use. Tunheim reiterated his earlier decision, issued August 31, 2007 which upheld the US Forest Service’s assertion that the Fowl Lakes are not included within the BWCAW boundaries. Tunheim denied counts I and II.

Neither the plaintiffs or the defendant, the US Forest Service, joined by interveners Cook County, Conservationists with Common Sense, and Arrowhead Coalition for Multiple Use, received satisfaction on Count III, which was denied “without prejudice.” The plaintiffs argued that the South Fowl Trail will project the sights and sounds of snowmobiles into the BWCAW, a violation of Section 4 of the Wilderness Act, which requires the USFS to preserve the wilderness character of the area. The defendants contend that there is no violation of the Wilderness Act because the proposed snowmobile trail is outside of the BWCAW.

Tunheim referred to a case regarding

helicopter use near a wilderness in Wyoming, which resulted in a court decision that “abides no diminishment” of opportunities for solitude. However, Judge Tunheim wrote that another court decision, in Arkansas states ‘that Congress does not intend that designation of protective perimeters or buffer zones around each wilderness area.’ Tunheim finally stated “the court holds that an agency’s duty to preserve the wilderness character under Section 4 of the Wilderness Act may apply to agency activity that occurs outside of the boundaries of the wilderness area.”

Tunheim went on to explain that in his opinion not all agency activity has an impact on a designated area’s ‘wilderness character.’ He wrote, “Thus, the key question in determining whether agency action violates Section 4(b) is whether the action degrades the wilderness character of a designated wilderness area. He said to answer this question, the court must look at various factors, such as the nature of the activity, the existing character of the wilderness area, and if recreational use is already evident.

“In other words,” wrote Tunheim, “where the agency activity does not increase or exacerbate the existing sound impact on the wilderness area such activity would not degrade the wilderness character of the area. On the other hand, agency activity that results in noise that is louder, more constant, more frequent, or of a different quality, is more likely to degrade the wilderness character from its present condition.”

Tunheim said the court needed more data on this and asked that the Forest Service conduct an environmental impact statement assessing the impact of sound on the wilderness.

US Forest Service Gunflint Ranger

Dennis Neitzke said the Forest Service was exploring options on just how this EIS could be done. “Obviously we just received the decision,” he said in a phone interview. “So we haven’t gone too far down the road. We’re looking at some options, at what has been done in other areas. The Forest Service did a sound analysis on the Echo Trail project between Ely and Cook. We’ve contacted some folks at universities to see how it can be done.”

Regardless of how it is done, the judge’s request delays construction of the trail for at least another season. Neitzke said the Forest Service must publish a notice of intent to conduct the environmental impact statement in the Federal Register. There will then be a scoping period in which public input will be gathered before the environmental study is done. After the analysis a draft EIS document will be prepared and public comments accepted again. “The Federal Register requirements add six months alone,” said Neitzke.

Count IV alleges that the construction of the South Fowl trail violates the National Forest Management Act because it adds 2.2 miles of new trail and thus harms the Canada lynx. The lynx has a competitive advantage over other wildlife in heavy snow-except when there is an overage of compacted trails. The Judge denied the count because he agreed that the Forest Service had conducted enough environmental assessment and because there is “no net gain.” He said with the loss of the former 2.2 mile, the amount of trail ends up being the same.

Count V introduced three arguments by the plaintiffs that the USFS had violated the requirement for an Environmental Impact

(Continued on Page Two)

South Fowl hearing in District Court

(Continued from Page One)

Statement. Judge Tunheim found that the USFS had conducted a thorough enough study on the impact on sensitive species and cumulative effects of the trail. However, Judge Tunheim agreed with the plaintiffs that the USFS needed to conduct further

study on the impact of noise from the trail on the BWCAW. Tunheim ordered the Forest Service to “promptly prepare an EIS to evaluate more thoroughly the sound impact in the BWCAW, and to suspend further activity on the South Fowl trail pending completion of the study.

Finally, the ‘Property Clause’ intro-

duced by interveners, CWCS and ACMU, to remove the motorboat limitations on the Fowl Lakes, was denied. CWCS and ACMU argued that since the Fowl Lakes were outside the BWCA boundaries, Congress did not have the authority to enact a motorboat size restriction. Tunheim disagreed.

DNR hires biologist to coordinate state’s wolf management plan

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has hired a veteran wildlife biologist from Arizona to coordinate the state’s wolf management plan.

Daniel Stark, who worked on the Mexican gray wolf recovery project in Arizona, will oversee the ongoing transition of wolf management from the federal government to the Minnesota DNR.

He spent the past five years as a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wolf biolo-



gist in Arizona. Prior to that he served as a general wolf biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in New Mexico.

“Dan will bring additional depth to our agency as we implement our state’s wolf management plan,” said Michael DonCarlos, DNR wildlife research manager. “He has extensive field, policy and research experience following seven years of

working on wolf recovery projects.”

Stark, a Minnesota native, earned his wildlife management degree from St. Cloud State University and is completing his master’s in wildlife conservation management at the University of Arizona.

Minnesota has been prepared to assume wolf management responsibility since 2001, when it completed its wolf recovery plan. The federal government returned wolf management to the state in March.

BWCAW permit fees will jump 60 percent

Beginning in 2008, permit fees for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness will see a major increase.

The new rates are listed with the old rates in parenthesis:

Adult per trip fee: \$16 (\$10)

Youth per trip fee: \$8 (\$5)

Adult Seasonal Fee Card: \$64 (\$40)

Youth Seasonal Fee Card: \$32 (\$20)

The fee increase was approved by the Regional Forester, acting upon the recommendation of the Eastern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee.

This is the first increase in the BWCAW user fees in the 10 years since fees were put into effect.

The basis for the increase is an adjustment for inflation (using the Consumer Price index) over the past 10 years with forward projections over the next five to 10 years.

User fees generated through this program come directly back to the Forest and help to fund the wilderness management program, including staffing with wilderness rangers, funding campsite and portage maintenance, permit issuance, and wilderness education programs.

The Forest Service also announced that dates for the lottery for 2008 BWCAW permits will begin on December 1, 2007.

This is a change from previous years when the lottery began in November.

The lottery allows people who know their desired entry date and location well in advance, to apply for permits.

The national campsite reservation website (www.reserveamerica.org) will be closed from Sept. 29 until 9 a.m. on Oct. 17.

During this time, the system is being re-designed and expanded and will be re-launched as www.rec.gov

The BWCAW reservation system will be incorporated into and accessed through this new system which also offers reservations for developed campgrounds on national forests.

Earlier this year, the Superior National Forest submitted a proposal to the Eastern Region Recreation Resource Advisory Committee (RRAC) to increase overnight user fees for the BWCAW.

The role of the RRAC is to provide recommendations on user fees to Forest Service (and BLM) officials.

Each RRAC is comprised of 11 volunteer members of the public, representing recreation users, special interest groups, and government officials (Indian tribes, state tourism, and local).

The Recreation Enhancement Act was signed into law in December, 2005.

The law allows federal agencies to charge modest fees at federal campgrounds, rental cabins and other federal recreation areas (such as the BWCAW).

Fees collected are retained at the forest and are used help manage the program or facility that generated the funds (in this case, the BWCAW).

The new program replaces the 1996 Recreation Fee Demonstration Act and Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) authority.

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 Boundary Waters experience!

Message from the President

Northern Minnesota has had a summer that could pretty much be described as good and bad.

The good was the unseasonable warm weather that made fishing and camping very enjoyable for most of the summer. Also good, was the news that a partial ruling in the South Fowl lawsuit determined that North and South Fowl Lakes are not within the Boundary Waters. The Izaak Walton League, Sierra Club and other preservation groups had hoped to have more restrictions placed on these two lakes near Hovland, Minnesota; such as a snowmobile ban and motor boat quotas. This isn't going to happen, which is very good news.

The bad was the extreme drought all across northern Minnesota that led to the Ham Lake fire which burned over 75,000 acres along the Gunflint Trail. With such dry conditions throughout the Superior National Forest, a complete fire ban implemented.

Heavy rains finally came in mid August and prevented more fires during the most heavily visited time for the Boundary Waters. This was very good, but these heavy rains were also part of the bad, with widespread flooding and fast rising rivers and lakes. These heavy rains have continued into October.

On one of the rare rainy days in July, I took advantage of an invitation to visit

the Franconia Minerals drilling operations on Birch Lake. Ernest Lehmann took several people by boat to the drilling barge near Bob Bay for a very informative tour. What a difference thirty years can make in the plans for mining copper and nickel. In the 1970s, INCO had plans to mine for copper and nickel in relatively the same area. It is good to know there is far cleaner and safer technology to conduct this type of mining now.

As several mining projects for north-eastern Minnesota move forward, CWCS did send a letter in support of the Kawishiwi Mineral Exploration. CWCS stands by its mission statement to carefully balance the need for economic development with great care for our environment. It's a tough balancing act, but it's important to the overall health of our communities.

The jobs that could be created by these proposed projects are crucial to helping our area economy, at a time when the local communities need this type of boost. These would be good paying jobs with starting wages at \$15/hour, with the potential to make as much as \$40,000 to \$80,000 per year with overtime. On top of that you add full benefits and paid vacations. If the proper environmental protections can be assured, it appears that these industries will be moving forward.

Another project that CWCS took part in was the Bio Mass Energy educa-

tional event in Chisholm. This project was the outcome of the community involvement meetings with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) held across the Iron Range. Bio Mass Energy seems very much a part of our energy future.

As we go into the fall and winter, CWCS is still waiting to have the Chain of Lake permit quotas resolved. We have had some recent news of some progress towards a solution by the US Forest Service. Even so, we are disappointed that a court ruling that directed that the system be corrected would take this long to be acted upon.

As always, CWCS appreciates your support and welcomes your input on various land and water issues.

Nancy McReady
CWCS President



Barb Klun takes notice of the precautions Franconia uses to protect the waters of Birch Lake



Franconia Minerals drilling barge on Birch Lake near Babbitt. The company is looking for copper, nickel, platinum and palladium.

Another lawsuit filed against USFS

The Sierra Club, Friends of the Boundary Waters, Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, and the Wilderness Society filed a lawsuit to block the Forest Service's Echo Trail Management Plan.

These preservation groups will then complain that the Forest Service doesn't have enough money allocated for Boundary Waters management and law enforcement, when they are the reason the Forest Service's budgeted resources are eaten up in court costs.

The concern of the timber sale to these preservation groups is the impact on the Boundary Waters and 'preserving wilderness character'.

There are four qualities of wilderness character that the Forest Service has management responsibility for: "untrammelled," "natural," "undeveloped," and "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation."

These qualities are the guidelines used in the NEPA process concerning

designated wilderness areas. Section 4(b) of the 1964 Wilderness Act charges the Forest Service with preserving wilderness character of the wilderness area. Nowhere does the language mention anything about timber management 'outside' a wilderness boundary.

CWCS agrees with much of the Plan, but some of our concerns include: taking into consideration soil conditions and the request to have more flexibility in allowing summer access to higher ground cuttings; consideration of harvesting some white and red pine that may be susceptible to blowdown; providing timber to satisfy the needs of our economy; conducting clearcuts with younger reserves that are more apt to stand beyond the first winter after the cutting; and prevention of wildfires.

In our comments to the USFS, CWCS stated that management that deals with sustaining a healthy forest was the foundation of the creation of the Forest Service. The Echo Trail Management Plan has kept the overall health of the

forest in mind, and it will not impact the Boundary Waters' wilderness character as these preservation groups claim.

CWCS also mentioned that Ely and Crane Lake snowmobile clubs have been attempting to continue the plan of an Echo Trail Corridor Snowmobile Trail that the late Senator Paul Wellstone proposed during the 1996 Field Hearings in International Falls.

Although trails are not a part of this management plan, CWCS feels that some of the proposed decommissioned roads should be taken into consideration to meet the public's need for ATV and forest access trails. These roads are a source of recreation for many forest visitors and provide access for many things, from hunting to berry picking.

CWCS hopes that recreational groups will be able to work with the Forest Service to make the proposed Wellstone/Tamarack Snowmobile Trail from Ely to Buyck a reality, as well as providing other access trails.

Forest Service notices for public input

An interesting editorial ran in the Ely Echo recently regarding the Forest Service's notice asking for public comment to clean up 65 acres of blowdown after a September 6 wind storm that started near Tower and headed east and south, with straight line winds that leveled trees along the way from Bear Island Lake to Highway 1.

CWCS received this same notice from the Forest Service as well as several others. They were for the East and West Zones Motorized Travel Management, the Kawishiwi Mineral Exploration and salvage timber harvest of the Ham Lake Fire, to name just a few. Do they all really deem such scrutiny from the public, in order for the Forest Service to do the job they are educated and trained in doing?

The editorial upheld the laws that require the Forest Service to ask the public for input and then using the public opinions gathered to determine how the Forest Service will do their jobs. CWCS agrees with this, but CWCS also agrees that at times the National Environmental Policy Act crosses the common sense line.

From the Forest Service's website:

"CARING FOR THE LAND AND SERVING PEOPLE," captures the Forest Service Mission. As set forth in law, the mission is to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people.

The first item listed to achieve this is: Advocating a conservation ethic in promoting the health, productivity, diversity, and beauty of forests and associated lands. The second item listed is: Listening to people and responding to their diverse needs in making decisions.

When it comes to providing a healthy, safe forest, especially after a catastrophic event such as a wildfire or straight line winds, is it really necessary to garner public comments to clean up the area and protect other adjoining lands from possible future wildfire or insect infestation?

Getting public input on the motorized travel management aids the Forest Service in providing multiple use of our

national forest. Asking for public input on the various mining projects is also of great benefit to the Forest Service in making its decisions. But, why request public comment to clean up after a wind storm or wildfire? Is this really necessary?

More than likely, preservation groups will send in their comments, and as to the wind storm clean up and the salvage timber harvest of the Ham Lake Fire, they will probably say that both actions will result in below cost timber sales. Never mind that the Forest Service is just trying to do their job – providing us with a healthy forest and protecting adjoining public and private lands.



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.

Ham Lake Fire recovery begins

by Rhonda Silence

After weeks of being away from their homes and neighborhoods because of the Ham Lake wildfire, Gunflint Trail residents were able to go home on Tuesday, May 22, 2007. Some homeowners had visited their property to see how their homes had fared from the devastating fire that burned 75,851 acres in the United States and Canada. The stress was lightened somewhat by the gathering of friends and neighbors at a

ceremonial ribbon cutting to "reopen" the end of the Gunflint Trail, which had been under an evacuation order since the fire started on May 5. Approximately 75 people gathered to watch Leanne Adams of the Seagull-Sag Home Owners Association and Shari Baker of the Gunflint Trail Association cut a bright orange ribbon. Gunflint Trail residents and supporters planted the first of what will be many new trees.

All of Cook County, and far beyond was glad to learn that the Ham Lake Fire was officially declared "contained" on the United States side of the international border on Sunday, May 20.

Even after containment on the U.S. side, fire crews continued to monitor by air. Removal of suppression materials-pumps and hoses no longer needed for structure protection-also continued for several days, as did patrol of containment lines. Mop-up of areas within half mile of all structures also continued.

The fire has been contained but recovery is just beginning. The ceremonial tree planting was a good start, followed by a broader community effort sponsored by the Gunflint Trail Scenic Byways Committee during Memorial Day weekend.

Ted Young said the Gunflint Trail has been overwhelmed with requests to contrib-

ute to the renewal of the forest after the Ham Lake Fire. "We can only hope that the USFS and DNR will follow with some action to reforest the thousands of acres of their land that was burnt," he added.

The devastation from a careless camper has affected so many people and their way of life on the Gunflint Trail. Some friends of CWCS lost their

cabin and our hearts go out to them and all the many others who lost their homes and cabins.

As property owners address the need to eliminate fuel loads on their property by thinning and cutting on their property as recommended by the US Forest Service, we believe it is time that the US Forest Service follows their own advice. Although logging all areas is not reasonable, it should be a much more used management tool. We would hope that extreme groups that try to stop all attempts at allowing this tool would come to the realization that they are perhaps hurting the forest in the long run as

well as severely depleting the budget of the US Forest Service. The US Forest Service should be allowed to act on responsible forest management practices.

The Friends and Sierra Club keep saying the buffer zone shouldn't be logged. There is no buffer zone to the Boundary

Property owners need to create defensible space

The Forest Service has a concern about potential fires in various areas of Lake County, with the Sunset Road a top priority because this area has only one entrance/exit. Much forest land is not accessible other than by lake and a fire would burn right to the road.

The national Firewise Communities program is a multi-agency effort designed to reach beyond the fire service by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others in the effort to protect people, property and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire - before a fire starts.

The Firewise Program suggests a thirty foot defensible space around homes and buildings in rural areas. This includes adequate mowing of grass, thinning and trimming of trees, having at least a 12-foot driveway and turn around for a fire truck, and having non-flammable roofing.



Leanne Adams of the Seagull-Sag Homeowners Association plants the first tree in the replanting effort after the 2007 Ham Lake Fire

Waters. They refuse to acknowledge that the Forest Service's mission is to provide a healthy forest. Logging some of the areas does that. The use of prescribed fire is another tool. We need both.

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Decision delayed on National Scenic Hiking trail

by Rhonda Silence

Gayle Coyer, Executive Director of the Superior Hiking Trail Association, appeared before the Cook County board seeking a resolution endorsing Congressional designation of the Superior Hiking Trail (SHT), the Border Route Trail, and the Kekekabic Trail as the 'Arrowhead Reroute' of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) (NCNST). Commissioners expressed support of hiking trails in Cook County, however, the board asked for further information on just what this national designation would mean to adjacent property owners and other forest users.

Coyer provided a sample resolution which explained that the NCNST was authorized by Congress in 1980 and extends from Crown Point in New York to Lake Sakakawea in North Dakota, a distance of over 4,600 miles. Coyer said the original route of the NCNST was in central Minnesota, but that route had not been developed because of the swamplands. Coyer said planners have instead developed the Arrowhead Reroute, a proposal supported by Congressman James Oberstar. Coyer said Congressman Oberstar is willing to introduce legislation to make the Arrowhead Reroute official, but he would first like a motion of support from the counties and towns along the route.

Commissioner Bruce Martinson said he had heard one citizen concern about the NCNST designation - whether the desig-

nation would affect the Forest Service's proposed South Fowl Snowmobile Trail Access which is currently being challenged in court. "Will someone come up with a need for a buffer for this trail?" he asked, noting South Fowl Lake's proximity to the Border Route Trail.

Coyer said there are no buffer zones associated with the trail. Commissioner Bob Fenwick said he would prefer to have more information on the designation, expressing concern about implementing the designation while the Forest Service is working on its motorized travel plan for the Superior National Forest.

Coyer said the county board supported the NCNST in 2004 and asked what had changed. Fenwick said nothing had changed. He said the county recognized the value of hiking trails and supported them.

However, he added, "Every time something gets designated on a federal level, it does impact us - how it is managed, and how it is talked about."

Coyer said there are 61 miles of NCNST in place in the Chippewa National Forest. "That's been in place since the 90s," she said. "I don't think it has affected anything."

Commissioner Jim Johnson asked if the designation would have a positive impact. "Will there be funding for signs and enhancements, like there is for the Scenic Byway? That would be a positive."

"I don't see any additional pots of money,"

said Coyer. She said the existing trails are already eligible for funding, reminding commissioners that Cook County has served as the fiscal agent for trail grants. She added, "I think it would be great to have another national trail as part of our wonderful northern region."

Martinson noted that the SHT is already a national trail. "What's the difference?"

Coyer said the SHT is a national recreation trail. The NCNST is a national scenic trail. Martinson repeated, "What's the difference?"

Coyer was unsure and turned to US Forest Service Gunflint District Ranger Dennis Neitzke. Neitzke, at the board meeting to provide a fire danger update, said he hadn't come prepared to talk about trails, and he was also unsure.

Commissioner Jim Johnson said that the board's concerns are not so much codified law, but with perception, for example, he asked, "What if a motorized trail crossed the scenic trail?"

Coyer said that should not be a problem. "We share the trail in Silver Bay. The only time we have a problem is when ATVs encroach on the hiking trail. We've coexisted with the ATV trail in Silver Bay. We've worked together for 20 years."

The board reiterated that it supports hiking trails in Cook County, but asked Coyer to return with information clarifying the different trail designations.

CWCS concerns on National Scenic Hiking trail

Looking at the maps at: www.northcountrytrail.org/maps.htm very little, or less than 50%, of this North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) is actually on the ground from the East Coast to North Dakota. Much of this trail is still in the planning stage. CWCS has several concerns about this trail.

Three existing trails are needed to complete the trail. Is one the North Shore Hiking Trail, which is part of the North Shore Snowmobile Trail? The ATV club in Grand Marais is trying to get a portion or all of the North Shore Snowmobile Trail designated for ATV use. If the North Shore Hiking trail is part of this national trail system, this may be where the opposition to ATV use on the snowmobile trail is coming from.

Although parts of the trail, such as the Kekekabic Trail through the Boundary Waters, should not be a problem, there should be some deep thought put into any implications this national trail would have on existing and proposed motorized routes. Without assur-

ances that these trails wouldn't be threatened by this proposal, we don't believe this would be a good move.

Another issue would be the federal tax dollars that may or may not be included in the language that would amend the authorization and complete the trail. What amount of money is being proposed for appropriation? Funding for close to 3000 miles of trail for hikers seems to be quite an investment.

Have all the EISs been completed? People tend to think that just because a trail is used by non-motorized means there is no impact. This is not true. Some of the trails and portages in and outside of the Boundary Waters show extreme visible signs of impact... from the hard packed trail no longer allowing vegetation to erosion problems.

Another question... how will this 4400 mile trail be maintained? More tax dollars? Most hiking club members don't pay fees to use trails. This is the same for many bike and ski trails. The users want the trails, but very

few pay toward getting them constructed or maintaining them. This seems to fall onto all tax payers for the recreational use of a few. Some clubs do have trail cleanup days with volunteers, but there is very little monetary investment by the users of these trails.

What kind of return will this completed trail (when the trail is actually on the ground and not just in the planning stage) have on the economies of the areas it passes through? Will it be worth the investment at this time of tight federal budgets? Will eminent domain have a play in takings for any reroutes? Also have all of the EISs been completed and at what cost to the taxpayer?

These questions need to be addressed before proceeding with this proposal.

The Ely Chamber is supportive of the concept of the trail, but with the understanding that they need more information and that they have a concern that there would be no impacts on any other uses that are in place or that are proposed.

The future of Biomass Energy

In February of 2007, the MPCA began a regional pilot project in Northeastern Minnesota which included six meetings to discover environmental issues/topics which were of interest to regional community members. These meetings took place in Duluth, Grand Maris, Grand Rapids, Virginia, International Falls, and Ely and were attended by nearly 200 people.

Each meeting provided opportunity for citizens to inform the MPCA regarding environmental topics/issues which were of importance to them as community members, and ranked their priorities. In addition, the agency asked citizens who were interested to volunteer to work with the agency to provide an educational/information event in the region in the next 6 months.

Over 500 environmental topics/issues were identified and discussed at our initial 6 meetings and 35 people stepped forward to offer assistance in the planning and execution of the educational/information event.

After three meetings with volunteers, it was determined that these three topics emerged as the top candidates to focus upon for the planned fall 2007 event: water quality, biofuels, and solid waste. About a dozen participants made the decision to continue with the process to review the rankings and select the topic for the planned event. After

careful consideration and discussion it was determined that biofuels would be the topic for the Northeastern Minnesota Community Involvement Project event.

On September 12, over 65 people attended the Bio Mass Energy educational event in Chisholm, including Brad More, MPCA Commissioner. Ten local and statewide experts shared the outlook, current and expected technologies, upsides and possible downsides of biofuels.

Biomass energy is the process of converting organics (plants, trees, wastes and other by-products) into fuel. There were three sessions dealing with "The Outlook for Biomass," "Environmental Impacts" and "Current and Emerging Technologies." Everyone left with a much-better understanding of this huge topic.

Feedback on the event was gathered at an October luncheon with the volunteers involved in putting the biofuels event together. The overall comments were that the presentations by the various speakers were very balanced with representation from industry as well as the environmental communities.

The MPCA's Communication Council, which sponsored a similar process in northwestern Minnesota, is reviewing the results. They will determine how the agency

will use the collected information, and what steps staff and managers will take from this point forward.



Advice from a Moose...

Think big
Spend time in the woods
Eat plenty of greens
Hold your head up high
Stay on track
Keep your nose clean
It's OK to be a little wild!

Raffle winners announced



Winner of the boat, motor & trailer was a very happy Tony Matkai from Stacy, MN; winner of the 2-night stay at Devil Track Resort was Dan Marks from Duluth, MN; and winner of the trolling motor was Todd Armbruster from Ely, MN. Gary Jones from Minneapolis, MN was the winner of the Early Bird Prize of His & Hers fishing rods for sending in his CWCS membership before July 1.



Advice from a Bear...

Live large
Climb beyond your limitations
Gather the sweetness of life
Live with the seasons
Make a good impression
Get plenty of rest
Look after your honey.



The American bald eagle, once nearly extinct, has made a remarkable comeback. The U.S. government took the nation's symbol off the federal list of protected species in June. Bald eagle numbers in the continental United States have risen from 417 nesting pairs in 1963 to nearly 10,000 today.



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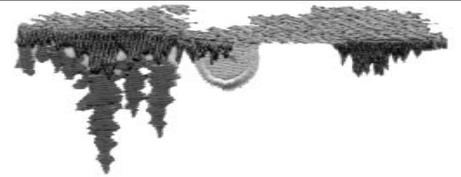
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Over 6,000 acres in Lake County set aside for forestry, recreation, wildlife

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 ma

EARLY BIRD DRAWING:

Membership dues received by June 1st will be entered into a drawing for 'His and Hers Fishing Rods.' Donated by Skube's Bait and Tackle in Ely. All new and renewing members will be entered in the drawing.

Please check your mailing label!

If you have paid your membership, there will be a PD 2007 amount above your name.

If you have not paid your membership, the top line will be blank. See examples:

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