

School Trust Land Exchange Education For Comment By Oct. 10, 2017: Nancy McReady, President: Conservationists With Common Sense

 WE SUPPORT MINNESOTA MINING · MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2017

Pay attention folks! It is very important you comment on this issue!

Submit comments by October 10, 2017 to: comments-eastern-superior@fs.fed.us

Below is the latest misinformation from the Friends of the Boundary Waters on the School Trust Lands exchange in the Boundary Waters.

The Friends of the Boundary Waters words are in italics and not in bold print.

The CWCS reply is in bold print.

A proposed land exchange between the State of Minnesota and the U.S. Forest Service would shrink the Superior National Forest by 47 square miles.

The Superior National Forest is not going to shrink. The land will still be within the Superior National Forest, only it would be managed by the State of Minnesota.

The State of Minnesota owns 86,000 acres of land within the BWCAW that is managed by the Forest Service as wilderness.

The Forest Service has not been managing these lands. These are School Trust Lands in the Boundary Waters that are to be exchanged for equal value Federal lands outside of the Boundary Waters. According to the 1964 Wilderness Act:

STATE AND PRIVATE LANDS WITHIN WILDERNESS AREAS

SECTION 5. (a) In any case where State-owned or privately owned land is completely surrounded by national forest lands within areas designated by this Act as wilderness, ... such State-owned land or privately owned land shall be exchanged for federally owned land in the same State of approximately equal value.

Nationally, there are 45 million acres of School Trust Lands granted in State Enabling Acts for a single, explicitly stated purpose - to support public schools. Because of the wilderness status of the Boundary Waters, these School Trust Lands have not been able to generate any revenue for Minnesota schools for over fifty years and there has been no compensation to the State of Minnesota from the Federal government.

Last week, the Forest Service released a draft plan that would give the State of Minnesota 30,000 acres of Forest Service land outside of the Boundary Waters in exchange for making some of the state land within the wilderness area federal.

HERE ARE THE PROBLEMS:

*An exchange of this size is a **massive loss of land** in the Superior National Forest. More importantly, this exchange puts an additional 56,000 acres of land at risk of being exchanged in the future.*

The Forest Service says there will be no net loss of national forest lands within the Superior National Forest boundary as a result of the proposed land exchange. The exchange will result in an increase of federal acres inside the BWCAW and a decrease in federal acres outside the BWCAW. The only difference is the State will now be able to manage these School Trust Lands to generate revenue for Minnesota schools.

*Land that moves from federal to state control will be managed for maximum revenue generation from **logging, mining, or other development**. Right now, these lands are enjoyed and valued by the public for outdoor recreation and other sustainable uses.*

EXACTLY! Just as the state Enabling Act mandates! The Federal lands that will be exchange will continue to be enjoyed and valued by the public for outdoor recreation and other sustainable uses.

*The Minnesota Legislature approved a compromise plan to exchange 30,000 acres of state-owned land in the Boundary Waters while selling the remaining 56,000 acres to the federal government. This would limit the amount of land the Superior National Forest would lose, but the **Forest Service's current proposal does not include plans to purchase the remaining 56,000 acres.***

The Minnesota Legislature was wrong in approving any such compromise, as Federal law trumps state laws. In the 1964 Wilderness Act it states an exchange. There is no mention of purchase, and there has not been any money appropriated for any such purchase.

CONTACT THE FOREST SERVICE AND STATE LEGISLATORS

Tell them to follow the 1964 Wilderness Act. It is law and they have been ignoring this law for too long! We will accept the proposal of an exchange of 31,000 acres of School Trust Lands in the Boundary Waters for equal value of Federal lands outside of the Boundary Waters. NO PURCHASE! We will wait another fifty years if we have to for the remaining 56,000 acres to be exchanged.

Let them know an exchange of land is not acceptable unless it is accompanied by a land purchase.

Share the ways you value these lands right now and why they should not be managed solely for economic returns.

Again, these lands were granted in trust for the support of public education. The Constitutional Convention of 1857 discussed the handling of school lands, and it was determined that if the lands were sold, it must be at public auction. This was proposed in the 1990s, but no one wanted to see private entities owning land in the Boundary Waters.

Minnesota used to have more than 8 million acres of School Trust Lands. Today,

2.5 million acres remain; more than 92 percent are in 10 northern Minnesota counties. School Trust Lands in other parts of the state were auctioned or sold according to state laws to support Minnesota schools. BUT, where School Trust Lands were surrounded by designated wilderness with the passage of the 1964 Wilderness Act, the Act mandates that these state-owned lands be exchanged. There is no mention of purchase of these lands by our federal government.

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Nancy McReady

CWCS President

Conservationists with Common Sense

"Preserving multiple-use access to public lands & waters"

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We Support Minnesota Mining Be sure to comment that federal law trump's state laws.

Like · Reply · 1 · September 11 at 5:12pm · Edited



Barb Baier Fultz Thank you Nancy

Like · Reply · September 19 at 1:55pm



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