

September 16, 2024

Thomas Hall, Forest Supervisor
Superior National Forest
8901 Grand Avenue Place
Duluth, MN 55808

ATTN: School Trust, St. Louis County, and TCF Land Purchase Project

Dear Supervisor Hall,

These comments are being submitted on behalf of Save Lake Superior Association, Save Our Sky Blue Waters, and Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest. All three groups are based in northeast Minnesota.

The Save Lake Superior Association has been in existence since 1969, with the goal of protecting the waters and watersheds of Lake Superior. The watersheds of much of the Superior National Forest and northern Minnesota flow into Lake Superior.

Save Our Sky Blue Waters was founded to promote the protection and retention of the wetlands, waters, forests, and wildlife of northeast Minnesota. The area is the center of three major watersheds, flowing north, east, and south, and containing a variety of ecosystems.

Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest is dedicated to the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural resources of the Cloquet Valley State Forest in northeastern Minnesota. The lands, lakes, rivers, and streams of northern Minnesota which lay north of Duluth in the Cloquet Valley State Forest and in the Arrowhead are home to many people, plants, and animals, and serve the world in many ways. Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest works to promote the responsible enjoyment of this unique treasure.

Our groups support a sale of state lands within the designated Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. A land exchange between state and federal lands, rather than a sale, could potentially conflict with existing watershed protections for northern Minnesota. Much of the land of Superior National Forest was acquired under the Weeks Act for the purpose of such watershed protection.

A land sale would provide a secure deposit into the School Trust Land Fund. Such a sale could have taken place years earlier except for political controversy over land use. It is time to settle this issue for the greatest long term benefit to both the trust and the watershed protection purposes so wisely put in place over 100 years ago.

We support the land sale as the highest benefit to future generations and we encourage the sale of these lands while funds are available.

Our groups also support the federal purchase of the Conservation Fund (TCF) Lands outside the BWCAW for conservation purposes and environmental protections. We thereby support the proposed land purchase package. Please keep us informed of future steps in this proposal.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

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