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First name: Theresa
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Thank you for giving the public an opportunity to comment on and provide proposed changes to the Forest Plan Amendment of Management Direction for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. As an avid outdoors person who is also concerned about protecting the environment for future generations it is truly appreciated. I have been enjoying nature and the outdoors my entire life and have also passed on this love to my family members and many friends. Which is what has led our family to purchase a cabin at the end of the Gunflint Trail.

Our family and other local property owners have one huge obstacle that we would like to see resolved so others can enjoy the outdoors as much as we do. Even with a cabin on Gull Lake that connects directly to the BWCAW specifically through the waterway of Saganaga Lake that is considered a Semi-primitive Motorized MA that has motor access on part of the lake we are required to purchase a Day Use Motor Permit in order for us to enjoy Saganaga Lake. This has led us and other home and cabin owners to pre-purchase a number of Day Use Motor Permits when they become available in January even when we do not know specific dates that we will be able to use the permits over the course of the summer. The cost of the permits is not the issue, the issue is being required to have a Day Use Motor Permit every time we want to experience Saganaga which we have a direct waterway to. By pre-purchasing several permits for the entire summer (potentially not using the majority of them) we are taking away the opportunity for others to experience and enjoy the area. In addition, we are hurting the tourist industry for the outfitters in the area as we have purchased permits that potentially will not be used that would have been purchased by other paying customers utilizing their business and services for their outdoor experience. The true resolve for what is taking place with the local home and cabin owners purchasing a large number of the Day Use Motor Permits would be resolved by allowing these tax paying property owners the opportunity to get a Motor Exempt Permit as is described here in PL 95-495 ( Semi-primitive Motorized MA Through PL 95-495, lake home owners and their guests, and resort owners and their guests have day use access to the lake on which they reside; and their entry will not be counted in determining quotas for that lake) just like the property owners on the east side of the peninsula have. Several property owners on the east side of the peninsula along with many US Citizens that own property in Canada utilize the same outfitter on the west side of the peninsula to store and launch their boats and snowmobiles as many of us do that have property on the west side of the peninsula. Another interesting fact is that about half of the property owners on the west side of the peninsula have water access only property while none of the property owners on the east side have water access only property, they have a road to access their property. However, the east side property owners all have the ability to get a Motor Exempt Permit and utilize Saganaga Lake and the west side of the peninsula at free will as they have a Motor Exempt Permit however we are not afforded the ability to be on the east side of the peninsula or Saganaga Lake unless we have pre-purchased a Day Use Motor Permit. In addition, the entire area is a very close-knit community with family and friends located on both sides of the peninsula along with family and friends who have property on the Canadian side of the border. Everyone tries to help each other out with projects, host picnics and celebrations and have even worked together to put out a couple of fires. Understandably, the people that own property in Canada also have Motor Exempt Permits which allows them to go back and forth as need be. Again, the few property owners on the Gull Lake side of the peninsula (west side) are required to have a Day Use Motor Permit in order to go to Canada. If we want to spend the night at a family or friends cabin in Canada we need to have a Day Use Motor Permit to go there and a permit for the next day which has to have been activated the day before so we can come back to the US side and travel through Saganaga Lake. This virtually makes if impossible for us to enjoy the wilderness with our families and friends that have property in Canada.

I have attached a map showing the area that I am referring to when I state east side and west side of the peninsula. The east side is circled in yellow and the west side is circled in red. As you will be able to see, the change in the Motor Exempt Permits would be minimally impacted when they become available to the property

owners on the west side.  We are all on the same waterway and are governed by the same rules and regulations including fishing laws and regulations because of being on the same waterway. This is another reason why the property owners on the west side of the peninsula should be able to obtain a Motor Exempt permit. The End of the Trail Campground (located on the west side of the peninsula) also has a sign posted stating that it is the beginning of the Saganaga Lake which again confirms that it is all one connected waterway. Most importantly, we all want the best for our little community at the end of the trail which is the beginning of a glorious wilderness.

Again, I'm truly grateful for the opportunity to state and comment on changes for the BWCAW.  Especially related to the 1978 BWCAW Act that states (An Exempt Permit is use that is exempted from the quota system on specific lakes. In the BWCAW Act of 1978, an exemption to the quota was provided to homeowners and resort owners (and their overnight guests), for day use motor access to the lake on which they reside.