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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.

Local property owners have a huge obstacle that we would like to see resolved so others can enjoy the outdoors as much as we do. Cabin owners on Gull Lake which 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 are required to purchase a Day Use Motor Permit in order to enjoy Saganaga Lake. This has led to many home and cabin owners to pre-purchase a number of Day Use Motor Permits when they become available in January even when they 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 they want to experience Saganaga (only a couple of times a year for the majority of property owners) which is part of a direct waterway. By pre-purchasing several permits for the entire summer (potentially not using the majority of them) they are taking away the opportunity for others to experience and enjoy the area. In addition, these property owners are hurting the tourist industry for the outfitters in the area as they have purchased permits that will not be used that could have been purchased by paying customers utilizing local businesses and services for their outdoor experience. The other part of the issue is that if the property owners do not purchase a day use permit in January there are none available throughout the summer as they have been previously sold out. This limits the property owners and their guests the ability to enjoy the waters on which they reside. 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 should 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 (the attached map shows the area that is being referenced to when stating east side and west side of the peninsula. The east side is circled in yellow and the west side is circled in red) are able to get. 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 the property owners on the west side of the peninsula. Another 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 west side property owners are not afforded the ability to be on the east side of the peninsula or Saganaga Lake unless they have pre-purchased a Day Use Motor Permit. There are approximately twelve water access only property owners on Gull Lake with this same water access only issue. For these water access only properties to launch their boat and park a vehicle at the public access (Cook County public access) the way the current system is set up they technically need a day use motor permit to reach their property or have to illegally travel (without a day use motor permit) and go around the peninsula to access Gull Lake.

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 they want to spend the night at a family or friends cabin in Canada they are required to have a Day Use Motor Permit to go there and need another permit for the next day (which would need to have been activated the day before) so they can come back through Saganaga Lake to their property. This virtually makes it impossible for these property owners to enjoy the wilderness with families and friends that have property in Canada.

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. This area is all the same waterway and is governed by the same rules and regulations including fishing laws and regulations as a result of being the same waterway. Which is another reason why the property owners on the west side of the peninsula should be able to obtain a Motor Exempt permit. Trails End 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, everyone truly wants the best for our little community at the end of the trail which is the beginning of a glorious wilderness.

Again, we all are 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.