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Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Boundary Waters Wilderness is one of the most special places on Earth to me, and I'm excited for the opportunity to provide feedback on its management. In general, I believe the wilderness is being managed well and I will provide only broad feedback.

1) I support the reduction of available permits made several years ago, and would support a further small reduction across the wilderness, especially at high use entry points. While this limits access to the wilderness, I believe in some areas human use has become unsustainable for the local environment. I understand this will have some negative impacts on the economics of the wilderness. I wonder what mitigation strategies the Forestry Service might take to support the economy of the wilderness if further permit reductions take place? Could the Forestry Service support outfitters in some way by advertising lesser used entry points?

2) I would like to see increased presence in the wilderness by Forestry Service crews, especially in high use areas. In my many trips to the BWCA I've never encountered Forestry Service personnel in the wilderness. This of course doesn't mean I don't think they're ever out there, but I don't know of any official metrics for suggested Forestry Service presence in the wilderness and it didn't seem to be a part of the existing plan as far as I could tell. Perhaps a recommended number of two person Forestry Service crews per time per management area type? There must be a good way to quantify this and provide increased and targeted education and enforcement in high use areas.

3) I support any effort to keep the wilderness more wild. Examples include but are not limited to: no human-made structures in the wilderness unless absolutely necessary (e.g. boardwalks), fewer motors allowed and in fewer areas, no increases to party size or number of boats per permit, reduction of permits as needed to protect environment, etc.

4) It's not clear to me what jurisdiction the Forestry Service has over activities outside the BWCA, but I support any limit on mining exploration within the watershed of the BWCA.

5) The current guidelines on campsites seem correct to me. Finding a campsite can be challenging at times in high use areas, but I've never ran into a significant problem personally on this. There has always been a campsite somewhere to end up at, even if it's not my top choice location, even with young children in my group, or even if it requires an additional portage. I'm hesitant to recommend more campsites to mitigate this issue, I think the issue is better addressed through permit reductions to preserve the wilderness.

6) Towboats seem to be a contentious issue. My opinion on this is in line with my desire for a reduction of motor use period, but I will defer to forestry personnel with more experience on this than myself. I generally avoid areas that allow towboats because I view all motors in the wilderness as a nuisance, not an asset, but I understand their economic importance and the protection of motors in some areas in the original federal legislation.

Thanks for reading. Like you, I love this place and hope it is protected for many generations to come. The threats of climate change and mining are perhaps the most significant of all and I understand that both probably fall outside the purview of the Forestry Service guidelines being considered for amendment. I'm excited to hear about the ongoing process to manage the wilderness and look forward to learning more from others about their priorities for the wilderness.

Thank you.