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First name: Karen

Last name: Johnson

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

The United States Forest Service,

Thank you very much for opening up your new Management Plan for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota to the public.

My name is Karen Johnson from Columbia Heights, MN who is a concerned citizen for the BWCAW. I am glad to hear a new plan is on your agenda. 30 years is a long time before updating. This is going to be a tremendous job and I would like to share several of my thoughts, questions and concerns about the Boundary Waters.

1. Climate Change:

I know all the current eco systems of land, water, air, and all living things they support are going to change with the warming of the earth, but how can we try to save what we have and still introduce new species to thrive and keep this wilderness existing for natural co existence of people and nature as the transition occurs?

How do we keep the water eco system balanced and able to support all the tiny microbes and plants to the large fish, animals, and people that depend on those lakes and rivers? Science and research are going to have to be a large part of your new climate change plan.

Are we bringing in new tree species or trying to alter the growing habits of the one's we have? Maybe AI can give information to help that.

How do we balance and manage the soil so new and old plants can thrive? Then there are the critters themselves. Do we have a plan of action for all our animals? Climate change is HUGE for your plan

2.Recreational Usage:

Our current permitting system needs revision. There is a need to keep better track of where people are going, and revisit the numbers of people/ group and at camp sights, and how long people can stay in the boundary waters.

First time campers must be better educated on the use of campsites, plus paddling and portage etiquette. They must also have to be instructed in the knowledge of storms..Each group member might have to take a quiz about campsites, etiquette, and storms. Every group should have one person who is designated as the lead person who is responsible for the group, kind of like a designated driver. There should also be education in the management of all sized critters, how to handle fish guts, and how to clean the campsite.

Fees may have to be increased.

Portage signage and trails should be well maintained.(civilian groups could do that)

Rangers could be in certain areas to patrol campsites and portages, offer stories, education, and assistance, and make people feel just a little more safe.

Implementing new standards for logging and roads are up to local laws and environmental controls. Some of those old standards need a new modern eye.

3. Monitoring and Research:

Fires and storms are going to become big issues for your new plan. Do we use more smoke jumpers to fight behind lines, use more chemical retardants to help put them out, or set up pumping stations in places near lakes that are likely to have fires? Do we study the science and weather for using very precise prescribed burns? Do we use a civilian group to clear dead downs from previous fires so they won't just swallow up a new fire? Do we

have other civilian groups to replant trees in areas that need them? These probably require government funding, (good luck with that) or maybe some of our very fine environmental agencies and groups could possibly work together and all of them help to manage our Boundary Waters.

To help you get a true picture and feel for our land and water area, you could use our local historians in the town of Ely, MN, the MN DNR, local Native Americans, the MN Historical Society, U of M, and canoeists, woodsmen, and environmentalists who have camped and lived in the woods for almost ever. They know a lot.

Storms are going to be more often and stronger as time passes. Maybe some AI information might give some clues as to how to implement your new education and storm plan.

4. Minerals and Mining:

This is all government vs environmentalist! (never ending battle.) Legislators must see that the BWCAW is not the place for sulfide mining. Other types of sustaining jobs must replace sulfide mines. This is not your job. You are the USFS land STEWARDS in charge of implementing a new plan of management for our precious boundary waters. Mining Companies absolutely cannot prove their operations will not pollute. Every single one of them has polluted every area they have ever implemented a sulfide mine. Your plan will have to deal with the cold hard facts about mines and environmental impacts for you to make a new management plan. That is my biggest concern. Maybe AI can help you come to a decision. Good Luck on all counts with this one.

Thank you very much for taking time to read a concerned citizen's thoughts and questions about your new updated management plan for our BWCAW. It is going to be a challenging 2 years for you. Me too. I wish you well and hope your collective efforts produce a plan to manage our beautiful wilderness so that it thrives for many many more years to come.

Sincerely,

Karen Johnson, concerned citizen for the BWCAW. knjn@mac.com