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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I've never understood why the Forest Service essentially charges a flat fee to access the BWCAW, regardless of length of stay. This enables visitors to stay for long periods of time, essentially squatting on a campsite for an entire week or even longer. Doing so, especially close to an entry point, makes it difficult for others to find a campsite within a reasonable distance of the entry point.

The summer of '23 our party of 4 entered through Poplar Lake at 8am on a Wednesday in mid July. Admittedly this is high season and a popular entry point. We were unable to find a campsite until very late in the day because every site we went by was taken. The total number of taken sites was >10.

This is not the only time we have observed this issue. It is a regular occurrence.

I can think of multiple ways to alleviate this problem. These include, for your consideration:

- Increasing the amount of money required for the permit when the party stays for a longer period of time. Quetico, for example, charges a base fee per person plus a per day fee, per person. This makes a lot of sense from multiple perspectives. One thing it will do is increase the amount of money available for managing the BWCAW.
- Requiring campers to move every other day - no more than 2 nights at a particular site.
- Putting a time limit on the number of nights a party can stay in the BWCA.
- Increasing the number of campsites without increasing the number of entry permits.

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As a stand alone suggestion, I would like to reiterate the following from above: Increasing the amount of money required for the permit when the party stays for a longer period of time. Quetico, for example, charges a base fee per person plus a per day fee, per person. This makes a lot of sense from multiple perspectives. One thing it will do is increase the amount of money available for managing the BWCAW.

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Changing the fishing regulations would be a very good improvement. Eliminate barbed hooks, no live bait, and no lead weights. I'm not an expert on Quetico's fishing regulations, but I do know Quetico only allows barbless hooks and prohibits live bait. Not sure about lead weights but considering all the harm caused by lead, this seems to be a "no brainer".

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There are a number of campsites in the BWCAW that are badly overused and need to be taken out of use for however long it takes for them to regain their natural character. When I write overused, I am referring to soil that has become extremely compacted, so much so that nothing can grow, so it's a muddy mess when it rains. Plus it's, well, just plain ugly and does not give one the sense that one is in the wilderness. These flora at these sites has obviously been very negatively impacted. Limited or no undergrowth, no pine needles or moss where there ought to be some or a lot, cut off branches on trees, the list goes on.

Increasing the fees for visitors will provide the funds to hire and equip workers to create new campsites, and allow overused campsites to be taken out of commission.

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That's all I have, at least until I think of any other brilliant ideas ;-). In conclusion I want to thank everyone involved in this process. Your hard work, passion, and dedication are deeply appreciated by all of us who love and cherish the BWCAW.

Ed Davies

612.819.1196 (yes, you can call, though I'm sure you are too busy to do so)