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Comments: I appreciate this chance to comment! Please keep the communication channels open! Changes like the permit decrease and food order should be created after consultation with public.

Permits have been an increasing issue since Covid and the permitting decrease. It's a crazy rush on permit release day that encourages people to book when they aren't sure about their schedule and cancel later. This year it seems to be worse, even the unpopular entries are filled. Overall, I support the permit decrease, but I think there are other ways to mitigate this effect. Some thoughts:

1. Most people camp close to entry points causing harm on those campsites. If there were more entry points with restricted access like Mudro, that specify some number of days at the most popular entry lakes (One - Three, Ensign, Snowbank, etc.) that may help.
2. Having done many trips, I am aware how few backcountry rangers there are. I expect many other people know this as well. Increasing their visibility even just within one or two portages of entry lakes would help. I have seen more trail / work crews than rangers - can they be allowed to at least check permits?
3. Permit cancellations - allowing everyone one last minute cancellation without significant penalty makes sense (life happens!), but there should be a significantly increased penalty (cost) for second or third cancellations and an increasing cost the closer it is to the reservation time might help too.
4. I would like to see some type of a rolling permit system so that all permits are not offered up on one day.
5. Including a restriction on the number of tents would help the effect on campsites - if a group of 9 people has 2 or 3 tents, this is less of an effect on a campsite than if they have 5, for example.

The new food storage order may be well intentioned, but it is a hammer that deeply needs some nuance. How about adjusting that order to only the areas that are a problem? There are many areas (burns!) where tree hanging is not possible and in areas where there are trees, sending larger groups to find adequate branches is going to cause serious trampling, possibly erosion, and branch breaking making future hanging difficult. In my 20+ years of trips that are mostly travelling trips (max of two days at a site), I have seen only one bear (viewed from a boat, at a distance), but I almost never stay near entry lakes, I pack in multiple layers for smell and waterproofing and I don't bring stinky food!

I appreciate the videos and quizzes for education. I think looking to Quetico for how to manage and educate visitors would be time well spent. A half hour with personal visit with a ranger will have more effect than a video and short quiz. I know the BWCA has many more visitors and this makes the education piece much more expensive and time consuming, but I would suggest that there could be a way to have very experienced visitors 'test out' of this process would help lessen the time needed to increase education for others. Possibly a volunteer program could help with this too.

If there were an office or two in the Twin Cities and permits could be picked up a few days ahead of the issue date, people might not be so rushed and distracted when they come in for the education piece and would listen (and have time to pack) better.

Can this plan include a goal to increase the size of the BWCA? That would be a great way to enhance the habitat and minimize outside noise.

Ending the possibility of sulfide mining in the watershed forever is critical to the health of the Wilderness.

I support barbless fishing hooks and lead-free fishing lure requirements.

I do not support a campsite reservation system.

From an environmental and wilderness standpoint I'd like to see no motors in the BWCA at all. I understand the businesses are built around this now, but there are too many and I would like to see at least a cap on the number of towboat trips and then a decrease over time. I have paddled Saganaga a number of times. I know the wind and waves on Sag are to be taken very seriously. Last summer I scheduled my first tow for a group. Knowing that if we were to get part way and needed to wait or stop at a campsite that motors would be around was one of the factors that made me decide to hire a tow > in other words the existence of motors and tow boats encouraged yet another one.

Most of all, I love the BWCA! To me, the land, wildlife, water, rocks and flora should have the first say. Since they can't speak, we, as humans should always consider their needs first.