

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/16/2024 5:34:42 PM

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Comments: Thank you for allowing comments regarding the direction of the wilderness that I cherish.

Let's start with a trend. There is more base camping at campsites in close proximity to entry points than previously. More remote sites are seeing lower use and entry point sites are seeing higher use. Another trend impacting the entry point sites is campers frequently want to sleep alone, whether in a tent or hammock. That means there can easily be five shelters at one campsite, and perhaps a communal tarp too. There needs to be additional planning for the heavy use the entry point sites are experiencing. The solution to these challenges is neither to reduce permits more, nor to force campsites to be reserved as Voyageurs NP does. Though the search for a campsite can be challenging during busy times, the flexibility in not reserving campsites is part of what makes the BWCA a wilderness. To reiterate do not institute a campsite reservation system, and do not reduce permits further. Mandating the holders of certain permits (similar to the current restricted permits) not camp within 2-3 portages of certain entry points could help these challenges. Similarly, recommending or mandating that group not camp in the entry point sites for less than a week is another way.

And like the summer, winter camping is also concentrated in certain entry point areas, such as Sawbill-Alton, Snowbank-Parent-Disappointment, Duncan, etc. Since the USFS discourages winter campers from using summer campsites, I suggest developing latrines without campsites. The new latrines would not be near summer campsites, but would be close to swamps and other attractive areas for winter camping.

I would like to see a rolling permit system instituted, similar to Quetico. This would lessen the stress for everyone at the end of January. It may also decrease the likelihood of hoarding permits. Additionally, the reservation fee should be increased from \$6 to \$50. Cancellations more than a month before the entry date would receive a \$50 refund. Cancellations less than a month before a trip would receive no reservation fee refund. Per person fees would remain the same. Permits are scarce, and that means they should be more expensive - simple economics. Making people cancel more than month out ensures the permit will be available to others and allow them time to plan a trip.

Also, it needs to be easy to change the location where a permit will be picked up. There many factors that affect the pickup location, including the group's work schedules, lodging plans, hours of cooperators, and the like. Locking in the location when the permit is reserved frequently means not all the things I mentioned are planned. This seems to be an easy software engineering problem, yet it is the frequent cause of stress for private groups.

I am opposed to any mining in Superior National Forest.

Lastly, the recent order regarding food storage concerns me greatly. The need to properly store food and keep a clean camp is paramount to keeping paddlers and bears separate from one another. There are multiple ways to safely store food, and only one of those is by hanging.

The order also allows for food to be stored in bear vaults, Ursacks, and the like. These are expensive and unnecessary alternatives to simply smell proofing the food. I find it ironic that Ursacks offer the option to purchase Opsaks with them. Opsaks eliminate smells, which is tacit statement eliminating smells is a successful way to store food. Bears have been able to open nearly every 'bear proof' item for sale on the market. However, if they can't smell the food they cannot find it.

Eliminating smells works. I use multiple pack liners to seal my packs and then double seal all food. I've travelled throughout the BWCA and throughout Canada for over 30 years and spent over 1000 nights canoeing and camping, and had no bear issues. In much of Canada it is not possible to hang a pack per USFS guidelines. That

leaves the only option as eliminating smells.

The new order also will notably increase campsite expansion. I've taken kids on many BWCA trips. Eight kids plus a leader gives us three food packs. Kids travel as a pack, which means nine people tromping through the woods to a few different hanging locations multiple times. And what of the damage to campsite trees?

Certainly, it is possible to purchase hundreds of dollars of unnecessary 'bear proof' items, and to raise the fees charged to the children yet higher. BWCA users are steadily aging. We know need more kids to experience the BWCA not fewer.

To be clear, food storage requirements are fine, but there the USFS needs to acknowledge that other methods work. If a ranger wants me to drop my food pack in the lake and let it float for 10 minutes, I'd be happy to do that. Waterproof packs are smell proof packs. I'm all in favor of more education using pre-trip videos and especially in person when permits are picked up. In short, the USFS has always sought to educate BWCA paddlers, and this is an opportunity but smell proofing must be included.

And I am opposed installing bear proof lockers at campsites like Voyageurs has. Bear lockers are incompatible with wilderness.

Thank you again for managing the forest as a wilderness.