Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/17/2024 4:09:49 PM First name: Susan Last name: Bonfield Organization:

Title:

Comments: Please accept this comment with respect to proposed changes to the use of towboats in the Semi-Primitive Motorized MA, specifically the Saganaga Corridor. As a property owner on the Canadian side of the lake, towboats provide my family with a critical lifeline and ability to continue to use and enjoy our family cabin. I first came to Saganaga as a very young child, over 50 years ago and have had the privilege of experiencing the BWCAW nearly every summer since then. As owners, we are stewards of the land and have the greatest interest in protecting the pristine nature of our second home. Change and evolution is good, but the end result should not negate the intention behind the creation of the BWCAW or ignore those who rely on the existing construct. The current management of the Saganaga corridor is designed for those who wish to experience the lake, understanding that it is in a "slightly modified natural environment." The vision was that there would be so-called motor lakes included in the entirety of the protected area, which lakes would provide access to the wilderness in a way that balanced the needs of visitors, owners and the environment. The existing use of motors in the Saganaga corridor not only allows for paddlers to experience the Canadian wilderness without paddling for 7 miles to do so, relieving congestion on the corridor and demand on those campsites, but it also allows for homeowners on the Canadian side to gain access to critical tools and resources that towboats can deliver. The overall impact of the towboats is managed in the existing plan and this management can continue to ensure that the balance that was intended for the Saganaga corridor is managed. There was an understanding at the time of the original legislation that a scaled approach to wilderness would allow for the greatest benefit for all and this scaled approach should continue. While not a full-time resident of Saganaga Lake, I have never, during my visits. felt disturbed by the use of towboats. To the contrary, over the marine band, I hear that they are dispatched to pick up canoeists facing rough water, injury or fatigue and see them delivering critical supplies. Visitors expect to see and hear some motors in the area, and frankly, there may be visitors that are comforted by the presence of a rescue tool like the towboats. (See the existing plan, where it was noted "visitors should expect to see a high number of boats with motors [in the semi-primitive motorized MA]. These are generally lakes located on the periphery of the Wilderness, with little portaging involved. Visitors

will experience considerably less solitude, freedom, and challenge than found in other management areas.") Management of natural resources like the BWCAW is a critically important priority; evolution of plans is responsible. However, any change should be implemented with an eye toward the original mission of allowing for variable use of the resources, including the use of towboats on motorized MAs. The plan allows for pristine wilderness areas, primitive areas, semi-primitive motorized and non-motorized areas. These designations allow everyone to enjoy the wilderness and their homes in a responsible manner. Please continue this thoughtful approach and do not restrict the use existing use of towboats on the Saganaga corridor.