

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/18/2024 4:59:05 AM

First name: Tess

Last name: Dornfeld

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Forest Service must create or update any emergency management procedures to be prepared for future scenarios such as the pandemic or other significant disruptions. It was blatantly obvious that the decision to allow self-issuing of permits in 2020 would lead to serious negative consequences, which the Forest Service itself reported on before the end of the summer. In a recent discussion of this Forest Plan Amendment process hosted by Friends of the Boundary Waters, a substantial majority of the comments concerned the ongoing changes that users have observed since then, including damage to campsites, irresponsible behavior, and other failures to follow wilderness regulations. While there are additional factors that play a role in these trends, the apparent poor planning and preparation for how to manage a situation like we experienced in 2020 was an initial catalyst for the years now of problematic issues, and it is sure not to be the last time that the Forest Service has to contend with a sudden and unexpected circumstance.

The Forest Plan Amendment must also include co-management strategies with Indigenous communities and stakeholders, at minimum for pilot program for some areas or aspects of Boundary Waters management.