

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/30/2024 7:04:48 PM

First name: Robert

Last name: Scheierl

Organization: Wes Libbey Northern Lakes Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America

Title: President

Comments: Thank you for the chance to comment on this important issue. I am the president of the Wes Libbey Northern Lakes Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America. Our chapter members live in Itasca County in northern Minnesota. The Izaak Walton League of America is a conservation organization whose goal is to protect our nation's soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife. We are also strong supporters of outdoor recreation and retention of public lands.

Our Chapter strongly supports the Federal purchase of the school trust lands within the BWCA and nearby lands outside the BWCA. Our chapter was actively involved in creating the BWCA wilderness area and retaining its wilderness values. We see this Federal acquisition of lands within the BWCA and nearby areas as the best way to preserve the wilderness values of the BWCA and protect the BWCA from any adverse effects from mining. We also feel that Federal ownership of these lands would help ensure that they remain in public ownership and available for public use, public enjoyment, and environmental protection.

Acquisition, rather than exchange, seems to be the method of acquiring ownership that is most acceptable to the affected parties. It also seems clear that acquisition would complete the transfer to Federal ownership much sooner, thereby reducing the chance that these lands could be further degraded prior to Federal acquisition.

Thank you for hearing our comments.