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Comments: US Forest Service and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources:

My Family and myself object to the sale of Minnesota School Trust Land to the Federal Government. Here are our reasons:

1. The Federal Government already has ownership of a large percentage of the forested land in Northern Minnesota. The Forest Service and the National Park Service knows how many acres of land is federally owned.
2. The land owned and operated by federal employees working in Minnesota, represents an enormous economic force in northern Minnesota. Perhaps better stated, economic power as well as a large potential block of voting power.
3. The point. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources understands the implications of objecting to any ideas that the federal government wishes to pursue. In truth, both the State and the Federal Government and the public understand that relationship.
4. Here in southern Minnesota, there is no school trust land left. It has all been sold and the money disappeared years ago. A friend of mine said last week, "If the Boundary Waters School Trust Lands are sold to the Federal Government the money received from the sale will be like pouring water on the ground. Some seeps away into the ground and the rest evaporates into the air".
5. Several years ago, the MNDNR hired Aaron VanderLinde to manage a BWCAW school Trust land exchange with the Forest Service. Years passed and the purposed land exchange never happened. Now, suddenly, the Forest Service wants to purchase the Minnesota school trust lands within the boundary of the BWCAW. Big change, little information.
6. The public needs to know more about this land exchange proposal. Price for example. If our State is to receive full value of the school trust lands located in the BWCAW, then let the public bidding begin. For obvious reasons, the Forest Service is undervaluing the land because of policy concerns. For example, they might have difficulty with access permitting enforcement. Recall the laws regarding ownership access to private property. Campsite regulations are another reason why the Forest Service needs to purchase the MN School Trust lands. Clearly, there are public folks who would be interested in a piece of real estate within the BWCAW.
7. So now the tables are turned. The school trust lands are really worth more than the assessed value placed on them by either the Federal government or Minnesota.
8. The point then, do State employees and State leadership have the fortitude to negotiate the best price for the BWCAW school trust land package. Or does the State bend to the wishes of the federal employees because of the large amounts of economic grants that are negotiated on a separate playing field.
9. Bottom line. The public needs to know more about this purposed land exchange, now altered into a land sale. Don't get in a hurry here. After all, we have been negotiating a land exchange for the same school trust land for the past 5 years. Selling the land is an entirely new and different real estate transaction.