

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/13/2024 2:37:49 PM

First name: SHEILA

Last name: SHEEHAN

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I support the federal purchase of the 80,000 acres of state school trust lands inside the BWCAW, and the 3,200 acres of St. Louis County land included in the land purchase package.

A federal purchase will increase the efficiency of administering and protecting the BWCAW as a Wilderness, and prevent future state or county governments from developing these lands.

A federal purchase will provide far more income to Minnesota's Permanent School Fund than would a land exchange, according to analyses by the local Timberjay newspaper and others.

Unlike the assertions of the local legislators, a federal purchase is perfectly legal under the Weeks Act. Furthermore, Congress created the Land and Water Conservation Fund for just such purposes.

As a reminder, back in 2012, at the behest of similar-minded local pro-development state legislators who had blocked earlier efforts for a federal purchase in order to acquire federal lands to develop, the Minnesota DNR proposed a land exchange with the Forest Service for Superior National Forest lands outside the BWCAW for some of the school trust lands inside the BWCAW. One of those state legislators vowed at the time that the state would "log and mine the hell out of those lands" once an exchange had occurred. As the Department's own findings concluded such an exchange would be too costly.

And lastly, any decisions that would leave these lands vulnerable to the self-interests of private developers would most certainly be too costly to the integrity of the BWCAW and it's closest surrounding areas.

Thank you for the consideration of my comments.