

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 9/16/2024 12:19:48 AM

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Comments: We Support, federal, buy-out of "Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness", school, trust, lands! The "Forest Service" MUST move ahead with the, federal, purchase, of these school, trust, lands, within the "BWCAW", and, ignore the plea from the, state, legislators for a, land, exchange!

The "U.S. Forest Service", and, the "Minnesota Department of Natural Resources" have reached a, good, agreement for a, federal, purchase of about 80,000 acres of, state-owned, school, trust, lands, and, 3,200 acres of, county, tax-forfeited, land inside the, 1.1-million-acre, "Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness" (BWCAW) in the "Superior National Forest" in Minnesota.

This proposal will benefit the "BWCAW", but, some, local, state, legislators are trying to torpedo the proposal!

The issue goes back to, Minnesota, statehood, in 1858, when the, federal, government granted, two, sections of land in, every, township (sections 16 and 36), to the State, to support education. Elsewhere, in Minnesota, these, school, trust, lands were, often, sold, and, the proceeds deposited in the state's "Permanent School Fund" that supports education. In, other, places, revenues from, mineral, exploration, and, mining, permits, and, timber, sales on, school, trust, lands, also, went into the "Permanent School Fund"!

But, because of wilderness, designation, the, school, trust, lands, inside the "BWCAW", have NOT generated income for the "Permanent School Fund" from logging, or, mining, and, Minnesota's, fiduciary, responsibility to the "Permanent School Fund" has NOT been met! The, school, trust, lands, inside the "BWCAW", and, the, tax-forfeited, St. Louis County, lands do NOT have, wilderness, protections, currently, and, these lands, inside the "BWCAW", could be developed in the future!

In 2012, and, at the behest of, 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!

But, an exchange, of this magnitude, proved to be, enormously, time-consuming and, would have been, prohibitively, costly, and, the "DNR" has, now, formally, withdrawn its request for an exchange. Instead, the DNR" and Forest Service now, are proposing a, federal, purchase of these, school, trust, lands within the BWCAW", using monies from the, federal, "Land and Water Conservation Fund". A, federal, purchase will make administration of the "BWCAW", more, efficient and, provide, far, more, money to the "Permanent School Fund" than would a, land, exchange, according to, various, analyses, including one by the local, "Timberjay", newspaper. And, this, purchase, proposal could, finally, resolve the, lingering, question of the "BWCAW"'s, school, trust, lands NOT providing, any, income for the 'Permanent School Fund'!

But, on August 15, a group of, five, local, Republican, state, legislators wrote a letter to the "DNR opposing the purchase, and, instead, pushing-again-for a, land, exchange! Among their claims is a, wild, one: that a purchase is illegal, and, would violate the "1964 Wilderness Act"!