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Comments: This misguided and massive manipulation project has no place in Wilderness and would violate the mandate of the 1964 Wilderness Act to preserve the area's wildness, its wilderness character. In addition, the agency's plan could include using helicopters and chainsaws, another violation of the letter and spirit of the law! ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!!

The 1.1 million-acre BWCAW is the largest Wilderness east of the Rockies and north of Florida's Everglades. It has over 1,000 lakes, connected by portage trails, rivers, and streams, and stretches for almost 150 miles along the international border. The BWCAW is one of the most highly-visited Wildernesses in the entire National Wilderness Preservation System, where about 150,000 people come every year from all over the world to paddle its lakes and fish its waters. The Fernberg Road is a paved highway that travels east of the city of Ely about 15 miles before ending at Lake One. The BWCAW surrounds the Fernberg Corridor on three sides, with homes, cabins, and developments within the corridor.

This project goes about it in the absolute wrong way! The Forest Service has promised since the 1980s that it will allow lightning-caused fires to play their natural role in the BWCAW, but these remain hollow, broken promises! With very few exceptions, the Forest Service has continued to put out nearly all natural fires in the Wilderness over the past 40 years. And while the Forest Service claims in the new draft EA that one of the project's purposes is to allow natural fires to burn in the BWCAW, there is absolutely no analysis in the draft EA about whether, when, or how the Forest Service will allow natural fires to do this if the proposed action occurs. It appears to be yet another repetition of the same old broken promise!

FOREST FIRES HAVE COMPLETELY DESTROYED THOUSANDS OF TREES, FORESTS, AND WILDLIFE! WE CANNOT TAKE ANY CHANCES WITH OUR REMAINING FORESTS WE AND WILDLIFE ALL DEPEND ON! THE RISK IS JUST TOO GREAT!!!! The draft EA totally fails to analyze whether, when, or how the Forest Service will allow natural fires to burn in the BWCAW if the proposed action proceeds.

Alternative 3-that is called the No Action in the Wilderness Alternative. Given the choices in the draft EA, Alternative 3 is the best choice to prevent the massive manipulation and taming of the BWCAW that the Forest Service wants to do in Alternative 2.