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Comments: To whom it may concern at the US Forest Service and beyond:

Thanks for this opportunity to comment in regards to plans for major human-set fire-setting in our 2nd largest wilderness area east of the Rocky Mtns. -- the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness. I just read Section 2(a) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and noted that the very first sentence reads: " In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and GROWING MECHANIZATION, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness."

Avoiding mechanization was always integral to what wilderness designation was all about. Thus, using helicopters and chainsaws is entirely inappropriate in this special area near the massive freshwater Lake Superior. Allowing chainsaws is an open invitation to those who want to haul the most valuable hefty conifer trees to the mill -- even if that kind of forest management is a huge contributing factor as to why forests are so flammable in recent decades.

Proposing such human intervention activities will have major impacts and would violate the letter and spirit of the Wilderness Act of 1964. Also with such repercussions in this very significant wilderness related to the main freshwater lake in the Americas, there must be more process in terms of environmental impact analysis than a mere Environmental Assessment.

By the way, of the alternatives offered, I favor Alternative 3 because the action alternatives are not appropriate in wilderness areas. If the agency chooses to do a full EIS regarding how to integrate burning into the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness, then a clear offered alternative certainly must be to consider allowing lightning fires to be burn within the wilderness. Toxic fire retardant chemicals would also be very inappropriate in this wild, vast, and recreationally popular area.

Generally, let natural fires burn in designated wilderness areas, so please assure that the next enviro impact document include an alternative to allow lightning-sparked fires to burn within the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness. It is so sizable that is not likely to burn catastrophically toward fairly proximate towns.

This fairly recent phase of fed'l land mgt agencies to reduce environmental analysis to embark on one-size-fits-all "landscape management" as well as "fuels reduction" schemes which look a lot like the timber industry getting their wish list to log some larger trees to make the project worthwhile is inappropriate and violates the letter and the spirit of a more than 60-year-old law, the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Please drop this "landscape management" project -- known as Fernberg Corridor Landscape Management Project -- as well as such one-size-fits-all schemes more generally.

Once again, choose Alternative # 3 for this round, and then either develop policy to allow lightning-ignited fires to burn within the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness Area, or else do a full EIS which includes an alternative to allow lightning strike fires to burn within that huge wilderness. Thank you for your consideration.