

# CWCS

Conservationists  
with  
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Sense



Advocates for multiple use of public lands & waters  
with care for our environment for healthy communities

SUMMER 2018 NEWSLETTER

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## Deep concerns on controversial proposed end to BWCA motor permit lottery

This past fall, the US Forest Service announced some huge proposed changes to next year's day use and overnight motor permit application process on Fall and Moose Lake.

The first of these changes applied to this past winter's permit application period with a fee being charged to each lottery application that was submitted.

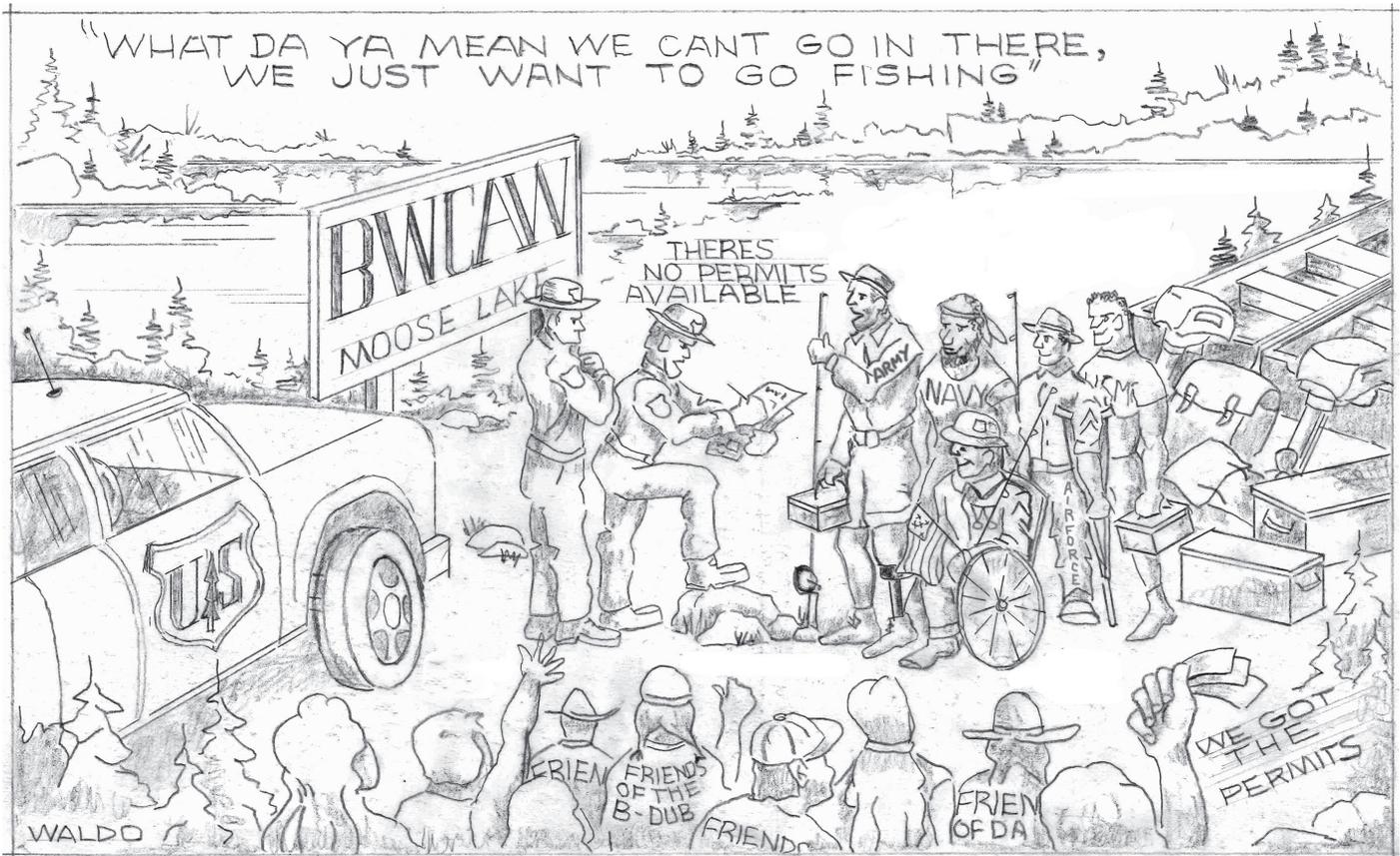
The second more drastic change was

that the USFS is planning on eliminating the lottery system for these permits for the 2019 permit season. They would replace this with some sort of a 'yet to be specified' system that would require a race to reserve available permit dates by computer applications in "real time" at a yet to be specified specific starting date and time.

This announcement has been met by many questions and concerns by both local

anglers and businesses that utilize these areas. The limited motorized permits in these areas have been historically in very high demand and the decades-long permit lottery has been used to attempt a fair distribution of this popular BWCA activity. Concerns over some problems with the past system led to the US Forest Service re-examining their procedures.

*(Continued on Page Four)*



## Land exchange issue: Why have laws?

St. Louis County Commissioners praised Minnesota U.S. Representatives Rick Nolan and Betty McCollum and U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith in securing \$4 million in the 2018 spending bill to begin the process for federal government to purchase state land within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. CWCS would expect our federal Representatives

and Senators to follow federal law.

Commissioner Frank Jewell has made several trips to Washington D.C. lobbying in support of the federal purchase which goes against the 1964 Wilderness Act. It mandates state lands surrounded by wilderness to be exchanged for federal lands of equal value outside of the wilderness. Commissioner Pete Stauber was the only one to oppose

this purchase plan.

There are 83,000 acres of School Trust Lands locked up in the Boundary Waters for the past 54 years, unable to generate revenue for Minnesota schools. Only 31,000 acres are being considered for exchange of federal lands in the Superior National Forest. How this large of a difference in acreage can be thought of as an equal exchange defies logic.

## Federal mineral leases returned to Twin Metals

In December 2017, U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) reaffirmed Twin Metals Minnesota's right to renewal of two federal mineral leases held in Northeast Minnesota for more than 50 years.

The DOI action withdraws and replaces a March 2016 DOI legal opinion that served as the basis for the December 2016 action by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and

the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to deny the renewal of the two TMM leases. Twin Metals' federal leases are important components of the underground mine project proposal the company is preparing for submittal to state and federal agencies for extensive review through an Environmental Impact Statement.

Twin Metals' federal mineral leases were first issued by the federal government in 1966

with a right of unlimited, successive 10-year renewals. The leases were renewed by BLM and USFS without controversy in 1989 and again in 2004. TMM filed for the third renewal of the leases in late 2012. The legal opinion issued by the DOI in March 2016 served as the foundation for the government denying the company's lease renewal application. TMM filed a federal lawsuit challenging the DOI's

legal opinion in Sept. 2016.

TMM has invested more than \$400 million to date in acquisition, exploration, technical, environmental, and other project development activities. The TMM project will meet all state and federal environmental standards, provide hundreds of jobs for generations of Minnesotans, and result in billions of dollars of environmentally-responsible economic growth in the region.

## Missed opportunity for Minnesota Senators

A majority of St. Louis County Commissioners and both Minnesota Senators ignored the 1964 Wilderness Act and supported the inclusion of money in the recent spending bill for purchase of some School Trust Lands in the Boundary Waters. Minnesota's two senators did not show that same support to include the PolyMet land ex-

change in the bill.

Last Nov., the House overwhelmingly passed Rep. Rick Nolan's bill H.R. 3115 with a 309 – 99 vote in support of the agreed upon land exchange with the Forest Service. Nolan, a Democrat, and Republican Tom Emmer lobbied along with Iron Range officials for its passage. At the time, both Sen. Amy

Klobuchar and Sen. Tina Smith seemed to support Nolan's bill.

Several preservation groups filed lawsuits opposing the land exchange between the Forest Service and PolyMet. Heavy opposition to include the land exchange in the spending bill came from these preservation groups who called the offices of Klobuchar, Smith and Schumer.

This was a definite missed opportunity for Klobuchar and Smith to help PolyMet move forward. It is another delay for PolyMet, but they are confident there will be another opportunity for the land exchange to be included on another bill before their permit to mine is issued by the state.

## Thinking about becoming a BWCA guide? Forget about it

*Editorial reprinted from the April 14, 2018 Ely Echo*

The U.S. Forest Service is up to its old tricks again, this time not allowing new fishing guides or any other types of recreational special uses.

The agency is hiding behind yet another lawsuit that it now needs to study and while that study is going on, everything and everybody gets put on hold.

This appears to be directly related to the lawsuit against towboats in the BWCA and the agreement/settlement that requires a study be done on Recreation Commercial Services.

Instead of focusing on the towboat issue, the agency has expanded the impact to include the entire Superior National Forest and any type of recreational special use permitting.

This is simply ridiculous. The Forest Service should be able to study the towboat issue and continue to conduct business as usual. For businesses that already have a recreational use permit, including fishing guides, they can continue.

But if a person decided they wanted to start a guide business this spring, their application would not be considered by the Forest Service. Another example of government putting unnecessary, unreasonable and draconian limits on instead of adapting and being user friendly.

A letter on this decision was sent out to current recreational special use permit holders last month.

Forest Supervisor Connie Cummins said in the letter the USFS is currently conducting a Recreational Commercial Services Needs Assessment.

"No new permits will be issued, and no new levels of services will be processed during this time. Exceptions to this hold will be for permits that were in the process of being issued at the start of the Needs Assessment..."

"If the Forest authorizes new business or the expansion of services by existing businesses during the analysis period, it will be necessary to start over as there would be new information to include," the letter states.

There is no timeline for this process other than the looming possibility of the agency having to implement a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis to evaluate potential changes. This could literally take years.

Some local guides believe this is the beginning of the end of commercial uses in the BWCA (and the Superior National Forest for that matter). The Forest Service doesn't want to have to deal with towboats or ciscoes or guides or truck portages or any other type of commercial endeavor. This is their way to shut the door and keep it shut.

Existing businesses may believe this is just the Forest Service stumbling through legal hoops as the result of yet another lawsuit filed by groups who really don't want people to use the Boundary Waters.

If you don't believe this is the case, remember this is the same agency that got all excited about a basketball hoop on Prairie Portage.

We would like to see the agency reverse its position on this issue and continue to work with people instead of slamming doors. Start by asking how the agency can help.

For instance, there are numerous outfitters who issue BWCA permits on behalf of the agency which could not possibly do it without them. Instead of hassling, how about reaching out and asking what could be done to help private businesses.

We only have to look at the decision to dump the lottery for motorized permits as an example of a federal agency that is far from user friendly.

## Message from the President

As I have stated before, one of my passions is snowmobiling, but several days of snowmobiling were put on hold in February with attending the PolyMet open houses and hearings in Aurora and Duluth. I submitted several comments on the various permits for PolyMet and also on their permit to mine. For more information on this issue, see the PolyMet article.

In early March, I attended the Motion Hearing for the Up North Jobs lawsuits against Governor Dayton. Attorney Joseph Leoni did a good job explaining why the case needs to move forward. It is interesting how once again School Trust Lands are impacted by the actions of our governor, as is the Obama Administration's proposed land withdrawal. These School Trust Lands are to benefit all school in Minnesota. Closing them off from future mining is a huge impact to their revenue source.

Also in March, I attended an all-day roundtable discussion to improve efficiencies and effectiveness related to the Forest Service's environmental analysis and project decision-making processes (NEPA). See article. Fortunately the recently passed Omnibus bill will allow federal agencies to access disaster funds for particularly expensive fires.

As the snow melts and temperatures rise, it's time to put our snowmobiles away. We had another good season with over 2,000 miles put on out sleds.

This year CWCS is going to try something different. Each year we raffle a boat, motor and trailer package and we have kept

the cost of the tickets at \$5. With the cost of the package going up each year, this year we have decided to raffle a motor only. So many times when people buy their tickets at the Blueberry Arts Festival and Harvest Moon Festival they say, "I already have a boat, I just want the motor."

CWCS continues to keep you informed on various issues that affect our lands, waters and communities. CWCS is the only multiple use organization that puts out a newsletter fighting FOR our communities, our schools and our hospitals of northeastern Minnesota. CWCS and our counterpart, We Support Minnesota Mining on Facebook, have put together a Mining Resource Library for easy access to information. Go to: <http://www.frontier-net.net/~babbittcs/WSMMRL/index.html>

We need good paying jobs. Tourism alone cannot sustain us year round. The three Ts need to remain strong – Taconite, Timber & Tourism. Looking at the next generation of mining, copper/nickel will provide jobs for future generations.

CWCS has finally added a PayPal options for online payment of dues and donations to our website [www.cwcs.org](http://www.cwcs.org)

Your support is greatly appreciated.

Nancy McReady  
CWCS President

*"Advocates for multiple use of public lands & waters with care for our environment for healthy communities"*



## Vermilion Lake Association plans aggressive war on AIS

by Gary Albertson

Lake Vermilion is thought by many to be the most beautiful lake in Minnesota. The Vermilion Lake Association, formerly the Sportsmen's Club of Lake Vermilion, with its many volunteers, is aggressively working to keep it that way. They are fighting to stop the invasion of AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) from getting into this lake. They are also getting neighboring lakes such as Pelican, Shagawa and Burntside to step up efforts to stop the invasion of AIS.

The good news, according to Jeff Lovgren, is that zebra mussels are not a problem in Lake Vermilion. They need sufficient calcium and a pH above 7.3 (slightly basic) to utilize that calcium. The pH in East Two River varied, but generally remained between 6.4 and 6.9 which is close to the his-

torical readings in the rest of Lake Vermilion.

Zebras are moving from the top of the threat table down two notches to just under starry stonewort and hybrid watermilfoil.

The main weapon used to fight the intrusion of AIS is the use of four inspection sites. The inspection sites where there are personnel on hand to inspect and clean off a boat include the Y Store near Tower and the Country Store in Cook.

Resorts are being asked to help in providing Sentries. Lake Vermilion has 15 participating resorts, Burntside has one and Pelican has three.

Decontaminations are also occurring at the DNR Landing on Burntside, Sandy Point Landing on Shagawa and the Ely Chamber.

Boat owners are asked to be sure they don't bring these AIS into Vermilion, Pel-

ican, Burntside, Shagawa or any other lakes, by keeping their boats clean. With the use of the inspection points, plus the help of the many involved in the Sentry program to watch out for AIS, this problem can be solved.

Boaters are asked before they take a trip with their boat to inspect and clean it, drain water from the bilge, live wells, motor, bait wells and ballast tanks, keep the drain plug out of the boat and water draining devices open while transporting watercraft, and dispose of all unwanted bait in the trash.

Funding for AIS prevention is provided by donations to the VLA, grants from St. Louis County and the Initiative Foundation.

This is an ongoing fight and the lake associations, resorts, volunteers and area businesses helping fight it are to be commended.

## New wild rice sulfate standard being discussed

Both the Minnesota House and Senate are looking to eliminate the old wild rice sulfate standard that has been on the books since 1973. Minnesota is the only state that has had a rule on wild rice sulfate standards, but it has not been enforced.

Rep. Dale Lueck, Rob Ecklund and others have authored a bill in the House. The bill would safeguard the water quality and aquatic habitat necessary to ensure natural

wild rice is protected and wild rice beds are not materially impaired or degraded.

The 45-year-old sulfate standard would cost millions of dollars to the state's rural municipal waste water treatment plants and would also drive up the cost of mining. Microbreweries, that have high sulfate water discharges, could also be impacted.

Lueck says the hydrological, biological and physical risk to wild rice health needs

to be addressed. A numeric sulfate standard has little to do with the overall health of rice beds. A working group of wild rice experts at the DNR, tribal governments and the public sector will address how to protect wild rice from a variety of threats, not just sulfate.

Senator Dave Tomassoni said they are looking to make sense out of the wild rice sulfate standard and to actually make it work.

## Cartoon on veterans and disabled highlights BWCAW access issues

The question was asked about Wally Fendt's cartoon's reference to veterans and disabled (see page one). It may be because Four Mile Portage from Fall Lake to Basswood was included and operated as a truck portage for decades. A business in the late 1980s wanted to assist veterans and the

disabled on fishing trips. The business was stopped, and trucks were no longer allowed on Four Mile Portage because of the Friends of the Boundary Waters lawsuit.

A few other facts... There are 16 lakes in the BWCA that allow limited motor use; Por-tage wheels are only allowed on Trout

Lake Portage, Four Mile Portage, Newton Portage, Pipestone Portage, Prairie Portage and Back Bay Portage. This was mainly to address international border waters. There are now only four motorized portages with the use of truck or rail - Trout Lake Portage

## Deep concerns on controversial proposed end to BWCA motor permit lottery

*(Continued from Page One)*

One huge mistake the US Forest Service had made in past lotteries is that staff didn't realized the agency was being charged a fee for each lottery application that was made by the private company that administers the permit system. Prior to this year, those individuals who made an application weren't charged for these applications, which left the US Forest Service footing the bill for the high number of applications that would be received in this process. This problem was solved in the most recent lottery, by changing the application process to require a \$10 fee for each application, thus eliminating the cost to the US Forest Service for these applications.

This decision, although an added cost to those making these applications, was seen by most as a reasonable adjustment that the US Forest Service had to make financially. Improvements to the system were also seen, as initial reports from the USFS show that the success rate for applications also made a huge jump this year.

The problems that would be solved by the elimination of the lottery aren't quite as clear. Different reasons have been communicated by the Forest Service on why it intends to eliminate the lottery. In a Feb. 12, 2018 article in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Kristina Reichenbach, a spokesperson for the Superior National Forest, stated that the lottery was ending because "the Forest Service was getting hit with service charges for unsuccessful lottery applications. In addition, the number of visitors served by the motor lottery is small in comparison to the BWCA's overall traffic..."

However, the permit applicant is now paying this fee and the lottery has nothing to do with this issue. The most recent communication received from local US Forest Service representatives stated that the reason for the lottery elimination was that there WAS NOT an overall shortage in permits, since a large percentage of motor permits end up not being used by the end of the season. Since some of these permits are unused, their logic was that the lottery isn't needed. This reasoning is in question since nearly every date for the season currently doesn't have permit availability for Fall and Moose Lake for both day use motor and overnight motor use.

The USFS has been questioned if the low numbers of use as rationale is possibly affected by combining these lottery permit area numbers with other non-lottery motor use areas (Gunflint Trail area lakes, Snowbank Lake, etc.) that are far less in demand. More importantly, in question is if eliminating the lottery would solve the largest problem that occurs which is unused reserved permits.

Combining the statistics of the lottery areas with non-lottery motorized areas has potentially created an inflation of the numbers of permits unused. But regardless, the more popular Fall and Moose Lake areas do have permits that go unused, or a term the USFS calls "no shows". Concerns have been presented that there have been time periods where there seems to be fairly low use in these areas even when permits are not available. When asked if the elimination of the lottery would help solve this problem, area resort owner Bob LaTourell disagrees.

"If anything, I think that this may make the no show problem even worse," said LaTourell. "In a race to input permit applications,

I would think there may be many permits reserved that are rushed and not well thought out. These rushed decisions may cause even more no shows. Eliminating the lottery does nothing to address the problem of no shows. Instead of eliminating the lottery, there are many other options of how to get unused permits to go back into the system.

A few ideas that have been presented to the USFS include refunds and a better way to put permits back into the system that aren't used. The USFS hasn't tried to utilize these solutions yet, and we think they should try these solutions before eliminating the lottery. A better, more flexible system that encourages permits to be cancelled and utilizes these unused permits would really help out those who would like to travel into these areas."

Another huge concern is that the yet to be specified procedure the US Forest Service would be using would make it necessary to make permit reservations over the internet on a specific starting time and date. As many area residents are aware, our internet service leaves much to be desired in our rural areas and has been a topic of discussion with area politicians. An internet outage would be catastrophic to those trying to make an application at that time, but also the speed wouldn't be equal to what those in urban areas enjoy. The potential problems and unequal internet access speeds have been eliminated in the past by the over month long lottery application period. The US Forest Service has not presented any solutions to this unequal internet speed issue or given any answers to what would happen if an area's internet access was down during this "go live" time period.

With all of these questions, one does have to wonder why eliminating the lottery is being considered instead of trying the many other less drastic adjustments that could improve the system. Perhaps it is because it is "easier" for the Forest Service.

In its press release the Forest Service stated that, "Eliminating the lottery will create a reservation system that is less complicated, consistent, fair, and will remove the need for a separate process."

This is in spite of the fact that lotteries that are far more complicated and inconsistent are used in dozens of other wilderness areas across the country and the use of these lotteries in those areas is touted as the "most fair" way to distribute these highly sought after permits. How they can say that it is fair in those areas, but not fair in our area is interesting. Also interesting is the argument that the permits aren't really in high demand because of the permits that end up not being used.

Most people who try to obtain a permit would disagree that they aren't in high demand and it is a fact that currently there are only a handful of permits available for these areas. Perhaps there are some who aren't concerned with this particular motorized wilderness use. Again, quoting USFS Superior National Forest spokeswoman Kristina Reichenbach - "It's not a real big deal," in referring to the motor lottery in comparison to the BWCA's overall traffic.

CWCS would ask you to please contact the Forest Service if you have concerns with these developments.

## Social Media used to reach legislators

The role of social media is proving to be very important in reaching legislators.

With the help of several pro common sense groups such as CWCS, We Support Minnesota Mining, Minnesota Miners, Up North Jobs, and others on Facebook and Twitter, our voices are being heard in Washington D.C. and all across the country.

There has been a networking on Facebook and Twitter with other groups battling the same battles about mining and the health of our forests. The above mentioned groups have been sharing information about mining projects in Wisconsin, Michigan, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, and many

other states. This contacting of legislators has been very helpful and beneficial.

Here in Minnesota, there has been a big push of twittering to U.S. Senators to sponsor Rep. Rick Nolan's H.R. 3115 bill. H.R. 3115, which passed in the House, seeks to convey specified National Forest System land within the Superior National Forest in St. Louis County, Minnesota, to Poly Met Mining Corporation, Inc. This would be in exchange for specified nonfederal lands within the forest in St. Louis and Lake Counties, Minnesota.

Senate sponsorship is also needed for Rep. Tom Emmer's H.R. 3905 bill. H.R.

3905 declares that minerals with the National Forest System (NFS) lands in Minnesota shall not be subject to withdrawal from disposition under U.S. mineral and geothermal leasing laws unless such withdrawal is approved by an Act of Congress. This is in direct opposition to President Obama's executive directive to withdraw over 424,000 acres in northern Minnesota from future mining with no input from city, county or state officials.

We continue to ask Minnesota Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith to help northern Minnesota on these two bills.

## CWCS participates in Forest Service Roundtable

The Forest Service has launched an agency-wide effort on NEPA reform to address improvements to efficiencies and effectiveness related to the Forest Service's Environmental Analysis and Decision-Making processes (EADM).

The purpose is to accomplish more work on the ground and increase the health, diversity, resilience, and productivity of our national forests and prairies.

- Share why changes are important for achieving the USCA Forest Service mission
- Identify, discuss and capture partner perceptions on barriers and solutions
- Explore what roles partners can play moving forward
- Support dialogue to strengthen relationships between partners and the USDA Forest Service
- Explain how partner inputs will be incorporated from the Roundtable and from participation in the formal rulemaking process

This is a region-wide discussion, and the March Roundtable discussion in Duluth

had video feeds from all across Region 9. Similar roundtables will be held with all regions of the Forest Service.

Over forty people were packed into a room at the Duluth Forest Service office. Several preservation groups were in attendance, including the Friends of the Boundary Waters, Izaak Walton League, Sierra Club, Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, along with Forest Service and DNR personnel, and county commissioners. No groups were present representing trails, other than Nancy McReady for CWCS and the Ely Igloo Snowmobile Club. Also attending were Kelsey Johnson for the Iron Mining Association and Scott Dane for the Associated Contract Loggers & Truckers.

One of the biggest concerns was how the Forest Service budget is being eaten up by fighting wildfires, and how the agency has a backlog of 6,000 special use permits for guides, trails, timber sales, etc. It was mentioned how wildfires are an emergency and natural disaster. So, why isn't FEMA money used to fight these fires to free up

the Forest Service's budget for addressing maintenance and special permits?

The question was asked, "How can the Forest Service provide better customer service?" Sharing resources, having an outreach for help and acknowledging the Good Neighbor Authority were a few replies. CWCS said better communication on what is expected on a project from start to finish with timelines and approval requirements.

The Forest Service seems to want to streamline efficiencies and effectiveness related to environmental analysis to free up man hours on projects and lessen budget costs. The first discussions on EADM began last year. <https://vimeo.com/237902205>

Good Neighbor Authority

The Good Neighbor Authority allows the Forest Service to enter into cooperative agreements or contracts with States and Puerto Rico to allow the States to perform watershed restoration and forest management services on National Forest System (NFS) lands.

## Up North Jobs files lawsuit on land withdrawal

In March 2016, Governor Mark Dayton issued a directive to the Minnesota DNR not to authorize or enter into any new state access or lease agreements for mining operations on state land in the Superior National Forest in close proximity to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Further, the Governor contacted the Bureau of Land Management, urging that Twin Metals Minnesota's leases, currently

under review, not be renewed. The Governor's actions were contrary to Minnesota law, the Minnesota Constitution and Public Law No. 49-495 that expressly permits mining in the Superior National Forest.

Governor Dayton was inspired to act by environmental preservation organizations that applied political pressure to pre-emptively quash a proposed mining project during the plan-

ning staged.

Responding to Dayton's unlawful actions, Up North Jobs Inc. brought an action in Minnesota District Court. Defendant Governor Dayton responded with a motion to dismiss the suit, contending that his directive was informal and was not an executive order, but only a recommendation made to DNR Commissioner Landwehr.

A Motion Hearing was held

on March 6, 2018 before the Judge Gary J. Pagliaccetti. Assistant Attorney General Jason Marisam for Defendant Governor Dayton, and Attorney Joseph Leoni for Plaintiff Up North Jobs, presented oral argument.

Pagliaccetti determined Up North Jobs and its executive director, Gerald Tyler, did not have the standing to bring a case. No word if Up North Jobs will pursue this any further.

## Hearings and more hearings

In February, supporters once again came out in force in support of PolyMet at two public comment hearings before the Minnesota DNR and MPCA. The first hearing was held in Aurora, which was overwhelmingly in support of PolyMet with over 450 people filling the Mesabi East High School gymnasium. Only a handful of anti-mining activists were at this hearing. There was a sea of 'Go PolyMet' blue hats and students wearing t-shirts saying 'Tomorrow is Mine' showing their support for the first proposed copper mine in northern Minnesota at the former LTV mine site.

An open house was held before each hearing for people to learn about the permit to mine process and about PolyMet's proposed mine plan.

Newly elected Aurora Mayor, Dave Lislegard, was first to speak at the Aurora hearing. Lislegard said PolyMet had done their job and now it was time for the DNR and MPCA to do theirs.

Union representatives, retired steelworkers, city mayors, county commissioners, state legislators, various organizations including CWCS (see CWCS comments article), and high school students spoke in favor of moving PolyMet forward.

A rally hosted by Jobs for Minnesotans was held in a packed room at the DECC with supporters for PolyMet. The support

continued at the Duluth hearing, but the blue hats and shirts in support of PolyMet were met with waving orange hankies by opponents to the copper/nickel project. Over 800 people attended this second hearing, with supporters once again outnumbering those who opposed by three to one.

Supporters pointed out the potential of PolyMet to create good paying jobs and produce needed minerals for our national security while protecting the environment. We can have safe mining with today's new technology and protect our waters.

People have been encouraged to send their comments to the DNR and MPCA on various permits for PolyMet, and even after these two hearings anti-mining preservation groups are asking for more hearings to delay PolyMet from moving forward. WaterLegacy petitioned the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to reject the draft permit, and to convene a "contested case hearing." That is a trial-like proceeding before an administrative law judge to resolve disputed issues of fact. The group says the permit lacks adequate safeguards to protect water downstream, in violation of federal and state law.

PolyMet says it can operate the proposed mine near Hoyt Lakes and Babbitt without harming the environment while creating hundreds of jobs.

### *Same opposition for other mining projects*

In other states there has been the same opposition to mining projects mainly from the emotional standpoint, not based on facts. Wisconsin and Michigan have heard the same rhetoric of failed mines from years ago. Anti-mining activists ignore the success of Flambeau and Eagle mines, and others across the country. Their NIMBY arguments are the same... Not In My Back Yard. They prefer to obtain mineral the United States need from countries with no pollution regulations and that often use child laborers.

At the legislative meeting held in Ely in early December several anti-mining activists were in attendance. Newly elected Aurora mayor Dave Lislegard asked, "If a company follows the process, meets or exceeds state and federal standards...would you support the project?" Ely's Steve Piragis said, "No."

We see this same opposition for the Back Forty Mine in Michigan where anti-mining activists hope the EPA will 'kill the project'. This was their response to the statement the EPA "objects to the issuance of a permit for this project as proposed." Parent company, Canadian-based Aquila Resources, believes the issues are addressable. Once again, anti-mining activists are not willing to work together with the mining company to assure the project is done safely.

## Comments at Aurora PolyMet hearing

*by Nancy McReady, president of CWCS*

I have followed and reported on PolyMet and their NorthMet project for CWCS and the Ely Echo since 2004. I have attended community readiness meetings, open houses, presentations, and hearings and have learned about PolyMet's process, their environmental safeguards and their financial reassurance that would be updated annually.

In those early days of information on PolyMet, few if any anti copper/nickel mining activists attended the meetings. Only in the last few years they have been speaking against all aspects of the permitting process and copper/nickel mining.

Main arguments against copper/nickel mining, or sulfide mining as they call it, are that it might, may or could pollute area lakes, rivers and streams. Even What ifs. One person at a presentation asked, "What if a meteor hits the mine?" They say they want proof that it can be done safely, and evidently they think natural disasters should be stopped by mine operations.

When we use as examples the mines at Flambeau in Wisconsin, Stillwater in

Montana or Eagle Mine in Michigan they aren't satisfied. PolyMet's ore body has a low sulfur content of less than 3% compared to Flambeau that had 30% sulfur. They do not acknowledge the new mining technology that has been used in other parts of the United States, and in Canada.

The opposition will bring up Mount Polley in British Columbia and the horrible breach of its tailings pond in 2014. They don't say how many times the mining company applied for water discharge permits, beginning ten years earlier, that the Ministry didn't address. This is what led to the breach of the tailings pond walls. These were far steeper than what PolyMet proposes for their double-walled tailings pond.

They also bring up Gold King in Colorado in 2015. The EPA released toxic water into the Animas River from a mine that had been idle since 1920. It was cheaper to release the water than to build a wastewater treatment facility. There were no reports of any fish lost and within weeks the Animas River was opened to tourists. Rafters are on the river, and fishermen are fishing the

river and other streams that were affected. An independent study of water quality in the Animas River after the spill shows major human health concerns were short-lived.

The lawsuit against Reserve Mining Company over taconite tailings dumped into Lake Superior were deemed asbestos-like fibers. Today we have Black Beach near Silver Bay where millions of tons of tailings washed up on shore. This beach is hailed the most beautiful beach on Lake Superior.

Accidents happen. There are no guarantees against that. When they happen, they are addressed and mitigated. And nature plays a big part in the recovery of the land and waters as well.

CWCS believes the state has been very thorough in its permitting processes. We trust the science and findings of the state agencies' experts which show the PolyMet NorthMet Project can protect human health and the environment.

The project should be allowed to move forward with its promise of much needed jobs and significant economic benefits to our communities.

\$5

# CWCS RAFFLE

\$5

Tickets available at The Great Outdoors, Zaverl's Bar, Ely Shopper, Arrowhead Outdoors (formerly Skube's), LaTourell's Resort, and Blomberg's in Ely & Babbitt. Joe's Marine in Ely and at Our Place in Finland.



**1st Prize**

**Evinrude 25HP E-Tec with electric start & tilt**  
(provided by Joe's Marine in Ely, MN)

**2nd Prize**

**2-Night Stay at Big Lake Wilderness Lodge** (donated by Big Lake Wilderness Lodge/John Swenson)

**Birch Bark Framed 'Boundary Waters Camp' print**



**3rd Prize**

Drawing at Annual CWCS Boat Raffle Fundraiser  
Sunday, Sept. 9, 2018 at Whiteside Park  
at close of Harvest Moon Festival

### CWCS RAFFLE TICKET ORDER FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Number of raffle tickets \_\_\_\_\_ Total amount enclosed, \$5 per ticket \_\_\_\_\_

**When ordering raffle tickets, be sure to send address labels!** We will put the labels on the ticket stubs and hand write your telephone number.

Please enclose check, payable to CWCS. Mail to: CWCS, P.O. Box 1046, Virginia, MN 55792

**EARLY BIRD DRAWING: Membership dues received by July 1st (dues may be paid online at [www.cwcs.org](http://www.cwcs.org)) will be entered into a drawing for a Round of Golf at Giants Ridge, Biwabik, MN. All new and renewing members will be entered in the drawing.**

***Please check your mailing label!***

**If you have paid your membership, there will be a PD 2018 amount above your name.**

**If you have not paid your membership, the top line will be blank. See examples:**

PD 2018  
Mr. Public Access  
Multiple-Use Way  
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**Paid memberships will receive a FREE CWCS bumper sticker!**

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Multiple-Use Way  
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PAID for 2018 

NOT PAID for 2018 

**Order raffle tickets when sending in your dues!**

**Send your membership in today! Get a friend to join!**

\$500 Enthusiast    Name \_\_\_\_\_

\$250 Patron        Address \_\_\_\_\_

\$100 Defender    City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\$50 Advocate     Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 Supporter    E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 Member

New

Renewal

Please enclose your check payable to **CWCS** and mail to:  
CWCS, PO Box 1046, Virginia, MN 55792-1046.

**All Donations are Tax Deductible! Thank you!**

**Fill out & Save This Record**

CWCS Membership paid on \_\_\_\_\_, 2018 with check number \_\_\_\_\_.

Additional Contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ also paid.

**Thanks!**



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