

### (1) Overview

Management of the wilderness resource involves more than simply setting aside land and leaving it alone. To retain its enduring value, the Forest Service manages wilderness and its various uses and activities to be compatible with wilderness character. To achieve the objectives for management of the BWCAW, the Wilderness has been divided into four management areas. The desired future conditions of both the physical and the social aspects of the resources differ slightly between management areas. This establishes a framework for managers that allow them to provide a range of wilderness opportunities for the public while maintaining the overall goals of preserving the natural ecosystem and protecting the integrity of the Wilderness for future generations.

The four wilderness management areas and desired conditions are:

- **Pristine** – The area provides a non-motorized pristine wilderness experience where human presence is almost nonexistent. Trails, portages, and campsites are not constructed or maintained. Leave no trace camping and travel techniques are stressed. Visitors will experience a high degree of freedom, challenge, and risk. Natural forces affect the ecosystem, ecological processes are not measurably affected by visitors, and impacts to the environment by humans are minimal. This area should provide outstanding opportunities for isolation, solitude, high degree of risk, challenge, self-reliance, and rarely encountering other visitors.
- **Primitive** – The area provides visitors with a primitive non-motorized wilderness experience in an unmodified environment. These areas are generally off main travel routes for those that are seeking solitude and challenge, but do not wish or are not capable traveling to the pristine areas. Natural forces affect the ecosystem, ecological processes are slightly affected by visitors, and impacts to the environment are moderate where camping occurs and along portages. Impacts are apparent form year to year, and apparent to a moderate number of visitors. This area should provide outstanding opportunities for isolation, solitude, be relatively free from sight and sound of humans, high degree of risk, challenge, self-reliance, and a low frequency of encountering others.
- **Semi-Primitive Non-motorized** - The area provides visitors with a semi-primitive non-motorized wilderness experience in a predominately unmodified environment. These areas are generally on main travel routes, where a visitor expects to encounter others more frequently, and solitude is not a high priority. A lesser degree of challenge, risk, and freedom is provided here. Natural forces affect the ecosystem, and natural conditions are moderately affected by visitors, and impacts to the environment are moderate where camping occurs and along portages. Impacts from visitors are noticeable and impacts persist from year to year to most visitors. Opportunities for isolation and solitude are moderate to low. The frequency of encountering others is moderate. Challenge and risk for this area are moderate to low.

- **Semi-Primitive Motorized** - The area provides visitors with a semi-primitive motorized wilderness experience in a slightly modified natural environment. Motor lakes were designated in the 1978 BWCAW legislation. Visitors should expect to see a high number of boats with motors. The lakes are generally on the periphery of the Wilderness. Visitors will experience considerably less solitude, freedom and challenge. Natural forces affect the ecosystem, and natural conditions may be substantially affected by visitors. Impacts to the environment often persist from year to year and are readily apparent to most visitors. Opportunities for isolation and solitude are low. The frequency of encountering others is moderate to high while traveling and moderate on campsites. Motorized watercrafts are permitted and will be noticeable along major travel routes and portages, and near major entry points. Challenge and risk for this area are moderate to low.

## (2) Monitoring Activities

- A. Monitoring questions for social conditions and land stewardship
  1. Visitor Use
  2. Compliance with Rules, Regulations reserving/issuing permits
  3. No Show Rate for overnight and day use motor permits
  4. Social Encounters – levels of crowding
- B. Monitoring for campsite conditions
  1. Shoreline disturbance
  2. Campsite area
  3. Non-vegetated area
  4. Exposed mineral soil
  5. Tree damage
  6. Root exposure
  7. Trails
  8. Erosion
- C. Monitoring for the 10-Year Wilderness Challenge

As the Forest Service began to evaluate our stewardship efforts for wilderness we discovered that in 2003, only 18 percent of the 406 wildernesses under our care were managed to a minimum stewardship level. That is why the Chief adopted the “10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge” (10YWSC) recommended by the Chief’s Wilderness Advisory Group. By adopting the 10YWSC, we are renewing our commitment to wilderness by pledging to bring all 406 wildernesses we administer up to a minimum level of stewardship within 10 years – as we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wilderness Act in 2014. This is an ambitious goal, which will require an interdisciplinary approach. Wilderness encompasses a myriad of resources that are integral to its whole, including recreation, heritage, air, water, soil, wildlife, fish, range, and fire.

A wilderness is considered to be managed to a minimum stewardship level when achieving a cumulative accomplishment level score of 60 or greater on the following 10 elements:

- 1) Direction exists in either the Forest Plan or subsequent planning document, that updated or amended the Forest Plan, that addresses the natural role of fire in wilderness and considers the full range of management responses.
- 2) The wilderness was successfully treated for non-native, invasive plants.
- 3) Monitoring of wilderness air quality values is conducted and a baseline is established for the wilderness.
- 4) Priority actions identified in a wilderness education plan are implemented.
- 5) This wilderness has adequate direction, monitoring, and management programs to protect opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.
- 6) The wilderness has a completed recreation site inventory.
- 7) Existing outfitter & guide operating plans for the wilderness direct outfitters to model appropriate wilderness practices and incorporate appreciation for wilderness values in their interaction with clients and others. Needs assessments are completed for new operations or for major changes to existing outfitter programs.
- 8) The wilderness has adequate direction in the Forest Plan to prevent degradation of the wilderness resource.
- 9) The priority information needs for the wilderness have been addressed through field data collection, storage and analysis.
- 10) The wilderness has a baseline workforce in place.

### (3) Evaluations and Conclusions

#### A. Monitoring for social conditions & land stewardship.

<b>BWCAW Public Contacts</b>							
Public Contacts	LaCroix	Kawishiwi	Tofte & Isabella	Gunflint	Supervisor's Office	Laurentian	Totals
Field Contacts	300	1137	865	982	0	0	3284
BW Permits Issued at FS Facility	670	6406	2885	3104	489	182	13736
BWCAW Video User Viewers	2010	25624	8655	9312	1467	728	47796

<b>BWCAW Reservation Lottery 2003-2006 Statistics</b>				
Year:	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total Number of Applications:	7667	7087	7490	813
<b>Successful Applicants</b>				
Day Use Motor	2896	2487	2460	2481
Day Use Motor – Canada	17	17	15	28
Overnight Motor	779	766	782	741
Overnight Paddle	3407	3221	3085	3300
Overnight Hiker	4	3	2	0
<b>Total:</b>	<b>7103</b>	<b>6494</b>	<b>6344</b>	<b>6550</b>
<b>Denied Applicants</b>				
Day Use Motor	470	492	1063	1455
Day Use Motor – Canada	4	6	8	9
Overnight Motor	54	52	52	90
Overnight Paddle	36	43	23	28
<b>Total:</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>1146</b>	<b>1582</b>
<b>Method of Application</b>				
Website	80%	84%	94%	95%
Mail	16%	14%	4%	3%
FAX	4%	2%	2%	2%

<b>Campsite Visits</b>		
Ranger District	Campsites Visited in 2005	% of District Campsites Visited
Kawishiwi	Visited 740 out of 777	%
LaCroix	Visited Out of	%
Gunflint	Visited Out of 536	%
Tofte	Visited Out of 324	%

**B. Monitoring for campsite conditions.**

<b>Campsites</b>	<b>LaCroix</b>	<b>Kawishiwi</b>	<b>Isabella &amp; Tofte</b>	<b>Gunflint</b>	<b>Total</b>
Routine campsite maintenance	250	1206	438	718	2612
Latrines Dug	14	80	37	58	189
Latrines Reset	0	2	0	0	2
Fire Grates Replaced	3	10	7	5	25
Tent Pads Rebuilt		1	3	4	8
Campsite Erosion Control Projects	3	5	5	6	19
Tree Planted at Campsites	0	21	81	24	126
<b>Trees</b>					
Hazard Trees Felled	106	151	62	26	345
Trees Bucked	102	301	280	307	990
Trees Low-stumped	102	66	41	66	275
<b>Portages</b>					
Rods of Portages Brushed and Cleared	5087	7720	2097	8555	23459
Miles of Hiking Trail Brushed and Cleared	28	0	18	48	94
Water Bars Cleaned	55	171	130	170	526
Water Bars Installed	25	4	20	41	90
Portage Tread Projects	2	12	6	8	28
Square Footage of New Boardwalk	0	300	820	1920	3040
Check Dams Installed	0	28	0	0	28
Culverts Installed	0	2	0	0	2
Illegal Site Rehabilitation	0	0	1	1	2
<b>Training/Refreshers # of Employees</b>					
Level II LE Refresher	4	10	8	6	28
Cross Cut Saw Refresher	1	12	6	12	31
CPR/First Aid	4	24	6	9	43
BWCAW Permit Issuance	0	7	0	0	7
<b>Miscellaneous Projects</b>					
Moose Hunter Orientation	0	0	80	50	130
Forest Service Centennial Trail Day	0	10	0	0	10
Heritage Resource Surveys	36 C Sites	11 C Sites	14 CS, 5 portages	0	66
Biological Surveys			8	9	17
Leave No Trace Program (# of students)	Partner w/ Kaw	682	3000	120	3802
Weed Inventories			312 for EZ zone		312
Fire Safety Presentations (Kawishiwi Only)	490 students in 28 classes				
Forest Service Centennial Presentations(Kawishiwi Only)	7 film days, 40 viewers, Displays				
Cross Cut Saw Training for volunteers(Kawishiwi Only)	43 trail volunteers				

### ***C. Monitoring for the Ten-Year Wilderness Challenge***

Each wilderness shall be measured against the accomplishment levels for all 10 primary output elements. A minimum cumulative score of "60" out of "100" must be achieved in order for a wilderness to be considered as meeting the "minimum stewardship level." Currently, the Superior NF has a "48". After the summer of 2006, we hope to have a "55".

#### Element 1 – Fire Plans

- 10 points = Implementation of the Forest Plan fire management direction is evaluated for effectiveness and modifications are made as needed.

#### Element 2 – Non-native, Invasive Plants

- 2 Points = An inventory is completed in wilderness and/or prevention program and targeted management actions have been implemented without a non-native, invasive species management plan. Now.
- 3 Points = A non-native, invasive species management plan has been prepared or direction is provided in the forest plan and includes direction for addressing invasives in wilderness. The Forest will have 2 GS-5 employees starting the summer of 2006 inventorying the Kawishiwi and LaCroix Districts to help reach this level. The Forest is also starting a non-native EIS that will have Wilderness included.

#### Element 3 – Air Quality Values

- 10 Points = Monitor priority sensitive receptors for trends from baseline (other than IMPROVE visibility monitoring)

#### Element 4 – Wilderness Education Plans

- 2 Points = Conduct wilderness education activities without the benefit of a wilderness education plan. Now.
- 4 Points = Develop wilderness education plan, or if existing, review and make necessary modifications. Soon.

#### Element 5 – Opportunities for Solitude

- 4 Points = Adequate direction sufficient to protect opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation is included in the forest plan.

#### Element 6 – Recreation Site Inventory

- 2 Points = A recreation site inventory plan is in place along with a recreation site monitoring protocol.

#### Element 7 – Outfitter and Guides

- 6 Points = All existing outfitter and guide operating plans for this wilderness direct outfitters to model appropriate wilderness practices and incorporate appreciation for wilderness values in their interaction with clients and others. Needs assessments are completed for new types of operations and for major changes in existing operations or increases in numbers of outfitters or service days.
- 8 Points = Monitoring is conducted on at least 25% of outfitter and guides permittees to evaluate if they are implementing conditions related to wilderness values identified in their operating plans. The Forest will have 2 GS-5 employees starting the summer of 2006 to help reach this level.

Element 8 – Adequate Plan Standards

- 6 Points = “Adequate direction” exists in the forest plan or individual wilderness plan that has been formally incorporated into the forest plan.

Element 9 – Information Management

- 2 Points – Inventory and/or monitoring data are collected in the field to address priority management issues, according to methods prescribed in a documented data collection protocol. Now – if we include permit system collections.
- 4 Points – Data collected from inventory and/or monitoring activities are entered into a database, or other suitable analytical tool (such as a spreadsheet), and analyses are conducted. The Forest will pay an employee four extra weeks for data input starting the summer of 2006 to help reach this level

Element 10 – Baseline Workforce

- 4 Points – Unit meets 70% or more of the baseline workforce.