

Monitoring Conducted

Partnerships and collaboration are essential to the welfare of the Superior National Forest (SNF). Since its designation as a National Forest in 1909, the SNF has benefited from the efforts of partners and volunteers working together with Forest Service staff to achieve social, economic and ecological goals.

Each year the SNF continues relationships with existing cooperators and enters into new ones. Collaboration with others has resulted in increased public service and improved land stewardship which has enhanced the Forest's efforts to achieve desired conditions. This overview will share information on groups and organizations with whom the SNF routinely cooperates, along with those whom the SNF has entered into formal agreements, including work contributed by volunteers.

I. Volunteer Agreements

The work of volunteers provides a tremendous value to the public. Volunteers donated their time and talents to the Heritage, Recreation, Wildlife, and Fisheries programs.

-During Fiscal Year (FY) 2007, volunteers to the SNF provided:

- 28,817 hours of service at an appraised value of **\$540,897** to the SNF.

II. Hosted Senior Program

The Forest hosted senior citizens who helped the Forest with a variety of landscape and facility maintenance, as well as clerical tasks. Their efforts provided the Forest with 15,406 hours of service at a value of **\$289,172**.

III. Grants and Agreements

The Forest Service uses many types of agreements to facilitate its work with others. Each of these has specific Congressional legal authority and requirements. The appropriate instrument depends on what the partnership will accomplish, who will benefit, and who is providing funding. The Forest Service must have appropriate statutory authority prior to entering into any agreement, which could result in the use, obligation, or other commitment of any Forest Service resources.

The following are agreements the SNF participated in during Fiscal Year 2007:

- Worked under **71 signed agreements** that provided or obligated a total value of \$1,119,718 with;
 - \$ 690,490 worth of cash and services to the Forest from partners
 - \$ 429,291 worth of cash, goods and services to partners from the Forest

Cooperation Summary Points

- * The total value of the work provided by Partners through grants and agreements, special use permits and other non-agreement based funds, and through the work of volunteers to the SNF equals over **\$1,621,527**.
- * Volunteers to the SNF provided 28,817 hours of service at an appraised value of \$540,897.
- * Hosted Senior Program contributed 15,406 hours of service at a value of \$289,172.
- * Special Use Agreements and other Non-Agreement Based Funds provided \$96,210.
- * There were a total of 71 signed agreements that provided or obligated
 - \$690,490 worth of cash and services to the SNF from partners
 - \$429,291 worth cash, goods and services to partners from the SNF.
- * Partners and Forest Service Staff:
 - Initiated 42 new agreements.
 - Enacted 85 modifications on existing agreements.
- * Individuals donated \$4,758.



Photo 1. Passport In Time volunteers screening material excavated from a Fur Trade Era heritage site on the La Croix Ranger District.

➤ **Initiated 42 new agreements**

- Of the 42 new agreements, there were 15 Collection Agreements, 6 Challenge Cost Shares Agreements, 4 Cooperative Fire Agreements, 7 Interagency and Intra-agency Agreements, 7 Participating Agreements, 2 Road Agreement, and 1 Memorandums of Understanding.

➤ **Made 85 Modification** on existing agreements (some agreements had more than one modification made during the year). These numbers includes only existing agreements where additional funding was provided or collected in FY 07. It does not include existing agreement with cooperators where funds were collected under a Special Use Agreement.

IV. Special Use Agreements and other Non-Agreement Based Funds

This category includes cooperative endeavors primarily with those who use forest resources, including resorts that are located on the forest, and other land use such as minerals, gravel and road use. The total amount of funds sent to the Forest in FY 07 was \$96,210.

V. Donations

The Forest was pleased to receive \$4,758 in donations from individuals.

VI. Total value of Formal Agreements and Volunteers

Formal agreements and the volunteer efforts of Partners led to a tremendous amount of work on the SNF that would not have been accomplished without their help. The total value of the work provided by Partners through grants and agreements, special use permits and other non-agreement based funds, and through the work of volunteers to the SNF equals over **\$ 1,621,527**.

VII. Other Cooperative Activities

The Superior National Forest cooperates with all levels of governmental entities, including Lake Associations, Townships, Counties, a variety of federal entities, and the State, especially the Department of Natural Resources. The Forest has been an active member of the Minnesota Forest Resource Council and its subsidiaries, to ensure that the efforts of all land management agencies are effective at the landscape level.

The Forest has had numerous cooperative endeavors with non-government organizations. These informal partnerships have not been documented through the formal agreement process and are not accounted for in the numbers listed above. However, they do greatly benefit the SNF.

One such example, as demonstrated in the picture above, is the development and implementation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans, where Forest Service staff works with local residents, local elected officials, County officials, volunteer fire departments, the Department of Natural Resources, and others to develop management practices across land ownership to reduce the threat of wildfire while achieving the overall goal of improved forest health on a landscape scale.

VIII. International Cooperation

Heart of the Continent Partnership (HOCP): HOCP is a newly formed international collaboration of over twenty agencies and organizations that care for the largest expanse of public green-space in the heart of North America. This 5.5 million acre landscape spans the international border between northeastern Minnesota and southwestern Ontario and includes the Quetico Provincial Park, the Superior National Forest, Voyageurs National Park, portions of Ontario forests and numerous Minnesota state forests and parks. During FY 2007, HOCP made significant internal progress building relationships and laying the foundation for a strong organization, such as developing a mission, vision, values, action areas, and themes. An alliance of non-profit organizations with a stake in the region's ecological and economic health, together with the public land agencies, are currently taking part in HOCP, meeting quarterly, talking, building relationships, and



Photo 2. Volunteer fire chiefs, DNR and Forest Service staff working together on St. Louis County Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

considering ways to work together. This is a huge and ongoing success as these groups have never before met to collaborate on this level.

Fire Program: The Superior National Forest and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources continue to work together to manage wildland fires along the international border. This close working relationship was exemplified by the Ham Lake Fire. Significant events that highlight this cooperation include the use of Canadian C-415 to protect structures along the Gunflint Trail, representatives from Canada and United States participating in each others Incident Management Teams and Dispatch Centers, sharing of resources along the common zone to meet critical fire management objectives and Thunder Bay refurbishing fire hose at reduced cost for the US Forest Service.

IX. Partnership Examples

Partnerships run the gamete of interests in support of the Forest. The following describes a portion of the wide variety of work done in fiscal year 2007.

Vegetation Management

- Planted 32,000 seedlings in blowdown or burned areas.
- Planted 10,000 seedlings in other areas of the Forest.
- Seeded Hush lake with wild rice seedlings.

Wildlife

- Monitored boreal owls and other breeding and migrating owls.
- Monitored population changes in heather voles and bog lemmings on the east side of the Forest using special trap lines to determine their presence and distribution.
- Surveyed and studied lynx, grouse, wolf, eagle, osprey, fisher and martens.
- Constructed great gray owl platforms, and maintained nest boxes.
- Constructed and maintained wildlife opening, and moose browse areas.

Recreation

- Maintenance and reconstruction including log removal and brushing; installation of water bars, checks, and drainage features; and re-capping was completed on portages, hiking trails and snowmobile trails throughout the SNF. In particular, work on was completed on the following *portages*: Back Bay, Wind Lake to Basswood, Trident Lake to Frog Lake, Birch Lake to Frog Lake, Knife River and Moose Lake to Wind Lake, and Stuart River. In addition, work was done on the following *trails*: Secret Blackstone, Taconite, Yukon, Laurentian, Pequaywan, Wolf Track, Sturgeon River, Kekekabic, Pow Wow, the northwest portion of Snowbank, and Angleworm.
- Operated campground concessions, welcomed and educated visitors, maintained and restored campsites, and removed hazard trees.
- Issued BWCAW permits and delivered information to wilderness visitors.
- Assisted with winter freight needs and hauled fire grates and latrines into the BWCAW during the winter using sled dogs.
- Constructed and/or maintained access to Tommila Lake and Moose Lake access.
- Provided interpretive items to the public at four district offices.

Planning and Research

- Provided GIS, maps, mineral, and geology information for mineral prospecting permits environmental impact statements.
- Researched and authored article on woody biomass utilization.
- Provided funding for the Forest to complete an environmental analysis.
- Organized the Forest's archived documents and photos into a searchable system and enter them into an easily researchable database.
- Excavated the National Forest portion of the Table Rock Falls site to obtain data for use in the evaluation of the site to the NRHP.
- Database entry, archaeological accessioning, and GIS data entry for the SNF Heritage program.
- Joint management efforts in the Sand Lake Seven Beavers Cooperative area.

A partnership to highlight is **Chik-Wauk**, a historical resort on the edge of the BWCAW that is being renovated into a museum and nature center with an anticipated opening date of 2010. Through a special use permit and a challenge cost share, the Gunflint Trail Historical Society (GTHS) raised donations of \$300,000 in FY 07 for work to be done in support of Chik Wauk. Only \$7,397 is counted in this report under funds to the SNF from partners as the great majority of the \$300,000 will be spent in future years. The GTHS' support was instrumental in getting Chik-Wauk listed on the National Register of Historic Place in June 2007.

The Lacroix Ranger District entered into a formal agreement with a citizen's group comprised of nearby landowners to provide monitoring of the Wolf Lake area. Resource monitored per the agreement included (1) Invasive species (2) rare species occurrence (3) road closure effectiveness (4) recreation use and (5) water quality. The citizen's group consisted of 14 landowners near Wolf Lake, 11 of which participated with monitoring. The citizen's group provided \$18,000 of in kind services for this cooperative effort.

Management Considerations

After reviewing monitoring findings, the Forest Interdisciplinary Team identified two management consideration to carry forward.

- * As part of the Forest prioritization approach, systematically seek to increase the number of partners and agreements in order to best meet the needs of our Forest and our public.
- * Involve Regional and Washington Office programs to bring regional and national partnerships to the SNF