

Monitoring Question

How successful is the Superior National Forest's land adjustment program in support and enhancement of Forest Plan desired conditions and objectives and in contributing to efficient and effective stewardship?

Monitoring Conducted

Objective. O-LA-1. *Through various land adjustment procedures & a landownership adjustment map, secure a land ownership pattern that supports & enhances total forest plan resource management objectives.*

Land Purchase

In 2006, the Superior National Forest (SNF) purchased one property, the Berdusco property, a 43.5 acre tract valued at \$240,000. This property was one of seven privately owned parcels within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in Cook County, Minnesota. Acquisition of this property will help maintain the environmental, social and economic benefits of the BWCAW by protecting its wilderness character.

Land Exchange

The SNF completed one exchange and continued to work on one other. The completed land exchange was the Correll exchange in which 720 acres of federal land located in T57 and 58N, R8W were exchanged for Corrells's 760 acres located in T57N, R10W. The exchange consolidated National Forest ownership, increased federal ownership by 40 acres, met Goals 3 and 6 of the Forest Service Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2004-2008, reduced landlines by 3 miles, prevented future development in an undeveloped portion of the SNF, and achieved a gain of 128 acres of wetland in federal ownership.

The ongoing exchange is with Lake County in which 2,814 acres of Lake County lands within the (BWCAW) would be exchanged for Federal lands of equal value. The nonfederal lands are scattered throughout the Lake County portion of the BWCAW. There are 40 separate blocks of contiguous nonfederal ownership with an average block size of 70 acres. The Lake County lands are in all four management areas of the BWCAW: pristine, primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized and semi-primitive motorized. The proposed Federal lands for exchange are located in Township 56 and 57 North, Range 9 West, and T63N R11W. Lake County would divest itself of all ownership in the BWCAW through this exchange.

Pilot Conveyance

The Interior and Related Appropriations Act, known as Pilot Conveyance, permitted the SNF to sell structures that were no longer needed for present or future management needs. The SNF's pilot conveyance project consisted of 4 sites: a portion of the former Isabella Administration site, two former outfitting businesses (Hibler and Border Lakes) located on Fall Lake, and a former tower site in Ely. The SNF undertook the task of subdividing the Isabella site into 9 lots known as Trappers Landing. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, the SNF was successful in selling the Hibler property and six lots within Trappers Landing

(Isabella Administrative Site). With the closing on these seven properties, the SNF deeded 16.16 acres of land with structures and received \$770,001 in sale proceeds.

BWCAW Appraisal

The Thye-Blatnick Act (PL80-733) passed by Congress in 1948 requires that every ten years an appraisal be conducted to determine the appraised market value of the Federal lands within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). Section 5 of the Act states that an amount equal to three-quarters of one per centum (0.75%) of the approved appraised value is paid each fiscal year to Cook, Lake, and St. Louis Counties, State of Minnesota. Payment would be in lieu of the property taxes the counties would have received, if in private ownership, and in lieu of receipts from the 25% fund. The SNF is in the process of completing a new appraisal for the 2008 payment determination. In FY 2006, the research and data collection began. The project will be completed by September, 2008.

Third Party Partnership

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a non-governmental organization and is a vital partner for the SNF in securing parcels of land that would otherwise have been sold and possibly subdivided and developed.

Parcels purchased by TPL and held for future acquisition by the Forest Service includes:

Long Island located on Burntside Lake. This was a privately owned island that had been surveyed and the south half subdivided and marketed. TPL was successful in purchasing the whole island and is currently holding the land for future transfer to the Forest Service. The SNF will be acquiring a portion of the island due to TPL's support in securing Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding.

Chain Saw Sisters was a well known rest stop providing cold beverages at the famous Chainsaw Sisters Saloon and provided a vehicle parking lot at one of the most popular entry points into the BWCAW. This 27 acre parcel is located 18 miles out of Ely off the Echo Trail on Picket Lake and borders the BWCAW at Mudro Lake.

Clarke is a 35.2 acre parcel located on Johnson Lake and is adjacent to the Voyageurs National Park. This property is one of four private parcels on Johnson Lake. TPL's acquisition of the parcel eliminates the possibility of the tract being sold privately and developed.

Another 3rd Party partner was the Friends of the Boundary Waters who assisted the SNF through working with TPL in providing some of the funding necessary for TPL to acquire the Chainsaw Sisters tract of land. Their support lead to the acquisition of the Chainsaw Sisters parcel and preventing it from being further developed and allowing for the land to be returned to a pristine state.

Evaluation and Conclusions

There are no Decade 1 objectives or projected conditions for land adjustments. Instead, the SNF works to secure an ownership pattern that enhances long term resource management objectives. During 2005 and 2006, land adjustments have resulted in a net gain of 69 acres to the SNF. Moreover, completed and pending land adjustments are in fact consolidating SNF lands, particularly within the BWCAW, resulting in ownership patterns that better meet resource management objectives.

Standards and Guidelines

Four applicable Standards and Guidelines (S&G's) were monitored during 2006. These S&G's primarily pertain to guidance criteria for land acquisition and disposal. These S&G's were adhered to, particularly G-LA-5 (Forest Plan p. 2-52) which guides land adjustments within the BWCAW where ongoing exchanges with Lake County are progressing.

Collaborative Opportunities To Improve Efficiency And Quality Of Program

Partnerships

The Trust for Public Land is a vital partner for the SNF. TPL has intervened in securing parcels of land that would otherwise have been sold on the open market and then possibly subdivided and developed. Over the last 17 years, the SNF has developed an immeasurable working relationship with TPL. They have been successful in securing funding to purchase lands through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. TPL has taken the extra step to provide whatever assistance they could in securing tracts of land crucial to the SNF.

Summary Conclusions

- * One 43 acre property valued at \$240,000 was purchased.
- * One land exchange was completed whereby 720 acres of federal land were exchanged for 760 acres of non-federal land.
- * Through the Pilot Conveyance law, seven properties totaling 16.16 acres of land with structures were sold for \$770,000.
- * Research and data collection as part of the Thye-Blatnick Act to appraise Federal lands within the BWCAW was initiated.
- * The Trust for Public Land secured three parcels (Long Island, Chain Saw Sisters, & Clarke properties).