

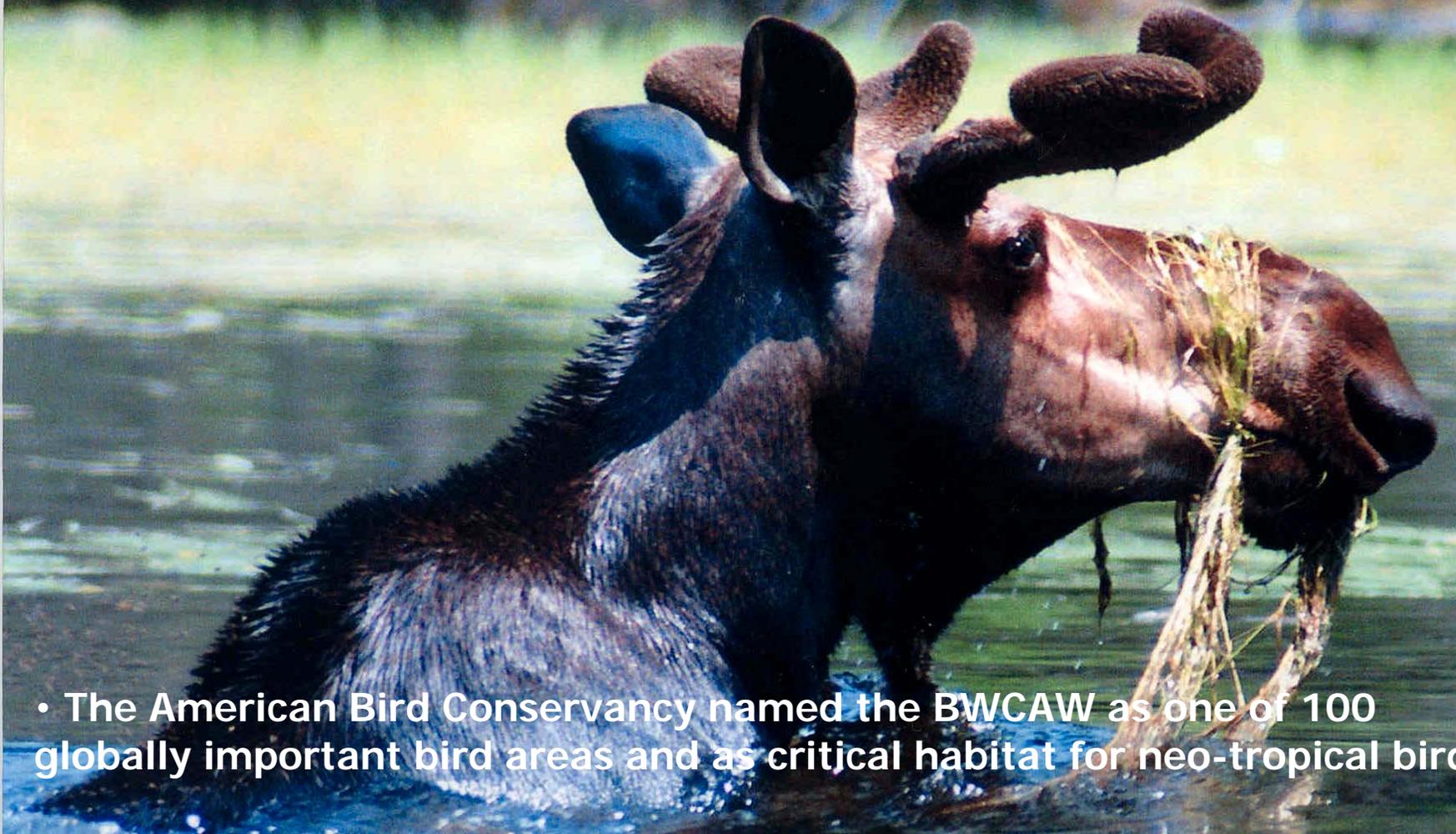


Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness
(BWCAW)

- The BWCAW is the only wilderness of substantial size east of the Rocky Mountains and north of Everglades at over 1 million acres

- The American Bird Conservancy named the BWCAW as one of 100 globally important bird areas and as critical habitat for neo-tropical birds

- National Geographic Society lists the BWCAW as:
"one of the 50 greatest places to visit in a lifetime"





The BWCAW is a unique and complex system:

- **Great abundance and arrangement of lakes –**
 - 1,175 lakes from 10 acres to 10,000 acres
 - Several hundred miles of streams
 - Only large lake land wilderness in the NWPS with 1200 miles of canoe routes.
- **The BW is one of the four key protected areas in the international Quetico-Superior Ecosystem protecting 2,500,000 acres of ecosystem – larger than Yellowstone NP.**

1964 WILDERNESS ACT



After 1964 Designation

- 1966 Permits required
- 1968 Group size limited
- 1971 Designated sites
- 1972 Snowmobiles prohibited
- 1973 Cans and bottles prohibited
- 1976 Visitor Distribution Program
 - »1982 - \$5.00 reservation fee
 - »1994 - reservation system private contract
 - »1999 - NRRS
- 1978 BWCAW Act

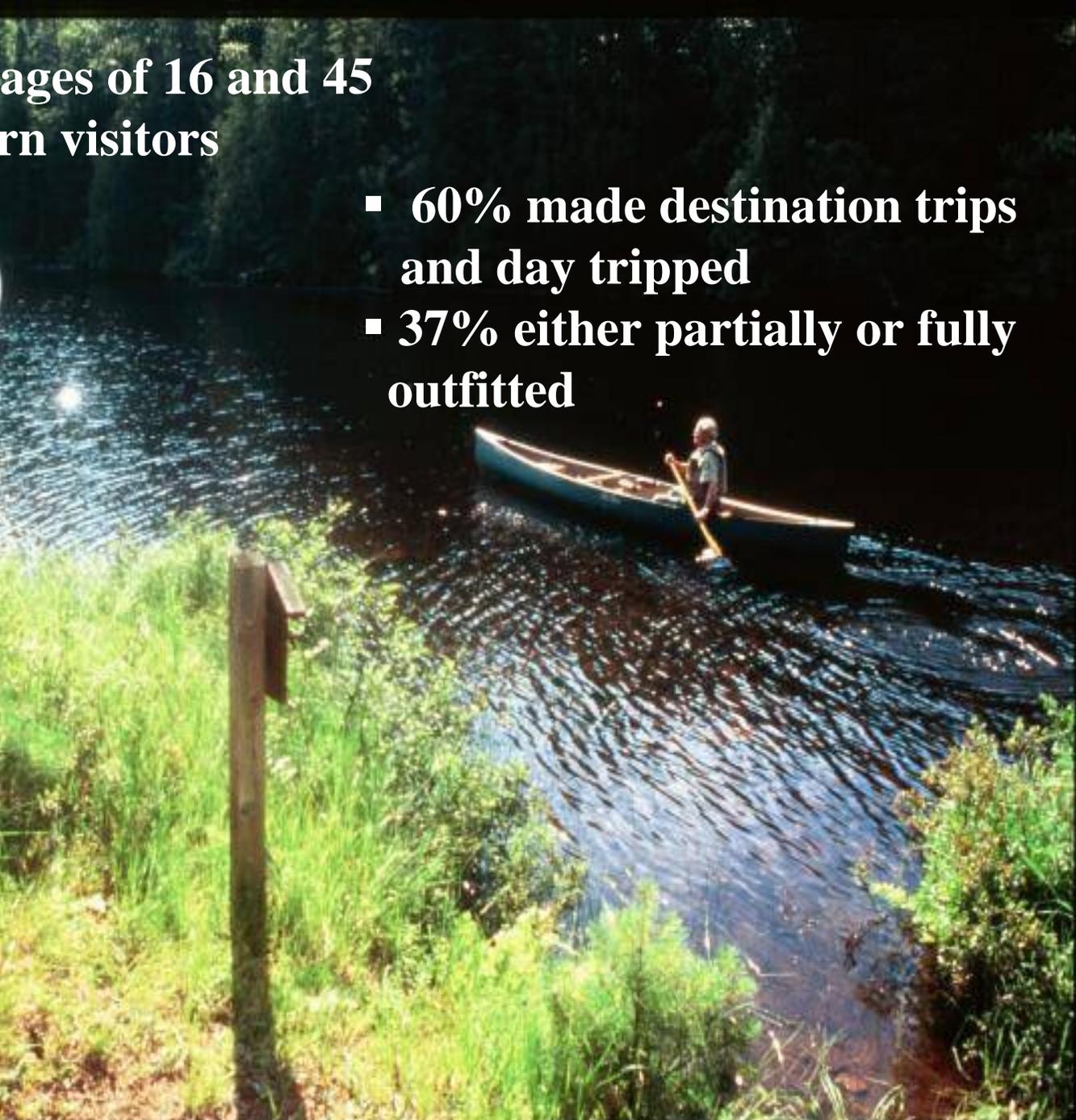
WHO'S USING THE BWCANW?

1,500,000 VISITOR DAYS

- 18% NE MN
- 39% Twin Cities (Minneapolis/St. Paul)
- 7% rest of MN
- 36% other states/countries (adjacent states & Canada)

- 70% between ages of 16 and 45
- 89% are return visitors

- 60% made destination trips and day tripped
- 37% either partially or fully outfitted



A red canoe is positioned on a calm lake, surrounded by a dense forest. The water reflects the surrounding trees and sky. The scene is peaceful and scenic, with a mix of green and yellow foliage, suggesting an autumn setting. The canoe is the central focus, with its reflection clearly visible in the water.

How Are Visitors Using the BWCAW?

- **91% paddle canoeists**
- **8% use motorized watercraft**
- **1% are hikers (16 trails)**
- **Avg. group size = 4**
- **Avg. length stay = 4 nights**

Winter Use.....

- Law enforcement by cross country skiing, dog sled, snowshoeing, and over flights. (need more presence)
- Freighting in supplies for the summer – boardwalk, puncheons, latrines, etc.
- Different rules



Remember: use is not as heavy from Oct 1 – April 30, but permits are still required and rules and regulations must always be followed

BWCAW Management Plan Goals and Objectives

- **Protect and Perpetuate Natural Ecosystems**
- **Provide an Enduring Resource of Wilderness for Future Generations**
- **Provide for Unconfined and Primitive Recreation**
- **Management areas – pristine, primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, and semi-primitive motorized**

Standards and Guidelines - Visitor Management

- Visitor use in any travel zone must not produce changes beyond the LAC standards.
- If standards are exceeded, then management action will be taken such as education, length of stay limitations at particular lakes, or quota adjustments

Visitor Management

- Entry point management will provide education, adequate parking and launch facilities commensurate with the types of uses and use levels, info regarding regulations and current resource conditions
- Quota system will distribute visitors and use in a manner that protects the natural resources and wilderness values, and limits the social encounters to that which is appropriate for each management area (4)
- The FS reserves the right to make immediate quota changes if necessary to meet changed conditions

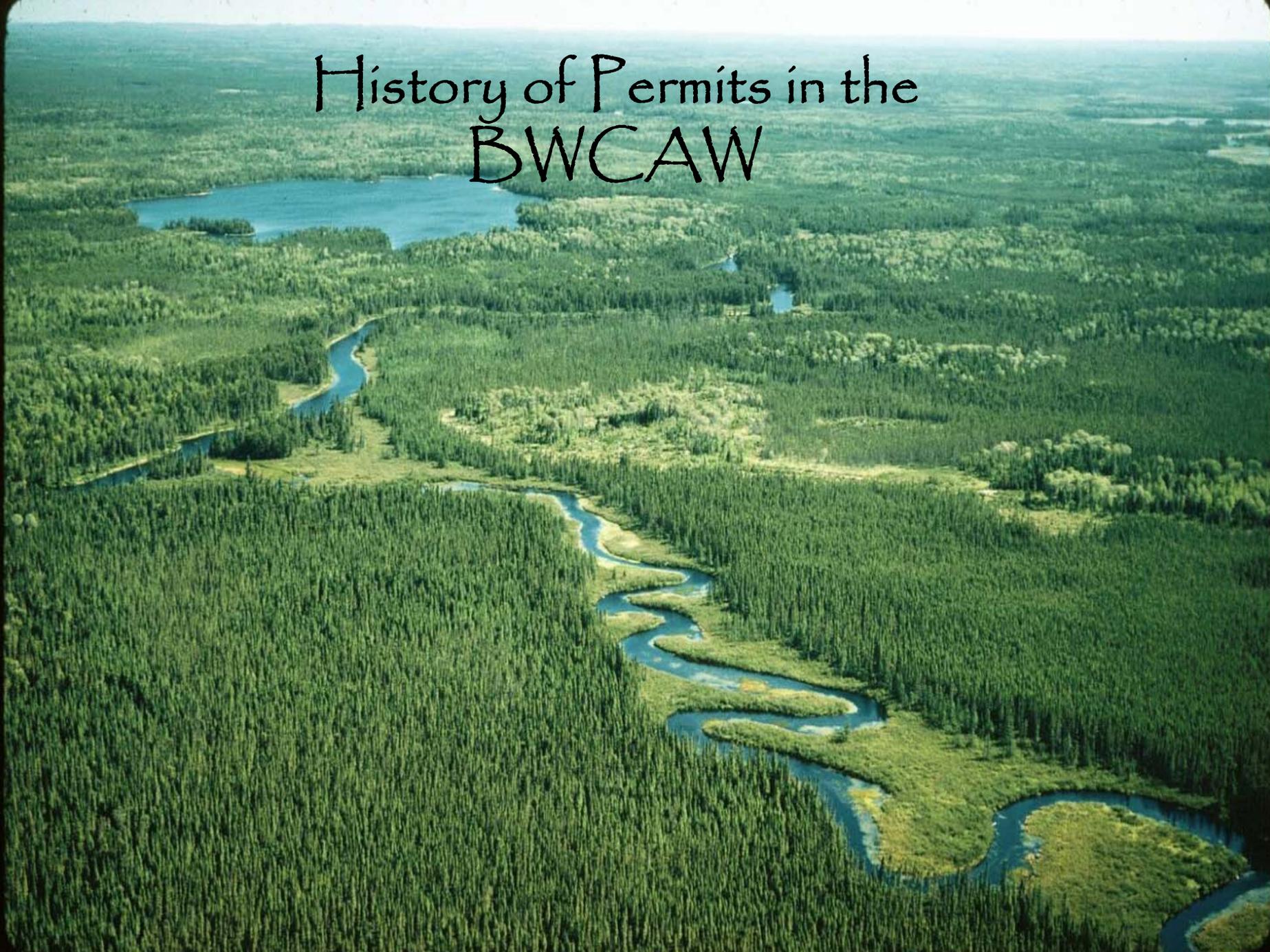
Quotas

- All quotas will be allocated on a daily basis
- Permits are issued by group
- All quotas will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis
- All members of a party must camp on the same site except in Pristine MA
- There will be no overbooking
- Each watercraft will hold a permit stub – allows members of the same party to enter at different times of the day

Quotas

- No quota or fee yet for non-motorized day use
- Motorized use –
 - Weekly quota – determined by seasons that have distinguishable periods of similar use, thereby leveling the use over the entire summer season.
 - Issued by group
 - First-come, first service
 - No-shows won't be put back in the system

History of Permits in the BWCAW



The Start of Permits

- **1966 - First year non-limiting BWCAW permits were required**

Why?

- **To get a handle on the use levels**
- **For user education**
- **Field rangers were spending approximately 75% of their time hauling out cans, bottles and trash, as well as restoring campsite damage**

Early Permit Data

1st decade - BWCA Wilderness use and popularity increased

- **20% of use at one single entry point**
- **80% of use at only 6 of approx. 75 entry points**
- **75% of use on Fri, Sat and Sun**
- **Campsites and portages in some areas were overused and showing signs of resource problems (hardening of sites, gullied portage trails, site enlargement, lack of fire wood, human waste exposed, etc.)**
- **Social issues occurring such as crowding on portages**

Early Permit Data Conclusion

BWCAW was big enough to handle total current use at that time, but data from non-limiting permits in first few years indicated a need for a better spread of visitor use by geography and time.

Establishing BWCAW Quotas

- **Initial quotas were developed using travel models**
 - **Based on information collected from visitor trip diaries and visitor surveys**
 - **Computer model analyses helped with entry point quota distribution**
 - **A predictable, stable relationship was found to exist between the entry point used and the patterns of campers once inside the BWCAW.**
- **Limits were set based on the # of approved campsites on lakes and the optimum rate of entry given the capacity of each and the desired level of campsite occupancy. The hope is that no lake is over 60% of site capacity at one time.**

Current Visitor Distribution Program

- In effect from May 1- September 30
- Permits required for all users
- Quotas limit the number of groups per entry point per day/week for all overnight use and day use motor use
 - Groups size limited to 9 people
 - No more than 4 watercraft per group
- Self Issue Permits for non-motor day use and all use during off season

Current Visitor Distribution Program

- **Approximately 75 entrance points**
- **Overnight quotas vary by entry point**
 - 1-26 overnight quotas per day
 - Overnight motor is a subset and regulated by a separate overnight weekly quota. Need the night and the week open, and most of these reservations go in the lottery)
- **Day use motor quota vary by entry point and by week**
 - Day Use Motor use is regulated by a weekly quota

Current Visitor Distribution Program

Lottery - January 15

- Application Period is Nov.1-Jan. 15 each year (we are looking to change to Jan 1)

- Internet/Fax/Mail Reservation begin Jan 20 (95% on web)
- Phones Reservations begin February 1
- Approximately 40,000 transactions/season (38,000 for 2005)
 - \$12.00 reservation fee
 - \$20.00 user fee deposit (overnight)
 - \$10.00 Adult/trip
 - \$5.00 Youth or Discount/trip

Quicks - Cooperators/FS calls RA for availability, handwrite permits



**Reserve *Your* Place
Under the Stars™**
National Recreation Reservation Service

BWCAW.org

[Changed Conditions](#)

[Lottery](#)

[Entry Map](#)

[Permit Issuing Stations](#)

[Availability](#)

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[Trip Planning Guide](#)

[What To Know Before You Go](#)

[Safety First](#)

[Rules and Regulations](#)

[Contacts](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Logout](#)



Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness
Permit Reservation Center (1-877-550-6777)

WELCOME TO THE BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA WILDERNESS
Part of the Superior National Forest,
Managed by the USDA FOREST SERVICE

You may now complete Lottery Applications for wilderness permits for the 2007 season. Lottery applications can be submitted by internet until 5pm CST on January 15, 2007. Applications submitted by mail or fax must be received by 5pm CST on January 10, 2007. [Click Here](#) to submit a Lottery application online and login to the BWCAW reservation system. To submit an application via mail or fax [Click Here](#) to download the application.

[Reserving a Permit](#)

[Canceling a Permit](#)

[Picking up a Permit](#)

[Payments and Refunds](#)

[Seasonal Fee Cards](#)

[Fees](#)

[Non-Profit Organizations](#)

[Reservation Center](#)



Partnerships

- **Cooperators (local businesses)** - The Cooperator offers services to the public, helps issue mandatory visitor use permits for visitor location convenience, and helps the Forest Service provide visitor education to the public.
- **Reservation Service Contractor (phone and web)**
- **Guides and Outfitters**
- **Other Agencies/Governments (customs, immigration, border patrol, state, Quetico, 1854 Authority, Voyageurs NP and First Nation)**
- **Universities – receive at least a dozen applications a year**
- **Friend's of the Boundary Waters Wilderness Organization (ed DVD, NFF funds for dogsled program, NNIS brochure and volunteer stipends)**
- **Eastern Interpretive Association**

Partnerships

An aerial photograph of a large, dark blue lake system surrounded by dense green forest. The lake is divided into several smaller bodies of water by narrow peninsulas and islands, creating a complex network of waterways. The forest appears to be a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees, with varying shades of green. The overall scene is a natural, undisturbed landscape.

Partners can help:

- Provide trip planning materials (maps, guidebooks, brochures), assistance, and advice
- Make reservations for users and issue permits
- Provide information on rules and regulations and Leave No Trace
- Model good travel and camping techniques and practices
- Give financial assistance for developing educational program (Education DVD)

Cooperator Partnership Agreements –

Cooperator will: (if agreements not signed, no access to reservation system)

- Comply with BWCAW permit issuance procedures as outlined in the **Field Operations Guide (FOG)** – new info added every year
- Utilize the rules and regulations provided on the back of permits and explain them to the party leader and encourage acceptance. Show the education DVD/video/flipbook
- Issue day use motor permits free of charge
- Return all permit books as completed, and any permit items no later than October 1.

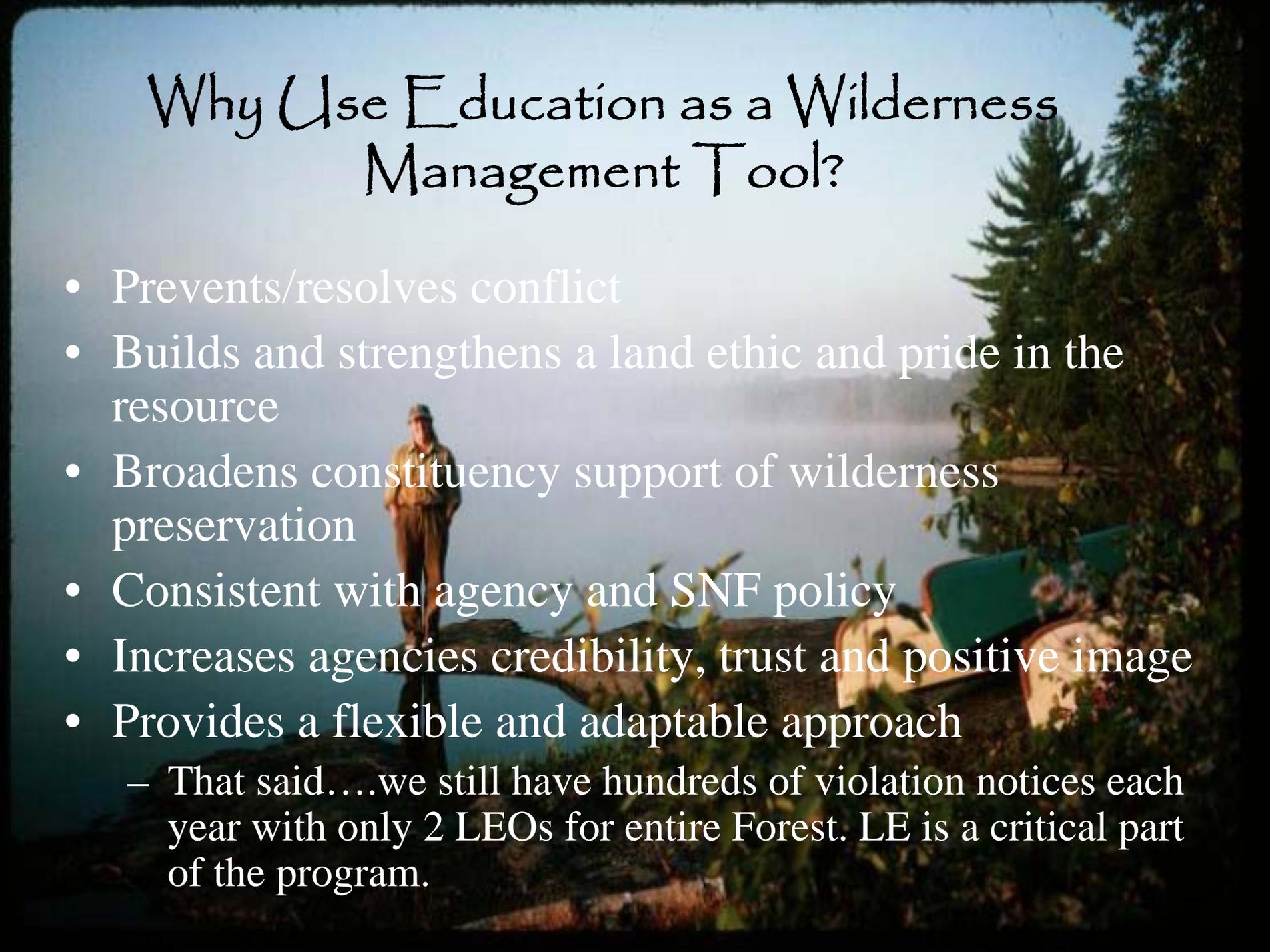
Cooperator Partnership Agreements –

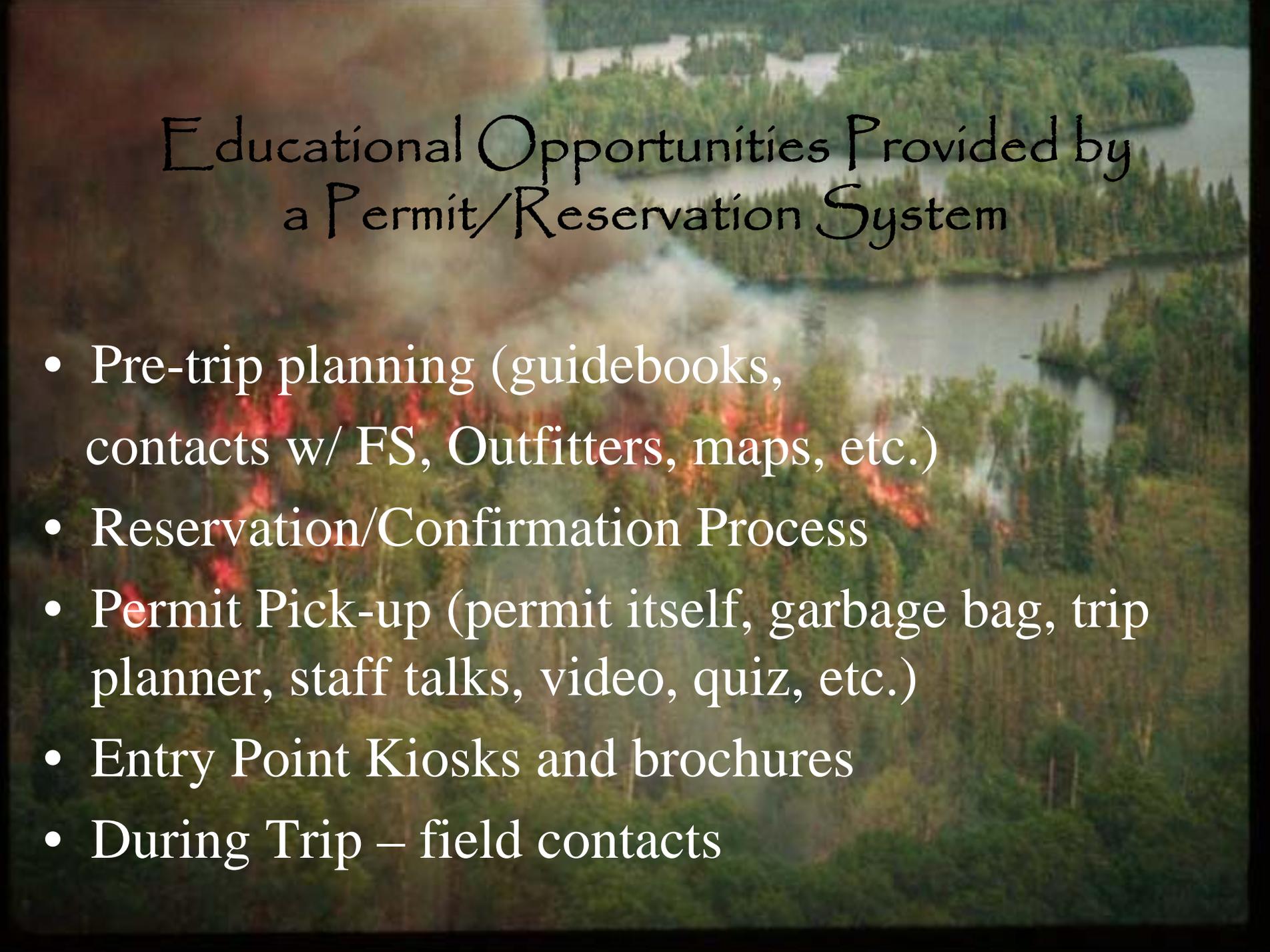
- Call the BW Reservation Center when issuing a permit that was to be picked up at a Forest Service office. Agrees to not issue a permit that was to be picked up at another cooperating business.
- Make those reservations associated with the Cooperator's/Guide's business only in a client's name
- Issue travel permits to walk-ins as is done for clients. Cooperators may collect an issuance fee, which will not exceed \$2, for each overnight travel permit issued.
- Failure to meet Agreement expectations can result in probation, termination, or non-renewal of their Agreement.

BWCAW Rules & Regulations

- Permits Required all year
- Designated Campsites, but not assigned – 2, 200 sites in the BW
- Use Fire Grates
- Use Latrines
- Observe Group/Watercraft limits
- Observe Motorboat restrictions & horse power limits
- No Cans & Bottles
- No Saddle, pack or draft animals except sled dogs
 - Huge emphasis on education

Why Use Education as a Wilderness Management Tool?

- Prevents/resolves conflict
 - Builds and strengthens a land ethic and pride in the resource
 - Broadens constituency support of wilderness preservation
 - Consistent with agency and SNF policy
 - Increases agencies credibility, trust and positive image
 - Provides a flexible and adaptable approach
 - That said....we still have hundreds of violation notices each year with only 2 LEOs for entire Forest. LE is a critical part of the program.
- 
- A person wearing a hat and outdoor gear stands on a large log in a wilderness setting. The background shows a body of water and trees under a clear sky. The scene is peaceful and natural.

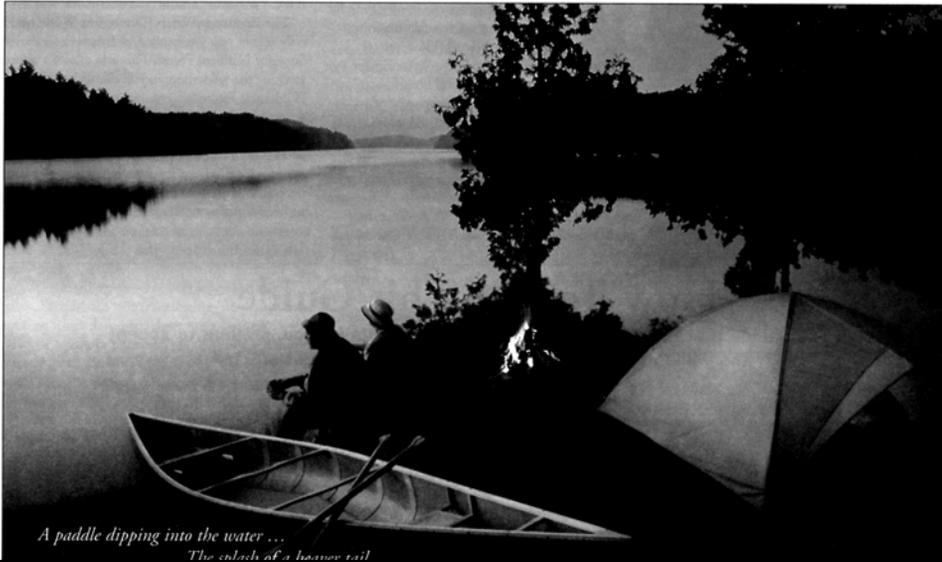
An aerial photograph of a large, calm lake surrounded by a dense forest of evergreen trees. A small, forested island is visible in the upper right portion of the lake. The water is a light, greyish-blue color, and the surrounding land is covered in lush green and brown foliage, suggesting a natural, undeveloped area.

Educational Opportunities Provided by a Permit/Reservation System

- Pre-trip planning (guidebooks, contacts w/ FS, Outfitters, maps, etc.)
- Reservation/Confirmation Process
- Permit Pick-up (permit itself, garbage bag, trip planner, staff talks, video, quiz, etc.)
- Entry Point Kiosks and brochures
- During Trip – field contacts



BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA WILDERNESS TRIP PLANNING GUIDE



- To help visitors determine if a wilderness trip is right for them
- How to obtain reservations and permits
- Changing forest conditions
- Prescribed burning
- Map/BWCAW Entry Points
- Outfitters & guides
- Leave No Trace/ Wildland Ethics
- BWCAW Rules & Regulations
- Safety
- State resources/ DNR info
- Fishing/hunting, watercraft regs
- Bears & food storage
- REA accomplishments
- Cooperators/permit stations
- Planning for Large Groups
- Winter travel
- Hiking info
- BWCAW Wilderness Kit info

BWCAW Trip Planning Guide

Available at all permit issuing stations and designed to be mailed to people who call, write or email a request for BWCAW information.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness



*What To Know
Before You Go*



USDA-FOREST SERVICE
Superior National Forest

What To Know Before You Go

- This brochure contains critical information before beginning a trip.
- Takes the most critical information from the BWCAW Trip Planning Guide and presents it in a more condensed version.
- Designed to accompany wilderness permit reservation confirmation letters sent to visitors by Reserve America.
- Also available at all permit issuing stations.
- If a trip leader did not receive one with his/her confirmation letter or a quick permit is issued, then it's given to the group.



BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA WILDERNESS

This certifies that

has received the U.S. Forest Service visitor education message and agreed to be a conscientious wilderness visitor and will **Leave No Trace.**

“Gray cards” are given when a visitor has watched the short LNT DVD, and have been given a thorough review of the rules and regulations on the back of the permit.

The cards are then presented at subsequent visits to by-pass viewing the DVD again, and only current conditions are discussed. The cards are good for 1 year.

Expiration Date



Visitor's Signature

Issued By

"Wilderness to the people of America is a spiritual necessity, an antidote to the high pressure of modern life, a means of regaining serenity and equilibrium."

Sigurd Olson



Entry Point: Tools

- Bulletin boards/
- Information kiosks
- Self-issue permits
- Registration books
- Brochures
- FS Personnel

• Location specific target messages for “magnet areas”



\$800,000 generated from REA Funds for wilderness

- Portage and campsite work performed with minimum tools
- Wilderness challenge elements
- Extended station hours



- Campsite rehabilitation
- Heritage surveys
- FPO work
- Permit issuing admin.
- Visitor permit checks
- Rules and regulations reviews by wilderness rangers



Current BWCAW Concerns

- Change in national trends – more visitors are base-camping close to EP's - may need to establish stay limits for certain lakes and we have FP direction to do so
- Travel models are slowly changing and need re-evaluation.
- Winter use is increasing - we need more of a winter presence
- Have large workforce and still aren't 'up to standard'
 - 25 summer temp. employees in the BWCAW '06
 - 16 permanent wilderness field people (part time)
 - 3 District recreation/wilderness managers for 4 Districts
 - 4 people in the SO that deal with wilderness (2 of us are solely wilderness)
 - Permit issuers at District front desks issuing wilderness permits
 - This work force would not be possible with out REA funds (fee demo)

Is the Permit/Quota System Worth It?

- Wilderness conditions started to exceed our BWCAW standards with noticeable portage erosion, campsite damage and enlargement, trash and overcrowding.
- The BWCAW was becoming more popular every year.
- It was becoming difficult to get a quality wilderness recreation experience overall, and impossible on popular travel zones.
- Was a permit system the first attempt to resolve the problems? No!
- The Forest first tried field contacts, educational brochures and signs at entry points, public announcements, presentations, office displays, user registration, etc.

Is the Permit/Quota System Worth It?

- What's the hitch?
 - The visitor *may* lose spontaneity (they still have the “quick permit” option)
 - A visitor may not get a permit for the most popular locations
 - Managing the reservation system contract and daily operations takes time and money
 - Providing the permits and all materials associated with them also takes times and money

In Summary

- Our permit system with quotas allows wilderness standards to be upheld by controlling the use levels at entry points and in travel zones.
- It ensures wilderness ethics and leave no trace messages are heard and/or read.
- It allows the visitor to hear about current conditions on fires, blow down, etc. and to prepare before coming.
- The user fees are retained on-site and are needed in all aspects of wilderness work from extended station hours for permit issuing, to backcountry projects, work supplies, & extra seasonal work
- Surrounding communities benefit financially

BWCAW User Education Video/DVD

- Collaborative project with NPOs, agencies, local businesses and focus groups.
- 2 versions – 8 minutes and 20 minutes (same info)
- User must watch 8 minute version at any issuing station to receive permit
- 20 minute version can be requested and sent at the time of the reservation
- Great example of groups at odds working together for a common goal
- Future project – video specifically designed for motorized users