



The School Trust Lands Exchange Scam

Legislation has been passed in the U.S. House of Representatives to trade approximately 86,000 acres of State school trust fund lands that remain within the borders of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness for Federal land in Superior National Forest. As part of the exchange, HR 5544 includes an area called the Mesabi Purchase Unit. Removing Federal protections from this land would be a strip mining give-away to PolyMet, Twin Metals, Teck Cominco, and Encampment Resources. HR 5544 also nullifies National Environmental Policy Act requirements for environmental review and public input.

Senators Franken and Klobuchar are now in the process of introducing a companion bill in the Senate. They are considering language that would

incorporate a hybrid land exchange/sale that was negotiated by a State stakeholder process, without public input. Of the 41,000 acres in the hybrid package, less than 1% contain school trust land mineral rights. According to the DNR Lands and Minerals Division, mineral rights on school trust lands that are held by private mining interests will not generate money for the school trust fund.

Removing land from Federal ownership removes Federal protections such as the Weeks Act prohibition of open-pit mining; it would be least costly for companies to mine the highly disseminated mineralization of the Arrowhead Region using the open-pit method. School trust lands exchange legislation is being promoted in preparation for turning the area into a sulfide mining district, with its known footprint of toxic metal leaching that would last for centuries.

We must let Senators Franken and Klobuchar know that any kind of land exchange is not in the best interests of our school children. A complete sale of the State land within the BWCAW to the Federal government would put an immediate and defined source of money into the Permanent School Fund.

by Elanne Palcich

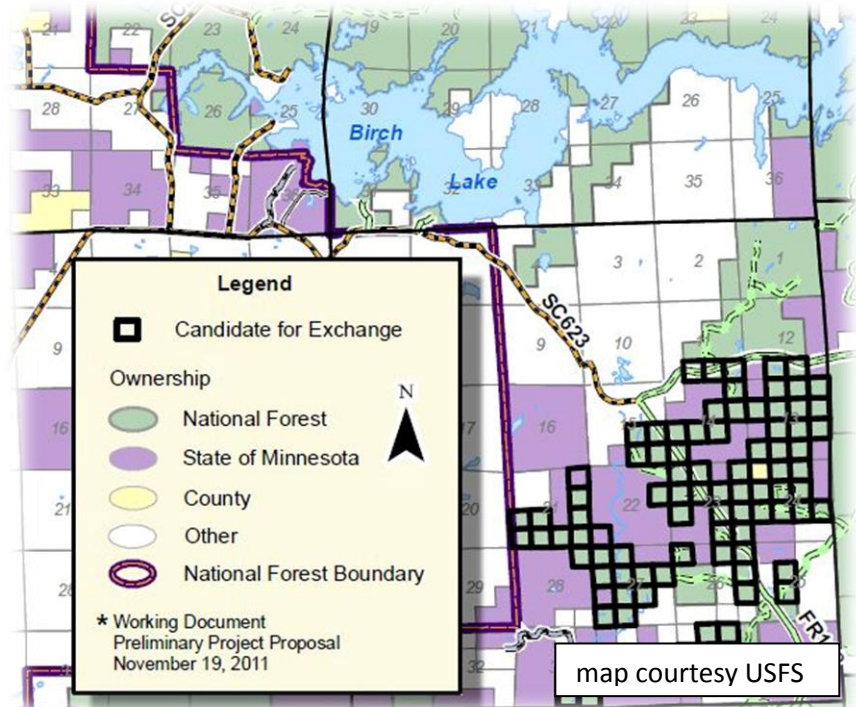
Call Senator Al Franken's office at 202-224-5641 and Senator Amy Klobuchar at 202-224-3244. Tell them we want to keep the legacy of Superior National Forest alive for future generations of school children.

EPA expands funding program to control/halt invasive species.

This federal agency will actually be using dollars from the Great Lakes Restorative Initiative. The defensive approach will call on twenty-one universities to carry out research and encourage creation of refined techniques to prevent further invasions of non-native aquatic life---both those of animals and plants. It will include detection of their DNA.

Eight million dollars will be allocated to these schools and emphasis placed on developing an alarm system to alert ports when new "invasions" are detected.

It's very unfortunate that work didn't begin in earnest when the foreign critters first appeared in the ballast water of ocean ships released when the vessels prepared to take on their cargo in Great Lakes ports. The



number of exotic fish, mollusks and other aquatic species is now at the 180 mark and growing. One of them, the zebra mussel, has been detected in a number of inland lakes despite efforts by the DNR demanding boaters follow strict regulations in ensuring infected equipment will not be the source of transport when the watercraft are used other than in the Great Lakes.

by Glenn Maxham

Minnesota now has 3,643 impaired waters in addition to Lake Superior!

Our focus is always on the health condition of Lake Superior, but we are also concerned with the status of inland waters. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency released data this fall and, as expected, the report was not at all good.

The Federal Clean Water Act requires all states to adopt water quality standards to protect lakes, streams and wetlands from pollution. The standards define how much of a pollutant, bacteria, nutrients,

turbidity, mercury, etc., can be in our water and still meet designated uses such as drinking, fishing and swimming. If a water body fails to meet even one of these standards it will be officially declared impaired.

1,613 of the lakes, streams and wetlands were polluted by toxics (mercury, PCBs and others) and the remaining 1,437 failed due to what the MPCA says were "conventional" pollutants. There are, amazingly, 81 watersheds in this state. The MPCA plans to monitor each of them once every ten years. Fifteen waterways were removed from the impaired list while 551 were added to the list.

by Glenn Maxham



photo by Todd Ronning

Is the five year old ballast water testing facility performing as hoped?

The three and a half million dollar operation on the Montreal Pier in Superior is an impressive collection of pipes and tanks calculated to finding the most effective method of dealing with the persistent problem of invasive aquatic species.. It's a project of the Great Ships Initiative that has a declared intent to combine efforts and concerns of diverse interests: maritime industry, environmentalists, government and academia, in the battle to keep out aquatic life forms not native to the Great Lakes. More simply stated: They want to wipe out the critters as the only viable means of keeping them from populating the Great Lakes and inland waterways.

It's now clear that there's no quick solution and no definitive data has been issued at this five year mark of the project. In his recent News-Tribune report John Myers said "the experimental system seems to be working." The foreign organisms have been zapped with ultraviolet light, exposed to deoxygenation, bathed in lye, subjected to fine mesh filters and other methods.

While some of the experiments have killed the invaders, keeping the chemicals from harming the environment has to be carefully controlled.---making sure a cure isn't worse than the problem!

Meantime the testing goes on and on

by Glenn Maxham

NOAA SEEKS 100% USE OF BIO-FUELS ON GREAT LAKES BOATS

It was unclear in the announcement from the National Oceanic and Atmosphere administration as to whether we will see lake carriers following NOAA's lead in converting its entire fleet from petroleum-based fuel use.

Called the Green Ship Initiative, the agency began looking for ways in 1999 to quit relying on petroleum to power its watercraft with B100 (100%) soy biodiesel as an integral part of its stewardship mission. That conversion project has been completed in all of NOAA's vessels, mostly research ships.

The benefits are considerable and include: decreasing emissions of fossil fuels that contribute to climate change and air pollution, reduces the risks of environmental harm in the event of a fuel spill, improves engine performance and extends engine life, cuts operating and maintenance costs by 20 to 40% and even reduces seasickness by eliminating the offensive odors of gas fumes.

As of now, 150 small vessels on the Great Lakes, government and privately owned, have been converted to the alternative fuel source. The agency noted that many agricultural products can be made into biofuels and that list could even include reprocessed cooking oil!



photo courtesy NOAA

by Glenn Maxham

Congress creates a snag in keeping Asian carp out of the Great Lakes!

Plans to keep the big non-native, always hungry fish from reaching the Great Lakes were fairly well in place and ready to be implemented when Congress put up a roadblock. It did so because the Army Corps of Engineers failed to meet the deadline set by the ruling body. The Corps recently announced the revised plans during a meeting in Traverse City, Michigan. Thus there will be a delay of more than a year and the Corp's report on the project will not be released until late 2013.

For a time there was optimism that an electronic barrier installed near the entry point of the Illinois River into Lake Michigan had stopped the upriver migration. That hope was shattered when the scaly eating machine's DNA was discovered beyond the barrier just a few miles from Lake Michigan.

Work cannot begin until Congress is prepared to release funding required if proposed dams are to be built to keep the bighead and equally unwanted silver carp species from entering Lake Michigan where they would consume the forage vegetation required by native fish and, in time, spread to the rest of the Great Lakes. That eventuality could lead to destruction of a \$7 billion fishing industry.

A fairly quick and effective solution would be to prevent the Illinois River from entering the big lake, especially when considering it had not done so until Chicago initiated reconfiguration of the waterway.

by Glenn Maxham

PolyMet's Latest Propaganda Hype

Ever since the sulfate issue has emerged as contributing to the methylation of mercury and the decline of wild rice stands, PolyMet has claimed that its proposed copper-nickel sulfide mining operations could meet state sulfate standards of 10 mg/l. On October 10, PolyMet announced that it has now come up with a reverse osmosis water treatment system to meet such standards. Reverse osmosis has been around for a long time. If this has been PolyMet's plan, why wasn't it included in its draft Environmental Impact Statement?

PolyMet does not explain how costly this water treatment would be for a full scale mining operation, how often the filters would need to be maintained or replaced, what would happen if the system stopped working, and how the system would be maintained into perpetuity. Nor does PolyMet explain how it plans to prevent sulfate pollution from not only its processing plant waters, but from waste rock piles, tailings, and open pits.

Furthermore, if reverse osmosis treatment is so effective for mining operations, why don't our state agencies require the taconite industry to install such water treatment systems before allowing them to expand? Let's try this treatment out on cleaning up our current sulfate issue before allowing PolyMet to experiment with our waters.

by Elanne Palcich

Cravaack's Bill Set to Destroy the North Woods of the Arrowhead

HR 5544, the Minnesota Education Investment and Employment Act, was introduced by 8th District Representative Chip Cravaack to authorize the exchange of an undetermined number of acres within what is now Superior National Forest for 86,000 acres of State lands within the borders of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). This bill does not account for the mineral rights underlying the surface area of the trust lands and thus leaves the door open for further reduction of Federal forest acreage.

The passage of HR 5544 by the U.S. House of Representatives on September 12 sets the stage for the dismantling of Superior National Forest, the retraction of Federal policy to preserve lands of scenic and recreational value for future generations, the negation of Federal policy requiring environmental review and public input when eliminating Federal lands, and the ignoring of Tribal treaty rights. What HR 5544 does do is facilitate turning the Arrowhead region of northeast Minnesota into a copper-nickel sulfide mining district for the benefit of multinational corporations seeking to extract Minnesota's minerals and sell them on the global market.

Rep. Cravaack has misinformed both his colleagues and his constituents. He has claimed that HR 5544 is for the benefit of Minnesota's school children when in fact there has been no accounting of the actual benefit for the school trust fund; if the mineral rights are owned by private interests, no money from mining would go into the school trust. He claims the minerals are necessary for our strategic interests when in fact the metals would be processed and sold on the global marketplace to

competitors such as China. He claims that no Federal protections will be lost, when lands traded will lose Weeks Act prohibitions against open pit mining, Endangered Species protections, and National Environmental Policy Act requirements for a public environmental review process. In addition, Rep. Cravaack's legislative fast tracking ignores Native American Tribal consultation.

Rep. Cravaack claims that environmental groups have impeded the removal of state trust lands from within the BWCWA when in actuality it was Iron Range legislators who impeded a land sale in the 1990's, losing interest money that would have been generated during the past dozen years.

Rep. Cravaack's bill is a giveaway to multinational mining companies who would find it difficult to get permitted without political intervention on their behalf. Rep. Cravaack ignores the scientific facts which explain why sulfide mining is so insidious, and he ignores the track record left behind by sulfide mining in other states. Rep. Cravaack was born in West Virginia, grew up in Ohio, and his family now resides in New Hampshire. Rep. Cravaack has no roots or ties to the Arrowhead region of northeast Minnesota, and his introduction of this reckless bill demonstrates his lack of knowledge regarding the history of the BWCAW and the economic value of the scenic character of northeastern Minnesota and the North Shore of Lake Superior.

Call Senators Franken and Klobuchar NOW and ask them to refrain from introducing any bill that involves exchanging Federal land for State land. Ask for a complete land sale of the remaining State lands within the BWCAW, or the addition of a fee to BWCAW permits that would go directly in the Permanent School Fund. Ask these two legislators to do what is right for the legacy of the Arrowhead region and the future of our children.

Call Senator Al Franken's office at 202-224-5641 (Washington) or 651-221-1016 (St. Paul) and Senator Amy Klobuchar at 202-224-3244 (Washington) or 612-727-5220 (Minneapolis).

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by Elanne Palcich