



Boundary Waters Advisory Committee

Annual Report BWAC 2003/2004

Mission

***To preserve existing
historic and intrinsically
beautiful trails in the
Boundary Waters Canoe
Area Wilderness of the
Superior National Forest.***

Saving historic trails is akin to saving lives. We are inextricably wedded to our wilderness – without it we can not be complete. Preserving a path in the woods will most certainly lead you to find a peace you didn't know was possible in a place you didn't know existed.



About the Boundary Waters Advisory Committee

We are a non-profit group, established in 2002, as a grass-roots volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation of the historic trails in the BWCA Wilderness. Most of these trails already have a protected status by being listed on the U.S. Forest Service trail inventory. Boundary Waters Advisory Committee is working with the USDA Forest Service and the legislature to return the few remaining, unprotected trails back into the inventory for public use. Additionally, we promote and provide continued trail maintenance of the protected heritage hiking trails in the BWCA.

www.bwac.homestead.com

-1-

The majority of hikers want to protect the BWCAW heritage hiking trails



- *The number of Minnesota hikers exceeds the number of Minnesota boaters, including those who fish from boats.*
- *According to responses, to the BWCAW Management Plan, more than 70% of BWCA hikers want to keep historic trails maintained.*
- *Without trail protection efforts, 2/3 of the existing trails would be gone since the passing of the 1978 BWCAW Wilderness Act.*
- *Hiking is the least intrusive way we can explore and appreciate wilderness*
- *Hiking is socially less imposing to other wilderness visitors than other forms of travel.*
- *Minnesotans appreciate their natural surroundings: 26% camp and 24% are engaged in nature observation or in nature photography.*

Sources: *Minnesota DNR, USDA Forest Service, Boundary Waters Advisory Committee*

Dear Friends

Since it's founding in 2002, the Boundary Waters Advisory Committee (BWAC) has been a steady voice for hikers and for the wilderness trails in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW).

In response to growing concerns about the demise of unprotected hiking trails in the BWCAW, the BWAC rallied to preserve these heritage paths.

*all hiking trails,
on remaining
trails in the*

*We have
hikers, whether
wilderness
maintained.
with other
of a good*

*In 2003-2004
gains towards
protection. To
has been on*

the environmental interest community and we have had success.

We are building a solid foundation from which we will protect wilderness values - and this takes time, patience, and perseverance.

In 2004 we started the process of applying for an IRS 501 c 3 charitable organization status. Our vision is that once this is accomplished we will focus our efforts on preserving trails and on educating the public. Our hope is that many will cherish hiking the trails in the BWCAW, enjoy them, and continue to support our efforts. Hillary Rodham Clinton, as 2000 chair of the White House Millennium Council declared three BWCAW trails as "Community Millennium Trails" to "Honor the Past and Imagine the Future." We too believe that these heritage trails connect people to their land, their history, and their culture.

*Our goal is to preserve
with a special focus
unprotected hiking
BWCAW.*

*been hearing that all
active or not, want
trails protected and
Isolated encounters
visitors are a sign
wilderness experience.*

*we made modest
our goal of trail
date our emphasis
building alliances with*



Nero Jain, Board of Directors - Rebecca Powell, Board of Directors

www.bwac.homestead.com

Message from the President

Without the work of volunteers 2/3 of BWCAW trails would not be open for hiking now. Imagine no Kekekabic Trail, no Sioux Hustler Foot Trail, no Pow Wow Trails, no Brule Lake Trail; and others being overgrown beyond repair. I am thankful for the hundreds of volunteers, from several outdoor organizations, who have volunteered in many ways to preserve these heritage trails.

Considering all the attention today, it to stand up and Yet when we asked happen to wilderness out?" The answer will be overgrown, available. Therefore it out, and volunteer Whenever I meet maintained trails and much they enjoy the offer, it confirms for me that we are doing the right thing.



issues that need has not been easy speak out for trails. ourselves: "What will trails if no one speaks was clear: they closed, and not is important to speak to maintain them. hikers on one of the they talk about how hike and all it has to

In my 15 years of clearing trails of windfalls and brush I have learned two things: A section of trail blocked with tree fall often takes a tremendous amount of work. Yet the amount of work expended for everyone's enjoyment is not obvious to someone hiking that very same section of cleared trail.

Behind each one of those accomplishments is a story of our commitment to wilderness trails and our commitment becomes action through generous contributions from all of our supporters. My hope is that after you read this report, you'll have a better idea of our achievements.

Please join us as wilderness stewards by continuing to support our trail preservation efforts, by volunteering time, money, or by writing to your legislator on behalf of wilderness trails. And please remember to join us for a wilderness hike. Enjoy your wilderness and happy trails!

*Martin Kubik
BWAC, President*

www.bwac.homestead.com

Preserving Our Heritage Trails

Legislative Background

In the 1964 Wilderness Act, Congress set aside lands for the use and enjoyment by all Americans. The BWCA Wilderness Act of 1978 also directed the Forest Service to construct new hiking trails. In addition, the National Environmental Protection Act created categorical exclusion for maintaining trails. In January 2000 President Clinton signed Executive Order #13195, "America's Trails for the 21st Century", that directs federal agencies to work with citizen groups to protect, preserve, and build trails. This executive order has the power of law as stated in the Forest Service Handbook.

The Boundary Waters Advisory Committee (BWAC) has carefully reviewed the legislation pertaining to trail management and has compared it to the BWCAW Management Plan of 1993 issued by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service.

The BWAC learned that during the comment period for the 1993 BWCAW Management Plan, hikers overwhelmingly commented in

favor of maintaining historic hiking trails. The USDA Forest Service chose not to consider the public comments for budgetary reasons and instead removed several trails – the exact number is unknown. We could not find these deleted trails identified in either the draft or the final plan. Consequently, the public was left uninformed of the Forest Service's decisions.

Position/Objectives

Based on the existing laws, the BWAC decided to work with the USDA Forest Service to identify the decommissioned trails and to help protect heritage-hiking trails in the BWCAW, and ensure proper maintenance for public use.

Actions taken by the Advisory Committee:

Introduced Mark Dayton's staff to hiking on a wilderness trail, the Kelso Mountain Trail, on National Trails Day 2004. *The purpose of the event was to show to the public, and members of the legislature the value of the wilderness trails for recreation, preservation, and as links to our past.*

Education/Building Awareness

Published the “Kelso Mountain Trail” initiative in an effort to increase awareness about unprotected hiking trails in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. This initiative included the 2000 declaration of Kelso Mountain Trail as a “Community Millennium Trail” by the former First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, chair of the White House Millennium Committee. It also informed about the legislation governing the management of the BWCAW and its trails.

In August 2002 the BWAC sent a proposal to the USDA Forest Service, offering to help preserve the few additional trails. The USDA Forest Service replied in August 2003, saying that the trails are not needed.

Result

As a result of the BWAC inquiry, the USDA Forest Service revised the Forest Trail Plan acknowledging the trails that had been removed from the USDA Forest Service inventory.

Background

In its first paragraph the 1964 Wilderness Act authorizes Congress to set aside land for use and enjoyment by all Americans. It appears the current approach to trail management by the USDA Forest Service is to preserve trails on a strictly utilitarian basis rather than on their recreational worth and intrinsic beauty.

Position/Objectives

The BWAC strives to bring the USDA Forest Service management plan in harmony with the full recreational intent of the BWCAW Act of 1978 and Executive Order #13195 “America’s Trails For the 21st Century.” Our objective is to uphold the law, so hikers can enjoy their entitlement, and for the USDA Forest Service to respond to our legitimate requests.

Actions taken by the Boundary Waters Advisory Committee

Organized a National Trails Day event in June 2004, sponsored by the American Hiking Society. The event was held at the Sawbill Lake Campground.

Participated at the USDA Forest Service sponsored celebration of the 40th anniversary of the 1964 Wilderness Act in Duluth, Minnesota on September 11, 2004.

The event was attended by 70 people and covered by a local TV station.

Delivered presentations on hiking and snowshoeing in the BWCAW to more than 150 people at the Center of Outdoor Adventure at the University of Minnesota, the 3M Outdoor Club, and Midwest Mountaineering's Outdoor Adventure Expo.

Developed, promoted and sponsored a "Wilderness Essay Contest" which was funded by grants from the recreation industry and the BWAC Board of Directors.

Sent out 187 press releases about the Essay Contest. The contest was announced by WELY

Ely radio station, and published in Midwest Mountaineering's Adventure Expo Event, Silent Sports, and Northern Wilds.



Submitted articles "Hiking to Eagle Mountain" and "Snowshoeing in the BWCAW" that were printed by the Northern Wilds magazine along with the announcement for the Essay Contest.

Published and delivered the brochure "Kelso Mountain Trail" for distribution at outdoor stores. The brochure provides information about the trail's history and hiking directions.

Results

Secured financial backing for the National Trails Day event by ten outdoor industry businesses.

Recruited co-sponsorship of six organizations for National Trails Day 2004, including the American Hiking Society.

Trail Maintenance Advocacy

Background:

Trail preservation is BWAC's core mission. Trail advocacy precedes successful trail returns to the USDA Forest Service inventory. The 1999 BWCAW Storm of the Century wreaked havoc on most of the wilderness trails. Clearing miles of fallen trees was just the beginning of needed trail maintenance. The resulting absence of tree canopy for many years to come will allow an abundance of brush to grow out of control and make maintenance more difficult and necessary.

Other challenges facing the committee's work is the increased USDA Forest Service safety training requirements. We support safety training as we've clearly demonstrated by our perfect safety record. Judicious allocation of volunteers' time to meet training requirements is necessary to still have the greatest amount of time for clearing trails.

Another serious issue that isn't being addressed is erosion on more heavily used trails. The BWAC is advocating to redirect hikers to less used trails to minimize the damage and to heighten the wilderness experiences for generations to come.

Actions taken by the Advisory Committee:

BWAC proposed to the US Forest Service to allow maintenance on several other, less used trails.

Result

The USDA Forest Service denied the request to protect three existing BWCAW heritage trails at this time.



We cannot wish our wilderness preserved. To save something as worthwhile and grand as the outdoors will take unfettered vision and uncompromising vitality. We have to work to keep that which is of most worth - it will not keep itself.



Statement of Financial Activity

Revenue

Memberships . . . 125
Donations 100
Total 225

Expenses

Website fee 99.99
Copies and postage . 152.59
Bank fees 36.00
Total Expenses . . . 288.58

2004 Beginning balance . . . 558.75
2004 Income 225
2004 Expense 288.58
2004 Ending balance 495.17

Acknowledgements

Cash donations \$100 or more

Don Roell

Corporate donors

Piragis

Midwest Mountaineering

Galyans

Corporate In kind donations

Sawbill Outfitters

REI

McKenzie Maps

Vasque

Hormel Foods

Granite Gear

Northern Wilds

WELY radio station

Royal Robbins

Cooke Custom Sewing

Private in kind donations

Buck Menssen

Martin Kubik

Board of Directors

Martin Kubik, President
Founder of Kekekabic Trail Club
3M

Nero Jain, Secretary
State of Minnesota

Rebecca Powell, Treasurer
Juno, Inc.

Buck Menssen
3M, retired

Donald Roell
3M

Mira Jain



www.bwac.homestead.com

**Boundary Waters
Advisory Committee**
309 Cedar Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55454
www.bwac.homestead.com

*Boundary Waters Advisory Committee
Annual Report 2003/2004*

Editor

Martin Kubik

Design

Linda Escher

Contributors

*Pauline Allison
Angela Anderson
Pat Duerr
Lisa Ebel
Don Roell*

Photographers

*Don Roell
Martin Kubik*

April 2005

