Press Release

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**Partnership for the Boundary Waters Pow Wow Hiking Trail**

The Boundary Waters Advisory Committee (BWA Committee) announced today the “Partnership for the Pow Wow Trail,” effort aimed at getting hikers back on the 32 mile long trail in the BWCA Wilderness and to help bring customers back to the Stony River Café at nearby Isabella, Minnesota.

The Pow Wow Trail, a favorite of backpackers, burned almost in its entirety during the Pagami Creek Fire in 2011 when it got out of control. The trail saw many backpackers up until the fire, but after the fire, the number of overnight permits dropped to 10% of the use before the catastrophic event. Martin Kubik of the BWA Committee counted over 1,800 treefalls blocking the trail. The Forest Service has closed most of the campsites along the trail and does not plan to reopen them anytime soon. A lack of hikers results in the trail overgrowing with fireweed and that translates into fewer opportunities for solitude in the wilderness.

But the Pagami Creek affected more than just the Boundary Waters. Nearby canoe outfitters report a drop in business following the fire. After hiking the trail, Kubik stopped at Stony River Café at nearby Isabella, a small, nostalgic, but genuine café decorated with crosscut saws and other artifacts from logging days gone by. “I was having a hearty breakfast of ham, eggs and hash browns with toast and coffee, when Tom Pearson, the 76 year old owner of the cafe told me that traffic has dropped in the years following the Pagami Creek Fire. That’s when I got the idea to encourage more hikers on the trail and help Tom and his wife as well,” said Kubik.

To get more hikers on the trail and to help the Stony River Café, the BWA Committee will reimburse up to 50 new customers five dollars when they order a meal at the café. Details of the reimbursement are on the website at [www.bwac.homestead.com](http://www.bwac.homestead.com).

BWA Committee members hope that more people will hike on the Pow Wow Trail, and in doing so help re-establish the tread. “We are at the tipping point, when we could lose the trail if not enough people hike it, because it is overgrowing. Like many of the hiking trails in the BWCAW, it is not adequately maintained. We need the Forest Service to clear the 1,800 treefalls, mark the trail, and restore the campsites so that hikers feel welcome back again and can enjoy the wilderness,” said Kubik. “And at the same time we will do what we can to help Tom and his wife Liz, owners of the small local business affected by the Pagami Creek Fire,” added Kubik.

The Pow Wow Trail is a historic trail with legacy rooted in logging roads and later connected to the BWCA Wilderness Act of 1978 co-authored by Bill Frenzel and James Oberstar among others.

The Boundary Waters Advisory Committee was established in 2002 to advocate for hiking trails and special places in the BWCA Wilderness. Its members have helped to bring back the Kekekabic, Pow Wow, Sioux Hustler and Brule Lake trails that otherwise would have disappeared over the past 20 years because of the USFS perennial budget cuts. For more information contact Martin Kubik, [wtrails2@yahoo.com](mailto:wtrails2@yahoo.com) or by phone 651-214-5849.