



Update: Significant Progress for the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters

April 2017

Background: Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness (NMW) is the founder and leader of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters (Campaign). The goal for the Campaign is permanent protection of the Boundary Waters watershed from sulfide-ore copper mining. The Campaign includes a national coalition of 36 conservation and outdoor sports organizations, and more than 250 businesses. The Campaign has built strong public support and earned the respect of government leaders, which led to significant progress for the Boundary Waters in recent months.

On December 15, 2016, Federal Agencies Acted to Protect the Boundary Waters

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) informed Twin Metals Minnesota that it would not renew its two federal mineral leases (the only two such leases in the Superior National Forest and critical to the development of any copper mine) because the Forest Service withheld its consent to the leases.
- The Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture announced a two-year moratorium on any federal mining approvals on 234,328 acres of Superior National Forest lands in the watershed of the Boundary Waters and initiated a study to consider a 20-year ban on federal mining.

Tens of Thousands Speak Out During Official Comment Period

- Since the official comment period for the current study began in January 2017, the Campaign and its partners have already mobilized tens of thousands of people to speak out for protecting the Wilderness.
- As part of the public comment period, the Forest Service and the BLM held a public meeting in Duluth in March. Thousands of people attended. Speakers in favor of protecting the Wilderness outnumbered opponents by 31 to 22.

Polling Shows Widespread Support for Protecting the Boundary Waters

- The success of the Campaign's efforts to engage the public is borne out by a February 2017 poll conducted by President Donald Trump's chief polling firm, Fabrizio Ward, showing that 59% of Minnesotans oppose sulfide-ore copper mining near the Boundary Waters.
- In Minnesota's Eighth Congressional District, which contains the Iron Range, opposition to sulfide-ore copper mining near the Boundary Waters exceeds support by a double-digit margin.

NMW Defends the Boundary Waters in Court

- In February, a U.S. District Judge granted to NMW the right to intervene in a lawsuit brought by Twin Metals.
- NMW will participate in the lawsuit to defend the decision of the BLM and Forest Service to deny renewal federal mineral leases in the watershed of the Boundary Waters.

Campaign Tactical Highlights

Building a Powerful and Diverse Coalition

- A powerful and diverse coalition is now even more critical because of the change in Administration. Our plan is to rely on more conservative coalition partners, including businesses, hunting and fishing groups, veterans, and Teddy Roosevelt Republicans in addition to traditional allies like conservation organizations, students, faith groups, and tribes.
- The Campaign created a national leadership team of NMW, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, National Wildlife Federation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, and the Outdoor Industry Association to persuade the Trump Administration to complete the environmental study and order the withdrawal.
- The Campaign launched the Boundary Waters Business Coalition in February to demonstrate that copper mining kills jobs. The coalition includes more than 250 business supporters, including REI, Patagonia, Rapala, and many Wilderness-edge, sporting and outdoor recreation businesses.

Engaging Grassroots Citizen Action

- The Campaign has more than 100,000 members and activists. Through Campaign partners and media outreach, the Campaign reaches more than 18 million people.
- In the past year, the Campaign has led, hosted, or participated in hundreds of public or organization events and presentations.
- Through a national speaking tour, Dave and Amy Freeman have continued to share highlights from their Year in the Wilderness and next steps for protecting the Wilderness.

Generating National and Statewide Media Attention

- The Minneapolis *Star Tribune's* November 29 Sunday cover story “BWCA girl guide is now a warrior woman trying to preserve it” featured National Campaign Chair Becky Rom's lifelong quest to protect the Boundary Waters.
- In addition to many Minnesota media outlets, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* ran stories on the December 2016 lease denials and withdrawal decision.
- The cover and lead story in the November/December 2016 issue of *Sierra Magazine* were about the mining threat to the Boundary Waters.
- *The New York Times* published a Travel feature on the Boundary Waters in October 2016 that mentioned the mining threat and featured NMW Board Member Paul Schurke.

Delivering Strong Science and Connecting Directly with Decision-Makers

- No evidence has been submitted that contradicts the existing science that the Campaign delivered to federal agencies in 2016 documenting significant risk of harm to terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems from sulfide-ore copper mining near the Boundary Waters.
- Campaign staff and volunteers, including Wilderness-edge business owners, meet monthly in Washington, D.C. with federal agencies and Congressional members from Minnesota and elsewhere to educate decision-makers and build political support for protecting the Boundary Waters.
- Governor Dayton has been a strong ally. Since announcing his strong opposition to the Twin Metals project on March 6, 2016, he has continued to speak out in support of protecting the Boundary Waters.