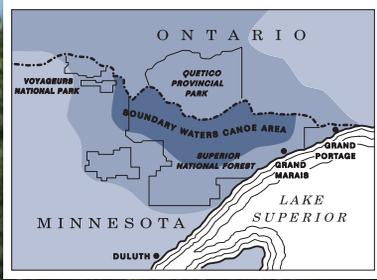


SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION OF QUETICO SUPERIOR CANOE COUNTRY

Spring 2016



# Wilderness News



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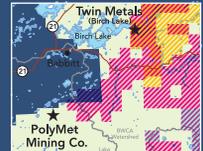
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QUETICO SUPERIOR FOUNDATION



The Quetico Superior Foundation, established in 1946, encourages and supports the protection of the wilderness, cultural and historical resources of the Quetico Superior canoe country and region.

### Wilderness News

Published by the Quetico Superior Foundation

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## LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

# Talking About the Issues

Caring about the northwoods and the Quetico Superior Region comes easy for many of us. Yet talking about the issues can be a whole other matter. From mining to climate change, it can be difficult to grasp the complexity of a situation or talk with someone with a different point of view.

In this issue of *Wilderness News*, we meet people and organizations that are jumping into the fray and talking about the issues that matter: Climate Generation, founded by polar explorer Will Steger, is helping people understand, talk about and act on climate change; Bent Paddle Brewing Company, which uses Lake Superior water in its beer, opposed the PolyMet mine proposal in the St. Louis River headwaters even though it cost the company customers—and then talked directly with those customers in personal conversations; Voyageurs National Park and the National Park Service (NPS) are using the NPS centennial as a way to draw attention to the often overlooked Voyageurs National Park; and of course, the mining discussion continues as Gov. Dayton declared his opposition to a proposed copper-nickel mine in the Boundary Waters watershed.

At *Wilderness News*, we believe that being informed is the first step toward a meaningful conversation. We hope these stories make you feel more informed and aware of the issues—and if you like what you read, we hope you'll share them. Whether you pay for the print edition, subscribe to the free online edition or follow the blog, please spread the word and continue the conversation.

Sincerely,

Jim Wyman  
President, Quetico Superior Foundation

On the Cover: Namakan Lake in Voyageurs National Park, photo by Megan Bond.

# Part I: Talking About Climate Change

By Alissa Johnson

**In many ways, the climate change discussion is everywhere. Paris hosted the 2015 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In March of this year, President Obama announced a pact with Canada to fight climate change. The U.S. Department of Justice announced that it was considering whether to prosecute climate deniers. Yet on a personal level, the scale of the issue can make it hard to navigate. How will it affect the places you love? What can you do to have an impact on the situation?**

In this series, *Wilderness News* dives into the topic as it relates to northern Minnesota and the Quetico Superior Region. We'll learn what climate change means for places like the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and north woods communities. We'll also meet people and organizations working toward solutions. We start with Climate Generation: A Will

Steger Legacy, an organization founded by Ely resident and Polar explorer Will Steger; it's reimagining the way we talk about climate change across Minnesota, including places like the Iron Range.

### From explorer to advocate

Polar explorer Will Steger has spent over 1,000 days of his life on the ice of the Arctic Ocean. He made a name for himself by traveling to the North Pole by dogsled in 1986—the first confirmed such trip to the Pole followed by the longest, unsupported dogsled expedition across Greenland in 1988. He returned in 1995, approaching the Pole from the Russian side. While the ice in the Arctic Ocean is always shifting, in 1995 he encountered expanses of water so wide he couldn't see across them. On the Canadian side, he and his fellow explorers traded dogs for canoes with runners that allowed them to move over ice and water. The region's transformation was stark; this type of open water had never existed in the North Pole. In 2002, sitting in his Ely, Minnesota home, Steger read that a segment of the Antarctic Larsen Ice Shelf had disintegrated—an expanse of ice 300 miles across that he once took 30 days to navigate.



During his 1995 North Pole expedition, Steger traded his dog teams for canoes with runners on the bottom so he and his team could navigate ice and open water. Photos courtesy Will Steger.





In 2015, Will Steger received the Canadian Governor General medallion in recognition of his expeditions in the Canadian Arctic (shown above in 2008) and educational efforts to raise awareness of the Canada-Minnesota relationship. At left: Steger visits an elementary school classroom. Photos courtesy Climate Generation.

"I couldn't believe what I read, but I knew it was a fact, and this made me realize that 'climate change' was happening right now. So I changed my life. I moved back to the city from my wonderful life in Ely, MN. in the wilderness and in '05 started the Will Steger Foundation, now Climate Generation," Steger told a group in Virginia, MN. last fall. The event that brought them together was part of a major public engagement initiative, Climate Minnesota: Local Stories, Community Solutions. Over the last 10 years Climate Generation has successfully led innovative climate change solutions in the areas of K-12 education, youth leadership and policy development. The Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources and the McKnight Foundation provided funding for Climate Minnesota to host 12 climate change events across the state.

From the West Metro to Duluth to the Iron Range, people got up close and personal with climate change. They learned how it would affect their communities, what people were doing to find solutions, and how they could take action themselves. And while science and facts were part of the lineup, another ingredient played a key role: storytelling. Community members from each location shared their personal experiences with climate change, transforming the topic from something large and impersonal to something concrete and local.

## Personalizing climate change

According to Johtsna Harris, Education Coordinator for Climate Generation, the approach to the convenings grew in part from the reception that Steger's eyewitness testimony had received. By providing a visual example of how climate change is playing out—especially one that came from his own experience—he drew thousands of people into the conversation. Climate Generation built on that by recognizing that everyone has stories to tell, especially since the impacts of climate change are no longer isolated to the polar regions and are being felt across Minnesota.

"It's not just the eyewitness account of a few people. All of us can share what we've experienced. Maybe we don't think we have a climate change story, but when you brain storm and do some digging, we all have the ability to think about how we've experienced climate change and have thoughts about the future," Harris said. Sharing those stories has become a powerful tool for Climate Generation. "Stories speak to us in different ways than science and policy because they place abstract facts and figures into context."

When Steger shared his stories at the Iron Range Convening in Virginia, he spoke to about 80 people—a small crowd compared to locations like Duluth where 150 people showed up. It was an older group, too, mostly retired. According to Harris, the energy felt different than other convenings. There was a more palpable tension, and one man made it known that he was there to disrupt the program. Knowing his intent, convening organizers made some changes to



Above: Will Steger addresses the audience at the Iron Range Convening. At right: convening participants engaged in conversation about climate change at a resource fair. Photos courtesy Climate Generation.

the schedule so it could flow without interruption. Virginia was also one of two communities where potential speakers declined to participate because they didn't want to be associated with climate change. At the same time, however, Harris noticed a passion and a hunger for the conversation. There were a lot of people trying to create change in their community and others who weren't sure what to think, but were curious to learn more.

The atmosphere wasn't necessarily a surprise. Climate Generation's Director of Education, Kristen Poppleton, pointed out that localization and knowing the community are critical to talking about climate change. "One of the things when we talk about the issue of climate change is how do you frame this issue to meet the community where it's at? How can you listen? You have to listen to the community to understand why they would even care about this," she said.

In urban communities, for example, the way to address climate change may be addressing high asthma rates due to the presence of an incinerator. On the range, where many people are living at the poverty level and view the loss of mining as a loss of livelihood, the focus may need to be the impact of climate change on tourism—something often touted as way to build up the economy. That's why each convening was tailored to the community, partnering with local leaders and organizations to make it feel like a local event. In Virginia, community leaders helped welcome participants. Three other community members told stories about their observations of climate change and their



Audience participation during the main presentation. Photo courtesy Climate Generation.

work toward solutions. And local organizations like the Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability and the Rural Renewable Energy Alliance participated in a resource fair before the convening or led workshops at its close.

"It's about connecting head to heart so it's not just an intellectual issue but a local issue that's impacting all of us in some way," Poppleton explained.

### Giving people a way to engage

In addition to framing climate change as a local issue, Climate Generation sought to engage people in the conversation right from the get-go. "After the welcome we asked a series of connecting questions throughout the program to speak to the emotional rollercoaster people go through when they learn about climate change," Harris said. The first question prompted people to share what they valued most about their community, and in Virginia, nature rose to the top of the list. "People thought they were coming to a forum to listen and it became this moment where they were going to blurt out this one word and now it's become a two-way conversation."

Later, the audience weighed in on how it felt about the impacts climate change would have on the things they valued most, and how they felt about tackling climate change. John Latimer, a phenologist who told his story at the Iron Range convening, suggested that people crave conversations about the natural world. He hosts a two-hour radio show on nature—what he’s observing, what listeners are observing and how it compares to the average—on KAXE, Northern Community Radio in Grand Rapids. He started the show over 30 years ago, and he has noted changes related to climate change. Quaking aspen break leaf bud earlier. During winter, the minimum lows aren’t as cold as they once were. Animal and bird populations are shifting. Yet the other thing he’s observed is that people want to talk about nature. Reflecting on the show’s beginning, he said, “This was before social media and before email, and a lot of the community was talking to me on the street, in the grocery store, or they would send me letters or write me postcards and tell me what they were seeing. It became obvious people were interested and tuned into nature and wanted to know more and share more.”

In a sense, the storytelling approach at the convenings offers an evolution of the conversation. “It gave a chance for people to say in their own words what it means to them, what it’s like to live in these times and to experience these changes. It was a very powerful way for people to express themselves about what is happening in their world,” Latimer said.

The results that Poppleton and Harris see confirm the convenings’ impact. Participant surveys showed that respondents became more comfortable talking about climate change and 89 percent reported taking some kind of action afterward. “Roughly ninety percent of people doing something is phenomenal,” Poppleton said. “The grand majority of attendees were hopeful and energized and ready to do something.”

*In upcoming issues of Wilderness News, we’ll take a look at the specific impacts of climate change on northern Minnesota. We’ll also meet individuals affected by climate change and working toward solutions. You can find more about Climate Generation and storytelling at: [www.climategen.org](http://www.climategen.org).*

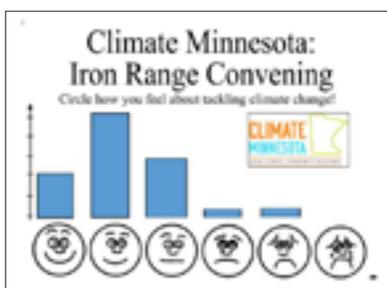
**In the meantime, tell us—what do you value about northern Minnesota and the Boundary Waters?**  
<http://facebook.com/wildernessnews>

Climate Generation staff visit Green Gate Guest Houses, a sustainable business whose owner, Shawn Callihan, spoke at the Iron Range convening. Photos and images courtesy Climate Generation.



Climate Generation staff. Back row: Nicole Rom, Executive Director; Nicole Eknitphong, YEA!MN Coordinator; Katie Siegner; Janet Brown, Associate Director. Front row: Megan Van Loh, Kristen Poppleton, Jothsna Harris.

Participants at the Iron Range convening rated how they felt about tackling climate change.





## Bent Paddle Brewing of Duluth joins the call to protect the planet's most precious resource.

By Greg Seitz

The water of Lake Superior is famous for its beauty, depth, cold, and power. It is also gaining a reputation for making great beer. It is pure and pristine, perfect for brewing.

The owners of Bent Paddle Brewing Co., located in downtown Duluth, attribute their quality beer and remarkably rapid success to the extraordinary quality of *Gitche Gumee's* water. "It's an amazingly blank slate," says co-owner Laura Mullen. "Other breweries have to add minerals or remove minerals to get the same water as we do when we open the tap."

The water is the single most important reason Bent Paddle was drawn to open its brewery in Duluth in 2013, where the municipal source is the big lake. In the past five years, the company has grown extraordinarily, employing 30 people, selling beer all over Minnesota, and blowing their business expectations out of the water. They thank Lake Superior.

"It's a huge part of our success, because the water does change the beer," Mullen says.

To help protect the source of their success, in October 2015 Bent Paddle joined sixty-eight other Duluth businesses to oppose the PolyMet mine proposal in the St. Louis River headwaters area. The companies believe the mine could contaminate the region's clean waters.

Together, employing nearly 1,000 people, the Downstream Business Coalition asked the state to invest in sustainable economic development in northeast Minnesota, not risky and short-lived mines. They believe with some work, the whole region could experience an economic renaissance like Duluth has the past few years, based on skilled manufacturing.

"I would love to see investment in different types of industry that would provide good jobs that allow people to stay where they are," Mullen says.

Co-owners Colin and Laura Mullen and Karen and Byron Tonnis. All photos courtesy Bent Paddle Brewing Co.



Bent Paddle's flagship beers include the Venter Pils, 14° ESB Extra Special Amber Ale, Bent Hop Golden IPA, and Black Ale.

In addition to Bent Paddle, several other companies have helped put northern Minnesota on the manufacturing map. Loll Designs makes high-end outdoor furniture from recycled plastic; Duluth Pack and Frost River produce canvas and leather softgoods. In Ely, Wintergreen Outerwear is again sewing its beloved anoraks. “These are high quality manufacturing jobs,” Mullen says. “We have well paid, benefits jobs, full time, with huge opportunities. Also, we are connected to our employees, we want them to be here for life if they want.”

But mining pollution could hurt business and progress. The coalition points to PolyMet's Environmental Impact Statement for predictions, writing in an open letter that the document states “pollution will continue for a ‘minimum of 200 years at the Mine Site and a minimum of 500 years at the Plant Site,’ requiring treatment ‘indefinitely’... contamination will reach the Partridge and Embarrass Rivers, which flow to the St. Louis River and ultimately Lake Superior.”

With this potential of pollution and the demand for jobs on the Iron Range, copper-nickel mining is one of the most controversial issues facing Minnesota's environment and economy in decades.

Bent Paddle experienced the contentiousness when their stance for clean water was interpreted by pro-mining customers as being opposed to mining. They have been boycotted by many Iron Range bars and liquor stores since joining the coalition. In March 2016, Silver Bay's city council even voted to remove Bent Paddle from its municipal liquor store.

But the brewers stuck to their stance, and started visiting their former customers. “We went up there and drove around to all the places,” Mullen says. “We explained it only relates to copper-nickel—not



Bent Paddle's downtown Duluth location has a 30-barrel production brewery and a taproom.

ferrous—mining and has nothing to do with union labor. In fact, we've used union labor for construction and every expansion.”

Expansions have been frequent. Bent Paddle created a seven-year business plan before opening and blew past it in two years. One year the company experienced four hundred percent growth. They don't anticipate (or want) that pace to continue, but intend to keep using every opportunity they can to develop in balance with the rest of the world.

Bent Paddle's mission statement includes sustainability for not only the business but the community, employees, and environment. They have made big strides in a couple short years, but also acknowledge they still have a lot of work to do.

“Every question that comes up for the brewery, we consider the sustainable alternative,” Mullen says. “We're ready to pay more money for things that are sourced properly, including metals.”

The brewery's massive stainless steel tanks come from Prince Edward Island, the coastal Canadian province. All the metal comes from the Great Lakes Area, including iron from Minnesota and Michigan. Their cans come from Wisconsin and are infinitely recyclable. Their tap handles are 100 percent recycled plastic, produced by Loll Designs.

But Bent Paddle is not done yet. They are discussing solar panels, environmentally-friendly building materials, and striving toward a zero-waste and low-toxic work environment. “We hope to be conceived over time with our commitment to clean water, as a company that truly, truly cares and has a voice and is a moral compass,” Mullen says.

Like his co-owners, brewmaster Bryon Tonnis is passionate about the Boundary Waters. Several years



The brewery and taproom are located in West Duluth's Lincoln Park neighborhood, which is emerging as a manufacturing center.

***“[Lake Superior is] a huge part of our success, because the water does change the beer,” Mullen says.***

ago he had just returned home from a canoe trip to his previous job as Head Brewer at Rock Bottom Brewery in Minneapolis when he broke his mashing paddle. Improvising, he retrieved his bent shaft canoe paddle from his car—and found it worked better than the straight brewing tool for the job.

Bent Paddle has outgrown the days of canoe paddles in the brewery, but its roots remain in the wilderness. In fact, its logo is tilted at 14 degrees—the traditional angle of a bent shaft canoe paddle. The name of one of its flagship beers, the 14 Degree ESB amber ale, also pays homage to those origins.

That is also the beer that Mullen says is her favorite, noting how it is well balanced, and award-winning. But what she would reach for after coming out of Boundary Waters after a canoe trip, she says would depend on the weather and the trip.

“If it were a rough one, the Cold Press Black Ale. But if it was hot and glorious, I’d want a Venture Pils.” That Pilsener is a beer they brew in honor of Lake Superior. So clean and pure, Superior’s water resembles that of Czech Republic, where such lagers originated. Without the water, it is almost impossible to brew well anywhere else—except on the shores of *Gitche Gumee*.

Since 1946, we’ve been working to protect the wilderness character of the Border Lakes Canoe Country. You can join us in our efforts by supporting our in-depth news coverage of the region or contributing to our grant program:

### ***Wilderness News***

For the most in-depth coverage of the issues facing the Quetico Superior Region, follow us online. When you subscribe to the *Wilderness News* blog, you’ll receive regular updates on the latest news, from mining to recreation to climate change. Three times a year, you’ll also receive the online edition of our newsletter, where we take an in-depth look at the ways people are engaging with the issues and looking for solutions.

Visit: <http://queticosuperior.org/subscribe>

You can also opt to receive the print edition of our newsletter for only \$25 per year.

To subscribe, email the editor:  
[editor@queticosuperior.org](mailto:editor@queticosuperior.org)

### **Grant Program**

The Quetico Superior Foundation supports qualified nonprofits whose work shares our mission to protect the wilderness character of northern Minnesota. Grants have been awarded to a diverse array of organizations, from the Urban Boat Builders, which introduces urban kids to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, to the Trust for Public Land to protect and conserve wild lands.

More here:  
<http://queticosuperior.org/grant-activity>

When you contribute to our grant program, you’re helping us support land preservation, forest management studies, wilderness youth programs, community development and education, and historical preservation.

To donate, visit:  
<http://queticosuperior.org/support>

Thank you!



Sunrise on Rainy Lake, photo by Joshua Henderson.

## VOYAGEURS—A MUST VISIT NATIONAL PARK

*The National Park of Minnesota's north woods celebrates the Park Service's Centennial.*

**One hundred years ago this August 25th, President Woodrow Wilson signed into law the National Park Service. For the century since, the agency has managed an ever-growing roster of places deemed worthy of perpetual protection. There are mountains and deserts, coasts and ocean, lakes and rivers.**

Minnesota's only National Park is comprised of wild woods and waters. Voyageurs National Park's big lakes and roadless forests were set aside in 1975 to recognize its beautiful north woods scenery, geologic features—including some of the oldest rock in the world—and the history of the French-Canadian canoe paddlers and fur traders called voyageurs, who crisscrossed the region 250 years ago.

While visitors need a boat to access most of Voyageurs, part of its appeal is the diverse ways visitors can and do experience it. There are the park tour boats,

big-lake kayaking, houseboats, hikers, and fishing boats. There are lodges and resorts, hotels, motels, and campsites. In 2014, 239,000 people visited the park. At more than 218,000 acres, there's plenty of room for everybody.

"We have an under-loved and under-utilized National Park in our state," says Christina Hausman, executive director of Voyageurs National Park Association (VNPA). "Our hope is with a national conversation about our National Parks and their relevance to younger people and more diverse people, we can use that to spotlight our national park."

"Nature doesn't have to be one thing," Hausman says. "We can make it accessible to various levels of backgrounds and experience."

VNPA and the National Park Service are working on several projects to celebrate the centennial and make more Americans aware of the natural refuge that remains a little lost on the Minnesota-Ontario border. They are launching a campaign to reduce invasive



First row top: Kayaking on Rainy Lake, photo by Jeffrey Kantor. Second row, left: Locator Lake Trail on Voyageurs' Kabetogama Peninsula, photo by Jeffrey Kantor. Second row right: the Voyageur tour boat on Rainy Lake, photo by National Park Service. Third row, left: photo by Kevin Erickson 2014 VNPA photo contest entry. Third row, right: A view from the Cruiser Lake Trail on the Kabetogama Peninsula, photo by Thomas Gable.



Top: Voyageurs National Park's Grassy Bay Cliffs, 2014 VNPA photo contest entry, photo by Linda Pascoe. Above, left: a traditional voyageur "north" canoe, which at 25-feet long could carry one-and-a-half tons of furs and five or six paddlers, photo by Kat Audette-Luebke, VNPA. Above, right: Ellsworth Rock Garden, photo by Zach Damond-Midnight, Wilderness Inquiry.

cattails, and restoring a hiking trail that runs through one of the best areas in the park to see wildlife like moose and wolves, past one of its most iconic vistas.

The project to restore wetlands taken over by non-native hybrid cattails could have real benefits for fish and waterfowl. The invasive plants grow densely, harming fish spawning and the foundation of the food chain, and can fill in ponds that ducks and other waterfowl depend on while migrating.

"VNPA has traditionally seen protection as protecting the park from outside threats, but protection also means protecting and restoring healthy habitats within the parks," Hausman says.

Native plants like wild rice, bulrushes and bur-reed will replace the cattails after eradication. The project will begin this summer with testing different removal methods in different locations.

Fixing boardwalks, clearing brush, repairing signs, and other renovations on the Cruiser Lake Trail not only make for a safer and more enjoyable hike, but represent a new way of funding National Park projects.

The Centennial funding that Congress appropriated depends on local matches. For VNPA, it has provided a chance to connect donors with worthwhile projects where their donations would be doubled by the government.



The Kettle Falls Hotel, photo courtesy National Park Service.

*The history of Kettle Falls is as colorful as the red roof on the hotel. Constructed by timber cruiser Ed Rose and reputedly financed by Madame Nellie Bly. The Kettle Falls Hotel has accommodated and entertained travelers since 1913. Robert Williams bought the hotel in 1918 for \$1,000 and four barrels of whiskey. From its somewhat scandalous past, grew a long tradition of hearty home cooking and hospitality served by the Williams family. This historic hotel was renovated by the National Park Service in 1987.*

“Anytime we can double our impact by having federal funds match private funds, that’s really the direction we want to take projects,” Hausman explains.

Also this summer, for the fifth year, the “Teen Ambassador” program will bring high school kids to the park – including the 100th participant. Kids from both local schools and all over Minnesota take an online college course, camp, paddle, hike and explore topics including air and water quality, wildlife research, cultural and natural history, Park Service careers, and conservation and stewardship.

“At the core it’s simple: the way you make an impact is getting a kid outside and everything else falls

into place from there,” Hausman says. “I’ve had an opportunity to be with ambassadors out on the Kabetogama Peninsula, when they see the night sky for the first time, and the impact is amazing.”

The impact is broadened when the ambassadors return home and share their National Park experience with their classmates and communities.

“National Parks are no longer just looking inside their boundaries alone,” says Doug Lowthian, who is serving as Centennial Coordinator at Voyageurs. “But are looking at how the park can be an asset to economic development and quality of life for surrounding communities.”



Top: Rainy Lake, photo by Jeffrey Kantor. Above, left: Kettle Falls Dam Tender's Cabin was built in 1910, photo by National Park Service. Above, right: there are 5-9 packs of gray wolves that live in Voyageurs National Park, photo by Jeff Smith, 2014 VNPA photo contest entry.

Over the past seven years, Park Superintendent Mike Ward built strong relationships with International Falls and other communities around the park.

In his tenure, the Park opened up a new headquarters building in International Falls, in partnership with the city. It also implemented a campsite reservation system, as well as several other major initiatives.

Ward recently left Voyageurs as he returned to St. Louis to lead the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, which includes the city's famous gateway arch. He made the move to be closer to family.

Hausman says the future presents "an opportunity to build on" Ward's relationships and successes. "The Centennial is a chance not just to celebrate the past hundred years but to look to the next hundred

years as a time for collaboration on a regional basis," says Lowthian.

Hausman says inadequate budgets are one of the biggest opportunities to improve the future of the National Park Service. She knows of at least seven full-time positions at Voyageurs that haven't been filled for years, and says much more could be done to serve the public.

"Our park is chronically underfunded. It's amazing how our park staff stretch their resources," Hausman says, "In this Centennial year, Congress has been more generous with the NPS budget, but it's still not enough. We need Congress to build on this budget and step up like many park partners are."

**Visit:** <http://voyageurs.org/centennial/>



Above left: Oveson Fish Camp (Rainy Lake), photo courtesy National Park Service. Above, right: National Park Ranger Pilot Steve Mazur meets with National Park Teen Ambassador, photo courtesy VNPA.

*There are more than 500 islands—and 655 miles of shoreline—in Voyageurs National Park. The park is a uniquely accessible combination of wilderness waters, treelined trails, and sites that bring us closer to our history in the north woods.*

*One special site is the Oveson Fish Camp—the only remaining intact commercial fishing camp in the region. Harry Oveson constructed his camp on an island near Cranberry Bay in the late 1950s and fished for whitefish in Rainy Lake from 1958 to 1985. The Oveson home, an ice house, a fish processing building, and tools of the trade help tell the story of commercial fishing on Rainy Lake. A cove near the fish camp is a watchable wildlife site where visitors may observe turtles, beavers, and a variety of birds. The camp is accessible by water, seven miles from the Rainy Lake Visitor Center.*





## Centennial Celebrations

Numerous events and programs in Voyageurs National Park, its neighboring communities, and the Twin Cities are being scheduled this year to mark the National Park Service's 100th anniversary.

An up-to-date calendar of Voyageurs Centennial Events: <http://voyageurs.org/centennial-events/>

### Featured Event:

Voyageurs NPS Centennial Celebration

April 18, 5:30 to 8 p.m.

Scheid Hall, Surly Brewing Co., Minneapolis (Brief remarks and art unveiling at 6:15 p.m.) \$30/ticket. Space is limited, guests must pre-register online.

### Attendees will enjoy:

- The reveal of the new Voyageurs National Park Centennial print by renowned landmark artist, Mark Herman; the first of his new series to benefit National Parks.
- A fun, casual gathering of fellow national park enthusiasts—wear what you would wear to your favorite national park.
- Appetizers and interactive stations with park rangers where you can learn more about this amazing national park.
- A Voyageurs-themed silent auction.
- A brief update from Voyageurs National Park Association executive director Christina Hausman
- Surly-brewed pints for the park and time to enjoy the brewery and event center.

### Other Event Highlights:

- National Parks Night at REI Bloomington, April 28.
- Special ranger-led hikes, paddles and boat tours at Voyageurs, May-September.
- National Parks Day at the Minnesota State Fair, August 29.
- Family Day and Grand Opening of Rainy Lake Recreation Trail, June 11.
- Volunteer Rendezvous weekend at Voyageurs National Park, September 16-17.

Opposite page, top: photo by Diane Michaud Lowry, 2015 VNPA photo contest entry. Second row, left: Volunteers helping remove old sign posts on National Trails Day on the Locator Lake Trail, photo by Christina Hausman, VNPA. Second row, right: National Park Teen Ambassadors paddling on Kabetogama Lake, photo by Zach Damond-Midnight, Wilderness Inquiry. Third row, left: Quill Lake, an interior lake on Voyageurs National Park's Kabetogama Peninsula, photo by Thomas Gable. Third row, right: photo by Allan Meadows, 2015 VNPA photo contest entry.

This page, top: free ranger-led voyageur canoe program, photo courtesy National Park Service. Center: kids at Kettle Falls Hotel, photo by Todd Maddison, 2015 VNPA photo contest entry. Bottom: National Park Service staff Chris Amidon and Miranda Challeen on Locator Lake, photo by Christina Hausman, VNPA.

# First Months of 2016 Include Major Moves for Northern Minnesota Mining Proposals

By Greg Seitz

## Gov. Dayton declares opposition to copper-nickel mining in Boundary Waters watershed

Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton has halted new leases of mineral rights on state lands near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. He announced the decision in a March 6th letter to Twin Metals, the company seeking to open a massive copper-nickel mine on the South Kawishiwi River, just a few miles from the edge of the wilderness.

Dayton called the BWCAW a “crown jewel in Minnesota and a national treasure” and said he has an “obligation to ensure it is not diminished in any way.” For those reasons, he said he has instructed the state Department of Natural Resources not to allow any more mining or mineral exploration activities on state lands in the area.

## Federal land managers reject automatic renewal of Twin Metals’ leases

The day after Dayton’s declaration, Twin Metals got more bad news. Two of the federal mineral leases Twin Metals owns were first issued in 1966, before modern environmental laws and the rigorous review now required. While the mining company had hoped to automatically renew its leases after they expired in 2013, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) decided in March that environmental review would be required before the leases might be renewed.

An Interior Department’s lawyer told the BLM’s that Twin Metals does not have an automatic right of renewal to the leases and that the bureau has discretion to grant or deny the application. The original leases required mining to begin within twenty years, and Twin Metals is still only doing exploratory drilling on the leased land.

Twin Metals can still attempt to renew the leases, but the process of evaluating their application and conducting environmental review may take multiple years.

## Rep. McCollum calls for watershed protection

Congresswoman Betty McCollum, representing Minnesota Fourth District, in the St. Paul area, continues to call for a moratorium on mining near the Boundary Waters. She sent a letter to three advisers to President Obama on February 2nd, asking for action to block mine development.

Writing to Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, and Director of the Council on Environmental Quality Christina Goldfuss, McCollum requested the Obama administration deny renewal of copper-nickel mining leases on Superior National Forest lands, withdraw the area from new leases for 20 years, and halting all pending leases.

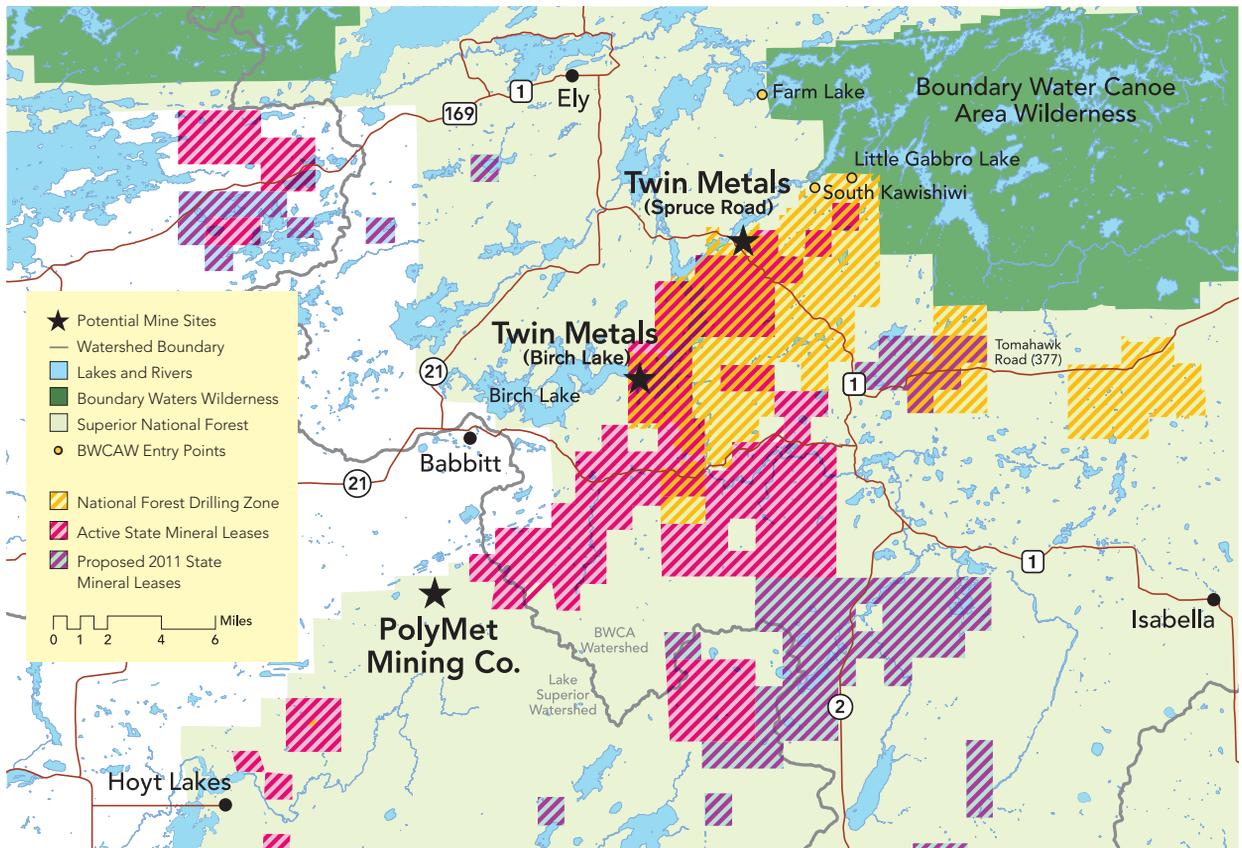
McCollum wrote, “Proposed sulfide-ore copper mining on federal land in the [Rainy River] Basin poses a direct, irreparable, and unacceptable threat to over one million acres of protected federal land and waters.”

## PolyMet mine proposal completes environmental review

PolyMet Mining Corp. has been given the green light to move into the final phase of approval for its proposed project in the St. Louis River watershed. The state’s Department of Natural Resources and Governor, in charge of determining its fate, declared the proposal’s Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) “adequate” on March 3, 2016, and said that the company can now apply for the permits it would need to mine.

The decision is a significant moment in the proposal’s long, difficult march, which began 12 years ago. The FEIS will guide upcoming decisions about whether or not the mine can legally and safely operate.

## Sulfide Mining Activity in Northeastern Minnesota



Map courtesy MiningTruth.org

Since 2004, Landwehr said that government staff and contractors have put 90,000 hours of work has been put into the project. That about the same as one person working a full-time job for 45 years. He said it is the largest environmental review process ever undertaken by the agency. (PolyMet reimburses the state for all costs.)

Governor Dayton said he remains “genuinely undecided” on the project. “I don’t know what the permitting process is going to determine. I don’t know what changes the company is willing to make to satisfy those concerns.”

### Poll finds public opposition to mining near Boundary Waters

Sixty-seven percent of Minnesota voters don’t think new copper-nickel mines should be allowed in areas where water flows toward the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. That was the key finding of a February poll paid for by the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters and conducted by Washington-based Anzalone Liszt Grove Research.

The poll also found that 65% of Minnesotan voters believe the Boundary Waters watershed should be permanently protected, including 59% of voters in northeast Minnesota’s Eighth Congressional District.

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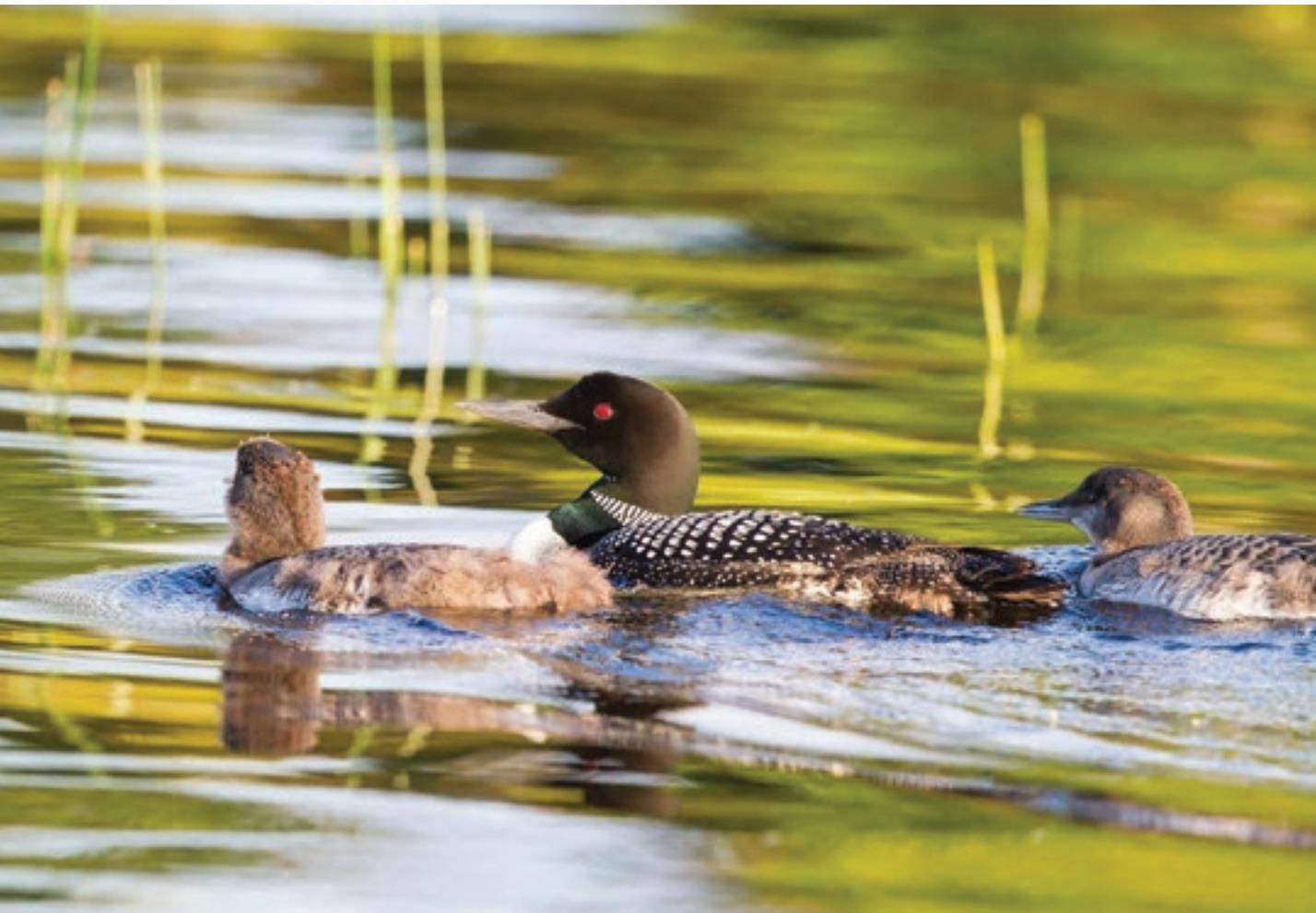


Photo by Mike Thiele, 2015 VNPA photo contest entry.



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