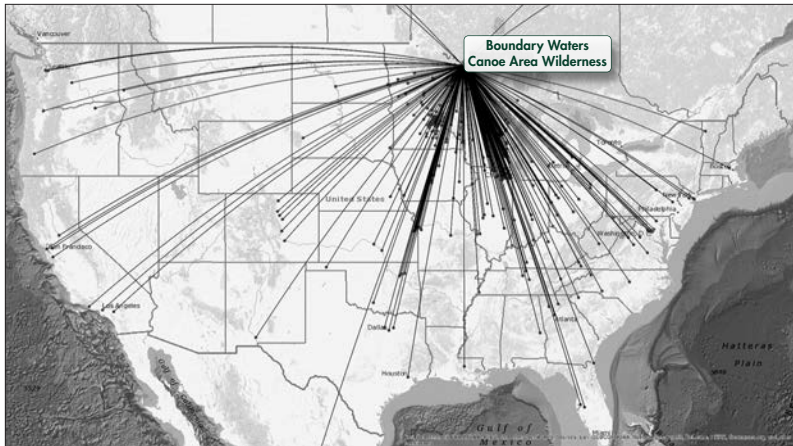




The Friends' mission is to protect, preserve and restore the wilderness character of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and the Quetico-Superior Ecosystem. The organization was founded in 1976.

Friends Analysis Finds BWCAW Drives Significant Economic Impact in Northern Minnesota

It has long been believed that the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is a significant contributor to the economies of neighboring communities. Until now, we as a state have lacked solid, scientific data to support those assumptions because the economic impact BWCAW visitors have on the neighboring communities has never really been formally studied. In fact, the most recent economic impact analysis of any Wilderness area in the country was completed over



Location of surveyed BWCAW visitors. Map courtesy of Conservation Economics Institute.

two decades ago. For years, conservationists interested in preserving the BWCAW have wanted to understand its economic impact and begin putting it into measurable terms that could be used for landscape management and policy making purposes.

The Friends, in partnership with Dr. Evan Hjerpe of Conservation Economics Institute, recently announced the findings of the first-ever regional economic impact study on the BWCAW. **The study, conducted last year, found that out-of-region visitors spent \$57 million in Cook, Lake, and St. Louis county during the 2016 summer permit season. In addition, this spending led to the creation of nearly 1,000 jobs and an overall economic output of \$77 million in one summer season** – scientifically supporting the assumption that the BWCAW is critical to the economic health of Northeastern Minnesota.

Visitor spending in BWCAW neighboring communities also extends far beyond basic expenditures. The total economic output of \$77 million generated approximately \$14.4 million in local, state, and federal taxes. These taxes funnel back into Cook, Lake, and St. Louis counties for community needs such as road improvement and emergency services.

Another key finding was the BWCAW's impact on jobs in the local communities. Nearly 1,000 full and part time jobs are created because of this visitor spending. These jobs span 127 regional industries and provide more than \$25 million in income. Some of the industries affected most by visitors are in hospitality, retail, and government – employment opportunities that are considered stable and

sustainable over time due to the low-impact they have on the BWCAW ecosystem.

In this report, Dr. Hjerpe states that, "The BWCAW is a unique Wilderness ecosystem that attracts thousands of outdoor recreationists and brings substantial money into rural economies. This study illustrates that Wilderness visitation can be an essential component of regional economic development, one that preserves the very resource that provides for

sustainable streams of income in the region."

Dr. Hjerpe used specific parameters to draw precise conclusions on the exact impact out-of-region visitors have on the rural, neighboring communities. Findings were extrapolated from data collected from May to September 2016 from summer quota BWCAW permit holders. Over a dozen local outfitters and permit issuers collaborated to distribute the surveys. It is important to note that in order to properly quantify visitor impact, the scope needed to be narrow. The study does not include economic impacts from winter visitors, spending from residents, or market impacts related to BWCAW art sales, amenity migration effects, or property value.

Even though this is a historic study, and one we hope will be used as a model for wilderness areas throughout the nation, the Friends sees this analysis as a starting point - the first concentric circle of study of the economic value the Boundary Waters creates. Future studies can include the above factors plus elements like ecosystem services and even more intrinsic values. Piecing together and articulating the full picture of the value Wilderness brings to nearby communities and the state of Minnesota builds leverage for conservation long term. ✦

The full study is available for download at:

<http://bit.ly/BWCAcreatesjobs>

You can also view an infographic summary by visiting:

<http://bit.ly/BWCAInfographic>

The Trailhead

There are many moving parts to the sulfide mining issue at the moment. Both PolyMet and Twin Metals' proposals are dynamic and, though they are in different stages of the development process, both have opportunities where our voices need to be heard. Friends believes both PolyMet and Twin Metals would irrevocably pollute BWCA Wilderness waterways and change the wild character of the region. We continue to be actively engaged in preventing both proposals from coming to fruition.



Executive Director, Paul Danicic

PolyMet is currently in the permitting phase after its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was deemed adequate - meaning "it studied what it was supposed to study." Friends made a strong and vocal argument that the EIS process did not properly frame the question of whether this was a good thing for our state or not. PolyMet is now applying for permits but will also need to negotiate a financial assurance deal, suitable to them, with the state of Minnesota in order to proceed. In essence, financial assurance for PolyMet is the damage deposit for a very poor tenant. The worst tenant. In addition to working in the permitting and legal arena, Friends is continuing to push for the highest possible financial assurance from PolyMet - not in the usual corporate guarantee mechanisms but in cold, hard cash firmly committed to the state.

Minnesota Governor Dayton, shortly after witnessing the gaps in the PolyMet EIS process, moved to prevent Twin Metals from exploring for minerals on state lands near the BWCAW. However, proponents of the Twin Metals project have been emboldened by the new federal administration and Minnesota legislature. There is a sincere and coordinated effort to reverse the Department of Interior and USFS' mineral withdrawal that is moving forward.

There has rarely been a more important time to speak loudly for the wilderness and make your voice heard. One way you can take action is to call your MN state representative and tell them you don't want these mines polluting our waters. If you live outside of Minnesota, tell your representatives not to approve environmental rollbacks for public lands and make them aware of the threat to the BWCAW. As the most popular national wilderness area, it is everyone's concern.

In addition, the comment period for the Twin Metals mineral withdrawal runs until August 17, 2017. Be sure to comment in one of the following ways:

Mail: Deputy State Director of Geospatial Services
Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States Office
20 M Street SE., Suite 950,
Washington, DC 20003

Fax: 202-912-7710

Online: Visit our website for a link or go directly to:
<http://bit.ly/BWCAWildForever>

We wouldn't have come this far in protecting the BWCAW without your committed engagement and financial support. Thank you for allowing us to continue this important work. We'll need you in the months ahead. Please be sure to keep in touch! ✦

Our Wild Minnesota Neighbors: Meet the Winter Wren



Winter Wren Photo by: Paul Stein, PaulSteinJC on Flickr

Perhaps you met the Winter Wren the way I did - roused early from my sleeping bag deep within the Boundary Waters Wilderness. While everyone else snored on, I was lured into the woods, searching for a glimpse of whatever was capable of making that sound. Cornell's Lab of

Ornithology describes it as "incomparably energetic in voice." I say more like a record player on high speed that can't stop. Eventually, standing in the forest in my pajamas, I caught sight of the singer and thought, "Of course! A wren." While wrens are known to be a talkative group, few are quite so much as the Winter Wren.

Northern Minnesota and the Boundary Waters Wilderness are part of this species breeding range. Climate change, however, may alter that. The National Audubon Society's climate models project an 85% loss of current summer range by 2080, pushing this species further into Canada. ✦

To hear the song of the Winter Wren, visit; <http://bit.ly/WinterWren>

Conservation Fellows Partnership Program Update



Conservation Fellows Nicholas Nicome, Sofia Lent, Eva Garcia and Melissa Garcia with Friends staff member, Betsy Daub at YMCA Camp Menogyn.

In January, Conservation Fellows Sofia, Nicholas, Eva, and Melissa joined Friends staff and members for our annual Winter Weekend at YMCA Camp Menogyn on the Gunflint Trail. Over the weekend, the Fellows hiked, skied, and took a plunge in the frozen lake. They also got the chance to hear a presentation on moose population

decline and research from Grand Portage Band biologist Seth Moore.

In the coming months, the students are working on independent projects that include a musical piece interpreting the sights and sounds of the BWCAW; a presentation on the impacts of air pollution, and video interviews exploring racially and culturally diverse experiences in nature. The Fellows also meet with individuals working in conservation in multiple ways, including scientists, outdoor-related businesses, and writers. Their mural about the impacts of sulfide mining is rotating between their four Twin Cities area high schools.

The Conservation Fellows program is a 10-month partnership between a cohort of high school students of color and the Friends, providing an advocacy mentorship experience and opportunities to share diverse perspectives about the environment. Friends is recruiting for next year's cohort. ✦

For more information, contact Betsy Daub at:
betsy@friends-bwca.org



2016 Accomplishments

Over the past year, the Friends has demonstrated strategic, compelling advocacy and creative outreach that inspires people to preserve the wild character of the Boundary Waters Wilderness and surrounding Quetico-Superior ecosystem.

We advance innovative environmental solutions that make good common and economic sense. Despite strong political opposition, we make strides with key leaders and we bring together the right people and partners to make a real difference for the wilderness and create a better long-term environment for its preservation.

ADVOCACY – Protecting wilderness character and preventing sulfide mining from ever happening in the wilderness watershed

- **Submitted evidence-based, technical comments** on proposed sulfide mining projects, (1) encouraging the Forest Service to deny Twin Metals' mineral lease renewal, and (2) requesting that the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management conduct a thorough, 2-year environmental review of sulfide mining risks near the BWCAW.
- **Supported a 20-year withdrawal of mineral rights** by the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management for 234,000 acres just south of the BWCAW – ensuring that no new mineral exploration or mine development could happen in the area.
- **Created the Downstream Team** a group of citizens from varied backgrounds interested in advocating for the BWCAW and Quetico-Superior region at the MN State Capitol – worked to restore the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Citizens' Board, secure funding for rural Broadband access, and defend against pro-mining interests that threaten the BWCAW.
- **Provided substantive comments on proposed US Forest Service timber management projects** near the BWCAW, resulting in revisions to the projects that will preserve the wild character of lands surrounding the BWCAW.
- **Provided a strong staff presence** for conservation in northern Minnesota by assisting in the formation of the Downstream Business Coalition (DBC), BuyDownstream grassroots organizing efforts, and Duluth for Clean Water citizen group.
- **Participated in citizen activism** as a part of the City of Duluth's St. Louis River Corridor Initiative, and Western Waterfront Trail Advisory group, the North Shore Climate Readiness community dialogue, and the East Range Citizens Advisory Panel on the Range.

SCIENCE / CONSERVATION – Restoring wilderness character and ensuring that management decisions are made using sound science

- **Coordinated 58 wilderness volunteers through the Superior Wilderness Volunteer Connection program**, for a cumulative total of 689 days in the field – program works to maintain and improve campsites, portage trails, and other recreation resources in the BWCAW.
- **Initiated a communications campaign about climate change** and its impacts on the BWCAW and northern Minnesota, helping the public understand current analysis of the effects of climate change and actions that humans can take to mitigate it.
- **Launched the Conservation Fellowship Partnership Program** with the first cohort of high school students of

Audited Statement 2016

Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
Action Network



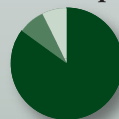
Fiscal Year 2016 – October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016

Support and Revenue

Contributions and Grants	\$708,714
Contributions and Grants - Temp Restricted	61,500
Investment and Other Income (Loss)	33,013
Total Support and Revenue	\$803,227

Expense

Program Services - 85%	783,888
Management & General - 8%	63,498
Fundraising - 7%	37,213
Total Expense	\$884,599



■ Program Services - 85%
■ Management & General - 8%
■ Fundraising - 7%

Program Services

Advocacy - 67%	526,720
Education - 18%	143,976
Science/Conservation - 11%	85,392
Building Wilderness Advocates - 4%	27,800
Total Program Services	\$783,888



■ Advocacy - 67%
■ Education - 18%
■ Science/Conservation - 11%
■ Building Wilderness Advocates - 4%

Total Assets – September 30, 2016

\$1,257,044

Total Liabilities – September 30, 2016

\$85,710

An audited statement is available upon request.

color – students have met with legislators, scientists, nature photographers, and others working in conservation, created a mobile mural about sulfide mining impacts on clean water, and developed independent projects for more in-depth study.

- **Coordinated the first-ever Science Symposium with the Heart of the Continent Partnership** that included presentations on research from social, cultural, and natural sciences.

EDUCATION / OUTREACH – Building the next generation of stewards and advocates

- **Sponsored 42 urban youth** for weeklong BWCAW canoe trips teaching environmental stewardship, wilderness values, and leadership skills in collaboration with YMCA Camp Menogyn on the Gunflint Trail.
- **Hosted 5 undergraduate and graduate interns** who worked on detailed advocacy and outreach projects with the Friends, offering the Friends an opportunity to help train young wilderness advocates through on-the-ground experience.
- **Hosted 3 Macalester College Fellows** who explored innovative and practical strategies to broaden discussions around sustainable economic development for local communities surrounding the BWCAW that support the health and longevity of both the wilderness and its neighbors.
- **Sponsored the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in Duluth and Minneapolis**, engaging new audiences to inspire adventure and serve as a catalyst to take action and protect wild landscapes like the BWCAW. †

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We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals, businesses and foundations which made gifts to the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness in the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016

Continuing Sigurd Olson's Legacy Sigurd Olson Circle

A program for donors who give \$1,000 or more annually. Thank you so much to those who have made this significant commitment.

If you are interested in joining the Sigurd Olson Circle, please contact Executive Director Paul Danicic at: 612-332-9630 or paul@friends-bwca.org



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Climate Change in the Boundary Waters

The Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness has begun a campaign to raise awareness and spur action surrounding climate change. Scientists predict that as Minnesota's climate warms in the coming decades, the Boundary Waters could experience drastic ecological changes that could detract from its cultural, scientific, and economic value. Thus, we feel it is part of our mission to ensure the public is informed when it comes to the science of climate change in Minnesota and keep our members up to date on the latest news in climate change policy. To be a part of the campaign, please follow us on Facebook and Twitter and subscribe to our email list. ✦

To read about the kick-off to our climate campaign, visit <http://bit.ly/ClimateKickoff>



Kelso River off Sawbill Lake, BWCAW. Photo by Bryan Hansel – www.bryanhansel.com

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