

# BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA WILDERNESS TIMELINE

- 1909** Superior National Forest established by President Theodore Roosevelt from public domain lands within the State of Minnesota
- 1909** Boundary Waters Treaty signed by Canada and the United States, requiring that neither country pollute boundary waters or waters that flow across the boundary
- 1946-1950** Congress authorizes mineral leasing on acquired national forest lands in Minnesota where leasing will not interfere with primary purposes for which the land was acquired. Contemplating granite, gravel, and iron ore mining that would not interfere with recreational uses, Congress also authorizes mineral leasing on public domain national forest lands in Minnesota, provided that the Forest Service consents to such leasing
- 1964** Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) designated by *the Wilderness Act* (P.L. 88-577)
- 1966** Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issues two mineral leases covering nearly 5,000 acres of the Superior National Forest adjacent to the BWCAW for a term of 20 years
- 1978** *Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act of 1978* (P.L. 95-495) bans mining within the Wilderness, establishes a 220,000-acre Mining Protection Zone along entry corridors, and further protects the BWCAW
- 1989-2012** BLM issues two renewals of the 1966 mineral leases with the Forest Service's consent
- March 2016** Department of the Interior issues a legal opinion finding BLM has discretion to grant or deny a lease renewal application for the 1966 mineral leases
- Dec. 2016** Following the Forest Service's denial of consent, BLM denies the renewal of original 1966 leases, now owned by Twin Metals Minnesota, a Chilean owned mining company, and the leases expire
- Jan. 2017** Forest Service files an application to withdraw from mineral leasing approximately 234,000 acres of Superior National Forest lands in the BWCAW watershed, initiating a 2-year mineral segregation, and issues a notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement
- Dec. 2017** Department of the Interior issues a new legal opinion finding that BLM lacked discretion to deny Twin Metals' lease renewal application
- Jan. 2018** Forest Service downgrades the mineral withdrawal study from an environmental impact statement to an environmental assessment and initiates a second public comment period
- Feb. 2018** At the conclusion of the public comment period, 98% of the 180,000 comments submitted to the Forest Service were in favor of the mineral withdrawal
- June 2018** Three lawsuits filed in federal district court in Washington D.C. challenging the BLM's reinstatement decision
- Sept. 2018** Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announces in a press release that the Forest Service is cancelling its application for the mineral withdrawal, and the public study process and development of an environmental assessment are terminated
- May 2019** BLM restores the cancelled and expired 1966 leases to Twin Metals Minnesota, giving a green light to sulfide-ore copper mining, and restoring the process to commence mining in the Rainy River Watershed -- just footsteps from the BWCAW
- December 2019** *The Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020* is signed into law, including House report language accompanying H.R. 2740 which directs the State Department to report to Congress on the effects of sulfide-ore copper mining in the Super National Forest on international waters shared with Canada and protected by the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty