



REFLECTIONS



NORTHERN TIER NATIONAL HIGH ADVENTURE

Pre-millennium Rendezvous 1998

by Dave Greenlee

It's time to file your trip itinerary. While you are at it, better rip off a hunk of bandanna and slather it with Ambroid* to patch that Seliga, and get some Neet's Foot oil on the straps of your Duluth A3's. We're going to have a Rendezvous on September 4-7, and its going to be a big one! Your reunion planning committee is cooking up a great time, and it ain't packsack stew.

Please take a few minutes and fill out the Registration Form and send it in. As you do, please consider your family's wants and needs. If there is something you would like us to help with, please make a note on the registration form, or contact one of the reunion planners listed below. If you are planning to go on the trail before or after the reunion, or would like to, please contact Mike McMahon. Do this especially if you would like to hook up with others who may "need a guide", or if you have room for one. As you figure out who will be with you and you work out your "meal plan" for your time at the Base, check out the growing list of activities and make plans accordingly.

Friday, September 4, 1998 4:00 p.m. - Early Registration - Welcome cabin; 6:00 p.m. - Supper - Dining Hall; 8:00 p.m. - Campfire and singing - Parley's Rock Later - Aurora Check.

Saturday, September 5, 1998 8:00 a.m. - Breakfast - Dining Hall; 8:30 a.m. - Registration - Dining Hall; 9:00 a.m. Tours of the Canoe Base; 11:00 a.m. Children's Concert - TBD; 12:00 Noon - Lunch; 1:00 p.m. - SAA Corporate Membership Meeting in the Lodge; 5:30 p.m. - Refreshments - SunSpree Resort; 6:30 p.m. - Dinner Banquet - SunSpree Resort Banquet Speaker - Sam Cook, outdoors writer for the Duluth News-Tribune and Herald, author of *Up North*, *Quiet Magic*, and *Camp Sights*.

Sunday, September 6, 1998

8:00 a.m. - Breakfast; 10:00 a.m. - Hymns in the Lodge; 12:00 Noon - Lunch - Dining Hall; 1:00 p.m. - Northern Tier Committee Meeting - (free time for everyone else).

Monday, September 7, 1998 8:00 a.m. Breakfast; 9:00 a.m. - Northern Tier Committee Meeting (continued); 12:00 Noon Lunch;

1:00 p.m. - Family Excursions / Hit the Trail for Home.

OK, if you elected to look for off-base lodging, look over your options, do some of your own research if you like, and then make reservations. Labor Day weekend is the last weekend of the peak summer season, and Ely can be a busy place at that time. If you de-

side to stay off base, remember that the Holiday Inn SunSpree is our host for the Saturday evening Banquet, and we have reserved a block of rooms. Be sure to tell them you are with the Sommers Reunion. The following list is from www.ely.org/bus_hotels.html.

Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort (218)365-6565; Boundary Waters Motel (218)365-3201; Budget Host Motel Ely (218)365-3237; Four Star Motel (218)365-3140; Hill's A-frames (218)365-3149; Lakeland Motel (218)365-3330; Paddle Inn (218)365-6036; Shagawa Inn Resort/Motel (218)365-5154; Silver Rapids Lodge (218)365-4877; Smitty's On Snowbank (218)365-6032; Super 8 Motel (218)365-2873; Timber Trail Lodge (218)365-4879; Westgate Motel (218)365-4513; White Wolf Inn (218)365-3466.

Butch has suggested another option to consider - the Fall Lake campground, about 15 miles from the Base. The rates are \$8/night for non-lakefront sites, no electricity, \$10/night for lakefront sites, no electricity, and \$12/night for sites with electricity. If you run short of ideas, contact the Ely Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-777-7281. Don't forget when you make your plans that there is an International Wolf Center, the Dorothy Molter Museum, and the Soudan Mine, all worthy of your consideration as places that are interesting, educational, and fun. If you want to schedule a float plane ride to take off from the Base or from the SunSpree, contact Carlo or Julie Palombi at Vista Air Seaplane Tours of Ely, 218/365-4797.

Ray Mattson is designing a Rendezvous '98 T-shirt that should be a great "piece-of-work." Larry Whitmore is working up a beautiful commemorative edition D.H. Russell knife from his contacts with the famous Grohmann knife factory in Pictou, Nova Scotia. The

(continued on page 3)



Double Packing along the border trail

These members of a 1930 crew are standing proudly at the border between the United States and Canada. On the left is Elisio Varani, one of four advisors with a group of 16 Boy Scouts from the "Iron Range" area of northern Minnesota. On the right is Henry Bradlich, with his foot on the boundary marker. The seven-day trip was sponsored by the Hibbing District Scout Office. It went from Winton to Lac La Croix via Fall, Newton, Pipestone, Basswood River, Crooked Lake, Iron Lake Bear Trap River, Gun Lake, Fairy Lake and Four Town Lake.

President's Message

by Dave Hyink

Let today be the day!
 The day you take a few moments to recall your first visit to Sommers Canoe Base.
 The day you pause to remember the plaintive wail of the loon on a quiet Quetico lake at sunset.
 The day you reflect on the great experiences you had in the North Country and how they helped shape your life.
 The day you stop to consider the influence that you had on the lives of your crew as you taught them the ways of the woods.
 The day you remember the wonderful people you got to know at the Base, and the effect that many of them had on your life.

The day you fondly recall the memories of taking your son or daughter on his or her first canoe trip.
 The day you remember the peaceful serenity that only a day on the trail can bring.
 Let today be the day that you take some action to set aside time to celebrate those memories and events with the friends who helped make them.
 Let today be the day you send in your registration for Rendezvous '98! Months of planning, 75 years of rich history, and years upon years of great memories await your return to the Far Northland.
 See you in September!

General Manager's Comments

by Doug Hirdler

As of May 15th we had received 134 staff applications for 1998 and 30 staff members from the 1997 staff are returning. When we have the opportunity to train 50 plus new staff members we know we have both a blessing and a curse. The curse comes from having a smaller staff than usual over the past few years which then means a smaller number will return. In order to help with that concern I am proud to say that the Northern Tier Committee has joined with the Alumni Association this year to really kick off the Staff Scholarship Fund, which will give college financial help of \$500; \$1,000; or \$1,500 for staff members who are returning for their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year.
 Our blessing stems from the growth that we have had this year and that which we project will continue into next year and beyond. The total long term participation for 1997 was 2,592 involved in 341 crews. This compares to 3,233 involved in 424 crews during 1996. The 1998 sign-up (as of May 15th) stands at 533 crews with 4,157 participants. When comparing the 1998 figure to previous years, one would have to go all the way back to 1968 to come close to the attendance figures when 298 crews with 3,492 participants enjoyed the High Adventure of the North. Sign-up for 1999 appears ahead of last year's record-setting pace with 464 crews and 3,354 participants com-

pared to 343 crews with 2,407 participants as of May 15, 1997. After the first week of taking reservations in April we had 382 crews signed up compared to 251 in 1997 for this year.
 What does this mean for the Charles L. Sommers National High Adventure Base and the Northern Tier High Adventure program? It means more youth, adults, and staff members will have the opportunity to understand what is meant by Sam Cook's "Up North" or the song "The Far Northland." It is a starting point for the new biennium and as that, it has ensured our first 75 years will strengthen our next.
 I wish to thank each and every one of the Alumni Association members for your recent hard work at the work week and for your role and support in training and orienting the new Northern Tier High Adventure Staff for 1998. No doubt without your involvement this record-setting year would not be possible. Many of you have suffered over the past year with two new greenhorns operating your beloved base and to you we say thanks for working with us to bring back the mystique that a Northern Tier trip can bring in each person's life. I am sure that you can and will be able to see that your commitment has persevered and won over many to the far Northland.
 Along with that I will be expecting to see each of you at the Rendezvous 98!

Alumni Association Directors and Officers

Director/President (1)*	Dave Hyink	(253) 863-6406
Director/Vice President (3)	Barry Bain	(612) 944-5178
Director/Secretary (1)	Butch Diesslin	(218) 365-6904
Treasurer	Nigel Cooper	(612) 738-1242
Director (1)	Roy Conradi	(770) 972-8115
Director (1)	Robert Welsh	(425) 454-5628
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Director (3)	Mark Nordstrom	(614) 833-0499
Director (3)	Linnea Renner	(218) 365-3655
Director (2)	Patrick Cox	(214) 342-8786
Director (2)	Dave Greenlee	(605) 594-6287
Director (2)	Wade Herbranson	(218) 365-3162
Director (2)	Jay Walne	(901) 278-2633

*Number in parenthesis is years remaining in current term

Program Liaisons

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Pre-millennium Rendezvous

(continued from page 1)

blade will be etched with a 75th Anniversary logo. Check out the picture on the web. Butch is soliciting interest to order some red jac-

shirts (remember them?) to be embroidered with the SAA paddlers logo. If there is sufficient early interest, we could possibly

have these ready for the reunion, so get your orders in now.

The fur trade theme will be played up throughout our Rendezvous, and Voyageur dress is encouraged. If you'd like to participate in Rendezvous-type skits, a reenactment, Voyageur story telling, or the like, please let us know.

And music! If Barb Cary Hall hasn't already tracked down all you guitar pickers and convinced you to get your fingers calloused for some serious music making, let this serve as a public invitation. Bring your voices and your instruments. We will make music!

The Banquet is expected to be our biggest ever, featuring Sam Cook, famous outdoor writer, storyteller, and a member of 1964's Crew 702C. Sam's lost guide, Gerry McKay, has been found, and we may get to see a reunion within the reunion.

For more information, check out the Rendezvous '98 pages on the Sommers Alumni Association web site at www.holry.org. The most up to date information will

be there, short of calling up a committee member. Also, we will be sharing messages from people who are making plans to be at the reunion or who can't be there and wish to let us know they are thinking about us.

...so make those plans and get ready for a good time!

Your reunion committee:

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greenlee@dakota.net

Barb Cary Hall (218) 624-0329
pulihall@abby.skypoint.net

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mnkolodgi@hotmail.com

* Depending on what segment of the 75-year history of the Base you draw your memories from, you may not have had to work with Ambroid, but I'll bet you could tell us about 1,001 ways to use duct tape on the trail.

Just Desserts

by Michael McMahon

Back when I worked at the canoe base we had some rather interesting donations of food. One year, we received several hundred pounds of hamburger frozen in 15-pound blocks. The morning of a trip, the blocks would be sawed in half and each crew would take a 7½-pound chunk of frozen hamburger on the trail. Until we finished off this donation, the first night out was for hamburgers. (From this experience, I learned that those of us who live in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota can put frozen steaks in the cooler, head for the Boundary Waters early in the morning, and enjoy steaks and baked potatoes the first night out. If they go into the cooler frozen and are carefully packed in the food pack, the steaks are just ready for cooking by evening.)

We took frozen hotdogs out the year I was a swamper with Bill Quinn. Our crew brought a gunny sack of corn on the cob. Bill's rule was that if they brought it, they could carry it, but we would be willing to help them eat the corn. So that first night on the trail, we had hotdogs and roasted corn on the cob on Knife Lake.

The government was always sending us surplus food of some sort. Back in the days when you could take canned goods on canoe trips, we would get canned meats. One year we got canned beef which, as I recall—and who knows what 35 years has done to my recall, was not too bad. This was trail food, after all. Another year, we got canned pork which, as I also recall—with the same limitations as with beef, was pretty awful—except you could make pretty good gravy with whatever that pork was packed in. The trick was to find something to put the gravy on, since the pork itself was not necessarily what you wanted to eat.

Perhaps my favorite, though, was the year we got several hundred pounds of chiffon pie mix through an ordering mix-up. Now this was a real treat! Consider how many chiffon pies you might make with several hundred pounds. And

we got quite a variety—red, blue, yellow, and green pies. Before the season opened, we were served chiffon pies every evening. It was becoming clear that we could be stuck with chiffon pies for years to come. After all, they were only convenient trail desserts for those crews that traveled with their own electric mixers.

Then one day, just before the season opened and we had pretty much completed getting the base ready for the crews, we all filed into the mess hall for lunch. The back windows in the hall were blacked out and we were told to leave them alone. Cliff Hanson, our base director, was away and when lunch was completed, Ron Walls called for a mandatory staff volleyball game on the court in the parking lot behind the mess hall. We all filed out the front of the hall and walked around to the back. There we found several tables piled high with chiffon pies in all colors. As I recall, the kitchen staff later gave some figure in the low hundreds for the number of pies. As you may suspect, it didn't take a Sommers staff more than about 10 seconds to determine the purpose of the "volleyball game." We proceeded to have one of the biggest pie fights you can imagine! In a few minutes the pies were gone, the staff was radiant in reds, blues, yellows and greens, with pie crusts as some of the decoration. Soupy Sales would have been proud of our performance! The kitchen staff kindly turned hoses on those most in need of cleaning, while others went to the showers and still others straight down the hill to the lake. A crew of guides and swampers spent most of the afternoon washing chiffon off the dining hall and other objects. Chiffon stuck like glue after the sun hit it.

All in all, I think we enjoyed throwing the pies more than eating them. In any case, even the "volleyball game" didn't seem to make much of a dent in our supply of chiffon pie mixes. Such pies were available throughout that summer—as I recall.

Seliga Canoes

by Chuck Rose

Joe Seliga starting building his own canoes when he couldn't become a canoe retailer. He wrote to the Morris Canoe company, asking for information about handling the canoes. Morris once employed 75 people in a Maine canoe factory, but a fire reduced him to a one-man operation. Joe then tried his own hand at building canoes, at first for himself. When folks offered to buy them, he became his own one-man operation.

The Charles L. Sommers Wilderness canoe Base bought Seliga Canoes from 1950 to 1972. Usually in quantities of 10, but one year the base bought 25. The canoes are numbered according to a system developed by Joe Seliga. First, a two-digit number gave the year of manufacture. Next a single digit indicated whether it was a regular canoe or a square-stern, which Joe was also building at the time. The next number indicates the total number of canoes produced. Well, not really. Joe can't remember how many canoes he made previously and he didn't want to look like a beginner, so he started numbering at 101. Addi-

tional digits at the end of the stem band represent the length in feet (usually 17). The first canoe Sommers bought was number 504122. He dropped the 4 in 1966, since he was just building canoes (with a few exceptions) and added the month at the beginning of the numbers. One of the last canoes bought by Sommers was 272339 (month, year, number) built in February, 1972. In 1984 he made a third change, back to the "year first" system. For example: 966136 (year, number, month)

At 87 years of age, Joe has still not caught up on his backlog of orders, but he doesn't take deposits anymore, until he's ready to start building an ordered canoe. Roger Dellinger (9459612) is creating a database of Seliga owners within the Sommers Alumni Association. Send him your serial numbers and other information (such as when purchased from the Canoe Base or Joe) at 13775 Chestnut Dr. #219, Eden Prairie, MN 55344 or rdellinger@barr.com. Now the alumni association is raffling the canoe Joe built for Sandy. See page 7 for information.

Avoid The Crowds in the BWCAW

by Jim Colten of the University of Minnesota

The BWCAW gets pretty heavy use but it is still possible to find some degree of solitude if you know how to look for it. I have taken all day side trips from a base camp on the second most popular route on a holiday weekend without seeing a single soul. I have also spent six days over a July fourth weekend seeing nobody on July 3, 4 and 5 and only 12 other people on the entire trip. Here's how.

The basic 'secret' is portage, portage, portage. Pick a route that opens and closes with long portages and averages five or more portages each day. Many people do not take those routes because they prefer an easier trip.

Choose your entry point carefully. Over half of all entry permits are allocated to just nine entry points. The remaining entry points have low daily quotas, are not as convenient to outfitter locations and get much lighter use. Avoid routes with lots of campsites — although having lots of campsites does offer a (sometimes false) sense of security when it comes to looking for a place to camp late in the day.

Time of year is an important factor. Before mid May and after mid September are much better (also much colder). My neighbor takes some measure of 'pride' in going so late that he has to break ice on the way out ... talking about mid-late October here.

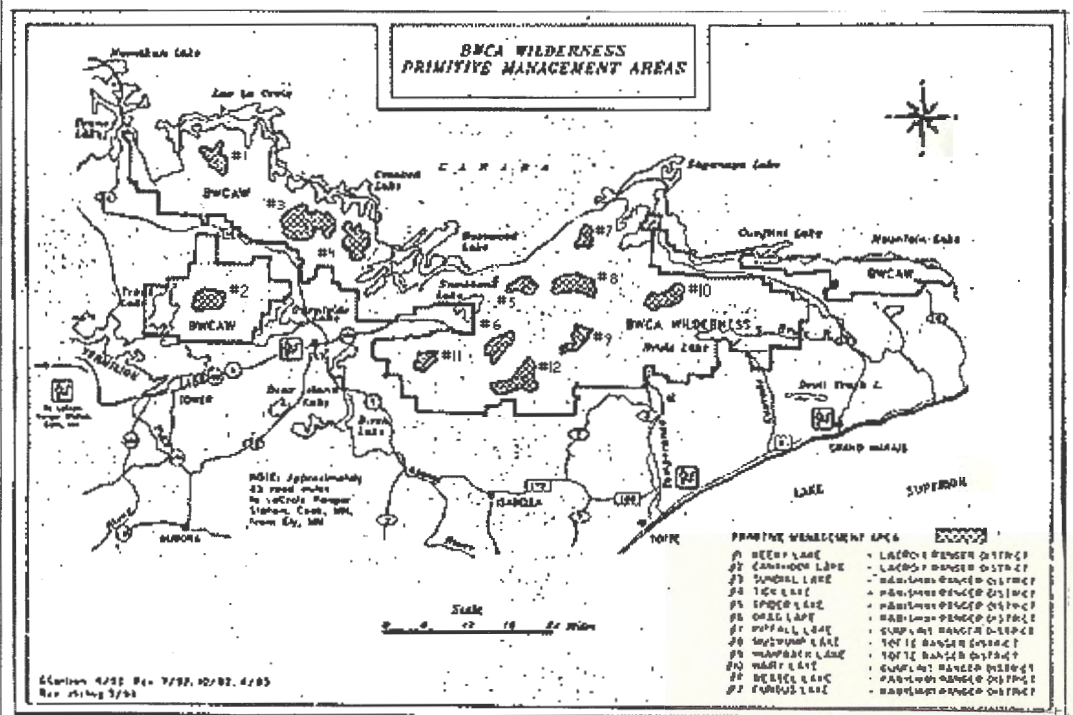
Experienced BWCAW travelers might consider trying one or more of the Primitive Management Areas.

Select a base campsite within striking distance of one of the BWCAW's hiking trails or short dead-end or loop canoe routes containing few or no campsites. These typically lightly used routes make good day trips visiting places you would otherwise never see.

Try BWCAW backpacking. There are miles of trails (almost 200, I think) and only a few percent of all BWCAW use is by backpackers.

Lastly, just across the border in Ontario is Quetico Provincial Park. Quetico's entry limits are much lower (about 60 parties per day vs. 280 for the BWCAW), its acreage is in one large block and there are fewer entry points (some not accessible by car). BWCAW is quite fragmented, has lots of good road access and has about seventy en-

(continued on page 5)



Primitive Management Areas

1. Weeny Lake (LaCroix Ranger District office). This is in the area south of Lac LaCroix, east of Loon, south of Thumb and Gebeonequet and north of Huster Lakes.
2. Canthook Lake (LaCroix Ranger District office). This is more or less in the center of the BWCAW portion south of the Echo Trail. It is east of Trout and west of Cummings Lakes.
3. Sundial Lake (Kawishiwi Ranger District office). This is in the area east of the Stuart River, south of Iron Lake and extreme western Crooked Lake, north of Beartrap Lake and west of Sinneeg Creek.
4. Tick Lake (Kawishiwi Ranger District office). This is in the area east of the Sundial Lake PMA and Sinneeg Creek, south and west of eastern Crooked Lake and northwest of Basswood Lake's Jackfish Bay.
5. Spider Lake (Kawishiwi Ranger District Office). This appears to be in the area north of Jordan, Hatchet and Ima Lakes, east of Ashigan and Trident Lakes, west of Gerund, Wisini and Kekekabic Lakes and south of Vera, Missionary and Skoota Lakes.
6. Drag Lake (Kawishiwi Ranger District office). This appears to be in the area north of the Lakes One/Two/Three/Four chain, west of Insula Lake and south of Disappointment Lake.
7. Pitfall Lake (Gunflint Ranger District office). This appears to be in the area south of Swamp Lake, west of Saganaga, Red Rock and Alpine Lakes, north of Jasper Lake and east of Fish and Zephyr Lakes.
8. Mugwump Lake (Tofte Ranger District offices). This appears to be in the area south of Kekekabic and Ogishkemuncie Lakes, west of Gabimichigami and Little Saganaga Lakes, north of Boulder and Roe Lakes and east of Wisini Lake.
9. Humpback Lake (Tofte Ranger District office). This appears to be in one of two areas north and west of Sawbill Lake. Either south of the Louse/Trail Rivers, west of Kelso and Alton Lakes, north of Grace and Phoebe Lakes and east of Polly and Koma Lakes ... OR north of the Louse/Trail Rivers, east of Pan and Makwa Lakes, south of Little Saganaga Lake and west of Mora and Hub Lakes. ... The PMA map I have shows little detail; the shape of this PMA seems to fit into the second area best but its placement relative to BWCAW borders seems to indicate the first area.
10. Hairy Lake (Gunflint Ranger District office). This is south of the Gunflint Trail just west of Gunflint Lake landing. It appears to be in the area south of Tuscarora and Cooper Lakes, east of Karl and Gordon Lakes, North of Frost Lake and Frost River and west of Mora Lake.
11. Weasel Lake (Kawishiwi Ranger District office). This appears to be in the area east of the South Kawishiwi River, north of Gabro Lake and west of Clearwater Lake. I believe that the 1995 Gabro Lake fire was in the area.
12. Fungus Lake (Kawishiwi Ranger District office). This appears to be in the area north of Isabella Lake and River, east of Diana and South Wilder Lakes, west of Ferne and Whittler Lakes and south of Insula and Maniwaki Lakes. It looks like the PowWow Lakes trail takes you to the western edge of this area and the dead-end canoe route from Insula to Maniwaki Lake takes you to the northeastern corner.

Adapted from the 1995 PMA brochure by Jim Colten, jcolten@umn.edu

Tidbits on the Sommers Clan

The family of **Carlos "Carl" Chase**, founder of scout sponsored canoe trips, including granddaughter Jonnie Stark, daughters Laura Vendetti and Elaine Mitchell are having a family reunion in Ely in conjunction with Rendezvous '98.

Zdenek "Dan" Dvorak '52 is retired and living in S. Lake Tahoe, CA with his wife Shirley.

Jim Oliva 1979-80 is a carpenter in Topeka, KS. His sons Matt (9) and Brad (7) really like to canoe, fish and camp and are looking forward to coming to Winton, MN for a trip with their uncle Bob Oliva '80.

Best wishes to **Dr. Chris Wolfe '69-71, '75** as he enters into a private practice as a Cardiologist in

Olympia, WA. The Wolfes' new address is 3220 Sunset Beach Dr., Olympia, WA 98502.

NEW LIFE MEMBERS: **Randall Howerton, M.D., 1982**, has an OBGYN practice in Tyler, TX.

Richard R. Lundquist 1973-93,96 Advisor lives in Manhattan, KS; where he works for G-R Manufacturing. According to his business card, they can meet your

needs for "Dohickeys, Gadgets and Thingamajigs."

Jon R. Pederson 1993-98 Ojpkik Advisor, owns Ruffridge-Johnson Equipment Co., in Minneapolis. Thanks to Jon for "finding" Mike Dahl 1968-69, a growing-up buddy.

John Tuthill 1973-76 is an Electronics Technician for the US Postal Service in Bismarck, ND.

Avoid The Crowds

(continued from page 4)

try points; there are few places more than two day's travel from an entry point. Quetico is also quite a bit more expensive (daily camping fees and more expensive outfitters) and much less accessible by automobile (all the better to keep crowds away).

How can you know when and where the lightest use is found? You may contact the Forest Service in Duluth for entry point usage info from the previous year.

Primitive Management Areas

PMA's are 12 remote sections of the BWCAW that occupy about 124,000 acres of the least-used parts of the wilderness. PMA's were established to offer visitors a wilderness experience that is more primitive than those currently available in the majority of the BWCAW.

Travel in a PMA requires more skill and effort than in the rest of the wilderness.

Previously established portages and hiking trails are not maintained. Most PMA's contain no trails at all and access to most of the lakes requires bushwacking and absolutely reliable orienteering skills.

PMA travel is usually much slower and more physically demanding than travel in the rest of the BWCAW. Plan accordingly and pack light.

Previously established campsites are not maintained and are not identified on maps. Latrines and firegrates might still be present but are being removed from those campsites. Most portions of PMA's have never contained designated campsites.

Slightly different rules are applied to the PMA's:

- Camping is allowed anywhere within a PMA.
- Fires are not restricted to

firegrates.

- Overnight use of a PMA requires that your travel permit contain a special (written) endorsement. Day use of a PMA requires no endorsement and is not regulated.
- PMA endorsements are issued only to holders of BWCAW visitor permits.
- You may only receive a PMA endorsement by appearing in person at the Forest Service district office that administers that particular PMA. I presume this happens when you pick up your permit.
- Each PMA is divided into sub-zones. Only one group is allowed to spend each night in each sub-zone. I am not aware of any reservation system.

Recommended PMA practices:

- You are encouraged to camp away from and out of sight of lakes and other waterways.
- Human waste should be buried 6-8 inches deep in organic soil 150 ft. from shore.
- Personal hygiene and dish washing should be done away from shore. Dump waste water at least 150 ft. from shore.
- You are encouraged to keep your party size small (1-6) when using a PMA. Small groups have less impact.
- In general, leave no trace. Consider using a stove rather than a fire. If you must have a fire:
- Normal BWCAW fuel gathering rules apply in a PMA.
- Choose a fire site with care, avoid overhead fuel and clear all burnable material from the fire area.
- When leaving an area, completely extinguish the fire, disperse cold-dead coals, ashes and unburned fuel and cover the fire scar with leaves and needles.

Reunion Trips

by Michael McMahon

We are beginning to get requests for information about people who are planning or might plan or even want to plan to take a canoe trip before or after the Rendezvous '98 Reunion. I am volunteering to provide a "clearing-house" for information about these trips. If you haven't taken a trip up north in several years, you should be aware that you need travel permits for both the Boundary Waters and the Quetico. I have information about the permits and

the process for obtaining them. I will also have information about what resources may be made available to alumni through the canoe base. In order to hook up people who are planning a trip and looking for others with people who also want to take a trip, let me know your plans or desires. You can contact me by e-mail at mcmahon@minn.net; by actual mail at 645 Gaston Avenue, Shoreview, MN 55126; or by telephone at (612) 483-5759.

Four Board Terms to Be Filled

Four terms on the Sommers Alumni Association Board of Directors are expiring this year. Dave Hyink, Bob Welsh, Roy Conradi and Butch Diesslin are serving in those terms now and each of them has agreed to serve another three-year term. A nominating committee chaired by Mark Nordstrom and including Barry Bain, John Christiansen, and Bob Renner is naming those four members as nominees to fill the four expiring terms. Profiles of each of the candidates: **Butch Diesslin** (1961-80, Cmte 1982-) Community College Physics Instructor, Vermillion Community College, Ely, MN; **Roy Conradi** (1959-64) Photographer/Publisher, Snellville, GA; **Dave Hyink** (1966-70, Cmte 1986-) Forest Scientist, Edgewood, WA; **Bob Welsh** (1952-53) Physician (semi-retired), Bellevue, WA

Members can also nominate other members, or themselves as candidates to serve as directors. Nominees must provide a willingness to serve statement to be considered bona fide candidates. Contact Mark Nordstrom, 612/833-0499, to nominate a member of the association for a new, three-year term as director. The election will be held at the annual meeting of the membership, September 5, 1998. Members can vote in person at the meeting or by proxy. Proxies are to be mailed August 1, to allow time for members to respond by the annual meeting.

Directors are responsible for determining whether gifts, grants, and devises of bequests are acceptable under the rules of the association and for determining activities, program or projects to be financed or administered by the association that advance the goals of the association under its rules.

Ice: Out, Fish: deep, Fire Risk: High

by Mark Nordstrom

When ice on the lakes turns black and pulls away from the shore it's the first step to ice-out. Some lakes were ice-free by the middle of April. In general ice disappeared about two weeks ahead of usual.

Much different from the conditions of two years ago, when ice-out lasted into the middle of May and last spring's ice-out was only a little quicker. But this year, fall made it all the way to spring without giving winter the upper hand. The average ice-out is April 17, but some lakes were clear of ice by the first few days of April.

Ice is usually off larger lakes beginning about April 25 in southern Minnesota and about May 5 on the Canadian border, says the Minnesota Climatology Office. They have averaged records from 1960 to 1979 to come up with those dates.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources says this all means conditions will be slightly different this summer in the BWCAW. Expect lower water levels, higher fire risks and deeper fish.

Fire risk

A fire restriction was already in effect for about a week in May this spring. Tracy Richards, supervisory information assistant with the Superior National Forest, says the ban was ended by a 1½-inch rain storm, but without significant rain to raise overall water levels bans may be in and out of effect all summer. She says conditions were dry in the fall, then the warm winter produced little snow and early meltoffs. A fire restriction means no campfires are allowed and campers are restricted to using stoves. For most canoe travelers that means bringing extra fuel along. Richards says before you set out, you may want to call ahead to find out what the current conditions in the BWCAW are. Call 218/365-7561 seven days a week between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. central time.

Dan Litchfield, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources natural resources wildlife technician, describes the condition of large-size dead wood in the forest as drier than wood bought in a lumber yard. He calls that large, dead wood thousand-hour fuels, meaning there's a thousand hours worth of burning time in them. He says the load of all the smaller fuel sizes

in the forest is high too, and he's expecting to have fires from lightning strikes this summer. He says the BWCAW is set up for fairly large fires this summer, which may affect hundreds of thousands of acres. Fires have already been burning in Canada and when the wind was right, smoke from them lingered in Ely. "It's a year to be careful with matches," Litchfield says. A fire will improve deer and moose habitat, he says, but he's hoping there won't be extensive destruction.

Wildlife

The deer had their fawns early this year, Litchfield says and the moose calves came early too. The woods should have a high population of them this year. He says there have been few complaints so far about bear activity, which may mean that the growth of food in

the woods is better in this year's warmer weather and earlier spring. It may mean that bears bother campsites less this summer. Litchfield notes that eagles nested early this year too.

Insects

Litchfield says the black flies came early this year and so did the dragon flies that feast on them. Maybe the drier conditions will mean fewer mosquitoes. That remains to be seen.

Vegetation

Expect dry conditions, but the warm early spring means better berry crops already, Litchfield says, and folks who like to pick them should enjoy bigger harvests quicker.

Water Levels

Water levels are down. Litchfield says the area was in a

drought condition last year and lake levels were already down going into the short winter with lower snow levels. Richards says unless there's significant rain this summer, water levels will be well below normal.

Fish

Litchfield says walleye spawned two weeks early in the MN DNR hatchery on Lake Vermillion. He says when water levels are at normal levels, the fish spawn in the feeding river more than in the lake. In this year's warmer, lower water he says there was less spawning in the river and more in the lake. He says he's not sure what it means, but it might mean a better hatching year. For the most part, it's likely that fish will be deeper than normal in most lakes.



Commissary Featured on Annual Greeting Card

Walking from the base entrance to the Lodge visitors pass the Hanson House, then the commissary building on their right. It's where crews pack food for their trips and where tents are hung to dry. A lot of traffic goes through it in a summer. This year Bob Cary has created a pen-and-ink drawing of it for the Alumni Association's annual Holiday Greeting card. It features the commissary in a snow storm with a single Blue Jay perched in a tree in the foreground. "They're always looking, always hunting for food in winter," Bob says. An order form for the cards is included in this newsletter. All money over cost received from sale of the cards is spent by the SAA to support base programs. Also, you can still order back issues of previous cards (until supplies run out) featuring the Lodge, Hanson House, canoe yard, fort gateway and portage at lower Basswood Falls. An order form is on page 8 of this newsletter.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness

Comparison of pending legislation

1978 BWCA Wilderness Act (P.L. 95-495)

Truck Portages

Two of five mechanical portages continue operation. Three truck portages were to close to truck use within the wilderness by 1984 (unless no feasible non-motorized method existed), but trucks operated through 1992 when federal appeals court enforced the law. Now nonmotorized use transports thousands of boats annually.

Motorboat Lakes

BWCAW remains most heavily motorized unit in National Wilderness Preservation System, with 21% of total water surface area open to motorboats after 1999. 14,000 other lakes in Minnesota remain open to motors.

Motorboat Quotas

1978 law directed Forest Service to develop motorboat quotas for lakes remaining open to motorboats.

Towboats

Through a drafting error, allowed towboats to continue operating within the wilderness.

Wilderness Additions

1978 law added 57,000 acres of additions to wilderness, for a total BWCAW of 1,087,000 acres.

Snowmobile Trails

Snowmobiling illegal in the BWCAW except for 2 short routes to access Canadian cabins.

Grams/ Oberstar Bills (S. 783, H.R. 1739)

Truck Portages

Opens the three closed portages (Trout, Prairie, and Four Mile Portages) to truck and jeep traffic within the wilderness to commercial concessionaires for hauling boats from lake to lake.

Motorboat Lakes

Eliminates the 1999 phaseout of motorboat use on most of Seagull Lake, scheduled by Congress in the 1978 law, and keeps this lake open to motorboats in perpetuity.

Motorboat Quotas

No change in motor quotas.

Towboats

No change.

Wilderness Additions

No additions.

Snowmobile Trails

No change.

Wellstone Bill (S. 1085)

Truck Portages

Opens Trout and Prairie Portages to truck and jeep traffic in wilderness to commercial hauling of boats from lake to lake.

Motorboat Lakes

Closes small Canoe Lake to motorboat use in exchange for allowing use of a motorized piston bully for grooming a ski trail within the wilderness.

Motorboat Quotas

Increases motor quotas and motor traffic on Basswood Lake.

Towboats

Eliminates towboats on Basswood Lake (5-10% of Moose Lake towboats) and S. Farm Lake (nearly no towboat use).

Wilderness Additions

Adds 21,700 acres of wilderness, but allows timber access roads in additions.

Snowmobile Trails

Supports new snowmobile trail along edge of wilderness in Echo Trail corridor, which would lead to rampant snowmobile violations in the BWCAW in winter.

Vento Bill (H.R. 2149)

Truck Portages

Keeps all three wilderness portages closed to truck and jeep traffic, and allows existing nonmotorized portaging to continue.

Motorboat Lakes

Closes Loon Lake, the remaining motorized part of Lac La Croix, and all of the wilderness portion of Seagull Lake to motorboat use.

Motorboat Quotas

No change in motor quotas, except for those lakes closed to motorboat use.

Towboats

Eliminates all towboat use within the wilderness.

Wilderness Additions

Adds 7,370 acres of additions to wilderness.

Snowmobile Trails

No change.

Damberg

Health care consultant David Damberg has died at the age of 64 of cancer. He was a charter life member of the Sommers Alumni Association, having worked at the base in 1950. He graduated from Macalester College in St. Paul in 1956 and earned a Master's degree in hospital administration from the University of Minnesota. As a principal in Hamilton HMC in St. Paul he helped plan and design health care facilities around the world. He died April 7 in St. Paul, where he had been a lifelong resident. He was an enthusiastic outdoorsman

1998 SAA Holiday Greeting Card Sale

Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association is now taking orders for the 1998 edition of our annual Holiday Greeting Cards. By using these cards, SAA members and supporters have the opportunity to send holiday greetings to their friends, business associates and fellow scouters as well as sending a message of their commitment to

programs of Northern Tier High Adventure, BSA. Orders will be shipped in November.

This year's card features Bob Cary's drawing of the Commissary Building in a winter storm. See page 6 for more information. It's printed using highest quality thermography (what's often referred to as "engraved," it protrudes up

from the surface of the card) on premium cards of recycled paper. The inside message reads HOLIDAY GREETINGS. The back of the card carries a message about Northern Tier High Adventure. This is a distinctive and very handsome greeting card. The cards come 25 per package, including envelopes.

A limited number of 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997 cards featuring the "Lodge," "Hanson House," "Canoe Yard" and "Gateway" are also available at a discounted price, while supplies last. A special series package, including all five previous years will be available at a special price, while supplies last.

Please send order to this address



Charles L. Sommers Alumni Association, Inc.
Holiday Greeting Card Sale
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Quantity

Price

___ 1998 Cards - Commissary	x \$25.00 = _____	
___ 1997 Cards - Portage at Basswood Falls	x \$20.00 = _____	
___ 1996 Cards - Fort Gateway	x \$20.00 = _____	
___ 1995 Cards - Canoe Yard	x \$20.00 = _____	
___ 1994 Cards - Hanson House	x \$20.00 = _____	
___ 1993 Cards - The Lodge	x \$20.00 = _____	
___ The Lodge, summer view, plain inside	x \$25.00 = _____	
___ One box of each, 1993-1997 (five boxes)	x \$90.00 = _____	
___ Enclosed is a tax-deductible gift to the Alumni Association for 1998.	_____	
Shipping: Free	Total _____	

Plain Inside (add \$5.00)

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