



July 19, 2021

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council  
Attn: Mr. Mark Johnson  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
State Office Building, Room 95  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Members of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council:

Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness ("Friends") is excited to have submitted a grant application to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council ("LSOHC") entitled, *Preventing Forest Fragmentation and Protecting Wildlife Habitat at the Edge of the Boundary Waters*.

This project will protect wildlife habitat at the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness through the purchase of 686 acres of forestland with more than two miles of riparian shoreline and 3,500 feet of lakeshore adjacent to public land. This project will open new lands to public hunting and fishing and provide wildlife habitat for moose, gray wolf, Canada lynx, fisher, marten, northern goshawk, and other species of greatest concern.

The Friends will permanently own and manage the project area for wildlife habitat. We recognize the importance of creating win-win scenarios for all stakeholders. To that end, as we outlined in our grant application, the Friends will commit to pay property taxes to Lake County and other local governments, which currently amount to approximately \$15,000 annually.

We proactively reached out to Lake County in April 2021 to discuss this important conservation project. We emphasized that the Friends would commit to pay property taxes and that we would enter into agreements to make our commitment to pay property taxes legally binding.

In a letter dated June 22, 2021 to the LSOHC, the Lake County Board of Commissioners stated that they oppose the use of public funds for our project because the Friends' goal is "to preserve this land and not allow the potential for future development." It is indeed our goal to protect this land for wildlife habitat and open new lands to public hunting and fishing, both of which advance the purposes of the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

We recognize the legitimate needs of Lake County to maintain its tax base. For that reason, we will pay property taxes. This is a win-win scenario for conservation and the community.

The attached summary further describes our project. We look forward to an opportunity to discuss this exciting conservation project with members of the LSOHC.

Sincerely,

Christopher D. Knopf  
Executive Director

# Preventing Forest Fragmentation and Protecting Wildlife Habitat at the Edge of the Boundary Waters



## CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITY

Arizona has the Grand Canyon. Wyoming has Yellowstone. Minnesota has the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

This Project will permanently protect 686 acres of forestland at the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, encompass over two miles of riparian shoreline and 3,500 feet of lakeshore. Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness will purchase the Project Area in fee title, permanently own and manage the property for wildlife habitat, and continue to pay property taxes to Lake County and other local governments.

This is superb forest habitat for moose, gray wolf, Canada lynx, black bear, fisher, marten, bald eagle, ruffed and spruce grouse, northern goshawk, and other species of greatest concern.

## Funding Request and Outcomes

- Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness requests \$1,805,000 to purchase in fee title 686 acres of forest with more than two miles of riparian shoreline and 3,500 feet of lakeshore
- Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness will permanently own and manage the Project Area and pay property taxes
- Prevents forest fragmentation, protects shoreline habitat and maintains wildlife corridors connected to thousands of acres of public land
- Provides wildlife habitat for moose, gray wolf, Canada lynx, fisher, marten, bald eagle, ruffed and spruce grouse, northern goshawk, and other species of greatest concern
- Opens new lands to public hunting and fishing



*Snowbank Lake parcel*





South Kawishiwi River parcel

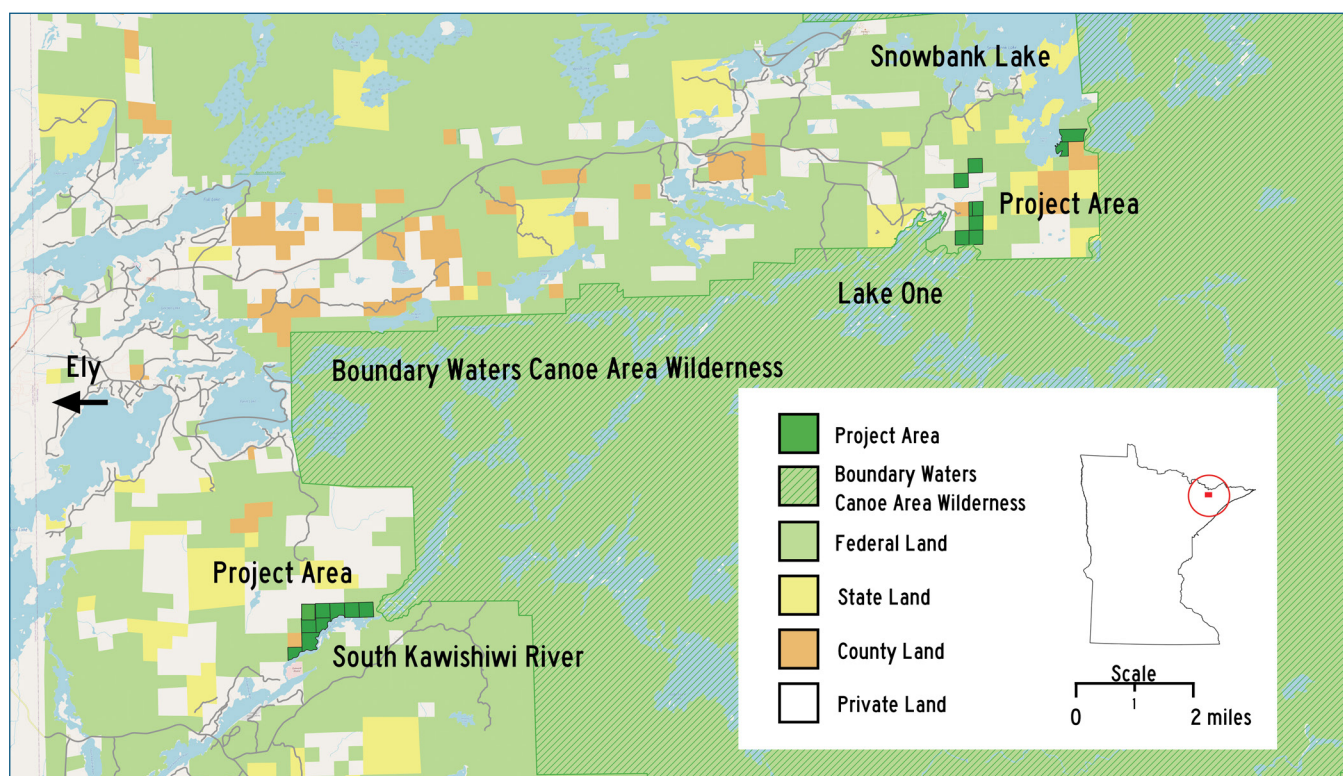
## CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with over 5,000 members. Friends has assisted in conservation land acquisitions since the 1980s. In 2019, Friends' volunteers worked 3,320 hours with National Forest rangers on conservation projects.

To develop wildlife management plans for the Project Area, the Friends has formed an advisory council that includes the Director of the University of Minnesota Center for Forest Ecology, a natural resources professor at Vermilion Community College, and the chief ranger at the Superior National Forest Kawishiwi Ranger District.

## MISSION:

*To protect, preserve and restore the wilderness character of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Quetico-Superior ecosystem.*



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