

BOUNDARY WATERS CANOE AREA WILDERNESS, MINNESOTA

THE PLACE:

With more than 1 million acres of boreal forest, rocky outcrops and nearly 2,000 clear glacial lakes, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is a national treasure. Located within Superior National Forest along the U.S.-Canada border in northeastern Minnesota, Boundary Waters is the most visited wilderness area in the United States and forms part of a 2 million acre binational network of protected public lands.

WHY IT'S SPECIAL:

This rugged wilderness attracts tens of thousands of visitors from across the country who seek solitude and adventure while paddling its 1,200 miles of canoe routes. Its interconnected lakes have some of the cleanest water in the world. This pristine landscape is a biodiversity hotspot, home to rare wildlife like moose and federally protected animals including Canada lynx, gray wolves, and northern long-eared bats. Boundary Waters' boreal forest sequesters massive amounts of carbon dioxide, playing an important role in the fight against climate change.

THE STAKES:

The biggest threat facing Boundary Waters has long been copper mining. President Trump's about-face in federal land-use policy threatens a mineral exploration and extraction boom in the Rainy River watershed, which includes the Boundary Waters. That could lead to harmful mining projects like the defunct Twin Metals copper sulfate mine, with acid drainage threatening now-pristine waterways. Transforming the forests bordering Boundary Waters into industrial mining facilities would also lead to substantial air, light, and noise pollution and increase road traffic, threatening the entire wilderness area.



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