Wilderness to the people of America is a spiritual necessity, an antidote to the high pressure of modern life, a means of regaining serenity and equilibrium.

- Sigurd Olson
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

To protect, preserve and restore the unique wilderness character of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and the Quetico-Superior Ecosystem

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THE FRIENDS’ GUIDE TO THE BOUNDARY WATERS

BY

Pete Marshall

Cover photo courtesy of Mark Tade
Chances are, someone you know has told you about how much they love the Boundary Waters. Perhaps you’ve had the opportunity to experience the magic of this land for yourself. Or maybe you’ve always wanted to go, but for some reason, never dipped a paddle in these pristine waters.

I can’t say how many people have told me they’d like to visit the Boundary Waters, but were worried they lacked the skills and experience to travel in such a remote area. Though this is rugged wilderness, you don’t need to be an experienced outdoorsperson to enjoy it.

Even if you don’t have an experienced friend or family member to introduce you, numerous outfitters and guides around the Boundary Waters can provide gear, expertise and guided services for all experience levels. We put together an extensive list of outfitters in Appendix I, and encourage you to contact them.

Whatever your skill level, you can enjoy the Boundary Waters! Whether you’re thinking of going up for the first time or are planning your 63rd trip, this is an area that will challenge you, bring you outside of your comfort zone, and open your eyes.
The area we now call the Boundary Waters was once exploited for profit. Trappers depleted the region of fur-bearing animals, the logging industry clearcut most of the white and red pines that once covered the area, and prospectors dug in search of gold, iron and copper. One aggressive industrialist almost built several dams on the Rainy River, the main waterway in the Boundary Waters.

This watery gem of a wilderness is rich in natural resources. But it is richer in natural beauty. While many exploited the region for profit, the story of the Boundary Waters is a story of people who recognized the beauty of this land, who said this is an area that needs to be set aside and protected.

Our nation has seen intense fights over the Grand Canyon and Yellowstone, but no piece of land has been so continually controversial as the Boundary Waters. It took generations of passionate advocates to restore and preserve this special place. It’s easy to think the Boundary Waters has always been here, but the wilderness we enjoy today is nothing to take for granted. History could have played out differently. Instead of wilderness, we would have an industrial corridor with congested roads, motor boats echoing over the lakes, lumber mills and paved parking lots.

In an apparent paradox, to become wild again, this wilderness needed people. To stay wild, it needs people.

From the rock art left by the first people who called this area home to today’s adventurers, the Boundary Waters is a place where wilderness and the human experience are intimately connected. It is a place where the connection between the earth and people — so rare in our modern society — is strong.

For over 40 years, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness has worked to protect, preserve and restore this national treasure. We have long believed that the best way to protect this unique area is to introduce new people to its wonders. The more people visit, the more will fall in love with it and work to protect it for this and future generations.

Whether you’ve been to the Boundary Waters dozens of times or are planning your first trip, we hope this guide provides you with the insights and information to enjoy this northern wilderness. When you get back from your trip, please send us pictures!
Before You Go

Like the Grand Canyon or Yellowstone, the Boundary Waters is one of the crown jewels of the American landscape. As the nation’s most popular Wilderness Area, visitors need to follow a few simple rules to ensure it retains its wilderness character.

Entering the Wilderness

There are about 70 designated entry points spread out along the perimeter of the Boundary Waters, all within Minnesota. Most entry points are accessed from a parking lot and have an informational kiosk.

About Permits

Everyone who goes into the Boundary Waters must have a permit! From May 1 to September 30, the U.S. Forest Service uses a quota system to limit how many parties can enter through each entry point. During this time, everyone traveling overnight in the Boundary Waters needs to be on a permit, which you can reserve online at www.recreation.gov/permits/233396 and pick up at a designated permit issuing station, such as a Forest Service office or an outfitter.

For each permit issued during this time, there is a fee of $16 per adult and $8 per child, age 0-17.

Reservations generally open at the end of January and are issued on a first-come first-serve basis. Plan to get yours early — they go fast! Pay the $6 booking fee and reserve your permit online to make sure you get a permit for the date and entry point you want.

There is no quota system in place for those who want to enter the BWCA for the day, or who want to camp overnight between October 1 and April 30. These permits are self-issued, and can be filled out at the kiosks at most entry points, Forest Service offices, outfitters or lodges.

Other Rules

- Group size is limited to nine people and four watercraft.
- Only camp in designated campsites, marked by U.S. Forest Service fire grates.
- Keep fires small and manageable. Drown them with water before leaving camp or going to sleep.
- The latrines are not garbage cans! Only poop, pee and toilet paper should go in them. Everything else — wipes, cotton swabs, tampons, diapers, etc. — needs to be packed out!
- Drones are not allowed! Aerial shots of lakes and friends paddling may be spectacular, but drones severely impact the wilderness character of the Boundary Waters.
- Glass containers and single-use metal cans are not allowed in the Boundary Waters. Before this rule was put in place, campsites were often littered with broken glass and empty tins.
PLANNING YOUR TRIP

There are around 1,200 miles of canoe routes in the Boundary Waters. With so many options of where to go, what lakes to visit and portages to take, you need to do a lot of paddling and go on many trips before you get bored.

Which canoe route should you take? How to plan your adventure? The single most important factor when it comes to planning a trip is the people you go with. No two crews or trips are alike. Before you unroll the maps, take the time to consider some key questions.

What is the Goal of the Trip?

Whether you’re out for two days or seven, set a goal for the trip. This won’t limit you, but will help shape your trip. Some goals might be:

- We want to travel fast and make miles!
- We want to complete a well-known route, such as the Voyageurs’ Highway or the Frost River loop.
- I want to introduce people to the Boundary Waters.
- We want to fish. And then fish some more.
- This is a trip to relax. And sleep until noon.
- I want to see pictographs or other cultural or historic features.

What Area Do You Want to Explore?

There are two primary “gateways” to the Boundary Waters. Through the town of Ely — a more central location — and through the town of Grand Marais, which gives access to the eastern part of the Boundary Waters. Both towns are immensely charming and you’ll find world-class canoeing wherever you go.

What Time Do You Want to Wake Up? How Many Hours a Day Would You Like to Spend Traveling?

How Many Miles Can You Cover in a Day?

Here’s a simple formula to guesstimate how far you can go in a day: Take the number of hours you plan to be on the water, multiply that by two (as in two miles per hour, a reasonable rate of travel for most) and shave off 25 percent for time spent on breaks, portaging, fishing, etc.

As far as portaging goes, consider everyone’s fitness. It’s important to be upfront about physical limitations that might make portaging a challenge. Keep this in mind when looking at the length and quantities of portages on any given route.

How Will the Weather Impact Travel?

Wind, along with being a danger on open water, can severely hamper your progress. If you see lightening, you need to get off the water and might not make your targeted miles that day.

Plan one out of five days as a weather day, a day that is not safe to paddle. This weather day may come at once, or be spread out. A windy afternoon might take you off the water a few hours early, or a morning thunderstorm might keep you in camp later than you hoped.

These are guidelines, not absolutes! The more trips you go on, the more comfortable you’ll be estimating how far to go in a day and the better you’ll be at planning your next trip.

Looking for more? Turn the page for five world-class canoe routes in the Boundary Waters.
ROUTE 1: RIVERS, ISLANDS AND LA CROIX

Overview: This route begins on the Little Indian Sioux River and leads into large bodies of water, ending on another river, the Moose.

Length: Approximately 49 miles. 4 to 6 days

Entry/Exit Points: Start at Entry Point # 14, “Little Indian Sioux River (North).” Take out at #16 “Moose/Portage River.”

Maps: Fisher - F-16 and F-23. McKenzie - 14, 32, 31, 13 and 12

Highlights: On your first day you’ll come to Devil’s Cascade, a spectacular display of rock and falling water. Along with the scenic rapids and falls on both rivers, the islands of Lac La Croix are a treasure. Bring your map, compass, and navigation skills because the inlets and islands of the big lake beg to be explored.
ROUTE 2: BIG WATER

**Overview:** Starting on Fall Lake you travel north into Basswood Lake and after two days or so of paddling, around the time you start to miss portaging, you portage back towards Fall Lake.

**Length:** Approximately 30 miles. 3 to 5 days.

**Entry/ Exit Points:** Begin and end at Entry Point #24, “Fall Lake”

**Maps:** Fisher - F-10. McKenzie - 17 and 10

**Highlights:** Lots of lakes and not a lot of portages!

ROUTE 3: MINNESOTA’S “MOUNTAINS”

**Overview:** There are a lot of lakes in Minnesota, but not a lot of mountains. What we got is beautifully displayed in this route that features bluffs, cliffs, long lakes and stunning overlooks.

**Length:** Approximately 50 miles. 4 to 6 days

**Entry/ Exit Points:** Enter at #60 “Duncan Lake.” End at Clearwater Historic Lodge.

**Maps:** Fisher - F-13 and F-14. McKenzie - 2 and 1

**Highlights:** After you huff it through the Baby Grand Portage (600+ rods) you arrive at a series of small lakes hemmed in by stunning mountains. Truly awe inspiring. Once you portage onto Clearwater Lake, don’t forget to turn around. It’s a silly gorgeous view.
ROUTE 4: A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE BWCA

Overview: Part of what makes this such a popular beginner’s route is that it conveniently starts at a campground maintained Sawbill Outfitters, which has groceries, gear rental, knowledgable staff, showers and basically makes it easy to start your Boundary Waters adventure.

Length: 5 – 7 miles. 1-2 days.

Entry/ Exit Points: Entry Point #38, “Sawbill Lake”

Maps: Fisher - F5. McKenzie - 20, 21

Highlights: Alton Lake, which you reach by a short, easy portage trail, begs to be explored. Lots of campsites and great fishing, this is a classic slice of canoe country.

ROUTE 5: THE NUMBER CHAIN

Overview: Another popular entry point and another great trip to introduce you and others to the Boundary Waters. The close proximity to Ely is also hugely convenient.

Length: 30 miles roundtrip. 3 days

Entry/ Exit Points: Entry Point #30, “Lake One”


Highlights: Swimming, fishing, islands, plenty of good camping and just the right amount of portages to give your legs a workout, but nothing that will leave you exhausted. This route inspires most people with the urge to explore more of the Boundary Waters.
WHAT TO BRING

Having everything you need fit into some packs and a canoe is one of the joys of traveling in the Boundary Waters.

If you talk to old timers who have been paddling the BWCA for 40 or 50 years, they’ll tell you the biggest thing that has changed is the emphasis on gear. Deciding what gear to take (so many brands, so many features!) can be overwhelming. Cutting edge, ultra-lightweight, indestructible, weatherproof gear is great and super convenient, but don’t let it distract you. Countless life-changing trips have been done in an 80-pound aluminum canoe and a high-school letter jacket.

In addition to a packing list (see page 19 - 20), here are some guidelines to help you decide on clothing:

- “Cotton kills” is a common saying in the outdoor world. When cotton is wet, it dries slowly and sucks the heat out of you. Look for either wool, synthetic fabrics such as polypropylene, nylon, or a cotton/synthetic blend.
- Wool is the miracle fabric. Even when wet, wool keeps you warm. I don’t know how, but wet wool socks on a cold day have managed to keep my toes warm.
- On a budget? Used clothing stores like Savers, Goodwill and military surplus stores can be treasure troves.
- Rain gear can be expensive. You don’t need to drop $300 to stay dry. Frogg Toggs makes affordable rainsuits that might not last a lifetime, but will keep you dry for four or five trips.
- Sometimes you need top-of-the-line equipment. Nothing can spoil an otherwise great trip like a leaky tent. If you can’t justify purchasing a new one, most outfitters have high-quality tents to rent. This goes with almost every type of equipment.
- Plan for a variety of weather, regardless of the forecast.
- Dress in layers, with a thin pair of long underwear as your base. This method allows you to add or shed clothing as needed.
- Dark clothing attracts bugs. The lighter the better.
Putting It All into a Pack

Canoeists can be rather creative when it comes to packing their gear. In addition to the traditional canoe pack — such as made by Frost River and Granite Gear — wannigans (essentially a small cabinet with pots, plates, food and other cooking supplies) and barrels are all seen out on the water today.

Whatever packing system you use (everyone has their opinions on what works best) the fundamental goals are to keep things orderly and to keep things dry. Here’s how to do just that.

- Line your bags with 1-2 large, 4 mm trash contractor bags. Frost River and Granite Gear make some that are specifically designed for canoe packs.
- Invest in waterproof casing, such a Pelican Case or a SealLine bag, for electronics.
- Pack you rain gear last. This way it will be on top and easy to access when you need it.
- Keep other items you might need during the day — toilet paper, water filter, camera — somewhere they are easy to reach.
- The thwart bag. Carry everything you need for the day — such as lunch, sunscreen, chapstick, etc. — in a waterproof thwart bag. I use a 10-liter SealLine drybag that clips right onto a seat or a thwart. This way, you’ll have everything on hand and not waste time digging around, trying to find the hand lotion.
What Kind of Tent Should I Bring?

The ideal Boundary Waters tent has three key features:

- Good ventilation – summer nights can be hot!
- A full rain fly that covers the entire body of the tent
- A roomy vestibule for storing gear

Most 3-season tents made today will do the trick. Because you don’t need to be overly concerned about weight, I like to go with slightly larger tents, i.e.: a three-person tent for two people. Two people in a two-person tent is downright crowded!

Should I Cook on a Stove or a Fire?

While cooking over a fire is traditional and has that authentic feel, it’s not necessarily convenient. Firewood can be hard to come by in camp and if you’re traveling during a particularly dry time, there may be a fire ban in place to prevent forest fires.

Stoves are more convenient, easier to use and have less impact than fires. Modern stoves can boil a quart of water in minutes and often have a press-button ignition system so you don’t even need to strike a match.

If you still want to cook over a fire, I recommend the EmberLit folding stove. This small stove collapses to the size of a greeting card and works by burning kindling and small pieces of wood, reducing the need to have a stack of firewood to cook your oatmeal. Super compact, lightweight and durable, it eliminates the need to carry fuel.

Sleeping System

A couple of days worth of paddling, along with an abundance of crisp, fresh air, are two of the most important ingredients for a perfect night’s sleep. A few more items and the recipe is complete:

- **Sleeping pad.** Modern sleeping pads can be downright luxurious. Air pads made by Therm-a-Rest, Sea to Summit or Nemo are compact, durable and remarkably comfortable. However, they are not cheap, either. A more affordable option would be to use two closed-cell foam pads. These will be significantly more bulky and slightly less comfortable, but you’ll still sleep like a baby.
- **Sleeping bag.** Modern sleeping bags are designed to be incredibly efficient when it comes to keeping you warm. On hot summer nights this can be a bit uncomfortable, but hey, that’s why Whitcomb Judson invented the zipper. Typically, you’ll want a bag that’s rated between 20 and 40 degrees.
- **Bag liner.** These will both increase the longevity of your sleeping bag and are ideal for those hot nights when you don’t need much more than a sheet for cover. You can buy one at most outdoor shops, or simply fold an old sheet in half, sew it about two-thirds of the way shut, and presto, you got a liner.
- **Pillow.** The easiest way to rest your head is to stuff some clothes into a bag and call it a pillow. However, if you’re a fussy sleeper, you might want to invest in an inflatable camp pillow. These compact numbers deflate to the size of a baseball and can make a real difference.
Footwear

The perfect footwear for canoeing has yet to be invented. There are about as many opinions about what kind of footwear you should wear as there are types of shoes. Let’s look at some popular options:

**Leather boots.** L.L. Bean’s classic canoe boots have been worn by paddlers for over a century. These tall leather boots with a rubber bottom look great but are neither cheap, nor entirely waterproof.

**Modern high-top boots.** Manufacturers such as NRS, Chota and Kokatat make great waterproof boots for canoe country. Both the NRS Boundary Boot and Kokatat Nomad Paddling Boot provide support and are tall enough to keep your feet dry when you wade into the water at the beginning or end of a portage.

**Overboots.** A great economic option is to wear a set of Tingly boots over a pair of sneakers. Tingley boots come in a variety of sizes, are durable, provide good grip, and will keep your feet dry.

**Water shoes.** Though it’s preferable to wear closed-toe shoes to prevent rocks and stick from cutting your feet on portages, many prefer sandal/shoe hybrids made by Keen, especially in the middle of summer. Those willing to risk their toes swear by sandals like Chacos.

**Camp shoes.** Once in camp, you want to change into something more comfortable: a pair of sandals or moccasins of some sort.

**Socks.** You always want to have at least one pair of dry socks to change into at the end of the day. Pack 3-4 pairs of wool socks and you should never have to suffer wet socks in the morning.

Navigation

I’m surprised by how many people rely solely on GPS to navigate through the Boundary Waters. Personally, I never use a GPS. Finding your way with a map and a compass is much more satisfying. And to be honest, I never took the time to learn how to use a GPS unit. Laziness keeps me set in my ways!

If you chose to navigate by GPS, you still need to carry a set of maps and a compass with you, and you need to know how to use them! See Appendix II for books that go into more detail about navigating with a map and compass, as well as GPS.

Maps for navigation

Several companies make waterproof maps that cover the entirety of the Boundary Waters, and include all the portage trails, campsites and entry points.

- **Fisher maps** are the iconic yellow and blue variety that have been a mainstay in the Boundary Waters for decades. They are easy to read and my personal preference.
- **McKenzie maps** are larger scale (1:31,680 or two inches to one mile) which is great for precision navigation, but if you’re going any distance, you’ll be carrying a lot of maps!
- **True North** is new to the map game and quite unique. They print their maps on cloth bandannas, so they can be worn, tied to a pack or stuffed in a pocket. And they’re just as detailed as any navigation map.

Map Cases

Though Fisher and McKenzie maps may be waterproof, you should still keep them in a waterproof case, such as the ones made by NRS, SealLine and Sea to Summit. A map case will increase the longevity of your maps and because you can tie or clip the case to a pack or the canoe, it will prevent your maps from blowing away.

Declination

For the most part, you don’t need to worry about declination — the angular difference between true north and magnetic north — in the Boundary Waters. The 1 to 2 degrees west declination is negligible for navigating through lakes. However, the magnetic north pole has been moving at an increased rate, so this will change in the coming years.
BWCA PACKING LIST

GROUP GEAR

- Portage Packs
- Bear Barrel(s)
- 100 Feet of Rope
- Cooking Utensils
- Dishwashing Set
- Camp Stove + Fuel
- Folding Saw
- Hatchet
- Toilet Paper
- Tent
- Matches / Lighter
- Map + Compass
- Map Case
- Water Treatment
- Emergency Locator
- Solar Charger
- Biodegradable Soap

PERSONAL GEAR

- Life Vest / PFD
- Sleeping Bag
- Sleeping Pad
- Medication
- Pocket Knife
- Chapstick
- Two Paddles
- Water Bottle
- Headlamp
- Camera
- Waterproof Case
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Eating Utensils
- Camp Mug
- Hand Sanitizer
- Toothbrush / Paste
- Book
- Pen & a Journal

THE WEARABLES

- Rain Coat
- Rain Pants
- 1 Warm, Long-Sleeve Top
- 1 Long-Sleeve Shirt
- 1-2 Short-Sleeve Shirt
- 1 Pair Nylon Pants
- 1 Pair Nylon Shorts
- 1 Swimsuit
- 1 Paktowl
- 2-3 Pair Wool Socks
- 1 Pair Camp Socks
- 1 Long Johns Top
- 1 Long Johns Bottom
- 2-3 Sets of Underwear
- 1-2 Bug Nets
- 1 Sun Hat
- 1-2 Bandana
- 1 Pair of Boots
- 1 Camp Shoes / Sandals

THWART BAG

- Sunscreen
- Bug Spray
- Hand Lotion
- Sun Glasses
- Multi-Tool
- Chapstick
- Water Filter
EATING AND DRINKING

Eating is a highlight of any trip to the Boundary Waters. After a few hours or a whole day of portaging and paddling, you feel like you really earned thoseorkfuls of macaroni. It’s hard to overstate how important a good meal is to the experience. If you’re introducing people to the Boundary Waters, make sure to plan and pack great meals.

General

The food you bring should be nonperishable: dried, dehydrated or packaged in a way that will prevent it from spoiling. Some people bring cheese, eggs, bacon, even steaks with them. However, this is risky and might require hauling in ice packs, coolers, or other cumbersome methods we won’t cover here. That being said, if your selected route is light on portages, a cooler might make sense.

You can always buy prepackaged meals designed for travel in the outdoors. Because you just add water and eat out of a pouch (i.e.: no dishes) they are super convenient. However, they also make Whole Foods look like a bargain and are loaded in sodium. You can do better!

Ideas for Breakfast

- Hot cereal: Seven grain or twelve grain hot cereals (available in most bulk sections) are filling and compact. Oatmeal is a classic, as is Malt-O-Meal. Add a dollop of peanut butter to these for a creamier, more filling meal. Don’t forget raisins, nuts and sugar!
- Cold breakfast: Bring some dehydrated milk and you can have any type of cereal on trail. Whole grain granola (such as Crapola) will fuel you until lunch.
- For more leisurely mornings: Pancakes are easy to make, and for the more intrepid cooks, you can try baking rolls, muffins and pretty much anything else.
- Coffee. Obviously.
Stopping for Lunch

Lunches should be ready made and require little to no preparation, that is, no cooking or baking. Here are the basic ingredients to a basic lunch. Modify as you will!

- Trail mix – Go to the bulk section and be inventive! Mix and match. Be daring!
- Beef jerky, summer sausage or some sort of salty protein.
- Dried fruit.
- Energy/ power bar/ candy bars. Choose a few of your favorites. For most people, two bars a day will do.

The Splendors of Dinner

For most crews, dinner is the meal with the most variety. The easiest way is to serve up a one-pot wonder. Here’s the general recipe:

- Start with a base, usually some sort of grain. This can be couscous, rice, pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, orzo), quinoa, etc.
- Protein, such as dehydrated beef, dried beans (be sure to get the quick cook variety), lentils or textured vegetable protein (which is great for both vegetarians and meat eaters).
- Powdered sauce. Find packets of red sauce, cheddar, alfredo (Knorr packets of alfredo and pesto are great), gravy, and more at most grocery stores.
- Other goodies, such as dehydrated peas, carrots, corn.
- Spices. Bring a variety. Favorites include Spike, Cavender’s, Old Bay, butter-flavored sprinkles. I’m serious about the last one.
- If you’re fishing, bring Shore Lunch or other easy-to-use batter to enjoy the fruits of your labor at camp.

Dessert

An easy way to do dessert is to make a pan of brownies or Rice Crispy bars at home, cut them into squares and have them ready for an after-meal treat. On trail, Jell-O No Bake Cheesecakes are a delicacy many experts swear by.

When it comes to eating on trail, we’ve only scratched the bare surface. Ask others about their favorite trail meals. It’s fun to exchange ideas and recipes. You might find that you become an inventive, gourmet wilderness chef.

The Right Way to Wash Dishes in the Wilderness

Cleaning up requires a few guidelines. First, eat or pack away all food scraps. Don’t dump them down the latrine or throw them in the woods or the water. Second, always use biodegradable soap. This is available at most camping stores, even big-box stores like Target carry it. Now, just because it’s biodegradable doesn’t mean it’s as harmless as spring water. Use the soap sparsely and be sure that you dump the dirty “gray water” from your dishes 200 feet or more from shore. This is necessary for the soap to properly breakdown and biodegrade.

The best meals in the Boundary Waters are literally swimming under your canoe. Photo: Austin Fairchild
Bears and Food

You can’t talk about food in the Boundary Waters without talking about hungry bears. The traditional wisdom is to hang your food from a branch so it’s at least 30 feet off the ground and 10 feet from the trunk. This may deter a lazy bear, but if a bear wants that food, they’ll get it.

I rarely hang my food. However, I’m militant about keeping a clean camp and always properly store my food. After over 500 nights on trail, I’ve only had a bear steal food from me once (I didn’t pack the spice kit properly). Here’s how to bear-proof your camp:

• Keep your food separate, ideally in a bear canister. BearVault makes some of the best canisters available and they come in a variety of sizes. These do the double duty of sealing in odors and making it incredibly hard for bears to break into your food. Another option comes from Ursack, a company which makes bear bags that are virtually puncture proof and far less bulky. However, these bags don’t lock in the odors as well as canisters.
• Clean fish and dispose of their guts at least 200 feet from camp.
• Make sure there are no scraps of food lying around camp.
• Store your food away from tents, away from camp, and away from where you eat. These are the areas bears associate with human food, so don’t keep your food here!
• Never, under any circumstances, eat or store food in a tent.
What about Drinking the Water?

While the Boundary Waters is famous for having some of the cleanest fresh water in the country, you still need to treat your drinking water. There are several ways to do this.

- **SteriPEN** is a small, pen-like tool that uses ultraviolet light to kill off 99.9 percent of bacteria, protozoa, even viruses. This is one of the easiest methods to treat water, but you can only treat one liter at a time.
- **Hand-pump filters** work by simply pumping water from the lake through the filter mechanism and into a bottle. The only downside is that pumping can get rather tiring, especially if you're filtering for multiple people.
- **Gravity filters**, such as made by MSR and Katadyn, are great for groups. Fill one reservoir bag with water, attach the hose and filter mechanism, hang the bag of water and let it run through the filtration mechanism. Gravity goes to work and with little effort you have a few liters of safe, drinkable water.
- **Iodine tablets** were once the main way people treated water. It might make the water safe to drink, but it tastes awful. Still, it's worth carrying a small bottle of Potable Aqua Iodine Tablets in case of an emergency.
- **Boil.** Simple and highly effective, boiling water isn’t convenient, unless you’re boiling water for coffee or dinner.
- **If you do not have a way to treat your water, the safest way to drink it is by paddling to the middle of the lake (or 200 feet from shore) and dunking a bottle in about arms-length underwater (not right at the surface).**
PORTAGE AND PADDLE

To the uninitiated, all canoes might look the same. But like bikes or skis, there are different canoes for different occasions: Canoes to maneuver quickly in whitewater, canoes to carry big loads — or big families — canoes for racing, and so forth.

Most of the canoes used in the Boundary Waters can carry a couple weeks’ worth of gear and are designed for traveling on flat water, meaning they are relatively easy to keep straight. Because there are no shortages of portage trails in the Boundary Waters, a light canoe is a must. The canoes you’ll probably see weigh about 40-45 pounds, and are made out of a tough, lightweight material called Kevlar. These boats will make you wonder how anyone ever managed to carry those 80-pound aluminum canoes.

Many people opt to rent canoes from Boundary Waters outfitters. Doing so avoids the cost of purchasing one and the hassle of transporting a canoe to the entry point.

The downside with Kevlar is that, while it is tough, it is not as tough as those aluminum workhorses or the Royalex boats you still see around (granted these boats are significantly heavier).

Take Care of Your Canoe on Trail

- Don’t drag the canoe over the ground to get it into the water. Lift and place it in the water so it floats and isn’t grinding against rocks. Don’t be afraid to get your feet wet!
- Especially don’t drag the canoe over rocks if it’s loaded. Always load the boat when it’s floating in the water.
- When you stop for lunch, grab a stick of wood, put it under the bow of the canoe on shore. This will keep it off the rocks.
- At night, bring the canoe all the way on shore, turn it over and tie it to a tree or a pack. A strong wind can lift a canoe!
Paddling that Canoe

If you stay on flat water, there are three paddle strokes you will use 90 percent of the time in the Boundary Waters: The forward stroke, the J-stroke and the draw.

The first thing to keep in mind is that you want to paddle on the opposite side of your partner. Paddling on the same side makes for an unstable ride and is the sure sign of a rookie who didn’t listen to more experienced paddlers! Sync with your paddling partner by calling “switch” or “hut” to switch sides.

For the forward stroke, the key thing to remember is to engage your core. Twist your torso and reach forward with your lower hand. You get the most power from the first half of your paddle stroke, so really try to maximize your reach and follow through.

Twist with your torso to pull your paddle through the water.

Recover by taking your paddle out of the water and again planting it in front of you, as far as you can.

J-Stroke

The J-stroke is used by the person in the stern — the back — of the canoe, and is by far the best steering, or correction, stroke out there.

The first two-thirds of the stroke is done like a forward stroke. At the end you slightly turn the paddle and pry away from the boat, turning the boat to whatever side you’re paddling on. The overall path of the paddle creates a “J,” hence the name ”J-stroke.”

Draw Stroke

Whitewater paddlers use the draw stroke all the time. In the Boundary Waters, you’ll mostly use it as a way to help steer the boat into a landing.

To perform a draw stroke, reach out from the canoe, plant the paddle and pull the canoe to the blade. Simple, right?

Like anything, the best way to master these strokes is to paddle, paddle, paddle. Ask others to help with your technique!
Portaging the Canoe

It takes more than brute strength to carry a canoe from one end of the portage trail to the other. Getting it on your shoulders takes technique, not muscle. Here are the steps to properly lift a canoe onto your shoulders. For a good video showing various portaging techniques check out: www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqA7d_tqgOw

- Starting with the canoe on the ground, step alongside the middle of the boat and turn the canoe on its side, so the hull — or bottom — is facing you.
- Hold the top of the gunnel and lift so the canoe is on your thigh.
- With your right hand, grab the middle of the yoke. With your left hand, grab the far gunnel.
- Take your right hand off the yoke and slide it under the canoe.
- Rock the boat a few times to build momentum and pop it up so the yoke rolls onto your shoulders.
- To take the canoe off, you essentially do this in reverse. Roll the canoe off your shoulders and onto your thigh. Move your hands from the gunnels to the yoke and place the boat in the water.

Portages in the Boundary Waters are measured by rods. This is one of the last places to use this archaic unit of measurement. One rod equals 16½ feet, about the size of a canoe.
AROUND CAMP

For one night or several, the spot where you make camp will be your home. Like your home, there are several rooms, so to speak:

- Bedroom, or the tents.
- Kitchen, or the area around the fire, where you cook and eat.
- Living room, where you put up your tarp or bug net.
- Porch, which is a rocky outcrop where you can enjoy the scenery, jump in the water, play cribbage or gaze at the stars. Porches are premium features, not every campsite has one!
- Bathroom, follow the trail and you’ll find it!

I can’t overemphasize how important it is to keep a tidy camp. Store your food properly, clean the dishes, put life vests and paddles under the canoe, put loose clothing in packs, keep tent doors closed, etc. Leaving things laying around is a recipe for losing something, and can be an invitation for unwanted critters.

Campsites are designated and clearly marked on McKenzie and Fisher maps, sites are available on a first-come-first-serve basis. Every campsite has flat areas cleared for tents, as well as a wilderness latrine, fire pit and a fire grate.

Camp Chores

A big component of everyone getting along involves sharing the workload when setting up and breaking down camp. My philosophy is that duties should rotate, so no one gets stuck doing one thing. This also prevents anyone from getting stuck with the one chore they don’t want, day after day.

The basic division of labor is as follows:

- Quartermaster – They set up and take down the tents, set up the tarp, camp chairs, etc.
- Cook – They decide what to eat and do the cooking.
- Dishwasher – Not the most glorious job, but a necessary one.
- Gatherer – Filtering water and gathering firewood, for example.

This is a flexible system. Depending on the size of your crew, you might have two people cooking, two people on quartermaster duty, one dishwasher and one gatherer. The rationale is that everyone does their equal share of camp chores.
Need-to-Know Knots

It’s hard to have a tight and tidy camp without tying a few knots! There are dozens of knots out there, but for the sake of simplicity, there are two knots you will use 80 percent of the time in the BWCA: the bowline and the taut-line hitch.

The bowline is a loop that does not slip. Perfect for tying down stakes and a million other uses.

The taut-line hitch allows you to adjust and tighten a line that cinches under pressure. Great for getting a tight tarp or clothesline.
SAFETY IN THE BWCA

In addition to wearing your life vest and leaving your contacts and contact solution at home (seriously, you look great in glasses) here are some of the most common dangers you could face while journeying into the Boundary Waters, and how to manage them.

When Lightning Strikes

If lightning flashes around you, get off the water. If you’re out on a lake or river, you’ll be the highest point, and a potential lightning rod.

At the same time, remember that you are vulnerable on land as well. Lightning cannot only strike trees or exposed people, but can actually travel through the ground and electrocute people.

If you’re on land, avoid tall trees (like those great solitary white pines), open spaces, and metal. Spread out from others (keep a distance of some 15 to 20 feet) and assume a safety position. This can best be done by sitting on a dry, insulated surface that can ground the lightning (a life vest or sleeping pad will be your best option). Tuck your legs into your chest so that only your feet and butt touch the insulated surface.

If you must stay on the water, the so-called “cone of protection” is where you need to be. The “cone” extends 45 degrees from the top of the trees down to the water. No need to do trigonometry here – simply paddle close to shore, the closer the better.

Swimming

Before you go for a dip, there are three precautions to keep in mind:

• Always swim with sandals or water shoes. Your feet will probably get wet during the day, either from wet-footing it at the start of a portage or from sweating in your socks all day. This makes feet spongy and easy to cut, which could very well be a trip ender.
• Don’t dive. Even at the go-to cliff-jumping spots, there is a significant risk of head injury. This can do more than end a trip.
• Swim in pairs or groups. After all, this is the wilderness.
Wind and Weather

One of the most dangerous situations people regularly get themselves into involves trying to cross from one side of a lake to the other. Then, in the middle of the lake, the wind picks up.

This could lead to the canoe capsizing, which can lead to hypothermia or even drowning.

Stay near shore. If you must venture out into the middle of the lake, do so in the morning, which in general is the calmest part of the day.

Knives, Axes and Saws

When using a knife, always cut away from you. The sharp end of the blade should be positioned so that if it slips, all it will cut into is air.

When using an axe or hatchet to chop wood, make sure you have a wide circle around you and no one will be in the way of your swing. If you’re standing, assume a wide stance so if you miss, you don’t swing your axe into your shin.

Don’t use dull blades. You’ll naturally have to push a dull blade harder, making it more likely you’ll accidentally cut yourself.

Finally, always sheath your tools. This will prevent unexpected injuries, and is a good way to increase their longevity.

Be Mindful of Where You Pitch Your Tent

In 2016 a man was killed and his son severely injured when a mature pine fell on their tent. It was an unexpected and tragic accident.

It might not be possible to completely avoid camping near large trees, but before setting up your tent, be sure to look up and check for so-called widow makers. These are large dead branches that fall from up high and get caught in the lower branches. They can weigh over a hundred pounds and are potentially deadly.

Animals and Biting Insects

Bears, wolves, moose and other iconic Northwoods animals are as much a part of the Boundary Waters as cold water and peeling birch trees. They can also cause a lot of stress and worry. Especially bears. The best way to avoid a run in with critters is to keep a clean camp. See page 30 for more on bear-proofing your camp.

Then there are the smaller, more numerous inhabitants of the North: mosquitoes and black flies. Especially in early summer, these suckers are out in force, and you need to be ready to guard against them.

Insect Repellent

Deet is a common — and potent — ingredient in a lot of bug juice. It’s effective but toxic. As it eats through nylon, you need to be careful when applying it, especially around your nylon clothes! Different types of bug juice have different levels of deet, from 7% to 98%. If you have a particularly strong aversion to bugs, you might want to go full force.

A more natural solution is Cutter Lemon Eucalyptus Insect Repellant, which uses natural insect deterrents (citrus and eucalyptus) and works just as well as some deet-based formulas.

Nets for Your Head, Nets for Your Tarp

In the spring and summer, you can go to the BWCA without bug juice, but not without a headnet. Be sure to get one with no-see-um netting, or else the black flies will crawl right in.

In camp, a screened-in tarp, such as made by Cooke’s Custom Sewing or Nemo Equipment can be an absolute haven.

Ticks

Ticks and tick-borne illnesses do present a danger to travelers in the Boundary Waters. Before you go, spray Permethrin on your socks, your tent and lower pant legs. This does wonders to keep ticks off you.
Campfires and Forest Fires

Forest fires are a risk during the summer. For your own safety, and the well-being of the wilderness, follow these precautions:

- Know what the risk of forest fire is before setting out
- When you can, cook over a stove
- Keep campfires manageable and contained within the fire grate
- Before leaving camp or going to bed, drown and stir ashes and embers with water
- Never leave a fire unattended

Communicating with the Outside World

What if something does go wrong? Or what if you just want to check in and let your mom know you’re alright?

There is some cell coverage in a few parts of the Boundary Waters but you should not assume your cell phone will allow you to call for help or communicate when out on trail.

The best way to communicate with the outside world is with an InReach or a SPOT, two of the most popular types of satellite messengers available on the market. At the most basic level, these units work by allowing you to send out status updates, via a GPS signal routed by a system of satellites. Most of the time you’ll use it to send out a notification that you are in camp for the night and everything is okay. In case of an emergency, you can send out an SOS distress call, which alerts nearby search and rescue teams. These units also have functions that allow your friends and family to track your progress and get updates on your status.

With an InReach or SPOT, you have an emergency safety device that could very well save your life. For this reason, they have become standard on many Boundary Waters trips.

Quick note: Satellite phones are now obsolete. Bulky, expensive to own, expensive to rent, and a hit or miss to operate, it’s hard to justify bringing them on a trip. Especially when better options are available.

Barbless Hooks

Use barbless hooks when fishing. It’s better for the fish and is a lot safer for you. Not convinced? Google “barbed fishing hook accident.” And don’t worry about losing a dream fish. Keep the line tight and the pressure on. You’ll bring that hog into your net without a problem.
The Wilderness First-Aid Kit

Whether you’re going into the Boundary Waters for one day or a week, you need to carry a first-aid kit. Just as important is knowing how to use what’s in your kit. It’s beyond the scope of this guidebook to provide detailed information on wilderness first aid. I strongly recommend taking a wilderness first-aid course from NOLS or at the very least, closely reading a book on wilderness first-aid before heading out. (See Appendix II for resources).

That being said, here is what a typical first-aid kit will contain:

**TOPICAL**
- Medicain® Sting + Bite swab
- Neosporin®/ Triple-Antibiotic ointment
- Hydrocortisone
- Aloe
- Alcohol prep pads

**TOOLS**
- Bandage shears
- Tweezers
- Safety pins
- Nitrate gloves
- 12 cc irrigation syringe

**WOUNDS**
- 2x2 gauze pads
- 4x4 gauze pads
- Assorted Band-Aids
- 3” roll of gauze
- Hydrogel burn pads
- 1” Athletic tape
- Duct tape
- Ace Bandage
- Moleskin® / Second Skin® or other blister kit

**ORAL**
- Ibuprofen
- Tylenol®
- Benadryl®
- Chewable antacid tablets

**IS IT SAFE? YES! WE TEND TO FEAR WHAT WE DON’T KNOW. TAKE PRECAUTIONS, PLAN AHEAD, AVOID UNNECESSARY RISKS, LISTEN TO THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE, BE WILLING TO LEARN, AND THE BOUNDARY WATERS IS ONE OF THE SAFEST PLACES YOU CAN BE.**
Ready to experience this unforgettable wilderness? Whatever your personal style, guides, lodge owners and outfitters around the Ely and Grand Marais areas are happy to introduce you to the splendor of northern Minnesota.

**ELY AREA**

**Big Lake Wilderness Outfitters**
PO Box 359
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-2125
www.biglakelodge.com
info@biglakelodge.com

**Boundary Waters Outfitters**
629 Kawishiwi Trail
Ely, Minnesota 55731
(218) 365-3466
boundarywatersoutfitters.com

**Boundary Waters Canoe Adventures**
3060 Echo Trail
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 343-7714
boundarywaterscanoetrips.com
info@boundarywaterscanoetrips.com

**Canadian Waters**
111 East Sheridan Street
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-3202
www.canadianwaters.com
cwmail@canadianwaters.com

**Canoe Country Outfitters**
629 East Sheridan Street
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-4046
www.canoecountryoutfitters.com
cco@frontiernet.net

**Cliff Wold’s Outfitting Co.**
1731 E. Sheridan
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-3267
www.cliffwolds.com
info@cliffwolds.com

**Ely Outfitting Company**
529 E Sheridan St.
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 343-7951
www.elyoutfittingcompany.com
info@elyoutfittingcompany.com

**Ely Area**

**Kawishiwi Lodge & Outfitters**
3187 Fernberg Rd
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-5487
www.lakeonecanoes.com
nicole@lakeonecanoes.com

**King’s Camp**
4005 Fernberg Rd
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-4030
www.kingscamp.com
info@kingscamp.com

**Kawishiwi Lodge**
3187 Fernberg Rd
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-5487
www.lakeonecanoes.com
nicole@lakeonecanoes.com

**Piragis Northwoods Company**
105 N Central Ave.
Ely, MN 55731
(800) 223-6565
www.piragis.com
info@piragis.com

**Riverpoint Resort**
12007 River Point Rd
Ely, MN 55731
(800) 456-5580
www.riverpointresort.com
info@riverpointresort.com

**Voyageur North Outfitters**
1829 E Sheridan St
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-3251
www.VNorth.com
info@VNorth.com

**Way to Go Canoe Outfitters**
1557 Esterberg Road
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-4726
www.waytogooutfitters.com
waytogoanoeoutfitters@gmail.com

**Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge**
1101 Ring Rock Rd.
Ely, MN 55731
(877) 753-3386
www.dogsledding.com
info@dogsledding.com

**Wilderness Inquiry**
808 14th Ave SE.
Minneapolis, MN 55414
(612) 676-9400
www.wildernessinquiry.org
info@wildernessinquiry.org

**Williams and Hall Guides & Outfitters**
14694 Vosburgh Road
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-5837
www.williamsandhall.com
canoe@williamsandhall.com

**Spirit of the Wilderness**
2030 E Sheridan St.
Ely, MN 55731
(218) 365-3149
www.elycanoetrips.com
info@elycanoetrips.com

**Spirit of the Wilderness**
2030 E Sheridan St.
Ely, MN 55731
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www.elycanoetrips.com
info@elycanoetrips.com
**GRAND MARAIS AREA**

**Bearskin Wilderness Outfitters**
124 E Bearskin Road
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(218) 388-2292
www.bearskin.com
outfitters@bearskin.com

**Border Lakes Tour Company**
(218) 370-0427
BorderLakesTourCompany.com
BorderLakesTours@gmail.com

**Clearwater Canoe Outfitters**
772 Clearwater Road
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(218) 260-2253
www.clearwateroutfitters.com
info@clearwateroutfitters.com

**Gunflint Lodge and Outfitters**
143 S Gunflint Lake Road
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(800) 328-3325
www.gunflint.com
info@gunflint.com

**Hungry Jack Outfitters**
318 S Hungry Jack Road
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(218) 388-2275
www.hjo.com
info@hjo.com

**Nor’Wester Lodge and Outfitters**
7778 Gunflint Trail
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(800) 992-4386
www.norwesterlodge.com

**Rockwood Lodge & Outfitters**
50 Rockwood Road
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(218) 288-2242
www.rockwoodbwca.com
info@rockwoodbwca.com

**Sawbill Canoe Outfitters**
4620 Sawbill Trail
Tofte, MN 55615
(218) 663-7150
www.sawbill.com
info@sawbill.com

**Seagull Canoe Outfitters**
12208 Gunflint Trail
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(218) 388-2216
www.seagullcanoe.com
seagull@seagulloutfitters.com

**Voyageur Canoe Outfitters**
189 Sag Lake Trail
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(218) 388-2224
voyageurcanoeoutfitters.com
vco@voyageurcanoeoutfitters.com

**Way of the Wilderness Canoe Outfitter**
12582 Gunflint Trail
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(800) 346-6625
www.wayofthewilderness.com
wowcanoe@boreal.org

**YMCA Camp Menogyn**
For over 90 years, this camp has introduced young people to the wonder of the Boundary Waters.
(612) 230-9622
www.ymcamn.org/camps/camp_menogyn

**YMCA Camp Widjiwagan**
For over 90 years, this camp has introduced young people to the wonder of the Boundary Waters.
(612) 230-9622
www.ymcamn.org/camps/camp_widjiwagan

**YMCA Camp du Nord**
A perfect getaway for families and groups, with numerous year-round activities for people of all ages.
(612) 230-9622
www.ymcamn.org/camps/camp_du_nord

**Voyageur Outward Bound School**
For over 50 years, VOBS has used the wilderness as a classroom to transform lives and build leaders.
(218) 491-6801
www.vobs.org
student.services@vobs.org

**Women’s Wilderness Discovery**
Custom, year-round trips and workshops designed for women and girls of all skill levels.
(218) 235-1994
www.womenswildernessdiscovery.com

**Camp Birchwood for Boys**
For over half a century Birchwood has focused on connection, self-discovery, and a shared purpose.
(218) 388-4402
www.birchwoodwildernesscamp.com

**Way of the Wilderness Canoe Outfitter**
12582 Gunflint Trail
Grand Marais, MN 55604
(800) 346-6625
www.wayofthewilderness.com
wowcanoe@boreal.org
There are several topics in this book — wilderness first aid, outdoor cooking and navigation — that are so extensive, they require their own books. From the hundreds of titles available to help sharpen your wilderness skills and make traveling in the Boundary Waters more enjoyable, these are the essential volumes to add to your library.

**Books**


Backed by research, this book does away with the many myths about bears to give a scientific account of bear behavior and how they interact with humans. The author is regarded as one of the world’s leading authority on bear ecology, behavior, and attacks.


The updated version of the classic guide to expedition canoeing is a masterclass in wilderness canoe travel. Jacobson is opinionated, ridiculously knowledgeable and has written a necessary book you will return to again and again. A must for anyone wanting to take their canoeing to the next level.


A veritable encyclopedia of canoe routes in the Boundary Waters. With detailed route descriptions, this book is also chalk full of information about the history, geology and ecology of the Boundary Waters.


Short and concise, this book has taught thousands how to improve their paddling and make more miles with less effort.


Fishing is good in the BWCA, it’s even better with this guide.


The go-to wilderness cookbook.


An exhaustive manual on how to treat many of the accidents, injuries and illnesses that arise in the wilderness. Reading the book can only do so much, I highly recommend taking a Wilderness Medicine class through NOLS (the National Outdoor Leadership School), which offers courses in all 50 states. [www.nols.edu/wilderness-medicine](http://www.nols.edu/wilderness-medicine)


Covering a range of topics, from safety to feminine hygiene, this is an invaluable resource for women wishing to get out more, dads who want to introduce their daughters to the wilderness, and anyone looking for a fresh perspective on wilderness travel.


A standard manual used by countless instructors in orienteering and navigation classes.
**ONLINE RESOURCES**

**BWCA.com**
This website contains a massive database of routes and an invaluable online discussion board where you can post questions, ask for advice and engage in lively debates.

**Canoeing.com**
Resources for the beginner and advanced paddler. Find routes, sell and buy gear, and get lost clicking around and exploring the magical world of canoe adventures.

**Friends-BWCA.org**
Along with updates and information from the organization leading the fight to protect and preserve the Boundary Waters, this site has a host of inspiring stories, route suggestions, and useful how-to articles that will make your next trip even better.

**GearJunkie.com**
With buying guides, gear reviews, adventure stories, and an insider’s peak at sales and deals, GearJunkie is an invaluable window into the outdoor lifestyle.

**OutdoorGearLab.com**
If you’re a meticulous shopper and want to be sure about the next jacket or tent you buy, this website is for you. With exhaustive reviews, comparisons and rankings.

**Paddling.com**
Another great resource for all things canoeing. There are lots of gear reviews on this site, which make it a great place to begin researching your next canoe.

**Recreation.gov/permits/233396**
The place you go to reserve your permit, check on the status of entry points, etc. At some point in the planning process, you will go to this website!

*Photo: Ashley Bredemus*
THE BOUNDARY WATERS NEEDS FRIENDS

For over 40 years, Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness has worked to protect, preserve and restore this treasured wilderness. From taking legal action against the sulfide mining industry to introducing young people to the magic of the Boundary Waters, our programs are developed out of a deep love for our northern wilderness, and a commitment to getting people outside.

TWO MINES, ONE THREAT
We are leading the fight against the proposed Twin Metals and PolyMet copper-sulfide mines. From battling foreign-owned mining giants in court to keeping elected officials accountable, we will stop this toxic industry from gaining a foothold and polluting the Boundary Waters.

NO BOUNDARIES TO THE BOUNDARY WATERS
Everyone should have an opportunity to visit the Boundary Waters. Our scholarship and educational program brings the Boundary Waters to classrooms throughout Minnesota and sends young people from underserved communities on life-changing canoe trips into the wilderness.

KEEP IT WILD
Working with the U.S. Forest Service and REI, we bring volunteers into the wilderness to clear trails, shore up campsites and serve as stewards of our land and water.

Although the Boundary Waters is protected, it faces serious issues. To stay wild, the wilderness needs people. It needs you. Become a champion of the wilderness and stay up to date on our work by following us:

www.friends-bwca.org
facebook.com/BWCAW
@friendsBWCAW
@friendsBWCAW
About the Author

Pete Marshall is the Communications Director for Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness. He has paddled over 8,000 miles through remote regions of the United States and Canada, including two expeditions that have lasted over 120 days. He lives in St. Louis Park with his wife and son.

Explore America's Favorite Wilderness!

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is a unique and stunning part of the American landscape. Each year, thousands of people come here to connect with friends, family and the natural world. This book is your key to unlocking the wonders of this national treasure. Topics inside include:

- How to plan a trip
- Safety in the wilderness
- Setting up camp
- Basic canoe skills
- What to bring
- And much more!

Published by Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

If you enjoyed this publication, consider donating to protect the BWCA:

www.friends-bwca.org/support