

Superior National Forest
8901 Grand Ave. Place
Duluth, MN 55808
www.fs.usda.gov/superior



Media Contact:

Kristina Reichenbach, Superior National Forest
p:(218)626-4393
c:(218)341-3759
kreichenbach@fs.fed.us

FOREST SERVICE ANNOUNCES OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO LEARN ABOUT AND COMMENT ON PROPOSED EXCHANGE OF STATE SCHOOL TRUST LANDS

DULUTH, MN (March 2, 2015) The Forest Service invites the public to review and comment on a proposed land exchange with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. With this proposed exchange, the United States would acquire approximately 30,000 acres of State school trust land within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in exchange for an equal value of federal lands to be selected from a pool of approximately 39,000 acres of Forest Service System Land located outside the BWCAW within the Superior National Forest.

The proposed land exchange is mutually beneficial to the State and to the Forest Service. It will allow the State to acquire, through exchange, lands that can be actively managed to generate revenue to benefit the Minnesota public school system. This land exchange presents an opportunity for the Forest Service to achieve priorities identified in the Superior National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan that include: a) acquiring additional land ownership within the BWCAW and, b) consolidating land ownership by exchanging out of fragmented parcels of federal land outside the BWCAW.

ALL OPEN HOUSES ARE FROM 4:00 PM TO 7:00 PM
March 9 - Gunflint Ranger Station 2020 W. Highway 61, Grand Marais, MN
March 10 - Laurentian Ranger Station 318 Forestry Road, Aurora, MN
March 12 - Forest Headquarters 8901 Grand Avenue Place, Duluth, MN
March 23 - Kawishiwi Ranger Station 1393 Highway 169, Ely, MN
March 26 - MN Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry- Headquarters 500 Lafayette Rd St. Paul, MN

The Forest Service is inviting interested parties to five public open houses where staff will be available to explain the proposed land exchange.

A description of the proposed land exchange and instructions for commenting are posted on the Superior National Forest website at: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/superior/projects. (Navigate to the School Trust Land Exchange project webpage.)

Comments are requested by April 3, 2015.

An interdisciplinary team of resource specialists and Forest leadership will evaluate the comments received regarding the proposed land exchange and identify environmental issues to study as well determine the appropriate level of environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Issues identified from scoping will be used to develop management alternatives to the Proposed Action and to disclose the effects of the actions of each alternative if it were chosen for implementation. The NEPA analysis will provide multiple opportunities for public review and comment regarding the proposed land exchange.

There is a total of approximately 83,000 acres of State school trust land in the BWCAW. As federal funds become available, the Forest Service intends to purchase remaining school trust lands in the BWCAW.