

To : Rainy River Headwaters/Vermilion River Watershed Planning Area Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Development

Greetings,

We are members of a civic partnership formed to discover, design and maintain a comprehensive plan to prevent additional Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) from flowing into the BWCAW through the Rainy River Headwaters access points. The Coalition grew out discussions between BWCAW recreationalists, sportsmen/anglers and active members of area lake associations. Participants include members of the DNR, USFS, Minnesota Sea Grant, 1854 Treaty Authority, Lake County/NSLSCD, Quetico Provincial Park, county Soil and Water Conservation Districts and lake associations. These have actively participated in our discussions and are key partners in the implementation of any solutions.

We understand that there are many, many challenges facing the lakes, streams and groundwater of the Rainy River Headwaters and the Vermilion River Watershed. Two areas where the BWCAW Coalition is focusing our efforts is building a cross sector base of engaged citizens aligned with the goal to protect the iconic waters of our area. We believe that this “civic infrastructure” is as important to protecting our waters into the future as on the ground projects.

We are also focused on the spread of aquatic invasive species. The number of species in our area, and the number of infested lakes is lower than other parts of the state. Prevention of AIS is far cheaper and has far better outcomes than management strategies after an infestation. We hope that by bringing community members together around efforts to prevent AIS spread into our area, we can create the civic infrastructure we will need to manage the many water quality challenges our area faces.

Thank you for your work.

Sincerely,

Jeff Forester, MN Lakes and Rivers Advocates  
Jeff Pike, WICOLA  
Carrie Ohly-Cusack - Burntside Lake  
Liz Anderson, Lake County  
Amanda Weberg, Cook County  
Byron Kearns - One Pine Lake  
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Doug Jensen, MN DNR  
Jon Utecht - NSLSWCD  
Matt Santo - 1854 Treaty Authority  
Ozzie Reif - Friends of the BWCA

List of participants