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SAVE THE BOUNDARY WATERS

100 Days of Action to Save the Boundary Waters: Environmental Threat

Focusing on the environmental threat, the campaign is highlighting the overwhelming science outlining the risks to the Wilderness from copper mining and the people whose lives will be impacted

Ely, MN--This week the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters' 100 Days of Action to Save the Boundary Waters focuses on the environmental threat sulfide-ore copper mining poses to the Wilderness. Dozens of scientific analyses have shown irrefutable evidence that hardrock mining on the doorstep of the Boundary Waters will cause irreparable harm to an irreplaceable Wilderness.

"The scientific consensus is clear," **said Tom Landwehr, Executive Director of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters**, "sulfide-ore copper mining right next to the Boundary Waters poses an unacceptable risk of irreparable damage. The vast majority of Minnesotans and Americans want this iconic Wilderness and its exceptional environmental, recreational, and economic benefits protected."

Recent [polling](#) shows that nearly 70% of Minnesotans favor permanently protecting the Boundary Waters from sulfide-ore copper mining, and in 2017 over 180,000 people urged the federal government to withdraw the watershed of the Boundary Waters from the federal mining program.

This week the campaign will be highlighting a [letter](#) from 53 leading scientists in ecology and natural resource-based disciplines expressing deep concern over the proposed sulfide-ore copper mining, a [website](#) from Earthworks that is a repository for the scientific studies showing the harm sulfide-ore mining will do to the Wilderness, a [Vox video](#) with over 2 million views with

local voices of those who will be impacted, and the [testimonial](#) of Carl Madsen, a former union electrician and local business owner.

Topline scientific findings on the Boundary Waters threat can be found [here](#) and include:

- **The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has deemed metal mining as the United States' most toxic industry.** Hard rock mining, most of which is sulfide-metal mining, contributes to more Superfund sites than any other industry. This is due to polluted mine drainage, a side effect of mining rock with significant sulfide-metal content. ([Environmental Protection Agency, April 2020](#))
- **Pollution from these mines will inevitably flow directly into the heart of the Boundary Waters.** Peer-reviewed research shows that pollution from a sulfide-ore copper mine in this watershed even under normal mining operations, would generate contaminants that would flow directly into the Wilderness. This type of mine can generate pollution lasting more than 500 years. ([Journal of Hydrology, February 2016](#)) // ([Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 2013](#))
- **Because of the Boundary Waters' interconnected groundwater, wetlands, and abundant lakes and streams, the area is especially vulnerable.** The many streams, wetlands, lakes, and aquifers downstream of the proposed mine sites are massively interconnected. Consequently, contamination would be widespread, and damage from an accident would be uncontrollable. ([Earthworks, 2018](#))
- **Acid mine drainage could wipe out local fish species.** Heavy metals and associated pollutants from sulfide-ore copper mines harm microorganisms, aquatic plants, and fish. Acid mine drainage also increases the acidity of waters, which certain species will be unable to survive. ([Earthworks, April 2017](#))

[100 days to Save the Boundary Waters](#), a multi-week campaign to demonstrate to policymakers the overwhelming support to permanently protect the Boundary Waters Wilderness from the threat of sulfide-ore copper mining. The campaign will consist of press events, videos, supporter actions, and more featuring voices from Minnesota and across the country of people that depend on the Boundary Waters for their livelihood, recreation, and clean water.

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