

Saving the Boundary Waters, One Mile at a Time

Our Public Lands Under Renewed Threat, Adventurers Amy and Dave Freeman Embark on a 1,750-Mile Bike Tour to Protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from Sulfide-Ore Copper Mining

A Year in the Wilderness by Amy and Dave Freeman

Explorers Amy and Dave Freeman have traveled over 30,000 miles by kayak, canoe and dogsled through some of the world's wildest places, from the Amazon to the Arctic. Named "Adventurers of the Year" by *National Geographic* in 2014, the couple's most recent adventures have found them in their own backyard.

The Freemans live on the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Northern Minnesota, a federally protected area that comprises 1.1 million acres of wilderness within Superior National Forest. The Boundary Waters is America's most visited wilderness area, beloved by many as an annual canoe pilgrimage.

When Amy and Dave learned of toxic sulfide-ore copper mining proposed within the area's watershed, they decided to take action—by spending a year in the wilderness, and sharing their experience through video, photos, and blogs with an audience of hundreds of thousands of concerned citizens.

From September 2015 to 2016, the Freemans spent 366 days outdoors in the BWCA, traveling by canoe, foot, ski, snowshoe and dog team to camp and explore over 500 of the area's rivers, streams and lakes—water so clear, the Freemans drink it right out of the lake.

Amy and Dave released an illustrated account of their adventure, *A Year in the Wilderness: Bearing Witness in the Boundary Waters* (Milkweed Editions, 2017), which was named one of 20 Big Indie Books of Fall 2017 by *Publishers Weekly* and featured by the *Wall Street Journal*. This book tells the deeper story of their year in this beautiful and fragile place: of loons calling under a moonrise, of ice booming as it forms and cracks, of a moose and her calf swimming across a misty lake. A paperback edition will be released by Milkweed on August 14, 2018.

The Freemans have worked closely with The Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters, led by Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, to sound a rousing cry of witness activism. On December 22, 2017, a critical decision was made by the Trump administration that puts the Boundary Waters region and watershed under an urgent threat. The U.S. Interior Department is reinstating two expired mineral leases first issued in 1966 that could allow Chilean mining company Antofagasta to build a copper-and-nickel mine adjacent to the Boundary Waters and upstream from Voyageurs National Park. Supporters of the mine say it will create 650 jobs; however, it will endanger 4,490 jobs in local tourism that depend on a clean Boundary Waters, including the Freeman's work as dogsled and canoe guides. Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness plans to sue to challenge the decision.

To bring renewed awareness of the issue to legislators in D.C., the Freemans are embarking on "Pedal to DC: A Book Tour to Save the Boundary Waters," biking 1,750 miles from Ely, Minnesota to Washington, D.C., between April and June 2018. They will be stopping in over 30 cities and towns along the way, with book events to promote *A Year in the Wilderness* and presentations to advocate for the growing national movement to fight for the Boundary Waters.

A YEAR IN THE WILDERNESS

Bearing Witness in the Boundary Waters



BOOK DETAILS

Milkweed Editions

Hardcover, \$35 US

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Paperback, \$20 US

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320 pages, 7" x 9"

Nonfiction | Nature | Memoir

Milkweed.org

About the Authors

Amy and Dave Freeman are the authors of *A Year in the Wilderness*, a project chronicling their yearlong adventure in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness to protect the Boundary Waters from sulfide-ore copper mining. The Freemans' expeditions have taken them over thirty thousand miles by canoe, kayak, and dogsled through some of the world's wildest places, from the Amazon to the Arctic. *National Geographic* named them Adventurers of the Year in 2014 and their images, videos, and articles been published by a wide range of media sources from the CBC, NBC, and FOX to the *Chicago Tribune*, *National Geographic*, *Outside*, *Backpacker*, *Canoe and Kayak*, and Minnesota Public Radio. They also run the Wilderness Classroom, an educational nonprofit organization that introduces children to wild places and unique cultures. The Freemans live in Grand Marais, Minnesota.

Story Ideas / Key Messages

- Witness Activism: The importance of getting out and listening to wilderness
- Pedal to DC: Biking 1,750 miles from Ely, MN to Washington, D.C., to Save the Boundary Waters
- The Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters: The Trump administration has renewed sulfide-ore copper mining leases that threaten the BWCA watershed and outdoor/tourism jobs in the area
- Adventurers of the Year (National Geographic, 2014): Together, Amy and Dave Freeman have traveled over 30,000 miles by canoe, kayak, and dogsled through some of the world's wildest places
- What the Freemans learned during their year living in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness
- An adventure bucket list inspired by the Freemans: cold water cliff-jumping, canoeing with your dog, dogsledding, cooking holiday meals over the campfire
- Protecting the moose, deer, black bears, wolves, mink, otters, squirrels, chipmunks and birds that call the BWCA home
- The Wilderness Classroom: The Freeman's work connecting students to global expeditions in order to improve students' core academic skills and appreciation for the environment

Praise for the book

"Through evocative personal narrative and nature photography, the Freemans... speak with a single attentive and amiable voice that centers the joys and challenges of navigating the land and water... Gorgeous color photographs focus on the human experience of being in wilderness and augment a novel work that should draw attention to the plight of the Boundary Waters."

—*Publishers Weekly* (A "Big Indie Book" of Fall 2017 Selection)

"Gorgeous... [the Freemans'] words are complemented by an outstanding selection of photographs that immerse the reader in the watery landscape, making an indelible impact."

—*Canoe & Kayak*

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Amy and Dave Freeman

www.freemansexplore.com

"At this moment in our history, when calls are growing to privatize public lands and weaken national parks, adventurers Amy and Dave Freeman . . . have done us all an invaluable service, offering a wonderfully compelling testimony for the value of wild places and the creatures who inhabit them. I urge you to read it, and then to join the Freemans in advocating for the preservation of the Boundary Waters."

—Vice President Walter Mondale

PR  THE BOOK

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