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Celebrating the Healing Power of Wilderness

The Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters and Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters are helping share stories of healing this Veterans Day, November 11.

Ely, MN (November 6, 2015) – This Veteran’s Day, the [Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters](#) and [Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters](#) are helping share stories of veterans finding healing through experiences in nature. The two groups are working together to protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, a place of healing right here in Minnesota, from proposed sulfide-ore copper mining. **Veteran Erik Packard**, creator of the [Save the BWCA Veterans Group](#), is supporting this effort.

Packard knows firsthand how hard it can be to find post-war healing, a struggle he faced after returning from service in Iraq. Packard will join the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters on November 11 to participate in a **social media takeover**. Through the Campaign’s social media accounts, Packard will be sharing his journey of recovery. The Campaign’s [blog](#) will also feature posts from other veterans who have experienced the healing power of the Boundary Waters. The Campaign encourages people to join in on the conversation and follow along across [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) with the hashtag **#WildernessHeals**.

On November 11, Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters will also release *Flush in the Wild*. The film follows the excitement of Packard’s first grouse hunt in the Boundary Waters and Superior National Forest, and includes reflections on his experiences healing in the Boundary Waters wilderness he loves and wants to protect.

In the film, Packard shares the story of his trip with [Voyageur Outward Bound School \(VOBS\)](#), which he credits with saving him. Since 1983, VOBS has run wilderness expeditions specifically designed for war veterans and service members. “I struggled with undiagnosed post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for years. I stopped doing the things I loved and I lost touch with being a husband and father,” says Packard in *Flush in the Wild*. “It was this amazing trip [with VOBS]. I could literally feel the poison that had infected my soul start to get drawn out of me.”

Packard chose to share his story and passion for the wilderness because he is concerned about the proposed sulfide-ore copper mining. “The mining proposed near the Boundary Waters will forever alter and destroy that peace of the wilderness.” Already the noise of the exploratory activity of the mining interests is doing this,” he says.

Packard created the Save the BWCA Veterans Group in February to connect with other veterans who want to help protect the Boundary Waters. “National treasures like the Boundary Waters are part of the reason I pledged my life to this country,” says Packard. In October, Packard joined the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters in Washington, DC, meeting with federal agencies and Congress members, such as Senators Franken and Klobuchar, to share why protecting the wilderness is so important to him.

The 9-minute *Flush in the Wild* film will debut on the Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters website on November 11.

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The Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters is a broad-based campaign led by Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness, which is based in Ely, Minnesota. Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters was formed by a group of sportsmen and women who are concerned about protecting the habitat of the area where they hunt, fish and camp, and is led by Boundary Waters Trust, which is based in Ely, Minnesota. For more information, contact Communications Director Ellie M. Bayrd at ellie@savetheboundarywaters.org and 612-616-2149.