

# EVENT RECAP

*Oh! The fun we had!*



## BOUNDARY WATERS BROADWALK

by Jan Bourdon

Spectacular, awesome, educational, inspirational, motivational...just a few words to describe the Save the Boundary Waters Broadwalk held in August at the Kawishiwi River Campground south of Ely, Minnesota, near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCA).

Whispers of wind in the pines, bubbling of the river, and the call of loons entranced us, while beautiful campsites and sharing excellent locally-influenced cuisine made us comfortable and content. Each day, interesting and inspirational speakers exposed the threat of sulfide-ore copper mining that could release sulfuric acid and heavy metals into the pristine waters of the region. While iron ore mining has been active since the early 1900s, the more dangerous sulfide mining has never been allowed in Minnesota. The risk of massive earth movement, noise, air and water pollution, and toxic spills remains on the minds of everyone who was there.

Thursday, the Broadwalk kicked off with introductions, followed by Peta Barrett, of Women's Wilderness Discovery, who set the stage with a moving reading from Sigurd Olsen's *A Sense of Place*.

Friday, hardy Broads pulled, lopped, and dug up the stubborn and invasive Siberian peashrub on nearby forest lands. That evening, Superior National Forest Supervisor Brenda Halter (decision maker for the proposed mining activity) discussed history and management of the forest. Becky Rom, chair of the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters (see Study A Broad), gave a heartfelt and personal presentation on the impact of mining on the regional landscape. Iggy Perrillo shared her adventurous 800-mile bike journey towing "Sig" the canoe (named for Sigurd Olson and covered with signatures of support) to raise awareness about the proposed mines.

Saturday and Sunday's cool rains didn't dampen spirits during



*Determined Broads beat down the scourge of Siberian peashrub.*

a menu of activities, including a bear hike along the river, paddling Hegman Lake, hikes exploring forest and bog ending at arctic explorer Paul Schurke's Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge, and a tour of Sigurd Olsen's Listening Point retreat. Saturday night, Amy Freeman, National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, inspired us with her extraordinary 2,000-mile paddle and sail from Ely to Washington, DC to create awareness about threats to the Boundary Waters.

Sunday evening, we were joined by many members of EMPOWER (Ely Minnesota Progressive Organization of Women for Equality and Reform) and the combined energy was palpable. Jane and Steve Koschak (see pg. 11) poignantly shared how mining threatens businesses and the environment. Campaign organizer Samantha Chadwick led letter writing to our members of Congress, and the entertaining and informative Sherry Abts, "loon ranger" extraordinaire, unraveled the mysteries of loons. A sing-along and impromptu dance to the tunes of Irene Hatfield brought it all together in a final celebration of new friends and love for this special place.

A powerful and engaging experience, the Broadwalk inspired new Minnesota Broads to kick-off the first official Minnesota Wild Waters Broadband meeting. Co-leader Donna Andrews and I will continue our partnership with the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters; we jumped right into the Campaign's education booth at the Minnesota State Fair immediately following the Broadwalk. As we recruit and engage more Broads this fall, we look forward to being a wild presence in the conservation of our gorgeous state.

You too can help by signing the Campaign to Save the Boundary Waters petition at [www.savetheboundarywaters.org](http://www.savetheboundarywaters.org).



*Minnesota Wild Waters Broadband Co-Leader Jan Bourdon (left) and Kat Audette-Luebke speak out for the Boundary Waters.*

