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Statement on US Forest Service Decision to Downgrade Study on Risks to the BWCA

Ely, MN - [Today, the U.S. Forest Service downgraded](#) the Environmental Impact Statement reviewing sulfide-ore copper mining leases on the edge of the Boundary Waters to an Environmental Assessment. Environmental Impact Statements include rigorous review of the effects on habitat, wildlife and the local economy. The downgraded Environmental Review process contains less opportunity for public input and significantly less review that Antofagasta's proposed sulfide-ore copper mine at the headwaters of the Boundary Waters deserves.

Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters issued the following statement:

"The nation's most visited Wilderness deserves rigorous study to determine whether this world-class hunting and fishing destination is at risk from sulfide-ore copper mining," said National Sporting Director, Lukas Leaf. "Hunters and anglers are troubled by the U.S. Forest Service's decision to downgrade the study from an Environmental Impact Statement to an Environmental Assessment. This new study does not give the Boundary Waters, Voyageurs National Park and the entire Superior National Forest the respect it deserves in this process.

While the U.S. Forest Service has acknowledged that protecting this Wilderness through a land withdrawal has no environmental downside our public lands, waters, wildlife and sporting heritage depend on a proper review to determine if the headwaters of the Boundary Waters is the right place for sulfide-ore copper mining."

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