



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Superior National Forest

Forest Service News Release

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Superior National Forest to Close area around Spice Lake Wildfire within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness

A portion of lands within the BWCAW in the Superior National Forest will be closed effective June 16.

Duluth, Minn. June 15, 2023— Due to the Spice Lake Wildfire on the Superior National Forest (SNF), Forest Supervisor Tom Hall is closing a portion of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) with an Emergency Forest Order - effective June 16 – prohibiting visitor entry at specific campsites, portages and lakes, and Pristine Management Areas (Forest Order 09-09-23-03#). The restrictions will go into effect beginning Friday morning (12:01) a.m., June 16, 2023; see Exhibit A of the Forest Order for a map of the area. The closure may be modified or extended as conditions allow.

The Forest Order closures include:

- All trails, portages, rivers, and lakes within the closure area (see in Exhibit A), including but not limited to 47 locations as noted.
- All zones of the of the Pitfall Pristine Management Area (1 through 3), and the Mugwump Pristine Management Area (1 through 5).
- The Kekekabic Trail- the area from the BWCAW boundary west of the Gunflint Trail to the series of portages between Thomas Lake and Ima Lake (see Exhibit A).

The Forest Service has notified permit holders and outfitters and is encouraging permit holders to seek an alternate area of the BWCAW or consider non-wilderness areas of the SNF (see below) for similar experiences. At this time overnight paddle, day use and motorized day use is not permitted in the closure area.

We understand that this will have a significant impact on our visitors, cooperators, and communities near the SNF. This emergency closure is necessary for the safety of our visitors, our wilderness rangers and our fire-fighters.

Northern Minnesota is facing severe to extreme drought conditions, causing active and increasing fire across the landscape. A Type 3 team is managing suppression actions on the Spice Lake Fire with additional resources on standby. Additionally, the Forest is monitoring the fires in Canada. The Forest is coordinating with Ontario counterparts.

Beyond the closures for the Spice Lake Fire, the Forest is open to the public. We do have a campfire restriction in place across the Forest— see website for details.

There are 254 backcountry campsites outside the Wilderness that offer remote paddling, camping and fishing. Here you can experience solitude without reservations, fees or permits and still have similar amenities to that

of a BWCAW campsite. Many backcountry campsites are located on canoe routes outside the BWCAW. State forests and parks and county lands are also available for recreation.

For more information on recreation alternatives outside the BWCAW, please visit: [Superior National Forest - Water Activities: Boating - Non-Motorized \(usda.gov\)](#) For a list of canoe routes with backcountry campsites in the Superior National Forest, visit: [Canoeing 2012 rev 0415 final.pub \(usda.gov\)](#)

The Superior National Forest also offers 23 developed campgrounds and 18 rustic campgrounds. Rustic campgrounds are free of charge and available first come, first served year-round. Fee campgrounds are open May – September and may be reserved at Recreation.gov. See the Forest website for more information.

Thank you for your cooperation.

For additional information regarding fire-related and/or forest closures and updates:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for this closure can be found on the forest website homepage hotlink www.fs.usda.gov/superior
- Inciweb for this incident can be found at <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mnsuf-spice-lake-fire>
- SNF Forest Orders are available here: <https://bit.ly/SNFforestorders>
- See the Superior National Forest website www.fs.usda.gov/superior
- [Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory](#)
 - www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/fuels_fire-danger/Fuels_Fire_Behavior_Advisory_EA_NortheastMN_WI_MI_20230612.pdf