

Superior National Forest

# Forest Service News Release

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<https://www.fs.usda.gov/superior>

## 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)](https://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/superior/recreation/wateractivities/?recid=36905&actid=79)  For a list of canoe routes with backcountry campsites in the Superior National Forest, visit: [Canoeing 2012 rev 0415 final.pub (usda.gov)](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5302434.pdf)

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](http://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](http://www.fs.usda.gov/superior)
* [Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory](file:///C:\Users\jvandrie\Box\1600InfoServices\1650_MediaRelations\Press%20Releases\2023\ww.predictiveservices.nifc.gov\fuels_fire-danger\Fuels_Fire_Behavior_Advisory_EA_NortheastMN_WI_MI_20230612.pdf)
  + www.predictiveservices.nifc.gov/fuels\_fire-danger/Fuels\_Fire\_Behavior\_Advisory\_EA\_NortheastMN\_WI\_MI\_20230612.pdf

**Political/Cooperator Notification:**

With health and safety in mind, please see attached a closure order going into effect this Friday, June 16. We encourage you to work with your visitors who have permits to enter Moose, Snowbank, Sananaga and Seagull entry points to change their plans away from the affected area. Once the public is aware of the closure, we are anticipating an organic reduction in permits due to visitor-initiated cancellations. However, we will review the permits levels for these points of entry on June 19 and if the levels have not decreased to a manageable level, we may be forced to cancel reservations to ensure we do not experience crowding or lack of campsite availability in the area of the BWCAW near the closure area.

We hope you consider the options for your customers and seek alternate experiences.

**Rec.gov Permit Holder Notification:**

Your reservation is located in an area of the BWCAW that is currently under a closure order due to wildfire activity. **Your reservation has not been cancelled. However, there is the potential that your permit could be cancelled as conditions change.**

For those wishing to rebook a permit for an alternative entry point in the BWCAW, check current availability at: [Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Superior National Forest - Recreation.gov](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.recreation.gov%2Fpermits%2F233396&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cc86b52b05783405463ab08db6dd9c7cd%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638224554343574125%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=MTcjHhCC4dUtyFWvrZCCsBmC%2BbPvB60%2FqH5qSAEsZR0%3D&reserved=0) and click on “Explore Available Permits” or contact your BWCAW cooperator. Additionally, there are [254 backcountry campsites](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fs.usda.gov%2Factivity%2Fsuperior%2Frecreation%2Fcamping-cabins%2F%3Frecid%3D36905%26actid%3D34&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cc86b52b05783405463ab08db6dd9c7cd%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638224554343574125%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=zRArnAGc%2BbWUCF1qZyM4wep7w6PT7CSEgN1y5Ky6Dmo%3D&reserved=0) outside the wilderness that offer remote paddling, camping, and fishing where you can experience solitude without reservations, fees, or permits and still have a latrine and fire grate ([campfire ban in effect for Superior National Forest](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fs.usda.gov%2Falerts%2Fsuperior%2Falerts-notices%2F%3Faid%3D67256&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cc86b52b05783405463ab08db6dd9c7cd%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638224554343574125%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Mf70N8zoXtE9%2FSefsCZXSsK4%2Bb5yHrVNgHVaP%2Fz7U6I%3D&reserved=0)). Visitors must follow the same Leave No Trace principles listed on page 5 of the [BWCAW Trip Planning Guide](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fs.usda.gov%2FInternet%2FFSE_DOCUMENTS%2Ffseprd611535.pdf&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cc86b52b05783405463ab08db6dd9c7cd%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638224554343574125%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=j6U7oVU6etsT72ScJxS4QrLllaMLtqIqhYk7epf2UL4%3D&reserved=0). For more information on recreation alternatives outside the BWCAW, please visit: [Superior National Forest - Water Activities:Boating - Non-Motorized (usda.gov)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fs.usda.gov%2Factivity%2Fsuperior%2Frecreation%2Fwateractivities%2F%3Frecid%3D36905%26actid%3D79&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cc86b52b05783405463ab08db6dd9c7cd%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638224554343574125%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=74ClvbEh5i42P7M3HdwfvKZQw%2FnszqmioIwy%2BEZLSpQ%3D&reserved=0)  For a list of canoe routes with backcountry campsites in the Superior National Forest, visit: [Canoeing 2012 rev 0415 final.pub (usda.gov)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fs.usda.gov%2FInternet%2FFSE_DOCUMENTS%2Fstelprdb5302434.pdf&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cc86b52b05783405463ab08db6dd9c7cd%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638224554343574125%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=3hHZ78%2Bxj4IQAAr%2BWmW%2FA272w3yc0ES0QIYgF9Y6j%2B4%3D&reserved=0)

Emergency restrictions are necessary for the public's health and safety due to wildland fires in the vicinity of the affected lands, waters, trails, portages, canoe routes, and all recreation sites. Local officials continue to monitor the changing conditions. For the latest information on wildfires and closure orders, please visit [Superior National Forest - Home (usda.gov)](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fs.usda.gov%2Fmain%2Fsuperior%2Fhome&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cc86b52b05783405463ab08db6dd9c7cd%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638224554343574125%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=nta%2FMebTjp%2Bv9KPaIedNAfDO6f%2BcfgRypiG0877trRg%3D&reserved=0) and scroll to “Alerts & Warnings” on the right side of the Forest home page. Follow the latest postings on Twitter (@SuperiorNF) or on Facebook at: [U.S. Forest Service-Superior National Forest - Home | Facebook](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FSuperiorNF%2F&data=05%7C01%7C%7Cc86b52b05783405463ab08db6dd9c7cd%7Ced5b36e701ee4ebc867ee03cfa0d4697%7C0%7C0%7C638224554343574125%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=bJTFA88D2%2F5T%2FOPvn7RoHYh9EhF6mrLNMu0oxb3%2FD8M%3D&reserved=0).

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