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PORTAGING EAST OF LAKE ALICE

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# PRELIMINARY PROSPECTUS

An Outline Plan for the Recreational  
Development of the  
Superior National Forest

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CAMP ON LAKE INSULA



CURTAIN FALLS PORTAGE

## LOCATION

The Superior National Forest comprises more than a million and a quarter acres in Northern Minnesota. It is bounded on the north by Canada, on the southeast by Lake Superior, on the southwest by the Iron Range and the west by the Vermilion River.

## ITS SERVICE TO COMMUNITY

The prime reason for setting aside any National Forest is the production of and protection of timber. The Superior is no exception, for annually timber companies produce many thousands of feet of lumber from the Forest.

As a sanctuary for wild life, few areas can Equal the Superior. The presence of the State game preserve almost coincident with the Forest offers the opportunity of establishing here a place of unexcelled game refuge.

Other Forests possess these characteristics to Some extent, but there is one outstanding feature found in the Superior National Forest which is not present in any other nationally owned property. This is a lake type of recreation. The Superior is unquestionably one of the few great canoe countries of the world. It is this recreational feature and its development that is the subject of this preliminary outline plan.

## ORGANIZATION

The Superior National Forest is under the direction of the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture. The Supervisor's headquarters are at Ely, Minnesota.

The Forest Service has taken the lead in planning for the development of the recreation resource in this area. In 1919 the recreation Engineer visited the Forest briefly. As a result of this visit the Forest was the second major project to be studied in District 2, this being accomplished in the summer of 1921.

## PURPOSES OF THE PLAN

The purposes of the recreational landscape plan for this area are:

First, to protect, preserve and enhance the natural values present.

Second, to plan for the human use of these values and the areas containing them. This necessitates the study of:

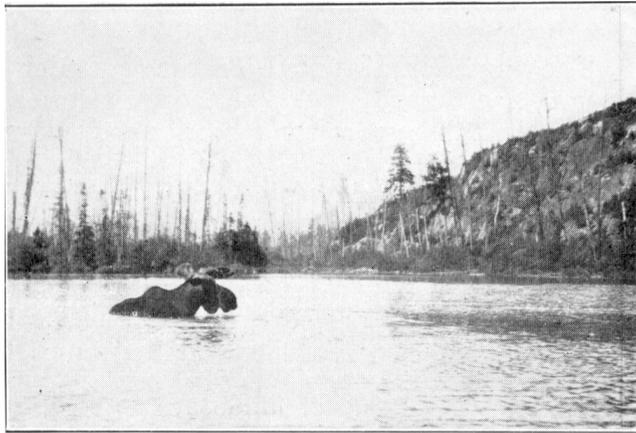
- a. Traffic lines.
- b. Types of transportation.
- c. Logical development of a comprehensive system of traffic.
- d. Residential areas and camp and hotel locations.

Finally, the "tying up" of a complete, comprehensive plan to fully utilize the recreational resources and to establish a program for development which will lead to a final, definite, unified whole.

This means that every cent spent in building the scheme proposed will be expended towards a total result. There will be no lost motion, no loss through ill-advised, hasty, makeshift construction.

## PLAN FOUNDATION

The whole system of planning for the recreational use of such an area as the Superior is not unlike that field of landscape architecture found in



AS MANY AS FORTY MOOSE HAVE BEEN SEEN ON CANOE TRIPS

city planning. However, the problems deal with less concentrated population, less congested residential areas and less massed traffic. The principles on which a plan may be built for a Forest are the same as in city planning. The application is different.

The study of the element forming the recreational appeal of the Superior shows the greatest feature of the area lies in water-way travel. Contributing factors are: (a) green timber; (b) lack of artificiality in development; (c) wild game living under State protection.

#### THE WATER FEATURE

The whole scheme of development of the Superior then centers on the best handling of water traffic and the presentation of the natural scenic beauties from these lines of travel.

This means that the Superior is to be developed in the most logical manner. It is purely a boat or canoe forest and it is only making the best of all possible existing values when this is done. It would be illogical, for example, to make the Superior a foot, horseback, airplane or auto playground for this would mean non-utilization of existing natural advantages. The development which enhances the canoeing feature starts with a major advantage. This following the line of least resistance will

produce a greater development for less cost than would the imposition of a scheme not suited to the country.

Furthermore, as the Superior is already a great canoe country the enhancement of this canoe travel, its greatest feature, will make it pre-eminent in this field; as opposed to this if it were attempted to make it an auto playground it would not only lose its claim as a canoe country, but enter into competition with all other automobile playgrounds. As a canoe country the Superior will have few, if any, competitors.

The whole scheme of landscape development is, therefore, based on the enhancement, preservation and development of the canoeing and boating feature.

## DEVELOPMENT OF TRAFFIC

Traffic flow is most important. Eventually the recreational plan for the Superior will link up all sections with the best possible representative traffic lines. At the present the trunk lines must have first attention.

## THE KAWISHIWI-ISABELLA TRUNK

As a starting place the Kawishiwi-Isabella loop has been selected. It is proposed to put this in as travelable condition as possible.

Obviously no work is needed in making the lakes and navigable portions of the rivers good highways.

The portages are the real problem. They must be made good foot traffic lines and kept open.

There are also short stretches of river which can be made usable or safer by removing rocks or establishing a dam.

These two points are the keystone of the whole traffic scheme. Good portages and navigable rivers mean good canoe travel.

## RESIDENTIAL FOCAL POINTS

It is necessary to have residential points along these lines for where people are present there must be places to find shelter and secure food. In



KAWISHIWI RIVER NEAR LAKE ALICE

the Superior scheme these are of two types: temporary stopping places which should be camping places with permanent development and permanent places to stop which will be in the nature of small hotels.

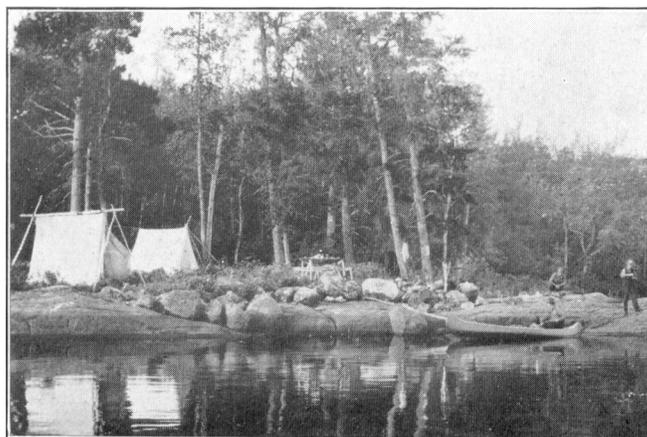
As the first development is to be in the field of canoe traffic the first consideration is to secure the overnight canoeists camps along these water ways.

There are several advantages in having such camps established. First, there is comfort and convenience to the tourist himself but beyond that there is a real need for such development to localize fire and sanitation problems.

This is a brief outline of the general policy to be pursued in the recreational development of the Superior National Forest to fully utilize the recreation at present not usable through lack of development.

## FINANCES

Such a plan demands financial expenditures. It is a National playground of National service and yet it is impossible to find funds in the United States Forest Service allotments to develop the area. The reason for this is that Congress has not made any appropriation for recreation in the National Forests. Millions of dollars worth of recreational use lie in these areas undeveloped for the lack of a few hundred



LAC LA CROIX

thousand dollars to properly plan and develop them along good recreational landscape lines.

Therefore, until Congress sees fit to make adequate appropriations for this work, there must be some other agency found which will supply the funds.

This puts the whole question of immediate development of the Superior National Forest up to Minnesota and her communities, for if funds cannot be supplied the whole plan outlined will not come into being and the Superior Forest will not serve humanity as a magnificent play area as it should be doing.

#### BUDGET

A preliminary budget of a preliminary plan for the Kawishiwi-Isabella route shows the following improvements to be constructed:

- 23 noon day camps – fully developed.
- 23 over-night camps – fully developed.
- 189 route markers and signs.
- 2632 rods (approximately 8-1/6 miles) of portage to make useable more than 125 miles of canoe travel.
- 106 canoe landings.
- 15 packsack and canoe rests on longer portages.
- Improvement at two points of rocky channel.



PARENT LAKE

The estimated cost of this program is \$20,000 for the two years. This includes a ten percent contingent for emergency work, a \$1500 fund for advertising purposes each year, and the cost of a well trained landscape architect to supervise. The latter item is the plan's keystone, and deserves comment. Such a trained man will save his cost in economies. Good design will be assured, a thing not certain when construction is under the supervision of an ordinary workman. Further, this man hired on a yearly basis will be able to do further planning necessary before the extension of this plan is started.

The program for 1922 will open a three to five day circle trip and a five to seven day, making four route combinations. The 1923 program will add a two to three week circle. The latter development will add the possibility of four other trips using this traffic line as a trunk.

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U.S. Forest Service