

2022

IMPACT REPORT



sportsmenbwca.org



CONTENTS

- **1 - REFLECTIONS**
- **2 - OUR MISSION**
- **3 - 2022 HIGHLIGHTS**
- **5 - 2022 GOALS**
- **7 - ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT**
- **10 - FINANCES**
- **11 - GET INVOLVED**
- **12 - MEET THE TEAM**



REFLECTIONS

As 2022 comes to a close and Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters looks back at what we've accomplished together this year, we can't help but be grateful. In the midst of global uncertainty, throughout the chaos of a midterm election, and despite brutal headwinds, the Boundary Waters remain a reminder of resilience in the face of change. Thank you for your commitment to ensuring our public lands remain in the public trust this year, free of pollution for future generations to enjoy.

Just a few years ago, a copper-nickel mine, proposed just outside the BWCA, was proceeding through the federal environmental review process when you and others like you decided to take a stand for the great places we have to hunt and fish. Since then, Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters has rallied with you, in-person and online, in the halls of Congress and the Minnesota Legislature, and stood with our community in defense of America's most-visited wilderness Area. We've sent thousands of comments to federal agencies, brought Boundary Waters business owners to meet with their elected officials, and done all we can to shine a light on the process to protect the BWCA with full public participation and transparency.

Since the founding of Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters, we've known one thing: passionate Boundary Waters supporters like you are what makes our work possible. Without the thousands of yearly visitors, without the businesses that outfit and house paddlers, and without 1.1 million acres of some of America's best habitat, all open to the public, our work would not be possible.

OUR MISSION

To protect the integrity of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and its watersheds for huntable and fishable populations of fish and wildlife, now and forever through advocacy and education

2022 brought more progress for the Boundary Waters than ever before, and it's because of supporters like you that we are collectively taking these positive steps toward permanent protection of the BWCA.

Our staff, board of directors, and our ever-expanding community appreciate all that you have given, every message sent, and your dedication to conserving the BWCA for future generations.

In 2022 we remained laser-focused on our mission and received significant conservation wins. From the cancellation of federal hard rock mineral leases upstream of the BWCA, the announcement to move forward on a 20-year mineral withdrawal, and the advancement of key protection legislation in Congress, we have a lot to be thankful for.

But the work doesn't stop here. There are still critical steps that must be taken in 2023 to ensure permanent protection of the Boundary Waters.

Our mission is directed at the entire outdoor recreation community, and more specifically at hunters and anglers. 140,000 jobs in Minnesota are outdoor industry jobs, of which 40,000+ are related to hunting and fishing. The Boundary Waters is the most visited Wilderness in America, and thousands of those visitors fish and hunt on their trips each year. Lodges, outfitters, guide services, and locals all benefit from the clean water in the BWCA and overwhelmingly advocate for their protection at events we organize, facilitate, or partner on.

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

We are a small organization with integrity that values our ability to make funding go a long way. We work towards a positive outcome on behalf of our community that values the priceless outdoor experiences that places like the Boundary Waters provide and for future generations that deserve to experience these wild places as we have.



Concerning Boundary Waters Protection:

At the end of January 2022, the comment period ended for the [US Forest Service recommended 20-year mineral withdrawal](#). Together with our partners we were able to submit over 25,000 comments in support of this action.

Immediately following the end of the comment period on January 26th, a broad coalition of hunters and anglers [applauded an announcement](#) by the Department of the Interior to cancel Twin Metal's federal hardrock mineral leases located in the Superior National Forest within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness watershed.

Following the cancellation of Twin Metals leases, [The MN DNR rejected Twin Metals Mine Plan](#) of Operations due to the loss of the federal leases, putting a full stop to the project.

On June 23, 2022, federal agencies [announced a 30-day public comment period for an Environmental Assessment \(EA\)](#), or a proposed study on the impacts of withdrawing mining leases upstream of the BWCA. In the study, federal agencies officially proposed a moratorium on the development of any mineral leases in approximately 225,504 acres of Superior National Forest lands within the watershed of the Boundary Waters for up to 20 years.

For the comment period associated with the Draft EA that ended in August, SFBW and its partners were able to submit thousands more comments in support of these 20-year protections. SFBW also hosted and organized a "Day Of Action" to help bring the entire hunting and fishing community together to show support for the proposed BWCA protections.

On July 12th, the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources [passed H.R. 2794 the Boundary Waters Wilderness Protection and Pollution Prevention Act](#). The bill, sponsored by Representative Betty McCollum (D-MN) then had a chance to move to the full House of Representatives for a vote. Passage through committee marked the furthest that permanent protection legislation had ever made it in the U.S Congress.

In the months after committee passage, Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters worked to gain as much support for the bill as possible with partners, constituents, and in D.C. to urge Congress to move expeditiously to a final floor vote on the measure, with the hopes of the bill being included in a Congressional package.

In December, Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters and our partners pressed hard in D.C. to pass Boundary Waters legislation. Though progress was made and partnerships were built, we were unable to get the bill across the finish line. The work continues in a new Congress with renewed hope and balanced strategy.

2022 HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

From in-person strategy meetings with partners at the TRCP Policy Councils to working the halls of Congress and federal agencies, our trips to D.C. were an incredible success. We were very honored to also attend the TRCP Awards Dinner where our very own Rep. McCollum received a conservation award for her work to protect the BWCA.

Staff members, Lukas Leaf and Spencer Shaver [received the Sigurd F. Olson Award at the National Backcountry Hunters & Anglers Rendezvous](#) in Missoula, MT, which acknowledges outstanding effort conserving rivers, lakes, or wetland habitat. Also, Vice-chair of the SFBW board Rob Drieslein received the Ted Trueblood Award for outstanding outdoors communicator.

"I've had the pleasure of working closely with both Lukas Leaf and Spencer Shaver," said BHA President and CEO Land Tawney. "It is an honor to recognize their steadfast contributions to the Boundary Waters. Their commitment, backcountry bona fides, and good nature helped carry the day for a 20-year moratorium on a mine proposed just a stone's throw from the most visited wilderness in America. For that we are grateful."

We're proud of our ["Paddlin Bear" lineup West Mountain Drifters and Ed Anderson](#), and have expanded this killer art into more areas of our brand. There are more collaborations to come in 2023 as our relationship grows. We've also continued to revamp our online store to bring new and fun offerings to our supporters, including all-new gear for kids.

[SFBW teamed up with Trampled By Turtles](#) and lead singer Dave Simonett for a wildly successful silent auction featuring experiences, memorabilia and gear. TBT was also instrumental in our online advocacy, a Boundary Waters media trip, and more. We plan on exciting new partnerships with TBT in 2023. Dave Simonett also joined the SFBW Board of Directors as one of its newest members.



SFBW continued its development of new programs outside of the sulfide-ore copper mining issue including Moose Conservation and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). SFBW also joined the MN-based CWD Coalition led by the MN Conservation Federation in early 2022 to combat the disease, working with state and tribal partners.

The Armed Forces Initiative of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers organized two separate trips for military members to explore the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. SFBW was proud to partner on these trips to help create the best experience possible.

We ran our ["Vote The Boundary Waters"](#) campaign again for the November elections, asking advocates to sign a pledge to protect the Boundary Waters before they hit the polls and reached tens of thousands of voters across the nation.

[SFBW launched a new YouTube channel](#), debuting "Grouse Up The Gunflint", and epic Northwoods adventure with a few conservation legends. We plan to continue to produce new and engaging content to add to this channel.

SFBW had the opportunity to host the production team for the [Huckberry series "The Dirt"](#) for a weekend, and showcased the Boundary Waters and the work of our organization in the latest episode "The North".

Going into our third year since its national release, [Patagonia's Public Trust film](#) continues to be one of the most engaging projects that we have ever been featured in, with millions of YouTube views and countless film showings across the country.

GOALS FOR 2023

Our plans for Congress, federal agencies, and at the state level for the next year and beyond.



We're very excited to grow as an organization with you in 2023. Expect to see more in the coming year.

Boundary Waters Protections

- Work closely with government agencies, key decision-makers, and national NGO partners to receive a final 20-year mineral withdrawal order from the Department of the Interior.
- Reintroduction of Rep. McCollum's permanent protection legislation, The Boundary Waters Wilderness Protection & Pollution Prevention Act in Congress.
- Passage of Rep. McCollum's bill through committee and as far as the House of Representatives.
- Help solidify support for a Senate companion to Rep. Betty McCollum's bill and see positive movement forward for the bill.
- Mirror legislation to the U.S. Congress bill introduced at the MN state level and movement forward towards the passage of this legislation.
- Identify key decision makers to bolster bi-partisan support for both the state and federal legislation.
- Develop further our working relationships with state & national NGO partners.
- Continue to expand and build new relationships in the hunting, fishing, conservation, and wild foods community.



GOALS FOR 2023

SFBW is an organization that plans on being around for the long haul.

- We hope to grow SFBW in both program capacity and staff size by developing unique opportunities in organizational funding.
- While protecting the BWCA from proposed sulfide-ore copper mining will remain our main focus, SFBW aims to officially launch new programs on a small scale for the organization. Starting with Chronic Wasting Disease and Moose conservation. Followed up by work in Responsible Recreation principles to ensure the Boundary Waters remains a pristine wilderness destination for generations to come.
- SFBW will build the organization's brand through media and celebrity trips, public and online event participation, and other media opportunities that arise for the organization. Our media trip model has been a huge success over the past few years. As final projects like MN Bound, Public Trust, and Grouse Up The Gunflint have shown. We'll continue to host these trips to grow national awareness of the BWCA and the conservation challenges that the area faces.
- Have a stronger presence at shows, conferences and events. SFBW plans on traveling more this year post-COVID, starting Pheasant Fest in February.
- Increased presence in local and national media. We're very humbled to have been featured in the likes of Outdoor Life, MeatEater, Field & Stream, and Outdoor News. From those accomplishments we would like to frequent the pages of other prominent news outlets through our work to protect the integrity of our cherished wild places.
- Lend a hand to those that have helped us. Our partners have many conservation issues that are important to SFBW. Showing up and showing support for bedrock legislation like The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) is the least we can do.
- Continue to expand and build new relationships in the hunting, fishing, conservation, and wild foods community.
- Further develop working relationships with state & national partners within the hunting, fishing, and conservation community to increase our chances of permanent protection for the Boundary Waters through both state and federal strategies.
- Increase our digital presence. Expect to see exciting new projects coming from SFBW in 2023. As well as new ways to contribute and participate in our efforts.

OUR WORK

Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters will continue to be a leading voice for the outdoor recreation community in NE Minnesota, and increase our advocacy efforts on behalf of our cherished businesses that rely so heavily on the outdoor recreation economy, which the Boundary Waters is truly the foundation of. As well as increase our role as an advocate on Boundary Waters related conservation issues for our community members, and for access and opportunity within the Boundary Waters region

With over 160,000 annual visitors in 2022 and that number steadily increasing, the Boundary Waters represents some of America's most accessible public lands and waters. Hunters and anglers travel to the Boundary Waters for a one-of-a-kind chance to pursue lake trout, walleye, smallmouth bass, northern pike, whitetail deer, and ruffed grouse in a true backcountry landscape. The BWCA also allows families of all backgrounds and children of any age to participate in a Wilderness trip. Few other destinations allow for this unique, special experience, and the few places we have in America that provide the backdrop for this experience must have proper protections in place.

Without steps forward to protect the BWCA from sulfide-ore copper mining, polluted water, and its impacts on fish and wildlife would depress businesses around the Boundary Waters and negatively impact the regional outdoor economy. We must work towards a positive outcome on behalf of this community, a community that values the priceless outdoor experiences that places like the BWCA provide, and for our future generations that deserve to experience these wild places as we have.

Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters regularly works with a broad coalition of conservation and environmental organizations, outdoor businesses, and supporters from across the country. We're proud to have built strong relationships that we continue to build upon with national organizations such as Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA), Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP), National Wildlife Federation (NWF), Trout Unlimited (TU), National Deer Association (NDA) and many, many more. We also partner with state and local organizations such as the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Alliance (MOHA), Minnesota Conservation Federation (MNCF), and local chapters of national partner organizations. Our shared work with these organizations is why we've been able to make the impact that we have on a national level.

Our business partnerships are critical to engaging our community. The support of the outdoor industry allows us to show elected officials and decision-makers the broad coalition that supports Boundary Waters protection. Lodges, outfitters, guide services, and local businesses all benefit from the clean water in the BWCA and overwhelmingly advocate for their protection in all manners possible. Lastly, our goals will never be accomplished without the tens of thousands of supporters in Minnesota and across the country who advocate on behalf of our organization and the Boundary Waters.



**THANK YOU FOR
ADVOCATING ON
BEHALF OF THE
BOUNDARY WATERS!**

**ADVOCACY & ENGAGEMENT
HIGHLIGHTS**

Total Messages To Decision Makers

Over 70,000 messages sent with our hunting and fishing partners through the entire year

Social Media Impressions

Over 2 million impressions through advocacy campaigns

Direct Action To Decision Makers

250% increase in actions taken in 2022

Comment Periods With Partners

Over 50,000 messages sent as a coalition in support of a 20-year mineral withdrawal

SFBW Messages Sent To Congress

Over 10,000 messages sent supporting BWCA permanent protection legislation

GROUSE UP THE GUNFLINT

This past autumn, Sportsmen for the Boundary Waters hosted a trip into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in pursuit of lake trout and ruffed grouse with MeatEater's Ryan Callaghan, Trampled by Turtle's Dave Simonett, and KFAN's Bob St.Pierre to highlight the hunting and fishing opportunities of the area.

After our wilderness adventure, we took out the video cameras and headed up the Arrowhead Region of Minnesota for some more ruffed grouse hunting with Scott Sorensen, owner of Fly Box & Company in Grand Marais. Our short film, "Grouse Up The Gunflint," is the result of that adventure.

We had a fantastic time showcasing one of the best outdoor activities that the BWCA has to offer in grouse hunting. Coupled with late season lake trout sizzling over the fire in the BWCA, it was truly a trip to remember.

Our hope is for this film to inspire people around the world to explore Northern Minnesota and our cherished Boundary Waters for the hunting and fishing opportunities these public lands and waters provide us all.

The film will be released again with partners and stakeholders ahead of the 2023 fall hunting season to promote the organization and our work.

ENGAGEMENT

5,000+

New Sportsmen for
the Boundary Waters
supporters

250%

Increase in direct actions
taken to Congress, Federal
Agencies, and local decision
makers

500K+

Views of films featuring our
work to protect the Boundary
Waters through mainstream
media channels

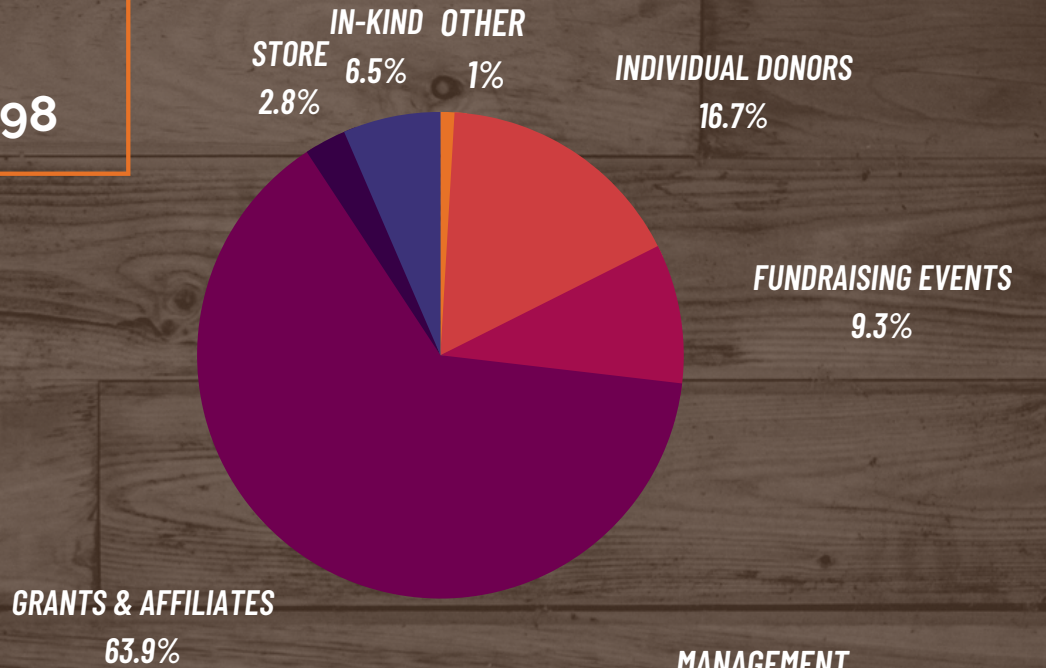


2022 FINANCIALS

Your support is, has, and will be critical.

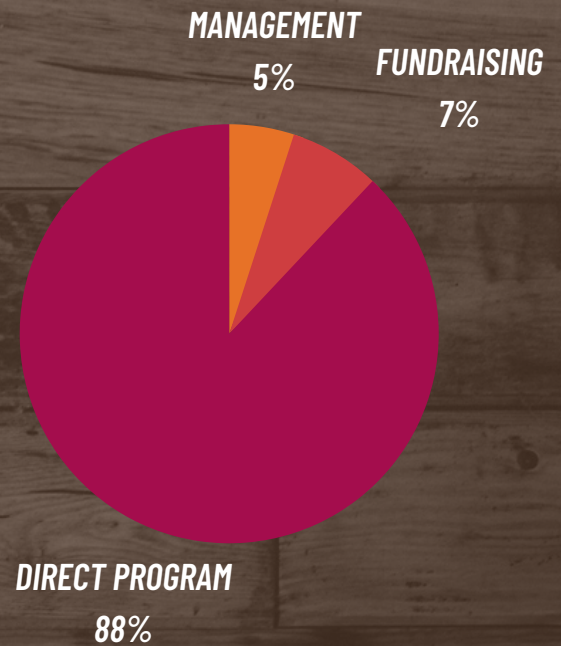
REVENUE

\$261,507.98



EXPENSES

\$261,397.97



KNOW THAT .88 CENTS OF EVERY SINGLE DOLLAR WE RECEIVED WENT DIRECTLY TO OUR MISSION TO PROTECT THE BOUNDARY WATERS.

GET INVOLVED

01

TAKE ACTION

Send a message directly to your decision-makers at federal agencies, the State Capitol or in D.C. Whether its an online message or a phone call, Your voice matters.

02

VOLUNTEER

Sign up at sportsmenbwca.org to volunteer at events both virtual and in-person, help organize direct engagement, and to stay updated on everything BWCA.

03

SPREAD THE WORD

Digital platforms are the best tool for you to reach others and get them involved. Share a petition, post on social media, and join other great conservation organizations working to protect our wild places.

04

CONTRIBUTE TO SFBW

Know that every dollar goes towards our efforts to permanently protect the Boundary Waters.

MEET THE TEAM

SFBW's strength is in our partnerships at home and across the country



THE SFBW TEAM

- Lukas Leaf, executive director
- Dave Nomsen, senior advisor
- Spencer Shaver, policy advisor
- Jake Dahlke, content manager

BOARD OR DIRECTORS

- Bob St. Pierre, chair
- Rob Drieslein, vice-chair
- Julia Peebles, treasurer
- Mark Neuzil, secretary
- Dave Simonett
- Ashley Peters
- Dave Seaton
- Hansi Johnson

NATIONAL PARTNERS

- Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- Trout Unlimited
- National Wildlife Federation
- American Sportfishing Association
- Izaak Walton League of America
- Fly Fishers International
- American Fly Fishing Trade Association
- National Deer Association
- And many more

STATE PARTNERS

- MN Chapter, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
- Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Alliance
- Minnesota Conservation Federation
- MN Chapter, Trout Unlimited
- MN Division, Izaak Walton League
- MN Department of Natural Resources
- MN CWD Action Coalition

2022 BUSINESS PARTNERS

- Simms Fishing
- Trampled By Turtles
- First Lite
- Patagonia
- Outdoor News
- Omnia Fishing
- Piragis Northwoods
- Federal Premium
- Hungry Jack Outfitters
- Camp Chef
- Huckberry
- Mend Provisions
- Wild Mountain
- West Mountain Drifters
- Artisans
- Fly Box
- O'Pros
- And more!

FISH STORIES FOREVER



X

Wild
Mountain

"I HAVE DISCOVERED IN A LIFETIME OF TRAVELING IN PRIMITIVE REGIONS, A LIFETIME OF SEEING PEOPLE LIVING IN THE WILDERNESS AND USING IT, THAT THERE IS A HARD CORE OF WILDERNESS NEED IN EVERYONE, A CORE THAT MAKES ITS SPIRITUAL VALUES A BASIC HUMAN NECESSITY. THERE IS NO HIDING IT...UNLESS WE CAN PRESERVE PLACES WHERE THE ENDLESS SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF MAN CAN BE FULFILLED AND NOURISHED, WE WILL DESTROY OUR CULTURE AND OURSELVES."

SIGURD F. OLSON

