



CONSERVATION EDUCATION — Success Story
North Country Media Tour—Low Down on the Blow Down

INTRODUCTION – The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, an international non-profit education association, offers journalists the opportunity to interact with leading scholars, exploring important issues in a variety of fields including the environment.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION —

Six media representatives from:

- Ventura County Star, California,
- Audubon magazine,
- WBEZ-FM, Chicago nat'l public radio,
- freelance science journalist,
- environment/outdoors wrtier for AP,
- publisher for BetterFORESTS magazine

toured the Boundary Waters Canoe Area to see first hand the impacts of a significant “blow down” event affecting more than 600 square miles. The task for the week was to experience the wilderness first hand and meet the researchers who study the science behind the news.



Tour guides included recreation staff from the USDA Forest Service, Superior National Forest and a forest ecologist from the University of Minnesota. The North Central Research Station assisted with arranging the tour and interviews with research scientists.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS — On July 1999 the Boundary Waters Canoe Area experienced an

event that happens on once every 1,000 years-- intense winds that uprooted and snapped off more that 30 million trees. In few minutes the region became a giant laboratory, giving scientists a once in a lifetime opportunity to study how a forest recovers from such a catastrophic event.

The journalists learned how William Mattson, entomologist with the North Central Research Staion, is studying if storm-damaged trees provide breeding material for root pathogens and wood-boring insects. Would increased populations move into undamaged forests?

Susan Stewart, a North Central Research Station social scientist is studying how tourists and local residents have and will be affected by the storm.

By the end of the week the journalists had learned first hand the how the Boundary Area Canoe is recovering and the careful research that is being done to capture that recovery. They had made the connections necessary to more accurately give the “low down on the blow down.”

For more information:

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