

## **THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON NORTHEASTERN MINNESOTA**

### **WHAT:**

The Greater Quetico-Superior Ecosystem (GQSE) hosts one of the largest connected and protected habitats in North America, spanning Voyageurs National Park (218,000 acres), the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (1.1 million acres), and Quetico Provincial Park (1.2 million acres). The region's abundant freshwater, wildlife, and natural resources make it culturally important from both a local and global perspective, holding spiritual significance for Tribes, high nature-based carbon storage, world-class opportunities for outdoor recreation, and a richness of biodiversity.

However, the GQSE is at the forefront of climate change. This ecosystem is highly vulnerable to climate change due to its heat- and drought-sensitive boreal forests and peatlands. While at times it may feel hopeless to stop our fossil fuel emissions and safeguard the region's habitats, there are steps that we can take now to maintain beautiful and functional ecosystems into the future. Climate adaptation efforts—such as prescribed fire and assisted migration of species—are how individuals and communities can have a tangible impact in the fight against climate change. Nevertheless, effective regional climate adaptation requires a comprehensive foundation of knowledge and a vision of the climate future we are looking to achieve.

### **HOW:**

Supported by funding from the LCCMR (Award 2025-180), we will systematically review all existing climate research, data, and reports related to climate impacts on land, water, wildlife, conservation, and recreation in the GQSE. From this we will develop a website that:

- Hosts all research on climate impacts in the GQSE
- Shares summaries of promising climate adaptation strategies and nature-based solutions
- Connects researchers and land managers with locally-relevant climate data
- Showcases artistic representations of ecosystem's potential climate futures
- Identifies key climate research knowledge gaps and sets a research agenda for the region
- Highlights the GQSE as a hub for climate and ecological research
- Supports funding for climate projects and initiatives in NE Minnesota
- Inspires similar action from other climate-vulnerable and culturally significant areas, such as Yellowstone or the Everglades

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