

# Career forum for women with outdoor interests

## Panelists to share experience and guidance to attain goals

by **SCOTT STOWELL**  
 Ely-Babbitt Editor

A forum for Women's Careers in the Outdoors will be offered at Vermilion Community College with designs on helping college and high school women shape their careers.

A panel of seven professional women in natural resources and other outdoor work will present their stories and perspectives for attaining careers in those fields. The forum is sponsored by the VCC Iron Women, the American Association for University Women and EMPOWER.

According to co-organizer Sarah Hansen, the forum will help empower young women to take active responsibility in forming their future because the panelists are proof that it's possible.

"Role models are important in everyone's life. I'm excited about having people connect with strong women in the field," she said.

She added that the idea for the event grew from the VCC Iron Women who wanted to hear from professional women in careers to which they aspired.

Iron Women forum volunteer Mara Brogan noted two main reasons for the event.

She said women need to know more about natural resources careers that have typically been dominated by men in the past.

Secondly, she said that being able to ask direct questions of a real person already engaged in their field of interest is better than reading information about the topic.

"The panel of women will make it easier to talk one on one," she said.

Caroline Owens, AAUW representative for the forum, said the response from the presenters was particularly encouraging.

"What's been fun, is how all of the people on the panel are excited about sharing their experience," she said.

Other panelists for the forum include:

- ▶ Lori Schmidt—VCC Natural Resource Instructor and Wolf Center Curator.
- ▶ Nancy Hernesmaa—Forest Ranger with Superior



**National Forest in the BWCAW.**

➤ **Amy Kireta—Research Fellow (freshwater ecologist), University Minnesota-Duluth Natural Resources Research Institute.**

➤ **Penny Jeffers—Outward Bound Field Staffing Director.**

➤ **Mary Manning—Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officer, Grand Marais.**

➤ **Barb Soderberg—Public Service Team Leader for the Superior National Forest (retired).**

➤ **Jen Westlund—Park Manager, Bear Head Lake State Park.**

Owens added that the college is becoming an institutional member for AAUW. As an affiliate, VCC women can join AAUW for free and use the Internet for the organization's career information.

Women's Careers in the Outdoors takes place on Thursday, March 19 in the VCC lecture hall room 104 from 6:30-8 p.m.