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August 30, 2014**

The Journal

International Falls, Minnesota

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County to seek info on water proposal

Proposal could impact logging, development

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

The Koochiching County Board Tuesday agreed to seek information about a proposal by the Environmental Protection Act to clarify protection of streams and wetlands under the Clean Water Act.

Former county Commissioner Mike Hanson, representing North Star Electric Cooperative, and North Star Electric Cooperative General Manager Dan Hoskins met with commissioners to ask them to seek more information about the proposal, and copies of testimony and a presentation provided at a May 28 hearing held on the proposal.

A formal comment period on the proposal closes Oct. 20 and Hanson said it's crucial the public be made aware should it be adopted, the proposal would impact use of the land and waters in Koochiching County and could drive up local electricity costs.

"The co-op's focus is on low-cost energy," Hoskins said.

"This would have an impact on that."

Hanson said he fears the area's federal delegation is unaware of the proposed changes to the Clean Water Act. He said he's frustrated by attempts to get more information about the May 28 hearing and the proposal. He asked the county board to request the information and to provide it to federal representatives of the area.

It's not only important to comment on the proposal that could be detrimental to the lifestyle and livelihoods of many in northern Minnesota, but to also ask why more public information on the proposal isn't forthcoming, Hanson said.

The proposal discusses regulating ephemeral waters, which are streams and creeks that flow periodically.

"That's what we have here," Hanson said.

Commissioners said they fear logging roads and operations would be restricted under the proposed change.

A bill supported by the National Association of Counties would prohibit the EPA from implementing the proposed rule. A NACO briefing to members said the proposal would amend the definition of "waters of the

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STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Former county Commissioner Mike Hanson, representing North Star Electric Cooperative, and North Star Electric Cooperative General Manager Dan Hoskins, left, met with commissioners to ask them to seek more information about a proposal. At right, county Environmental Services Director Dale Olson listens to the discussion.



STAFF PHOTO

Dick Bergh, International Falls, left, gave Jens Inge Egeland, of Kopervik, Norway, a mini Norwegian battle ax sent to him by a friend in Norway. The two men say they are like family after a recent visit.

COMMON INTEREST CREATES BROTHERHOOD

Facebook strengthens connection

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Social networking has strengthened Borderland's connection with Norway.

While northern Minnesota is known for its many residents of Scandinavian descent, Jens Inge Egeland, of Kopervik, Norway, tightened that connection with a visit to International Falls last week.

Dick Bergh, a local member of the Sons of Norway, a fraternal organization representing people of Norwegian heritage, shares with Egeland a love of Norway, even though he has never visited.

Bergh first connected with Egeland via Facebook about six months ago. Bergh was drawn to Egeland's Facebook post of a Viking ship featured on a commemorative stamp,

which Egeland sent to Bergh. That started the friendship.

In August, Bergh met Egeland, a self-employed gravel truck driver who spends the two to three months he doesn't work each year traveling the U.S. Egeland estimates this is his 25th visit to the United States.

Bergh met Egeland in person when Egeland was looking on Facebook for a ride from Savage, Minn., to Moose Lake. Bergh had lived in Moose Lake years ago and knew some of the same people Egeland was planning to visit.

Bergh drove to Savage, picked up Egeland and brought him to International Falls.

"We are family," Bergh said.

"Norwegian brothers," Egeland added.

Egeland first came to the U.S. years ago in an exchange program and worked on a ranch in South Dakota. He

noticed the Norwegian names on tombstones in a cemetery at a nearby church.

"That was fascinating," he said. "After that, I've been so interested that I have been to all the Norwegian settlements throughout the Midwest and connected with people. Of course, Minnesota has a lot of Scandihooivians."

Since that first visit to the U.S., he has come two to three times each year to see the influence of his homeland and to meet people who have Norwegian connections. He has relatives and friends all over the U.S.

"I love America," he said. "I live on an island and everybody there has an uncle or a cousin in America."

He shared photos of the island of Karmou, where the family farm is nestled in a

Brotherhood to A7 ➤

Summer wraps up, warmer winter predicted

BY EMILY GEDDE
Staff Writer

With the first official day of autumn less than one month away, Mother Nature is preparing Borderland for the weather that lies ahead.

After a few weeks of hot, humid temperatures, this week's overnight lows of around 50 degrees have greeted residents in the morning with the reminder – fall is on its way.

But according to Melody Lovin, meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Duluth, don't trade the flip flops for wool sweaters just yet. As the Labor Day weekend approaches, Lovin said temperatures are expected to be in the mid-to-upper 70s, but forecasts show a chance of rain and thunderstorms each afternoon of

More information

For a complete forecast, visit www.crh.noaa.gov/dlh.

the long weekend.

"There is a chance of rain or thunderstorms every day," she told The Journal Thursday. "Sunday afternoon and evening, we are expecting quite a bit of rain."

A strong, westerly system will push through just in time for Labor Day Monday carrying with it the possibility of more severe weather.

Welcome, fall — or not

While some residents may be reluctant to welcome the season of cooler temperatures, changing colors and shorter days with open arms, others are embracing

the ideas of hooded-sweatshirts, bird hunting and time at the shack. Last year, however, Lovin reminds Borderland fall came sooner than it will this year.

"By this time last year, we had already issued freeze warnings," she said of the NWS. "We haven't had any deep freezes yet this year."

And even though to some it may seem like summer in International Falls was cut short because of the flooding in early June, last year, the weather was "all over the place," according to Lovin.

"We had freeze warnings, heat warnings, the weather was everywhere," she said of summer's final month. "This year, August is actually about 2 degrees below normal for temperatures and 2 inches below normal for rainfall."

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VOLUME 5
NUMBER 70