

LOCALNEWS

Public value versus government rule

Wetland issues gaining momentum

BY LAUREL BEAGER  
Editor



Wade Pavleck



Bob Anderson

The idea of mitigating wetland disturbance from development in Minnesota based on public value instead of government rule and regulation is getting some attention.

Several area leaders attended a meeting in Chisholm Jan. 15 where revisions to the state's wetland laws were explored.

International Falls Mayor Bob Anderson attended the meeting and reported to the Falls City Council last week many people across the state are attempting to find a way to make it easier and less expensive to mitigate the loss of wetlands through development.

Anderson said the idea behind the state's wetland laws was to protect the wetlands left in the state from disturbance or destruction when homes, businesses and roads are developed.

The issue is being pushed to the forefront now, Anderson said, because it's anticipated in the next 20 years 5,000 acres of wetlands will be impacted by development in the Rainy River and Lake Superior drainage basin for two projects. Where and how those acres will be mitigated is in question.

One question raised at the forum, Anderson said, was why mitigation cannot be conducted outside the basin where wetlands were disturbed and it is needed.

Locally, Koochiching County officials have said for years Borderland has so many healthy wetlands it makes any kind of development — for driveways, garages or businesses — a

challenge.

Commissioner Wade Pavleck attended the Chisholm meeting and said if the idea is to boost the state's wetlands to benefit the state, it makes more sense to mitigate where there are few wetlands left.

He said mining projects in St. Louis County will require mitigation, which may occur in Koochiching or Lake of the Woods counties, where land is fairly cheap, but still in the watershed of the developments.

"If we're really looking at doing what's in the best interest of Minnesota when it comes to replacing wetlands, shouldn't we be looking statewide instead of in the watershed?" he asked. "Nothing is getting done in rest of the state where they've drained and it seems to many people that's where the work needs to be done."

Pavleck pointed to information compiled by Dale Olson, county Environmental Services director, which estimates Koochiching County has 99 percent or more of its original wetlands.

In addition, Olson noted a study of the 2 million acre county shows it has 1.4 million of acres of wetlands. Doing the math, Olson estimates 1 percent of the county's wetlands equals 14,000 acres. If wetlands were filled at an average of 20 acres per year, it would take 700 years just to impact 1 percent, according to Olson.

"The bottom line is that no matter how hard we try

and how many laws we break, we will never impact even 1 percent of the wetlands in Koochiching County," Olson said.

Pavleck said places like Koochiching County are paying a big price for attempting any development here.

"The law is to benefit all of Minnesota, but the only people penalized are the people living where there are wetlands existing," he said, suggesting the cost of mitigation should be borne by the entire state.

Meanwhile, Pavleck said he's encouraged the idea of basing mitigation on public value instead of government rule and regulation is encouraging.

"I think this is certainly a step in the right direction and support the efforts," he said.

Pavleck said he's also encouraged staff from the United States Army Corps, which enforces federal wetland rules, were at the meeting. "They came and talked to me, and said 'we wouldn't be here if we were not willing to look at and think it has merit,'" Pavleck said.

The ratio of wetland loss and mitigation was also discussed. Anderson said some mitigation requires eight acres to be mitigated when one acre is disturbed. "Why not one-to-one, or better?" Anderson asked.

But Anderson said he "wouldn't hold his breath" that wetland credits would not be needed for mitigation.

Pavleck said a Lake of the Woods lawmaker has introduced a bill to allow for mitigation outside the watershed where a wetland was disturbed.

He added, with that bill and support from Rep. David Dill and Sen. Tom Bakk, he hopes to see relief in wetland mitigation requirements for Koochiching County.

MINI LEADERS, BIG CHEERS



STAFF PHOTO BY KEVIN BONESKE

Forty-five girls ages 3 to 8 performed at the Falls High School basketball game Tuesday. Prior to the performance, the mini leaders took part in a program to learn about cheering and leadership through the Bronco basketball cheerleaders. The program is open to students from preschool through grade 6, Lori Potter, adviser, said.

Job gains in December cap off 2013

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Another month of job gains ended 2013, closing out a year that saw 11 of 12 major industrial sectors gain jobs, according to figures released by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

Minnesota employers added 9,500 jobs in December, which combined with revised November numbers, puts total job growth in Minnesota to 45,900 in the past year. This results in a growth rate of 1.7 percent, compared with a national rate of 1.6 percent during that period.

The state unemployment

rate remained unchanged in December at a seasonally adjusted 4.6 percent, well below the U.S. unemployment rate of 6.7 percent.

LOCAL NUMBERS

In Koochiching County, unemployment figures remained steady, with the unemployment rate increasing from 9.3 to 9.4 percent. The number of unemployed persons went from 605 to 618.

"December's employment numbers closed out a strong year for the Minnesota labor market," DEED Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben said in a release. "Eleven out of 12 major industrial sectors gained jobs last

year, and leading indicators point to continued growth in 2014."

Trade, transportation and utilities led all sectors in December with 4,600 new jobs. Government gained 2,600 jobs, manufacturing gained 1,700 jobs, education and health services gained 1,200 jobs, professional and business services gained 1,000 jobs, construction gained 400 jobs, and logging and mining gained 100 jobs.

Job losses occurred in December were in leisure and hospitality, which lost 800 jobs, other services lost 700 jobs, financial activities lost 500 jobs, and information lost 100 jobs.

### IT'S ALL ABOUT BABY!!

These toys are designed to lead little ones down the path of development and actively engage them with an array of color, texture and sound

## NEW TOYS HAVE ARRIVED!

#### WINKEL COLOR BURST

Colorful loops of tubing are spun into a shape that makes it easy for children grasp, shake & explore

#### TURN & DISCOVER RATTLE

This playful toy features silly animal faces and vibrant color patterns that reward baby with a new sound each turn

#### SKWISH CLASSIC

Provides hours of infant entertainment by introducing the concept of cause and effect while encouraging the development of grasping and reaching with it's rebounding elastic and bright colored beads

#### WOBBLE WE GO RATTLE

Unique wobble bottom design that holds two puppy and kitty rattles

#### PUPPY – GO – ROUND

Features four puppies that twirl and spin around. Puppy ears are made of soft plastic for teething

#### TWISTY TIME RATTLE

Rattles, twists and teethingers! Several exciting features to entertain baby. Easy-to-grasp rattle also includes rattle beads, squeaker and clacking

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# Football Savings

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### 4 DAY SALE

Wednesday, Jan. 29 – Saturday, Feb. 1

**RonDiaz**  
Spiced Rum  
1.75  
**\$14<sup>99</sup>**

**Bacardi**  
Limon  
1.75  
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**Phillips**  
Vodka  
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**\$10<sup>99</sup>**

**Windsor**  
Canadian Whisky  
1.75  
**\$14<sup>99</sup>**

**E & J**  
Brandy  
VSOP liter  
**\$10<sup>99</sup>**

**Samuel Adams**  
12 pk. bottles  
**\$15<sup>99</sup>**

**BUD LIGHT** **Budweiser**

**Pabst Blue Ribbon**

24 pk. cans  
**\$16<sup>99</sup>**

**Redd's**  
Apple Ale  
12 pk. bottles,  
12 pk. cans  
**\$12<sup>99</sup>**

### Don't Forget The Bar Supplies!

## The Jug Liquors

Borderland's Local Liquor Store  
Hwy 53 & 11th St. - M.-Sat. 8am-10pm  
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