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International Falls Journal

ifallsjournal.com



**Wednesday,
April 1, 2015**

International Falls, Minnesota www.ifallsjournal.com \$1



ANGLERS FLOCK TO RAINY RIVER

A group of bundled-up anglers launch their boat onto Rainy River at the Frontier access near Birchdale Friday to kickoff the spring walleye season.

**BY EMILY GEDDE
AND LAUREL BEAGER**
Staff Writers

BIRCHDALE — Seth Nelson and his son, Christian, spent Friday afternoon playing basketball at their Birchdale cabin near the Nelson Park boat access. Every once in awhile there would be a brief pause in the game for Christian to hop in his golf cart and shuttle an angler from his truck back to his boat waiting at the access. “It’s been pretty quiet,” Nelson reported. “Most of the action is up the road.”

He was right. About six miles to the west at the Frontier access, several boats and empty trailers lined roads just off Highway 11. Signs urging motorists to slow down and be aware of extra traffic were in place to ease any congestion.

Minnesota Conservation Officer Darrin Kittelson reports Tuesday the early walleye season on the Rainy River is in full swing, with ice leaving area landings in recent days.

Anglers were using landings at Koochiching County’s Nelson Park, which opened Monday, and Frontier Park to access the river over the weekend.

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STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

Several vehicles and empty boat trailers line a road near a Birchdale landing.



A young boy offering a shuttle service on his golf cart waits for anglers near a Birchdale landing.



One angler reports fish were biting near areas where there was still ice.

KOOCHICHING COUNTY BOARD

Get out and get moving

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The Koochiching County Board Tuesday took a step to promote healthy lifestyles through getting out and taking more steps during the day.

The board approved a resolution proclaiming April 6-12 National Public Health Week 2015 in Koochiching County. The week is an initiative from the American Public Health Association, and this year’s theme is “Healthiest Nation 2030.”

The forward-thinking theme is because in the U.S., the upcoming generation will be less healthy than the generation before, Koochiching County Public Health Supervisor Nancy Lee said. This can be attributed to lifestyle changes like less healthy diets and more sedentary habits, she said.

“We hop in the vehicles to go most places, we don’t walk very much and we don’t bike much, we aren’t very active,” Lee said.

The situation won’t change overnight, Lee said, which is why the theme focuses on 2030 and not 2016. Gradual, small changes like moving more and eating healthier can go a long way, she said.

County Commissioner Brian McBride said on a recent trip to Fort Meyers Beach, Fla., he was surprised to see how much residents walk and bike to get around.

“Relating that up to here, it’s partly due to our climate, too, that we only have the ability to be active for five or six months a year,” McBride said. “We’re kind of tied up inside.”

Walking meetings are a way for people with office jobs to get away from their desks and get moving during the day, Lee said. Smaller meetings of two to three people can be more productive on the move, she said.

“Just being out walking, your brain might be working a bit better, a bit different,” Lee said. “We sit a lot.”

Sheriff’s business

In other business Tuesday, the board approved various motions on personnel changes in the

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Timber industry waiting for USFWS decision

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

A decision expected Thursday on a proposal to list the northern long-eared bat as endangered or threatened could impact the timber industry, officials said. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Ser-

vice is expected to list the bat as endangered or threatened, and industry officials said listing the species as threatened would be the lesser of two evils, but one which the timber industry may be able to live with.

At issue is the decline of northern long-eared bat populations

in a number of states to a fungus known as the white-nose syndrome, which infects bats and spreads while they hibernate together in caves in the winter.

Among the concerns is that in an effort to stem the population decline of the bat, the FWS rule may restrict timber harvest dur-

ing summer months to protect the bat’s summer habitat.

Wayne Brandt, Timber Producers Association executive director, said he has been following the issue closely.

“We’re in the mode of sitting and waiting and seeing what they publish,” he said. “We hope it

would be threatened with an improved 4-d rule with clarification on some of it.”

However, Brandt stressed the the FWS should be considering how to eradicate the fungus that is spread in the winter to stabilize

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**VOLUME 6
NUMBER 27**