

SNOWMOBILE ACCIDENT



STAFF PHOTO BY SPENSER BICKETT

A snowmobile was involved in an accident Thursday morning just outside the International Falls city limits. No further information was available in time for this publication.

VNP

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“This is a large project and will take time and monitoring to achieve success,” said Ward.

Park officials said they spent a great deal of time determining the first 34 sites selected, and based their decision on visitor use, location, and size of the sites. The 34 reservable sites will be marked with “reservation only” signs for the first year.

Park staff are working to implement temporary computer kiosks at park visitor centers to assist with walk-in reservations. Reservations at the kiosks will only be for that day. All other reservations will need to be made in advance on-line or by phone at www.recreation.gov or by calling the National Call Center at 1-877-444-6777. Advance reservations are available until midnight the night before the visit. Reservations are by credit card only.

The fee structure for sites was based on the amenities at the sites. All of the fees collected will go back into the park. The fee structure is as follows:

- Small campsite with no tent pads — \$16
- Small campsite with 1 tent pad — \$18
- Small campsite with 2 tent pads — \$20
- Large campsites – \$24
- Boats on interior lakes rentals — \$12
- Houseboats — \$10

■ Backcountry campsites (regardless of tent pads) \$16

The dates and sites selected to go live with www.recreation.gov are as follows in 4 phases.

Phase 1:

Visitors to the park will be able to make reservations for these sites starting 10 a.m., April 1.

Reservations required with www.recreation.gov for:

- April 15 through Oct. 15
- All rentals canoes and rowboats on interior lakes May 15 through Sept. 15
- All Backcountry (interior) campsites
- 34 Frontcountry (main lake) campsites; see list below
- Also included are all canoes, rowboats, and backcountry camping sites in the interior of the Kabetogama Peninsula.
- All other sites will remain first-come, first-served in 2014. However, a free overnight permit is still required for all first-come, first-served sites within the park and are available at the following boat launches: Rainy Lake Visitor Center, Kabetogama Lake Visitor Center, Ash River Visitor Center, Crane Lake Ranger Station, and the Crane Lake MN DNR launch.

Phase 2:

- Sept. 16 through May 14, 2015
- All campsites
- All rental canoes and rowboats on interior lakes
- Free
- Reservation required with www.recreation.gov

Lake	Site Name	Site Number
Rainy Lake	Big Island	R5
	Virgin Island South	R27
	Blueberry Island West.....	R92
	Diamond Island South.....	R10
	Kawawia Island	R16
	Three Sisters Island.....	R77
	Harrison Bay.....	R61
	Krantz Point.....	R62
	Loon Bay	R63
	Shelland Island	R106
	Lyle Mine Island.....	R93
	Dryweed Island.....	R11
	Saginaw Bay.....	R22
	Sunrise Point.....	R26
	Rainy Lake Group Campsite	R74
Kabetogama Lake	Fish Camp Island.....	R13
	Kempton Entrance East.....	R91
	Bald Rock.....	K1
	C Vic Linsten	K5
	Eks Bay	K8
	Kabetogama Lake Group Site.....	K54
	Happy Landing	K11
	Moxie Island.....	K22
	Peterson Point.....	K25
Namakan Lake	Day Marker 23.....	N5
	Torry Fish Camp.....	N43
	Namakan Island North East.....	N55
	Pike Bay	N 31
	My Island South	N24
	Voyageurs Narrows.....	N41
Sand Point Lake	Browns Bay View	S3
	King Pin.....	S10
	Norway Island.....	S14
	Burnt Island.....	S4

The park will no longer have self-registration permit stations

Phase 3:

- April 15, 2015 through Oct. 15 each year
- All rental canoes and rowboats on the interior
- May 15, 2015 through Sept.15 each year
- All campsites
- Reservations will be available six months in advance and will open November of each year

Phase 4:

- May 15, 2015 through Sept. 15 each year
- No camping, houseboating, boat rentals without a reservation
- Reservations will be available on April 1, 2015, for houseboating

FISHING

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electronic signs to be located on Minnesota Highway 11 that would indicate when parking was full at some of the busier accesses to lessen traffic safety concerns. And camping will be limited at Nelson Park and prohibited at other parks. Outhouses and garbage dumpsters are expected to be placed at landings, provided snow can be moved out of the way. And snow and ice expected to be removed, if needed, from boat ramps if possible.

Anglers will see several new signs posted identifying areas where parking is prohibited, as well as new areas designated for certain activities.

Koochiching County Undersheriff Bruce Grotberg said deputies would be carrying extra citation booklets this year, after experiencing parking issues that caused concerns about getting emergency vehicles into the accesses, should they be needed.

He said some truck owners parked under “no parking” signs and accepted tickets rather than move and be required to walk or bicycle miles back to the landing after parking in an acceptable place.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources fisheries biologists Phil Talmage, of Baudette, and Tom Burri, of International Falls, said the walleye population on the Rainy River is healthy. They stressed that it would remain so provided anglers handle fish properly.

They and others at the meeting stressed that some concerns heard at the September meeting could be alleviated with more use of common sense and courtesy toward others by people attempting to get on the river.

While last season may have given the perception of being the busiest in years, surveys showed that the fishing pressure was similar to other years, but was condensed at just two accesses and compressed into a shorter period of time because of ice conditions.

Some people at the meeting suggested that the num-

ber of site attendants at Koochiching County parks with accesses might help.

Tom Morris and Tom Toratti, Koochiching County Land and Forestry Department, said Koochiching spends about \$10,000 on two site attendants at four county parks, snow removal and other needs during the season. Lake of the Woods County has provided Koochiching County with \$2,500 to help with the costs in the past several years.

Bob Moore, DNR Trails & Waterways Division, indicated he would seek DNR funds to assist the counties with some of the costs caused by the huge influx of people, boats and trailers. He thanked county officials for taking the lead in addressing the needs caused by the season.

The group also discussed posting on tourism websites in the area when parking lots at specific parks were full in an effort to alleviate congestion. Information on the season can also be found at the DNR’s website.

The benefit to the two counties was also discussed.

John Henry, executive director of Lake of the Woods Tourism, thanked the group for the “Herculean effort” to tackle the challenges brought with the early river walleye season. He told the group that the season provides an economic boost for the area during a normally slow tourism period.

Talmage agreed that the economic activity spurred by the season is very important to the local economy.

Koochiching County Commissioner Kevin Adee said most the motels and hotels in International Falls are full during the peak of the season.

Area Convention and Visitor Bureau Executive Director Pete Schultz also attended Wednesday’s meeting. He later told The Journal that the spring fishing season brings activity to the International Falls business community, and hotel and motel owners in the area are reaching out to the anglers for their business.

“Baudette benefits, but there is an effect here, no doubt about it,” he said.

ICE

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“I found out if I make the rings out of slush, the color hold really well,” he said. “When I was using water, it would just separate..The colors were really deep about a month ago, but because of the cold, they’ve really started to fade.”

GLITCHES ALONG THE WAY

LeBlanc admits the seemingly-simple design has had its share of glitches.

As he was preparing to place the final ring, he said it slipped through his fingers and shattered on the ground.

Coincidentally, the ring LeBlanc broke with was the same one that malfunctioned during the opening

ceremony in Sochi.

“I couldn’t believe I did that,” he said with a chuckle. “What are the odds it would be the same one?”

ICE EXPERIENCE

LeBlanc has been shaping different landmarks out of ice off and on since 1991.

“When my dad was in the hospital down in the cities, we’d go see the ice castles at the winter fair in St. Paul,” he said.

Inspired by the frozen figures, LeBlanc decided he could create something similar, just on a much smaller scale. So he said he built a “simple little church.”

“From there,” he added, “I’ve tried to do something a little different every year.”

Among the about 20 ice designs LeBlanc has cre-



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

Mark LeBlanc poses next to his partially finished ice creation.

ated, he said he’s built the Emerald City, Elvis’ Graceland, Chapel of the Holy

Cross, the White House, the Space Shuttle Columbia, the Eiffel Tower and a Disney princess castle.

Shuttle Columbia creations to respective officials and received responses on his work, he said.

“That is always pretty cool,” he said.

And he’s received positive feedback from the community, too.

“I see people drive by to look at what I’ve done,” he said. “It’s neat to have people appreciate them.”

NOT DONE YET

Because the Olympics are over, LeBlanc said he plans to add to the design to recognize the Winter Paralympics that began Friday and run through the March 16.

“I think I’ll try to add mountains to the top with a wheelchair symbol,” he said. “If the weather cooperates, we’ll see if it turns out.”



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CITIZENS OF INTERNATIONAL FALLS

The city has two vacant positions on the North Koochiching Sanitary Sewer Board. Presently there are six (6) commissioners representing the city.

The Sanitary Sewer board meets monthly and is responsible for the operation of the treatment plant, other processing equipment and the financial cost of the operation. The term of the office for commissioners is three years.

Citizens may submit a letter of interest to Betty Bergstrom, Deputy City Administrator or complete an application at the city offices.

Letters may be sent to:

City of International Falls

600 4th Street

International Falls, MN 56649

In Memory of

Shane Piekarski

March 13th 1978 – March 5th 2006

Shane it's lonely here without you. We miss you more each day, for life is not the same to us since you were taken away to the resting place we visit, place flowers and trinkets there with care, but no one knows our heartache when we turn and walk away.

Love

Mom, Dad, Nakoda

Chris, Cherie, Lexi, Sandy