

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Effort on river continues

The push to restore the traditional Rat Root River walleye spawn run continues with the help of a grant from a granola bar company.

The \$18,000 grant from Nature Valley company and its funding partner, the National Parks Conservation Association, will be used by the Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club to purchase 3,000 trees that will be planted along the Rat Root River.

The grant and the tree planting is just part of the ongoing project that has brought a variety of efforts intended to restore walleye spawning habitat by improving water flow and reducing sedimentation in the river that connects to Rainy Lake in Black Bay.

The project teams the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District with the RLSC. The club provides the initiative, the district serves as financial agent for the funding, and the DNR provides technical expertise.

The project has received significant funding through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council.

Planting the hardwood trees along the river bank will help hold the shoreline in place, thereby reducing erosion of the soil bank that causes dirt to flow down river covering the rock that walleye prefer when laying eggs. In addition, the hardwoods

are expected to live more years than conifers, which have fallen into the river causing a tangled mess of roots, limbs and trunks that have slowed the flow of the river.

Nature Valley is a longtime supporter of national park preservation through its Preserve the Parks program which benefits the NPCA. The grant to RLSC was a result of NPCA contacting Voyageurs National Park Superintendent Mike Ward to ask if any area projects would benefit from grant funding. And while the Rat Root River isn't in Voyageurs, an improved walleye population will certainly benefit the park by restoring a natural resource, as well as benefit the area residents and visitors that fish the waters within the park.

For years, local folks have joked about the benefits (or lack of benefits) of drawing granola-eating visitors that may have ideas for Borderland's future that are different than the people who live here. What irony that the very company that makes that granola is helping us to restore a resource so very important to us.

We've praised the people involved in initiating, financing and developing this valuable project. And it's clear that others are also seeing the benefits in improving walleye spawning habitat on the Rat Root River.



GUEST COLUMN

Once a Weiner, always a Weiner

BY DOUG PATTON

The late-night comedians have not had this much material since Bill Clinton wagged his boney finger at the television cameras and declared, “I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky,” and then sent Hillary out to declare that the whole thing was the work of a “vast right-wing conspiracy.”

With Anthony Weiner now embarrassing even his fellow disgraced New Yorker, Elliot “Love Client #9” Spitzer, the jokes for Leno, Letterman, et al, are practically writing themselves.

There are two schools of disgraced politicians — those who know they are a disgrace and those who don't. None of these people, in either category, particularly seems to care one way or the other, but there is a distinction.

There is the Barney Frank/ Mark Sanford/David Vitter school, wherein said politician simply refuses to resign — even after being caught red-handed. (Clinton, of course, falls squarely into this camp.)

U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-MA, the first openly homosexual member of Congress, was censured by his colleagues for his behavior, which included allowing his boyfriend to run a male prostitution ring out of the congressman's townhouse.

Clinton, of course, was impeached by the House of Representatives — only the second president in history so censured — for lying under oath about his Oval Office trysts with Monica Lewinsky.

The U.S. Senate, however, requiring a two-thirds majority to remove him from office, subsequently refused to do so.

Sanford was serving as

governor of South Carolina at the time of his scandal. A rising star in the Republican Party at the time, he told a whopper about a weekend spent hiking the Appalachian Trail, when in reality, he was in Argentina visiting his mistress. Sanford insisted on finishing his term as governor and saw his marriage disintegrate as he declined to break off the long-range relationship with his paramour.

In 2007, Vitter, a Republican senator from Louisiana, was identified as a client of a prostitution service during the infamous DC Madam scandal. Like Clinton, Frank and Sanford, Vitter thumbed his nose at those who called for him to resign.

Then there is the publicly contrite school, wherein each of these men (let's face it, it's always men) claims to take full responsibility for his actions but never does.

This would include people like former New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevy, former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, and the aforementioned Elliott Spitzer, former governor of New York.

McGreevy was a sleazy Democrat who resigned after admitting he had been having tete-a-tetes with men in rest stops along the New Jersey Interstate.

Gingrich hit the door faster than his enemies could yell “evaporating speaking/ writing/consulting fees” after his peccadillo with his current and third wife while still married to wife #2.

Spitzer resigned after being caught consorting with high priced hookers while allegedly engaged in state business.

And then there is former New York Congressman

Anthony Weiner, who tweeted risque photos of himself to a woman not his wife. As is no doubt the first instinct with all these clowns, Weiner initially tried to go the Clinton/ Sanford/Vitter route and hang in there. It didn't work. The pressure was too great, and he finally resigned from Congress. That was two years ago.

Incredibly, Weiner is back, and he is running for mayor of New York City. Not only that, polls show he stands a very good chance of actually being elected — or he did until it was revealed this week that he had continued for at least six months with the same lewd behavior that got him in trouble in the first place.

At a surreal news conference, with his wife at his side, Weiner brushed the new revelations aside as though they were old news. We'll see. The temptation is to believe that even calloused New Yorkers will see his actions as beyond the pale, but it's not like there isn't precedent for this of type of come-back.

Gingrich has made a fortune writing, consulting and speaking, and actually ran a credible presidential campaign last year. Spitzer is asking voters to elect him New York City Comptroller. Vitter has since been re-elected, and Mark Sanford was returned this year by the voters of South Carolina to the seat in Congress he occupied for a decade before his election as governor.

But Anthony Weiner? Really?

Patton describes himself as a recovering political speechwriter who agrees with himself more often than not. His weekly columns are distributed by Cagle Cartoons newspaper syndicate.

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