

LOCALNEWS

Group to work with county on park, access issues

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

A small group of Birchdale-area residents are expected to work with Koochiching County officials to develop a solution to concerns surrounding the early spring walleye season on the Rainy River.

The idea of forming a group to consider solutions to the concerns grew from a community meeting conducted Monday in Birchdale by the Con-Con Committee.

Koochiching County Land Commissioner Dennis Hummitzsch said the meeting drew about 30 people, many of whom are members of the

Con-Con Committee, as well as other local citizens.

He said details of the working group will be determined in the future.

“I look forward to getting local folks involved and hopefully this works out positively for everyone,” Hummitzsch told The Journal Tuesday.

Hummitzsch said area residents attending Monday’s meeting expressed appreciation to the committee, the five county commissioners and county Land and Forestry Department that attended for listening to their ideas.

A range of opinions about how to solve concerns sur-

rounding the spring walleye season were revealed, Hummitzsch said. The concerns include parking issues, river bank erosion and others.

“Closing the season was one side of the opinion and the need for the economic development (the season brings) so we need to work with it was the other side of the opinion,” Hummitzsch told The Journal Tuesday.

Other ideas suggested included charging a fee for use of the county parks to access the river, or a fee for an extra license or a license sticker, he said.

A concern focused upon during the meeting, he said, was “the idea that the boats

are bigger, motors are bigger and the wake of the big boats is causing more severe erosion than normal.”

Billed as a community meeting on “county parks/landings improvements discussions,” the meeting also raised comments about road maintenance and nuisance beaver concerns involving the “various problems beaver cause and how we can on private lands take care of it.”

Nuisance beavers have caused flooding and timber damage in Koochiching County.

The idea that the money paid to the county by the state on the Con-Con lands should be spent cautiously was also

raised. Hummitzsch said the comment included the idea that the county seek other sources of money to be used for parks and recreation development and maintenance of those parks.

The Con-Con Committee helps guide the spending of money generated from the Consolidated Conservation lands, commonly referred to as Con-Con lands. The lands are state-owned property held in the public trust specifically for conservation purposes. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has the responsibility by law to manage these lands for the public.

Koochiching County re-

ceives money, known as payment-in-lieu-of-taxes, or PILT, from the state for the Con-Con lands within the county, as well as revenue from the sale of timber from the lands. Some of the money generated must be spent within the Con-Con lands, and the county uses some of the money on the county’s parks and water accesses in that area.

Hummitzsch added that another general comment made Monday by local citizens involved questioning the impact of allowing active farm land to be developed into wetlands and placed into wetland conservation easement banking programs.

DISTRICT COURT

The following people have been sentenced for aggravated misdemeanor or felony crimes in Koochiching County District Court. This information is provided to The Journal by court staff.

■ Amber L. Bjork, 19, International Falls, was sentenced Sept. 23 for felony receiving stolen property and felony theft — take, use, transfer movable property without owner consent. On the theft charge, she was given a stay of imposition of sentence and ordered to serve 30 days jail and pay \$275 fine and fees. She was placed on five years supervised probation and ordered to serve 32 hours with the Sentence to Serve program. She was ordered to provide a DNA sample to the state and may not use alcohol or drugs and may not enter places where alcohol is being used or served. She must follow the recommendations of a chemi-

cal dependence test. On the stolen property charge, she was given a stay of imposition of sentence and placed on supervised probation for five years. She was sentenced to 30 days jail and must supply a DNA sample to the state. She was ordered to serve 32 hours with the Sentence to Serve program and may not use alcohol or drugs and may not enter places where alcohol is being used or served. The sentence is to be served consecutive with a previous sentence.

■ Jean C. Clement, 52, Littlefork, was sentenced Sept. 23 for felony financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult — uses/manages or takes property for benefit of someone else. She was given a stay of adjudication and placed on supervised probation for two years. She was ordered to serve 40 hours community work service and pay \$250 fees. She must

complete a fiduciary responsibility course and provide proof of completion.

■ Jack D. Erickson, 23, Baudette, was sentenced Sept. 23 for felony receiving stolen property. He was given an stay of imposition of sentence and placed on supervised probation for five years. He was ordered to serve 30 days jail and pay \$275 fine and fees. He was given credit for 17 days jail served. He was ordered to supply a DNA sample to the state and must submit to random searches and testing.

■ Melissa K. Martel, 44, International Falls, was sentenced Sept. 23 for felony wrongfully obtaining assistance — theft by false statements, concealment, or impersonation. She was given a stay of imposition of sentence and placed on five years supervised probation. She was ordered to pay fine and fees of \$275 and

submit to random testing and searches. She may not act financially for any other person and may not open or maintain checking accounts.

■ Aaron E. Davis, 18, International Falls, was sentenced Sept. 23 for gross misdemeanor introduce contraband — drugs/liquor — into jail/lockup/prison. He was sentenced to six months jail and \$275 fine and fees. The sentence is to be served concurrently with a previous sentence.

■ Dawn J. Loney, 30, International Falls, was sentenced Sept. 23 for gross misdemeanor driving after cancellation posing a threat to public safety. She was placed on two years probation and ordered to pay \$3,475 fine and fees, with \$2,700 stayed on court conditions. She was ordered to serve 24 hours with the Sentence to Serve program and complete a court-ordered program.

EMOTIONAL MOVE IN



STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

Good Samaritan Society-International Falls resident Rose Olson is greeted by staff and volunteers at the new location of the facility on Keenan Drive Tuesday during move-in day. The day brought tears and cheers from residents who, according to Good Samaritan staff, have long been waiting to see the new facility that has been under construction for more than one year.

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