

LOCALNEWS

WSI drastically lower than last year

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

The measure resource managers use to indicate the winter severity on Minnesota’s deer herd is less than half of what it was last year at this time.

The winter severity index, or WSI, for the International Falls area, was 41 Jan. 31, reports Larry Petersen, DNR area wildlife manager.

The WSI was 84 last year on this date, and 45 two years ago.

“This has been a very good winter for them,” he said of local deer.

The average WSI for this date is about 56. Borderland’s harshest winter in the mid 1990s had an index of 109 on this date. The mildest winter in Borderland had at the end of January an index of 20 just three years ago. All the win-

ter severity data dates from 1966 to present.

The drastic changes in winter severity from year to year is pretty typical, and this year’s less severe winter is very welcome, said Petersen.

“In winters, we seem to talk about an average winter, but from a WSI standpoint, we don’t have that very often,” he said. “It’s either quite a bit above average, or in this winter, quite a bit below average. But this year is pretty welcome because we’ve had several pretty severe winters in the last five years.”

The winter severity index is a standardized number the DNR uses when considering impacts of the winter on deer. It is calculated using temperature and snow depth in the period from Nov. 1 through April 30, or whenever winter ends. Every day the daily

“This has been a very good winter for them.”

Larry Petersen
DNR area wildlife manager, on deer



FILE PHOTO

Several deer dine on freshly-laid alfalfa during last year’s severe winter.

MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY
WEB NOTICE ON DRAFT/PROPOSED
AIR EMISSION FACILITY PERMIT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) proposes to issue Air Emission Permit No. 07100002-013, to Boise White Paper LLC for their facility located at 400 2nd Street, International Falls, Koochiching County, Minnesota.

The permit action is the reopening of the Part 70 Operating Permit; therefore, the draft/proposed permit has been placed on public notice. The MPCA is seeking the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) concurrent review of this draft/proposed permit and the EPA’s 45-day review period will begin with the 30-day public review period.

This reopening is to allow Boise Paper to cease operation of the Ambient TRS monitor at their facility.

There are no emission changes associated with this permit action.

The Permittee has submitted a pollution prevention progress report pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 115D.08.

The preliminary determination to issue the air emission permit is tentative. There are four formal procedures for public participation in the MPCA’s consideration of the permit application. Interested persons may (1) submit written comments on the <draft/proposed> permit; (2) request that the MPCA hold a public information meeting; (3) request the MPCA hold a contested case hearing; and/or (4) submit a petition to the Commissioner requesting that the MPCA Citizens’ Board (Board) consider the permit matter.

The decision whether to issue the permit and, if so, under what terms, will be presented to the Board for decision if: (1) the Commissioner grants the petition requesting the matter be presented to the Board; (2) an Board member requests to hear the matter prior to the time the Commissioner makes a final decision on the permit; or (3) a request for a contested case hearing is pending. Otherwise, the Commissioner will make the decision.

Persons who submit comments or petitions to the MPCA must state (1) their interest in the permit application or the draft permit; (2) the action they wish the MPCA to take, including specific references to the section of the draft permit they believe should be changed; and (3) the reasons supporting their position, stated with sufficient specificity as to allow the MPCA to investigate the merits of the position.

As described in Minn. R. 7000.1800, persons who submit requests for a contested case hearing must also state the issues they propose to address in a contested case hearing, the specific relief requested or resolution of the matter, and the reasons (which may be in the form of proposed findings) supporting an MPCA decision to hold a contested case hearing. Failure to comply with these rules exactly may result in a denial of the request. The decision whether to hold a contested case hearing will be made under Minn. R. 7000.1900. Most public libraries throughout the state have copies of the current Minnesota Rules. They are also available on the Internet at www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us.

The public comment period commences February 8, 2015, and terminates March 9, 2015. Comments must be received in writing at the MPCA by 4:30 p.m. on March 9, 2015. Evidence of timely receipt includes a date/time stamp imprinted on the first page of the written comments by the first floor information and reception area of the MPCA or by the Industrial Division support staff, or receipt by fax.

Comments, requests, and petitions should be sent to:
Brady Krueger, Air Quality Permits Section
Industrial Division, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155
Fax - 651-296-8717 – Email - brady.s.krueger@state.mn.us

A copy of the draft/proposed permit will available on the MPCA’s website at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/news/data/index.cfm?PN=1>, or will also be mailed to any interested person upon the MPCA’s receipt of a written request. Additional materials relating to the issuance of this permit are available for inspection by appointment at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul, Minnesota 55155; phone 651-757-2780, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. All MPCA offices may be reached by calling 1-800-657-3864.

DATED: February 4, 2015

Don Smith, P.E., Manager
Air Quality Permits Section
Industrial Division

only controllable thing is hunter harvest.”

This past November, deer harvest was reduced in the state in an effort to help the population rebound from several severe winters, including last year when the WSI hit the threshold that allowed Minnesota Deer Hunters Association to request initiation of the state’s deer feeding program.

That threshold isn’t going to happen this year, said Petersen.

With this year’s mild winter, a lot of deer have not moved to their winter range, he said. “Pretty typically, in these mild winters, some are staying in their summer range,” he said. “Conditions haven’t reached the point of triggering the threshold that tells them ‘I need to go to the winter area,’” he said.

Research has shown that most deer respond to snow depth, which when deep enough triggers them to make a migratory move to their winter range.

The snow depth is around 12-14 inches in the International Falls vicinity.

However, Petersen said individual deer behave differently to snow depth, and further south deer don’t move to winter areas.

Deer naturally put on fat in late summer and fall to store energy for winter and the metabolic rate of deer slows in the winter, keeping them from burning fat at the rate they do in summer.

“They ride out this time and conserve energy,” said Petersen, noting food sources available in winter are less nutritious than that in the summer.

And deer exhibit a “group strategy” that benefits each individual as they share the work load of breaking trail though snow when they congregate in a yarding situation. But that also has pluses and minuses in that food supply can dwindle there, said Petersen.

“Over the long haul, that’s how deer have survived: it’s better to migrate and go to yards,” he said. “Most who survive do so not as stand alone deer, but going to a winter range with particularly good conifer cover.”

Conifers, or trees with needles, catch snow from dropping to the ground, creating an area below the tree with less snow on the ground. “They don’t have to wade through snow and burn energy by foraging,” he said. “That, along with sharing breaking trail, benefits that energy budget.”

And while this winter has been mild, some deer may still die if the winter goes into April, when the metabolic rate begins to increase and fawns are growing inside does.

“Their energy demand is increasing and there may be no fat left and when they burn fat they also burn muscle and then you see skinny deer and weaker deer,” he said.

The senses of a deer also assist its survival in the winter, he said. “They learn when they need to run and don’t need to run — when the best strategy is to hide or freeze and conserve energy and hope the predator doesn’t notice them.”

Road rage? What to do if it happens to you

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Road rage in a small, rural community with few multiple lanes of traffic?

Say it ain’t so.

But one local woman was so upset by a traffic incident Jan. 28 she visited International Falls Police Capt. Tom Lynch and called The Journal in an effort to make others aware it can happen here and what to do if it does happen.

“We all make mistakes driving, and we all get angry at others who cut us off or do stupid things, but how we control ourselves and our actions can make a difference of life and death,” she told The Journal.

The woman, who asked not to be identified out of concern of being targeted, said she drove her vehicle onto Highway 11 in front of an oncoming vehicle, not realizing she didn’t have

time to speed up enough to not cause the other driver to slow behind her.

“Admittedly, I was on the phone talking to a friend and was probably a little distracted,” she said. But the car passed her with the driver honking its horn. She said she indicated she was sorry, but the driver of the other vehicle may not have known that. Then the driver slowed down in front of the woman. When she attempted to pass, the driver sped up, matching speed and braking attempts, so the woman could not get back into the proper lane.

“Wanting to safely get out of the oncoming lane, I decided to turn left into a driveway on the north side of the highway, thinking she would just go on her angry way and leave me alone,” she said. Instead, the other driver “went from angry to out-of-control,” turned the vehicle around and at one

point the two vehicles were facing one another in the same lane.

When the woman stopped, the angry driver stopped next to her vehicle and yelled at the woman about using her phone while driving. The driver followed the woman to her destination and continued to yell at her as she removed her child from its car seat and finally drove off.

The concerned woman and Lynch said they agree this was an isolated incident, but she said she wanted others to know what to do if it happened to them.

Call 911 if you have a phone and drive to a public place or the Koochiching County Law Enforcement Center, Lynch said.

“Don’t ever pull over,” he said. “Having a conversation is not the right thing to do. This person is having anger issues and you don’t need to engage them.”

And, he cautioned, never make any kind of hand gestures at any driver, but especially one who seems to be angry at the way you are driving.

“That’s like trying to put out a fire with gasoline,” he said. “Don’t egg them on.”

Finally, he said if someone is driving closely behind in an aggressive way that feels unsafe, get the license plate number and contact law enforcement.

“We would absolutely follow up,” he said.

In the recent case, however, the woman said she was so upset she simply forgot what to do and did not get a license number or call 911 while the incident was occurring.

“There were definitely some things I should have done differently, apart from pulling out in front of her, that would have been much safer for me and my family,” she told The Journal.

But at the same time, the woman said the driver could have “given her the finger” to indicate her annoyance and moved on.

She encouraged all drivers to control their emotions.

BEEN TOLD THERE IS
NO HOPE?

You may have been told the there is no help available to deal with your or a loved one’s hearing loss. The hearing aid technology that is currently available can help many people that could not get help in the past. It may be time to get a fresh look at what is now available to help you hear better.

We offer you professional service, ethical business practices and quality digital hearing instruments at reasonable prices.

We strive to provide all people with the means to improve communication. Call today to find out more about our commitment to provide quality instruments and superb service.

Our clinic dates are as follows:

Thursdays, January 22 & 29
Thursdays, February 5, 12, 19 & 26

RENAISSANCE
HEARING CENTERS

Rainy Lake Medical Center
1-800-414-5854