

FORUM

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That focus brought more presentations this year and the event has been lengthened to accommodate them, said Todd Sellers, executive director of the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation, a leader among the organizers.

When the International Joint Commission in 2000 revised the rule curve that sets levels on Rainy Lake and Namakan Reservoir, it scheduled a review of the effects of the change for 2015. As a result, a variety of studies intended to measure the effects of the rule curve change were set in motion. The forum featured 14 of those studies presented in the special focus session.

Gail Faveri, Canadian chair of the water levels committee of the International Rainy — Lake of the Woods Watershed Board, presented information to a packed RRCC theater considering the goals and performance of the 2000 rule curves Wednesday afternoon. The committee monitors the levels of Rainy and Namakan lakes and at times directs dam operators to go out of the curve range. Rule curves tell dam keepers how much water to release given the time of year, or conditions, to keep the levels within the curve to benefit the most people and the most interests, Faveri said.

Her talk included a comparison of the 1970 rule curves to the 2000 curves, concluding:

■ Since 2000, high or low inflows have seen water levels violate the rule curve 12 times on Rainy Lake and nine times on the Namakan chain of lakes.

■ If the 1970 rule curves had been followed the number of violations would have been the same during extremely high inflows and worse during extremely low inflows.

■ When inflows are not extreme, the rule curves are meeting their objective, particularly during dry conditions.

Ryan Maki is leading the coordination of all the studies and works as an aquatic ecologist for Voyageurs National Park. Maki contributed to several projects and presentations, and served as emcee for some of the event.

Falls High class of 1972 graduate Jeffrey Kantor, who owns a Rainy Lake summer residence, presented an abstract, “Model Predictive Control Strategies for Implementing Rule Curves for the Namakan Reservoir/Rainy Lake Watershed.”

Kantor is a professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering at the University of Notre Dame.

“It’s just natural for a guy like me to be interested in the science and engineering that’s behind the lake, especially with flooding last summer, it just seemed like something of interest and maybe I could help out a little bit,” he said.

Kantor said he was impressed by the attendance at the forum and interest in the watershed.

“It’s a strongly interdisciplinary group which makes it interesting,” he said.

The watershed is made up of near wilderness areas, as around Rainy Lake, as well as populated areas, such as Winnipeg, Kantor said.

“All these issues come to play: Do we regard lake level management a curse and return things to a wilderness state, or is it a blessing if your property and business is affected by that,” Kantor said. “We’re also at a boundary when it comes to the impact of climate change and all these things. What’s the future of Rainy Lake and this area? It’s going to depend on these water resources.”

Mike Williams serves on the IJC’s industry advisory group.

“I am here listening and

learning,” Williams said. “Some of the stuff is a little over my head, but interesting.”

The forum presents trends about the watershed — “some positive, some negative, but it looks like we’re moving in the right direction again,” Williams said. “It’s critical we learn about things and keep going in the right direction. I wish more people could experience this.”

Koochiching County Commissioner Rob Ecklund attended representing the county board and said factors that influence changes in the huge 14,300 square miles of watershed need to be better understood.

“After the last year of the flood, I am trying to understand more about what the impact of the entire watershed means to us, to future development, future livability,” Ecklund said. “Everything that comes through International Falls ends up in Lake of the Woods.”

He said understanding the interconnectedness of the communities in the watershed helped him lobby for support in Washington D.C. recently for sewer projects east of International Falls that will benefit areas to the west, and represented by federal lawmakers who do not represent the Falls area.

Pam Tomevi, district coordinator for the Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District, works with the watershed restoration plan directed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to monitor the health of the watershed and discuss with the public future projects. A poster presentation at the forum explains the Littlefork and Bigfork rivers public engagement process.

She said it’s also a great place to network with scientists, and has evolved to include different levels of leadership and partners “to move things from ‘here’s what we know’ to ‘here’s what we maybe can do on both sides of the border.’”

on either side of the crossing, warning drivers to stop when a train is present.

Variances in the speeds of trains moving through the crossing has resulted in further calibration of the arms, Gautreaux said. Also, if trains stop at the nearby depot, she said the arms will be triggered even though

there isn’t a train blocking the crossing.

The city of Ranier is working with Koochiching County, the Federal Railroad Administration and CN to implement the quiet zone for the crossing, Gautreaux said, which will eliminate many of the instances of train horns blowing.

hold water in high water events.”

Current rules are, in the 80-percent counties, “killing economic development and killing counties as the costs rise,” Dill said.

Dill noted Hennepin Coun-

ty retains less than half of one percent of its presettlement wetlands.

“You folks have destroyed all your wetlands and are looking to us to save your bacon,” he said of counties with few wetland acres left.

TRAFFIC

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Gautreaux said the crossing arms installed at the crossing are still being calibrated, and aren’t working as they should. In the meantime, stop signs have been put up on barricades

WETLAND

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■ Continuing at at our current rate, it will take 3,889 years to impact 1 percent of the county’s wetlands.

■ Even if the impact went up to 50 acres per year, (14 times what it is now), it would take 280 years to impact 1 percent.

■ Christopher Columbus wouldn’t have to work as fast as Paul Revere. He would have only had to fill in 27 acres per year. He’d be 564 years old today.

“Impacting even 1 percent of Koochiching County’s wetlands is beyond comprehension,” Olson wrote to Dill. “It’s literally impossible.”

Current rules call for wetlands to be mitigated in the county where it has been disturbed.

Dill said the bill calls for the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources to delineate areas of high priority for the creation of wetlands in the state. When someone proposes a project, an application process would site a wetland in a watershed where it would have the most value — not in the Rainy Lake-Lake of the Woods watershed, where Dill said there is no place to create new wetlands because so many presettlement wetlands still exist.

Wetlands could be created to mitigate loss in the counties with vast amounts in places like the Red River Valley, “where we’re spending hundreds of millions of bonding money to create containment to mitigate flooding,” Dill said. “One option is to build functional wetlands there to benefit the public that would store and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The Kallemeyn Award recipient, Ken Beaty at right, is pictured with previous recipients, from the left, Darryl McLeod, Nolan Baratonno, Larry Kallemeyn, Andrew Paterson, Lee Grim and Tom Mosindy.

Foundation awards presented

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

A regular feature of the International Rainy — Lake of the Woods Watershed Forum is the presentation of two awards.

The Kallemeyn Award was presented Wednesday by the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation to Ken Beaty, Fisheries and Oceans, retired, in recognition of his contributions to research and resource management in the Rainy-Lake of the Woods basin:

■ As a hydrologist at the Experimental Lakes Area from 1969 until 2012, in monitoring, recording and analyzing a broad range of hydrological and meteorological parameters in small streams, lakes and their drainage basins, many lying within the greater Lake of the Woods watershed.

■ In creating a database of likely unequaled scope and duration on the hydrology of headwater and near headwater Precambrian Shield ecosystems, through detailed, year-round observations and sampling for more than 40 years in the Rawson Lake calibrated watershed—amassing detailed records of precipitation, snow cover and water content, stream flows, lake levels, evaporation, flushing rates, groundwater movement, and other hydro-meteorological parameters that will be valuable to current studies of contaminate loading and future studies of climate change effects on lakes.

The Kallemeyn Award recognizes outstanding professional achievement in scientific research or resource management in the Lake of the Woods and Rainy River basins. This award is named in honor



The Wilson Award was presented to Phyllis and Dale Callaghan, at left, pictured with Kelli Saunders, of the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation, the organizer of the forum.

of its first recipient, Larry Kallemeyn, U.S. Geological Survey, retired. Throughout his career, Kallemeyn made significant contributions to scientific understanding and resource management in the basin.

The Wilson Stewardship Award was presented by the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation to Dale and Phyllis Callaghan in recognition of their contributions and works:

■ Leading to the formation of the Rainy Lake Conservancy.

■ In establishing conservation reserves for crown islands on Rainy Lake and Land Trust mechanisms for protecting private islands.

■ Helping to preserve most of Goose Island as a nature reserve, in partnership with the Nature Conservancies of Canada and the USA.

■ In working with the NCC, the government of Canada and other local partners to adopt the NCC Lake of the Woods Rainy Lake Natural Areas Conservation Plan.

■ In spearheading the completion of the first comprehensive biological

inventory of the Canadian portion of Rainy Lake.

■ In establishing cross-border conservation easements and mechanisms to permit Canadians and Americans with Canadian property to protect their properties as conservation easements.

The Wilson Stewardship Award recognizes outstanding achievements of individuals, groups, or projects that are making a significant contribution to environmental stewardship and sustainability of the Rainy-Lake of the Woods watershed ecosystem, through education, outreach, civic engagement and participation in stewardship initiatives or program development and projects or programs focused on protection, restoration, preservation or reduction of environmental impact and development of sustainable practices.

This award is named in honor of its first recipient, Gerry Wilson, in recognition of her contributions to lake stewardship during her 16 years as the former executive director of the Lake of the Woods District Property Owners Association.

There's a little HERO in all of us!



Watch for THE FLOCK around town!

Bust out your SUPERPOWER and donate this March!

As part of the Minnesota FoodShare Campaign, Border State Bank will be a drop point for this community-wide effort. Like years past, we will match up to \$1,000.00 of funds donated!

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