

Resort recovery
Lodge owners fight to save docks

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High water causes VNP to refund reservations

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2014 FLOOD:



Even in the pouring rain, dozens of volunteers gathered at City Beach in Ranier Sunday to help fill sandbags to distribute to area residences and businesses in need as levels of area lakes and rivers continue to rise.

STAFF PHOTO BY EMILY GEDDE

One for the history books

BY EMILY GEDDE
AND LAUREL BEAGER
Staff Writers

For the first time in 85 years, the level of Rainy River is as high as its ever been – surpassing the level of the historic 1950 flood.

And the levels of area lakes and possibly the river are expected to go higher, even without the rain predicted for the weekend.

Lee Grim, local member of

the International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Board of Control, met with local, state and federal officials Tuesday to discuss the rapidly-rising water levels.

He predicted the level of Rainy Lake will rise another foot from where it's at now, based on inflow and outflows.

"Mother Nature is doing her thing," Grim said, adding the Littlefork and Bigfork river watersheds received more than 15 inches of rain in the last month.

And, he told the group, the lake may take two weeks to peak and then two and a half

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weeks to get to the top of the International Joint Commission rule curve.

He said members of the IJC and their staff will be in the community Wednesday to assess the damage.

The flood is drawing a lot of attention from the media as well as state and federal representatives. Congressman Rick Nolan toured the flood damage

Monday, and Gov. Mark Dayton, state Sen. David Dill and staff from the offices of U.S. Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken attended briefings by the Koochiching County Board and its staff Tuesday.

Rising waters

The river at Manitou Rapids, just downstream from Loman, stood at 21.43 feet and rising on Sunday evening, up more than 6 feet in the past four days. The previous record was 21.04 feet, set in 1950.

The water is about 3-feet above Highway 11 west at Lo-

man, reeking havoc on nearby homes and other buildings. At least one family abandoned its home near Pelland Junction and on Tuesday, a resident told Sheriff Brian Jespersen another residence has been abandoned in the area due to flooding.

Helping out

All the while, volunteers have been working almost around the clock to fill sandbags and stack them as needed to save homes and businesses.

Historic Flood to A7 ►

Getting attention: State, federal officials pledge support

Dayton, Nolan tour flooding

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Gov. Mark Dayton snapped photos of flooding at Loman and shook the hands of many volunteers at City Beach as he toured the area Wednesday.

Many people thanked Dayton for his concern and asked about state assistance.

The Koochiching County Board Tuesday declared a state of emergency, the first step toward seeking state and federal assistance for public and possibly private property.

"Glad I could be here," Dayton told Liz Forsythe as she thanked Dayton for visiting the volunteers filling sandbags at City Beach.

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She was one of hundreds of volunteers that have come to help since Thursday.

Dayton then thanked her for her efforts.

"All we can do is our part," she told the governor. "Our community is great for that — help your neighbor. And here we are."

Dayton sat in the cab of a pickup truck as it traveled west on the flooded and closed portion of Highway 11 at Loman, as water nipped at the bumper. He tried to bolster the spirits of volunteers that had quickly sandbagged around the Loman Fire Department. Bert Bergdahl posed for a photo with the governor, with others noting the historic significance of the photo.

Dayton was guided in the tour by Sen. David Dill, International



STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Gov. Mark Dayton takes a break from touring areas impacted by the flood to snap a photo of rising waters in Loman.

al Falls Mayor Bob Anderson, county Board Chairman Rob Ecklund and county Engineer Joe Sutherland.

At Loman, Assistant Fire Chief Shelton Zook said people have

been working around the clock trying to save the department's building.

"We're usually pretty well under the state's radar," he said. "It's nice to get noticed, I guess."

Zook said the larger community turned out to help, and so much food was brought the Red Cross turned around and left, he said laughing.

"It's incredible the amount of volunteers we had," he said watching as the governor looked at the flooded highway and asked how people in the area were doing. "It's unbelievable. All told we probably had hundreds of people here. We're doing OK now, and I hope it lasts."

Zook said the department has spent lots of money saving the department's building and he said having the governor visit brings attention to the needs of the area.

"It's a big day for the department," he said noting the volunteer department handles calls about 20-miles on each side of Loman.

Zook was already wondering

Support to A7 ►

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