LOCALNEWS

Restoration of Second Creek could be pushed by RECAP

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Community officials are expected to continue to review concerns and issues regarding the potential development on County Highway 155 of the Renewable Energy Clean Air Project facility.

Koochiching County commissioners last week heard questions from members of the public about a buffer zone that is to be established between Second Creek and the facility, as well as concerns about Second Creek.

The issues are also part of discussions between the county and International Falls officials about the annexation by the city of the County Highway 155 property known as the multimodal district.

David Stavseth and Jeff Oveson, who live in the area, told the county board last week that they are concerned about developing the RECAP facility on the site because of the amount of garbage expected to be brought to the facility.

RECAP would use a plasma arc torch to gasify garbage and other biowaste and create energy and other biproducts.

Commissioners said that in addition to the multimodal district, sites near the county's transfer site on Highway 11-71 and on Highway 332 are being considered for the RECAP facility.

An environmental permitting assessment for the project is expected to take place in the near future when the three proposed sites for the facility will be evaluated through a public process, noted county officials.

Meanwhile, others have voiced concern about the need to protect and improve Second Creek, which is located near the west border of the district.

Commissioners said a restoration plan for Second Creek is expected to be a part of the discussions about the district.

Doug Grindall, who lives on the shore of Second Creek, said the creek has degraded over the years from what was once a healthy northern pike spawning area. He said when he first moved there in 1958, children regularly swam there, he caught trophy-size pike, and people remember a gravel creek bottom. He said the gravel is no longer there and now he attempts to keep dogs from swimming there because of the smell. He said in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the former city of South Falls dumped its sewage in the creek when northern pike were spawning.

"You don't see northern spawning there today," he said.

STAFF PHOTO BY LAUREL BEAGER

Sunlight sparkles off the water in Second Creek Tuesday. An effort to improve northern pike spawning habitat in the creek east of International Falls is in the discussion stages among local city, county and resource officials.

Kevin Peterson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources fisheries supervisor, said a plan to restore Second Creek is in the early discussion stages. He said he has had conversations with interested parties and people that live near or along Second Creek about what they perceive as a loss of habitat or decline in pike spawning activity over the years.

"We're just now starting to identify the problems," he said.

The good news, said Peterson, is there is money available for improving and protecting habitat from a variety of sources if water quality has been impacted in the past.

But he said a champion for the cause may be needed. He pointed to the efforts of Julian Brzoznowski in rallying interested people and funding sources to restore trout streams near Orr. That project received funding from the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, formed to oversee the distribution of dollars generated by the Legacy Amendment.

"Often, what it takes to really get a project going is to have a local spark plug — someone willing to champion the idea, to find partners and put together a little coalition sometimes," said Peterson. He said the trout restoration would not have occurred without Brzoznowski's "steady and persistent knocking on doors, making phone calls, and pulling all the players together to make it happen. I've seen it time and again and what it takes is that local champion."

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New dock coming to Ranier

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

RANIER- The Ranier City Council Monday carried a motion to hold off on removing or replacing the dock on County Road 21 until the Koochiching County Board decides what the county wants to do about the dock.

Ranier has to wait to see if the county will contribute any money towards removing the dock because there isn't any money available for Ranier to tackle the project on its own, City Clerk Kim Nuthak said.

Ranier is seeking a 50/50 split on the costs of removing the dock, which sits on property owned by Terry Woods and Tony Cole, because when ownership of the dock was given to Ranier from the county, officials may have been aware it sat on private property, Nuthak said. Cole is a member of the Ranier City Council.

"They gave us that dock, and I don't know if they knew it was on private property, but they speculated it," Nuthak said. "So now that it's dilapidated, I'd hope they'd help us."

The important thing about the dock is that regardless of who owns it, it should be maintained, Mayor Dennis Wagner said.

"If you're not going to take care of something, then don't own it," he said.

The official motion, proposed by Councilor Todd Coulombe, said if the county agrees to a 50/50 split on the costs of removing and building a new dock, Ranier will go ahead and solicit bids to build the new dock to DNR specifications.

The county board met Tuesday and discussed the issue of the dock on County Road 21. County survey technician Matt Gouin reported the details of the survey he conducted on the dock. He confirmed part of the dock lies on private property, and a new dock would have to be located east of the current location, because a culvert lies west of the current location, he said.

"The owners want it removed, it's there by virtue of the county requiring it to be there way back when, so it's our responsibility," Koochiching County Commissioner Wade Pavleck said.

In response to the city of Ranier's request the county pay for part of the removal of the old dock and construction of a new one, the board carried a motion funding $6,000 or 50 percent of the $12,000 approved bid for a new dock. The approved bid was submitted by Carl Brown, who said he's built hundreds of docks in the area over the years.

In new business,Wagner said he spoke with Gary Olson about building a fire pit at the skating rink, in order to have fires and other activities once the weather starts cooling off more. Olson would build the four-foot diameter pit free of charge to the city, Wagner said.

"I thought it would be nice, if we had Ranier Daze we could have open-pit barbecue, marshmallows and stuff like that," he said. "It's a cute little deal, the kids would love it."

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.

■ Jonathan D. Cooper, 37, Fort Frances, was sentenced Sept. 9 for gross misdemeanor driving while intoxicated. He was sentenced to 10 days jail and $4,125 fine and fees. All but $1,625 was stayed on court conditions and he was placed on two years supervised probation. He was ordered to submit to random testing and may not use alcohol or drugs. He was ordered to serve 40 hours with the Sentence to Serve program.

■ Jacob J. Hanson, 25, Blackduck, was sentenced July 9 for gross misdemeanor driving while intoxicated. He was sentenced to one year jail and fine and fees of $4,195. All but 30 days jail and $2,195 was stayed on court conditions and he was placed on three years supervised probation. He may not use alcohol or drugs and may not enter bars or liquor stores. He was ordered to follow the recommendations of a chemical assessment and submit to random testing.

■ Jeffrey A. Raboin, 28, International Falls, was sentenced Sept. 9 for gross misdemeanor purchase, sell, barter, furnish or give liquor to someone less than age 21. He was sentenced to nine months local confinement.

■ Charlie D. Little, 38, Littlefork, was sentenced July 10 for gross misdemeanor game and fish violation — unlawful transport of wild animals. He was sentenced to one year jail and $3,650 fine and fees. The jail time and all but $700 was stayed on court conditions and he was placed on three years supervised probation. He was ordered not to hunt with firearms or deer hunt with a bow, but may trap.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

Koochiching County
SAP 036-598-029 (CR 71) Bridge replacement
BIDS CLOSE **Wednesday, October 2, 2013 at 2:00 pm, local time**

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS: Sealed proposals will be received by the Board of County Commissioners of Koochiching County, Int'l. Falls, Minnesota until **2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 2, 2013** at the office of the County Auditor/Treasurer in the Koochiching County Courthouse 715 4th Street Int'l. Falls, Minnesota 56649 at which time they will be opened and read publicly for the following:

Project Designation: SAP 036-598-029 (CR 71) Bridge replacement and grading on CR 71

Project Location: On CR 71, appx. 0.8 miles east of TH 65, appx. 6.75 miles south of Littlefork. Total Length – 0.04 miles, incl. bridge approach work

Major Project Quantities include:
- removal of existing timber bridge (appx. 22' long), Existing Bridge No. 93477
- 64 lin. Ft. of 10 ft. x 7 ft. precast concrete box culvert (2 lines x 32 ft. long = 64 ft., excluding aprons)
- appx. 681 CY of Common Excavation
- appx. 287 CU YD of Common Borrow
- appx. 386 tons of Aggregate Base Class 5

Project Start Date: No later than **October 21, 2013**

Project Completion Date: Within 10 working days of start date, and no later than **November 1, 2013**

Proposals, Plans and Specifications are available at:
Koochiching County Highway Department
715 4th Street
Int'l. Falls, MN 56449

Cost for Plans: Cost of one set of plans and proposals is $75 (Minnesota State Sales Tax Included). There is no cost for electronic plans and specs, they are at https://egram.co.koochiching.mn.us or phone (218) 283-1186 or email to joseph.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us.

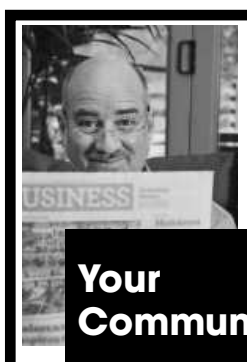
Bidder's Bond: Bids must be accompanied by a certified check or bidder's bond made payable to the Treasurer of Koochiching County in an amount not less than 5% of the total bid.

Bid shall be plainly marked on the exterior of the containing envelope: **"2013 Box Culvert, Letting Date, October 2, 2013".**

The County Board reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive irregularities and informalities therein, and to award the contract in the best interests of Koochiching County.

Dated at International Falls, Minnesota .....**September 3, 2013.**

Joe Sutherland, Koochiching County Highway Engineer
Phone: 218-283-1186
Email: joe.sutherland@co.koochiching.mn.us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