LOCALNEWS

Proposal by sled

A special trail toward marriage

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Nathan Morgan proposes to Jill Ostertag on the Bill Morgan Memorial Trail Feb. 21. Bill Morgan was Nathan's grandfather, who died while grooming the Ash River Trail in 1996.

When Nathan Morgan decided after 15 years to propose to Jill Ostertag, it had to be done in the right place and the right time.

That place was the Bill Morgan Memorial Trail and the time was Feb. 21.

Nathan's grandfather was Bill Morgan, who died Dec. 22, 1996, when the groomer he was operating broke through the ice on Ash River. The trail, which runs along the Ash River Trail, was dedicated in his memory.

"He wanted his grandpa to be a part of it," said Nathan's mom, Kandy Morgan.

The proposal was an absolute surprise to Ostertag, who is expecting the couple's second child, said Kandy, who is married to Nathan's father Mark.

Not much of a snowmobiler, Ostertag agreed to go out on a family ride to see the trail that bears the name of Nathan's grandfather.

"She's a sport for Nate," Kandy said.

The night before, Kandy and Mark Morgan, and Nathan's sister, Nicole Buchan and husband Ben, rode the trail to decorate the spot where Nathan would propose the next day. They told Jill they wanted to make sure the trail was OK for a pregnant rider.

Then Saturday morning, they all headed out for a ride. Once at the trail sign, they stopped under the guise of getting some family pictures with the sign.

But when Nathan called Ostertag over to the sign and dropped to one knee, Ostertag knew something was up, Kandy said.

Nathan asked the mother of his 4-year-old daughter, Mackenzie Morgan, to marry him and Ostertag said yes.

Kandy said Nathan asked his father to carry the engagement ring in his pocket on the ride to Kabetogama and to give it to him that Saturday morning.

"I'll cry about this for years," Kandy said. "You've heard about proposals, but this is really kind of a rare one."

The couple, and Kandy and Mark Morgan, live in Cambridge.

"We're just so very proud of him thinking of his grandfather," an emotional Kandy Morgan told The Journal. "Bill was a very, very, very important part of Nathan's life."

Kandy Morgan said the family thinks highly of the larger Borderland community and was happy they could be in the area for such an important event in their lives.

"We want to honor, respect and thank the community for not only the trail, but for everything they do," she said. "It really means a lot to us."

Two planned cell towers would add coverage

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Two proposals for cell towers in Koochiching County are the latest of several to add cell phone coverage in Borderland.

The Koochiching County Planning and Zoning Commission is scheduled to conduct public hearings Thursday on two separate applications by Martin Consulting LLC on behalf of Verizon Wireless for conditional use permits to construct 134-foot monopole cell towers.

A hearing will take public comment at 7:05 p.m. on a proposal to erect one tower on property just south of Menards and about 500 feet west of County Road 106. At 7:25 p.m., another hearing will take input on a proposal to erect a tower south of and adjacent to Highway 11 East, just west of a gravel road into a Bowman Construction Co. rock quarry.

The two 134-feet tall monopole cell towers require a smaller area because they are monopole structures with only "one foot" and low enough that they do not require being marked with flashing lights, said Dale Olson, county Environmental Services director.

All towers must meet the requirements of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Federal Aviation Administration and local zoning, Olson said. The act does not allow local jurisdictions to prohibit the placement of communication towers, but allows them to regulate how and where the towers are placed as long as the overall impact is not to preclude wireless services.

Many jurisdictions have established ordinances prescribing how cell towers may be built and sited.

Koochiching County does not have a separate tower ordinance, Olson said. Instead, the county zoning ordinance requires a conditional use permit, which puts in motion a process that begins with a company proposing a location and seeking a conditional use permit from the county.

"There are a lot of eyes in the process," Olson said.

The permit application is decided by the Planning and Zoning Commission with a recommendation to the county board, which makes a final decision on the permit.

The company seeking the permit must notify, and get approval from, the Federal Aviation Administration, which considers the proposed tower height and its location near an airport.

Olson said the FAA considers not just whether a plane might hit the tower, but whether the flight pattern takes it near enough to the tower, which could interfere with the plane's navigation systems.

In addition, Olson said the local airport commission may also review the application, but generally goes along with the FAA determination.

The FAA requires towers 200-feet or higher to be marked, usually with a light.

Very rarely are environmental impact assessments required for cell towers, Olson said.

Concerns Olson has heard voiced about proposed towers involve the impact on migratory birds and property values and a perceived risk of cancer.

Most scientists agree cell phone antennas or towers are unlikely to cause cancer, according to the American Cancer Society.

Where the issue gets complicated, is the federal government's requirement companies provide service to everyone possible, when few people want a tower near them, Olson said. The requirement does not allow local governments to reject the proposals without good reason.

The act prohibits denying a tower based on health concerns, provided it meets FAA regulations and guidelines and then it is presumed safe.

"Nobody wants a tower in their neighborhood, unless it's on their property and they receive the financial benefit," Olson said. "Consultants find the sites based on the needs of the company. Depending on the terrain and other factors signals may only carry a few miles, resulting in the need for more towers."

5K for Relay—Run/Walk

Saturday, May 2, 2015

Rainy River Community College 1501 Highway 71 International Falls, MN 56649

8:00 AM Registration 9:30 AM Race time

The race begins and ends at the college.

T-Shirt Size: (No guarantee of a T-shirt if registered after April 11th, 2015)

Adult sizes: _____ XS _____S _____M _____L _____XL _____XXL

ALL PROCEEDS FROM THIS EVENT GO DIRECTLY TO RELAY FOR LIFE!!

Registration Form

Please print clearly! One form per participant.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Zip _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Sex _____ F _____M Age on race day _____

***Before April 12th*, 2015: $20 check payable to: ACS/American Cancer Society.**

***On or after April 12th*: $25 check payable to: ACS/American Cancer Society.**

Mail this form and your check to: Jill Christie 5K for RFL, 101 2nd St, International Falls, MN 56649

Please read and sign: I am entering this event at my own risk and assume all risk and responsibility for injuries I may incur as a direct or indirect result of my participating in this event. I, for myself, heirs and executors, also agree not to hold any and all participating sponsors and supporters and the directors, employees and agents of such parties responsible for any claims. I verify that I have full knowledge of the risks involved in this event. I am aware that extreme and/or severe weather conditions may exist at the time of this event and that I am physically fit and sufficiently trained to participate in it.

Signature _____ **Date** _____