

LOCALNEWS

Active Streets to return next summer

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

International Falls residents who took to the streets to get active this summer can rest assured the program will return next year.

The Active Streets program wrapped up for the summer after another successful session on Wednesday, said Nancy Lee, public health supervisor at Koochiching County's Public Health and Human Services Department and chair of the organizing committee.

The program is a project of the Koochiching County Public Health and Human Services Department and Healthy Northland, and is made possible through support from the State-wide Health Improvement Program of the Minnesota Department of Health. Additional funding has been provided by the Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota.

Other cities in the SHIP region held Active Streets nights this summer, Lee said, but International Falls was the only one to offer the event on multiple nights. Active Streets nights in the Falls occurred once a month in June, July and August.

Active Streets was held more than once this summer in order to offer something different every time, as well as reinforce the idea

of everyday activity, Lee said.

"My thought is we want people to understand it's not just about being active on a nice day, they should do it in their daily life," Lee said.

Various groups combined to offer a wide variety of activities, Lee said, including street hockey, an obstacle course, hopscotch, yoga, and more.

"There was a little different look at each event," Lee said. "We did it more than once, so people could build on it each time."

Everyday activity doesn't have to just be running, biking, or walking, Lee said. It can include things like gardening or mowing, or anything that gets you off the couch and outside.

"It was really enlightening, and I hope people got the idea walking or biking isn't the only activity they can do," Lee said. "There's so much to do to get us moving and active, anything where you're moving is exercise."

The feedback from attendees throughout the summer was overwhelmingly positive, Lee said, and provided them with a few tweaks they'll incorporate into next year's events.

"We want to have it in people's minds that activity is for everyone," Lee said. "We did see a lot of families with young kids, and we want people to be aware that it isn't just a time for



STAFF PHOTOS BY EMILY GEDDE

Paul Harder plays street hockey during Wednesday's Active Streets event.



At left, Betsy Ward helps Mackenzie Sheasby make a hat out of a paper bag. Nancy Lee, public health supervisor at Koochiching County's Public Health and Human Services Department and chair of the Active Streets organizing committee, said being active isn't just about running, walking or biking, it can be everyday activities, too.

County board discusses aid program

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

Minnesota may share a 547-mile international border with Canada, but a recent aid program passed by the state legislature is focusing on aliens of the aquatic, non-human, variety.

The Koochiching County Board Tuesday in a committee of the whole session discussed how to properly use funds to create an aquatic invasive species prevention program.

County Administrator Teresa Briggs said the deadline to create a program is December, so the board Tuesday came to an agreement to put a committee together to come up with a plan of attack. Representatives from the county environmental services and land and forestry departments, as well as Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District employees were present for the brainstorming session, she said.

According to H.F. 3167 passed during the previous legislative session, a county must use the AIS prevention aid to prevent the introduction or limit the spread of AIS at all access sites within the county. There are 29 public water accesses in northern Koochiching County, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Briggs said one of the points of the discussion was coming up with a use for the

money that's worthwhile, and determining if there's the resources available to cover enough of the water accesses in the county to make a difference. There was also a focus on education, she said, but that has its limitations as well.

"We can educate local people, but if people come in from out of town, what are you going to do about them?" Briggs said.

The law suggests using the aid to provide for site-level management, county-wide awareness, and other procedures the county finds necessary to achieve compliance.

Another issue brought up was the sharing of international waters with Canada, Briggs said.

"We can do all we can, but if others aren't doing it, you're just spinning your wheels," Briggs said. "The talk about it can't just be in one entity, it has to be collaborative."

According to information from the Association of Minnesota Counties, Koochiching County will receive \$48,963 in AIS prevention aid in 2014, and \$108,805 in 2015.

One thing all parties involved in the discussion agreed on, Briggs said, was the importance of preserving area waters.

"We want to make an effort to do something," Briggs said. "No one wants the lakes infested."

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4:00 pm Flood Volunteer Appreciation
6:00 pm Boat Parade
6:30 pm Flood Volunteer Appreciation Program
7:30 pm Casting Call
10:00 pm Jam Session by Local Artists
Friday, August 22nd
10:00 am Arts & Crafts Festival Flea Market
11:00 am Concessions Open
11:00 am Rad Zoo
11:00 am Fun Zone Opens
12:00 pm Fun Zone Blow-Up
12:00 pm Tractor Rides
12:00 pm Beer Gardens open
1:00 pm Kids Games, Old Fashion Races & Fun Zone
1:30 pm Rad Zoo
4:00 pm Weigh-Ins
6:00 pm Lawn Mower Drag Racing

Saturday, August 23rd
8:00 am Kids Fishing Tournament
8:00 am Classic Car/Motorcycle Show Registration
9:00 am 5 K Race
9:00 am Fastpitch Tournament
10:00 am Arts & Crafts Festival Flea Market
10:00 am Classic Car/Motorcycle Show
10:00 am Disc Golf
11:00 am Concessions Open
11:00 am Family Fun Zone opens
12:00 pm Beer Gardens open
12:00 pm Tractor Rides
12:00 pm Go Cart Races
12:00 pm Jam Session by Local Artists
12:30 pm Kids Games, Old Fashion Races & Fun Zone
3:30 pm Car/Motorcycle Show Awards – drive thru
4:00 pm Weigh-ins
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