

DNR aim is satisfied deer hunters, healthy deer herd

DNR STAFF REPORT

As a long-time Minnesota hunter and wildlife manager, Paul Telander has witnessed the ups and downs of Minnesota's deer population. As a hunter, he remembers when the season was closed in 1971 because deer numbers were precariously low. As a wildlife manager in northwestern Minnesota, he helped rebuild the herd that eventually led to a record harvest in 2003 of 290,000 deer.

Now as the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' wildlife section chief and at a time in Minnesota's history when the deer population is neither particularly high nor low, Telander answers questions about Minnesota's deer population.

What is the DNR's deer management goal?

Our goal is to provide a healthy, sustainable and abundant deer population. In practice, that means having a deer herd that creates satisfied hunters, provides good hunting and minimizes unwanted consequences for wildlife habitat, people and deer them-

selves. Our management approach factors in habitat and the impacts deer have on it, disease, land management and the desires of all Minnesotans.

Are you meeting with deer hunters about deer population?

Yes. In fact, deer management will be discussed at length at the annual wildlife roundtable, and we'll be having additional discussions with deer hunters at both the state and local levels. It's a timely topic.

How would you characterize this past deer hunting season?

The 2013 deer season harvest of 171,000-plus animals is a solid number, but the lowest since 1998 and the third consecutive year of decline. Part of the reason for the decline in harvest the past few years



Paul Telander

was the restricted harvest of antlerless deer through more lottery areas and fewer intensive and managed deer areas that we have used in an attempt to allow populations to stabilize or rebuild in many parts of the state.

What's planned for 2014?

We have not yet made decisions on the 2014 deer season, but we have heard the concerns of hunters from many areas of the state and will make adjustments based on sound science and current conditions. We realize last winter was unusually hard on deer in northern Minnesota, resulting in more mortality and reduction in fawn production than expected. This winter's weather will likely produce more negative effects on both fawn and adult mortality as well as fawn production, especially if bitter cold and deep snow conditions continue into spring.

Does that mean you expect antlerless permit numbers to decline?

Deer harvest results

from 2013 and other factors will weigh into our antlerless permit and season structure decisions. Though the harvest analysis will not be complete until spring, it's likely that antlerless permit numbers will be decreased in certain areas and deer permit area designations designed to reduce harvest will be expanded. This approach will help stabilize or build deer populations where needed.

How did last year's hunting season compare to others?

Perspective-wise, the 2013 deer harvest was well above the average harvest of the 1980s, just slightly below the average harvest of the 1990s but considerably lower than the average harvest of 2000-2010. The average harvest from 2000-2010 was about 240,000. Those years represent the highest deer harvests in history. The record deer populations that produced those harvests were the source of unwanted problems for people, the land, and deer themselves.

CLINIC

► continued from A1

resource in International Falls."

Essentia Health now operates the existing clinic on Keenan Drive, which Haley said will be renamed to reflect its ownership following an unwinding process. The unwinding processes involves a former affiliation and plan to integrate the hospital with Duluth-based Essentia Health. That affiliation was ended in August, when the board and Essentia officials announced an effort to fully integrate the hospital in International Falls with Essentia Health had ended. Since then, hospital board members have said the hospital will move forward independently. Haley said the unwinding process is expected to be completed in March.

RLRHC will be open at the hospital from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Traditional clini-

cal care services will be provided to all ages. Health care professionals can be designated as local family practitioners, a release from RLMC said. Patients must call 283-5503 to schedule an appointment; however same day appointments may be available, it said.

In the meantime, Haley said the RLRHC will feature faces familiar to the community:

■ Dr. Jay Knaak has served as the hospital emergency room doctor and will be the clinic's primary physician.

■ Nancy Burmeister will serve as nurse practitioner.

■ Brad Reiners, physician assistant, will move from the existing clinic to the hospital's clinic.

Haley said the clinic will offer optometrist services five days a week, as well as ophthalmology services.

The hospital is considering other specialty services, he said, including considering adding dental services next summer for low income or the Medicare

or Medicaid population.

Haley said while the two clinics may be in competition for clients on some services, the hospital clinic is intended to be "more complimentary" to services offered at the Essentia clinic. "The existing clinic has very good providers and we want to have people in the community have quicker access to health care," he said.

The clinic will be a Rural Health Clinic, which Haley said is a federally sponsored program that will charge fees on a sliding fee program based on income. "A sliding fee scale is a set of discounts applied to charges based upon an uninsured patient's annual income and family size," the release stated. The RLMC's Community Care program will also cover the Rainy Lake Rural Health Clinic. Community Care is a program that could provide financial assistance for insured Rural Health Clinic patients who are unable to pay fully for the services they receive. RLRHC will

BONDING

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cost is estimated at nearly \$18 million with projects in Koochiching and St. Louis counties. A portion of the money would be used to extend sewer collection services to the end of Highway 11 east to Dove Island. Dayton had included the money for the sewer project in his proposal last year, but it was not funded in the final bill.

Rainy River Community College would benefit by Dayton's proposal to provide \$3.3 million to the Northeast Higher Education District of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. The money would be used to design, renovate, furnish and equip space to meet workforce training needs in 18 spaces at RRCC, Itasca, Hibbing and Vermilion campuses.

RRCC interim Dean of Students Elena Favela said she's grateful the governor included the NHED in his proposal.

"We feel very fortunate to have the opportunity to improve our facilities which in turn will improve the learning experiences of students in the practical nursing program," she said. "The plan is to update and fully equip the clinical skills lab so that students can learn and practice their skills in a professional environment, and demonstrate proficiency in a state-of-the-art lab."

Bonding proposals will be brought forth by the Minnesota House and Senate after the Legislature convenes Feb. 25. After that, a final bill will be considered in committee.

Dayton said the projects involving Borderland will

play a role in the local economy, which was a factor in his decision to include them in his proposal.

The park sewer projects, he said, would not only benefit the local economy but also the environment.

"I was convinced by civic leaders how urgent this was for the health and well-being of the residents and the tourism industry, and would help grow the economy up there," he told The Journal Wednesday.

Dayton said he knows the project has the support of Borderland's state lawmakers, Rep. David Dill, DFL-Crane Lake, and Sen. Tom Bakk, DFL-Tower, but he's hopeful his proposal has enough support to include the project in the final bonding bill.

"It's an environmental hazard, public health and safety hazard and that's important," he said of failing systems. "And I know how important that park is to Koochiching County and International Falls and the whole border effort with Canada."

He said the area deserves special attention especially with the elimination last year of 265 jobs at the local paper mill.

Including more money for the sewer projects in future bonding proposals by Dayton requires his reelection, he said laughing.

"There are many really, good important projects, including projects like this that are partially funded enough so we can move meaningfully ahead with money this year," he said. "If I am reelected, I will certainly come back in 2015 with a bonding bill, as I did in 2011 and last year, and see what the inclination of the Legislature is."

Dayton said he may also

be able to include more for the airport project in future bonding bills.

"If that only gets us part way to conclusion (of the project) and I come back, we'll definitely try to complete what we need to do there because the airport is hugely important to the economy of the Falls and the region."

Being an international airport with tourism spilling into Canada, "as much as I don't like to see Minnesotans fishing outside of Minnesota, given they do," the connection is important, he said.

International Falls Mayor Bob Anderson called the inclusion of the airport and sewer projects in the governor's bill "a wonderful piece of positive news for our city and county."

However, he acknowledged the governor's proposal is just the first of three steps — approval of the governor, House and Senate — the projects must complete to receive state bonding money.

"Certainly the airport commission and county and city are just grateful to Gov. Dayton and our state Rep. Dill and Sen. Bakk," Anderson said, who also serves as the chairman of the local airport commission. "The governor listened to our needs when he visited here in the fall and we followed up with information."

Anderson agreed with Dayton the airport and sewer projects are "very strong economic development projects for an area hit with some negative economic news in 2013 and I'm hopeful the Legislature will see that and recognize the benefit of funding these."

In addition, Anderson said any assistance RRCC

receives from the state is positive.

Northeast Regional Corrections facility was not included in governor's proposal and he acknowledged he would "get considerable grief" from supporters. He said the money for the facility, which houses Koochiching County offenders, was included in his bill last year, which he said "fell apart." While he said he knows the project is necessary, it asked for money late in the process.

"It's a good project, I support and if the Legislature includes it in the final bill I will sign it," he said. "But it was one of the two-thirds of the requests we just didn't have the resources for."

The Renewable Energy Clean Air Project's request was not included in the governor's proposal. Dayton said he just couldn't provide money for the project when other projects in the community would be funded through his plan. Plus, he noted, the state has provided money for RECAP in the past.

"International Falls and Koochiching County came out pretty well," he said. "We just couldn't fund everything."

"Almost every project I said no to are ones I would like to say yes to and hope to have the chance to do so in the future," he said.

Meanwhile, Dayton asked whether the community had warmed up and joked residents must feel like they're experiencing a heat wave with the above zero temperatures. He said he had to decline an invitation to attend Icebox Days, but joked how we "make virtue out of necessity."

"I was thinking about you folks," he said of the recent frigid temperatures.

SKI

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"There are only a few things you can do outdoors in the winter," he said. "Skiing is just great...The more time you put in, the better you get at it and the more fun it is. Why would you live here in the winter if you can't be outdoors? Skiing gets you outdoors."

There are two main techniques when it comes to cross-country skiing: classic skiing and skate skiing, Eberhardt said.

Skate skies are shorter and lighter than classic skies and don't require as much balance as using classic skis, Eberhardt said. "It depends on what style best fits you...Either style can be very easy or challenging, depending on how much you put into it."

SKIERS AT WORK

Aside from enjoying what the wooded trails of the great outdoors have to offer, Eberhardt said club members strive to ensure the Tilson trail and the Manka Trail are in prime condition for skiers to enjoy.

"The Tilson trail really requires a lot of work," Eberhardt said of the grant-in-aid trail. "There is a lot of mowing and brush removal we have to do in the fall before we can even think about

skiing on it in the winter. I think we spend more time in the fall cleaning the trail than we do grooming it in the wintertime."

Fortunately, Eberhardt said the club receives an annual grant of about \$4,300 from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

"Our club really appreciates what the DNR does for us," he said. "They have been very helpful in every way."

BECOME A POLAR POLER

Eberhardt said the club always welcomes new members and urges anyone who has skied, would like to ski, or is just curious about skiing, to attend a monthly meeting.

"We meet from November through March on the first Monday of every month," he said.

Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. in the basement meeting room at the International Falls Public Library. Each meeting consists of certain topics, discussion points or demonstrations for those who attend. Membership fees, Eberhardt said, are relatively inexpensive — \$25 for a family and \$15 for single registrants.

"We just want to get people involved," he said. "We don't want this to be too big of an expense. We want to have everyone enjoy skiing together."

AGENDA

City Council
Tuesday, January 21, 2014 • 4:30 P.M.
Council Chamber

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

ROLL CALL

MINUTES

- Approve minutes of the Monday, January 6, 2014 regular City Council meeting

SPECIAL ACTION CLAIMS

TRANSFERS

To:	From:	
1. City of Intl Falls - Fund #101 General Fund	City of Intl Falls - Fund #601 Water/Sewer Admin Costs	\$16,492.00
2. City of Intl Falls - Fund #403 Reserve for Capital Outlay	City of Intl Falls - Fund #601 Water/Sewer	\$15,958.50

REGULAR CLAIMS

- Regular Claims

AUDIENCE

OPENING BIDS AND/OR QUOTES

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CONSENT AGENDA

NEW BUSINESS

1. Report of Legislation and Land Use Committee — recommendation to approve request for street dance on 4th Avenue and 3rd Street - June 7, 2014
2. Consider amending Ordinance 5 - 23 Hours of sale and Ordinance 5 - 43 Sunday sales of beer and liquor on - sale to allow Sunday serving to begin at 10:00am
3. Report of Firemen's Relief Association on increase in pension
4. Convention & Visitors Bureau ad campaign funding request
5. Year 2014 license renewal — Falls Pizza, Inc., dba Giovanni's Pizza, restaurant, and wine on - sale
6. Mayoral Proclamation, National Stalking Awareness Month - January 2014
7. Resolution# - 14 — approving application for exempt permit - Ruffed Grouse Society
8. Second and final reading of Contract Ordinance #954 - 2014 Freightliner Dump Truck from State Bid Contract #61003
9. Accept low bid from Up North Builders and approve first reading of Contract Ordinance for the Animal Shelter
10. Approve letter to President Obama requesting signature on Proclamation of Peaceful Borders Day
11. Any other business

PUBLIC HEARING

REPORTS OF ADMINISTRATOR, ATTORNEY, AND DEPARTMENT HEADS

REPORTS OF MAYOR, COUNCIL COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

AUDIENCE — 2nd CALL

CORRESPONDENCE

- International Falls - Koochiching County Airport Commission meeting minutes — November 25, 2013

REMINDERS

- Next regular Council meeting is Monday, February 3, 2014 at 4:30 PM

The City of International Falls complies with the ADA. Individuals with disabilities requiring special aids should contact the City Administrator, 600 Fourth Street, International Falls, MN, 56649, 218-283-9484, 48 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.