

LOCALNEWS

Geotourism project launched

MapGuide to tell Heart of the Continent region's story

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Organizations in north-eastern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario are joining with National Geographic Maps to highlight the world-class natural and cultural attractions of the Heart of the Continent.

The project seeks to contribute to the economic health of communities by promoting geotourism: tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place — its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents.

A community-based nomination process will be used to create a National Geographic "Geotourism MapGuide" for the region. The Heart of the Continent area designated for the map encompasses part of Koochiching and all of Cook, Lake and St. Louis counties in Minnesota and northwestern Ontario border municipalities from Fort Frances to Thunder Bay, including gateway and First Nation communities, plus private and public lands in both nations.

The interactive Web site will be available late fall or early winter 2014.

"Participation by local

If you go

Public forums are scheduled for:

- May 7, 7:30 p.m., American Inn, International Falls
- May 16 and 17, Heart of the Continent booth, Ice for Kids Arena, Fort Frances
- May 21, 6 p.m., Oveson's Pelican Lake Resort and Inn, Orr

residents is critical to the project's success," said Frank Jewell, steering committee chair. "Our goal is to get nominations from across the region that identify the things people love best, those 'must see' places that might range from an incredibly beautiful hike to a historic downtown with exceptional galleries and restaurants."

Local residents and visitors are invited to nominate for inclusion in the MapGuide the landmarks, attractions, activities, events and even local foods that define the region's character and distinctive appeal. Nominations may be made through June 15 at www.traveltheheart.org.

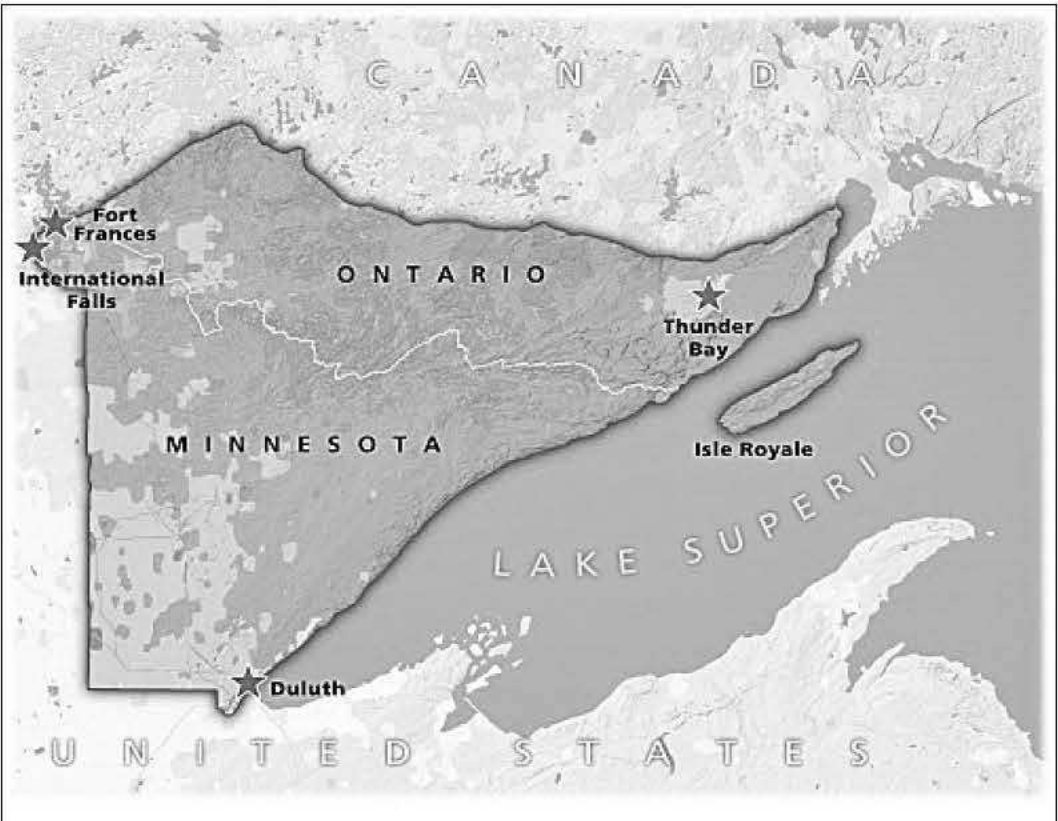
Public forums and presentations are scheduled for International Falls, Fort Frances, and Orr during May.

"The National Geographic Maps Division is pleased

to have the opportunity to spotlight this region and, in doing so, support and sustain it as one of the treasured natural places on the globe," said James Dion, director of Tourism Programs, National Geographic Maps. "The

MapGuide will celebrate the area's abundant scenic, cultural and historical attributes from the unique vantage point of those who live there."

Beyond open-to-the-public map point nomination, the MapGuide development process calls for oversight by a regional committee. The Heart of the Continent Stewardship Council represents an assortment of geotourism perspectives, including community leadership, historic preservation, natural resources, public lands management, indigenous peoples, traditional and local arts, agriculture,



CONTRIBUTED ILLUSTRATION

A map shows the Heart of the Continent region.

tourism promotion and local businesses.

A primary task for the stewardship council will be to review and sort nomination submissions prior to sending them to National Geographic. The council will have final say on the selected sites.

The National Geographic Society has worked with community-based alliances to develop similar Geotourism MapGuides and websites in other regions around the world. Geotourism MapGuide projects have been completed or are ongoing

in the U.S. Gulf Coast States (Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi) Central Cascades (Oregon, Washington), the Crown of the Continent (Alberta, British Columbia, Montana), Four Corners (Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah), Greater Yellowstone (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming), Guatemala, Lakes to Locks Passage (New York, Quebec), Newfoundland, Portugal's Douro Valley, Redwood Coast (California), Sierra Nevada (California, Nevada) and the Tennessee River Valley (Smoky Mountains through

Knoxville and south to Chattanooga and north Georgia).

National Geographic Maps was established as a division of the National Geographic Society in 1915 and has been producing maps for National Geographic magazine and other Society groups for 95 years. National Geographic Maps produces outdoor recreation mapping software, Trails Illustrated maps and software, globes, wall maps, travel maps and atlases. For more information on National Geographic Maps, visit natgeomaps.com.

Council publishes new ordinance

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

The Ranier City Council Monday approved the publishing of a summary of ordinance 152, which outlines the recent water and sewer rate changes.

The ordinance, which was approved at March's council meeting, will become law once it is published, and the new rates go into effect on June 1. The council agreed to publish a summary of the ordinance, city Administrator Sherril Gautreaux said, because the full, 17-section ordinance is eight pages long.

The new ordinance increases the water rate by 5 percent while reducing the escrow charge attached to

each bill from \$7 to \$3.50. Half the escrow charge goes into an account designated for water line repairs, while the other half goes to an account designated for water line replacement. The total yearly contributions to the escrow accounts is slightly more than \$36,000.

With the city of International Falls raising its water rates by 5 percent for 2014, the city of Ranier would have to raise its rates to keep up with the change, councilors said. If the Ranier rate was not increased, the fund would operate at a deficit of \$21,150.

With a balance of a little more than \$355,000 in its water accounts, the city reduced the amount it contributes to the escrow accounts

and raised the water rates to make up the operating deficit. To keep up with the rate of inflation, the city will continue contributing to the escrow accounts, just not at the rate it has been.

In other business, the council approved submitting a grant application to cover the remaining costs of adult exercise equipment the Ranier Recreation Club purchased in 2013.

The two pieces of equipment from Exerskys, an outdoor fitness equipment company, were purchased with a grant from the Koochiching Community Development Authority. Gautreaux said the grant from the Marshall N. Knudson Family Community Fund would cover the remaining costs.

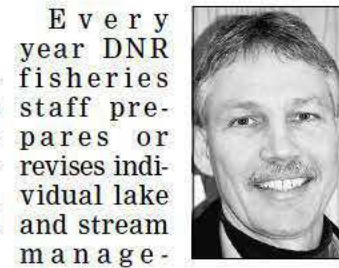
DNR prepares fisheries plans

DNR STAFF REPORT

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is preparing individual fisheries management plans for nine lakes and one stream in northern St. Louis and Koochiching counties.

The public is invited to review and comment on those plans.

"Fisheries managers use the plans to describe the past, present, and desired future conditions of the water body," said Kevin Peterson, International Falls area fisheries supervisor. "The plans identify goals and objectives for the fish community and identify specific management activities planned for the next 10 to 20 years."



Kevin Peterson

Every year DNR fisheries staff prepares or revises individual lake and stream management plans for several waters in each management area. In the International Falls area, plans for the following lakes and one stream will be reviewed:

Lakes: Ban, Bartlett, Beast, Blackduck, Kjestad, Marion, Mukooda, Myrtle, Pelican (near Orr); stream: Billy Creek (near Big Falls).

Copies of the draft plans are available at the Interna-

tional Falls Area Fisheries office located at 392 Highway 11 E., International Falls, MN 56649. You can also call the office at 218-286-5220 to request a copy or email kevin.peterson@state.mn.us.

Those wishing to comment on any of the plans may do so by contacting the DNR Area Fisheries Office by any of the methods outlined above. Office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Public comments on lake management plans will be taken through May 2.

Comments, questions and suggestions for management of any of the other lakes and streams in the International Falls area are welcome at any time.

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Thursday,
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Backus Auditorium

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Sponsored by: Patrons of Border Concert Association

Tickets available at the door for non-members \$20.

EAT BEFORE THE CONCERT:
Enjoy the "Top the Tater" Supper \$6
Backus 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Choppers for children would like to thank our Local Elks Club for the continued support and the recent donation of **\$2000** towards the quality mittens for the children

THANK YOU!

The Littlefork Saddle Club members would like to express a Heartfelt "Thank You" to all those who very generously donated to our awards Banquet. Thanks to you it was a huge success and we greatly appreciate your help!

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And "ALL" the members, family and friends who generously donated their time, hard work and items for the Auction and Raffle.

Again, Thank You ALL So Much!!!