

TRAIL, ICE REPORTS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The view from the Kettle Falls overlook.

IVSC

The following was posted Thursday on the International Voyageurs Snowmobile Club website at <http://www.ridetheborder.com/>: “While we still have plenty of snow on the ground and trails are still in good condition old man winter is coming to an end. Warmer temps have taken the snow off from some roads that lead to our trails so please be careful riding in these areas, and be respectful and stay off people’s property in doing so. Enjoy what’s left of the winter, watch your speed, stay on your side of the trail and be safe.”

VNP

Below is this week’s winter trail conditions report. All reports are available on the park’s website at www.nps.gov/voya.

BOARD

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now?” asked board member Willi Kostiuk. “The more I think about that area, it’s really important to have someone back there...I think it’s something for consideration.” The superintendent previously suggested remodeling the district offices near the front entrance of Falls High School to create a space for the Community Ed office, which is currently located on the east end of the building. Nelson said there is concern about the lack of security at the Community Ed entrance. Relocation would eliminate a secretarial position that would amount to about \$35,000 in savings. Kostiuk suggested a security system be installed near the Community Ed office to avoid relocation. “It would be an empty spot back there,” he said. “There would be no one to watch that entrance...The pool would have no direct supervision.” Nelson said the facility committee will evaluate options and present them to the board to aid in any decision. Board member Gordy Dault asked how monitoring the hallways, locker rooms and bathrooms would be handled should the hall monitor position, held by BethAnne Slatinski, be eliminated. “Much of that would fall to the dean of students and/or the principals,” Nelson said. “It would just have to be on their plate to do more of it.”

SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH The board appeared divided on how to move forward in its search for a new superintendent. Nelson, whose contract expires June 30, will leave International Falls to pursue his St. Cloud-based consulting business part time. In December, the board tabled action on hiring a consulting firm to help in the search of a new superintendent and agreed to seek quotes from other companies.

Snowmobile trails

Snowmobile trails are in fair condition with pockets of slush showing up on lake surfaces. Speed limits in the park are 45 mph on lake surfaces and 25 mph on land portages.

- International Falls to Kettle Falls (Purple Trail) – Open, staked, and groomed
- Rainy Lake/Black Bay to Kabetogama Lake to Ash River (Green Trail) – Open, staked, and groomed
- Ash River to Crane Lake (Green Trail) – Open, staked, and groomed
- Chain of Lakes (Dashed Black Trail) – Open, staked, and groomed
- Ash River to Kettle Falls (Yellow Trail) – Open, staked, and groomed
- East Namakan Lake to Sand Point Lake (Blue Trail) – Open, staked, and groomed

But Kostiuk said he felt the expense was unnecessary.

“We did a pretty good job of hiring the last superintendent,” he said. “I think we have the ability to review all the applications that we’ve had...And follow through with the process as a board. I don’t think we need to spend any more money on hiring someone to narrow the field down when I think we’re perfectly capable of doing it ourselves.”

Board member Mike Holden disagreed. “It wouldn’t hurt to have somebody take a look at it,” he said, noting the high turnover rate the district has experienced in superintendents over the years. “You’re going to want to make sure you’re gonna get somebody that’s gonna stay.”

“That’s been our goal every single time,” Kostiuk said of the hiring process. “I don’t think hiring an outside company will ensure (someone will stay). I think our goal as a board is to get the best person for our district. It’s always been our goal to do that.”

Holden said a consistent superintendent would help stabilize the district.

“It needs to get done right so it’s going to stabilize and someone’s going to stay here,” he said.

Kostiuk said there is never a guarantee someone would stay in the district.

Board member Michelle Hebner said the past two superintendent hires have “been a little shaky at best,” and thought it would be beneficial to have an outside resource aid the board in the process.

“I don’t think we’ve constantly done a good job over time as far as our process,” she said. “And to involve somebody that does that specifically for a living for many other school districts I think would benefit us.”

The board agreed Nelson, who has more than 30 years of education experience under his belt, will play a role in the hiring process and will hold interviews later this month.

ANDERSON

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to try to market ourselves to businesses,” he said. “Skilled labor can be a real asset for us.”

Retention and expansion of existing businesses is also important, he said. Providing the tools and resources needed to grow existing businesses as fast as possible “are exciting and fun things to work at,” he said.

Diversifying the economy to minimize impacts in certain industries is also a challenge he said he looks forward to assisting

Coming from Crosslake, near the Brainerd lakes area, gives him an under-

standing of the valued role the tourism industry plays here, he said.

Anderson said he served on a number of organizations professionally and has been active in his church and civic organizations in the past.

“I want to be active in the community, out and about, but I don’t want to infringe upon my duties and responsibilities as city administrator,” he said. “I want to do both, but will clearly make my job priority. I need to be involved and want to be involved and will be involved as much as I can.”

He said he will bring city staff together to ensure services are being provided efficiently.

FORUM

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the huge basin. Visit www.lowwsf.com/2014-forum-story-tour.html to see an interactive story map tour of the basin and research presentations featured in this year’s forum.

In its 11th year, the forum attracts leading scientists and decision makers to the college, where research is shared and contacts made for future projects.

UNIQUE

Micheal Laitta, geospatial coordinator for the International Joint Commission in Washington D.C., said the forum and the relationships it has spawned is unique to the watershed. In his position, he said he travels from Maine to Utah and deals with many IJC-related boards and non-governmental organizations.

“There is this one geography that keeps on shining a little brighter than any other interface and this is the Lake of the Woods-Rainy River,” he said.

He said the value of the forum is difficult to describe, but settled on the word “invaluable.”

“This is one of the only transboundary basins where you have such fundamental engagement at all levels — from federal, provincial to state, but more importantly you have a local geography of people that are not only passionate, but they’re knowledgeable and engaged, with a willingness to sit down and listen to every single thought. That’s unique,” he said.

Liatta smiled and said he gets excited about the forum

and what it represents. He’s drawn back to this area because of the geography, the groups, and the people he deals with in the watershed.

“Where else can you get local voters, cottagers, First Nation people in the same room with some of the best scientific minds, some of the best policy people in North America just looking at their geography?” he asked. “People tend to forget that this is a basin, a geography that is divided by an international boundary, so to be able to bring these people together and essentially erase that line and look at: what can we do to improve joint science, what can we do to encourage our dual economies, what can we do to enjoy managing and studying our one environment.”

Liatta said the forum allows researchers conducting multi-million dollar, multi-year studies to come together to consider what the information means to other aspects of the basin and how the data collected can be used by resource managers across the basin and borders.

“It really stands out, and I mean that sincerely,” he said.

Liatta said he would next travel to Alberta to help Alberta, Saskatchewan and Montana create seamless data, “which we have done and are already using here. I just can’t say enough about the quality of engagement and the quality of people here — it is different here. We’re using the commitments, the models and the IMA strategic plan here for the rest of the U.S.-Canadian interface. This is where it works.”

“The demands on local government are higher than they have ever been on providing outstanding services at rock bottom costs,” he said.

Schools are hubs of communities and Anderson said he plans to follow local sports teams. He has a daughter who’s very active as a student who he said will be allowed to finish out her high school years in her existing school. His wife works for the Minneapolis Heart Institute and is busy establishing a new office.

For a while, he said he will spend some weekends at his former residence to prepare their home for sale.

Meanwhile, Anderson

said he’s waiting for his passport so he may visit the the Falls’ sister city, Fort Frances. He said he understands the two communities, because of the distance from other communities, must rely and depend on one another for a variety of resources.

He said he looks forward to becoming a member of the community and using his background in public service to assist the council. He gave credit to the council for including members of the public in its decisions.

“I feel very grounded and I think I hopefully can make a difference in a way that everyone will stand to benefit and everyone will participate,” he said.

Pam Tomevi, district coordinator for the Koochiching Soil and Water Conservation District, agreed what happens in the basin and at the forum is unique. “The collaboration and the partnership that is going on among multiple agencies in two countries is setting the stage for how it will be done across the whole U.S.,” she said. “It’s pretty cool.”

Tomevi said the feeling of participants at the forum is it’s better to be proactive and willing to work together to solve, address, or prevent issues challenging the waters.

“Water knows no boundaries. Our fish don’t come stamped with a maple leaf or U.S. flag on their butt,” she said. “The forum was built on science, created to bring scientists on both sides of the border to talk about data, but it’s evolved to include civic engagement and decision makers to move the science into projects — something tangible.”

She said she wished more members of the International Falls and larger community would at least stop in at the forum to see things happening locally are being recognized and emulated internationally.

Todd Sellers, executive director of the Lake of the Woods Water Sustainability Foundation, Kenora, helped to establish the forum.

“We are really proud to continue to be involved in supporting these binational partnerships and collaborations that are really burgeoning in this watershed,” he said during a break Thursday during the forum. “The forum continues to be an incubator for

research and management activities erasing borders between agencies, two provinces and one state.”

Sellers pointed to one presentation involving the historical trends in phosphorus accumulation and modeling on Lake of the Woods, which gives insight about how phosphorus from previous decades are recycling seasonally back into the water, which is likely one of the stimulation of seasonal algal blooms.

He cited the study’s eight authors and their agencies listed in the program as an example of collaboration coming from networking opportunities at previous forums.

AWARDS

Sellers said Wednesday’s banquet announced Darryl McLeod, fisheries manager with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources in Fort Frances, was the recipient of the Kallemeyn Award. He was selected for nearly 30 years of collaborative work on Rainy Lake lake sturgeon and work to refine the long-term fisheries assessment protocols for the OMNR on sturgeon ecology and the recovery of walleye on Rainy Lake.

Dyke Williams, a resident of Seagull Lake in Minnesota and Kenora, received the Wilson Award in recognition of a number of activities, but also for his longtime service to the Quetico Superior Foundation and the leader of its white pine recovery program, Sellers said. Williams was also honored for his commitment and promotion of youth education in areas of water and the natural environment.

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Tues.	Breakfast Sandwich with hashbrowns	
Wed.	French Toast w/eggs & sausage or bacon	
Thurs.	Blueberry Pancakes w/eggs & sausage or bacon	
Fri.	Biscuits & Gravy w/eggs & hashbrowns	
Sat.	Cinnamon Swirl French Toast with ham & eggs	
Sun.	Blueberry Cream Cheese Crepes with eggs & ham	

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Fri.	Fishermen’s Catch	\$16.99
Sat.	Rib Eye Steak	\$17.99
Sun.	Chicken Kiev	\$11.99

Dinners include choice of potato & salad. Choice of soup for \$1.00

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