

OUTDOORS

CALL OF THE WILD

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Bobbi Bernath, president of the Trails End Chapter of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association was presented with the MDHA Distinguished Service Award. Pictured with Bernath are MDHA's President Denis Quarberg and Vice President Doug Appelgren.

MDHA presents Bernath Distinguished Service Award

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Bobbi Bernath of International Falls was presented the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association's Distinguished Service Award Feb. 22 at MDHA's 27th Annual State Habitat Banquet in Grand Rapids.

The award is presented annually to people who have exhibited outstanding conduct and dedication to MDHA and its mission; working for tomorrow's wildlife and hunters today through education, habitat and legislation, said a statement from MDHA.

Bernath serves as the president of the Trails End

Chapter of MDHA.

Bernath was recognized for her tireless work as a chapter steward for the Trails End Chapter and for the state office, and her exemplary volunteer spirit and activity, according to MDHA.

"Bobbi's dedicated volunteerism on behalf of the Trails End Chapter and the MDHA state organization has been a great asset to this organization," said MDHA State President Denis Quarberg. "She is one of the many jewels within this organization. Like most non-profit organizations, MDHA has well over a thousand vol-

unteers statewide who are involved within our 62 chapters. Without them, there is no way that we could accomplish even a small percentage of what gets accomplished. Volunteers are the heartbeat of MDHA. Recognizing the Bobbi Bernath's within our organization is just a small way that MDHA can express our gratitude for their generous dedication."

The Minnesota Deer Hunters Association is a non-profit conservation organization. For more information on about MDHA, visit MDHA's website at www.mndeerhunters.com or call 800-450-3337.

Winter severity index is 143

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

The winter severity index for the International Falls area was 143 on Wednesday, reports Larry Petersen, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources area wildlife manager in International Falls.

The WSI was 98 last year at this date, and 33 two years ago, he said.

The average WSI for this

date is about 91. The harshest winter in the mid 1990s had an index of 158 on this date.

The snow depth is around 28-36 inches in the International Falls vicinity, said Petersen. The deeper snow can be found south and east of here.

The winter severity index is a standardized number the DNR uses when considering impacts of the

winter on deer. It is calculated using temperature and snow depth in the period from Nov. 1 through April 30 or whenever winter ends. Every day the daily low temperature is zero or below is one point, and every day the snow depth is 15 inches or deeper in an open aspen woods is one point. The points are added each week until winter ends.

Officials warn of slush on some lakes

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

While there's plenty of snow on area lakes, some of that snow is forcing water upward, creating dangerous slush conditions.

Outdoor enthusiasts need to be aware on some lakes, beneath several inches of fluffy white snow, laying on top of clear ice there may be a thick layer of slush and/or crumbling ice, a U.S. Forest Service news release said.

The concern is echoed by Seth Nelson, Voyageurs National Park maintenance supervisor for the Namakan District who also handles the park's winter grooming operations.

Nelson said the VNP groomer was stuck in slush twice this week, with crews out until 10 p.m. working to free the machine. In addition, two park snowmobiles were also stuck in slush this week. He said the slush is being experienced right along snowmobile trails as well as off trails and in back bays.

Nelson urged snowmobilers to stay on packed trails to avoid the slush, and if they go off the trail, use extreme caution.

"The last snowfall pushed the ice down and the water came through," he said. "We're finding

slush all over. As soon as you get off the hard-packed trails, and into the back bays, it's pretty hazardous going off trail, and even on the trail for the groomer."

With warm temperatures forecast, Nelson said lakes could get pretty messy.

As the forest service release was passed around to resource managers, each added their own concern in the next forwarded email.

The release urges snowmobilers to be sure someone at home knows where you are going and when you expect to be back, and before venturing too far out on a lake, to check conditions below the surface.

The International Falls Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Office would hold off on planned oxygen testing until conditions improve.

Kurt Erickson, St. Louis County Rescue Squad, wrote about an emergency on Black Duck Lake, northeast of Cusson and Orr last week.

"Had 13 snowmobilers out on Black Duck. The group didn't stick together. Two ended up missing from the back of the group. Several from the main group went back to find them. Slush was up to three to four feet deep

and very liquid. Several snowmobiles ended up stuck in slush. One guy was soaked to the waist and several had very wet feet. Temp was -25 with very strong winds. White out conditions. We had to navigate by GPS. Found all and got them off the lake. Took from 2100 to 0300 hours. The wet guys were in serious trouble. They could not get a fire going and were getting very cold. Even though they had broken into a cabin for shelter! They did not have proper gear with them for bivouacking. Orr FD got stuck in slush two times. We pulled them out.

"When we cut the hole in Lake Vermillion for the Polar Plunge — we found about 11-12 inches of clear ice covered by about 18 inches of frozen snow/slush. The frozen snow slush was not strong enough to hold together for us to be able to pull it out. It would crumble and break when we put the ice tongs on it.

"We have had a couple other calls with folks getting stuck in the slush. When we ran our Marsh Master out on Black Duck the slush came to the top of the tracks. About three to four ft high. It was a real mess. Orr FD was running a Polaris Ranger on tracks and that got stuck twice."

TRAIL, ICE REPORTS

IVSC

The Internatioanl Voyageur Snowmobile Club posted the following this week on its website at <http://www.ridetheborder.com/>

"After three months of very cold conditions things are finally starting to look up. Unfortunately we're into the last month, but with the temps rising and days getting longer it's time to get off the couch, turn off the TV and enjoy the best groomed trails anywhere. There are a couple logging jobs going on as their season is also winding down so please be careful around these areas. All trails are in excellent condition, the lake is pretty wind blown so watch your speeds and

stay on your side of the stakes marking the trail. So again get out and enjoy yourself, watch your speed, and be safe."

VNP

Snowfall has picked up over the last few weeks, creating a great opportunity to experience Voyageurs National Park by snowshoe.

Near the Ash River Visitor Center is the Sullivan Bay Snowshoe Trail. From a small parking area on Meadwood Road, this easy to follow path gradually rises from the road into the woods. Watch for plenty of animal tracks, including

wolf, deer, squirrel, and snowshoe hare; you may even see the animals. The trail is a round trip hike of 1.5 miles. Snowshoers will often have first "human" tracks after a good snowfall.

The trail ends on a small cliff overlooking Sullivan Bay. Inspired visitors can scramble down to the lake surface and continue their adventure onto the bay. With a picnic table at the end of the trail, bring your lunch along and enjoy this scenic spot in your national park.

All reports are available on the park's website at www.nps.gov/voya.

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CONGRATULATIONS!

STUDENTS OF THE MONTH ANNOUNCED AT INDUS

The following students have been named "Students of the Month" at Indus School based on their exemplary behavior and attitudes, academic achievement or special achievement, and uniqueness. Four students are chosen from these groupings on a monthly basis: Grades 10-12, Grades 7-9, Grades 4-6, Grades K-3.

Students recognized in March for January in Elementary are:

Brea Hasbargen

Third Grader Brea Hasbargen was nominated by her teacher, Julie Talmage, for being a "kind-hearted, thoughtful student that inspires those around her." According to Talmage, she has a "quiet, determined way," which shows itself by persisting, "even when the going gets tough." Hasbargen has an "outstanding work ethic," says Talmage, which allows her to meet challenges "head on and persevere."

Mia Stenberg

Fourth Grader Mia Stenberg, nominated by her teacher, Suzanne Mathews, is recognized for asking good questions which help her and her classmates to understand new concepts. She also assists classmates who have difficulty understanding by putting concepts into her own words.

High School Students of the Month are:

Christopher Guba

Sophomore Christopher Guba was nominated by two Indus instructors for his efforts academically and socially, evidencing excellent attendance, hard work, respectfulness, effectively working in a group, and interacting with peers in a positive way.

Georgii (Gosha) Kolesnikov

Junior Russian foreign exchange student Georgii (Gosha) Kolesnikov, nominated by English instructor Wade Sutton, shows "consistent internal motivation to learn and risk himself in that learning." Sutton notes that Kolesnikov "tackles our language while at the same time [he] keeps up in his classwork and participates in extracurricular activities. He is an example, both academically and in attitude, to students older and younger alike."

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