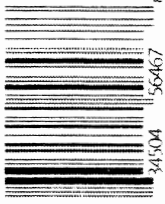




Nevis School  
news and  
happenings ...  
See  
pages 8 & 9



New column ...  
"Reflections  
on the Water"  
Check it  
out on page 11



6 34504 56467 8



# Northwoods Press

Serving the Nevis Lakes Area Official Newspaper for Hubbard County

Vol. 52, No. 40 Wednesday, October 1, 2014 \$1.00

## COLA to be involved with second university capstone project

By Carrie Hitchcock

Following the success of a master's degree capstone project in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) at Indiana University last spring, with which it was involved, the Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) is once again the subject of a capstone project at that university.

The spring 2013 project had focused on improving lake association management, and the fall 2014 project, already in progress, is

entitled "Enhancing the Hubbard County Coalition of Lake Associations' Lake Monitoring Program."

At their Thursday, September 25 meeting, members discussed, via a conference call, the goals of this project with master's student Rob Conover and SPEA Professor Dr. Burney Fischer, a summer resident of Big Mantrap Lake.

Conover explained that the goals included identifying a Minnesota standard for lake wa-

ter quality and COLA lake monitoring efforts, as well as what actions need to be taken to raise those efforts in order to achieve what he referred to as "top-tier status" in lake monitoring, and to outline what payoffs there would be to COLA if they achieved that status.

Conover said one of the major tools they would use in the project would be a stakeholder survey, which they were in the final stages of designing for approval by the university. He said they hoped the broad-scope survey would

help them identify current lake monitoring efforts and help shed light on areas that are successful, as well as those that need improvement.

He said the survey will be sent to 29 lake associations in the county, as well as at least 11 other COLAs throughout the state, by early to mid-October, and that after receiving the surveys back, they plan to run analyses, produce a detailed report with recommendations and

(COLA continued on Page 5)

present the results to the COLA committee in early December. They also will make a pamphlet for distribution to other COLAs, lake associations and websites.

Conover and seven other master's students will once again receive guidance from Dr. Fischer and a COLA committee.

**Straight River Watershed and Groundwater Management Area**

Doug Kingsley, Area Supervisor for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fisheries office, gave a presentation on various aspects of the Straight River watershed, including changing uses that have begun to affect the health of the river and prompted the designation of the watershed as one of three state Groundwater Management Areas (GWMA), the purpose of which is to study sustainable water use.

Those changes have included conversion of over one-half of forested lands in the watershed to agricultural or residential development use, which has resulted in changing the physical characteristics of the stream, causing it to get wider and shallower, and increased runoff that often carries pollutants, fertilizers and pesticides.

The increased agricultural use in the area's sandy, fast-draining soils has resulted in higher nitrate levels in the groundwater, in the stream, and the Park Rapids municipal drinking supply, he reported. The increased residential development has increased impervious surfaces, runoff and vegetation removal, and decreased nutrients.

Kingsley reported, however, that there have been attempts to reduce these effects by instituting agricultural Best Management Practices, including less tillage, crop rotation, and reduced fertilizer and pesticide use.

He also said that bridges and culverts have often been constructed undersized to

save money, set too high in the stream or at an improper slope, which has restricted fish passage, altered the stream and increased water temperatures.

Kingsley said that permitted use of groundwater had been steadily increasing, due largely to agricultural irrigation, and that studies on the effect of increasing groundwater use show that it may have reduced inflows into the Straight River by up to 30 percent. In turn, reductions in groundwater inflows into the river and overuse of springs – which keeps temperatures low – increases water temperatures, as does damming a river.

Kingsley said that DNR Fisheries has monitored stream temperatures with data loggers during the open water season since 2003 (though not in 2006, 2009 or 2011), and that they have found a statistically significant increasing trend. He said that studies of air temperatures for those same periods did not find corresponding trends of the same statistical significance.

He said that increasing temperatures affect the ability of the river to sustain an environment healthy enough for the river's famed brown trout to flourish, and that 2012 produced the river's highest water temperatures, and the greatest proportion of time within a range of what is called "thermal stress" and "lethal" conditions for the fish.

In addition to the increasing water temperature trend, the river has also seen a decrease in dissolved oxygen, which happens as temperatures increase. Dissolved oxygen is required by almost all aquatic organisms to survive, and because of the reduction in the Straight River, it was listed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as impaired for dissolved oxygen in 2010, which, then, also affected the ability of the trout to survive.

In the year-long process of monthly meetings of the

advisory committee of the Straight River GWMA, Kingsley opined that the future sustainability of groundwater use will "depend on the willingness of public leaders and private users to make wise decisions about water use."

**Other business**

Communication Director Larry Roberts presented past president Dan Kittilson with a Certificate of Appreciation for his five years service as president.


"Dan has been the spokesman for this organization for a long time," Roberts said. "He is a dedicated and serious individual when it comes to protecting the lakes and rivers in Hubbard County."

Sharon Natzel gave an update on the "Information Gathering Activity" that has been collecting data over the last few months on how to improve various aspects of COLA's operations, the results of which will be incorporated into COLA's activities in the future.

Jeff Mosner gave an update on the proposed Sandpiper pipeline, including the fact that the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission had ruled for further study of six alternatives to Enbridge's original proposed route. He said the PUC will delay consideration of the route permit until first completing the Certificate of Need process.

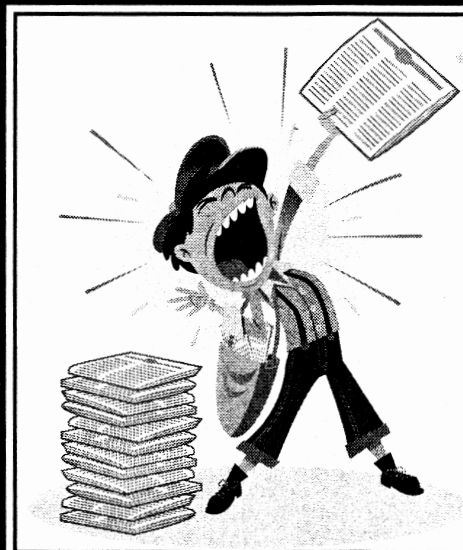
He reported that between November and March, there will be six hearings for interveners – groups such as Friends of the Headwaters (FOH) who are challenging Enbridge's route. Those hearings will be posted on the FOH website.

President Lynn Goodrich reminded members that the League of Women Voters (LWV) will be hosting six candidate forums, the first of which was held on Tuesday, September 30. He said the LWV is always looking for volunteers, and they will consider questions submitted by the public for the candidates at [rapidsleague@gmail.com](mailto:rapidsleague@gmail.com).



Does the thought of be

For more inform



**Have Som**

We don't try to be able to attend a photo or think a photo might. We'll

**N**  
**218**