Winter 2014

The Izaak Walton League of America

President’s Letter by Minnesota Division President Barry Drazkowski

Threat to the Wetland Conservation Act

My best winter wishes to all my fellow Ikes. I hope your winter is enjoyable and you are staying warm. I want to also take just a moment to thank each and every one of you for all you do, both your commitment to conservation issues and your commitment to the Izaak Walton League. I know how full life is, with family, activities, and the often many organizations between which we split our time.

Only through your efforts as part of our grassroots driven organization, do we achieve such prominent statewide recognition as a balanced voice for conservation. We are not the largest Minnesota conservation group, and we don’t have large funded staff that carries our message. We, with minimal resources, work as volunteers. We make a difference and have significant credibility with our State leadership. So, in this context, I will write about about one of our biggest conservation issues facing us during this legislative session. The threat to the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA), and that threat’s risk to Minnesota’s wetland resources.

Over the past summer and fall, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has implemented a stakeholder process to engage a discussion around their intent to introduce significant changes to WCA in this Legislative session. This process was flawed and not inclusive of all the stakeholder groups whose voices should have been heard. It forwarded an agenda that created the perception that stakeholder groups endorsed the proposed mitigation alternatives being proposed by the BWSR planning team (also included the DNR and PCA). Through the process alternatives were prioritize, irrespective of stakeholder opposition to those alternatives. BWSR released on the Friday before the October all stakeholder meeting their draft legislative modification proposal. This was discussed and BWSR offered stakeholder the opportunity to submit comments on the draft by the following Friday. However, they also noted that discussion around the proposals would continue until they made their proposed WCA modifications to the legislature. So what are they proposing?

Their proposal included some modifications that would apply primarily to the Northeast portion of the state, and others would affect the entire state. Their driving assumption is that there are not enough mitigation opportunities in NE MN to replace long-term potential wetland losses.

They discussed numerous alternative strategies to compensate for wetland functions lost in the northeast. “Alternatives” meaning out of kind replacement or the loss of one type of wetland function could be replaced by an alternative option including; expanded use of preservation; restoration and/or protection of riparian corridors and streams; stabilization of natural hydrology; peat land hydrology restoration; and approved watershed plan implementation projects.

They also proposed new processes including, wetland siting strategies, In-lieu Fee program, and the possibility they might need additional data to inform mitigation siting decision making. Legislation change proposals included; creating a BWSR authority to create “high priority” areas for wetland mitigation throughout the state and from which developers could focus their mitigation intentions; create an in-lieu fee program where a developer could pay a mitigation-need based fee to a fund, which would then be used by a third party to purchase or create mitigation; create an authority for BWSR to purchase land in support of the banking and/or in-lieu fee program; and the creation of stewardship fund from which mitigation maintenance would be funded.

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Cherry Schwartz, Barry Drazkowski and Jill Crafton at work during the Fall Board of Directors’ meeting. Photo by Gary Schwartz.
Much to Do about Everything, Jill Crafton

Bush Lake Chapter member Jill Crafton wears many Ike hats on the local, state, regional and national levels. She lists recent activities such as the Great Lakes Healing our Waters Coalition Conference in Michigan that reflects her interest in keeping the Great Lakes in good shape, especially by cleaning ballast water. At the conference, Jill attended a Muskegon tour of a restoration project 40 minutes south of Jill’s Lake Michigan family place. The return on investment for cleaning up some of the toxic areas is greater than a 6:1 return for every dollar invested, even better, the students, residents and businesses became involved and now have an ownership stake in keeping the waters clean.

Working with Dave Zentner on Great Lakes issues, Jill praises his tireless efforts to secure funding for ballast water treatment testing.

Jill has chaired the Watershed Solutions Summit since it evolved from the Wetlands Summits and will again in February. As treasurer of the Minnesota Division she handles budget and money matters and has a leadership role with quarterly meetings. A newly elected National Director she provides leadership on the League’s Executive Board. And she makes time for local affairs such as tending the Ike table at the September Minneapolis Monarch Festival. These are just a few of the many issues oriented activities that capture her time. With all these activities she added a September wedding of her son. Jill promises to have more time starting in January when she retires from Robins, Kaplan, J Miller, and Ciresi L.L.P.

Conservation Volunteer Article
Honors Jan and John Green

The November-December issue of Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine includes an article by former DNR Division Director Lee Pfannmuller that recounts the important conservation work of McCabe Chapter members Jan and John Green. The Greens have helped to promote and conserve Minnesota’s Lake Superior region for nearly 60 years. Both of them have written books about the natural world – Jan on birds and John on geology. And each has been played a major role in conservation issues affecting the North Shore. In the 1970s, Jan Green was a key organizer in the movement to expand protection of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, ultimately helping to pass the BWCA Wilderness Act of 1978. Meanwhile, John provided expert testimony on mining waste discharge into Lake Superior, and he scouted more than 100 miles of the Superior Hiking Trail to determine the best route for construction.

To learn more about the Greens’ rich conservation legacy, read the full article at dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine

President’s Letter Continued from page 1.

Fundamentally, there are some good ideas on the table, but they are mixed in with some very troubling assumptions. The most troubling for me, is that the State is essentially writing off the northeast, assuming potential development exceeds the area’s ability to find suitable mitigation and that saying no is not an option. Gone is the requirement to mitigate within the same basin. Gone is the assumption that the law provides a vehicle to say enough is enough.

This is a very short and simplified summary. Discussions are unfolding as I write this letter. The conservation community is coming together to develop its strategy to preserve WCA and its intent. The Minnesota Izaak Walton League is working diligently to make our voices heard. We are working with our new Environmental Issues Committee to change the legislative outcome. When you read this, we and the rest of the conservation community, will be engaged in a very significant legislative initiative to protect OUR wetland resources.

Justin Hanson of the Mower Co. SWCD at the Trom water retention pond. Photo by Gary Schwartz.

Justin Hanson and Kenny Trom at the Trom farm. Trom a member of the Austin Ikes. Numerous environmental improvements have been made on his farm and the group toured two of them. Photo by Gary Schwartz.
Ikes celebrated Halloween at the Austin Americinn the evening before the Fall Board of Directors’ Meeting. No scary costumes, just serious discussion of issues facing Ikes. Attendees agreed that Don Arnosti’s representation of Ikes has already shown positive results with Audubon members and activists on board. Arnosti’s long time environmental contacts are a plus for Ike visibility. The Issues Committee has been collecting issues recommendations.

The Minnesota Division appeal will have program check offs as usual and this year there will be a check off for the Environmental Issues Program. The program will also be seeking funding through grants. Positive relationships with foundations are essential for the Minnesota Division to succeed.

A question? What would you, as an Izaak Walton Leag member, like the Ikes to be known for? You can be involved.

**LOCAL ACTION ON A SPECIFIC ISSUE BRINGS RECOGNITION.**

**Notes from Board of Directors’ Meeting - November 1, at Austin Ike’s Chapter House**

President Barry Drazkowski reported that the Environmental Issues Committee should provide a new venue for Chapter and Division interaction around issues. Gathering issues ideas from members via grass roots input is vital to Issues Committee progress.

Other items covered at the board meeting:

- Move Minnesota transportation investment update by John Siekmeier; Utah Canyonlands Ike support for action by U.S Congress and President; Transportation investment update; Public Utilities Commission (PUC) member to be appointed, has to be a Republican or Independent for membership balance; Treasurer Jill Crafton announced a $7000 contribution from the Leuthold Foundation. Ikes are very appreciative of their ongoing commitment to the MN Division; Gary Schwartz announced that he will not run for another term as National Director; Many thanks to Gary for his national leadership over many years. His unfailing attendance with Cherry at national meetings has taken them all over the country; Membership of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership was renewed as a valuable source of publicizing Ike priority issues through MEP’s legislative briefing book. Over 80 environmental organizations share information in the briefing book.

**This Presentation Was Part of BOD Meeting**

**Choosing the Best Pipeline to Move Bakken Oil**

In an article in the Fall Waltonian, Duluth Ike Craig Sterle wrote an impassioned plea for support of a safer pipeline route than the new Sandpiper Pipeline proposed by the Enbridge Pipeline Company to move Bakken oil to Superior, Wisconsin.

Sterle brought Richard Smith of the Friends of the Headwaters to the BOD meeting to explain the advantages of alternative pipeline routes. In a slide presentation Smith helped members visualize the advantages of other proposals than the more dangerous route advocated by Enbridge.

Armed with many maps, Smith showed increased possibility of ground water contamination, danger to wild rice beds, wetland areas, animals and plants, that could be part of building the new Sandpiper Pipeline.

**FOREST MEMORIALS**

Here’s a perfect way to memorialize or honor a loved one and also help the environment. A minimum donation of $20 will send a calligraphed certificate to the one designated by the donator. The money is used to provide maintenance of the Fay Harrington IWLA Memorial Stand, a piece of forest located at Deep Portage Conservation Reserve in Cass County Minnesota. A lovely signed nature trail winds through the woods making it a beautiful place to hike. The donation also supports Minnesota Division programs. Forms can be be secured through ther from the Minnesota Division Office or online at minnesotaikes.org by clicking on the “Resources” tab.

**Afternoon Programs**

The first afternoon session featured professional photographer John Duren's stunning pictures of birds that dwell in wetlands. Duren has a background of early work at the Hormel Nature Center. His photos are breathtaking and show the patience and talent Duren has nurtured to collect his portraits. The show was a tribute to the value of wetlands.

Later the group moved outside to visit Ike Kenny Trom’s farm to view two environmental improvements of many Trom has made, one a retention pond. The group toured several other projects including those of Dwight Ault, another Austin Ike.
Change Is a Coming (And We’re Driving That Train)

by Don Arnosti

Izaak Walton League members have a proud legacy of conservation achievements in Minnesota, and we are looking to add a few more achievements in the coming years. This Fall, dozens of members from across the state have joined the “Environmental Issues Committee” (EIC) and have been meeting in person and on line to discuss issues. In December, the EIC will recommend to the Board a select few upon which we should focus the majority of our efforts in the coming year.

The EIC is considering recommending up to three issue areas:

*Agricultural reforms, to encourage cover crops to retain soil and nutrients on site.

*Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy implementation at the chapter level, to address Global Warming.

*Invasive Species, both terrestrial and aquatic, which threaten the Great Lakes, our lands and waters.

*Land Management and Funding, we seek to protect Scientific and Natural Areas from inappropriate uses, increase funding to natural resource agencies, and protect School Trust Lands from exploitive, economically-driven management.

*Mining, sulfide ore mining threatens the waters and wetlands of northeastern Minnesota, while silica sand mining destroys rare bluffland habitats and dries up springs and streams in southeastern Minnesota.

*Water and Wetlands, are at the heart of many conservation issues in our state. Unsustainable groundwater use depletes aquifers, agricultural practices pollute surface waters and damage Mississippi River habitats, while mining interests threaten to undermine the state Wetland Conservation Act.

Join the EIC today (email list serve) to stay up-to-date with the latest efforts. Your ideas and participation are welcome! Please contact Noreen Tyler at ikes@minnesotaikes.org to get signed up.

— GreenStep Cities —

As Michelle Schroeder steps down from her two term, four years as a member of the Minneapolis Community Environmental Advisory Committee, she plans to give GreenStep Cities more of her time.

For Ike cities that are already GreenStep cities (Austin, Duluth, Grand Rapids, Rochester, etc,) she plans to ensure that current sustainability efforts continue. For Ike Chapter cities that are not yet GreenStep, she will continue to recruit these from a different angle. There are also other cities nearby that have expressed interest in becoming GreenStep Cities that are not Ike Chapter cities.

To help these cities become more sustainable, Michelle will identify practices they already employ and report progress on newly established best practices. Ike Chapters can help engage communities to adopt new sustainability measures.

Input from GreenStep Cities will be reported by Michelle. Let her know positive progress that she can pass on to others.

Michelle explains, “Whether or not these cities are GreenStep Cities, I want to help find ways for Ikes to engage those communities to help them become more sustainable. It is where you live. You should have a say in the future of your home cities. Plan on seeing more regular input from me via the Waltonian where I will highlight various cities’ progress. Austin will be one of the first communities, specifically its Downtown Plan. I hope you will enjoy this new information as it becomes available.” Contact Michelle at sustainableike@hotmail.com for additional information.

Minnesota GreenStep Cities is a voluntary challenge, assistance and recognition program to help cities achieve their sustainability quality of life goals. This free, continuous improvement system is based on 28 best management practices that can be implemented by completing various goals. Find more information and a listing of Best Practices on the GreenStep Cities web site greenstep.pca.state.mn.us.

Plan to Make Division Awards

Plan to honor Ikes and other environmentally active citizens with awards for their environmental work during 2014. Nomination forms can be found on minnesotaikes.org by clicking on the “Resources” tab.
✓ Chapters Check In

Austin Chapter continued its efforts to bring back Purple Martins and had at least 85 fledglings. They are hoping for second year birds returning to their area next year. York University of Toronto reports that Purple Martins are declining by about 4% a year due to non-native species such as European Starlings and House Sparrows as well as climate (cold wet springs and hot dry summers). The Austin Chapter holds an annual Pork Feed to support the Wetbugs program at the Hormel Nature Center as well as a steak cookout to raise money for other area youth environmental education programs.

At the Austin Chapter’s September meeting, Minnesota Division National Director Gary Schwartz presented the Ray Haik Watershed District Award to the Cedar River Watershed District. (The award was named for Haik who was a former National president from Minnesota who authored legislation that established watershed districts.) Justin Hanson accepted the award on behalf of the CRWD. The CRWD was nominated for the award based on the following: Applying for and receiving grant funds to aid in river and stream improvements; Successfully implementing flood control and wetland projects with local landowners; Partnering with local groups to clean up the Cedar River; Educating the public through presentations during Waterways Month (June) and local youth with the Wetbugs project. Good Work, Austin Chapter!

The Owatonna Chapter’s Rip Roarin Rummage Sale held in September cleared over $700. The proceeds go to funding scholarships, including the Minnesota Division Scholarship, for youth, chapter leadership development and to preserve land in Steele County for wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation. This October they also organized about 50 students from Owatonna High School and several chapter volunteers to clean up trash from Hammann Park and Izaak Walton Creek as well as attacking invasive plants.

The New Ulm Chapter held its annual Fall Ditch Clean Up, making their roadside cleaner and more attractive.

Buckthorn busting at the Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter property has made a lot of headway this fall, thanks to help from their members, the city of Brooklyn Park, and the Champlin Park Outdoor Adventure classes of Kim Kovich and Ed Olson.

For their work volunteers were treated to homemade soup and cheesy French bread provided by members Judy Arnold and Linda Erickson. Thanks to their efforts, they can see that a variety of native plants and flowers are making a comeback. It is a never-ending challenge as buckthorn seeds can remain dormant for six years.

This November the Bush Lake Chapter hosted a Climate Parents Meeting with their State Senator Melissa Franzen. Climate Parents is a group of parents and grandparents working for climate and clean energy action for the sake of today’s kids and future generations.

Every December the McCabe Chapter hosts a new member meeting that explains: Who we are. What we do. How we do it. And How very welcome you would be. Great idea McCabe Chapter!

Earlier this fall the Bush Lake Chapter and the Minnesota Valley Chapter both participated in the Minneapolis Monarch Festival and Bloomington Heritage Days. These events are fun and were a great way to promote the League, its conservation activities and to promote chapter growth. Milkweed seed packets provided by Prairie Moon Nursery were handed out at the Monarch Festival for citizens to plant and provide the monarch butterfly’s food.

Owatonna Chapter members Gerry Wacek and Cherry Schwartz pose with some of the trash the Owatonna High School students collected. Photo by Gary Schwartz.
New Member Offer!

The Minnesota Division is offering a 50% discount on the national and division portions of brand new member dues for the 2015 membership year (all new memberships processed after October 1, 2014). In order to qualify for this reduced rate no one in the household may have ever held an Izaak Walton League membership. *This offer is only for new members who have no prior history of League membership. A portion of the proceeds for the new Environmental Issues program have been designated to fund this offer in the hope that new members will help enhance and grow our issues activities.

Because our national office requires full dues, please process your new memberships as you normally would. Invoice the Minnesota Division for the 50% portion of the new members national and division dues along with corresponding names, addresses, phone numbers and of course email addresses.

*This offer does not include the chapter dues portion of membership. The goal of this special offer is to get 1000 new members who will be active on conservation issues and help breathe new life into our Chapters and the League. Please contact the Minnesota Division office if you have any questions. Send all invoices to: Minnesota Division IWLA; 2233 University Avenue W, Ste. 339; Saint Paul, MN 55114

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL of our volunteers and donors who have contributed to our efforts from early December of 2013 to the end of November of 2014. We know that there are a lot of pressures and worthwhile causes that your time and money could support, making your contributions to our efforts especially valuable to us.

We cannot thank you enough!


If you haven’t responded to the annual Fall Appeal, please do so now and get your name added to the honor roll. We rely on funds from all of our fundraising activities to make ends meet; supporting all of our programs including the new Environmental Issues initiative.
January 23 - Friday evening

7:00 - 9:30 PM  Wine & Cheese & Beer get-together
Minnesota Valley Chapter, 6601 Auto Club Rd.,
Bloomington, MN  55438, (952)944-1423

January 24 - Saturday

All Saturday eventa at:
REI-Bloomington, 750 W American Blvd.
(952)884-4315, rei.com/stores/bloomington.htm

Morning
9:00  Doors open/set up
9:30  Minnesota Division Board of Directors’

Noon - Working Lunch (pizza)

Afternoon
1:00  Environmental Issues Committee
Workshop - 2015 Focus
Don Arnosti and members of the Environmental Issues Committee present high priority environmental issues for 2015. Attendees will break into small groups and brainstorm ways that we can carry these issues forward with vigor to our legislators, to our chapter members, and to our local communities.

4:30  Adjourn

Saturday Evening Program
6:00  Dinner (provided by those amazing chili-casserole-cupcake cooking volunteers of the Bush Lake Chapter)
7:00  Program – Becky Rom presents Boundary Waters Wilderness: More Precious than Copper. Becky talks about how we can protect the pristine waters and unspoiled forests of the Boundary Waters by taking action. She shows how keeping sulfide ore mining out of the watershed and continuing the rich legacy of the Wilderness Act will ensure that future generations will enjoy the Boundary Waters Wilderness for another 50 years and also help improve the economy of NE Minnesota. Becky is a resident of Ely, former chair of the Wilderness Society Governing Council, Friends of the Boundary Waters Canoe Wilderness, Twin Cities Community Land Bank and advocate for the Boundary Waters since the 1970s.

*Possible Accommodations: Four Points by Sheraton Minneapolis Airport, 7745 Lyndale Avenue South, Richfield, MN 55423, (612) 861-1000, starwoodhotels.com rates from $79; La Quinta Inn Minneapolis Airport Bloomington, 7815 Nicollet Avenue, Bloomington MN, Minnesota 55420, (952)888-8800, super8.com, rates from $67; Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites, 1601 East American Blvd, Bloomington, 55425 1 (800) 315 2621, (952)854-1687, hiexpress.com - rates from $114  *prices are subject to change.

Registration Form - Winter BOD & Strategic Planning Meeting & Events

Name(s) ________________________________________________________________
Address:  ____________________________________________________________________
City:  ___________________________________________  State:  ____    Zip:  ____________
E-mail:  _____________________________________________________________

Registration Fee:  $25 per person  X_______ = ________ enclosed.

Online registration available at  minnesotaiwes.org. Questions?  Call (651)221-0215 or  email ikes@minnesotaiwes.org.
MINNESOTA WALTONIAN
The Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America publishes the Waltonian four times a year on the months of March, June, September, and December. Copy deadline is the eighth of the month prior to publication. Send material to: Waltonian Editor, C/O Minnesota Div., IWLA, 2233 University Ave. W, Ste. 339, St. Paul, MN 55114, 651-221-0215, ikes@minnesotaikes.org

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2014 Division & National Dues
(Including national dues -Chapter dues are in addition)
Individual $52.50, Family $75.00, Student $30.00, Youth $15.80

WATERSHED SUMMIT
Date Set
The date is February 21 at Normandale College in Bloomington. Among timely topics to be presented will be the MN AG Water Quality Certification Pilot Project and Nutrient Reduction Strategy by Darrell Gerber of the Freshwater Society. The Freshwater Society will partner with Ikes on the Summit.

For more information check the Minnesota Division website minnesotaikes.org.