

Down Memory Lane

10 YEARS AGO • AUG. 9, 1999

Calling the fee structure at the city park “simply insane,” a charter captain told the Grand Marais Park and Recreation Board he probably will not be back next summer unless something is done to make the system more equitable.

“I’m not a troublemaker, but I’m here to tell you that this is a bad deal all the way around,” Jim Latvela of Two Harbors told the board at its Aug. 3 meeting. “My operating costs have doubled since when I first came here 15 years ago.”

There is good news and bad news for Gunflint Trail residents. The good news is that approximately 95 percent of customers have had their power restored following the July 4 blowdown.

The bad news is that for the remaining consumers, it will continue to be a long tedious process to locate and repair the problem.

Line crews are now going pole by pole, span by span, locating problems. They are also looking at individual services, replacing poles, meters and transformers and reconnecting lines as needed.

20 YEARS AGO • AUG. 7, 1989

Seventy-five years ago this summer, Andrew Hedstrom and a few friends fired up an old, refurbished steam sawmill on Maple Hill north of Grand Marais and began to saw pine logs into lumber.

Those early days of horse-drawn sleighs have been replaced with laser-guided saws and computerized sorting machines, but the Hedstrom family’s dedication to producing lumber products continues.

The 75th anniversary celebration culminates the week of Aug. 14 with a four-day open house at the automated 88,000-square-foot sawmill. The company will open its doors to everyone, offering guided tours and refreshments for all.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has some good news and bad news about sea lampreys in Lake Superior.

The good news is very few lampreys are spawning in Cook County streams. The bad news is there are still plenty of lampreys in Lake Superior.

50 YEARS AGO • AUG. 6, 1959

The Matt Johnson store is about to have a face-lifting.

The Johnson brother team — Ted, Tumsey and Paul — have sought bids from contractors on the enlargement of the present Matt Johnson Store, which will allow for much more floor space and make working conditions handier.

The major change will be the elimination of the present east basement. Instead the floor area will be lengthened 22 feet eastward, and extended another 30 feet northward beyond the present north wall. Display aisles will be changed to run east and west instead of north and south.

The new addition will be solid brick.

Twenty minors were surprised at a beer party on Cascade Beach last week and politely told to go home.

Sheriff Emerson Morris, alerted by a highway patrolman who discovered the party, conferred with the parents. No charges were made.

L.D. “Dad” Lammon, 81, veteran newspaper publisher at Coleraine, was lost for 33 hours in a blueberry patch before being found, well chewed by mosquitoes, but otherwise in good condition.

“Dad” was found sitting on a log and still insisting if he’d been given a bit more time he would have found his way out.

We’re glad he got out in good shape, that he wasn’t harmed by the three bears he saw, and hope that someone will find and bring back the 12 quarts of blueberries he had picked and had to leave behind.

Gogebic Lake in Cook County, the sole home of splake in Minnesota, was the object of some recent study by state fisheries biologists.

What are splake? They are the result of crossing brook trout with lake trout. Splake have been successfully raised and stocked by Quebec and New Hampshire. Strictly an experiment in Minnesota to date, fisheries officials are watching the results of their first stocking efforts in Gogebic Lake.

90 YEARS AGO • AUG. 6, 1919

The Wahlstrom family left Thursday on a berry-picking expedition and are expected to return Thursday.

A get-together farmers and settlers picnic will be held at Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Westerlund’s “Hillcrest” farm near the Brule, town of Hovland, on Aug. 23.

A.J. McGuire of the State Agricultural Farm, whom many in Cook County know and admire for his good work here in the past, will be the speaker.

The orchestra of the Orpheum Theater, Duluth, having chartered the Edna A. for a trip around Isle Royale, will stop all next Saturday at Grand Marais and give a dance and concert at the Happy Hour Hall on the evening of Aug. 9.

Those who come are assured of a good time.



Herbicide treatment on roadsides, power lines

Rhonda Silence

Spraying of herbicides for vegetation management on electrical power lines by Great River Energy (GRE) began in Cook County in July and finished up last week. GRE treated its 70 – 100 foot wide transmission line right-of-way from Taconite Harbor in Schroeder to the Maple Hill area. However, unlike the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which posts signs where it uses herbicides or the US Forest Service which issues a press release cautioning the public to be aware that herbicides may be used in forest road rights-of-way, GRE does not notify county residents unless the power lines cross private property.

GRE is a wholesale power provider which delivers electricity to the Lutsen-based Arrowhead Electric Cooperative Inc. Arrowhead Electric has also used herbicides on its distribution power lines in the past. According to Joe Buttweiler of Arrowhead, the last time rights-of-way were treated with herbicide was 2006. Buttweiler said the cooperative subcontracts treatment to companies that are required to use EPA-approved herbicides. The last time Arrowhead used herbicides the work was done by Central Applicators of Foley, MN. Buttweiler said if treatment is to be done, the cooperative notifies its customers via the cooperative newsletter and if the treatment crosses private property, by registered letter.

The Minnesota DNR has not conducted herbicide treatment for several years, however, when it did, in 2007, it did post the area where the spraying took place. The DNR conducted herbicide treatment to eliminate brush to reduce the competition between newly planted trees and brush. The DNR treated 310 acres in 2007 on state land in the Devil Track – Trestle Pine Lake area. The chemical used at that time was Accord, or Glyphosate, which DNR Two Harbors Area Forester John Bachar said was the equivalent of the household weed-killer Round-Up.

The US Forest Service is conducting herbicide treatment along its road rights-of-way in an attempt to control the spread of non-native invasive plants through the end of August. Although Forest Service spokesperson Kris Reichenbach said the Forest Service uses non-chemical means whenever possible, herbicide spraying is often the most effective way



Photo by Mike Schelmeske

Lake States Tree Service, contracted by Great River Energy, treated transmission lines with herbicides during the month of July. No signs were posted, however sites that were treated will be apparent as the treated vegetation is now brown and wilting.

to control invasive plants. The Forest Service uses two EPA-approved chemicals, Milestone and Escort.

The Forest Service does not post signs where it sprays, but it sent out news releases cautioning forest visitors not to pick berries next to a road. Reichenbach advised, “Although we control the spray to stay within 25 feet of the road’s edge, we suggest that if you do pick berries next to a road, you move 50 feet from the road before you start picking.”

Maps showing the Forest Service herbicide treatment sites are available at the district offices in Grand Marais, Tofte, Aurora, Ely, and Cook, MN or on the Superior National Forest website at www.fs.fed.us/r9/superior or by calling Jack Greenlee at (218) 229-8817.

GRE spokesperson Lori Buffington said herbicide treatment is one of many methods the power provider uses to avoid outages on the transmission lines. She explained, “To ensure the safe, reliable operation of our transmission lines, GRE inspects its lines frequently by air and also by ground to look for, among other things, trees that may interfere with lines. Transmission lines are not insulated and their voltage is high, so trees could cause a short circuit and outages. Additionally, line contact with trees or other objects that touch the ground can be dangerous for people nearby and could cause an outage.”

Buffington confirmed website information stating that

the transmission line voltage averages 33,000 volts (33kV).

Buffington said GRE contracted with Lake States Tree Service of Grand Rapids, MN, which used Dow herbicides Garlon 3A and DMA4, both EPA approved herbicides. She said the contractor was not required by the EPA to post notice of the spraying.

Approved by the EPA or not, some county residents would rather not see any herbicides used, like Mike Schelmeske, of Grand Marais, who noticed the spraying operation on County Road 7 in Grand Marais—in an area abundant with raspberry bushes. Schelmeske said he would prefer mechanical brush clearing. “If they contacted people, they may find that we’d be willing to mechanically release the vegetation,” said Schelmeske.

Schelmeske noted that at the very least, GRE could post signs informing the public that chemical treatment had taken place within the right-of-way. “Then people would know that the area had been sprayed and someone who was chemically sensitive would have the option of going elsewhere to walk or to pick berries.”

Steve Scott, general foreman with Lake States Tree Service, said his company does contact land-owners if the treatment is conducted on easements crossing private

property. He said the county property tax roll is used to contact people and before any spraying is done, a person in the field double-checks to see that they have found all land-owners on the transmission line.

No notice is given on road rights-of-way owned by the county or state. Scott said land use permits have been obtained for maintenance work, including herbicide treatment on the power line rights-of-way along roads. Posting is not required with the herbicides in question, he said. “If the label requires posting, we do post. The label is the law,” said Scott.

Scott said that the Dow chemicals used are approved for use in working pastures (except dairy) and in wetlands. “Apparently there is not a significant risk to people’s health,” said Scott.

Asked if posting would be considered in the future, Scott said his company would not post unless directed by the EPA or GRE. “Every year we probably spray at least 1,000 miles of right-of-way throughout the state,” said Scott. “If we had to post it all, it would become very costly.”

Scott confirmed that the herbicide treatments in Cook County were finished. “By this time everything we sprayed is definitely wilting,” he said.

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