

Invasion of earthworms?

Citizen volunteers needed for research along the North Shore

Staff reports

The hunt is on for invading earthworms in North Shore parks and wayside rests. In late August, scientists searched the forest floor for visual indicators that non-native earthworms might be having an effect on this ecosystem.

In September and October, people interested in the project are invited to help collect and identify earthworms. Go to the web site at www.GreatLakesWormWatch.org for more information and to sign up.

Many people are still surprised to learn that these ribbed wigglers, coveted by anglers and gardeners, are not native to this region. Earthworms were introduced by Europeans some

250 years ago with plants and in ship ballast from across the ocean. Subsequent generations of Americans have moved them throughout the country, especially around lakeshores when leftover bait is turned loose.

What does this mean for the forests in this region? According to NRRI scientist Cindy Hale, it can mean stress on the forest floor. Beloved trilliums, orchids and other spring and summer flowering plants are threatened, perhaps even the regeneration of sugar maple trees.

The scientists are searching the following parks: Jay Cooke, Gooseberry, Split Rock, Tettegouche, Temperance, Crosby Manitou, Judge Magney, and Grand Portage, and the Caribou and Kadunce way side rests on Highway 61.

"For thousands of years, no earthworms existed in this region until European settlers began arriving around the mid-1800s," said Hale. "But they continue to be transported, intentionally and unintentionally, through a range of human activities, from dumping bait to transporting compost and mulch."

There are several species of earthworms that are not yet widespread across the Great Lakes region, but have the

potential to be very destructive. Since earthworms on their own travel very slowly, people need to be aware and help prevent spreading them unintentionally. There are about 16 earthworm species that are invading North America (of 3,000 to 4,000 species globally) and research shows that the more species of earthworms found in a site, the greater the potential impacts.

"Many people have learned since kindergarten that earthworms are good because they mix and aerate the soil," said Hale. "But researchers are documenting dramatic changes to the native understory plant species and tree seedlings because earthworms change the soil structure and nutrient availability for these plants."

This summer's research has focused on identifying the level of impact by exotic earthworms throughout the north shore region so land managers can protect forested areas not yet invaded.

Citizen volunteers will learn how to catch and identify earthworms, and how earthworm invasions can lead to a cascade of changes in hardwood forest ecosystems that can negatively affect many forest plants and animals.



Subscribe to the Cook County News-Herald 218-387-9100 www.CookCountyNews-Herald.com

Bakk receives another Legislator award

Staff reports

State Sen. Tom Bakk, DFL-Cook, was presented with two 2009 Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities' (CGMC) Legislator of Distinction Awards on Land Use and Tax Policy on July 31.



Senator Tom Bakk

Bakk was recognized for his positive impact on land use and annexation reforms guiding state tax policy, and leadership in crafting the 2009 Omnibus Tax Bill.

As Senate Tax Chair, Bakk has been a strong advocate for Local

Government Aid (LGA), the state's program that helps cities provide basic services. In 2003, the LGA program suffered substantial cuts and has yet to recover the same level of funding as was appropriated five years ago. In his 2008 Tax Bill, Sen. Bakk increased LGA by \$42 million, and this year the Senate tax proposal held LGA constant despite the huge state deficit.

The CGMC is a nonprofit advocacy organization representing 80 cities outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The coalition educates legislators about issues important to greater Minnesota.

"Sen. Bakk is one of Greater Minnesota's strongest advocates when it comes to property tax relief," said CGMC President Wayne Wolden, mayor of Wadena. "He is resolute in his support for LGA,

and unwavering in his commitment to sound tax policy."

"Sen. Bakk had the courage to push for land use reform that will protect Minnesota's natural resources and environment," said Executive Director of the CGMC, Tim Flaherty. "His efforts will not only reduce the cost of government, but they will dramatically improve Minnesota's water quality, and help the state meet their climate-change goals."

"I am dedicated to protecting Minnesotans from paying rising property taxes for the services all Minnesotans are entitled to," Bakk said.

"Deep cuts to LGA translate to increased property taxes and reduced services. I will continue to fight against balancing the state's

budget through raising property taxes — it is not fair, equitable, and will exacerbate the already growing problem cities face to provide services we all need and use."

Bakk was also recognized in February 2009 when he received the Building Association of Minnesota's President's Award for his efforts to pass legislation requiring a statewide building code for all builders; and in July 2009 by the League of Minnesota Cities when he was awarded its Legislator of Distinction Award for his role in crafting the 2009 Omnibus Tax Bill and his efforts to preserve agricultural land and open space through land use policies.

Who are our elected officials?

By popular demand, we are once again running contact information for our elected officials. If you want to talk to decision makers—from our county commissioners to the President of the United States, here's how:

President of the United States President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington DC 20500
(202) 456-1414
www.WhiteHouse.gov

Vice-President Joseph Biden President of the Senate
US Senate
Washington DC 20510
(202) 456-1414
www.WhiteHouse.gov

Senator Al Franken
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
(202) 224-5641
Fax: (202) 224-0044
info@franken.senate.gov
(Website pending)

Senator Amy Klobuchar
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
(202) 224-3244
Fax: (202) 228-2186
www.klobuchar.senate.gov

Representative James Oberstar
2365 Rayburn Building
Washington DC 20215
(202) 225-6211
Fax: (202) 225-0699
Oberstar@cpinternet.com
www.house.gov/oberstar

Governor Tim Pawlenty
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul MN 55155
(800) 657-3717
Fax: (651) 296-2089
tim.pawlenty@state.mn.us

Senator Thomas Bakk
75 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol Building, Room 226
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
(651) 296-8881
sen.tom.bakk@senate.mn

Representative David Dill - District 6A
571 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul MN 55155
(800) 339-0466
rep.david.dill@house.mn

Cook County Commissioners
District 1 Jan Hall
District 2 Fritz Sobanja
District 3 Robert Fenwick
District 4 Jim Johnson
District 5 Bruce Martinson

Cook County Courthouse
411 W. 2nd Street
Grand Marais MN 55604
(218) 387-3000
E-mail Commissioners c/o
Board Secretary Janet Simonen
Janet.simonen@co.cook.mn.us

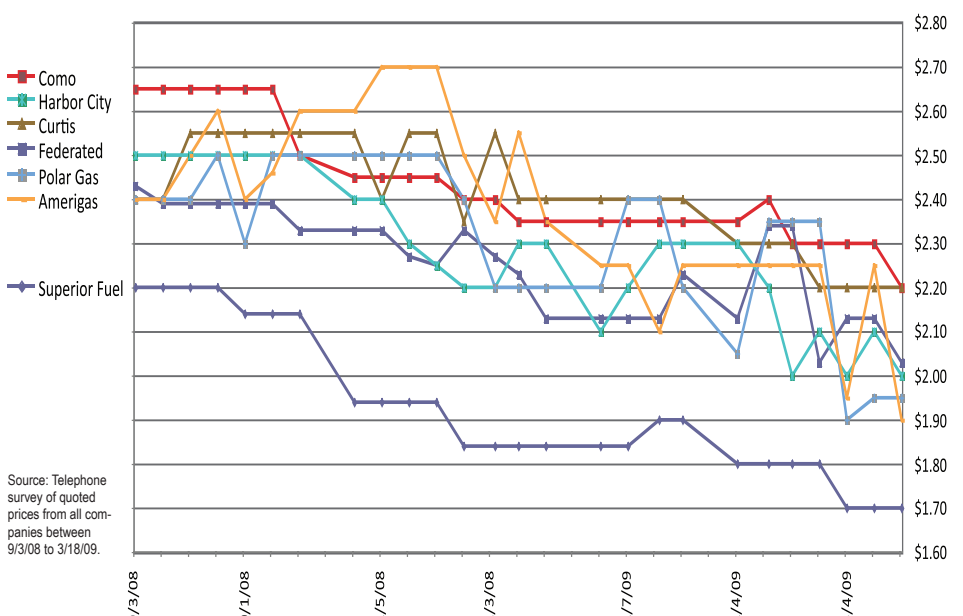
Grand Marais City Council
Mayor Sue Hakes
Councilor Bill Lenz
Councilor Tim Kennedy
Councilor Jan Sivertson
Councilor Kay Costello

15 North Broadway
Grand Marais MN 55604
(218) 387-1848
E-Mail Councilors c/o
Cityhall@boreal.org

ARE TANKS REALLY FREE?

Superior Fuel customers saved an average of \$600 on home heating fuel.

WINTER 2008 / 2009 PRICE COMPARISON



When our competitors offer a "free tank" lease, you're locking yourself into their high fuel prices.

Put yourself in the position of getting the best price for your home heating fuel year after year.

The chart above shows significant savings through tank ownership.

We're confident that you'll choose Superior Fuel Company. We've consistently offered the lowest prices.

In addition, there are no hidden charges such as "hazardous materials" and "fuel surcharges."

We're the honest, straightforward company that offers low prices still untouched by the competition.



Call Superior Fuel Company today. Start saving on home heating fuel!
(218) 722-2050 • (715) 392-3431

SUPERIOR FUEL COMPANY.
DELIVERING HONESTY, INTEGRITY & HOME HEATING FUEL.
CALL 877-388-1744

WATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

for Cabin/Home Owners

- » Removes bacteria, viruses and cysts
- » Treats all water used within your cabin/home
- » Fully automatic
- » Minimal space required for installation
- » Easy winterization for seasonal usage
- » Performance verified by NSF international & BioVir Laboratories

www.homespring.com
218-388-0155
 AUSTIN CONSTRUCTION