

Volume
3,
Issue 1

May

Wabedo Township News

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of Wabedo Township was held on Tuesday, March 11, 2003.

The meeting began with the election of a moderator. Bill Bliss was elected to this position.

Items on the agenda included .

Treasurer's report

Election Results

Levies for: Road & Bridge, Fire Department, Ambulance, and General

Donation requests

Planning Commission Report

Investigating the sale of the Town Hall

Off-sale liquor in Wabedo Township

Look for articles on some of these topics in the newsletter. Although the meeting was well attended there is always room for more. Next year's meeting date was set for the second Tuesday in March, 2004 at 8:00 p.m. at the Township Hall. **March 9, 2004.**

It is important for everyone to take an active role in their township government.

Donations:

There were several requests for donations. Donations are part of the general revenue fund and given by Wabedo Township to organizations in the area. The following donations were made:

Friends of the Library \$1,500

Lakes Area Dive Team, - \$500

Lake Country First Response Team, a defibrillator \$2,900, Longville

Ambulance Service a lap top computer with a GIS not to exceed \$1,500.

The Safety Network \$1,000

The Longville Clinic thanked us for the past support and reported that they did not need any donations this year.

Town Hall

The floor plan for a new town hall was discussed See the news article.

Off-Sale Liquor

There was a discussion about off-sale liquor in Wabedo Township. The residents were in consensus that they did not want off-sale liquor anywhere in Wabedo Township.

It was a good meeting with a lot of participation by

Election Results

There were two positions on the ballots treasurer and one township supervisor.

Alicia Burgers was re-elected Treasurer for another two years. There was also one write in candidate.

No candidates filed for the three year supervisor position. There were six write-ins: Ralph Schmidt, Ed Olson, Lorin Neuenfeldt, Doug Mayer, Mary Jacobson, and Ralph Gardinier. Ralph Schmidt won with 14 votes.

Board of Supervisors

Chair: Bill Bliss 363-2335

Supervisors: Patrick Butler 363-2528

Ralph Schmidt 363-3326

Treasurer: Alicia Burger 363-2319

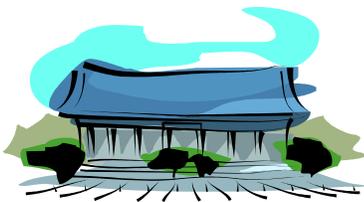
Clerk: Barbara Anderson 363-2649

Town Hall Plans

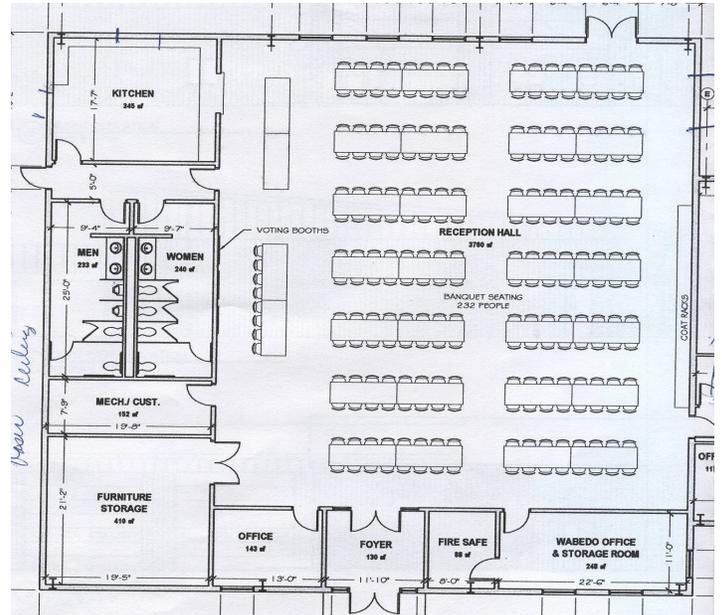
At the annual meeting two years ago the residents asked the Board of Supervisors to have the present town hall property appraised. The Board reported back that the land and building were appraised at \$238,000. Then the residents asked the Board to draw up plans for a new building and look at possible building sites and a road equipment maintenance garage.

This past year the Board has been working with the students from Northwest Technical College in Detroit Lakes (NTC). After touring town halls in townships about the same size as Wabedo the Board met with the students and professor from NTC. They listened to what the Board wanted to consider and what they did not want in the building. It started with a concept of a larger town hall. Residents have commented about needing a community center/town hall.

At the annual meeting it was decided to have a series of articles in the newspaper followed with a survey to the land owners in Wabedo Township to help determine what the next step should be.



Here is a copy of the floor plan that was presented at the annual meeting. The cost of the building is about \$25.00 a square foot. This is based on a 75' x 80' metal building and includes septic system and well, electric, heating and air conditioning.. It does not include the price of the land.



Frozen Septic Systems

You are very lucky and one of the very few if your septic system did not freeze this past winter. Nearly 90% of all septic systems in Cass County were frozen! That is the first time in history.

There are many misconceptions about how to deal with a frozen onsite system.

- Do NOT add antifreeze, salt or a septic system additive into the system.
- Do NOT pump sewage onto the ground surface.
- Do NOT start a fire over the system to attempt to thaw it out.
- Do NOT run water continually to try to unfreeze system.

Things you can do to prevent your system from freezing in the future. You do not have to do all of these, pick and choose based on your situation :

Place a layer of mulch (8-12 inches) over the pipes, tank and soil treatment system to provide extra insulation.

Let the grass grow a little longer in the fall over the system. This will provide extra insulation and help hold any snow that may fall.

Use water; the warmer the better! Increasing the water use from low to normal use can help the system. Doing a load of laundry a day with warm or hot water, using your dishwasher and hot bath/showers can help. DO NOT leave water running all the time, as this will hydraulically overload your system.

If you know you are going to be gone for an extended period, plan accordingly. This could include having someone stay at your home or pumping out your tank before you leave. This is a good idea for cabins also.

Fix any leaky plumbing fixtures or appliances in your home.

For more information go to: <http://septic.umn.edu>

Loons, Lakes and Environmental Stewardship

A few years back I had a call about an injured loon on Wabedo Lake. I caught the loon and discovered that it had an injured eye. As a matter of fact it looked as though it had been poked out. Other than that it seemed to be in pretty good shape. I brought it home and put it in the bathtub. I've done this before with injured loons, it's the only place I have that they seem to be satisfied with. The white bottom in the tub makes it easy for the loon to see and catch the minnows that I provide them. Needless to say, my family doesn't really like giving up the bathtub to a loon. I can only get by with this arrangement for a couple of days. Finding a place for a loon to recuperate isn't always an easy thing. We have licensed wildlife rehabilitators in our area, but none will take a loon on a long-term basis. I searched for a home for this loon and the only one I found who would possibly take it was an individual from the Minnesota Zoo.

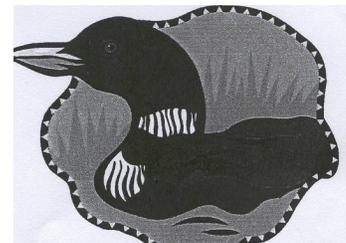
I called the zoo and visited with the rehabilitator. I can't remember his name, but he said that he was doing a study on loons to see why they had died. He would do a necropsy on all the dead loons he received. He read my mind for in the next sentence he assured me that my loon wouldn't become one of his statistics. He said that he would do all he could to insure that it could be placed back in the wild again.

I asked him about his study and what his preliminary findings were. He said that the two major things that he found so far were that the loons died from injuries they received during territorial disputes and mercury poisoning. Territorial disputes I could understand and figured that's what had happened to my loon, but I couldn't figure out where the mercury poisoning came from. I asked him if the loons got the mercury poisoning from where they overwintered. He said no and stated that the mercury was ingested from the fish the loons ate on the local lakes. He said that a lot of those that he got in might have been hit by watercraft, but in reality they were dead on the water as a result of the mercury poisoning. He said that they were just too sick to get out of the way of the boats.

I filed this information and thought about it from time to time. Especially when I'd go out and pick up a dead loon. I never started probing into where the mercury came from until I started paying attention to the fish consumption advisories that the Minnesota Department of Health puts out. They used to publish a yearly booklet, and I'd see it at the Walker fisheries office. I'd page through it and look to see what lakes were listed in the area that I patrolled. I was surprised to see the recommendation for restricted fish consumption on lakes like Woman, Little Boy, and Leech. There was even a page listing meal advice for untested lakes.

Reading through the new advisory each year was total extent of my inquiry until the Brainerd Boat study came out. The DNR had a study done that had an airplane flying transects at different times of the day and over certain lakes. The study area started south of Longville and went all the way down to Brainerd. The information that they came out with was interesting. They said that the trend seemed to be towards more recreational boating and that the average size of the boats had gone up to 18ft. It also stated that the average size motor was pushing towards 100 horsepower. As things happen in life, I'd been passed by again. I'd been perfectly content with my little 16 ft boat with its 25 horsepower motor. The new data started me thinking about how hard these big boats could be on the lakeshore. Surely the wave action from the larger boats must cause a lot of shoreline erosion. These sediments end up in the lake and in a lot of cases on top of the sand, gravel and rocks that are the primary spawning areas for Walleyes. When the eggs are laid in these areas they can become coated with this sediment and the eggs die from lack of oxygen.

This sediment issue made me think back to the Fish Consumption advisory book. There was a section in the book called. **What contaminants are found in Minnesota fish?** The guide states that we have **mercury, PCB's** and **toxaphene**.



More on Loons, Lakes & Environmental Stewardship

Mercury recycles between land, water and air and enters plant and animal tissue. Although mercury is a naturally occurring metal, most of the mercury, which enters Minnesota waters, comes from household and industrial wastes released during incineration, latex paint, and from burning coal and other fossil fuels. Mercury in the air settles into lakes and rivers.

PCB's are synthetic oils that had many uses and are found in electrical transformers, cutting oils, and carbonless paper. Although they were banned in 1976, they do not decompose easily and remain in the water and lake sediments for years.

Toxaphene is a mixture of over 670 chemicals, and was banned in 1990, but continues to be a problem in certain areas.

All of these contaminants seem to have one common denominator. They all end up in the lakes or river's bottom sediments. If they stay there undisturbed it would be like putting them in a zip lock bag. They probably couldn't hurt anything unless the bag was opened some how. Once more I started thinking about the affect that these large boats and motors could have on our water quality. What's happening below the water surface?

A 1974 EPA study concluded that even 10 horsepower engines could produce significant stirring of bottom sediments at depths up to 15ft, and that engines with greater horsepower can do even more damage than smaller engines. The study found that the activity of a 100 hp outboard motorboat causes significant increases in turbidity, orthophosphorus and total phosphorus. In other words, the boats stir up the nutrient-rich bottom sediments, which releases phosphorus and accelerates algae growth. This study wasn't concerned with the possibility of opening the zip lock and releasing **Mercury, PCB's or Toxaphene**.

Motors aren't the only things that are opening the zip lock. Weed rollers also stir up the bottom sediments. What should be done? Does it make sense to keep stirring up old problems? What affect does the suspension of these sediments and contaminants have on our environment? We already know what mercury does to the loons. The Minnesota Department of Health has stepped up its effort to make people aware of this problem by publishing two more booklets. One is called **Eat fish Often?** And the other is **An Expectant Mother's Guide to Eating Minnesota Fish**. Their website address is:

www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/fish/index.html

By now, some of you are probably thinking, we all have to die of something. Others are coming up with things that could be done on the local level in order to assist in solving this problem. I can think of several things that might help. Some of these are being implemented in our area at this time.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Cass County Extension, Cass County Environmental services as well as local lake associations are promoting natural shoreline. Environmental services enforce zoning ordinances that restrict what can be done in the shoreline impact area. By leaving the shoreline natural it aids in preventing erosion as well as preventing excess nutrients from reaching the water. One pound of phosphorus can produce up to 500 lbs of algae bloom. If you must fertilize, use lake friendly fertilizer, which is available at some of the local hardware stores in our area. The more buildings, roads and lawn that we put around our shoreline increase the amount of impervious surface area near the lake. When it rains, instead of soaking into the soil, more runoff and what it contains enters the lake. Cass County Extension offers classes in lakescaping or shoreline design. That means putting your shoreline back the way it was. Using native plants as buffer strips near the waters edge to assist in preventing the nutrients and sediments from reaching the water. Replanting aquatic vegetation or weeds as a lot of us call them. Provides habitat for wildlife and fish as well as dissipating the wave action before it strikes the shore. It's a proven fact that shoreline property value is directly related to water quality.

"It also stated that the average size motor was pushing 100 horsepower..."

Loons, Lakes, and Environmental Stewardship con't.

Sky Blue Waters is the name for a joint powers coalition of approximately 15 townships that are looking in to surface water regulations. Questions are being asked as to whether we should allow large motors on some of our smaller lakes. Should some of the areas be slow no wake? Should we require electric motors only on some of the small-undeveloped pristine lakes? This wouldn't restrict you from using your current boat. You would only be able to use the electric motor while on that particular lake. Talk to your township officials. Ask them to become a member of the coalition. It doesn't mean you have to implement ordinances. It will help the township officials to better plan for the future. As you read this, you're probably thinking of some lakes that would benefit from this type of restriction. This area is referred to as the retirement magnet. It is proposed that we will see a 60% increase in our population by 2030. If your township implements ordinances, it will be for the good of the environment and for our safety.

Another thing to think about is intra-lake zoning. Currently most counties classify their lakes into 3 categories, general development, recreational development and environmental development. Each category has certain restrictions as to lot size, building set back, and how many square feet that can be used for buildings. Once a lake is classified all the shoreline is included in that category. Judging from the information on what's in the bottom sediments. Take a lake that has the classification of recreational development. Does it make sense to allow as much development on the shore of a shallow soft bottom bay that has a lot of low shoreline with aquatic vegetation around its edge? Shouldn't this area be classified differently or should we allow just as many houses around its edge as we do hard or sandy bottom areas. Being less restrictive means more big boats stirring up the bottom and the disturbance of sensitive fish and wildlife habitat. As a result of the new evidence that's coming in. Itasca County is currently looking at changing its shoreline zoning criteria to be more restrictive. Should the State, Cass County or the local townships be doing the same thing?

More research needs to be done on the suspension of mercury from the bottom sediments to see if this increases the amount of methylmercury that is made available for the fish to ingest. The consumption advisory states that mercury is converted to methylmercury by bacteria and other processes. Fish absorb methylmercury from their food and from water as it passes over their gills. Mercury is tightly bound to proteins in all fish tissue, including muscle. Unlike the other contaminants, which can be greatly reduced by removing the skin and trimming off the fatty areas. There is no method of cooking or cleaning fish, which will reduce the amount of mercury in a meal. I find it interesting that the Leech Lake Indian Reservation's consumption advisory is more restrictive than the Minnesota Department of Health's recommendation.

Sensitive fish and wildlife areas should be inventoried on each of the lakes. Lake associations could assist with this. In some cases an organization called the Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation has come into play. They assist individuals as well as lake associations in setting aside sensitive areas. The Mule Lake Wildlife Management area and the Lost Lake Aquatic Management area are two examples their accomplishments.

I didn't write this to scare people. I just wanted to make you aware of what affect we are having on the lakes and rivers in our area. It is our responsibility to practice good environmental stewardship for the future generations. I hope that this will at least start you thinking. Please feel free to contact me. I am not an expert in this area, but I can put you in touch with those who are. If you need more resource information, pick up a copy of the Welcome To Cass County Resource Guide. It is available at the Cass county court house. It contains a compilation of all the governmental agencies we have in Cass County as well as their most frequently asked questions. It also has a quick reference page on obtaining permits. The DNR also has a website that might be of interest. The address is www.dnr.state.mn.us There are no easy answers. Regulations always infringe on an individual's rights. But some times we don't have any other choice.

Doug Sandstrom
DNR



The ISTS Program



ISTS is Individual Septic Treatment Systems. This information was provided by the Region Five Development Commission.

THE PROGRAM

Do I qualify?

Your present system must be failing or in non-compliance. New construction does not qualify.

The failing or non-compliant system must be in the county in which you are applying, although you may also reside outside of the county.

Loans of three (3)% will be offered to qualified landowners in Cass County. Landowners must be able to show repayment ability.

Loans can be for up to \$8,000.

You can take up to five (5) years to repay.

Loan Terms

Maximum interest rate for loans to borrowers shall be 3% per annum.

Maximum of \$8,000 per system.

An origination fee of up to 1/2 % shall be charged to the borrower along with other customary fees.

Life of the loan will not extend past five (5) years.

Region 5 Development Commission will be the local lender of the loan.

Eligible Activities

Repair or replacement of an existing Individual Sewage Treatment System that does not conform with the provisions of the MN Rules Chapter 7080.

Relocation of ISTS out of environmentally sensitive areas.

Replacement of ISTS that is failing or non-conforming with an expanded portion of the ISTS

CONTACT PERSON FOR CASS COUNTY

Paul Fairbanks

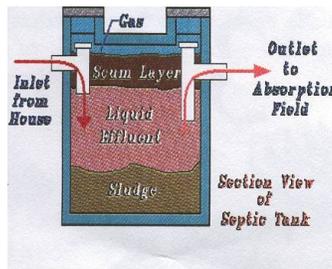
Cass County Environmental Services

303 Minnesota Ave W.

PO Box 3000

Walker, MN 56484

218.547.3300



Eligibility

Loans can be disbursed to private property owners in the participating counties. Your primary residence need not be in the county in which you are applying. Your existing septic system must be failing or non-conforming. Applicants must provide proof of repayment ability.

The NCEDA Loan Bond will determine the ability of the potential borrower to repay the loan. They review potential loans during their monthly meetings.

No work can be started on a project before it has been approved by the Region 5 Development Commission.

Ineligible Activities

ISTS in excess of 5,000 gallons of waste per day.

New connections or repairing old connections to collection systems or municipal waste treatment systems.

Expansion or upgrading of a conforming ISTS due to construction of additional living quarters, new construction or new expanded use.

Costs that were incurred before the effective date or after termination date of the loan agreement or before loan packet approval.

THE PROCESS

Landowners should request an application packet from Paul Fairbanks. They must complete the application and return it with a cost estimate from a contractor. The County Contact Department will inspect the current system and set the priority as related to the Comprehensive Local Water Plan and those improvements that will best protect water quality. The County will forward the complete application to Region 5 Development Commission for loan approval. The NCEDA (North Central Economic Development Association) Loan Board will review and rank the applications during their monthly meeting.

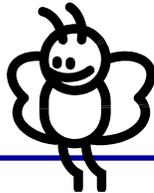
When an application has been approved, Fairbanks will notify the landowner to proceed with construction of the new septic system. When the system is complete, a project certification form will be signed and sent to the MN Dept. of agriculture along with the contractor's bill. The landowner will close on the loan and reimburse Region 5 Development Commission as per their loan schedule.

WABEDO TOWNSHIP NEWS

1535 Bargen Lane NE
Longville, MN 56655

Phone: 218-363-2649

A great place to live!



Some Facts

Butterflies taste with their feet

A duck's quack doesn't echo, and no one knows why.

Elephants are the only animals that can't jump.

All polar bears are left handed.

A snail can sleep for three years.

Crocodiles cannot stick out their tongues.

Planning Commission ...

How does it work? This question is often asked of Chair Bill Bliss, and Planning Commission Chair Craig Anderson. They had a great opportunity to explain to all the townships in District 5 at Deep Portage last month. Bridget Chard, consultant planner, explained how Wabedo Township gathered the information needed for a Comprehensive Plan and Anderson explained how the Commission works today. Wabedo is one of two townships in Cass County that has a planning commission. Sylvan Township is the other. The goal of the planning commission is to provide direct input to the county of what the property owners of Wabedo desire.

Can we get to your house..

Throughout the past year many of our firefighters have noticed an increase in the number of driveways that our department may not be able to get our fire trucks down.

Our trucks vary in size from a regular pickup truck to our main pump truck that is 10 feet wide, by 9 feet high, by 34 feet long. This truck requires 2-3 times as much room to turn as a regular pickup.

Narrow driveways, heavy brush and trees along the edge cause problems for the truck to make the turns and curves. It also makes it difficult to see on coming traffic. Power lines may be hooked and taken down causing an extra hazard.

We are asking for your help in making sure we can get all of our firefighting equipment to where it may be needed. We would like to have a minimum width on all driveways of 12 feet. A minimum overhead clearance of 10 feet. If possible, turn or curves in driveways to be NOT MORE than a 45 degree angle. Please make all effort possible to help us with this request.

Remember, if we can't get our equipment to where it needs to be, our ability to help you with all of our resources, is greatly reduced.

Longville Fire Department