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## Harvest slot relaxed for fall walleye fishing on Mille Lacs



Mille Lacs Lake walleye anglers now have a relaxed harvest slot for walleye fishing which began Thursday, Sept. 1.

As announced in March of this year, the one-fish walleye limit will resume on Mille Lacs on Sept. 1. In an expansion of the harvest slot, anglers will be able to harvest one walleye 20-23 inches or one longer than 26 inches, with fishing allowed from 6 a.m. to midnight. The original walleye harvest slot for fall fishing on Mille Lacs this year was one fish 21-23 inches or one longer than 28 inches.

"Given the current size structure of Mille Lacs' walleye population, this regulation change will meaningfully increase the amount of wal-

eye available for anglers to harvest," said Brad Parsons, fisheries section manager for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. "Catch rates may not improve this season, but there will be a better chance to keep a fish."

The recent lower catch rate of walleye in Mille Lacs Lake is less a reflection of the number of walleye in the lake than it is how hungry those fish are. The number of walleye longer than 14 inches has been similar each year from 2020 to 2022. But an abundance of yellow perch from a strong 2020 year class has created more natural food for walleye, which consequently are not as willing to bite on anglers' baits.

Each year, the state and the eight Ojibwe bands that

have treaty fishing rights on Lake Mille Lacs establish a safe harvest level for walleye in Mille Lacs Lake. That total is split between the state and bands.

The DNR sets regulations to keep the harvest within the state's share based on projections using recent data. If actual conditions differ substantially from the projections, the number of walleye

taken can be lower or higher than expected.

"We're seeing that this year," Parsons said. "With actual state angler catch rates and harvest significantly lower than expected, we're adjusting the regulation to provide more opportunity without significant risk to the long-term sustainability of Mille Lacs' walleye population."

Regulations for all other species remain unchanged. Walleye regulations for the winter season, which begins Thursday, Dec. 1, will be announced in November.

Information explaining DNR fisheries management and research, citizen engagement and Mille Lacs area recreation opportunities is available on the DNR website at [mndnr.gov/MilleLacsLake](http://mndnr.gov/MilleLacsLake).

## Stump Trophy stays in Aitkin

By ANN SCHWARTZ

Football season... gotta love it. You start the first game of the season under the hot sun, sweating in shorts. By the last game you are huddled under blankets blinking away snowflakes.

Crosby-Ironton's offense was pretty much non-existent as the Aitkin Gobblers defeated the Crosby-Ironton Rangers 34 to 0 on September 1. The first game of the season was played on Atkins Veterans Field and The Stump Trophy now remains in Aitkin for another year.

Aitkin's Jacob Williams rushed for nearly 225 yards and scored four touchdowns. The Gobblers led 16-0 at halftime and went on to rack

up 18 more points in the second half.

A party atmosphere permeated the evening with

a pre-game cookout at the field. The bleachers were packed with fans from both teams.



Martin Henke shows how hot it was on the field and shows off the Stump Trophy, in the possession of Aitkin for another year. Jason Henke photo

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# Extension of free nursing assistant training program in Minnesota



mand careers, and supports the health of our state," said Governor Walz. "The success of this program is a testament to Minnesota's ability to collaboratively address complex problems."

According to employment data from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, nursing assistants are the sixth highest demand job in the state. The COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated the need for qualified nursing assistants. This initiative invests in the future health of our state by providing trained workers who will fill vacant positions at hospitals, long-term care facilities, and veterans' homes throughout Minnesota.

"We are continuing to build our long-term care workforce, so that Minnesota families can continue to rely on talented, highly qualified nursing assistants to provide critical care for their

loved ones. Thank you to the Minnesotans who are taking advantage of this initiative and providing quality care for their communities," said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan. "I am grateful for the leadership of Commissioner Olson and the collaboration among our partners in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and higher education to creatively address this critical need."

In December 2021 Governor Tim Walz set a goal for the state to recruit and train 1,000 new nursing assistants. The State of Minnesota surpassed this goal in less than three months. The initial investment was made with Federal American Recovery Plan funds. The \$2.4 million investment announced today comes from the state's COVID-19 Management Appropriation fund.

Achieving that goal required a public-private partnership of state agencies, higher education institutions, and long-term care providers. This work is led by Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) Commissioner Dennis Olson.

"I am incredibly proud of this initiative's success, and look forward to continuing the work," OHE Commissioner Dennis Olson said. "This work not only breaks down financial barriers to post-secondary education, connecting more Minnesotans with the skills they need to start a new career, it bolsters our workforce pipeline and supports the state's health-

care industry. This initiative is truly a new model for how we can invest in workers and the economy while filling vacancies in high-need career areas."

"The Next Generation Nursing Assistant program is symbolic of how responsive our colleges and universities are when meeting critical workforce needs in Minnesota," said Devinder Malhotra, chancellor of Minnesota State. "I am very grateful for the hard work of our faculty, our staff, and our students. We deeply appreciate the leadership of Commissioner Olson and our partnership with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education that made the success of this program possible."

The new funding will allow the Next Generation Nursing Assistant initiative to run until February 2023.

What partner organizations and the health care industry are saying about this investment:

"With unprecedented numbers of vacant nursing assistant positions throughout the long-term care sector, we are pleased to hear there will be additional funding for no barrier, nursing assistant training via this initiative," Patti Cullen, president and CEO, Care Providers of Minnesota said. "We need to do all we can to prepare the next generation of professional caregivers to meet the increasing demands of Minnesota's aging population. We look forward to working with the Administration to ensure

that newly certified nursing assistants find meaningful employment in Minnesota's nursing facilities and assisted living facilities."

"Over 4,000 USW represented health care workers in Minnesota are invigorated by Governor Walz's investment in improving care in our state by bolstering the ranks of qualified nursing assistants," said United Steelworkers District 11 Director Emil Ramirez. "Providing education and opportunities for the next generation of union health care workers will have important, long-term benefits for all of us."

"SEIU members provide essential services every day to keep Minnesotans safe and healthy," said Brenda Hilbrich, Executive Vice President of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota & Iowa. "Even before COVID, this work was challenging and too often under appreciated. It has become even harder with the ongoing staffing shortages. Frontline healthcare workers with our Union appreciate Governor Walz taking executive action to step in and take action to help bring nursing assistants into our field."

Available courses can be found on the OHE website. Those interested in enrolling in the free training are encouraged to check back often as new courses will continue to be added as they are made available. Courses will be offered throughout the state, in-person and hybrid, on Minnesota State campuses and at many private training providers.

On Sept. Thursday, Sept. 1, Governor Tim Walz announced a \$2.4 million investment to continue Minnesota's free nursing assistant training program. The Next Generation Nursing Assistant initiative provides Minnesotans with free training, books, uniforms, and covers the cost of the certification exam. The initiative has so far recruited and trained 1,370 Minne-

sotans, strengthening the state's health care workforce pipeline.

"By bolstering our health care workforce and providing pathways to life-long careers, this initiative continues to benefit Minnesotans in the short- and long-term. I'm proud to invest in a program that strengthens our health care workforce, eliminates barriers to entry into high-de-

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## Rollover seriously injures toddler

A three-year-old McGregor boy suffered life-threatening injuries in a one-vehicle rollover on Labor Day.

The Minnesota State Patrol reported Ernest Roy Vandermeij was flown to Children's Minnesota Hospital in St. Paul after the vehicle he was in rolled over at 12:43 p.m. Monday, Sept. 5.

Sally Ann Vandermeij, 31 of McGregor, was driving a 2006 GMC Sierra west on Highway 210 near 230th Avenue, according to the state patrol. The vehicle was pulling a Bobcat when it lost control, entered the north ditch and came to a rest on its roof.

Sally Vandermeij and the other passenger, infant Elsy

Beck Vandermeij, suffered non-life-threatening injuries. All three people were wearing seat belts, the state patrol reported, but the vehicle's airbag did not deploy.

The Aitkin County Sheriff's Office, McGregor Fire and Ambulance and North Memorial Health Air Care assisted at the scene.

## Man drowned at summer camp

A 30-year-old man from Hutchinson drowned at a youth summer camp near Brainerd on Labor Day.

At approximately 1:37 p.m. Monday, Sept. 5, the Crow Wing County Sheriff's Office responded to Northstar Camp, located at 11287

Eagleview Drive in Brainerd, on the report that a staff member from a school in southern Minnesota that was with a group of students on a weekend retreat, had gone underwater.

Upon arrival, Deputies learned a student, who was

with the group, was able to retrieve Alan Garcia and attempted to administer life-saving measures. Garcia was transported to Essentia Health - St Joseph's Medical Center in Brainerd, where he was later pronounced deceased.

## Deerwood Motel closed for reno



Karin and Tony Nelson of Deerwood are now the new owners of the Deerwood Motel. The motel will be closed for a couple months, while the Nelsons make renovations and updates to the 1960's era building.

## Send Us Your Photos and Community Events!



Got an interesting photo and story to share? Just send it to [hopper@crosbyironton.net](mailto:hopper@crosbyironton.net), along with your name, city and a description of the photo. We also accept news and community events. And who knows, you may see your submission next week in the **NEWSHOPPER!**

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### September

- 10th - Smoke on the Range at the Deerstand in Deerwood. Cash prizes, trophies, live music by Mudcat Melby, meat raffle, delicious ribs and more! Call 218-534-9253 to register or for more info.
- 10th - Cuyuna Range Youth Center back-to-school dance, 6-10pm. Do Help Wanted Ad ors open at 5pm. Admission is \$3 and includes door prizes and food.
- 12th - Unlimited Learning "Pipes of Power: The cultural and historical significance of the sacred pipes" program, 1:30pm at the Crosby-Ironton High School Forum Room. The fee is \$5 for non-members, and it's free for members. For more information, contact Sally Ihne at [sihne@charter.net](mailto:sihne@charter.net) or call 218-829-2544.
- 13th - Ripple River Quilters Garage Sale at the Hazelton Town hall beginning at 12:30pm.
- 13th - The public is invited to hear details about the new proposed state-of-the-art, multimillion-dollar nursing home to be built on the Heartwood Senior Living Community campus in Crosby at a public forum 5-6:30pm at Heartwood's Conference Room. Attendees must use the entrance to the right of Heartwood's main entrance and wear a face mask. Refreshments will be served.
- 16th - Smiles for Jake suicide prevention documentary and discussion at Mayberry Auditorium, 5:30pm.
- 16th - Grassroots Concerts at the Journey Church in Nisswa, \$10, featuring Claudia Schmidt at 7:30pm. For more information, go online to [GrassrootsConcerts.org](http://GrassrootsConcerts.org) or call 218-838-4266.
- 17th - Our Savior's Lutheran Church Fall Bazaar and Bake Sale in Outing, 9:30am-12:30pm. The luncheon includes sloppy joe sandwich, chips, pickle, slice of pie and a beverage for \$9. Hand-made craft items, quilted, knit and crocheted pieces, greeting cards and more. The church is located on the hill at 525 State Hwy. 6 NE, in Outing
- 17th - Car Show from 11am-1pm at Heartwood Senior Living in Crosby. No registration fee. Free mini burger basket, root beer and cupcakes will be served. Call Sarah at 218-545-8531 for more info.
- 17th - Cascade United Methodist Church of Deerwood Annual Harvest Supper 4:30-6:30pm at the church located on Hwy 6/210. The menu includes meatballs with gravy, mashed potatoes, rutabagas, seasonal vegetables and dessert. All are welcome to attend this fall celebration of the harvest and a free will offering will be accepted for the meal. Proceeds benefit local missions.

## Pine Lake Autumn Picnic Supper

On September 23 at 3 p.m. Pine Lake Chapel, in south Aitkin County, is excited to present *A Musical Stroll Down Memory Lane* with a concert by Beth and Les Hazelton. You will enjoy timeless classics performed in an intimate and simple acoustic style. Following the concert the Chapel will entice you with an Autumn Picnic Supper complete with hot dogs, brats and more delicious picnic fixings. A free-will offering will be accepted which will help to eliminate debt reduction on the Chapel's new Fellowship Hall.

Pine Lake Chapel is located at 43472 240th Street just 1/4 mile west from Highway

169 in south Aitkin County.

Beth and Les Hazelton come from Duluth where they live with family and pets. They are delighted and feeling honored to be able to share a special afternoon of music with the Pine Lake Chapel, the church of Lester and his siblings upbringing!

Since their musical collaboration began in Duluth in 2010, vocalist Beth and guitarist Les have been performing regularly at night clubs, music venues, house concerts, retirement communities, conventions, benefits for charities and festivals in the region. Both draw on formal musical training and



years of performing, for the joy of it. Together, they aim to soulfully present a variety of styles, the song selection blending familiar with less well-known musical gems.

Listen for jazz standards, a nostalgic seventies pop tune, a room-quieting a'capella rendition, something flirty, toe-tappers, hip folk, sacred, modern alternative, all sea-

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# Oak trees showing signs of drought stress, beetle infestation

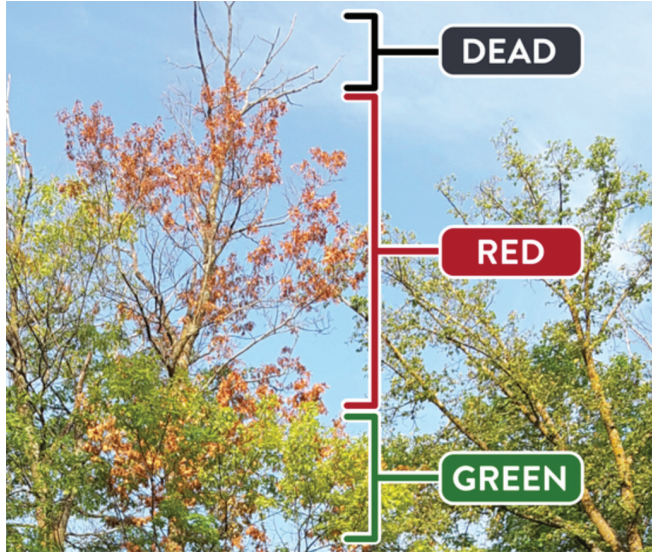
Oak trees stressed by recent drought have been showing symptoms of infestation by twolined chestnut borer, according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Twolined chestnut borer is a native wood-boring beetle. The larvae feed beneath the bark of oak trees. Trees stressed and weakened by drought are especially vulnerable, while healthy trees are usually not infested.

"Even when hot, dry weather is replaced by rainy days, it can take years for trees to

recover after a drought," said Val Cervenka, DNR forest health coordinator. "After two consecutive years of drought conditions in 2021 and 2022, we expect to see oak trees dying from twolined chestnut borer attack for the next few years."

Symptoms of an infestation often begin in mid-July and initially include dead and dying leaves at the top of the tree. Dead leaves can stay on branches for months. During the year following the attack, the top of the oak tree will be dead and leafless; leaves



in the middle section die, become orange-brown and stay on the tree; leaves at the bottom will still be green. If the tree has been infested for more than a year or two, it might be possible to find small, D-shaped exit holes in the trunk where the adult borers have come out of the tree.

Oak wilt and twolined chestnut borer symptoms can

be similar: red oaks with oak wilt will rapidly drop most of their leaves within six to eight weeks, and leaves may be green or only partly brown when they fall from the tree. In contrast, dead leaves on trees attacked by twolined chestnut borer will hang on to the tree and remain brown.

For more information, head to the forest health page of the

DNR website ([mndnr.gov/TreeCare/Forest\\_Health](http://mndnr.gov/TreeCare/Forest_Health)).

"Unfortunately, preventing an attack of twolined chestnut borer on stressed oaks is difficult," Cervenka said. "However, you can take steps to reduce stress during drought, which decreases the likelihood of twolined chestnut borer attack."

To reduce stress in yard trees: Mulch and water trees properly. If rainfall is inadequate, watering oaks weekly may be the best method to prevent twolined chestnut borer attack.

Avoid adding soil over roots, do not fertilize stressed oaks, and do not allow herbicides to contact oak leaves.

To reduce stress in woodlands:

Thin trees crowding oaks to reduce stress caused by competition for resources. However, wait until the trees have recovered from recent

drought because thinning during or shortly after a stress event can increase the chance of attack from twolined chestnut borer.

Avoid wounding oaks from April to July when oak wilt spreads easily. Add a diversity of tree species to make woodlands more resilient to change.

Eradication of twolined chestnut borer in woodlands is not possible. However, over time, borer populations will naturally decline. If many, high-quality oaks are affected, landowners can work with a forester to set up a salvage harvest during the winter before the trees degrade. Contact a local DNR forester ([mndnr.gov/Woodlands/CFM-Map.html](http://mndnr.gov/Woodlands/CFM-Map.html)) for questions about managing oaks in woodlands.

For more information, head to the tree care page of the DNR website ([mndnr.gov/TreeCare](http://mndnr.gov/TreeCare)).

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