

Mantrap Lake loons featured in winning photo

By Shannon Geisen
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Local wildlife photographer Steve Maanum captured a winning photo of the state bird. His image of a loon with two chicks, entitled "Just 10 More Minutes," is featured on this year's Loon Appreciation Week poster.

Loon Appreciation Week is May 5-11. It's sponsored by LoonWatch, a program of the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College in Ashland, Wis.

Held the first week of May, LoonWatch promotes loon education and conservation during Loon Appreciation Week by creating and distributing a new poster each year. Posters are available to the public for \$7 each and may be ordered at www.northland.edu/sustainability/soei/loonwatch/loonpos-



Maanum

ter/#loonposter. "This year I was lucky enough to submit the winning photo," Maanum said.

As a loon volunteer on Mantrap Lake, he is frequently called upon by lake associations and conservation groups to give presentations on Mantrap's successful loon management project that dates back to the mid-1980s.

"We just put out 20 nesting rafts last week," he said.

Along with interesting loon facts, the poster emphasizes that "Good nesting sites are critical loon habitat."

Major threats to loons include fishing line, hooks and sinkers; lead tackle; shoreline development; human disturbance; water pollution; mercury; water level fluctuations and predators.

LoonWatch also ensures that contest photos are taken in an ethical way. The guiding principle: Place the welfare and safety of the loons and their habitats above all else and avoid disturb-



Submitted photo

The 2019 Loon Appreciation Week photo highlights a photo by local wildlife photographer and outdoor educator Steve Maanum.

ing them in any way. A general rule of thumb for good loon etiquette is to keep a distance of 200 feet from loons and loon chicks, according to

LoonWatch. Never flush birds — that is, disturb them and make them fly or swim. In breeding season, it can interfere with reproduction. Never get too close

to a loon family with chicks. If you separate a loon parent from its chicks, this could be fatal for the chicks, especially when they are very young.

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"I just wanted to end everything because the bullying got so bad," she said.

Hailey said she was sitting by herself on the bus.

"Other kids came up to see what was wrong," she said. "One of them went to get the bus driver. The other kids were trying to talk me out of it. Then my brother (age 11) came back to convince me not to do it."

Kara said neither of her children told her about the incident. "I found out from one of Hailey's friends who was concerned about her," she said. The incident happened the Wednesday before Thanksgiving break. Kara said classes were back in session the following Monday but it wasn't until two days later that a school staff member contacted her.

Superintendent Gregg Parks said the bus driver's report did not say anything about suicide or they would have made contact with Kara right away. He said the bus driver must not have been aware of the suicide attempt because he classified the incident as harassment and there was an investigation.

He said if the report had said it was a suicide attempt "that's something we would definitely take seriously and deal with right away."

"When an event takes place you have three days to conduct an investigation so they went through that, determined that there was not necessarily bullying but there was harassment by the other individuals," he said. "Bullying is something that's repeated over time, it's not something that happens once."

After looking at records, Parks said this was the first time an incident with Hailey happened on the

bus. "All I can tell you is it was investigated and the individuals involved did receive consequences. I can't tell you what they were, but the principal followed the handbook as far as consequences and we considered the incident closed at that point. This event took place in November and we haven't had any issues with either the kid or the mom coming forward and saying something or the bus driver or anyone else. To label an isolated event as bullying doesn't meet the threshold for what bullying is."

'Nonstop' bullying

"I have gone into the school every year since Hailey started in kindergarten to talk to the principal and others about her being bullied," Kara said. "She's been dealing with it nonstop."

Kara said Hailey is on an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and has been receiving speech services since she was 3.

"Back at the beginning they were teasing her due to her speech," she said.

Kara said Hailey has been going to outpatient therapy since she was in elementary school to help her deal with the bullying.

She said while school officials have told her they have a zero tolerance policy, she doesn't see any results with her daughter.

"It may get better for a week or two and then it's back to the same old thing," she said. "I feel like Nevis School is really great at sweeping it under the rug."

Kara said this year has been hard for Hailey, adding some of the incidents have been physical including being jumped on by a group of boys that resulted in scrapes on her knee and arm.

"I feel like they don't take it seriously and they don't address it with the children that are bullying," she said.

She said she told Hailey she has the right to defend herself when she feels threatened and that helped in one instance.

Kara said Hailey refused the home school option because she wants to be with her friends.

"I told her there may come a point where I don't give her a choice, especially after she got to the point this year where she thought she'd be better off dead than dealing with these kids picking on her daily," Kara said.

School bullying policies

That parent-student handbook has a short section that states the district "is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students. Bullying is expressly prohibited and any student engaging in bullying will be subject to the school's progressive discipline policy."

The district defines bullying as "done on purpose, repetitive and with a difference of power between the victim and the student. It includes physical, emotional, written, cyber or any other means of causing fear or harm to another student."

While online handbook states that the full bullying policy is attached, the attachment page is blank. Parks said they are working on fixing that problem, but the complaints are handled the same whether they are oral or written.

"Quite honestly, bullying is such a rarity in this school that most of the cases are just handled with an oral report right to the principal or the Deans of Students," he said.

The complete bullying policy, which is eight pages long and includes the complaint form, is found by going to the district dropdown menu of the school board policy manual and clicking on policies and reports.

Deal with the bully, support the bullied

Hailey said she would like to tell people at the school that, if a certain group of kids are bullying a person, they should not be in classes together and that bullies should get "a pretty hard punishment."

"We have discipline referrals where you get a write-up, but that doesn't do anything," she said.

Her advice for those who are bullied is to tell someone. "If you don't feel comfortable talking to adults if you have a very good friend who you can talk to, talk to them," she said.

Anti-bullying policy 'is effective'

"The investigator will use his or her best judgement to determine if immediate steps need

to take place to protect the complainant or others involved," Parks said. "Often times this will lead to a phone call home to one or both parents or a face-to-face meeting to alert them to the allegations."

He said consequences for bullying implemented at the school may range from interventions up to suspension or expulsion.

Parks said he believes the school's anti-bullying policy is effective. "I believe that our staff and students do a great job of reducing the presence of bullying," he said. "We do this by getting to know our students and by letting them know that the adults in the school are all concerned about their safety and security."

Parks said parents who have concerns about bul-

lying they don't feel are being addressed should come to him.

"We want this to be a great place for all of our kids," he said. "In my mind, we do a pretty solid job of addressing those issues. We have implemented Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as a method of focusing on all of the good that our kids are doing every day at school. We focus on rewarding good behavior, and as a result, hope to reduce bullying or the perception of bullying in our buildings. We have also worked hard to ensure that our student mental and social health needs are met through the use of our elementary and high school social workers and our mental health practitioners."

CORRECTION

Due to Memorial Day, the Northern Knights Car Club meeting moved from May 27 to Monday, May 20, at 6:30 p.m. at tractor

club grounds. The May 27 date was incorrectly listed in the Enterprise's monthly club calendar. We apologize for any confusion.

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