

# THE Exponent

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## Swap with Polk County possible for federal transportation funds

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Exponent Reporter

A swap with Polk County for federal transportation dollars is possible, the East Grand Forks city council learned at their Aug. 3 meeting.

At issue is the fate of \$860,000 in federal funding to be used for transportation improvements in 2022. The city chose to change the original project on the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) long-range transportation plan to one some of the council members believe is a more immediate need.

A roundabout at Bygland Road and Rhinehart Drive, estimated to cost \$1.6 million, was the original project slated for the federal funding. This funding comes to the city every fourth year because it is shared with Thief River Falls, Crookston and Bemidji.

Instead, the industrial park project on 10th St. NE, estimated at \$1.78 million, was eventually approved. The improvements are necessary because the road is nearly impassable during wet conditions or spring thaw, forcing heavy vehicle traffic onto private property.

The 10th St. NE project involves reconstruction of the street from 11th Ave. NE to 15th Ave. NE plus an extension of the street. Because that stretch of road is not on MPO's list the city council sought an amendment to add the project.

The MPO board tabled that amendment request until they have the answers to some questions, such as "how the roadway network in and around 10th St. NE would be further improved to provide transportation choices." The board requested cost estimates, funding sources and a timing plan. The MPO also wondered why a project already in their plan was not chosen.

An amendment to the plan requires studies and public hearings. The extremely tight timeline to submit the project to MnDOT for approval led the council to explore the idea of a swap of funding with another entity.

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photo by Bruce Brierley

Hugh "Turtle Dundee" Reese stands in front of his fishing hole at Eagle Point in East Grand Forks. Reese has been fishing at this spot for the last 15 years.

## Turtle Dundee, a fixture on the Red Lake River for 15 years

**Bruce Brierley**  
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Most summer mornings commuters driving over the Point Bridge glancing down at the river will see "Turtle Dundee's" pickup parked just up river from the rock rapid dam along with his fishing buddies pickup. Today there was only his pickup.

"He backed out on me today," says 82-year-old Hugh "Turtle Dundee" Reese of his fishing partner.

Reese has been a frequent fixture at this fishing spot for the last 15 years.

"I used to fish the Red Lake when I lived in Crookston. Then I moved here to take care of my sister and my brother in law. They both passed away. So now I moved in with my daughter to take care of her. So I've been here for probably 15 years now."

As the drought altered Red Lake River slowly moves by Reese muses about the difference between the fishing this year and last.

"Last summer we caught a lot of big cats, but they were skinny and we threw them back. There was no meat on them."

This year he says the cats have been pretty slow as they can't swim up the river from the Red River because the river level is too low to get past the rock rapids dam. He has however pulled about eight snapping turtles out this year.

"A lot of snapping turtles this year. I think it's because they are hard up for food so they come looking for it," says Reese.

The year has been a hard one for the Vietnam veteran who has had plenty of

health related issues this year.

"Yeah, this last year have been tough on me. I had staph infection, a hernia operation. It's just been terrible rough on me," reflects Reese.

He is glad that he got his COVID-19 vaccination as he is sure that he would not survive a bout with the virus.

Still Turtle Dundee is not down about the recent setbacks instead he enjoys the surroundings and the serenity of his fishing hole. He talks about the Bald Eagles that frequent the area interjecting facts about the birds as an adult male eagle majestically soars overhead. He is also quick to point out a beaver lodge directly across from the bank that he fishes off of.

"This river kind of astounds me because there are many different things in here. There's a beaver den right over there. She's got three little ones. Just yesterday she was going up towards the dam and she had three little ones on her back. That's what they'll do rather than have them swim behind them. she's been here for I don't know how many years. I'm surprised she still has pups at her age."

Reese used to smoke his fish but an unfortunate incident put an end to his smoker.

"I quit smoking years ago. My smoke house burned up on me. Yeah I went away and left some big cats in there smoking and they dripped down on the burner and caught on fire. I came back and there's fire shooting out the top. That was the end of my smoking days."

These days if he keeps a fish he deep fry fries them.

"I deep fry them when I do keep them. I roll them in egg and Kellogg's cornflakes then i deep fry them and they're really good. Almost like popcorn shrimp."

When asked about his most interesting catch in the river he tells about a huge goldfish that he caught. He has also caught sturgeon, northern, walleye, carp, and sheephead, as well as the world renowned catfish that inhabit the river.

Much like the barber shop of yesteryear the fishing hole is something of a destination as people come down to visit and listen to the stories and fish tales that are spun while the rods are in the water.

The visit with Reese lasted about an hour during which time his bobber sat quietly in a still portion of the river. Then like an omen from the river just as he announced that he is going to pack it in for the day to get some of his daily chores done his bobber disappears below the surface.

Reaching for his rod he sets the hook and proclaims in true fisherman fashion, "I think I got I got a good one. I'm glad I put the big rig on."

When the fish broke the water it was obvious that the catfish that was on the line, while a nice fish was no where near what he thought he had hooked and without skipping a beat proclaimed,

"Them little guys can fight."  
He then unhooked the fish and released him back into the murky waters of the Red Lake River marking the end of another session on the banks of the fishing hole.

## Kora and Jeff Jordheim reel in 10K at Drayton catfish tournament

Kora Jordheim and Jeff Jordheim of East Grand Forks, MN won the \$10,000.00 first prize in Drayton's Catfish Capital Challenge Friday and Saturday, August 6-7. Their cumulative weigh-ins of 8 channel catfish totaled 71.77 lbs. over the two-day tournament. In all, almost \$19,000 in cash prizes were awarded in downtown Drayton late Saturday afternoon. Second place finishers were Branden Lunski and Jensen Bauer of Grand Forks, ND with 69.58 lbs. Third place went to Wade and Lacey Anderson of East Grand Forks with 66.37 lbs. Big Fish-Day 1 went to Scott Schmidt and Chad Dunwald of Sidney, MT with a 19.48 lb. catfish, and Big Fish-Day 2 went to Kerry Larson and Wade St. Germain of Sebetha, KS and Argyle, MN with an 18.28 lb. fish.

The 52-boat tournament brought to Drayton over 100 anglers from multiple states. The weekend also featured a catfish fry, city-wide garage sales, and a street dance to cap two days of exciting fun on the Red River of the North.



submitted photo

Kora Jordheim and Jeff Jordheim with their whopper catfish. (see page 14 for photos of second and third place)

