

State parks provide learning experiences

Minnesota DNR unveils I Can! program, registration for program underway

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' award-winning I Can! program resumes this summer with outdoor skill-building sessions held in more than 25 Minnesota state parks. Programs start Saturday, June 11, and continue through late August.

Registration began on Thursday, April 14.

Program offerings include:

- I Can Camp!
- I Can Paddle!
- I Can Mountain Bike!
- I Can Fish!

The I Can! program is designed for individuals and families interested in trying

one or more of the featured outdoor activities.

"We provide all the gear along with friendly instructors who can show you how to use it," said Ann Pierce, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Parks and Trails director. "Our goal is to make it easy for all Minnesotans to get outdoors, have fun and enjoy the health and wellness benefits of nature."

For more information—including program details, dates, times, locations, and minimum age requirements—visit the I Can! page of the DNR website or contact the DNR Information Center

at info.dnr@state.mn.us or 888-646-6367 (8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday).

To register for the I Can! programs, visit mndnr.gov/reservations (link is external) or call 866-857-2757 (8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, except holidays).

Since 2010, nearly 100,000 people have participated in I Can! programs. The DNR's I Can! program series is made possible with funding from the Parks and Trails Fund, created after voters approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment in November 2008.

The Parks and Trails Fund receives 14.25 percent of the three-eighths percent sales tax revenue that may only be spent to support parks and trails of regional or statewide significance.

ARCHERY GAINS POPULARITY

continued from 3

their program through the University of Minnesota Extension.

Twenty youths are signed up with 10 youths in each of two different classes, 5th through 8th graders, from 3:45 to 4:45 and from 4:45 to 5:45 at the Kennedy Secondary School community ed section. There are also some students on a waiting list for the next offering or in the event of cancellations.

Sanderson and Struck also volunteer with archery instruction for 5th grade students attending the Prairie Science Class at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center on the south side of Fergus Falls.

"Matt Conner (USFWS) and trained NASP BAI trainer deserves credit for establishing archery at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center by obtaining proper equipment and training many volunteers" said Sanderson, who retired as a physician in Fergus Falls in 2011.

Struck retired from Otter Tail Power Company in 2016 where he had worked in system operations. Raitz is still working at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife office in Fergus Falls.

Other individuals have also been trained as NASP BAIs and have helped with the 5th grade instruction at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center. Up to 80 fifth grade students participated this year alone in Tia Thysell's and Becky Greenagel's classes, who are also NASP BAIs.

It is safety first when conducting archery classes inside a gymnasium.

There are 10-by-30-foot nets to protect areas behind the target butts. The

structured range and archery equipment ensures that NASP is the safest academic sport for grades 4-12 youth in school, second only to ping pong (as quoted in government sports injury reports).

Schools in each state offer tournaments that allow individuals and teams from neighboring schools to compete for awards.

"There can be hundreds of youth participating in any one such tournament," Struck said. "State and national competitions can offer scholarship money to be awarded to top archers."

Adds Sanderson, "These tournaments can host as many as a thousand youths at the state tournament. NASP offers academic incentives through their Academic Archer awards where good shooting and good grades combine. There are as many girls as boys that can compete."

A new Fergus Falls Area Home School NASP archery group has just completed shooting in four school tournaments. Their required training was conducted through the 4-H Shooting Sport and Wildlife summer program.

As noted by Struck, "We commend the West Otter Tail County 4-H SS&W Club for their wonderful strides made in archery and other shooting competition."

"It has been a learning experience as well as exciting to compete with hundreds of other school students," Struck said. "As examples, competition is quite stiff with 343 students competing in the Alexandria tournament and

over 250 in the Wahpeton Tournament."

Two tournaments were virtual, where scores were shot in the Lakes Area Archers range in Erdahl and submitted electronically with the help of Tom Johnson, a prominent area competitive archer and Otter Tail Power retiree.

The plan is to offer similar experiences to the District 544 students who are qualified and who practiced for next winter's tournaments.

Sanderson, Struck and Johnson have been working with Mick Johnson of the Fergus Falls Parks, Recreation, and Forestry to establish a suitable community archery range location.

There is now an outdoor archery range at DeLagoon Park two miles south of Fergus Falls near Pebble Lake. The site has seen some activity by the community, and this summer there will also be targets for kids.

A search is on for more grant money for a broad-head target and elevated shooting platform. Much of the equipment has been funded by a grant from the Blandin Foundation and volunteer labor. Someday there will be an indoor archery range as well.

More information about these youth and community archery opportunities can be found by contacting the Fergus Falls Parks, Rec, and Forestry office, West Otter Tail County Extension office, and the School District 544 Community Ed office.

NASP info is www.nasp-schools.org; www.nasp-tournaments.org

BEAR HUNTING APPLICATIONS

continued from 2

etation and food resources, as well as concerns about increased bear and human interactions, prompted the split. The new permit area provides the DNR greater flexibility to develop hunting strategies specific to the Northwest Angle's bear population and control hunting pressure in response to the local bear population.

For 2022, DNR is offering a small number of hunting permits in the Northwest Angle, reflecting a status-quo level of harvest for the first year of this new area.

The DNR also has modified the boundaries of per-

mit areas 28 and 47 to follow the Leech Lake Reservation boundary. This change is consistent with adjustments made to deer permit area 197 in 2021.

Lottery winners will be notified by Wednesday, June 1. The deadline to purchase bear hunting licenses awarded by lottery is Monday, Aug. 1. Any remaining unpurchased licenses will be available over the counter starting at noon Thursday, Aug. 4.

An unlimited number of bear licenses also will be sold over the counter for the no-quota area that includes

east-central and far northwestern Minnesota. No-quota licenses are valid only in the no-quota area.

Hunters with either a quota or no-quota license who are interested in taking a problem bear should contact the area DNR wildlife manager to be added to the hunter contact list if the opportunity arises.

Complete instructions about how to apply for a license, maps of permit areas and a listing of permit availability for each area are available on the DNR website.

UKRAINE WAR HITS HOME

continued from 1

traveled to Ukraine to help spread the word of God in the area. During their time the group would set up day camps to teach about God, while also getting to know the people of Ukraine on a more personal level.

"You might come back with a few trinkets, but your heart was overfilled with the giving that you received

back from those people," said Pastor Wendell Wahlin, who led several of those trips to Ukraine.

On Feb. 24 Russian tanks and fighters entered the country of Ukraine as part of an invasion. Ukraine was part of the former Soviet Union that gained its independence in 1991. Since that time, Ukraine has been an independent country with a democratically elected President and government.

The invasion ended weeks of speculation and troop build up along the Ukrainian border with Russia and even Belarus. The military build up dated back to late 2021 and included Russian President Vladimir Putin recognizing the independence of two pro-Russian breakaway regions in eastern Ukraine.

"I stayed in touch with some of them. They are experiencing some pretty incredible times," said Wahlin.

One thing that has always

“The people are gracious. They are very thankful people and they were just 10 years coming out of Soviet control. One of the things I noticed was the incredible appreciation for the family being able to go to school, being able to speak their Ukrainian language. There was just a resurgence for life and hope.”

- Wendell Wahlin on the appreciation Ukraine residents showed their group

stuck out to Wahlin about his time in Ukraine was how gracious and caring the people were during their visits. Even though the Ukrainian people didn't have much in terms of possessions or money, they were always willing to share what they had with their new friends.

"The people are gracious. They are very thankful people and they were just 10 years coming out of Soviet control," he said. "One of the things I noticed was the incredible appreciation for their family being able to go to school, being able to speak their Ukrainian language. There was just a resurgence for life and hope."

Dorothy Heschke traveled to Ukraine eight times beginning in 1994 through the mid 2000s. She said the

group helped with a summer Bible school program and helped the community of Khudyaki with their church. They also brought medical and dental supplies to the country, which had just recently broken away from the former Soviet Union.

"The interesting thing for me was the officials would ask us to pray for their facility, their teachers and staff," she said. "It is quite a bit different from here where they try to separate church and state. There they were eager for people to come and pray for them."

Donna Smith was also a part of several of those early trips. She spent time in a small village providing day camps to residents in the region.

"It just tears you apart just thinking about it," she said of the war in Ukraine. "We were in a real small village. I have been looking for it on TV and they haven't ever identified it."

As part of his visits to Ukraine, Wahlin was a mentor to a young pastor in a small Ukrainian village just a few hours south of the capital of Kyiv. The pastor he was a mentor to, named Alexi, moved his family to Canada about five or six years ago when he began to notice signs of trouble between Ukraine and Russia.

"I said Alexi what prompted you to move your family out of Ukraine. He said Wendell I know the history with Russia. I could see it happening and it was not going to be good," said Wahlin of his conversation with Alexi. "He said it was just so obvious there was going to be some very dark times for Ukraine in the future."

Wahlin said a few weeks ago that Alexi told him he hadn't seen the flurry of war in their hometown yet, however, the crisis surrounding food shortages and getting products was real.

While she has not been to Ukraine since 2006 or 2007, Heschke said she has remained in contact with several people she met in Ukraine. Since the start of the war, she has remained in almost daily contact with one person in particular, who was able to flee to Warsaw in Poland. The person has since returned closer to the Ukrainian border and is ministering refugees in that region.

As a whole, Heschke said the Ukrainian people enjoyed color and were always willing to give visitors and friends just about everything they had—even if they didn't have much at all.

"They were warm, giving, gracious loving people," she said. "If they have anything they would gladly give it to you."

Especially in the early years, Heschke said some Ukrainians were unsure of what to think of their new American counterparts. That was due to past Soviet Union propaganda, which portrayed their new Western friends as the enemy.

"She said the only time I ever thought I would see, an American was when they were dropping bombs on us, because that was the propaganda they were given," said Heschke.

Smith said the people they came in contact with were extremely friendly and were grateful for their American guests. She said most people had gardens to help provide necessary food to survive the winter. At that time, gas was only delivered to the gas stations on certain days of the week and general stores carried much of the necessary items for the town.

"It was very pleasant and they gave us stuff. They fed us very well. We were invited over into a couple of homes and you knew they laid out probably more than they usually had," she said. "They were very nice and generous with what they had."

While the trips were meant as a way to share the word of God, Smith said they were able to see different parts of the country like the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, they flew out of the capital of Kyiv and some of the markets.

Many of the small town churches doubled as a food pantry during their time in Ukraine, where people could bring their harvests to share with other people. Those same food pantries are helping to feed the people today.

"There are young people who cared for us in those summer camps. Some of those young people who have been trained and who have grown in their faith, they are the ones who are serving in their faith in a time of need," said Wahlin.

As the war in Ukraine transitions east from the central area of the country near the capital of Kyiv, Wahlin said they rarely went to the eastern part of the country due to that area's allegiance to Russia.

"Even back then we said we are not going to travel into eastern Ukraine. There was a heavy Russian family and Russian descendants (who had) a loyalty to Russia that did not exist in the rest of Ukraine," he said.

INMAN TOWNSHIP

is taking quotes for
CEMETERY & TOWN HALL
MOWING

Please submit quotes and proof of insurance by
May 9, 2022 to:

MELANY DOLL
52780 STATE HWY 210
HENNING, MN 56551

Complete Auto Repair Center

SEE US FOR YOUR AUTO REPAIR NEEDS!

- Full Tire & Alignment Services
- Diagnostics & Electrical
- Auto Start & Accessory Installations
- In-House Locksmithing Services
- Service & Repair... on all Makes & Models including Diesels!

ASE CERTIFIED

autofixrepairs.com Call 218.548.5480

Online Appointment Scheduling Available
302 Industrial Drive, Henning, MN | autofixrepair@gmail.com | Owners, Jeff & Holly Weller

Trust the Plumbing Professionals!

We've got a handle on leaks

• BRIAN BROGARD • ROBERT JOHNSON • LIC. NO. PC644456

BROGARD PLUMBING
HEATING AND EXCAVATING
306 INDUSTRIAL DR. • PO BOX 336
HENNING, MN 56551

BUS. (218) 583-2041 • FAX (218) 583-4389

Truax Buy a Quality Vehicle from someone You Trust!

AUTO SALES

IF WE DON'T HAVE IT, WE CAN FIND IT.

GIVE US A CALL AT **218.462.2765** 213 State Hwy 29 South Deer Creek, MN 56527
www.truaxauto.com

• Chiropractic • Pregnancy
• Acupuncture • Children & Babies
• Nutrition • Work Comp & Auto

HEALTHY BALANCE
— CHIROPRACTIC LLC —

Call **218.548.2447** 801 Inman Street | Henning, MN
"We're taking new patients!"