



Ladysmith News

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Thursday, November 17, 2022

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World turns upside down

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Veterans have their day

Thanking those who served Page A12

Oily sheen seen along shorelines

Dam discharges hydraulic fluid in Flambeau River

By Luke Klink

An environmental and industrial services company is working on the Flambeau River, attempting to clean the waterway after a release of non-hazardous hydraulic fluid from the Dairyland Dam.

Dairyland Power Cooperative reported a discharge of turbine lubrication oil from the hydroelectric station at the Ladysmith Dam on Monday, Nov. 7. Dairyland Power initially estimated up to approximately 20 gallons of oil may have been discharged to the Flambeau River from the dam, located about 3 miles upstream from Ladysmith. More investigation determined the discharge to be 175 gallons.

"Dairyland Power immediately took steps to stop the discharge and made repairs," said John Sager, backup regional spill coordinator for the Northern Region Remediation and Redevelopment Program at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

State DNR officials also are investigating why the initial discharge was under-reported and its impact on the environment and human health, according to DNR Hydrogeologist Jeff Paddock. He said a meeting is scheduled this week with environmental response firm staff to gather

additional information.

"It is not uncommon for the amount that was spilled to go up as we investigate further." We are still following up on why that [discharge] number increased. It sounds like they did another assessment and determined it was a higher amount of lubrication oil," Paddock said.

Dairyland Power hired a spill response company, Bay West, to mobilize to the site and place booms and collect any oil discharged to the river, according to Sager. The firm was on-site doing clean-up for about a week.

"At this time we do not have a report from Bay West as to the amount of oil recovered," Sager said.

The material is nonhazardous petroleum oil, Mobil DTE 26 Ultra, according to Katie Thomson, Strategic Communications Manager for Dairyland Power Cooperative.

Approximately 175 gallons of oil were released, according to Thomson, in a follow-up email after the initial Dairyland report. She added the incident has been reported to the state DNR.

The Mobil DTE Oil Named Series oils are high quality, rust- and oxidation-inhibited circulating lubri-

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Election results reveal county backs Republicans

Voters went to the polls Tuesday, Nov. 8, to cast ballots in the Congressional midterm elections. Many races remained too close to call late into the night and early the next morning.

Voters were deciding the race for Wisconsin governor as well as other key state races for Lt. governor, attorney general, secretary of state, treasurer, Assembly and Senate. At the federal level, voters were deciding contests for U.S. Senate and Congress.

Which party controls the US Senate was not called until later in the week. The fate of the US House remains up in the air.

Signs of a "red wave" of Republican strength did not materialize, as Democrats held on to several competitive Senate and governor seats across the nation.

The race for US Senate went to Republican incumbent Ron Johnson over Democrat challenger Mandela Barnes, 50.5%-49.5%.

The winner of the Wisconsin District 7 seat in Congress went to Republican incumbent Tom Tiffany over Democrat challenger Richard Ausman, 61.9%-38.1%.

The race for Wisconsin Attorney General went to Democrat incumbent Josh Kaul over Republican challenger Eric Toney, 50.7%-49.3%.

The race for Wisconsin Secretary of State went to Democrat incumbent Doug LaFollette over Republican challenger Amy Loudenbeck, 48.3%-48.0%.

The race for Wisconsin Treasurer went to Republican John Leiber over Democrat Aaron Richardson, 49.6%-48.2%.

The race for the 87th District seat in the Wisconsin State Assembly went to Republican incumbent Jim Edming over Democrat challenger Elizabeth Riley, 69.5%-30.5%.

The race for the 29th District seat in the Wisconsin State Senate went to Republican Cory Tomczyk over Democrat challenger Bob Look, 62.5%-37.5%.

Republicans handily carried each race among Rusk County voters, winning by about 2-to-1 margins in the contested battles.

Uncontested county races also were also on the ballot with incumbent Republicans Sheriff Jeff Wallace and Circuit Court Clerk Lori Gorsegrner winning easily.



RIVER SPILL CLEANUP CONTINUES — Workers of an environmental and industrial services company head upstream in the Flambeau River on Saturday afternoon, using hundreds of feet of brightly colored yellow booms and barrels in an effort to contain a spill of turbine lubrication oil from the hydroelectric station at the Ladysmith Dam. The spill was initially reported as about 20 gallons, but later expanded to 175 gallons of the product labeled as non-hazardous. However, river residents reported to law enforcement seeing an oily sheen in the water and smell of gas in the air.

— News photo by Luke Klink

Nine day gun-deer hunt kicks off Saturday

By Luke Klink

The Wisconsin gun-deer hunting season kicks off Saturday and runs for 9 days, through Sunday, Nov. 27.

Area wildlife experts are forecasting a "very good" deer herd in Rusk County and excellent weather conditions. A little snow cover would be helpful with slight chances forecast most of this week in the days leading up to the hunt.

About 90 percent of the 930 square miles of Rusk County is considered suitable deer habitat, with public land making up about 27 percent including state, county, and municipal government ownership, as well as Forest Tax Law open lands.

"The peak rut for Rusk County was likely last week, but there are still a lot of bucks out chasing does with lots of scrapes and rubs on the landscape," said DNR Wildlife Biologist Emma Hanson, who is stationed in Ladysmith. "I think that the gun season is early enough this year that it should catch the tail end of the rut."

This year's harvest started above the 5 year average then leveled down to average during a stretch of warm weather this fall, according to Hanson.

"The weather is changing now, and cold weather keeps deer moving and eating to keep their energy up which should help improve hunter success," said Hanson.

Snow would help increase visibility in the woods, making it easier for hunters to spot their deer, according to Hanson.

She cited other conditions in the woods that should lead to a successful season for hunters, starting with several mild winters and another good growing season this year. This has resulted in plenty of



GUN-DEER HUNT SET TO START — Austin Schultz is seen last year with the impressive 10-point buck he got in Rusk County on opening morning of the 9-day gun-deer season in 2021. This year's hunt kicks off Saturday and runs through Sunday, Nov. 27.

food in the woods going into the fall from resources such as cherries, hazelnuts, and acorns.

"The deer herd in Rusk County is strong and healthy. These conditions are good for fawn survival

and also for bucks to put energy into quality antler growth," Hanson said.

The deer population in Rusk county has been holding steady around 26,000 deer the past 2

years. This is in line with the population objective to maintain the current population level.

Citizens can help to set these population objectives in the county by getting involved in the County Deer Advisory Council, which provides input and recommendations on deer management to the state DNR.

As of Nov. 11, there were still more than 1,200 public land and more than 7,000 private land antlerless harvest authorizations available for Rusk County.

"Harvesting an antlerless deer is a great way to fill your freezer with quality meat, and to help reduce competition for resources in the deer herd so that bucks and the population as a whole can remain healthy," Hanson said.

Chronic wasting disease (CWD), a fatal infectious nervous system disease in deer, has not been detected in Rusk County, but hunters can submit their harvested deer for CWD sampling at either a self-serve kiosk or set up an appointment with Hanson for any deer heads they would like to keep for mounts.

The movement of dead or alive CWD positive deer, moose, elk or reindeer/caribou (natural or human-assisted) is a key pathway in the spread of CWD. The infectious nature of the CWD prion contributes to an increased risk of introduction and spread of CWD if dead carcasses are brought to new areas and not disposed of properly.

There is a kiosk at the Ladysmith DNR Service Center, N4103 Wis. 27. Call (715) 518-8063

There is also a carcass waste dumpster available at the Ladysmith DNR Service Center, thanks to the contribution of the Rusk

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VEHICLE	MILES	STOCK #	COLOR	PRICE
2018 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 2500 HD LTZ	51,102	196929	SUMMIT WHITE	\$57,988
2020 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 LT TRAIL BOSS	29,533	231225	CAJUN RED TINTCOAT	\$50,988
2014 FORD F-150 XL	142,371	26718	BLUE JEANS	\$16,988
2016 GMC SIERRA 1500 SLT	91,000	333362	CRIMSON RED TINTCOAT	\$31,142
2015 GMC SIERRA 1500 SLT	58,703	376161	ONYX BLACK	\$34,393
2014 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 LTZ	115,315	257248	VICTORY RED	\$25,488



2018 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 2500 HD LTZ



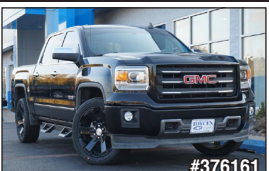
2020 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 LT TRAIL BOSS



2014 FORD F-150 XL



2016 GMC SIERRA 1500 SLT



2015 GMC SIERRA 1500 SLT



2014 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 LTZ

TOYCEN

of Ladysmith

715-532-3333

SALES DEPT. HOURS:

Mon.-Thurs. 8-6;

Fri. 8-5; Sat. 9-Noon



John Tinder



Tim Rugroden

Spill: Traced back to Dairyland Power Dam

Continued from Page A1

cants. They are used widely in steam turbines and hydro turbines, as well as all other continuous circulation methods involving pumps, valves and ancillary equipment.

The material acts as a thin surface sheen in the water, more like gasoline than oil. As a result, it may seep under and around the booms being used for containment.

Law enforcement records show a complaint made on Sunday, Nov. 6, to the Rusk County Sheriff's Department dispatch center of "gas coming down in the water past their house."

The caller also reported to dispatch, "they can smell gas."

A river resident who asked not to be identified, said, "When it was calmer out, the sheen was out from the shore about 5 or 6 feet."

"The oil is already at Memorial Park," the resident said. "My understanding is it is several hundred gallons of oil."

A social media post on Nov. 7 by a river property owner stated, "we saw something that looked like a rainbow film [kind of] like when you mix gas and water." The poster reported the incident to law enforcement and a conservation officer, "confirmed that a spill team and a dive team [were] going to inspect gate #2, to see if there was a leak."

A conservation warden who was contacted reported to the dispatch center there was a similar call several days earlier, "and it was deemed algae from the flowage coming through the dam when it is open."

It is not clear to state DNR officials how long the oil may have been releasing into the river.

"We are still following up on that also," Paddock said. "We are still investigating that. We will need to follow up with that a little more"

Bay West is using yellow booms anchored to the shoreline or trees and pumps to push the oil into absorbent traps, according to Thomson. Bay West is responsible for proper disposal of the material, she added.

"Crews from Bay West will continue to remove remaining oil this week, and we will provide further updates on the effort as recovery progresses," Thomson said.

Due to the low toxicity, volume released and volume of water flowing through the Flambeau River system, the petroleum sheen and any uncovered turbine oil should readily degrade or disperse, according to Thomson. Due to these factors, there is minimal risk to the environment and human health, she added.

Cold temperatures may hinder natural disbursement.

DNR officials will decide if a large clean up crew will be brought in.

A data sheet for the product states the material is not hazardous, according to regulatory guidelines with no significant physical or chemical hazards. However, high pressure injection under the skin may cause serious damage, and excessive exposure may result in eye, skin or respiratory irritation.

In case of a land spill, stop the leak if possible without risk. Recover by pumping or with suitable absorbent.

The data sheet also provides management instructions for a water spill that include stopping the leak if possible without a risk. Confine the spill immediately with booms. Warn other shipping. Remove from the surface by skimming or with suitable absorbents. Seek the advice of a specialist before using dispersants.

Water spill and land spill recommendations are based on the most likely spill scenario for this material. Geographic conditions, wind, temperature, (and in the case of a water spill) wave and current direction and speed may greatly influence the appropriate action to be taken. For this reason, local experts should be consulted.

The material is not considered hazardous under OSHA standards. It is not expected to be harmful to aquatic organisms.

The leak occurred on turbine #2, which was immediately taken out of service when the problem was discovered. The unit was isolated from the river.

"It will remain out of service until a root cause analysis has been completed and repairs have been made," Thomson said.

Dairyland personnel will continue to meet and communicate with land-

owners throughout this process, according to Thomson.

"Dairyland takes this incident very seriously and is 100 percent committing to proper cleanup and mitigation," Thomson said.

There have been no reports of fish kills or wildlife destruction, according to Paddock. "We've had a sheen on the water but we haven't had any impacts on fish or wildlife to this point," he said.

"They have placed booms on the surface to catch any of the oil and they have been doing a process to wash off any of the rocks that were impacted and any of the hard material impacted on the shoreline. They have been recovering that and disposing of properly," Paddock said.

Dairyland Power had a similar discharge in the past, according to Paddock. He said in January 2021, the company reported a discharge of 10 gallons that was immediately recovered.

"It has happened in the past," Paddock said. "They noticed it, I believe in one of their sumps."

Paddock said it is not uncommon to get "releases in surface water," whether that be from a boat, turbine or other source.

"We do get a lot of reports of impacts to surface water," Paddock said.

A final report will help state DNR officials determine if more remediation is needed or if the case can be closed, according to Paddock.

Impacted residents are asked to direct questions to Katie Thomson in Corporate Communications at (608) 787-1323.

Dairyland Power has 45 days to report its findings and document its spill response and submit it to the state DNR.



CLEANUP UNDERWAY — A yellow boom is placed in the Flambeau River shoreline, near the Turner's Pond Take A Kid Fishing Area.

— News photos by Luke Klink



HEADING UPSTREAM — A yellow boom is placed in the Flambeau River. Workers for an industrial and environmental services company were hired by Dairyland Power Cooperative heads upstream as clean-up continues after a turbine oil discharge from the dam.



SPILL DETECTED — A Flambeau River property owner reported a sheen along the shoreline, much like what happens when gasoline is spilled in water. A law enforcement officer responded to the call, walking the shoreline to see how far the material went upstream before investigating at the dam.



DAM DISCHARGE — Dairyland Power initially estimated up to approximately 20 gallons of oil may have been discharged to the Flambeau River from the dam, located about 3 miles upstream from Ladysmith. More investigation determined the discharge to be 175 gallons.

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Community
THANKSGIVING
DINNER

Thursday, November 24th at Noon - 1P.M.
at HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH
 320 First Street South, Ladysmith

MENU: Turkey, Dressing, Potatoes & Gravy, Vegetables, Cranberry Sauce, Dinner Rolls, Jell-o, Pies, and Beverages

Deliveries to homebound members of the community within five miles of the church will be available.

To reserve a meal, please contact the church office (715-532-7739) by noon on **Monday, November 21.**

Chippewa County Courthouse hours to change Jan. 1

The Chippewa County Courthouse announced new hours of operations starting Jan. 1, 2023.

The new hours will be 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday to Thursday, and 7:30-11:30 a.m., Fridays.

The courts may have additional hours on Fridays until 4:30 p.m., but only for scheduled court hearings.

Legion announces football raffle winner

The Bruce American Legion Post 268 football raffle winner for this week is Bill Kelemen, of Ladysmith.

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