

SPORTSLOOK

K-Runk Memorial Race is Friday night

The 7th annual K-Runk Memorial Race will be held Friday night, July 14, at Eagle Valley Speedway in Jim Falls. The race is held in memory of Kyle Runkle, who was well-known in the Chetek area.

Each year, the memorial race commemorates Runkle's love of racing his Midwest Modified race car after he unexpectedly passed away in November of 2016 at the age of 22. It is a fun-filled family-friendly night of racing, along with giveaways, drawings and raffles.

All proceeds go to funding the upcoming yearly races, payouts and trophies. If interested in supporting, donating items or purchasing a K-Runk Memorial T-shirt for this year's race, contact Jerry Knutson at 715-859-6332.



Weekly winner of fishing photo contest

This week's winner of Chetek's 2023 Catch-and-Release Fishing Photo Contest is Ken Placzek, of Westmont, Illinois, who caught and released this 21-inch largemouth bass pike while fishing on the Chetek Chain on Thursday, July 6. Placzek calls Chetek his "home away from home."

He will be awarded \$20 cash, courtesy of Crimson Hue Resort.

The photo contest is meant to promote the catch-and-release aspect of fishing on the Chetek Chain while encouraging photographers to take unique, clever and clear photos for submission.

To submit a photo, anglers will need to catch a fish, take a digital photo, release the fish and then send the photo to tyler@theteketalert.com.

Herrmans successful in single season World Slams

Colleen is third woman to accomplish feat



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Barron residents Neal and Colleen Herrman proudly hold up the Ocellated turkeys they harvested in Mexico this past May during the couple's quest to complete a turkey hunting "world slam," which entails bagging all six subspecies of wild turkeys in North America.

BY TYLER FLORCZAK

Simply put: turkeys don't stand a chance when Neal and Colleen Herrman are in the woods or fields chasing gobblers.

The husband and wife duo recently checked off a bucket list goal of completing a turkey hunting World Slam, where the Barron residents each harvested all six subspecies of wild turkeys in North America in a time frame of 60 days. Accomplishing a world slam in itself throughout a lifetime is impressive but to complete the feat in one spring season is mind boggling.

They logged more than 22,000 miles driving to and from several states and flying to Mexico on two separate occasions to accomplish the special feat. It was the third time Neal has achieved a World

Slam while Colleen joined elite company by becoming just the third woman ever to complete a single season World Slam.

Turkey hunting's "slams" are documented by the National Wild Turkey Federation. The six required subspecies for a world slam are the Eastern, Osceola (Florida), Merriam's and Rio Grande turkeys in the United States; the Gould's in the United States or Mexico; and the Ocellated in Mexico.

Colleen and Neal's quest for the single season World Slam started March 16 in Florida when the couple flew south for a 10-day vacation at a friend's where they also planned to hunt Osceola turkeys. During their first morning (March 18) hunting in the Sunshine State, Colleen shot two birds and Neal harvested one gobbler. Not

to be outdone by his wife, Neal bagged bird No. 2 the next morning, allowing the couple plenty of time to relax and rest in the warmer Florida weather.

After returning to Wisconsin for one week, the couple drove west to South Dakota where they hunted Merriams in blizzardlike conditions April 4-8. Neal described the experience as "hell on earth." "It was terrible; blizzard conditions, deep snow and freezing cold temperatures. Plus, the birds weren't responding to calls as they were essentially in 'survival-mode' due to these crazy conditions," he stated. "Although we had two tags apiece, we were at the point where we thought if we got one Merriam apiece, we were done. It was very

SEE SLAM, PAGE B3

CLPA report: survey results guide lakes management plan

This is the first of a three-part series highlighting the needs for protecting our lakes and the many groups working to protect and improve our lake and watershed.

This first part summarizes the Chetek Lake Protection Association online survey used to update the Chetek Lakes Aquatic Plant Management Plan. Part two will summarize the many groups working to protect and improve the lakes, and part three will summarize lake improvement projects being performed to improve the health of the entire Red Cedar Watershed.

THE SURVEY

Last winter, the Chetek Lakes Protection Association conducted an online survey to gather input from CLPA members and the Chetek-area community to assist the engineering team working with the CLPA to update the Aquatic Plant Management Plan. The survey helped us learn a lot about our residents: 1) Who they are, 2) What they do on the lake, 3) What they see, and 4) What's important to them!

WHO RESPONDED TO THE SURVEY?

With the online survey, 255 people responded, of which 86% were CLPA members and 14% were nonmembers.

Ninety-two percent owned property on the Chetek Chain of Lakes, and 46% were full-time residents.

WHAT DO WE DO ON THE LAKE?

The most popular activity on the lakes is "cruising/boating." According to 92% of the respondents. Eighty-eight percent respondents said fishing, while 79% said

water sports (swimming, kayaking, tubing, skiing), and 55% said "Sponsored Events" (Liberty Fest, Winter Fest, Lake Fest). Another 52% said ice fishing along with 34% saying ATV/UTV activities and 18% saying snowmobiling. When asking what type of watercraft our responders used, 82% said pontoon, 62% kayak/canoe/paddle boat, and 27% small fishing crafts.

WHAT DO WE SEE?

Seventy-seven percent of the responders observed that weeds are an issue for people and/or fish at times. Sixty-three percent report weeds on Prairie Lake, 55% on Tenmile, 42% on Ojaski, 39% on Pokegama, 38% on Moose Ear, and 29% on Lake Chetek. When asked what types of weeds are found, most weeds reported were of the floating varieties that lie near the surface. Fifty-four percent reported duckweed, 38% reported curly-leaf pond, and 22% reported milfoil/coontail. These are the weeds that live 3-4 weeks in summer, die and decay, and are the most common cause of smelly odors in late summer or fall. Oftentimes these decaying plants are mistaken for blue-green algae, but blue-green algae blooms are not common on the Chetek Chain, although they have been found occasionally in small stagnant bays that do not have water flowing into and out of the bay.

Several Chetek Chain residents in these bays are using aerators to keep the water moving near their docks and reduce the accumulation of the dead plant debris. The aerator adds dissolved

SEE PLAN, PAGE B2



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A fish story bigger than Alaska

Chetek Alert Sports Editor Tyler Florczak was reunited with a childhood pet while on a fishing excursion in Homer, Alaska, recently. Somehow, Florczak's pet goldfish Walter had found his way to the chilly waters of the Northern Pacific Ocean after being flushed years ago. Both recognized each other immediately. Perhaps a goldfish's memory isn't as short as many assume. Both are happy to be reunited. Florczak commented, "We may need a bigger tank."

Red Cedar Riders host Barrel Blast, July 15-16

The Red Cedar Riders Saddle Club will host its annual Barrel Blast at Red Cedar Riders Arena in Chetek on Saturday and Sunday, July 15-16.

On Saturday, classes will start at 9 a.m., while Sunday classes begin at 8 a.m. Both shows are sanctioned by the National Barrel Horse Association.

Classes for both days include peewee barrels, open 4-D, youth 4-D (\$50 added), senior 4-D, open 4-D and open 2-D pole bending.

For more information, contact Shelly at 715-828-4227 or Lisa at 715-790-7502, or visit the Red Cedar Riders' Facebook page.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

First-time visitor reels in trophy walleye

Mark Pearson of Rochelle, Illinois, spent his first vacation in Chetek at Outer Resort over the Fourth of July. Pearson, who is legally blind and has cerebral palsy, caught this beautiful 25-inch walleye fishing with his buddies on the north end of Prairie Lake. While bringing in this whopper, they broke the fishing pole and landed it without a net (which they forgot to bring). A plain hook and leech was used as bait to entice this lunker. They eagerly anticipate many more years of fishing on the chain of lakes. Pictured above at left is Pearson with his catch and close friend Zach Miller is pictured at right.

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Chirp on your shoulder: bald eagle call heard over Chetek River

This bald eagle, photographed above the Chetek River recently perched high above the flowing waters, let loose its peal call. The call consists of high-pitched, prolonged, gull-like cries and lasts several seconds. The mature bald eagle was calling to another eagle on the other side of the river as both appeared ready to feast on fish floating beneath the waters' surface. The peal call is a bald eagle's primary call, a descending chitter-call, is a kind of laughing cackle. It sounds similar to a gull. They use it often when other eagles are present or are flying in to a feeding area or perch.

PLAN: Water quality a top issue for respondents

FROM PAGE B1

oxygen into the water which allows aerobic bacteria to consume the bad algae naturally. This process disrupts the "bad weeds" from making themselves at home, and prevents plants from decaying and smelling in the bay area where the aerator is installed.

When respondents were asked why the Chetek Chain has shoreline management concerns, 75% said that shoreline plants (or absence of plants) are the cause. Respondents went on to say they believed that 65% of shoreline erosion was caused by wave action from boats, 52% shoreline management (lack of vegetation), 31% wind, 30% ice shifting in winter and 29% storm-water runoff. When asked where weeds affected navigation, our respondents reported 35% Tenmile, 35% Prairie, 31% Ojaski, 28% Moose Ear, 13% Pokegama, and 9% on Lake Chetek.

| Priority | Responder's Score |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Lake Condition | 4.42 |
| Quality of Fishing | 3.15 |
| Safety | 2.66 |
| Erosion Control | 2.55 |
| Ease of Navigation | 2.21 |

WHATS IMPORTANT?

When the responders were asked to rank the most important priorities for managing our lakes on a scale of 1 to 5, they responded as follows:

Additional survey comments that were shared included: increase communication and boater education at landings, restrict fertilizer/pesticides, consider dredging to reduce nutrients, greater enforcement of State and DNR rules (especially no-wake zones near shorelines!), and reduce algae in the water.

It is clear that the lakes are very important to most everyone living in the area, or making their living as a business owner or employee of a company dependent on the income earned from lake businesses.

Number one priority from most responders was water quality, and these inputs and values are being included in the new update to the CLPA Aquatic Plant Management Plan for the Chetek Chain. The original plan, drafted in 2012, documents the species of plants found in The Chain and what actions are available to manage the situation.

One of the actions that came directly from the original plan was to initiate the Lake Association's weed skimming program in response to the rapidly increasing curly-leaf pondweed found throughout the chain. In the seven years the CLPA plant harvesting program has been in operation, there has been a significant year-to-year reduction in the amount of pondweed observed and harvested throughout the Chetek Chain of Lakes.

These results are documented and reported to the DNR and Red Cedar Watershed Partnership organizations each year. The updated Aquatic Management Plan, due later this year, will reassess the aquatic plant conditions and determine options on how to approach and manage the lake weed threats going forward.

If you would like to assist in the efforts to protect and improve our local lakes, please consider donating your time as a volunteer, or a monetary donation to fund the equipment and maintenance expenses by going to the CLPA website at www.cheteklakespa.org, or email info@cheteklakespa.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ED KRAMER

Chetek Hydroflites head to State Competition the weekend of July 23

The Chetek Hydroflites Water Ski Show Team will host its kick-off performance on Sunday, July 16, before packing everything up to compete in the 57th Annual Wisconsin State Water Ski Show Championships at Red Sands Beach on Lake Wazeecha, in Wisconsin Rapids, the weekend of July 22; this means there will not be a ski show Sunday, July 23. The Hydroflites will be back to entertaining crowds in Chetek on Sunday, July 30.

CLPA hosting fundraiser for weed skimmer

The eighth annual fundraiser for the Chetek Lakes Protection Association Weed Skimmer Program for 2023 is slated for Saturday, July 22. The Skimmer removes unwanted weeds from the lakes and is solely supported from donations and raffle sales at this event each year. Gilligans in Chetek will once again host the annual fundraiser which will run from 12-4 p.m. with the grand prize drawing taking place at 4 p.m. It will be a day filled with games and several additional raffles, along with several prizes (including cash prizes) and several ways to win throughout the afternoon. This will be an afternoon of fun for the whole family.

Prizes for the winning raffle tickets include: grand prize—\$1,500; several prizes for \$250 in Chamber Bucks; Leinenkugel and Miller electric beer signs; gift certificates from area restaurants and businesses; plus, many other prizes too numerous to list! Raffle tickets can be purchased in advance at Fostbite's Pub & Spirits, Phill's, Sioux Creek Golf Course, Rod & Gun Sports Shop and Gilligans.

Check out the CLPA website, Facebook page, posted flyers and many of the local businesses for additional details, or for additional information, email info@cheteklakespa.org.

Fall elk hunt drawing winners announced

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources today announced that four Wisconsin residents won a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hunt elk during the 2023 elk season, which opens Saturday, Oct. 14.

The DNR randomly selected these hunters from more than 21,300 applicants. This drawing is random, with all applicants having an equal chance to be selected. All four hunters have been contacted by the DNR and are from Cedarburg, Green Bay, Sparta and Mount Horeb.

"The winners are excited to pursue elk right here in their home state and create memories with family and friends – something they will hold onto for the remainder of their lives," said Josh Spiegel, DNR Wildlife Biologist. "We wish them the best of luck."

In May, the DNR pre-

sented the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board the eight-bull harvest quota within the northern elk management zone, the same quota that was approved for the 2021 and 2022 seasons. Of the eight-bull quota, the DNR awarded four licenses to state hunters. The Ojibwe tribes have declared the remaining four elk, per their treaty rights within the Ceded Territory.

The 2023 elk hunting season will take place only in Wisconsin's northern elk zone, which covers portions of Ashland, Bayfield, Price, Rusk and Sawyer counties. This area includes the 1995 reintroduction effort, which began with 25 elk from Michigan. The northern elk herd population is projected to reach 355 animals this year. The central elk herd is estimated near 155 elk this year, bringing

the statewide post-calving population above 500 elk.

The DNR thanks everyone who applied for this year's elk permits. Those applications contribute directly to the future of the state's elk population. For each \$10 application fee, \$7 goes to elk management, habitat restoration and research. In 2023, some applicants chose to give amounts above the \$10 fee, and their additional donations totaled more than \$8,000.

For more information on the elk hunt, visit the DNR's elk hunting webpage. Additional information about Wisconsin's elk can also be found on the elk in Wisconsin and elk reintroduction webpages.

Sign up for updates on current translocation efforts by joining the "Elk in Wisconsin" and "Wildlife Projects" email distribution lists.

DNR webinar for learning how to hunt bear

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources will host an educational hunting webinar for people interested in learning how to hunt black bears in Wisconsin on Wednesday, July 12, at 12 p.m. It will be recorded and available for viewing after.

The webinar will include information on bear biology and management, bear hunting rules and regulations, and the most common techniques used to hunt bear in Wisconsin.

Learn to Hunt Bear Webinar

When: Wednesday, July 12, 12 p.m.

Where: Youtube. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XH4b5kZNX4>)

Webinar will be recorded and can be viewed anytime at the same link.

"Wisconsin has a strong bear hunting tradition, and the opportunity generates a lot of interest from hunters," said Bob Nack, DNR Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation Team Supervisor. "Due to the high level of interest and permit wait times, many hunters don't get the chance to gain a lot of bear hunting experience. This webinar will provide a basic understanding of what it takes to hunt Wisconsin black bears."

Following a presentation by DNR staff, the audience will have opportunities to ask questions that panelists will answer at the end of the program. The webinar will be recorded and available online.

Contact the DNR [email: RobertR.Nack@wisconsin.gov] if you or your organization is interested in

hosting a Learn to Hunt bear program.

Learn more about various hunting season dates, rules and regulations, harvest quotas and more on the DNR website at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Hunt>.



WISCONSIN DNR

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