

East Gull Lake Staff Changes

Retirement—Gregg Struss

We are sad but yet excited for Gregg Struss, Maintenance/Wastewater Operator who has retired his position at the City after 10 years of service.

Gregg has been working part time for the City since May 4, 2006. Prior to working with the City of East Gull Lake, Gregg was the manager with the US Army Corps of Engineers facilities at the Gull Lake Dam for many years. He is still assisting the City wastewater department occasionally until June while the newly hired technician is finishing his education. Gregg’s enthusiastic smile and hearty laugh will be missed, but he will still play tennis with the boys each week on the East Gull Lake courts.

New Hire—Cole Neeser

Cole Neeser, the new Wastewater/Maintenance Technician, was hired on December 2, 2016 and will be working Fridays until his college course is complete. He will start full time work following his graduation in June.

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EAST GULL LAKE MEETINGS:

- ◆ Council: First Tuesday of the month, 6:30PM
- ◆ Planning Commission: Last Tuesday of the month, 6:30PM, no scheduled meeting in December
- ◆ Committee meetings determined as needed

Please check the City [website](#) for additional meeting information.



Comprehensive Plan Update

For over a year, the Planning Commission has been reviewing and updating the Comprehensive Plan for the City of East Gull Lake. The present plan was completed in 2005 by an outside firm. It contained a great deal of optimism and expectations that were never realized due to the massive economic downturn that occurred shortly after that time.

During review, the current plan has been shortened and updated with the visions of the present Planning Commission. City Council will make their assessment of the plan before having a joint meeting with the Planning Commission for further review. Following this joint session, there will be a public hearing for the resident’s ideas for the City’s future. This meeting will occur sometime during the summer when the seasonal residents are available to participate.

For the last three revisions, we have hired a consultant at a great deal of expense to coordinate. In the opinion of the Planning Commission, the end product had more of the consultant’s opinions and vision than the City’s. There is a great deal of experience and talent on the City Planning Commission and City Council, with many years of living in East Gull Lake. It may take a longer period to get this plan done, but it will be the vision of the City this time.

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The Harbor at East Gull Lake

After many years of discussion and potential plans that began in the early 1960's, a development is finally being built in the land we have all referred to as "The Channel" or to some "Wood Tick Ditch".

The original development vision was for 48 mobile home sites platted in 1962 shortly after the Channel was excavated by a still valid US Coast Guard permit. The future plan in 1962 was to add fingers to the north side of the channel for up to 60 more mobile homes for a total of more than 100 building sites. Environmental laws were just beginning in this era, but thankfully, possibly due to wastewater issues, that development never came into fruition.

As the land changed hands over the next 52 years, a number of other plans were proposed, but the developers could not come up with a plan that was acceptable to City, State and Federal officials. In 2014, shortly after I started working for the City of East Gull Lake, I met with Martin Harstad who owned the land since 1981. In the mid-1990's, he floated the idea of doing a high-density town home development on the property. He informed me that after meeting with local government officials and the lakes association, he realized it would never happen. His new idea for the property was the exact opposite. His new vision was extremely low density single family homes with a homeowners' association that would maintain the pool, storage buildings, harbor, lawn mowing and snow removal. Prior to making a formal application with the city, Mr. Harstad met with members of the Planning Commission and City Council to get their response on the project. He also met with representatives of the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Cass County and the Gull Chain of Lakes Association to be able to incorporate any of these entities desires or concerns with the project. Through the process, he did extensive surveys, which included an archaeological study, the required wetland delineation and extensive soil tests. One of the keys to the development was getting a permit to expand the channel to create a harbor for the 27 home sites that he had planned.

One of the first joint meetings on the proposed harbor was held at City Hall attended by myself, Mr. Harstad and representatives of the DNR, USACE and Cass County. At that meeting we were informed that personnel of several agencies would need to review and approve any proposal. It was also stated at the meeting that the 41 lots platted in 1962 along the south side of the channel still had the possibility of development. What the owner could do with these lots was a very big concern to City, County, State and Federal Officials. Current laws would have allowed a dock for every one of the 41 platted lots on the south side of the channel and one for every 100 feet on the north side of the channel. It also was determined that the developer could have put docks directly onto Gull Lake as the property also has hundreds of feet on Gull lake frontage. After numerous studies and negotiations that would limit the number of docks from the new development, the decision was made in 2016 to allow a small harbor with 27 slips (one for each home of the proposed new development), because this was "the least environmental impact of all options that are possible."

Over the years, the city has had numerous discussions with Mr. Harstad about a donation of part of his property to the City. In the spring, hundreds of local citizens have used his property as if it were public property to fish for pan fish when the ice is coming off the lake. The City and Mr. Harstad had come very close to making this donation a reality over the years but for one reason or another it never happened. The Planning

**BUILT ON THE
CHANNEL, THE
HARBOR WILL
PROVIDE 27
RESIDENTIAL HOMES
AND A COMMON POOL
AND PLAY AREA**

The Harbor at East Gull Lake, Continued

Commission even discussed making this a condition of the Conditional Use Permit recommendation for the Harbor project to the City Council but the City attorney noted it would be illegal to do so. Mr. Harstad requested that the project either be approved or denied based on the merits of the project. He made it very clear that the land donation, if finalized, would be separate of any approvals of the new development.

I am happy to report that around the first of the year, the City received the land donation from Mr. Harstad. The City now has the deeds to 23 acres of property that included the 41 platted lots. Citizens will now be able to enjoy the new City property as well as have access to the channel for fishing for many years in the future.

When the final plat is completed this summer, Mr. Harstad will also donate additional acreage on the western edge of the development bordering Gull Lake where the old road went to the bridge. This is part of his park dedication commitment for the new development. This donation of land along with placing the remaining undeveloped land on the north side of the channel into a permanent conservation easement will assure a great majority of the entire 58-acre parcel remains in a natural state for the future.

Current construction is progressing very well with the first two housing units underway. Baratto Brother's Construction, a local company, is the exclusive builder for the project.

This will ensure that local suppliers and labor will be used as part of the construction process. Soon the harbor, including dredging of the new boat slips, will be completed. The 27 required storage units across Squaw Point Road to the East have been ordered and soil preparation is underway. The roads, utilities (including City sewer), and association maintained pool house and swimming pool will be installed soon, along with a great deal of landscaping and tree planting. The goal is to have a possible July 4th open house to introduce the newest housing option to the community.

More information is available on site where the sign is located at the intersection of Squaw Point Road and Green Gables Road or you may stop by City Hall for information as well.

**LAND DONATION TO
THE CITY SOUTH OF
THE CHANNEL WILL
REMAIN
UNDEVELOPED**



Trail Extension—Squaw Point Area

Since 2011 we have not extended the East Gull Lake Trail system. Currently there are approximately nine (9) miles of multiuse trails exclusively on the south end of the City. There are no developed trails within the northern portion of the City (north of Gull Lake Dam). The main reason for this is the availability of right of ways, as they are non-existent or vary greatly.

Another reason is several residents on the north end of City years ago, did not want any trails. This may have been due to fear of the unknown and their own privacy concerns. Some people say it's the expense. However, they are misinformed and not aware of the variety of grants and public funding that is available to communities to build access to healthy activities. East Gull Lake has been the benefactor to many of these and the actual cost to the City of our current trails for the residents would surprise you.

Having over ten years' availability of trails on the south end of town, the popularity is overwhelmingly positive. Walkers, bikers, and golf cart enthusiasts alike use the trail and in some cases, most recently, year around due to very little snow. Some neighborhood residents even routinely plow the snow in the winter with four-wheelers to be able to enjoy their daily walk. The communication and neighborhood interaction is one of the positive results to having a trail in your area.

Since "The Harbor" development is underway and the future will bring new residents and guests who most likely will be of the age that likes to walk, bike or drive a golf cart. The City Council is of the opinion having a trail from the Gull Lake Dam to the intersection of Hillview Forest and Squaw Point road would be a nice addition. We also have gained the right of way along Squaw Point Road due to the PUD agreements for land donation. This is a busy road and sharing it with the traffic is a dangerous thing. Having trails separated from the road is a great benefit and encourages many families to enjoy exercise together.

One of the challenges will be getting a trail through the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) campground area due to the burial mounds. I have had two meetings with the USACE staff and they agree it would be a benefit to both USACE and the City to ascertain something that works for both parties

If you have an interest in helping with planning a trail in this area, please let us know and we can involve you on the trail committee that has not been very active the last few years.

**HAVING OVER TEN
YEARS' AVAILABILITY
OF TRAILS ON THE
SOUTH END OF TOWN,
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POSITIVE.**



East Gull Lake Staff Changes

Cole was born and raised in Sauk Rapids, MN and attended Sauk Rapids–Rice School. He is a sports enthusiast with a keen interest in hunting and fishing. He is currently studying Water and Wastewater Technology at St Cloud Technical Community College. During his studies, he completed an internship with the City of Sauk Rapids at their water plant.

Cole is very excited to graduate and start full time with his D Wastewater license. He is enjoying working in East Gull Lake and looks forward to moving into the area.

As you see Cole out there on site, please be sure to welcome him to East Gull Lake.



COLE NEESER—
NEW WASTEWATER
TECHNICIAN

ESD Explained

Electric Shock Drowning

Believe it or not, summer, and all its activities, is approaching quickly. Before we know it, many will be swimming in the beautiful lakes of the area. In an article by Beth A. Leonard, she explains in detail the dangers of electric currents in fresh water. She states: “Every boater and every adult who swims in a freshwater lake needs to

understand how ESD happens and what to do—and not to do—if they ever have to help an ESD victim”. She notes that it is important for the rescuer to stay out of the water while trying to rescue the victim.

She explains the difference between fresh water and saltwater noting the saltwater is 50 to 1,000 times more conductive, making the human body the target in fresh water for the electricity to travel through while trying to ground out. She also noted that AC is more dangerous than DC to the human body.

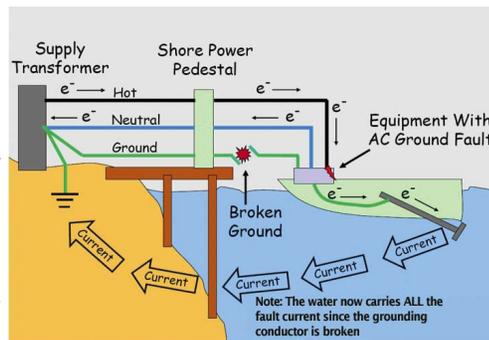
To explain how electricity gets in the water in the first place, she notes that “In a properly functioning electrical system, all of the AC current that goes into the boat or lift through the shore power cord returns to its source—the transformer ashore or on the dock where it originated.”

Three things have to occur for electricity to end up going through the water:

- ◆ Electrical fault
- ◆ AC safety ground fault
- ◆ No ground fault protection

In 2013 the ABYC made ground fault protection on boats part of the E-11 electrical standard. Please be careful if you have older equipment that may not be grounded properly.

Check out the following website for more information on ESD. www.BoatUS.com/insurance



STRAY AC ENTERS
WATER BY
ELECTRICAL FAULT
AND FAULT IN
SAFETY GROUND

Wastewater Facility Plan

In 1991 East Gull Lake gratefully received two Federal grants for over a million dollars apiece to build the two existing wastewater treatment plants. These grants were some of the last grants offered at that time by the federal government. This was also the beginning of the wastewater system which the city had been planning since the late 1960's that was badly needed to keep Gull Lake and Sylvan Lake clean.

In 2004 the City decided to expand the Pine Beach plant adding another 282 homes to the original system. With a booming economy in 2005, they expanded the plant as it was anticipated that many more connections would be added in the near future for additional revenue. Part of the additional expansion was financed by a guarantee of 150 additional future connection fees for Madden's and Cragun's that the resorts have been paying for since that time. This revenue has helped pay for part of the PFA bond payments. Unfortunately, the financing for the 2004 project was based on getting many more additional connections and due to the recession and economic downturn that occurred shortly after 2006, those connections never occurred and the revenue from wastewater charges is currently not keeping up with the bond payments that continue until 2024. We have looked into refinancing the current 1% PFA loan; however, the additional interest rate adjustment and associated bond cost would exceed \$600,000. The City Council is currently determining the best way to move forward without refinancing.

**FACILITY PLAN IS A
REQUIRED FIRST STEP
IN THE PROCESS TO**

UPGRADE The most important issue currently is that the Squaw Point Waste Water plant has only had small minor improvements done over the last 27 years. The plant was originally designed for a 20-year lifespan and it was not originally designed to reduce phosphorous that discharges into the Gull River. New regulations are coming from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) in the future and phosphorous reduction is a very important item in the Governors Clean Water initiative.

Improving this aging wastewater plant is the reason East Gull Lake contracted Short Elliot Hendrickson Engineering (SEH) to create a facility plan on March 1, 2016. The Harbor development on the channel had already received approval from the MPCA to be added to the existing Squaw Point plant permit and is not the reason for the facility plan which was contracted before the development was approved by the City.

A facility plan is a required first step in the process to upgrade an older facility and it allows a city to apply for financial assistance from the Mn PFA (Public Facilities Authority). Our application was submitted to the PFA for the Squaw Point Plant on March 3, 2017 for the opportunity to be considered for potential grants or low interest loans. (An application in 2004 for the expansion of the Pine Beach Waste Water expansion allowed the city to get a 20 year 1% loan for more than 6.4 million dollars.)

SEH was asked to put together engineered estimates for two different options for the Squaw Point plant. One option was an upgrade to the existing plant to provide Phosphorous reduction capabilities. The other option was to construct a

Wastewater Facility Plan, Continued

pipe from the north side of the City to the Pine Beach plant to take advantage of the additional unused capacity planned for in 2004. In addition, there are two very key lift stations that have not been upgraded since 1991 and they are included in the facility plan as well.



Another significant long term advantage to installing the pipe to the Pine Beach plant is

- ◆ treatment of phosphorous can be done with existing equipment at this plant
- ◆ reducing utility expense and chemical costs by not having two plants
- ◆ eliminating required testing expense at one plant.
- ◆ additional labor needed to run two plants rather than one

Other additional benefits for running the pipe to the Pine Beach Plant are:

- ◆ The treatment process at the Pine Beach Plant during low flow months in the winter would benefit from the increased flow.
- ◆ Because of the phosphorous reduction equipment already in place at Pine Beach, there is greater potential to receive a grant based on a point source reduction program to help fund the cost of the pipe to bring it to the Pine Beach area as phosphorous reduction is a very key element which the state is promoting to clean up rivers downstream.

The biggest challenge ahead is determining the financial details and fine tuning the cost estimates for improvements. There are some very difficult decisions to be made and it will take some time. A Public Hearing will be held on Saturday April 29th, 2017 at 1:00 PM, so all residents will have a voice in the decision-making process.

The long-term benefits of these facility upgrades are maintaining the beautiful lakes and rivers that we all enjoy.

East Gull Lake History

by Linda Engel

Thanks to Rob Mason's collaboration with Marla Yoho, clerk of Fairview Township, the long sought answer to "**when was the city incorporated**" has recently been verified. In Echo Publishing's "Love of the Lakes" 2016 Edition, an article written by Pete Mohs states that Fairview Township was organized in March, 1922. Because road maintenance was difficult in that era, "...November 1924, a portion of the original township that lies to the east and south of Gull Lake was 'detached' and became East Gull Lake." That means the city centennial could be celebrated in 8 years! *(From EGL History Committee Agenda & Follow up Notes, June 15, 2016)*

BIGGEST CHALLENGE
AHEAD IS
DETERMINING THE
FINANCIAL DETAILS

EAST GULL LAKE
HISTORY UPDATE



SIGN UP FOR EMAIL ALERTS:
www.eastgulllake.govoffice.com

Household Hazardous Waste & Electronics Mobile Collection

East Gull Lake City Hall
Thursday, June 22, 2017
12 noon—4:00 pm

For Cass County Residents Only
No appointment necessary



Examples of accepted wastes:

- Unwanted or unusable paint and paint products
- Adhesives, mercury products, corrosives, pesticides, oven cleaners, batteries
- Cleaning products, old gasoline, automotive products (except motor oil)
- Also accepting fluorescent bulbs



Do NOT bring these items:

- Explosives or radioactive wastes
- Used motor oil, oil filters or antifreeze—these can be taken to any county transfer site at no charge year round
- Unusable joint compound—this should be dried out and disposed of in regular garbage

If you have questions, or need to make an appointment to drop off our wastes at the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) facility north of Pine River at other times call:
Cass County HHW facility at Pine River: 888.910.2425, ext 2

Cass County Environmental Service Department at Walker: 218.547.7287



Brush and Leaf Removal

Please remember that leaves and brush do not belong in the wetlands, right-of-ways, or vacant property. Mike's Tree Service (218.825.8207) is still taking brush and the City still takes leaves at the Pine Beach wastewater treatment plant land.