

Jim Ozenberger Is New Deputy District Ranger on the Hiawatha Forest

By Karen Gould

In October, Jim Ozenberger closed the door to his office, said good-bye to a job and friends he'd known for more than 15 years, and traded a view of the mountains and a horse barn for an office overlooking the Straits of Mackinac. Mr. Ozenberger is the new deputy district ranger at St. Ignace for the Hiawatha National Forest, stationed in the east district office on US-2, and reports to Steve Christiansen, the district ranger. He replaces Martie Schramm, who has transferred to the Kaibab National Forest in Williams, Arizona, where she is the deputy ranger.

Mr. Ozenberger monitors programs and long-term forest management plans, working with a staff of 43 full-time and seasonal employees.

The move, he said, is part of his career plan, and the water is what drew him to this area of the country. He hopes to dock his sailboat at the St. Ignace City Marina and to crew on a boat in the Port Huron-to-Mackinac Island yacht race this summer.

"This is a big change for me," said the 46-year-old Colorado native. "I was drawn on a personal level by all of the water that we have here, and the lakes we have around here are just incredible, incredible beauty."

Mr. Ozenberger has spent most of his career with the U.S. Forest Service in Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. In his last position as a forest ranger at the Bridger-Teton National Forest in Jackson, Wyoming, his team protected and managed 3.4 million acres of public



Jim Ozenberger is the new deputy ranger with the Hiawatha National Forest in St. Ignace.

land, including 1.2 million acres of designated wilderness that is only accessible by foot, all-terrain vehicles, helicopters, or horseback. Much of his work in range management required riding a horse, and sometimes camping in the wilderness.

"A lot of the area there didn't have roads, so horses were the efficient way," he said.

He enjoyed the job so much, he stayed for 15 years.

"The time went very fast for me," he said. "I saw some amazing country and had some incredible experiences there. It was kind of hard to leave that area, but I knew that I had to pursue my career goals."

Small by comparison, the Hiawatha National Forest, named

after the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem, "The Song of Hiawatha," has 879,000 acres. The land borders three Great Lakes - Michigan, Huron, and Superior - and includes a lighthouse and four islands, Grand Island, Round

Island, Government Island, and St. Vital Island. There also are six designated wilderness areas on the forest, Mackinac, Delirium, Big Island Lake, Horseshoe Bay, Rock River Canyon, and Round Island.

"They're very professional here and what they do here they do very well," Mr. Ozenberger said of the district. "I came here to learn and develop my experience and my life's work, my career. This is a really good learning experience. My goal is to be a district ranger and to do that well."

The forest is divided in two sections. The east side, which is more than 440,000 acres, includes St. Ignace north to Sault Ste. Marie and west of Rudyard to Lake Superior. It does not include Tahquamenon Falls. The west side includes land from Rapid River north to Munising.

The U.S. Forest Service manages mineral and wood production, water usage, campgrounds, and wilderness and recreational land use on the national forests. It also manages developed campgrounds, or administers contracts with those

Snowmobiles Cross Straits January 12; First of Winter



With Mackinac Island visible over his shoulder, Island resident Brett Horn prepares to make the journey home, returning as he came to St. Ignace, over the ice on his snowmobile. Mr. Horn and his friend, Bobby Roach (not pictured), made the first ice bridge crossing of the year Monday, January 12.

Mackinac Island residents Brett Horn and Bobby Roach crossed over the ice by snowmobile to St. Ignace early Monday afternoon, January 12, establishing the first ice bridge crossing of the season.

The men made the trip in less than 10 minutes, a far faster passage than the hour it took in February 2008.

This marks Mr. Horn's sixth time being a part of the first ice crossing group.

"It was flat," he said of the ice. "We really didn't check, so I can't say how safe it is. We just got on it and went. It was flat all the way."

The men left the Island at the old Stonecliffe ski hill, reaching land at the Mackinac Grille in St. Ignace. They rode their sleds north to the Driftwood Restaurant before heading back to the Island.

When the ice is good, Islanders line the bridge with Christmas trees recycled as trail markers, which serve to direct those making the crossing around cracks, slush holes, and other impediments. Reflector tape on the trees makes them visible at night.

St. Ignace residents who work on the Island in the winter find the ice bridge convenient, and Island residents say the ease of crossing gives them more freedom during winter months.

As ice began to build in the Straits during cold weather near the end of December, Arnold Transit stopped ferry service January 3. Temperatures are predicted to drop below zero this week.

Traveling over the ice is risky, and passage between the Island and the mainland is not condoned by the U.S. Coast Guard or any local law enforcement agencies.

Great Lakes Air in St. Ignace provides transportation year-around.

Marshall To Replace Fenlon as Twp. Member on City Board

By Ryan Schlehuber

Jerry Fenlon was thanked by the Moran Township board Wednesday, January 7, for 12 years of service on the St. Ignace Recreation Advisory Board as a township representative. His replacement will be Gracia Marshall.

Mrs. Marshall, a 1987 graduate of LaSalle High School is a certified referee for high school volleyball and is the head coach for the St. Ignace girls volleyball team. She and her husband, Randy, have three children. The Recreation Advisory Board supports the city's recreation department and includes representatives from the city and Moran and St. Ignace townships, which contribute funding for recreation programs.

Township Treasurer Susan Dionne informed the board that she will hold office hours at township

hall from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, February 28, for tax collections. This year's deadline for taxes is Monday, March 2.

She also will accept payments by mail if it is postmarked no later than March 2.

She said a proposal in the state legislature could allow tax deadlines that fall on a holiday or weekend to be delayed until the following Monday, which would avoid municipalities having to hold office hours on weekends or holidays.

The board put to rest a question posed by a small group of township residents who asked if the Western Brevort Cemetery could be renamed Brevort Cemetery.

After sifting through township records, Township Supervisor Jim Durm found that the cemetery has been named Western Brevort

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who manage and operate concessions. The agency also manages timber sales and monitors prescribed fires. It maintains a trail system for hiking, skiing, off-road vehicles, and snowmobiling, often working with volunteers. Other tasks include engineering, building, and maintaining roads, and fighting forest fires. Throughout the country, it manages buildings, dams, and utility easements through the national forests.

"It is a lot of land management that we do," said Mr. Ozenberger, "and it is public land, is tied to legislation. There are many legislative acts that designate the authority to the Forest Service. It is complex."

The Forest Service motto, he said, is "We will care for the land and serve people."

Since he has been here, he has made it a goal to meet people in the community and get to know forest service staff.

"People are really nice here and very easy to converse with, real genuine, good folks," he said.

This winter, the staff plans some control work on the emerald ash borer, which is destroying ash trees. Controlling invasive species is a big

issue here, whether in the forest or in the lakes, he said, although funding to fight the invaders is limited.

Mr. Ozenberger has a degree from Colorado State University in range ecology, which includes forests, grasslands, riparian areas, and wildlife habitat.

"The Hiawatha Forest has a very good reputation for forest management, or what now is called sustainable landscape management," he said. "It's quite complex, and we have some really good foresters."

Included is the protection of threatened and endangered plant and animal species, including the goshawk and a species of dragonfly.

"Actually," he said, "this area has the most threatened and endangered species of any forest in the northeastern region."

The Upper Peninsula is isolated, surrounded by water on three sides, and that can lead to the development of specialized species, he said, since they don't have the opportunity to move around.

Another feature of the region is the large amount of limestone, which creates a soil that has a chemistry on which only certain plants thrive.

Recycling Center Will Open in Clark Township

By Jonathan Eppley

Cedarville contractor Mike McMaken will open a recycling center between Cedarville and Hessel on the corner of M-134 and State Avenue, called Green Choice Refuse and Recycling Services. He has worked a deal with Waste Management to set up several closed-top compactors to be used for sorting recyclable materials, including, but not limited to, glass, cardboard, metal, and several types of plastic. A large wood-chipper will make wood chips from yard debris and unused construction lumber, and the chips will be available for purchase, he said.

The recycling center will open for business Monday, February 2, and is part of McMaken Carpentry's plan to become a "full-circle green" contractor.

"To be full-circle green is not only to offer people green building ideas and bring those into their homes, but also what happens to the products that you take away from a remodeling site and what you do with the waste," Mr. McMaken said.

Tom Huskey, owner of Tom Huskey Construction and Design in St. Ignace, said about half of the unused materials taken away from his job sites are put into dumpsters and eventually taken to a landfill. The rest is given away or donated,

he said.

Mr. Huskey said he is looking forward to using the recycling center almost 30 miles away from his office.

"There's really not a lot of waste left over" from a job site, he said, "but I'd be open to that."

For a disposal charge yet to be determined, the recycling center will be open to the public, as well as to Eastern Upper Peninsula contractors, Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is expected to create two new jobs.

Mr. McMaken also is expanding his carpentry business under a subsidiary called Green Energy Solutions to sell and install renewable energy source products, such as solar panels, solar hot water systems, and vertical and horizontal-axis wind turbines. He plans to offer environment-friendly products like spray-foam insulation made from soy, and a plastic-wood hybrid decking material that does not require regular maintenance.

He expects the expansion to create an additional five to 10 new jobs.

"I can't sit back and expect people to come to work here and just do it the same old way that we've been doing it," he said. "We'd better protect what we have, we'd better protect our resources, we'd better protect our environment."

Mackinaw City Planning Commission

Ramp Approved, New Plans Discussed for Senior Facility

By Ryan Schlehuber

With approval of a site plan and special use permit to build an accessible ramp to his senior-assisted residence facility, Cedarbrook Village owner Craig Bonter provided insight into future plans and ideas to the Mackinaw City Planning Commission at a special meeting Thursday, January 8.

To clear up what Village Manager Jeff Lawson called "a formality," Mr. Bonter was required to secure a special use permit for the operation of the assisted-living facility because it is zoned for motel occupancy, as the building was formerly a Ramada Inn.

Mr. Bonter was given a variance by the village council December 18 to build a 30-foot, covered ramp from street level to the building's second floor for people to exit and enter the building more easily. A variance was needed because the plans would violate the village zoning ordinance, which now requires at least 25% of the lot to be greenspace.

After Commissioner Paul Allers echoed the council's desire to see more greenspace, Mr. Bonter said the ramp addition will actually add a few more square feet of greenspace, especially if he is able to convert some of the parking spaces to greenspace, a possible future project, said Mr. Bonter.

"We have 30 residents and only maybe two who drive," said Mr. Bonter, "so we would like to remove some parking spaces for more greenspace."

The building has 160 rooms and includes medical facilities and physicians' offices. Cedarbrook is working with Mackinac Straits Hospital in St. Ignace to provide physician care for senior residents.

Commissioner Rosada Mann praised the facility's community garden behind the facility, pointing out that it is an added benefit for residents.

"I was interested to see it was a built-up garden so that residents on crutches or wheelchairs could go out there and work out in the garden," said Ms. Mann. "I was very pleased to see that; it was very nice."

Commissioner Bo Whipkey added that the planning commission wants to spruce up both sides of South Nicolet Street, where Cedarbrook Village is.

Plans to repair and remodel the facility's sign near the street are underway. The sign was damaged after a milk truck hit it, said Mr. Bonter, adding that he wanted to remodel the sign, anyway.

Another feature Mr. Bonter is hoping to add is a swimming pool for aquatic therapy for residents.

Construction of the ramp is expected to begin in about three

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