



February 19, 2016

Legislative Week

It was a very exciting week at the Capitol this week with both the Senate and the Assembly taking up many pieces of legislation on a wide variety of topics.

The Senate took to the floor Tuesday. We passed a few dozen bills including a few that I authored.

Assembly Bill 422 was passed on a voice vote and relates to funding for the [Florence Wild Rivers Interpretive Center](#). I authored this bill with Representative Rob Swearingen and it was one of the pieces of legislation that was heard at the public hearing I held in Antigo a few months back. The Florence Wild Rivers Interpretive Center is located on US 2 and operates through a unique state, federal, and county partnership. The Florence County Forestry and Parks, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, United States Federal Forest Service, University of Wisconsin Extension and Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicles are all housed at the Center. There is also a new RV Dump Station and an off-leash dog park located there as well. The Center provides a lot of services for the area - in fact it sells over \$40,000 in DNR licenses, permits and registrations each year. This bill has already passed the Assembly and awaits the Governor's signature.

Assembly Bill 700, which moves the start of the wolf hunt season, was also passed. I mentioned this bill in previous updates, but I authored this bill with Representative Al Ott to help prevent conflicts with bird dogs getting caught in traps and to allow wolf pelts to reach prime condition. The bill was supported by the Wisconsin Conservation Congress in last year's survey.

Senate Bill 605 was also passed in the Senate. I authored this bill with Representative Terry Katsma to clarify which kinds of flashlights could be used during night hunts. Current law provides the option to use a handheld flashlight and this bill broadens the options to lights that can be affixed to a person or clothing, or a gun mounted light.

On Tuesday, Lac Courte Oreilles Chairman Mic Isham delivered the State of the Tribes address. The State of the Tribes address began in 2005 to help promote better communications between the tribal nations and the state. There are 12 federally recognized tribes in the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council and each year the council selects a member to give the address. It is a great opportunity for both lawmakers and the people of Wisconsin to learn about the issues the tribes are facing as well hear about the successes they've had this year.

On Wednesday, I testified on two pieces of legislation I authored related to the Rural Wisconsin Initiative in the Senate Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges.

The first bill I testified on was Senate Bill 662 which would provide additional funding for the Wisconsin Rural Physician Residency Assistance Program. This program was created in 2010 to help establish more residency programs in rural areas of our state. The idea behind the program is that if doctors spend time training in rural parts of the state they will be more likely to practice medicine in a setting similar to the one where they received their training.

The second bill I testified on was Senate Bill 663. This bill creates a recruitment program to help draw educated and employed individuals to rural Wisconsin. Declining population continues to be an issue throughout Wisconsin and it impacts many aspects of our communities. Less people means a smaller labor pool for employers and less children in our schools. This bill provides an incentive for young people to move to rural Wisconsin by allowing them to apply to have some of their student debt paid for. The bill is crafted very narrowly and requires that the individual is a new resident in a rural county, has graduated from college, has a full-time job, and is not on government assistance programs. This idea has been implemented in Kansas and Oklahoma and they've seen some success with it.

On Thursday, the Assembly was on the floor with over 100 bills on its calendar.

One of the bills it passed was Senate Bill 434 - the bill I authored with Representative Mursau that makes changes to the MFL program.

Senate Bill 434 returns nearly \$18 million over the next three years to towns and counties in the form of MFL - Closed fees. As municipalities and counties have had to tighten their belts, the forestry industry has seen an increase in local road weight restrictions. SB 434 will help with local transportation budgets. Additional changes include increasing the minimum acreage for enrollment from 10 to 20 acres, greater flexibility for owners when transferring ownership and splitting acreage, rule flexibility when a natural disaster strikes property enrolled in MFL, and lowering the administrative burden for enrollees by eliminating the severance and yield taxes. SB 434 cleared the legislature on a bipartisan vote and now goes before the Governor for his signature.

I also want to use this opportunity to thank Rep. Mursau for his hard work on this legislation. There were bumps along the way but in the end we were able to pass a good bill that will have a positive impact for the people of Wisconsin. I appreciate his hard work and support.

Executive Order

This week, Governor Walker issued [Executive Order #186](#).

This executive order prohibits state agencies, departments, boards, commissions, or any of their agents from developing or promoting the development of a state plan to comply with the 111(d) Rule related to the Federal Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan (CPP).

Last week, the Supreme Court of the United States granted a stay in the implementation of the CPP so it could be further reviewed by the court.

The CPP is just another example of federal overreach that will stymie our economic growth. The plan has very little environmental benefit and will be very harmful by driving up energy cost - especially in states like Wisconsin. I've seen estimates as high as \$13 billion in unnecessary costs due to the CPP. Driving up energy costs will not only hurt families across Wisconsin, but it will also make it harder for businesses to be successful.

I applaud Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel for leading the charge against this rule in court as well as Governor Walker for protecting Wisconsin families from this potentially unconstitutional new regulation.

DNR's Outdoor Report

While many regions of the state were just finishing shoveling after this past week's snowfall, this weekend promises significantly warmer temperatures across the state with a high chance of snowmelt especially in the south. That being said, some area lakes in the Northwoods are holding on 10 to 12 inches of ice, with a thin and more brittle layer on top that is still making vehicle travel inconvenient.

After another recent dusting, numerous cross-country trails, particularly in the northern and some central counties,

where almost a foot or more of snow remains, have been groomed in the past week and are as prepared for warmer temperatures as possible.

This weekend is the 43rd annual American Birkebeiner Ski Race from Cable to Hayward, the largest Nordic ski race in North America. The race reached its 10,000 skier limit and race officials closed the course this week until race day to try and preserve as much of the base as possible and have the trail in the best shape it can be with the projected warm-up. Skiers who compete in the Birkebeiner have been visiting the Flambeau River, Northern Highland-American Legion and other park and forest properties to prepare for the competition.

Snowmobile trails were in good condition across the northern tier of counties and some northeaster counties on the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's [Snow Conditions Report](#), but the warm weather coming will take a toll on trails. Some central and northeastern counties have announced they will be closing trails before the warm-up.

Those skiing, snowshoeing and hiking may well be treated to a variety of tracks, from small rabbit imprints to larger deer and mid-sized weasels. If you're watching the skies or the treetops, keep your eyes open for raptors, as hawks and owls are tending their nests and eagles are circling for food. If you're simply out for a short walk around the house, or pondering the bird feeder, you may see goldfinches, red breasted and white breasted nuthatches, woodpeckers of several varieties and more.

The walleye bite has still been fickle for many Northwoods anglers, with primarily small sizes being reported. However, action for panfish has remained more consistent, with anglers reporting catches of perch, crappie and bluegill, particularly in deep water areas. Anglers fishing Green Bay off Door County did well with the whitefish but perch were hard to come by. Anglers reported lots of cracks in the ice covered with snow and hard to see. One UTV got stuck when one of its tires went through a crack earlier in the week.

At the end of the sixth day of the Lake Winnebago System sturgeon spearing season on Feb. 18, the Upriver Lakes harvest included four adult females, which was enough to trip the 90 percent trigger, so the Upriver Lakes season will come to a close Friday, Feb. 19 at 1 p.m. The harvest of 15 fish from the Up River lakes brought the season total to 290 fish. The harvest on Lake Winnebago picked up again for the second day in a row with a total harvest of 36 fish, bring the season total to 245.

Another sign of spring has arrived, as skunk cabbage has started to emerge on the boardwalk loop north of the beach at the Pike Lake Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

Woodruff DNR Service Center area

Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest - Snowmobile trails are in good condition but the warm weather coming will knock them down. Law enforcement has been getting some poor fishing reports. There is layer of slush underneath the top snow pack on many area lakes. With rain predicted for Friday (and warm temperatures) the lake ice could become dangerous. Increased snow depths are bringing more diversity to the Northwood's bird feeders. A bobcat is frequenting our feeders looking for suet and venison scraps, and hopefully grabbing a mouse or rabbit off guard! Red poles, goldfinches, red breasted and white breasted nuthatches, blue jays, chickadees, hairy, downy and pileated woodpeckers are the daily visitors for sunflower and thistle seeds. Their visits are pure sunshine during these bleak winter days when one doesn't want to venture out for a ski or snowshoe. The days are getting noticeably longer allowing time for outdoor exercise after work. Three campsites are plowed at Clear Lake Campground for winter campers. Use has been very light, so come on out - you will likely have the campground to yourself! Portions of the roadways in Clear Lake and Crystal Lake Campgrounds are plowed for winter walkers to have a safe place to walk out of the snow. We still have a couple of openings for volunteer campground hosts for the coming summer - one at Cunard Lake mid-summer, and one at Clear Lake in fall. Contact Joe Fieweger at 715-385-3355 ext 113 or joseph.fieweger@wi.gov if interested. - Kimberly Krawczyk, Visitor Services Associate

Forest cross-country ski conditions were good as of Feb. 18. Escanaba and Madeline trails were groomed and tracked

Calendar of Events

Upcoming Events

Start Date		Location
February 20	<u>Annual Post Lake Ice Fishing Jamboree</u>	Elcho
February 20	<u>Candlelight Ski/Hike</u>	Crivitz
February 20	<u>Frozen Tozen Winter Fest</u>	Boulder Junction
February 20	<u>Ice Fishing Derby</u>	Phelps
February 20	<u>Human Ice Bowling</u>	Athelstane
February 27	<u>Ho-Drags on Ice</u>	Rhinelander
February 27	<u>Winter Party</u>	Presque Isle
February 27	<u>Love Me Tender in Merrill</u>	Merrill
February 27	<u>Volunteer Fireman's Ball</u>	Florence
February 27	<u>4th Annual Blindfold Snowmobile Race</u>	Phelps
February 27 - 28	<u>MASTERS Snowmobile Hillcross and Hill Climb</u>	Florence
March 5	<u>Keyes Peak Winterfest</u>	Florence

As always, if you have any comments or thoughts regarding the subjects of this e-update, please feel free to contact me.

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