



Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

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January 2024

By Paul von Goertz - KRHCC Board Member

WILL KNIFE RIVER BE ABLE TO KEEP ITS COMMERCIAL FISHING HERITAGE?

Mary and I are very fortunate to live on the lake, only because we bought our property 53 years ago before the marina was built. From our vantage point we can see Steve Dahl heading out in all kinds of weather nine months out of the year to lift his herring nets which are almost directly in front of our house.

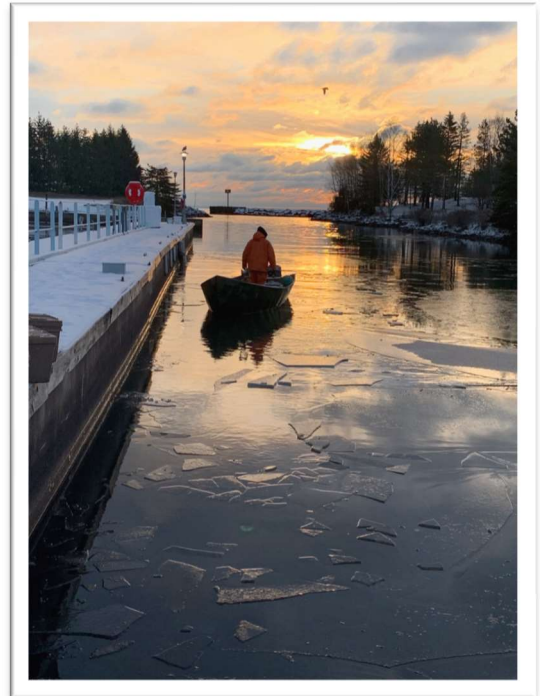
Photo right: Steve Dahl breaks through December “mirror ice” to tend to his nets. Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

It’s good to see Knife Rivers’ (KR) two licensed commercial fishermen, Steve and Mark Torgerson, carry on KR’s fishing heritage. Currently catches are limited to herring but can include lake trout if stocks allow as in 2021. Commercial operators can fish for ciscoes (a herring variety) lake trout, and round whitefish.

How long will our fishing heritage last? Two important factors are stable fishing stocks and people who want to work this hard to make or supplement a living.

I spoke with Cory Goldsworthy from the DNR’s Lake Superior area fisheries for help in answering these questions. According to Goldsworthy, herring stocks are currently stable, but many factors like air and water temperature, currents, turbidity, wind, and ice cover all affect where herring can find food and so be found.

State and federal sampling of Lake Superior waters can somewhat predict what years can yield the most herring. As a rule, if a herring is still alive at one year there’s a good chance it will make it to



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adulthood at three to four years. So, if test nets produce a lot of herring in the one-year-old range, there should be good numbers in three to four years.



Photo left: One of Knife Rivers past commercial fisherman, Al Wiemi dresses out his day's catch. Photo credit: Kay Struve

The road to becoming a licensed commercial fishman on Lake Superior is challenging. According to the DNR's website, commercial fishing in Lake Superior is limited to 25 licensed commercial fishermen. Some of the considerations for issuing a license are based on experience with fishing Lake Superior, such as having apprenticed with a licensed commercial fisherman and having the necessary equipment.

A person with a commercial fishing license may list one person as an apprentice on the license. A person acting as an apprentice must have an apprentice license. The commercial fishing licensee, or the apprentice listed on the license, must be present at all commercial fishing operations, including going to and from fishing locations, or setting or lifting nets, or removing fish from nets. A person possessing an angling license may assist the holder of a master's or apprentice license in going to and from fishing locations, setting or lifting nets, or removing fish from nets.

Goldsworthy expanded on the licensing process. "There are three ways. The apprenticeship program is the most common and preferred by the DNR. The second would be generational where the license is inherited. A third allows a commercial fisherman to literally sell his business – his license, fishing gear and even boat. Goldsworthy discouraged this option. "People who choose this option can damage the reputation of the industry by not knowing how to correctly and safely set and lift nets, or through lack of experience adversely affect fishing stocks and even the environment. All forms of commercial licensing are written in the State statute. <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/97C.835>

I asked Goldsworthy what incentives there are for a person to pursue a career as a commercial fisherman, provided stocks remain stable. "We're up against a trend where young people are moving away from careers that can require long hours - like farming - or working with their hands. There is an upside that reflects a person's values and that's "locally grown food." It's fresh and ready to eat and studies show consumers are willing to pay more for locally grown food." Just what constitutes "locally grown" is not clearly defined by a web search. But a factor is the distance food travels from place of origin to the consumer and what, if any, processing is involved. Most herring from KR are sold fresh to local restaurants – "from lake to table."

Commercial fishing out of KR goes back to the 1750s when Europeans partnered with Indigenous peoples to create a viable industry at the mouth of the river. Through good and not-so-good times it has always survived. What we need now are men and women with an entrepreneurial spirit, a love of the lake and its many moods, and the satisfaction of giving people fresh fish to enjoy.

The KRHCC thanks Cory Goldsworthy for his help in writing this story. If readers would like more information on any aspect of Lake Superior commercial fishing, Cory is willing to answer your questions and address any concerns in KR at a convenient time and location. Contact Cory Goldsworthy, Area Supervisor, phone 218/302-3268, email cory.goldsworthy@state.mn.us

PLATFORM LAMP ADDS MORE AUTHENTICITY TO KR DEPOT

By Todd Lindahl

Todd Lindahl, KRHCC historian, has acquired another item for the depot that brings the depot back closer to 1900, and that's a kerosene platform lamp. Here's the story about platform lamps and how the one for our depot was acquired.

Railroad Depots, and especially those that had late night passenger trains, needed to have a platform in front of the depot lighted for public safety.

Photo right: A kerosene lantern on the landing deck of the Northern Pacific's depot in Sandstone. The depot was later moved to Chisago City. Photo credit: Todd Lindahl



When the Lester Park depot was no longer needed and moved to become the KR depot in December 1899, new platform lamps had to be purchased for that station. The Alger-Smith Lumber Company's Duluth & Northern Minnesota Railway and the Duluth & Iron Range Railway had agreed to split the cost of the Knife River depot since both railroads were very active both day and night there.

As agreed to, Alger-Smith purchased one Dietz platform lamp and the Duluth & Iron Range the other. Each lamp could light an area of about 50 feet and because of the length of the depot at that time, two were necessary. Each was mounted on a pole and probably located near the front corners of the depot. It is possible that a third wall-mounted lamp of a different style may have been attached to the wall on the north side of the depot, but this has never been verified.

In 1905 the Duluth & Northern Minnesota Railway installed a steam-powered electric generator in the roundhouse at the north end of the Knife River yard. It provided electricity for all the railroad facilities and about half of the town. At this point the two kerosene platform lamps were no longer needed. Electric carbon arc lamps mounted on high poles across from and behind the depot provided a reliable bright light after the sun went down.



Eliminating the kerosene lamps undoubtedly made the agent quite happy. He no longer had to use a ladder to light the kerosene lights every night as before. He also didn't have to fill the tank and adjust the wick to create the proper amount of light. If the wick was too high, the lamp would smoke badly and blacken the globe. The agent would then have to remove the globe and clean it. Keeping the wick trimmed helped maintain a good flame and as a result a good light as well.

Photo left: Head of the lantern in the KRHCC depot.

Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

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At some point the Duluth & Iron Range Railway removed its platform lamp and its final disposition will be forever unknown. The Duluth & Northern Minnesota Railway lamp was also removed and then reused in a logging camp cookhouse to light the dining area. A resident of Two Harbors worked in the camp as a logger and when the camp shut down, the old platform lamp was going to be left behind. He asked the foreman if he could have it and was given permission. He kept it in his garage in an alley between First and Second Avenue until the 1990s at which time I (Todd Lindahl) acquired it.

For security purposes, the platform lamp has been placed on a post and is mounted in the waiting room of the KR depot.

Photo right: Lantern on its post. The post is a replica made and painted by Todd Lindahl. Photo credit: Paul von Goertz



It is on loan from Todd and is part of his amazing collection of railroad memorabilia. The KRHCC greatly appreciates the loan of the lamp and thanks Todd for preparing this history and making, painting and mounting the post upon which the lamp rests.

KR IS BECOMING A WILD PLACE!

THE KNIFE RIVER CHICKEN MURDERS



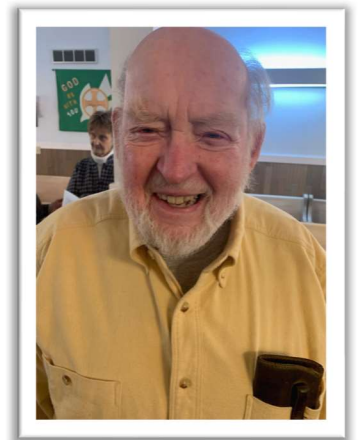
We have good neighbors who have a few chickens they keep for fun end eggs. We have become somewhat fond of the four hens as they do have personalities and always greet us when we bring them approved meal scraps.

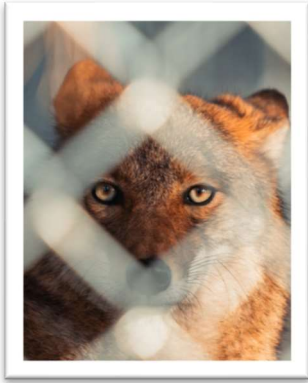
Shortly after the first of the year Mary went to greet them after her morning walk with friends to behold a scene of great carnage. The door to the hen house was open and scattered in the immediate area were four dead chickens, none of which had been eaten. The scene was perplexing as the hen house was a commercial variety with bolted doors. And why were the hens outside and within a few feet of the hen

house?

Photo: Footprint captured in fresh snow. Mary's boot next to it for size perspective. Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

A clue to the murderer was a defined footprint in fresh snow. I took a picture of it and sent it to our resident wildlife expert, Bill Berg (image right), retired DNR Wildlife Research Biologist. Bill responded: "All the bears are sleeping, and prints would be much larger. Bobcats have retractable claws and would not show and are identical to house cat tracks only a bit larger. Too small for fox, so likely coyote, unless you know of a neighbor dog that runs loose." Photo: credit Paul von Goertz





We're not aware of a large dog that runs loose in our neighborhood, so probably a coyote and a nasty one who kills for sport. If anyone has any info or comments on these murders, write me at: info@krhcc.org

Since my talk with Bill, I have learned from other local folks that a coyote(s) has been sighted several times recently in KR. Are we their new hunting grounds?

Image left: The last photo found on the deceased chicken's cell phone. Photo credit: Public domain rights free

BOBCAT CAUGHT ON CAMERA IN DRIVEWAY

A security camera recently caught this large cat in the driveway of their east KR home. Once again, I went to my go-to guy on wildlife, Bill Berg, for comment: "Not a cougar, as they have a long rope-like tail. Just a big bobcat, likely a male. Bobcats and lynx have stubby tails, and lynx have a very different body shape with a goatee and tufted ears. A couple other of your neighbors have photographed what is likely this same bobcat the last couple years. Hopefully he will bring a girlfriend one year, and you can watch the kittens. Very playful, just like house cat kittens."

Photo right: Big bobcat caught on security camera. Photo credit: David Jacobson



DEAD END ROAD PROVES DEADLY TO DEER



Mary and I were walking down American Dock Road enjoying a sun-lit mid-January day when Mary spotted the remains of a deer just off the road. There were many footprints around it, mostly human, so no recognizable animal tracks.

My guess is that a deer was being chased down the road avoiding the snow drifts when it realized it was approaching a dead end. So, it veered off into the woods, where it was met by the steep railroad grade and the rest you can figure out. Was this the work of one or two predators? Coyotes? Wolves? We may never know.

Image left: Victim of New Year's weight loss resolution with assist from predator. Photo credit: Paul von Goertz

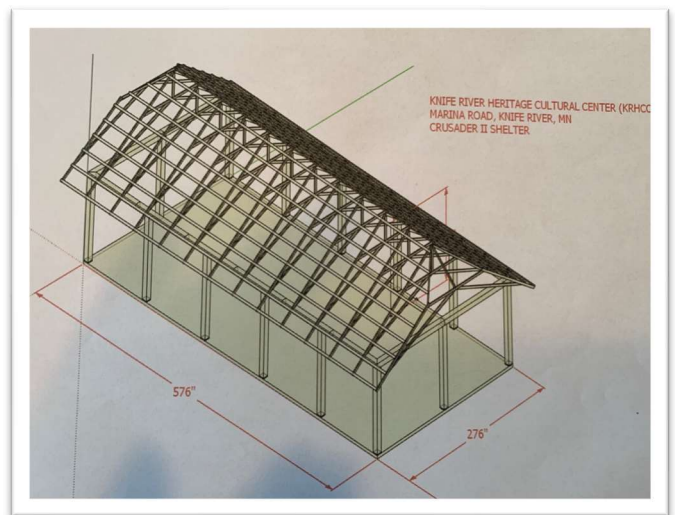
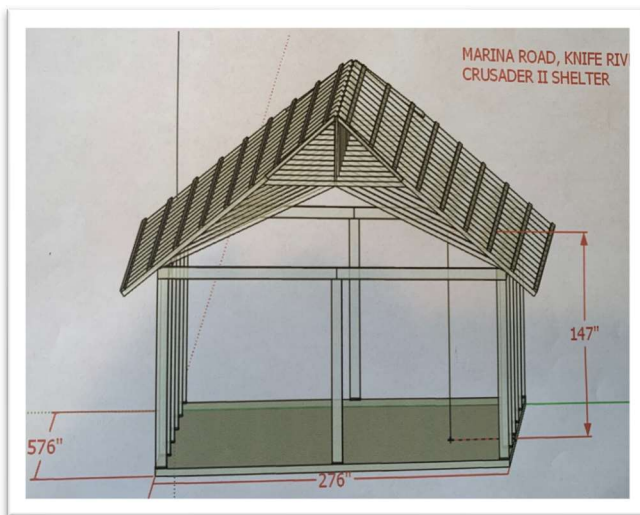
SHELTER GRANT MATCH MET – BUT GOAL POSTS MOVED

As mentioned in previous newsletters, the KRHCC is eligible for a \$30K match grant from the Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation (IRRR) contingent on an equal amount being raised from other sources for a total of \$60K. A \$10K grant awarded from the Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation (LKJ) December 18, combined with your donations got us the match.

According to the LKJ website: “Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation seeks to promote access to educational opportunities and to improve the quality of life in the North Shore communities of Cook, Lake and southern St. Louis Counties through grantmaking in the areas of arts and culture, community and economic development, education, the environment and social welfare programs to qualified organizations.”

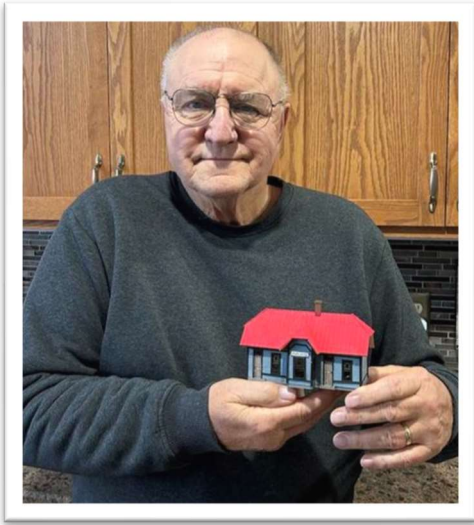
We feel the foundation’s mission and that of the KRHCC align so well that LKJ has made three grant awards to the KRHCC since our founding in 2018. We greatly value their faith in us to complete our current project.

We are now in the process of completing the application for the IRRR grant which is due the end of this month and includes three bids for building the shelter. After fielding questions from bidders, we are wondering if our estimate of \$60K is enough. We are reluctant to dip into our general fund to pump up the shelter fund as we need dollars to pay our overhead. Please keep those donations coming so we can get our shelter built this summer and keep the lights on. We are a 501 (c3) so all donations are fully tax-deductible. Send to KRHCC, POB 240, Knife River, MN 55609. Thank you!



Shelter framework drawing by David Grong

KR DEPOT CHOSEN AS A KIT MODEL



Paul and Kay Struve were at the Duluth train museum gift shop recently and were surprised to see a model of the KR train depot to HO scale (model railroad scale). Of course, they had to buy it. They then told me about it.

Image left: Paul Struve holds the laser-cut model he assembled and painted. Photo credit: Kay Struve.

I was proud that our depot had been chosen to be modeled and intrigued how it came to be. So with the help of Google I found the originator of our model and several other depots. His name is D. Scott Peterson and this is what he told me by email.

“Hidden River Manufacturing LLC (HRM Laser Models) is a small company in north central Wisconsin. The business started in 2013 with the production of a kit used for instruction purposes at our local hobby shop (now closed). That sparked the idea for creating more kits that I could sell at the hobby shop and on the internet. Eleven years and over 170 kits later I am still in the business of having fun.”

“I create kits using the original plans for a depot and redrawing them in AutoCAD. I create files that my laser engraver can read and cut basswood parts and thin aircraft plywood from Bud Nosen Models in Two Harbors. The kits are all tabs and slots construction and double-stick taped plywood pieces. Yellow glue in a small applicator squeeze bottle is the glue that I use to assemble the kits. Some sanding is required to form the bevels on the wood roof ridges (I instruct modelers how to do that in the instruction sheets). The kits come with a list of tools required for construction. People provide their own paint.” Photo right: Depot detail - Hidden River Manufacturing LLC



“My selection of prototype depots to model comes from my love of local area depots and multiple sources for the original depot plans. I try to be as accurate as possible when creating a kit. People suggest depots for me to model, but they must provide the plans. I do not model from a photograph. There is no accuracy in that. Old wood depots are the best for me to model as I model in wood, although I can model brick and stone if need be. (It is harder to do and costs a lot more in laser time.) Most of my models are in HO scale (1/87).”

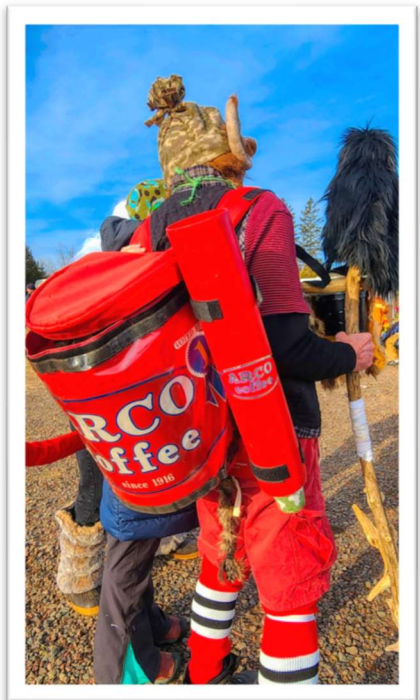
“I don’t model just any depot. There must be some interest to me. Wisconsin and states close are the most likely for me to model, but I do branch out.”

“I have modeled Knife River, Wayzata, Winona, Red Wing, Hastings, Montevideo, Rosemount, Farmington, Endion, Little Falls, Staples, and Minneapolis MILW RD depots in Minnesota.”

People can purchase the Knife River model kit at The Depot in Duluth or direct from HRMLaserModels.com He takes checks or PayPal.

OUR FAVORITE 2023 JULEBYEN PHOTOS FROM TROLL VILLAGE (KRHCC site)

All photos courtesy of Marilynn Magnuson: "The Viking Lady."



JANUARY DONATIONS, MEMORIALS, HONORARIUMS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Donations:

- Hidden River Manufacturing to general fund
- Peter Geist to general fund
- Ronald and Cynthia Svee for CRUSADER II rebuild
- Mitchell Costley in memory of Steven Ojard to general fund
- Victor and Lynda Johnson in honor of Paul and Mary von Goertz for contributions made to KR for the general fund

Grants:

- Lloyd K. Johnson Foundation

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