



TIMBERLINES

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
Izaak Walton League
March 2026

www.breckenridgeikes.org



Coming Events

March 2026

- 10 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 24 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
Matt Norton, Boundary Waters Advocate: Sulfate in the Rainy River-Headwaters

April 2026

- 14 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 28 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
Bruce Carlson, Minnesota Biological Survey History and Future Plans

May 2026

- 3 Pancake Breakfast 8 am-1 pm
- 12 Board of Directors Meeting 7 pm
- 26 Social Educational Meeting 7:30 pm
"Cranes over Minnesota" (International Crane Foundation)

Social Educational Meeting:

Tuesday, March 24 7:30 pm

Matt Norton, Boundary Waters

Advocate: Sulfate in the Rainy River-Headwaters

Matt Norton has been an Ike since shortly after moving to Minnesota in 1999. He is Policy & Science Director for Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness (NMW) and Save the Boundary Waters, and oversees NMW's water monitoring program. Matt has undergraduate and master's degrees in biology and forest science from Yale University, and a law degree from the University of Michigan Law School. Matt has worked since 2002 to protect Minnesotans' air, water, and public lands, including with NMW since 2016, and previously with the Minnesota Environmental Partnership and the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy.



Matt will discuss mining sources, background conditions in reference streams (those without mining), the impairment of Birch Lake, and downstream transport of sulfate from Birch Lake to and across the BWCA Wilderness boundary.

His presentation will offer a detailed look at the 2023-2025 data, and:

- describe background water quality in reference streams in the Rainy River-Headwaters;

PLEASE RENEW YOUR ANNUAL IWLA MEMBERSHIP FOR 2026

A number of members still have not renewed their membership for 2026.

Please return your dues with the pink portion with the label to Barb Franklin or bring it to a meeting.

Membership determines our representation in regional and national IWLA.

- identify mining discharges and describe their effects on two polluted tributaries to Birch Lake;
- trace elevated sulfate concentrations from mine NPDES-permitted surface discharges to tributaries of Birch Lake, through Birch Lake, and downstream to and across the BWCA Wilderness boundary;
- quantify elevated sulfate at the Wilderness boundary in terms of both concentration and load; and
- explore the implications of elevated sulfate on the watershed and the Boundary Waters.



Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness (NMW) has built and operated a professional water quality monitoring program that has produced extensive water quality data since 2020. The scope of the program’s data collection has shifted occasionally as new questions arise. To date, NMW’s monitoring program has centered on a portion of the Rainy River-Headwaters watershed including Birch Lake, its tributaries, the White Iron chain of lakes, and tributaries to those lakes, including the Kawishiwi River, the largest river system in the Rainy River-Headwaters watershed.

NMW’s water quality monitoring staff are properly trained to follow appropriate field data and sample collection methods. NMW follows all MPCA and EPA SOPs for QA/QC. NMW’s record-keeping is meticulous. The field equipment NMW uses is the same as used by the MPCA and EPA. A state-certified testing laboratory analyzes water samples using accepted analytical methods and submits sulfate results directly to the MPCA’s water quality database, EQUIS. The MPCA is using NMW’s submitted data in its Clean Water Act Section 303(d) determinations. MPCA’s determination in Nov., 2023 that Birch Lake (a wild rice lake) is impaired for sulfate was confirmed by EPA in spring of 2024, and is based substantially on lab results from NMW’s 2020 – 2022 sampling years.

Izaak Walton League, Breckenridge Chapter
Defenders of Soil, Air, Woods, Waters and Wildlife



Pancake
Breakfast



Sunday, May 3, 2026
8 am-1 pm
Adults \$10.00 Children \$5.00
www.breckenridgeikes.org

Raffle \$2

Breckenridge Chapter House
8816 West River Road
Brooklyn Park, MN 55444

Commissioner Lunde Speaks HCMC Closure / HERC Closure



Somewhat in jest, 1st District Hennepin County Board Commissioner Jeff Lunde told the audience at the Chapter House that an incumbent “politician will never lose an election if the trash is picked up on time”. His point being, that the vast majority of people (excepting us Ikes) don’t know and don’t care where their trash ends up, just so the bin is empty on Friday.

We invited Mr. Lunde to address us again - two years after his last appearance at the Breck Chapter House - to explain what is going on in Hennepin County related to the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC). Our members have been aware that some in Minneapolis have been pushing to accelerate plans to close HERC long before its planned 2040 decommissioning, pitching the burner’s early closure as an environmental justice issue, despite evidence to the contrary (see HERC Air Emissions Impacts below).

The Commissioner started off his remarks by emphasizing that the number one issue before the Commission right now is obtaining a new funding stream to cover its two safety net hospitals’ (Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) and North Memorial Hospital) projected annual revenue shortfall, shifting it from the Hennepin County property tax role to a repurposed Twins Stadium Hennepin County sales tax (due to paid off in

2027). <https://www.startribune.com/target-field-tax-conversion-wait-until-2026/601243816>

The County took control of HCMC from its board last year, aiming to stabilize operations and prevent potential closure of the safety-net hospital. This is a highly rated hospital that sees 40% of its ER visits come from outside the County, 30% of all patients and 24% of uncompensated patients also from outside the County, many even from outside the state. Hennepin County’s ask is being accompanied by a warning, that otherwise, HCMC will close May 19 this year, not having a plan of where its patients will go.

“On the environmental front there is good news,” Mr. Lunde also joked. There is a plan to close the HERC. It’s by 2040, if a workable plan to reduce and manage Minneapolis’ trash (700,000 tons annually) is adopted, including funding for it. More composting of organics, especially in multiple dwellings, would be a step in the right direction. Minnesota’s producer packaging responsibility bill which will be fully implemented in 2032 should also help. Of the “burner’s” trash, 75% is generated in Minneapolis. If HERC were to close today, we would definitely need a new landfill he said. Landfills in Elk River and Burnsville are approaching their permitted capacity while Pine Bend has about another decade’s worth or trash permitted.

The Commissioner was willing to guarantee that no outside county would be willing to step up to open a new landfill for Hennepin trash. Also a big NO, would be a District 7 Commissioner voting for a new landfill in this more rural part of Hennepin County. Landfills just sit there forever we were reminded, leaching toxins into the ground water and methane into the atmosphere. Minnesota has already paid out half a billion dollars to clean up landfills and another \$300,000,000 is needed. Other options for additional landfilling sites are less practical, including existing sites in Iowa and perhaps NW Wisconsin but this would come with the added pollution caused by the long-distance hauling of the waste by 10,000 truck trips annually.

Those advocating most strenuously for early closure of HERC cite negative human health effects. Lunde and David McNary, Assistant Director at Hennepin

County Department of Environmental Services, (who accompanied the Commissioner) mentioned that a primary contributor to the HCl acid emissions, a respiratory irritant, (still well within MN Dept of Health permitted level) is plastic water bottles, a problem that could be ameliorated by better recycling.

Reference was also made to the fact that Europe, with its stricter environmental laws, banned trash landfills in 2005 and uses the same state of the art technology as HERC is using in its burners.

By his read, Lunde does not see the County Board of Commissioners approving an accelerated plan to close HERC absent adoption of an alternate plan for Minneapolis trash. Certainly Lunde, who represents a district more diverse than Minneapolis, will not vote to allow Minneapolis trash to be hauled to the Brooklyn Park waste transfer station, the only one currently in the County. He said another transfer station needs to be built somewhere else in the County to handle the HERC waste before it could close.

Mr. Lunde said he will keep our Chapter of Ikes alerted about when the County starts the process of filling out the Environmental Advisory Board which he was successful in getting adopted recently. I'm sure our Chapter would be proud to have a member serving in this capacity.

A thoughtful and educational Q&A session which ended the meeting was followed by delicious light refreshments and decaf coffee provided by longtime member John Wexler.

Reported by Tim Johnson

HERC Air Emissions Impacts

Submitted to the Minneapolis Climate & Infrastructure Committee

October 10, 2024

Conclusions and Considerations

While HERC is an important contributor to emissions in Minneapolis and Hennepin County, its overall contributions when compared to all other sources are small. Emissions in Hennepin County are dominated by mobile and nonpoint, and those sources pose much higher risks to human health than emissions from HERC. The cancer and non-cancer risks from HERC emissions are well below the Minnesota Department of Health incremental risk thresholds. This means that HERC is not likely to cause more harmful cancer or non-cancer effects in one part of the community than another because there is equally low impact on surrounding communities.

In Minneapolis, cancer and non-cancer risks from air pollution are driven by mobile sources. The closure of HERC will not impact overall cancer and non-cancer risks from air emissions in Minneapolis. The premature closure of HERC will increase truck transport of trash throughout the county and outside of Hennepin County to landfills. This is estimated to result in more than 10,000 additional trips by semi-trailer trucks annually. This increase in truck traffic would add to what is already the highest source of pollution in Hennepin County and the driver of cancer and non-cancer risks in Minneapolis. Increased pollution from truck traffic results in higher exposures at breathing height as opposed to controlled, tall stack emissions which are designed to better disperse pollution higher in the air to reduce ground level concentrations.

Continuing Roundup News

by Karen Ostenso

Information for this article was gleaned from several online sources, not just the Star Tribune. At times it was difficult to determine their accuracy.

On Friday, February 20, 2026, The *Minnesota Star Tribune* ran another article regarding Roundup, its active ingredient glyphosate, and its owner, Bayer. The original article was written by Hiroko Tabichi and Sheryl Gay Stolberg of the *New York Times*.

They again noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said in 2017 that glyphosate was “not likely to be carcinogenic to humans.” This position was in contrast to the stance of the International Agency for Research on Cancer which stated in 2015 that the same chemical is “probably carcinogenic to humans.” Then, in 2025, the scientific journal that wrote the 2017 article retracted its position.

And very recently, on February 17, Bayer announced it had reached tentative agreement to pay plaintiffs \$7.25 billion to settle thousands of lawsuits against it. These payouts can continue for 21 years, and it means no more lawsuits can be filed against Bayer. Bayer is admitting no wrong-doing nor liability.



And, if the situation isn't confusing enough already, the United States Supreme Court is to hear a related case this April. Bayer is arguing that because the EPA said Roundup is safe, they were not required to put a warning on its packages.

The February 20 article reported that President Trump signed an executive order regarding glyphosate. It states that production and availability of glyphosate is "critical to the national defense." Using the Defense Production Act, he gave authority to compel production of enough glyphosate to be adequate for farming.

Interestingly, Health Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. was a lawyer who helped win a jury verdict against Monsanto in 2018. He contended the company knew Roundup causes cancer. After Trump's executive order, Kennedy said he supported it as needed for national security.

A *Star Tribune* article of February 25, written by Ali Swenson of the Associated Press, reviewed a statement by Kennedy supporting Trump's boosting the production of glyphosate. Although Kennedy said he believes glyphosate causes cancer as recently as January, he is now endorsing Trump's view. The article purports that Kennedy's statement is probably politically based.

I look forward to the SCOTUS ruling in April.

Rule of Law Resolution:

Passed January 13, 2026 by the Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter, IWLA board of directors.

Protect Democracy & the Rule of Law Whereas:

1. Conservation laws of the land were passed with bi-partisan support;
2. Laws establish legal foundation for the conservation, management and utilization of species, habitats, and ecosystems;
3. Consistent application of environmental regulations ensures predictability, trust and fairness and assures stakeholders that rules are not arbitrarily enforced;
4. Environmental regulations define rights to exploit, and responsibilities to conserve, natural resources;
5. Environmental laws hold governments, industries, and individuals accountable for violations through enforcement.

Therefore, be it hereby resolved:

The Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America urges all citizens and organizations to work together, peacefully and legally, to support and enhance democracy and the rule of law.

W. J. Breckenridge Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America
8816 West River Road
Brooklyn Park MN 55444



If you would like to submit an article for the Timberlines, please send it to
Barbara Franklin at: bbfrankli@gmail.com
Deadline is the First Day of each month.
All articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the position of the Breckenridge
Board of Directors. The Editor reserves the right to edit material as necessary.

Get the Lead Out

Two of our Breckenridge Chapter members, Steve Schaust and Dana Dickson, joined others in testifying at the Minnesota Senate in support of a bill to transition away from toxic lead ammunition and fishing tackle

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