

Izaak Walton League President & Vice President Present at Rotary

Leaders of the Cass County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League, President Don Hoppe and Vice President Norm Moody, discussed the purpose, history and activities of the Cass County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League. Both gentlemen have a distinguished history of service and reside in Cass County.

The mission statement is “to conserve, restore, and promote the sustainable use and enjoyment of our natural resources, including, soil, air, woods, waters and wildlife. Three “C’s” highlight their work: Conservation, Community and Common Sense which govern the priorities, history, and activities of the members as they work to connect and educate us about the value of a healthy environment. Benefits are not only to our economy which is dependent on hunting, fishing, and shooting sports, but other outdoor recreation, as well as the protection of our water and health of our people, fish and animals. The “Ike’s” have been implementing their mission for about 104 years, since 1922.

President Don Hoppe explained that it all started when Will Dilg lost his Chicago job of alcohol distribution in about 1920 due to the Prohibition Act., 18th Amendment to the US Constitution. Dilg moved to Wisconsin to hunt and fish along the Mississippi River near La Crosse, Wisconsin. Even in 1920, Dilg saw reduced fish and wildlife resulting from destroying wetlands and the use of lead in fishing and hunting. The effects of lead poisoning had been known for 3,000 years. Yet here it is.

The Compleat Angler by Izaak Walton (1593-1683) was often used by Dilg. He decided to put Walton’s ideas to work. He started the Izaak Walton League of America. How could Walton, who lived hundreds of years earlier; author one of the most relevant books about fishing today? In his book, Walton shared how healthy lands and waterways support good hunting and fishing and how they suffer from mismanagement. This became the basis for the Izaak Walton League of America of which the Cass County Chapter is one of over 200 chapters in 15 states.

Norm was convinced when a friend who was bird hunting with steel shot instead of lead shot amazed his friends by shooting a bird from about 70 yards. Thereafter, Norm saw no reason not to abandon the lead, especially when so many living things die of lead poisoning.

Animals die of lead shot or lead tackle introduced into the food chain by hunting & fishing with lead. Norm saw a bald eagle walking on a path in front of him, obviously not well. The eagle was taken to a wild-life re-hab where it was diagnosed with lead (Pb) poisoning and could not be saved. One pellet of ingested lead is a deadly dose.

Although lead is a known poison, not allowed in food, packaging, pipes, paint, gasoline or plumbing; it is still allowed in sporting good products. As a result, about 25% of adult loons die annually of lead poisoning.

Should lead be allowed into the lifecycle or food chain of animals? Since it is allowed, those who wish to sustain hunting and fishing for our family and friends must consider how to improve our practices, voluntarily or support legislation to move away from lead in our tackle and ammunition.

What can I do? Three easy suggestions sponsored by the Izaak Walton League: 1. Participate in a lead collection day, 2. Participate in the fun learning activities at Deep Portage Reserve and other Learning Centers, 3. Join the Cass County Chapter of the Izaak Walton League and receive the *Outdoor America Magazine*. Or the electronic newsletter (www.iwla.org).

Rotarians advocate for healthy water in communities locally and worldwide. Currently a project in Cambodia is being fostered. Clean water projects stop water-borne diseases such as polio and other health threats. Clean water helps everything thrive. Clean water, soil and air stabilize all economies, human and otherwise.

In other Rotary activities, if you are interested in volunteering to help build a clean water well in a small village in Burfat, Cambodia, please contact Terry Holly, who is putting together a team. If you are interested in making a difference in Minnesota, contact the Izaak Walton League. Together we can make a difference, wherever we are.

Pictured - Izaak Walton's Chapter President Don Hoppe, Tim Richardson, Rotarian;, Vice President Norm Moody

