

For Immediate Release

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River Paddle Expected to Draw Hundreds

Canoers, kayakers and others will take to the water this Saturday (May 10) to show their support for the Namekagon River, a National Scenic Riverway, to oppose the Arrowhead-Weston transmission line crossing the river. Citing the line's connection to destruction of northern Manitoba's Nelson River and local environmental impacts along the 250-mile long line corridor, spanning Wisconsin and Minnesota, five statewide organizations have organized a paddle followed by a public hearing.

Said Linda Ceylor of SOUL, "We question the need for the line altogether, which certainly questions the need for any additional crossing at the Namekagon. SOUL has, and will continue to argue that there are better ways to provide for Wisconsin growth than long distance transmission lines."

Paddlers will meet at the Springbrook Community Center (take HWY 63 toward Hayward from Trego) at 8:30, where they can shuttle to the launching site at nearby Stinnett Landing (6 miles further on Hwy 63). There will be a short opening ceremony including some words from former Senator Gaylord Nelson, and performances by Native American drum groups. An American spokesperson for northern Manitoba's Pimicikamac Cree Nation (PCN) will be present to describe the upheaval of PCN's culture and way of life as a result of damming the Nelson River.

"This paddle is a great opportunity for folks to get outside and enjoy the beautiful river while taking a stand to protect this resource. Wisconsin's waters are a precious resource that we can all enjoy and protect." Said Claire Schmidt of Clean Wisconsin.

Hundreds of river advocates and friends from a diversity of backgrounds will stand together on Saturday to voice their support of the Namekagon and our northern rivers. This issue unites us all, said Lisa Goodman of the River Alliance of Wisconsin.

The paddle—approximately 2 hours-- will be followed by food and the hearing at the Springbrook Community Center. At the hearing, citizens may voice their opinion on the Arrowhead-Weston transmission line crossing the Namekagon River. All written or spoken testimony will be presented to the National Park Service for consideration in their Environmental Impact Statement process. Those unable to attend in person but wishing to submit their written comments may send them: Attn: Jill Medland Re: Arrowhead-Weston Line PO Box 708 St. Croix Falls, WI 54024.

Ceylor added, "Crossing the Namekagon with transmission lines will not only impact this Scenic Riverway, but may deny other northern Wisconsin rivers, now qualified by the Rivers Inventory the benefits and protections of being named as national wild, scenic or recreational river. We have questioned the need for this line as there are better ways to provide for Wisconsin's electrical infrastructure."

The event is free and open to the public.

For details and event info, visit: <http://www.protecttheearth.com/GaylordNelson.html>

To learn more about the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, visit: <http://www.nps.gov/sacn/index.html>.

The Namekagon River Gathering is sponsored by: SOUL (Save Our Unique Lands), The River Alliance of Wisconsin, Clean Wisconsin (formerly Wisconsin's Environmental Decade), the Wisconsin Stewardship Network, Anishinaabe Nijjii/Protect the Earth.

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