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Volunteers needed for city dune restoration

September 25, 2013

CHRISTIE BLECK - Journal Staff Writer (cbleck@miningjournal.net) , The Mining Journal

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MARQUETTE - Dunes and sand beaches within the city limits are to be spruced up Saturday during a community-wide restoration event.

The Superior Watershed Partnership in cooperation with the city is hosting the volunteer effort to help protect and restore Lake Superior dunes and beaches in the city.

The event, set for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., is open to the public, including families, schools, churches, community organizations and businesses. Participants are to meet at the partnership offices at Presque Isle Park at 10 a.m.

Article Photos



Superior Watershed Partnership volunteer Nathan Yaussy...

Volunteers will help transplant native beach grass, remove invasive plant species and pick up litter.

They are asked to bring work gloves.

Marquette has more than 10 miles of Lake Superior shoreline, with less than 10 percent composed of sand beach and coastal dunes. Most of Lake Superior's coastline within the city is rock, gravel or cobble.

Marquette does have sand beaches available to the public, but if people don't use designated public-access trails, foot traffic can cause erosion and loss of beach grass. The grass makes a dune stable, according to a SWP press release.

By transplanting native beach grass, pulling up alien plants and removing litter, volunteers can help protect the local dune ecosystem.

Rick Ligman, field supervisor/coordinator for the partnership, mentioned the scarcity of Lake Superior sand beach habitat compared to rock.

"So, what we have literally in the city limits of Marquette is something very special," Ligman said.

With the added foot traffic that encroaches on this habitat, Ligman said the partnership wants to make the community aware of the role of dunes in the shoreline ecosystem.

Five principal sites will be addressed Saturday, Ligman said, with invasive weeds to be pulled.

"We're particularly going to focus principally on spotted knapweed," he said. "That's the most numerous invasive that's out there."

Ligman said removal of invasives is aimed at helping people realize certain species aren't just plants, but plants that need to be removed.

He said the partnership hopes the dune restoration will become an annual event.

In case of rain, the event will be rescheduled for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday.

Christie Bleck can be reached at 906-228-2500, ext. 250.

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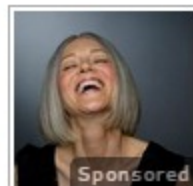
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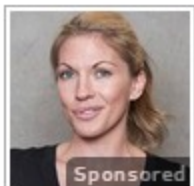
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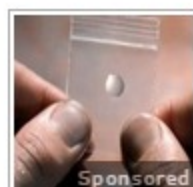
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