

# Oberstar Democracy Project



Friends of Jim Oberstar  
222 West 1st Street  
Duluth, Minnesota

Phone: 218-723-8813  
www.oberstar.org

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## Jims Schedule

Range 4th of July Celebration

Gilbert, July 3rd

Aurora, July 3rd

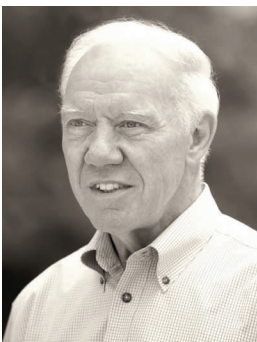
Eveleth, July 4th

Nashwauk, July 4th

Keewatin, July 4th

Biwabik, July 4th

The farm bill forum will be held at the Morrison County Government Center, Monday July 4<sup>th</sup>, from 7-9pm



## Clean Water Restoration Act Fights Pollution

Last week Congressman Jim Oberstar introduced the Clean Water Restoration Act, a piece of legislation aimed at cleaning up "point source" water pollution and promoting conservation of our nation's wetlands.

Two Supreme Court Decisions in 2001 and 2006 had effectively stripped the original Clean Water Act, removing the authority of the Army Corp of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency to enforce CWA on our nation's wetlands and waterways.

"These rulings ignore everything we have learned about water pollution and wetland conservation," Oberstar said, "You have to control pollution at its source. If you wait until it hits a major waterway, it is too late to deal with the problem effectively."

The 2007 CWRA will look to restore the Clean Water Act

to its original intent, returning authority of the EPA and Army Corp to "navigable" waterways. "You only have to look at the devastation caused by hurricane Katrina and the flooding on the Mississippi River in the mid 1990's to see how wetlands protect us by holding back flood waters," said Oberstar, "Wetlands also filter ground water and allow it to recharge aquifers. The Ogallala Aquifer provides water to eight states from Nebraska to Texas, but many of the wetlands that filter and recharge it have lost their protection due to these Supreme Court rulings."

The Clean Water Restoration Act has different implications for every state. In Minnesota, for example, CWRA will have no impact on the regulation of wetlands. The state of Minnesota has environmental laws in place that are more stringent than Federal regulations in CWRA.

Oberstar's bill, which has 150 co-sponsors, is supported by more than 300 organizations from conservation groups, farmers, fishers, boaters, unions, and local government organizations. Ducks Unlimited and the Izaak Walton League have come out in support of CWRA.

"This bill is designed to restore the authority of the Clean Water Act so it has the same effect it had prior to the Supreme Court Rulings," said Oberstar, "CWRA will not create onerous new rules of regulations."

Exemptions for farming, mining and logging are still upheld in the new bill. "The Clean Water Act has been around for almost 35 years and we have proven that we can clean up our water, protect our wetlands and have a thriving economy," said Oberstar.

## Farm Bill Forum

On Monday June 4<sup>th</sup> Congressman Oberstar will host a forum on the upcoming 2007 reauthorization of the Farm bill.

With the Farm Security Rural Investment Act of 2002 set to expire, Oberstar hopes to get the input of farmers in the 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, and the rest of rural, farming Minnesota.

"We have an opportunity to restructure our farm and food

policies to benefit family farmers and consumers," Oberstar said, "This bill can also address some of America's biggest energy, health, and environmental changes."

Oberstar will address the forum with a panel of experts;

Mark Glaess- Chair, Gopher Consumers United for Rail Equity

Michael Sparby- Project Development Director, Agricultural

Utilization Research Institute

Roger Vogt- Farmer, Palisade Minnesota

Lee Johnston- State Director, Minnesota Milk Producers Assoc.

"Farmers are the most versatile and resourceful people you will find," said Oberstar, "We need their help to draft a farm bill that helps our family farmers."



*“In this case, magnitude should not be measured in number of structures destroyed, but by the intensity of the effect,” Oberstar said*

## Oberstar Visits Gunflint Trail

Last week Congressman Jim Oberstar toured the Ham Lake area, which was recently devastated by fire. Oberstar has asked officials from the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) to meet with him to discuss stepping up their involvement and relief aid. “We need to act quickly to make sure that Cook County gets the help it needs before the area’s economy is devastated,” Oberstar said.

FEMA designates disaster relief on the basis of damage caused to man-made structures. This could be a potential problem for gunflint trail residents. While almost 76,000 acres were burned and 135 buildings lost in the fire, the damage may not have a

high enough price tag to warrant federal disaster declaration. After meeting with area residents, business owners, and other community leaders, Oberstar is calling on FEMA to step up.

“In this case, magnitude should not be measured in number of structures destroyed, but by the intensity of the effect,” Oberstar said. “In this area, the intensity of effect is huge because of the nature of the economy here. If resort owners are without communication for three months on a five-month economic season, then they might as well have all burnt to the ground.”

The fires destroyed most of the telephone and communi-

cations infrastructure in the gunflint region, in the same month the tourist season begins. It is estimated that telephone communications may not be restored in the area until the end of July, forcing resort owners to book their reservations by cell phone. Also, they cannot process fishing licenses or credit cards without the communications infrastructure.

Oberstar remains optimistic about the resources to rebuild the region, “I am going to ask FEMA Administrator David Paulison to help in thinking creatively about this situation. Let’s get the proper designation in place so FEMA can come in and do what it’s intended to do,” Oberstar said.



*This is good news for not only business and homeowners in the Gunflint Trail area, but for the economic future of the two-county region,” Oberstar said*

## Assistance Headed to Ham Lake Business Owners

Help is on the way for business owners and residents on the Gunflint Trail. Fires in the Ham Lake area recently destroyed most of the areas business and communication infrastructure. The U.S. Small Business Administration signed off on an “Administrative/Agency Declaration” for Cook and Lake Counties, allowing qualifying people access to physical and economic injury loans through the SBA.

“This is good news for not only business and homeown-

ers in the Gunflint Trail area, but for the economic future of the two-county region,” Oberstar said, “It is a significant step in the rebuilding of businesses, communities, and lives.”

Oberstar continued, “I am glad the SBA has recognized the seriousness of the situation and responded to the needs of the people of Northeastern Minnesota.”

“The isolation of the Gunflint Trail community essentially multiplies the devastation,” said Oberstar, “The fire didn’t

merely burn down trees and buildings; it scorched a unique infrastructure that the residents rely on perhaps more than other communities.”

The SBA gives long term recovery assistance in the form of low-interest loans to homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes and private non-profit organizations. The SBA contains an Office of Disaster Assistance that provides affordable financial assistance to disaster victims.



# Jim Oberstar

**WORKING** for you   
for minnesota

## Contact the Campaign!

Blake Chaffee  
Campaign Manager  
(218) 310- 4376  
[blake@oberstar.org](mailto:blake@oberstar.org)

Alana Petersen  
Political Director  
(218) 213- 4129  
[alana@oberstar.org](mailto:alana@oberstar.org)

Local DFL Unit  
Chair: Don Bye  
8th CD:  
[www.cd8dfll.org](http://www.cd8dfll.org)

# Jim Oberstar

**WORKING** for you   
for minnesota

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me about—

The Oberstar Democracy Project

Volunteering

Traveling around MN to support Democrats

Placing a lawn sign in my yard

Writing a letter to the editor

Using my name and testimonial

**Oberstar**  
**Democracy Project**

Please sign me up for—

The Oberstar Democracy Project

E-mail updates from Jim

Please share your story about Jim:

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