



PARENT

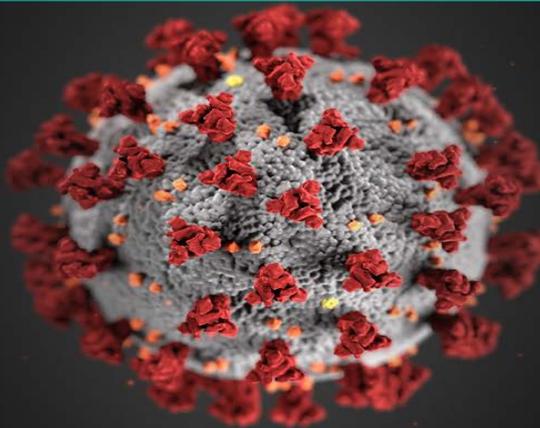
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PERSPECTIVES

This issue of *Parent Perspectives* contains testimonials from FPS-ers from our Minnesota Affiliate. See how incredible their skills have become since learning and implementing the Future Problem Solving process! Please enjoy this newsletter and feel free share with friends, family and colleagues!

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)



www.cdc.gov/COVID19

This issue of the Parent Perspectives finds most of us at a time of uncertainty with the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, I find reflecting on the work that we do at Future Problem Solving Program International hopeful and positive to the benefits our students receive. Both of my children participated in the program – my son from 4th-12th and my daughter from 4th-6th. As 20 and 18 year olds now, I feel that FPS supported their critical thinking development as they are watching and monitoring this pandemic. As parents of problem solvers, I hope that your discussions with your children are forward looking and creative in possible solutions to this global concern. We KNOW our FPSers are equipped with skills of the future, and for that we can be immensely proud.

As we closely monitor the potential impact from COVID-19 we will monitor directives from the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), local officials, and our school districts to guide our decisions moving forward. At this time, the status of the International Conference this June at UMASS-Amherst is being monitored with virtual contingencies in place. We will continue to keep our groups posted via emails and on our website at <https://www.fpspi.org/ic-information/>.

Yours in problem solving,
April Michele
FPSPFI Executive Director

FPS Applied to Loons

Written by: Minnesota FPSP Coach, Sheila Johnston, February 2020

Sheila, a long time FPS coach who started FPS programs in many schools over the years, retired to her home in Northern Minnesota. Within her first three months of retirement, she started yet another new program in Nisswa, Minnesota.

Besides her passion for teaching problem solving skills to young people, she applies these skills to help save our State Bird, the Loon.

Here is her story...

Hello FPS Parents,

As your child's FPS coach, I want to share with you how I use FPS in my life. I have been coaching FPS for close to 30 years, and the process is part of me. When faced with a challenge, my mind immediately goes to the stem of the key verb phrase in the Step 2 Underlying Problem, how might we? I am the chair of the Gull Chain of Lakes Environmental Committee, and one of my responsibilities is developing and managing the association's loon protection programs. I paddle on Upper Gull as often as possible, and the loons have come to see me as a friend, frequently popping up right next to my kayak. I am a passionate protector of loons. Because of my involvement in loon protection programs, a whistle blower reached out to me about a program to protect loons that was in jeopardy and asked for my help.

First, a little history. You may know that, in 2010 BP's (British Petroleum) Deep Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico was an environmental disaster that affected hundreds of wildlife species, including Minnesota's common loons which winter in the Gulf. Approximately 900 Minnesota loons perished, and the health and fertility of Minnesota loons and their offspring continue to be compromised by the effects of the oil spill 10 years later. Federal laws require the party guilty of the spill to reimburse costs for the restoration of the species affected by the oil spill. The US Department of the Interior Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program (NRDAR) manages wildlife restoration efforts caused by oil spills. Common loons from Minnesota were one of three out of 400 proposals submitted for funding. In addition to \$5.5 million for conservation and habitat protections, the funding included \$1.27 million dollars for the MPCA to reduce losses of loons as a result of lead poisoning through a Get the Lead Out education program. Loons ingest pebbles to aid digestion, and they often accidentally consume lost lead sinkers when picking up pebbles. Just one lead sinker can fatally poison a loon. The educational activities would encourage anglers to switch to non toxic jigs and sinkers to reduce the annual mortality of loons due to lead poisoning. The MPCA's plan included outreach activities at sportsmen's shows and schools with many activities planned in the months before the fishing opener. Before the MPCA could implement the program, spending needed to be approved by the Legislative Advisory Commission. However, one Minnesota senator has been blocking authorization of spending, so the program has been unable to proceed. This has already put the project months behind schedule.

After the whistle blower reached out to me, I wrote emails to Senator Gazelka, my State Representative John Poston, and Senator Ruud. I had a meeting with Representative Poston, and waited to see if the legislators I communicated with could persuade Senator Ingebrigtsen to remove his block. Unfortunately, they were unable to do so, so Senator Ingebrigtsen said he planned to take the issue to his Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee sometime in February. This would result in a further delay of the program even if it were to be approved. So, I asked myself, Due to the fact that at least 200 Minnesota loons die of lead poisoning each year, how might we convince Senator Ingebrigtsen to authorize the MPCA to spend the funds awarded to them for Get the Lead Out education, so loons will be less likely to suffer from the toxic effects of lead in their Minnesota environment in 2020 and beyond?

I did some brainstorming of solutions and implemented a multi-faceted social media action plan:

- I emailed over 150 friends and associates requesting emails to Senator Ingebrigtsen and legislators.
- I posted requests for emails on my Facebook page and on Facebook loon group pages.
- I enlisted a friend who is an environmental influencer to post regular messages on twitter.
- I emailed and enlisted support from environmental organizations.
- I did an email blitz to close to 1000 members of the Gull Chain of Lakes Association requesting emails be sent to Senator Ingebrigtsen and legislators.
- I emailed 40 lake associations alerting them of the situation and requesting their membership to email Senator Ingebrigtsen and legislators.
- I sent a press release/news tip to MPR, TV news stations, and 25 newspapers, supplying them with contact info for legislators willing to be interviewed and other sources for articles.
- I went out of my comfort zone and participated in interviews.
- I created a change.org petition and shared it on social media, which has been signed by over 1275 people worldwide and will be shared at the February 18, hearing.
- I did a final social media blitz requesting people to attend the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee hearing on the issue on Tuesday, February 18, 2020.

As a result of these actions, MPR and newspapers from around the state have been reporting on the issue. There has been a huge public outcry to legislators, and it has taken them by surprise. They have been flooded with emails and phone calls. Representative Rick Hansen has authored a bill to unfreeze the funds. I have my fingers crossed that there will be a positive outcome at Tuesday's Senate hearing. I know I have given it my best. FPS...not just for competitions!

Epilogue:

The Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee chaired by Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen met on Tuesday, February 18. David Benke, Director of the Resource Management and Assistance Division, provided testimony on how the funds would be expended for the Get the Lead Out education program. Dr. Carrol Henderson answered questions about loon populations and lead poisoning. This session satisfied the questions posed by the Committee and after about 30 minutes, Senator Ingebrigtsen withdrew his former request for further information on this grant and the money has been released for the MPCA to proceed with the program.

A total of \$1,270,590 has been allocated by the USFWS (United States Fish and Wildlife Service) from the BP remediation account. That amount will be utilized over the next three years. If the USFWS is satisfied with the initial accomplishments of this program and their restoration goals for loons lost in the oil spill have not been reached, the amount can be repeated every three years for the next 15 years until the USFWS determines that the restoration goals have been accomplished.

FPS in ACTION!



A note from the Editors:

We hope you enjoy this issue! We always find the testimonials so powerful that we share as many as we get. We typically do not change them at all and share them with you as they are submitted. We are always looking for more testimonials! We especially love hearing how our FPS-ers apply their problem solving skills in their college, adult, and professional lives!

You may submit a testimonial any time during the year to rogers.cyd2@gmail.com or brad@fspi.org.