



# FISH Project Promotion Summary

Success of the FISH Project is largely credited towards collaboration with engaged local partners and maintaining public awareness prior to and throughout the project. Project goals were achieved through community-wide support and participation.

Promotion focused on broad publicity through local media, businesses, and community events. Word-of-mouth was key in enrolling participants and rallying public support. Likewise, a trust-filled atmosphere - developed over time through face-to-face meetings and open, transparent communication with project organizers, local staff, participants, and the community - contributed to meaningful relationships and appreciation of the project. Resources put towards project promotion and continual updates to the community enabled the FISH Project to meet project goals and community expectations.

## Promotion Plan

Project partners determined a promotion plan. This included an extensive list of venues to reach potential participants and the community. A brief summary is below. See the Appendix for the list of venues.

### Promotional Materials Development Process

- Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC) and Grand Portage Health Services (GPHS) staff suggested what type of materials were needed; provided input on community standards and values to inform the design and content; and reviewed and commented on draft materials.
- Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and project staff drafted promotional materials based on input from Project partners: Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC), Cook County North Shore Hospital, Grand Portage Health Service (GPHS), Grand Portage Trust Lands (GPTL), and other stakeholders.
- MDH, GPHS, and SMC approved all final versions before distribution.

### Printed Promotional Materials

- Printed materials were created to **inform the public** about FISH Project purpose, procedures, and benefits and **promote participation** in FISH.
- Materials were not designed to provide information about safe fish eating guidelines or the risks and benefits of eating fish. (Education about fish consumption was reserved for participant education.)

### Community Engagement

- Project staff participated in a variety of local media events and attended local family and community events
- Project staff utilized community partners: Grand Portage tribal officials and agency staff; Cook County and Grand Marais public health and other government officials and agencies; and business owners.

## **Collaboration Key for Project Promotion**

Several different approaches were used for Project promotion in order to reach people through their preferred communication network (or way people get information/news). Two collaboration approaches are described below. Overall, the community was very engaged.

### **Partnering with Local Clinics**

As a trusted source in each community, SMC and GPHS were key venues for promoting the project. Face-to-face conversations with patients and providers, internal clinic emails, posts on the SMC Facebook page and website, and attending staff meetings and clinic community events were successful at reaching women to enroll in FISH. Later on, staff also found it valuable to check the clinic appointments schedule each week, call women who were already coming to the clinic for another appointment, and schedule a FISH visit on the same day around the other appointment. Out of 60 participants who completed a final project evaluation, 26 women said they heard about the project through clinic staff and/or the SMC Newsletter (*The Daily Apple*).

A FISH Project page was created on the SMC website (<http://sawtoothmountainclinic.org/fish.php>). During recruitment, a promotional video was created and posted on this page along with other print promotional materials. Current postings include Project summaries and other fish information as it becomes available.

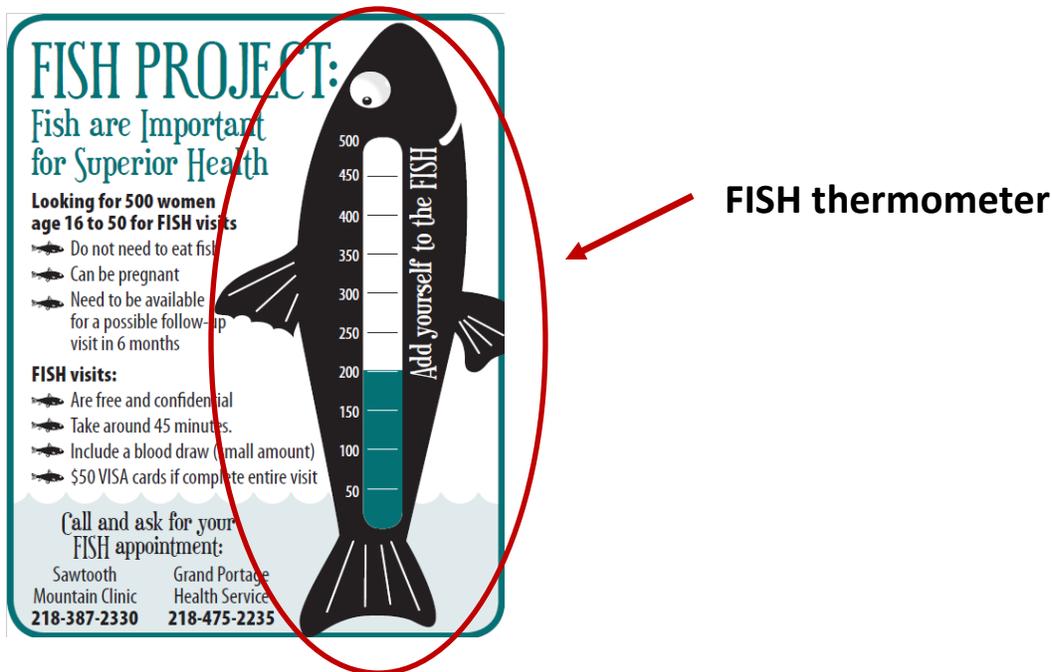
### **Advertising and News Coverage by Local Media**

Advertising and new stories in local newspapers and radio on a regular basis kept the Project “alive” over the long promotion and recruitment time period.

**WTIP** is stationed out of Grand Marais and shares information with the community through live radio and online streaming. Between May 2014 and December 2015, the FISH Project was featured eleven times during daytime programming which included interviews with Project staff and questions from listeners. In addition, 65 public service announcements (PSAs) were aired to promote participation in fall 2014. The WTIP broadcasts and PSAs are in the Appendix.

The **Cook County News Herald** is one of several local newspapers along the North Shore. Available online and in print, this is a popular news source for local residents.

News Herald staff worked to develop a unique image to be used in a series of ads for readers to identify with the FISH Project. The FISH thermometer featured a large fish with a number line to track the number of FISH participants throughout the project period. Permission was also granted by the News Herald (with proper credit given to the paper) to use the design for other promotional purposes so the design was incorporated into business posters and the SMC Newsletter (*The Daily Apple*) and also used by WTIP on their website later on in the enrollment period.



Using the **FISH thermometer** helped participants and the community identify with the project. The FISH thermometer kept people connected. It was easy to recognize and stood out on a full page newspaper spread among other ads, and having the number line continuously tracking participant numbers demonstrated clear progress. In addition, broad circulation meant several people in the community had the potential to see this ad numerous times. Finally, the FISH thermometer was used later on in other promotional materials, which allowed for a visually catchy image to tie a variety of promotional activities together over a long time period. Depending on the day, a person may see the FISH Project thermometer while reading the morning paper, at the local bank and gym, in the clinic newsletter, and on Boreal Access (the area's online events calendar). Out of 60 participants who completed a final evaluation, 23 said they saw the FISH Project advertised in the local paper, at local businesses, or on Boreal Access.

Beginning in October 2014, monthly ads were placed in the News Herald. Each month the number line was increased to show the growing number of FISH participants. In this way, the community was given "real time" updates and kept informed on the project's progress.

As June 2015 approached (the final deadline to enroll in FISH), the monthly ads switched to every 2 weeks and then weekly. Ad size also increased leading up to the final ad, which ran 2 weeks prior to the final deadline. Wording for the bi-weekly and weekly ads were modified to create a sense of urgency for those still considering enrollment. The goal was 500 participants, and 499 enrolled by the June deadline.

Other print and online sources that assisted in promoting the Project (examples in Appendix):

- Duluth News Tribune – print and online paper; based out of Duluth  
<http://www.duluthnewstribune.com/content/mercury-study-needs-more-women>
- Northern Wilds – print and online monthly paper; based out of Grand Marais
- North Shore Journal –print paper; based out of Silver Bay; delivered free along the North Shore

- SMC newsletter *The Daily Apple*– print and online newsletter
- Cook County Whole Foods Co-op newsletter *BlueBerry Jam* – print and online newsletter
- Websites: SMC, SMC Facebook page, CCNSH, WTIP
- Boreal – email blasts for Special Clinics and classified ads (10+ times)

## **Other Recruitment/Promotion Approaches and Communications**

A wide range of passive and active recruitment methods were utilized to encourage women to participate. Some recruitment methods were more successful than others. In addition to partnering with local media outlets, some other efforts included dropping off brochures to businesses, sending letters to women patients of SMC and GPHS, manning a booth at local community events, contacting local churches, special events for walk-in appointments, and word-of-mouth.

Communications focused on creating a well-informed and knowledgeable community in order to: 1) build support for the Project, and 2) help establish long-term healthy fish consumption choices in these fishing communities.

Brief summaries of some of these efforts is below.

### **Word-of-Mouth**

In the final project evaluation completed by 60 participants, 51 women said they heard about the FISH Project from family, friends, or WIC/clinic staff. Word-of-mouth and personal relationships were the most effective way reported by this population to promote the project. Women who had a good experience as a participant told their family/friends and encourage others to take part. Even women who were reluctant to do the blood draw walked out of their FISH appointment with a smile and felt participating was worth their time.

### **Local Businesses**

Nearly 2800 three-fold flyers were distributed and 300 posters were displayed throughout the Project at a variety of venues, including many local businesses. Promotional materials were delivered to over 50 local businesses and available for patrons to read on-site or take home. Some were small brochures while others were large posters. Examples are in the Appendix.

### **Walk-in Events**

In the early months of enrollment, participation was slower than expected. FISH appointments were available weekdays during clinic business hours, but only about 100 women had scheduled an appointment between May and August 2014. In September 2014, two walk-in events were scheduled to boost participation. The first was held on a Wednesday evening pizza bake at Birch Grove Community School on the west end of Cook County so that women living here had a shorter distance to travel to participate. Unfortunately, bad weather contributed to a low turnout and only 15 women took part. The second took place at SMC in Grand Marais on a Saturday with 28 women participating.

Staff had heard that some women had been unable to make an appointment during the day or preferred an evening or weekend. The two events gave women an opportunity to stop in without making an appointment at times that might be more convenient for them to participate.

Many hours of planning went into preparing for these special events. Additional staff were also needed to work the events. Project staff were hoping to get 50 women at each walk-in event. Due to several hours of planning/preparation with only low participation, it was decided not to do any more special events.

Promotion for the special events included: public service announcements (PSAs) and staff interviews on live radio with WTIP; using Boreal Access (email to group list and posted on calendar); postings on WTIP, SMC, and Cook County North Shore Hospital websites (internal and external pages); SMC Facebook posts; and sending an event flyer home with students at the school.

### **Local Churches**

A list of 15 local churches was compiled from internet searches. Staff contacted churches by phone to explain the Project and asked if a FISH Flyer could be distributed to their congregation. Out of the original 15 churches on the list, 4 no longer existed or were unable to be reached by phone or email. Of the 11 churches who agreed, one agreed to personally talk with the few women in their church and the other 10 were emailed 3 flyers (in Appendix) and asked to choose the format(s) they felt would best connect with their parishioners (based on age, technology, congregation size, etc.). Possible routes of flyer distribution were discussed but left up to the individual churches (Sunday bulletin, email lists, church newsletter, service announcements, etc.). Staff asked churches for confirmation of receiving the flyers but ensured churches that they would not be contacted again for follow-up of distribution or additional promotional activities.

Churches were receptive to spreading the word about FISH, but some churches said they had very small congregations with few women of child-bearing age. Churches were urged to share the FISH flyer with members and also encourage members to share the flyer with other family/friends/neighbors outside of church. It is unknown if contacting local churches was successful at increasing participation or public awareness in this community. Out of 499 participants, 60 women completed the final Project evaluation; none of these women said they heard about FISH through church.

Contacting churches in this community did not appear to increase participation. However, other communities may find this avenue beneficial to their outreach efforts for other populations.

## **Promotion for Community Events**

By March 2015, all participants had received individual blood mercury and fatty acids results by mail. In November 2015, two events were held to share initial summary results with the communities and applaud efforts of community supporters and participants. Enrolling 499 participants was a huge accomplishment and met the Project goal.

Advertising for the **Report Back to the Community Events** included (examples in the Appendix):

- FISH Ad
  - SMC quarterly newsletter *The Daily Apple*
  - Northern Wilds, ½ page ad
  - Cook County News Herald, ran ad 1/wk for two weeks prior to event

- NorthShore Journal
- SMC website and Facebook page
- Boreal access and calendar
- FISH Posters
  - SMC exam room
  - Grand Marais elementary school Friday folders
  - Grand Portage Clinic, Community Center, Reservation Tribal Counsel Building, Trading Post
  - Cook County Whole Foods Co-op
- Grand Portage mass email list
- WTIP – interview with staff

The events took place in Grand Marais and Grand Portage. Both events followed an open house format (where people could mingle, talk with staff, and read summary results on display boards around the room or on printed handouts) as well as formal presentations. Smoked fish, cheese, crackers, fruit, cookies, and beverages were purchased from local businesses. In Grand Marais, the local Girl Scouts volunteered to help with refreshments during the event. A mix of about 30 participants and interested community members attended each event. All attendees were asked to complete questions on fish choices and understanding the fish guidelines about which fish to eat; completed forms were entered into raffle drawings for \$25 VISA gift cards given away throughout the 2-hour event. A more detailed summary of the community events is found in a separate report (*Report about the Fish are Important for Superior Health (FISH) Project Community Events*).

The SMC website (a trusted community source) will be updated with additional Project results and information as they become available.

## Appendix

Project Promotion List of Venues

Media Support

WTIP Broadcast Recordings

WTIP Public Service Announcements

Cook County News Herald

Northern Wilds

North Shore Journal

SMC Newsletter: *The Daily Apple*

Cook County Whole Foods Co-op Newsletter: *BlueBerry Jam*

Local Businesses Promotional Materials

Walk-in Special Events

Church Promotional Materials

Report Back to the Community Events Promotional Materials

## **Project Promotion List of Venues**

### **Media**

Local media resources were used periodically to promote the Project and increase participation and awareness.

#### ***Print Media***

- Cook County Whole Foods Co-op Newsletter, *Blueberry Jam*
- *Cook County News Herald*
- *Duluth News Tribune*
- *North Shore Journal*
- *Northern Wilds*
- Sawtooth Mountain Clinic News, *The Daily Apple*

#### ***Radio***

- WTIP North Shore Community Radio (90.7 FM)

#### ***Internet***

- Boreal Access mailing lists and event calendar
- CCNSH internet and intranet
- SMC website and Facebook page

### **Public Events and Locations**

#### ***Promotional Events and “Walk-in Special Clinics”***

FISH Project brochures were available at other community events to promote the Project. Whenever possible, staff from SMC/GPHS also attended to help recruit participants. In one case, a Visit One Special Clinic took place at the same time as the event.

- SMC women’s health event, May 2014
- Grand Portage Mammobus event, May 2014
- Grand Portage Health Fair, Summer 2014
- Cook County Schools Open House, August 2014
- Blood pressure clinics – throughout enrollment period
- Pizza bake at the Birch Grove Community Center (Visit One Special Clinic)

#### **Public Poster Locations**

Project partners placed FISH posters at the following community sites on the North Shore in May 2014. Later, posters were replaced with updated posters for the Special Clinic Events (September 2014) and then the Report Back to the Community Events (November 2015).

**Grand Marais**

- *Arrowhead Center for the Arts*
- *Arrowhead Pharmacy*
- *Cook County Community Center*
- *Cook County Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)*
- *Cook County Extension*
- *Cook County Family Planning*
- *Cook County North Shore Hospital*
- *Cook County Public Health*
- *Cook County Whole Foods Co-op*
- *Dockside Fish Market*
- *Gene's IGA*
- *Grand Marais Art Colony*
- *Grand Marais Pharmacy*
- *Grand Marais Public Library*
- *Java Moose*
- *Johnson's Foods*
- *Lake Superior Trading Post*
- *North House Folk School*
- *North Shore Car Wash & Laundromat*
- *Sawtooth Mountain Clinic*
- *The Garage*
- *U.S. Post Office*

**Grand Portage**

- *Grand Portage Community Center*
- *Grand Portage Head Start*
- *Grand Portage Health Service*
- *Grand Portage Human Services*
- *Grand Portage RTC*
- *Grand Portage Trading Post*
- *Grand Portage Trust Lands*
- *Oshki Ogimaag Community School*
- *Ryden's Border Store & 66*
- *U.S. Post Office*
- *WIC*

**Hovland**

- *Chicago Bay Store*
- *U.S. Post Office*

**Lutsen**

- *Clearview General Store*
- *Heavy Duty Sewing (Clearview)*
- *Lockport Marketplace*
- *Lutsen Resort*
- *Moondance Coffee Shop*
- *U.S. Post Office*

**Tofte**

- *Birchgrove Community Center (Patty Nordahl)*
- *Grand Marais State Bank, Tofte Branch*
- *North Shore Market*
- *U.S. Post Office*

**Other**

- *Churches*
- *Schools*

## Media Support

### WTIP Broadcast Recordings

Date	Title	Link
05/27/2014	LSProject: Mercury and Fish Consumption	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/content/lproject-mercury-and-fish-consumption">http://www.wtip.org/content/lproject-mercury-and-fish-consumption</a>
05/29/2014	Clinic to participate in mercury in fish project	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/content/clinic-participate-mercury-fish-project">http://www.wtip.org/content/clinic-participate-mercury-fish-project</a>
09/01/2014	Special Enrollment Events for FISH Project in September	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/content/special-enrollment-events-fish-project-september">http://www.wtip.org/content/special-enrollment-events-fish-project-september</a>
07/31/2014	Clinic launches mercury in fish study	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/content/clinic-launches-mercury-fish-study">http://www.wtip.org/content/clinic-launches-mercury-fish-study</a>
11/11/2014	LSProject: Fish are Important for Superior Health	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/content/lproject-fish-are-important-superior-health">http://www.wtip.org/content/lproject-fish-are-important-superior-health</a>
01/15/2015	Sawtooth Mountain Clinic FISH study still seeking participants	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/content/sawtooth-mountain-clinic-fish-study-still-seeking-participants">http://www.wtip.org/content/sawtooth-mountain-clinic-fish-study-still-seeking-participants</a>
05/26/2015	FISH project approaching enrollment deadline	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/content/fish-project-approaching-enrollment-deadline">http://www.wtip.org/content/fish-project-approaching-enrollment-deadline</a>
07/03/2015	WTIP's First Thursday looks at the FISH Project	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/content/wtip%E2%80%99s-first-thursday-looks-fish-project">http://www.wtip.org/content/wtip%E2%80%99s-first-thursday-looks-fish-project</a>
11/12/2015	FISH project info sessions are scheduled	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/fish-project-info-sessions-are-scheduled">http://www.wtip.org/fish-project-info-sessions-are-scheduled</a>
11/18/2015	FISH Project results show most women have safe mercury levels	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/fish-project-results-show-most-women-have-safe-mercury-levels">http://www.wtip.org/fish-project-results-show-most-women-have-safe-mercury-levels</a>
12/02/2015	FISH Project wraps up with public events	<a href="http://www.wtip.org/fish-project-wraps-public-events">http://www.wtip.org/fish-project-wraps-public-events</a>

## **WTIP Public Service Announcements**

### FISH event PSA Schedule September 2014

#### **FISH 1**

*Run 20 times: September 1-12*

WTIP is supported in part by...

The FISH Project, a local project to lower mercury exposure in woman and their families. Appointments are available now for women age 16 to 50 at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, Grand Portage Health Service, and special FISH Project events. Participants will receive a VISA gift card. A video and more information are available online at: [Sawtooth Mountain Clinic dot org](http://Sawtooth Mountain Clinic dot org)

#### **FISH 2**

*Run 10 times total: September 1-8*

*Run additional 10 times total: September 9-10*

WTIP is supported in part by...

The FISH Project, inviting women age 16-50 to a special event on September 10<sup>th</sup> anytime from 3-7pm at Birch Grove Community Center. Join the community Pizza Bake and stop by to learn how to reduce exposure to mercury from fish. No appointment necessary. Free snacks and child care are provided. Participants receive a VISA gift card. More information is online at [Sawtooth Mountain Clinic dot org](http://Sawtooth Mountain Clinic dot org)

#### **FISH 3**

*Run 10 times total: September 4-10*

*Run additional 10 times total: September 11-12*

WTIP is supported in part by...

The FISH Project, inviting women age 16-50 to a special event on September 13<sup>th</sup> from 8am-3pm in the lower level classroom of the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic. Stop in anytime to learn how to reduce exposure to mercury from fish. No appointment necessary. Free snacks and child care are provided. Participants receive a VISA gift card. More information is online at [Sawtooth Mountain Clinic dot org](http://Sawtooth Mountain Clinic dot org)

#### **FISH 4**

*Run 5 times: September 8-13*

WTIP is supported in part by...

The FISH Project, a local project to lower mercury exposure in woman and their families. Women age 16 to 50 who would like to participate but are unable to attend the special FISH Project events on September 10<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> are asked to call the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic and speak with a FISH nurse. Appointments are available for a time that works for you. More information is available online at: Sawtooth Mountain Clinic dot org

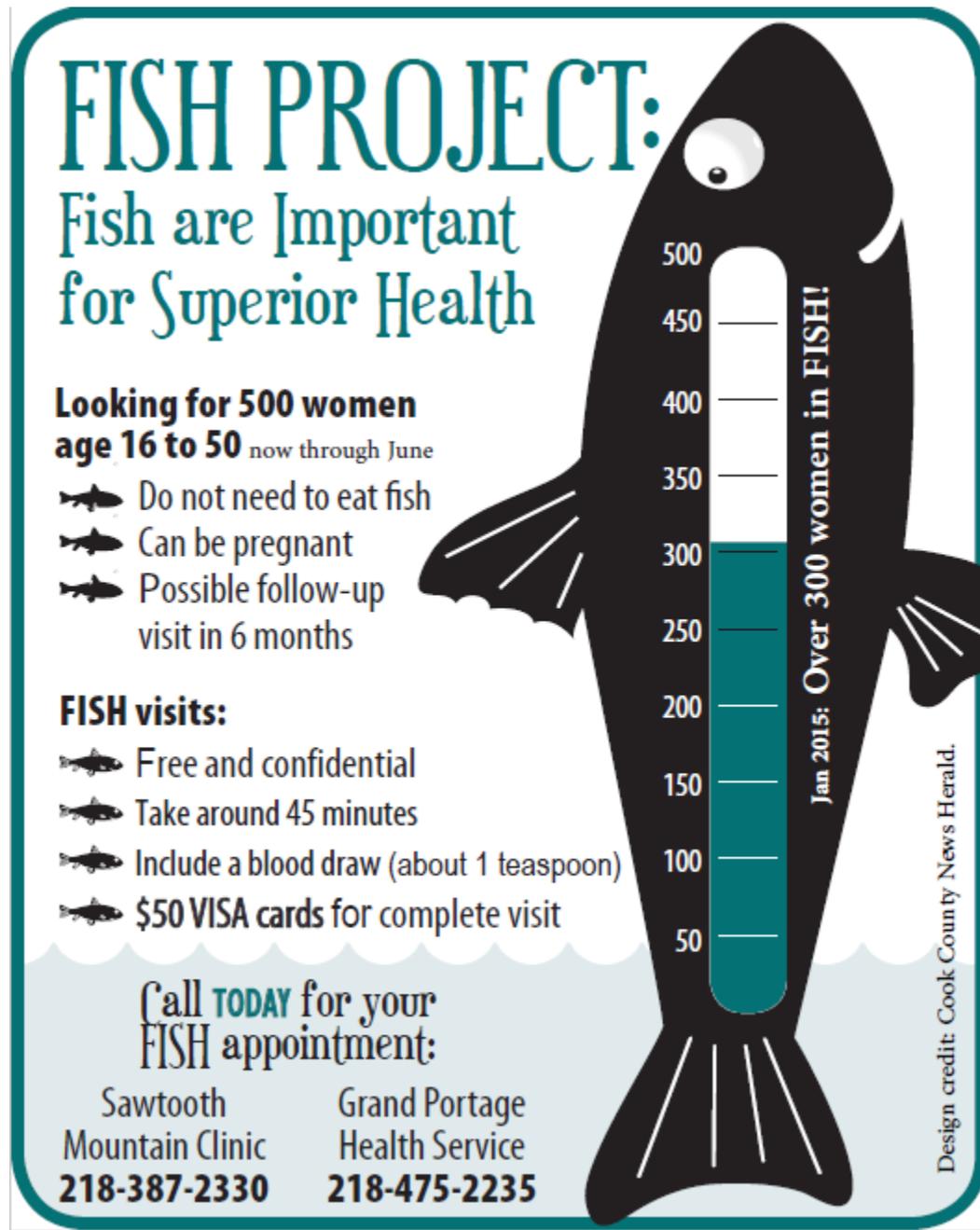
**Total number of spots: 65**

**Total cost: \$975**

# Cook County News Herald

Example of ads:

January 2015



**FISH PROJECT:**  
Fish are Important  
for Superior Health

**Looking for 500 women  
age 16 to 50** now through June

- Do not need to eat fish
- Can be pregnant
- Possible follow-up visit in 6 months

**FISH visits:**

- Free and confidential
- Take around 45 minutes
- Include a blood draw (about 1 teaspoon)
- \$50 VISA cards for complete visit

Call **TODAY** for your  
FISH appointment:

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic <b>218-387-2330</b>	Grand Portage Health Service <b>218-475-2235</b>
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500  
450  
400  
350  
300  
250  
200  
150  
100  
50

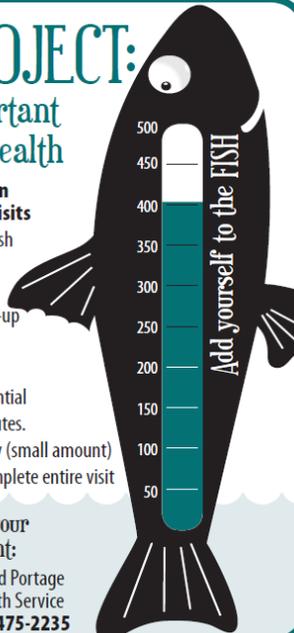
Jan 2015: Over 300 women in FISH!

Design credit: Cook County News Herald.



April 2015 ad

**FISH PROJECT:**  
Fish are Important for Superior Health



**Looking for 500 women age 16 to 50 for FISH visits**

- Do not need to eat fish
- Can be pregnant
- Need to be available for a possible follow-up visit in 6 months

**FISH visits:**

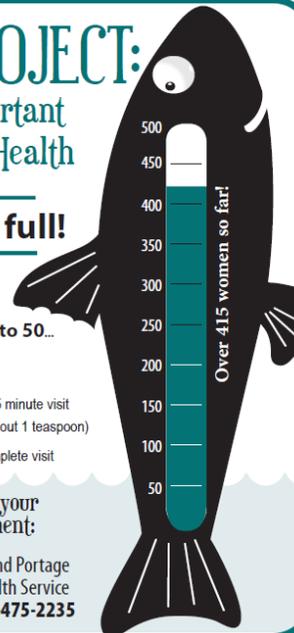
- Are free and confidential
- Take around 45 minutes.
- Include a blood draw (small amount)
- \$50 VISA cards if complete entire visit

Call and ask for your FISH appointment:

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic 218-387-2330	Grand Portage Health Service 218-475-2235
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May 2015 ad

**FISH PROJECT:**  
Fish are Important for Superior Health



**FISH nearly full!**

Enroll by June!

**All WOMEN age 16 to 50...**

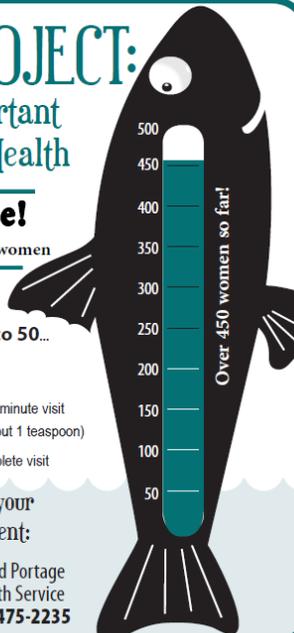
- Do not need to eat fish
- Can be pregnant
- Free and confidential 45 minute visit
- Includes blood draw (about 1 teaspoon)
- \$50 VISA card** for complete visit

Call **TODAY** for your FISH appointment:

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic 218-387-2330	Grand Portage Health Service 218-475-2235
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June 2015 ad

**FISH PROJECT:**  
Fish are Important for Superior Health



**Last Chance!**

Deadline: June 30 or 500 women

Less than 50 slots left!

**All WOMEN age 16 to 50...**

- Do not need to eat fish
- Can be pregnant
- Free and confidential 45 minute visit
- Includes blood draw (about 1 teaspoon)
- \$50 VISA card** for complete visit

Call **NOW** for your FISH appointment:

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic 218-387-2330	Grand Portage Health Service 218-475-2235
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Article:

**FISH Project results released (11/21/2015)**

[http://cookcountynewsherald.our-hometown.com/news/2015-11-21/General\\_News/FISH\\_Project\\_results\\_released.html](http://cookcountynewsherald.our-hometown.com/news/2015-11-21/General_News/FISH_Project_results_released.html)



COOK COUNTY  
**NEWS Herald**

November 21, 2015

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News

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## FISH Project results released

Brian Larsen



Minnesota Department of Health Research Scientist Patricia McCann visits with Monica Anderson while looking adoringly at baby Edith. Monica and Edith attended the Fish are Important for Superior Health (FISH) update at North House Folk School on November 17 where McCann gave the results of the year long study involving 499 Cook County women.

*Staff photo/Brian Larsen*

"We know that too much mercury in a developing fetus or young child can affect a child's I.Q., their ability to learn and to process information," said Minnesota Department of Health Research Scientist Patricia McCann, who headed up the Cook County Fish are Important for Superior Health (FISH) Project.

With canoes and boats overhead in the rafters and Lake Superior's waves lapping gently on the shore just outside, North House Folk School was the perfect place to present the first (of potentially many) findings from the FISH report.

McCann addressed a roomful of mostly women on Tuesday, November 17 and presented the results of the study conducted from May 2014 to June 2015. Some 499 women, ages 16 to 50 that live in or near Cook County, took part in the study and only 3 percent of them were over the safe level of mercury, she said.

"We had a broad spectrum of people," McCann said. "Everyone from vegetarians to women who ate fish almost every day."

Why did the state pick Cook County for its study? McCann said an earlier research report showed 10 percent of Minnesota babies tested in the North Shore area had unsafe levels of mercury in their blood, and those results triggered the need for analysis.

Participants reported eating over 40,000 meals of fish during the study, with 28 percent of those fish caught locally. About 70 percent ate canned tuna, walleye, salmon, lake trout, and shellfish while 80 percent said they ate fish caught locally. Most of those meals were made up of lake trout, walleye, herring, and whitefish. McCann said 4 percent of participants didn't eat any fish.

"All fish contains at least a small amount of mercury," she said.

"People shed mercury through their hair, fingernails and through their excrement. Adults can eat three times more fish than kids, but not everyone who ate more fish than recommended by the guidelines had a mercury level above recommended levels. This is because mercury is processed differently in different people."

No two lakes have the same amount of mercury in them, even if they are next to one another, she said.

Mercury comes from a variety of sources, said McCann. "Mercury in Minnesota waters comes from coal combustion, mining, and worldwide emissions and other human activity."

Once the mercury is in the water it is absorbed by algae, which is eaten by little minnows and fish. They in turn are eaten by bigger fish, which are caught and eaten by people.

Lakes in northern Minnesota have more mercury in them than lakes found in the metro area, said McCann. Northern and walleye, which are top predators, have more mercury than less predatory fish.

And cutting fat from fish won't reduce the level of mercury in them, said McCann, explaining that mercury is stored in muscle.

### **Benefits of eating fish outweigh the risks**

"We hope we don't scare people away from eating fish," said McCann. "I eat fish." She said benefits of eating fish outweigh the risks if women follow the guidelines set forth by the state.

Fish provide many good nutrients, she said. They are low in bad fats and a good source of protein, iodine, and vitamin D. They are also high in DHA and EPA omega-3 fatty acids. These fatty acids, said McCann, are important for eye and brain development.

Among the 499 Cook County participants, 37 percent had DHA and EPA Omega-3 fatty acids at or above the national averages.

Through this study, said McCann, "We hope to help women and their families enjoy the health benefits of eating fish while lowering their exposure to mercury."

Some women didn't think eating tuna counted, but tuna is a fish, said McCann. Albacore tuna has more mercury than cheaper brands packed in water or oil because it is made from tuna that is more predatory than smaller tuna, she said.

As far as eating fish you catch in Minnesota, McCann said to use the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) fish guidelines. Unless they are lake specific, the guidelines are general in nature, but should provide sound advice.

Although there are more than 10,000 lakes in the state, only 5,044 of them are fishable, she said. And of those lakes, the state has data on 1,800.

McCann thanked Sawtooth Mountain Clinic employees Joyce Klees and Theresa Borak for their work coordinating and interviewing the women who took part in FISH. Sawtooth Mountain Clinic Director Rita Plourde said she was happy the clinic could take part in helping the community, and she thanked her staff for all of their time in writing the grant and performing the necessary work to aid in making the study so successful.

More needs to be learned, said McCann, adding that FISH studies will be taking place on the South Shore of Lake Superior and in Illinois. Results from those projects will aid in this research, she said.

As far as the 3 percent of women who had high levels of mercury, they have been getting help from the clinic and will continue to be monitored.

Eat fish, said McCann, but follow the specific guidelines for individual lakes, or if they don't exist, follow the Minnesota DNR guidelines that are more general.

After all, everyone wants to have a smart, happy, healthy baby, and eating the right amount of fish can be a big part of that.



Eating fish in moderation is part of a healthy diet. You can look up mercury rates in fish from area lakes on the MN DNR lakefinder website.

| MATT SCHMIDT

## FISH Project Begins Late May

**COOK COUNTY**—Beginning late May, women ages 16-50 who reside in or near Cook County, may begin enrolling to participate in the FISH Project (Fish are Important for Superior Health). The project comes on the heels of a 2007-2011 study of mercury levels in newborns in the Lake Superior Basin in which the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) found that 10 percent of newborns tested in the Minnesota region of the study had mercury levels above what the Environmental Protection Agency deems to be safe. Because mercury levels were higher in infants born in summer months, researchers determined that local fish consumption may be part of the cause.

These elevated mercury levels in newborns led to the FISH project, which is taking action to reduce mercury exposure in women of childbearing age. Local FISH coordinator and RN at the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, Joyce Klees, points out

that benefits outweigh risks if women eat fish low in mercury and other contaminants. Fish is a healthy source of protein and Omega 3 fatty acids. Educating about the risks and benefits of eating local fish will be part of the FISH project's mission.

The enrollment period for the project will last one year. Women can enroll by calling either the Sawtooth Mountain clinic in Grand Marais, or the Grand Portage Health Service and ask for a FISH coordinator to schedule an appointment.

At your appointment you will take a short survey and give a blood sample. The appointment will take about an hour. Blood will be tested for mercury, and results will be shared with the participant. Names and participant information will be kept confidential.

The participant also will be given educational material about which fish are healthy to eat and which fish should be avoided.

The appointments are at no cost, and participants who complete the visit will receive a Visa gift card. Participants may be asked to make a follow-up visit within six months of their initial appointment.

Patricia McCann, Minnesota Department of Health project leader, said that she hopes other health-care providers will adopt the methods developed through this project. McCann also foresees creating new materials for education as well as providing training for health-care providers about how to educate the community on the risks and benefits of eating fish.

FISH is a partnership between the Grand Portage Health Service, the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, the Cook County North Shore Hospital, Grand Portage Trust Lands and the Minnesota Department of Health.

—Erin Altemus

# ALONG THE SHORE

## The FISH Project—mercury and fish in Cook County

**GRAND MARAIS**—The FISH Project (Fish is Important for Superior Health) continues to enroll women of child-bearing age (age 18-50) in Cook County in a study that assesses the levels of mercury and healthful fatty acids in each participant's blood, as well as educates women on the risks and benefits of eating fish.

The FISH Project stems from a 2010 Minnesota Dept. of Health (MDH) study that found 70 percent of northeastern Minnesota babies tested had mercury in their blood above the level considered to be safe, and notably higher than any of the other regions tested in the Lake Superior Basin.

So why did babies in northeastern Minnesota have higher than average levels of mercury in their blood?

Babies born in summer months were most likely to have higher levels of mercury, suggesting that fish consumption was at least partially responsible (as fish consumption is higher in summer months). Those of us who live in northeastern Minnesota think of our waterways as being pristine, and they are, but that pristine water actually contributes to higher levels of methylmercury in fish, according to Bruce Morrison of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

Pristine biological systems, such as the lakes and forests in Cook County, are actually better at collecting mercury from the environment than less pristine systems. As plant material is broken down, organic carbon is dissolved, which often gives our waters that tea-stained look. Organic carbon is good at holding on to mercury. The mercury is carried downstream to lakes and wetlands where natural bacteria promote the methylation of the mercury. So, it's not that there is necessarily more mercury found in northeastern Minnesota, or even arriving in the river, it's just that our wetlands are extremely efficient at methylating mercury.

Methylmercury binds to an amino acid, a building block for proteins. So organisms (algae, plankton, fish) accumulate it as a source of protein. Once the methylmercury has bound to the system in muscles of fish, it stays there. The older the fish, the more likely they are to have higher levels of mercury, which is why the FISH Project and the MDH have recommendations about fish consumption that are largely based on size of the fish. They have their guidelines posted online, that are based on sampling they have done of fish in lakes all over Minnesota. In general, the larger the size of fish, the less frequently you should eat it.

And where is this mercury coming from?

According to Morrison, some of the highest levels of mercury in the state have been found in fish in Voyageur's National Park, where there are no direct human-caused sources of mercury. Surprisingly, 90 percent of the mercury that gets into our fish comes from outside the state, large-



The Minnesota Dept. of Health has guidelines on their website about how much of any given fish is safe to eat for most lakes in Cook County. | ERIN ALTHEUS

ly, Morrison says, from coal-burning power plants, and also researchers are finding that artisanal gold mines where elemental mercury is used to extract gold from the ore, is a large source of mercury emissions. This mercury comes here from other parts of the country and even around the world.

Trends for mercury levels in fish are somewhat difficult to interpret. In 2002, an analysis of trends from 1982 to 2006 showed that average concentrations of methylmercury in fish were going down. Looking very closely at the data, however, revealed that levels went down until the mid-90s and then went back up until 2006. The last six years show a trend of methylmercury levels in fish going down again.

Morrison pointed out that in northeastern Minnesota, the downward trend of methylmercury levels is not keeping up with the rest of the state. The lakes along the Canadian border are trending upward, based on Morrison's research, which he says is not yet published. His hypothesis is that this is explained by changes in climate—warming, changes in precipitation, greater amounts of rain, more flushing of the watershed, more transporting of mercury, greater flo-

odors of water levels—and that all of this has an effect on the methylation of mercury. In the Canadian Arctic, researchers are seeing the same trends—that despite the pristine waters, methylmercury levels in fish are rising, and researchers believe this is due to the effects of climate change.

Will the FISH Project do anything about methylmercury levels in fish? No. But healthcare providers at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic and Grand Portage Health Services will speak with project participants about the fish they eat, how much fish is safe to eat, and which fish are safe to eat. The MPCA does have a mercury reduction plan, however, that is reducing mercury emissions from local sources, including coal-fired power plants and iron mining.

By September, FISH Project coordinator Joyce Kees estimates that 100 women will have signed up to participate in the project, but they are hoping to get 500 participants. To sign up, you must be between the ages of 18 and 50 and be a resident of Cook County for more than 9 months of the year. You can call the clinic in Grand Marais, Grand Portage or Tofte to make an appointment. At the appointment,

which takes up to an hour, you answer a questionnaire about your fish consumption and give a blood sample. All results will be shared with the participant but kept confidential. An overall report on the project will be shared with the community at the completion of the project. Participants will receive a \$50 Visa gift card after completing their one-hour appointment.

You do not have to eat fish regularly or ever to participate in the project, and to date, some women have said they eat fish very regularly through the summer, while at least one vegetarian has also signed up.

Two events in September offer easy opportunities for women to sign up. On Saturday, Sept. 13, there will be a walk-as-participant enrollment at the lower level of the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic in Grand Marais from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. (Independence grounds) On Wednesday, Sept. 10, there will be an event coinciding with the West End Pizza Bake at the Birch Grove Community Center from 3 to 7 p.m. It will allow women an opportunity to sign up for the project on the West End.—Erin Altheus

 **ALONG THE SHORE**

# FISH PROJECT:

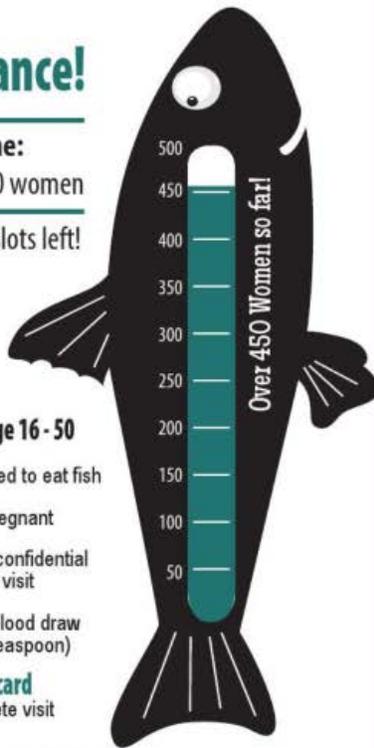
## Fish are Important for Superior Health

### Last Chance!

**Deadline:**  
June 30 or 500 women  
Less than 50 slots left!

**All women age 16 - 50**

-  Do not need to eat fish
-  Can be pregnant
-  Free and confidential 45 minute visit
-  Includes blood draw (about 1 teaspoon)
-  **\$50 VISA card** for complete visit



Call **NOW** for your **FISH** appointment:

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic  
218-387-2330

Grand Portage Health Service  
218-475-2235

## Fish Project seeks females age 16 to 50

**GRAND MARAIS**—Women and teen girls can make a positive health impact on themselves and others by participating in the North Shore Fish Project that ends this month. In exchange for a free and confidential visit lasting around 45 minutes and a blood draw of about one teaspoon, participants receive a \$50 VISA card. A follow-up visit might be requested in six months.

Joyce Klees is the Fish Project coordinator and a registered nurse at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic in Grand Marais. She says, "The Fish Project ends the last day of June or once we have 500 participants."

Turn-out has been good, but approximately 50 more females are needed. It's okay if participants are pregnant.

"We're looking for women along the North Shore from Two Harbors to Thunder Bay," says Klees. Although the project prefers females who eat fish, it's not a requirement. "The Fish Project is focusing on looking at the blood-mercury level in women and their fish consumption," she says.

Mercury is a contaminant. It's commonly found in fish, and this is a concern for many. The project will send confidential mercury-level reports to each participant and also report back to the community with a public presentation this fall.

Pat McCann is a research scientist at the Minn. Dept. of Health and the driving force behind the entire Fish Project. Minnesota wants to provide accurate information about which fish have the lowest amount of contaminants.

"Women of child-bearing age are a group that we want to reach because they're the ones who could possibly transfer the mercury to a baby," McCann said. "It's mercury exposure we're most concerned about."

Eating fish is a nutritious way to help almost everyone be healthy. Those are facts that are already known. But some types of fish are better than others, for women and men alike. One objective of the Fish Project is to inform and educate people on which fish are better to eat. For example, Lake Superior's whitefish, herring,



**Whitefish, herring, smelt, coho salmon, and rainbow trout have lower levels of mercury. Shele Toffey of Docksider Fish Market in Grand Marais displays a Lake Superior smoked whitefish.** | DEKE BURNHAM

smelt, Coho salmon, and rainbow trout are better because they have lower levels of mercury.

Fish with high mercury levels include Chinook salmon and lake trout. This is because they eat other fish and accumulate the mercury from them.

"These fish live longer, thereby attaining higher mercury levels because they consume a greater number of fish throughout their longer life spans," McCann said.

Fish are a good source of nutrition with many health benefits. The Health Dept. doesn't want to discourage people from eating fish.

"We want everyone to eat fish, but to choose those with lower contaminant levels," McCann said.

The Sawtooth Mountain Clinic website has an excellent 11-minute video that interviews local participants, and further explains the Fish Project. See it at [www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org](http://www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org). Women are urged to take part in the Fish Project by contacting the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic at (218) 387-2330 or the Grand Portage Health Service at (218) 475-2235. —Deke Burnham

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November 2015

¼ page ad – page 18

**EVENTS**

The 11th Annual **DULUTH** *Fish & Hunt*

November 13 & 14

Admission \$5  
Early Bird Hours  
Happy Hour!

**FISH PROJECT:**  
Fish are Important for Superior Health

**You did it!**  
Two Community Events  
to say THANK YOU &  
share FISH Project RESULTS

**Event Details**  
5:30-7:30pm  
Presentations start ~6:15pm  
with open house before & after

<b>Tues Nov 17</b> <b>Grand Marais</b> North House Folk School	<b>Wed Nov 18</b> <b>Grand Portage</b> Log Community Building
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REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED - smoked fish, crackers, cheese, dessert bites  
Public invited!  
Win \$25 VISA cards

Questions? Contact...  
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic  
218-387-2330  
Grand Portage Health Service  
218-475-2235

18 NOVEMBER 2015 NORTHERN WILDS

# FISH PROJECT:

Fish are Important for Superior Health

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Two Community Events  
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Public invited!  
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**Questions? Contact...**  
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic  
218-387-2330  
Grand Portage Health Service  
218-475-2235

Success! 499 women in FISH!

Design credit: Cook County News Herald

18 NOVEMBER 2015 NORTHERN WILDS

February 2016

½ page story – page 8



## FISH Project update

**GRAND MARAIS**—Over the past year and a half, eating fish has received some extra attention on the North Shore. Nearly 500 women participated in a study examining fish consumption, mercury exposure and health. The Fish are Important for Superior Health Project, also known as the FISH Project, has been focusing on helping women and their families to enjoy the health benefits of eating fish, while lowering their exposure to mercury. This project came about after a study found that 10 percent of babies tested from the North Shore area had mercury in their blood above the level considered safe. Mercury exposure is of concern for individuals of all ages, but developing fetuses and children are most at risk. Exposure can affect a child's ability to learn and process information.

This project brought together several key partners, including the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, Grand Portage Health Service and the Minnesota Department of Health, to recruit participants to complete a survey and provide a blood sample for testing of mercury and omega-3 fatty acids levels. Overall, the results thus far have been interesting and helpful for many study participants and community members.

The 499 participants reported eating over 40,000 meals of fish in the previous year, with 28 percent of them being locally caught fish. The testing showed that most participants had low levels of mercury in their blood. However, the middle value or median level for the group, 1.16 micrograms per liter (mcg/L), was higher than the U.S. and Canadian averages for women. In addition, 3 percent of participants did have mercury levels above the level considered safe for a developing fetus (5.8 mcg/L). The participants with high mercury levels had self-reported eating more fish than recommended, according to the Minnesota Department of Health Fish Eating Guidelines. As part of the project, these participants were counseled on how to lower their mercury exposure based on the fish they were eating. As one study participant shared, it was "interesting to be a part of the study—

mercury in fish is not something I really thought about before, so it's good to be more aware and have resources about it."

Three species of fish were eaten too often by the participant pool, based on the guidelines: lake trout, walleye and canned tuna. This was especially of concern during the summer months, when consumption was higher as local fishing is more prevalent. Walleye and lake trout are recommended no more than one meal per month for women of childbearing age and children age 15 and younger. However, lower mercury fish can be eaten along with one serving of a higher mercury fish.

In addition to participants' mercury levels being tested, the levels of two omega-3 fatty acids, DHA and EPA, were also tested. DHA is important for brain and eye development in a fetus. "I think it is important to know how to eat healthy and incorporate fish into your diet...I eat some fish, but not a lot, and I should do a better job of eating more," shared another study participant, highlighting the balance between achieving the health benefits from fish while reducing the negatives with mercury exposure.

The Minnesota Department of Health will continue to analyze the data from this study to better understand the relationships between reported fish consumption and blood mercury/fatty acids levels, reported fish consumption and variation in blood mercury level, and comparing these results to results from other similar projects.

"Results from these analyzes will help improve future communication of fish consumption advice and identification of women who may be at higher risk of too much exposure to mercury," said Patricia McCann with the Minnesota Department of Health.

Analysis of the data from this study is ongoing and a final report will be available by late fall 2016. Updates will be available on the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic website and information about safe fish consumption is available at [www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org](http://www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org).—Maren Webb



## SMC Newsletter: *The Daily Apple*

Examples:

April 2014



### *Coming This Spring*

#### **FISH** are Important for Superior Health (**FISH**) Project

Fishing and fish-eating are important parts of the life and tradition of North Shore communities. Beginning this spring, women of these communities can enroll in a free program that educates them to avoid contaminants in fish while continuing to eat fish.

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, Grand Portage Health Service, Grand Portage Trust Lands, Cook County North Shore Hospital and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), are partners in the Fish Are Important for Superior Health (FISH) Project - a clinic-based program for women ages 16 to 50.

Women who participate in the FISH Project will learn about:

- The health benefits of eating fish while reducing their exposure to mercury and other contaminants in fish.
- Participants will also learn how much mercury contamination and healthful omega fatty acids they have in their bodies, and what they can do to reduce mercury and increase omega 3's, if necessary.

FISH Project participants can enroll at:

- Sawtooth Mountain Clinic
- Grand Portage Health Service or
- FISH Project Events

#### **SMC'S** *Endowment Fund*

HELP GROW OUR ENDOWMENT – Your generous donation to the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic Endowment fund is vital to ensure the mission of our Community Health Center...to continue providing access to high quality healthcare to all users, regardless of financial ability to pay and to ensure continued recruiting and retention of all Providers.

The clinic visit will include:

A questionnaire about the kinds of fish that women eat and how often they eat fish; A blood sample that will be analyzed for levels of mercury and healthful fatty acids found in fish, and; A visit with a Nurse to learn how to choose the best locally caught and purchased fish for healthy eating.

After the visit, the clinic will:

1. Send a letter to each participant with her mercury and fatty acid results. A nurse or doctor will be available to discuss those results.
2. We will ask some participants to return for a second visit in six months.
3. Results of the second visit will help us to learn whether the in-clinic education was helpful, and it will allow participants to measure the changes they have made in their fish-eating habits.
4. Women will receive a Visa gift card for each visit they complete.

The **FISH Project** came about as a result of a 2010 Minnesota Department of Health Study, *Mercury in Newborns in the Lake Superior Basin*. The study showed that ten percent of the Northeast Minnesota babies tested had mercury in their blood above the level considered safe. Mercury in Newborns also told us that there are women in our communities who are eating too much high-mercury fish. The FISH Project can help us to lower mercury levels in newborns and others.

Please help to make the **FISH Project** a success by participating, if you are a women aged 16 to 50, and by encouraging other women to participate. A video about the FISH Project will be available soon on the Sawtooth Mountain website. Information about enrollment will be coming soon on our website, in local media, and on posters in public places along the North Shore.

# FISH PROJECT:

Fish are Important  
for Superior Health

**FISH nearly full!**

Enroll by June!

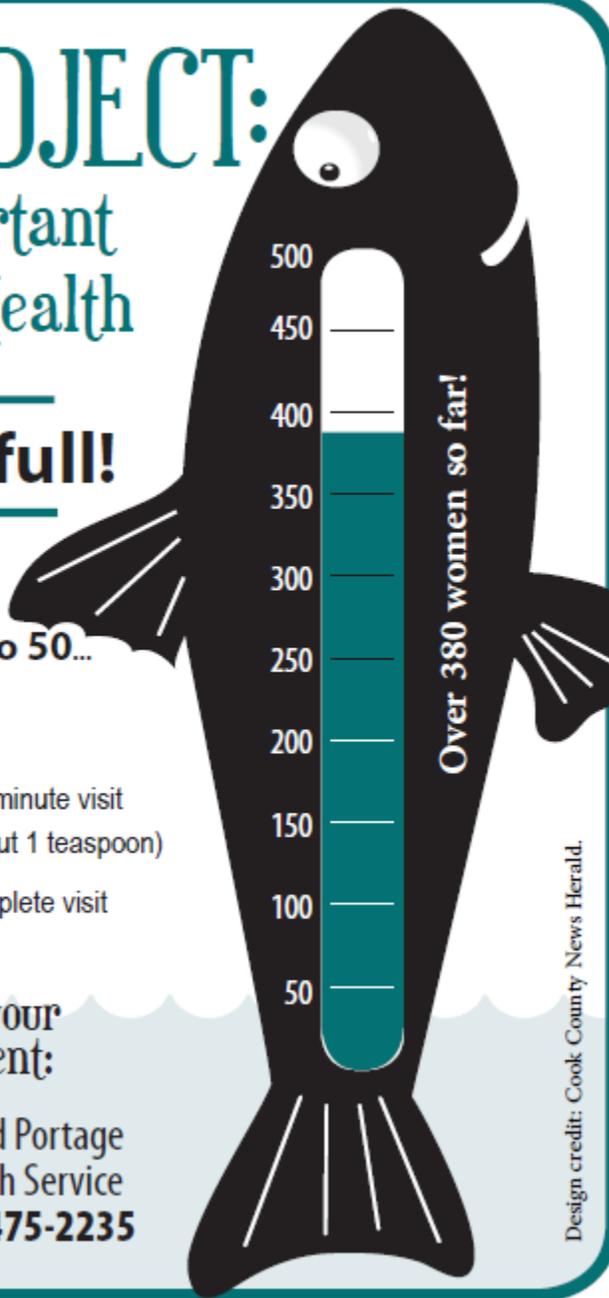
**All WOMEN age 16 to 50...**

-  Do not need to eat fish
-  Can be pregnant
-  Free and confidential 45 minute visit
-  Includes blood draw (about 1 teaspoon)
-  **\$50 VISA cards** for complete visit

Call **TODAY** for your  
**FISH** appointment:

Sawtooth  
Mountain Clinic  
**218-387-2330**

Grand Portage  
Health Service  
**218-475-2235**



Design credit: Cook County News Herald.

## Cook County Whole Foods Co-op Newsletter: *BlueBerry Jam*

January-February-March 2015 Issue, page 6

### **FISH PROJECT IN FULL SWING!** **Women ages 16 to 50 are needed to reach our goal of 500 participants by May 2015!**

As of November, over 250 women have TAKEN THE BAIT and SET THEIR HOOKS by taking part in the Fish are Important for Superior Health (FISH) Project. This large-SCALE project along the North Shore helps women choose fish to eat that are low in mercury. Visits are free, confidential, take around 45 minutes and upon completion of the visit you leave with up to \$50 VISA in gift cards.

To take part, women must:

- Give a small amount of blood to be tested for mercury and fatty acids
- Complete a questionnaire about the fish they eat

Personal blood results will be given to each woman so she can make

informed choices about which fish to eat to keep mercury at a safe level in her body. Participants do not need to eat fish, can be pregnant, and may be asked to return for a 6-month, follow-up visit.

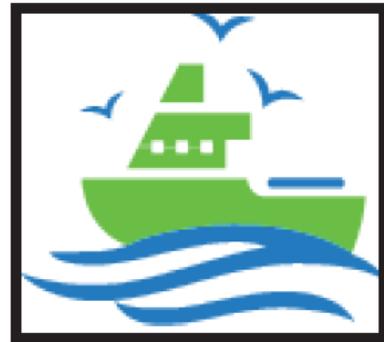
**Receive up to \$50 in VISA gift cards for your visit!**

So, what are you waiting for? Don't miss the BOAT!

Make your FISH appointment TODAY!  
FISH Project participation deadline: 500 participants or mid May.

**Call or stop in at:**  
**Sawtooth Mountain Clinic**  
**218.387.2330**

**Grand Portage Health Service**  
**218.475.2235**



# Local Businesses Promotional Materials

Examples:

Brochure

## FISH Project

Helping women and their families enjoy the health benefits of eating fish while lowering their exposure to mercury



**YOU can take part in the FISH Project!**

For More Information

Please call and ask for a FISH Coordinator at one of our Project locations:

**Sawtooth Mountain Clinic**  
(218) 387-2330



**Grand Portage Health Service**  
(218) 475-2235



**Make your appointment between June 2014 and May 2015!**

## FISH Project

**Fish are Important for Superior Health**



Project Partners

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic  
Grand Portage Health Service  
Grand Portage Trust Lands  
Cook County North Shore Hospital  
Minnesota Department of Health

## Fish are Important for Superior Health (FISH) Project

### Why are we doing the FISH Project?

A 2010 study showed that 10% of Northeast Minnesota babies tested had mercury in their blood above the level considered safe.

**We want women to choose to eat fish that are low in mercury.**

That way women and their families can have the health benefits of eating fish while lowering their exposure to mercury.

### Who can participate in the FISH Project?

Women age 16 to 50 who live in or near Cook County can take part in FISH.

### Why should I participate?

Taking part will give you information to improve your health and the health of your family.

The things we learn from the FISH Project will help your community and other communities where people catch and eat fish.



### If I decide to take part, what will I do?

- You will answer questions about the kinds of fish you eat and how often you eat fish.
- You will have some blood drawn from your arm.
- You will learn how to choose locally caught and purchased fish for healthy eating.

### We will...

- Test your blood samples for mercury and healthful fatty acids found in fish.
- Send you your blood results and a nurse will be available to discuss them with you.

### How long will it take?

The first visit will take about one hour. Women who complete Visit One will receive a \$50 Visa gift card.

We will ask some women to return for a second visit in 6 months. For completing the follow-up visit, women will receive a second \$50 card.

### Is my information private?

**Yes.** Your information will not be shared. Participant names and personal results will only be seen by some Sawtooth Mountain Clinic and Grand Portage Health Service clinic staff.



### Why should I eat fish?

Fish are an important part of a healthy diet. Catching and eating fish are part of the history and culture of the Great Lakes region.

- Fish are a great source of low-fat protein.
- Fish contain Omega-3 fatty acids that are important for the developing eyes and brains of a fetus.

Eating fish low in contaminants is good for the health of adults and children.

**Needed: Women Age 16 to 50**  
**Fish are Important for Superior Health (FISH) Project**  
**to Participate in the FISH Project**

**Who:** Women, age 16 to 50, who live in or near Cook County  
**When:** One-hour appointment between May 2014 and April 2015.  
Some participants will be asked to return for a second visit in six months  
**Where:** Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, Grand Portage Health Service, or at special locations to be announced

**Make the most of the health benefits of eating fish, and lower exposure to mercury for you and your family**



A recent study showed that ten percent of the Northeastern Minnesota babies tested had mercury in their blood above the level considered safe.

**Participants will:**

- Answer questions about the fish they eat
- Have a blood test for levels of healthful fatty acids in fish and for mercury contamination from fish
- Receive the results of those tests and learn what they mean, and
- Learn how to choose the best fish for healthy eating

Participants who complete either visit will receive a Visa gift card.

To register as a participant or for more information, call:  
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic at 218-387-2330 or  
Grand Portage Health Service at 218-475-2235  
and ask for a FISH Coordinator



See FISH Video online at: <http://www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org/>

# Fish are Important for Superior Health

## FISH Project



Enjoying the health benefits of eating fish while lowering exposure to mercury



### Reason for the FISH Project

A recent study showed that 10% of Northeast Minnesota babies tested had mercury in their blood above the level considered safe.

### **The FISH Project!**

Women choosing fish to eat that are low in mercury

### Why eat fish if they contain mercury?

Catching and eating fish are an important part of our history and culture.

Fish are...

- A key part of a healthy diet
- Major source of Omega-3 fatty acids need for developing eyes and brains
- Rich in vitamins and protein and low in saturated fat

### Who can take part...

- Women age 16 to 50
- Live in or near Cook County

### What will I have to do?

FISH takes about 1 hour of your time.

You will...

- ✓ Answer questions about the kinds of fish you eat and how often you eat fish
- ✓ Have blood drawn from your arm to test for mercury and healthful fatty acids found in fish
- ✓ Learn how to choose fish low in mercury to eat

Some women will be asked to return for a follow-up visit.

### If you participate, you will...

- Find out the mercury and fatty acid levels in your body
- Get information to improve your health and the health of your family
- Get a \$50 Visa gift card

### FISH Project Partners

- Cook County North Shore Hospital
- Grand Portage Health Service
- Grand Portage Trust Lands
- Minnesota Department of Health
- Sawtooth Mountain Clinic

### More Information

Ask for a FISH Coordinator at:

Sawtooth Mountain  
Clinic  
(218) 387-2330



Grand Portage  
Health Service  
(218) 475-2235



## Walk-in Special Events

### Letter and flyer sent to local businesses

Greetings,

I am the coordinator for the Fish are important to Superior Health (FISH) Project at Sawtooth Mountain Clinic (SMC). I am reaching out to the local businesses and agencies to help spread the word about this project. Please share this information with your employees as appropriate.

Thank you,

Joyce Klees FISH Coordinator, Sawtooth Mountain Clinic

**Fish are Important to Superior Health (FISH) Project: helping women and their families enjoy the health benefits of eating fish while lowering their exposure to mercury.**

The FISH Project is the result of a 2010 MDH Study, *Mercury in Newborns in the Lake Superior Basin*. The study showed that ten percent of the Northeast Minnesota babies tested had mercury in their blood above the level considered safe. Partners in the project are Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), SMC, Grand Portage Health Service (GPHS), Grand Portage Trust Lands, and North Shore Hospital.

We are looking to enroll 500 women age 16 to 50, who live in or near Cook County. FISH visits take approximately an hour, are free and confidential. Participants will answer questions about the fish they eat and have a blood test that measures their mercury level. Participants who complete the visit will receive a \$50 Visa gift card.

See FISH Project Video online at: [www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org](http://www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org)

Women can enroll at GPHS, SMC, or special enrollment events; see attached flyer.

For more information or to enroll call SMC at 387-2330 or GPHS at 475 -2235

### Special Enrollment Event: FISH Project

Fish are Important for Superior Health (FISH) Project

**Women, age 16 to 50, who live in or near Cook County**

Minors need parental consent in order to participate

❖ **Wednesday September 10, 3:00 to 7:00 pm**  
**Birch Grove Community Center**

OR

❖ **Saturday September 13, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm**  
**Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, lower level classroom**

No appointments necessary

Snacks provided

Child care available

**Make the most of the health benefits of eating fish, and lower exposure to mercury for you and your family**



#### Participants will:

- Answer questions about the fish they eat
- Have a blood test for levels of healthful fatty acids in fish, and for mercury contamination from fish
- Receive the results of those tests and learn what they mean, and
- Learn how to choose the best fish for healthy eating

Participants who complete either visit will receive a Visa gift card.

A recent study showed that ten percent of the Northeastern Minnesota babies tested had mercury in their blood above the level considered safe.

See FISH Project Video online at: [www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org](http://www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org)

For more information or to enroll at other times call Sawtooth Mountain Clinic at 218-387-2330 and ask for a FISH Coordinator

Special Events ad in Cook County News Herald

**SPECIAL ENROLLMENT EVENT:**

# FISH Project

Fish are Important for Superior Health (FISH) Project

**Women, age 16 to 50, who live in or near Cook County**

Minors need parental consent in order to participate

**Wednesday, September 10**

3:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Birch Grove Community Center

**Saturday, September 13**

8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, lower level classroom

**No appointments necessary**

Snacks provided Child care available

**Make the most of the health benefits of eating fish, and lower exposure to mercury for you and your family**

**Participants will:**

Answer questions about the fish they eat

Have a blood test for levels of healthful fatty acids in fish, and for mercury contamination from fish

Receive the results of those tests and learn what they mean

Learn how to choose the best fish for healthy eating

Participants who complete either visit will receive a Visa gift card.

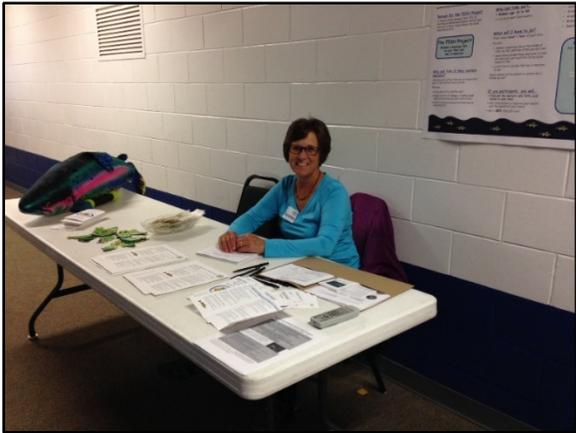
A recent study showed that ten percent of the Northeastern Minnesota babies tested had mercury in their blood above the level considered safe.



See FISH Project Video online at:  
[www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org](http://www.sawtoothmountainclinic.org)

For more information or to enroll at other times call Sawtooth Mountain Clinic at 218-367-2330 and ask for a FISH Coordinator

Staff photos at school walk-in special event



Reception table (above), mobile lab (right),  
questionnaire area set-up (below)



## Church Promotional Materials

Flyer Choices for Churches

### FISH Project: Option 1



#### FISH Project in full swing!

#### Need women ages 16 to 50 to reach goal of 500 by June

As of January, over 300 women have *TAKEN THE BAIT* and *SET THEIR HOOKS* by taking part in the Fish are Important for Superior Health (**FISH**) Project. This large-*SCALE* project along the North Shore helps women choose fish to eat that are low in mercury. Visits are free, confidential, and take around 45 minutes. To take part, women must:

- Give a small amount of blood (about 1 teaspoon) to be tested for mercury and fatty acids
- Complete a questionnaire about the fish they eat

Personal blood results will be given to each woman so she can make informed choices about which fish to eat to keep mercury at a safe level in her body. Participants do not need to eat fish, can be pregnant, and may be asked to return for a 6-month follow-up visit.

#### Receive up to \$50 in Visa gift cards!

So, what are you waiting for? Don't miss the *BOAT!* Make your **FISH** appointment TODAY!



**Sawtooth Mountain Clinic**

**(218) 387-2330**

**Grand Portage Health Service**

**(218) 475-2235**



## FISH Project: Option 2



### **Fish are Important for Superior Health – FISH Project Need women ages 16 to 50 to reach goal of 500 by June**

As of January, over 300 women have participated in the **FISH** Project. This project encourages women to choose fish to eat that are low in mercury. FISH visits are free, confidential, and take around 45 minutes. To take part, women need to:

- Give a small amount of blood (about 1 teaspoon) to be tested for mercury and fatty acids
- Complete a questionnaire about the fish they eat

Personal blood results will be given to each woman so she can make informed choices about which fish to eat and keep mercury at a safe level in her body. Participants do not need to eat fish, can be pregnant, and may be asked to return for a 6-month follow-up visit.

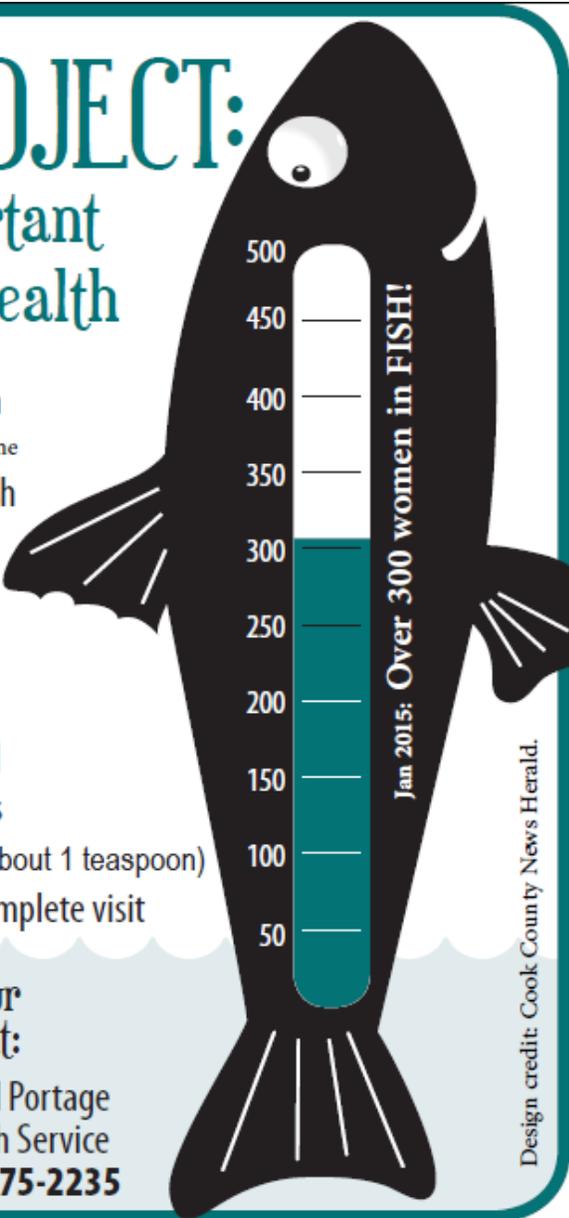
### **Receive up to \$50 in Visa gift cards!**

So, what are you waiting for? Make your **FISH** appointment TODAY!

**Sawtooth Mountain Clinic**  
**(218) 387-2330**

**Grand Portage Health Service**  
**(218) 475-2235**

## FISH Project: Option 3



# FISH PROJECT:

## Fish are Important for Superior Health

**Looking for 500 women age 16 to 50** now through June

- Do not need to eat fish
- Can be pregnant
- Possible follow-up visit in 6 months

**FISH visits:**

- Free and confidential
- Take around 45 minutes
- Include a blood draw (about 1 teaspoon)
- \$50 VISA cards** for complete visit

**Call TODAY for your FISH appointment:**

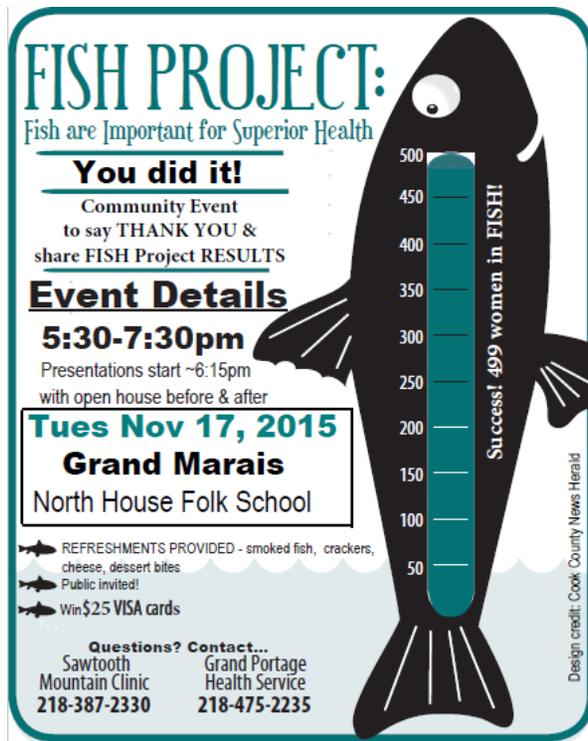
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic <b>218-387-2330</b>	Grand Portage Health Service <b>218-475-2235</b>
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Jan 2015: Over 300 women in FISH!

Design credit: Cook County News Herald.

## Report Back to the Community Events Promotional Materials

FISH ad and poster examples



**FISH PROJECT:**  
Fish are Important for Superior Health

**You did it!**  
Community Event  
to say THANK YOU &  
share FISH Project RESULTS

**Event Details**  
**5:30-7:30pm**  
Presentations start ~6:15pm  
with open house before & after

**Tues Nov 17, 2015**  
**Grand Marais**  
North House Folk School

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED - smoked fish, crackers,  
cheese, dessert bites  
Public invited!  
Win \$25 VISA cards

Questions? Contact...  
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic 218-387-2330  
Grand Portage Health Service 218-475-2235

Success! 499 women in FISH!

Design credit: Cook County News Herald



**FISH PROJECT:**  
Fish are Important for Superior Health

**You did it!**  
Two Community Events  
to say THANK YOU &  
share FISH Project RESULTS

**Event Details**  
**5:30-7:30pm**  
Presentations start ~6:15pm  
with open house before & after

<b>Tues Nov 17</b> <b>Grand Marais</b> North House Folk School	<b>Wed Nov 18</b> <b>Grand Portage</b> Log Community Building
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REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED - smoked fish, crackers,  
cheese, dessert bites  
Public invited!  
Win \$25 VISA cards

Questions? Contact...  
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic 218-387-2330  
Grand Portage Health Service 218-475-2235

Success! 499 women in FISH!

Design credit: Cook County News Herald



**FISH PROJECT:**  
Fish are Important for Superior Health

**You did it!**  
Two Community Events  
to say THANK YOU and share  
FISH Project RESULTS

**Event Details**  
**Tuesday, Nov. 17**  
Grand Marais  
North House Folk School

**Wednesday, Nov. 18**  
Grand Portage  
Log Community Building

**5:30-7:30 p.m.**  
Presentations start ~6:15 p.m.  
with open house before & after

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED:  
Smoked fish, crackers, cheese, dessert bites  
Public invited!  
Win \$25 VISA cards

Questions? Contact:  
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic 218-387-2330  
Grand Portage Health Service 218-475-2235

Success! 499 women in FISH!