

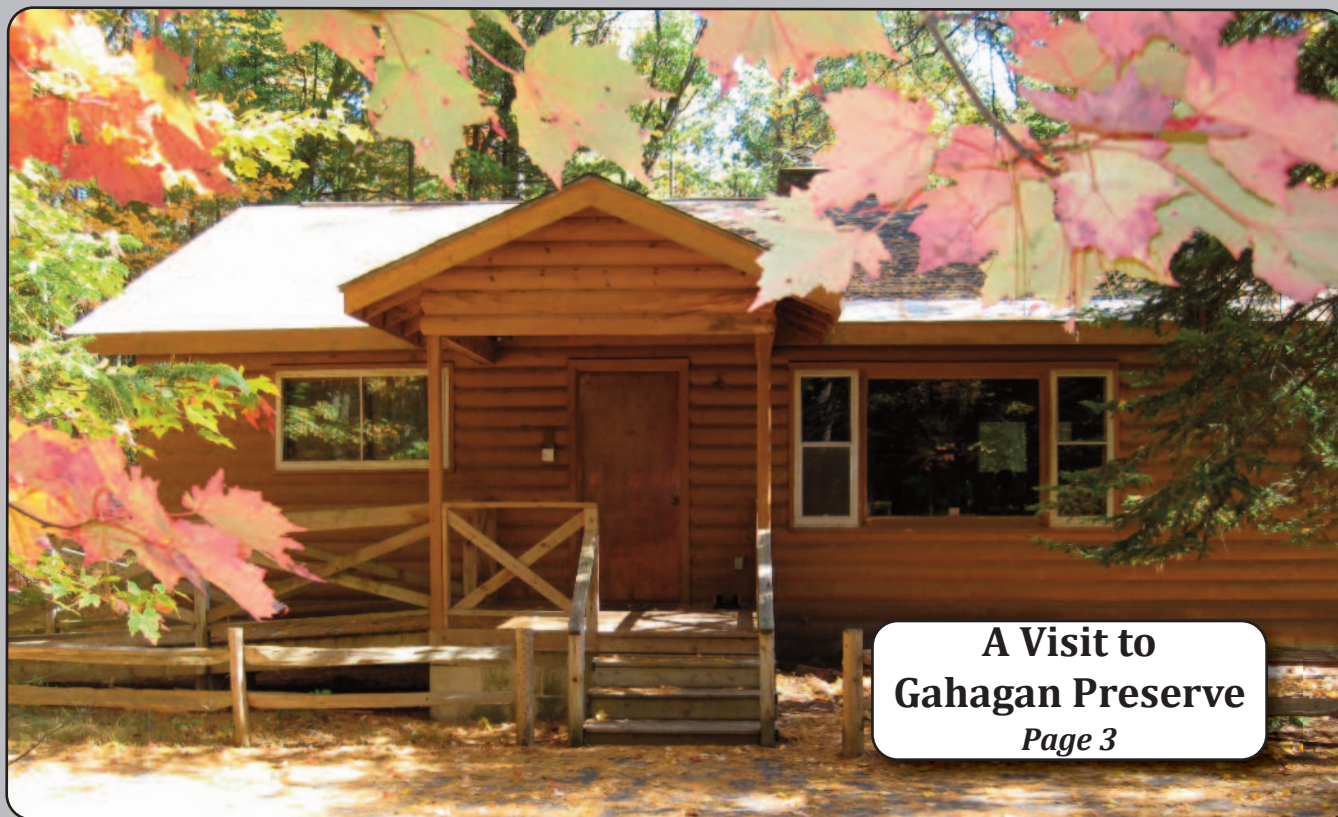
# Here's the latest digital edition of the new *North Woods Call*

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*Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953*



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## Hope you enjoy!

[www.mynorthwoodscall.com](http://www.mynorthwoodscall.com)

“Fracking” outcry grows after May auction sales

## Conservation groups ask for moratorium on state oil and gas leases

A large contingent of conservation-minded individuals and organizations showed up at the Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting in September to protest state leasing of oil and gas interests—particularly within and near environmentally sensitive areas.

Nearly three hours of testimony was heard by NRC members and at least three Michigan nonprofit groups formally asked for a moratorium on such leasing until a thorough assessment can be made regarding the environmental impacts of horizontal hydraulic

fracturing.

Michigan Land, Air, Water Defense Inc., The Friends of the Jordan River Watershed Inc. and the FLOW for Water Public Trust Policy Center were among those requesting that a committee or citizen task force be established to review the state’s procedures, law, policy and leases to better address this controversial issue.

Anti-fracking protests have grown since the leasing and sale of public land and mineral rights in Barry and Allegan counties by the Michigan Department of Natural Re-

sources (DNR). Of particular concern is the leasing in May 2012 of more than 23,000 acres of public land mineral rights in Barry County, including Barry State Game Area and the Yankee Springs Recreation Area.

Despite public outcry and many unanswered questions about the implications of leasing state lands for oil and gas exploration—especially parks, recreation, game and other special areas—the DNR has scheduled another auction October 24 for nearly 196,000 acres of state-owned oil and gas lease rights in 22 Michigan counties.

Some 15,000 acres of this reportedly include state parks, game and recreation areas, and recreational trails.

Barry County contains the Glass Creek Watershed, which was recently ranked by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) as worthy of “protection,” its highest designation. Meanwhile, the DEQ reportedly awarded a \$270,499 matching grant to several conservation organizations—including the DNR—to permanently protect the watershed.

(Continued on Page 2)

### Savoy drilling in Mason Tract scuttled

Another threat to the Mason Tract has been turned back.

Savoy Energy LP (Savoy), a Traverse City based oil and gas company that created a firestorm of opposition when it applied for a permit to directionally drill a well under the 4,700-acre wilderness area, has decided to withdraw its application.

One of the major plaintiffs in a lawsuit to halt the drilling—An-

glers of the Au Sable—celebrated the success.

“Our journey through the legal process started back in June of 2003 when Rusty Gates organized a group of volunteer lawyers to review the plans of Savoy,” said Bruce Pregler, president of Anglers of the Au Sable. “At that initial meeting we knew we had to take steps to stop the incremental

(Continued on Page 2)

### North Woods Notes

**GAHAGAN PRESERVE MEMBERSHIPS:** Fall is membership renewal time at Roscommon’s Gahagan Nature Preserve. If you have not yet joined or renewed your membership this year, do so now. The cost is \$15 for an individual, \$25 for a family, or \$50 for an organization. You can also make a tax-deductible donation anytime.

**HUNTER SURVEY REWARDS:** Three Michigan deer hunters were recently rewarded for their participation earlier this year in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) state harvest survey.

Donald Fry of Marlette, Londa Merrill of Cornell and Donald Weiderman of Mendon were presented with sporting arms by Safari Club International at the September meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission.

The winners’ names were selected randomly from the pool of all hunter surveys received. The surveys help the DNR evaluate regulations and develop management plans.

**KEWEENAW’S TORCH LAKE:** Michigan Sea Grant has designated \$119,339 to assess the impact of past copper mining on Torch Lake in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Not to be confused with the larger Torch Lake in Antrim County, this water resource in the Keweenaw Peninsula’s Houghton County has suffered from persistent issues, such as fish tumors, a degraded lake bottom and fish consumption advisories.

The research will combine current knowledge about the lake with historical information that has not been previously compiled. The information will help remediate the site where needed.

**NORTH WOODS CONSERVANCY:** The Calumet-based North Woods Conservancy has set a fund-raising goal of securing 400 “monthly sustainers” by the end of this calendar year. At last report, they had more than 150 and were gaining steam. Monthly sustainers are individuals who give a few dollars each month to support the conservancy’s efforts to preserve and enhance natural areas in the Keweenaw Peninsula.

**LOW WATER:** Lake Michigan was reportedly reaching a near record low water level in mid September. At 577 feet, it was just one foot above the lowest level in recorded history, officials said.

Lake Huron, meanwhile, was almost two feet below its long-term average and nine inches below last year’s level. As a result, state conservation officials are expecting challenging waterfowl hunting conditions this season on Saginaw Bay.

**CLEANER BEACHES:** The summer drought of 2012 may have an upside. Officials believe an annual effort to clean Great Lakes beaches and shorelines could be easier this year, because the dry weather meant fewer sewer overflows that dump trash into the water.

**FISHERY REGULATIONS:** The Michigan Department of Natural Resources will announce new northern pike and muskellunge regulations at the October 11 Natural Resources Commission meeting in Ontonagon.

The proposed changes are based upon public survey responses and discussions with the DNR’s Warm Water Resources Steering Committee. To review survey results, visit [www.michigan.gov/fishing](http://www.michigan.gov/fishing).

**SPORTSMEN’S ACT:** Ducks Unlimited is urging support for Michigan Senate Bill 3525. The bill focuses on two core issues to the organization—habitat conservation and increased access for recreational hunting.

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## Dam removal under way on Boardman River

What has been called the largest dam removal project in Michigan history is now under way in Grand Traverse County.

Structural removal of the Brown Bridge Dam on the Boardman River began August 16.

“The job is relatively weather-dependent,” said Frank Dituri, chairman of the Boardman River Dams Implementation Team, “but we hope that the major excavation portion is done this calendar year.”

The dam, built in 1921 at river mile 18.5, is the first of three slated for removal in a multi-phase project that will return the

Boardman to a more natural state as a free-flowing, cold-water river.

“Restoration of the river will continue over the next few years,” said Steve Largent, Boardman River Program Coordinator at the Grand Traverse Conservation District.

Also scheduled for later removal are the Sabin Dam at river mile 5.3, which was built in 1902, and the Boardman Dam at river mile 6.1, which was built in 1894. Both dams were rebuilt in 1930. In addition, the Union Street Dam in Traverse City will be modified, Largent said.

The initial cost for completing the total dam removal project is estimated at \$5 million to \$8 million, not including transportation system expenses. Funding is being pursued through federal, state, tribal, local government and private sources.

The Great Lakes Fishery Trust has awarded \$1 million to the City of Traverse City to help with the removal of Brown Bridge Dam and the restoration of 1.5 miles of river, 156 acres of wetlands and 25 acres of upland habitat.

Largent said there has been good public support for the project, despite the cost.

“Actually, the cost is very reasonable,” he said. “There would have been costs associated with repairing the dam, too. We’ve raised enough money from twenty-seven different funding opportunities and we’ve been very transparent.”

“We held a number of public meetings. We do have those who don’t like to see change—who loved the pond the way it was—but a lot of people love what’s going on.”

Largent said that transparency has been key all along the way. They have been sharing plans and information online not only for public consumption, but so that engineers in other parts of the country can learn about the project and maybe apply some of the learnings to their own efforts.

(Continued on Page 2)



The power house at Brown Bridge Dam is already gone.

### Release & Open House October 14

## Gahagan Nature Preserve completes biography of benefactor

The Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve at Roscommon will unveil its new book about the North Woods Call founder during an open house on October 14.

The event at the preserve’s cabin—once the former home of Marguerite Gahagan—will run from 4 to 7 p.m. and double as the annual membership meeting. It will feature finger foods, beverages and a sampling of fine wines, along with an opportunity to view and purchase the book.

*Pine Whispers: The Biography and Writings of Marguerite Gahagan* has been in production for the past two years. Written by local volunteers, it describes Gahagan’s fascinating life and her importance as a Michigan conservation leader.

The book is named after the weekly “Pine Whispers” column that Gahagan wrote during the 16 years she owned and operated *The North Woods Call*.

Part biography and part Gahagan’s own writings

about conservation and life in northern Michigan, a soft-cover version of the book will sell for \$19.95 each during the open house and later at other sales outlets to be announced on the preserve’s website at [gahagannature.org](http://gahagannature.org).

A special leatherette hardcover edition is also being offered with gold printing on the spine for a cost of \$50 each. Orders for this collector’s edition must be made by October 29 by sending a check to Gahagan Nature Preserve, P.O. Box 421, Roscommon, Michigan 48653.

Buyers of the leatherette edition should include their name, address, telephone number and the words “Leatherette Pine Whispers order” on the correspondence. They will then be notified when they are able to pick up the book, probably by the end of November 2012.

All proceeds will go to the Gahagan Nature Preserve and its programs.

## Conservationists challenge Michigan oil and gas leases

*Continued From Page 1*

While state lands within Yankee Springs, and other game and wildlife areas, are designated as “non-development” of the surface, adjacent or nearby state and private land is being leased to drill using unconventional hydraulic fracturing techniques.

Hydraulic fracturing is a controversial operation that pumps massive amounts of water, sand and chemical additives into a well and down the casing (tubing) under high pressure. As the mixture is forced out through perforations in the well casing into the surrounding rock, the pressure causes the rock to fracture. These fractures are then propped open with pumped sand, which enables gas and/or oil to flow from tight, or low permeability rock, to the well.

State regulators are charged with monitoring the process at every step—from permitting and drilling through production and plugging the well.

“The state has totally failed to conduct baseline water, natural resource and environmental studies of cumulative impacts and effects—including a ‘no lease’ alternative for these special areas,” said Jim Olson, a Traverse City environmental law attorney.

“All the DNR does is classify development, non development, or development with restrictions, without considering the whole,”

Olson said. “Non-development is a misnomer, because it applies only to the surface, whereas the leases sold underneath authorize physical drilling, explosives and massive quantities of chemicals and water.”

Elizabeth Kirkwood, policy director at the Traverse City-based FLOW Public Trust Policy Center, reminded commissioners that the DNR does not analyze the cumulative effects of oil and gas exploration on the air, water and land because the DEQ later conducts impact evaluations at the drilling permit stage. This is a failure of public trust, she said.

The ‘public trust doctrine,’ as well as Michigan environmental and constitutional laws, require the DNR to protect and conserve state natural resources when leasing state lands for oil and gas purposes, Kirkwood said.

Ed Golder, public information officer at the DNR, said the NRC has no authority where the leasing of state land is concerned. “The authority rests entirely with the DNR,” he said, “which has the power to approve auctions on publicly owned land. The issue was before the NRC only as a matter of courtesy and information.”

Nevertheless, conservationists are calling on the NRC, DNR and Gov. Rick Snyder to get a handle on the situation immediately.

“There’s no reason to allow

these leases to be sold,” said Olson. “It’s an unconventional industrial operation. We’re looking at it from a water pollution and land perspective. There are toxic chemicals and run-off. It will wreak havoc on the environment.”

The NRC can take the lead by setting policy and direction, Olson said. “Legal power, or not, they have the clout. The impact of the NRC demanding a response should not be underestimated.”

In addition to canceling or delaying the October auction and establishing a citizen task force to review these issues, conservation groups have asked that non-development leases be canceled and a hydrological study be conducted on state-leased lands to assess the cumulative impacts of water used (and disposed of) during hydrofracking operations.

Wastewater disposal and transport issues should also be examined, a full disclosure of the chemicals used at every stage of production should be made and water supplies should be tested before and after drilling, they said.

There was no immediate response as to whether the state intends to honor these requests.

Although the DNR has so far approved the October 24 auction, Golder said “it is our intent to continue listening to concerns raised about leasing on public lands.”

### Conservationists dispute claim

## Industry says “fracking” is safe alternative

Contrary to concerns expressed by Michigan conservationists, oil and gas industry advocates say that hydraulic fracturing is a safe, proven and essential process for recovering natural gas and oil from reserves found deep below the earth—often in tight rock.

According to a brochure published by the Lansing-based Michigan Oil and Gas Producers Education Foundation (MOGPEF), the process is necessary for the “successful development of most oil and gas wells in Michigan.”

Many geologic formations in Michigan, the organization says, have low permeability and could not produce economically viable volumes of natural gas without the use of hydraulic fracturing.

More than 12,000 wells have been developed in Michigan using this method, according to MOGPEF, without adverse environmental impacts from the hydraulic fracturing process. Each well is constructed with the protection of the environment and water resources in mind, they said, with fracturing operations taking place below any freshwater aquifers.

Each well drilled has two layers of steel casing and two layers of concrete to protect groundwater, industry officials said. Many deep wells also have a third casing extending about half the well depth, providing additional protection against potential fluid migration.

In addition, according to MOGPEF, any fluids that flow back to the surface after the fracturing process are disposed of in deep disposal wells designed specifically for this purpose in accordance with state and federal regulations.

Despite such industry assurances, opponents say there are many examples where these operations have resulted in air and water contamination, as well as other unacceptable side effects. Industry claims to the contrary are erroneous and misleading, they say.

Releases, spills and other accidents are documented around the country, according to conservationists. The potential effects on state forest wetlands, habitats, springs, tributary groundwater and streams, ponds and lakes are significant, they say.

“Collectively, the science clearly shows an unprecedented risk of harm—whether from deep or horizontal fracking itself, or from typical accidents and errors resulting in far larger harms because of the industrial, water-intensive, chemical-intensive and land-intensive drilling operations involved,” said Jim Olson, an environmental law attorney in Traverse City.

## Dam removal will return Boardman to natural river flow

*Continued from Page 1*

When all three dams are removed, more than three miles of cold-water stream, 253 acres of wetlands and 57 acres of upland habitat will be restored.

The timeline for the total project is tentative and subject to change based on the outcomes of the permitting processes, unforeseen schedule changes and availability of funding.

Brown Bridge Dam is being removed first because it offers the most significant ecological benefits. Brown Bridge Pond will no longer exist after the dam is deconstructed. The entire 191-acre impoundment will revert to a free-flowing natural river. In addition to the ecological benefits, the dam removal and restoration project is expected to bring several economic and recreational benefits to

the community. Among other things, it has been predicted that the local economy will see an estimated \$3 million in increased recreation, tourism and property values—and local schools will have a hands-on environmental laboratory for outdoor education.

In addition to the dam removal and river restoration, a comprehensive “prosperity plan” is being developed across the 291-square-

mile watershed. Organizers say the plan will reflect the economic and community development of the unique resource, focus on its long-term protection, and address issues of business and job creation.

Much more information about this project, the Watershed Prosperity Plan and the overall impact on the region can be found at [www.theboardman.org](http://www.theboardman.org).

### Looking for Hickories: The Forgotten Wildness of the Rural Midwest

A Book of Essays by  
Tom Springer



A Michigan Notable Book  
[thewildnearby@gmail.com](mailto:thewildnearby@gmail.com)

## Savoy Energy withdraws application to drill on Mason Tract

*Continued From Page 1*

encroachment of development into this beautiful river corridor.”

Gates, a northern Michigan conservation legend, was owner of Gates Au Sable Lodge near Grayling prior to his untimely death a few years ago.

“This victory is a tribute to our organization’s staying power and commitment to protecting our forests and rivers for future generations,” Pregler said. “This battle has been won, but rest assured the Anglers will remain vigilant. We will continue to monitor actions that may negatively impact our beloved watershed.”

A lawsuit seeking to halt the proposed drilling operations was initially filed in federal court during June 2005. In addition to Anglers of the Au Sable, plaintiffs included Tim Mason (grandson of George Mason) and the Mackinac Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Pregler credited the many volunteers who freely gave of their time to work on the issue.

“Our members’ passion to protect and preserve is what makes the Anglers such a powerful voice in defending the environs of the Au Sable River,” he said.

Savoy’s decision to withdraw its application follows a lengthy administrative and legal struggle. The firm’s initial plan to drill by the Mason Tract Chapel caused an unprecedented public outcry, including over 500 comments received by the U.S. Forest Service opposing the permit.

Then came a series of legal setbacks starting with an injunction in 2005 by a federal magistrate and a ruling by federal Judge David M. Lawson in 2008 that Savoy’s drilling plan violated several guidelines

of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In spite of these decisions, Savoy filed for another drilling permit in spring 2010. This time, however, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be conducted before any application would be approved. An EIS sets a much higher standard for any activity on national forest land.

The required EIS, coupled with continued concern from conservation groups and recreational users of the area, likely meant that any mineral extraction operation would have a number of special considerations applied to it.

A draft of the EIS was being prepared and would have been available later this year. Thereafter, the U.S. Forest Service would have again requested public comment. Savoy’s withdrawal of its permit ends the Forest Service’s obligation to move forward, as there is no pending permit application.

The Mason Tract was established in the 1950s by a gift from auto executive and naturalist George Mason to the State of Michigan. The gift was conditioned on a promise by the state that the land remain undeveloped and never sold. The South Branch of the Au Sable flows through the tract. As tribute to George Mason, a chapel was constructed on the South Branch’s banks as a sanctuary for fisherman, hikers, bicyclists, skiers and canoeists.

While Savoy’s decision to withdraw its application is good news for lovers of the Mason Tract and South Branch of the Au Sable, it does not mean that an oil and gas well may not someday be constructed near the Mason Tract.

—Thanks to Anglers of the Au Sable for this report.

## Wanted

### Correspondents

We would like to hear from quality writers & reporters interested in contributing conservation-related news from across Michigan — particularly in the northern lower and upper peninsulas, and the capitol city of Lansing.

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## Chesapeake Energy & Encana deny charges

### Michigan attorney general investigates alleged bid-fixing by natural gas companies

The Michigan attorney general's office has launched an investigation into allegations that two of North America's largest natural gas corporations colluded in an effort to fix bids in Michigan's oil and gas lease market.

The two companies—Encana and Chesapeake Energy—came under scrutiny after Reuters News Service intercepted at least a dozen e-mail messages that suggest top company officials discussed a plan to divide up Michigan counties that were auctioning prime oil and gas acreage in order to avoid a costly bidding competition.

The investigation was launched at the urging of two state representatives—Dian Slaven (D-Canton) and Charles Smiley (D-Burton).

"We have opened an investigation into Chesapeake Energy and Encana regarding the recent antitrust allegations

raised in media reports," said Joy Yearout, acting director of communications in Attorney General Bill Schuette's office. "As part of that investigation, we have requested information from the companies."

Yearout declined to speculate about a timeline for this investigation, saying it will "be driven by the evidence."

Ed Golder, public information officer at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), said the DNR could not comment on the matter.

"Frankly, I would have nothing to say in any case since their office is handling the entire matter," said Golder. "I have no information about the investigation."

Tom Baird, vice president of Anglers of the Au Sable, a northern Michigan conservation group, said he has been concerned since reading the initial reports, but has not been

able to get additional information.

"For years we have kept an eye on oil and gas development in the area," he said, "particularly in the Mason Tract and along the Au Sable River." This goes to the larger question of where and for what price oil and gas leases are bid. Has the state been ripped off (by these companies)?"

In June, Reuters reported that the two business rivals plotted during 2010 to avoid bidding against each other in a state auction and in at least nine prospective deals with private land owners.

Both companies have denied the allegations, although they reportedly admitted to talking about some kind of joint venture in Michigan.

*The North Woods Call* will continue to track the investigation.

## The North Woods Call legacy lives on at the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve

ROSCOMMON, Mich. — One of the sterling legacies of *The North Woods Call* is the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve—an oasis of land preservation and conservation education located at the southern edge of Roscommon.

Established on property donated to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources by the *Call*'s founder and first editor when she died in 1997, the preserve consists of mature pine forests, cedar swamps and the beginnings of Tank Creek, which feeds into the South Branch of the Au Sable River.

Upon her death, Gahagan gifted ten acres of land and her cabin home, which served as a foundation for the preserve. Another 50 acres of land was added later.

"Our principle mission is to preserve (the land) and educate our community on the value of preserving wildlife habitat," said Education Director Tom Dale. "We host about sixty elementary and middle school class field trips each year. We also have a naturalist who visits about twenty area schools and takes the message to nearly five thousand students each year."

The preserve offers summer nature camps, along with occasional evening programs, and there is an opportunity for groups of parents to learn how to teach ecology lessons—complete with education kits that can be used in their children's classrooms. Since 2000, the preserve has provided approximately 160,000 student contact hours of environmental education to area children, according to Dale.

In addition, the preserve has partnered with several other or-

ganizations to collect data and regularly monitor water quality in the upper Au Sable River watershed. Each June and September, volunteers collect insect specimens at six points along the river system. The type, quantity and variety of these macro-invertebrates are used to determine the overall health of the water.

"Our mission was Marguerite's mission," Dale said—preserving and protecting the resource. "She died without ever knowing that the preserve was established. The Department of Natural Resources was days away from selling the property when a local civic group managed to grab onto it and—through legislative action—got it transferred to the Roscommon Metropolitan Recreational Authority."

This occurred largely through the efforts of John Rosczyk and Pat Demers—then chair and vice chair of the Roscommon Metropolitan Recreational Authority, he said. They recognized the property's value and made significant effort to acquire the land for future generations, according to Dale.

"We came within days of not having the preserve," he said.

Marguerite Gahagan—a novelist and early Michigan conservation journalist—founded *The North Woods Call* in 1953, following jobs with the *Toledo Morning News*, *Detroit Mirror*, *Detroit Times* and, finally, *The Detroit News*, which she joined in 1934. She was known as a hard-driving reporter who made weekly visits to northern field stations of the Department of Natural Resources, which was then known as the Michigan Conservation Department.

Gahagan lived in the Roscommon cabin for the last ten years that she published the *Call*. "The cabin is the center of everything we do," said Dale. In addition to educational programming, it is available for rent to groups and individuals, he said.

Other than the structure itself, the only piece of Gahagan's personal property that remains is her typewriter, he said.

Gahagan sold the *Call* in 1969 to Glen Sheppard, who continued publishing the newspaper until his death in early 2011. Dale said the publication has always been very well respected. Both Gahagan and Sheppard made huge contributions in the fight to protect Michigan's natural resources, he said, although in different ways.

"Marguerite had a much larger subscription distribution," Dale said. "She worked harder at it. She was more newsy and somewhat confrontational. He was less newsy and way more confrontational."

Dale and his colleagues have recently finished a biography about Gahagan, which includes selections from her *North Woods Call* writings and information about the preserve. The biography will be officially released and available for sale during the preserve's open house October 14.

Dale, a retiree of Kirtland Community College where he taught a variety of life sciences, works part-time under contract and is the only paid employee of the preserve. "We have ten or twelve reliable volunteers," he said, and twenty more who will be there occasionally when begged."

An eight-member board of directors governs the preserve.

A portion of the preserve's financial support comes from a small endowment left by Marguerite Gahagan to maintain the property, which is invested in various funds, as well as from another small interest-bearing account at the Roscommon County Community Foundation. The rest comes from memberships, donations, grants, bequests and user fees.

"We primarily serve the Roscommon Area Public Schools and they pay us to use the preserve," he said.

In addition, Kirtland Community College sponsors the Visiting Naturalist Program—one of the preserve's popular outreach activ-



The Gahagan Preserve is located on the south side of Roscommon.



Maggie's beloved pond near her Roscommon cabin as seen in 2011.

ities. Other schools pay fees to participate in the preserve's Environmental Education for the Future program.

Dale said the board would like to grow the preserve—add acreage on its perimeter—but funding is minimal and they need much more. He also would like to one day hire a young naturalist educator on a full-time basis.

The public can help by getting involved.

"We need memberships, sponsors, donors and users," Dale said.

There also are many opportunities for volunteers.

The Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve is located at 209 Maplehurst on the immediate outskirts of Roscommon. It is a non-profit corporation and all donations are tax-deductible. Memberships are \$15 per year for an individual, \$25 for a family and \$50 for an organization.

For more information, phone (989) 275-3217, or visit the preserve's website at:

[gahagannature.org](http://gahagannature.org).



Education Director Tom Dale on the porch of Marguerite Gahagan's cabin.



The Gahagan cabin has become a classroom for area school children

# Opinion Page

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



## A windmill lovely as a tree?

Back in the late 1960s and early 1970s, we used to see a short poem written on commonly available posters.

It went something like this: "I think that I shall never see a billboard lovely as a tree. Perhaps unless the billboards fall, I'll never see a tree at all."

Back then environmentalists were waging a public relations campaign against what they deemed to be the ugly blight of outdoor advertising. They hated having their view of roadside scenery interrupted by the proliferation of billboards that lined the highways of America.

This was probably a worthy endeavor and some states—such as Kentucky—passed laws prohibiting the placement of billboards within a certain distance from the Interstates.

We're not sure how effective the campaign was over the long-term, but it probably padded the coffers of advertising agencies and gave stewards of the land a visible cause to rally around during the era when Earth Day was first conceived. And it inspired groups like the infamous Monkey Wrench Gang to carry out nighttime raids with chain saws to topple the offending obstacles.

Correct us if we're wrong,

## Less is more when it comes to government trifling in our lives

Songwriter Roger Miller may have said it best in his Tony Award-winning score for the hit Broadway musical *Big River*, a mid-1980s stage adaptation of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

"Dad-gum gov'ment, you sorry so and sos," Huck's father, Pap, opined in the play. "You've got your damned hands in every pocket of my clothes."

Maybe beleaguered citizens have always felt that way, but government intrusion into our lives seems particularly prevalent these days. Some people seem to like it. They apparently believe that government is our friend and very good at solving social problems.

We don't.

With some notable exceptions, government has historically been wasteful and inefficient when it comes to managing the public treasury. The runaway spending seems to mostly benefit power-hungry politicians, who line their own pockets and those of their friends while dumping billions of dollars down dark holes that never quite seem to fulfill the promises that are made.

We agree that government has a vital role in serving the needs of the people—sometimes. There have, for example, been some good things done in the name of conservation that would probably have not occurred without the participation of government.

The acceptable functions and powers of government have been carefully limited, however, by founders who were apparently much wiser than our leaders are today.

Unfortunately, politicians—with the somewhat blind consent of the people—have repeatedly violated those constitutional limits over the years, enriching themselves and consolidating their power to the detriment of the citizens they serve.

This has to stop.

Politicians at the federal, state and local levels are not elected to make lucrative lifetime careers for themselves. They are not elected to have better pay and benefits than the people who are paying their salaries.

They are in office only to serve those whom they represent—temporarily—and then return home after a few years to resume their lives as private citizens.

Remember this the next time you visit the voting booth—then register your complaint accordingly. It is the only way we are going to restore a nation in serious decline.

but today's environmentalists seem less concerned with such roadside blights. At least we haven't noticed the same militancy and fervor in the face of burgeoning cell phone towers and power-generating windmills. Every time we take a trip, it seems like there are more of these landscape-tainting monstrosities being built.

Yeah, we know that Americans love their cell phones and that many see green energy as the wave of the future. But is anyone else bothered by the proliferation of tall steel towers and giant rotating blades everywhere we look?

Perhaps beauty truly is in the eye of the beholder.

Are we willing to accept the countryside dotted with unsightly technology, as long as we gain in profits or personal convenience? If so, why do we so often want to mobilize the Monkey Wrench Gang if someone else builds something "less desirable" that we find personally objectionable?

While we're all for alternative energy and advancements in communication technology, maybe it's time to engage in a broader discussion—such as what we want our world to look like when we gaze across a pristine vista into the distant horizon.

### Conservation Quote

*"Conservation laws are only as strong as the people who support them. We look away and they are in danger of being overturned, compromised and weakened."*

— Terry Tempest Williams

### Book Review

#### Uncommon Conservation: The Story of Saving

Grass River

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Chabanelle Media

Traverse City, Michigan

It took special vision and uncommon stewardship to create one of Michigan's oldest and largest nature preserves. The compelling story behind that effort is told in this fine 65-page book, released on the 40th anniversary of Antrim County's Grass River Natural Area (GRNA).

Located in the Chain of Lakes area at the southeast edge of Clam Lake, the GRNA is a testament to the work of numerous volunteer activists who joined hands over several years in a collective effort to preserve 41 parcels of land totaling 1,443 acres along 6.2 miles of shoreline.

Along the way, they created a comprehensive road map for future conservationists and land stewards to use in protecting irreplaceable natural resources for future generations.

This book is a well-written and highly readable gem. It was drafted by Heather Shumaker and features attractive graphic and text designs by Jill Plamondon and Barb Hodge.

The effort described here has received national attention as the "Grass River Model." The resulting nature preserve is a treasured gift that is visited by more than 31,000 people each year. The story this book tells will inspire conservationists for years to come.

### Book Review

#### Looking for Hickories by Tom Springer

Copyright 2008

University of Michigan Press

Ann Arbor

Here's another engaging and highly readable book that you should have in your stack. It is *North Woods Call* columnist Tom Springer's ode to the people, natural beauty and lore of the upper Midwest.

Alternately poignant and humorous, *Looking for Hickories* features a series of finely crafted essays that capture the character of a region where bustling communities share a fragile mosaic of quiet woods, fertile meadows and miles of farmland.

The experiences the author shares are taken largely from the life he has lived in and around St. Joseph County, Michigan—near the community of Three Rivers.

## It's time to stop howling at the moon—and each other

It's a cool morning with a hint of fall in the air and Toby is stretched out on the floor near my desk.

Toby is my son's beagle hound and I've been elected dog sitter for the day. We just returned from an energetic romp through the woods—searching for fresh air and exercise—and now my four-legged companion is trying to sleep it off.

Having a dog around the house reminds me of my younger days. It seems like there were canines everywhere in the rural neighborhood where I grew up—big dogs, little dogs and all sizes in-between. Some belonged to our family, but many lived with the neighbors.

They were mostly mongrels, I guess, with every kind of name you could imagine—Snorky, Wags, Cocoa, Nipper, Tony, Sport, Chip and Joey. I remember them all. Saber and Shane were male German shepherds with questionable dispositions. Penny and Princess were female beagles. It seemed like Princess was always pregnant, waddling and bellowing across hill-and-dale on her regular hunting expeditions.

The lucky dogs roamed free in those days. Others—such as the unpredictable German shepherds—were kept chained, or penned.

One of the first dogs I remember—Skippy—was struck by a car when I was perhaps five-years old. He retreated under our front porch and stayed there whimpering in pain until my father mercifully took a rifle and ended the misery.

Dogs can bring much grief when their relatively short lives reach their inevitable conclusions (see Tom Springer's column on Page 6). Maybe it's the memory of this pain and loss that made me not want a dog for many years, along with a personal resistance to the constant demands that dogs place on their masters.

Yet, energetic animals like Toby add a lot of joy to our lives. Their ebullient personalities and unwavering loyalty are infectious, and may be worth all the extra work that goes into caring for them.

Toby, for instance, is occasionally in need of a bath—thanks to his penchant for seeking out and rolling in the foulest-smelling odors that perfume the ground along woodland trails. It's not always easy to understand the ways of a dog.

It can be just as difficult to understand the ways of men and women. Despite all our good deeds and wonderful inventions, we often insist on polluting the earth, abusing natural resources and disparaging each other. Then we find perverse satisfaction rolling in the stench that we create—until bath time, at least.

This phenomenon seems to happen the world over. It is found throughout our lives and culture—in politics, sports, entertainment, media, business, religious institutions and interpersonal relationships. We know we need cleansing—and are often pointed toward the soap and water—but decline to scrub ourselves down. We'd rather hold our noses and blame the filth and offending odors on someone else.

Toby doesn't necessarily think about the things he does. He's wired that way. But we humans should know better. A dog merely follows his instincts. We are supposedly gifted with reason and logic.

If we're going to improve our relationship with the earth, work better with each other and make greater advancements for the common good, we need to take personal responsibility for the outcomes of our actions.

As some political strategists like to say, we've all got a dog in this hunt. We might as well train it to do the right thing.

Otherwise—with apologies to the late Hank Williams—we'll just keep chasing cars, scratching fleas and howling at the moon.

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## Viewpoint

## Why Michigan needs 25 X 25 renewable energy plan

By Hans Voss

In November, Michigan voters can point toward a bright economic and environmental future by approving “25 x 25,” which requires that 25 percent of Michigan’s energy come from renewable sources by 2025.

The proposal would trigger \$10.3 billion in investment in Michigan and create 74,000 jobs over the next 13 years, according to a recent Michigan State University study. It would increase our energy independence and make Michigan what it should be: a world leader in renewable energy research, manufacturing and development.

Approving 25 x 25 is one of the most distinct and important steps we can take to create a better future for Michigan. That makes it one of the most important things on the ballot.

The proposal is a modern-day example of a tradition defined by former Governor William Milliken of building a competitive economy around quality of life and a clean environment while continuing our proud history of industry-leading innovation.

As executive director of the Michigan Land Use Institute, I’ve worked for years with members, colleagues and partners to move that Milliken tradition forward. Sometimes our work is tangible, like coordinating a home weatherization program to save energy, or facilitating loans to farmers eager to grow their business. Other times it’s broader and less defined, like publishing educational pieces, supporting an ordinance, or trying to influence crucial legislation like the current farm bill.

Whatever we’re doing, we’re always measuring benefits. And we think 25 x 25’s benefits are sky-high—higher than anything proposed for Michigan in the nearly 20 years we’ve been at it. They are both massive and long lasting.

But is it doable?

Yes! Michigan is already on track to achieve its current 10 percent renewable energy standard by 2015. Twenty-nine other states already have renewable energy standards, some of which shoot for much higher goals: California is aiming for 33 percent by 2020, and New York is working toward 30 percent by 2015. Even among our Midwest neighbors, Min-

nesota, Illinois and Iowa already adopted 25 percent by 2025 standards; Iowa is already producing 21 percent of its power from renewables.

Michigan not only has the sun and wind to compete with those states, but we also have two crucial, enviable edges—an unrivaled modern manufacturing legacy, and a proud history of innovation.

The economic argument is real. Michigan produces most of its power from coal plants today. These are expensive to operate and many are in need of major investments just to keep them operational. There’s a tiny coal plant in Holland, for example, that needs \$28 million in pollution upgrades just to stay legal.

And each year we send \$1.36 billion of our money to Appalachia and Wyoming to buy coal. A good portion of that money would stay right here in Michigan with homegrown renewable energy.

Plus, 25 x 25 means lots of new, good-paying jobs for Michigan—manufacturing, exporting, selling, financing, transporting, building and operating new, clean-energy systems.

No wonder the Michigan Energy Jobs campaign to support 25 x 25 is non-partisan. For example, Saul Anuzis, recent chair of the Michigan Republican Party and a national political player, enthusiastically endorsed 25 x 25.

“I am proud of the fact that many of the states that are at the forefront of responsible renewable energy standards are led by Republican governors and legislators,” Anuzis said. “Michigan is uniquely positioned with our industrial base and growing energy sector to be a national leader in manufacturing of renewable energy equipment and systems.”

We’ll need every Democrat, Republican and Independent vote we can attract because Consumers Energy and DTE Energy have donated more than \$2.9 million each to a massive campaign to defeat 25 x 25. Anuzis calls these utilities “government-granted monopolies with unprecedented political clout, PACs, and influence” that oppose the measure “in order to protect their market position—the status quo.”

The opponents are saying things like:

*It will raise electric rates.* The

proposal specifically limits any renewables-related rate increase to no more than 1 percent annually. And, according to the recent analysis by experts in utility economics and the experience of states like Iowa, renewables can actually help lower rates over time.

*We should leave it up to the Legislature to develop energy policy.* Lansing-watchers will tell you: Industry lobbyists would prevent Michigan from catching up with our neighbors on renewable energy policy. There’s even pending state legislation to repeal our current 10-percent renewables standard.

*We shouldn’t tamper with the constitution.* The state constitution specifically defines that a majority of voters can amend the constitution through citizen ballot initiatives. It was amended 69 times before it was completely rewritten in 1963 and 31 times since then, for all sorts of reasons: establishing the Natural Resources Trust Fund, legalizing stem cell research and regulating casinos, to name a few.

*“25 x 25” is too risky and too rigid.* Actually, it’s the safe thing to do. The cost of renewables like wind and solar is steadily decreasing; their fuel is eternally free; natural gas, oil and coal prices will only become more volatile; and the proposal’s cost cap guarantees no significant, renewables-related rate increases. And, as other states have shown, a 25 percent goal is entirely doable.

In Gov. Milliken’s era there were breakthroughs like the Michigan Environmental Protection Act and Wetlands Protection Act. Times have certainly changed since then. But that pro-economy conservation ethic that made Michigan a leader in the 1970s is still with us—really, it’s who we are here in the Great Lakes State. And a modernized renewable energy initiative is consistent with all of it.

I usually try not to predict what voters will do, but 25 x 25’s benefits are so clear and logical that I think Michiganders will back it. Clean, local, renewable energy that attracts investment and creates jobs? That’s plain, common sense.

*Hans Voss is executive director of the Michigan Land Use Institute.*

## Conservation partners to improve state’s waterfowl legacy

Just about all Michigan residents—whether they know it or not—have a connection to our state’s rich and diverse waterfowl and wetlands heritage.

A recently launched initiative called the Michigan Waterfowl Legacy (MWL) seeks to strengthen this connection, bringing together hunters and non-hunters alike to restore, conserve and celebrate Michigan’s waterfowl, wetlands and waterfowl hunting community.

A 10-year, cooperative partnership between various government agencies and non-government conservation organizations, waterfowl hunters and the public, MWL aims to improve waterfowl populations and wetland habitat, increase waterfowl hunting participation and promote the value of waterfowl hunting, and engage citizens to take positive action to conserve the state’s waterfowl and wetlands.

MWL partners active on the steering committee in-

clude the Departments of Natural Resources and Agriculture and Rural Development, the Citizens Waterfowl Advisory Committee, Ducks Unlimited, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, Michigan Audubon Society, Michigan Duck Hunters Association, Michigan North American Waterfowl Management Plan Steering Committee, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, The Nature Conservancy, Pheasants Forever, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Waterfowl USA.

Public response so far has been good at many MWL kickoff events around the state, according to DNR officials.

To learn more about the Michigan Waterfowl Legacy and how to get involved, visit [www.michigan.gov/mwl](http://www.michigan.gov/mwl).

—From the Michigan DNR

## Outdoor Rhythms

By Doug Freeman



## Camping evinced: A night at Fisherman’s Island State Park

Some years back, I took a vacation from a steady but grinding job in an industrial lab. I loaded various pieces of outdoor gear into my blue Ford F-150 and buzzed north with the blessings of my wife, who probably also needed a break.

A solitary campsite is what I sought—not always easy to find on Michigan’s northwestern shore on a breezy, sunny September afternoon.

Fisherman’s Island State Park seemed a logical place to spend a night or two before meeting up with an old Army pal in Charlevoix. We’d planned to hop aboard the Beaver Island boat later in the week, followed by several days hiking around-the-island and an eventual stop-over for a beer and meal at the Shamrock, located in picturesque St. James.

To my surprise, several rustic sites were unoccupied in the park’s north loop, just off the beach. I quickly pulled into one and ran my fee up to the contact station, thrilled to find so little competition for the available spots. Maybe a forecast of thunderstorms had discouraged some of the potential campers.

My site was tucked into a strand of pin oaks and small pines, no more than a couple hundred feet from the rolling Lake Michigan surf. Camp consisted of a well-worn nylon pup tent, a military surplus sleeping bag, a box of firewood gathered from our yard in Montague, and some odds-and-ends of food and drink stowed in a favorite backpack.

Once established, I sat at the campsite’s small picnic table to enjoy fresh lake air and watch blue-green waves crash against the cobbled shore. Herring gulls soared, calling to each other. A few low outcroppings of rock jutted into the churning lake, reminding me of time spent on the New England coast. Truly, I was sitting by the sea.

While in this state of reverie, I noticed an empty beer can lying in thin grass at the edge of the woods. An esteemed professor of natural resources from my alma mater, Central Michigan University, suddenly appeared in my head with a questioning look on his face.

Roused to action, I picked up the can. Ten cents is ten cents, as the state’s deposit law allows. More cans appeared, along with other assorted trash; bottles, bottle caps, cigarette butts, food wrappers, plastic utensils and a length of braided nylon clothesline, which I saved for later use. No doubt, a summer’s worth of discards. Once sorted, I put the no-value trash into an extra bag and strolled to the station, where a dumpster accepted my deposits.

The beach route leading back to my campsite was inviting. I followed the shoreline, picking up interesting items, including several examples of Petoskey stones.

A well-dressed couple in their thirties walked by barefoot, carrying their shoes, obviously much involved with each other. I exchanged nods with the gentleman, hoping that a scruffy looking bearded man in boots, worn jeans and a forest-green flannel shirt wouldn’t be too much of an intrusion into their world. We are what we are.

Supper that evening was cold canned beans, leftover biscuits from home with butter and strawberry jam, and a juicy Michigan apple.

I carefully arranged my small supply of wood in the approved fire ring and gloried in a spectacular sunset.

A good-sized raccoon appeared, prowling around the camp at twilight. Probably accustomed to a diet of people food, given by or sneaked from other campers over the course of many summer nights. I donated a piece of beef jerky, placing it on top of a flat rock. My new buddy picked it up soon after, then hustled away through the brush to enjoy his or her snack in privacy. Wise animal.

The campsite to my immediate north was filled during the evening. Fortunately, the new neighbors were quiet types. I could see their campfire through the trees long before I started mine.

Once the stars were out over the lake in their full sparkling glory, I put match to kindling. Yellow and orange flames danced, safely contained within the metal ring. An excellent place to warm one’s hands on a cool night, an opportunity to think of times past, and sometimes to contemplate one’s hopes for the future. It’s a type of individual therapy that most often soothes, but can occasionally slap you in the face with painful realizations. Always useful, though.

Strong black tea brewed in a steel mug kept me awake long enough to hear and appreciate some of the night noises as I sprawled on a woolen blanket next to softly glowing maple coals. Besides the chattering of numerous raccoons throughout the camping area, I could hear barred owls hooting and caterwauling from the wooded ridges and ravines to the east—the drumlins—Glen Sheppard’s country.

I fully understood at that moment why he wrote about it, valued it so, and did his utmost to protect it—a work that must be continued.

By the time I’d settled into my sleeping bag (well after midnight), I felt myself to be a more spiritual, thankful person.

I prayed for the feeling to stick.

## Share Your Thoughts &amp; Ideas

The North Woods Call welcomes letters & viewpoint articles. Write tightly & include your name and contact information.

(Ideally, Viewpoint articles will be 500 words or less).

## More Opinion

### The Wild Nearby

By Tom Springer



#### One of the oldest “tails” in the world

From Old Yeller to Marley, most dog stories have the same ending, but we keep reading and telling them anyway. So here goes.

It's a golden fall afternoon, and I'd rather be anywhere but here, kneeling in a stall at the vet's office, as my hand caresses—for the last time—the head of our black lab, Melody.

“Is it time?” the vet had asked me 30 seconds earlier.

“It's time.”

He'd left a catheter port in her front leg during surgery the day before, because they suspected it would come to this.

With both kidneys now failing, it had.

The vet gently slid his needle in, and after a last little huff of breath, her precious life slid out. For once, the euphemism matched the reality: he really did put her to sleep.

On the ride home I clutched Mel-Mel's leash and soiled, stinky collar to my chest. Then I cried as hard at age 52 as I had at age 10 when my dog was killed on Christmas Eve. We grownups are never quite as grown up as we think we are.

In the days that followed I learned anew that when a creature we've cared for dies, it's not just their presence we miss. We also grieve the abrupt end of daily routines that once seemed mundane, but in hindsight gave our lives no small degree of meaning, purpose and stability.

Rain or shine Mel-Mel would greet me when I pulled in the driveway after work. She'd nuzzle up to my hand as soon as I opened the car door. No one taught her that; it was all her idea.

And every night for eight years it was my job to shut her in the barn at bedtime. As befits a good country dog, she refused to sleep anywhere else but in a stall with hay on the floor.

“Goodnight, Mel-Mel.” I'd say. “Daddy loves ya.” (Yes, I really said that.)

Then I'd pause outside for the barn prayers: one Pater Noster and five Ave Maria's. It was something I'd started years before during a time of sickness and anxiety, and the habit stuck with me. I'd face north and the Big Dipper would give its benediction as the dog contentedly crunched down her nightly ration.

Did I gripe long and loudly on those gusty winter nights when I had to “barn” a stubborn dog that didn't have the good sense to sleep inside by a stoked fire place? Oh yes. But mostly, when the wooden door thumped close, there was a quiet satisfaction that another day had come to a proper end.

The night after Mel-Mel died, in a fit of melodrama I couldn't help but act out the routine one more time. I trudged to the barn, scooped the tin can half-way with dry food and filled the battered steel bowl that she'd never again empty. It was cathartic in the extreme. But the primal sobs this little ceremony wrenched from my soul were enough to scare a barn swallow off its roost.

The next day brought a more practical tribute. We've got four beehives and it was time to harvest their honey. To do that, I first calm the bees with a hand smoker and use dry hay as its fuel. As always, I got a few handfuls from the floor of Mel-Mel's pen. Only this time I noticed how much the hay smelled like her (or maybe it was how much she'd smelled like the hay).

Either way, it struck me that the flattened hay carried not just her scent, but her hair and thereby her very DNA. And how in the smoker it would burn as incense, and like the symbolism of incense evoked in the Old Testament, would carry a prayer offering to the heavens.

Surely you've read enough weepy dog stories to guess what that prayer was about. Meanwhile, until some gold-hued afternoon when she can once more and forever greet my arrival, long may she run.

## A Conservation Conversation: Keith Creagh

*Where did you first develop an interest in conservation and outdoor education?*

As a family, we have camped all around the state and nation. I've been in forty-nine of the fifty states.

I went fishing and hunting with my dad. I still do and he's eighty-five this year. I've been doing that since I was a ten-year-old. I've only missed a few seasons hunting and fishing with him.

I also did the scouting route. I was a Cub Scout, Boy Scout and Eagle Scout. I went to Michigan Tech, where we spent a lot of time outdoors.

That's how it all got started. If there's an outdoor sport, I probably tried it and liked it.

*How has that interest shaped your life's work?*

Being an ethical hunter, I was always responsible for my shots. That alone builds your self-confidence and gives you a quality of life that many people don't get to experience.

If you're deep in woods in the Upper Peninsula, a mile-and-a-half from the road in a snowstorm, and decide to shoot a whitetail deer, there's a lot to that. It's hard work. It teaches patience, accountability and responsibility. Those are great life lessons.

Then, when you get back to the camp and are able to share those stories with lifelong friends, that's all very special. It's one of the fibers that run through life.

I feel very privileged to have experienced that.

*What do you believe are the three biggest conservation issues facing Michigan?*

There are a number of them.

One is invasive exotics, both terrestrial and aquatic. They have a huge impact on the resource. And once they impact, you can't turn back the clock. We need to continue to pay attention to invasive and exotic species, such as the emerald ash borer and the Asian carp.

Also, as populations grow, we need to be aware that the demands on our resources grow. We need to think about how we manage that tension over time.

As people become more distant (and detached) from the resource, the tougher it is to deliver the conservation message to those with

*The North Woods Call periodically publishes insights from various conservation leaders and educators.*

We ask each of them to answer six questions about their own outdoor interests and the current needs of Michigan conservation.

Today we visit with **Keith Creagh, director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).**

Creagh is the former director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and was named by Gov. Rick Snyder in 2012 to head the DNR. He holds a bachelor of science degree in forestry from Michigan Technological University in Houghton.

He and his wife, Laska, have four children and reside in Williamston, Michigan.



DNR Director Keith Creagh

whom we need to engage.

We can talk about resource fragmentation, urban sprawl, the Great Lakes, water quality and land use, too, but these are my top concerns. There's a whole litany of them, though.

That's why we need to have a more comprehensive approach to resource management, work more closely with local partners and make sure these issues are on the radar screen.

*How would you recommend that we deal with each?*

We need to have scientifically based decisions—bringing robust science to the table at the appropriate time—but also engage local partners to help us plan and implement programs both scientifically and appropriately.

We need to establish networks of opinion leaders locally. There are numerous examples of great partnerships with such organizations as the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Ducks Unlimited and others. They can help carry the message, but we have to agree on what the message is.

It's always difficult (to engage citizens who don't have a scientific background). That's why, if the solutions come out of Lansing and we don't have local relation-

ships and local credibility, it's tough to have local engagement.

*What are the barriers to solving these problems?*

Finding an imaginative way to facilitate the conversation.

How do we engage property owners, build capacity, and establish traditional and nontraditional partnerships? It takes time and effort, but I think it's the right thing to do.

*Who are your personal Michigan conservation heroes and why?*

“Heroes” is a tough word, but I have great respect for some individuals who have helped form my (conservation) ethic. Among them, are:

**Gordon Guyer**, former director of both the MDNR and the Michigan Department of Agriculture, and one-time president of Michigan State University. He has been a friend, mentor and colleague. He has the knowledge and ability to say what is scientifically sound, and to build partnerships. He is great.

**Keith Charters**, a conservationist, hunter, angler, land steward and longtime chair of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission. He has done great work around the Natural Resources Trust Fund. He is a visionary, bringing people together and leaving a long-term legacy of effective programs.

**Jordan Tatter**, a former chairman of the Michigan Agriculture Commission and one-time member of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission. He had the ability to take potentially divisive issues and find common ground. Anyone can identify a problem, but it takes a unique individual to bring people together around a workable solution.

### Young aspen forest habitat being created

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Ruffed Grouse Society and the Conservation Resource Alliance have joined together to maintain young aspen forests in a core area of Emmet County.

Teams of resource professionals are working with private landowners, power companies and state forest systems to put young aspen forest habitat back on the landscape, thus improving conditions for woodcocks, whip-poor-wills and other species.

Landowners who are interested in this project should visit: [michigan.gov/landownersguide](http://michigan.gov/landownersguide).

### Allegan County yields state-record fish

**Bryan DeGoede of Kalamazoo nabbed this state-record black buffalo September 5 on the Kalamazoo River in Allegan County. The fish, a member of the sucker family, weighed 37.4 pounds and measured 39.3 inches. DeGoede was bow fishing when he landed the trophy. The previous state-record black buffalo—33.25 pounds and 36.5 inches—was taken on the Grand River in Ottawa County in 2004. DeGoede's catch was the second state-record fish taken from southwestern Michigan this year. The other—a 49.8-pound, 45.7-inch flathead catfish—was caught by Rodney Akey of Niles in the St. Joseph River. State records are recognized by weight only.**

(DNR photo)



## Conservation Officer Logs (8/20/12 through 9/3/12)

*Ex-prisoners ticketed for verbal abuse and failure to wear ORV helmets***DISTRICT 1**

**CO Ryan Aho** stopped an unregistered ORV with two subjects on it who weren't wearing helmets. Both subjects had just been released from prison. They became verbally abusive and were making violent threats to the CO. Backup was called and the subjects were issued several tickets.

**CO Marvin Gerlach** assisted on an illegal bear bait investigation being conducted by **CO Brian Bacon** and **Sgt. Marc Pomroy**. Contact was made with two subjects who had in their possession an untagged leg-hold trap and a live raccoon. Enforcement action was taken.

**CO Marvin Gerlach** contacted a subject on an ORV crossing through a creek on state land. The subject stated that he did not realize the large concrete barricades blocking the illegal crossing were put in place to actually keep people out. Enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 2**

While working the early Goose season opener in the Engadine area, **COs Brett Gustafson** and **Mike Hammill** heard several volleys of shots. They located a field with goose decoys and three hunters. As the COs broke the tree line, two other subjects were seen near a residence. One of them got up and started walking away slowly. The other got up and started to leave, but then sat back down. The COs determined that the first subject was not hunting and the second subject was hunting, but didn't have a license and was using lead shot. Enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 3**

**CO Andrea Erratt** responded to a complaint of shots fired at night and found a noise-making cannon in a farm field. A subject happened to be riding an ORV into the field and was contacted. The landowner explained the noise-maker was allowed for scaring away blackbirds and displayed his permit. Unfortunately, he also had a loaded .22 rifle on the ORV, as well as other ORV violations. He was ticketed for the loaded firearm on a motor vehicle and warned on the other violations.

**CO Steve Speigl** was called to

a complaint of shots fired where it was reported that bullets were "whizzing" over nearby houses. Upon arrival **CO Speigl** found an adjacent landowner was trying to eliminate varmints from his property. **CO Speigl** advised the subject of his errant shots and also discovered a loaded .22 on the ORV that the subject was driving. Enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 4**

**CO Brian Brosky** was working near Indian Bridge in Mason County when he encountered a subject attempting to snag fish at the bridge. After recording the person's activity on video, he made contact and asked him why he was so blatantly snagging during the day. The subject stated that he thought he could snag fish as long as he didn't keep them. A ticket was issued for attempting to snag salmon.

**CO Brian Brosky** and **Sgt. Kevin Hackworth** assisted the Mason County Sheriff's Department with a case involving a number of persons who had set up a fishing camp along the Pere Marquette River. The COs assisted in locating and removing a small child who was suffering from a brain injury after having been accidentally shot through the eye by a high powered pellet rifle by her younger brother. The victim was air lifted from the scene and reported to be in critical condition.

**DISTRICT 5**

**CO Jason McCullough** reports that a subject he ticketed earlier in the summer for killing a goose with a golf club received three days in jail and a hefty fine.

**CO Mark Papineau** received a complaint regarding a subject dumping several couches on state land. Unfortunately, by the time **CO Papineau** arrived, the subject had left the area, leaving behind three couches dumped in the woods. However, the original complainant was able to provide a license plate number and physical description of the suspect. **CO Papineau** located the suspect who confessed to the violation. Enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 6**

**CO Dan Lee** located a boat dumped in a parking lot along the Shiawassee River State Game

Area (SGA). The vessel was stripped of all things useful except the registration number. The CO contacted the registered owner who explained that he had just given it to his neighbor. The neighbor explained that he had picked it up and had given it to his nephew. The neighbor explained to the CO that his nephew told him the boat was junk and just dumped it somewhere. The nephew was contacted by **CO Lee**. Enforcement action was taken.

**CO Jason A. Smith** received a complaint of a group who had shot a Sandhill Crane in the Fish Point Managed Waterfowl Area. After contacting the hunter, a confession was obtained and after searching the CO was able to recover the dead bird. The hunter also had 17 rounds of lead shot and possessed more shot shells than is allowed in the managed area.

**CO Bob Hobkirk** worked an ongoing complaint at the Port Crescent State Park in Huron County of a male subject exposing himself to canoeists in a local river. The subject had exposed himself twice in the past two weeks and officers predicted he would do it again by Labor Day. Officer **Hobkirk** hid in the woods while a female deputy sheriff posed as a canoeist. The female rounded a corner on the river in her canoe and looked up to see the subject exposing himself. She radioed to Officer **Hobkirk** who was able to run to the closest parking lot near the river. **CO Hobkirk** observed the subject matching the description running to a vehicle where he detained him. The subject was interviewed and confessed to exposing himself to the undercover deputy and to a recent incident within the last couple of weeks. The subject was lodged and is awaiting a pretrial hearing.

**DISTRICT 7**

**CO Chris Simpson** was assigned to the Silver Lake ORV Area when he witnessed a small para plane riding low over the dunes. Within minutes, Oceana Central Dispatch was reporting a plane crash at the dunes and dispatching units to the scene. **CO Simpson** arrived first to find off-duty fire and police personnel

beginning rescue and first aid measures to the two victims. Leaking fuel required moving the victims from the overturned plane and first responders performed CPR and first aid as required. Witnesses indicated the plane fell approximately 100 feet to crash upside down after the parachute collapsed. Both victims died in the crash and the case remains under investigation.

**CO Chris Simpson** encountered two subjects hunting coyotes at night with center-fire rifles in the Muskegon SGAD during the closed season. One subject had just regained his hunting privileges after a four-year revocation. Tickets are to be issued for hunting with center-fire rifles after hunting hours.

**CO Ivan Perez** responded to a complaint of a young Sandhill Crane being held illegally in Ottawa County. **CO Perez** interviewed the person who residents indicated was holding the young bird during the last few months. **CO Perez** interviewed several witnesses but the suspect denied any responsibility for this activity. Within days, **CO Perez** was called to a scene where a young Sandhill Crane was walking around homes, in the roadway and accepting hand held food from area residents. **CO Perez** was able to capture the crane and transport the bird to a permitted rehabilitator.

**DISTRICT 8**

**CO Brian Fish** assisted the Calhoun County K9 handler when he file-checked a motorist on I-94 and received an NCIC hit from the terrorist watch list. The person was important enough that the hit mandated a phone call to the

terrorist watch headquarters. The situation was turned over to local authorities.

**CO Daniel Prince** responded to a waterfowl complaint where two individuals were hunting on a local golf course while riding a golf cart with their guns uncased and a possible safety zone violation. **CO Prince** responded to the golf course but the hunters were gone. **CO Prince** contacted the golf course manager and follow-up enforcement action will be taken.

**CO Todd Thorn** checked anglers near Moores River Dam in Lansing and came across two men fishing above the dam. One of the men had a fishing license, but the other did not. The one without the license stated that he thought he could fish using his friend's license because they were only using three lines between the two of them. Upon further investigation, the man without the fishing license had two short bass in his cooler and he also had a warrant. Enforcement action was taken, including a ticket for fishing without a license and possessing short bass.

**DISTRICT 9**

On the second day of the early Goose season, **CO Kris Kiel** handled a hunting incident in Lake St. Clair near the city of New Baltimore. A young girl was hit under the eye with a shotgun pellet by someone from another hunting party. In retaliation, the adult in the victim's party fired a round off in the direction of the other party. Warrants will be sought for both adults.

**DNR to reduce Chinook salmon stocking in Lake Michigan**

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will reduce Lake Michigan Chinook salmon stocking by 50 percent.

The decision comes in response to a recommendation by the Lake Michigan Committee, an interjurisdictional group comprised of fisheries managers from Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and five Michigan tribes that are party to the 2000 Consent Decree.

Under the lake-wide plan, the 3.3 million Chinook salmon annually stocked in total in Lake Michigan by the four states would be reduced to 1.7 million starting in 2013.

"This reduction is essential in helping to maintain the balance between predator and prey fish populations in Lake Michigan," said Jim Dexter, Michigan DNR Fisheries Division chief. "These reductions are necessary to maintain the lake's diverse fishery."

A key factor to Lake Michigan's current and potentially precarious ecosystem balance is an increas-

ing presence of wild Chinook salmon in Lake Michigan. Streams in Michigan continue to produce significant numbers of naturally reproduced Chinook salmon and lake-wide estimates show more than half of the lake's Chinook population is of wild origin.

This marks the third time in recent history that stocking in Lake Michigan has been reduced by the agencies. Previous decisions to reduce stocking in 1999 and 2006 resulted in maintaining and improving catch rates. Fisheries managers believe this is because natural reproduction continues to fill any available predatory space.


"This will give the DNR more flexibility to adaptively manage the lake," said Jay Wesley, Southern Lake Michigan Unit manager. "Traditionally, we have made changes in stocking and waited five years to evaluate it, and another two years to implement changes. Now we have the ability, through a defined and accepted process, to make changes as they are needed."

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## THE NORTH WOODS CALL

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THE NORTH WOODS CALL

## EHD now found among deer in 26 counties, Michigan officials say

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Michigan State University Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health said that Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) has been confirmed in 26 Michigan counties.

These respective counties list numbers varying from one to 1,664 deer affected by the disease. Included are Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Clinton, Eaton, Genesee, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Ingham, Ionia, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lenawee, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Ottawa, Saginaw, Shiawassee, St. Joseph, Van Buren and Washtenaw counties.

For the complete list, which presumably will be updated by the time this story appears, go to [www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases).

EHD is caused by a virus that is transmitted by a type of biting fly, according to the DNR.

A constant characteristic of EHD is its sudden onset, officials said. Deer can suffer extensive internal bleeding, lose their appetite and fear of humans, grow progressively weaker, salivate excessively and finally become unconscious, they said. Due to a high fever, infected deer often are found sick or dead along or in bodies of water.

At present, just over 4,200 dead deer have been reported in 26 counties. The DNR expects more dead deer to be found as farmers harvest their crops and hunters take to the field.

"Since July, the DNR, in cooperation with many, helpful volunteers, has been monitoring the EHD outbreak," said Brent Rudolph, DNR deer and elk program leader. "This is a horrible disease for hunters, DNR personnel and other wildlife enthusiasts to see affecting deer."

The first, hard frost should kill the flies, Rudolph said. The insects have thrived this year due to the dry, hot summer, he said.

This year has seen a number of major outbreaks across the country, and EHD has been documented in all neighboring states of Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio.

Despite this, Michigan DNR

officials said that the state's deer seasons will go ahead as planned this year.

Hunters have voiced concern with harvesting an EHD-infected deer. They have asked if deer infected with EHD are safe to eat. EHD does not affect humans, according to the DNR, so edibility of the venison is not affected by this disease.

There is no evidence that humans can contract the EHD virus either from the midge or from handling and eating venison.

Hunters in affected townships should anticipate seeing fewer deer this year. However, because EHD die-offs are localized, hunters in adjoining townships may not notice any differences. States that have had similar outbreaks in the past have consistently seen deer numbers in such localized areas rebound within a few years.

"We will continue to monitor this unfortunate situation," said Russ Mason, DNR Wildlife Division chief. "I understand how important the deer resource is to people. EHD is affecting me and my family as well, because we are deer hunters. When we consider regulations for next year, there is no doubt that we will be factoring in the impact of this disease along with other influences on the deer population. Most likely, there will be changes to our management of deer in southern Michigan."

The DNR encourages hunters to stay aware of confirmed outbreak areas and adjust, if appropriate, their hunt and harvest plans.

Anyone discovering concentrations of dead deer or those seeking more information can contact their local wildlife biologist at the nearest DNR office. Office locations can be found at [www.michigan.gov/wildlife](http://www.michigan.gov/wildlife) under Wildlife Offices.

Because dead deer do not harbor EHD and cannot infect other deer, it's fine to leave carcasses where they are found, according to the DNR. It's also OK to bury dead deer at a sufficient depth so that no parts are showing above ground. Carcasses will also be accepted at landfills that take household solid waste.

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Please join our efforts to keep readers fully informed about conservation and outdoor issues by providing us with news tips and/or photographs.

Send your tips, ideas and photos to: [editor@mynorthwoodscall.com](mailto:editor@mynorthwoodscall.com).

### 12th Annual Great Lakes Water Conference

New international, national and state laws impacting Great Lakes water quality and quantity will be the subjects of the 12th annual Great Lakes Water Conference on Friday, November 2, 2012, at the University of Toledo College of Law.

The conference is free and open to the public. For more information, visit <http://www.law.utoledo.edu/ligl/conferences.htm>.

## Final Shot



Outdoor enthusiasts from all backgrounds travel north to partake of Michigan's abundant natural resources. Here, a Mennonite family relaxes on the wooden boardwalk overlooking Tahquamenon Falls in the state's Upper Peninsula.

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