



“The newspaper for people who love the north”



Mid-November 2012
\$2.50

Vol. 60 No. 1
Digital Delivery

THE NORTHWOODS CALL

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953

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Michigan Photographer
Rick Baetsen**
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**Looking for a Christmas gift idea for the outdoor lover?
Why not give The North Woods Call?**

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THE NORTHWOODS CALL

Happy Thanksgiving!

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953

North Woods Notes

HELLO, MARY LOU: Mary Lou Sheppard, widow of former *North Woods Call* publisher Glen Sheppard, has been fighting some kind of cancer in recent months. At this writing, she was out of the hospital, but told us recently that the disease had been “getting the best of me.” We don’t have any further details, but you might want to send your thoughts and prayers her way.

WOODY BOUDEMAN: Richland-area resident Sherwood “Woody” Boudeman has been honored by Ducks Unlimited (DU) for his long-time support of wetlands conservation. Boudeman is one of nine individuals featured in the organization’s November/December magazine salute to supporters “through the decades.” An ardent DU supporter for 38 years, Boudeman said he doesn’t just manage his property to take ducks. “My land provides productive wetlands for ducks and other wildlife,” he said. Boudeman also mentors young people who will become future conservationists.

GRAY WOLVES: Gray wolves in the Great Lakes region were recently removed from the endangered species list. Today, there are about 700 wolves in Michigan, compared to just under 300 a decade ago. Now, some state lawmakers—most notably Rep. Matt Huuki (R-Atlantic Mine) and Sen. Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba)—are considering legislation to make gray wolves a game species, which could bring about a possible hunting and trapping season for wolves. The Department of Natural Resources is reportedly supportive of this idea. The Humane Society and other opponents, meanwhile, are gearing up to fight the proposal.

PLATTE RIVER FISHING: To protect steelhead reproduction, a portion of northwest Michigan’s Platte River will be closed to fishing from January 1 to March 31, 2013. The closure will apply to the river from the Platte River State Fish Hatchery down to Platte Lake, Michigan Department of Natural Resources officials said. Also, no fishing will be allowed within 300 feet of the upper hatchery weir whenever the weir is in place, which in 2012 was from August 15 to September 30.

PLAN YOUR HUNT: Opening day of firearm deer season is fast approaching. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources suggests that you plan in advance for the annual November 15-30 event. Familiarize yourself with regulations, they said, by visiting their website at www.michigan.gov/deer, or Michigan State University’s White-Tailed Deer website. You’ll find deer-check locations and other important information.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: Just a reminder that a Recreation Passport is required to enter Michigan state parks and recreation areas. Visit www.michigan.gov/recreationpassport for specific details.

MILLION CAMP MILESTONE: Algonac State Park recently hosted Elizabeth and George Angerer of Roseville, Michigan, who received a Pure Michigan prize for being the one millionth campsite registration in Michigan State Parks for 2012—an annual number that has not been seen since 2005. There has been a seven percent surge in campground registrations this year over the 2011 season.

DEEP-WATER CISCOES: The “bloater” fish—a deep-water cisco—has been re-introduced into Lake Ontario, bringing the fish back to the lake for the first time in nearly 30 years. This action by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is the first of its kind in the Great Lakes. It is a culmination of several years of collaborative laboratory, hatchery and field research conducted by federal, state and provincial agencies.

WATERFOWL HUNTING: A partnership between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is paying off with increased opportunities for Michigan hunters, according to DNR officials. DNR Wildlife Division staffers helped write a plan that allows waterfowl hunters to use some of the marsh on the refuge. It creates three managed hunt zones within the Refuge’s Brancheau Unit. Sunday and Wednesday morning drawings for the hunt zones are held in conjunction with the twice-weekly drawings at nearby Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, they said.

SNOWSHOE BUILDING: Sleepy Hollow State Park will offer snowshoe-building classes in December and January. Participants will learn how to weave a pair of traditional wooden snowshoes similar to the ones Native Americans made for generations. The two-day classes will be held at the park headquarters, 7835 East Price Road, Laingsburg, on Dec. 7-8, Jan. 11-12 and Jan. 25-26. Cost is \$170, including materials.

Could establish a precedent

Citizens group sues the Michigan DNR to overturn downstate oil and gas lease sales

HASTINGS, Mich.—A non-profit citizens group is suing the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in hopes of nullifying the recent auctions of mineral rights within Barry and Allegan State Game Areas, as well as in the Yankee Springs Recreation Area.

Michigan Land Air Water Defense (MLAWD) filed the lawsuit October 24 in Barry County Circuit Court. The group is seeking a declaratory ruling to nullify lease auctions conducted by the DNR on May 8 and October 24, 2012.

“We hope our case sets a precedent,” said Steve Loshier, president of MLAWD. “We feel that

all state parks, recreation and game areas, and other specially designated areas should be off limits to the (drilling) technique of horizontal hydraulic fracturing.”

The group sued following the DNR’s October 22 denial of their request to remove the right to “unconventionally” develop oil and gas on the contested parcels. They had made three such previous requests—all of which were denied.

“My clients appreciate the courtesy of the meeting with DNR officials to address the problem,” said Jim Olson, an environmental law attorney in Traverse City, “but the process brought no immediate

relief to my clients or their members, be they individuals or businesses.”

DNR officials disagree that the auction of the oil and gas lease rights in question is unlawful, according to Ed Golder, public information officer at the DNR.

“The department considered the concerns and legal arguments raised by the plaintiffs before they filed suit,” Golder said. “We believe the lease sale is proper and will—through legal counsel—defend that position in court.”

Golder said it wouldn’t be proper for DNR Director Keith Creagh to comment, because “he

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The North Woods Call marks its 60th year in print

The *North Woods Call* has entered its 60th year of publication.

Founded in 1953 by Marguerite Gahagan, the newspaper was first published on November 11 of that year.

Except for a period from February 2011 through August 2012—when the business closed following

the death of longtime publisher Glen Sheppard—*The Call* has appeared consistently.

Over the next 12 months, as we approach the actually anniversary date, we will occasionally publish excerpts from past issues.

See Page 2 for Marguerite’s original welcome letter.

Senator Tom Casperson discusses the DNR

Some Michigan conservationists have accused state Senator Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba) of “unwarranted assaults” on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

But Casperson says he is merely trying to represent the interests of his constituents.

“There’s a role for (the DNR) to come out publicly with their plans,” Casperson told *The North Woods Call* during a recent telephone interview, “and there’s a role for the Legislature to play. In my district, some of their decisions have not been well-received by the public.”

Casperson said the agency makes a lot of recommendations related to land use and that these decisions need to be vetted.

DNR officials say that they have a good relationship with the senator and value him as an important partner in shaping public policy on critical natural resources questions.

“Senator Casperson has been an active and passionate voice when it comes to natural resources issues,” said Ed Golder, public information officer at the DNR. “We have supported some of his bills and opposed others.”

Casperson, likewise, said that new DNR Director Keith Creagh has been good to work with.



Sen. Tom Casperson

“I think he wants to change direction and make the department more responsive to the public,” Casperson said. “They need to stop on the path of preserving things—except certain spots that need protection. Either way, it shouldn’t be all or nothing.”

Casperson said that the DNR is under a lot of pressure from environmental groups. “In the past, he said, it wasn’t just that pressure was being applied. They were working together hand-in-hand.”

People have asked for a new approach by the DNR, he said, and “we are starting to see some active changes. When I go on the street and talk to people now, I get a totally different perspective.”

There is still pressure from en-

vironmental groups, Casperson said, whenever the direction they want the DNR to go is questioned and they don’t like it.

“I wouldn’t be doing my job if I didn’t get involved in it,” he said.

Casperson has received a significant amount of criticism over his sponsorship of Senate Bill 1276, which—among other things—would prohibit the DNR from designating land for biological diversity. It would also delete the conservation of biological diversity from the agency’s duties regarding forest management and require the DNR to balance its management activities with economic values.

The legislation, Casperson said, is aimed in part at protecting access to public land for all users. Several citizens were quite upset when the DNR began implementing its land-use plan for the Pigeon River area, he said, and discovered that it limited access to certain recreational uses.

“We are the ones who got the phone calls—not the department,” he said. “It doesn’t mean that the plan is bad, or good. That’s not the point. But when they submit a plan and the public complains, they ignore it. That’s not right.”

The DNR, he said, should play

(Continued on Page 2)

Lawsuit filed over oil and gas leasing controversy

(Continued from Page 1)

has been named a litigant in the suit.”

Golder previously told *The North Woods Call* that the hydraulic fracturing process is regulated by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and that state officials “are confident that Michigan has a rigorous regulatory structure” in place to ensure the safety of such exploratory drilling operations.

Olson said that a review by the courts is necessary to resolve the dispute and maintain protection for “special public trust state lands.”

Hydraulic fracturing is a controversial operation that pumps massive amounts of water, sand and chemical additives into a well and down the casing 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.

Opponents of this practice say there are many examples where these activities have resulted in air and water contamination, as well as other unacceptable side effects.

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

The industry disputes these claims, but opponents say it is being erroneous and misleading.

“Yankee Springs Recreation Area, and the Barry and Allegan State Game Areas are irreplaceable treasures,” said Loshner. “For the state to risk the sanctity and integrity of these areas with scarcely a glance toward ‘due diligence’ is a betrayal of their obligation to responsibly manage our public lands.”

Olson said it boils down to a “public trust issue.”

“The DNR has a duty to investigate likely and cumulative impacts from horizontal hydrofracking,” Olson said, “and is accountable to citizens to protect special unique areas. These areas are designated so they are not run over—and surrounded by—oil and gas development.”

Loshner said that hydraulic fracturing is simply unacceptable near, or under, public lands—even if everything goes according to plan.

“The process itself is a mishap,” he said. “This is heavy industry. This is unavoidable air, noise and light pollution. By its nature, hydrofracking involves the withdrawal and contamination of colossal volumes of groundwater. Water is permanently removed from the hydrologic cycle, rendered toxic and—in Michigan—injected into porous rock formations. This fact alone should be cause for DNR review.”

Olson said the DNR has done very little to determine the overall impact on land use, wildlife, water resources and public use that occurs with this type of development.

“Relying on permits from the Department of Environmental Quality—which are rarely, if ever, denied—is not a viable way to protect these sensitive areas,” he said. “The threats to quality of life and jobs that depend on these areas have been ignored.”

“The reality is that the public trust and citizen rights to use and enjoy these pristine areas are being trampled in favor of money from oil and gas,” Loshner said.

According to the DNR’s Golder, nearly \$3 million was raised from the October 24 auction alone, which involved leases for nearly 196,000 acres of state-owned land in 22 Michigan counties—including some 15,000 acres of state park land, game and recreation areas, and recreational trails.

Loshner said the overall acreage of special areas is just a small fraction of the estimated 4.5 million acres owned by the State of Michigan.

“We’re talking infinitesimal—near zero impact on oil and gas development in Michigan—but with disastrous short- and long-term impacts on our precious parks, recreation, hunting and fishing grounds, and waters,” he said. “This is unconscionable and—we believe—illegal.”

The acreage specified in the lawsuit represents less than two percent of the state’s publicly held land, Loshner said.

MLAWD was formed in August 2012 in response to the leasing of mineral rights in Barry County. Included in that contested area is the Glass Creek Watershed, which was recently ranked by the DEQ as worthy of “protection,” the agency’s highest designation.

The Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy is also working to protect the watershed.

Protesters arrested at state oil & gas lease auctions

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) decision to proceed with its October 24 auction of oil and gas leases brought more protests and resulted in the arrests of seven people.

“The auction was moved to the Lansing Center to accommodate the larger number of people we knew would be interested,” said Ed Golder, public information officer at the DNR. “We allowed people who were in the audience and concerned about the proceed-

ings to hold up signs and to quietly observe.”

The arrests came after a few individuals interfered with the proceedings, according to Golder. Those seven people were charged with misdemeanor counts of disrupting a public meeting, attempting to obstruct a police officer, or both,” he said.

Golder said there have been protests and arrests at the last two oil and gas lease auctions.

“We have been conducting these auctions since the 1920s,”

he said. “I don’t know what the reaction has been during that entire time span, but the most recent auctions mark the first time in recent years we’ve seen these kinds of protests.”

Protesters are particularly concerned about well-drilling in environmentally sensitive areas held in the “public trust,” as well as with the industry practice of hydraulic fracturing.

Complaints have also been registered at Michigan Natural Resources Commission meetings.

Resource managers need to be responsive to the people, Sen. Casperson says

(Continued From Page 1)

an active role in managing resources, but they shouldn’t ignore what people are telling them. “The idea that the Legislature shouldn’t be involved—I couldn’t disagree with that more,” Casperson said.

The senator said he doesn’t have a particular agenda for dialing the DNR back. “So far, we have been dealing with individual cases,” he said, “taking up one at a time.”

Casperson said he likes the idea of term limits for members of the state Natural Resources Commission (NRC) and the Natural Resources Trust Fund Board.

“We’ve talked about this, he said, “not to stop them from what they’re doing, but to change it up so we have fresh ideas. There are those who like the current system and think it’s working fine. But there are 9.5 million people in Michigan. We see the same people serve on the NRC and then move to the Trust Fund Board.”

Casperson said that it doesn’t matter who the governor is—Republican or Democrat—the same people are named to these boards. “You always have the same people at the table,” he said. “Why is it that the same people are always in these work groups?”

It is the governor’s prerogative who he or she names to these boards, Casperson acknowledged, but at the same time the Michigan Senate “has a responsibility to the people who elected us.”

When he ran for office, according to Casperson, he said the same things about natural resource management as he is saying now and won election in a historically Democrat district.

“If those were my issues then—and they were—I should have been thrown out on my ear, but I wasn’t. I was elected (in a district with a significant amount of state-owned land).”

Looking Back: November 11, 1953

The North Woods Call arrives as new resident

By Marguerite Gahagan

With this edition, *The North Woods Call* makes its bow to residents and visitors in Crawford, Montmorency and Otsego Counties.

As the year-round residents know so well, the north woods have a changing beauty with each month of the year. And, with each season of the year, sportsmen find the woods and the plains, the lakes and the streams, offering their own magic to soothe mankind weary of the city turmoil and troubled by a world at war.

The all-too short weekends available to thousands down below live on in memories. Those brief hours of peace and quiet, of good sport and unbelievable beauty, give man a true appreciation of freedom—the freedom of his pioneering forefathers, and the courage to retain that freedom for his children in a democracy threatened by the evils of world Communism.

Days, even short days, spent in the north woods can be nostalgic. The little towns, evenings in the local pub, farm neighbors swapping news on logging, the price of potatoes, money raised for the school at the box social—an almost lost pattern of American life.

And so *The North Woods Call* will try to serve as a link between the woods and down below. Each week it will attempt to cover local community highlights. And, most of all, it will emphasize the sports and recreation features that make this portion of northern Michigan unique in the state.

The Call frankly admits that it means to promote the north woods. The people who come to know and love the woods bring assets in the form of business, money to develop roads, new schools, improved land, added interests and support of state conservation programs.

The Call, in being edited from a log cabin on the wooded shores of a small lake, faces the same rugged future that all business ventures face when they begin operating in what are still the wide-open spaces.

The Call is edited and published by Marguerite Gahagan, who for 20 years was a reporter on Detroit’s daily papers, and her brother, John J. Gahagan—for five years a probation officer at Detroit’s Recorder’s Court—who will serve as business manager.

To those advertising neighbors and friends who helped launch the first edition, *The Call* is grateful. And to our readers we can only say that we hope *The North Woods Call* will be welcomed each week in your homes as a pleasant tie to country that you love.

Pigeon River Country dam removal

GAYLORD—The Grayling-based Huron Pines organization is launching a small-dam removal project on the Black River east of here.

Saunders Dam will be dismantled to restore natural stream functions. Currently, the dam is being blamed for increasing water temperatures, impeding sediment transport and limiting fish passage to the upper reaches of the Black River and Saunders Creek.

In 2011, The Michigan Department of Natural Resources purchased 517 acres of land in this area of Otsego County to expand the Pigeon River Country State Forest. The land is part of the Black River Watershed, a productive brook trout fishery with

an increasing fish population.

A survey, designs and permitting will be completed during the fall and winter months. Dam drawdown will begin during spring and summer of 2013.

For more information, contact Sam Prentice, watershed project manager, at (989) 448-2293, Ext. 17. He can also be reached by e-mail at samuel@huronpines.org.

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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Renewable Energy Mandate Rejected

Michigan voters soundly defeated the so-called 25X25 renewable energy question when they went to the polls November 6.

Ballot Proposal 3 would have enshrined a renewable energy mandate in the state Constitution, requiring that Michigan utilities get at least 25 percent of their annual electric retail sales from clean renewable sources—including wind, solar, biomass and hydropower—by the year 2025. It also called for electric providers to limit rate increases to one percent per year to cover costs associated with meeting the standard.

In the end, voters weren't convinced that it was a good idea to leverage the Constitution for this purpose and apparently believed that the state's existing energy policy is working just fine.

Current law already mandates that ten percent of Michigan's energy be derived from renewable resources by the year 2015. This sets a less-aggressive goal than some other states with similar standards—Hawaii 40 percent by 2030 and California 33 percent by 2020, for example—but no other state has a renewable energy mandate in its constitution.

Backers of the proposal said they wanted a constitutional amendment because the financial clout of utility companies would prevent such a measure from passing the Michigan Legislature. They said it would have resulted in \$10 billion in investments, thousands of new jobs and a cleaner, healthier environment. With the cost of renewables going down compared to coal, they said, such a measure would save Michigan money in the long run.

Opponents, however, countered that it would cost \$12 billion and were skeptical of the promised one percent cap on price increases. Higher energy costs, they said, would actually lead to a net decrease in jobs.

The measure had support from renewable energy firms, as well as several unions and government leaders, including former Michigan Gov. William G. Milliken and former U.S. President Bill Clinton.

State AG still investigating bid-fixing charge

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette is continuing his investigation into allegations that two of North America's largest natural gas companies colluded in an effort to fix bids in the state's oil and gas market.

The two companies—Encana and Chesapeake Energy—came under scrutiny after Reuters News Service intercepted at least a dozen e-mail messages that suggested 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 Slavens (D-Canton) and Charles Smiley (D-Burton). The two representatives did not respond to earlier requests for comments.

When contacted recently by *The North Woods Call*, the attorney general's office would say only that

the investigation—which began in late September—was “ongoing.”

“We do not comment on the details of ongoing investigations,” said Joy Yearout, acting director of communications for the attorney general.

Previously, Yearout confirmed that an investigation had been opened regarding the anti-trust allegations raised in media reports. At the time, she said the attorney general had “requested information from the 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 is continuing to track the investigation.

Conservation officer remembered; CO memorial is planned

1920s-era Michigan conservation officer Theron A. Craw was recently remembered on the 84th anniversary of his death in the line of duty.

Craw died November 5, 1928, after being accidentally shot a few days earlier by his partner, as the two were working along Acme Creek in Grand Traverse County.

“Danger is inherent in conservation law enforcement, said DNR Law Enforcement Chief Gary Hager. “This hero's life cut short reflects that danger. We will always remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.”

This year marks the 125th anniversary of conservation law en-

forcement in Michigan. Craw is one of 12 fallen conservation officers feted during the dedication of a memorial site outside the DNR's conference center at Higgins Lake.

For more information, or to contribute to the construction of a memorial, visit the Michigan Conservation Officer Association site at www.mcoa-online.net.



White-tailed deer

(Rick Baetsen)



Wood duck

(Rick Baetsen)



Rick Baetsen with pals Chloe & Emma

Photographer has long connection to *The North Woods Call*

Past subscribers to *The North Woods Call* will recognize the many wonderful nature and wildlife images contributed over the years by Michigan photographer Rick Baetsen.

Former publisher Glen Sheppard relied heavily on the photographs, but it was a simple twist of fate and the courtship dance of sharp-tail grouse that connected Baetsen to the publication.

A former fisheries biologist for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Baetsen was working at the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery near Alba in 1978 when he saw an article from the local *Antrim County News* that caught his attention.

The article was written by current *North Woods Call* publisher Mike VanBuren—then a staff writer at the Antrim County News—and told of a sharp-tail dancing ground in eastern Antrim County.

Baetsen said he had first seen the sharp-tail dance several days earlier when he and his wife of two weeks “belly crawled” into rural dancing grounds near Raco in the eastern Upper Peninsula.

“That was quite an outing,” he said, “to get your new bride up at

four in the morning and have her belly crawl with you out in the cold morning to get a glimpse of birds dancing at sunrise.”

A coworker at the Jordan River Hatchery “brought in the (*Antrim County News*) clipping and also told me of the greater prairie chickens that were in the Antrim County area years earlier,” Baetsen said.

Baetsen had a longstanding passion for photography, and usually carried his camera along when his work took him out of the office and into the field. Determined to find some sharp-tails closer to home that he could observe and photograph, Baetsen contacted Bob Strong, the district wildlife biologist at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources office in Gaylord.

“Bob suggested that I contact Bud Jones of Alba, who had a similar interest and knew where the birds danced (at eastern Antrim County's Lake of the North development).

Jones, who had been featured in the aforementioned *Antrim County News* story, agreed to take Baetsen to the dancing grounds and the two became best of friends.

“We did many nature and outdoor things together over the years until he passed away in 2004,” Baetsen said. “It was through Bud that I had the chance to meet Glen and Mary Lou Sheppard, and use Shep's darkroom one night until three in the morning, where I got hooked on making black-and-white prints.”

That chance connection to the Sheppards through Bud Jones began a partnership that resulted in numerous Rick Baetsen prints appearing on the pages of *The North Woods Call* over more than three decades.

“As I get older, I find these things that guide or change our path in life to be more and more interesting,” said Baetsen, who is now retired and spends as much time as possible in the woods of the northern lower and upper peninsulas.

He continues to pursue his love of nature photography in the upper Great Lakes region.

A native of Michigan's thumb area, Baetsen studied fisheries, wildlife and botany at Lake Superior State College in Sault Ste. Marie, and earned a degree in botany and plant ecology.

After graduating from college,

he worked temporarily as a fisheries technician for the U.S. Forest Service and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Most of his working life, however, was spent as a management biologist at USFWS lake trout hatcheries, as well as at the Jordan River National Fish Hatchery in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula and at Pendill's Creek National Fish Hatchery in the Upper Peninsula.

In addition, he worked for a time out of the USFWS Fisheries Resource Office in Fairbanks, Alaska, on the northern USFWS refuges that were created by the Lands Act of 1980.

The North Woods Call, he said, has been part of his adult life since first reading the newspaper in the 1960s while at his family's Ogemaw County cabin. “In the 1970s, I was honored to meet Glen and Mary Lou Sheppard,” he said, “and pleased to be associated with them for the next thirty-three years.”

When he met Glen Sheppard, Baetsen was quite taken with Sheppard's English setter dog, Toots. A few years later, Baetsen and his wife got a setter of their own, and later replaced it with an-

other when the original dog passed away. They now have had setters for the past 22 years.

In addition to *The North Woods Call*, his images have been published in books, magazines, calendars and other newspapers, as well as on public and commercial television and a number of Internet websites.

Baetsen's award-winning photos reflect his love of the wilderness and Michigan's natural areas. His favorite subjects include wildlife, birds, butterflies and landscapes.

He now has more than 80,000 images in his stock collection—including more than 40,000 of ruffed grouse that he has taken since 1976. He hopes to someday produce a coffee table book about ruffed grouse and its behavior through the four seasons.

An active member of several conservation organizations, Baetsen also leads nature tours, and gives slide presentations on his travels and various natural history topics.

For more information, or to order photographs, visit his website at www.rickbaetsen.com.

Opinion Page

Conservation Quote

"It is hard to place a price tag on these things; on the sounds and smells and memories of the out-of-doors; on the countless things we have seen and loved. They are the dividends of the good life."
— Sigurd F. Olson

Is this the best that we can do?

Well, the American people have spoken—or so it seems.

It's not exactly clear what we said, but some are pleased with the November 6 election results and others are deeply disappointed.

You might say that we fall into the latter category.

We had hoped for fresh solutions to the myriad problems facing the nation, but instead got the status quo.

A reported \$6 billion—a whopping sum that might better have been invested elsewhere—was spent collectively by both sides on campaigns, advertisements and elaborate "ground games."

Yet nothing has really changed. We have once-again embraced the same career charlatans and demagogues that are largely responsible for the growing mess in which we find ourselves.

Go figure.

What does this say about our grand experiment in representative government? Perhaps that our system is stunningly corrupt—thanks to the polluting influence of big money, the willful incompetence of media "watchdogs" and the persistent deceit of power-hungry politicians? Or maybe that we, the people, simply don't care?

Either way, it doesn't bode well for the future.

To repeat the oft-quoted words of the comic strip character Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

The debate over climate change

It was probably inevitable that Hurricane Sandy would give rise not only to ocean waters, but also to the debate over "climate change."

This phenomenon, of course, was previously known as "global warming" until the propagandists adjusted the language to more easily manipulate public opinion.

You'd think that the publishers of a conservation newspaper like *The North Woods Call* would naturally buy into the claims that human activity is threatening our planet with disastrous calamity—a fate that can only be prevented by adopting "progressive" political measures aimed at controlling man's tendency to destroy.

Not necessarily.

We're still waiting for sound, verifiable evidence that will stand up to broad scientific inquiry. As it is, the "science" appears to be all over the map and some of it has been shown to be suspiciously fraudulent.

What's a discriminating editor to do?

We're not inclined to ignore factual data—assuming it exists—but we haven't yet seen any arguments that convince us beyond a reasonable doubt that natural cycles and weather patterns are directly connected to our admittedly over-consumptive lifestyles.

Former Vice President Al Gore certainly didn't do it with his so-called "inconvenient truth" and carbon credit scam. And recently we ran across a silly newspaper story describing the "carbon footprint" left by joggers exhaling CO₂ gases and buying shoes manufactured in less-than-ecological ways.

If the climate change theory has real legs, so to speak, we would expect that better arguments can be made based on unimpeachable sources. So far, we have not heard all that many.

You may be a dyed-in-the-wool believer in all things related to "climate change." If so, you're probably wondering what we've been smoking.

Not a thing.

We're simply trying to sort through the competing arguments and discover the truth, which seems to be hard to come by these days.

You'll get no push back from us over the fact that human beings are quite capable of fouling the environment, wasting energy and generally wreaking havoc on our quality of life. Plenty of examples can be found throughout history.

We're just not sure this selfish carelessness explains the occasional periods of warming and cooling that have resulted in droughts, floods and other deadly weather events for centuries.

Bottom line is that we don't think humans have the power to actually destroy the planet—as the most dire prognostications suggest. There is an authority much greater than us who governs the earth and will decide if and when it needs to be destroyed.

Until then, we should strive to be good stewards of the resources we have been given—which might just involve more open and honest conversations aimed at helping each other separate fact from fiction.

The flames of fellowship: A lifetime of campfires

A man's life can be measured in the glow of campfires. At least that's the way it has been for me.

I first gathered around the soothing flames while still a boy—during family campouts at Interlochen State Park—where we fellowshiped regularly with friends and relatives who made the trek north each July.

Back home, the neighbor kids and I could often be found on summer nights building campfires in the hills behind our home, a rite-of-passage that included sipping root beer from gallon jugs, exploring dark woodlots in the moonlight and sleeping soundly in canvas pup tents, or in bags rolled out under the stars.

"The fire is the main comfort of the camp—whether in summer or winter—and is about as ample at one season as at another," wrote Henry David Thoreau. "It is as well for cheerfulness as for warmth and dryness."

That's probably one reason our Native American brethren have traditionally gathered around fire circles to talk and listen to the wisdom of others.

For much of my childhood and into my adult life, I have collected wisdom from campfire conversations. For many years, it was an Independence Day ritual for family and friends to gather around a blazing social fire built in the gravel driveway—and later in the patio fire pit—of our rural home.

We children would listen to the

North Woods Journal By Mike VanBuren



conversations of our parents and their friends, learning important life lessons passed down through stories and good-natured laughter.

"Even in a time of elephantine vanity and greed, one never has to look far to see the campfires of gentle people," observed Garrison Keillor of Minnesota Public Radio's *A Prairie Home Companion*.

Gentleness and quiet wisdom seem to have always been hallmarks of the campfires that I sat around. As I grew older, I carried those benefits with me.

Among my best memories are the roaring campfires shared with friends and family in various locations throughout northern and southern Michigan.

Elsewhere, I have basked in their warmth and light in the national forests of Arizona, with young Dutch tourists on a cold September evening in Wyoming's Yellowstone National Park and in front of a crackling fireplace at a small log cabin in the ghost town of Tincup, Colorado.

During my early college years, there were large group gatherings in Allegan Forest and on the beaches of Lake Michigan. And my good friend and ex-roommate from Central Michigan University

still joins me for regular spring and fall excursions—including twice on the south shore of Beaver Island—that would be incomplete without campfire philosophy.

Firelight was even an integral part of my courtship years and a delight at the wedding reception. And my own kids were raised on campfires and smores during 20-plus years of August camping trips to the state park near our house.

Many gatherings with my acoustic musician friends over the years have included singing to the accompaniment of guitars, banjos and mandolins in the flickering shadows of a friendly campfire.

I treasure these memories and hope to make even more of them before my days are done.

George Bernard Shaw said that "life is a flame that is always burning itself out, but it catches fire again every time a child is born."

It's somehow comforting to know that—when the embers of my life are finally extinguished with a dash of cold water and a whiff of white smoke—another boy will come along and seek wisdom in the stories and laughter of a thousand campfires.

A strip mine in Mackinac County?

The North Woods Call is seeking information about a rumored limestone and dolomite strip mine slated for Mackinac County.

We're told that an anonymous letter delivered to the Fiborn Karst Preserve described a plan for a mineral extraction company to open a 5,000-plus acre mine.

The exact location of the potential mine is not known, but some expect it could include land between the Fiborn Quarry and Hendricks Quarry.

The letter suggested that test drilling had already begun, although there have apparently been no reported signs of this.

Contact us with any details.

Book Review

Pine Whispers

By
The Marguerite Gahagan
Nature Preserve

2012
Gahagan Nature Preserve Inc.
Roscommon, Michigan

There are two good reasons to purchase this book—it's a great read and you'll be supporting the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve.

Pine Whispers contains the biography and writings of Ms. Gahagan, founder in 1953 of *The North Woods Call*.

Dedicated to the memory of Ms. Gahagan—"writer, conservationist and lover of nature"—the book tells her personal story from her birth in Toledo, Ohio, through her stints as a romance novelist and as an award-winning Detroit journalist.

We learned many things as we turned the pages.

The 53-page life story contained in the book is fascinating in and of itself. It was enlightening to learn more about Gahagan's various activities, although we found ourselves wishing for greater detail about this unique woman's personality, motivations and passions.

The 40-page second section of the book—"News From the North Woods"—is equally engaging. It features some of Marguerite's own writings about the north country, as well as musings about nature and the many challenges of running a weekly newspaper by herself.

Such challenges are becoming ever more familiar to us, so it was helpful to better understand how Marguerite managed her work and the features that made *The Call* so special during those early years.

The offending words chosen for the headline of our inaugural editorial about former publishers notwithstanding, we discovered (Page 48) that Marguerite did not like being referred to as "Maggie."

We also learned that the noisy sound of a pileated woodpecker helped her identify a site for her Roscommon cabin (Page 50).

The 86-page third section of the book—"Poetry of the Pines"—takes words from Gahagan's popular "Pine Whispers" column and fashions them into poetic verse.

The book concludes with a few pages describing the Gahagan Nature Preserve, which was created from the home and property that Ms. Gahagan donated when she died in 1997 at the age of 89.

If you're interested in Michigan history and the legacy of *The North Woods Call*, you can't go wrong with this book.

Proceeds support the programming and maintenance of the Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve.

The North Woods Call

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel
Since 1953

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A Newshound Publication

Letter to the editor**Gravel & “fracking” operations raise ire of folks in Kalkaska County’s Rapid City**

Editor:

In September we received a courtesy letter from Rapid River Township (Kalkaska County), notifying us that they had issued a permit for a gravel pit on the property abutting ours to the south.

We—as adjacent property owners—had NO say in the permitting process.

A little research turned up the information that a judge had issued an opinion that gravel was a mineral and could be mined on any property anywhere in the state. The only regulations that could apply would be those established by the local municipality—and those were limited to air quality, noise, driveways, dust, and hours of operation. They could also not be so restrictive that the property owner would be prohibited from establishing a pit. (And the conditions were strictly voluntary—a municipality was not required to issue any regulations).

Further inquiries to the township assured us that there would be no dust on our property, as the prevailing wind was always from the northwest. The county road commission would issue any permits for driveways.

Except for the hours, the township is assuming no responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of the unfortunate residents directly affected by this judge-permitted land use.

The end result of the original excavation (which now covers at least 40 acres) is that there are rumbling noises both in my house and in the yard, vibration in my home and sand on my furniture. Items have fallen from my shelves and my laundry has smelled like diesel fumes. There

is a 7-foot-high berm less than 40 feet from my front yard and dust blows down the road on walkers, delivery personnel and cyclists, in addition to local residents.

Now there is constant vibration and noise from the crusher, more pit equipment, trucks hauling sand/gravel, and additional oil/gas platform construction equipment less than a quarter-mile from our property line. There also is pounding from water-well drilling equipment to access the millions of gallons needed for the oil well operation. The hours of operation for the gravel pit are daylight. (This is the only requirement that seems to have been adhered to).

So our nice, quiet, peaceful, rural retirement home with clean air and a beautiful pastoral view is now an industrial site and our property values—well, I surely hope if we decide to sell that someone will be interested in purchasing our home at its prior value.

The gravel pit is obviously for the benefit of Chevron, which was issued a permit by the State of Michigan to drill a “fracking” well on private property. As nearly as I can figure, this well is about a half-mile from our beautiful Rapid River blue ribbon trout stream that makes a bend around the properties here before reaching Torch River and the Chain of Lakes.

My last conversation with the local Michigan Department of Natural Resources employee who issues permits for wells on state land indicated that this was the only private-land permit of which he was aware. There are acres and acres of state land where this well could have been placed—away from private homes, away from

the river.

The well site is exactly the minimum number of feet that is allowed from our (west) adjoining neighbor’s house and well. So their driveway is now one of four (two were added on the corner). The trees were cut and there now is a big pile of sand in their front yard. These neighbors are very concerned about their water well and property value—not to mention all the noise, air pollution, and additional deterioration of their lifestyle when the 24/7 oil well drilling starts.

Another interesting development is that most of the mineral rights to the property where the exploration is under way are owned by a wealthy non-resident who apparently couldn’t care less about the neighborhood, property values, etc.

So BIG OIL is back in full force, the environment takes another hit, property owners have no rights and local government is powerless.

There is no immediate need for natural gas—which is a non-renewable resource—and our clean water supplies are threatened.

Fracking has not been determined to be a necessary and/or safe source of drilling.

Phyllis Senske
Rapid City

Phyllis, You might want to connect with the folks in Barry & Allegan counties who are fighting these fracking operations and recently filed suit against the DNR over related lease sales (see article in this edition of The North Woods Call).

— MV

**Quiet Water Symposium**

(North Woods Call photo)

Seekers of peace and solitude will likely be interested in the Quiet Water Symposium to be held March 2, 2013, at Michigan State University in East Lansing. The 18th annual event will celebrate the silent outdoor sports. It will feature presentations, demonstrations and exhibits promoting non-motorized outdoor recreation, as well as the conservation of natural resources. Admission is \$10 for adults; \$5 for students with identification. Children under 12 are free. For information, or to volunteer, visit www.QuietWaterSymposium.org.

The Wild Nearby

By Tom Springer

**Bassin’ in the U.P.? Keep what you need, but leave the rest**

Chances are you’ve never heard of Flapjack Lake. It’s in the central Upper Peninsula—a secluded little gem set deep in the Hiawatha National Forest, reachable only via a nameless, bumpy two-track. Without a generous tip from a local fisherman, I wouldn’t have known about it myself.

My first visit there on a still August morning was near perfect. Loon music echoed across the mirrored waters and two deer grazed on a misty shoreline steeped with white pine and hemlock. I paddled silently between rafts of lily pads and my casts soon yielded three keeper bass. After a gallant fight, I released them all to grow and fight again. A vicious, sub-legal pike snapped my line and escaped with my top-water lure, but the show he put on was almost worth it.

Yet as I pulled out my canoe at the gravel landing, the illusion of isolation vanished. Five guys rumbled up in SUVs and pickups that bristled with brush guards and gear racks. With nimble energy they hustled their boats and fishing tackle into the water.

“You see a 20-inch northern with my six-dollar Hula Popper in his mouth, lemme know,” I said from the window of my family-man issue Dodge minivan.

“Oh, we’ll get him,” said a rangy, 20-ish fellow with a red bandana and baggie cargo shorts. He was friendly, but cocky—about as insufferable as I’d been at his age.

Still, I was happy for them. They brought to mind one of my favorite lines from Aldo Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac*: “I am glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in...”

But by that evening, I wasn’t so sure.

It turned out they were staying at the same resort we were (so much for the secret of Flapjack). And there, as they horsed around in the yellow glow of their cabin’s porch light, I saw a sight that made me half sick. They held up for the camera three long stringers that sagged heavy with largemouth bass.

So what’s wrong with that? They’d bought their licenses. The fish were all of legal size—14 inches. It didn’t look like they’d exceeded their creel limit of five bass apiece.

All true. But they’d surely exceeded what’s healthy, reasonable and even ethical for a small lake in the Upper Peninsula.

Keep in mind that fish grow much slower in the cold north. Bass may take nine years to reach legal size—compared to three years in the south. DNR research shows that a lake the size of Flapjack (four or five acres) may only have 50-60 bass in the keeper-size category. Clearly, a crew of skilled, hard-fishing anglers can—quite legally—devastate a small lake’s spawning bass population in short order.

For two more days, morning and night, my neighbors hauled home full stringers. Their body-count mindset reminded me of the 19th century market fishermen who wiped out Michigan’s native grayling. Yet instead of filets salted and packed into hogshead barrels, these were iced down and packed into coolers.

And to what end? Believe me: bass taken from a warm, shallow, weedy lake taste as bad as they sound.

On our last night, I visited another little lake, this one just off Forest Highway 13. The fishing was mediocre—what you’d expect from a place along a well-traveled road. But as dusk fell, a 17-inch largemouth slurped down my Hula Popper. Then he proceeded to thrash and tail-dance across the water in true spirit-warrior fashion. Delightful.

Once he was landed, I noticed something at the back of his mouth: a rusted, size-two hook. He’d been giggered deep, and either he’d broken off, or someone had cut their line to save him.

Either way, because of chance or generosity, this moment, the kind that fishermen live for, was mine to savor. He was a keeper, alright. But it was the experience—not the carcass—that was worth keeping.

And that’s something that will never grow stale in a freezer—fishy and forgotten behind a bag of frozen peas.

Tom Springer writes from rural Three Rivers, Michigan. A collection of his essays, Looking for Hickories (University of Michigan Press) was a Michigan Notable Book in 2009.

A note to letter writers

All letters must be signed. Please include your name and mailing address (e-mail address, too, if you don’t mind).

We won’t publish addresses or phone numbers, but we must have them to verify that letters are authentic. No unsigned letters will be used. It’s OK for your signature to be electronic.

Calling all store owners

If you own a store and want to stock *The North Woods Call*, please contact us. Let us know who you are, where your store is located and how much commission you would want from sales.

We may be able to accommodate you if we can find a cost-effective way to deliver the product to you.

editor@mynorthwoodscall.com

More Opinion

Outdoor Rhythms

By Doug Freeman



On patrol for trashy behavior

One blustery, gray day in early November, an old army buddy and I emerged from the Edmore Game Area after many hours of grouse hunting. The few birds we'd kicked up had flown away low and fast, using the thickets to their advantage. Consequently, our shotguns remained unfired.

We stopped to rest on the Pine River Bridge, where we gazed down into the flowing waters.

"Nice shooting," Ron commented with a sardonic smile. His elbow jabbed my ribs.

"Shut up," was my only response.

A minute later he tapped my shoulder and pointed toward the bridge's far end. Following the line of his finger, two sets of eyes zeroed in on a large pile of black trash bags on the river bank. An investigation was needed.

This was a bad choice for a disposal site, especially since the township transfer station was a mere mile up the road. I jogged several hundred yards to my parked truck, drove back, and assisted my buddy in a clean-up.

Twenty-two bags later we headed for the dump station, where our odoriferous cargo could safely be deposited.

"Not so fast," Ron cautioned as the station came into view. He produced a damp, soiled piece of paper and stuck it under my nose. Besides smelling bad, it read "Lola's Pink Pansy Beauty Salon." (Name changed to confuse the innocent). The shop was located nearby.

"Don't you think we ought to let Lola know about her trash?" Ron asked quietly. I agreed.

The establishment was easily located and when two grizzled men in hunting clothes enter a beauty salon, they get noticed. A middle-aged lady in a flowered smock came over and asked if she could be of service. It was almost closing time. A pair of younger female employees stopped what they were doing to listen in.

In a diplomatic manner, I explained that we'd gathered some rubbish from an ecologically sensitive flood plain. Ron produced the invoice and handed it to the lady, who indeed turned out to be Lola. She looked stricken as the situation sank in. She told us she'd tasked her teen-aged son the week before to haul her trash to the dump. Apparently, that hadn't happened.

I tried to mitigate her stress.

"How about we if throw all those bags into your dumpster outside? Then we'll call it a day."

For whatever reason, Lola hesitated. With a dead-pan expression on his bearded face, Ron chimed in. "Or, we could take your stuff over to the sheriff's office. Can't recall exactly what the fine is for dumping toxic trash next to a waterway." He scratched his head. "Two thousand dollars, or just one?"

Lola quickly granted us permission to unload the goo-leaking bags into her salon's industrial-grade container. We'd completed the job and were preparing to go when the kind woman ran out to us. Reaching through the truck's open window, she stuffed a large denomination bill into my shirt pocket. No chance for a verbal protest—she'd already jogged back inside. I wasn't comfortable with the unexpected cash.

Ron chuckled, then mentioned the names of some local restaurants. After all, we were both hungry. And one does develop a powerful appetite while patrolling the Michigan woods.

Doug Freeman is a writer and amateur naturalist living near the Lake Michigan shoreline north of Muskegon.

Please join the North Woods Call community today!

DNR emergency order limits antlerless deer licenses in the wake of EHD

With epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) at historic levels this year in Michigan's deer herd, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is trying to balance hunting opportunities with herd health.

DNR Director Keith Creagh signed an emergency order that decreases antlerless license purchase limits for deer management units where the most EHD-related die-offs have occurred.

Effective immediately, the purchase limit for Unit 486 (a multi-county area in the southern Lower

Peninsula) is five private land antlerless deer licenses per hunter. The public antlerless license purchase limit per hunter is two for each of the units in the following counties: Branch, Ionia, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lapeer, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola and VanBuren.

Those who purchased antlerless licenses prior to the emergency order are not required to return licenses. It only applies to those licenses purchased on or after November 8.

"We're encouraging hunters to



White-tailed deer in northern Michigan

(Michigan DNR photo)

Northern deer hunts poised for comeback?

The thrill of loading the car and heading for deer camp in northern Michigan may be regaining its popularity, say Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) officials.

For the past decade or so, more hunters spent their time—and killed more deer—in southern lower Michigan than in the northern Lower and Upper peninsulas, they said. But now the trend may be starting to reverse itself.

"We haven't necessarily seen increased license sales, or more hunter numbers in northern Michigan, but what we are seeing is that the hunters who are out there are more successful and that's always a good thing," said Ashley Autenrieth, DNR deer program biologist.

Autenrieth, who is stationed in Gaylord, said more hunters have been calling, looking to buy property adjacent to public land to establish deer camps in the northern

Lower Peninsula.

Possible reasons for this renewed interest: new license regulations and three consecutive years of mild winters, she said.

"The last three mild winters have really helped," Autenrieth said. "People are seeing more game. Our deer herd has been on a nice, steady increase for the last three years, which is what we want."

There are ever-increasing numbers of deer in areas with medium-to good-quality habitat, she said, and the deer seem to be very healthy.

"We're getting reports of good trail camera pictures and people say they're seeing some very nice quality bucks," Autenrieth said.

The change in Upper Peninsula buck regulations—where hunters who opt for a combination license are limited to a buck with at least three antler points on one side and four on one side (statewide) with

the second tag—may have resulted in some older (and bigger) animals, DNR officials said.

In addition, more antlerless permits are available in new areas in northern Michigan.

"A number of areas in both the U.P. and northern Lower Peninsula have been opened for the first time in a number of years," Autenrieth said. "I think we'll see an increase in hunter success throughout much of northern Michigan again this year."

Nevertheless, DNR officials believe the bulk of the deer harvest will occur in southern Michigan for the foreseeable future.

Yet northern deer hunting seems poised for a comeback soon, they said, although nobody is predicting the kind of traffic jams on northbound I-75 that used to be common in years past.

—Michigan DNR report

Sportsmen: Donations sought to help the hungry

Michigan hunters are being encouraged to remember their hungry neighbors when they take to the woods and fields this season.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is urging all hunters to consider a donation to the Michigan Sportsmen Against Hunger (MSAH) organization when purchasing hunting licenses.

Financial donations will be used to support the processing of venison by participating processors, according to the DNR. Venison may also be donated to the cause.

Last year, venison given to local food banks and food kitchens throughout Michigan supplied enough meat to provide more than 100,000 meals with a source of nutritious protein, officials said.

"Today, we have the opportunity to continue a tradition started by hunters before us, who hunted to provide food for early settlements in Michigan," said

Ray Rustem, DNR liaison to MSAH. Donations of money or venison can help those who are still experiencing hard times in our state."

When renewing fishing or hunting licenses, tell the license vendor of your intent to make a monetary donation to the program. Donations can be made in the amounts of \$1, \$5, \$10, or \$20. The vendor will add the donation amount to the overall purchase price of the license and it will appear as an additional item on the license.

Those who want to donate a deer should visit the MSAH website at www.sportsmenagainsthunger.org.

Those who don't hunt or fish can help by visiting the Michigan e-store at www.michigan.gov/estore.

"Many people continue to struggle in this economy," Rustem said. "Donating to this important effort is a simple way to help."

—Michigan DNR

use their best judgment," said Brent Rudolph, the DNR's deer and elk program leader. "If a hunter is in an area of an outbreak, backing off—or not taking an antlerless deer at all—is an appropriate thing to do."

It is not known how many deer have died from the disease, but more than 13,000 dead animals had been reported as of this writing. These deer have been found mostly in the southern third of the state, officials said, though the disease has also been documented in

Clare and Osceola counties, and is suspected as far north as Presque Isle and Benzie counties.

Often thought to be "blue tongue"—a similar but different disease—EHD is a viral affliction that causes deer to die from internal bleeding. It is transmitted by the bite of a tiny fly, called a midge that typically breeds in mud flats.

This year's drought has expanded areas where the midges can reproduce, because in most years those mud flats would be under water.

The disease does not affect humans, according to the DNR, so it is safe to harvest and eat the venison. Though widespread or long-term impacts to deer populations are not expected, local effects can be significant and last a few years.

A weekly EHD map has been compiled, which may help hunters make harvest decisions. The map and other EHD-related information can be found online under the DNR's "Current Issues" heading at www.michigan.gov/wildlifedisease.

Conservation Officer Logs (10/15/12 through 10/28/12)

Bird hunters, bird dogs and three loaded shotguns = "drive-by" shooting

DISTRICT 1

CO **Dave Painter** worked the grouse decoy in an area known for road hunting. A truck pulled up with three bird hunters who stuck the gun out the window to try to shoot the grouse decoy. The hunters had bird dogs in the bed of the truck, and three loaded, uncased shotguns in the vehicle. Enforcement action was taken.

CO **Jason Wicklund** was working an early morning shining patrol when he responded to a 911 call of a man having a heart attack. The CO arrived and administered first aid until paramedics arrived on scene. As the paramedics were tending to the victim, the CO observed a large marijuana growing operation in the bedroom of the house. Enforcement action was taken.

CO **Marvin Gerlach** contacted two subjects in a pickup stopped on a rural county road. The father and son explained that their bird dog had gotten sick inside the cab of the truck and they were trying to clean it up. They did not, however, have a good explanation for the two loaded, uncased shotguns they had in the vehicle. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 2

While driving down an unpaved county road, CO **Robert Crisp** had to swerve to avoid being hit by an oncoming truck. CO Crisp turned around and initiated a traffic stop. Prior to pulling over, the subject was observed to lean over towards the passenger seat of the vehicle. Upon contact with the driver, it was discovered that there was an uncased firearm in the vehicle. The subject was ticketed for the firearm violation and warned for the careless driving.

CO **Kyle Publiski** received a complaint of a deer being illegally shot with a firearm during the bow season. The CO proceeded to the suspect's residence and made contact. Upon answering the door the suspect was covered in fresh blood which he claimed was red paint. When asked what he was painting at such a time of the night, he didn't have an answer. He then showed the officer a deer hanging in the garage that he claimed he shot with a bow. A closer inspection determined that the hole in the deer was clearly from a bullet hole. After being caught in several more untruths, the subject admitted to shooting the deer with his rifle from his blind. The deer and gun were seized and a ticket was issued for the illegal deer.

CO **Kyle Publiski** heard talk of a subject who was bragging about shooting a nice ten-point buck during the closed season. When contacted, the subject blamed the whole thing on his girlfriend. He tried to explain how she used his gun and his truck, field dressed the deer and hung it

A NOTE TO READERS:

These are brief excerpts from the CO's bi-monthly field reports. To conserve space, we have excluded the more routine activities in favor of what we think are the most unusual and interesting.

If you want a more complete log than we are able to provide, you can find an archive of them under the Law Enforcement tab on the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website.

in his garage without any of his assistance. CO **Publiski** wasn't impressed with the story and neither was the girlfriend. The subject has been arrested in the past for poaching deer and other various fish and game violations. The gun and deer were seized and warrants are being sought for the boyfriend in the case.

DISTRICT 3

CO **Michael Feagan** was in his patrol truck watching anglers at the Cheboygan River dam, when two subjects pulled up next to him, got out and started fishing. CO **Feagan** moved his patrol truck, and then watched the pair snag and keep several fish. Both were ticketed and later stated, "We must be the dumbest fishermen alive".

CO **Matt Theunick** contacted a bear hunter who failed to seal his bear within the required 72 hours after the kill. In fact, it was over two weeks after he shot the bear. The subject stated he had only four days left during his vacation after shooting the bear, and it just wasn't enough time. Enforcement action was taken.

While en route to a night shining patrol, CO **Michael Feagan** and **Sgt. Greg Drogowski** stopped to assist an elderly lady walking down the highway in her pajamas. The COs learned that she had been assaulted by her husband, and sustained injuries. The local police agency was called and COs assisted in contacting and eventually arresting the husband for domestic violence.

CO **Bill Webster** responded to a complaint of people snagging salmon at the Ninth Street dam in Alpena. When he arrived the suspects had already left. CO **Webster** checked all the motels in the area for the suspect vehicle and eventually found it. CO **Webster** then contacted three subjects who admitted to keeping 14 Chinook Salmon, of which 10 had been snagged. Two of the subjects each had five prior DNR violations and are being charged again with retaining foul hooked fish. Reimbursement will be sought for approximately 100 pounds of illegal fish.

CO **Kelly Ross** and **Sgt. Joe Molnar** assisted local deputies and the Michigan State Police with a subject in the woods with numerous firearms. The subject had been arrested earlier in the day for shoplifting and stated he would not be taken alive. He was apprehended without incident.

DISTRICT 4

CO **Angela Greenway** responded to a complaint of an oil-like substance flowing into the Little Manistee River near the Village of Luther. CO **Greenway's** investigation revealed that someone had removed boards from a water control structure of an impoundment attached to the river by a small feeder stream. CO **Greenway** returned the next day with personnel from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and located a person who admitted to removing the boards without a permit. The incident has been turned over to DEQ personnel for disposition.

COs **Jeff Ginn** and **Mike Wells** have been investigating illegal charters on the Muskegon River. The COs contacted a subject taking passengers for hire on an uninspected boat and ticketed the captain for the violation. Contact was made with a second subject operating an unlicensed vessel containing two fishing clients. Both clients were ticketed for fishing without a license. The captain was ticketed for operating an illegal charter.

CO **Mike Wells** received a complaint of an illegal camp on state park property. CO **Wells** walked into the illegal campsite and observed a large amount of litter spread about due to the evening's partying activity. CO **Wells** had to wake the multiple subjects and then had them pick up the entire area, including putting out the fire. Enforcement action was taken to address the trespass and other violations.

DISTRICT 5

CO **Bobbi Lively** and a U S Forest Service (USFS) law enforcement officer contacted a subject driving from deer camp whose hunting privileges were revoked. The driver was also driving on a suspended driver's license. The subject told CO **Lively** he was not hunting but his wife had been and they had not placed any bait at their hunt location. CO **Lively** quickly checked a nearby hunting site with an illegal stand that was baited and found a second blind that was also

baited. When she returned to the subject and told him of her findings, they admitted to placing the bait, and the subject whose hunting privileges were revoked admitted he had been archery hunting at the second stand. Enforcement action was taken.

CO **Jon Warner** was observing anglers when a subject came down the riverbank and started asking anglers to sell him their fish. The potential buyer finally located a subject willing to sell him his salmon. CO **Warner** discreetly followed the subjects back to the parking lot and observed the exchange of money and fish. He then contacted both subjects who confessed to what CO **Warner** had already observed. Tickets were issued to both subjects.

DISTRICT 6

CO **Seth Rhodea** contacted two subjects late at night who were dragging two deer out of the woods. Upon asking the subjects if both deer were tagged, the subjects replied that they had heard coyotes in the woods and were just trying to get out as fast as they could so they did not have time to tag the deer. Tickets were issued for failing to immediately validate and attach kill tags.

CO **Chad Foerster** was working late night in Bay County for shining activity when he had a vehicle go head-on with him, nearly running him off the road. The CO was able to turn around on the vehicle and catch up to it where he found it stopped in the middle of the road. When CO **Foerster** activated his blue lights signaling the vehicle to pull over, the suspect vehicle took off at a high rate of speed. The CO pursued the vehicle for a short distance before it came to a stop again. Upon contacting the driver, the driver stated he did not see the blue lights, only "really bright lights" before hearing the siren and stopping. When asked why he crossed the center line, he said that he did not remember doing so, nor did he remember seeing the CO when he ran him off the roadway. When asked why he stopped in the middle of the roadway, he claimed that he was texting and that he'd had too much to drink to text and drive at the same time and figured it was unsafe to do so. The subject was arrested for OUIL and had his vehicle towed.

DISTRICT 7

CO **Brad Brewer** was on foot

checking on some tree stand issues at Leidy Lake State Game Area and was walking back to his truck. Shots rang out and bullets began going through the brush within 20 feet of CO **Brewer**. CO **Brewer** took cover and could see the subjects through some brush at the other end of the field. CO **Brewer** yelled at the subjects, identifying himself and the subjects stopped shooting in his direction and began shooting in a different direction. CO **Brewer** carefully contacted the subjects, one adult and two juveniles. All three subjects were target shooting at a box that they placed in the crotch of a small tree, without regard for the fact that they had no backstop. CO **Brewer** warned the subjects for littering and issued the adult a ticket for reckless discharge of a firearm. The two juvenile's parents were contacted and informed of the incident.

DISTRICT 8

CO **Dan Bigger** responded to a hunter harassment complaint where a subject was turning on a radio and facing the speakers toward the woods where the complainant was hunting. This was documented over a half a dozen times and this time the subject was caught in the act. Contact was made and the subject refused to identify herself and in turn let her dog out in the enclosed porch between CO **Bigger** and the residence door. CO **Bigger** contacted the prosecutor's office while still on scene and the loud music could be heard over the phone. CO **Bigger** requested to meet the prosecutor with a report and two hours later a warrant was issued for interfering with the lawful hunt of another.

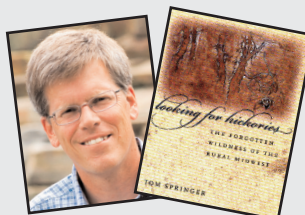
DISTRICT 9

COs **Mike Drexler** and **Dan Walzak** assisted the Special Investigation Unit with a buy/bust operation where a subject sold a stuffed screech owl. A ticket was issued and \$1,000 restitution will be sought.

CO **Brandon Kieft** was checking an Oxford Township gravel pit near a state game area when he observed a male subject carrying a bag of bait. The subject stated that he knew that he was on private property, but didn't think the owners cared. CO **Kieft** pointed out that there are a number of "No Trespassing" signs posted along the adjacent roadway where the subject had parked. Enforcement action was taken.

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Final Shot



Lake Superior & Whitefish Bay

The sand and stone beach surrounding Whitefish Point in Michigan's Upper Peninsula is a great place to walk, or simply sit and watch the Great Lakes freighters pass by. It is also an excellent location to spot numerous species of migratory birds that travel the route each spring and fall. If man-made attractions are more to your liking, there's the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum, lighthouse station and gift shop to visit. Unfortunately, it's much more congested than it used to be prior to the tourist developments, but it's still a fine place to enjoy the outdoors and feel the strong wind in your face.

Discover the outdoors— in Detroit?

It's a long way from the north woods, but the city of Detroit will soon have its own "Outdoor Adventure & Discovery Center."

To be located at 1900 Atwater Street along the Detroit Riverfront—site of the former Globe Trading Company—the facility will provide residents and visitors of all ages with an innovative destination offering hands-on, interactive experiences in outdoor recreation.

The \$12.8 million, 42,000-square-foot building will house a ropes challenge course, an archery range, and simulated experiences like kayaking, fishing and skeet shooting, as well as instructional areas where visitors can learn important outdoor skills.

Depending on your interests, you will be able to learn about pitching a tent, building a campfire and a range of similar things. Other activities will focus on natural resources management.

Michigan educators, meanwhile, will find "extended classroom opportunities" that will complement learning plans with integrated natural resources, biology and environmental lessons.

This is just one step in a multi-phase project to redevelop downtown Detroit. Renovation of the building was to begin this fall.

Great Lakes "backslide"

Water quality agreement slammed

The recent renewal of a 40-year-old agreement between Canada and the United States to restore and maintain the quality of water in the Great Lakes has been slammed by two observers.

James Bruce, former director of the Canadian Center for Inland Waters, and Chris Wood, author of *Dry Spring: The Coming Water Crisis of North America*, said the agreement "sets eloquent objectives and worthy principles," but neglects "hard number goals and actions to reach them."

In an opinion piece published recently in the *Toronto Star*, the critics said there are some improvements to the document, but it "puts off for further negotiation the setting of any clear targets or indicators" aimed at a "healthy habitat" for humans and wildlife.

The program of research the agreement sets out is somewhat "superfluous," they said, when it comes to the effects of what some believe is widespread climate change as a result of human activity.

As a result, the same threats that prompted the original Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement in 1972 are back—"dead zones" in Lake

Erie and blooming algae that "may release deadly liver and other toxins," they said.

Human health issues are not prominent in the renewed agreement, according to Bruce and Wood. Nor does it contain any remedial measures to adapt to these conditions, they said.

In the original agreement, each country committed to several pollution-control measures to achieve specific objectives. This time, these are left up to the two countries to work out over the next five years.

And there is reportedly no commitment to continue working toward unmet or ongoing commitments from earlier versions.

There are other problems, as well, according to Bruce and Wood—some perhaps inconsequential and others more revealing.

For example, the "unresolved issue of persistent toxic chemicals has been discreetly renamed 'chemicals of mutual concern,'" they said.

"Meanwhile, the water in the Great Lakes continues to backslide."

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