The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is seeking public comment on proposed aquatic nuisance species (ANS) controls that can be used to prevent the transfer of algae, crustaceans, fish and plants between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River systems via rivers and other aquatic pathways. The Corps is preparing a feasibility study and environmental impact statement in consultation with other federal agencies, Native American tribes, state agencies, local governments and non-governmental units. The public comment period will run through February 21, 2013.

More than 90 options and technologies for controlling invasive species have been identified so far, including hydrologic separation of the basins, modification of water pathways, use of barriers to prevent the transfer of nuisance species moving on watercraft, and removal of nuisance species. Among other things, the organization has been preparing a feasibility study and environmental impact statement in consultation with other federal agencies, Native American tribes, state agencies, local governments and non-governmental units. The public comment period will run through February 21, 2013.

The Corps of Engineers will formulate plans using one or more of these controls based on four criteria—completeness, effectiveness, efficiency and acceptability. Comments may be submitted online at www.glmis.anl.gov, or by writing to GLMIRIS ANS Control Screening, 111 N. Gower Street, Suite 600, Chicago, Illinois 60606. They may also be hand-delivered to the Chicago office.

Not only do Asian carp threaten Lake Michigan’s multi-billion dollar fishery, but organisms like zebra mussels and quagga mussels have ridden canal waters out of the Great Lakes and into the Mississippi basin. From there, they have hitched rides on recreational boats towed over the Rocky Mountains and now plague irrigation and other federal agencies, Native American tribes, state agencies, local governments and non-governmental units. The public comment period will run through February 21, 2013.

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A perspective on lake-effect snowfall totals

In addition to frigid temperatures, significant amounts of lake-effect snowfall fell on Michigan and other areas in the Great Lakes region during the latter half of January. A few places in northern Lower Michigan, for example, saw 10 inches of snow in a 48-hour period ending January 22, according to the Weather Underground website (wunderground.com). Western New York State saw even greater totals with more than 24 inches falling in some areas during the same period. Additional accumulations followed.

The Great Lakes—the largest fresh-water bodies in the world—are unique in producing extraordinary snowfalls of this nature, officials say. Except for Lake Superior, they remain mostly ice-free all winter and can produce such storms at any time, although the greatest accumulations often occur in November and December, because the waters are still relatively warm and able to produce more vapor to the atmosphere.

The mercury registered minus five degrees the morning of Jan. 17 at the Pt. Iroquois Lighthouse on Whitefish Bay in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Portions of the U.P. are among the snowiest locations east of the Rocky Mountains.

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Big Wheels Rollin’

Log-bauling big wheels such as these on display at Hartwick Pines State Park were indispensable pieces of equipment at lumber camps throughout northern Michigan during the heyday of logging operations. They weren’t easy to manage, though, and required strong men and even stronger horses to maneuver through the woods. (See story at right from The North Woods Call archives.)

Comments sought on invasive species

(Continued from Page 1)

hydroelectric systems across the west. “This is not about Asian carp,” Peter Aminn, a Great Lakes author who is managing director of the University of Notre Dame’s Environmental Change Initiative, told the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel in December. “This is about two artificially connected watersheds that many people argue never should have been connected.”

Fixing the problem, according to The Journal-Sentinel, would require a massive public works project that would cost at least $4 billion and take years to complete. It would also require dramatic sewer treatment upgrades for the area.

Process for Michigan wolf season outlined

A process that could result in recommendations for a potential wolf hunting season was outlined at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) meeting in December. The recommendations are expected to be revealed by early summer.

The update, which was requested by NRC Chair J.R. Richardson, covered the history of wolves in Michigan and the forthcoming process for determining how a public hunting and trapping opportunity could be structured.

According to the presentation by the Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) Adam Bump, there has been a correlation between wolf density and livestock depredation events in the Upper Peninsula, warranting consideration of a hunting season.

In January, the DNR was to begin a wolf abundance survey and meet with tribal biologicals per the 1836 Consent Decree. Tribal consultation will continue throughout the process, DNR officials said.

In February, there will be a wolf forum meeting, followed by public engagement through a series of meetings in March and another wolf forum meeting in April. The season structure could be proposed as early as May or June.

“We commend the (Department of Natural Resources) for acting swiftly to outline a transparent and scientific process for moving forward with a wolf season, said Erin McDonough, executive director of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs.

Lame Ducks

The Michigan League of Conservation Voters “Lame Duck Environmental Scorecard” is available for download on the MLCV website. See how your legislator voted on issues concerning the state’s land, air and water at: www.michiganlcv.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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Our 60th Year: Looking Back to Feb. 3, 1954

—From the pages of The North Woods Call—

The big wheels of lumber camps needed strong men

The big wheels were killers. It was a brave and a cautious man who walked beside the long tongue ahead of the wheels. It swung wickedly as though the big wheels hit a stump —like an evil snake hitting out at a man’s ribs, ready to knock him to the ground for the big wheels to crush.

In Clarence Bergery of Bagley Township, the big wheels remain vividly alive. “Sure, I drove the big wheels,” he said. “They could kill a man. Did kill my uncle Warren over near Boyne Falls. Quite a few guys got killed by them.

It had been a long time since he’d seen big wheels, he admitted.

“Not many around anymore anywhere,” he said. “They was big — about eight feet high and eight feet between the wheels. Guys skid bunches—ten or twelve logs—with a chain around them. We’d un-hitch the team and put the pole up in the air. The guys would chain the bunches on and we’d pull the pole down until it raised them logs off the ground. The hind ends would drag. Going down hill with the big wheels, we’d tie a big log on the back to cut the speed. The load was heavy.”

And the teams were made up of big horses, he said. “Most teams were 3,000 to 3,600 pounds. They had to be to pull those big wheels.”

The spokes and axels were oak, Bergery said, but if one broke the blacksmiths repaired them with maple or elm. “They had about six-inch tires,” he said, “and blacksmiths had to be good to fix them—to tighten them when they got dry, or fix the spokes.”

In the 30 years that he worked in the woods, “I guess I done about everything—drove skidding teams, sawed and even helped in the cook shanty,” Bergery said.

It was west of Wolverine that he drove the big wheels. “No other way to get lumber out during the summer,” he said. “In the winter, we had the sleighs.”

“I remember wading in the snow when it was really deep,” he said. “I was savin’ one year. You couldn’t tell where you dropped a tree— couldn’t see the top (because) the snow was so deep.

“Cutting all that timber stopped the snow around here, too. The miles of big timber gave moisture to the air. In a big woods, the air was always moist. Trees give out moisture. Take the trees away and you don’t get the snows and rains of the old days.

“I remember walking a mile to school in the winter. We didn’t have snow plows, but a roller would come along, pulled by eight or ten teams. The big roller would pack the snow down, so folks could get through.

“By spring, the big banks on either side would be melted away and the rolled road would be standing up four feet high,” he said.

“Every camp had music. There was always a couple of mouth organs—sometimes a fiddler. Best one I remember was an old Frenchman from across the Straits. And there was a saw guy who could really make songs. It was in the camp over near Johannesburg.”

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**A Conservation Conversation: Josh Greenberg**

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 Josh Greenberg of Gates Au Sable Lodge, located on the banks of the mainstream Au Sable River at 471 Stephan Bridge Road east of Grayling, Michigan. Josh is a member of Anglers of the Au Sable, a premier Michigan conservation organization. Centrally located in a river system that features more than 100 miles of prime trout water, the Gates Lodge is a major fly-fishing destination—featuring cozy accommodations, hearty food and a complete line of outdoor fly-fishing gear.

The river—with its gentle currents and shallow gravel bottom—is “heaven” to fly fishers, who call it “The Holy Water.”

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

My father has been involved in conservation and environmental issues for as long as I can remember. Being an angler since a young age, naturally an interest develops in preserving the environment you’re having on the water.

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

When I moved to Michigan, I was thrust into a more proactive role working for Rusty Gates—who was a conservationist through and through. But my real involvement began when he became ill (he passed away in 2009) and I switched from a fishing guide to the front desk of Gates Lodge. Being involved in conservation comes with the job. In fact, they’re almost inseparable. I can’t do what he did, but I try my best.

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

Water, water, and water: hydrofracturing, existing pipelines, and smaller point-source threats due to weak regulations by state and federal agencies. These would include excessive withdrawals, pollution of ground and surface water, and abandoned wells.

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

Don’t trade the long-term health of our water for short-term benefits. We are dealing with energy interests that are very wealthy and are used to getting what they want. The current use of hydrofracturing techniques to extract natural gas has not been adequately vetted. The entire practice—from beginning to end will take a concerted effort by conservation groups—as well as from the energy companies—to avoid an incident similar to that which befell the Kalamazoo River. If not, it’ll happen again and again.

**What are the barriers to solving these problems?**

The rivers are too often abused by liberal regulations placed upon private companies by state and federal agencies. From energy companies wanting to pump treated water into the river—as in the Kolke Creek case—to the private dam on the Pigeon that failed, there are a wealth of small threats that, cumulatively, could destroy the water quality in our state.

**Please encourage others to join the North Woods Call community today!**

Marginal lands—a fuel source

Marginal lands—those unsuitable for food crops—can serve as prime real estate for meeting the nation’s alternative energy production goals, according to Michigan State University (MSU) researchers.

In the current issue of Nature, a team of researchers led by MSU shows that marginal lands represent a huge untapped resource to grow mixed species cellulosic biomass—plants grown specifically for fuel production—which could annually produce up to 5.5 billion gallons of ethanol in the Midwest alone.

"Understanding the environmental impact of widespread biofuel production is a major unanswered question both in the U.S. and worldwide," said Ilya Gefand, lead author and MSU postdoctoral researcher. "We estimate that using marginal lands for growing cellulosic biomass crops could provide up to 215 gallons of ethanol per acre with substantial greenhouse gas mitigation."

The notion of making better use of marginal land has been around for nearly 15 years. However, this is the first study to provide an estimate for the greenhouse gas benefits, as well as an assessment of the total potential for these lands to produce significant amounts of biomass, he added.

Focusing on 10 Midwest states, Great Lakes Bioenergy researchers from MSU and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory used 20 years of data from MSU’s Kellogg Biological Station to characterize the comparative productivity and greenhouse gas impacts of different crops, including corn, poplar, alfalfa and old-field vegetation.

“The value of marginal land for energy production has been long speculated and often discounted,” he said. “This study shows that these lands could make a major contribution to transportation energy needs while providing substantial climate and—if managed properly—conservation benefits.”

This is the first study to show that grasses and other non-woody plants that grow naturally on unmanaged lands are sufficiently productive to make ethanol production worthwhile.

—Michigan State University

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**Mary Louise Sheppard**

**EDITOR’S NOTE: The late-January edition of The North Woods Call went to press before the following information was received. Although a related story ran previously, here is the official obituary notice.**

Mary Lou Sheppard, longtime Charlevoix resident and owner, with husband Glen, of The North Woods Call, passed away at home, December 29, surrounded by family and friends.

Mary Lou, daughter of Leon and Juanita (Hardy) Ouvry—was born May 18, 1933, in Detroit, and grew up in Traverse City and Mancelona. She later lived in Boulder, Colorado, before moving to Charlevoix in 1960 with her first husband, James Alspaugh.

Mary Lou’s passion in life was her garden of flowers and vegetables, which she shared with friends and strangers alike. Her yearly report of the numbers of quarts of raspberries picked tickled her pink, as did all the new friends she made through tending concerts, visiting friends, sisters and children, and walking with her precious dog, Bitty. Her only regret was not being able to travel for the next 10 years. Of dying from cancer, she said “This is not what I had planned!”

Mary Lou was preceded in death by husband Glen. She is survived by her daughters, Cyndi Gardner of Oakland, California; Pamela Alspaugh, with Mary’s dog Bitty, of Bellevue, Washington; Sherry Marshall of Midland, Michigan; and Jacalyn (Sass) Anderson of Elk Rapids, Michigan; 10 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Mary Lou wished to thank her many friends and family for their company and assistance during her illness. Her family and friends will have a celebration of her life later in May.

Please share your thoughts, anecdotes, stories and photos with Mary Lou’s family on their online guest book at: www.winchesterfuneralhome.com/Guest-Books.

For a more lasting memorial, the family asks that Mary Lou be remembered through memorial contributions to Hospice of Michigan, Traverse City Branch.
The ravages of road salt

It seems insane sometimes to pay $20,000 or more for a vehicle and then drive it during Michigan winters. Road salt can kill plants and even wildlife that ingest the salt. It can get into their food supply through contaminated groundwater and soil. There also have been studies showing that road salt might cause cancer in people who are frequently in contact with it.

And it does a lot of structural damage to highways and roadways—putting large potholes in the pavement, and breaking down concrete and asphalt over time, which causes road surfaces bridges and parking lots. Not to mention it what does to vehicles. This combined damage to vehicles, roads and highway infrastructures has been estimated at around $7 billion each year. With road salt costing $100 per ton, loading salt at even the slightest hint of inclement weather, it is well worth looking into possible solutions for this dilemma.

It seems to us that the debate ought to focus more on the second Amendment & you

We’re not sure what the average North Woods Call reader thinks about the current debate over “gun control,” which is occurring at the federal, state and local levels. The president is threatening more aggressive action and comments by our elected and appointed representatives are all over the map—depending on whether they’re up for re-election soon.

We’d like to hear from some of you on this matter.

The ghosts of Deward: A study in mismanagement

Ongoing debates over open pit mining and hydraulic fracturing in drilling operations have made me think of earlier times when Michi- gan’s resources were plundered as—particularly during the late 19th and early 20th century log- ging of the Deward tract in the east end of Michigan’s fabulously rich mining region. I first visited the site near the intersection of Antrim, Kalkaska, Crawford, and Montmorency counties in 1978 with the late Ford Kellum, a retired Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologist and sometime editor of Michigan’s conservationists. Kellum was irritated at de- velopers and oil companies that, day, which he said were continuing the abusive practices that turned the fragile land surrounding Deward into a case study of mismanage- ment.

As one of the last remaining stands of white pine near the end of Michigan’s fabulous mining era, the majestic forest offered tremendous potential for a hungry industry. By the late 1970s, the site was described as God-forsaken brush country, punctured by oil & gas wells, the remnants of numerous other development activities.

What we saw that day was a virtual wasteland of weathered and decaying stumps on soil so delicate that bruises left by horse- drawn wagon wheels more than 60 years earlier could still be seen. That’s why Deward, once a major old town site, over long-abandoned railroad grades and past the huge coniferous forest that once stood there that once ran without stopping day and night, producing as many as 52 million board feet of lumber in a single year.

The town began to die, of course, as soon as the last giant pine completed its run through the mill in 1902, as suddenly as the town was created, the mill was dismantled and moved away. The local population gradually di- minished until the state lost interest and des- serted the site in August 1932.

Deward had become the last of Michigan’s lumbering ghost towns, leaving behind a peculiar type land mass marked only by the huge white pine stumps. Road salt and fires did too poor to bring the forests back kept much of the land from recovering. During the 1920s and 1930s, huge flocks of prairie chickens could be flushed from almost any- where on the tract, but—due to the fires, natural growth and de- velopment—they eventually disappeared. Shaved-tail grouses were introduced south of Deward in 1933 and did well for a while. But they finally disappeared due to the fires in 1933.

For more than a generation, there was little activity on the De- ward site. Then, the logging company con- struction crew moved through the area, uprooting stumps and leav- ing a large scar on the land. Later, a large development firm took over 12 square miles of the tract surrounding Lake Harold in Antrim County. Roads were cut and paved, recreational facilities and an airport were built, and lots were sold to eager buyers. Elsewhere on the tract, drilling operations continue today.

Several years ago, I returned to Deward with my nine-year- old son and a former college roommate. We camped for two days at the old town site, hiked along the Manistee River and searched for memorabilia.

Book Review

“We Still Hold These Truths” by Matthew Spalding

The North Woods Journal

North Woods Journal by Mike VanBuren

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Recently, we dropped by a used literature sale at a library near our home and discovered this book in the boxes of discs:

some would say it has little to do with the preservation of natural resources, but maybe it has something to do with the conservation of the United States. Kellum was particularly in light of the ongoing debate over the Second Amendment.

Longtime North Woods Call publisher Glen Sheppard often said, “There is only one side in any issue involving natural re- sources—NATURE’S!” In fact, he often said this not just for many years on the publication’s editorial page.

Recently, I reviewed a column that appeared in Pravda, the state-run Russian newspaper. The writer, Stanislav Mishin, advised Americans to keep their guns. The title, “How the Communists got their guns,” is well chosen. When the Communists did what they took power in Russia, he said, was to dispossess the population, which opened the door to numerous other abuses. The Second Amend- ment, Mishin said, is “a rare light in an ever-darkening room” and should be honored and defended.

admit—the author argues that America’s founding principles found a consistent, meaningful basis in the universally true understanding of human liberty.

Spalding reminds us that con- stitutional government gets its legiti- macy from the consent of the governed and exists to secure the natural rights with which we are endowend by our creator. He ex- plains how the principle of human equality is expressed in the con- stitutional rule of law, and in the forms and institutions of limited constitutional government.

We Hold These Truths argues that the way forward for the republic is not to be found in rejecting the very idea of self-evident truths and enduring principles. Instead, the author says we must transcend the parti- san ideologies and social interests that divide us, and re-create a liberal national consensus built upon unchanging principles that unite all Americans in a common purpose.

In 1952, when dedicating the new National Archives building in Washington, D.C.—which houses both the Declaration of Indepen- dence and the U.S. Constitution—Democrat Harry Truman said, “Liberty can be lost and it will be lost if our forefathers’ documents are regarded not as the supreme expression of our pro- found belief, but merely as cu- riosities in glass cases.”
Winter canvas: Deep snow, bear tracks and vinyl potato chips

Cool weather camping in Michigan is a cinch. Barring excessive rain or snow, early April and late October are just about perfect. Few bugs, no crowds, and a late-night campfire to ward off the chill. Add a beer or two and some thoughtful conversation. Not bad.

Winter camping, however, is a totally different animal, especially if you’re eccentric enough to try it in a tent. Years ago, a friend and I had some free time during a bitterly cold January weekend. Seeking a challenge, we loaded all our gear into the trunk of my small car and headed for the Edmore Game Area.

Snow was still falling when we reached our destination, with the temperature hovering around five degrees. A shovel was required to open a parking space beside the county road, and later to clear a patch of ground for our campsite. The snow was at least a foot deep.

We set up our antique-but-eyewashy canvas pup tent in one of the more remote spots in the game area, a good quarter mile from the road.

We managed to stay warm by keeping busy, first with the tent, then by collecting dead wood for a fire. Both of us were warmly dressed, though my buddy declined to wear a hat of any type, for reasons unknown. I’m still not sure how he retained his ears.

We rugged men filled up on trail mix, chocolate, and canned goods heated over an open fire. Darkness fell quickly, followed by clearing skies and a brilliant half moon.

Since most of our food supply was already depleted, and it was too early to contemplate sleep, we came up with the creative idea of going for a hike into the winter woods.

As we set off, the insides of our nostrils were already crinkling in the cold. Our beards and moustaches gathered snotty chunks of ice, which had to be removed frequently. We skirted numerous snowdrifts and thickets while wandering, stirring up an occasional cottontail. Not much else was moving amidst the illuminated trees, ridges and hollows—just us and the bunnies.

We walked by an isolated cow pasture where a Hereford bull had once caused me to leap to safety over a four-foot-high stock fence. No doubt the herd was tucking snugly in their distant barn with ample hay and water to last the long winter night. I briefly considered joining them so as to get out of the cold, but my friend insisted we go on, even though our eyebrows were going numb.

Coming to the edge of a small bog known for its grousse population, a line of tracks in the moon-lit snow caught our attention. The prints were large.

“Bear,” we whispered in unison. Acting on instinct, we decided to track the creature. Backwards. Opposite the direction of travel. No need to aggravate a big animal equipped with sharp teeth, claws and an unpredictable disposition, we concluded.

Not having snowshoes, our strength eventually began to wear down. Luckily we came upon a road near a landmark we recognized. We started the two-mile trek back to camp with renewed energy.

Morning dawned crisp and sunny. The inside tent walls were stiff with frost, causing a mini-snowstorm as we moved about. Having left nothing available for breakfast, we soon hauled our gear (and our stiff, shivering bodies) back to the car to begin our trip home.

A newsman on the radio reported a low temperature that night of 25 degrees below.

I’m not sure, but I think we both decided at that point not to apply for any upcoming Arctic expeditions.

Doug Freeman is a writer and amateur naturalist living near the Lake Michigan shoreline north of Montague, Michigan.
Four ways to tell if it’s winter in a Michigan farmhouse

Try as we might, there are corners of our 19th century farmhouse where it still feels like 1860. There’s a certain wilderness within, a physical indwelling that will not be tamed no matter how much we cull and insulate.

You feel it when the hawkwind kneads around the eaves and rattles the 12-pane windows. You see it personified in the tree-trunk floor posts, their bark still on, that stand like petrified sentinels in the cobblestone Michigan basement.

When I was younger, stronger and dumber I figured to have it all modernized in three, maybe four years, tops. Now I know it’s a battle I’ll never win—and perhaps am not meant to.

As long as I’m here, I’ve decided to keep some regions of the house forever wild. Which is to say cold, dark, dirt-floured, unpainted and congenial to over-wintering rodents. From December to late March, that means the outdoors will often be as close as the next room. Even without a calendar, here’s how we know that winter has arrived:

You can see your breath in the back living room. Ironically, the back living room was once called a summer kitchen. Meals were cooked there in hot weather, so that the kitchen’s wood stove wouldn’t overheat the house.

The room itself was built above a dirt-floured crawl space. I went down there once to insulate and got briefly wedged between the hand-hewn timber beams and bare earth. I struck it then as the kind of dark, forgotten cavity where a serial killer would hide dismembered body parts. We’ve since added a wood-burning fireplace that can raise the temperature to near 70. With no fire, though, temps hover in the upper 20s. The bright side? There’s virtually no chill.

The Mouse Drawer has fall occupancy. To keep rodents out of a 19th century farm house, you’d have to encase it in concrete blast walls like those around the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. Abstain that, and because my idiotic cats could care less, I’ve become the resident mouse doctor.

It’s a typical case of asymmetrical warfare. I come equipped with my human hubris and conventional American weaponry—i.e. traps baited with peanut butter (crunchy works better than creamy). The mice, like armed peasants everywhere, know and own the local terrain. I’m just another invading infidel.

Once the cold drives them indoors in the fall, I usually trap six or seven mice under the kitchen sink. After those early victories, a defiant few retreat to the dreaded Mouse Drawer. It’s a narrow rectangle of incomprehensible ground high just left of the stove, a Khyber Pass where all my incursions meet with fealty. We do some cooking utensils there, but my wife considers them accursed and unclean. Trust me: no measure of disinfection could render them touchable. The icy phrase, “That came from the Mouse Drawer?” ends all discussion about the author.

The storeeroom doubles as a refrigerator: Need more room to cool a few six packs of beer? Get a kettle of soup that’s still too hot for the refrigerator? Want to store apples, baskets of summer squash, bundles of sweet onions and clumps of dried dill? Then let the cold work for you. Turn your store room/mud room into a hallibut walk-in-cooler.

Yes, you’ve got to overcome the prudish, bourgeois notion that it’s uneconomical to store edibles beside a rusty tool box. But what’s the difference between 35 degrees in a refrigerator and 35 degrees in a mudroom? You think the food cares? Besides, we’ve had no problems out there with mice. They’d rather stay in the main house where it’s warmer.

The region and ruin of the ice-boxy: Adom Old houses leak heat the way press secretaries leak scurrilous news tips. On a steel roof in January, that escaped heat melts the snow to make icicles. Under the conditions I’ve seen them grow six feet long as big as around as a girl’s waist.

They hang with homicidal intent, stalkacacies perched on the cliffs of doom. Until, at around 1 a.m. on some foggy night, they crash and boom to earth like calving icebergs in a Norwegian fjord. Startling in the extreme, but not altogether unwelcome. It’s simply the Lord’s own water music, come to tell the old house that winter has loosened its grip.

Barney’s Lake Nature Preserve

The Little Traverse Conservancy added a 173-acre parcel to the Barney’s Lake Nature Preserve on Beaver Island during 2012. The new preserve, shown above, includes more than a half-mile of Lake Michigan frontage. It was one of the most successful land protection years in the organization’s 40-year history.

More than 5,200 acres of land and 5.75 miles of shoreline were set aside at various locations in the Conservancy’s five-county service area. Land protection highlights also included 3,810 acres with nearly two miles of Lake Superior shoreline that was purchased and set aside in partnership with the State of Michigan near a 500-acre addition to the Allo-Leopold Nature Preserve on Marquette Island in the Les Cheneauxs. The Conservancy also took possession of the following donated land: the 120-acre James V. Foster Nature Preserve in eastern Chippewa County—including the 25-acre Hartley Lake—near De Tour Village; the 150-acre Pigeon River Preserve along a mile of Pigeon River shoreline; and the 148-acre Hymas Woods Nature Preserve in Emmet County. More than a dozen work days were also held at various preserves, in addition to other land stewardship efforts. Finally, more than 4,300 students or children participated in Conservancy led environmental education outings and programs. The 4,400-member Little Traverse Conservancy is the oldest regional, nonprofit land trust in Michigan.

Bleak report on the impacts of climate change

In somewhat of a doomsday scenario, three University of Michigan researchers say that “climate change” will lead to more frequent and intense Midwest heat waves, which have prohibited the sustainable production of grading air and water quality and threatening public health.

Intense rainstorms and floods will also become more common, they predict, and existing risks to the Great Lakes will be exacerbated.

Aquatic ecologist Donald Scavia, Dan Brown of the School of Natural Resources and Environment (NSNRE) and Rosina Bierbaum of the SNRE and the School of Public Health were lead convening authors of chapters in that 1,100-page National Climate Assessment, which was written by a team of more than 240 scientists. Missy Stults, a doctoral student and research assistant with Bierbaum, was a contributing author to the “adaptation chapter.”

“Climate change impacts in the Midwest are expected to be as diverse as the landscape itself,” Scavia said. “Impacts are already being felt in the forests, in agriculture, in the Great Lakes and in our urban centers.”

In the Midwest, extreme rainfall events and floods have become more common over the last century, the report says, and those trends are expected to continue, causing erosion, declining water quality and negative impacts on transportation, agriculture, human health and infrastructure.

The authors also warn that climate change will likely worsen a host of existing problems in the Great Lakes, including changes in the range and distribution of important commercial and recreationally valued fish species, increases in invasive species, declining beach health, and more frequent harmful algal blooms. However, declines in ice cover on the Great Lakes may lengthen the commercial shipping season.

In agriculture, longer growing seasons and rising carbon dioxide levels are likely to increase the yields of some Midwest crops over the next few decades, according to the report, though those gains will be increasingly offset by the more frequent occurrence of heat waves, droughts and floods. In the long term, combined stresses associated with climate change are expected to decrease agricultural productivity in the Midwest.

The composition of the region’s forests is expected to change as rising temperatures drive habitats for many tree species northward. Many iconic tree species such as paper birch, quaking aspen, balsam fir and black spruce are projected to shift out of the United States into Canada.

The rate of warming in the Midwest has accelerated over the past few decades, the report says. Between 1900 and 2010, the average Midwest air temperature increased by more than 1 degree Fahrenheit. However, between 1950 and 2010 the average temperature increased twice as quickly, and between 1980 and 2010 it increased three times as quickly.

According to the researchers, the warming has been more rapid at night and during the winter. The trends are consistent with the projected effects of increased concentrations of heat-trapping greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide released by the burning of fossil fuels.

Projections for regionally averaged temperature increases by the middle of the century, relative to 1970-2000, are approximately 3.8 degrees Fahrenheit for a scenario with substantial emissions reductions and 4.9 degrees for the current high-emissions scenario. Projections for the end of the century in the Midwest are about 5.6 degrees for the low-emissions scenario and 8.5 degrees for the high-emissions scenario, the report says.

The draft National Climate Assessment report is available at http://ncacad.globalchange.gov.

—The University of Michigan

Technology aids thirsty crops during drought

While many of the nation’s crops withered under last year’s punishing drought, Michigan State University (MSU) researchers dramatized—indeed, increased corn and soybean production on test farms using revolutionary new water-saving membranes.

The subsurface water retention technology process was developed by Alvin Smucker, MSU professor of soil biophysics and ag-bio research scientist. His invention uses porous, engineered films, strategically placed at various depths below a plant’s root zone to retain soil water. Proper spacing also permits internal drainage during excess rainfall and provides space for root growth.

“This technology has the potential to change the lives and regional landscapes domestically and internationally where highly permeable, sandy soils have prohibited the sustainable production of food,” Smucker said. “Water retention membranes reduce quantities of supplemental irrigation, protect potable groundwater supplies, and enable more efficient use and control of fertilizers and pesticides.”

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DISTRICT 1

On a call from a subject who wanted to claim a spot while they went back to their actual residence. When the CO arrived and checked a local unattended lines and were ticked for the fourth time in the past five years.

DISTRICT 2

While on patrol in the Garden Plains area, CO Mike Evink contacted a subject in a vehicle. Once the officer contacted the driver, “Hey, do you remember me?” CO Evink asked him. The subject was a vehicle with vio- lations, including unregistered snowmobiles, with too many lines, unattended lines, open inquisitors in/on motor vehicles, no helmets, and asked him to be his alibi for proving that he had not been in a location. The forester who works the Bay/Saginaw State Game Area (SGA) said that it was and then asked him to be his alibi for proving that he had not been in the area. The homeowner then obtained a search warrant for the fourth time in the past five years.

DISTRICT 3

CO Danuane Budreau contacted a subject subject was standing over a large hole in the ground containing the remains of approximately 30 ducks. The subject used to shoot the turkey.

DISTRICT 4

While on patrol, CO Holly Pennoni traveled a road in a truck with two deer hunters standing on the road. CO Pennoni followed the horse to a nearby residence and searched for the owner. The CO observed a barn door open and went to see if the resident was inside. From the adjacent barn door, the CO observed an untagged deer that was hanging. A few minutes later, the homeowner re- turned and the horse was safely secured. When asked about the untagged deer, the homeowner stated that he had tagged the deer earlier and was hunting for a buck. After being presented with this in- formation, the subject admitted to taking the deer without a license. The deer was seized and a ticket was issued for the illegal taking of a deer.

DISTRICT 5

CO Brian Lebel was on patrol in Mecosta County when he located a group of hunters exiting a deer. He then contacted the three vehicles that were still parked. A few days later, the CO received a complaint from central dispatch that the bow hunters had talked to just reported their pop-up deer blind stolen, with fresh tracks leading to where the subject was looking for it. Another hunter was parked. A record check revealed a high rate of speed toward their location. Upon making contact with the occupants, who were also part of the group for hunting that was chasing the subject and questioned the homeowner as to why he and the turkey were chasing each other. On further investigation, CO Hudson received a confession and located a 12 gauge shotgun subject used to shoot the turkey. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 7

CO Chuck Townes reported that a subject involved in a poaching complaint, a distraught subject approached the CO and wanted to know what was going to happen to one of his friends. When asked to leave the scene by deputies assisting the COs in the area, the subject became hostile and refused to leave. The subject smelted of intoxicants and when asked to leave the scene, drove off and was apprehended by the subject’s residence. Inves- tigation revealed the subject’s blood alcohol content was over the legal limit and he was in pos- session of a loaded, unregistered, 9mm handgun that was sitting next to him in the vehicle. Enfor- cement action was taken.

CO Pete Purdy contacted two deer hunters on private property. When asked if they had their deer in their vehicle, they first denied it and then said that they didn’t carry their tags afraid in fear that they would lose them. Then they advised the CO that they had too many holes in their hunting clothes and were afraid they would fall out. They then advised that they didn’t think carrying tags was legal when deer hunting applied to pri- vate property. Finally they stated that they normally don’t tag their deer until they get their deer home and field dress their deer. Enforce- ment action was taken.

CO Joel Lundberg received a call from a subject who wanted a bobcat sealed on the last day of season. The subject stated that he didn’t want to talk any more. The CO then observed a war- rant for the trapper’s residence. A complaint at the trapper’s residence was checked and found to contain photos and dates the bobcat was taken. The bobcat was taken out of the storage shed for the COs to look at. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Phil Hudson observed a subject chasing a turkey in a field to be decided to sit back and watch for a while. The turkey chased the subject back to his res- idence and then the hunter walked back to CO Hudson’s location. The CO observed blood coming from the turkey’s head so the CO decided that the hunter had shot it and that it had a small BB hole in its head. Hudson found the CO’s residence where the turkey chased the subject and questioned the homeowner as to why he and the turkey were chasing each other. On further investigation, CO Hudson received a confession and located a 12 gauge shotgun subject used to shoot the turkey. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mark Papineau received a complaint regarding a large plane of black smoke coming from a house. When CO Papineau responded to the area and was able to see the smoke from several miles away. The CO then pulled into the driveway, several subjects quickly jumped into ve- hicles and fled. The remaining subject was standing over a large hole in the ground containing the remains of approximately 30 ducks. The subject smelled of intoxicants and when asked to leave the scene, drove off and was apprehended by the subjects. The subject admitted to shooting the subject’s blood alcohol content was over the legal limit and he was in pos- session of a loaded, unregistered, 9mm handgun that was sitting next to him in the vehicle. Enfor- cement action was taken.

CO Muneeb Ahmed contacted a subject for taking a bobcat during the closed season. When the subject was talking to the subject, the subject acknowledged that he had shot the bobcat in December who had sealed a bobcat and traps within a 24 hour time period. The trapper was identified and re- ported for taking a bobcat during the closed season. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Steve Menk contacted a subject to a complaint in which he found an overwhelming illegal amount of deer bait, and an eight point buck had lost his tag which was illegally taken with a crossbow. The subject tried to impress the CO that he had tagged the deer with someone else’s tag which was taken with a crossbow which was taken with a crossbow.

CO Matt Themnick received a complaint that there was a truck with two deer hunters standing on the road. The truck was identified and re- ceived his second ticket within a few weeks for failure to check traps within a 24 hour period.

CO Nick Torsky and Sgt. Joe Molnar contacted an individual who had shot a deer and had stated he’d shot it with his bow. The COs interviewed the suspect and he admitted that his brother had shot the bobcat in December while deer hunting and he put it in the freezer until he could have it mounted. Charges are being filed against him and he has been scheduled for a hearing.

CO Jon Warner stopped a large group of ORVs being oper- ated without helmets and with ex- 4

 puni- sional activity.

THE NORTH WOODS CALL Early February 2013 Page 7

Conservation Officer Logs (12/24/12 through 1/8/13)

Tip-ups and fishing tournament bring violations galore for several folks

Become a North Woods Call Partner

Please join our efforts to keep readers fully informed about conser- vation and outdoor issues by providing us with news tips and/or pho- tographs.

Please send your tips, ideas and photos to: editor@mynorthwoodscall.com.
January Skies
Dark clouds envelop the Straits of Mackinac on this windswept day in mid-January 2013. Temperatures were sub-zero in many parts of Michigan—particularly the northern Lower & Upper peninsulas—which resulted in cold fingers and stinging faces for The North Woods Call photography team.

Readin’, writin’, and raisin’ salmon
Learning the ins-and-outs of fish-raising is the aim of students and teachers who participate in the “Salmon in the Classroom” program.

The year-long education program sponsored by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) allows teachers to receive fertilized salmon eggs from a state fish hatchery in the fall, hatch them, feed and raise the fry through spring and then release the young salmon into a local river.

And there’s an entire curriculum to guide participants throughout the year.

“Salmon in the Classroom teaches students about everything—from the life history of fish to the importance of the Great Lakes and fishing to Michigan’s traditions and way of life,” said Natalie Elkins, a DNR education specialist who oversees the program. “Even better, it is a great place-based education effort that ties right back to the kids’ communities. Students get invested in and excited about their local rivers and streams, knowing that the smolts they released will return to the very same spot in two to three years to spawn. That connection encourages a long-standing appreciation for Michigan’s natural resources and ecosystem health.”

The program has been in Michigan schools for more than a decade, with 180 schools currently raising salmon through the 2012-13 school year.

It requires a commitment from both educators and their schools. Educators must commit to teaching their students about the Great Lakes ecosystem and fisheries management by raising salmon for almost the entire school year. And schools must purchase the necessary equipment, including a tank, chiller and other supplies, according to Elkins.

The cost—about $1,200—can be a significant hurdle for many schools, but Elkins said there are many generous sportsmen’s organizations and private donors willing to support schools with the needed funding. Many of these sponsors also get involved in helping teachers and students with the program.

For information, visit www.michigan.gov/sic, contact Elkins at (517) 373-6919, or e-mail her at elkins@michigan.gov.

Conservation voters give a report card to the governor
After two years in office, Gov. Rick Snyder has received an average performance grade from the Michigan League of Conservation Voters (MCLV).

“At this point in his time in office, the governor is receiving a passing—though not impressive—grade of ‘C’,” said MCLV Executive Director Lisa Wozniak and President Elizabeth Welch Lykins in their “midterm report card” published recently.

“We have held Governor Snyder accountable for each action he’s taken that has impacted our land, air and water.”

The governor was scored in a variety of important categories, including the Great Lakes and Michigan waters (C+), land conservation (C), clean air and energy (D), transportation (A), agriculture (B), toxics and hazardous chemicals (F), budget issues (C+), and appointments and administrative decisions (C+).

“When MCLV endorsed Gov. Snyder in the 2010 primary election, we had high hopes that his intention to ‘move Michigan forward’ would carry over into the environmental arena,” the report says.

“While we’ve seen, however, is steady improvement in certain areas—such as Great Lakes protection—and backwards movement in regard to subjects like air quality.

“In too many instances, Governor Snyder let the anti-conservation Legislature lead on environmental issues, regardless of significant public opposition.”

The governor did take a critical stand to protect Michigan’s natural resources when he vetoed House Bill 4326—a bill that would have prevented his office from putting in place protections for the Great lakes that are stricter than those at the federal level, according to the report.

“We loudly commended him for this decision, the report says, which both illustrated a strong desire to protect our resources and the kind of leadership we wish we had seen more often. The governor and MCLV agree: We need ‘reliably positive action’ in order to ‘move Michigan forward.’ At times we agreed with his means by which to do so, but more often than not we found ourselves forced to assign him negative marks for his passivity in the face of devastating legislation. His energy and environmental ad- dress in November 2012 gave him a last-minute boost to his overall grade. We hope it is just the beginning of a renewed effort to take more proactive leadership.”

The full report card can be reviewed at www.michiganlcv.org.