Comments Sought on Invasive Species  
Page 1
Josh Greenberg Talks Conservation  
Page 3
A Perspective on Lake-effect Snow  
Page 1
Predicted Impacts of “Climate Change”  
Page 6
Mary Lou Sheppard Obituary  
Page 3
Governor Snyder Gets Report Card  
Page 8

www.mynorthwoodscall.com
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 quality or flow within a waterway, chemical applications, collection and removal of nuisance species and other controls currently in research and development.

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.glmaris.anl.gov, or by writing to GLMARIS ANS Control Screening, 111 N. Canal, Suite 600, Chicago, Illinois 60606. They may also be hand-delivered to the Chicago office.

Asian carp, zebra mussels and a host of other undesirable species are prolific invaders, costing the United States billions of dollars each year. Among other damaging impacts, they clog water pipes, threaten ecosystems, harm fisheries and compete with native species. Biologists predict the number of unwanted organisms moving on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal from the Mississippi River basin and into Lake Michigan will only grow until the waterway is somehow plugged.

It is much more than a Great Lakes problem because biological pollution travels in both directions on what has been called the “invasive species superhighway.” Not only do Asian carp threaten Lake Michigan’s multi-billion dollar fishery, but organisms like zebra 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 (Continued on Page 2)
Comments sought on invasive species

(Continued from Page 1)

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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 capital city of Lansing.

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THE NORTH WOODS CALL

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 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 Berry 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 anywhere anymore,” he said. “They was big — about eight feet high and eight feet between the wheels. Guys skid bunks—ten or twelve logs—with a chain around them. We’d un-chain 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, Bergey 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,” Bergey 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 saving’ 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 or-gans—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.”

Process for Michigan wolf season outlined

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—Michigan United Conservation Clubs

Big Wheels Rollin’

Log-hauling 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.)
Marginal lands—a fuel source

Marginal lands—those unsuited for food crops—can serve as prime real estate for meeting the nation’s 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
The ravages of road salt

It seems insane somehow to pay $20,000 or more for a vehicle and then drive it during Michigan winters. Road salt has long been the bane of cars and trucks—not to mention the outdoors in general—and we’ve often cursed the use of road salt and the toll it takes on our vehicles.

It happens almost everywhere in cold climates around the United States, whenever the season of harsh weather and snowstorms arrives. Approximately 10 million tons of road salt is dropped on roads throughout the country each winter.

Although this practice succeeds in keeping roads clear of hazardous snow and ice, some critics are concerned that it is harming the environment, and killing plants and wildlife. Road salt can kill plants and even wildlife that ingest the salt. It can get into their food supply through contaminated groundwater and soil and water.

There have also been studies showing that road salt may affect and 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 ruins road surfaces, bridges and parking lots. Not to mention it does to vehicles.

This combined damage to vehicles, roads and highway infrastructures has been estimated at around $7 billion each year.

With county road trucks often spreading salt at even the slightest hint of inclement weather, it is well worth looking into possible solutions for this dilemma.

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

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 executive action and comments from 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 Dewdor: A study in mismanagement

Ongoing debates over open pit mining and hydraulic fracturing in drilling operations have made me think of earlier times when Michigan’s residents were opposed to such actions—particularly during the late 19th and early 20th century log- ing of the Dewdor tract in the state’s Northwoods. I first visited the site near the intersection of Antrim, Kalkaska, and Charlevoix counties in 1978 with the late Ford Kellum, a retired Department of Natural Resources wildlife biologist and sometime advisor about Michigan’s conservationists.

Kellum was irritated at developers and oil companies that day, which he said were continuing the abusive practices that turned the fragile land surrounding Dewdor into a case study of mismanage- ment.

As one of the last remaining stands of virgin white pine near the center of Michigan’s fabulously rich logging era, the majestic forest offered tremendous potential for a hungry industry. By the late 1970s, however, it had already been described as God-for-saken brush country, punctured by oil & gas wells, and covered with various other development activities.

What we saw that day was a vast rural 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. In the late 1800s, mining operations were conducted at the old town site, over long-abandoned railroad grades and past the huge white pine stumps that the mine 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. The roads “sawdusted,” which as suddenly as the town was created, the mill was dismantled and moved away.

The local population gradually diminished until the state’s conservationist deserted the site in August 1932.

Dewdor had become the last of Michigan’s lumbering ghost towns, leaving behind a prime- type land mass marked only by the huge white pine stumps. Roads once filled with soot 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. Shapred-tailed grouses were introduced south of Dewdor in 1935 and did well only until about 1950, at which time they, too, became the victims of growth and develop ment to the point where—at the time of our visit—there were only a few remaining in the area.

For more than a generation, there was little activity on the De wdor tract. Then the Northern Consolid ation construction 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 Kalkaska County. Roads were cut and paved, recreational facilities and an airport were built, and lots were surveyed and sold.

Elsewhere on the tract, drilling operations continue today. Several years ago, I returned to Dewdor with my new father-in-law—a nineteen-year-old 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

“How We Still Hold These Truths” by Matthew Spalding

We recently dropped by a used literature sale at a library near our home and discovered this book in the boxes of discards.

Somehow we say it has little to do with conservation of natural resources, but maybe it has something to do with the conservation of the United States Constitution and particularly in the 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, this is what Nature is all about—her particular kind of harmony and balance, and the laws of nature and nature’s God.

At a time when our country seems to be in the midst of an identity crisis—divided, confused and adrift—the author argues that America’s founding principles formed the “consistent, meaningful and universally true understanding of human liberty.

Spalding reminds us that constitutional government gets its legitimacy from the consent of the governed and exists to secure the natural rights with which we are endowed by our Creator. He explains how the principle of human equality is expressed in the constitutional rule of the United States and in the forms and institutions of limited constitutional government.

We Hold These Truths argues that America’s constitutional government 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 partisan ideologies and special interests that divide us, and re-create a limited national government that builds upon unchanging principles that unite all Americans in a common purpose.

In the 1780s, when drafting the new National Archives building in Washington, D.C.—which houses both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution—Natural growth and a 25-year old pine plantation were being built in an ever-darkening room” and “the latter than the former.

Conservation Quote

“The aged because there are, or ever will be, is dependent on six inches of topsoil and the fact that the rain comes when it is needed, and does not come when it is not needed.”

— Gary Paulsen

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren

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Opinion Page

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Michigan’s Conservation Sentinel Since 1933

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A Newshound Publication
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-busy 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 roused 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 tucked 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 it’s grouse 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. Need no one 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. As we set off, the insides of our nostrils were already crinkling in the cold.

Morning dawned crisp and sunny. The inside tent walls were stiff and remote, 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. Need no one to aggravate a big animal equipped with sharp teeth, claws and an unpredictable disposition, we concluded.

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Despite the fact that my air mattress had deflated due to the intense cold, and broke into vinyl potato chips as I handled it, the mummy bag was still enough to provide for a fairly comfortable night’s sleep. I’ve endured worse.

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 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 primal indwelling that will not be tamed no matter how much we cult and insulate. You detect it when the hawkish wind keens 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 and dirt-shored, 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-floored crawl space. I went down there once to insulate and got briefly wedged between the hand-hewn timber beams and bare earth. It struck me then as the kind of house.

The Mouse Drawer has full occupancy: To keep rodents out of an 19th-century farmhouse, you’d have to encase it in concrete blast walls like those around the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. Absent that, and because my indolent cats could care less, I’ve become the resident mouser.

Barney’s Lake Nature Preserve

The Little Traverse Conservancy added a 22-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 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 5,750 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 for addition to the Allo-Leopold Nature Preserve on Marquette Island and in the Les Cheneauxes. 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 Pine Grove River Preserve along a mile of Pine River shoreline; and the 148-acre Hymus Woods Nature Preserve in Emmet County.

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, increased soil evaporation and 145 percent more cucumbers than did corn.

Aquatic ecologist Donald Scavia, Dan Brown of the School of Natural Resources and Environment (NSNRE) and Rosina Bierbaum of the NSNRE 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 warm-water and cold-water fish species, increases in invasive species, declining beach health, and more frequent harmful algae blooms.

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 1979-2000, 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://ncadac.globalchange.gov.

The North Woods Call

Early February 2013

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 the impact of 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 corn and soybean production on test farms using revolutionary new water-saving membranes.

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

DISTRICT 1

While on patrol in the Garden Plains area, CO Mike Evink contacted a subject in a vehicle. Once contacted, the driver asked, “Hey, do you remember me?” CO Evink answered, “Yes, I do.” The subject was pulled over to receive a ticket. He was given a ticket for unregistered ORVs and unattended lines along the lakes.

DISTRICT 2

While on patrol in the Garden Plains area, CO Mike Evink and CO Dave Ferner contacted a subject in a vehicle. Once contacted, the driver drove off and was apprehended by COs Doug Hermanson and Mike Evink. CO Evink informed the subject that he had been shot in the same area.

DISTRICT 3

CO Brian Lebel was on patrol in Mecosta County when he located a group of hunters existing in the woods. He approached the subjects and found them with a crossbow and deer. The subjects told the CO that they were not hunting and that they had found a lost dog in the area. The CO then noticed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed toward their location. Upon making contact with the occupants, who were also part of the hunting party, a loaded unsecured firearm was observed in the front seat near the driver. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 4

While on patrol, CO Holly Pennoni noticed a small group of people standing next to a horse standing on the road. CO Pennoni stopped the horse and asked the horse’s owner if he had reported the horse missing. The owner stated that he did not want to talk any more. The CO then noticed a search warrant for the tractor’s residence. A check of the computer at the residence was checked and found to contain photos and dates the bockat was taken. The bockat was taken out of the barn. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Phil Hudson observed a subject chasing a turkey in a field so he decided to sit back and watch for a while. The turkey chased the subject back to his residence and then the subject ran back to CO Hudson’s location. The CO observed blood coming from the turkey’s head so the CO did not know that the subject had bockat it. The subject had a small BB hole in his head. CO Hudson went to the residence and asked the homeowner how the turkey chased the subject and questioned the homeowner as to why he and the turkey were chasing each other. Afterwards, CO Hudson received a confession and located a 12 gauge shotgun used to shoot the turkey. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 5

The NorTh Woods Call

CO Mark Papineau received a complaint regarding a large plume of black smoke coming from an area. The complainant had called the CO. The CO was able to receive a call from the area on the phone. The area was searched and found to contain photos and dates the bockat was taken. The bockat was taken out of the barn. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Jon Warner stopped a large group of ORVs being operated without helmets and with unregistered ORVs. The complainant for the group stated they didn’t have to wear helmets because the motorcycling helmet law was repealed. The CO warned the group and issued tickets for no helmets.

DISTRICT 6

In late December, CO Quincy Gower was checking campsites while patrolling the Grass Lake/Saginaw State Game Area (SGA). The CO observed three campsites which had been in the same spot in October, the beginning of the archery season. It was obvious to the CO that the owners just left the campsites alone and didn’t carry their tags afield in fear that they would lose them. Then they advised the CO that they didn’t have too many holes in their hunting clothes and were afraid that they would fall out. They then advised the CO that they didn’t think carrying tags when deer hunting applied to private property. Finally they stated they normally don’t tag their deer until they get their deer home and field dress their deer. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Joel Lundberg received a call from a subject who wanted a bockat sealed on the last day of the season. The CO requested that the subject come to the location. Upon arrival and checking the area the CO became even more suspicious. At this time the trapper said he did not want to talk any more. The CO then obtained a search warrant for the trapper’s residence. A check of the computer at the residence was checked and found to contain photos and dates the bockat was taken. The bockat was taken out of the barn. Enforcement action was taken.

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Early February 2013 Page 7

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Send your tips, ideas and photos to: editor@mynorthwoodscall.com. Please join our efforts to keep readers fully informed about conservation and outdoor issues by providing us with news tips and/or photographs.
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 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 sportmen’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 elkinsn@michigan.gov.

“C” rating overall

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 (MLCV).

“At this point in his time in office, the governor is receiving a passing—though not impressive—grade of ‘C,’” said MLCV 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), agriculture (B), toxics and hazardous chemicals (F), budget issues (C+), and appointments & administrative decisions (C+).

“When MCLV endorsed Governor 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.

“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 “relentless 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 environment address 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.