On the heels of Michigan's decision to allow a limited wolf hunting season, the federal government says its four-decade-old wolf protection for gray wolf has been a success.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in April proposed eliminating the remaining protections of the animal as an endangered species across the lower 48 states—except in portions of the Southwest, where recovery efforts for the related Mexican gray wolf have made slower progress.

The proposal is subject to a 90-day public comment period, with a final decision to be made within a year.

Some scientists and members of Congress, consider the move to be premature, but USFWS officials insist the wolf can thrive—even enlarge its territory—without ongoing federal protections.

Wolves once were common across much of North America, officials said, but trapping, poisoning and aerial shooting encouraged by federal bounties diminished those numbers and left only a small remnant in northern Minnesota by the time protections were begun in 1974.

There are now more than 6,100 wolves in provinces of ten states, they said, primarily in the northern Rocky Mountains and the western Great Lakes region. Most are found in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin, though some small packs and individual wolves have been spotted in other states.

Many conservationists say that protections are still needed if the wolves are to expand their territory further and they believe the USFWS of bowing to political pressure from elected officials in the West who want to limit the predator’s range so they are less threatening to livestock interests.

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Feds say, “No!” Should gray wolves be protected?

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has approved permits to drill into Muskegon County’s Ravenna Township—northeast of the village of Ravenna—using controversial hydraulic fracturing techniques.

THE FAMILY DEER: The Detroit Zoological Society has been approved—pending a battery of diagnostic animal health testing—to provide a home for a white-tailed deer that has been living inside a Gene- see County residence for approximately five years.

DEER PEE & HEMLOCKS: This just in from the journal Ecol- ogy—the booming white-tailed deer population is bad for hemlock trees. During Michigan winters, when deer converge on stands of young hemlocks to eat winter cherries and predators, the higher den- sity of animals relieving themselves in a small space saturates the soils with nitrogen, according to the science magazine.

FUEL WOOD WEBSITE: An updated website has been launched—www.michigan.gov/fuelwood—to make the purchase and use of fuel wood permits easier and more convenient. It includes new county and township maps, easier navigation and a mail-order option. The permits—$2.50 to 3,500 of which are issued annually—cost $20 and are for use on designated state forest land in the northern two-thirds of the state. They allow for the collection of up to five standard cords of wood per household.

MORE GREAT LAKES WATER: The U.S. Army Corps of Engi- neers in Detroit is forecasting a total rise of 20 inches in Lake Michigan and Lake Huron from this past February through the month of July—thanks in part to heavier than normal rainfall this spring.

The legislation encourages own- ers of the state’s 11 million acres of private forest land to allow log- ging on their property in exchange for tax breaks. They can earn tax incentives by adopting a land-management plan that includes harvesting, habitat improvement and environmental protection.

The legislation is seen by sup- porters as an economic driver for property owners and the timber in- dustry, providing potential gains in employment along with increased rural development. It will help en- sure a steady, future supply of tim- ber, they said, that will bring more certainty to businesses as they de- cide to locate or expand timber processing in Michigan.

Among other things, the legis- lation reportedly eliminates the punitive nature of the “recapture tax,” which requires property owners to repay exempted taxes when their land is removed from the Qualified Forest Program. It also reduces land fragmentation by allowing property owners with larger tracts of land to take part in the program, improves the process for establishing qualified forest property, enhances technical and export support, and fosters stronger working relationships with private forest owners.

In addition, the Qualified For- est Program will now be managed by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Develop- ment, rather than the Department of Natural Resources.

Late June 2013 $2.50

MICHIGAN'S CONSERVATION SENTINEL SINCE 1933

The forest management goals set during Gov. Rick Snyder’s Forest Products Summit in April were ad- vanced in early June when the governor signed a 9-bill legislative package aimed at boosting Michi- gan’s timber industry.

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**Michigan budget includes funds to hire more conservation officers**

A new budget bill passed by the Michigan Senate in early June sent to the governor for approval sets aside enough revenue to hire up to 40 additional conservation officers.

It also restores funding to the Office of the Great Lakes and various surface water protection programs.

“[The vote] sends a strong message [that] protecting our natural resources is a smart investment,” said Jack Schmitt, political director for the Michigan League of Conservation Voters (MLCV).

“Michigan’s economy relies on clean water and diverse forests, and this budget ensures our state’s most valuable resources will be preserved for years to come.”

The MLCV and other conservation groups had previously expressed concern that proposed cuts to some of these programs would be damaging to the state’s natural resources. The revised legislation, however, reinstates $700,000 for water protection, and assumes that changes in Michigan’s hunting and fishing license fee structure will also pass the Legislature and be signed by the governor, thus earmarking the additional revenue expected from the fee increases to pay for a larger force of conservation officers.

**North Woods Ramblings With Shep**

**Leaving Phelps Station**

By Glen Sheppard

MATCHETT LAKE—This department’s guide is one of those guys who talks with trees. I make no apologies for it. Don’t even feel silly about it.

There are trees spotted all through the north woods that I’m on pretty personal terms with. In the spring and summer, when lap cedars fly a rod as we carry on our conversations. In the fall, I trade the rod for a shotgun and bird dog nuzzling my shoulder. For the past few winters—since the big red fox hound, Call, died—the rifle I used to carry has been left at home.

They are all sorts of trees. Cedars. Pines. Oaks. Beeches—they’re my favorites. Birches. Tamaracks. Spruces in the Arctic. Maples. And now a giant basswood. They are all large and old; superior specimens. With some of them, our affair has been going on for 20, or more.

I ask them about the things they’ve seen—how the land has changed in their time—whether man has been good for them.

They display no impatience with this small talk, nor discomfort as my shoulders wriggle around looking for the best curve to settle into. They don’t complain of the small campfires that have cooked fish, woodcock, groused beans and hash. They have yet to wince at the odor from drying wool socks and underwear, or pipe smoke.

The past few evenings I’ve been developing a relationship with an ancient basswood that grows on the west side of this drumlin where Mary Lou, Toots, Twig, this typewriter, and I have been sleeping. It’s stately, proud and, at first, sorta aloof—like it wasn’t sure it wanted to get involved with the fella whose gaze seemed to be trying to absorb the valley and swamp along the shore of Matchett Lake only a few hundred feet away.

I explained the sorrow in having to leave the birch under which the swing had sat at Phelps Station. That we didn’t want to leave Phelps Station, which sits temporarily abandoned just three miles to east, but that the grand old farmhouse is larger than we really needed and the mortgage payments considerably higher than our means, as inflation and recession put the pinch on us.

I tried to humbly point out that my friend John Frey’s generosity, we are going to be sharing the view, so we might as well be chums.

That first evening, a gentle rain dropped off the rim of my hat and washed the basswood’s leaves. So gentle that fireflies, like dancing stars, seemed to snap and crinkle in the fieldstone where the deer came to drink in the pond—within arrow distance of the basswood and the swing.

I think, when I mentioned the fireflies that the birch and I shared for years at Phelps Station and how important they are in my scheme of things, and how clean the rain will leave things, that the basswood joined in the conversation.

A friendly wind made soft music through the cedars, birches, poplars and showy lady’s slippers that fringe the lake. There was this tingling sort of sensation, as though the wind had missed us at Phelps Station and traveled across the four thousand miles until it reached us.

Now the basswood can listen to the wind and I recall memories of those wonderful years at Phelps Station. Maybe I’ll send it visit up on and let me know how things are over there in the valley where the ghosts of the old logging town still hold forth. To visit Big Dog Call’s grave and remind his spirit that I still roam the ridges and swamps with him.

Moving was—still is—hard. For several months, I was tempted to close up The North Woods Call and turn this typewriter to tasks that would bring in enough money to keep us at Phelps Station. But that was, really, never a viable option. The Call is too important to us and, we hope, you.

So, this basswood, the swing, the wind and I are going to start a new chapter on firefly watching and dreaming.

**“A step backward for clean water.”**

A proposed bill overhauling Michigan’s wetlands protection program passed the House Natural Resources committee recently, possibly creating additional exceptions for development within currently protected wetlands areas.

Even worse, according to the Michigan League of Conservation Voters (MLCV), it could open a state-managed protection program to a federal takeover.

The MLCV calls the legislation “a step backward for clean water.”

The bill—also opposed by the Michigan Environmental Council and others—was intended to address deficiencies, but in-turn creates exemptions for development and eliminates important protections, MLCV officials said.

And, if signed into law, the bill would make it easier for Michigan’s wetlands protection program to be transferred to federal control, which they say is a bad idea that should be thwarted.

**Habitat Improvement**

A work crew places logs, trees and branches in the North Branch of the AuSable River to improve habitat—and ultimately fishing—in the river. The activity is part of a $60,000 project under way this summer and next near Lovell’s Michigan. State fish and wildlife managers have been adding woody cover to trout streams for nearly a century, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Properly placed, it can improve the function of streams, including helping to manage and move sediment that covers up gravel—which is valuable spawning and aquatic insect habitat.

**Brown Bridge Dam project completed**

Removal of the Brown Bridge Dam on the Boardman River near Traverse City has been completed.

Spring rains have helped transform the newly exposed bottom-lands into a greenscape, according to the Boardman Dams Implementation Team. As restoration work continues, the river is running through a “dynamic and primarily relic” channel for the first time in more than 90 years.

The dam removal took 21,270 man hours—equal to 14 people every day for five months—to finish the deconstruction phase. The project reportedly wrapped up on schedule and within budget.

The team has now turned its attention to plans for removing the Boardman and Sabin Dams. In addition, the single-lane Cass Road Bridge will be replaced, thanks to a $3 million grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation.

More fundraising continues.

**For updates, t-shirts & caps, visit our website at:**

www.mynorthwoodscall.com

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**North Woods Notes**

(Continued From Page 1)

**SRC MEETINGS:** The next Michigan Natural Resources Commission meeting will be held July 11 at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing. The September 12, November 7 and December 12 meetings will also be held at that location on August 8, the commission will be at Annis Water Resources Institute in the Lake Michigan Center, 740 West Shoreline Drive, Muskegon, and on October 10 commissioners will convene at a location yet to be determined in Iron Mountain. For more information about starting times and agendas, visit the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website at michigan.gov/dnr.

**TREE PLANTING:** The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has planted more than 7 million seedlings this spring on state forest land. The Arbor Day Foundation supported the planting of 400,000 of the tree seedlings in both the northern Lower Peninsula and Upper Peninsula. Many of the seedlings planted came from the DNR-operated Wyman Nursery in Newberry.

**WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME:** A recently completed statewide survey of 33 known but wintering sites in Michigan showed no sign yet of white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease that kills bats by causing them to burn up energy reserves prematurely during hibernation. For more information about this disease, visit our website at: www.mynorthwoodscall.com.

**MCCU opponents new gun control attempt**

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs is battling proposed gun control legislation that it says could criminalize youth firearm hunting.

House Bill 4774, introduced by Rep. Jim Townsend (D-Royal Oak), would apply all current license requirements for acquiring, carrying, possessing and transporting a pistol to all firearms—including restrictions on youth carrying or possessing them outside a target range.

Applying handgun requirements to all firearms—including rifles and shotguns (with the exception of black powder antiques)—would effectively ban youth hunting with firearms, the MUCU says.

Intended or not, that would be the result, the group says.
North Woods Call readers share their likes and dislikes

The new North Woods Call fared relatively well in a recent reader survey, with most respondents saying that they planned to renew their subscriptions when they expire.

The feedback was somewhat ambivalent, but 94 percent of subscribers participating in the survey.

"I don't know whether that means the rest of our readers are satisfied," said Mike VanBuren, The Call's editor and publisher.

"But we hope that's the case."

Of those who answered the survey, 71 percent said they would sign up again and 24 percent said they might.

It was difficult to decipher the renewal intentions of the one person who accounted for five percent.

"We get outdoors and find out what the DNR (Department of Natural Resources) is up to. They have too many high-priced college kids and not enough old guys who really know what conservation is all about. The Call is the only place to get this data."

"No district map for the conservation officer reports. [Former Publisher] Glen [Sheppard] always included one."

"Regurgitated columns from old (Marguerite Gahagen). I did not enjoy reading them under Shep and I don't care to read them now."

"Your political conservatism. I am not sure you can/should consider this a bully pulpit to get into the political arena on all issues. Some are in evitable, as they relate to our natural resources, but some definiately are not."

"You probably won't like this, but there needs to be a voice for responsible gun owners to offset the mania we hear from the National Riffle Association and other reactionary groups. You won't scare the hell out of any subscribers by being silent on issues beyond your scope. What's wrong with background checks and banning assault weapons? Does everyone in our country need to lose a loved one to a Newtown massacre in order to come to the realization that behind the Second Amendment — which never contemplated assault weapons in the hands of crazies?"

"I would think you could get more offenders to be emboldened to destroy our environment and our resources. Keep up the good work."

"You retained the same format and similar columns as the original. I enjoy the longer articles, which is something Shep did not have."

"Almost all articles, regardless of title, are concerned with the out-of-doors, wildlife, conservation, hunting, fishing and factors which affect any of the above."

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"Content is fine and will only get better as your acceptance by readers increases. I think I'm hooked on the conservation officer reports. It's true — for the most part lawbreakers do stupid things."

"You are doing a great job. Keep up the good work. The issues are getting better."

"It takes me back to the times of the first North Woods Call. I hope you are successful in this publication. We need to know what is going on from another point of view."

"I am very satisfied with everything."

"I enjoy each issue. Keep up the good work."

Dislikes
Here are some of the things readers said they DON'T like about the newspaper:

"This week's catch phrase. Just give us [good], useful information about Michigan's natural resources and conservation."

"The older version is much better."

"If I like the North Woods Notes, you'll re-publish those conservation officer logs opinion page — all of it."

"It's all about what is good for the land and therefore the people."

Charlevoix County gets $1 million forest legacy grant

Approximately 750 acres and nearly three-quar ters of a mile of Thumb Lake frontage in Charlevoix County will be protected under a $1 million Legacy Program grant. The project, known as Gitche-ninj Nebish Forest (Ojibwe), includes a conservation easement on a 750-acre easement on 750 acres of rolling northern hardwood forests — strategically positioned to connect larger blocks of protected lands.

The property is adjacent to Thumb Lake forest land on three sides and contains the Thumb Lake frontage on the fourth side. Bill O'Neill, chief of the DNR’s Forest Resources Division, said state acquisition of the conservation easement means that the property will stay in private ownership, but will be open for public recreational use and will be managed as a working forest.

"Whether you enjoy hunting, fishing, birdwatching, hiking, or one of the many other recreational opportunities our forest land has to offer, this property also takes into account protection of wildlife habitat and ensures that sustainable timber management continues on the property," O’Neill said.

The Legacy Program, administered by the U.S. Forest Service with money from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, is providing 75 percent of project funding. The purpose is to identify and protect environmentally important forest areas threatened by conversion to non-forest uses.

The past and present merged last October when the current North Woods Call editor dropped off by Marguerite Gahagen’s cabin at Roscommon to deliver some newspapers for the Gahagan Nature Preserve’s office survey."

"I would like to see more information on how the Natural Resources Trust Fund money was spent this year — DNR land acquisitions, counties, acreage, etc."

"Stand for something [such as] the bottle bill [and] include a petition."

"Need more reader feedback printed [and] less 'endorsement' or fault-finding in 'global warming.' The real issue (never mentioned) is too many people in this world!"

"I prefer the print edition. However, it is a bit pricey for us retirees."

"The electronic version is OK, but I would rather have it on newspaper. Find a cheap way of getting it done."

"While I wish more readers would have participated in this survey, we want to thank those who did," VanBuren said. "Such feedback is both encouragement and criticism — is very much appreciated. It helps to inform us about our strengths and weaknesses of our journalistic endeavors and gives us solid ideas as to how we can improve our efforts."

"A more thorough assessment of The Call’s current and future health will be done in the coming months, when we attempt to at tract new readers through various marketing efforts and see just how many current subscribers actually renew."
Population and Immigration

Here's a conundrum—for us, at least.

Why do so many of our staunch “environmentalist” friends seem to support decidedly liberal immigration policies? These same people are quick to say that they’re concerned with the pressures that too many human beings put on our natural resources. In fact, they often want to block the use of these resources when considering how many people to let into our country each year.

Anything less than that seems foolish.

Those of us who have been a while have seen the dramatic changes brought to our communities and the natural world by increasing numbers of people—heavy traffic, urban sprawl and pressure on natural areas among them.

Some of these changes are inevitable, of course, given the exponentially increasing population all over the world. But does that mean we shouldn’t bother managing these impacts?

It’s getting harder to find places we can go to shut out the din of modern civilization. Many of the places we remember from childhood have long since been swallowed by the ever-advancing tide of development. We grieve the loss of these places, yet many of us are now powerless to prevent it—despite the good work being done by land conservancies, environmental groups and assorted conservation-minded citizens.

Almost everywhere we look, the battle is being lost. Yet the nation is poised to extend the welcome mat to millions more in the name of a free society, as well.

One can’t necessarily blame this problem on those who are seeking better opportunities for themselves and their families. We would probably do the same thing. But we still need to protect this nation’s resources through thoughtful policies and enforcement.

Maybe if their own governments weren’t so corrupt, this flood of immigrants—both legal and illegal—could find greater opportunity at home and not feel the need to search for it here.

Opinion

Conservation Quote

“If a man knows how many fly rods he has, he has too few.”  — Glen Shepard

National Rifle Association

We continue to scratch our heads over the anti-park advocacy of the National Rifle Association (NRA).

Although we are not and have never been members of that organization—and are certainly wary of the many funded power exercised by these types of lobbying groups—it seems to us that the NRA has evolved into representing the interests of hundreds of thousands of its members—and perhaps the general interests of a free society, as well.

If not for the battle being waged by the NRA, there would likely be many more restraints on gun ownership than we have already seen—liberty suppressing regulations that do not honor the second Amendment, or the U.S. Constitution.

Argue if you must about the “craziness” of semi-automatic weapons in the hands of average citizens. Our predecessor, Glen Sheppard, reportedly had little use for the NRA himself and would probably agree that prohibitions are necessary.

Glen and Mary Lou Sheppard

Daughter Jackie Anderson at an estate sale held recently in a large pole barn at Shep and Mary Lou’s home near Charlevoix.

North Woods Journal by Mike VanBuren

The North Woods Call was written for many years in this basement office at the Sheppard home on Turkey Run Road. The office contents—and those of the entire house—are now being removed for sale.

The stacks of loose paper, piles of books and racks of charred smoking pipes that defined Glen Sheppard’s basement office are gone now. The well-used ceiling maps have disappeared and the built-in gun cabinet is empty.

Only a couple of steel file cabinets and the legendary conservancy writer’s laminated-top desk remain—and they’ll soon be headed upstairs.

Nearby, at the opposite end of the basement, Shep’s fly-tying paraphernalia, fishing reels and extensive collection of tools have been cleared from the wooded work benches. Only a few stray items are left to remind us of the man who lived and worked in this space as an avid outdoorsman and longtime publisher of The North Woods Call.

A narrow spiral staircase on the main floor of the Turkey Run home south of Charlevoix, Michigan, the rooms have been emptied in preparation for a series of estate sales in the large garage and nearby pole barn outside, which are now stuffed with a lifetime of furniture. Memory, outdoor clothing, fishing and camping gear, inflatable boats, hand and power tools, assorted household items, several prints by wildlife artist Jim Foste and a large collection of cribbage boards—some of which Shep made himself—are on display along with numerous other personal items that are available for purchase.

My wife and I are here to load and carry away 40-plus years of unbound newspaper archives that are stored in boxes, plastic bags and random stacks in Shep’s basement, as well as in the still-cluttered upstairs office once belonging to his wife and business partner, Mary Lou.

The former business office is located just inside the back door, a few feet from the now barren kitchen dining area where Shep once held court for governors, Michigan Department of Natural Resources officials and field staff, fellow journalists and assorted other visitors—including yours truly—who made regular pilgrimages to the wooded druntn on which the Sheppard home sits.

Mary Lou kept track of the books, circulation figures, advertising, phone calls and most everything else with which Shep did not want to be troubled—including Shep himself—while he did the reporting and writing.

The feisty scribe passed away in January 2011 at the age of 74 and Mary Lou followed not long after in late December 2012. Many conservationists have called it “the end of an era.”

So this is a somewhat wistful and reflective day for those of us who are walking in their rather large footsteps. Yet the sad and decidedly dark cloud that hangs over the reason for our being here is brightened by the general cheerfulness of Mary Lou’s daughter, Jackie Anderson, who has the unavoidable task of cleaning everything out and organizing the estate sales. One sale was held a few weeks ago, while the second is occurring today.

Anderson says she expects to hold at least one more sale—maybe more—before she is finished clearing things out and putting the house and accompanying 11-acres on the market.

It’s a grim task and nature is already reclaiming Mary Lou’s once-immaculate flower and vegetable gardens. Two picturesque wooden swings where the couple reportedly sat to enjoy their outdoor Shangri-la are hanging overgrown and unused.

But Shep would likely scoff at any latent sentimentality. “He lived, he died and he’s gone,” he once told a friend, and he insisted on no memorial service to celebrate his life and times. The same is apparently true for Mary Lou.

Both were cremated upon their deaths and their ashes scattered in locations meaningful to them. A bit of Shep resides for posterity in the woods surrounding his former home, according to Anderson, and the rest will likely be placed soon in the “Holy Waters” of the Au Sable River, a place dear to the hearts of both Shep and his father.

Mary Lou, on the other hand, loved to travel and requested that family members take her ashes along on trips, leaving portions behind at various special locations. Her wishes have already been carried out in Hawaii, Ireland and the United States, Anderson said, and there are more of her remains waiting to be scattered whenever other family members feed their wanderlust.

As for me and my wife, we elect to honor their memories by visiting one of their favorite restaurants—The Front Porch in nearby Ellisonville—where in late years Shep and Mary Lou are said to have eaten lunch nearly every day. I was here with Mary Lou twice myself after she told me The Call. As the nonprofit ministry of a local church, the small eatery will provide just the kind of nourishment we need on a day like today, when we say our final goodbyes to these tenacious friends and defenders of the north country.
Mary Lou Sheppard enjoyed gardening and planted several varieties of flowers and vegetables around their home. This patch in a driveway island has been in need of her attention for the past couple of years.

The NorTh Woods CaLL

The Wild Nearby

By Tom Springer

A young girl's guide to power tools

At age 12, our daughter discovered that a front yard can be more than a soft, green place to turn cartwheels. It’s also a renewable source of income. I’d gladly pay her to mow, since this frees me up to tend the garden, pick berries, or fish the river. It's time, not money, that’s the true currency of a fleeting Michigan summer.

There was just one problem — she couldn’t start the mower without me. It was a second-hand push model that took three or four Dad-sized yanks before the engine would smoke and sputter to life. “Dad,” she’d say, with a pony tailed sincerity that would soon enough break hearts other than my own. “What’s up with this thing?”

I suppose it could have been a rusty spark plug, clogged fuel filter or fractured electron transducer shield for all I know. But there’s another answer that I couldn’t burden her with just yet. The mower won’t start because it’s a machine—a soulless, unreliable, infuriating and deceptively time-consuming piece of mechanical enslavement.

This swing in front of their home was one of the Sheppard’s favorite spots to enjoy the woods and wild creatures that frequented the surrounding 11 acres and regularly provided fodder for Shep’s writing.

A lone abandoned coffee mug rests on the deck railing that Glen and Mary Lou Sheppard regularly covered with suet and seed to encourage birds and other woodland creatures to visit their drumlin abode.

In memory of

Shep & Mary Lou

from 1969 to 2011

Glen Sheppard: 1936-2011
Mary Lou Sheppard: 1933-2012

-letter to the editor-

A “battler’s” grandson checks in

Editor:

I am Guy Kistler’s grandson.

I have many fond memories of fishing with my grandfather. It was quite a surprise and pleasure when I stumbled upon the story

Guy Kistler: An Insistent Voice for Better Water Quality

By Tom Springer

Late June 2013

Page 5
Night hikes and the joy of fireflies

As you may already have surmised, I firmly believe that our children should get out in the outdoors as often as possible. One of the best ways to encourage this is by making it an enjoyable and rewarding experience. In older years, as it will build an appreciation that can’t be taught. Whether you take them fishing, hunting, hiking, camping, biking, canoeing, or any other outdoor adventure, the time spent will be well spent.

Night hikes are especially important as many kids have never experienced a night without street lights, or some other artificial lights. It is hard even for all of us today.

Our backyard wild experiences with lightning bugs, or fireflies, was visiting our cabin in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. We owned a cabin (and still do) between Kinton and Trout Creek on old highway 28. Some of you in the older generation may remember the Ottawa Lodge. It is near there.

Well, in the grassy old pasture behind the barn of Smith’s Cabins were literally thousands of lightning bugs in early July. It was a sight to see and a sound to hear at night.

In Michigan, we have several species of fireflies. I cannot tell which is it, but if you were to study them, you can detect differences by the color of their light, and the pattern and length of time they glow. There are several being done across United States, taking into the different types, habitat, and numbers.

The glow in fireflies is due to a chemical reaction called bioluminescence in the lower abdomen of the insect. Scientists have isolated the chemicals that produce the light and we understand more about the process.

Fireflies are interesting insects. They are beetles and belong to the family Lampyridae. They are most noticeable because of their ability to glow. The males glow to attract a mate, or some type of prey. Females may not fly, but do give off a soft glow to tell the mate she is available.

This glow light may be yellow, green, or even pale red and of different wavelength. They also have specific patterns of glowing. The larvae also glow and are often called “glow worms.”

Most often they live in moist wooded areas where they have a good source of food. Both the adults and larva eat other insects, snails, slugs, earthworms, and even other fireflies. They inject a poison into the prey to immobilize it and then eat the meal. Some females have the ability to mimic the response glows of other species of firefly, thus luring a male to be eaten by the trickster.

As we already know, most lightning bugs are nocturnal, which allows them to show off the glow to attract a mate. The life cycle goes some thing like this: After maturing, eggs are laid in the ground and hatch in about a week. They then have a very specific pattern of glowing. The larva, after it hatches, spends about two years in moist areas around streams and wetlands, feeding on its prey. After the larva matures, it creates a chamber in the soil, where it undergoes the process of metamorphosis, turning into an adult firefly. This process takes about two weeks. Most adults only survive the summer.

If you were to capture some lightning bugs, which is a fun activity, it is good to know that they do not glow in the dark. They can also glow and be eaten by the trickster.

Diversity in Lake Michigan fishery?  

John Janssen, a professor of fisheries ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Freshwater Sciences, stimulated a summer meeting of the Lake Michigan Fisheries Forum in Cleveland, Ohio. While there has been much success in managing for chinook salmon and other species, there have been recent years—a long with controlling aquatic invaders such as lamprey and alewives—efforts to battle more recent intruders such as zebra and quagga mussels that might have gotten in clear jet with a bit of soil or mulch. This keeps the insects from drying out. You should not keep them for more than a few hours and then release them where they were captured.

Studying these creatures can be exciting and I guarantee that the kids will remember.

Bill targets offshore wind projects

A handful of Michigan lawmakers have proposed legislation to block offshore wind projects in Lake Michigan.

Representatives Ray Franz, Greg MacMaster, Tim Kelly, Jon Bus WD, Patrick Sommervile and Bob Genetski, House Bill 4778 would prevent the state from entering into a lease, or deed, to site and build any offshore wind research structures, or any wind turbines on submerged land. It also blocks leasing of state land for trans mission lines.

Wind energy proponents have criticized the proposal. Hugh McIarmi Jr, spokesperson for the Michigan Environmental Council, called the bill “foolish beyond de scription.”

As reported in the last North Woods Call, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) lawyers will be in Bar county County Court July 2 to argue for the “summary disposition” of a lawsuit filed against the DNR by the Ottawa County citizen’s group “Mass Defend Ports.”

Michigan Land Air Water Defense (MALWD) is seeking to nullify the previous sale of oil and gas leases in Allegan State-owned Areas, as well as in the Yan kee Springs Recreation Area.

“The DNR has asked the court to dismiss the case, because they say it is premature and claim that there is no likelihood of oil and gas leasing in the state, and no time to prepare the environment for the leasing.” To That, they do, then why, do they say that the land was set aside for public benefit and spend federal money for game and wildlife management under that purpose?”

Under the Michigan Environmental Protection Act and other relevant case law the DNR has a duty to consider the likely impact on natural resources and the public trust of the state, according to Olson. The agency needs to do a cumulative impact analysis on the overall project BEFORE they sell leases, he alleged.

“T he burden is on those wanting to do the project [to show that the resource and public trust will not be harmed], Olson said. “It’s not up to the citizens to do this. It’s all about good government—not faulty government.”

The DNR, meanwhile, says the Michigan Depart ment of Natural Resources Public Trust and Natural Beauty (DEQ) is conducting an analysis before any permits are approved, and any actual oil and gas development occurs—thus providing a line of defense for natural resources.

Theagreement between the laws to be dis missed, because state officials say, it depends on “hy pothetical future events which have not occurred and may never occur.”

In its request for summary disposition, the DNR also says that claims of MALWD are based on the common law public trust doctrine, which they say applies to the state’s right to use navigable bodies of water—not to prevent the state’s lease of natural resources.

The officials, said officially, mandates the public the right to fish and navigation of the waters in Michigan do not apply to all lands owned by the state, or “any land owned by the state unless that land underlies navigable water, or is adjacent to navigable water below the ordinary high-water mark.”

Further, the DNR says, the request for an injunction on leases already classified as “non-develop ment” would not support the idea of not being able to fish or other activity on the surface on those pales—is irrelevant, because it “does not present a claim upon which relief can be granted.”

Also, the claim by MALWD that the lease auc tion and lease state-owned mineral rights, they said. It invades “the agency’s decision-making process” and also invites “matters of policy to the exe cutive branch.”

Besides, this is beyond the jurisdiction and purview of the courts, they say.

The DNR says that the only way the harms al leged by MALWD could ever occur would be if a mineral rights lessee to obtain all necessary drilling and environmental permits from the DEQ, ac tually begin drilling, employ hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” techniques and conduct those activities in a manner that causes environmental harm. The DNR claims any possible applications for such permits on the land in question, so any al leged harm at this point is “hypothetical,” they say.

The mere auction, or lease, of mineral rights does not itself harm natural resources,” the DNR says.

“The potential action that concerns the plaintiff— fracking—has not even been proposed on any of the lands referenced in the complaint. … At present, there is no indication that the lessees have any intention of fracturing.”

When the state makes a decision to transfer oil and gas leases, they said, “There are no envi ronmental impacts to these state game areas,” coun ted Olson.

“They are doing so without any consideration of the basic impacts that occur with this type of change. Secondly, they are not even engaged in the actual drilling of water involved in these incredibly rich and diverse wildlife areas in Barry and Allegan counties—if these quantities were to be removed [and used in fracturing operations].”

While some conservationists seem content with allowing “experts” in state agencies such as the DNR to make such decisions, others say that citizen voices should be heard.

Indeed, many past and current Michigan environ mental protection laws say that resource protection issues are “of paramount public concern” according to Olson, “and that we are no longer going to just rely on the expertise of an agency, because an informed citizenry is an important part of our environmental protection in Michigan.”

“The courts do not defer to agencies,” he adds. “They make independent decisions. The courts are supposed to make the right decision in a good way and make good decisions. [Too often] we’re going backward from what the laws require.”

Book Review:

Ann Miller’s Hatch Guide for Upper Midwest Streams

By Ann R. Miller  

Illustrated by Jonathan Higgins  

2011:  Frank Amato Publications  

Portland, Oregon  

ISBN: 978-1571884817

Most naturalists don’t write books for the fishing and hunting trade. But as I have said previously, most hunters and fisherman make the best naturalists.

One of the best fishing guides has been written by a naturalist/aquatic biologist, Ann Miller. She has written “Hatch Guide For Upper Midwest Streams.” I believe this book is the state-of-the-art for fly tying enthusiasts. While this book is not about fishing per se—it is not just about middle-age men.

Miller spent more than three years traveling across the upper midwest, capturing aquatic insects and photograp hing them in the different life stages. In the book are about 50 species of aquatic insects and aquatic life forms imitated by wet and dry flies.

The author is very involved in teaching the art of fly tying. He says, “The hatch in the back of the book—each individual fly has basic instructions on what it takes to tie that particular fly.”

The author is very involved in teaching the art of fly tying and promoting fly fishing, especially for women.

The 348-page book retails for around $30 and can easily fit in a pocket. Anyone who enjoys Michigan streams must have this book, even if not a fish fisherman—just for the great pictures of our aquatic life.

—Richard Schinkel
Alcohol, drugs, a water-logged truck, a turtle for sale and lots of excuses

The resident insisted on changing the tire for the officers as he re- layed a story of how, approxi mately 10 hours later, he had stepped and helped him change a flat tire. The COs thanked the gentleman and were appreciative of him repaying the good deed.

A recent manure spill at a local peony farm resulted in an estimated 10 hours of cleanup by the farm and was not related.

Two were grateful that the CO was the sharp incline was still running when the CO pulled them out. The CO contacted the seller at the garage sale. The Sgt. then contacted the seller at the garage sale and found out that the snipping turtle was taken from the wild. Violations involved selling a turtle taken from the wild and possession of a turtle out of season. Enforcement action was taken and the turtle was released.

COs Krist Kiel and Ben Lasher were on marine patrol on the holiday on Lake St. Clair, and stopped 14 vessels in the course of the patrol. One of the subjects fishing without a license had four warrants for his arrest. Due to the holiday, however, no one was able to pick him up. The subject was advised and released.

COs Krist Kiel received a RAP complaint regarding a subject who was in possession of three baby Canada geese. CO Kiel arrived at the scene and found three geese inside a small fenced-in area. In the enclosure was a dish of water and a plate with bread and a turtle for sale for $50. The Sgt. contacted the subject and asked him what he had bought the geese for. He did not have his driver’s license and determined that his birthday was in February. However, the geese were only a few weeks old. CO Kiel finally got the truth out of the subject, who admitted that he had taken them out of a turtle farm. CO Kiel transported the baby geese to a licensed rehabilitator and enforcement action was taken.

Sgt. Arthur Green and CO Mike Drexler worked a Memorial Day holiday on the Detroit River. One vessel was stopped for failing to display registration numbers or decals. The occupants stated that they had been operating the vessel for approximately three weeks and they were planning on ordering the numbers soon. The vessel was also missing some important safety equipment. Enforcement action was taken.

COs Damon Owens and Sgt. Troy Bablau conducted a marine patrol for the Memorial Day holiday and issued a ticket to a subject fishing without a license who was “testing” his pole. A license check showed he last purchased a fishing license in 2008. A consent search revealed he had an entire trunk of well-used fishing gear. After a short conversation, he admitted he had been “testing” his fishing license since 2008, and getting caught over was undue.

**DISTRICT 9**

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Fishin’ for Memories

Here (above) are just a few of the numerous fishing reels that the late North Woods Call editor and publisher Glen Sheppard collected at his home near Charlevoix. Many of Shep’s personal effects—along with those of his wife, Mary Lou—have been offered for purchase during a recent series of estate sales. Some of old fisherman’s smoking pipes and a well-used manual typewriter (below) were also among the items on display. See pages 4 & 5 for additional details and photos.

What’s that? Squirrels that fly?

By Chris Hoving
Adaption Specialist
DNR Wildlife Division

Michigan may be the best state in the country to see flying squirrels. It has more forest areas open to public recreation than any other state in the country. In fact, Michigan has the largest system of state forests in the country. Forests are the places to find flying squirrels and the forest needs to be mature enough to have at least a few snags, or dead standing trees. Many different animals benefit from snags, including flying squirrels.

Flying squirrels aren’t particular about the kind of forest they live in, although they prefer trees with nuts—such as beech, oak and hickory.

Flying squirrels aren’t actually flying. They glide. They have a loose fold of skin along each side of the body, from ankle to wrist, which extends to form a kite-like surface that allows the squirrel to glide from tree-to-tree.

For a limited time only!

If you didn’t get a copy of this fine book earlier, now may be one of your last chances. The collection of writings by longtime North Woods Call publisher Glen Sheppard is out-of-print, but we picked up a handful of new copies from Shep’s estate and are offering them to the first 25 people who speak up.

Check our website for availability and ordering information:

www.mynorthwoodscall.com