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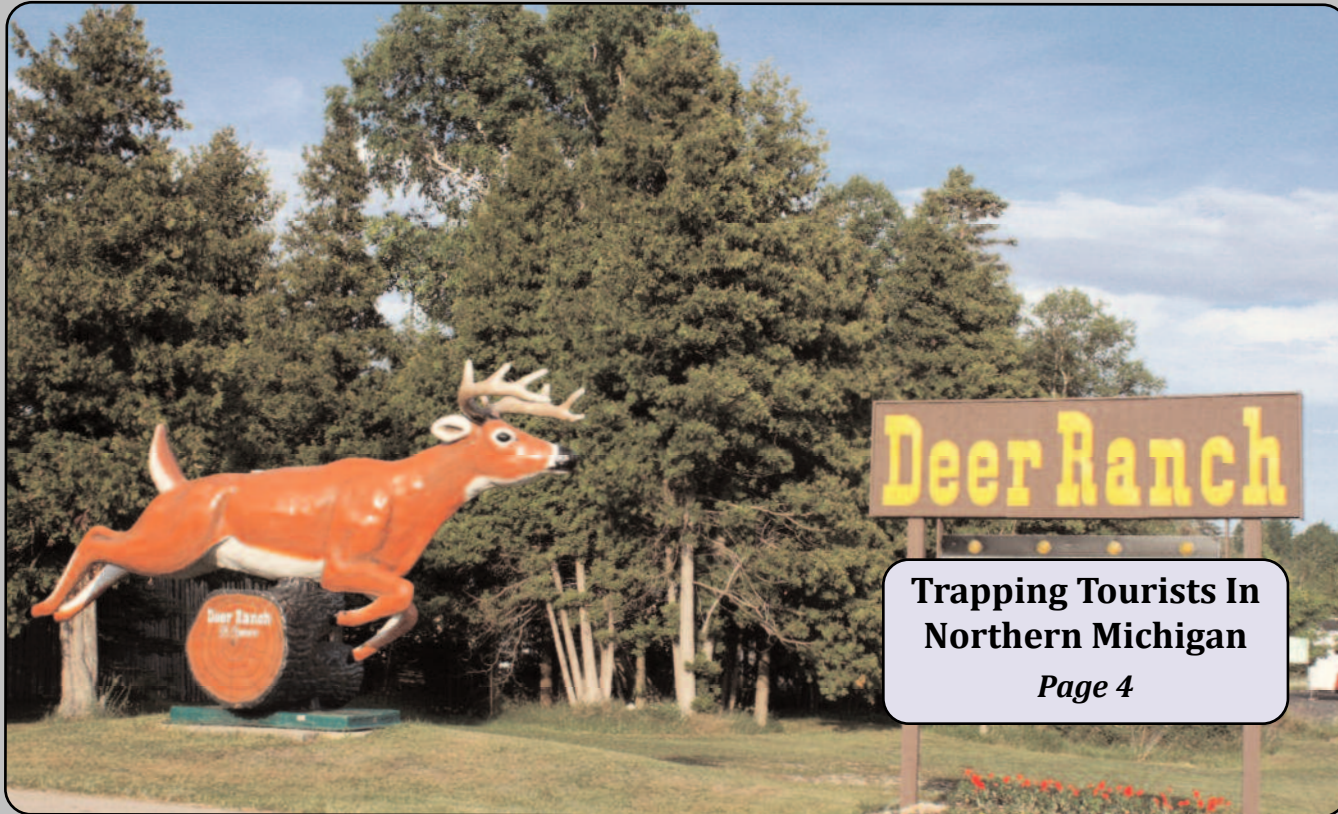


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Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



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Summer break: A time to recharge

At the considerable risk of appearing like we take more vacations than Congress, it's time for our annual summer pause to recharge the batteries.

But that doesn't mean we'll be lounging on the porch with a tall straw, sipping on a cool glass of sarsaparilla. There's much to do to prepare for *The Call's* second year of operation since the publication was regenerated last September.

Among other things, we have some important marketing details on which to focus, including the design and printing of subscription renewal cards (Yes, it will be that time soon for many of you and we hope you will see fit to continue with us for another year).

We also want to consider whether to update the publication's overall design, without tampering too much with the elements so many of us have always enjoyed about *The Call*.

Oh, and maybe we'll get a little much-needed outdoor exercise. So, our next issue will be dated early August. See you soon!



North Woods Notes

DNR LAWSUIT: A legal hearing in a lawsuit filed by a Barry County citizen's group against the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been postponed until July 26. Originally set for July 2, DNR attorneys are asking that the lawsuit be dismissed because they say it is based on "hypothetical future events" that may not even occur.

LAKE MICHIGAN SALMON: Anglers aren't sure what to expect of the Lake Michigan salmon fishery this year. State and federal officials are reportedly worried about the forage base. The number of alewives and other prey fish are at an all-time low, they said.

BEAR HUNT LOTTERY: Results of the 2013 bear hunt license drawing have been posted at www.michigan.gov/huntdrawings. A total of 7,906 bear licenses were available during the application period (May 1- June 1). An additional 267 leftover bear licenses are available in the Bergland Management Unit (Sept. 25-Oct. 26) and will be sold on a first-come, first served basis.

ELK HUNT LOTTERY: Results of the 2013 elk hunting license drawing have also been posted at www.michigan.gov/huntdrawings. Two elk seasons will be held. The first will run from Aug. 27-30, Sept. 13-16 and Sept. 27-30. The second season will run from Dec. 7-15. An additional season may be held Jan. 15-19, 2014, if the Department of Natural Resources determines the harvest insufficient to meet management goals. A total of 60 any-elk and 140 antlerless-only elk licenses have been issued through the drawing.

GREAT LAKES DIVERSITY: Chicago's John C. Shedd Aquarium has launched an interactive exhibit dedicated to Great Lakes wildlife and conservation. The exhibit—*At Home on the Great Lakes*—features more than 60 Great Lakes species that connect visitors to the living world through hands-on and up-close encounters with native and invasive animals. Helping people get to know and appreciate what is below the surface of the Great Lakes is important to conservation efforts, organizers said.

FARM BILL: The U.S. Senate included key conservation provisions in its version of a new farm bill, linking conservation practices to crop insurance premium subsidies—rather than direct payments—and endorsing a sod-saver program to conserve native prairies. From there, the bill went to the U.S. House, which had not included these programs in its version of the legislation. Conservationists were urging U.S. representatives to support the Thompson-Fortenberry Act to include compliance with such conservation practices.

GREAT LAKES UNITED: One of the region's strongest binational advocates for protecting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River for the past 30 years ceased operations in both Canada and the United States July 1. Financial challenges were cited as one of the reasons.

SLEEPING BEAR WILDERNESS: For the second time, the U.S. Senate in June passed a bill to designate about 32,557 acres of the 71,199-acre Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore as wilderness under the National Wilderness Preservation System. The bill, which at this writing had not passed the U.S. House of Representatives, is the result of 13 years of planning and discussions to update the park's general management plan. The Senate passed a similar bill last year, but the House did not vote on it.

PETROLEUM COKE: U.S. Rep. Gary Peters (D-Michigan) has reportedly introduced legislation that demands answers and holds responsible parties accountable for the petroleum coke piles near the banks of the Detroit River in southeastern Michigan. Environmentalists say that the three-story-high piles pose a threat to Michigan's reputation as a "clean water leader" and are urging that something be done to clean up the waste and convert it into "something productive." The issue has sparked more calls for renewable energy alternatives to the continued pumping of oil sands by petroleum companies.

REST IN PEACE: C. Troy Yoder, retired director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Region 2, died June 21 at the age of 93. There will be more about Mr. Yoder in the next *North Woods Call*.

(Continued on Page 2)

License fee legislation passes state Senate

Legislation that streamlines Michigan's hunting/fishing license fee structure—and provides approximately \$19 million in funding for fish/wildlife habitat improvement and more conservation officers on the ground—has been approved by the state Senate on a vote of 24-14.

Despite some wrangling, House Bill 4668 passed with bipartisan support after an amendment was added to provide more transparency around how state fisheries officials will spend money from the fee increases. It then went back to the House, where it was expected to get final approval and be sent to Gov. Rick Snyder for signature.

On the assumption that the legislation would eventually pass, state budgets were built to reflect the increased revenue, restore funding to the Office of the Great Lakes and pay for 40 additional conservation officers across the state.

Some hunters and anglers have opposed the move to raise fees—the first significant increase in hunting and fishing license fees since 1997—and several have expressed their disappointment in online comments attached to Internet news stories.

"Sure, let's drive hunter numbers even lower by

raising prices," said one. "Raise prices and lose more hunters and fishermen," agreed another. "This won't solve anything but more money being dumped into a system that will keep wasting money," said a third.

A broad range of conservation and environmental groups, however—such as the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and the Michigan League of Conservation Voters (MLCV)—have vocally supported the change.

"We always say that hunters, anglers and trappers fund conservation in Michigan, and with this bill we expect to see greater returns on that investment," the MUCC said in its analysis of the bill.

The MLCV called the vote "an important victory" for Michigan natural resources, while some critics say it just amounts to another tax increase.

MUCC officials said they have supported the fee proposal because the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) "is being transparent with how they'll invest it. "About \$7 million is going to fish and wildlife habitat projects, \$4.5 million for additional conservation officers, and more for fish hatchery maintenance, angler outreach and improving the license fee delivery system," according to the MUCC.

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THE NORTH WOODS CALL

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



Snowshoe Priest

Roman Catholic Bishop Fredric Baraga (1797-1868) lived among the Native American tribes in the Upper Great Lakes region more than 150 years ago. Affectionately known as "Snowshoe Priest," "Shepherd of the Wilderness" and "Apostle of the Lakelands," he is said to have snowshoed 700 arduous miles between villages each winter through frozen wilderness—sleeping without even a tent. Born in Slovenia and drawn to missionary work in North America, Baraga learned Indian languages and understood the native's desire to keep both their culture and their land. He helped protect them from being forced to relocate, and published a dictionary and a grammar book of the Ojibwa language still in use today. A 60-foot-high shrine (left)—near U.S. 41 between L'Anse and Baraga in Michigan's Upper Peninsula—was erected in 1972. The four-ton brass figure by Lake Linden sculptors Jack Anderson and Arthur Chaput Jr. is made with copper from the White Pine mine. The snowshoes are 26 feet long and the cross is seven feet high.

Learn to fish

You can learn the basics of fishing this year at one of the "Hook, Line & Sinker" programs being offered at more than 30 Michigan state parks and hatcheries.

Knot-tying, casting, selecting and using bait, and removing the fish from the hook are among the topics covered.

To find a program near you, visit www.michigan.gov/hook-lineandsinker. It's free, but a Recreation Passport is required for each vehicle entering the park.

Obama urges climate change action

President Obama added fuel to the already contentious climate change debate last week by ordering new curbs on carbon emissions from existing coal-fired power plants.

He also said he would not approve the Keystone XL pipeline unless it is shown that it won't significantly increase carbon emissions.

Coupled with new efficiency standards for vehicles, appliances and buildings, the push is aimed at helping reduce carbon emissions by three billion metric tons over 17 years, and commits to cutting hydrofluorocarbons emitted by refrigerators and air conditioning units. Permits will also be issued for wind & solar energy projects on public land.

That may be good news for environmental groups calling for climate change action, but not for those who worry about jobs and aren't convinced that man-made climate change is actually occurring. Obama also signaled he will sidestep the legislative branch as much as possible via executive orders and bureaucratic regulations.

The Environmental Protection Agency will be asked to come up with a detailed draft proposal by June 2014 and a final version in 2015.

Happy Independence Day 2013: A holiday for those who love liberty

Michigan State University study

A “sweet spot” for environmental actions

It has long been debated how many people working together can bring about change.

Scientists at Michigan State University (MSU) have found that there is indeed a “sweet spot”—a group size at which action is most effective. Perhaps more importantly, they revealed how behaviors of individual group members can pull bad policy up, or drag good policy down.

In a paper published recently in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the researchers said that group size is key to effective action.

“This paper finds that group size does matter—and the answer is right in the middle,” said Jianguo “Jack” Liu, who holds the Rachel Carson Chair in Sustainability at MSU and is director of the university’s Center for Systems Integration and Sustainability (CSIS). “Collective action is of growing importance as the world becomes more interdependent. It’s important to understand how collective action works if we want programs that are effective.”

Wu Yang, an MSU CSIS doctoral student, and his colleagues studied how groups in the Wolong Nature Reserve worked to participate in China’s massive Natural Forest Conservation Program. That program pays all of the 1,100 rural households there to monitor the forest on which they rely to enforce logging bans intended to allow forests to recover. Since it is mostly local residents who chop down the trees for firewood, or to build homes, enlisting locals has been identified as the best way to increase forest cover.

The stakes are high. Wolong is a biodiversity hot spot that is home to endangered giant pandas.

Wolong and the conservation program is a stage on which the universal behaviors that have bogged down

collective actions are played out. If groups get too big, “free riders”—individuals who dodge their duty undetected and still reap the benefits—can make collective actions less effective, the research shows.

In small groups, participants can be overburdened. In contrast, large groups need to have expensive enforcement efforts to reduce free riders and improve the effectiveness. For both group sizes, those limiting forces drag the effectiveness down.

This work for the first time tests and quantifies the non-linear relationship hypothesized by Elinor Ostrom, the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in economics for her analysis of governance—particularly how people managed “the commons,” as she referred to shared natural resources.

“We’re showing that the outcomes of these actions are important,” Liu said. “This can point the way to determine how to better protect the environment and utilize natural resources.”

Other contributors to the paper were CSIS members Thomas Dietz, professor of environmental science and policy, sociology and animal studies; Andres Vina, assistant professor of fisheries and wildlife; and former CSIS doctoral students Wei Liu, now a postdoctoral fellow at IIASA in Laxenburg, Austria; Mao-Ning Tuanmu, now a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Yale University; and Guangming He.

The research was funded by the National Science Foundation, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, as well as MSU AgBioResearch.

—Michigan State University report

Our 60th Year: Looking Back to June 16, 1954

—Excerpts from *The North Woods Call*—



Exotic fishing trips to Alaska and hunting expeditions to Africa were far from the experiences of the average man, according to *North Woods Call* founder Marguerite Gahagan.

The Average Man

By Marguerite Gahagan

Playtime for the average man has arrived. When summer vacation time rolls around, the dreams of the long winter months can be realized.

Playtime for the average man on vacation in the north country is a bit of fishing with perhaps one really good rod for which he saved his pennies, or a camera that he received as a gift from the family which realized he’d never spend that much on himself. And, because he’s an ordinary Joe Doe, vacation time for him is also vacation time for the family, so he bundles them all up in the family car—along with the dog—and is pleased if he can catch a few fish, hear some birds sing, and see some deer in the woods.

Leafing through the slick-covered outdoor and sporting magazines, one wonders if the average man is forgotten. To be sure, the hunter and fisherman reads them avidly. Yet seldom, if ever, does he read the story of an average guy fishing, or hunting.

In true storybook fashion, the fisherman of the magazines fishes off the coral-studded shores of a southern island, where whale-size fish put up murderous battles, and the hero—after achieving victory—can relax at ease on his yacht while hired hands do the work.

Or, if he doesn’t like the South, he heads north—not just to the north woods, but north to Alaska—where he goes in by plane. Then, surrounded by knowing guides, he is whisked to a secret fisherman’s heaven, where he is handed his specially designed rod and reel, and—casting in the spot designated by the native—engages in a battle of brawn and brain with a giant of the northern waters.

Actually, the fisherman of the slick outdoor magazines are pikers compared to the hunters. Never do the hunters jam into a share-the-ride car, drive 200 miles and spread out into the woods of an ordinary place like Michigan, Wisconsin, or Pennsylvania to hunt deer. Those hunters in the shiny pages hunt Kodiak bear in Alaska, or elephants in Africa, or lions in Timbuktu.

Nothing less than a safari—complete with modern equipment and guides, movie cameras, Abercrombie and Fitch accessories, portable ice boxes and, of course, dry martinis—will do for these hunters.

Perhaps such stories are an escape into a sportsman’s Never-Never Land—a variation of the “poor girl who marries the millionaire” plot.

But looking at the hundreds of thousands of ordinary guys who hunt rabbits and squirrels and deer; who fish through the ice in the winter and swarm along woodland streams and lakes in the summer—happy over their bluegills, their pike and best of all their trout—one wonders what has happened to the magazine hero.

Modern American fiction grew up when it turned from the Cinderella theme to the rich source of the average man, looked at realistically.

Perhaps some day the magazine sportsman hero will be given the break he deserves. He may even be a fly fisherman on a north woods stream only 200 miles from home, but still a hero when he returns home.



North Woods Notes

(Continued from Page 1)

NRC 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.

ANTLER POINT RESTRICTIONS: Deer hunters in 12 northwest Lower Peninsula counties will have to count antler points before they shoot a buck this fall. New regulations approved by the Natural Resources Commission in June require hunters to ensure that antlered deer have at least one antler with a minimum of three points, with each point at least one-inch long. The counties affected are Antrim, Benzie, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Missaukee, Osceola and Wexford. A similar rule has been in effect in Leelanau County for the past ten seasons.

DON’T FEED THE BEARS: The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) advises homeowners to eliminate food sources that may attract bears to their property. This includes unsecured garbage cans, barbecue grills and even bird feeders. Bird seed is especially attractive to bears because of its high fat content and ease of access. If you’ve removed such food sources for two or three weeks and not seen any results, contact the nearest DNR office for assistance.

FRACKING PLANS: The Canada-based Encana Corp. is reportedly planning to drill 500 new natural gas wells in northern Michigan using the controversial technique of hydraulic fracturing. According to a recent story by writer Jeff Alexander in *Bridge Magazine*, it is estimated that the activity could consume more than 4 billion gallons of groundwater—mixed with chemicals and other additives—to fracture rock formations and release the natural gas.

BOAT RAMP CLOSURES: The Hoist Basin boating access site in Marquette County will be temporarily closed July 22 while a new concrete boat ramp is installed. It is expected to re-open by July 26. The Van Riper State Park boating access site in Marquette County will be temporarily closed Aug. 5, also for installation of a new concrete boat ramp, and is expected to re-open by Aug. 9.

FIREWORKS & CAMPFIRES: The Michigan Department of Natural Resources urges caution when using fireworks and enjoying campfires this Independence Day. Point fireworks away from homes, and always soak used sparklers and other fireworks in a bucket of water before throwing them in the trash. Use fire rings in nonflammable areas for campfires, never leave them unattended, keep a water source and shovel nearby, place roasting sticks in a bucket of water when not in use and completely extinguish fires before turning in for the night.

Youth Conservation Council holds its first meeting

Members of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission’s (NRC) Youth Advisory Council met for the first time in June—one of several face-to-face and web-based meetings they will participate in this year.

The meeting at the Kettunen 4-H Conference Center in Tustin was described as “enthusiastic” and generated several good ideas for getting more youth involved in hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation activities, according to Ray Rustem, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ (DNR) Youth Council advisor.

“Since this was the first meeting of this group, team-building was an important aspect,” Rustem said. “There were plenty of activities that allowed the kids to interact with one another, learn some new skills and become familiar with their fellow council members.”

Among other things, participants learned more about the NRC and the DNR, and the national trend of declining participation in outdoor recreation activities.

“Now that they’ve begun to lay the groundwork, council members will spend the next several months working on developing their ideas into feasible, youth-centered programs and activities that can be implemented through the DNR,” Rustem said.

The 18 members of the Youth Council range in age from 14 to 18 and come from all parts of the state.

Help compile *The North Woods Call* history

If you have stories to share about *The North Woods Call*, or photos and background information about the newspaper’s role in Michigan conservation history, please contact us at:

editor@mynorthwoodscall.com

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Report: How clean are Great Lakes beaches?

A report by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) says that in 2012 the Great Lakes region had the highest percentage of water monitoring samples that exceeded the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) health standards.

Approximately one in every 10 samples taken in the region last year was more contaminated than the EPA's standards allowed, the report says

Testing the Waters: A Guide to Water Quality at Vacation Beaches reveals which beaches across the country have pollution problems and which tested clean. It is available for review at nrdc.org.

Nationwide, 10 percent of all reported beach monitoring samples exceeded the national daily maximum bacterial standard of 235 colonies/100 ml in 2012. Of all beaches tested in Great Lakes states, Ohio ex-

ceeded the daily maximum standard the most (20%) and Michigan the least (6%).

Only Bay City State Recreation Area in Michigan's Bay County received a five-star rating, however, which notes exceptionally low violation rates, as well as strong testing and safety practices.

Other Michigan beaches monitored once each week included Port Crescent State Park Camping Area in Huron County (4-Star rating), Ludington State Park Campground Beach in Mason County (4-Star), Silver Beach in Berrien County (3-Star), Warren Dunes Beach in Berrien County (2-Star), Port Crescent State Park Day Use Area in Huron County (2-Star), Pere Marquette Park in Muskegon County (2-Star), and North Beach Park in Ottawa County (2-Star).

Partners in Conservation Award

Kalamazoo-area native John Woollam was honored with a Partners in Conservation Award at the Natural Resources Commission meeting in June.

Woollam, who has been active in land conservation and preservation since he was in high school, is an electrical engineering professor at the University of Nebraska.

He was nominated for the award by the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Forest Resources Division for contributing the matching funds that enabled the DNR to purchase the 3,810-acre Crisp Point tract in Chippewa and Luce counties, which includes two miles of Lake Superior shoreline.

Without Woollam's gift, the state would not have had the funds to acquire and protect that tract of land, which—in addition to the lakeshore—includes habitat for threatened and endangered species, and both game and non-game species. It also contributes more than 3,600 acres of previously unmanaged timber to the market," said Kerry Weiber, DNR forest land specialist.

Woollam has worked with numerous conservancies and agencies to acquire and preserve land in Michigan for many years.

"I love the outdoors," said Woollam, who attended the meeting with his wife Cyndi to accept the award. "I lived on a lake as a youngster and I loved it. That's why I got involved."

More forest plan input is invited

Open houses will be held in Gladwin and Harrison to receive public comment on proposed forest management treatments for 2015 in the Gladwin Management Unit.

Included are Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella and Midland counties, and the southern part of Iosco County.

The meetings will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. July 16 at the Gladwin Field Office, 801 N. Silverleaf Street in Gladwin and 3 to 5 p.m. July 17 at the Redding Township Hall, 8391 W. Temple Drive in Harrison.

The Department of Natural Resources will complete the formal review of plans for those areas at 9 a.m. July 31 at the Harrison Field Office, 2115 Sullivan Drive.



Jeffery Ginn



Troy VanGelder



Richard Nickols



Jason Wicklund

Life-Saving Conservation Officers

—DNR photos

Michigan conservation officers do much more than measure fish and check hunting licenses. They are fully empowered peace officers who find themselves in many situations that require a cool head and life-saving abilities. Four such woodland heroes were recently honored by the Michigan Natural Resources Commission for quick-thinking emergency actions that averted what could have been fatal consequences. Jeffery Ginn's powers of observation helped him prevent a death from asphyxiation in Newaygo County; Troy VanGelder's knowledge of the swamps in Oceana County helped him find and rescue a helicopter crash victim; Richard Nickols' fast response to a medical emergency led to a complete recover for a heart-attack victim; and Jason Wicklund's determination resulted in his finding a lost senior citizen at 3 a.m. during an Upper Peninsula snowstorm.

Checking the health of forest resources by air and land

Native insects and diseases influence forests differently as they grow older and succeed to various mixtures of trees—and as climate extremes, such as warming trends and droughts, change the landscape.

In an effort to keep up with these changes, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Forest Health Program monitors the occurrence and impacts of both native and exotic forest insects and diseases.

Understanding the impacts of pests and other stressors helps resource managers make short-term and long-range plans to keep Michigan's forest ecosystems

functioning sustainably and productively.

"We spend time flying over the forests looking for problems like defoliation, discolored leaves and tree mortality," said DNR forest health specialist Dr. Robert Heyd. "We spend time evaluating the seriousness of problems detected from the air, or reported by forest resource managers and the public. "Mostly what we see as we fly Michigan's 20 million acres of forest land are healthy forests. Occasionally we have widespread outbreaks like the forest tent caterpillar and gypsy moth defoliation of hardwoods in the northern Lower Peninsula, which lasted

for several years and ended in 2011."

Different tree species have different site requirements (e.g., soil, moisture and climate). Trees growing on suitable sites are healthier and less likely damaged by native pests.

"When our forests are stressed by events like extended droughts, trees occurring on less-than-optimum sites, and trees that are toward the end of their natural life, they are most heavily impacted," Heyd said. "Impacts include declining health as evidenced by branches in the upper crown dying and discoloring. These weakened trees are

more susceptible to 'secondary pests.'"

Heyd explained that secondary pests are those that only impact weakened trees, such as pine and root rots of hardwoods by bark beetles. Healthy pines produce pitch, such that when bark beetles try to chew through the bark they are "pitched-out." When pines are weakened, they produce less pitch, allowing bark beetles to successfully attack the tree. In hardwoods, healthy trees produce chemicals and stored energy such that root rots cannot invade roots. But stressed trees have less energy for such chemicals and are successfully invaded.

It takes a few years of normal rainfall for trees to completely recover energy reserves and corresponding defenses to pest attacks.

"Adding an inch of water to the rooting zone of yard trees during periods of drought is the single most important way to keep the trees healthy and resistant to native pests," said Roger Mech, DNR forest health specialist. "Of course, exotic pests like oak wilt and the emerald ash borer attack both healthy and weakened trees."

The DNR also recommends keeping the following in mind: If planting a tree or thinning a woodlot, it is important to match selected tree species to the planting site. Be sure that the tree selected actually grows in that area and that it is matched to the site in terms of soil and the availability of sunlight.

In a woodlot, promote trees that are best adapted to the site, are growing vigorously and have no serious pest problems.

It is always best to seek the assistance of a consulting forester when managing a woodlot.

In addition to native pests, people continue to import exotic insects, diseases and plants—some of which greatly influence the function and appearance of forest ecosystems.

When not surveying Michigan's forests or evaluating the impact of a current pest situation, DNR forest health specialists work with state, federal, private and industrial resource managers.

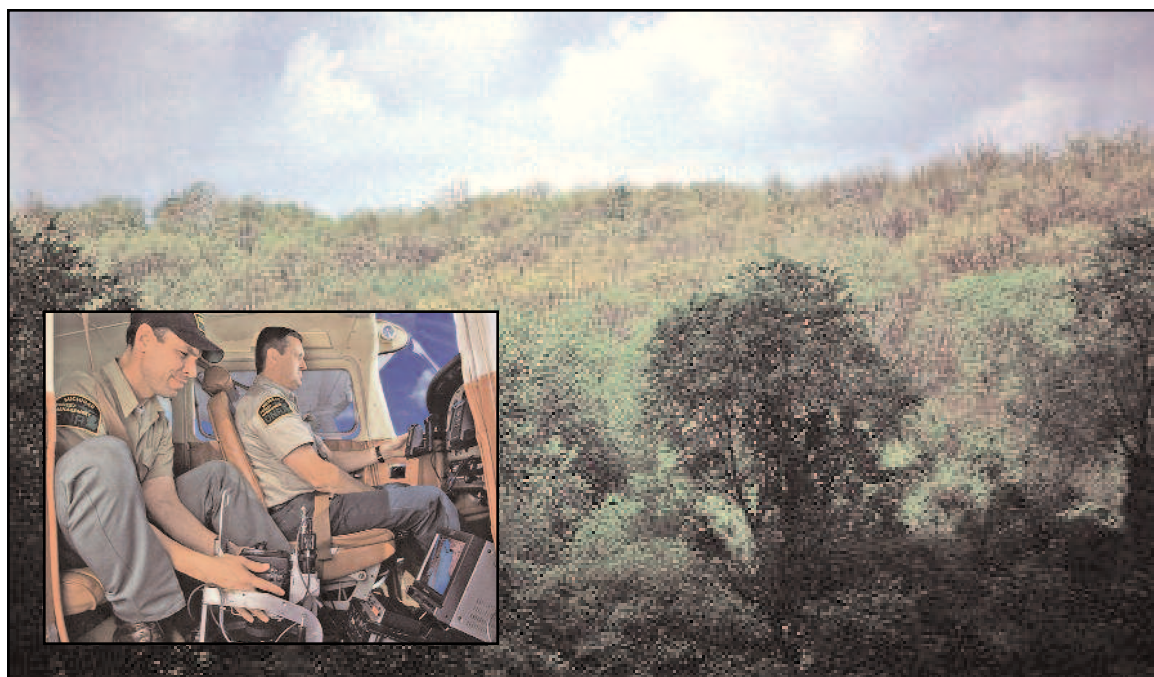
The DNR's Forest Health program monitors the long-term health of Michigan's forest resource by using a network of permanently established survey plots that are examined over time. This helps to detect more subtle changes in forest condition, growth and productivity.

Monitoring the health of Michigan's forest resources has been and continues to be greatly enhanced by advances in computer-aided data analysis, navigation, mapping and image-processing technologies.

"All of these tools help us meet the Forest Health Program goal of keeping forest ecosystems functioning well over long periods of time to provide resilience to short-term stress and adaptation to long-term change," Heyd said. "The health and sustainability of Michigan's forests are vital to ensuring this natural resource can be enjoyed and used by current and future generations."

For more information, visit: www.michigan.gov/foresthealth.

—Michigan DNR report



Monitoring Forests

—Michigan DNR photos

Entire hillsides have been defoliated by the exotic, invasive gypsy moth, as illustrated by this scene in Barry County. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) forest health specialists have been monitoring these events and taking management actions, as appropriate, to conserve the resource. Here, DNR forest health specialist Roger Mech and DNR pilot Bill Green (inset) take aerial photographs to record and assess the severity of such impacts.

Opinion

Conservation Quote

"We stand today poised on a pinnacle of wealth and power, yet we live in a land of vanishing beauty, of increasing ugliness, of shrinking open space and of an overall environment that is diminished daily by pollution and noise and blight. This, in brief, is the quiet conservation crisis."

— Stewart L. Udall

Born to be ... loud?

As summer kicks into high gear and outdoor temperatures escalate—along with gasoline prices—garage doors roll open and increasing numbers of would-be wild ones emerge on their two-wheeled cruising machines.

They clutch the chrome handlebars, twist the throttle and roar off down the open road in search of freedom and camaraderie. There's nothing quite like the joy of acceleration and the feel of a warm wind in your face. We get that.

What we don't understand, is why so many motorcycles—particularly, it seems, Harley Davidsons—have to be so doggone noisy. After all, aren't there ordinances in most communities that prevent any person or group of people from disturbing the peace?

Yet, we've often been walking along a quiet roadway contemplating pleasant thoughts when one or more of these vibrating vehicles come sailing by, breathing fire from their lungs and belching like medieval dragons on steroids.

What's that all about? We'd likely get a ticket from some irritated neighborhood constable if we did something similar with our automobile.

Don't get us wrong. We like the whole idea of motorcycles—their "stick it in the man's eye" independence, fuel efficiency and most everything else they represent. In the often spirit-crushing culture in which we live, we need something to help us get in touch with our rebel souls.

So go to it easy riders. Feel free to get your motors running, head out on the highway and look for adventure—whatever comes your way. Some days we wish we could throw on a brightly colored bandanna, tight leather jacket and pair of stout boots, and climb aboard for the ride.

But is it too much to ask that you add an effective muffler to your list of essential gear?

Tilting at windmills

Passing through Mackinaw City recently, we noticed a couple of new windmills that we hadn't seen before towering above the trees on the outskirts of town.

We're all for clean energy, but we don't think these rotating behemoths do anything to beautify the landscape—in the Straits area or elsewhere—and we're beginning to wonder just who really benefits from these investments.

We know a lot of the windmills we see sprouting up around the countryside are the result of crony capitalism, where tax dollars are used to subsidize the activities of politically chosen investors. There's probably good money in constructing them if you can get the state and federal grants. But has anyone found that their electricity bills have gone down as a result of theoretically free wind energy?

Ours haven't—yet, at least.

We're just guessing here, but it seems like the billions of dollars spent on windmill farms and other "energy smart" alternatives to fossil fuels might better be spent retrofitting individual homes and businesses with wind and solar devices so that actual taxpaying citizens could directly benefit from cheap energy and not be billed monthly for it by some utility company.

Call us impractical—and maybe we are—but an awful lot of money is being tossed into the wind under the guise of energy independence—even while many government-subsidized green energy companies go belly up due to poor management and lack of sustainable markets.

Despite all this activity, few people that we know feel any more energy independent now than they did a few years ago. In fact, it's just the opposite.

If only we did more careful thinking about such schemes before implementing them, we might all be better off.

Fighting the good fight

We got a slightly uncomfortable feeling in our gut a few weeks ago while driving from Mackinaw City to Glen Sheppard's former home near Charlevoix.

As we passed through Petoskey and saw all the relatively new development along U.S. 31 south of town, we recalled Shep's many efforts to protect the Lake Michigan shoreline from such landscape-gulping activities.

Yet, there it was, despite numerous angry news stories and pointed editorials. As usual, the money interests and pressures of modern civilization seem to have won out.

Shep had successes, of course, and we know we must keep fighting the good fight—as he did with his *North Woods Call*—but from time-to-time it can be a bit discouraging just the same.

Trapping tourists in Michigan's north country

Summer has officially arrived in northern Michigan, along with the annual influx of tourists looking for recreation and quality outdoor experiences.

The vacationers have been greeted, once again—as they have for many decades—by legions of gargantuan figures that stand solemn guard over many state highways. These figures are easy to spot, posing rigidly along the roadways while waiting to accept star billing in somebody's photo album, home video, or slide show.

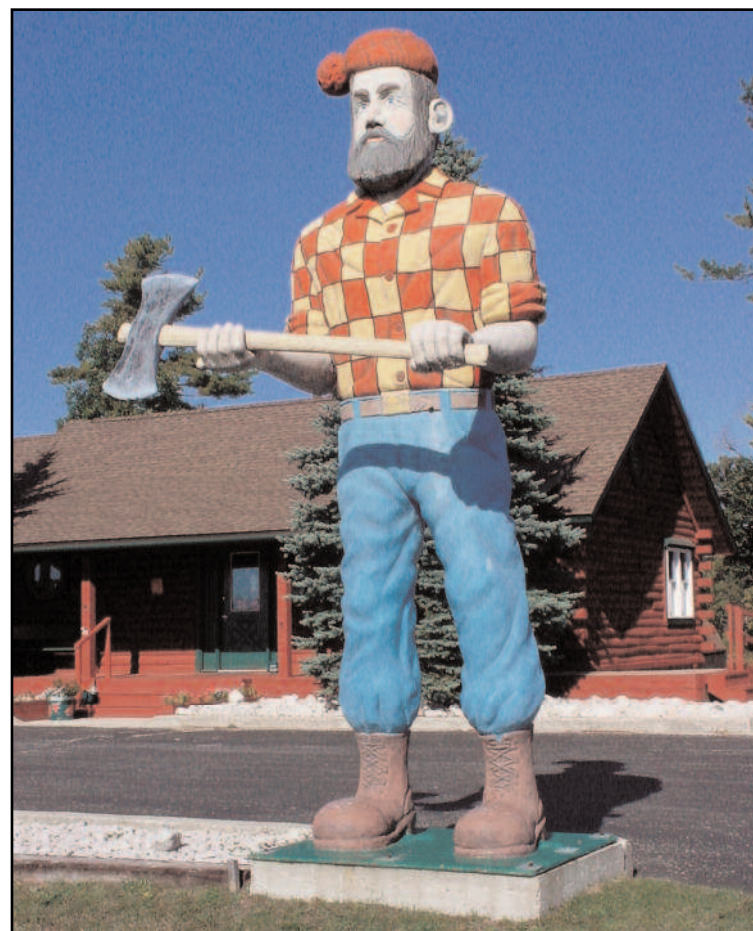
Inevitably, a road-tripping family from Flint, Detroit, or Grand Rapids will come along, careen off the blacktop in their mini-van and slide to a dusty halt amidst flying gravel. The kids will jump from the car and race to strike a giddy pose for Dad, who will peer through the viewfinder of his camera and capture the special moment for posterity.

Then they'll all head for the gift shop—there's usually one close by—in search of fake Indian-bead belts, tiny birch bark canoes, or some other cheap and inauthentic trinket from Asia to help them remember the occasion.

As for me, I generally turn away in callous indifference and keep driving. I'm too old to get excited about incredible hulks of hardened plaster spread over wood and chicken wire frames. Besides, if I want, I can always visit them on the way back. The elephantine forms will certainly be there for a while, waiting patiently for the next carload of money-toting tourists to come whizzing by.

These herculean dust collectors range from bearded folk heroes to domestic and wild animals. They are often brightly colored and magnified many times by dimensionally challenged craftsmen. If I didn't know better, I'd think an army of jumbo knickknacks had invaded the north country.

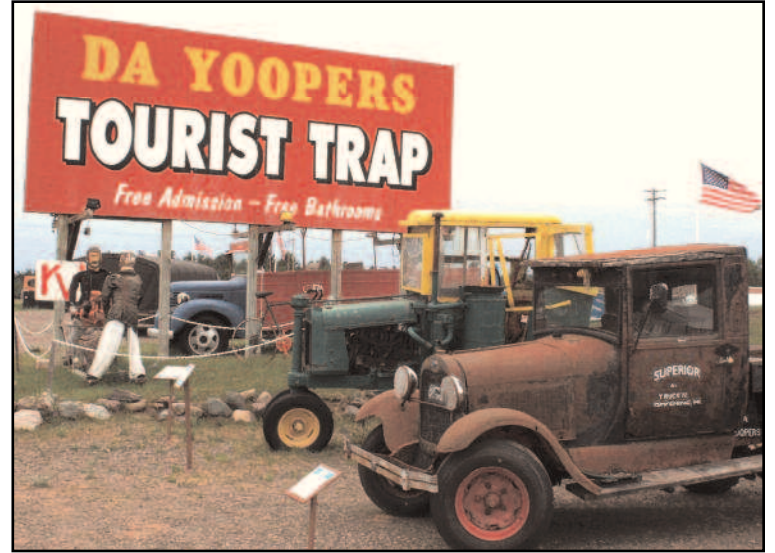
Without a doubt, one of the most popular northern creations is Paul Bunyan—an overgrown, ax-wielding lumberjack who can sometimes be seen standing next to his beloved companion, Babe



Paul Bunyan—minus Babe the Blue Ox—guarding the highway west of St. Ignace in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



Plenty of roadside humor—and stuffed mannequins—can be found at this stop along U.S. 41 near Ishpeming, Michigan.

the Blue Ox. A cute couple, to be sure, and one that I confess posing alongside a time or two when I was a child traveling between state parks with my parents and sister.

Large, inanimate bears and moose are also popular among the prodigious artisans who build these towering monuments to the north woods. Throw in some antique automobiles, and perhaps some stuffed deer hunter mannequins, and you have a recipe for upper Michigan intrigue.

Back when I worked in Kalkaska during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the village seemed to be rich in candidates for the yet-to-be-established Monster Statue Hall of Fame. Anyone who drove through the village in those days was greeted by a rich variety of cyclopean replicas. There was a chicken, a jumping trout, a pink hippopotamus and a foraging bear—not to mention the obese toddler balancing a double-deck hamburger at the southern end of town.

Further north, about halfway to Mancelona, an entire colony of mastodonic critters has resided for years in the forest along U.S. 131.

Last time I checked, there was an elephant, an eight-foot-tall rabbit, and a host of other stiff and hollow mammals. Tucked away in the trees, as I recall, was even a small replica of Noah's Ark, which I suspect the animals use whenever it rains.

Mt. Mancelona may not be as majestic as Mt. Ararat, but nobody seems quite sure where Noah's floating zoo actually came to rest. I think I know.

At one time, I thought that Kalkaska County—once known for lumber and more recently for crude oil—might attempt to become the nation's leading producer of Goliath souvenirs, designed for and, of course, sold to money-oozing tourists from Brobdignag and beyond.

It would have been the natural next chapter to the local development story. With badly twisted logic caused by attending too many Economic Development Corporation meetings, I figured the county could well emerge as the only community anywhere in the world to manufacture northern Michigan souvenirs for visiting giants—beings long associated with abnormal growth.

And there I was in the middle of it all, never having taken a ceramics class.

The North Woods Call

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Since 1953

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A Newshound Publication

Letter to the Editor**Balance needed in coverage of conservation issues**

Dear Mike:

The more of *The North Woods Call* I read the more concerned I am about some of your positions on conservation issues (Opinion Page, early June edition).

You may recall that the voters overwhelmingly supported Proposition G, which gave the DNR [Michigan Department of Natural Resources] the authority to manage our natural resources. This mandate was based on the belief that scientists who were trained experts in wildlife management, fisheries and forestry could do the best job of sound scientific management.

You now think the voters should make this decision. Unfortunately, these uninformed voters are too easily swayed by TV commercials sponsored by the Humane Society of the United States, The Sierra Club, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and other anti-hunting groups. Many of their commercials will be emotional appeals, such as the mother wolf with her cute little cuddly pups (The card, along with the letter from the Sierra Club, is enclosed for your edification).

These groups are funded by the likes of New York City Mayor Bloomberg, Greek shipping billionaire George Soros and lots of Hollywood stars. Are these the people you want managing our wildlife?

You also should be concerned about so-called grassroots initiatives. Current practice, if [they] are well-funded, is to pay petition gatherers two dollars a signature. I hope we don't become like California, where almost every issue needs voter approval. Why have a legislature?

You have also sided with the anti-fracking crowd. Most of their "sky is falling" rhetoric is speculation. We have been fracking in Michigan for the last 50 years without the apocalypse they predict. As a journalist, I hope you would try to at least present both sides of an issue. Why not ask the oil companies to respond to the articles that have appeared in some recent issues?

Oil and gas drilling—and logging—are regulated by the state.



This image of a wolf family appeared on the cover of a note card sent out by the Sierra Club to appeal to donors. An accompanying letter urged members of the organization to fight against "anti-wildlife politicians," oil companies and others who "are pressuring elected officials to abandon wildlife protection for profit."

[They] can provide a much-needed boost to our economy. So-called environmentalists don't seem to know, or care, about economic issues. Drilling and logging provide many much-needed jobs. Being without a means to provide for your family is devastating. [They] will also bring in dollars to the Natural Resources Trust Fund, which continually adds to our natural areas for the benefit of everyone.

I hope that, as a journalist, you will try to be more balanced in your approach to conservation issues. If, instead, you choose to become an advocate, you should be honest and change the name of your publication to "The Tree Hugger's Journal."

Yours for conservation,
Russell W. Reister
Chelsea, Michigan

Russell,

Thanks for your thoughtful letter. Lots of valid points here. We hope Michigan doesn't become like California, either.

Just so you know, it is not our intent to advocate for anything other than good decisionmaking, the wise use of natural resources and responsible government.

This requires healthy skepticism on a variety of fronts. Yet, despite our natural suspicions surrounding the motives of state officials, industry representatives, politicians, animal rights advocates, numerous environ-

mental groups and others, an objective reading of The Call should reveal that we have attempted to be balanced in our coverage.

Indeed, while we may have supported some positions and challenged others on our editorial pages, we have regularly reported opposing viewpoints, including comments expressed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and industry representatives on the subject of "fracking" and the sale of mineral rights for that purpose. We have quoted the Michigan Oil and Gas Producers about the "safety" of fracking and even featured a conversation with state Sen. Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba), an outspoken critic of the DNR and certain resource management policies.

You will also find that we support sound economic development if it dovetails with society's long-term interests and doesn't carelessly abuse our resources.

The bottom line is we believe in open and honest civic debate, proper stewardship, and constitutional government. We respect the expertise of scientists and "those in the know," but aren't sure that they should trump the expressed will of the people in every situation.

We agree that it would be highly inefficient for every conservation issue to require voter approval, but thousands of governing and administrative rule-making decisions are made every day without any push-back from citizens. And most of these are not decided by a legislature, but by a host of unelected bureaucrats.

On those relatively rare occasions when citizens disagree with the "experts" and petition their government, we are uncomfortable with political end runs designed to thwart opposition and mute the people's voice.

But your points are well-taken and petitioners need to be honest, too—we can all use a little more truth in advertising—and at least leave these decisions up to actual residents of the state and our elected representatives.

—Mike

The Wild Nearby

By Tom Springer

**A tree that gives (even when you don't want to)**

After four straight weeks of business trips to New Mexico, California, North Carolina and Ohio, I wanted nothing more than to spend a few fruitful days at home.

The vegetable garden had grown shaggy with lamb's quarter and quack grass. The frightfully unmowed back yard gave the place the desperate air of a foreclosed home.

Then there was the serviceberry tree. The purplish-red, pea-sized berries were ripe and it was the one chore that I couldn't wait to wade into. That is, with a bucket tied around my waste for picking.

I'll pause here to say that if you've never heard of serviceberries that's understandable. They grow on a small, unremarkable tree that usually tops out at 15 feet in height. They're native to Michigan, but are also widely used for landscaping. There's a good chance you'll likely find a serviceberry tree growing happy and forgotten next to a school, mall, bank or doctor's office.

Given the tree's anonymity, few people know that serviceberries are as tasty in their own right as a blueberry, cherry or raspberry.

I planted my own serviceberry trees about 10 years ago, but they've never been very productive. A little white worm invades the fruit, and in those years when there was a fair crop, squadrons of cedar waxwings would eat them before I could.

I'd long since given up on my largest tree, but this year it surprised me. By late June a purplish-red haze of abundance enveloped it. There was more fruit than there were leaves; more berries than the tree had set for the last five years put together.

While my daughter and niece and I picked, I recalled the day when we'd brought the three-foot high tree home from the nursery. Ah, the naïve hopes I'd had for it. They'd long since been dashed and the tree had mainly become a nuisance to mow around. Now, this unexpected resurgence had given us a season of rare generosity.

The tree yielded about three quarts of fruit, enough for a batch of my wife's homemade jam. But as humans do, I took full credit for "my" tree's bounty and was eager to show off a little.

A while later, as I walked toward the house with a full bucket in hand, I saw a new neighbor come walking down Moorepark Road. I'm not sure if she's Mennonite, but she looked to be: she wore a long, plain skirt and a white head covering.

"Good evening," I blurted out, "you want to try some berries?"

I handed her the bucket so she could sample a few.

"Oh my," she said, "these are quite good. Are you selling them?"

"No," I said, with barely concealed pride, "they come from our tree in the backyard. "We've got plenty this year."

"Well, thank you!"

With that, she walked off down the road—with the bucket still in hand, and thereby every single berry we'd picked that night.

I was too stunned to say that I'd only meant for her to take a handful. It was as if I'd offered someone a single chocolate and they'd taken the whole box. My unintended generosity had likely cost me a year's worth of peanut butter & jelly sandwiches and jam-slayered cornbread.

By the next morning, my shock gave way to anger. What made this woman think that she could have the entire bucket? When we give a gift, don't we get to set the terms for our largesse?

Given our low-producing trees I usually pick the serviceberries that we use for jam in urban settings. So the next day, during my lunch time walk at work, I set out with renewed resolve. That's when I remembered a row of young trees that were planted a few years ago beside a church parking lot.

They must've been waiting, because they verily shamed me with their generosity.

Within 35 minutes I'd filled a one-gallon freezer bag with 4.8 lbs. of fruit. It was easily twice what we'd picked and (accidentally) given away the night before. It was truly a loaves and fishes moment. And it brought to mind, with painful acuity, a quote by St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.) that I'd come across just the day before: "Any good thing that can be shared is not properly possessed unless it's being shared."

Needless to say I no longer begrudge my neighbor that fine mess of berries. Not since the trees have found a way to out-give my stinginess. So in deference to their woody wisdom, I've left for the birds and anyone else (including my neighbor, who still has my bucket) the fruit that's now ripening on two other late blooming trees. What have I got to lose?

It's easier to fill a hand left open in generosity than a fist clenched tight in greed. In my pantry cupboard, there's 23 pint jars of serviceberry jam to prove it.

Proposed Great Lakes legislation

A new bill introduced in the U.S. Senate would authorize several Great Lakes restoration programs and strengthen regional coordination and binational cooperation with Canada.

Among other things, the bipartisan legislation—known as the

Great Lakes Ecological and Economic Protection Act—would formally authorize the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a multi-agency program to implement a comprehensive cleanup strategy.

It's not clear what such an effort would cost taxpayers.

Viewpoint**Living next door to a "horizontal fracking" well**

By Anne Zukowski

Horizontal fracking is a new extreme fracking technology first used in Michigan in 2010. The process uses and contaminates millions of gallons of groundwater. Mixed with sand and toxic chemicals, [the water] is pumped at high pressure into deep shale layers to fracture the rock and release the gas. Most of this toxic brew returns to the surface where it must be disposed of in more shallow injection wells.

What is it like to live next door to a heavy industrialized natural (methane) gas horizontal fracking well? JoAnne Beemon from Friends of the Jordan and I interviewed neighbors of Encana Corporation's Westernman Well in Kalkaska County.

Bernard and Phyllis Senske live in a farm house that has been in her family for over 100 years. Phyllis was born there. They raise cattle and are surrounded by rolling hills, forests and farm land. Part of the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed, the Rapid River and Rugg Pond are one-half mile away.

Phyllis described the fox, deer, sandhill cranes and turkeys that frequented the area. Stars were easily visible at night.

All that changed last fall when construction of the Westernman Well began. Five acres of heavily wooded land was clear cut and graded flat for a well pad. Truck traffic has been constant. One time last winter, their two-mile rural road was completely blocked with trucks and they were unable to get out.

Horizontal fracking operations run trucks, compressors, drilling machinery and bright lights 24 hours a day, every day. During an eight-day period in early June when the actual fracking was taking place, the noise was so overpowering that a family near the well was forced to go to a hotel (paid for by Encana). The Senskes turned down an offer to leave temporarily, saying they would not be forced out of their home by a gas company. And they needed to stay to take care of their cows and their dog. Neighbors described the noise as being next to

(Continued on Page 6)

Viewpoint

Living next door to a “horizontal fracking” well

(Continued from Page 5)

a jet engine plane during take-off, constantly, night and day.

The Senskes described parts of the drilling process that made the ground around their house vibrate, the windows rattle and pictures shake on the walls. People living a mile away were bothered by the noise. Water coming out of their tap was milky and their pump often sputtered air from a drop in water pressure. Clouds of silica sand dust drifted over when the wind blew, or when trucks carrying it passed by. A house and trees next to the drilling site were covered in fine silica sand dust. Silica sand dust, when inhaled, can cause silicosis, similar to black lung disease.

What alternatives do people have?

One neighbor stated that most people in Kalkaska County do not own their mineral rights and worried that, if gas drilling companies wanted to drill on his property, he would be unable to stop them. As he put it, if you have no mineral rights to your land, you have no rights. He has been told by real estate agents that his house is worth 40 percent less because of the fracking and that it would be a waste of time to list it.

Fracking operations in Michigan are setting national records for water use and contamination. Excelsior Well 3-25 HD1 used and contaminated over 20 million gallons of water to frack a single well.

Encana's Westerman Well was permitted by the DEQ [Michigan Department of Environmental Quality] to remove 8.6 million gallons from the

aquifer. According to the DEQ's Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool, 900 gallons per minute could be removed from the aquifer. However, after drilling eight water wells, they still didn't have enough, so they sent trucks into Kalkaska to take water from the municipal well. (Information brought to public attention through website www.respectmyplanet.org).

Highly industrialized fracking operations change the character and quality of life in our rural communities. Most of the fracking in Michigan, however, is occurring on state land. The DNR leases state land for as little as \$10 per acre, and they give away the water.

Thousands of acres of our state forests are being cleared to build well pads, roads and pipelines. Noise, air pollution, massive water withdrawals — which affect the vitality of our rivers and lakes, and damage wetlands and wildlife—will have a profound effect on our “Pure Michigan” tourist economy. This damage, like the damage to rural communities, cannot be undone.

We need to end federal and state environmental exemptions and subsidies to gas and oil companies. There are alternatives to fossil fuels. By utilizing and developing them, we can save our environment, our health and our economy.

Anne Zukowski of Charlevoix is a board member of Don't Frack Michigan, a group pushing for a ban on horizontal fracking in the state.

A Naturalist's Musings

By Richard Schinkel



Michigan Loons: Northern symbol

The common loon has become the true symbol of the north woods.

Who hasn't been inspired by their night calls. A series of wails, hoots, moans and yodels are given and are not soon forgotten. Many a novice camper has felt an attack of wolves was eminent.

There is no better feeling of being in the wild than sitting around a campfire and listening to the wails and calls of the night, resounding against the forest. I maintain if you get a kid to experience this and take him or her fishing, you will have an outdoors person for life.

Historically, loons nested across Michigan, but as the human population grew and human disturbance along with it, the population receded north. Today, nesting occurs primarily in the upper peninsula and upper lower peninsula.

In 1987, the common loon was designated as a threatened species and a recovery plan was developed. It was determined at that time that only about 200 pairs were nesting in Michigan. The Michigan Loon Preservation Association was formed to educate [citizens] and help the loon population. The population has been on the increase, primarily due to these educational efforts and allowing loons to nest without human interference. Some attempts were made to create loon nest platforms, with limited success.

Common loons are very susceptible to human disturbance at nests, because of their inability to travel far on land—their legs being set so far back to make them remarkable swimmers. When people get too close, they often abandon the nests. Some evidence indicates that they have become more tolerant of human presence, but it is still unwise to approach a nesting site. It is estimated that somewhere between 500 to more than 700 pairs of loons nest in Michigan, but many lakes still do not have pairs—hopefully meaning that this symbol of the north may yet expand.

The nest is very close to shore, often in a boggy mat or peninsula. If successful, the “mound” built up of vegetation and mud may be used from year-to-year. Two eggs are normal. Both parents incubate for 28 to 30 days. Being precocial, the black chicks are able to swim within a day after hatching and drying. The first few weeks, they are attended diligently by both adults, often riding on their backs.

Much like sandhill cranes, sibling rivalry can ensue. This is where the stronger (often first-hatched) chick tries to eliminate the second. This may go on for a day or two, but often the parents separate them and both will live.

Both parents, being good fishers, will feed the chicks. The adults eat any aquatic creatures, such as frogs, crayfish, leaches and insects, but the main diet is fish. Loons are great swimmers, and can dive to extreme depths and catch most any fish. Some say they can dive several hundred feet and stay under for as long as five minutes. Most dives, however, are only about a minute in length.

Most bird species have hollow bones, but the loon does not. It has solid bones, which aids in its ability to dive. In about six- to-eight weeks, the chicks will be almost as large as the adults and will migrate with the parents to the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Coast.

The young may not return the following spring, as it takes them two to three years to be able to breed. Although we are increasing the number of nesting common loons, we must be diligent about their nesting areas.

During migration, we may see thousands of loons migrating along the Great Lakes, as many nest further north into Canada.

Today the common loon still faces obstacles, which include botulism, lead and pesticides, as well as commercial nets. Some of these, such as the netting, have been researched, but much progress is needed.

Richard Schinkel is a retired naturalist, educator and businessman living in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Ask your local library to include the North Woods Call

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Incrementally wilder: Problem-solving on the farm

Once in a while, though not often, I come up with an idea that solves multiple problems without creating any corresponding ill effects.

Case-in-point: Every year since my wife and I moved out to our little twelve-acre farm a few miles west of the pleasant town of Montague, we've been annoyed by an anonymous passerby.

This person complained via telephone to our neighbors—not to us—about our miniature horse being allowed to roam dangerously close to the edge of the county road.

Our neighbors, being thoughtful and judicious folks, tactfully relayed this information to us each time. My wife and I would immediately hot-foot out to the road, but invariably found no horse. Stormy, our amiable three-hundred pound mini, would be grazing placidly along the graveled, tree-lined service road leading out to our pole building, on land which we cheerfully pay property taxes twice each year. Well, maybe not “cheerfully”.

Despite repeated explanations to the passerby through our neighbors, the issue seemed to pop up again every four months or so. Our pavement-averse equine was always elsewhere and safe. The

Outdoor Rhythms
By Doug Freeman

neighbors said they felt like they were talking to a brick wall when dealing with this person (I had a boss like that once).

The problem ended a couple summers ago. Rising gasoline prices caused me to rethink my mowing routine. By reducing the amount of land being regularly mowed, I was able to cut fuel costs by about 20 percent, and save over an hour of time spent each week attached to the seat of my lawn tractor.

The areas no longer trimmed included the service road and an adjacent field. Maples, elms, blackberry bushes and wild roses quickly sprouted amidst the tall grasses, creating a kind of wildlife oasis. Deer now graze and turkeys guide their little ones through the thick cover no more than thirty feet from our garage.

Birds of many species seem to be more common around the old homestead. Rabbits, land turtles, foxes, woodchucks, and even an occasional family of porcupines have been observed making them-

selves at home in the new growth.

We still keep a lawn around the house for purposes of security and fire safety, but there's no need for fertilizers or herbicides to keep it looking nice. Just letting the grass grow a bit longer before cutting seems to hold the weeds in check. Heck, I've been known to mow around patches of wildflowers anyway—they add color to the property.

And our disgruntled and deliberately ignorant Lookie-Lou has gone silent. Though still used several times a year by one of the local farmers who tends a field out back, our service road is so overgrown (especially since I've seeded and watered it) that no one can possibly mistake it as being part of the Muskegon County road system.

In this case, doing less has resulted in more—cost savings, habitat improvement for wildlife and ourselves, and some extra privacy and quiet.

I should have figured it all out many years earlier.

Letter to the Editor

An insider's look at Michigan conservation history

Dear Mike,

Thank you so much for your very nice letter of several months ago. I hope *The Call* has had a successful start. You've really taken on a big challenge.

I have been looking in my files, hoping to find something that would be of interest to you and your readers, but my ability to read and find good material is limited.

A history of the passage of the Michigan Environmental Protection Act and the Inland Lakes and Streams Act of long ago is something that might possibly interest your readers.

Dr. John Tanton asked me to write it some time

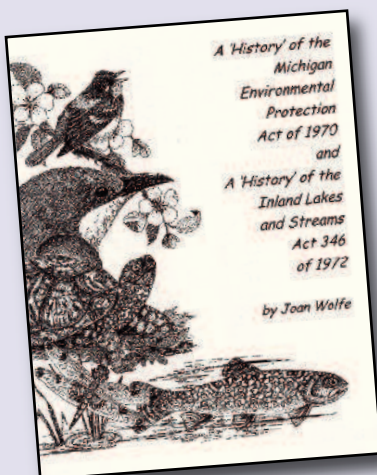
ago and he published many copies. I have only a few left, but I will go ahead and send it to you in case you are lacking material sometime.

Very best wishes,

Joan L. Wolfe
Frankfort, Michigan

Thanks for the history lesson, Joan. I will digest the report and perhaps include a summary in The Call.

—Mike



Excerpts from conservation officer logs (5/28/13 through 6/9/13)

“Shiny objects,” turtle eggs, an X-large NFL player & a squatters’ camp**DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

CO Marvin Gerlach, while on marine patrol on the Green Bay waters of Lake Michigan, contacted a 52-foot cabin cruiser that was not displaying a registration decal. The owner stated he did not have to register his vessel because it was federally documented. After a brief discussion, the owner admitted he should have registered the vessel and paid the estimated \$72,000 in sales tax when he bought the boat in 2012. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Marvin Gerlach investigated a complaint that two subjects on ORVs attempted to pull the pay pipe out of the ground at a local state forest campground (SFC) using the ORVs and a chain. The subjects were unsuccessful in their larceny attempt and fled the scene as they were interrupted by a group of campers. **CO Gerlach** is following up on information provided by the witnesses.

CO Jason Wicklund responded to a call by a concerned camp owner in regard to a neighboring camp shooting “hundreds” of rounds of ammunition. When the **CO** arrived at the scene he found several individuals sitting around a campfire. The **CO** also observed an AK-47, AR-15, shotgun and a handgun nearby. All of the individuals had been drinking and were shooting at a pan hanging in a tree, as well as at an old computer tower. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Jason Wicklund was checking a local lake when an individual approached him to say that he had seen some “shiny” items at the bottom of the lake when he was looking for bass. The **CO** and individual recovered a large collection of diamond, gold and silver jewelry, ammunition, and some personal items linked to a safe robbery the week before. The items were turned over to the local police.

DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)

CO Mike Hammill was on routine patrol when a reckless driver came speeding down the road past him. The **CO** watched in his mirror as the driver came to a dead end on the road they were on. The vehicle turned around and once again came back in a reckless manner. An attempt was made to initiate a traffic stop but the subject wouldn’t stop and accelerated to get away. The **CO** had to hold back from the pursuit for safety reasons due to the dusty road conditions. Fortunately, a Michigan State Police (MSP) trooper was close by and heard the radio traffic, and was able to intercept the subject and bring the chase to an end. The driver was arrested for drunk driving and felony flee and elude.

CO Kyle Publiski was on patrol when he came across an angler without a fishing license. The subject claimed to have bought a license and, as he continued to dig through his wallet, finally claimed that he must have forgotten it at home. He went on to explain how he would never fish without a li-

cense. Further investigation revealed that the man didn’t buy a license and that he had been ticketed in the past. He once again received a ticket for fishing without a license.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)

CO Duane Budreau and **Sgt. Greg Drogowski** followed up on a complaint of a subject burning tires, a TV, and plastic drawers from a refrigerator. A ticket was issued for unlawful disposal of solid waste.

Sgt. Greg Drogowski investigated a complaint of a large amount of trash dumped on state land. Evidence was found in the trash which led to a suspect. An interview with the suspect produced an admission and a ticket for littering. A clean-up of the site is also being provided by the defendant.

CO Bill Webster contacted the operator of an ORV parked in a closed area, who was cutting trees which were blocking the illegal trail he wanted to ride on. **CO Webster** explained why the trees were blocking the trail and ticketed him for his violations.

DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)

CO Rebecca Hopkins handled a burning complaint where a subject in his 20s was playing with matches and lighting cottonwood seed fluff on fire in his driveway. A gust of wind took some of the burning cottonwood down the driveway and across the roadway into the distant ditch. The embers ignited the grass, resulting in four acres being burned before the fire was suppressed. A ticket was issued for allowing the fire to escape.

CO Angela Greenway was on patrol using a Cam Am Commander UTV and was able to locate a Jeep that had breached a barricade on state land. The vehicle traversed through a stream and was in the act of destroying a wetland area. **CO Greenway** contacted the operator and took enforcement action on the numerous ORV violations.

CO Brian Brosky was on patrol when he observed a motorcycle with an expired plate operating on a two-track. The operator did not possess a motorcycle endorsement and had no insurance for the bike. The female passenger had multiple outstanding warrants for her arrest. The passenger was lodged in the Mason County jail with enforcement action taken on the operator.

**DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)**

CO Jon Warner assisted local and federal agencies in trying to locate a 14-year-old youth who was missing in the Au Sable River. The youth was recovered from the river, but unfortunately was not able to be revived.

While checking anglers during “Free Fishing Weekend,” **CO Steve Lockwood** came across a subject who was fishing in Gladwin County. During the initial contact, the angler complained about how slow the fishing was but added that it didn’t matter because he did not eat fish. During the conversation, **CO Lockwood** observed a stringer with what appeared to be an undersized northern pike anchored close to the angler. When the question finally came up as to how many fish he had kept, the subject admitted he had kept a few rock bass and very reluctantly mentioned he had a pike. The reluctance probably had to do with the fact that the pike was only 22 inches long. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Warren MacNeill was contacted by the Alcona County Sheriff’s Department for assistance with apprehending a combative subject who had promised to kill the next deputy who attempted to arrest him. **CO MacNeill**, along with a U.S. Forest Service officer, was able to make contact with the subject and quickly apprehend him.

DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)

While on marine patrol, **CO Joshua Wright** found a muskrat trap that was still set from the prior trapping season. He followed up with the owner of the trap and issued him a ticket for trapping out of season. **CO Wright** has had prior contact with the trapper and has given him warnings on the same issue.

CO Joshua Wright was checking marine activity on a local river when he observed teenagers launching an unregistered boat. He notified the teens that they

needed a registration before they operated the boat with the use of the engine. They left the launch paddling the boat. Knowing how well teens listen to authority, **CO Wright** went downstream and watched the teens from the woods. When they thought they were clear from the sight of the **CO**, they fired the engine up and headed down the river. **CO Wright** stepped out from the brush and made contact with them. A ticket was issued.

CO Scott Brown received a complaint of an individual on Facebook posing in pictures with a fawn he had taken home after finding it in the wild. The fawn died a few days later and was retrieved by **CO Brown**. A warrant request has been submitted for the illegal possession of the fawn from the wild.

DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)

CO BJ Goulette was patrolling southern Muskegon County when he observed a large plume of black smoke coming from behind a residence. Upon checking behind the residence, he observed a subject burning wood and tires. The subject stated he believed the wood contained termites and was burning it up to kill the insects. The subject stated he was told by a friend he could legally use one tire to start the fire. **CO Goulette** then asked why there were at least two tires in the fire. **CO Goulette** also informed the subject the insects on the wood were not termites, but rather a harmless beetle larvae. The subject was ticketed for burning tires.

While patrolling the Flat River SGA near Belding, **CO Cary Foster** observed a subject digging in the dirt near a wetland area. Upon making contact with the subject, she stated she was bird-watching and denied digging. Further investigation revealed the subject was indeed digging and had dug up two turtle nests and had the eggs in her backpack. The subject stated she was “a naturalist” and was trying to save the eggs from raccoons. It was explained to the subject that this was not only illegal, but part of the natural wildlife cycle. The subject was ticketed for removing the eggs and the eggs were returned to the nests.

CO Chris Holmes received a complaint of subjects netting fish illegally in Augusta Creek. Due to the thick brush **CO Holmes** entered the stream to locate the suspects and observed them throwing

a cast net. **CO Holmes** waited until the suspects were approximately five feet from him before making contact and seizing a nylon bag of fish they had in their possession as well as the illegal cast net. The subjects were in possession of 42 illegally taken brown trout. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)

CO Derek Miller checked anglers further down the Huron River. He found several groups of anglers fishing near the Wayne County line. One subject handed him an ID card and stated that his wife wasn’t fishing at all. A file check revealed the subject to have eight outstanding warrants from Wayne County. **CO Miller** transported the subject to the north county line where he was turned over to the local police officers.

CO Kyle Bader assisted a group of subjects who were having trouble while jet skiing and jet boating on Coldwater Lake. **CO Bader’s** attention was drawn to the [jetski] that was completely upside down with two subjects in the water trying to right it. The subjects were able to get their craft upright, but were unable to board it. **CO Bader** pulled both subjects onto his boat. The female subject got on fine, but when the male subject got on, the [jetski] sank. After a few failed attempts, he accepted **CO Bader’s** offer for a ride to his dock. He advised the **CO** that he is a pro football player in the NFL and this isn’t the first time his size has limited his activities.

CO Damon Owens reports closing a deer season case with a guilty finding of three illegal deer, totaling \$3000 in reimbursement to the state, community service, and other fines and costs.

DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)

CO Ken Kovach checked on suspicious vehicles at the Port Huron State Game Area. After walking in on a beaten down trail, **CO Kovach** came upon a large camp. The **CO** found that there were six individuals living on the land. The subjects were from North Carolina, they had a large camp site set up, they were in possession of undersized trout, and because they were non-residents they did not possess any Michigan fishing licenses. They were “homeless” and had purchased a house in the area, but could not move into it until a certain date. Enforcement action was taken.

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Final Shot



Visitors Only

This frankly worded sign at Da Yoopers Tourist Trap on U.S. 41 near Ishpeming, Michigan, pretty much sums up the attitudes of many Upper Peninsula residents when it comes to tourism, which long has been the lifeblood of the north country's economy. The sign, of course, is intended to be humorous, but one can understand the sentiment as the population and development in many areas continues to grow.

Talkin' Turkey

Ken Johnson of Kingsley displays a turkey he bagged in northern Osceola County. Johnson's success challenges the common belief that you have to go to southern Michigan for the best turkey hunting. Like Johnson, others who spent time hunting in the northern half of the state reported being satisfied with their experiences. "We took three birds in three days," said Tony Snyder of the National Wild Turkey Federation. "We had awesome hunting and saw lots of birds in the area." The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and its conservation partners have worked to create better wildlife habitat and hunting opportunities. The efforts seem to be paying dividends.

—Michigan DNR photo



Fishers return to Lower Peninsula

Despite regular reports of fishers in the Lower Peninsula, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has not been able to confirm them below the Mackinac Bridge—until now.

Recently, Melissa and Nate Sayers of Onaway were out for a walk in North Allis Township, Presque Isle County, when they saw something odd.

"We heard the neighbor's dog barking at [the] base of a tree and we saw a ball of fur up in the tree," said Melissa Sayers. "We initially thought it was a bear cub. Then it moved and we realized it wasn't a cub."

It was a fisher.

"This is very exciting," said Jennifer Kleitch, a DNR wildlife biologist who investigated the location and confirmed that photos of the fisher were legitimate. "We treat every rare animal sighting seriously and we must have evidence we can follow up on and investigate to make a definite identification."

Historically, fishers were found throughout both the Upper and Lower peninsulas, although by 1936 deforestation and unlimited harvest resulted in the species vanishing from Michigan. Beginning in 1961, fishers were reintroduced to the Upper Peninsula and by 1989 the U.P. population had recovered enough to establish a limited trapping season in the western U.P.

"It's great to see another native

—Michigan DNR report

Woodcock viewing area dedicated

Dr. George (Andy) Ammann, a former grouse and woodcock biologist for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), was remembered June 6 with the dedication of the Andy Ammann Memorial Woodcock Viewing Area at the Rose Lake wildlife research facility in Clinton and Shiawassee counties.

Ammann, who died at age 98 in 2008, was a well-respected member of the DNR staff and an avid outdoorsman. He pioneered the modern method of woodcock banding—using pointing dogs to locate nests, where the chicks are then banded—and wrote a book about it.

Several family members attended the dedication and shared stories about Ammann's passion for hunting and the out-of-doors.



Fisher in Presque Isle County.

—Mike O'Meara photo

species return to parts of its former range," said DNR furbearer specialist Adam Bump. "Fishers are another species in Michigan that benefit from habitat management and science-based harvest regulations."

Fishers are typically found in large forests, with a preference for areas dominated by coniferous trees. They have a diverse diet, mostly comprised of small-to medium-sized mammals—such as mice and rabbits, along with dead deer. They consume a fair amount of fruits and nuts, as well, and often are noted or being one of the few species that successfully prey on porcupines, although porcupines typically make up only a small portion of their diet.

Those who believe they have seen a fisher in the northern Lower Peninsula and have physical documentation (pictures, locations of tracks, etc.) are asked to call the DNR at (989) 732-3541, ext. 5901.

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