Michigan’s Conservation Sentinel Since 1953

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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 final approval and be sent to Gov. Rick Snyder for signature.

On the assumption that the legislation would eventually pass, conservation officers 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 fishing license fees since 1997—and several have expressed their dissatisfaction 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 running for years.”

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 thinking we will 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 MUCC included these programs in its version of the legislation. “Who 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.

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.

Coupied with new efficiency standards for vehicles, appliances and buildings, the push is aimed at helping reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 1 billion metric tons over 17 years, and commits to cutting hydrofluorocarbon emissions by 80% by 2050.

The Environmental Protection Agency will be asked to come up with a plan to achieve the reductions by 2013. The EPA is expected to publish a regulation to implement the plan by December 2013.

That may be good news for environmentalists looking 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.

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Learn to fish

You can learn the basics of fishing 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 michigan.gov/hook.

Snowshoe Priest

Roman Catholic Bishop Frederic 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 Lake Region,” he was 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 6-foot-high statue (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 sculptor Jack Anderson and Arthur Chapat Jr. is made with copper from the White Pine mine. The snowshoes are 26 feet long and the cross is seven feet high.

Happy Independence Day 2013: A holiday for those who love liberty
It has long been debated how many people working together can bring about change. Scientists at Michigan State University (MSU) have come to believe that the activity could consume more than 4 billion gallons of water. A recent story by writer Jeff Alexander in Bridge Magazine, it is estimated that 500 new natural gas wells in northern Michigan are likely to be drilled, and they are reportedly planning to drill 500 new natural gas wells in northern Michigan.

In a paper recently published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the researchers said that group-size is key to effective action. They found 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 were led to participate in China’s First Great Green Wall. The Natural Forest Conservation Program. That program pays all of the 1,100 rural households there to monitor and control the group. However, a million round bales intended to allow forests to survive. Thus, it is mostly local residents who chop down the trees for firewood, or to build houses, enlisting locals has been identified as one of the best ways 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 behavior of bears, and bears that have been known to break down food sources for two or three weeks and not see 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 activity, you might be able to get them to focus on 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 post-doctoral fellow at IASA in Lasenburg, Austria; Mao-Ning Tsuann, now a post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Yale University; and Guangming He. The research was funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, as well as MSU AgBioResearch.

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 Conference Center in Tusin was described as “enthusing” and generated several good ideas for getting 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. “Our goal is to have members of the Youth Council range in age from 14 to 18 and come from all parts of the state.”
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’ (MDNR) FWaD 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 MDNR 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, damage on less-than- optimum sites, and trees that are toward the end of their natural life, they are mostly 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, MDNR 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 woodland, 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 woodland, 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 woodland. 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

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Monitoring Forests
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.
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 garrulous 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—usually one choice by—one—in search of fake Indian beads, 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 incredibly huge chunks of hard-earned plaster spread over wood and chicken wire frames. Besides, if I want, I can always visit them on the way back. The eleven plans will certainly be there for a while, waiting patiently for the next carousel of money-totting tourists to come whizzing by. These hulkish 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, wailing lumberjack who can sometimes be seen standing next to his beloved companion, Babe 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 Marcellona, an entire colony of mastodontic critters has resided for years in the forest along U.S. 131.

Last time I checked, there was an elephant, an eight-foot alligator, 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. Marcellena may not be as majestic as Mt. Ararat, but no body 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 Brobdingnag 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—being long associated with abominable growth.

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

**Trapping tourists in Michigan’s north country**

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**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

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**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. We’re thinking of 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 medicaid dragging its feet.

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

Did we get us wrong? We like the whole idea of motorcyclists—‘their stick 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?

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**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-galvanizing 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.
Balance needed in coverage of conservation issues

Dear Mike,

I wrote a letter in The North Woods Call I read more than I cared about, I am some of your positions on conservation issues (Opinion Pages, Oct. 28). You may recall that the voters overwhelmingly supported Proposition G, which gave the DNR $225 million from the Sale of Public Lands (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 and other anti-hunting materials and other anti-hunting commercials will be emotional appeals, designed to appeal to the feelings of the believe that scientists who were trained experts in wildlife management, fisheries and forestry could do the best job of sound scientific management.

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Michigan Loons: Northern symbol

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

Who hasn’t been inspired by their night calls. A series of wails, howls, roars 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 the calls of the loon, resonating 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 rise since primed 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 unusual 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 loons—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 “round” built up of vegetation and mud may be used from year-to-year. Two eggs are normal. Both parents incubate for 28 days, the chicks will be almost as large as the adults and will migrate around patches of wildflowers anyway— they add color to the property.

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 out of the water. Most dives, however, are only about a minute in length.

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 extraordinary depths. They can stay underwater for a long, long time. 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 Jerre Springs, Michigan.
“Shiny objects,” turtle eggs, an X-large NFL player & a squatters’ camp

DISTRICT 1 (Marquette) CO Marvin Gerlach, while on routine patrol on the Green, waters of Lake Michigan, contacted a 52-foot cabin cruiser that he was not displaying a registration decal. The owner admitted he did not have to register his vessel because it was federally documented. The owner further admitted he had not registered himself to have registered the vessel because he believed it was federally documented. When the officer further explained that the owner had to register the vessel as well, the owner was disappointed and was referred to the local district for further assistance.

CO Marvin Gerlach investigated the vessel. The vessel had been struck by a tow vessel in the course of towing. The vessel was empty and a chain was used to tow it to a nearby dock. The owner claimed to have bought a fishing license through his wallet, finally claiming he would never fish without a license. When asked why, he stated he was too busy to fish. When asked how many times he had fished, the police officer quickly apprehended him.

DISTRICT 2 (Newberry) CO Mike Hammill was investigating a complaint of a peaceful camping spot being disturbed by a nearby group of campers. According to the complaint, a large collection of diamond, gold and silver jewelry, ammunition, and other goods were taken.

CO Mike Hammill was contacted by a local lake where an individual had launched an unregistered boat. CO Mike Hammill quickly apprehended him.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord) CO Duane Budreau and Sgt. Greg Drogonwski 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 Drogonwski investigated a complaint of a large bulldozer driving on private 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 owner of an ORV parked in a closed area, who was cutting trees which were recently planted. The subject was at a parking lot and was at a shooting range, as well as at an old camp before being apprehended.

CO Jason Wicklund responded to a call a concerned citizen had placed to a neighbor boat camping 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 handgrenade nearby. All of the weapons were loaded and were being shot at a hanging in a tree, as well as at an old campfire. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Jason Wicklund was checking a local lake when an individual claimed to have found something in a lake that he had seen “shiny” items at the bottom of the lake when he was looking for bass. The CO recovered a large collection of diamond, gold and silver jewelry, ammunition, and other goods were taken.

CO Jason Wicklund was on patrol when he noticed a Jeep that had breached a motorized snowmobile trail. It was discovered that the vehicle was parked on the edge of a cliff and was put into storage.

DISTRICT 4 (Caldwell) CO Melissa Gates handled a burning complaint where a subject in his 20s was playing with matches and lighting a woodchuck, wood chip fire in his driveway. A gust of wind took some of the burning wood down the driveway and into the distant ditch. The embankment created a very large fire, resulting in four acres being burned before the fire was suppressed. A ticket was issued for allowing the fire to escape.

Angela Greenway was on patrol using a Cam Am Commander UTV and was able to locate a Jeep that had breached a motorized snowmobile trail. 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 Reiley was on patrol when he observed a motorcycle with an expired plate operating on a two-track road. The operator did not possess a motorcycle endorsement and had no insurance for the vehicle. 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 suspect 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 Lockerd 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 Lockerd observed a stringer with what appeared to be an undersized northern pike anchored close to the angler. The angler was able to come up as many how fish he had kept, he kept a few rock bass and very reluctantly mentioned he had a pike. The fish was not kept. The angler was cited for illegal fishing. The subject was released by CO Greenway and placed on home confinement.

CO Warren MacNeill was contacted by the Alcona County Sheriff’s Department for a complaint of a vehicle with a deer and an illegal hunt. The vehicle was stopped and an interview was held with the subject. A ticket was issued for hunting without a license.

CO Brian Reiley was contacted by the Alcona County Sheriff’s Department for a complaint of a subject burning wood. CO Reiley suppressed the fire, and a ticket was issued for burning wood.

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 had his prior contact with the subject and quickly apprehended him.

CO Joshua Wright was contacted by the Alcona County Sheriff’s Department for a complaint of a subject burning wood. CO Wright suppressed the fire, and a ticket was issued for burning wood.

CO Josh Wright was contacted by the Alcona County Sheriff’s Department for a complaint of having a horse on a trailer. CO Wright was able to locate the trailer and find the suspect.

CO Joshua Wright was contacted by the Alcona County Sheriff’s Department for a complaint of having an unregistered boat. He notified the youths that they needed a registration before they operated the boat with the use of an engine. They left the boat and budaped the boat. Knowing how well teens listen to authority, CO Wright went downstream and observed the boat and trolled the woods. When they thought they were clear of 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 for unrestrained boating.

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

DISTRICT 7 (Pineview) 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 located a subject burning yards 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 there were no pests, not termites, but rather a harmless beetle larvae. The subject was ticketed for burning tires.

While patrolling the Flus River SGA near Belvidere, 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 digging dandelions. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mike Hammill was contacted by a local resident who had dug up two turtle nests and retrieved the eggs. The CO was permitted to remove the turtle nests, but rather a harmless beetle larvae. The subject was ticketed for removing the eggs and the eggs were returned to the nests.

CO Chris Holmes received a complaint of a subjects netting fish illegally. The subject was not using a licence. After a few failed attempts, he accepted CO Bader’s offer for a ride to his dock. He admitted he was a fan of the NFL and this wasn’t the first time his size has limited his activities.

CO John 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 leaving the launch area, CO Kovach came upon a large camp. The CO found that there were two tents and one “homeless” and had purchased a sleeping bag and was living on the beach. 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 discovered paddling in a park row boat on a house in the area, but could not move it into it until a certain date. Enforcement action was taken.
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 definitive 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 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 are often 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.

—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.

—Michigan DNR report

Fish in Presque Isle County.
—Mike O’Meara photo