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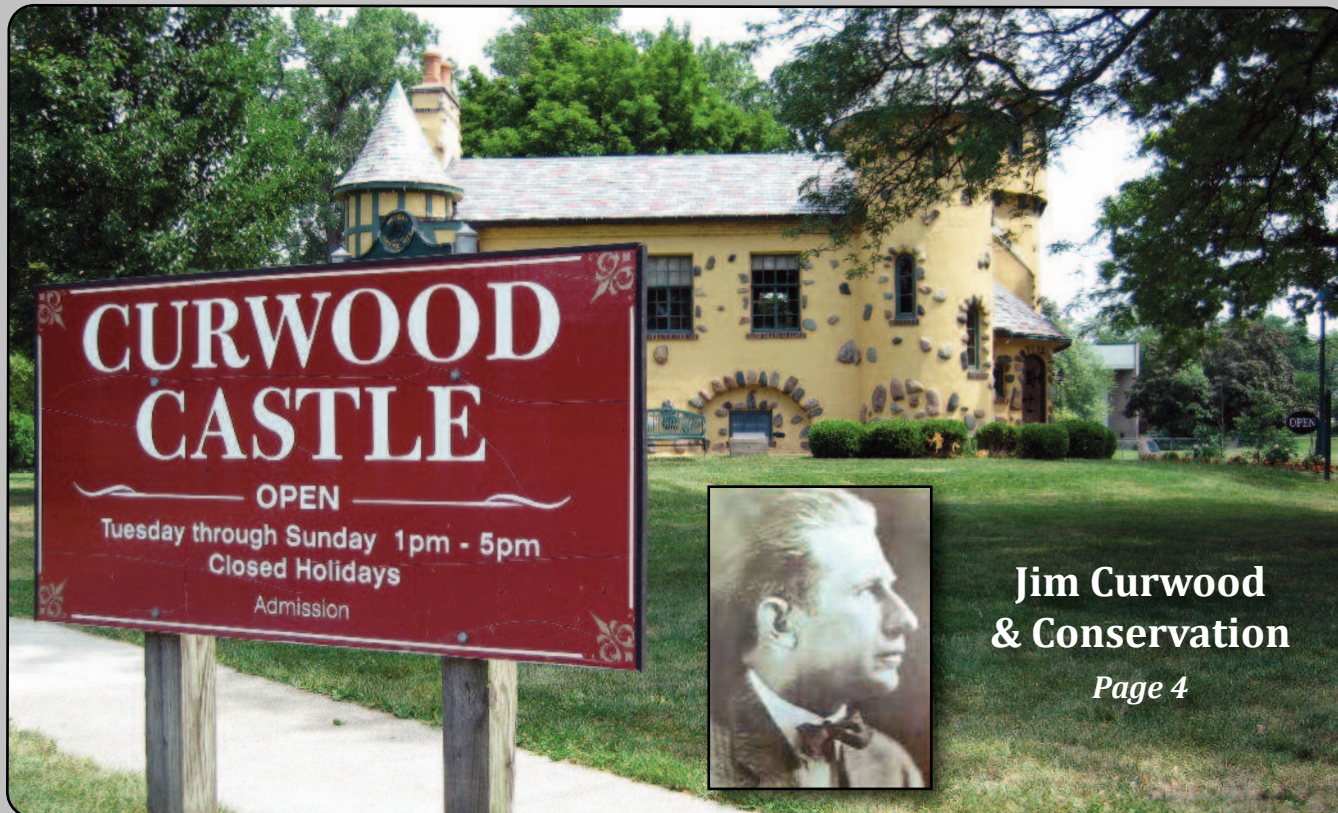


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# THE NORTHWOODS CALL

*Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953*



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## \$75,000 restitution in poaching case

A Shiawassee County man nabbed for poaching will pay the state of Michigan \$75,000 in restitution and have his hunting privileges revoked for the next three years.

Brian Birchmeier, 51, of Owosso Township, was sentenced Aug. 12 under a plea agreement in Shiawassee County District Court. He had been facing 125 misdemeanor charges related to poaching deer and turkey.

Last October, Birchmeier was found in possession of parts of more than 100 animals, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). He was originally charged with 115 counts of taking or possessing a deer over the legal limit, one count of taking a deer without a license, seven counts of taking a turkey without a permit and two

counts of illegal baiting.

It is one of the largest poaching cases in recent Michigan history, DNR officials said.

Birchmeier pleaded no contest on three counts of taking and/or possessing deer and turkey, and one count of licensing violations, which allowed the court to revoke license privileges at its discretion.

DNR Conservation Officer Daniel Bigger was called to Birchmeier's home in October 2012 on a tip from the Shiawassee County Sheriff's Department. Bigger found several sets of antlers, as well as illegal bait piles.

The officer subsequently obtained a search warrant and seized more than 170 antlers, as well as shoulder mounts, crossbows and turkey beards.



## North Woods Notes

**CRYING WOLF ... AGAIN:** Keep Michigan Wolves Protected has reportedly filed a second petition to ban wolf hunting in Michigan. Stung by recent legislation that gives the Natural Resources Commission additional power to designate game species and hunting seasons in the state—which effectively scuttled an earlier referendum effort—the group, backed by the Humane Society of the United States, will continue its push for the issue to go to voters. The DNR, meanwhile, has delayed license sales until September 28 to help them prepare for an expected high demand among Michigan hunters. Also, the use of steel-jaw leg traps will no longer be allowed as part of this year's hunt.

**WEEKLY FISHING REPORT:** Beginning Sept. 5, the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) popular weekly fishing report will be available via a toll-free telephone number. Just dial 1-855-777-0908 for no-charge updates. You can also find the report—containing the latest fishing news and information—online at [www.michigan.gov/fishingreport](http://www.michigan.gov/fishingreport), or subscribe via e-mail

**BEARS:** Michigan has an estimated population of 8,000 to 10,000 black bears, according to the DNR, with 90 percent of them in the Upper Peninsula. Bears are generally afraid of humans and will usually leave an area if they become aware that people are present, DNR officials said. Attacks on humans—such as the one that occurred during mid-August in Wexford County (see related story on this page)—are unusual, they said, and in most cases occur because a sow is protecting her cubs.

**CONSERVATION THREATS:** Ducks Unlimited (DU) is calling on members and supporters to stand up for vital conservation programs—such as the North American Wetlands Conservation Act—that are threatened by federal budget-cutting measures. Such programs combine non-federal dollars from partners such as DU and match them with “modest federal dollars” to deliver millions of acres of habitat conservation, DU officials said.

**PASSENGER PIGEON PATCH:** The 2013-2014 Michigan Living Resources Patch features the passenger pigeon to mark the 100th anniversary of the bird's extinction. Once thought to be the most abundant land bird in North America with an estimated population of up to 5 billion, passenger pigeons were wiped out within about 40 years during the late 1800s due largely to popular pigeon shooting matches and market hunting. Loss of the birds is a reminder of why it is critical to protect threatened and endangered species.

**INVASIVE SPECIES:** The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has issued its final report and recommendations of the state's Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Council. The report supports the state management plan that has now been submitted to the federal Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, and features recommendations relating to ballast water, the Pure Michigan brand, education and phragmites control, among other things. The recommendations have been outlined by the Michigan United Conservation Clubs and can be read at [www.mucc.org/2013/08/invasive-species-recommendations-released/](http://www.mucc.org/2013/08/invasive-species-recommendations-released/)

**WALLEYES GALORE:** The DNR Fisheries Division stocked 4,160,502 walleye fingerlings in 120 bodies of water throughout Michigan during the past spring and summer. A total of 30 walleye ponds located across the state—which are critical to the state's cool water fisheries management—were used this year.

**FREE-THOUGHT BUREAUCRAT:** In an agency wide address to employees last month, U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Sally Jewell reportedly suggested that no one working for her should challenge the idea that human activity is driving changes in the earth's climate. “I hope there are no climate change deniers in the Department of the Interior,” she is said to have proclaimed.

(Continued on Page 2)

## Graymont still analyzing U.P. mine sites

Officials at Graymont, one of North America's leading lime producers, say they will likely complete their analysis of potential sites for a proposed quarrying operation in Michigan's Upper Peninsula (U.P.) within the next couple of months.

“We're still moving ahead with the project,” said Bob Robison, the company's director of mining and geology, noting that Graymont has spent a significant amount of money on test drilling at various locations. “We're looking at property and trying to determine our best options. Once we go through the analysis and determine our next steps, then we'll move ahead with land acquisition.”

Robison has said that Graymont is looking a several parcels in an area south to southeast of Newberry. Much of the land is state-owned, he said, but there are also some privately owned parcels being examined.

According to one Michigan resident who has been looking at documents obtained under a Freedom of

Information Act (FOIA) request, Graymont may be zeroing in on 10,000 acres near Rexton, but Robison declined to reveal the locations of any specific pieces of property being considered.

“I'm not at liberty to say which ones,” he said, “but we will share that information as soon as we can.”

Robison said the final decision about the project and its location is not entirely up to Graymont. A lot of it, he said, will be “up to the regulators” and whether the company can negotiate the land deals.

One of many questions being asked by opponents is what will be done to protect whatever wetlands exist within the chosen mining area. The FOIA documents reportedly suggest that there is a plan to “zig-zag” the mine around the wetlands, an idea some have said would be foolish and unworkable.

Graymont is anxious to provide the public with more information, according to Robison, but didn't

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## THE NORTH WOODS CALL

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



### Soaring Back

—Michigan DNR photo

*An osprey glides across the Michigan sky—testifying that the species once decimated by DDT and other pesticides is rebounding in the state. Officials say they have already exceeded their 2020 goal of 30 active nests in the southern Lower Peninsula—56 to be exact—and have been able to remove the osprey from the threatened species list and sustain their population in Michigan.*

### Was dead bear responsible for attack on girl?

A Wexford County property owner shot and wounded a black bear Aug. 17, because he thought the animal was a threat to his life.

It was uncertain whether it was the same bear that was involved in an attack on a young girl two days earlier in Haring Township. The 12-year-old victim reportedly underwent surgery at Munson Medical Center in Traverse City, before being released for recovery at home.

Two Michigan conservation officers—Sam Kosciński and Holly Pennoni—tracked the wounded bear, shooting and killing it at about 2:45 a.m. Aug. 18. The bear was about two miles from the area where the girl was attacked.

The animal's carcass was sent to the Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Disease Laboratory in Lansing for DNA and disease testing, officials said. It was to be checked against fur and other DNA samples taken from the girl's clothing. Results—unavailable at the time of this writing—were expected within several days.

## Judge dismisses lawsuit against the DNR

A judge has dismissed a citizen lawsuit against the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and its director, Keith Creagh, over the sale of oil and gas leases in Allegan and Barry counties.

Barry County Circuit Judge Amy McDowell indicated that the case was premature and “not ripe for review” by the court at this time.

Michigan Land Air Water Defense (MLAWD), a nonprofit citizens' group, filed suit last October in opposition to the sale of oil and gas leases in the Barry and Allegan State Game Areas, as well as in the Yankee Springs Recreation Area, because they say the land has previously been set aside for recreational purposes under the public trust doctrine. The DNR has violated the public trust, they say, by failing to protect the greater public interest by selling the lease options and not keeping those areas safe from development.

MLAWD is seeking to have the leases set aside at least until environmental impact studies can be done—particularly in regard to impacts of the controversial process known as horizontal hydrofracturing, or “fracking.”

DNR attorneys, however, argued that there was no genuine issue for trial, because the lawsuit depends on “hypothetical events which have not occurred and may never occur.” Even if such events do occur, the DNR says, a well-established procedure is in place for the state Department of Environmental Quality to do a review and impact assessment before any development activity would be allowed.

“Michigan courts have long held that the court should be a place of last resort,” McDowell said. “A plaintiff lacks standing to bring forward a case if there are other avenues for the plaintiff to seek relief.”

(Continued on Page 3)





## MANISTEE RIVER CLEANUP

*The Old Au Sable Fly Shop in Grayling—which for many years housed a recreational canoe livery—is the starting point for the Sept. 21 Manistee River Cleanup. For more information, or to volunteer for the event, contact Andy Partlo at [andy@oldausable.com](mailto:andy@oldausable.com). And don't forget the 19th Annual Au Sable River Cleanup on Sept. 7, which kicks off at Gates Au Sable Lodge (10 a.m.) and ends with the George Alexander Memorial Luncheon there. To pre-register for that one, call Josh Greenberg at (989) 348-8462.*



## North Woods Notes

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**NRC MEETINGS:** The next Michigan Natural Resources Commission meeting will be held Sept. 12 at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road in Lansing. The Nov. 7 and Dec. 12 meetings will also be held at that location. On October 10, commissioners will convene at Pine Mountain Resort, 3332 Pine Mountain Road, in Iron Mountain. For more information about starting times and agendas, visit the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website at [michigan.gov/dnr](http://michigan.gov/dnr).

**NO TO ENBRIDGE:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in August denied a request by Enbridge Energy to extend the deadline for dredging the delta in Morrow Lake near Comstock in Kalamazoo County. The EPA, which ordered the dredging, said the company failed to report in detail about its efforts to find alternative dredge pad sites in the face of continued local opposition to a previously chosen location. It is not clear whether the company has considered other options, the EPA said, such as using several smaller dredge pads or other methodologies. An adjacent property owner concerned with potential contamination filed a lawsuit against Enbridge over the first choice of a dredge pad location.

**FERAL SWINE:** Wild hogs can reproduce quickly and tear up farm crops and native landscapes, according to the Michigan United Conservation Clubs. They directly impact wildlife by feeding on ground-nesting birds, fawns and other small animals. They also spread various diseases. It is estimated that there are 1,000 to 3,000 feral swine in Michigan, but the population is expected to expand if nothing is done now to control the numbers. (See more in the next *North Woods Call*).

**ENERGY HOGS:** Plugged in environmentalists in touch with the latest communication technologies may not be happy to know that the average iPhone uses more energy than a mid-size refrigerator, according to Mark Mills, chief executive officer of Digital Power Group, a tech investment advisory company. Mid-size refrigerators that qualify for the EPA's Energy Star rating use about 322 kilowatts per hour, he said, while the iPhone uses 361 kilowatts per hour if you calculate related wireless connections, data usage and battery charging. Much of that energy is going to server farms—giant clusters of computer servers that connect smart phones and databases—as well as to wireless networks that never go to sleep, according to Mills.

**HIGH-TECH ARCHERY:** A new three-dimensional archery facility has opened at the Sharonville shooting range. Archers are invited to stop in and hone their skills, with a little assistance from modern technology.

**HARD ROCKERS:** For all you rock hounds out there, mark your calendars for the 6th annual "Rock On!" agate show at Muskegon Lake State Park Sept. 14-15. The show—featuring presentations, vendors and musical entertainment—will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**PARTNERS & SPONSORS:** The DNR is seeking support from partners and sponsors for 2014 outdoor recreation events and initiatives. Opportunities include volunteering as an instructor for various statewide campaigns, sponsoring campaign events, and donating to specific projects. For information, call Maia Turek at (989) 225-8573.

## Graymont says company is still seeking mine site

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yet have much to share when contacted by *The North Woods Call*.

"That's the challenge," Robison said. "We need to let people know that we're moving forward and we will do that as soon as we can. We're not dodging questions. We want to be as clear as we can."

Once the exploratory phase is completed, Robison said, a news release will be sent out and he expects the project will move ahead "as soon as possible." A specific timeline, however, will be set by Graymont's management team when all the relevant information has been collected.

John Maitland, Graymont's regional environmental health and safety manager, said the next phase of the project will involve a town hall-style meeting to talk with U.P. residents, let them know the current status of the effort and share with them the company's "internal values."

If the project is ultimately approved and goes forward, public access will be granted to all land that's not actively being mined, Robison said. "We have no intention of blocking people out," he said. "And once we're through with the mining, there will be land reclamation"—replacing ground cover so vegetation can return.

"There's no reason to leave just bare rock," he said.

Also, any recreational trails disturbed during the process will be restored so the public does not lose access, Robison said.

"A lot of us are outdoor enthusiasts," added Maitland. "We like to hunt and fish, too."

Citizens are being asked to write to the Michigan Natural Resources Commission and state legislators to share their views on the proposed project.

**Our 60th Year: Looking Back to September 2, 1970**  
— Excerpts from *The North Woods Call* —

## Forest zoning may flop

By Glen Sheppard

The first two weeks in August 1970 could become historically significant, or notorious, in Michigan's north woods history.

Thirty or 50 years from now, a father may stand among huge pines in the Au Sable State Forest and tell his son that this area was reserved for him by Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) field men. Or he may stand on the same spot with oil wells, power lines and roads all around them, and tell his son that foresters, game biologists and fish biologists back in 1970 tried to zone this area off-limits to development, but were overruled by administrators in Lansing.

The next few months should tell how the story will be written in the year 2000, or 2020.

By August 15, the DNR professionals who live and work in the north woods had completed rough zoning of all state-owned and some privately owned lands in the northern Lower Peninsula. Their ideas on how to do the job varied greatly, in that there was no standardized terms or classifications used. But the zoning maps seen by *The North Woods Call* show that the field men were operating under the same basic idea—zone still largely unspoiled areas as closed to further development of any kind.

Not only did they zone these areas off-limits to oil drilling, but also to highway construction, trail road improvement, power and pipe lines, impoundments, gravel pits and every other form of forest exploitation, except controlled recreation and timber harvest.

Almost without exception, the field men agreed that any new power and pipe lines and highways should follow existing highway paths, or go through areas where there is the least amount of unspoiled public forest.

They also touched—briefly, due to the lack of time—on areas in which they feel motorized recreation vehicles should be banned, or restricted to specified trails.

A look at the zoning maps shows great differences. For instance, in Ogemaw County, only a fraction of the state-owned land is considered by the local resource managers to be worth zoning as a non-development zone—while up in Emmet, Cheboygan, Charlevoix, Otsego, Antrim, Montmorency and Presque Isle counties, the vast majority of state forest is crossed off to oil drillers, road builders, power companies, etc.

As one forester in the DNR's Cadillac district put it, "they have more to save up there (in the northernmost Lower Peninsula)—more that hasn't already been spoiled."

The zoning maps are now in Lansing, where DNR Deputy Director for Field Operations Warren Shapton says staff personnel will go to work to refine and standardize the hurried and rough terminology produced by the field men.

When Shapton and northern Lower Peninsula regional chief Troy Yoder gave field men the go-ahead to do the fast zoning job, they handed out only sketchy directions.

"We weren't sure how we should do it," Shapton explained, "so we asked field men to submit their thoughts. We assumed there are 100 ideas or more out there, which is good. The more the better."

Now, Shapton explained, the staff experts in Lansing will get their licks in and return the plan to field men for updating and additional ideas. He hopes the zoning maps will start going back to field men for a second look in about a month.

Shapton admits field men who fear Lansing will weaken their zoning proposals may have reason for concern, due to what they have seen happen in oil leasing recently. But he insists that, if Lansing makes any major changes in the field's recommendations, it will still be to enlarge and strengthen the non-development areas.

Shapton, who has been as upset as just about anyone over the fact that large wilderness tracts were leased to oil drillers without field men having a chance to recommend against the leases, says the zoning should have been done years ago.

When the zoning is completed, Shapton hopes it will be used by the DNR to convince legislators and the governor to provide funds for purchasing private wild lands in non-development areas.

Obviously, funds for this—if ever provided—will be slow in coming. It thus appears that the zoning plan could become an effective tool to get the legislature to provide for property tax relief for persons who own undeveloped land in areas zoned against development, if they agree to leave the property as it is.

*The Call* hopes that DNR brass will not forget that the forests do not belong to them. They belong to the people.

For updates, t-shirts & caps,  
visit our website at:  
[www.mynorthwoodscall.com](http://www.mynorthwoodscall.com)



Also follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Blogger



## Barry County judge dismisses citizen lawsuit against the state DNR

(Continued from Page 1)

Once all other “avenues for relief” have been exhausted, McDowell said, MLAWD may then appeal to the court for review of the DNR decisions.

The court was not able to consider a violation of the public trust at this time, McDowell said, because the DNR has merely issued a “non-developmental” lease permit—which means no actual drilling is allowed without a formal application for a change in status—and “has not engaged in any activity that has actually harmed the public trust in these resources, or is likely to do so.”

If the DNR had initially classified the lease as “developmental,” or “developmental with restrictions” prior to review of the impact on protected areas, then the court may have reached a different conclusion,” McDowell said. The opinion did not con-

sider the Allegan State Game Area, she said, and only applies to lands located in Barry County.

Ed Golder, the DNR’s public information officer, said the agency is pleased with the court’s decision, “which affirms the DNR’s position that the department has the proper protections in place for the state’s natural resources when it comes to the leasing of public lands.”

“We’re surprised and disappointed, but we’re not done yet,” said Steve Loshier, MLAWD president.

Jim Olson, a Traverse City attorney representing MLAWD, called the ruling “round one,” because there are many unanswered questions and it does not appear to be a final decision on all issues.

“We are reviewing the ruling and weighing our options,” Olson said, “but do intend to seek clarification from Judge McDowell,

because the opinion lacks any reference to law or facts that were presented in the case under the court rules. So, as it now reads, it is not possible to determine precisely what the opinion means.”

In a news release issued after the ruling, MLAWD said the opinion “demonstrates misunderstanding of key facts, as well as applicable law with respect to central issues presented.”

Among other things, the organization said, the ruling apparently dismisses the case as a whole, while at the same time doesn’t consider issues arising from leasing in Allegan County. It also doesn’t address the conflict between DNR administrative rules governing oil and gas leasing and the procedures the agency adopted to carry out the rules.

“The clear public interest in mounting a challenge to this indefensible disparity is

one of the central reasons MLAWD filed suit,” the news release said.

Furthermore, the court based its ruling in part on the conclusion that the plaintiff failed to show *actual harm*, although “this is not the statutory provision on which MLAWD’s claim rests, the group said. Instead, the claim is based on the DNR’s *failure to consider* effects on land, air, water and natural resources, as well as *alternatives* before it sold the leases.

The judge also concluded that no surface disturbance can occur unless the DNR later reclassifies such leases, they said, and noted that the public can appeal reclassification and nondevelopment procedures—conclusions contrary to DNR staff testimony.

If indeed no reclassification appeal procedure exists, “it would be improper for a trial judge to grant summary disposition,” MLAWD said.

## Reminiscences: A life at Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies

*EDITOR’S NOTE: The following memories were posted recently on the Au Sable Trails Institute website. The author may not remember me after all these years, but I was first introduced to Bob Barr and his colleagues in 1978—during my days at the Antrim County News—when I accompanied some Mancelona middle school students on an educational snowshoeing expedition at Au Sable Trails. I was intrigued by the organization’s work then and still am. Much later, during the 1990s, I met Associate Director Dave Mahan through the W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Groundwater Education in Michigan Program. Our best to Bob in his pending retirement.*

—Mike VanBuren

By Bob Barr

Director of Support Services  
Au Sable Trails Institute

“Don’t you get bored living out here in the middle of nowhere?” exclaimed our friend from the big city (city folk can be so provincial). “I couldn’t stand the isolation.”

[My wife] Becky and I had been living at Au Sable in the caretaker’s house for several years by the time our friend made her comment.

Trish Fagg, Au Sable’s environmental education director, lived in a cottage 30 feet from our house and Au Sable’s founder Harold Snyder and his wife Ellen lived just across the pond, a five minute walk away.

Our basement was constantly filled with an ever-changing assortment of environmental education interns, students, faculty families, or staff. Twenty to thirty year-round residents came to the lodge one evening a week for an environmental education program that Trish coordinated.

Becky and I were involved in our local church (a shorter driving time than our city friend was from her church) two nights a week, and I had just joined the local volunteer fire department (our motto: “We’ll save your lot”). So you can see why I broke into laughter when I heard my friend’s question. We were facing a classic case of “looks can be deceiving.”

More than the total number of people in our lives was the quality of those people.

Becky and I did worry about raising kids in a community in



Bob Barr will retire from Au Sable Institute near Mancelona at the end of this year.

which education lagged behind and many people had relatively few opportunities to explore the wider world, but we had rich friendships within the Au Sable community from academic sorts far and wide. The college students would come and go, but every year there were a couple of them who would stay on to be interns, or work as staff and perhaps return the next year as students once again.

We got close to these folks, and occasionally would serve as mentors and guides for them. At the very least, they were the sources for many wonderful stories. Over the years, we have hosted in our home educators, scientists, a congressman, theologians, journalists, famous authors and thinkers from five continents

Our kids’ lives were enlarged by playing with professor’s kids, who came from all over the United States to spend their summers with us. And we were enriched by local people who did not have much education, nor had they seen much of the world, but who lived a rubber-meets-the-road sort of Christian life—informed by an unsophisticated, but very personal and powerful faith.

So, no, from a people perspective, we did not have time to get bored. Rather, the thousands of people who have been part of our lives these past 36 years have blessed us and enriched us in ways incalculable.

Our friend, who calculated boredom by the absence of people, completely missed a very powerful element of life at Au Sable, and that is the place itself. This is a beautiful place, and each season has its charms: the spectacular colors of fall, the returning birds of spring, morning mists over the lakes, fox kits playing

below our deck, and my favorite, the Currier and Ives beauty of a heavy lake-effect snowfall.

But there are lots of beautiful places in the world, and we know that God speaks through his creation. There is something more, something special, that happens on these unique acres. God has honored the prayers of the founders that this place would be a place where God’s presence could be felt.

Over and over again, I have heard students, retreat participants, campers, and staff testify to life-changing encounters with God while they were on these grounds.

A college student attended several winter retreats here with his church. He developed a very aggressive cancer and requested that he be permitted to make one last winter retreat at Au Sable. We put a couple of beds in the lodge conference room, so his aids could be with him through the night, and we had a spectacular snowy winter weekend. He died in the spring.

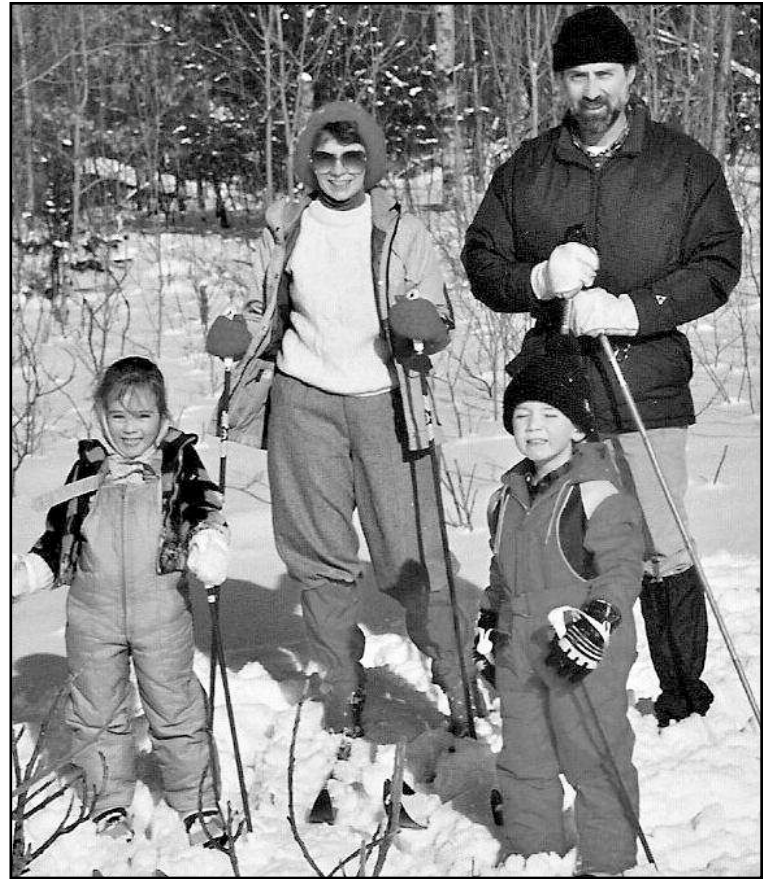
Just this past week, a student from our first fall semester program showed up because he was in the area and wanted to find out if Au Sable still existed. He spoke of the impact this place had on his life 33 years ago. Interestingly enough, I remembered him as one with whom we failed to connect. He wasn’t interested in biology, could be abrasive at times and was always pushing the behavioral boundaries. While I liked him personally, I was not unhappy when he left. And yet God spoke to him here (probably in spite of us) and his life was impacted.

God still speaks here. Some students have changed majors and career tracks as a result of their Au Sable experience. One guy came to Au Sable planning to be a wildlife biologist and told me later that it was my fault he was a missionary in Uganda. Several have met their spouses here and a few have even gotten married, or had their receptions here.

Others have committed their lives to the Lord while sitting quietly by the water, or in the forest. It is these people who have been the main reason I have stayed here for all these years.

Those people and maybe a couple of others.

Becky knew long before I did



Bob Barr with wife Becky and children enjoy a winter outing during an earlier time in his 36 years at Au Sable Institute.

that we were moving north to Au Sable—even before Harold offered me the job. In fact, one of the issues (among a long list of others) she wrestled with before agreeing to marry me was whether a good Southern Baptist girl from Kentucky could survive in the north woods. She has not only survived, but thrived here—serving mostly at no pay as cook, professor, housekeeper, environmental education intern, counselor and artist.

We’ve been blessed by the presence of many others who have been devoted to this place: Harold and Ellen Snyder, who between them have been professor, mentor, employer, colleague, surrogate parents, neighbors, and friends; Trish Fagg, who has seniority on me by two months, and joined Becky and I as Au Sable pioneers in 1977; Muriel Janisse, who is next in seniority, and who I often refer to as “poor Muriel” because of the jokes she took from Dave Mahan and I, but she certainly was a victim who gave as good as she got; and Dave Mahan, who was hired to be my supervisor, but quickly became my brother (except for my biological brother, there is no one closer to me than Dave).

While I would not trade my life at Au Sable for anything, there

have been some tough moments, and I could not have done it without Becky, Trish, Muriel, and Dave.

While I am convinced that the life changing encounters many people have had on these grounds are the result of the prayers of our founders, I believe with equal fervor that a big part of the good that has happened here is the result of the spirit and community that was forged here by servant hearts, gentle spirits and giving lives that Trish, Muriel, Dave and maybe I have poured into this place.

One of the delights of my job is its variety. My tasks change with the program and the season. Nothing remains the same. Trish and Muriel are retired, and I will be soon. But Paul [Wiemerslage], Lynn [Drew], Dieter [Bouma], Dave, and Fred [Van Dyke] are in place, and I believe that Au Sable is ready to move forward and continue its life-changing work.

So it is with a deep sense of gratitude for the adventure that God has allowed Becky and me to live here at Au Sable, and a confidence that God will continue to work in the hearts and lives of people who experience this place, that I can pack away my tools and delight in what God has in store for this very special place.



# Opinion

## Conservation Quote

"Nothing can ever be done in the mighty work of upbuilding our forests and wildlife until the house in Lansing is utterly cleaned out."  
—James Oliver Curwood

## Judge muffles citizen voices

Sometimes it seems like all branches of government—elected and unelected—conspire to thwart the will of citizens.

Such is the case in Barry County, where Circuit Court Judge Amy McDowell recently ruled in favor of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) request to dismiss a lawsuit brought against the agency by Michigan Land Air Water Defense (MLAWD).

MLAWD—a citizen's group opposed to the sale of oil and gas leases in the Barry and Allegan State Game Areas, as well as the Yankee Springs Recreation Area—was surprised by the ruling.

So were we. The citizens put up their own resources against the taxpayer-funded legal team of the DNR to ask that the leases be nixed, at least until environmental impact studies can be done.

The judge, however, sided with DNR attorneys and outlined her reasons—somewhat confusingly—in a written opinion.

We think MLAWD attorney Jim Olson makes a solid argument when he says the DNR claims are "so intertwined with factual assertions on the part of the agency" that the only way to resolve the arguments is through a formal trial. It is uncertain now whether that will happen.

Stay tuned, though. More legal jousting is sure to come.

## Feral cats: Pets gone wild?

The three cats that reside in our home are warm, cuddly creatures that snuggle, purr and carefully groom themselves to demonstrate that they are lovable and well-behaved domestic sweethearts.

Let them outside, however, and they immediately turn into vicious serial killers that get perverse pleasure out of maiming more vulnerable animals—then proudly leaving the mangled leftovers of mice, chipmunks, birds, rabbits and squirrels on our doorstep.

We don't like it—although we appreciate the general absence of trouble-making mice around our home—but we're not sure what to do about the slaughter. Like us, our cats are outdoor-lovers and would go stir-crazy if we imprisoned them in the house.

According to a Smithsonian Institute study, free-ranging cats like ours are the top threat to wildlife in the United States, killing up to 3.7 billion birds and 20.7 billion mammals each year. Yet there is no real consensus about whether this is acceptable.

Cat lovers say their pets are simply part of nature's sometimes unpleasant eat-or-be-eaten network and are hard-wired to do what they do. Those less enamored with prowling renegades, however, say something must be done about these mass murderers and have even proposed the hunting of feral and stray cats—those once adorable human companions that have returned to the wild.

That may be OK for often unhealthy felines that are truly undomesticated—living outdoors without any human contact or care—but how would hunters tell the difference between one of those and a free-ranging domestic cat?

Would they be allowed to profile, or ask for a government-approved identification card, before aiming and firing?

## When man collides with nature

It has been said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Nowhere does that seem more true than in the relationship between people and nature.

And conflicts with wildlife may be at the top of the list.

The struggle with Canada geese has raged for some time in grassy backyards, at public parks and on lakeshore beaches, and the squishy messes they leave behind can turn even the most docile animal lover into a raging waterfowl exterminator.

Then there are mute swans, on which the Michigan Department of Natural Resources has declared war—in Barry County, among other places—planning to kill thousands over the next five years to reduce their numbers in the state. The birds are an invasive species, they say, and have a destructive impact on vegetation.

Now comes a Bellvue-area farmer, who tells us about the damage sand hill cranes are doing to his crops. He says he's able to legally shoot them as nuisances, when necessary, but complains that state law does not allow him to harvest and eat them. "That's stupid, he says.

It doesn't seem to matter whether we're talking about wolves, wild hogs, deer, raccoons, or any other species that have found themselves at cross purposes with humans. Some folks want them protected, while others insist they can't be eliminated quickly enough.

Workable solutions to these dilemmas do not come easily—particularly in this day-and-age when we can't seem to sit down with others and discuss anything rationally.

In a weird sense, it's biodiversity run amok.

## James Oliver Curwood & Michigan conservation

I've never been sure what medieval-style castles have to do with conservation and north woods action-adventure stories.

But it's something I puzzle over whenever I pass through the lower Michigan community of Owosso and see the unusual writing studio built by early 20th Century novelist James Oliver Curwood on the banks of the Shiawassee River.

Curwood was famous for his lifelong interest in the outdoors and the riveting stories he penned about nature, romance and the struggles of fictional heroes and heroines living in the far north. He was among the best-selling American novelists of his era—certainly the highest paid—with his literary creations appearing in magazines, books, stage productions and early motion pictures.

Yet, in 1922—while seeking a quiet retreat to do his writing and meet with business associates—Curwood constructed what is now known as the "Curwood Castle," a fairy tale bit of architecture more reminiscent of the European Middle Ages than the harsh wilds of North America.

Go figure.

Maybe Curwood wanted to stand out among his Shiawassee County neighbors, or—as some have said—fulfill his romantic notions of an inspiring place to write his stories. He was far from commonplace himself and may have longed for something unique to match his personality.

Regardless of the reason, the castle is somewhat symbolic of Curwood's crusade for the conservation of Michigan's wildlife, forests, lakes and streams. Among other things, he was suspicious of the Michigan Department of Conservation's ability to manage natural resources, and believed that political patronage was interfering with effective enforcement of the state's game and fish laws.

Simply put, he didn't think that the Michigan Conservation Commission and the bureaucrats hired to protect the resources were doing their jobs. You might even say that Curwood saw the state's conservation system as a kind of contemporary feudalism where political favors were given to special interests in exchange for their loyalty to politicians.

The Department of Conservation, he said, was being diverted

## North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



from its original purpose into a political machine, which had for its aim the spending of money where it would do the most good—for politicians.

Sound familiar?

The Curwood Castle—actually a replica of a Norman chateau—was built rather late in the author's life, just four years before he died in 1927 at the age of 49 from an infection related to what is believed to have been a spider bite. Likewise, Curwood's zealous dedication to conservation—capped by his own appointment to the Conservation Commission in 1926—blossomed during the last decade of his life.

Prior to that, by his own admission, he was a wanton killer of animals and had numerous big-game trophies hanging on the walls of his Owosso home to prove it. All that changed, however, during a hunting trip to the Canadian Rockies, where he stalked a large grizzly bear he named Thor. Curwood reportedly tried to kill the animal three times in three weeks—seriously wounding it—until Thor approached him one day on a rocky ledge high on the side of a cliff and Curwood slipped and fell, breaking his gun.

The bear reared up on its hind legs, as if it were going to attack the terrified hunter, then turned and walked away with a low growl. Curwood couldn't believe he had escaped near certain death and returned home committed to the conservation of wildlife, rather than to its destruction.

Of course, he wrote a story about the incident—published in 1916 as "The Grizzly King"—in which he said, "Thor was not, like man, a murderer."

Going forward, Curwood began to campaign publicly about the virtues of conservation.

"I have ceased to be a destroyer, as I once destroyed," he said, "and my ruling passion is to help wild things to live, from flowers and trees and birds and beasts to man himself, rather than to indulge further in the dominant sport of my species—extermination."

Curwood spent much time enjoying Michigan's outdoor re-

sources and owned several cabins, including one along the Au Sable River near Roscommon that was later expanded into a lodge said to have once hosted the likes of California newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst.

Under the administration of then Michigan Gov. Fred Green, Curwood saw some notable successes in his campaign for conservation, although neither the governor nor fellow Conservation Commission members were ready for all of the major reforms he proposed.

His legacies include pushing through the commission a resolution supporting the purchase of a stand of virgin white and Norway pine near Grayling, which later became the showpiece of Hartwick Pines State Park. Perhaps more importantly, Curwood significantly moved public debate toward the conservation of Michigan's natural resources and built support for many related policies and programs that followed.

He wanted to limit, or even close, certain hunting seasons, and he was interested in stocking streams and game preserves, as well as reforestation.

"Conservation is not simply a matter for the hunter and fisherman," he said. "Our very lives and future prosperity depend on it."

In a letter to noted Michigan conservationist P.S. Lovejoy, Curwood said, "We must save what we already have and then look ahead to what we can achieve in the next 50 or 100 years."

Unfortunately, after his death, many of the things Curwood fought for—especially when it comes to separating partisan politics from conservation—have been routinely sidestepped.

For the crusading author, however, it was largely a spiritual quest that can only be ignored at our peril.

"Nature is my religion," he said, "The great goal I want to achieve is to take my readers with me into the heart of this nature. I love it and I feel that they must love it—if I can only get the two acquainted."

## Book Review

### God's Country and the Man

If you want a quick study in the life and times of Michigan novelist James Oliver Curwood, this is a good place to start.

Written by Judith A. Eldridge, and published by Bowling Green State University in 1993, *James Oliver Curwood: God's Country and the Man* reveals much about Curwood, a contemporary of author and adventurer Jack London, and one of the most successful American authors of the 1920s.

Like London, Curwood wrote romance-action-adventure stories set in the north woods of Canada and Alaska. Born and raised in

Owosso, Michigan, Curwood called the Shiawassee County community home for most of his relatively short life.

He was a relentless writer whose outlook on wildlife and the protection of natural resources was significantly altered by an encounter with a huge bear on a 1914 hunting expedition.

A man ahead of his time, Curwood was largely forgotten after his death in 1927. He loved nature and was a strong advocate for Michigan conservation causes in his latter years.

Check it out. This book is well worth the read.

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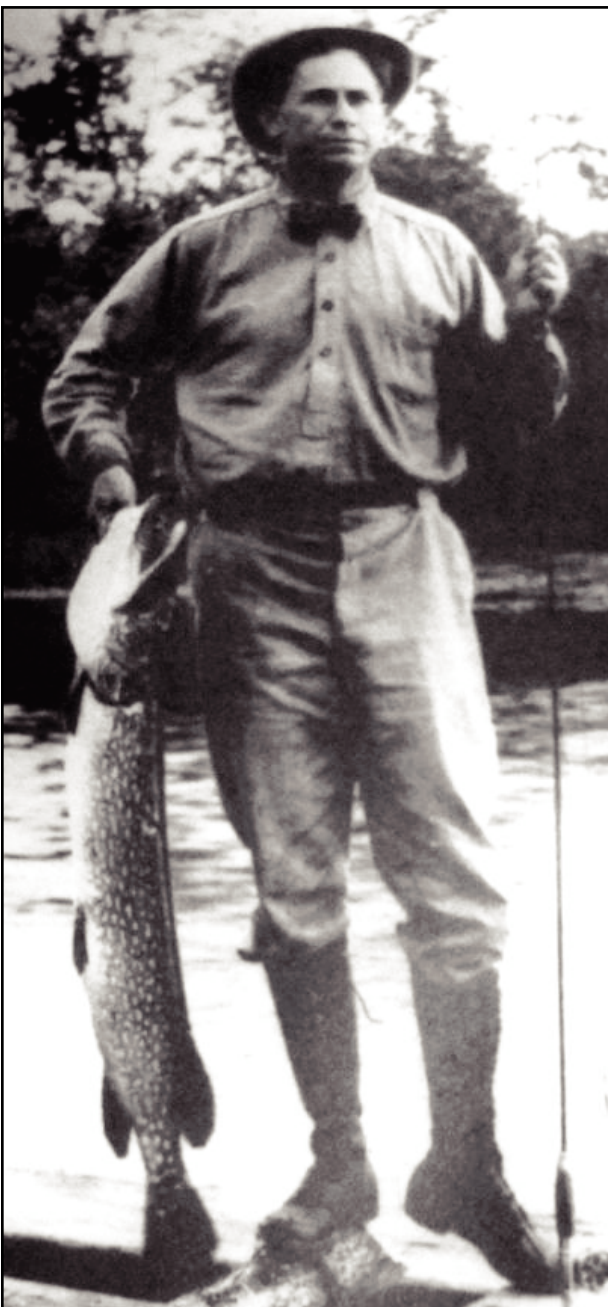
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The Curwood Castle (above) now houses a museum with assorted memorabilia, including a collection of the adventure-romance writer's books (right). James Oliver Curwood (below) from Owosso was an avid hunter of wild animals before an encounter with a large grizzly bear reshaped his priorities and made him a much stronger advocate for natural resources conservation.



**The Wild Nearby**

By Tom Springer



**Gratefully dead: A garden gone wild**

The garden looks terrible, but neither nature nor I would have it any other way.

For one thing, I can scarcely bear to eat another cucumber. Our veggie-sated taste buds no longer crave the pickle-sized dainties of July. So the vines, left to their own devices, have raised-up a final crop of elephantine proportions; yellow-green torpedoes that want nothing more than to swell, split and spill their seeds. And I intend to let them.

The broccoli, too, have turned renegade. Gone are the compact heads, the seed-catalog perfection of early summer. The plants have shot up lanky stalks topped with a flurry of Easter-yellow flowers. The honey bees and bumblebees go mad for them.

As for the tomatoes ... well, they do what every leggy tomato plant secretly yearns to do. Topple over, no matter how tightly you've staked or trellised them, and thus spill a profusion of red fruit in various stages of ripeness and decay. I've never met an upright tomato plant that wouldn't rather live a horizontal existence.

This wonderfully fertile mess illustrates a central paradox of gardening. In spring, before a garden can produce even a calorie of produce, you put in long hours to make it perfect. Everything must be living-room tidy. You use a yardstick to line up the distance between plants and rows. Like a prison guard in a watchtower, you scan the bare soil for any fugitive weed that sprouts higher than a golf tee.

Then by late summer, you happily let the whole thing go to hell in a bushel basket.

Why? Was all this neatness just for vanity's sake, to show off one's gardening chops to friends and family? It certainly could be. Yet to thrive, little plants do need protection from the stranglehold of aggressive weeds. And the blanket of straw and newspapers we laid down in the garden does hold in the moisture that small, shallow roots need to flourish. (Come spring, the snow-saturated papers will have dissolved to a gray mush and all but disappeared—last year's bad news turned poetically to humus, as it were.)

This idyll of neatness has its season, but by Labor Day we welcome the fecund disorder of harvest time. By then we've eaten, stir-fried, frozen, pied and jammed our way through a home-grown summer. The freezer and pantry can hold no more. Nor can we impose on family and friends another heavy sack of surplus tomatoes.

It's time, then, to let the garden run its course. For while our plants were hothouse raised, from seeds that may well be genetically mangled, they nonetheless bear the holy trace of their creator's imprint. As with all living things, they're encoded with a deep, sacrificial need to further their own kind. And so we let them joyfully go to seed and cast off their unharvested fruit in a last, profligate act of abundance.

To be sure, this practice would drive many serious gardeners batty. By mid-October, they've rototilled all the vegetative messiness into scorched-earth submission. They don't want a scraggly patch of plants to over winter and set the stage for a plague of volunteer seedlings in the spring.

I don't mind the volunteers—especially the broccoli sprouts which I find particularly hardy. Beyond that, I let the garden have its way so I can witness the full measure of the year. The whole modern gardening routine—plants raised in sterile indoor nurseries, then sold in big box garden centers noxious with the smell of toxic lawn chemicals—is already stage-managed enough. It doesn't need our help to truncate the life cycle.

Further, we live in a culture that systematically “fixes” cats, dogs and husbands. Some consider it a virtue to put elderly trees and elderly people out of their misery (or out of our misery). Our world, as I find it, is already synthetic enough. I don't want a contracepted and euthanized re-creation of all that's phony in my side-yard garden.

Now I'm not New Age enough to think that plants have a prescient self-awareness. Yet a phenomenon from last summer's severe drought did give me pause. In this parched season I noticed several blue spruces in our yard that wore a remarkably thick mantle of cones. Of all years, this seemed like a time when they should conserve their energy.

Later, I learned from a botanist friend that this was in fact an act of supreme altruism. The trees were indeed stressed, he said, almost to the point of death. That's precisely what triggered their reaction. They grew an extra-heavy crop of cones to ensure that more blue spruces would continue after them.

Unless a grain of wheat (or even a pine cone) shall fall, then it remains but a single grain. But if it dies, it will bear great fruit. If trees and cucumbers can remember that, then maybe we should, too.

**Letter to the editor**

**Stop poisoning Michigan with toxic oil and gas chemicals**

Editor:  
Once again, Team Services has been caught using toxic waste chemicals from oil and gas drilling as dust control on roads.

According to the Traverse City Record-Eagle, Team Services sprayed 300,000 gallons of toxic fluid on 121 miles of roads in Benzie County. Testing showed levels of carcinogenic benzene and toluene 1,000 times higher than the legal limit.

This is a recurring story. One year ago, [Michigan Department of Environmental Quality] (DEQ) documents obtained through a Freedom of Information request confirmed that Team Services sprayed thousands of gallons of toxic, carcinogenic fracking fluid waste from gas wells on roads in Cheboygan and Kalkaska counties.

Public outrage forced the DEQ to suspend permits for this types of “dust control”

disposal for one year.

Now, a year later, they are at it again. And the penalty for getting caught? A verbal reprimand from the DEQ!

How many other roads have been similarly sprayed? How much toluene, benzene and other deadly chemicals have seeped into groundwater from these sprayings? How many animals (including people's pets) have gotten sick from drinking puddles of toxic

fluid after a rainstorm? How much vegetation has been destroyed? How will these chemicals affect area farm and homeowner water wells?

It's time for the DEQ to do its job. Stop allowing the poisoning of our environment with oil and gas drilling chemicals.

Anne Zukowski, Charlevoix  
Co-chair, Don't Frack Michigan



## Outdoor Rhythms

By Doug Freeman



### The voices of North Manitou

On a warm, sunny September afternoon some years past, I found myself to be the only back-packer on North Manitou Island. Just two people were on the island in total that day, the other party being the federal caretaker.

Ranger Dave occupied a house at the old Coast Guard station next to the east side dock. He'd hiked four miles to the southern landing to meet me as I straggled down the gangplank of the Manitou Isle.

After an amiable-but cautionary speech, he looked me over closely while asking about probable destinations. The ranger wrote something in his pocket notebook.

"Nobody else is scheduled to be on this island for two days," he informed me. "So don't get injured, or killed. That would make a mountain of paperwork for me."

With a smile and a light tap on my shoulder, he was gone—headed back toward his station.

For one of the few times in my life, I was acutely alone. Not bad, actually, having twenty-two square miles of designated wilderness to oneself. As an experienced backpacker who'd camped on the island before, I felt reasonably prepared.

Staying on the shoreline trail, I went south to view the remains of a lighthouse, taken down in 1942. It would have been great to see it intact. The South Manitou Lighthouse is still standing and well-maintained—an impressive structure right out of a New England painting. Unfortunately, a scattering of bricks and pieces of rusted iron are all that remains of the north island light. Kind of sad.

Further inland, I passed a boarded-up 1920's-style home with gables and a garage. Reputed to be a retreat for Chicago gangsters, the structure is more reliably known to have been a summer home for a well-to-do (and law-abiding) Illinois family.

I stopped by a small, overgrown cemetery where the headstones were tilted and obscure. Some of the readable markers were for children who'd died of illnesses in the late 1800s. Makes a person think seriously about our human condition.

Two hours of hiking through lovely woods and idyllic meadows brought me to the island's western side. The wind coming off the lake was strong. I thought I heard someone calling out from behind a line of grassy dunes. Scanning the shoreline with binoculars, I could see only rough water and a deserted beach, patrolled by seagulls and sandpipers.

Camp was set up in a slight hollow just back from the crest of a wooded dune. My ancient green canvas pup tent was barely visible from any direction. Low-impact and inconspicuous—the best way to live when in the field.

Satisfied with the accommodations, I trekked north, leaving most of my gear behind. North Manitou was a prominent port back in the days of wood-burning lake steamers. Islanders made their livings by supplying vessels with fuel and food. Livestock was raised and orchards tended.

I'd hoped to visit the site of an abandoned town shown on the transit company's map. The trail wound inland, crossing several others. In a short time, I was completely lost. Then came clouds, covering the sun and blocking any view of that directional beacon. Having been careless enough to leave my compass back in camp, I was in a bind.

Panic didn't set in until dusk. I had no clear idea how to get anywhere in the hour of twilight left to me. Then the cloud cover opened up briefly, revealing a glow that could only emanate from the setting sun.

I reached the shoreline in about five minutes. Hot, tired, and not at all sure how to locate my camp, I thought I heard voices on the wind again. Sounded like farm kids urging each other to take a dip in the big lake after a day of hard labor.

Not a soul was in sight, so I stripped to my skivvies and dove into the cooling waters, answering the siren's call. Refreshed and happy to be splashing around, I failed to notice a too-rapid darkening of the sky and a momentary lull in the wind.

A vivid flash of lightning caught my instant attention. By the time I'd made it to shore and scooped up boots and clothes, a full-fledged thunderstorm was in progress. Seeking any shelter available, I ran up a narrow dune path and into the woods on the other side.

Strangely, unexpectedly, I tripped over my tent while stumbling along. The next forty minutes were spent kneeling within my canvas cocoon. I'd been told knees are a very non-conductive part of the body. It's also a good position for petitioning our Lord, which I did fervently until the heavy rain, booming thunder and falling branches were done.

Changing into dry clothing, I sat atop a dune, spooning sustenance from a can of "Big John's Beans n' Fixins," perhaps one of the better meals I've eaten. Stars slowly returned over the open lake. The air became pleasantly cool.

The next day would bring new discoveries and adventures. And I knew I'd be ready to hear more island voices.

### Share your thoughts and ideas

The North Woods Call welcomes letters and viewpoint articles. Please write tightly and include your name and contact information.

(Ideally, Viewpoint articles will be 700 words or less).

## It's a good time to study the monarch butterfly

Now is a good time to visit your neighborhood field and seek out some milkweed plants.

All summer the monarch butterfly has been laying eggs, hatching, eating and pupating into a beautiful orange and black butterfly. This butterfly is abundant and this is when the population gets to be the largest.

It's a great learning experience to teach kids the complete cycle of a butterfly. The stages are: egg, larva (caterpillar), chrysalis (cocoon) and adult butterfly. The monarch is probably the easiest to see and to experience the complete stages of its development, called metamorphosis.

The food source for the caterpillar is the milkweed. Although it feeds on all species of milkweed, it is most easily found on the common, or pasture, milkweed in old fields.

At this time of the year, you can usually find all the stages of this butterfly on and around the milkweed. Look on the underside of leaves to see a white dot that on closer look appears to resemble a hand grenade. This would be the egg. Cut the entire plant and place it in a bottle of water and wait for the egg to hatch. When it first hatches it will look like a small black dot with a short tail. It won't take long—a few days of eating—until it doubles and triples in size.

Normally, the caterpillar remains on the same plant. In the wild, you may find plants with as many as fifteen caterpillars of all different sizes feeding. The caterpillar is colored with bright yellow and black stripes. It has two antenna on the front and two on the back. After a time—a couple weeks—it will be large enough to pupate, or turn into a chrysalis. It will attach itself to the bottom of a

### Seney Swan

*A majestic swan enjoys the freedom of open waters at the Seney National Wildlife Refuge in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The refuge is a haven for waterfowl and other wildlife, as well as for people who want to get away from the clatter of modern life and absorb the sights and sounds of the natural world.*

### Letter to the editor China, the U.S. and invasive pests

Editor:

As the emerald ash borer came from Asia, I thought your readers would be interested to know about the export of railroad ties to China.

There is a market for millions of these tie logs as China rapidly develops high-speed rail throughout their country. Before shipment from the U.S., the ties must be baked for four hours at 400 degrees Fahrenheit.

Too bad for ash trees and for all of us, really, that the U.S. has not shown the same concern for invasive pests that China has. Chestnuts, elms and now ashes—all victims of imported organisms.

Jerry Jung  
Birmingham, Michigan

## The Natural World

By Richard Schinkel



The viceroy butterfly (left) is similar in appearance to the monarch (right), but has a distinct line across its trailing wings.

stem or leaf with silk from the rear end and transform itself into a beautiful chrysalis. The chrysalis will be bright green with gold dots making a partial ring around the top and other gold dots scattered around.

While inside the chrysalis a rapid change is occurring, turning the caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly. As the chrysalis ages, it will become darker and darker. On the last days, you may even be able to make out the color of the wings through the outer shell.

The butterfly will emerge, unfold its wings and dry off. This takes about ten days. From the time the caterpillar is mature, until it decides to attach itself to something, it may wander and show up on the bottom of a table, chair etc. Some will put a dead-branched stick in the bottle to entice the caterpillar to attach there.

I have seen kids transfer the stick to multiple bottles and get a number of chrysalis on a single branch. The adult monarch will then seek a mate and lay eggs.

One of the most interesting features of this butterfly is that it is one that migrates. The butterflies we see here fly to the southern

United States and—until recently, at least—most go into a hidden valley in Mexico. The most impressive migration is in California, where literally hundreds of thousands move south.

Michigan is no slouch in migration. As fall approaches, you can see them moving south. I have seen literally hundreds trying to cross Lake Michigan from the north shore.

Monarchs have eggs and caterpillars in the Upper Peninsula into mid September. Both the adult and caterpillar taste bad, so they are normally not eaten by birds.

Because of this, a mimic insect—the viceroy butterfly—has evolved with much the same design pattern. The easiest way to tell them apart is by the trailing wings. The viceroy has a black line across the wings, unlike the monarch.

Going through the stages of metamorphosis is good project for a kid and even a classroom. You may also wish to check with local nature centers, because many have people who band these butterflies, or have programs about them.



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**Conservation Officer Logs (7/22/13 through 8/4/13)****An alleged terrorist, “haunted” mischief, a fuel spill and waterski “watch” dogs****DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

CO Jason Wicklund assisted a Michigan State Police (MSP) trooper in Ontonagon County with the arrest of a subject wanted on terrorism warrants. The subject was taken into custody without incident and is awaiting extradition to Virginia for the felony terrorism charges.

CO Jason Wicklund went to a local “haunted” spot where locals gather in Ontonagon County. The CO observed several empty vehicles and heard screaming and went to investigate. The CO located several groups of people trying to cross the river to get closer to the phenomenon. After getting them back to their vehicles, CO Wicklund addressed several issues, including open intoxicants, minors in possession of alcohol, possession of marijuana, destruction of county property, littering and indecent exposure. Local officers assisted with the enforcement action.

CO Jason Wicklund responded to a complaint of overdue kayakers in Gogebic County. The CO used his patrol truck to navigate to the opposite side of the lake. After a brief walk, the CO encountered a pair of elderly females who had swamped the kayaks in the high winds and waves and were sitting along the shoreline, unsure of how they were going to get back. CO Wicklund offered to load all of the gear and kayaks and transport them back to the highway.

**DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)**

COs Brett Gustafson, Jeff Panich and Mike Evink were conducting a marine patrol when they encountered a group of boats that were competing in a local fishing tournament. The subjects were all using too many fishing lines. Tickets were issued and the subjects were eliminated from the tournament.

CO Mike Evink contacted subjects panning for gold on the shore of Lake Superior. The subjects were using a power sluice box and a water pump. The unsuccessful pair were warned for using the power equipment.

CO Mike Evink assisted Manistique Public Safety with a subject who stated he was “rearranging” his apartment. He was doing this by throwing all items in the apartment from the second floor balcony. The officers were able to convince the subject to self-admit at the local hospital for evaluation.

**DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)**

CO Kelly Ross received a complaint of bullets being fired over a house. CO Ross, assisted by CO Nick Torsky, responded to the location with the assistance of the MSP and local deputies. Seven teenagers were located target practicing and in possession of a large quantity of alcohol and marijuana. They were charged with various alcohol, marijuana, and firearms violations.

CO Mark DePew and Sgt. Joe Molnar were at a state launch site when a boat with three anglers came to shore, and when asked

how their fishing trip was, they replied that they had caught numerous white bass. The COs discovered no white bass, only six undersized smallmouth bass. The COs issued one ticket for possessing undersized fish and instructed the anglers on fish identification.

**DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)**

CO Holly Pennoni observed two women fishing in a rowboat on Barry Lake in Wexford County. Upon contact one angler displayed a fishing license and the other claimed to have one but not with her. CO Pennoni attempted to ascertain if she had a fishing license by running information given by the angler in the RSS system. CO Pennoni also attempted to verify identification via LEIN. Driver license photos were sent to CO Pennoni—two photos of the same person; one heavy set and the other considerably thinner. The identification via LEIN showed a person in their early 20’s, CO Pennoni was looking at someone in their 30’s. After many stories, ranging from having gastric by-pass surgery to other explanations for weight loss in photos, the angler finally admitted that she did not have a fishing license. A ticket was issued.

CO Brian Brosky was working on the Manistee River when he observed an angler attempting to snag fish with an unbaited hook. Upon contact, the angler cut his fishing line and denied his actions. CO Brosky explained that he had been watching him and the angler confessed, advising the CO that there were so many salmon he “just couldn’t resist”. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Brian Brosky was working on the Manistee River in Manistee County when he observed two anglers with fly rods attempting to snag salmon while using illegal fishing gear. CO Brosky eventually identified himself and yelled to the anglers in the river that, if they cut their fishing lines, they would go to jail. Both anglers disregarded CO Brosky’s direction and cut their fishing lines. The anglers were both lodged in jail with several tickets bestowed upon them as well.

**DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)**

CO Chuck McPherson received a complaint from an eyewitness, reporting that he had observed a subject shoot at three ducks in the water on Houghton Lake. The witness stated that one of the ducks was killed in the shooting. CO McPherson located the suspect, who admitted to shooting the ducks because he felt they were a nuisance to the lakefront property owners. Enforcement action was taken.

COs John Huspen and Chuck McPherson testified at a jury trial in Crawford County in a case where a subject shot a trophy white-tailed deer from outside the fence of a game ranch in October 2012. After two full days of hearing witnesses and analyzing evidence, the jury deliberated for two hours and returned with a guilty verdict for the charges of larceny over \$20,000, felony firearm, and



criminal trespass. A sentencing date has been scheduled but the conviction will require mandatory prison time for the offender.

CO Mark Papineau received a complaint regarding a large gasoline spill in Secord Lake. CO Papineau arrived at the local marina to find the local fire department deploying booms into the lake to control a large slick on the surface of the water. While interviewing the station attendant, CO Papineau learned that a customer began pumping gas, walked into the store, and returned to the vehicle more than one half hour later to find the pump had failed to shut off automatically. Nearly 100 gallons of gasoline had been discharged into the parking lot and then drained directly into the lake. CO Papineau ticketed the customer for leaving the gas pump unattended. Officials from the DNR, DEQ, and Department of Agriculture continue to investigate additional violations and monitor the mandatory remediation of the contaminated concrete and soil.

**DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)**

CO Quincy Gowenlock received a call from local dispatch about a deer that had jumped through a window at a local church in the city of Saint Louis. Upon arrival, the CO was met by a local police officer who advised that the deer jumped through the basement window and was trapped inside. The CO and the local officer went into the basement and located the deer, which was jumping onto the counters and destroying the kitchen in the basement. The officers were able to open a door which led directly to the outside. Unfortunately, the deer was frightened and wedged itself behind a huge industrial stove and the wall. The CO had to reach in behind the stove while the deer was kicking and scare it out. Once it was out, the deer saw the light leading to the outside, took off running and made it out of the building. The church officials then started their big cleanup project.

While patrolling the Flat River State Game Area (SGA), CO Larn R. Strawn observed a van parked in a state land parking area. Upon approaching the van, the CO observed that the side cargo door was open and could see a man and a woman lying on a mattress in the back of the van. The CO announced his presence and asked the couple for their identifications. The man provided his driver license, however the woman said she had none. The

CO contacted Station 20 and requested their assistance with identifying the woman, given the limited information she was willing to provide. Ultimately, the CO identified and arrested her for outstanding warrants.

While passing through the Verona SGA, CO Bob Hobkirk observed a vehicle parked at the back of one of the parking areas. As CO Hobkirk approached the vehicle, he observed two individuals inside. When contact was made, CO Hobkirk observed an elderly man sexually assaulting a juvenile. The man was arrested by CO Hobkirk and charged with third-degree criminal sexual conduct. Additional information was turned over to the local police agency for further investigation.

**DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)**

CO Brad Brewer observed a boat towing a skier without an observer. Upon stopping the boat, CO Brewer observed two dogs in the boat. The driver of the boat tried to claim that the dogs were trained to let him know when the skier fell. The driver was ticketed for towing without an observer.

CO Michael Mshar assisted local police officers in response to a shots fired complaint, where an individual had been shot. When contact was made it was determined that an intoxicated subject was shooting his intoxicated friend with a BB gun.

CO Greg Patten reported the conclusion of a court case where he ticketed a person for purchasing hunting licenses while being revoked. During a sentencing in Muskegon County, the judge fined the subject more than \$300 and issued an additional three years revocation of all hunting privileges, while adding three years of fishing license revocations to the most recent sentence.

**DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)**

CO Damon Owens reports closing a case involving a subject for possession of wildlife in captivity. The subject had unlawfully transported several raccoons from another county and was attempting to release them within Jackson County. This unlawful act also was found to violate the individual’s current probation from other crimes committed and may possibly cause an adverse effect on time served within a local correctional facility.

CO Dan Bigger finished an investigation of subjects operating

personal water crafts on the Shiawassee River and traveling up the Corunna Dam during high waters after storm run-off raised the water levels. The subjects were warned about the dangers of the dam and reminded there had been fatalities at the dam due to the turbulent water and undertow. They agreed it was not a smart thing to be doing, removed the video from YouTube, and apologized for poor decision making.

Responding to a Report-All-Poaching (RAP) complaint, CO Todd Thorn arrived at a residence and located a live raccoon in a small cage in some long grass next to the house. The raccoon had been recently trapped in another county and was being used to train dogs. The raccoon had to be euthanized and enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)**

As CO Kris Kiel was finishing up a joint marine patrol with the Macomb County Sheriff Marine Division, a mayday was heard over the marine radio of a vessel taking on water off Metro Beach. The subject stated that he did not think he would make it to shore. CO Kiel and the deputies were first on the scene, where they found two adult males not wearing PFDs. The subjects were transferred to the Sheriff boat and the Sheriff Department’s pumps were deployed and turned on to empty the bilge of the quickly sinking vessel. CO Kiel asked the boat owner why he thought water was coming in the boat. The boat owner stated that he had plugged a hole in the boat with a “t-shirt” and the bilge pump had been working fine, although constantly, for the last few hours while they fished. It was not until the bilge pump quit that he started to worry. The subjects were transported back to shore while their vessel was towed.

CO Lacelle Rabon contacted an angler who did not have a fishing license. The angler said the store where he normally purchases his license has been closed. He to fish, but he decided he would not keep anything that he caught and thought he would not be violating fishing regulations. CO Rabon advised the angler he needed a license even if he was catching and releasing the fish. The angler stated he did not think that was fair. CO Rabon explained the law a second time and took enforcement action.

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## Final Shot

### Cut River Bridge

*If you've traveled along U.S. 2 between Epoufette and Brevort in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, chances are you've crossed the Cut River Bridge. The river itself is relatively short—about four miles from the Little Brevort wetland to northern Lake Michigan—but the bridge is one of the longest truss arch bridges in the United States. The structure spans 641 feet and is 147 feet above the river. There are approximately 888 tons of steel in the bridge, which is 159 feet above nearby Lake Michigan. Completed in 1947, locals often call it the "million dollar bridge over a two-bit creek." There are parking areas at both ends of the structure, as well as a pedestrian foot path on the north side, which offers a good view of the deep gorge below. Be careful, though. Cars and trucks whiz by at a pretty good clip, and don't seem to slow down much for sightseers.*



### Environmental education gets boost at Pierce Institute

The Pierce Cedar Creek Institute in Barry County near Hastings—a strong advocate of environmental education and research—will host its key fundraising and "friendraising" event from 6 to 9 p.m. Sept. 14.

"A Latesummer Night's Green" is a great opportunity to enjoy delicious food, music and drink, while helping the Institute fulfill its mission.

Science funding has been on the chopping block lately as the federal government looks for ways to cut spending and rebalance the national budget. With this activity has come a proposed reduction in funding for early-career researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Over the years, NIH-funded scientists have won 40 Nobel Prizes, according to Pierce Cedar Creek staffers. "With traditional funding for scientific research on the decline, it is vitally important for communities to nurture local talent and provide bright minds with the experiences they need to feed their curiosity," they said in a recent newsletter.

That's where the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute

comes in.

The institute has funded more than 100 undergraduate researchers in nine years and has been acclaimed for its success.

Just this year, students from a range of colleges and universities were funded to formally document 13 studies and make presentations to state, national and possibly international audiences. In addition, 20 students have been supported to pursue science, art and writing projects.

"The institute has provided nearly one million dollars in funding directly to students and faculty mentors so they can complete their research projects," said Executive Director Michelle Skedgell.

By connecting students with scholars and researchers from different disciplines, the Institute seeks to enrich the opportunities of undergraduates and encourage understanding of the environment through quality educational programs.

For information, visit [cedarcreekinstitute.org](http://cedarcreekinstitute.org), or call (269) 721-4190.

## Partnership conserves warbler

By Abigail Ertel  
 Kirtland's Warbler Coordinator  
 Huron Pines

Federal dollars are igniting a new conservation partnership in northeast Michigan.

Huron Pines, a nonprofit organization [based in Gaylord], recently received \$171,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Joint Venture Habitat Restoration and Protection Program (Joint Venture Program). The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding will be used to plant two million jack pine seedlings in Kirtland's warbler management areas, streamline community outreach programs and offer landowners cost-share opportunities.

The Joint Venture Program specifically funds projects that use innovative partnerships to complete conservation work in priority bird areas. This marks a new method of collaboration with the state of Michigan, in that Huron Pines—acting as the fiduciary—will provide funds to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to offset the annual costs of jack pine planting.

Michigan Audubon Society (MAS) has a long history of involvement with Kirtland's warbler education efforts, and will also be a key partner in completing the proposed scope of work. The organization's experience will be central to increasing awareness and support of the warbler's incredible story throughout the state and Great Lakes region.

Through its Private Lands Program, Huron Pines will provide landowners living in areas of jack pine ecosystems technical guidance, better planning tools and cost-share opportunities to achieve their individual stewardship goals, while blending ecosystem-appropriate strategies.

This strategic partnership falls in line with the goals of the Kirtland's Warbler Initiative, a program developed to usher the warbler off of the Endangered Species List and into a future of successful, sustained survival. Once de-listed, federal funding specifically provided through the



A male Kirtland's warbler  
 —photo by Gene McGarry, Woodstock, NY

Endangered Species Act for Kirtland's warbler programs will be allocated to the needs of other endangered species.

"Recovery of the Kirtland's warbler has been rooted in partnership, and this opportunity to work closely with Huron Pines to develop an innovative funding strategy like the Joint Venture Program demonstrates that continued support for the warbler can be garnered through the initiative and that nonprofit organizations have the ability to lead the way," said Russ Mason, DNR Wildlife Division chief.

Joining intensive and dynamic community outreach with on-the-ground restoration efforts rounds out the scope of work and provides built-in sustainability for the programs. Commitment from all partners has been underscored by their agreement to provide matching dollars from the value of staff time, travel costs and seedlings to be planted.

"The commitment by DNR and MAS to provide in-kind matches means we've already increased the investment in northeast Michigan to over \$300,000 with this grant award," said Abigail Ertel, Kirtland's warbler coordinator for Huron Pines.

Daniel Kennedy, endangered species coordinator with the DNR Wildlife Division, added, "The department understands that management of public lands is a key factor in the quality of life and economy of northeast Michigan, and is excited to provide this up-front commitment to the area."

Huron Pines is working to conserve the forests, lakes and streams of northeast Michigan. The organization has leveraged investment in the region to over \$2 million annually.

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