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Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



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Palms Book State Park, Schoolcraft County
Michigan's Upper Peninsula

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THE NORTHWOODS CALL

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953

"Anniversary" & autumn break

This is not the official anniversary of *The Call's* founding—that comes in November—but it is a milestone of sorts.

It has been one year since publication resumed under new ownership, following the January 2011 death of longtime publisher Glen Sheppard.

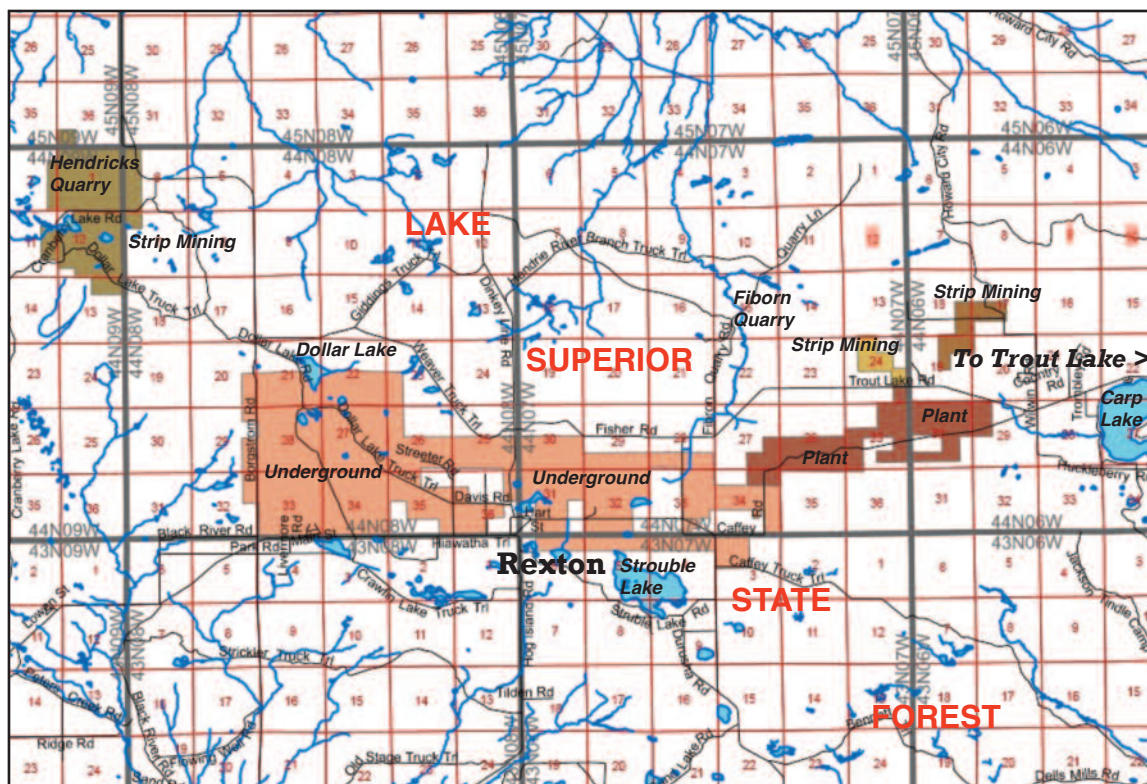
Of course, that means that renewal notices will begin going out soon to readers who signed up early on.

"We're grateful for all the generous support we have received during our first 12 months of operation and trust that readers have found enough value in our work to continue with us," said current Publisher Mike VanBuren. "Obviously, continued loyalty from past subscribers and success in gaining new readers are essential to *The Call's* long-term health and sustainability."

It's also time for the newspaper's traditional fall break, which this year will be spent visiting Talia Elle Girgenti, the editor's brand new (and very first) grandchild, in Harriman, New York.

That means that the next *North Woods Call* will appear in your mailboxes in mid-October.

Until then, enjoy the cool nights and beautiful colors of autumn.



Limestone Quarry Site

Although not yet officially announced, the selected location for Graymont's proposed limestone quarry is said to be in the Rexton area of the Lake Superior State Forest. The map above was gleaned from documents obtained by opponents of the operation under a Michigan Freedom of Information Act request. Most of the mine site is on state-owned land, although the parcels depicted in white within the mine boundaries are reportedly privately owned.

Rexton likely location for proposed mine

While Graymont officials have not yet publicly acknowledged their chosen location for a proposed quarrying operation in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, some sources—including documents obtained under a Michigan Freedom of Information Act request—say that the company has chosen a 9,600-acre area surrounding rural Rexton in Mackinac County.

Maps found among the documents show the border of the mine site extending along portions of the north and south sides of the Wisconsin Central Railroad tracks and Hiawatha Trail—from west of Borgstrom Road in Hudson Township to east of Caffey Corner. The northern border cuts through the middle of Dollar Lake, then dips down near Fisher Road. The southern border follows Hiawatha trail through Rexton, then dips down to Crosseville Lake and skirts the northern tip of Strouble Lake. Included in the designated mine area are numerous lakes, streams and wetlands that opponents say could be harmed by the activity.

Much of the mine around Rexton, outlined on the map above, has been labeled "underground." Another section—which extends from east of Caffey Corner between Trout Lake and Caffey roads halfway to the village of Trout Lake—has been labeled "plant." At least three separate areas around Hendricks Quarry and Nelson Lake to the northwest—and to the south and west of Fiborn Quarry north of the so-called "plant" area—are apparently being targeted for strip mining.

Most of the property—all within the Lake Superior State Forest—is owned by the state of Michigan, though there are some significant portions that are privately owned.

In August, Graymont spokesman Bill Robison told *The North Woods Call* that the company—one of North America's leading lime producers—was still analyzing potential sites, but expected a formal decision within a couple of months.

David Gorenflo, an outdoorsman/opponent of the proposed mine, has launched a Facebook group to keep others informed about the controversy. To learn more about Citizens Against Strip Mining (CASM), visit www.facebook.com/groups/401316723302145/.

Lawsuit challenges fracking in wildlife sanctuaries

A lawsuit has been filed against the U.S. Secretary of the Interior and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in an effort to stop leasing of federal mineral rights for fracking, and other oil and gas development in the Allegan State Game Area (ASGA).

John Davis Jr. and Marybeth Pritschet-Davis—longtime residents of Allegan County—filed the legal action in U.S. District Court in Grand Rapids on September 5.

Coming just a few weeks after a Barry County circuit court judge dismissed a similar case against the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the suit seeks to

protect the ASGA, wildlife resources and the Kalamazoo River—among other things—from potential damage from the controversial practice of hydraulic fracturing.

"Fracking has no business anywhere near the ASGA's crucial wildlife habitat, said John Davis Jr. "My wife and I had to step up and take this on."

On Sept. 12, the BLM auctioned 27,302 acres of subsurface mineral rights in the ASGA, which is home to state and federally listed endangered and threatened species, several trout streams, nine lakes, various wetlands, vernal pools, three wildlife sanctuaries

and the lower Kalamazoo River, which has been designated by the state of Michigan as a "natural river."

The BLM reportedly auctioned 6,000 acres of its ASGA subsurface mineral rights earlier this year. The action was triggered when undisclosed oil and gas companies filed "expressions of interest" in the ASGA and surrounding private land with the BLM. The total acreage of what the BLM calls the "decision area" is approximately 127,000 acres in portions of several townships.

The Davises are being represented by Jeffrey K. Haynes of (Continued on Page 5)



North Woods Notes

GAHAGAN OPEN HOUSE: The Marguerite Gahagan Nature Preserve will host its annual open house and membership meeting from 4 to 7 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 22. The volunteer organization—headquartered at the late *North Woods Call* founder's cabin in Roscommon—has grown in size and scope over the years. Members and non-members alike are encouraged to attend the open house and celebrate the collective accomplishments of people who love the outdoors, value the environment and realize the need to educate youth about the natural world. An informal presentation will begin at 4:30 p.m., followed by fellowship and a guided walk around the preserve. Marguerite Gahagan established *The Call* in 1953 and published it for the first 16 years.

EHD OUTBREAK: Muskegon County is the first in Michigan to have epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) confirmed this fall. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) says that 25 to 50 deer have died in Muskegon County so far. The incidents appear to be localized, they said, and are in line with outbreaks that have occurred annually for the last decade in Michigan. The disease is caused by a virus that is transmitted by a type of midge. It comes on suddenly and deer can suffer internal bleeding, lose their appetites and fear of humans, grow progressively weaker, salivate excessively and finally become unconscious. Due to a high fever and extensive internal bleeding, infected deer are often found sick, or dead, along (or in) bodies of water. For information, visit www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases. The first hard frost should kill the flies, DNR officials said. The disease does not affect humans, they said.

BEAVER ISLAND WORK DAYS: Up to 20 volunteers are being sought by the Little Traverse Conservancy for trail work and general clean-up of the Barney's Lake Preserve on Beaver Island. The two-day event will be held Sept. 23 and 24 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. To help out for part of a day, both days, or just a few hours, contact Mike Lynch at (231) 344-1011, or send him a message at mike@landtrust.org. All volunteers should bring gloves, appropriate footwear, lunch and a water bottle. Drinks and snacks will be provided.

CANADA CREEK BRIDGE: The foot bridge over Canada Creek in Presque Isle County has been rebuilt with a grant from the federal Recreational Trails Program. An integral part of the High Country Pathway—an 80-mile-long loop trail—the bridge is now open and ready for use. There is also a creekside shelter adjacent to the new bridge.

IRONTON BOAT LAUNCH: A new ramp is being constructed at the Ironton Boat Launch on Lake Charlevoix in Charlevoix County. The replacement project began Sept. 16 and is expected to take about two weeks. Boaters should expect partial and complete shutdowns during this time, according to the DNR.

CROW ISLAND: The water level was recently lowered at Crow Island State Game Area in Saginaw County to accommodate the replacement of a water-level control structure in the East Unit along M-13. The DNR and Ducks Unlimited are working to improve waterfowl habitat.

(Continued on Page 2)



No Compost, Please

Environmentalists and back-to-nature types often encourage composting as an earth-friendly practice that pays future dividends. But citizens of Cooper Township in southern Michigan's Kalamazoo County are much more concerned about the landscape and groundwater supplies in their rural neighborhood. That's why they've been protesting a proposed 10-acre indoor/outdoor composting facility at the site of an old gravel pit. The \$1 million project—which would be located within several yards of the Kalamazoo River—would turn tons of organic waste into compost fertilizer and create up to 30 jobs, according to the Chicago-based Cocoa Corporation. Yet residents who fear various contaminants and heavy truck traffic have urged township officials to nix the plan. At last report, it appears they may have been successful—for now, at least.



North Woods Notes

(Continued from Page 1)

NRC MEETINGS: The next Michigan Natural Resources Commission meeting will be held October 10 at Pine Mountain Resort, 3332 Pine Mountain Road, Iron Mountain. The November 7 and December 12 meetings will be held at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, Lansing. For more information about starting times and agendas, visit the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website at michigan.gov/dnr.

WIND FARMS & EAGLES: Wind energy facilities have killed at least 67 golden and bald eagles in the past five years, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Raptor Research*. And that estimate is probably low. More on this in the next *North Woods Call*.

PHOTO CONTEST: Friends of the Jordan River Watershed will announce the winners of its 6th annual photography contest and debut its 2014 "Visions of the Valley" calendar during a special celebration on Saturday, Sept. 21. The event will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Jordan River Watershed Center in East Jordan. It is free and open to all.

S.S. BADGER FINES: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency wants to double fines against the S.S. Badger for dumping coal ash in Lake Michigan after the end of the 2014 sailing season. The agency filed a motion in U.S. District Court in Grand Rapids to revise a preliminary decree it reached in March with owners of the coal-fired car ferry. If approved, the revision would double the penalties from \$3,000 to \$6,000 per day for ash discharges during the 2015 season and set additional restrictions on ash and mercury content in the coal.

ANTLER POINT RESTRICTIONS: Don't forget the new antler point restrictions that are in place for the 2013 deer hunting season in Michigan's northwestern Lower Peninsula. The newly enacted restrictions apply to a 12-county area, in addition to the other Michigan counties where they were already in effect. For more information, contact the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

FOREST PLANS: Public input on forest plans for Alcona, Crawford, Iosco and Oscoda Counties will be taken from 1 to 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 8, at the DNR's Grayling Field Office, 1955 Harwick Pines Road. Such open houses are a good way for Michigan residents to learn well in advance about the DNR's proposed treatment plans and to share input toward final decisions on those treatments, according to Bill O'Neill, chief of the Forest Resources Division.

SAUNDERS DAM: Removal of Saunders Dam on the Upper Black River began Sept. 9. The project—involving the Gaylord-based Huron Pines organization, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Michigan DNR, the Upper Black River Council and several private donors—will reconnect eight miles of the river and its tributaries to allow fish passage and natural river processes to occur for the first time in decades.

DAM GRANTS: Proposals are being accepted for \$350,000 in DNR grants to address Michigan's failing dam infrastructure in 2014 through removals, repair and maintenance. See michigan.gov/dnr-grants.

AU SABLE RIVER: The Au Sable Big Water Preservation Association has been working for the past two years with the Huron Pines organization to control erosion in the "big water" stretch of the river on U.S. Forest Service property. It is the single largest project of its kind in that area of the river, said Association President Thomas Buhr, "and has done a great deal of good for the river."

Attack bear escapes justice

The black bear that attacked and injured a 12-year-old girl last month near Cadillac has apparently escaped justice—for the time being, at least.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources officials thought they may have tracked and killed the renegade bear Aug. 18, after a similar bear had been shot and wounded by a Wexford County property owner who said he believed the bear was a threat to his life.

But a comparison of DNA taken from the dead animal with fur and saliva samples taken from the attack victim revealed that it was not the same bear. The tests also showed that the bear that attacked the girl was a female, while the bear killed was a male.

The victim survived the attack, but reportedly underwent surgery at Munson Medical Center in Traverse City before being released for recovery at home.

DNR officials said they would temporarily extend trapping efforts in the area of the incident and continue to monitor bear activity in that location in an effort to find the guilty animal. As of this writing, however, the aggressive bear had apparently not been located.

The public was being asked to report bear sightings in the area of the attack—which occurred in Wexford County's Haring Township—by calling the Report All Poaching (RAP) Hotline (800-292-7800), or the DNR's Cadillac Operations Service Center at (231) 775-9727.

The public is reminded not to shoot a bear unless the animal poses an immediate threat. The black bear is a protected species under Michigan law.

Black bear attacks on humans are very rare, DNR officials said. Many bear attacks occur because a sow is protecting her cubs, they said, but there is no evidence that cubs were present at the scene of the Wexford County attack.

Our 60th Year: Looking Back to Sept. 22, 1954

Land of our fathers

By Marguerite Gahagan

To lovers of the woods and the wildlife it contains, it is an unpleasant possibility that the little of it remaining available to the public might be destroyed.

Here in Michigan, the state and national parks give happiness, a momentary freedom from the turmoil and tension of big city life, and the great sports of hunting and fishing.

The fight to preserve those lands is not over. Too few who enjoy them realize the battle that is being waged constantly to prevent—little by little—that land from being whittled away.

The latest round was won by conservationists throughout the nation when they successfully plugged loopholes in the atomic energy and multiple mineral leasing bills that would have opened the precious national parks, monuments and wildlife lands for the exploration and recovery of minerals determined to be the sources of fissionable materials.

As civilization continues to struggle though its atomic age, racing oftentimes blindly for war in the world's mad scramble for scientific know-how, simple truths are forgotten, or ignored.

In the worldwide race against communism, the victor may be the one with the largest atomic stockpile. But, if that stockpile is [built] at the expense of the last of this nation's remaining public forests—the last wilderness stronghold of wildlife that give fast-living man a momentary escape into the contemplative world—it would be a high price to pay.

That the lands should be open to private interests for prospecting and mining would therefore be even more of a sacrifice on the part of the public.

Life is precious and so is freedom. Our great national parks, with their wilderness beauty, are a constant reminder of those very facts.

Let us not lose them.



Rare Wolf Attack

A 16-year-old boy survived an unusual attack by a gray wolf in northern Minnesota during late August. Noah Graham, of Solway, was camping on Lake Winnibigoshish with friends when the animal reportedly approached and chomped on the back of his head. The attack apparently came without warning and Graham had to kick and scream at the animal to get it to retreat. It was the first documented serious wolf attack on a human in Minnesota, said state officials, who were waiting for DNA test results to confirm whether a wolf trapped and killed in the same campground a few days later was the same animal that attacked Graham. The dead wolf had a jaw deformity that made it likely it had to scavenge for food, they said, because it wouldn't have been able to kill large prey. Graham suffered a deep, four-inch gash on his scalp, but otherwise was not seriously injured.

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A debate over the right to farm vs. invasive swine

State's plan to fine pig farmer is outrageous

By Sen. Darwin Booher
R-Evart
Michigan's 35th District

Mark Baker is a fighter.

He honorably fought for our country as a member of the Air Force for 20 years. Now, to keep his family farm in McBain, he's fighting against state bureaucrats, the attorney general and a team of taxpayer-funded attorneys who are seeking to take away this patriot's livelihood.

The Department of Natural Resources issued an invasive species order in 2010 that arbitrarily bans select breeds of pigs. Department officials claimed the pigs must be banned because the state has a problem with feral hogs, meaning wild pigs running outside of a fence. The department makes this claim despite the fact that: 1) Mark's pigs have been raised inside a fence their entire lives; 2) not a single Baker pig has ever escaped captivity; and 3) all pigs, no matter what the breed, are capable of becoming feral (i.e. loose).

The DNR created a list of certain subjective characteristics that pigs will be assessed by to determine if they are now an invasive species. Mark's pigs matched some of the characteristics—characteristics that any pig would meet. And, overnight, Mark's pigs were magically transformed into an "invasive species" despite the fact that he and his family had been raising the heritage hogs without incident since 2007 and successfully selling to high-end restaurants as his family's primary source of income. Therefore, left with no other alternative, Mark filed a lawsuit against the DNR to try to protect his family's livelihood.

(Continued on Page 5)

EDITOR'S NOTE

We recently ran across these two recent editorial viewpoints via the Michigan United Conservation Clubs' website.

One letter is written by a state senator and the other by an official at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

We think they provide an interesting look at the growing problem of feral pigs in Michigan, as well as the conflict between state officials charged with protecting natural resources and one local farmer.



Russian wild boar

Russian boar pigs are illegal in Michigan

By Ed Golder
Public Information Officer
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Sen. Darwin Booher's recent op-ed regarding invasive swine in Michigan downplays a growing and critical problem for the state. Sen. Booher offers no reasonable solution to protect and defend Michigan's farms, forests and fields from this aggressive invader, and he ignores and omits important facts. I'd like to set the record straight.

Sen. Booher writes that the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has "arbitrarily" banned "select breeds of pigs." In fact, there was nothing arbitrary about the 2010 Invasive Species Order that prohibits a very specific type of pig—the Russian boar.

These animals, which are dangerous and can harbor diseases, were brought into the state to be hunted. Over time, Russian boar made their way into the wild. We know that at least some escaped from game ranches. The result has been a growing, breeding population of feral swine—that is, swine not in captivity. While it is true, as Sen. Booher writes, that any pig can become feral, Michigan's problem is not with just any pig. Our problem is with Russian boar.

This is borne out by the results of a trapping program conducted by the Michigan Wildlife Conservancy and the U.S. Department of Agriculture—Wildlife Services. The program catches feral swine across the state. In fact, feral swine have been spotted in 76 of Michigan's 83 counties. Almost all of the pigs captured or killed are Russian boar or hybrids of Russian boar.

(Continued on Page 5)

Wolf hunting licenses will be on sale starting Sept. 28

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources says 1,200 wolf hunting licenses will be available for over-the-counter purchase beginning at noon Eastern Daylight Time on Sept. 28.

The licenses will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis and aren't cheap. The cost is \$100 for residents and \$500 for nonresidents.

Hunters 10-years-old, or older, are required to have either purchased a previous hunting license, or taken a state-approved hunter safety education course.

A limited harvest of 43 wolves is planned in three designated wolf management Units of the Upper Peninsula—18 in Gogebic County in the far western U.P., 19 in portions of Baraga, Houghton, Ontonagon and Gogebic counties, and eight in portions of Luce and Mackinac counties.

The 2013 wolf season will open Nov. 15 and run until Dec. 31, or until the target harvest for each wolf management unit is reached. Bag limit is one wolf per person per year.

Hunting with firearms and crossbows, as well as with bow and arrows, will be allowed on public and private lands. Hunters must report a successful harvest over the phone on the day of harvest. Once target harvest is met for a wolf management unit, the entire unit will be closed for the season.

Licensed hunters are required to check daily by phone, or online, to determine whether any management units have been closed.

The 2013 Wolf Hunting Digest is available in an interactive format on the DNR website.

Tapping into the "plastic oil field"

A Japanese businessman says he has invented a machine that converts plastic refuse into oil.

Akinori Ito of Japan's Blest Corporation, said the machine was designed to answer growing concerns over global warming and garbage disposal.

"Plastic is made from oil," Ito said, "so we figured it wouldn't be too difficult to convert it back to oil."

Ito demonstrated the invention in a video that was released by United Nations University and is making its way around the Internet. He said he has been taking the machine to undeveloped countries to teach the people how to recycle their plastic garbage.

"When a child understands this," he said, "the garbage gets cleaned up."

He just stuffs plastic garbage

into the machine, which melts the plastic and turns it into liquid. As the liquid boils, gases are released through a container of water, which cools the gas and turns it to oil.

The resulting oil product can be burned as is, he said, or can be further processed to make gasoline, diesel and kerosene.

One liter of oil can be gleaned from about one kilogram of plastic, Ito said.

Instead of purchasing and shipping oil from the Middle East and other far-distant places, Ito said the world's overall CO2 emissions would be lower if we simply turned plastic back into oil. And we could solve a major garbage disposal problem at the same time.

Is anybody out there listening?

Stuck on you: Lessons from a seedy hitch-hiker

September is stick tight and burr season. It's a time when plants love to send their seeds home with you. Across field and forest a plague of cling-ons waits to hitch a ride on socks, shirts and pants—not to mention every fur-bearing inch of the family pet.

How one handles such low-grade annoyances says much about their character. You could, as I do, gripe incessantly as you scrape off stick tights with a butter knife, or tug gingerly on the painfully spiny burrs of burdock.

But you could also forgo the grumbling, open your eyes to nature's ingenuity and see the potential for a multi-million dollar industry. That's basically what Georges de Mestral, a Swiss electrical engineer, did in 1941.

Mestral liked to take his dog (no record of his name; let's call him Fritz) on hunting trips into the Alps.

I can imagine Mestral in a jaunty Tyrol hat and green wool knickers—and Fritz as a sturdy sheepdog of Swiss lineage. It's a fine, fall afternoon in the mountains, the crystalline air fresh with the tang of spruce and sun-warmed granite. Dog and master have just returned from a walk that led through pastures thick with burdock thistle.

Mestral, a patient and methodical man, sits down and tamps a fresh bowl of tobacco into his Meerscham pipe. Then, as he brushes Fritz's tail, the gears in his keen mind begin to turn. He plucks out a burdock thistle, and what others would cast away, he examines with great care. And he beholds in his hand not a weedy nuisance ... but a singular marvel of divine engineering.

Being the sort who keeps a microscope around the house, Mestral decides to take a closer look. It's then that he notices something extraordinary. On the thistle's burrs are tiny hooks that make it catch on loops of fur and clothing.

The Wild Nearby

By Tom Springer



Thus did Georges de Mestral get the idea for a new fabric fastener that would connect people to their clothes as never before.

It took 10 long years of experimentation before Mestral brought his product to market. In a world that couldn't see beyond buttons, snaps and zippers, his idea was first ridiculed. Yet Mestral finally secured a patent. He named his product Velcro, because it combined the two French words velour (velvet) and crochet (hook).

The burdock that inspired Mestral came to North America as an exotic species imported from Europe and Asia. Who knows, maybe the first one even stowed away on the unkempt tail of Fritz's ancestor.

As for stick tights, they're dried seeds that grow on a native plant officially known as showy ticktrefoil. The plant is one of the most important food sources for northern bobwhite, and a favorite of ruffed grouse, wild turkey and white-tailed deer. Its showy pink, pea-like flowers attract hummingbirds and a host of pollinators.

Earlier this year, our long-haired barn cat was a wretched mass of thistles, stick tights and lord knows what else. Our outdoor cats usually get food, water, shelter, a rabies shot and that's about it. But this one had a pitifully snarled coat that hung in long strips like kitty dreadlocks; a Cat-stafarian if you will. It was ugly, but more than that a health hazard. Should the strips pull away, they could've torn away the skin beneath them.

Finally, for \$60—four times more than I've ever paid for a haircut—we had the cat shaved. Pink and bald as a newborn pos-

sum, she had to spend three weeks indoors before she grew enough peach fuzz to prevent sunburn.

A clever guy like Georges de Mestral might see that and come up with more than one way to skin a cat, or at least to shave one. Yet he'd no longer be a lone genius if he did. There's a new field of science known as biomimicry that looks for solutions to human problems in the designs of nature. One popular biomimicry discovery sprung from the study of overlapping scales, known as dermal denticles, which grow on the surface of shark skin. Since dermal denticles allow sharks to move with great efficiency in water, scientists (and no doubt someone from Speedo) wondered what might they do for a human swimmer?

Enter the shark-skin inspired swimsuit that helped Michael Phelps win a cluster of U.S. gold medals in the 2008 Olympics. A similar pattern has been used to paint the hulls of oil tankers, which reduces drag and thus improves fuel efficiency.

While I haven't got an electron microscope, there's much I'd like to learn from nature.

From the white pine: how to dance in the summer breeze with a bewitching whir and rustle that no stringed instrument can rival. From the sycamore: how to yearly slough off the bark of middle age and wear a crown shiny white and always new. And from the small-mouth bass: how to spit out—with impunity—the hooks of those who would lure me into their pet projects and obligations.

Hopefully, I'll stick tight long enough to learn about that.

Opinion

Quote Box

"Growing timber is a simple affair. All you have to do is stick a little tree into the right sort of ground and wait."

—P.S. Lovejoy

Transparency and U.P. mining

We recently spoke with officials at Graymont, a leading lime producer, who said they had not yet chosen a site for a proposed quarrying operation in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

That may have been technically true—with a firm and final decision forthcoming—but we have since learned that the company has been zeroing in on a 9,600-acre area around Rexton in Mackinac County (see related story on Page 1).

While we understand the desire to protect corporate secrets and to release information when it is most beneficial to management and investors, we would much prefer more transparency in matters of such consequence to citizens of the state—particularly those living in the region most directly impacted by the proposed mining activities.

In fact, we believe company officials and state regulators working in tandem with Graymont have an obligation to share information with Michigan taxpayers, who ultimately own the lion's share of natural resources being sold for commercial interests.

A strip mine and quarrying operation has a much greater impact on the land than, say, a timbering operation. All the more reason to have a free and open civic debate—well-informed by abundant detail—about where such operations should be located.

If we can't resolve these dilemmas, however, it occurs to us that we may need to have a discussion about which industrial activities and products the modern world is willing to live without.

An ecological prophet of doom

A couple of people have asked why we haven't swallowed the notion of man-made climate change like a hungry fish—hook, line and sinker.

There are several reasons we aren't doing more than nibbling at the bait. And one of them can be summed up in two words:

Al Gore.

The former U.S. vice president turned carbon credit profiteer has said a lot of outrageous things over the years—and not just about the "inconvenient truth" of global warming. His demagoguery seems to know no bounds.

Now he has reportedly compared "climate change deniers" with "an alcoholic father who flies into a rage every time a subject is mentioned." And he likened them to the perpetrators of history's most egregious events, including racism, apartheid, and slavery.

None of this is really surprising, of course, because he is following the same playbook that most so-called "progressives" use to push their often dubious desires on a confused and ill-informed world. Such tactics are not only dishonest, but patently offensive, and we long ago stopped listening to anyone who uses them.

Simply put, personal smears and the wholesale demonization of others are non-starters that poison civic debate, and keep us from collectively reaching consensus on issues as complex and politically charged as climate change.

We deserve a more genuine discussion about such consequential matters when we engage in the public square. And it's up to each of us to make sure we have it.

Snake oil salesmen and self-absorbed prophets of global ecological disaster should be rejected in favor of clear thinking and verifiable facts—even if we're tempted to bite hard on the frightening theory of man-made climate change.

When we allow ourselves to be manipulated by modern-day Elmer Gantrys, it's truth and civility—more than the earth—that hang in the balance.

Patience and the civic debate

Recently an Internet blogger criticized the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) over the agency's response to the unlawful spraying by Team Services LLC of toxic brine on some Benzie County roadways.

He accused the DEQ of sternly wagging a finger at the perpetrator, rather than hitting the company with stiff fines and other punishments.

Come to find out, the DEQ was still investigating and wanted "to get a firm understanding of what happened and what the actual environmental damage is" before deciding on the next steps.

This seems reasonable enough to us, providing the "investigation" is indeed completed and appropriate action is then taken.

Not to judge the blogger's sincerity or conclusions—he may be proven right—but this is one of the problems with our civic debate today. We too often leap to conclusions before all the facts are in.

It's good to watchdog public institutions and private industries to make sure they do what they are supposed to be do. When they don't, it should be loudly pointed out. But we might want to be a little more patient before firing our guns, so we at least give our intended targets enough time to do what needs to be done.

Urban sprawl & the "geography of nowhere"

Many years ago—before I ever lived in northern Michigan—my predecessor at *The Antrim County News* wrote a column about urban sprawl and development in Traverse City.

The area around Grand Traverse Bay, he concluded, was a beautiful place "until the white man came."

He was, as I recall, talking about the heavy traffic and view-blocking construction along U.S. 31 in the mid-1970s. Today, of course, these problems are exponentially worse.

Northern Michigan—Traverse City and Petoskey, in particular—are drawing visitors and new residents like steel nails to some kind of powerful urban magnet.

Recent national attention as great places to live and vacation have only increased the number of people and automobiles flocking to these areas.

Each time I venture into either of those communities, I'm struck by the additional clutter and increased difficulty I have driving my own vehicle through the mind-numbing congestion.

I'm sure city officials are doing their best to cope with all the changes, but I wonder if they're doing enough. As population figures escalate, little seems to relieve the growing pressure. Even building new and wider roads does not eliminate traffic congestion. The new roads just fill up with cars and additional businesses that attract more activity.

These problems are by no means confined to northern Michigan. Unplanned growth and urban sprawl have become huge problems in many locations.

Some folks in my hometown of Richland—a generally peaceful, well-used community in lower Michigan—worry about this, too.

It's not that they mind the increased commerce and higher tax base that come with more people and more development. They just hate having lost the quaint, small-town atmosphere that once was the village.

Yet they should have thought about that years ago—back when they first began to welcome the houses, apartments, businesses

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



Early morning bustle in the village of Richland, Michigan.

and industries that now surround the one-time farm community.

These days, cars and trucks crawl around the shady village square like ants on molasses. They fill parking lots, clog roadways, and snake out in all directions across the cluttered landscape. And people are everywhere—crowding local schools and forcing higher taxes on us all.

It's an ongoing challenge faced by cities and villages throughout the Great Lakes region—and beyond. From Buffalo to Chicago and Cleveland to Marquette, sprawl is increasing air and water pollution, devouring forests and wetlands, and saddling communities with the social and economic costs of unplanned growth.

Many people in Richland seem to think they can stop this hungry monster with feeble efforts to preserve local heritage. They've had the village designated a historic district, and have declined to let the streets be widened to accommodate the thickening traffic.

But I think it's too little, too late. They shouldn't have allowed it to get this way in the first place. Even now, little is being done to stop the runaway development that hugs the outskirts of the village—turning it into what writer James Howard Kuntsler calls "the geography of nowhere."

Still, I find myself hoping there's a way out of this mess. Some claim there is—if we have

the wisdom and will to correct our mistakes. Urban, suburban and rural communities should try to manage growth and sprawl with what the Sierra Club says are "smart-growth solutions." These include setting boundaries for urban growth, preserving farmland and green space, and building neighborhoods that are easy on pedestrians.

We need better transportation choices, too—such as bike paths, commuter trains and buses. And we should do away with government programs and tax policies that help create sprawl. More importantly, we should insist that decaying urban areas be revitalized before new development is allowed on open rural land.

People move away from cities because they're looking in part for better schools, safer streets, and cleaner air. They also want a sense of community and a connection to nature. If we could address these issues in existing urban areas, there might not be a need, or a desire, for so many people to flee to places like Richland, or rural communities further to the north.

The answer lies in making all communities "user-friendly" and livable—regardless of their size. That way, everyone can enjoy the benefits of a healthy environment.

And we wouldn't have to destroy our farmland, forests and rural villages in the name of modern homesteading.



Sadly, the peaceful charm of small-town America is increasingly threatened by runaway development and urban sprawl.

The North Woods Call

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Since 1953

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Reader Comment

We can fix science problems in the U.S.A

Editor:

The last two opinions in your paper made me think of the history of our country.

"Oh, we can't fly. We are not birds."

"We can't go to the moon. It's too expensive. And what good will it do?"

"We can't go to Europe and fight their battles. Let them settle it."

"We can't have a national highway system. The states are in charge of the highways."

"We can't, we can't, we can't."

But this country does things. Problems come up and we solve them. This is the United States of America. We solve problems.

So let us get our collective heads out of the sand and solve climate change—NOW! The sooner the better. We have the tools and the skills; the technology and the manpower. Let's get busy.

Give the oil subsidies to the renewable energy people.

Will there be setbacks? Of course. Will there be mistakes? Yes. But look at the oil spills. Progress is something we do and, when we want to, we do it very well.

Think of what would have happened if the horse

and carriage industry had spent as much money on lobbying and advertising as the oil industry does today. I suspect we would have lost the First World War.

"Let's wait and study the problem some more." The problem has been studied for 50—yes, 50—years and the conclusions are still the same.

This is not a social problem. This is a physical—a science—problem. We can fix these types of problems; fix them for our own good and for the good of coming generations.

Remember the frog in hot water. It will jump out. But put the same frog in cool water, heat it and the frog will stay and get cooked.

Then remember the canary in the coal mine.

William Twiddy
Harbor Springs, Michigan

Amen. We couldn't agree more. We just need to make sure the problems we are solving—and spending millions upon billions of dollars in the process—are verifiably real and that ALL the information on which we are relying to make these decisions is actually true.

—Mike

Sen. Boohar: No state fine for pig farmer

(Continued from Page 3)

Now, incredibly, through the lawsuit that Mark filed, the department is claiming that Mark has admitted to having invasive species and should be fined \$10,000 per pig—or an astounding \$700,000! That is right, the state wants to fine Mark nearly three quarters of a million dollars simply because of the breed of pig that he produces on his farm.

Of course, if Mark was "just" poaching deer, he would only be subject to a \$1,000 fine. If he were driving drunk, he would only be subject to a \$2,000 fine. Or, heaven forbid, if he were selling crack cocaine to our children, he would only face a \$10,000 fine.

Instead of prohibiting all people from hunting simply because a few people choose to poach deer, or stopping all people from driving because some people do choose to drive drunk, we pass laws to clearly and specifically address those behaviors. We do not simply have some bureaucrat make a rule that prohibits hunting and driving.

Unfortunately, that is not the case for Mark Baker. The heritage pigs he raised were legal one

day and not the next—simply because the DNR director said so and couldn't be bothered to simply take a bit of time to promulgate some sensible regulations to ensure pigs didn't become feral.

Like Mark, several other operators in Michigan have also been wronged by this action and forced by the state into the same corner as Mark. Consequently, they have also filed lawsuits to protect their businesses, their property and their livelihoods. Not surprisingly, rather than allow Michigan citizens who will serve as jurors to decide whether the department's actions were right or wrong, the DNR and their team of taxpayer-funded attorneys have continually sought to delay, or dismiss, the case.

All of the actions taken by the state—from first issuing the invasive species order, to its implementation, to the stall tactics and indefensible fines—were done because of a bureaucratic ruling, not because it was required by law. Instead of taking a common sense approach to prevent the release of feral swine—such as requiring tags on all pigs, or increasing the penalties for those who purposefully release hogs or allow them

to escape—the department developed this outrageous rule that targets only certain breeds.

Thankfully, it's not too late. State officials can still do the right thing and just repeal the invasive species order. They could then work to institute common sense changes that would better address feral pigs in Michigan, and not instantaneously make criminals out of law abiding citizens and take away their property and their living. As this lawsuit heads to trial, I hope the DNR, attorney general, and Governor Snyder see how shameful this decision is and reconsider their decision and actions.

Mark Baker is a fighter, but this is not a fair fight, so I will continue to stand behind Mark and the other farmers who are fighting against this disgraceful ruling.

And, I urge you to join me in that fight by calling the governor's office (517-373-3400) and request that he join me at Mark Baker's farm to see the issue firsthand, and then work with me on a common sense solution that doesn't put our law abiding, hard-working, small family farms out of business.

Industries, Potato Growers of Michigan and Michigan Agri-Business Association.

Michigan knows about invasive species. The Asian carp continues to threaten our Great Lakes. It's worth noting—and remembering—that Asian carp came into the Mississippi River basin from fish stocking ponds where they were supposedly being held "captive." Now they are threatening incalculable harm to the world's greatest freshwater lakes system. "Captive" invasives—whether four-footed or finned—pose just as great a threat to our state as those that are in the wild.

Throughout the process that led to the Invasive Species Order, the DNR sought to find a reasonable solution. The DNR supported sensible legislation that would have provided adequate fence regulations to make sure Russian boar

did not get into the wild. The legislation passed in the state House of Representatives. It was Sen. Boohar and his colleagues who failed to move that legislation through the Senate. With no reasonable alternatives to protect the state's natural resources against this threat, the DNR had to declare the Russian boar an invasive species under Michigan law.

Russian boar were not legal one day and illegal the next, as Sen. Boohar suggests. The DNR understood the potential impact that the Invasive Species Order could have on some individuals. As a result, the DNR delayed the effective date of the Invasive Species Order for 10 months and then delayed enforcement for an additional six months. This time was meant to allow the Legislature time to come up with an alternative solution, as well as to give affected individuals

Book Review

American Barns by Jan Corey Arnett

ISBN: 978-0747812494

Published by Shire Books

United Kingdom

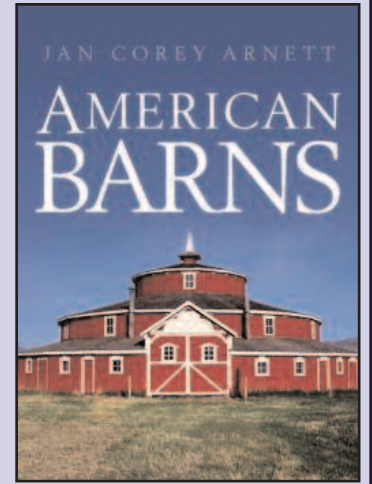
Nothing says rural America quite like a big red barn.

The heart of every working farm and ranch, the barn has become an icon of hard work, clean living and mankind's ongoing relationship to the land.

This 72-page paperback book by Battle Creek resident Jan Corey Arnett chronicles many types of barns. Illustrated with beautiful photographs—including shots of many Michigan barns—it examines how these treasures of early American architecture developed.

The author—who grew up on a Stephenson-area dairy farm in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and for many years has been involved in barn preservation work—shows how a wealth of immigrant construction methods, as well as a range of environments and climates, resulted in a fascinating variety of barn styles throughout the United States.

Well-written and informative, this book highlights many famous and historic barns that the



reader can visit. It also discusses the efforts of conservation groups working to preserve America's barns and find ways to repurpose the old structures as homes, studios and living monuments to rural heritage.

A current move to return to the small family farm, create more sustainable agricultural methods and make healthier food available locally, offers many heritage barns a chance at new life.

Get your signed copy today from the author at:

www.jancoreyarnett.com.

It's the perfect gift for any barn enthusiast.

Allegan Game Area fracking suit

(Continued from Page 1)

Beier Howlett PC in Bloomfield Hills. After conducting an exhaustive search, Haynes said he has been unable to uncover any BLM notice to the public about this proposal, according to a related news release.

"Apparently, BLM provided neither direct notice of the proposal to affected persons and local units of government," he said, "nor solicited public comment, both of which the BLM should have done."

"We've lived in the area for 38 years and never heard any mention of the federal government owning any interest whatsoever in the ASGA," said Marybeth Pritschet, who with her husband owns a house and 40 acres contiguous with the game area. "No doubt it's very convenient for the companies and the BLM to exclude public involvement."

The Davises created a conservation easement on their land to enhance the natural values of the ASGA and to protect its wildlife habitat. They are financing the litigation with their own personal savings.

The Center for Biological Diversity, which successfully brought a similar action against the BLM in California last year, is supporting the lawsuit.

"Fracking pollution poses enormous threats to Allegan County's water and to the endangered species in this important wildlife habitat," Marc Fink, a Center for Biological Diversity attorney, said. "The federal government should protect these public lands—not auction them off for dangerous drilling and fracking."

DNR's Golder: Michigan needs protection against Russian boar pigs

(Continued from Page 3)

Invasive swine may carry disease to domestic livestock, root up farm fields, even eat upland game birds, small mammals and fawns. Southern states such as Texas, Mississippi and Florida have watched feral pigs become an expensive plague, estimated to cost the United States \$1.5 billion a year. This threat is the reason that a broad coalition of groups continues to support the prohibition on Russian boar in Michigan.

The coalition includes Michigan's largest conservation group, the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, as well as the Michigan Wildlife Conservancy. Also supporting the Invasive Species Order is a large group of agricultural organizations, including the Michigan Pork Producers Association, the Michigan Milk Producers Association, Michigan Allied Poultry

Industries, Potato Growers of Michigan and Michigan Agri-Business Association.

Michigan knows about invasive species. The Asian carp continues to threaten our Great Lakes. It's worth noting—and remembering—that Asian carp came into the Mississippi River basin from fish stocking ponds where they were supposedly being held "captive." Now they are threatening incalculable harm to the world's greatest freshwater lakes system. "Captive" invasives—whether four-footed or finned—pose just as great a threat to our state as those that are in the wild.

Throughout the process that led to the Invasive Species Order, the DNR sought to find a reasonable solution. The DNR supported sensible legislation that would have provided adequate fence regulations to make sure Russian boar

time to adjust their business practices.

Sen. Boohar defends one particular local farmer, Mark Baker of Missaukee County, while ignoring the concerns of a much larger group of farmers and conservationists. But DNR policies must encompass the interests of all farmers and protect the state's natural resources for the benefit of all Michigan residents.

Sen. Boohar accuses the DNR and the Michigan Attorney General's office of continually seeking to "delay" Mr. Baker's court case. However, many of the delays in Mr. Baker's case have been the result of his attorney's actions. If Mr. Baker is eager for a quick resolution, it's surprising that his attorneys have missed by more than a year the court-imposed deadline for naming expert witnesses.

Mr. Baker and Sen. Boohar con-

tinue to try to confuse citizens by suggesting that "heritage" breeds of swine have been made illegal in Michigan. That is simply not so. Every type of pig is legal to raise in Michigan except Russian boar and Russian boar hybrids—the very type of pig Mr. Baker has openly admitted to owning.

Given Mr. Baker's admission, Sen. Boohar's complaints about "subjective characteristics" used to identify Russian boar are nonsensical. Mr. Baker himself has identified the type of pig he owns, as could any farmer.

The DNR will continue to work closely with our partners in the Legislature to identify needed protections for Michigan's farmers, citizens and world-class natural resources. We'll look forward to constructive proposals from Sen. Boohar that will advance those goals.

More Opinion

Fall is a great time for studying spiders

At the end of summer, we experience all kinds of sounds—sounds of insects and the young bird fledglings of the year.

Many birds are just learning to make the traditional sounds of the parents and can be very confusing. Insects have been producing young all summer and now we are probably at the peak of the population.

We are also at the peak of the spider population. As we get out on those dewey and even frosty mornings, enjoy the sometimes intricate webs the spiders build.

There are only two poisonous spiders found in the United States, the black widow and brown recluse. The black widow is not real common in Michigan and the brown recluse is not indigenous to Michigan. There have only been a handful (3 to 5) reported cases of the brown recluse presence.

Most often, the wolf spider is misidentified as the brown recluse, as it is one of the most common and gets large and scary. The brown recluse usually can be accounted for having been transported in from the south.

The black widow we have here is the northern black widow. The greatest abundance is on the western coast, but it can be found throughout the state—although far from common. As the name implies, it is black and the underside has a red or orange hour glass shape. The male is smaller than the female.

Traditionally, black widows were encountered while picking berries, in and around brush and in outhouses that are not used often. The bite is usually not fatal, but needs to be treated by a doctor.

Our largest spiders—wolf and fisher spiders—can reach nearly four inches across, including the legs.

Even though we only have two spiders that pose a real threat, all spiders can bite and many inflict a painful wound. It's always good to be careful with any insect, spider, or anything that has a mouth.

The Natural World By Richard Schinkel



Most spiders spin webs to do different things. Most often the web is used to catch insects, but can also be used to attract a mate with the proper placement of pheromones. Once the spiders mate, they lay eggs in sacs and can attach them to the web, put them underground, or place them on their bodies.

When the eggs hatch, the young disperse quickly, because they are extremely hungry and will eat their siblings. To move, they spin out a flat silk thread that will carry them away.

Often, when hunting or hiking in the fall, you may feel a web hit your face. Most often this is a newly hatched spider ballooning or “kiting” its way to freedom. A field of ballooning spiders is called a gossamer.

Some pretty spiders that show up in the fall are the black and yellow argiope. It spins a web in a circle and can often be found in the center of the web.

Other fall spiders that spin circles are quite colorful and, when I was a kid, I collected them. My mother wouldn't allow them in the house, however, so I kept them in the granary in individual jars and let them go after a couple weeks.

The silk produced by spiders is one of the strongest fibers in nature. Some of the most intricate webs are spun by a group of spiders called the orb weavers and they are most abundant in the fall, with webs glistening dew or frost.

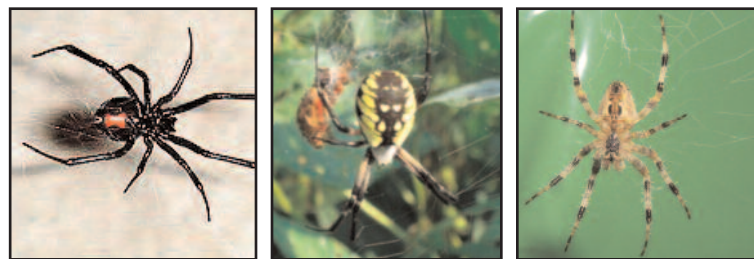
The orb weavers can have an array of colors and usually have large bodies.

A spider that doesn't carry the same tactics of spinning webs is the fisher spider. It actually hunts small fish, insects and other aquatic creatures. Also known as raft or dock spiders, they can actually dive under water. When they go under water, they are encased in a bubble of air. They hunt by sitting on the edge of a body of water, watching for a tiny ripple. Soon, the spider will scoot across the water to capture the prey with its foremost legs—which are equipped with claws—and then inject venom into the prey.

A unique way to locate and study spiders is to shine them at night. Unlike shining deer and other wildlife, it isn't illegal. It takes a bit of technique to get it right, but when you master the art it can be fun. Take a flashlight, hold it next your eye and scan your surroundings. You should see tiny emerald sparkles of light. Walk toward the spider until you see its body. This is a fun activity for kids of all ages.

One thing that you will discover is the large number of spiders you will locate. One source has estimated that there are more spiders per square foot in a meadow than any other invertebrate.

Get kids outdoors and they will find these things for themselves.



Many kinds of spiders, such as black widows (left), argiopos (middle) and orb weavers (right) can be found in Michigan.

A polarized environment: Who's to blame?

Paul Sabin, a professor at Yale University, wrote a thought-provoking column in the Boston Globe earlier this month about the decline of Republican environmentalism over the past quarter-century.

There are numerous reasons for this phenomenon, he said—not the least of which are the increasingly partisan political alliances of environmental groups.

“Environmentalists exacerbated the Republican shift away from environmental issues by allying forcefully with the Democratic Party,” Sabin wrote. “Environmental groups gave [former President George Herbert Walker Bush, for example,] little credit for his accomplishments.”

Among other things, Sabin said, Bush was concerned with population growth and shared the environmental movement's goals of improving the nation's air and water.

“When they denounced Bush for his failings and allowed Democrats to claim the environmental mantle exclusively for themselves, environmentalists helped to drive both parties to the extremes,” he wrote. “The Democrats veered toward warning of environmental apocalypse, while many Republicans went to the other pole, denying the threat of environmental problems.”

In a somewhat related interview Sept. 5 in *Salon*

magazine, writer and journalist Naomi Klein—who is examining the issue of climate change in an upcoming book yet to be titled—acknowledged that there is a “dual denialism” at work. Conservatives may deny what many believe is verifiable science, she said, but liberals deny the political [and economic] implications of the science.

“I think there is a very deep denialism in the environmental movement among the Big Green groups,” she said. “And to be very honest with you, I think it's been more damaging than the right-wing denialism in terms of how much ground we've lost, because it has steered us in directions that have yielded very poor results.”

It's important to ask, she said, “why green groups have been so unwilling to follow science to its logical conclusions. I think the scientists Kevin Anderson and his colleague, Alice Bows, at the Tyndall Centre have been the most courageous in this ... because they have been saying for at least a decade that getting to the emissions reduction levels that we need to get to in the developed world is not compatible with economic growth.”

In the end, economic and ecological issues need to be addressed simultaneously, Klein said, requiring all sides to address the broader realities of the debate.

“Fracking” reports are published

University of Michigan researchers have released seven technical reports that together, they say, form the most comprehensive Michigan-focused resource on hydraulic fracturing—a controversial natural gas and oil extraction process commonly known as “fracking.”

The studies, totaling nearly 200 pages, examine seven critical topics related to the use of the technique—technology, geology & hydrogeology, environment & ecology, public health, policy & law, economics and public perceptions.

The reports represent the first phase of a two-year project—expected to be completed in 2014—

to analyze the fracking practice and recommend policy options to government officials, industry experts, academics, advocacy groups and the general public.

The reports can be found on the university's website and public comments—which will be used to inform the second phase of the project, not to revise the current reports—are being sought through Oct. 7 via an online form.

The next *North Woods Call* will examine the major findings—which acknowledge that high-volume hydraulic fracturing can help access natural gas reserves, but conclude that potential impacts to the environment and public health must also be addressed.

Outdoor Rhythms By Doug Freeman



Hoofbeats in the midst of a mist

Working a second shift job requires me to do much of our barn animals' care around noon and midnight. Most of the farm folks out this way hit their beds just after dark and rise before dawn, so I'm considered a bit odd, if not downright eccentric.

Though my routine is different, our goats, chickens, cats, dogs and thick-necked miniature horse have all adapted well over the years.

One cool September night not long ago, after the barn cleaning, feedings, and bucket refills had been completed, I sent our hoofed critters into the big pasture out back, where they could enjoy a couple hours of peaceful grazing. The chicken girls had returned to their coop, allowing the barn lights to be doused. My watch read quarter-past one.

A bright half-moon had risen over the eastern tree-tops, inspiring a deviation from the path leading up to our house. I took a stroll down the county road instead, keeping to shadows and making as little noise as possible.

A pair of barred owls chorused back and forth from their favorite grove above Pierson's Creek. Three deer glided across the road ahead, slipping into a field of well-tended corn without making a sound.

I decided to leave the pavement to check on some young trees recently planted along our southern boundary. Ground fog was forming as each small tree was examined by moonlight. Everything was fine. The owls were still yakking. The fog thickened into a surrealistic swirl as it expanded and engulfed me where I stood.

Two dark blobs appeared suddenly out of the mist in an adjacent field. They grew larger, and were clearly moving closer.

Bears? The word popped into my head. One had been seen wandering the lakeshore only a few weeks earlier.

A loud snort startled me. Then came a gleam of recognition and a sense of relief. Quarter horses. Belonging to our neighbors. They'd stopped about twenty feet away to look me over.

Faith and Moby—a gentle mare and her fully-grown son. We'd met before. I asked them what they were doing out on such a foggy night. No response.

Moby was known to have a strong protective instinct, coupled with a tendency to bite and kick. Having read some of Monty Robert's enlightening books, I figured it might be a good idea to make myself seem less threatening.

I turned away and knelt slowly, tearing up a handful of wild grass. In less than a minute, while munching on the seedy tips, I felt a horse chin come to rest on my shoulder. Then the other. Faith and Moby had relaxed and were watching me eat. My scent and voice were no doubt familiar to them. I felt temporarily accepted into their herd.

The next major task would be to lead them home safely, so I set out on a direct line to their paddock. They followed. We came upon a laden pear tree, causing a delay. My barn was nearby, but I didn't have any halters large enough for a pair of 900-pound horses.

I rubbed faces and kissed a furry nose or two, trying to urge my new herd mates to move on. Unfortunately, Moby trotted off into the fog, shadowed by his mom. The sound of their hoof-falls receded to the west. At least they were traveling away from the road.

I sprinted to the house and phoned our neighbors. No one picked up. Sound sleepers. A message on their answering machine was the best I could do.

The remainder of that night was spent patrolling the county road on foot. Cars are not frequent during the hours of darkness, but some of them cruise by at 70 or 80 mph—way too fast for a road with kids and livestock, and a speed limit of 45.

I was prepared to flag down anyone passing by with a flashlight should the errant equines appear again, but they didn't. Faith and Moby had run free all night, and slipped into their paddock through a busted fence just at dawn, their owner told me later that morning. And my boss wondered why I was dragging at work in the afternoon.

I told her I'd been up all night playing with horses in the fog.

Conservation Officer Logs (8/5/13 through 8/18/13)**Off-road fatality, third-generation scofflaw, assorted pipe bombs & more****DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

CO Dennis Gast observed a boat on a small inland lake with two subjects fishing. Upon contact, CO Gast found that the boat was unregistered and there were no personal flotation devices on board. Both subjects were fishing without licenses; both were suspended and had warrants out for their arrest. Enforcement action was taken for the fishing violations and the subjects had to post bond to prevent a trip to the county jail.

CO Dave Miller reports there was an off-road vehicle (ORV) fatality in Baraga County. The operator was not wearing a helmet and crashed his ORV. The crash was possibly the result of the operator having a heart attack.

COs Dave Miller and Mark Leadman worked several complaints of early bear baits and trespassing in Ontonagon County. Several illegal ORV trails and illegal blinds were located on private property and one illegal bear bait was located.

CO Dave Painter had a busy week on local lakes in Iron County. Two subjects were ticketed for fishing without a license. One subject was the third generation family member to be arrested by CO Painter for game and fish violations.

DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)

CO Robert Crisp assisted local deputies with an ORV accident. Two youths in a side-by-side ORV had struck a tree head on. They were taken to Munising Hospital with minor injuries. The ORV was a complete loss.

CO Jeff Panich stopped two subjects on Drummond Island on top of Marble Head for operating an ORV in a closed area. The illegal operation took them within inches of falling off a cliff. This safety concern was mentioned by the CO and one of the subjects complained, "we're all adults here" and that nobody would ever drive off a cliff." As the CO explained how quickly accidents can happen, another ORV approached and the driver accidentally hit the gas instead of the brake, causing her to crash head-on into a tree. The subject was OK, other than a few bumps and bruises. The incident proved the point the CO was making and was well taken by the complaining subject. Tickets were issued for operating in a closed area.

CO Kyle Publiski is investigating a subject from Drummond Island who cut 15 large maple trees from state land. Though all were good saw logs for lumber, the subject cut them all into firewood and had been selling the wood locally.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)

CO Bill Webster was patrolling with the U S Coast Guard (USCG) on Lake Huron, checking diving vessels, when they contacted a diver who was having a decompression-related emergency. CO Webster, realizing the severity of the situation, arranged to have him loaded on the USCG boat and taken to a landing site,

where he was transported to a decompression chamber.

CO Carl VanderWall reports a defendant was found guilty for the illegal killing of two goslings with a paintball gun, and ordered to pay \$1,285 in fines, costs and reimbursement. He killed the geese because they were defecating on his lawn.

Sgt. Greg Drogowski recovered a stolen shotgun from a subject after a different individual was suspected of stealing the firearm. The investigation involved several people and resulted in confessions obtained from witnesses and the suspect. Multiple felony charges are pending. The suspect was only recently released from prison and was still on parole/probation.

DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)

CO Justin Vanderlinde responded to a complaint in Manistee County of a deer being shot illegally. CO Vanderlinde obtained a photo and name of a potential suspect. After several interviews with multiple subjects, CO Vanderlinde was able to determine who illegally shot the deer and removed the backstraps. Evidence was secured and an investigative report was forwarded to the prosecutor's office for the issuance of arrest warrants.

CO Mike Wells was working a complaint on the Muskegon River of subjects taking over-limits of trout. CO Wells located two subjects matching the suspect description and watched them for approximately four hours. The trout were not biting well and the subjects caught few fish. When contacted, one of the subjects possessed three undersized trout and the other possessed two undersized trout. When asked if they measured the fish, the subjects answered that they didn't have to because the trout were dead due to swallowing the hook and they didn't want to waste them. During CO Wells' observations, the subjects made no attempt to measure the fish and just threw them into their bag after unhooking the trout. The fish were seized as evidence and tickets were issued for the possession of undersized fish.

DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)

CO Brian Olsen was on marine patrol when he observed an unregistered personal watercraft (PWC). Upon contact, it was learned the operator was a juvenile without the proper safety certificate. CO Olsen gave a verbal warning for the violations to the juvenile and his father. Two days later, CO Olsen located the same unregistered PWC operating on the same lake with the same father who had been warned earlier. A different approach was taken this time with a ticket issued for the violation.

CO Mike Hearn was patrolling a parcel of private land that historically has had ORV trespass issues. While leaving the property he observed three subjects walking down the private drive, who had just gotten out of a van on the county road. As soon as the subjects observed the CO,



they ran into the woods. CO Hearn made a traffic stop on the van, and identified the driver as the mother of a juvenile in the group. She called her son and he returned to the road, now shirtless, with his 17-year-old friend. The third person was identified but was not found. The juvenile has been told several times not to be on the property. He was released to his mother, and the 17-year-old was told to walk home. A deputy arrived on scene and took a quick walk, following their path through the woods. A cold bottle of cola was found, along with an unopened pint of whisky. It just so happens the 17-year-old and 18-year-old were on probation for alcohol related violations and due in court the next day. Their probation officers were contacted.

CO Chris Bowen responded to a wildfire complaint in Roscommon County. During his investigation of the origin, it was determined that a subject had been shooting Dragons Breath shotgun shells, which are essentially large firecrackers. The subject admitted to shooting the explosive, which led to the start and escape of a wildfire. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Chris Bowen was on patrol and made contact with a wood cutter. He witnessed the subjects cutting a standing live oak tree. During the interview, the subjects told CO Bowen they cut the live oak tree because there was a dead limb at the top of it that they couldn't get to. The subjects were ticketed.

DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)

CO Joshua Wright received a complaint that a person who was metal detecting on state land found an unusual object that was buried. CO Wright went to the complainant's house and quickly identified the objects as pipe bombs and a shrapnel bomb. The residences around the complainant's house were quickly evacuated and the Michigan State Police (MSP) Bomb Squad was called to the scene. The bomb squad determined that all the components were there for seven pipe bombs and one shrapnel bomb, but none of them were completely put together. Further investigation is being conducted by the CO and the MSP.

CO Dan Lee watched a couple of anglers for a while on a local river. When he contacted the pair, one of the men stated that he was not fishing. The CO asked the angler to come with him to his patrol truck and bring the pole he had been using to fish. The man picked up a pole and followed the

CO to his truck before realizing he had just admitted to fishing, and lying about it.

DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)

CO Andy Bauer worked the St. Joseph River system for illegal fishing activity related to summer run steelhead. CO Bauer observed a man and his 16-year-old son fishing near a dam. CO Bauer watched the father offer his son a drink from a plastic water bottle and, when the son turned it down, the father drank the water and threw the bottle into the river. CO Bauer made contact and issued the subject a ticket for littering.

CO Andy Bauer and Sgt. Zach Doss patrolled Lake Michigan over the weekend and observed a 39-foot boat from Illinois being operated without registration and with a five-year-old boy on board who was not wearing a personal flotation device. Upon stopping the vessel, the owner stated that the boat was documented and therefore did not need to be registered. After an explanation of the law, enforcement action was taken for both offenses.

DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)

While conducting a late-night patrol in the Rose Lake Wildlife Area, **CO Rich Nickols** came across an extremely large party on state land. Over one hundred college-age subjects had gathered for the party and many were still arriving when CO Nickols came across them. CO Nickols was able to coordinate with township and county police officers to disperse the crowd. Many of the under-21 subjects had not (yet) consumed any alcohol and were warned for the state land violations. The investigation is continuing into the party organizer.

While on marine patrol, **CO Rich Nickols** observed three subjects who were shore fishing and getting ready to leave. CO Nickols watched a subject pull a stringer out of the water and put it in a cooler. It appeared that there were a couple questionable sized bass on the stringer. CO Nickols beached his patrol boat and contacted the subjects at their vehicle. One bass was 13 inches and the other was 14 inches. The subject who caught the bass also had a warrant for his arrest. A ticket was issued and the subject was turned over to the Michigan State Police on the warrant.

DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)

COs Kris Kiel, Mike Drexler,

and **Todd Szyska** contacted the operator of a 38 foot yacht due to it not displaying a Michigan registration. The owner/operator of the vessel had never checked on the status of his expired temporary registration permit. In fact the operator/owner stated he had an additional temporary permit issued that was 10 days more current than the one he had handed over. Unfortunately, that permit and the one in hand still showed that the vessel was overdue 20 days from the last issued temporary registration. Enforcement action was taken.

COs Kris Kiel, Mike Drexler, and **Todd Szyska** contacted several anglers on a yacht, fishing on Lake St. Clair. Two subjects were standing on the back of the water deck transom of the vessel with fishing poles in hand. When asked for their fishing licenses, the third member of the vessel did all the talking. The speaker was the father and was trying to talk on behalf of his son and his nephew. However, both male subjects were 18 and 17, and neither of them had a fishing license. Further, the nephew stated he did not have his license on him, and then it materialized magically out of his pocket after more questioning. The nephew was an Alaska resident here on vacation. The spokesperson stated he had taken the boys to the local fishing store to buy the licenses, but his son did not have his driver's license with him and nothing was really said about the Alaska nephew. However, the spokesperson was clear to state that he did purchase his fishing license that day and bought the night crawlers. Enforcement action was taken as well as \$100 dollars bond for the out-of-state Alaska resident.

COs Kris Kiel, Mike Drexler, and **Todd Szyska** contacted two subjects in a small inflatable rowboat one mile off shore from Metro Beach. The small inflatable was being tossed around violently by large vessel wake. The vessel was occupied by a 24-year-old subject and his nine-year-old nephew. No personal flotation devices were on board the vessel. When the adult was asked why they did not have any life jackets, his response was that his nephew was a "real good swimmer." The nine-year-old, the adult, and the rowboat were placed on board the patrol boat, and were driven back to a residence several canals off of the lake. Enforcement action was taken.

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Final Shot



Sinkhole Lakes

They're not your average sinkholes that gobble up houses and cars in places like Florida. Many such natural geologic features in northeast Michigan—like this one in the Pigeon River Country State Forest—have filled with groundwater to form spring-fed lakes, offering expanded opportunities for cold-water anglers. Once used as fisheries research sites by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the seven sinkhole lakes in the Pigeon River Country have since been opened to public fishing and other recreational uses, which has resulted in overuse and erosion along the steep surrounding banks. That's why Huron Pines of Gaylord is spearheading a conservation project to protect the clear, blue-green water. Working with the DNR and the Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited, the organization has been stabilizing the banks, constructing proper foot trails and generally improving access to the lakes. The work has already been completed at three of the lakes, and more will be done this fall and into 2014. For additional information on the projects, contact Sam Prentice at (989) 448-2293, extension 17, or write samuel@huronpines.org.

No spinning-wing decoys on Harsen's Island

A three-year ban on spinning-wing decoys at the Harsen's Island Unit of the St. Clair Flats State Wildlife Area (St. Clair County) has been enacted, beginning with the 2013-14 waterfowl hunting season.

The ban prohibits the use of any decoys with a spinning-wing

motion—whether mechanized, or wind-powered. It is believed that such decoys reduce the quality of hunting within the close quarters of managed hunt zones at Harsen's Island.

A similar ban has been in place at the Shiawassee River State Game Area for three years.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources sought public comment, held meetings and had conversations with hunters and hunting groups before adopting the ban, officials said. The agency will now evaluate the impacts of the policy during the ban.

—Michigan DNR

Turning pine cones into profit

Here's an opportunity to make a few bucks while helping the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) keep state forests healthy and sustainable.

This fall, as they are ripening, you can collect red and jack pine cones and sell them to the DNR by visiting offices in Cadillac, Gaylord, Manistique and Marquette. The seeds are placed in cold storage at the DNR-operated Wyman State Nursery until needed.

Each bushel of pine cones can net between \$30 and \$35 for the person willing to put in some sweat equity.

"The annual pine cone buying program provides an opportunity for residents to contribute to the DNR's rejuvenation efforts and help produce millions of seedlings that will help sustain Michigan's state forest land," said Bill O'Neill, chief of the DNR's Forest Resources Division (FRD).

Michigan's forests are known for their breathtaking beauty, sheer size and inviting spaces. These forest lands are carefully managed for timber, wildlife, recreation, aesthetic and ecological values—all of which play an important role in the state's economy through forest-based industry and tourism.

Collaboration is important when it comes to successfully managing Michigan's state forest land to meet these needs.

"It is no small job," said O'Neill, who also serves as Michigan's state forester. "Last spring alone, FRD staff planted more than 7 million seedlings on state forest land—reforesting around 7,500 acres."

Many of the seedlings used in the DNR's planting efforts come from Wyman. The Manistique-based facility produces 5 million to 7.5 million seedlings annually to help replenish Michigan's for-

est land. If pine cones aren't collected yearly, those seedlings won't be produced.

The pine cones sold to the DNR can help produce seed and seedlings that will reforest habitats crucial to the survival of many species like deer, turkey and many other game and non-game species, including the federally endangered Kirtland's warbler.

In addition to the Kirtland's warbler habitat, the DNR also focuses its reforestation efforts on sites that have been harmed by natural disasters like wildfire.

September and October are generally the best months to collect pine cones. Only cones that are tight (unopened) and clean (free of sticks, debris, rot, decay and fungus) will be accepted.

Keep the cones cool to ensure that they do not begin to compost; the seeds will die at high temperatures. After the DNR purchases the pine cones, they are dried and the seeds are extracted and cleaned.

"Collected seeds can be stored several years, so your contribution will help the DNR grow jack and red pine seedlings now and well into the future," O'Neill said.

People interested in picking and selling cones to the DNR this fall can contact the FRD staff person in their area for more information and to find out the dates each office will buy cones from the public.

Cadillac: Sue Sobieski, 231-775-9727, ext. 6904

Gaylord: Tim Greco, 989-732-3541, ext. 5041

Manistique: Richard Mergener, 906-341-2518

Marquette: Tom Seablom 906-228-6561

For more information about the DNR's reforestation efforts and state forest planning, visit www.michigan.gov/forestplan.


—Michigan DNR

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