



**“The newspaper for people  
who love the north”**



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*Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953*



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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.

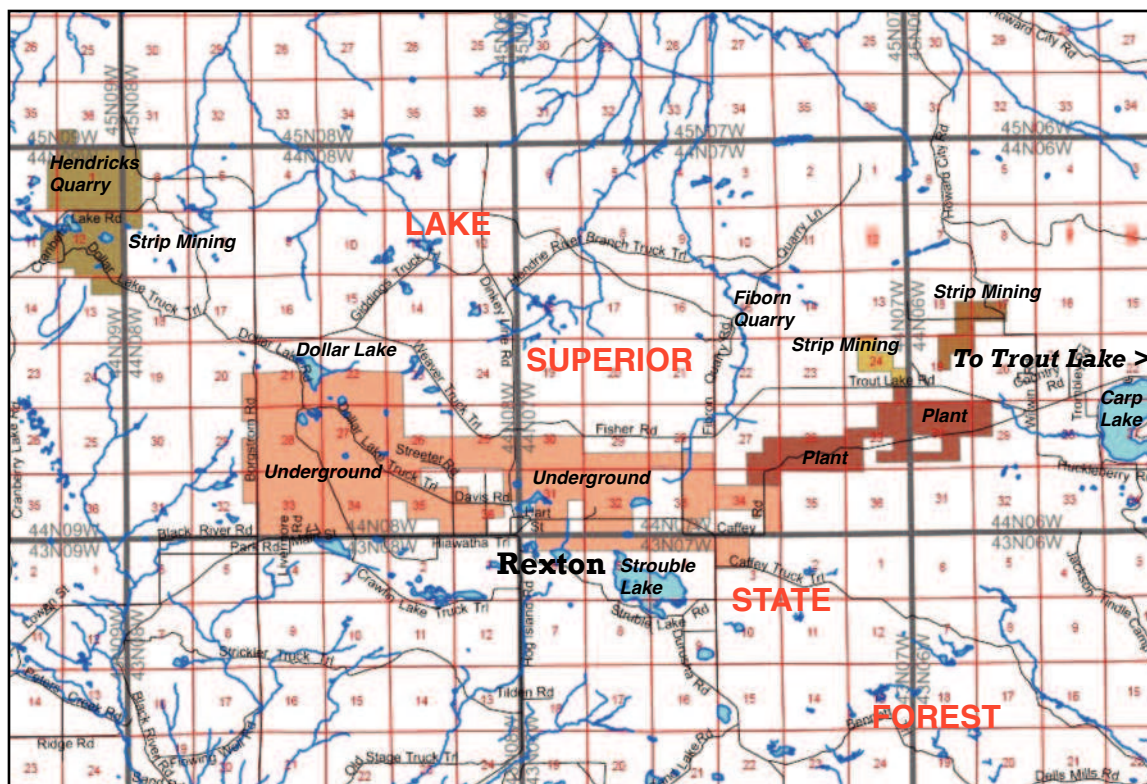
Of course, that means that renewal notices will begin going out soon to readers who signed up early on.

“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.” An-

other 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/](http://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](http://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](mailto: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)















## 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](mailto: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

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## 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](http://www.michigan.gov/forestplan).

—Michigan DNR