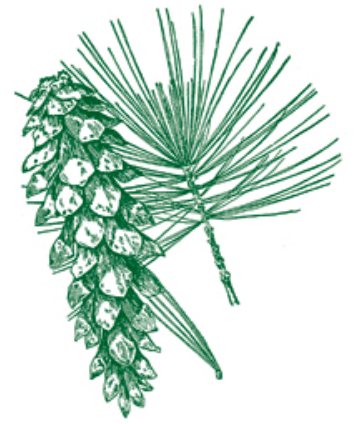




**“The newspaper for people
who love the north”**



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Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



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Harvest Time

There are numerous reminders that fall has arrived and Old Man Winter is lurking just around the corner. The chilly nights have brought frost to the pumpkins, and farmers throughout the north country are completing harvests and preparing for the coming snow. Meanwhile, the young ghosts and goblins of Halloween will soon be on the streets in search of tasty goodies of their own.



North Woods Notes

NEW LICENSE FEES: Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder last month signed legislation approving new hunting and fishing license fees in Michigan. While there was strong opposition in some circles—as well as strong support elsewhere—the updated license structure and increased revenue will help keep Michigan’s costs competitive with other Great Lakes States, according to Keith Creagh, director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It had been 17 years since adjustments had been made to the license fees, officials said, which had reportedly caused reductions in field staffing, habitat management and law enforcement. The new license and pricing options will take effect March 1, 2014. Costs and options for the fall and winter 2013 seasons remain unchanged.

ASIAN CARP CAUGHT: A 53-inch, 82-pound Asian carp has been caught in a Chicago-area lake that connects to Lake Michigan, according to an announcement last month at the annual Great Lakes Commission meeting. The news was reported by John Goss, the Asian Carp director for the White House Council on Environmental Quality. The incident occurred in August on Flatfoot Lake near the Illinois-Indiana state line. There were also several positive DNA samplings for Asian carp reported last summer in Chicago’s Lake Calumet, the largest body of water in the City of Chicago, officials said.

NEW MAPPING TOOL: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has launched a new online mapping tool for the Great Lakes. The tool will give decision makers, resource managers and environmental responders better information as they clean up hazardous materials and restore coastal and estuarine environments. It features the most comprehensive collection of environmental contaminant data in the region, as well as information on natural resources, habitats, weather, water levels and currents.

SUBMERGED HAZARD: There is a continued push for Canada-based Enbridge Energy to safeguard the Great Lakes from a potential rupture of pipelines that cross the Straits of Mackinac. Protesters have recently called renewed attention to the hazard in light of the July 2010 rupture of an Enbridge pipeline near Marshall, Michigan, that dumped an estimated one million gallons of tar sands oil into the Kalamazoo River system. Although government officials say that the Enbridge pipelines crossing the Straits have never spilled into the adjoining waters of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, environmentalists say a leak would devastate some of the areas most bountiful fisheries, wildlife refuges and municipal drinking water supplies, as well as the tourist industry on Mackinac Island. The pipelines were reportedly installed during 1953 and experience has shown that such pipes deteriorate with age.

NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP: Ontario Power Generation (OPG) has proposed constructing a nuclear waste disposal site in Kincardine, Ontario—50 miles east of Michigan’s thumb and within one kilometer of Lake Huron. Although there has reportedly been support for the plan from those communities in the immediate vicinity that are getting significant financial incentives from OPG, several people—including Canadian author Farley Mowat and assorted Michigan lawmakers—have spoken out in opposition. A public comment period was scheduled to end Oct. 11, with a report containing recommendations for Canada’s federal government expected within 90 days after that.

DAM REMOVAL SLOWED: A project to remove the 156-year-old Lyons Dam on the Grand River in Ionia County has been slowed by the discovery of more than 50 “snuffbox mussels,” an endangered freshwater species that must be relocated before the work moves forward.

(Continued on Page 2)

2013 deer hunting prospects outlined in DNR report

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has issued its 2013 Michigan Deer Hunting Prospects report.

The report notes that the winter of 2012 got off to a late start and continued to be mild through much of January and into early February. But increased snowfall and a late thaw still made conditions difficult for deer—most notably in the Upper Peninsula.

As a result, some areas may see decreased numbers of deer (particularly fawns).

Nevertheless, deer survival and conditions in the northern Lower Peninsula appear to be minimally affected heading into the 2013 season, the report says.

The impact of nearly 15,000 deer that were found and reported as mortalities due to epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) will continue to linger for some

time in those areas of the southern Lower Peninsula where the most substantial outbreaks occurred. Few EHD outbreaks were reported during the summer of 2013 and, by the end of September, only Muskegon County had a confirmed case.

Fortunately, wherever the disease has emerged in the past, substantial long-lasting effects have not been seen. Hunters in those areas hardest hit by EHD are being encouraged to continue to limit antlerless deer harvest, although those afield this year will be able to directly assess recovery of deer in those areas.

The full report contains additional information about hunting expectations in each region and can be found online at www.michigan.gov/deer, along with a list of deer check stations and 2013 Shiawassee River State Game Area deer hunt information.

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U of M reports examine fracking issues

The controversial natural gas and oil extraction process known as “fracking” has the potential to cause significant harm to the environment, according to a series of technical reports released last month by University of Michigan (UM) researchers.

Damage could include erosion and sedimentation, increased risk of water contamination from chemical spills and equipment runoff, habitat fragmentation, negative impacts on aquatic and terrestrial organisms, loss of stream riparian zones and reduction of surface waters available to plants and animals due to a lowering of groundwater levels.

There also are potential hazards to public health via impaired air quality, water pollution and degradation of ecosystems, researchers said. Nearby communities could be affected by increased traffic and motor vehicle accidents, stress among residents and “boomtown-associated” effects such as strained health care systems and road degradation they said.

The reports—drafted during the first phase of a two-year study project—examine seven critical topics related to the use of the technique. They are technology, geology & hydrogeology, environment & ecology, public health, policy & law, economics and public perception.

The project is expected to conclude in 2014 with an analysis and recommendation of policy options for government officials, industry experts, academics, advocacy groups and the general public.

Public comment was sought through Oct. 7 to inform the second phase of the project.

In addition to possible impacts on the environment and public health, the reports conclude that a recent flurry of mineral rights acquisitions in Michigan suggests the potential for growth in natural gas production through high-volume hydraulic fracturing (fracking), although researchers say that only a handful of such wells have been drilled to date.

“Michigan is thus in a unique position to assess the future of high-volume hydraulic fracturing before the gas boom begins,” they



Hydraulic fracturing in Michigan gas and oil drilling activities have generated much controversy, along with seven recently released technical reports on the subject from the University of Michigan’s Graham Sustainability Institute.

It is unlikely that there will be significant growth of the oil and gas industry in Michigan in the near-term future, according to the researchers, because of the current low price of natural gas, the high cost of drilling deep shale formations and the absence of new oil discoveries.

Nevertheless, considerable reserves of natural gas are believed to exist in deep shale formations such as the Utica-Collingwood, which underlies much of Michigan and eastern Lake Huron, and extends into Ontario, Canada.

The researchers noted that state officials are the primary sources of law and policy governing hydraulic fracturing in Michigan. The operators of such wells must disclose the hazardous elements of chemical additives to the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), they said, within 60 days of well completion.

Unlike most states, however, the DEQ does not require operators to report to FracFocus.org, a nationwide chemical disclosure registry.

The gas extraction industry creates employment and income for Michigan, according to the reports, but the employment effects are modest compared with other industries and not large enough to “make or break” the state’s economy. The number of technical jobs in the industry will likely increase in the future, while the need for less-skilled laborers will decline, the reports conclude.

In the study of public perceptions, the researchers found that a slight majority of Michigan residents believe that the benefits of fracking outweigh the risks, but significant concerns remain about the potential impacts to human health, the environment and groundwater quality.

(Continued on Page 3)



Trumpeting Conservation

The trumpeter swan—North America's largest native waterfowl—heralds conservation efforts at the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary near Hickory Corners, Michigan. Despite weighing in at 30 pounds with a wingspan of seven feet, the birds are sensitive and easily disturbed during nesting season. Native Americans often hunted them for food, but their numbers declined significantly after Europeans arrived with guns in search of feathers for quill pens, decorations, beds and other uses. Even famed bird researcher and artist John James Audubon is said to have preferred their feathers over all other quill pens. By 1933, less than 70 wild trumpeter swans still lived in the lower United States. Today, they sometimes fly into power lines and cell phone towers, and can be poisoned by lead pellets that are swallowed while foraging on pond bottoms. In 1989, the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary began raising the swans from eggs collected in Alaska and at various zoos. Since then, the facility has released more than 200 trumpeters, which have established several breeding populations. Established on land donated by cereal industry pioneer W.K. Kellogg and now part of Michigan State University's Kellogg Biological Station, the Sanctuary works with researchers from various institutions to study the ecology of all living systems—including birds, fish and water quality.



North Woods Notes

(Continued from Page 1)

NRC MEETINGS: The next two Michigan Natural Resources Commission meetings will be held at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road in Lansing—Nov. 7 and Dec. 12. For more information about starting times and agendas, visit the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website at michigan.gov/dnr.

STAMPEDE FOR WOLF LICENSES: Licenses for Michigan's first managed wolf hunt nearly sold out the first day they were offered. Despite a cost of \$100 for residents and \$500 for nonresidents, almost 900 of the 1,200 available licenses were gone within the first 30 minutes after they went on sale at noon Sept. 28, according to the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Only about 100 licenses for the hunt (Nov. 15 to Dec. 31) remained by 5 p.m. that day, they said.

PROTECTING THE WOLVES: Despite the popularity and brisk sale of wolf hunting licenses in Michigan, the group Keep Michigan Wolves Protected continued efforts to gather signatures to put an anti-hunting referendum on next year's ballot. They hope to have enough signatures by March to support the initiative.

RIFLE RIVER: The Gaylord-based Huron Pines organization recently led a volunteer project to restore an eroded bank on the Rifle River. In an effort to blend the healing bank with the river's natural characteristics, volunteers in July anchored whole trees to the stream bank to capture eroding sediment, installed live brush bundles and planted native trees and shrubs to hold soil in place, and improved riparian habitat.

BIG RED PHOTOS: A popular spot for photographs in the sand dunes of Holland State Park is no more. Sure, the iconic "Big Red" lighthouse remains on the south side of the Lake Michigan channel, but the trees and dune grass on the north side—and the dune itself—are history. On October 2, contractors started clearing the low dune that for years attracted photographers to the spot. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers decided to level the dune and raise the beach by three inches. The purpose: to relieve pressure on the adjacent sea wall and minimize the cost of dredging in the channel.

TURKEY HABITAT: Volunteers are being sought to help improve turkey habitat on Gaylord-area public land. The Michigan United Conservation Clubs, the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Michigan DNR will plant crabapple trees on Saturday, Oct. 19. If you want to help out, go to the Gaylord DNR office, 1732 West M-32 at 9 a.m. that day and caravan to various locations where the trees will be planted. Contact Drew YoungeDyke at (517)346-6486, or visit www.mucc.org for more information. Lunches will be provided to all volunteers, along with a digital subscription to the Michigan Out-Of-Doors magazine.

Our 60th Year: Looking Back to October 21, 1987
— Excerpts from *The North Woods Call* —

A Perfect Day

From the book, "Lure of the Lone Trail" by Glen Sheppard

The bamboo sinews of the Paul Young Parabolic stretched into the back cast, sending the number 8, 4X-long Mickey Finn streamer fly whistling past my ear.

This rod, crafted by Bob Summers, is slow. It takes time to become accustomed to its cadence after a summer of casting faster, shorter, much lighter dry fly cane rods. It is a powerful beast, though. What it lacks in grace it makes up for in thrust.

The loop straightened out far over my shoulder and the corks leaned into the fore cast. Like a mighty spring, the cane almost groaned as it lurched forward, firing the streamer fly far out over the river into the swirl just above the bend of the current. Slack line played out as the fly twisted and sank in the heart of the water.

Huge, muscled, salmon—some dark, some silver—cavorted in the river, from its wide slack water ending at the lake to its gnarled shallow beginning in the hills. The inch-and-a-half-long fly was not aimed at them. A profane thought.

In reality, it was targeted at nothing. An electro-shocking survey a few weeks earlier had confirmed what we've told the biologists for more than a decade; salmon, lampricide and sand have wiped out the resident trout, except in the very uppermost headwaters, where a remnant population survives. Down here, where the season lingers year around, the chances of catching a real trout are about as good as an old editor's chances of walking on water.

On shore under the overhanging cedars and tamaracks, the bird dog pup's tail swept the needles and grasses like a broom, as her head followed the road and line. She knew the little double gun and shell vest were in the car.

She's learned to like the game we play in the woods. With the cover mostly down and the season half-finished, she's had her gums on several grouse and her paws on more woodcock. She's figured out this is what she's all about.

So why are we puttering around in the river? There are no good smells there. The action is at the edge of the conifers, where the birches, popples and alders hold sway. Where the berry patches grab at her feathers and puffs draw October-fat grouse.

Well, she'd have to be patient. This is a part of the annual rhythm; one last moment to make love with the river—to feel the current hug and tug at us. To feel the magic of the rod and the wonder of a perfect cast. To be near running water. To turn over in your hand the beauty of fur and feathers twisted on a shank of iron. To resurrect a pledge to spend more hours this winter squinting over the tying vise.

As ancient and perfect as the grouse woods are, there is something more intoxicating about fly fishing. It draws deeper of the soul. It is more of a commitment. It is where life begins. And ends.

It isn't catching fish. It is being there. Being a part of something that is harder to identify, to understand. It is a lot of things you really don't put on paper; that this typewriter hasn't learned to quantify.

It is meditation and beauty.

Beautiful stuff that you fear would disappear if it could be explained in print.

Nails didn't care about that business. But she seemed happy to just be there.

The nearly 60-degree water wasn't much colder than it had been in August. But the air barely nipped fifty degrees. Even in the waders it turned cool darn fast.

Reluctantly, but also happily, the time came to snip the fly off the 3X tippet, wind the line and leader onto the reel, and call it a day—and a season.

Clamoring up the bank and shuffling through the woods toward the car, I tried to remember if there had ever been a bad trout season. Probably, in the mid years, say from age 17 to 30, when the pursuit of trout in the creel had been so intense I didn't find time to idly marvel at the stunning wonder of a tiny mayfly's wings and to fall victim to the current's spell.

The thought brought a chuckle. Those years are long behind us. Surviving them is what earned us the privilege of fishing where brook trout live—or at least used to live.

At the car, the waders came off and the boots went on. The fly vest was replaced by the shell vest and the rod by the shotgun. I would at least give Nails a few minutes to vacuum the bracken in search of bird scent.

Not 200 yards from the trail, she started twisting and darting, around and around, in an ever-tighter circle. Under a rotting blowdown elm she finally froze—on point.

I've learned that at seven months she knows her trade and there would be a bird, or more than one, within easy range of the 7-1/2 bird shot.

The hard decision was whether I wanted to kill anything on this last day of trout fishing.

Thumb on the safety, I moved, slowly, in front of her.

Egads! She was perfect, by my standards (So much so, I was overwhelmed that this had happened to me again. More than two years ago, when Toots left me, I'd been sure it never would).

A bird went off to the left. A wild shot, at best. He'd been under some blackberry brambles. How she'd scented him was baffling.

Then a bird went out from under the blowdown, not 20 feet from Nails. She stiffened. I shot. The bird crumbled. She capably shifted four or five feet to the right and stiffened.

A bird, then another, flushed at the edge of the blowdown.

The gun never came up.

A guy can only handle so many riches in one day.

As tea water simmered over the little gas stove on the tailgate of the Suburban, she sat there, tail swishing, big eyes gaping, first at the tired guy with the bent legs and then at the bird I'd dropped in front of her to boast over.

Who was that jerk who said life is never perfect?

Pure Michigan hunt winners harvest bear & elk

Each year, Pure Michigan Hunt (PMH) winners get to spend the fall hunting seasons living out their dreams—pursuing elk, bear, deer, turkey and ducks in Michigan's outdoors.

All three 2013 Pure Michigan Hunt winners recently harvested bear. Dave Gittins of Kawkawlin and Jim Bosscher of McBain both successfully harvested bear in the Cadillac area, using Wayne and Rob Nixon as their hunting guides.

Gittins harvested a 450-pound bear on public land. "This is my first bear," said Gittins. "I'm still amazed at his size!"

Bosscher harvested his bear accompanied by Jenny Olsen from Michigan Out-of-Doors TV.

"Hunting is all about the experience and the friends that you are with that make the memories," said Bosscher.

Jason Webb, the PMH winner from Westland, also harvested a bear on public land in the Lewiston area.

Webb hasn't hunted for his elk

yet—he's waiting to hunt during the December elk season—while both Bosscher and Gittins have already taken theirs. PMH winners can hunt any open unit, during any hunt period for that animal. They are not restricted to a unit or a hunt period.

Next up: Waterfowl season.

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Windmill farms blamed for the deaths of several eagles



Rotating blades on energy producing windmills are deadly.

As briefly mentioned in the last *North Woods Call*, wind energy facilities have killed at least 67 golden and bald eagles in the past five years, according to a report published recently in the *Journal of Raptor Research*.

The number may actually be much higher, researchers said, but—at minimum—wind farms in 10 states have killed at least 85 eagles since 1997, with most deaths occurring between 2008 and 2012 when the industry was significantly expanding. Most deaths—79—were golden eagles that struck wind turbines, while at least one was electrocuted by a power line.

Researchers said their figures are likely to be substantially underestimated, since companies report eagle fatalities voluntarily and only a fraction of those included in the total were discovered during searches for dead birds by wind-energy companies. In addition, the study did not include more than 60 eagles killed each year at a cluster of wind farms in California's Altamont Pass, which is said to be the deadliest place in the country for eagles.

"It is not an isolated event that

is restricted to one place in California," said Brian Millsap, national raptor coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and one of the study's authors. "It's pretty widespread."

It is not known what toll the deaths may be having on local eagle populations, Millsap told the Associated Press (AP). While the golden eagle population is stable in the West, any additional mortality for a long-living species such as the eagle can be a tipping point, he said.

Wind farms are clusters of turbines as tall as 30-story buildings, with spinning rotors as wide as a passenger jet's wingspan. Numerous birds—not just eagles—have reportedly been killed by collisions with the rotating blades. From a distance, the blades appear to be rotating slowly, but can reach speeds up to 170 miles per hour at the tips, creating tornado-like vortices, according to the AP.

Facilities in two states—California and Wyoming—were implicated in 58 of the deaths, while the remainder occurred in Oregon, New Mexico, Colorado, Washington, Utah, Texas, Maryland and Iowa, researchers said.

Fracking foes claim conflict of interest in study

The validity of technical reports on hydraulic fracturing published by the University of Michigan (UM) is being challenged by a group trying to ban the controversial practice.

The Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan (CBFM)—a statewide ballot initiative—says two members of the study's steering committee contributed to the Michigan Chamber of Commerce's political campaign to defeat CBFM's efforts to amend the state constitution.

The two members—John DeVries of the Mika, Meyers, Beckett & Jones law firm and Gregory Fogle, who owns Old Mission Energy—each reportedly gave \$500 towards thwarting the ballot initiative.

The UM Law and Policy report makes no mention of the ballot initiative, but details "prioritized pathways" to guide future policy options for public participation, said LuAnne Kozma of CBFM.

"With the industry steering the UM researcher's work, it is inherently a 'frackademia' study," she said.

University of Michigan reports examine fracking issues

(Continued from Page 1)

According to the researchers, the public tends to view the word "fracking" as the entirety of the natural gas development process, from leasing and permitting to drilling and well completion, to transporting and storing wastewater and chemicals. Industry and regulatory agencies hold a much narrower definition that is limited to the process of injecting hydraulic fracturing fluids into a well, they said.

These differences in perceived meaning can lead to miscommunications that ultimately increase mistrust among stakeholders.

What is fracking?

In fracking, water, sand and chemicals (in a mix known as hydraulic fracturing fluid) are injected under high pressure deep underground to crack sedimentary rocks—such as shale—and free trapped natural gas or oil. Though the process has been used for more than a half-century, recent technical advances have helped unlock vast stores of previously inaccessible natural gas and oil, resulting in a boom in some parts of the United States.

Chief among the technical advances, according to University of Michigan researchers, are directional drilling and high-volume hydraulic fracturing, which are often used together. In directional drilling, the well operator bores vertically down to the rock formation, then follows the formation horizontally.

High-volume fracking—the focus of much recent attention and public concern—is defined by the State of Michigan as a well that uses more than 100,000 gallons of hydraulic fracturing fluid, the researchers said. By comparison, an Olympic-sized swimming pool holds about 660,000 gallons

of water, they said.

Since the 1940s, an estimated 12,000 gas and oil wells have been drilled in Michigan using hydraulic fracturing, according to the study, without any reported contamination issues. Most of those wells have been relatively shallow vertical wells that each used about 50,000 gallons of water.

Recently, however, a relatively small number of deep, directionally drilled, high-volume, hydraulically fractured wells have reportedly been completed in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula. Those wells sometimes use several million gallons of water and one required more than 20 million gallons.

Since 2010, 19 such wells are known to have been completed in the state.

Water concerns

Though groundwater contamination is often cited as a top concern, surface contamination from spills and improper disposal of waste fluids likely carries the greatest risk for water quality impacts, the reports conclude, due to proximity to potable water.

When a well is fracked, the fluid is injected into rock formations to create cracks and to prop them open. Of the total volume of hydraulic fracturing fluids injected into a well, amounts varying from 10 percent to 70 percent may return to the surface as "flowback water" after the pressure is reduced and gas or oil begin to flow toward the wellhead.

In Michigan, the average amount of flowback water returning to the surface is about 37 percent of that injected.

The flowback water is highly saline and can contain elevated levels of heavy metals and natu-

rally occurring radioactive elements in addition to methane and the original chemical additives in the fracturing fluids. Common hydraulic fracturing fluid additives include ethylene glycol, hydrochloric acid, isopropyl alcohol, methanol and ammonium persulfate.

All flowback in the state is disposed of by deep-well injection and it is not allowed to sit in open pits, so the risk of this type of contamination is lower than in other states without such disposal opportunities and regulations.

Michigan's interconnected aquatic ecosystems (streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands) and the groundwater aquifers to which

they are linked are of particular concern for contamination. The connectivity between surface and groundwater bodies "can lead to impacts both near and far from drilling sites, researchers said.

The probability of significant methane leakage associated with deep-shale drilling involving hydraulic fracturing in Michigan "is quite low, provided that best practices are adhered to," they concluded.

More data needed

The greatest challenge to understanding the potential public health risks of hydraulic fracturing in Michigan is the lack of state-specific data, researchers

said. While thousands of hydraulically fractured wells have been drilled in Michigan, the potential public health risks related to these facilities have been poorly documented. There needs to be much greater understanding of which chemicals are being used in every well, with information related to volumes, amounts, disposal plans, etc. made available.

The study—expected to cost at least \$600,000—is being funded by UM. State regulators, oil and gas industry representatives, staffers from environmental nonprofits and peer reviewers provided input to the technical reports, and more than 100 public comments were considered.



Don't Fence Us In

Many opponents of hydraulic fracturing in Michigan are feeling fenced in by seemingly unstoppable corporate and government forces that approve of the controversial practice. A lawsuit brought by citizens in Barry County against the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) over oil and gas lease sales, for example, was recently dismissed by a local circuit court judge. Meanwhile, other proponents of banning the practice have experienced similar setbacks. But the battle continues. A glance at a recent map of Barry County leases on both private and public lands is somewhat startling, due to the large number of parcels targeted for exploration—including those in the Barry State Game Area and the Yankee Springs Recreation Area. The map, which isn't shown here because it would not have reproduced well in the black-and-white print version of this newspaper, is being compiled and updated by Michigan Land Air Water Defense (MLAWD), the nonprofit group that has been challenging the DNR leases. "Regardless of what happens, we're still in the fight," said MLAWD President Steve Loshier.

Opinion

Quote Box

"A limit on the automobile population of the United States would be the best news for our cities. The end of automania would save open spaces, encourage wiser land use and contribute greatly to ending suburban sprawl."

—Stuart Udall

Healthy transportation planning

A number of wonderful bicycle and walking paths are springing up in various locations around the north country. For those healthy enough to engage in such activities, these paths are welcome additions to our transportation network.

But most of them seem to be targeted toward recreational use—summer strolls, campground connections, fall color tours and the like—rather than general transportation needs. That's all well and good, but we'd like to see a more concentrated effort to build such thoroughfares to destinations where people need to go on a daily basis.

That way, we could more easily pedal or walk from home to our jobs, the grocery store, doctor's office, or local retail outlets—without traveling along dangerous roadways shared with speeding cars and trucks that are too often operated by drivers who are texting, talking on cell phones, or engaged in numerous other distracting and unsafe practices.

Whenever new roads are built, or old ones refurbished, wouldn't it be a simple matter to also include bicycle and pedestrian pathways separated from the traffic lanes? Maybe road crews could even construct new right-of-ways dedicated solely to foot-powered traffic and connect them to the favored destinations of average working Americans.

Such accommodations would allow short- and medium-distance transportation that doesn't burn fossil fuels and provides health benefits to those who choose to travel this way. Some users would probably even want to go longer distances when time allows—not just to the beach, or through a local park, but to places they need to visit during normal daily activities.

We don't know about you, but this would make us much more inclined to dust off our bicycles, or take a walk into town to pick up a few things from the store.

Limiting power plant emissions

Now that the Obama administration is moving ahead with the first federal carbon limits on the nation's power companies, we're wondering what "unintended consequences" this action might have for consumers.

While limiting industrial emissions always seems like a good idea—even if one doesn't fully subscribe to the theory of man-made climate change—it's unclear how willing people are to pay more for their electricity.

In a move to bypass the legislative process via executive action, the president authorized the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to limit new gas-fired power plants to 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions per megawatt hour and new coal plants to 1,100 pounds of carbon dioxide, administration officials said. The average advanced coal plant is currently emitting about 1,800 pounds of carbon dioxide per megawatt hour, according to industry estimates.

While environmental groups see the new rules as an important step in targeting the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the country, opponents fear it could raise utility rates, inhibit the production of reliable energy and wipe out jobs—particularly in coal-dependent states.

Intense lobbying on both sides is expected in the coming months, as well as possible court challenges, before the new rules are supposed to be finalized in the fall of 2014.

We applaud efforts to develop more sustainable energy supplies, but remain uncomfortable with end-runs around Congress and the absence of any comprehensive national energy policy that considers economic realities along with the environment.

We'd prefer to see an open civic debate about these issues—one aimed at revealing all pertinent facts and finding the best, most affordable, solutions to our energy problems.

Not only are American citizens currently embroiled in huge financial struggles—brought on, in part, by short-sighted government policies and bureaucratic rule-making—but we're increasingly double-minded about resource management and conservation.

We say that we want to reduce energy consumption and phase out the use of fossil fuels, while at the same time embracing technological and lifestyle choices that only increase our energy dependence. We have, for example, a seemingly insatiable appetite for electronic appliances, games and gadgets, while simultaneously ignoring the energy resources needed to power them.

It's unclear whether there are even enough green energy options available to us to meet these—and other—demands.

Isn't it time we get serious about addressing these problems over the long-term and move beyond the temporary stop-gap measures that never quite seem to get the job done?

Rising oil prices vs. freedom of the open road

Among the most heartbreaking aspects of escalating energy costs—for me, at least—are the negative impacts that higher gasoline prices have on the average person's ability to travel.

This is pretty much a uniquely American worry, I know, and one that presents quite a conundrum for the conservationist in me.

On one hand, I want to cut pollution and save fossil fuels. On the other, there is nothing that brings me greater joy and experiential learning than climbing behind the wheel of a motor vehicle and wandering down America's back roads. I suppose I could do this on foot, or bicycle, but it wouldn't be the same.

Maybe I'm just spoiled by the fleeting opportunities of the past and need to plan less-distant travel in the future. But that's not something I can easily accept. It seems too much like an assault on the personal liberty to which I have grown accustomed.

As Texas songwriter Billy Joe Shaver so aptly declared: "Movin' is the closest thing to being free."

Right or wrong, this has been one of the guiding philosophies in my own life, and something ingrained in the America psyche since the nation's founding and westward movement of the first European settlers. Gasoline-powered cars and trucks have routinely taken me places I would never have gone and shown me things I would never have seen in any other way.

Ah, sweet freedom.

My parents first introduced me to the American road during the summer of 1963 with a journey down Route 66 to Arizona. From there we drove north to Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Tetons, then back to Michigan—all in a tiny turquoise-colored Volkswagen beetle with no air conditioning.

Ever since that trip, the wonders of two-lane blacktop and the fascinating discoveries one can make along the road have captured my imagination like sticky fly paper.

It was, of course, a time when gasoline sold for 20 to 30 cents per gallon and you could drive all the way across the country for not much more than it costs now for a single fill-up. In fact, for much of my adult life—until fairly recently—road trips remained af-

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



fordable vacation alternatives.

So down the road I went. From the dense forests of the Great Lakes region to the Saguaro National Monument in Arizona ... from Big Sur on the rugged California coast to picturesque Bar Harbor in Maine ... from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia to Banff and Jasper National Parks in the Canadian Rockies ... from Mt. Ranier in Washington State to the Everglades in the Seminole country of southern Florida ... across the mighty Mississippi, Missouri and Columbia rivers ... from New York City to Los Angeles and Chicago to New Orleans ... and from the border towns of Texas and Mexico to the quiet farm communities of Indiana and Ohio.

And, sorry to say, I've loved every gas-guzzling minute of it.

At first, I traveled in an old Plymouth Valiant with a slant-six engine. Then it was a 1967 Rambler Rebel with soft and comfortable reclining seats. Later, I graduated to a series of Ford pickup trucks and Econoline vans, which made it possible to sleep undisturbed in roadside rest areas and assorted parking lots, thus avoiding the costs of hotels and motels.

Those were the glory days of cheap travel and nonstop adventure, which fed my writer's muse like nothing else before or since.

But now such travel has become a major—and often unaffordable—investment for a penny-pinching adventurer who remembers much less painful visits to the gas pump.

Jet-setting elites still have affordable options and seem to be traveling as much as ever. But what about the common man? Have we forever lost a treasured piece of liberty we once took for granted? Will we again see a time when we can take to the highway without breaking the bank?

Maybe not, but I remain hopeful. There are still a lot of things I want to see in this great land—things I'm sure to miss if I'm forced by economics, resource concerns, or government bureaucrats to stay at home.

It's interesting to note that when cars were first introduced into American cities in significant numbers, they were seen as the solution to an urban pollution problem—horses. During the latter part of the 19th Century, horses in New York City alone dropped an estimated 800,000 to 1.3 million pounds of manure every day—much of it onto the city streets, according to information gleaned from The Henry Ford Museum's popular exhibit, "The Automobile in American Life."

Add to that the urine and remains of animals that died from disease or exhaustion and were often left where they fell, and the nation's cities were dirty, foul-smelling and fly-ridden places, particularly in hot weather.

It's no small wonder many urban residents hailed the coming of "horseless carriages."

But with today's exponential population growth, and millions more cars and trucks on the world's roadways, we're once again forced to look for innovative transportation solutions.

I just hope whatever we come up with will include energy efficient personal vehicles that are affordable to purchase and operate—and useful for long-distance travel, camping, trailer hauling, and all those other traditional automotive activities that modern lightweight and electric-powered cracker boxes so far haven't been able to handle.

Of course, that will do little to address other automobile-related troubles such as congestion, urban sprawl, and accidental injury or death.

To borrow another phrase from Billy Joe Shaver, unfettered travel on the nation's back roads and interstate highways may be a "low-down freedom" in light of dwindling resources, corporate greed and modern environmental politics, but it's freedom nonetheless.

It would be unfortunate—at least for those of us who love the road and all it represents—to see such opportunities to roam fade away like yesterday's horse and buggy.

It's all a matter of perspective

One day we received this anonymous note in the mail:

"We are not interested in your reprints of Fox News and Tea Party positions in edition-after-edition. *The North Woods Call* is a lost cause. Shep would be so disappointed. We will not be renewing our subscription."

On the same day, we got two other notes—both signed.

"Keep up the good work," said one. "Truly enjoy every issue."

"Well done," said the other. "Shep would be happy."

Apparently, it's all a matter of perspective.

Since we seldom watch Fox News and aren't involved in any Tea Party activities, it is difficult to know which of our opinions parallel theirs. We are governed by our own observations, education and life experiences.

But none of that really matters. The important thing is to encourage a free and open discussion in the marketplace of ideas. To that end, this newspaper is obligated to call things as it sees them and we welcome the comments of readers who wish to do likewise.

Let's not forget, though, that our nation grew from principles of limited government, personal liberty and the constitutional rule of law. Those ideals have served us well. Why any citizen wouldn't cherish and defend these things is a mystery to us.

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Outdoor Rhythms

By Doug Freeman



The environmental quotient

We live in an era when people of a certain political persuasion are rejecting the idea of governmental authority.

Laws and regulations are too restrictive, they say, and constitute an unwarranted intrusion upon their personal independence. Apparently, they want functional government to fade away, particularly at the federal level.

Yeah. That would be great—especially with regard to our environment.

For instance, the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore could be sold to wealthy private interests, thus eliminating the need for those pesky park rangers and nerdy naturalists. Get 'em off the public payroll and save a ton of money.

Multi-million dollar homes and exclusive gated communities are better. They must be, judging by the number of them that have already sprouted in Michigan's fabled "Up North" country.

And why the need for state and national forests? They're costly to protect and administer. Privatize those acres and let the marketplace determine the fate of trees and trout streams, bobcats and bears. After all, we humans are dominant on this planet, aren't we? We'll make all the right decisions as individuals—no need for some bureaucrat to boss us around.

Enough sarcasm. Most readers of *The North Woods Call* know that the "highest and best" use of land and resources doesn't necessarily revolve around making profits. Thankfully, most of us also recognize the intensely rapacious nature of our own species, hence the need for rein-in in certain areas of human activity.

The two "ride-alongs" I did this year with conservation officers were instructive. More darn government employees, some might say. But without these dedicated, gutsy men and women constantly patrolling our wild areas (sometimes on their own time, without pay), I doubt we'd have much in the way of a safe, undamaged outdoors.

Responsible citizens can play a huge role as well. Giving the DNR's law enforcement branch a "heads-up" on environmental violations is critical, and is much appreciated by the officers.

Being a little less greedy ourselves when we're harvesting resources has a positive impact. To me, taking home a brace of grouse from a hunting trip has always been preferable to killing a legal limit of birds. The same applies to fishing. I've gone to barbless hooks and release any fish I don't care to clean or eat that day. The wild creatures of Michigan do not owe me a living.

To the contrary, I buy licenses I may not use and donate to the Nature Conservancy. Most of the *Call's* readers probably do that much and more. We realize that everyone's quality of life will diminish without adequate habitat and protection for wildlife.

We're not prophets or saints. We're just ordinary folks who want our society to avoid the fate of so many others throughout history—those that used (and frequently squandered) their natural resources without forethought or planning.

In an increasingly urban world, we can still see the importance of maintaining—and even expanding—natural areas. Not building on that back lot. Planting a tree. Voting for a candidate with strong leanings on the side of conservation. Working in increments. Valuing the aesthetics of a park. It all helps.

In the end, given equal amounts of damage, I believe I'd rather be mauled by a bear than run over by a speeding BMW.



Temporarily Closed

Have citizens been railroaded by the closure of federal monuments and nature preserves during the most recent government shutdown? Although tax revenues don't stop rolling into federal coffers during such times and about 83 percent of the government has reportedly continued to operate, there seemed to be a concentrated effort by those in charge to inconvenience the public as much as possible. The Seney National Wildlife Refuge and the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge were among those in Michigan impacted by the political temper tantrum, as were the open-air World War II and Vietnam memorials in Washington, D.C., and unstaffed highway pull-offs in South Dakota where motorists could view Mt. Rushmore. Go figure.

Enjoying The Call

Mike:

Congratulations on a wonderfully revitalized *North Woods Call* celebrating its first anniversary under your guidance.

It's a much-needed resource and I look forward to receiving each issue.

Many thanks.

Linda Knibbs
Chicago, Illinois

Educating about outdoor heritage

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) has announced its support for a new bill aimed at educating the public about Michigan's outdoor heritage.

The bill, recently introduced by Rep. Jon Bumstead (R-Newaygo), would create a sportsmen's council to oversee a statewide education campaign aimed at teaching the public about the importance of hunting, fishing and trapping to wildlife management, the economy and Michigan's outdoor future.

The bill is based on a concept used in Colorado, where during the early 1990s sportsmen and women saw the loss of trapping and hunting with bait in successive elections at the ballot box. Colorado sportsmen came together to create a funding mechanism and advisory council aimed at educating the public about the benefits of these activities.

Colorado's "Hug a Hunter" and "Hug an Angler" campaigns grew from this effort and were very successful. The campaigns focused on the shared interests of sportsmen and non-sportsmen. They urged all citizens to take pride in the state's natural beauty and to recognize that much of the conservation funding comes from hunting and fishing license fees.

After the campaign began, seven of 10 people polled said they'd vote against restrictions on hunting, eight of 10 said they'd vote against restrictions on fishing and 30 percent said they had become more supportive of sportsmen.

Part of the effort included adding a \$1 surcharge to each base hunting and fishing license purchased, which go into a fund to support the public education efforts.

Similarly, Rep. Bumstead's bill would reportedly establish an independent group called the Wildlife Council that would be tasked with administering the \$1 surcharge fund and hiring a marketing firm to research and develop the media-driven public education campaign.

The council would consist of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources director, four individuals who have regularly purchased hunting or fishing licenses, and select others representing a local hunting/fishing business, agricultural producers and rural areas where economies are substantially impacted by hunting and fishing. There would also be someone with a media or marketing background.

—MUCC report

The Wild Nearby

By Tom Springer



All the little live things:

A farm where nature has its say

The copperbelly water snakes and smallmouth salamanders can't speak their names. Neither can the hay-scented ferns or three-bird orchids.

But on Bonamego Farm, they don't have to. They've got an advocate who's as passionate in their defense as any lawyer will ever be.

"For some people, everything comes down to dollars and cents," said Louis Bonamego, who farms (and philosophizes) in Van Buren County's Lawrence Township. "Well, there's much more beyond yourself to care about. That's why I'm doing this. It's all the things that can't talk that I want to protect."

By "this," Bonamego means a conservation easement with the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC) that covers 170 of his farm's 360-acres. The legal agreement with SWMLC, a local land trust, will protect the woods and wetlands and cropland from development, even when the property changes hands.

On a recent afternoon, I met there with Geoff Cripe, SWMLC's land protection specialist, and Kevin Haight, a SWMLC board member. I'd tagged along to write an article for their newsletter. I'd been feeling cooped up lately and this seemed like the ideal way to escape the ankle-tethers of office minutia.

We were especially eager to see the farm's 48-acre wetland. It ranks in the top five percent of the 10,000 parcels in the Paw Paw River and Black River watersheds in terms of biodiversity. Technically, it's an "inundated shrub swamp." In laymen's terms it's a buggy, boggy morass where few rational humans ever tread. Except for Haight and Cripe, who paddled it last spring and marveled at the wealth of plant and animal life.

Alas, there wasn't enough water there now to float a kayak, much less a canoe.

"That's a shame," Cripe said. "Everything's out there: shorebirds, waterfowl, scarlet tanagers, warblers, even long-tailed weasels."

So much for the exploring the wild, beating heart of the property. A bit deflated, we decided to take a driving tour until Bonamego got back home from a produce delivery in Lawrence. It was slow, bumpy going. With a bulky canoe strapped on top, Haight's humble Honda sedan had about as much ground clearance as a push lawn mower.

But a leisurely pace suits the place, which has a 19th century pastoral look about it. Bonamego limits his use of pesticides and herbicides (he prefers biological controls such as rotten-egg spray to keep deer at bay). Nor does he prune his apple trees and grape vines as severely as big commercial growers do. This gives his orchard the kind of voluptuous appeal that Robert Frost once wrote dewy poems about.

When we finally reached Bonamego's farmhouse, he was waiting in the driveway. I'd pictured him as a wispy, ascetic nature lover—but he was none of that. He was thick of neck, shoulder, thigh and forearm. Even at age 66, there were traces of the young man who'd played center on the Western Michigan University (WMU) football team. In conversation, he spoke quickly, laughed often, and adroitly covered a breadth of topics both practical and profound.

"My parents were both born in Italy and when they bought this farm in the 1940s it was all sassafras and blow sand," he recalls. "People said we couldn't make a living off it, but here I am."

While at WMU he earned a bachelor's degree in education—but he never taught school full-time. The farm and its untamed environs have been the only vocation he's ever wanted. He bought it from his father in the 1970s and has since expanded it from 60 to 350 acres. He's nurtured it into the township's most diversified farm with dozens of varieties of apples, grapes, peaches, pears, plums and vegetables.

Even so, not until his early 50s did Bonamego discover all the unknown treasures in his midst. That's when Tom and Nancy Small of Kalamazoo, both botanists and authors, asked to take a look around his farm.

"I'd already found 25 or 30 species of plants and wildflowers and thought may they'd find a few more. It turns out that they found 360! It made me feel like I'd been wasting my whole life, because I'd been walking right by this stuff all that time."

All the little live things are safer now, thanks to Bonamego's conservation ethic. Yet our talk also proved that you don't always need a trail, truck, or canoe to find the wild heart of a beautiful place. It can beat just as lively in the man or woman who calls it home.

"People say, 'Why don't you sell this farm and travel around the world?' I say 'Why? There's so much here at arm's length that I haven't seen. Besides if I were only satisfied by material things, I could live a thousand years and never have enough. I want to die here happy with what I've got—not unhappy because I don't have more.'"

Hey, who dumped soap in the water?

Ever notice "soapy" foam in Michigan lakes this time of year?

It's usually not manmade soap, according to the Gaylord-based Huron Pines organization, although chemically very similar. It is made up of fatty acids that build up as plants and animals decom-

pose in the water. The acids create short-term bubbles that are harmless to humans and animals.

But if you see foam that hangs around for a long time, or appears to have artificial colors, or scents, you should report it the Department of Environmental Quality.



Good boots are essential for this Taylor resident, who recently trekked more than 900 miles across Michigan from Belle Isle to Ironwood.

A foot-powered adventure

Chris Hillier admits he wasn't watching television that November day in 2012 when Gov. Rick Snyder called for a hiking trail across Michigan that would take folks from Belle Isle to Ironwood.

But as soon as Hillier heard about it, he was all about making the hike.

"I said, 'I'll be the first,'" the 45-year-old Taylor resident remembered. "In the long-distance hiking community, that's something."

Hillier went right into action, mapped out a route—which included a fair stretch of state where there are no designated trails—and lined up supporters to help him re-supply along the way. And on April 26, 2013, Hillier left Belle Isle, took a right on Jefferson, a left on Connor, and was on his way to the westernmost edge of the Upper Peninsula.

By the end of the first day, Hillier had covered 24 miles and made it into Macomb County. From there, he picked his way along roadways, railroad tracks, or whatever route he could find until he made Midland, where he knew he had a 230-stretch of well-maintained trail that would take him to Mackinaw City.

Long story short? Eleven weeks and 924 miles after he started, Hillier trekked into Ironwood on July 18, the first person to take the unofficial Belle Isle-to-Ironwood Trail.

"I asked around," Hillier said. "Nobody's done it."

On his best day, Hillier covered 27 miles. He averaged 12 to 15 miles while hiking about 12 hours a day.



Chris Hillier

—Michigan DNR photos

Hillier said he got a lot of weird looks and plenty of questions from passers-by as he made his way across the state. "But everybody was cool," he said, especially the folks he met on his last leg of the journey as he pulled into Ironwood.

"The reception I got was over the top," he said. "The mayor, the Chamber of Commerce and a bunch of people came to the edge of town and gave me a police escort into town. They really rolled out the red carpet. They've worked very hard on the trail system there and they want hikers and bikers to come there to enjoy it."

Although the official Belle Isle-to-Ironwood Trail has yet to be completed, adventurers who like to hike, bike or otherwise explore the state by trail have more options in Michigan than anywhere else in the Midwest—thanks, in part, to the more than \$100 million the Natural Resources Trust Fund has invested in them over the years.

—Michigan DNR report

Autumn in Michigan: A time for nutting

Even though we've been canning and freezing all summer, my wife gets into what she calls her "squirrel" mode when days shorten and get cooler.

She wants to have a well-stocked "larder" for the winter.

Fall is the time to gather those wild items to be enjoyed during the winter and Michigan offers a great variety of nut fruits. Generally about eight to ten native nuts are available and some are mighty tasty.

The most prolific, both for humans and wildlife, are the oaks. More acorns are grown each year than yielded by all the other nut trees combined. It is an important food for deer, turkey, squirrels, chipmunks and a variety of rodents.

Acorns were somewhat a staple food for the Native Americans, but because of the tannins in them, we don't eat them as often today. White oak acorns are more mild and, if washed in water a few times until the water is no longer brown, they are quite edible. The white oak acorn has a slight nutty flavor when roasted.

Two nuts that are quite popular, but can be a pain to get the nutmeats, are the black walnut and butternut. Black walnut trees are easy to identify with the large green tennis ball type seeds. They are common in many forests and are heavy producers. After collected from the ground, the green husks become black and have to be removed to reach the hard inner shell. Many trappers save some of the husks in which to boil traps to give them a brown color and a bit of an oil coating.

Unlike the english walnut, the shell inside a black walnut is quite hard and you have to use some hard object, such as a hammer, to break the shell open. Since they shatter, you may want to place the nuts in a box when you break them to keep the nutmeats from scattering everywhere.

Harvesting black walnuts can also be profitable. Each year various stations are set up to collect walnuts. They usually pay \$8 or more for a bushel of shelled walnuts, depending on the market. Most often there is a shelling machine at the collection station.

The butternut—sometimes called the white walnut—resembles the black walnut. The trees are similar, but the fruit of the butternut is elongated or elliptical,

The Natural World

By Richard Schinkel



like a long egg. You will need to go through the same husking process as the black walnut, but the shell is easier to break open. Both types of wood are highly desired, with black walnut being more abundant.

As Tom Springer may point out in his book, "Looking for Hickories," collecting hickories in the fall is fun. Eating hickory meats can also be fun, but they can be frustrating, because some of the hickory species have very bitter fruit. The two that are the best are easy to identify, those being the shagbark and shellbark hickory. Both have distinctive bark with long loose strips that appear as if they could fall off. Often they can be identified by the pile of loose bark at the base of the tree.

Although the hickory fruit has an outer shell similar to the walnut, it splits off easily in four parts as the nut gets ripe. The hard inner shell is easily cracked open with a hammer, or some type of nut cracker, to give delightful sweet meats used in cookies etc.

Other than humans and squirrels, I'm not aware of any other animal that may forage on the hickory nut, although the vegetation is a food plant to a number of butterfly larva.

The beech tree is easily recognized with its grey elephant-like trunk. Often found near habitations, it gets a disease we naturalists call "initials disease," because it is an easy tree to carve initials into. The carving will remain as long as the tree is alive. I have seen trees that were carved on a hundred years ago. Beech nuts are small and quickly eaten by numerous creatures. They have a thin shell and can easily be peeled open with a fingernail. The flesh is sweet and very nutritious, about 20 percent protein. They spoil quickly, however, so they must be dried or roasted within a day or two of harvest. It is an important food for wildlife, such as partridge, turkey, deer and squirrels.

One of my favorite nuts is the hazelnut or filbert. I remember eating them at Christmas with my family and finding them while deer hunting in the Upper Peninsula. Granted, they weren't as

large as the commercial ones, but notwithstanding size, looked the same. The hazelnut also has an outer shell while growing and displays "two wings" from the bottom, hence the name winged hazelnut. You can wait until the nuts fall on the ground, but risk losing them to other hungry creatures. When the bush loses its leaves, the nuts are nearly ripe. They will begin to turn brown and then can be picked. Use a nut-cracker to crack them open.

The chances of finding an American chestnut in Michigan today is slim. Most of these trees were wiped out with the chestnut blight, but some have survived. I have found a few in central Michigan and even harvested some nuts. The husks of the fruit are extremely spiny and you should wait until the husk begins to open on its own. Then, with heavy gloves, finish prying it open and take out the treasured fruits. Today, most of our commercial chestnuts are of one or more Chinese varieties that are able to survive our climate. A few native growers offer Native American chestnut seedlings from seeds harvested from wild Michigan trees.

The last nut we are going to discuss is the buckeye, or Ohio buckeye. Although edible, it is sometimes confused with a chestnut, because of the similar leaves and fruit. It is high in tannins and, much like some oaks, not very desirable. Native Americans did roast them and grind them in a meal called "hetuck." The name came from a pioneer that impressed the Indians, who called him "Hetuck," meaning eye of a buck deer, or Big Buckeye, and this then became the nickname for the people of Ohio. Today, the most famous outcome is the buckeye candy made to resemble the buckeye nut, dipping a peanut butter fudge ball in chocolate, leaving a peanut butter eye exposed.

Nutting is becoming as popular as mushrooming, shed hunting and just hiking. In addition, you come home with a treasure. Nutmeats make a great personal Christmas gift.

Dam removal plan sparks local debate

It seems that environmental decisions are never easy.

While removal of dams on the Boardman River in Grand Traverse County continues apace, not all Michigan communities want to lose such defunct old structures in favor of free-flowing rivers.

Several hundred residents of Ceresco on the Kalamazoo River in southern Michigan's Calhoun County, for example, are opposing a plan by Enbridge Energy to remove the local dam as part of the company's efforts to clean up a July 2010 oil spill. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is on board with Enbridge, having encouraged removal since the late 1980s.

It will be better for the river if the dam is removed, proponents say. Among other things, it will increase recreational opportunities, improve wildlife habitat and fisheries, and help Enbridge complete its cleanup.

But local residents opposing the plan say that the 174-year-old landmark is part of their history and is

a centerpiece of the community. If forms a 75-acre lake—actually an impoundment that merely deepens and widens the river—which is surrounded by a handful of homes, farms and woodlands. The dam was built just a year after the settlement was formed.

It was previously owned by Ceresco Power and Light, but in late September was purchased by Enbridge for demolition. The crumbling and rusted structure has not been used to generate electricity since 1953, when another utility—now known as Consumers Energy—retired and sold it.

It may not look like much to the casual observer, according to opponents of the demolition, but the dam represents a history worth preserving that gives the tiny community a special identity.

Others, however, find comfort in knowing that the dam will be replaced by a healthier river. The river itself has a much longer history that existed before the dam was built, they say, and the dam removal project will help restore that natural heritage.

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Conservation Officer Logs (9/3/13 through 9/16/13)

Foggy fire, fighting canoeists, "Hardy-gras," falling owl & a pregnant vagrant

DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)

CO Jason Wicklund continued his investigation into the illegal killing of seven turkeys by a motor vehicle. CO Trey Luce used the information provided by a witness to locate the suspect, who admitted to striking the turkeys. A warrant request was sent to the Iron County Prosecutor's office for review.

COs Jason Wicklund and Dave Painter were checking bear traps in the City of Iron River when CO Wicklund received a call about a possible drug deal a few blocks from their location. The COs responded and located two individuals who were positively identified by the complainant. A check of the individuals produced a stolen handgun as well as marijuana. Both individuals had extensive felony records, and one of the individuals had a felony warrant for his arrest from Wisconsin for a parole violation. Both subjects were lodged in the Iron County jail.

CO Brian Bacon set out a grouse decoy on the opening day of small game season. The decoy was out for less than five minutes when a vehicle stopped and the occupant attempted to shoot the decoy from the vehicle, but was stopped before firing. An investigation revealed the shooter didn't have a hunting license, had no hunter orange, and had a suspended driver's license.

CO Brian Bacon contacted a subject who was returning to a vehicle with an empty white corn bag. Investigation revealed the subject just baited a deer stand and admitted he was getting a head start. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)

CO Mike Hammill received a report of several dead skunks in live traps near a residence. Upon investigating, CO Hammill found there were numerous deceased animals in live traps set around a residence. CO Hammill discovered that the owner of the property lives in Illinois and set the traps nearly three weeks ago. Upon contacting the landowner, CO Hammill pointed out the cruel and inhumane way to get rid of nuisance animals and ticketed the subject for the violation.

CO Jeff Panich was patrolling early in the morning in dense fog when he observed a large amount of black smoke visible near a residence. The CO pulled into the driveway and observed a man with a tractor frantically pushing piles of burning lumber away from nearby trees. Upon contact, the subject stated he was burning down an old garage behind his house. The owner then stated to the CO he started the fire early in the morning and in the fog in hopes that no one would catch him burning the building. The CO assisted in controlling the dying fire and notified dispatch. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mike Evink was working with a local U.S. Forest Service (USFS) law enforcement officer when they came upon a vehicle

with a marijuana pipe on the seat. They were able to track down the owner of the vehicle, who advised he had a medical marijuana card, but didn't have it on him at that time. The officers followed the subject back to his residence where he did produce the medical marijuana card. While at the residence, the officers observed what appeared to be a short-barreled shotgun on a window sill. After leaving the residence, they contacted the local drug enforcement team and found that the subject had a felony record. The drug team then investigated and found close to twenty other firearms at the residence.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)

CO Eric Botorff checked several anglers, inquiring into their success. The subjects stated they hadn't caught a thing—until the CO looked into their bucket and found a six-inch largemouth bass. Their excuse was that they were only keeping it for their aquarium. It prevented a ticket being issued for possession of an undersized bass, and the fish being returned to the water.

CO Steve Speigl, while checking Jordan River access sites, pulled into a fight in progress which resulted from a disagreement between canoeists. After the scene settled down, both parties decided they did not want to press charges. CO Speigl met with a local deputy a few miles away after leaving the scene to drop off paperwork when both officers were called back to the same access for another fight in progress. One of the combatants returned to the access site and re-kindled the fight, then fled the scene. After a short investigation, all parties were located and interviewed. The investigation was turned over to the deputy for prosecution.

CO Jon Skilba and Sgt. Joe Molnar were working the fall elk hunt and, while checking a kill site, located a second blood trail. The COs were able to follow the trail and located a second dead elk. The COs investigated the scene and requested the hunter and guide return to the scene. After a short investigation the guide admitted to shooting the elk for the hunter who did not feel comfortable doing so himself. Charges are being sought with the prosecutor's office.

DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)

CO Brian Brosky reported that two subjects he had arrested and lodged for snagging salmon and littering by cutting their lines—after being instructed not to do so—were convicted and ordered to pay fines and costs totaling over \$1,300.

COs from three districts assisted numerous other law enforcement personnel with a large marine event on the backwaters of the Muskegon River in Newaygo County. Estimates obtained from aerial photos placed the rafted boats at around 700. The event, known as the "Hardy-Gras Hot Boat Weekend," has steadily increased in attendance and associated alcohol-influenced problems.



The team of COs operated off five Great Lakes patrol boats issued over 30 tickets for a wide variety of marine safety violations.

DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)

CO Matt Liestenz served a search warrant at a residence as part of an investigation of a subject taking and possessing protected migratory bird species. With the assistance of COs Mike Hearn, John Huspen, Chris Bowen, and Bobbi Lively, as well as the Traverse City Narcotics Team (TNT), two bobcats, one river otter, and one barred owl were seized from the residence. In addition, TNT seized approximately five pounds of marijuana from the residence. Charges are pending.

CO Matt Liestenz solved an ongoing timber theft complaint in Missaukee County. After a lot of legwork, surveillance, and multiple interviews, two subjects are being charged with multiple violations, including cutting live standing trees on state land and selling wood cut on state land for commercial purposes.

DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)

CO Joshua Wright was checking a pair of goose hunters when one of the hunters advised him that this was his first time out goose hunting and that he was not hunting, but just calling for his friend. CO Wright asked him if it was the first time he was goose hunting, how did he learn to blow a goose call? The hunter had a stumped look on his face. CO Wright advised him that before he made contact with them, he observed two shotguns. The non-hunter admitted that he was hunting and that they had hidden the gun in a camper when they saw the CO. The hunter not only was hunting without a license, but was also drinking. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Jeremy Payne located an illegal camp on state land in Isabella County. The family, including a six-year-old, was homeless and living in a pop-up camper, and had no camp card. The CO advised them of their violation and contacted the Department of Human Services.

Sgt. Ron Kimmerly took a RAP complaint of a suspect shooting a great horned owl. The complaint was generated from Facebook, where the suspect posted, "the strangest thing just happened. An owl just flew over my chicken coop and just fell out of the sky dead. I also noticed something else strange. It had a hole in its neck." The sergeant

contacted the suspect, who admitted to shooting the owl. A ticket for shooting the owl was issued.

DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)

CO Patrick McManus patrolled a closed section of Swan Creek in Allegan County in response to a report received of a subject taking fish illegally with a hatchet. As luck would have it, CO McManus located a subject matching the description along the closed stream with a spear in his possession the next day. Contact was made and a confession was obtained on the previous day's activity and enforcement action was taken for the illegal gear.

CO Mike Mshar responded to a safety zone complaint received of subjects hunting waterfowl too close to a residence and horse barn. Contact was made with two hunters who claimed they were outside of the required 150 yard safety zone. CO Mshar measured their distance, and found them to be within the safety zone. The hunters didn't believe CO Mshar was correct and so were allowed to measure it themselves with their equipment, which showed the same illegal distance. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)

CO Kyle Bader was working in Branch County, but monitoring Hillsdale dispatch, when he heard a state police trooper get dispatched to a goose hunting complaint in Hillsdale County. CO Bader responded with the trooper and the two located the venue, but no subjects. The trooper went off duty and CO Bader continued digging, eventually locating the subject's residence. Upon contact with the subject, it was determined that he had shot four geese without a state or federal stamp. When the CO asked to see the geese, the subject took him to the brush pile the geese were hidden under. The subject said he was planning on lying about taking any geese when the CO showed up, but he thought better of it. A ticket was issued.

CO Al Mendez was patrolling state land and found a 22-year-old female living in a tent. She told the CO that she was pregnant and homeless. She said she had no food and had been left there by her boyfriend. CO Mendez contacted a local church and took her

there for assistance. She was provided a place to stay, a balanced meal, and lots of assistance from the ladies of the church.

DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)

Patrolling the Pointe Mouillee SGA, CO Dan Walzak contacted two subjects, a male and a female, fishing from the dike of a refuge which was closed to traffic. The CO observed four lines in the water and asked the two anglers for their licenses. The male subject pulled his license from his wallet and advised CO Walzak that the female was his sister, that she did not have a license and that he had just asked her to fish with one of his lines. A look came over his sister's face that indicated that the last part was news to her. After explaining to the male subject that either he was fishing with too many lines or she was fishing without a license and would receive a ticket, the man admitted to using all four lines. Verbal warnings were given for being in the refuge and enforcement action was taken for the fishing violation. A check through LEIN revealed that the female subject also had two outstanding traffic warrants.

While on a marine patrol of Belleville Lake, COs Mike Drexler and Derek Miller observed several subjects fishing along the shore. As the COs approached to check the anglers, two subjects quickly packed up their fishing gear and started heading to their car. The COs were able to catch up to the pair, who stated they were going to try a new spot. One subject stated he did not have a fishing license while the other stated that his "old lady was supposed to buy it" for him. That subject had not purchased a fishing license since 2008. Both subjects received a ticket for fishing without a license.

While checking shore anglers in Marysville in the late evening hours, CO Ken Kovach contacted an angler who had three fish in his possession. The three fish included a rock bass, a freshwater drum, and an undersized smallmouth bass. When addressing the law violation, CO Kovach learned from dispatch that the subject also had a felony warrant for his arrest in Florida. Enforcement action was taken.

Marketplace of the North

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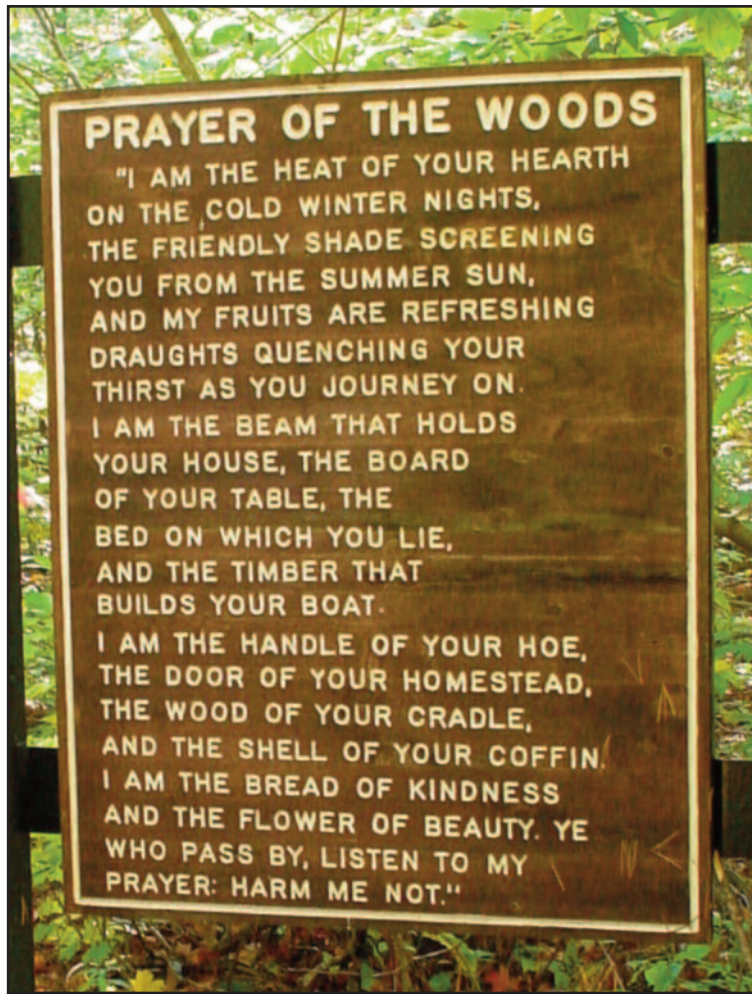
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Final Shot

Giving Trees

Hikers along the Lake Superior shoreline in Muskallonge Lake State Park may have seen this reminder of our indebtedness to Michigan's forests. In addition to all the things listed in this "Prayer of the Woods," the trees serve to break the strong winds that often seem to blow off Gitchee Gumee and across Muskallonge Lake. The 217-acre park is located northwest of Newberry in Luce County in an area well-known for its forests, lakes and streams. It is situated on the former site of a lumbering town (Deer Park) and an Indian encampment. The lake was a mill pond for millions of white pine logs that were brought to it by railroad lines prior to 1900 when the resource was depleted. There are about 70 lakes and five rivers within a 20-mile radius of the park, including the Big Two-Hearted River made famous in the short story by American novelist Ernest Hemingway.



A lesson in respect: Bald-faced hornets

By Doug Reeves
 Assistant Chief
 DNR Wildlife Division

When I think of bald-faced hornets the first word that comes to mind is "respect," and I do mean RESPECT.

For some people, the thought of bald-faced hornets conjures up fear. For those who have hyper-allergic reactions to stings, that fear is justified. For the rest of us, a healthy dose of respect is all that is required to live around these creatures.

They don't seek us out looking for ways to scare us, or make us miserable. In fact, they kill and eat a lot of insects that we find annoying. These are not pollinating bees; they are predators!

Each year during my outdoor excursions, I come across several bald-faced hornet nests. Some are way up in the tree canopy, while others are only a few feet off the ground.

Last week, I discovered one in a small Sargent's Crabapple shrub about five feet off the ground, located within about eight feet of a trail that I mow and walk frequently. I don't expect that walking past it at that distance will elicit a defensive response on the part of the insects, so I will continue to walk by it, but I do have some concern that going by with my mower might get their attention, especially if the clippings blow in the direction of the nest.

Since I have already been stung

once this year while mowing in another location, I think I will just let the vegetation on that trail grow for the rest of the year, at least for 20 feet, or so, on either side of that nest. I do have respect for those insects.

I am not saying that every bald-faced hornet nest should be left alone. Some are in unacceptable locations, where normal human traffic will cause a defensive response by the hornets sooner or later. Because some people do have very serious allergic reactions to stings, those nests need to be removed. But I do advocate leaving them alone if they are in an area where trouble is unlikely.

—Michigan DNR report

Get your fall kicks on M-119

The "Tunnel of Trees"—state road M-119 between Harbor Springs and Cross Village in Emmet County—is more than a beautiful scenic route favored by fall color enthusiasts.

It's an important part of northern Michigan's early history.

This section of the road has generally been preserved in its original layout from as far back as when it was an animal path, and later a trail used by indigenous Native Americans.

According to information published online recently by officials in Emmet County and shared by the folks at Little Traverse Conservancy, there are four significant spots along the route that are marked with unique signage—originally placed in the 1950s and updated in 2003.

The signs designate areas with Native American historical significance and that have historical geographical significance. Going from south to north the four signs are Devil's Elbow; Middle Village; Old Area of Council Tree; and L'Arbre Croche.

Devil's Elbow refers to one of the many turns along the route that is particularly sharp. Local lore concerning the route will tell you the name has to do with some curious unexplained phenomena that occurred in the area, but it is most likely derived from translations of the original Native American name, "where the spirits live."

The Middle Village sign refers to the location where the first Jesuit mission was built in 1741, and then reconstructed with the cooperation of local Native American carpenters in 1825.

The Area of the Old Council Tree sign marks the location of a large tree where the chiefs of three local tribes would meet for council meetings in the late 1700s. The tree was also used as a landmark in travel and migration of the tribes.

L'Arbre Croche is the French name given to the area between Cross Village and Harbor Springs because of a large crooked tree on a high bluff which was visible from miles around and marked the center of a large Odawa settlement.

Technically, the road today is a nearly 28-mile state trunk line, but it's also one of the most scenic routes in the Midwest. Fall color seekers come each year on motorcycles, in convertibles and on bicycles to enjoy the grandeur of a Michigan autumn.

On an average day, between 2,000 and 15,000 vehicles use various parts of M-119.

The first highway along the route was a section of M-13, designated in July 1919. It was later redesignated M-131 in 1926, a name that lasted until the early 1970s. Between 1926 and 1972, the highway was extended on both its northern and southern ends at various times. No changes have been made since the M-119 designation was applied.

M-119 begins at the intersection of U.S. 31 north of Petoskey. From Harbor Springs on, however, it is also known as the Tunnel of Trees Scenic Heritage Route, a designation made in 2002.

The roadway meanders through oaks, maples, birch and cedars along an old Odawa (Ottawa) trail. As a scenic route, the highway is excluded from meeting the state's trunk line standards, which would subject it to widening, the addition of shoulders, increased speed limits and other specifications.


As Michigan Department of Transportation officials have said, "M-119 is not a road for those in a hurry."

The Heritage Route Committee has published a guidebook for M-119, which they say is a "community resource to protect and preserve." The guidebook includes maps and further information about the highway.

To view it, visit: <http://www.nwm.org/userfiles/filemanager/1046/>.

Questions and comments can be directed to Patty O'Donnell at (231) 929-5039, or by writing to her at P.O. Box 506, Traverse City, Michigan 49685-0506.

—Report from Emmet County officials



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