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 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 of these deer 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.

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 failures, 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 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 by private parties 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 said. 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 researchers, 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.
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 poisonous by pellets that are swallowed while foraging on pond bottoms. In 1899, 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 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.

STAMPEDE FOR WOLF LICENSES: 900 of the 1,200 available licenses were gone within the first 30 minutes first managed wolf hunt nearly sold out the first day they were offered.

STAMPEDE FOR WOLF LICENSES: 900 of the 1,200 available licenses were gone within the first 30 minutes first managed wolf hunt nearly sold out the first day they were offered.

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, 171/2 West M-32 at 9 a.m. that day and caravan to various locations where the trees will be planted. Contact Drew Younge/Dyke at (517)346-6486, or visit www.mauc.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 sinew of the Paul Young Parabolic stretched into the back cast, sending the number 8, 4X-long Mickey Finn streamer fly whistling past my ears.

This rod, crafted by Bob Summers, is slow. It takes time to become accustomed to its cadence after a lifetime of 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 leaped into the fore cast. Like a mighty spring, the cane almost groaned as it lurched forward. The streamer fly far out over the river drew 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 slow slack water ending at the lake to its snarled 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 that the coho biologists for more than a decade; salmon, lampreicide 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’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 worn in the car.

She’s learned to like the game we play in the water. With the cover mostly down and the season half-finished, she’s had her guns on several grosse and her gosse on more woodcock. She 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 confines, where the birches, poplars and alders hold sway. Where the berry patches grab at her feathers and puffed tails draw October-fat grouse. Well, she’d have to be patient. It was the partir of the annual rhythm; one last moment to make love with the river—to feel the current hug and tug at us. To resurrect a pledge to spend more time 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 a girl can only handle so many riches in one day.

It is meditation and beauty. Beautiful stuff that you fear would disappear if it could be explained in print.

Nails did 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 fast.

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

Clambering 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 90’s, maybe some years from age 17 to 30, when the pursuit of trout in the credel had been so intense I didn’t find time (I’d barely seen it now) to 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.

While 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 something else.

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.

Thump 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 guy can only handle a few riches in one day.

A bird went off to the left. A wild shot, at best. He’d been under some blackberry brambles. How she’d have to be patient. This is 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 yet—he’s waiting to hunt during the December elk season—while both Bosscher and Gittins have already taken theirs. PMH hunters can hunt any open unit, during any hunting period for that animal. They are not restricted to a unit or a hunting period. Next up: Waterfowl season.

(For updates, t-shirts & caps, visit our website at: www.mynorthwoodscall.com

For updates, t-shirts & caps, visit our website at: www.mynorthwoodscall.com

Also follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Blogger

Pure Michigan hunt winners harvest bear & elk

Each year, Pure Michigan Hunt (PMH) winners get to spend the fall hunting season out living 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 Rob Nixon of Cadillac are both veterans of the Pure Michigan Hunt. The two friends have hunted the Bear and Bear & Elk unit each of the past 20 years.

Gittins harvested a 450-pound bear on public land. “This is my first bear,” said Gittins. “I’m still amazed at its size!”

Boscher 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 to make the memories," said Boscher.

Jason Webb, the PMH winner from Westland, also harvested a bear on public land in the Livin -

ton 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 hunters can hunt any open unit, during any hunting period for that animal. They are not restricted to a unit or a hunting period. Next up: Waterfowl season.
University of Michigan reports examining 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 naturally 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. 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 non-profits, and MLAWD, the nonprofit group that has been challenging the DNR leases, were involved in the technical comments were considered.

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 De Vries of the Mika, Meyers, Beckit & 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 LaArne Kozma of CBFM.

“With the industry steering the UM researcher’s work, it is inherently a ‘frackademia’ study,” she said.

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) for allowing 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 Losh.
Among the most heartbreaking aspects of rising fuel costs are the increasing 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 those in the business of moving people around.

On one hand, I want to cut pollution and save fossil fuels. On the other hand, it's good to know that changing the way I get to work brings me greater joy and experiential learning than climbing behind the wheel of a motor vehicle. It's good that I can get around 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 clincher.”

Right or wrong, this has been one of the guiding philosophies in my own life, and something in my blood. Long before since the nation’s founding and westward movement of the first European settlers. Gasoline-pow- ered cars and trucks have rou- tinely 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 open road during the summer of 1963 with a journey down Route 66 to Arizona. From there we drove north to Yellowstone National Park and Ground Teton, then back to Michigan—all in a tiny turquoise-colored Volkswagen beetle with no air conditioning.

Even since that trip, the wonders of two-lane blacktop and the fas- cination of the open road have made along the road have captured my imagination like sticky fly paper. It was, of course, a time when gasoline was 10 cents per gallon and you could drive all the way across the country for not much more than the cost of a single-fill up. In fact, for much of my adult life—until fairly re- cently—road trips remained a forlorn alternative.

Over the long-term and move beyond the temporary stop-gap measures that never quite seem to get the job done?
The environmental quotient

We live in an era when people of a certain political persuasion are re-
jecting the idea of governmental authority. Laws and regulations are too restrictive, they say, and constitute an unwar-
anted intrusion upon their personal independence. Apparently, they want governmental function to fade away, particularly at the fed-
eral level.

Yeah. That would be great—with especially regard to our environ-
ment.

For instance, the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore could be sold to wealthy private interests, thus eliminating the need for those pesky public lands and naturally greens. Get ‘em off the public payroll and save a ton of money.

Multi-million dollar homes and exclusive gated communities are bet-
ter. 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 re-
vert around making profits. Thankfully, most of us also recognize the intense value of nature itself, hence the need for rein-
ing in certain areas of human activity.

The two “ride-alongs” I did this year with conservation officers were in-
structive. 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 in 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 goose from a hunting trip has always been preferable to killing a legal limit of birds.

The same applies to fishing. I’ve gone to barless hooks and release any fish I don’t care to clean or eat that day.

The wild creatures of Michigan do, however, need our attention.

To the contrary, I buy licenses I may not use and donate to the Na-
ture Conservancy. Most of The Call’s readers probably do that much and more. We realize that everyone’s quality of life will diminish with an 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 who used (and frequently squandered) their natural resources with
out forethought or planning.

In an increasingly urban world, we can still see the importance of mainaining—and even expanding—natural areas. Not building on that back in the woods, I say. It takes a candidate with strong leanings on the side of conservation. Working in increments. Valuing the aesthetic
ics 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 monu-
ments and nature preserves during the most recent government shutdown? Although tax revenues don’t stop rolling into federal coffers during such duels, 83 percent of the budget of the government has reportedly continued to operate, there seems to be a concentrated effort by those in charge to inconvenience the public as much as possible. The Seney Nat-
ional Wildlife Refuge and the Detroit International Wildilfe Refuge were among those in Michigan impacted by the political tem-
per tantrum, as were the open-air World War II and Vietnam memo-
rials 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 won-
derfully revitalized North Woods Call celebrating its first an-
iversary under your guid-
ance.

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

Many thanks,

Linda Kaibbs
Chicago, Illinois

Educating about outdoor heritage

The Michigan United Conser-
vation Voters (MUCVC) recently
an
ounced its support for a new bill aimed at educating the public about Michigan’s outdoor heri-
tage.

The bill, recently introduced by Rep. Jon Buson (R-Newaygo), would create a students’ coun-

cile of outdoor educators and
provide an education campa-

ign aimed at teaching the public about the importance of conservation and trapping to wildlife manage-

gency and Michigan’s outdoor fu-

ture.

The bill is based on a concept used in Colorado, where during the early 1990s sportsmen and women lost the ability to trap and hunting with bait in succes-

eive elections at the ballot box. Colorado sportsmen came to-
gether and used an educative mech-

anism and advisory council aimed at educating the public about the benefits of this activities.

Colorado has named their concept “Hug an Angler” and “Hug a Hunter”

and I say ‘Why? There’s so much here at arm’s length that I haven’t
enjoyed yet. I want to die
here happy with
what I’ve got—not unhappy because I don’t have more.”

“People say, ‘Why don’t you sell this farm and travel around the
world?’ I say ‘Why?’ There’s so much here atarm’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 what’s up in the water?

Bearberry leaves have sprouted in certain areas of human activity.

Temporarily Closed

Have citizens been railroaded by the closure of federal monu-
ments and nature preserves during the most recent government shutdown? Although tax revenues don’t stop rolling into federal coffers during such duels, 83 percent of the budget of the government has reportedly continued to operate, there seems to be a concentrated effort by those in charge to inconvenience the public as much as possible. The Seney Nat-
ional Wildlife Refuge and the Detroit International Wildilfe Refuge were among those in Michigan impacted by the political tem-
per tantrum, as were the open-air World War II and Vietnam memo-
rials 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 won-
derfully revitalized North Woods Call celebrating its first an-

iversary under your guid-
ance.

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

Many thanks,

Linda Kaibbs
Chicago, Illinois

Educating about outdoor heritage

The Michigan United Conser-
vation Voters (MUCVC) recently
an
ounced its support for a new bill aimed at educating the public about Michigan’s outdoor heri-
tage.

The bill, recently introduced by Rep. Jon Buson (R-Newaygo), would create a students’ coun-

cile of outdoor educators and
provide an education campa-

ign aimed at teaching the public about the importance of conservation and trapping to wildlife manage-

gency and Michigan’s outdoor fu-

ture.

The bill is based on a concept used in Colorado, where during the early 1990s sportsmen and women lost the ability to trap and hunting with bait in succes-

eive elections at the ballot box. Colorado sportsmen came to-
gether and used an educative mech-

anism and advisory council aimed at educating the public about the benefits of this activities.

Colorado has named their concept “Hug an Angler” and “Hug a Hunter”

and I say ‘Why? There’s so much here at arm’s length that I haven’t
enjoyed yet. I want to die
here happy with
what I’ve got—not unhappy because I don’t have more.”

“People say, ‘Why don’t you sell this farm and travel around the
world?’ I say ‘Why?’ There’s so much here atarm’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 what’s up in the water?

Bearberry leaves have sprouted in certain areas of human activity.
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 on supply drops all 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 Menominee County. From there, he picked his way along roadways, railroad tracks, or wherever there could be a route until he made Midland, where he knew he had a 230-mile stretch of well-maintained trail that would take him to Mackinaw City.

Long story short? Eleven weeks and 924 miles later, Hillier completed the trek to 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.

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 definitive old landmarks 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 old dam as part of the company’s efforts to clean up a July 2010 oil spill. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is not opposing removal, 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 impounded segment of the river—deeps 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 Ford and Light, but in late September was purchased by Enbridge for demolition. The crumbling and rusted structure has not been used for hydroelectricity since 1953, when another utility—now known as Consumers Energy—retired it.

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

Others, however, find comfort in knowing that if the dam is removed, its replacement will be 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.

Even though we’ve been can- ning and preserving vegetables, my wife gets into what she calls her “squirrel” mode when days shorten and get colder. She wants to have a well- stocked “larder” for the winter.

The world is taking time to remove those wild foods to be enjoyed during the winter and which provide a great variety of nut fruits. Generally, eight to ten native nuts are available and some are mighty tasty.

The most prolific, both for hu- mans 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 ro- dents.

Acorns were somewhat of 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 flavorful. They get nutty until the water is no longer brown, they are quite edible. The white oak also has a slight nutty flavor when roasted.

Two nuts that are quite popular, but can be a pain to get the nut- meat out of, are the butternut and butternut. Black walnuts are easy to identify with the large green tennis ball type seeds. They are common in many forests and are heavy producers. After col- lected from the ground, the green nuts best be cooked prior to being removed to reach the hard inner shell. Many trappers save some of the husks in which to boil the nuts. When cooked, they are a nice source of protein 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 can break the shell by stepping on it. They can be harvested in fall as the shells crack and split open by themselves. The shells of the nut are also edible. Each year, you can harvest the nuts if you can also profit. Each year vari- ous stations are set up to collect walnuts. They usually pay $8 or more per bushel. For the Wilder, who sells the husks, depending on the market. Most often there is a shelling ma-chine at the collection station.

The butternut—sometimes called the white walnut—resem- bles the black walnut. The trees are similar, but the fruit of the but- ternut is elongated or elliptical, 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 de- sired, with black walnut being more abundant.

As Tom Springer may point out in his book, “Looking for Hicko- ries,” collecting hickories in the fall is fun. Both have distinctive bark, both have long loose strips that appear as if they could fall off. Often they can be identified by the pile of loose bark that is shed by this tree.

Although the hickory fruit has an outer shell similar to the wal- nut, 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 squir- rels, I’m not aware of any other animal that may forage on the hickory nut, although the vegeta- tion is a food plant to a number of birds. The hickories, as I have learned, are the most productive trees.

The beechnut is easily recog- nized with its grey elephant-like trunk. Often found near habita- tions, it is a common wood in the natural- ists call “initial diseases,” 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 nu- merous creatures. They have a thin shell and can be easily 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. Roasted, they are an important food for wildlife, such as par- tridge, 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 Penn- sula. Granted, they weren’t as large as the commercial ones, but not unreasonably sized, looked the same. The hazelnut also has an outer shell while growing and displays “two wings” from the bot- tom, hence the name winged hazelnut, the nuts fall on the ground, but risk losing them to other hungry crea- tures. When the bush loses its leaves to winter, the nuts fall 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. The husks of the fruit are extremely spicy and you want to use your hands to help enlarge the nuts. Then, with heavy gloves, finish peeling it open and take out the treasured fruits. Today, most of our com- mercial 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 Michi- gan trees.

But all that we are going to discuss is the buckeye, or Ohio buckeye. Although edible, it is sometimes confused with a chest- nut, because of the similar leaves and fruit. It is high in tannins and, much like some oaks, not very desirable. Native Americans would roast the nuts in a meal called “hheckt.” The name came from a pioneer that im- pressed the Indians, who called him “H tec ht,” 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 in chocolate, leaving it to cool and leaving a peanut butter eye ex- posed.

Nutting is becoming as popu- lar as mushrooming, shed hunting and just hiking. In addition, you come home with a treasure. Nut- meats make a great personal Christmas gift.

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

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 every- body was cool,” he said, especial- ly 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 ex- ecutive into town. They really rolled out the red carpet. They’ve worked very hard on the trail sys- tem there and they want hikers and bikers to come there and 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 area have made it into Macomb County.

“In the beginning of the journey as we pulled into Iron-wood, I knew he had a 230-stretch of well-maintained trail that would take him to Mackinaw City.”

Chris Hillier—Michigan DNR photos

Chris Hillier—Michigan DNR photos

Advertise your business here!

Contact: editor@mynorthwoodscall.com

Thanks to all of you who have renewed your North Woods Call subscriptions

Become a North Woods Call partner

Please join our efforts to keep readers fully informed about conservation and outdoor issues by providing us with news tips and/or photographs.

Send tips and photos to: editor@mynorthwoodscall.com.
Foggy fire, fighting canoists, “Hardy-gras,” falling owl & a pregnant vagrant

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

**DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**
When they came upon a vehicle, the driver was under the impression that he had a medical marijuana card, but didn’t have it on him at that time. The driver was given a ticket for possession of marijuana without a license. A ticket for speeding was also issued.

**DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)**
CO Bruce Painter served a report of several dead scraps in live traps near a residence. Upon investigating, CO Hammill found that two otters had killed and consumed animals in live traps set near a residence. CO Hammill discovered that the owner of the property lives in Illinois and set the traps near the residence. Upon investigating, CO Painter found the traps near a residence. The family was able to catch up to the pair, and they were able to catch up to the pair and confirm that the subject was taking fish illegally with a baited trap.

**DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)**
CO Eric Bottorff checked several anglers, inquiring into their success. The subjects stated that they hadn’t caught a thing — until the CO looked into their bucket and found a six-inch largemouth bass. Their fishing license was also expired, and the CO seized their gear. The anglers were then cited for fishing without a license and were instructed not to fish without a license again.

**DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)**
CO Brian Bacon set up a decoy on the roadway during the day. He stopped five minutes later and asked the driver if he was tempted to shoot at the decoy from the vehicle. The driver chose not to shoot at the decoy.

**DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)**
CO Matt Liisteneltz served a warrant at a residence as part of an investigation of a subject taking and possessing protected migratory bird species. With the assistance of COs Hearn, John Housen, Bowen, and Bosley, and, as well as the Traverse City Nar- cotics Team (TNT), two bobcats, one otter, and one bass were seized from the residence. In addition, TNT seized approximately five pounds of marijuana from the residence. Charges are pending.

**DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)**
CO Justin Wright was checking a group of poachers hunting when one of the hunters advised that this was his first time out hunting and that he was hunting for geese. The CO asked him if he was hunting geese, the subject took him to the gun in a camper when they were hunting, but didn’t have it on him at that time. The subject was also drinking. Enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)**
CO Patrick McManus patrolled a closed section of Swan Creek in Allegan County in re- sponse to a report received of a subject hunting without legal permission to do so. As luck would have it, CO McManus located a subject who was subjected just baited a deer stand bag. Investigation revealed the subject was out for less than five minutes, meaning he was not jeopardizing the safety of the deer in the stand. The subject was served with a ticket for possessing hunting equipment.

**DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)**
CO Kyle Bader was working Branch County, but monitoring Hillsdale dispatch, when he heard a state police trooper get dis- patched to a goose hunting complaint. CO Bader responded with the trooper and the two located the venue, but no subjects. The trooper went off duty and CO Bader continued dig- ging, eventually locating the sub- ject’s residence. Upon contact the subject was determined that he had shot four geese without a state or federal stamp. CO Bader informed the subject that he did not have a license. The subject took the gun to measure it themselves with the gun to measure it themselves. The subject was served a ticket for hunting without a license.

**DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)**
Patroling on the Pontiac Monaille SGA, CO Dan Walzak contacted two subjects, a male and a female, who were fishing from a bank of Swan Creek which was closed to traffic. The CO observed four lines in the water and called back to the same alleged license for their licenses. The subject pulled his license from his wallet and advised CO Walzak that he had a fishing license. The CO then noticed a receipt in the subject’s pocket which she did not have a license and that he had just asked her to fish with one of his lines. A look over his sister’s face that indicated that the last part was news to her. After explaining to the male sub- ject that either he was fishing with too many lines or she was fishing without a license and would re- ceive a ticket, the man admitted to fishing too many lines — which was already justified for being in the refuge and enforcement action was taken for the fishing violation. CO Walzak and LEES-911 did not know of any female subject also had two outstanding traffic war- rant.

While on a marine patrol of Bellville Lake, COs Mike Dreder and Derek Miller ob- served several subjects fishing along the shore. As the COs ap- proached to check the anglers, two subjects were questioned about their fishing gear and started heading to their car. The COs were able to catch up to the pair, and one subject was issued a ticket for leaving his fishing gear on a new spot. One subject stated that he did not have a fishing license since he was not using any equipment. The subject was served with a fishing license ticket because the other stated that his “old lake buddy was supposed to go with him”. That subject had not pur- chased a fishing license since his license had expired. The subject was served with a ticket for fishing without a li- cense.

While checking shore anglers in Iron River, COs Kyle Drexler and Tom Eminger waterskied for two hours. CO Ken Kovach con- tacted an angler who had three fish in his possession. The third fish was a 14-inch, 12-ounce, white perch. As the angler learned from dispatch that the subject also had a felony warrant for his arrest in Florida. En- forcement action was taken.

**Contact information**

**Conservation Officers**
- CO Brian Bacon (Marquette)
- CO Steve Speigl (Marquette)
- CO Dave Painter (Newberry)
- COs Mike Cleeney, Joe Johnson, and John Housen (Roscommon)
- CO Michael Mshar (Hillsdale)
- CO Jeremy Payne (Hillsdale)
- COs Mike Drexler and Derek Miller (Iron River)
- COs Brian Bacon and COs from three districts (Bay City)
- COs from five districts (Plainwell)
- COs from five districts (Rose Lake)
- COs from five districts (Southfield)

**Contact details**
- COs are available in each district for assistance. They can be contacted at www.mynorthwoodscall.com.
A lesson in respect: Bald-faced hornets

By Doug Reeves
Assistant Chief
DNR Wildlife Division

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 about within 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

Final Shot

Get your copy today!

If you didn’t get one of these fine books earlier, there is still time.
The collection of writings by long-time North Woods Call Publisher Glen Sheppard is out-of-print, but we picked up a handful of new copies from Shep’s estate and still have a few left. Check our website for availability and ordering information:
www.mynorthwoodscall.com

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’Aubre 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’Aubre 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 wa a section of M-13, designated in July 1919. It was later re-designated 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.

Devil’s Elbow 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 sign, ‘Devil’s Elbow’ was first dedicated in 1956 and reopened in 2003.

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

The highway along the route was a section of M-13, designated in July 1919. It was later re-designated 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.

Devil’s Elbow 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.

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 highway along the route was a section of M-13, designated in July 1919. It was later re-designated 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.

Devil’s Elbow 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 highway along the route was a section of M-13, designated in July 1919. It was later re-designated 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.

Devil’s Elbow 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 highway along the route was a section of M-13, designated in July 1919. It was later re-designated 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.

Devil’s Elbow 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 highway along the route was a section of M-13, designated in July 1919. It was later re-designated 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.

Devil’s Elbow 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.