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The report notes that the winter of 2012 got off to a late start and continued to be mild through much of January and 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 deer harvests 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.

U of M reports examine fracking issues

The controversial natural gas and oil extraction process known as “fracking” has the potential to cause significant financial incentives from OPG, several people—including from those communities in the immediate vicinity that are getting significant concerns remain about the potential impacts to human health, the environment and groundwater quality.

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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 such as strained health care systems, stress among residents and traffic and motor vehicle accidents. 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.

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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 ear.

This rod, crafted by Bob Summers, is slow. It is being there. Being a fly an angler can use to quantify a moment of bird scent.

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 just to be there.

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

Reluctantly, but also happily, the time came to snap the fly off the 3X tippet, watch 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 nineties, from age 17 to 30, when the pursuit of trout in the creeled had been so intense. I didn’t find time to truly love the run, the 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 us is what earned us the privilege of fishing where brook trout live — or at least used to live.

After 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 brass in search of its purpose.

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.

Two more than two years ago, when Trout left me, I’d thought it was done.

A bird went off to the left. A wild shot, at best.

He’d been under some blackberry brambles. How could I have missed that bird?

Next up: Waterfowl season.

Up next: Waterfowl season.

Turpentine 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.

(Continued from Page 1)

NRC MEETINGS: The 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.

STAMPEDE FOR WOLF LICENSES: Licenses for Michigan’s first managed wolf hunt nearly sold out the first day they were offered. Despite a cap of 1,100 for residents and 550 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 and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources are working to educate the public to the importance of protecting the species.

RIFLE RIVER: The Gaylord-based Huron Pines organization recently launched 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 risk of erosion.

The inch-and-a-half-long fly was not ending at the lake to its gnarled shallow beginning in the hills.

Dave, muscled, bronzed — some dark, some silver — castoved 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 that the biologists for more than a decade; salmon, lampreacide and sand have wiped out the resident trout, except in the very uppermost headwaters, where a remnant population survives.

Down here, where the season lingered year around, the chances of catching a real trout are about as good as an old editor’s chances of walking on water.

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 guns on several grouse and her javes on woodcock. She figured out this is what she’s all about.

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

Well, she’d have to be patient. This last day of trout fishing had been a part of the annual rhythm; one last moment to make love with the river — to feel the current 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 fly can only handle so many rich days 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 tined 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?

(Continued from Page 1)

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Next up: Waterfowl season.

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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 Michi- gan’s outdoors.

All three 2013 Pure Michigan Hunt winners recently harvested bear. Dave Gittins of Kawkawlin and Bosscher of McBain both successfully harvested bear in the Cadillac area, using Wayne and Bob 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 magazine.

“Hunting is all about the expe-rience and the friends that you are with,” said Bosscher.

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 al-ready taken theirs. PMH winners 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

Also follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Blogger.
Rotating blades on energy producing windmills are deadly.

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 waste-water 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 miscommuni-cations 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 ad-\n\ncances, 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 for-mation, then follows the forma-tion horizontally.

High-volume-fracturing—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 gal-lons of hydraulic fracturing fluid, the researchers said. By compar-is-on, an Olympic-sized swimming pool holds about 660,000 gallons of water, they said.

As briefly mentioned in the last North Woods Call, wind energy facilities have killed at least 67 golden eagles over 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 ea-gles since 1997, with most deaths occurring between 2008 and 2012 when the industry was signifi-cantly 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 un-derestimated, since companies re-port 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 each year at a cluster of wind farms in Califor-nia’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 Cali-fornia,” said Brian Millsap, na-tional 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 have on local eagle populations, Millsap told the Associated Press (AP). While the golden eagle population is stable in the West, any additional mortal-ity for a long-living species such as the eagle can be a tipping point, he said.

Wind farms are clusters of tur-bines as tall as 30-story buildings, with spinning rotors as wide as a passenger jet’s wingpan. Numerous birds—not just eagles—have reportedly been killed by collis-ions 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 vor-tices, according to the AP.

Facilities in two states—Califor-nia and Wyoming—were im-planted in the 1980s, while the remainder occurred in Oregon, New Mexico, Colorado, Washing-ton, Utah, Texas, Maryland and Iowa, researchers said.

In Michigan, the average level of heavy metals and natu-raly occurring radioactive ele-\n\ments in addition to methane and the original chemical additives in the fracturing fluids. Common hydraulic fracturing fluid addi-tives include ethylene glycol, hy-drochloric acid, isopropyl alcohol, methanol and ammonium persul-fate.

All flowback in the state is dis-covered by deep-well injection and it is not allowed to sit in open pits, so the risk of this type of con-tamination is lower than in other states without such disposal op-portunities. 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 hy-draulic fracturing in Michigan is “quite low,” provided that best prac-tices are adhered to,” they con-cluded.

More data needed

The greatest challenge to un-\n\nderstanding the potential public health risks of hydraulic fractur-ing in Michigan is the lack of state-specific data, researchers said. While thousands of hy-draulically fractured wells have been drilled in Michigan, the po-tential 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 re-\n\lated to volumes, amounts, dis-posal 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 public interest groups have provided input to the technical reports, and more than 100 public comments were considered.

Fracking foes claim conflict of interest in study

The validity of technical re-\n\ports on hydraulic fracturing pub-\n\lished by the University of Michigan (UM) is being chal-lenged by a group trying to ban the controversial practice. The Committee to Ban Frack-ing in Michigan (CBFM)—a statewide ballot initiative—says two members of the study’s steer-\n\ing committee contributed to the Michigan Chamber of Com-\n\merce’s political campaign to de-fet CBFM’s efforts to amend the state constitution.

The two members—John De-Vries of the Mika, Meyers, Beck-\n\ett & Jones law firm and Gregory Fogle, who owns Old Mission En-\n\ergy—each reportedly gave $500 towards thwarting the ballot ini-tiative.

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 LaRonne Koza of CBFM.

“With the industry steering the UM researcher’s work, it is inher-\n\ently a ‘frackademia’ study,” she said.
Healthy transportation planning

A number of wonderful bicycle and walking paths are springing up in various locations around the northern state. For those who enjoy engaging in these activities, the paths are well worth their initial investment. But most of them seem to be targeted toward recreational use and do not provide proper access for 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.

We applaud efforts to develop more sustainable energy supplies, but those 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 footpaths and bike lanes and connect them to the desired 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 where they need to engage in 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 Obama administration created 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 EPA is projecting emissions to be 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 the larger goal 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 have written elsewhere about these issues—and 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 not as if there aren’t enough green energy options available to us to meet these—and other—demands.

It isn’t the 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?

It’s interesting to note that when cars were first introduced into American cities in significant numbers—much of it owing to an solution to the urban pollution problem—horses. During the lat- ter half 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 informa- tion gleaned from The Henry Ford Museum’s popular exhibit, “The Automobile in American Life.”

Add to that the urine and re- mains 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 roads, we may once again forced to look for innovative transportation solutions.

We hope whatever we come up with will include efficient personal vehicles that are affordable to purchase and operate—and for long-distance travel, camping, trailer haul- ing, and all those other traditional automotive activities that modern lightweight and electric的目光s have so far hadn’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 roadways and interstate highways may be a “low- cost freedom” in light of dwindling resources, corporate greed and modern environmental mismanagement, but it’s freedom nonetheless.

It would unfortunately—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.
Outdoor Rhythms
By Doug Freeman

The environmental quotient

We live in an era when people of a certain political persuasion are reviewing 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 governmental function to fade away, particularly at the federal level.

Ya, 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 newly naturals. 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 famed “Up North” country.

And why the need for state and national forests? They’re costly to maintain, as were the open-air World War II and Vietnam memorials.

National Wildlife Refuge and the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge continuing to operate, there seemed to be a concentrated effort by those mauled by a bear than run over by a speeding BMW.

To the contrary, I buy licenses I may not use and donate to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and I vote against restrictions on hunting, fishing and trapping to recognize that much of the pride in the state’s natural beauty involved around making profits. Thankfully, most of us also recognize the intensely capricious nature of our own species, hence the need for rein- forced 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 of the way, endangered species.

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 grousse 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 with an inadequate 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 with out 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 alley, cutting down a candidate with strong leanings on the side of conservation. Working in increments. Valuing the aesthetic- ism 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.

Enjoying The Call

Mike:

Congratulations on a won- derrfully revitalized North Woods Call celebrating its first anniversary under your guid- ance.

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 Conser- vation Clubs (MUCC) has an- nounced its support for a new bill aimed at educating the public about Michigan’s outdoor her- itage.

The bill, recently introduced by Rep. Jon Busonel (R-Newaygo), would create a sportsmen’s coun- cil to oversee the educational efforts of the Michigan Fish and Game Conservation Council aimed at teaching the public about the importance of hunting and fishing. The new council began operating in 2007.

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 bat in succes- sive elections at the ballot box. Colorado sportsmen came to- gether to form a machinery mech- anism and advisory council aimed at educating the public about the benefits of these activities.

Colorado sportsmen, beginning to consider themselves a “Hunt an d Hug an Angler” campaign, argued from this effort and were very successful. The campaigns fo- cused 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. At one point, 13 of the 19 Colorado counties began, 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 be- come more supportive of sports- men.

Part of the effort included adding a $1 surcharge to each base hunting and fishing license purchased, which goes into a fund to support the public education ef- forts.

Similarly, Rep. Busonel’s bill would reportedly establish an independent group called the Wildlife Council that would be task- ed with creating a $1 surcharge fund and hiring a mar- keting firm to research and de- velop the media-driven public education campaign.

The council would consist of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, MUCC and indi- viduals who have regularly purchased hunting or fishing li- censes, and select others repre- senting the hunting, fishing and trapping 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.

The Wild Nearby

By Tom Springer

All the little water things:

A farm where nature has its say

The copperberry waters and smallmouth salmonists can’t speak their names. Neither can the bay-scented ferns or three-bird orchids.

But on Bonamego Farm, they don’t have to. They’ve got an advo- cate who’s as passionate in their defense as any lawyer ever will be. And so, some people everything comes down to dollars and cents, 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, wa- terfowl, scarlet tanagers, warblers, even local fish and bloaters.”

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, Haigh’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 feel to it. Bonamego limits his visitors to 15 per day, and prefers biological controls such as rotenone-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 Roben Frost once wrote poetry about his own.

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 so, there were traces of the young man who’d played cen- ter on the Western Michigan University (WMU) football team. In con- versation, 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.”

At WMU he earned a bachelor’s degree in biology 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 1965.

Even so, not until his early 50s did Bonamego discover all the un- known 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.

“T’d already found 25 or 30 species of plants and water fowers and thought 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 things are safer now, thanks to Bonamego’s con- servation 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 right by your window if you just look hard enough. Apparently, he was only satisfied by material things, I could live a

Hey Sudden: 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, al- though 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 harm- less 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 to the Depart- ment of Environmental Quality.
Autumn in Michigan: A time for nutting

The Natural World
By Richard Schinkel

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 with supplies 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 Marquette 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-mile 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 the fifth day of fall, and made it 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.

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 supporting the project unless and until it has received encouraging 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 the 174-year-old landmark is part of their history and is a centerpiece of the community. If a 75-acre lake—actually an impoundment of the river 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 Dow and Light, but in late September was purchased by Enbridge for demolition. The crumbling and rusted structure has not been used for electricity since 1953, when another utility—now known as Consumers Energy—retired it.

It may not look like much to the casual observer, according to proponents of the removal. 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 canoest, “Hardy-gras,” falling owl & a pregnant vagrant

**DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

They discovered a report of a deer skulking in live traps near a residence. Upon investigating, CO Mark McManus located a subject who had set the traps near a residence. The subject was located and interviewed. A check through LEIN revealed that the subject either he was fishing with too many lines or she was fishing without a license and would receive a ticket. The officer did not have a fishing license and so was allowed to fish with his equipment, which showed the same illegal distance. Enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)**

A warrant request was made for his arrest in Florida. Evidence. The CO pulled into the residence. Charges are pending.

**DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)**

The team of COs operated off five Great Lakes patrol boats located around the island. The lawsuit was filed in Allegan County after a report received of a subject taking and possessing protected migratory bird species. With the assistance of COs Brian. COs Jason Wicklund and Jon Sklba, and Bossy, and Allen, as well as the Traverse City Nar- cotics Team (TNT), two bobcats, one otter, and one barred owl were seized from the residence. In addition, TNT seized approxi- mately five pounds of marijuana from the residence. Charges are pending.

**DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)**

CO Kyle Bader was working Great Lakes patrol boats issued citations for the fishing violations. The subject was taken for the fishing violations.

**DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)**

CO Kyle Bader was working 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 subject’s residence. Upon contact the subject was determined that he had shot four geese without a state or federal stamp. The trooper had told the subject that any goose when the CO showed up, but he thought better of it. A ticket was issued.

**DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)**

CO John Huspen was hunting in Michigan. $20 each, plus shipping and handling. For more information, see the Newshound Productions page at www.mynorthwoodscall.com.

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A lesson in respect: Bald-faced hornets

By Doug Reeves
Assistant Chief
DNR Wildlife Division

When I think of bald-faced hornet nests, 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 an enormous number of insects. They serve to break the strong winds that blow in the direction of the nest.

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 the 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 from 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