



“The newspaper for people
who love the north”



Late November 2013
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Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



**Happy Thanksgiving
2013**

—Michigan DNR photo

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Freedom Hunt

—Michigan DNR photo

Frank Koszegi (right) of the Grand Rapids Home for Veterans, bagged a white-tailed buck with the help of Climax resident Russ Audette during this year's Michigan Freedom Hunt at the Fort Custer Recreation Area. The Oct. 17-20 event—aimed at making deer hunting more available and accessible to hunters with disabilities—drew a record 47 participants and some 200 volunteer assistants. Though aimed at veterans, the hunt does not exclude anyone with disabilities.



North Woods Notes

MICROPLASTICS: The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative—a binational coalition of mayors and other local officials—is asking regulators and industries to take action on removing microplastics from personal care products and clean up those already in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway. Microplastics pose a number of threats. Fish, birds and wildlife ingest them, which can cause internal blockages, dehydration and death in those species. They also affect the quality of ecosystems and habitats. Most significantly, they absorb and transport other pollutants that are already in the water. These toxins become even more concentrated as they bioaccumulate in the food chain.

FRIDAY NIGHT OSPREY: Football at Marion High School in northern Michigan attracted some unusual spectators this year when a pair of osprey nested on the stadium lights. The stadium is located on the edge of town overlooking agricultural fields and the Middle Branch River with its many feeder streams. A nearby mill pond holds a supply of fish, which were probably the real motivation for the nest building. The nest has been removed from the stadium light pole and a new osprey platform was built by the school's shop class, then installed at another location on a 70-foot pole donated by Consumer's Energy.

PRINTER-READY TARGETS: The Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) shooting range web page now has printer-ready targets to download before you go out to sight in your firearms. Check out the "Next Steps" header at www.michigan.gov/shootingranges and click on the "Print Targets" link. There are two bulls-eye targets and a turkey pattern target available.

PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION: Two residents of Michigan's Upper Peninsula—Sten Fjeldheim of Gwinn and Dave Cella of L'Anse—were presented Partners in Conservation Awards from the DNR during the October Natural Resources Commission meeting. Fjeldheim, who coaches the Nordic ski team at Northern Michigan University, has made many contributions to the cross-country skiing landscape. Cella, a longtime conservation enthusiast, has also made several volunteer contributions over the years, dedicating both time and personal resources to get things done.

TREE-PLANTING GRANTS: Applications are available for the 2014 DTE tree planting grant program. The deadline for submitting the applications is Dec. 16. Eligible applicants include local units of government, nonprofit organizations, tribes and schools which are located within the DTE Energy service area and have not received a grant during the previous year's grant cycle. A total of \$60,000 is available in matching grants of up to \$3,000. Visit www.michigan.gov/ucf for more information, or contact Kevin Sayers at (517) 241-4632, or e-mail him at sayersk@michigan.gov.

SNOWSHOE BUILDING: Sleepy Hollow State Park in Clinton County will offer several two-day snowshoe-building classes—recommended for ages 16 and older—in December and January. Participants will learn how to weave a pair of traditional wooden snowshoes similar to the ones Native Americans made for generations. Cost is \$170 and includes the pre-formed wooden frames, lacing, high-quality bindings and personal instruction. Classes are limited to eight people. To make a reservation, call the park at (517) 651-6217, or e-mail Denise Smith at smithd8@michigan.gov.

GREAT LAKES HABITAT: The National Marine Fisheries Service has announced almost \$15.9 million in funding for habitat restoration projects to restore nearly 1,000 acres of Great Lakes marsh and wetland habitat, and open more than 34 stream miles for fish passage.

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Naturally reproducing grass carp in Lake Erie basin

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been getting more reports of grass carp being captured by commercial fishermen in the Sandusky River—a tributary of Lake Erie.

These fishermen have also reported seeing more of the species, as well as specimens of varying age and size, which DNR officials say indicates that there may be a naturally reproducing population in the lake. This assumption has been confirmed by a recently released U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) report.

The USGS has determined grass carp, a species of Asian carp, are naturally reproducing within the Lake Erie basin. While grass carp do not present the same ecological risk to Michigan's waters as bighead or silver carp, they are a concern because they feed on aquatic plants and can significantly alter habitat required by native fish.

Grass carp previously captured in Michigan waters were thought to be the result of fish movements from other states where stocking of genetically altered fish

for aquatic vegetation control is allowed. Those fish are sterilized through a heat-treating process when their eggs are developing, which may not be 100 percent effective.

Michigan has prohibited live possession of grass carp since the 1980s and continues to oppose their use in public or private waters in other states with connections to the Great Lakes.

The DNR Fisheries Division has been actively working with commercial anglers in Lake Erie to remove and report any grass carp they capture in their nets. Fish that appear to be fertile are analyzed to determine reproductive development. The DNR is also involved with the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, which has representation from all of the Great Lakes states. The committee's goal is to implement a sustainable Asian carp control program and to prevent the introduction of Asian carp.

In the meantime, calls to separate the Great Lakes from carp-infested waterways are increasing.

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New Michigan "fracking" rules proposed

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has proposed new rules that would require more monitoring and reporting of high-volume hydraulic fracturing.

Regulators said they are responding to the public's growing concern about the controversial oil and gas exploration process with the updated environmental regulations.

"[Michigan citizens want] assurances that our regulatory program will be protective of the public health and the environment," said DEQ Director Dan Wyant, "so we ... feel it's important to update our hydraulic fracturing regulations to strengthen

the environment."

The new regulations—which could be in place within six to nine months—would require hydrofracturing operations using more than 100,000 gallons of fluid to use the state's water withdrawal assessment tool, disclose chemicals used in fracking fluid in an online registry and conduct baseline water quality testing.

DEQ policy already requires use of the water withdrawal assessment tool, which uses computer modeling to predict the impact a proposed water withdrawal would have on nearby water resource volumes. The proposed regulation would formalize existing department policy to

deny permits which would cause an adverse impact to a nearby river or stream.

The rules would also require companies to disclose chemicals used in hydrofracturing fluid on the website FracFocus. Chemical family names would have to be disclosed if the exact recipes are protected by trade secrets.

The proposed updates must first go through a public review process and get approval from the Michigan Legislature's Joint Committee on Administrative Rules.

DEQ officials also said they plan to make the agency's list of permit applications more user-

(Continued on Page 2)

Graymont mine pushes ahead

Graymont Inc. has asked the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for an OK to acquire 10,000 acres of state-managed forest in northern Mackinac County near the village of Rexton.

The proposal includes approximately 7,820 acres for an underground mine, 1,780 acres for two separate surface mines and an option to purchase 840 acres for the potential development of a limestone processing plant.

It also includes the DNR retaining a state-managed surface easement on the underground mine portion (with the exception of 1,500 acres that will be used for mine support infrastructure) so that the property continues to be managed for timber resources and open for public recreation uses.

"In the coming weeks, the DNR will process the application and it will be reviewed following standard DNR policy and procedure," said Kerry Wieber, the agency's forest land administrator.

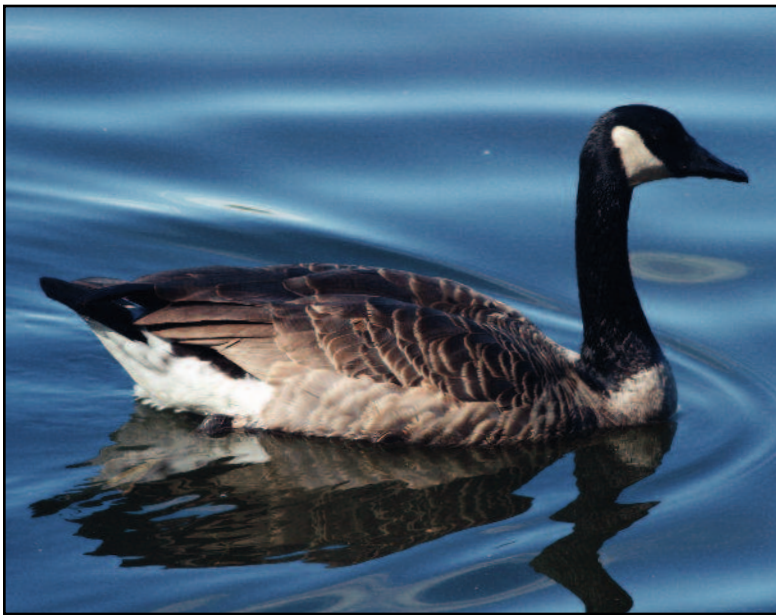
The application will also be reviewed by the DNR's Minerals Management Unit. Recommendations will be made to DNR Director Keith Creagh, who will make the final decision on the proposal and reveal it at a future

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Searchin' for Powder

Ski lodges across the northland are preparing for what they hope to be a busy winter sports season. This giant downhill racer stands year-round outside the entrance to Big Powderhorn Mountain near Bessemer in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Dubbed by promoters as "The Ski Capitol of the Midwest," the resort has been recognized by OnTheSnow.com as having the "best downhill terrain" in the region. The area reportedly gets an average of 17 feet of natural snowfall each year and offers great views of the western U.P.'s surrounding forest lands.



Ubiquitous Honker

Once threatened with dwindling populations, the Canada goose is now one of the best-known birds in North America—found in every contiguous U.S. state and Canadian province at one time of year or another. They are adaptable to many habitats and may thrive wherever grasses, grains, or berries are available. Historically, they summered in northern regions and flew south when cold weather arrived. This cycle continues, but due to changing weather, human settlement and farming patterns, many have begun to alter their migrations. Some have shortened their flight to traditional wintering grounds in the southern U.S. and Mexico. Others have become permanent residents of parks, golf courses, suburban developments and other human habitats. In many such areas—including airports—they are so numerous that they are considered to be a nuisance. When they do migrate, however, they form impressive and aerodynamic “V” formations and can cover 1,500 miles in just 24 hours with a favorable wind, although they typically travel at a much more leisurely pace. Canada geese are social birds which fly in noisy groups that honk their way along established paths that include designated “rest stops.” They remain in flocks year-round, except while nesting. According to the National Geographic Society, just 50 geese can produce two-and-a-half tons of excrement in one year.



North Woods Notes

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NRC MEETINGS: The December 12 Michigan Natural Resources Commission meeting will be held at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, in Lansing. For more information about the starting time and agenda, visit the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website at michigan.gov/dnr.

DIOXANE STANDARDS: The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has released new cleanup criteria for more than 300 hazardous substances—ranging from arsenic to zinc—but the standards for removing dioxane from the environment aren't changing. According to a recent report by the M-Live Media Group, the DEQ is planning to stay with a cleanup standard of 85 parts per billion for 1,4-dioxane. That despite the fact that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency now believes dioxane is more cancerous than previously believed and that 3.5 parts per billion of the substance in drinking water poses a 1 in 100,000 residual cancer risk.

SQUELCH THOSE ENGINES: Officials of Washtenaw County and the City of Ann Arbor are encouraging motorists to turn off their engines when their vehicles are standing still. They have reportedly launched a website at www.motor-smart.org to help schools, businesses and residents spread the word about the environmental and health damage—not to mention fossil fuel consumption—caused by unnecessary vehicle idling.

ORTONVILLE RANGE: The 200-yard shooting range at Ortonville could be closed due to the construction of new restrooms. Users are encouraged to call range staff at (248) 627-5569 before they go to make sure the range is open. The construction will potentially impact only the 200-yard range, not any of the other shooting areas.

NEW RESERVATION SYSTEM: A more user-friendly central system to manage state park and harbor reservations was launched Nov. 1, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Reservations can be made at www.midnrreservations.com, or via the call center at 800-44-PARKS.

FISHERIES INFORMATION: The DNR is offering an online publication that highlights its work on inland lakes and streams. “Reel in Michigan’s Fisheries” was developed for anglers and is shared quarterly. The October edition covers several inland lakes, including Mullett, Upper Bushman and Nawakwa. Current and past issues can be found at www.michigan.gov/fishing.

TRAPPER EDUCATION: Three trapper education field days will be held in southern Michigan Dec. 7-8. The events—at the Lloyd A. Stage Nature Center, the Pokagon Campground and the Frankenmuth Conservation Club—are for students who have completed the online, or home-study course and are required to receive a Michigan Trapper Education Safety Certificate. Visit www.michigan.gov/huntereducation.

Our 61st Year: Looking Back to November 18, 1970
— Excerpts from *The North Woods Call* —

The #1 business in the north woods

By Glen Sheppard

If—as some game biologists claim—deer business is the biggest, most important business the DNR is in, it is just about out of business.

Sunday morning between 8 a.m. and noon, [my son] Craig and I drove from Grayling to Roscommon to Luzerne to Mio to Lewiston and then to Atlanta. For two generations, this has been deer business country. From Atlanta we headed home through Johannesburg, Gaylord, East Jordan and back to Charlevoix.

In the towns, we saw fewer cars and people than I see on my regular weekday beat through the area during the winter months. Along the roads, there were far fewer cars than on a normal mid-winter weekend. The whole trip, we counted 17 dead deer, including the three on Atlanta’s buck pole at noon.

That’s a mighty dismal picture for a big business.

Harry Collins, a friendly, talkative old gent who runs things at the Gaylord Chamber of Commerce, has for several years contended that mushroom picking is as big—or bigger—of a business than deer hunting. Because Harry’s sort of colorful, this department has been inclined to consider his argument a little exaggerated. But it was certainly an accurate reflection of what was happening in Gaylord Sunday.

Because Charlevoix is a little out of the deer hunting belt, Craig has never seen the excitement that I remember in the north country on opening weekend. Al Szok also figured his David should get a peek at the color.

So the four of us spent Saturday night in a ruddy folding camp trailer just outside Grayling. (Now I have another reason for retreating from the city years ago: I was sick of sleeping in tents every weekend. Home sleeping in the north country beats tent sleeping a mile wide. To wander a bit more: Maybe only us weaker guys move up north. The guys who are tough enough to keep living in tents every weekend so they can escape the city—as I did for years—don’t have to move north).

There was plenty of deer business in Grayling Saturday night. Craig had his first hamburger in a real bar. Swore I’d never do that, but it seemed like less of an evil than denying him the opportunity to see that part of the deer season.

There was a guy in the bar with a full bandolier of 30-30 rounds around his shoulder. The weight alone would have felled an infantryman. (And Monday morning we heard that a fellow was killed up in Emmet County when seven guys got to cracking in at the same deer).

Chum Longworth, the busy and always gracious and patient (even when he’s mad at you) chief of the Grayling Chamber of Commerce, said there were as many hunters in town Saturday night as on the evening before deer season last year. There probably were. And 12 deer had been hung on the Grayling bragging pole before a single deer was strung up at Roscommon, or Atlanta.

But in the other areas we visited, there were barely enough hunters around to count the snowmobiles that move in every weekend during the winter.

The DNR field men and local businessmen we talked to Sunday and Monday all said about the same thing. You could hardly tell it was deer season. One guy said he sat in the woods east of Gaylord four hours Sunday morning and heard only three shots.

Monday morning one DNR field man told us, “They’ve all gone home—what few of them there [were].”

Several DNR field men said they were surprised to hear so many hunters say they were glad the department had cut the doe quota, even though it meant their chances of getting a white-tailed deer were less than in other years.

At least a few of these guys were pleased—not because they fail to understand the biological reason for antlerless hunting, but because bucks-only hunting returns a certain “quality” to deer hunting. Sort of like the “quality” angler who will fish all summer with flies for a big brown trout and never catch it, but wouldn’t think of fishing with a snag hook to land a monster salmon.

These ramblings are not intended as criticism of the DNR for its deer management program. *The North Woods Call* will still consider the majority of game biologists qualified technicians, even if hunters only bag 50,000 deer this season.

However, it might be considered criticism of the department’s priorities.

Deer business is important business—even if it isn’t as big a business as Dave Arnold thinks it is. But it is nowhere near the department’s, or the game division’s, most important business.

The number of persons who hunt for deer and the number of persons who kill deer is of no major significance. What counts is that there is still a quiet, unspoiled forest for them to sit and walk in. A clean stream for them to rest beside. A chickadee in a cedar tree. An absence of oil well clang and stench. A place where Kirtland’s warblers will continue to nest. A chance to, maybe, see an eagle. A place that can only be reached by walking a mile or so, where snowmobiles, motorbikes and other noisy contraptions are not allowed.

Craig “saw” his first deer season. I hope he gets to see scores more. If, however, he doesn’t, he will survive. But I doubt any of us will consider surviving worthwhile if the quiet forests, the chickadees, the warblers, the eagles, the unspoiled streams [and] the isolated spots, are lost.

Those are the priorities the DNR—and all of us—should be giving more than lip service to.

Not Pete Petoskey, or anyone else, can bring back the day when deer were the number one issue in the north woods. Today, survival of the north woods is the number one issue.

And we can’t afford to forget it.

DEQ proposes new rules on hydraulic fracturing

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friendly, and offer an online portal to collect public comments and questions on proposed wells.

Several conservationists and environmental activists have given a thumbs up to at least some of the rule changes, but many say more still needs to be done to protect Michigan’s natural resources—such as requiring the disclosure of specific chemicals used in the process before permits are issued, greater public involvement in permitting decisions, allowing local governments to control wells and putting a hold on any new “fracking” permits until officials have a better understanding of safety issues.

Some industry representatives, meanwhile, have said that while the DEQ proposals include some “common sense” changes, there

is a lot of misinformation about hydraulic fracturing, and oil and gas producers need to do a better job explaining the technology.

Hydraulic fracturing is the process of using a mixture of water, sand, and chemicals to force open fissures in shale rock and allow trapped oil or gas to escape into the well shaft and up to the well head where it can be stored and transported. Existing

Michigan regulations require cement casing to surround the well. This method allows producers to access oil and gas that is inaccessible using conventional drilling.

Sales and royalties from the state’s oil and gas rights fund the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Michigan State Parks Endowment Fund. But there is much controversy of such sales for “fracking” purposes.

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Stories in the sand: Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

No visit to Michigan's Upper Peninsula is complete without a stop at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore between Munising and Grand Marais.

The sandstone cliffs hugging the southern shore of Lake Superior for nearly 40 miles, tower 50 to 200 feet above the deep blue water. They reflect colors of ochre, tan and brown—sandwiched with layers of white and green—and are surrounded by deep forests of emerald, black, and gold.

This fine palette of tones, shapes and textures testify to an artistic force behind nature, which is exhibited throughout the 72,000 acres of shoreline, cliffs, beaches and dunes.

The formations are the result of massive glaciers inching back-and-forth across the land—scouring and molding the volcanic and sedimentary rock of previous eras into rubble and slowly enlarging river valleys into the wide basins that would become the Great Lakes.

The last glacier began its retreat about 10,000 years ago. Meltwater from this wasting glacier formed powerful rivers and scattered rubble on outwash plains and into crevasses. The water scooped out basins and channels that harbor the wetlands found in the park today.

Eventually, according to geologists, the weight of the glacier lessened, and the land rose to expose bedrock to lake erosion. It was this onslaught by the lake—centuries of battering waves and ice—that carved the bedrock into



Miners Castle, a picturesque outcrop of sandstone rock, is perhaps the most photographed site in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

cliffs.

The water continues to pound and sculpt the cliffs today, eroding them inland, while enlarging the lake.

Inland lakes formed when glacial outwash buried enormous blocks of ice. The ice melted over time, forming depressions that filled with water and became kettle lakes.

Those who examine the stones along Twelve-Mile Beach will see horned coral from an ancient sea, polished granite and quartz rounded like eggs, and disk-shaped fragments of the Jacobsville Formation sandstone.

The name “pictured rocks” comes from the streaks of mineral stain that decorate the face of the sculptured cliffs. The ramparts of the cliffs are composed of Cambrian sandstone of the Munising Formation, which makes up the angled slopes and formations such as Miners Castle.

Covering it all is the Ordovician Au Train Formation, a harder limy sandstone that serves as a capstone and protects the underlying sandstone from rapid erosion.

The streaks on the cliffs occur when groundwater oozes out of cracks. The dripping water con-

tains iron, manganese, limonite, copper and other minerals that leave behind a colorful stain as water trickles down the cliff face.

The bounty of Lake Superior has attracted people to the area since the glaciers retreated northward. Archaic and woodland Indians made summer camps along the coast. Later, Ojibwa Indians hunted and fished the region—as their descendants still do—while enroute to their summer fishing grounds at the Sault rapids of the Saint Mary's River between Lakes Superior and Huron.

In the 1600s and 1700s, French and English explorers and

voyageurs came searching for furs and minerals. They left little behind except place names, such as Grand Marais and Miners River.

In the 1800s, American and European settlers arrived to make fortunes in mining and logging. One such adventurer was Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, an Indian agent and wilderness scholar.

The demand for timber attracted lumber barons who bought vast forests of white pine, beech and maple. By the 1890s, boomtowns supported sawmills. Grand Marais alone had a population of 2,000 and produced millions of board feet of lumber each year.

Business on the lake flourished, as well. Wooden-hulled freighters and sidewheelers transported lumber and pig iron to distant markets. To help ships navigate the dangerous reefs, the U.S. Life Saving Service (later the U.S. Coast Guard) built light stations along the lakeshore. By the early 1900s, most of the forests were gone and the fortune-seekers moved on. Only a few small towns and lonely lighthouse keepers remained.

Today, the park offers a variety of hiking and walking opportunities, along with camping (backcountry and rustic campground), fishing, hunting, boating, canoeing and sea kayaking. Private tour cruises are also available, leaving Munising Bay every day from June to mid-October.

In addition, winter recreation opportunities are available in the form of ice fishing, camping and snowshoeing.

—National Park Service

Bird is the word with these female hunters

When Jody Bachelder took a step back away from the pointing dog at her feet, a rooster pheasant sprung into flight, practically knocking her over and leaving her so temporarily dazzled she didn't even think to shoulder her shotgun.

“I'm four months pregnant and

I swear I felt the baby jump,” said Bachelder, who was making her first pheasant hunt.

It happens all the time, said Scott Brosier, proprietor of Pine Hill Kennels and Sportsmen's Club near Belding, Mich., and the host of a recent pheasant hunting event for women.

“Lots of people get startled when that flush occurs right in their face,” said Brosier. “I've seen guys who are built like Buicks jump when it happens.”

Bachelder's disorientation didn't last long. Not too many minutes later, a rooster got up in front of her and she smoothly mounted her firearm, pulled the trigger and dropped the bird into the tall grass.

Bachelder was one of a dozen women attending the event, which was put together by Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) wildlife technician Donna Jones, who works at Flat River State Game Area.

Brosier—who had put together his own women's event last year as part of a breast cancer awareness program—was more than happy to accommodate the program. Jones lined up three chapters of Pheasants Forever—Barry County, Montcalm County and Grand Valley—to help with the funding, and all that was left was to recruit the women.

It didn't take long. “I could have gotten 40,” Brosier said.

Among those who signed up was Alyssa Wethington, an intern with the Gourmet Gone Wild program, which is designed to introduce folks who are not from sporting traditions to the outdoors by exposing young professionals to wild game and fish dishes. She brought her grade-school pal, Shakoor Rohela, and the 22-year-

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Jody Bachelder displays her first pheasant during a recent hunt.

—Michigan DNR photo

DNR sells more oil & gas leases

Late last month, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offered state-owned oil and gas lease rights to more than 11,000 acres.

The Oct. 28 auction included leases in 12 Michigan counties.

Conservationists and activists throughout the state have been critical of such sales, particularly as related to the controversial practice of hydraulic fracturing in public game and recreation areas, and state parks. Lease sales in those areas should be halted, opponents say, at least until better laws and regulations are in place to protect lands that are held under the public trust.

But DNR officials say everything is being done properly with an eye on protecting natural resources.

“The leasing of state-owned mineral rights is an active program and a critical part of Michigan's natural resources-based economy,” said Mary Uptigrove, manager of the DNR's Minerals Management Unit. “Proceeds from state-owned mineral lease rights are used to purchase land for public use, to maintain and upgrade state and local parks, and to care for and preserve fisheries and wildlife habitat.”

At least one lawsuit has been filed (by a Barry County citizen's group) against the DNR over the matter, but a circuit court judge dismissed the suit last summer.

Even though an oil and gas company might win lease rights at the auction, officials said, it doesn't mean it will be allowed to drill a well on the leased parcel. The state Department of Environmental Quality's Office of Oil, Gas and Minerals regulates the drilling and operation of oil and gas wells, they said, and enforces a comprehensive set of regulations designed to protect Michigan's resources from the potential negative effects of drilling and operating wells.

“Every county in Michigan has benefited from the oil and gas leasing program,” Uptigrove said. “That revenue means that Michigan residents and visitors throughout the state can enjoy broader access to increased outdoor recreation opportunities.”

Senator condemns “wasteful” parks

A U.S. senator from Oklahoma has called two Michigan parks among the most “egregious,” and “wasteful” federal expenses.

Sen Tom Coburn criticized Isle Royale National Park and the Keweenaw National Historic Park as either inaccessible, or created just

to satisfy political desires.

Together, Coburn said, the parks cost about \$6 million per year to operate and have maintenance backlogs of about \$30 million. But state officials said the parks are key to the local economy and preserving history and landscape.

Opinion

Quote Box

"We can have wilderness without freedom; we can have wilderness without human life at all, but we cannot have freedom without wilderness, we cannot have freedom without leagues of open space beyond the cities, where boys and girls, men and women, can live at least part of their lives under no control but their own desires and abilities, free from any and all direct administration by their fellow men."

—Edward Abbey

Grass carp & other invasives

Now that naturally reproducing grass carp have been found in a Lake Erie tributary, we're wondering whether we're close to losing the battle to keep their biological cousins—bighead and silver carp—out of Great Lakes waters.

We hope not, although these threatening invasives have also been documented in the Chicago Area Waterway System.

Grass carp, which have reportedly been seen in the region on various occasions since the late 1970s, is a species of Asian carp that Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) officials say does not present the same ecological risk to the state's waters. They are a concern, however, because they feed on aquatic plants and can significantly alter habitat required by native fish.

Because of this, we support the DNR's efforts to address the grass carp issue via law enforcement, research and education. DNR conservation officers should be encouraged to continue inspecting wholesale fish and bait dealers to make sure live grass carp are not being imported into the state. And the agency's Fisheries Division should continue performing fishery surveys to actively seek out such fish for euthanization and study.

But that's not all. We should ramp up discussions about the potential for separating carp-infested waterways from the Great Lakes. Now is the time for action on these issues.

Perhaps by working together—and encouraging those in the trenches—we can keep these invaders out of Michigan waters and preserve the ecology and habitat for native species.

That's a tall order, given the presence of reproducing grass carp in the Lake Erie basin and the closeness of bighead and silver carp to Lake Michigan, but it's well worth the effort.

New Kellogg Foundation CEO

Some Michigan conservationists have been asking whether the selection of a new president and chief executive officer at the Battle Creek-based W.K. Kellogg Foundation signals a return to more targeted grantmaking in the areas of agriculture and natural resources.

Don't hold your breath.

Although agriculture and natural resources are part of the Kellogg Foundation's 83-year legacy, the organization in recent years has shifted its focus more directly toward improving the lives of vulnerable children—which was also one of Mr. Kellogg's personal concerns—and away from some of its other historical program priorities.

It's true that the cereal industry pioneer gave us the Kellogg Forest, Kellogg Bird Sanctuary, Kellogg Biological Station and a series of outdoor education camps for youth. And his foundation has funded many noteworthy agricultural and natural resource stewardship projects throughout the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean and Southern Africa.

But there's much less of that going on these days and immediate indications are that the foundation will stay the course with its current program emphases.

Like many of you, we'd like to see more ongoing investment in sustainable agriculture and the outdoors—especially from one of the nation's premier private philanthropies.



La June Montgomery-Tabron

But there's only so much money to go around and Kellogg Foundation officials have decided—for now, at least—to focus their efforts on creating conditions where vulnerable children can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

That's a worthy goal, although it seems like numerous other foundations, nonprofits and government programs have nearly identical missions.

The good news is Ms. Tabron is a fine individual with her feet planted firmly on the ground. In addition to strong and principled leadership, she is sure to bring additional heart to the organization's grantmaking.

And maybe she and her colleagues will one day rediscover some of Mr. Kellogg's other interests and make greater investments in our vulnerable environment.

In the meantime, we congratulate La June and wish her the best when she takes the reins of the Kellogg Foundation in January 2014.

Old friends, stormy nights and "robber barons"

We should have known that the rain wouldn't stop.

All the weather reports said it wouldn't. And the deep gray clouds that hung over most of Michigan that October day had already been spitting water for the better part of 24 hours.

But on we drove—a former college roommate and I—from the sand-covered eastern shore of Lake Michigan to the northern forests of Roscommon County.

We thought we could escape the precipitation if we traveled far enough—past the blanket of drizzle and into the bright sunshine of a cool autumn day. But the daylight came and went, and we were left without a dry place to pitch our tents and build a campfire.

There was a time when it wouldn't have mattered. We would have taken to the woods, anyway, and toughed it out on a soggy campsite with the hope of a better day tomorrow. But we're older now—less inclined toward voluntary suffering—and much prefer to hear raindrops falling on the roof of a dry shelter than dripping into our tents and pooling like unwelcome ponds beneath our sleeping bags.

So we rented a tiny tourist cabin on the western shore of Houghton Lake and dialed up the gas furnace. The quaint log structure—built in the 1950s—featured a small kitchenette, bathroom, dining table, sitting area and two cozy bedrooms.

It was more than we needed, but at least we were out of the nasty weather.

My friend and I have been making these annual pilgrimages for at least 38 years now and many times have attempted to solve the world's intransigent problems over late night fires. Our animated conversations have typically lasted well into the early morning hours—sometimes past daybreak.

This time was no exception, except we lacked the calming influence of dancing flames and smoldering wood coals. That may be where we went wrong.

In days gone by, we seemed to agree on potential solutions much more than we disagreed. But not so much anymore.

My friend took a sharp left turn somewhere along the way and ended up in places I don't fully appreciate. He would probably

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



say the same about me, albeit our philosophical destinations vary.

A cold, rainy night in northern Michigan only seemed to exacerbate the differences in our viewpoints.

Still, I have great respect for this political opponent—a smart and articulate observer who can speak intelligently about many subjects. He is good-hearted and courteous to other people. And he has been a major encourager and supporter over the years.

Friends like that are hard to come by and something to be treasured. So it's particularly troubling when we butt heads like a couple of stubborn bighorn rams on a steep mountainside.

Our disagreement over domestic affairs has seldom been as contentious as it was during this outing. I blame a malfunctioning and extra-constitutional government for many of our nation's problems—along with deceitful, propaganda-spewing demagogues of all stripes. He says I'm much too harsh in my criticism and should have more respect for public office holders.

Perhaps, but they must earn that respect.

My friend seems blissfully satisfied that our elected and appointed public servants are honorable individuals with good intentions and sufficient integrity. He points to corporate and banking interests as the real culprits.

But that's not what this tale is really about. The point to be made, as we have often said, is that opposing viewpoints offer new perspectives and opportunities to learn.

Such debates certainly have made my intellectual gears turn on occasion and now I'm told that "a little socialism" is better than "unbridled capitalism."

Hmmm. Liberty seems to be an increasingly tough sell in the land of the free. But the underlying point is well-taken. Not all business leaders have been models of ethical behavior. Then again, neither have government officials.

Regardless—from what I've seen—government doesn't create wealth. It only consumes and "re-

distributes" it. Like it or not, free enterprise (within reasonable boundaries that protect the rights of individuals) is what pays the bills, creates jobs and generates tax revenue.

And, despite a handful of so-called "robber barons" that may have operated from time-to-time throughout our history, most businesses and industries have made overwhelmingly positive contributions to society.

Among other things, they have provided employment, helped build personal security, funded schools and hospitals, and supported numerous other institutions and programs that benefit each of us. And they're responsible for many of the recreation programs and public park lands that we now enjoy.

In Michigan alone, much of the state's philanthropic history is tied to the land. Many of our state parks—including Hartwick Pines, Brimley, P.H. Hoefft and Warren Dunes—exist because of gifts from private philanthropists. The same is true for national parks and historic sites, such as Acadia in Maine, Grand Teton in Wyoming and the Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee.

Other private donations have contributed significantly to park planning, development, management and interpretation.

But there's no need to debate these points here—nearly a month after our Houghton Lake confab ended and tempers cooled.

By the following morning, the rain had mostly stopped, so we traveled back across the state to the Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area in the Manistee National Forest. There we finally pitched our tents, had a blazing campfire and engaged in a far more amiable conversation.

We'll probably always argue the fine points of self-government, but hopefully we'll each learn something from these exchanges and embrace the truth where we find it.

While a little rain may fall on us from time-to-time, we can't let the storms of life wash our common sense—or friendships—away.

Book Review

Edward Abbey: A Life

Ever since we read *Desert Solitaire* and *The Monkey Wrench Gang* back in the 1970s, we've been fascinated by the writings of Edward Abbey (1927-1989).

His rebellious spirit and irreverent humor are always entertaining, even if his personal behavior and beliefs sometimes leave us scratching our heads.

This 2001 biography from the University of Arizona Press offers a definitive look at the life and writings of "Cactus Ed," who has been called "The Thoreau of the American West." Author James M. Cahalan separates fact from fiction—which is important for understanding the feisty author—and paints a much more human portrait of the man than we have seen elsewhere.

Abbey, who wrote extensively on environmental, political and philosophical issues, created many of his own myths and gained somewhat of a cult following in the process.

This book carefully examines the contradictions in Abbey's personality and corrects many misapprehensions surrounding his life.

It is at once an engaging and inspiring read.

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Viewpoint**Ban horizontal hydraulic fracturing now**

"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude, rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not after we got through with it."

—Lyndon B. Johnson

Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council (NMEAC) has concluded that horizontal hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking, should be banned. It poses a threat to the global environment and should be stopped immediately, everywhere.

All methods of mining the earth for fossil fuels cause damage to the environment. However, fracking is one of the most damaging of all. Currently, the state of Michigan endorses fracking "if it is done right." But more regulations with better enforcement only pushes us further toward reliance on dirty fossil fuels that threaten our environment and human

health.

Technologies such as fracking, tar sand processing and off-shore drilling are some of the more risky methods that have been devised to deceive us into believing that fossil fuels are inexhaustible. Fracking facilitates this deception.

A popular idea is that natural gas can serve as a bridge to cleaner sources of energy in the future. However, this ignores the economic reality that as long as natural gas and oil can be produced—at a lower cost than clean energy, through exploitation of natural resources at no cost to the fracking industry—the incentive to develop clean energy is severely challenged.

How can we justify to future generations the squandering of millions of gallons of water for each well drilled when pure uncontaminated water is becoming ever more scarce? Currently, fracking is not even subject to EPA clean water regulations. And fracking, by adding to current

CO2 levels, actually contributes to one of the greatest problems facing the continued existence of life on our planet—global warming. If fracking had to pay for the natural resources it damages, gas would not be cheap.

We cannot allow horizontal fracking to further devastate our vital natural resources. Water and air are held in common and belong to all people. It is in our common interest to vigilantly protect them.

To that end, NMEAC supports an immediate ban on fracking so that our world can move as swiftly as possible from dependence on dirty fossil fuels to a clean energy environment.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This position paper was published by the Traverse City based Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council, which is the Grand Traverse region's oldest grassroots environmental advocacy organization.

**Deer Camp Humor**

In the last North Woods Call we featured Ozz Warbach's amusing illustration "Michigan Hunting Lodge." If you've traveled along U.S. 41 near Ishpeming, Michigan, you may have discovered another version at Da Yooper's Tourist Trap (above). Those who have experienced an Upper Peninsula deer hunt with all its trappings will undoubtedly recognize some familiar activities and pastimes.

Top 10 safe hunting tips from Michigan COs

With Michigan's firearm deer season now under way, conservation officers at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are offering their top 10 tips for a safe outdoor experience.

"Hunting in Michigan is a time-honored activity, rich in tradition, when families and friends come together to enjoy our great outdoors," said Lt. Andrew Turner, who leads the DNR's Recreation, Safety and Enforcement Section for the Law Enforcement Division. "Making your hunt a safe and responsible experience is key to having an enjoyable and memorable time."

The top 10 safety tips for hunters to remember are:

1) Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.

2) Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.

3) Be certain of your target, and what's beyond it, before firing. Know the identifying features of the game you hunt. Make sure

you have an adequate backstop; don't shoot at a flat, hard surface or water.

4) Keep your finger outside the trigger guard and off the trigger until ready to shoot.

5) Don't run, jump or climb with a loaded firearm. Unload a firearm before you climb a fence or tree, or jump a ditch. Pull a firearm toward you by the butt, not the muzzle.

6) Avoid alcoholic beverages before or during hunting. Also avoid mind- or behavior-altering medicines or drugs.

7) All firearm deer hunters on any land during daylight hunting hours must wear a hat, cap, vest, jacket, rainwear or other outer garment of "hunter orange," visible from all sides. All hunters, including archers, must comply during gun season.

8) Camouflage hunter orange is legal, provided 50 percent of the surface area is solid hunter orange. (Exceptions: waterfowl,

crow and wild turkey hunters, and bow hunters for deer during bow season).

9) Always let someone know where you are hunting and when you plan on returning. This information helps conservation officers and others locate you if you get lost.

10) Carry your cell phone into the woods. Remember to turn your ringer off or set your phone to vibrate rather than ring. Your cell phone emits a signal that can help rescuers locate you when you are lost. If you have a smart phone, go to the settings and enable your GPS to help searchers find you if you get lost. Make sure before you leave for the woods each day that your phone is fully charged. If you have a smart phone, download a compass and flashlight app—there are many versions of these apps that are free at the iPhone App Store, or on Google Play for Android.

—Michigan DNR report

The Wild Nearby

By Tom Springer

**Local man, 54, kills first turkey**

I didn't know that a 25-pound turkey could be so strong. But this one had about enough flap to carry us both airborne across the barnyard.

Even with his two wings held fast in a bear hug, I could scarcely contain his fury. His scaly, four-inch claws tore a foot-long gash in my sweatshirt. My main advantage was that I knew where we were going: to the bloody funnel nailed on a fence post 75 feet away. The day of reckoning had come.

Of course, by modern standards, none of this carnage was necessary—let alone desirable.

Come November, vast flocks of stationary, indoor turkeys roost in supermarket freezers across the land. They're conveniently dead. They've been hygienically frozen and shrink-wrapped into culinary submission. They've even got a red plastic button stuck in their chest that pops-up when the bird's been properly cooked. It's a fool proof—even idiot proof—system for the millions of Americans who cook only one turkey per year. Present company included.

The status quo went unquestioned until last Thanksgiving, when we decided to make some gravy for the family dinner. It seemed simple enough. According to my mother-in-law—raised barefoot in a Blue Ridge Mountain holler where drinking water came from a spring—you just need some good "pan drippings" and flour to make gravy.

I'm not sure what you'd call the grey synthetic slime that oozed from our store-bought turkey. But it surely wasn't drippings. At least not in the good-earth, backwoods Virginia sense of the word. Forget the gravy; this crud made the whole entrée suspect.

"I cannot believe," I told my brother, "that we are about to eat the turkey that this vile seepage just came from."

We did eat it, but I vowed that next year would be different. So I convinced my brother, who already raises chickens for meat and eggs, that he should add a small flock of turkeys to his repertoire.

We bought 13 chicks—only one of which died over the summer. They were a hearty, traditional variety with bronze-black feathers that made them resemble wild turkeys. In fact, one September day my sister-in-law looked out to see a wild flock gathered curiously outside the domestic turkeys' pen. Not unlike visiting hour at the county jail.

By mid-October, the birds were ready to harvest. They'd lived outside since June in a grassy paddock. They'd fattened themselves on milled grain, earthworms, grasshoppers and excess garden cucumbers. They'd felt the cool breeze of morning, taken dust baths on sunny afternoons and roosted at night in a humble, but raccoon-proof coop made of particle board. We had kept our end of the bargain (although technically my brother, Jeff, did all the work). Now it was time for them to keep theirs.

"Get em' over here quick," Jeff commanded, as big brothers are wont to do. "Don't let him fight so much,"

Then he told me, for the 86th time, about the day when he came home to find that a red-tailed hawk had preyed on two hens in his chicken yard. Ever the pragmatist, he butchered one of the fresh-killed birds and made soup out of it. It was famously inedible. The flesh was tough, tasteless and rubbery as an old tractor tire.

"It's all the adrenalin that does it," he said. "Once they get scared, their muscles are pumped full of it."

I folded the turkey's wings and stuck its head first into the funnel. With the bird's head and neck pulled firmly out the bottom, the butcher knife did its work with grim efficiency. The now brainless carcass flopped in the funnel for 20 seconds or so—a phantom attempt at escape—and then went forever still.

"I must've killed 1,000 chickens over the years, but I never get used to this part," said Jeff, as a crimson stream spattered into the bucket. "I do it quickly because I never want them to suffer."

Compassion can show up in the strangest places. Even in a barnyard abattoir. If that sounds hypocritical, consider how a wild turkey meets its end: either the slow agony of sickness and starvation, or an ambush by coyotes that probably aren't morally opposed to eating a live animal one wing, or one drumstick, at a time.

We dipped the limp turkey into a cauldron of boiling water, plucked its feathers and then gutted it out. On a chilly afternoon it felt perfectly natural—and pleasurable—to warm one's stiff fingers inside a steaming body cavity.

On Thanksgiving, I'm hoping that our humane dispatch of the turkey will beget tender breast meat. And, instead of a factory-farm oil slick, pan drippings for gravy that will run like a golden river down mashed-potato mountains into a cranberry sea.

It's what I'd expect from a family turkey farm a 100 yards down the road. The best food chains (like the best brothers) are closely linked, just as nature intended them to be.

Graymont mine proposal moves ahead

(Continued from Page 1)

Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting.

DNR officials said that approval of the application will not necessarily mean approval of mining, because the proposal would then have to go through regulatory review by the Department of En-

vironmental Quality.

The DNR will host a future public meeting on the proposal. Citizens can also comment at an upcoming NRC meeting and online at DNR-GraymontProposal-Comments@michigan.gov.

Graymont was to host a public meeting in Naubinway Nov. 12.

Anti-Poaching bill clears Michigan House Natural Resources Committee

A bill to raise the amount of restitution paid for poached trophy bucks was reported unanimously from the House Natural Resources committee on Oct. 29, but not without a major overhaul in how the restitution fines will be calculated.

Originally, Senate Bill 171—introduced by Sen. Phil Pavlov (R-St. Clair)—was designed to calculate the restitution fine paid on a poached trophy buck based on the Boone & Crockett scoring system. Basically, the higher the B&C score, the higher the fine.

While most legislators and stakeholders agreed with the overall concept, a number of concerns were raised by the Department of Natural Resources, governor's office and committee members about the system being too complicated. In light of these concerns, a number of changes were proposed that were adopted by the committee.

Under the new format of SB 171, the general concept—the bigger the buck, the bigger the penalty—stays intact. The restitution for illegally shooting a deer will depend on whether or not the deer has antlers, and the value will get progressively larger based on the number of points.

The progressive penalty system breaks down as follows:

* For any deer with or without antlers, the base restitution fine will be \$1,000.

* For any antlered deer, there will be an additional \$1,000 fine.

* For antlered deer with 8 to 10 points, an additional \$500 for each point.

* For antlered deer with 11 or more points, an additional \$750 for each point.

Under this system, the fine for poached buck from a spike to seven points would be \$2,000 (\$1,000 base fine, plus \$1,000 for having antlers). The poaching of a 10-point buck would be fined at \$7,000 (\$1,000 base fine, plus an additional \$1,000 for having antlers and an additional \$5,000 (10 points x \$500 per point)). A 12-point buck would be \$11,000 (\$1,000 base fine, plus \$1,000 for having antlers and an additional \$9,000 (12 points x \$750 per point)).

Point is defined in the bill as being at least one-inch long as measured from its tip to the nearest edge of the antler beam.

Violators found illegally killing an antlered deer will also lose their ability to purchase a hunting license for an additional number of years. First time violators will lose the privilege for an additional two years; second and subsequent offenders will lose their hunting privileges for an additional seven years.

—Michigan United Conservation Clubs report

Nature's signs proclaiming the coming winter?

Squirrels gathering nuts, geese flying south early and mammals getting thick fur are all said to be predictors of the harshness of the winter to come.

Some believers also point to mice invading homes, black woolly bears, fat deer, rotund skunks, thick corn husks, leaves dropping before full color, excess numbers of nuts, thick onion skins, fruit blooming twice, crickets seen in homes, abundant spiders, and heavy production of cones on coniferous trees.

The most famous of these alleged prognosticators is the woolly bear. This caterpillar of the Isabella Tiger Moth has brown and black bands with 13 body segments. Other names given this caterpillar include, woolly worm, fuzzy bear, black-ended bear, banded woolly bear and hedgehog caterpillar. The name approved by the Entomological Society of America is the banded woolly bear.

Most citizens believe that the amount of black on the caterpillar indicates the severity of the winter—the more black, they say, the more severe. More sophisticated watchers count the body segments of black, with each of the 13 segments indicating one of the weeks of winter. Each band predicts a week of winter. Starting at the head predicts the beginning of the winter and the various weeks of the season are represented as one progresses toward the rear.

Woolly bear caterpillars spend

The Natural World

By Richard Schinkel



the winter hidden until spring. As with almost all of the nature “predictors,” the idea that woolly bear color bands predict the harshness of winter is a myth. They actually indicate how well the caterpillar ate during the late summer.

The increase in fat and fur of mammals is due to the availability of food and time to accumulate the food. Of course, the amount of forage available is due to the success of the growing season. Was the season dry or wet? Was there a frost late or early? What other factors were present?

The previous season also has an effect on this spring's production, as the buds to make the fruit were on the previous year's growth.

Some seed and food production will cause the movement of critters. We may have an influx of winter birds when the seed crop is small in Canada. Deer and turkey move to where the acorn and beech nuts are abundant. But, as a whole, normal winter preparations are being carried on by the wildlife out there and don't predict the coming season.

If more mice come into our houses, it may be more a factor of a good breeding season. The same can be said for insects. All-in-all, the longtime predictions of

the harsh or mild winter are merely myths—like the seeing the shadow of a groundhog in February.

An interesting story about predictions concerning the harshness of the winter occurred in a remote Indian reservation. The chief was to predict the winter for the tribe. Not knowing all the old traditional Indian signs—to be safe—he told the tribe it would be cold and to collect wood. To cover himself, he secretly called the U.S. Weather Service, which confirmed a cold winter.

A few weeks later, the chief again called the Weather Service and was told that it would be a very cold winter. He went back to the tribe, said it would be very cold and told them to collect more wood. To cover himself, he once again called and was told it was going to be a severely cold winter. So the tribe was told to collect as much wood as possible. Another call to the Weather Service ensued and was told to brace for an extremely severe winter.

When the chief asked how the Weather Service knew how bad the winter was going to be, he was told that they knew because the Indians were furiously collecting wood.

Bird is the word for these women

(Continued from Page 3)

olds had their first hunting experiences together.

Trish Taylor, a public-relations professional from Allegan, said she hunted rabbits as a youngster, but despite being married to a sportsman and owning a pointing dog, had never hunted upland birds.

Similarly, Kathleen Kiester of Dimondale had hunted wild turkeys and deer, but had never pointed the Model 12 Winchester she inherited from her father at flying birds. By the time the hunt was finished, Kiester had killed a pair of pheasants.

Bachelor, whose husband was away on business in China, e-mailed him a picture from her smart phone as soon as it was taken.

“This is cool,” she said, admitting that she was a little bit surprised that she made her shot. “It's different than I was expecting. I like the walking around instead of sitting in the deer blind.”

A DNR wildlife biologist gave a presentation at the event, explaining the DNR and general wildlife management.

Jones was very pleased with the way things went.

“When I started at the DNR, I wasn't a hunter and some of the guys showed me,” said the 33-year DNR veteran. “I was hoping to target single moms and first-time hunters. It worked out perfectly. We had a lot of fun.”

So much, in fact, that Jones can hardly wait to start planning next year's event.

—Michigan DNR report

Heading into the dunes: The Nordhouse wilderness area

At least once each year, in early spring or late fall, the Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area beckons me northward.

The “Dunes” are actually 3,400-plus acres of blissfully undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline—sandy beaches, high and low dunes, forests, hills, bogs, swamps, small creeks, and an inland lake.

Ludington State Park, another beautiful shoreline gem, borders to the south. The Lake Michigan Recreation Area is on the northern boundary, a unit with several rustic campground loops, all of which seem to be well taken care of, and aren't heavily used during the off season.

Native American family groups frequented the creek mouths during the non-winter months, probably for thousands of years, according to verbal histories and careful archaeological research. A wide variety of habitats and food sources supplied most of their needs. Easy canoe travel up and down the shoreline was also a positive factor.

The Recreation Area's campsites are wooded, spacious and well-positioned with regard for privacy. A trusted camping buddy and I have enjoyed pitching our tents in a loop where we're often the only campers. We then hike for miles along wind-whipped shores, picking up stray bits of trash (usually plastic) and marveling at a scenic view unblemished by human structures.

By the time our jacket pockets are full, ears and fingers are ap-

Outdoor Rhythms

By Doug Freeman



An evening beach scene at Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area.

proaching numbness. A good time to high-tail it back to the campsite, nestled behind a huge wooded dune. There we dine on a supper of canned goods and ready-to-eat delights. As darkness falls, our supply of firewood is heaped inside a regulation cement fire circle and set ablaze.

More than a few beers are downed during such sessions—summit conferences, we call them. Discussions cover a multitude of topics, from family situations to environmental politics to military history. They sometimes become colorful. Being removed from conventional, comfortable

surroundings can produce a plentiful (if somewhat raw) flow of ideas and language.

I've backpacked deeper into the wilderness area on my own on a couple of occasions. If the weather's clear, a tent isn't needed. Relaxing in your sleeping bag under the stars within a cathedral of trees is a treat to experience. It's a little scary at first, but you quickly get used to the aloneness, to the hooting of owls and noisy scurrings of small animals.

With no motorized vehicles to be heard, it's like stepping back in time with the land's first inhabi-

tants. Turn your cell phone off—you really don't need it. Save your batteries.

On one solo expedition, I slept beside a bog with a rivulet running by. An amazing amount of wildlife showed up early the next morning for a drink. Had I been hunting, I wouldn't have fired a shot. The scene was too rare and tranquil to disturb.

Another expedition took me to a hilltop clearing where the night sky was dramatically vivid with stars. A unexpected windstorm roared in off the lake just after midnight, and didn't cease until dawn. Tree limbs were snapping and thudding to the ground, causing a case of nerves that night. Sleep did eventually overcome all the commotion.

I awoke to the sight of two white-tailed does eyeing me curiously from the nearby tree line. They didn't leave when I stood to pack my gear. They didn't seem overly frightened of the slow-moving and apparently dull-witted creature that had temporarily invaded their realm. I moved off quietly in the opposite direction.

The Nordhouse Dunes and surrounding lands—owned and managed by us through federal and state governments—are precious. In some ways, they're comparable to the larger and more famous Sleeping Bear Dunes to the north.

I hope that we, as citizens, will continue to provide protection for these natural areas, and for so many others. The benefits to average yokels like me are beyond measurement.

Conservation Officer Logs (10/14/13 through 10/27/13)**Online evidence—plus a capsized boat, furry squirrel hat & some “black ducks”****DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

CO Doug Hermanson tracked down a subject who had posted pictures on a social network site of two bucks that he shot last year. The pictures showed a seven-point and a 10-point buck. A check of the retail sales system revealed that the subject had purchased a firearm license and later purchased an archery license. The site indicated that one deer was taken in rifle season and the other in muzzle loader season. As the hunter had not purchased a combination deer license, he was in violation of the one buck rule. One set of antlers were seized and the subject was charged with taking an over-limit of antlered deer.

CO Grant Emery contacted a group of bird hunters in Gogebic County. The subjects stated that they were big fans of the game warden shows on television, and that it was neat to be checked in the field. CO Emery cleared the contact without any violations, but it didn't take long for CO Emery to come across game violations a short distance down the road. The CO contacted a subject with a loaded firearm on his ORV. Turns out he was part of the original contact group and was returning to meet up with his hunting party. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)

CO Jeff Panich contacted a group of waterfowl hunters. After checking all licenses, birds and guns, CO Panich observed something floating a short distance from the blind. CO Panich retrieved a cormorant from the water and asked who had shot the bird. One of the hunters confessed and stated that he was able to shoot cormorants under a federal permit that had been issued. CO Panich explained that there are certain locations, dates and times on the permits and that waterfowl season definitely isn't the time.

CO Robert Crisp contacted two people hauling firewood on a two-track in the AuTrain area. Upon making contact, CO Crisp observed an uncased crossbow on the passenger seat of the truck. The passenger stated that he had just purchased the crossbow and was able to provide a receipt from a local sporting goods store. CO Crisp asked both occupants if there were any more weapons in the vehicle and the driver stated that there may be a loaded .45 pistol behind his seat. CO Crisp checked behind the driver's seat and located a loaded and uncased .45 and an uncased .9 mm pistol. Further investigation revealed that both guns were also unregistered. Both pistols were seized and enforcement action taken.

CO Michael Evink responded to a call of an overturned vessel and people in the water. When CO Evink arrived on scene he found that all persons were out of the water and that some were being treated for hypothermia. CO Evink found that the subjects were duck hunters and that they had overloaded their vessel with people, equipment and dogs,

causing the vessel to roll over. After a short time the sunken vessel and most of the hunting equipment was retrieved.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)

CO Andrea Erratt is investigating an incident where a crossbow hunter accidentally released a bolt through his own leg, while getting ready to shoot at a deer. The subject was treated and released at a local hospital.

CO Bill Webster and **Sgt. Joe Molnar** investigated a complaint of an individual trespassing and driving through a food plot doing extensive damage to the food plot. While looking at the damage, the COs located corn and apples scattered throughout the food plot. After a short conversation, the landowner admitted to enhancing his food plot. He was ticketed for baiting in a closed county.

DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)

CO Sean Kehoe participated in a week-long trial against a subject who fired a rifle at him and sheriff's deputies when they responded to a complaint of shots fired this past April. The trial concluded with the subject being found guilty by the jury of seven out of nine counts. The guilty verdicts were for two counts of attempted murder, three counts of assault with a dangerous/deadly weapon, one count of shooting at a building and one count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. Sentencing has been set for November.

CO Holly Pennoni responded to a complaint from a hunter whose bird dog got caught in a 220 Conibear trap while they were out hunting on public land. Unfortunately, the dog died as a result of being in the body gripping trap. CO Pennoni was able to track down the trap owner and the investigation led to several more illegally set traps on dry land. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Jeff Ginn was contacted regarding a hunter harassment complaint. CO Ginn decided to pose as a hunter on a stand in the area where the harassment had been taking place. Within minutes of being on stand, CO Ginn experienced harassment in the form of the neighboring property owner driving his vehicle along the property line waving and smiling at him. The suspect was also observed transporting a loaded, uncased firearm, which was later recklessly discharged by the suspect. Upon contact with the suspect, CO Ginn was able to obtain a confession from the subject who explained he was trying to prevent the complainant from harvesting any deer. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)

CO John Huspen received a hunter harassment complaint from a waterfowl hunter. The complainant indicated the suspects urinated on the tires of his truck. CO Huspen contacted the suspects who were also waterfowl hunting. The young hunters apologized for their behavior, and



were written a ticket for hunting out of an illegal blind.

COs Jon Warner and **Mark Papineau** were on salmon spawning patrol when they observed an angler using illegal tackle. After observing for a short time, the COs contacted the suspect and took enforcement action. The suspect complained that he had received a ticket for the same exact offense just one week earlier from **CO Brian Olsen**.

While on patrol, **CO Mark Papineau** was flagged down by an individual who was deer hunting just south of the City of Gladwin. The deer hunter stated that he was hunting from a ground blind when a vehicle full of “kids” pulled into the parking area. Moments later, the individual advised that a gun went off from the parking area and he heard the bullet fly by his head. The individual advised that he confronted the “kids” and they laughed at the incident and then walked off into the woods. CO Papineau made contact with subjects matching the description. Upon discussing the incident, CO Papineau was informed that one of the subjects was a first time hunter and the other guy was trying to show him how things are done. He continued by telling CO Papineau that he removed his .22 rifle from the trunk and proceeded to show the new hunter how to make sure the firearm is unloaded. The individual advised that the magazine was already removed from the rifle, so he pointed the barrel in the direction of the woods and pulled the trigger. To his surprise, the gun went off. In addition, the new hunter was not wearing any hunter orange. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)

Sgt. Ron Kimmerly received a Report-All-Poaching (RAP) complaint where a hunter in the Shiawassee River State Game Area (SGA) saw another hunter shoot a trumpeter swan. Seven additional calls came in reference the shooting. Trumpeter swans are on the endangered/threatened list. Kimmerly contacted the suspect hunter out in the field and obtained a confession but could not find the swan. After Kimmerly met the hunter back at the field office and issued a ticket, he went back into the game area to search for the swan. Kimmerly flushed the injured swan out of the thick brush, but it could not fly and appeared to have a broken wing and was bleeding from the neck. Unfortunately the swan will die somewhere in the game area.

CO Joshua Wright received a

complaint of a person hunting out of a golf cart for deer. CO Wright contacted the hunter who had his crossbow out of the golf cart but was holding a beer in his hand. When asked for his hunting license, the hunter did not have one. Further investigation also revealed marijuana in the golf cart. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)

CO Chris Holmes received a complaint of two subjects killing three turkeys. After interviews and a search of one of the subject's homes, it was found that three turkeys were killed. The hunters had licenses for two turkeys, but not the third. An admission was obtained from the second hunter who stated he "got greedy" and killed the third turkey without a license.

COs BJ Goulette and **Ivan Perez** responded to a RAP complaint where a person heard a shot and watched a great blue heron slowly descend to the ground and was found dead. The COs located the bird, which appeared to be shot and followed their lead to the source of the shooting, a nearby farm. The COs contacted a farmer at the location who quickly admitted to shooting the heron. He reasoned the bird had been drinking at a water trough used by his cattle and there was the chance of disease transmission. CO Goulette asked why he did not just shoot to scare away the bird and he responded that he did just that and the bird flew away. He then shot again and killed the bird on the chance that it might return. The farmer was ticketed for taking a non-game bird.

CO Chris Simpson investigated an anonymous complaint phoned into the RAP line reporting a subject had several deer in his freezer and had taken an illegal bobcat. CO Simpson went to the residence and conducted an interview of the suspect while examining his four current valid deer tags. During the interview, the suspect denied taking any deer yet this fall until CO Simpson pointed out blood on the tailgate of his truck. Further discussion led to an admission of taking a doe and failing to tag the animal, even though he possessed a valid license. Noting a smell of marijuana, CO Simpson continued to question the subject and eventually seized a lock box containing a quantity of marijuana. The subject was ticketed for failing to immediately tag his deer. The

investigation continues.

DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)

COs Derek Miller and **Jason Smith** worked a complaint of subjects hunting in an area closed to hunting. After a long foot patrol, the COs located several hunting points, along with trail cameras and equipment stashed in the woods. The COs were able to obtain identification of the subjects off of the trail cameras, and after a short investigation, obtained a full confession from the involved party. Warrants are being sought through the prosecutor's office.

CO Jason Smith was patrolling the Sharonville SGA when he saw a small game hunter run from the woods back to the vehicle, hoping to leave before the CO could contact him. CO Smith was able to make contact with the hunter who was in dark clothing, black face paint and wearing a squirrel hat. CO Smith asked about the hat and the hunter stated that he had made it out of five squirrels that he had shot in the past. CO Smith asked the hunter if he thought it was a good idea to be walking around state land (while other small game hunters were out) with a squirrel on his head and not wearing hunter orange. The hunter admitted that it probably was not a good idea. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Rich Nickols assisted local police officers with a call regarding an overdue hunter and an abandoned vehicle. The hunter was located deceased on the Rose Lake Wildlife Area. The hunter apparently fell about 20 feet while climbing down from his tree stand.

DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)

CO Kris Kiel received a complaint of a boat blind chasing after and shooting cormorants. The boat blind was not stationary, and it was not hunting over duck decoys. CO Kiel met with the complainant at Lake St. Clair Metro Park who agreed to take him out to talk with the suspect. CO Kris Kiel contacted the subject and found that he was a first-time duck hunter, new to the sport. The subject had no idea what kind of ducks he was shooting at; he thought they were just black ducks and not cormorants. The young hunter was also without the proper licenses to hunt waterfowl. After educating the youth about duck identification and cormorants, enforcement action was taken.

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Black Lake's juvenile sturgeon

Black Lake is unique among Michigan's inland waters in one significant way: it is the only lake that maintains a remnant population of native lake sturgeon large enough to support a recreational fishery.

The February spearing season on Black Lake is one of Michigan's most unusual (and festive) fishing opportunities.

But just how large that sturgeon population is—and how much help it needs to continue to support that recreational fishery—was the focus of a recent three-week survey effort by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fisheries Division this August.

In short, DNR fisheries managers wanted to figure out what's going on with the sturgeon population in the 10,000-acre Lake Huron watershed lake. Fisheries biologists wanted to know how the thousands of sturgeon stocked in the lake over the course of the last dozen years had fared.

"It's mostly a stocking evaluation, looking at juveniles," explained Ed Baker, the DNR fisheries biologist who runs the Marquette Fisheries Research Station and has been working on sturgeon since 1995. "It's a basic mark-and-recapture survey."

The DNR dispatched three crews of fisheries technicians to survey the lake with gill nets. Each crew fished two 1,200-foot gillnets—600 feet of six-inch mesh and 600 feet of eight-inch mesh—for four days a week. They set nets, let them fish for an hour, and then returned to them to check and see what showed up.

"We caught 281 unique lake sturgeon," Baker said. "The majority of those were juvenile fish. The smallest fish we caught was around 22 inches; we guess that's a three-year-old fish. The fish in that size range were stocked in 2010 or 2011. They're really growing quite rapidly."

Many of the juvenile fish had coded-wire tags in their snouts, but DNR staff cannot gather any data from those tags without removing them. Fish captured in the survey were also marked with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags so that, in the future, any fish handled can have that information collected electronically.

The largest fish caught in the survey measured 73 inches. The largest captured with a coded-wire tag was a 52-incher, Baker said.

Of the fish that measured 52 inches or less—252 total—about half had coded-wire tags. Still, the DNR will be able to tell whether the untagged fish came from hatchery stock or were naturally produced, Baker said.

It will take some time to analyze all the data, Baker said. Part of the assessment is designed to make sure the DNR isn't stocking too many for the lake to support.

Overall, Baker said he was pleased with the survey. Two sturgeon died during the activity—there is almost always some mortality associated with gill nets—but the large mesh used allowed the lake's smaller fish to escape unharmed.

Black Lake is part of the Cheboygan River Watershed (which includes Burt Lake and Mullet Lake), but is isolated from the rest of the watershed by the dam on the lower Black River. The dam, built around the turn of the 20th century, trapped the sturgeon that were upstream of Lake Huron in the lakes when it was closed. Now, more than a century later, that remnant fish population—with a helping hand from the DNR—continues to provide a unique recreational fishing opportunity to Michigan anglers.

For more information on Michigan's lake sturgeon, visit www.michigan.gov/sturgeon.

—Michigan DNR report

Final Shot



Up in Michigan

The "general store and post office with a high false front" is just one landmark in Horton Bay, Michigan, which figured prominently in several of author Ernest Hemingway's short stories. Hemingway, who as a boy summered with his family on Walloon Lake southwest of Petoskey, wrote about the small village in various stories, including "Up in Michigan," "The End of Something" and "The Three-Day Blow." The town, nestled on Lake Charlevoix, was also the scene of Hemingway's 1921 marriage to first wife Hadley Richardson. Horton Bay was once a lumbering center during the late 1800s, but eventually faded into small cluster of buildings that includes the general store, blacksmith shop, a couple of inns and several cottages. Built in 1876, the Horton Bay General Store, 05115 Boyne City Road, is currently owned by Chip Lorenger, who along with his late wife, Claudia, has owned the business for more than 14 years.

European frog-bit: DNR battles new invasive species

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Division is leading response efforts to control a new aquatic invasive plant—European frog-bit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*).

Until recently, this free-floating plant had only been reported in a few localized sites in the southeastern Lower Peninsula. Through recent statewide monitoring efforts, this species has been detected in Saginaw Bay, Alpena and Munuscong Bay in Chippewa County.

This new invasive was detected as a result of an Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) pilot project funded through a federal

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant. The project relies on collaboration with partners, including Michigan State University and Cooperative Weed Management Area groups.

Using the new State of Michigan's Rapid Response Plan for Aquatic Invasive Species—developed jointly by the DNR, DEQ and MDARD—these new reports were verified, an on-site assessment was conducted and a response plan was formulated. Control measures are under way, including physical removal (1,500 pounds removed beginning in mid-September) and trial treatments with herbicides.

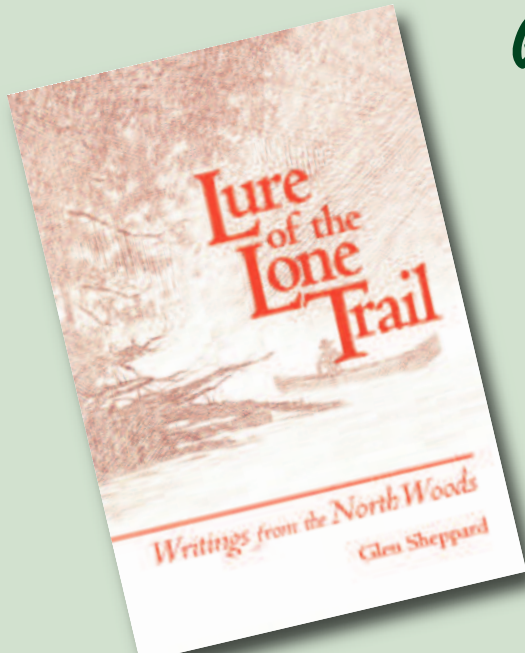
"Responding quickly to a new invasive species is critical to increasing our chances of success, and it requires a well-organized, collaborative effort between multiple agencies and other partners,"

said Wildlife Division chief Russ Mason.

Education, outreach and future control activities are being planned with local stakeholders and partner groups.

European frog-bit—which resembles a miniature water lily (lily pad), with leaves about the size of a quarter or half-dollar—was accidentally released into Canadian waters between 1932 and 1939, and has since spread throughout Ontario, New York, Vermont and other eastern states. It forms extremely dense vegetative mats that cover the available open water surface. Frog-bit shades out submerged native plants, reducing invertebrate and plant biodiversity, disrupts natural water flow, inhibits watercraft movement and may adversely affect fish and wildlife habitat.

—Michigan DNR report



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