The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been getting more reports of grass carp being captured by commercial fishermen in the San-dusky 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 re-leased 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 require-ments of native species.

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-treatment process when their eggs are developing, which may not be 100 per-cent effective. Michigan has prohibited live possession of grass carp since 1980, and continues to ban use in public or private waters in other states with con-nections to the Great Lakes. The DNR Fisheries Division has been actively working with commercial anglers in Lake Erie to re-move and report any grass carp they capture in their nets. Fish that appear to be fertile are analyzed to de-termine reproductive development. The division 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 im-prove the Asian carp control program and to prevent the introduction of an Asian carp.

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

North Woods Notes

Frank Koscziel (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.

New Michigan “fracking” rules proposed

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has proposed new rules that would re-quire more monitoring and re-porting of high-volume hydraulic fracturing. Regulators said they are re-sponding to the public’s growing concern about the controversial oil and gas exploration process with the updated environmental regulations.

“(Michigan citizens want) as-surances that our regulatory pro-gram will be protective of the public health and the environ-ment,” said DEQ Director Dan Wyatt, “so we ... feel it’s impor-tant to update our hydraulic frac-turing regulations to strengthen the environment.”

The new regulations—which could be in place within six to nine months—would require hy-drofracturing operations using more than 100,000 gallons of fluid to use the state’s water with-drawal 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 as-sessment tool, which uses com-puter modeling to predict the impact a proposed water with-drawal would have on nearby water resource volumes. The pro-posed 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 the 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 work through the rule-making 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 pushed ahead

Graymont Inc. has asked the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for an OK to acquire 10,000 acres of state-man-aged forest in northern Mackinac County near the village of Rexton. The proposal includes approxi-mately 7,320 acres for an under-ground mine, 1,780 acres for two separate surface mines and an op-tion to purchase 2,940 acres for the potential development of a lime-stone processing plant.

It also includes the DNR re-taining a state-managed surface easement on the underground mine portion (with the exception of 1,500 acres for a public mineral resource protection infrastructure) so that the property continues to be managed for timber resources and open for public recreation.

“In the coming weeks, the DNR will process the application and it will be reviewed following standard DNR policy and proce-dure,” said Kerry Wieber, the agency’s forest land administrator. The application will also be reviewed by the DNR’s Minerals Management Unit. Recommendation will be made to DNR Di-rector Keith Creagh, who will make the final decision on the proposal and reveal it at a future (Continued on Page 3)
North Woods Notes

(Continued from Page 1)  

NRC MEETINGS: The December 12 Michigan Natural Resources Commission meeting will be held at the Michigan State University Diagnostec 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 340 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. Environmental activists have called for the DEQ to string up at Roscommon, or Atlanta.

SQUELCH THOSE ENGINES: Officals of Washnaton 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 dam-

ORTONVILLE RANGE: The 200-yard shooting range at Or
tonville could be closed due to the construction of new restrooms. Users are encouraged to call range staff at (488) 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.mid reservat ions.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 quar-

The #1 business in the north woods

By Glen Sheppard

If—as some 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 were strung up at Roscommon to Luzerne to Mio to Lewiston and then to At-

Ortonville Range:

The December 12 Michigan Natural Resources Commission

mixte

Other than a couple of Mexico. Others have become permanent residents of parks, golf courses, suburban developments and other human habitats. In most 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.

UBIQUITOUS HONKER:

Once threatened with dwindling populations, the Canada goose is now one of the best-known birds in North America—found in every con-

tiguous 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 north-

ern regions and flew south when cold weather arrived. This cycle con-

tinues, but due to changing weather, human settlement and farming patterns, many have begun to alter their migrations. Some have short-

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lieved and that 3.5 parts per billion of the substance in drinking water poses a 1 in 100,000 residual cancer risk.

DEQ proposes new rules on hydraulic fracturing

(Continued from Page 1)  

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

Several conservationists and environmentalists believe the DEQ has given a thumb up at least to some of the rule changes, but many say more still needs to be done to pro-
tect Michigan’s natural resources—such as requiring the disclosure of specific chemicals used in the process before permits are issued, give public involve-

ment in permitting decisions, al-

dowing local governments to control wells and permitting a hold on any new “fracking” permits until officials have a better understand-

ing of safety issues.

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

But in the other areas we visited, there were barely any hunters around to check out the new mobiles that move in every during the winter.

The DNR field men and local businessmen we talked to on Saturday 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 de-

partment 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 failed to understand the biological rea-

son 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 day and catch a big brown trout, but never catch a 5-pounder with a flash hook to land a monster salmon.

These ramblings are not intended as criticism of the DNR’s deer management program. The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund and the Michigan State Water Quality Fund and the Michigan State Parks Endowment Fund. But there is much controversy of such sales for “fracking” purposes.
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 Supe-
rior for nearly 40 miles, tower to 200 feet above the deep blue water. They reflect colors of ochre, tan and brown—sand-wiched with layers of white and green—and are surrounded by deep forests of ever-ald, black, and gold.

This fine palette of tones, shapes and textures testifies 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 glacial icing backed-and-forth across the land—scour-
ing 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 re-
treat about 10,000 years ago. Meltwater from this wasting gla-
cier formed powerful rivers and scattered rubble on outwash plains and into crevasses. The water scooped out basins and plains and into crevasses. The water continues to pound and sculpt the cliffs today, erod-
ing them inland, while enlarging the lake.

Inland lakes formed when gla-
cial outwash buried enormous blocks of ice. The ice melted over time, forming depressions that filled with water and became ket-
tilake.

Those who examine the stones along Twelve-Mile Beach will see horne din coal from an ancient sea, polished granite and quartz ronded like eggs, and disk-
shaped fragments of the Jacob-
sville Formation sandstone.

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

Covering it all is the Ordovi-
cian Au Train Formation, a harder limy sandstone that serves as a capstone and protects the under-
lying sandstone from rapid ero-
sion.

The streaks on the cliffs occur when groundwater ooze 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 north-
ward. Archic and woodland In-
dians 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 traders remained.

Today, the park offers a variety of hiking and walking opportuni-
ties, along with a full range of activities such as kayaking and canoeing, fishing, hunting, boating, canoe-
ing and sea kayaking. Private tour cruises are also available during Munsing Bay every day from June to mid-October.

In addition, winter recreation opportunities are also 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 shot-
gun.

“I was 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.

“It’s a lot of people get startled when that flush occurs right in front of 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 min-
utes 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 Depar-
tment 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 aware-
ness program—was more than happy to accommodate the pro-
gram. Jones lined up three chap-
ters 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 100,” Brosier said.

Among those who signed up was Alyssa Wethington, an intern with the Gourmet Gone Wild pro-
gram, which is designed to intro-
duce 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, Shakoob Robela, and the 22-year-
(Continued on Page 6)

—Michigan DNR photo

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

Jody Bachelder displays her first pheasant during a recent hunt.

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 crit-
ical 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 Uptgrove, 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 habitats.”

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 dis-
missed the suit last summer.

Even though oil and gas companies might win lease rights at the auction, officials said, it doesn’t mean it will allowed to drill a well on the leased parcel. The state Department of Environmental Qual-
ity’s Office of Oil, Gas and Minerals regulates the drilling and oper-
ation 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 leases,” Uptgrove said. “That revenue translates 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 Kew-
weanaw National Historic Park as either inexcusable, 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.
Grass & 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—from infesting the Great Lakes.

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 occasion 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 as they do to the Mississippi River basin. But that’s not all. We should ramp up discussions about the potential for separating carp-infested waterways from the Great Lakes, perhaps as a way to control these invasive species.

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. Illinois, which is nearby, has recently held a tall table meeting on the potential for separating 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 foundation’s grantmaking 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 the other historical programmming 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 the foundation has funded numerous other 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 in its current program emphases.

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

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 our last days here had already been spitting water for the better part of 24 hours.

But on we drove—a former college roommate and I—on the sand-covered eastern shore of Lake Michigan toward the local communities of Roscommon County. We thought we were in for the precipitation if we traveled far enough—past the blanket of drizzle just behind us. But that’s not much farther than we needed to welcome our pondside beneath our sleeping bags.

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 worked well into the early morning hours—sometimes past daybreak.

This time was no exception, except that we’re now benefitting from the influence of dancing flames and smoldering wood coals. That may be where we went wrong.

Ok, I admit it. We didn’t seem 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 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 could speak intelligently about many subjects. He is good-hearted and concerned about other people. And he has been a major figure 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 extraterritorial—often unconstitutional—government for many of our nation’s problems. My friend—and most likely I—propaganda-spewing demagogues of all stripes. He says I’m much too harsh in my criticism and should give 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 people’s intellectual gears turn on occasion and now I know 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 idea is well taken. Not all business leaders have been models of ethical behavior. Then again, neither have government officials.

Regardless—as 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, builds the jobs and generates tax revenue.

And, despite a handful of so-called “robber barons” that may have enriched themselves at the expense of many over the long term, most businesses and industries have made significant financial 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. Of many of our state parks, including Crispin, Brimley, F.H. Hoef 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—near the end of our Houghton Lake confab and temps 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 about the fine points of self-government, but hopefully we’ll each learn something from the other.

Regardless of our conversations, we’re thankful to have been able to escape the storms of life wash our common sense—or friendships—away.
Know the identifying features of what's beyond it, before firing. Loaded.

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.

4. Keep the 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

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 outing.”

The top 10 safety tips for hunters to remember are:

1. Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.

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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

Viewpoint

Ban horizontal hydraulic fracturing now

“As 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. The state of Michigan endorses fracking “if it is done right.” But more regulations without enforcement only pushes us further toward reliance on dirty fossil fuels that threaten our environment and human health.

Technologies such as tar sand processing and offshore 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’s 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 at Traverse City based Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council, which is the Grand Traverse region’s oldest grassroots energy environment.

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.

The status quo was 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 drippins” and flour to make gravy.

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

I almost believed the joke. “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, this should add a small flock of turkey 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 a diet of winter wheat, earthworms, grasshoppers and excess garden cabbages. They’d felt the cool breeze of morning, taken dust baths on sunny afternoons and roosted at night in a humble, but rafter-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 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 pragmatic, he butchered one of the freshly 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 super-charged full of adrenaline.”

I folded the turkey’s wings and stuck it 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 furnace for 20 seconds or so – a phantom attempt at escape – and then went forever still.

“Must’ve killed 1,000 chickens over the years, but I never got used to it,” said a criminal splattered 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 ambushed 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, plunged its head and the rest plunged in too. The water’s fever killed every 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 drippins for gravy that will run like a golden river down mashed-potato mountains into a cranberry sea.

I can’t wait to leave a few scattered 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)

National 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 Environmental Quality. Graymont would 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 host to a public meeting in Naubinway Nov. 12.
Nature’s signs proclaiming the coming winter?

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

Some believers also point to mice invading homes, black woolly bears, fat deer, rotund skunks, thin cow hawks, leaves dropping before full color, excess numbers of nuts, thin onion skins, fruit blooming twice, crickets seen in homes, abundant spider webs, and heavy production of coniferous cones.

The most famous of these allegorical 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, wooly worm, fuzzy bear, black-ended bear, banded wooly bear and hedgehog caterpillar. The name approved by the Entomological Society of America is the banded wooly 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.

Wooly bear caterpillars spend the winter hidden until spring. As with almost all of the nature “predicators,” the idea that wooly bear caterpillars predict the harshness of winter is a myth. They actually indicate how well the caterpillar developed over the late summer and early fall.

The increase in fat and fur of mammals is due to the availability of food and time to accumulate it. 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.

Seed and food production will cause the movement of critters. We may have an influx of winter birds with the small bird population even smaller in Canada. Deer and turkey move to where the acorn and beechnut are abundant. But as a rule, 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 a more factor of a good breeding season. The more mice, the more we have in the woods.

In all, the longtime predictions of the harsh or mild winter are merely myths—like seeing the shadow of a groundhog in February.

An interesting story about predictions concerning the harshness of winter is the history of a famous 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 an extremely cold winter. So the tribe was told to collect as much wood as possible. Another call to the Weather Service ensued and the chief was told that it was 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 eagerly collecting wood.

Bird is the word for these women

(Continued from Page 3)

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

“Then it’s cold,” she said, admitting that she was a little bit surprised that she made her shot. “It’s different than I was expecting. I like it a lot better. The wind was blowing and it felt more like sitting in the deer blind.”

A DNR wildlife biologist gave a presentation at the event, explaining that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and DNR work together to protect and manage the wildlife. Jones was very pleased with the event.

“When I started at the DNR, I wasn’t a hunter and some of the guys showed me,” said the 33-year-old DNR veteran. “I was beginning 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

Headling 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, bogs, swamps, small creeks, and an inland lake.

Ludington State Park, another beautiful shoreline gem, borders the south. The Lake Michigan Recreation Area is on the northern boundary, a unit with several rustic campgrounds, 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 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 better—is replaced by a more scientific 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.

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**DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

CO Dean Molinaro stopped a driver for a slow-moving vehicle on a two-track road near a waterfowl hatchery. The driver stated that he was transporting ducks to a local waterfowl farm. The ducks were loaded in a trailer and the driver had a large, loaded .410 shotgun behind his seat. CO Molinaro found that the ducks were waterfowl hunting, and that they had overloaded their vehicle with people, equipment, and dogs, causing the vehicle to roll over. He cited the driver for the violations of operating a waterfowl vessel and most of the hunting equipment was retrieved.

**DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)**

CO Andrea Errati 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 hospital.

**DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)**

CO Jon Warner was contacted in a week-long trial against a suspect who fired a rifle at him and sheriff’s deputies when they returned a young man to his home. The suspect had a loaded short rifle fired this past April. The trial concluded with the suspect being found guilty and guilty of possession of a firearm. The guilty verdicts were for two counts of attempted murder, three counts of assault with a deadly weapon, one count of shooting at a building and one count of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. The sentencing has been set for November.

**DISTRICT 5 (Alpena)**

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

**DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)**

Sgt. Ron Kimmery was contacted regarding a hunter harassment complaint. CO Kimmery decided to pose as a hunter on a stand in the area where the harassment had been taking place. Within minutes of being on station, the suspect experienced harassment in the form of the neighboring property owner driving his vehicle along the driveway, and a dog barking at the suspect. The suspect was also observed transporting a loaded, uncased firearm, which was later destroyed by CO Kimmery. Under contact with the suspect, CO Kimmery was able to obtain a confession from the suspect who explained he was trying to prevent the complainant from harvesting any deer. Enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)**

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 the angler in for enforcement. The suspect complained that he had received a ticket for the same offense just one week earlier from CO Brian Olsen.

**DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)**

CO Kris Kiel received a complaint of a boat blind chasing after a trumpeter swan. Unfortunately, the boat blind was not stationary, and it was not hunting over duck covers. CO Kiel met with the complainant and determined that the boat blind was not stationary, and it was hunting over duck covers. CO Kiel worked a complaint of sub–season hunting. The boat blind was not stationary, and it was not hunting over duck covers. CO Kiel met with the complainant and determined that the boat blind was not stationary, and it was hunting over duck covers. CO Kiel worked a complaint of sub-season hunting. The boat blind was not stationary, and it was not hunting over duck covers. CO Kiel met with the complainant and determined that the boat blind was not stationary, and it was not hunting over duck covers. CO Kiel worked a complaint of sub-season hunting.

**DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)**

COs Derek Miller and Jason Smith worked a complaint of sub-season hunting. After a long foot patrol, the COs located several hunting points, along with trail cameras and found several hunting stands and tree stands. The COs were able to obtain identification of the subjects hunting. After a short interview, a copy of the interview, obtained a full confession from the involved party. Warrants are being sought throughout the area for the suspects.

**DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)**

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 the hunter to come across game violations and questioned him about 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.
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 spawning 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 stock 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 caught 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 fish 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 Muller 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

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 habitats.

— Michigan DNR report

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THE NORTH WOODS CALL

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, 8515 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.