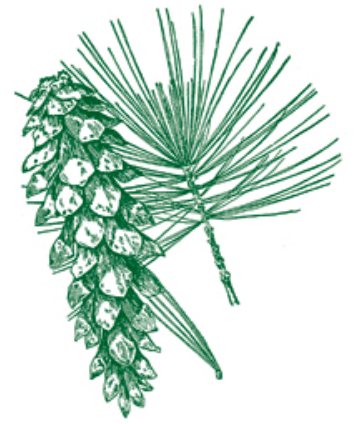




**“The newspaper for people
who love the north”**



Early February 2014
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Digital Delivery



Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



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Sierra Club weighs in on wolf hunt ballot issues

The Michigan Sierra Club wants to keep voters involved in the state's wildlife decision-making.

The organization is supporting one citizen petition drive and opposing another—both of which are linked to Michigan's controversial wolf hunt.

The group's 18-member executive committee in January voted unanimously to support a petition drive undertaken by Keep Michigan Wolves Protected (KMWP) to repeal Public Act 21 of 2013 and to oppose a separate effort launched recently by Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) to block voters from having a say over hunting and other wildlife decisions.

"Many citizens do not want wolves hunted. We believe they should have a voice," said Marvin Roberson, Michigan Sierra Club forest ecologist. "We believe that the values of a majority of Michigan citizens should be heard on this and future wildlife issues."

The Sierra Club and some other environmental or-

ganizations have historically advocated for keeping the voice of the public in natural resource management decisions, because wildlife and other state natural resources are owned by Michigan's citizens.

Both current petition drives were launched in the wake of the successful effort by KMWP to give voters an opportunity to ban wolf hunting. The group early last year gathered enough petition signatures to place the question before voters this November. But moves by the Michigan Legislature, Gov. Rick Snyder and most recently MUCC are attempting to thwart any vote to ban wolf hunting.

The MUCC-supported citizen initiative, called Citizens for Professional Wildlife Management (CPWM), would go a step further and place all future decision-making on hunting and other wildlife issues entirely in the hands of Lansing lawmakers and the politically appointed Michigan Natural Resources Commission—and out of the hands of voters.

(Continued on Page 2)



Wolf Petitions

Michigan's wolf population continues to be the center of controversy as competing petition drives call for both a citizen voice in managing the animals and leaving such decisions up to scientists and "expert" bureaucrats. Conservation groups are also coming down on various sides of the issue as supporters of both approaches juggle for political advantage (see story at left).

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THE NORTHERN WOODS CALL

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953

MUCC applauds governor's conservation

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) says Gov. Rick Snyder is continuing to move Michigan conservation priorities forward.

Following Snyder's recent state-of-the-state address, MUCC Executive Director Erin McDonough said the governor's commitment to seek funding to address the Great Lakes, inland lakes and terrestrial invasive species will build on past successes and help protect Michigan's high-quality natural resources, the Great Lakes region and industries that depend on these resources.

Several years ago, sportsmen

and women in Michigan identified five top priorities, according to the MUCC. These include habitat, access, recruitment & retention, protecting rights and invasive species. Throughout his tenure, Snyder has worked with the state legislature and many other partners to successfully move these critical issues forward, the organization said.

Examples, according to the MUCC, include:

Improving habitat: In 2011, the governor signed a bill which enabled volunteers to help the DNR make needed habitat improvements on public lands.

Preserving access: Depart-

ment of Environmental Quality Director Dan Wyant protected the ability of the public to walk and fish along the Great Lakes shoreline—a public right that few states other than Michigan have.

Enhancing recruitment and retention: The governor signed the "Hunter Heritage" bill package, which allows more youth to get into the fields and forests with their families.

Protecting rights and outdoor heritage: In 2013, Snyder supported the Scientific Wildlife Management bill package (see Page 1 story above) to make sure wildlife decisions are made based

(Continued on Page 2)

Crawford oil & gas lease request

Core Energy LLC of Traverse City has requested a direct, non-development oil and gas lease in northern Michigan's Crawford County.

The lease would cover Michigan Department of Transportation oil and gas rights located within Section 6, T28N, R03W in Maple Forest Township. It contains a total of 0.85 acre, "more or less," according to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The area in question is further identified as "the part of Parcel 2 of Control Section 204000, Valuation Map V12EM/SO54, former Penn Central railroad right-of-way, previously known as The Michigan Central Railroad Company—Mackinaw Branch—lying within the SE1/4 NE1/4.

A nondevelopment oil and gas lease classification does not allow for use of the surface in the production of oil and gas and protects the valuable surface features of the parcel, while also protecting the people of the state from drainage of the oil and gas resource without compensation.

Written comments on the proposed lease may be submitted by February 8, 2014 to the Minerals Management Manager, DNR, P.O. Box 30452, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7952.



Another State-Record Catfish

—Michigan DNR photo

A new state-record flathead catfish was caught Jan. 13 by Dale Blakley of Niles. Blakley was fishing for crappies on Barron Lake in Cass County when he nabbed the giant fish, which weighed 52 pounds and measured 46.02 inches. It was the second time the record has been broken in less than two years.



North Woods Notes

ECOLOGY & ECONOMY: The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) says it continues to enhance and improve environmental quality, while at the same time participating as "a full partner" in Michigan's economic recovery. Eco-friendly monitoring and oversight need not come at the expense of economic growth, Dan Wyant, DEQ director, told M-Live's *Greening of the Great Lakes* host Kirk Heinze recently. The two can effectively co-exist, he said, especially if outdated or unnecessary rules and regulations are either streamlined or eliminated. When it comes to such challenges as "fracking" in oil and gas development, Wyant said, "We have heard loud and clear from the public. Michigan has had a model program for monitoring hydraulic fracturing, but we are looking at even more stringent regulations with respect to water quality and water use."

PROTESTERS FOILED: An Ingham County circuit judge denied a motion to dismiss charges against four protesters who allegedly attached themselves to construction equipment in opposition to an oil pipeline project. The cases against the four individuals, arrested July 22 on charges of trespassing and resisting/obstructing a police officer, would go to trial as previously planned on Jan. 27, said Judge William Collette.

GREAT LAKES ICE: The ice cover on the Great Lakes is rapidly growing due to the recent invasion of arctic air, according to meteorologists. Lake Superior went from 14 percent ice cover on Jan. 1 to 37 percent on Jan. 10. Lake Michigan, meanwhile, went from 19 percent cover on Jan. 1, to 36 percent cover, Lake Huron from 32 percent to 46 percent and Lake Erie (which is much shallower than the other Great Lakes) from 25 percent to 87 percent. Blame it on the "polar vortex" they said.

SOO LOCKS CLOSED: The Great Lakes shipping locks at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan are closed to navigation for the season and are undergoing annual maintenance and repairs. More than 4,500 vessels carrying up to 80 million tons of cargo, maneuver through the locks annually, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Iron ore, coal and limestone are among the most frequently carried commodities. The Poe lock was built in 1968 and is 1,200 feet long. The MacArthur lock was built in 1943 and is 800 feet long.

INLAND LAKES CONVENTION: The Michigan Inland Lakes Partnership will host Michigan's first joint conference dedicated to the state's inland lakes. Lake enthusiasts and professionals are urged to attend the gathering at Boyne Mountain Resort in Boyne Falls on May 1-3, 2014. For more information, visit the partnership's website at michiganlakes.msue.msu.edu/convention.

OUTDOOR LIFE AWARD: The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has earned the first-ever *Outdoor Life* magazine Open Country Award, which recognizes individuals and agencies for protecting and improving public hunting access. The DNR won the award for its public-private partnership with Michigan United Conservation Clubs in the "On the Ground" program, a statewide series of volunteer fish and wildlife habitat improvement projects. In 2013, more than 140 volunteers participated in six Lower Peninsula projects.

BAITFISH RECEIPTS: Anglers who purchase and use minnows as bait are no longer required to keep baitfish receipts. Such receipts were previously used for educational and law enforcement purposes to direct anglers to places where their bait could be used, based on purchase location and whether it was certified as disease-free. Anglers today are more knowledgeable about the risks associated with baitfish use, officials said, so the decision was made to simplify the regulations.

(Continued on Page 2)



Costly Tweety Birds

Keeping the North Woods Call's winged backyard visitors in seeds and thistles seems to get more expensive each year, which means the pickings get lean sometimes between replenishing. Unstable commodity prices and shortages of some items—among other things—put upward pressure on costs. Cheaper alternatives can be found at times, but that doesn't mean our feathered friends will eat it. They seem to have definite culinary preferences and will take flight to neighboring feeders in search of something better if they feel short-changed where they're at.

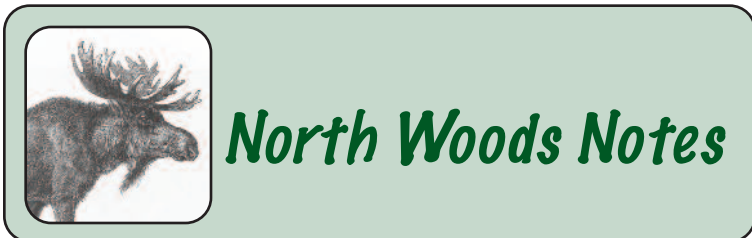
Snyder moves conservation forward

(Continued from Page 1)

on sound science.

Investing in natural resources: Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Director Keith Creagh listened to the conservation community while developing license fee restructuring—focusing new dollar investments where hunters, anglers and trappers saw the most need; more conservation officers, habitat management, research and customer service. The DNR's general fund portion of the state budget has also grown steadily since 2011.

"We look forward to working with the Snyder Administration, Michigan Legislature and conservation partners to support the newly proposed invasive species initiative, MUCC officials said.



(Continued from Page 1)

2014 NRC MEETINGS: The Feb. 13, April 10, May 8, June 12, Sept. 11 and Nov. 6 Michigan Natural Resources Commission meetings will be held at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, in Lansing. Other meetings during 2014 will be held March 13 and Oct. 9 at the Ralph A. MacMullan Center, 104 Conservation Drive on Higgins Lake near Roscommon; July 10 at the Outdoor Adventure and Discovery Center, 1801 Atwater Street in Detroit; Aug. 14 at a location yet to be determined in Munising; and Dec. 11 at the Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Avenue in Lansing. For more information about the starting times and agendas, visit the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website at michigan.gov/dnr.

2013 RIVERKEEPER: Tess Nelkie, a member of The Anglers of the Au Sable Board of Directors and an active conservationist, has received the organization's highest award—*Riverkeeper*—for 2013. A resident of Tawas since 1974, Tess is a teacher for deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Iosco County and co-owns Nordic Sports with her husband, Gary. She was recognized for her "substantial and unselfish contributions to the preservation, protection and enhancement" of the Au Sable River system. "I think we all have a responsibility to protect the outdoors we love," she said, "and an obligation to take action on issues we know are right, whether we will see the results in our lifetime, or not."

PARK SUPPORTER DIES: Emmet County Controller Lyn Johnson, who was instrumental in the acquisition and development of a new Hayes Township park at the former Camp Sea-Gull (see story on Page 3), passed away January 6, 2014—the same day the park property was officially transferred to the township.

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE: Applications are being accepted for the Porcupine Mountains Artist-in-Residence Program for spring, summer and fall of 2014, as well as winter of 2015. The program is open to artists and artisans whose work can be influenced by the unique northern wilderness setting of Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. Applications must be received by March 31. Artists will be notified on or before April 25. For more information and application materials, visit www.porkies.org/artist-in-residence.

CO HONORED: Michigan conservation officer Jason McCullough was named the National Wild Turkey Federation's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year and will also be honored Feb. 15 at the organization's annual convention in Nashville, Tennessee.

BLACK LAKE STURGEON: The 2014 lake sturgeon fishing and spearing season on Black Lake in Cheboygan County will begin at 8 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 1. For details, call the Gaylord Operations Service Center at (989) 732-3541, or visit www.michigan.gov/fishing.

Our 61st Year: Looking Back to February 3, 1971
— Excerpts from *The North Woods Call* —

Shaving razors and snowstorms

By Glen Sheppard

The *North Woods Call* may hold an auction on used razors. There must be nearly a dozen of them in drawers, briefcases, suitcases and the cabinet over the sink.

All but a couple of them have been used only two or three times. They'd be a real buy. Especially the one purchased last Tuesday in Gaylord. It has been used only once.

About the time the girls at the *Northern Star* were finishing up putting last week's paper together, I called the state police to see how the roads were back to Charlevoix. The fellow on the desk said they were recommending that no one try to leave town. In fact, he added, they had a trooper on M-32 at the U.S. 75 interchange refusing to let cars go west, north, or south.

There was only one thing to do. Buy another razor, toothbrush and change of underwear. The big briefcase with all of these emergency items was still in the closet at Charlevoix. The duffle bag with rain gear and other "might need it" stuff, including razor and clothes, was in the basement in Charlevoix.

It was the worst storm most people remember in northern Michigan. The only place I've ever seen so much wind accompany a snowstorm was in the Arctic and sub-Arctic.

It was the high wind, not the snow, that paralyzed the northwestern part of the state last Tuesday through Monday. Winds up to 89 knots were unofficially reported coming in off Lake Michigan.

Sonny Lang said it took him three hours to drive the last eight miles from Boyne City to Charlevoix, behind a county snow plow, Tuesday afternoon. The plow was repeatedly stopped by up to eight-foot drifts.

Schools in Charlevoix and Emmet counties were closed all week. Hard-working county road crews could not unplug the back roads. Farmers were complaining that their cream was spoiling. Due to the wind-blown snow, visibility was often zero, from Tuesday through Monday. Road commissions did not dare send their drivers out on the road, for fear they would run into cars they couldn't see.

But, actually, the storm wasn't bad from about

Kalkaska or Lake City east. The worst of it was along the Lake Michigan shore, all the way from Wilderness State Park south to nearly Muskegon.

At Petoskey, the storm brought in a new record for snowfall. Jim Doherty's more than quarter-century record shows that the more than 100 inches of snow logged by Feb. 1 this winter is more than has ever fallen by that date in Petoskey. In January, alone, more than 55 inches fell. At Boyne Falls, snowfall as of Feb. 1 added up to about 150 inches.

And way up the lakeshore, at isolated Good Hart, one of those classic storm stories unfolded. Petoskey State Police teamed up with an Emmet County Road Commission crew to batter a hole up M-31, north of Harbor Springs toward Cross Village, through 12-foot-high drifts, when word was received that Mrs. Wilbur Kurburski was about to become a mother. The call came through at 2:45 a.m. Wednesday. At 6:20, the troopers and Mrs. Kurburski reached the hospital at Petoskey. The doctor recorded the delivery at 6:21 a.m.

Most northerners appeared to take the storm in good humor—especially the school kids and teachers.

The only real loss was in wildlife. No one will ever know how many thousands of birds froze to death in the high winds, many of them birds that have been lured to the unnatural winter environment of the north woods by the good intentions of people with bird feeders.

Deer, rabbits, squirrels and grouse (what few of them are left) must have suffered horribly. The wind chill factor for a well-fed, well-dressed human, was more than 50 below zero. What it was for hungry animals is anyone's guess. Maybe a day of the high winds wouldn't have been extremely serious, but six straight days had to be too many.

There's still a lot of winter left—at least three months in much of the north country.

Unless the January thaw comes on strong in February, thousands of forest creatures are going to have a lot bigger problem than owning one more razor they didn't need in the first place.

Sierra Club weighs in on wolf hunts and ballot issues

(Continued from Page 1)

"Our leadership from throughout the state felt strongly that stewardship of Michigan's natural resources and wildlife has a long tradition of being held in the public trust and that removing voters from any decision-making in how these resources are managed is not the Michigan way," said David Holtz, Sierra Club Michigan Chapter chair. "Those who are working to take democracy out of wildlife protection would like us to believe this is all about science. It's not about science. It's about politics and privilege. Michigan's natural resources belong to the people, not to politicians or special interests."

Merle Shepard, chairman of CPWM, disagrees. "This is about making sure that decisions about fish and wildlife management are made by relying on sound science and the recommendations of biologists," he said, "not activists, or television commercials."

In 2012, the Michigan Legislature passed Public Act 520, which added the wolf to the list of game species in Michigan. Sierra Club opposed the legislation, because it failed to follow through on commitments under the state's wolf management plan to begin scientific studies related to proper management of the wolf. Almost immediately upon passage of Public Act 520, KMWP launched

a petition drive. The effort succeeded in collecting enough signatures to place a referendum on the law on the ballot in 2014. This would have allowed Michigan voters to either approve or overturn the legislative decision to add wolves to the list of game species.

However, in a move many say was designed solely to thwart any vote on wolves as a game species, the Legislature passed and Gov. Snyder signed into law Public Act 21 of 2013. This allowed the Natural Resources Commission (NRC)—as well as the Legislature—to add species to the game list. It also gave the NRC sole authority over issues regarding fisheries management. KMWP then initiated a second referendum petition challenging PA 21 to reverse what is seen as a cynical move to interfere with a vote of the people on the referendum to repeal PA 520.

The citizens initiative petition

drive launched by MUCC mirrors PA 21, except that it includes a \$1 million appropriation. As a citizen's initiative, MUCC is seeking to collect enough signatures to bring this measure directly to the Legislature, which can approve the initiative without going to a vote of the people. The inclusion of an appropriation in this measure also means the provisions transferring authority to the NRC to set game and fish species in the citizen's initiative would remove any opportunity for referendum and a vote of the people.

Erin McDonough, executive director of the MUCC, said the initiative will show "that the people of Michigan believe in using biology to make fish and wildlife decisions" and provides the resources to make scientific fisheries decisions by making sure the DNR can respond rapidly to aquatic invasive species like Asian carp."

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



Also follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Blogger

Camp Sea-Gull is now a Hayes Township park

The former Camp Sea-Gull property along the north shore of Lake Charlevoix officially became a Hayes Township park on the morning of January 6, 2014.

With 1,400 feet of lake frontage, the 20-acre site offers public access to the lake for numerous recreational opportunities, with a number of the camp's facilities slated for public use and year-round enjoyment.

Township officials plan to open the property to the public immediately for things like Lake Charlevoix access for ice fishing, but many of the steps required to convert the property from a private camp to a public park will take time.

"Some of the buildings need to be removed, and some will be renovated for public use," said Township Clerk Marlene Golovich. "We'll be enlisting the help of community volunteers for some of this work, but we'll also be applying for development funds in order to develop public recreation facilities."

Township Supervisor Ethel Knepp said that the manager's residence on the property will be retained, and that the township plans to employ an on-site manager. "We might not be able to make that happen right away," Knepp said, "but it's an important part of our long-term plan."

Hayes Township officials received a lot of help from the late Emmet County Controller Lyn Johnson and Parks and Recreation Director Laurie Gaetano in planning for the acquisition and development of the park. Emmet County has a long and successful track record of protecting and enhancing recreational properties, including Camp Petosega on the shore of Pickerel Lake.

"When Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC) Executive Director Tom Bailey introduced us to the Emmet County staff, it was like 'off to the races' after that," said Golovich. "It really was. It



The shoreline of Lake Charlevoix at Camp Sea-Gull is part of the new Emmet Township park.

was so positive. They kept telling us, 'You can do this, you can do this.'"

With a price tag of \$4.2 million, the project was daunting, but together, the group came up with a plan.

In 2012, Hayes Township Parks Committee member Anne Kantola worked with Golovich and the LTC's Ty Ratliff to submit a grant request to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF). Funded by revenues from oil, gas and minerals on state-owned land, the fund makes grants to help local units of government acquire land for public recreation and conservation.

In December of 2013, the Camp Sea-Gull project was recommended for funding and a \$3,750,000 MNRTF grant. The 25 percent local match requirement was met with \$500,000 from the township's recreation fund and some \$672,000 raised in a public fund raising campaign with help from the conservancy. More than 260 individuals, families,

and foundations contributed toward the project.

"The Camp Sea-Gull land acquisition is a great example of the type of project the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund makes possible" said Steve DeBrabander, manager of recreation grants for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "This project will provide the public with additional high quality access to Lake Charlevoix for swimming, boating and other outdoor recreation uses. The DNR is proud to be a partner in this project."

The acquisition of Camp Sea-Gull fulfills a long-term dream of Hayes Township.

"Through a 2008 township survey, our residents identified the need for more lake access as a high priority," said Knepp.

Since that survey, township officials have been actively looking for property to acquire, with a special interest in a place to launch small boats. When the Camp Sea-Gull property came on the market, the township held a series of public hearings and determined that there was widespread support for acquisition of the site.

One of the advantages is that the property is just across the Boyne City-Charlevoix Road from the 75-acre Nathan "Barry" Driggers Preserve, which was acquired through a 2007 grassroots fund raising campaign.

"The people of Hayes Township have proven over and over again that they want to establish a healthy balance between land development and land protection," said Bailey. "This new public park will be a tremendous resource for people who live in the township and those who come here to visit."

Bailey also noted that the previous owners of the Camp Sea-Gull property, the Schulman family, deserve a lot of credit for sticking with the partners through what ended up being a three-year process.

"We wouldn't have the property to consider as a park site if the Shulmans had not provided good stewardship for the land," he said, "and the sale would not have been possible without their patience."

"Camp Sea-Gull has been part of the Schulman family since 1955, offering families and children the opportunity to experience our beautiful northern Michigan outdoors," said a representative from the Schulman family. "That legacy can now continue indefinitely under the township's stewardship."

Hayes Township is planning for a June 7 open house at Camp Sea-Gull. Look for an announcement with details soon.

—Little Traverse Conservancy



Paved pathways and rustic trails are available to take hikers through the woods and along the shore of Lake Charlevoix at Camp Sea-Gull.

—Little Traverse Conservancy photos



North Woods Story: Sister and the Eagle

By Judy Blanchard

Summer in northern Michigan will usually see me on the back waters of the Big Manistee River near Mesick.

As our responsibilities to home and family grew, my sister and I savored the occasional weekend when we could have some time together and enjoy our time away. We spent hours quietly exploring the river banks, snorkeling around snags of driftwood and evenings at the campfire solving the problems of the world.

One particular Sunday afternoon, the last day of our little vacation, as my sister was in the camper changing from wet suit to dry travel cloths, I was standing on the end of the dock air-drying in the beautiful warm sunshine, saying goodbye to the river and asking God for guidance and strength with some difficulties in my life.

I finished my little prayer and turned my face up to the sun and there just above me—silently hovering—was an eagle. He was so close that I could see his eyes as they scanned the water. I took it as a sign that my prayer had been heard and I felt a calmness come over me.

As quietly as I could, I called to my sister to come outside and see. Since eagles were not as common then as they are now, she rushed out of the camper and down the dock to marvel at the sight above us.

We "ooh'd" and "ahh'd" as this stunning creature soared above and slowly faded to the far shore. We "goshed" and "holy cowed" as we watched it disappear.

So there was my sister, hair dried and styled to perfection, make-up just so, wearing a freshly pressed t-shirt, hands on hips and her underwear!

"Nice underwear." I said.

At first she looked around to see who on earth I might be talking to—then it dawned on her to check her own attire

Her big brown eyes got even bigger; her mouth dropped open.

"Oh my gosh!" she gasped.

She sprinted up the dock, yanking the tails of her shirt down almost to her knees and, in a flash of legs and undies, dashed into the camper.

So, not only did the Lord hear my prayer and give me a wondrous experience with an eagle, he also showed me he also has a sense of humor!

Kalamazoo resident Judy Blanchard and her family have spent many summers on the Big Manistee River near Mesick.

**Tell your friends
about the
North Woods Call**

Opinion

Quote Box

"Most men, it appears to me, do not care for nature, and would sell their share in all her beauty, for as long as they may live, for a stated and not very large sum."

—Henry David Thoreau

The slow ride to fuel efficiency

With all the brouhaha about energy efficient cars and lessening our dependence on fossil fuels, we wonder why a nation that could put a man on the moon nearly 45 years ago is taking so long to bring an affordable engine to market that eliminates our need for high-priced gas and oil.

Isn't space-aged science capable of this yet, or could it be that corporations and politicians see too much money to be made by slowing progress and milking the status quo for as long as possible?

We don't know the answer to this conundrum, but there has been talk about such engines for decades. There have even been various experimental models boasting solar and electrical power, hydrogen fuel cells and other energy sources, but they seldom seem to roll off assembly lines in sufficient numbers and at prices that make the dream a reality.

Those energy efficient cars that have been produced have largely been either unaffordable to the average person, or poor substitutes to those powered by traditional internal combustion engines. It seems like we could do better than this.

We've heard occasionally that some such engines have been developed, but the oil and gas industry—not to mention current industrial automobile manufacturers—have ways of squelching such inventions before they see the light of day.

This may simply be an urban legend fueled by misinformation on the Internet and other questionable sources. But mankind and his technology have been able to do some pretty amazing things over the years.

Why can't we make a better automobile?

Calvin "Rusty" Gates Jr.

We recently received our copy of the late fall 2013 *Riverwatch*—a newsletter published periodically by The Anglers of the Au Sable.

On the cover was a photograph of what appears to be a bronze plaque honoring the late Rusty Gates.

Try as we might, we couldn't find any reference to the cover illustration within the newsletter, so we assume that the plaque will be placed at Gates Au Sable Lodge near Grayling, or somewhere along the river that Rusty loved.

It's a handsome marker, which features a sculpted relief of Mr. Gates and the following

words of tribute:

In memory of Calvin "Rusty" Gates Jr., 1955-2009.

A quiet man who loved the Au Sable and a warrior who fought against those that did not.

An excellent fly fisherman who spent his life helping those who were not.

A leader who made a community that carries on in his memory.

This quiet river attracts wanderers; leaves them lovers, protectors.

It's a fitting memorial to one of northern Michigan's premier conservationists.

Thank you, Rusty.

Conservation: No isolated island

We're not sure how many of you there actually are—we've only heard from a few—but there seems to be at least a small bit of consternation over the subject matter covered in certain *North Woods Call* editorials.

"Too political," some have said. "Inappropriate for the *Call*," others claim.

We have tried on various occasions to explain why we believe some of these topics are important to civic debate, self-government and ultimately the conservation of natural resources. But some of you apparently don't want to hear it, or simply aren't buying the reasoning behind our editorial decisions.

That is your prerogative.

Yet we must remember that this is a newspaper—one with a rich history of diverse editorial opinions. As such, it is our duty to think broadly about a range of issues that impact public policy, leadership and collective decision-making.

If you don't agree with our editorials, or our choice of topics, you are free to respond with your own thoughts and ideas—as some of you already have.

That's precisely what a healthy civic discourse is all about.

Believe it or not, we don't particularly like political arguments—there's far too much irrational bias, emotion and misinformation in them to be productive. And we're certainly not trying to annoy anyone by asking you to read about things you'd rather not.

But occasionally it seems a wider perspective is needed, so we might wander off the nature preserve from time-to-time and explore connections that some may consider far afield. So what?

Good governance begets good stewardship and the conservation of natural resources is not an island unto itself.

Slipping into Music City: Wintertime in the South

You think winter's tough in the north woods?

Try getting around on snow and ice in the southern United States—say Tennessee.

My friend—a native of Nashville—calls it "Hillbillies on Ice." I call it weird.

I learned about these challenges one strange February night on Interstate 40 in middle Tennessee. My American Airlines flight had landed at Nashville's International Airport around 8:30 p.m. Temperatures were dropping fast and a drizzly rain began to fall as the big jet touched down and taxied to the terminal gate.

No big deal. I'm from Michigan. I'm used to slick pavement and winter driving. My biggest concern was finding the Holiday Inn and getting a good night's sleep. The next day would bring long hours in the edit suite at Elite Post on Music Row, putting the finishing touches on the Kellogg Foundation's sustainable agriculture video.

I stopped by the Avis desk and picked up a small rental car. Then I threw my luggage into the trunk and headed out for the 20-minute drive into Music City, and a warm bed at the Holiday Inn.

Traffic was light as I left the airport. I was pleased to be keeping such a tight schedule. At this rate, I'd have plenty of time to go over the edit script before turning in for the night.

That's when I saw it—up ahead in the westbound lanes of I-40. The prettiest display of colored lights I'd seen since Christmas. Flashing yellows. Blinking reds. Sparkling whites. All accented by an icy glare on the road. By the time I realized what I was getting into, I was far past the last exit ramp, rolling down a long incline toward a huge, six-lane parking lot.

At least it looked like a parking lot. There were cars, trucks, buses and vans everywhere—lined up like summer tourists at nearby Opryland. I lifted my foot from the accelerator and pressed hard on the brake pedal, sliding to a not-so-graceful stop behind a pickup truck carrying two middle-aged men armed with open beer bottles. I was relieved to stop before I rammed the vehicle, because it was one of those legendary trucks with a gun rack bolted over the rear window.

At any rate, all three westbound lanes were clogged as far as I could see. In a matter of seconds, I was imprisoned in the middle lane of a busy interstate highway, boxed in tighter than Carrie Underwood's blue jeans by several other vehicles that came sliding in behind me.

"Must be an accident," I told myself, reaching to shut off the ignition. "They'll probably have it cleared in a few minutes."

I opened the car door and stepped outside. It's a good thing I had a tight grip on the metal doorframe, or I would have been stretched out on the cold, hard pavement with my feet wiggling in the air. Several other people

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



were also dancing around on the slippery blacktop, like clumsy Olympic figure skaters going for the gold in street shoes.

I climbed back inside my car and started the engine. The heat felt good on my chilled bones, so I let the motor run for 15 minutes or so. Not being particularly interested in dying of carbon monoxide poisoning on a Tennessee highway, I eventually turned the motor off and waited until I started to shiver before switching it on again.

After the first hour, I was getting a bit antsy.

"What's going on up there?" I asked the driver of the car parked next to mine, who seemed rather unconcerned with the delay.

"Probably just the weather."

"A little ice on the road? C'mon. You've got to be kidding."

He wasn't. We sat for another hour. Then another. Then another.

None of the other drivers seemed to think it was unusual to be sitting still on Interstate 40 in the middle of the night with no indication that the traffic would ever start moving again. They just sat patiently in their cars and trucks and buses and vans—an apparently typical winter night on the Nashville freeway.

After the fifth hour of starting and stopping and re-starting the car—too tired to stay awake and not wanting to fall asleep—I was sure I was either on Candid Camera, or lost in the Twilight Zone. It was surreal. I had been spinning the radio dial, listening to various news broadcasts and generally searching for a credible report about the huge traffic jam that had the city tied in knots. Nothing. Not a single mention of it on the airwaves. And nobody but me seemed to think there was anything unusual about the information blackout.

"Does this happen often?" I asked a young woman standing by the car behind me.

"No. It's just the ice," she said matter-of-factly. "We're not used to that down here, you know."

Oh, really? As if they were used to spending the night on blocked freeways in sub-freezing temperatures.

Along about 4:30 a.m., I leaned my seat back and was drifting in and out of a fitful slumber. I don't know how long I slept, but I was awakened with a start. Bright lights were shining in my rearview mirror and a loud air horn was rattling my car windows. A huge salt truck had come weaving through the traffic behind me and the driver wanted us to move our cars out of the way so he could get through.

Saved at last by a tardy truck driver and the blessed chloride that eats jagged holes in our automobiles.

As the other cars edged off the

road, I loitered between the middle and right lanes until the truck passed. Then I moved in quickly behind the huge salt spreader and followed the yellow monster through a maze of stalled vehicles. I nuzzled the back of the truck for about a mile-and-a-half—determined to hold my place—until we came to the first cars, parked smack in the middle of an open road. No accident. No barriers. No pulling to the side of the road. "Let's just stop here, Jimmy—until spring."

I still don't understand what happened that night. I passed the salt truck on the three-lane stretch ahead and had no trouble moving about 35 miles-per-hour over the ice. Within about 15 minutes, I was rolling into the Holiday Inn parking lot on West End Avenue, exhausted and bewildered. It had been more than eight hours since I entered the traffic jam and I still had heard nothing on the radio indicating that there was a problem on the highway.

I stumbled into the empty lobby and rang the bell to summon the desk clerk. Within a few minutes, I was on the elevator to the seventh floor. At the end of a long hallway, I slipped the key card into the slot and pushed open the door. I was surprised when the door caught on the end of the security chain with a loud crash.

"What the #%!?" I heard a sleepy, but startled man say from inside the darkened room.

"Oops. Sorry, " I said, as I closed the door and made a hasty retreat to the elevator. "Wrong room."

Back in the lobby, the desk clerk apologized repeatedly and set me up in a vacant suite on the fourth floor. I climbed into the elevator once again and shuffled down another long hall to the replacement accommodations. Inside, I threw my luggage on the floor and flopped onto the bed. It was nearly 5:30 a.m. and I was scheduled to be at Elite Post in less than three hours. I turned out the light and quickly fell into a hard sleep.

It was going to be a rough day—one sure to make me long for a good ole Michigan winter.

The North Woods Call

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Viewpoint**The high costs of fracking**

My husband and I recently vacationed in Roosevelt National Park in western North Dakota. We hiked through fantastically beautiful and rugged rock formations, saw herds of buffalo and antelope, and watched soaring golden eagles.

We also saw first-hand how large-scale fracking devastates rural towns and farmlands, turning them into heavy industrial sites. We saw fracking wells and facilities everywhere with barracks-like housing and trailer parks thrown up around them to accommodate out-of-state workers. Exorbitant prices for everything from rent to food often force out local residents. Crime increases and public health is impacted by increased air pollution. Unending lines of tanker trucks carrying everything from heavy equipment to toxic fracking chemicals and waste whiz through small towns and down narrow two-lane roads (similar to our county roads in northern Michigan). Noise and diesel fumes fill the air.

What really caught our attention were the “**Danger, Hydrogen Sulfide Gas...**” signs posted on gates of drilling facilities. Hydrogen sulfide (sour gas) is a byproduct of deep-shale drilling. Atop all fracking facilities was an orange flag to indicate wind direction in case of a major hydrogen sulfide leak (run upwind). The flags were even attached to street signs in residential areas near wells. Low-level leaks are quite common—we detected the rotten-egg smell of hydrogen sulfide on two occasions while there. Imagine constantly living under the threat of a possible poison gas cloud engulfing your neighborhood.

It has happened in Michigan. Christmas Eve, 2011, a valve failed at an injection well in Crawford County, allowing 80 percent hydrogen sulfide gas to spew into the atmosphere for more than four hours over much of northern Michigan. DTE Energy received numerous calls from people who thought the rotten-egg smell was coming from a gas leak in their home. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) seldom investigates leaks because hydrogen sulfide was eliminated from the Clean Air Act list of hazardous substances by powerful gas and oil lobbyists.

The insanity of fracking hit me one night as we watched the sunset in North Dakota. As darkness descended, the sky lit up with hundreds of flares from fracking wells surrounding the park. Fracking in the Bakken Shale is done for oil. Oil is more profitable than methane (natural) gas, so the gas that comes up with the oil is flared (burned) off into the atmosphere as a waste product. Meanwhile, multinational corporations such as Encana are grabbing up our state land at rock-bottom prices, clear-cutting our forests, destroying recreation and wildlife areas that provide habitat for animals and tourism dollars for residents—so they can drill for the very same gas that is considered a “waste” product and burned off into the atmosphere in North Dakota! This is insane.

It gets worse. Since they get the water for free, the fracking industry has set national records for water use and contamination here in Michigan, using 16-25 million gallons to frack each well. And they are not stopping there. Encana was recently granted two permits from the DEQ to use and contaminate 35 million gallons of groundwater. To get an idea of how much water 35 million gallons represents, stand in front of Tahquamenon Falls, the largest waterfall in our state. Roughly 5,000 gallons of water flows over the falls every second (US Forest Service estimates). Watch the water cascading over the falls for two hours. That represents the amount of water mixed with toxic chemicals and removed forever from the hydrologic cycle to frack a single well. Droughts and water shortages are becoming more common and severe. Our Great Lakes water levels are dropping. We should not allow our water to be squandered, poisoned and destroyed.

There are alternatives. Imagine what could be accomplished if our state government stopped subsidizing fossil fuel extraction and developed an energy policy to improve and expand wind and solar energy technology—we would see remarkable changes in a short time. American ingenuity is a creative and powerful force. Fracking has been banned in Vermont and in three Canadian provinces. New York State has a moratorium, and over 400 municipalities across the country—including in Michigan—have passed resolutions restricting or banning its use. We must ban fracking in Michigan.

Anne Zukowski
Don't Frack Michigan
Charlevoix

New Recruits
Thirty-one Michigan conservation officer candidates showed up Jan. 12 for the first new recruit school since 2007. The 22-week academy is being held at the Michigan State Police training facility in Lansing and successful candidates will go from there to another 18 weeks of field training.
—Michigan DNR photo

**Stranger danger: Getting to know the Au Sable**

It was a stranger to me.

I can imagine little kids yelling “Stranger! Stranger! Stranger danger!” Clearly, that is an enormous burden to put on someone, and in this case, it wasn’t even a someone, but a something. A river. The Au Sable River in northern Michigan.

Well, in my defense, I have only been acquainted with a few rivers thus far. I was born near the Mississippi River, and my recollections are few, of course. The baby pictures are cute. As a young adult, I was a newspaper reporter in a town along the Mississippi, a difficult job far away from home. My memories of that time are not that positive. Now, I live near the Detroit River, a majestic body of water, a breed onto its own.

I do have a lifelong love of a small lake near Gaylord, where my family has a cabin, and it’s a very special place for me. But even a river novice such as I can articulate notable differences between my beloved lake and a river such as the Au Sable.

Naively, I can state that fishing is a popular past-time on both bodies of water. Nature abounds in both settings, which are stunning in their very different ways. The loons and eagles favor the skies above both. But the lake’s beauty is much like a mature woman—all grown up and set in her ways. Yes, she kicks up her heels now and again, but she stays fairly serene in her northern woods.

As for the Au Sable, it’s a mysterious figure darting in the shadows, churning with dark emotion. It’s a laughing, red-haired tomboy racing across the countryside, singing a song. It’s a peaceful old man, snoozing in the warmth of the summer day, his belly rising gently in time with his snores.

But I didn’t see its beauty at first. I simply saw a stranger who was very threatening to me. You see, my husband fell in love with the Au Sable many years ago. I call it his mid-life crisis. All of a sudden, he’s spending time with strange people named “Orvis,” “Rusty” and “Spike.” He started wearing different clothing—strange rubber pants, little vests that barely covered the mid-section, funny-shaped netting hang-

New raptor group

The Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch has been formed to conduct surveys and educate people about raptors, their natural history and related conservation efforts.

For information, contact Kathy Bricker, secretary-treasurer of the organization at (231) 627-4830, or at kathyathnaturelover@gmail.com.

River Reflections

By Betsy Hayhow Hemming



ing from his back and little pouches with tiny flies stuck on them. He couldn’t visit the river enough.

Then he had the audacity to suggest that we should explore purchasing land along the river. Well, I put my foot down. What was he thinking? He swore he’d never do anything without my full support and endorsement. But enticing letters from strangers started coming in the mail, offering all sorts of lures to the river: Rustic cabins, hundreds of feet of riverfront, prime fishing areas. It was clear that he was being seduced, and I was powerless to stop it.

The unimaginable occurred: We bought our little piece of Au Sable paradise. He proudly introduced me to this vixen. Needless to say, I wasn’t amused. I was terrified. How could I compete? It didn’t help that our children were thrilled and instantly connected with the river. The land was rugged and foreign. The wild species were just that: Wild. And the river? It laughed at me! Honest, it did, that cheeky thing. It invited all my loved ones right in, and so they went. My husband wept with the joy of it.

I, on the other hand, hesitated. Slowly, oh so slowly, I began to make peace with the Au Sable. I count Mother Nature as a very special friend and clearly this river was also friends with the good mother. That was a plus for the river. The sun seemed to be a friend as well, choosing to set nicely in front of our new property most evenings, causing the ripples of the water to dance on the leaves of the birch trees.

I discovered kayaks. These mighty little vessels bring one close to the river’s many qualities. Hours can fly by as one flows down the river. The journey provides a true close-up view of the nooks and crannies carved out by the constant flow of water, along with the wildlife that enjoys all those special spaces.

A massive load of logs arrived

recently. They serve as fancy housing for the trout, and a wonderful re-use of the awesome trees of the forest. I imagine creating little islands of nature among them. The beavers had a similar idea and created a castle worthy of royalty. Sadly, they keep adding more rooms and snitch our chatty aspens when we are not looking.

Over time, I was lured into the river for a fishing jaunt. I put on the funny rubber pants, which look so much better on my husband than on me. I picked out my own favorite flies, selecting them based on the creativity of their name, not their functionality of landing fish—much to the embarrassment of my husband in front of all the fisher dudes. I defied my husband’s best instructions on how to fish. I knew how to fish. My little lake had taught me a few things! And darned if the river didn’t offer me a fish for my efforts. How I laughed. And the river chuckled with me—in a good way.

A charming temptress, the Au Sable.

The years have passed and I have settled into our little river house along the Au Sable. My children imagine their mother in her later years, a novelist inspired by northern woods and naughty rivers, strolling along the banks of the river, with dear Mother Nature at her side. I have made my peace with the Au Sable. I know that my husband will always be smitten, and I am at peace with that as well.

It’s a stranger no longer, this river. Rather, it’s a kindred spirit with plenty of attitude—the way I like my kindred spirits.

Just don’t tell my husband that I am smitten in my own special way.

Betsy Hayhow Hemming is an aspiring novelist who spends as much time as possible admiring the Au Sable River. She lives in the Detroit metro area, where she works in leadership development.

Shaking the proverbial rag doll

Mike,

Sorry about your mom. Many of us can empathize.

Nice comment on “Losing Parents” by John Richter.

Re: Richter’s viewpoint on public trust: A real eye-opener which all Michiganders need to take a stand on.

I’m taking the liberty of sending copies to my representatives as a start. Thanks to John for a very informative letter.

By the way, Mike, your incessant defense on your opinion of Obamacare reminds me of the bulldog who can’t stop shaking the rag doll.

Sincerely yours,

Norm Spring
Grand Haven, Michigan

Thanks, Norm. Better to shake the occasional rag doll than to be shaken down by deceitful demagogues, which is what our editorial comments were about in the first place. This, too, is a public trust issue. Woof.

—Rover



The Ice Men Cometh

—Michigan DNR photo

Michigan Department of Natural Resources conservation officers practice rescue techniques on a frozen lake to make sure the rescuers remain well away from the thin ice. The woods cops are encouraging outdoor enthusiasts to be cautious when going out on lakes, ponds and other bodies of water that appear to be solidly frozen. Things are not always as they appear, they say.

Free fishing Feb. 15 & 16

Michigan anglers will be able to fish without a license Feb. 15 and 16 during the state's annual winter free fishing weekend.

While residents and non-residents won't need to have an official license that weekend, all other fishing regulations will apply.

The event has been held each year since 1994 as a way to promote awareness of and better connection to the state's vast aquatic resources and fishing opportunities.

To encourage involvement, organized activities are being scheduled in communities throughout the state. A full list of these events—as well as tools to assist communities that want to plan and promote local activities—can be found online at the following address: www.michigan.gov/freefishing.

Fishin' on frozen water

Michigan anglers didn't have a lot choice about how they practiced their sport in early 2014.

With arctic weather leaving most of the state's lakes—as well as many of its rivers—frozen, it's been fish through the ice or stay home and think about fishing.

Fortunately, getting started ice fishing is relatively simple. Anglers need just three basic pieces of equipment—something to make a hole with, something to clear the slush from the hole and something with which to fish—and they're in business.

The first two are easy. Either an auger (a corkscrew-like cutting device), or a spud (an over-sized chisel) will get you through the ice. And a simple slush scoop—something that looks like a ladle with holes in the cup—will get that job done.

That leaves a beginner short just one item: fishing tackle. Anglers can fish through the ice either with hooks and lines, or spears. Ignoring the latter, the options are myriad, ranging from high-tech graphite rods and top-of-line spinning reels to simple fiberglass poles jammed into wooden-dowel handles and outfitted with a simple plastic, spring-



Getting out when the weather's nice can make ice fishing much more enjoyable says fisheries biologist Scott Hanshue.

tension spool to hold line.

Anglers can fish through the ice virtually anywhere they can fish during soft-water season, except on designated trout streams—consult the 2013 Michigan Fishing Guide for exceptions. They can fish for virtually all species, except largemouth and small-mouth bass (the season on which closed Jan. 1). And, in at least one case—spearing for sturgeon on Black Lake—there is fishing opportunity through the ice that is not available the rest of the season.

As with open-water season, opportunities range from fishing for minnows (smelt) to muskies.

—Michigan DNR report

That pesky white stuff: Part II

Drifts, avalanches and the “sublimation” of ice

Continued from last issue

We have talked about the different snow types. The one that hangs on branches on trees is called *Qali* by the Inuit people. It can be significant for critters who seek shelter under the down-turned, snow covered branches.

It is also significant in that the snow that filters through the needles gets all broken up and ends up as fine snow in a bowl-shaped depression beneath the base of the tree. This snow is called *Qamaniq* and isn't the fluffy or deep kind that animals can burrow into or beneath.

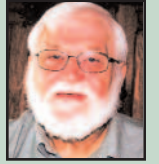
Typically, the ground beneath the tree doesn't thaw and stays frozen. Because of this, the rodents beneath the snow don't normally burrow through this layer.

Some feel that the tree benefits, as it stays dormant and not reacting to the warming of the deep *Pukak* snow (discussed last time). Trees may also benefit as the rodents don't travel beneath it to get to the trunk and girdle the bark.

With the “blizzard of 2014” we had a lot of wind and, because of this, we had major drifts that caused traffic problems. Drifts are usually not good for wildlife. The snow that makes drifts is called *Upsik*, or wind-beaten snow. The actual drift is called *Kimoaqruk*.

The Natural World

By Richard Schinkel



When drifts form, the snow crystals are finely churned and become fine as powder. When they get compressed, or settled into place, they become very hard packed. If critters—such as the ruffed grouse—get caught in them overnight, they may not be able to escape. This, of course, is true of the *Siqoqtoaq*, or sun crust snow, where rain has made an ice layer on the surface.

As kids, we loved drifts, because they were so hard you could literally walk across them—though they were a several feet deep.

The same thing happens with avalanche snow. As it rolls down the mountain or hill, it gets churned up and becomes fine powder. When it settles, it becomes extremely hard and difficult from which to escape. Because of this, they train skiers to “swim” if caught in an avalanche and get to the top. Once the snow settles around you it can quickly become as hard as cement.

It is great to understand snow, but with the Eskimos it literally can be life or death. Fortunately,

they know how to handle all kinds of snow.

As snow and snowflakes age, they go through different stages. All these stages are important to the wildlife and those living in the northern climates.

One of the most fascinating things I encountered when taking a mountaineering course in the Wind Rivers of Wyoming was the process of “sublimation.” Each morning when arising, we would have frost on our sleeping bags, because moisture would collect there. We would air them out on a branch, and the frost would soon be gone and our bags would be dry. It was far too cold for the frost to melt. The frosty ice just “sublimated” into the dry mountain air. It went from a solid (frost) to vapor.

The same thing occurred when we had ice storms. Even though the temperatures didn't get above freezing, the ice on the trees sublimated and was gone after a few days.

The next time you are out and about, think about the types of snow you may encounter.

The northern lights: “Dance of the Spirits”

By Richard Schinkel

As the days of winter give us more night than day, we spend more time in the dark.

This gives us a better chance to see the aurora borealis—or northern lights—which the Cree Indians referred to as “Dance of the Spirits.”

This phenomena, which is fantastic to experience, is most often seen near the two equinoxes. We were to experience a good one in the early part of January, but most of Michigan was cloud covered.

My first time seeing the northern lights was in high school after a football game. We met at a friend's house to go get pizza and, while waiting outside, this great glow came over the sky and a multitude of colors streamed upward.

I was very impressed. The majority of the ones I've seen since were not as great—mostly waves of greenish or blue, often with a tinge of red.

Hunters and fisherman that travel north have a greater chance of seeing this sight, because it more commonly occurs in the northern latitudes, unless we have a very strong solar flare. The aurora occur around the two magnetic poles, which roughly correspond to the arctic and antarctic circles.

The southern aurora is called *aurora australis*. Since the sunspots, solar flares, or magnetic storms are responsible for these lights, they roughly follow the sunspot 11-year cycle. We have just finished a high cycle. As electrons from the sun hit the earth's atmosphere, they show colors, depending on what atoms



The “Dance of the Spirits” illuminates the night sky over a teepee village. In Medieval Europe, the northern lights were commonly believed to be a sign from God.

are struck and at what altitude.

Green, the most common, is oxygen at about 150 miles in altitude. Red is also oxygen, at the same altitude. Blue occurs when the nitrogen atoms are hit at about 60 miles, while purple and violet with nitrogen are at a higher altitude.

Aurorae are classified as diffuse and discrete. A diffuse aurora is a featureless glow in the sky. A discrete aurora has sharply defined features, usually standing out from a diffuse aurora. These aurora vary in intensity and movement, and some people have even been able to read a newspaper from the light.

The most common discrete aurora is a curtain of waves of green—at least in the lower part of Michigan.

I am not going to swear by it, but I believe I have heard sounds from an auroral borealis. Once, with an exceptionally large one that nearly covered half the sky, I de-

tected what I would call a flowing static. Sounds have been documented from auroras, but mostly loud claps.

The University of Alaska notes that hearing an aurora would be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, occurring during maximum activity and windless nights, away from any noise.

Many travel and vacation spots advertise that you may see them when you visit. Most of these are to the north, as the chances are better.

Actually I have seen a good number in August in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and Canada. One place I believe would be very rewarding in terms of seeing the northern lights would be on Isle Royal in Lake Superior. Another good place would be on the shores of Lake Superior.

For a youngster, in particular, seeing the northern lights would be an experience not soon forgotten.

Conservation Officer Logs (1 1/25/13 through 1 2/8/13)**Wolf kills, apple baiting, fish tales, hunter orange deficiency and a bloody cigar****DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

CO Matt Eberly is investigating a complaint of a small wolf being shot in the Copper Harbor area. An unknown hunter called a local taxidermist in an attempt to sell the wolf to the taxidermist. The hunter said he wanted to continue wolf hunting and shoot a larger wolf than the one he harvested.

CO Brian Bacon reported that an individual who shot a deer at night with a crossbow was recently sentenced in Dickinson County. The individual was immediately ordered to serve five days in jail, forfeit his crossbow, pay reimbursement of \$1,000, plus fines and costs, and lose his hunting privileges for three years.

CO Jason Wicklund responded to a complaint of a wolf collar in mortality mode in Gogebic County. The CO located the signal of the collar coming from a river, but due to heavy snow and ice, was unable to retrieve it. After a few days of rain and warmer temperatures, the CO returned with wildlife personnel and recovered the collar a short distance from the bridge. The collar was cut deliberately and thrown into the river. The investigation is ongoing.

DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)

CO Brett Gustafson worked a shift with an intern from Lake Superior State University. During the patrol, they contacted three deer hunters driving down a back road where numerous complaints of shooting from vehicles had been received. The father was driving, his young son was next to him and the driver's brother sat by the open sliding door on the mini van. The gun was unloaded and in a case by the time CO Gustafson got to the frantically moving hunter in the backseat.

While on patrol **CO Michael Evink** located a pickup truck near the dead-end of a county road. CO Evink observed numerous bundles of Balsam boughs in the bed of the truck. After locating the owner of the truck cutting additional boughs, CO Evink informed the individual that he was on private property. The individual acknowledged he did not have permission from the landowner to cut boughs. CO Evink contacted the landowner to confirm that no one had permission to be on the posted property. Enforcement action is being taken for the larceny of tree boughs.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)

CO Eric Bottorff responded to a complaint from an elk hunter who shot and wounded an elk. CO Bottorff determined that the elk was shot on state land and tracked the elk onto private property. The landowner was contacted and the hunting party was able to continue tracking the elk. The hunter was eventually able to recover his elk.

CO Bill Webster contacted a hunter who was hunting over an apple tree. When asked if he knew why the CO was checking him, he stated he was not baiting. CO Webster agreed he was hunt-

ing over an apple tree, but noted that apples grown in the wild did not come with grocery store stickers on them. The hunter admitted to putting more apples under the tree and was ticketed for hunting over bait.

CO Kelly Ross and **Sgt. Joe Molnar** are continuing an investigation of a cow elk which was shot by a deer hunter in Montmorency County. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Gaylord DNR office at 989-732-3541, or the RAP hotline at 1-800-292-7800.

CO Steve Speigl was routinely checking ice anglers in Antrim County when he observed the tail of a fish wedged between buckets in a sled. Closer inspection revealed a northern pike that appeared to be undersized. The angler then stumbled through several excuses, finally landing on, "I thought this was a no-size limit pike lake." CO Speigl reminded the angler that there is only one lake in Antrim County like that, and the lake he was fishing on was not it. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)

CO Steve Converse responded to a complaint of a subject who had posted on his Facebook page a picture of a deer he had supposedly harvested in October. The complainant stated he had information that the subject didn't have a valid license to hunt deer. CO Converse went to the suspect's residence to look into the information and when he discovered a freshly taken deer hanging in the garage. Further investigation led to CO Converse issuing tickets for the illegal taking of two deer without licenses.

CO Carla Soper responded to a complaint of subjects keeping undersized brown trout at Tippy Dam on the Big Manistee River. CO Soper was able to make contact with a group of non-resident anglers, who were hiding the trout in a plastic grocery bag underneath a log. One subject admitted that he was responsible for keeping all of the trout and wanted them for Christmas dinner. The subject was ticketed for possessing an over-limit and given a warning for the possession of the undersized trout.

CO Brian Lebel reported that two separate subjects in Osceola County—involving violations of shooting deer with firearms during the archery season—pleaded guilty and each were assessed \$1,425 fines, costs and restitution, along with the loss of all hunting privileges for four years.

CO Brian Lebel observed two subjects walking a remote ditch in an area that he had received reports of trap theft. CO Lebel was able to locate a dead raccoon in the bed of the subject's pickup truck. One of the subjects was uncooperative upon contact and was later found to have two outstanding warrants for his arrest. He was currently on a 12-year hunting and trapping revocation due to multiple convictions of hunting infractions. The second subject did not possess a valid fur har-



vester license, but claimed that the raccoon was hers. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)

CO Jason McCullough responded to a complaint of a possible trespass. The landowner had located a blood trail, as well as drag marks, on his property. The property owner then located a second deer that had been shot on his property. While CO McCullough was investigating the complaint, he observed the neighbor going into the woods for the afternoon hunt. The CO contacted the hunter, who admitted to shooting the two deer. The subject said he thought that he had only killed one deer, but when he began looking for the deer he realized he had killed two deer. The subject did not have a license for the second deer and he left the deer in the woods so he could retrieve it after dark. The subject had brought out a crossbow and an archery license for the afternoon hunt.

CO Chris Bowen received a complaint from township police officers, who responded to a car/deer accident. The officers determined the individuals driving the car were not involved in a car/deer accident, but had struck a tree with their vehicle and attempted to cover it up by putting deer hair in the grill of the vehicle. CO Bowen assisted the officers at the subject's residence to investigate the deer used to cover up the accident. The deer was untagged and CO Bowen issued a ticket for the violation. In addition, the individual was in possession of a substantial number of sheriff's department uniform parts. The investigation is ongoing.

CO Murray Cherry contacted an individual he had observed with a flashlight in a field after dark. As CO Cherry approached, the subject began walking toward him. He told the CO he'd shot an eight-point buck and had to go to the truck to get his license. CO Cherry walked with the individual back to the eight-point buck, which had not been field dressed and had been dragged a substantial distance. It was obvious the hunter had seen the CO pull up and decided he better tag the deer. A ticket was issued.

DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)

CO Jason A. Smith contacted a group of hunters and three of the five hunters in the group suffered from a hunter orange deficiency. The problem was remedied by handing out plastic orange vests and a ticket to go along with them.

CO Dan Lee assisted an officer with the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) with a trespass case near the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. A permitted hunter on the Refuge became bored during the antlerless hunt and proceeded to drive around the adjoining property, where he shot at a deer on private property in full view of the landowners. The hunter left the scene, then returned in a different vehicle with a partner and proceeded to enter the private property to search for the deer. The USFWS officer contacted the hunters as they exited the woods. Both were ticketed for trespass and the shooter was not in possession of a valid deer tag to take deer in the refuge.

DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)

CO Chris Holmes received information that a subject had a deer head and several dead squirrels on his porch. CO Holmes was familiar with the suspect and knew he had several warrants for his arrest. CO Holmes responded to the apartment to investigate further and saw a subject run from the parking lot, grab the deer head and enter the apartment. CO Holmes radioed for additional police units and went to the apartment door. CO Holmes was confronted by another person at the apartment door and finally contacted the subject who had run into the apartment with the deer head. The subject gave him a bogus name, but after further investigation it was found the subject who had run into the apartment was the subject wanted on outstanding warrants. The subject was issued a ticket for a tagging violation and lodged in the Kalamazoo County Jail for assault, drugs, probation violation and driving with a suspended license warrants.

DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)

CO Rich Nickols took a complaint from central dispatch about a bullet that went through a window and interior wall of a house. CO Nickols was able to determine the location of the shooter and found fresh deer tracks near that location. After conducting interviews, CO Nickols found two hunters who were in the area that afternoon and they both shot at a deer. Both were using the same ammunition as the bullet that was recovered from the house. The homeowner knew the hunters and did not want charges filed.

CO Dan Bigger conducted an evening patrol for after-hours hunting and possible hunting from a vehicle on the less-traveled

roads in the county. Just before the end of legal hunting hours, CO Bigger observed a van on the side of the road next to a field with deer standing in it. CO Bigger observed the subject in the van and noted there was no movement. CO Bigger approached the van and contacted the subject to see if everything was OK. When asked if he was OK, he looked at CO Bigger and stated "No." The subject lifted his hands in the air, showing a towel that was saturated with blood. CO Bigger asked what had happened and if he wanted help. The subject said yes and had a hard time getting out of the vehicle. CO Bigger learned that while attempting to use a cigar cutter, he cut the tip of his thumb almost completely off and he was losing a lot of blood. CO Bigger was able to flip the tip of the thumb back into the proper position and apply pressure to stop the bleeding. CO Bigger then put more dressing on the wound and taped the subject's hand to prevent it from moving. The subject then refused any further medical treatment and stated he was going to go get it sewn back on. The subject got into the vehicle, lit the cigar, and left.

DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)

CO Brandon Kieft responded to a complaint of a "stolen deer" in Rose Township. When CO Kieft met with the complainant he advised that he had been tracking an antlerless deer he shot around dusk and witnessed two male subjects load it onto an ORV and leave the area. After obtaining an address from the complainant, CO Kieft conducted follow up with the homeowner. An untagged antlerless deer was located inside a detached barn on the property. The homeowner advised that his son had shot the deer that evening. CO Kieft had the son respond back to his parent's house to investigate the complaint further. After interviewing the son, it was determined that he had not purchased any antlerless deer licenses this season. However, he was adamant he shot the deer from his tree stand. After checking both properties and walking each blood trail, CO Kieft determined that both subjects had shot two different antlerless deer. The wounded deer had crossed in the woods and caused the blood trails to intersect. The complainant's deer was not "stolen" but the blood trail was eventually lost. The other hunter was ticketed for taking a deer without a license and that deer was seized.

League criticizes dune road plans

The Michigan League of Conservation Voters (MLCV) has criticized the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for its plan to approve a paved road in critical dunes as part of a proposed Lake Michigan housing development in Saugatuck Township.

The DEQ has reportedly said it would permit construction of the road once certain conditions are met. The planned road would be two miles long and provide access to 18 lots.

"Michigan's critical sand dunes are some of the most fragile, vulnerable stretches of land in the state," said Patty Birkholz, west Michigan director for the MLCV. "When you pave over the dunes, you cannot get them back. The Michigan DEQ's decision opens up Michigan's shoreline to irreversible damage."

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Meet the northern shrike

By Doug Reeves
 Assistant Chief
 DNR Wildlife Division

I was outside, headed back to the house, when I heard a bird song that seemed to be a jumble of various noises.

It was not a clear, predictable song, and much of it was what I would call a racket—sounding like a disturbed or distressed bird—but it was one that I had heard several times before. I knew it was a northern shrike.

This makes the fourth year in a row that we have had at least one shrike visit our 40 acres. Previously, they were rare visitors that stopped in for a short time and then disappeared just as quickly. Lately they have been staying for prolonged periods. That may be because the mix of fields and brush suits them very well now.

Northern shrikes have a subtle beauty, being varying shades of gray, white and black. The blocky head, black eye stripe and hooked beak are important identification marks.

They tend to be quite visible much of the time, setting on electric lines, the tops of trees and other conspicuous places. My experience has been that they arrive around the first of December and are gone by mid-February.

They seem to prefer old fields and brushy areas here. Michigan is in the midst of the wintering region for this bird. Northern shrikes nest in the far northern subarctic forests and tundra. They only go as far south as they have to in winter, which means they don't go much below mid-Ohio, Indiana and Illinois in this region.

There are actually two shrike species that may be seen in Michigan, and they can be difficult to tell apart. The other species is the loggerhead shrike, which nests in Michigan, but so rarely as to be listed on the endangered species list.

Loggerhead shrikes tend to be a bit smaller than northern shrikes, and while there was a day when it was important to me to carefully study the birds to ensure which species I was viewing, these days I am satisfied to determine that the shrikes that appear at our place are northern shrikes—due to the timing of their appearance and their comparatively large size, which is similar to the size of a blue jay. If a shrike shows up in April or May, I will pay much closer attention to it and determine which species it is for sure.

Shrikes are unusual. Almost every reference you find will de-



—U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service photo

scribe them as "predatory songbirds." Predatory they are, and sometimes you can know they are in the area without even seeing or hearing them. That's because they sometimes stash their prey in bushes where it is quite visible. Over the years I have found such prey as a chickadee, meadow vole and white-footed mouse stashed in the crotch of a shrub, or hanging in a multiflora rose bush. Last winter, I discovered the presence of a shrike at the Shiawassee River State Game Area when I found a meadow vole hanging in the crotch of a gray dogwood shrub.

That finding caused me to watch birdlife closely, and sure enough, I saw a shrike within about 200 yards of that vole. I have also seen shrikes on several other state game and wildlife areas in central Michigan over the years, including the Gratiot-Saginaw, Maple River and Rose Lake areas. They are never abundant, and I cannot say that I have ever seen more than two at any one time, but because they are predators, I would not expect to see them congregated in groups.

The shrike I saw continued the racket for most of the 20 minutes it took me to walk back to the house. Then, just as I entered the yard, it dove off the power line and chased after a small bird. They went around and through a willow thicket, and in a matter of seconds, the chase was off. I think the smaller bird may have escaped into a brush pile on the edge of the thicket. The shrike went back up and sat on the power line, but was quiet for the time being.

As I thought about that chase, it occurred to me that I have only observed a few attempts at predation by shrikes, and I have not seen one that was successful. Yet, it is also true that I have not seen the smaller birds become alarmed at the presence of a shrike the way they do when there is a Cooper's hawk, or American kestrel, in the neighborhood. Is that because they don't recognize it as a predator until it is actively chasing them? I wonder...

Workshops to teach management of "fugitive dust"

Fugitive dust from roads, surface lots, storage piles, and other sources contributes to air pollution and has the potential to be a significant contributor to storm and surface water pollution.

That's why the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is partnering with the East and West Michigan Chapters of the Air & Waste Management Association to present two fugitive dust management workshops and vendor expositions.

The events—to be held March 18 at Laurel Manor in Livonia and March 20 at Frederik Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids—will provide information on how to control fugitive dust at public and private facilities, lots and roads. To help comply with environmental requirements relating to fugitive dust, attendees will receive an overview of air quality regulations and health issues, an overview of sediment

and water regulations, a profile of dust control methods, approaches for developing solid fugitive dust plans, and success stories on dust management.

The workshops are recommended for anyone dealing with fugitive dust issues, including municipal, county, or state road repair and maintenance; zoning board or local responsibility for site location, selection, or approval; owners/managers of an unpaved lot, or salvage yard; trucking businesses; rail yard operations; sand blasting or building renovation; quarry or mining operations; asphalt or concrete plant or terminal operations; building construction or demolition companies; and environmental consultants.

Exhibitors will have an opportunity showcase their products and services that are designed to help control fugitive dust.


For more information, visit the DEQ website.

Final Shot



Snowy Drive

Whitefish Bay on Lake Superior in Michigan's Upper Peninsula is no stranger to snow, as demonstrated by this January photograph. We knew the scenic byway through the Hiawatha National Forest between Bay Mills and the junction of M-123 is a beautiful drive during the summer and fall, but we hadn't previously traversed it in the dead of winter. It may be even more beautiful this time of year. The byway follows FSR 3150 and FSR 42, which are two-lane paved roads suitable for all types of vehicles. Whitefish Bay is 27 miles long. Motorists can enjoy the panoramic views of icy Lake Superior and Canada at Spectacle Lake Overlook, as well as a visit to Point Iroquois Lighthouse, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



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