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Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



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THE NORTHWOODS CALL

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



North Woods Notes

BLUE ECONOMY: A recent Michigan Economic Center Report, “Water, Michigan and the Blue Economy,” discusses ways that the state’s natural water assets—along with related education programs, research and technological innovation—contribute to economic growth. The report is a baseline inventory of the Great Lakes State’s blue economy activity, and estimates that nearly one million Michigan jobs and \$60 billion in annual economic impact are linked to water assets and water innovation abilities. The report was commissioned by the governor’s Office of the Great Lakes to inform a developing state water strategy and as a first step for the project known as Growing Michigan’s Blue Economy. The project is supported by the C.S. Mott Foundation and designed to accelerate this growth. The full report can be downloaded from the Michigan Economic Center website.

FROZEN LAKES: As most of us know, this has been one snowy and icy winter. A recent report that the Great Lakes are 80 percent frozen over underscores that observation.

ICY ADVANTAGE: This year’s harsh winter has some advantages beyond bustling ski resorts and increased opportunities to cross-country ski and snowshoe. It’s also good for Great Lakes water levels, which dipped to record lows last year. The ice cover we’ve seen this winter helps reduce evaporation from the lakes, which experts say is the single largest source of water loss from the inland seas.

BEARS & CROP DAMAGE: Michigan House Bill 5225 reportedly proposes to expand crop damage permits to include the killing of bear. According to a column by Paul Rose, senior editor at the online Northern Michigan Conservation Network, the recently introduced legislation comes at a time when Michigan’s registered bear harvest has declined by 47 percent in the lower peninsula alone, and 34 percent statewide. Rose said the proposal may merely be a technical maneuver to allow an agricultural producer to qualify for a damage reimbursement, but it’s still bad public policy.

WOLF DATA: The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recently released statistics from last season’s public wolf hunt, which reportedly showed that the majority of wolves taken by hunters were likely from problem packs. The Michigan United Conservation Clubs—which opposes petition-drive efforts to allow state voters a say in the matter—says such statistics prove that “biologists know best.”

BLACK LAKE STURGEON: The 2014 sturgeon season on Black Lake lasted just 82 minutes, DNR officials said. When the cannon went off Feb. 1, alerting those on the ice to the end of the season, six sturgeon had been speared, which were all that were allowed under the state’s recreational fishermen’s allotment.

DNR EMPLOYEES AWARDED: Ed Shaw, an employee of the DNR’s Marketing and Outreach Division, has been named Educator of the Year by the Michigan State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. Shaw works at the Carl T. Johnson Hunt and Fish Center, where he coordinates hunting, fishing, trapping and other conservation-focused programming. One of Shaw’s DNR colleagues, Lisa Jackson, was named 2013 Outstanding Conservationist of the Year by the same organization. Jackson works in the Wildlife Division at the DNR’s office in Lansing, where she coordinates hunt drawings and other projects related to hunter and trapper licensing for a wild variety of wildlife species.

SLEEPING BEAR DUNES: Part of the Sleeping Bear Dunes could upgrade its national lakeshore status if Congress approves a bill that would designate 32,500 acres within the park as “wilderness,” according to the Michigan League of Conservation Voters (MLCV). That is the highest level of conservation protection for federal land. The bill would safeguard the public access points and historical structures already in existence, and prevent man-made changes to the landscape in the future, MCLV officials said.

ANOTHER STATE-RECORD FISH: A second state-record fish was caught in Michigan waters during January—this time a white perch in Muskegon County. The fish was reeled in January 21 on Muskegon Lake by Aaron Slagh of Holland, Michigan. It weighed 1.93 pounds and measured 13.25 inches.

LAND TRANSFER: The DNR in January approved the transfer of roughly 128 acres of state-managed forest land to Kirtland Community College for use in developing a health sciences center between Grayling and Roscommon. The college paid a nominal application fee of \$300.

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Lower tax for carbon dioxide-injected wells?

Michigan legislators are looking at reducing the severance tax on oil and gas that is produced by using carbon dioxide as a way to tap into hard-to-reach reserves.

The process involves injecting compressed carbon dioxide near an existing well to recover more oil from it. According to proponents of the method, it protects the environment by keeping greenhouse gas from the atmosphere and helps the economy through increased oil production.

The legislation—sponsored by Rep. Aric Nesbitt (R-Lawton) and Rep. Thomas Stallworth III (D-Detroit)—would allow carbon dioxide pipelines and specify that eminent domain could be used to

site the pipelines in the same manner as oil and natural gas lines. The severance tax would be lowered from 6.6 percent to 4 percent for oil and from 5 percent to 4 percent for gas extracted through the carbon dioxide process.

A lower tax is necessary given the higher costs of the labor-intensive method, said Nesbitt.

“This is an opportunity to take advantage of emerging technologies to do a much better job of protecting our environment by capturing the carbon dioxide versus expelling it into the environment,” said Stallworth.

The Sierra Club Michigan Chapter was reportedly concerned earlier that the lower tax would

apply to controversial hydraulic fracturing projects, but the latest version of the bill apparently says that fracking isn’t included, according to a group spokesman. While it may keep some carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, burning the newly extracted oil will release greenhouse gases, said Mike Berkowitz, the organization’s legislative and political director.

There also is concern over oil companies being able to use eminent domain to install pipelines on private property.

The oil and gas severance tax reportedly generates about \$60 million for the general fund each year.



Slip-Sliding Away

Two cross-country skiers make their way through a snow-covered woodland at the Greenwood Foundation, a privately owned property near Wolverine, Michigan. There is a conservation easement on the property and Greenwood recently hosted a public event to allow exploration of the 1,400-acre parcel.

—Photo courtesy of the Little Traverse Conservancy

Review of Rexton mine proposal continues

More than 40 people reportedly showed up at a public meeting Jan. 30 to learn more about a potential limestone project near the Upper Peninsula community of Rexton.

The meeting at the Bayliss Public Library in Sault Ste. Marie—hosted by the League of Women Voters of the Eastern Upper Peninsula—included representatives from Graymont Inc. and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The meeting focused on a proposed land acquisition application submitted by Graymont to obtain some 13,000 acres to set up several surface mining areas and perhaps one underground limestone mine.

As previously discussed in *The North Woods Call*, the company—a leading producer of limestone in the United States—approached the DNR in 2012 about the land transaction and the DNR approved the

company’s request to explore the area.

Company officials have said that the area contains “the quantity and quality of limestone” that the firm is seeking and the proposed transaction has been under review by the DNR, the Mackinac County Planning Commission and the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning and Development Commission. If the proposal is accepted and all required permits are obtained, there would be six jobs created by the surface mining operation, they said. If a processing plant is constructed, there could be as many as 25 or 30 jobs.

According to a late January article in the *Sault Ste. Marie Evening News*, the State of Michigan would be compensated for the limestone as it is mined during the next 100 years through a royalty interest on each ton of limestone removed. The state would also re-

tain an easement right on the surface of the underground mine area, the newspaper said, which would allow timber management and public recreational use.

Once work in the underground mine is completed, the state reportedly would be offered the underground mine for one dollar and the surface land would be sold back at market value.

Approval of the land transaction would not necessarily mean approval of mining operation. Those plans would still need to go through regulatory review by the Department of Environmental Quality, officials said.

A citizen’s group opposing the planned mine—the Coalition Against Strip Mining—recently filed a Freedom of Information Act request to obtain a document containing DNR staff reviews of the land acquisition proposal.

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Our 61st Year: Looking Back to Feb. 24, 1971

Pete Petoskey: Wildlife chief sees changing times

By Glen Sheppard

Michigan's new wildlife chief can't buy a ranch, and raise and release several million deer, pheasants and rabbits a year. He doesn't have a forest the size of the Great Lakes waiting to be discovered.

But Pete Petoskey can mold new concepts and express rather bold thoughts out loud that may have as dramatic an impact on the future of Michigan sportsmen as fish chief Wayne Tody's Great Lakes sports fishery program has had.

And Petoskey is doing just that. Or almost. Actually, the thoughts he is expressing on wildlife, hunter and forest management are not as original as the fish division's salmon program. But they are as daring.

Michigan game men and foresters for years have secretly said that hunter numbers and wildlife habitat have to be "manipulated" to retain a semblance of "sport" for hunters. But the suggestions of expressing such notions out loud, in public, gave them shivers.

Even now, Pete Petoskey is hesitant. He's saying such things, but he admits he doesn't believe "Michigan hunters are ready."

Maybe the hunters are ready.

Willard Musolf, president of the Michigan Deer Hunters Association—the arch critic of the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) deer program—after reading last week's *North Woods Call*, said Petoskey's ideas "sound good."

Musolf, who, like Petoskey, is really a good guy, wasn't endorsing all of the wildlife chief's new program. He isn't sold on a license increase. The DNR and legislature, he says, should prove that they will give hunters their money's worth—which they've never done—before they get more money. Nor does he agree that there should be a longer buck season in the Upper Peninsula.

But he does agree that the number of hunters in the woods at one time should be controlled. He is also convinced that other hunters are awakening to the fact that they must live with some loss of freedom due to the burgeoning population.

"There's only so much room for people [in the woods]," Musolf said. "We are going to have to do something. Hunters have to realize we have to live with some changes."

Petoskey, his biologists in the field and those who surround him in the Mason Building in Lansing are hunters since boyhood. Like so many Michigan outdoorsmen, the possibility that someone will tell them where they can hunt and that they have to take turns runs counter to several generations of heritage deep-seated in the north woods.

But Petoskey is now saying just that. The number of hunters in a given areas at a given time must be limited. Deer hunting is the chief problem. Due largely to lack of targets, small-game hunters are seldom crowded.

How can Petoskey limit the number of hunters in any specific area? There are a couple of ways. Habitat can be improved ... so that deer suddenly become over-abundant everywhere. ... [And] deer licenses can be sold on a permit basis.

* * *

Pete Petoskey doesn't have the answer. And he recognizes he won't know what the reaction will be until he sticks his chin out. That, apparently, is why his handsome jaw is spouting such revolutionary ideas.

Petoskey has said Michigan can double the size of its deer population and of its annual deer harvest. This, he says, will cost a million dollars a year. But, at the same time, other questions are being raised. Should Michigan pay for and promote increased deer hunting? Or even the present level of deer hunting?

Game and forest managers are starting to wonder. Maybe the forests should be managed for grouse and rabbits, instead of deer.

* * *

The fish division more than a decade ago decided that opportunity, not blood, is the measuring stick, but in the last six years has gone back to equating success with quantity, instead of quality. So Pete Petoskey has no leader to follow. And people who have known him since he joined the department more than 20 years ago say his best qualities have been exhibited when he was leading, not following.

* * *

It is interesting to note that back in the earn-a-buck, beg-a-buck days of the Great Depression, Pete Petoskey's family owned the small grocery store in Ortonville, where Wayne Tody's family traded. Since then, Tody has captured the admiration of the fisheries world with his Great Lakes program.

Petoskey may, in the next few months, gain as broad respect for his boldness in making Michigan hunters face up to the realities of increasing people pressures on declining wildlife habitat.



Winter Wonderland

—North Woods Call Photo

There was plenty of snow on the Michigan landscape in early February—more than some areas have seen in several years. The heavy precipitation, of course, is a boon to winter recreation enthusiasts, but an unwelcome curse to those who simply want to keep their driveways and sidewalks clean. With half of the winter season remaining, forecasters say we are likely to get even more of the slippery white stuff, so keep those plows and shovels sharpened—but go easy on the salt.

Review of Rexton mine proposal continues

(Continued from Page 1)

Among other things, the review document says that the tourism and recreation economies could be impacted by the mine due to reduction of available state land. Public access to lakes and streams needs to be maintained, and development within wetland areas should be avoided.

Loss of the state forest land would reduce the amount of property available for hunting, trapping and other wildlife-related recreation, DNR officials said. The project area also encompasses the upper watersheds of the Black River, Davenport Creek and Paquin Creek—cold water and groundwater-fed streams that support brook trout, chinook salmon, steelhead and coho salmon.

In addition, the east branch of the Sage River and the west branch of the Hendrie River are both located within the proposed project boundaries. Both streams are classified as cold water streams.

Any large quantities of water being directly pumped from mining operations may alter the channel characteristics, DNR officials said in the review document. It is critical to preserve the hydrologic integrity in the watersheds both above and below the surface, they said. Further, the use of water for processing, or de-watering surface pits and/or underground mines is also a concern.

The area in question also provides diverse habitats for important game species, such as deer, bear, snowshoe hare, bobcat, marten, ruffed grouse and woodcock, and supports numerous non-game species, including pileated woodpeckers, many songbirds and the rare red-shouldered hawk. It is likely that these wildlife species would be negatively influenced by the regular activity and operations of the mine, officials said.

Two plants that are listed as species of special concern—the alga pond weed and male fern—have also been identified in the area, they said, as well as muskeg and an archeological site.

The document also points out that the DNR typically does not engage in large-scale sales of land to a private individual or organization "without the opportunity for all members of the public to bid on the property by means of auction." Because of this, DNR officials suggested that Graymont propose a land exchange in order to proceed with the current proposal and assist the state in meeting objectives outlined in the DNR's Public Land Management

Strategy.

The general public can make comments during public meetings, or by e-mailing DNR-GraymontProposalComments@michigan.gov.

Comments will be accepted until a final decision is made, DNR officials have said.

Additional information can be found at www.rextonproject.com. There also are regular updates posted at: www.facebook.com/groups/40136723302145/.



North Woods Notes

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2014 NRC MEETINGS: The next Michigan Natural Resources Commission meeting will be held March 13 at the Ralph A. MacMullan Center, 204 Conservation Drive, on Higgins Lake near Roscommon. The Oct. 9 meeting will also be held at that location, while the April 10, May 8, June 12, Sept. 11 and Nov. 6 meetings will be held at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, in Lansing. Other meetings during 2014 will be held July 10 at the Outdoor Adventure and Discovery Center, 1801 Atwater Street in Detroit; Aug. 14 at a location yet to be determined location 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.

NUCLEAR SECURITY: Two southwestern Michigan lawmakers have introduced legislation aimed at better protecting nuclear power facilities from terrorist attacks. Sen. John Proos (R-St. Joseph) and state Rep. Al Pscholka (R-Stevensville) introduced Senate Bill 757 and House Bill 5282 on Feb. 6. The bills—which will go to the House and Senate committees on energy and technology—are aimed at providing nuclear plant security officers with "reasonable and necessary response capabilities" to protect plants, employees and the general public.

FUEL WOOD PERMITS: To help with heating energy needs this winter, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is selling fuel wood permits a month-and-a-half before the traditional starting date of April 1. The permits—good for 90 days—cost \$20 and can be used on designated forest land in the northern two-thirds of the state. They allow for the collection of up to five standard cords of wood per household. The wood is for personal use only and may not be resold, or traded. Due to the harsh winter, a second fuel wood permit may also be purchased this calendar year, in addition to the emergency permit.

ENBRIDGE MEETING: About 150 people reportedly attended a Feb. 5 meeting of the Mackinac County Planning Commission to discuss the Enbridge pipeline under the Straits of Mackinac. According to one observer, company officials said the pipeline is maintained to federal standards and there is no current replacement schedule. They were apparently close-mouthed about specific material that passes through the line, or what might escape if there is a spill, but said the pipeline is not capable of moving heavy crude and there are no plans to move tar sands through it. The meeting reportedly degenerated and ended with several shouts from the audience about Enbridge being "liars."

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DNR unveils new grant programs to improve wildlife/aquatic habitat

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has announced two new grant programs to improve wildlife and aquatic habitat.

Both programs will be funded with a portion of the increased revenue expected from hunting and fishing licenses sold each year, DNR officials said.

The Wildlife Habitat Grant Program (WHGP) is aimed at enhancing habitat for game species. Goals include managing the habitat for sustainable wildlife populations in a changing environment, increasing public participation and support of hunting and trapping, and increasing participation in “non-consumptive wildlife-related recreation.”

“This is an exciting opportunity to partner with others in the state to increase the habitat for the benefit of hunters, trappers and wildlife viewers,” said Russ Mason, chief of the DNR’s Wildlife Division.

WHGP funding is available—through an open competitive process—for local, state, federal and tribal governments, for-profit and nonprofit groups, and individuals. Minimum grant amounts will be set at \$15,000, with the maximum being the amount of funds available for that grant cycle. The 2014 overall available grant amount is \$650,000.

The WHGP application period began Feb. 1 and will run through the close of business on March 1. Successful grant applications will be announced by April 1. A detailed WHGP handbook and application are available at www.michigan.gov/wildlife, or www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants.

The \$1 million Aquatic Habitat Grant Program (AHGP) program will emphasize protecting intact and rehabilitating degraded aquatic resources throughout the state; developing self-sustaining aquatic communities that provide for continuing recreational opportunities and natural resource-based economies; and encouraging strong relationships and partnerships—along with new expertise—for aquatic habitat protection and recovery.

“This program will work to increase fish and aquatic wildlife populations statewide by ensuring our best waters remain so and improving aquatic habitat that is currently degraded,” said Gary Whelan, DNR Fisheries Division program manager. “It will also serve to increase direct public involvement in watershed issues and increase availability of high-quality, self-sustaining aquatic resources.”

AHGP funding is available—also through an open com-

petitive process—for eligible single- and multiple-year projects by local, state, federal and tribal governments, nonprofit groups and individuals. Minimum grant amounts will be set at \$25,000, with the maximum amount being the amount of funds available for that grant cycle.

AHGP projects can address issues on rivers, lakes, or the Great Lakes. Smaller projects within the same watershed that address similar issues and system processes can be bundled into a single grant proposal package in order to reach minimum grant amount requirements.

“This is a very exciting program that will continue to enhance Michigan’s world-class fisheries—which you can’t have without great aquatic habitat,” said DNR Fisheries Division Chief Jim Dexter. “We look forward to seeing projects of various scope and size that will impact all types of aquatic habitat.”

The AHGP application period began Feb. 1 and will end at the close of business on March 15. Successful grant applications will be announced by April 15.

A detailed AHGP program handbook and application are at www.michigan.gov/fishing, or www.michigan.gov/dnr-grants.

Gun laws cause Beretta to move

U.S. manufacturer Beretta announced in early February that it would become the latest gun maker to expand beyond the borders of its home state due to tougher gun laws.

Instead of building in Maryland, which adopted stiff new regulations last year, Beretta is putting up a new manufacturing and research facility in Gallatin, Tennessee.

The company had earlier telegraphed the decision, saying any expansion would occur someplace that has “shown consistent, strong support for Second Amendment rights.”

New York-based Remington Arms is also looking at expanding into Tennessee. Other pro-gun states—from Texas to Wyoming—are seeing an influx of gun makers who feel they’re now unwanted in places they’ve operated for decades.

Ruger and Colt Manufacturing, for example, are expanding from Connecticut into North Carolina, and Magpul Industries pulled up stakes in Colorado and headed to Texas.

In addition, most gun manufacturers have seen an explosion in sales since new anti-gun laws have been adopted. Smith & Wesson, for example, reportedly saw firearms sales rise from \$80.4 million in 2003 to \$857.5 million in 2013.

Forest plans OKd

Keith Creagh, director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), has approved the agency’s final regional state forest management plans.

The three plans—covering the eastern Upper Peninsula, the western Upper Peninsula and the northern Lower Peninsula—are aimed at helping the DNR sustainably manage four million acres of state forest plans.

They were developed with input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including citizens.

For more information, contact Scott Jones, DNR forest management planning specialist at (517) 284-5873, or visit www.michigan.gov/regionalforestplans.



Southern Gem

Spring Brook—a high-quality designated trout stream in north central Kalamazoo County—cuts an icy path through a frozen wetland near The North Woods Call office earlier this month. With quality aquatic habitat and a water course of more than nine miles (along with seven miles of tributaries), the brook drains a 31-square-mile area and has been managed for trout since at least 1926. The fishery is considered to be one of the best in southern Michigan and is comparable to the best trout streams that the state has to offer, according to Department of Natural Resources officials. Brown trout are the mainstay of the fishery, although some brook trout are reportedly present, too. Kind of seems like it should be located somewhere further north, doesn’t it?

—North Woods Call photo

Huron Pines group presents the 2014 O.B. Eustis awards

The Gaylord-based Huron Pines organization has presented its annual O.B. Eustis Awards, which honor the late industrialist, environmentalist and nature columnist.

The awards, which recognize environmental protection and outdoor improvement efforts in northeastern Michigan, were presented to Huron Pines board member **David Smith**, the **Montmorency County Road Commission (MCRC)** and **Northeast Michigan Sea Grant (NMSG)** during organization’s annual meeting Feb. 1.

Smith has selflessly dedicated thousands of hours to the protection of the Au Sable River Watershed. He has helped plan and implement restoration projects, supervise AmeriCorps volunteers and chaired the Au Sable River Watershed Committee. He is a reliable, devoted and tireless worker who has positively affected the quality of the river and the entire region.

The MCRC is a dedicated partner in conservation projects that benefit northeastern Michigan. By helping replace under-sized culverts, it has improved the qual-

ity of local water and habitat. During the past two years, MCRC was instrumental in completing five road/stream crossing improvement projects in the Thunder Bay and Black River watersheds, and has contributed more than \$113,000 in equipment and labor to various projects.

NMSG, meanwhile, has empowered young people through student-driven educational projects and creative opportunities to learn about natural and cultural landscapes.

The organization facilitates place-based school-community partnerships to improve the qual-

ity of students’ education by extending the classroom beyond the walls of the school and into the “living lab” all around us. This investment in youth cultivates strong leaders and fosters a culture that encourages the enjoyment and protection of our natural resources.



O.B. Eustis Award winner David Smith (center) with Huron Pines Executive Director Brad Jensen (left) and Jensen’s colleague Lisha Ramsdell (right).

—Photo by Marie Harrington

2013 hunting incident report

There were nine personal injury hunting incidents—including one fatality—during 2013, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Six of those incidents involved self-inflicted firearm injuries, DNR officials said.

Thanks in part to hunter education, this is a decline from 2012, when 15 hunting incidents—including one fatality—were reported.

The youngest hunter involved was a 12-year-old in St. Clair County, who shot high at a deer, went over the intended target and struck a chicken coop, which caused the slug to ricochet off the coop and strike another 12-year-old in the arm.

The fatal incident in Montmorency County involved a 52-year-old, who was hunting from a tree stand and suffered a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Opinion

Quote Box

"The [Walloon Lake] area is still beautiful, green and hilly with a vernal juiciness that reminds one of the Lake Country in England. But it's hard to identify the landscape with the woods, swamps and rivers where Nick Adams played Injun, and endured the rites of passage that Hemingway wrote so cleanly about. Not, anyway, when you see a million-dollar condominium peeking through the woods like some sort of fey Rotarian Xanadu."

—Jim Harrison

Spending those fee increases

Changes in Michigan's hunting and fishing license fee structure—effective March 1—are expected to bring in additional revenue to fund Department of Natural Resource (DNR) programs.

In addition to putting more conservation officer boots on the ground, grant programs for wildlife and aquatic habitat improvement have already been announced (see story on Page 3).

That's all fine and dandy, and we're sure that such efforts will help the DNR secure partners to manage these important resources.

But a landowner friend of ours has asked why DNR officials seem to be spending this anticipated money before they know for sure how much the changes to hunting and fishing license fees will yield in additional revenue. We think that's a good question.

What happens if the money doesn't come in as planned? Are Michigan hunters and anglers going to buy licenses and special endorsements in the same numbers as they normally have? Will the money still be there if some borderline hunters and anglers decide they don't like the new fee structure and stop participating?

Maybe we should wait until we know how much money is actually available before we go about spending it. Just a thought.

What about artificial baiting?

While reading John Gunnell's viewpoint article in this edition of *The Call* (see Page 5), we were reminded that we have never quite understood the practice of artificially baiting game animals.

We suppose it has something to do with making the hunt successful for more hunters, selling more licenses and generating revenue for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). And, in some cases, it's probably a fairly effective way to reduce the numbers of certain game animals.

Yet we often wonder if hunters should rely more on their own knowledge and skills to seek and outwit their prey, rather than violating the natural design by tricking hungry deer, bear and other wildlife into becoming sitting targets for those already armed with tree stands, high-tech weapons and miscellaneous other 21st Century gadgets?

We recognize that baiting may be the only way some hunters could get a bear, which often hang out in dense thickets and can be difficult to find. Maybe some folks aren't proficient enough to even bag a deer without it. But is that reason enough to do it?

It's one thing to set up a blind near an existing apple orchard, or stand of oak trees rife with acorns. It's quite another to purchase food and spread it on the ground to invite animals to a complementary dinner—although we're sure many farmers and retailers appreciate the boost to their economies.

But how does this practice ultimately affect the ecology of the forest and the natural balance of those creatures—targeted and untargeted—who come to feed at the sleight of hand buffet?

It seems to us—at minimum—that baiting creates an unfair advantage and takes some of the sport away. Many hunters, of course, will disagree with that assessment—especially those who don't like to run dogs, or corner their prey in some other way.

Still, this may be one of those issues that DNR brass and members of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission should spend some time reconsidering, instead of constantly building on myriad existing rules and regulations to police citizens and gather more revenue for state coffers.

Praise for snowplows & blowers

We don't know about you, but we've been singing the praises of internal combustion engines and fossil fuel this winter.

Without them, we'd probably have permanently disabled backs, significantly damaged hearts and maybe a broken ankle.

There has been more snow than usual this year at *The North Woods Call* office and our lengthy, up-hill driveway has required almost daily cleanings with both our 21-year-old Simplicity snow blower and much newer Kubota snow plow, which we purchased this season.

Environmental purists might say that we shouldn't be using such machines when responding to nature's winter onslaught, but this year we wonder how we would manage without them. For many years, we were satisfied with just the snowblower and several shovels, which were quite effective in clearing snow when powered by younger bodies.

But, regretfully, we've been losing some of our oomph of late and appreciate having the extra assistance that man-made and gasoline-powered snow removal equipment can provide.

Living on the edge: Trials of the outdoor life

After several days of sub-zero temperatures and a couple feet of lake-effect snow, the thermometer reached a blistering 24 degrees.

I had recently returned from Sunday morning worship services and it seemed like a good time to walk on water—frozen water, that is—so I pulled out the old Alaskan trapper snowshoes and took a hike around the property.

There's nothing like a little fresh air and exercise to energize the body and soul. Or so I thought.

I wandered through the hillside pines behind *The North Woods Call* office, across an open meadow and down into the wetlands along Spring Brook. Along the way, I followed the tracks of assorted woodland creatures that meandered back-and-forth across the surface of the snow.

The field mice and cottontail rabbits seemed to have an easier time of it. They stayed pretty much on top and ran from place-to-place without much impediment. White-tailed deer, on the other hand—with their thin legs and sharp hooves—had sunken a foot or more beneath the crust as they waded between browses and the shelters they found under low-hanging pine boughs.

I didn't do much better, although my snowshoes only sank a few inches into the white powder. After only about an hour of constant motion—stopping occasionally to snap a photograph of the pristine landscape—my lungs and leg muscles were beginning to complain and I was looking forward to a cup of hot tea beside the pellet stove.

Maybe it's the peril of advancing age, or perhaps I'm just a bit out-of-shape these days compared to the glory years of my youth. Whatever the reason, I found myself contemplating previous generations of outdoorsman and lamenting the increasing softness of modern man.

Take the voyageurs, for example. These were tough men—mostly French Canadians who transported goods and supplies by canoe through the Great Lakes and northern wilderness during the fur-trade era of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Unlike me—with the possible exception

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



Hopeful prospectors camp on frigid Lake Bennett enroute to the Yukon gold fields during the Klondike Gold Rush of the late 1890s.

of the masonry work I did year-round during my late teens and early 20s—they lived a harsh life of toil. Among other things, they had to carry at least two 90-pound bundles of fur over portages that were a half-mile, or longer, and some carried four or five bundles at a time. Their wooden canoes were commonly 25 to 36 feet long and weighed 300 to 600 pounds empty. On top of that, the vessels carried three tons of cargo.

The men often rose as early as 2 or 3 a.m. to begin their typical day's journey, and were expected to work 14 hours before bedtime and paddle at a rate of 55 strokes per minute. Danger was at every turn and not just because of exposure to outdoor living. Drowning was common, along with broken limbs, compressed spines, hernias and rheumatism. They did not have time to live off the land by hunting and fishing, so they carried their food with them, and often faced swarms of annoying black flies and mosquitoes.

Then there were those who took to the northern wilderness to seek their fortune in gold nuggets. It is said that more than 100,000 people started off for the Klondike, but less than 30,000 actually made it to the gold fields in the Yukon Territory. The difficulties of the Chilkoot and White Pass trails forced many to turn back. Most found no gold at all,

because—by the time they arrived—most of the good stakes had already been claimed.

Jack London, of course, got several good stories out of the experience, but most others went home broke—if they went home at all—discouraged and defeated by the land they sought to tame.

Such is often the fate of man against nature.

Nature will ultimately be the victor, says a friend of mine, an outdoorsman and bush pilot in Alaska. That's why we must always work WITH her and not AGAINST her, he says.

Yet, in this age of Kevlar canoes, lightweight camping gear and freeze-dried food, it's tempting to believe that the odds are beginning to tilt in man's favor.

Some, of course, are better suited to hold their own in the great outdoors than others, but it's still relatively easy to get into trouble if we forget our place when venturing into the wild.

There really wasn't much danger in a short snowshoe hike from my doorstep. And it was indeed invigorating—for body and soul—to drink in the pure February air and warm my complacent muscles.

But there were lessons to be learned, just the same, as I thought about advances in civilization and the great distance we have come from the earth that sustains us.

Book Review

Winterdance: Race Across Alaska

Looking out our window onto this year's snow-covered Michigan landscape makes us think we're living in the far north.

So there's no time like the present to revisit a couple of books on our shelf—*Winterdance* by Gary Paulsen and *Race Across Alaska* by Libby Riddles (with Tim Jones).

Both books are about personal experiences running sled dogs in the famed Iditarod race nearly 1,200 miles across the Alaskan wilderness from Anchorage to Nome. Paulsen, best known for writing adventure novels for boys, calls the race a "fine madness," while Riddles—the first woman to win the grueling competition (1985)—relates how the love of animals drew her to the sport.

We found both books to be riveting reads. Paulsen is a great storyteller, regardless of the subject, and Riddles provides details about dogs, sleds and cold-weather endurance that made us almost believe we had run the race ourselves.

We met Riddles one day in Juneau, Alaska, where she was giving a slide presentation and autographing copies of her book. Naturally, she is self-assured and passionate about what she does.

For those fascinated with Jack London-style tales of man (and woman) against nature, these offerings are both fine candidates for wintertime reading. Who knows, they might even inspire you to pick up a sled and start training a team of dogs. Or not.

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Viewpoint (Part I)**The price of baiting: Calling a spade a spade**

By John Gunnell

The 2013 regular deer season is now history in Michigan. Driving home downstate from the Upper Peninsula allowed me time to reflect anew on a subject that lingers in my mind for a practice that flaunts all reason.

Real hunters bemoan the monster the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has allowed to be created and perpetuated by legalizing the baiting of deer and bear.

In their appointed capacity, our [natural resources] commissioners sanctioned such practice and conveniently “buried their heads in the sand” in accepting the consequences.

Just saying “no” to such a multi-destructive scheme by those so anointed to protect nature’s uniqueness and delicate balance from man’s self-rewarding influence could have once been easily rejected.

Today, DNR leadership—like sheep—are cajoled by subterfuge, resulting in political appeasement. They still dismiss being held accountable for being out of balance with nature, and remain committed to saying “yes” to economic tampering and “snake oil salesmen” who ignore long-range environmental consequences.

Just saying “no” to baiting was too old fashioned and removed the drama sought to feed small men’s egos. The proverbial cat remains out of the bag and nature still bears

the consequences.

Leadership avoided ever answering to anyone or anything. Theirs has become a “parlor game,” relying upon political correctness to cover up their transgressions.

I recently had the opportunity to interview the very sage and much-revered elder statesman from Michigan’s DNR of the past—Merrill “Pete” Petoskey. He, too, rues the day when baiting of wild animals was sanctioned, amounting to their current neutered existence.

The insidious effect on altering deer and bear patterns of existence by way of unnatural feeding removes the self-reliance and caution they once possessed to protect their very existence.

Some of our leaders—who once still held lingering regrets for being party to legalizing deer and bear baiting—had hoped for a redemption, in a “left-handed way,” when chronic wasting disease (CWD) surfaced. Those who silently wished in retrospect that they would have had the courage to originally say “no” once again failed—like Pontius Pilate—and washed their hands of this outdoor sin. Unfortunately, we again saw a lack of courage by enough of our leaders who could have seized a face-saving CWD outbreak to just say “no.”

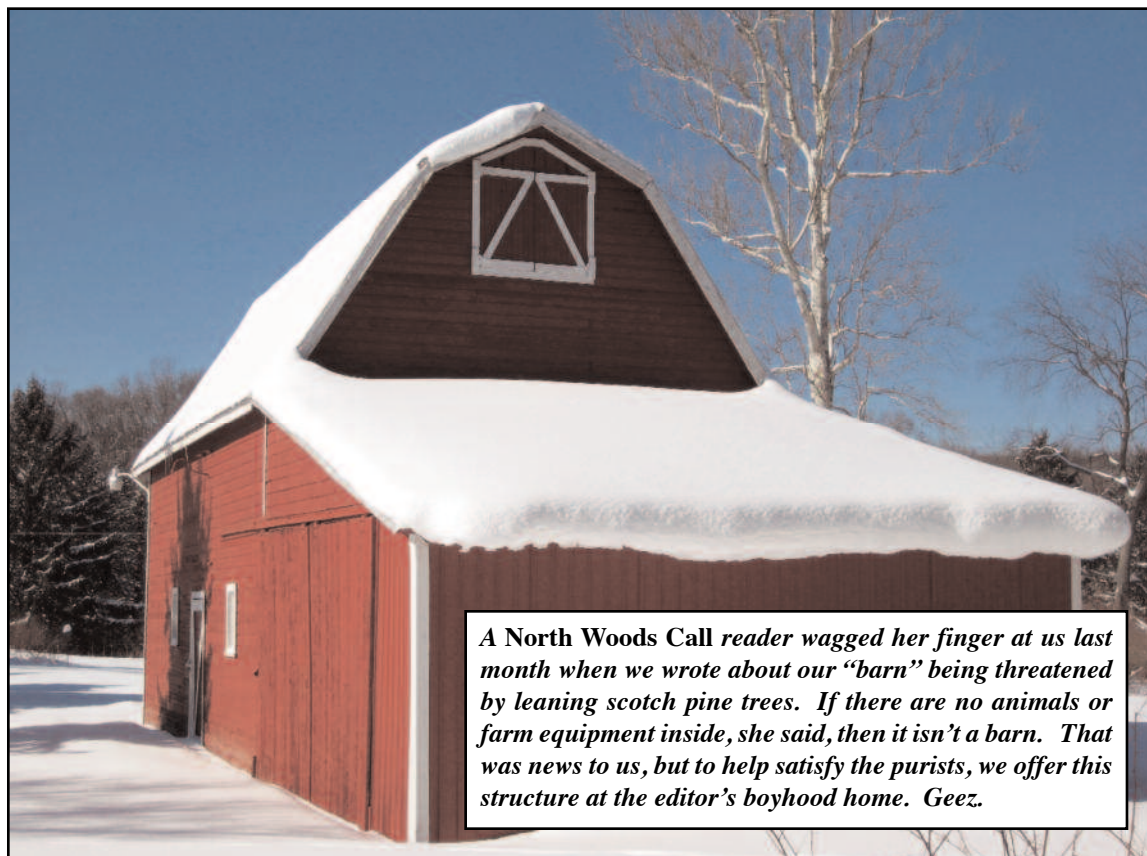
Hunters who believe in the notion of nature unaltered long for the day when deer and bear will

once again be sighted in their natural meanderings, relying again on their innate instincts. Seeing deer and the occasional bear in the woods, absent the influence of man-placed food for the purpose of the ambush, could return the woods and its creatures back to the mysteries that once lured us all in the beginning.

Older men, like myself, have long memories of the [natural resources] commissioners who first gave their approval for deer and bear baiting. Having the courage to reverse earlier decisions, today’s commissioners would initially create a firestorm of opposition by those who would manipulate nature for their own selfish purposes. The anger demonstrated by those who profit most—if unsuccessful in swaying DNR leadership from a higher calling—would then revert to threats, scare tactics and other devious practices.

I am reminded of Marc Antony’s funeral address on behalf of his good friend Julius Caesar, when he spoke of honorable men behaving like “brutish beasts” and having “lost their reason.”

John Gunnell is a writer and outdoorsman living in Rockford, Michigan. Part II of his Viewpoint article will appear in the next edition of The North Woods Call.



A North Woods Call reader wagged her finger at us last month when we wrote about our “barn” being threatened by leaning scotch pine trees. If there are no animals or farm equipment inside, she said, then it isn’t a barn. That was news to us, but to help satisfy the purists, we offer this structure at the editor’s boyhood home. Geez.

Annual Trout Unlimited meeting held in Grayling

The 2014 annual meeting of Trout Unlimited’s Mason-Griffith Founders Chapter was held Feb. 1 at the Mainstream Steak and Ribs restaurant in Grayling.

A capacity crowd of fifty-five members attended the social hour—followed by dinner, a brief business meeting, a presentation and awards.

Jim Anderson (Grayling), Boyd Dillon (Mio), Karen Harrison (Grayling) and Mark Hendricks (Grayling) were re-elected to the chapter’s board of directors.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forester Patrick Mahoney presented Chapter Advisor Howard Johnson (Saginaw) an Outstanding Project Award from the DNR’s Forest Resources Division for Johnson’s work with the Cedars for the Au Sable project. The project seeks to bring young Northern white-cedars back to the banks of the Au Sable and Manistee rivers.

Steve Sendek (Grayling) gave a talk with pictures about the Chapter’s Au Sable River habitat improvement project in the William’s Tract above Grayling and the structure repair project below Grayling. The presentation included work in 2011 and 2012 that was done in preparation for the 2013 projects.

President Karen Harrison presented the chapter’s Rainbow Trout Award for Organization of the Year to Northpoint Fisheries Management, a company owned by Sendek, a retired DNR Fisheries Biologist who is providing oversight for various river projects.

David Smith presented the chapter’s Brown Trout Award for Resource Professional of the Year to DNR Fisheries Senior Biologist Neal Godby (Gaylord).

Paul Mesack presented the chapter’s Brook Trout Award for Volunteer of the Year to Mark Rais (Grayling) for his ten years of selfless service as chapter treasurer.

Angling humor**Getting back to ice fishing**

Each winter around this time of year, I feel compelled to usher in the new ice fishing season by sending my annual letter to 15 of my fellow curmudgeons. These men are a mixed bag by vocation, yet are inextricably intertwined by their penchant for taking on all types of circumstances in their pursuit of ice fishing utopia. Such men represent a culture driven with a passion for self-induced pain, fatigue and disappointment beyond explanation—over and over in order to find out for themselves “whether the fish will bite.” Such excellent Cedar Springs ice fisherman as Harry Jones and Mike Richie (both now deceased) come to mind to set the standards for fellows like me. Here is my 2014 letter sent to the aforementioned fishing curmudgeons:

Dear _____:

Forgive me for my tardiness in writing you concerning the 2013-2014 ice fishing season. I trust that you are still upright and taking nourishment.

In preparing my fishing poles and related paraphernalia, I am reminded of just how much our sport has changed over the years. No longer do we convert car aerials into fish poles, or use axes to cut our fishing holes.

While still within the inventive stage of fishing tackle (ie. J. Hubbard’s teardrops, spring bobbers, etc.), a new multi-phased ice fishing reel will soon render all of us obsolete. The new reel—only about \$100 each—will have a built-in fish finder, automatic hooking sensors, and an impulse that sends a signal through your new line and lure to release the fish once on the ice (for only an additional \$35.95 per pole).

While these devices may seem absurd to a seasoned angler with unlimited resources like yourself, I believe such trendy gadgets are but the tip of the iceberg.

Realizing that most ice fishermen tend to be older men who are experiencing urinary complications, a new device still on the drawing boards will eventually recycle and hold urine once needing immediate exit through several layers of ice fishing clothing. Extraction containers with spigots would hold a day’s urine collection for a mere \$395 and make it necessary to spend two hours in the bathroom emptying it upon returning home.

I hope this information is useful in planning your future ice fishing. I look forward to seeing you out on the Big Wabasis.

Fond personal regards,

John Gunnell
Rockford, Michigan**Rocker Ted Nugent lauds the “real conservationists”**

Michigan’s so-called *Motor City Madman* says hunters, fishermen and trappers are America’s “real conservationists and environmentalists.”

Ted Nugent—legendary guitarist, rock-and-roll performer, passionate hunter and Detroit-area native—said such outdoor men and women consistently monitor the health of wildlife and wild habitat, and are the “ultimate barometers for quality air, soil and water.”

In an opinion column posted earlier this month online at *World Net Daily*, Nugent said sportsmen and women were among the first to respond to water pollution problems in Lake Erie and they got organized to change the situation.

“We simply refused to accept the status quo of the industrial revolution mistakes and knew instinctively that industrial productivity and clean air, soil and water were not mutually exclusive,” he wrote. “So we went to work and raised adequate hell to reverse the situation.”

It wasn’t long thereafter that Lake Erie got cleaned up so well that it once again became one of the world’s top walleye and small-mouth bass fisheries, Nugent said.

“The wild celery and biodiversity returned and with this natural eco-cleansing system came the magnificent flights of wild fowl,

as well as fish and furbearers.” he said.

With characteristically blunt language, Nugent said the efforts and financial support of sportsmen and women have resulted in more deer, wild turkey, black bear, cougar and wild geese in America than ever before, along with thriving herds of elk, moose, caribou, antelope and bison.

“As usual, there is that pathetic lunatic fringe cult of denial known as animal-rights freaks that would end it all tomorrow if they could,” he said, “but thanks to educated, caring conservationists, our undeniably successful heritage of hunting and fishing carries on—guaranteeing a healthy future for wildlife and the critical support network of habitat that just so happens to assure a healthy environment for all living things.

If you are serious about a healthy environment, Nugent said, “the best thing you can do is purchase a hunting license, a fishing license and a trapping license. Join Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, the National Wild Turkey Federation ... Pheasants Forever, Safari Club International, the mighty [National Rifle Association] and any number of hunting organizations that are solely dedicated to conserving wildlife and wildlife habitat. We put our money where our mouth is...”

The Wild Nearby

By Tom Springer



Sycamore: Winter's witness

In the ancient, pre-settlement forests of the Midwest, there once grew hardwoods of such enormity that the words "big tree" can't begin to define or describe them.

Of these, none rivaled the sycamore. The most gigantic stood in the black-muck bottoms along storied rivers such as the Ohio, Mississippi, Wabash, Maumee, Kankakee and St. Joseph. How big? One famous specimen on the Ohio, measured by George Washington and later by French botanist Andre Michaux, was 13 feet in diameter and 44 feet in circumference.

Such a tree was the size of a modest living room. And since aged sycamores are often hollow in the middle, some settlers would indeed live inside them until a proper log cabin could be built. Then they'd convert the still-living sycamore into a stable that could house pigs, chickens, a cow or horses.

But this was an age when land was cheap and virgin forest viewed as an unholy obstacle to progress. As the swamps were drained to make farmland, lower-value trees like the primeval sycamores were often pushed into heaps and wantonly burned.

A sycamore may still attain such majesty, but it would take 500-800 years to do it. Meanwhile a big tree aficionado has to appreciate what's at hand. For me, that meant a recent visit to the Michigan record sycamore about five miles south of Berrien Springs.

It was a Saturday morning and, after our daughter's basketball game, we lit out west from Three Rivers on M-60. By the time we'd reached Cassopolis, my wife was drowsy, so I turned off the radio and let her rest. (Poor girl; the sheer thrill of an hour's drive with a middle-aged man to visit an old tree in 10-degree weather must've worn her out.) That's OK. The drive became a welcome meditation through a landscape turned pillow-soft and serene by one of the snowiest winters on record.

Once we hit the Berrien County back roads, you could tell this was big sycamore country. Past rolling vineyards and orchards of apple and peach, wherever a creek or marsh held a little copse of woods in its lee, there you'd see a hulking sycamore. Their squat lower trunks were barked in flaky, chocolate brown. At about chest height, they forked into multiple trunks of elephant-leg dimensions. From there on up, their bark—and no other tree looks remotely like it—faded gradually from a mottled, creamy green to ivory.

We found the record tree on a half-acre wedge of state land bordered by U.S. 31, a highway overpass and a cul de sac off Lake Chapin Road. It was huge and stout, yet as welcoming as a big-bosomed grandmother (you know the type). According to the Michigan Botanist, the big tree stands 120 feet tall, with a crown of 96 feet. It measures seven feet in diameter with a circumference of 21.5 feet.

As Michigan's reigning champion, it certainly merits a pilgrimage. On the first warm Sunday in May, perhaps, when dandelions brighten the lush spring grass, the sycamore would make an inviting spot for a picnic. It fairly begs to be photographed with a gaggle of arms and legs, young and old, happily joined around its ample waist.

That said, the ancient tree did look a little lonely. With its brethren long gone, the old sycamore has only a self-absorbed subdivision and a disinterested freeway for company. Sycamores are usually gregarious trees that grow in groves along languid rivers. (The finest stand I've seen is on the banks of Sugar Creek in Turkey Run State Park, Indiana).

Still, as singular landmarks, these isolated sycamores can offer great comfort and instruction. Their oddly peeling bark and piebald complexion makes them a curiosity, even to those who don't give trees much thought. Their fallen leaves, although an unremarkable dusty brown, can be as big as a dinner plate. Much like the tree itself, they'll dwarf all other hardwoods in a fall leaf collection.

Yet it's from December through March that the sycamore's soaring beauty becomes most evident. It's a tree that seems to exult in winter's light—and thereby stands as a witness during the coldest season.

In chameleon fashion, the sycamore's high branches reflect and glorify whatever light the fickle winter sun provides. On an overcast day, they glow with a steely, monochromatic sheen. On clear days the high branches first turn faint orange at sunrise, then by noon turn a dazzling sometimes rapturous white. As the hours progress, the sycamore's high crown will even emulate the faint blue hue of late afternoon snow.

One sycamore in particular greets me each morning along the Kalamazoo River south of Battle Creek. Its forked trunk rises above waters that, in July 2010, suffered the largest inland oil spill in U.S. history. Some 900,000 gallons of Athabasca tar sands crude flooded into the river from a burst Enbridge pipeline near Marshall. Here, at the tree's base, a gravel lot and boat landing served as marshalling point for the clean-up.

The trucks and airboats are all gone now, the clean-up—in legal terms—completed. The sycamore survived it all and appears unscathed by this manmade disaster. It grows on as a witness to what its kind has always done: provide a home for all who are wise enough to share and protect the sprawling generosity of nature.

Finding winter insects and invertebrates

As a young lad, we would have to find corn borers to go ice fishing. We lived on a farm where the corn fields didn't get tilled under as they do today and the corn shocks wouldn't have the genetic treatments to combat insects. As we got older, we had to switch to sweet corn stalks and eventually couldn't find enough, so we had to purchase ice fishing bait.

Two places we did find grubs with fair consistency was in goldenrod ball galls and burdock seed heads. Of the three goldenrod galls, the ball gall is the only one that overwinters a grub.

The other two galls of the goldenrod are the bunch gall and elliptical gall. If you cut partly through the ball gall and then break it apart, you should find a small white grub, about the right size for a small jig hook.

The burdock seed head isn't quite as reliable, but you should find a fair number of white grubs on a plant of seed heads. This grub is smaller and it may take a few to put on a hook. I don't know what the grub from the burdock turns into, but from past experience with goldenrod ball galls, they pupate into flies, similar in looks to a deer fly.

Other galls you may try are oak galls. Oaks have a number of galls, with the oak apple gall offering the best chance of getting a grub. There are a good number of oak apple galls and the ones formed in the late summer are most likely to have a grub, usually a wasp grub.

The willow pine cone gall overwinters a grub, but I have never had much luck in getting a sufficient number to truly try it out.

If you're ambitious, you could also get a good number of aquatic insects, because they overwinter in immature stages in streams and lakes. The stonefly actually will be active out of streams on nice

The Natural World

By Richard Schinkel



days. Flying stone flies make good winter protein for many birds and you may see active feeding along streams on mild days.

Another insect quite active during winter is the "snow flea," or springtail. These small insects live in forest litter and number in the thousands over a small area. When the weather gets mild, especially on sunny days, they will migrate to the surface and can be found on tree trunks and the surrounding snow. They are called springtails because at the end of the abdomen are two modified legs that fold up under the body so that they can flip and propel themselves a few inches away.

If you do a fair amount of cross-country skiing or snowshoeing, you may find them in your tracks, because they often can't seem to flip high enough to get out of the tracks. The snow literally gets a gray cast where these little guys are found.

There are numerous species of snow fleas, some live on the surface of water and are called "water fleas." I guess the flea part comes from the ability to "jump," as the common pet flea does. Of course, they are found in the forest litter all year and I have had experience with them when camping with kids. At lunch we put out the fixings for sandwiches and the kids put together what they want to eat. Once, while getting ready to put away a roll of cheese, it appeared to have a gray cast. It was literally covered with snow fleas that migrated over three feet of canvas to get to the cheese in less than a half hour.

Then there is the preying mantis. Now, there are no live man-

tises in the winter, but the egg masses are in the fields on shrubs and tall weeds. When cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, or hunting, I keep my eyes open and "pick" a few of these egg masses to put in my yard and garden.

You can purchase egg masses from catalogs, or garden centers, but why do so when you have a ready supply in nature? Each frothy egg mass will contain from about 50 to over 200 eggs. They are attached to stems and look like egg-shaped brown styrofoam, about an inch long, with a blunt end where the female stopped laying eggs. It is best to break the twig off below the egg mass, then take the whole twig and put it in your garden area. You should keep it somewhat hidden, because woodpeckers and other birds will peck the eggs out. It is best to twist tie them to other branches and let nature hatch them out in spring.

The egg mass may be on other objects, even the side of buildings. These you can't remove, because the integrity of the mass will be damaged.

The egg mass of the preying mantis is called an ootheca. Even though you may collect a good number of ootheca, the number of mantises will be limited, as they are voracious eaters and the first thing they see upon hatching is brother and sister, which are mighty tasty.

Don't make the mistake of taking them inside for very long, or you will have a hoard of tiny jumping mantises migrating across your home.

Winter is fun and is actually quite alive, so get out there and enjoy it.



2014 Farm Bill

—North Woods Call photo

Never mind the fossil fuel and tax dollars burned earlier this month when President Obama came to Michigan State University to sign the 2014 Farm Bill into law. Wetland and waterfowl observationists are finding plenty to cheer about in the legislation. Among other things, the bill reconnects conservation compliance to crop insurance and includes an important regional sod-saver program. Both provisions are expected to encourage the conservation of the nation's remaining wetlands and grasslands. "[The bill] will help deter wetland drainage and incentivize the conservation of these valuable lands while keeping working farmers and ranchers on their land," said Dale Hall, chief executive officer of Ducks Unlimited. More than \$1 billion is also allocated for wetlands and grasslands conservation easements. The Michigan Land Use Institute (MLUI) also says the bill is "a step in the right direction," although there are still some other provisions the MLUI wishes had been included. The overall bill will cost U.S. taxpayers nearly \$100 billion per year—roughly 80 percent of that going to the food stamp program. Here, a fruit grower tends to chores last spring along Grand Traverse Bay on Old Mission Peninsula.

Conservation Officer Logs (12/8/13 through 1/7/14)***Mother's license, an honest wife, a dead cougar, & rescuing a chicken "hawk"*****DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

CO Dave Miller received a complaint of subjects hunting from the bed of a pickup truck. CO Miller responded and located the vehicle operating with two young subjects in the bed of the pickup and with uncased bows in the vehicle. The subjects had already used their deer tags and had borrowed a tag from one subject's mother. Tickets were issued to both subjects and the CO is following up with the subject's mother for loaning the license.

CO Mark Leadman was patrolling in the deer yards of Marquette County and observed fresh drag marks along a side road where a deer had been killed. Fresh vehicle tracks in the snow led back to a camp where contact was made with two hunters. A fresh doe was hanging on the buck pole outside camp. One of the hunters stated that his wife had shot the deer the night before and had left for home. They explained that the deer was not found until early that morning. Parts of the story did not make sense and CO Leadman attempted to contact the wife. CO Leadman was unable to make contact with anyone at the residence until the following day. The hunters had returned home by that time and they quickly admitted they had used the wife's tag on the deer at camp. He explained that his wife was unwilling to go along with their story and would not lie to an officer. A ticket was issued for using another's kill tag.

CO Grant Emery is investigating multiple fur related violations in Gogebic County. CO Emery received information about animals being taken illegally and not being registered within the required time frame. The investigations are ongoing.

DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)

COs Jeff Panich and **Kyle Publiski** were working in Mackinac County when a vehicle driving on the roadway approached and stopped several yards in front of them. The COs contacted the operator, who was rapidly trying to unload an uncased rifle in the passenger seat next to him. A recently killed deer was also located in the bed of the vehicle. The subject stated he never hunts this way, but he considered how deep in the woods he was and figured he wouldn't see any law enforcement in the area. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mike Hammill was on routine patrol when he crossed paths with a black powder hunter coming out of the woods. The hunter provided his kill tag and claimed that he had no luck. The CO asked about his hunting blind and proceeded into the woods to check things out. At this point the hunter became nervous and said, "You're not going to like what you find." Upon arrival at the deer blind, the CO located a fresh blood drag trail. He then located a doe and a crossbow that were hidden in the woods. The hunter confessed that he illegally shot the doe with his crossbow. Charges are being sought for an illegally taken deer.

CO Mike Hammill received a complaint about a cougar being illegally shot in Schoolcraft County. The CO conducted a thorough investigation, which revealed evidence of a cougar kill, along with a suspect. After further investigation and interviews with assisting officers and detectives, the suspect confessed to shooting the cougar. Further investigation revealed parts of the animal which were seized and taken into evidence. Charges are being sought in the case.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)

While observing a trail intersection on the North Central Snowmobile Trail (25 mph speed limit), **CO Mike Feagan** watched four snowmobilers race up to a stop sign. One reached over and shut off another one's sled, then took off at a high rate of speed along with the other two. The fourth operator got his sled started and hit the gas, and was paced at 55 mph a short while later. All four were ticketed for excessive speed.

CO Bill Webster had received complaints of stolen tree stands on state land over a period of three years. CO Webster, **CO Warren MacNeill** and a detective with the Wildlife Resource Protection Section (WRPS) investigated. A suspect was interviewed and a stolen tree stand was located. The COs searched the suspect's residence and located numerous other tree stands. The investigation is ongoing.

DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)

CO Mike Wells conducted an investigation of a retail sales distributor issuing military licenses to non-military personnel. The investigation resulted in multiple license sales issued by one individual. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Mike Wells received a RAP complaint of an individual shooting at a flock of wild turkeys with a rifle within the safety zone of a residence. CO Wells responded to the scene and was able to obtain eyewitness information that directed him toward a suspect. CO Wells conducted several follow-up interviews and located the shooter, who at first stated he was just trying to scare them off the roadway when he jumped out of his vehicle and shot three times at the large flock. Warrants have been requested through the prosecutor's office.

DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)

CO John Huspen was patrolling Hanson State Wildlife Refuge when he located three subjects cutting standing timber. Unfortunately for them, cutting standing timber was not the only violation, as the area they were cutting was completely closed to all cutting of firewood. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Jason McCullough located a vehicle parked on the road near a beaver dam and found a subject walking down the road. While talking with the first subject, a second subject came out of the woods from the area of the



beaver dam. **CO McCullough** has had numerous contacts with the second subject. After talking with the subjects and checking the traps, the CO located numerous untagged snares and traps in the vehicle. A check of licenses revealed that one subject was trapping without a license, as well as trespassing. This repeat offender received another ticket.

CO Warren MacNeill responded to a complaint of a possible injured chicken hawk that was inside a shed. The caller stated that he tried to feed the chicken hawk, but it refused to eat the raw chicken he was feeding it. The caller cautiously allowed CO MacNeill into the shed to rescue the chicken hawk. CO MacNeill was able to recover the bird and take it outside the shed, where he identified the bird for the caller. The caller was very embarrassed to find out the bird refused to eat the raw chicken because it was, in fact, a chicken itself.

DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)

CO Jeremy Payne made a waterfowl baiting case this past fall on the Pine River in Alma, where six hunters were arrested. The total fine and restitution was \$6,000. The hunters also had their shotguns condemned and lost their hunting privileges for two years.

On New Year's Eve **CO Jeremy Payne** took a RAP complaint of a buck shot out of season. The complainant advised that he saw someone shoot a buck. The complainant was out hunting and had just shot a doe. He told the CO that while he was field dressing the doe he saw a seven point buck run out of the woods. He advised he heard a shot and then saw the buck drop in its tracks. When the CO asked for the suspect's description, the hunter advised that he just saw the buck drop. After further investigation the CO determined that the original complainant had shot the buck. This was confirmed through a confession. The shooter advised that he was hunting with his friend and he wanted to make sure that he could take a deer home. The subject was issued a ticket for taking the buck out of season.

DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)

CO Michael Mshar responded to a shots-fired complaint of a subject taking two deer with a rifle. It was learned that the shooter was a juvenile and had legally harvested the animals with his shotgun, but had made mistakes with the tagging requirements. CO Mshar met with the

subject and his grandfather to discuss proper guidelines for the tagging requirements and warnings were given.

CO Greg Patten was called to investigate a trespassing situation in Muskegon County where he further established a bobcat had been taken by a trapper. As the County is closed to state licensed bobcat trapping, it was determined the trapper was a tribal member operating under consent decree regulations. Upon conferring with tribal enforcement and additional investigation, the trapper was ticketed by tribal enforcement for the illegal taking of a bobcat on private lands without permission.

DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)

CO Jeff Goss investigated a complaint of a possible captive fawn. Upon responding to the complaint, CO Goss observed the deer standing at the front steps of a house. The subject at the house explained that they found the fawn in the field behind their house, and admitted to bottle feeding it and providing it with shelter. CO Goss explained that it is against the law to rehabilitate wildlife without a license and that a licensed rehabilitator was on her way to take the deer to her facility. While CO Goss was waiting for the rehabilitator to arrive, the subject was asking the CO questions and keeping him distracted. Unbeknownst to CO Goss, the female subject had sneaked out of the house and tried to hide the deer in a nearby wooded area. When the rehabilitator arrived, they were unable to locate the deer. Unfortunately for the female subject, there were three inches of freshly fallen snow on the ground. CO Goss was able to quickly locate the subject and the fawn approximately a quarter of a mile away, hunkered down in the woods. The deer was safely transported to the rehabilitation facility and charges are being sought for rehabilitating wildlife without a license.

CO Shane Webster worked an internet-based complaint of an individual who had posted pictures of a nine-point whitetail he had taken. The subject had not purchased any buck tags for the year. Upon contact with the subject, he denied having taken the deer himself and claimed his son had shot the deer. The antlers were found and indeed a Mentored Youth license was found on the deer. CO Webster questioned the individual on why only the subject's name was on his entry online and not the youth's. The subject claimed he had sent the email explaining his entry, but apparently it had gotten messed up. CO Webster left the residence, but was still not convinced by the subject's story. CO Webster did some more online research and found a posting by the subject's girlfriend, a picture of a young child and the nine-point deer with the statement

"Daddy's big buck." CO Webster re-contacted the subject and presented him with the posting. The subject broke down and confessed that he had taken the deer and used his son's license on it, since it was a cheap way to go and he had not purchased a buck license for himself. A warrant request is pending.

DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)

CO Todd Szyska received a complaint from **CO Kris Kiel** that a subject was over-limiting on panfish at Harbor Club North Marina. CO Szyska checked numerous anglers, but the suspect was already gone upon arrival. One angler who was checked was happy to show his limit of bluegill; however, the angler had not had a fishing license since 2010. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Ken Kovach reports on a trial of a subject he arrested on opening day of the firearm deer season for shooting an antlerless deer without a valid license. The subject was found guilty and fined \$200. He also lost his hunting privileges per statute and has to pay \$1,000 reimbursement for the deer. The judge ordered the subject to ten months probation, instead of jail.

CO Ben Shively responded to a RAP complaint during a winter storm about a subject who had shot two fawns and the fawns were reportedly still alive. CO Shively arrived on scene and met with the complainant, who stated he heard two shots and, when he came out, he saw the deer still alive just off his property. He stated that the hunter approached the deer and he began to yell at him and he took off. CO Shively dispatched the doe and yearling, and began to search the area for the hunter's footprints. After 15 minutes of searching, CO Shively located two additional does that had been shot. CO Shively made contact with the hunter who was returning to the deer. When asked why he had left the scene, the hunter explained that his family had had issues with the complainant and he was trying to avoid a confrontation. CO Shively asked if he had shot all four deer. The hunter stated that he had only shot three times and had only shot three deer. CO Shively showed the hunter the four deer and determined that the yearling was standing behind the third doe when he shot. The hunter stated he had seven or eight deer licenses. CO Shively asked to see the licenses to cover the four deer. CO Shively looked through the hunter's combination licenses and doe permits and found that the hunter did not have any private land doe permits for Oakland County. The hunter was ticketed for taking an antlerless deer without a license, and all four deer were seized and donated to Sportsmen Against Hunger.

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Final Shot



Heavy Load

During the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897-98, the Canadian government required those going to the gold fields to bring a year's supply of food with them to avoid starvation during the long Yukon winter. This included 400 pounds of flour, 200 pounds of bacon and 100 pounds of beans. Moving the pile of goods forward was a major problem. Those who carried their own goods had the choice of ferrying more weight on their backs, or making more trips. Some trudged nearly 1,000 miles to transport their supplies to Lake Bennett from Dyea, one of two jumping off points for the 600-mile trek to the gold fields.

—North Woods Call photo taken at the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park at Skagway, Alaska

New poaching, trespass fines

New Michigan laws to deter poaching of antlered bucks—especially those with trophy-sized racks—and to reduce recreational trespass are now in effect.

The new laws make several changes to fines and restitution payments for poaching deer, including a progressive penalty system:

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

- * For any antlered deer, there will be an additional restitution of \$1,000 plus;

- * For antlered deer with 8 to 10 points, an additional \$500 will be assessed for each point; and

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

A "point" is defined in the bill as being at least one inch long as measured from its tip to the nearest edge of the antler beam. As an example, illegally killing a 10-point buck in Michigan will now result in a \$7,000 restitution, plus fines and court costs.

Poachers also now face stronger penalties related to hunt-

ing privileges. Under previous law, poachers would lose their hunting privileges in Michigan for the remainder of the year of the conviction, plus three years. Those who kill an antlered buck will lose their hunting privileges for an additional two years on their first offense (potentially six years in total) and an additional seven years on second and subsequent offenses (potentially 11 years in total).

In addition, the new laws address recreational trespass by increasing the civil damage award that a landowner may recover. Previously under the law, the maximum amount a landowner could recover from someone who trespasses on his or her land to hunt or engage in other recreational activity was \$250, or actual property damages. Under the new law, the civil action increases to \$750 or actual property damages. Additionally, if someone kills any protected animal, game, or fish while trespassing, the new law creates a new misdemeanor with higher fines than allowed for a first violation.

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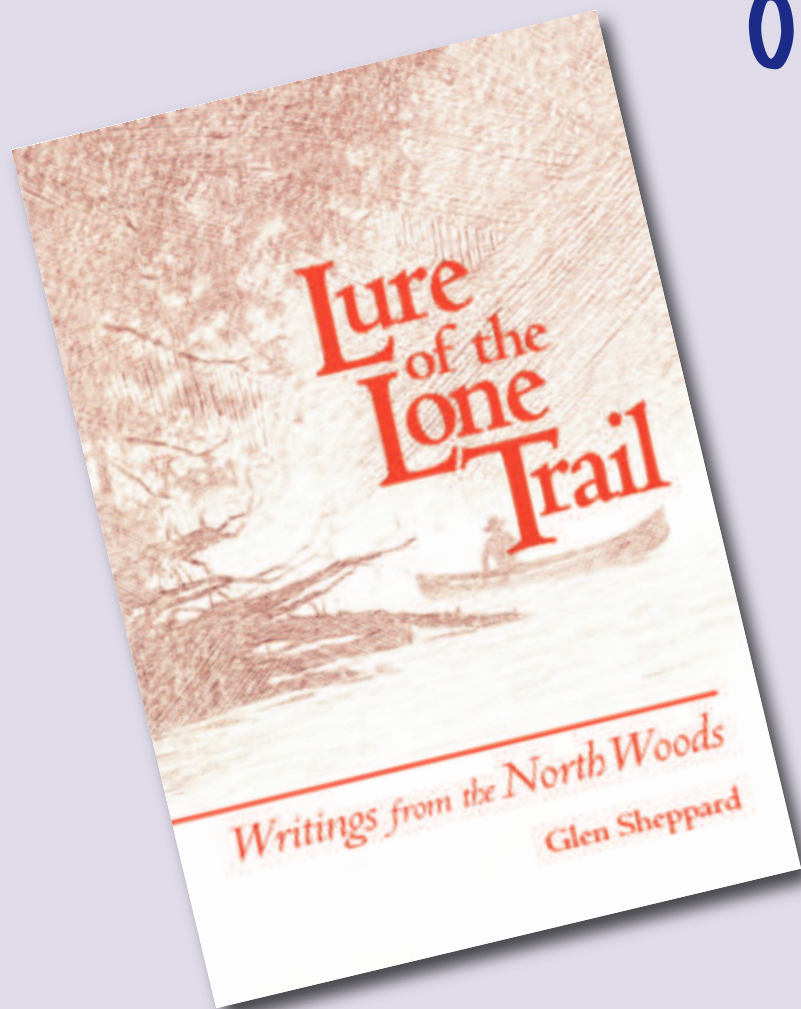
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Past snow days

If you think this winter has been tough, you might give some thought to a couple of other doozies that occurred in recent memory.

January 1967—This blizzard fell on January 26 and 27, and dumped twenty-four inches of snow on Lansing alone and similar amounts elsewhere in the state. *Lansing State Journal* articles from the days after the storm tell stories of stranded bus passengers, a mother who picked her children up on horseback, and neighbors who built a human-sized Snoopy snow sculpture.

January 1978—Snowstorms with 50- to 70-mile-per-hour winds pummeled much of Michigan. Snowfall totals ranged from eighteen inches in Lansing to an incredible fifty-one inches in Traverse City. More than 100,000 cars were abandoned on roads and highways, and travel was impossible for days. Governor William G. Milliken declared a state of emergency on January 26 and activated the National Guard to assist with the cleanup. The governor also requested financial assistance from the federal government and estimated damage totals to be more than \$25 million—not including lost productivity from workers who were unable to get to their jobs.

—Archives of Michigan