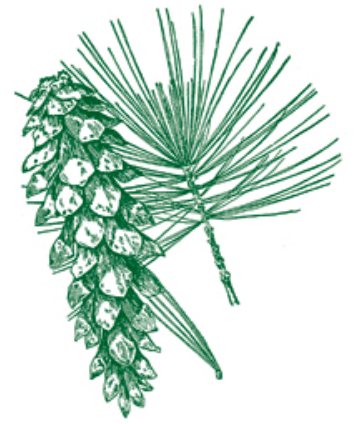




**“The newspaper for people
who love the north”**



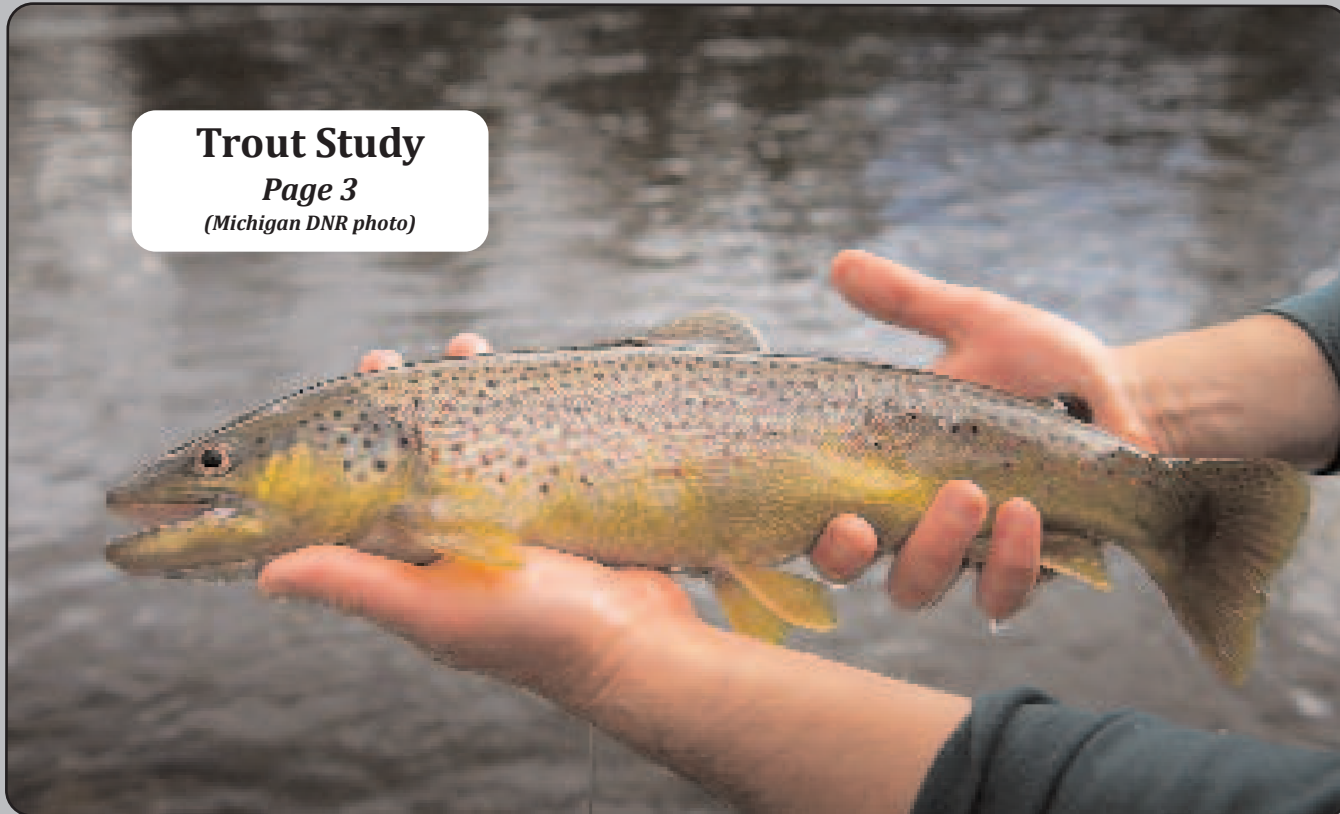
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\$2.50

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Toughening Up

—Michigan DNR photo

New Michigan conservation officer recruits are being whipped into fighting shape at the Michigan State Police training facility in Lansing. They are now nearly two months into a 22-week academy and still have several weeks to go. As previously reported in *The North Woods Call*, 31 candidates began the training Jan. 12—the first new recruit school since 2007—and those who are successful will go from there to another 18 weeks of field training. The ramped up outdoor law enforcement troops are made possible through changes to Michigan's hunting and fishing license fees, which officially took effect on March 1 (See related story on Page 8).

Local residents push back on U.P. mine proposal

Opposition to a proposed limestone mining operation near the Upper Peninsula community of Rexton appears to be gaining some steam.

A small group of local residents have jumped into the fray and are trying to prevent Canada-based Graymont Inc. from getting the state forest land that the company says it needs for the operation.

Graymont—a leading producer of limestone in the United States—has submitted a formal proposal to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and wants to acquire some 13,000 acres to set up several surface mining areas and perhaps one underground limestone mine. The company also operates a regional quarry near Gulliver in the Upper Peninsula.

Rexton-area residents have complained that they have questioned the company on several matters, but have not received any satisfactory answers as to how the limestone will be taken from the mines and how water resources sources will be protected.

“We are just very, very concerned,” property owner Don Frederick reportedly said in late February, according to an article in the *Sault Ste. Marie Evening News*. “We are worried about our wells, very concerned about our property values, very concerned about our roads.”

DNR officials have said that approval of the land

transaction would not necessarily mean approval of mining operations. Those plans—presumably detailing impacts on land and water resources—would still need to go through regulatory review and permitting by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

DNR officials said they have been reviewing the proposal and considering comments that have been made by the general public, local government officials and others. If approved, it would represent one of the largest transfers of state land ever.

Critics say that such a hefty transaction should have been opened for competitive bidding, but it was not. It is up to just one man—DNR Director Keith Creagh—to decide whether approval is given, they said, when something this significant should be contingent on a vote of some sort.

DNR officials themselves have acknowledged that the agency does not typically 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 have suggested that Graymont propose a land exchange in order to proceed with the current proposal.

If the proposal is accepted and all the necessary

(Continued on Page 2)

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THE NORTH WOODS CALL

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



North Woods Notes

BRRRR! Winter 2014 raged on as of this writing, dumping record-breaking snow and ice on much of the nation. During a typical winter, 30 to 40 percent of the Great Lakes are covered by ice, according to AccuWeather Senior Meteorologist Brett Anderson. This year, 80 to 90 percent of the lakes are ice-covered. On Feb. 13, Lake Superior was said to be 90 percent covered—the most ice seen there in about 20 years. The winters of 1993 and 1994 had the previous highest ice coverage since monitoring began about 30 years ago.

2014 FISHING GUIDE: Here's a warmer thought. The newest Michigan Fishing Guide—which includes rules and regulations effective from April 1, 2014, through March 31, 2015—is now available wherever fishing licenses are sold.

HELPING HANDS: Supporters of a drive to place the so-called Scientific Fish & Wildlife Conservation Act on this fall's general election ballot are getting some help from Cabela's, Bass Pro Shops, Gander Mountain, Jay's Sporting Goods, Frank's Great Outdoors and other outdoor retailers. The stores are letting the ballot drive organizers collect petition signatures at their locations.

CONFUSED WATERFOWL: Near record ice this winter and less open water have flummoxed Michigan waterfowl and left them stranded on roadways. The birds apparently confuse the pavement with open water. Once they land on the roadway, experts say, they cannot take off again, because their bodies are adapted to lifting off from water.

HUNTING & FISHING COLLECTIBLES: Historic rods, reels, flies, creels, tackle boxes, decoys, traps, shell boxes and many other items will be on display at the Hunting & Fishing Collectibles Show March 7 & 8 at the Ramada Inn in Grayling. Show times are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Admission is \$2. For information, call (248) 797-0126, or e-mail birwin11@yahoo.com.

HURON PINES AWARD: Dan Kennedy, endangered species coordinator for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, has received the 2014 Huron Pines Award, which recognizes his ongoing commitment to natural resources conservation in northeast Michigan.

TRASHY NEIGHBORS: While Michigan residents apparently disposed of less garbage at in-state landfills during the last fiscal year, total waste deposited increased as neighboring Canada dumped more trash here. Refuse from Michigan reportedly decreased about 0.5 percent, while trash from Canada grew 13.5 percent, according to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. About 17 percent of all waste in Michigan landfills comes from Canada, they said, and another six percent comes from other states.

MORE OIL & GAS LEASES: The Michigan Department of Natural Resources will hold an oral bid public auction May 14 for approximately 22,000 acres of state-owned oil and gas lease rights. Lands under consideration include acreage in Barry, Cheboygan, Clare, Crawford, Genesee, Grand Traverse, Isabella, Jackson, Kalkaska, Lapeer, Lenawee, Mecosta, Midland, Montcalm, Osceola and Sanilac counties.

COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS: Consumers Energy plans to decommission at least three coal-fired plants that generate electricity in Michigan. The company is said to be on track to close the B.C. Cobb Generating Plant on Muskegon Lake, the J.C. Weadock plant on Saginaw Bay and the J.R. Whiting plant near Monroe over the next few years as stricter U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulations approach. There will likely be some significant losses in jobs and tax revenue for state and local governments, and some observers have suggested that electricity rates for homeowners and businesses will increase. But our so-called carbon footprint will reportedly be smaller.

(Continued on Page 2)

Fisherman's Island land swap opposed

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is reportedly considering a land swap deal between the St. Mary's Cement Plant and Fisherman's Island State Park (FISP) near Charlevoix.

But conservationists and some area residents—who reject it a “land grab”—are up in arms about the proposal.

The company wants to take 190 forested acres at the north end of the park to expand its quarrying operations. If the deal is approved, St. Mary's would also take the Bells Bay access road that leads to a picturesque stretch of Lake Michigan beach, as well as trails and the existing park entrance. The woods would be quarried and a berm built along its edge, officials said.

A narrow strip of land between the berm and Lake Michigan would remain part of the park, but “access would be difficult and the beauty and environmental integrity of the park would be lost, according to Anne Zukowski, a Charlevoix resident and opponent of the plan.

The company has reportedly asked to move the park entrance several miles south into Norwood Township, which would be the third time the park entrance has been moved to accommodate the cement plant's expanding quarry.

The proposal has reportedly been in the works for two years, Zukowski said, although a formal application had not yet been submitted to the DNR at the time of this writing. However, the company has received “conceptual” approval from Charlevoix Township, Norwood Township, the local road commission and state officials, she said.

Curiously, the general public has not yet been part of these discussions, opponents say.



This property—heavily used throughout the year by hikers, skiers, hunters, mushroomers, high school cross-country team members and others—would be removed from Fisherman's Island State Park under the proposed land swap and replaced with what opponents say is a less-desireable piece of land.

—photo courtesy of Anne Zukowski

Zukowski said that the piece of land St. Mary's wants to give to the park is mostly a flat and somewhat marshy field. Claims that this property contains a blue ribbon trout stream are exaggerated, she said. In fact, the quarry pits are said to suck up the surrounding groundwater, while the stream usually dries up in the summer.

The other long, narrow strip of land—which abuts state land on the east side—contains wetlands and a stream, she said. The west side has already been quarried, with a large berm built along the entire length. The quarry reportedly cannot be expanded in that direction due to wetlands regulations.

Opponents of the planned land swap have started a Facebook

page containing maps and other information. The page, located at www.facebook.com/stoptheswap, received more than 1,100 “likes” within the first ten days of posting.

“This land swap sets a dangerous precedent,” Zukowski said. “Our state land is already being leased for fracking. Now our state parks are up for grabs to be compromised and sacrificed to accommodate corporate interests.”

“I see no reason at all for any land exchange here—other than [for] the benefit of St. Mary's cement plant,” said East Jordan resident Brian Hammond Jr. in a letter published by the *Charlevoix Courier*. “Fisherman's Island State Park is 2,678 acres of

(Continued on Page 2)



Waiting for Springtime

—North Woods Call photo

A handful of leftover cattails from 2013 patiently wait for the return of spring in a wetland area near the North Woods Call office. After nearly two-and-a-half months of almost daily snowfall, the warm sun finally bathed lower Michigan for a few days in late February. But don't put away those snowshoes and woolen mittens too soon. It will likely be another three weeks or so before the swamp grass begins to green and the first spring flowers emerge, bringing vibrant colors to the gray and often overcast landscape.

Opposition to Upper Peninsula mine proposal grows

(Continued from Page 1)

permits approved, it would likely be 30 to 50 years before underground mining is started, according to company officials. There would be just six direct jobs created by the surface mining, they said, although if a processing plant is constructed there could be 25 or 30 direct jobs.

Local residents say they are confused by those projected job numbers, because they reportedly were told at one point that there would be 75 jobs.

The proposal was up for review by the state's Land Exchange Review Committee last month, but the panel's preliminary decision was tabled until more information can be gathered, officials said. The committee is expected to reconvene in late March for a possible ruling, they said. The DNR will host a pub-

lic meeting after that to give local residents the opportunity to respond.

"This is in conflict with the Pure Michigan campaign," Trout Lake resident Kathy English told the *Soo Evening News*. "People are not going to want to see big mining trucks, or holes in the ground."

"All we hear about is money, money, money," added Frederick. "We hear very little about the people who are going to be affected by this."

"People that moved [up north] chose to live there for pure air, quality of life, and peace and quiet," said English. "People are not going to buy places, or move next to a mine."

A recent survey of Trout Lake Township residents reportedly showed about 95 percent are opposed to the project, as is the Trout Lake Township board.

Our 61st Year: Looking Back to March 10, 1954
—Excerpts from *The North Woods Call*—

Conserving the good earth

By Marguerite Gahagan

The good earth is man's most precious possession.

And, throughout the world today, that good earth is called upon to feed more and more millions of human beings.

Only recently has man recognized the desperate need to preserve his earth if it is to continue to serve him and his children's children.

In Otsego County—a small piece of the world's good earth—farmers celebrate the 10th anniversary of their Soil Conservation District. They are rightfully proud of their program, of their efforts to promote it, and of the results obvious even to the untrained eyes of the non-farmer.

Acres of dying land have been given new life, have become productive again, [and now] bear rich produce and healthy trees.

Science did much to make the miracle possible, but the courage to start on a project and to follow it through the long, slow years came from the farmer's own heart.

Now the farmers point with pride to fields where soil erosion was stopped by contour planting. They show rich acres that were brought back to productivity by the use of waterways.

They watch the slow, steady growth of trees, providing windbreaks that keep their soil from blowing away before their very eyes. And they watch the miracle, not alone, but banded together by a program that—through its far-reaching effects—can give them the satisfaction of a giant achievement.

The very vastness of the soil conservation program means individual patience. The task is never completed, but unending, a task to be done by this generation and the next.

The farmer is concerned with the understanding his child will have for the land. He has wisely, therefore, sought to teach the school boys and girls the value and necessity of conserving the good earth.

The district sponsors educational programs to interest the children and proudly claims that, in many cases, children have sold their own parents on the need for soil conservation.

In other distant lands, the good earth lies barren, robbed of all fertility over the centuries. The message of soil conservation is slowly being carried to impoverished farmers in those lands.

Such programs—as the one in Otsego County with its tremendous achievements—assure the ever-growing spread of soil conservation across the world.

While the farmers themselves celebrate their district's birthday, it is an occasion in which all county residents should gratefully share.

The work done in soil conservation is not just for the farmer. It is for all mankind. And to the farmer, who by his labor makes the program successful, all mankind must indeed be grateful.



North Woods Notes

(Continued from Page 1)

APRIL NRC MEETING: The April 10 meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC) will be held at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, in Lansing. The May 8, June 12, Sept. 11 and Nov. 6 meetings will also be held at that same location, while the Oct. 9 meeting will be back at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center, 104 Conservation Drive, on Higgins Lake near Roscommon, where the March 13 gathering was held. Other NRC meetings during 2014 will be 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.

CLEANER VEHICLES: Today's truck and automobile engines burn up to 95 percent cleaner than past models, according to Cheryl Bynum, SmartWay program director and developer at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. And non-road engines, such as those used in agriculture, have 90 percent less emissions and particulate matter, she said. "We've cut lead from fuel entirely," Bynum said, "and cut fuel sulphur by 90 percent in gasoline and 99 percent in diesel."

MANURE POLLUTION: Michigan environmental regulators say they'll probably never know exactly how much waste escaped a large lagoon at a farm near Hopkins last month. The Department of Environmental Quality was awaiting results of water sample tests taken from Allegan County's Bear Creek, following the Feb. 14 incident. An icy pipe and valve failed in the farm's storm water system, causing backed-up manure to leak into drainage ditches and into Bear Creek. The creek feeds the Rabbit River, a tributary of the Kalamazoo River that flows into Lake Michigan. Cleanup activities are under way.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Risks associated with hydraulic fracturing in oil and gas development are exaggerated, says John Simaz, Michigan field director for Energy In Depth, a public outreach campaign funded by the Independent Petroleum Association of America. While there will always be risks with any form of energy development, he said, the oil and gas industry is under constant scrutiny from federal and state regulators, and fracking has been successfully used in Michigan for decades.



A lone dog surveys property near the St. Mary's quarrying operation south of Charlevoix, Michigan.

—photo courtesy of Anne Zukowski

Fisherman's Island State Park land swap opposed

(Continued from Page 1)

untouched land that provides a number of outdoor activities for families of northern Michigan and tourists from all over, with 81 rustic campsites, a three-mile cross-country hiking trail, five miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and seasonal hunting. [It] may be an inconvenience to citizens of Charlevoix having the entrance moved to Norwood. It does not seem reasonable to ravage any portion of the beautiful 2,678 acres of raw nature [that the park] has to offer."

The public would not only lose Bell's Bay Road to Lake Michigan, opponents say, but also 190 acres of rich, beautiful forest; six

campgrounds; a woodland buffer protecting campsites from the quarry operation; and convenient close access to the park—among other things. In exchange, the public would be given a 35-acre, 3,000 foot section of McGeach Creek that has only intermittent flow, a 185-acre inland and mostly scrub parcel, a new ranger contact station and help in creating new campground spots and roads.

DNR spokesman Ed Golder acknowledged that St. Mary's has talked to the agency about a "potential land swap," but said it is still "just a matter of discussion."

"There is no proposal before the DNR at this time," Golder told

The North Woods Call, "so we don't have any position on a potential land deal. It will be reviewed through the DNR's established process for reviewing land transaction applications. That review would involve scrutiny from our Wildlife, Fisheries, Forest Resources, and Parks and Recreation divisions."

The process would include ample opportunity for public comment, Golder said.

Word has it that a supporting resolution is expected from the Charlevoix County planners when they meet March 6 and the township board will reportedly discuss the proposal during its March 10 meeting.

Intervention on Schwartz Creek: Will it help?

The Escanaba River Watershed Project has been exploring the possible removal of a perched culvert in Dickinson County's Schwartz Creek to improve brook trout habitat.

But some anglers say the pristine Upper Peninsula tributary stream—one of the headwaters of the Escanaba River's West Branch—should be left alone.

The culvert reportedly cuts off some 20 miles of stream that brook trout could use for spawning, according to officials at the Michigan Department of Natural Resource (DNR).

The 25-foot-long pipe—five feet in diameter—was identified as a problem when the fledgling watershed group was collecting information on natural reproduction of brook trout and developing a five-year plan of action. The organization hired Northern Michigan University graduate student Joe Wagner to study the area, collect habitat and water-quality data, quantify the flow, and tag and follow some fish to determine how trout travel in the system.

Project leaders have met with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Dickinson County Conservation District and the Dickinson County Road Commission to see what it would take to fix the problem.

"It can be replaced several ways," said Bob Jensen of the Marquette-based Fred Waara Chapter of Trout Unlimited. "It could be anything from a grandiose concrete culvert to a simple metal span—or something in between. We're collecting data on the flood plain, which will determine the project's cost to a great degree."

The Escanaba River Watershed Project has submitted a grant application to the Environmental Protection Agency in hopes of funding the replacement, which could cost in excess of \$100,000, according to Jensen.

"If we could keep it to a minor project—less

than 20 feet and no change in roadway elevation—it can minimize red tape," Jensen said. "DEQ is very supportive. If the road commission can get a design and do the work, we can hopefully get this done this year."

Meanwhile, the project has attracted additional partners: the Michigan Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU)—which has a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant for a "fish passage program"—the Dickinson County Sportsmen's Club, Northern Michigan University's fisheries program, the Trout and Salmon Foundation, and an anonymous hunting and fishing club.

But not everyone agrees that the replacement effort would be good for the stream.

"[Schwartz Creek] is one of the coldest tributaries and it contains the best native brook trout habitat that I know about," said one Michigan conservationist and outdoorsman who has a hunting camp on 40 acres downstream. "It has five miles of character, just as Ma Nature planned it ... I personally know the quality of the upper reaches of Schwartz Creek, because I have fished there since 1966."

The availability of grant money for these types of projects too often influences decision making, he said, but in this case nothing needs to be done to improve stream quality and the DNR needs to "stop being influenced by special interests."

Schwartz Creek currently has "over five miles of stream without a bridge over it," he said. "It is the best of the best."

The Escanaba River Watershed Project formed a few years ago when the DNR partnered with the 250-member Fred Waara Chapter of TU and the Escanaba River Association.

DNR fisheries biologist Darren Kramer, who is working with the group, says the bottom line is to protect and improve the resources in the whole watershed, improve fishing for the gen-

eral public and build a foundation to explore other opportunities on streams in the Upper Peninsula.

Wagner, the graduate student who spent the last two summers studying the situation, said he suspects the perched culvert is causing problems with water temperatures downstream in Schwartz Creek.

Bryan Burroughs, executive director of Michigan TU, said there are actually two Schwartz Creek culverts being examined. One, he said, may require a bridge, rather than a replacement culvert, but that will depend on the results of a planned engineering and feasibility study.

"We are evaluating options for two new road/stream crossings on Schwartz Creek," confirmed Ryan McCone, Fred Waara Chapter Conservation Committee chairman, "[We] anticipate finalizing designs and applying for permits this spring, and look forward to working with our partners to install new structures such as clear span bridges, or large fish-friendly culverts later this year."

The benefits of reconnecting historically isolated fragments of the watershed include greater fish and aquatic organism access to life-cycle critical habitats, according to McCone.

"These habitats are essential for reproduction, rearing, feeding, overwintering and finding thermal refuge," he said. "And best of all, they already exist. The new road/stream crossings should also improve the long-term stability of each crossing, and will increase their capacity to transport water and sediment—while strengthening the ecological sustainability of the watershed and benefiting all who fish and recreate in the central Upper Peninsula."

Replacing the culverts on Schwartz Creek is just the first of what the local TU hopes will be numerous projects in the watershed.

Traverse City train study

By James Bruckbauer

It's been nearly 10 years since the Grand Traverse Dinner Train picked up passengers in Traverse City and led them through a three-hour tour of scenic northern Michigan. But a new study by the Michigan Land Use Institute (MLUI) is looking at a possible return of train service "Up North."

Over the next several months, MLUI staff will research what it would cost to run a passenger train on an 11-mile stretch of railroad tracks between Traverse City and Williamsburg, just east of Acme Township. The study will focus on the tracks between the former railroad depot and the Turtle Creek Casino, where the line ends.

The Michigan Department of Transportation owns the line and leases the tracks to the Great Lakes Central Railroad Company.

Right now, those tracks occasionally carry a few freight train cars, but—because of federal regulations—they are unable to carry passengers. The study will estimate what it would cost to upgrade the tracks so trains could once again carry passengers along the line.

The study will also describe the different ways trains could operate. One option involves refurbishing a historic trolley that could serve as a tourist-type train running between the Grand Traverse Resort and Traverse City. Researchers will also explore commuter train service that would focus on relieving car congestion on busy US-31, which runs parallel to the tracks.

Maura Niemisto, a recent University of Michigan graduate who is leading the research on the study, says a tourist-type train could be a cost-effective way to get service up and running. Then, if demand grows over time, that service may lead to a more detailed study on running frequent commuter trains.

The study will also examine other similar-sized communities that have initiated passenger rail service on existing freight train tracks. The researchers will focus on the Astoria Riverfront Trolley in Astoria, Ore.; the Music City Star in Nashville, Tenn.; and the Napa Valley Wine Train in Napa, Calif., as well as others.

Traverse City real estate leaders say train service could boost property values along the line and also support development within walking distance of the train stops. Master plans at both ends of the line call for "mixed-use" development that allows residents to walk, bike and use buses to reach their daily needs.

The report is expected to be released later this spring. It's supported, in part, by a \$5,000 grant through the National Association of Realtors.

James Bruckbauer is the MLUI's transportation policy specialist.

Comparing strains of brown trout in Michigan fisheries

A four-year research project that compares two strains of brown trout that have been stocked in a pair of rivers, a handful of inland lakes and four Lake Michigan ports, is preliminarily showing that neither strain is best in all situations.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has long used Wild Rose strain brown trout for stocking across the state. But fisheries officials have become concerned about diminishing returns from the stockings of the Wild Rose strain, which has been in the system for many years.

So they launched an experiment in which similar numbers of Sturgeon River strain browns—taken from wild brood stock—were stocked in various bodies of water. The fish were fin-clipped (right ventral fin clip for Wild Rose strain, left ventral fin clip for Sturgeon River browns) for easy identification. The Au Sable River below Mio Dam and the Manistee River below Hodenpyl Dam—both tailwater fisheries—have been subject to mark-and-recapture, electro-fishing surveys for the last four years.

"In the two tailwaters, the Sturgeon River strain is far outperforming the Wild Rose strain," said DNR Research Biologist Todd Wills. "We're getting better survival with the Sturgeon River fish and good growth."

The Sturgeon River strain fish go into the river a little bit smaller than the Wild Rose strain, which has been in the hatchery system for many years and seem to grow more quickly than the Sturgeon



Fisheries managers are optimistic that if they can identify the right strain of brown trout, they'll be able to grow more big fish like this male held by fisheries technician James Zellinger. —Michigan DNR photo

River fish while in the system. But the Sturgeon River fish are nearly as long as the Wild Rose fish after a year in the river, showing the kind of vigor biologists like to see.

Results from the five inland lakes, however, where both species have been stocked (Bear Lake and Starvation Lake in Kalkaska County, Lake 15 and McCormick Lake in Montmorency County and Bridge Lake in Otsego County) are just the opposite.

"In the inland lakes, the Wild Rose strain fish are doing better," Wills said.

"Anglers report catching more Wild Roses than Sturgeon Rivers," said Tim Cwalinski, a

DNR fisheries biologist. "That backs up what we're seeing when we shock the lakes."

Returns of the fish from stocking at four Lake Michigan ports (Frankfort, Ludington, Cedar River and Menominee) have been disappointing.

"In three years we've only seen four fin-clipped fish," said Wills. "With that amount of data, we really can't say much of anything other than we're not seeing a lot of returns to the creel. I don't think that's much of a surprise; brown trout have not done well in the Great Lakes in recent years. And that doesn't seem to be a strain thing; it's more likely a changing-ecosystem issue.

"We spend a lot of time and

money raising fish in the hatchery and we want to know that what we're stocking is surviving well enough and living long enough to be worth the effort," Wills said. "The project will be finished within the next 18 months and fisheries managers should have a better idea of what they want to stock to benefit anglers."

The final report will not be completed until later this year. When it's finished, those interested can find it at www.michigan.gov/fishresearch.

To learn more about Michigan's fish production system and individual hatchery work, visit www.michigan.gov/hatcheries.

—Michigan DNR report

Opinion

Quote Box

"Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depend, have become global garbage cans."

—Jacques-Yves Cousteau

Fisherman's Island "land grab"

Former *North Woods Call* publisher Glen Sheppard had a special place in his heart for Fisherman's Island State Park.

After all, he lived just south of there and spent much time walking the beaches at the park and nearby Norwood. It's safe to say that Shep would be more than a little upset about a proposed land swap between the State of Michigan and St. Mary's Cement Inc. (see story on Page 1).

As current stewards of *The North Woods Call* legacy, we don't like it much better—especially the stealth manner in which the company and government officials have apparently gone about the negotiations.

St. Mary's has been meeting with state, county, township and road commission officials for several months, we're told, and the general public has only recently found out about it. Critics say that the entire "land grab" deal has gotten too much traction while avoiding public comment, or participation.

Such back-room dealing has no place in civic or corporate decision making. The public has too much to lose and St. Mary's is about the only beneficiary that we can see.

Citizens of the Charlevoix area and across the state need to put a stop to this plan, before the discussions evolve into a formal proposal. Fisherman's Island is a wonderful resource and should be protected for future generations under the public trust.

While we can empathize with the job-creating needs of private enterprise, there's no need to sacrifice treasured public resources in the name of corporate expansion.

Save Fisherman's Island now!

Snowmobiles and the outdoors

We've never been particularly fond of snowmobiles in the north woods.

Sure, they're fun to ride and can get you from place-to-place (often tavern-to-tavern) in a hurry. And they provide a terrific shot in the arm for local economies during the gray and overcast winter months.

But they make a lot of noise, terrorize the wildlife and result in many property damage and personal injury incidents each year.

A glance at some of the conservation officer logs that appear on Page 7 of *The North Woods Call* will testify to that.

We can't really explain it, but there seems to be something about certain people and their

machines that cause them to engage in behaviors incompatible with the natural world—to not mention personal health and safety.

We were snowshoeing in the Jordan River Valley one day when we were treated to the peace-exploding ruckus of a pack of snowmobilers racing along an old rail bed, enroute to their next urgent destination.

The excessive racket and two-cycle exhaust fumes announced their coming far in advance, shook our nerves as they passed by and rubbed our noses in their lingering presence long after they had disappeared down the trail.

Is all that really necessary to enjoy the outdoors?

Jet fuel and national hypocrisy

When the president of the United States flew to East Lansing, Michigan, recently to sign the new farm bill into law and a few days later traveled on Air Force One all the way to California to talk about the alleged perils of climate change, we couldn't help but wonder how serious he is about curbing the use of fossil fuels.

A Boeing 747-200 plane the size of Air Force One is said to use in the neighborhood of five to eight gallons of high-octane jet fuel per mile flown. That averages somewhere around 4,023 gallons per hour, according to the International Civil Aviation Organization.

That's a lot of fuel, not to mention a heavy cost to U.S. taxpayers. And the current occupant of the White House has reportedly used the aircraft more than any other president.

But he's not the only one. Many politicians and bureaucrats of various stripes are duplicitous about this issue—telling Americans they must drive more fuel efficient cars, install better furnaces, or embrace more energy efficient appliances and light bulbs—while at the same time jetting around the nation and world like flocks of restless birds in constant migration.

And the rest of us aren't much better—assuming we actually have the personal resources to purchase airline tickets for fast-paced travel adventures at home and abroad. The quicker we can get someplace—anyplace—the better, it seems, even if we don't really need to go there.

If the president and others truly believe that human activity and the burning of fossil fuels is rapidly destroying our planet and endangering the future of mankind, why haven't they cut back on their own unnecessary travel?

Could it be they don't really believe what they say?

Toxic acoustic trash in a hard-of-hearing world

Am I the only one bothered by noise?

Sometimes it seems that way.

If some guy isn't speeding past my house on a motorcycle without a muffler, somebody else is lighting fireworks, or popping off rounds from a high-powered rifle.

Wherever I go, horns are honking, tires are squealing and radios are blaring. I hear whistles, bells and chain saws. Even a quiet snowshoe outing in northern Michigan was marred by snowmobiles racing through the trees.

Mother Teresa said, "We need silence to be able to touch souls." I think that's true. Too much noise is the enemy of deep thought and spiritual renewal. It rattles our nerves and numbs our minds.

Unfortunately, noise is among the most pervasive forms of pollution. It comes from many sources—road traffic, airplanes, jet skis and garbage trucks. Not to mention construction equipment, lawn and garden machinery, and boom boxes. I've read that urban noise is doubling every eight to ten years.

The problem isn't just that noise is an unwanted assault on the soul. It can damage human health and well-being. Stress, high blood pressure, sleep interruptions and

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



lost productivity are just a few of the maladies linked to noise pollution.

My father and his stepfather were railroad men on the Michigan Central line. They spent their lives with loud steam and diesel locomotives. "Grandpa Steve" was the first to become "hard of hearing," as the old folks said. Now my dad—as well as many of his retired co-workers—are in the same shape. And lately I've been traveling down the same set of rails—probably due to lawn and garden equipment, former factory jobs and perhaps my own brief stint on the Penn Central Railroad.

Hearing loss is common in a noisy world. And, of course, it's one of the dubious perks of aging.

I grew up on a non-working farm in rural Michigan. I would often lie awake at night listening to a nearby whippoorwill, or the summer breeze blowing through the maple tree outside my bedroom window. In the morning, birds perching in that same tree would wake me with their songs. I don't hear those sounds as often

anymore. My ears are less capable, but I'm also too distracted by the clutter of modern life.

We probably need better regulations and enforcement to limit noise in the areas we share. Polluting public spaces shouldn't be allowed. After all, society has long recognized our right to be free from physical assault, or to breathe clean air and drink clean water. Shouldn't we also have the right to peace and quiet?

Some people would say the bluegrass music I enjoy qualifies as noise pollution. But I try to play it softly. A good neighbor keeps his noise to himself.

If you ask someone to name our most precious natural resources, you'll probably get answers like water, trees and animals. But what about quiet? It may be one of our most endangered assets.

Henry David Thoreau said that nothing was as startling to him as his own thoughts. I wonder sometimes if we'd even recognize ours.

Quiet is a good thing. And we're losing it fast.

Book Review

A Feathered River Across the Sky—Joel Greenberg

By Richard Schinkel

Martha, the last living passenger pigeon, died one hundred years ago this year.

"A Feathered River Across the Sky" is more than a documentation of the extinction of a species. It is a story about the reasons this bird became extinct and a tale about our current relationship with our natural world.

This book is remarkable in that it has literally reams of documentation on the billions of passenger pigeons that once existed in North America. Today, none remain.

The early records go back before the white man arrived and the story is recorded in American Indian lore. Native Americans recognized early on that the birds were a "finite" resource. Even though warring tribes could harvest the pigeons in peace, they also made truces to not take adult birds during nesting.

If we were to read one or two of the accounts about the huge numbers encountered, we would label them as preposterous. But the author has compiled numerous incidents across the U.S. and Canada illustrating the unbelievable numbers seen and actually harvested. These accounts come from markets, hunters, farmers, businessmen, shippers and even ornithologists—Audubon, Wilson, Gene Stratton Porter—as well as Chief Simon Pokagon.

Greenberg documents in detail the numbers reported, shipped and eaten, as well as those taken just for sport. This great number of birds often wreaked havoc with farmers and even destroyed woodlots by breaking limbs and trees. They were seen as a prize, but also a scourge.

Michigan played a major part in the passenger pigeon's life. They nested in various areas of the state and provided income for much of the human population, even though there was no predicting when or where they would come each year.

I live in southwest Michigan and am very interested in Simon Pokagon of the Pokagon band of the Potawatomi Indians. Simon was the last chief of the tribe and held dominion over southern Wisconsin, northern Illinois, northern Indiana and southwest Michigan. The tribe still has holdings here.

Simon studied the passenger pigeon in Wisconsin. He described in detail the massive flocks moving in "unbroken lines" across the sky. Most of the critical documentation of numbers taken were from one of the largest nestings in Wisconsin. The nesting occurred over 850 square miles in west-central Wisconsin in 1871. Previously, Petoskey, Michigan, was thought to have the largest flock.

Over 600 professional netters and hunters descen-

(Continued on Page 6)

Viewpoint (Part II)

"Calling a spade a spade"

EDITOR'S NOTE: John Gunnell's look at baiting, and other wildlife harvesting/management techniques continues from last edition.

By John Gunnell

Protection of Michigan's natural resources relies upon a few leaders with knowledge, vision and integrity. The ever-changing landscape of nature as further influenced by humans makes it mandatory for our leaders to accurately and honestly match best practices with our wild animals' natural habits for survival.

One well-conceived alternative, relying only upon natural phenomena, was the introduction of the gray wolf on Isle Royale. With multiplying numbers of moose on the island and their dwindling food supply, the wolf's presence rebalanced the food chain for both species.

For several years, the moose/wolf experiment on Isle Royale seemed to work. However, in recent years—as so often occurs—nature's variables have thrown her curve balls. Currently, the demise of the two species seems to be hanging perilously in the balance, further

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The North Woods Call

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel
Since 1953

Published regularly by:
Newshound Productions LLC
5411 East DE Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49004.

Telephone: (269) 342-8724

E-mail: editor@mynorthwoodscall.com

Website: mynorthwoodscall.com

Online subscription: \$35 per year
and \$60 for two years.

Print subscription: \$55 per year
and \$95 for two years

Editor & Publisher: Mike VanBuren

Publishers Emeritus:
Marguerite Gahagan
Glen and Mary Lou Sheppard

Advertising rates upon request

A Newshound Publication

Letter to the Editor**Wildlife managers know best:
Wolf hunt is not for voters**

Editor:

I would like to address the "Letter to the Editor," written by Mark Karaba, regarding the wolf hunt issue. For the record, I completely agree with him and would like to add some more insight to this issue.

I've had many conversations with individuals who are opposed to any form of wolf hunting in Michigan, and I can safely conclude that their position is based purely on emotion, rather than logic.

Proof of this is in the typical conversation that takes place on this subject. I ask this question: "You are opposed to hunting wolves, so why don't you feel the same about coyotes?"

The usual response is, "Well, there are plenty of coyotes!" So, I respond with, "So what are you going to do when there are plenty of wolves, of which, in certain areas, there already are?"

From that point, the responses are all the varying anti-wolf hunt talking points such as, "They just want to exterminate the wolf again," "We need wolves to take care of sick animals," and my personal favorite, "We need wolves because they kill only sick and dying animals." (Yes, somebody actually said that to me).

My point in asking the "coyote" question is to expose the misinformation and hypocrisy surrounding this issue. There is plenty of concern for the wolf and virtually none for the coyote. This makes no sense, especially when you consider the fact that the wolf and the coyote are essentially the same animal. The one big difference between them being the wolf is far more aggressive and tenacious.

Hundreds of coyotes are killed each year in Michigan and there are still plenty of coyotes. At some point, the same will be said of the wolf. In some areas, that situation already exists. Should there be a ban on hunting wolves, what then will the process be to control their numbers?

Wolf hunting in Michigan can't—and should never be—up to voters. With all due respect, most Michigander's are simply not educated enough on the subject of wildlife population management to be making these types of decisions. If so, we would be voting on everything, including whether or not there should be a deer hunting season, bag limits on grouse, what the minimum trout size should be and so on down the line.

Should wolf hunting become a ballot issue, anti-hunting groups such as the DDAL (Doris Day Animal League), PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), KMWP (Keep Michigan Wolves Protected), Sierra Club, and others will flood Michigan with anti-hunting propaganda and misinformation in an attempt to stir-up negative emotions on this issue—all logic will be lost.

(Yes, the Sierra Club is an anti-hunting group, which is why I chose not to ask for their assistance with my fight against the U.P. Limestone strip mine).

In conclusion, I am a hunter and have been for over 40 years. As such, I believe that all wildlife needs to be logically managed—the wolf is no exception. For some reason, the wolf has been placed on a pedestal as if it were some sort of god-like creature. This emotional attachment is understandable, but misplaced and dangerous.

Many people are under the misguided belief that wolf numbers will never get out of control. Make no mistake, as with coyotes, it will happen.

What then will the solution be?

David Gorenflo
Traverse City, Michigan

Au Sable hex hatch: The river as a stage

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tired of the long winter? Here are some reminiscences from Betsy Hemming that are sure to get you thinking ahead to the glories of summer.

River Reflections

By Betsy Hayhow Hemming



Major June events: Summer solstice, the 53rd wedding anniversary of my parents and—drum roll please—the hex hatch.

The hex hatch is big on the main stream of the Au Sable River (excuse the understatement). It's actually somewhat miraculous—you have to be at the right place at just the right time, which generally is in the middle of the night. Sometimes the miracle occurs and the hex spring from seemingly nowhere, luring trout to feed, and sometimes not.

Our little camp is on a part of the river renown for hex, thanks to a fair amount of mud, (not conducive to wading, by the way) and the sludgy river's edge. Mud, in the fly-fishing context, is good, apparently. Because rumor has it, where there's mud, there's hex and where there's hex, there's trout. Big trout. This is where the monsters are.

I found myself on our little dock, smack dab in the middle of hex hatch last summer, on a very beautiful June evening. The fireflies were already blinking away, much earlier than I remembered from past years, but in keeping with the evening. The fly fishermen were out in spades, spread out along this lovely space of the river. I heard someone say: "There are hex here." That's a very important statement, one not to be taken lightly.

Hex. What a strange word. I'm told that the hex is to mayflies as a Spike's burger is to the world of hamburgers—revered for their ability to lure trout. Downstate, we have fish flies—also part of the mayfly family—which are often cursed by those who don't fish simply because they have to drive through, or step on, thousands of writhing flies that are just trying to make *THE* best use of the roughly 48 hours they have on this planet as flies. I guess it's all a matter of perspective.

As I sat on the dock, I felt like I was at the theatre and the river was a stage. The curtain rose.

The performers, dressed in full fishing regalia, lined up across the stage, rods in hand. They reminded me a bit of the Chinese terra cotta warriors from my youngest daughter's native China.

Theatre lighting was comprised of very small beams of light coming from fishing hats that all reference some really great river fished in the past. The sound technicians had provided the howling of coyotes in the distance. I'm not sure if this was a dramatic play or a musical, but it probably doesn't matter; the quality of the production was superb.

These fine actors knew their lines—both the fishing credos often waxed along the river and those cast into pockets of quiet water hopefully occupied by the hex. Because then, if all goes well, the real actors will emerge: The trout, of course.

The verbal lines are said quietly, but with manly urgency. Let me emphasize that I did not make these up:

Fisher dude #1: "Did you hear that?"

Fisher dude #2: "I can't see my fly."

Fisher dude #3: "What was that?"

Fisher dude #4 (my husband): "Betsy, come here!" said with a slightly changed tone, signaling that something big was going on in his little fishing world.

So I reluctantly left my private box seat and made my way upstream a tad. I couldn't see a darn thing, which makes me wonder what joy there is in fishing when you can't see what you catch. But as usual, I digress. After rapping my shins on various branches and shrubs, I heard a lot of commotion in the water of the splashing variety.

He had caught a trout of enormous proportions, though frankly, now that I think about it, I really didn't see it. So I guess I'll have to take his word for it. But judging from the amount of splashing and the pitch of his voice, it must

have been a humdinger.

I called it a night at this point, but certainly the fisher people did not. The show must go on. After a few hours, they did exit the river, having mastered as many trout as they could. I was sorry not to be there to applaud, but I did catch the second act a few hours later.

So then what happens? Well, the campfire gets stoked, the wine bottle opened, and the stories of great valor get told.

There are lots of stories of great valor. It's interesting: Rarely do fishermen sit around the fire and tell stories of long periods of absolutely no action whatsoever. It's all about the drama of bringing in a big one, the tragedy of the one that got away, and the comedy of one of the actors who inadvertently took a dip in the river. I will mention no names.

Hours pass as the stories are told. I happened to venture out at about 4 a.m. to find two men peering at a bounty of hex gathered under the porch lights. They guiltily sprang away when I emerged and judged that it was time to call it a night.

The next morning finds us retelling the stories of the night before—over coffee and camp breakfast. The storytelling concludes with a wry comment from one seasoned professional remembering his early fishing days and his wonderment on why the fishermen seemed so camp-bound and out of it during the middle of the day. Because they were just waiting for the night, of course, and another round of performances to begin.

As another year arrives, I fully expect more high-quality river theatre. Fish on.

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.

Viewpoint (Part II): "Calling a spade a spade"**Knowledge, vision & integrity needed to protect Michigan resources***(Continued from Page 4)*

pointing out nature having the last word. Using the moose/wolf scenario demonstrates in a positive way what can happen when leadership is legitimate and accountable for its actions.

The ramifications for another experiment was increasing the number of moose in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. At first blush, the ideas seemed to simply be an extension of the moose population already present in small numbers near the Canadian border. Unfortunately, by accident or hidden agenda, the re-introduction of the gray wolf was shortly thereafter ushered in with the promise to return wolves to their native habitat.

Bragging rights for the wolf's return were hailed in newspapers from Kalamazoo to Marquette with little substantive justification shown for its long-term benefits. Now, after several years—with tongue in

cheek—the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has dealt with increasing wolf numbers by authorizing a controversial wolf hunt in 2013 that coincided with the regular Nov. 15 firearm deer season. It was determined that a hunt would quell mounting fears by humans over wolves and help control attacks on livestock.

We have recently experienced the results of that wolf hunt. The hunt produced a far less-than-planned-for kill, compared to licenses authorized. Hunting over deer bait piles relied upon almost exclusively by most Michigan deer hunters of today just did not work with wolves.

Amusingly, yet sad for the few remaining real deer hunters left in Michigan today, the whole wolf debacle once again pointed out that tampering with nature ultimately never works, costs money, erodes trust and simply makes use all look foolish.

Rumor has it that the next year spaces at

the site bordering Rapid River in the Upper Peninsula—where tons of deer bait was stockpiled and sold in 2013—will also have special wolf bait next year to guarantee meeting the 2014 wolf kill quota. "Public Land Pirates" are expected to also expand their "gut baiting sites" for sale to further meet the increased demand for both bear and wolf ambushes.

Excuse me for making light of such horrific, manufactured circumstances, but this sad chapter needs defining for what it really is.

Unfortunately, our leaders—who are in denial through their silence over what has happened as a result of their capitulation—have also gone blind and deaf on such travesties. As is often the case, even a very legitimate scientific effort of the type put forth by Rolf Peterson on Isle Royale years ago to promote and control the moose population there held no guarantees to last for

perpetuity. Sadly, different schemes far less noble than Mr. Peterson's—and are profit-driven—continue to preoccupy our leaders, resulting in a waste of time and resources and damage to our out-of-doors.

Another undeniable result of DNR mismanagement is the bear elimination fiasco going on in Michigan as you read. Black bear numbers have steadily declined from an estimated DNR figure of 18,000 to 19,000 in 2010 to an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 in 2013. Such loss of species in Michigan is a direct result of allowing the killing of bear over gut piles from northern lower Michigan and throughout the Upper Peninsula.

Not unlike past denial, the DNR and its affiliates continue rationalizing with talk of cutting permits, etc., and completely ignoring the commercial baiting of bear, causing a precipitous decline in bear numbers.

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200 attend Enbridge meeting

An estimated 200 people attended a Mackinac County Planning Commission meeting in early February to learn more about the submerged oil pipeline that many say threatens the Straits of Mackinac.

The St. Ignace gathering resulted in more questions than answers, according to some observers who were present. At the onset, the company promised to answer as many written questions as possible.

Enbridge strives to be “green” and environmentally friendly, said Jackie Guthrie, the firm’s Superior Region spokesperson. She described the pipeline and the various types of inspections that are routinely conducted, and discussed monitoring, leak detection and emergency response.

More details were provided by Blake Olson, Enbridge Superior Area manager and one of his engineering colleagues. The pipeline was “over-engineered,” they said—meeting or exceeding federal standards—and inspections to date show it continues to be “fit” for service. The company has no current replacement schedule, they said, and has no plans to move heavy (tar sand) crude through the line.

What does go through the line, however, is “classified,” they said, and they would not estimate the amount of material that would spill into the Straits if the pipeline failed. They also would not discuss the Kalamazoo River spill of a couple years ago, saying that the situation was different and did not apply to the current discussion.

Bill Hazel of Marine Pollution Control in Detroit, however, reportedly said there could be 5,500 barrels (170,000 gallons) and would impact at least 25 square miles of lake surface.

In the event of a spill, the company said, the federal government would determine the amount of financial responsibility Enbridge occurs.

At this point, the meeting was reportedly closed amidst several shouts from the audience about Enbridge being “liars” and not really answering the questions posed.



Hard Water Fun

—Michigan DNR photo

Lots of smiles were on tap Feb. 22-23 when the Michigan Department of Natural Resources held its “Hard Water School” at the Carl T. Johnson Hunt and Fish Center in Cadillac. The ice fishing clinic included instruction on how to set up equipment, how and where to fish, ice safety, and rules and regulations. All participants received a supply of gear to keep, including a rod and spinning reel with line, a tip-up with line, sinkers, hooks, leaders, jigs, bait and a bait puck.

It’s finally time to get ready for spring nesting

This has been a cold and snowy winter, and many of us would not be unhappy if it ended at a reasonable time.

March will bring sugaring and the last rabbit hunts. We also may—at least here in the south—see the end of ice fishing.

Now is the time to prepare for the new nesting season—a good time to check those bird nesting boxes to make sure they are in good shape, and even build a few additional ones for the spring and summer seasons. You never have too many nesting boxes. The birds will decide which they will use and maximize the breeding habitat.

When inspecting your nest boxes, make sure they aren’t being used as a roost at night. I have two that are—one by five eastern bluebirds and one by a downy woodpecker. The woodpecker is just outside the kitchen window and is fun to watch approach at dusk. He will land in the birch tree and look all around, then quick as a flash enter the house.

There are numerous books and articles dealing with the proper construction and dimensions of bird nest boxes, and, of course, some proponents are totally sold on their own design. I would look at what is available for lumber and decide what species you wish to attract.

Some of the lumber companies have what they may call a second, or extra, bin of odds-and-ends. Those pieces can be very attractive, cost wise. I usually get

enough for three or four houses for less than five dollars. Take a measuring tape with you, because the pieces are not sorted. Know what sizes you require for the boxes you wish to construct.

The most commonly built is the bluebird house, as it can almost be considered an all-purpose house. The entrance hole is one-and-a-half inches in diameter and allows a good number of species to use it for nesting. In addition to the eastern bluebird, others that will use the house are tree swallows, black-capped chickadees, white and red-breasted nuthatches, the tufted titmouse, downy woodpeckers, house wrens, house sparrows and house finches.

If your target birds are wrens and chickadees, you can use a house with an entrance that is one-and-one-eighth inches in diameter. This eliminates larger birds from preying on these little guys.

If you’re interested in purple martins, I would recommend the Purple Martin Conservation Association website to get sizes, because many old plans for attracting the birds are extremely outdated. Entrance size and shape is important if you want to entice one particular species, but eliminate another. Most sizes are designed to benefit one species, but stop larger birds from enter-

The Natural World

By Richard Schinkel



ing.

You may want to try some larger houses this year. Those that attract wood ducks can also be used for screech owls and hooded mergansers.

Of course, most species of squirrel may invade them, too. This is another reason to have multiple houses. Not only does it allow numerous nesting sites for the target species, but allows other species to use the nest boxes.

When building a box, it is not wise to use treated lumber. Also, the inside of the box doesn’t need to be painted or treated. Rough-sawn lumber is good, or you can “rough up” the inside yourself with a hatchet. Make sure the box has adequate ventilation and drainage. Most often, it is best not to face the house into the prevailing storm direction.

A great activity is to sponsor or volunteer for a scout group, conservation club, or nature center to help kids build bird houses. February and March are great months to do this, but any season is fine, because most birds will nest more than once. Remember, our first bluebirds will begin looking for nest cavities in early March.

You may want to keep records of your achievements and even consult help guides for ideas.

Good luck in your building and nesting successes.

Book Review: *The passenger pigeon’s flight to extinction*

(Continued from Page 4)

ded on the Wisconsin flock, filling all vacant rooms. One merchant reported selling sixteen tons each of shot and powder over the season. It was estimated that this represented over one-half million rounds of shot.

From the shipping records, it is estimated that at least 1,200,000 dead pigeons were shipped during the forty days of hunting. Somewhere between 100 to 200 barrels of pigeons were shipped daily—each barrel containing 300 pigeons.

In 1872 a nesting occurred near South Haven and Bangor, Michigan. Shelby had a nesting where about 700,000 birds were killed, caught and shipped. Petoskey had the best documentation of its harvest, which occurred in 1878 and the birds covered an area about three miles wide and forty miles long. It was estimated that the number shipped was as large as the Wisconsin harvest of over one million birds.

It was in this area that the first conservation efforts emerged. One of the first conservation groups,

the Michigan Sportsmen Association, was involved. Michigan had set some restrictions on harvesting and the association tried to intervene, with little success. Other conservation efforts were formed as the years went by.

Michigan was one of the first states to try and control market hunting and is actually the only state in the U.S. to grant the passenger pigeon complete protection in 1897. Today we face extinction of countless species from four different threats. These are habitat loss, pollution, introduced species and direct taking of the organisms.

This book is extremely well researched, documented and written. It is not a difficult book to read and doesn’t preach—just lays out the facts. It is recommended for all sportsman and outdoor enthusiasts. If you can, attend one of the many talks Joel Greenberg is giving across Michigan and throughout the Midwest to mark the 100th anniversary. He will be giving a presentation March 22 at Sarett Nature Center near Benton Harbor.

Viewpoint (Part II): “Calling a spade a spade”

Knowledge, vision & integrity needed to protect Michigan resources

(Continued from Page 5)

Due to bear baiting using animal guts, “human predators” regularly sell and maintain baited killing locations on public land for sizeable sums of money. Killing a bear under such circumstances to collect a trophy, or bragging rights, by little more than an “animal harvester” has no legitimate status in the once-proud annals of Michigan hunting.

In defense of legitimate hunting, by comparison a small number of real bear hunters hunting with dogs were responsible for harvesting a limited number of bears in 2013. The hunter’s dogs, if successful, will tree a bear. The hunter is then left to determine whether the bear is worthy of taking.

Most bear harvested after being treed b

dogs are of mature size. Shooting young (cub) bears holds no sport for longtime dog hunters who train their dogs for the challenge presented by mature bear.

Hunting bear by dogs is a rich and historic tradition reaching back several hundred years throughout the United States. The sport is carried out by real woodsmen and requires a serious investment of time, energy and money. Such factors are why only a limited few participate in comparison to other types of hunting.

Speaking with my friends who hunt using dogs causes me to harken back to my early days in the woods, when discovering deer on my own initiative peaked my sense of excitement for the hunt. Mine was like the excitement produced for the bear hunter

when they hear the “music of their dogs.”

Once again, the issue boils down to how deer and bear are harvested. Should we continue to lure wild creatures by deception with “man-placed food,” versus allowing them to find natural food that their wanderings help them discover?

Hunting by using dogs requires hunting bear on their terms. In so doing, the bear’s chance of out-maneuvering the dogs on their turf is the challenge of the hunt. It creates sport for the hunter with a very real chance for the bear to live another day.

Shooting a bear or deer only after using skill, knowledge and energy falls within the parameters of what all real hunting once was and was meant to be. Taking a bear, or deer, based upon deception by luring it to

an artificial food location removes any semblance of ethical hunting practice.

We need to once and for all times set aside favoritism and rediscover our original mission of protecting nature’s ways.

Avoidance and memory lapses are convenient disguises resorted to by those who would defend the appeasement game to accommodate every man-contrived scheme, hatched to take advantage of wild animals.

John Gunnell is a writer and outdoorsman living in Rockford, Michigan. Part I of this Viewpoint article appeared in the last (Late February) edition of The North Woods Call.

Conservation Officer Logs (1/20/14 through 2/2/14)**Domestic violence, snowmobile madness, import violations & an arctic fox bite****DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

CO Elton Luce concluded an investigation into an illegal deer kill from the last firearm deer season. A Minnesota resident had been hunting in Michigan for the last several years by purchasing resident combination deer licenses. The Minnesota resident, who attended Northern Michigan University several years ago, had been using an old student ID to purchase the licenses. Minnesota Conservation Officers interviewed the subject and discovered that he had harvested a 10-point buck in Michigan this last season. The meat, antlers and firearm were seized as evidence, and a three-count warrant has been secured for the suspect's arrest.

CO Matt Eberly assisted the Michigan State Police (MSP) with a domestic violence incident in Ontonagon County. A woman dialed 911 and reported that her husband had harmed their dog with a knife, and was threatening her with a shotgun. Upon arrival, the officers were able to safely remove the woman from the residence. After negotiations, the man was convinced to put down the gun and surrender. He resisted arrest and the officers had to deploy a TASER to subdue the individual. He was then lodged in the county jail.

COs Grant Emery, Dave Painter and Sgt. Marc Pomroy executed a search warrant on a residence in Gogebic County. Officers recovered bald eagle parts from the residence along with an untagged deer. The investigation is ongoing with warrants being sought from the prosecutor.

DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)

Sgt. Gerald Thayer and Lt. Skip Hagy, while on patrol at the I-500 in Sault Saint Marie, observed a subject operating a snowmobile without a helmet, with no registration and no trail permit. When contact was made, a strong odor of intoxicants was detected. Sobriety tests were conducted and the subject was found to be operating under the influence. He was transported and lodged in the Chippewa County jail.

COs Kyle Publiski and Kevin Postma were working the Brimley area on snowmobile when they spotted a snowmobile traveling down a paved road. After stopping the snowmobile, it was determined that the snowmobile was a 1980 Kawasaki. Not only didn't it have a snowmobile trail permit, it had not been registered in 34 years. A ticket was issued to the owner and operator.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)

COs Mike Feagan and Eric Bottorff found a tip-up at least 1/4 mile from the nearest ice shanty. The flag was set off and the COs waited for 25 minutes with no response from an angler. Tracks were then followed to the nearest shanty, where the subject claimed he was keeping a close eye on the tip-up. A ticket was issued for fishing with an unattended fishing line.

Officers in Area 3 participated in Operation Lifesaver

which is a joint enforcement effort with the county sheriff's department, MSP, and the railroad company. Eight tickets were issued during the enforcement detail; four for railroad trespass, one for an unregistered snowmobile, one for no trail permit, and another individual was arrested for operating while intoxicated and driving while his license was suspended.

CO Bill Webster was fishing on Fletchers Floodwater on his day off and, upon returning to his truck, was contacted by another angler. While they were talking, the angler said he caught his limit of panfish and then showed CO Webster his bucket of fish. The CO identified himself and counted the fish, which totaled 59 fish—34 over his legal limit. A ticket was issued for the violation.

DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)

CO Holly Pennoni and Sgt. Robert Torres conducted a taxidermy inspection. During the inspection the COs observed the heads of two deer taken in Illinois in violation of the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) importation regulations. The COs were contacted by the Illinois DNR to assist with an investigation they have involving three Michigan hunters who harvested these same two nine-point bucks in violation of their state laws. The COs seized the deer and antlers, and contacted the three hunters. Statements were taken and the information was forwarded to the Illinois DNR.

CO Steve Converse conducted a taxidermy inspection and located two deer brought in from Wisconsin in violation of the CWD importation regulations. CO Converse interviewed the hunters and a ticket was issued for the importation violation.

CO Steve Converse responded to a complaint of a snowmobile in the Manistee River in the High Bridge area. CO Converse was able to make contact with the snowmobile operator, who informed the CO that he went across the river once, hydroplaning with speed, without going down. On his second attempt, the snowmobile stalled and sank to the bottom of the river. CO Converse issued a ticket for reckless operation and a U.S. Forest Service (USFS) officer will be following up on the illegal operation on federal lands. The snowmobile was removed from the river.

CO Brian Brosky was working a snowmobile patrol and contacted several snowmobilers traveling to and from the Cadillac Snow Festival. CO Brosky issued tickets for expired registrations, failure to register a snowmobile, no trail permits and several recreational trespass violations for operating across planted agricultural farmlands without permission. The landowner made contact with CO Brosky the same day to thank him for his efforts.

CO Brian Brosky contacted a subject on the frozen Custer River who was in possession of two undersized northern pike. The subject stated that both pike had swallowed the hook and he felt he



should keep the fish. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Troy Mueller was working a snowmobile patrol when he stopped a snowmobile operating against the flow of traffic. Upon making contact with the operator, CO Mueller observed what he thought was a valid trail permit. Upon closer inspection, CO Mueller found that the operator had attached his firearm deer license, and used a black marker to write snowmobile 14 on the license and affix it to the windshield in an attempt to deceive law enforcement with the counterfeit trail permit. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)

CO Mike Hearn was patrolling Kalkaska County on snowmobile when he began following a group of riders through a residential neighborhood. The CO estimated their speeds at over 75 miles per hour. CO Hearn was able to get the last machine in the group to stop. He was then able to follow the suspect back to the cabin and make contact with the remainder of the riders. CO Hearn educated the group on the laws regarding safe operation of snowmobiles, which included issuance of a ticket.

CO Mike Hearn wrapped up a lengthy investigation that involved the illegal taking of deer, making use of an illegal device and taking deer without licenses. It involved a male/female pair that bragged about their conduct on social media. The complaint was turned over to CO Hearn, who began an intensive investigation that included a search warrant to locate evidence. After all the pieces were put together, a report was turned over to the local prosecutor. Numerous count arrest warrants were issued for both individuals named in the report.

While patrolling Secord Lake, **COs Mark Papineau and Jason McCullough** found several tip-ups set in the ice and partially covered with snow. The tip-ups had no name or address, and there was no recent sign of anyone checking them. The COs tracked several footprints back to a residence and attempted to make contact with the anglers. Unable to make contact, the tip-ups were seized. CO Papineau returned the following day and contacted the responsible party. The anglers stated that they had set the tip-ups, but then went to the bar for the evening. They went to check them that morning and noticed that they were missing. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)

COs Ken Lowell, Jeremy Payne and Dan Lee conducted a group patrol on the Saginaw River system. The area they wanted to work was reportedly an area where short walleye and over-limits were being taken. It took the COs hours to get to the area due to the number of snowmobile and ORV violations they encountered on their way. Multiple tickets were issued for improper or no registration, no trail permits, no helmets, 100-foot rule violations, and riding double on ORVs.

CO Quincy Gowenlock and an animal control officer responded to a call of dogs attacking deer. Upon arrival, the officers found a freshly killed doe. While talking to the complainant, she advised the dogs chased down the deer in her back yard and attacked it. She advised the dogs had just run off prior to their arrival. The CO searched the area and located the two dogs near a house. At a closer glance, the CO observed fresh blood on the faces and heads of both dogs. The CO advised the animal control officer and both made contact with the owner. The owner admitted that the dogs were hers and said they run loose all the time. The owner was issued a ticket for allowing her dogs to run at large.

CO Quincy Gowenlock responded to a call where an Alma city police officer had been bitten by a pet fox. The original call went out as a dog loose in a building. When the city officer arrived on scene he grabbed what he thought was a small dog. It turned out to be a fox, which bit him on the hand. It was later determined that it was an arctic fox. The owner was located and interviewed. After reviewing all the paperwork, it was determined that the fox was legally possessed. Unfortunately, the animal was seized and dispatched for rabies testing at the demand of the Isabella/Gratiot Health Department.

Sgt. Ron Kimmerly has been investigating a complaint where suspects have been taking pheasants and rabbits by shooting them from their vehicle. This has been occurring for the past few weeks in southern Saginaw County on Amman and Ditch Roads (N/W corner), and in the 14000 block of Briggs Road and the surrounding areas. The suspect vehicle is a light brown, tan, or beige in color. It has four doors and is most likely a Buick. The suspects have been shooting the pheasants and rabbits while they feed close to the road, and also pheasants while they roost in trees close to the road and homes with bird feeders. The Sgt. believes the suspects will continue taking the wildlife in the area and is asking for help from local residents. Any information on the suspects can be provided confidentially to the Report-All-Poaching (RAP) hotline by call-

ing 1-800-292-7800.

DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)

CO Kyle Bader checked a pair of anglers on Gilead Lake. One angler said he hadn't caught any fish, but when the CO asked about a plastic shopping bag in his sled, he said, "I do have a fish in there." The bag contained a large perch and a 13-inch largemouth bass. The angler was ticketed for taking a bass out of season.

CO Jason Smith followed up on a deer complaint where a hunter shot a deer on opening day without a license and posted pictures of himself on Facebook. CO Smith talked with the hunter, who was less than truthful. When CO Smith asked him about the pictures on Facebook, the hunter then remembered that he went out and shot a buck opening morning and then decided to go buy a license that night. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Shane Webster completed an investigation into the taking of an eight-point whitetail during the firearm deer season. CO Webster was able to piece together evidence that the deer had been taken prior to a license being purchased. COs Webster and Damon Owens interviewed the subject, who confessed that he had not purchased his firearm license until after he had killed the buck. He stated that when he went hunting he had not expected to see a buck, but the temptation was so great that when one appeared during his hunt he had to take it. A warrant request will be filed with the local prosecutor's office.

DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)

Checking on a complaint of trash dumped on state land, **CO Dan Walzak** found the discarded household trash containing a number of magazines with a name and address on them. Visiting the address, CO Walzak was able to contact the resident and quizzed him about how his trash may have ended up in a parking lot on state land 12 miles away. The subject stated that it had to have been his young grandson who lives with him and was supposed to prepare the trash for pick-up. CO Walzak asked the man to call his grandson right away to let him know that he was being sought. Returning to the parking lot a little over an hour later, CO Walzak found the area totally cleaned up—with no evidence of there ever being trash dumped. Contacting the grandson, CO Walzak found that he had gone to clean it up as soon as he got the call from his grandfather. Asked why he dumped the trash in the first place, the grandson stated that he was late getting the trash out for pick-up and his grandfather was upset with him, telling him to do something with it, so he dumped it. He also stated that as he was driving away he knew that he had messed up. Enforcement action was taken.

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Published twice monthly (except one issue in January, April, July and October) by Newshound Productions LLC, 5411 East DE Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49004. First-class postage paid at Kalamazoo, Michigan, and additional mailing offices. Online subscriptions \$35 per year and \$60 per two years. Print subscriptions \$55 per year and \$95 for two years. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The North Woods Call*, 5411 East DE Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49004. MDOT Code: 8021-0068

New license options arrive

As of March 1, Michigan sportsmen and women are seeing changes to the state's hunting, fishing and ORV license options—a lineup that state officials say hadn't undergone any real change since 1997.

The changes and resulting fee increases have been criticized by some, but the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) says the new license structure provides a simpler license-buying experience, brings Michigan's license options and prices in line with those of other states, and generates the revenue necessary to deliver the best in outdoor recreation opportunities.

The first thing customers will notice, they said—besides the prices—is an easier-to-navigate number of license choices, falling from 227 down to just over 40. Individual archery deer and firearm deer licenses are gone, as are restricted fishing licenses. Some prices have risen, they acknowledge, while some remain the same, and others have decreased.

DNR Director Keith Creagh says the changes will provide valuable support for the work the DNR does in close cooperation with partner organizations.

"World-class natural resources belong to everybody in Michigan and define who we are as a state," Creagh said. "Those resources are fundamental to why people live in, visit and set up shop in Michigan—and that's vital to our state and local economies.

"We want to make it easier for people to get the licenses they need and ensure the funding that will allow the DNR and our partners to enhance and protect our natural resources for current and future generations."

Under the new structure, all hunters will be required to purchase a base license, with different price points for resident, junior, senior and nonresident hunters. The base license (which allows the buyer to hunt small game) is needed to purchase any other licenses. Deer hunters will have the option of buying one deer license (\$20) or two-deer li-

censes (\$40). Hunters may choose one option or the other.

The single deer license replaces the separate firearm and archery season licenses of previous years, and is valid for archery, firearm and muzzleloader seasons. Hunters who opt for the single tag won't be able to purchase a second, but they will be able to purchase antlerless licenses where available.

With the two-tag deer combo license, both licenses are valid for archery, firearm and muzzleloader seasons. It includes one regular and one restricted license, as in previous years. Antler point restrictions will apply based on the area of the state.

Antlerless deer licenses cost \$20, and will continue to be available based on license quotas set for each deer management unit; quotas should be finalized in July.

For anglers, the two previous options for fishing licenses—one for everything except trout and salmon and another that includes trout and salmon—have been rolled into one license. A resident fishing license will cost \$26 and includes fishing for trout and salmon (down from \$28 if you bought the all-species license under the old system). A one-day fishing license will cost just \$10.

The new fishing licenses are required beginning April 1.

The hook-and-bullet crowd can try the hunt/fish combo (the base license, a fishing license and two deer tags), which is available for \$76, a modest savings compared to buying them separately.

Discounts on some licenses will be available for youths and seniors. Active military and veterans with 100-percent disability who were or are Michigan residents will also be eligible for free licenses.

The DNR anticipates the new license options, when fully implemented, could bring in up to \$18 million annually in new revenue, some of which is already being spent on the recruitment and training of more conservation officers, as well as recently announced grant programs to improve wildlife and aquatic habitat.

Document details health of Michigan's forest land

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has released its 2013 Forest Health Highlights report, which includes an overview of Michigan's forests, the insects and diseases that have threatened them over the past year, and details about what DNR staff is doing to improve forest resources.

The report breaks down forest health threats by examining insects and diseases, forest decline, invasive plant control and other health concerns. Accompanying photos and maps illustrate the pests and show the effects they have had on Michigan's forest system.

Highlighted are DNR efforts to control oak wilt, a serious disease that threatens Michigan's extensive red oak resource. In cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, tens of thousands of feet of root graft barriers have been installed on state forest land. These barriers prevent oak wilt from moving to healthy trees through infected root systems.

"The key to slowing the onslaught of exotic invasive organisms in Michigan's forests is public awareness," said Dr. Bob Heyd, DNR Forest Pest Management program manager. "The Forest Health Highlights report provides timely information about the condition of our forests and what's being done to protect this important resource."

Michigan's approximately 20 million acres of forest land play a key role in the state's recreation, forest products and other important industries, and the health of those forests is essential to sustaining this vital resource for many generations, DNR officials said.

To learn more about the health of state forests, visit www.michigan.gov/foresthealth to see the full report.

—Michigan DNR report

Final Shot



Moon Flight

—photo by Steve Baker

A bald eagle soars across the Michigan sky as a half-moon hangs gloriously above. This photo, courtesy of the newly formed Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch group in northern Michigan, honors just one of the many birds of prey that pass over the Straits of Mackinac enroute to summer nesting grounds further north. The nonprofit group aims to survey the birds and educate people about their natural history. Numerous raptors—among them eagles, hawks and owls—gather near Mackinaw City before crossing to the Upper Peninsula. The region's natural woodlands and fields serve as a stopover area while the birds await appropriate conditions to continue their northward migration. Bird watchers will also be interested in the 8th annual Michigan Bird Conservation Initiative meeting to be held March 20-22 at the Kettunen Center in Tustin. An assortment of presentations and educational workshops will be held. For more information and to register—the registration deadline is March 10—visit the Kalamazoo Nature Center website at <https://naturecenter.thankyou4caring.org/mibi-workshop-2014>.

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