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who love the north”

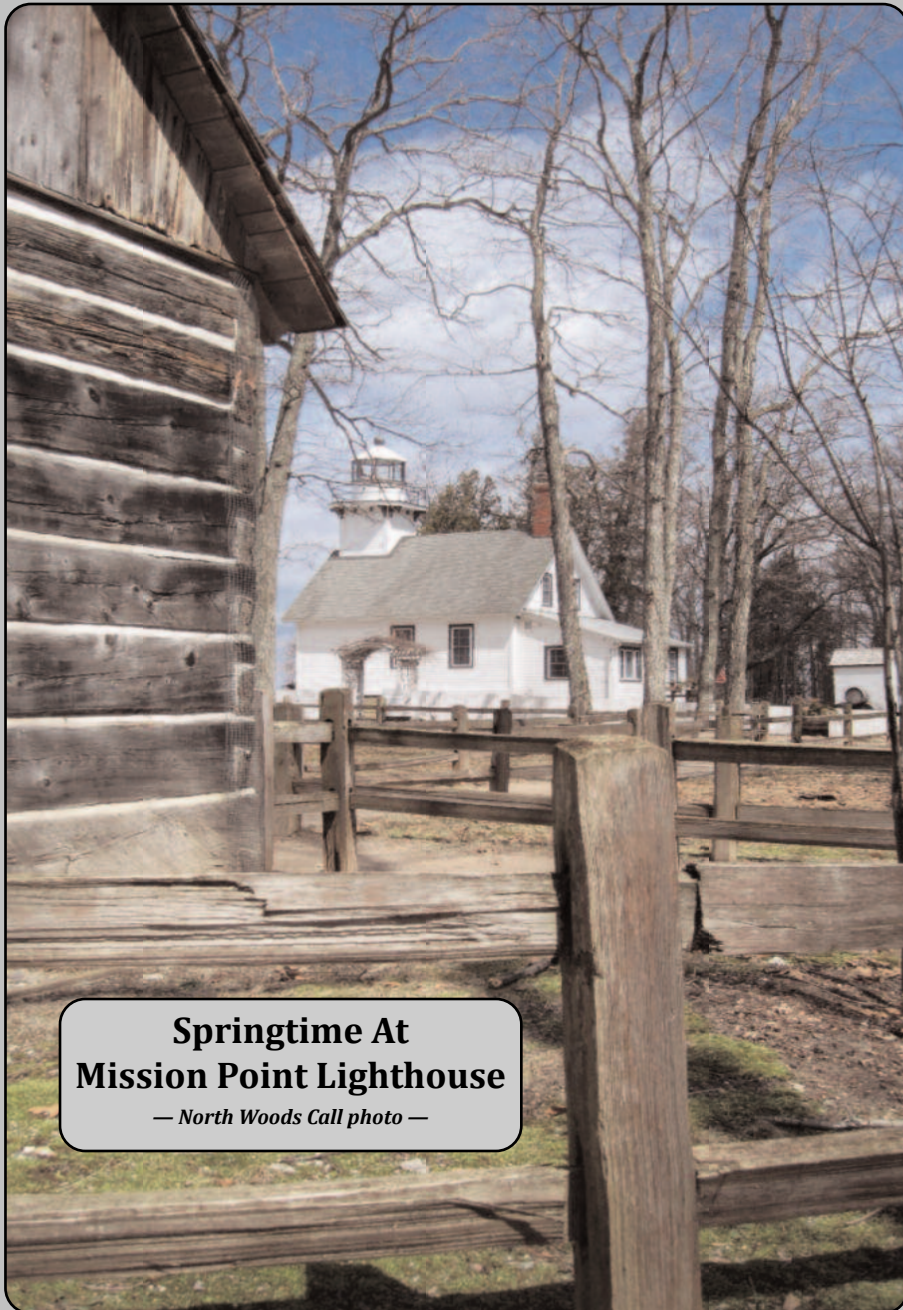


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**THE
NORTHWOODS
CALL**

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



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THE NORTH WOODS CALL

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



North Woods Notes

POPULAR CALL: Curators at the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library say that *The North Woods Call* is one of their most-viewed archive collections. "The level of interest in the paper is really impressive," said Michael Shallcross of the library's Digital Curation Division. A variety of back issues can be accessed at the library, although more current editions are embargoed for a period of time.

FISHERMAN'S ISLAND GROUP: A new group—Friends of Fisherman's Island State Park—has been formed with the aim of saving the resource from a proposed land swap and industrial development by St. Mary's Cement Inc. The organization has a Facebook page and has started an online petition drive there. For more information, contact Anne Zukowski at (231) 547-3467, or at AnnieZuko@aol.com.

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES: The Michigan Environmental Hall of Fame will honor its 2014 inductees during an April 10 ceremony at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum in Grand Rapids. Individual inductees are **Norm Spring** of Grand Haven, **Joan Wolfe** of Frankfort, **Don Inman** of Millersburg and **Dave Dempsey** of Minneapolis, Minn. Spring helped form the Michigan Pesticides Council and was a leader in the fight to ban DDT from the state and nation; Wolfe was founder of the West Michigan Environmental Action Council and served on the Natural Resource Commission; Inman had the concept for the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund; and Dempsey—the author and co-author of six conservation books—has helped shape conservation and Great Lakes policy for 30 years. The nonprofit organization inductee is the **Clinton River Watershed Council**, which works to protect, enhance and celebrate the Clinton River, its watershed and Lake St. Clair. Dempsey will give the keynote address at the event.

ASIAN CARP: The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) says research on Michigan rivers and streams during 2013 did not find any evidence of Asian carp. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sampled the Muskegon, St. Joseph, Grand and Detroit rivers, as well as Lake St. Clair, in search of environmental DNA, or eDNA related to the bighead carp or silver carp varieties. The DNR previously released similar findings for the Portage River.

SWINE LAWSUIT DISMISSED: A lawsuit filed by a Marion-area farmer against the DNR has been dismissed. As previously reported in *The North Woods Call*, the farmer—Mark Baker—had challenged the DNR's invasive species order that barred his practice of cross-breeding forbidden Russian boars with heritage Mangalitsa pigs. The DNR began enforcing the ownership and breeding of certain strains of pigs in 2012, because of the threat they pose if they were to escape and become wild. Missaukee County Chief Circuit Judge William Fagerman dismissed the lawsuit after the DNR argued that Baker no longer owns the offending Russian breed. Supporters say the DNR order helps prevent the increase of "feral" hogs that can destroy habitat and spread disease.

BEACH CLOSURES: Although the number of Michigan beaches closed due to pollution has declined in recent years, so has long-term water quality, according to a report by Qing Zhang in the *Great Lakes Echo*. "All our near-shore waters are at risk," Joan Rose, director of the Water Quality and Environmental Microbiology Laboratory at Michigan State University, is quoted as saying. "No surprise, in urban areas things are more serious." This conclusion is based on measuring bacteria levels buried in sediment, the article says.

WATERSHED SUMMIT: The Michigan Watershed Summit will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. on March 26 at the Eagle Eye Banquet Facility in East Lansing. The purpose is to bring together as many of the state's watershed groups as possible for information sharing, updates and discussion. To register, visit the Michigan Water Environment Association website.

PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR: Abigail Ertel of the Gaylord-based Huron Pines organization was named "Professional of the Year" during the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy's annual Osprey Awards. Among other things, she was honored for her work on the Huron Pines Kirtland's Warbler Initiative.

MIGRATING HAWKS: Hawks have begun to pass through the Straits of Mackinac as they return to nesting territories in the Upper Peninsula and northern Ontario. Last year, 7,578 red-tailed hawks were counted migrating over the Straits—more birds than at any of the other 275 hawk count sites in North America.

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Charges filed against Chesapeake & Encana

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette has filed criminal charges against Oklahoma-based Chesapeake Energy Corporation and Delaware-based Encana Oil and Gas USA.

The two firms allegedly collaborated to avoid bidding wars against each other in Michigan public auctions, and private negotiations for oil and gas leases. The activity reportedly caused prices to plummet.

"I will aggressively prosecute any company who conspires to break the law," Schuette said when his Corporate Oversight Division filed the charges. The current charges are merely accusations, he said, and the defendants are presumed to be innocent "until and unless proven guilty."

Public auctions of state-held oil

and gas leases are held twice yearly—once in May and once in October—by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). During the DNR's May 2010 auction, both Chesapeake and Encana purchased natural gas leases in Michigan.

In 2012, the *Reuters News Service* uncovered a possible conspiracy between executives of the two companies in which they allegedly discussed an agreement following the May 2010 auction to split up Michigan counties where each company would be an exclusive bidder for both public and private leases.

In the five-month period following the May 2010 auction, this alleged conspiracy may have been a key driver behind the state-held lease price in Michigan going

from \$1,510 per acre in May 2010 to less than \$40 an acre at the October 2010 auction.

The following charges were filed against the companies on March 5:

- * One count each of antitrust violations relating to a contract or conspiracy in restraint of commerce. This is a high court misdemeanor punishable by up to two years and/or \$10,000 fine for an individual, or up to \$1,000,000 for a corporation; and,

- * One count each of attempted antitrust violations. This is also a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year and/or \$1,000 fine.

Representatives from both Chesapeake and Encana were scheduled to be arraigned on March 19 in Cheboygan County's 89th District Court.



The buying and selling of black bear parts is illegal in Michigan, because it creates a market for the parts, and provides a financial incentive for poachers to unlawfully take the animals during closed seasons and in excess of established limits, according to Michigan Department of Natural Resources officials.

Men arrested for buying black bear parts

Two Midland men have been arrested on charges of illegally buying Michigan black bears and black bear parts, according to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The charges, authorized by the Midland County Prosecutor's Office, are the result of an undercover investigation by the DNR Law Enforcement Division's Special Investigations Unit.

At this writing, the case was pending arraignment of the defendants in the 75th District Court in Midland County. Names of the defendants were being withheld until the arraignment, officials said.

A conservation officer assigned to the Bay City District received information that one of the subjects was contacting hunters and soliciting the purchase of black

bear parts. Investigators established undercover contact with the suspects and an associate based on this information. A number of transactions involving black bears and black bear parts were conducted with the suspects.

Each of the seven counts against the defendants carries a fine of up to \$1,000 and 90 days in jail, plus \$1,500 in reimbursement per animal that was illegally bought.

"Individuals soliciting for the purchase of black bear parts creates a market for the illegal parts and provides a financial incentive for poachers to take the animals during closed seasons—in excess of established limits and by unlawful methods," said Detective Lt. Jason Haines. There is a black market for black bear parts in Asia, where the parts are used for medicinal purposes, he said.

"The Special Investigations Unit plays a vital role investigating and arresting major violators, and its cases often include interstate and international violations," said DNR Law Enforcement Division Chief Gary Hagler. "The unit's role in the Law Enforcement Division is to use undercover investigations, the latest in technology and forensics to apprehend poachers, and others who are illegally commercializing fish and game in our state. The unit works with our conservation officers to build strong cases and to protect our natural resources."

Anyone with information about the illegal commercialization of any Michigan wildlife or fish, or any natural resources violations should call the Report All Poaching hotline at 800-292-7800.

—Michigan DNR report

Our 61st Year: Looking Back to March 17, 1971

Urban sprawl edges north

By Glen Sheppard

A few years ago—no more than ten—Belleville was as small townish as a small town could be. Residents of the less-than-2,000 population western Wayne County community were annoyingly proud of their picturesque village. There was still a lingering suspicion that they had something they shouldn't share with "outsiders."

All that's gone. It's hard to find the village among the thousands of new homes, factories and businesses which now surround its former well-defined city limits. Where the "city" once ended and the farms started. Now it's one big, sprawling checkerboard of houses.

There were those who tried to warn the city and township planners that they should, and could, stop it. But few listened.

Now, I'm told, the newspaper office is being moved. There will still be a newspaper, but it will be edited from a "central" office lost somewhere in the jungle of suburbia.

I was 19 years old when I first edited the *Enterprise-Roman* for Lew Robson and Ray Clift. As I recall it, the paper even then was around 100 years old. It was a proud newspaper in a proud community.

Years later, with a few more newspapers and many miles of wandering behind me, I returned to the *Enterprise-Roman* because it was the best memory a very tired young man had. And even then, Belleville was still a magical sort of place. Quiet and busy. Busy worrying about the other guy's business and the "scandal" of police chief Irv Stech riding to work in the police car—instead of spending his own gas money to travel the less than one mile from home to City Hall.

That's the kind of environment a community newspaper—and a small town—thrives in. Unless people have the time and concern to "care" about everything that is happening to their town, it can't survive and it won't support a community newspaper.

But things changed. Now people, apparently, "just live" in Belleville and Van Buren Township. People who "just live" someplace don't care enough to keep its wonder alive.

But this isn't the "Suburban Call," so why ponder a tragedy that happened so far from the north woods? Because it is happening here. The north country's small towns are in danger of out-growing, or out-spreading, themselves. In a real sense, every north woods county is a small town. And our counties, too, are trying to escape their personality.

"Small towns are often committed to the idea of growth and industrial development," Clayton Denman writes in a pamphlet published by the Small Towns Institute. "This is based on the misconception that the ideal is to become a city and that such towns are lagging behind. Instead, it should be recognized that smallness has its own advantages which inevitably disappear with growth. Such advantages as friendliness, quiet, compactness and diversity."

Denman also makes these observations:

"Development is not necessarily bad, but it should come, if possible, from within the community itself. Local development would at least make it more likely that those involved would retain some feeling for small town life and traditions.

"Some small towns have matured into prosperous and sound communities by following an effective community plan. The danger is that such workable plans encourage outsiders to settle in these towns. ... "Urban people may inadvertently destroy the places they moved to in an effort to escape the annoyances and problems of city living."

Denman makes many other and very specific suggestions for preserving small towns. The pamphlet "Small Towns" should be read by all public officials and civic leaders in small cities, villages and counties. *North Woods Call* readers can't expect the officials in their home communities—or in the northern country county they hope to see escape the agony of growth—obtain the pamphlet on their own initiative [so why not buy copies for them?].

At a nickel a copy, I can't see how you can make a better investment.

Fisherman's Island land swap meeting

Nearly 100 people reportedly attended a March 13 meeting of the Charlevoix Township Board to discuss the proposed land swap at Fisherman's Island State Park.

St. Mary's Cement made a presentation to the standing-room-only crowd and representatives from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) were also present. St. Mary's has proposed exchanging about 190 acres of forest woodland to expand their quarrying operations.

They did not ask for a vote on the matter, observers said, but rather suggested a committee of "respected community leaders" be established to facilitate the ongoing discussion. The committee would presumably come up with an "equitable" solution that would benefit everyone.

"Relying on a committee to solve the problem through compromise is admitting defeat," said Anne Zukowski, a member of Friends of Fisherman's Island State Park. "They are dangling 'shiny trinkets' in front of us, hoping we will be dazzled into giving up prime park land."

If the community is against the project, company officials reportedly said, then it will not move forward, but for now they plan to "keep going until it is no longer a good idea."

Citizen response to the proposal has apparently been mixed.



The Final Insult?

—North Woods Call Photo

Just when we thought the bright sunshine, warmer temperatures and melting snow signaled an end to winter, we were slammed by another storm that dropped eight more inches of wet, heavy white stuff on the North Woods Call homestead. Consequently—a mere week before spring officially began—we were back on the snowplow clearing a clogged driveway. To add insult to injury, the thermometer then dropped below zero and froze everything solid for another day. At this writing, the mercury was back in the mid-30s and we were hoping that the worst winter around these parts in recent memory had moved on. But we'll see.

Proposed change to animal salvage tags for road kill

State Sen. Darwin Booher (R-Evart) wants to change the animal salvage tag system in Michigan.

He has proposed new legislation (Senate Bill 613) to make it easier for people that hit game animals with their vehicles to keep them, while still giving the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) a record of the kill.

The proposed bill, however, says it would still be illegal to keep migratory birds, cub bears, wolves, spotted fawn deer, elk and moose.

Currently, a person who hits a deer, or other game animal, with a vehicle must request a salvage tag from a law enforcement officer in order to keep the animal for food, the hide, or bait, according to the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC). The system has been in place since 1989 to close a loophole that allowed people to claim they hit an animal with their vehicle, rather than confessing that they shot it out-of-season, or without a license. Poachers often exploit this system, the MUCC says.

Under the proposed legislation, people who want to keep road kill will either have to get a salvage tag as currently required—or 1) call the DNR, or a local law enforcement agency, or 2) fill out a form on the DNR website. The reporting requirement, however, would not apply to small game, which is a concern to the MUCC.

"Hunters will all now carry a base license," MUCC officials said, "which would allow them to legally keep small game killed, so there is little reason for this exemption.

"Turkey and deer hunters, [as well as] trappers, may also be concerned that people could keep a vehicle-hit animal with only a phone or online report, rather than direct oversight by law enforcement."

The DNR would still be able to restrict salvaging dead game animals in the event of disease or public health concerns.



North Woods Notes

(Continued from Page 1)

APRIL NRC MEETING: The next Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC) meeting will be held April 10 at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, in Lansing. For more information about the agenda, visit the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website at michigan.gov/dnr.

PROTESTORS RELEASED: Three women—arrested last July and found guilty Jan. 31 of resisting and obstructing police during a summer 2013 protest of an Enbridge oil pipeline—were released in early March by Ingham County Circuit Judge William Collette. Vicci Hamlin of Michigan City, Ind., Barbara Carter of Detroit and Lisa Leggio of Holland were credited for time they already served in jail. The women, who were involved with the Michigan Coalition Against Tar Sands, affixed themselves to large pieces of machinery near Stockbridge, Michigan, where Enbridge was working to replace and increase the capacity of its 6B pipeline. The same pipeline ruptured near Marshall in 2010, spilling more than 800,000 gallons of heavy crude into the Kalamazoo River and Talmadge Creek.

ANTI-FRACKING MOVIE: Public screenings of the film "Gasland 2" will be hosted by the Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan, which is working on a ballot question to eliminate horizontal hydrofracturing and related wastes in the state's oil and gas development. The free showings of the film by Josh Fox will be from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Mar. 21 at the Elk Rapids Township Hall in Elk Rapids, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Mar. 25 at the Morton Township Library in Mecosta, 2:30 to 5 p.m. at the Chelsea District Library in Chelsea, 7 to 9:30 p.m. at Edgewood United Church of Christ in East Lansing and 5:30 to 8 p.m. at Hastings Public Library in Hastings. Donations will be appreciated.

PURE MICHIGAN HUNT: It's time once again to apply for the upcoming Pure Michigan Hunt drawing. Three winners are selected each year to receive an elk, bear, spring and fall turkey and antlerless deer license—as well as first choice opening morning at any of Michigan's world-class managed waterfowl hunt areas across the state. An additional prize package is also awarded. Applications can be purchased for \$5 each in unlimited quantities anywhere hunting licenses are sold, or online at www.mdnr-elicence.com.

Public to review Jordan River proposals

The public is invited to review proposals to replace the twin culverts on the Jordan River with a clear-span bridge at the Old State Rd. crossing.

Two new public access sites are also being planned to complement a new bridge and accommodate the growing number of river users.

A meeting to discuss the proposals is scheduled for 5 to 7 p.m. Mar. 25 at VFW Post 7580 at 4960 M-32 Highway in East Jordan.

These projects will impact many people and cost significant money, organizers say, so it's important to consider as many perspectives as possible.

"The Jordan River crossing at Old State Road is plagued with fundamental design problems," said Dr. John Richter, president of Friends of the Jordan River Watershed. "These ultimately result in pollution, erosion, congestion, and public health and safety problems. This is a popular spot and nobody wants to deliberately harm the river, but unless we redesign this site, normal activities will degrade the river and accelerate problems that already exist."

During the meeting, members of the work group will offer details, answer questions, take comments and receive suggestions.

Two of three suspects plead guilty in Schoolcraft County cougar killing

Three suspects from Bay and Saginaw counties—reportedly involved in the illegal killing of a cougar—were arraigned March 5 in Schoolcraft County District Court.

Two of the suspects pled guilty and the third entered a not guilty plea.

Troy Robert Richard, 42, of Bay City, pled guilty to taking and possessing an endangered species, and conspiracy to take an endangered species. He was sentenced to 30 days in jail, a three-year revocation of all hunting privileges, and \$5,775 in fines, court costs and restitution—including expenses to preserve the animal for educational purposes. Richard also forfeited the weapon involved in the killing and was ordered to serve 120 hours of community service.

Theodore Robert Richard, 68, of Munger, pled guilty to aiding and abetting the illegal taking/possession of an endangered species, and paid \$1,725 in fines and costs. His hunting privileges were also revoked for a period of two years and he received 96 hours of community service.

The third suspect—Todd Anthony Richard, 43, of Burt—pled not guilty to conspiracy to take/possess an endangered species. He owns and operates a taxidermy business in Bay County and is a brother to Troy Richard.

According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the crime occurred at the Richards' hunting camp in Germfask Township near Seney on Dec. 9, 2013. The animal was shot from the subjects' camp when it walked into a deer food plot and drove the deer out while the subjects were muzzleloader hunting for deer. The animal was wounded by Troy Richard with a center-fire 22-250 caliber rifle and it then fled the food plot. The following day, it was tracked and located approximately one-quarter mile away and killed.

Investigators said Troy and Theodore Richard then brought the animal back to their camp, where they field dressed and hid it—then cooked and ate part of the heart. They left for their homes in Bay County shortly after, with the animal intact, but field dressed, in the back of Troy Richard's pickup truck.

Troy Richard reported that he struck a deer with his truck after leaving the camp. He picked up the deer, put it in a trailer with other deer they had killed and transported it to the Michigan State Police post in St. Ignace. There he obtained a permit for the road-kill deer—all while having the cougar in the truck's bed under a tonneau cover so that it

could be hidden from view. DNR officers noted that Richard had ample opportunity to report the cougar killing at this point, but failed to do so.

Troy Richard returned to his residence with the cougar, where the animal was skinned and prepared for mounting. The skull was also boiled and preserved, and the remains of the carcass were disposed.

When the Richards' learned that DNR conservation officers knew about the poaching, they attempted to hide the evidence at another location. During the investigation, they reportedly gave many false statements and had officers searching several areas in the Upper Peninsula, where they claimed to have disposed of the entire cougar. They repeatedly denied that they took the animal home with them.

The cougar hide, which had been prepared for mounting, and the skull were eventually recovered. The entrails of the adult male cougar were also found at the Richards' camp. The suspects ultimately admitted the crime and said it was one of opportunity—a once-in-a-lifetime chance to kill a cougar in Michigan and have it mounted.

Cougars are on the Michigan endangered species list and are a protected animal that may not be hunted.

Time to get a fishing license

As most *North Woods Call* readers already know, Michigan's fishing licenses were restructured on March 1.

There are now five options from which to choose when making your purchase. All fishing licenses are good for all species.

- Resident Annual - \$26
- Non-Resident Annual - \$76
- Senior Annual (for residents age 65 or older) - \$11
- 24-Hour (resident or non-resident) - \$10
- 72-Hour (resident or non-resident) - \$30

Residents and non-residents can also purchase the hunt/fish combo license for \$76 and \$266, respectively, which consists of a base license, annual fishing license and two deer tags. A base license is not required when just purchasing a fishing license.

The changes to hunting and fishing license fees are expected to bring additional revenue to state coffers.



Great Lakes Comeback

Last spring's low water levels in the Great Lakes—shown here along Grand Traverse Bay on Old Mission Peninsula—will likely not be so much of a problem this year, according to federal officials. The lakes are expected to continue a steady recovery, thanks to widespread ice cover that is slowing evaporation and snowfall which has approached record amounts in some areas. Polar air that has gripped the region this winter has caused the most extensive freeze-over of the lakes since the record-setting year of 1979, when nearly 95 percent of their surface area solidified. In early March, the Associated Press reported that the ice cover had reached its highest point since then—91 percent. Meanwhile, the snowpack collected in the watershed will melt this spring and much of the water will flow into the lakes—or the streams that feed them. Some areas will likely be in danger of flooding, officials said, and any additional rainfall will only add to that threat. Remind us again why so much money was spent on dredging last year...

—North Woods Call photo

World-record Michigan fish a "best catch"

The International Game Fish Association (IGFA) has included a Michigan muskellunge on its list of the "best" record catches of the past year.

As previously reported in *The North Woods Call*, the Great Lakes muskellunge was caught Oct. 13, 2012, on Lake Bellaire in Antrim County by Joseph Seeberger of Portage. It weighed 58 pounds and measured 58 inches and was listed as a world-record catch by the International Committee of the Modern Day Muskellunge World Record Program in February 2013.

It is the only fish in the United States included in the IGFA contest, which asks anglers to vote for their favorite entry at www.igfa.org/contests/AnglersChoice.

The winning entry will receive the Angler's Choice Award at an IGFA ceremony in April.

Can we still be friends? A continuing dialogue with the Au Sable River

It's easy to be friends with a river in the glorious seasons of summer and autumn. Spending time on the Au Sable River on a beautiful day—with the sun shining down, eagles soaring, fish cruising and flies buzzing—is heaven on earth.

I don't think I can add much to the praises that have been sung to the Au Sable in this regard. But what about those days when a river is cranky, impatient, or over-active? That's another matter. I am reminded of a few recent experiences when my new friend had its proverbial river shorts in a bunch.

We had the rich opportunity to join our dear friends for a float in an Au Sable riverboat. It was my first venture on this fine method of transportation. Doesn't its name just sing to you? I digress. The day was sunny—we had a lovely snack packed and the rods at the ready—and we pushed off. The absolute second that the boat touched water, the clouds descended and the river started pouting. Nonplussed, we carried on.

Don't get me wrong. It was a

River Reflections

By Betsy Hayhow Hemming



lovely float. How could it not be a wonderful river experience? We talked about all the important things in life. We flicked a few flies out into those cozy little places where—if we were trout—we would lurk. Then we realized it was really cold; shivers of anticipation had shifted to just plain shivers. By that time, we came upon Rainbow Bend, where we thought we might pause for a little appetizer and put on another layer of clothes.

Sadly, the little campground at Rainbow Bend was populated by some bumbling idiots. Three very drunk dudes stood shirtless at the river's edge, one blowing a moose horn and the others adding to the bad vibes with hurled insults and potty mouths. Clearly, they were hunkering down for the night at the campground and it was going to be a wild and crazy one. The river was perturbed, of course.

Perhaps that's why we were experiencing such rough weather—the river's way of sending a message to those who just don't get it.

At the same time, we observed a family of dad, mom and son—clearly bivouacking at the bend for the night—wincing at the noise. They looked forlornly at us as if to say, "Please take us with you." The river continued its naughty reaction to the screeching coming from the water's edge: It belched rain—lots of it. The wind whipped up and it felt like a November day. We packed up quickly and waved sensitively at the soulful-looking family as they put on their hoods.

Now it should come as no surprise to any of us that a diversity of people come to play in the river. It also is not my place to judge those three men who tried so hard to entertain us as best they knew how. But it's a little inter-

esting to think that the river changed so dramatically, as these lovely gentlemen started up on the moose horn. Coincidence? I don't think so.

On another glorious afternoon, our family headed downstream for a nice, long float. As we took a sharp turn, the newly-noted thunderheads in the sky said, "Perhaps not." Again, the changeling nature of the Au Sable was obvious. The gentle giggles and frisky friendliness instantly disappeared and the river bared its teeth. The wind whipped across the top of the water, practically hissing.

"Whoa!" we said. We quickly turned the vessels toward a convenient stopping point, but we had no options for cover. Ever resourceful, my husband whipped out a large tarp from the bottom of the canoe and we ducked underneath it just as the rain blasted down. The four of us sat on the edge of the canoe laughing away, the rains sounding like hail on the tarp. "I love this family!" said older sister, in a burst of exuberance. The husband got extra

brownie points for sure. A brief boom of thunder caused a pause, but as fast as the storm came, it disappeared, off to torture some other group of nature lovers.

And what was the Au Sable up to all this time? It just waited patiently for us to come back in and play, its hand over its proverbial mouth to hold in the laughter. "Come on, hurry up!" it seemed to say. We threw off the tarp and off we went.

I did get angry at the river once, early in our relationship. Our beloved black lab had no fear of the river whatsoever, and introduced herself immediately. For quite a long time, they played an intense game of whatever it is when dogs and rivers play together. We were amazed at the dog's energy level and the river kept right up with her. We will never know quite what happened, but our dog had a seizure the next night and died the following day. I blamed the river as we wept for our loss. But I knew in my heart that it wasn't the river's fault. Life happens and sometimes for

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Opinion

Quote Box

“Getting on the subject of beautification is like picking up a tangled skein of wool. All the threads are interwoven—recreation and pollution and mental health, and the crime rate, and rapid transit, and highway beautification, and the war on poverty, and parks—national, state and local. It is hard to hitch the conversation into one straight line, because everything leads to something else.”

—Lady Bird Johnson

Price-fixing and big business

It had been several months since we received any response from the Michigan Attorney General’s office to our inquiries about the agency’s bid-fixing investigation of Chesapeake Energy and Encana Oil & Gas.

We thought perhaps they were stonewalling for some unknown reason. Turns out that the investigation just took longer than we expected and criminal charges against the two companies have now been filed (see story on Page 1). Our apologies, Mr. Schuette, for being suspicious.

The two firms are, of course, presumed innocent until proven guilty, so we will reserve comment on that until another time.

For those companies that are tempted to do the kind of thing for which the defendants are charged, however, let this be a warning. There’s no place for collusion and unfair bidding practices anywhere in business, let alone during auctions of public resources.

We’re pleased to see the attorney general taking a tough stand on this matter.

2014 Environmental Hall of Fame

We are pleased to hear that some folks long connected to *The North Woods Call* as readers and news sources will be inducted into the Michigan Environmental Hall of Fame next month.

As reported in the “North Woods Notes” on Page 1 of this edition, Norm Spring, Joan Wolfe, Don Inman and Dave Dempsey have been selected as the next group of individuals to receive the honor. The Clinton River Watershed Council was chosen as this year’s nonprofit organization.

Each of these inductees has worked tirelessly over many years to educate the public, inform policymakers and protect Michigan’s environment from damage and abuse.

Positive change doesn’t always happen easily. The road to civic improvement is often long and difficult—filled with potholes and numerous other obstacles that require much strategic thinking, and even more personal tenacity. Leaders like these have proven time-after-time that they have the wisdom, courage and fortitude to bring about such change in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds.

As a result of these gallant efforts, Michigan and the nation in general are much better off today.

Sure, there’s still a lot of work to be done, but it’s good to pause along the way to recognize those who have gone before. We admire each individual and organization that has heard the call and responded by saying, “If not me, who? If not now, when?”

There is a great need for active environmental stewardship and we’re grateful that these folks—and others—have stepped forward to help preserve and defend our natural heritage.

David vs. Goliath

Yet another grassroots citizens’ group—Friends of Fisherman’s Island State Park—has formed to fight attempts by private industry to pirate public resources that were set aside for preservation under the public trust.

Add to that numerous other local organizations with similar purposes—Michigan Land Air Water Defense in Barry County, the Coalition Against Strip Mining in the Upper Peninsula and Don’t Frack Michigan, for example—and it’s clear that many important issues are not being adequately addressed by elected representatives and bureaucrats who are being paid to do so.

We support the right of businesses and corporations to make a fair profit while providing society with much-needed goods and services. And the careful use of natural resources is often part of that equation. Yet—short of a national emergency—some things should never be for sale or barter. And that includes parks, forests and natural areas that have been set aside for preservation and enjoyment by future generations.

Each year, we spend millions of taxpayer dollars on agencies and programs aimed at protecting such areas. Is it too much to expect those in charge of administering those activities to put the public interest first?

We applaud the efforts of concerned citizens who are alarmed by what they see as a dereliction of duty by public servants and organize to take matters into their own hands. Great personal and financial sacrifices are made when jumping into the fray and standing up to be counted, but the fruits of citizen action—which sometimes means civil disobedience—are for the benefit of all.

Let’s support such activists in their struggles against giants and thank them for at least trying to make a difference.



Some roadside advertising contains useful public service announcements, but the billboards on which these messages appear still block views and mar landscapes, even in urban areas. —North Woods Call photo

Springtime, billboards and roadside vistas

Now that the strenuous winter of 2013-14 is drawing to an unceremonious close, we’re relieved to see some traditional signs of spring.

Robins have been spotted scurrying across icy mounds of snow. Blue skies and bright sunshine have regularly been peeking through the dark, gray clouds that have dominated our local environment for the past four months. And a season-long collection of sharp icicles has all but disappeared from the eaves of our house.

Perhaps even more noteworthy, the spring edition of the Cabela’s catalog has arrived in our mailbox. Heck, the wildflowers and skunk cabbage should be along any day now—if the still-deep snow ever melts and uncovers the ground.

There will be rain, of course, and plenty more cool days, but the rebirth of springtime never fails to bolster my spirit and get me in the mood for warm-weather adventure—and maybe a couple of long-overdue road trips.

Road trips?

Sure, spring is a perfect time to break the chains of the homebound and point the automobile down a stretch of blacktop.

I don’t have to go very far, or use a lot of gasoline. Just let me go someplace—anyplace—where I can pitch a tent, hike a wooded trail, explore a museum, or visit friends and relatives. It’s time to thaw the frozen mind and clear the cooped-up senses.

But don’t force me to look at a lot of outdoor advertising—specifically highway billboards—on the way.

Not that I have anything against advertising. In fact, I’d like to attract more of it to *The North Woods Call* to help ensure a more stable future.

But there’s something about the landscape-blocking intrusion of giant signs that interferes with my thoughts and interrupts my peace of mind.

Even Phineas T. Barnum—the

so-called “Shakespeare of advertising” and “greatest showman on earth”—apparently had his limits. Barnum, who is credited with placing the first billboards in New York City, said there is an appropriate time and place for such attention-grabbing salesmanship.

“No man ought to advertise in the midst of landscapes or scenery in such a way as to destroy or injure their beauty by introducing totally incongruous and relatively vulgar associations,” Barnum said in his 1866 book, “The Humbugs of the World.” “Too many transactions of the sort have been perpetrated in our own country.”

Barnum said it is “outrageously selfish to destroy the pleasure of thousands for the sake of additional gain.”

No less a salesman, albeit in a much different way, U.S. President Lyndon Baines Johnson had a similar outlook.

“There is a part of America which was here long before we arrived and will be here—if we preserve it—long after we depart,” Johnson said when signing the Highway Beautification Act of 1965—probably at the urging of the First Lady. “The forests and the flowers, the open prairies and the slope of the hills, the tall mountains, the granite, the limestone, the caliche, the unmarked trails, the winding little streams. This is the America that no amount of science or skill can ever re-create or actually ever duplicate.

“In recent years, I think America has sadly neglected this part of [its] national heritage. We have placed a wall of civilization between us and between the beauty of our land, and of our countryside. In our eagerness to expand and to improve, we have relegated nature to a weekend role and we have banished it from our daily

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



lives.”

I’m not sure how much of what ol’ LBJ believed that I would agree with today—I was too young in the mid-1960s to have had many public policy ideas myself—but I think I could have gotten on board with these sentiments.

I’ve had similar thoughts whenever I’ve driven the George Washington Memorial Parkway leading into the nation’s capital—or traveled the Blue Ridge Parkway in Virginia and the Natchez Trace Parkway in Tennessee. Even the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive through northern Michigan’s Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore reminds me of the stark contrast between most public highways and those where the natural vistas have been carefully preserved.

It’s probably not practical to think that all roads could be constructed in such a way. After all, America runs on commerce and creative advertising is key to the nation’s success. But it would be nice to at least consider these possibilities before we cut thoroughfares through mountains, across prairies and along seashores, then line them with gargantuan consumer messages that assault the natural landscape.

Not everything should be for sale, especially shared public spaces that would look and feel much better without all the clutter.

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So long to “Outdoor Rhythms”

For those of you who may be wondering what happened to Doug Freeman’s column “Outdoor Rhythms,” which appeared regularly in *The North Woods Call* for more than a year, the author has decided to discontinue writing it—for now, at least.

As other columnists have also done, Doug graciously contributed his words to our pages even when our anemic budget didn’t allow any real monetary reward for his efforts.

We are grateful for this generosity, and will miss Doug’s insightful comments and general passion for all things outdoors.

A View From Elsewhere**That old, rusty underwater pipeline? No worry!**

By Eve Andrews

Recently, scenes from the frozen Great Lakes region have brought to mind the post-apocalyptic icy landscape of the Lands Beyond the Wall.

The Straits of Mackinac in northern Michigan is currently facing its own “winter is coming” scenario and it doesn’t involve a horde of aggressive snow zombies with a penchant for disembowelment (we hope). This threat, however, could result in the destruction of a vast ecosystem, threatening drinking water supplies and the livelihoods of local fishermen.

To stave off disaster, Michiganans are loudly voicing their concerns about a section of oil pipeline that runs along the bottom of the Straits of Mackinac, a five-mile-wide body of water separating the upper peninsula of Michigan from the rest of the state, and conjoining Lakes Michigan and Huron.

Called Line 5, the segment—part of a pipeline built in 1953—has undergone minimal repairs in the past 60-plus years. As production from Alberta’s tar sands has soared over recent years, many are beginning to question whether Line 5 can handle more of that oil.

Pipeline owner Enbridge expanded the line’s capacity by about 10 percent last year, to nearly 23 million gallons per day. The National Wildlife Federation released a video in October 2013 showing broken supports that suggest corrosion along Line 5, and is demanding that it be replaced entirely.

Enbridge’s position is that the pipeline has “been operating there for decades and operating safely.” But plenty of things tend to operate less effectively after decades of use.

Enbridge already has a bad rep in Michigan after one of its pipelines burst in 2010 and poured over a million gallons of tar-sands oil into the Kalamazoo River watershed. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, that little oopsie was the costliest pipeline disaster in the nation’s history—and, because tar-sands oil is far more difficult to clean up than the standard variety, the cleanup is still going on three-and-a-half years later.

A cleanup in the straits—where parts of the pipeline lie under 270 feet of water—would be much harder still, as the *Associated Press* notes:

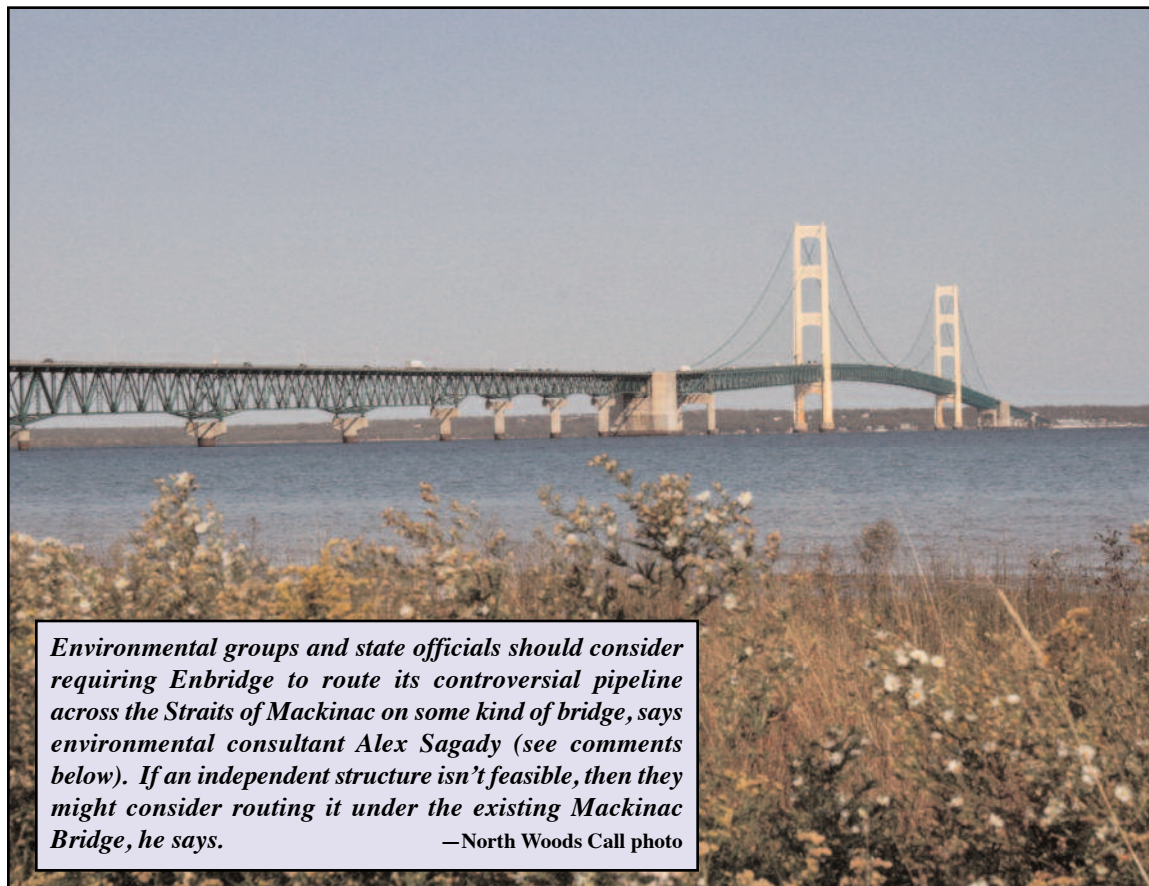
“The Straits of Mackinac epitomizes a potential worst-case scenario for a pipeline accident: an iconic waterway, ecologically and economically significant, that could be fiendishly hard to clean up because of swift currents and deep water that’s often covered with ice several months a year.”

In December, Sens. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) sent a letter of concern to federal pipeline officials about environmental risks posed by the aging pipeline.

The oil and natural gas industry has a hell of a streak going when it comes to pipeline spills, so speaking strictly in terms of mathematical probability, Line 5 should be perfectly fine. That’s how statistics work—right?

Source: “*Sunken Great Lakes Oil Pipeline Raises Spill Fears*,” The Associated Press.

Eve Andrews is a Grist fellow and new Seattle transplant via the mean streets of Chicago, Poughkeepsie, and Pittsburgh, respectively, and in order of meanness. This column is used by permission of Gristmill online news.



Environmental groups and state officials should consider requiring Enbridge to route its controversial pipeline across the Straits of Mackinac on some kind of bridge, says environmental consultant Alex Sagady (see comments below). If an independent structure isn’t feasible, then they might consider routing it under the existing Mackinac Bridge, he says.

—North Woods Call photo

Controversial pipeline needs to be reconstructed to cross the straits on a bridge

By Alex Sagady

As to the Enbridge Line 5 Mackinac Crossing matter, *Grist* said:

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) released a video in October 2013 showing broken supports that suggest corrosion along Line 5, and is demanding that it be replaced entirely.

I don’t know if this completely and accurately summarizes NWF’s present position, or not.

However, what should be clear is that all Michigan environmental groups addressing the Enbridge Mackinac Line 5 crossing matter should be demanding much more out of Enbridge’s hide than mere Line 5 replacement on the segment under the Mackinac Straits.

Don’t make the same mistake [of] being satisfied with mere Mackinac segment pipeline replacement that U.S. Rep. Candace Miller mistakenly made [of] being satisfied with mere replacement of Line 6B under the St. Clair River.

Enbridge pipeline company isn’t in the

Great Lakes water resource protection leadership business, whereas Rep. Miller should be. Rep. Miller’s mistake was in not demanding that Enbridge get their pipelines out of the St. Clair River by constructing a suitable pipeline bridge for the replacement Line 6B as it crossed the St. Clair River.

If Michigan environmentalists want to get tough with the Enbridge pipeline company—and if you are not calling for Line 5 operations cessation and de-commissioning (questions about that need to be asked about the old pipe from the ongoing Line 6B replacement operations, by the way)—then the toughest position that can be extracted from Enbridge pipeline company is the requirement that a Line 5 replacement in the Mackinac segment get the pipeline out of the water and onto a proper form of pipeline bridge crossing support.

As long as Lines 5 and 6B exist as they presently do at the Mackinac Straits and at the St. Clair River, these pipelines are susceptible to marine navigation accidents resulting from drift or loss of power from

ships on the Great Lakes. This means that a ship or barge could damage or break these pipelines if they ran aground on the pipelines in near-shore areas. These pipelines don’t meet trench standards discussed in a recent report to Congress on pipeline stream crossings.

Specifically as to the Enbridge Line 5 Mackinac crossing, the existing installation features about a quarter of a mile of completely unsupported pipeline segment as indicated by Straits bathymetry and in the NWF report.

In considering this situation, Michigan environmental groups should not consider that Enbridge maintaining an operating pipeline with this manner of unsupported segment constitutes acceptable pipeline engineering design for either the current existing facility, or any replacement pipeline in this location. These two pipelines at the Straits with this design in this location cannot be practically and effectively visually inspected from the outside for the presence of stress cracking preliminary to failure.

Book Review**A Trust Betrayed: The Untold Story of Camp Lejeune, North Carolina**

Speaking of public trust issues, here’s one from outside Michigan that should be of interest to Americans in general and conservationists in particular.

It’s about the poisoning of thousands of U.S. Marines and their family members at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, in what is said to be the largest drinking water contamination case in the nation’s history.

We just received notice of this book—published by St. Martin’s Press in 2011—and haven’t had time to read it ourselves, but we’ll put it on the stack and get to it as soon as we are able.

Written by tenacious reporter Mike Magner—a former *Kalamazoo Gazette* colleague of ours from years past—the book tells a story that began in 1941 when the Marine Corps opened a base on the Atlantic shores to practice beach landings during World War II. For the next 40 years, the Marines apparently dumped toxic wastes at numerous locations around the installation, which ended up seeping into the groundwater that still supplies the base.

According to promotional material for the book, it wasn’t until the 1980s that wells containing industrial-strength solvents, benzene from spilled fuel and other hazardous chemicals were tested and taken offline. By that time, harm had been done to many base residents, especially babies exposed to the pollution in the womb—without anyone even realizing it.

When a federal health study in 1997 estimated that more than 100 children born at Camp Lejeune suffered from cancer or birth defects, victims of the contamination began to demand a full accounting. Seventeen years later, after much stonewalling and obfuscation by the Marine Corps and the Department of the Navy, health studies are continuing, lawsuits are advancing and many affected parties are still waiting for compensation from the government.

Kirkus Reviews calls Magner’s book “a fast-moving, smartly detailed story of an environmental disaster compounded by the Corps’ broken promise—“We take care of our own”—to the men [and women] who served and suffered.” And *Publishers Weekly* says “this book is the first complete account of what really happened—an adroit mixture of detailed factual reporting and disturbing accounts of the serious health problems suffered by individual Marines and their families.”

“A Trust Betrayed” is available in stores and online.

We can say from our own experience that Magner is a fine reporter who has been a journalist for nearly four decades. In addition to the *Kalamazoo Gazette*, he has held various positions in Washington, D.C. and currently is managing editor at *National Journal*.

A native of South Bend, Indiana, and a graduate of Georgetown University, Magner lives with his family in Arlington, Virginia.

A continuing dialogue with the Au Sable River

(Continued from Page 3)

reasons we don’t quite understand.

But the Au Sable seemed to know of our sadness. Soon thereafter, it put on a show, with a dazzling sunset sending bolts of light across the water: “Fireworks for the fish,” as my nephew used to

say.

A balmy breeze blew and I could almost hear the words, “I’m so sorry. ... Will you still be my friend?” We always forgive our dear friends for an occasional bout of temper or a poor choice, don’t we? Of course we do.

What I’m saying is that Michigan environmental groups simply letting Enbridge merely replace Line 5 at the Mackinac Straits aren’t being tough enough on this company. If anybody in Michigan doubts the need for our state to be resolute and determined with accountability as to the Enbridge pipeline company, you merely have to spend some time with this report to see how the entire Kalamazoo River Enbridge atrocity could have been completely avoided if Enbridge hadn’t been operating in a reckless and irresponsible manner (ntsb.gov/doclib/reports/2012/par1201.pdf)

If Enbridge is going to be allowed to continue to operate Line 5 in the future, then Michigan environmental groups must insist as a primary demand that Enbridge reconstruct the Line 5 Mackinac crossing on a pipeline bridge. The leadership for this must come from the environmental movement, Michigan citizens and government, because you will not find such leadership forthcoming from Enbridge.

(Continued on Page 6)



All Outdoors

By Mark Karaba

A drive into springtime

The trip was not planned. It started with a phone call from my brother.

That was on Feb. 18 of this year. He was calling to see if I wanted to ride along with him to take our mother down to see her sister—our aunt—in Knoxville, Tennessee, for a short four-day visit. I said yes. I mean YES! Please! I only had one question—could I bring my fly fishing "stuff" along?

"Fine with me," was his reply.

Now I had purpose. Of course, I also looked forward to seeing my aunt and spending some quality time with my mother.

We left early the next morning at around 7 a.m. I have made this trip to Tennessee many times, though not with Knoxville as a destination. And not in February.

The drive was pleasant and, thankfully, uneventful. My brother, who has made the trip in February many times, commented that he had never seen snow cover all the way through Indiana. Even the northern tier of Kentucky had patches of snow here and there.

As we drove on, the snow waned and disappeared altogether by the time we got into Tennessee. Even the tops of the Smokies did not appear to have snow and this was unusual. I have seen the mountain passes closed the first of April, with the Forsythia blooming in Gatlinburg and the tops of the mountains covered in snow.

As we arrived in Knoxville, the thermometer read 50 degrees. When we stepped out of the car at my aunt's house, it was like a dream.

The next morning after breakfast and a shower, we decided we should probably let mom and her sister get caught up and not interfere with that sacred reunion.

Oh, and maybe we should go to the mountains to give them plenty of time to bond. This seemingly unselfish act could by sheer coincidence lead to some random sightseeing and possibly trout fishing—mainly as a means of preoccupation, of course, so as not to lead us back to the house prematurely and possibly foul the atmosphere of two sisters in the depths of conversation and "catching up." I felt that this was the responsibility of considerate sons and nephews.

As we drove higher into the Smokies, the thermometer seemed to climb along with us. By 1 p.m. it was 65 degrees. We had the windows down and, as was fitting, the radio dialed into bluegrass music. The sky was a deep blue with nary a cloud to be seen. The snow shovel-born blisters on my hands seemed to heal as they hung out the window, as if they were immersed in some traditional southern backwoods potion.

After a little bit of trout fishing and sightseeing, we decided to head back to Knoxville. It was late afternoon and food was the next order of business.

I suppose we hoped that our considerate and unselfish act would not go unnoticed. Possibly we would be rewarded with a home-cooked meal that would be ready to be dished out upon our arrival. This was not exactly how dinner played out, but it was in the making and served a short time later.

The next two days seemed to go exactly the same as the first—up early, coffee, a bite to eat and we were off. It appeared as if the two sisters were in fact in the depths of bonding, and it seemed only fair that we not interfere with the siblings catching up on all things family and otherwise.

So, for three full days, my brother and I dutifully stayed away. We went to the mountains, to the rivers and streams and had awesome weather—all in the name of what was decent and righteous, as good sons and nephews with a sense of "doing the right thing for others," should do!

Early on Sunday morning, we departed for home.

Leaving this virtual tropical paradise and driving back to the sub-arctic regions of southern Michigan—with its normal daily routines like snow shoveling hauling firewood and repeatedly checking the ten-day forecast, which has been randomly similar to the results of a scratch-off ticket.

We drove into snow midway into Kentucky and, well, if you live in Michigan, you know the rest of the story.

After being home for a few days and staring at the largest piles of snow that have ever adorned my yard, I have to really think hard to remember an all-too-brief vacation that now literally seems like a dream.

Now when I check the ten-day forecast, it is for Tennessee. Then, as I watch the snow fall outside my window for a moment, I remember it was real.

FLOW urges public trust framework

The Traverse City based For Love of Water (FLOW) public policy group says the International Joint Commission (IJC) is on target including public trust standards in its recommendations for solving Lake Erie's harmful algae blooms.

"The call for a public trust framework recognizes a benchmark adopted by the courts of all eight Great Lakes states and On-

tario," said FLOW founder Jim Olson. "The benchmark means governments must act. It also means that all private interests involved with phosphorous management practices, farming and the nonprofit sector must work together, because we share this common water held in public trust."

Citizens may also "seek recourse" to make sure public and private uses are protected, he said.



Much of the Straits of Mackinac could be harmed if Enbridge's pipeline were to rupture and spill into the water, conservationists say, such as the Mackinaw City Marina shown here. —North Woods Call photo

Straits of Mackinac pipeline needs to be reconstructed

(Continued from Page 5)

A dedicated pipeline bridge for Line 5 as a specific dedicated structure would be a major and expensive [option], with considerable visual impact on the Straits. Such a structure would require construction of tall bridge piers in the Straits.

However, another alternative is to re-route Line 5 under the Mackinac Bridge. Democrats Mark Schauer and Gary Peters should consider proposing a State of Michigan/Enbridge deal to re-route Line 5 through the Mackinac Bridge and make it into a major campaign issue in the coming [gubernatorial] and U.S. Senate races. Getting the Enbridge company under some kind of decent system of accountability for their Line 5 Mackinac Crossing could be a winning campaign issue.

The State of Michigan should extract a significant price from Enbridge if the Mackinac Bridge were to

be used in this manner. A starting negotiating position might be to require Enbridge to assume a significant share of bridge maintenance costs in exchange for being able to route the pipeline through the bridge, or some other arrangement to shift bridge revenues from bridge tolls to Enbridge payments.

In any event, insisting that Line 5 and 6B crossings at the Mackinac Straits and at the St. Clair River be through pipeline bridges rather than bottom pipeline crossings is an easily understood, physically tangible and environmentally preferable articulation of hydrocarbon pipeline stewardship that Enbridge should be required to adopt if they are going to continue to operate Line 5 at the Mackinac Straits.

Alex Sagady is an environmental consultant in East Lansing, Michigan.

There are many rites and signs of spring

When I began working at Sarett Nature Center in 1977, we had a "phenology" chart where we kept track of the first arrival of certain spring fauna and flora.

We also produced a list of arrivals and departures based on years studying the birds that came through our area.

Of course, all of us consider the American Robin as a true sign of spring's arrival, as well as Canada geese moving north.

Well, things have changed. Now many robins remain here all winter, as do Eastern Bluebirds, so they are not as good an indicator. The same goes with the Canada Goose. With the introduction of the "giant" Canada Goose, we no longer have an easy way to distinguish between northern flocks moving through, or just resident flocks moving about.

Even the flight of Sandhill Cranes was a good sign of spring, but now—at least in some of the southern counties—some cranes remain here all winter. A better judge of the coming of spring is the arrival of Common Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds (although a few of those, too, remain year-round).

I usually don't count the Red-winged Blackbirds as arriving until I hear the first "konk-ah-ree-ah" of the males. Males typically arrive about a month earlier than the females to set up territories.

One bird that is great to keep an eye and ear out for is the American Woodcock. Very rarely will one overwinter in the north. Arriving back in Michigan, beginning in March through April, the males also set up "peenting" territories for the wooing of females. Usually the ground needs to be somewhat thawed and most of the snow cover gone. The males will set up their peenting area in a semi-open space and begin their peenting dance and aerial flight at



The Natural World

By Richard Schinkel

dusk and dawn during early spring, then off and on all night as the females return a month or so later. If you have never experienced this ritual, go to YouTube, and call up "music of nature" and the American Woodcock. You will see and hear the male doing his thing before the aerial display. In fact, at our nature center, many friendly wagers were given on who would be the first to locate a woodcock. I have won many a cheeseburger this way.

Of course, as spring advances, we look forward to the first Baltimore Oriole, House Wren, Ruby-throated Hummingbird and Purple Martin. Most often, these birds arrive in the same short and fairly predictable window of time. In some cases, we can keep track of when they move northward. In the case of the Purple Martin, you can go to the Purple Martin Conservation Society website and watch the map as they are sighted moving north. For the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, you can visit hummingbirds.net/map.html and get updates on migration.

As we move from late April into May, things get real crazy with multitudes of birds migrating through and it can test your identification skills.

Another sign of spring is the leaving of the ice on ponds and lakes. This allows the critters to begin to stir as the water warms. The DNR and local nature centers do frog and toad surveys to keep tabs on the populations. It is fun to know which begins calling first and how to tell them apart by their calls. One of the first is the wood frog, which is usually found in wooded ponds and begins to

call even when there may be some ice floating on the pond. The call is a soft quick "bark." Soon will come the sounds of the chorus and cricket frogs, followed by the spring peepers.

When it gets real warm and we have some spring rains, we may experience a migration of frogs, toads and salamanders moving to ponds in the warm rain.

The arrival of vegetation is more dependent on the soil warming up, but the skunk cabbage doesn't wait. It has a mechanism to warm the soil around it and often we see it coming up through the snow. It is believed that the purplish flower that smells bad takes advantage of the beetles and flies that are feeding on winter kill carrion, because few bees or butterflies are out this time of year.

The parade of arriving blooming spring wildflowers can vary as much as three weeks over different years.

I was lucky when growing up, as we had a small trout stream flowing through the farm. We couldn't wait for the first warm April day to wander down and do some exploring. We usually "baptized" the creek on April 1, by throwing pebbles into the cool, clear water.

One of the other rites of spring for my brother and I was to go fishing with my uncle for suckers in the St. Joseph River between Berrien Springs and St. Joseph. If we caught extra fish, we could sell them at the fish shop. But, as the dip netters started fishing, the price dropped dramatically. Yet, the dip-netters were fun to watch in their shoddy shacks below the dam in Berrien Springs.

Conservation Officer Logs (2/2/14 through 2/17/14)**More snowmobile madness, a frozen dog, sibling knife assault & drug offenses****DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

CO Dave Painter responded to the scene of a snowmobile crash in Iron County. The snowmobile operator was travelling at a high speed and left the trail, crashing into some trees. The rider suffered leg fractures and was transported from the scene to a waiting ambulance by CO Painter and a local deputy.

CO Marvin Gerlach worked a snowmobile patrol in northern Menominee County. While stopped at a crossing of the snowmobile trail and a county road, CO Gerlach observed a subject who was operating a snowmobile fail to stop at a stop sign at the county road. CO Gerlach estimated the subject crossed the county road at approximately 50 miles per hour. After stopping the subject, the snowmobiler proudly stated to CO Gerlach that he had actually crossed the road at 63 mph. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Dave Painter observed a lone group of anglers fishing an Iron County Lake. When the subjects were observed smoking what appeared to be marijuana, CO Painter unloaded his snowmobile and made contact with the group. It was quickly observed that the subjects were fishing with too many lines and were in possession of marijuana. Further conversation with one of the individuals found that he had shot a deer illegally. When the CO traveled to the subject's house to retrieve the deer, an illegal marijuana grow operation was discovered. Warrants are being sought for the illegal deer and marijuana violations.

DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)

CO Mike Hammill received a report of a small dog frozen in the snow on the edge of a snowmobile trail in a remote area north of Newberry. CO Hammill responded to the area on his snowmobile and located the dog as described. The small dog was difficult to see as it was white in color, sinking in the deep snow and covered by snow in subzero temperatures. He picked up the dog, put it inside his snowmobile jacket and returned to town to the local veterinarian. He later learned that the animal had been reported as lost by its owners when it jumped out of their car. The animal was expected to make a full recovery and was returned to its very happy owners.

CO Kyle Publiski assisted local deputies with a 911 call from a father who stated his 12-year-old son was trying to stab his 10-year-old son with a knife. Once on scene, the situation was calmed down, but got reheated when it was proposed that the older son be possibly taken to a juvenile detention center. The father became very agitated and stated that he was not going to allow his son to be taken. If the boy was taken, the father said, he would kill himself. To compound matters, the father's stash of marijuana was observed. While attempting to arrest the father, the subject began to resist arrest and was eventually taken into custody. After allowing the offi-

cers to search the rest of his residence, the father's additional marijuana was located. The father was lodged in the county jail.

CO Kevin Postma was checking ice anglers when he contacted a subject as he was coming out for the afternoon. CO Postma and the angler had a typical discussion for several minutes outside of the fishing shanty and the angler's license was checked. The subject then went to the back of the shanty, recovered a propane tank and advised that he was just out there to pick up the tank and then head back home. CO Postma then asked the subject if he minded if he took a look in the shanty. The subject agreed and opened the shanty. Inside CO Postma located two set lines. The subject stated, "Yep, you got me" and enforcement action was taken.

COs Brett Gustafson and Mike Evink were on snowmobile patrol in western Mackinac County when an approaching subject on a snowmobile ran CO Gustafson off of the trail, almost hitting him. The COs attempted to stop the subject, at which time the suspect tried to evade officers, resulting in a high speed pursuit. As CO Gustafson closed in on the fleeing sled, the suspect reached into his coat. The CO thought he was reaching for a gun, but the suspect threw something into the snow. Finally, CO Gustafson was able to stop the suspect and place him under arrest. Further investigation revealed that the subject had thrown a bag of marijuana and a dope pipe into the snow. It was also discovered that he was operating on a suspended license and was a convicted felon with multiple felony convictions, including many narcotics crimes. The suspect was lodged in the Mackinac County Jail and charged with reckless driving, fleeing and eluding, possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia, and driving on a suspended license.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)

CO Steve Speigl responded to a Report-All-Poaching (RAP) complaint after 10 p.m. of an angler setting too many tip ups and leaving them unattended. A search on the ice revealed a total of 10 tip ups set in front of a lake-side cabin. One of the tip ups had a 'flag' up and after an hour CO Speigl contacted the angler, who had to be awakened. The angler owned the tip ups and said he didn't think he was 'slaughtering' the fish, as he never caught anything anyway. CO Speigl advised the importance of keeping lines in immediate control, and then issued a ticket for unattended lines.

DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)

Around midnight, CO Steve Converse was traveling home when he observed sparks flying over the Manistee River/M-115 Bridge. Investigating, CO Converse was able to ascertain that what he was seeing was a snowmobile being operated down the center of M-115 without any lights. A stop was made and the snowmobile operator was not wearing a helmet, had no func-



tional headlights or taillights on the snowmobile, had not registered the snowmobile since 2004 and did not have a trail permit. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Sean Kehoe contacted a subject fishing and discovered he did not purchase a fishing license. The subject was someone with whom the CO had previous contact who had asked about becoming a conservation officer and expressed great interest in the job. CO Kehoe ascertained the subject had fished at least three times this winter without purchasing a fishing license. When asked why he did not purchase a license, the subject advised that he did not think he would see a CO today. A ticket was issued for fishing without a license.

DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)

COs Matt Liestenfeltz and Mike Hearn worked an investigation of illegal trapping activities. The investigation, involving several family members, led them to numerous otters, one of which was not tagged. Enforcement action was taken on the untagged otter, as well as additional warnings for other issues.

Responding to ongoing trespass complaints from the rail company, **CO John Huspen** worked a high problem area near Frederick. The compacted snow from snowmobiles has been responsible for numerous train derailments over the years. During his patrol, CO Huspen issued several tickets to snowmobilers for operating on the railroad right-of-way.

CO Warren MacNeill responded to a report of a skier lost in the woods. On the way to the scene, CO MacNeill made contact with the lost skier over the phone. Once the subject explained to the CO the area they were in, CO MacNeill was able to give the subject directions back to a vehicle.

DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)

CO Phil Hudson responded to a snowmobile personal injury crash where the operator had struck a tree head on. CO Hudson rendered first aid and covered the victim with his emergency blanket and duty issued uniform coat to keep them warm until fire rescue arrived on scene with a back board and basket to transport the victim.

CO Joshua Wright worked two midnight shifts on Belle Isle with **Lt. Dave Malloch** and **Sgt. Tom Wanless**. During those two shifts, a total of 29 warrants were discovered, seven people were lodged at the Detroit Detention

Center, and one felony and nine misdemeanor charges were issued. Some of the evidence seized ranged from a loaded handgun to illegal narcotics.

Sgt. Tony Soave received a complaint of two snowmobilers riding their snowmobiles across an open stretch of water on the Saginaw River, and running over and killing at least nine ducks. A witness at the scene, who was watching the ducks with his son, photographed the snowmobiles operating through the water. One photo showed one of the sleds with a hen mallard on the left ski. Due to the increased attention given to the issue by the media, Sgts. Soave and Kimmerly have been following up on several tips and leads that have come in. Sgt. Soave is awaiting results from the Michigan State Crime Lab Audio-Visual Division as to whether or not registration numbers can be recovered from the photos of the snowmobiles.

A DNR pilot who was flying over the area of Riverdale observed a large amount of deer feed behind a house. The information was passed onto **CO Quincy Gowenlock**. The CO made contact with the homeowner, who admitted to putting all the feed in the field. He advised he felt sorry for the deer because of the harsh winter. The CO explained the rules regarding feeding along with the intent of the law in regard to the dangers of disease spreading through the herd. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)

CO Dave Rodgers was called to a report of coyote hunters with dogs trespassing in Kent County. CO Rodgers met with deputies at the scene, who were holding some of the hunters and beginning their investigation. Hunters on the road indicated their companion had entered the property only to recover a dog, but they had no permission to hunt any surrounding property. CO Rodgers followed tracks approximately one-half mile, which began to indicate a running stride. CO Rodgers found a rifle buried in the snow near a tree during the track. After a mile of tracking, he found the hunter standing on the next road across a section with the excuse of just waiting for his dog. The recovered rifle diffused the argument and he was ticketed for trespassing.

COs Cary Foster, Dave Rodgers and Ivan Perez conducted a snowmobile patrol near the Conklin, Sparta and Kent City area, and also patrolled the Musketawa Trail. During the patrol, four people were ticketed for operating unregistered snowmobiles and two people for failing to wear helmets. The COs reported one person attempted to flee after seeing the approaching officers, but stopped when he realized he would be leaving two daughters behind, both of whom had no snowmobile safety training. COs ticketed a total of eight people, and gave several warnings for trail permit violations, as most were ticketed for no registrations or other offenses.

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 jet 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 had 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, and 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 purchased a license that night. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)

While working a midnight shift on Belle Isle, **Sgt. Tom Wanless** and **CO Josh Wright** observed a vehicle with no lights on parked in the traffic lane on Douglas McArthur Bridge. The COs approached the vehicle and could smell the odor of marijuana. A female sitting in the driver's seat said her vehicle broke down and would not start. She also said her husband just left walking across the bridge to get help. The female admitted to having a small amount of marijuana on her person. A search of the vehicle located four additional bags of marijuana, some unknown pills, and an open bottle of whiskey. The female had 10 misdemeanor warrants for her arrest and had no valid driver's license, due to multiple suspensions. The subject was lodged on the warrants and the vehicle was towed. A warrant is being sought for the traffic and drug violations.

Sgt. Tom Wanless and **CO Josh Wright** stopped a vehicle on Belle Isle in the early morning for operating in a closed area. The pair could smell marijuana as they approached the vehicle. The driver admitted to having some marijuana. The bag of marijuana was located and the driver and passenger were placed in the patrol unit for a consent search of the vehicle. An open bottle of alcohol was found under the seat and a loaded .38-caliber revolver was found in the glove box. The driver admitted he purchased the firearm from "an acquaintance of an acquaintance." The driver had six warrants for his arrest and a suspended driver's license. He was lodged on the warrants and a warrant is being sought for the firearm, drugs, and traffic violations.

CO Ken Kovach reports that a subject he arrested late last year for shooting a pheasant from a motor vehicle was found guilty. He was ordered to pay \$200 in fines and costs, \$500 reimbursement and his hunting license was revoked for a year.

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Final Shot



Outdoor Education + Exercise

This past winter may have been a tough one for adults grasping snow shovels, but for children outfitted with snowshoes, it represented new learning and exercising opportunities. Just ask these fifth-graders from Charlevoix, who explored the great white wilderness with staff from the Little Traverse Conservancy. The enthusiastic group of kids gathered recently in Charlevoix County at the Barry "Nathan" Driggers Preserve along the Boyne City-Charlevoix Road—across from the Camp Sea-Gull property—and took to the northern woods.

—Photo courtesy of Little Traverse Conservancy

Fishery conversation & coffee

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will host informal public discussions of local and statewide fisheries management activities and concerns.

"Conversations & Coffee with DNR Fisheries Division" will take place in each of the eight management units that oversee the state's fisheries, and will give people the opportunity to meet managers and biologists, discuss local issues and management activities, and get specific questions answered.

Refreshments will be served.

The meetings will be as follows:

Tuesday, **March 18**, from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Bay City State Recreation Area Visitor Center, 3582 State Park Drive, in Bay City.

Wednesday, **March 19**, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Carl T. Johnson Hunt and Fish Center, 6087 E. M-115, in Cadillac.

Thursday, **March 20**, from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Waterford Fish Station, 7806 Gale Road, in Waterford.

Thursday, **March 20**, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the DNR Pocket Park (U.P. State Fair Grounds), 2401 12th Ave. N, in Escanaba.

Thursday, **March 27**, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the D&R Sports Center, 8178 W. Main St., in Kalamazoo.

Tuesday, **April 8**, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Tahquamenon Area Public Library, 700 Newberry Ave., in Newberry.

Wednesday, **April 9**, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Ishpeming Township Hall, 1575 U.S. 41, in Ishpeming.

Thursday, **April 10**, from 6 to 8 p.m. (CST) at the Gogebic Community College, E 4946 Jackson Road, in Ironwood.

Monday, **April 14**, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Sydney's Restaurant, 400 Cedar St., in Munising.

Wednesday, **April 16**, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Portage Lake District Library, 58 Huron St., in Houghton.

Wednesday, **April 16**, from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Northland Sportsmen's Club, 1592 Old Alba Road, in Gaylord.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/fishing.

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Bill would alter beaver trapping requirements

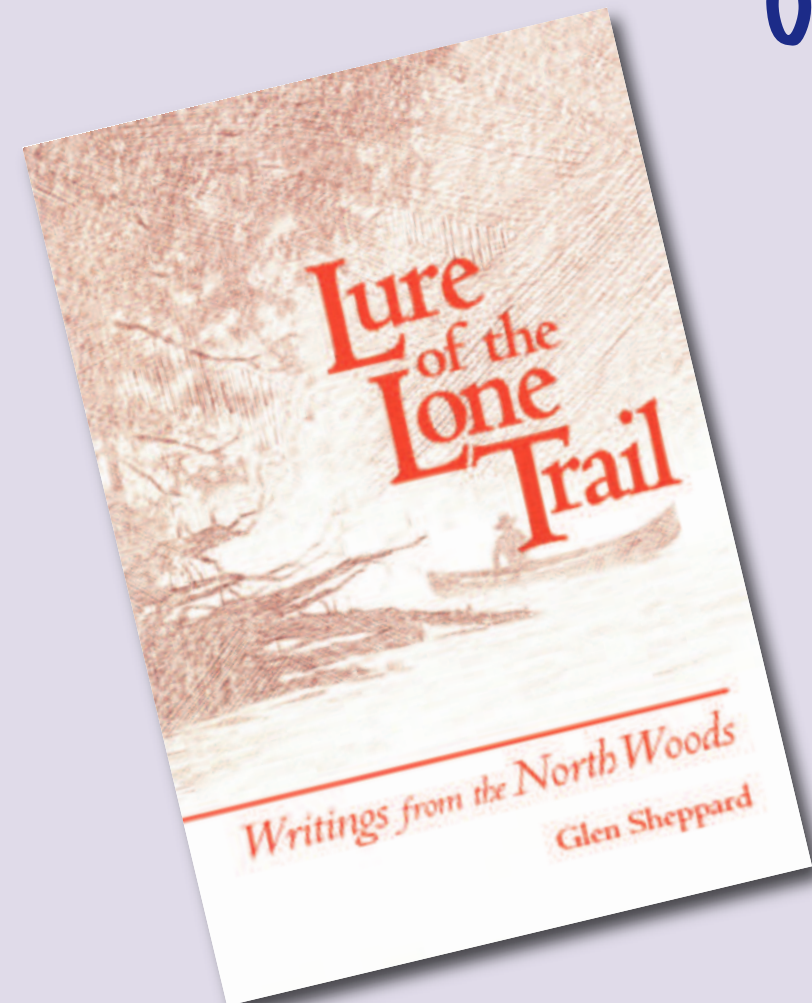
Proposed legislation in the Michigan Senate would allow licensed fur dealers to trap beavers—a move that would reportedly open the door to commercial trapping of the animal.

The bill, introduced by Sen. Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba)—who also championed Michigan's wolf hunt law—has been reviewed by the Senate Outdoor Recreation & Tourism Committee and was reported in the legislative body earlier this month.

Although beavers can be trapped now, such action by licensed fur dealers has been outlawed since the early 1900s. The current law was created at a time when the beaver population needed to be increased and the intent was to make it harder for beavers to be harvested, according to Michigan Department of Natural Resources officials.

It is a law that some say is no longer needed.

Some animal rights activists, however, say that trapping more beavers would be "senseless and cruel." But supporters of the plan say beavers can be a nuisance to humans and it's helpful—for people and beavers—to keep the ecosystem from getting overpopulated.



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