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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 defendants 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—one 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 $1,000 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.

**Michigan’s Conservation Sentinel Since 1933**

**PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR:** Abigail Ertel of the Gaylord Environmental Action Council was named Professional of the Year at the 7th annual Russel A. Kirtland’s Warbler Initiative.

**BEACH CLOSURES:** 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 Shalckcross 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 Stone’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 INDUCTION:** 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 Grant 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 Resources 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 much worse.”

The report, 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’s web site.

**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.

(Continued on Page 2)
Urban sprawl edges north

By Glen Sheppard

A few years ago—no more than ten—Belleville was as small town as a small town could be. Residents of the less-than-2,000 popula-
tion western Wayne County community were annoyedly 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 form-er 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 county 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 wan-dering 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 sur-vive and it won’t support a community newspaper.


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 per-sonality.

Small towns are often committed to the idea of growth and indus-trial development. Clayton Denman writes in a pamphlet pub-lished 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 possi-ble, from within the community itself. Local development would at least make it more likely that those involved would retain some feeling for town life and tradition.”

“Some small towns have matured into prosperous and sound com-munities 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.”

“Small towns work for small towns. And our counties, too, are trying to escape their per-sonality.”

Denman makes many other and very specific suggestions for pre-serving the character of small towns. “Small Towns” should be read by serving small towns. The pamphlet “Small Towns” should be read by everyone who is concerned about the future of small towns. And by all those who want to do something about it.

“Hunters will all now carry a "salvage tag" as currently required—or 1) call on DNR, or 2) file a local en-force-ment 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.”

Some proposed change to animal salvage tags for road kill

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

He has proposed new legisla-tion (Senate Bill 613) to make it easier for people that hit game ani-mals with their vehicles to keep them, while still giving the De-partment 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. Pheasants 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 2) file a local en-force-ment 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 ex-emption.”

“Turkeys 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 enforce-ment.”

The DNR would still be able to restrict salvaging dead game ani-mals in the event of public health concerns.

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Proposed change to animal salvage tags for road kill
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 owns and operates a taxidermy business in Bay County and is a brother to Troy Richard.

According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, 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.

Troy Richard reported that he shot 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 of.

When the Richards’ learned that DNR conservation officers knew about the poaching, they attempted to hide the skull and other evidence. The Richards 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 pled guilty to one of the charges—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.

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 that 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 winter has caused the most extensive freeze-over of the lakes since the record-setting year of 1979, when

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Opinion

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. The charges against the defendants were now filed (see story on Page 1). Our apologies, Mr. Schuette, for being suspicious.

The two firms are, of course, permitted innovators until proven guilty. It’s easy to offer 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 or 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 group of individuals to receive the honor. The Clinton River Watershed Council was chosen as this year’s nonprofit organization.

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.

There’s a lot of work left to do, but it’s good to pause along the way to recognize those who have gone before us. We admire each individual and organization that has heard the call and responded to the challenge, “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—that’s clear: Michigan is that many important issues are not being adequately addressed by elected representatives and bureaucrats who are being paid to do so.

So the support of the right foundations 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 because of history and tradition.

Environmental activists are often accused of causing the very problems they are trying to solve. This is not true. The warp and weft of the natural environment are far too complex to be caused by one group of individuals. But it is true that people who are concerned about the welfare of the natural environment have the unique advantage of being able to offer creative solutions that work best for our world.

We applaud the efforts of concerned citizens who are alarmed by what they see as a dereliction of duty by public servants and organizes 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.

—Lady Bird Johnson

Price 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 control, urban health, and public safety, and county, state and national. It is hard to hitch the conversation into one straight line, because everything leads to something else.”

—Norm Spring

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 to help ensure a more livable America, it has sadly neglected this part of its national heritage. We have placed a wall of civilization between us and the beauty of our land, and of our country. In our eagerness to expand and improve, we have neglected nature to a weekend role and we have banished it from our daily 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 much political ideas myself—but I think I could have gotten on board with these sentiments.

We’ve had similar thoughts when ever 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 thorough-fares through mountains, across canyons 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.

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 popularizing the first billboard along the 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 Hamburghs of the World.” “Too many transformations of the sort have been perverted 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 forest and the flowers, the open prairies and the slope of the hills, the tall mountains, the granite, the lime-stone, 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 the beauty of our land, and of our country. In our eagerness to expand and improve, we have neglected nature to a weekend role and we have banished it from our daily lives.”

We support the right of businesses and corporations to make a fair profit while providing society with much-needed goods and services.

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

Editor & Publisher: Mike Verburg

So long to “Outdoor Rhythms”

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 surcouning the yards of snow. Blue skies and bright sunshine have regularly been peering through the clouds that have dominated our local environment for the past four months. And a season-long collection of sharp icicles has disappeared from the eaves of our house.

Perhaps even more年度ively, the spring edition of the Cabin’s Mail box catalog has arrived in our mailbox.

Heck, the wildflowers and skunk cabbage should be about any day now— if the still-deep snow no longer 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 gaso...
The Straits of Mackinac epitomize 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-II.) 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 hella 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 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.

Michigan environmental groups addressing the Enbridge Mackinac Line 5 crossing matter, the existing installation is the Strachts bathymetry and in the NWF report.

In considering this situation, Michigan environmental groups should not consider the Enbridge maintaining an operating pipeline with this manner of unsupported pipe, with this design in this location. These pipelines don’t meet trench standards discussed in a recent report to Congress on pipeline stream crossing.

Specifically as to the Enbridge Line 5 Mackinac crossing, the existing installation features a quarter of a mile of completely unsupported pipeline segment dedicated 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 an 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 visual inspected from the outside for the presence of stress cracking preliminary to failure.

What I’m saying is that Michigan environmental groups simply letting Enbridge maintain an operating pipeline with this manner of unsupported segment constitutes an 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 visual inspected from the outside for the presence of stress cracking preliminary to failure.

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)
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 the next morning. 7 a.m. I drove 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 to 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 Galax, 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 sun was shining and breakfast and a shower, we decided, would probably let mom and her sister get up and not interfere with that sacred reunion.

Oh, and maybe we should go to the mountains to give them plenty of peace and quiet. This seemingly unselfish act could be by some 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 deep discussions about “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 in unison. By 1 p.m. it was 65 degrees and we had almost downed 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 shovels blotted on my hands seemed to melt 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 dainty and unselfish act would not go unnoticed. Possibly we would be rewarded with a homemade 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 content 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, 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 the pool and the mountains and snow-lined streets 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.

The North Woods Call 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 in its efforts to negotiate a framework that would lay the legal standards in its recommendations for solving Lake Erie’s harmful algae blooms.

“The call for a public trust framework recognizes a benchmark framework that recognizes the right of the public to access lakes and rivers, and protect public water,” said FLOW founder Jim Olson. “The benchmark means governments must act. It also means that all private interests in these waters must be aligned with phosphorus management practices, farming and the nonprofit sector must work together, because we share this common water held in public trust.”

Citizens may also “seek re-course” 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. Moreover, as much as the Snow City Dam shows, the Straits of Mackinac pipeline needs to be reconstructed

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 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, a 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 all 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.
**DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)**

CO Dave Painter responded to the scene of a snowmobile crash inIron County. The snowmobile operator was traveling at a high speed and left the trail, causing his passenger to fall off, who then was struck by an oncoming sled. The rider suffered leg fractures and was transported from the scene to a waiting ambulance by CO Dave Painter and a local deputy.

CO Marvin Gerlach worked a snowmobile patrol in northern Marquette County when he observed a snowmobile stop at a crossing of the snowmobile trail and a county road. CO Gerlach used his thermal imaging camera to observe a male sitting in the driver’s seat of the snowmobile, who was operating a snowmobile fail to stop at a stop sign at the county road. CO Gerlach esti mated the speed of the snowmobile at county road at approximately 50 miles per hour. After stopping the subject, the snowmobiler proudly stated he was from out of state and 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 subject was approached, the subject 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. CO Painter had a conversation with one of the individuals found that he had shot a deer illegally. When the CO traveled to the scene of the deer hunt, he observed the deer, an illegal deer gun operation was discovered. Warnings 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 described as being white in color, sinking in the deep snow and covered by snow in subzero temperatures. CO Hammill located 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 lodge security at a lodge where a father who stated his 12-year-old son was trying to stab his 10-year-old son with a knife. Once on scene, CO Publiski was able to talk the boy down, but got reheat when it was proposed that the older son be permitted out of the lodge. After being contacted by police, 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 officers to search the rest of his residence, the father’s additional marijuana was located and the subject was lodged in the county jail.

CO Kevin Postma was checking ice anglers when he contacted a male who was carrying a bag with what appeared to be marijuana. CO Postma and the angler had a typical discussion for fishing shanty and the angler’s license was censused. The subject then went to the back of the vehicle and retrieved a properly purchased fishing license and tickets. The angler was released and did not have a trail permit. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Sean Klohe contacted a snowfisher and discovered he did not purchase a fishing license. The subject was someone with whom the CO had previous contact. CO Klohe assigned the angler as a conservation officer and expressed great interest in the job.

CO Gustafson and Mike Evink were on snowmobile patrol in western Mackinac County when they approached a snowmobile ran CO Gustafson off of the trail, almost hitting him. The COs attempted to stop the subject with no success and the subject tried to evade officers, resulting in a high speed pursuit. As CO Gustafson closed in on the fleeing suspect, the suspect tried to drive into a snow bank. CO Gustafson was able to stop the suspect and place him under arrest. CO Gustafson also discovered that he was operating on a suspended license and was a convicted felon with convictions for multiple narcotics convictions, including many narcotics crimes. The suspect was lodged in the Mackinac County Jail and charged with reckless driving, being and operating a snowmobile and possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia, and driving on a suspended license.

**DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)**

CO Steve Speigl responded to a Report-All-Peaching (RAP) report of a man not wearing a coat getting too many tips up 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 ‘slacking’ the tip ups. CO Speigl explained to the angler who had to be awakened. The angler owned the tip ups and said he didn’t think he was ‘slacking’ the tip ups. CO Speigl explained to the angler that he was caught in the game anyway. CO Speigl advised the importance of keeping lines in immediate control, and then issued a $150 ticket to the subject.

**DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)**

Around 11 p.m. CO Steve Converse was traveling home when he observed sparks flying over the Manistee River/M-115 bridge. 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 functional headlamps or taillights on the snowmobile, had no registration or insurance and did not have a trail permit. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Michael Kehoe contacted the subject and discovered he did not purchase a fishing license. The subject said he was fishing in the area, had previously purchased a license, and was a convicted felon with convictions for multiple narcotics crimes.

COs Matt Lientenhofz and Mike Hears worked an investigation of illegal trapping activities. The investigation involved 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 warning for illegal trapping.

**DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)**

COs Matt Lientenhofz and Mike Hears were ticketed for no registrations for operating on the railroad right-of-way.

COs Warren MacNeill worked on 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 vehicle on Belle Isle. CO Hudson rendered first aid and covered the victim with his emergency blanket and an insulated 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 Matoch and Sgt. Tom Wanless. During those two shifts, a total of 29 warrants were discovered, seven were lodged, one was transported to the Detroit District Center, and one felony and nine misdemeanor charges were issued. Some of the warrants were evidence of a person driving a loaded hand gun to illegal narcotics.

CO Tony Sonnichsen received a complaint of two snowmobilers riding their snowmobiles across an open stretch of water on Lake Huron while running off trail and killing at least nine ducks. A witness at the scene, who was watching the ducks with his son, contacted a snowmobile operator going across the water. One photo showed one of the sleds on the D-500 waterway. Due to the increased attention given to the issue by the media, Sgts. Soave and Kiemmerly have been following up on several tips and leads that have come in. Sgt. Soave is awaiting results from the Michigan State Crime Lab Analysis Division to determine whether or not registration numbers can be recovered from the photos of the snowmobiles.

**DISTRICT 7 (Plainsville)**

CO Dave Rodgers was called to a report of coyote hunters with dogs trespassing in Kent County. CO Rodgers met with deputies to search the rest of his residence, the father’s additional marijuana was located. The father expressed great interest in the job.

COs Matt Lientenhofz and Mike Hears were ticketed on a deer complaint where a subject he arrested late last year was turned over and identified as a subject the CO had previous contact. The subject was someone with whom the CO had previous contact.

**DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)**

CO Kyle Bauer checked a pick of snowmobiles on the trails where an angler said he hadn’t caught any fish, but when the CO asked about the bag of fish, the angler said “I do have a fish in there.” The bag contained a large perch and a 13-inch largemouth bass, which was ticketed for taking a bass out of season.

CO Jason Smith followed up on a deer complaint where a subject was fishing and discovered he did not purchase a license that night. Enforcement action was taken.

**DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)**

CO Josh Wright observed a vehicle with no lights on parked for an extended period of time at the Gilead Lake. CO Wright received a call from a complaint of a male sitting on a snowmobile ran CO Gustafson off of the trail, almost hitting him. The COs attempted to stop the subject with no success and the subject tried to evade officers, resulting in a high speed pursuit. As CO Gustafson closed in on the fleeing suspect, the suspect tried to drive into a snow bank. CO Gustafson was able to stop the suspect and place him under arrest. CO Gustafson also discovered that he was operating on a suspended license and was a convicted felon with convictions for multiple narcotics convictions, including many narcotics crimes. The suspect was lodged in the Mackinac County Jail and charged with reckless driving, being and operating a snowmobile and possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia, and driving on a suspended license.

**DISTRICT 10 (Rhinelander)**

CO Steve Speigl responded to a Report-All-Peaching (RAP) report of a man not wearing a coat.

**DISTRICT 11 (Green Bay)**

COs Gary Foster, Dave Rodgers and Ivan Perez contacted a snowmobile operator and discovered they were 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 in the patrol vehicle for a consent search of the vehicle.

COs Gary Foster, Dave Rodgers and Ivan Perez contacted a snowmobile operator operating in a closed area. They went out and shot a buck opening morning and purchased a license the next day. He was ordered to pay $200 in fines and court costs, $500 reimbursement for taking a bass out of season.

**DISTRICT 12 (Belle Isle)**

COs Dave Rodgers and Ivan Perez contacted a snowmobile operator and discovered they were 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 in the patrol vehicle for a consent search of the vehicle.

COs Gary Foster, Dave Rodgers and Ivan Perez contacted a snowmobile operator and discovered they were operating in a closed area. They went out and shot a buck opening morning and purchased a license the next day. He was ordered to pay $200 in fines and court costs, $500 reimbursement for taking a bass out of season.
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 Pre-school and Management Center. The local kids, ages 9 to 12, 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.

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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 Caspermon (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.