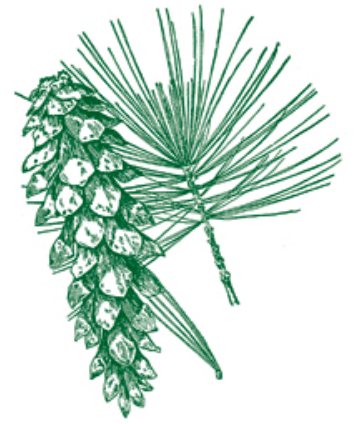




“The newspaper for people who love the north”

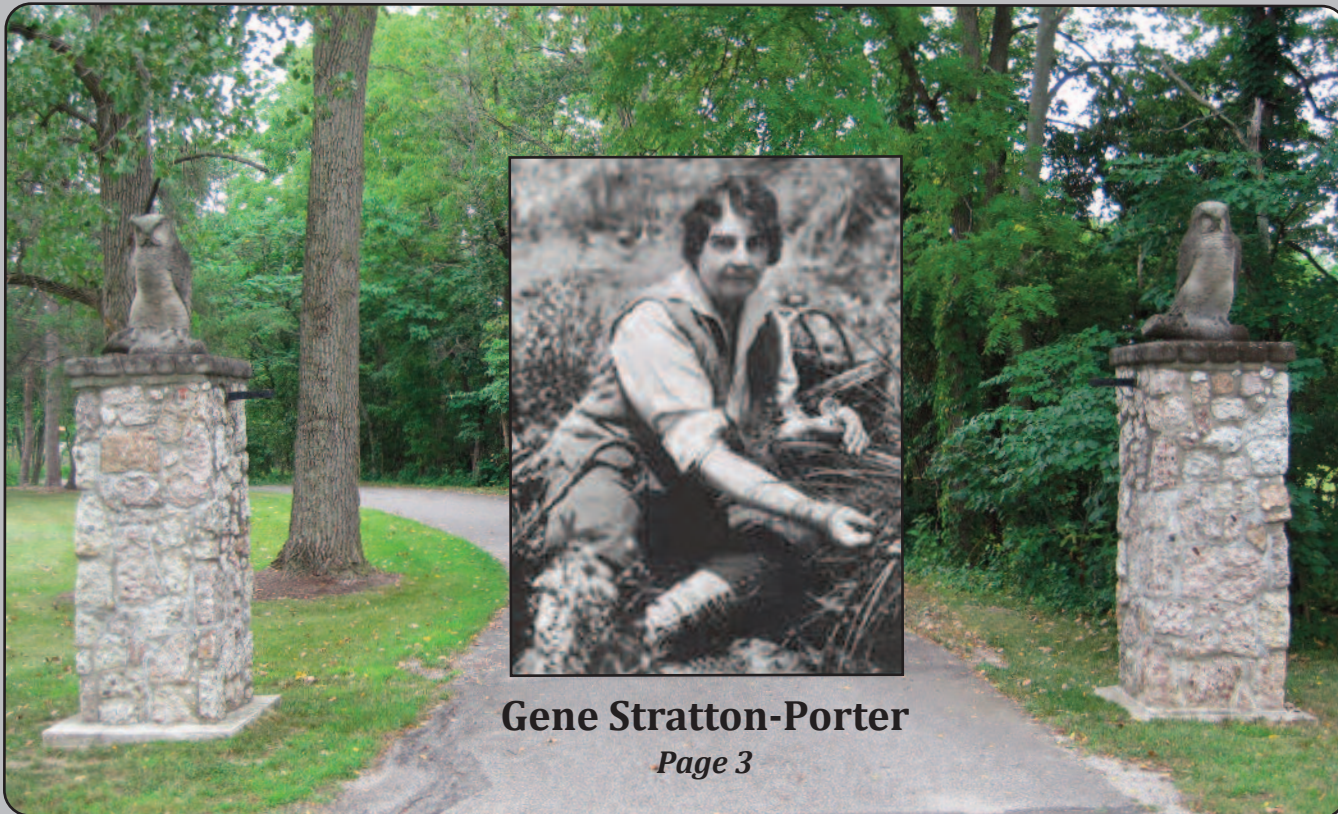


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THE NORTHWOODS CALL

Michigan's Conservation Sentinel Since 1953



Gene Stratton-Porter
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Entrance to Gene Stratton-Porter historic site near Rome City, Indiana.

—North Woods Call photo

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Never cry wolf: Have legislators neutered voter referendums?

The Michigan House of Representatives added its seal of approval to a recent state senate vote, which may have neutered two November voter referendums by confirming the Natural Resources Commission's (NRC) authority to manage wolf hunting in the Upper Peninsula.

On Aug. 27, the Republican-led house approved and enacted a citizen-initiated law—passed by the state senate two weeks earlier—that protects the ability of the NRC to name game species and establish hunting seasons. The legislation does not require the governor's signature and, because it contains an appropriation, is apparently not subject to a third referendum.

The debate was reportedly heated and the vote close. The measure passed the lower chamber 65-43, but critics say they are committed to challenging the act in court.

Wolf hunt opponents had gathered 214,000 signatures for a referendum on a 2012 wolf hunt law, and when the legislature responded by passing a second law,

they gathered another 183,000 signatures for a second ballot proposal. The petition drives were funded primarily by the Humane Society of the United States.

A coalition of hunting and conservation groups, however, responded by collecting some 297,000 valid signatures to send another bill to the legislature—the Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. The bill also contained an appropriation to fight invasive species, which observers say means it may be immune from future referendum efforts.

"We are very thankful to the legislators who voted for sound science, the voters who signed the petition, the organizations who supported it, and the tireless volunteers who collected the signatures of almost 300,000 registered Michigan voters," said Dan Eichinger, executive director for Michigan United Conservation Clubs. "This is an important step to protecting the rights to hunt, fish and trap in Michigan from radical animal rights organizations."

"It's crucial to Michigan's future that we respect and honor the fishing and hunting heritage by maintaining a factual, science-based approach," said state Rep. Andrea LaFontaine (R-Columbus Township).

"We thought it was important to listen to the will of the 300,000 registered voters who brought this initiative to us," added Rep. Jon Bumstead (R-Newago). "This is about more than wolves. It's about protecting the rights of our constituents to hunt and fish by managing our fish and wildlife with sound science."

But state Rep. Brandon Dillon (D-Grand Rapids) criticized the practice of attaching appropriations to controversial bills to make them referendum-proof and rejected claims that the fight has been about sound science.

"If we used facts to make our decisions around here, we'd have a lot different bills passed," said Dillon. "The actions on this bill, frankly, are not out of a first-rate democracy, they're one of a banana republic."

Michigan is currently home to an estimated 636 gray wolves, all located in the Upper Peninsula. Voters in other parts of the state shouldn't make a decision that primarily impacts residents north of the bridge, according to Michael Leonard of the Safari Club International, Lansing chapter.

Despite approval of the Scientific Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act by the state legislature, Michigan's wolves should not be hunted this year, say officials of the group Keep Michigan Wolves Protected (KMWP). The law will only take effect next year, they said, and provides no authorization for a hunt this year.

Consequently, it does not nullify the two referendums on the ballot this November, the wolf hunting, KMWP said.

"The wolf hunt referendums will still be on the November 4 statewide ballot and we'll continue urging voters to vote NO on both referendums to stop wolf hunting and maintain voter rights," said Jill Fritz, direc-

(Continued on Page 2)



North Woods Notes

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GAHAGAN OPEN HOUSE: An open house and general membership meeting will be held on Sunday, Sept. 21, at Roscommon's Gahagan Nature Preserve. The event runs from 1 to 4 p. m., with a formal program beginning at 1:30 p.m. Beverages and finger food will be provided. Regular members and the public are invited to stop by, and enjoy the fellowship and nature trails.

INCRIMINATING VIDEO: Two Upper Peninsula hunters—already under investigation for videotaping hunting dogs mauling a coyote—are now accused of running down another coyote with a truck, then filming the injured animal before killing it. According to a report by John Barnes of *M-Live*, the animal was purposely struck with a motor vehicle and left alive in the road for several minutes while it was videotaped before being shot with a pistol. One of the men reportedly posted the video for a short time on *YouTube*. As of this writing, officials had recommended a felony charge for knowingly killing, torturing, mutilating, maiming or disfiguring an animal—punishable by up to four years in prison. They also suggested various misdemeanor charges, including violating a wildlife order mandating the swift dispatch of a wounded animal, and illegal possession of a pistol by a minor.

EDUCATIONAL GRANTS: The Michigan Nature Association (MNA) and Lake Trust Credit Union are teaming up to offer \$500 nature field trip grants to teachers across Michigan. The aim is to educate the next generation of conservation leaders by helping teachers develop hands-on learning opportunities in a natural setting. Teachers can apply for nature field trip grants by calling 866-223-2231, or by visiting <http://michigannature.org/home/news/naturefieldtrips>. Grants are accepted year round, and the next application deadline is September 15.

POWERFUL POOP: Four farms in Michigan have been selected by Consumers Energy to produce electricity using anaerobic digesters. The digesters reportedly convert animal waste into electrical power in a process facetiously known as "poop to power."

FISHERWOMEN: The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will offer a salmon fishing workshop for women on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 26 and 27 in Mackinac County. It's part of the DNR's Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) program and is aimed at women that have previous fly-fishing experience and would like to expand on their abilities. The workshop—at the Carp River Campground 15 miles north of St. Ignace (off of I-75 and Mackinac Trail)—begins at noon one day and ends at noon the next, and will be held rain or shine.

POLAR ICE CAP: Satellite images reportedly show that the summer ice cap in the Arctic is thicker and covers 1.7 million square kilometers more than it did two years ago. That, according to the British *U.K. Mail* newspaper, which at the end of August reported that an area twice the size of Alaska was open water two years ago and is now covered in ice. The satellite images were taken from the University of Illinois Cryosphere Project, according to the newspaper.

UNPLUG: Adults who wish to unplug their busy lives and reconnect with nature might be interested in "Camp Kitigin" Sept. 12-14 at the YMCA Camp Timbers in West Branch. The weekend camp is an all-inclusive experience, featuring lodging, food and materials. A variety of outdoor activities are offered for men and women who want a respite from modern life and technology—computers, phones, tablets, televisions and the like. To register, visit www.mrpaonline.org/campkitigin. Cost is \$200.

SMOKED BIRDS: Even green energy has its drawbacks. A state-of-the-art solar plant in California's Mojave Desert has been blamed for igniting numerous birds in mid-flight. It is estimated that between 1,000 and 28,000 birds have gone down in flames when flying over a field of 300,000 mirrors that reflect the sun's rays onto boiler towers.

(Continued on Page 2)



Shovels & Trees

Bureaucrats and politicians don't often want citizens to catch them with their hands dirty, but that didn't stop Michigan Department of Natural Resources Director Keith Creagh (left) and Gov. Rick Snyder from hoisting shovels to help volunteers plant more than 75 fruit-bearing trees and shrubs last month along a new hunter walking trail in southern Marquette County. Sure, it's a staged photograph during a contentious election year, but the two men wanted to demonstrate the importance of the overall effort, presumably without digging a hole for themselves. The easily accessible walk-in trails—designed to showcase Michigan's outstanding upland bird hunting opportunities—are being developed in areas with historically significant grouse and woodcock populations. As shown here at a site south of Gwinn, the trails are enhanced by planting nannyberry, crabapple and red oak trees, which are expected to attract a variety of wildlife, including upland game birds, deer, bear and songbirds.

—Michigan DNR photo

Graymont land purchase request is tabled

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Land Exchange Review Committee has reportedly tabled a request by Graymont Inc. to purchase about 10,000 acres of state forest land for their Rexton-area project.

The action—to allow time to gather additional information from Graymont—was announced during the August meeting of the state Natural Resources Commission by DNR's Upper Peninsula Field Coordinator Stacy Haughey.

The move is expected to cause an indefinite delay in the project.

"We still have many questions we would like answered," said Deputy DNR Director Mill Moritz. "We have concerns about

the hydrology and other issues," said Moritz, who also chairs the LERC. "We are giving this back to Graymont to re-submit their application, if they so wish."

"We're not going to be bound to some artificial deadline," said Ed Golder, the DNR's public information officer. "We need to get this right. To do what's right for the public."

"This isn't really good news or bad news," said mine project opponent David Gorenflo, "but it does give us some faith that the DNR is taking this very seriously."

Kerry Wieber, forest land administrator with the DNR's Forest Resources division, said that the agency has received nearly 900

public comments regarding the proposal. Of the responses, approximately 95 percent are opposed, she told *The St. Ignace News*. The majority of respondents are opposed to the sale of public land, not the mine itself, she said. Many believe the sale would be too large, and comments frequently suggest the state should lease, rather than sell, the land.

"Judging from the application, we are uncertain whether the sale of the land would be an appropriate transaction," Ms. Wieber reportedly told *The St. Ignace News*.

If the sale is eventually approved, the proposed project is expected to encompass a total of

(Continued on Page 2)

Our 61st Year: Looking Back to Sept. 14, 1955

The Paul Bunyan of bears

By Marguerite Gahagan

Jesse [the horse] was skidding logs near the little Cheboygan swamp where Pete Goff was logging and she twitched her ears, flared her nostrils and started shivering.

"Smelled that bear," Pete Goff said. "Have to hold her head when you start workin' near that swamp. She's afraid of him. He's big."

"Go on, tell the whole story," said Jack Bowman, Pigeon River conservation officer. "Tell how she laid down and you got right on her back, 'cause you were afraid that when she got up she'd take off and leave you alone with that bear. Go on and admit it."

"That bear's big," woodsman Goff argued. "He's the biggest Pat Gilbert ever [saw] in his life an' he spent his life in the woods."

The big bear's fame grows daily as the loggers watch him—ever alert to his presence and knowing his ways.

"Billy Scott parked his car an' we put our lunches in the back seat," Goff said. "When we came out of the woods for our lunch, we saw where that bear had been at the car. He'd smelled our lunches. He'd tried to get in, an' when he couldn't, he got mad. He gave that back right fender a slap an' he left the dent of his big paw. He sort a rolled his paw up. You can see where he clawed the paint off, rollin' that paw before he let go an' give it a lick. The dent's right there."

Then there was the day when the loggers stacked their axes against a stump when they knocked off work for lunch. When they came back, Mr. Bruin had been there and [was] apparently in a nasty mood. There was no other explanation, game men say, other than he was in a mood.

"He'd took a swipe—a great big swipe—'an sent them there axes flyin' all over the place," Goff admitted. "OI' Pat had a time findin' his."

His weight?

"Six hundred pounds, we guess," [Goff] said. "His hind foot's two inches longer than my shoe. He hangs around the swamp pickin' berries. He ain't afraid. He ain't movin' out because we're cuttin'. We've [seen] him stand up in the road—taller than a horse, he is.

"There's a she-bear around, too. Her and two cubs. She's half as big as he is. But him, he's the biggest bear we've ever [seen]."

Cheboygan's a big county and there are many woods and many swamps. Where is the swamp where the 1955 Paul Bunyan of bears hangs out?

Pete Goff looks blank and Jesse ain't talkin'.

Autumn's wealth

By Marguerite Gahagan

Autumn is coming to the north country and with her she brings a new form of recreation—the color tour.

Each fall has found a growing army of beauty lovers arriving in the north country for the pleasure of driving back-woods trails, where hardwoods flaunt their glory against the green of pine and cedar.

Northern lakes are at their peak of beauty in the cool days, reflecting fall skies of blue, and pictures worthy of the greatest artists are to be taken and treasured by the camera fans.

Late vacationers have discovered that no picnic ever was quite so pleasant as the one on a cool, sunny day—with red and gold leaves rustling underfoot and the calls of birds, gathering in flocks for their migration, echoing throughout the woods.

[Michigan], with its thousands of streams, [and] its acres and acres of state land, has progressed far since the time when "a vacation" meant days of July and August.

As winter has made the north country a winter wonderland with skiing, and spring has brought thousands of visitors north to see the budding arbutus and pick the delectable morel, so has fall made the north woods the scene of beauty and enjoyable leisure hours.

Each season has its devoted fans, but an increasing number of nature lovers point to autumn as the vacation time of greatest beauty and quiet.



The Frank Opolka

—Michigan DNR photo

Frank Opolka (second from left), a retired Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) deputy director who was responsible for the agency's Upper Peninsula operations, was recognized recently when a new 27-foot SAFE boat was named in his honor. The boat is docked at the Presque Isle Marina in Marquette and conducts patrols on Lake Superior from Marquette County west. Opolka, seen here with (from left) DNR Lt. Peter Wright, DNR Law Enforcement Division Chief Gary Hagler and DNR Law Enforcement Division Assistant Chief Dean Molnar, joined the agency as a conservation officer in 1964 and worked his way up to chief of the Law Enforcement Division and deputy director.

Have legislators neutered voter referendums?

(Continued from Page 1)

tor of KMWP. "In the meantime, the good news is that Michigan's wolves will be saved from the hunt this year."

"What the legislature passed today is a patently unconstitutional measure and we're going to sue and knock it out," Fritz said. "The ballot measure that the legislature approved bundled together three unrelated measures to push the wolf hunt over the finish line, and in the process violated Michigan's single-issue law requirement. We're confident that Michigan courts will reject the legislature's unconstitutional act and instead respect the results of the vote this November."

Last year, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sold 1,200 wolf hunting licenses, generating roughly \$120,000 for the Game and Fish Protection Fund, according to the non-partisan House Fiscal Agency. Twenty-two wolves were legally killed in three regions of the Upper Peninsula during Michigan's first-ever wolf hunt in 2013—about half the number the DNR had hoped for.

Graymont land request tabled

(Continued from Page 1)

expected to encompass a total of about 13,000 acres. Of that, the company is asking for the state to sell them about 10,000 acres, including an open pit quarry—centered around the old Hendricks Quarry, located primarily just south of the Luce/Mackinac County line—encompassing about 2,000 acres, as well as a much larger underground mine going from roughly the town of Garnet east past Rexton.

The company also wants some additional acreage, which will provide space for a processing plant.



North Woods Notes

(Continued from Page 1)

AUGUST NRC MEETING: The Sept. 11 meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission (NRC) will be held at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Center, 4125 Beaumont Road, in Lansing. The Nov. 6 meeting will be at the same location, while the Oct. 9 meeting will be at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center, 104 Conservation Drive, on Higgins Lake near Roscommon. On Dec. 11, the NRC will host its final meeting for 2014 at the Lansing Center, 333 E. Michigan Avenue in Lansing.

WEST NILE VIRUS: The Michigan Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) and Community Health say an eight-year-old horse from Grand Traverse County was tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV), and euthanized after failing to respond to treatment and supportive care. The gelding had not received an annual vaccination against the virus, they said, but other horses at the premises have since been vaccinated. MDARD was also recently notified that a small turkey flock in Ingham County was affected by WNV with high death losses due to the disease. In addition to vaccinating horses against WNV, officials say that effective mosquito control measures need to be used on farms, ranches and elsewhere.

STURGEON RELEASED: Several juvenile lake sturgeon from the New Richmond facility were released Sept. 6 into the Kalamazoo River. The activity was marked with a day-long event at the New Richmond Bridge County Park on Old Allegan Road in Manlius Township. The public was invited to tour the park, as well as the lake sturgeon rearing facility. The juvenile sturgeon were collected from the wild in May and reared in the facility until they reached 10 to 11 inches in size. Their larger size will reportedly give them a much better chance at survival.

DUCK STAMP: Waterfowl hunters and wildlife enthusiasts can now buy the federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp—also known as the Duck Stamp—at more than 1,400 Michigan license sales outlets. The stamp also has been available for purchase online at www.mdnr-elicence.com since mid-July.

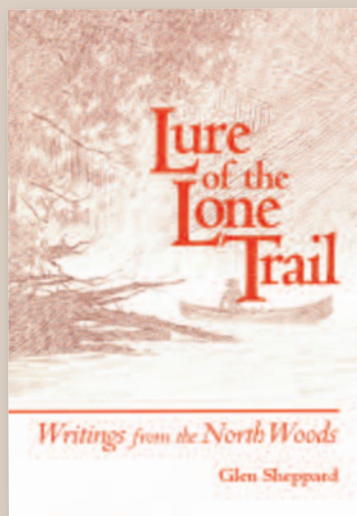
NON-METALLIC MINERAL LEASE: The Alger County Road Commission of Munising, Michigan, has requested a direct nonmetallic mineral (sand and gravel) lease from the State of Michigan. It covers Department of Natural Resources (DNR) mineral rights located in Munising Township, Alger County, and contains a total of 40 acres, more or less—further described as: NE1/4 SE1/4, Section 15, T47N, R17W. Written comments relative to the request may be submitted by September 20, 2014, to the Minerals Management Unit, DNR, P.O. Box 30452, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7952.

SWAP MEET: A swap meet for hunting, fishing and trapping gear will be held Saturday, Sept. 13, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the DNR Wildlife Field Office, at the corner of Columbine and Voakes on Harsens Island, Michigan. Admission is free.

FIREFIGHTING: Thirty-one Michigan Department of Natural Resources employees, who are trained as firefighters, were dispatched recently to help contain wildfires in Oregon, California, Washington and Idaho.

HATCHERY BYPASS: Huron Pines is working with Harrietta Hills Trout Farm of Grayling on a collaborative effort to restore fish passage on the East Branch of the Au Sable River via a bypass channel.

Time is running out!



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The “ghost nets” of Lake Superior

Once they break free, they drift undeterred, buoyed, submerged and battered by the wild waters and shifting ice sheets of Lake Superior.

Yet they continue to entrap fish, waterfowl and marine debris, even though no fishermen will now come to claim and clear them.

They’re called “ghost nets,” and they’re a problem in Lake Superior, where commercial and tribal fisheries depend on gill nets for their livelihood. In the Apostle Islands area alone, there are hundreds of commercial and tribal fish nets, spanning tens of miles. Sometimes, these nets come unmoored, creating hazards for wildlife and for recreational boaters and anglers.

To tackle the problem, University of Wisconsin (UW) Sea Grant has partnered with the Apostle Islands Sport Fishermen's Association (AISA) and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission Law Enforcement team.

Using a two-year, \$25,000 investment from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Marine Debris program, the three groups will spend the next year organizing and holding a series of public workshops aimed at educating new commercial and tribal anglers on best net-management practices, as well as creating an educational video to detail the appropriate actions recreational boaters should take when they become entangled in either a ghost net, or even a properly moored net.

“Lake Superior is a very inhospitable environment,” said Al House, a board member of AISA and member of UW Sea Grant’s advisory board. House estimates that one percent or less of commercial or tribal nets break free and become ghost nets, but they still creates an impact that needs to be addressed.

“These nets are depleting a resource that’s finite,” House said of the Lake Superior fish population, which is rich in valuable species like trout, cisco and whitefish. “The idea is to move quickly to protect it.”

Currently, tribal fisheries have no requirement to report that their gill and trap nets have become unmoored. In some cases, several days may pass before a fisherman even notices that a net has broken free. Depending on what the ghost net encounters, it might float on the water’s surface, or sink to the bottom, trapping debris and fish life.

“The challenge is definitely finding them,” said House. “They’re worse than the proverbial needle in the haystack. The idea is also to find an accurate as-

essment of the scope of the ghost net problem--nobody knows how many, or how few, there are. “

Eventually, the partners would like to develop and implement a GPS-based system for identifying, tracking and reporting ghost nets, as well as creating a second video on best-management practices fisheries can use to reduce gill net loss. But the first step is education.

It’s not about “pointing fingers,” officials say—just finding a solution.

“This is really about raising awareness of how to be safe when you’re fishing,” said Titus Seilheimer, UW Sea Grant’s fisheries outreach specialist and the project’s principal investigator.

“We can cooperate and make the whole situation better,” said House.

—Sea Grant report

Chesapeake Energy anti-trust trial date is set

Oklahoma-based Chesapeake Energy Corporation will go to trial Dec. 2 on one count of violating Michigan’s antitrust law.

Company officials were arraigned in late August in front of Cheboygan Circuit Court Judge Scott Pavlich. The trial will likely last about three weeks.

The charge stems from Chesapeake’s alleged role in bid-rigging at the October 2010 state oil and gas lease auction. Criminal charges were filed by state Attorney General Bill Schuette last March.

The company also faces separate felony charges of racketeering and fraud for allegedly victimizing private landowners across northern Michigan. The complaint alleges that Chesapeake directed its agents to recruit multiple landowners to lease their land to the company during the summer of 2010. It is alleged that several times the landowners notified the agents of existing mortgages on the land to be leased and the agents allegedly indicated the mortgages would not be an obstacle.

When competition from the competitors stopped, Chesapeake—through its leasing agents, including Oil Niagaran and a shell corporation called North-

ern Michigan Exploration—allegedly cancelled nearly all the leases, using mortgages as the purported basis for the cancellation. The attorney general alleges Chesapeake therefore obtained uncompensated land options from these landowners by false pretenses, and prevented competitors from leasing the land.

Company officials were arraigned in late June on one count of conducting criminal enterprises (racketeering), punishable by a fine up to \$100,000; and 20 counts of false pretenses (\$1,000 to \$20,000), punishable by \$10,000 per count.

Cheboygan District Court Judge Maria Barton heard oral arguments regarding the possibility of binding the racketeering case over for trial. She will issue a written opinion addressing whether the case will advance to trial.

A spokesman for the attorney general said the timing for her opinion will be up to the judge, but “our best guess is that it will be weeks, not days, before a ruling is issued.”

If the racketeering case is bound over, it will go to trial in Cheboygan Circuit Court.



Echoes of Marguerite

A few miles south of the Michigan state line in northern Indiana is a historic site that may be of interest to North Woods Call readers. In some ways, Call founder Marguerite Gahagan seems a lot like naturalist and writer Gene Stratton-Porter. Both women aimed to inspire an appreciation of nature. While Gahagan (1907-1997) lived and worked for many years in Michigan’s north woods, Porter (1863-1924) plied her trade at Limberlost Cabin in Geneva, Indiana, and later at Wildflower Woods near Rome City, Indiana, where these pictures were taken. She wrote for popular magazines like Ladies Home Journal, and published photographs and studies of life in nearby woods and swamps. Her novels blended fiction with vivid descriptions of nature. By her death in 1924, ten million copies of her books had sold, including the internationally popular “Freckles” and “Girl of the Limberlost.” In the 1920s, she moved to Hollywood to produce movies based on her novels. Porter’s two-story “cabin” on Sylvan Lake (below left) is now a state historic site. Her grave (directly below) is located on the property. Porter’s daughter, Jeannette, is also buried there.

—North Woods Call photos



Signs of fall seen in the north woods

Another Labor Day has passed us by and the telltale signs of fall are beginning to show up in the north country.

According to the Department of Natural Resources in neighboring Wisconsin, trees in the northern forests are already beginning to turn color and the first fall hunting seasons are getting under way.

In addition, bird migration is in full swing, with recent cold fronts bringing the first good waves of warblers, orioles, hummingbirds and tanagers. Common nighthawks have also been reported darting overhead.

Oh, and it probably won’t be long before we see our first frosts.

Hunter education

Now is a good time for new hunters to enroll in a safety class so that they’re ready to hit the woods this fall.

Michigan has three types of hunter education courses: traditional classroom, home study and online.

For more information, or to find a class in your area, visit michigan.gov/huntereducation.

A great book for the nature lover!

Pine Whispers

The biography and writings of Marguerite Gahagan

(Founder of The North Woods Call)

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www.GahaganNature.org

Opinion

Quote Box

"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land."
—Aldo Leopold

"We don't inherit the earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children."

—Native American proverb

Huffing and puffing over wolves

Not to make any judgements about the merits of Michigan wolf hunts, but we were a bit chagrined by recent actions by the Republican-led Michigan House and Senate, which, in effect, ran end-runs around citizen opposition to such activity.

Sure, a variety of other folks—largely members of hunting and outdoor groups—initiated legislation that was clearly designed to keep this November's voter referendums from stopping future hunts in their tracks. And it was, we're told, perfectly legal for pro-hunt forces to petition legislators to do this.

Still, we're concerned when public servants and special interest groups interfere with the right of all citizens to decide such controversial issues for themselves. It doesn't seem to be in the best long-term interest of our representative republic.

We can't really pinpoint what it is, but there is something unsavory about the whole affair. And, this time, the scheming was done largely by the "Grand Old Party."

The "science" of mineral leasing

Many Michigan conservationists insist that we trust Department of Natural Resources (DNR) experts to "scientifically manage" such things as biodiversity, wolf hunts and the like.

Yet they don't necessarily display similar confidence in the DNR's decisionmaking when it comes to leasing state land for oil and gas development.

Neither do we, but there seems to be a bit of a disconnect here. Why is that?

Progressing to a better earth

Here's another conundrum:

Why do our friends with "progressive" minds apparently want to transform nearly everything about our world—ethics, morality, faith, culture, values, marriage, governing principles and society at large—except, of course, the natural environment?

Don't they recognize the cause and effect of such actions?

In a divinely ordered universe, it's impossible to keep only the things we choose—i.e. environmental justice—while dismantling the very foundations of social relationships and human ecology.

Like it or not, Irrevocable natural laws apply to all that we do, and for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

Preserving the great outdoors, therefore, requires wise stewardship of ALL the sacred traditions with which we are entrusted.

Nature writing vs. news/opinion

It's hard to know what today's dedicated conservationist prefers—non-confrontational nature writing, or hard-hitting outdoor news and opinion.

There's a difference, you know.

Most would probably say they want both, at least until they see one, or the other. Then they tend to say, emphatically, "Stick to something I like."

Strange how personal views and beliefs can impact a person's objectivity.

It's a lot more fun—with much less indigestion—to write happy stories about nature. But hard news and considered opinion are necessary for an informed society and improved public policy.

Throughout its history, *The North Woods Call* has tried to carefully balance these varied interests.

Yet, after nearly 62 years on the firing line, we still find ourselves wondering what our readers really want.

Bears, bait and bushwhacking: The assault on traditional hunting

Many of Michigan's traditional hunters feel that their beloved outdoor sports and longtime conservation ethics are under assault—all in the name of accommodating a vast array of special interests that the traditionalists believe threaten natural resources and recreational opportunities.

Harvesting unsuspecting bears on a bait pile, for example, has opened doors to capitalizing on what was once an effective and respectable way to properly manage these sensitive creatures. Namely, simple hunting practices that rely on finely honed woodland skills and weaponry that at least give the animals a fighting chance to escape.

Once upon a time, the commercialization of any natural resource found on state-

owned land was illegal. But now, myriad methods are employed to aid trophy hunters who may not know the first thing about tracking and harvesting a wild beast in its own environment.

These non-traditional "hunters" shoot from elevated stands, use crossbows equipped with night-vision sights and ambush bears foraging at attractive bait piles that do not belong in their natural habitat.

Some legal bear baits—fish offal, for example—are restricted in other situations, the traditionalists point out—such as when an angler illegally cleans a brook trout in a stream, or on a river bank.

Ten-year-old kids are even allowed to shoot a bear with a bow and arrow, they say, which leaves some old-time hunters

Being still: Appreciating the sounds of silence

One of the things I most enjoy about trips into the north woods are the various opportunities they offer for relative silence.

Not complete silence, of course. There are always renegade sounds wafting through the trees—birds singing, streams gurgling, leaves rustling, an occasional airplane passing overhead and other more menacing auditory distractions.

But any kind of silence is better than none at all.

Henry David Thoreau said that silence is "the universal refuge—the sequel to all dull discourses and all foolish acts."

"Nowadays, most men lead lives of noisy desperation," added James Thurber in a take-off on one of Thoreau's most famous quotes.

That's for sure.

As we've mentioned on this page before, the world is becoming an increasingly noisy place. And not just due to the high decibel levels caused by machinery and stereophonic speakers. We're suffering from a glut of high-tech communication gadgets and a general overload of information—both useful and useless—from a growing variety of sources.

I suppose we contribute our fair share to this overload with the news and editorials we publish in *The North Woods Call*. But that's minor compared to the amount of tripe that spews from smart phones, social networking sites and the mouths of politicians.

A few years ago—before I shut myself in my home office and began writing this newspaper—I had real-world jobs where employee meetings were all too often ruled by individuals intent on sucking the air out of the room and dominating the conversation. Psychologists say that these extroverts have a need to talk. It energizes them and helps them process their thoughts.

The trouble is, they don't seem to learn much of value when they're talking all the time.

Most of my former colleagues would probably say that I don't have that problem. In fact, they have sometimes complained that I don't say enough. Kind of like "Silent" Calvin Coolidge, I suppose, without the bully pulpit.

I plead guilty as charged.

The truth is, I don't really like to hear myself talk and my spirit gets weary if I have to listen to others drone on. Instead, I typically process my thoughts by silent contemplation—and ener-

North Woods Journal

By Mike VanBuren



Even the remote village of Noorvik, Alaska—located far to the north within the Arctic Circle—is impacted year-round by a variety of noisy machinery and various other human activities. —North Woods Call photo

gize myself by actually doing what needs to be done.

Silence is golden, they say, and I concur.

There are, of course, numerous benefits to being still. Among other things, it promotes inner peace, teaches us to listen, helps us communicate on a deeper level, encourages self-discovery, gives us rest, boosts creativity, enhances mental clarity and—most importantly—allows us to hear the voice of God.

"In the attitude of silence, the soul finds the path in a clearer light," said Mahatma Gandhi, "and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness."

"Nothing in creation is so like God as silence," agreed Meister Eckhart.

I used to camp on occasion in the Sand Lakes Quiet Area near Traverse City and on North Manitou Island in Lake Michigan. At these and similar locations, I greatly appreciated the freedom from chance encounters with motorized vehicles.

Too much random racket supercharges my nerves, and leaves me drained and irritable.

Back in the 1990s, when I was attending the Colorado Outward Bound School near Leadville with a group of Kellogg National Fellows, the nighttime snoring ritual in the men's bunkhouse sounded a bit like time trials at a local drag strip. It eventually drove me from the building, and forced me to move my bedroll outside and spread it out under the stars in a stand of tall pines.

I wasn't being anti-social—just searching for quiet meditation and peaceful sleep.

One of the final exercises in the week-long Outward Bound experience involved several hours of solo time in a mountain forest. We were told to sit silently, observe nature and write letters to ourselves that would be opened a year after we returned home.

"Be still and know that I am God," the holy scriptures say. That's good advice, but tough to do in today's world.

It has been said that the northern Arctic region expresses the sum of all wisdom—silence.

But I wonder about that, since modernity has invaded all areas.

A few years ago, when I visited the rural villages of Kotzebue and Noorvik in northwest Alaska—several hundred air miles from the urban center of Anchorage—my senses were assaulted by numerous all-terrain vehicles roaring through the streets and across the landscape.

It seems that wherever man goes, he carries the din of human activity with him.

"We need to find God," Mother Teresa said, "and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature—trees, flowers, grass—grows in silence. See the stars, the moon and the sun—how they move in silence. We need silence to be able to touch souls."

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asking, "How foolish can Lansing get?"

We don't know the answer to that question, although unwise decisions seem to pervade every aspect of today's society. But that seems to be OK with most folks—as long as they are politically correct.

To be truthful, we don't currently take an active part in the hunting and fishing sports. We haven't for years. And we're not really high-tech groupies who can't wait for the next best thing to increase our competitive advantage in an overpopulated and out-of-control world.

But we empathize with those who prefer to live simply and fairly, hunting in tried, true and low-impact ways that honor wildlife and preserve the resource.

That seems to be a lot more rewarding.

Letter to the editor

Money vs. personal integrity

Editor:

The Michigan Oil and Gas Association really pulled off a coup by hiring Michigan United Conservation Clubs' (MUCC) executive director Erin McDonough.

As we all know, MUCC is not only a club concerned with conservation issues, but also concerned with related environmental issues. MUCC is composed of over 100,000 club people and speaks as one voice.

One of their issues is the drilling and fracking on public property by the Michigan Oil and Gas Association.

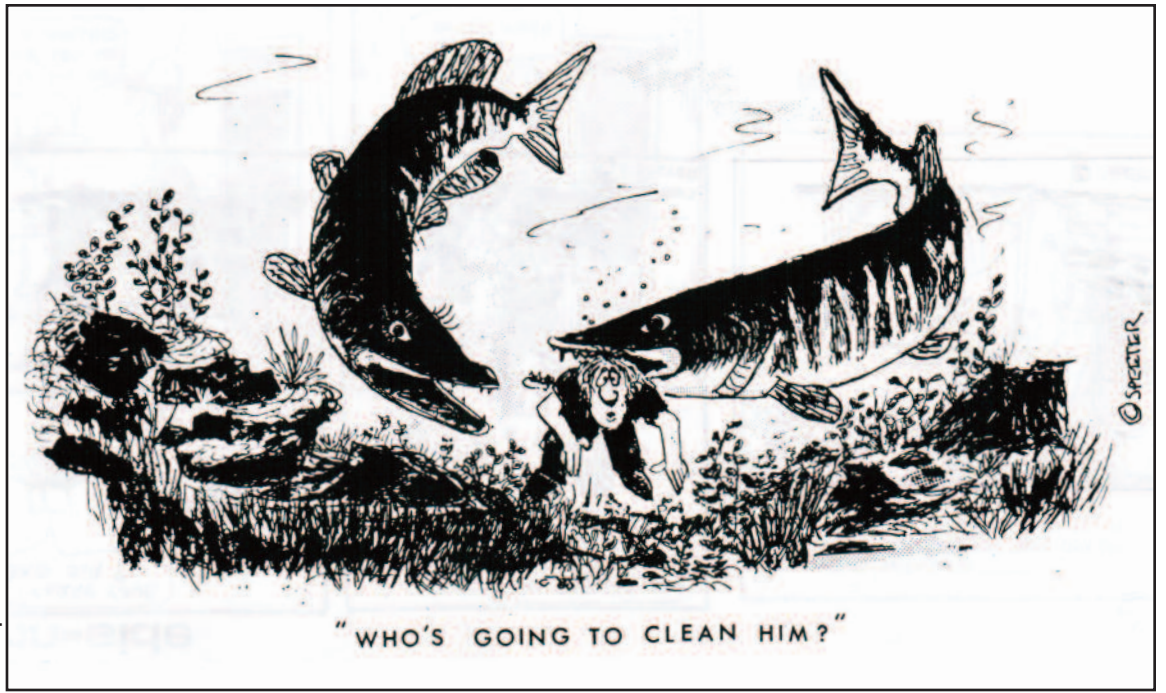
I say to you, Erin, there's a lot more on the earth than money. Integrity is one of them.

Norm Spring
Grand Haven, Michigan

Norm,

We don't personally know Erin, or her motivations, but we had very similar thoughts and concerns when we heard this news. Thanks for voicing them.

— Mike



John Speeter Illustration

"WHO'S GOING TO CLEAN HIM?"

Thanks for supporting *The North Woods Call*

Viewpoint

Hands off Hartwick Pines State Park

By Charlotte Jameson

When news broke about a plan to auction off mineral rights for oil and gas activity under Hartwick Pines State Park by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Michigan League of Conservation Voters (MLCV) and our members hit the ground running to protect this state treasure.

Already, more than 2,000 Michiganders have sounded the alarm and submitted comments in opposition to the Michigan DNR's proposal. There is still time to join them before the comment period ends. Submit your comment today!

Michigan LCV's Executive Director Lisa Wozniak and Deputy Director Jack Schmitt went on the record to share our concerns with the proposal in *Bridge Magazine*, *M-Live*, the *Crawford County Avalanche*, and the *Lansing State Journal*.

"This is an area we've purposely preserved for decades ... it does not sound like a wise decision," said Wozniak.

"There are some special places in the state where oil and gas development should not be happening, and Hartwick Pines is one of them," added Schmitt.

If you aren't familiar with it, Hartwick Pines State Park is nestled between Gaylord and Grayling. It spans almost 10,000 acres and contains the largest stand of old-growth white pine forest in the Lower Peninsula.

In short, it's the sort of place worth safeguarding for future generations. Right now, we need to stand our ground.

The DNR has the power to take land off of the auction block and we need to put on the pressure to protect Hartwick Pines.

Tell the Michigan DNR today—hands off Hartwick Pines!

Charlotte Jameson is policy manager for the Michigan League of Conservation Voters.

Information sought in elk-kill cold case

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking information on an elk poaching case from late 2013.

On Dec. 28, 2013, a large elk bull carcass was found near Decheau Lake Road and Meaford Road, north of Atlanta in Montmorency County. The elk was illegally killed and parts of the animal were removed.

Conservation officers at the DNR's Gaylord Customer Service Center are seeking any information that would assist with the investigation.

If you can help, call the Gaylord Customer Serv-

ice Center at 989-732-3541, or the Report All Poaching (RAP) line at 800-292-7800. Information can be left anonymously. Tips also can be provided online at www.michigan.gov/conservationofficers. Information leading to an arrest and conviction is eligible for a cash reward funded by the Game and Fish Protection Fund.

Elk poaching carries fines of up to \$2,500, restitution to the state of up to \$1,500, loss of the firearm used in the incident and loss of hunting privileges for up to three years.



—Michigan DNR photo

Osprey Backpack

Julie Oakes (left) of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Brian Washburn of the USDA Wildlife Services outfit an osprey chick with a "backpack" satellite and GSM telemetry unit. It will help scientists track young birds' daily movements and seasonal migration patterns. To follow where the birds have been, visit www.michiganosprey.org. They have recently been rebounding in Michigan.

Dansville shooting range closed

The Dansville Shooting Range in Ingham County is closed for renovations and will be until all of the work is completed.

The project has been progressing nicely, officials say, with berms reconstructed, most of the "eyebrows" completed and the shooting stations nearly finished. The first phase was scheduled to be done by Aug. 27, while the second phase will begin when resources become available, they said. Those who try to use the range while it's closed will likely be met by law enforcement officers, who are patrolling the area.

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Daniel Eichinger hired as Michigan United Conservation Clubs executive director

Daniel Eichinger has returned to the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) as the organization's new executive director.

He replaces Erin McDonough, who recently left that post at MUCC to become president and chief executive officer of the Michigan Oil and Gas Association.

Eichinger, who most recently was associate director for leasing and regulatory services at Central Michigan University, began his career at MUCC as director of membership, and has extensive legislative, agency, executive and nonprofit experience.

"I am honored to have been chosen to lead MUCC into the future," said Eichinger. "This is a critical time for conservation in Michigan and during this transition we will sustain the momentum created by our excellent staff and highly engaged members, affiliates, and partners."

Prior to his time at Central Michigan University, Eichinger worked for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources as Policy and Regulations Unit manager, assistant to the chief of the Wildlife Division and legislative liaison. He also served as a conservation policy advisor to



Daniel Eichinger

former Lieutenant Governor John D. Cherry.

Eichinger has been connected to MUCC for more than 30 years. His father, John Eichinger, served as MUCC president from 1984 to 1985 and his grandfather, Ryan Bontekoe, served as MUCC president in 1977. Daniel Eichinger has been an active member of

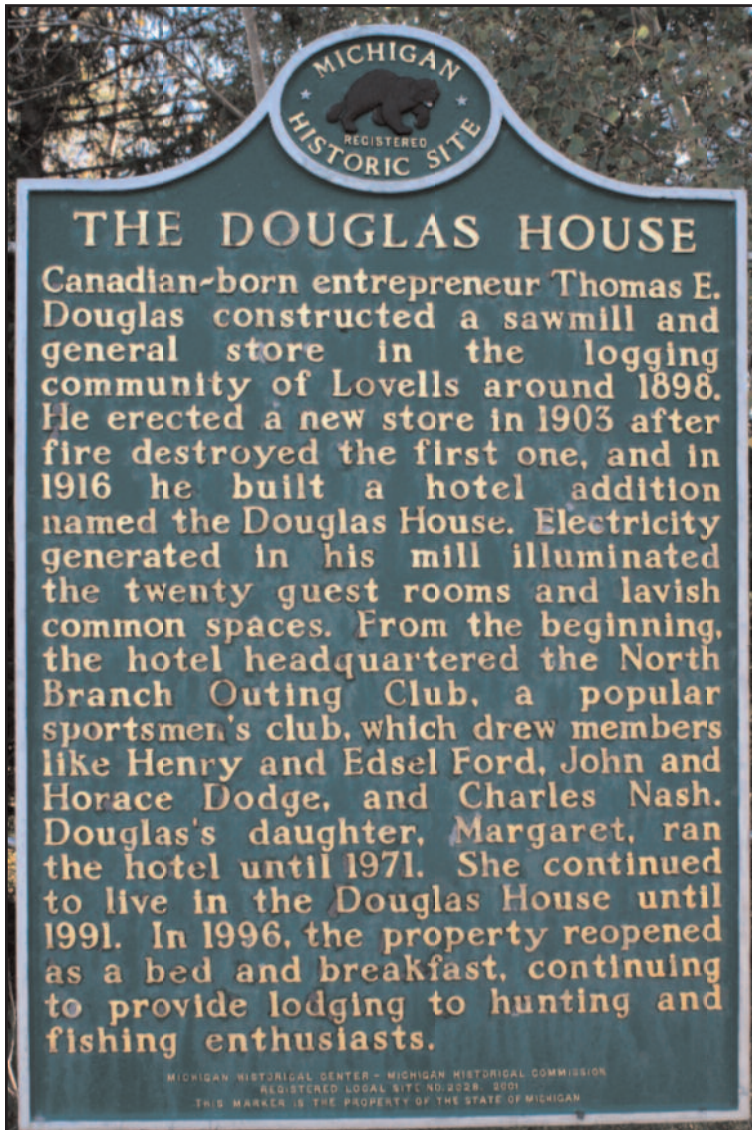
MUCC, as well. Just last year, he drafted a policy resolution for the annual convention.

Eichinger has worked on a wide range of conservation issues throughout his career and counts the creation of Michigan's Recreation Passport, working toward the delisting of the gray wolf from the endangered species list and expanding youth hunting opportunities through the elimination of the minimum hunting age (which began as an MUCC resolution) as among the most gratifying.

"We're very excited to have Dan join the MUCC team," said Ron Burris, current president of

the organization's board of directors. "He brings a tremendous passion for conservation and we're confident he'll hit the ground running and advance our mission of conserving, protecting and enhancing Michigan's natural resources and outdoor heritage."

Eichinger holds a master's degree in public administration from Central Michigan University, a master's of science degree in fisheries and wildlife from Michigan State University, and a bachelor of arts degree in political theory and constitutional democracy from Michigan State University's James Madison College.



Historic Douglas House: A rest stop in Lovells, Michigan

Bird feeders: Time to prepare a smorgasbord for the coming fall and winter

Even though most of us feed birds for the entire year, we usually have a greater interest in putting out the feeding station during the fall and winter.

I want to give some insight into what happens at your feeding station, as well as suggest some things that require your attention.

First, let us consider the way birds feed. Typically, the first feeder we place out is what I call a bin feeder. This is a feeder that has a hopper and birds feed on two sides as the feed is slowly gravity fed to the openings. These can hold anywhere from a couple of pounds to quite large quantities.

Most often, a general mixed seed is placed in these bin feeders until we become more aware of what the birds prefer. This type of feeder is non-selective, meaning it is available to most any species.

As we learn what birds prefer and if we want to be selective in our feeding, we go to tubular feeders and suet feeders. These will have portals to feed from with different sized openings and various types of perches. At least one of these tube feeders will be a thistle (nyjer) feeder to attract finches and discourage other birds.

One tubular feeder that deters

The Natural World By Richard Schinkel



house finches is a feeder that has portal openings below the perches that house finches can't use.

Many birds will be most comfortable feeding on the ground, so a platform feeder works well.

Now let's look at some specific birds. The first group is what I call the snatch-and-grab group—those that take a seed and fly away to eat it. These include various woodpeckers, chickadees, nuthatches, the tufted titmouse, and blue jay. They normally grab a seed and open it elsewhere.

Now, the blue jay may eat the first few seeds upon arrival at the feeder, but—as it gets a bit filled—will stuff its craw and leave, sometimes to store the food, or eat it.

Since all of these birds are unable to crack open sunflower seeds, they must use other methods. The blue jay, chickadee, nuthatch, and tufted titmouse place the seed between their toes and peck the seed open. The woodpeckers and nuthatches will

take the seed, force it into a crevice and peck it open that way. The red-headed woodpecker, like the blue jay, may store some seed, much like the acorn woodpecker of the Southwest. At our nature center, we had one that stored sunflower in a nearby utility pole. A red-bellied woodpecker found it and thought it had a wonderful ribbon feeder tree.

The birds that can crack open seeds, such as the goldfinch, house finch, cardinal and various sparrows, will remain at the feeders and eat until content.

A number of birds like to feed at ground level and these may include the junco (snow bird), song sparrow, white-throated sparrow, white-crowned sparrow, northern tree sparrow and mourning dove. As food gets scattered on the ground, most will feed there if otherwise not able to find feed.

The behavior of birds at feeders is very interesting and, as we become more in tune with feeding, can be fascinating.

Watch the interaction between species, as well as within species. Juncos, for instance, normally will not tolerate another junco within an eight-inch circle before one gives a challenge, but that is not so with other species.

Many people don't like blue jays, because they tend to take over a feeding station, but if you pay attention, most often they will feed for only a short time, fill their craws and leave. This allows the other birds to return.

Watch the different behavior at different seasons. How do cardinals react to each other in the winter, and then in spring, as breeding season approaches? When do birds come to the feeder? We have seen that cardinals often are the very first and last at feeders. At our nature center in winter, we have had more than 50 male and female cardinals at twilight.

Of course, all of us who feed hummingbirds have seen the severe apparent fighting over a feeding territory, especially as summer ends. Even though this is common, I have seen feeders placed in a row and harmony exist for quite a number of hummers at one time. We should keep our hummingbird feeders up until at

least October 1 and take them down after two weeks of no activity. Many of us keep one feeder up well into November to help any late migrants, or—more importantly—some visiting western species that are more tolerant of the cold.

Some hummingbirds have been successfully recorded into December—mostly the rufous hummingbird.

A quick note: The best all-around seed to feed is black oil sunflower, or any other sunflower. The second best is millet. Most mixed seeds can be good, but try to get one without any milo (sorghum), because most of our birds will only eat this at last resort.

Thistle is a good food for finches and safflower is good for cardinals, and they won't attract grackles or squirrels.

Of course, water is always attractive to birds at any feeding operation.

Have fun this fall and winter, and pay attention to what is happening around your feeders.

Celebrate nature!

Conservation Officer Logs (7/20/14 through 8/4/14)

“It’s my wife’s fault,” drunken gunslinging, fishy story, explicit sex & drug \$\$\$

DISTRICT 1 (Marquette)

CO Dennis Gast encountered a group of non-resident anglers with expired daily licenses who were in possession of fish. CO Gast determined that a large northern pike that was flopping around in the bottom of the boat was caught after their licenses had expired. CO Gast issued a warning for fishing without a license and addressed the expired boat registration and lack of personal flotation devices (PFDs).

CO Brian Bacon investigated the complaint of a sturgeon being taken during the closed season on the Menominee River in Dickinson County. CO Bacon developed a suspect who was interviewed and denied catching a sturgeon. Multiple witnesses were located and interviewed with evidence obtained that a sturgeon was harvested by the suspect. Warrants are being sought through the Dickinson County prosecutor’s office.

DISTRICT 2 (Newberry)

CO John Wenzel assisted Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel with a subject who was out on a logging job and had a tree fall on him. The subject suffered a broken leg and shoulder. Due to the location in the woods, the ambulance was not able to make it back to the victim. CO Wenzel transported the EMS crew to the victim and then transported the victim out to the waiting ambulance.

CO Mike Hammill caught up with an individual he had been looking for since snowmobile season. The complaint was that the individual would get intoxicated, then drive his snowmobile at a high rate of speed through a neighboring town. CO Hammill was in this area checking anglers and observed the individual drive by on an ORV. No ORV sticker was visible, so the ORV was stopped. Upon further investigation, the operator had no driver’s license and no ORV sticker. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 3 (Gaylord)

CO Andrea Erratt contacted two kayakers going into Lake Michigan—one without a personal flotation device (PFD). The subject stated it was his buddy’s kayak and his buddy stated he tried to get him to bring a PFD, but he wouldn’t do it. A ticket was issued for not having a PFD on board.

CO Eric Bottorff followed up on illegal blinds left on state forest land (actually camper trailers converted into deer blinds) where the owner was a tribal member. The tribal conservation officer was contacted and the case was referred to him. The subject will be cited into tribal court.

CO Mark DePew investigated a jet ski accident where a 63-year-old operator was thrown from the machine he was operating and broke his leg.

DISTRICT 4 (Cadillac)

CO Steve Converse observed a single angler trolling on Lake Michigan with six lines set.

When contacted, the subject blamed his wife, because she was sick and not able to come with him. A ticket was written for the extra lines.

CO Brian Brosky was on foot patrol along the Little Manistee River checking on fishing activity when he heard several gunshots along the river. CO Brosky observed four males and one female in possession of firearms, drinking alcohol and using marijuana. Believing that the subjects may be attempting to take fish with the firearms, the CO set up surveillance of the subjects, concealing himself behind a large tree. The subjects began to randomly discharge the firearms into the river and woods with several of the rounds striking to the left, right and above CO Brosky. CO Brosky radioed for assistance and CO Steve Converse responded and contacted the subjects as they attempted to leave the area. It was determined that the subjects were in possession of marijuana and one of the subjects had a handgun concealed in a backpack with no concealed weapons permit. The subjects initially denied the reckless discharge of firearms until CO Brosky informed them of his location and the close call that had occurred. Enforcement action was taken.

COs Kyle Publiski and Troy VanGelderren responded to a complaint of a subject in possession of a lake sturgeon in Manistee County. Upon arriving at the suspect’s residence, the officers observed a subject on a front porch, covering something up. Contact was made and it was discovered that the subject had possession of the sturgeon on his front porch and had covered it up so the officers would not see it. During an interview, the suspect first advised that he had found the fish dead in a local river, but changed his story to say that he tried to release the fish after catching it, but it had died. The subject admitted that he planned to dry the fish out to display it and also claimed that he was an avid angler. The officers determined that this avid angler did not possess a valid fishing license. The subject was ticketed for the illegal possession of the Sturgeon.

CO Mike Wells and PCO Josiah Killingbeck were assisting local law enforcement in an annual HEMP flight to locate illegal marijuana grows and to check medical marijuana grow operations in Newaygo County. While at a medical marijuana grow located by helicopter air support, officers discovered that the grow owner was in possession of four blanding turtles and one eastern box turtle. Upon interviewing the owner, he advised that he had picked the turtles up from his property over the last few months for his children to play with. The subject advised that he was not aware that these particular turtle species were protected. Enforcement action was taken regarding the possession of a protected species, and the turtles were seized and released a short distance away.



DISTRICT 5 (Roscommon)

COs John Huspen, Mike Hearn and Kyle Bader were teamed up working the Bud Bash event when they received a complaint about two individuals who were engaged in highly explicit sexual activities right in the middle of the navigation channel. The COs responded to the scene and both subjects were arrested and turned over to authorities on shore.

Sgt. Jon Wood was watching the waters of Houghton Lake from the West shore access site when he observed the operator of a vessel running continuous circles around two other vessels—one of which was being towed by the other. The circles were causing large wakes for the other vessels. As Sgt. Wood continued to watch, he saw the operator of the same vessel purposely run through a flock of rafting ducks on the water. The ducks were forced to take to the air to keep from being hit. Sgt. Wood was able to contact COs John Huspen, Mike Hearn and Kyle Bader, who were quick to respond from a different part of the lake. The COs were able to locate the suspect and take enforcement action.

CO Jon Warner was called to assist in searching for a group of overdue canoeists. CO Warner launched his patrol boat on Loud Pond and, after checking the area, he located the overdue canoeists. CO Warner loaded everyone, including an 11-month-old infant, onto his patrol boat and returned them to shore.

DISTRICT 6 (Bay City)

CO Dan Lee and PCO Jeremy Beavers were patrolling a busy Sanford Lake when they observed a subject fishing from a boat. As the COs approached, they saw the man place his fishing pole down. When contacted, the man could not produce a valid fishing license. He also had warrants out of Ionia County. Enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 7 (Plainwell)

CO Andy Bauer responded to a RAP complaint of a raccoon being kept in captivity. CO Bauer contacted the subject and discovered a raccoon being kept in a cage without food or water available. The subject was ticketed for possession of the raccoon and the animal was released to the wild.

CO Brad Brewer and Sgt. Zachary Doss responded to a RAP complaint of a subject shooting several geese. Upon investi-

gation, a confession was obtained from a homeowner, who had shot eight geese in his yard and thrown them into a weedy section of the lake. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Andy Bauer responded to a RAP complaint of a subject using a cast net at the Berrien Springs dam. CO Bauer responded and was able to locate the suspect, who admitted to using the cast net and to fishing without a license. The subject was in possession of several fresh water drum. The subject was informed that it is illegal to use a cast net on inland waters in Michigan and was ticketed for fishing without a license.

CO Brad Brewer followed up on a complaint of illegal ORV operation in the Three Rivers SGA and the discovery of a package with an address that appeared to have fallen out of a vehicle that had destroyed several berms. CO Brewer investigated and obtained a confession from the package owner to illegal operation of a truck in the game area. Enforcement action is being taken.

DISTRICT 8 (Rose Lake)

CO Jeff Goss and PCO Matt Page worked a trespassing complaint in Branch County. An elderly female was advised of tree stands being placed on her property. Upon further investigation, three tree stands and two salt blocks were located on the property. The COs developed a few good leads and the investigation is ongoing.

CO Shane Webster stopped and checked a couple fishing on the Grand River. The female handed CO Webster her fishing license, but the male stated that he had not purchased one. The subject explained that they had bought his girlfriend’s fishing license earlier that day, but he did not purchase one because he did not want to pay the non-resident license fee. He still held a Florida drivers license and had not changed his residency to Michigan, despite having lived here for more than a year. Enforcement action was taken.

CO Shane Webster worked the annual Raft-O-Rama marine event on a local Jackson County lake. During the patrol, a vessel pulled alongside CO Webster and advised him of an overloaded vessel operating on the water. CO Webster made contact with the subjects on the vessel and identified 26 individuals on board the pontoon boat, even though only 16 life jackets were available and the boat was significantly over the vessel’s capacity rating. Individuals were escorted to shore and unloaded in order to make the operation safe, and enforcement action was taken.

On a fishing check during his patrol, **CO Todd Thorn** saw a young girl sitting alone in the back of a car and checked to make sure she was okay. CO Thorn saw that there was a five gallon bucket in the seat beside her and that it was full of panfish. CO Thorn then asked her who caught the fish and she pointed about 100

yards away to her family members, who were still fishing. Those individuals were checked and found to have more fish with them. In all, there were a total of three people fishing and they had 117 panfish, a short bass, and some perch. The individuals stated that they were not aware that there were laws regarding the taking of fish. Those same individuals were educated on the laws and given a fishing guide before enforcement action was taken.

DISTRICT 9 (Southfield)

CO Ken Kovach and PCO Jason Becker assisted local narcotics teams on “Operation Hemp.” The mission was successful and netted over 200 illegal plants.

BELLE ISLE

CO Jeff Goss and PCO Matt Page made 28 fishing contacts while on the island. During these contacts, only two subjects were fishing without a license. The two subjects fishing without a license were separate and both were fishing with their husbands. It was apparent that the women did not have a lot of experience fishing and that they were merely accompanying their husbands. On both occasions, the COs advised the women that if they are to go fishing they need a license. The COs advised both parties to get a license by the end of the day, or they would be ticketed in the mail. Both parties agreed that they would get a license.

CO Damon Owens and PCO Chris Reynolds, while on patrol on Belle Isle, were called upon to assist Michigan State Police in a two vehicle traffic stop. During the stop it was found that one of the passengers had a warrant for felonious assault with a dangerous weapon, the subject was taken into custody. In the other vehicle a large amount of money was found along with some drugs.

CO Ben Lasher observed a female sitting on a picnic table on Belle Isle with her motorcycle parked nearby. When CO Lasher came back around he saw that the same subject had left a brown paper bag on the picnic table and was walking to her motorcycle. Lasher stopped and talked to the subject about leaving the paper bag behind, which concealed an empty 24 oz. beer. CO Lasher addressed the littering, but the subject stated that it was not littering, because she did not throw it on the ground. Not only was the subject in violation of littering and possessing alcohol in the park, but the subject was also found through SOS/LEIN to have no motorcycle endorsement. Enforcement action was taken.

While working a midnight shift on Belle Isle, **COs Pete Purdy & Mark Ennett** made contact with two anglers under the McArthur Bridge after the close of the state park. One of the anglers had three outstanding misdemeanor traffic warrants for his arrest. The warrants were confirmed and the subject was lodged at the Detroit Detention Center for his outstanding warrants.

Final Shot



Teachers & the Great Outdoors

—Michigan DNR photos

This summer's week-long Academy of Natural Resources—July 13-18—offered Michigan educators the opportunity to learn about the state's diverse natural resources, discover current trends in resource management and experience activities that bring this knowledge to the classroom. As in previous years, three separate sections were offered—each with a different emphasis, but all useful to teachers who wish to blend natural resources themes into their school curricula. The instructional activities were based at the Department of Natural Resources' Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center on the north shore of Higgins Lake. One, two or three education credits are available from Ferris State University to those who attend the course, which costs \$350 and includes food & lodging. Approximately 35 State Continuing Education Clock Hours (SCECH) are also available through the program.

Group protests radioactive waste delivery

After an incoming shipment of radioactive frack waste from Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale region was approved by Michigan Department of Environmental Quality regulators, the Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan (CBFM)—a ballot question committee seeking to ban fracking and frack wastes—made plans to greet the trucks when the wastes arrive at the Belleville processing and disposal facility.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection said that trucks from Michigan were on their way to Pennsylvania to bring the material back to the Great Lakes State. At this writing, an exact date and time of the trucks' arrival in Michigan was not immediately known.

The CBFM mobilized volunteers that participated in last year's ballot initiative, which involved hundreds of people gathering over 70,000 signatures from Michigan voters in 2013. If passed by voters in 2016, the Committee's ballot initiative language will prohibit such shipments.

The radioactive material includes two roll-off containers of "fracking sludge" and possibly a "box" of liner to be cut up into 4-foot by 4-foot sheets, according to committee spokesperson LuAnne Kozma.

"This is a wake-up call for Michiganders that all

fracking operations and the impacts on people are connected," Kozma said. "Our entire state is a frack waste dumping ground for fracking operations in Michigan and from other states. This particular waste is coming from a county in Pennsylvania, where residents are living among more than 800 frack wells, four impoundments and other frack industry complexes—all of which is affecting their health and well being."

Once diluted at the Belleville processing facility, all of the material will be disposed of at a facility on the same hazardous waste landfill site operated by Wayne Disposal Inc. It would also be legal, though, to dump it in any Michigan landfill, Kozma said in a recent news release.

The ballot initiative, if approved by voters, would ban the storage, processing, disposal and production of frack wastes statewide. It also would ban horizontal hydraulic fracturing operations and repeal a law that requires the state to foster the development of the oil and gas industry "along the most favorable conditions."

The committee's new interpretive brochure on the harms of fracking, the extent of the frack industry in Michigan, and how the CBFM's ballot initiative works is available at <http://LetsBanFracking.org>.

Managing our coastal waterways

When it comes to understanding America's coastal fisheries, anecdotes are gripping—stories of a choking algae bloom, or a bay's struggle with commercial development.

But when it comes to taking action, there's no beating big data.

In a recent edition of "Estuaries and Coasts," a Michigan State University doctoral student and others give a sweeping assessment of how human activities are affecting estuaries, the nation's sounds, bays, gulfs and bayous. These are places where freshwater flows into the oceans, and the needs of the people blend with a wide variety of fish and shellfish that support both commercial and recreational fishing.

This first comprehensive look at changes in land cover, river flow, pollution and nutrient levels highlights the state of America's estuaries.

Estuaries are tended to by many agencies at the federal, state, local and non-profit levels. Land use changes, through commercial and residential development, farming and industrial activities, can threaten delicate ecosystems that nurture valuable fishing resources.

Yet many of these managers don't have the resources to examine long-term changes, or compare themselves to other ecological systems, said Joe Nohner, who is pursuing a Ph. D. in fisheries and wildlife in the Center for Systems Integration and Sustainability.

"Estuaries provide ecosystem services for commercial and recreational purposes, and are im-

portant to us all," Nohner said. "But groups charged with protecting them need to determine what areas should receive their funding and effort. They don't always have the broad-scale data to help set these priorities. What we've created is an informational tool that helps them determine what problems to address and where."

The project gathered and crunched the nation's stockpile of data gleaned from monitoring "estuary stressors." Taking a big-picture view—from small river mouths to large deltas over a decade or more—tells a crucial story of what is happening.

These individual stories—reflecting sewage leaking into a river, deforestation thanks to recent urbanization and changes in the flow of a watershed—are compiled into a broad narrative.

"There's myriad ways we impact our land and waterways, and we've been able to create an overview of the cumulative changes of a lot of small decisions that normally slip under the radar," Nohner said. "It can be hard to have that cumulative perspective, especially for areas being managed by small organizations."

The estuary assessment was part of a nationwide assessment of estuaries, rivers, and reservoirs produced by the National Fish Habitat Partnership. A map of the results and data downloads are available online, so managers can not only have information about their corner of the fisheries world, but how it compares to others.

—Michigan State University

Onaway State Park boat ramp closed

The boat launch at Onaway State Park in Presque Isle County will be closed for renovations until at least Sept. 27.

According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the project will focus on reorienting the single-lane launch to provide for better maneuverability and easier retrieval of boats.

"The way the launch is oriented now makes backing a trailer into the launch area difficult," said Jeremy Spell, park supervisor at Onaway and Aloha state parks. "The existing launch also requires boats to get too close to the rock jetty, which causes congestion on busy boating days."

Spell said that reorienting the ramp at Onaway State Park will kick the skid pier out away from the rock jetty, making it easier for those retrieving boats to tie up while they get their vehicles—and still maintain an open lane for someone launching a boat.

"We understand this is an inconvenience to many of the boaters in the area and we ask for your patience as we work to improve the launch for everyone's use and enjoyment," Spell added.

The repairs at this site are supported through the Michigan State Waterways Fund, a restricted fund derived from boat registration fees and a portion of the Michigan marine fuel tax for the construction, operation and maintenance of recreational boating facilities, harbors and inland waterways.

While the construction work is in progress, boaters are encouraged to seek other launching opportunities in the area. Additional boat launch, harbor and marina information is available in Michigan's Recreational Boating Information System.

**Help compile the
North Woods Call history**

Share your memories with us!

Contact: editor@mynorthwoodscall.com

**Thanks for supporting *The North Woods Call*
and the conservation of natural resources**