



A LOOK AT THE LAKE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BURT LAKE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION
OCTOBER 2018

Collaboration

Jim Burke, President

Collaboration: Webster defines it as “To work jointly with others especially in an intellectual endeavor.” I would further that by adding “for mutual benefit.” Collaboration is one of the mainstays of BLPA. In our early days, actually year one as we were forming, our BLPA founders collaborated with Tip of The Mitt Watershed Council to help write our articles of incorporation and begin our mission statement. That mission remains unchanged. It has been our guiding light for twenty years and likely will be for years into the future. We’re represented on the TOMWC Board. We’ve been working with them from the very beginning and even today we remain close partners, working jointly on numerous projects for mutual benefit.

Sturgeon For Tomorrow just celebrated their twentieth anniversary. We attended their annual banquet last night. We sat at a table with some of our friends from Mullett Area Preservation Society—more about that later. BLPA has been attending SFT banquets, we’ve been sturgeon guards, financially supported the sturgeon hatchery, and jointly planted thousands of sturgeon fingerlings in Burt Lake over the years. We’re members of SFT. Yes, for mutual benefit.

Speaking of the Sturgeon For Tomorrow banquet, the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians was represented there. We talked with them for a while and will be getting together next week to talk about sturgeon

and to release a couple hundred sturgeon fingerlings that were raised in the tribal hatchery near Pellston. The release will be into the river of their namesake, just south of Wolverine.

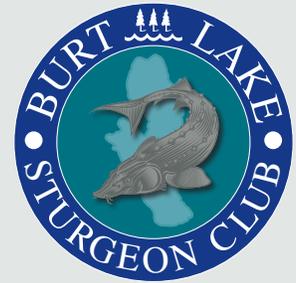


We collaborate with the tribes, especially our friends at the Little Traverse Bay Bands. In 2015 LTBB conducted a sturgeon survey on Burt Lake over a two week period. Gina Burke from BLPA and Brenda Archambo from Sturgeon For Tomorrow joined Kevin Donner, the LTBB Great Lakes Program Manager on board the LTBB research vessel several times throughout that endeavor and boated some sturgeon in the process. Although this was a research mission, they all had a good time collaborating—for mutual benefit.

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The Sturgeon Club

David Steenstra, Chairman

One of the many objectives of The Sturgeon Club is to gather data and help educate our membership. We are asking all of you to provide us with input. If you see a Sturgeon, just let us know. We will take it from there.

On Monday night, June 11, at 8:30, BLPA member Eric Borcharding from Plymouth Beach contacted us. A five—six foot Sturgeon had just washed up on the shore, obviously dead. By 9:00, we had already made contact with appropriate MDNR officials. On Tuesday morning by 7:30, we were in live discussions with MDNR, and by 9:00 Tuesday morning, Patrick Hanchin from the MDNR Charlevoix field office was at Plymouth Beach. A Bald Eagle had also discovered the Sturgeon and was reluctant to relinquish his prize. The fish was significantly decayed. Patrick placed the remains in a large leaf bag and brought it back to the lab for further evaluation.



Now for the rest of the story. When Patrick returned to the lab he discovered the Sturgeon had a pit tag. A pit tag is a small inserted serial number the DNR injects in any captured or hatchery raised Sturgeon. Just two months earlier in April, this Sturgeon was captured during an MDNR late night electrofishing project, in search of Muskellunge, in the Crooked River. This Sturgeon was not stunned. She was carefully lifted into the lab boat by MDNR Biologists Tim Cwalinski and Neal Godby. She was barely alive, nearing the end of her natural life. The water temperature in the Crooked River was 67 degrees. Tim and Neal inserted a pit tag, transported her to Maple Bay, and released her in cooler water with hopes she may revive in the cooler depths. She did not. Here is a picture of her in April.

Here are the “facts”. Keep in mind this data falls within a reasonable range and is not necessarily exact.

- Female
- 80 – 120 years old
- 120 – 140 pounds, pre-spawn; 100 pounds post spawn
- 72 inches
- She was completely spawned out when captured
- DNR officials believed she was clearly on her “last leg”



This Sturgeon was likely an indigenous Burt Lake Sturgeon. There were no other pit tags or other indications that she may have been hatchery raised. She may have laid up to 700,000 eggs each time she spawned, which is typically every four years. Just before spawning, up to 1/3 of the female Sturgeon's body weight are eggs.

Spawning Facts

Lake Sturgeon, *Acipenser Fulvescens*, usually spawn from late April until the middle of June. Ideal water temperature for spawning is 53 degrees. They prefer rocky, shallow areas along River Banks. Often, a number of Male Sturgeon show up first. Spawning begins as soon as a ripe female arrives. She may lay up to 700,000 eggs. The fertilized eggs are about 1/8 inches in diameter, sticky, and cling to gravel and rocks until they hatch in five—eight days. About twelve days later, the fry (newly hatched eggs)



are one inch long. They will often live in the river for a year before moving into Burt Lake. In 15 years the males mature and are about 45 inches long. In 24 years, the females mature, and are often 55 inches or more. They tend to return to their birth location, and the spawning cycle begins anew.

Lake Sturgeon is a very special species that inhabits Burt Lake. Please keep us posted with information and pictures. A special THANKS to our good friends at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for doing a remarkable job for all of us! Thanks Tim, Neal, and Patrick! You guys rock!



2018 Sighting

Thanks to Don Bowen for reporting four Sturgeon sighted in the Sturgeon River around the first of June. You can see one of them near the center of this photo. Thanks Don!



In Case You Missed the Annual Meeting

Gina Burke, Secretary

Our July BLPA annual meeting was a success with many positive comments from those in attendance about the speaker. His name is Josh Packer and he is a Special Investigator with the US Coast Guard. I met Josh in 2017 at a Sturgeon Advisory Council meeting and the topic of Lake Sturgeon was a point of discussion. After listening to him talk at that meeting, I asked if he would be interested in talking at our annual meeting.

You may ask why the Coast Guard would want to speak at the meeting. What does that have to do with Burt Lake? The answer is simple...Lake Sturgeon. Yes, the quality of the lake tells us a lot about what is happening under the surface. There is another whole side to the life of the Lake Sturgeon, which is what Josh spoke to everyone about.

We probably all know that one of the world wide delicacies is caviar. Ever wonder where that comes from? Yes, it is the roe (or eggs) of a female sturgeon. In order to produce caviar, the female sturgeon is caught and killed and her roe is harvested from her body. In Eastern Europe, the sturgeon population has declined due to the overharvesting of sturgeon. Here in northern Michigan, there is a sustainable population of Lake Sturgeon. The Lake Sturgeon move from the lake into the rivers, streams and tributaries spawning grounds in late spring (April – June). The females are full of roe, waiting to be fertilized by the males. It is not uncommon for a fertile female to have 1/3 of her body weight in roe. What is becoming a precious commodity is Lake Sturgeon roe. It is illegal to commercialize any part of Lake Sturgeon in Michigan and poaching of Lake Sturgeon is on the rise. They can be easily captured during the spawning time of year for a few reasons: they are in shallow water and they tend to be docile creatures. The rise of illegal harvesting of the Lake Sturgeon in Michigan is simple to understand and has turned out to become a very lucra-



Josh Packer, Special Agent US Coast Guard Investigative Services and Dave Steenstra, BLPA Board member and chair Burt Lake Sturgeon Club

tive business for some. It equates to a potentially a high reward (sales of harvested roe) on the black market. The black market is willing to pay high dollars for the roe. Just to give you an idea of how much a large female can yield, it is somewhere in the range of \$75,000 to \$110,000. This is not a misprint, these are the figures.

Josh recommends that any person(s) observing suspicious behavior, learning information of illegal Sturgeon harvesting, or observing potential poaching of lake Sturgeon should contact Michigan DNR, Coast Guard Investigative Services Sault Ste. Marie (906) 253-2449, or the US Fish & Wildlife Service (734) 995-0387.

Stay tuned as there will be more to talk about in the near future and share with our membership as there is a fast growing awareness of poaching by law enforcement agencies.





Collaboration continued from page 1

So, back to the SFT Banquet. We talked at length with Marty Jones, a MAPS board member, about the commonalities in our organizations and some of the issues that face both lakes. We discussed collaborative opportunities; the most obvious being the newly formed Burt Lake Sturgeon Club. As we study indigenous sturgeon spawning habitat and migration in Burt Lake and its tributaries, we quickly see the opportunity to include Mullett Lake and its connecting waters. We are a conjoined ecosystem that has much more in common than not. How can we only study sturgeon in Burt Lake and not Mullett Lake when we're talking about the same fish?

BLPA is an integral part of the Northern Inland Lakes Fishery Advisory Committee, co-chaired by Frank Krist of the Hammond Bay Anglers Association and Tim Cwalinski, a senior fisheries biologist from the Gaylord MDNR office. Other member organizations include Mullett Area Preservation Society, Pickerel Crooked Lake Association, the five northern Michigan tribes, MDNR, Sturgeon For Tomorrow, Black Lake Association and several other lake associations, and other engaged local citizens. We discuss the many issues pertaining to northern Michigan lakes. We all work together (collaboratively) with the MDNR to influence policies, procedures, and regulations for the mutual benefit of our lakes, fisheries, and citizens.

The Tuscarora Township Board of Trustees—as individuals—are members of BLPA, as are the Burt Township Board members. We support and collaborate with them on many projects, not the least of which are the Burt Lake Bicycle Trail, Veterans Pier, Christmas in Indian River, Summerfest, Burt Township “Big Dump Day,” the Indian River sanitary system feasibility studies, and other projects—for mutual benefit.



A successful collaboration expedition: Marty Jones, MAPS, Jim Burke and Dave Steenstra, BLPA, Joseph Vigliano, MAPS.

The list of our collaborative partners continues to grow. We're developing environmental education programs with the University of Michigan Biological Station and Inland Lakes Schools that will likely include field trips to our recently acquired Sturgeon River property. This acquisition was a collaborative effort with a very generous private donor and our friends at the Little Traverse Conservancy. It's for mutual benefit. We're teaching the next generation how to be good stewards of Burt Lake and its watershed.

Could BLPA have done this by ourselves? Probably not. Why would we when we can work collaboratively with so many other dynamic organizations for mutual benefit?

This, my friends, is SYNERGY: The interaction and cooperation of multiple organizations to produce a combined result greater than that of the sum of their separate effects.

This is how it's supposed to work. There's more to come. Stay tuned.

This is who we are. This is what we do.



Aquatic Invasive Species Landing Blitz

Steve Reh, Environment and land Use

In June of this year BLPA volunteers along with volunteers from the Mullet Lake Area Protection Society (MAPS) participated in the 5th Annual Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Landing Blitz. The Landing Blitz is a collaborative outreach campaign supported by the Michigan Departments of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), Natural Resources (MDNR) and Agriculture and Rural Development (MDAR). The purpose of the Blitz is to promote the importance for boaters to ensure their boats and trailers are free from aquatic invasive species prior to launching into Michigan's waters. Recreational boating can be a significant pathway for the spread of AIS between bodies of water. Real and lasting damage to the ecosystems of our pristine Northern Michigan lakes has become a distinct possibility from AIS in recent years. Already we have firm evidence of eurasian watermilfoil, zebra mussels, quagga mussels and gobies invading beautiful Burt Lake.

The Landing Blitz activity in our area involved providing educational information and a free boat wash at the Burt Lake State Park launch on June 23rd and at the Aloha State Park launch on Mullet Lake on June 24th. Huron Pines from Gaylord provided the boat washing equipment and their staff provided the washing activity. The message lines for the event included: "Clean

Boats, Clean Water," "Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose," and "Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!" Unfortunately, the weather didn't cooperate on June 23rd as a steady all day rain resulted in few boaters venturing out onto the lake. A better day on the 24th saw a good number of boaters taking advantage of the free boat wash and educational materials. Statewide 88 locations participated with over 130 volunteers reaching at least 7,500 boaters and anglers with AIS prevention messaging.

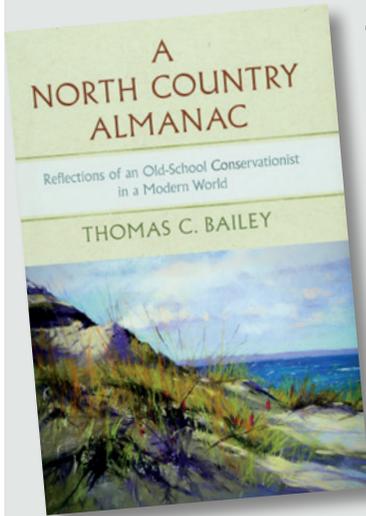
Darrell Schwalm of MAPS states it well when he says: "Managing invasive species is a difficult goal. Once introduced, they are here to stay; and if controlled in one spot, ready to be reintroduced. This is why best management practices rely heavily on education and outreach to the boating public. Targeting the state parks that attract visitors from throughout the state will perhaps provide at least a little impact from this one-day blitz event." Both MAPS and BLPA intend to participate again next year to continue sharing this important message that helps protect our Inland Waterway from future infestations of aquatic invasive species.

Many thanks to the two MDNR Park Supervisors who were very helpful in coordinating these events.





New Book by Longtime Conservancy Executive Director



The highly requested and much anticipated compilation of essays and newsletter columns by longtime Little Traverse Conservancy Executive Director Tom Bailey is hot off the press. *A North Country Almanac: Reflections of an Old-School Conservationist in a Modern World*, features previously-printed pieces seen in LTC's newsletters, as well as additional pieces he has written over the years. Artwork for the book was generously donated by Heidi Marshall, Tom's fiancée.

Books are available locally through the Conservancy office and local book stores. The printing cost for the book was generously underwritten by Ian and Sally Bund, meaning that 100% of the proceeds of books purchased through the Little Traverse Conservancy are given back to the Conservancy. Books can be purchased at the LTC web site, www.landtrust.org, or through their office at 3264 Powell Road, halfway between Petoskey and Harbor Springs. You may also order by phone at 231.347.0991. Cost is \$25 + \$7.25 shipping.

From MSU Press: A North Country Almanac: Reflections of an Old-School Conservationist in a Modern World includes the musings of an independent mind on wilderness, the conservation ethic, and the joys of loving in the outdoors. Although a lifelong conservationist, Thomas C. Bailey has never unquestioningly accepted environmental dogma. The essays here often challenge familiar assumptions about stewardship of natural resources. The former National Park ranger, fishing guide, and conservancy director offers a rich variety of perspectives on an interesting array of topics, returning always to his fundamental belief that conservation pioneers such as John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, and Aldo Leopold had it right when they affirmed Walt Whitman's observation that "the secret of making the best person...is to grow in the open air and to eat and sleep with the earth."



Dave Lesh artwork



Swimmer's Itch Survey

Mac Richardson, Waterways Use and Safety

Swimmer's itch is an irritating skin condition caused by parasites that live part of their lifecycle in snails and the other part in water birds which live in and around Burt Lake. The skin irritation occurs when a small tiny (1/80 of an inch) parasitic flatworm leaves the snail looking for its bird host and encounters a person instead. Burrowing just under the skin the parasite dies, leaving an itchy bump. Many northern Michigan lakes have experienced swimmers itch with various degrees of severity and have used various methods of solutions, some more successful than others.

We at the BLPA would like to learn if swimmer's itch is a problem on Burt Lake, and if so, how severe a problem and where on the lake the problem occurs.

Enclosed in this issue of *A Look at the Lake* is a one page survey that we would like you to answer and send back to us. Fill it out, fold it and send it back. If you prefer to answer electronically, you can access this survey on our web site www.blpa.org



This information will act as the basis for a possible lake-wide assessment of swimmers itch done by an outside professional contractor during the spring of 2019. It is equally important for us to know that you did not experience swimmers itch in your area, so please respond accordingly. Thanks for your help.





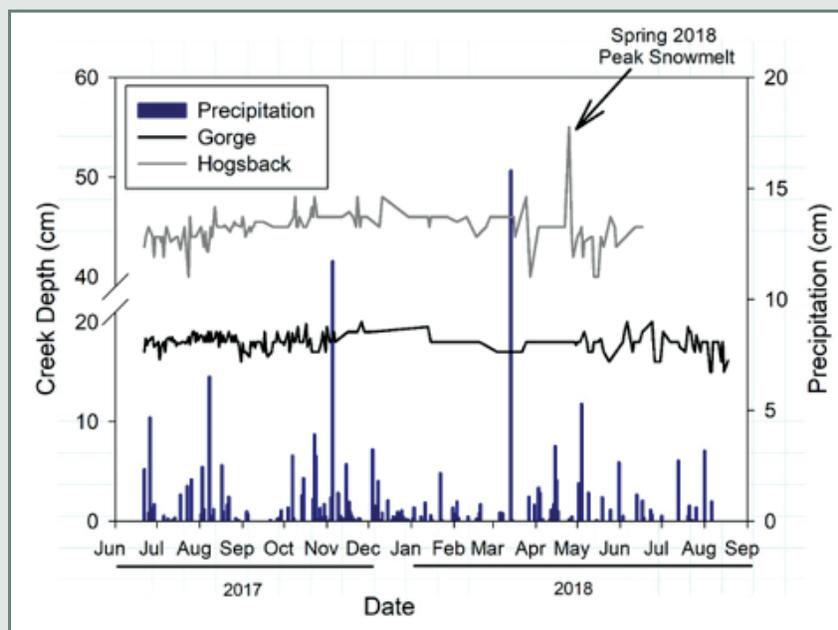
Carp Creek Stream Monitoring Project

Katy Hofmeister, U. of Michigan Bio Station

Beginning in June 2016, hikers taking the popular trail along Carp Creek have contributed to monitoring changes in the water depth at two places along the creek. Visitors to the Gorge and Hogsback Road monitoring stations recorded almost 550 individual observations of water height, allowing UMBS researchers to track the changes in the creek through every season. People contributing to this project included local folks, students at UMBS, visitors from southern Michigan, with a few people from as far away as California and Texas. The results of the Carp Creek monitoring effort at the two are shown in the following graph, along with precipitation. At the Gorge, the creek is an average of 18 cm deep in all seasons and does



not change much after rain events. Further downstream at Hogsback Road, Carp Creek is much deeper (average of 45 cm) and responds to both rain events and dry spells. For example, during peak snowmelt in Spring 2018, Carp Creek increased in depth from 45 to 55 cm over just a few days at Hogsback Road, while there was no change in the water depth at the Gorge. The efforts of these community members and visitors provides valuable information about Carp Creek and will inform future research at UMBS.





Board Member Profiles:

Jane E. McGinnis



My earliest memories are of Burt Lake. My grandmother was born in Indian River in 1887 and her father built many of the passenger boats that traversed the Inland Waterway and Burt Lake. Now that I have retired and live permanently again in Indian River I am delighted to be able

to contribute my time and skills to protecting this great resource. I grew up in Detroit but spent most of my professional career in California. I have a BS degree from San Diego State University and a MS degree from St. Mary's Moraga. Together with my husband we owned and operated a photography and video production company for over 35 years.

My background in finance and economic development served me well when we returned to Michigan in 2005. I served on the Cheboygan County Economic Development Corporation and was Chair of the Cheboygan County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. In 2008 I was elected to the Tuscarora Township Board as a trustee where I served until December 2016. I was recently appointed to the Tuscarora Township Planning Commission. I live with my husband, three dogs, and African Grey parrot on the Little Sturgeon River in Indian River.

Kathryn "Katie" Parker



My husband, Bert Ebbers, and I have been fortunate to live at the north end of beautiful Burt Lake in Burt Township for the past 30 years. We raised a family here; the youngest two of four children grew up here and graduated from Pellston Public Schools.

I am a Burt Township trustee, elected in 2016, and before that served for ten years on the township's Zoning Board of Appeals. In my working/personal life, I am a consulting archaeobotanist with clients in several states. (Archaeobotany is a specialty within archaeology. Archaeobotanists identify plant remains—seeds, wood, nutshell, rinds, etc.—from archaeological sites, and interpret how they were used by the people who lived at those sites in the past, the past including human occupations 5000 years old as well as 19th century farms and lumber camps.) I'm also a long-time active member of Pellston/Levering New Hope United Methodist Church and a member of Bug Camp Stewards, a volunteer group that monitors and maintains University of Michigan Biological Station non-motorized trails, among other tasks.

Thanks all the new members who've joined the BLPA this year, and welcome to a busy organization.

Jim & Jeannie Anderson, Greenville, OH
John Bailey, Alanson
Don Bowen, Indian River
Keith Butkovich & Jaynee Handelsman, Ann Arbor
William & Elaine Case, Milford
Jeff & Tracy Darrow, South Lyon
Terrence & Michelle Falahee, Orchard Lake
Barry & Dianne Gies, Indian River
Jacqueline Hulderman, Alanson
Bill & Gina Keough, Brutus
John Kraig Kessey, Allen Park
Meggan & TJ Lekander, Howell
Jim & Alice LeMay, Indian River
Kyle & Beth Lieberman, Petoskey
John & Sharon Lowe, Troy
Michael & Lisa McCully, Indian River
John & Marylou McIlwraith, Cincinnati, OH
Terry Moore, Indian River

Joe & Linda Mullen, Riverside, CA
Dan Nivelt, Indian River
Mike & Patty Quinn, Bloomfield Hills
Dr. Dana Randall, Ann Arbor
Mike & Sharon Ridley, Indian River
Quinn & Stephanie Ridley, Indian River
Aaron & Sarah Rustad, Haslett
Steve & Marsey Shuman, Petoskey
Mike & Deb Skaglin, White Lake
Joel & Faith Steenstra, Hudsonville
John & Heather Steenstra, Sparta
Craig & Sarah Sturgis, Livonia
David & Nancy Sturuss, Grand Rapids
John & Beth Tagliavia, Ortonville
The Double Gun Journal, East Jordan
Vandenburg, Amy & Straub, Larry, Arlington, VA
Joan & Brad Whittlesey, Englewood, CO
Bob & Laura Zubeck, Royal Oak



Sturgeon Study

David Steenstra, BLPA Sturgeon Club

The University of Michigan Biological Station is a world class biological research facility located on the north shore of Burt Lake. BLPA has collaborated with the U of M Biological Station the past several years on projects that help us understand water quality. This summer, three exceptional students conducted a comparison of known lake Sturgeon spawning sites in the upper Black River to potential spawning sites in the Sturgeon River. The following is a very brief synopsis of over 50 pages of data the students collected.

Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) were once abundant in Burt Lake. Careless over-harvest, poaching, and habitat loss have reduced populations significantly. The focus of this study was to determine whether or not habitat in the Sturgeon River was limiting the spawning and recruitment of the Burt Lake Sturgeon population. The students compared various conditions in the upper Black River which has a healthy Sturgeon population, to the Sturgeon River about which little is known. They examined average and substrate velocity, substrate composition and embeddedness, as well as proportions of prey and predatory macroinvertebrates. They determined that lake Sturgeon spawning may be plausible in the Sturgeon River. But there are a number of other questions that will require additional research.

Even without human impact, spawning is a delicate process for lake Sturgeon, considering the highly specific habitat requirements for successful egg development and larval rearing. Sturgeon tend to lay their eggs on rocky substrate with clean interstitial spaces, used as egg refuge. Velocity is an issue that will require further research. The Sturgeon River is the fastest river in the



Pictured left to right: Robert Perrone, Calla Beers, Ellie Olds

Lower Peninsula. Lake Sturgeon spawn in the spring, and it is possible that increase flow during that time could push velocities out of the suitable range of 0.5 – 1.3 m²/s. This issue will require additional research next spring. Many other issues will require future research, including temperature variations, discharge comparisons, depth and width variances, substrate composition (cobble, pebble, gravel) and the embeddedness.

You can see the full report at www.blpa.org/projects/sturgeon-club.

Our sincere thanks go out to these exceptional students. Thank you Robert, Calla, and Ellie. Also, thank you to their professors Paul Moore and Amy Schrank, and to UM Bio Station associate director and BLPA board member Karie Slavik.

Please contact the BLPA office if you see Sturgeon anywhere in Burt Lake or the Sturgeon, Crooked, Maple, or Indian Rivers.





Up North

Michael and Peg Supernault

As we write this, another “Up north” summer draws to a close. As usual, it was full of company, outdoor adventures, fun days on the lake, campfires and delicious grilled meals. Although each summer is unique in its weather and activities, all have a wonderful similarity and tone.

After a cool start, by mid-June summer arrived in full force. Indigo Buntings, Common Yellowthroats, various species of virios, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and Eastern Pewees filled the air with their song. Their bright plumage flashed through our fields of vision. At the end of the month, the temperature had climbed into the high nineties. On July 1, we recorded a “feels like” temperature of 114 degrees—northern Michigan was (for the first time in recorded history) under a heat advisory.

During the majority of June and July, we were involved in some of our most enjoyable experiences—helping young people understand and enjoy the natural world around them. It is always rewarding—whether the group is a school class coming to Wolverine Camp, the talented young writers at Author Quest, or the children at our “Bug Camps”. Early in the summer, we often think this will be our last year for that involvement, but that seems to always change. I guess we do love the teaching.

We can only hope that all adults can retain (or regain) the awe and wonder we possessed as a youth, as we spend time in the natural world exploring, discovering and wondering. It is very special to offer our children, grandchildren and neighborhood youngsters the same opportunity. An article in the September, 2018 issue of *Outside* (“Rewilding the American Child”) echoes our philosophy: “It is time to make childhood an adventure again. Kids deserve a chance to explore nature without



Jess Miller

agenda or chaperone...to fall in love with nature so they become stewards of the earth.”

When we are teaching, a huge goal is to help students discover that everything they see, hear or find in a river, lake or field is a part of their world. Michael even challenges them to find one natural (not man-made) thing that does not help them to live. He always offers a reward of \$5.00 if they can find one thing—he has never needed to pay out that reward. We also spend time with two terms which are critical in understanding the environment: *ecology* and *biodiversity*.

Often, when we talk about ecology (the study of interrelationships between living and non-living things), Michael uses an example of an owl and a pizza. Owls help us have pizza. The owls eat mice, which would eat the wheat, which is used to make flour, which is used in the dough. Another example he uses in the woods is to tell the students to stop using the poison ivy that is here. He says to take a deep breath and hold it—now as you hold your breath, you are NOT using poison ivy (but if you keep NOT using it for ten minutes, you will have a problem.

Biodiversity is self-explanatory—relating to the positive effect of having a wide variety of organisms in an area. It is critical that there be many different plants in a biome—tall, short, woody, herbaceous, living and dead. These differences provide food and shelter for a broad spectrum of animals. The biodiversity will make a healthier community. If there is little variety, one calamity can destroy the forest.



Jess Miller



Jess Miller

Every living organism contributes to the health of our planet. One example is insects. Although they are not always welcome neighbors, they provide 80% of the plant pollination. This affects our food supply, as well as that of animals around us. However, species counts in some areas have decreased by 75% in the last quarter-century. Although there may be other factors to blame, pesticides seem to be the major cause.

Mid-July in our avian world could be called “Take Your Kid to Lunch” time. We watched White-breasted Nuthatches, chickadees, Tufted Titmice, Downy and Pileated Woodpeckers at our feeders stuffing seeds into the beaks of wing-flapping young. Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, sapsuckers and flickers were taking their turns at the feeders. The young birds always look larger and fatter than their harried and overworked parents.

Sometimes the drama is much smaller and requires a still mind and body. Michael watched a Black-capped Chickadee make several curious trips from a tree to a space below the birdbath. With binoculars, he could see that the chickadee was visiting a spider web, and raiding the spider’s pantry. The recently-caught insects were his lunch that day. In August, Peg watched what she called “the hummingbird wars”. Several hummingbirds have aerial battles over ownership of the feeder— which could accommodate all of them comfortably, if they would share space. But no.

By late August, the lack of rain was taking its toll. In our prairie/grassland project, the Big Blue-stem (which

last year had grown to a height of more than six feet and produced many seeds) was this year only thirty inches tall, with no seeds. Goldenrod and Aster dried up without producing seeds. This may be a problem next winter for birds needing these seeds. The prairie area did give us two new nesting species. Vesper Sparrow and Field Sparrow joined the Bluebird and Tree Swallow.

Now the summer ends and we await the brilliant fall colors and cool nights (and also the first snowflake!). It is time to reflect on the joy we derive from being in this beautiful place and be thankful. It is time to look forward to beautiful autumn in the woods and lakeside, and the wonderful hush of the first snowfall. And then there is the raucous summer that will arrive sooner than you might think.

We cannot think of a better, more beautiful, finer place to live, and we hope you share in that thought. So many activities, so many wonderful sights, so many blessings. There are so many adventures ahead for us, and we hope that is true for all of you. Have a wonderful winter—see you on the lake next summer!



Jess Miller



Jess Miller



Biathlon Raises \$3000

Jess Miller, Organizer

Nearly 100 participants gathered at Devoe Beach on Burt Lake for the 11th Annual Kayak Bike Biathlon held on July 22, 2018 in Indian River. This unique event includes 2.2 miles of kayaking on the Indian River and 11.7 miles of bicycling on the North Central Trail. The biathlon involves over 25 volunteers and attracts hundreds of spectators. Participants and their families come from all over Michigan and from as far away as both coasts of the USA. The biathlon showcases Indian River's pristine waterways and scenic trails. Organizer, Jess Miller, said that the event raised over \$3000 this year, which will be used for the continued construction of the new Burt Lake Bike Trail.



A new champion was crowned. Yvon Dufour of Fowler beat all other participants this year with a time of 57 minutes and 3 seconds. Jay Jones of Waterford placed second overall. A new women's record was set by Mary Kay Aufrance of Marquette, beating her own last year's record setting time by over two minutes. The new overall women's record is now 66 minutes and 35 seconds, which is pretty awesome for a 60+ year old woman. Adri Fowler of Lake City came in second overall for the women this year.



McGinnis Video

The World's Toughest Outboard Marathon

More than 90 boats, some going over 55 MPH, traveling over 80 miles, cheered by 5000+ spectators.



Burt Lake Trail Update

Margie Reh, Trail Committee

The committee has finally received the final two pieces of the puzzle in order to allow Phase II to go for bids in November. The University of Michigan easement final approval and the archaeological survey approval letter from the State Historic Preservation Office were received in August. The committee appreciates the efforts of several committee members as well as Top of Michigan Trails Council board members that allowed this to happen. Michigan Department of Transportation is responsible for letting and evaluating the bids for Phase II this fall/winter with construction planned for spring/summer of 2019. This section of trail will be a paved, separated trail picking up where Phase I ends on W. Burt Lake Road and will wind through University of Michigan Biological Station property, including “the gorge” and end on East Burt Lake Road.

The committee, with the assistance of OHM Advisors engineering firm, has already submitted grant applications to the DNR Trust Fund and MDOT Transportation Alternatives fund for Phases III and IV. These two phases were combined for fiscal efficiencies. These phases will run along East Burt Lake Road and connect the first two phases of trail with the already-completed Phase V. That phase was completed in 2017 and consists of 5-foot paved road shoulders running from Hoppies to Topinabee Mail Route Road along Mullet-Burt Lake Road. Approval could come as early as this winter on those two grants with construction planned for 2020. Once these next two sections are complete, over 11 miles of the proposed 18-mile route will be able to be enjoyed by walkers and bikers.

The volunteer maintenance group continues to do yeoman work keeping the trail in outstanding condition

for walking, jogging and biking. Two areas prone to wash-out were paved this summer, the Brutus Hill and the Jay Jontz hill which were identified as top priority to improve the trail. You will soon see the bright-colors vests of the volunteers out on the trail clearing leaves and debris. Feel free to stop and say thank you or better yet, offer to join this group in their year-round effort to keep Burt Lake Trail in good condition.

There have been some complaints of vehicles parking on the trail and especially lawn service providers and other trailers. The committee is pursuing signage along the trail but appreciates efforts by residents to have their lawn service and other contractors park elsewhere.

The committee is looking for new energetic members to help make this trail a reality. Trail building takes a long time and requires the efforts of many dedicated people. If you are interested in helping in this rewarding project, please contact Chairman Gene Hodulik, ehodu@racc2000.com or any committee member: Gary Street, Margie Reh, Jim Valrance, Mac Richardson, Dennis Dombrowski (Mullett Twp), Dale Covy (Munro Twp), Virginia Chenevere, or Paul Janness.

The committee appreciates the efforts of BLPA over the years in helping raise funds and awareness. Donations are needed and welcome, please send to:

Top of Michigan Trails Council
Burt Lake Trail (*be sure to designate Burt Lake Trail on your check*)
1687 M-119
Petoskey, MI 49770

Burt Lake Preservation Association
P.O. Box 632
Indian River, MI 49749

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Monitoring Project**

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Biathlon Raises \$3000



BLPA Board of Directors meetings are normally the second Saturday of the month at 8:30, Tuscarora Township Hall, Indian River.

The deadline for the next newsletter is JANUARY 1, 2019. Contact editor John Roberts with suggestions: darbyburt@icloud.com.

Visit www.blpa.org or facebook.com/burtlakepreservationassociation.