



A LOOK AT THE LAKE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BURT LAKE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY

2020

What Have We Done For You Lately?

2010-2020 The Decade in Review

Jim Burke, President

As we begin a new decade it's appropriate to review the past. What has BLPA done for you in the last ten years? I can think of several big-ticket items. Rather than rely on my memory I opened our newsletter files. Thirty-three of them. Read 'em all.

So this began as a research paper – remember those? It didn't take me long to realize that you probably aren't interested in all the specifics; you would prefer the Cliff Notes summary version. You want to know what we did. So here it is, chronologically:

In collaboration with the Little Traverse Bay Band (LTBB), Sturgeon for Tomorrow, and the DNR we planted 8,507 fingerling sturgeon in Burt Lake and the Sturgeon River from 2010 to the present.

When the DNR was considering closing Mullett Lake to walleye fishing due to low survey numbers, we joined with MAPS to convince the authorities that there was a better way.

We hired Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council (TOMWC) to survey and evaluate the entire Burt Lake shoreline. Nearly 900 properties. Some folks didn't like their evaluation, but we all got the idea. The follow-up survey several years later showed nice improvement in shoreline management and greenbelts.

BLPA helped fund the Burt Lake bike trail by matching \$51K in donations.

We sponsored a walleye survey conducted by the DNR in 2011 that jaw tagged 5000 fish. We constructed the Greendocks rain garden, conducted a tributary study, coordinated an ice trash clean up event with the Tuscarora Township Fire Department, and a sturgeon gill net survey. We began monitoring fracking operations in our watershed. 2011 is also the year that BLPA pledged a \$51K match for Veterans Pier fundraising. What an incredible success that turned out to be!

In 2012 we "hired" the U of M Biological Station limnology students to evaluate the Plymouth Beach canal – some of our members were concerned about possible contamination. The results? "surprisingly healthy".

Here's the big thing. The REALLY BIG THING: We "discovered" Line Five. Yep, before anyone was even aware that a thirty inch pipeline that carries almost a million gallons of crude per hour lies in our backyard, we began discussions with Enbridge and ultimately pushed the issue to the forefront in Lansing. Now everybody knows about Line Five. Everybody. We're still on it. More news about that later. That was 2013.

In partnership with the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Coast Guard, Enbridge and first responders we hosted an emergency spill exercise in the Indian River. Their post mortem exposed many deficiencies that led to recommendations, many of which have been implemented.

Griswold Mountain was the talk of the town in 2014. Understanding that it wasn't topographically in our watershed but feeling obligated to do something positive we pledged \$10K toward an environmental study to end the nonsensical speculation. It turned out to be a "not in my backyard" issue that soon became history.

We planted 5000 weevils in the south end of Burt Lake in an attempt to control the spread of invasive Eurasian Watermilfoil.

BLPA also funded the feasibility study for sewers in Indian River.

In 2015, in collaboration with LTBB and the DNR we participated in another sturgeon gill net survey in Burt Lake. The results estimate about 700 adult sturgeon. Not nearly what our lake can support. Our target is 2000 adults.

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2010-2020 The Decade in Review *continued....*

Jim Burke, President

We hired TOMWC to conduct a comprehensive aquatic plant survey of the entire lake. The study examined 3200 specific recorded locations and documented several areas of Eurasian Watermilfoil that were previously unknown. That was 2016

The next year we began aerial drone mapping of Burt Lake to better understand the Eurasian Watermilfoil population. We completed the Burt Lake Watershed plan with TOMWC. We partnered with LTC to acquire the final three-acre parcel in the Seven Springs Nature Preserve which completed a 65-acre conservancy available to all. We established the Burt Lake for the Future endowment fund to provide for gifts that keep giving well into the future.

The Burt Lake Sturgeon Club was formed to preserve and protect natural spawning habitat for indigenous sturgeon. All BLPA members were enrolled in the new club.

In 2018 we continued the aerial mapping for Eurasian Watermilfoil. We completed a Sturgeon River property transaction that will be used for education. We also partnered with the U of M Biological Station to assess the Sturgeon River for sturgeon spawning habitat.

We continued aerial mapping in 2019, understanding that at least three data points (2017, 2018, 2019) are

required to establish a trend. It looks like we're in good shape. More about that later. With your financial support through fundraising we helped LTC and the Melvin family secure an eight-acre parcel with 930 feet of Burt Lake frontage on the south side of the lake. This Ellinger Road preserve will now be held in conservancy for all to enjoy. Plans include a short boardwalk and a viewing platform along the shoreline. It'll be constructed this year. We also paid for the Indian River sewer phase two feasibility study this past year. We support sewers for the health of the lake.

Whew! That's a lot, and that's just the big stuff. So, what have we done for you lately? There it is folks. A lot.

What's in store for 2020 and beyond? The 2000 Consent Decree, which was a 20-year agreement between the State and the Tribes regarding fishing rights and regulations is in the process of renegotiation. We're on it. What's next for Line Five? It's getting interesting, as you know. We're on it and will keep you in the loop. Our membership crossed the 800 threshold this year. We have some great new ideas about future expansion in the next decade. Our power is in our numbers. That's you, the voice of Burt Lake. Happy New Year and thank – you for your generosity and support!



Veteran's Pier Welcomes Winter. Credit: Cam Braddock Gaslight Group Properties



Fishing Tournament Follow Up

*David Steenstra
Water Use and Safety*

Last summer, we conducted an extensive fishing tournament survey in which most of you participated. Your responses indicated there were inconsistent “beliefs” about Michigan Marine Law and Boater Safety Regulations. We would like to clarify what the law does say. For all power watercraft, the requirement is slow, no wake within 100 feet of a shoreline or dock. This means that a fishing boat operating with a small trolling motor can come within one inch of your dock.

They can also fish within your designated swimming areas. Riparian rights specify that a property owner cannot restrict the use of the water surface by members of the public. We did contact the DNR to clarify this “belief” as well. We know that some of you have designated swim areas, roped off, and buoyed. According to Officer James Gorno, designated swim areas are only permitted for public institutions.

BLPA will continue to have communications with tournament organizers in an effort to improve the social behavior of some of their participants. The safety of our membership is of high importance, and knowing the laws as written are an important step in this understanding.



Michigan Septic Summit

*Grenetta Thomassey, Policy Director
Director, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council*

The group called For the Love of Water (FLOW) hosted a Michigan Septic Summit in Traverse City on November 6, 2019 in partnership with sponsoring organizations including Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. More than 160 attendees show that Michiganders are very interested in solutions for safe disposal of human waste, especially given our important water resources.



*FLOW: More than 160 people from around Michigan turned out and tuned in to presentations, panel discussions and peer-to-peer conversations around regulating Michigan's septic waste
Photo by Rick Kane*

Michigan is the only state that lacks a uniform sanitary code requiring periodic inspection and maintenance of septic systems, which also provides data on existing systems. Michigan does have local Sanitary Codes created by district health departments in conjunction with county governments. Local Health Departments set policies for the way new septic systems are sited, designed, and installed, and define what constitutes a failure of an existing system. These local policies take local conditions into account. But the problem is:

Once they are installed, most on-site septic systems in the state are not legally required to ever be inspected again.

Because there is no requirement for additional inspections, some aging systems have not been replaced, are probably uninspected and unmaintained, and thus are in danger of failing. Considering that typical septic systems usually have a lifespan of 25 to 30 years, older systems still in use may have already failed, or could be on the verge of failing soon.

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Mandatory inspections should be required for septic systems, which is common in other states, at least when a property is sold or ownership is transferred.

Time of Transfer or Point of Sale ordinances already exist in some local governments in Michigan and are successful, with proven track records. The Watershed Council has worked with several local governments to help them enact some of these Point of Sale ordinances.

Jon Beard of Public Sector Consultants in Lansing, revealed a startling mid-Michigan survey result: 30% of residents with a septic system did not know they had one! And even more alarmingly, later presenters at the event judged this figure to be too low. Also, 25% of those surveyed did not pump or maintain their septic system regularly. The results from this particular survey say 55% of septic systems are essentially neglected in that area, sometimes unintentionally but this can be damaging, nonetheless.

An estimated 130,000 septic systems in the state are failing, releasing 5.2 billion gallons of sewage annually into Michigan waters. According to EGLE (the new MI DEQ - Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy), the failure rate for these systems in any given year is 5-10%, based on information from local county health departments submitted to EGLE. But the true extent of septic system failure and replacement has not been quantified by the state, most local governments, or the Health Department, including the types of failed systems, their spatial distribution, and reasons for failure.

Importantly for our region of Northern Michigan, could this also mean that expected lifespans are actually longer than 25-30 years, if systems are well-maintained, or used sparingly, the way they can be in our local resort areas? Knowing that would be extremely helpful to homeowners and manufacturers. However, we don't have the data available to figure that out, because once these systems are installed, in most places in the state, there is no required oversight or maintenance. Unfortunately, there is also a new emerging issue that might stress existing systems even more.



Scott Kendzierski, Director of Environmental Health Services at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan identified the seasonal rental scenario, in which a three-bedroom home with a septic system designed and permitted in the 1970s for perhaps six occupants is now accommodating more than three times that many people as vacationers, overtaking an aging or possibly failed system. Short-term rental agreements factor into this conversation, as well, in addition to traditional rentals.

What's next in the wake of the Septic Summit? FLOW, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, and many others intend to support more local and regional education on this topic. If you have questions about the Watershed Council research, please visit their website at www.watershedcouncil.org under the Hot Topics button at the top of the page. You can also call Grenetta Thomassey at 231-347-1181 ext. 1118.





Sturgeon in the Classroom

David Steenstra, Sturgeon Club

Jennifer Vandaele is a champion for the cause of Lake Sturgeon. On December 16, she appeared before the Inland Lakes School Board along with seven of her very passionate third grade students. They did a presentation on their Sturgeon in the Classroom program. They recited the facts by memory: How big do they get? How long do they live? What do they eat? These kids were on their game, obviously having been taught well by Ms. Vandaele. The board got to see their Sturgeon. His name is Burt.



This is their fifth year having a Sturgeon in the Classroom. They usually get the Sturgeon in October and release it in May. The fish has a micro-tag so it can be identified in the future. Perhaps 50 years from now that fish will be caught. It could be six-foot long, weigh 100 pounds, and the micro-tag will tell us that this fish was raised in Ms. Vandaele's class.



"Burt" is about 8 inches long right now, and should be around 15 inches long when they release it in May. One of Jennifer's learning objectives is to help her students become better stewards of our natural resources. In particular, an endangered species. The Sturgeon is provided to her from Sturgeon for Tomorrow, in cooperation with the Michigan DNR. The DNR issues a permit for this program.

Thank you Jennifer for taking the extra step to give our kids a wonderful learning experience. Hands-on education is one of the best ways to learn.

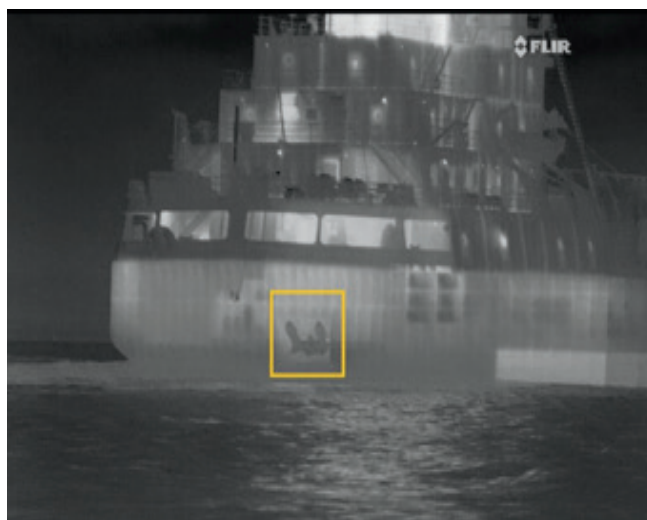
2019 Straits Line 5 Update

*Jennifer McKay, Policy Director
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council*

The following is a summary of a presentation to the BLPA board in December, 2019

Enbridge has recently instituted three measures to try and enhance safety at the Straits of Mackinac.

1. A vessel monitoring and alert system – Vesper Marine's Guardian:protect system allows Enbridge to monitor and alert other ships in the Straits when they are near Line 5 and send an alert to notify of the "no anchor" zone.
2. Cameras at the Straits – located at the Enbridge facilities onshore to monitor ship traffic 24-7.
3. Patrol vessels – will monitor ships in the Straits to determine if anchors are up and provide notifications as needed to the vessels and the U.S. Coast Guard. The image below is from one of the patrol vessels showing "Anchor up."



Night Monitoring in the Straits. Credit: Enbridge Energy

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Geotechnical Investigation

The remaining anchors will be installed in 2020 after...around the pipeline. In addition, over the summer, Enbridge also installed approximately 30 of the 54 anchors that are required to comply with a Federal Consent Decree. Each anchor uses two 10-inch-diameter by 10-foot-long screws and a helical anchoring system with saddle mounts around the pipeline.

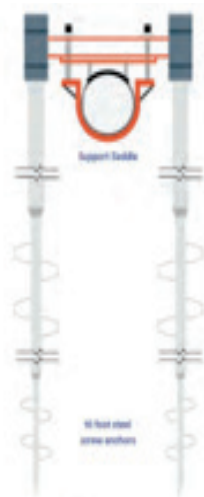


Illustration of Screw Anchor Technology
(viewed in direction of pipeline)



Core Samples. Credit: Enbridge Energy

Divers also completed inspection of approximately 1/3 of the current anchors. Each anchor needs to be inspected for coating damage per an agreement with the State of Michigan. Approximately 1/3 of the anchors were inspected in 2018 and the remainder will be inspected in 2020.

Geotechnical Investigation

Enbridge completed the geotechnical investigation in the Straits in November. The geotechnical boring work was to get sediment and rock samples from the lakebed to determine feasibility of a tunnel, and will guide the design of the tunnel and tunnel boring machine. Samples were taken from 27 locations - seven onshore, six nearshore, and 14 deep water.

Now that the geotechnical investigation is complete, Enbridge expects to submit permit applications for the tunnel to the State of Michigan and Federal government during the first quarter of 2020. It is still unclear how the State will handle the submittal of permit applications. The Governor previously issued an Executive Directive that State Agencies were not to take any action regarding the tunnel, due to an Opinion by the Attorney General that a law allowing the tunnel was unconstitutional. This matter is currently before the courts.

Court Cases

Enbridge is in the midst of many court cases both in Michigan and Wisconsin regarding Line 5. These court cases attempt to prevent the tunnel or decommission the pipeline and are expected to take many years and be appealed, regardless of who wins the case.

Administrative Action

The Governor has taken actions related to Line 5. She has directed the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to begin a comprehensive review of Enbridge's compliance with the 1953 Easement, and other factors affecting its validity. The results of that review are expected in 2020.

In addition, the Governor created the U.P. Energy Task Force to assess the UP's overall energy needs and how they are currently being met. The Task Force is charged with identifying alternative propane delivery options in the event of a Line 5 shut down, along with ways to rein in other energy rates in high-cost regions of the U.P. A report is due from the Task Force March 31, 2020.

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council Position

The overarching goal of Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council is no transportation of crude oil in, on, or under the Great Lakes.

An incident or failure on Line 5 is a low-probability, high-seriousness event. But if it does happen the result would be catastrophic given the insufficient capability to effectively respond to a failure. Replacement of Line 5 in the Straits will not remove the similar threat to the nearly 400 sites where it crosses a waterbody in Michigan, especially the Bearsaw swamp and Indian River near Burt and Mullet Lakes.

For more information, go to <https://www.watershedcouncil.org/pipelines.html>



Burt Lake Sturgeon Club

David Steenstra

Who can forget the amazing presentation Captain Ken Clark gave us at our annual meeting last July. Captain Clark owns a charter boat service and transports his boat to his client's lake of choice. Ken loves coming up to Burt Lake. He's a great member of BLPA. Maybe you have seen him out on the lake fishing with clients.

On October 15, Ken was fishing with Matt Mellema and his 14 year-old son Benjamin. It was around 7:00 in the morning. They were jigging for Walleyes on the south end of the lake, near the mouth of the Sturgeon River. What a surprise and a thrill when Ben jigged his lure upward in the jigging mode and he realized there was something substantial on the other end. After what must have seemed like a lifetime, they landed this monster 50 inch, 40 pound Sturgeon. The fish was caught, photographed, and released immediately. Captain Clark's rule of thumb is to hold his breath when the fish leaves the water, and safely releases it before he needs to take another breath of air.

Congratulations Ben! This is the beginning of a story that will last you a lifetime. And you even have photo evidence. Come on back and catch yourself another one. And for those of you who want more secret detail, Ben was using an Okuma Deadeye jigging pole, yellow fire line, and a Northland Tackle Puppet jig, available at Pat and Gary's of course.



Support BLPA With a Tax Break

Bill Kanine, CPA

Administration and Finance Committee

Support BLPA with a qualified charitable distribution using your IRA required minimum distributions. A qualified charitable distribution is an otherwise taxable distribution from an IRA owned by an individual who is age 70 ½ or over that is paid directly from the IRA to a qualified charity. Normally, a distribution from a traditional IRA incurs taxes since the account holder didn't pay taxes on the money when they put it in to the IRA. But account holders 70 ½ or older who make a contribution directly from a traditional IRA to a qualified charity, like the Burt Lake Preservation Association ("BLPA") can donate up to \$100,000 without it being considered a taxable distribution. The deduction effectively lowers the donor's adjusted gross income.

To avoid paying taxes on the donation, the donor must follow IRS rules for qualified charitable distribution ("QCDs"), aka charitable IRA rollovers. Most churches, nonprofit charities, educational organizations, nonprofit hospitals, and BLPA are qualified organizations. The charity will also not pay taxes on the donation.

This tax break does mean that the donor cannot also claim the donation as an itemized deduction on Schedule A of their tax return. Other donations to charity that don't use IRA funds, however, can still be claimed as itemized deduction. Since the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act increased the base standard deduction, many taxpayers will no longer itemize on Schedule A, making the upfront IRA deduction potentially even more important. QCDs are a good choice for individuals that receive RMD's who don't itemize deductions. Taxpayers whose annual income affects their Medicare premiums might also find that this provision helps control the premium cost.

Using an IRA to make a charitable donation can help lower a tax bill and help a worthy cause like BLPA. Talk to your IRA custodian about how to make this happen and be sure to leave sufficient time for the funds to reach the charity timely.



Memorials Received

The following memorials were received during 2019. The Burt Lake Preservation Association is a community of members and friends. As an organization we are united by the common theme of preservation and protection of Burt Lake and its watershed. As a community we are also united by common attitudes and interests, celebrations, and sorrows. Thank you to the following donors who chose to remember neighbors, friends and family through a donation to the Burt Lake Preservation Association.

In Memory of:

Gertrude Crowley

Burt Lake Marina

Sadie “Puff” Hampson

John & Joann Hannah

Jack Harris

Mike and Peg Supernault

Mary Jayne Knaff

Friends of Janet Mabrey

Peter Moran

Gary & Mary Street

John & Linda Wojciechowski

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Henry & Sarah Peet

James Nield

John & Linda Chayka

William Fox Wilson

Paul & Debra Seehaver

Theodore Hans Wuerful

Elizabeth Tiller

Elinor Kessel

In Honor Of:

Verne Binder on her Birthday

Mike and Peg Supernault

**Mr. and Mrs. James Harrington III
on their 50th Anniversary**

Trish Harrington

**Michael & Maggie Wilp
on the birth of their son
Cooper Gregory Wilp**

Dave Hoppe, Nan & Roy





Burt Lake Treasure:

Harris Melvin Preserve a Success

Little Traverse Conservancy is excited to announce the completion of the former “Ellinger Road” project which has now become the Harris-Melvin Family Nature Preserve. Announced last year as a fundraising project, this preserve represents one of the largest remaining private and undeveloped properties along Burt Lake.

At eight acres, the new preserve contains more than 930 feet of pristine and undisturbed Burt Lake shoreline. The property is located within a long stretch of Burt Lake that has very little public access.

A robust economy and strong real estate market had made this undeveloped shoreline desirable and highly-threatened. After many discussions, the landowners were willing to sell at a bargain sale, and the Conservancy launched a successful fundraising campaign that was completed last summer.

The Conservancy staff note that if not for the dedicated perseverance of the Harris and Melvin families – longtime conservationists in the region – the preserve would not have happened. “Our clan has been spending summers in Indian River for generations now,” said Mark Melvin. “It has become a part of many of us: the lake, the rivers, the streams, and the shores around the lake.”

In addition to Mark’s family’s lead donation, generous support came from Kalyn Brandewie, Anne Melvin and Dan Sullivan, the Burt Lake Preservation Association, the Carl’s Foundation, and numerous other Burt Lake supporters.

“Burt Lake is a precious northern Michigan jewel and the support we received for this project confirmed how much people care about it,” said LTC Executive Director Kieran Fleming. “As part of the Inland Waterway, the waters of this lake eventually end up in Lake Huron and the more we can do to care for the land that feeds the waters, the better.”

Plans include a short boardwalk and viewing platform along the shoreline, which should be constructed next year.





Up North

By Michael and Peg Supernault

As we look out on a dreary, almost snow less view, we long for the next snowfall that will turn the scene beautiful again. We await the sight of snowmobiles' headlights on Rails to Trails and ski and snowshoe tracks filling Wildwood Hills. We anticipate the next decade, and reflect on the memories of the past year. With smiles, we think of boat trips, hikes along rivers and time spent with family and friends. Serene sunrises and spectacular sunsets over Burt Lake were highlights this year. Seeing an eagle soar silently overhead, watching bluebirds feed their young and hearing the spring calls of warblers added to our enjoyment of the natural world.

Mid-September found Michael paying careful attention to his favorite radio program, "Science Friday", while observing the bird life before him. The Phoebes, Eastern Peewees, hummingbirds and several warbler species were "feeding up" in their preparations for a long fall migratory trip. We feel so fortunate to live in such a beautiful area with such diversity of flora and fauna! We are surrounded by wonderful and interesting things—we only need to pay attention. It is our hope that everyone will maintain or improve their natural area, so we all may pass on this lovely place – unharmed—to the next generation.



Photo Credit: Tom Prout

September brought much rain as campfires, kayak trips and swimming activities dwindled. Deer and turkeys wandered across our front yard, feeding on acorns. It was bittersweet to clean out the Nature Center for the last time. For over a decade, one or both of us had taught a Nature Study Field School ("Bug Camp"), and spent so many enjoyable hours with young people indoors and out. We will miss it.



Photo Credit: Tom Prout

As September morphed into October, trees began to gain autumnal color, and the cast of bird characters changed. Gone were the flashy summer residents; in their place were the more somber winter visitors. Our last warbler was sighted on October 16th, a lone Robin was looking for his buddies on October 23rd, and a very late Sandhill Crane called overhead on November 7th. Our vegetable garden was harvested, with carrots, beets and potatoes in storage. Garlic and onions were dug and dried. The freezer was stocked with peas, beans and corn. As the boards went up on the screenroom, we remembered great meals, wonderful evenings with friends, and many hours listening to the river. There were some warm, beautiful days to boat on Burt, and enjoy the spectacular colors on the hills. This is still one of our favorite times on the lake—enjoying "the last good day of the summer".

In November, with a little fresh snow on our back walkway, we spotted Badger tracks. We followed the tracks into our field, where they mingled with those of fox, deer, squirrel, turkey, mouse, vole and assorted small birds. The field was the source of dinner for many—seeds of grasses, goldenrod aster and milkweed. The elimination of some of these undigested seeds will become next year's plants.

Even those brown "dead" plants are critical to the ecosystem around us. All are connected, whether it be the underground fungi, the mosses and lichens on the surface, the integral plants that some call weeds, or dead trees. Each has value—as a food source, a habitat, a shelter or nesting place. This ecology is critical for the survival of mosquitoes, mice, martens and people.



Photo Credit: Tom Prout

Think for a moment about a standing dead tree. It harbors millions of insects that feed so many other living things. The dead tree is “eaten” by various fungi, and provides shelter for birds, ranging from owls to mergansers. Woodpeckers, Bluebirds, chickadees and Tufted Titmice find respite in dead trees. Hollow spaces in dead trees provide nesting spaces for flying squirrels. If left alone, the tree will eventually fall, becoming a home for an entirely new population: various beetles, salamanders and assorted harmless northern snakes. Eventually, the tree returns to the earth much of the material it used during its lifetime.

On November 16th, we awoke to a spectacular sight. A beautiful hoarfrost was clinging to every branch and blade of grass along the Sturgeon. It sparkled in the sunrise as if clothed in diamonds. Fifteen bird species and a young deer feeding by the river added a counterpoint to the cold beauty.

As the sun rose, the hoarfrost fell from the branches, filling the still air with sparkling crystals.

Early in December, we were fascinated by a confrontation between a Goshawk and a squirrel. They were on the opposite sides of the same tree, playing a life-or-death game of hide and seek. Each would peek around the tree, then go back to hiding. Since the Goshawk was on the squirrel’s favorite perch, it almost seemed that the squirrel was trying to intimidate the hawk and frighten it off. The hawk was unable to maneuver around the trunk to get at its squirrel lunch. Eventually, the hawk gave up and retreated to another tree. The squirrel loudly proclaimed victory.

Later in the month as temperatures warmed, Michael could be found with an insect net in hand collecting “dancing flies” and winter moths. They were taking advantage of the sunny day. He may have appeared demented to those driving by!

December may not have provided the usual population of winter birds, but it did offer some spectacular sunrises and sunsets. We were awakened quite early on three successive mornings by our wild neighbors. Two Great-horned Owls used their voices to compete for territory. The next morning, deer pawed through leaves searching for acorns while coyotes howled at the river’s edge. On the third morning, two ravens perched outside our open window, talking to each other.

Looking forward to the rest of winter, we will once again take a winter raft trip down the Sturgeon. It is almost time to plan our garden, while looking through the sumptuous pictures in seed catalogues. By early May, we will hope to assist the Sturgeon River Sweepers, as they work to pick up trash and detritus left by humans.

As we finish this, we are privileged to watch the world turn white with snow-frosting. It is so beautiful, and so necessary for so many reasons. Time to ski and ‘shoe.

Do not lose sight of—as Carl Sagan called it--” The Pale Blue Dot” where we live. Not only is it our home, it is our responsibility to be good stewards of the lands and waters. In spring, evaluate the ecosystem around you, and see how best you can help. Use native plants in your landscape, mulch to retain water, discover natural remedies for repelling pests.

Happy New Year—we are all looking forward to enjoying the year ahead.

Burt Lake Preservation Association
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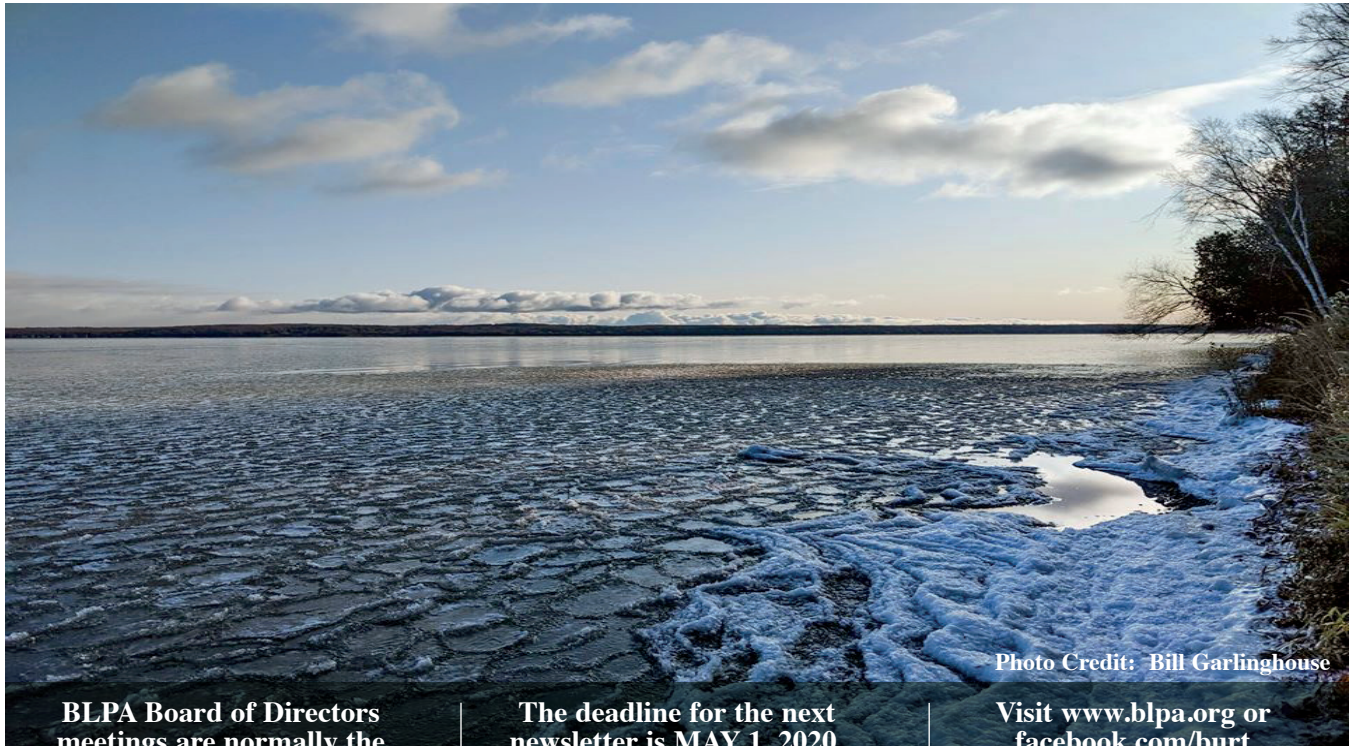


Photo Credit: Bill Garlinghouse

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 MAY 1, 2020.**
Contact editor John Roberts
with suggestions:
darbyburt@icloud.com

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lake preservation
association](https://facebook.com/burtlakepreservationassociation).**