



A LOOK AT THE LAKE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BURT LAKE PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION
JUNE 2019

A Look Through The Windshield

Jim Burke, President

Our January newsletter reviewed 2018 accomplishments (A Look Through The Rearview Mirror) and promised that this issue would discuss what your Board sees on the horizon. Rest assured that as we look through the windshield we're not staring at the hood ornament – remember those? – we're scanning the horizon in an attempt to get ahead of the issues that may affect the Lake we love.

So, what's ahead in our 2019 journey? I mentioned in January that our Membership Committee will have big news to share. Jackie Russo is returning to our Board and Billy Andrew will be joining us. They're both dynamic talented people. We're privileged to welcome them to your Board of Directors. Their bio's are contained elsewhere in this newsletter. They'll be reinvigorating our Membership Committee. Although our membership is the strongest it's ever been we know that we've been running on cruise control for a few years.

Funny story: In 1978 Henry Ford II fired Lee Iacocca, the father of the Ford Mustang. This is an excerpt from their conversation: "Your timing stinks. We've just made a billion eight for the second year in a row...But mark my words, Henry. You may never see a billion eight again. And do you know why? Because you don't know how the _____ we made it in the first place!" Classic Lee Iacocca. We don't want to get ourselves in that situation. Jackie and Billy have the knowledge, skills, and ability to guide our Membership Committee to new horizons, creating a strategic roadmap to bolster our membership.


RESEARCH PROJECT



Our strength is in our numbers.

Our Sturgeon Club is collaborating with Sturgeon for Tomorrow, the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, U of M Biological Station, and the DNR to monitor sturgeon spawning runs in the Sturgeon River. With the technical assistance of Pat and Jane McGinnis, we have an underwater video camera and recorder documenting fish migration. To my knowledge this is a first! We're using the latest and greatest technology.

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	<i>Treasurer:</i> MIKE CHERVENY	<i>Secretary:</i> GINA BURKE		



A Look Through *continued....*

We're also working with – collaborating – (ref. October 2018 newsletter "Collaboration") LTBB to place an antenna array in the river to read PIT tags imbedded in sturgeon that will be recorded as they pass upstream and downstream in their spring migration. We'll be monitoring how many sturgeon swim upstream and how many return to Burt Lake. We'll also be assessing the river for spawning habitat. Cool stuff.

We're working with Sturgeon for Tomorrow and our representatives in the Michigan House of Representatives to introduce HB 4018 which will significantly increase sturgeon poaching penalties. Thank-you to Representative Sue Allor for moving this bill out of committee. We'll keep you informed as it passes through the House and Senate. Stay tuned folks.

We've talked about the 2000 Consent Decree before. It governs Tribal and State fishing rights on the Great Lakes. It's due for renewal in 2020 and negotiations have begun. This is important as it can influence the 2007 Consent Decree which includes Burt Lake. Our partners, The Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources are a party to these negotiations.

In summary, we're not driving aimlessly on cruise control. This is not driverless technology. This is not a Sunday drive. We're charting a course that will guide BLPA for the years ahead. "Life is a journey. Enjoy the ride." This is exciting. Stay tuned.

Corrections to the 2019 BLPA Directory

The 2019 Directory has been published and distributed to BLPA members. As stated in the directory, every effort is made to ensure accuracy of everyone's information. If you see an error or omission, please contact Cindy Fisher (cindyfisherblpa@yahoo.com) so corrections can be made. We will publish corrections in our newsletter. Please make note of the following corrections to your 2019 directory:

Kleckner, Kimberley NEW PO Box 1095
Besaw, Charles NEW Phone: 989.684.7045
Rosner, Richard & Marilyn
Primary: 3563 Greenmans Point
Cheboygan, MI 49721 231.238.9502
Secondary: 4939 E Burt Lake Rd.,
Cheboygan, MI 49721 Cell: 231.420.2131

Board Member Profile: Billy Andrew



Being an Indian River native and growing up on Burt Lake's southwest shore, I am very excited to accept a position on the BLPA Board. My love for Burt Lake and the entire inland waterway resonates from my parents, Richard and Sharon Andrew, whose passion was both personal and professional as owners of A.K. Smith and Son Real Estate.

I am an alumnus of Inland Lakes Schools and the University of Michigan with a degree in Kinesiology with concurrent enrollment in the School of Education. I attended the Manship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge where I studied Public Relations and Advertising and was a staff athletic trainer for Olympic Sports.

I returned to Indian River in 1994 to work with my family in the real estate business. I am now managing broker for Coldwell Banker Schmidt Real Estate in Indian River. I reside in Indian River where I, with my wife of 26 years Jennifer Andrew, raised our family; Will and wife Allison who live in Westland, MI; Casey, a senior business major at Grand Valley State University; and Kylee, a junior Neuroscience major at the University of Michigan

Board Member Profile: Jackie Russo



I'm excited to be returning to the BLPA board after a three-year absence. I was busy as the Area Director of Community Bible Study (A national and international organization) for lower state Michigan. My husband and I built on Burt Lake in 2005 and have enjoyed the beauty and prestige waters that cannot be compared to the other lakes. I felt it led me to return to the board because it takes many to come together in unity, with the same passion, to continue to protect our lake for the future of the generations to come. I have four grown children, three of whom are married and have blessed us with eight grandchildren...and look forward to coming up to Papa and Nana's lake house. I am an avid runner and cyclist, former Chili Cook Off Champion of Indian River and enjoy all the trails around our lakes. I look forward to getting to know all of you in the future, as we together continue to support BLPA.



Shoreline Protection School

Lindsey Gardner, MSU Extension Educator



Michigan State University Extension is offering a training session at Camp Pet-O-Se-Ga in Emmet County, July 19th, on the benefits of natural lake shorelines and the techniques and tools property owners and local governments can take to maintain or recreate natural shorelines.

In 2017 a report by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality concluded that degraded lakeshore habitat is the biggest stressor to Michigan's lakes. Indeed, intensely developed lakeshores can have a dramatic impact on lakes. For example, shoreline erosion increases when there are no native lakeshore plants to hold the soil in place with their deep and fibrous roots. Additionally, removing native vegetation can impair water quality by increasing pollutant and nutrient runoff from the upland portion of the shoreline property. Once trees, shrubs, and other plants are removed, their resident fish, birds, frogs and turtles will also disappear.

Often, when shoreline property is developed, traditional landscaping practices and ideas are used (i.e. a clean-cut lawn up to the water's edge for the full length of the shoreline). This type of landscaping is not sustainable for the long term health of a lake. A more ideal approach instead is to have a balanced design between nature and the needs of the landowner. There are many lake-friendly practices and designs that integrate a natural component of shoreline development with landscaping plans.

Many of these practices are as simple as adding native vegetation back to a portion of a shoreline property.

The MSU Extension program will take place on July 19th from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The cost to attend is \$25 and includes handouts, refreshments, and lunch. Specific topics included in this workshop:

- Introduction to Shorelines - Lake Ecosystems, Understanding the Shoreline, and Aquatic Plants
- Natural Shorelines and Healthy Fisheries
- Planning and Designing your Natural Shoreline Project
- Maintenance and Natural Shoreline Success
- Local Planning and Zoning for Natural Shorelines
- State of Michigan Shoreline Rules and Regulations
- Hands-on Aquatic Invasive Plant Identification

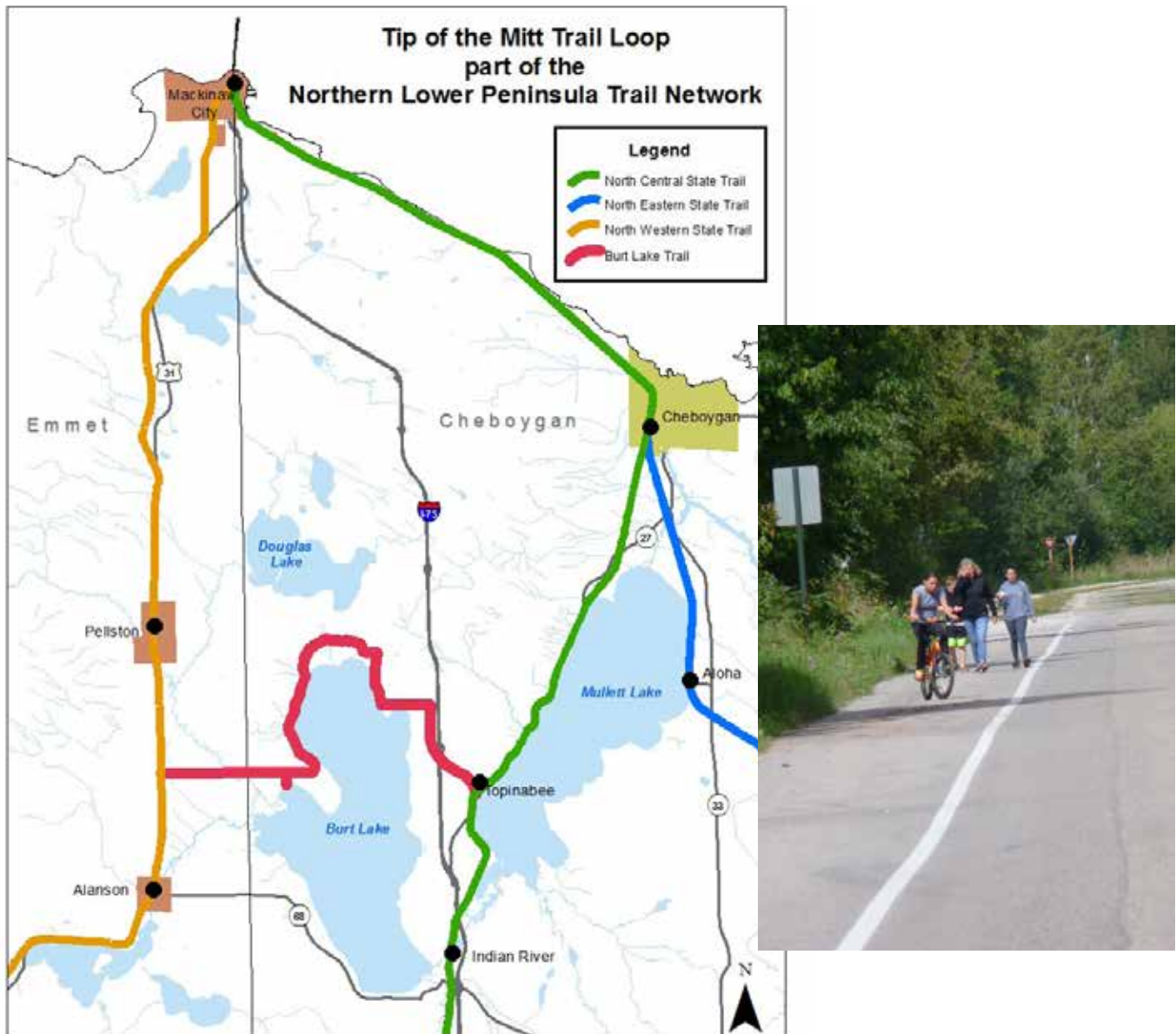
Participants will also enjoy a field component examining a local natural shoreline project. The program is sponsored in part by the Burt Lake Preservation Association, Northeast Michigan Council of Governments, and Networks Northwest.

To learn more and register for the program, please visit <https://events.anr.msu.edu/naturalshorelines2019/>



Burt Lake Trail Update

Gene Hodulik, Chairman, Trail Committee



Phase II is underway at last. It extends the trail from Hogsback Road to East Burt Lake Road. The plan is May 3 bids are let by MDOT, June 7 the low bidder is announced, June 10-24 pre construction meeting held, contracts finalized and sent to MDOT. Once approved construction must start within 10 days. So it could be by the end of June or July 10 construction should start. Completion date is first week of October.

There is no Township tax money being used to construct Phase II. There was no Township tax money to

complete Phase V (Burt-Mullett Road with five foot paved shoulders). We should receive an MDOT/TAP conditional approval for Phase III and IV within three months. Then we need the DNR Trust Fund Grant to move ahead. Almost all of the re-construction of East Burt Lake Road planned for summer 2020 will be paid for by the one mill county-wide tax. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the 52 homeowners along East Burt Lake Road to get it widened with six foot shoulders for the walkers, joggers and bikers.



Legislative Update

David Steenstra

On April 16, BLPA attended a State Senate Republican caucus in Lansing. In addition to meeting our elected officials at this reception, we also had opportunities to keep some of our important issues on “The front burner”. Those issues included polyfluoralkyl substances (PFAS,) Line 5, The Garnecki property, and the efforts to revitalize lake sturgeon in Burt Lake. BLPA has always maintained direct contact with our elected representatives and will continue to actively do so.



Sawing the forest for the trees

Jenny Kalejs, Outreach Coordinator, UMBS

Adaptive Aspen management experiment and red pine harvests are underway at UMBS. This spring, a planned experimental manipulation and a red pine harvest have UMBS affiliates yelling “TIMBER!”

But arborists and nature-lovers need not be alarmed. Both harvests are pre-planned in accordance with ongoing UMBS research and forest management best practices.

Adaptive Aspen Management Experiment

Mature aspen and select other species are being harvested around the Honeysuckle Creek Watershed. The project, led by primary investigator and UMBS Associate Research Scientist Luke Nave, aims to produce immediate changes in forest composition and structure that would otherwise play out over time in the successional trajectory of harvested stands. Removal of mature aspen will allow regeneration of new aspen and birch trees, increased growth of non-dominant species, and succession to a more structurally and compositionally diverse cover type. Removal of aspen at the extreme end of their lifespan will also make these wooded areas safer for runners, bikers, and recreationists.

Broader goals of the experiment include leveraging total-ecosystem research to better inform forest management strategies, especially in the context of the environmental changes brought on by a warming climate. The project fits into the wider Climate Change Response Framework through the USDA Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science.



Red Pine Harvest

Since 1991, UMBS has maintained a red pine plantation on Riggsville Road just west of the Station. Plantations like this, typical of northern Michigan and other Lake States, are managed for habitat, biodiversity, and economic value. They can also serve as useful sites for research. Michigan Tech forestry students helped develop a management plan for the UMBS plantation as a capstone project. From planting to harvest, these plots often follow a 60-90 year cycle.

Benefits of the prescribed harvest include improving safety conditions on Riggsville Road by decreasing shade and ice build up, diversifying forest structure and age class, protecting marketable timber, and enhancing wildlife habitat.

The timber companies involved with both projects have posted signs along the road and access points to warn motorists that trucks and equipment will be moving around the site. Later this month, UMBS staff and researchers will tour a local sawmill where much of the timber is destined.



New Boating and Fishing Laws

Kevin Walters, Aquatic Biologist, Michigan DEQ

Recent changes in Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) require watercraft users in the state to take steps to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. Also, anyone fishing with live or cut bait or practicing catch-and-release fishing will need to take precautions to limit the movement of invasive species and fish diseases.

What boaters need to know

Amendments to Sec. 41325 of NREPA (Act 451 of 1994), finalized near the close of the 2018 legislative session, affect both motorized and nonmotorized watercraft, trailers and other conveyances used to move watercraft. In addition to the existing law requiring all aquatic plants be removed from boats and trailers before launching, the changes require the following, prior to transporting any watercraft over land:

- Removing all drain plugs from bilges, ballast tanks, and live wells.
- Draining all water from any live wells and bilges.
- Ensuring the watercraft, trailer, and any conveyance used to transport the watercraft or trailer are free of aquatic organisms, including plants.

This means after trailering boats, and before getting on the road, boaters must pull plugs, drain water and remove plants and debris from all watercraft, trailers and other conveyances.

What anglers need to know

For anglers, NREPA amendments codify the Michigan DNR's Fisheries Order 245 regarding the release of baitfish, collection and use of baitfish and cut bait, and release of captured fish, specifically:

- A person shall not release baitfish in any waters of this state. A person who collects fish shall not use the fish as bait or cut bait except in the inland lake, stream, or Great Lake where the fish was caught, or in a connecting waterway of the inland lake, stream, or Great Lake where the fish was caught if the fish could freely move between the original location of capture and the location of release.
- A person, who catches fish other than baitfish in a lake, stream, Great Lake, or connecting

waterway shall only release the fish in the lake, stream, or Great Lake where the fish was caught, or in a connecting waterway of the lake, stream, or Great Lake where the fish was caught if the fish could freely move between the original location of capture and the location of release.

Whether purchased or collected, unused baitfish should be disposed of on land or in the trash – never in the water. Any baitfish an angler collects may be used only in the waters where it was originally collected.

“It is important to clarify that anglers are allowed to catch and release fish,” said Seth Herbst, the DNR's aquatic species and regulatory affairs manager. “Anglers who are catching and releasing fish should only release the fish back into the same water or in a connecting body of water the fish could have reached on its own.”

Why it matters

Many invasive species move from one location to another with the help of human transportation. Plants like Eurasian watermilfoil or starry stonewort can travel from lake to lake on boats and trailers. Just one plant fragment can start a new population.

Draining boats and cleaning trailers can limit the spread of zebra and quagga mussels, which are common in some inland lakes. A more recent invader, the tiny New Zealand mudsnail, can hitchhike from river to river when mud or debris is left on kayaks, canoes and gear.

Moving fish from one body of water to another can spread fish diseases, like heterosporis (a parasite of yellow perch) and viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus (VHSv), a serious disease that can affect many fish species. Fish diseases also can be spread to new locations when water carrying parasites or infection is transferred via bilges, live wells or ballast tanks.

What you should do

Here are some simple rules of thumb to help boaters and anglers navigate these laws:

- CLEAN boats, trailers and equipment.
- DRAIN live wells, bilges and all water – pull all drain plugs.
- DRY boats and equipment.
- DISPOSE of unwanted bait in the trash.

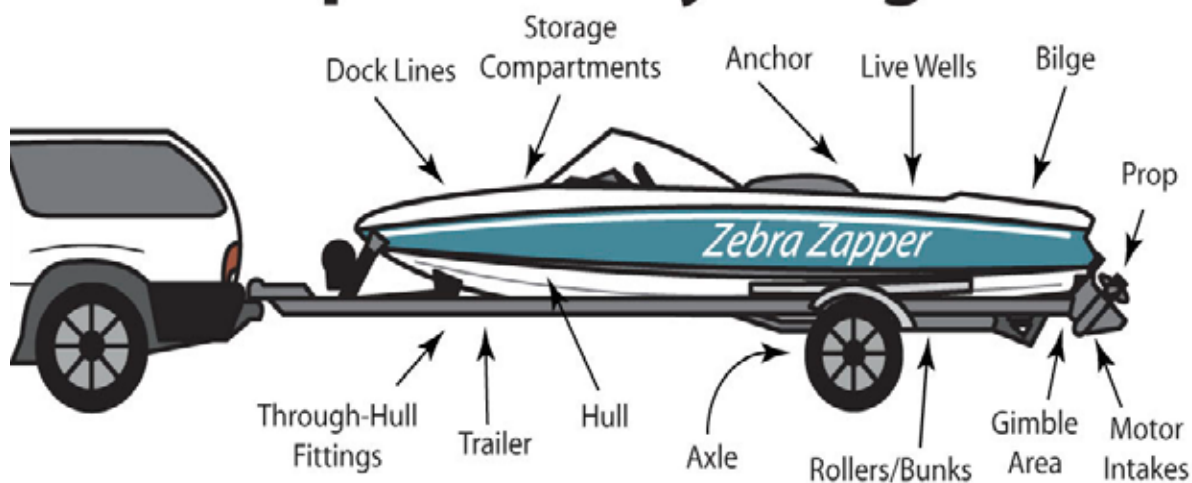


And remember when practicing catch-and-release fishing, return the fish to the water where it was caught. For more information on the new boating and fishing laws, visit the Laws section at Michigan.gov/invasives.



Michigan's Invasive Species Program is cooperatively implemented by the Michigan departments of Agriculture & Rural Development, Environmental Quality and Natural Resources.

Before leaving and before launching...
inspect everything!



Inspection points:

New boating laws in Michigan require removing plants and aquatic organisms from trailers and boats and draining water from bilges, live wells and ballast tanks.

Cleaning boat:

It just takes a few minutes to look for and remove debris and plants from your boat and trailer. Be sure to pull the plug, too.



Community Affairs Report

Mike Cherveny /Chris Kindsvatter

BLPA Community Affairs Committee works with and reports on activities that affect Burt Lake and surrounding area and works with Tuscarora and Burt Township as well as providing input on the state level.



Boat Launch Hours of Operations

HB 4362 introduced by Representative Sheppard in March would regulate by the DNR hours of operation hours of public access sites. Also further regulate on inland lakes operations from 8 am to sunset by special rules by local ordinances up to 10 pm. BLPA is providing its perspective to the state committee on this proposal.

Indian River Sewer Expansion

BLPA board approved the funding of Tuscarora Township phase two sewer feasibility study. The study includes area from the Indian River and the Sturgeon River and also parts of Burt Lake within Indian River proper.

PFAS in Burt Lake

Proposals have been presented to the Board on studying and monitoring the effect of PFAS in Burt Lake. Given the recent concern and state funding that may be available to do specific studies, the Board is now investigating other cost-effective ways to do similar testing and preventive measures on Burt Lake through the state. More to come.

Line 5 Tunnel

Gov. Whitmer has backed off her original opposition to the new pipeline authority a bit and has started negotiations with Enbridge over the tunnel. The future of Line 5 and a new proposed tunnel is murky at best right now. Expect and long negotiation and potentially long legal process to play out.

Garnecki Property

Dating back to 1989, BLPA members have been concerned and involved in the DNR purchase of the Garnecki property on the west shore of Burt Lake in the middle of a residential area. BLPA was the lead organization in the lawsuit to prevent the state from ignoring local zoning to use this property as a small park and boat launch site but worked in an alternative site of the Maple Bay site. The Garnecki property has been up for sale on and off for the past 20 years but recently the DNR activity is directed at selling to the tribe.

BLPA will be look at several options including working with other land preservations organizations to determine their interest in a possible purchase as a conservation area.



Short Term Rentals

Rep. Jason Sheppard has once again reintroduced legislation dealing with short term rentals that would create new zoning requirements specific to short-term rentals.

The bill, House Bill 4046 has received a hearing in the Local Government Committee last month. No vote is expected on the legislation at this time.

Short term rentals became an issue in Burt Township several years ago and in Cheboygan County and the Cheboygan County Planning Commission also has had hearings on same. Presently Cheboygan County ordinance of May 2018 adopted is: Short Term rental is in effect for all zoning districts and short term rentals are rental or use of a building customarily used as a dwelling for a period of less than 30 days by an individual, by more than one family or a group of individuals who are not the legal owner of the dwelling. A short-term rental shall not be occupied by the owner of the building during the period of such rental or use.



Summer Activities at U-M Biological Station

The University of Michigan Biological Station (UMBS), spanning over 10,000 acres on and around Douglas and Burt Lake, is a field station dedicated to education and ecological research. UMBS serves four primary populations: students, researchers, global science, and the local community.

In addition to the terrestrial, aquatic, and atmospheric research and monitoring that keeps natural areas pristine, UMBS serves the community by hosting special events. Please consider joining us. And of course, our neighbors are always welcome to use UMBS's extensive trail system.

Summer Lecture Series

Each summer, UMBS hosts nationally-renowned scientists to give both a public talk (in the Gates Lecture Hall) and a targeted research seminar (in the Alumni Room upstairs). Both begin promptly at 7:30pm. This year's line-up (with one more to come - stay tuned on our website): <https://lsa.umich.edu/umbs>

Tuesday, July 9:

Robots, Telemetry, & the Sex Lives of Wild Birds: Using technology to study courtship and conservation

Lecture by Dr. Gail Patricelli, UC Davis

Wednesday, July 10, 2019:

Courtship behavior in a changing world: basic science in the conservation of sage-grouse

Research Seminar by Dr. Gail Patricelli, UC Davis

Tuesday, July 23:

Our Health and the Health of the Great Lakes

Lecture by Dr. George Bullerjahn, Bowling Green State University

Wednesday, July 24:

Planktothrix and Microcystis: The Toxic Twins of Lake Erie

Research Seminar by Dr. George Bullerjahn, Bowling Green State University

UMBS Exploration Day

Come explore the Biological Station on Saturday August 3, 2019. Through a variety of behind-the-scenes activities, learn about the field courses we teach every spring and summer, as well as the ongoing scientific research we've been conducting since 1909. The program will run from 2-4pm, and begin in the Gates Lecture Hall. Tours and programs will follow. Please note that pets are not allowed in the station because of ongoing research.

State Park Boat Access Closing in September

The boat access facility in the Burt Lake State Park in Indian River will close September 3 for the second phase of a site approval project and remain closed until Spring 2020.

Check www.Michigan.gov/DNRClosures for any changes or updates on the project. For more information on the closure contact

Sherie Owsiak at 231-238-9392 or
OwasiakS@michigan.gov



Burt Lake Sturgeon Club

David Steenstra

It's been a very busy Winter and Spring for the Burt Lake Sturgeon Club. On February 2, BLPA President Jim Burke and director David Steenstra visited the 20th annual Black Lake Sturgeon Shivarree. We were greeted out on the very thick ice of Black Lake by none other than the Sturgeon General, Brenda Archambo. Brenda has done an amazing job of leading the charge to bring back a limited open Sturgeon season on Black Lake. The season opened at 8:00 A.M. By 9:18 A.M. Six Sturgeon were harvested and the season closed. Here is the break-down of the lucky anglers:

8:18 A.M.	Steven Bodinger	56 Inch, 33 pounds	Male
8:23 A.M.	Stephanie Miller	52 Inch, 27 pounds	Male
9:03 A.M.	Scott Kramer	52 Inch, 25 pounds	Male
9:07 A.M.	Robert Dodder	72 Inch, 80 pounds	Female
9:18 A.M.	Doug Boughner	61 Inch, 54 pounds	Female
9:18 A.M.	Tim Raymond	60 Inch, 47 pounds	Male

Congratulations to these lucky anglers. Thank you Brenda and Gil Archambo and the team at Sturgeon for Tomorrow for organizing another fantastic Shivarree. If you have never attended one of these events, you need to do so sometime. It's really quite something to see.

On Valentine's Day, the Sturgeon Club made a presentation at the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council "ice breaker" series. BLPA director David Steenstra discussed the objectives of the Sturgeon Club and how this endeavor fits in with the mission of Burt Lake Preservation Association.



On Thursday, February 21, we attended the annual Sturgeon Advisory Council Meeting at Tuscarora Township Hall. Members of this group include Sturgeon for Tomorrow, DNR Fisheries, Representatives of all five tribes, BLPA, Burt Lake Sturgeon Club, Black Lake Association, Mullett Area Preservation Society, MDNR Conservation Officers, U.S. Coast Guard, and Michigan State University. Discussion topics included management plans, research summaries, hatchery stocking data, law enforcement issues, outreach, and educational programs.



On February 28, we met with Kristopher Dey, Hatchery Manager for the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians. The hatchery is located near Levering. It is state of the art. LTBB is working on stocking Whitefish, Cisco, Lake Trout, and Sturgeon. A special "Thanks" to Kristopher Dey for a tour of the facilities and a wonderful meeting. BLPA and the Sturgeon



Club is excited about the possibilities of collaboration with the tribe.

On February 28, BLPA President Jim Burke, director David Steenstra, SFT President Brenda Archambo, Mary Jones from MAPS, Kristopher Dey and Maxwell Field from LTBB, met with MDNR representatives Neal Godby, Dave Borgeson, Tim Cwalinski, and Ed Baker in Gaylord. The general topic was the Burt Lake Sturgeon Club. Discussions centered around projects for this year, and goals and objectives

Some of the projects for this year include underwater census compilation in the Sturgeon River, assessment and additional data collection in the Indian, Crooked, and Maple Rivers, another potential collaboration project with the University of Michigan Biological Station, further assessment of the Maple River now that the dam has been removed: What is the impact of the new “free-flowing” Maple River?

We have a lot of irons in the fire. These are exciting hands-on activities. As always, you can play a role. If you see a Sturgeon anywhere in our watershed, please call the BLPA office. Let us know. We will follow

up on all sightings immediately. Thanks for your interest, and your involvement.



Chapeau de Esturgeon

Elegant fish deserve elegant hats. These are custom-created from repurposed cashmere sweaters; no two are alike. They're available in adult and children's sizes and provide perfect protection against the cold whether you're out fishing or just enjoying the outdoors. Proceeds benefit the Sturgeon Club. They're available at the Wind Rose Gift Shop next to the theater in Cheboygan and the BLPA annual meeting in July. Dave Steenstra also has some in the trunk of his car.





Up North

Michael and Peg Supernault

On a relatively mild day in late April, we noticed that the last of the snow piles along our driveway were likely to disappear that day. They had been accumulated and solidified by the snow-thrower and plow since January, and reached almost seven feet in height. Frankly, we were glad to see the last of them.

It was a beautiful winter that offered multiple opportunities to snowshoe, ski and hike. Most of all, we deeply enjoy observing the dark Sturgeon River bracketed by banks and fields of the whitest snow. Trees also wore snowy overcoats, and even grasses and shrubs sported white mufflers where they emerged from the snow cover. If you were one who wished for a “Real winter,” by late January your wish had been fulfilled. In a five-day period, more than twenty inches of snow had fallen, with much blowing and drifting. The chill factor had reached minus thirty degrees.

On one of our most blustery days, we were visited by a Rough-legged Hawk, hunting for a tasty morsel for lunch. Michael has always kept a list of bird species seen, and this hawk (which was a first on our property) was number 128. He also has a list for Cheboygan County, and the Rough-legged was number 198 seen by him in our county.

There is always something to see—tracks of many animals who wander through at dusk or dawn—or just when we are not looking. Mink, beaver, deer, squirrel, bobcat, coyote, and rabbit—each leave a trail for us to see. There was even a wing-print in snow where a Bald Eagle had landed to pick up a large piece of suet.



By January 30th, although it was quite temporary, the Sturgeon has a thin skin of ice from bank to bank. That was the first time the river had frozen over since we have lived here. By February 2nd, we were mesmerized by the “Dance of the ice sheets”. As they floated downstream, they would occasionally smash into each other, submerging one under a log jam, or piling up with others in front of the river’s current. When one was caught in an eddy, it would whirl until the river caught it and sent it on its journey.

By early February, the behavior of the turkeys hinted at spring as they puffed out their feathers and mock-chased each other. Deer had difficulty finding food during the harsh late winter, and were seen swimming across a swiftly-flowing Sturgeon River in hopes of better browsing on the other bank. An eagle’s nest was spotted near the river; the pair of eagles perched nearby.



We enjoyed the tranquility of the river during a winter raft trip with friends. Some people have concerns about the possibility of water in the raft and the discomfort of being cold and wet during the trip—but it was not an issue at all. This is always a wonderful experience, filled with deer sightings, various bird visitations and lovely scenery. The animal tracks down to the river banks is a record of their travels. When we spotted an otter slide, we could envision how much fun the otter would have careening down the slope to plop into the water. As grasses and branches dip into the water, icicles form on them, which move with the wind and current. The gentle, bell-like sound of the icicles was a beautiful sound track accompanying our travels.



We were still in Winter's grip in March. As we cross-country skied, we measured the snow depth—about twenty-five inches on the level. However—woodpeckers began their territorial drumming and the eagle was on his favorite perch. He was totally uninterested in the scampering mink moving below, or the turkey flock across the river. He may have been napping, or waiting for lunch to swim by.

The morning of March 18 began with a temperature of twelve degrees, but quickly warmed into the thirties. The wood behind our house was filled with the sounds of our neighbors. The first “Con-ka-ree” of newly arrived Red-winged Blackbirds, the gobble of turkeys, snorts of deer, and the ever-present and very vocal Blue Jays. The warm afternoon was highlighted by list bird # 129. Three Goldeneyes joined the merganser, a Canada Goose, Mallards and a pair of Wood Ducks on the river.



As April approached, we noticed changes in the road traffic. Vehicles that had been topped with ski racks or pulling snowmobile trailers have been swapped out for those with kayak or bike racks. Boats on trailers are now a usual sight, as we start looking toward summer.

For many, including us, the period between March 15th and June 1st is an extremely interesting to observe nature. There are so many changes as the landscape changes from white to brown to green. Mammals are more active, and many have their young now. Plants rejuvenate, with buds turning into leaves and flowers blooming throughout the forest. Insects—even those that are not our favorites—seem to be everywhere pollinating flowers, catching other insects and being eaten themselves by arriving birds and appreciative fish in the lakes and rivers. The changes in birdlife can be

dramatic, as returning species mix with those that spent time here in the winter.



In mid-April, Michael was fortunate enough to witness a wonderful scene. As he glanced up from his book, an eagle dove toward the river—talons out. It was not, however, after the Mallard that is usually in that spot. Instead, it splashed into the river, struggled a bit, and brought out a five-pound trout. In about fifteen minutes, the eagle had devoured most of the fish. Then he seemed to wash his feet in the river and wipe his beak on a nearby fallen tree. When he flew off toward his nest, two ravens immediately glided down to finish the leftovers.



As April morphs into May and temperatures rise toward the 70s, thoughts turn to morels, leeks, boating on Burt, campfires, fishing, company, and gardens filled with flowers and vegetables.

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Please take the time to enjoy and appreciate the beauty of our watershed. Please learn and understand its needs and functions, and its value to all of us. The ecosystem has a huge impact on our mental and physical health. Its beauty impacts our financial health, which we usually overlook. Be kind to the natural communities that are your neighbors. Use less, if any, fertilizer, water less often and plant native vegetation—it needs far less upkeep. Increase your greenbelt, plant a tree, plant for pollinators and keep grass clippings and leaves on the land, not in the lake.



Walk, hike, canoe, swim, boat, kayak—and take some time to just sit in the fresh air. Enjoy the sights, smells and sounds of this beautiful area we call home. Have a wonderful summer!



Introducing the Bair Family Nature Preserve

Katie Parker, Environment and Land Use

An exciting stewardship and outdoor science education plan for the Bair property on the Sturgeon River is being developed. With the assistance and encouragement of the BLPA Board of Directors in 2017, the Bair family donated just under three acres of property along the Sturgeon River in Indian River to the Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC). Named the Bair Family Nature Preserve, this riverfront property is now protected from development for everyone to enjoy. The BLPA will serve as the long-term Volunteer Land Stewards for the Bair Family Nature Preserve, which will include the regular monitoring of the property and reporting according to the LTC Land Steward Monitoring Guidelines. A pathway is being considered to allow easier access to the river. Led by Mike Supernault, the EN-LAND Committee plans to partner with the local public schools to encourage the use of this property for educational field-based, natural history programming.



Drone Operation Requirements

As warmer weather comes to Burt Lake, BLPA members and visitors are reminded that Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) requires operators of all Drones must report their operations and flight of a drone within 5 miles of an airport tower, flight service or airport manager. In the Burt Lake area that is the Pellston (231.539.8441) and Indian River (517.202.9926) Airports managers since there is not a tower. The purpose is to determine air traffic that might be in the area and/or aviation events.

For more information about new drone operation rules go to <https://www.faa.gov/uas>



In summary from the current general FAA requirements for recreational Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Drone pilots in Class G airspace (uncontrolled).

- If flown within 5 miles of an airport, notice must be given to Flight Service, ATC or airport authority as to date and time of operation.
- You must keep your drone within sight. Alternatively, if you use First Person View or similar technology, you must have a visual observer always keep your aircraft within unaided sight (for example, no binoculars).

- You can fly during daylight (30 minutes before official sunrise to 30 minutes after official sunset, local time) or in twilight with appropriate anti-collision lighting.
- Minimum weather visibility is three miles from your control station. The maximum allowable altitude is 400 feet above the ground. Maximum speed is 100 mph (87 knots)
- Cannot fly over anyone not directly participating in the Drone operation, not under a covered structure, or flown from inside a covered stationary vehicle.
- No operations from a moving vehicle are allowed.
- All Drones operators must be registered with FAA and each drone they intend to operate.
- Commercial Drone operators are required to have FAA operator's license and follow more strict rules.
- All drones must be registered and so marked on the Drone the owners FAA registered license number and address, even if flown in your back yard.
- Must be 13 years of age to register. If less than 13 a responsible adult must be registered in that person's place
- Airspace restrictions - Stadiums, sporting events, Security sensitive airspace (i.e.: Mackinaw Bridge), restricted or special airspace.
- Michigan specific law forbids drones to interfere with hunters, locate hunt, trap or catch animals.



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**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 OCTOBER 1, 2019.
Contact editor John Roberts
with suggestions:
darbyburt@icloud.com**

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