



Emmet County Lakeshore Association

Post Office Box 277
Harbor Springs MI 49740

In unity, there is strength

Board Members Contact Info:

Bob Bokram

E-mail: rbok@bignetnorth.net
Telephone: 231.526.5274

Rob Deane

E-mail: f.r.deane@att.net
Telephone: 616.456.8463

Kimberly Dowd

E-mail: kdruns@gmail.com

***Mandi Garber-Secretarial Services**

E-mail: northernsec@yahoo.com

Don Gschwind

E-mail: ldgschwind@yahoo.com
Telephone: 231.526.1158
Telephone: 248.540.1428

Fred Hoffmann

E-mail: dr-fred@live.com
Telephone: 231.526.6611

Lou Kasischke

E-mail: louk@gtlakes.com
Telephone: 231.242.0147

Clas Nilstoft

E-mail: nilstoft@comcast.net
Telephone: (231) 526-8022

Catherine Reindel

E-mail: catherinereindel@sbcglobal.net
Telephone: 231.242.0458

George Reindel

E-mail: georgereindel@sbcglobal.net

Gary Rentrop

E-mail: grentrop@rentropmorrison.com
Telephone: 248.644.6970

Dick Selvala

E-mail: dickselvala@yahoo.com
Telephone: 231.526.5147

Dave Shear

E-mail: dave@elswest.com
Telephone: 734.665.5951 or
Mobile: 734.834.0809

Lucy Somes

E-mail: l_capital@sbcglobal.net

www.emmetcountylakeshore.org

Emmet County Lakeshore Association's 2010 Annual Meeting

ECLA's Annual Meeting was held at the Birchwood Country Club on August 6, 2010. Approximately 75 members were in attendance for the lunch. ECLA's Board of Directors was confirmed by the members in attendance.

President Gary Rentrop provided a brief history of ECLA. Its first organization meeting was held in 1971. ECLA's purpose was established, which has been "to preserve and protect the natural beauty of that portion of Emmet County which lies along the Lake Michigan shoreline between Harbor Springs on the south and Sturgeon Bay on the north". He quoted Mort Neff at that organizational meeting as stating, "I believe we should increase our membership as rapidly as possible since a large membership will carry more weight in dealing with problems which arise." That statement 39 years ago rings true today.

Thanks from the Board were extended to Naomi Singer for her service to

ECLA as its Secretary, to Fran Shepard as a Board Member, and to Dell Wetzel and Dick Cobb as representatives of ECLA on the Heritage Highway Committee.

Issues which the Board had worked upon over the past year were identified as: (1) the M-119 Corridor, (2) Ecology of Lake Michigan, (3) the elimination of Phragmites plants from the shoreline, and (4) Tree Disease.

The speakers at the Annual Meeting were (1) Russell Kidd from Michigan State University Extension Service, who did a presentation on a number of diseases and insects, mostly invasive, that are impacting our trees, and (2) Kevin Cronk from Tip of the Mitt, who did a presentation on Phragmites and the program spearheaded by Tip of the Mitt to chemically treat in order to destroy the numerous stands of Phragmites plants along the shore.

Emmet County Lakeshore Association

Board of Directors

Bob Bokram, Treasurer • Rob Deane • Kimberly Dowd • Don Gschwind
Fred Hoffmann, Nominating Committee • Lou Kasischke, **Vice President**
Clas Nilstoft • Catherine Reindel • George Reindel • **Gary Rentrop, President**
Dick Selvala • Dave Shear • **Lucy Somes, Secretary**

Association Address: ECLA • PO Box 277 • Harbor Springs, MI 49740

Emmet County Lakeshore Association

Fall 2010 Newsletter



Newsletter articles were submitted by:
Gary Rentrop, Lucy Somes

UPDATE: Botulism Toxin, the Asian Carp in Lake Michigan, and Phosphates



Botulism Toxin:

2007: During the fall of 2007 there was an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 water birds that were believed to have died from botulism poisoning along the northern Lake Michigan shoreline. These water birds included loons, gulls, and all ducks, local and migratory in Lake Michigan. As reported in prior ECLA Newsletters, the chain of events leading up to the botulism toxin poisoning of sea birds is: (1) Botulism is naturally occurring on the lake bottom; (2) Mats of Cladophora algae (the same algae we see thick along the Lake Michigan beach) are believed to be caused by clearer water, caused by the invasive zebra and quagga mussels' filtration of plankton from the water and from the mussels' excretions causing the fertilization of the algae. These mats create an anaerobic condition on the lake floor which causes the botulism to produce a toxin; (3) The toxin is ingested by the mussels; (4) The invasive mussels are then eaten by the invasive round goby fish; (5) The dead round goby fish float to the surface and are eaten by sea birds; (6) The toxin causes a paralysis and the birds die from drowning or exposure.

2008, 2009: There was little die-off of sea birds reported in 2008 and 2009. Michigan Sea Grant, which

is studying this problem, believes other factors such as warmer water may be a variable in the chain of events which brings about the toxin poisoning.

2010: This past summer there were reports of dead round gobies washing up on shore. This fall there have been several reports of sea bird die-offs. Mark Brederland of Michigan Sea Grant reported 25+ dead Red-necked Grebes in the vicinity of Brevort River in mid September. Based on these reports it is believed that the fall of 2010 could be another year of botulism deaths of fish-eating birds migrating along Lake Michigan.

Handling and Reporting: The dead water birds should not be handled with bare hands. They can be picked up with disposable gloved hands and placed in a garbage bag for disposal or buried with a shovel. If you find a dead loon please make an effort to determine if it is banded. If it is, please immediately contact Joe Kaplan at Common Coast Research & Conservation for instructions at 906-370-1231. Common Coast Research & Conservation is very interested in retrieving banded loons and have the required Federal and State permits to salvage dead birds.

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Update: Botulism Toxin, the Asian Carp in Lake Michigan, and Phosphates continued...

Asian Carp and the Chicago Sanitary Shipping Canal:

At the Tip of Mitt Annual Summit meeting this summer, Marc Gaden, PhD, from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, provided a presentation on how best to prevent the Asian Carp from entering Lake Michigan. The Carp was introduced into the United States to clean algae from the cat fish farm ponds in the south, including those farms along the Mississippi River. The Asian Carp found its way into the Mississippi river and has been moving north. No Asian Carp have yet been found in Lake Michigan, however, the carp's DNA has been found in the lake and the Asian Carp has been found north of the electric barrier constructed by the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers installed to keep the Carp out of Lake Michigan.

Historically the Mississippi was separated from Lake Michigan topographically at the Illinois River with a natural sub-continental divide. Chicago, at that time, was pumping its sewerage into Lake Michigan but was also getting its drinking water from the Lake. Chicago residents were getting ill and the decision was made to pump the sewerage into the Mississippi, sending it down to St Louis, so as to protect Chicago's drinking water supply taken from Lake Michigan. The Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal was constructed breaking the topographical divide thus allowing the Mississippi to be joined with Lake Michigan and providing a pathway for the Asian Carp to enter the lake.

Suit was filed by five Great Lakes States, not including Illinois, to have the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal closed. The U.S. Supreme Court dismissed the states' lawsuit. The states have now filed a second lawsuit in the U.S. Supreme Court against the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. Marc and others believe the only permanent way to prevent the Asian Carp from entering Lake Michigan is to restore the natural topography, thereby causing the natural hydrological separation of the Mississippi River from Lake Michigan.



Until recently there have been many cooks in the kitchen on the Asian Carp issue, but no one at the federal level in charge of the Asian Carp problem. Strong opposition to the closure of the Sanitary Shipping Canal has come from barge and recreation users of the Canal. Interestingly Marc points out that only 1% of the Mississippi barge traffic enters the Great Lakes. A system which has been used successfully for many years on the east coast could be employed in place of the locks on the canal. This system lifts the vessel out of the water and on rails transports it to the other side.

Phosphate-free dish detergent now the law: In a prior Newsletter we discussed the effects of phosphate acting as a fertilizer in the Great Lakes, adding to the nutrients that are causing the Cladophora algae blooms and algae mats on the bottom of the lakes. In that article we reported that phosphorus in laundry detergent had been banned for a number of years, but not in dish detergent. In July 2010 the ban on phosphorus in laundry detergent became state-wide. There is legislation in the Michigan House now to ban phosphorus in lawn fertilizers.

Fall Lakeshore Phragmites Treatment Completed

Thanks to efforts by the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council ("TOM"), Emmet County, and ECLA Board members, the fall treatment to eradicate Phragmites along the lakeshore has been completed. 231 property owners were contacted by mail by TOM with ECLA Board members making phone calls and personal visits to these property owners to obtain permission to access their property so that the invasive Phragmites plant could be chemically treated. Only 16 property owners said no. The project was a great success.

Phragmites has taken over much of the Saginaw Bay shore line, growing to the water's edge with an almost impenetrable wall of stalks, reaching heights of 7 feet. Phragmites has been caught early enough in Emmet County that they should be able to be controlled. A second treatment in the spring is anticipated.

TOM's Kevin Cronk, who walked the shore identifying the stands of Phragmites, spoke at ECLA's Annual Meeting in August. He brought samples of the invasive Phragmites plant and the native Phragmites plant. Thanks to Kevin for his efforts and for his presentation at our annual meeting. Also thanks to all lakeshore property owners who allowed access to their property for the Phragmites treatment.



Tree Disease and Infestation in Northern Michigan, Part Two

Did you know that forest land in Michigan "accounts for 93 million acres or 53 percent of land..." and that, "97 percent or 18.7 million acres is timberland"? You would if you had attended the Emmet County Lakeshore Association's Annual Meeting in August and listened to Richard Kidd of the Michigan State Extension. Richard gave an excellent presentation and handout on the current state of Michigan's forests, including ideas and samples of what we can do to help save endangered trees on our own property.

Richard explained that, although there are new tree pests since 2000, native insect populations go through natural cycles. Population "crashers" consist of predators, parasites, diseases, weather, etc. From an interesting handout, "2009 Michigan Forest Health Highlights," we learned much about the health of our forests in Michigan. At least one identifiable nonnative species was found when sixty-five percent of plots were sampled. "Higher percentages of nonnative to total species were evident in the Lower Peninsula. Likewise, the percentage of nonnative-species ground cover to total ground cover was higher in the Lower Peninsula."



Dead Ash trees



Emerald ash borer adult. Photo by David Cappaert, Michigan State University, www.insectimages.org.

Native to northern Michigan is the Forest Tent Caterpillar, or FTC, which was a severe defoliator of hardwoods in 2009. This insect has several naturally occurring control mechanisms. One of these includes a parasitic fly, or "Friendly Fly," which helps reduce the FTC populations. The Forest Tent Caterpillar has little spots, or "keyholes" on its hairy back that look like footprints. Their cycle is approximately two to three years.

Another caterpillar that is native is the Eastern Tent caterpillar, affecting crabapple and apple trees. He has a solid back line down his hairy back. The Gypsy Moth is also becoming naturalized. Although these caterpillars may be left alone, other pests are in need of extermination.

A tree harming insect is the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an invasive pest detected in 2002, was brought to the United States aboard shipping pallets and crating from China. EABs have been seen in South East Michigan from the Indiana border to Saginaw. Purple traps, containing an alluring aromatic poison is used to catch these beetles in campgrounds, recreation areas, sawmills and along roadways.

Bayer Advanced Tree and Shrub Insect Control is also an effective insecticide.

From Richard's presentation, along with illustrations, we can appreciate the efforts of the Forest Management Service's efforts to work on eradicating invasive insects and plants, as well as the effects of drought on Michigan's forest lands.

ECLA would like to extend a thank you to Richard Kidd for his informative talk. The "2009 Michigan Forest Health Highlights" can be viewed at www.michigan.gov/foresthealth.

Be sure to attend next year's ECLA Annual Meeting to learn more about preserving our beautiful corner of northern Michigan.