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Tunnel of Trees Update continued....

for the M-119 Tunnel of Trees Scenic Heritage Route outlining the mission, goals and objectives of the Heritage Route. The plan is also available in complete form at each township hall and at the above website. Current projects for the roadway include: a revised guidebook for corridor preservation and protection, submission of a grant by MDOT for road repair and bridge construction and development of educational materials for those who wish to preserve the natural beauty and uniqueness of the state scenic highway and travel the road safely.

ECLA Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting will be held on August 7th at the Birchwood Country Club. Our guest speaker will be Jeff Alexander, author of several books covering environmental issues important to our membership. Please complete the enclosed registration form and forward to us as soon as possible. Seating is limited.

911 Signage Project Continues

ECLA has purchased additional raw materials for green 911 signs. These signs are being offered to our membership at no charge for the first sign and a nominal \$8 for additional signs.

For your convenience, ECLA will have a booth at the Good Hart Mini Fair. Board members will be making signs on site for your purchase or pick up. Please remember that your sign will indicate the location of your residence for both fire and emergency rescue and your correct address is essential. Questions??? Please contact Bob Bokram at 526-5274 or Frances Shepard at 526-7202.

For those of you in Birchwood, we are still awaiting a decision regarding signage in the development.

Emmet County Lakeshore Association

Board of Directors

Bob Bokram, Treasurer • John Carr • Rob Deane • Don Gschwind
Fred Hoffmann, Nominating Committee • Lou Kasischke • Clas Nilstoft
Catherine Reindel • **Gary Rentrop, Vice President** • **Dick Selvala, President**
Dave Shear • Frances Shepard • **Naomi Singer, Secretary**

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

Emmet County Lakeshore Association

Summer 2009 Newsletter



These articles were provided by the following:

Dick Selvala, Gary Rentrop, Catherine Reindel, Frances Shepard and Naomi Singer.

Letter From The President

As we move out of late spring into summer there is a thread of optimism running along the Emmet County Lakeshore Association corridor that is unrelated to the economy for which discussions have a life of their own. The good feelings are about the improved recreational use of the shoreline and near shore waters of Lake Michigan because of the significant increase in water level to as much as a foot above the same period of a year ago.

While there may not be an immediate impact on sale prices, surely lake shore properties have enhanced value with the higher water levels we can look forward to, at least the immediate future.

Our mission with the Lakeshore Association is to represent the interests of residents along the Lakeshore corridor who individually or thru smaller individual associations have less geographical representation, fewer members and primarily seasonal

presence. We can do this best with greater numbers and so we urge you to renew your membership this year and to encourage your northern friends and neighbors to do the same.

This newsletter is being given greater distribution beyond our regular membership roster with the objective of reaching shore area residents that share our belief that our voice is louder with greater numbers. When issues arise affecting the well being of our members and their interests, the leverage of greater membership can be important.

We look forward to seeing many of you this summer, including, at our annual meeting at Birchwood Farms Country Club on August 7th. Have a great summer!

Dick Selvala, President
Emmet County Lake Shore Association
(ECLA)

Tunnel of Trees Update

The ECLA Board and the Heritage Highway Committee have received numerous comments from property owners regarding issues along M-119. Some of the issues property owners may be on the look-out for include inappropriate tree cutting and littering. As a reminder, snowplowing across a state or county roadway is illegal. Residents should be mindful of this as it can cause serious erosion and drainage problems to adjoining properties including the loss of trees and flooding. To assist our membership with their concerns, we spoke with the MDOT representative from Gaylord who has supplied the following contact information for area residents: Theresa Brockway at the MDOT Transportation Service Center 989-344-1802 and the Emmet County Road Commission 347-8142.

The M-119 Tunnel of Trees Heritage Highway Implementation Committee meets regularly on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 9:30 AM. Committee membership includes three representatives selected by each of the following townships; West Traverse, Friendship, Readmond and Cross Village. Three additional members are selected by the ECLA board representing our membership. Additionally, ECLA Board members are also members of the Heritage Highway Committee representing their respective township. Members at large include representatives from local government, the Little



Traverse Conservancy and the Odawa Tribe. A schedule of meeting dates, locations and minutes are available on the web at www.nwm.org/m119.asp or contact Patty O'Donnell, Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, pattyodonnell@nwm.cog.mi.us or 231-929-5039. Naomi Singer is currently serving as chair, and can be reached at singernaomi@gmail.com or 526-6264. Property owners will be receiving a summary of the recent updated Management Plan

In unity, there is strength

Emmet County Lakeshore Association
Post Office Box 277
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Emmet County Lakeshore Association

Lake Michigan — Water Level, Algae, Botulism and Invasive Species



Water Level: In case you have not noticed, Lake Michigan water levels are up, way up. In the 16 months prior to April 2009, levels have risen two feet and are predicted to continue to climb into July this summer. In January 2008 we were looking at the likelihood that lake levels would reach an all-time low, and then they began to climb. In January 2009 it was forecasted that lake levels by April would rise 4 inches, instead they went up 11 inches. Despite the gain, lake levels remain 9 inches below the long-term average for April. The higher water levels are attributed to two cold and wet winters.

The question remains why the lake levels of Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, considered one body of water, remain below the long-term average. An organization known as the Georgian Bay Association ("GBA") undertook a study in 2004. The study concluded that 6 billion more gallons of water were flowing out of Lakes Michigan and Huron per day in 2004 as compared to 1971. The study attributes a substantial portion of this loss to the dredging of the St. Clair River to provide depth for cargo ships. It is alleged the dredging effectively created a larger drain and now has cut through the bed rock to clay which is eroding, causing an ever increasing drainage of the St. Clair River of the water of Lakes Michigan and Huron. The GBA has been pushing for a structure to be placed in the river to reduce the flow. In response to the pressure created by the GBA study, the International Joint Commission ("IJC") responded by conducting its own study. On May 1, 2009 the IJC issued the International Upper Great Lakes Study (IUGLS) draft report which concluded the erosion of the St. Clair River is not ongoing and recommends that "remedial measures not be undertaken at this time." The GBA disputes the findings of the report.

Algae: Cladophora algae has infested Lake Michigan waters in recent years. Along beaches and in the rocks in the shallows off shore, mats of unsightly algae have formed, often making the beach unusable for recreation and adversely affecting shoreline rentals and shore property values. Shore birds which in the past have fed and bred along the beaches had all but disappeared — their food supply smothered in the algae mats. The shoreline at the writing of this article is now free of almost all algae mats and algae growth on shoreline bottom rocks and the shore birds are feeding again along the beaches.

Type E-Botulism: In a prior ECLA newsletter we described what is believed to be the cause of the outbreak of botulism poisoning of fish-eating birds during the fall

of 2007 when it was estimated that 6000 birds died in the stretch of shoreline from Sleeping Bear Dunes to Wilderness State Park. Scientists suspect the algae Cladophora may promote the growth of e-botulism bacteria by providing a suitable habitat for Type E Botulinum toxin to be produced. The USGS reported, "Bird die-offs appear to coincide with massive shoreline accumulations of Cladophora, suggesting a cause-effect relationship." The e-botulism bacteria is ingested by the zebra and quagga mussels, invasive species from ocean waters, which in turn are ingested by the round goby fish which in turn are eaten by fish-eating birds. During the fall of 2008 there was little if any e-botulism deaths of fish-eating birds along the shores of Lake Michigan. Shoreline wave action from higher water levels is preventing the accumulation of algae mats, and colder waters during the summer of 2008 may well be disrupting the habitat for the production of the botulism toxin. We will wait and see what the fall of 2009 holds.

Invasive Species: Along with the zebra and quagga mussels that are significantly affecting the ecology of the Great Lakes, a new invasive species has entered the Great Lakes mostly from the ballast tank discharges from foreign ships entering the Great Lakes through the St. Lawrence Seaway. A new invasive species is discovered about every 28 weeks. In the Great Lakes region, Michigan and New York have recently adopted their own ballast regulations, and Minnesota and Wisconsin are considering possible regulations. While courts have upheld these regulations (most recently in New York where the regulation was just upheld on May 29, 2009), there is a need for federal regulation so that there is uniformity. There are of course other connections from the Great Lakes to "foreign water". The Mississippi and its interconnecting canals and rivers now threaten to create a pathway for the Asian carp to enter Lake Michigan. Asian carp can weigh up to 100 pounds and can reach 4 feet in length. The Asian carp was imported by catfish farmers to keep their ponds free of algae. The Asian carp is now within 38 miles of Lake Michigan. If the Asian carp were to enter the Great Lakes in sufficient numbers to multiply and survive, it would be devastating to the native fish populations and the Great Lakes Ecosystem. In an effort to stop the carp from entering Lake Michigan a demonstration electric barrier has been constructed on the Illinois Sanitary and Ship Canal leading into the Mississippi River, with a permanent electric barrier to be activated in late 2010 or 2011.

Wildfire Danger: Stay Aware

Most wildfires are caused by individuals who are open burning leaves, tree limbs, brush, yard debris or trash. When an open burn fire escapes from an individual's control, the individual can be held responsible for the cost of putting out the fire and for the cost of property damage caused by the fire's escape.

There are rules and regulations about where, when and what we are permitted to burn. An individual may not cause or permit open burning of refuse, garbage or any other waste material except for natural materials such as leaves, trees, logs, brush, grass, and evergreen needles. A burn permit is required to legally burn these natural materials. In Northern Michigan, we can now obtain an open burn permit on the internet by logging on to www.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits. The website has a color-coded map with the burn status applicable to each county:

- **BROWN** — indicates that open burning is not permitted anywhere in the county.
- **ORANGE** — indicates that open burning restrictions are in effect for that county. Select your county for the burn restrictions applicable in your township.
- **GREEN** — indicates that open burning of natural materials is permitted if proper precautions are taken.

The map is updated at 10:00 A.M. each day.

If you do not have access to the internet, you must call (866) 922-2876 to obtain a burn permit, if available under current conditions.

No burn permits are issued for burning natural materials within 1400 feet of a city or village unless specifically authorized by local ordinance. Applicable local ordinances are available on the DNR website.

Burn permits are not required for natural materials burned in a properly constructed burn barrel or home incinerator. See the DNR website for requirements.

Burn permits are not required for cooking or recreational campfires. However, a no burn proclamation can be issued by the Governor because of extreme fire hazard conditions. The DNR website has detailed tips for campfire and outdoor burning and reminds people that you can be held responsible for the cost of putting the fire out if it escapes and for any resulting property damage.

We are responsible for informing our guests and renters including the need to be aware of the information posted by our fire department concerning fire hazard conditions. Keep your eyes open and stay aware. Thank you for your support on this important issue!

