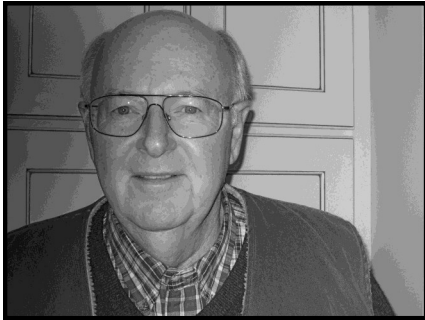




# Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association

## January, 2013



### **Bob King** **President's Message**

Fellow Riparians,

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and that your new year is off to a great beginning. 2012 was another productive year for ESLA except for one aspect. Membership was at a recent record low with only 521 waterfront property owners paying dues. This number is down from a recent high of 644 members in 2008.

Our revenue the last two years was \$50,065 and expenses were \$55,561. This is the first time that our expenses have exceeded our income over a two-year period. The primary reasons have been because of the Rapid and Torch River sedimentation project and the contribution we made to the Village of Elk Rapids for the installation of the courtesy docks.

As many of you are aware, ESLA has had a bank balance of about \$90,000 for a number of years. Some have expressed the view that a

non-profit organization such as our should not be accumulating surplus funds. However, the ESLA Board of Directors considers this a prudent position, allowing us to respond to emergencies that may occur. The potential issues that may arise in the near term are concerning the relicensing of the Elk Rapids dam and the emergence of Eurasian Water Milfoil. Issues related to waterfront development may also prompt ESLA to collaborate with other partners in pursuing legal actions that may be appropriate to protect our property values.

If you became a new waterfront property owner during the last decade, you received a copy of ESLA's *Riparian Handbook* and *ESLA's First Fifty Years*. The former provides information about the specific responsibilities that a riparian has in protecting and preserving our Elk River watershed. The latter describes the contributions that ESLA has made in achieving these common goals. If you need to replace either or both of these documents, please send me an email.

Data from the Traverse Area Realtors Association indicate that home sales went up 26% during the last year with average home prices also rising. But, the long-term value of our property investment is directly tied to the quality of our waters and lakeside environment. ESLA's role is to represent your

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interests in assuring that threats that may diminish these qualities are identified and addressed. Please use the enclosed envelope to submit your 2013 ESLA dues or visit our website – [www.elk-skegemog.org](http://www.elk-skegemog.org) to pay by credit card. We need your support to best represent your inter-

**Reminder — Please renew your 2013 dues or join if your membership is not current. Use the enclosed envelope to submit your 2013 ESLA dues or visit our website – [www.elk-skegemog.org](http://www.elk-skegemog.org) to pay by credit card. ESLA is a volunteer organization which depends totally on relatively modest \$25 annual dues. Please be generous and renew at the \$50, \$75, or \$100 levels.**

## Short's to Short's 2013 kayak paddle event: volunteers needed

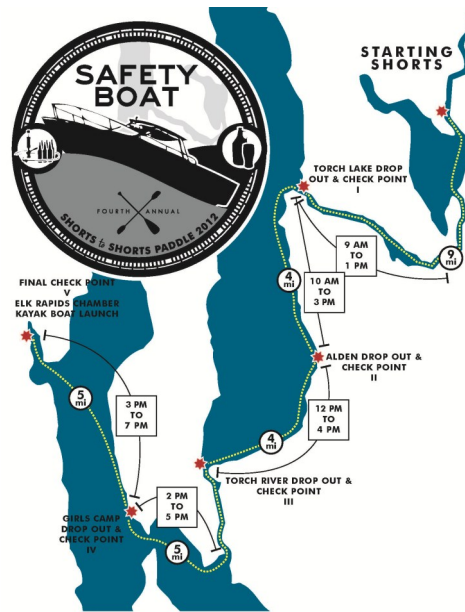
Short's Brewing Company is hard at work planning the 5th Short's to Short's Paddle event, which is scheduled to take place on May 18, 2013. Last year's event fielded over 250 kayakers and we are gearing up for an even larger flotilla in 2013!

As always our priority is to host a safe event. In order to make the event safer than ever, we will need an army of volunteers on land and on the lakes. Three Lakes Association (TLA) and Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association (ESLA) have agreed to partner with Short's to help recruit additional safety boats, observers, and check-point-volunteers to be stationed along the route. Interested boat captains, first mates, and check-point volunteers should contact Todd Gyulveszi at Shorts Brewing Company to become an official member of the safety team by sending an email to Todd at [todd@shortsbrewing.com](mailto:todd@shortsbrewing.com) or by calling (231) 498-2300 ext 105.

To upgrade the safety aspects of the event, Short's is pursuing approximately 50 safety-spotter boats and checkpoints to be strategically placed throughout the near 30-mile journey. This number of safety boats is more than double the number that was available last year. The lake associations have already identified several additional volunteers who are willing to help. Kayakers will paddle along the Chain of Lakes route from the launch site in Bellaire behind Fischer Insurance to the landing point in Elk Rapids at the public kayak launch near the Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce. A post-paddle reception will take place at Short's Elk Rapids Production facility. Volunteers will be rewarded with a bounty for helping out

with this year's event.

Short's has created a Mission Statement for this event that describes what the event means to them now and what it will remain to be for years to come:



SHORTS to SHORTS 2012 SAFETY BOAT SCHEDULE

The Short's to Short's Paddle is an annual point-to-point paddle event that spans Antrim County's entire lower chain of lakes. The event is open to all who possess the skills and perseverance to attempt it. Taking place near the day of Short's Brewing Company's annual anniversary, the event began as an informal meeting of co-workers to celebrate another year of making beer in pristine Northern Michigan. Today, the manta Per Unda Por Zythum (By Water for Beer) remains as strong as ever, yet the mission has expanded to include raising awareness and funds to protect the waters and resources of our region and those who work to

protect them.

ESLA's goal is to help Short's host the largest single day paddling event in Michigan, Short's style, that is not only safe and fun but also to highlight the beauty of this area. ESLA will also make information available to kayakers regarding our efforts to safeguard the quality and clarity of the water in these lakes, and we will mark the location of a few fish shelters on their route.

Shorts will start accepting kayaker registrations on-line mid-January 2013. A special Website for this purpose will be accessible at [www.shortsbrewing.com](http://www.shortsbrewing.com). If you have any questions, please contact Todd Gyulveszi, Short's Brewing Company, Manager of Festivals and Events.

## Notes from Summer 2012 Water Samplings

This past summer saw much of the same work as the last several years performed on our lakes. With the high school summer interns along to learn about our lakes and their environs, I conducted a variety of water quality sampling events. Direct water quality tests included surface water temperatures, Secchi disk readings, E. coli sampling, algal samples from the east and west shores of Elk Lake and a brief search for invasive aquatic weeds. Very little direct work was done in Rapid River because researchers from MSU and TOMWC did most of that technical work this year.

Surface water temperatures in both lakes were high once again. For most of the summer the temps mirrored each other. The interns spent most of their time on Elk Lake but did sample with Dale Claudepierre on Skegemog one week. During week ten (the middle of August), I noted an anomaly on Elk Lake. The water temperature had dropped by 2-3 degrees Fahrenheit. There had been several cloudy, rainy days previous to sampling, but no such large change occurred in Skegemog. Because this was so unexpected I sampled approximately one mile north of our usual sample site and found exactly the same surface temperature. No factor, other than weather, could account for this anomaly.

Secchi disk readings, which measure water clarity, were also made weekly. Remember that these clarity readings are due to three factors: suspended sediment, floating algae and calcium carbonate crystals, which form as the water warms up. The readings cannot separate these factors out. This past summer showed no important changes for the Secchi disk readings in either lake.

The E. coli samples were done at road ends and boat/kayak launch sites. Only one site showed high E. coli readings: the kayak launch along US-31 north of Rotary Park. The site was re-tested and found high numbers (more than 300 bacteria/100ml.) again. This site is frequented by large numbers of waterfowl, mink, otters and occasionally dogs. I would advise not standing in this water long and toweling off as

quickly as possible after using this site. The village and health agency will be contacted this spring to advise them of the high readings found in 2012.

Algal samples collected from the bottom of Elk Lake ('brown crud') were sent to PhycoTech for identification. This was the third year of such sampling from both the east and west shores. No troubling species or numbers of algae were noted. The variety of algae found increased somewhat and this is generally a sign of good aquatic diversity. This type of sampling is more expensive than other samplings done and I propose that this sampling can be discontinued at this point. Should troubling mounts of algae be found in the future, The sampling program can be re-instated.

A brief survey for Eurasian water milfoil (EWM) was conducted in Torch River bayou and Skegemog Lake. This extremely aggressive rooted aquatic plant has been recently found in the Elk River Chain of Lakes. The Six Mile Lake Association is having a difficult time trying to control a large amount of this weed. You may have also read in local papers that Three Lakes Association has been trying to eradicate this species in Torch Lake, with little success.

In our brief survey in August we could not confirm the presence of this weed. But, because this weed spreads from any small segment broken off the parent plant, it is highly likely to move into our lakes. This 'fragmentation' spreading includes segments that might be carried on boats or trailers from lake to lake. Those who move their boats should wash them thoroughly and allow them to dry, for a week or more, if possible. ESLA will be addressing this issue in the coming boating season.

Thomas Yocum  
Water Quality Monitor

## Elk Rapids Area History Storyboards Project Background

About 2 years ago members of the Elk Rapids Rotary Club and representatives of the Elk Rapids Parks and Recreation Commission set out to brainstorm ideas as to increase the usage of Rotary Park in Elk Rapids. Many ideas came out of that exercise. The most ambitious idea was to somehow use the park area to present some his-

mittee.

After several meetings the idea of a new kiosk in the park was abandoned in favor of using a building that already existed, the pavilion in Rotary Park. In fact, two very nice historical photo-



torical information concerning the Elk Rapids area and the chain of lakes. A committee was formed to develop details on this concept. Members of the committee represented the Historical Society, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Rotary Club and business community. The original concept was to construct some sort of a kiosk featuring historical photographs of the Elk Rapids area and surrounding waterways with appropriate narrative panels. The committee called itself the Elk Rapids History Kiosk Com-

graphs were already mounted on the deck railing of the pavilion. These were put in place by the Rotary Club about 6 years ago. A concept evolved which included 3 storyboards on the inside north wall of the pavilion. This step is phase 1 of a long range plan for the pavilion. Phase 2 is still taking shape but will likely include a full wall map of the chain of lakes, Elk Rapids and East Bay. This map will be on the outside north wall of the pavilion. Ground mounted photo-

(History Storyboards—continued from page 4)

graphs and narrative storyboards will correspond with numbers on the map. A walkway and viewing platform will allow visitors to study the map and learn from the ground mounted storyboards. The theme of this outdoor display will be the nautical heritage of the region. Our goal with both project phases is to present some Elk Rapids area local history to visitors and local residence in a beautiful setting, right here along the Elk River in Rotary Park.

Going back to phase 1, the 3 storyboards each feature specific aspects of our local community history. The center storyboard features the areas first inhabitants, the Anishinabek and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. The panel to the west features general historic photos of early Elk Rapids. The storyboard to the east is very much linked to its location in the park. It is titled, “Why All the Stumps?” and informs the reader how the level of Elk River and Elk Lake has changed over the last century as a result of dams being constructed for various industrial application. It should be noted that a QR code is located on one of the storyboards. Interested people can scan this code with appropriate smart devices and link to the Elk Rapids Historical Society home page for additional information and encouragement to visit the museum in Elk Rapids.

Acknowledgements: Many individuals have contributed to the completion of phase 1. Glenn Neumann using his experience and Historical Society records selected most of the photographs. Glenn and others worked on the narrative supporting each photo. Tom Vranich helped with his broad knowledge of resources that could be applied to make the displays very professional. Reverend Tom John reviewed the center panel with some tribe elders to make sure they were comfortable with the presentation. The professional storyboard layout was done by Jim Witte who donated his time and talent. Printing of the storyboards was done by Britton Banner of Traverse City. The Elk Rapids Parks and Recreation Commission and the Rotary Club offered funding for the project. And of course, every-

one on the committee contributed many hours of time and ideas to the completion of phase 1.

The committee has begun work phase 2 of the project. Phase 2 more complex than phase 1 and will be significantly more expensive so fund raising will be an issue sometime later this year. If anyone has ideas as to the design of phase 2 or individuals/groups that might have an interest in supporting phase 2 please let me know.

Finally, one of our plans for the future is to approach MDOT , Michigan Department of Transportation, and request “Historical Marker Ahead” signs along US-31. If successful this would bring additional visitors to the park and our community. We are also hopeful that the displays here in the pavilion will encourage local citizens to learn more about the rich heritage of this area and surrounding waterways.

Jim Sak, Committee Chairman  
231-264 6069  
jsak@tm.net

## **Attention Anglers**

### **Do you regularly fish for lake trout in Elk Lake?**

If so, please contact the MDNR for information on participating in an angler diary program. If already participating, please remember to keep fishing!

Contact:

Jory Jonas  
Fisheries Research Biologist  
96 Grant Street, Charlevoix MI, 49720  
(231) 547-2914 xt 229  
Jonasj@michigan.gov



## Invasive Aquatic Plants 2012 and Beyond

Earlier in this issue, I reported that Eurasian water milfoil (EWM) has been observed in most of the Elk River Chain of Lakes. This invasive plant spreads aggressively and can become so thick that it impedes boat travel. The plant roots and grows to the surface. The only part that appears above water are the small flower heads, appearing in late July or August. The plant breaks apart easily and the floating fragments can root whenever they catch along the bottom. This is the main factor in their aggressive spread through a lake or river.

There is a native milfoil, which is not as aggressive as EWM, and usually causes no problems. One problem that has been noted in recent years is that hybridization has been found between the native form and EWM. This hybridization creates a form that is both aggressive and hard to properly identify. Such hybrids were verified in Torch Lake last year and can be expected to be present elsewhere.

Currently, there are several methods of control that have been used against EWM, all with mixed results. One method of control is the use of herbicides released into the water. These herbicides can eradicate native plants as well as EWM and are most effective in small bodies of water. More recently a small weevil that feeds on EWM has been tried in Six Mile Lake, as well as many other lakes. The weevil control method has generally proved slow and mainly slows EWM growth, rather than eliminating it.

Two physical methods of removal or prevention of EWM are being tried in several sites. In Torch Lake in 2011, Physical removal by divers, using suctioning hoses to prevent the spread of plant fragments, proved to be ineffective. More EWM was spotted in 2012 than had been present previously. Moreover, this method is costly. A second physical attempt to circulate and aerate water along the lake bottom has been set up in Paradise Lake near the Mackinac Bridge, along with other sites. It appears to be too early to tell what results this method produces.

It should be noted by riparians that aquatic weeds

along our shores can be a mixed blessing. Native plants can, and do, provide shelter and food for many aquatic organisms such as young fish, crayfish, frogs, mussels and many more.

To show how weed beds can be a concern to many, I was asked to examine and identify plants from both sides of Elk Lake last summer. The first plants, found on the east side, turned out to be Chara, a green alga that grows to several inches on the bottom of most lakes in northern Michigan, and elsewhere. It is a native alga and under most circumstances creates no problems. Some people might not appreciate wading across it barefooted but it is not toxic, does not cut or irritate the skin and can be left undisturbed. It is not an aggressive alga.

The second plant, found on the west side of Elk Lake, turned out to be a native pondweed. It grows rooted to the bottom and extends up toward the surface, like EWM. It has quite a different appearance than milfoils: the leaves are somewhat arrow-shaped and flattened. This can be a rapidly expanding plant as the riparian who asked me to examine it described. From a small patch in June it expanded to three or four times larger by August. Such growth is normal where there are no other aquatic plants to compete with it.

The native pondweeds (there are a couple of invasive pondweeds now) provide shelter and food for aquatic organisms as discussed above. In this particular instance, the weed bed was interfering with PWCs by entering and clogging the propulsion system. The best method of controlling native weeds would be raking them out manually. However, be prepared for the spread of these plants through fragmentation and re-sprouting from the roots. You may create weed beds in front of neighboring properties. Please try to keep informed. In the meantime, I would suggest looking at websites for the MDEQ and Michigan Natural Features Inventory highlighting invasive species. Google can certainly give you enough information to keep you informed.

## ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION

Sept 1, 2012 — August 31, 2014

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#### **ZONE C**

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Hugh Ryan	7866 Hoiles Dr. Williamsburg	267-5380	<a href="mailto:hnryan@torchlake.com">hnryan@torchlake.com</a>

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**ESLA WEB SITE: [WWW.ELK-SKEGEMOG.ORG](http://WWW.ELK-SKEGEMOG.ORG)**

## *Reminder*

*Please renew your 2013 dues or join if your membership is not current. Use the enclosed envelope to submit your 2013 ESLA dues or visit our website – [www.elk-skegemog.org](http://www.elk-skegemog.org) to pay by credit card.*

*Thank you for your continued support and participation.*

ESLA  
P.O. Box 8  
Elk Rapids, MI 49629

## **ESLA NEEDS YOU**

ESLA is a volunteer organization composed of people motivated to preserve our beautiful lakes and streams and educate the public. Unfortunately, as our member continues to age and fewer people appear have time/willingness to contribute, ESLA is struggling to continue our distinguished record of protection and education. ESLA needs your leadership. If you have not been active in ESLA but wish to make a contribution, even a small one, of your leadership and talent, please contact Bob Kingon ([rjkingon@prodigy.net](mailto:rjkingon@prodigy.net)).

## **ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION**

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Robert Stibbs	Treas.	231-218-5391	<a href="mailto:stibbs@omico.net">stibbs@omico.net</a>

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