



Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association

June 2015



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Here's to the best days of my life, spent in the arms of another woman's husband – here's to my father.....Irish Salute. With Father's Day fast approaching, I'm reminded of the impact my father had on my life. His attributes which I admired the most were his love for my mother, his integrity and his patience (of Job.) His father died when he was 9 years old and his sister was 1 year old. I marvel, considering the hardships he grew up with, that he became the man he became, or perhaps, in spite of those challenges.

As far back as I can remember, he had a great love of reading, history and nature. He loved reciting Robert Burns. Growing up, the nightly ritual was being read a story. His inflections were perfect; we were squealing with delight or scared to death, depending on the character. A poignant moment came

when, about 10, I decided I was too old to kiss and say 'good night, Daddy' and started saying 'Dad'. There were wonderful trips to the library, which became my second home. A bookstore to me is like a candy shop to most others. Due to his love of history; in his telling it, or my reading about it, the whole world became fascinating and the people and places were so real, I wanted to live during those times. Due to life's circumstances, I've been lucky enough to visit places I had only seen in pictures from a book.

His love of nature is 'the rest of the story'. Learning from nature is both infinite and rewarding beyond compare. All the walks in the woods, when you didn't even realize you were learning to identify flowers and birds by their song; clouds that predict rain or snow; croaking frogs in early spring; the names of constellations; the names of creeks and rivers; kinds of fish; it is endless.

All those loves that were passed on have now become passions for me. I am so fortunate to be involved in ESLA. It is nature at its best! It is continuing to learn how to become the best stewards of our environment, lakes, rivers and streams. It is collaboration with other lake associations and watersheds. It is working together and playing together and helping us be winners along with nature. I am looking forward to seeing all our

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members again at our annual meeting at 5:30 p.m. on June 27 at the Twisted Fish Gardens in Elk Rapids.

ESLA is fortunate to be working with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council on another project. TOM presented a Master's Project proposal for creating a watershed management plan for the Elk River Chain of Lakes. Five graduate students from U of M's School of Natural Resources and Environment have selected this project. Their team is quite diverse in both their interest and expertise which they believe will be beneficial for accomplishing the goals of this project. Following is a little background about who they are and their field of study:

LAUREN SILVER – She is

President's Message Cont.

a first year conservation ecology student specializing in aquatic ecosystems and ecological restoration. She studied ecology and environmental science as an undergraduate student and has experience with water quality testing, plant identification, GIS, ecology of fishes, and invasive species management. She is familiar with the Northwestern Michigan region and has previously worked for the Grand Traverse Conversation District as well as the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy.

ELLIOT NELSON – He is studying Behavior, Education and Communication as well as Conservation Ecology and is a former teacher. His expertise includes water quality testing, education/outreach, communication with different stakeholders, and plant and bird identification.

KEVIN PETERSON – He is a conservation ecology and environmental informatics student. His undergraduate degree is in biology and he has worked with several environmental non-profits. He has experience with water quality and macroinvertebrate identification, outreach and GIS.

BRANDON LIST – He is a landscape architect now pursuing a master's degree in sustainable systems. His expertise includes site design, data analysis and GIS, and project management.

STEPHANIE MILLER – She is studying environmental informatics and has a background in mathematics. She has experience with databases and GIS and worked in IT for several years.

All of the students share a passion for conserving, protecting, and restoring the water resources of the Great Lakes Region.

2015 ESLA Summer Interns

Each summer ESLA sponsors an intern program to involve Elk Rapids High School students in the monitoring of lake and stream water quality. The process we use includes working with the Elk Rapids High School teaching staff to identify students that have an interest in general science, chemistry or biology.

The intern program events this year will include water sampling in the Rapid River as part of the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Center "Adopt a Stream" program as well as doing lake quality tests on Elk Lake and Lake Skegemog. In addition the interns will help with the evaluation of treatment techniques for eradication of the invasive hybrid Eurasian watermilfoil that was confirmed in two locations last year.

Another project involving the interns will be the assessment of aquatic invasive species in our lakes, that will be directed by the Tip-of-the-Mitt Watershed Center. As in the past the interns will complete their assignment by writing a report on some aspect of the summer work and presenting that material to the ESLA Board of Directors as well as the Elk Rapids School Board.

Dale Claudepierre
Board Member and Intern Mentor

Update: The Elk Rapids Hydro Dam FERC Application



Remember the Dam? The process for relicensing the Elk Rapids Hydro Electric Dam with the Federal Regulatory Commission (FERC) began in 2009 as a five year relicensing project and continues to move forward, albeit slowly, to a conclusion. The effort for the relicensing was frontloaded by a coalition led by Mark Stone, Antrim County Drain Commissioner, with an extraordinary support from ESLA and a coalition (see <http://3lakes.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/02/relicensing-elk-rapids-dam.pdf>) of local associations and

agencies. The current license for the Dam expired 31 December, 2014, but the license has been extended by FERC until final determination of the pending relicensing application.

The FERC relicensing project is officially identified as Elk Rapids Hydroelectric Project # P 3030. FERC issued notification of the release of the Environmental Assessment and its availability, reference Antrim County Project P # 3030, for review on 16 May, 2015. The Environmental Assessment addresses the findings, requirements and everything else to date. It is the final document before FERC approves or disapproves the license. The notice of release represents an approximate 30 day window for stakeholders i.e. agencies/riparians to exercise public comment as necessary.

The new FERC license for the Elk Rapids Hydro Electric Dam, if approved, will represent an approximate 30 year license. The relicensing process has had the good fortune of having the assistance of the operators of the ER Hydro Electric Dam, the Stockhausen family. They have provided their expertise and the continued competent and responsive operation of the ER Hydro Electric Dam.

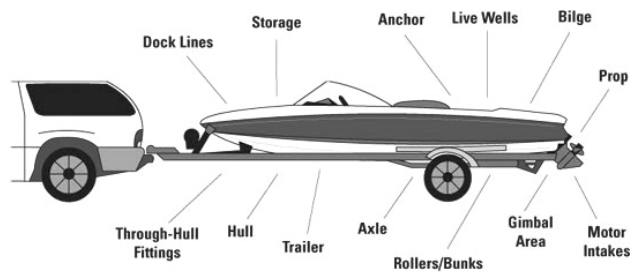
Every action/interaction to date has been addressed as requested from FERC. We (the coalition) have been forthcoming, responsive, candid, comprehensive and more. We have presented, in our view, a compelling case for approval. We are confident, at this late date, that the FERC relicensing of the Elk Rapids Hydro Electric Dam will be approved, but like in any process, one is not assured of anything until the official announcement is delivered. In summary, “ I think we’re gonna be alright.” (from the movie, Monsters Ball).

Pete DiMercurio, ESLA Board of Directors

Free Boat Inspection

My name is Scott Boni, I was just put in charge of the Recreation Department in October of last year. I wanted to write to you today

Before launching and before leaving...
Inspect everything!



to inform all the Lake Associations of a Marine Vessel Safety Inspections that we are implementing this year. There will be a Marine Vessel Safety Inspection for the general public on June 20, starting at 10:00am. We will be holding it at the Milton Township Fire Station just north of Torch River Bridge.

We wanted to let the citizens of Antrim County and members of lake associations have a chance to get their boats inspected without charge or possible penalty. It gives us a chance to meet the public and members from the different Associations and let them meet some of our Marine Deputies. It will show the public that we are serious about Boater Safety and that we are leading from the front. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call or e-mail me at.: Cell - [231-350-2943](tel:231-350-2943); Work- [231-533-3538](tel:231-533-3538); Email- bonis@antrimcounty.org

Scott Boni, Deputy, Antrim County Recreation Department

ESLA Photo Contest

Our fifth annual photo contest is ready to begin. This year we will hold the contest for submissions throughout the four seasons in order to further capture nature in all its diversity and our lakes as they transform and work their magic through the year. **Entries can be made through May 31, 2016.** There will be prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place once the judging has concluded in **June, 2016.** Another change is that **there will be no calendar.**

Soon the ESLA website (starting this June 15) will be ready to accept entry forms and your photos. The contest is for all ages, and pictures should reflect the beauty of the Elk-Skegemog area and the many ways of enjoying what surrounds us. There is no fee to enter and the contest is open to all Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association (ESLA) members and their families.

We thank all who have submitted photos in the past and hope you continue to add to the photo archive on our website, capturing the beauty of nature, family, and friends in the place we call home.

Photos are used for promotional opportunities for ESLA. Remember, there are cash prizes to win and the addition of your photo to the ESLA Website Gallery. Please go to the ESLA website for details starting June 15. Photos must be submitted by May 31, 2016 in order to qualify.

We hope everyone will participate!

Senate Bills 39 and 40

The Michigan Waterfront Alliance recently distributed an “action alert” notification regarding two Michigan Senate Bills, 39 and 40. The notice contained a brief description of the proposed legislation, which was described as potentially impacting “all recreational and industrial usage of all state land in Michigan...”.

The two sponsors of these bills, State Senator Tom Casperson from Escanaba and State Senator Darwin Booher from Northern Lower Michigan, assert (<http://bridgemi.com/2012/08/senator-a-primary-objective-should-be-to-return-land-to-private-ownership/>) that the DNR owns too much land and that there is no plan for the purchase, sale, or premier management of State lands. In 2012, Senator Casperson introduced a bill to cap the amount of land that the DNR could acquire to 4.626 million acres and subsequently the bill was signed into law by Governor Snyder. Since the DNR already owned 4.59 million acres, the new cap left a cushion of about 17,000 acres. In essence, the DNR is now in a position where it cannot acquire any more public lands in Michigan (with some very specific exemptions) without divesting of existing parks, recreational lands, public boat launches, etc.

Senator Casperson has reportedly said that the DNR should forget about acquiring any more property in the U.P. or the northern Lower Peninsula (<http://bridgemi.com/2012/08/how-much-of-michigan-should-public-own/>). According to him, the “primary objective should be to return land to private ownership”. If you have ever enjoyed any of the public lands in Michigan, including State parks, State forests, State recreation areas, State game areas, or DNR public boat launches, Senator Casperson’s intention to return public land to private ownership should be of concern.

Senate bills 39 and 40 would place further restrictions on the DNR. In a preliminary analysis of Senate bill 39 disseminated on February 27th, 2015 the Michigan Environmental Council stated the following:

We have identified at least two areas where we see potential to work toward common objectives:

- Greater transparency in terms of DNR land access and regional ownership patterns.
- Greater clarity in the existing definition and process of “surplus land” designation and sale.

There are three main areas of concern to MEC, and a series of related issues, which would also lead to our opposition of the bill as drafted. The three primary concerns are:

- The bill would require motorized access onto all public lands and trails, regardless of potential negative impacts to other users and natural resources, or safety issues.
- The bill could force the DNR to sell any state-owned land or grant any easement requested, regardless of the recreational loss and impacts on public resources.
- The multi-use nature of Michigan’s state forests would be jeopardized by the establishment of universal timber harvest targets of 95% of minimum allowable sale quantities.

Senate Bills 39 and 40 cont.

Several additional concerns also were identified in that analysis. They included:

- Creating a 5-year annual approval process of the DNR Land Strategy for Removal of Land Cap
- Adding that PILT (payments in lieu of taxes) payments be directly tied to Removal of Land Cap
- Creating additional penalties for trespass specific to DNR employees.

The analysis by MEC contains considerably more detail which cannot be included in this newsletter. The complete document can be found on the ESLA website at:

<http://www.elk-skegemog.org/>

(Editor's note: in addition, I have produced a more "personal" evaluation of this proposed legislation which is available on my website at: <http://deanwginther.com/>)

Senate bill 39 can be viewed here:

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2015-2016/billintroduced/Senate/pdf/2015-SIB-0039.pdf>

Senate bill 40, which places considerable constraints on the funding of the DNR, can be viewed here:

<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2015-2016/billintroduced/Senate/pdf/2015-SIB-0040.pdf>

Dean W. Ginther

ESLA Newsletter Editor and Board Member

Attention Anglers

2015 Changes in Fishing Regs

Historically, the regular bass season is from the Saturday before Memorial Day through December 31. The minimum size limit is 14" with a daily possession limit of 5 total or in combination with walleye, pike, and flathead catfish. The DNR has now added a catch-and-immediate-release season from the last Saturday in April through the Friday before Memorial Day weekend. This will allow fisherman to target bass earlier as long as they immediately release the caught fish. Previously, it would have been illegal to target bass while fishing before the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. Of course incidental bass catches occur out of season and you're OK as long as you immediately release the fish.

2015 Summer Free Fishing Weekend

During the 2015 Summer Free Fishing Weekend (June 13 & 14) all fishing license fees will be waived for two days. Residents and out-of-state visitors may enjoy fishing on all waters for all species of fish. All other fishing regulations still apply. For Free Fishing Weekend events in your area, click on any county listed below.

Ken Krentz
ESLA Board Member

ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION

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Annual Meeting June 27 , 2015

Please RSVP at the ESLA website: www.elk-skegemog.org

You are invited to attend the ESLA 2015 Annual Meeting at the Twisted Fish Gardens in Elk Rapids beginning at 5:30 p.m on June 27. There will be great food, conversation, information, and a brief business meeting, which will include the election of new/returning officers. Below is the proposed slate of officers for 2015-2016:

President.....Ruth Bay
Vice President.....Dale Claudepierre
Recording secretary.....Kathy DiMercurio
Correspondence Secretary.....Kathi Gober
Treasurer.....Robert Stibbs

Meet your ESLA neighbors, renew your acquaintances, and make new ELSA friends.