



# Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association

## January, 2015



### President's Message

Welcome to 2015! The farewell to the previous year and the welcoming to the New Year makes me contemplate the verse "To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Following are 7 lines with 28 'times'. We all experience our 'seasons' and 'times', some in exactly the same way and others in as many different ways as there are people in the universe – hopefully, with loved ones, to share our sorrows and joys, with gratitude and grace.

We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated and hardwork-

ing board, which complement each other with their education and expertise in many fields. With our current projects and programs, we will be needing volunteers, our upcoming 'seasons', of spring and summer. If you have a few hours, we welcome you with open arms, an experience you are sure to enjoy.

Our 'time to sew' and 'time to reap' is culminating in various projects, in which we are partnering with Tip of the Mitt and other Lake Associations. We have been included in 2 grant proposals for treatment of invasive species. We are also involved in the Natural Shoreline Champion Program. Of much interest is "Because of the Water", "Kewadin Waterfront Park" and "Loon Network". Articles on all these subjects will follow, in this newsletter.

January, the beginning of the new year is the perfect 'time' to begin our Membership campaign and we invite all riparians to join the Elk Skegemog Lakes Association. Your membership dues are

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the primary support of this volunteer based organization. ESLA supports a variety of projects that protect our waters and lands, promote safety, serve the local communities, and educate our members and the citizens in our area.

In an effort to reduce costs and communicate in a more timely and efficient manner, we have created and maintain an e-mail list we use to distribute the newsletter electronically. You may be included on this list by visiting the website ([www.elk-skegemog.org](http://www.elk-skegemog.org)) and providing your name

## President's Message Continued

and e-mail address for inclusion. Please invite your family members or interested friends to include their information on this list – we are happy to include anyone interested in receiving our newsletter. This also provides a more reliable delivery than the current forwarding method for regular mail.

If you need to change or update any of your contact information, include family members or just ask questions, please send us an e-mail at [info@elk-skegemog.org](mailto:info@elk-skegemog.org). We will respond to your request.

If you receive the printed newsletter, you will find an envelope included in this newsletter to complete and mail your payment in. However, it is probably quicker to visit the ESLA website – [www.elk-skegemog.org](http://www.elk-skegemog.org) – and make your payment either by credit card or your PayPal account where indicated.

Thank you in advance for your continued support of ESLA.

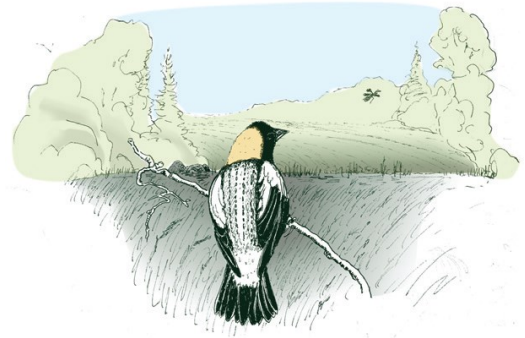
Ruth Bay, ESLA President

### **ESLA Invasive Watermilfoil Eradication Plan (continued from page 3)**

Permit requests are being submitted this month with the Michigan DEQ. Riparians will be contacted by ESLA for the specific area where the infestations have been located. Treatment will likely begin in May or June, depending on the water temperature in the areas under consideration.

3. Complete the shoreline survey of Lake Skegemog and Elk Lake: As a result of a two year grant received by TOMWC both of our lakes will be surveyed in 2015 with an emphasis on invasive aquatic vegetation, especially watermilfoil. ESLA volunteers and the summer interns will be on our lakes this summer, working with water quality experts, to search for problem areas and map the spots for further investigation. We encourage all riparians to look for suspicious water vegetation and notify your zone captain or Dale Claudepierre ([ginidale70@gmail.com](mailto:ginidale70@gmail.com)) regarding any concerns.

## **Elk Rapids Providing Bird Habitat**



Through a collaboration with GreenER, Elk Rapids has become the first community in the world certified by Saving Birds Thru Habitat. GreenER is working to promote bird watching, the second most popular outdoor activity in the country, as an element of eco-tourism for people of all ages in Elk Rapids. Properties owned by this Village host significant numbers and varieties of native plant species. These plants support healthy bird populations by producing an abundance and diversity of insects.

## ESLA Invasive Watermilfoil Eradication Plan (Dale Claudepierre)

In the September 2014 ESLA newsletter there was an article on the discovery of invasive Hybrid Eurasian Watermilfoil (HEWM) in Elk Lake and the Torch River watershed. The detailed report prepared by the 2014 ESLA summer interns is available at [www.elk-skegemog.org](http://www.elk-skegemog.org). There were several recommendations included in this report and at the December 11, 2014 ESLA Board of Directors meeting the following plans were approved relative to each recommendation:



1. Apply for financial assistance: the Tip of The Mitt Watershed Council (TOMWC) coordinated a grant application to the Michigan DEQ for financial assistance in controlling invasive species throughout the Elk River Chain of Lakes (ERCOL). Part of the TOMWC grant application to DEQ is to request funds to use benthic barriers to prevent the growth of watermilfoil. This approach lays a barrier on the bottom of the lake and cuts off sunlight to the aquatic plants. The fabric must be permea-

ble to allow gases from decaying plants to pass through. Benthic barriers are sheets (or mats) of plastic or fabric that are placed over vegetation to indiscriminately kill what is under the sheet. Normally HEWM will be eradicated in 8 weeks and often the native plants return. The advantages versus herbicide treatment are there are no water use restrictions and the mats are normally reusable. The included photo above is from the Lake Louise Christian Community Association which shared their experience with us regarding the method they used to construct their benthic barrier mats. Based on their success this design will be the basis for our mats. The most likely locations for the application of these mats are along the Torch River and in the Torch Bayou, as well as in Torch Lake, and this plan will be implemented following the confirmation of the DEQ grant.

2. Develop a plan for herbicide applications: based on the experience of other ERCOL associations, some watermilfoil infestations require herbicides to control the invasive aquatic vegetation. ESLA has hired PLM Lake and Land Management Corporation to work with us to evaluate the specific sites where Hybrid Eurasian Watermilfoil has been confirmed and to recommend a treatment plan. PLM has extensive experience in Six Mile Lake and Torch Lake and has been successful in controlling a variety of aquatic infestations.

## Because of the Water Update (Jim Sak)

Hopefully by now you have seen the beautiful map of the “tip of the mitt” displayed on the north wall of the Rotary Park picnic pavilion.



This map was designed by Mark Stone owner of Michigan Maps. His time and talent were donated to the project. ESLA contributed \$1,000 toward this project, since the project highlights the role of water resources in the development of the Elk Rapids area over the last few hundred years.

During the winter and early spring months the committee will continue work on the viewing patio design and select historic photographs for the ground mounted storyboards to be placed in various locations in the viewing patio area. The design of the introductory panel, “Because of the Water”, will also be completed this winter. This panel will be mounted on the northwest corner of the pavilion and be a continuation of the map now mounted on the north wall.

Sometime this spring we will be looking for volunteers to help with the construction of the patio viewing area and placement of the storyboards. If you would like to help for a few hours contact Jim Sak at [jsak@tm.net](mailto:jsak@tm.net).

## Planned Kewadin Waterfront Park (Bob Kingon)

In 2014, Milton Township had a unique opportunity to establish a park in the heart of Kewadin to include 198 feet of frontage on Elk Lake. The Township purchased a property that is immediately west of the historic Milton Township Hall (the Water’s Edge Market is immediately east of the Hall). This property comprises 3 acres on the north side of Cairn Highway and a strip on the south side with 38 feet of frontage on Elk Lake. On the south side of Cairn Highway the Township purchased property that is directly across the Highway from the Township Hall and that has 160 feet of frontage on Elk Lake and is 200 feet deep.

In June, the Township selected Gosling Czuback Engineering Services (GCES) from among three proposers to provide design services for developing the parkland. GCES has provided the Township with phased options for development and is assisting the Township in submitting a grant request to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTN) administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The property on the north side of Cairn Highway will be primarily a parking area and allow for improved landscaping in front of the Hall and along the eastside of the building. A mid-block crosswalk will be installed to allow park users to safely cross Cairn Highway. The Lakeside portion of the Park will include restrooms, rooftop plaza space, picnic areas, playground equipment and beach enhancements. Details of these plans and related costs are being developed now for the MNRTN grant application and a public hearing will soon be scheduled. The Park will not only serve the residents of Milton Township and surrounding areas, but will also be a featured destination for kayakers on the Chain Of Lakes Water Trail.

# Attention Anglers

## Fall Update: DNR Study of “Remnant” Lake Trout (Ken Krentz)

The Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources study of lake trout in Elk Lake has had significant progress this fall under the direction of MDNR biologist Jory Jonas and CMU graduate student Kyle Broadway.

This study of an apparently unique strain of lake trout, perhaps only found in Elk Lake, is supported by a \$5000 grant from ESLA to supplement radio tracking equipment purchases required. The research plan is to

net several fish, insert tracking tags below their dorsal fins, then return them to the lake for electronic tracking. Data gathered will provide an understanding of the trout's life cycle and perhaps why we have a self sustaining population in Elk Lake. Most lake trout in the Great lakes and inland lakes are not reproducing in the wild. One exception is Elk Lake. Thus, this research is potentially quite significant for the lake trout fishery of the entire Great Lakes region.

During the fall season of 2014, six fish were netted in Elk Lake, fitted with radio tags, and released back to the lake. The tags are inserted into the fish just below the dorsal fin. Two passive radio receivers were installed in the lake near

the narrows between Elk and Skegemog lakes. It was found that in late fall the lake trout tend to inhabit that area. The receivers are anchored in place about 10 feet below the surface, out of harms way from boats and ice this winter.

These units will track and record the movement of the six tagged fish in that area. The next step is to retrieve data from the receivers this winter by cutting through the ice and raising them to the surface.



If you happen to catch a lake trout with

one of these tags, please record the date, time, and location and return the fish live back into the lake, and then contact Jory Jonas. If you keep the fish, please return the undamaged tag, because they are expensive and reusable, to Jory Jonas at the address below. If you know lake trout fisherman, please get the word out to them about this study and the importance of properly handling tagged fish and tags. The DNR also plans to post notices at Elk and Skegemog Lake public fishing access sites announcing the study and informing what to do with a tagged fish.

Jory Jonas  
 Fisheries Research Biologist  
 Traverse City Field Office  
 970 Emerson Road  
 Traverse City, MI 49696  
 (231) 922-5280 xt 6872 (phone)

## The Elk Lake Surprise (Peg Comfort)

On a warm July night, Josh Owens (pictured left) drove his small fishing boat from Kewadin along the north shore of Elk Lake toward the loon nesting platform. Earlier this spring, Jim McKimmy had installed the platform and filled it with straw. Josh (pictured right) had checked on the loon family just before nightfall, so he had a pretty good idea where they were resting.

Joe Kaplan stood in the bow of the boat with a salmon net grasped tightly in his hand. He searched the water with a spotlight secured to his bike helmet with ducktape. Behind him on the floor sat Peg Comfort.

When Joe caught the loons in his light, Josh switched to the electric motor and slowly approached the birds. Closer and closer he went, until he was afraid he might run them over, but at just that moment, the adult male started to dive. Joe dipped the net and scooped up the bird. His timing was flawless!

Joe brought the bird and net into the boat. Peg put a loose towel over the bird's head while Joe gently folded the loon's wings close to his body. Then he handed the bird to Peg. She placed the bird on her lap and tucked his head around her side. Josh started the bigger engine and headed back to his house.

Joe and Peg weighed and banded the loon, drew a blood sample and feathers for mercury analysis and released him gently back into the water.

Would you believe? This adult male had been banded in this same territory in 1992. Since loons do not start reproducing until they are 6–8 years old, this bird was at least 28 years old. Amazing!



The Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed is estimated to have 24 nesting loon pairs and more than 80 adult common loons— perhaps the largest concentration of loons in the Lower Peninsula. Elk Lake has at least 4 pairs, but only the pairs in the Kewadin and Elk River territories nested and produced young in 2014. This loon population is monitored by more than 30 volunteers of the LOON

NETWORK, a project of Michigan Audubon. Summer loon banding is conducted by Joe Kaplan, and the spring survey is conducted by Damon McCormick, loon biologists with Common Coast Research & Conservation.

Special thanks go to volunteers: Jim McKimmy, Josh Owens, Chuck Schuler, Tom Schuler, Pete DeMercurio, Carl Wrobel, MaryAnne Rivers, Dawn Rudolph, Thom Yocum and Rich Hannan.

For more information go to: [www.commonloon.org](http://www.commonloon.org) or call Peg Comfort, project manager, at 231.676.0566.

PHOTO: Left to right— Josh Owens, volunteer— Michigan Audubon LOON NETWORK, and Joe Kaplan, loon biologist— Common Coast Research & Conservation.

## ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION

July 1, 2014 — June 30, 2015

<b>Officers</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Ruth Bay	President 11393 Center Rd. Traverse City 49686	947-1619	jackbay@charter.net
Dale Claudepierre	Vice Pres. 13952 Fairmont Dr. Rapid City 49676	322-2892	ginidale70@gmail.com
Kathy DiMercurio	Rec. Sec. 535 Sixth St. Traverse City 49684	946-1687	kathygets@charter.net
Kathi Gober	Corr. Sec. 8516 Skegemog Pt. Rd. Williamsburg	267-5506	hotwheeler8454@torchlake.com
Robert Stibbs	Treasurer 10561 S. Elk Lake Rd. Williamsburg	218-5391	stibbs@omico.net

### **ZONE DIRECTORS**

#### **ZONE A**

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Ken Krentz	13997 Ringler Rd. Rapid City 3	322-4144	kenneth.krentz@yahoo.com
Kent Reynolds	8534 Ridge Rd Rapid City	264-8360	kentsreynolds43@gmail.com

#### **ZONE C**

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Joan Richardson	9350 Larsen Rd Williamsburg	267-5458	phijo@gmail.com

#### **Zone D**

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Tim Wheeler	7546 Hoiles Dr. Williamsburg	267-5830	twheeler@torchlake.com

#### **Zone E**

Dave Lawicki	Captain 6954 Aarwood Rd. Rapid City	944-3051	aarwood6954@hotmail.com
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### **AT LARGE APPOINTED DIRECTORS**

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

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

**Happy New Year—Please remember to renew your ESLA membership for 2015.**

ESLA totally depends upon the generous donations of time and effort from our volunteer members and their annual contributions. Renewal is easy—go to <http://www.elk-skegemog.org/> and click on the button on the right side of the homepage which says “join ESLA renew membership”. Alternatively, if you are receiving the Newsletter via the U.S. mail, there will be a dues envelope enclosed. If you haven’t become an ESLA member yet, please do so this year.

In addition to your annual dues, please consider a gift to the Elk-Skegemog Lakes Endowment Fund. Checks should be written to the Elk-Skegemog Lakes Endowment Fund and mailed directly to: Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, 250 E. Front Street, Suite 310, Traverse City, MI 49684. Donating to the Elk-Skegemog Lakes Endowment Fund through the GTRCF offers the advantage of supporting efforts in the preservation and protection of our lakes (Elk and Skegemog) and rivers (Torch and Rapid River) not only today, but in perpetuity. Contributions are tax deductible on an itemized federal tax return. The Community Foundation can also facilitate stock gifts and estate directives. For additional information, call the Foundation at (231) 935 4066 or contact Pete DiMercurio, (see the ESLA Board contact list) to assist in directing any questions.