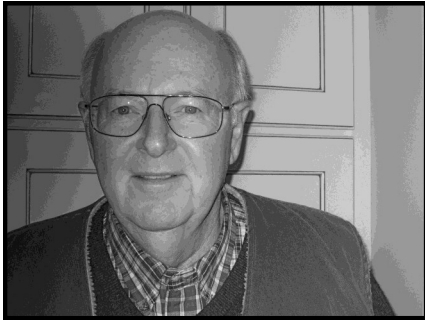




Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association

June, 2013



Bob Kingon **President's Message**

The neighbor's docks and boats are all in and the first loon chick was spotted in the Torch Bayou. So, summer is here and most welcomed. You will find a potpourri of articles in this newsletter commensurate with all the activities with which ESLA has been and will be involved.

I am ending my 15th year as a member of the ESLA Board of Directors. Karen and I have been members for over forty years as both of our parents had summer homes in the area. When we began spending our summers on Elk Lake, I joined the Board of Directors to be involved in preserving the quality of the environment of our wonderful Elk-Skegemog watershed. I have served under the leadership of Al Wagner, Mary Ann Rivers, Dean Ginther and Pete DiMercurio – all dedicated to the mission of ESLA.

During the last 15 years, ESLA has become a more proactive organization while still being diligent to its primary mission related to preserving water quality. Our environmen-

tal activities have been expanded primarily by Thom Yocum and his institution and development of our summer intern program. They have informed us about "brown crud", an algae byproduct of warming waters and zebra mussels. And they have relieved our concerns about e-coli "hot spots" through systematic sampling.

Major challenges are facing us that will require continual surveillance and attention. Eurasian water milfoil is moving down the Elk River Chain of Lakes. Sediment deposition is impacting the health and navigability of our Rivers and the confluence where Torch River meets Lake Skegemog. The remaining land being developed around our Lakes are often those with wetlands or other environmentally sensitive concerns.

We need "new blood" on our Board and encourage anyone who has an interest in working with a great group of people on these challenges to consider becoming a member.

I received a note from one of our members enclosed with their dues envelope asking why ESLA contributed to the new docks in the Elk Rapids upper harbor. I just want to clarify that we did NOT contribute to the docks installed in 2012 at the former Beck's property. These rental docks were entirely paid for by the Village/Harbor Commission. ESLA contributed \$5,000 in 2011 toward the installation of the floating courtesy docks

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Message	1
Torch River Sediment	2
2012 Water Quality	3-4
Bottle Bill	5
Swimmer's Itch	6
2013 Photo Contest	6
Boating Safety	7
New Law/Loons	8
Summer Interns	9
Shorts Paddle	10
ESLA Officers	11

located on the north bank immediately after entering the harbor from under the US 31 Bridge. The Board of Directors donated this amount on behalf of our members to assure that the riparians on our Lakes and Rivers always have a place to dock their boats when visiting the Village.

If you are receiving this newsletter via the postal service, it may arrive after our annual meeting. I hope you were able to attend. If you are receiving this email electronically, then it should arrive in your email box prior to the ESLA annual meeting on July 22. We have a great program planned for the two hours between 10 am—12 noon and I hope to see you there.

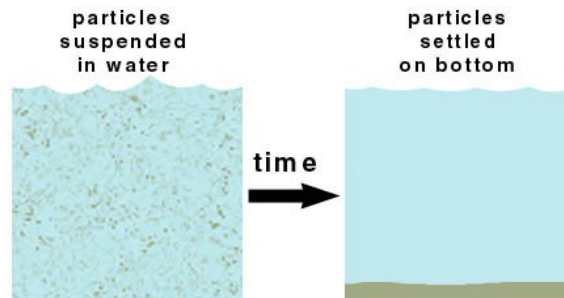
Torch and Rapid River Sedimentation Issues

Representatives of ESLA met with over sixty river riparians and interested citizens on June 1, 2013 to review data and plans regarding the sedimentation issues in the Torch and Rapid Rivers and Lake Skegemog. Based on the stream sampling and data collected in 2011 and 2012, including preliminary results from work by MSU funded by ESLA, it is estimated that over 4000 tons per year of sediment in the Rapid River watershed reaches the village of Rapid City and about 75% of that reaches Aarwood Bridge. Approximately 1000 tons of sediment is estimated to flow into the Torch River, with some residual amount flowing to the area of confluence with Lake Skegemog. Rugg Pond, now 110 years old, no longer functions as a “sand trap” and sediment from the “Upper Rapid” and Little Rapid Rivers is being transported downstream from Rugg Pond. Sediment runoff around the 16 road crossings also adds large amounts of sand to the River.

In addition to the reduction in water navigation and changing the flow of the rivers, this sediment has covered most of the natural gravel bottom and significantly reduced the stream aquatic insects that are necessary to support the steelhead and trout that spawn in the rivers, especially the Rapid. Based on stream sampling by ESLA and Friends of the Rapid River volunteers over the past two years, the aquatic insect rating is POOR in the area around Aarwood Bridge and only FAIR in the section downstream of Rapid City. Thankfully, some areas upstream are rated GOOD, indicating the acceptable overall water quality, but the habitat is the issue downstream.

The preliminary findings from the MSU team were shared at the meeting through slides that showed where and when sediments have widened the Rapid and Torch Rivers and the corresponding depths. The Rapid River is so shallow going up

stream from Torch River the MSU team could only collect data for the first 1,400 feet. The upper reaches of the Torch River are showing significant widening and loss of depth because of sediment deposition. The lower area of Torch River has remained relatively narrow and deep with a much greater flow rate than the upper part of the River. However, as the Torch begins merging with Lake Skegemog, the sediment build up once again has widened the original river course to the degree that it is difficult to discern.



As these sediment deposits will continue to negatively impact the use of the rivers, the fish habitat, and eventually property values, ESLA has been working with the Three Lake Association (with a similar issue on the Grass River), the Tip-of-the-Mitt Watershed Council, and Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Center to develop an action plan for correction and remediation.

The Grass River between Lake Bellaire and Clam Lake has very similar sediment issues as the Rapid and Torch Rivers. The Antrim County Commissioners and the Grass River Natural Area have agreed on a project to place fallen trees strategically in the River to divert the current and hopefully move sediment well into Clam Lake. These trees are referred to as “Large Woody Debris.” The results of this demonstration, if successful, may hold promise as applications in the Rapid and Torch Rivers.

It was impressive to see the high level of interest at this meeting from the public, regarding these rivers and the impact the sedimentation is having on water quality. In addition to looking for outside help from State agencies and our watershed partners, the attendees were reminded to watch for sources of sediment and pollution and to maintain shoreline riverbanks.

Results of 2012 Water Quality Monitoring



The water quality dataset for Elk and Skegemog Lakes continues to grow and vital signs show that the lake ecosystems remain healthy. The summertime monitoring sponsored by

the Elk-Skegemog Lake Association supplements the decades-old dataset accumulated by Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council as part of the Comprehensive Water Quality Monitoring Program. Last year marked the 12th consecutive year of data collection on Elk and Skegemog Lakes. Monitoring is performed in the deepest areas in both lakes, from the water surface to lake bottom, in April, July, August and October. Water samples are collected to send to the lab for chemical analyses of nutrient levels and a Hach Hydrolab® instrument is employed to measure dissolved oxygen, water temperature, pH, and conductivity.

Results from the 2012 samples show that nutrient levels in both Elk and Skegemog Lakes remain low and are typical of the high quality lakes in this region. Total phosphorus concentrations for both lakes were consistently below 10 parts per billion (ppb) and total nitrogen concentrations were also quite low, particularly on Lake Skegemog (see graphs on page 4). Following three years of data collection, a pattern has emerged on Elk Lake of decreasing nitrogen throughout the summer season at the surface, which must be due to uptake by algae and other aquatic life or from deposition as it settles out. If total phosphorus were to suddenly climb and stay consistently above 20 ppb or if total nitrogen began to rise into the 800-1000 ppb range, then we would take a closer look to determine why.

Yet again, dissolved oxygen was found to be abundant throughout the water column in both Elk and Skegemog Lakes. During 2012, dissolved oxygen

concentrations were consistently above the State of Michigan surface water quality standard of 7 ppm set for lakes that are capable of sustaining cold-water fisheries. In fact, dissolved oxygen readings were above 9 parts per million (ppm) in Elk Lake and above 8 ppm on Lake Skegemog during all but one monitoring event. Both of the lower readings occurred at the bottom where oxygen becomes depleted first.

Conductivity and pH readings were also found to be at typical levels for clean, healthy lakes in this region. Conductivity levels tend to increase as urban and agricultural land uses increase in a watershed, but levels have remained fairly constant (between 250 and 300 microSiemens) in both Elk and Skegemog Lakes since monitoring began in 1992. The pH levels have been within state standards (between 6.5 and 9.0) for the duration of monitoring on both lakes.

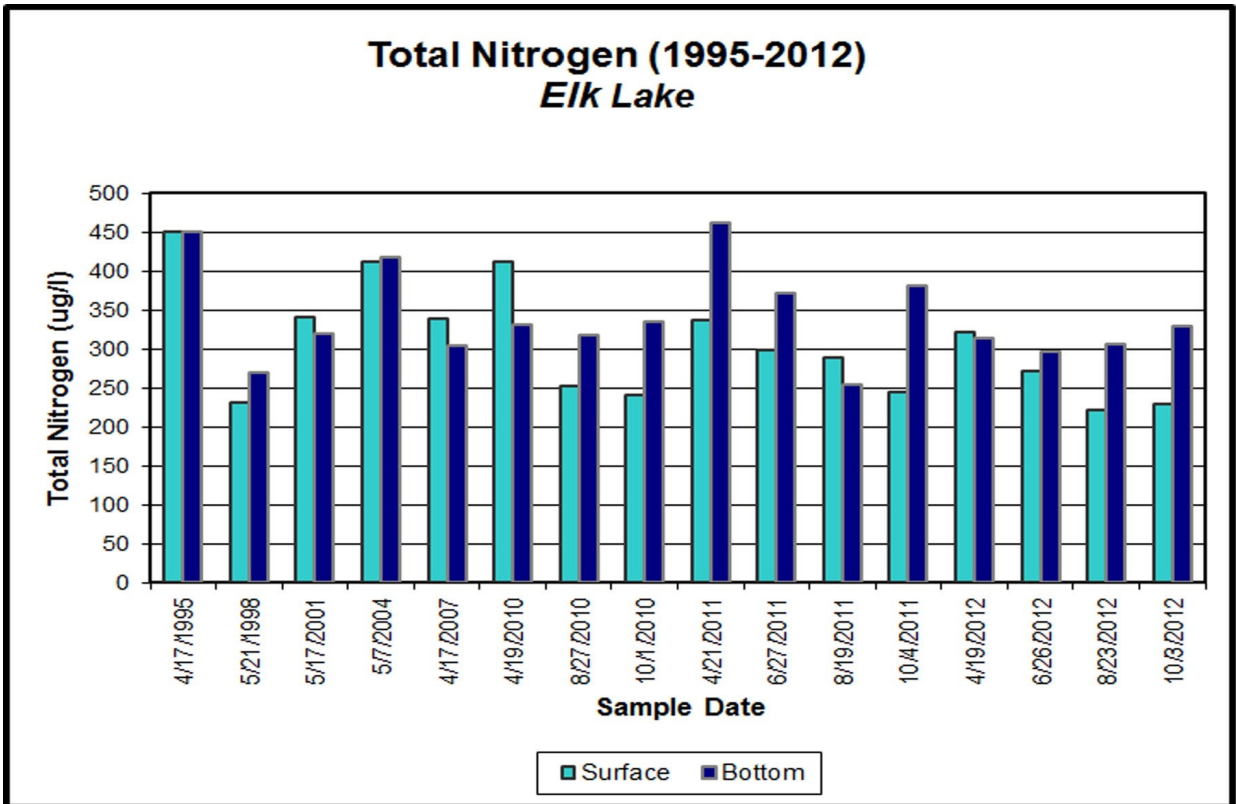
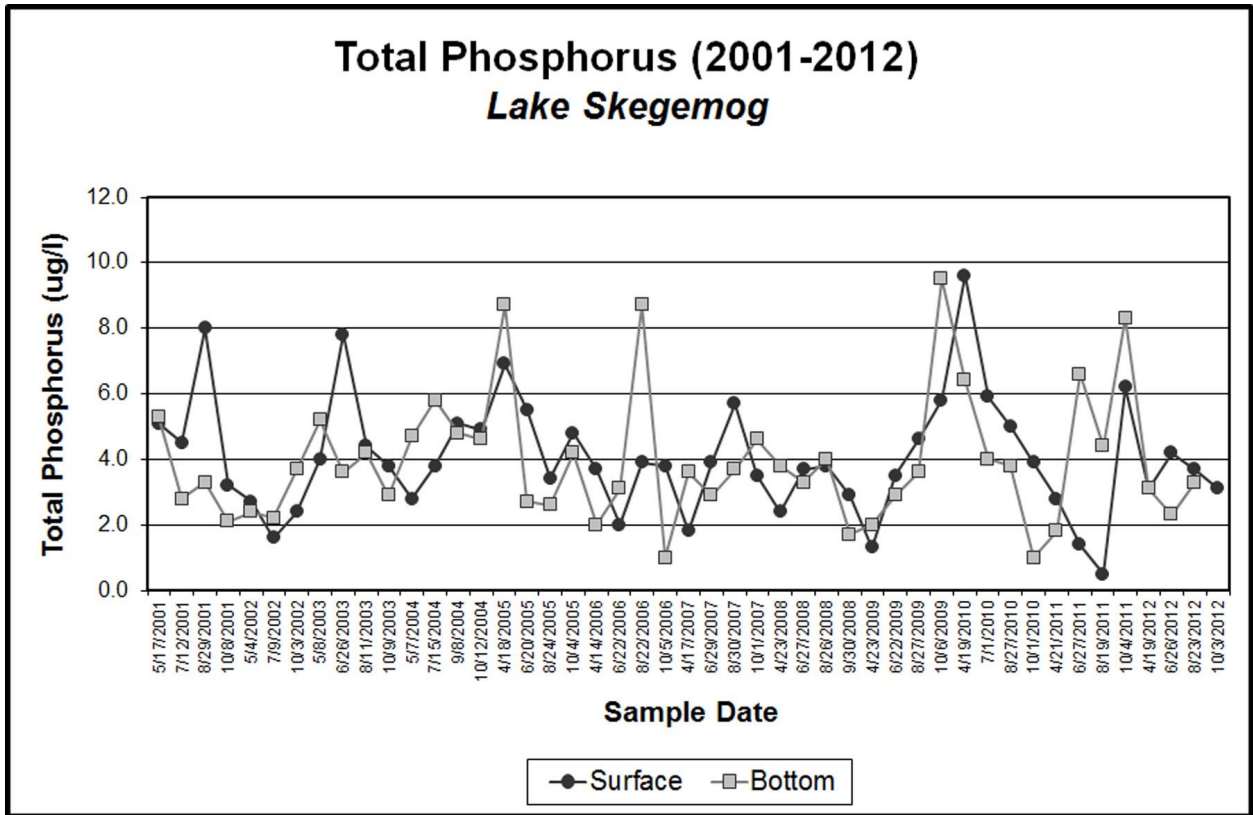
I updated the database (Excel spreadsheet) with all the new data from the Hydrolab and the laboratory, including updates to charts for phosphorus and dissolved oxygen. I also made new charts for total nitrogen and nitrate nitrogen. I will send the updated database to you and Thom via email and will include an invoice for our services with this report/letter. Please note that this year (2013) is a Comprehensive Monitoring year, which means that the first monitoring event on Elk and Skegemog in early spring will be free of charge. Look for us soon out on the lakes!

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Cronk
Monitoring and Research Coordinator
(231) 347-1181

kevin@watershedcouncil.org

2012 Water Monitoring—continued from page 3



Opportunity to Support Extension of Michigan's Bottle Bill

Kevin Cronk is our colleague at the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council who supervises our water quality evaluation efforts (see page 3 and 4) and has been instrumental to our work on the Rapid River. He has asked that we let our ESLA riparians know of the initiative his brother is pursuing to expand Michigan's Bottle Bill.

Dear Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association,

Our grassroots organization is dedicated to the vision of expanding Michigan's existing Bottle Bill. The existing bill is the most effective in the nation in returning containers with deposits at approximately 97% (Michigan DNRE, 2010). The goal is to include sealed drink containers not yet encompassed in the existing bill such as water, juice, sports drinks, and alcoholic beverages through an "initiative to amend existing legislation" on the 2014 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT.

We are a group of Michigan residents that believe the existing bottle bill is efficient in having containers returned and recycled and has a positive impact on our economy and environment. We also know that in the last few years we are seeing too many other drink containers without deposits on them in the trash, streets, parks, rivers, lakes and other places instead of recycled. We believe that a majority of citizens in Michigan agree with our view and will vote to expand Michigan's bottle bill at the 2014 election.



Our plan is to soon have our petition ready for submittal and approval from the Michigan Secretary of State and the Board of Canvassers. Once approved, we have the great task of collecting the 258,088 signatures required. We will have 180 days to get the signatures collected and submitted to the Secretary of State. The signatures are to be collected and submitted no later than November 28, 2013. Once we submit enough valid signatures, the Michigan Legislation has 40 days to pass the petition into law or it goes onto the 2014 ballot.

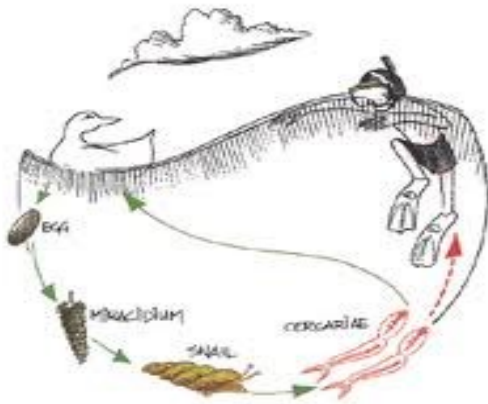
We are contacting your organization to support our cause in the following methods:

1. Financial contributions – at this time we will need funds to have a legal review of our petition and printing for petitions and educational materials. Financial contributions should be made payable to the Committee to Expand Michigan's Bottle Bill and sent to PO Box 1696, Bay City, MI 48706.
2. Volunteers – we will need many volunteers this summer to help us collect signatures. Volunteers should contact us through our Facebook page or email notifying us of their interest and include their name, email and location.
3. Support – like us on Facebook, send us a letter or email acknowledging your support. Tell your friends, family and co-workers.

Kip Cronk
Expand Michigan's Bottle Bill
PO Box 1696
Bay City, MI 48706

Swimmer's Itch

Swimmer's itch is caused by an allergic reaction to certain microscopic parasites that infect birds and mammals. These parasites are released from infected snails into the water and can be picked up by swimmers. Swimmer's itch is not contagious and cannot be spread from one person to another.



What are the symptoms of swimmer's itch?

- tingling, burning or itching of the skin
- small reddish pimples
- small blisters

What can be done to relieve the itching?

- Apply a corticosteroid cream or an anti-itch lotion
- Apply cool compresses to affected areas
- Bathe in Epsom salts or baking soda
- To prevent infection, try not to scratch the affected areas.

How can swimmer's itch be avoided?

If the water is infested, swimmer's itch cannot be avoided. The infestation is usually found in shallow water. Most susceptible are children who spend time playing for extended periods in shallower water. Swimming in deeper water lessens exposure. Depending on the swimmers skin sensitivity, the rash may be minimal or more pronounced. It usually disappears within a week. If it lasts longer or if a pus develops, a doctor should be consulted.

2013 ESLA Photo Contest



Our Third Annual Photo Contest is now underway. It just keeps getting better.

With camera ready, why not take some creative photos documenting what you love about living in the ESLA area? Then, share your favorite shots by entering the photo contest via the ESLA website. It's free to participate and open to all Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association (ESLA) members and their families. These contests create a historical photo archive of our rivers, lakes and their inhabitants, capturing fond memories of nature, family and friends. Photos are also used for promotional opportunities for ESLA. There are cash prizes to win, a photo gallery on the website, and our yearly calendar made with photos from the contest to purchase. Please go to the ESLA website for details. Photos must be submitted by September 15 in order to qualify.

We hope everyone will participate!

Obtain your Boating Safety Certificate (BSC)

The Antrim County Sheriff's Office announces its 2013 boater safety initiative. You, your children, grandchildren, friends, and relatives are encouraged to participate. There are two simple and flexible steps:

1.) Study the Michigan Course Book or take a web-based course - or both - at your own pace from your own home. For the on-line classes see www.michigan.gov/boating. Course Books are available at the Antrim County Sheriff's Office (Bellaire) for those registered for an exam.

2.) Take a proctored exam at your local sheriff's office or at one of Antrim County's morning exams shown below. All of these services are provided at **no charge to the public**.

Many of the boating laws have changed, so you need to be up-to-date with the current law. Of particular importance are **new requirements to have and carry a Boating Safety Certificate (BSC)**:

Boats - Any person born after July 1, 1996, must have and carry a Boating Safety Certificate (BSC) to operate any boat with a motor greater than 6 hp. So this summer, depending on exact birth dates, anyone 16 years old or younger and even some 17 years olds will need a BSC now and for the

rest of their lives.

PWCs (Jet Skis) - Any person born after December 31, 1978, must have and carry a Boating Safety Certificate (BSC) to operate any *personal water craft* (PWC/Jet Ski). So, if you're not yet 35 years old, you must have and carry on board your BSC.

Participants who believe they will be ready to take the proctored exam can reserve a spot in any of these three events. Registration is required. You can register by email to BoatSmartSafeLegal@charter.net. Please provide the desired exam date, name, phone, and email address for each participant. You can also register by phone to the respective number listed below. The programs all start at 9:00 a.m. and end at Noon. The programs include registration, local ordinance review, Q&A, proctored exam, and certificate issue - at no cost to the participants.

NOTE: If your schedule does not permit you to attend one of the three events listed below, phone (231) 533 - 8627 ext.1 for an appointment to take the proctored exam at the Antrim County Sheriff Office in Bellaire.

Date	Sponsoring Group	Location	Registration #
June 29 - Sat	Friends of Grass River Three Lakes Association	Grass River Ed. Cnt. 6500 Alden Hwy. Bellaire	231-668-9605
July 22 - Mon	Torch Lake Yacht Club	10280 Larson Rd. Bellaire	248-770-5050
July 27 - Sat	Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association	321 Bridge St. Elk Rapids Police Station	231-947-1619

New Michigan Law

Since 1994, the taxable value of a property cannot be increased from one year to the next by more than the rate of inflation or 5% whichever is less, until the property is transferred or, as commonly referenced, “the taxable value is capped.” When there is a transfer of the property to a new owner (including a family member), the taxable value of the property is “uncapped” to the State equalized value, which is supposed to represent 50% of the property’s fair market value. Thus, “uncapping” the taxable value after a sale or transfer can result in the new owners paying significantly more in property taxes than longtime previous owners of the property.

The exemption to this “uncapping” provision is the transfer of property from one spouse to another (or from a decedent to a surviving spouse). A new law, Public Act 497 of 2012, extends this exemption to transfers between relatives. Beginning December 31, 2013, the exemption applies to the transfer of residential real property if the transferee is related to the transferor by blood or affinity to the first degree and the use of the residential real property does not change following the transfer.

Persons related by blood to the first degree include a person’s parents and children (including legally adopted children). Persons related to the first degree by affinity include a person’s spouse, mother-in-law, father-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepson, stepdaughter, stepmother or stepfather.

While the scope of the new law is narrow, the new law is not limited to homesteads. Thus, it allows parents to transfer cottages and vacation homes that have been under the same ownership for a number of years to close relatives, allowing the property to remain in the family without the fear of an insurmountable tax burden.

Summarized, from an article by Crystal Morgan, Bloom, Sluggett, and Morgan, PC, [The Michigan Riparian](#), Spring 2013 issue, published by the Michigan Lakes and Streams, Inc.

Loon Nesting Platforms



Loon pairs live and nest on many of the lakes in our Elk River Chain of Lakes. Pairs have successively raised chicks on Lake Skegemog and the

first chick sighted this spring was a few days ago in the Torch Bayou.

While we have had three to five pairs of loons on Elk Lake during recent years, there have been no chicks raised in some time. Artificial nesting platforms (ANP) have been successfully used on Clam Lake and Intermediate Lake in the recent past. They are made out of PCV pipes assembled into a four-foot square with fine netting under the structure. The platform is anchored to move easily with wave action. The nest is filled with mud (simulates their natural near shore nest) and straw to provide camouflage. They are placed near shore, but far enough away from land predators and in areas of the lake that are relatively secluded and free of heavy boating.

This spring Jim McKimmy and Thom Yocum worked with students from the Elk Rapid Middle School Nature Club in building three platforms and then deploying them on Elk Lake. At the School, the students did a great job in helping assemble the materials that Jim had prepared ahead of time. A few days later, the platforms were placed on a flatbed trailer with buckets for mud and bales of straw. A powerboat and a rowboat were also towed to each launch site. Once at the site, the students found sources of mud, filled buckets and then spread the mud in the platforms, followed by installation of the straw camouflage. The platform was placed on the rowboat with three students and they were towed to the area of deployment. On one occasion, the loon pair was within 30 feet of the team. In some cases the loons use the ANPs the first year, but often it may be two to three years before they become an actual nest.

This was a great experience for the Nature Club students and hopefully we will have many loon chicks on Elk Lake in future years.

2012-2013 ESLA Summer Interns

The 2012 high school summer interns have completed their reporting and their Powerpoint presentation. A summary of their collaborative paper is available on the ESLA web site soon.

For the summer of 2013, three interns have been selected: Nick Ranger, Emma Kinery, and Mitch Miller. All will be seniors at ERHS in the fall. Their work will be similar to that done over the last five years but will see some changes too, as dictated by past data.



The algal testing has been discontinued. The data indicated no noxious types present and, in fact, indicated that algal diversity was increasing slightly, which is generally a good sign for our lakes.

The E.coli testing will be curtailed, depending on any indications of problems arising along the shoreline. The only consistently true 'hot spot' has been the Rotary Park kayak launch site on US-31. This is to be expected anywhere such large numbers of geese, swans and other wildlife congregate during the summer. ESLA will communicate findings to Elk Rapids Village for possible work.

An increased search for aquatic invasive species will be conducted this year. ESLA has applied for grant

funding that would allow for such work through Tip of the Mitt Watershed Center, with baseline mapping in both lakes and Torch River. The status of that application is not known at present. Regardless, the summer interns will work on this search.

The Elk Rapids High School interns also will once again participate in volunteer lake monitoring and study water quality parameters. New, this year, will be occasional observations of any loon activity near the three artificial nesting platforms that were installed

in April. One is located just north of Palaestrum, one on the west shore of Elk River across from the Third St. road end, and the third platform is in the Kewadin Natural area, approximately one hundred yards south of the Cottage Cove boat channel.

The islands were built by Cherryland Middle School students in Mrs. Imperizzelli's 'Wetlands Touring Club'. Jim McKimmy graciously organized this project and I helped with the construction and deployment of these structures. If any of you travel near these areas, particularly the nest in Kewadin, please remember to keep at least one hundred feet away. Loons were present in that area when we deployed the island. If loon activity is observed near any platform, please send along to me by phone or e-mail.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you on our beautiful lakes this summer.

Shorts to Shorts Paddle Event

The 2013 Short's to Short's Paddle and Summer Kickoff Party was reported to be the best, most fun Short's to Short's Paddle ever.

Next year, if you don't paddle – volunteer!!

Although many changes were made to this year's events, everything about the 2013 S2S Paddle and Summer Kickoff Party were massively successful.

On Saturday, after brief comments from Joe Short and Event Director, Todd Gyulveszi, 125 participants took to the water with absolutely ideal paddle weather of low- to mid-60s, overcast skies, and no wind. With the assistance of the Grass River and Torch River currents and the stillness of Lake Bellaire, Clam Lake, and Torch Lake, paddlers entered Lake Skegemog to a pleasantly shocking surprise of a direct tailwind all the way to the finish! With such great conditions, the 2013 Short's to Short's Paddle was completed by 4 p.m. This made it by far the fastest in the event's 5 year history.

While some ESLA members took part as paddlers, we had many who volunteered as safety boat captains on Torch River, Lake Skegemog and Elk Lake. About one-half those who began the paddle finished in Elk Rapids. Take out points were manned along the way. It was a beautiful day and all the volunteers enjoyed themselves. Proceeds from the brewery tours at the party will be split between ESLA and the Three Lakes Association in support of their involvement.



SHORT'S to SHORT'S 2013 PADDLE TIME GUIDE

ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION

Sept 1, 2012 — August 31, 2014

<u>Officers</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Bob Kingon	Pres 10202 East Elk Lake Dr. Rapid City	322-6055	rjkingon@prodigy.net
Vacant	Vice Pres.		
Kathy DiMercurio	Rec. Sec. 535 Sixth St. Traverse City 49684	946-1687	kathygets@charter.net
Lou Ann McKimmy	Corr.Sec 8824 Penahguhme Rapid City	264-5653	mama7@chartermi.net
Robert Stibbs	Treasurer 10561 S. Elk Lake Rd. Williamsburg	218-5391	stibbs@omico.net

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Joan Richardson	9350 Larsen Rd Williamsburg	267-5458	phijo@gmail.com
Denise Heidisch	9286 Elk Lake Trail Williamsburg	264-8210	compacc@ameritec.net

Zone D

Tom Klingler	7772 Hoiles Dr. Williamsburg	267-9352	klingler3@earthlink.net
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Kathi Gober	8516 Skegemog Pointe Rd. Williamsburg	989-631-9438	hotwheeler8454@torchlake.com
Hugh Ryan	7866 Hoiles Dr. Williamsburg	267-5380	hnryan@torchlake.com

Zone E

Melissa Culver	9601 Shellway Dr. NW Rapid City	322-4909	MelissaCulver01@charter.net
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AT LARGE APPOINTED DIRECTORS

Thom Yocum Water Quality	8447 N. Bayshore Dr Elk Rapids	264-6387	kstyocum@aol.com
Dean Ginther Editor	11228 Shippey Ln, Rapid City	322-6286	dean_ginther@gmail.com
Steve Flechter - Foundation	10426 E. Elk lake Dr. Rapid City	322-6015	flechtsp@comcast.net

ESLA WEB SITE: WWW.ELK-SKEGEMOG.ORG

ESLA NEEDS YOU

Elk Skegemog Lakes Association is an organization that has had very dedicated leadership over the last few years. Because of this, the organization has been able to provide input to several projects that are important to the watershed and impact the outcomes to benefit the quality of the lakes and surrounding area.

This is your opportunity to become more involved, either as an active board member or as a part of the executive team. The work that has been started can be continued and grown. You can be part of the team that will help assure that the current high quality of this area will remain for many generations.

Members of the board will be communicating directly with each riparian owner over the next few weeks. Please welcome them and review the information they will provide. We hope you will realize the importance of this organization and become a part of the ongoing process. Thank you for your continued interest and support.

ESLA

P.O. Box 8

Elk Rapids, MI 49629

ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS

Bob Kingon	President	231-322-6055	rjkingon@prodigy.net
Vacant (needed)	Vice Pres		
Kathy DiMercurio	Rec. Sec.	231-946-1687	kathygets@charter.net
Lou Ann McKimmy	Corr.Sec	231-264-5653	mama7@chartermi.net
Robert Stibbs	Treas.	231-218-5391	stibbs@omico.net

PAST PRESIDENTS

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Lou Wood	1989-1991	264-5648	
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