



# Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association

## May 2018



It is my pleasure to present our Elk Skegemog Lake Association's first newsletter of 2018. The 2018 year will be a busy one for ESLA. During 2018 ESLA's key environmental efforts will on reducing Swimmers Itch occurrences, locating and reducing invasive species such as Eurasian Water Milfoil and Purple Loosestrife, and continuing the research to better understand Golden Brown algae. Other activities will include implementing a revised and improved website which will be more consistently updated and better organized.

The ESLA Board has decided to provide a printed copy of the Newsletter to all Elk Lake, Skegemog Lake, Torch River, and Rapid River riparians. If you are an ELSA member, you also

have the option of receiving via email the full color electronic version of the Newsletter.

As in the past several years, ESLA in continuing the presentation of education topics via the "It's a Shore Thing" series at the Twisted Fish Gallery on S. Bayshore Dr. in Elk Rapids. See the additional information within this Newsletter on page 8 for upcoming topics and dates. The annual meeting is scheduled for June 22 at the HERTH Hall on River Street in Elk Rapids. The ESLA Board will meet on May 17, July 19, September 20, and December 13 at the Government Center in Elk Rapids. Mark your calendar for all of these upcoming events. ESLA members and the public are welcome to attend.

The enclosed articles will provide more detailed information on many of these topics. If you are a current ESLA member, our annual ESLA dues payments are coming in quite nicely -- THANK YOU for your continued support. If you are not a current member and wish to join, just go to the ESLA website (<https://www.elk-skegemog.org/>) and please sign up.

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I look forward to seeing you on the water; at the "It's a Shore Thing" presentation and at the ESLA Annual Meeting.

Best Regards,

Gary Chenoweth

### ***Don't Forget — ELSA Annual Meeting***

The annual meeting is scheduled for June 22 at the HERTH Hall on River Street in Elk Rapids. Light refreshments will be provided.

## ESLA Working to Control Swimmer's Itch Contributed by Sue McCraven

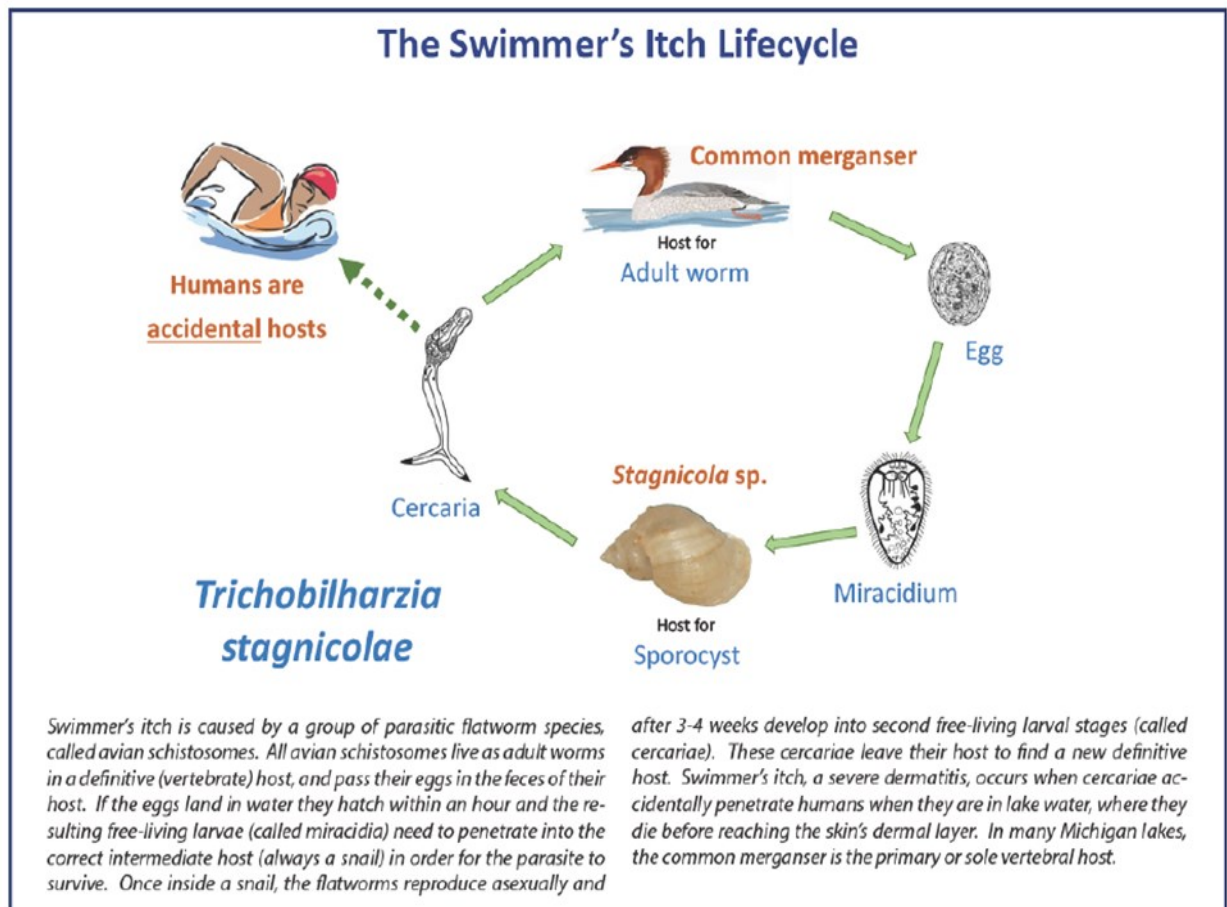
ESLA is excited to announce a contract with Ron Reimink of Freshwater Solutions to initiate the most scientifically advanced and proven methods for remediating Swimmer's Itch (SI) in Elk Lake and Lake Skegemog. On March 15, 2018, ESLA Board members unanimously voted to hire Freshwater Solutions to conduct MDNR-required testing, a prerequisite for obtaining a 2019 state permit to trap and relocated specific waterfowl found to be associated with outbreaks of Swimmer's Itch.

### ESLA Awarded MISIP Funding for Swimmer's Itch Control

By being the first lake association to apply for Michigan Swimmer's Itch Partnership (MISIP) funding, ESLA riparian members are fortunate to receive the maximum funding available based on MISIP's established first-come/first-serve basis. Here are ESLA's contract costs for 2018:

Elk Lake: \$13,919 (\$10,919 with \$3,000 MISIP allocation)  
 Lake Skegemog: \$7,471 (\$4,471 with \$3,000 MISIP allocation)

### First Step: Which Parasites Are Causing SI on Elk and Skegemog Lakes?



## Swimmer's Itch Continued

Beginning this June 2018, Ron Reimink will begin a comprehensive assessment to:

1. Establish baseline swimmer's itch exposure data at a number of locations using qPCR analysis of water samples (qPCR is state-of-the-art DNA analysis for rapid species identification).
2. Determine which snail species are harboring avian schistosomes, or flatworms, that attack humans as well as waterfowl. See Figure on page 2 for a graphic description of the lifecycle of the parasitic flatworm.
3. Determine the level (percentage) of parasite infestation on Elk and Skegemog Lakes.
4. Complete documentation to obtain a 3-yr. MDNR merganser trap and relocation permit (\$200).
5. Train and equip Elk and Skegemog Lake riparians to collect future water samples for qPCR analysis; this will save ESLA money going forward.
6. Freshwater Solutions will also collect research data for the National Science Foundation and/or the Engineering Research Council of Canada. This means ESLA will be an integral part of a much larger research initiative in many North American lakes.

### History and Devastating Results of Swimmer's Itch

Glen and Higgins Lakes have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars over the course of many years to get their SI problem under control. Higgins Lake has spent over \$500,000 since 2015 on Swimmer's Itch because the SI problem was so bad that people could no longer swim in the lake, property values dropped significantly and children were not interested in inheriting the family lake-front home.

Lobbyists were hired to push the state to do something. Glen Lake also funded the lobbyist and tried everything from noise harassment to shooting waterfowl before concluding — as did Higgins Lake riparians — that a waterfowl trap and relocation approach would prove successful. Lime Lake and Crystal Lake have also funded remediation of Swimmer's Itch.

### Swimmer's Itch Control: An Ongoing Effort

Like Glen and Higgins Lakes, Elk and Skegemog Lakes will be part of an ongoing effort to control Swimmer's Itch through state-mandated water testing and permitted waterfowl collection and relocation. Once Freshwater Solutions determines whether mergansers, mallards or another waterfowl are caught up in the life cycle of the flatworm schistosome that causes SI, bird broods will be humanely collected and relocated on Great Lakes where the culprit snails do not occur. In this way, the ducklings "imprint" on a body of water that does not harbor infected snails and will return to the same area to breed as adults. In this way, waterfowl contribution to the parasitic flatworm lifecycle is greatly reduced.



*Ron (FWS) and trainee Bruce Hood band a captured merganser hen*

### Upcoming Presentation on Swimmer's Itch

For those interested in learning more, MISIP will present at the annual Michigan Lake and Stream Associations Conference at Crystal Mountain Resort on Saturday, April 21, 2018.

## DNR Fish Surveys 2018 - 2019

Contributed by Ken Krentz

The DNR, with the help of ESLA, is beginning a two year project to better understand the fish population in Elk Lake. The primary focus is rainbow trout. Elk Lake's cold, deep, clean water and decent forage base provide good habitat for rainbows.

Rainbow trout have been in Elk Lake for a long time, probably since their introduction in the Great Lakes region in the late 1800's. The Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources has stocked rainbows for many years, but stopped in 2008. Their most recent fish survey done in 2008 yielded few rainbows with most being wild fish, not stocked fish. Stocking was discontinued for several reasons: Some are: 1. Poor survival rate of stockers. Few are recorded by surveys or caught by fisherman. 2. Low angler pressure compared to other Michigan lakes receiving fish plants. 3. Planting stock availability. Michigan's recent hatchery production is at full capacity with other lakes and rivers being higher priority.

Fishing success has reportedly declined since stocking was discontinued. Until recently that is, when there has been some increased success reported catching wild rainbows. The rainbow's life span is 3-5 years, so the stockers are gone by now. The DNR theorizes the improved fishing success could be caused by favorable weather for successful spawning in the last several years, and the latest stocked strain may have reproduced more successfully than previous strains.

The DNR is planning a comprehensive study over the next couple years to further understand the wild fish population under the direction of Heather Hettinger, DNR Management Biologist for our area. First, in the summer of 2018, Elk Lake tributary streams will be surveyed by netting and non-lethal electroshocking. Similar surveys were done in Torch Lake tributaries and the Rapid River in 2017. Additionally, a complete fish community survey is tentatively planned for 2019 in Elk Lake. This is a weeklong effort with several boats doing netting and electrofishing day and night, targeting all species. Similarly, Torch Lake will have this survey done the summer of 2018.

Another method of gathering data is to survey anglers. The DNR seeks to survey as many fishermen as possible during the 2018 calendar year by asking anglers to fill out and return a creel survey log. ESLA has distributed creel survey logs to all riparians along with the membership letter sent out in March, 2018. Please record your fishing success throughout the year and return to the address included on the form by the end of the year. If you are not a fisherman, please pass on to someone who is. The forms are printed on waterproof paper so you can conveniently keep them out in the weather. If you need more, the forms will also be available in self-serve containers at Elk and Skegemog Lake boat launch sites starting this spring.

These angler surveys, along with the DNR lake and tributary surveys over the next 2 years, will provide valuable data for understanding, maintaining, and improving the Elk Lake fishery. Thanks for your participation.

## ESLA and the Arctic Grayling Initiative

Contributed by Ed DeRosh

Ever wonder how the city of Grayling got its name? It was named for a fish that no longer inhabits the Au Sable and Upper Manistee rivers that have their headwaters nearby. The Arctic grayling is believed to have been the predominant fish in these rivers and most streams in the northern lower peninsula of Michigan since the end of the last Ice Age (about 10,000 years ago) until the most recent 150 years. This salmonid species, *Thymallus arcticus*, (owing to its reputation of having a fragrance like that of thyme when brought from the water) has a distinctly large dorsal fin, requires cold, clear water, and is notoriously easy to catch on hook and line. The latter two characteristics undoubtedly contributed to the fish's disappearance from Michigan lakes and streams. In addition, the fish has a delicate beauty all its own.

In the mid-1800s, the fish was caught and shipped commercially to cities by the carloads, significantly impacting its population in the upper reaches of the Manistee and Au Sable. Increasing demand for lumber to the build cities like Grand Rapids, Detroit, and Chicago turned the Manistee and Au Sable rivers into conduits for millions of logs. Their uplands and shores were stripped of vegetation and woody debris, while gravel and cobble bottoms were replaced with sand and silt, robbing the fish of habitat essential to its feeding, protection, and spawning. Dams and impoundments prevented the fish's seasonal migration, increased water temperatures, and generally impaired grayling habitat. Meanwhile exotic species of trout were introduced that were better able to adapt to the changes in stream ecology that were being brought about by man. These species: brook trout, brown trout, and rainbow trout competed with or preyed on native grayling. It's believed that the combina-



tion of overfishing, lumbering, and the introduction and natural spread of competitive species resulted in the demise of the grayling in Michigan by the late 1800s. There have been several attempts by the State of Michigan to bring back the grayling since then – none of them successful. But the story of the Arctic grayling in Michigan might not be over just yet.

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## Arctic Grayling Initiative Continued

gan Arctic Grayling Initiative. The Initiative is a partnership of over 30 companies, universities, and organizations with the goal of *“reestablishing a self-sustaining population of Arctic grayling within its historical range Michigan”*. The impetus for this renewed effort stems from the success of grayling in Montana’s Ruby River, where the fish has now been naturally reproducing for seven years following its reintroduction with the use of remote site incubators (RSIs). RSIs are placed in headwaters of coldwater streams with good water quality, habitat, and relative absence of competitive or predatory fish. In contrast to traditional planting techniques, the fish are hatched onsite so that the emerging fry imprint on that specific stream location and have instinct to return as adults to spawn. It’s believed that much of the failure experienced in previous reintroduction attempts has been due to losing juveniles to the downstream migration of fish that never returned to spawn because they were eaten by predators or lacked instinct to return. Michigan’s Arctic Grayling Initiative intends to import grayling eggs from Montana or Alaska (the only two states where wild grayling now exist). Brood stock will be raised at the Oden fish hatchery, which is being refitted with UV equipment (to treat eggs for potential diseases) that will be used for reintroduction efforts. Remote site incubators will be strategically located in suitable streams, with several tributaries of the Upper Manistee being targeted for initial reintroduction attempts in 2022-2023.

Last November, several ESLA members joined a committee comprised of other Elk River Chain of Lakes associations representatives, DNR employees, and representatives of interested NGOs to screen and nominate specific stream sections within the Elk River Chain of Lakes watershed for inclusion in a second wave of reintroduction streams. Criteria considered for nomination included designation as a coldwater stream, macroinvertebrate scores (indicative of water quality and available forage for fish), presence of natural or man-made barriers to fish passage, and the relative density of potentially competitive species. The following streams had sections that were nominated to be surveyed by the Grayling Initiative research crews: Cedar River, Desmond Creek, Eastport Creek, Finch Creek, Green River, Jordan River, and Rapid River.

The committee submitted its findings and nominations to the Grayling Initiative leadership at the end of February. It hopes to learn this summer which, if any, of the nominated streams will be surveyed by the Initiative’s team of researchers (fingers crossed!).

Regardless, of whether the Arctic Grayling Initiative is successful in reestablishing the fish to northern Michigan streams, the project has the potential to increase the public’s awareness and appreciation for our area lakes and streams. Community stewardship of our natural resources is more important than ever as development continues in the face of mounting threats to state and federal environmental programs. In addition, this collaboration and partnering by public and private entities brought about to reclaim a part of our natural heritage can only have a positive influence on other future environmental efforts.

## Elk River Chain of Lakes Greenbelt Initiative—contributed by Bob Kingon

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council is looking to assist lakefront property owners with greenbelt and shoreline stabilization projects. Thanks to a grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the Watershed Council may be able to help design and install natural shoreline projects. Better yet, eligible projects will have a portion of the project costs covered.

For further information contact:

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

231-347-1181 or email [jen@watershedcouncil.org](mailto:jen@watershedcouncil.org)

## Swans by the numbers Contributed by Mary Beth Kazanski, bird watcher



While enjoying a second cup of coffee one cold winter morning, I saw an interesting sight. Close to shore a group of three mute swans graced the water and fed peacefully. But when one lifted its head there was definitely something around its neck. Had it gotten caught on something? No. This was a tag. And, this had a small solar panel on it.

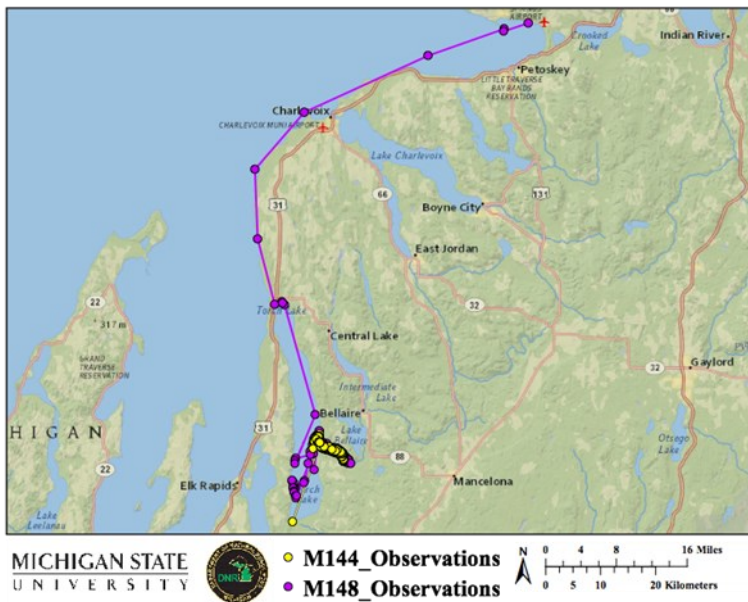
Thanks to the easy availability of such information on the internet, my husband and I quickly learned that a researcher at Michigan State University had tagged several mute swans throughout the state. Randy Knapik is a PhD can-

didate working at MSU in partnership with Michigan DNR, and the USDA's Wildlife Services. The research is trying to understand the movement of mute swans and thereby gain information for management strategies of this swan population. Randy told me that "our" swan, M144 (yellow dots below), is a female tagged in Clam Lake in May of 2017. Her cygnet, M148 (purple dots), is also being tracked. The solar powered GPS device sends location data back to the researchers allowing them to follow feeding patterns, movement through the winter, etc. and thus develop long-term control strategies. Tagging and tracking will continue for the next few years.

Mute swans, though beautiful, are an invasive non-native species. They can eat up to 8 pounds of aquatic vegetation daily and compete with native species such as common loons and

## Swans by the numbers Continued

trumpeter swans for territory. They also have a deserved reputation for aggression toward kayakers, paddle boarders and small watercraft.



The public can assist this research by reporting green colored mute swan sightings to Randy Knapik ([knapikra@msu.edu](mailto:knapikra@msu.edu)). Not all will have the GPS tracker but will have numbered green collars. Please record the number on the green tag along with date and location. Further information about mute swan management in Michigan can be found at [www.michigan.gov/muteswans](http://www.michigan.gov/muteswans).

*It's a "SHORE" thing.....*

*2018 series at the Twisted Fish Gallery*

April 27th—Aquatic Invasive Species Management

May 25th—Loon update

July 27th—Topic TBA

August 24th—Arctic Grayling Initiative

September 28th—Historical Perspective of Elk and Skegemog Lakes

## MAKING IMPROVEMENTS AT YOUR SHORELINE?

Contributed by Bob Kingon



Keeping it natural on  
the lakefront protects water quality

Our actions in the Elk-Skegemog Watershed can have adverse impacts on natural resources, particularly water bodies. To protect these resources, policies have been enacted at the federal, state and local levels that regulate certain activities to help assure that our water resources are not only protected, but improved over time. Below is a summary of those State and local regulations that most often apply to Elk-Skegemog riparians.

Most activities that occur within or along the shoreline of inland lakes, rivers and stream are regulated under Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA). Under Part 301 of NREPA, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) regulates shore-

line activity that occurs below the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) or below the highest legal lake level. Examples of work requiring permits on an inland lake, river or stream are:

Dredging, filling, constructing or placing a structure on bottomlands, such as beach sanding and installation of riprap (rocks), a breakwater or permanent dock.

Artificial or natural material added to the shoreline to prevent erosion or ice damage that extends onto the bottomland below the OHWM.

Structurally interfering with the flow of water.

Connecting a ditch, pond or canal to an inland lake, river or stream.

Complete information may be found at: [www.michigan.gov/deqinlandlakes](http://www.michigan.gov/deqinlandlakes)

Permits to conduct activities covered under Part 301 are obtained directly from MDEQ Water Resource Division district offices:

Grand Traverse and Kalkaska Counties – Cadillac office – 231-775-3960

Email: [deq-wrd-district-cadillac@michigan.gov](mailto:deq-wrd-district-cadillac@michigan.gov)

Antrim County – Gaylord office – 989-731-4920

Email: [deq-wrd-district-gaylord@michigan.gov](mailto:deq-wrd-district-gaylord@michigan.gov)

Under Part 91 of the NREPA, regulations are in place to control soil erosion and sedimentation. Enforcement of these regulations are delegated to counties. If you will be disturbing soils, removing existing vegetation, or changing topography within 500 feet of a lake, river or stream or in area greater than 1 acre, you will need a Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Permit from your county erosion control officer. These officers review your soil erosion and sedimentation control plans, issue permits and take enforcement actions as may be required.

Complete information may be found at: [www.michigan.gov/soilerosion](http://www.michigan.gov/soilerosion)

Antrim County – 231-533-8363 [www.antrimcd.com/soil-erosion](http://www.antrimcd.com/soil-erosion)

Kalkaska County – 231-258-3367

[www.kalkaskacounty.net/departments/planning\\_and\\_zoning/index.php](http://www.kalkaskacounty.net/departments/planning_and_zoning/index.php)

Grand Traverse County - 231-995-6051

## MAKING IMPROVEMENTS AT YOUR SHORELINE? Continued

<http://www.co.grand-traverse.mi.us/518/Soil-Erosion>

Environmental organizations including MDEQ recognize that Part 91 does not adequately prevent the flow of nutrients (primarily phosphorous and nitrogen) and pollutants (pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals) into water bodies. They and most lake associations advocate maintaining and re-establishing natural greenbelts at the shoreline. These are also called natural buffers and shoreline or native protection strips. Natural vegetation with deep fibrous roots holds plants and soils in place, encourages filtration and readily absorbs nutrients. They also provide habitat for wildlife and certain vegetation attracts birds.

All local governments in the Elk-Skegemog watershed address the need for shoreline greenbelts and specify restrictions on activities that can be conducted near the shoreline. These restrictions and exceptions to them are different for each governmental unit and are delineated in zoning ordinances. The zoning ordinance for each governmental unit can be found at their website and links are provided below with the phone number for the Zoning Administrator.

Elk Rapids Township - Section 2.11

[http://www.elkrapids.com/uploads/4/6/4/5/46455369/2016-dec\\_amended\\_ert\\_zoneordinance.pdf](http://www.elkrapids.com/uploads/4/6/4/5/46455369/2016-dec_amended_ert_zoneordinance.pdf)

Zoning Administrator – 616-822-6282

Elk Rapids Village – Section 531

<http://www.elkrapids.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ADOPTED-ZONING-CODE-2018.pdf>

Zoning Administrator – 231-262-9274

Milton Township – Chapter 3 117.320

<http://www.miltontownship.org/zoning/revisedzoningord.pdf>

Zoning Administrator – 231-264-6697

Clearwater Township - Sections 4.13 and 9.02 as amended

<http://www.clearwatertwp.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Amendment-8-to-Ordinance-22.pdf>

Zoning Administrator – 231-332-4500

Whitewater Township – Article XXVII, Section 27.13

[http://www.whitewatertownship.org/uploads/2/1/9/6/21966412/whitewater\\_township\\_zoning\\_ordinance\\_as\\_of\\_01262018\\_-\\_website\\_copy.pdf](http://www.whitewatertownship.org/uploads/2/1/9/6/21966412/whitewater_township_zoning_ordinance_as_of_01262018_-_website_copy.pdf)

Zoning Administrator – 231-267-5141 Ext. 21

In summary, you may require up to three permits in Elk Rapids, Milton and Whitewater Townships. In Elk Rapids Village and Clearwater Township, you may require up to two permits and need to accommodate specific local zoning restrictions. In addition, if you will be disturbing a wetland on your property that is within 500 feet of the OHWM, a MDEQ permit will be also required. <http://www.michigan.gov/wetlands>

## ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION

July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

Officers		Address	Phone	Email
Gary Chenoweth	President	843 Millers Park Elk Rapids	314-814-5324	gec9309@aol.com
Mary Beth Kazanski	Vice Pres	9501 Shellway Dr. NW Rapid City	609-577-3814	mbk.mbkaz@gmail.com
Joan Richardson	Rec. Sec.	9350 Larsen Rd. Williamsburg 49690	267-5458	phijo3@gmail.com
Kathi Gober	Corr. Sec.	8516 Skegemog Pt. Rd. Williamsburg	267-5506	hotwheeler8454@torchlake.com
Phil Spangenberg	Treasurer	8991 Skegemog Pt. Rd Williamsburg	586-215-7878	phlspn9@aol.com

## ZONE DIRECTORS

## ZONE A

Jim Sak	Captain	11329 Hanel Rd Williamsburg	264-6069	jsak@tm.net
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## ZONE D

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Tim Wheeler		7546 Hoiles Dr. NW Williamsburg	772-530-7213	twheeler@torchlake.com

## ZONE E

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Brenda Miller - Membership		209 Traverse St. Elk Rapids	499-0134	brenda@mortonmiller.com

ESLA  
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Elk Rapids, MI 49629



Please join or renew  
your membership in  
ESLA at:

[https://www.elk  
-skegemog.org/](https://www.elk-skegemog.org/)

If you are a current  
member, **thank  
you** for your contin-  
ued support.

**WE WANT YOU!**