

ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION OCTOBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

President's Message

Bob Campbell
ESLA President



What a sweet summer on our waters! Somehow, we missed out on 500-year rains and super-sweltering afternoons of recent years. Sunrises over the Skegemoog Swamp were sublime. Sunsets over Elk's west shoreline stunning. OK, enough S words.

But please indulge my summer waxing a bit more. Grandsons Max, 5, and Beau, 2, reeled in rock bass and bluegills in my not-so-secret spots. Even little Jack, who turned 1 in late June, embraced lake living with outsized giggles as he played with Gram in the shade of the lakeside river birch.

By next summer, he'll chirp: "I love loons."

This is how the magic passes through generations who find their way by inheritance, devotion, dumb luck or retirement to embrace ESLA's waters.

The scene (as pictured on this page) that I watched on quiet, late summer mornings on my Skeg side of Skegemoog Point

reinforced the importance of ESLA's Commitment for Generations message: "To Protect and Preserve Our Precious Resources."

The little boy, age 3, in the rowboat is Rowe (no kidding) Guest, his dad Jamison Guest is rowing. Just out of camera range is Rowe's grandpa, Ladd, who is married to Chris, who is now 71 and has been coming each summer to their cabin in the former Rice's Resort since she was 1. Her father was among the original owners when the resort closed. That's four generations. I expect Rowe will someday rowing his son or grandson on early morning at least a few decades away.

At their association's annual meeting over the Labor Day weekend, Chris prodded the other eight cabin owners to sign up for individual ESLA memberships. It was among many encouraging moments that kept those of us passionate about ESLA's mission energized.

\$\$\$ UP, ###s DOWN

Still, as of this writing, our number of paid members is down about 100 from 2021's figure, even as the total dollars contributed has surged thanks to the generosity of the 400 or so who have writ-

CONTENTS

President's Message	1—2
Water Protection Activities	3—4
ESLA Champions & Legends	5
Fisheries Report	6
ESLA Biologist Consult	7—8
Rugg Pond/Torch River	8
Business Sponsors	9
DNR Report	10

ten checks or paid dues by credit or debit cards. Our goal is to surpass our 2021 total membership in the remaining months.

Inflation, as it has for all, has sharply increased ESLA's costs for contractors to aggressively address invasive species threats and infestations, as well as water testing and work on many other fronts (*see stories inside this newsletter about what ESLA did this summer to protect and preserve our shared waters*).

Meanwhile, ESLA is pushing to get boat wash stations on our most frequented public boat launches to help keep invasives out of our water and off our shorelines. And for the first time, we offered free shoreline protection and enhancement consultations this summer with our lake biologist Samantha Ogle. (*See separate story in this newsletter.*)

Our "It's A Shore Thing"

Continued on page 2

President's message (continued)

events, we realized at our July gathering, had outgrown their longtime home at Twisted Fish Art Gallery (please keep supporting Twisted Fish with your business).

This year's excellent programs and speakers and subsequent record turnouts led the ESLA board to relocate remaining events to the Elk Rapids Harbor Pavilion on East Bay where we expect to stay in 2023. A big thank you to the Village and Marina folks for accommodating us.

Our annual meeting in June also will remain at the Harbor Pavilion. About 100 people attended this year's meeting and learned more about board members, as well as our projects and plans. As per usual, primo hostess and board member Ruth Bay came through with superb catered food, while Short's donated the firm's trademark beer and the Village Market contributed excellent wines. Kudos all!

CHAMPIONS AMONG US

The ESLA board also created and then tweaked a new Champion category of support. The revised iteration: Pledge with at least \$1,000 in the first year to make a \$5,000 contribution over five years to support ESLA's Strategic Environmental Fund. At this writing, we have about 15 individuals or couples who have made the pledge, including three who wrote checks for \$5,000 upfront. Dean Ginther, a former ESLA president and our longtime newsletter editor, led this push. If this appeals, contact Dean at 231-676-2928 or dean.ginther@gmail.com.

A BIZ EMBRACE

Meanwhile, led by ESLA's Finance Committee Chair Nancy Covington Schreiber, ESLA reached out for the first time to area businesses, including many who offer services to our members (find a list inside this newsletter). So far, nearly 20 have signed up and donated from \$100 to \$500 to make sure their businesses are listed on our website and newsletters. ESLA does not pretend to have vetted the firms' products or services, but we're thrilled they have decided to support our mission. If interested, contact Nancy at 954-240-2954 or Coving-

ton.nancy@yahoo.co.uk.

JOIN THE ESLA TEAM

ESLA revised for the first time in about 20 years its recommended level of individual dues for our waterfront property owners: \$50 for supporters; \$100 for sustainers; \$250 for Silver; \$500 for Gold and \$1,000 for Platinum. As of this writing, dues for about 400 members (which include couples) have been paid by check to **P.O. Box 8, Elk Rapids, MI. 49629** or through our website link to PayPal at elk-skegemog.org. If your check lists an address that isn't your riparian home, please make note of your waterfront address on the check or in an accompanying note.

For context, the average dues paid in 2022 has been about \$150. At this time, we prefer checks. For online credit or debit card payments, we're working to improve our online membership payment options but you can still sign up online through links on our website.

Not sure if you've paid 2022 dues? Send an email to ElkSkegemoglakes@gmail.com and we'll check. FYI, don't assume that if you're getting ESLA emails that you've paid your dues. We keep your emails (and never share them) but don't put you on a naughty list if you haven't paid.

SPEAKING OF EMAILS

We're now communicating at least once monthly by email blasts about new concerns, findings, changes in event locations or timing and other news that can't wait for the next printed newsletter. If you want to make sure you're getting those alerts, send an email to elkskegemoglakes@gmail.com. Include your riparian address so we can connect the dots.

Newsletters also are posted on ESLA's website before they arrive in your mailbox, whether that's on ESLA waters or in another city or state.

We've also learned that some of our recent members thought if they were receiving emails it meant their dues were paid for the current year. Wrong. Again, if you're unsure whether you've paid, send us an email and we'll check.

HOW ESLA PROTECTED OUR WATERS THIS SUMMER

Jan Garvey, ESLA Environmental Protection Committee Leader

We've had a busy summer on the lakes. You may have seen our Lake Biologist, Samantha Ogle, kayaking, water sampling or treating invasive plants. Or unusual boats doing fish surveys or surveying the depths of Elk Lake.



Surveyed past 'hot spots' and chemically treated Eurasian Water Milfoil (image right) in two locations. EWM spreads easily and can cause problems by clogging boat motors. It is normally found in marinas or other areas with slow moving water where boats congregate.

Mechanically treated purple loosestrife (image below) around the shoreline by digging out plants in more than 25 locations. And, we chemically treated 10 locations where plants were too large to dig out. In addition, we worked with CAKE CISMA (Charlevoix Antrim

Kalkaska Emmet Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) to treat large areas of purple loosestrife in Lake Skegemog with 8 pots of beetles – the first time we have participated in this treatment. Purple loosestrife is a beautiful stemmy plant (image right) from Eurasia that ended up notorious for choking out wetland native plant communities. It is a prolific spreader and can take over large areas of the shoreline if left untreated.



Identified and chemically treated Curly Leaf Pondweed (image left) at the north end of Elk Lake. This is the first time that it has been identified on our lakes.

Multiple sections of shoreline on Elk were sampled this summer for water quality parameters, including E. coli

Hosted 3 boat wash events with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. Over 40 boats were washed before and after they launched into ESLA waters. ESLA is currently researching boat wash options for the main boat launches on Elk Lake and Lake Skegemog to support Michigan's "Clean

Drain Dry" law aimed at reducing the spread of invasive species to our waters.

More than 20 shoreline consultations were conducted, focusing on "Healthy Shorelines". Riparians are very interested in getting information on how they can improve their shorelines and were very enthusiastic about Sam's help.

Worked with Jan Stevenson, professor at MSU and well-known expert in Golden Brown Algae research, to obtain samples of GBA on Elk Lake and Lake Skegemog. Jan is conducting a research project with Torch Lake to look at the effect of nutrients on GBA and he is sampling numerous northern lakes to determine if the GBA structure varies.



DNR Fisheries Division surveys on our lakes confirmed the presence of Round Gobies (image left). Round gobies have voracious appetites and an aggressive nature which allows them to dominate native species. Round gobies also have a competitive advantage over native species due to a well-developed sensory system that allows for enhanced water movement detection and the

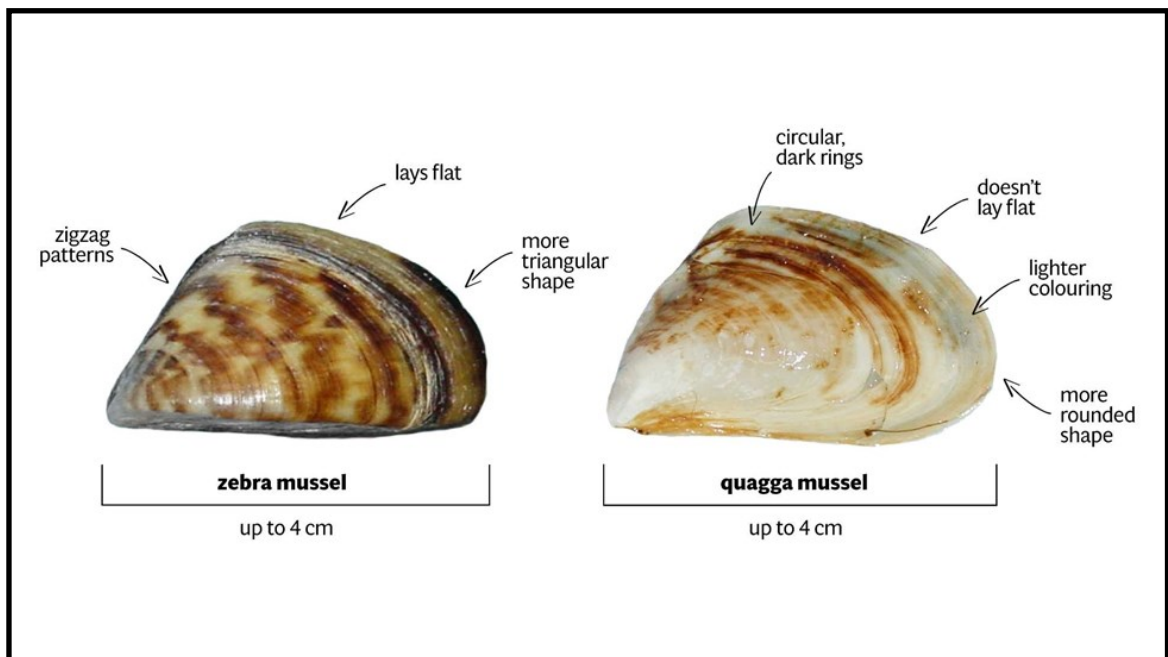
ability to feed in complete darkness. One positive: smallmouth bass and lake trout love to eat gobies.

Hans VanSumeren, director of the Great Lakes Water Studies Institute at Northwestern Michigan College, and his students, (image right) were on Elk Lake this summer using sophisticated technology to get our best idea yet what's happening in Elk Lake's deeper waters. ESLA successfully sought the NMC experts, who typically focus on the Great Lakes.



NMC research confirmed the presence of Quagga Mussels (image below) in Elk Lake. Quagga are prodigious water filterers, thus removing substantial amounts of phytoplankton from the water and altering the food web. Quagga mussels clog water intake pipes and underwater screens much like zebra mussels.

PIC





Become An ESLA 2022 Champion and/or Legend

By Dean Ginther



As of late September ESLA has gained thirteen new Champions this year. Champions are donors who have given \$5000 or more in a single year or who have pledged to give \$5000 or more within a five year (or less) period. There is still time this year for you to join this generous group of 2022 ESLA Champions.

ESLA Legends are donors who commit to leave a legacy gift to ESLA by pledging \$25,000 or more upon their death. This pledge is not legally binding but rather represents a commitment to ESLA to make a legacy donation of \$25,000 or more. Each Legacy donor will need to establish an estate plan to fulfill their ESLA legacy commitment. The Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation can assist those wishing to make a legacy gift to the ESLA endowment (see below).

Any donations can be directed to either or both of the funds described below. Note that donation from those who select to participate in the five-year Champion plan will be placed into the Strategic Environmental Fund. Also, please be aware that donations and gifts to ESLA are not membership dues.

The Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association Fund, is an endowment managed by the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. Donations to the ESLA fund are held in perpetuity and generate yearly income based on a three-year average of the account balance (currently about \$152,000). To contribute, go to <https://www.gtrcf.org/give/our-funds.html/42/> or contact ESLA at ElkSkegemoglakes@gmail.com for help.

The Strategic Environmental Fund, a new fund professionally managed by the ESLA Financial Committee and overseen by the ESLA Board. Proceeds in the fund will be tapped to address significant, possibly unanticipated, challenges to ESLA's mission to "preserve and protect our precious resources." The ESLA Board may supplement the fund with an infusion from existing reserves.

ESLA also will accept unrestricted gifts that — at its discretion — the ESLA Board may designate to cover immediate financial needs or to enhance the Strategic Fund or the Endowment Fund.

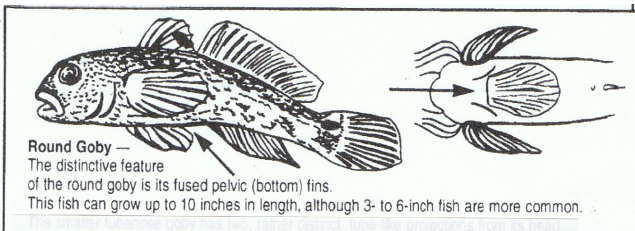
Questions? Contact Dean Ginther, who spearheaded the ad hoc committee that developed these alternatives, at 231-676-2928 or at ElkSkegemoglakes@gmail.com. Thanks for your generous support.

DNR CONFIRMS INVASIVE ROUND GOBIES IN ELK LAKE

Ken Krentz, ESLA Fisheries

The DNR's fish survey of Elk Lake this summer confirmed, not surprisingly, the presence of the invasive Round Goby. Gobies have been present in the Great Lakes for decades, and in many inland lakes. It is unknown how long they've been in Elk and Skegemog lakes.

The adult goby is a 2-6-inch bottom-dwelling fish similar to native sculpin (muddler minnow). The distinguishing difference is their pelvic fins. The sculpin's two pelvic fins are separate, while goby's are fused to form a fan or suction cup shape under the head.



The bad news about gobies: They compete aggressively for food with native fish, can spawn several times each year, can live in all depths of our lakes, and like to eat fish eggs. The good news: Gobies are an excellent forage fish for many native gamefish. Smallmouth bass have been growing bigger and faster in waters with gobies. Also, gobies eat invasive zebra mussels.

Historically, gobies have fit into their habitat, as opposed to driving out all competitors. There is no known control for existing populations.

Potential further introduction of gobies and other invasives can be reduced by draining and cleaning your boat's bilge, as well as live and bait wells before launching into our lakes or any others. ESLA will continue to monitor their impact.

INITIAL DNR FISH SURVEY: Mixed Results, More Details in '23

In late June and early July, the DNR, led by biologist Heather Hettinger, conducted a fish survey of Elk Lake — the first in



about 20 years. The purpose is to determine fish populations by species from the tiniest minnows to the biggest lunkers.

Over 10 days and nights, boats, biologists, and technicians plied Elk from shoreline shallows down to 150 ft., using gill nets, fyke nets, and seines. Also, non-lethal electroshocking and netting was done at night near shorelines in waters less than 8 feet deep. The DNR conducts lake fish population surveys each summer around the state, then analyzes findings over the winter and issues its reports in the spring.

The initial observations from the Elk Lake are: Small brown trout planted this spring were found all over. Also netted: small Atlantic salmon, probably from the spring plant in Torch Lake. Perch, rock bass, and all minnow species were in abundance. Rock bass numbers were huge. Typical numbers of lake trout, whitefish, and cisco were found in deeper water. Fewer than expected smallmouth bass were netted. No rainbow trout (steelhead) or adult brown trout were found. Unfortunately, several 2-inch round gobies were caught. Gobies are an invasive bottom-dwelling fish. *(See accompanying story.)*

Hettinger, who led the research effort, has committed to present the findings to ESLA members at a "It's A Shore Thing" or ESLA annual meeting in 2023.

Shoreline Consultations: Positive impact one parcel at a time

Samantha Ogle, ESLA Lake Biologist

This summer, I held 19 shoreline consultations with property owners on ESLA waters. It marked the first time the lake association formally reached out to offer free consults. Our goal: to enhance water quality in the critical zone where land meets water one property at a time.

In my travels to your homes, cottages and building sites, I heard concerns and questions ranging from the expected longevity of a tree drooping towards the lake, to buckling of shorelines from ice damage, to plant recommendations, to invasive species worries. The consultations were for new builds, cottages and homes erected decades ago, and on empty lots where owners sought advice on how to minimize their impact on water quality when they build their dream home.



Samantha Ogle ESLA Biologist

I typically began conversations with two questions: How do you use your property or anticipate using it? What concerns do you have? The answers focus my advice. We want you to enjoy your waterfront while not harming it. For example, if having a sandy spot to play near or in the water is a priority, we suggest ways to reduce the impact of the sand. If having an opening to launch or retrieve your Hobie Cat is important, we have ways to minimize impact. The whole idea is to work *with* you on this so that you fully enjoy your property. Your heirs or others who someday may own the property will appreciate your efforts.

I spent much time explaining the benefits of bioengineering the shoreline with biodegradable coir logs for erosion control. They're effective and an alternative to installing large boulders for protection from waves from wind and boat wakes. I explained how the immense energy from waves can dramatically change the shore in just one storm, or one winter's ice push. Having plants or trees with deep, strong and complex root systems hold soil and sediment in place and protects against erosion.

Erosion allows harmful sediments and fertilizers to reach our waters during our increasingly heavy rainstorms. Still, a healthy shoreline is not one size fits all. Sometimes, boulders can be part of the shoreline protection mix. Generally, we are hopeful to implement a dense buffer zone, or greenbelt, between the grass and the water.

Shoreline Consultation (from pg. 7)

I also encourage, especially those who haven't started to build, strongly considering lake water irrigation. Unlike well water, lake water has nutrients that feed the soil and minimize or eliminate the need to fertilize.

Other differences among properties also call for different solutions. Some face long stretches of open water and waves; some have steep banks; some have little elevation change from the water to the residence; some have full sun or no sun at all.

Understanding your property as a mini ecosystem within a much larger dynamic is key. Each parcel is one piece within a huge puzzle: the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed. It's why ESLA has invested in long-term plans to help protect the whole puzzle.

Some people I met were do-it-yourselfers; others wanted to hire help. I provided resources to businesses that specialize in shoreline work, arborists that can help with healthy tree trimming, and countless links to different plant guides, examples of bioengineered shorelines, benefits of lake water irrigation, etc.

I am thrilled that so many were so enthusiastic to make a positive impact. My goal is to educate with the best lake-friendly solutions without judgment and help those I consult with to better understand the entire watershed.

If you are interested in having me come to your property for a consultation, please contact me at samantha@onelessconsulting.com

Update on Rugg Pond

By Past President Mary Beth Kazanski

Kalkaska County has approved the funds for an engineering study to determine the best plan for the dam, either repair or removal. Results are expected later this year.

Rugg Pond was formed by an earthen dam built by Kalkaska Power and Light in 1904 northwest of Kalkaska where the two branches of Rapid River meet. Kalkaska County took over ownership in 1953. The Rugg Pond Nature Preserve consists of 105 acres.

State of Michigan inspectors, who regularly examine earthen dams, have concluded Rugg Pond needs repairs.

BOATING: Channel buoys added, more in 2023

By Pat Pierce



For boaters navigating the stumpy waters where the Torch River flows into Skegemog Lake, ESLA used member dues this year to add new and replace damaged buoys marked "STUMP."

Led by boating safety leader Pat Pierce, ESLA faces challenges each year to meet the responsibility we have assumed to help riparians and those using local public

launches avoid costly tows out of the stumps. State and local governments take no responsibility, unless your safety is at risk.

In 2022, ESLA added three large buoys and replaced one other on the northwest side of the channel where the lake and river converge. That area has been especially tricky and resulted in many calls to the "Tow Boat" franchise over the years.

For 2023, ESLA will add at least three additional large buoys, including on the channel's southeast side, to help boaters stay in the channel. We have a contractor who does most of the buoy seasonal placement and removal each spring and fall.





WE CONGRATULATE ESLA'S FIRST TIME BUSINESS SUPPORTERS

This year, for the first time in ESLA's nearly 75 years, we actively solicited contributions from our local business community. . Show your appreciation to these businesses by thanking them for their help when you use their services or products.

PATRON LEVEL \$500 +

Elk Rapids Marina on Elk Lake 231-264-9500 elkrapidsmarina.com

SUSTAINER LEVEL \$250 - \$499

Barker Creek Nursery 231-267-5972 barkercreek.net
 Blackmore Property Maintenance 231-264-9404 blackmorepropertymaintenance.net
 Bodywise 231-264-6688 erbodywise.com
 Bokhara Pet Resort 231- 254-5855 bokhara.com
 Coldwell Banker Camille Campbell 231-944-9385 camilleycampbell.com
 Chemical Control Company 231- 946-5771 chemicalcontrol.com
 Great Lakes Cottage Watch 231-633-7378 glcottagewatch.com
 Habitat Landscape 231-622-2688 habitat-landscape.com
 Miner's North Jewelers 231-946-8528 minersnorth.com
 Raymond James Rockne "Rocky"
 Paige 248-277-8875 raymondjames.com/rockypaige

BUSINESS BACKER LEVEL \$100 - \$249

All Smiles Family Dentistry 231-264-6300
 Century 21 Northland Kellie Sergent 231-264-4500 c21northland.com
 Coach's Angle Charters coachscharters.com
 Elk Rapids Skin & Laser Clinic 231-264-0700 youridealyouweightloss.com
 Fish With Jim Outfitters 231-252-1277 fishwithjimoutfitters.com
 Lakeside Properties Real Estate 231-254-5000 lakesidepropertiesrealestate.com
 Michigan Lake Products 231-264-8002 michiganlakeproducts.com
 RE/MAX of Elk Rapids
 Don Fedrigo 231-264-5400 donfedrigo.com
 Short's Brewing Company 231-498-2300 shortsbrewing.com
 Stoney Cabin Toys 231-498-5744 stoneycabintoy.com
 Village Market 231-264-5629 villmkt.com

(Boating continued) Besides Pat, kudos go to ESLA members Phil Richardson and Mark Taylor, ESLA board member Dale Claudepierre and ESLA president Bob Campbell who drove their boats and/or lent their muscles to help Pat retrieve lost buoys around Skegemog and drop and reposition missing buoys along the channel path.

Michigan DNR Report

DNR: Wake boats pose threat to water quality;
Three things operators can do to lessen impact



The Michigan Department of Natural Resources issued a strongly-worded warning and recommendations in mid-September after studies showed conclusively that wake boats can pose a significant threat to water quality on inland lakes such as Elk and Skegemog.

This happens for two reasons:

- Wake boats allow the operator to direct the angle of the propellor more downward, stirring up sediments and reducing clarity.
- The boats have ballast systems to shift weight to create larger wakes. The

ballast also uses lake water, creating potential to move invasive species between lakes when boats are trailered.

The studies found the resulting waves carry “1.7 to 17 times the energy of those created by other comparably-sized power boats,” the DNR reported, adding the “waves take much longer to decrease in size, too – between 225 feet to 900 feet from the boat.”

In addition to educating members about this threat, ESLA will seek new signage at public boat launches on our waters with the following three DNR recommendations wake boat operators can follow to reduce harm to shorelines and water quality.

1. When wakesurfing or wakeboarding, during which boat speed, wave shapers and/or ballast are used to increase wave height, operate at least 500 feet from docks or shoreline, regardless of water depth.
2. When wakesurfing or wakeboarding, never operate in water less than 15 feet deep.
3. Completely drain ballast tanks before trailering or otherwise transporting a watercraft over land.

This summary of the report was provided to the Michigan Lakes and Steams Association by one of the authors: Joe Nohner, Ph.D., Inland Lakes Habitat Analyst & Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership Coordinator

Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Read the complete report here: <https://mymlsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/DNR-Wake-Boat-Report.pdf>

ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS

January 2022

Contact: elkskegemoglakes@gmail.com.

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Phil Spangenberg	Treasurer	8991 Skegemog Pt. Rd Williamsburg	586-215-7878
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Dale Claudepierre		13952 Betty Lane. Rapid City	248-644-7614
Dean Ginther	Newsletter	11228 Shippey Ln. Rapid City	231-676-2928
Andy Hogarth		11942 E Elk Lake Trail Rapid City	5 17-388-2238
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Phil Spangenberg		8991 Skegemog Pt. Rd. Williamsburg	586-215-7878
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 <u>SUPPORT</u>			
Samantha Ogle		samantha@Onelessconsulting.com	231-492-9630

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

Your financial support for ESLA's mission is crucial. But we're always on the lookout, too, for members interested in volunteering. Send an email at elkskegemoglakes@gmail.com and let us know you've got time to help and what skills you might bring.

