



Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association

Sept 2017



Gary Chenoweth—ESLA President

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greeting ESLA Friends.

It is my true honor to be following Ruth Bay as President of the Elk Skegemog Lake Association. Ruth, past Officers and Directors deserve a huge amount of gratitude for building a very active and effective organization.

Over the next 2 years, my main objective is to support key **ESLA Committees** and focus on the continual development and implementation of programs that will protect our precious pristine waters. In addition, develop lasting friendships with people I come into contact with though ESLA!

Invasive Species monitoring and eradication continues to be the primary objective of the **Environmental Protection Committee**. In addition, EPC will continue collaborating with the Tip of Mitt Watershed Council, other Lake

Associations and Michigan Universities in an attempt to gain understanding and knowledge about the ugly Golden Brown Algae that is prevalent in not only our Elk River Chain of Lakes but also in most of all Northern Michigan lake bottoms.

Recreation & Safety Committee will continue to promote and educate kids and adults on Water & Boating Safety. Maintaining and enhancing our waterways Navigational Aids is another one of the Committee's key responsibility. Note: My annual prop expense has declined significantly since Skegemog/Torch River entrance stumps have been mark quite well over last several years!!

Government Relations Committee key area of responsibility will be to maintain relations with pertinent officials from the 4 Townships and 2 Counties that ESLA waterway resides in. At times, dialogue with State officials is also required.

In recent years, **Communication/Membership Committee** has enhanced this task by not only planning Annual June Meeting, but by also hosting small informal "It's a Shore Thing" information meetings. During this year, committee plans on placing emphasis on using Social Media more effectively. Improving and making

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website more user friendly and initiating an ESLA Facebook page.

As you can see, there is a lot to be done by ESLA team during year. Lucky for all of us, team is made up of passionate members who love and want to protect our lakes and rivers.

Bio: Grew up on Indiana farm. Met Mary (wife) at Purdue University. Mary's grandparents purchased Elk Lake property in 30's. My first visit to Elk Lake, July 4th holiday, 1971. Employed by large soybean/canola processing company, Bunge NA. Retired and moved to Elk Rapids, summer 2013. Joined ESLA as Zone A Director 2014-2015

Meet the 2017 ESLA Intern — Ed DeRosha



Hello ESLA members! I'm Ed DeRosha and I am privileged to be the first college intern to be hired by ESLA. I am finishing a bachelor's degree in Freshwater Science and Sustainability through Western Michigan University this summer and I expect that this internship will help pave my entry to a new and gratifying late-life career. Some of you may already know me or at least recognize my last name. My two children, Dan and Katie, attended Elk Rapids schools and Dan did an ESLA internship as a high school student about ten years ago, so in this instance, it is Dad who is following in his son's footsteps. Incidentally, Dan has stuck with science and is now completing a doctorate in chemistry. I like to think that his internship with ESLA furthered his scientific interest. When I learned this spring of the opportunity to apply for this internship, I did so without hesitation. My family and I have many happy memories of swimming, boating, fishing, and water skiing on Elk and Skegemog Lakes. Therefore, it seemed only fitting that I do something to help preserve these two fresh water jewels.

It has been a busy, fascinating summer for me so far. I am not only getting the chance to apply much of what I have learned in my courses at NMC and WMU, but I am also enjoying the opportunity to meet and work with the kind and knowledgeable members of ELSA's environmental

Meet the ESLA Intern Cont.

committee, in addition to many professionals from area governmental and non-governmental environmental organizations, including, Antrim and Kalkaska Co. Conservation Districts, Antrim County Health Dept., Chain of Lakes Association, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, and Grand Traverse Watershed Center.

My days have been filled with assisting with surveying for invasive species in the lakes, including purple loosestrife (a lovely, but aggressive invasive wetland plant), Eurasian water milfoil, and curly-leaf pondweed; measuring various parameters that reflect water quality, such as dissolve oxygen, water clarity, nutrient levels, specific conductance (an indicator of mineral concentration in the water); participating in a study aimed at determining factors that may be contributing to blooms of golden brown algae that have become increasingly common in recent summers; tabulating, analyzing, and summarizing data in written reports; and meeting with ESLA members to discuss priorities and strategies in response to the findings of these studies. I hope to be heavily involved in efforts to share with you what we learn this summer as we work as a community to protect our precious lakes for ourselves, the many species that inhabit them, and future generations.

Milton Township Beach (Kewadin Park)

Over the last three years, Milton Township has been creating a nearly 10-acre park in Kewadin with 400 feet of frontage on Elk Lake. The Conservancy assisted the Township in acquiring a grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) to purchase the former Waters' Edge Resort that completed the land acquisition. The Conservancy is now raising funds for the match and stewardship costs.

With grants from multiple sources, the Township installed a universally accessible kayak launch in June adjacent to the existing boat ramp. The Township is spending about \$40,000 this fall for improvements to the boat ramp, including extensive systems to manage the storm water runoff from Cairn Highway. Bids have also been received for improvements on the north side of Cairn Highway west of the old Township Hall. This project will be conducted in the spring of 2018, and will create parking areas and a pedestrian crosswalk that are necessary to officially open the park beach to the public. Access to the County recycling bins will be from the west side of the hall on a more substantial paved drive. With assistance from the Conservancy, the Township has submitted a \$400,000 application to the MNRTF to make improvements on the former Waters' Edge property including renovating the only remaining building (lodge) into an open air pavilion with universally accessible bathrooms on the lower level.

2017 Elk and Skegemog Lakes Cladophora Survey Results and Analysis

Submitted by Ed DeRoshia, ESLA Intern

Editor's Note — Cladophora is a filamentous green alga found naturally along most Great Lakes and inland lakes and streams. It can become a smelly and unpleasant nuisance if it grows in great abundance along the shoreline.

From May 12 to July 27, 2017, Heather Smith, Baykeeper of the Grand Traverse Watershed surveyed Elk Lake and Lake Skegemog for shoreline development and alteration, erosion, and tributaries, in addition to Cladophora and its substrate. You may have seen Heather or John Nelson, the prior Baykeeper, taking pictures of the shoreline during this period. Data regarding the incidence of Cladophora and associated factors are presented and analyzed in this report.

Lake Skegemog

A total of 116 properties were surveyed on Lake Skegemog. Ninety-eight of these properties were classified as developed (permanent structures on site), while 17 were not developed and one property was classified as partially developed. In total, 34 properties (29%) had Cladophora density scores of moderate or higher (at least 50% of bottom covered for a length of 50 feet or more). Twenty-five (22%) of all properties had no appreciable greenbelt at the shoreline (defined as sparse or no trees without other vegetation). Of properties lacking a greenbelt, 10 (40%) had scores indicating moderate or greater for Cladophora density. In comparison, of the 91 properties with at least a 10 foot length of greenbelt, only 13 (14%) had Cladophora scores of moderate or higher. Of 75 properties with a greenbelt and neither a drain pipe or tributary running to the lake, the incidence of moderate or greater density of Cladophora was 5/75 (7%), while the incidence of moderate Cladophora density on non-greenbelt properties also lacking a drain pipe or tributary remained elevated at 7/20 (35%).

Tributaries were noted on four of the properties. Of these four properties, three (75%), had a Cladophora density score of moderate-heavy (2) or heavy (1). All these properties had at least a minimal greenbelt and none had a drain pipe noted, therefore, the presence of a tributary on the property was highly predictive of appreciable presence of Cladophora.

Drain pipes discharging into the lake were also associated with higher incidence of Cladophora. Of 14 properties where drain pipes were observed, 10 (71%) had a Cladophora score of moderate or greater, with six scoring heavy or very heavy. Of seven properties with drain pipes, but also a greenbelt, the incidence of moderate or higher Cladophora was 6/6 (100%). Of seven properties without a greenbelt the incidence of moderate or greater was 3/7 (43%). Therefore, the association of a drain pipe with the incidence of Cladophora was independent of the presence of a greenbelt. None of the properties with drain pipes also had tributaries to the lake.

In sum, only five of 34 properties with appreciable Cladophora present had none of the three correlating factors noted above (lack of greenbelt, drain pipe from property, or tributary present). The incidence of moderate or greater Cladophora on properties without any of the three correlates present was 5/75 (7%). Conversely, the incidence of moderate or greater Cladophora for the properties with at least one of the factors present was 16/41 (39%).

Cladophora Survey Results and Analysis Cont.

Elk Lake

A total of 884 properties were surveyed on Elk Lake, of which 795 (91%) had at least partial development, while 774 (89%) had a building on the property. 16 percent of all properties had heavy/heavy-very scores for Cladophora density, compared to 9% of undeveloped properties without tributaries present.

Elk Lake had 24% of properties lacking an appreciable greenbelt, similarly to Lake Skegemog (22%). Properties with no appreciable greenbelt at the shoreline had a 23% of incidence of heavy/heavy-very Cladophora density scores, compared to 14% of greenbelt properties.

Twelve percent of Elk Lake properties had a drain pipe discharging to the lake. Of these properties, 38 percent had Cladophora density scores of heavy/very heavy, compared to 13% of properties without a drain pipe noted.

The presence of a tributary on site appeared to be the strongest predictor of high Cladophora density. Fourteen of 18 properties with a tributary present (78%) had Cladophora scores of heavy/very heavy. None of those properties were completely lacking a greenbelt or had a drain pipe discharging to the lake.

Overall, of properties with Cladophora density scores of heavy/very heavy, 62% had at least one of three predictors present; no greenbelt, a drain pipe discharging to the lake, or a tributary to the lake, while 38% had none of these predictors. Properties with at least one of the three predictors present had an incidence high density scores of 24% (94/399) compared to 12% of properties with none of these predictors present. Thus, in aggregate, these factors were associated with a doubling of incidence of high densities of Cladophora.

The above results suggest that lack of greenbelts, presence of a drain pipes to the lake, and tributaries emptying into Elk Lake and Skegemog Lake are all significant factors contributing to eutrophication of the lakes. Programs to educate property owners regarding the importance of greenbelt buffer zones to reduce nutrient pollution, in addition to limiting the application of lawn fertilizers and proper maintenance of septic systems would probably be helpful in reducing Cladophora blooms. Investigation regarding the concentrations and sources of nutrients for discharges from both drain pipes and tributaries appear to be warranted.

Cladophora Densities on Elk Lake

Incidence

None	V Light	Light	Light-mod	Moderate	Mod-Heavy	Heavy	Heavy-V Heavy
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121	155	158	66	181	72	92	39
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Percent of Total Incidence

13.7	17.5	17.8	7.5	20.5	8.1	10.4	4.4
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AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES BOATER EDUCATION

Submitted by Ken Krentz



The Tip of the Mitt Watershed council has initiated a project to educate boaters about aquatic invasive species (AIS) and how to help prevent their spread when transporting your boat from one body of water to another. Their research has revealed signage at boat launches is the most effective way to inform boaters. The signage describes how to clean your boat by removing visible plants and animals, draining all water, emptying bait containers, and drying or washing your boat. In addition to signs, hand out literature in the form of pocket cards is being distributed. The pocket cards are colorful credit card size brochures that open up to show typical AIS and recommended boat cleaning.

The Tip of the Mitt is promoting installation of signage at all boat launches in their 4 county area. ESLA has partnered with them and identified 8 launches with trailer ramps on Elk and Skegemog Lakes, and Torch River; 4 DNR managed and 4

locally managed. You will now see a red, white, and blue AIS sign with pocket card holder located at the Elk Rapids harbors and the Fairmont Drive launch on Skegemog Lake. Later, the new Kewadin waterfront park will be signed ,also. DNR sites will hopefully be done in the future.

In addition, ESLA has distributed AIS posters to many local businesses that boaters use around our waters. They are the same colors and design as the boat launch signs. Our lakes are relatively free of invasives compared with many other lakes and rivers, so its especially important to take steps to insure a clean boat when launching in our waters. This project is funded jointly by Tip of the Mitt and ESLA.

Action Alert — submitted by Ed DeRoshia, ESLA Intern



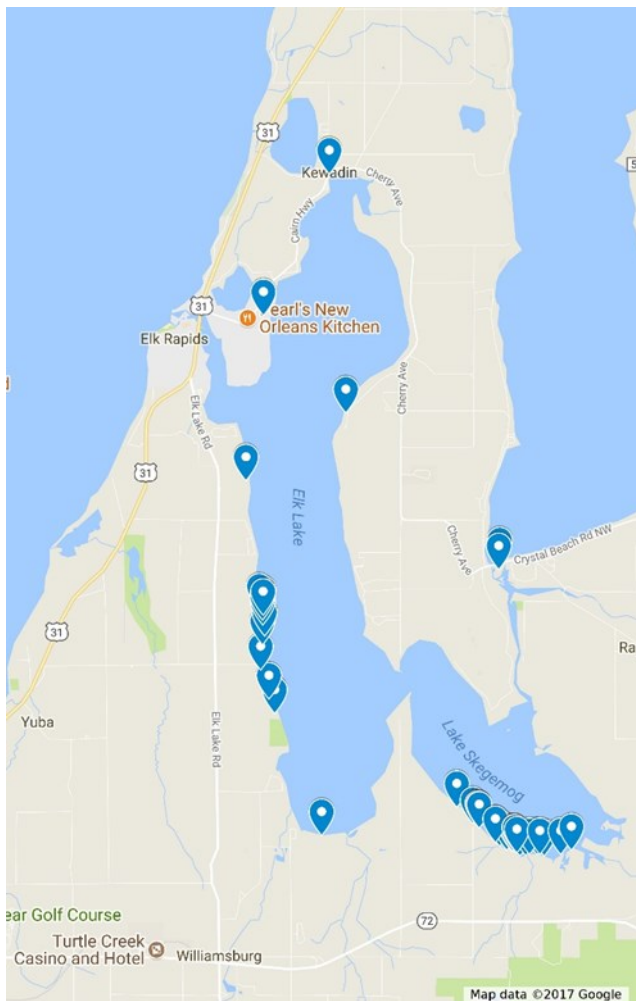
Do you have a plant on your property that looks like the one pictured below? Maybe it appeared on your shore only recently, or perhaps it's been there for years and you appreciate its vibrant blooms that appear in the summer months. Don't be fooled by its beauty – it's an aggressive invader that can reduce plant diversity in wetlands and degrade the habitat of birds, fishes, frogs, and other critters. The plant is an invasive that was first introduced in the northeast in the 1800s. It grows up to 6 feet tall and spreads via seeds, cuttings that can regenerate, and its spreading root system.

While it can be controlled easily enough in your yard, the seeds of purple loosestrife can be carried via wind, animals, and importantly for our lakes, on the water. Areas like the Lake Skegemog Natural Area are particularly vulnerable to this invasive, since it offers ideal habit and lies in the receiving path of the prevailing northwest winds. In fact, a recent survey of Elk and Skegemog Lakes found

most of the purple loosestrife to be on the western shore of Elk Lake, upwind from the southeastern shore of Lake Skegemog where the heaviest infestations are found (see map).

If you would like to help preserve the diversity and resilience of the ecosystem of our lakes, you can remove the plant on your property yourself or contact an ESLA board member (or intern Ed DeRoshia at 231-590-9207) to arrange to have your plant(s) removed or treated in place with an herbicide by a crew that ESLA plans to be contracting this month *at no cost to you*.

If you attempt to remove purple loosestrife yourself, you will need to be certain to remove all the root system, which can be quite large in a mature plant, otherwise, it will grow back. It should be burned or disposed of in a black plastic bag and taken to a landfill, not composted. Likewise, any flowers, pods, or seeds need to be handled carefully to prevent spilling on the soil or water. A permit is required to spray herbicides near public waters or wetlands. August is the ideal time of year to remove the plant, before it goes to seed. *Please help us eradicate purple loosestrife on Elk and Skegemog Lakes by taking action now!*



Nearby Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservatory Projects

See <https://www.gtrlc.org/land-protection-stewardship/active-projects/> for more information and to make a donation

Copeland Farm Easement

Rarely does the Conservancy have a chance to protect a place that is so incredibly important in terms of both ecology and history. The Copeland farm has roots that stretch back to William Copeland, the first permanent white settler of Kalkaska County. He took up residence on the land in 1855, and it's been owned by his descendants ever since. But this historical significance, while certainly of note, arguably plays second fiddle to the tremendous conservation values of this 179-acre property.



This spectacular parcel has nearly 1,000 feet of shoreline on Lake Skegemog and more than 500 feet along Barker Creek, a key tributary. More than half of the property is high quality wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat and protects the water quality of the lake by filtering runoff. This property has been on the radar of local conservationists since the early 1970s, when a grassroots effort led to the creation of the 3,300-acre Skegemog Lake Wildlife Area. The Copeland parcel is adjacent to the wildlife area and contains the last significant undeveloped shoreline in the area. In addition to natural features, a portion of this property contains viable farmland that has been in use since William Copeland first settled there more than 160 years ago. We have spoken with the landowner and secured an option to purchase a conservation easement that would forever protect these critical ecological features.

Your gift will:

- Protect diverse and important natural land that provides habitat for multiple fish species, several state and federally threatened bird species, two turtles of state special concern and the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake, Michigan's only rattlesnake and another species of special concern
- Help safeguard the water quality of Lake Skegemog by preserving wetlands, which act as filters for surface water runoff

Camp Maplehurst Milton Township Purchase



This spectacular 400-acre property is one of the largest remaining intact and undeveloped parcels near Torch Lake. From 1955 until 2011 it was home to Camp Maplehurst, a summer camp beloved by generations of campers and counselors. This beautiful property has northern hardwood forests and open meadows that surround Lake Maplehurst, a 60-acre spring-fed gem. Its position on high ground means visitors have views of Torch Lake, Elk Lake and Grand Traverse Bay. We helped Milton Township successfully apply for a \$1.9 million Michigan Natural Resources Trust fund grant so the land can be used for a public park. The grant, approved on Dec. 7, will cover about 70 percent of the cost to acquire the land. We anticipate a need of about \$1.8 million to cover a local match requirement for the grant, the cost of immediate stewardship (including demolition of several aging buildings on the property) and endowing the property's care. While other recreational properties in Milton Township provide access to shoreline and nature, none at this time feature a trail system. GTRLC and the township believe this park would provide a wonderful setting for a trail system for hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. There is also extensive waterfront area that will allow fishing, swimming and non-motorized boating. Aside from recreation, this is yet another project that will serve to safeguard water quality in the Chain of Lakes watershed.

Shoreline Survey Assessing the Health of Elk and Skegemog Lakes

Submitted by Ed DeRosha

If, like many of your neighbors, you have been wondering what those people in kayaks with notebooks and cameras have been up in front of your beach, don't be alarmed – they are water quality specialists and interns working on behalf of ESLA, Tip of the Mitt Water Council, and the Grand Traverse Watershed Center. With funding from a grant from the DEQ, the shorelines of the Chain of Lakes, including Elk Lake and Lake Skegemog are being surveyed for water quality indicators and factors that can affect



it.

Data being collected by the research teams includes shoreline development (riprap, break walls, etc.), shoreline erosion status, use of riparian greenbelt buffer vegetation, indicators of nutrient pollution, and the presence of tributaries or drain pipes feeding to the lake. All these factors can interact to affect the quality of lake water

in terms of clarity, sedimentation, as well as weed and algae proliferation. The data collection phase is winding-down and initial attempts are being made to collate and analyze the data to generate profiles depicting the health status of the lakes and guide us in the development of strategies to protect and improve water quality. You can anticipate reports from both ESLA and Tip of the Mitt over the next few months.

While we all enjoy the right to use our properties according to our own preferences, what “happens in Vegas”, often does not “stay in Vegas”, when it comes to our water. As riparian property owners, we share the lake as a community. How we manage our individual properties affects our ability to enjoy clean, safe water for swimming and fishing, as well as the health of the many diverse organisms that inhabit the lakes and their shores. For this reason, ESLA is embracing this opportunity to learn more about our shared management of the lake, its status, and to share that information with everyone to ensure that our lakes remain healthy and enjoyable for all of us.

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
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Phil Spangenberg	Treasurer	8991 Skegemog Pt. Rd Williamsburg	586-215-7878	phlspn9@aol.com

ZONE DIRECTORS

ZONE A

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ZONE E

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AT LARGE APPOINTED DIRECTORS

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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!