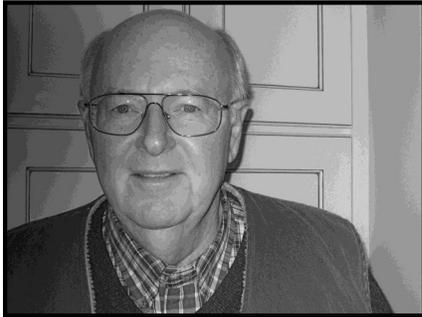




Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association Newsletter-June, 2012



Bob King **President's Message**

Dear fellow Riparian,

It is now mid-May and it feels like summer with fishermen trolling and sailors already tacking. ESLA is gearing up for another busy summer with continuing activities on our Rivers and Lakes and sponsoring events for our members.

Many of you participated in the survey that ESLA conducted last fall regarding the ESLA Annual Meeting. The majority of folks wished to continue having the meeting on Saturday morning at 10 AM, and most favored the Elk Rapids High School Auditorium as the venue. However, the prevailing view was to not hold the meeting in July or August because of competing activities and family visits. So, this years Annual Meeting will be held on June 23rd.

We will have two guest speakers from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Jory Jonas will present her work with the

“remnant” lake trout recently discovered in Elk Lake. These lake trout are a species that once thrived in Lake Michigan, but have not been identified there for many decades. Our remnant trout migrated into Elk River and Elk Lake prior to the construction of the first Elk Rapids dam in the 1850s. If you saw net buoys on the Lake in April, that was Jory attempting to document the spawning habits of these lake trout. There are many unique characteristics of these fish that Jory is researching and will share with us.

Andrea Albert is the DNR Conservation Officer for Antrim County and is very active on our ESLA Lakes and Rivers. She will bring us up to date on DNR activities as they may affect riparians and the recreational use of our waters. She has been taking the initiative with our surrounding townships to establish no wake ordinances in Elk River and area between the west end of Torch River and Lake Skegemog where water propelled boats are able to travel at relatively high speed without concerns about sunken logs. She will also share information about new capabilities that our sheriff departments have to measure boat engine noise levels.

Board Director Dale Claudepierre will review ESLA's 2011 activities and findings on the Rapid River and present our plans for 2012.

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We have growing concerns about the amount of sediment depositing in Torch River and Lake Skegemog. ESLA member Adam Jankowski will bring us up to date on the deployment of fish shelters – come and learn where they are located. So join us at 9:30 for coffee, doughnuts and visits with your fellow riparians.

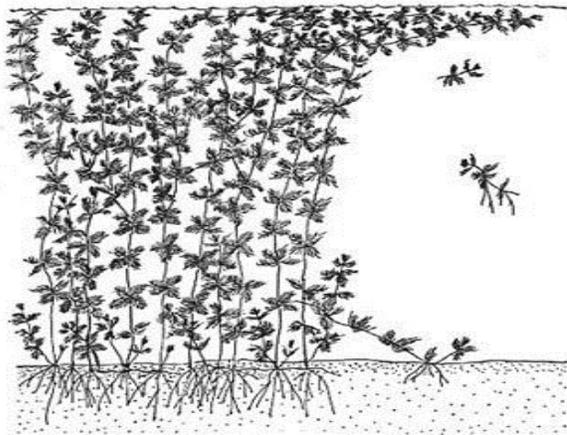
You will note elsewhere in the Newsletter that our local governments are working to preserve our water quality. Milton Township has joined Clearwater Township in requiring that septic systems and water supply systems be evaluated prior to a property being sold or transferred. The Village of Elk Rapids is reviewing options for upgrading its waste treatment facility and some of the options will extend Village sewer lines to

President's Message Cont.

some riparian properties in Elk Rapids and Milton Townships. ESLA's Government Relations Committee is involved in these and other initiatives.

You will see on page 7 a list of the members of ESLA's Board of Directors. This a great group of people who care about the Elk-Skegemog watershed and are devoting time and energy to its preservation. We have a vacancy in ESLA Zone D which includes riparian properties on Lake Skegemog that are in Clearwater or Whitewater Townships and Whitewater properties on Elk Lake from the "narrows" to Miami Beach Rd. We meet five times a year for two-hour meetings. Some of our Directors winter elsewhere and miss our December and March meetings. But, with email communication, this is not a barrier to meaningful participation. If you live in Zone D and are interested in joining the Board please contact me.

Eurasian Watermilfoil



Every riparian should be alert to the presence of Eurasian Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) or EWM an invasive species that has the potential to adversely impact our ESLA Lakes and Rivers. Six Mile Lake in the most northern portion of our Chain of Lakes has had an infestation for a number of years and has had difficulty keeping growth in check. Most disturbing is the discovery of a

pioneer bed of EWM in Torch Lake between Lone Tree Point and Stony Point south of Clam River. The bed was discovered last through aerial photographs. Also, Alden Harbor has had extensive EWM beds the last few years. We recommend that you raise your boat motor after leaving Alden Harbor and remove any vegetation from your propeller – **DO NOT THROW IT BACK INTO TORCH LAKE**, take it home and put it with your household refuse.

EWM can thrive in any type of water body and once it is established in multiple beds it is not likely to be eradicated and very difficult to control. Since EWM spreads by floating fragments that sink and become established in the lake or riverbed and EWM beds do exist upstream from us, it is likely that we will begin seeing signs of infestation in our ESLA Rivers and Lakes. It is important that we identify any pioneer beds early so we can quickly take action. Those riparians on Torch River and the Torch Bayou may be the first to spot EWM.

See the article in the July 2011 TLA Quaterly Newsletter at <http://3lakes.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/TLA-News-JUL11.pdf> for more information on the eradication efforts by the Three Lake Association.

A Word About Toilet Paper

Yes, ESLA has an opinion about toilet paper. Consumer Reports has rated toilet paper on four variables. There is one measurement that is important to us as riparians with septic systems – disintegration. Their measurement reflects the amount of time needed to breakup in swirling water. Complete survey results may be found on their website: www.consumerreports.org. Most toilet papers rate good to excellent on disintegration. But, four rated fair to poor:

- Charmin Ultra Soft
- Charmin Ultra Strong
- Quilted Northern Soft and Strong
- Seventh Generation Bath Tissue

ER Wastewater Treatment

On November 11, 2011, a Traverse City firm, Gosling Czubak Engineering Sciences Inc., issued a report commissioned by the Village of Elk Rapids that examines the feasibility of expanding the Village's sewer system and treatment plant.

The treatment plant did not meet DEQ discharge permit limits during spring and early summer of 2011. The study discovered that critical aeration equipment had been downsized and the equipment was not capable of meeting the stated organic capacity of the treatment plant. "The most urgent improvements were conducted in the November 2011, but more work is needed."

The Village of Elk Rapids is home to two major beverage and fruit processors. Shorts Brewery is connected to the Village wastewater system but is "stressing the abilities of the aging treatment plant". Burnette Foods is not connected to the Village system and operates its own spray irrigation system for wastewater treatment. ESLA has over the years responded to member concerns about the disposal of this wastewater adjacent to Elk Lake. ESLA reviews all of the compliance reports that are related to the DEQ permit provided to Burnette Foods.

This feasibility study investigated 6 alternative treatment technologies. The alternative with the lowest life cycle cost is a mechanical treatment plan/lagoon hybrid that uses common municipal treatment plant technology modified to make use of the existing lagoons. This is the alternative recommended by Gosling Czubak.

This alternative would include treating the wastewater from Burnette Foods and from an expanded service area. The expanded service area is based on discussions with Village, Elk Rapids Township and Milton Township officials and would include properties on:

- Grand Traverse Bay along North Bayshore Road and in Inwood Harbor
- Elk Lake and Elk River that are within the Village limits
- Elk Lake around Spencer's Bay in Elk Rapids Township
- Elk Lake from the Village limits to Birch Lake

including Maple Harbor

- Elk Lake in the Village of Kewadin in Milton Township
- Elk Lake along Elk Tip Drive in Milton Township

The ESLA Board of Directors will discuss this report during its July meeting and will determine ESLA's position regarding the proposed alternatives. The full report may be found on our ESLA website

Landscaping with Native Plants

Condensed from the Spring 2012 issue of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council "Currents".

Native plants are plant species that are, well, native to a given region. Here in Northern Michigan, native plants have acclimated to our cold winter, short summers, sandy soils, and local bugs and browsers. They are more than just part of the scenery; they are a critical piece of the great ecosystem puzzle. For residential landscapes, they not only add beauty, but also can provide habitat and save you time and money, as they typically require less maintenance. Many native plants have a deep network of roots, which is ideal for shoreline buffers, restoration projects, and rain gardens.

If you are interested in trying native plants in your landscape, there are a few things you should know. Digging them up from the wild is not OK since transplants may not survive, local pollinators and other animals depend on them in the wild, and removing protected species is illegal. A better alternative is to purchase native plants through a reputable nursery. To locate a native plant nursery, contact the Michigan Native Plant Producer Association (www.MNPPA.org). Native Michigan plants also may be available from local nurseries, although they may be grown from seed originating outside of the region. These plants will be suitable but possibly not as well adapted than a plant grown in Michigan with more local genetics.

Loon Network

The Elk River Chain of Lakes (ERCOL) Watershed may be home to the largest population of nesting loons in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. The ERCOL Watershed Loon Network is an informal group of volunteers committed to using a watershed approach to protect threatened common loons. The Network is funded by the generosity of private donors. The ERCOL Watershed Loon Network is a project of Michigan Audubon, a statewide 501(c)3 organization. More information is available at their website: www.loonnetwork.org/

On April 24th, the Loon Network met to discuss activities for 2012. Individuals attending represented 10 lakes in the ERCOL. The network has developed a number of logs to document sightings of loons and their behaviors, especially nesting activity and number of new chicks. They have developed key research questions that they will address in 2012:

- How many nesting pairs are in our Watershed?
- Do some of these pairs occupy the same territory every year?
- How many chicks did these pairs produce?
- How many loons were banded?
- Which banded loon returned to our lakes?
- How many loons in our Watershed are related to each other?

ESLA is proud of the following individuals who are volunteering their time :

Thom Yocum – Team Leader
 Jill Packer – Torch Bayou
 Gerrie Thompson – Lake Skegemog South
 Dale Claudepierre – Lake Skegemog North
 Phil Curtis – Lake Skegemog North
 Ted Ewald - Lake Skegemog North
 Pete DiMercurio – Elk Lake South
 Carl Wrouble - Elk Lake West
 Jim McKimmy – Elk Lake North/Kewadin

Get Your Boating Safety Certificate

The Antrim County Sheriff's Office announces its 2012 boater safety initiative. You, your children, grandchildren, friends, and relatives are encouraged to participate.

Three simple and flexible steps for all participants (youth and adults):

Boat Smart - 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 also available at the Antrim County Sheriff's Office (Bellaire), Torch River Pit Stop (Torch River), and Dewitt Marine (Clam Lake).

Boat Safe - 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.

Boat Legal - Age restrictions and certificate requirements for legally operating a boat vary slightly from those for operating a personal water craft (PWC). If you're not yet 34 years old, the law states that you must have and carry your Boating Safety Certificate on board to legally operate a PWC.

Participants who believe they will be ready to take the proctored exam can reserve a spot in any of five events. Registration is required. You can register by email to SmartSafeLegal@charter.net. The ESLA sponsored event will be held on Saturday July 14th at the Elk Rapids Police Department, 315 Bridge Street. You may register for this event by calling 231-947-1619. The programs all start at 9:00 a.m. and end at Noon. The programs all include registration, local ordinance review, Q&A, proctored exam, and certificate issue - at no cost to the participants.

ESLA 2012 Photo Contest

Do you have some great nature, action or lake living photographs that depict our beautiful Elk-Skegemog area? Enter them in the 2012 ESLA photo— information on contest rules and an entry form will be forthcoming in the next newsletter and on the ESLA website. The contest will run through September, is free, and the winners receive CASH prizes!!



2011 Elk/Skegemog Lakes Water Quality Monitoring Results



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 da-

taset accumulated by Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council as part of the Comprehensive Water Quality Monitoring Program. Last year marked the 11th 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 2011 samples show that nutrient levels in both Elk and Skegemog Lakes are typical of the high quality lakes in this region. Total phos-

phorus concentrations for both lakes were consistently below 10 parts per billion (ppb) and, in fact, rarely got above 3 ppb. Nitrogen concentrations were also low, never surpassing 400 ppb. If phosphorus were to suddenly climb and stay consistently above 20 ppb or if nitrogen began to rise into the 800-1000 ppb range, then we would want to take a closer look at what was happening. As things stand, results show that nutrient concentrations in Elk and Skegemog Lakes remain quite low.

Yet again, dissolved oxygen was found to be abundant throughout the water column in both Elk and Skegemog Lakes. During 2011, dissolved oxygen never dropped below 8 parts per million (ppm) in Elk Lake and only dropped below 7 ppm on Lake Skegemog once in the late summer (6.7 ppm). This measurement occurred at the bottom where oxygen becomes depleted first and although just below the State of Michigan surface water quality standard of 7 ppm set for lakes that are capable of sustaining cold-water fisheries, it was still far above the State standard of 5ppm for warm-water fisheries.

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 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.

Kevin L. Cronk

Monitoring and Research Coordinator

Don't Lose Your Dock this Summer

During every big storm on our Lakes, riparians lose sections of the dock. If you find a dock section washed up on your shore, be a good neighbor and lean it up against a tree near the shoreline so that it is visible to those searching for the lost section. To make recovery of your dock sections more likely, paint your name and telephone number on the underside of each section.

Milton Township Septic Inspection and Property Transfer Ordinance



In May 2012 the Milton Township Board enacted the Septic Inspection and Property Transfer Ordinance. The effective date of the Ordinance is November 22, 2012. This Ordinance requires an evaluation of a sewage treatment and disposal system (STDS) and private water supply system at the time a Milton Township property is sold or transferred to determine the operational status of the

STDS and private water supply system. A more detailed Notification will be available in July at the Township office or on the Township website (www.mmiltontownship.org) that includes exemptions and processes to follow. Only evaluations conducted by the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW) or its contractors comply with this Ordinance. If HDNW determines that the STDS or private water supply system fails evaluation, the failed system(s) must be corrected and the HDNW must provide final approval before the sale or transfer of the property can be completed.

By September 1, applications for an evaluation that is required by this Ordinance will be available at the Township office, downloaded from the Township website (www.miltontownship.org) or from the HDNW. Local real estate agencies may also have copies of the application. The application must be returned to the HDNW and must be accompanied by the evaluation fee, as set by the HDNW.

New Michigan Legislation

The Michigan Senate and House have passed legislation that clearly defines and restricts the type of activities that may legally occur at the thousands of public road ends that terminate on Michigan's inland lakes and streams. Lt. Governor Calley on March 22, 2012 and took affect immediately as Public Act 56.

The new law makes it a misdemeanor to place boat hoists or anchoring systems or to install a dock or wharf at road ends. Similar penalties apply to boaters who moor or dock their boats at road ends between midnight and sunrise. Only single-season docks authorized by local government officials and approved by the Department of Environmental Quality will be allowed under the new law. Violators face a fine of up to \$500 per day.

Calley also signed into law a measure taking away law enforcement officers' ability to stop boaters and make sure they have adequate floatation devices on board. The governor's office said "repeated stops without reasonable suspicion of violation are an unnecessary hindrance for boaters."

Anyone being towed by a boat, such as water skiers and swimmers riding tubes, will have to wear life vests under another new law. But children under the age of 12 no longer will have to wear Type I or Type II life vests that offer higher buoyancy. They'll now be required only to wear Type III personal floatation devices.

Another new law changes the charge for fleeing and eluding law enforcement officers while in a boat or on a personal watercraft from a misdemeanor to a felony. That makes the penalty level equal to the one motorists face if they flee on land.

Calley also signed into law a measure that requires moored barges to be lit so other boaters can see them and to have the owner's name and contact information marked on the side so law enforcement officers know how to reach the owner.

ELK-SKEGEMOG LAKES ASSOCIATION

Sept 1, 2010 — August 31, 2012

OFFICERS		Address	Phone	Email
Bob Kingon	Pres	10202 East Elk Lake Dr. Rapid City	322-6055	rjkingon@prodigy.net
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Dave Lawicki		6954 Aarwood Rd. Rapid City	944-3051	aarwood6954@hotmail.com
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Steve Flechter - Foundation		10426 E. Elk lake Dr. Rapid City	322-6015	flechtsp@comcast.net

ESLA WEB SITE: WWW.ELK-SKEGEMOG.ORG

2012 ESLA Annual Meeting

This year's annual ESLA Meeting will be held on June 23rd at the Elk Rapids High School auditorium. The meeting will start at 10:00 am and conclude by 12 noon. Please attend—bring your family and friends.

ESLA NEEDS YOU

ESLA is a volunteer organization composed of people motivated to preserve our beautiful lakes and streams and educate the public. Unfortunately, as our member continues to age and fewer people appear have time/willingness to contribute, ESLA is struggling to continue our distinguished record of protection and education. ESLA needs your leadership. If you have not been active in ESLA but wish to make a contribution, even a small one, of your leadership and talent, please contact Bob Kingon (rjkingon@prodigy.net).

**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
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