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Good news about people, places, things and events along
Antrim County's sparkling Chain O' Lakes

WELCOME ...

... to the Chain of Lakes Gazette, a new annual
guide to the region's unique system of waterways
running through Antrim and Kalkaska counties. The
Gazette is a creation of West Shore Publications,
which publishes the weekly Antrim Review and
Kalkaska Review.

Within this inaugural edition, we offer a capsule
view of the organizations associated with the Chain
of Lakes, Paddle Antrim and its work developing
a formal paddle trail along the Chain, as well as
its signature late summer festival celebrating the
waterways.

Additionally, this edition includes maps, launch
sites, photos and other information related to our
area's cherished gem.

Hopefully it will inspire you get out and experience
the Chain for yourself, or at least dip a toe in the
water from shore.

Enjoy!

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PADDLE ANTRIM

Paddle Antrim Festival offers great way to experience the Chain of Lakes

Now in its fifth year, the Paddle Antrim Festival is the best way to experience the Chain of Lakes Water Trail and the quaint lakeside communities that surround it.

This fun, non-competitive event, on Sept. 12-14, provides opportunities for all levels of paddlers to participate one or two days with many distance options available. In addition to two great days of paddling, there are three days of live music, great food and drinks for paddlers and the entire community.

The event highlights the wide-range of paddling opportunities that northern Michigan's Chain of Lakes provides. The first day begins with a series of small calm lakes which is a must-see, perfect for all paddlers. The second day enthusiasts can explore up to five lakes and two rivers including the tranquil Grass River Natural Area and the crystal blue waters of larger lakes such as Torch Lake. Paddlers will enjoy the unique communities of Ellsworth, Central Lake, Bellaire, Alden, and Elk Rapids as they



make their way down the waterway. To make the weekend stress-free, meals and shuttle service are available.

"We are excited to invite all levels of paddlers to grab their canoe, kayak or paddle board and experience the diversity of paddling available on our pristine waters," said Deana Jerdee,

executive director of Paddle Antrim.

"Over 150 paddlers come from all over the state and the country to experience the diversity of the pristine Chain of Lakes Water Trail and the wonderful hospitality each community has to offer."

Beyond paddling, the weekend kicks off Thursday night (Sept. 12)

in Ellsworth with live music and food available for the entire community. The festival ends with a bang at the "Final Bash" Saturday night in Elk Rapids hosted by the festival's top sponsor, Short's Brewing Company.

"This all-ages party is for paddlers and the entire community to come out and enjoy live music and great food and drinks," said Jerdee. "Short's Brewing Company and sponsor Pearl's New Orleans Kitchen will be there serving up food and brews for all to enjoy."

The Paddle Antrim Festival not only encourages folks to get out and enjoy the area's lakes and rivers, but also supports Paddle Antrim's mission to protect the waterway by focusing on stewardship, education and increasing access through development of the Chain of Lakes Water Trail.

For additional information on Paddle Antrim, the Chain of Lakes Water Trail or Paddle Antrim Festival, visit paddleantrim.com, email: info@paddleantrim.com or call 231-492-0171.



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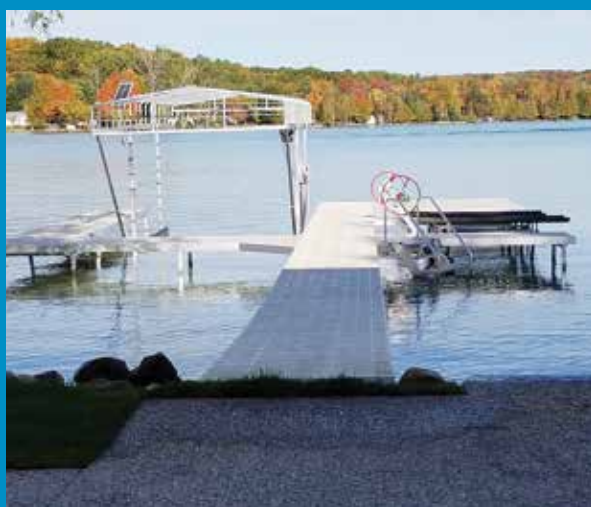


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PADDLE TRAIL

Take time to explore the Chain of Lakes Water Trail



BY TED WENDLING
Contributing Writer

Meandering through 14 interconnected rivers and lakes and spanning more than 50 miles, the Chain of Lakes Water Trail provides the area with a perfect blend of eco-tourism and economic stimulus.

“I’ve been in the chamber world for a few years now and this is an amazing project to be part of,” said Mary Faculak, president of the East Jordan Chamber of Commerce. “Visitors have discovered the Wooden Shoe Campground and discovered the beauty of the Upper Chain of the water trail.”

In addition, she said the Chain of Lakes’ proximity to the so-called “Breezeway Corridor” – a 26-mile stretch of County Road 48 that connects the communities of Atwood, Ellsworth,

East Jordan and Boyne Falls – has helped to reinvigorate the area.

“This is a tremendous win and a tremendous opportunity for new businesses and existing businesses,” she said.

Faculak sits on the board of directors of Paddle Antrim, a nonprofit organization based in Elk Rapids that is overseeing the development of the Chain of Lakes Water Trail. The Chain of Lakes is one of only eight state-designated water trails in Michigan, and the only designated water trail in the northern Lower Peninsula.

Deana Jerdee, Paddle Antrim’s executive director, said the organization’s mission is to promote the healthy and safe low-impact usage of area waterways by sponsoring community paddles throughout the

PADDLE TRAIL, continued on page 5A

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PADDLE TRAIL

Continued from page 4A

summer. Paddle Antrim also offers both beginner paddling classes and a Level 1-2 coastal kayaking class.

Paddle Antrim's season culminates with the Paddle Antrim Festival, a three-day celebration being held this year from Sept. 12-14. Last year, Jardee said about 150 paddlers – mostly kayakers – participated in the festival, paddling distances from just a few miles to 42 miles, the entire water trail. The festival begins in Ellsworth and ends in Elk Rapids, where the festival's top sponsor, Shorts Brewery, hosts a wrap-up party featuring food and live music.

The festival is popular enough that, after just four years, it draws visitors from other states.

Marci Palajac, co-owner of The House on the Hill, a French country farmhouse bed-and-breakfast on St. Clair Lake in Ellsworth, said she looks forward to the festival every year.

"I get a lot of Chicagoans," Palajac said. "A lot of them start at Six Mile Lake, at the head of lake. Then they'll make it to me, which is about eight miles, and then continue on to Bellaire."

"They've always been desirable guests," she added.

Typically, said Patti Savant, former executive director of the Bellaire Chamber of Commerce, kayakers will paddle from Ellsworth to Bellaire on the first day, ending at Richardi Park, where they can participate in the Friday Block Party. Savant hopes that the Chain of Lakes Water Trail someday becomes as well-traveled as the Glacial Hills Pathway and Natural Area, a 31.5-mile trail in Bellaire that

has developed a reputation as one of northern Michigan's premier mountain biking trails.

"I guess I look at what's happened in the U.P.," Savant said, referring to the recent development of seven fledgling water trails in the Upper Peninsula. "The sky's the limit of where we can go at this point."

However, you don't have to wait until September to take advantage of the Water Trail.

For beginning paddlers who have never launched on any part of the Chain of Lakes, Jerdee recommends a couple of family friendly paddling trips that offer a range of experiences and amenities.

Beginning at River Park in Ellsworth, next to the Wooden Shoe Campground, you can paddle south through Ellsworth, Wilson, Benway and Hanley lakes for seven miles, exiting at Thurston Park in the village of Central Lake. The park offers lakeside camping, along with a swimming beach, playground, restrooms, water, a pavilion and fishing docks. Restaurants and other shops are within walking distance. Estimated paddling time: three to four hours.

For a shorter trip – one that doesn't require you to shuttle cars – Jerdee recommends putting in at Richardi Park in Bellaire. The park has a beach, pavilions, playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, restrooms, water and outdoor showers. From the park, you can paddle north up the Intermediate River, where undeveloped portions of the shoreline

provide opportunities to see wildlife. The river meets Intermediate Lake after just 1.5 miles of paddling, at which point you can turn around and return to Richardi Park or paddle another half mile into the lake to check out a small island. Estimated paddling time: two hours.

Jerdee said Paddle Antrim is in the process of designing signage and informational kiosks for the water trail after obtaining permission from the 17 jurisdictions in Antrim, Charlevoix, Grand Traverse and Kalkaska counties through which the water trail flows. The signage will include community directories; road signs to direct paddlers to access sites; tips on the use of safety vests and how to plan for inclement weather; information on how to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species; and warnings about approaching impediments such as dams.

For a small nonprofit organization like Paddle Antrim, developing the Chain of Lakes Water Trail and pulling off an event as well-coordinated as the Paddle Antrim Festival would not be possible without the assistance of a dedicated group of volunteers, Jerdee said. Those volunteers include Art and Nancy Zelenak of Central Lake, who have participated in the festival every year. Art is the festival's designated photographer, while Nancy paddles with a group of people she met, in a moment of serendipity, on the river.

"I saw these guys paddling and their paddles were upside down," she recalled. "I said, 'Do you realize your paddles are upside down?' That's how I met them."



PLANNING YOUR TRIP

With 2,880 miles of coastal water trails and another 1,415 miles of inland water trails, Michigan offers a full range of choices for both advanced and beginning paddlers. Whether you're interested in a day trip or a week-long paddle, a good place to start planning your trip is by visiting the Michigan Water Trails website (michiganwatertrails.org). The site is maintained by the Land Information Access Association (LIAA), a nonprofit community service and planning organization headquartered in Traverse City.

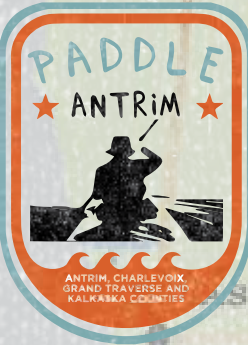
The LIAA site includes a regional map that allows you to pull up detailed information about the area that you intend to visit. Thinking about a paddle trip to Northwest Michigan? Your choices are the Inland Waterway, the Lake Michigan Water Trail Northwest, the Chain of Lakes Water Trail and the Beaver Island Water Trail.

Say that you're interested in checking out the Chain of Lakes Water Trail. Clicking on the Chain of Lakes link pulls up detailed information on each of the trail's four segments – the 19.5-mile Upper Chain Trail from Central Lake to Bellaire; the 10.2-mile Lake Bellaire Loop Water Trail from Bellaire to Torch Lake; the 30-mile advanced-level Lower Chain Water Trail from Torch Lake to Elk Rapids; and the 13-mile Northern Elk Lake Loop Water Trail, which traverses the north shore of Elk Lake near Kewadin.

Want more information on the Elk Lake Loop? Clicking on the link takes enthusiasts to a map that allows you to view and plot access sites, campgrounds, marinas, parks and rest stops. You can then view high-resolution aerial photographs taken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (click on "Show Shoreline Photos").

The website also offers videos and instructions on how to plan a trip and how to view and use oblique aerial photos of Michigan's coastline.

- By Ted Wendling, Contributing Writer



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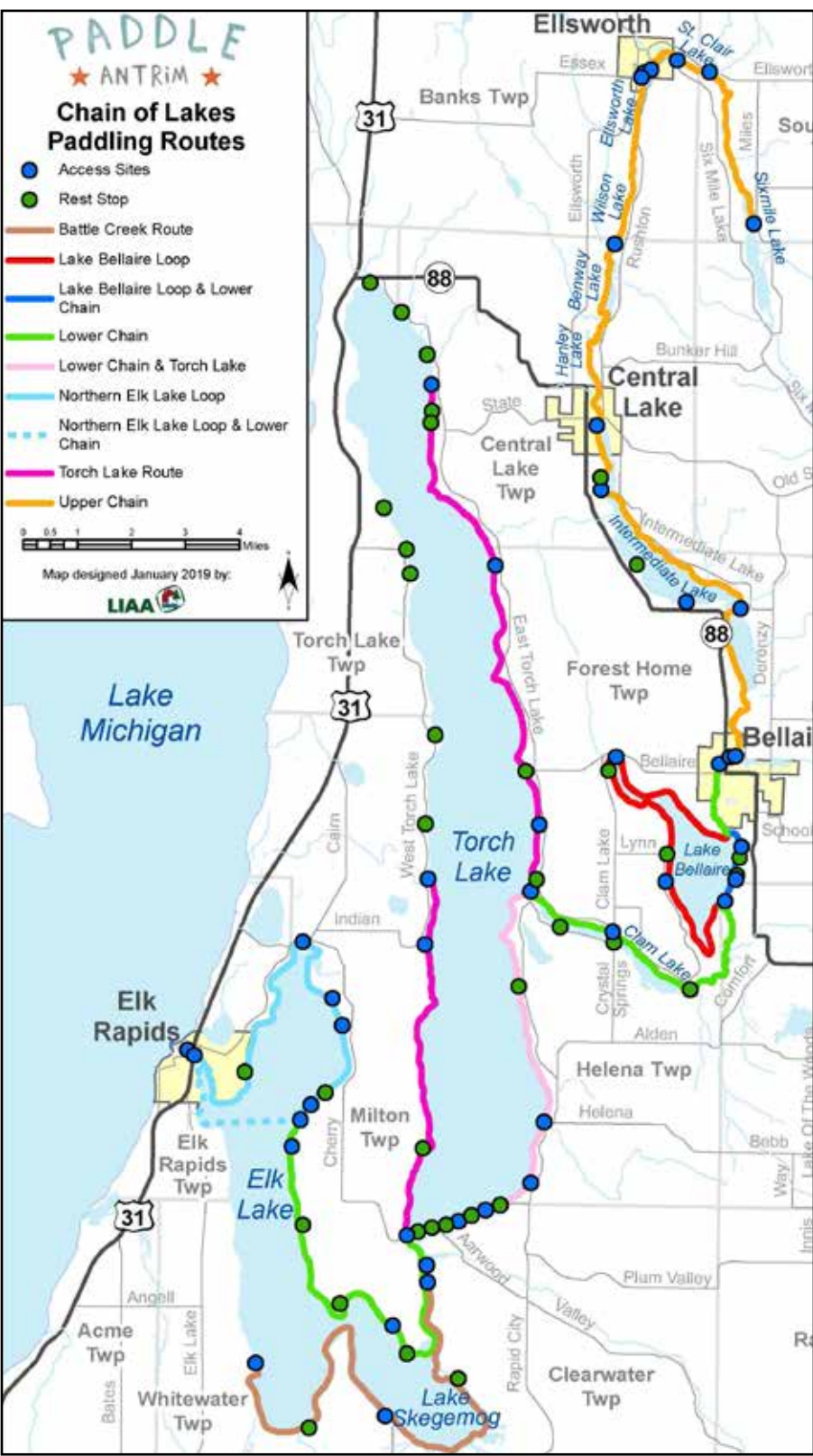
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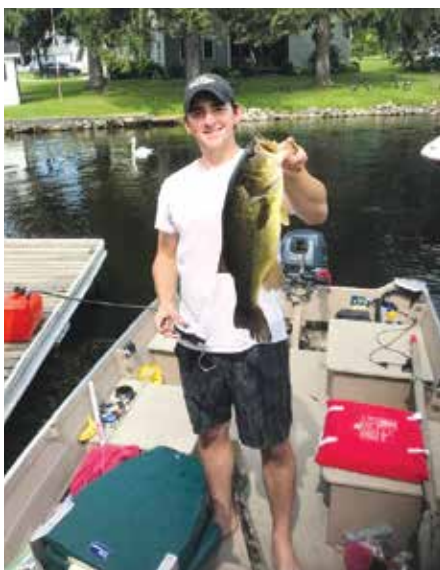
A wide variety of fish for Chain of Lakes anglers

Bass

Northwestern lower Michigan's Chain of Lakes is blessed with several species of bass, including both largemouth and smallmouth bass as well as the smaller rock bass. One of the fishing world's most popular game fish, all three species of bass can be found in all of the waters on the chain, including larger connecting rivers. Most popular with anglers are largemouth and smallmouth bass, with the fabled "bucketmouth" largemouths primarily found in the northern portions of the chain, with weedier, shallower, and therefore, warmer waters, while hard-fighting smallmouth bass are closely linked to lakes with deeper water, including seemingly bottomless Torch Lake. Both, however, can be caught from the same bodies of water and often from the same general areas. Michigan's "catch and keep" bass season opens May 25 of each year, although most anglers prefer to release bass as they are not generally considered prime table fare.

Walleye and Yellow Perch

Probably the most popular game fish in the Midwest, perhaps due to their excellent flavor, walleye are regularly stocked in several of the bodies of water in the Chain of Lakes, including Intermediate Lake, Lake Bellaire, and Six Mile Lake. The largest member of the perch family, with weights of 7-10 pounds commonly reported in the Chain,



Courtesy photo

Northwestern Michigan's Chain of Lakes offers a wide variety of great fishing for everyone, from the tastiest panfish to one of the Midwest's most popular gamefish, like the nice largemouth caught by this happy young angler on one of the Chain's upper lakes.

walleye can test the patience of even the most experienced angler in the Chain, but early in the season, which opens on the last Saturday in April in northern Michigan, fishing river and lake bottoms with jigs tipped with minnows or leeches is a popular technique. As the season progresses, trolling with plugs or spoons or with spinners and crawler harnesses becomes the preferred method. Yellow perch, which have been in the decline for the last few decades throughout northern Michigan, can be caught with the same methods as well as from docks and shore structures.

Panfish

The Chain of Lakes boasts a large variety of popular, and very edible, panfish, including bluegills, sunfish, and black crappie. All three species can be caught in the Chain's smaller, shallower lakes, as well as in coves and canals and near marinas. Anglers generally still fish or cast for panfish with live worms or minnows, or jigs with a bobber, although fly fishermen often take them on streamers. The fishing season is open year around for panfish.

Northern Pike and Muskellunge

Known as the Chain of Lakes' "toothy" game fish, both Northern Pike and Muskellunge inhabit the Chain, with the smaller Northern Pike found most commonly in the weedy shallows of smaller lakes, until summer's heat forces them to deeper waters. The musky, which can reach lengths of more than 50 inches when mature with weights in excess of 40 pounds, can be found in larger, deeper lakes. When "on the feed," pike will take a variety of artificial baits, such as spoons, minnow-baits and spinners, but musky can take much more of an effort. Northern Michigan's "catch and keep" season for northern pike opens on the last Saturday in April, while musky anglers must wait until the first Saturday in June to pursue their game. Only one musky per angler per year may be kept, and in Michigan all muskellunge catches must be reported to the DNR. In the Chain of Lakes, only muskies with a minimum length of 50 inches can be kept. A world-record 58-pound musky was caught in October 2013 in Lake Bellaire.

Lake Trout, Brown Trout and Atlantic Salmon

Those with big lake downriggers and trolling gear will be delighted to

BY LINDA GALLAGHER
Contributing Writer

When it comes to fishing in northwestern Michigan's Chain of Lakes, there's a very large variety of game fish species to target. From the little bluegill caught with a garden worm on a Snoopy fishing rod to the impressively large Great Lakes musky, known as the fish of 1,000 casts, from its headwaters in the north to the largest lakes in the south there's great fishing for every angler's interest in the Chain of Lakes.

learn that the Chain of Lakes' Torch Lake boasts a species of land-locked salmon found otherwise only in the St. Mary's River and the Great Lakes — the Atlantic Salmon. One of the hardest fighting game fish in the fishing world, not to mention best-tasting, Atlantics have been stocked in Torch Lake for more than 20 years and are a prime target for more experienced big water anglers, who traditionally will troll or long-line for the fish during the spring and early summer months of the year. Fly fishermen also enjoy targeting salmon, which can be easily mistaken for smaller, darker-skinned Brown trout, when the fish enter tributary rivers in the fall. A 26-pound, 12 ounce Atlantic caught in Torch River in the fall of 2011 still holds the international fly fishing

world record.

Also of interest to those with big lake trolling gear may be Torch Lake's native Lake Trout, traditionally caught with spoons trolled at depths up to 150 feet, and Brown Trout, first stocked in the waters off Alden's harbor in the late 1800s, which can be caught using long-line or trolling methods. Lake trout and brown trout are also present in both Lake Bellaire and Elk Lake. Trout and salmon regulations apply to these species of fish, and a Michigan trout stamp is required of all anglers.

Whatever the angler chooses to target, there's always something to fish for in northwestern Michigan's Chain of Lakes. For more information, consult the MI DNR Fishing Guide.





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High-tech lake study, mapping and software proposed to address lake level woes

BY CHRIS DOBROWOLSKI
Contributing Writer

Lake levels have become a hot button topic in many areas across Michigan, the Chain of Lakes included, where high water has become problematic for some home and land owners.

So, when Antrim County Operator of Dams Mark Stone learned about a cutting edge computer model that could help solve lake level woes, it immediately drew his attention.

Stone is hoping the county will approve and help support a hydrology study of the Chain of Lakes watershed that would provide vital information to

a software program that, when all the data is entered, can project what would occur with lake levels under a variety of conditions, perhaps to curtail the number of high water incidents.

“The first thing we need to do is develop a study of the Chain of Lakes,” said Stone. “This is for creating a software model that simulates the lake levels under all different kinds of circumstances. So, you can run scenarios, like what happens if we get a four-inch rain in this area? What happens to the lake levels? What are the flows like? What happens if we dredge the river six inches? What happens if we dredge the river a foot?”

“You can put that into the model, adjust the model and then run rainfall scenarios and all that – and it will give you a pretty good prediction of how that’s going to affect the lake level in Intermediate Lake,” he said.

The study would be conducted in the fall and would include a LiDAR flyover by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — the county qualified for an in-house program to assist with the cost — to gather data on the surface forms of the watershed. Survey work would also need to be completed to determine what’s under the surface of the water. Those numbers would enter the program, along with soil types and meteorological data, and the model would be ready to go.

“If you’re going to simulate the watershed, you’ve got to have all these measurements that you can put into the model,” said Stone. “You’ve got to have the science and engineering to back up any kind of plan because if we were to propose ‘We’re going to do such and such and it’s going to cost a half million dollars,’ people (will) say how do you know you’re not going to create flooding

downstream by doing that? The study is going to start all the way in Elk Rapids and go all the way up through the Chain of Lakes up to Six Mile Lake.”

If all goes as planned the model could be in place by 2021.

“We’ve got a proposed project that is on the table now,” said Stone. “The county board will probably address it in September at their second meeting. Hopefully they will approve it and we’ll actually begin the process of doing the study.”

The study and implementation of the model would be as big as any project Stone says he’s been a part of since he started working with the dams in 1997 as drain commissioner.

Stone has been dealing with the high water levels since 2013. While it has, at times, brought out frustration from concerned residents, it has also created a solutions-oriented network of citizens.

Stone just urges patience.

“It’s a very complicated process,” he said. “Not only am I dealing with the unpredictability of weather and water — is not as intuitive as you might think, especially when you’ve got this river between the lake. It’s funny how all the dynamics work, then on top of that I’ve got a lot of people with strong opinions.

“I’ve got this really great group right now. I don’t think I’ve had as cooperative a group as I have right now. It’s essentially a response from people being upset about the high water. There was a lot of anger and frustration, but out of that anger and frustration we ended up with a whole new group of really constructive thinking, hard-working people and they’re all volunteers.

“They really want to help me solve this problem,” Stone added.



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Chain of Lakes public fishing areas

*By Linda Gallagher
Contributing Writer*

With 14 lakes and almost as many connecting rivers and streams, northwestern lower Michigan's Chain of Lakes in Antrim, Charlevoix, and Kalkaska counties is a pristine 75-mile-long waterway with many public fishing areas.

Although anglers with some type of watercraft will find no shortage of access to fishing opportunities, thanks to dozens of public boat launches, anglers restricted to dry ground can also find good fishing from a variety of docks and piers open to the general public, some of which are listed below:

Ellsworth Community Park: Located on Ellsworth Lake on the east side of the Village of Ellsworth in northern Antrim County, the Ellsworth Community Park offers a free public boat launch, public

fishing dock, public restrooms, covered pavilion picnic area and playground offering access to anglers interested in pursuing walleye, panfish, bass, and northern pike. Open from Memorial Day until Oct. 1.

Camping and a public beach are available nearby at the Wooden Shoe Campground maintained by the Village of Ellsworth. Bait and tackle is available within walking distance in the village.

Thurston Park: Located at the north end of Intermediate Lake in the Village of Central Lake, Thurston Park and Campground offer a free public boat launch, public camping, several public fishing docks, public restrooms, public beach, covered pavilion picnic area and playground offering access to anglers interested in pursuing walleye, panfish, bass, and northern pike. Open from mid-May until mid-October. Bait and tackle is available within walking distance in the village.

Craven Park: Located at the east end of the Village of Bellaire on Craven Pond, a man-made pond on the Cedar River (a tributary of the Chain of Lakes), Craven Park offers anglers limited brown trout, bass and brook trout opportunities, with small watercraft access to Craven Pond, fishing docks and public camping maintained by the village. Open from mid-May until mid-October. Bait and tackle is available in the village.

Alden: Located on the southeast end of Torch Lake, the Village of Alden's public harbor offers a free public boat launch and several fishing docks, as well as fishing opportunities from the breakwall of the harbor itself. Bait and tackle is available within walking distance in the village.

Echo Township Community Park: Located in Echo Township in northeast Antrim County, the Echo Township Community Park at the south end of Six Mile Lake

offers a free public boat launch, public fishing dock, public restrooms, beach, picnic area and playground offering access to anglers interested in pursuing walleye, panfish, bass, and northern pike. Open from Memorial Day until Oct. 1.

Elk Rapids: Located on the southern end of the Chain of Lakes, Dam Park in the Village of Elk Rapids — adjacent to the municipal public harbor — offers fishing from a walkway behind the Elk Rapids Hydroelectric Dam as well as several fishing docks and the breakwall of the harbor. Free public boat launch offering access to East Grand Traverse Bay is available on the south side of the harbor. Bait and tackle is available within walking distance in the village.

For a more complete list of all Chain of Lakes waterway accesses, visit: fishweb.com/maps/antrim/upperlakes/index.html

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AREA BOAT LAUNCHES



BEAL LAKE
Beal Lake Public Access
Echo Township
GPS: 45.06125 N, -85.16630 W
Driving Directions: From Central Lake: Go east on Old State Rd approx. 6 miles to Six Mile Lake Rd. Site is just north of Old State Rd.



ELK LAKE
Bridge Street Access
Elk Rapids Township
GPS: 44.89935 N, -85.41185 W
Chippewa Trail Extension
Milton Township
GPS: 44.83212 N, -85.35324 W
Details: 66ft
Driving Directions: Located south of Kewadin Approx. 7 miles to Chippewa Trails Extension Elk Lake - Kewadin access



Milton Township
GPS: 44.92817 N, -85.36547 W
Driving Directions: Located in the Village of Kewadin south side of Cherry Ave.
Rotary Park
Elk Rapids Township
GPS: 44.89694 N, -85.40952 W

INTERMEDIATE LAKE
Central Lake Access - E. Bradford
Central Lake Township
GPS: 45.06819 N, -85.26001 W
Driving Directions: South of Central Lake approx. 2 miles. Access is 1/2 mile south of the extension of Houghton Rd.
Intermediate Lake Access
Kearney Township
GPS: 45.01946 N, -85.20488 W
Driving Directions: Located 3 miles north of Bellaire on Derenzy Rd. to Intermediate Lake Rd. Go south to lake.
Thurston Park
Central Lake Township
GPS: 45.06887 N, -85.25966 W
Driving Directions: Thurston Park, Village of Central Lake.

INTERMEDIATE RIVER
Intermediate River Access
Forest Home Township
GPS: 44.97986 N, -85.20697 W
Details: Trailer parking.
Driving Directions: On north side of the Village of Bellaire. Travel east on Green Acres Ave. to River St. Extension.
Ohio St. Boat Mooring Facility
Kearney Township

GPS: 44.97785 N, -85.21243 W
Driving Directions: Located on the west side of the Village of Bellaire.
River Street Access Site
Kearney Township
GPS: 44.98050 N, -85.20753 W
Details: trailer parking

CLAM LAKE
Clam Lake Access - Clam Lake Rd.
Forest Home Township
GPS: 44.93252 N, -85.25191 W
Driving Directions: Located southwest of Bellaire on the south extension of Clam Lake Rd.

CRAVEN POND
Craven Park
Kearney Township
GPS: 44.97700 N, -85.18763 W
Details: lighted athletic field, fishing, 4-H facilities

LAKE OF THE WOODS
Custer Township Park (Lake of the Woods)
Custer Township
GPS: 44.90534 N, -85.17680 W
Details: no facilities



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AREA BOAT LAUNCHES

TORCH LAKE

Eastport Torch Lake Access

Torch Lake Township

GPS: 45.10576 N, -85.34642 W

Driving Directions: Located at the southeast side of the Village of Eastport

Torch Bay Nature Preserve

Torch Lake Township

GPS: 45.07646 N, -85.36496 W

NW Torch Lake Dr. boat ramp

Torch Lake Township

GPS: 45.03443 N, -85.33124 W

Driving Directions: Located south of Eastport, 5 miles on US-31 to Barnes Rd., travel east 1 mile to access.

Indian Rd. Extension

Milton Township

GPS: 44.92859 N, -85.32281 W

Details: 66ft

Driving Directions: From Kewadin travel approx. 2 miles east to Indian Rd. extension.

Torch Lake Township Bill Good Day Park

Torch Lake Township

GPS: 45.07429 N, -85.35609 W

Township Dock

Helena Township

GPS: 44.88124 N, -85.27752 W

Driving Directions: Located in the Village of Alden at the end of the Main St.

SIX MILE LAKE

Echo Township Park

Echo Township

GPS: 45.10523 N, -85.20059 W

Details: water skiing, canoe trips

LAKE BELLAIRE

Lake Bellaire (Fisherman's Paradise)

Kearney Township

GPS: 44.94699 N, -85.20578 W

Driving Directions: Travel south from Bellaire on M-88 to Fishman's Paradise Rd. Go west on Fisherman's Paradise Rd. to MDNR access on the south side of road.

LAKE SKEGEMOG

Skegemog Access - Fairmont Drive - Site #48

Milton Township

GPS: 44.81890 N, -85.32775 W

Driving Directions: Located south of Torch River approx. 2 miles on Torch River Rd. to Fairmont Dr. travel south to access.

Skegemog Lake Wildlife Area

Milton Township

GPS: 44.82065 N, -85.32394 W

THAYER LAKE

Thayer Lake Access

Helena Township

GPS: 44.93209 N, -85.28608 W

Driving Directions: Located North of Alden Approx. 4 Miles on East Torch Lake Dr. Travel east to access

WILSON LAKE

Wilson Lake Access

Central Lake Township

GPS: 45.12036 N, -85.25035 W

Driving Directions: From Central Lake: Go east on Old State Rd. to Rushton Rd. Go north.

ELLSWORTH LAKE

Wooden Shoe Park

Banks Township

GPS: 45.16403 N, -85. 24088 W

Driving Directions: East of Ellsworth at the intersection of Rushton Rd. and Pleasant Hill Rd.



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Lake Bellaire

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Ben-Way Lake

131 acres - Maximum depth - 42 ft.

Clam Lake

420 acres - Maximum depth - 29 ft.

Elk Lake

7,730 acres - Maximum depth - 192 ft.

Ellsworth Lake

120 acres - Maximum depth - 42 ft.

Hanley Lake

93 acres - Maximum depth 22 ft.

Intermediate Lake

1,571 acres - Maximum depth - 20 ft.

Six Mile Lake

407 acres - Maximum depth -31 ft.

Skegemog Lake

2,560 acres - Maximum depth - 29 ft.

St. Clair Lake

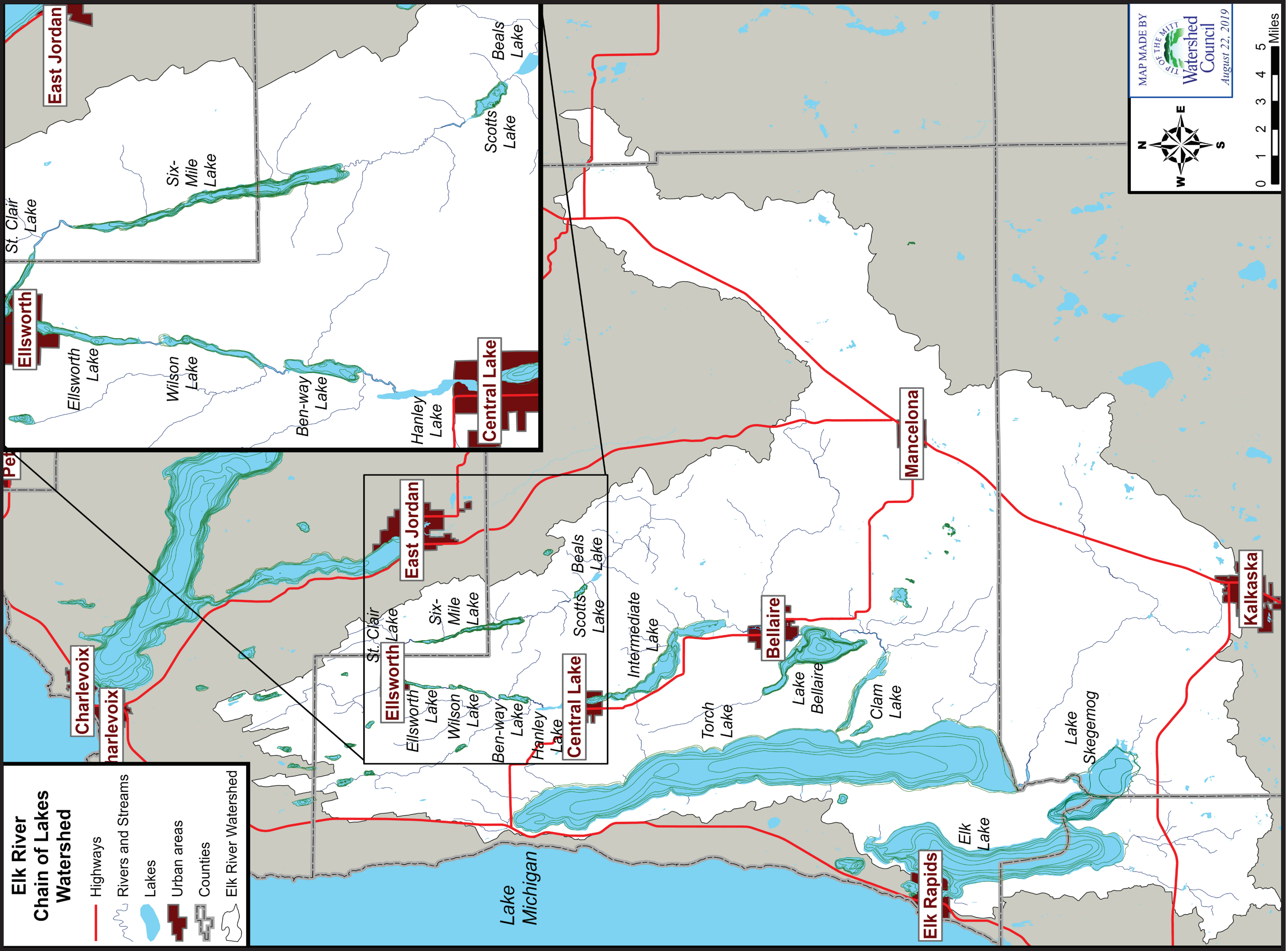
64 acres - Maximum depth - 32 ft.

Torch Lake

18,770 acres - Maximum depth - 285 ft.

Wilson Lake

106 acres - Maximum depth 47 ft.



LAKE ASSOCIATIONS

Three Lakes Association

In the summer of 1966, a group of knowledgeable volunteer founders convened to consider the formation of a non-profit organization with the purpose of providing leadership to preserve, protect and improve the environmental quality of the Chain of Lakes watershed for all generations. Thanks to these visionaries, this organization became the Three Lakes Association (TLA). Subsequently, this mission statement was upgraded to include "...with emphasis on Lake Bellaire, Clam Lake, Torch Lake and their tributaries."

To help accomplish this mission, TLA created the following committees:

Water Quality, including a lake monitoring subcommittee; Education, which includes a Science Education Outreach Program to assist science teachers in four local school districts; Membership Development, which currently exceeds 500 family members; Treasurer and investments; and Publicity, including quarterly newsletters, and a website: 3lake.com/

TLA's recent accomplishments include the following:

As part of the State of Michigan's ongoing water quality monitoring program, TLA's volunteers have monitored the clarity and phosphorus, and phytoplankton content in Torch, Clam and Bellaire lakes several times each year.

In addition to measuring the E. coli content in more than a dozen tributaries for more than 15 years, TLA has compared the E. coli and human fecal bacteria (HF183) content in four of these tributaries for the first time in 2019. This comparison was immediately after major rain events and during a time of normal stream flowing.

Similarly, the human fecal bacteria content in the water of Torch Lake's popular sandbar was measured before and during the Fourth of July celebration, where the same new, DNA-recognizing methodology, qPCR (quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction) was used. This information



TLA summer interns are shown this summer preparing to collect water samples on Torch Lake from Art Hoadley's pontoon: (from left) Matt Baker (Elk Rapids High School), Angel Shaw (Central Lake), Riley Fillmore (Mancelona), Emily Comai (Kalkaska), Art Hoadley, and program coordinator Matt Carter.

Courtesy photo

may be used to design follow-up actions to warn swimmers about health risk concerns associated with swimming at the sandbar during days of very high use.

This same new technology is being used by TLA's 2019 summer interns to measure human enteric bacteria, and swimmer's itch parasites in near-shore water samples around Torch and Bellaire lakes. It is anticipated that human fecal bacteria findings may help support proposed policies that address malfunctioning septic systems.

A recently observed concern in near-shore areas of these and other lakes is the appearance of Golden Brown benthic Algae. In collaboration with diatom experts at Michigan State University and the University of Michigan, TLA has pioneered some research to determine the root causes of this nuisance aesthetic concern, especially research related to changes in the concentrations of groundwater nutrients.

TLA is collaborating with Intermediate Lake Association, Friends of Clam Lake, the Elk River Chain of Lakes-Watershed Plan Implementation

Team and Antrim County to build a predictive hydrology model, in hopes of forecasting the effectiveness of various possible actions/construction projects to help manage the levels in the lakes with concerns regarding the water levels in these lakes.

In response to the lack of fish habitat in five of the lakes in the chain, TLA coordinated the construction and installation of multiple fish shelters at 82 locations in these lakes over a five-year period.

TLA has coordinated the treatment of Eurasian water milfoil in three locations in Torch Lake over the past 10 years. These treatments include the removal of whole plants by divers and suction, smothering with benthic barriers, and treatment with herbicidal pellets.

In response to the buildup of sediment in Grass River, TLA was instrumental in installing seven Large Woody Debris structures at strategic locations in Grass River to help scour the channel and build up the shallow banks of the river.

Since 2004, more than 60 high school students have participated in TLA's Summer Internship Program, which requires at least 60 hours of community

service time, and writing a scientific report, and preparing and presenting slides that describe their project. The interns receive a half-credit of Independent Environmental Study on their transcript and a token scholarship for college books. Occasionally, TLA showcases the careers of past interns in its quarterly newsletter.

Since the inception of the Science Education Outreach Program in 2007, more than \$75,000 in small grants to individual science teachers have been awarded to supplement their science curriculum for items like field trips, dissecting scopes, and Inland Seas Scholarship experiences.

As part of the Elk River Chain of Lakes-Watershed Plan Implementation Team, TLA has contributed to the development of a new Watershed Management Plan, which is expected to assist in designing new initiatives to help protect the Chain of Lakes for the next generation, as well as obtaining grants and permits as part of these initiatives.

For more information about TLA, visit 3lakes.com, which also provides access to TLA's quarterly newsletters.

LAKE ASSOCIATIONS



Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council’s newest volunteer program, Watershed Action Volunteer Experience (WAVE), helps further the protection of Northern Michigan’s lakes, stream, and wetlands. It provides both technical and financial support to groups who wish to carry out watershed stewardship projects.

Funding from the Dole Foundation is supporting three team projects in Antrim County: Birch Lake Association’s shoreline protection project, Paddle Antrim’s invasive plant identification cards, and the Antrim County Conservation District’s Alden rain garden enhancement.

According to Caroline Keson, water resource specialist with the

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, teams receive funding up to \$2,500 to accomplish their projects, and they are part of the collective effort of 12 WAVE teams across northern Michigan.

The next time you’re in Kewadin, be sure to check out the new greenbelt at the Milton Township Waterfront Park (formerly the Water’s Edge Resort). The project is the result of a partnership between Milton Township, Elk-Skegemog Lake Association, Inhabitect LLC, and Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council.

“The Watershed Council provided 75 percent of the funding for the project through our current Elk River Watershed Protection grant, which includes incentivizing the installation of greenbelts throughout the Watershed,” said Jennifer Buchanan, watershed projects director.

“The grant is from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Grants - Federal Clean Water Act Section 319.”

Milton Township subsidized the project and demonstrated its commitment to shoreline protection strip requirements, which are part of their zoning ordinance. The landscape company, Inhabitect LLC of Traverse City, worked with the Watershed Council and township representatives to develop the greenbelt plan, which extends approximately 170 feet along the shoreline and is, on average, 11-feet wide.

Buchanan said plant species were selected based on their aesthetic traits, their tolerance for shoreline conditions, and low maintenance requirements. Nearly all of them are native to Michigan.

“We commend the township for taking the initiative to install this community project,” she added.

To find out more about the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, call 231-347-1181 or visit: watershedcouncil.org/



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LAKE ASSOCIATIONS

Friends of Clam Lake

The Friends of Clam Lake (FoCL) is an organization specifically dedicated to issues that pertain to Clam Lake. The organization's goals are the protection of the water quality, safety, environment, wildlife and quality of life of all who live and/or play on Clam Lake through the dissemination of information and taking action on issues which impact Clam Lake.

Clam Lake is unique in its location between Lake Bellaire and the very popular Torch Lake, which results in a high volume of transient boat traffic during peak summertime conditions. Its relatively smaller surface area compared to adjoining lakes, narrow width and three-mile east to west orientation, provides a safe harbor for boats when windy conditions exist on Torch Lake and Lake Bellaire.

Clam Lake is home to a major commercial marina and has a hard surface public boat launch, plus a second hard surface ramp open to public use. When these factors combine with typical lake specific boating and tubing activities, traffic patterns on the water, boating and swimming safety and shoreline soil erosion can become significant issues.

FoCL has been conducting annual boat counts on a selected non-holiday Saturday during the month of July for more than 10 years with the objective of providing factual reference data to all interested lake users and state agencies. FoCL also provides direct support annually to a program administered by the county sheriff offering required boater

safety instruction classes to area youth.

FoCL completed permitting and professional installation of three ice damage resistant wooden posts in Grass River last summer. These posts were used by the Grass River Natural Area to mount their new "No Wake" signs featuring the organization's latest logo design. In the past, FoCL has also provided direct support to Grass River Natural Area programs for local students to learn about the natural environment.

FoCL members installed fish shelters at nine locations on Clam Lake as part of a five-lake multi-year DEQ permit ending in 2017. The organization developed the permit applications for all lakes that participated in the project and provided a construction location, volunteers and over-the-road transportation for every fish shelter structure placed on Clam Lake, Lake Bellaire and Torch Lake.

Additionally, FoCL purchased two boater advisory buoys indicating the presence of an artificial nesting island for common loons along the extreme southeast shoreline of Clam Lake and provides annual maintenance, placement and oversight of the buoys and nesting island in coordination with the Grass River Natural Area and the Michigan Loon Preservation Society.

FoCL regularly engages with other area organizations, state agencies and stakeholders to identify and address local environmental and regulatory issues and concerns.

To find out more, visit focl.info/



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LAKE ASSOCIATIONS

Antrim Conservation District

The Antrim Conservation District's mission is to promote the conservation, informed use and protection of Antrim County's natural resources. The Chain of Lakes watershed is a unique and valuable asset, largely located within Antrim County that is ours to protect and appreciate. One of the lakes, Torch Lake, contains one-third of all the water held by all the inland lakes in Michigan, making it a critically important freshwater resource.

The Chain of Lakes is impacted by all the land, forests, wetlands and tributaries surrounding it. One of the greatest challenges to the watershed is excess sediment and contaminants being carried by stormwater. Excess sediment and other stormwater contaminants degrade our natural waterways, harming wildlife, water quality, and our ability to swim or fish.

For several decades the Antrim Conservation District has worked to



manage and protect Antrim County's nearly 5,000 acres of county-owned forestlands and assist private forest landowners. Healthy forests and sustainable timber harvests help make

waters draining into the watershed clean and free of sediment.

The Antrim Conservation District also houses the county's Soil Erosion Control program. This is probably the greatest tool available in the county that ensures soil and contaminants do not reach waterways that could impact the Chain of Lakes watershed during construction activities.

Antrim County voters passed a millage in 2016 that increased the ability of the Conservation District to stabilize its foundation, expand on its mission and reach more people. As a result, the District is excited to launch a new program this fall titled, "Healthy Lakes Landscape Initiative."

The new program focuses on non-construction sites to mitigate stormwater runoff and reduce pollution. An individual may think their little piece of property does not have much impact

on a lake, but what we don't realize is that nearly 100,000 gallons of water can drain from the roof of one 2,000 square-foot home in one year. Then add the garage roof, driveway, walkways and roads, and we realize it adds up fast.

If all that excess water was soaked into the ground from every home in the watershed, it would go a long way toward reducing contaminants as well as flash flooding. The Antrim Conservation District is developing plans to motivate local officials and private landowners with financial incentives (as funding allows) and a recognition program to install rain gardens and buffer strips and other "green infrastructure." This, in turn, will ensure that future generations of residents and tourists will be able to enjoy swimming, paddling, boating and fishing in the Chain of Lakes.

To find out more, call 231-533-8363 or visit antrimcd.com/

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LAKE ASSOCIATIONS

Intermediate Lake Association

Like many other lakes on the Chain, Intermediate Lake has been, and is, represented by a lake association, a group of interested lakefront property owners and others, who are committed to maintaining the quality and recreational uses of the lake for the enjoyment of all.

The Intermediate Lake Association (ILA) was formally established on June 20, 1998 and set regular meeting dates as the second Saturday of month, typically May through September each year. ILA is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit Limited Liability Corporation, led by an all-volunteer board of directors and officers. The bylaws identify charitable,

educational and scientific as purposes of the Association.

The original members identified issues of interest or concern as: lake level, fish numbers, Texas Instrument contamination plume, shoreline development, personal watercraft use, disregard for safe boating and regulations, loon habitat, water quality, septic tank regulations, property taxes, and ordinances, along with zoning and pesticides. Many of those 1998 issues are still of interest today in 2019.

In the past five years, ILA has accomplished a number of tasks, including: installing fish shelters at 10 selected sites around the lake to

increase fish habitat and improve fishing opportunity for our members and the general public; maintained a commitment to returning loon populations by placing artificial nesting platforms (ANPs) at historically successful locations around the lake; started a program to study the existence and severity of swimmer's itch and implement a program to mitigate the occurrence of the itch; started a focused program of communications with members on topics of both local and regional interest; and developed a process for increasing ILA membership, most notably and successfully through direct mail recruitment.

Membership has increased from about 45 member families to about 145 from June 2018 through July 2019.

Many thousands of visitors and residents alike have enjoyed Intermediate Lake for more than 140 years. From hearty settlers and lumbermen, to winter and summer vacationers, Intermediate Lake has offered its plentiful and clean waters to those who seek the relaxation and other benefits of up north living.

For more information, visit intermediatelake.org or send questions and comments to email@intermediatelake.org.

Elk-Skegemog Lake Association

Members of the Elk-Skegemog Lake Association (ESLA) are always looking for ways to protect and enhance our pristine lakes, rivers streams and environment.

The ESLA has tackled a number of issues in the past year, including researching cercariae parasite levels present in the lakes, which cause swimmer's itch. Sue McCraven, ESLA President Gary Chenoweth's Volunteer of the Year for 2018-19, was instrumental in initiating the study done on swimmer's itch, the results showing a major presence of the parasite.

McCraven has been working full-time on a multi-year swimmer's itch remediation that will be presented to ESLA membership later this year. In addition, she is evaluating all the responses that were received from a recent swimmer's itch survey that was sent out with membership renewals.

ESLA members have become concerned about poor trout fishing in recent years, which played a significant role in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources decision to reinstitute stocking. They believe there is sufficient habitat and ample forage base to maintain a rainbow and brown trout population trout without adding pressure to the native fish.

Trout were stocked twice in 2018 and again this spring. Last spring,

7,700 rainbows averaging eight-inches long were released at the Elk Rapids upper harbor. These fish were expected to be up to 15-inches long by this spring and in the 20-inch or above range in spring of 2020.

Last December 40,000 brown trout were released at the Whitewater Township Park. This plant was unplanned, however four-inch long fish became available from the hatchery sorting process and Elk Lake was chosen to receive them. Then, on April 4, about 19,500 brown trout were released at the Whitewater Township Park. They became available also due to less priority elsewhere. These fish are five- to eight-inches long. Some of these fish should reach 15 inches in length in the spring/summer of 2020. So, at this point we have a total of 7,700 rainbows and 59,500 browns stocked over the past year.

The 2018 and 2019 fish plants and the six-year stocking plan are great news to improve trout fishing for several years in the future. The DNR plans to continue voluntary creel surveys and netting/ electroshocking surveys to monitor the population. Fisherman creel surveys are going to be supplied at boat launch sites and DNR creel clerks will be monitoring fisherman on the lake.

Common Coast Research & Conservation has undertaken a

Common Loon project within the Elk River Chain of Lakes (ERCOL) watershed. The effort has primarily involved color-marking adults and their chicks, monitoring loon activity on approximately 30 ERCOL lakes, and working with local residents and lake associations to protect and propagate the species through public education and habitat enhancement.

It has come to ESLA's attention that some local townships and Kalkaska County, are considering petitions to remove Point-of Sale (POS) inspections of septic tanks. Letters have been written and sent to appropriate officials regarding board member concerns.

Last summer Robin Sims, a property owner on the east side of Elk Lake, sent 400 letters to residents to enlist support for extending or creating access to a septic treatment facility. This summer she plans to continue that effort with individual contact and information about the possible options.

The ELSA also has looked into the issue of light pollution and has provided some simple ways for residents to reduce the amount of lighting that is causing stars to seem to be disappearing in the night sky.

To find out more, visit elk-skegemog.org

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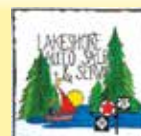
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LAKE ASSOCIATIONS

Torch Lake Protection Alliance

The Torch Lake Protection Alliance (TLPA) has been working for 25 years to protect Torch Lake.

Our vision is: “We are focused on a healthy Torch Lake environment that is enjoyed and respected by all.”

Our current project involves encouraging lake riparians to practice sound shoreline management. This includes adding a no-mow zone to your shoreline, taking a mishorelandstewards.org survey, and using native plants in the buffer zone. We are also urging lake owners to eliminate chemical fertilizers and use natural grass clippings when

mowing. Fertilizers promote algae growth. We plan to extend this project by encouraging good septic system maintenance.

Among the other projects the TLPA has taken part in, include:

- Working with owners on erosion and invasive plant issues
- Monitoring township meetings and keeping track of legislation at the state level that affects inland lakes
- Supporting local environmental zoning laws, including supporting township and county septic system ordinances. A few years ago, TLPA

assisted in a better placement of a septic system for a planned development.

- Ongoing monitored action on a site that would require regular dredging

- Continuing to fund efforts to keep a safe and healthy sandbar for residents and visitors, providing trash receptacles and portable bathrooms over the Fourth of

July holiday. The group appreciates the cooperation of the two county sheriffs and the Michigan State Police, and assist with funds for some of the overtime work.

- Working closely with other lake and watershed organizations

To find out more, visit: torchlakeprotectionalliance.org/



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