

BAY MILLS NEWS

Serving the Eastern Upper Peninsula

"Gnoozhekaaning Bidajimowin"

May 2020

NARF and Earthjustice join Enbridge fight

By SHANNON JONES

Bay Mills News

BAY MILLS — As Enbridge continues to move forward with plans to build a tunnel to house Line 5 under the Straits of Mackinac, Bay Mills Indian Community continues to fight.

On May 12, BMIC added a few new tools to their belt — enlisting the services of Earthjustice and the Native American Rights Fund to assist in the legal battle against Enbridge.

Earthjustice is a nonprofit public interest environmental law organization working to protect people's health, to preserve magnificent places and wildlife, to advance clean energy, and to combat climate change.

NARF has provided specialized legal assistance to Indian tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide since 1970. NARF works in such critical areas as tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, natural resource protection, voting rights, and Indian education.

Both organizations are representing BMIC pro bono.

"We are pleased to expand our presence in the Midwest and stand with Bay Mills in defense of the Great Lakes—the largest freshwater system in the world—and the incredible and complex ecosystems that have sustained the Anishinaabe people for generations," said Gussie Lord, director of Tribal Partnerships at Earthjustice. "Bay Mills has consistently voiced its concerns about the continued operation of Line 5 through the Straits of Mackinac and across other ceded territory in Michigan where it holds treaty-protected rights."

BMIC and its new legal advocates intend to pursue all avenues to prevent the construction of the tunnel and the pipeline's presence in treaty-ceded waters.

On behalf of BMIC, Earthjustice and NARF attorneys filed a Petition to Intervene to participate as a party in the Enbridge Line 5 Tunnel Project proceedings before the Michigan Public Service Commission.

"With their application to move a section of the Line 5 pipeline to a tunnel dug under the Straits of Mackinac, Enbridge proposes a significant project that could have extreme impacts on the area's waterways and wildlife. Over the years, the tribe has consistently fought to protect their fishing and hunting rights. This filing continues that fight. NARF is proud to stand with the nation to ensure that the Bay Mills Community's fishing lifeways and tribal homelands are adequately protected for generations to come," said NARF Staff Attorney David Gover.

The legal team will also submit comments, on behalf of Bay Mills,

opposing Enbridge's request to issue a declaratory ruling. The oil giant is claiming that, due to the original 1953 easement under the Great Lakes, the project can now skirt any additional review by the Commission—including any review of environmental impacts.

BMIC — as well as many other tribes, environmentalists, and citizens — disagrees with that position.

"It is extremely important for Bay Mills Indian Community to take up this battle against Enbridge," said Whitney Gravelle, BMIC in-house counsel. "Since time immemorial, the Great Lakes have been an integral part of Bay Mills' way of life, and they will continue to be an integral part of tribal culture, tradition, and economy for many generations to come. By failing to consider the dangers Line 5 poses to treaty-fishing rights, cultures, and traditions of the Anishinaabe, we risk killing the heart of Turtle Island — the heart of North America."

Soo Locks re-opens park

SAULT STE. MARIE — As parts of Michigan move forward with re-opening, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced that the Son Locks Park, also known as the St. Mary's Falls Canal Park, will re-open on Memorial Day Weekend. The viewing platforms and visitors center will not be open at this time.

Earlier this month, the Corps announced the cancellation of Engineer's Day, as a result of current regulations against mass gatherings. The International Bridge Walk, Bay Mills Pow Wow, and Sault Tribe Pow Wow were also canceled this year.

Executive Council discusses tribal business

BAY MILLS — On May 11, Bay Mills Executive Council met virtually to discuss business. All members were present.

After approval of the agenda, the following reports were given:

Chairman Bryan Newland

— COVID RESPONSE: Surveillance testing is taking place at Bay Mills Health Center on a random basis, no positives thus far.

— CARES ACT relief was awarded, although the funds are less than anticipated. The tribe is developing a spending plan to keep everyone safe.

— Administration is working with enterprise team for re-opening procedures and Wild Bluff procedures are complete.

— A staff meeting was held to discuss hazard pay. Checks are expected to come out in the coming days.

— Treaty fishing negotiations are difficult at this point. A mediator has been brought in to negotiations process.

— Economic Development: BMIC hoped to get the Gaming Control Board and state to speed up process for Internet gaming. Governor told gaming operators they would not speed up rulemaking process. This would move the timeline to the end of November if nothing went wrong. Timeline remains unknown at this point.

— Enbridge Line 5: Legal team working to intervene in Public Service Commission permit process, a necessary step to reserve right to go to court at a later date.

— Met with Duane Bedell and Ken Perron about the remote work policy that would be permanent part of HR Policies. A draft has been shared with council. This would allow some to work remotely at times. Medical and family leave policies are also being discussed.

— July 4 fireworks: Have not yet purchased fireworks yet. Council needs to make a decision soon about event and expenditure.

CFO Albert Bertram

— IT has been helping with funding requests

— Looking to budget hazard pay from CARES Act funding if possible.

— BMIC is hoping to get insurance reduced for less use of vehicles as some insurance companies are refunding individuals.

— Plans discussed for thermal scanning capabilities at old medical center and new medical center, like a secure staging area.

— Small Business Administration funds for Paycheck Protection are done at the end of June.

Human Resources Director Ken Perron

— Working to recall staff and start payroll back to normal.

— Assisting employees who had problems getting their unemployment set up.

— A tip wage adjustment was made for enterprise employees.

— Remote policy discussions are moving forward.

— Looking into a workshare program and changing short term disability definition.

— Kronos update is still slowly moving forward.

— Working with accounting to do worker's comp adjustment for payroll. Hope to get cost down.

BMRC General Manager Richard LeBlanc

— Focusing on business resumption plan.

— Food and Beverage: Focus on Sacy's will be more effort to prepare for service in light of issues surrounding buffet offerings.

— Wild Bluff is being prepared. Some staff is in to get course ready.

— Slot machine panels discussed. Not very sturdy, still looking at products.

— Coordinating efforts for what the future holds.

II. Old Business

Gaming opening schedule: Scheduled to re-open on Friday, May 15. BMRC has not finalized procedures and does not have the equipment in place. Recommendation extend to June 1. (Passed)

In new business, the following items were presented for a vote.

a. Resolution No. 20 — 5 — 11A — Family Violence Grant: In support of

a grant application BMIC has submitted in the past. Four-year grant, requires no match, and supports Journey to Healing program. (Passed)

b. Emergency Authority Delegation Extension: Extend Chairman's authority for another two weeks. (Passed)

c. Acceptance of HHS Revenue Relief funds in amount of \$191,997.76: Need to accept monies that have come to the health center for lost revenue and related expenses to COVID (Passed).

c. Internet Gaming Agreement (partner not ready to sign yet for NIGC information) (Tabled)

d. Sports Betting Agreement (edits sent out, not been returned) (Tabled)

e. Revised Executive Order for COVID-19 Response: New Shelter at Home order, establishing different levels of restriction. Council can change them as needed. This supplements the previous order. Move to level 4. Curfew removed. (Passed)

f. Policy Exception Request — Sandy Walden: Forgo posting process to promote internal candidates. Move junior staff to adult positions. No Motion made. Failed action.

g. Reaffirmation of poll votes (Passed):

— Approval of Contract with Seven Generations Architecture and Engineering (7 Gen) (Senior housing project)

— Approval of MDHHS Contract Waiver (immunity)

— Approval of NDN Contract Waiver (immunity)

— Acceptance of NDN Collective Funds (\$75,000)

— Approval to Submit THPO Grant to National Park Service

— Approval to Amend Contract with Environmental Consulting & Technology (ECT)

— Resolution No. 5 — 1 — 20A — Support for submission of the Rural Tribal COVID— 19 Response Program

— Resolution No. 5 — 1 — 20B — Support for Application for Tribal Opioid Grant Program

COVID-19 Community Testing & Tracing



Drive Thru Testing Available at Bay Mills Health Center

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY
May 27-28

Testing is offered free of charge (insurance billed when applicable)

- Open to Bay Mills Indian Community tribal members, employees, and current Bay Mills Health Center patients.
- Tests will be offered over the course of two days on a first-come, first-serve basis from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. (*One member per household preferred*)
- Patients age 10 and older preferred.
- Appointments can be made by calling Bay Mills Health Center at 906-248-8364.

The Process

- All medical personnel will be in full PPE during the course of testing.
- Please follow the guidance of personnel when entering the parking lot.
- Confirmed cases will result in contact tracing to begin immediately.
- Results will be sent to the Chippewa County Health Department and Indian Health Service.

A combination of tests will be used, including Rapid Test.

If an individual has rapid testing they will be directed to park, and wait for results.

Patients who have the send out swab test will be called regarding their results.

OPINION

Suffering from Coronavirus Fatigue

By Sharon M. Kennedy

By now most folks are tired of hearing about the virus that changed our lives, ruined our economy, diminished our bank accounts and flattened the stock market and any semblance of “normalcy” in America. The last three months have been as torturous as if some foreign enemy had invaded our shores. First it was the fight over toilet paper. Then it was the scramble for ventilators. Then it was makeshift hospitals in parking lots. Then the plea for face masks and other PPE, something we had never heard of prior to the pandemic. Sandwiched between the hysteria sweeping our country was the shooting of Ahmuad Arbery, the young Georgia fellow who was mistaken as a burglar, a threat to civilization, and a menace to white society.

Wouldn't you think that during this peculiar time Americans would be reading from a “one for all and all for one” script? When did we become a nation of haters or have we always been this way and it took the pandemic to magnify it? Why is it only the front liners who treat people kindly without regard to race, color, or creed? True, many individuals are doing their part on the home front. They're making masks or drawing pictures or sending words of encouragement to medical personnel. Such people are the backbone of the U.S. They refuse to join the haters. They rebuke them by performing honorable deeds.

As I write this, states are beginning to open for business as almost “usual.” Our leader in the West Wing has perfected coronavirus fatigue to an artform. In order to dampen the outrage spreading from the Atlantic to the Pacific, he has told

governors to do as they see fit. Open at will. Do whatever you want. Step on the accelerator and get going. Take the economy off life supports. For God's sake and for the sake of my re-election, stop being scared of the “invisible enemy” and pull yourself together. In other words people, man up and get to work. Your ride on the unemployment +\$600 gravy train is over. Get dressed, get off your couch, and get out the door.

I don't know what to believe anymore. Does it make sense to go full speed ahead or is it foolhardy? Is the death count really as high as is reported or are natural causes being attributed to the virus? Are hospitals and nursing homes faking the numbers in an attempt to receive more federal funding? Are suicides not really suicides just more deaths as a result of the virus? Are nurses and doctors lying? Are they sending fake videos to cable networks because they want our

sympathy? Is the man in the Oval Office right? Are we, the public, being duped by those gawd awful Democrats?

I don't think so. I think we've simply gotten used to being told every snippet of news that doesn't make Donald look good is fake. The man at the helm has an aversion to truth, yet millions of Americans hang on his every word. They'll defend him to the end of his next presidency. Don't kid yourself. He'll

be re-elected. Eventually there'll be a cure for coronavirus, but there'll never be a cure for stupid.

Kennedy is a freelance writer who resides in Brimley. She is also the author of Life in a Tin Can, available on Amazon. Kennedy can be contacted at sharonkennedy1947@gmail.com.



Bay Mills News

12140 W. Lakeshore Drive Brimley, MI 49715

Phone: 906-322-9820

This publication is owned and operated by Bay Mills Indian Community. Opinions expressed on this page are those of the relevant contributors.

LSSU to start fall term early, conclude prior to Thanksgiving

SAULT STE. MARIE — Lake Superior State University has announced that in addition to planning for face-to-face instruction for Fall 2020 they are also adjusting the academic calendar. Instead of beginning classes on Aug. 24, instruction will commence on Monday, Aug. 10 and the semester will conclude prior to the Thanksgiving holiday.

As the administration analyzed plans for face-to-face instruction for the Fall semester, it became apparent that many of the safety considerations and protocols under consideration can be greatly enhanced if the university enables students to travel to campus early and complete the semester by Thanksgiving.

At the outset of the COVID-19 outbreak, President Rodney S. Hanley charged his leadership team with evaluating all options and taking the necessary steps to ensure the most responsible and full-fledged campus operations that can be delivered safely given environmental constraints. Provost, Lynn Gillette began working with administrators and faculty to develop plans for safe operations. These dialogs included planning of fall course delivery, academic support, residence life, dining, and all university activities.

“Paramount in university planning is the overriding principle that students, faculty, and staff feel safe and secure in the environment. We will do everything possible to protect our students, their families, and the university community in our endeavor to deliver a meaningful fall campus experience,” said Hanley.

Leveraging best practice risk mitigation strategies, the team made recommendations regarding health screenings, social distancing, sanitization and disinfecting, masking, classroom spacing, facilities as well as residence life and dining enhancements. As

these plans evolved, the strategy that students could come to campus and complete their coursework before the Thanksgiving break became very attractive in terms of safety. Without the traditional holiday break, students’ studies can continue unabated for the Fall 2020 semester without the need to travel in the beginning of cold and flu season.

Moreover, LSSU will shift the start of the Spring Semester later than usual to enable students to be home for a more significant time before traveling and shifting spring break so that the university would remain in continuous operation for the term and minimize the risk associated with spring travel. Current plans project starting Spring 2021 semester January 19 and concluding the term April 30th.

While the situation may seem fluid, the intimate nature of Lake Superior State University and the creativity and commitment of the faculty and staff enable the flexibility to deliver a supportive and healthy learning environment. Campus administration will continually monitor environmental conditions and is committed to investing in the student experience and delivering the high quality instruction we are known for while keeping all of our constituents safe and secure.

“We understand conditions may change, however, we have engaged in thoughtful and robust preparation and planning that we believe will make for the safest environment for our students,” added Hanley.

LSSU is one of several universities across the country working to keep campus courses moving forward in light of the pandemic.

Several universities in other states have canceled fall courses on-campus and moved to a remote learning environment.

Bay Mills Pow Wow canceled for 2020

BAY MILLS — The Bay Mills Pow Wow Committee has announced the 29th Annual BMIC Honoring Our Veterans Pow Wow will not be held this summer. The event has been canceled due to concerns regarding the possible spread of the coronavirus.

Each June, the event draws dancers, vendors, and drummers from across the country. Members of the Pow Wow Committee did not want to risk the health of Bay Mills Indian Community residents or the health of visitors by offering a social event in a time of social distancing.

Although Bay Mills does not have a confirmed case of the virus, Chippewa County Health Dept. has confirmed the presence of the virus within the region.

“The Pow Wow Committee together voted unanimously to cancel the Pow Wow,” said Pow Wow Committee Member, Whitney Gravelle. “It is necessary to keep our elders, traditions, languages, and tribal communities protected during these unprecedented times.”

Several tribes throughout the state of Michigan have canceled their pow wows as a precaution. Gravelle hopes to offer the community a smaller event, such as a drum social, in the fall, if the community is deemed no longer at risk.

“Next year will be the 30th anniversary for the BMIC Honoring Our Veterans Pow Wow, and the Pow Wow Committee will take this time to plan an even bigger event for our Community and relatives across Turtle Island.” Gravelle said.

For more information, updates, and other events check out the Bay Mills Pow Wow Facebook page, as the Pow Wow Committee works to honor our ogichidaag at the 30th Annual “Honoring Our Veterans” Pow Wow on June 25 -27, 2021.

Great Lakes Composites Institute has face shields available to businesses as U.P. reopens to the public

BAY MILLS — The Great Lakes Composites Institute, and partner organizations throughout the local area, continues to assist in meeting the PPE needs of local essential organizations — and now local businesses in Regions 6 and 8.

According to GLCI Technical Director Dr. Christopher Griffen, the effort has manufactured 6000 units, with delivery to 98 "essential" organizations, to date. Production began in late March.

“The initial focus on counties within the EUP has been expanded to address recipient needs in southeastern/lower Michigan through a second manufacturing/distribution location through the Clinton Community School District,” said Griffen.

On May 18, Gov. Whitmer relaxed restrictions on many U.P. businesses, increasing the need for PPE. On Friday, May 21, restaurants and retail businesses can open and operate at limited capacity. This also marks the busy Memorial Day holiday weekend and left businesses a mere four days to prepare to open under new restrictions, which include the use of PPE when dealing with the public.

Griffen immediately began working with the local chambers of commerce to provide PPE to retail businesses in both Mackinac and Chippewa County, recognizing the need.

“An additional 45 businesses are projected to receive face shields by May 22,” said Griffen. “A surplus of 1,000 units will meet this, as well as requests for the middle and western half of the U.P. going forward.”

Griffen can make face shields available to any local business in need within 24-hours of their request. Business owners can contact him via e-mail cgriffen@bmcc.edu or by telephone at 630-2403

Mackinac Bridge Walk suspended for 2020

ST. IGNACE — In light of ongoing concerns about the pandemic — including the inability to social distance, public safety, and revenue loss — the 2020 Mackinac Bridge Walk has been canceled.

Earlier today, the Mackinac Bridge Authority board held a special meeting and was given an overview of past bridge walks and current safety concerns in a presentation by Executive Secretary Kim Nowack.

Last year, nearly 30,000 people walked the bridge. MBA board members noted that the current Executive Order from the governor would make holding a mass gathering impossible, even if social distancing requirements were reduced.

Additionally, costs associated with the walk were a concern.

In April, traffic on the bridge was down to 35 percent of normal flow, resulting in an operating deficit of \$700K.

"First and foremost our responsibility is the long term care of the bridge. Funding from toll revenue has to go to that," said board member Kirk T. Steudle. "I don't relish the chance to vote to cancel one of the events that has been going on for decades, but at the same time, from a financial and safety perspective, it makes all the sense in the world."

Mackinac Bridge Authority asks customers to be patient

ST. IGNACE — The Mackinac Bridge Authority's temporary restriction on cash transaction slowed toll payments, resulting in some traffic backups. MBA is asking for customers to be patient as traffic increases.

Customers might also consider crossing the bridge at other times to avoid peak traffic. Traffic is expected to increase this weekend as well, particularly on Memorial Day for southbound traffic.

Until further notice, Mackinac Bridge customers will need to pay with a credit or debit card, or use a MacPass card or windshield sticker. If drivers wish to pay with credit or debit cards, the toll collector will hold the credit card device out to the driver so they can insert their card. Drivers will not need to hand their cards to the toll collector. Other payment types on phones, including Google Pay and Apple Pay, also are accepted.

Wanic named to Udall intern program for 2020

TUCSON, Ariz. – The Morris K. Udall & Stewart L. Udall Foundation (Udall Foundation) and the Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management, and Policy at the University of Arizona are pleased to announce the selection of the 2020 Native American Congressional Interns. The program's newest class of Udall Interns comprises 12 students representing 12 tribes and nine universities from around the country. The Udall Interns were selected by an independent review committee on the basis of academic achievement, leadership, and demonstrated commitment to careers in tribal public policy.

Caitlin E. Wanic, a member of Bay Mills Indian Community, has been selected for the 2020 program. She is currently a junior at Dartmouth College studying Native American studies and studio art. After graduating, she plans on enrolling in a post-baccalaureate program to pursue her pre-medical course requirements and study for the LSAT. Wanic's ultimate goal is to enroll in a joint MD/JD program and work as a physician for her tribal healthcare clinic and serve on tribal council, where she can better improve her tribe's relationship with the Michigan government and enhance tribal sovereignty.

Udall Interns are placed in Senate, House, and Federal agency offices in Washington, D.C., for an intensive nine-week summer program. Additional professional development and enrichment activities are hosted throughout the internship program and provide opportunities for the Udall Interns to meet and network with key decision makers. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Udall Foundation and NNI have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Udall Internship program. As a result, all of the 2020 Udall Interns have been offered spots in the 2021 program. In the interim, staff from the Udall Foundation and NNI are working together to provide the 2020 Udall Interns with online professional development and networking opportunities to keep the class connected and supported.

From 1996 through 2019, 278 Native American and Alaska Native students from 124 tribes have participated in the Native American Congressional Internship program. Five Udall Interns have been members of the Bay Mills Indian Community.

The Udall Foundation's Native American Congressional Internship Program, funded and co-managed by NNI, provides Native American and Alaska Native undergraduate, graduate, and law students with the opportunity to gain practical experience with the federal legislative process in order to understand firsthand the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the federal government. Learn more about the Congressional Internship Program and meet the 2020 Udall interns.

Construction on new Soo Lock set to begin

DETROIT — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District, has announced that the new lock at the Soo project is on schedule as construction for phase one of the project began the first week of May. Trade West Construction, Inc., began to move equipment to the site on May 4 and will begin deepening the upstream approach to the locks in the north canal within the next month.

Phase one of the project, upstream channel deepening, will facilitate the construction of a new Poe-sized lock in the place of the existing Davis and Sabin Locks. This work is expected to be complete in November 2021.

"It's incredible that we're starting this construction a year earlier than even the most optimistic projections when the project was reauthorized in 2018," said Lt. Col. Gregory Turner, commander, USACE, Detroit District. "Getting the first phase started sets the conditions for the project's ultimate completion."

The three major phases of the project remain on track with their timetables virtually unaffected by the coronavirus pandemic at this time. Phase two involves rehabilitation of the upstream approach walls, which will stabilize the existing approach walls to allow for modern vessels to tie up and wait their turn to pass through the new lock. The third phase, construction of the new lock chamber, will include rehabilitating downstream approach walls and is nearing its 70 percent design milestone.

The Soo Locks are situated on the St. Marys River at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan and allow vessels to transit the 21 foot elevation change at the St. Marys Falls Canal. Over 85 percent of commodity tonnage through the Soo Locks is restricted by vessel size to the Poe Lock. This new lock project will construct a second Poe-sized lock (110' by 1,200') on the site of the existing decommissioned Davis and



Sabin locks. According to a 2015 Department of Homeland Security study on the impact of an unexpected Soo Locks closure, the Soo Locks are nationally critical infrastructure and the reliability of this critical node in the Great Lakes Navigation System is essential to U.S. manufacturing and National Security.

For more information about the New Soo Lock project, visit our website: https://www.lre.usace.army.mil/About/Highlighted-Projects/New_Soo_Lock/

School districts struggle to find teachers as shortage continues

By MADDY O'CALLAGHAN

Capital News Service

LANSING — The K-12 educator shortage in Michigan is a crisis that must be addressed, say education groups pushing for better teacher retention and recruitment programs.

“Too many classrooms are staffed with long-term subs — many not credentialed — because districts cannot find enough certified teachers to fill their vacancies,” said David Crim, a Michigan Education Association communications consultant.

A study of 120 Michigan educators by Public Policy Associates, in partnership with the American Federation of Teachers and the Middle Cities Education Association, recommended solutions to the shortage.

The MEA and the AFT are the state's two largest unions of school personnel. Middle Cities is a consortium of urban school districts in Michigan.

MEA President Paula Herbart said it's important to hear directly from teachers to address the issues.

A survey by Launch Michigan, a coalition of business, labor and education groups, found 75% of teachers said they wouldn't recommend that anyone enter their profession.

Herbart said that changing the dialogue about educators is an important first step.

“What we need to do is stop talking about education as though it's less than a profession,” Herbart said.

“We're always going to have children. We're always going to need teachers. And then it's also about making sure our message to legislators, business and philanthropic groups across the state is that we are admirable human beings who work for the betterment of our society as a whole,” she said.

The study addressed conditions that deter current teachers from staying in the field.

Educators who participated in the study highlighted the need for increased pay, reduced class sizes and high-quality preschools to improve working conditions.

Teacher shortages are a more severe problem in high-poverty areas with lower pay, according to the Economic Policy Institute in Washington, D.C.

Traci Burton, the family and community engagement director for Benton Harbor Schools, said her district

has difficulties recruiting teachers because pay is much lower than in neighboring districts.

The district has had problems with long-term subbing and high staff turnover rates.

“I couldn't imagine what it's like not to have the same teacher throughout the whole school year,” Burton said. “That lack of stability is devastating for a child. Teachers are some of the most influential people in our lives.”

To address the problem, the Benton Harbor district recently implemented a Teacher in Training program to make it easier for substitutes to get their official certification.

The program works with local colleges to help substitutes get certified.

Burton, who started off as a permanent substitute herself, said the effects have been amazing.

The MEA said the Legislature should adopt Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's proposed education budget to address the need to address teachers.

Whitmer called for the highest state funding increase for schools in two decades. MEA's Crim said districts could use the extra aid to raise starting salaries to at least \$40,000 a year.

It's “a reasonable measure when you consider the importance of their work and the magnitude of the crisis,” Crim said.

MEA is pushing legislators to roll back a portion of the \$2 billion corporate tax cut implemented a decade ago and use some of those dollars to help early career teachers repay their student loan debt.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael Rice also supports Whitmer's proposed budget and reiterated the Department of Education's responsibility to teachers.

“We are committed to working with all interested parties to rebuild a profession that continues to be among the most honorable in our society, but which has been badly undermined and denigrated over the last half decade,” Rice said.

In addition to retention, education advocates say the state needs to address teacher recruitment and improve the quality of educator preparation.

The Center for American Progress, a nonpartisan policy institute based in Washington, D.C., found that Michigan has the second-largest declining rate of enrollment for teacher preparation programs in the country.

Michigan also ranked last in the proportion of students who completed their teacher-preparation programs from 2010 to 2018, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Herbart said, “It starts with our educators ourselves, and continuing to encourage our best and brightest students to want to be educators, to stop discouraging it.

“When a young person says to me ‘Mrs. Herbart, I want to go into education,’ I tell them I am so excited about that,” she said. “We're trying to bridge the gap between our new educators and our aspiring educators so that they see the connection.”

Meanwhile, the Michigan Association of State Universities says it will make sure teacher preparation and professional development is a top policy issue. It represents the state's 15 public universities.

The association promotes collaboration between education college deans and the state Education Department, said policy specialist Robert Murphy.

The association also meets with legislators on teacher education program bills to call attention to the impact they would have on state university programs.

Education advocates are also pushing to improve mentoring programs for early-career educators and paid internships for aspiring educators to improve teacher preparation programs.

Education advocates also want schools to address a lack of diversity among teachers. A 2017 study by Johns Hopkins University found that low-income African-American elementary school students who had at least one teacher of the same race were more likely to graduate high school.

Herbart said, “Nothing makes a difference more in the life of a child of color than seeing someone that looks like them in their classroom.”

Whitmer has formed an Educator Advisory Council to address diversity.

Herbart said her union will lead focus groups where educators of color can identify areas of needed support.

“Nothing will singularly impact the success of a student or lack of success of a student than having a quality public educator standing with them,” Herbart said. “It's admirable work and it deserves quality pay and respect.”

Rising waters threaten wells, drinking water systems

By KATRIANNA RAY
Capital News Service

LANSING — Three of the five Great Lakes set water level records for March, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Lakes Michigan, Huron and Erie topped their previous record set in 1986, according to the Detroit District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. So did Lake St. Clair.

There's more of the same ahead: "Water levels are expected to rise toward their seasonal peaks over the coming months and will continue to be near or above record high water levels. Significant erosion continues in many locations as water levels remain extremely high," the Army Corps said.

At the same time, water levels on lakes Superior and Ontario were below the March 2019 levels, the agency said.

With the increased occurrence of flooding from the Great Lakes, inland waters and groundwater, residents should keep an eye on their wells, experts advise.

Contaminated floodwater may infect wells and sewer systems, with the greatest risk of contamination in flood zones, according to Doyle Berg Jr. of Berg Well Drilling in Traverse City.

"Every wellhead, by code, has to be a foot above the ground, so most places that are out of a flood zone are fine," Berg said. "If you're out of a flood zone, the chances of having water a foot high over the ground would be something like the great flood when Noah's Ark was on the water's surface.

"It's a rare event," he said.

A common style of private wells in Northern Michigan is the artesian well, with no pump. Water flows naturally.

Due to the constant movement, contaminated water can't backflow down the well, keeping the water clean, according to Berg.

Homes along the Great Lakes also have wells that are drilled in well pits, which can be susceptible to flooding, according to Dan Thorell, the environmental health director of Grand Traverse County.

Health risks can occur from a contaminated well. Bacteria such as E.coli and rotavirus can be found in contaminated water, along with dangerous substances like lead and nitrate, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"It's like a beach — some beaches, when they are tested, some are good and acceptable for swimming," Thorell said. "Sometimes, they're closed because they are contaminated with sewage or waterfowl feces.

"If a well did become submerged in surface water, we would immediately tell people not to drink the water and disinfect the well as soon as possible."

Wells aren't the only worry.

Septic systems "from our standpoint, is almost a bigger concern," Thorell said. "You have these bluffs that are eroding and property that is falling into the lakes.

"We've seen some cases where the septic tanks are exposed and the drain fields are exposed and they all fall into the water, and it's not a good situation," he said.

Flooded rivers, lakes and other bodies of water can become contaminated from septic systems, Thorell said.

"The groundwater levels that are rising up are affecting the septic system that was there," Thorell said. "Instead of the septic system being out of the water and having some soil to treat the wastewater,

now it's submerged in the groundwater.

"That means there's no treatment going on and could potentially impact the surface waters," he said.

In many older homes, the sanitary system and emergency storm systems are combined into one system.

That can cause contamination, according to Nick Assendelft, the public information officer for the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy.

"You might have a combined sewer overflow if you have a large storm and the water table is high," Assendelft said. "Or you might have flooding from lakes or rivers that are high and that gets into the combined sewer system — that could create some contamination with overflows."

Thorell said older municipal sanitary sewers are known to have cracks, and older sewer lines can be vulnerable to contamination.

And Assendelft said, "High water levels are going to be with us for a while, so it's important that people are aware of the impacts and aware of their personal situations. They need to have some work done, they should start this process as soon as possible."

People concerned about contamination of their wells and water should apply for well drilling permits as soon as possible, according to Assendelft.

"Right now, it's hard to find contractors because so many people want shore work done," he said. "Permits are good for five years, so if you put in a permit now and the work can't get done until next year, at least you are one step ahead of yourself."

Walking On

George E. Hill, Jr

George E. Hill, Jr., 55, of Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. passed away early Monday morning, May 11, 2020, at his home. George was born on Sept. 2, 1964, the son of George E. and Anna E. (Kropp) Hill.

George graduated from Brimley High School with the class of 1982. When he turned 18 he went to work at U.P. Tire and he spent 37 faithful years there. He enjoyed helping people and he liked to chat. George also worked for Quaker State on Saturday for 14 years. He also enjoyed his toys (especially his Kubota Tractor), and going to tractor pulls and mud runs. He most enjoyed spending time with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

George is survived by his wife: Pamela; his children: Anne Ellis (Jim Sherbrook) of Sault Ste. Marie, Michelle Ellis (Mark Ringler) of Fond DuLac, Wisc., and Justin Romano of Sault Ste. Marie; his grandchildren: Raquel Thompson (Kiefer Benner), Bryce and Keldon Casey; and his great-grandchildren: Emma and Kohen. George is also survived by a brother: Scott (Terri) Hill and a sister: Sheryl (Scott) Runkle; niece and nephews: Jillian (Jason) King, Jared, Jason, and Justus Hill and Jean Luc Runkle; and brothers-in-law: James Ellis Jr. and Scott Ellis. George is further survived by several aunts, uncles, cousins, and two furbabies: Buster and Koda, who will miss him very much.

George was preceded in death by his parents: George and Anna Hill; his father and mother-in-law: James and Gladys Ellis; a sister-in-law: Mary Bunting and a brother-in-law: Bradley Ellis.

Per George's wishes there will be no public viewing. A memorial service will be held at a later date. George is off to be with his furbaby: Roxee. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be left to help with the funeral expenses.

Arrangements are in the care of C.S. Mulder Funeral Home and Cremation Services. Condolences may be left online at www.csmulder.com

Barbara Arlene Fegan

Barbara Arlene Fegan, 81, of Brimley, passed away on Sunday, April 26, 2020, at the Hospice of the EUP – Hospice House.

Barbara was born in Dafter, Michigan on March 8, 1939, the daughter of the late Albert and Alice "June" (Ehn) Sarley. She graduated from Brimley High School and later worked there as the high school secretary for 27 years. Barbara married Merlin Fegan in Sault Ste. Marie in 1955. She was a wonderful wife, mother, and grandmother.

Barbara is survived by her husband: Merlin Fegan; five sons: Larry (Jamie) Fegan of Brimley, Terry (Maggie) Fegan of Dexter, MN, Kenneth (Nadine) Fegan of Dafter, Michael (Julie Green) Fegan of Dafter, and Thomas (Kim) Fegan of Muskegon; seven grandchildren: Jason (Ruth) Fegan, Rebecca Fegan, Lacey Fegan, Lindsey (Kyle) VanSloten, Heather (Jason) Church, Chelsea (Allen) Orr, and Logan Fegan; four step-grandchildren: Jami Green, Jessica (Jerry) Green, Genie Gagnon, and Francis (Ashley) Gagnon; 16 great-grandchildren: Mickayla, Jordan, Morgan, Tessa, Zackery, Noah, Lukas, Kallan, Aubree, Caleb, Abigail, Emmalyn, Cassius, Bentley, Cartland, Kyson, and another grandson on the way; and seven step-great-grandchildren: Dylan, Devin, Ashtin, Jaylyne, Jacob, Caleb, and Katelyn. She is also survived by two sisters: Bonita (Ronald) Lawson and Janey (Bill) Wibby; and a sister-in-law: Arlene Sarley.

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents and a brother: Ronald Sarley. A private graveside service will be held on a later date at North Rudyard Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be left to Hospice of the EUP. Arrangements are in the care of C.S. Mulder Funeral Home and Cremation Services. Condolences may be left online at www.csmulder.com

Carrol Ellen Weston

Carrol Ellen Weston, 85, of Brimley, died on April 18, 2020 in Sault Ste.

Marie, Mich. She was born on Jan. 1, 1935 in Sault Ste. Marie, to Ellis J. and Isabelle (McRae) Wilcox.

Carrol grew up in Brimley and graduated from Brimley High School in 1952. After high school, she married her high school sweetheart, Richard Weston, on Aug. 8, 1953 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Sault Ste Marie. They made their home in Brimley and raised their family. Richard worked and retired from Great Lakes Dredge & Dock. Richard was a commercial fisherman until he died on April 27, 2002. Carrol worked some part time jobs when her kids were in school.

Carrol was a member of the Brimley VFW Auxillary.

Carrol loved to travel with her family and listen to country music, especially George Strait. She enjoyed quilting with her granddaughters, great granddaughter and her niece Mary Ann. She also enjoyed visiting with her nephew Greg, and having coffee dates with her best friends, Joan and Dottie.

Carrol is survived by her children, Nancy Weston of Brimley, Michael (Laura) Weston of Sault Ste. Marie, and Janis Weston of Brimley; grandchildren, Nadia Cottelit, Kelly (Daniel) Berg, Jamie Perron, Benjamin (Candice) Weston, Katherine Weston, and Michael Hall; great-grandchildren, Jasmine, Noah, Carter, Oliver, Emilia, Madison, and Freyja; brothers, Jack Wilcox of Reno, Nevada, Dave (Jackie) Wilcox of Rossford, Ohio, James (Cecelia) Wilcox of Juneau, Alaska; sisters, Anne Amyotte of Wilseyville, Cali. and Mary Jo Savoie of Lancaster, Cali.

Carrol is preceded in death by her husband, Richard Weston; infant son, David Weston; brothers, Tom Wilcox, Don Wilcox, and Bill Wilcox; sisters-in-law, Virgie Wilcox, Sheila Wilcox; and brothers-in-law, Robert Weston and Harry Amyotte.

A Celebration of life will be held later this summer 2020.

Interment will be at Mission Hill Cemetery. R. Galer Funeral Home in Pickford, Mich. is serving the family. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.rgalerfuneralhome.com.

Stick to local forests when seeking morels

A sure sign of spring is nearly here: wild leeks and morels. As sunshine and April rains wake up the forests, the annual search for the elusive mushrooms is a great way to enjoy the outdoors. You can find them from late April to early June, and – according to Michigan State University Extension – they're believed to grow in every Michigan county.

Most Michiganders will tell you that the location of a good morel patch is a matter of utmost secrecy. This makes mushroom hunting a perfect chance to practice the 6-foot-minimum social distancing that is such a critical step in slowing the spread of the coronavirus. Mushroom hunters should plan to search locally, too, and only with people who live in their household.

To find morels, target hilly areas with plenty of hardwood trees like maple, beech and oak, or where a wildfire or prescribed burn has occurred. Pick a warm day after a rain to start your hunt, when mushrooms are most likely to have bloomed. When heading to the woods, take a mesh bag for carrying your prizes, a knife (always cut, never pull morels) and a map of your hunting area. Leeks also favor hardwood forests; bring a scissors to harvest them without disturbing the bulbs.

Learn how to find morels, tell a false one from a real one, prepare them, and boost your odds of success – with a map showing sites of last year's wildfires and prescribed burns – at Michigan.gov/MiMorels.

State campgrounds and DNR-operated harbors set to open June 10

The DNR will extend closures in state forest campgrounds and DNR-operated harbors through at least June 9, allowing for additional time to prepare for public reopening.

Reservations for dates between May 15 and June 9 will automatically be canceled after May 15 for a full refund to the original payment method. Most state parks and recreation areas and state-managed trails and boating access sites remain open to provide local opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, but social distancing is key. Federal and state health officials consistently have said that keeping at least 6 feet away from those outside your household is vital to containing the virus spread.

Crisis counseling available via text

By texting the keyword RESTORE to 741741, Michigan residents can have a confidential text conversation with a crisis counselor.

Trained counselors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to respond to texts from Michigan residents who are facing a mental health crisis — everything from anxiety and financial issues to suicide and domestic violence. While the text line is starting during the pandemic, MDHHS intends to continue offering the service in the future.

The text line is provided by Crisis Text Line, an organization established in 2013 that has provided this type of support on an international level with the recognition that with new technologies, texting is a fast and easy way to connect and may be

the preferred way for some people who need immediate support.

As part of Michigan's partnership with Crisis Text Line, people who text RESTORE to 741741 will receive referrals to local mental health resources and connections. Crisis texts are confidential, but this partnership also will provide the state with broad trends to understand the need for any additional services.

If anyone in emotional distress feels a chat via text would be useful to resolve the emotions of the moment, the text line's crisis counselors can help people shift from a heated moment to a calmer state.

MSUE hosting webinar

Michigan State University Extension Food Safety Educators will be hosting a live Question and Answer webinar on May 29, 2020 at Noon, EDT. They will be discussing safe food handling during and after floods or other severe weather situations.

They will be also be addressing food and water safety issues, cleaning and sanitizing, and what food to keep and discard. Participants are encouraged to ask their questions during the Q & A portion of the event. Food Safety Educators will be available to provide the most up-to-date research-based information.

To Register visit <https://www.canr.msu.edu/events/food-safety-after-a-flood>

To register and participate in the webinars by phone, please call 877-643-9882. The phone number and ID will be given at registration.

Michigan State University Extension helps people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses.

For more information or questions, contact Joyce McGarry at mcgarryj@msu.edu

DNR wants hunter input on proposed 2020 deer hunting regulations

A new package of deer hunting regulations designed to simplify rules and remove barriers to participation was introduced to the Michigan Natural Resources Commission Thursday at the commission's regular monthly meeting, which was conducted in an online and conference call format due to COVID-19 public health and safety concerns. The regulations, proposed for the 2020 deer hunting season, are scheduled for an NRC vote in June.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources deer program experts say the regulations, if approved, will provide additional opportunities and cost savings for hunters and offer flexibility in how hunters pursue deer. The DNR uses existing and projected data to gauge the impact of proposed regulations. The data shows that the projected changes will not have a significant negative effect on the deer herd or the quality of deer hunting.

"These recommendations are aimed at making it easier for hunters of all ages and experience levels to enjoy a Michigan outdoor tradition, while at the same time facing the present and future challenges of managing the state's deer population," said Chad Stewart, the DNR's deer, elk and moose program leader. "We hope that hunters across the state will take the opportunity to review the regulations and share their opinions, because their feedback is critical in shaping the future of deer hunting."

STATEWIDE

- Change Liberty and Independence hunt qualifications to include deaf people.
- Allow mentored youths (age 9 and younger), junior license

holders (age 10-16) and apprentice license holders to be exempt from antler point restrictions in all seasons, in all deer management units (DMUs) and under all licenses.

- Require a 60 percent support threshold from a survey to prompt the DNR to recommend antler point restrictions (APRs) to the NRC, as decided by the 2019 APR work group. This replaces the 66 percent support threshold recommended by previous APR work groups. Additionally, failed APR initiatives would face a 10-year moratorium before another initiative would be considered.
- Change the statewide limit for antlerless license purchase to 10 per hunter. This limit offers maximum opportunity for those who wish to manage abundant deer on their property.
- Require hunter orange to be visible on occupied ground blinds.
- Standardize baiting practices (eliminate the requirement to use single-bite baits in select counties) during the Liberty and Independence hunts for hunters with disabilities.

UPPER PENINSULA

- Allow Upper Peninsula archers to resume pursuing antlerless deer in all DMUs with their deer/deer combination license.
- Remove remnant APRs on the deer license in parts of DMU 122.

LOWER PENINSULA

- In addition to the archery season, allow antlerless deer to be taken on the deer/deer combination license during the firearm and muzzleloader

seasons in all Lower Peninsula DMUs.

- Open early and late antlerless seasons in all Lower Peninsula mainland DMUs.
 - Allow antlerless deer to be taken on a deer/deer combination license during both the early and late antlerless seasons in the Lower Peninsula.
 - Change antlerless quotas in select DMUs.
 - Shorten muzzleloader season in the southern Lower Peninsula to 10 days and extend the late antlerless season to provide consistency between all regions of the state.
 - Allow legal firearms to be used during the muzzleloader season in the southern Lower Peninsula.
 - Scale carcass movement restrictions to areas most affected by chronic wasting disease. This eases some of the movement restrictions in parts of the state with a lower risk of harvesting a CWD-positive animal while still applying those restrictions to areas with the highest risk.
 - Resume four-point restriction on combination license in select DMUs in the Lower Peninsula.
 - Continue the expanded archery season through Jan. 31 for one more year in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties.
- Read the full NRC proposal memo or the justifications behind the 2020 proposed regulation changes at Michigan.gov/Deer.

Hunters are encouraged to review the proposed regulations and share their feedback either through an anonymous survey or by email to NRC@Michigan.gov.

All comments must be received by June 5 to be considered.

Pickford man arraigned for illegally killing wildlife

CHIPPEWA COUNTY — Kurt Johnston Duncan, a 56-year-old Pickford man, was arraigned on Wednesday, May 20 in Chippewa County's 91st District Court on 125 wildlife misdemeanor charges. The charges are the result of months-long investigation by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division.

Duncan faces charges that include illegally harvesting 18 wolves over the past 18 months and killing and disposing of three bald eagles. Wolves are protected in Michigan and are on the federal endangered species list. Bald eagles are protected under state law, as well as the federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Duncan, who today pleaded not guilty to all charges, faces:

- Up to 90 days in jail and \$1,000 fine for each wolf.
- Up to 90 days in jail and \$1,000 fine for each eagle.
- Restitution of \$1,500 per eagle and \$500 per wolf.
- Up to 90 days in jail and \$500 fine each for the other wildlife crimes.

Duncan was served four search warrants in March. Other species involved in the charges include deer, turkey, bear and bobcat. DNR law enforcement detectives said that Duncan was using the animals for a variety of reasons, including crafts, selling, or disposing of them, and stated that he was catching the animals because he could and "likes to do it."

Conservation officers collected evidence to support the charges and identified additional suspects who are expected to be charged in the near future.

"We had a team of conservation officers that worked well together throughout this investigation," said DNR Law Enforcement Division Chief Gary Hagler. "Investigations like this require a long-term commitment from everyone involved. I want to thank the prosecutors in this case who worked with our officers. We are happy with the outcome and hope this case sets an example to prevent future natural resource crimes."

The Chippewa County Prosecuting Attorney's Office is seeking \$30,000 in restitution to the state for the illegally taken animals. Duncan's cash bond is set at \$500. Other conditions of Duncan's bond include having no contact with co-defendants, no possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon, and no engaging in hunting or fishing.

Anyone witnessing a natural resources crime or having information about such a crime is encouraged to call or text the DNR's Report All Poaching hotline at 800-292-7800.

Michigan conservation officers are fully commissioned state peace officers who provide natural resources protection, ensure recreational safety and protect citizens by providing general law enforcement duties and lifesaving operations in the communities they serve.

June 1 is the deadline to apply for the Redistricting Commission

The Michigan Department of State has now processed 5,559 notarized applications for the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission and reminds those interested in applying that only a few days remain until the June 1 deadline.

Applications can be completed and notarized electronically at RedistrictingMichigan.org.

"The response during this application period has been tremendous," said Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. "Michigan is now leading the way in a new age of democratic engagement.

The same momentum that sent people to the polls to vote in favor of this commission in 2018 has compelled thousands across the state to apply to serve on it. We look forward to that continued enthusiasm in these last few weeks before moving forward to the next stage of the selection process."

Following the June 1 deadline, Rehmann LLC, an independent accounting firm, will randomly select 200 semifinalist applicants from the total processed notarized applications, using statistical weighting methods to mirror the

geographic and demographic makeup of the state. The applications of the 200 semifinalists will be posted online and their applications delivered to legislative leaders who may strike up to 20 applications, as allowed by the Michigan Constitution. In August, Rehmann LLC will carry out the final random drawing of 13 commissioners.

For detailed information on the application process and timeline, as well as an updated applicant profile, please visit RedistrictingMichigan.org.

Bay Mills Indian Community COVID-19 Response Plan

Level 5: Highest Restrictions

All restrictions the same as outlined in Resolution No. 20-03-23E, the first Shelter at Home Executive Order, passed on March 23, 2020 by the Bay Mills Indian Community Executive Council.

- Curfew is in place from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
- Your movements should be limited.
- Only essential travel outside the home is permitted.
- You should not gather with individuals outside of your household.
- Masks are required throughout the reservation.

****Full details on level 5 restrictions can be found online at baymills.org.*

Level 4: Many Restrictions

All prior restrictions as Level 5, EXCEPT:

- Curfew is lifted.
- Non-essential workplaces will remain closed.
- Outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people permitted- you must adhere to social distancing.
- No indoor gatherings or residential visits indoors are permitted.
- No in-person education.
- Essential businesses will be open with limited capacity, masks are required.
- Outdoor recreation facilities remain closed, including campgrounds, parks and playgrounds.
- Outdoor construction is permitted, adhering to social distancing.
- Indoor construction is permitted in vacant or unoccupied dwellings.
- Telehealth is encouraged for non-urgent medical, dental, and behavioral health.
- Masks required in public facilities.

Level 3: Moderate Restrictions

All prior restrictions as Level 4, EXCEPT:

- Indoor residential visits are permitted.
- Outdoor recreation facilities will be open for use. This is limited to 10 people at a time, including supervising adults.
- Non-essential businesses may open and operate at 50 % capacity, following customer and employee safety protocols are posted for public notice.
- Gatherings are limited to no more than 25 people. (This excludes businesses operating under capacity restrictions.)
- Executive Council may permit larger gatherings such as outdoor commencement ceremonies for OCS and BMCC with appropriate social distancing guidelines.
- Masks are required in indoor settings with public interaction.
- Campgrounds open (restrooms will remain closed).
- Medical, dental, and behavioral health in-person visits can increase with safety protocols and with provider approval.
- In-person education permitted with modifications to comply.
- Government offices will be open with limited services by appointment; telework permitted (in-person meetings are discouraged).

Level 2: Low Restrictions

All prior restrictions as Level 3, EXCEPT:

- Masks required in public spaces.
- Non-essential businesses allowed to open at 75% capacity (w/ employee & customer safety protocols for public notice).
- Outdoor recreation facilities and campgrounds open.
- With the exception of businesses operating under capacity restrictions, indoor gatherings of more than 25 people are prohibited.
- Government offices reopen; telework optional.
- In-person education is permitted.

Level 1: No Restrictions

- All prior restrictions are lifted.
- Masks are recommended in public spaces.
- Businesses encouraged to post employee and customer safety protocols for public notice.

**** You can find the most current level of response by visiting baymills.org.
The level will be posted at the top left side of the website.*

Please continue to practice social distancing at all times. Those age 60 and older, or members of a vulnerable population, should avoid social contact at all levels.

Abandoned mines aplenty, but cash to clean, close them is even scarcer

By ERIC FREEDMAN
Capital News Service

LANSING – Nobody knows how many abandoned mine features such as tunnels, shafts, pits and waste piles remain on federal land in Michigan and elsewhere, but untold numbers of them pose safety and environmental threats, a new General Accountability Office report says.

The National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and Environmental Protection Agency say there are at least 140,000 in their jurisdictions — more than 100,000 of them potentially hazardous.

And those agencies estimate there could be over 390,000 others across the country.

In Michigan, most hardrock mining for copper, iron and other valuable minerals took place in the Upper Peninsula, where the industry was once a major economic force and where the state's largest swaths of federal land are located.

GAO, a nonpartisan investigative arm of Congress, said, "Unsecured tunnels, decaying structures, pits and other hazardous features are found at many abandoned mines and can endanger the physical safety of nearby residents and visitors to public lands."

The report said it would cost billions of dollars to deal with just the physical safety threats of the 140,000 known mine features nationally.

In addition, the report said, "Abandoned mines can also cause environmental degradation and hazardous conditions that may pose risks to human health and the environment, such as draining highly acidic water into soil and streams."

Cleanups, closures and remediation of such environmental risks would cost billions more, it said.

Between 2008 and 2017, the four federal agencies and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement spent about \$29 billion on inspections and cleanup nationally, according to the GAO.

During that period, the EPA spent \$3 million and the Forest Service spent \$954,000 in Michigan, the report said.

After that period, the government allocated funding for work at the Ottawa National Forest in the Western U.P., Isle Royale National Park in Lake Superior and Keweenaw National Historical Park on the Keweenaw Peninsula.

All the Forest Service money spent in Michigan during the study period was used in the 993,000-acre Ottawa National Forest, according to Lisa Klaus, a public affairs and administrative officer for the forest. It went to install and replace gates and create an

interpretive mining trail that outlines local mining history.

"The gates were implemented for safety concerns and to preserve and protect bat habitat and bats which historically use these mines," Klaus said in an emailed statement.

The Forest Service compiled its list of sites in the Ottawa based on historic records, staff knowledge and public input, she said. The agency has addressed all previously identified hazards, and "is continuing efforts to identify and address hazards as they are discovered."

Klaus said no sites have been identified on the 895,000-acre Hiawatha National Forest in the Eastern and Central U.P.

Since the time covered by the report, the Park Service finished inventorying most sites on Isle Royale's in 2019, although "a few mining features remain to be inventoried and estimates prepared for any remediation projects they require," said mining engineer Hillary Smith, an Abandoned Mineral Lands Program manager for the agency.

Copper mining on Isle Royale began as long ago as 4,500-plus years when Native Americans started to dig pits to reach the pure copper they used to make spear points. Modern copper mining began there in the mid-1800s.

In 1977, the Park Service added Isle Royale's Minong Mine Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes remains of a 19th-century copper mine and prehistoric mining activities.

Smith said, "We have \$50,000 for the inventory and compliance work for these sites."

Another \$240,000 is available for the repair of closures and installation of new closures and the associated compliance work."

The Keweenaw National Historical Park website says, "From 7,000 years ago to the 1900s people mined Keweenaw copper. Native peoples made copper into tools and trade items. Investors and immigrants arrived in the 1800s in a great mineral rush, developing thriving industries and cosmopolitan communities."

Smith said the Park Service has set aside about \$175,000 for inventorying and assessing mining features there, Smith said, plus \$130,000 for a safety project scheduled to begin next year.

The GAO report noted that an 1872 law allows private claims for hardrock mining on federal land, but until the 1970s there was no requirement for mine operators to reclaim the land after ending their operations. In many cases, however, past operators have died or gone out of business, leaving taxpayers on the hook for cleanups and closures.



***To fund life-saving programs like MICHild,
urgent care, Medicaid and Medicare
YOU and YOUR FAMILY must
be counted in the 2020 CENSUS
this spring.***

The **2020 CENSUS** Is quick
and **EASY** to fill out. Use it to count
EVERYONE in your home. And by law,
it is **100% CONFIDENTIAL**



For more information go to
www.mivoicerecounts.org