



Les Cheneaux WATERSHED NEWS



SPRING 2020

LES CHENEUX WATERSHED COUNCIL

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 1

IS THE PRESENCE OF INVASIVE CATTAILS A BAD THING OR GOOD THING?



Invasive cattails at Cedarville launch ramp

Invasive cattails (*Typha spp.*) have increased in local presence and density since the early 2000s, especially in areas with rich, organic sediment. These cattails interbreed with native cattails and the hybrid offspring grow more aggressively than the parent forms.

Resulting dense cattail growth crowds out other native wetland plants and affects fish habitat as well as invertebrate populations. Decreased plant diversity reduces our wetland resilience during times of stress such as water level and temperature extremes.

On the plus side, cattails are among the best emergent wetland plants for efficient removal of weed and algae-promoting nutrients. Lower nutrients correspond to less weed and algae growth in the waterways. Excess sediment nutrients support luxuriant cattail growth to a point that the plant even alters its primary form of reproduction.

Island-8 Bridge: The image below shows hybrid-invasive cattail growth significantly narrowed the channel at Island-8 bridge in 2014. Growth was so dense that even runabouts were restricted in navigating easterly from the bridge. Cattail growth is generally limited to water depths less than four feet. One positive aspect of the higher lake level, shown in the 2019 Island-8 bridge image, above right, is that this invasive cattail patch has drown and the waterway is once again more open to recreation.



2020 News and Plans

Highlighted in this Issue

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For details on most topics, see our website:
www.lescheneauxwatershed.org



Sheppard Bay: Higher water level has halted the advancement of invasive cattail easterly into Sheppard Bay (below) and has contributed to beaver and muskrat activity creating channels which, thereby, provides more spawning area, especially for perch and northern pike.



**A SINCERE THANK YOU TO ALL
WHO SUPPORT OUR PROJECTS!**

Find Us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Les-Cheneaux-Watershed-Council/140334046002322>

LCWC Office Phone: 906-484-3031 (Machine Answer)

LES CHENEAUX WATER QUALITY REMAINS EXCELLENT

Water Quality: Each year Council members collect water samples from twelve sites throughout the islands, ranging from Marquette Bay to Mc Kay Bay. Samples collected monthly from May through September are analyzed for two key weed growth indicators: phosphorus and phytoplankton (free floating algae). Analysis is done by chemists at the University of Michigan Biological Station at Douglas Lake. Once again our Les Cheneaux waters are rated as excellent quality for recreational use. Even with the over five feet of increased water depth since 2012, our waters remain pristine. Sample analysis is supported by Les Cheneaux Islands Association. *At right, Lynn Wolters recording data during sample collection.*



UNPRECEDENTED RISE RATE IN LAKE HURON WATER LEVEL

Water Level is always on the mind of Islanders, whether it is high, low or just right. During the past few years many have been wondering when the rise that has continued since 2013 will stabilize or begin to drop. According to the Corps of Engineers we can expect at least a six inch increase in lake level this year. Our landmark photo of John Bentley's boathouse shows the levels at his cottage since 2013.

NOTE: An article on lake level effect on Les Cheneaux was published in the *Chicago Tribune* on January 9, 2020. Here is a link to the article; click on the panel for "Homeowners near the Great Lakes....." <https://www.chicagotribune.com/chi-tony-briscoe-staff.html>

LCI WATER LEVEL CHANGES from July 2013 through July 2019

Dec 2012	Record Low
2013-2014	Up 14.4"
2014-2015	Up 13.2"
2015-2016	Up 12.0"
2016-2017	Up 6.0"
2017-2018	Up 2.0"
2017-2018	Up 16.0"

Lake elevation numbers were taken from Corps of Engineers charts.



TOTAL RISE: 63.4" (161cm)



LITTLE BROWN BAT UPDATE!



In 2017 the Watershed Council began monitoring our local bat populations to determine how the once numerous "Little Brown Bats" (LBB) had survived the fungal infection that has devastated bat populations of multiple species nationwide since 2006. In addition to being highly efficient, nocturnal, flying insect traps, the LBBs are the species that caused so many of us to keep tennis racquets handy at the bedside during summers past. Although we need our night time tennis racquets less these days, after three years of monitoring, Scott Myers has found that among bat signals recorded, LBBs are still the most numerous among local bat species when he surveyed around buildings where the LBBs prefer to live. Signals are also recorded in high number for the Silver Haired Bats, which prefer living in more forested areas. Overall, Scott has detected eight of the nine bat species native to Michigan. Scott will report his findings during the 2020 Aldo Leopold program.

Thanks to those who have reported bat sightings to Scott during the past few years. With your input, added data, and corresponding with university contacts, Scott hopes to learn more about the overall health of our local LBB colonies that are such an important part of our Les Cheneaux ecology.

SAVE THE DATES: FrogFest - Saturday, July 11th at Heritage Park / Annual Meeting July 9th



FrogFest is held annually on a Saturday in July with our primary interest being to engage the community, especially the young, and to raise awareness of the rich natural legacy to be enjoyed right here in Les Cheneaux by just stepping out the door!

**Watershed Council Annual General Meeting
will be held on Thursday, July 9th at the
Clark Township Community Center.**



UPCOMING SEMINAR: BLASTOMYCOSIS SET FOR MAY 9TH AND JULY 9TH

The objective of an upcoming Blastomycosis seminar is to make regional medical professionals as well as the general public more aware of the cause, symptoms and treatment of this, potentially lethal, fungal disease that is prevalent in the Great Lakes area, including the Eastern Upper Peninsula. **For the uninitiated, Blastomycosis (Blasto) is caused by a soil-borne fungus that has an ability to infect dogs and, in some cases, humans.**

Two seminars are planned: the first is scheduled for May 9th at the Hessel School House and will be presented toward medical professionals but the public is welcome. Blasto infections of humans will be discussed by Carol Kauffman, MD, Professor of Internal Medicine and Chief of Infectious Diseases, University of Michigan Medical School and by Scott Schreiber, Epidemiologist for Michigan Department of Community Health. Blasto infections of dogs will be addressed by Daniel Langlois, DVM, College of Veterinary Medicine, Michigan State University and by Clinton Groover, DVM, Pickford Veterinary Clinic. A second seminar will be aimed at the general public and will be held on July 9th at the Les Cheneaux Community Center.

For more information regarding the seminars, please contact Kerri Smith or Paul Gingras at Hessel School House, 906-484-1333 or hesselschoolhouse@gmail.com



ZEBRA MUSSEL SURVEY



Above: Adult Zebra Mussel
Dreissena polymorpha



Right: Scott Myers works
on recovering traps after
four months exposure.

A 2019 island-wide zebra mussel survey found **no evidence** of a growth resurgence. For more information see the LCWC website.



GOVERNMENT ISLAND

Council members were joined by US Forest Service staff last year while brushing the Mike Mahoney hiking trail.

FOUR WAYS to provide continued financial support to LCWC with 501(c)3 status:

- **A check** sent to our address with the form at right letting us know you'd like to join our membership
- **PayPal** through our website, lescheneauxwatershed.org
- Through the **LC Community Foundation** directed to either our LCWC endowed or unendowed account.
- **Funds transferred directly from an IRA to LCWC.** This avenue is approved under the new tax code. For details, refer your tax advisor to the article, "How to Donate Your Required Minimum Distribution to Charity" from *U.S. News & World Report*.

<https://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/iras/articles/2017-12-04/how-to-donate-your-required-minimum-distribution-to-charity>

Re-new your membership with the LCWC today!

We need your support to preserve the health of our waters!

Basic Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	Leopard Frog	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Spring Peeper	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	Blue Heron	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500
Green Frog	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	Wetland	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000
Tree Frog	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	Water Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/> \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Email _____

Send check to: LCWC • PO Box 578 • Cedarville, MI 49719

LES CHENEAUX WATERSHED COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 578
CEDARVILLE, MI 49719



**Warm winter brings
unexpected and tasty treat**

LES CHENEAUX WATERSHED COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2020

DNR COMPLETES 50TH CONSECUTIVE SEASON SURVEY OF LES CHENEAUX FISHERY

DNR Milestone: Last fall marked the 50th consecutive season that the Michigan DNR surveyed and evaluated our Les Cheneaux fishery. Ours is the longest running survey the DNR has conducted and they have learned valuable fishery management lessons from their Les Cheneaux data. Images below (L-R) show a gill net being brought aboard the Research Vessel *Tanner*, the middle image shows a wall-hanger size pike in the net and the lower right image shows fish sorting and data collection by the crew. What happens to the fish that were netted? The fish are cleaned and kept on ice, then donated to our local food pantry. You can learn about results from this survey during the DNR fishery local meeting this spring.



SCHOONER, INLAND SEAS, RETURNS TO LES CHENEAUX JULY 6-7, 2020

Once again, we will be visited by the schooner, *Inland Seas*, in Hessel on July 6th & 7th. As before, she will sail twice a day while providing a unique, educational and fun experience for children and adults. The ship's crew will provide a hands-on experience in water research opportunities at multiple education stations as well as have participants take part in ship handling skills. The event is sponsored by our Watershed Council and is an activity of the Inland Seas Education Association (ISEA).

Ticket sales will begin in May. Learn more about ISEA at www.schoolship.org