



# LES CHENEAUX WATERSHED NEWS

SPRING 2016

LES CHENEAUX WATERSHED COUNCIL

Volume 7 Number 1

## 2016 News and Plans



### **The *Inland Seas*, a floating laboratory**

Can you imagine this schooner in Les Cheneaux? Well, plan to be in Hessel on July 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> to see the “*Inland Seas*” during her two day stay here as part of the Inland Seas Education Association (ISEA) this summer. 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 educational stations as well as have participants take part in ship handling skills.

### **HIGHLIGHTED IN THIS ISSUE:**

- ◆ Inland Seas Schooner visit
- ◆ Cedarville Harbor ready for construction
- ◆ Water quality is improved for LCI and Lake Huron
- ◆ Milfoil: Where is it? ◆ Aerators for treatment plant
- ◆ eDNA testing for invasives ◆ Website on the way
- ◆ Enbridge Line-5 ◆ Frogfest
- ◆ Spruce budworm ◆ Government Island

**For more depth** on the above topics visit our website as shown below.

**We now have both Endowed and Unendowed Funds** with the Community Foundation (LCCF). In addition to the ability to contribute directly to our Watershed Council 501(c)3 account you also have the LCCF option to help us become “better endowed”.

[www.lescheneauxwatershed.org](http://www.lescheneauxwatershed.org)

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

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



**Cedarville Harbor** upgrade will soon be underway. Engineering bids for the project are being sought and construction will begin after Labor Day. Total project cost estimate is \$780,000 and as of this writing about \$100,000 local match funds is still required for this 50% match Waterways Commission grant and other committed funds. The Community Foundation has agreed to serve as fiduciary agent for collection and distribution of local match funds. Completion of this project will be the first tangible evidence of the downtown Cedarville revitalization effort! [LesCheneauxWatershedCouncil.org](http://LesCheneauxWatershedCouncil.org)

**Water Quality in 2015:** We have observed a steady annual decrease in algae concentrations throughout the island waters from 2013 through 2015 that parallels observations of decreased milfoil growth as reported elsewhere in this issue. In 2015 we had algae populations one quarter of the levels measured in 2013. Reasons for the drop in algae concentrations within the islands are not obvious. Water temperatures do not seem to be a major factor and zebra mussel populations appear to remain stable.

Could an influx of the more nutrient poor water from the open lake be reflected in lower phosphorus and algae concentrations in 2015? One argument that favors this possibility is that a three foot rise in lake level (yes, 38 inches) over a two year period essentially dilutes the available nutrients within our channels. In more shallow bays, such as Sheppard and Cedarville, nutrients available in 2015 were about one half the amount available in 2013 for a specific volume of water. Less food translates to less growth. Other thoughts from readers? LesCheneauxWatershed.org



*Stauroneis* spp., a diatom algal form present in our algal communities

### Lake Huron Water Quality Gets Better!

During a meeting of about 120 U.S. and Canadian Scientists last November a “State of Lake Huron” conference was held in Alpena and was attended by several LCWC members. A highlight from that meeting was learning that Lake Huron water quality is getting better.

Regardless of size, most all bodies of water tend to become more “nutrient rich” as they age. Moderate nutrient concentrations promote a healthy ecosystem and fishery but excess nutrients lead to unhealthy lake conditions. Since the 1970s the upper halves of both Lake Huron and Lake Michigan have been observed to reverse that trend in that nutrient levels have measurably decreased. Lower nutrients translate into lower algae populations which have significantly decreased, a trend which continues. Today the nutrient levels of Lakes Huron and Michigan are beginning to look more like the pristine Lake Superior. A primary cause for this reversal could be attributed to invasion by filter-feeding mussels: the zebra and quagga. Water quality improvement is a good thing, but too few nutrients can upset the fishery food chain. These effects have begun to show in catches of fewer and smaller fish including salmon and whitefish whereas lake trout seem to be holding their own.



**DNA test for invasives:** Michigan State Univ. is developing methods to detect invasive aquatic species by monitoring environmental DNA, or eDNA. Here Chris Brumleve relays information about the non-native Rusty Crayfish found at various places throughout our islands.

**Water level:** Although we have enjoyed the high lake level for three years, *the long term Lake Huron forecast* is lower water levels.

### Milfoil: Where did it go?

Water level up: Weeds down. Does it get any better than that?

Although some of you might have had a degree of Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) issues last summer, the vast majority of shoreline property owners, fishermen and pleasure boaters have been thankful that it has almost disappeared. An exception is the marinas where EWM persists. A key EWM management effort in 2016 will be to minimize EWM at all marinas and launch sites.

Following the intense EWM growth in 2012 we have seen progressively less growth each of the last two years. In fact, studies conducted by the Watershed Council have shown that the actual number of EWM plants in Sheppard and Cedarville Bays decreased by 90% from 2013 through 2015. The Council would like to take credit for the unexplained decrease in EWM but, in fact, other than the lake level rising over three feet since January 2013 we have no explanation why EWM has virtually disappeared, only that it has. LesCheneauxWatershed.org



A collaborative project with Michigan Tech Univ aims to make identifying “footprints” of invasive water weeds easier and quicker using UAV (drone) technology. The MTU pilot is shown here launching the UAV from our boat cockpit in the Boat School channel.

**Enbridge:** A resolution insisting that Enbridge immediately reduce the volume and type of crude transported in Line-5 is presently being circulated throughout Michigan. The resolution will keep State of Michigan restrictions in effect until an independent assessment of Line-5 is completed and recommendations made. Many village, township and county governments are supporting this resolution the results of which are being forwarded to Governor Snyder for action.

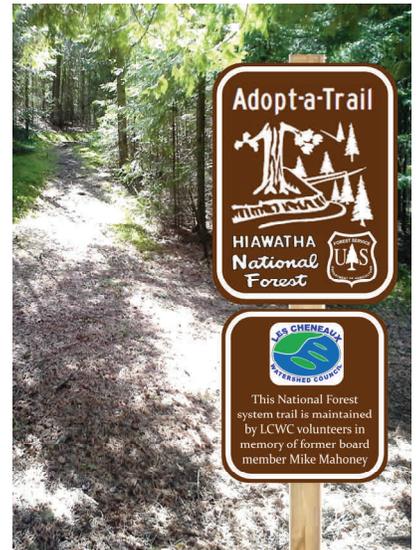
- A resolution incorporating the above concepts was ratified by LCWC during our February board meeting
- Another educational Line-5 seminar will be sponsored by the Council this summer.
- For the recent L5 information log on to the site below from Univ Mich Public Radio.  
<http://michiganradio.org/post/recently-released-enbridge-report-shows-areas-corrosion-along-line-5>
- Monitor our Facebook and Website for Line-5 updates.



Reagan Smith, daughter of Paul and Stephanie (Chard) Smith

Left: **Frogfest** is held annually the second Saturday in July with our primary interest being to engage the community, especially the young, to make them aware of the rich natural legacy to be enjoyed right here in Les Cheneaux.

Right: **Government Island** Trail system will be dedicated this June by the U.S. Forest Service in memory of former board member, Mike Mahoney. Dan Reelitz, LCWC Director, is the LCWC Forest Service liaison.



Left: Spruce budworm, *Choristoneura fumiferana*

**Editorial Comment:**

Your Watershed Council strives to provide information on environmental topics of local interest, some of which may carry political undertones.

We strive to provide members and readers a factual basis on matters such as microplastic beads in the waters or spruce budworm control. Our purpose in referencing specific sources for further study is to provide the public with a basis from which to learn more about scientific aspects of ecological topics.

Periodically you will read in our newsletter or on our website about an advocacy position the Council has taken. Past examples are agreed Council positions about the Asian Carp or lake level management. A present advocacy issue is the safety of Enbridge Line-5.

The line between taking an advocacy or a political position is a thin one. Although we sometimes enjoy spirited discussions within our board meetings on certain topics, when a Council position is made public on what are sometimes controversial topics it is the result of deep thought, consideration and discussion among our board members about what is best for Les Cheneaux. Our advocacy efforts have not been, nor are they, intended to support a political agenda. LCWC closely follows terms of our 501(c)3 status.



New bubbler system installed at Twp Sewer Treatment plant. [LesCheneauxWatershedCouncil.org](http://LesCheneauxWatershedCouncil.org)

**Re-new your membership with the Les Cheneaux Watershed Council today!** We need your support to preserve the health of our waters!

- Membership or Donation to the Les Cheneaux Watershed Council
- \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Basic Membership
- \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Spring Peeper
- \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Green Frog
- \$75 \_\_\_\_\_ Tree Frog
- \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Leopard Frog
- \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Heron
- \$1,000 \_\_\_\_\_ Wetland
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Water Guardian

Send check to: **LCWC, Box 578, Cedarville, MI 49719**

LES CHENEAX WATERSHED COUNCIL  
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**Enbridge:** More information about Line-5 that crosses under the Straits of Mackinac becomes available almost daily as a stream of public seminars, media announcements and resolutions calling for transparency and responsible actions on the part of Enbridge are posted. Read more inside about our recent educational seminar with Dr. Ed Timm.

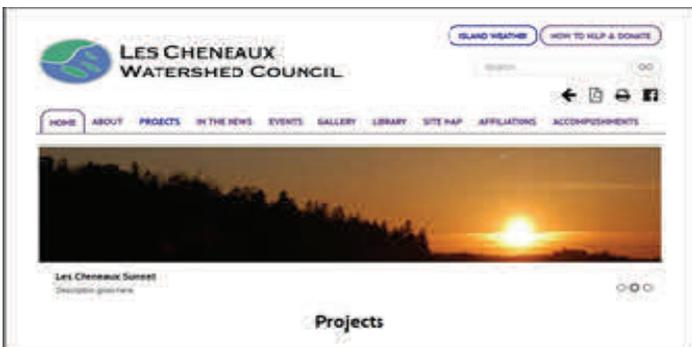


LES CHENEAX WATERSHED COUNCIL  
NEWSLETTER

A map of the Les Cheneaux Islands, showing the outlines of the islands and their surrounding waters.

**Website:** We want you to have a complete package when you wish to learn more about local environmental issues. To help with this we will soon have our website upgraded to make it easier to locate current as well as older LCI scientific ecology information and to improve access from most mobile devices.

Watershed Council Directors Michael Stoll and Daniel Reelitz accepting the 2015 Cooperative of the Year Award from Nick Cassel of the Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) for Chippewa, Mackinac and Luce Counties plus the Hiawatha National Forest.



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

