

# Shore Lines

Pickerel-Crooked Lake Association

Spring 2014

*Working, Educating and Advocating for Lake Quality Since 1963*

## PCLA President's Letter

### *SLOW MOTION*

Whoa, after this record setting cold & snowy winter, we seem to be moving slowly, HOWEVER our plan of work is picking up speed! Hal is working on Natural Shorelines; Dan is busy "bird doggin" water levels and the latest in government activities; Wayne is looking for more fish (and plunking boats in the water); Judy is working on a possible fun social event; Greg is putting together our annual Board ballot; Dave is updating our website/communications; Ray is alert for invasive species (with Jan and Maggie's help); Larry is keeping our written records in shape; Karen is tracking all of you (our members); Roger's helping Hal; Wayne and Dudley are working on various projects; and Maureen keeps all of us "in line" by reporting and watching our financial picture. If you see them on the Lake or around this summer, be sure and THANK THEM!

What's next seems to be my responsibility; and looking ahead INVOLVES you! As we move into the next 50 years of lake living on Pickerel and Crooked Lakes,



we constantly need involved members who participate in volunteer programs and who want to run for the Board (we need directors who represent all of our shorelines). As a present member, you may find yourself with a new neighbor or two, as

properties change hands or new places are built; and you certainly would do your job by visiting them and asking them to be a member of the PCLA. Just go "on line" at [www.pickerelcrookedlakes.org](http://www.pickerelcrookedlakes.org) and you will find an application and the information that you will need to be a great spokesman for lakes advocacy! Call me, or talk to any board director if you are interested in volunteering!

A special thank you to our hard working shore monitors and our two lakes monitors, who keep vigilant eyes on the health and threats to the quality of our lake waters.

See you on the lakes,  
Darlene and Dudley Marvin

## Crooked River Lock Schedule

### 2014 Fees:

- \$10 per day / \$30 season pass
- May 24-June 29:** 8:00 am to 9:00 pm
- June 30-Aug. 17:** 8:00 am to 10:00 pm
- Aug. 18-Sept. 1:** 8:00 am to 9:00 pm
- Sept. 2-7:** 9:00 am to 8:00 pm
- Sept. 8-30:** 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Oct. 4-5:** 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Oct. 11-12:** 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Oct. 18-19:** 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Oct. 25-26:** 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

*The Crooked River Lock  
Will Close For The Season at 5:00 pm  
on Sunday October 26, 2014.*

### Pickerel-Crooked Lakes Association Board of Directors

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## Show your lake you care

What we do with our lawns, lakeshores, and landscapes has more to do with our neighbors and communities than with environmental attitudes and beliefs. Landscape Architecture Professor Joan Iverson Nassauer of the University of Michigan has studied the phenomenon and discovered that when it comes to our landscapes, we are driven by cultural norms more than ecological health. In a nutshell: the appearance of our landscapes reflects our personal character. And so we mow, prune, trim, weed, mulch, water, plant, fertilize, and weed whip our landscapes into neat and tidy, colorful and contained, orderly and managed yards that we hope reflect who we are: hardworking, thoughtful, good citizens who care.

When it comes to shorelines, however, traditional landscape practices can be detrimental to lake health. Neat and tidy lakeshores may reflect our hard-working nature, but they are not in the best interest of the resource. Consider a natural shoreline: undisturbed and untouched. Emergent vegetation grows along the shallow lake margin, toppled trees lie submerged in the lake and their upright neighbors remain, for now, offering shade and cooling water temperatures. Organic, or “mucky,” lake bottoms sustain populations of macroinvertebrates, which in turn provide food for other wildlife. Submerged rocks shift with waves and ice over the seasons. There isn’t much “neatness” to this picture, but there is order: ecological order.

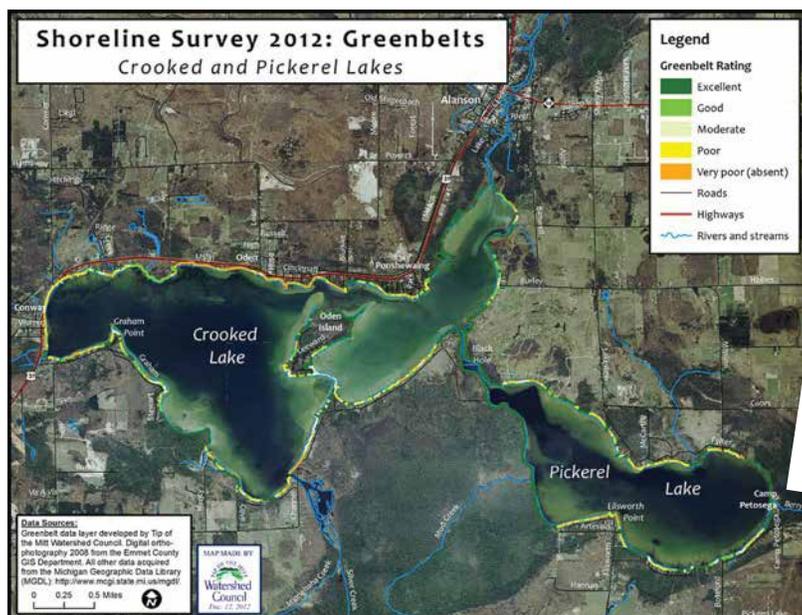
Achieving some degree of balance between cultural norms and ecological order is, however, obtainable. An important

concept from Nassauer’s research is termed “cues to care,” or things you can do with a landscape that let people know that you are actually caring for it. These cues can be formal, casual, functional, or frivolous. They can be big or small, but they have to be noticeable to a casual observer. They have to provide some sort of evidence that you care for your landscape. You can easily include traditional cues to care in your “lakescape” by incorporating pathways, maintaining a crisp edge between lawn and your greenbelt (or other landscaped or no-mow areas), and by adding the occasional bench, birdhouse, or other accent. We know you care, but consider how to show it by trying these lakescape-centric cues. We promise your lake will approve!

1. Allow emergent plants, such as bulrushes or ‘reeds’, to grow along the shoreline. They help buffer wave energy, break up the ice cover, and provide critical habitat for fish, invertebrates, and birds.
2. If a tree falls in the lake, leave it. Resist the temptation to remove fallen trees. Trees in the lake are essential to a lake’s “carbon diet,” plus they offer valuable habitat.
3. If you don’t already have a greenbelt, a strip of vegetation that is either deliberately planted or allowed to naturally grow along the shoreline, then get growing!
4. Don’t flatten ice shove berms if they are stable and vegetated because altering them may lead to shoreline erosion.



Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council • 426 Bay Street, Petoskey, MI 49770  
PH: (231) 347-1181 • Fax: (231) 347-5928 • [www.watershedcouncil.org](http://www.watershedcouncil.org)



## PROTECTING OUR WATERS: A NATURAL LAKESHORE SERIES

By Hal Willens

*Over three quarters of the shoreline of Pickerel and Crooked Lakes is occupied by residences. Results from the 2012 Watershed Council survey of our lakeshore indicate that human activity along the shoreline is likely impacting the lake ecosystem and water quality. Over 50% of the shoreline has a poor greenbelt, and most of these consist of a traditional lawn down to the water's edge. Almost one third of properties showed heavy growth of Cladophora, an indicator of nutrient pollution. Altered shorelines were present on almost two thirds of properties. Relative to other lakes in our area, these are high percentages. In order to preserve the quality of our waters, PROTECTING OUR WATERS: A NATURAL SHORELINE SERIES will highlight how you can properly care for your shoreline and protect the quality of our waters.*

### Benefits of a Shoreline Greenbelt

Living on a lake or stream provides an opportunity to get to know your waterway intimately and experience its changes with time and the seasons. It also provides opportunities to relax and enjoy the splendor of the near shore environment. For some, the enjoyment comes from observing wildlife that utilize the shoreline ecosystem. For others, it's simply the connection to the water which instills a deep feeling for the outdoors and of memories past. Access to the water provides many recreational benefits as well—swimming, fishing, boating, or simply enjoying the breathtaking views and serenity that one might experience from the sight and sound of moving water. Whatever your reasons for owning and enjoying shoreline property, enhancing your waterfront landscape with a shoreline greenbelt may greatly increase the benefits you derive.

#### WHAT IS A SHORELINE GREENBELT?

A shoreline greenbelt is a strip of diverse vegetation, either naturally growing or planted, along the shoreline of a lake or stream.

Usually consisting of a mixture of trees, shrubs, ground cover, and wildflowers, shoreline greenbelts offer waterfront residents an attractive way to protect the water quality of their lakes and streams while providing many additional benefits as well.

#### GREENBELTS PROVIDE A ZONE OF PROTECTION FOR WATER QUALITY

- Greenbelts minimize polluted runoff by trapping sediment and debris and by filtering more nutrients, toxic substances, and other pollutants from runoff compared to mowed lawns.



- Lawn fertilizers and pesticides applied near a shoreline can end up washing into our waterways—causing unwanted pollution. Greenbelt vegetation reduces the need for chemical applications and lawn maintenance.
- Deep roots of greenbelt vegetation bind the soil in place—in most cases, preventing shoreline erosion more cost-effectively than seawalls or other engineered structures.
- Greenbelts reduce nutrient pollution from reaching our waterways by drawing up the by-products of septic system wastes.

#### SHORELINE GREENBELTS PROVIDE MANY OTHER IMPORTANT BENEFITS

- Shoreline greenbelts can be very attractive—providing aesthetic beauty for your property and enhancing your waterfront views.

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## Getting the Word Out

- Greenbelts offer privacy and protection from sound, reducing the noise you may hear from motorboats, personal watercraft, or your neighbors.
- Planting trees, shrubs, ground cover, and wildflowers may enhance the value of your waterfront property.
- Songbirds, butterflies, small mammals, and other animals have a greater chance of finding food, shelter, and nesting sites in greenbelt vegetation than a lawn.
- Greenbelts can make effective windbreaks, saving energy by slowing the speed of the wind around buildings.

### HOW TO STOP LOSING GROUND

Because greenbelts are so effective at controlling shoreline erosion on lakes and streams, they are sometimes installed, enhanced or maintained for this purpose. The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council offers a service to assess shoreline erosion problems and prescribe, design and/or install solutions. Biotechnical erosion control is the method most commonly prescribed. This method which utilizes woody vegetation along with flexible armoring brings together biological, ecological, and engineering concepts to produce a living, functioning system designed to prevent shoreline erosion. The vegetation used in a biotechnical erosion control project can be selected to complement a greenbelt design too. If you would like more information about this service, contact the Watershed Council at (231) 347-1181.

### TECHNICAL SERVICES OFFERED BY THE WATERSHED COUNCIL:

- Shoreline Property Management Consultation
- Biotechnical Shoreline Erosion Control
- Septic System Evaluation
- Wetland Identification & Delineation
- Research and Dissemination of Technical Information
- Conservation Planning & Design

Members receive a 10% discount on all technical services.



### Children at the Water's Edge

One of the best toys we have discovered for our grandchildren (and our neighbors' grandchildren) is the good old fashioned minnow trap! Put some food scraps in the

trap, secure the line to the dock, and pitch the trap into the lake. Just be prepared: after the kids discover how cool this is, they are out checking what might be in the traps even before they come say hello to us! We have caught crawfish (both native and rusty), bass, perch, minnows, even mud puppies. What a great way to introduce the next generation to the fascinating watery environment we have at our doorsteps. Give kids a bucket of water and some minnows, and they will be happy all day!

- Audrey McMullen

*Photo of Brenna Kerton, courtesy of  
Audrey McMullen*



### BOATERS SAFETY CLASSES

Boater Safety Classes co-sponsored by CLYC and PCLA are scheduled for Sat. June 14th and July 12th 9:00-3:00

#### CONTACT:

Emmet County Sheriff's Dept.  
at 231-439-8900 for details.

The class will be held at the Crooked Lake Yacht Club



### BREAKFAST INVITATION

#### Kick Off The Summer 2014!!

Opening breakfast/brunch hosted by the Crooked Lake Yacht Club and the Pickerel-Crooked Lakes Association. This will be a fun social event with information and displays about the lakes, held at the Crooked Lake Yacht Club on Saturday June 21st at 10:00 a.m. Members of the Alanson Improvement Group and the Inland Water Route Historical Society will also be guests.

The price is \$8 per person.

Please RSVP by June 16th to Roger Winslow at [rogerwinslow@hotmail.com](mailto:rogerwinslow@hotmail.com) or Karen Plasencia at [karenplasencia@gmail.com](mailto:karenplasencia@gmail.com) or call 248-421-3566



### Keeping the Waterway Clean

Returning from the Crooked River clean up... over 10 bags of garbage, a barrel of recyclables, a bicycle and enough floating wood to sink a fleet of pontoons!! A special thank you to all who helped!!

# Wildlife Corner

by Dave Droste

## Double Crested Cormorant - Fisherman's Nightmare or Misunderstood Native Aquatic Bird.

Several PCLA members have asked that I write about the cormorant. Surrounded by controversy, and misinformation, it is sometimes hard to separate fact from fiction. It is widely perceived that the cormorant is an invasive species to our area, and has had a large negative impact on our fisheries. There is no doubt that they eat a lot of fish, but finding conclusive scientific evidence as to how much has proven difficult. In fact this native bird to North America has seen its population fluctuate wildly in the past 50 years.



**Physical Description:** Cormorants are large birds (27-35 inches long) with dark brown or black plumage that has a dull greenish or bronze sheen. They have lean bodies, long necks and relatively short wings. They have long beaks with a hooked upper mandible and bright orange-yellow skin that covers the face, throat and base of the bill. Their black feet are webbed feet and found on short legs, and their tails are wedge-shaped. Males are slightly bigger than females. Juveniles are much duller in color than adults.

**Geographic Range:** Double-crested cormorants breed across North America, as far north as southern Alaska. They winter in North America as far south as Sinaloa, Mexico, and are common on marine and inland waters throughout their range.

**Habitat:** They require water for feeding and nearby perches, such as rocks, sandbars, pilings, shipwrecks, wires, trees or docks for resting on and drying out during the day.

**Reproduction:** Cormorants are monogamous and breed in colonies of up to three thousand pairs. The male chooses a nest site and then advertises for a female by standing in a "wing-waving display" that shows off the

brightly-colored skin on his head and neck. Peak breeding is May through July. The males arrive at the breeding colony first and chose a nest site. The male and female work together to repair an old nest or to build a new one of sticks, twigs, vegetation and flotsam and jetsam found nearby. The male brings most of the material to the female who builds the nest and guards it from other colony members who would otherwise steal the nest materials. The nests typically built on the ground, but are occasionally built in trees. After nest construction is complete, the female lays 1 to 7 (usually 4) pale bluish-white eggs. The eggs are laid 1 to 3 days apart. The young begin to leave the nest when they are 3 to 4 weeks old. They can fly at about 6 weeks and dive at 6 to 7 weeks. The chicks become completely independent of their parents by 10 weeks of age. Double-crested cormorants do not breed until they are at least 2 years old.

**Lifespan / Longevity:** The oldest known wild double-crested cormorant lived 17 years with the average life expectancy for wild birds to be 6 years.

**Behavior:** Double-crested cormorants are very gregarious. They can be found in small and large groups both on the breeding grounds, and during the winter. They also migrate in large groups. Double-crested cormorants feed during the day by diving for fish. After diving, cormorants look for an elevated spot to perch with their wings outspread. This is most likely done to dry out the feathers.

**Food Habits:** Double-crested cormorants feed primarily on fish, but also eat insects, crustaceans and amphibians. They dive underwater to catch their prey. They may swallow small fish while underwater, but bring larger prey up to the surface to shake, clean or hammer on the water before consuming them. When feeding on schooling fish, cormorants may feed together in flocks. They have a hook-like tip on the upper maxilla of their bill and specialized muscles that aid them in grasping their slippery prey.

**Predation:** Gulls, crows, jays and grackles are probably significant predators of cormorant eggs and chicks. Coyotes, foxes and raccoons may also prey on cormorant chicks. Adult

cormorants and chicks are susceptible to predation by bald eagles, and occasionally by great horned owls.

**Economic Importance for Humans (Negative):** Double-crested cormorants and other fish-eating birds are considered by some to be detrimental to commercial fisheries and fish farms. However, the extent of their impact on fish populations is difficult to quantify, and has been demonstrated by some studies to be very small.

**Recovery:** The Double-crested Cormorant's numbers decreased in the 1960s due to the effects of DDT. Colonies have also been persecuted from time to time in areas where they are thought to compete with human fishing. Recently the population of Double-crested Cormorants has increased. For populations nesting in the Great Lakes region, it is believed that the colonization of the lakes by the non-native alewife (a small prey fish) has provided optimal feeding conditions and hence good breeding success.

Double-crested cormorants eat other species of fish besides alewives and have been implicated in the decline of some sport-fish populations in the Great Lakes and other areas. Scientists are not in agreement about the exact extent of the role of cormorants in these declines, but some believe that Double-crested Cormorants may be a factor for some populations and in some locations. In light of this belief, and because of calls for action by the public, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has extended control options to other government entities, including the State of Michigan. The DNR has stipulated the "Double-crested cormorants may be harassed without a permit by nonlethal means to deter or prevent damage to private property or to public fishery resources using such devices as noise makers or scare devices and other recognized and recommended means of preventing damage which do not kill, harm, capture, trap, or collect animals."

For the past 5 years board members have informally monitored cormorant activity on our lakes. Although groups of 50 or more birds have been sighted, these occurrences are rare and often associated with migration.

## What you should know about Northern Michigan Pipelines



Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council is committed to working on ways to avoid disasters that can degrade our inland lakes, streams, wetlands, and Great Lakes. One of the risks we face is the network of oil and gas pipelines buried beneath our feet. This is not necessarily unique to Northern Michigan as millions of miles of pipeline crisscross not just our state but across the United States. However, Northern Michigan is a uniquely vulnerable area with a wealth of pristine water resources. If something were to go terribly wrong with one of those pipelines, Northern Michigan would suffer disproportionately.

For example, Line 5, owned by Enbridge Energy Partners, is a hazardous liquid pipeline that carries crude oil under the Straits of Mackinac; the Indian, Pigeon, and Little Sturgeon rivers and their tributaries; and through almost 10 miles of wetland habitat. Given this wealth of natural resources, we must ensure a high level of disaster preparedness and take every precaution to avert disaster. This is exactly what the Watershed Council is doing to help improve pipeline safety and protect our valuable waterways.

To accomplish this, the Watershed Council is working on prevention measures, emergency response planning, education and outreach, and policy recommendations. Since an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure we are, first and foremost, focusing on what we can do to help prevent an accident. This includes identifying the most sensitive water resources along the route of the pipeline, evaluating the integrity of the pipeline itself, and assessing the operation and maintenance of the line by Enbridge. We are looking for those

areas that may be improved upon and are asking the following questions. Are there enough shut-off valves along the route? Are inspections conducted frequently enough? And will a leak be detected quick enough to prevent significant damage to the environment?

While we would rather prevent an accident from occurring in the first place, we also need to be prepared should something go wrong. We need to make sure emergency plans are developed and that our first responders are trained and have the necessary equipment to respond properly. Similarly, public education and awareness is crucial. Our Northern Michigan community -- residents and visitors alike -- need to know where the pipelines are, what they transport, what the signs of a leak are, and who to call in the event of an emergency. In an effort to raise awareness, the Watershed Council is developing educational materials including presentations, publications, and a webpage devoted to pipeline and pipeline safety. We will also be hosting a public meeting later this summer, which will provide an outlet of communication between Enbridge, the regulatory agencies and the community at large. Lastly, as an advocacy organization, we need to look at reforming and enforcing the laws.

For far too long, pipelines have been out of sight and, subsequently, out of mind. We will be working directly with Enbridge, the regulatory agencies, and the local community to ensure we are taking any and all actions to prevent a failure or incident in Northern Michigan. We need to ensure the strongest possible protections are in place to preserve the heritage of Northern Michigan - a tradition built around our magnificent waters.

**SAVE THE DATE**



*Learn more about Northern Michigan's Pipelines*

# Northern Michigan Pipelines Symposium

June 24, 2014 • Petoskey High School Auditorium

Watch for details in our upcoming summer events calendar.

Our Business Members provide additional support to the P.C.L.A. Please utilize their services and thank them!!

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**Betsy Steele**

*David & Diane Steele*



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**IS IT SPRING YET?** What a winter we've had! Spring is certainly a long time coming this year but it surely will get here eventually! Along with improving weather we plan to once again focus on activities that support our mission, goals and strategic plans.

We will continue to work on our educational outreach with updates to our waterside kiosks, boater safety classes and website communications. Invasive species monitoring and mitigation are also prime areas for our efforts along with water quality, lake and boat launch monitoring too.

All of these activities and many more are extremely worthwhile and beneficial to all who enjoy our lakes but they also require planning, implementation and follow up. Our members are known for their generous donation of time and effort that have made us so successful but we can always use more help. We would appreciate your input and support in any areas you might want to learn more about or get more involved in. Many hands make light work so please consider becoming more active in our efforts to protect and preserve our waterways. You can contact any board member with any suggestions, questions or to volunteer.

Remember, we are not all work and no play. Many of our activities can be a lot of fun too. We are also planning to have another fun, social gathering this summer to give our members a chance to connect and enjoy sharing time with their fellow lake enthusiasts. Mark your calendars and plan to join us July 22nd at 6:30 at the Crooked Vine Winery, 8370 Lakeview Rd. in Alanson for an evening of great wine in a lovely setting and wonderful company. This will be a purely social event with no agenda except to relax and enjoy the opportunity to get better acquainted with your fellow lake enthusiasts. Looking so forward to another wonderful summer season (whenever it gets here) on our beautiful lakes. Hope to see you there! - Judy Reddick Brown

**PCLA Annual Meeting: Saturday, August 2, 2014 (the first Saturday in August), at 9:00 a.m.**

Held at the Inland Water Route Historical Museum. Refreshments will be served.

We will have a speaker from the Inland Water Route Historical Museum talking about their activities and the building of the "Launch". All members are welcome!

Don't forget to visit us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PickerelCrookedLakesAssociation>

Or on our website: <http://www.pickerel-crookedlakes.org>