

ISLAND CURRENTS

Beaver Island Association Newsletter - Fall-Winter 2012

Supporting Environmental & Economic Sustainability

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Big money: Beaver Island receives nearly half a million dollars in natural resources awards. (By Morgan Sherburne, Reprinted from the Petoskey News, August 22, 2012)

The very characteristic — its isolation — that makes the Beaver Island archipelago vulnerable to invasive pests also protects it from the change that can devastate the mainland. And to maintain its isolated ecosystem, the island has recently received more than \$400,000.

One of the organizations behind the grants is [The Nature Conservancy](#), which recently released a catalog of the 32,000 islands in the Great Lakes. "The conservancy looked at (the islands') species, and their threatened and endangered unique natural features," said Pam Grassmick, a board member of the Beaver Island Association. "We ranked in the top 10. We have a little gem right here in our backyard." For example, said Grassmick, the island has no evidence of emerald ash borer, an insect that has killed close to 40 million ash trees just in the Lower Peninsula, according to a 2011 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development report. And if the island can keep visitors from bringing in infested firewood, the island is likely to remain bore-free: the bug can fly only six to nine miles. "We could be the last refuge for ash trees to be seen in the Midwest," said Grassmick.

The island archipelago has also battled its 27 acres of Phragmites, an invasive grass, down to less than half an acre, said Beaver Island Phragmites administrator Lisa Welke recently.

Some of the grants include \$75,000 from The Nature Conservancy, \$8,500 from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and \$2,200 from the Charlevoix Community Foundation to the Beaver Island Association so the group could pinpoint invasive species by GPS. Also, the Conservation Resource Alliance won a \$369,000 grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's "Sustain Our Great Lakes." The grant helps fund a "multi-faceted program to inventory and restore our islands, which will complement the work by the Beaver Island Association, The Nature Conservancy and the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians," said Grassmick. Finally, Beaver Island will also receive some funding from a \$200,000 grant awarded to the conservation group Huron Pines and Conservation Resource Alliance in order to help restore and protect the archipelago.

Other natural resources projects include documenting both the various federally threatened and endangered special on the island and the already established 23 different invasive species. One of those threatened species is the pitcher's thistle, a dune flower that matures up to seven years before flowering, then dying. It requires bare sand to germinate, and traffic — foot or vehicular — can be tough on the plant. Also tough on the plant is a weevil, an insect inadvertently introduced into the United States, then purposefully distributed to control some thistle species, according to an article by Kayri Havens-Young with the [Chicago Botanic Garden](#). The

"Larinus planus" weevil could potentially collapse thistle populations, if gone unchecked, said Grassmick, who's been in conversation with the Chicago Botanic Garden. Havens-Young researched the weevil in Door County, Wis., and writes that the weevil has recently been found a little closer to home: in Wilderness State Park.

"These islands might be the last refuge for preserving plant species like the pitcher's thistle," said Grassmick. "They're little biospheres."

Selection of a New Superintendent/Principle for the Beaver Island Community School. The following is a reprint of a letter, dated July 17, 2012, from the Beaver Island Association to Jessica Anderson, President, the Beaver Island School Board.

Dear Mrs. Anderson:

I understand that the School Board has undertaken a process for identifying qualified candidates to replace Kitty McNamara as Superintendent and Principal of the Beaver Island Community School, who will be retiring at the end of the next school year; and that the Board has retained Mark Eckhart, the former head of the Charlevoix Intermediate School District, to assist in this process.

The Beaver Island Association is a non-profit organization of approximately 200 members who are property owners on Beaver Island. We have a strong interest in maintaining the Beaver Island Community School as an educational institution fully engaged in preparing Beaver Island students for college and ultimately for rewarding careers in the world economy. The viability of the island community depends upon preparing future leaders with strong academic experience.

With this letter I am presenting the views of the Beaver Island Association regarding the qualifications and experience which a new leader of the school system should have, in order for the school to best prepare its students for the demands of the twenty-first century. Here is our position in summary form:

1. **Vision.** The new superintend/principal must set an educational mission for the school based upon high academic achievement.
2. **Leadership.** He or she should have strong leadership skills to work with the staff to implement a coordinated curriculum based upon the mission.
3. **Educational theory.** He or she should have the academic background and experience to apply state-of-the-art teaching methods to the school curriculum, with particular emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
4. **Teacher Effectiveness.** The new superintend/principal should have experience in processes for measuring the performance of the teaching staff; a willingness to undertake comprehensive evaluations; and the ability to design and implement programs to improve effectiveness where indicated.
5. **Distance Learning.** With the small size of the school and its relative isolation, it is important that the new leader have familiarity with the technology of distance learning to bring courses and programs of high academic quality and high student interest to the school and to the homes of students. BICS has invested heavily in classroom technology. Using this capability to cost effectively expand the academic curriculum and to better engage the students and parents in learning should be a high priority.
6. **Community Involvement.** The island community is small and closely knit. It is imperative that the new superintendent effectively engage the parents of the students and other community leaders in working to support the high academic mission of the school.
7. **Knowledge of State and Federal standards and requirements.**
8. **Emphasis on preparation and guidance for four-year colleges and universities.** In years past, the majority of BICS students graduated and then enrolled in four-year colleges and universities. For some time this has not been the case, with a great majority of students electing to attend two-year community colleges within Michigan. The future of the island, in the hands of BICS graduates, depends upon greater focus on preparing BICS students for four-year colleges. This will require connecting with parents for them to better understand the career and economic benefits that a four year degree offers; and it will require an effort on the part of the school's guidance staff to become more familiar with appropriate colleges and universities, and to become more expert in the process of obtaining available financial aid. Greater educational opportunities for graduates should be a high priority for the new superintendent.

I hope you and the other Board members will carefully consider this letter and incorporate these concepts in your search. A number of our board members have careers in academic fields. We would be glad to spend more time, at your convenience, discussing this and in addition, the Beaver Island Association would appreciate periodic updates on your progress, or thoughts regarding any assistance you think might be helpful to the School Board in finding the best possible candidate for the position.

Sincerely, The Beaver Island Association

BICS Superintendent/Principal Search Calendar

- August 13 open meeting with Mark Eckhardt for community members to provide input regarding competencies and requirements for a new administrator.
- Possible fall meeting as a follow-on to the August 13 meeting. Subsequently the School board will define a candidate profile and develop a hiring brochure.
- Post position by January 2013. Interview for position (all interviews will be posted and public).
- Visit worksites of candidates selected as finalists.
- Hire new administrator in April 2013 with a start date of mid-June 2013.

BIA members are encouraged to communicate their ideas regarding position requirements directly to Jessica Anderson, President BICS School Board (jkeehn3@hotmail.com)

Beaver Island Association support of Leadership Charlevoix County (a letter to Ann Partridge of the Steering Committee)

Dear Ann:

The Beaver Island Association agrees that the development of future leaders is essential for Beaver Island; and we support connecting future leaders on Beaver Island with others within Charlevoix County to help them understand the full range of resources available within Charlevoix County. We are pleased to contribute \$200.00 to support the candidate selected for participation in 2012-2013.

I hope that you will consider the following criteria in your selection of the individual for the program:

- The person selected should have a stated interest in becoming a future leader on Beaver Island
- He or she should be committed to full participation including all off-island sessions
- He or she should be a full-time resident of Beaver Island

We also request that the selected individual agree to attend the first meeting of the BIA Board for summer 2013 to share his or her thoughts about what the Association can do to help Beaver Island thrive.

In addition we urge supporters of the leadership training initiative to develop both short and long-term plans including:

- How both the individual and the island will benefit from participating in the leadership program. Specifically, how will what the individual learns contribute to the development of Beaver Island?
- How can connections made during the program be leveraged to increase the visibility of Beaver Island within the broader Charlevoix County community?
- How can the individual connect what was learned in the program to the BICS Career Day initiative, in order to convey to other students and parents the range of resources and jobs within the area?

Sincerely, The Beaver Island Association

Beaver Island Association request regarding the paving Peaine Township portion of Kings Highway; in a letter to Mr. John Vondaran, Chairman Charlevoix County Road Commission Steering Committee. (August 8, 2012)

Dear Chairman Vondaran:

The Beaver Island Association is a non-profit community organization committed to supporting environmental and economic sustainability of Beaver Island. This letter is written on behalf of our 200+ members who are residents of Beaver Island, to urge the Road Commission repave the 4.04 miles of Kings Highway within Peaine Township in the calendar year 2013.

This section of highway is the primary north-south artery used daily by the 2000 Island residents and visitors traveling beyond the harbor area. Many areas of the road are in very poor and unstable condition with patches on top of patches. The road is narrow to

start with, and the shoulders have disintegrated to the point where passing on-coming vehicles is dangerous. All it would take for a serious accident is to have a passing car's tire hit the disintegrated margin, causing a spin-out and loss of control. It has heavy bicycle traffic, and it is THE road that Beaver Island emergency vehicles, both fire and EMS, use to rapidly respond to island emergencies.

Attached are photos of 5 locations showing that the original road surface no longer exists and that the shoulders are dangerous.

We understand the many road repair needs in Charlevoix County, and the difficulty of prioritizing scarce resources to meet these needs. However, we have been patiently paying the 1.0 mil County Road millage for several years while the only county road in Peaine Township is dangerously disintegrating.

We urge the Steering Committee to take action that results in the repaving of Kings Highway in 2013. If you need additional documentation, please call me. In addition, I strongly urge you or a member of the Steering Committee to come to Beaver Island to personally review the need for immediate action. I or another BIA board member would be glad to escort you on a tour of the island so that you can appreciate what an essential artery this road is, and see how badly it needs repaving.

Thank you for your consideration.

(Note: After a follow-up telephone call in early October by Bob Anderson, Mr. Vondaran said he had received the letter and it is on the agenda for the next meeting, but it will not be discussed until January, 2013 because the Board of Commissioners has several positions up for grabs in this election and the Steering Committee will not make recommendations until after the new positions are finalized.)

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Update on the 2013 Emerald Ash Borer trapping project

Dr. James Beck who is in charge of the USDA's Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) program reported to the BIA that the program has been cut by 40% and no further monitoring will take place in lower Michigan. Furthermore, only a small number of UP counties will have the non-commercial traps available in 2013. The good news was that during the 2011 trapping efforts, no Emerald Ash Borers were found on Beaver Island. As a result of these continued funding cuts, the 2012 EAB trapping was not initiated. Our archipelago continues under the EAB quarantine along with Isle Royale and Charity Island-those islands outside the EAB's flight range.

The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has agreed to supply the Emerald Ash Borer traps for the 2013 season to Beaver Island. Volunteers will be used to hang, monitor, and remove the EAB traps. The Michigan Department of Agriculture, Pest Manager, John Bedford, will provide technical assistance for the placement of traps and offer their entomology services for verification of any suspicious insects. Special thanks to the Beaver Island Boat Company and the airports for their surveillance and assistance protecting our ash trees by keeping firewood from arriving on Beaver Island. A BIA representative has been invited to attend an October meeting in Roscommon given by the DNR and the MDA. The workshop will focus on forest health, pest that are in Michigan and pests yet to come. More information will be available in our spring newsletter.

Report on the annual beach clean-up effort.

The annual beach cleanup sponsored by the BIA was held on an absolutely beautiful day this past September 15. Twenty nine volunteers showed up at the Community Center to pick up their data cards and bags. They cleaned almost 31 miles of Beaver Island beaches--and Northcutt Bay on Garden Island, thanks to Pam Grassmick.

Bob Anderson found the two most unique items: a weather balloon battery and housing and a glass bottle with an alien doll inside. Judy Boyle retained her title of "Queen of Beach Trash" with a haul estimated at 150 pounds. Two 50 gallon drums made up most of that weight. Young Paige Pryor came in second in trash tonnage when she found a huge 100 pound rubber belt from some construction machinery on the beach near the boat dock. Low water levels made these finds visible this year. There were 44 dead cormorants found along with several other birds which may indicate a potential return of avian botulism.

By noon everyone returned to the Community Center for a hot dog lunch sponsored by the BIA. Thanks to McDonough's Market for donating the buns, the Community Center for donating the space and--most importantly--to all the volunteers who helped keep Beaver Island beautiful.

Update on the Phragmites eradication effort

As the 2012 growing season comes to a close we can all rest easy knowing that the Phragmites in our archipelago have been treated and are hopefully on their way to extinction. The DNR awarded the BIA an \$8,500 grant to be applied toward the 2012 treatment. By partnering with the townships, this award will provide the bulk of the treatment cost for Beaver Island.

The first week of September Cardno JFNew battled strong winds but managed to treat High, Garden, Hog and Beaver Islands. We will not know the results of treatment until next year but based on recent history, it should be successful.

We are down to maintenance level on Beaver Island and must continue close monitoring in order to remain in control of this invasive. In addition to the Lake Michigan shoreline, two small interior spots were also treated along with another site of a very aggressive invasive species called Japanese Knotweed.

The property owners have been instrumental in achieving this by reporting sightings, supporting efforts and allowing treatment of their properties.

We are also grateful to the many organizations (TNC, DNR, BIA, Little Traverse Conservancy, and the Odawa Tribe of Chippewa Indians) for their continued support.

Beaver Island Elections November 2012

The 2012 election on Beaver Island has developed into one of the most contested in memory. In St. James Township Bill Haggard, long time visitor and recent full-time resident, defeated Rick Speck for the position of Township Supervisor in the August primary. Rick has served as Supervisor for a number of years and previously held the position as a Township Trustee. Rick has announced that he will be a write-in candidate for the November election and his backers have mounted an energetic campaign.

Nevertheless Peaine Township is where all the "action" is. Cherie Browe, Charlevoix County Clerk, made the comment that in her 20 plus years as County Clerk she has never observed anything like the activity in Peaine Township.

- In the August primary there were 5 candidates for the two trustee positions currently held by Paul Welke and Pete Lodico, however Paul failed to file in time for the primary election.
- Carolyn Works, Brad Grassmick and Ernie Martin Jr. ran for the two democratic trustee ballot positions with Brad and Ernie winning.
- Republicans Charles Carey, Peter Lodico and Mike Scrips ran for the two ballot positions with Pete and Mike winning.
- Paul Welke filed as an unaffiliated party candidate for Trustee and will be on the November ballot so there will be 5 candidates for the two Trustee positions.
- Tina Morgan is opposing incumbent Larry Kubick for Treasurer.
- Krys Lyle for Clerk opposes incumbent Colleen Martin.
- Incumbent Jack Gallagher is opposed by Bill Kohls.
- Tina Morgan, Krys Lyle, Brad Grassmick and Jack Gallagher are running as a unified slate and have established a web page where their background and positions on issues are stated. That web page is <http://www.teamupforchange.org>.

(President's comment: As with our national elections, many, many voters are hoping that whichever candidates are elected, we can achieve a less contentious, more consensual problem solving political environment.)

What is behind the Great Lakes Energy surcharge?

A number of BIA members have asked about the surcharge that appears on our Great Lakes Energy (GLE) electric bills.

The surcharge was authorized in a 2000 agreement between GLE and the Michigan Public Service Commission. GLE installed a new three phase service cable from the mainland to the island, and installed 3000 kw of new & upgraded back-up three phase diesel generator units on the island, at a cost of \$4.9 million of which, 60% (\$2.8 million) was allocated to Beaver Island customers. To recover this capital cost, a surcharge of \$10.25 per month per island customer and a hook-up fee of \$500 (single phase) and \$1500 (three phase) were instituted for the thirty year term of the agreement. The agreement started with 1,100 meters (customers) and assumed 4% annual growth in determining the amount of the surcharge. The surcharge can be reduced only if there is more than 4% growth per year in the number of meters (which would allow spreading the capital cost over more customers). It cannot be increased.

The agreement is reviewable every five years to see if a surcharge adjustment is justified. The 2010 review reported 1,120 meters on Beaver Island, far below the planned 1,600 meters based upon the 4% annual growth assumption.

When the back-up generating units are operated and feeding the mainland grid, GLE receives a credit from its energy provider but claims the high cost of generation (primarily diesel fuel) exceeds the value of the credit received. Further, since other GLE customers shared in the capital cost of the Beaver Island upgrade, any credit is spread throughout the entire GLE rate base.

Bottom line, Beaver Islanders can expect to pay the \$10.25 per month (\$30.75 billed quarterly) surcharge until 2030 when the agreement expires. The complete agreement can be seen in a link on our website at www.beaverislandassociation.com.

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Report from the Michigan Invasive Species Coalition meeting in Gaylord, September 25, 2012.

BIA board member Lisa Welke participated in a conference of the Michigan Invasive Species Coalition in Gaylord on September 25. The meeting was organized by Sue Tangora, DNR Wildlife Division. The conference included representatives from all over the

state including the DNR, DEQ, TNC, USFWS, MDOT, MDA, MSU. Participants came together to share ideas and to work collectively on the problem of invasive species.

One of Lisa's conclusions was that the Beaver Archipelago is far advanced in dealing with invasive species compared to the rest of the state. In other places, various organizations are battling randomly without the extensive mapping that we are so fortunate to have. When Lisa told them that Beaver Island had completed a GPS survey of 6000 acres which included 23 invasive species this year, they were amazed. The Townships, the Beaver Island Association, many other generous organizations, and most of all, the people of Beaver Island have a right to be proud of our program.

The main consensus of the conference was that Early Detection Rapid Response (EDRR) is critical to success. This is what we do on Beaver Island but we must be very vigilant. Several participants reported real horror stories of Phragmites growing through pavement, and Japanese Knotweed growing into building foundations, breaking them apart.

Also discussed was the spread of invasive species as a result of mowing road shoulders, a significant problem on the mainland. Care needs to be taken when mowing, such as cleaning mowers and eradicating invasive species along road margins prior to mowing. Representatives from MDOT said that they don't have control because much of road maintenance is hired out to private contractors. They suggested that individual counties work with their road commissions on education and early detection. This will be difficult statewide but should be manageable for Beaver Island. You can report sightings of invasive species along roads to the BIA (Beaverislandassociation@gmail.com) and we will follow-up to see what can be done about prompt eradication.

The meeting was educational, gave contact information for many helpful agencies and was a proud day for Beaver Island

Plans for a high level meeting on environmental issues; January 11, 2013 (11am-3pm), DNR Gaylord Operations Center.

The Beaver Island Association will gather representatives on January 11, 2013 in Gaylord for a daylong meeting to coordinate and collaborate on projects for 2013. Various organizations have committed and include the Michigan Natural Features Inventory, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawas, Little Traverse Conservancy, Office of Great Lakes and the Conservation Resource Alliance. Last summer's invasive species assistance and survey came about at a similar event that occurred last January. These meetings assisted many of the participating organizations with securing funding that will be utilized for multi-faceted inventories and restoration of our archipelago's high value natural areas. Craig Schrottenboer will chair the event and more details will be available in our spring newsletter.

Discussion of the draft of the U.S. Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Land Protection for the Great Lakes.

Below is a URL to a Draft of the USFWS' Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Land Protection for Great Lakes islands (beware: it is a very long document!). It refers to state held islands in our archipelago for purchase from the DNR using continental shelf oil drilling funds. Page 5 shows the islands currently held and through the document it discusses goals, objectives, and strategies. Additionally, lists of rare and endangered species, and areas of high conservation value are found in charts. **These are preliminary discussions and nothing has been yet decided – they are exploratory at present. The objectives are to protect the islands from invasive species and to protect unique bird nesting sites and other natural resources, while allowing for various forms of recreational use.** The proposed islands in the Beaver Island Archipelago – Hog, Garden, High, North Fox and South Fox - are shown on page 177-with the addition of Whiskey Island. Gull, Pismire and Hat islands are already under the jurisdiction of the Federal government. Hunting is still allowed on USFWS held islands where game species are present. Another USFWS desire is to promote applied research to address wildlife, habitat, and eco-system questions. CMU has the opportunity to play a larger role along with the planned Northern Michigan University archeological campus. Access should still be allowed; however, there may be specific sites during special nesting times of the year that may be off limits due to colonial water nesting bird sites containing birds that are threatened with possible extinction in our lifetime. The proposed plan also discusses a dedicated staff for the islands.

Dave Ewert (Sr. Scientist for TNC and Great Lakes Islands expert) would like to present at the January Gaylord meeting. He has also requested that the BIA coordinate putting together a list of issues/threats and opportunities that island residents would support. We encourage all Beaver Island residents to review the potential advantages that such an exchange could bring to the islands in terms of enhanced recreational infrastructure and economic development.

This plan, if it proceeds, could have a significant economic benefit for the island should Beaver Island become the headquarters for this effort, either for Lake Michigan or possibly all of the Great Lakes. CMU is already a center for wetlands and shoreline research; so the Biological Station could be a valuable participant in this effort. The BIA could be an important participant in this effort by

coordinating with the townships the outline of a plan for the archipelago and fostering relationships between both the government and CMU.

An already scheduled January meeting (see preceding article) in Gaylord with various interested organizations would be a good forum for discussion. In preparation, it would be beneficial to have a coherent recommendation in the event that we want to move forward as a partner in these discussions. Does the BIA feel that we should take a role in these discussions? **We would like to hear from our membership on this important subject.**

Other activities

The Beaver Island Association is a supporter of, and member of The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, the Michigan United Conservation Club, the Alliance for the Great Lakes, the Nature Conservancy, the Conservation Resource Alliance, and the BI Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the BIA was a financial contributor to Leadership Charlevoix County initiative; and as an attendance incentive, the BIA contributed two prepaid gas cards to the September 28th Health Fair held at the Beaver Island Community School.

The Beaver Island Association website – get the details on what the BIA is doing

For an in depth look at past efforts and current initiatives this home page acquaints you with our mission statement and this latest island newsletter. The website will bring you up-to-date on the BIA’s current initiatives and archives our last five years work on behalf of our members. The website identifies board members, committees and a calendar of events and archives past newsletters and annual meeting and BOD meeting minutes. Some of the relevant topics and articles here include:

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|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| BI School Board communications | Wildlife Certification | Sustainability |
| Invasive Species Initiatives | Island Property Taxes | ORVs on the Island? |
| Marina Reservations | Road Maintenance | Avian Botulism |
| Phragmites Ordinance | Forest Management | DNR and Private Logging |
| Township Consolidation? | Forest Fire Prevention | History of BIA |
| Ecosystem Workshop | Economic Development | Aging |
| Beach Cleanup Reports | Great Lakes Restoration Initiative | Fighting Green Slime |
| Permaculture Discussion | Great Lakes Islands Symposium | Saving the Family Cottage |

LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS. The Beaver Island Association is an organization of dedicated volunteers who seek to represent the interests of all residents and visitors on Beaver Island. From Phragmites and other invasive species control, to township governance, to support of the Community School, and everything in between, the BIA is working to support environmental and economic sustainability.

If you are not an active member, please consider joining to support our efforts and to continue to receive the BIA newsletter. Our membership year runs from July 1 to the following June 30. Please join us by using the membership tab.

Active Membership: 177

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Bob Anderson, Treasurer -juniperdunes@aol.com
- Pam Grassmick mcgrass@ameritech.net
- Peter Igoe, President randpigoe@comcast.net
- Jim Jones jimijones@aol.com
- Beth Leuck bleuck@centenary.edu
- Ken McDonald, VP. kj.mcdonald@comcast.net
- Taffy Raphael, Secretary teraphael@gmail.com
- Craig Schrottenboer cschrottenboer@kidshopeusa.org
- Bob Tidmore B_Tidmore@hotmail.com
- Lisa Welke, Welke61@gmail.com

Write: The Beaver Island Association, P.O. Box 390, Beaver Island, MI 49782.

Email: beaverislandassociation@gmail.com