



# ISLAND CURRENTS

Beaver Island Association Newsletter -Spring 2018

**In This Issue:**

<p><b>SAVE THE DATE!</b>  <b>BIA ANNUAL MEETING</b>  <b>MONDAY, JULY 9, 2018</b>  <b>4:00 – 5:30 PM</b>  <b>BIC CENTER</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRESIDENT'S CORNER</li> <li>• COUNTY BUILDING UPDATE</li> <li>• WELL WATER TESTING</li> <li>• INVASIVE SPECIES REPORT</li> <li>• NLMIC MEETING SUMMARY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BEAVER ISLAND BIRDING TRAIL</li> <li>• WATERWAYS TRAIL UPDATE</li> <li>• GREAT LAKES ISLANDS COALITION</li> <li>• HIGH SPEED INTERNET INITIATIVE</li> </ul>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**President's Corner** (Bob Anderson, President)

The Winter edition of our bi-annual newsletter was electronically distributed for the first time to most of our members. This was our first effort for distribution by email. Several members expressed appreciation for the format and no negative feedback was received, so we will continue with this more cost-efficient distribution.

It's been a busy winter, with township consolidation the dominant topic. As I reflect on the public dialogue around the township consolidation ballot issue, the role of local government kept surfacing, and whether "it" could be better served with one or two townships. Voters settled the township question for now, but I believe that the voters and non-voting taxpayers of Beaver Island have widely varying opinions of what township government is and/or should be.

The obvious government role of levying and collecting property tax for voter-approved services and oversight of expenditures and staffing just maintains the status quo. These activities are both important and necessary, but do not pursue what is needed for Beaver Island's future. Extensive time and effort went into creating a Beaver Island Master Plan that was adopted by both townships in 2017. While reasonable to assume island government would follow the Master Plan, it is not clear who is responsible to execute that plan and coordinate the actions of our two townships.

The Master Plan reflects more than just our Beaver Island thoughts and experiences. Since 2015 we have had exchanges with the Maine-based Island Institute and several of its island members. They shared their successes and failures as isolated island communities. Last fall Beaver Island hosted the first-ever Great Lakes Island Summit where representatives of our sister Great Lakes islands shared similar successes and failures. The communities that were thriving had a defined plan for success and a committed leadership driving execution of the plan with the support and encouragement of their citizens. A common thread was attracting families that wanted the unique island life-style whose jobs could be performed from homes with high speed internet rather than office locations. A Friday, April 27 Wall St. Journal headline read, "When A 9-to-5 Job Meets Paradise, an intrepid minority of professionals are finding ways to relocate to locales traditionally viewed as vacation destinations, the 'save the family' effect." Reliable high-speed internet access is a critical enabler to attract families to work from

their "vacation paradise." We currently have three choices for internet service---TDS DSL service over the phone system, satellite internet, or using a cell phone hot spot (if you are fortunate enough to have cell service at your location.) None of these are capable of supporting the kind of jobs that will allow a family to move to Beaver Island.

Three different improved internet activities are underway....TDS is upgrading its DSL service but has not shared its plan for improved backhaul off the island (backhaul generally refers to the side of the network that communicates with the global Internet); Great Lakes Energy is implementing a fiber-to-home trial in its Petoskey region that includes Beaver Island, but we will not see island activity until next year, and the backhaul plan is likely microwave rather than fiber due to cost; and the BIA initiated a high speed internet proposal with Northern Michigan University that that has unfortunately run into tower capacity issues. High speed internet is being pursued by different organizations for their own purposes, without a focus on what is needed to secure our island's future.

Again, should the two townships work together to implement long-range island priorities, or just maintain the status quo? In the past many successful initiatives were accomplished by dedicated, concerned island residents in non-governmental organizations, such as The Preservation Association of Beaver Island (PABI), the Wildlife Club, and your Beaver Island Association. These organizations have often represented the island with varying levels of township support. Beaver Island must provide the necessary infrastructure (i.e. reliable high-speed internet) and marketing to attract non-taxpayer supported jobs. Without jobs, we have no families. With no families, we have no school. With no school, we become an island of seniors passing on property to a generation that cannot afford it.

Our township supervisors have talked about organizing a group to look at economic development opportunities and also, some sort of broadband development committee. We acknowledge that there has been some discussion at the township level about looking at some of these issues, but the time for talk is over and the time for action is now.

The mission statement of the BIA is "Supporting Environmental & Economic Sustainability." We commit to our membership that we will continue to advocate for economic development on your behalf.

\*\*\*\*\*

**County Building Update**

This initiative began in October 2012 with the announcement of a much needed building to replace the county Road Commission garage on Beaver Island. In January, 2013 the County Commissioners agreed "in principal" to approve \$1.5 million to provide a multi-use facility to

properly house the three county-level functions of the sheriff's office, transit operation, and road commission vehicle and maintenance facility. A working committee consisting of the three users and the county administrator evaluated options and costs. After more than three years of

study, in 2016 the County purchased the lumber yard building from Jeff Powers (the lumber inventory and equipment were sold to Ernie Martin and Ben Fogg) and began developing a plan for the modifications needed to meet their individual needs: appropriate office space; indoor parking and work space for transit vehicles; indoor parking for sheriff vehicles and equipment, and two temporary holding cells meeting Department-of-Corrections standards; and indoor parking and maintenance space for Road Commission vehicles and equipment. Unfortunately, the facility was ultimately determined to be unable to meet the original intended needs, and the county is now working on plans to convert the site to service the sheriff and transit

activities and the Road Commission is pursuing separate property for its own facility. In discussion with Kevin Sheppard, County Administrator; Nancy Ferguson, County Commissioner; and Pat Harmon, Road Commissioner Manager, it now appears the lumber yard facility could be under contract later this summer for its conversion, and the Road Commission hopes to acquire property this year and is setting aside funds for eventual facility construction. A comparison of the facilities for the three county departments on our island compared to those on the mainland make it clear this is needed, but it is frustrating that after six years we are still waiting

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Well Water Testing**

Beaver Island residents may not be aware that the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality offers testing of well water for a modest fee. The following website link contains detailed information;

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-ess-faq-water-wb-homewaterwells-testing\\_206706\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-ess-faq-water-wb-homewaterwells-testing_206706_7.pdf)

Sample bottles for the basic tests of Partial Chemistry Test and Bacteria Test are available for \$20 each at the Beaver Island Rural Health Center as well as the Public Health

facility in Charlevoix at 220 W. Garfield Ave. Instructions for collecting and mailing the samples for testing accompany the sample bottles.

Unlike some mainland locations, there is no history of water quality issues on Beaver Island. However, it is a good idea to have your water tested periodically. This may be of particular interest to residents who rent their home to tourists who may not be accustomed to our well and septic systems.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Invasive Species Report** (Beth Leuck)

After finding one immature female emerald ash borer (EAB) in a trap on Beaver Island last summer, additional purple traps with lures have been requested to place around the island. Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's Jane Winkler will again come to the island in June or July to help island volunteers hang twenty traps at strategic locations. The traps will remain in place until October. This year we hope to collect data from the traps that will better let us pinpoint the location of any EABs.

both townships to pass a local ordinance to prohibit transporting all untreated wood to Beaver Island.

The Charlevoix, Antrim, Kalkaska and Emmet Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CAKE CISMA) plans to come to Beaver this summer to treat high-priority invasive species such as wild parsnip, invasive Phragmites, and glossy buckthorn. BIA members involved with invasive species control have also discovered that one of the two island garlic mustard populations is much more extensive than originally reported. This population has spread in the forested dunes along the Kuebler Trail near the culvert that crosses under Eagle Hill Road. Given the alarming rate at which garlic mustard can spread and its ability to cover a forest floor completely once it is established, this population must be controlled professionally to preserve the native flora on the northwest side of the island. BIA members will be communicating with and soliciting CAKE CISMA about to help control this very aggressive invasive plant.

Because EABs have been found in almost all Michigan counties, the state is rescinding the quarantine on the movement of untreated wood products across counties. The logic is that a quarantine is not needed if every county has infected ash trees. This action leaves Beaver Island unprotected at the state level in prohibiting firewood movement to the island. The island is one of the last places in Michigan with no apparent infestation. It would be wise for

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Northern Lake Michigan Islands Collaborative Meeting Summary** (Beth Leuck)

Twenty-two participants attended a meeting of the Northern Lake Michigan Islands Collaborative (NLMIC) held at the Community Center on May 3. Four members of the BIA Board were present. The meeting was led by Jennifer Kleitch and Pat Lederle of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Following are some of the issues which may be of interest to BIA members that were not covered in other newsletter articles:

- c) Five public sites in Peaine Township—Bill Wagner Campground, Martin's Bluff, Greene's Lake, Lake Geneserath, and Fox Lake-- are in the process of being transferred from the DNR to the township. The sites may need to undergo environmental assessment. The sites will be leased to the township for 30 years.
- d) Fifty-eight acres on Indian Harbor, Garden Island, have been acquired by the DNR using the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund. Almost the entire shoreline of Indian Harbor now is public land.
- e) A Michigan Recreation Passport grant has been submitted by St. Janes Township for multiple enhancement projects for the St. James Campground, including showers and electrical hook-ups.

- a) The name of Squaw Island will be officially changed to Eagle Island once the USGS approves the name change.
- b) A new digital signage system, produced by the Community Center and located at the center and other businesses, contains up-to-date public service announcements and information for islanders and visitors.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Beaver Island Birding Trail** (Beth Leuck)

Approximately 60 participants, over 75% of them island visitors, attended the fifth annual Warblers on the Water bird festival on May 25-27. The organizers wish to thank everyone on the island who offered use of and/or drove their vehicles after a misunderstanding about planned vehicle use left the event without transportation for field trips. The festival's success was enhanced by your generosity.

The weekend weather was perfect for birding. All the field trips were filled to capacity, and there was a waiting list for some of them. The Sunday morning trip to Garden Island was a real treat for participants, with a smooth trip over to

\*\*\*\*\*

**Waterways Trail Update** (Mark Engelsman & Pam Grassmick)

As the old adage goes, "Talk is cheap." Human time, talents, and resources are needed to pull off any project and the Beaver Island Waterways Trail Project demonstrates how successful collaboration lead to an exciting outcome. The Water Trail concept, first placed before the public in March 2015 began with a small group of interested individuals, including Wes Andrews, Carol and Dan Burton, Mark Engelsman, Pam Grassmick, Eric Henningway, Bill McDonough, and Rachel Teague. Together, they reflected needed expertise and a commitment to economic development to benefit our community. Charlevoix County provided a resolution of support for designation as a Michigan Trail town, as did both island townships. Since Beaver Island is also designated as a Wildlife Research Area, the group obtained a Special Use Permit from the National Resource Commission (NRC) to allow camping on state held lands between May-September (typically disallowed in Wildlife Research Areas). Permissions reflected positive completion of a series of reviews, including: (a) legal description of the site where activities will occur, (b) types of use (i.e., stopover or campsite), (c) for site-specific purposes, the physical amenities for each site (e.g., signage, information kiosks, facilities such as tent platforms, fire ring, outhouse), (d) State Historic Preservation Office clearance for site-specific activities, and (e) Threatened & Endangered

\*\*\*\*\*

**Great Lakes Islands Coalition** (Patrick McGinnity)

The Great Lakes Islands Coalition has had a productive spring. The 2018 Islands Summit is set for Oct. 1st and 2nd on beautiful Madeline Island, and registration is now open. The process for selecting Beaver Island representatives has not been determined. It is also hoped that another island community will have stepped up to host the 2019 Summit before the end of summer, so that the location can be announced at the conclusion of the Summit on Madeline.

\*\*\*\*\*

Northcutt Bay thanks to the expertise of Captain Mike Collins and a relatively insect-free jaunt across the island searching for birds. Everyone who participated in the trip was thrilled with the experience. The presentations at Community Center were well-attended by both birders and islanders and contained interesting information about Bald Eagles, Piping Plovers, and waterbirds that nest on the outer islands.

Festival participants probably directly spent between \$25,000 and \$35,000 during their stay on the island demonstrating the importance of this BIA-sponsored event to the economic health of the island.

Species review and clearance site-specific activities. Further, a Memorandum of Agreement with the newly formed Trails Association to detail responsibilities for monitoring and maintaining sites. With a relationship firmly established between the Land Information Access Association and the Office of Great Lakes-Coastal Zone Management Division, Beaver Island was awarded funding to produce an in-depth waterways trail plan to circumnavigate Beaver Island and develop a paddling guide. In October 2017, the Special Use Permit was granted by the NRC in Lansing for primitive camping at designated sites. The Beaver Island Waterways Trail Plan and the paddling guide is complete and downloadable at: <http://www.michiganwatertrails.org/trail.asp?ait=cv&cid=361>

The Waterway Trail Headquarters will be located within the Beaver Island Community Center, providing visibility and access to both visitors and residents. A special thank you to board member, Ken McDonald, for this financial support in the acquisition of the water trail signage. The paddling guide will be available on multiple websites, including the Community Center, Townships, Chamber, and Michigan Waterways Trail. Save the date for September 1st for a dedication and celebrate the opening of the trail and successful outcome of this collaborative work and the ongoing activities to complete the proposed amenities as soon as possible.

In other news, the drafting process for a GLIC Charter is ongoing, with a subcommittee being formed to review and ground-truth the draft Charter. Patrick McGinnity will be working on that. Also, thanks to an OGL grant, Island Institute Membership has been offered for Great Lakes Islands Coalition members. Amongst other benefits are subscriptions to The Working Waterfront newspaper and the glossy Island Journal. Beaver Island's subscriptions will be received and held at the Beaver Island District Library.

## High Speed Internet Initiative

Projects are advancing from several different sources for improving internet service on Beaver Island. TDS is making changes in some island service areas; Great Lakes Energy is proceeding with its fiber to the home project on the mainland, but its plans out here remain unclear; and the Northern Michigan University initiative that was presented

at least year's annual meeting is still being pursued. Rather than take a lot of print space for updating these, come to the July 9th annual meeting to hear an up-to-date report on what is happening and how they may meet our long-term communication needs.

\*\*\*\*\*

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Anderson, President – reanders49@gmail.com Ken McDonald, VP - kj.mcdonald@comcast.net Alan Vicstein, Treasurer - avicstein@gmail.com Taffy Raphael, Secretary - teraphael@gmail.com Pam Grassmick - pgrassmick@gmail.com	Don Fix - fixes@tds.net Patrick McGinnity - island.library@gmail.com Sheri Richards - s.richards.realtor@gmail.com Mark Engelsman - bihappyaddle@gmail.com	Jim Jones - jimijones@aol.com Beth Leuck - bleuck@centenary.edu Kevin Boyle - kevin@boyle.bz Bob Tidmore- B_Tidmore@hotmail.com
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**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 have friends or neighbors who are not members, send the BIA their names and addresses and we will send them a copy of this newsletter.

**Write:** The Beaver Island Association, P.O. Box 390, Beaver Island, MI 49782. **Email:** [beaverislandassociation@gmail.com](mailto:beaverislandassociation@gmail.com)

## Beaver Island Association

*Supporting Environmental & Economic Sustainability*

Please pay your dues 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 or rejoin us by sending a check for \$25 to Alan Vicstein, Treasurer, The Beaver Island Association, PO Box 390, Beaver Island, MI 49782.

**.\*\*\*\*Yes, please renew our Beaver Island Association membership for 2018-2019 \*\*\*\*\***

Name(s)

Mailing Address

email address



**P.O Box 390**

**Beaver Island, Michigan 49782**