



ISLAND CURRENTS

Beaver Island Association Newsletter - Summer 2020

SAVE THE DATE! BIA ANNUAL MEETING

**NEW DATE:
TUESDAY, AUGUST 11**

4:00 - 6:00 PM

**NEW LOCATION:
BEAVER ISLAND GOLF COURSE**

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Update - and more!*

President's Corner

Kevin Boyle, BIA President

How the world has changed since our last issue of *Island Currents*. With most traditional island events cancelled this summer, the season has become one of back to basics for the island. Lots of seasonal residents are back and there is a steady flow of tourists, but people are occupying their time with time spent on the deck, walking the beaches, boodles and other activities that generally don't involve big groups. While it is

a very different summer on the island, the good news is that despite increased traffic on and off the island, we have--so far--not encountered an outbreak of COVID-19. And that's with some traffic metrics at or above where they have been in the past. That is a testament to the care the majority of islanders and visitors have taken to protect both themselves and the island.

The pandemic has slowed progress on a number of projects as meetings have been curtailed and other work delayed. Still, we press onward. This newsletter includes updates on our ongoing projects as well as some new webinars we are planning. You'll also find some recent posts from the BIA website where we are doing our best to keep our members up to date on developments of interest on a real time basis. This collective effort by your board and other BIA volunteers is bringing updates on community meetings and more to beaverislandassociation.org. If you've not visited the recently, we hope you will check it out, add it to your browser bookmarks and check back frequently for updates.

I'd like to call your attention to some upcoming webinars we have arranged for BIA members. The first is a presentation on cottage law coming up on the 6th. Next is aimed at helping property owners deal with high water issues on August 25th. Information on both events follows below.

Finally, a few words about our annual meeting. Your board has carefully considered whether to proceed this year. We understand concerns about group gatherings, but also recognize their value. Our compromise is to hold this year's meeting in an open air environment (with tents available for rain cover if need be) at the Beaver Island Golf Course. We will practice social distancing in the fresh air while still providing an opportunity for your board to update you on its work and you an opportunity to discuss island concerns and see, albeit at a 6 foot distance, your island friends. We will endeavor to make the meeting available by video and audio conference for those unable to attend in person and have asked Joe Moore to record it for broadcast on News on the Net. Whether you attend in person or by technology, your board and I look forward to seeing you on August 11.

P.S. Tomorrow is election day in Michigan. Please remember to vote (if you haven't done so already by absentee ballot).

Election on August 4th

Bob Sramek, BIA Board

Don't forget about the election coming up on August 4th. It's not just a primary. There are ballot issues for millage renewals as well:

- Recycling Purchases and Programs
- Senior Citizen Programs
- Airport Operations and Maintenance
- Road Maintenance and Construction
- Support Emergency Medical Support
- Operation of the Beaver Island Community School
- Operation of St. James Township
- Provision of Advanced Life Support
- Maintenance and Operation of the Landfill and Transfer Station
- Operation of the Beaver Island Historical Society

To help in your decision making, the following link will allow you to view a sample ballot for either Peaine or St. James Township: <https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/PublicBallot>

Please be sure to vote. It is a way for people to express their opinions, needs, wants, preferences, dreams and desires. Voting allows us to have control over our lives. By not voting, you are placing your liberty and freedom into the hands of others. **Voting is the essence of democracy.**



Invasives Update

Pam Grassmick, BIA Board

Invasive species continue to spread without control which can decrease property

values, impact our enjoyment of areas and activities, cause health issues, and become increasingly costly and difficult to control. We've been very fortunate that private property owners have spent time educating themselves about the negative effects of uncontrolled terrestrial and aquatic invasive species on our archipelago's landscape. Your continued support allows Beaver Island to devise environmentally appropriate and effective measures.

People have been inquiring about the absence of purple Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) traps hanging from the ash trees this year. For over a decade these traps have quietly monitored our island for EAB. The reason that no purple EAB traps will be placed is that in 2019 a few EAB were found in multiple purple traps across the island and now is wide-spread. After several winter conference calls with forest pest specialists and the USDA's Animal and Plant Inspection Health Service (APHIS), the decision to continue EAB trapping will be placed on hold. Based on the best invasive control science available, parasitoids were released on Beaver Island in 2019 and 2020 and in 2020 on Garden Island. These parasitoids only attack the EAB. These bio-control warriors were obtained from the USDA's APHIS Rearing Facility. Currently 390 US counties and Canadian providences are using this form of bio-control agent to control EAB. As we document proliferation of parasitoids this summer, we hope to find a thriving population controlling EAB. Because EAB was detected early on our islands, BIA and state and federal agencies remain optimistic that with professional parasitoid guidance ash trees can be preserved.

A Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) survey was conducted in March 2020. Thanks to a grant from The Nature Conservancy, the CAKE CISMA completed a second hemlock this survey season on both public and private lands with owners consent. This survey was cost-free to the landowner through the grant. No HWA was found over the past two years but we must continue to be vigilant.

For those that may be unfamiliar with this invasive species, the hemlock woolly adelgid is a parasitic insect that feeds exclusively on hemlock trees. If left untreated, infested hemlocks can die in as little as 4-10 years. This invasive species is working its way north, supposedly using the Lake Michigan shoreline as its primary avenue to expand its range. If left unchecked, Michigan's native hemlock population could be in serious trouble.

With the loss of state funding to Cooperative Invasive Species Management Teams, the island lost access to two interns to assist with invasive species along with the loss of the CAKE Executive Director, Benjamin Van Dyke. Despite these setbacks, BIA

volunteers have continued to remove garlic mustard and European Swamp thistle. No phragmites treatment will occur this summer. At the last Northern Lake Michigan Islands Collaborative, a representative from the US Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) Coastal Program attended. She has agreed to proceed with funding two interns to assist with threatened and endangered species management on state and private lands and continue with control of invasive species for 2021 and 2022. St. James Township has agreed to administer a USFWS \$176,000 grant for the entire archipelago. More information will be forthcoming from St. James Township regarding this positive development. St. James Township is spearheading a revised invasive species program in which the Beaver Island Association is pleased to participate.

For more information, visit beaverislandassociation.org



Island Invasive Species Work Continues Despite Loss of State Funding

The recent loss of state funding for two seasonal interns in 2020 has been a blow to the archipelago's invasive species control. Invasive species continue to spread without control which can decrease property values, impact our enjoyment of areas, and become increasingly costly and difficult to control as their numbers increase. Once

again, the Beaver Island Association has stepped in ...

[Read more](#)

Beaver Island High Water Summit

BIA is teaming with the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council to offer a webinar designed specifically for homeowners and landowners on Beaver Island facing high water issues. The Summit is set for August 25 at noon and is expected to run about 90 minutes. “The webinar will feature experts both on the science of lake ...



[Learn more and sign up to attend](#)

Dr. Powers warns of tick borne disease with COVID-19-like symptoms

Island vet Dr. Jeff Powers wants you to be on the lookout for ticks on your pets—and yourself. A tick borne disease called anaplasmosis can cause COVID-19 like symptoms in people. It is still relatively rare, but apparently present on the island in deer ticks as Jeff has seen six positive tests in pets for the disease. If you find ...

[Read more](#)

Tick tracking? There's an app for that

The Michigan DNR's latest update includes information on a tick tracking app, something that should be of interest here on the island given their prevalence this year. The info from the DNR follows. Help track valuable tick data with mobile health app
Why is it that some people seem to come into contact with ticks more often than others? How ...

BICS Planning to Return to School in the Fall!

Wil Cwikiel, BIA Board Member & BICS Superintendent-Principal

Beaver Island Community School has served Beaver Island from the same location on King's Highway for over 100 years. This year marked the first year that the school had to close its doors due to a global pandemic, but that did not mean that the learning stopped. After the order to close Michigan's schools in March, Beaver Island teachers kept teaching and our students kept learning through Zoom and outside family drop-boxes where students handed in their completed work. Thanks to some easing of the restrictions on outside gatherings, we were able to have our graduates parade through town in early June and a wonderful graduation ceremony on our soccer field on June 20th. We send a huge thanks to the parents and community members who provided support for faculty, staff, and students through the last four months of school this year!

Now, we are in the process of planning to return to school in the fall. On June 30, Governor Whitmer released the 63-page *Return to School Roadmap* that outlines the safety requirements and recommendations for schools to resume face-to-face teaching and learning in September. The *Roadmap* calls for each school to develop a plan for three different scenarios based on our region's COVID-19 recovery phase. BICS has established a Return to School Planning Committee comprised of parents, teachers, board members, and a health care provider to develop the plan. The plan will include will be completed by August 15 and available at www.beaverisland.k12.mi.us.

There have been a few changes recently on the BICS Board of Education. Susi Myers, longtime board president stepped down. Vicki Smith was elected by the other board members to take over the role of board president. At the July meeting, the board appointed Erin Randall to fill Susi Myers' board seat. Erin comes to the board with previous experience serving on non-profit boards, a degree in early childhood education, and she and her husband have two students who will be attending BICS in the fall. We thank Susi for her years of service and look forward to Erin serving on the BICS Board of Education.

On August 4, 2020, voters will be asked to renew the Beaver Island Community School district's operating fund millage. This millage represents 70% of the district's annual operating budget. The millage has remained unchanged for decades, and at 15.7908

mills, it is the lowest millage of any school district in Charlevoix County. There are several other important items on the August ballot as well, and we encourage everyone to exercise their right to vote.

Beaver Island Community School greatly appreciates the support of our seasonal and year-round residents. We are proud to be an important part of the Beaver Island community and believe that a strong school contributes to a strong community. If you have any questions or thoughts that you would like to share, please feel free to call me at (231) 448-2744.

Editor's Note: A report from WVBI about the governor's back to school plan (which includes a link to the plan) is available here: <https://wvbi.biccenter.org/governor-releases-back-to-school-plan>. The plan says the governor will rely on data from the state's [MI Start Map](#) in evaluating whether to allow in person classes this fall.

BICS Conducts Budget Hearing

The Beaver Island Community School (BICS) Board of Education met on Monday June 29th for their annual special budget hearing to pass the upcoming school operating budget. State law requires Michigan school districts to develop and approve their operating budget for the upcoming school year before July 1st. After a presentation of the proposed budget by Lisa Krosnicki, the district's ...

[Read more](#)

Waste Management Committee meets with big trash on the agenda

One of the most essential services for an island community, is how to discard of trash and large objects from private property. The Beaver Island Waste Management Committee (WMC) is back on track to improving trash removal after a hiatus during the last couple of years. At the June 16th meeting, the members discussed a web page development for the ...

[Read more](#)



Broadband Update

Dick Mulvihill, BIA Board Member & BIA Broadband Committee Chair

The world is interconnected and the future of information, education, work, health care, social connection and entertainment are all tied to broadband internet access. The COVID-19 crisis accentuates the point especially as folks try to work remotely and school goes online.

For our kids to have the same educational opportunity, our young adults to find work without moving off the island, our elderly to receive quality health care, Beaver Island needs competitive broadband service. Our current DSL service is not adequate in many locations on the island even today, and there is no reasonable prospect that it will be improved to become competitive with what's available nearby on the mainland. With service improving dramatically on the near-shore mainland (gigabit service from GLE and a municipal fiber project in Traverse City are examples), we are at an inflection point. BIA believes we must find a way to keep pace. Our existing carrier has made clear they have no plans to match mainland speeds. GLE has looked at fiber service for the island and concluded that it does not fit their business model. To their credit, they are looking at a wireless service--but that service is not anticipated to commit to speeds faster than 50 Mbps.

It appears that the only way for the island to remain competitive is to solve the problem for itself. That means construct our own broadband infrastructure with a view to either partnering with a commercial provider to use that infrastructure to provide service--or operate a municipal service similar to the way a municipal water or sewer system

works. Given the importance of and demand for broadband services, one might expect that federal or state sources would be available to assist in construction. Unfortunately, that is not the case for us. Although the townships appear to be eligible for some low interest loan programs, there appears to be no current program that would provide grant funding for a municipal system. We will continue to look for support, but we believe prudence requires we develop a plan based on local support and funding--as has been done by other communities like ours.

So, now the heavy lifting begins. Success will require the participation and financial commitment of a diverse array of island stakeholders and public institutions. It will also require an understanding of why we are where we are, how broadband can contribute to economic development and what it will cost. We'll talk about why we are where we are in this article. We plan to talk about the benefits and costs of a true high speed system at our annual meeting.

Why we are where we are

The simple answer is economics. Publicly available broadband exists at all on the island only because TDS has been funded by the government to build it. You may recall that the island took a run at partnering with a commercial wireless provider to build a wireless broadband system in the wake of the 2007 financial crisis using funding intended to help with the recovery. Rather than fund that project, the government chose to finance a basic DSL service promised by TDS. TDS built the system and it was adequate at the start, but within a few years the service slowed as more and more users were added without additional capacity being added. Since then, service has been improved only marginally and only when additional government funding was obtained. To its credit, TDS has used federal government funding in the past year to implement improved technology that has improved service at some locations on the island. But, even at its best (about 90 Mbps down at some locations in town), that service is not competitive with the mainland and has not kept up with peak demand. For too many island residents and locations, the service has been consistently well below what is considered even basic service on the mainland--and too often, unsuited to their needs. Representatives of the island's Joint Telecommunications Committee have talked with TDS about their plans for the island. TDS has been very clear that they have no plans to provide service that matches that available on the mainland.

The only other known plan to bring terrestrial broadband to the island has been floated by Great Lakes Energy. They announced their TrueStream fiber project several years ago and are now deploying it in their service areas on the mainland. GLE sent survey

crews to the island to evaluate the use of fiber here. That work showed that such a system couldn't be self sustaining--that it couldn't be built without an external subsidy beyond that available to GLE. More on that below.

The BIA formed a group to begin looking at what could be done about these service issues in 2015. That group looked into alternatives, conducted a survey to assess island views and ultimately developed a proposal for a three phased approach to address the issue. That plan envisioned an interim wireless service as part of Northern Michigan University's [Educational Access Network](#) (providing 20 to 25 Mbps service almost all of the island), a high-speed service available at key island locations fed by an island financed connection to the mainland (providing 200 Mbps service at key locations like the library, school and Community Center) and, as a final step, fiber to the home service on the island initially fed by wireless connections to the mainland and, ultimately, fiber under the lake. NMU came to the island several times to make presentations about its service and its willingness to construct it. Unfortunately, the tower space necessary for that project was given to a mobile service provider. BIA's committee worked to identify funding sources for the pools of service project and to secure tower space for the NMU project, but ultimately concluded that moving forward would require direct involvement by the townships. BIA's then president Bob Anderson urged the townships to address the issue and, ultimately, the townships teamed up to form the Joint Telecommunications Advisory Committee. The Committee was tasked with reviewing the problem and reporting back to the townships.

The Committee was organized in the fall of 2018 and began meeting monthly. The committee reviewed the BIA's plan and explored it further. JTAC representatives met with TDS and with GLE to investigate what those providers would be willing to do. Neither envisioned competitive service for the island. After study and discussion, the JTAC developed a plan similar to that developed by the BIA and presented this at a joint meeting of the townships. The JTAC also recommended that the townships invest in an engineering study to help validate its initial conclusions and to look into costs for developing the island wide, high-speed service envisioned. The townships board supported funding the study and asked the JTAC to continue its work. All felt that proceeding with an island-wide plan would depend on cost and demonstrated interest from islanders in improving service.

As directed by the townships, the JTAC commissioned a "Quickstart" study of service options for the island designed to develop preliminary system designs, estimate their costs and model financing options. The study cost approximately \$1,200. It looked at delivering service to all existing broadband customers on the island as well as providing

an expected level of service to locations that are not now served. It profiled service options that were all wireless, a mix of wireless and fiber and all fiber. The JTAC conducted a series of meetings with the team that prepared the study to fully understand it. The wireless options in the plan would provide better service than now available, but would fall well short of speeds now available in Charlevoix, Petoskey and Traverse City. The financial models in the study showed that while both a pure wireless and mixed wireless/fiber system could be self sustaining, an all fiber system would require municipal financing to work.

The JTAC has also considered the possibility of satellite based services. Current offerings do not approach necessary speeds and are subject to data caps (enforced by slowing service after certain volumes are used). They also present technical issues that limit their use for two way applications (like VoIP telephone service). Elon Musk's Starlink system claims it will bring higher speed service without some of the technical issues presented by existing system. But, information about actual performance is scant and relying on what appears to be a consumer oriented service delivered by a provider over whom the island could have no influence does not seem a prudent approach for a service that is critical to the island's economy.

As part of their ongoing work on this project, members of the JTAC and BIA's broadband committee have attended presentations and seminars being put on by Merit (a consortium of Michigan Universities that operates a state-wide fiber network used to provide services to those universities, schools and libraries and others throughout the state). Merit has a project they call the Michigan Moonshot project that is designed to bring high-speed service to rural areas. As a result of the island's participation at numerous events, Merit invited the BIA to become a member of (at no cost) and since has been working with the JTAC and BIA to refine and execute the island's plan.

So, where are we today?

The three phase plan remains the roadmap:

Phase One: NMU remains interested in providing its [EAN](#) service to the island, but additional financing must be identified to support that. NMU sought that funding in a REconnect grant application, but their proposal was rejected because of inaccurate data at the FCC about the availability of service on the island. NMU has reapplied, and while their proposal doesn't include funding for the island, they remain interested in providing service--but the island may need to provide tower space. Wireless broadband is not available over most of the island, so BIA believes the NMU service is a critical

part of a solution both because it can provide interim service improvements to all and because even after better service is available, it will provide both some mobile access and a lower cost (about \$30 a month) option--lower with an education subsidy--for island residents. NMU has successfully deployed its EAN in many locations in the UP and is in the process of completing construction of 60 sites in the UP.

Phase Two: The JTAC and BIA have been working since this time last year to organize a group of users to finance and construct what has come to be called the "pools of service" project to bring 200Mbps service for public use to key locations on the island. The county, school, library, each township, health center, Historical Society and Community Center all signed on to the project and plans were underway to implement it for this summer when COVID-19 hit. In the wake of that, the county had to withdraw from the group because of a spending freeze. Led by Kitty McNamara, the group sought grant funding from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation and was awarded a \$7,000 grant. The townships each agreed to kick in \$1,500 each to make up the shortfall caused by the county's withdrawal. The group is now working to finalize its operating agreement and on construction details. The cost to construct the facilities and establish a reserve for repairs is less than \$40,000. There is still a lot of work to do, but the project is well underway.

Phase Three: Consideration of community financed infrastructure for the island requires more information than we now have for a fully informed decision. While the Quickstart study provided a costs estimates for constructing such a system (roughly between \$2.75 and 3 Million depending on assumptions made), that model relied on publicly information in the public record rather than any onsite review. Further study is necessary to refine that model and narrow the cost projections. We believe this work could be done for about \$40,000 and are working with the JTAC to pursue it. We also need robust information on actual service speeds on the island as well as an understanding of who would subscribe to an offered service and at what rates. Merit has resources that can be used to develop surveys to assess island interest, price sensitivity and other factors involved in continued planning. While work on that goes on, you can help out by running speed tests at your house using tools from MLAB, an independent, non-profit research group that is cooperating with Merit. You can run the test by clicking on this link: <https://speed.measurementlab.net/>. Please run it on a recurring basis at different times of the day. The more test results we have, the better.

Funding

While we continue to investigate options for grants that could help with the costs of

constructing a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) system on the island, our research so far has revealed no opportunities that look promising. Most programs are designed for existing carriers and generally rely on the inaccurate service data that thwarted NMU's application. We hope our efforts to collect accurate data can help with this, but a near term solution doesn't appear likely. Still, with the election cycle upon us and broadband availability an issue in rural locations across the country, other options may become available. Indeed, six rural broadband bills have been introduced recently in the U.S. House and Senate.

Of all these, one called the Accessible, Affordable Internet for All Act looks interesting. It would provide \$80 billion to deploy broadband in unserved and under-served areas. "Unserved" is defined in the legislation as lacking access to broadband speeds of 25 Mbps download/25 Mbps upload. While the FCC's data says that numerous locations on the island have 25 Mbps download (which is true in some locations, but not as broadly as shown in the FCC's maps), there is no commercially available upload service at that speed. Recipients of the funds under the proposed program would be required to deploy networks capable of 100x100 Mbps (100 Mbps upload and download), ensuring that they can meet future broadband needs. The program would distribute funds through a competitive bidding process that prioritizes higher speeds and open access models, and a quarter of the funding would go to states to disburse themselves. The act would also remove state barriers to municipal, cooperative, and other community broadband networks. Some of these exist in Michigan. While we believe the island could easily overcome them, their elimination would remove a complication that has already slowed the Pools of Service project. There is, of course, no assurance this proposal will become law--but we will follow it and advocate for it if appropriate.

In the face of this, we think it important to look to private grant opportunities as well as island supporters who are interested in assuring the island's future. We believe that funding from sources such as those combined with millage support for a bond issuance would raise the necessary funds assuming research described above reveals a project that is viable.

The Road Ahead

We'll close by pointing out that the project we advocate is not novel. Similarly situated communities have pursued FTTH systems and have successfully deployed them. For example, a Maine island similar in size and population to Beaver Island, built the Islesboro Municipal Network. Voters authorized a \$3.8 million bond to build a municipal

dark-fiber network. Subscribers pay \$30 a month for up to a gigabit FTTH service. There are additional examples right here in Michigan. It appears our path forward may involve municipal funding of fiber and other infrastructure on the island and a partnership with an existing carrier--perhaps GLE, which has expressed willingness to consider such a proposal--to manage and deliver the service.

Your BIA board believes the organization needs to continue to support the JTAC and the island's efforts on this front. To succeed, we anticipate the need for assistance in a number of areas where our members have skills. Among these are:

- Communication
- Marketing/advertising
- Financial
- Legal
- Project management
- Network technology & operations
- Private sector fundraising
- Community liaison

If you could provide assistance to the project on any of these fronts, please get in touch with a BIA board member and let us know. It is important to understand that for a project like this to succeed we will need broad community support and a willingness to deal with unexpected challenges and changes along the way. It won't be easy or quick, but other communities have shown it is doable. We look forward to discussing discussing our efforts on this front with you at our annual meeting.

Editor's Notes: Some have asked about the work being done by GLE on Kings Highway this summer. We understand it is part of a GLE project to increase power reliability by putting some key lines underground. It is not related to TrueStream. Nevertheless, it is important that GLE has been very responsive to concerns expressed about broadband on the island. Their CEO and Chief Technology have traveled to the island to discuss plans and have since met again with representatives of the JTAC. Last fall TDS installed some fiber to connect its site on Sloptown Road to the tower site just south of the Stone House. It is not a part of a residential fiber project for the island.

Kevin Boyle contributed to this article.

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council provides info on participating in Line 5 review process

BIA is a member of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. They recently sent the following information on participating in the Line 5 permitting process (including a handbook on pipeline permitting in Michigan). Here's their release: Pipeline Permitting Resources Available Enbridge Energy has submitted multiple applications for their proposed Line 5 Tunnel Project in the Straits of Mackinac. You ...

[Read more](#)

Mark Your Calendar: Cottage Law Webinar

Fraser Trebilcock attorney Mark E. Kellogg will be presenting a webinar on the topic of cottage law on Thursday, August the 6th , beginning at noon. The webinar will focus on all aspects of cottage law; understanding what cottage planning and succession is, why it is important, and the benefits of creating a plan for your family's future generations.

[Learn more and sign up to attend](#)

Gypsy moth response

While gypsy moths have not presented much of a problem on the island except at a few locations in Port St. James, where some rather large infestations have been found. The following article has advice on what to do in case they show up around your house. Gypsy moth caterpillars are eating leaves; here's what to do Michigan Department of ...

[Read more](#)

EGLE warns about hidden debris in waterways

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy has issued a press release warning boaters about the presence of debris in Michigan waterways. High

water levels in the Great Lakes as well as in rivers, streams and inland lakes has cause extensive erosion and the release of downed trees, docks, stairs and other objects into the water where they ...

[Read more](#)

Island Real Estate & Business Trends

Sheri Richards, BIA Secretary & Real Estate One Realtor

We are seeing record numbers of sales this season, as people from all over the country are looking for a place of peace and serenity. As we all know, Beaver Island offers a piece of pristine beauty and a pace of life that is hard to find in our turbulent world. We are seeing multiple offers coming in for a single property, homes selling within 22 hours of hitting the market and buyers purchasing without even setting foot on the island. In a word, the market is hot. This unexpected turn of events has real estate agents, appraisers, lenders, and title companies working overtime to keep up with the pace.

While high water levels has created serious problems for some properties, they have also added sand or revealed new sandy beaches at some locations. As always, Beaver Island's beautiful sandy beaches call to those looking for their "island getaway". Rental properties are in high demand. Due to Covid 19, multiple rentals were cancelled and refunded, but we have seen the books completely refilled and rental managers are turning away renters as the demand continues. Chamber President Paul Cole reports that he is seeing a lot of folks wanting to travel "locally" discovering the island for the first time. He says cottage rentals are way up with it hard to find space to stay right now as cottages and motels are pretty fully booked. Rentals have been filled since mid June, and bookings continue through mid September, while we expect to book into October due to remote workers planning to continue to escape to the island while working remotely.

The excess demand for housing isn't translating to a robust year for other businesses on the island. Paul says they are averaging between 10-20% down depending on the business. That probably reflects that some people have decided to get here and stay at their island home as well as the fact that almost all summer island events that draw crowds have been cancelled.

The real estate outlook continues to look good though. Interest rates are still low, and

this pandemic has driven buyers to start shopping for that dream property. We expect to finish out a solid year for the island.



Beaver Island picked as top destination. Again.

Beaver Island along with fellow Great Lakes Islands Alliance member Washington Island have both been picked as top road trip destinations for the COVID-19 era by Chicago Magazine. The antithesis of more touristy Great Lakes destinations (looking at you, Traverse City), Beaver Island is an uncrowded natural oasis with friendly locals and a totally relaxed vibe. Chicago Magazine The article features ...

[Read more](#)

Island Eagle Saved by Volunteers Returns

The following post from Facebook (and linked YouTube video) updates a story a number of BIA members have been following... <https://youtu.be/lip-b6Re0-M> By

Rebecca Lessard, Director of Wings of Wonder This adult Bald Eagle was rescued and transported from Beaver Island, Michigan on February 29th, 2020. He was favoring his left wing and could not fly. At Wings of Wonder the ...

[Read more](#)

Becca Foli snaps a baby owl picture

This adorable photo of a juvenile Northern Saw-whet Owl was taken on 6/12 by Becca Foli near Indian Point (Birding Site #6). It is one of the smallest owls in North America. They are rarely seen because they are nocturnal and found in dense conifers or mixed forests. Male and females Saw-whets cannot be differentiated by plumage but the female is slightly ...

[Read more](#)

Treasurer's Report

Alan Vicstein, BIA Treasurer

We were involved in many projects during the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2020. This past year, however, was not strong financially as our account balances decreased by \$2,163. That in no small part reflects the major impact COVID-19 has had on the Island. We were forced to cancel our Warblers on the Water Birding event scheduled for the Memorial Day Weekend. Along with the cancellation came a loss of the revenue it generates for the BIA. Of course, BIA is not alone. Many other events on the Island have also been cancelled or scheduled as no-cost virtual events.

During these trying times, your board has been active in supporting the economic sustainability of Beaver Island through funding projects and partnering with other non-profit organizations as well the townships to promote the Island and the interests of our members.

Revenue from memberships has been declining steadily over the past four years. If you are happy with the work the Beaver Island Association does on your behalf, I would urge you to pay your 2021 FY year membership fee (\$25) at this time. **If you would**

also like to make an additional donation to support our work on Invasive Species, High Speed Internet , Birding Trail, Water Trail , Dark Skies, or any of our other projects, it would be greatly appreciated.

It would also be help if you would talk to your friends and neighbors and encourage them to join the BIA. Follow this link to sign up or pay dues:

<https://www.beaverislandassociation.org/membership-2/>

Beaver Island Association Annual Report					
Fiscal Period Ending June 30, 2020					
Change in Assets					
Account	\$ 43,646		\$ 44,012		Change
Bank Accounts					
CD	\$ 3,968		\$ 3,974		\$ 6
Checking	\$ 2,722		\$ 1,152		\$ (1,571)
PayPal	\$ 1,502		\$ 905		\$ (598)
TOTAL	\$ 8,193		\$ 6,030		\$ (2,163)

Beaver Island Association Annual Report

Year Ended 06/30/2020

4 year Cash Flow Comparisons

Category	7/1/2016- 6/30/2017	7/1/2017- 6/30/2018	7/1/2018- 6/30/2019	7/1/2019- 6/30/2020	Budget 2021
INCOME					
Interest Inc	11	9	10	6	2
Membership Dues	1,840	1,705	1,525	1,550	3,500
Other Income (Business)					
BIBT Fees	270	2,235	2,268	200	2,200
BIBT Sponsorship	1,225	675	0	0	1,200
Donations	255	0	584	385	250
Island Fellow Donations	300	1,500	0	0	0
Misc Sales	0	0	0	192	1,400
TOTAL Other Income (Business)	2,050	4,410	2,852	777	5,050
TOTAL INFLOWS	3,901	6,124	4,387	2,333	8,552
OUTFLOWS					
Advertising (Business)					
Advertising (Business):BIA	783	93	250	585	600
Advertising (Business):BIBT	0	0	0	383	400
Advertising (Business):Publications	0	100	0	100	100
TOTAL Advertising (Business)	783	193	250	1,068	1,100
Insurance (Business)	229	229	229	254	300
Meals & Entertainment (Business)	1,031	415	64	1,196	1,200
Misc. Expense (Business)					
Misc. Expense (Business):Clothing - Custom Printed	0	1,123	559	0	1,200
Misc. Expense (Business):Island Institute	0	0	0	0	0
Misc. Expense (Business):Meeting Expenses	0	200	0	0	0
Misc. Expense (Business):Memberships	360	410	380	323	850
Misc. Expense (Business):PayPal Fees	30	26	55	65	50
Misc. Expense (Business):Recognition Award	0	132	0	0	0
Misc. Expense (Business):Rental Fees	0	820	1,600	0	1,600
Misc. Expense (Business):Web Services					
Misc. Expense (Business):Web Services:BIA	600	600	600	600	600
Misc. Expense (Business):Web Services:BIBT	419	249	253	274	300
Misc. Expense (Business):Web Services:Island Jewel	80	80	0	84	0
TOTAL Misc. Expense (Business):Web Services	1,099	929	853	958	900
TOTAL Misc. Expense (Business)	1,489	3,639	3,447	1,345	4,600
Office Expenses (Business)	0	0	0	145	100
Postage and Delivery (Business)	463	122	46	288	200
Postage and Delivery (Business):EMS Project	160	0	0	0	0
TOTAL Postage and Delivery (Business)	623	122	46	288	200
Printing and Reproduction (Business)	1,008	203	0	0	0
Printing and Reproduction (Business):EMS Project	739	0	0	0	0
TOTAL Printing and Reproduction (Business)	1,747	203	0	0	0
Sponsorships	0	0	0	160	885
Taxes (Business)					
Taxes (Business):Licenses (Business)	20	20	25	40	25
TOTAL Taxes (Business)	20	20	25	0	25
Travel (Business)	94	215	0	0	0
TOTAL OUTFLOWS	6,016	5,036	4,061	4,496	7,425

OVERALL TOTAL	(2,115)	1,088	325	(2,163)	1,127
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Great Lakes Islands Alliance News

Bob Anderson, BIA Past Preseint & GLIA Steering Committee Member

The [Great Lakes Islands Alliance](#) (GLIA) is a voluntary, collaborative network that brings together interested island leaders, residents, business owners and advocates from islands across the region. The mission of the GLIA is to “encourage relationship building, foster information exchange, and leverage resources to address shared challenges and embrace opportunities to benefit islands.” We currently have participants from fifteen islands belonging to three states and one province in four of the Great Lakes.

GLIA this past winter and spring continued with monthly conference calls of the Steering Committee and key support organizations, and a separate monthly conference call with the general GLIA participant group. Primary topics of common interest were the Mott Foundation grant project announced at the Summit last fall on Mackinac Island; ongoing high lake water level & erosion concerns; planning for the fall 2019 Summit to be hosted by the Lake Erie islands; and, like just about everybody, COVID-19.



Going in reverse order, COVID-19 presented a unique topic for sharing information among the islands. It was valuable to see both the similarities and differences faced by islands in different governmental jurisdictions and how local authorities were working to protect their residents and visitors.

It also had the unfortunate effect of postponing the hard work of the Lake Erie islands Planning Committee for our 2019 Summit. Several factors around the virus prompted the Steering Committee in June to announce postponement of the Summit to 2021: uncertainty of the future status of the virus in the fall when the Summit was scheduled; concerns about travel, lodging and the inherent close personal interactions of a Summit; and the hardship of businesses on the host islands that were struggling to get back in operation for the summer season and expecting them to be able to help with sponsorship financing. Like so many other activities, we hit the “pause” button and plan to resume the annual Summit in 2021.

All of our islands are feeling the impact of record high lake levels. Excellent information was shared across our network of several webinars presented by subject matter experts on causes and projections, as well as resources for help in shoreline remediation. Hundreds of island residents across the Great Lakes are being confronted with tough decisions regarding an uncertain future. We are fortunate here on Beaver Island to have qualified resources to help with protecting our property that is in jeopardy.

Finally, good progress has been made on the [Mott Foundation](#) grant project administered by Northland College and led by The [Stewardship Network](#) in Ann Arbor. The grant focus areas of policy influence, communications, and institutional stability have been the subjects of hours of discussion around proposals and alternatives regarding how a future GLIA might look and function. Many other regional organizations share many of our interests and concerns, but we are unique in our ability to present an island perspective. Stay tuned for more details of the project later this fall.



GREAT LAKES
ISLANDS ALLIANCE



Beaver Island Archipelago Trails Report

Ken Zick, BIA Member & BIATA Secretary

Like many organizations during the coronavirus pandemic, the Beaver Island Archipelago Association (BIATA) has been limited in its activities. Last year was a particularly active and productive year. In addition to trail maintenance, BIATA erected signs with map cases on most DNR designated trails. Thanks to the work of Jim Flanagan, trail specific maps were prepared for insert in cases at most trailheads and intersections. Brad Grassmick graded the beginning portion of Buffalo Camp Trail with gavel provided by Richie Gillespie. In collaboration with the DNR, members also placed DNR authorized "No Vehicle" signs on specified walking trails and beach access points where vehicles are not allowed. Ironically, these "walking only" trails were the result of Michigan legislation in 2018 which expanded use of two track trails by vehicles. Most of these signs have been removed and taken away. The Association has informed the DNR that concrete embedded sign posts should be installed if they wish to continue to mark such places.

Almost two years ago the DNR sponsored and facilitated a trails planning meeting with the Association that challenged participants to imagine elements of a comprehensive multi-use trail system for the island. DNR representatives shared the plans of trail associations on the mainland. The participants identified several needed elements for a

plan that included: destination sites, parking areas, new loop trails, trail improvements and extensions, public-private partnerships to secure easements, designation or creation of a biking trail, and collaborations with other stake holders. This conference birthed an initiative approved last year by association membership to explore funding for a consultant to study island trails with a view toward fashioning a long range plan for a multi-use trail system that incorporated these elements. The study would also secure support from relevant state and local stakeholders and find funding sources for plan implementation. A report and funding request was made to the Peaine township board for initial funding of a study. The Board approved \$3000 on the condition that it be matched by private funding sources, but indicated that it was receptive to a return request for funding if a matching grant could not be found. The Association contacted LIAA (Land Information Access Associates) for a preliminary estimate of consultant costs associated with an initial survey of island trails and funding sources. A proposal was made to the Charlevoix Community Foundation this year, but staff at the foundation advised the Association to first secure "buy in" by relevant stakeholders. The DNR has now agreed to host a meeting in August or September with representatives from various state and local groups to review preliminary plans, further outline any needed plan elements, and seek consensus about the deliverables of a consultant's report. The Association will request funding at the Peaine Township Board meeting in August to cover a study done by LIAA. Such a report could then be used to secure private and public funding for implementation of a comprehensive multi-use trail plan, which would undoubtedly be staged over a number of years.

Given the limitations of the pandemic, the Association has asked its membership to consider adopting a trail for maintenance this summer. Moreover, it seeks volunteers (especially those with a tractor or backhoe) to assist in replacement of a culvert on the Blue Trail. An old log culvert has collapsed, and it presents a significant danger to snowmobilers in the winter. The Board also seeks applications for two vacancies on the BIATA Board. If anyone wishes to volunteer for these projects or positions, please contact BIATA Secretary, Ken Zick at Ph. 231-448-2525, or email zickk@wfu.edu.

Despite the challenges imposed by the pandemic, BIATA remains active, albeit in a limited way, to assure present and future improvement of our wonderful wilderness trails - trails which offer beauty, solace, and healthy outdoor exercise to residents and visitors alike.

Island Township Boards

ST. JAMES TWP BOARD		PEAINE TWP BOARD	
Kathleen McNamara	Supervisor	William Kohls	Supervisor
Julie Gillespie	Clerk	Carla Martin	Clerk
Diane McDonough	Treasurer	Larry Kubic	Treasurer
Paul Cole	Trustee	Paul Welke	Trustee
Travis Martin	Trustee	Ernest Martin	Trustee
Cynthia Pryor	Deputy Sup.	Krys Lyle	Deputy Sup.
AIRPORT COMMISSION		WASTE MANAGEMENT	
Dave Paul	Chair	Paul Cole	Chair
Kathleen McNamara	Vice Chair	Frank D'Andraia	Secretary
Ronald K Jakubus		Carla Martin	Treasurer
Carla Martin		Paul Welke	
Ernest Martin		Joe Moore	
Joe Moore		Sheri Richards	
John Martin		Travis Martin	
Rachel Teague (Manager) - Rec. Secretary			
BI TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY		EMERGENCY SERVICES AUTHORITY	
Mary Cook	Director	Jim McDonough	
Bob Tidmore	Chair	William Kohls	
Larry Hansz	Vice Chair	Kathleen McNamara	
Mark Engelsman	Treasurer	Bill Turner	
Kevin McDonough		Tammy Radionoff	
Stephen West		Cody Randall	Interim Director
BI DISTRICT LIBRARY		BI TELECOMMUNICATION ADVISORY	
Becca Foli	Chair	Kevin Boyle	Chair
Erin Randall	Chair Elect	Kathleen McNamara	Vice-Chair
Krys Lyle	Secretary	Theresa McDonough	Secretary
Vicki Smith	Treasurer	Neal Green	
Kathy Tidmore	Trustee	Gary Conant	
Kim Mitchell	Trustee	Paul Welke	
John Fiegen	Trustee	Wil Cwikiel	
Sally Rehkopf	Trustee		
ST. JAMES PLANNING COMMISSION		PEAINE PLANNING COMMISSION	
Patrick McGinnity	Chair	William Markey	Chair
Paul Cole	Board Rep.	Krys Lyle	Secretary
Adam Anderson		Larry Kubic	Board Rep.
Beth Crowwhite		Dan Burton	
Bob Tidmore		Angel Welke	
Rick Speck	Zoning Admin.	Rick Speck	Zoning Admin.
Amy Jenema	Assessor	Sally Akerley	Assessor

Draft Annual Meeting Agenda

President's Report - Election of New Board Members - Treasurer's Report - Invasives Update - Membership Update - Broadband Update - BIA Communications: Updates to our Websites and Approach - Other Business - Good of the Order

BIA Officers and Board of Directors

Kevin Boyle, President

president@beaverislandassociation.org

Dick Mulvihill, Vice President

vicepresident@beaverislandassociation.org

Alan Vicstein, Treasurer

treasurer@beaverislandassociation.org

Sheri Richards, Secretary

secretary@beaverislandassociation.org

Wil Cwikiel

wil@beaverislandassociation.org

Don Fix

donf@beaverislandassociation.org

Pam Grassmick

pam@beaverislandassociation.org

Louis Post

Louis@beaverislandassociation.org

Bob Sramek

robert@beaverislandassociation.org

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. Please feel free to forward this newsletter to people you know who might be interested in joining us. If you would like to become more involved in the BIA's work whether by helping with a particular project, joining one of our working committees or serving on the board, please reach out to any current board member. We look forward to your participation!

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 the completed form below along with a check for \$25 to Alan Vicstein, Treasurer, The Beaver Island Association, PO Box 390, Beaver Island, MI 49782. Or, [renew online](#).

Yes, please renew our Beaver Island Association membership for 2020-2021.

Name: _____ **Email:** _____

Street: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

The Beaver Island Association's mission is to support both the economic and environmental sustainability of the island. We do that by following issues and, where appropriate, speaking out and acting on them. We are hands on. Our current efforts, many discussed in this newsletter, include dealing with invasives, the birding and water trails, broadband availability and balanced economic development. Our past successes include deployment of the island's fire danger warning signs, work with the Maine Islands Institute to help develop plans for the island and spark the creation of the Great Lakes Islands Alliance, a successful awareness campaign concerning the need for and economic sustainability of paramedic care on the island, the birding and water trails, effective management of invasives-and more. Our success as a group depends on your support of these efforts through membership in BIA.



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Beaver Island Association - P.O. Box 390 - Beaver Island, MI 49782

The MailPoet logo, which consists of the word 'MailPoet' in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a gray rounded rectangle. A small white bracket is positioned below the text.