



ISLAND CURRENTS

Beaver Island Association Newsletter - Spring 2019

SAVE THE DATE!
BIA ANNUAL MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 8, 2019
4:00 - 6:00 PM
BIC CENTER

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Committee Report*

Presidents Corner (Kevin Boyle, President) - It's been a busy fall, winter and spring on the island with record setting cold spells, more snow and higher Lake Michigan water levels than we've seen in a number of years, and a very late spring. In late May, snow still lingered on our west side beach in areas where trees shelter what were at one point 8' drifts from the sun. All the snow melt mixed with spring rains made for lots of standing water in the woods and along our island roads with occasional overflows in low places. As summer arrives, a boulder off the beach that our kids named "bird poop rock" when it stood tall as a bird perch--is now beneath the waves. Despite a challenging winter and spring, our county road crews have kept things in remarkably good shape—and, as always, year-round islanders soldiered on through the winter, enjoying the opportunity to use snow shoes, cross country skis and snowmobiles more

often than has been possible in recent years.

Last fall several BIA members attended the 2nd annual Great Lakes Islands Summit (along with other representatives from Beaver Island). The location was Madeline Island, which is the far western end of Lake Superior. The most significant outcome of the summit was the formal creation of the Great Lakes Islands Alliance. The assembled participants selected an executive committee to guide GLIA through the coming year and BIA's former president Bob Anderson was selected to serve with that group. Substantive work at the summit included a review of issues identified at the inaugural Islands Summit on Beaver Island in 2017 and the formation of a variety of working groups to begin work on those issues. Bob's article below provides more detail on the summit as does the GLIA website: <http://greatlakesislandsalliance.org> . The 2019 Islands Summit will take place this fall on Mackinaw Island from October 20-23. If you are interested in attending, please let me know. (You should know that all BIA members who attended the summit covered their own costs.)

Summit attendees came away with a clear understanding that our fellow Great Lakes islanders share many concerns, problems and values with us. Among those issues is the need for competitive, reliable communications service—including broadband. As Alan Vicstein and Dick Mulvihill write elsewhere in this issue, your BIA Broadband Committee has continued to pursue this issue. As you may know, in part as a result of our urging that they do so, the townships decided last fall to establish a Joint Telecommunications Advisory Committee (JTAC) to review the status of telecommunications services on the island with a particular focus on broadband and mobile telephone and data services. Several BIA members volunteered to serve on this committee. The townships selected Kitty McNamara (St. James Supervisor), Paul Welke (Peaine Trustee), Neal Green, Gary Conant and me to serve on the committee, and the committee in turn elected Kitty McNamara as vice-chair, Theresa McDonough as secretary and me as chair of the group. The committee holds monthly meetings that are open to the public. It is looking at short, intermediate and long term methods to address service issues with a focus on developing plans that will allow the island to attain and maintain service levels that are competitive with those on the mainland. As Alan and Dick report below, the BIA Broadband Committee continues its work as well in support of the joint committee's efforts.

Another issue discussed at the Islands Summit was sustainable economic development and the need to be strategic about the use of resources to promote tourism and other economic development on our islands. As you might imagine, there is a wide diversity of circumstances and views on these issues. Here on the island, Paul Cole, the new

island Chamber director is busy working to develop both more effective promotion of existing events as well as the development of new events to draw additional visitors to the island. He has organized monthly "Discover Beaver Island" meetings that bring folks together with interest in supporting those efforts as well as coordinating activities. The most concrete result of these efforts so far is the establishment of the Beaver Island Irish Festival, a family oriented event that will kick-off this fall. Paul has also worked with the primary island events organizations to develop and publish a brochure for distribution at Michigan Welcome Centers and in travel kiosks around northwest Michigan. The brochure includes a calendar of major island events and pointers to information sources on travel to as well as accommodations on the island.

Your BIA leaders continue to look for ways to maintain our services more efficiently so that we are able to be as effective as possible with your dues payments. We've been able to significantly reduce the costs associated with this newsletter with our move to its electronic distribution. For this issue, we've moved from fixed format PDF files (that tend to be hard to read on hand-held devices) to a format that will adapt to the device you use to read the newsletter. Figuring out how to do that took longer than we expected and delayed getting this edition out, but we think it is for the better in the long term. Going forward, we plan to publish news directly to our website with periodic email newsletters that aggregate that information so you can visit the website to see the latest if you choose--or just wait to receive an email update. We are also working to reduce the cost of hosting our various BIA websites and to move the development and maintenance work for those sites either to volunteers or service providers on the island so that funds we do expend are recirculated right here.

I've just scratched the service of the work in service of our organizations goals that was undertaken during the winter. Our annual beach cleanup event was a success again, led by new event-chair Sheri Richards (who also serves on the BIA board). Board member Pam Grassmick has once again organized a spring Warblers on the Water birding event. Board member Dick Mulvihill spent many hours this winter researching broadband funding opportunities. You'll find more about these efforts and others elsewhere in this issue, and we'll provide and update and additional information at our annual meeting, which is scheduled for Monday, July 8, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the BIC Center. (We thank the BIC Center for making their auditorium available to us for our meeting.) In the meantime, I'll ask three things: first, if you've not done so already, please renew your membership for 2019 as a robust roster improves our ability to advocate effectively on your behalf; second, please consider looking for ways you can become involved in advancing our efforts as our board members (all volunteers) are all running at full steam; and, third, if you have questions or concerns, please feel free to

contact me at president@beaverislandassociation.org. Thank you for your continued support of BIA and the island we all love.

Historical Society Building Update

Lori Taylor-Blitz, BIHS Executive Director

Anyone who has been on the island and passed by the Print Shop most likely could not help but notice the museum is underwound some much-needed repairs! After Labor Day the Historical Society began work to replace the front porch and repair the false front and façade. The façade updates include period appropriate lighting, electrical outlets, repairs to the Board and Batten siding and historic window work.

Next fall BIHS will begin work on the construction of the rear addition. It is a single-story building, less than 2,000sf, with a cathedral ceiling. The new exhibit space will have a handicap accessible entrance, cathedral ceiling with an open room concept, and an outdoor plaza with a wide slider door for outdoor programming. There will be a small classroom and a room adjacent the exhibit room for collections and storage.

Architectural services are being provided pro-bono by Ebersoldt + Associates Architects, and its owner, Vince Ebersoldt, a long-time Island visitor, Island property owner and benefactor, as well as a BIHS Trustee. The Board of Trustees are extremely grateful to Vince and his team for the work they are doing on behalf of the Society, helping to keep Island History Alive!

McDonough Construction was hired to complete the porch project, remove the old back room, and advise the architect regarding the new addition.

More detailed information and images can be found on the Historical Society website at www.beaverislandhistory.org



St. James Township on Schedule to Receive Campground Improvement Grant

Kathleen McNamara, St. James Supervisor

St James Township officials have been busy on several fronts. Of course, there are the day to day items that must be tackled and dealt with; being a small township does not exempt us from all of the state reporting and recordkeeping required of larger municipalities. The day to day work is primarily performed by Treasurer Diane McDonough, Clerk Julie Gillespie and Supervisor Kathleen McNamara. Township Trustees Travis Martin and Jeff Powers lend their time and expertise to serving on committees and researching topics for decision-making.

One of the focus areas for the board is making improvements to the recreational infrastructure that is so necessary to the economic life of the island, and to the well-being of those who make Beaver Island their home. To that end, during 2018, the township completed an updated 5-Year Recreation Plan which was approved and which allowed the township to apply for a \$150,000.00 Recreation Passport Grant. The township was recently notified that its application for St James Campground Improvements grant garnered the second highest score of 68 applicants state-wide! Although final notification of grant receipt is forthcoming, it is anticipated that the full amount of \$150,000.00 will be awarded. The campground improvement project includes increasing the number of camping sites from 12 to 30, including 10 RV sites, building a restroom/shower facility, bringing in electrical service and improving access

to the beach. A goal of the project is to preserve the rustic beauty of the site while providing amenities that visitors and residents can enjoy. The timeline for implementation of the project is being researched – best case scenario would have much of the work completed by mid-summer 2019. The schedule will depend upon the timeline of the State of Michigan and its requirements for issuing the grant money. The township also recently received notification that it's Harbor Plan, an addendum to the 5-Year Recreation Plan, was also approved by the MDNR following submission in October of 2018. Approval of this Harbor Plan will allow the township to apply for grants for improvements to the harbor area through several state sponsored grant programs. The township anticipates submitting a grant request for the spring 2019 granting deadline. The township board will decide by the end of January which project(s) warrant seeking state grants. As the board begins its budget planning for 2019-2020, thought will be given to the amount of general fund dollars that can be committed to parks and recreation improvements.

Remember, the St James Township board meets at 5:00pm on the first Wednesday of each month at its township hall at the point. Offices of the supervisor, treasurer and clerk are located in the Governmental Building on King's Highway, in the same building as BIEMS and the Sheriff's office. Residents and visitors are welcome to stop in and let us know what you think about issues in St James Township. Or check out our website: stjamestwp.org

INVASIVES REPORT

Beth Leuck and Pam Grassmick, BIA Board

Emerald Ash Borer and Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

For the second year in a row a single emerald ash borer (EAB) was found in a purple lure trap on Beaver Island. The individual was located in a trap on Kings Highway just south of Sloptown Road in a marshy area consisting mostly of black ashes. Several state agencies are now working with BIA volunteers to handle this potential problem. Experts from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), the Department of Natural Resources Wildlife and Forestry Divisions, and Michigan State University's Department of Entomology and Forestry have offered planning and implementation advice. Based on published experimental results from other studies, a comprehensive treatment plan has been developed in an attempt to

curtail an EAB infestation on the island. In addition, 36 purple lure traps supplied by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) are placed around the island this summer. In previous years volunteers have hung 20 traps but the number this year is almost doubled so extra traps can be placed in and near the area where the EAB was found to better determine the extent of the problem. Four more traps have been placed on Garden Island. Experts have assured us that one borer in a trap does not mean that that island will soon be infested with EABs, but by responding quickly we hope to control any EAB population on the island so few or no ash trees are lost. BIA members can help the effort by never moving untreated wood products from the mainland to the island and by educating neighbors and friends about the problem.

Kudos to both townships for recently passing ordinances regulating the movement of untreated wood products to the island. Control of untreated wood products helps protect the island not only against EABs but also against all insect pest species that live and feed in wood and bark. These important pieces of legislation will help protect against pest species that may not be a problem now but could be in the future due to changing climatological conditions.

Hemlock wooly adelgid (HWA) is an invasive insect species that sucks sap from hemlock trees, and a heavy infestation can kill trees. In March a crew of forest experts surveyed the island's hemlock stands for the occurrence of HWA and found no evidence of the pest species. HWA has been discovered in four southwestern Michigan counties, and vigilance against this invasive insect is the best defense to prevent establishment on the island.



One of the EAB lure traps in place on the island.

Invasive Plant Species

In September 2018, BIA served as the townships' unpaid *Phragmites* Administrator in

an effort to continue control efforts against invasive *Phragmites* (*Phragmites australis*). During that time, the Charlevoix, Antrim, Kalkaska and Emmett Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CAKE CISMA) crew conducted shoreline surveys for invasive *Phragmites* on an additional 7 acres of Beaver Island. All known surveyed sites of invasive *Phragmites*, numbering 17 in all, were sprayed with herbicide by the CAKE CISMA crew. Eleven sites that had relatively sparse or smaller infestations were chemically treated by hand-wiping. Garlic mustard was treated along Eagle Hill Road on either side of the Kuebler Trail tunnel, and a population of glossy buckthorn was cut and treated on the west side of Garden Island. Due to poor weather conditions, it was not possible to visit the other islands in the Beaver Island archipelago to treat *Phragmites*.

During the winter of 2019, BIA members worked with Benjamin VanDyke, CAKE CISMA Executive Director, to secure 2019 funding for invasive species treatment for Beaver, Garden and Hog Islands. A \$30,000 grant was awarded to CAKE CISMA from the US Forest Service. In addition to *Phragmites*, non-native cattail will be targeted. We anticipate a late July-August treatment to occur. If you suspect you have invasive *Phragmites* on your property, please contact Pam Grassmick for further information.

To improve effective treatment of invasive species and establish a presence in the archipelago, CAKE CISMA is working with BIA members to secure funding to implement an internship program. The program will provide two paid internships in 2020 for two undergraduate students from CMU and will equip students with field experience in plant and animal identification, survey techniques, and invasive species treatment through mechanical and chemical control methods. Both interns will have a state level application certification.

We remain concerned that there is no locally appointed administrator in place to address invasives issues, especially *Phragmites*. Failure to control these invasives could harm wildlife and result in reduced property values, which would in turn result in decreased governmental tax revenue for the island. Thanks to all island residents and visitors who reported *Phragmites* so volunteers from the BIA could document and record locations to help the CAKE CISMA crew more efficiently travel to the plants.

BEAVER ISLAND COMMUNITY SCHOOL UPDATE

Wil Cwikel, BIA Board & BICS Superintendent-Principal

Beaver Island Hosts the First Annual Great Lakes Islands Basketball Tournament

On the first weekend in December, Beaver Island Community School welcomed the Put-in-Bay Panthers, the Mackinac Island Lakers, and the Washington Island Bucks to the first annual Great Lakes Islands Basketball Tournament. Due to some predictably unpredictable weather, the Washington Island Bucks had the opportunity to spend two additional nights on Beaver Island.

This is the first Great Lakes basin-wide gathering of the high schools that proudly serve their unbridged island communities, and we hope this event will become an ongoing tradition. Mackinac Island has already committed to hosting the Great Lakes Island Basketball Tournament next year!

The idea for this tournament was hatched at the Great Lakes Island Summit held on Beaver Island in September of 2017. When Steve Poe of Put-in-Bay suggested bringing island communities together through a basketball tournament, everyone thought it was a great idea. However, ideas become great only through people putting in the work to bring them to fruition. It took a lot of support from parents, coaches, school boards, and communities to provide the resources to allow the teams to travel to this unique cross-state tournament. Special thanks to the Athletic Directors in each of the schools for making this happen: Kerry Smith, Beaver Island; Bob Lohff, Mackinac Island; Steve Poe, Put-in-Bay; and Michael Gillespie, Washington Island.

The teams were quite evenly matched, which ensured some great basketball. At the end of the round-robin tournament, the Put-in-Bay Panthers took home the trophy on the women's side and the Beaver Island Islanders won the men's side. In addition to great basketball, the students from the different schools had a wonderful time getting to know each other at a dance and activity night sponsored by the BICS Student Council. As we discussed last year at the Great Lakes Summit, and we reiterated and formalized this year on Madeline Island with the establishment of the Great Lakes Islands Alliance, island life brings both unique challenges and unique opportunities. Though we are spread out across hundreds of miles and in many states, in many ways we have more in common with each other than with our neighboring mainland communities. By gathering in different ways, from the annual Island Summit to an annual basketball tournament, we will help to foster communication and collaboration that will help strengthen our communities over time.

In what surely what President George H. W. Bush would have considered a community of light, we'd like to thank the entire Beaver Island community for making this event

wonderful. From the student athletes who played their hearts out, to the parent volunteers who ran concessions all weekend, to everyone on the Island who helped make the Bucks' extended stay enjoyable, thank you all for making this first annual tournament tradition-worthy!

If you are a fan of both basketball and islands, plan on joining us next year (first weekend in December) on Mackinac Island!



A group photo taken at the first GLIA Basketball Tournament.

BI Fit Now at BICS

BI Fit, with support of private donations and the Charlevoix County Community Foundation, has created the opportunity for island residents to exercise in the Beaver Island Community School (BICS) gymnasium. BI Fit provides members with the opportunity to work out on various equipment, including a treadmill, elliptical, exercise bike, and rowing machine. As well, members can walk the perimeter of the gymnasium. This program is truly a partnership between Island residents and BICS. Trained volunteers oversee the program and monitor use of the equipment during the open sessions. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer exercise monitor, call the BICS office at (231) 448-2744.

During the summer, BI Fit is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays (except *Baroque on*

Beaver week) from 7:00 am to 10:00 am. If you are interested in becoming a BI Fit member, please stop by the office during regular business hours and pick up a membership packet. Annual membership fee is \$25.00 If you have any questions, feel free to give Wil Cwikiel a call at (231) 448-2744.

Beach Clean-Up Report

Sheri Richards, BIA Secretary

The 2018 Beach Cleanup was a great success! Lot's of comradery was had as we worked together to keep our island beautiful. From collaborating with the Community Center folks, who hosted the event, to receiving the collection cards from participants, the event went off smoothly. Our 26+ participants ranged from 8 – 72 years old. The beaches that were cleaned: Donegal Bay, Big Sand Bay, Lookout Point, Bonners Landing, Wagner Campground, Back Beach, Greene's Bay, Wicklow Beach, St. James Campground, McCauley's Point, Little Sand Bay, and Paradise Bay. With over 498 items collected ranging from a metal chair, tennis balls, to a lost shoe. Oh... let's not forget the couch springs! Thank you to all who participated.

Beaver Island Birding Trail (BIBT) & Warblers on the Water Birding Festival (WoW)

Pam Grassmick, BIA Board

Each year since it began, attendance at Warblers on the Water birding festival has increased, with both Michigan and out-of-state participants discovering or returning to Beaver Island. Registration for the fifth annual 2018 WoW event was brisk, with sign-ups for field trips reaching capacity – the Garden Island birding trip filled within two hours of the registration page going live! Between web blasts by the State of Michigan, Michigan Audubon, the Birding Wire, and news agencies, the event reached 200,000 outdoor enthusiasts. Despite challenges inherent in organizing such an event, with island generosity and off-island connections, we have been able to bring expert field trip leaders to the island, design top-quality programming, and provide transportation

for participants.

The sixth annual 2019 WoW birding festival was a smaller event with fewer field trips and presentations than in 2018. The attending participants enjoyed a boating adventure to High Island where they observed multiple shorebird species, including the endangered Piping Plover, and a rare Red-throated Loon. The Beaver Island community participated enthusiastically in the festival by providing transportation, entertainment, snacks, and presentations to the participants. As always, first-time WoW participants were “wowed” by the island hospitality and natural beauty of the island.

The Beaver Island Birding Trail and Warblers on the Water birding festival consistently attract individuals to locations around the island throughout spring, summer, and fall. The BIBT is user friendly and suitable for individual use or group events, such as WoW. However, to insure long-term success of the birding trail and festival, some aspects of both need attention. First, the six-year-old website and BIBT maps need updating. The birding list was updated in 2018 to reflect a few additional bird species. Second, organized birding events need to be integrated into a larger community economic plan. To that end, current organizers of WoW are discussing the feasibility of maintaining this Memorial Weekend event and will keep the community posted over the course of the decision-making process.

2018 Great Lakes Islands Summit on Madeline Island

Bob Anderson, Immediate Past President

Building on the success of 2017's inaugural Great Lakes Islands Summit on Beaver Island, a second conference was held in October, 2018 on Madeline Island, with participating island communities in the States of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio, and Province of Ontario.

The 2018 Great Lakes Islands Summit on Madeline Island inspired representatives from thirteen Great Lake's islands and four supporting organizations to gather for two days to help move the Great Lakes Islands Alliance (GLIA) toward sustainability. Beaver Island attendees included Alana Anderson, Bob Anderson, Kevin Boyle, Mary Cook, Wilfred Cwikiel, Mary Delamater, Pamela Grassmick, Michael Green, Ken McDonald, Kathleen McNamara, Lori Taylor-Blitz, Angel Welke and Paul Welke. A major goal of the summit was to ratify a shared charter and develop and approve a

formal organizational structure needed to move GLIA to the next phase of development. Summit attendees unanimously approved the ratification of a shared charter and selected and approved a slate of island members to serve as the steering committee that includes chair Michael Childers (Madeline Island), Bob Anderson (Beaver Island), Kristy Beyer (Drummond Island), Mike Gora (Middle Bass Island), and Joe Shorthouse (Manitoulin Island). Additionally, Matt Preisser (Michigan Office of the Great Lakes), Brandon Hofstedt (Center for Rural Communities at Northland College), and Kate Tagai (Island Institute) agreed to provide staff and advisory support to the newly formed GLIA steering committee.

In addition, the summit sought to develop potential areas of focus intended to guide the Alliance over the next year. As a result, the summit included expert presentations and in-depth discussions on sustainable energy, water levels, affordable housing, and economic development. From these discussions, two subcommittees were created – commerce committee and water levels committee. Participants had the opportunity to create new and build on existing peer-to-peer connections, and were inspired to continue involvement in the coalition.

Like the 2017 Summit on Beaver Island, the 2018 Summit on Madeline included another island community stepping and volunteering to host the third annual Great Lakes Islands Summit. The 2019 Great Lakes Island Summit will be held on Mackinac Island.

A comprehensive report on the Madeline Island Summit, including details of the presentations can be found online at https://www.northland.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018-Great-Lakes-Islands-Alliance-Summit-Report_FINAL



Beaver Island Water Trail

Pam Grassmick

On September 1, 2018, the Beaver Island Community Center (BICC), trailhead for both

the birding and water trails, held the dedication celebration for the Beaver Island Water Trails. The celebration event included special guest speakers involved in the development of the trail: Jon Allan, Director of the Office of Great Lakes, Jennifer Kleitch, Department of Natural Resources-Wildlife Division, and Harry Burkholder, Executive Director of the Land Information Access Association. Speakers emphasized the uniqueness of Beaver Island and the power of collaboration that established this unique water trail. Wil Cwikel and Eric Strickler, sponsored by the Beaver Island Music Festival, offered expertise including safety and paddling demonstrations at various times throughout the day. Eric shared a link with videos taken as he circumnavigated the 43 mile trail on his SUP (stand up paddle board), including one scene of a buck swimming off shore, returning to shore and bounding into the woods.

Five years in the making, the non-motorized water trail circumnavigates the entire island with designated stops on public lands. It is geared for adventure paddling and offers rustic camping on state designated areas. It's goal is to enhance access, highlight natural and cultural features, and promote tourism. The water trail is notable because of the beautiful, natural environment with sunken shipwrecks. Family-friendly areas for paddling include Paradise Bay and segments on the island's inland lakes. The newly formed Beaver Island Trails Association will monitor sites and assist with developing site plans.

The trail is documented in the Beaver Island Paddling Guide, accessible through Michigan Water Trails website at michiganwatertrails.org and at beaverislandwatertrail.org. A waterproof, printed version is available for purchase at the BIC Center and at biccenter.org. Funding for planning and related documents were provided through grants from Coastal Zone Management and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division.



The trail is documented in the Beaver Island Paddling Guide, accessible through the trail website at www.beaverislandwatertrail.org. A waterproof, printed version is available for purchase at the BIC Center. Funding for planning and related documents were provided through grants from Coastal Zone Management and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division.

Broadband Update

Alan Vicstein and Dick Mulvihill

The BIA's Communications Infrastructure Group continues to work to address communications issues on the island. Last fall, in part because of the urging of the BIA, the townships established a Joint Telecommunications Advisory Committee (JTAC). BIA members Theresa McDonough, Kitty McNamara, Kevin Boyle and Wil Cwikiel were appointed to the committee, which elected Theresa, Kitty and Kevin to serve as secretary, vice-chair and chair respectively. BIA members Alan Vicstein (Treasurer) and Dick Mulvihill have actively participated in the committee's meetings and work. The committee is charged with investigating communications issues on the island and

advising the township boards on proposed approaches to address them. At the initial meetings of the JTAC, your BIA Broadband Committee provided an overview of the work and the plan they had developed to address broadband issues. Although the BIA's plan has evolved over time, at its core it remains a three tiered approach: first, establish "pools" of service that are competitive with those routinely available in urban areas (100 Mbps+) at key island locations (the school, library, Community Center, and Health Center); second, facilitate an implementation of Northern Michigan University's Educational Access Network on the island, which would provide a low cost, education oriented 20 Mbps service that could be implemented quickly and serve as a bridge to faster service; and, third, develop and execute a plan to bring infrastructure to the island (likely fiber-based in part) capable of delivering gigabit service initially connected to the mainland by microwave, but ultimately by under-lake fiber. Although the JTAC has not adopted this roadmap, it has been investigating each of these options--and has generally been looking at near, medium and long term solutions.

The JTAC has discussed its goals and concerns with representatives of are incumbent wireline provider TDS. Prior to the formation of the JTAC, BIA arranged meeting with the CEO and CTO of Great Lakes Energy and has had numerous discussions with representatives of NMU. The collective takeaway from these meetings is that no service provider plans to provide gigabit service to the island in the foreseeable future. Thus, if the island concludes that such services is necessary it appears that a realistic plan for the island to receive service at that level will require either a public-private partnership (where the island invests in infrastructure that can in turn be utilized by a commercial provider to deliver service) or a community operated system. The JTAC is beginning to investigate what options might be available for such a plan, and your BIA Broadband COmmittee is working to support those efforts by arranging background meetings with organizations that have either advised on such programs or implemented them. We are looking to approaches taken by other island and small communities that have implemented or appear to be successfully pursuing similar goals.

We believe service at this level implemented sooner than later is critical to the future economic sustainability of the island. Our research shows that a majority of island residents and visitors believe our existing service is inadequate. Although Great Lakes Energy's TrueStream proposal may bring us wireless service at speeds up to 50 Mbps in the next several years and TDS says it will deliver 25 Mbps service to many areas, and faster service up to 100 Mbps to a lucky few in an unspecified time frame, nearby mainland communities are *today* seeing the rollout of *gigabit* service. We believe that planning for less will leave us perpetually behind our mainland competitors both in adjacent communities (that compete with us for residents and visitors) and in larger,

more distant communities (that are home to many of our visitors). We also believe the same level of service should be available to essentially all island residents.

Although much work remains to be done, a path forward on broadband for the nearer term seems to be developing. There appears to be a very near-term, relatively low-cost ability to implement the “pools” that are the first tier of our vision. NMU has applied for ReConnect grants that would support deployment of their EAN service on the island if it receives those grants and the island is willing to make a rather modest investment in backhaul. That could happen next year. The route to gigabit service remains to be developed.

The availability of landline service and mobile telephone service are also issues of great concern on the island. The JTAC is pursuing both of these issues, and they are both areas where we believe that group’s status as a governmentally appointed body will be useful in drawing attention to issues. Ultimately, given our experience in dealing with TDS on extended 911 and basic phone service outages, we believe the best solution to landline issues is the establishment of a viable internet service competitor that could support internet-based telephone service (as would be the case with both GLE and NMU). On the mobile side, NMU’s EAN would provide data service using technology essentially the same as that utilized by Verizon and AT&T (now 4G LTE). While NMU’s plans call for essentially an island-wide fixed service (using outdoor antennas at some customer locations) and a mobile service to a larger area of the island than now served by Verizon or AT&T, that service would not be available on a mobile island-wide—at least at the outset. So, it will be necessary to encourage Verizon and/or AT&T to expand their service on the island—a task that may prove quite difficult given the economics.

We will address these issues in more detail at our Annual Meeting on July 8th. We have invited the JTAC to provide a current status report on their efforts at the meeting, where we will also have an update on NMU’s progress in rolling out the EAN in the Upper Peninsula.

NOTE in the interest of full disclosure: Kevin Boyle is a past president, the current treasurer and long-time board member of the NMU Foundation, a non-profit entity charged with raising funds for NMU. He also served as pro bono counsel to NMU in proceedings at the Federal Communications Commission that lead to the grant of NMU’s initial FCC licenses for the EAN. He is an NMU alum and would remind you that it is always a great day to be a Wildcat.

Draft Annual Meeting Agenda

President's Report - Election of New Board Members - Treasurer's Report - Update from St. James Supervisor on High Water Issues - Marina Plan Update - Invasives

BIA Officers and Board of Directors

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Dick Mulvihill

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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.

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 2019-2020.

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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