

The Intermediary

Summer 2003 *newsletter for members of the Intermediate Lake Association*

Letter From the President

Dear intermediate Lakers:
another busy summer season is about here and with it comes the usual array of activities that keep us all busy. I hope you will all take the time to attend our meetings, which will be held at our normal location at the central lake governmental center. I believe that the priority for our association must be to acquire sensitive, precious lakeshore and adjoining property, as they become available. This is only method or protecting and maintaining these lands from encroaching development. As we have seen in other areas, such as the Hanley cove project, it is next to impossible to prevent development with the usual legal remedies. To this end, I respectfully propose that we embark on an aggressive fund raising campaign to raise the necessary monies to acquire these properties as well as maintaining and upgrading existing properties. There are numerous sources of funding from non-profit, charitable and other foundations and organizations, which are dedicated to environmental protection. In addition our own association can start the process by raising our own funds. I look forward to hearing your ideas on fund raising and I wish you all a happy, fun summer season. My email and phone numbers: 810-343-2185 fwelch17@comcast.net

Second nesting is a success !

2003 has been a great year for Intermediate Lake's loons, with a little help from friends.

In May a pair of common loons successfully nested at the south end of Intermediate Lake hatching both eggs on June 5th.

Then came a surprise. Utilizing one of three "Artificial nesting islands" (A.N.I) placed at the far south end of our lake a second pair of loons nested. The second nesting began in mid June and on July 10th one of two eggs hatched!

According to Peg Comfort of the Michigan Loon Preservation Association "It is not unusual for loons to be nesting in June. Sometimes if they lose their first eggs- due to nest washout/ disturbance, they will re-nest. Considering the limited territory, we are lucky to have two nesting pair on the lake itself". Typically loons are intolerant of another pair of loons within their territory.

In the past nesting attempts down the river were unsuccessful due to predators and high water levels. This time the story has a happy ending. Using an A.N.I. the second nest was isolated on the lake itself affording the eggs protection from land born predators. Additionally, the A.N.I. is constructed with PVC pipe making the nest buoyant and less likely to be washed over by fluctuating water levels. However, jet skis and powerboats still pose a threat to the young chick.

This unprecedented second successful nesting is not entirely due to luck but is instead the fruit of human effort. Last winter, with hands-on instruction from Bill Truscott, Zone Chairman of the Chain of Lakes Chapter of Ducks Unlimited, the third grade class at the Central Lake Elementary School fabricated three A.N.I.s. In April, shortly after "Ice-out" Bill placed the A.N.I.s in key nesting locations at the south end of Intermediate Lake. This spring all three A.N.I.s were adopted as nesting sights by waterfowl, two by loons and a pair of mute swans nested and hatched chicks on the third.

Congratulations to Bill and the third graders on a job well done!

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P.O. Box 795
Central Lake, MI 49622
e-mail: ila@intermediatelake.org

Newsletter's New look

Four years ago the I.L.A.'s board of directors decided to publish a quarterly newsletter for our members. We hired Gina Kendall, owner of In Inc. to publish the newsletter, send monthly meeting notices and email announcements. It was always great fun working with Gina, and her talent consistently produced a quality newsletter to be proud of. In addition to being especially talented, Gina was, gratefully, very patient with us. Unfortunately, Gina will no longer be our newsletter publisher.

Due to financial constraints we began searching for ways to cut costs rather than raise membership dues. It makes financial sense to begin publishing newsletters in-house. Once all the bugs have been worked through, you will again begin receiving newsletters on a quarterly basis.

With that, we are looking for ideas and topics of interest to you. Remember this is your newsletter, concerning your lake and association. We welcome stories or historical tidbits about our lake and surrounding area. We also welcome anyone interested in lending their talents to formatting, editing, mailing or content.

Central Lake boat docks ready for use.

This spring The Village of Central Lake installed 40 feet of boat dock capable of accommodating four boats 20 feet in length. Included in the project is 150 feet of boardwalk with benches at the northern tip of Intermediate Lake. And according to Village President Larry Eckhardt " Construction of gazebo is planned for the west end of the boardwalk later this month".

When asked about possible expansion of the boat docks Larry stated "That will be based on usage". The Villages parks and recreation department and private donations funded the project.

The boat docks are "seasonal" and do not pose any adverse ecological impact to the lake. Over night docking will not be allowed.

In addition to mooring boats the docks provide an excellent platform for young children to fish. The best angling, using a worm and bobber, can be found off the east dock .

The I.L.A. wishes to thank Larry and the Village of Central Lake for the time, effort and funds spent to create this outstanding new improvement to our lake.

(continued from page 4)

Antrim County readily accepted grant money from the F.A.A to extend the runway safety area 1000 feet. In the future, should the F.A.A. offer more grant monies for expanding the airport runways to accommodate regularly scheduled commercial flights in and out of the airport, will the Antrim Board of Commissioners (B.O.C.) just as eagerly accept those funds? And will we suddenly find ourselves directly under flight paths for Northwest Airlines and/or military jets?

Another thought, Two years ago the B.O.C. enthusiastically adopted a wetland ordinance. At the exact time the ordinance passed the F.A.A. mandated the runway safety areas be constructed in order to maintain the C-2 status of the A.C.A. Those extensions require filling up to 20 acres of wetland on County property. Which constituted a direct violation of the new County wetland Ordinance. Over the course of following two years the ordinance dwindled and was eventually repelled. Did the prospect of losing F.A.A. funds contribute to the demise of the wetland ordinance or was that a mere coincidence? Makes me wonder.

Friends, we need to form a committee of I.L.A. members who are available during the day, on weekdays, to attend to the County's Transportation Board meeting once a month and voice our objection to this proposed project. If you have ever lived directly under a flight path to a municipal airport you know what's at stake.

727's IN YOUR BACKYARD?

By Linda Gallagher

Is there a hidden agenda at the Counties Airport? If you look carefully at some of the activities taking place, you've got to wonder.

Two years ago, the county began looking into extending the safety zone of both of the airport's runways by a total of more than 1000 feet, well into very sensitive wetland areas. Evidently, new FAA regulations implemented in 1999 now require that all "C-2" classified airports, which includes the AC airport, must provide a much larger safety area for the take off and landing of aircraft.

The unfortunate events of September 11, 2001 took the FAA's focus away from small rural airports and bought one of the last remaining wetlands on Intermediate Lake some time. But now, the issue has reared its ugly head again. And time is of the essence.

Extending the runways will entail filling approximately 20 acres of wetlands and re-routing an active trout stream. The environmental impacts of such a fill are reported to include: compounding drainage issues along Derenzy Road, damage to a waterfowl staging area and sensitive ecosystem with a number of rare and threatened species of flora and fauna, and the loss of coldwater and storm water recharge important to the Chain of Lakes watershed, specifically-Intermediate Lake. Does the FAA actually advocate breaking state laws regarding wetland filling? Apparently, they do.

The county is currently looking for mediation sites to facilitate such a fill project. With a "no-net loss" policy, the state may allow the wetland fill if the county can find 20 acres of wetlands to create or restore somewhere else. Once again, the area being considered is the Grass River Natural Area, literally downstream from the airport. Given the heated wetland discussions over the past couple of years, this seems a little hypocritical. For what Intermediate Lake loses, the Grass River also loses, and that can never be re-gained.

Wetland issues aside, is expanding the runway simply a pre-cursor to airport expansion itself? Expansion to commercial service would be a viable option for the county with the added safety zones in place. Think of the additional noise and pollution risks, not to mention the safety issues of having a commercial airport so close to a very sensitive watershed and one of the largest human populations in the county.

Currently, the airport does not provide any real services to the average resident of the county-another issue altogether. There are no commercial flights in or out, no import or export of goods, no coast guard services, etc. Some wonder why we even have this airport, and do we really need it?

The fact that the airport has been running in the red, costing county taxpayers thousands of dollars annually when it services only a few private planes has been an increasing topic of discussion for many years.

There is an answer to this if you are one of Antrim County's taxpayers who does not want to see a metropolitan airport at their back door-for now, a reclassification of the airport to "B-2" by our Board of Commissioners, which would not affect current operations in any way, but only limit the amount of growth allowed.

Perhaps, with more efforts on our part, down the line we can ensure that the Antrim County Airport will NEVER be a threat to our quiet residential life and sensitive wildlife habitat, if the airport is either moved or closed down entirely, as many would like to see.

But, for now, we all have work to do. Two years ago, Antrim County's BOC voted to retain the airport's C-2 status. Does the current BOC still feel that this status is critical to the well-being of Antrim County? Let's find out-write or call your commissioner, and let him know that you DON'T want this desecration of Intermediate Lake to take place!!

Please remember, if that commissioner believes it should, there's a cure for that, too-and tell that commissioner just that. Even if you are not a registered voter in Antrim County, you can make a difference-just start talking to those who are. They're listening. Here's how to get hold of your local Antrim County Commissioner:

**Antrim County
Board of Commissioners
Meetings are held on the
2nd Thursday
of each month at 9:00 a.m.**

If you live in Kearney or Echo Township, your commissioner is Dave Howelman. If you live in Central Lake Township or Forest Home Township, your commissioner is Gene Dawson. Robert McLeod

P.O. Box 14
Eastport, MI 49627
Phone: (231) 599-2979

Email: mcleod@antrimcounty.org

Michael Crawford
7157 Crystal Springs Road
Bellaire, MI 49615

Phone: (231) 377-4605

crawford@antrimcounty.org

Eugene Dawson
4289 Mitchell Road
Central Lake, MI 49622

Phone: (231) 544-6460

dawson@antrimcounty.org

Laura Stanek

5688 Stanek Road

East Jordan, MI 49727

Phone: (231) 582-9002

stanek@antrimcounty.org

Larry Bargy

6585 Cairn Highway

Kewadin, MI 49648

Phone: (231) 264-8587

bargy@antrimcounty.org

Bernard Blackmore

P.O. Box 265

Mancelona, MI 49659

Phone: (231) 587-5162

Email: [black-](mailto:blackmore@antrimcounty.org)

more@antrimcounty.org

Jack White, Chairman

10877 US 31 South

Williamsburg, MI 49690

Phone: (231) 264-8291

white@antrimcounty.org

Joseph Allen

9858 S. M-88 Highway

Mancelona, MI 49659

Phone: (231) 587-8096

allen@antrimcounty.org

David Howelman

5842 Fishermans' Paradise
Road

Bellaire, MI 49615

Phone: (231) 533-5326

howel-

man@antrimcounty.org

Intermediate Lake Association
P.O. Box 795
Central Lake, MI 49622

Vice President's column

By Jeff Cullen

Just two thoughts for this addition of the newsletter. Those of you who recall my earlier columns know I inject fishing, politics or a brief mention of my brother-in-law Frank in my articles. I'll spare you the fishing and Frank stories this time around.

We received an e-mail from a water sports enthusiast whose family owns a cottage on our lake. The letter illustrates a concern many of us share; the tenuous balance between human activities such as boating and the wild life that inhabits our lake.

"Hi, my family has a place on intermediate lake, and I don't think the no wake zone for the south end of the lake is such a good idea. My cousin and I wakeboard and ski in the south end of the lake because it is such a convenient location, the sandbar bar is right there and there isn't usually too much boat traffic which is nice. I think many water-skiers and wake boarders wouldn't like the a wake zone too much. Please take my suggestion into account while thinking about making the south end of the lake no wake."

Granted boating is great fun, all of us enjoy being on the lake. However there also comes with that a responsibility we share. Many members of this association have given a great deal of effort to our nesting loons. It would be a tragedy to see those efforts wasted by a boater who probably "just didn't know". When you consider that we have seven miles of lake to enjoy, asking boaters to slow down while traveling through one of only a handful of sites available for nesting loons in the region makes sense. Please, when your boating in the south end of the lake drive slowly and keep an eye out for loons, swans and ducks on the water with their young. Look closely; a mature bald eagle has taken up residence there too. You just might get a close up view of our nation's symbol, if you're not going too fast.

I believe this is cause for concern. The proposed extension of the runway safety areas at the Antrim County airport is an issue we must be attentive to. Linda Gallagher's letter speaks of this in detail. I will just offer my two cents.....

(continued on page 2)