

MICHIGAN TURKEY TRACKS



March 2018

No. 44

To all MWTHA members and interested friends:

As we get through yet another northern Michigan winter, those of us still concerned about the welfare of the Eastern Wild Turkey in the cold and snowy north continue to do what we can to keep the birds going, most of that through our own pocketbooks, but also with the help of the MWTHA.

Although December and most of January was brutal, with extremely deep snow and bitter cold, our birds have continued to show what appears to be as growing ability to withstand long periods of time without adequate nutrition, as many of the birds we have recently located have proven. Ever seen a wild turkey wade an ice cold creek in the dead of winter to forage on winter-cress?

Numbers, overall, continue to suffer from the incredible numbers of avian and mammalian predators, the detrimental effects of a growing human population in the north, and perhaps, in areas with fall hunting seasons, too much hunting, not to mention the negative effects a lack of adequate winter nutrition has on a hen's ability to successfully nest and raise chicks in the spring.

Sadly, as it has been for the last decade, very few seem to recognize the looming threat of the wild turkey's extirpation in northern Michigan, or to care-their phones and video games are more important, as reflected in our overall declining number of hunters.

Volunteers continue to be few and far between, donations have continued to decline, and interest, overall, in joining together for the benefit of our wild turkey continues to fail.

But some of us continue to try to do what we can for the wild turkey and will continue to do so as long as there is breath in our bodies and birds in the woods. None of us wants the wild turkey to become a thing of the past in northern Michigan. So look at your calendar, find some time to get involved, and do what you can financially to prevent that from happening by renewing your membership in MWTHA and your interest in the future of our hunting sports.

Looking for information as to what the MWTHA will be up to this spring? Check out our website at www.mwth.net, or our Facebook page, or just look inside!

Have a great spring and summer!

Sinda
14

TWO TROUT STREAMS DIED AND NO ONE CARES

This article is condensed from the huge file I have on the following subject.

In 2000 I was serving on the board of commissioners for Osceola County. I had established the Conservation, environment and Solid Waste committee within the committee structure. In the fall of 2000 we became aware that the foreign based Nestle Corporation announced that they wanted to pump water from two springs in Osceola and Mecosta counties, in addition from wells they would establish.

We had many citizens concerned about the impact Nestle would have on their wells, ponds, streams and wetlands. We found that Nestle had been kicked out of Wisconsin and had announced that they were going to western Michigan (Osceola and Mecosta counties). As their normal procedure is they approached two small towns in northern Wisconsin with a total population of 1000. Nestle announced that they wanted to tap two springs and pump 5000 gallons of spring water per minute and they would not hurt the environment, build a bottling plant, provide jobs and boost the economy. Massive opposition and the lawsuits began. Among the lawsuits was one by the Hochunk Indian tribe. One of the town's mayors was recalled. All during this time Nestle was drilling wells and preparing to build a huge factory. This was in Adams County who were zoned. Eventually they wrote a resolution that declared that they would not change their zoning for Nestle. Nestle then announced that they were headed to western Michigan.

A key to all of this was that the United States Geological Survey (USGS) publically stated that they did not trust Nestle, their monitoring and that Nestle's operation would hurt the environment. I had the opportunity to have a series of conference calls with them and learned valuable information.

So in the fall of 2000 Nestle is at our door step. We held a well attended public meeting at the courthouse with a Nestle representative and an agent from the USGS present. We asked if Nestle would be willing to establish an escrow account to be used if wells and wetlands were affected. Their answer was NO! I asked the agent from the USGS to examine Nestle's proposal. He did get back with me and predicted that if Nestle eventually gets what they want ponds and wetlands feeding the spring may dry up and not recharge. The two streams that begin from the spring will be affected. He warned not to trust Nestle's monitoring.

Nestle had made the decision that they were going to Mecosta County first, tap a spring, drill wells on their property and build a bottling plant there.

A group of concerned citizens formed Michigan Citizens For Water Conservation (MCWC). They filed a law suit and eventually spent \$1,000,000 fighting Nestle. While still in litigation Nestle built a \$100,000,000 bottling plant larger than Buckingham Palace. Nestle received a permit to pump 400 GPM from the Mecosta County spring and a \$9,500,000 tax break. The permit cost Nestle \$200 which allows them to pump millions of gallons of the freshest, coldest water on earth.

After Nestle began pumping the flow to the Dead Stream and Thompson Lake was down to a trickle. The court ordered a reduction to 218 GPM. Currently they are pumping that amount of water from the spring plus ground water from their wells which adds up to millions, then billions of water and pay nothing for it.

Nestle's next project is to draw water from the White Pine spring located in Osceola Township, Osceola County, which is near the city of Evart. Back in 2000 there was a large sign on US-10 as you entered Evart from the west. It read "Perier (Nestle) Go Home". I found out that a local well driller had posted the sign. I wondered

THE MICHIGAN WILD TURKEY HUNTERS ASSOCIATION (MWTHA) IS THE ONLY HUNTING ORGANIZATION WITH THE MICHIGAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION (MCF) THAT IS SUPPORTING THE PUBLIC LAND HUNTER.

Two Trout Streams Died and No One Cares . . .

why a well driller who could make a fortune placed such a sign. I contacted him (who now has been in business for over the past 60 years) and inquired why the sign was there. He told me that between industry, the city of Evart and private wells the aquifer had declined by ten feet. In 2017 I contacted him again to see if the aquifer had recharged.. He stated no it had not and now has declined by fourteen feet. I have brought this to the licensing authorities several times without being acknowledged. How many millions of gallons of the coldest, purest water on earth must this be?

Forward to 2005. Nestle has paid \$200 and had been granted a permit to draw water at 150 gallons per minute from the White Pine spring. Somewhere between then and now they began pumping 250 GPM. How they were able to do this without a permit I don't know. This began like a soap box opera with twists, turns, lies, claims of questionable science (voodoo science). In 2016 Nestle applied for a permit to increase it's take of water from the spring to 400 GPM. There was a huge amount of opposition from the public. A public hearing was held in Big Rapids where over 500 attended and many spoke in opposition. The Michigan Department of "Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has received over 80,000 comments on Nestle's proposal.

A pile of local newspaper articles appeared during this period many claiming "State—Nestle agree that Nestle's water withdrawal will not have negative effect on the environment". Nestle was bringing out many facts as an example "Creek has greater base flow than state's model predicts". (remember the Voodoo science?). There was even one article about Trout Unlimited has no problem with the withdrawal.

The Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act is connected to the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act which states that groundwater pumping must have no negative impact. After Nestle began it's pumping at White Pine Spring neighboring residents began to see environmental changes. Spring fed ponds dried up and haven't recharged, wetlands affected and springs dried up or were reduced to a trickle. Chippewa and Twin Creek both have their beginning at the White Pine spring. Residents complained about the flow of low water and were taking photos of before and after.

On February 14, 2017 the MDEQ sent a two and a half page request for additional information. It required Nestle to review their pumping impact of streams, wetlands and bodies of water. Among the data required were the stream flow, stream temperatures, fish, aquatic species, method used, etc. (give an A+ to the MDEQ). Nestle had until August 30 to comply. They couldn't. They were then given until September 30 to comply. They couldn't. They were then given until November 3rd. It appears that they did not do that either. Nestle has hired a firm called Arcadis to monitor these things, so what is their problem? It couldn't be that they are in serious violation could it?

I have never forgotten the prediction that the agent from the USGS had made to me in 2000. That and the fact that nothing was heard about Nestle's requirement to survey the two trout streams I decided to research both streams to see if the water temperatures would support trout. I asked John McClane to assist me. John is a registered surveyor who knows the natural resources surrounding Nestle's operation. He is also on the board of directors of Michigan Citizens For Water Conservation (MCWC). On July 17, 2017 we began our research by starting at the headwaters of both streams to where they enter the Muskegon River. We stopped at every culvert crossing. We found that the temperatures ranged from 51 degrees to 60 degrees which would support a trout population.

What I expected to find were full flowing streams. I couldn't believe the low water that I was observing. On July 31 John and I began another segment of our research (in cooperation with MCWC). As water flows through a culvert for a long period of time aquatic growth appears on the sides of the culvert. This provides a historic

AS LONG AS WE EXIST WE SHALL REMAIN THE CHAMPIONS OF THE WILD TURKEY, IT'S PUBLIC LAND HABITAT AND HIGH QUALITY, ETHICAL HUNTING OF THEM.

record that can indicate if the water flow has been compromised. Our objective was to measure water depth in a culvert, measurement from the top of the water to the historic water line, measure the width of the culvert, check the water depth downstream and record any trout or other aquatic specie that was observed. (We found none). As we checked each culvert from the headwaters to the Muskegon River, we recorded water depth from 2 inches to 8 inches on average. It was estimated that historically between 14 to 18 inches of water flowed through the culverts. It should be noted that rainfall was 10 inches above normal for that area.

I had the temperature and water depth recorded but needed a background for reference. I learned that the DNR fisheries biologist for that area had retired, however there was a study of Whirling Disease conducted on both Chippewa and Twin Creeks in July of 2000. I was able to obtain the report. Four DNR fisheries biologists conducted the study using backpack shocking equipment.. What they found on both streams were impressive populations of both native brook and brown trout up to 20 inches, of various sizes and age classes, along with an abundance of crayfish and other fish species. They collected 20 trout from each stream from 4 to 8 inches for the study. As I waded the exact same section of Chippewa Creek that they had the water was ankle deep. From our research and observations the dynamic aquatic eco system that was found in 2000 no longer exists.

A 2.5 page detailed report on our research of the two streams was sent to the MDEQ director. A reply was received from her.

A number of news media and others were notified of the results of our research in an effort to notify the public. It was distributed by Michigan Citizens For Water Conservation. FLOW (For The Love Of Water) based in Traverse City placed it on their web site as an interview. Bill Parker, editor of Michigan Outdoor News published it in it's entirety. Certainly there would be outrage by the outdoors community. Wrong! Silence! After an article in the Cadillac News that stated "Trout Unlimited Has No Problem With Nestle's Water Withdrawal" I sent a letter to Michigan TU president Burroughs. He replied that TU had reviewed the data from Nestle and had made that determination. A copy of the research report was sent to him. The result from TU? Silence! Both editors of the Cadillac News and Big Rapids Pioneer were sent copies of the research report. Result? Silence! Apparently a foreign corporation that trashed two trout streams that has been in existence for thousands of years isn't news. Or could it be the full page ads from Nestle?

The Chippewa-Ottawa Resource Authority was contacted. No action from them. The Detroit Free Press was contacted. Never returned our phone call. A copy of research was sent to the executive director of Michigan United Conservation Clubs and a follow up email the deputy director. There was no response. We are a member. Perhaps it is time to part ways.. Contacted Scott Heintzelman who is the chief MDNR fisheries biologist for the northern lower peninsula.. He was asked to have the DNR take action on behalf of the fishery resource on the two streams. He has decided to defer to Nestle.

TV 9&10 at Cadillac and TV 7&4 at Traverse City were both contacted and never contacted us in return. Garret Ellison of MLive was contacted by telephone. He requested a copy of the research. One was sent to him. No reply. Contact was made with David Fair of Western Michigan University Public Radio. No Response! We were advised to contact Marc Smith at the National Wildlife Foundation. Nothing there either! We were also advised to contact Oday Salin at the Great Lakes Environmental Law Center. A call was made to them three times only reaching an answering service who promised to call back. They never did!

I have written several times about AISI, it stands for apathy, ignorance and self interest. It is very much alive and thriving.

By Jim Maturen

Check out www.storyofstuff.org for a short movie (A Tale of Two Cities) that coincides with this article.

Articles and letters based on various topics by our members are welcome.

OF DEER AND RATTLE SNAKES

The Baldwin-Luther Swamp is a large swamp complex in Lake County and is part of the Pere Marquette State Forest. It is a major winter deer yarding area. Sometime around the 1960s and 1970s area Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) wildlife biologists created a series of openings on the edge of the swamp using deer hunting license dollars. Through the years they were maintained using Deer Range Improvement (DRIP) money.

The openings are impressive in size and are designed so that deer using them are not far from cover. They were planted in crops that provided a food source at the end of winter. Not only were they excellent habitat for deer, but other wildlife species as well, including Wild Turkeys.

Fellow MWTHA member Bill Shinn owns hunting property on the eastern edge of the swamp. Several years ago he observed that DNR wildlife openings on the edge of the swamp were no longer being managed and were falling into disrepair.

This past summer I was accompanied by a retired DNR employee who knows the area very well. We checked a series of those wildlife openings and found nothing but weeds and encroachment of new vegetation. I contacted the local DNR wildlife biologist and asked why they were no longer managing these openings. He replied that the endangered species biologist in Lansing wanted them set aside for Rattle Snakes. If they were allowed to be plowed, tilled and planted any Rattle Snakes present would be killed. Of course they had no idea how many Rattle Snakes were living there. The guy was just following orders from Lansing so I did not press the issue forward.

A dollar fifty of each deer hunting license sold is designated to the restricted DRIP fund. As it implies it is to be used to enhance deer habitat. A few years ago it was found that the DNR was using DRIP funds to plant Jackpine for the Kirtland Warbler. There was a big to do about this by the hunting community. Jackpine as it turns out is deer habitat also. This can not be said for converting critical deer habitat to Rattle Snake habitat.

This is just one case but how many DRIP funded openings and habitat projects have been converted or abandoned? As we noted on the last issue of Turkey Tracks about the diversion of the restricted Turkey Fund how much of the DRIP fund is actually used for deer range improvement? As in the case of the restricted Turkey Fund and the DRIP fund the DNR in establishing these types of funds there is a promise to the hunters and fishermen that if they are willing to pay more then that money will be used exactly as promised. Given a few years down the line and that is no longer the case.

What has happened to those wildlife openings on the Baldwin-Luther swamp is not acceptable. They must be returned to their original intended use and actively managed as such. If the DNR wants Rattle Snake habitat then create it Back in my working days I remember a state statute called Larceny By Conversion and the penalties for those violating it

By Jim Maturen

IF YOU HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET CHECK OUT OUR UPDATED WEBSITE AT WWW.MWTHA.NET. IT IS UPDATED FROM TIME TO TIME AND WITH EACH ISSUE OF MICHIGAN TURKEY TRACKS WHICH IS PUBLISHED IN MARCH AND SEPTEMBER OF EACH YEAR.

We welcome articles dealing with Michigan's natural resources. We offer the author an opportunity to express his/her concerns or facts in print, where other publications will not do so.

This is the eighth article by John Gunnall that has appeared in Michigan Turkey Tracks. John is a retired school educator who has served as Superintendent of Schools for the Mattawan, Detour-Drummond Island, Crystal Falls, Hale and Banger school districts. Many others who have been outdoorsmen and hunters over the past eight decades have witnessed declining game populations, declining hunters within our ranks and questionable management practices in the name of "Hunter Opportunity", "Recruitment And Retention" and "Impact On The Economy", among others.

Our Outdoor Habitat: The Crisis is Now

Basic to Man's existence is an invisible tether that connects us inexplicably to the Earth's resources. When any part of our planet is devalued all people and all her internal and external systems are affected. Currently another man caused crisis has revealed itself in my part of the world near the small community of Belmont, Michigan. Belmont is located only a stone's throw from Grand Rapids, Michigan's second largest city. Over fifty years ago an area manufacturer disposed of waste material containing chemical into the Earth which today is the likely source of residents living near the dump site who are no longer able to drink the water they pump from their wells. Without dwelling on this single event and other like incidents in Michigan one can easily understand the reoccurring problems when our outdoor habitat is being largely taken for granted in Michigan.

People in high places making decisions for us ordinary citizens know that our state's habitat is being marginalized when we still lack a value quotient of our outdoor habitat. Decisions about saying "yes" to proposals must get beyond "dollars" and "past practice" and re-introduce the once credible response of just saying "no" to matters beyond the brain dead issues before our DNR Commissioners like "antler restrictions", "ten brookie limits", etc.

In the USA we champion democracy and its greater potential for representing the wishes of her citizens. Yet history reveals that several of the earliest leaders of successful civilizations that came into prominence long before America was founded espoused far different philosophies with some ruled by benevolent dictators. It was once believed that a caring autocrat could more fairly and more efficiently save his subjects from their human frailties. Such rulers repudiated conventional wisdom later held by democratic governments of today. Remnants of stronger leaders whose style is reminiscent of some past rulers is actually refreshing to me given our "yes man" society where corruption has become a daily conversation.

This writer does not cotton to the belief that contrary historic governance as having once existed should be cause to abandon our representative form of democracy. With that being said, instances in history do show evidence of dictators holding their subjects accountable for preserving and protecting nature's habitat.

I am further reminded of my days studying political philosophers and the fact that many of those early regimes ie: Greeks, Romans, etc., made their subjects strong through demanding thrift and their obligation to protect the potential for their lands in order to yield nature's bounty. To consume their habitat for nefarious benefit was to "cut off their nose to spite their face" and was met with fierce retribution. Clean up and emergency legislation to assure habitat protection and preservation were never part of the equation when the consequences were immediate, severe and enforced to dissuade even the most reckless subjects.

Today with greater population driven by a material world that enables Americans with artificial influences "for having more and more things" we should not be surprised that we are taken to the brink by an ecosystem struggling with its capacity to withstand man's thoughtless decisions. Our country and other nations must face the sobering reality that without taking a "value inventory" of our "full habitat" we will once again fall victim to the guestimates of the past. To place a value on habitat must take us beyond our "historic extrinsic assumptions" and compel examiners to use new multifaceted knowledge. Those who thrive on quick decisions and quicker fixes i.e.; (DNR Commissioners, etc.) will never understand or appreciate the depth of inquiry in the decision making process required for placing a value on Michigan's habitat.

Help Wanted: Human qualifications sought in determining a value for Michigan's habitat

1. Visionaries with preservationist mentalities, having no personal or political agendas.
2. Persons who are work driven not seeking personal gain or fame, i.e. Dr. Gregg Gunnell (recently deceased), World Renowned Duke University Paleontologist.
3. Men who recognize and have studied the collages of nature who are sensitive for identifying her interdependent systems.
4. Men who have depth perception for understanding nature in order to correct and repair damaged systems that she has already incurred.

Preserving habitat like money has reached the point that we must "figuratively" throw away the combination to the safe. We must not take the risk of uninformed spending of her dwindling potential. A mentality for the protection of a yet undefined value of habitat must begin now that dignifies those who "dare to say no" to a state which has allowed itself to recklessly harvest it heritage and fabricate resource numbers to protect revenue sources generated on the back of Mother Nature.

Michigan Wild Turkey Hunters Association

3074 56th Street

Chase, MI 49623



Articles and letters based on various topics by our members are welcome.

So far we have helped to support 2,098 Wild Turkeys found over our 13 counties. Winter is far from being over. We will continue to fund our winter survival program and support as many Wild Turkeys until spring shows it's warm, fuzzy face again.

Winter had arrived over our 13 county chapter area. On January 8, 2018 we made our first purchase of 10,000 pounds of shelled corn. This is being written during the last portion of January. It has been an on again off again winter. What had been snow cover has melted in our southern counties, leaving bare ground and deep snow that has melted into ice in our northern counties.

Pere Marquette Chapter