



Fall
Newsletter

Les Cheneaux Islands Association

November, 2021

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Manager's Report

Mark Engle

Weather & Water Update

Lake Huron's water level has continued to recede this fall. From October 5 through November 5, Lake Huron water went down 3 inches. November 5, 2021 compared to November 5, 2020 shows a 16 inch drop for Les Cheneaux water, however, we are still 1-1/2 to 2 feet above the long term average. The seasonal fall decline is expected to recede another 1-7 inches according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

For a second straight year, La Nina conditions are predicted, which indicates wetter and colder weather in the north country. La Nina can occur every 2 to 7 years, sometimes lasting for two years. A cooler Pacific Ocean causes changes in wind and pressure patterns which in turn tend to affect temperatures and rainfall; cold and wet in the northern U.S. and dry and warm in the south.

The Great Lakes are experiencing record warm temperatures. When cold air exists over warm lakes, the result can be lake effect precipitation often in the form of snow squalls. Cloud cover traps heat, land cools faster than water, thus cold fronts pushed by winds can cause regular snowfall. Heavy snow has already happened in the northern Lower Peninsula and along the Lake Superior shoreline in the Upper Peninsula.

Autumn colors have mostly come and gone; things seem to have been pushed back by a couple of weeks with moderate air temps being the norm. So far there have been just a few frosty mornings, but

forecasts indicate a colder change in the near future.

LCIA Property Inspections

Recent strong, gusty winds have taken down trees and limbs in the Eastern U.P. causing power outages. Many of the fallen trees are spruce that have died due to 'spruce budworm.' LCIA property inspectors are on the lookout for tree damage or dangerous conditions around buildings and power lines. Considering the fact that there can be 2-3 weeks between inspections, you may want to contact a neighbor or caretaker if your property has large spruce trees.

Fish & Game Report

Fishing activity seemed to slow down a bit in mid-September due in part to periods of wet, windy weather. The weather improved in early October as did the fishing.

Perch were biting throughout the islands; some keeper size fish were catchable amongst what appears to be an endless supply of 5-6 inch fish.

Northern pike fishing had some hot periods in October; early mornings and late evenings were active feeding times.

Smallmouth bass were plentiful, especially during late summer and early fall. Like perch, many immature bass were everywhere there was a weed bed. Hopefully the abundance of small fish is a positive look to the future for the Les Cheneaux fishery.

Duck hunting was not quite normal. Migratory flocks were several weeks late for arrival in the islands; it was well into

November before flights were seen with any regularity.

Clark Township News

Installing an ADA compliant kayak launch at the Cedarville Harbor has received positive feedback and fund raising efforts are continuing. The Cedarville Harbor launch area is obviously a popular destination for kayakers; a good access point would be a great addition. The LCIA has donated \$2,000 toward this project.

The LCIA also donated \$2500 toward the purchase of the new Clark Township fire and rescue boat. Donations are still being accepted toward the expenses of the boat and trailer. The Les Cheneaux Community Foundation has established a fund for this project.

Funding is in place and work has begun on converting one of the tennis courts at the Snows Heritage Park into four pickleball courts.

Clark Township is considering some options for changes at the Hessel Marina. There is a need to better serve larger boats; the electric system is outdated and maneuvering a large vessel to inner slips can be difficult. Adding some day use slips to the west of the existing marina would serve local small boat traffic and cut down on congestion at the courtesy docks.

A suggestion has been made to construct a pathway/trail along Weston Ave. from the Cedarville Harbor parking lot to Cedar Cove and the Cedarville EZ-Mart with a bridge over Pearson Creek. A trail would provide access for snowmobiles in the winter and walkers and residents of Cedar Cove without having to cross main roads.

Read more township news below from Mike Patrick and Bob Smith.

Cedarville Harbor Transient Access - Update From Mike Patrick & Robert Smith

In response to a written request from M. Patrick, J. Torsky and R. Smith, the availability of temporary or day-use slips in Cedarville Harbor was discussed as an agenda item during the Clark Twp Board of Trustees meeting on 17 Nov. M. Patrick and R. Smith were in attendance.

The Board agreed to make those slips not in the State of Michigan reservation system exclusively available for boater day-use. This would amount to three finger piers being available for day-use boaters. This would provide dock space for multiple boats, depending on length at the designated finger piers.

It was suggested that the \$5000 shortfall incurred without renting the slips on a seasonal basis would be made up with a special offer to LCIA. A proposal was made to extend an offer to LCIA whereby members could have access to the aforementioned slips for an annual fee of \$50. The shortfall would be resolved if only 100 members take advantage of the proposal.

Key points of the LCIA group rate include:

- The fee would include day-use as well as unrestricted launching and retrieval for the entire boating season, to include the months of highest demand, July and August.
- Day-use will be tentatively defined as having a boat at selected slips for a maximum of three hours per visit.
- The mechanism envisioned would be that an LCIA member would have in his /her possession an LCIA membership card. That membership card would be shown to a harbor attendant upon landing to indicate the individual could use the slip space at no charge.
- Non-LCIA members would, as of the Nov. 17 discussion, be charged \$10 during July and August for the same privilege.

Details of the above proposal will be refined and a policy will be in place for the 2022 season.

In preparation for the proposed LCIA group dock fee program, LCIA will need to develop some form of identification for members who choose to take advantage of the program.

The Township Board does intend to make seasonal dock use available on the south side of the main pier, with the

east end reserved for the new fire/rescue boat.

Existing courtesy docks in both Cedarville and Hessel will remain fee-free.

A similar use proposal for slips in Hessel will be developed as part of the marina upgrade program.

Keep in mind, this has been proposed and has not been adopted by the township board.

Background:

The initial intent for building the new docks in Cedarville was to partially restore dockage that was lost when the original Les Cheneaux Islands Association dock was turned over to township control. The existing township courtesy dock in Cedarville cannot accommodate boater demand during the peak summer boating months.

State funds were approved to help pay for the new docks, but along with the grants, came strings. Strings such as making a designated number of slips available to the State Reservation System. Although disappointing, there were still several slips available for local “transient” use. The operative term here is “transient”. The State definition includes any of our islander boats that happen to frequent the harbor in search of a slip for short-term use. Short-term is interpreted to mean a few hours for the boaters to conduct business in town, after which they return to their local waterfront properties.

Going into the completion phase of Cedarville Harbor, there were two types of boaters expected to use the facility: cruising boats eligible to reserve slips as part of the State Reservation System and local transient boats.

There was no real policy in 2020 due to Covid issues. However, in 2021 multiple slips were rented to local individuals on a seasonal basis through the township. Those seasonal local rentals plus the popularity of Cedarville Harbor for cruising boats left essentially one, sometimes two, slips available for local transient boaters.

It has been explained that those slips rented to locals for the boating season included the times of highest demand: July & August, however, that is the time of highest demand for other local boaters also. Seasonal rental of those slips was not in the best interest of the highest number of local boaters.

During the 10-plus years of being part of the harbor committee there was zero discussion about leasing slips to local boaters on an anything but transient basis.

Moreover, leasing of township slips to selected local transients is in opposition to the intent and to discussions of the harbor committee with local marina operators, in that the new facility would not compete with them. Multiple conversations with Viking, Tassier’s and Cedarville Marine reinforced the intent that the new facility would not compete with them. Unfortunately, the State Reservation System has undermined part of that commitment, but the township has control to make remaining slips available to the public on a first come, first serve basis.

One way to resolve the matter was suggested by the township—that is to have specified slips available to those with a means of identification for their use. One suggestion was for interested boaters to pay a small fee for which they would have short-term (1-4 hours) access to the specified slips.

Again, the original objective of developing the new Cedarville docks was simply to replace short-term docking that was previously afforded by the original LCIA dock. As a first step toward achieving this goal, it is recommended that the LCIA Board Liaison approach the township board with this issue and then report back to LCIA board on how LCIA

members and other local boaters can gain access to docks at the new harbor facility.

**Additional Township News -
Mike Patrick**

The Great Lakes Boat Building School has received \$200,000 from the American Rescue Plan Committee of Mackinac County for expansion of the school which will provide more classrooms, employ more teachers, and attract more students.

The American Rescue Plan is also providing \$25,000 toward installing bathrooms at Snows Heritage Park.

Wishing everyone a safe, healthy, & happy holiday season!