

EUP Volunteers Collect Critical Scientific Data About Species, Habitats From Spring Frog Calls
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trees, some emitting slow, musical trills, others calling with lower, shorter, nasal-sounding voices.

While fun and serenity draw frog and toad surveyors back to the wetlands each year, the data they produce has a serious side. Frogs and toads are indicators of water quality, said Ms. Perrault, a

groundwater technician for the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

"Frog species need a certain level of water quality to survive," she said. "If you don't have that level, the water becomes inhospitable, and you start losing species."

Throughout Michigan, many frog and toad populations are declining, said Kathy Jones, volunteer coordinator for the Marsh Monitoring Program of Bird Studies Canada, a project that focuses on wildlife and water quality in the Great Lakes Basin. Mrs. Jones coordinates survey volunteers, including the efforts of Ms. Perrault and Mr. Vaal. The program includes about 300 U.S. and 300 Canadian volunteers.

In some areas, frog and toad population declines are normal fluctuations caused by varying annual conditions, such as drought or temperature, but some declines are caused by pollution or habitat destruction, Mrs. Jones said.

Regarding frog populations, the Straits of Mackinac area is on the only maritime shipping route that is not an area of concern in the Great Lakes Basin, she said.

Information from frog and toad surveys in Mackinac and Chippewa counties is needed for comparison with problem areas. Surveys gleaned from healthy areas helps determine if others require environmental remediation.

Shipping routes that require remediation include the St. Marys River, which has been degraded by industrial pollution, the Detroit River, the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, and the Niagara River. Once an area of concern is noted, more intensive research is done, and Bird Studies Canada provides information to government and private groups that request it. The data is shared with scientific publications and journals, on its Web site, and the State of Lakes Ecosystem Conference.

The United States and Canada have been collaborating on water protection projects since the International Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, Mrs. Jones said. From a 1987 reconfiguration of that treaty came the International Joint Commission, which deals with water issues affecting both countries. The commission focuses on all boundary waters, such as the Great Lakes Basin and the St.

Lawrence River.

Since 1995, the Marsh Monitoring Program has been used to gather data on frog populations and habitats to discover long-term trends.

Declines that have researchers concerned are the American toad, western chorus frog, green frog, and northern leopard frog. The American toad, which is declining by 3.8 percent each year in the Lake Huron basin, is of a

greater concern than others because the species is a generalist, meaning it can survive in more habitats than other frogs and toads, which are restricted to wetlands.

As the American toad has declined in the area, however, the bullfrog is increasing by 3.3 percent each year, a fact that has surprised some surveyors.

In the Les Cheneaux area, pollution is not the main threat to

frog and toad populations, Ms. Perrault said. Here, the threats are dropping lake levels, combined with building along the shore.

Ms. Perrault finds it encouraging that frogs and toads are not seriously threatened in the Straits area.

"We'd like to keep it that way," she said. "It is still pretty here, but things don't stay pristine if you don't pay attention to them."

Local Volunteers Needed for Frog and Toad Surveys

Two major frog and toad surveys overlap in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. One is the Marsh Monitoring Program, a division of Bird Studies Canada. The second is the Michigan Frog and Toad Survey by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The surveys are considered critical to determine long term trends in amphibian population. Information is used, in part, to measure water quality.

For both programs, volunteers are provided with regular routes and training materials to estimate the number of frog and toad calls in their areas. Participation fluctuates annually. Several routes are open in Mackinac and Chippewa counties this year.

The Michigan Frog and Toad Survey is in particular need of volunteers to cover routes in the Eastern Upper Peninsula, said Lori Sargent of the DNR, Wildlife Division. To participate, contact Ms. Sargent at (517) 373-9418.

The Frog and Toad survey began in 1988. A 10-year survey was completed in 2006. It is available at <http://www.michigan.gov/dnr>. Click on "Wildlife and Habitat," then "Research Projects," then "Frog and Toad Survey."

The Marsh Monitoring Program also published a 10-year report in 2006. It is available at www.bsc-eoc.org/library.html.

To participate in the Marsh Monitoring Program, contact Kathy Jones at (888) 448-2473, extension 212.

Brown Shares Highlights of 50 Years of St. Ignace Progress

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access to these parcels within the city.

One project helping to attract people to the town was the establishment of Mackinac Straits Hospital in 1957. Mr. Brown points to this collective effort among the city and surrounding townships as an example of a long history of collaborative projects in St. Ignace. Over the years, city leaders have focused on developing not only its infrastructure, but cooperation with the workforce, the schools, and preserving local history, a trend that continues today with the city's interest in the Fort de Buade collection, Mr. Brown said.

"Preservation of the history here has been a focus of the city, and was promoted by the city through the Michilimackinac Historical Society in the '60s and '70s," he said. "The society, with the help of the city, solicited state and federal funds to memorialize the history of this area, the French and Indian connection. That cooperation is still going on among the city, the historical society, and the tribe."

Plans are being made today to commemorate the history of commercial fishing here. Mr. Brown recalls when the shoreline of Moran Bay was lined with small fishing docks, while across the bay, huge stacks of lumber awaited milling at Maple Block Lumber Company, where butcher blocks were made. That site was later purchased, then torn down, by the Barrett family of Newberry, and is now the location of the Shepler's Ferry operation.

"St. Ignace was one of the biggest fishing ports on the Great Lakes, and our main street on the lake side was filled with fishing docks, warehouses, and little ice-houses. It was significant, but the economic impact has faded away from what it was 30 or 40 years ago, although you can still see evidence of these docks when you walk along the boardwalk," Mr. Brown said.

He recalls an even earlier St. Ignace story relayed by his father, regarding the movement of the county seat from Mackinac Island to St. Ignace in the early 1880s.

Sault Tribe Votes To Amend Its Constitution

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board member in 2004 because he felt serving in both posts would be unethical.

"Double dipping means you're paid as a board member and as an employee," he said. "Most members believe you're paid twice for what is really a full time job as a board member. They know this practice is unhealthy." Tribal board members are paid \$68,000 per year for their service, Mr. Gravelle said.

Some members see the amendment as a first step toward more self-directed changes in their government.

"Now, we must move forward toward adopting other structural changes to our constitution, like separation of powers, checks and balances, qualified individuals to serve in the judicial branch of government, and broader representation for the 62% of our members who live south of the Mackinac Bridge and throughout the United States," Mr. Gravelle said.

According to the tribe's constitution, adopted in the early 1970s, the document may be amended by a majority vote at an election called for that purpose by the Secretary of the Interior, provided that turnout of qualified voters is at least 30%.

The newly approved amendment's language is: "Any person elected or appointed to a position on the board, who is either an employee or independent contractor of the Tribe, shall voluntarily resign his or her employment position and/or surrender any rights under any contract with the Tribe prior to assuming the duties of office or taking the oath of office. Failure to voluntarily resign and/or terminate the contractual relationship with the Tribe shall bar the elected or appointed official from assuming the duties of office or taking the oath of office."

The tribe's Upper Peninsula service area, which includes Chippewa, Mackinac, Luce, Schoolcraft, Alger, Delta, and Marquette counties, is divided into five units. Tribal members who are registered as voters in each unit elect representatives to the 13-person board by write-in ballot. The number of representatives chosen from each unit reflects the unit's population. All officers serve for four years, and staggered terms put half of the board up for election every two years.

The tribe has more than 33,000 enrolled members.

Residents May Take Free Ferry This Weekend

Star Line Mackinac Island Ferry, Mackinac State Historic Parks, and the Butterfly House on Mackinac Island are offering area resident appreciation days Saturday, May 12, and Sunday, May 13.

Star Line is offering free ferry travel to and from the Island Saturday, May 12, to Mackinac County residents and free travel Sunday, May 13, to Emmet and Cheboygan county residents. Proof of residency is required.

A free pass to the Butterfly House also is available when receiving the ferry ticket.

Mackinac State Historic Parks will offer 50¢ admission for adults to Fort Mackinac, Colonial Michilimackinac, and Historic Mill Creek on both days. The offer is open to all residents of Mackinac, Cheboygan, and Emmet counties. Youth pay just 25 cents.

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