

# Recreation Plan Adopted, Wastewater Discharge Site Sought in Clark Township

By Amy Polk

Clark Township adopted a new five year plan to guide recreational development Thursday, March 20, following a public hearing and some minor changes. Recreation Plan Advisory Committee members Linda Sherlund, Michelle Walk, and Mike Miller said the plan received much community participation through surveys, including student polling by the Les Cheneaux Youth Advisory Committee.

"We pretty much scrapped the old plan and started fresh," Ms. Walk said.

Trustees appointed six workers for the May 6 election, chairperson Julie Smith and Lois Tassier, Lori Jacobus, Lori Thompson, Jean Sommers, and Kathryn Hills.

Special events applications for Music and Art Dockside in Hessel, Sunday, July 20, and Art in the Park Saturday, August 30, were approved.

Supervisor Linda Hudson will seek \$13,900 to fund an engineering study for an alternative to discharging treated wastewater into Cedarville Bay. The township did not budget for the engineering study this year and Treasurer Katie Carpenter said the township does not have the money. Trustee Mike Lofdahl agreed with her concerns, but said he sees no problem with Mrs. Hudson seeking grants or other funding assistance for the study.

Nutrients from current treated discharge is thought partially responsible for weed growth in

Cedarville Bay. Ideas for alternative discharge points include pumping the water into a marshland, or piping it out beyond the islands into Lake Huron, where currents will better circulate nutrients.

## North Huron Scenic Pathway Meeting Announced

Clark Township hosted a North Huron Scenic Pathway meeting Tuesday, March 25, at 1:30 p.m. at the township hall, where pathway engineer Rowe Incorporated of

Mount Pleasant was expected to project costs and money-saving options.

The plan to build a 10-foot-wide path from St. Ignace to Drummond Island could cost as much as \$40 million to \$60 mil-

lion, an average of \$600,000 per mile, according to Ms. Walk. Sections with boardwalks and bridges will cost more.

Money can be saved if volunteers do some of the work and materials are donated. Sections not using federal or state funding would not have to meet higher and more costly standards.

## Township Invited To Participate in Ports of Mackinac

Clark Township received a letter updating the board on the Ports of Mackinac project. The township and other Mackinac County waterfront towns have been invited by the St. Ignace Chamber of Commerce to participate in a Web site to promote Mackinac County ports and will focus on the strengths of the Straits of Mackinac as a region. The Great Waters is a similar campaign, using trails to direct tourists through various Eastern Upper Peninsula communities and regional highlights.

The site is under construction, said Chamber President Cheryl Schlehber, and should be up in mid-April, when the chamber plans to invite area communities to St. Ignace to learn about the site.

"We're so fragmented with all these individual communities, and it costs so much to promote them," she said. "What we're trying to do is promote regionally, and, hopefully, stimulate the economy."

As a boating destination, travelers would be directed from port to port using interactive maps, tourism packages, and the area's interesting history and culture.

## Chard Road Bill Paid; Township Concerned About Projects

A month-long standoff on a Mackinac County Road Commission bill for Chard Road ended with Clark Township agreeing Thursday to pay the bill and hold Road Commission Manager Karrie Abbitt to her promise to correct deficiencies found in the work. Mrs. Abbitt promised a spring site inspection of Chard Road, which was supposed to be improved to the township line, according to the contract. The township contends work stopped about 100 feet short of the line. Trustees were withholding \$10,000.

During discussion about township roads, trustees said they are concerned about news reports that the road commission is cutting staff. The township usually considers and signs road project contracts before the spring, but no road work estimates have been presented. Last year in April, Clark Township had signed contracts for six road projects. The township has only one contract with the road commission for improvements to Swede Road. Clark Township levies one mill annually and spends about \$167,000 a year with Mackinac County Road Commission on township jobs.

Mrs. Hudson said she spoke about these concerns with Mrs. Abbitt, who is expected to take a three-month family leave in April. Mrs. Abbitt said she cannot perform estimates in the winter, but is planning to estimate project costs after the snow melts.

## Les Cheneaux Students Learn About Brain Research



Les Cheneaux Elementary School students (from left) Cody Barowski, Hunter Perkins, Allison Mrozyk, Patrick McMaken, and Tyler Schramm hold some of the many examples of animal brains neuroscience researcher Jamie Johansen (far right) brought to school January 25 as part of her Brain Day presentation. (Les Cheneaux Community Schools photographs)

By Amy Polk

During "Brain Day" at Les Cheneaux Community Schools in January, Jamie Johansen discussed brain health and gave most students their first hands-on encounter with brains. Human, monkey, sheep, raccoon, and cat brains were among the materials she showed the students. The brains had been plasticized to preserve them and make them easier to handle.

Ms. Johansen is a doctoral student in the neuroscience program at Michigan State University and will complete a post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Washington following graduation this summer. She has been involved in science education and community outreach for the past four years through a program called Brain Awareness Week, started at the university. Each March, neuroscience students volunteer to visit Lansing area schools and teach students about the brain and nervous system using the brains, laboratory equipment, and other materials.

"I grew up in a rural community and felt strongly that rural areas should also be exposed to activities like this, and also organized a Brain Day in my hometown of Big Rapids last year for the Mecosta-Osceola Math Science and Technology Center," Ms. Johansen said. "This year, I took it further and went to the Les Cheneaux Schools."

She got the idea to come here while vacationing in Cedarville last year and talking with bed and breakfast operator Betty Struble, a substitute teacher at Les Cheneaux Community Schools.

With younger students, she spoke about the functions of various brain parts and what happens when the brain is injured.

"Then I tried to stress why it was so important to protect your brain by wearing bike helmets," she said.

"With the older students, I talked about my research and what I am doing in school, and went further into brain functions."

A group of Les Cheneaux fifth grade students (clockwise from left, starting in front) Maddie Kohlmann, Morgan St. Andrew, Monica Krackowski, Shannon Sayles, Isabel Brumleve, Alexandra Cabello, and Paige Kanitz enjoy handling the brains and research materials brought to school by neuroscience researcher Jamie Johansen.



Cedarville High School science students (from left) Carissa Sudol, Adam Dingman, and Karissa Schlosser examine brain and laboratory materials while asking questions of Ms. Johansen.

Her research at Michigan State may be used to find ways to treat and cure disease. She is now working on a Kennedy's disease research project, showing that the disease can begin in the muscles, not the nerves, as scientists previously believed. Kennedy's disease is a degenerative muscular disease similar to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

"In my 15 years here, it was probably one of the more powerful demonstrations we've had at our school," said Elementary Principal Eric Cardwell. Such programs, he said, are critical to bringing education to life for students and introducing them to professions.

He and Cedarville High School Principal Randy Schaedig said Ms. Johansen exemplifies a woman pursuing a career in science.

"More women are attending college now," Ms. Johansen said, "but are still underrepresented, overall, in science careers. I think it is extremely important to encourage young women, especially in science."

She does this by speaking to girls at the Lansing Area Schools Sixth Grade Girls Math and Science Conference and has led discovery workshops at the conference for the past four years.

"This is a specialized activity to encourage young women in our local school districts to become involved in math and science, and also a great way to provide mentorship to aspiring women scientists."

She recommends that any high school student interested in science or medical careers should take as many college level or Advanced Placement courses available in high school.

Ms. Johansen has been interested in brains since high school, and by the time she entered college, she was considering a career in science research.

"I knew I wanted to work with animals, so zoology was a natural choice," she said. "I did my undergraduate work also at Michigan State University, and within zoology, I chose neuroscience and animal behavior as my concentration."

## DDA To Seek Funds for Park a Second Time

By Karen Gould

The St. Ignace Downtown Development Authority (DDA) will reapply this month for a \$134,000 development grant for Chief Wawatam Park. The money will be used for a children's education area with a railroad and history theme and a fishing platform on the south side of the dock, Director Deb Evashevski told the DDA Friday, March 14.

St. Ignace failed to get the grant last year from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Development program.

Mrs. Evashevski reminded the authority of the April 7 public hearing on the proposed Transportation Museum, and asked members to attend. The hearing will be at 8 p.m. at City Hall. The city, which will develop and operate the museum, is seeking federal funds administered through the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Downtown informational signs, discussed a year ago, were back on Friday's agenda. The changeable signs will contain a downtown map and pinpoint the type and location of businesses.

The DDA has budgeted \$10,000 for signs and is estimating each sign will cost \$1,000. The Authority is working with Sam Staffan of Mackinaw Art and Sign in Mackinaw City. The Authority is considering placing the markers near the old bakery, the Emporium, the Ojibwa Museum, the upper parking lot, and at the corner of State and Truckey streets. On the east side of State Street, the board suggested, sign locations could include near each ferry boat line.

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## Paquin Resumes Tribal Police Chief Position

Fred Paquin of St. Ignace was reinstated as chief of police for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Thursday, March 13, after the dismissal of simple assault charges against him February 25. He is seeking his old seat as chairman of the Greektown Casino board, and awaits confirmation from the state's Gaming Control board. Mr. Paquin also is an elected tribal board member.

Since September, Mr. Paquin, 50, had been on suspension with pay as chief of police.

Tom Miller of Cooks, the tribe's Unit IV representative, currently serves as the Greektown Casino interim board chairman.

## Mackinaw Visitors Bureau Removes Appointed Seats

By Paul Gingras

Two years after adding representatives from outside the hotel, retail, and attractions field to its board of directors, the Mackinaw Area Visitors Bureau voted March 3 to eliminate representatives from the village council, Mackinac State Historic Parks, the Mackinac Bridge Authority, and a Mackinac Island ferry line. A letter thanking the village for its participation was read at the council meeting Thursday, March 20.

Twenty-seven businesses in the bureau voted to eliminate the seats. Eleven voted to retain them. The board of directors decides how the bureau uses a special room assessment tax to promote the area.

The village council voted to send a letter noting its disapproval of the bureau's action.

"At the very least, it is discouraging," said Trustee Jeff Hingston. "You would think that the Visitors Bureau would want residents of the community to be part of" promoting the area.

The seats were eliminated because the bureau discovered that the public act allowing formation of visitors bureaus in Michigan does not allow appointed seats, said William Bertchinger, chairman of the Visitors Bureau. All seats of the 11-member board must be occupied by elected hotel owners or owners of associated businesses, such as attractions or retailers. The bureau heard legal opinion at a January meeting that confirmed the rules, Mr. Bertchinger told *The St. Ignace News*.

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## Longer Office Hours Requested for City Recreation Department

By Ryan Schlehber

A request for extending office hours at the St. Ignace City Recreation Department highlighted a brief meeting of the Recreation Advisory Committee Wednesday, March 12. Office hours have been from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday and are covered by Recreation Director Erica Mattson and her part-time assistant, Helen Thibeault.

Committee member Fred Paquin said the office should be open until 5 p.m., like most businesses in town.

"I get a few calls from people that called the office and told me it's always closed," Mr. Paquin said.

Committee member Craig Therrian agreed, noting the city may be missing out on business callers after 3 p.m. who want to rent the conference rooms or ice rink.

"If we just rearrange the shifts to have someone cover those last two hours, it shouldn't cost us any more money," said Mr. Therrian.

City Manager Eric Dodson said he would review work schedules and see what he could do. No changes are likely until Mrs. Mattson returns from maternity leave.

Silver Mountain sledding hill did well this year, Mr. Dodson told the committee. The facility, overseen by Moran Township and the city, opened December 30 and closed for the season Sunday, March 16. It was open from Friday to Sunday each week.

"Last year, it was only open for four weekends," said Mr. Dodson, noting poor weather. "We had a

good winter this year." The city generated \$3,485 in concessions, \$1,200 more than projected, and lift tickets generated \$11,489.

The committee agreed to charge a hospital obesity program only \$25 an hour to rent Little Bear Ceast Conference Center, half the normal rate. The 12-week program, to be coordinated by registered nurse Carol Norman of Mackinac Straits Hospital's Naubinway Family Health Clinic, would use the conference room from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. one day a week. The program is funded by a federal grant and participants will be charged a fee. A starting date has yet to be scheduled.

The St. Ignace girls softball team will be allowed to use a batting cage in the hockey rink area, along with the boys baseball team, the committee decided. Players use flight balls for practice, instead of softballs or baseballs, as they are lighter and will not damage the facility.

Teams pay a small fee to cover the cost of electricity during practices, said Mr. Dodson.

A March 8 broomball tournament in St. Ignace generated \$1,000 that was donated to the Recreation Department, Mr. Paquin announced. The money will be used to purchase athletic equipment for public use.

An ad hoc committee to discuss the possibility of using the fitness center's treadmill room as an additional locker room for hockey teams during the season met March 19, with a report expected at the recreation board's April 9 meeting.