

Michigan's State Forests Are Certified as Healthy and Sustainable

Michigan has more than 19 million acres of forest land that provide recreation, products such as paper and lumber, and beautiful vistas. Our forests protect soil, air and water quality, and support biological diversity, wildlife and aquatic populations, and diverse plant communities.

In recent years, many citizens here and throughout the world have asked that forest managers demonstrate that they are practicing sustainable forest management. This means meeting the needs and values of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs and values.

Over the past decade, forest certification systems have been developed to assess forest sustainability. Each system has a set of standards or principles that address legal compliance, forest productivity, reforestation, forest health, biodiversity, planning, and soil and water protection as well as monitoring and improving practices.

In the United States, there are three prominent certification systems, each with a slightly different approach: the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Standards, and the American Tree Farm System (ATFS).

The SFI program has its origins in the U.S. and is focused on



Outdoor Matters
A column from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

applied forest management and on maintaining a high standard of forestry performance.

The FSC program is an international system that emphasizes social values and the environmental value of natural forest ecosystems, to which it adds an important economic dimension.

The ATFS program is geared toward private family forest landowners.

All three certification systems require an evaluation by qualified, independent, third-party auditors, and a certification certificate is issued only if acceptable conformance with the standard is demonstrated.

In 2005, at the direction of Governor Jennifer Granholm and the legislature, the Department of Natural Resources certified its 3.9-million acre state forest system under both the SFI and FSC programs, becoming the largest single dual-certified landowner in Michigan and one of the largest in the nation.

"Michigan is now one of only 10 states dual-certified under the

SFI and FSC programs," said Dennis Nezych, DNR forest certification specialist in Marquette.

To become certified, the Michigan state forest system underwent a rigorous two-week audit in September 2005, whereby on-the-ground forest practices were appraised against a set of forest certification standards that address environmental, social, and economic issues.

"The auditors appraise how effectively current management maintains forest health and productivity," Mr. Nezych said. "Certification is critical to Michigan from an economic standpoint. Major wood product consumers, such as Time Warner, now require the paper they use be produced from a certified forest which is well-managed and legally harvested. Certification of Michigan forests demonstrate that our forests are managed in a sound and comprehensive way."

To maintain certification, annual surveillance audits are conducted. Certification must be renewed every five years with a large scale

renewal audit. It is an adaptive system that strives for continual improvement.

"Forest certification keeps our forests competitive with forests in other states and around the world, in terms of timber products and goods," said Division Chief Lynne Boyd of DNR Forest, Mineral, and Fire Management. "It is fundamental that we maintain certification to retain and create jobs, continue to manage forests for wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities, and maintain overall forest health."

The Michigan state forest system recently celebrated its centennial.

During the October 2008 surveillance audit, auditors reported, "the sustainable forestry program of the Michigan DNR has many clear strengths which factored strongly into the finding of continuing conformance with the certification requirements."

The auditors noted collaboration among the Forest, Mineral, and Fire Management, Wildlife, and Fisheries divisions as a very positive aspect of Michigan DNR's management.

They found, overall, DNR's management of the state forests is on a steady course despite the increasing challenges associated with budget reductions and staff limitations.

Consumers can identify wood

products coming from certified, well-managed forests by product labeling. Both SFI and FSC have unique labels that you can search for the next time you purchase lumber or paper products.

Before a product may carry the SFI or FSC label, all stages of the production, from the certified forest to the finished product, must be tracked and independently evaluated.

Certification of Michigan's

state forest system clearly demonstrates a commitment to excellence and to sustainable management. Since certification in December 2005, the DNR has demonstrated continuing conformance with the standards.

More information about forest certification efforts in Michigan is available under the "Forests, Land and Water" section of the DNR's Web site at www.michigan.gov/dnr.

Michigan Politics

By
George Weeks



Candidates Atwitter Over New Media

Some things haven't changed along Michigan's gubernatorial campaign trail since statehood was achieved in 1837.

Most notably: Our cycle of economic boom, bust, and rebound continues in the wake of forces beyond state control. Term-limited Governor Jennifer Granholm is the third consecutive chief executive to inherit a deficit and budget woes from a predecessor.

Another recurring and related issue: the level and kind of taxes. Campaign debates about this abound through the ages. As 1963-69 Republican Governor George Romney observed: "The inequities and weakness of Michigan's tax structure have been documented time and again."

But there has been profound change on one front just since Granholm won her second term in 2006: campaign technology. New media has candidates atwitter about multiple ways to reach out to voters who will pick her successor in 2010.

Politicians of both parties across the nation are embracing interactivity cyber campaign techniques that proved so successful last year for now-President Barack Obama.

Lieutenant Governor John Cherry, early frontrunner for the Democratic nomination in Michigan and, he says, first lieutenant governor in the nation to go on Twitter, activated a Web site April 2 that has pages for Twitters, blogs, and a "newsroom" that includes endorsements and other political material as well as grants and other official items that he announces.

Cherry said the site, available at www.peopleforcherry.com, also features posters and stickers to download and print (more than 100 people ordered them the first two weeks, and he gained 1,129 Twitter "followers") and "widgets to bring our site directly to your Facebook, MySpace, iGoogle, or my Yahoo! account, or to any Web page or blog you want."

Hip as she is now to the new media, those are words that would have been alien to Granholm when she entered elective politics.

Cherry already has about a dozen people on his campaign staff, including two fulltime staffers running new media – Director Mike Muscat, 39, veteran of 15 years in the advertising industry, and Deputy Director Graham Davis, 22, fresh from Michigan State University.

I cite this because it underscores how Cherry, 58, a longtime legislator who has been kicking around the Capitol for 27 years, this far in advance of November 2010 has implemented techniques we will be hearing much more about in coming months. "He gets it," says Davis.

Chris DeWitt, campaign media guru for Cherry as he was for ex-Attorney General Frank Kelley and Granholm, recalls that when he started working in northern Michigan on now-Senator Carl Levin's campaign long ago, it was a big deal just to have two-way communication via fax.

DeWitt says that while TV ads will account for the bulk of the campaign budget, the new media site is a highly cost-effective way to connect directly and rapidly with voters on issues that they have indicated are important to them.

That's a view shared by John Yob, who had major roles with the Midwest and then national campaign for 2008 Republican presidential candidate John McCain. He

said: "You have to communicate with how [those you want to reach] communicate" – and younger generations are tuned to new media.

Yob now has a key role in helping Ann Arbor businessman Rick Snyder gear up for a bid for the Republican nomination. It's for sure that Snyder, a former president of the Gateway computer outfit and now top dog of one of the nation's largest investment firms focused on micro and nanotechnology companies, will be widget-wise on new media.

(Snyder, traveling this week in his GMC Yukon hybrid, scheduled a Tuesday kickoff in Marquette and Escanaba for his first "Statewide Listening Tour" and then, after stops in Cheboygan, Alpena, Gaylord, and Charlevoix, a full day Thursday in Traverse City.)

Shoe leather and stamp licking are less important these days in other than local campaigns.

But old-fashioned campaigning still counts. It's good to see U.S. Representative Pete Hoekstra (R-Holland) vowing in his gubernatorial quest to periodically campaign by bike, as he long has in his congressional district. And he's going to pull brief duty in various regular jobs. Gimmicks, but good for the local coverage.

About the time that Cherry announced his new media gig, U.S. Representative Dave Camp (R-Midland) launched a package of multimedia contacts, including a new Web site and Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube accounts, offering, he said, "constituents more ways than ever to contact and stay up-to-date with the latest developments from Capitol Hill."

Go to <http://camp.house.gov/> and you will immediately see on your screen a gesturing, trim fellow in a blue suit say in a loud voice: "Hi, I'm Dave Camp. Welcome to my Web site."

In announcing his project, Camp's office said: "The goal of the new multimedia sites is increased transparency, to keep constituents updated with easy-to-use formats and user-friendly features."

"So friend Camp on Facebook, follow him on Twitter, see his latest videos on YouTube, and check out the new Web site and submit your photos."

Camp also uses the device of making robo phone calls to unsuspecting constituents inviting them to stay on the line and join other constituents in asking him questions. Another northern congressman, Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) recently began the practice.

Oh, how far we have come in adding perks since Capitol Hill politicians got free postage as an advantage of incumbency.

"Friend him on Facebook. Follow him on Twitter" – it's a new political world out there.

But old ways still count in the era of new media, which, of course, draws much of its fodder from reliable "old media."

George Weeks retired in 2006 after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.

For the Record

In an article, "Local Man's Body Found at Straits," published in *The St. Ignace News* February 26 issue, it was incorrectly stated that George Wellington Jr.'s father, George, had reported him missing the day before.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Keep Residential Zoning in Place in Clark Township

To the Editor:

Storm clouds are on the horizon for Clark Township.

We have people of every income bracket and from almost every social background in our community. We are a conglomeration of Native Americans, fishermen, hunters, boaters, farmers, and retirees. We have artists, musicians, gift shop owners, restaurateurs, and various contractors. Hessel and Cedarville are a melting pot of cultures and lifestyles all jumbled into a fabric of quiet, laid-back island and rural living, planted in the middle of an ever-changing universe.

Clark Township is populated with people who love the many wonderful characters and characteristics that our area has to offer.

Over the last decade the main issue has been developing a plan for smart growth for the township, without jeopardizing the fragile fabric of the islands, wetlands, waterways, residential, and commercial areas.

We have entrusted our Board of Trustees to put in place a Planning Commission and Zoning Board with the objective to preserve and protect the best qualities of Clark Township's lifestyle, culture, and environment.

I want the board of trustees to do their elected duty and save our residential zone on Hillcrest Lane.

We have at issue here one person trying to change the fabric of our neighborhood.

The owner of lots 22 and 23 on Hillcrest Lane continues to battle the residents on this issue. He is seeking to change these R-1 residential lots to commercial in hopes of obtaining a special land use permit to make his parking lot legal.

In *The St. Ignace News* March 19, 2009, attorney James Murray claims that rezoning would not be spot zoning because properties across the street are zoned commercial. The last time I looked, there were two homes direct-

ly across the street.

There is an easement of 18 feet between two residential lots that constitutes the commercial property on Hillcrest Lane. There is less than 1% of the total frontage on Hillcrest Lane zoned commercial. Closer to the intersection of Hillcrest Lane and Island View, there is one section of property that is zoned resort, all other property along Hillcrest Lane is R-1 residential.

It seems that changing lots 22 and 23 to commercial would certainly fall under a spot zoning issue. This small percentage of property would be absolutely inconsistent with the zoned residential area.

Mr. Koster cries that he needs this change for the Hessel Harbor Association (HHA).

In *The St. Ignace News* February 19, 2009, Mr. Koster states, "I haven't made up my mind yet. I don't know. I'm going to look at what my options are." He goes on to say, "My concern is the long-term solution for the Hessel Harbor Association, and that would be that we're rezoned. That would give [association members] the most protection in the future and then it would become a conforming use on a commercial piece of property."

In our last annual membership meeting of the Hessel Harbor Association August 8, 2008, this very issue of the parking lot and how to solve the problem was on the agenda. At that time, there was in place a cease and desist order for no parking on Hillcrest Lane. The original developer and then vice president of HHA at that meeting commented on this issue. He felt it was up to each individual owner affected by this issue to hire attorneys and settle the parking problem in court. Let the HHA solve its parking problem without changing our R-1 residential zone.

If Mr. Koster would be forthcoming in all issues surrounding this case, it would help the Board of Trustees to understand his necessity for this parking lot. Mr. Koster is protecting his only avenue to a storage building on M-134. Access is through our residential neighborhood crossing Hillcrest Lane onto lot 23, then lot 22, on down, across wetlands he backfilled. Mr. Koster built a road where no road existed.

If this parking lot did not already exist, would the trustees still consider rezoning this property?

This parking lot was created without proper permits from the Township and Department of Environmental Quality.

It remains an eyesore to the residents of Hillcrest Lane, Island View, and Pickford Avenue.

This issue affects all residential areas in our township; do not let a precedent be set for spot zoning.

Please attend the public hearing Thursday, April 30, at Clark Township Hall at 7 p.m. Let your voice be heard; written comments also accepted.

Lea Brunson

Hessel

St. Ignace News Policies

Letters:

All responsible letters will be considered for publication and may be edited. They must be signed and a telephone number must be included for verification. Personal thank-you notes, personal attacks against other people, form letters, and letters promoting political candidates are not accepted, although letters for or against ballot proposals are welcome.

Obituaries:

The St. Ignace News maintains a policy of not charging for obituaries and we do often add information or rewrite them for clarity and reader interest. Obituaries that the family wants published exactly as submitted can be placed in the newspaper for \$75. Photographs are welcome at no charge.

Weddings:

Weddings with photographs are published without charge within 45 days of the ceremony. After 45 days, a photograph can be included for \$35.00.

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The complete edition of The St. Ignace News is available online at stignacenews.com.

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USPS Periodical Publication Number - 462-380

ESTABLISHED 1878

Published each Thursday at Saint Ignace, Mackinac County, Michigan

Entered in Saint Ignace, Michigan Post Office as Periodical Mail Matter, Act of March 3, 1879

Periodical Postage Paid at Saint Ignace, MI • Additional Postage Paid at Gaylord, MI

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to St. Ignace News, PO Box 277, St. Ignace, MI 49781

Volume 130, Number 3 Thursday, April 23, 2009

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Subscriptions:

\$42 in Mackinac, Chippewa, Emmet, Luce, and Cheboygan counties.

\$52 elsewhere in the United States and military post offices.

\$35 for the Web edition at www.saintignacenews.com

We take Visa, MasterCard, and Discover

The quotation under the flag of *The St. Ignace News* on Page 1 is from the 10 triads written by Dr. Fred Newton Scott, creator and teacher of the first continuous course in journalism in the United States at the University of Michigan in 1890. The 10 triads are chiseled on the parapet of the Detroit News Building at 615 Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit. They were headed "Ideals of the Press" or "The Newspaper in a Free Society," and serve as a reminder of what a free press means to us.