

HERON TRACKS

The Official Newsletter of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
Volume 24 Number 1 Winter 2017

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Executive Director's Corner

It is a new year, a new time. Like the seasons, nothing is static. Winter rolls into spring, often taking steps back before finally giving way to the bloom period. We continue to move forward, and encourage you to enjoy the fruits of nature. In saying that, I reference the work completed before me: Bundy Hill, most notably. Then my own (and feeling fortunate for the privilege) most recently, the Hagen Preserve. One very large accomplishment intended to ensure that a local treasure remains accessible. One very small parcel added to a large corridor of natural touchstones linked together by the Chippewa River, increasing the amount of wildlife habitat corridor facilitated by its addition.

As I work to create management plans for each parcel, I keep your interaction with each in mind. You are an integral part of the picture. I keep the generations in mind. Our generation, the next one, and the ones who gifted us in starting this adventure. We are significant members of the natural world, both insightful and with impact. It is our good fortune to share that love of nature and enable the generations that come before and after us to do the same.

So thank you to the donors that continue to entrust us with ever more pieces of your natural heritage.

Thank you to the newest easement donor, who so loves the fertile soil, woodland and waters which



Katie Randall, CWC Executive Director

their property holds that they placed it under our watchful eye. It is a promise and a duty of the highest order. You, our members and stakeholders are in it for all the right reasons, and continue to render the privilege of this keep to us. We need you to do so. We gladly share this responsibility of nature keeping. It is what we do; and in no small way, thanks to you.

Become a Banquet Sponsor

Our 22nd Annual Spring Banquet is coming up on Thursday, April 20th, and once again this year we are looking for sponsors to step up in support of our banquet by contributing \$200 to underwrite the cost. You don't have to attend to be a sponsor, and in fact, this is a great way to show your support of the CWC if you are unable to attend. You will be acknowledged at the banquet as a Banquet Sponsor, and more importantly, you will have the good feeling of knowing that all of the proceeds generated by the banquet will go to support the mission of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy to preserve open space and wildlife habitat.



So how about it? Are you ready to step up and become a Banquet Sponsor?

A banquet reservation form is included in this copy of our newsletter.



John Mitchell, CWC Board President

Waiting for the family to awaken on Christmas morning, I read the last of Edward Wilson's Half Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life. Falling asleep as I finished his lament on the path we are following; a path that might yet turn in time, I found myself in Scrooge's dream. Three visions visited me. First, Wilson's plea that half of Earth be set aside to sustain the natural systems that as yet we do not understand well enough to be justified in allowing them to perish. Then, a heart-felt message from one of our own, Mike LeValley, encouraging all who read his Blog as Education Director of the local Conservation District (<http://mid-michigannatureandscience.blogspot.com/>) to support the CWC or other local conservation organization. And finally, my own plea of last winter for others to join me in paying a private carbon tax, in my case to the CWC.

Last winter I penned: "We all want a world where we, and future

President's Statement

generations, do not need to worry about human-caused climate change. I think we can agree on that." Today I add the interrelated scourge of what many call the 6th Extinction to that statement.

Wilson estimates that about 15% of Earth's land is protected, at least in name

To date the CWC has protected almost 5,000 acres representing about 1/4 of 1% of our five county service area. Yes, there are state forests and public parks. Yes, we are not a bio-diversity 'hot spot'. But it is obvious that we have a long enough way to go that the calculation is meaningless. And as our friend Mike LeValley would remind us, it makes sense to put your dollars into where you live. After all, we the citizens of central Michigan are the people responsible for protecting our local ecosystem.

I once again entered my data into the calculator on 'Carbon Footprint Ltd' (<http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>) and my personal carbon footprint is (egads!) about 14 tons. William Nordhaus of Yale recently updated his estimate of the social cost of carbon to about \$40 per ton. So, my 14 tons of CO2 equivalents at \$40 per ton add up to \$560. That is my so-called carbon debt for 2017. No small amount. And yes, kind of scary. The US average is over 20 tons per person while

to avoid more than 2 degree Celsius of increased temperature we need to get down to 2 tons per person.

Katie; the check for \$560 is in the mail

I'd like to think of this as the Citizens' Climate Lobby's proposed 'Carbon Fee and Dividend' with mine designated for the CWC. Since the United States government is not administering it, I am once again charging myself and sending it to the CWC. I know that something very real will be done to permanently maintain the earth's ability to absorb and sequester my carbon pollution.

This doesn't let me off the hook to reduce my carbon footprint. I do feel a bit better; the first step to reducing our carbon footprint is to know where we stand. I hope each of you will check out your personal carbon footprint. The tax is optional. The effect on Mother Earth is not.

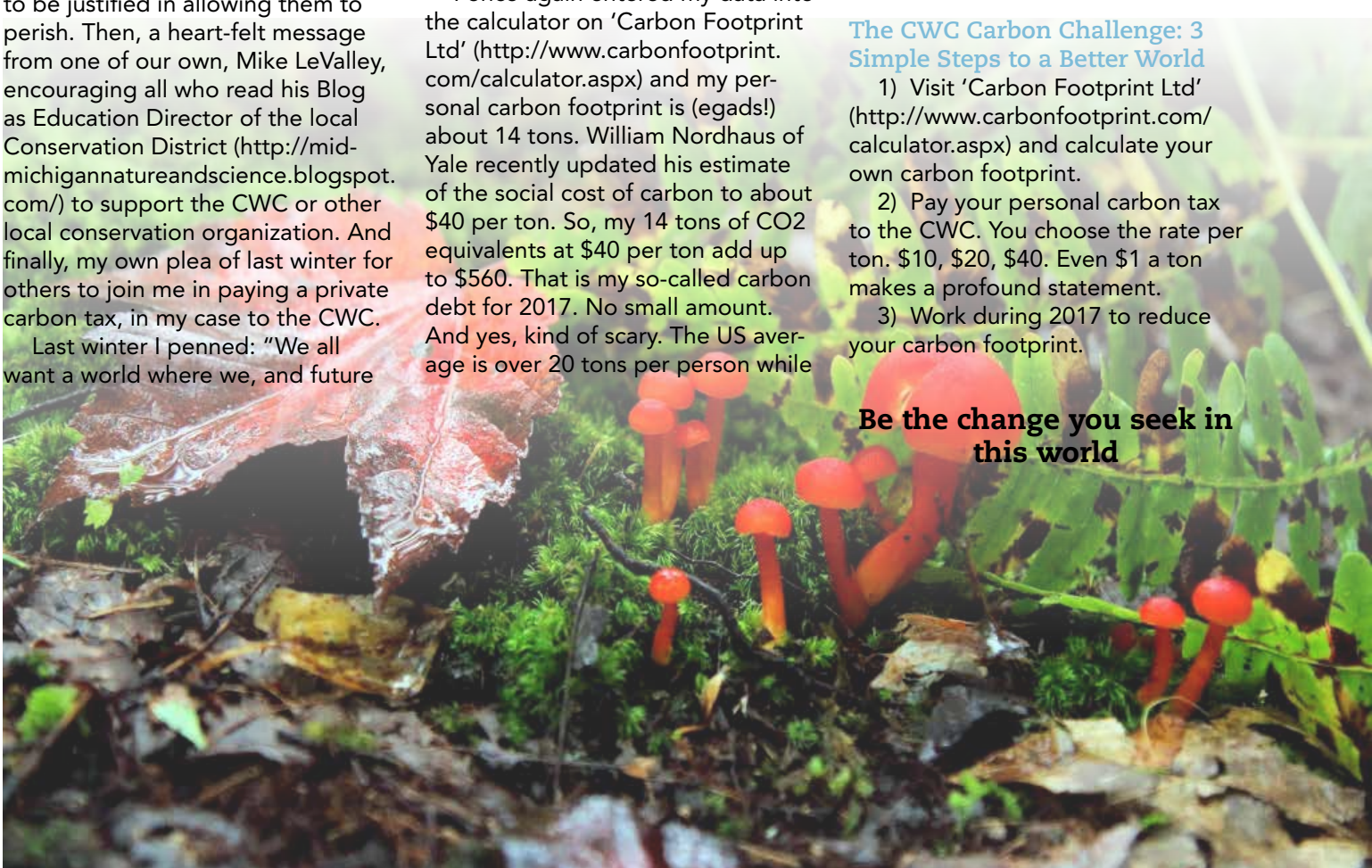
The CWC Carbon Challenge: 3 Simple Steps to a Better World

1) Visit 'Carbon Footprint Ltd' (<http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>) and calculate your own carbon footprint.

2) Pay your personal carbon tax to the CWC. You choose the rate per ton. \$10, \$20, \$40. Even \$1 a ton makes a profound statement.

3) Work during 2017 to reduce your carbon footprint.

Be the change you seek in this world



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Connecting the Dots: From Woods to Water



From cradle to grave, protecting fisheries habitat requires consideration of every step in the process. For example, long known for their hardiness and need for space, northern pike need protection at every life stage, despite their eventual size. That largesse exhibited at the end of a thrilling fight between reel and hook comes in no small thanks to the provision of spawning and nursery habitat that ensures a successful brood season. Ungulates use protective corridors to move between summer and winter ranges for breeding, birthing and rearing. Fish require similar considerations. Although differing widely between species and their natural history, the same elements remain; spawning, nursery, and territorial habitat are essential for success.

The trick is to ensure the system connects, protects, and flows like the Holland tunnel at rush hour. Okay, maybe that analogy is not the best one, but you get the gist. So how is the CWC providing this essential habitat corridor for northern pike?

It is as simple and as complicated as ensuring that the habitats we provide through our acquisition and protection strategies meet the needs of native plants and animals. Aquatic habitat of high integrity and complexity is crucial in the grand design for successful management.

Almost everything utilizes wetlands, lakes, rivers and riparian corridors. Bays and inlets, emergent creeks, headwater springs and wetlands offer the perfect place for food resources and nesting habitat. Whether fashioned from the woven strands of last year's matted cattails, bedded on mats of grasses above the water line, overhead in tall trees using stocky branches as chunky nests, or sheltered within banks beneath grassy overhangs, aquatic habitats host a diversity of residents.

So those very large fish, the ones speckled and dappled to match the sunlight streaming through the



spatterdock, the graceful arrow arum and ribbon-leaf pondweed can find the emergent creek and swim inland to its headwaters. There, in the shallow warmer waters of the marsh, the female pike lays tiny eggs scattered in a cloud of male pike seminal fluid, sticky enough to cling to the underside of plant leaves. Fertilization is literally dependent upon the "catch-as-catch-can" method. Nevertheless, there in the sheltered wetland, the pike grow and learn to hunt; until in a year's time, they are large enough and now intolerant of the warm waters. They are ready for life in the lake.

This is not to say that life is not fraught with danger, and that every egg reaches maturity. Predator though the pike may be, getting to that stage is 90% of the battle. Young pike are prey as well as predator, whether in the marsh, swimming the creek channel, or in the lake. By seeking to provide adequate food and shelter for all, we as habitat managers work to foster the biodiversity that provides for healthy predator/prey relationships. In other words, we root for everything.

Reference:
Life of a Pike: Growing up is hard to do-especially when your siblings are trying to eat you http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/young_naturalists/young-naturalists-article/pike_life/pike_life.pdf

CWC PROTECTED LAND

County	Acres
Clare	2,494
Gratiot	149
Isabella	939
Mecosta	491
Montcalm	816
Midland	8
34 Easements	4,284 Acres
21 Preserves	614 Acres
1 Government Transfer	(2 Acres)
TOTAL	4,898 Acres

22nd Annual CWC Spring Banquet

Thursday, April 20, 2017



1559 S. Chippewa Road
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

KEYNOTE SPEAKER Kyle Bagnall



Featuring:

Silent Auction & Social Hour, 5:30 pm
Deluxe Dinner Buffet, 6:15 pm
Prime Rib and Chicken Veronique
Music by Charlie Walmsley
50/50 Raffle
\$400 Motorless Motion Raffle
Live Auction

\$60 ADVANCED REGISTRATION, \$65 AT THE DOOR

Kyle W. Bagnall received a Bachelor of Arts in Public History from Western Michigan University in 1993. Since 1995, he has worked as Manager of Historical Programs at Chippewa Nature Center, designing and presenting environmental history programs on topics such as Woodland Indian life, agriculture, fur trade, lumbering, surveying and settlement. Kyle has presented Bela Hubbard programs throughout Michigan since 2005, Ephraim Williams programs since 2011 and introduced the John Loyer program in 2013. Mr. Bagnall will be presenting "A Chippewa River Odyssey," a visual journey of his 2014 trip in a solo canoe down the entire length of this local waterway. We will learn about access points, river conditions and historical points of interest along the route. Like the river itself, we'll meander through tales of fallen trees and stinging nettles, a capsized canoe and a broken paddle, autumn leaves, ice jams, abundant wildlife and an unforgettable journey through the seasons.

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(\$65 at door)

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