

THE LAKE GUARDIAN



SPRING 2023

PHOTO CREDIT: MARGE BEAVER
PHOTOGRAPHY-PLUS.COM

Historical Highlights *Howes Leather Company, Boyne City*

Kim Baker

“An Industry Dies—An Era Ends” was the frontpage headline of the *Northland Press*, Thursday, September 25, 1969. The article describes the community’s surprise over the loss of Michigan’s last sole leather plant—Howes Leather Company, Charlevoix County’s oldest major industry at the time.

R. H. (Rudy) Jacobson, the plant’s superintendent, announced the news, “The final processing of hides is

underway, and the cutting plant will close on Friday. All work at the plant will cease by November 14.”

At one time, there were 22 tanneries in Michigan, the closest being on Petoskey’s Old Tannery Road on the southeast shore of Little Traverse Bay.

Boyne’s tannery opened at the turn of the century, two years before the Wright brothers historic Kitty Hawk flight in 1903. The plant employed over 180 men who “sloshed their way around

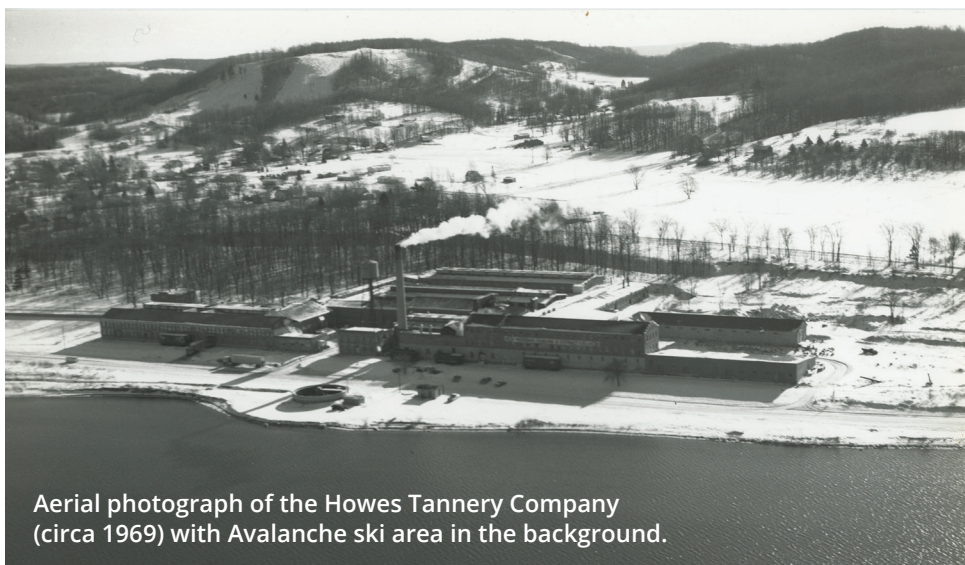
vats of hemlock extract where thousands of hides were turned into sole leather.” Most of the product went to shoe soles, others for belts and gloves. During the Second World War, Howes supplied soles for military boots.

But the industry’s demise was inevitable. The demand for sole leather dwindled as synthetics took over and the Kennedy administration failed to protect the industry from cheap foreign imports. Howes officials also cited Michigan’s Pollution Act of 1965, which would have required the operation to make costly water treatment improvements by 1971.

As a result of the tannery’s closure, the Penn-Central railroad, which had delivered 600-700 carloads of hides from the Chicago stockyards to Boyne annually, renewed its petition to abandon its tracks north of Grand Rapids, starting with the 7-mile stretch connecting Boyne Falls and Boyne City.

Once the die was cast, Superintendent Jacobson carefully went through the company archives to preserve the plant’s history. Boyne City

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Aerial photograph of the Howes Tannery Company (circa 1969) with Avalanche ski area in the background.

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PHOTO CREDIT: CYNTHIA KUJAWSKI
CINDYKUJAWSKI@YAHOO.COM

President's Corner

LAST SPRING, MY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE ENDED WITH THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH:

"Both our mission statement and our state constitution require balancing the forces of conservation and development. This balancing act is always a challenge. Maintaining our watershed so our water is



clean and safe to drink, live in and play on, not only for us but for all the living things in the watershed, is a very complex task. We do our best to come up with 'things we can do' to contribute. We also do well

when we remember that nature, when given enough room and enough time, will strike a balance. That is why, among other things, our focus on shoreline protection emphasizes providing space for natural forces to work with minimal interruption. After all, in the end, nature prevails."

Those of you who attended Lake Charlevoix Day last June will recall that Dr Guy Meadows and Dr Richard Norton joined us in an engaging community dialogue about how to care for our lake.

Earlier this spring, Doctors Norton, and Meadows (as lead authors) published a definitive treatise titled "Armor or Withdraw? Likely Litigation and Potential Adjudication of Shoreland Conflicts Along Michigan's Shifting Great Lakes Coasts" to be published in the Michigan Journal of Environmental and Administrative Law. *(It can be viewed online at <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4321238>.)* This is a serious, scholarly article, 147 pages long, extensively footnoted. Part of it is a comprehensive primer on the complex legal structures and arguments that come up in any discussion of shoreline (watershed) protection. Part of it is a review of the earth and lake science principles which explain the forces of nature that are at work along our shorelines. It lays out the responsibilities as well as the rights of riparian owners.

After a thorough review of the science and the law, the authors frame the issue in simple terms. In any given location, we cannot preserve both the beach and the beach house. Sooner or later, depending on location, either the beach will take out the beach house or the protections built to protect the beach house will destroy the beach. They go on to point out that the beach is held in trust for the public whereas the beach house is privately held,

setting up a classic conflict between the rights of owners of parcels of land to use their land freely and the rights of neighbors and the general public to protect the lands beyond the boundaries of that particular parcel. The authors are not optimistic that litigation will lead to environmentally sound solutions.

Instead, they argue: "Finally and most importantly, the Michigan Legislature and the legislative bodies of Michigan's coastal localities . . . should convene legislative working groups with all parties affected—including shoreland property owners and the rest of the community more broadly. They should collect all the data and information currently available regarding shoreline dynamics, governmental authorities, and limitations, and shoreland property owner rights and responsibilities under law. And they should deliberate carefully on what if any modifications to current statutes might be warranted—recognizing and fully vetting all the likely tradeoffs any decisions would implicate, both in terms of impacts to private shoreland properties and to the State's Great Lakes public trust coastal resources." @ pg 147

Working to find that balance is our mission at Lake Charlevoix Association. We have our work cut out for us.

*Tom Darnton,
LCA President*

Mission:

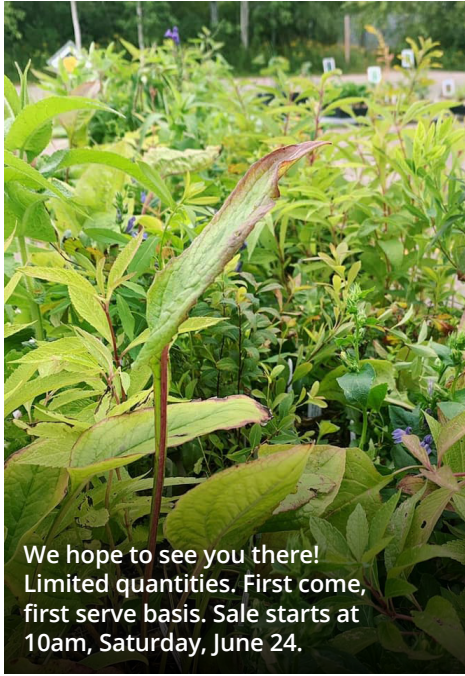
*Protect the natural quality and beauty of Lake Charlevoix.
Promote understanding and support for safe and shared lake use.
Advocate sensible and sustainable practices for lake use and development.*

LCA Board of Trustees

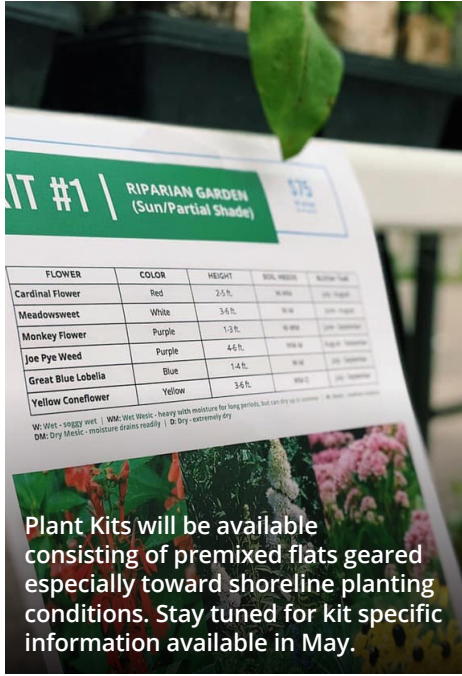
Tom Darnton | President
Dan Mishler | 2nd Vice President
Howard Warner | Treasurer
John Hoffman | Secretary

Kim Baker | Director
Joe Kimmell | Director
Peggy Smith | Director

www.lakecharlevoix.org
Like us on Facebook!



We hope to see you there!
Limited quantities. First come,
first serve basis. Sale starts at
10am, Saturday, June 24.



Plant Kits will be available
consisting of premixed flats geared
especially toward shoreline planting
conditions. Stay tuned for kit specific
information available in May.

TWO LAKE ASSOCIATIONS SHARE COMMON GROUND

The 2023 Native Plant Sale

Peggy Smith

Michigan has more than 11,000 inland lakes supported by more than one hundred thousand members of lake associations. Each of these lakes is unique in terms of their size, shape, and health. The one common feature that every one of these lakes has is a shoreline. A shoreline that when equipped with the appropriate vegetative buffer will purify water, buffer waves, reduce erosion, store carbon, and serve to maintain a healthy habitat for the fish, birds, and other wildlife that live in and around the lake.

To that end, the Lake Charlevoix Association and the Walloon Lake Association are hosting a native plant sale. The plants have been sourced from the Otsego Conservation District greenhouse. That means they are appropriate for our area and will support and enhance your lakefront and watershed gardens.

To meet everyone's needs, they may be purchased in flats or as individual plugs. Each plant will be labeled with both name and the habitat that best suits its growing needs. This sale is a beautiful opportunity to try something new, share a flat or two with a neighbor, or expand existing planting beds with proven stock that likes your location.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Peggy Smith at jps197@comcast.net.

2023 NATIVE PLANT SALE

SATURDAY, JUNE 24TH
10AM - 1PM
4060 N. M-75
THE WLAC FRONT LAWN



It's time to renew your annual membership to the Lake Charlevoix Association.

The Lake Charlevoix Association plays an important role in keeping our beautiful lake one of the healthiest in North America. Our efforts include research, education, advocacy, and collaborating with other environmental organizations—all aimed at protecting Lake Charlevoix for future generations to enjoy.

Please use the enclosed envelope or go to <https://www.lakecharlevoix.org/support-us.html> to renew or increase your annual support. You will be providing critical funding for our 2023 activities.

Thank you for your ongoing support!



PHOTO CREDIT: JOEL VANROEKEL

ICE

Then and Now

Joel VanRoekel

FOR MORE THAN 10,000 YEARS, HABITANTS AND VISITORS OF OUR CHARLEVOIX WATERSHED HAVE SHARED A LANDSCAPE DOTTED WITH LAKES AND RIVERS NESTLED AMONG ROLLING FORESTED HILLS.

It wasn't always that way, however. Geologists tell us that Michigan was above sea level for some 200,000,000 years. Around a million or so years ago, winters began to lengthen, snowfall increased, and it didn't melt. Glaciers began to form when new fallen flakes of snow became compacted. The airy crystals changed into pellets of ice, which in turn changed into granules called firn. This build up continued for thousands of years until the ice became so heavy that the sheet began to move simply under its own weight.

Over time, climate change caused lobes or sheets of ice to advance and retreat in a series of glaciations that covered the entire state. Ice scoured the land, plucking rocks and pushing boulders. It abraded the land's surface like coarse sandpaper. The result of this

glacial movement was so profound that it left Michigan with about 400 different types of soils and a multitude of rocks and minerals.

Just about every feature in our watershed was formed in some way by ice and water. Our hills, valleys, lakes, ponds, and wetlands are there primarily because of the ice, melt water, or ground water created by the glaciers. The next time you are on the road in Charlevoix County, take the time to notice the variety of landforms around you. In geological terminology, you will find that many of our highest hills are recessional moraines, like Boyne Highlands and Nub's Nob. They came about when a pause in the advancing glacier allowed the ice to melt and the till (ranging from clay to boulders) was left. Mt. McSauba is more than 700 feet of dune field created during the post-glacial Lake Nipissing Great Lakes era. On your next drive between Charlevoix and Torch Lake you will notice several drumlins (streamlined elliptical hills that can be up to a mile in length) that are on the

eastern side of US31. They were molded by overriding ice depositing a mix of clay up to boulder sized rocks.

The indigenous peoples who first explored our area may have seen the last vestiges of a mile high wall of ice as it receded to the north. What remained was a land dotted with thousands of kettle lakes, medium sized depressions ranging from a quarter mile to two miles across. Thumb Lake and Deer Lake are two of the many kettle lakes in our county. They were formed when massive chunks of ice separated from the receding glacier and became buried in sediment to slowly melt. The weight of the ice coupled with the melting water filled the depression left by the block.

While the glaciers are gone for now, ice is still having its way with our lake. Each spring brings evidence (see photo at top of page) of the powerful forces that shaped our state millions of years ago. They are still at work today. It's a reminder that we have a living lake that is vulnerable to forces beyond our control.



PHOTO CREDIT: A.I. DEPICTION OF THE LAURENTIDE GLACIER

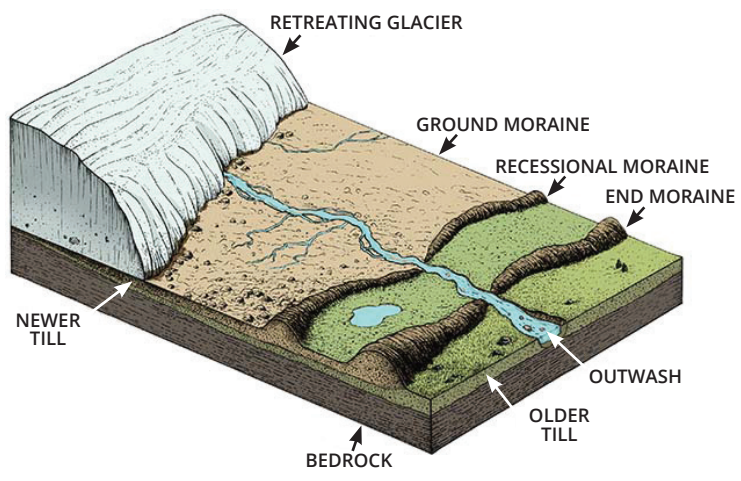


PHOTO CREDIT: OHIO DNR



A Living Shoreline

A THRIVING LAKE

Joel VanRoekel

If you look up “Fun Facts for Michigan Lakes,” you will learn that Houghton Lake is the biggest, Torch Lake is the longest, and Lake Charlevoix’s shoreline is nearly the same length as the other two combined. The importance of this last fact is that healthy lakes require healthy shorelines. One of the key findings of the *National Lakes Assessment* was that lakes with poor shoreline health are three times as likely to be in poor overall biological condition than lakes with good quality shorelines.

The LCA, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, and the Land Information Access Association take shoreline health seriously. They have been meeting with the three city and seven township planning commissions over the past year to review and discuss the ordinances and regulations that are designed to protect and preserve our lakeshore.

Imbedded in those shoreline ordinances is a term that describes the land area from the water’s edge to a specified distance upland from the lake. “Buffer strip”, “green belt”, and “native shoreline” are some of the labels used for that critical area of the lake that filters runoff, stabilizes the shoreline, and supports the lives of aquatic plants, animals, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals.

The ordinances concerning riparian shorelines explain in very precise terms

WHAT they can and should do on their shorelines in a variety of situations.

What isn’t as apparent is WHY something should be done in certain ways. We don’t really move beyond a generalized notion that it’s “good for the lake,” when the real question is “what difference will my treatment of the buffer zone make for the health of the lake and all that’s in it?”

That’s where the relatively new concept of a “Living Shoreline” can help. In broad strokes, a Living Shoreline reminds us that there are 100,000 species of plants and animals living in freshwater habitats. Living Shorelines are designed to connect the land to the water in ways that support a healthy lake ecosystem, stabilize the shoreline, reduce erosion, and do not interrupt the connections between the water, shore, lake bank, and upland.

What does Living Shoreline mean for an individual parcel of lakefront? It means there might be a muskrat swimming toward the bridge with a mouth full of



PHOTO CREDIT: JOEL VANROEKEL

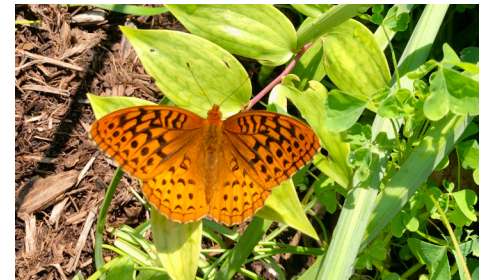


reeds gathered at the south end of the property.

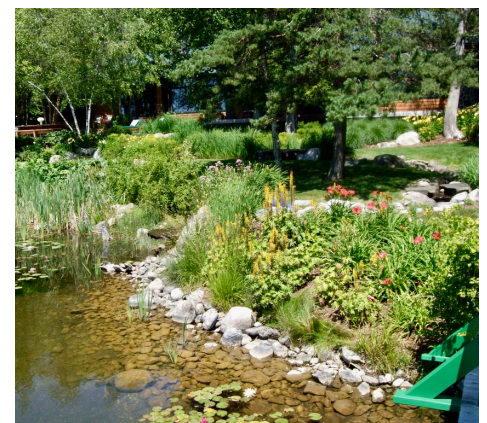
It’s a mink kit that was curious enough to come within six feet of the beach chair, while its mother watched from the cattails nearby.

It’s the beaver swimming under the dock, oblivious that it’s being watched from above. It’s the neighbor’s text that they’ve spotted the otters off their dock or friends in Sleepy Hollow Bay asking if we heard the loons this morning. It’s the waterfowl, eagles, king fishers, herons and shorebirds that inhabit the bay.

Living shorelines like this allow creatures like this to thrive.



There is legitimate concern that inappropriate shoreline development and the failure to comply with current standards will damage the quality of water, the health of the wildlife and the beauty of the lake. Living shorelines can help future generations see what you see here.



THE *Wake Boats* ARE COMING!

John Hoffman

FOR THOSE OF US WHO GREW UP AS SLALOM SKIERS ON INLAND LAKES, THE PREFERRED TOWING BOAT WAS ONE THAT PRODUCED THE SMALLEST WAKE SO THAT WE COULD RAPIDLY CRISSCROSS THE WAKE FROM SIDE TO SIDE. WELL, NOT SO MUCH THESE DAYS AS WAKEBOARDERS AND WAKE SURFERS WANT THE LARGEST WAKE POSSIBLE TO PRODUCE JUMPS AND THE ABILITY TO "SURF" A CONTINUOUS WAVE ON A SURFBOARD.

The growing popularity of wake surfing and wakeboarding has significantly increased the demand for boats that can produce wakes of up to 3 feet or more. These boats have hulls that are shaped to produce a maximum wake and often include a hydrofoil that pushes the stern downwardly and raises the bow. In addition, ballast tanks can be filled with water to increase the weight of the stern.

Sounds like great fun, so what's the issue? In response to increasing concerns from riparians about shoreline erosion, and other lake users that fish or use paddleboards and small nonmotorized watercraft, the University of Minnesota conducted a study in 2020. It compared the wake waves produced by wake surfing boats to those produced by conventional powerboats of generally similar size. The study found that under typical operating conditions at 100 feet, the wake boats produced maximum wave heights 2 -3 times larger and wave

energies 6 - 12 times larger than the conventional boats. Further, the large waves generated by wake boats take a much longer distance to dissipate (500 feet or more) as the similar wake wave characteristics of the non-wake surf boats. The Michigan DNR reports that the propellers of wake boats generate turbulence that can resuspend bottom sediments as deep as 33 feet.

The negative environmental effects of the large waves include shoreline erosion and the degradation of fish habitat. Sediment resuspension can cause nutrients to become available in the water column that may result in excessive algae growth.

The 100 ft shoreline "buffer" under

existing Michigan boating law was put in place before the arrival of wake boats in the early 2000s and has been deemed insufficient to provide the necessary environmental protections. Accordingly, The Michigan DNR recommends that wake boats when operating in wake-surfing or wakeboarding modes:

- 1 ***Operate at least 500 feet from docks or the shoreline regardless of water depth.***
- 2 ***Operate in water at least 15 deep.***

So, when wakeboarding or wake surfing this summer, have a great time but keep the health of Lake Charlevoix in mind!





PHOTO CREDIT: SHERRY PURSEL

VISIONING Update

Tom Darnton

Updating the Fall Issue cover story, we have completed the second round of planning commission meetings described there and are hard at work on the final report. The report itself should be available by early summer. We found that the commitment to shoreline protection remains firm and well informed within the planning community. We also found a good deal of frustration with the existing methods for applying and enforcing shoreline protection principles.

In addition to the forthcoming written report, our efforts have helped re-establish the annual "Planner's Forum", an annual gathering of the watershed planning community for timely workshops and networking. It will convene again in November of 2023. Together with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, we have also begun a needed and mandated 10-year review of our Watershed Management Plan. We'll have more on those subjects at our annual meeting and in the Fall 2023 newsletter.

Historical Highlights

Howes Leather Company, Boyne City

Continued from page 1

manager, Forbes Tompkins, hoped that if another industry didn't emerge to take over some of the existing buildings, Howes would "see fit to dedicate a strip along the lake as a permanent public park and beach." Today, Boyne City Tannery Park, just west of the Harborage, provides public access to Lake Charlevoix.

In the fall of 1970, Jacobson and a few key employees moved east to oversee and close the remaining tanneries in Curwensville, Pennsylvania, and Durbin, West Virginia. Ford Motor Company hired as many of the skilled workers from the plant as they could entice to move. According to the *Northland Press*, the majority of the "faithful workers" remained in the area.



R. H. (Rudy) Jacobson, a local Boyne City boy who raised in the ranks to become the tannery's last superintendent.

Special Thanks

Special thanks to my Horton Bay neighbor, Roger Jacobson (Rudy Jacobson's son) for the source material and images for this article. Roger, now 77 years old, remembers cleaning his dad's offices as a teenager and unloading carloads of 90 lb. raw hides wrapped with salt and 100 lb. bags of Quebracho bark imported from South America,

once local stands of Hemlock trees were depleted. The whole experience encouraged "Jake" to take his University of Michigan engineering studies seriously!



"Boyne City Tanning Company," an artistic rendering of the sole leather plant on the southeast shore of Lake Charlevoix.



Tributes

**In Memory of
Walt & Martha Landis**
By Connie Landis

**In Memory of
Seymour Greenwald**
By Greenwald Builders

**In Memory of
David Harris**
By Carol Harris

**In Honor
Paul Nowak**
By Jonathon & Lynn Friendly



Join now!

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SELC *Join Us!*



PHOTO CREDIT: JULIE STRATTON

Each May the Lake Charlevoix Association and the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council sponsor an event called **Students Experience Lake Charlevoix (SELC)** for approximately 300 area sixth and seventh graders. For the event, students board the Beaver Islander in Charlevoix, travel to the west bay of Lake Charlevoix and spend either a morning or an afternoon on board participating in experiments relating to water quality, watershed protection, invasive species, water safety and several other topics. The students rotate to seven different learning stations which are run by enthusiastic area volunteers. It's a great, fun learning experience for everyone on board. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us at info@lakecharlevoix.org

SEPTIC STUDY UPDATE: Sampling data is just in and according to Dr. Uzarski from CMU, alarming nutrient levels, likely from both septic leaching and other sources, were found in many of the 90+ locations sampled. We are planning for a deeper and broader study soon. Stay tuned.



Scan QR Code for
**WATERLEVELS
FORECAST**



News Bites

PHOTO CREDIT: NATALIE LEFEVRE WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/BYLANDNSEA

Annual Meeting: Please join us on Tuesday, June 20th, for our LCA Annual Meeting at The Boathouse on Lake Charlevoix located at 204 Water St., East Jordan. We will host a coffee hour from 9-10 a.m. followed by the meeting from 10 a.m. - noon.

Renewal Time: Please take a moment to join/renew your LCA Membership. Please scan the QR code above which takes you to our website www.lakecharlevoix.org. Online renewal is preferred. You may also mail the remittance envelope enclosed in this newsletter. We appreciate your support. The LCA lake protection programs are only possible through the generous contributions of our members. The LCA is a 501(c)3 and donations are fully tax-deductible.

POD: Please remember to put your pills in the POD. Improper disposal of unwanted and expired medicine can pose a significant danger to Lake Charlevoix. The best solution is to properly dispose of them through Northern Michigan's Prescription & Over-the-Counter Drug Drop-off (POD) Program. Find the nearest POD location here: www.pillsinthepod.com

Thank you: We want to take a moment to express our sincere gratitude for your generous support of the LCA mission. Your contributions have made a significant impact on our ability to protect Lake Charlevoix. We understand that you have many choices when it comes to donating and we are honored that you have chosen to support our cause. We look forward to sharing our progress with you and making a lasting impact together.