TNNEWS Front Page
TOWNSHIP NEIGHBORS NETWORK
An all – volunteer, 501(c)(3) – Serving Elk Rapids, Milton, Torch Lake, and Banks Townships
Summer 2025 Edition

TODAY'S WEATHER:
www.wunderground.com/us/mi/kewadin

STORM CENTRAL
www.gtlakes.com/storm-central/

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

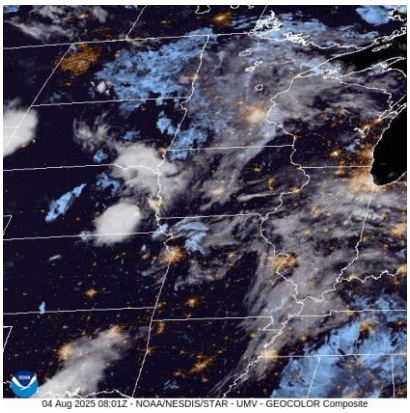
Wildfire Smoke Continues to Spread Across the Great Lakes
https://www.weather.gov/grb/Smoke

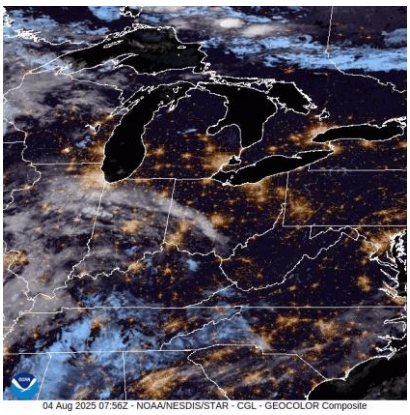
Smoke from wildfires across Canada and the western U.S. continues to spread across the skies across much of the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes.

The smoke may dim the sun and create colorful sunrises and sunsets. Where the smoke is the thickest, it is reaching the surface at times, reducing visibilities, and creating a burning smell.

The smoke will also create air quality issues at times, mainly for sensitive groups. See the links below for more information. Please see the links below.
Real-Time Satellite Animation

https://www.weather.gov/grb/Smoke

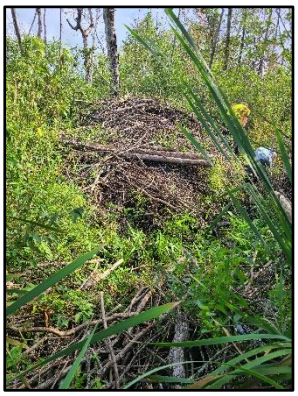




GRAND TRAVERSE BAY BOTTOMLANDS - NEARLY DEVOID OF LIFE
Restoring the Bay food web is daunting - but can be restored one stream at a time
THE MITCHELL CREEK-KEWADIN PROJECT SHOWS HOW

RESTORE FLOW – MITCHELL CREEK-KEWADIN.
East Bay aquatic food web is all but gone. Quagga Mussels are the culprit. Too much for TNN to tackle. Restoring food web one stream at a time in TNN service area is possible. Mitchell Creek-Kewadin is the largest of eight streams along Antrim East Bay coast. The Creek went dry in 2021-22. Trout, salmon, smelt, crawfish, are gone.

PERMIT - CONTRACT – INSURANCE - WEATHER EGLE Permit was granted December 2024. A contract between the property owner, excavator and TNN was signed March, 2025. Funding was provided by direct donations to TNN, Rotary Club-ER, and Rotary Club West Michigan District. Lability insurance was obtained. Spring runoff, rainstorms, and weight limits pushed work into May.



EXCAVATION. In time, the soil dried out and stabilized to support equipment. Excavation began after a dry spell, to slowly draw down water levels from Mud Lake, Creek, and wetlands. With soil stability, excavation was completed in one day. There was no increase in runoff onto adjacent property as observed by TNN volunteer naturalist, and a neighboring property owner.

RESULTS. Requirements of the EGLE Permit were met. Debris piles and dams were removed to high ground on property via an access path through wetland scrub. The path was smoothed & reseeded. Work was approved by TNN volunteer naturalist Scott DeFrain whose photos recorded results. He noted:

"The Creek is clear from old dam site to Mud Lake. Most of the water is now within the channel. Still some standing water in the marsh area. No new beaver sign. I do see signs of otters."

Other observers concluded that the Mitchell Creek-Kewadin watershed, which been split in half by obstructions, once again flowed as one watershed. (Note: A two-track and marshlands on property in Creek headwaters had been flooded since 2022).

RESEARCH. This success was all about the team. Two years of research by TNN volunteers led the great result – authorized aerial, kayak and on-foot observations with Antrim Conservation District (ACD) found huge dams and debris piles blocked Creek flow. This led to high water on Mud Lake and impact on aquatic life, hard woods, a home at risk of flooding, farms and wetlands in the watershed. Interests of Creek, Bay, farm, rural, and Mud Lake residents were aligned in favor of action. The resident team met in Farmer White Events Barn on US 31 to provide direction.

Stream assessment will continue with site visits by the TNN volunteer naturalist over Summer and Autumn 2025. As of the week of August 4,
Mitchell Creek-Kewadin is again flowing year-round.

Suckers may return to Mitchell Creek-Kewadin. Suckers' swarms, once common, were seen near the Creek when it was dry. Year-round flow was restored in mid- May by TNN & Rotary.

SPRING SUCKER RUN

Excerpt BY: Daniel O'Keefe, Mich. Sea Grant, MSU Extension - March 12, 2025

Ah, springtime. Birds are singing and flowers are blooming. Love is in the air, and in the water, too.

Fish are stirring from winter haunts and begin to move toward spawning grounds to mate..Pike & steelhead spawn soon after the ice is gone. Others start feeding heavily as warm waters build up energy reserves before spawn.

Suckers are native fish that make a springtime migration. Some sucker species migrate from the depths of the Great Lakes into tiny creeks where their young can thrive.

Long nose suckers have been recorded living as deep as 600 feet. They often spawn in creeks so shallow that their backs stick out of the water.

Shallow, rocky or gravel-bottomed areas in streams are called riffles, and riffles are the preferred spawning habitat for many species of suckers along with steelhead, walleye, and many other fish.

Spaces between rocks provide an ideal incubator for eggs and larval fish. Eggs that fall between rocks are protected from predators, while a gentle flow of fresh water around the eggs provides oxygen.

While suckers do spawn in fast riffles, where other fish tend to feed in slower areas of the creek .

Cultivate milkweed and other native plants to benefit monarch butterflies and other wildlife.

Written By: Mara Koenig

https://www.fws.gov/media/monarch-butterfly-sumac

The Monarch Super generation and their Phenomenal Migration.

As fall approaches, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have something special for you to watch and celebrate. Mid-August typically marks the start of fall migration for millions of monarch butterflies. Adult monarchs are partway through their life cycle, but their reproduction is on hold.

These monarchs are different from their parents, grandparents and even great grandparents. Previous generations completed their life cycle in four weeks. Each of these previous generations migrated north, resulting in four generations over the course of the summer. Butterflies in this last generation are members of the generation that migrates south, often called the monarch super generation.

Imagine the journey - flying more than 3,000 miles to Mexico, not knowing where you can rest or where you will have your next meal. The sun is your guide on daily flights, traveling about 50 miles each day. You often catch free rides on thermal air currents, sometimes flying a mile high. When rain splashes down, the wind blows strong or your body temperature drops below 86 degrees, you are unable to fly.

Timing is everything

A monarch butterfly sips nectar from New England aster. Decreasing day length and temperatures, along with aging milkweed and other nectar sources, trigger the birth of the super generation and their epic migration. They live eight times longer than their parents and grandparents - up to eight months - and travel 10 times farther. To do this, they must conserve energy by storing fat in both caterpillar and butterfly stages and waiting to mate until spring

https://www.fws.gov/media/monarch-butterfly-new-england-aster

Monarchs must time their spring and fall migrations to coincide with optimal habitat conditions, including nectar flowers for butterflies and milkweed for caterpillars. Since milkweed is the only food source for monarch caterpillars, if there's no milkweed, there are no monarchs - it's that simple. If nectar sources and milkweed goes away, the population declines.

Creating pollinator habitat

The number of monarchs has decreased significantly over the last 20 years, and massive efforts to address this problem are currently underway. The focus is to improve habitat for pollinators, including monarchs. Given the scope of this challenge, we must all work together to improve, restore and create pollinator habitat. Together we can save the monarch.

No matter who you are or where you live, you can get involved today. Start by planting native milkweed and nectar plants that are local to your area. Garden organically and monitor monarchs in your area. Educate others about pollinators, conservation and ways they can help .

https://www.fws.gov/story/phenomenal-monarch-migration#:~:text=Mid%2DAugust%20typically%20marks%20the,grandparents%20and%20even%20great%20grandparents.

PUBLIC SERVICE NOTICE
NEIGHBORLY BEACH WALKING

We're still in the thick of summer. TNN reminds all that the beach along L. Michigan, including East Bay, is private to the statutory Ordinary High Water Mark.

Supreme Court, in the Glass v. Goeckel decision 16 years ago, established a right for the public to walk alongshore on a "sandy sidewalk", that portion of the beach where the sand remains wet.

Avoid walking inland or engaging in activities other than walking, Dogs should be leashed to not disturb wildlife habitat in the upper part of beaches and bluffs. Dog waste should be picked up, bagged, and taken along.

SADLY - PIPING PLOVERS NOT SEEN

Great Lakes' shores, once home to nearly 800 pairs of Piping Plovers, dropped to 13 in 1990 due to nest disruption, predation, & habitat loss. Piping Plovers are a Federal Endangered Species. The protected population increased to 85 nesting pairs. But have not been seen along East Traverse Bay beaches near the Creek this year. (Photo by Audubon)

Reprinted from Summer 2024 TNN News.

REMOVING BEAVER DAMS TO PROTECT MASSIVE BROOK TROUT

Excerpt: February 28, 2023 By Megan Helsel & Aaron Guikema, USDA Wildlife Services.
https://wildlife.org/removing-beaver-dams-to-protect-massive-brook-trout/

Beaver dams are a major cause of habitat degradation in streams that drain into Lakes Superior, Huron, and Michigan. Beaver ponds obstructing small streams can destroy critical habitat for spawning brook trout, disrupt gravel stream bottoms, decrease stream flow, cause lower oxygen, and heat up water temperatures.

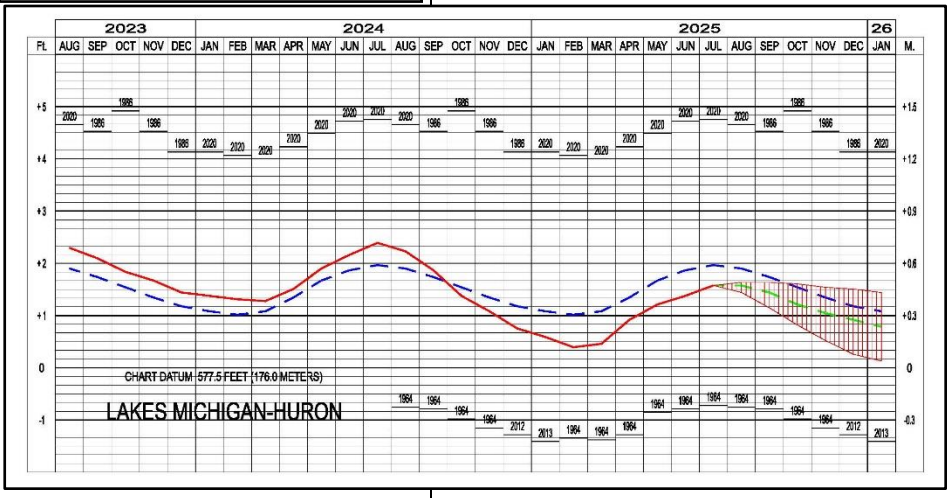
Plummeting fur prices and reduced commercial fur trapping have resulted in an increasing beaver population in this region. With an increase in population, there are higher incidences of stream obstructions causing significant degradation of ecosystem quality and substantial reductions in trout production on these tributary streams.

Anglers are familiar with petite brook trout. Imagine a brook trout measured in feet and pounds. Massive "coasters" hatch in small streams that feed into Lake Superior, migrate to the lake to mature, then return to spawn. USDA-Wildlife Services protect stream habitat crucial to the life cycle of coaster brook trout which grow up to three times larger than inland stream brook trout

From 2018 to 2021, the Michigan DNR & USDA goal was to protect areas of coastal wetland and other habitats in Michigan. Wildlife Services staff monitored targeted areas along 19 streams, surveyed about 200 acres and removed 120 beaver dams.

Continual stream surveys are crucial for success in maintaining the free-flowing conditions conducive to coaster brook trout migrations. USDA Wildlife Services will continue to ensure fish habitat and fish migration to spawning grounds is secured.

WATER LEVELS FORECAST AUGUST 2025 - US Army Corps of Engineers – Detroit



Precipitation was above average for the Great Lakes Basin. The Superior - Michigan-Huron basins received 121% of their averages. High precipitation across the basin contributed to increased water supplies for Lakes Superior, Michigan-Huron, and St. Clair. Lakes Erie and Ontario water supplies were less than average.

July outflow was below average Lake Superior and Michigan-Huron from June to July, so water levels rose on these lakes by 4 and 2 inches. respectively. Both remain below average. The updated 6-month Great Lakes water level forecast predicts that Lake Superior and Michigan-Huron will peak in late summer before beginning their seasonal declines.

SCAN ME

PLEASE DONATE TO TNN - A 501(c)(3) CHARITY**.** Continue the initiative to restore Mitchell Creek—Kewadin. The water is back – suckers and trout may follow next spring. Rotary Club funded one year – Creek support is up to TNN. Scan QR Code OR Use PAY PAL, credit & debit cards on www.townshipneighborsnetwork.com/donate/ OR Mail a check.

Published by: Township Neighbors Network, A 501(c) (3) Public Charity. P.O. Box 887, Elk Rapids, MI 49629.