

Rehabilitation of Great Lakes starts to pay off

By Lem Mesero
outdoors writer

Worried about your rheumatism, duck? Fearful the nuclear bomb will destroy civilization? Frankly that Social Security will go belly up before you can collect?

Take heart. At least the Great Lakes are getting cleaner — certainly cleaner than they were 30 years ago.

Not only are they producing sport fish, but they are becoming "rehabilitated" as a source of commercial fish, according to Professor James Diana of the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources.

"Today the Great Lakes still display many of the effects of previous neglect. But there is a definite movement in the right direction," said Diana, citing anti-pollution and restocking programs.

Since 1982 Great Lakes salmon have been commercially marketed. Prior to that, salmon could be taken by sport fishermen, who were warned against eating too many, but were too contaminated with industrial PCB chemicals for the market. PCBs accumulate in the fat of lake trout and salmon.

Recent studies have shown other prized fish — whitefish, perch, bass and bluegills — are "much less susceptible to PCB contamination than are salmon," said Diana, adding it's especially true in northern bodies of water such as Lakes Superior and upper Huron.

Besides laws against dumping toxic chemicals, Diana cites other efforts to clean up the Great Lakes:

- Bans on phosphates, slowing the growth of algae.
- Controls of the lamprey, an eel-like species which migrated from the Atlantic and almost wiped the lake trout in the 1940s and '50s.

- RAP — for "Rigorous Action Planning" — a state Department of Natural Resources program which encourages citizens to report illegal gill netting as well as illegal deer kills. Surprisingly, the RAP program drew reports of chemical dumping, too.

Diana is cool to the idea of dredging Lake Erie to make it more navigable. He fears dredging would tear up lake sediment laden with toxic chemicals.

NEED A BOAT storage spot on land? Stony Creek Metropark northeast of Rochester for the season? Registration for rental spaces will be at 9 a.m. Saturday at the boat launching building. Bring your state boat registration number, length of boat, trailer make and trailer license registration. At 10 a.m. a drawing of all rental agreements will determine who gets space.

Spaces will rent for the entire season of April 14 to Oct. 14. Cost for summer rental is \$110. For information on facilities and other details, call the Stony Creek Metropark office at 781-4242.

INDEPENDENCE OAKS County Park near Clarkston has a family springtime nature interpretive program from 10 to noon Saturday.

"Egg-specting Spring" will be a demonstration of natural dyeing of Easter eggs. Fee is \$1 for materials.

Preregister by calling the park's office at 838-0903. Independence Oaks is on Sashabaw Road 2 1/4 miles of I-75. Vehicle admission is \$2.50 for Oakland residents, \$4 for outsiders.

TWO LEADERS of the Huron-Clinton Metroparks system have received professional awards.

David O. Laidlaw, director since 1969 and former superintendent of Kensington Metropark, received the Cornelius Mory Pugsley medal in New York City from the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society. It recognizes leadership and contributions as a parks and recreation administrator.

John C. Hertel, who represents Wayne County on the metroparks

board, received the Michigan Audubon Society award for 1984 in the legislator category. Hertel, a state senator until 1983, led the unsuccessful fight to prevent drilling for oil in the Pigeon River State Forest. The Harper Woods Democrat is now a Wayne County commissioner.

INDIAN SPRINGS Metropark near Clarkston has three nature-center programs this weekend. Register in advance by calling the toll-free number 1-800-552-6772. The lineup:

"A Two-hour Night Hike" — 7 p.m. Friday; you'll overcome needless fear of the night and learn about animals in the woods after dark.

"Early Birding" — 8:30 a.m. Saturday; naturalist Karen Blake says you should wear waterproof footwear, bring binoculars and field guides for a stroll through the Great Huron Swamp.

"Candles from Mother Nature" — 1 p.m. Sunday; a program on how to make candles from natural objects. A \$1.50 fee covers cost of materials.

KENSINGTON Metropark west of New Hudson has three events this weekend:

"Woodland Walk" — 10 a.m. Sunday; starting at the nature center, naturalist Mark Szabo will lead a leisurely stroll and point out early wildflowers and signs of animal activity.

"Early Wildflowers" — 2 p.m. Sunday; Szabo will lead a 90-minute trek on woodland trails. The nature center is on the west side of the park, best reached from the Kensington Road exit from I-96.

Farm chores — 4 p.m. Saturday at the Farm Center at the north end of the

park. Farm interpreters will discuss basic animal care and let participants feed and water the animals.

Vehicle entry permits are \$3 for the day, \$7 for the season. Preregister by calling toll free 1-800-552-6772.

STONY CREEK Metropark will host the "Focus on Nature," a monthly nature photography workshop, at 10 a.m. Sunday in the nature center.

It's free, and you'll need your 35 mm camera. The morning features a shooting session; the afternoon, a program. To register, call the toll-free number 1-800-552-6772.

EPA's Ruckelshaus to speak on landfills

William Ruckelshaus, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, will be among the speakers on "Alternatives to Landfills" in a metropolitan Detroit conference Monday.

Sponsored by Concern Detroit, Inc., the conference will begin at 1 p.m. with registration at the Downriver Community Conference, 15100 North Line Road, Southgate.

Advance registration to assure a space can be accomplished by calling Terry Gibb at the Concern office, 879-1333. The conference and literature are free.

Also on the program will be former state Rep. Thomas Anderson, now a member of the state Natural Resources Commission. The conference will deal with the reduction of solid waste and other innovative solid waste disposal methods.

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