

Leelanau Enterprise

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Lautner makes FOIA request

By Zachary Marano
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Leelanau County commissioner Melinda Lautner revealed that she is going through the county prosecutor's office to request all correspondence between fellow commissioner Kama Ross and county employees. Lautner told the newspaper she is concerned that these comments are influencing a third-

party workplace climate/culture survey, despite assurances from the firm that they come up with their own survey questions internally.

The board of commissioners at a special meeting earlier this month approved a \$6,500 contract with the Michigan Leadership Institute (MLI) to conduct this survey. Data is being gathered in one-on-one meetings between employees and former school superintendent at

Glen Lake Community Schools, now MLI regional president, John Scholten.

Scholten said that he plans to collect data through surveying in late November and December and present an "action plan" to the board in January 2024. The goal of the survey is addressing the work culture at the government center that contributed to numerous employee complaints and resignations.

Perhaps the most visible of these has

been the departure of the finance department's fifth director in two years, Sean Cowan, on Oct. 23. Staff proposing this survey believe that their coworkers can give more valuable input towards a solution when their anonymity is protected by a third-party intermediary.

Lautner opposed the contract with MLI but was overruled by all other board

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Magnus Goodell, son of Matt and Nora Goodell of Lake Leelanau, was in awe of Santa Class at the Light Up Leland celebration kicking off the holiday season. More holiday event pictures can be found on Pgs. 7 and 8.
Photo by Mark Morton

New fishing decree appealed

By Alan Campbell
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An appeal has been filed seeking to overturn parts of a new Tribal fishing decree that detractors say would negatively impact fish populations in the parts of lakes Michigan, Huron and Superior that fall within the jurisdiction of 19th century treaties.

The new fishing order, which regulates the catches of commercial fishing operations belonging to members of five Native American tribes including the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, remains in effect for now. Its impacts, should there be any, won't be felt locally until spring with the expansion of gill netting into Grand Traverse Bay and an extra month of commercial fishing west of Leland prior to Memorial Day weekend.

Charter boat captain Tony Radjenovich of Leland Township is president of the Coalition to Protect Michigan Resources, which filed a document signifying its intent to appeal. The actual appeal is not due for several weeks.

"There just isn't enough fish to allow more gill netting," Radjenovich said. "We need to preserve the resource, and gill nets take all the fish. They are non-selective. I don't understand why a state of Michigan-licensed commercial fisherman can't use them, but a tribal fisherman can."

In a press release, the coalition noted that gill netting was banned by the MDNR in the 1970s after research concluded gill nets are non-selective with disastrous consequences for fishery populations.

Radjenovich said scraping together funds to file the appeal was no easy effort. The coalition's most powerful

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Wall work to enhance Fishtown

By Alan Campbell
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Retaining walls don't make memories. But courtyards can, which is why the latest project undertaken by the Fishtown Preservation Society (FPS) seems destined to become the backdrop for more than a few selfies.

"Whether you're waiting for your sandwich, people watching or taking a moment in Fishtown, people should feel

comfortable with the finished project," said Amanda Holmes, executive director of FPS.

While perhaps not as challenging as lifting the historic Morris shanty off its watery foundation or as profitable as renovating the Otherside Shanty into a rental unit, turning a retaining wall into a functional transition zone can prove nonetheless challenging. A crew from Elmer's has been busy the past few days removing the old infrastructure and

driving steel pile-ons into soil that for generations has supported the gumboots of commercial fishermen.

The look of the finished product will be softened with thick wooden planks, built-in tables and seating. Native plants will provide landscaping. The goal is to blend with Fishtown, creating a timeless setting aged by weather.

History has played a part in all the

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Co. Board adopts 2024 budget

By Zachary Marano
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Leelanau County's annual budgeting process was difficult this year, as finance department head Sean Cowan unexpectedly resigned before the 2024 fiscal year budget was completed, but staff and elected officials nonetheless rallied.

Commissioners were able to approve the budget as scheduled following a public hearing at their Nov. 21 regular meeting.

Board members credited commissioner Doug Rexroat, who stepped up to chair the finance committee established on Oct. 2, and Cowan's former assistant finance director Catherine Hartesvelt, who is back in an interim finance director role as the county searches for a full-time replacement.

Hartesvelt told the board on Nov. 21 that the proposed budget is \$16,539,326 with about a 6% fund balance. For perspective, she said, the board's 2023 fiscal year budget was about \$15.5 million bud-

get with a 9.9% fund balance. She added that budget amendments may come later in the year.

The coming year's budget is roughly \$1 million higher because of a 3.25% increase in county employee wages; new positions including a sheriff's office detective, a Freedom of Information Act coordinator, an election coordination manager for early in-person voting; and capital outlay issues, Hartesvelt said.

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Thank you **Joyce Nash** of Suttons Bay for being a loyal subscriber.

New fishing decree

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member, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, is joined by fellow nonprofits Michigan Charter Boat Association, Michigan Steelhead and Salmon Fishermen's Association, and Hammond Bay Area Anglers in financially supporting the effort.

"The coalition met with all of its supporters, and we explained to them what we thought was lacking in the judge's order. We said we need to set the record straight. Biological information was the most obvious mistake, and it wasn't allowed in the order," Radjenovich said.

Charter fisherman Bill Winowiecki, who hails from Cedar, is president of the Michigan Charter Boat Association and holds a seat on CPMR board. He said U.S. District Court judge Paul Maloney left open the opportunity for the

Coalition to appeal, an option that was not available in 2000 when the previous decree was approved. CPMR, whose motion to have a seat at the negotiating table was denied by Maloney, has been participating as a friend of the court.

"The money was tough to scrape up. All the major groups involved are out of money. But we didn't have a choice. Our legal team said (the opportunity to appeal) has never happened in all the years of the decree," Winowiecki said.

Also noticing that change of precedence was the Department of the Interior, a participating member of negotiations. A day after the Coalition motioned to appeal the decree, the Interior Department filed an appeal to have that portion of Maloney's decision stricken.

Notably, neither the coalition nor the Department of Interior

sought an order delaying implementation of the decree.

Centerville Township attorney Bill Rastetter has represented the Grand Traverse Band in negotiations over Tribal fishing rights for more than four decades. He did not comment for this story on the appeals. In past interviews he has stated that the new decree, which was given a lifespan of 23 years, leaves in place harvest quota percentages essentially dividing commercial fish stocks evenly between state-licensed and Tribal fishers.

The decree approved by Maloney is the third following a landmark decision in 1979 by Federal Judge Noel Fox validating two 19th century treaties that ceded land essential for Michigan to attain statehood. Among money and other guarantees granted the tribes was the right to fish treaty waters in parts of the Great Lakes.



Inclement weather slowed work earlier this week in Fishtown, with cranes owned by Elmers put on standby. Biggs Construction is the general contractor. Enterprise photo by Alan Campbell

Wall work to enhance Fishtown

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work of FPS, and the retaining wall is no different. Folks close to the place wanted to know the destiny of large rocks that came from a Leelanau County farm and served their purpose well for decades.

"The beautiful stones that have been there will be part of the work," Holmes reported. "It's another in the phase of things. We basically hope to have it all done by the summer of 2025."

The wall project had to be utilitarian to solve a drainage problem that's been ongoing since the Leland Harbor underwent its own renovation project in 2013. Holmes said the work changed

where rainwater drains, steering it into the shanty village rather than north where it had previously found its way into Lake Michigan.

"It was always suppose to drain to the north, and now it will drain north but end up at a different location," Holmes said.

The project will rebuild about 60 feet of retaining wall, and create three pathways into the Fishtown complex. One will be wheelchair accessible.

It's been quite a run of progress for FPS, all made possible by the pledges of donors who raised \$5.5 million to lift Fishtown above record-high Lake Michigan water levels. A slew of projects started

in October 2019, when the Village Cheese Factory building was lifted and moved, its foundation rebuilt, and the structure placed back in its original location.

Work that followed stabilized and renovated the Morris and Otherside shanties, raised Leland River docks by 8-12 inches, rebuilt Carlson's Shanty, raised the Diversion store eight inches, stabilized the Tug Stuff building and will soon do the same for the Dam Candy building.

The timeline calls for a celebratory lighting of the rooftops in Fishtown for Christmas 2025, repeating a holiday gesture first performed in 2018 when FPS paid off its mortgage. The nonprofit in

2006 purchased the shanty complex for \$2.7 million from the Carlson family headed by Bill Carlson, who wanted to retire and was considering selling.

Fishtown is beloved not just by county folks. It shows up on surveys as one of Leelanau's biggest draws for tourism, and once found itself pictured on a cover of the official Michigan Department of Transportation state highway map.

One of the last projects planned

by FPS will involve turning a smaller storage building located on the south side of the river into a classroom.

"We're looking to become a place to teach skills required for commercial fishing. It could be something we share with the public. Kids in the summer could learn net tying, safety, how to mend and fix things. Boat maintenance is a very big deal," Holmes said.

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Notice Of A Public Meeting To Institute A Summer Property Tax Levy For Glen Lake Community Schools Leelanau and Benzie Counties, Michigan

Administrative Offices:
3375 West Burdickville Road
Maple City, Michigan 49664-9608
Telephone No.: (231) 334-3061

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on December 11, 2023, at 6:00 o'clock, p.m., at Glen Lake Community Schools, 3375 W. Burdickville Rd. Maple City, MI 49664, in the High School Library Media Center, the Board of Education will hold a public meeting at which will be offered for adoption a resolution to impose a summer tax levy of all of its annual property tax levy. The adoption of the proposed resolution would result in the annual levy of all of school property taxes on July 1. The Board of Education, under Act 451, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, as amended, may impose a summer tax levy of all of annual school taxes. If a summer tax levy is imposed, the school district may enter into agreements with each city or township in which it is located, or a county treasurer, for collection of the summer taxes, or may collect such taxes itself pursuant to said Act 451.

This notice is given by order of the Board of Education.

Brooklynn Massene
Secretary, Board of Education