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Catch the Bug with Leadership Charlevoix County

LCC to host Euchre Tournament and Beatles Vinyl Night at Stiggs Brewery for Beetle Mania project—managing infestation of Purple Loosestrife to preserve Charlevoix County's Waterways

Leadership Charlevoix County (LCC) and Stiggs Brewery & Kitchen in Boyne City are hosting a Euchre Tournament & Beatles Vinyl Night on Monday, April 9, from 7-10 p. This fun night will help raise money for the LCC 2018 class project, Beetle Mania. The Euchre Night event will have a \$10 buy-in, with all of these funds directly benefitting the LCC project. Prizes include: 1st Place - Personal brew day for up to 6 people, 2nd Place - Howler or growler full of Stiggs beer free with purchase of howler or growler, 3rd Place - LCC t-shirt and Stiggs bottle opener. The goal of the project is to control the spread of the invasive species Purple Loosestrife, which is infesting our beautiful waterways in Charlevoix County.

Purple Loosestrife is an aquatic plant native to Europe and Asia that made its way to the United States for ornamental purposes and then spread through ballast water and other means. While Purple Loosestrife has a very pretty flower, given the right conditions, Purple Loosestrife infestations can result in dramatic disruption in water flow in rivers and streams, and a sharp decline in biological diversity as native food and plant species are completely crowded out; the life cycles of organisms from waterfowl to amphibians to algae are also affected. Imagine no longer being able to kayak down your favorite river or lose trout in your favorite fishing hole.

Managing Purple Loosestrife is important, notes members of the Leadership Charlevoix County class. Once established, loosestrife stands are difficult and costly to remove by mechanical and chemical means. LCC class of 2018 has opted for the biological control method—the introduction of its natural predator, Galerucella beetles, or Purple Loosestrife beetle. Releasing these beetles establishes a long-term population of beetles at the infestation site. Rather than replacing one invasive species with another, the beetles feed almost exclusively on Purple Loosestrife and once their food source is gone, the beetles will die off as well.

“Leadership Charlevoix County has partnered with the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council to bring attention to the problem Purple Loosestrife is creating and beginning to try to manage it in Charlevoix County. We will be working with the Friends of the Boyne River, The Lake Charlevoix Association, and several other local waterway associations to determine the release

sites. We expect to release the beetles in mid-June," said Darrell Lawson, LCC 2018 participant.

LCC is attempting to raise money to purchase the beetles to be released in sites around Charlevoix County. Current sites being looked at are Oyster Bay, the Boyne River at Riverside Park, Melrose Township Park, and a location between East Jordan and Ironton.

Please join Leadership Charlevoix County for the fundraiser at Stiggs Brewery on April 9 and "help preserve our beautiful northern Michigan waterways for generations to come," Lawson said. If you are unable to attend the fundraiser, but have interest in supporting the project, donations are appreciated. Donations may be mailed to Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council (TOMWC) at 326 Bay St., Petoskey, MI 49770. Please make checks out to TOMWC with "Beetles-LCC" in the memo line. You may also donate online or learn more about this project on our website at www.beetlemanialcc.com.

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