

Bear Lake Township

Summer 2025

198 E. Bear Lake Rd. NE - Kalkaska, MI 49646

Bear Lake Township Officials

OFFICE: 231-258-4871

SUPERVISOR:

George "Bud" Banker Opt. 3 Cell: 231-624-1019

Hours: Monday 9 to 11 am

TOWNSHIP CLERK Dawn Dannenberg Opt. 1

Email:

bltclerkddannenberg@yahoo.com Hours: Wednesday 9 am to Noon

TOWNSHIP TREASURER Shirley Havens Opt. 2

Email: shavensbltt@yahoo.com

Hours: July thru February

Tues., Thurs., Fri. 9 am to 2 pm 2nd Sat. of month 9 am to Noon

March thru June

Wed. only 9am to 1 pm

TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES:

Robert "Bob" Dixon

Cell: 989-710-0093

James "Jim" Knight Cell: 989-513-0138

TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR

Sally Murray

231-499-7682

sallyannmurray8120@gmail.com 810 Cottageview Dr., Suite 301

Traverse City MI 49684

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETINGS

Meetings are held at the Bear Lake Township Community Center the second Tuesday of each month.

All meetings begin at

4:00 pm

All other meetings or changes in the regular meeting will be posted on website and at the Township Bulletin Board.

PLEASE TRY TO ATTEND!

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Clean-Up Day— **SATURDAY—JUNE 14TH**

8 am to Noon

Bear Lake Township CLEAN-UP DAY is located at the Blue Bear Trail Head, M-72 and Sunset Trail. PROOF OF RESIDENCY REQUIRED: THIS NEWLETTER, LAST PROPERTY TAX BILL, PROOF OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP or UTILITY BILL. etc.

First load is free, each additional load will be \$15.00

(a load is considered to be one (1) pickup truck, utility trailer or equivalent).

ACCEPTABLE ITEMS: Limit of two (2) major appliances, refrigerators and freezers must be tagged "FREON FREE" - furniture—chairs—couches—mattresses—carpeting (cut to 6' length and tied) - scrap metal.

UNACCEPTABLE ITEMS:

Household garbage—Tires—Batteries—Hazardous chemicals—Paint—Oil—Explosives—Yard waste— Brush-Asphalt-Broken Concrete-Glass-Burn Barrels filled with trash-Hot Tubs and

- Building Materials. NO LOOSE MATERIALS. Just a reminder: Workers are Volunteers, so help with whatever you are able, to make things move quickly. Thank you! This is a courtesy to the property owners and to help maintain our woods from debris, your cooperation is appreciated.

RECYCLE AT THE TOWNSHIP-3 recycle bins at the Community Center for Homeowners use. REMINDER: Do not discard your household garbage in the recycle bins, the bins are for recyclables. Do not leave boxes or other items on the ground if bins are full. We will lose our recycle bins if this continues. Someone has to clean that up! Please observe the signs on what can and cannot be placed in the recycle bins. Thank You for your cooperation! These bins help keep our township free of litter.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Saturday-July 26th-9 am to 1 pm

Kalkaska Middle School

Enter from W. Kalkaska Rd. to circle drive

The event is made possible by the Districts millage and limited to Kalkaska County Residents only. Proof of residency is required via driver's license, water bill, tax bill, etc. Appointments are highly recommended, we are limited to the space available by the vendor. A RSVP link/button will be live no later than June. 2nd at www.kalkaskaconservation.org. Call the Conserva-

tion District office with questions. 231-258-3307

AUGUST 31ST—11 AM TO 2:30 PM CHICKEN BBO

SAVE THE DATE for the annual Bear Lake Township Firefighters Assn. Chicken BBQ. Help support our Fire Dept. by attending. Good food, fun things for the kids, raffles, and Chicken dinner with all the fixins. (Take -outs available).

As always Volunteers are needed and also desserts for the meal. If interested please contact::

Sharon Pincombe (231-499-7043)

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75TH Anniversary

This year marks the 75th Anniversary of Bear Lake Township. Our area was originally platted as an unorganized portion of Clearwater Township on the eastern edge of Kalkaska County.

On June 27, 1950, Bear Lake Township was formally designated to be Kalkaska Counties twelfth township. The first meeting of the newly formed local government was held on February 28, 1952, in the original Bear Lake Township Hall that was formally an old frame schoolhouse near Riverview Rd, close to the Manistee River.

On the morning of Saturday August 9, 2025, 9 am to 10 pm, a commemorative celebration will take place at the Bear Lake Township Improvement Association meeting to recognize this historic event. Association meeting will follow at 10:00 pm.

Submitted by Jeff Shull—Jeff did a lot of research on the history of Bear Lake Township, Thank you.

News from Assessor

Annual property site inspections have resumed, for assessment administration purposed. The State Tax Commission recommends 20% of all parcels in the township be reviewed annually. Site inspections are exterior only. This process assures that all parcels are being assessed as accurately as possible. An inventory of the salient features of the property are noted, photographs of the exterior of all structures are taken and the sketches are reviewed for accuracy. When property owners are home, interviews are conducted and any questions the property owner(s) have are answered. When nobody is home a card is left on site, indicating the date of inspection. If the Assessor has any questions, the back of the card may read, "PLEASE CALL."

The Inflation Rate Multiplier (IRM) for 2025 has been determined to be 3.1%. This means that taxable values (the value against which the millages are levied) will generally increase by 3.1% this year (the maximum allowable increase is 5%). Note that new construction, transfers of ownership, and demolition may alter this calculation.

Please contact the assessor if you have questions regarding: property valuation or details, exemption status (principal residence; agricultural; disabled veteran; commercial forest; qualified forest; etc.,) hardship exemptions, land divisions, etc.

Sally Murray, Bear Lake Township Assessor SallyAnnMurray8120@gmail.com— 231-499-7682

Clean Energy and Clean Energy Waste Reduction Act

PUBLIC ACT 233 of 2023: Clean Energy and Clean Energy Waste Reduction Act regarding Renewable Energy Initiatives, signed into law.

In November of 2023 legislation was passed by both chambers of the legislature and signed by Governor Witmer, Statewide. This legislation was implemented on November 29, 2024.

The legislation supersedes County Zoning or Township Ordinances for the placement of Windmills, solar panels, or battery storage facilities in communities. To object to a oproject coming into a community, a formal request would go before a Public Service Commission panel of three appointed members, by the Governor.

Status of HB 4027 4028, to repeal part 8 of Act 233, giving local say over renewable energy projects.

April 30, 2025, the House of Representatives voted 58 yeas to 48 noes', (4 not voting), to move this legislation forward to the Senate.

I am monitoring this closely as it affects the pristine look of Bear Lake Township.

Submitted by: Jim Knight, Trustee

From the Clerk

August 5th, 2025 will be an election for 2 County Proposals. COMMISSION ON AGING—RENEWAL KALKASKA COUNTY TRANSIT—

NEW MILLAGE (an increase is requested.) This will be a 1 day only election and the polls will be open 7 am to 8 pm.

SENIOR LUNCH AT THE BEAR LAKE TWP. COMMUNITY CENTER

Tuesday and Thursday meals are served from 12:00-12:30 pm but you are welcome to come in early to visit and enjoy a meal with your neighbors. All meals include a vegetable, milk, fruit and bread. Meals are a suggested \$4 for seniors age 60+, guests younger than 60 are welcome. All meal sites offer CARRY-OUTS (does not include the salad bar or soup.) Meal site coordinator is Iola @ 941-270-1549, please call to let her know your menu order and what days you will attend between 8:30 to 9:00 am., or for information on meals.

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NOTES FROM THE TREASURER

After a very long and hard winter, hopefully spring and summer is finally on its way.

I would like to thank everyone for their patience after my husband passed away. I cannot express my heartfelt feelings for the cards and condolences I received during this time. Things were a little behind for a time but we are getting things back on track.

Summer 25 tax bills will be mailed the 1st week of July with a due date of Sept. 15th, 2025. We have been working on address changes with the Assessor and the County to assure that you receive your bills. If you do not receive your bill, please give our office a call so we can mail or email you a bill, interest begins on Sept. 16th.

If you require a receipt for your tax payment, please remember to enclose a stamped selfaddressed envelope with your payment.

We had a few issues with some credit card payments but I believe the credit card company has resolved the issue and hopefully it will be a smooth collection this year. You will again this year be able to pay your tax payments online by credit card , e-check , in the office, in person or by phone. Credit card payments require a 3% fee and e-checks a \$3 fee. I prefer not to accept cash, but if you pay in cash please have exact amount as we do not keep monies in the office for change.

We do our best to answer emails and phone calls. You are always welcome to stop by the office, call or email and we will respond in a timely manner. Enjoy your summer and hopefully it will last until November or December, one can only hope.

Shirley Havens, Bear Lake Twp. Treasurer



JUST A REMINDER

Before you burn, please check websites for our area to make sure it is safe to burn and apply for a permit. Observe the Smokey the Bear sign in front of our Fire Barn, it is monitored and changed accordingly. ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT A

BEAR LAKE TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT: In 2024, our firefighters responded to 135 calls for service, with August being our busiest month, having 16 calls. Most importantly, we are proud to report that we had a safe year, with no reportable injuries.

We are eagerly awaiting the delivery of a new 2023 Dodge Ram truck, which is being custom-built as a brush/wildland firefighting vehicle by CSI Emergency Apparatus in Grayling. We expect delivery in June. The last three brush trucks were funded through government programs, including the DNR and Military, at no cost. As a result, this will be the first brush truck that our department has had to fund in over 30 years. This purchase was made possible thanks to budgeted fire department and township funds, along with support and contributions from the Bear Lake Township Firefighters Association. We are proud to say that we were able to fully fund this vehicle without requiring any additional millage from taxpayers.

We are incredibly fortunate to have such amazing support from our community and township board. Thanks to this strong partnership, we have all the equipment necessary to perform our duties safely and effectively. However, what we truly need is more people. If you've read my past letters, you know I often emphasize this: staffing is a significant challenge for volunteer-based fire departments, not just locally but across the country. As a volunteer fire department, we only receive compensation for each call we respond to. Currently, we have 12 dedicated firefighters. Additionally, our Bear Lake Township Firefighters Association is always looking for volunteers to assist with fundraising efforts to support the department.

Please join us in making this ongoing conversation with your neighbors. We need more community members to step forward and help ensure we can continue serving our community effectively.

We are also pleased to highlight our ongoing partnership with Kalkaska EMS and Kalkaska Memorial Health Center, who provide our residents with 24-hour advanced life support (ALS) ambulance services. Their team of professionals consistently provides excellent patient care. Since last September, Kalkaska EMS has been staffing and ALS ambulance at our fire station from 7 am to 7 pm. While there are times when they need to shift their resources to cover other calls, this arrangement has been invaluable to our community.

Last August we said goodbye to Chief Andrei Henegariu, who retired and moved out of state with his wife, Sarah, who also served as our Fire Captain. We are grateful for what Andrei and Sarah contributed to our department and community, and we wish them both the best in their future endeavors. Before his departure, Chief Henegariu recommended to the board that I be reappointed as Fire Chief.

In October, I was honored to appoint Pat Bird as our new Assistant Fire Chief. We are excited for the leadership and energy Pat will bring to our team.

Finally, I encourage anyone who has questions about the fire department or is interested in becoming more involved to reach out to me. I am always happy to provide information and answer any questions. Our firefighters meet on the first three Wednesdays of each month at 7 pm, and we welcome anyone who wishes to attend or learn more.

Thank you to all the residents of our community who continue to support our fire department and the Bear Lake Firefighters Association. Your involvement is crucial to our success, and we appreciate every bit of help we receive.

Sincerely, Mark A. Laskowski, Fire Chief, Bear Lake Township Fire Department 231-384-5785

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BEAR LAKE TWP. FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION—OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

2024 was another banner year for the Firefighters' Association. We were able to sponsor the Community Yard Sale and the Annual Chicken BBQ once again. We will not be sponsoring a Community Yard Sale this year. Any group or person interested in doing this should contact the Township Board.

The Annual Chicken BBQ is scheduled for **Labor Day Sunday, August 31st**. This is our primary fundraiser and is essential to providing funds for needed equipment. Since 2010, the Association has donated over \$160,000 to the Fire and Rescue Department including \$15,000 in 2024, which will be used on the new brush truck.

As always, there will be a need for volunteers to help with the Chicken BBQ. If you have any interest in helping, please contact a member of the Association or the Fire Department and we will find a job that matches your talents. Teenagers are also welcome; it is never too early or too late to start volunteering.

The Well Project brick sale resulted in a beautiful display located by the flag pole at the Community Center. Please stop by to view this growing display. It is a compilation of many family names which have helped make this township special. Bricks continue to be sold, so do not delay adding your family to the display. Please contact any member of the Association or Fire Department for details. Forms available in the Township office during business hours.

Sadly, we say goodbye to Linda LaMothe, a longtime member of the Association and dedicated volunteer who passed away this year.

The firefighters' Association is a small but dedicated group and new people are needed to help plan and organize these events. Please consider joining us. Follow us on Facebook at Bear Lake Twp. Firefighter's Association to keep up with developments.

Thanks to you all.

2025 Notes from the Bear Lake Association

We're excited for another summer season to enjoy all the great things our township has to offer! The Association board is grateful for your ongoing interest and commitment to protecting and keeping Bear Lake beautiful and clean.

As a friendly reminder, here are a few practices that will keep the lake a place for everyone to enjoy.

- Please clean your boats and trailers before and after you launch. A new 2019 Boating Law says you can't launch or transport watercraft unless they and the
 trailers are free of aquatic organisms.
- No high-speed boating before 11 am and after 7:30 pm. IT'S THE LAW! -
- Keep all high-speed boating far away from the shoreline it helps prevent erosion.
- Do not feed the ducks or geese—they can bring swimmers' itch.
- Don't bathe yourself or pets in the lake—soap chemicals are bad for the lake life.
- Help protect our nesting loons by staying 200 feet away from them.
- Septic tanks should NOT be "out of sight, out of mind". Keep them functioning well—have them cleaned and inspected regularly. Poor systems leak toxins into
 the lake.
- RAKE THE LAKE—removing organic material (e.g. leaves, twigs) helps reduce weed fertilizer and algae.
- Remove all fireworks and all debris from the water.
- No beach fires—the carbon remains in the water and is toxic.
- If you fertilize, use one with ZERO phosphate—it's like steroids to aquatic plants and algae.

The Bear Lake Association keeps an eye on the water quality by doing regular testing and treating invasive plants. We appreciate any donations to the Bear Lake Association of any amount to help us keep and maybe even improve the quality of the water. You can find more information on our **website**: www.bearlakeassoc.com or email us at: bearlakekalkaska@gmail.com

2024 Bear Lake Township Improvement Association News

For 64 years, the Bear Lake Twp Improvement Association (BLTIA) has supported projects focused on the needs of the township, its residents, and the protection of our beautiful natural resources. During 2024, BLTIA supported the following programs and township services: Paid dues for the Bear Lake and Cub Lake Associations' membership in MiCorps Cooperative Lake Management Program (CLMP). This program assists our volunteers with technical help and testing supplies used to maintain the health of our lakes. As a result, invasive species, such as phragmites and Eurasian water milfoil have been greatly reduced in Bear Lake and in Cub Lake. *** Financially supported the Bear Lake Christian Church's Share Shack. Food assistance is an ongoing need in our community due to inflation and unemployment. *** Ongoing support for our Fire Department staff and their volunteers with snacks and drinks during fire runs, donations to their annual chicken BBQ, and funding to equipment upgrades.*** Purchased light filtering window shades for the township hall, and built a small house to protect exterior plumbing during the winter. *** Updated the laminated community cards for both Bear and Cub Lake. The community cards provide helpful local contact information and cover the best practices for keeping our lakes clean. *** Purchased interior and exterior First Aid kits for the Community Center, the Center is often locked, and the exterior First Aid kit is available for minor injuries that may occur to residents playing sports. *** In June, the BLTIA sponsored a social event at the Community Center with the purpose of bringing township residents together to visit and meet their neighbors. The afternoon gathering was well received.*** Purchased mulch which volunteers spread throughout the Community Center for a fresh and clean look.

Among our other activities, we provide volunteers for the Adopt-A-Forest and Adopt-A-Highway clean-up days and manage the Little Free Library on the west side of Bear Lake Road, approximately 1.5 miles north of M-72. Feel free to stop by to take a book or leave a book for others. Publish the "Bear"-in-Mind Newsletter, May to September, to members with an e-mail address. It is a brief and informative email with timely news and a calendar of events.

<u>In your summer tax bill, a BLTIA membership form will be enclosed.</u> You can continue our good work through your 2025 donation. We encourage you to contact us with projects we may consider supporting. Email your suggestions to bearlaketwpimprovementassoc@gmail.com.

Mark your calendar for our Annual Meeting on <u>Saturday, August 9, 2025.</u> The social begins at 9:00 am followed by the business meeting at 10:00 am. Details will be announced in the Bear-In-Mind newsletter. *Submitted by Sharon Davis, Recording Secretary, Bear Lake Twp. Improvement Assoc.*