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2024 Winter Newsletter

10599 Twin Lake Rd NE Mancelona MI 49659

Phone (231)587-8354 Fax (231)587-4066

[www.bluelaketwpkalkaska.org](http://www.bluelaketwpkalkaska.org)



### Township Hall Office Hours

**Supervisor:** Thurs 9:00AM – 1:00 PM **(any day by appointment)**

**Clerk:** Tues 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

**Treasurer:** Wed 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

**Assessor:** 2nd & 4th Fri 9:00 - 11:00AM **(any day by appointment)**

**Zoning Dept:**  Fri & Sat 10:00 AM – Noon (**or by appointment)**

**(Nov 20--May 15 Wed 10:00AM-2:00PM, weekends by appointment)**

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**Township Telephone Numbers You May Need:** ***(In an Emergency Call 911)***

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Supervisor\* | Todd Fletemier | Home: 586-588-1871 | [blsuper@torchlake.com](mailto:blsuper@torchlake.com) |
| Clerk | Tracy Nichol | Home: 231-587-9644 | [blclerk@torchlake.com](mailto:blclerk@torchlake.com) |
| Treasurer | Christine Almose | Home: 231-587-9593 | [bltreas@torchlake.com](mailto:bltreas@torchlake.com) |
| Trustee\* | Todd Brozovich | Home :231-333-4599 | BLTrust1@torchlake.com |
| Trustee | Larry Shoemaker | Home: 231-384-1456 | gladysshoemaker90@yahoo.com |
| Township Assessor | Tom Sheneman | Work: 231-587-8354 | [blassessor@torchlake.com](mailto:blassessor@torchlake.com) |
| Zoning Admin | Cindy Anderson | Home: 231-320-0285 | [blzoning@torchlake.com](mailto:blzoning@torchlake.com) |
| Blue Lake Fire Dept. | Chief Greg Brierley | Home: 734-216-9137 | bluelakefirechief@att.net |

\*New Board Members

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Phone Number** | **Other County Numbers of Interest:** | **Phone Number** |
| GFL Environmental (Trash) | 231-258-9030 | Kalkaska County Road Commission | 231-258-2242 |
| Kalkaska County  Commissioner: Kohn Fisher | 231-258-5178 | Kalkaska Animal Control | 231-258-3309 |
| Kalkaska Sheriff Department | 231-258-8686 | DNR Burning Permit  http://www.dnr.state.mi.us.burnpermits | 866-922-2876 |
| Kalkaska County Office Building | 231-258-3300 | EGLE (formally DEQ) | 989-619-3740 |
|  |  | RAP Poaching Hotline | 800-292-7800 |

**Township Meetings**

The Board meets the first Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM at the township Hall. We welcome everyone to attend.

**Drop Box**

The Township has a secure drop box located between the office and hall doors. For your convenience this can be used to drop off any correspondence (for example: voter information or taxes).

**Fire and Rescue Department**

We are staffed with volunteers and are always seeking new members. Volunteers are paid for their time coming to meetings, taking classes, and during runs. Please feel free to call Fire Chief, Greg Brierely at 734-216-9137 or simply stop by the fire barn on Monday evenings. We meet every Monday evening at 7:00 PM. We would be happy to meet with you and talk about your options.

**From the Supervisor’s Desk**

As you read this, I will have a few weeks behind me as your new Township Supervisor. I want to start by thanking Supervisor Blair Shearer and Trustee Mary Shaw for their many years of service to the Township, we wish you both well.

As a quick introduction, my wife and I have two adult children and three grandchildren, who have me wrapped around their fingers for sure. We love walking in the woods and being outdoors along with hunting and fishing are what brought me here. I spent my career in the Product and Manufacturing side of the automotive industry, and through the years learned a lot about leadership and how to address difficult problems head on.

As we go into the New Year, my goals remain unchanged from what I stated earlier in the year; increase transparency by getting our Township meetings online, update the Township Website and include all spending and budgets online, finish the township hall in a REASONABLE budget for what it is, and focus on the budget process to reduce spending where possible. It won’t all happen in January, but I will remain focused on getting these items done in addition to the normal job.

I thank all of you for your best wishes and support and I will do my best to continue to improve the Township. I would also like to hear from you if there are issues you would like addressed in the township, please email me at [blsuper@torchlake.com](mailto:blsuper@torchlake.com) or give me a call.

**From the Clerk’s Desk**

The General Election drew a record number of voters this November. Many took advantage of the opportunity to vote early or with an absentee ballot. If you would be interested in becoming an election worker for future elections, call or stop by the Clerk’s office for more information.

**From the Treasurer’s Desk**

Winter taxes are due by Friday, February 14, 2025. The treasurer’s office will be open that day to collect payments. If your payment arrives to Blue Lake Township via US Postal Service and is postmarked on or before February 14, 2025, your payment will be accepted as paid in full. If post marked, hand delivered or put in the drop box after February 14, 2025, you will be billed an additional penalty of 3%.per month until paid. As of March 1, 2025, all unpaid taxes are turned in to the Kalkaska County Treasurer. The County will add an additional interest fee to your bill.

**You can also look up what you owe in property taxes by going to our website** [www.bluelaketwpkalkakaska.org](http://www.bluelaketwpkalkakaska.org)

Under DEPARTMENTS & SERVICES click on TAXES, in the far right-hand column is a PAID/UNPAID list in alphabetical order by last name. In addition to online credit card payments, you can now pay your tax bill by ACH for a fee. Electronic payments are available on the TAX PAGE of our township website. The additional fees are paid to the vendor and not to the township.

**From the Zoning Administrator’s Desk**

In Blue Lake Township, Kalkaska County, zoning permits are required before starting any project. Coming to us first ensures you learn about all your options, avoiding the hassle of stop-work orders, costly delays, and the potential need to tear down unpermitted work. Even if you have a professional builder, it's crucial to get informed. We've seen cases where experienced builders assume that asking for forgiveness is easier than asking for permission, but this often results in costly after-the-fact permits for the property owner, sometimes amounting to thousands of dollars.

Our office is funded by your tax dollars to serve and guide you through the zoning process, making it easier for you to navigate the rules that keep our community special. The zoning regulations aren't optional—they apply to everyone and are in place to protect the very qualities that drew you here. We cherish our rural character, natural beauty, and peaceful environment, free from crowds and commercial sprawl. All our departments are here to help preserve that, and we're always happy to answer your questions—feel free to call the zoning office anytime. Just a reminder, Winter Zoning Office hours are in effect (Nov 20-May 15), Wednesdays 10AM-2PM, or by appointment. Wishing everyone a happy Holiday Season!

**From the Assessor’s Desk**

My office hours for 2025 will be the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month from 9:00AM to 11:00AM. I am available at any other time by appointment, so please don’t hesitate to contact me.

2025 Assessment Change notices will go out at the end of February 2025, if you have any questions regarding your assessment, please contact me. The good news for 2025 is that the inflation rate multiplier (the amount your taxable value will go up without improvements) will be 3.1%, for the past two years it has been 5%.

In 2025 we will once again be inspecting 20% of the township parcels, you will receive notice if your property has been selected for review during 2025.

Please reach feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have, my email address is: [blassessor@torchlake.com](mailto:blassessor@torchlake.com) and the Township Hall number is (231)587-8354. Email will be the quickest way to reach me.

**December Board of Review Meeting**

The Board of Review will meet Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at the township hall located at 10599 Twin Lake Rd NE, Mancelona MI 49659 for the purpose of correcting omissions and errors of fact to the 2024 assessment roll. The time of the meeting will be 10:00AM. No property valuation appeals are heard at this meeting.

**Blue Lake Township 2024 Road Improvements**

This year was a bit of a start and stop year for our roads. While the Township is responsible for determining what local roads (NOT 612 for example) are requested for repair, we depend on the County and their vendors to do the work, we cannot contract on our own for road work. We were able to complete an Asphalt overlay on Gedman and Pflum Roads, along with a large shoulder reclaim project along Blue Lake Road, investing $297,616 in our roads this year. The original plan was to chip seal the remainder of Blue Lake Road, Birch Road and Eagle Lake Dr, however the contractor was not able to fit this into their schedule this year. Our goal is to complete those projects in 2025. We also have initiated discussions with the County on how to repair Twin Lake Road, specifically the section between Kemler and Papoose Lake Road, through the lowlands area. This section of road gets very bumpy in the spring thaw and is in need of a complete remove and replacement. This is planned to be our largest expense in the 10-year plan, but if the costs are extreme, we will be forced to take a different approach. We will keep you updated as this develops.

If you are interested in becoming a part of the Township Road Committee, we are in need of volunteers. Please contact Larry Shoemaker at (231)384-1456.

**Campers and Trailers**

Per our Township Zoning Ordinance outside storage of tents, campers, and travel trailers, motor homes or similar recreational vehicles is prohibited except on parcels with a primary dwelling. This helps keep vandalism down, improves property values, and prevents that abandoned look. Temporary use of tents, campers, travel trailers or motor homes may be permitted for 45 days per calendar year, with a $5.00 permit issued from the Zoning Administrator.

**Township Hall Available**

The Township Hall is available for your personal use. It requires an application to be completed and a $50 deposit. If the usage rules are followed and the hall is left clean, the deposit will be refunded. Call the hall at 231-587-8354 during office hours or visit our web site and look under “Events - Hall Rental” for further information.

**Free Property Fraud Alert for All Kalkaska County Taxpayers**

Sign up today for free alerts to notify of you of ANY documents recorded with your name match in Kalkaska’s land records. If a document is recorded, you will be contacted by phone, text, or email (your choice) within 48 hours. Your contact information is not shared with any entities, it is used strictly for notification purposes. Sign up: [www.propertyfraudalert.com](http://www.propertyfraudalert.com)  Please contact JoAnn DeGraaf, Kalkaska County Register of Deeds with any questions 231-258-3315.

**Burn Permits**

Please add the following web site to your phone/computer to gain information on whether it is legal to burn:

[www.2.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits](http://www.2.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits). The website is continuously updated. If you touch the County of Kalkaska on the map of Michigan, it will show each township in the county and if burning is authorized. Sometimes burning is only allowed at special times of the day. You can only burn the following: leaves, grass, limbs, brush, stumps, and evergreen needles. No building materials, plastic, rubber, foam, chemical treated wood, textiles, electronics, chemicals, or hazardous materials may be burned. Notice to those who choose to burn: You are responsible for fire, smoke, or odors created from open burning…. And for damage that results from your fire. It is a citable offense if you are not in attendance during the burn. It is also a citable offense if you are burning without a permit.

**Kalkaska Library Satellite Location**

The Kalkaska Library has set up a satellite location at the Coldspring Township Office located at 6515 County Road 571 NE, Mancelona. You can now pick up and return books for the Kalkaska Library there on Thursdays from 9AM-6PM. They will soon be adding Bestsellers, Wi-Fi Hotspots and more. Plus, public computers, printing and fax service will be available. Watch for more special events and programs coming to this location at [www.kalkaskalibrary.org](http://www.kalkaskalibrary.org) or call (231)258-9411.

**Broadband Service**

The Township maintains a Public Access Wi-Fi system at the Township Hall. If you have a compatible computer, you can use it in and around the Township Hall to access the Internet. It works in the parking lot but if you are there during office hours come in and use the table inside.

**Township Recycle Locations**

GFL Recycle County bins are available at CETA Hall and behind the Kaliseum. Bins will be emptied by GFL every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

**Kalkaska Public Transit Authority**

Kalkaska County Residents 60 years of age and older can ride free of charge on all KPTA buses. This Senior Ride Free program is provided through a contract between Kalkaska Public Transit Authority and Kalkaska County Commission on Aging. Currently the service is for transportation within Kalkaska County only and does not apply to trips going into Grand Traverse County. For additional information regarding this service, please feel free to contact KPTA at 231-258-6808 or the COA at 231-258-5030.

**Kalkaska Memorial Health Center**

Kalkaska Memorial Hospital has 24/7 emergency services that are available with new physicians and extended services. Located at 419 S Coral Street. Visit their website [www.munsonhealthcare.org/kmhc](http://www.munsonhealthcare.org/kmhc) for more information. KMHC has also opened a Walk-in Care Clinic attached to the Medical Associates Offices. The first check-in window is dedicated to walk-in registration. No appointments are necessary. All patients are welcome and served on a first come first served basis. The clinic is open Monday thru Friday Noon - 8 PM. Saturday from 8 AM - Noon. They are closed on Sunday. Office call pricing will be charged for each visit.

### Trash Pickup

**Residential trash pickup is on Monday by GFL Environmental with a 5-bag limit per household.** Boxes of garbage or large items that do not have a sticker on them will not be picked up. **Household items only, no construction material will be collected.** If a holiday falls on Monday, pickup will be on Tuesday. Please do not put out trash that is not bagged - our contract with GFL Environmental is for bagged trash only. If you put your trash out before Monday morning, please have your trash in an animal proof receptacle. Dogs, cats, ravens, and raccoons are just some of the critters who love to spread trash around. FYI: scattered trash violates the nuisance ordinance, and a ticket may be issued. Large items require a sticker for pick-up and are available at the township hall.

**The Vital Role of Greenbelt Ordinance in Blue Lake Township**

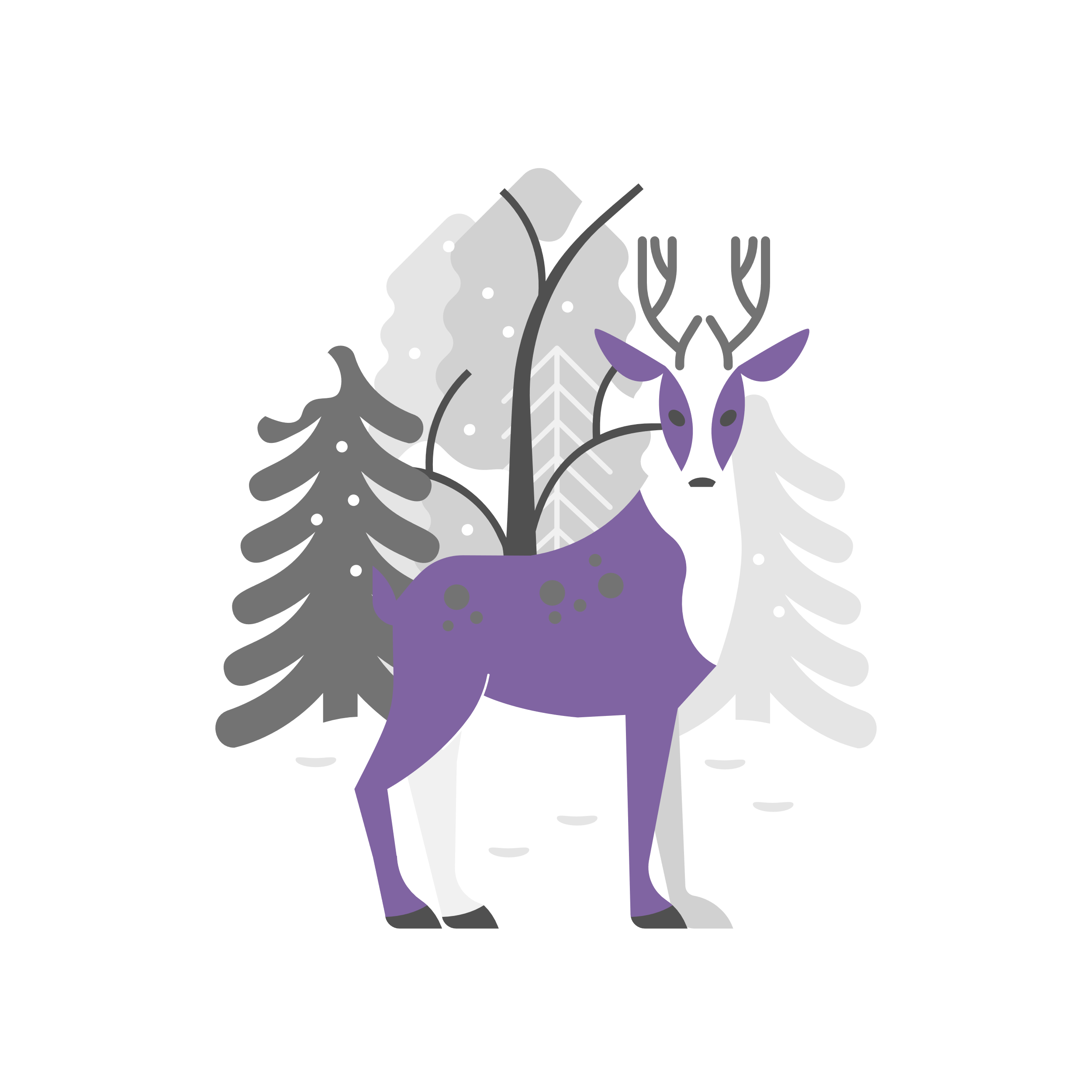
Recently in the township we have seen an increase in the number of reported Greenbelt Ordinance violations. Most of the violations have been the result of a simple lack of knowledge of our Greenbelt Ordinance. To help offset this, we will feature a number of articles in the upcoming newsletters to provide more information on our Greenbelt Ordinance. For starters, what is a Greenbelt, how does Blue Lake Township define it, and why do we have it?

What is a Greenbelt? The Greenbelt is simply a strip of land intended to be a natural buffer between the lake shore and the developed areas of a property, such as a lawn and building structures.

How does Blue Lake Township define the Greenbelt? In our Zoning Ordinance’s Section 3.07 defines the Greenbelt; formally called a Natural Greenbelt as: “A strip of land 25 feet wide as measured inland from the ordinary high-water line of the lake shore shall be maintained as a natural greenbelt zone.” The ordinance gives an example on how to determine the ordinary high-water line, we will detail that in another newsletter.

Why do we have a Greenbelt and Ordinance? A natural greenbelt serves a few purposes; first by keeping the native trees and plants in place, the root systems act to reduce the effect of soil erosion due to wave action. Another purpose of the Greenbelt is to act as a natural filter between lawns and the lake shore. Fertilizer runoff from lawns has been shown to greatly contribute to algae blooms, and other potential threats to the natural environment can be filtered. The Ordinance has been enacted “To preserve natural resources, water quality and community scenic and recreational values, a greenbelt zone shall be established and maintained on all waterfront properties.”

The ordinance goes on to define what can be built in the Greenbelt and how to properly manage clearing. In the next Newsletter, we will provide more detail on this. **In the meantime, if you are planning to clear or build anywhere in the Greenbelt, be sure to contact the Zoning Administrator *before proceeding* for guidance and to obtain any necessary permits.**



**Wishing you and yours a magical holiday season!**

**Visit our website** [**www.bluelaketwpkalkaska.org**](http://www.bluelaketwpkalkaska.org)

**for more township information**