All eyes on the bay: Will it freeze?

By TOM CARR
Record-Eagle staff writer

TRAVeRSE CITY -- West Grand Traverse Bay appeared on its way to being officially frozen Thursday before warmer temperatures Friday caused the ice to recede, according to Pat Hobson, the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce's "bay watcher."

"The lack of a freeze this late in the season has some wondering whether this winter will be the fourth straight "no freeze" winter for the bay," Hobson said Friday afternoon from her office which overlooks the bay.

Melting the ice is not an exact science, but Hobson could see its thinning to its thinnest point this winter on Thursday. But the bay isn't considered officially frozen until ice reaches from Clinch Park Beach to Power Island, about five miles north.

On Friday, the white ice looked patchy and flimsy near the shore, then extended out several hundred yards from shore as a flat, white mass. A wide, gray, soggy crack snaked its way through about 100 yards from shore as a flat, white mass. A wide, gray, soggy crack snaked its way through several hundred yards from shore as a flat, white mass. A wide, gray, soggy crack snaked its way through the middle of the snow-covered tundra.

But what does it matter if the bay freezes? Dave Barrons, a freelance meteorologist who broadcasts for WTVY-WWUP TV & FM, said he's not sure what it means. But he said the fact that it hasn't completely frozen for five of the last six winters may indicate a trend.

"I find it interesting, but I don't know what it means," Barrons said. "When you put this together with the fact that the seven warmest years on record were in the 1980s, it's an amazing coincidence."

Freeze frame: A view from Wayne Hill shows open water and frozen areas on West Grand Traverse Bay.

By The Associated Press

Bay freeze facts

The Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce's records on the freezing of West Grand Traverse Bay date back to 1851. Statistics exist for every year except 1921, which is missing.

According to those records, the bay has not officially frozen for five of the last six winters. It also shows that 1992 was the third straight year it stayed unfrozen. The only previous three-year freezeless stretch was 1952 to 1955.

Here are some other records:

- The years in which the first freeze came earliest were 1856 and 1857, when the bay froze on Jan. 10.
- The year in which the first freeze came latest was 1922, when it occurred on March 23.
- In 1984, the bay froze and remained frozen until March 15.
- A frozen bay last year occurred from Feb. 23 to April 16.
- The latest freeze was May 8, 1974, which also ended the longest freeze on record -- 115 days.

A change of pace -- U.P. state's warm spot

By The Associated Press

You know it's really cold outside when the hottest spot in Michigan is in the Upper Peninsula.

The highest temperature reported Thursday in Michigan was 19 at Sault Ste. Marie in the extreme northeast. Alpena and Detroit, which more commonly take the honor, reported high temperatures of 25 degrees, with lows of 10 below zero and 6, respectively.

"It's pretty doggone cold out here. I don't think there's any way we could have been the warmest in the state," Dan Donarski, director of the Sault Convention and Visitors Bureau, said Friday.

"It was very cold outside and the wind was howling. Our clothes must be clean.

"Don't Overdress because you don't want to overheat.

"Wear Loose, layered clothing so you can easily strip or add layers.

"Stay Dry.

Meanwhile, forecasters expect a return to normal temperatures this weekend with low temperatures expected to hover around zero.

Donarski offered some advice to downstate residents who aren't accustomed to the bitter cold. The suggestions come from the letters C-O-U-L-D.

"Your Clothes must be clean.

"Stay Dry."

The winner receives a return to form this weekend with low temperatures expected to go below zero in the Upper Peninsula, while the Lower Peninsula should see lows above zero.

By TOM CARR
Record-Eagle staff writer

Protection Program, and was not available to Leelanau County investigators until Thursday, Donaldson said. Federal reports indicated that Cunningham had dealt directly with Duckwall, but Donaldson learned Thursday that the two he said, filled him in on the sale. Cunningham's boats were traded in and the boats and the trucks would be.

He said he hired two men -- Donaldson and one other -- to help him. The two paid Cunningham $1,000 for the boats and the trucks.

This weekend's cold could lead to a more commonly take the honor, reported high temperatures of 25 degrees, with lows of 10 below zero and 6, respectively.

Meanwhile, forecasters expect a return to normal temperatures this weekend with low temperatures expected to hover around zero.
A small buffalo (right) stands in the snow at the Oleson Buffalo Farm along U.S. 31 South, as another (above) heads toward a warm barn Thursday afternoon. Single-digit temperatures at night have caused animal owners to put pets and livestock indoors during the cold spell.

**Northport, township officials study plan to install $385,000 water tank**

**BY KAREN EMERSON**

**Record Eagle staff writer**

**NORTHPORT — Village officials need a rod from Leelanau Township and more than $200,000 before they can buy a new water tank that would increase water pressure to homes and fire hydrants.**

Northport and township officials met this week to talk about buying a 150,000-gallon water tank in a former ski hill near Morningside Drive west of the village limits.

The proposed site is township-owned land.

"We think this is a way the township and village can work together to provide better service," said Township Clerk Peggy Reinsch.

Northport and Leelanau officials know whether the water tank can be situated on the 50-acre township parcel because the land was acquired with a recreational grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Part of the property is used by a local sportsmen club for a shooting range. King said Peggy Reinsch said township officials will look into possible land use for the property. She did not know how long that could take.

The water tank project could be completed by fall if the Michigan Department of Natural Resources allows the water tank at the township site, King and Ed Reinsch said.

The new tank will increase water pressure throughout the village, King said.

"That'll make everybody happy," he said.

"The water tank project will cost about $385,000. The village already has about $150,000 for the water tank project was denied state funding earlier this year for the project but is now looking into grants and bonds for the balance of the water tank that would be paid back with water revenues over 15 years, King said.

The township and village have worked cooperatively in the past in similar land-use situations, Reinsch said. The township hall and fire department, for example, are located on village-owned land.

**. . . All eyes on the bay — will it freeze?**

**Continued from PAGE 1A**

There have been only 24 winters in the last 142 in which the bay has not frozen, according to records kept by the chamber.

When it appears the bay is frozen, the chamber contacts local media. The local Coast Guard does not monitor Grand Traverse Bay, because of the lack of air and water currents and other factors.

Those reasons also contribute to the fact that East Bay freezes much more easily than West Bay, Barres said.

Even if the bay does freeze all the way to Power Island, anyone wanting to walk on it should take precautions, according to Dep. Tom Bonstey, marine safety supervisor for the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Department.

Precautions include going only where others have recently gone, tying ropes to oneself and anchoring it to a tree on shore, or wearing a life jacket can keep a person afloat, it doesn't guard against freezing to death. He said an insulated dry suit might be against hypothermia, but they are expensive.

**Record Eagle/Janet Van Meter**

**Record Eagle/John L. Russell**

**Record Eagle/Janet Van Meter**