

New forests will take years

Fire damage to wildlife causes worry

By Dennis Pfaff
Detroit News Staff Writer

Six-thousand charred acres near Grayling — including prime nesting grounds for the endangered Kirtland's warbler — will take 50 years to fully regrow, state officials said Wednesday.

Lost in the wind-swept blaze this week were wildlife and mature pine trees, and replanting efforts will be needed to help the area recover.

"The forest is a renewable resource and it will renew," said Bill Mahalak, acting regional forest manager for the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

"With some help, we will have forest there again."

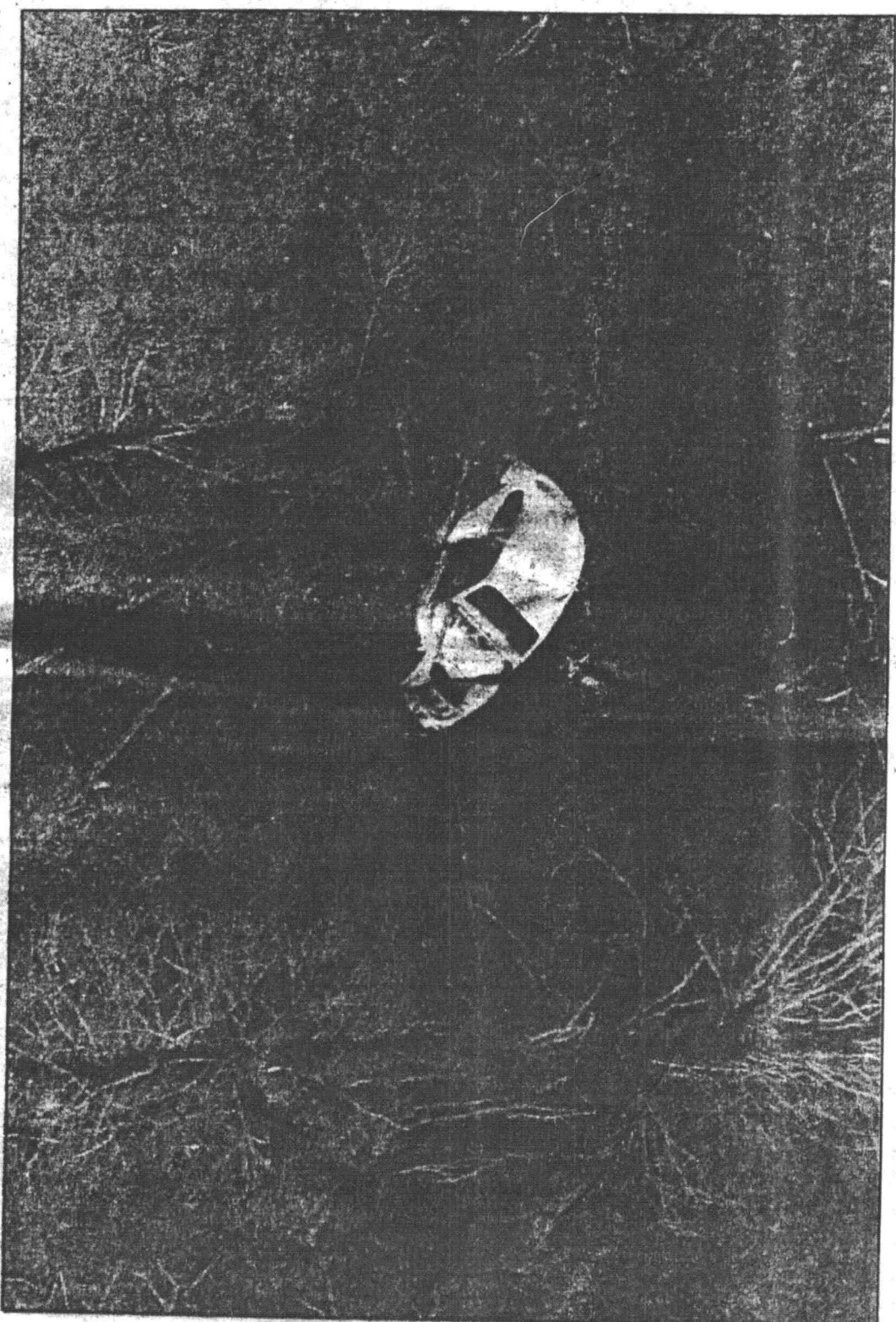
Susan Henry, a DNR spokeswoman, said there could be a substantial toll in animals and nesting birds caught by the fast-moving fire.

"If any wildlife was in there, it was dead," she said.

Fishermen are concerned trout fishing along short stretches of the Au Sable River might be affected by loss of forest and grass along the river, dubbed the "Holy Waters" by

Please see **Fire/5A**

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A Volkswagen Beetle, with tires, doors and hood gone, sits in the middle of the devastation caused by Tuesday's forest fire near Grayling. DUANE E. BELANGER/The Detroit News

