

# U. P. Environment

---

Spring 2010



Dutchman's Breeches  
(*Dicentra cucullaria*)

Quarterly Newsletter for the  
Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition  
The oldest grassroots environmental  
organization in the U.P.

## Celebrate the U.P.

March 19th and 20th 2010

FREE

Sponsored by Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition



**Celebrate what birders,  
hikers, canoeists, artists,  
and homesteaders among  
others find so special  
about life in the U.P.**

**U.P. Celebration  
at the Three Corners  
Front and Ridge Streets  
Marquette, Michigan**

**The Landmark Inn  
Peter White Public Library  
Federated Women's  
Clubhouse**

**[upenvironment.org](http://upenvironment.org)**



## Welcome to the Second Annual U.P. Celebration at the Three Corners!

Once again our speakers will help us transition from the black/white of winter to the subtle greening of spring. Some presenters will take us back into winter with all its fury and wonder: filmmaker George Desort revisits his January and February, 2010, trip to Isle Royale, capturing its otherness and magic; Michael Neiger guides us along with his campers into wild lands over nine days in February, 2009; Sue Robishaw and Steve Schmeck tell us how they harness the sun at their homestead to power themselves through the Long Cold.

Other presenters will carry us forward into the snowless months: Steve Pence and Chris Ozminski canoe on the swollen Bremner river in Canada; John and Victoria Jungwirth show us the traditional skills that allowed Native Americans - and themselves, as successor woodwrights - to shape birch bark and other materials into the first canoes; and filmmaker Michael Loukinen and rice harvester Roger LaBine document the cycle of life that is wild rice on Lac Vieux Desert.

But the times also demand that we raise our sights up a level from astonishment and knowledge. We must learn better how to protect the places that we love. Our panel this year is a how-to guide to "landowners, large and small" on means of enhancing their special places, whether through conservation easements, sustainable forestry, or greater awareness of what fish, animals, and plants need. And, of course, we are all landowners of the public lands in the Upper Peninsula and beyond - the national and state forests, refuges, and parks - a system that is now described as "America's Best Idea."

What does good land stewardship require of us in an era of climate change and resurgent mining? Shall we deny both, and live in a world of illusion that the U.P. will remain more or less as it is? We are losing our white ash and beech trees, and there is little we can do about it, but where we *can* intervene along the broad front of threats—from invasive species to forest conversion to sulfide mining-related contamination—we *should* intervene. Others have done so in the past. Bob Sprague, Park Manager of the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, will tell us of the citizen campaign that saved an irreplaceable old growth forest from logging in the midst of World War II. This generation of Yoopers, transplants, and U.P.fans can rise to the occasion, too, and must.

Enjoy today's feast of insights and images!

Jon L. Saari, President  
Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, 2000-2010

---

**UPEC Board:** Jon Saari, President; Bill Malmsten, Vice President; Doug Welker, Sec./Treasurer; David Allen, George Desort, Connie Julien (Webmaster), Mary Martin, Patrick St. Germain, Nancy Warren, Sherry Zoars



## Schedule of Presentations

### Kick-off—Friday, March 19, 2010

#### Federated Women's Clubhouse



7:00 p.m. “The Wolves of Isle Royale” – Rolf Peterson, MTU ecological research professor  
Followed by *Winter Study* – filmed on Isle Royale in 2010 by George Desort

Isle Royale moose and  
wolf print photos by  
George Desort

### Saturday, March 20, 2010

#### Peter White Public Library – Community Room

- 10:15 – 11:15 a.m. “Nine-day Moose River Snowshoe Expedition: Moose River Crossing to James Bay on the Arctic Ocean, February ‘09” – Michael Neiger, wilderness guide
- 11:30 – 12:30 p.m. **Discussion:** “Climate Change, Spirituality, and Citizen Campaigns” – Eric Hansen, author, hiker, activist
- 1:00 – 2:45 p.m. *Manoomin (Wild Rice): Ojibwe Spirit Food* – a film by Michael Loukinen, NMU professor of sociology and documentary filmmaker; with Roger LaBine, Ojibwe wild rice harvester

#### The Landmark Inn – Sky Room

- 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. “Winging it U.P. and Green Birding” – Scot Stewart, educator, birder, photographer
- 11:30 – 12:30 p.m. “The *Pictured Rocks Journal: New Media in National Parks*” – Craig Rademacher, NMU professor of outdoor education and leadership management, publisher
- 1:30 -- 2:30 p.m. “Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park: A Perspective on the Origin of Michigan’s Largest State Park” – Bob Sprague, park manager, PMWSP

#### The Landmark Inn – Board Room

- 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. *Walking Paths and Protected Areas of the Keweenaw* (Michigan Nature Association, 2009) – Joan Chadde, environmental educator, author
- 11:30 – 12:30 p.m. “Making a Birch Bark Canoe” – John and Victoria Jungwirth, woodwright and herbalist (view a Jungwirth birch bark canoe in the Landmark Inn lobby)
- 1:30 -- 2:30 p.m. “Integrating Solar Energy into your Life” – Sue Robishaw and Steve Schmeck, homesteaders, artists, solar electric system consultants

#### Federated Women's Clubhouse

- 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. “A Not-Too-Serious Look at Landscape Painting” – Patrick St. Germain, artist
- 11:30 – 12:30 p.m. **Open Mike Session:** “Mother Tongues/Other Tongues” – Mary Kinnunen and Jeff Eaton, writers—and you! Bring your favorite poems, prose and/or music that celebrates the U.P. and share them with others!
- 1:30 -- 2:30 p.m. “Bremner River Journal: A Vignette in Film and Words about Seeking Solitude” – Steve Pence and Chris Ozminski, wilderness canoeists

### Panel Discussion with the Public

#### Peter White Public Library—Community Room

- 3:00 -- 4:45 p.m. “Protecting the U.P. Landscape:  
A How-to Guide for Landowners, Large and Small”

**Panelists:** Bill Davis, Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy; Kim Herman, Forest Ecologist, MI DNRE; Justin Miller, Forestry Consultant; Jessica Mistak, Fisheries Biologist, MI DNRE  
**Moderator:** Mary Martin

- 5:00 -- 7:00 p.m. **Public Reception—Federated Women's Clubhouse**

Past UPEC board members – where are they now? Updates given (some in person).  
*Join us for wine and hors d'oeuvres!*

## Presenter Information



### **Joan Chadde** – environmental educator and author

Joan was a collaborator on a new guidebook published by The Michigan Nature Association, *Walking Paths and Protected Areas of the Keweenaw*, which describes twenty-two sanctuaries & preserves in Houghton and Keweenaw Counties. Each description includes driving directions, a trail map, interesting plants, animals and geology, and conservation history, along with color photos of each site. The guidebook was produced in collaboration with seven other land conservation organizations and units of government with protected lands in the Keweenaw Peninsula. The new guide was designed to increase awareness of local land conservation efforts in the Keweenaw, and the special habitats, unique features, and interesting plant and animal species found in Houghton and Keweenaw counties. Joan was responsible for compiling the information that went into the book, and she will discuss the beautiful areas which inspired her to do so.

Joan is the K-12 Education & Outreach Program Coordinator for MTU's Center for Science & Environmental Outreach and Western UP Center for Science, Math & Environmental Education. Her education/outreach efforts span 30 years and include K-12 teachers, students, and the public in Michigan, Wyoming, Montana, Arizona, and California. She has worked as an environmental educator at the National Outdoor Leadership School (WY), Yosemite Institute (CA), Outdoor Vacations for Women Over 40 (MI, WY & AZ), Wyoming Outdoor Council, and Innisfree (MI), and as a water quality specialist for the Montana Department of Natural Resources.



### **George Desort** – documentary filmmaker

George's new 30-minute documentary explores the 52 years of the Isle Royale Wolf-Moose Winter Study. The documentary filmmaker shadows biologists Rolf Peterson and John Vucetich through this amazing ecosystem during seven adventurous weeks in the middle of a Lake Superior winter.

As a documentary filmmaker and photographer, George has worked with the Isle Royale Wolf-Moose Project during the last five years, including the storied winter study. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and received his BFA from Columbia College in Chicago, where he now resides. His work has appeared in *Audubon Magazine*, *Backpacker*, *National Geographic*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. The documentary, *Fortunate Wilderness, the wolf and moose study of Isle Royale*, has aired on PBS stations across the country and was a finalist at the International Wildlife Film Festival and the Lake County Film Festival.



### **Eric Hansen** – author, hiker, advocate

Join author Eric Hansen for a reading and discussion of his recent public radio essay, "Copenhagen, Climate Change, and Common Sense Conservation." He invokes success stories from the U.P.'s and Wisconsin's past and present as he reflects on the climate change Summit. How does climate change become part of a new narrative on land protection? Michigan environmental historian Dave Dempsey noted that Hansen's essay is "a calming, hopeful piece in a time of nasty, violent invective about global warming."

Eric Hansen is an award-winning environmental essayist, author, conservation campaigner, adventurer, public speaker and pulpit guest. He has highlighted the U.P.'s natural heritage in *Backpacker* magazine, the op-ed pages of our region's leading newspapers, and in numerous public radio interviews. Widely traveled, he's a veteran of 29 treks to the bottom of the Grand Canyon, successful ascents of most of the high peaks of Glacier National Park, and a slow and memorable telemark-style ski descent of Colorado's highest peak, Mount Elbert. You can read more about his adventures on [www.eric-hansen.com](http://www.eric-hansen.com).

(Presenter Information continued on page 5)

(Presenter Info cont. from page 4)



**John and Victoria Jungwirth** – canoe builders

John and Victoria, homesteaders and builders of traditional birch bark canoes, will discuss how a bark canoe was made during the Iron Age and how this “pick-up truck of pre-history” made life in the north possible. One of the Jungwirths’ recent creations will be on display in the Landmark Inn lobby, and the presentation will begin there with a demonstration of construction techniques.

The Jungwirths live in a remote corner of Marquette County where they strive to develop a sustainable lifestyle that balances the modern and the ancient. Besides building canoes, Victoria runs a small, wild herb medicinal business and works at the Marquette Food Co-op. John continues to hone skills used to live in the bush and pursues his trade as a woodwright.



**Mary Kinnunen and Jeff Eaton** – writers

Pasties, and bears, and Yoopers - oh my! Hear the voices of the Upper Peninsula, from the comic to the bittersweet, through poetry and prose. This is an open mike session, so bring along your own poems, prose pieces, and songs in celebration of the U.P.

Mary is a Marquette native and founding publisher of *Marquette Monthly* magazine. She currently works as a freelance writer in Rhinelander, WI. Her essays and articles have recently appeared in such magazines as *Latitudes and Attitudes*, *Northern Breezes*, *Good Old Boat*, and *Mainsheet*. Jeff is a former writer and editor for Marquette publications. He now teaches writing and literature at Nicolet College in Rhinelander, WI, and contributes to *Mainsheet* magazine.



**Michael Loukinen**, documentary filmmaker, **and Roger LaBine**, Ojibwe wild rice harvester

Many Ojibwe youth are losing the “wild ricing” traditions of their ancestors due to the deaths of knowledgeable elders and the harmful environmental impacts on their rice beds. A cultural dispute rages between the Ojibwe and some lake property owners disdainful of the “ugly lake weeds,” who are also oblivious to the harm caused by antiquated and leaking septic systems. Other threats are hydroelectric power companies who want lake levels controlled to generate maximum power. The film *Manoomin (Wild Rice): Ojibwe Spirit Food* looks at the traditional practices of planting, rice-boat building, harvesting, parching, dancing, winnowing, cooking, and, finally, the ceremonial offering of wild rice at a feast.

The late Spiritual Elder Archie McGeshick, Sr., continued to plant and harvest wild rice the way his ancestors had for centuries even while dying of cancer. He took Michael Loukinen out to record these traditional practices in the hope that, through this documentary, more people will understand, appreciate and want to protect indigenous wild rice beds. The opening scene of *Manoomin...* shows him offering Ojibwe-language prayers and tobacco to the Water, Shore and Great Spirits as he surveys the rice bed that he is trying to restore. The film is dedicated to him.

Dr. Michael M. Loukinen joined NMU in 1976. He was born in Detroit but lived half of his childhood life in the U.P. Along with many scholarly publications, he has completed thirteen documentaries, most on ethnic traditions in the Upper Midwest, including those of Finnish Americans, Ojibwe, Menominee, Ottawa and Serbs. He has also recorded the traditional occupational cultures of trappers, loggers and commercial fishers in the U.P. This showing of *Manoomin...* is part of a 30-year retrospective of Michael’s works. His films have won state, national and international academic and artistic awards. For the last decade, he has been working with Grant Guston, a highly skilled

(**Michael Loukinen and Roger LaBine** continued on page 6)

(Michael Loukinen and Roger LeBine cont. from page 5)

digital artist working at Learning Resources at NMU and at Lake Effect Media. Their website can be found at [www.upnorthfilms.com](http://www.upnorthfilms.com). ( For DVD sales, call 906-227-2706 weekdays)



Roger LaBine is a member of the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe located in Watersmeet, MI, who is currently working in the Environment and Planning Department for the tribe. He is the nephew of Archie McGeshick, Sr., the elder featured in *Manoomin...* Roger is carrying his uncle's knowledge to the next generation by teaching youngsters about the manoomin that is so integral to Ojibwe cultural heritage. He has conducted 4 rice camps over the past 3 years and continues the restoration of manoomin in the western end of the Upper Peninsula.

### Michael Neiger – wilderness guide



Michael will present an account of a February, 2009, nine-day snowshoe and sledge expedition down Canada's Moose River, from Moose River Crossing to James Bay on the Arctic Ocean's lower Hudson Bay. In addition to digital media, he'll also bring along some of his specialized gear, including an expedition sledge, huge Cree snowshoes, ice spud, etc. If time permits, Michael will discuss some of the cases he is working on with Michigan Backcountry Search and Rescue.

Michael Neiger is an avid wilderness tripper who has paddled and skied solo to the Arctic Ocean. As a wilderness guide, he has led hundreds of backpacking, canoeing, and snowshoeing trips and expeditions across northern Michigan and Ontario, Canada. He enjoys researching and writing and is currently working on detailed backcountry guidebooks on the history, caves, old growth, overlooks, shipwrecks, and hidden gems of Grand Island and Pictured Rocks. As the founder of Michigan Backcountry Search and Rescue, he assists families and law enforcement agencies with missing-person cold cases in remote wilderness regions of Michigan and Ontario.

### Steve Pence and Chris Ozminski – wilderness canoeists



Chris Ozminski, Lapeer, and Steve Pence, Marquette, have each spent a lifetime searching for solitude in Michigan and nearby Ontario. Both were on a May, 2009, wilderness trip on the Bremner River led by Michael Neiger of Marquette (see above). Chris made a film of the adventure, which Steve will introduce, reflecting on the "why" of their passion for the outdoors.

Steve Pence is a native Upper Peninsulan, having begun to explore the rivers and streams of the U.P. at age 4, with a father who loved trout fishing. He says he is pleased to have never completely grown up. Chris Ozminski has been an avid outdoorsman since his childhood in the 1960s when his mother introduced him to camping, hiking, canoeing, fishing, and nature study. Since then, he has developed a passion for all-season, remote wilderness exploration. Hoping to give back a little of what he has gained from his experiences in the public lands, he volunteers in Wilderness Search and Rescue and has embarked on a new career path in documentary film-making. Chris worked in the manufacturing industry for 30 years.

### Rolf Peterson – MTU biological research professor



The U.P. Celebration at the Three Corners will kick-off on Friday evening, March 19<sup>th</sup> with MTU's own Rolf Peterson whose talk will weave together images that tell the story of wolves and moose, the focus of over 50 years of annual monitoring and study, in Isle Royale National Park.

(Rolf Peterson continued on page 7)

(Rolf Peterson cont. from page 6)

Rolf has conducted wolf research at Isle Royale since 1970, and also in Alaska, mainland Michigan, and, together with many collaborators, Yellowstone National Park. He has a B.A. degree in zoology from University of Minnesota, Duluth, and a Ph.D. from Purdue University. He has been on the faculty at Michigan Tech since 1975. In addition to research on wolves and moose, he has conducted ecological studies of beaver, otters, muskrats, bats, coyotes, and other mammals. He serves on the board of directors of the International Wolf Center

### **Craig Rademacher** – *Pictured Rocks Journal* online publisher



Craig will share information on the growing trend of new media being developed to interpret America's national parks. As an example of this trend, the development and publication of the new *Pictured Rocks (PIRO) Journal* will be discussed. The *PIRO Journal*, an entirely digital Interpretive magazine launching in Spring 2010, brings together the arts, interpretive story, and science in a unique way that permits readers to explore and understand the meaning of America's first national lakeshore.

Craig Rademacher is a native of Michigan and moved to the UP in 2007. He is an Assistant Professor of Outdoor Recreation Leadership and Management at Northern Michigan University. His specialty within the ORLM program is interpretation. His research and creative interests are in understanding and exploring the interplay between mobile media technology and public lands. He writes a professional blog entitled *New Media in National Parks* (<http://newmedia.nmu.edu>) and is soon to publish the *PIRO Journal*.

### **Sue Robishaw and Steve Schmeck** – homesteaders, solar energy specialists



From solar oven to solar electric, there are many ways you can incorporate solar energy into your life. It has been an integral part of Sue and Steve's homestead for thirty years, and they will tell you how to make it part of yours, too. They'll take you on a tour of their solar life, filled with tips, ideas, and, hopefully, enough inspiration for you to try and create your own solar opportunities. They will explain how using solar energy can be fun and satisfying and why its varieties of applications can fit into any lifestyle.

Sue Robishaw and Steve Schmeck have been living an "alternative" solar lifestyle on their homestead in the woods north of Cooks, MI, since the late '70s. They designed and built their underground home - as well as their life - to fit into and enjoy the natural world around them. Sue is an artist, writer, musician, passionate organic gardener and a popular speaker on gardening and their "green" lifestyle. Steve is an artist and woodcarver, fiddler, computer guy and solar electric system consultant who has helped many people design and install their own off-grid systems.

### **Patrick St. Germain** – artist



"A Not-Too-Serious Look at Landscape Painting" is a retrospective of Patrick's works which will cover over 30 years of his interpretations of Upper Michigan's unique and colorful environment. His interpretations are visually striking, often irreverent and satirical, and unfailingly thought-provoking. With him, one always encounters an unusual eye and mind at work...

Patrick has been living and painting in Marquette for more than 30 years. His versions of the Upper Peninsula landscape and wildlife have been shown in most major museums and exhibition spaces in Michigan, including two showings at the Detroit Institute of Arts and an exhibition at the Office of the Governor in Lansing. Patrick's paintings are in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum, the Madison Art Center, the Wustum Museum, the University of Michigan Hospital, the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh, and many other public and private collections. In Marquette, his artwork is permanently installed in NMU's Superior Dome and in the Marquette County Courthouse.

(Presenter Information continued on page 8)

(Presenter Info cont. from page 7)



**Bob Sprague** – Manager, Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park

Listen and watch while Bob tells the story of the park's fascinating origins and describes its bountiful natural resources and recreational opportunities. According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park was named among the Top 10 state parks in the nation for the third consecutive year.

Bob has worked at Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park since 1976 - as a Park Ranger up to 1994, Park Interpreter until 2005, and then as Park Manager, the position he currently holds. "The Porkies" are his passion, and he spends as much time as possible hiking, exploring, skiing, and photographing the park.



**Scot Stewart** – birder, photographer, and educator

The Upper Peninsula has been a great place to bird, and is now even better because of great birders regularly spending more time afield, finding great discoveries and using today's technologies to let others know about them. "Green Birding" now encourages birders to look closer to home... you'll see where!

For nearly 40 years, Scot Stewart has been exploring both the U.P.'s well-known and more secretive wild places as a photographer, educator, and writer. He says he feels he's found a home in one of the most beautiful places on Earth.

## Panelist Information



**Bill Davis** – Outgoing President of the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy—  
"Conservation Easements as a Land Use Option"

Bill's presentation will review U.P. land conservancies and their market areas, as well as other forms of land preservation. He'll explain what conservation easements are and how they work, as well as the tax incentives associated with easements and their potential role as a property rights tool. Having been a board member and president of the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy (formerly Central Lake Superior Land Conservancy) for a number of years, Bill also will discuss its mission and vision.

Bill is a former consumer/credit card banker who retired to Marquette in 1996 after living in the Detroit area for 30 years. He has owned property in Grand Marais for 30 years, and he and his wife, Kathy, spend summers there, fishing and protecting endangered Piping Plovers.

For the past fourteen years, Bill has served on several boards that deal with land-use issues and has been a long-time member of UPEC and various other environmental organizations. He and Kathy have implemented conservation easements on their Lake Superior shoreline property and have donated land to the Michigan Audubon Society. Bill describes himself as an expert on the tax deductibility of conservation easements and their use in preserving property owners' dreams.



**Kim Herman** – Monitoring Specialist, Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division MI DNRE— "Your Big Backyard and The U.P. Neighborhood: Connecting People Through Stewardship"

Kim asks of the audience "Do you know how your backyard fits into the Upper Peninsula landscape or how to find out?" She will briefly review some of the U.P. ecosystems, their wildlife and wildflowers, along with stewardship opportunities and tools for managing

(Kim Herman continued page 9)

(Kim Herman cont. from page 8)

anyone's special place, large or small. Learn how we may have fun with children and adults of all ages in the process and find out where to go for more information and resources.

Kim began working for the State of Michigan in 1982 as a botanist for the MI Department of Transportation. She joined the DNR Wildlife Division in 1990, and served as Protection Specialist with the MI Natural Features Inventory and later as Stewardship and Natural Areas Coordinator in the National Heritage Program. She moved to the U.P. with her husband, Mike, in 2002 to serve as a Wildlife Division Ecologist. In 2004 she joined the DNRE Forest, Management Division as a member of the Forest Certification Implementation Team. Kim is now in the Forest Health and Monitoring Unit working on invasive plant control efforts. She is also on the DNRE Biodiversity Assist Team, working with staff on management plans for a system of Ecological Reference Areas and, more recently, on a system of potential Biodiversity Stewardship Areas on state forest land. Among her accomplishments, Kim was National President of the Natural Areas Association (NAA) from 2005-2009 and has served on the NAA Board since 1994.

**Justin Miller** – President and Consulting Forester, Green Timber Consulting Forestry, Inc.—“**Environmental Sustainability: What a Private Landowner Can Do**”

Justin will explore opportunities for private landowners to use their land as a tool to benefit the environment and support the economy. In his words, “A responsible steward is a role model in environmental sustainability.”

Justin is a consulting forester who serves the interests of non-industrial private landowners throughout the central and western Upper Peninsula. This small, private landownership makes up fifty percent of the U.P.'s land base. He and his staff of foresters assist landowners in focusing on long-term, sustainable planning and management. Justin serves as president for the Michigan Chapter of the Association of Consulting Foresters. He enjoys family time with his wife Michelle and 3-year old daughter Ayla, along with windsurfing and tele-skiing.



**Jessica Mistak** – Senior Fisheries Biologist, MI DNRE—  
“**Conservation, Protection, and Management of the U.P.'s Aquatic Landscape**”

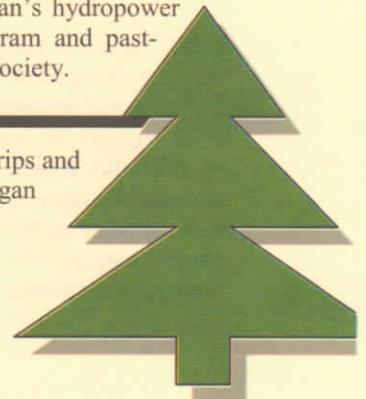
During her presentation, Jessica will discuss Michigan's water resources, including wetlands. She will introduce simple ways to protect aquatic resources on private property, such as shoreline management practices, riparian buffers, and options for prevention and control of aquatic invasive species.

As a Senior Fisheries Biologist for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Jessica is responsible for initiatives concerning conservation, protection, and management of aquatic habitat. Her work involves providing technical and policy assistance to the MI DNRE on a variety of aquatic habitat-related issues including mining, dam removal, fish passage, stream restoration, and participation in Michigan's hydropower licensing proceedings. Jessica is a senior fellow in the Environmental Leadership Program and past-president of the Michigan Chapter and the North Central Division of the American Fisheries Society.



Join the **North Woods Native Plant Society's** free, botanist-led field trips and learn about the fascinating native flora and ecosystems of Upper Michigan and Northern Wisconsin. Check out [www.northwoodsnativeplantsociety.org](http://www.northwoodsnativeplantsociety.org) for more information.

To get email notices of future trips, contact [nwnpsociety@gmail.com](mailto:nwnpsociety@gmail.com).



## **A UPEC Primer (Notes towards a UPEC History)**

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition has been around as a grassroots organization for almost 35 years. Grassroots groups (unlike established corporations) are not insulated against failure, so our history is an instructive lesson in how one small group has survived for the long haul. The "coalition" in the early years was a coalition of groups, including industrial groups; but by the 1990s it had become a coalition of environmental groups and now is mainly a coalition of committed individuals.

We've learned to reduce internal conflicts and conserve group energy by becoming a Board of activists representing diverse conservation causes. Like entrepreneurs we each pursue our individual passions – wilderness, roads, waterways, trails, wildlife, plants, parks, forestry, sustainability, camps – while using the Board as a sounding place to test and amplify our understandings. For example, Doug Welker (Alston and Atlantic Mine) has long been Chair of the Peter Wolfe Chapter of the North Country Trail; Dave Allen (Marquette) has long represented the Central U.P. Sierra Club, and Connie Julien (Chassell) has represented FOLK on the UPEC board for years. Nancy Warren (Ironwood) is nationally active with the Timber Wolf Alliance; Sherry Zoars (Watersmeet) helps lead the North Woods Native Plant Society. And I have been a Board member of the Central Lake Superior Land Conservancy (now renamed Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy) for almost a decade.

The multiple commitments of Board members mean that all lead very busy lives; consequently the UPEC Board only meets quarterly, but usually for 4-5 hours. Since we are also spread around geographically we minimize travel by meeting at Alberta, MI, midway between Houghton-Hancock and Marquette, the two areas where many of our Board members reside. Between meetings we conduct business by e-mail, and less frequently by conference calls.

UPEC has never had paid staff in a fixed office, but in 2001 we recognized the inefficiencies (and high turnover rates) of volunteer newsletter editors and membership chairs. So we hired an Independent Contractor on a monthly stipend to act as newsletter editor and business manager. Suzanne Van Dam (Houghton) held the position from 2002-2004, and Susan Rasch (Aura) from 2005 to today. Their homes became our "office," their phone numbers our contact numbers.

(Cont. on page 11)

## **So Just What Does UPEC Do? (Some Highlights)**

### **WE WRITE**

- comments to government agencies on permit issues for old growth in public forests (1990s), on U.P. reservoirs (2008-2010), on sulfide mining (2004-2010), on the Woodland Road (2010), on management plans within national forests and parks;
- action alerts on the Beaver Basin Wilderness (2009),
- newsletters (3-4 times a year)
- op-eds monthly in the *Mining Journal* (2010).

### **WE TESTIFY AT PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- in Washington, D.C. (Michigan Wilderness Bill, 1987)
- in Lansing on Kenecott mining permits (2007)
- in the Marquette area (Humboldt Mill, Woodland Road, 2009-2010).

### **WE REPRESENT**

- U.P. interests within the Michigan Environmental Council (MEC) (1999-2010)
- Legal defense of motorboat regulations on Crooked Lake in the Sylvania Wilderness (for over a decade).

### **WE FUND**

- Environmental Education grants (\$6,000 since 2005)
- Regional outreach activists like Eric Hansen and his Headwaters Country Project from outside grants (\$10,000 since 2008)
- Land acquisitions such as the Copper Country Audubon Preserve expansion (2002).

### **WE ORGANIZE**

- a travelling art show, "Celebration of the U.P. as Home," (five cities in 2007-2008)
- "U.P. Celebration at the Three Corners in Marquette" (2009,2010)
- forums on mineral rights (2009) and dam removal regulations (2008)
- a planning group for a Trap Hills National Recreation Area within the Ottawa National Forest (2004-2010).

### **WE CO-SPONSOR**

- films like "Fortunate Wilderness (2010)
- the Keweenaw Sustainability Council (2009).

—Jon Saari

(U.P. Primer cont. from pg. 10)

In recent years, the whole operation has run on about \$10,000-\$15,000 per year. The income comes from 200-300 individual memberships (about 35%), \*EarthShare Michigan (a kind of United Way for environmental causes) (55%), and the rest from small grants and interest from an endowment fund with the Marquette Community Foundation (currently worth about \$45,000). Our major expenses are the Independent Contractor, the four issues of the newsletter *The UP Environment*, environmental education grants, our annual Celebration of the U.P. as Home, and regional outreach activities. We are fiscally sound because our fixed costs are limited and predictable, we are not grant-dependent, and our generous Board members pick up their own travel expenses and often donate for other expenses.

As an organization UPEC has also tried to keep its gaze steady on the long-term, beyond crises. Big issues framed as crises (such as the proposed federal nuclear waste repository, the proposed paper mill on Keweenaw Bay in the 1980s and the new wave of sulfide mining today) burst on the scene suddenly, and require huge inputs of time, energy, and money. As with the sulfide mining issue, many new groups form (for example, Save the Wild U.P. with its website and Marquette office, and Yellow Dog Summer with its youthful and militant spirit) and established ones raised their efforts to reflect the demands of the political and legal struggle (for example, the National Wildlife Federation's Lake Superior Office, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, and the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve). UPEC has sought to be a leading member in these new coalitions, but as a U.P.-wide grassroots group it does not have the wherewithal or instincts to take over. We feel it is good if there is a broad front of diverse groups promoting opposition and reform, but realize that many of them will not outlive the crisis.

Our long-range strategic goal is enhancing land and water protection in the Upper Peninsula, both on public and private lands. Public lands (state and federal national forests, refuges, and parks) have regular citizen input opportunities though general and specific management plans and projects. Private lands are often neglected, but the new regional land conservancy movement has provided ways to enhance protection on private lands through conservation easements and preserve creation. Any opportunity to enhance public or private land protection must be seized, for the sake of biodiversity and as a buffer against future crises.

The soft power of artists, filmmakers, and writers, who help shape messages and stories that resonate with the public, are key to long-term land and water protection. In 2006 UPEC initiated a traveling art exhibit, curated by Board member Joyce Koskenmaki (Hancock), called Celebration of the U.P. as Home. It traveled to five cities and showed viewers what it means to artists to live and work in the U.P. That idea was followed up by the first U.P. Celebration at the Three Corners in Marquette on March 28, 2009, a day-long festival that explored the visions and experiences of artists, writers, birders, hikers, land managers, spiritual leaders, meteorologists, historians, and filmmakers, all of whom donated their time and talents for the good of the cause.

So we seek (in the formulation of outreach activist Eric Hansen) to create a buzz, to start a thousand conversations, and to build a wider U.P. fan club within the Lower Peninsula as well as Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois. Our regional outreach, assisted by grants from The Wilderness Society, is premised on the insight that outside allies are needed to promote lasting land protection in the U.P. Only by appreciating the U.P. as a world-class treasure, as an iconic wild headwaters country within the Great Lakes watershed, can we ensure its future.

—Jon Saari, UPEC President

Member of  
**EarthShare**  
Michigan

\*EarthShare Michigan allows working people to donate to environmental organizations —such as UPEC—through workplace giving campaigns.

To learn more about them, you can go to [www.earthshare.org](http://www.earthshare.org).

Background photo:  
The Trap Hills  
By Doug Welker

**Upper Peninsula  
Environmental Coalition**    **Return Service Requested**  
P.O. Box 673  
Houghton, MI 49931  
Phone: (906) 524-7899  
www.upenvironment.org

Nonprofit Organization  
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
**Permit No. 35**  
Houghton, MI 49931



*Protecting and maintaining the unique  
Environmental qualities of the Upper Peninsula  
of Michigan by educating the public and  
acting as a watchdog to industry and government*



Greedasaures Wrecks  
By Patrick St. Germain

***Be sure to join us for our spring board meeting  
Friday, March 19, from 2-5 p.m. at the Federated  
Women's Clubhouse in Marquette!***

"Greedasaures Wrecks"

In the misty fabric of our past, a spirit machine creature was created by a clever, but not always wise race of beings.

It's name is Greedasaures Wrecks.

It continues to roam the earth with passion and energy, and consumes with restless glee, whatever attracts its eye.

It has flattened forests, erased mountains, and turned prairies into dust.

To it, great rivers are only a toy and the oceans are but an annoyance.

It is pure terror as it eats its way into the future saying "Me", "Mine", "My desires cannot be satisfied", "I will not be stopped".

But in the night, when silence keeps its knowing watch, the Destroyer feels fear.

Fear that it will one day fail, and be abandoned to dissolve back into the continuum from which it was made.

Fear that it will be forgotten, and passion will be only a dream, and love will be forever lost beneath the dust.

I know the fitful midnight skeleton's dance of this terrifying terrified creature, because...

It is I.

We are one.

-Patrick St. Germain