



Late Fall / Early Winter 2023

UPEnvironment

UPEC STRENGTHENS OUR INTERCONNECTED COALITION TO PROTECT OUR FUTURE

The Year in Review, by Evan Zimmermann, UPEC President

In 2023, the UPEC board carried on our work advocating for the preservation of the UP's culture and natural resources through education, events, and careful industry analysis. I'm proud to have taken on the role of president to carry our mission forward for the future of our home. With your support, we have been able to volunteer our time and effort to keep our focus on critical issues to build a sustainable and prosperous future for us all.

We continued our livestream series with Joe Hovel on Northwoods conservation, energy transitions with Ken Muir, music with Michael Waite, and climate change news from the Conference of the Parties with Sarah Green. Then we returned to live events after years of operating virtually with our 2023 Celebrate the UP! in Marquette, which we extended for the first time to include Ishpeming at Partridge Creek Farm and the RAMBA mountain bike trailhead.

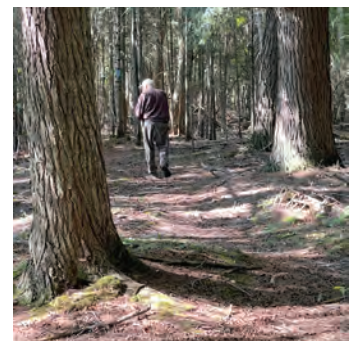
With our theme of "Smile!" we incorporated comedy along with music for the first time at our party at the Ore Dock Brewing Co. with Devon Grice and Ramble Tamble. It was so exciting to see everyone's shining faces in person and reestablish connections with our friends and supporters.

We were honored to welcome Jenn Hill as our keynote speaker, giving us an update on all the processes in place to enhance Michigan's sustainability, and we were proud to present the first UPEC-produced documentaries by board member Dave Aho. We were so thankful

to all our presenters for showing us the many aspects of the UP environment, from outdoor recreation to climate science to the spiritual aspects of connecting with nature. Thank you to everyone who participated and supported our efforts, and we look forward to seeing you next March in Houghton and Hancock!

Our community continues to create innovative art and education. Our 2023 Photo Contest winner was Russell Johnson. We're inviting submissions for new categories of photography for 2024, and we hope you can participate! Our yearly Environmental Education and Community Conservation grants are made possible by your donations and since our board is composed entirely of volunteers, we can ensure that the maximum amount goes to the best community programs and land preservation efforts through

Some images from UPEC activities in 2023.



comedy • music • learning • fun!
march 10-11, 2023 • ishpeing & marquette
in-person & on-line • free to all, all welcome
upenvironment.org • yoopersmile.com
streaming at [facebook.com/upenvironment/live](https://www.facebook.com/upenvironment/live)

careful review and consideration. Announcements of the 2024 Photo Contest and grants programs are later in this issue.

This year, we awarded Environmental Education grants to Kevin St. Onge of the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District for Environmental Stewardship Through UP Forestry, Tami Mokszycke of Hermansville North Central Elementary to create a Pollinator's Palace, Kristina Waara of Arvon Township Schools to create a program for students on pollinators and making maple syrup, and Martha Rypstra of West Iron Public School District for a school garden greenhouse. Thanks to all of our environmental educators!

Conservation grants were awarded to the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy for access and road infrastructure in the new Dead River Community Forest, the Copper Harbor Trail Club for improvements to a trail connector along M-26 in the Keweenaw Peninsula, the Keweenaw Land Trust to help manage the conversion of a small private island camp into a public resource, and Monica Cady for an Ojibwe Apothecary Land Rematriation. Land conservation is at the core of our mission, and these organizations are doing essential work for all of us and will benefit directly from your support. You can feel proud to know that your membership has made these grants possible.

We were also happy to participate for the second time in the Marquette Maritime Museum's Lake Superior Day and meet with new and old friends to discuss the UP's history and environmental future. We'll be back on July 21, 2024, for a third round of summer fun.

As a new collaborative effort with Jane Fitkin of Citizens for a Safe and Clean Lake Superior (CSCLS), we launched a new monthly UP Environment email newsletter to bring you a consolidated summary of some of the most important regional news, with our first edition focusing on mining with guests from Honor the Earth and the Tamarack Water Alliance. We also re-launched our Live-stream Series to kick off the newsletter at facebook.com/upenvironment/live. We plan to bring you more every month with each new edition. Every UPEC and CSCLS member will receive the newsletter in their inbox, and we'll be publishing them online at up.news.

We continue to focus on the most important environmental campaigns of our time, including the expansion of mining with our Mining Action Group headed by Kathleen Heideman and Steve Garske. We advocate for the removal of the dangerous and unnecessary Line 5. We fight against

Collaboration + Determination = Nullification: Citizens' Group Thwarts Planned Rocket Launch Facility



We are thrilled to announce that, thanks to tireless work by CSCLS, on November 21 the Powell Township Board passed a resolution against the industrialization of the Granot Loma site (shown above) for rocket launching. We hope this is only one of many wins for the environment in the near future.

“The simple fact that we’ve defeated the spaceport threat is a testament to the strength of the people’s will,” said Jane Fitkin, outreach director for CSCLS. “People in the UP have a deep connection with the land and the water here, and have shown up these past 3 years to oppose this obviously bad project. Surely there are more issues to address, as there’s no shortage of environmental threats in the Superior watershed, but I have a lot of hope in the people of this area to protect what we hold dear. We stopped this rocket together.” <https://citizensforsuperior.org/>

the industrialization of natural areas for rocket testing with CSCLS. We support new wilderness areas with Keep the UP Wild led by the Environmental Law and Policy Center and hundreds of other organizations. We support the Coalition to SAVE the Menominee River opposing sulfide mining 150 feet from an important Lake Michigan tributary and sacred site, and the new group Protect the Porkies, who stand against a sulfide mine on Lake Superior which similarly infringes on indigenous rights, endangering the water and old growth forest. Horst Schmidt, our previous president, continues his relentless focus on political and legal developments across environmental issues, and we'll keep you updated on social media on all the latest news.

As a new generation of volunteers steps up to carry forward our decades-long mission, we hope that you'll continue to support all the work we do. UPEC is a labor of love for our land, our health, the vitality of our entire ecosystem, and the unique culture which it supports. Only through constant effort can we ensure that future generations can continue to live happy and healthy lives in the place that sustains us.

ANNOUNCING THE 2024 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & COMMUNITY CONSERVATION GRANTS PROGRAM

Applications accepted through February 15, 2024

The application window for UPEC's Environmental Education and Community Conservation Grants Program is now open! This program supports transformative change in the Upper Peninsula by empowering student/teacher partnerships and funding community-led visions for betterment. This year, we are extending the application deadline into February to allow applicants more time following the holidays to prepare. To ensure the best possible outcomes, we also will now require applicants to meet with our Evaluation Committee via Zoom to discuss their projects before final decisions are made. These Zoom calls will be scheduled in late February, with final grant decisions coming by March 15. Interested in applying? Read on for descriptions of both grants.

Are you a teacher with a great idea for getting your students interested in the environment? We invite you to make your idea a reality through our **Environmental Education Grant Program**. For over 15 years, UPEC's Board has approved grants of up to \$500 to support educator-promoted environmental projects. Educators in Upper Peninsula schools, public or private, or other groups and institutions wanting to create or enhance an environmental education program or support an ongoing activity, are eligible to apply.

UPEC believes this grant series is especially important because schools are strapped for dollars to do innovative environmental education programs. Projects funded in

2023 were pollinator enhancements, a school greenhouse, environmental stewardship in a school forest, and sustainable maple syrup making. If you'd like to apply, please visit upenvironment.org/environmental-education-grants.

UPEC's **Community Conservation Grant Program** is designed to challenge UP communities to promote conservation values within their watershed or local area. The program honors the late Tom Church of Watersmeet, a long-time UPEC member whose bequest made this fund possible. The program is also supported by the Saari Family Fund and many individual donors. The grants, up to \$10,000 each, are for planning or implementing local conservation projects that engage a variety of stakeholders within a community, from recreational groups to naturalists, township officials, churches, and schools.

We want to encourage proactive stewardship with this program. Grants could be awarded for finding ways to enhance native plant and animal life. They can be for starting a community forest, restoring a stream or wetland, or putting on a program about local medicinal plants. Land acquisition projects for conservation purposes are a possibility. Projects funded in 2023 included grants to land conservancies for purchases of key land and an environmental restoration project. To apply, please visit upenvironment.org/community-conservation-grants.

WHY THE TRAP HILLS ARE WORTHY OF WILDERNESS STATUS

Text and photos by Steve Garske, UPEC Board Secretary

[Ed. note: On October 17, the Michigan Senate's Committee on Natural Resources and Agriculture held a hearing on a proposed resolution to the US Congress in support of designating the Trap Hills as a federal wilderness area. State Senator Ed McBroom (R-Vulcan) opposed the resolution, while several UP residents, including UPEC Past President Horst Schmidt, spoke in favor. The committee did not vote on the resolution at the hearing. Afterwards, UPEC Board Secretary Steve Garske sent the following letter to members of the committee, rebutting claims Senator McBroom made in his testimony.]

The following is in response to statements made by Michigan State Senator Ed McBroom at a recent Michigan Senate hearing, on a Senate resolution urging Congress to designate four areas in the Ottawa National Forest (ONF) as federal wilderness. Sen. McBroom's comments are posted on the Michigan Senate Republican website, at <https://www.misenategop.com/sen-mcBroom-u-p-residents-oppose-wilderness-resolution/>.



I hope that my responses to Senator McBroom's comments will be helpful to you in future deliberations regarding this wilderness proposal.

1. Senator McBroom calls the proposal for four additional federally-designated wilderness areas in the UP a "federal takeover."

This is a rather strange view, as the areas being proposed for wilderness are already federal land, and are already being managed by the Ottawa National Forest.

2. Sen. McBroom also said that "Further, it would end management of the forests, making both these tracts and those adjacent more susceptible to fire, disease and invasive species."

Unfortunately Mr. McBroom has this all backwards.

First, the areas that would be designated wilderness predominantly support black ash and mixed conifer swamps and northern hardwood forests. Northern hardwood forests in particular have long been known in forestry circles as the "asbestos forest" because they rarely burn.^{1,2} (Anyone who has tried to burn freshly cut, green sugar maple or other hardwood firewood in a wood stove or a fireplace will know why.) These types of forests become MUCH MORE flammable after logging though, because logging allows the wind and sun to reach the forest floor and dry it out. It also dries out the slash left on the ground after logging, greatly increasing the amount of dry fuel available for a fire.

Second, invasive plants and invertebrates are much more likely to gain a foothold after logging. Non-native, invasive earthworms, slugs, plant seeds and rhizomes can easily hitch a ride in the mud and debris attached to logging equipment. (The Ottawa requires logging and other heavy equipment to be cleaned off before being used on the Ottawa, but it's nearly impossible to remove all the mud and other debris from this heavy equipment.) Logging by its very nature removes some of the forest canopy cover, and leaves ruts and bare patches in the existing ground cover where invasive plants in particular can get a start. And certain invasive plants such as Japanese stiltgrass can significantly INCREASE the flammability of northern forests.³ Wilderness designation would preclude use of this equipment and greatly slow the spread of invasive plants and animals, without increasing the risk of wildfire.

3. Sen. McBroom states that designating these areas as wilderness "certainly would have a negative impact on our economy and severely hurt tourism by limiting certain forms of outdoor recreation."

Declaring these areas as wilderness would definitely not hurt tourism or negatively impact the economy. Just the

opposite is true! Most of these areas have not been logged for a very long time. The core Trap Hills region (with which I am very familiar) has not been logged since the first big cut well over 100 years ago, and there are pockets of old-growth there that have never been logged at all. At that time logging was done with horses.

In recent years the Trap Hills has gained a nationwide reputation as a great place to hike through extensive stands of mature and old-growth hardwood forest, and to enjoy the spectacular views.⁴ Keeping it the way it is is the best way to encourage tourism. People from other parts of the country can visit lots of places closer to home to see clearcuts and heavily logged forests, and aren't going to travel long distances to see the same thing here.

4. Sen. McBroom claims that "A wilderness designation would significantly limit recreational access to these areas by prohibiting motorized vehicles and equipment."

Almost all of the Trap Hills and Elcho areas being proposed for wilderness are designated as Management Areas 6.1, 8.1 or 8.3. MA 6.1 emphasizes "a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation environment." MA 8.1 designates Wild and Scenic River corridors, MA 8.3 identifies "Special Interest Areas." All three of these management areas are already designated by the Forest Service as non-motorized. The Pioneer Trail is the only designated motorized recreational trail that runs through the proposed Trap Hills Wilderness. This trail can be specifically excluded from wilderness designation in any legislation designating the surrounding land as wilderness. Therefore the loss of motorized recreation opportunities resulting from wilderness designation would be minimal.

5. Sen. McBroom claims that wilderness designation would "hinder those with mobility challenges and disabilities and limit access to the elderly unable to walk long distances."

Again, because nearly all these areas consist of large blocks of roadless forest and wetland, and because they are already managed as non-motorized, access for people with mobility issues would not be significantly limited by wilderness designation.

6. Sen. McBroom claims that "The 2006 Ottawa National Forest Management Plan includes a determination by the National Forest Service that the areas currently under

discussion lack wilderness characteristics and have a 'low to moderate wilderness potential.'"

The decision by the ONF not to even consider the Trap Hills and Norwich Bluff areas for wilderness designation in the 2006 Forest Plan was (in my opinion, based in part on information from an ONF employee familiar with the process) an arbitrary and biased one. The ONF's reasoning for not recommending these areas for wilderness consideration is laid out in Appendix C of the Environmental Impact Statement for their 2006 Forest Plan.⁵ Throughout this document the ONF cites criteria from the Forest Service Handbook in deciding whether these areas qualify as wilderness. These criteria are frequently at odds with the Wilderness Act of 1964.

One of their main reasons given for claiming that the Trap Hills region was "unsuitable" for wilderness designation was that one could hear traffic from Hwy M-64. This is



ridiculous. Over the last 25 years or so I have spent a lot of time hiking and exploring the Trap Hills, and have never heard vehicles from M-64 or anywhere else (with the possible trivial exception of infrequent vehicles at the end of Forest Road 326 near the start of the Hacking Trail, from a small part of the extreme western end of this area). But even if this claim were true, it still shouldn't have precluded wilderness designation for the Trap Hills. That's because the Wilderness Act of 1964 only pertains to the land being designated as wilderness, not the land outside the wilderness boundary.⁶ This includes land immediately adjacent to the wilderness boundary. There are many examples of wilderness areas with road corridors (even 4-lane highways) for boundaries. Whether or not it might be possible to hear traffic from M-64 or any other roads is

therefore irrelevant to the eligibility of the Trap Hills or any of the other areas for federal wilderness designation.

Another reason given for not considering at least the Trap Hills as wilderness was that it supposedly had “active roads.” This is also false. The only so-called “roads” that have ever existed in the Trap Hills core area were the old horse trails used to partly log the area well over 100 years ago. Since then these trails have all but vanished. In most areas they are virtually indistinguishable from the surrounding forest. There are still a few spots where a careful observer can see short stretches where the forest is a little bit younger and more dense than the surrounding forest (due to fewer large trees and more saplings and “brush”), but the average hiker would never notice them. In all cases they are impassible to any sort of vehicle, including ATVs and mountain bikes. Nonetheless the ONF has maintained these old horse trails in their road inventory as “active roads.”

Despite their remoteness and unique features, these areas are vulnerable to future resource exploitation. They need to be protected for the long-term as federal wilderness.

ENDNOTES

1. Heinselman, Miron (Bud). 1999. *The Boundary Waters Wilderness Ecosystem*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. 352 pp.
2. Frelich, Lee, and Craig Lorimer. 1991. Natural disturbance regimes in hemlock-hardwood forests of the upper Great Lakes region. *Ecological Monographs* 61(2): 145–164.
3. Emery, Sarah M., and others. 2011. Fire intensity effects on seed germination of native and invasive Eastern deciduous forest understory plants. *Forest Ecology and Management* 261: 1401–1408. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0378112711000569>
4. Hanson, Eric. 2002. Out of sight: Hiking Michigan’s Trap Hills. *Backpacker Magazine* (May). <https://www.backpacker.com/stories/out-of-sight-hiking-michigan-s-trap-hills/>
5. Ottawa National Forest. 2006. *Final Environmental Impact Statement Appendix C – Wilderness Evaluation*. https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5110700.pdf
6. The Wilderness Act. Public Law 88-577 (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136). 88th Congress, Second Session. September 3, 1964 (as amended). https://winapps.umt.edu/winapps/media2/wilderness/NWPS/documents/publiclaws/The_Wilderness_Act.pdf

“REMATERIATING” LAND USING OJIBWE KNOWLEDGE

Great Lakes Now profiles UPEC Community Conservation Grant recipient

Great Lakes Now (www.greatlakesnow.org), an initiative of Detroit Public TV and PBS, recently profiled Monica Cady as part of its new Waves of Change online interview series highlighting the diverse faces and perspectives shaping the environmental justice movement throughout the Great Lakes region. Cady, a member of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa, is a forager and herbalist living in Hessel, Michigan, a place that is part of her Tribe’s ancestral homeland in what is now known as Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. She is the recipient of a 2023 UPEC Community Conservation grant that supports her work to “rematriate” a plot of land near her home with plants that are culturally significant to the Ojibwe People, cared for using traditional techniques.



Great Lakes Now did an 18-minute audio interview with Cady for the series, and also published a short video profile. Both are available at www.greatlakesnow.org/2023/10/waves-of-change-meet-herbalist-and-forager-monica-cady/. Here is a transcript of the video profile (published with permission).

GREAT LAKES NOW: You told me that you view your work as decolonizing yourself, and the land where you reside, through plants, through herbalism. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

MONICA CADY: As I'm learning about the culturally significant plants, it's a way for me to learn about my culture. One of my relatives lived to be 113 — she's Mackinac Band Ojibwe — and I believe she lived to be that old from drinking tamarack bark tea and bearberry tea. So by protecting the plants and learning about them, it is my way to decolonize and reclaim and rewild the land, and learn what my ancestors ate.

As far as environmental justice and herbalism, I forage sustainably, completely sustainably, and I aim to be very low-impact and do everything in season. Basically, when I am foraging I am just kind of pruning, going and pruning — you can't even tell that I've been there.

ENTER YOUR BEST PHOTOS – AND AI ART – IN OUR 2024 PHOTO CONTEST

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES: JANUARY 19, 2024

Every year, UPEC invites people to help us recognize and share the beauty of our Upper Peninsula landscape and its inhabitants by entering our Photo Contest. Our 2023 photo contest winner was Russell Johnson (his winning photo is at right). We're looking forward to seeing your submissions for 2024!



This year we will honor photo winners in two categories: Unedited Photos and Digitally Enhanced Photos. Unedited Photos are exactly that: shots you take and then submit to the contest without any post-processing. In the Digitally Enhanced category, you can take your original photo and let your creativity run free using any of the many digital photo editing tools out there. You can send us up to three photos total, in either or both of the categories. The shots can be of any subject, so long as it's a picture of the UP. Photos must be a high-resolution shot in .jpg format (file size: 1 megabyte minimum; 5 megabytes maximum).

NEW THIS YEAR: Create and share UP-themed AI Art! Just for fun, we've added a category where you can use one of the new AI image generators online (search for "free AI image generators") to create an image that represents the UP. This is done by entering a descriptive text prompt into the image generator. An example would be: "**Northern forest with lake and canoe, van Gogh style.**" The more detail in your prompt, the better the results. Some generators allow you to then edit the image in various ways. Let your imagination rule, and then save the image, give it a title, and send it in!

The winners in each category will be enlarged, printed, and matted, and we'll display it at our Celebrate the UP! event next March in Houghton. The photographer/artist will get to keep the print. The winners and first runners-up will also be published in our spring newsletter. The deadline for entries is January 19, 2024.

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Do you shop at Tadych's Marketplace (formerly Econofoods)? If so, please save your receipts and donate them to us. Keep an envelope handy at home where you can deposit the receipts after shopping. When it's full, mail them to us. We turn them in and get a donation!



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STEVE GARSKE



A beaver pond in the Trap Hills. Inside, Steve Garske rebuts arguments against designating this area as a federal Wilderness.

*Support UPEC by becoming a member or renewing your membership today!
 Just fill out the form below or online. All memberships expire on January 1st.
 Not sure if your membership is current? Email us at upec@upenvironment.org.*

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109th: Jenn Hill (D)
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housedems.com/Jenn-Hill/

110th: Greg Markkanen (R)
 517-373-0850
gophouse.org/member/repgregmarkkanen/posts

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Please give us the honoree's contact information on the space below this form; or, if a memorial, the name and information for a family member.

Please clip and mail along with your check to: UPEC, P.O. Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931

Thank you for your support!

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