



# The Upper Peninsula *Environment*

Newsletter of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition • May-June 1992

## Development at Little Presque Isle & Wetmore Landing: not a "done deal" yet

By Joanne Welsh

On Lake Superior about five miles north of Marquette, Little Presque Isle and Wetmore Landing are two of the few undeveloped stretches of shoreline near the city open to the public. The DNR, with a \$360,000 grant from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, is attempting to change that in spite of enormous public outcry against development. Citizens who believe that the area is an extremely fragile ecosystem as well as a place from which to draw spiritual renewal think that it should be left alone. If the DNR has its way, however, the 2,800-acre site will become a State Forest Recreation Area with three camping loops (two of which will allow motor vehicles), including toilets, trash barrels, picnic tables, and grills. "Host campers," volunteers who spend long periods of time on site, are expected to help protect the area from uncontrolled use. Lynn Emerick, a long-time member of UPEC, says that the "campground is being justified to combat beach parties, littering, and erosion in the areas. But to cut Norway pines, build trailer facilities, make new roads, and house up to 100 people per night on the shoreline as an answer to some misuse of the areas is like bringing an elephant into your basement to step on a spider."

Emerick isn't alone in her opposition. The grassroots group Citizens to Save Little Presque Isle/Wetmore Landing organized a protest outside the DNR district office in Marquette on Earth Day that drew about 100 demonstrators and a continual medley of supporting honks from passing cars. So far, there have been close to 700 postcards in opposition (apparently the DNR is only counting one postcard if two or more come from the same household), and between 1,500 and 1,700 signatures in opposition on petitions. Since 1991, only ten instances of support for the development have been filed with the DNR. Further, the Marquette County Commission has requested a new public hearing on the DNR plan because of concern over changes made since the Commission first approved it in 1986. The DNR has denied the Commission's request. Mike Paluda, regional supervisor of the DNR forest management division, says the agency is going ahead with the plan in spite of the opposition, lamely adding that "not everybody is going to be happy."

There are several avenues open before the proposed campground, slated for opening in 1993,

becomes a "done deal." These include the potential for a court injunction, pushing for an EIS, and finding grounds for an archeological survey of the area. Free legal services have been offered to help CSLPI combat the development. In addition, two experts, including John Halsey, the director of Michigan state Bureau of History, have recommended an archeological study be carried out. And it looks like at least a minimal EIS will be done by volunteer specialists. If rare species turn up—and it looks like they will—the DNR may have to do an EIS. Don Snitgen, UPEC member, biology professor at NMU, and key activist against the development, has invited the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) on a field trip to LPI/WL. They have accepted.

Citizens are still working actively to sway the DNR and NRC. Letters opposing the development should be sent to Roland Harmes, Director, DNR, P.O. Box 30028, Lansing 48909; and to Frank Opolka, Deputy Director—Region I, 1990 US-41 South, Marquette 49855. Finally, you can make a difference by speaking out at the NRC meeting, which will be Wednesday, June 10, 7:30 pm ET, at the state office building at 305 Ludington St. in Escanaba! Speakers will be allotted a maximum of ten minutes if they register with Karen Scott, secretary to the NRC, by June 5. Call (517) 373-2352. You can register at the door, but will only get five minutes. **If you care about Little Presque Isle and Wetmore Landing, this is the meeting to attend!**

Those wishing further information on the issue can write to CSLPI, c/o UPEC, P.O. Box 847, Marquette 49855. If you would like to make a donation to this cause, write checks to UPEC, Marquette Chapter, and specify CSLPI on the check.

### Envirocalendar

**June 10:** DNR Natural Resources Commission meeting, Escanaba. See above story for details.

**June 17:** Marquette UPEC Chapter meeting, Village Inn Hotel, 1301 N. 3rd St., 7 pm ET.

**June 22, July 27, August 24:** Houghton UPEC Chapter meeting, Portage Lake United Church, Houghton. 7 pm ET.

**July 20:** UPEC board meeting, 7 pm ET, L'Anse Township Hall, downtown L'Anse.

## A visionary perspective: Stephanie Mills addresses GMM

Bioregionalism is a relatively recent term in environmental circles. However, in her presentation, "More Than Just Saving What's Left, Bioregionalism for the Long Haul," author and activist Stephanie Mills assured the audience at UPEC's General Membership Meeting that many of us are bioregionalists without realizing it. Indeed, there are many examples of those who are mindfully attempting to simplify their lifestyles in order to live responsibly as members of the larger biotic community.

In order to appreciate the scope of the bioregional movement, one must first recognize that the Earth has not and cannot generate new ecosystems to accommodate rapid human population growth and resulting exponential increases in consumption. Mills explained how consumerism is a form of complicity with the agents of ecological destruction. The challenge of bioregionalists is to find our way back into the web of life.

Mills' prescription for "devolution" back into a more sensible living arrangement between humans and other species begins with the development of "ecological literacy." She urges us to "reinhabit" the land rather than occupy it, to celebrate the life forms (biota) around us and to become mindful of the sacredness of everyday life.

Mills recommends a "downwardly mobile" lifestyle leading to a higher quality of life based on a sense of ecosystem dynamics where nothing is expendable and there is no "away" to throw things to. Growing our own food, repairing and reusing goods, bartering services, and frugality are all things that a growing number of people actively participate in or aspire to. She emphasized that greater local self-reliance is dependent on maintaining healthy ecosystems and involves a generous reciprocal relationship with the Earth. Bioregionalism bespeaks this reciprocal emphasis and recognizes the importance of unfragmented biotic reserves and the value of ecological restoration.

Mills advocates a culture of cooperation where unity is achieved through a synthesis of views rather than trade-offs. She proposes that decision-making be based on a loyalty to place, integrity, goodwill, and respect for the web of life.

Over the last two decades, Stephanie Mills has been writing, editing, speaking, and organizing on the visionary edge of ecological concern. Her two books, *Whatever Happened to Ecology* (a memoir) and *In Praise of Nature* (an anthology, with her essays, on the literature of nature and environmentalism), received national critical acclaim. She is currently working on a book about ecological restoration, and is active in the bioregional movement.

—Catherine Andrews

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## News & Notes

**Inland Sea symposium set** The 5th Inland Sea Symposium, entitled "Connect with Superior," is a weekend of conference and hands-on workshops, boating equipment demos, sea kayaking, and interpretive programs sponsored by the Inland Sea Society. This year it will be at the Apostle Islands from June 18-21. For more information, call the Society free of charge at 800-354-8735.

**Motors continue in Sylvania** David Morton, the supervisor of Ottawa National Forest, announced in April that the USFS will continue to let motors be used on Big Bateau, Devils Head, and Crooked lakes within the Sylvania Wilderness while the UPEC appeal is pending. Morton said a separate amendment to the Ottawa management plan will be issued sometime later this year regarding motor use.

**EPA plans revegetation at Torch Lake** In May EPA released its proposal for cleaning up the stamp sands and surface areas in the Torch Lake Superfund toxic sites in Houghton and Keweenaw counties. The sites stretch from Freda on the Lake Superior shore to Copper City. EPA wants to spread topsoil over most (but not all) of the stamp-sand sites and plant ground cover. UPEC will probably support this approach, with a few stipulations. We are preparing detailed comments to get to the EPA by the July 1 deadline.

### AWAKE blasts DNR meddling

The contest to protect the Keweenaw from another round of destructive copper mining remains in doubt. AWAKE, a small grassroots group fighting the proposed GLM mine in Keweenaw County, is contesting the exploiters on several fronts, most of them within the DNR. Evidently we are having some effect. The chairperson of the Keweenaw County commission announced at a May 12 meeting that someone in the DNR urged her to start a letter-writing campaign in favor of the mine to offset the large volume of mail the agency was receiving from anti-mine people. We, of course, are outraged by this unethical behavior and have expressed our displeasure in letters to various newspapers and to elected officials. On another front, AWAKE is working hard to convince the DNR to order an EIS for the proposed mine. In Chile, a \$30 million EIS was done for a mine that opened recently. Surely we deserve an EIS also. *It is imperative to write to Roland Harmes, director of the DNR (P.O. Box 30028, Lansing 48909) to (1) express your disapproval of their unethical attempts to promote private financial interests and (2) demand an EIS for the GLM proposed mine.*

—John Mantz, Secretary, AWAKE

(Ed. note: If you are concerned about the possibility of renewed mining in the Copper Country—and the GLM mine could be just the tip of the iceberg, since the corporate giant Noranda is waiting in the wings—you might consider supporting AWAKE. Their address is c/o Janet Avery, HC 1, Box 22, Mohawk 49950; (906) 337-2571.)

**The Upper Peninsula  
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**preserving & maintaining the environmental  
quality of Upper Michigan since 1976**

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- Chippewa Rapids Audubon Society, Menominee-Marinette
  - Citizens Against the Road, Grand Marais
  - Copper Country Audubon Society, Hancock
  - Copper Country Peace Alliance, Houghton
  - Dickinson Citizens for Clean Air, Norway
  - FOLK, L'Anse
- League of Women Voters of the Copper Country, Calumet
  - MTU Student Pugwash, Houghton
- National Wildlife Federation Great Lakes Office, Ann Arbor
  - Northern Michigan Wolf Sanctuary, Negaukne
  - Pictured Rocks Trail Crew, Munising
    - Ottawa National Forest, Keweenaw
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I want to protect the U.P. by joining UPEC. My annual dues are enclosed (check one):

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## Your Turn

### **Numbers are not enough**

During the past month or so there has been a bit of controversy within UPEC regarding the philosophies we should promote in our resolutions. Some folks feel that we environmentalists must limit ourselves to facts and statistics to appear reasonable and acceptable to the general public. Yet I maintain that advocating the spiritual approach of challenging individuals to assume personal responsibility for those actions which affect the planet is equally as valuable as an educational tool.

It's high time to steadfastly promote ideas which go beyond compromise and diplomacy. There is no need to feel timid about adopting resolutions that advocate preservation of the Earth even if they demand sacrifices of the public. Let's freely encourage ideas such as:

- promoting the view of the Earth as "Home" to foster greater respect and responsibility toward our planet;
- rejecting the anthropocentric mindset and defending the inherent rights of non-human life;
- setting aside numerous large tracts of land exempt from industrial development and extraction;
- advocating much simpler lifestyles which include curtailing consumption and supporting greater energy efficiency and much more extensive recovery and recycling of materials.

If the above (and complementary) ideas are to become reality, we must not feel that they are unreasonable requests. On the contrary, I would argue that it is precisely those companies and individuals who clamor for profits and "business as usual" at the environment's (and our) expense who are out of line. We must feel comfortable demanding sacrifices of industry, politicians, and the general public.

Perhaps some folks feel that we have to be perfect ourselves before we actively support such values, but we will never have the opportunity to substitute benign alternatives to our present lifestyles unless we actively campaign for such changes. It is a learning process for each of us to discard the habits and trappings of our growth-oriented materialistic society.

It is important to remember that our vision of lifestyles in harmony with the Land will remain only a lofty ideal unless we work to incorporate the principles of Earth as Home/Companion into our social fabric. Those of us within the environmental network know only too well the monumental challenges we face in our efforts to heal the planet; if we do not accept the responsibility to advocate fundamental philosophies which cut to the core of our environmental crisis (rather than simply treating its symptoms), then how will we ever effect the real changes necessary to preserve our Home?

—Lisa Wallace, Hancock

### **The scourge of resourcism**

"Nothing in nature has value until man makes it into something he can use. Wilderness has no independent value. It acquires value only through conversion into an economic commodity." This perspective, called *resourcism*, was adamantly expressed to me several years ago by a staunch defender of the rights of corporations. What it fails to recognize are the rights of nature.

Resourcism is central to a tradition that has contributed immensely to ecological destruction. All of nature is assigned to catego-

ries of utility in which nothing has value independent of being a means of achieving human ends, i.e., of being a resource. Rationalized systems of management and technology are used to "improve" the processes of nature's "ecomachinery" to maximize production, whether it be wood fiber, energy, or deer and grouse. In his book, *The Practice of the Wild*, poet Gary Snyder insightfully refers to tree farms as "rationalistic, utopian totalitarianism."

Unfortunately, resourcism also permeates much of the language and arguments advocated by many environmentalists. To the resource environmentalist, nature remains a process to be managed solely for the fulfillment of human wants. Advocacy for protection of trees, forests, wildlife, plants, wetlands, rivers, watersheds, wilderness, and the larger ecosystem, all come under the terminology of protecting "the resource." Missing from this perspective is the fact that all beings and processes of nature exist for their own reasons quite independent of human desire. Wilderness (wildness) for its own sake. This principle is deserving of ethical recognition in public dialogue.

The danger of environmentalists speaking of nature as a smorgasbord of resources for "wise use" is aptly stated by ecologist Paul Shepherd in his book, *Man in the Landscape*.

... Resourcism is the most insidious form of nature hating because it poses as a virtue, as prudent, foreseeing, and unselfish. It destroys the world and ourselves in spite of the altruism of its protagonists...

To the extent that nature is robbed of its protective identity by being considered a resource, its protection from exploitation is diminished. In his essay "The Gospel of Global Efficiency," philosopher Wolfgang Sachs writes:

Looking at water, soils, animals, people in terms of resources reconstitutes them as objects for management by planners and for prizing by economists. . . . it will in the future, be much more difficult to have any intrinsic respect for them.

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I think that many of the environmentalists framing their arguments in the language of resourcism believe that this is the only way to maintain credibility in the context of Industrial Growth Society. Yet, is this really the type of credibility needed, or a form of complicity with ecological destruction?

Confining environmental activism to pollution control and the prevention of resource depletion for the benefit of human health and affluence postpones the necessary reform of the entire human relationship with the natural world. It reminds me of antebellum slave owners arguing that if they became more gentle and caring masters of their slaves, then slavery would be acceptable.

Just as the only meaningful reform of human slavery was to abolish it, the only meaningful reform of resourcism is to abolish it by embracing the rights of wild nature to flourish independent of human purpose. Only then can we hope to speak clearly and effectively for biodiversity and wildness.

—Kraig Klungness, Houghton

(The views expressed in the "Your Turn" column are those of the authors exclusively and do not necessarily represent, nor do they imply, any official position of UPEC.)

#### Lampreys rebound in northern Lake Huron

The parasitic sea lamprey, long thought to be under control, is apparently resurging in the waters of northern Lake Huron adjacent to the eastern U.P. According to the Center for the Great Lakes newsletter, *The Great Lakes Reporter*, charterboat captains and anglers are reporting "a significant increase in lamprey in the fish they catch." Northern Lake Huron has been treated with lampricide, but lamprey numbers there, say fishery officials, are about the same as they are in the St. Mary's River, which is the biggest source of lamprey in the Great Lakes. Flow through the St. Mary's wide watercourse is too fast to treat with chemicals. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service says that lamprey numbers have actually been rising since the late 1970s, despite an expensive control budget.

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