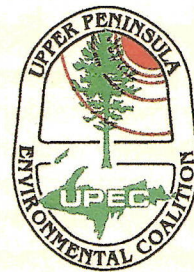


UP Environment

Winter 2012

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition's quarterly newsletter
UPEC is the UP's oldest grassroots environmental organization.



Need to reconnect environment, electoral politics

By Robert Evans

As we reflect on the results of the November elections, it's appropriate to assess what impact they may have on the many serious environmental issues facing our world today.

Although issues such as the economy and health care seemed to be foremost on people's minds as they went to the polls, a healthy environment is, of course, the fundamental basis for everything – and one that we sometimes, unfortunately, take for granted. It is not possible to have a healthy economy, or even to maintain public health over the long-term, without a healthy environment upon which all of us depend for our very existence.

The issue of climate change was unfortunately absent from the discussion during the presidential race this year – at least until the very last week. As we all know, Hurricane Sandy hit the East Coast just before the election, bringing coastal flooding and other devastation to the coast of New York, New Jersey, and other areas. Although it is difficult to link any single weather event to climate change, many climatologists have concluded that the likelihood of such extreme weather events is certainly enhanced by human-caused climate change.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and New York City



A kayaker enjoys sunshine and solitude on one of the many inland lakes sprinkling the region's public lands. Photo by Robert Evans

Mayor Michael Bloomberg have both spoken out on the urgent need to address this issue in the near future. President Obama, in his post-election address, stated, "I am a firm believer in the need for federal leadership in this area." See Page 3

Ready, aim. . . not so fast!

By Nancy Warren

I have seen people moved to tears upon first hearing a wolf pack howl and have watched others stare in awe at the size of a wolf track. Most Michiganders value the wolf for the vital role it plays in the ecosystem and support wildlife decisions based on sound science.

Recently introduced bills designate the wolf as a game animal and authorize the first recreational Michigan wolf hunt in modern history. HR 5834, introduced by State Representative Matt Huuki, and SB 1350, by State Senator Tom Casperson, are nearly identical except the Casperson version removes the word "scientific." The Senate version states, "The sound management of the wolf population is necessary" whereas the House version states, "The sound scientific management..."

The Senate version also sets the penalty for illegally killing a wolf at a fine of \$200 to \$1000. Illegally killing an elk results in a fine of \$500 to \$1000 and illegally killing a moose has a fine of \$1000 to \$5000. With approximately 700 wolves, 500 moose, and 850 elk in Michigan, why are wolves afforded a lesser comparative value?

Wolves See Page 7



A wolf pup on a road near Mass City. Wolves are particularly vulnerable on area roadways. Often they are killed by accident, but sometimes on purpose. Photo by Al Warren

Reflections on UP landscape: 'Legacy is not destiny'

Saari shares stewardship perspective

Editor's Note: Long-time UPEC board member Jon Saari delivered the following comments at the Sept. 28, 2012 Lake Superior Binational Forum in Marquette. Saari was one of the recipients of the ninth annual Environmental Stewardship Award.

Thanks to those who nominated me and to the jury.

I am pleased to be recognized along with another bearded gentleman from our corner of the UP, Chauncey Moran, the River Walker. We are both chastened activists, but I trust not hardened by cynicism about the struggles we have been fighting. I view these struggles long-term, and through an historical lens, as befits a historian.

What is the appropriate time scale for viewing our history? Going back 160 years? European settlement, and the industrial-scale extractive industries of mining and lumbering that accompanied it, have created the UP landscape that we know today: small towns, a backwoods culture of camps, sacrificial mining zones, industrial ruins, and a large cut-over forest with surprising remnants of what once was. It is a landscape perpetuated by long winters and black flies that have kept the human population low and steady for the last 120 years and for millennia before Europeans came.

But legacy is not destiny. Our task is to re-imagine the highest and best uses of this landscape within the constraints of past use and future potential. The UP is mineral-rich, but the battle over the comparable worth of riches on the surface and those underground is just beginning. Fresh water, snow, and ice become ever more precious in a warming world – what are Lake Superior and its tributaries worth? A populist movement needs once again to challenge the entangling of corporate and state power; it is not a question



Jon and Christine Saari at their camp

of more or less government, but who is using government for what ends.

We do not know yet how much of the landscape needs to be better and differently managed in order to sustain the full community of life. Short-term thinking never even gets to this question. Each decision about a mine, a road, a forest conversion, a new subdivision can degrade or enhance this community, depending on the balances we humans strike.

So let us err on the side of enhancement, for the sake of all life.

Celebrate the UP on March 8-9

UPEC will hold its annual Celebrate the UP at the Three Corners in Marquette on Friday and Saturday, March 8-9. Mark your calendars! A complete program will be available in the Spring 2013 *UP Environment*.

About UPEC...

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition has over a 35-year track record of protecting and seeking to enhance the unique environmental qualities of the UP through public education and monitoring of industry and government. UPEC seeks common ground with diverse individuals and organizations in order to promote sound planning and management decisions for all the region's natural resources.

UP Environment is published four times a year and available online to share with family & friends. Send your comments or contributions to UPEC by standard mail at P.O. Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931, or e-mail us at upec@upenvironment.org. You can also visit us at www.upenvironment.org

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2012 elections: Mixed results, yet cause for hope

Electoral PoliticsContinued from Page 1

liever that climate change is real, that it is impacted by human behavior and carbon emissions. And as a consequence, I think we've got an obligation to future generations to do something about it." This gives us real hope that this urgent issue will finally get the attention it deserves from our elected leaders.

In Michigan, conservation and the environment have been under near-constant assault over the last two years. Too many of our state (and federal) legislators (including several from the UP) have introduced or sponsored bills that are openly hostile to our public lands, clean water, clean air, and the environment in general.

In our view, this election was critical in terms of electing representatives with an understanding that environmental protection and providing good jobs can (and should) go hand-in-hand, rather than being in conflict with one another. So how did we do at electing those types of people? The results are somewhat mixed, but there is some reason for optimism.

The Michigan League of Conservation Voters (MLCV) reports that five candidates for the Michigan Legislature that they endorsed, all with excellent scores on MLCV's environment scorecard, were victorious: Rep. John Switalski, Rep. Winnie Brinks, Rep. Rob VerHeulen, Rep. Gretchen Driskell, and Rep. Scott Dianda.

Dianda's election (he unseated incumbent Matt Huuki) is of particular interest to those of us in the western UP. Huuki had an MLCV environment score of just 31%, and supported many anti-conservation bills during his tenure, including the Land Cap Bill, which limits state ownership of public land, and PA 113, which overrides local zoning authority over mining activities. Indications are that Dianda will have a much more positive view of conservation and the need for environmental protection, and we are interested to hear his specific views on these issues in the coming weeks and months.

In a very close race, incumbent U.S. Representative Dan Benishek defeated Gary McDowell, by less than 0.6%. This was a major disappointment for the environmental community, as Benishek has one of the lowest environment scorecard scores of all legislators in the country (a score of "3", as reported by the National League of Conservation Voters). Benishek was selected as one of the LCV's "Flat Earth Five" legislators, for his anti-science positions on many issues, including climate change. Benishek has sponsored and supported many anti-conservation bills during his first term, including the "Sportsmens Heritage Act of 2012", which, if it had passed, would have opened up federal wilderness areas to road building, timber harvest, ATV use, and other activities currently not permitted within wilderness. Fortunately, this bill was shelved before Congress adjourned for the fall, although there is speculation that it may resurface during the upcoming lame

duck session of Congress. Although Benishek was reelected, we are hopeful that the closeness of his victory will impress upon him the need to take a more balanced approach to environmental issues than he demonstrated during his first term in office.

Michigan Ballot Proposal 3, which would have inserted a bold and forward-thinking renewable energy standard into the Michigan Constitution, was unfortunately defeated. It was reported that this initiative, if passed, would have created 94,000 Michigan jobs, reduced electric rates, and reduced the mercury and carbon dioxide that is the result of our overdependence on out-of-state coal. The opposition spent massive amounts of money to defeat Proposal 3, including a campaign of confusion which apparently created enough doubt in the minds of voters to insure its defeat. However, the vitally important work to keep moving toward renewable sources of energy for Michigan and our nation will go on in other ways, supported by a broad coalition of organizations.

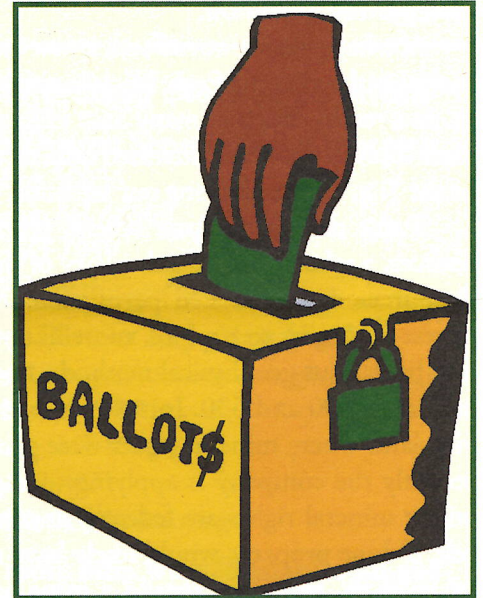
As we look ahead, those of us interested in conservation and environmental protection cannot rest for long. In Michigan alone, there are at least four pieces of controversial legislation pending that would significantly

set back management of our natural resources, forests and wildlife. Any or all of these bills may be acted upon during the lame duck session of the legislature between now and the year's end. They are:

- Measures to prohibit protection of biological diversity (SB 1276)
- A proposed recreational hunting season for wolves (SB 1350)
- Two bills that politicize Michigan's 30-year-old program of lands acquisition using revenue from oil and gas (HB 5944 and SB 1238)

It is critically important that anyone interested in conservation and environmental protection express your views on these bills to your elected representatives, as soon as possible. If we fail to speak out, much damage could be done, just within the next month or so.

Electoral Politics.See Page 5



Ontonagon County's spectacular & wild Trap Hills

By Doug Welker

The Trap Hills, which extend from north of Bergland to Rockland in Ontonagon County, are truly special. They're home to panoramic cliff-top vistas, the highest sheer cliff in Michigan, one of the most spectacular sections of the North Country Trail anywhere, a host of rare plants, waterfalls, designated Wild and Scenic Rivers, and a fascinating, primarily 19th-century, copper mining history. And, by and large, they're really wild and relatively unspoiled. For nearly 20 years now a number of Trap Hills supporters have made efforts to help keep them that way. A group called the Trap Hills Conservation Alliance has been active, ultimately advocating National Recreation Area status for the area which would involve management by the Ottawa National Forest. The NRA's focus would be enhanced recreation (both non-motorized and motorized), resource protection, and historical and natural resource interpretation.

At a key point in our efforts, a new environmental threat appeared to the east, the Eagle Mine in northwest Marquette County. As a result, efforts of many Trap Hills advocates were directed there instead. However, increased mineral exploration in the heart of the Trap Hills is drawing our attention back to the west.

Twice during the past several years, Trans Superior Resources, a wholly owned subsidiary of mining giant Bitterroot Resources, has requested permission from Ottawa National Forest managers to explore, most likely by drilling test holes and by various geophysical methods, near the junction of Forest Roads 400 and 630. Initial exploration was on Forest Service land where mineral rights were privately held, and more recently the company is applying to explore in a nearby area where mineral rights are federally owned. The exploration itself, if done properly, would likely have minimal environmental impacts. However, should a mine be developed, it would likely extract metallic sulfide minerals, and the environmental risks could be significant. In addition, a mine would seriously

degrade the area's wildness, could affect many views from the North Country Trail, and could impact the Pioneer Multi-Use Trail (a major ORV trail that many ORV users worked very hard to build) and the Cascade Falls Trail.

Should Trans Superior's latest exploration request be approved, the company will likely be on the ground in the area by spring. Those of us concerned about Trans Superior's activities will be monitoring what's going on, and plan to schedule field trips to the area for anyone interested, beginning next spring or summer. If you want to be kept informed, let me know (Doug Welker at dwelker@up.net).

To learn more about Trans Superior's latest exploration application, visit http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=38891 To learn more about the Trap Hills in general visit <http://www.northcountrytrail.org/pwf/traphills.htm> For details on the North Country Trail in the Trap Hills, including many photos, visit www.northcountrytrail.org/pwf/map_links_west.htm

Trans Superior's Trap Hills activity is just a small part of the big picture of a "mining rush" in the western and central UP. Recently Kennecott Minerals applied to lease 15,000 acres of state-owned mineral rights in southern Houghton, southern Baraga, and northern Iron Counties. Earlier this year, Kennecott purchased all (tens of thousands of acres) of Ford Motor Company's mineral rights in Baraga County. The list of mineral leasing areas and exploration sites continues to expand, and in most cases exploration is done without public notice. FOLK (Friends of the Land of Keweenaw) has launched a Mining Education and Empowerment Campaign, in part to track mineral activities in the western UP. Recently, records of mineral rights obtained by Kennecott from Ford have been added to its database. By the end of the year, expect a high percentage of mineral rights ownership, leasing, and mineral exploration sites in the western UP to be available on maps at <http://www.folkminingeducation.info/>

Consider EarthShare payroll deduction to support UPEC

UPEC is a proud member of EarthShare of Michigan, an organization that allows working people to donate to environmental organizations through workplace giving campaigns. Each year EarthShare provides UPEC with critically needed funding for environmental education and program operation.

If you would like to help UPEC receive more funding, consider letting your employer know you want to participate in the EarthShare of Michigan giving option at your workplace through the annual payroll deduction plan. For more information, please call 1-800-875-3863 or visit www.earthsharemichigan.org

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Winter 2012



-- 4 --

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UP Environment

Is threatened as mineral exploration intensifies



UPEC and FOLK members are very concerned about how a rush to new mining may impact the UP, and about how little power citizens and local government have in mineral exploration and development decisions. Poor state mining regulation, currently coupled with a "jobs at all cost" attitude, represent a threat to the responsible development of any mine. Citizen involvement may be able to change that. Visit <http://www.folkminingeducation.info/> to learn how that might happen.

The Trap Hills have the highest cliffs in Michigan (left lower photo) as well as rugged, majestic topography (upper photo). As a result, there are numerous waterfalls and hidden glens.

Photos by Doug Welker

Contacting State Legislators

38th District Senator Tom Casperson

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Lansing, MI 48909

517-373-7840

SenTCasperson@senate.mi.gov

110th District Rep. Matt Huuki

(through 12/31/12; Scott Dianda effective 1/1/13)

PO Box 30014

Lansing, MI 48909

888-663-4031

MattHuuki@house.mi.gov

For more info: www.legislature.mi.gov

MLCV & UPEC prioritize public lands for protection

Electoral PoliticsContinued from Page 3

On a final note, UPEC, along with over 20 environmental groups from across the state, participated this year in a process designed by MLCV to identify a list of the top statewide environmental priorities. These "highest priority" issues will be presented to the new Michigan Legislature after the start of the new year, as issues that have broad public support and should demand their attention. UPEC submitted two issues for consideration (sulfide mining and public lands), and the public lands issue was ultimately selected to be one of the priority issues.

The public lands issue basically calls for development of a strategy to defend our Michigan public lands (state, federal, and other public lands) from attacks by legislators and others who wish to weaken existing rules for their use, or weaken some aspect of management which could lead to degradation.

Examples of such attacks on our public lands within the last two years include the Land Cap Bill sponsored by State Senator Tom Casperson, Benishek's Sportsmens Heritage Act of 2012, and Casperson's more recent attempt to direct the Michigan DNR to manage state lands without consideration for biodiversity. These bills and others negatively impact the integrity of our precious public lands, which are there for the use and enjoyment of all citizens, and which provide critical habitats for a host of animal and plant species.

Michigan's public lands are truly a treasure that deserve protection and careful management. We are hopeful that the selection of this issue as a statewide priority issue will lead to more attention to this matter in the coming legislative session, along with a high degree of public support for long-term, science-based management and protection of our public lands.

Remembering & honoring those who share stewardship values

UP Environment provides a place to remember and honor people dear to us in the name of environmental protection and stewardship. Your gift in honor of or memory of others allows them to continue participating in UPEC's work. If you want your contribution to honor or remember someone, please provide relevant information with that contribution.

In Honor of Jon Saari by Steve Syrja

In Memory of Arjmana Zahur by David Clanaugh

Different ways to support UPEC

This Holiday Season consider contributing to UPEC in honor or memory of a special friend or loved one.

When you make a gift on behalf of another person, we will send an acknowledgement of the gift to that person or his/her family, so enclose mailing information. When you contribute on behalf of someone else, encourage them to become a UPEC member through your gift.

Do you or someone you know have an upcoming special event? Consider making the event "green" by designating UPEC as an honor gift recipient. UPEC has a PayPal link at its website that you can use for this.

Don't forget those Econo Foods slips -- a slow & steady way to support UPEC!

Thanks to you and Econo Foods, UPEC has earned several hundred dollars over the past few years by submitting grocery receipts collected by UPEC members. That amount represents 1% of total gross receipts from all the slips.

That may not seem like a lot, but when you're a non-profit organization every little bit helps. Of course, that amount could be even higher this year if more of us were to save our slips and

send them in! For a family that spends \$100/week on groceries at Econo, this would translate into \$50 of annual support for UPEC.

Either save receipts throughout the year and mail them to us, or give them to a UPEC board member -- whichever is more convenient. It's one of the easier low-cost ways you can offer your support. Thanks!

Yes! I want to join UPEC in making a difference

(Please complete and give this to a UPEC board member or mail to UPEC, Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931)

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Zip _____

Phone: _____

Name of Person providing gift membership: _____

I'd like to make an additional contribution to the following fund (s):

(Email & Phone are optional)

\$ _____ UPEC Land Acquisition/Protection

\$ _____ UPEC Environmental Education Grants

\$ _____ UPEC Outreach Fund

\$ _____ UPEC MCCF Endowment Fund*

I'd like to support the goals of UPEC by enclosing a contribution for (please check one):

_____ Regular Membership (\$20)

_____ Supporting Membership (\$50)

_____ Student/Low Income Membership (\$15)

_____ General Unrestricted Contribution

_____ Gift Membership
(include information above)

Consider enclosing a note with feedback about this newsletter & UPEC's work.

* If you want your contribution to go directly to the Marquette County Community Foundation, put **UPEC Fund** on the memo line and make it out to the foundation. We will forward the check to them. OR you can make your contribution directly to UPEC. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your contributions are tax-deductible. THANKS! A UPEC membership and newsletter subscription make a great gift. Just provide the details and we will gladly do the rest.

This is a gift in honor or memory (please circle) of _____

No scientific evidence to justify wolf hunting season

Wolves . . . Continued from Page 1

Each bill states that the use of hunting as a management tool is necessary, "to minimize human and gray wolf encounters and to prevent gray wolves from threatening or harming humans, livestock and pets."

Since federal delisting nine months ago, ten wolves have been killed because of permits issued by the Michigan DNR to 14 private landowners who have reported ongoing depredation problems. Public Acts 290 and 318, which allow any individual to kill a wolf if in the act of attacking their livestock or dog, also became effective. So far, six wolves have been killed under

this authority. Additionally, resource managers killed one wolf responsible for livestock depredation, and eight wolves attracted to an Ironwood residential area by persons feeding deer. This was done as a proactive measure; no one was threatened by the wolves.

There is a compensation program to reimburse livestock producers for verified losses caused by wolves. Through a federal grant, 20 donkeys (known to protect livestock from wolves) have been placed on farms and fencing has been purchased for seven farms. These and other non-lethal measures have proven to be effective in reducing wolf depredation.

Claims of wolves transmitting diseases or decimating deer populations are unfounded, and threats to human safety and reports of widespread livestock depredations have been overblown.

Very few wolves are responsible for depredation. There are roughly 900 working farms in the UP. Over the past 17 years there have been about 230 verified wolf depredation events with about seven percent of farms having experienced a verified wolf depredation. In 2010 (53%) and 2011 (43%) of the depredations were on a single farm. The best way to manage problem wolves when non-lethal measures fail is to ensure producers follow best management practices and to target the individual wolves responsible for the depredation. Research shows that randomly killing wolves not responsible for depredation can actually cause depredation to increase.

With all the non-lethal and lethal measures available to target and control problem wolves, there is no scientific evidence to support the need for a recreational wolf hunting season.



Although wolves have been recovering throughout the Upper Lakes Region, their population remains fragile. Despite the lack of scientific evidence to support recreational wolf hunting seasons, Michigan has joined Wisconsin and Minnesota in moving in this direction.

Photo by Jayne Belsky

The guiding principles for the 2008 Michigan DNR Wolf Management Plan were developed by an advisory committee (roundtable), consisting of 20 organizations. The plan outlines approaches for managing wolf-related issues based on scientific evaluation of the potential impacts to the wolf population, their feasibility, and their probability of success. The approaches in the plan were supported by a majority of respondents to the 2006 public attitude survey and directly reflect the diverse interests represented on the roundtable.

Roundtable members were unable to reach consensus on the issue of a recreational wolf hunt because of differences in fundamental values. Members did agree, however, that some situations may warrant consideration of reducing wolf numbers in localized areas as a means to reduce the risk of negative interactions if it was determined that the problems could not be addressed through non-lethal or individually directed lethal means. The DNR has not established that such a situation has occurred in Michigan.

Although the bill that passed in the Senate on Nov. 29 will likely pass in the House and be signed by Governor Rick Snyder into law designating the wolf a game animal, the responsibility for establishing rules and regulations governing any hunt rests with the Michigan DNR and the Natural Resources Commission. MCL 324.40113a requires that the NRC utilize "principles of sound scientific management in making decisions regarding the taking of game."

The wolf population is still fragile. We need to ensure that the wolf's howl will continue to resonate across the UP by keeping politics and emotion out of the decision-making process.

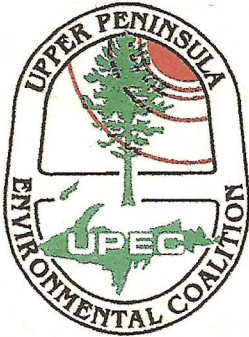
For more information visit www.wolfwatcher.org

**Upper Peninsula
Environmental Coalition**

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Look for UPEC on Facebook!



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by educating the public and
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2



Environmental Education Grants due January 10

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (UPEC) has a grant opportunity for educators and youth workers who provide quality environmental education programs to regional children from preschool to high school. UPEC's Environmental Education Fund offers grants of up to \$500 for the 2013 calendar year, with applications due Thursday, Jan. 10, 2013. Once again, special consideration will be given to quality grant projects that address the potential impacts of sulfide mining on human and natural communities.

Teachers, 4-H leaders, Scout leaders, museum staff members, youth service workers – anyone who wishes to start or maintain an environmental project involving preschool through high school age children – are eligible for funding which may be used for all program expenses other than salaries.

UPEC has funded everything from middle school students cleaning up and monitoring the chemical composition of water bodies, to elementary students creating community gardens, to high school students testing soil samples on snowmobile trails, to a high school-college partnership exploring the literature of place and stewardship, to environmental education day camp activities. As the UP's oldest grassroots environmental organization, UPEC is equally willing to fund outstanding projects inside and outside of formal school settings.



UPEC funded an environmental day camp last summer in Iron River as one of six programs receiving support. Children learned about the essential role wolves play in our region.

To learn more about the program, download a grant application, and obtain mailing information, go to UPEC's website at

upenvironment.org. Completed applications must be received by mail as hard copies or emailed no later than Jan. 10, 2013. Funding decisions will be announced by the end of January.