



The Upper Peninsula Environment

Newsletter of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition • September 1990

Counting trees, counting dollars: How much timber is really out there?

(Ed. note: Last month we told you about a report, written by DNR forester Greg Kudray, which questions the timber supply estimates used to justify a new paper mill in western Upper Michigan. Kudray completed the report in April as part of a DNR review of a proposed land exchange for the Arnheim mill push. In this excerpt, Kudray discusses the methods used in the last USFS field survey of the western U.P.'s forests, the 1987 computer-simulation update of that survey, and other timber supply estimates based on these data, which are used to make business investment decisions worth millions of dollars.)

... The most fundamental consideration [in siting a paper mill] is the timber supply, its availability, and the long-term effect of adding 750,000 cords of pulpwood demand to regional timber markets. The James River proposal, now on hold, is supported by a favorable DNR resource impact analysis (Webster 1989). The basis for the Webster (1989) and Main (1982) mill timber supply estimates, which is the Forest Service Inventory and Analysis (FIA), needs to be examined in regard to its basic character and scope. ...

Forest Service Inventory and Analysis (FIA)

Base data for timber supply estimates (Main 1982, Webster 1989) are derived from Forest Service inventories undertaken periodically by the North Central Forest Experiment Station in St. Paul, Minnesota. The last field survey to collect data in the Upper Peninsula occurred in 1978 and 1979 (1980 FIA).

The 1980 FIA was based on survey points systematically distributed across Michigan. In the western Upper Peninsula, 13% were visited ground plots (about 1 plot for every 2,000 acres); the remainder were classified with aerial photos (Spencer 1982).

No fieldwork was undertaken for the 1987 update. Computer simulation of the late 1970s field plot data was used to predict tree growth. Removals were estimated by analyzing trends in wood consumption based on industrial surveys. These trends were then projected to the 1987 report date (Smith 1986).

It is important to realize the fundamental difference between the 1980 inventory and the 1987 update. A forest survey is most accurate immediately following fieldwork and data compilation. Thereafter, changing conditions related to harvesting levels, tree growth, land conversion to other uses, and mortality from natural causes force reliance on projec-

tions of these effects on the initial baseline data. Smith [who authored the 1987 update] feels that the short period between the 1980 Forest Service inventory and the 1987 update would not greatly affect total volume figures for the timberland base. ... In recognition of the need for accurate timber supply estimates a new inventory has been scheduled to begin within the next two years (Smith pers. comm. 1990).

Forest Type Classification Discrepancies

A comparison of Forest Service inventory (Spencer 1982) and Michigan DNR Division of Land Resources land type classifications for four counties in the western Upper Peninsula show some large discrepancies in land type acreages. There is a 9% and 6.5% acreage difference between the two systems regarding water and northern hardwood acreage, respectively.

If this difference were consistent through the rest of the western Upper Peninsula, the Forest Service inventory would list 156,000 acres more northern hardwood land than the DNR land management data. At an average growing stock level of 16.2 cords/acre (Spencer 1982), this would translate into 2,500,000 cords.

Michigan State Forest operations inventory land classification based on field survey and stereoclassification also lists substantially less northern hardwood acreage than the Forest Service inventory. Operations inventory data (Anderson pers. comm. 1990, Nelson pers. comm. 1990) has 29% less northern hardwood acreage on state land in the western Upper Peninsula than the Forest Service ownership-type class data tables (Spencer 1982). This discrepancy may be explained by the proportionately greater aspen acreage listed on state inventory records. These aspen types mixed with northern hardwoods would be managed by clearcutting, so the future stand would have much less northern hardwood volume due to the predominance of aspen regeneration.

FIA Timberland Assumptions

To be classified as timberland in Forest Service inventories, land must meet the following minimal requirements (Spencer 1982): one acre or larger in size, capable of producing at least 20 cubic feet per acre per year of annual growth under management, not reserved for some other use, such as wilderness.

FIA inventories are inclusive rather than exclusive in character. They make few distinctions about the suitability or availability of forestland for timber management. That responsibility falls to the resource manager with his particular land-use priorities and assumptions regarding timber manageability (Smith pers. comm. 1990). To develop an estimate of forestland base available to support industrial development, realistic assumptions need to be made concerning timber availability, landowner priorities, and competing multiple uses.

Concern about contradictions between Forest Service estimates and actual timber market conditions prompted the Hardwood Research Council to call for further refinement of inventory data to consider discount factors such as tract size, low timber volume per acre, steep slopes, waterfront buffer strips, higher-valued non-timber uses, ownership, and mixed stands (Lee 1980). The Forest Service reply acknowledged the necessity of applying these discount factors, some of which could be calculated from existing data, while others were not available (Spencer 19820).

Timber availability—the volume forthcoming at harvest—is not the same as a timber supply estimate. The choice and definition of assumptions influence actual timber projections. Without careful definition, projections will find little professional or public acceptance (Tedder and La Mont 1986). (Next month: a summary of the timber supply discount factors in western Upper Michigan.)

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Covering Kudray:

A response from the DNR director

Last month we reported on the response to the Kudray report by the DNR and the local press. We summarized a news piece written by freelance journalist Park Teter in which he reported that the DNR's upper echelon dismissed the report out of hand. Teter's story was based on interviews with DNR forestry officials and with Greg Kudray himself.

In an August 6 letter to the *Environment*, DNR Director David Hales said that characterizing the DNR's response as a cavalier dismissal is "a misperception that never had any basis in fact. A number of individuals in the Department, including Hank Webster, several [Natural Resource Commis-

sion] Commissioners, and myself, have considered what the report says and, at least in Hank's instance, there was a specific and thoughtful reply." Hales included a copy of a two-page letter from Webster to Kudray dated May 18, which was before Teter's news story was completed. Hales continued:

"My response to the ongoing concern about timber availability . . . has been to commission a special report by Deputy Director Michael Moore, which will focus on the quality and degree of confidence we can have in our information about Michigan's forestry resources, as well as identifying questions to which we should all seek answers. In addition, the Department has proposed, and the Governor has strongly supported, the appropriations necessary to enhance the United States Forest Service Survey of Michigan's timberlands, so that we all have better data for making decisions . . . Finally, this Department is clearly on record as calling for full environmental impact assessments as being necessary components of any decisions we might make on the development of pulp and paper mills in this state. Regardless of the availability of any general inventory data, that kind of environmental assessment will be necessary to evaluate the impacts of any particular project."

Workshop on Lake Michigan clean-up plan set for Escanaba

A key part of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement is the requirement that Lakewide Management Plans (LAMPs) be done for every Great Lake. A LAMP is supposed to be a comprehensive plan for getting rid of toxic chemicals in each lake. The planning process is just now getting off the ground. First in line is Lake Michigan. Its LAMP will be written by EPA and the four states bordering on the lake.

Unfortunately, most people know little about the GLWQA and less about LAMPs. Yet millions of tax dollars will be spent doing these plans. The time for public input to begin is before the money starts to flow. So the Lake Michigan Federation (based out of Chicago) has been holding a series of LAMP workshops in cities around Lake Michigan to prep local citizens about the process and solicit input. UPEC is co-sponsoring the sole U.P. workshop, which will be in Escanaba, Saturday, September 8, from 10-3. Each workshop will start with an hour-long briefing on LAMPs, followed by sessions where you can say what you think should be included.

We hope many of our members, especially those in the southern U.P., will be able to make it. According to Glenda Daniel, the Federation's executive director, the LAMP will probably be "the most significant clean-up plan to affect Lake Michigan in this decade." The LAMP may also be the best way to get DNR action on the two "official" toxic discharge areas of concern on the north shore of Lake Michigan—the Manistique and Menominee rivers—as well as other pollution hotspots, such as Escanaba.

The exact location in Escanaba will be announced. Watch your paper or get hold of the Federation at the address and phone below. Admission will be free. Info packets are also free and available from the Lake Michigan Federation, 59 E. Van Buren St., Suite 2215, Chicago, IL 60605 (phone 312-939-0838). Citizen comments will be compiled in a report the Federation will submit at the end of the year to EPA, the International Joint Commission, and the State of Michigan.

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and maintenance of the
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of the Upper Peninsula*

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Board votes to reject membership requests from for-profits

Acting on recommendations from its Organizational Review subcommittee, the Board voted unanimously at the August meeting to reject membership requests from for-profit organizations from now on. The Board then voted unanimously to revoke the membership of the only for-profit now in UPEC, the Upper Peninsula Power Company. The Board cited UPPCO's numerous actions to bring about a paper mill on Keweenaw Bay, including trying to engineer a land exchange which was crucial to the mill's supporters. After review, the DNR rejected the exchange. These actions, the Board felt, put UPPCO fundamentally in conflict with UPEC's charter to protect and maintain Upper Michigan's environmental quality. In light of the new policy, the Board then rejected a membership application from the McDonald's restaurant of Esacanaba.

The whole issue of corporate-environmentalist relations is a thorny one. It was brought into sharp focus by the most recent Earth Day, whose activities, many environmentalists think, were simply appropriated by companies who suddenly want to appear "green." The Board was considering using the Valdez Principles as a screen-out, but finally decided that its time is better spent working on issues, not getting mired in an endless round of reviewing corporate ethics. The sense of the Board is that UPEC has evolved into a grassroots coalition of non-profits, and that this position is the most effective for us to be in. An amendment will be offered to the whole UPEC membership next spring to constitutionalize the for-profit ban.

Arnheim mill proposal all but dead

Environmentalists are, by nature, a cautious lot, never wanting to declare victory so long as the prospect of defeat is out there somewhere—no matter how remote! Nevertheless, if ever there were a time to celebrate a rare win over the big polluters and their supporters in government, it's now. In early August the Western U.P. Forest Improvement District (WUPFID), which had touted the so-called Arnheim industrial site for a paper mill, withdrew its application to have lands there rezoned for industrial use. Without such rezoning, the mill can't go forward, and so the project is, in effect, dead.

WUPFID gave up after Baraga Township wrested zoning control away from the pro-mill Baraga County government. The Township electorate had voted down the mill in a recent county-wide opinion poll. Earlier, WUPFID had been thwarted in its attempt to amass enough land for a huge mill by the grassroots efforts of FOLK and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, who were backed up by the support of UPEC. WUPFID ended up with only about 330 acres—not enough for a paper mill. Nonetheless, WUPFID continues to talk about the need for some sort of plywood or paper mill, so all three U.P. anti-mill groups will continue to monitor events.

News & Notes

FOCUS to Offer Alternatives Building on the example of FOLK's *Sustainable Development for the Keweenaw* report, the new Ontonagon environmental group FOCUS will offer the county its own alternative economic proposals, according to spokesperson Jean Schertz. FOCUS has joined UPEC as a Supporting Organization. To help FOCUS or get more info about their activities, write them at P.O. Box 142, Mass City 49948. Your support will be appreciated, since the professional organizers behind PULP have re-formed themselves into a group called PACE in Ontonagon County.

September, October Meetings Reminder The September meeting will be at L'Anse Town Hall on the 11th; in October it's back to Ely Township on the 9th. Both dates are Tuesdays and the meetings begin at 7pm ET. All environmentalists are welcome!

Welsh Joins Board Joanne Welsh of Marquette, long-time UPEC member and former editor of the *UPEC Bulletin*, has re-joined the Board as an at-large member. The Board nominated Welsh to fill the At-Large vacancy created when the Copper Country Audubon Society decided to switch from being a Supporting to a Member Organization and Dave Bach accepted CCAS's invitation to be its representative on the Board. Welsh recently represented UPEC at an initial organizing meeting of the Zero Discharge Alliance in Ann Arbor (see next story).

ZDA Off and Running... At the Ann Arbor ZDA meeting, activists decided that the Alliance would have a conference in Windsor, Ontario, probably next March, to bring together people from across the Great Lakes. The ZDA also formed committees to help build support for ZD and for local groups working to achieve ZD. The conferees put together a draft Statement of Principles which affirms that zero discharge *means* zero—not "below regulatory concern" or some arbitrary level or below the limit of detection. UPEC has endorsed the draft with a few qualifications. The ZDA continued its organizing at a 1-day strategy conference in Amberg, WI, on August 25. Co-sponsored by Greenpeace, UPEC, Dickinson Citizens for Clean Air, and the Lake Michigan Federation, this session hosted pulp-and-paper activists from around the region. They put together a preliminary, unified ZD strategy for Lake Michigan and the south shore of Lake Superior. They also brainstormed ideas on how to get the public to understand and accept ZD.

... So is Northwoods Alliance The Sierra Club has convened the Northwoods Alliance, a coalition of environmentalists in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota who are concerned about forestry issues. The NA held its first meeting in Madison last month. The NA's first task is to do something most planners never bother with: chart out a vision of what it wants the North Woods to look like years down the road. The NA's goal is better and stricter forest management practice in both the public and private sectors. How to do it? The NA is aiming for a 3-state Forest Practices Act initiative, to be on the ballot in '92, which would harmonize private-sector forestry laws within the region. The NA reasons that a voter initiative is the only way to go to avoid getting a jumbled, compromised mess out of three different legislatures. UPEC will be actively involved in the NA, whose next meeting is slated for October 20 in the Sylvania Tract near Watersmeet. We'll have more next month.

Sylvania Wilderness Threatened Speaking of Sylvania, vice-president Bill Malmsten reported at the August meeting that UPEC's negotiations with the Forest Service over motors on Crooked Lake have been a dismal failure. USFS has released a preliminary management plan for Sylvania which gave in to nearly every demand made by anti-wilderness landowners and others. USFS refused UPEC's

proposal for a phase-down of motors on Crooked Lake, which we assert are damaging Sylvania's wilderness character. The USFS's own attorneys have strongly implied in their legal opinions that, under the Michigan Wilderness Act, it would be illegal for USFS *not* to consider banning motors from Crooked. We are planning to rally support for UPEC's position by doing a mass mailing to all the campers who have recently registered at Sylvania.

Race to Save the Planet MTU Student Pugwash will sponsor a 5k & 10k Race to Save the Planet on October 6 in Houghton. The race begins at Tech's Student Development Complex (the gym). Its purpose is to draw attention to the world's numerous environmental problems and to encourage area residents to tune in to the new PBS series "Race to Save the Planet" which starts airing that evening at 7 pm on Channel 13. Proceeds go to the Copper Country Citizens for Recycling. To register, send your name, address, phone number, age as of October 6, distance you'll run, and a check for \$5 (made payable to MTU Student Pugwash) to Craig Waddell, Dept. of Humanities, MTU, Houghton 49931. You can get more info by calling Craig at 487-2381 or 482-1636.

Help us protect the U.P.!

Name

Address

Zip

Phone ☐ Check here if this is a change of address.

☐ I would like to support the goals of UPEC by becoming a member. My annual dues are enclosed (check one): ☐ Individual Member (\$10); ☐ Low-Income person (\$5); ☐ Student (\$5); ☐ Senior Citizen (\$5). Additional contributions are, of course, greatly appreciated. Dues are good for the entire calendar year in which they are paid. Thank you!

☐ I belong to or represent an organization whose goals support UPEC's goals, and would like to get information on possible membership. Dues for organizations are \$15 annually.

☐ I want to get to know UPEC better. Please send me a free 3-month subscription to UPEC's newsletter, the *Upper Peninsula Environment*.

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