

# The Upper Peninsula Environment

Newsletter of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition • March 1991

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### **Fish advisories (from p. 1)**

there is widespread mercury contamination in the north central United States. It is possible that acid rain filtering into the ground is dissolving mercury deposits which then leak into rivers. There are no known methods for removing mercury from fish.

The good news is that test results downstream from Mead's mill on the Escanaba River show that dioxin levels in fish are declining there. Levels in northern pike, for example, have fallen to 2.1 ppt from 10.7 ppt in 1988. Both Mead and Champion have started new controls within the last two years to reduce dioxin pollution. The DNR and DPH say they are encouraged by the apparent reduction, but even so the fish consumption advisory for the Escanaba River remains in effect. Another bright spot, reported the DPH, is that PCBs are declining in Lake Superior lake trout.

Fish consumption advisories now apply to these U.P. waters: Lake Michigan, Escanaba River, Menominee River, Lake Michigamme, Michigamme Reservoir, Peavy Pond, Paint River Pond, Michigamme River, Little Bay de Noc, Manistique River, Net River, Round Lake (Marquette Co.), Lake Superior, Chaney Lake, Deer Lake (Marquette Co.), Carp River, Carp Creek, Langford Lake, Torch Lake, an unnamed lake in Baraga County, and West Branch Lakes (Alger Co.). A general advisory for mercury exists for all inland lakes in the state as well.

### **Superior projects (from p. 1)**

the lake. At two meetings, in Hancock and Rockland, there were also vociferous opponents of zero discharge. At Rockland, the group representatives were even labeled "economic terrorists" by one irate logger. EN will be producing a directory of environmental groups as the next step in this project, based on responses to questionnaires they are circulating.

In a separate project, NWF has launched a Lake Superior initiative. Former UPEC president Gayle Coyer is the organizer of the project, which aims to work with regulators, legislators, and the public to make zero discharge a reality. This initiative will also look at proposals for new paper mills, contamination from past mining, and the increasing demands from industry on the region's forests. Just as impor-

### **Superior slide show highlights UPEC annual GM meeting**

UPEC's annual General Membership Meeting will be held on April 13 at the Northwoods Supper Club on US-41 in Marquette. The meeting begins with a planning session at 4:30 pm, followed by a social hour at 5:30 with the featured speaker, Mark Peterson, director of the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute of Ashland, Wisconsin. Dinner will be served at 6:30, followed by Mark's presentation at 8:00. He will be focusing on Lake Superior issues, and will show SOEI's new slide show, "A Lake in the Balance." Please note that the meeting will be held one week earlier, and begins a half-hour earlier, than previously announced.

All members are welcome at the 4:30 planning session, at which we will discuss the upcoming year's activities. And don't miss meeting Mark at 5:30—he's eager to talk to U.P. enviros. As for the food, there are a variety of entrees to choose from. Everyone will order off the menu. No RSVPs are required. *Make plans to attend—we hope to see you there!*

tant, NWF will be hiring an attorney to work exclusively on Lake Superior issues. The first duty of this person will be to go after industrial polluters in the Lake's basin that are violating their discharge permits.

### **Zero discharge "buycott," educational activities planned for U.P.**

A March 7 meeting of U.P. supporters of the Zero Discharge Alliance in Marquette had an excellent turnout. In order to support the concept of zero discharge of persistent toxics in the Great Lakes, public information is essential. Lake Superior is the test case lake and the target industry is the pulp and paper industry which, in addition to dioxin, produces 20-30 tons of organochlorines a day. Attendees decided to work to support the Zero Discharge Alliance Action Week (which has been changed from March to May 6-12) with a media campaign, a paper "buycott" (as opposed to a boycott), and a zero discharge slide show to be shown in schools at all levels.

The media campaign, chaired by Michael Huntly (942-7767), will feature everything from letters to the editor to a panel discussion—hopefully televised—by experts on zero discharge. The buycott will provide information to individuals and businesses on how to purchase environmentally friendly paper products: those made without chlorine and with as much post-consumer recycled paper content as possible. Recycle!Marquette is helping with this effort. Scot Stewart (225-7738) will be putting together a Lake Superior zero discharge slide show. He would like to make the show available to schools in all areas of the U.P., if there are people willing to call him to train in with him and take it on the road themselves.

You may want to participate in Zero Discharge Action Week by organizing a buycott or putting on the slide show in your neck of the northwoods. You could also help by writing letters to the editor and to your Congressional representatives supporting zero discharge of persistent toxics. If you would like a zero discharge information packet, write Joanne Welsh (228-7738) at 606 Brule Rd., Marquette, MI 49855, enclosing \$1.00 for postage and copying costs. If you would like to donate money to the zero discharge public education effort, send a check to UPEC earmarked *zero discharge*. In the unlikely event that money is left over, it will revert to the UPEC general fund. The next meeting will be in Marquette on March 26 in the evening. For more information on the location, contact Michael, Scot, or Joanne at the numbers above.

—Joanne Welsh

### **Enviro speaker series in full swing at MTU**

UPEC's newest member, MTU Student Pugwash (see next story), is sponsoring a series of lectures on various environmental topics this spring on the university's campus in Houghton. Most of the events are Wednesday evenings at 7. Topics include population studies, sustainable development, environmental risks, and Torch Lake as a Superfund site. Pugwash is also sponsoring Tech's Earth Day celebration, an all-day series of events on Friday, April 19. For a schedule, call Craig Waddell at 487-2381.

The Upper Peninsula  
Environmental Coalition  
P. O. Box 34  
Houghton, Michigan 49931

*dedicated to the preservation  
and maintenance of the  
unique environmental quality  
of the Upper Peninsula*

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Joanne Welsh  
*Marquette*

#### SUPPORTING & MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- Bay de Noc Audubon Society & Naturalists' Club, *Gladstone*
- Copper Country Audubon Society, *Atlantic Mine*
- Copper Country Citizens for Recycling, *Houghton*
- Copper Country Peace Alliance, *Houghton*
- Dickinson Citizens for Clean Air, *Norway*
- FOCUS, *Mass City*
- Friends of the Land of Keweenaw, *L'Anse*
- League of Women Voters of the Copper Country, *Calumet*
- MTU Student Pugwash, *Houghton*
- Ottawa National Forest, *Kenton*
- Recycle!Marquette, *Marquette*

*UPEC is a member of Great Lakes  
United, HONOR, the Michigan  
Environmental Council, and the  
Northwoods, Timber Wolf, and Zero  
Discharge Alliances*

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unbleached paper*

Dave Harmon, editor

## News & Notes

**Student group joins UPEC...** We are very pleased to have as a supporting member the Michigan Tech chapter of Student Pugwash, an international, nonprofit, educational organization run by students and young professionals. The goal of Student Pugwash is to promote better understanding of social and environmental issues. MTU Student Pugwash has been a very active group, sponsoring a series of lectures on campus and organizing Earth Day events each of the last two years.

**Paul Ehrlich to speak at Tech** The noted academic and environmentalist Paul Ehrlich will be at Michigan Tech in Houghton on March 26. His lecture, set for 8 pm ET at Fisher Hall, is entitled "Can Our Life-Support Systems Survive the Population Explosion?" Ehrlich, who co-authored the well-known book *The Population Bomb*, is known for his trenchant analyses and dynamic lecturing style. He is currently a member of the faculty of Stanford University in California.

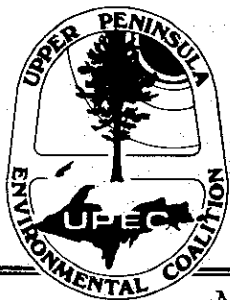
**Coming soon to the Environment** We are happy to report that, as soon as our current paper stock is exhausted, we will be switching to an unbleached, 100% post-consumer content paper. Our current paper is "100% recycled," but only 15% post-consumer, meaning that 85% of the fiber is mill-end waste and trimmings. The cost for the new paper stock is \$5 more per ream, but if this country is ever to get serious about ending our addiction to turning trees into throwaways, we must support markets for the highest post-consumer content possible. The paper is called Minimum Impact Premium and can be ordered from Earth Care Paper in Madison, 608-277-2900. An addendum: as you know, we switched to soy-based ink a couple of issues back. We feel the print quality is, if anything, better than before. By using soy-based instead of petroleum-based ink, you reduce by 80% the emissions of toxic volatile organic compounds (VOCs) produced during the production and pressroom use of regular inks. The soybean oils used in the ink are totally biodegradable in landfills, though it should be noted that other components of soy ink are toxic and nondegradable. Soy inks can facilitate the use of nontoxic press cleaning agents, since soy ink is water-soluble. And soybeans are renewable, unlike petroleum. According to Earth Care, if all printing companies in the USA used only soy inks, we would lower our oil imports by 5-6%—about the same amount as we imported from Iraq last year. Think about that for a minute.

**UPPCO to sell off 34,000 acres** In December, the Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO) gave a 1-year purchase option to the Trust for Public Land for 34,000 acres in the western U.P. The land—32,000 acres in Ontonagon and 2,000 in Gogebic counties—borders the Ontonagon River system stretching from Victoria Dam to Bond Falls and Lake Gogebic. According to UPPCO, "most of the lands cannot be developed due to the rugged terrain and the cost of owning them exceeds any revenues we can gain from their management." UPPCO says it entered into the deal with the Trust "to assure protection of this beautiful natural resource, continue public use and enjoyment of the lands and treat the current lessees [of hunting camps] fairly." The Trust acquires environmentally valuable land with the intention of finding a permanent steward for it. It seems the Trust will try to sell the land to the U.S. Forest Service for the Ottawa NF.

**Caribou reintro mulled** U.S. Rep. Bob Davis has announced that his office will do a preliminary study of whether woodland caribou should be reintroduced to the U.P.

**We press DNR to reduce hazwaste** UPEC Board Member Joanne Welsh was the only person to show up at a February 6 DNR-hosted public meeting on hazardous waste. Welsh made it crystal clear that UPEC is not interested in more and better "management" of hazardous wastes, but in a strong state policy mandating their reduction.

**NCT Hikers' Club to meet** If you're interested in trails, recreation, or Ottawa NF issues, mark your calendar for the North Country Trail Hikers' Club spring meeting May 10-12. They'll be staying in restored miners' cabins at Old Victoria in Ontonagon County. Old Victoria is a 19th-century mining town just off the NCT. Plan for hikes, learning about local history, discussing recreation issues, and lots of fun. To get more detailed information as the date approaches, call Doug Welker (338-2680) or Dan Elzinga (225-1585). Everyone is welcome.



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