



The Upper Peninsula ENVIRONMENT

Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition

July/August 1995

UPEC APPLAUDS DECISION ON SYLVANIA MOTORBOATS

The Forest Service released its long-awaited decision on the use of motorboats in the Sylvania Wilderness in early June. In the Decision Notice, the Forest Service outlined its decision to restrict motor usage on the three lakes in question in the 19,000 acre wilderness -- Crooked, Big Bateau and Devil's Head -- to electric motors only and also to a slow, no-wake speed. The size of the electric motor will be restricted as well with a maximum size of 24 volts or 48 pounds of thrust (a 4-horsepower equivalent).

The Forest Service also announced as part of the Decision Notice that it will use the 1995 season to educate Sylvania Wilderness users about the changes and the new regulations will be implemented on April 1, 1996.

UPEC considers this decision by the Forest Service a vast improvement over the current virtually unrestricted use of motorboats. At issue here was whether motorboat usage adversely affected wilderness values. The 1987 Michigan Wilderness Act allowed motorboat usage to continue as long as it didn't adversely affect wilderness values.

UPEC, led by UPEC Vice President Bill Malmsten, had been working since 1988 to get the Forest Service to identify the wilderness values of Sylvania and then assess whether these values were adversely affected by motorboat usage. According to Malmsten, "This is a much better decision and will go a long way toward eliminating the adverse effects of motors in this wilderness. However, we

still believe there may be some conflicts with wilderness values, particularly if there is a high use of electric motors. We will be asking the Forest Service to re-assess the situation in a couple of years during the Forest Plan revision process to determine if additional restrictions are needed."

The Forest Service received 205 comment letters on the draft Environmental Assessment (EA). In response to overwhelming public comment against the use of motors as well as other factors, the Forest Service actually chose an alternative that was stricter than their preferred alternative outlined in the draft EA. Their preferred alternative was to require electric motors but not until the year 2000.

But the saga does not end here. The Decision Notice will likely be appealed by landowners who live on Crooked Lake outside of the wilderness boundaries who feel they have the right to unrestricted use of all of Crooked Lake. If there are any appeals to the decision, UPEC has the right to file as an intervenor and be will able to give input as to the outcome of any appeals. UPEC has determined that we will file as intervenors once appeals are filed.

Also, a decision in the lawsuit filed by the landowners against implementing wilderness regulations at all in Sylvania has not yet been made. The landowners have already lost on this issue in lower court and they are now in the Court of Appeals. UPEC filed a friend of the court brief in both

the lower court and appeals court to support the Forest Service in their right to implement wilderness regulations.

The fight to protect Sylvania has only happened as a result of UPEC's Bill Malmsten's tireless efforts over the years and by the comment letters to the Forest Service and generous contributions of people who love Sylvania to UPEC's Sylvania Legal Defense Fund. If you would like to make a contribution to assist in the costs associated with intervening in the appeals to the decision, please fill out the form on page 4. Help us keep Sylvania protected!

SHOULD UPEC SUPPORT BEAR HUNTING RESTRICTIONS?

by Bill Malmsten, Vice President

An organization called Citizens United for Bears (CUB) has requested UPEC's endorsement and support in its effort to protect the black bear. Through a ballot initiative CUB hopes to eliminate the use of dogs and baiting as legal bear hunting methods in Michigan. Other means of bear hunting would still continue. CUB leaders have expressed a wide variety of reasons for their objections to these bear hunting methods. Although both methods have been widely used in Michigan for many years, recent changes in the way these hunting methods are practiced give rise for concern.

The availability of high tech electronic tracking systems is reported

to have greatly increased both the effectiveness and the popularity of hunting bears with dog packs. Radio transmitters are attached to the dogs. The dogs are placed on a bear's trail. The hunters track the dogs with direction finders from their vehicles. By using multiple direction finders at different locations and communicating by radio, the hunters are able to track the progress of the hunt from the road. When the signal stops moving, the hunters know that the bear has taken refuge in a tree. All they have to do is follow their direction finders to the tree, and shoot the helpless bear out of the tree.

This hunting method is believed to be particularly harmful to bear cubs. Since black bear cubs remain under the care of their mother into their second summer, a female pursued by a dog pack will be separated from her cubs. When the hunter shoots the female from the tree, he may not even realize that he is orphaning her cubs. Even if the mother survives, she may have difficulty locating her cubs after a long pursuit. The cubs are especially small and vulnerable when their mother is pursued during the summer dog pack training season.

Although baiting bear has been legal in Michigan for many years, there are reports that much larger amounts of bait are now being used. The concern is that the availability of large amounts of bait causes bears to alter their natural feeding habits. Bears that become acclimated to eating human source food become problem bears. Even a single bear that has been acclimated to human food can cause tremendous problems, including getting into refuse containers, campers packs, and any other human food source available. The bear management policy in our national parks for many years has been to make every effort to prevent bears from coming into contact with human source food. The belief is that bears eating natural food do not cause problems. Many of the bear

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Switch to Kenaf -- A Tree-Free Paper

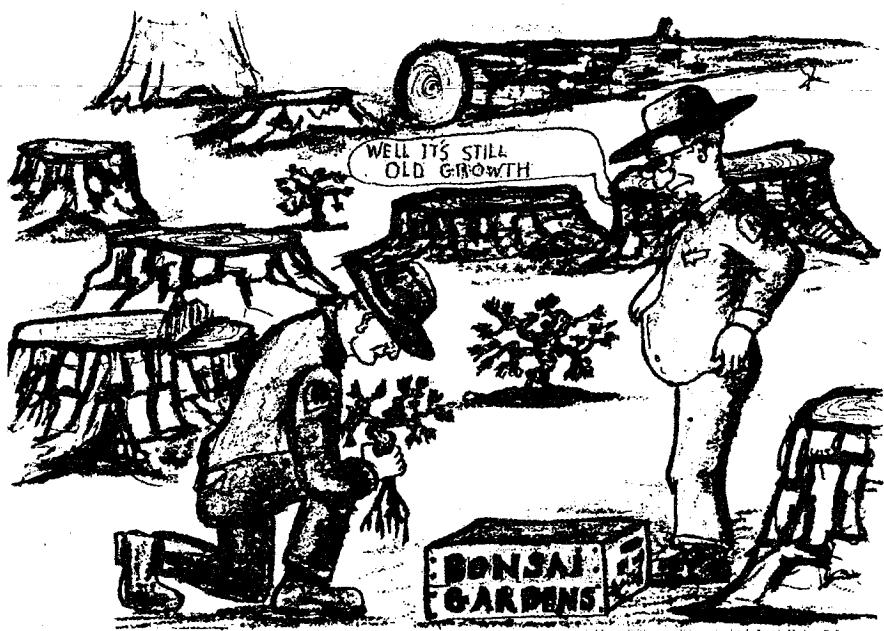
Kenaf is a member of the hibiscus family and is related to cotton and okra. It grows 12-14 feet in five months. One acre of kenaf will produce six to ten tons of usable fiber per year, up to five times more pulp per acre than trees produce. Once it's pulped, it has the same strength and performance as wood fiber. But because it's whiter than wood, it requires fewer chemicals and less energy to make pulp. Kenaf could go a long way in helping reduce our dependence on wood and reduce harvesting demand on our public forests. Our UPEC newsletter is printed on kenaf -- our printer likes working with it and we think the quality is great! **To locate kenaf:** K-P Products, Inc., Box 4795, Albuquerque, NM 87916-4795 Phone: 505-294-0293

Hints on Reducing Junk Mail

Member Mark Young from Iron Mountain reports on the

following ways to encourage advertisers to stop the flow of junk mail: Since companies have to pay for the postage on business mail reply envelopes, you can fill them with unwanted junk mail and send them back to the company. This, with a request to take you off their mailing list and stop sending junk mail, may help to make your statement. Or, when you receive mailings made with glossy paper that's difficult to recycle, mail it back (possibly with a scrap of drywall to add to the weight!) and ask the company to switch to recyclable paper. **To get off junk mail lists:** Write to Mail Preference Service, Direct marketing Association, P.O. Box 9008, Farmingdale, NY 11735 (this will keep you from being put on new mailing lists — you have to write to companies directly to be taken off current mailing lists).

UPEC member Wayne Stanley of Thompson has contributed another cartoon. This one reflects prevailing government agency attitudes towards old growth forests. Thanks Wayne.



Yes! I want to protect the U.P.!!

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I would like to support the goals of UPEC by becoming a member. My annual dues are enclosed (check one):

Regular Member (\$15)
 Supporting Member (\$50)
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Here's an extra contribution of \$ _____.

I want to protect Sylvania Wilderness by contributing \$ _____ to the Legal Defense Fund.

I'd like to ensure the long-term viability of UPEC by contributing \$ _____ to the UPEC Endowment Fund. [For endowment checks only, if you make the check out to the Marquette Community Foundation (MCF) and put "UPEC Fund" on the memo line, you can take a 50% tax credit on your MI state income tax (up to \$200 for individuals, \$400 for couples). Mail to MCF, Attn: UPEC Fund, P.O. Box 185, Marquette, MI 49855. Or you can send your contribution directly to UPEC and take a regular tax deduction.]

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problems that arise in Michigan may be a result of bears being acclimated to human source food by bait hunters. The placing of large amount of bait in the woods also creates an unsightly littering problem, often on public land.

CUB leaders have expressed concern for the continued existence of Michigan's bear population. Hunting bears with dogs has become a much more effective means of killing bears with the use of electronic tracking systems. The ravenous hunger of bears preparing for hibernation makes them very vulnerable to bait hunters.

The UPEC Board of Directors has been considering taking a position on the bear hunting issue. The Board's primary concern is the possibility of a declining bear population. At this time we have not seen any conclusive evidence that the black bear population is in immediate danger in Michigan. Proponents of bear hunting restrictions discount the accuracy of Michigan DNR bear population counts, which are the only population figures available. Since bears are very difficult to count, accurate population figures are difficult to obtain.

The bear hunting lobby is expected to make a major effort to defeat the bear hunting restriction initiative. If UPEC supports the initiative, there is the possibility that UPEC could be drawn into the controversy, which would divert UPEC's limited resources from issues that are more critical to our long-term goals. On the other hand, this may be our only opportunity to protect the black bear. We could not support a state wide initiative on our own at a later time, if we wait for positive evidence of the black bears demise.

The UPEC Board is very interested in hearing from our members on this issue. Please tell us what you think about the proposal to eliminate bear baiting and bear hunting with hounds in Michigan. Send your comments to UPEC, PO Box 847, Marquette, MI 49855.

Upper Peninsula Environment

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