



Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition NEWSLETTER

September 1989

September 1989 Meeting

The September UPEC Board meeting will be held at the L'Anse Town Hall in down-town L'Anse at 7pm, Tuesday, September 12. We will return to our weekend meeting schedule in October, with a possible tour of the Mead paper mill in Escanaba.

Quote of the Month

"I am an environmentalist." Guess who? (Besides George Bush.) Answer at end of newsletter.

IJC's October Meeting is Especially Important This Year

The International Joint Commission's biennial meeting on Great Lakes water quality is especially important this year, in light of the mill proposal. At the meeting, to be held October 12-14 in Hamilton, Ontario, various environmental groups plan to critique the IJC's responsibility as evaluator of the government's progress toward achieving the goals of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. One goal of the agreement is to strive for zero

discharge of toxic materials into the Great Lakes; a paper mill on Keweenaw Bay would, of course, have exactly the opposite effect.

To prepare for the IJC meeting, a meeting of environmental groups, co-sponsored by UPEC, will be held in Green Bay on September 23. Anyone interested in attending should come to the September UPEC meeting or call Gayle Coyer at 942-7767.

¿A James River Corporation Paper Mill on Keweenaw Bay?

FOLK Formed to Oppose Paper Mill on Keweenaw Bay

Friends of the Land of Keweenaw, or FOLK, was formed in July to spearhead opposition to the proposed siting of a billion-dollar-plus paper mill by the James River Corp. on Keweenaw Bay near Arnheim, between Baraga and Houghton. Some 200 to 250 people, almost all opposing the mill, showed up at the group's first public meeting in Baraga. At the meeting, several members of the Dickinson County Citizens for Clean Air recounted the story of their ongoing fight with Champion International over odors and other forms of air pollution emitted by its paper mill at Quinnesec. A meeting held by James River two days later was attended by about 140 people, about half of whom opposed the mill. James River expects to spend the next two years obtaining the necessary state and federal permits for the mill, and it would be five years or so before the mill would be opened. The mill would use about 700,000 cords of wood per year.

James River has been notably unforthcoming on most environmental impacts of the mill. They told public meeting participants that mill odors would seldom go beyond the mill site, even though these odors are commonly carried up to 40 miles downwind from paper mills. They have not ruled out clearcutting of hardwoods as a source of pulp, and have not addressed the issue of how airborne toxics might be concentrated by lake/land breezes along the Lake Superior shoreline. James River has refused to give details of the type of process that the plant would use. However, in letters to the DNR, and in private conversations, they have stated that their preference is for a bleached Kraft mill.

FOLK is circulating petitions in opposition to a paper mill on Keweenaw Bay. Copies of the petition will be sent to Governor Blanchard and possibly elsewhere. The group also plans to fight the mill on air/water pollution, forestry, and

community disruption issues. FOLK would also like information on existing James River paper mills. Anyone with information on these mills or their environmental effects on local communities should get in touch with Kraig Klungness at 482-2967, or contact FOLK at P. O. Box 168, L'Anse, MI 49946. You may also write to the above address to join FOLK.



UPEC Adopts Study Position on James River Paper Mill

At its August 8 meeting, the UPEC board passed the following resolution: «The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition finds the recent proposal by James River Corp. to site a \$1 billion pulp/paper mill on Keweenaw Bay of grave concern due to the potential for significant environmental degradation of air, water, and forests. We therefore begin a process of critical inquiry into all aspects of this proposal in order to develop a well-documented, firm position.»

UPEC has also joined with nine other groups—Public Interest Research Group in Michigan, Wisconsin's Environmental Decade, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Minnesota Conservation Federation, American Lung Association of Michigan, National Wildlife Federation, Great Lakes United, and Sierra Club Mackinac Chapter—to assess the potential environmental impacts of the mill. The 10-group coalition has asked the president of James River for a joint meeting of company representatives, environmental groups, state officials, and other interested parties to identify pertinent environmental issues and to obtain information. UPEC also has asked that James River use an independent consultant when collecting environmental information.

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UPEC Officers: President Gayle Coyer, Skandia, 942-7767; Vice President Marilyn Cooper, Houghton, 482-7834; Secretary-Treasurer Dave Bach, Atlantic Mine, 482-6543; Corresponding Secretary Dickie Selfe, Houghton, 482-5663; **Board Members-at-Large:** Robert T. Brown, Houghton, 482-0945; Kraig Klungness, Houghton, 482-2967; William Malmsten, Ishpeming, 485-5909; William L. Robinson, Marquette, 226-2723; Jon Saari, Marquette, 228-4656; Gregory Seppanen, Harvey, 249-3949; Scot Stewart, Marquette, 225-1418; Rolf Swanson, Marquette, 228-6702; Douglas Welker, Pelkie, 338-2680. [All telephone numbers are Area Code 906.] **Member Organizations of UPEC:** Citizens Information Committee (Ontonagon County); Copper Country Audubon; Copper Country Citizens for Recycling; Copper Country League of Women Voters; Copper Country Peace Alliance; Dickinson Citizens for Clean Air; Mejedwa; Ottawa National Forest District Ranger; Recycle Marquette; Upper Peninsula Power Company. UPEC is a Member of: Great Lakes United; Michigan Environmental Council; Timber Wolf Alliance. **Newsletter Staff:** Doug Welker, Pelkie, Editor; Bob Linn, Hancock, Publisher.

Membership/Information Form

Check Appropriate Box: Application

Information Request

Change of Address/Telephone Number

Name: _____ Telephone Number: (_____) _____ - _____

Address: _____ City/Town: _____ ZIP: _____

- I would like to support the goals of UPEC by becoming a member. My dues are enclosed as follows (check one):
 - Individual Member, \$10; Student, \$5; Senior Citizen, \$5; Unemployed, \$5.
- I belong to an organization whose goals support UPEC goals, and would like to obtain a copy of the UPEC constitution and other appropriate information in preparation for possible membership application. Organizational membership dues are \$15 annually.
- Please send me additional information, such as a copy of the UPEC constitution, so that I may further consider UPEC membership.

Michigan Sand Dune Protection Act Becomes Law

On July 5, the Michigan Sand Dune Protection Act was signed into law. The law provides protection for 60,000 acres of critical dunes, in both public and private ownership. Protection will result largely from local zoning ordinances. Michigan DNR will provide communities with model ordinances, which the communities may adopt or come up with equivalent or more stringent ordinances of their own. The ordinances will not prevent development in dune areas, but for "sensitive" dunes, no development will be permitted at the crests of barrier dunes, on slopes of greater than 12 degrees, or on slopes facing directly onto lakes. [Summarized from *The Mackinac*, Michigan Sierra Club Mackinac Chapter, Aug-Oct 1989, p. 1.]

UPEC to Join Timber Wolf Alliance

Sue Schenk Drobny will be UPEC's representative to the Timber Wolf Alliance, a group dedicated to allowing a pack of some 80 wolves to develop. See the July-August UPEC Newsletter for more information on this group. This is also, of course, a Michigan issue since Wisconsin wolves would undoubtedly make their way over the border into the western and central U.P.

Escanaba River State Forest Plan Up for Public Review This Fall

The forest management plan for the central U.P.'s Escanaba River State Forest is nearing completion and will be available for public review this fall. The plan is significant since the State Forest is a pilot project among the six Michigan State Forests and the final form of the management plan will be a model for future State Forest plans. The plan warrants very careful scrutiny since Michigan State Forest plans typically provide "guidelines only" and there is not much opportunity for detailed public input. This is in sharp contrast to the National Forest planning process, where the National Forests are required to stick to the specifics of their management plans and where public input is actively encouraged. There is some concern that the new plan may result in increased cutting of U.P. forests.

Low-Level Radioactive Waste Update

The statewide exclusionary screen process (which will exclude certain portions of Michigan from consideration as low-level radioactive waste disposal sites) is not completed yet, even though it was due to be finished in late July. When the process is

completed, the next step will be to evaluate the favorability of those portions of the state which were not rejected by the exclusionary screen. The Michigan Low-Level Radioactive Waste Commission has established a list of favorability criteria it will use, but the criteria are not ranked. For instance, with regard to certain sites the Commission could decide that local public acceptance of a facility is more important than environmental concerns. The consensus at the August UPEC meeting was that a ranking of favorability criteria should be established prior to looking at individual sites, and that environmental concerns be at the top of the list.

UPEC to Request Study of H-58 "Lakeshore Drive" Alternative at Pictured Rocks

At the August 8 meeting Dave Bach suggested that the National Park Service should consider the alternative of arranging for the use of part of H-58 in Alger County as part of the Pictured Rocks Lakeshore Drive. With appropriate legislation the Park Service could then take responsibility for maintenance of the highway. This is a potentially cost-effective alternative to constructing a new highway in the Beaver Basin area. The H-58 alternative would retain the present state of seclusion in Beaver Basin and would provide no less of a scenic shoreline drive than the Beaver Basin alternative. UPEC has requested that the Park Service consider the H-58 alternative as part of their Beaver Basin road feasibility study.

Torch Lake/Deer Lake

In spite of finding that mercury levels are now higher in Deer Lake than before remedial action was initiated, DNR continues to stock walleye in the lake at the rate of one million per year. Likewise, DNR has begun stocking walleye in Torch Lake, a federal superfund site, even though the incidence of fish tumors there seems to be increasing.

UPEC to Visit Delerium Wilderness and Hendrie River Water Cave

On September 16 and 17, UPEC members will journey to the eastern U.P. to see how two very different "wilderness" areas are being managed. On Saturday we will visit the Hiawatha National Forest's Delerium Wilderness. This wilderness is largely swamp, so prepare for wet feet, but hopefully few bugs by then.

On Sunday, we will be given a tour of Hendrie River Water Cave west of Trout Lake. The cave is on the Fiborn Karst Preserve, and members of the Fiborn Karst

Conservancy will be our guides. While only about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile in length, Hendrie River Water Cave is Michigan's longest, and it contains a waterfall and other interesting features. A variety of other outstanding Karst (limestone solution) features, plus an abandoned limestone quarry, are also found on the preserve.

Doug Welker (338-2680) is coordinating this trip. He will provide you with a map, list of things to bring, names of persons to carpool with, etc. You must contact Doug by September 12 if you're interested so he can arrange for caving gear. Mike Huntly/Gayle Coyer have offered their place as a place to crash Friday night on the way east. There is an excellent site on State land near the Karst preserve where we expect to camp Saturday night.

Sylvania Wilderness Sampler Trip

Ottawa National Forest's Sylvania Wilderness (formerly Sylvania Recreation Area) west of Watersmeet will be the site of another UPEC wilderness sampler trip on the weekend of September 30 and October 1. Sylvania contains beautiful clear lakes, thousands of acres of virgin forest, and some interesting wilderness management problems.

We will camp at Loon Lake, about a 2-hour hike or paddle from where we'll start. Bring your own canoe, rent one from Sylvania outfitters at Watersmeet, or backpack in. Prepare for excellent smallmouth bass fishing, discussing wilderness management, swimming (beautiful sand beach, but a bit cool for some in late September), and lounging around.

If you're interested, contact Doug Welker (338-2680) or see him at the September meeting.

Just a reminder.....

If you'd like something in the UPEC Newsletter, please try to have something to give the newsletter editor at the Board meeting. If you can't make the meeting, send it to UPEC, PO Box 34, Houghton, MI 49931----marked "Attention Newsletter Editor." This makes doing the newsletter a much more pleasant job.

Our Mystery Environmentalist is..

Michigan Senator Joseph Mack (D-Ironwood). See *The Mackinac*, Michigan Sierra Club, August/September/October 1989, page 3 for a thought-provoking essay by Ann Woiwode on environmentalism and politics which was inspired by Senator Mack's statement.

Upcoming Events

UPEC Board of Directors, L'Anse Town Hall, 7pm (all members welcome)
Hendrie River/Delerium Wilderness Camping Trip (see article in this issue)
Prep meeting for October IJC, Green Bay (see "IJC's..." top of 1st page)
Sylvania Wilderness Camping Trip (see article in this issue)

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