



The Upper Peninsula ENVIRONMENT

Volume 21, No. 5

September - December 1996

Published Bi-Monthly by the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, P.O. Box 847, Marquette MI 49855-0847
(Issue Date: October 31, 1996)

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(EAN), which is a term EPA made up, but representatives said is the equivalent of an Environmental Impact Statement. At the meetings, they stated that the EAN process could last 12-18 months, or even longer.

After these community meetings, Copper Range Company then announced that it was suspending the pilot phase until there was more "regulatory certainty." The Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, Russel Harding, fired a nasty letter off to EPA insisting that EPA should back off from regulating this project. EPA stated it intended to remain firm and conduct the EAN.

UPEC has encouraged the EPA to remain firm and to continue to conduct the EAN. We think it is vitally important that the EPA assign their most experienced technical staff to this experimental project to determine the risks of abandoning the highly acidic solution loaded with heavy metals in the mine or to deny a permit to conduct the project. There is a great deal at stake here.

BEAR BAITING CAUSES HUMAN/BEAR CONFLICTS

By Bill Malmsten, UPEC President

Editor's Note: Bill provided the following information, which was approved by the UPEC Board for publication, concerning bears and the decision on Proposal D, which would ban baiting bears and hunting bears with dogs.

Proponents of bear baiting and bear dog use have warned us that a ban on these hunting methods will be risky. Convincing research on human/bear interactions conducted

by National Park Service biologists clearly show that just the opposite is true. The chances of someone being injured by a black bear will be substantially reduced if bear baiting is banned.

The research was reported in a paper titled, "Bear-Inflicted Injuries in Yellowstone, 1970-1994," available from the Office of Bear Management, Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming. The study included both black bears and grizzly bears. According to the paper, "From 1930 through 1969, an average of 45 people per year were injured by black bears in the park [Yellowstone NP]... Prior to 1970, most bear management involved food-conditioned bears that were extensively influenced by the availability of human foods and garbage in developed areas and along roadsides."

In 1970, management was intensified to prevent bear access to human sources of food. The last of the park garbage dumps were closed, bear proof garbage cans were installed, and visitors were required to keep their food inaccessible to bears. "Management after 1970 involved bears that were largely uninfluenced by human food and garbage. From 1970 through 1978, bear inflicted human injuries decreased significantly from previous levels to an average of six per year."

"By 1979, most bears with prior knowledge of sources of human foods were no longer in the population." In the decade from 1984 to 1994, the last year reported in the study, there were no reported black bear inflicted human injuries in the park, even though visitation substantially increased during the period to an all time high of over 3 million visitors in 1994. "The data also strongly suggest that the presence of food-conditioned bears, combined with the availability of human food in park campgrounds, led to most bear-inflicted human injuries in developed areas."

It is my contention that the bear baiting stations used by hunters in Michigan produce a very similar situation to the open garbage dumps

and unprotected garbage cans that existed in Yellowstone National Park prior to 1970. The lesson here is that bears that have been conditioned to eating human source food will be in conflict with humans regardless of their population levels, but bears that are conditioned to eating natural food can co-exist with humans without conflict.

Opponents of Proposal D have predicted that during years of poor natural bear food production, increased black bear problems will require the killing of bears by state employees in Michigan if bear baiting is banned. But another study of the Yellowstone bear population noted that even with a shortage of natural food, no increase in bear-caused problems occurred in Yellowstone NP once the bears had been conditioned to eating natural food sources ("Restoration of Natural Populations of Grizzly and Black Bears in Yellowstone National Park," available from the Office of Bear Management, YNP).

As more people move their dwellings and vacation homes into bear habitat, it will become increasingly important to cut off the

bear population from all sources of human source food, including the hunters' bait piles.

Copies of the reference studies are available for our cost of copying and mailing. Send \$4.53 to UPEC, PO Box 847, Marquette, MI 49855.

JET SKIS A GROWING ISSUE OF CONCERN

UPEC member Wayne Stanley has shared his concerns with us on jet skis. During the 1995 Michigan boating season, jet skis accounted for 312 of the 686 boating accidents. For many people, these boats -- with their penetrating noise -- prevent people from enjoying the natural value of a lake. In addition, since these boats are often operated in shallow waters, they can harm aquatic vegetation and wildlife. There were some weak legislative attempts in 1996 to address jet ski problems, but they were mostly to create a summary of law pertaining to jet skis and enact stricter life jacket requirements. This issue will continue to grow as the number of jet skis buzzing our lakes continues to grow as well.



The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition was organized on December 6, 1975. The goals of UPEC are to protect and maintain the unique environmental quality of the U.P. of Michigan; to evaluate and promote planning and sound management decisions for all the resources of the U.P.; and to work toward these goals through coordination of member groups, individual members, and public information.

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Ishpeming

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Membership in UPEC is open to all individuals and groups who wish to support the goals of the Coalition. Applications for membership should be sent to PO Box 847, Marquette MI 49855. News items and submissions to the newsletter should be sent to the same address. UPEC is a nonprofit organization [IRS 501(c)(3)] and dues and contributions are U.S. tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

**UP OFF-ROAD VEHICLE
COMMITTEE NEEDS INPUT!**

An Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) Committee has been established by the Department of Natural Resources. The Committee charge is to: 1) recommend methods to restore ORV damaged sites; 2) assess damage caused from 1994 through 1997 from ORVs; 3) report whether or not ORV damage poses a "significant threat" to the Upper Peninsula's resources to justify a "closed unless posted open" state policy, which is currently in effect in the Lower Peninsula (in the UP, there is currently an "open unless posted closed" policy on state lands except it's illegal to ride on Great Lakes beaches); and 4) determine whether an additional deferral period is appropriate before making a decision.

If you know of sites where visual damage, loss of vegetation, or soil movement has occurred, you can use the form included in this issue to report the damage. Be as specific as possible about the location so that the committee can visit the site and verify the damage. If at all possible, please try to provide a photograph. Send the information to: Bernie Hubbard, Michigan DNR, Rt 4, Box 796, Newberry, MI 49868. Please feel free to copy the report and distribute it. Thanks for your assistance on this important issue!

**NEWS FROM THE LAKE
SUPERIOR ALLIANCE (LSA)**

By Vern Simula, UPEC's
Rep on the LSA Steering
Committee

The LSA received a grant from the Mott Foundation earlier this year to continue to build and strengthen the Alliance, which brings together citizen groups from

all around the Lake Superior Basin to be a united voice in protecting Lake Superior and to help each other with local environmental issues.

The Mott grant hired a Coordinator (these duties are being shared by Bob Olsgard of Sarona, WI, and Gayle Coyer, of Skandia, MI) and funded the LSA newsletter, Superior Vision (Kathy Broesmer of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, is the editor). The grant also provided mini-grants for ten "Sustainable Basin" projects. These projects are being undertaken by local groups to demonstrate different ways to protect Lake Superior. In Michigan, the CUP Sierra Club group and UPEC are undertaking a Community Mercury Project to reduce sources of mercury in the community. Friends of the Land of Keweenaw (FOLK) is participating in a project to protect the Otter River Watershed. Other projects include clean-up campaigns, paint exchanges, and a wetlands watch.

The Alliance attempts to host its four quarterly meetings in various parts of the Basin on a rotating basis. The next meeting is scheduled for January 18-19 in Marquette (see details on the back page). Please come!

Alliance meetings are a chance for local environmentalists to come together to describe the types of environmental problems they are grappling with in their community and to have other members help brainstorm effective strategies. Such meetings are creative and inspiring. If you have issues which you would like to have addressed at an Alliance meeting, please come to the next meeting! Or, please call me at 906-487-9505, or write me at Rt 1, Box 28, Toivola, MI 49965 or email me at vsimula@portup.com.



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GIVE TO THE UPEC ENDOWMENT FUND!

TAKE A TAX CREDIT FOR 1996!

Since 1994, UPEC has had its own endowment fund, called the UPEC Fund, which is established within and managed by the Marquette Community Foundation. The goal of this fund is to build the principal and interest in the fund until we have enough money to fund a staff person and office on a permanent basis. This is a lofty goal, but it's a major way to keep UPEC alive -- watch-dogging environmental issues in the Upper Peninsula -- long into the future.

If you contribute to the UPEC Fund through the Marquette Community Foundation, you can deduct fifty percent of the amount of your contribution right off your state income tax form on the line Community Foundation Tax Credit. The maximum credit you can take is \$200 for individuals, \$400 for married couples. Example: if you make a \$100 contribution, that's a \$50 tax credit. Think of your money going to work for UPEC instead of some of the other things they spend state tax money on!

Our members and friends have been very generous in the past. Please contribute to the UPEC Fund to help keep UPEC strong!

Here's how: Make your check out to the "Marquette Community Foundation" and write "UPEC Fund" on the memo line. Mail to: Marquette Community Foundation, Attn: UPEC Fund, P.O. Box 185, Marquette, MI 49855.

THANKS FOR CARING ABOUT UPEC!

ORV DAMAGE LOCATION

COUNTY _____

T _____ R _____ SECTION _____

LANDOWNER (IF KNOWN) _____

DATE REPORTED _____

REPORTED BY _____

PHONE NO _____

TYPE OF DAMAGE (PHOTO ENCOURAGED)

Please return to: **BERNIE HUBBARD**
MICHIGAN DNR
RT 4 BOX 796
NEWBERRY, MI 49868

Map of Location - Scale (Each box = 1/4 mi square)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF BEST WAY TO GET TO DAMAGE LOCATION

UP ORV COMMITTEE FOLLOW UP

NAME _____ ORGANIZATION _____ DATE _____

SITE FACTS

CORRECTIVE ACTION NEEDED

