

U. P. Environment

Quarterly Newsletter for
the
Upper Peninsula
Environmental Coalition
The oldest grassroots
environmental organization
in the U.P.

From the President's Desk: Messages and Power

Fall 2008



In January, 2008, the UPEC Board created an Outreach Fund to help us further our land protection agenda for the Upper Peninsula. The intent was to go beyond homegrown allies in the U.P. to reach regional "fans of the U.P." The assumption is that we can only succeed on many of our present-day issues – the dangers of sulfide mining, the weakness of landowner rights, the imperative of prioritizing the landscape – by creating linkages and awareness among non-U.P. residents down-state and in the surrounding states of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota. In the era of Rio Tinto and untraditional forestland own-

ers, we cannot save our landscape without many new allies.

So the message is key, including what is said, to whom, and why, and how. What gives a message power so that it can command attention, move minds and hearts, and lead to action? Four examples begin to sketch out some answers.

1. The Headwaters Country Project

This is the title of Eric Hansen's latest cooperative venture with UPEC, funded by a grant from the

(cont. on page 3)

Photos: Above—Lake Superior shoreline near Munising by Jeannine McKenzie

Left—Old growth hardwoods in Sturgeon River Gorge by Doug Welker

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Don't forget those Econo Foods Slips!

Thanks to you and Econo Foods, UPEC has earned several hundred dollars over the past few years by submitting grocery receipts from the store collected by UPEC members. That amount represents 1% of total gross receipts from all the slips.

That may not seem like a lot, but when you're a non-profit organization every little bit helps. Of course, that amount could be even higher this year if more of you were to save your slips and send them to us!

Either save them throughout the year and mail them off to us before the end of May, or simply hand them to a UPEC board member when you attend a meeting—whichever is most convenient. It's one of the easier ways you can offer your support.

About UPEC...

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition has a 30-year track record of protecting and seeking to maintain the unique environmental qualities of the U.P. through public education and watchful monitoring of industry and government.

UPEC seeks common ground with diverse individuals and organizations in order to promote sound planning and management decisions for all the region's natural resources.

Our newsletter, the *U.P. Environment*, is published four times a year.

You can send your comments or contributions to UPEC by standard mail at P.O. Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931, or e-mail us from our website at upenvironment.org.



UPEC is a proud member of Earth Share of Michigan, an organization that allows working people to donate to environmental organizations through work place giving campaigns.

Each year Earth Share provides UPEC with critically-needed funding for environmental education and program operation.

If you would like to help us earn more funding for UPEC, consider letting your employer know you want the Earth Share of Michigan giving option at your workplace and give to the annual payroll deduction plan.

For more information, please call 1 (800) 386-3326 or view the website at www.earthsharemichigan.org

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Wilderness Society and private donors. The focus is not on a single watershed, but on all waterways as sources of the largest and most precious body of fresh water on the planet, the Great Lakes. The U.P., with streams feeding into Lakes Superior, Michigan, and Huron, is the center of Headwaters Country, and deserving of special consideration. Water is the theme, sulfide mining is the danger, and watershed protection is the message. And Eric Hansen, well-known writer of hiking guides to the U.P. and Wisconsin, has already begun to get that message out. On July 27 the Sunday opinion section of the Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel featured his op-ed on the U.P. as an iconic land of water; the op-ed was prominently on the front page and went out to over 400,000 readers of the paper. You can read it at the following url: www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=776441

2. The Protect the Earth Summit

On two sunny days in early August, over 100 activists took part in a U.P. gathering inspired by a Wisconsin tradition of Protect the Earth Summits. Lectures at NMU, a rally at the Presque Isle band shell, and a walk to Eagle Rock on the Yellow Dog Plains made up the agenda, but the spirit of the gathering was Native American. During the lectures indigenous movements worldwide and locally were discussed and oral histories taken of traditional cultural practices on the Yellow Dog Plains. At the rally a

13-year old Anishinaabe girl danced, an Ojibwa folksinger sang, and Jim St. Arnold from GLIFWC (Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission) spoke of treaty rights. At Eagle Rock, a drum circle called all together. The speakers were Native Americans from Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, the Mole Lake Sokaogon Ojibwa and the Rainy River First Nation. The entire weekend expressed the desire to connect with deeper regional traditions that respect and defend the Earth.



Eagle Rock—Photo courtesy of Cynthia Pryor and Save the Wild U.P.

The message here was not primarily political and legal but cultural, witnessing to a seventh-generation land ethic of “doing no harm” and resisting short-term extractive mining that threatens to damage a very special corner of the U.P. No mass gathering of people power, the Summit nonetheless demonstrated an impressive linking of leaders from throughout the Upper Midwest and Canada. And it spoke to the importance of multi-cultural movements of resistance that brought native and non-native peoples together in a common defense of their homes and landscapes. The moral power of the spirit, symbolized by a blessed eagle feather, was believed decisive in the long term. Old-fashioned? Illusory? I would be hesitant to discount these beliefs. The raising of hopes and the forging of solidarity were visible fruits of the Protect the Earth gathering which is likely to become an annual event and grow in momentum.

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FERC Supports UPPCO Basin Development

By William Malmsten,
UPEC Vice President

Right: Photo of Cataract Basin
by Wm. Malmsten

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has released three Environmental Assessments (EAs) regarding the Upper Peninsula Power Company's (UPPCO) plans for the development of the shorelines of Upper Michigan hydroelectric basins. UPEC leaders are very disappointed that the EAs largely support UPPCO's proposed development.

These first three EAs include development plans for AuTrain, Cataract, and Boney Falls Basins, all located in the central U.P. UPEC has filed protests on each EA with FERC, including up to seventeen pages of specific objections. We anticipate that FERC will release EAs for the remaining two basins, Bond Falls and Prickett Basins, in the near future, followed by 30-day comment periods. Bond Falls and Prickett basins are located in the western U.P.

Although UPPCO owns the shorelines of the basins, their operating licenses require them to maintain buffer zones around each basin that will

protect their natural features. Development plans would allow for the installation of docks up to 150 feet in length; the building of motorized trails within the buffer zones; and the clearing of trees so that the basins will be visible from the homes bordering the buffer zones. These provisions would essentially turn the lots bordering the buffer zones into lakefront property, greatly increasing their selling prices.

It appears the authors of the EA failed to do any independent investigation into the accuracy of statements in the Shoreline Management Plans. They simply reviewed the plans taking everything that UPPCO said at face value. Most of the substantive issues raised by UPEC and others in official comments filed with FERC were completely ignored in the EAs.

FERC seems to blatantly disregard the National Environmental Policy Act in their creation of the EAs, including

- failure to consider a range of alternatives,

- failure to consider a "no-action alternative",
- failure to consider cumulative impacts,
- failure to consider impacts from activities on adjacent lands,
- and failure to consider issues raised by public and resource agency comments.

The EA authors admit that the shoreline development would result in "...changes in the aesthetics character of the lake from a rural, wilderness nature to a more developed landscape..."

They admit in numerous places in the EAs that the plan would cause degradation of the basins, and they admit that the total impact of the development cannot be determined because the developers have not released the details of their development plans. Yet FERC concludes that the level of development provided by UPPCO's SMPs is appropriate.

(Continued on page 6)



Professional Botanists Admire U.P. Plant Communities

In late July, over forty botanists from lower Michigan, the U.P., and Wisconsin gathered to explore and enjoy the unique botanical habitats of the western

U.P. The *North Woods Native Plant Society* and the *Michigan Botanical Club* sponsored the event to showcase the western U.P.'s special features.

Members visited the Trap Hills and the Sturgeon River Gorge wilderness, both in the Ottawa

National Forest, as well as the Porcupine Mountain Wilderness, a western U.P. state park. Visiting botanists explored with nine U.P. and northern Wisconsin experts - an extraordinary number for so remote a location. Wisconsin and lower Michigan folks were impressed with the uniqueness and variety of our native plant communities; even U.P. residents were excited about plants and places new to their experience. This represented a unique chance to promote advocacy for the U.P.'s botanical treasures among folks closer to the state political arena in downstate Lansing.



- Sherry Zoars, UPEC
Board Member

Top Photo—A photographer going for a dream shot of pinedrops

Left Photo- Exploration along the middle branch of the Sturgeon River

(Photos courtesy of Susan Trull)

UPPCO seems to have made a tremendous effort to gain support from community leaders in Upper Michigan. Their efforts have been largely successful as they have gained support for development from state legislators, county commissions, and chambers of commerce, among others. The statements of support from the various individuals and groups are so similar that the words seem to be coming directly from the UPPCO lobbyists. The common theme of the statements is that we need the jobs coming from the construction of homes around the basins because the fuel crises has hurt the tourist industry in the U.P. Considering that the transportation crises is temporary but the development would be permanent, this is a very short-sighted point of view. The construction jobs will be short term, but tourism jobs could last far into the future.

The U.P. is blessed with an abundance of inland lakes besides bordering three of the Great Lakes. Unfortunately most of the shorelines of these lakes have already been developed. Even within our state and national forests, many lake shorelines are privately owned and have already been developed. Remaining U.P. lake frontage is being rapidly gobbled up by developers. Even the shorelines of remote lakes previously open to the public are being bought up and divided up into lots.

Natural shorelines are needed not only for recreation but also to support a host of plants and animals that depend upon such habitat for their existence. UPEC will continue to make every effort to prevent the development of the UPPCO basins.

For more current information visit our web site, upenvironment.org, or the Upper Peninsula Public Access Coalition web site at uppac.com.



Celebrate the U.P.!

UPEC will be hosting a gathering in Marquette on
Saturday, March 28, 2009,
which will
highlight speakers and conversations about ideas and things
that make the U.P. special.

Mark your calendars and keep your eyes open
for details to come soon!

- Karen Bacula, UPEC Board Member
and Celebration Coordinator



3. Step by step, walking to the Mackinac Bridge

Margaret Comfort, an oncology physician from near Chicago, is walking 200-plus miles to honor the U.P. and educate people along the route to the dangers of sulfide mining to Great Lakes waters. She started on August 17 at Eagle Rock and plans to join Governor Granholm on September 1 for the annual Labor Day Bridge Walk. A support team organized by several local groups is assisting her. Her message? Start paying attention, protect the water, and be prepared to give something of yourself for this important cause.



Lake Michigan shoreline near Naubinway

Photo by Jeannine McKenzie

This will not be an easy hike for 49-year old Margaret Comfort. But by making the effort, she encourages others to take stands and make sacrifices as well. Some will step forward and accompany her along the way. I joined the band myself for one segment, walking from the Tourist Park in Marquette to the Welcome Center east of the city on US 41. Many motorists honked their horns in support as we walked through the NMU campus and the city of Marquette. We got to know our fellow walkers better. We handed out educational flyers and engaged people on the street in discussion of issues. At the Welcome Center an anonymous woman came forth and gave \$20 for the Walk. Would she have been so moved by a solicitation letter in the mail, or an article in the newspaper? Unlikely. The impact of seeing someone with your own eyes take a stand is thought-provoking. It is another way of making a message powerful.

4. U.P. Celebration on March 28, 2009

Last year UPEC sponsored a traveling art exhibit called "Celebration of the U.P. as Home." It led to new outreach activities with artists, several of whom have joined our Board, and new audiences to hear our message. The message was positive, honoring U.P. artists and their special sensitivity in seeing the man-made and natural worlds within which U.P. residents are fortunate to live. It was also an opportunity at each reception in five cities to talk about what is threatening this special world.

While we may do a repeat of such an invitational art show in 2010 or 2011, the Board decided to do a different kind of one-day U.P. Celebration in 2009. Through lectures, slide shows, panels or workshops, we will showcase the silent recreation possible in the U.P. and discuss the hows and whys of prioritizing the U.P. landscape. We hope to have a reception for former UPEC Board members and visiting speakers. The timing – March 28, 2009 – should allow us to take advantage of the waning of winter and desire to be out and about on the land and water, fishing, hiking, bird watching, kayaking, or whatever. We hope to attract regional visitors to the U.P. to hear our messages and the talks by a talented array of invited presenters. Eric Hansen will also be here for the U.P. Celebration, helping us to hone our message about why the U.P. and its wild lands are regionally significant.

-Jon Saari, UPEC President

UPSTREAM ON THE SEICHE

By Keith Taylor

Carried upstream on the seiche--
water pushed back toward its source--
until the flow turns and my
canoe stalls on mudbanks, alder thickets,
mosquitoes and deerflies. Robins laugh
from the shade. I can do nothing,
but slog back, pulling my boat
through slime, slapping at bugs.

Then, high in the mud....tracks.

I climb up, kneel before them
and sketch one in my notebook
to compare with a guide at home:
two and three-quarters wide;
three and three-quarters long;
angular toes, the center two
noticeably larger than the two outside.
The track of a small wolf,
its outline clear, the edges sharp,

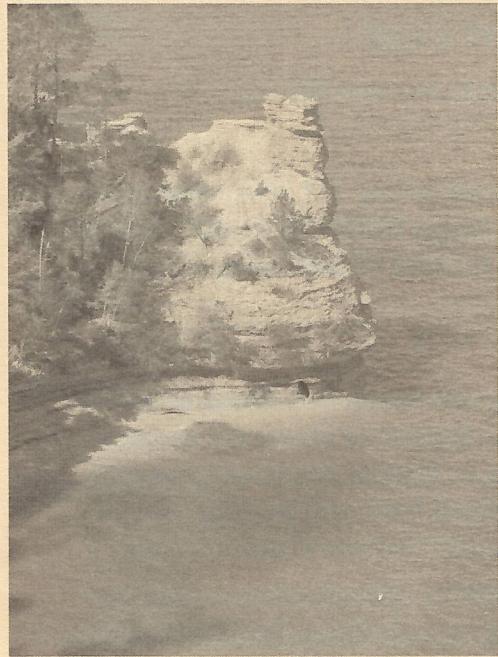
until the seiche turns and fills
the creek, releasing my canoe.
Water rises to the wolf print,
dissolving it, dirt stirred up
then back toward the big lake,
a gentle pull but strong enough
to carry me out past mudbanks,
the sedge and rushes, jewelweed
glowing orange, oxeye daisies,
out past the thickets, shaded
at midday, creatures hiding inside.

"Upstream on the Seiche" was first published in a chapbook, *Dream of the Black Wolf*. The work will be republished in the poet's newest book, *If the World Becomes So Bright*, slated for publication by Wayne State University Press next spring.



Wolf Illustration
by Michael Keranen

Keith Taylor teaches in the Humanities Department at the University of Michigan. In 1991, he served as the artist in residence on Isle Royale. This poem came from that experience and is reprinted here with the permission of the author.



Miner's Castle, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore

Photo courtesy of Kristy Gollakner

National Parks Conservation Association

Announces New Website to Empower National Park Visitors to Address Global Warming

(Washington, D.C.) Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and the nation's leading voice for the national parks, the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), have launched a new website, *Do Your Part for Climate Friendly Parks*, which empowers national park visitors to reduce green house gas emissions and help national parks nationwide become leaders in combating global warming.

"The 300 million people who visit America's national parks annually could be a tremendous force in combating global warming," said NPCA Clean Air and Climate Programs Director Mark Wenzler. "We are giving park visitors a tool to make a difference by cutting global warming pollution and helping to protect the national parks they love."

Developed in concert with the National Park Service's Climate Friendly Parks program, the *Do Your Part* website encourages national park visitors to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and thereby help to protect America's national parks from the effects of global warming. Visitors choose from a drop-down list of 15 national parks, create a personal profile, and pledge to take climate-friendly actions that would then "benefit" that individual national park.

According to the website, if only five percent of national park visitors substituted 10 percent of their current electricity use with greener sources of power, they would save 11 billion pounds of carbon dioxide per year.

The 15 national parks listed on <http://www.doyourpartparks.org> are among the 40 parks nationwide that have joined the Park Service's Climate Friendly Parks program and committed to taking on-the-ground action to address global warming, including working to achieve maximum energy efficiency in park buildings and expanding park shuttle systems. Participating parks featured on the website include Apostle Islands, Glacier, Yosemite, Zion, and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore earned its distinction within the Climate Friendly Parks Program by completing a Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventory and Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gases. Pictured Rocks also implemented climate-friendly actions such as constructing a photovoltaic power system at Au Sable Light Station, installing photovoltaic powered campground water pump systems, replacing many petroleum-based products with soy or vegetable-based products, and running park diesel equipment on 20 percent biodiesel blend.

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“The Lakeshore’s Climate Friendly Action Plan has set the goal of 10 percent of our 435,000 annual park visitors participating in this program,” stated Chief of Heritage Education Gregg Bruff. “If 43,000 visitors reduced their greenhouse gas emissions, we would be making a huge leap forward in combating climate change here at the Lakeshore.”

In 2007, NPCA published *Unnatural Disasters*, a report about the ongoing and forecasted effects of global warming in national parks nationwide, from increased flooding and fires to the loss of plants and animals. Glaciers in the national parks of Alaska as well as North Cascades and Mount Rainier National Parks will continue to disappear, Joshua trees will no longer exist at Joshua Tree National Park, and a rising sea will drown Everglades National Park and portions of historic sites such as Colonial National Historical Park, site of the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown. In its report, NPCA offered recommended actions for federal, state, and local governments, and individuals to slow, and in some cases, halt the damage from global warming to our national parks.

“The Do Your Part website provides national park visitors with easy-to-follow opportunities to reduce our personal contributions to global warming and thus, ensure a healthier park system for our children and grandchildren,” said Wenzler.

-National Park Service



Pen and Ink Illustration

By Michael Keranen

Yes! I Want to Help UPEC Make a Difference!

(Please complete and mail to UPEC, Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931)

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

I'm already a member, but I'd like to make an additional contribution to:

- UPEC Land Acquisition/Protection Fund
- UPEC Environmental Education Fund
- UPEC Outreach Fund
- UPEC Endowment Fund*

I would like to support the goals of UPEC by enclosing a contribution for (please check one):

- Regular Membership (\$20)
- Supporting Membership (\$50)
- Student/Low-Income (\$15)
- Other (\$)

*If you make out your check to the Marquette Community Foundation (MCF) and put UPEC FUND on the memo line, you can take a 50% tax credit on your Michigan income tax (up \$200 for individuals; \$400 for couples. OR you can make your contribution directly to UPEC. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, dues and contributions are tax deductible.

Thank you!

Nominations Needed

Every other year, members are asked to vote for those they feel would serve well on the UPEC board. Therefore, from now until March, 2009, we'll be taking nominations for board seats. Please call (906-524-7899), drop us a line (P.O. Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931), or email us (upec@upenvironment.org) if you know of—or are yourself! - someone who would be an asset to the UPEC board. We'd love to hear from you!

Upper Peninsula

Environmental Coalition

Return Service Requested

P.O. Box 673
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Phone: (906) 524-7899
E-mail: upec@upenvironment.org
www.upenvironment.org



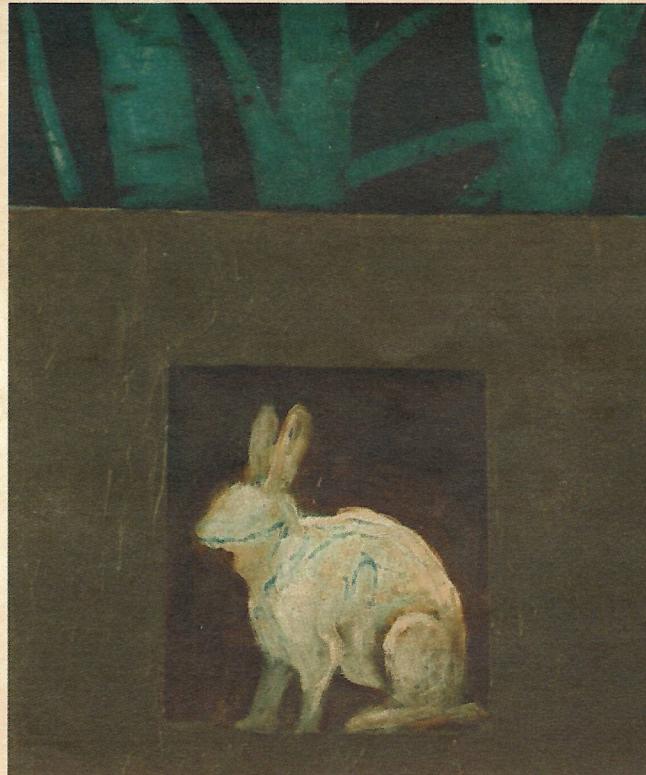
Protecting and maintaining the unique environmental qualities of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan by educating the public and acting as a watchdog to industry and government

Nonprofit Organization

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Houghton, MI 49931

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Chassell, MI 49916
Mem. Exp: June 2008



Rabbit in Hiding Place
By Joyce Koskenmaki