



The Upper Peninsula Environment

Volume 25 • Issue 4

Published quarterly by the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, PO Box 847, Marquette, MI 49855

UPEC JOINS WITH NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

REQUESTING CONTESTED CASE HEARING

UPEC and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) have challenged a Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) permit allowing the latest expansion of the Empire Mine near Ishpeming, Michigan. The DEQ issued a permit on August 29, 2000, that allows filling of 79.4 acres of wetland in addition to obliterating 4,700 lineal feet of streams. UPEC and NWF, along with the Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC), asked for a contested case hearing before a DEQ administrative law judge on October 27, 2000.

According to our petition, the permit violates both state and federal law. In essence, it allows significant degradation of waters and aquatic ecosystems, without examining alternatives or changes to the proposed activity. Moreover, the agency failed to make specific findings of fact, outlining the physical, biological and chemical components of the impacted area. Additionally, the permit fails to require adequate mitigation. Finally, the petition questions any disposal of waste as fill into the waters of the United States.

Several UPEC members have signed statements linking their interests, as members of UPEC, to the proposed expansion. Chris Fries canoes and fishes in rivers and streams just below the impacted area; Dave Allen rides his bicycle in and around the region, and skis at Suicide Bowl; Robert Myers fishes near Goose Lake Outlet, and has concerns about the project's impact on groundwater near his home in Sands Township.

In making the decision to pursue this matter, many board members simply considered it the right thing to do. Although we do not want to stop mining at Tilden or Empire entirely, we do think the DEQ should take a hard look at several aspects of this case:

- What are the alternatives to filling the wetlands, lakes or streams?
- Does wetland mitigation in lowland areas really replace the unique upland habitats?
- The area to be destroyed includes a white cedar swamp: How well does white cedar grow and regenerate in a "mitigated" wetland?
- The DEQ goes back only 13 years to consider the cumulative impacts on an area, and UPEC asks: Is this enough time to make a proper analysis?
- What threatened or endangered species use or occupy these areas? Qualified botanists and

biologists should survey these areas several times during the year. Relying upon Michigan Natural Features Inventory data, when the area is off limits to the inventory, makes little sense.

- Finally, NWF plans to ask for a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) and a Preliminary Injunction. Under Michigan law, CCI can start work on the Empire Mine expansion even though UPEC and NWF have filed for a contested case hearing. The TRO/Preliminary will stop the company from causing irreparable harm before we have a chance to present a case on the merits.

This case will give UPEC, NWF and MUCC a chance to look closely at whether or not less destructive options exist. Look for the next chapter!

Malmsten Resigns, Saari Becomes UPEC President

On October 27, 2000, William Malmsten resigned the position of UPEC president. The board's decision to mount a legal challenge to a Marquette county mine expansion precipitated Malmsten's decision. Malmsten explained that he felt that he had an excessive conflict of interest between his position as owner and

manager of a retail store in western Marquette County and a UPEC lawsuit challenging the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company's plans to expand the Empire and Tilden mines, also located in western Marquette County (see lead article on page 1). He felt that negotiating the terrain between his business livelihood and the UPEC presidency might be injurious to both sides.

In accordance with the UPEC Constitution, upon Malmsten's resignation, Vice President Jon Saari became the president of UPEC. However, upon Malmsten's own request, the board subsequently agreed to appoint him to the vice president position that had been vacated by Saari. Malmsten will thus remain on the UPEC board, but the leading position within UPEC will now switch to long-time board member Jon Saari.

Saari has been a member of UPEC since the 1970s, having served on the Board for much of that time, and acting as newsletter editor in the early 1980s. He lives in the city of Marquette, and is employed as a professor of history at Northern Michigan University. In recent years he has been integrating an ecological perspective into the study of history, writing articles that trace the human-induced changes in the regional landscape.



PUBLIC ACCESS KEWEENAW

The Keweenaw Peninsula is, by anyone's account, a very special place. Thrusting out into the vast waters of Lake Superior, the peninsula boasts miles of pristine shoreline, beautiful forests, clear lakes, and a vibrant community of year-round and summer residents. The people of the Keweenaw—not to mention the thousands of visitors who come each year—are convinced that this is a place whose unique features and character are worth preserving.

However, the Keweenaw is at a turning point. Many people are surprised to learn that there is very little public land on the peninsula. Much of the land is now owned by International Paper (IP), a company based in Connecticut, and is enrolled in the Commercial Forest Reserve (CFR) program, a state-run program that gives large forestland owners tax breaks in exchange for allowing public access.

Now IP has begun to explore the option of selling off significant parcels of its land, a move that would result in the removal of the lands from the CFR. This has raised concerns about the continued availability of public access to the most spectacular parts of the Keweenaw, as well as the possible conservation impacts of piecemeal development.

Public Access Keweenaw is a community forum for everyone who cares about the future of the Keweenaw Peninsula. The organizers of Public Access Keweenaw believe that it is important for the entire community to have more information about what is happening. We see the forum as the beginning of a process of discussion and coalition building to secure the future of public access in the Keweenaw.

Public Access Keweenaw's goal is to work with Keweenaw residents, IP and other landowners on the amount of public land in the Keweenaw. Public Access Keweenaw is committed to doing this in a nonconfrontational, cooperative manner. We recognize that one of the benefits of increased public ownership is that it will provide more stable and predictable operations for businesses in the Keweenaw, including the tourism industry.

If you want to help secure the Keweenaw's future at this critical point in time, please join us at this open, community-wide meeting at the Calumet Theatre on **Monday, December 4, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.**

What will you get out of it?

- A representative from IP will be there to tell you about the company's stewardship policies and the plans for its Keweenaw land holdings.
- A panel of citizens from the Keweenaw will discuss the public access issue from a local perspective.
- Noted photographer Charlie Eschbach, publisher of Keweenaw Traveler magazine, will present a slide show of what is at stake: the stunningly beautiful lands and waters of the peninsula—some of it so remote you probably have never seen it.

A reception with refreshments will follow.

The December 4 meeting is just a starting point, a springboard to forming a coalition of community groups that will work to secure the future of public access in the Keweenaw. You will be given the opportunity to take the meeting's message back out into your neighborhood, to your family and friends.

So mark your calendars and plan to join us for a positive, forward looking event. The future of the Keweenaw depends on the communities of the Keweenaw, and don't miss this chance to make a difference!

(For current information, see www.publicaccesskeweenaw.org.)

BOOK REVIEW by Patti Clancy

Food shortages, malnutrition, starvation—such deprivations are far removed from the minds of most Americans, and surface only when a famine makes headline news. Otherwise, we middle-class citizens don't have a clue as to what hunger is, though it is a fact of life for many people in our cities and rural areas.

However, like rain forest destruction, the earth's food supply is an environmental issue that is

ongoing, despite sporadic and scanty news coverage.

That hunger is an environmental issue had not occurred to me prior to reading *The Paradox of Plenty* (Ed. Douglas H. Boucher, 1999, Food First Books). The existence of hunger is basically dependent on how natural resources are used and who has the power to make decisions about the use of land, soil and water. Where there are people with no voice in these decisions, and no ownership of land, there will be hunger.

The Paradox of Plenty is a collection of writings by a group of scholars who have studied hunger from various angles. The book begins by debunking myths about hunger—such as that it is caused by population exceeding resources. The authors quote many statistics and studies showing that the supply of food in the world at present is adequate to feed the existing world population.

The contention is made, and strongly defended, that people are dying of starvation all around the world, not because of food scarcity, but because of a lack of democracy and adequate distribution mechanisms.

Governments, the World Bank, the IMF, chemical companies, corporate farmers, and proponents of the "green revolution" are all part of an economic system that produces a bottom layer of hungry people. *Paradox* explains clearly how all of these entities play a role in the complex scheme of world food production and marketing.

For example, US government sponsored food aid, on the surface, is a humanitarian action. Many Americans support food aid, believing it is a morally correct program that reduces hunger around the world by sharing the wealth of US agriculture.

However, in analyzing the sources of the food and where, and under what circumstances, the food is sent, it appears that food aid is primarily used for military/ political/economic leverage, and often

benefits large international corporations rather than the hungry. In many instances, food aid has hurt small, local farmers in the countries where it is sent, *because it depresses the prices of local agricultural products in these countries.*

Specific examples of food aid efforts going awry are cited in the book.

Included in the text is discussion about NAFTA, IMF and the World Bank, and how their policies affect hunger and food shortage. A lucid explanation of the debate between the "free trade" and "sustainable" approaches to agricultural policies explains why free trade agreements tend to favor agribusiness, and fail to address the concerns of such groups as organic farmers, consumers who desire food quality and safety, and farm workers.

Also explained is the drive to use undeveloped rainforest and other sensitive areas for the sake of increasing production of beef and other products.

Overall, I feel this is a well documented, illuminating book, that lends understanding to world hunger, while also showing the interrelationships between hunger issues and many environmental issues.

THANK YOU, MEMBERS for saving your Econo Food receipts

by Friederike Greuer

Due to many members saving up and sending me their Econo food receipts, our Education Fund has now earned \$58.49. Thank you all for sending us the receipts! This is a good beginning for our fund. All of this money will go into environmental education programs that are either designed or sponsored by UPEC. We would like to encourage you to continue saving your Econo food receipts, and send them to:

Friederike Greuer
218 East St.
Houghton, MI 49931

You can also simply write UPEC on the back of your receipts and put them in the box at Econo marked "Computers for Kids."

Another means for helping education efforts is to pass along Campbell Soup products labels to your local schools. This includes all Campbell, Prego, and Pepperidge Farm products.

Schools are also happy to accept any box tops for education from any General Mills products. The schools can redeem the Campbell Soup labels for school supplies or equipment, and for each box top the school will receive ten cents.

All of us can make a difference in our community even if in very small ways.

UPEC Board Meeting October 11, 2000 Alberta, MI 6 pm

Some items discussed:

- Consideration of joining NWF lawsuit against DEQ over authorization of the Empire Mine expansion
- Keweenaw land use issues
- Central UP Forest Landowners Cooperative
- Central Lake Superior Land Conservancy
- Sylvania Wilderness update

Next UPEC Board Meeting:

3 pm, Saturday,
January 13, 2001
Ford Forestry Center
Alberta, MI

Yes!

I want to protect the U.P.!

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

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)

Student/Senior/Low Income (\$10)

Here's an additional contribution of \$ _____.

I'd like to ensure the long-term viability of UPEC by contributing \$ _____ to the UPEC Endowment Fund.

NOTE: If you make the endowment 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 Endowment Fund contributions 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 break. Please send membership dues to UPEC at P.O. Box 847, Marquette, MI 49855.

Thanks for helping to support UPEC!

About UPEC . . .

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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