



1976-  
1991  
**15th**  
anniversary

# The Upper Peninsula Environment

Newsletter of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition

• December 1990

## The UPEC year in review

by Gayle Coyer, president

Our list of activities for the year is overwhelming! I'm very proud of the way our grassroots, all-volunteer organization is becoming more of a voice in Lansing and the manner in which we've begun to network with other environmental organizations throughout the state and nation to accomplish our goals.

- Our major accomplishment this year was to work with FOLK, other environmental organizations, and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community to defeat the siting of a James River pulp and paper mill on the shores of Keweenaw Bay.

- Our next major challenge is to work with FOCUS and other organizations to defeat the siting of a similar mill proposed by Mead on the Ontonagon River near Rockland. We met with Mead officials and provided them with a 5-page scoping analysis of issues we believe should be addressed in the EIS they are preparing. We helped FOCUS organize and provided them with a small amount of seed money.

- We joined the Zero Discharge Alliance, an association formed to demand zero discharge of persistent, bioaccumulative toxics in the Great Lakes Basin. We attended strategy meetings in Amberg, Wisconsin, and Thunder Bay, Ontario, on this.

- We commented on: Mead and Champion wastewater discharge permits; Michigan water quality standards; Forest and Mineral Development Fund rules; the Council on Environmental Quality environmental review procedures; and the Escanaba River State Forest Management Plan.

- We sponsored a public meeting on the MichCan copper mine discharge permit and commented on the permit. We also worked with the DNR on the Ropes gold mine permit and on permits for proposed new copper mines in the region.

- We sponsored a camping trip to Grand Island and made comments for the management of the island. We participated in negotiations on motor use in the Sylvania wilderness and we are working to defeat the proposal to have no regulations on motors on three lakes [see accompanying story]. We also participated in the McCormick and Sylvania wilderness management plans. We also worked on building the North Country Scenic Trail.

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## Sylvania wilderness defense effort launched

by Bill Malmsten, vice president

The UPEC Natural Areas Committee has been working with the Forest Service for over a year on the development of a wilderness management plan for the Sylvania Wilderness Area. This spectacular 18,000-acre tract, located in the western U.P. near Watersmeet, was designated a wilderness area in December 1987 with the passage of the Michigan Wilderness Act.

Our greatest concern is the proposed unrestricted use of motorboats on three lakes within the wilderness boundary. The use of high-powered motorboats, including large pontoon boats and 180-hp ski boats, has increased dramatically since Sylvania was designated a wilderness. This unrestricted use of motors is of greatest concern on Crooked Lake, since this lake extends into the heart of the Sylvania wilderness. Over half of Sylvania's backcountry campgrounds are either on Crooked Lake or are accessible only by passing through Crooked Lake.

The roar of boat motors can be heard throughout most of the lakes surrounding Crooked Lake. If the unrestricted motor use is permitted to continue, much of the wilderness character of Sylvania will be lost. We are also concerned over adverse impacts of motor use on water quality and on potential interference with nesting loons, eagles, and other wildlife.

Although UPEC has worked hard for many months to convince the Forest Service that wilderness motor use should be greatly restricted, the intense lobbying efforts of a group of anti-wilderness motorboat users was apparently more effective than ours. The Forest Service released a proposed plan

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## UPEC CALENDAR

### NEXT MEETING

Sunday, January 13, 1 pm EST, Ely Township Hall, West Ishpeming

### UPCOMING EVENTS

February 23-24, UPEC backcountry ski & info trip, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore (see article, p. 2)

### **UPEC Year in Review (cont'd from p. 1)**

• We worked hard on the passage of the Michigan Scenic Rivers bill and held a press conference and testified at congressional field hearings (it didn't pass this session). We also undertook a field investigation to keep 25 U.P. proposed units in the Coastal Barrier Act (we didn't succeed; the units were left out of the final bill). We met with the National Park Service to protest the proposed road-building through the heart of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore.

• We worked on the low-level radioactive waste siting investigation. We attended a conference on Michigan Remedial Action Plans for International Joint Commission Areas of Concern. We organized and published a U.P. candidates survey to give voters the candidates' positions on environmental issues. We also attended a Michigan Environmental Council retreat to help set priorities and campaigns for the coming year.

The year ahead will be filled with similar challenges and activities. I urge everyone to keep up the good fight. If you want to get involved in any of these issues, please give me a call at 942-7767 or write to me at the UPEC address.

### **Sylvania defense (cont'd from p. 1)**

last August which included no restrictions on motor use on three Sylvania wilderness lakes. It appeared at that time that the only avenue remaining for UPEC to satisfactorily resolve this issue would be through litigation. We believe that the proposed Forest Service plan is a clear violation of the law. Unfortunately, the high cost of litigation makes this avenue a very difficult one to follow. After consulting with an attorney familiar with Forest Service issues, we concluded that this option might just be out of our price range. Although national environmental groups have expressed interest, compared with critical national problems the Sylvania issue has been just too small for their active involvement.

Out of desperation we turned to the only group of people we could think of who would understand the crucial nature of this issue: the actual Sylvania backcountry users. We established a fund dedicated to the protection of Sylvania and in early November sent out a test mailing soliciting the support of registered backcountry campers in the wilderness. The response has been even greater than what we hoped for. We have not only received considerable contributions to the fund, but campers have also sent many letters to the Forest Service and to us.

The Sierra Club has recently shown increased interest in this issue. Conrad Krinock from their Mackinac Chapter has met with Forest Service personnel and has demonstrated considerable expertise in his analysis of this issue.

The Forest Service now reports that a revised proposed wilderness management plan will be released in mid-December 1990, and that they think environmentalists will like it better than the last version. We sincerely hope the new version of the management plan will provide an appropriate level of protection for Sylvania and will take into consideration the wilderness values for which it was established. But if it does not, we now feel that we are in a position to do something about it.

Please consider adding your contribution to the Sylvania Fund. More important, take a few moments to write to

the Forest Service and protest the threat to Sylvania posed by unrestricted motor use. Write to: David Morton, Forest Supervisor, Ottawa National Forest, East US-2, Ironwood, MI 49938. Thanks to all of you who have already written and contributed—it looks like your efforts may already have begun to make a difference.

**Please help us help the Sylvania wilderness...**

**Name \_\_\_\_\_**

**Address \_\_\_\_\_**

**Zip \_\_\_\_\_**

**My contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the Sylvania Fund is enclosed.**

**UPEC • Box 34 • Houghton 49931**

### **Pictured Rocks ski-info trip slated for February**

On the weekend of February 23-24, 1991, UPEC members Mike Huntly and Dave Bach will be leading two-day wilderness cross-country ski trips into the backcountry of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. These outings are being organized to familiarize key environmental leaders from lower Michigan and northern Wisconsin with the Lakeshore and the planned Beaver Basin Rim Road as proposed by the National Park Service. We hope this outing will broaden the base of active support to contest this plan and support more environmentally sound and cost-effective alternatives.

Participants will stay in Munising and meet for breakfast on both days before leaving on the all-day outings. The tentative trips are: Saturday, February 23, the Beaver Basin backcountry via part of the proposed road alignment; and Sunday, February 24, to Chapel Beach via Chapel Falls, and Chapel Lake. Both trips are from 10-15 miles long and follow ungroomed trails. Plans are also being made to meet with Park service personnel on the evening of February 23 to discuss the Rim Road proposal.

Because of logistics this outing will be limited to 30 adults—20 from lower Michigan and northern Wisconsin, and 10 UPEC members. For more information or to sign up, call Mike Huntly at 942-7767 or Dave Bach at 482-6543 before January 1.

—Dave Bach

### **Fifteen years at the grassroots. See you in 2006.**

UPEC has been working to protect the quality of our region's environment since January of 1976. You don't last 15 years in the grassroots activism game unless you're making a difference. UPEC is. So if you care about the future of the U.P., join us, and ask your friends to join—there's a form on the back page. And if you're already a member, get active on an issue of your choice. Anytime you're ready, we'll be here!

The Upper Peninsula  
Environmental Coalition  
P. O. Box 34  
Houghton, Michigan 49931

*dedicated to the preservation  
and maintenance of the  
unique environmental quality  
of the Upper Peninsula*

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**SUPPORTING & MEMBER  
ORGANIZATIONS**

- Bay de Noc Audubon Society & Naturalists' Club
- Copper Country Audubon Society
  - Copper Country Citizens for Recycling
  - Copper Country League of Women Voters
- Copper Country Peace Alliance
- Dickinson Citizens for Clean Air
  - FOCUS
- Friends of the Land of Keweenaw (FOLK)
  - Ottawa National Forest, Kenton Ranger District
    - Recycle!Marquette

*UPEC is a member of Great Lakes United, the Michigan Environmental Council, and the Northwoods, Timber Wolf, and Zero Discharge Alliances*

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vegetable-based ink on recycled,  
unbleached paper*

Dave Harmon, editor

## **Should UPEC voice support for treaty rights?**

**by Chuck Harris, UPEC member, Hancock**

During the debate over a new pulp and paper mill in the western Upper Peninsula, the only governmental body which has been consistent in its opposition is the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Tribal Council. This isn't surprising, since American Indian tribes have often taken stands for environmental protection. In Wisconsin, the Lac Court Oreilles Band of Chippewa have joined with others opposed to an open-pit copper mine in Oneida County.

As tribes have taken a more active role in exercising their treaty rights, there have been increasing attacks by non-Indians on those rights. The violence and racism which erupt in Wisconsin during spring spear-fishing season is especially outrageous. Politically, there are various county, state, and federal officials working for the modification or abrogation of treaties with Indian tribes.

As environmentalists, we should recognize the contributions Indian tribes have made toward environmental protection. We should support the sovereignty of tribal governments, the treaties made with tribal governments, and the exercising of the rights guaranteed in those treaties.

As environmentalists, we often talk of the importance of biological diversity. By supporting treaty rights, we also recognize the importance of cultural diversity. The environmental movement has been criticized, by some, as being composed of essentially a privileged few who are economically secure. By supporting treaty rights, we recognize the contributions of people who are not economically secure and yet have had the courage to take a strong environmental stand even when it meant turning away from the get-rich-quick promises of big business.

I would like to see UPEC, as an organization, support the rights guaranteed to Native Americans in treaties initiated and signed by our federal government. I also encourage individual members to support the Indian community by learning more about the treaty rights controversy.

HONOR, a national organization formed to support treaty rights, is one of the first places to start if you are interested in learning more about this issue. You can reach them by writing to HONOR, P.O. Box 09685, Milwaukee, WI 53209. For information from the Indian perspective, especially concerning the fishing controversy, write to the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, P.O. Box 9, Odanah, WI 54806. When you write, ask them to send you their bimonthly newspaper *Masinaigan*.

*(Ed. note: The board welcomes the input of members on this important issue. Please take a moment to send us your thoughts, pro or con.)*

## **FOCUS, FOLK continue fight against Rockland mill**

FOCUS and FOLK members made an effective demonstration at a pro-mill meeting on November 8 in Ontonagon. The featured speaker, Mead woodlands manager William Ticknor, was greeted by signs saying "Support Zero Discharge," "We Don't Need Mead," and "No New Mill." The event garnered TV coverage. FOCUS is networking with all kinds of environmental groups, and met with Wisconsin Greens at Old Victoria on September 29.

FOCUS continues to work on zoning issues. A Rockland Township zoning subcommittee reported back to the zoning board on November 6. They made only very minor variations in Mead-drafted changes to the ordinance (see the November *Environment*). Members of FOCUS and FOLK objected to accepting the modifications, which would eliminate local environmental standards. The board argued that the township couldn't enforce local standards, and were willing to rely solely on state and federal standards. No action was taken, but the zoning board is expected to meet again this month to adopt the recommendations. It will then go to the Township board for consideration.

Mead has stated that after all zoning reviews are finished they will apply for the necessary zoning permits from the state. FOCUS has established a legal defense fund and will seek legal counsel on zoning issues. If you'd like to contribute (or join—dues are \$10 annually and FOCUS has begun publishing a newsletter), write to them at P.O. Box 142, Mass City 49948.

—Jean Schertz, FOCUS

## An Environmental Impact Statement for The Environment

Remember the Fairness Doctrine? It was a rule that said TV and radio stations had to present opposing viewpoints on controversial issues or else lose their broadcasting licenses. The Fairness Doctrine was a casualty of '80s deregulation. But it lives on, after a fashion, in UPEC. We spend a lot of time yelling at other people about their environmental impact. So, in the interest of fairness (and just to keep ourselves a *little* humble), here's an "environmental impact statement" on the production of this newsletter.

We use a brand of paper called Minimum Impact from Earth Care Paper Co. of Madison, Wisconsin. Earth Care buys this paper from a supplying mill. According to Earth Care advertising, "Minimum Impact is one of the most ecological printing papers made. No deinking or bleaching. This 100% recycled, acid-free paper uses less water, fewer materials, and creates less solid waste than virtually any other paper." That's great, but it doesn't mean the paper is entirely non-toxic (though discharge from recycled mills is far lower than that from mills bleaching virgin pulp.) And, Minimum Impact has a post-consumer content of only 15%—which seems pretty low. This means 15% of the content comes from paper that someone has used and returned to a recycling center. The rest is "recycled" from mill waste.

Until this issue, we had to use petroleum-based ink for printing. This ink is most definitely toxic. Our printer in Calumet has just started stocking non-toxic soy-based inks, so beginning with this issue we're using them. Hurray! The cost per issue is only \$1-2 more.

The newsletter is done on computer. We draw power from Upper Peninsula Power Company, which generates our electricity from a variety of sources. Most of it comes from the Presque Isle coal-fired plant in Marquette, but some comes from a coal-fired station in L'Anse and from six hydro stations in the U.P. UPPCO also buys a small amount of power from Wisconsin Electric, which generates with coal, nuclear, and hydro. UPPCO buys low-sulfur coal from eastern mines. According to UPPCO, the stacks on their plants are equipped with electrostatic precipitators (scrubbers) that remove 99% of the particulate matter in the emissions.

The items for the newsletter, of course, derive from UPEC activities, which themselves have a considerable environmental impact. UPEC is probably one of the most far-flung grassroots groups in the continental U.S.—we literally have members in the U.P. who live more than 300 miles apart. When the board meets in the Marquette area, Houghton-based directors do a 170-mile round-trip, same-day drive for a two- or three-hour meeting. And no one is reimbursed for mileage. That sort of commitment would probably stagger most groups, but it's *de rigueur* for us. Nevertheless, the amount of gas we burn up just to talk to each other is considerable—not to mention the resultant pollution emissions. The best we can do is carpool (usually two carloads go down to Marquette for meetings, and every other meeting is in Houghton or L'Anse).

No doubt there's more. But the point is that, as the year ends, it's good to remind ourselves that we all have to strive to consume less—even if we're doing it in the name of a worthy cause.

**Best wishes to you for 1991!**

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_  Check here if this is a change of address.

I would like to support the goals of UPEC by becoming a member. My annual dues are enclosed (check one):  Individual Member (\$10);  Low-income person (\$5);  Student (\$5);  Senior Citizen (\$5). Additional contributions are, of course, greatly appreciated. Dues are good for the entire calendar year in which they are paid. Thank you!

I belong to or represent an organization whose goals support UPEC's goals, and would like to get information on possible membership. Dues for organizations are \$15 annually.

I want to get to know UPEC better. Please send me a free 3-month subscription to UPEC's newsletter, the *Upper Peninsula Environment*.

**UPEC, P.O. Box 34, Houghton, MI 49931**

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