



# The Upper Peninsula Environment

Newsletter of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition • January 1991

## Show of support needed to keep Mead EIS on track

With a new governor taking over in Lansing, we can expect many significant changes over the next few months as the administration settles in. Early indications are that John Engler will rework parts of the state government apparatus to reflect his own interests. As of this writing, he hasn't announced what he's going to do with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), a brainchild of Blanchard's. The fate of the CEQ is vitally important to the U.P. because it is the body designated to review Mead's environmental impact statement (EIS) on the proposed Rockland mill. In fact, the whole EIS process is now in doubt, since Mead is doing it at the behest of the CEQ. If the CEQ is abolished, what will become of the EIS?

Whatever happens to the CEQ, we cannot allow the EIS to fall by the wayside. In spite of the flaws of the current EIS process (not the least of which is that Mead, rather than an independent entity, is controlling the data gathering), it's better than nothing. So please take a few moments to write Engler and urge him to:

- Keep the CEQ, or at least replace it with a similar body devoted *solely* to advocating environmental interests (none other exists at the state level);
- Publicly reaffirm the need for a rigorous EIS, especially given the fact that forestry concerns will not be addressed anywhere else in the mill-building process; and
- Call for public review and input into revisions of the EIS. Right now it's unclear what role (if any) the public would have in reviewing Mead's EIS.

His address: Governor John Engler, State Capitol, Lansing 48909. By the way, as soon as we hear who Engler's environmental aide will be, as well as the new DNR director, we'll pass names and addresses along to you. Please take time to write on this issue!

## DNR stops stocking fish in contaminated Deer Lake

After years of trying to halt the stocking of sport fish in mercury-contaminated Deer Lake (Marquette County), UPEC has finally succeeded. Deer Lake is an International Joint Commission (IJC) Area of Concern, an infamous status given to 42 contaminated toxic hotspots around the Great Lakes. UPEC has been fighting the stocking program because it was understood at the public meetings held by the DNR that fish stocking would not begin (with the exception

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## Suing to protect biodiversity in National Forests

by Walter Kuhlmann  
(first of two parts)

Fourteen years have passed since diversity was recognized by Congress as a goal in managing the National Forests. In the 1976 National Forest Management Act (NFMA), Congress expressed its concern that Forest Service management of natural forests as "tree farms" was reducing the overall diversity of species. It directed the Forest Service planning process to "provide for diversity of plant and animal communities. . . ."

Despite the congressional direction in the NFMA, and an increasing awareness of habitat losses around the world, the Forest Service has continued to ignore the relationship between its prescriptions for manipulating and fragmenting the landscape and the work of scientists who are studying the ecological effects of landscape disturbances.

Environmentalists, too, were slow in grasping the importance of the NFMA diversity provisions. Early examinations of final forest plans focused on below-cost sales, intensive road construction and reconstruction, and the loss of particular habitats known to currently harbor threatened or endangered species.

However, the growing attention paid to forest destruction and habitat loss around the world have brought increasing visibility to the discipline of conservation biology. Since

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## ENVIRO CALENDAR

### UPCOMING UPEC MEETINGS

- Sunday, February 10, 1 pm ET, Portage Lake United Church, Houghton (across from MTU)
- Sunday, March 10, 1 pm ET, L'Anse Township Hall, downtown L'Anse
- GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Saturday, April 20, 5 pm ET, Marquette (exact location TBA)
- Tuesday, May 14, 7 pm ET, Portage Lake United Church, Houghton
- Tuesday, June 11, 7 pm ET, L'Anse Twp. Hall

### UPCOMING EVENTS

February 20, Lansing, Michigan Environmental Council legislative reception. Contact: MEC, 517-487-9539.



## Suing for biodiversity (cont'd from p. 1)

the 1960s, scientists have been improving their understanding of how ecosystems work, and how their size, shape, and degree of fragmentation of an area affect its biological content. These events are persuading many that a full understanding of the causes of losses in biological diversity will soon dwarf and subsume many of the public lands management issues of an earlier day.

In Wisconsin, trained botanists from the University of Wisconsin led the ecological impact analysis of the plans for the Nicolet and Chequamegon National Forests. . . . These scientists, along with local environmental activists, filed administrative appeals in late 1986 of both the Nicolet and Chequamegon Plans and Final Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), which focused on the application of principles of conservation biology to Forest Service management techniques.

The legal basis for requiring the comprehensive application of the principles of conservation biology to forest planning rests principally on: (a) the language in the National

**Biological diversity ("biodiversity"):** The variety of life forms, both wild and domesticated, on Earth. It can be measured on three levels: as genetic, species, or ecosystem diversity.

**Forest fragmentation:** The division of large, contiguous blocks of undisturbed forest into a patchwork of habitats. The patches of forest left behind can be thought of as "islands" of undisturbed forest in a landscape "sea" dominated by disturbed habitat types. Forests can be fragmented by road building, clear-cutting, new development, and so on.

Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requiring consideration of the cumulative impacts of actions, as well as disclosure of the environmental consequences of those actions, and (b) the language of the NFMA requiring that forest plans "provide for diversity of plant and animal communities based on the suitability and capability of the specific land area in order to meet overall multiple-use objectives."

The conservationist appeals have opened up a new front in the battle against timber primacy in the management of our national forests. The Wisconsin appeals were denied by the Forest Service Chief in January of 1990. The appellants have now filed suit in U.S. District Court seeking judicial review of the Chief's decision on the Nicolet Plan. The Chequamegon case will be filed soon if mediation efforts are not successful.

Central to the Wisconsin Forest Plan appeals was a comprehensive biological analysis prepared by a group of botanists at the University of Wisconsin. They showed that periodic logging and the fragmentation that accompanies it jeopardizes the existence of certain plant and animal communities. The scientists prepared a sound (and as yet un rebutted) case demonstrating the need for large blocks of mature forest in order to maximize overall biological diversity in the two Wisconsin National Forests.

Based on their findings, the appellants asked the Forest Service to set up several large Diversity Maintenance Areas (DMAs)—large blocks of forest to be undisturbed by logging, road construction or reconstruction, or human-made wildlife openings. . . . The botanists' report showed that cur-

rent management of the forests, including periodic logging, road construction, and the creation of "wildlife openings," produces an overabundance of common habitat types. While this benefits local populations of species adapted to forest edges and disturbed environments, the more sensitive species that need forest interior habitats will, over time, be extirpated from the forest. The over-replication of a common and locally diverse disturbed habitat lowers total diversity because edge effects intrude on adjacent, undisturbed habitats, making them unsuitable for interior dwellers.

Thus, they argued, the issue that should be analyzed in the plans is not whether second-growth or old-growth conditions are more diverse in local terms, but rather how to adequately and sustainably provide for both types of communities in order to maintain the overall diversity of the forest. Further, studies of population dynamics show that the challenge is not simply one of providing adequate area for animals with large home ranges or special habitat requirements. Natural fluctuations in populations due to environmental variation, and random changes in survival and reproduction are constantly occurring. Plant and animal populations must be large enough to overcome these factors.

*(Reprinted from the Fall 1990 Horizons, the newsletter of the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, Northland College, Ashland, WI 54806. Used by permission.)*

### A second go-round on UPEC tees!

You may recall back in November we offered UPEC t-shirts and touted it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Well, somebody once said that "Truth is elastic. Trying stretching it if you don't think so." We have taken this saying to heart and thus are offering, due to relentless demand, a second round of UPEC t-shirt orders. Last time there was some confusion (mostly the editor's fault) regarding the details of the shirts. Here's the deal:

- These are top-notch, all-cotton garments emblazoned with the UPEC logo (the thing on the front page of the newsletter).

- There's only *one* color available for the t-shirt itself: jade. Last time we said forest green; wrong, wrong, wrong. Jade is more of a brightish, blueish green.

- There are *two* colors available for the UPEC logo: white and blue.

- Last time we said you could only get sizes L and XL. Uh-huh. You may order S, M, X, XL.

- The price is \$8 apiece. Add \$1 per shirt if you want them mailed to you. Otherwise you can pick yours up at the March meeting in L'Anse or by contacting Becky Bach (Houghton area) at 482-6543 or Sue Schenk Drobny (Marquette area) at 249-3753 (evenings). The shirts should be ready by March 10.

Please use the order form below. As Thoreau said—specify, specify. Gives us sizes & logo colors. The deadline for orders is February 25. These are really attractive shirts, certain to make you the envy of your associates. And in only a few months it'll be warm enough to wear them!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Shirt #1: Size \_\_\_\_\_ Logo color \_\_\_\_\_

Shirt #2: Size \_\_\_\_\_ Logo color \_\_\_\_\_

Shirt #3: Size \_\_\_\_\_ Logo color \_\_\_\_\_

# of shirts x \$8 (x \$9 if shipped) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to UPEC & send to P. O. Box 34, Houghton 49931. Thanks!



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, HONOR, the Michigan  
Environmental Council, and the  
Northwoods, Timber Wolf, and Zero  
Discharge Alliances*

*printed with  
vegetable-based ink on recycled,  
unbleached paper*

## Deer lake fish stocking (cont'd from p. 1)

of adult perch for testing purposes) until the mercury level in Deer Lake's fish went below the public health advisory level of 0.5 ppm.

The DNR recently imposed a catch-and-release order on the lake. It is now illegal to possess fish from Deer Lake. UPEC worked with Great Lakes United and the Michigan Environmental Council to have the following language added to the catch-and-release order: "There will not be any fish stocking program for Deer Lake until levels of contamination have been successfully reduced to allow for a healthy sport fishery without any endangerment of public health." A small victory, but a victory nonetheless!

UPEC has also been working with Great Lakes United to reopen the remedial action plans (RAPs) for both Torch Lake (Houghton County) and Deer Lake to incorporate new data and to take an ecosystem approach to the RAP.

## UPEC bids farewell to Coyer & Huntly

We are very sorry, yet at the same time pleased, to report that UPEC is losing two of its finest activists. Gayle Coyer, UPEC's president for the past several years, left for Ann Arbor in early January to take a job with the National Wildlife Federation. Her spouse, Michael Huntly, will join her soon. Under Gayle's leadership, UPEC has securely established itself as an active, well-informed regional advocacy and education group. Much of our success can be attributed directly to Gayle. She spent incredible amounts of her personal time on UPEC business, and mastered a bewildering variety of technical minutiae so UPEC could comment on various projects. And Michael served as an eloquent UPEC spokesperson at hearings and events on several issues. Together, they "anchored" our group. We have greatly benefitted from their energy and expertise, and we'll miss having that on a daily basis.

Why are we pleased? Because the good news is that Gayle will be working full-time on Lake Superior issues for NWF. She has a three-year grant-funded position. Her job is to organize support for zero discharge in the Lake Superior basin. NWF is also hiring another full-time position to work on Lake Superior issues. So Gayle will be in touch regularly with U.P. activists. Both Gayle and Michael will remain in UPEC, and Gayle has promised a monthly column for us.

Gayle will probably remain, nominally, as UPEC president until new officers and board members are elected in April. Vice president Bill Malmsten will chair upcoming meetings.

All of us at UPEC wish Gayle and Michael the best. They have *promised* to come back to Skandia at the end of the three years. We certainly hope they will.

## News & Notes

**Canadian enviros to visit U.P.** Environment North, a Thunder Bay citizen's group, will be making a tour around Lake Superior in early February to meet with grassroots groups and strategize about zero discharge and other issues. The dates are still up in the air, but it looks like EN will be in Sault Ste. Marie the first week of February, Marquette on February 5, Houghton on the 6th, and Ontonagon on the 7th. The Houghton meeting, at least, is to be open to the public. For more info, watch your local paper, or you can call EN's Chris Clark at 807-344-7346. Also keep in mind that EN will be coordinating the first Lake Superior Environmental Conference, which is set for June in Thunder Bay.

**ZDA kickoff set for March** The Zero Discharge Alliance is planning a publicity blitz for sometime in March to mark the start of its campaign for zero discharge. Their addresses: ZDA USA, P. O. Box 32246, Detroit 48232; ZDA Canada, P. O. Box 7243, Windsor, ON N9C 3Z1. In the meantime, Citizens for a Better Environment, a Milwaukee-based group, has begun a campaign calling for a ban on chlorinated compounds used in industrial processes.

**Water conferees target Superior** FOCUS's Dave Anderson recently attended a national water quality standards conference in Washington. He reports that attendees from around the country were in general agreement that Lake Superior, as the most pristine of the Great Lakes, needs special protection from pollution. Of course, westerners may be eyeing the lake for water diversion, but at any



rate they are in agreement with us insofar as water standards are concerned. Anderson says that U.P. activists need to send a clear message to our representatives: that zero discharge of persistent, toxic substances from industrial sources is not a pipe dream, but a feasible goal which can be reached in the near future. As an example, Anderson brought back samples of fine-quality publishing paper (with four-color graphics) that were bleached without the use of chlorine. The U.S. paper industry persists in claiming nonchlorinated bleaching methods cannot produce high-quality publishing paper.

**New slide program from Sig Olson** The Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute of Ashland, Wisconsin, has produced a slide show on Lake Superior issues. According to the Institute, the 22-minute program, "A Lake in the Balance," takes "a hard look at environmental issues facing Lake Superior" by exploring some of the region's historic sites and the "rugged beauty that makes this unique lake worth preserving." The intent is to raise awareness and motivate people to take an active role in the lake's future. You can buy the slide-tape program (accompanied by a 12-page discussion guide) for \$75 plus tax, or you can rent it for \$7.50. Contact SOEI, Northland College, Ashland, WI 54806; (715) 682-1223.

**UPEC meets with Koivisto.** . . . On January 7, UPEC board members held an informal meet-and-greet session with incoming State Senator Don Koivisto of Ironwood. We got to know him a little better, and got his initial stances on a number of topics.

**. . . and will meet with Dresch** At our next meeting (February 10 in L'Anse) we will have newly elected State Representative Stephen Dresch on hand to chat and take questions. If you haven't met him yet, please make plans to attend and bring a question or two to ask.

**UPEC joins HONOR** At the December meeting the board voted to join the treaty-rights support group HONOR, which is based in Wisconsin. Many issues surrounding the treaty rights issue were discussed prior to the vote. The board will soon consider a formal resolution in support of Native American treaty rights. For more information on the wording of a resolution, or to express your opinion on this issue, write to the P. O. box or get in touch with any board member.

**Low-level lecture draws 100** A little more than 100 people turned out in Ontonagon in early December for a talk on low-level radioactive waste. The speaker was Dr. Judith Johnsrud, who has lectured widely on the subject. She emphasized that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission "doesn't measure real doses to real people" when they set exposure limits. She suggested that these limits may be too high; the National Academy of Sciences's latest report on the biological effects of radiation suggests exposure limits should be lowered considerably. Johnsrud also covered the legal and economic aspects of disposal.

And what of the attempt to place a low-level dump in the U.P.? Michigan has filed suit against the Midwest low-level waste commission because it has cut off money to search for a site in the state. For whatever it's worth, Ontonagon County remains a top choice for any new waste disposal facility. But the whole process is currently mired in what has to be one of the biggest bureaucratic muck-holes in history.

**Changing address? To be sure to get the newsletter without interruption, please send us your new address using the form below. Thanks!**

**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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