

Spring 2006



Spring Runoff

Photo Courtesy of Joyce Koskenmaki

Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition

U.P. Environment

From the President's Desk

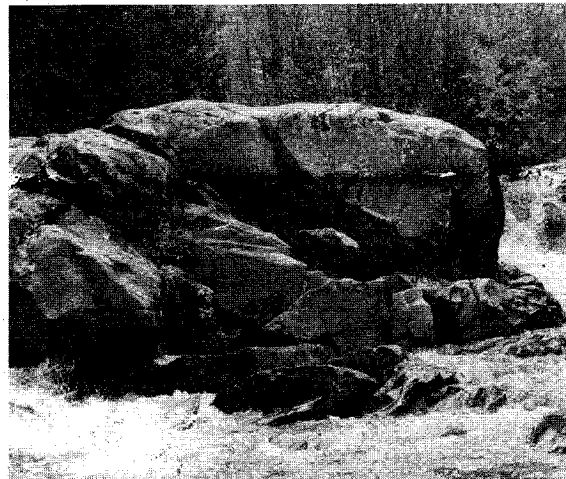
The following remarks were made by UPEC President Jon Saari at the final hearing on the Non-Ferrous Metallic Metals Mining Rules in Lansing, Michigan in early December, 2005. He urged the addition of an exclusion clause in the rules which would have permitted the DEQ to deny a mining permit based on the sensitivity of a particular site. His overall perspective underlines the destructiveness of mining and the tortured logic and language of efforts to contain that destructiveness. The final rules were approved in January, 2006; they did not include an exclusion clause, despite the urgings of many at the three hearings in Escanaba, Marquette, and Lansing.

I address you today as a professional historian, as the head of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, and as the grandson of a Finnish immigrant miner who died of silicosis.

The destructiveness of mining, past and present, is at the heart of our regulatory problems. No human activity, except perhaps warfare, disturbs earth like mining activity does. The Worldwatch Institute estimates that the amount of earth disturbed by mining now approaches the level moved by the forces of natural erosion themselves. How is this destructiveness reflected in the proposed mining rules?

Section R 425.201.7.b.

This section says that the DEQ shall approve a mining permit if "the proposed mining operation will not pollute, impair, or destroy the air, water, or other natural resources or the public trust in those resources." This seems like a good protective principle, but it is taken away in



Yellow Dog Falls

Photo courtesy of Joyce Koskenmaki

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UPEC Action...

Board members attend public hearings around U.P. and in Lansing to help set mining rules

Board member Doug Welker gives presentation at large WI recreation show on proposed Trap Hills National Recreation Area.

Board VP, Bill Malmsten, works with UPPAC to monitor Bond Falls, other flowages' land sales



Pardon our Dust - Reconstruct We Must!

Our apologies to all those who may have gone to our website lately and discovered nothing but outdated information and old grant application forms. Our website, www.upenvironment.org, is undergoing a much-needed facelift. So many new issues have come to the forefront that we decided to rework the entire site. Until that work is finished, we've had to leave up old info in its place.

The new website (at the same address) should be up shortly. We'll be adding great color photos from around the U.P., updating the website as quickly as new information becomes available, and the entire site should be that much easier to navigate.

In the meantime, thanks for your patience. As the stories in this issue illustrate, it takes time to do things right!

-Ed.

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 at srasch@up.net.



**Earth Share
OF MICHIGAN**

Earth Share of Michigan allows working people to donate to environmental organizations through workplace 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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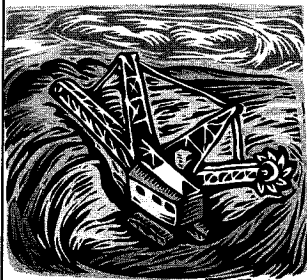
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a disclaimer two sentences later, which says "for the purposes of this subsection excavation and removal of non-ferrous metallic minerals and of associated overburden and waste rock, in and of itself, does not constitute pollution, impairment, or destruction of those natural resources." This is double talk and obfuscation. Mining cannot proceed without impairment and destruction, and in the case of sulfide mining, probably not without pollution as well.

Mining locations are lands *sacrificed* for other supposedly more valuable human purposes. In the Upper Peninsula, such sacrificial lands scar the landscape: waste piles of rock as high as our highest natural hills in Michigan, and sterile tailing ponds covering many square miles. As a mine, the proposed Yellow Dog mine is even a bit deceptive: it has a small footprint, is underground, and has been described as a surgical cut into the earth. But no mining is surgical. It is instead an act of human engineering and violence, cutting into natural systems of soil, water, and air, often with unknown consequences.

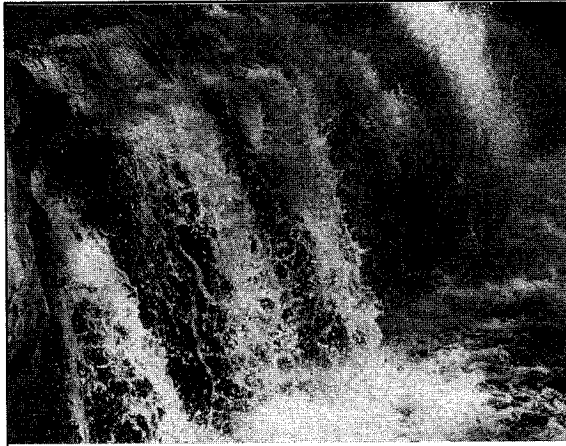
So we should talk and write the rules straight, and call destruction *destruction* because that is what we are issuing permits for. Through the rule-making procedure we are trying to safeguard this dangerous enterprise, but we should do it without illusion about the inevitability of damage and without twisting the English language.

How does this reality square with the public trust doctrine, where the legislature and the DEQ are charged with protecting our natural resources from pollution, impairment, and destruction? The only way to make this public trust doctrine operational is to have an exclusion clause in the rules that says certain things (for example, sacred lands, populated lands, rare wildlands and habitats, headwater regions) are too valuable to risk their destruction. There is no such clause in the legislation or rules, and it is a serious omission. Our existing permits offer some protection to air, water, and wetlands, but they do not substitute for an exclusion clause based upon site sensitivity. Such a clause would give the DEQ another lever to enforce the public trust in the protection of our most valuable resources. Please add such a clause, as is contained in the mining rules of some other states.

Definition of *mitigation*

Mitigation is not defined in R 425.102 and 103. Hence we must infer that it is being defined by other parts of PA 451. The word does not simply mean to lighten or reduce impacts; it has a much more specific meaning, for example, when it is mentioned under the definition for "Remediation" (R. 425.103.1) Remediation is "the taking of actions... to prevent, minimize, or mitigate injury to the health, safety, or welfare, or to the environment..." Mitigation here means creating alternatives that legitimate the destruction that is considered "necessary." What has this meant, for example, in wetland legislation as it has been applied to mining activities? Cleveland Cliffs Mining company has been legally allowed to destroy tens of miles of streams and at least three natural lakes through the placement and expansion of its waste stockpiles in Marquette County. To "mitigate" such destruction, which was argued to be an inevitable result of mining ...

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Action Needed to Protect UP Flowages

Help protect six flowages and their critical wildlife habitat in the UP!!!!

The Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO) and its parent company, Wisconsin Public Service Corporation (WPS), have plans to liquidate about 7300 acres of land in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan surrounding six flowages: Bond Falls, Victoria, Prickett, Boney Falls, AuTrain, and Cataract. Portions of the land already have been sold to Naterra

Land Company for extensive residential development, but UPPCO and WPS state that they will retain control over final development plans.

These flowages and reservoirs, although man-made and used for hydroelectric production, have become important recreational and wildlife areas located in some of the most scenic and wild areas of the UP. Prime examples are Victoria Reservoir, with its steep and rugged shoreline, and Prickett Reservoir, just downstream from the Sturgeon River Gorge and Wilderness Area, with its great fish habitat, rugged hillsides and remote setting.

This corporate sell-off of high value property is typical of what is happening to wild land across Upper Michigan; we are rapidly losing some of our most highly valued wildlife habitat and recreational lands to development. Generally there is little that the public can do other than promote the purchase of the properties by public entities or conservation organizations. In this instance, however, development and use of the UPPCo project lands are restricted by the hydroelectric licensing agreement with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Lands surrounding the flowages are protected by specific regulations in each licensing agreement. This buffer zone, referred to as the project area, averages about 400-500 feet wide. Project lands are restricted to uses that best serve the public and protect natural resources by FERC licenses. Although the UPPCo land sale involves land just outside of the project lands, Naterra's proposal would involve extensive use and development of these project lands.

Naterra's development proposal would subdivide purchased non-project lands into individual lots for residential sale and includes activities that would impact both the project area and buffer one. Access corridors and electrical service, installation of private piers with up to ten slips, new and improved roads, stairs and electric lifts, access to waterfront for back lots and overhead power lines would be constructed on or directly affect the project area or buffer zone. In addition, some projects would include view corridors across project lands. In the case of the Prickett project, that would allow for removal of aquatic woody debris up to water depths of eight feet, threatening valuable fish habitat.

A number of these proposed activities directly conflict with the FERC licenses. At Bond and Victoria flowages, in particular, the 2003 license calls for management for old-growth forest characteristics within the buffer zone; a natural, undeveloped shoreline; protection for sensitive wildlife species, particularly loons, osprey, bald eagle, and gray wolf, along with their habitat; limitation of human activity along portions of shoreline; and unrestricted public access to the project area for fishing, hunting, sight-seeing, bird-watching, and water access.

(Continued on Page 5)

(Flowages continued from Page 4)

Extensive development would restrict hunting and fishing and would impact protected areas of non-game species, such as loons, eagles and osprey, violating the land use agreement as prescribed by FERC.

We believe that the proposed activities within the Project Boundary are in clear conflict with the terms and conditions of the FERC licenses and would breach the goals of resource protection, as well as public use and access to project lands.

We call upon FERC to enforce the terms of their license agreement by prohibiting the intrusion of the proposed extensive residential uses on project lands.

During the recent licensing procedure, there was no mention of extensive development on any UPPCO land holdings surrounding these flowages, therefore, no public comment opportunity has yet taken place on these plans. For this reason, we believe that a new comprehensive environmental impact study should be conducted, followed by public meetings and a comment period before any development activity takes place.

An organization called the Upper Peninsula Public Access Coalition (UPPAC) has formed to try to prevent the further loss of access to lands formerly open to the public. The group includes people interested in wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing, camping, snowmobiling, and other outdoor activities. We are asking our members to work with UPPAC to help prevent the further loss of habitat and access to wild lands in Upper Michigan.

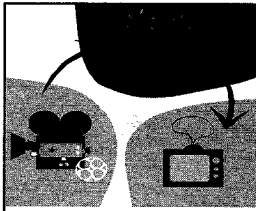
Another option for preventing inappropriate development on the lands surrounding the flowages is for reasonable zoning regulations to be implemented by the townships or counties where each flowage is located. If you live near any of the proposed developments, it would be helpful if you could arrange a UPPAC presentation before your local zoning authority.

Submitted by UPEC member, Tom Church, and
UPEC Vice-President Bill Malmsten

What can you do to help?

- 1) **Write FERC** - visit the Upper Peninsula Public Access Coalition (UPPAC) website for suggestions and letters (<http://www.uppac.com/>) and sign the online petition.
- 2) **Contact UPPAC** at alwarren@jamadots.com to hold a local informational meeting and request a Township or County resolution to protect these flowages.
- 3) **Forward this information** to a friend who cares about the beauty of the UP and its protection for future generations.

-Bill Malmsten and Tom Church



UPEC Sponsorship through Public Television Channel 13 and Public Radio 90.1

Many of our members support public television and radio in the U.P. through their pledges and contributions. Now we have a mechanism so some or all of that support can go directly to enhance UPEC's visibility and its ability to fund programs on the airwaves. You get the tax credit for the donation, but UPEC gets the publicity.

Here is how it works. When you donate to public TV or radio, request Partner Premium Shares (PPS). For every \$10 you donate, you earn one share. For a \$100 donation, that's 10 Partner Premium Shares. Those shares will be sent to your home address. It will be UPEC's responsibility to collect members' shares, save them up, and then spend them for on-air underwriting. Susan Rasch, UPEC's business manager, is our contact person. Send your PPS to her at P.O. Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931. At each quarterly meeting, the Board will then decide which causes, events, and programs we want to use the accumulated shares to support in the upcoming months.

For public radio, there are no Partner Premium Shares. Instead, when making a donation, just tell the radio station staff person that this donation is to go towards the UPEC Fund. The UPEC Board will then spend these accumulated funds to support programs of our choice with messages of our choice, provided they meet Federal Communication Commission guidelines on political speech.

These arrangements are a win-win situation for public radio and television and for UPEC. So in addition to recognizing spouses and grandkids and other causes, consider making UPEC one of your beneficiaries on the airwaves.

-Jon Saari

(President's Desk continued from Page 3)

the company was permitted to create man-made wetlands elsewhere as a substitute. The same policies seem to be envisioned under these new rules.

If a new wave of non-ferrous mining is to hit the Upper Peninsula, are we to expect a new wave of such inferior man-made alternatives created by the "inevitable destruction" to our natural system? Is mitigation an acceptable methodology to be considered under alternatives in section 201.1.c? If natural lakes and rare upland forested wetlands have not proven special enough to be protected from destruction by mining, what is to prevent a new mining company from arguing that other natural features need to be risked or sacrificed in order for their business to proceed? The environment is seen a collateral damage to legitimate "mining activity." And what if some things are not replaceable by inferior alternatives? Could financing a coaster brook trout restoration program in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore "mitigate" the disturbance of the same species in the only Michigan stream where it naturally spawns? The license to destroy and then mitigate as "collateral damage" is not compatible with a 21st century land ethic in the state of Michigan. This dilemma illustrates once again that we need an exclusion clause that focuses attention on those natural and cultural features that are irreplaceable, on those land features that should make certain sites off-limits for mining and not vulnerable to the logic of mitigation for destruction.

Kennecott Applies for Mining Permit

Kennecott Minerals (KMC) filed its application for a mining permit (part 632) and others permits Feb. 22, 2006 with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The forms are voluminous - 1 gigabyte - and are on the web as well as in selected libraries. Use the following URL to find the mining permit application (type it as one line): <http://www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-ogs-land-mining-metallicmining-EagleAppWeb.pdf>.

Or go to michigan.gov/deq. Click on "Land," then "Gas, Oil and Minerals," and then on "Mining." Go to "Information" and click on "Eagle Mine." At the top of that page, click on "Application for Permit Files." (Ignore the Feb. 22 posting about how apps won't be available until March 8.) You will get a one-page .pdf file with links to the actual application material. A word of caution: make sure you assess your computer's storage capabilities and your time to wait before you begin downloading these .zip files; as mentioned before, some are very large.

Hard copies can also be found at these locations:

- Peter White Library, 217 N Front Street, Marquette, MI 49855 Contact the Resource Desk, 906 228-9510
- Michigamme Township Hall, 202 W Main, Michigamme Township, MI 49861 Contact John Olsen, 906 323-6608
- Powell Township Hall, County Road 550, Big Bay, MI 49808 Contact Township Clerk, 906 345-9345
- Michigan DEQ, UP District Office, 420 5th Street, Gwinn, MI 49841 Contact Ann Zaenglein, 906 346-8560
- Michigan DEQ, Lansing Office, Constitution Hall, Office of Geological Survey, 525 W. Allegan Lansing, MI 48909-7756, (517)241-1515

DEQ suggests calling beforehand to make sure the files are available.

Earlier in February, the rules for part 632 Nonferrous Mining made their way through the administrative processes and have now gone into effect. To download a copy of the Statute and Promulgated Rules,

(Continued on Page 8)

Fish Endangered?

On Feb. 23, 2006, the Huron Mountain Club and the Sierra Club filed an application with the Fish and Wildlife Service to have the Salmon-Trout strain of Coaster Brook trout declared endangered. A final determination could take years. But until then actions along the Salmon-Trout River must not harm this Coaster Brook Trout strain.

In response, on Friday, Feb. 24, at a KMC Community Advisory Group (CAG) meeting, Jon Cherry, head of the mine project, said that this request would have no effect because their planned actions will result in no pollution to the Salmon-Trout.

Well, maybe.

-David Allen

(Kennecott Permit continued from Page 7)

Promulgated Rules, go to: <http://www.michigan.gov/deqogs>. Select "Metallic Mining," then "Part 632" under the "Laws and Rules" heading.

Are these rules good enough? I, and many others, wanted somewhat stronger ones. These are probably good enough, though, if they are used diligently. And there is hope here. In a letter to Steve Chester, head of DEQ, on Feb. 23, Governor Granholm said, "I am now directing that you give rigorous and thorough review to Kennecott's permit applications and ensure that they meet each and every aspect of the new regulations..."

Opponents of copper-nickel mining on the Yellow Dog Plains want this mine stopped. Our intended protest is three-pronged:

1. Get DEQ to deny the permit applications.
2. If necessary, litigate.
3. Get community support for no mining on the Yellow Dog Plains.

What can you do to help? To assist on point one, read the applications and Environmental Impact Analysis. Then go to the public meeting and supply written comments. One meeting is at the start of the process - perhaps the end of March; (Ed. note: Just before this went to press, it was announced the first meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 18 at NMU in the Great Lakes Room.) the other is near the end of the process. Doing this will also assist on point two.

Point three can be a more heart-felt reaction as to why you do not want a mine on the Yellow Dog Plains and is not constrained by the laws and rules. For example, too much truck traffic on formerly quiet, rural roads may be a concern to you.

More later.

Dave Allen
UPEC board member



2006 Upper Peninsula E-Waste Clean Sweep



When? 9 AM - noon, Saturday April 22, 2006 (Earth Day)

Where? At a U.P. church parking lot near you. Collection sites to be announced in April. This effort is sponsored by leaders of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, United Methodist, Buddhist, Baha'i, Jewish, Unitarian Universalist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian communities of Northern Michigan.

Items to be accepted: Computers, monitors, televisions, cell phones, fax machines, copiers, stereo equipment and printers

For more information, including specific locations of the collection sites, call the Central Lake Superior Watershed Partnership at 228-6095.

Is Southern Houghton County on Tap for a Future Sulfide Mine?

Trans Superior Resources, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bitterroot Resources Ltd., a Canadian mineral exploration company, has applied to the state of Michigan for the right to lease 1345.86 acres of state-owned mineral rights in a remote area of southern Houghton County. The area, about 12 miles south-southwest of Nisula and 10 miles north of Kenton, is on Ottawa National Forest land. Trans Superior's apparent target is a rock body known as the Echo Lake Gabbro, a layered igneous intrusion that lies about 1000 feet below the surface and has good potential for economically recoverable sulfide ore containing platinum, palladium, and gold.

Leasing of mineral rights would allow them to do mineral exploration such as drilling, seismic work, etc. That area would then join the Eagle Project area of Marquette County, the Black Creek Swamp of Baraga County, and others as a place where mineral exploration would be taking place. Of course, mines are not opened in all areas where mineral exploration takes place, but exploration is typically a necessary step in determining the value of the ore body and practical issues dealing with its removal. (Continued on Page 10)

Join Us for The Annual Spring Meeting Saturday, April 8, 2006 at the Northwoods Supper Club in Marquette!

Our guest speaker will be **Eric Hansen**, noted author and hiker. His topic will be *The U.P.—An Iconic Landscape and its Regional Magnetic Power*.

Eric will present a slide tour of the U.P.'s best hikes and offer his thoughts on the land, its compelling themes and its almost mythic place in the imagination of people throughout the Midwest. The author of *Hiking Michigan's Upper Peninsula—A Guide to the Greatest Hiking Adventures in the U.P.* (See the review on Page), Eric walked 900 miles while researching that project. He has highlighted the U.P.'s natural heritage in adventure features in *Backpacker Magazine*, the op-ed pages of the *Chicago Tribune* and in interviews on Wisconsin Public Radio.

His U.P. slide shows are popular in Wisconsin—twice drawing overflow crowds of more than 300 people. He confesses to a fascination with connecting those folks, the U. P.'s "down below fan club," with the land and issues of up north. Widely traveled, Eric is a veteran of 22 treks to the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

You can hear his U.P. radio interview (about 15 minutes long) on Wisconsin Public Radio at <http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/wuwm/news.newsmain?action=article&ARTICLE>

Schedule

3p.m.-6p.m.	UPEC Board Meeting in Tamarack Room
6p.m.-7:30p.m.	Dinner in the Tamarack Room (Order off the menu—everyone pays for his or her own meal)
7:30p.m.	Eric Hansen's presentation in the Embers Room

Get Involved: Central U.P. (CUP) Spring Activities

Looking for something to do when the weather turns nice? Here are some activities to get you outside. There are even opportunities for important hands-on labor meant to preserve the beauty of our wild U.P.

CUP Meeting Place Information

- **Water Sentinels** water monitoring trips will meet at Huron Mountain Realty in Big Bay at 10 am. Contacts: Dave Allen (906) 228-9453; dallen@nmu.edu, or John Rebers (906) 228-3617; jrebers@nmu.edu.
- **Little Presque Isle** cleanup trips will meet at 10 am in the Little Presque Isle parking lot turn off of Big Bay Rd, M550, just before the Harlow Ck bridge. Cleanup takes about 2 hours; we shall walk about the tract after the cleanup, weather permitting. Contacts: Dave Allen (906) 228-9453; dallen@nmu.edu, or John Rebers (906) 228-3617; jrebers@nmu.edu.
- The **Trap Hills** events are still in the planning stage. For information closer to the event, contact Dave Allen (906) 228-9453; dallen@nmu.edu, John Rebers (906) 228-3617; jrebers@nmu.edu or Doug Welker (906) 338-2680.

April 2006

Sat., 29th: Water Sentinels water sampling on the Yellow Dog Plains (Yellow Dog River, various branches Salmon-Trout River, and Cedar Creek)

(June 2006 cont.)

Sun., 25th: Little Presque Isle Tract cleanup (with perhaps a walk afterward)

- Dave Allen

May 2006

Sat.-Mon., 6th-8th: Botany weekend in the Trap Hills. The spring ephemera should be in good form then.

Sat., 20th: Little Presque Isle Tract cleanup (with perhaps a walk afterward)

Sun., 21st: Water Sentinels water sampling on the Yellow Dog Plains (see 4-29 for description)

Sat.-Mon., 27th-29th: Hike in the Trap Hills over Memorial Weekend. Three days of walks

June 2006

Sat., 24th: Water Sentinels water sampling on Yellow Dog Plains (see 4-29 for description)

Another Sulfide Mine on Tap?

(Continued from Page 9)

A map of the lands Trans Superior is applying to lease can be found at <http://www.upenvironment.org/tsrpropleaseelarea.jpg>.

A good reference on sulfide mining with a U.P. focus is http://www.northwoodswild.org/downloads/arc_new_may2005.pdf. http://pubs.usgs.gov/info/mwni_cu/

This site describes the potential for new sulfide mineral deposits in the Lake Superior region.

Submitted by Doug Welker

Newberry 6th Graders Study Water

(The following is another report in our series of 2005 UPEC Environmental Education Grant winners.)

In an attempt to increase science inquiry and to give our students an appreciation of the water that surrounds them, 83 Newberry 6th graders took to Teaspoon Creek, a tributary of the Tahquamenon River, to study its water. While at the creek, students measured dissolved oxygen levels, nitrogen levels, ammonia levels and pH. Also, each group of students placed macro-invertebrate traps in the water. These macro-invertebrates would later be used to further evaluate the water in Teaspoon Creek.



Students placing macro invertebrate trap.

While waiting for the traps (to fill), students studied tap water to determine what was in it. Students were surprised to see that the drinking water was free of many impurities since there have been concerns about the drinking water in Newberry. However, this concern stemmed from iron bacteria that we did not test for. They found the water to be hard but pretty drinkable.

After three weeks, the macro-invertebrate traps were collected and then sorted. A biotic index was completed on the entire collection of macro-invertebrates, and the students found the water in Teaspoon Creek to be fair, indicating there may be a little pollution in the water. They also decided that another test is necessary in the spring because some macro-invertebrates are less likely to be found in the fall when we did our testing.



Another group putting in their traps.

During this project, students learned to better appreciate the water we have. Along with this, they have generated ways to conserve water and keep it clean. This was evident in the brochures they completed to be displayed in our school.

- Erin McNamara, Teacher

Following are excerpts from some of the students' brochures:

"If you want to go to the Atlantic Ocean but don't know how to get there follow the rivers and lakes! Here are the rivers and lakes to follow. Teaspoon Creek, Tahquamenon River, Lake Superior, St. Marie River, St. Claire River, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, Lawrence River, Gulf of Lawrence, Cabot Strait, Atlantic Ocean." -Lotie Derusha



A caddis fly collected at the Teaspoon Creek.

"We need to keep our water clean. We especially have to stop dumping wastes into the water without cleaning them first. It is a major killer of animals. We also have to stop using pesticides, because they run into the water and pollute it." - Billy Doyle

"One way to conserve water is to turn off the water when it is not being used while brushing your teeth. Another way is to save clean water that you were about to pour down the drain." -Abigail Hayes

"Water is important because we can not survive without it. Over half of our body is made of water. We can live ten days without water." -Amanda May

"The Water Quality in Luce County is pretty good. Newberry has had problems with drinking water but it is okay now. The water in Luce County is Hard because it has some Calcium and Magnesium in it. The ph ...is mostly around 7 or 8. I think overall Luce county has fair water quality." -Laura Bontrager

U.P. Environment

A Bang Up Year for North Woods Conservancy!

The year 2005 went out with a bang. First, on December 6, Keweenaw County was awarded a Michigan Trust Fund Grant for \$1.97 million to purchase a 100 acre addition to the Gratiot River County Park, including 4,000 feet of Lake Superior cobble shoreline. Acquisition by the county will end the North Woods Conservancy's (NWC) three-year interim ownership of the parcel and retire the huge interim-ownership loan. No more \$25,000 per quarter interest payments!

The NWC's purchase of the parcel in 2003 precluded a bridge across the Gratiot River through the existing (then new) county park, 22 homes on the lakeshore, and prevented the loss of natural and scenic resources, as well as public access to the parcel. If the county had not received the trust fund grant (written and facilitated by the NWC), the land would have had to be sold/developed to retire the NWC debt.

Then, on December 29, the NWC was awarded a National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Act grant in partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Eagle Harbor Twp., and the Nature Conservancy.

This \$928,000 "NickWick" grant will

1. Retire the \$215,000 remaining debt on Seven Mile Point, and
2. Provide most of the funds needed to purchase Merganser Pond, a 400-acre wetland parcel between Five Mile and Seven Mile Points (roughly bisected by Five Mile Point Road), and finally,
3. Provide funds for land acquisition in Eagle Harbor Twp.

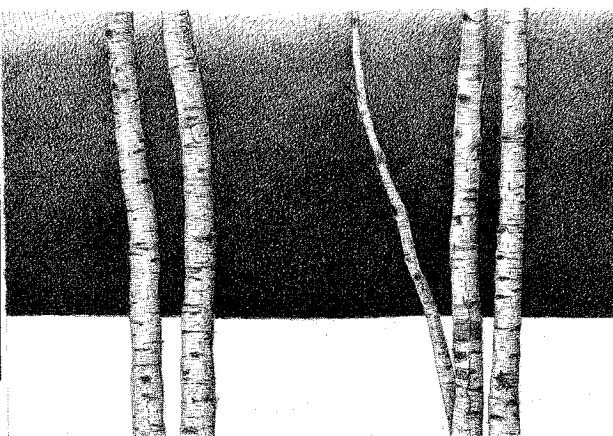
In sum, the NWC brought in nearly \$3 million in land acquisition dollars for natural and scenic resource conservation and public access to the Keweenaw in 2005.

John Griffith
NWC President

NWC Could Use Your Help!

The NWC still needs to raise about \$70,000 in matching funds to complete the purchase of Merganser Pond. The pond is a fantastic wetland with open water, emergent scrub-shrub, and forested wetland, with ridges of pine upland. There will be a parking area off Five Mile Point Road and miles of trails for running, hiking, biking, skiing, snowshoeing, etc., plus wildlife observation decks (as soon as NWC volunteers build them...). This deal will likely be concluded by mid 2006.

-John Griffith



Birch Trees
by Joyce Koskenmaki

A Book Review—*Hiking Michigan's Upper Peninsula*

(Eric Hansen, 2005, The Globe Pequot Press)

When I pick up a guidebook I might buy, I always consider a number of things. Is it easy to find hikes I might want to take? Are there good maps and good directions to the trailheads? Do the maps show plenty of detail? Is there a good narrative for each hike and are mileages shown for key points along the trail?

After reading *Hiking Michigan's Upper Peninsula*, I can answer with a resounding "YES" to each of the above! This book, however, gives readers even more. Hikes are cross-referenced as to level of difficulty, location, and so forth. Each hike has a related photo taken by Eric himself; the fact that he has actually hiked each of these trails lends credibility to what he says. But most important, perhaps, is that Eric describes his hikes with great emotion which, along with the photos and maps, will easily entice most hikers to start planning trips to places Eric visited, perhaps hoping to experience the emotions that Eric did.

This 200-page book, subtitled *A Guide to the Greatest Hiking Adventures in the U.P.*, describes 50 hikes, ranging from short, easy one-day hikes to difficult, multi-day backpack trips. They are his "top 50 hikes" in the U.P. This volume and another excellent companion guidebook written by Eric, *Hiking Wisconsin*, are available at <http://www.eric-hansen.com/> and other online sources, as well as many bookstores. It retails for \$16.95.

I highly recommend this guidebook to anyone with an interest in exploring our great U.P.

Doug Welker, UPEC board member and
U.P. Coordinator for the North Country Trail Association

Upcoming Great Hikes! These hikes are open to the public and free except for the Botany Workshop for which there is a small charge. Contact me at dwelker@up.net for more information about any of these events.
-Doug Welker

5-13 **Hike the Trap Hills** of Ontonagon Co., focusing on spring flowers and some rare plants, with a dose of cliffs, talus slopes and maybe a waterfall or two. Moderate to strenuous. Led by Steve Garvey and Doug Welker.

5-26 thru 29 **Memorial Day Trap Hills hiking** and possibly some **river paddling** (depending on water levels). Easy to strenuous. Come just for the day, or stay over at the organized campout in a nearby National Forest or at a motel in Bergland. Trap Hills Conservation Alliance event.

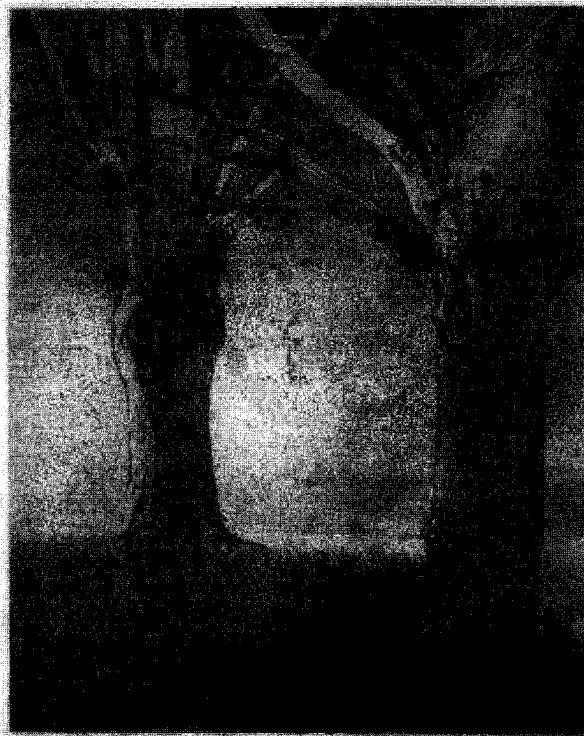
5-29 **Sturgeon River Gorge** hike southwest of Baraga for a look at rare plants, virgin forest and gorgeous scenery. Moderate to strenuous. Led by Doug Welker and Quita Sheehan.

6-2/3/4 **Ottawa National Forest Breeding Bird Census** At Camp Nesbit near Sidnaw. Open to birders from beginner to expert. Contact Steve Babler sbabler@fs.fed.us.

6-3/4 **Gratiot Lake Conservancy botany workshop** Eagle Harbor, MI. Contact BELH@VERIZON.NET or go to <http://www.mlswa.org/Gratiot-Lake-1508/> (use drop-down menu for "What's New")

7-17 **Uler Trail** (part of North Country Trail) through rich hardwoods in the seldom-visited Penokee Range west of Hurley, WI. Easy to moderate. Outstanding vista, trees, shrubs and wildflowers! Led by Ian Shackleford.

7-8/9 **Exploration of the McCormick Wilderness** southeast of Marquette. Moderate difficulty. **8th** Start at south entrance, led by Sue Trull; **9th** at north entrance, led by Colleen Matula. Camp-over optional. Do either or both events.



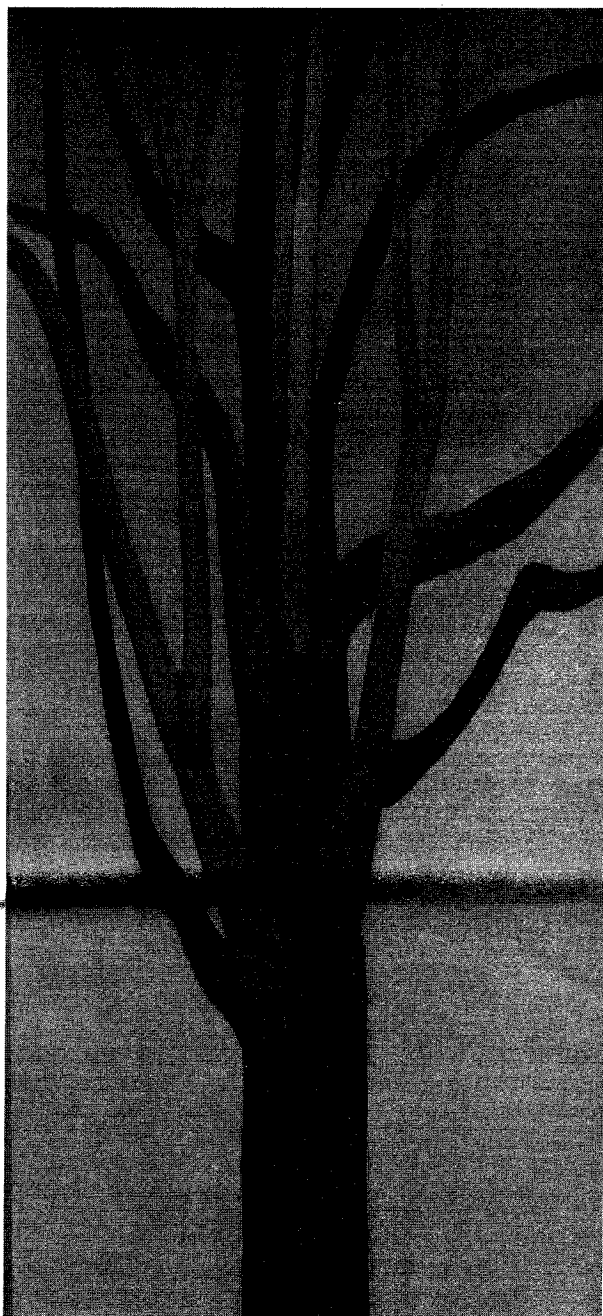
TREES, by Vaino Kola
Etching, 18"x18"

An excellent exhibition of landscape prints and paintings by Maine artist Vaino Kola was shown at the Finnish-American Heritage Center gallery in Hancock in December, 2005.

Kola's art is a response to nature at the deepest level. He joked that "Finns like nature more than each other!" Working from sketches and memory, he composes his work according to sensitive relationships of shapes and forms, light and dark, texture, line, space. With a solid understanding of visual structure and dynamics, he expresses a compelling inner voice. He celebrates his dialogue with the light dance and magic of nature, and what comes out is a deep feeling for that which holds it all together.

Vaino Kola was born in Viipuri, Finland and immigrated with his parents to this country at age 14. Educated at the Massachusetts College of art and Yale, he taught art at Chatham College in Pittsburgh, Boston University, and Wheaton College. His wife Marsha is also an artist. Upon retiring they moved to Deer Isle, Maine, because the rocky wooded landscape reminded him of Finland.

Joyce Koskenmaki,, Board Member



Gray Pine
by Joyce Koskenmaki

For dates and times of readings this spring by this and other U.P. poets, held at the Falling Rock Café & Bookstore in Munising and the 8th Street Coffeehouse in Escanaba, e-mail Catherine Carole at Munising@catherinecarole.com

"Pop": A Cry Through the Pines

By Catherine Carole

(The first version of this poem was published in
"The Story in History" by Margot Fortunato Galt)

"Pop" is what i called him
as he tightened the cold steel vice
scents of pine drift in the rafters
he drank ancient age without ice
smells wavered freely through air

when he held his "little old grandma"
they ran through the kitchen like kids
two boxcars separated not long ago
he'd rise up early to extend
a battered hand
a comfort for the winter fowl with some seed
and corn

blue jays and snow birds flocked round his
cloddy galoshes
i'd watch him from inside the glass he would
come in to me
and ask, "what do you see my little chick-a-
dee?"
i would laugh with delight as he placed me on
his knee

he stood solid and chugged until 79
then the train cracked a "Pop" deep in
the engine
a cry through the pines

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