



# The Upper Peninsula Environment

Newsletter of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition

• November 1990

## **UPEC field study finds no good reason for gutting Coastal Barrier Act**

Legislation to expand the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) is currently before Congress. Back in July, Rep. Bob Davis was instrumental in deleting most of the U.P. study units proposed for inclusion from the House version of the bill. UPEC responded by joining with the National Wildlife Federation to fight for reinstatement of these lakeside lands in the Senate version of the bill, sponsored by Sen. John Chafee of Rhode Island.

To bolster our case in the Senate, in August UPECers Dave Bach, Jim Bruce, Gayle Coyer, and Dell Greek did a field spot-check of 20 of the units deleted from the House bill. The parcels they checked were scattered throughout the eastern and central U.P. and the Keweenaw Peninsula. In several cases there are small portions of partially developed areas within a study unit; these rightfully should be excluded from the CBRS, but we argue that there is no reason to exclude the entire unit. In other cases, the study units are totally undeveloped, such as Bay Mills Point, Little Lake, and Great Sand Bay. Still other units harbor unique or threatened species (Stony Point) or have important barrier beaches protecting fragile interdunal areas (Randolph Lake). One unit, Eagle River, has superb broad sand beaches and coastal swampland which could be threatened by a condo project. And at Pequaming, wetland waterfowl breeding habitat would definitely benefit from protection under the CBRS.

We sent a copy of our report to Chafee and to Sens. Riegle and Levin. In the cover letter, UPEC president Gayle Coyer asked them to keep the U.P. units in the Senate version of the bill and to fight to restore them to the final legislation in the conference committee. "What we found," wrote Coyer, "is that almost all of the units meet the coastal barrier criteria and are unique areas greatly in need of protection."

## **Board meets with Mead to lay out our EIS criteria**

At a special board meeting held August 28 in L'Anse, UPEC gave Mead a five-page list of issues we feel must be addressed in the environmental impact statement (EIS) the corporate giant is preparing for the proposed Rockland mill. Mead, which requested the meeting, was represented by Karl Ayers, its environmental manager. Also present was Jim

Stovall, a vice-president of Sirrene Environmental Consultants, the firm handling the EIS for Mead.

UPEC's list, which was put together on short notice through hard work by several members, keys in on issues related to land and forestry, water, air, production technology, solid waste, economic-social-cultural concerns, and worker health and safety. Some of our questions include: Will market forces set into play by such a huge mill turn the forests primarily over to pulpwood instead of sawlog production? How will it affect the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park? Will contaminated sediments keep the Army Corps of Engineers from dredging the mouth of the Ontonagon River? What will be the total organochlorine discharge (not just dioxins) from the mill? What about bioaccumulation? Sport fishing? Native American treaty rights? Is the company considering alternative bleaching technologies? How much vent gas will be released each year from the smokestacks? How does building this mill compare with promoting a sustainable economy emphasizing small businesses designed to be compatible with the area's natural environment?

Whether Mead and Sirrene will actually address all these issues remains to be seen. In a letter acknowledging our comments, Ayers refused to give to UPEC Mead's timber analysis which purports to show that there is plenty of wood available to support a virgin supermill, calling such info "confidential." On the other hand, at the August 28 meeting Ayers and Stovall did promise a thorough EIS.

But it is clear that Mead doesn't view the purpose of an EIS the same way we do. Ayers told the board that Mead is looking at this whole EIS process as simply a way to explain to the public the contents of the company's pollution discharge permit applications—which they will be applying for *as soon as the EIS is completed*, i.e., next summer. We think that at the very least there should be a considerable period between the completion of Mead's EIS and the filing of their discharge permit applications. Otherwise, how is the public supposed to evaluate the study? Every indication is that Mead is racing to get their polluter permits before momentum for zero discharge overtakes them.

And momentum for ZD is beginning to gather pace. In October, UPEC joined with more than a dozen national, regional, and local environmental groups around Lake Superior in signing a letter to high government officials calling for a moratorium on new point sources of toxic discharges until the IJC recommendations have a chance to be enacted. And Ontario's New Democratic Party, which recently took control of the provincial government, has a stated goal of achieving zero discharge within ten years. (See also "New & Notes" in this issue.)

FOCUS watchdogs Mead's  
rezoning manuevers

Jean Schertz of FOCUS (Box 142, Mass City 49948) fills us in on zoning issues (sound familiar?) surrounding Mead's proposed mill:

The mill site lies in two townships, Ontonagon and Rockland. Rockland's zoning board plans to modify their existing ordinance based on a draft proposal submitted by Mead's lawyers. At the board's last meeting Mead's ordinance was sent to subcommittee for review. Nevertheless, no formal application for a zoning change has been put in by Mead yet. The area is currently zoned "Recreation/Forestry." Ontonagon Township has received an identical proposal from Mead. FOCUS plans to establish a legal defense fund to help it cover the costs of legal advice on zoning issues. To attract capable counsel we must show financial responsibility and a legal defense fund will be a first step.

FOCUS continues its educational work through forums, mail-outs, and newspaper ads. Our membership is now over 100 but expenses are increasing proportionately.

## The Kudray Report, Part II: Timber Supply Discount Factors

*In this, our concluding installment on the Kudray Report (see the September Environment), we summarize Greg Kudray's analysis of factors which tend to lower timber supply estimates.)*

### OPERABILITY CONSTRAINTS

Operability is the ease or difficulty of managing timber due to physical conditions in the stand or on the site. There are numerous considerations important in determining operability. An analysis applying some of these factors in Michigan indicated 49% of the forestland would be classified as being of poor operability.

**Tract size.** Modern logging operations, particularly pulpwood specialists, are very mechanized and have high overhead costs that do not vary with tract size. Most local loggers need, depending on the quantity and quality of timber, at least 15-40 acres in one location to profitably operate.

**Accessibility.** Legal and natural barriers often limit operability. These include denials of rights-of-way across private land and the presence of wetlands. These situations are common throughout the U.P.

**Terrain.** Steep terrain and wet or rocky soils, common in the western U.P., can also limit operability. Recommended widths for streamside no-logging buffer zones often increase if adjacent slopes are steep.

**Stand characteristics.** Stands that are classified as "nonstocked" or "poorly stocked" (6% of those in the western U.P.) will be only marginally operable. Some sites will be invaded by nonforest vegetation while others will not be available for harvest until some kind of site treatment is done.

### MULTIPLE-USE CONSTRAINTS

State and National Forests (38% of the timberland in the U.P.) are managed under the multiple-use philosophy. The consideration of other land uses (e.g., recreation, wildlife protection, energy production) and their effects on timber management is vital in projecting timber availability. Timber contributes only 17% of the total discounted benefits calculated on ten National Forests in our region. Given these other demands, timber harvesting may be excluded or restricted.

### PRIVATE FOREST OWNERSHIP

Private nonindustrial landowners control 37% of U.P. timberland. In all of Michigan, only 3% of such owners rank

timber production as their primary or secondary reason for owning woodland. Many are unwilling to make a long-term commitment to timber production. They value their forests more for the firewood it can produce and/or the amenities it can provide, such as recreation, a second home, or aesthetic enjoyment. Reluctance to harvest is correlated directly with decreasing size of acreage owned: smaller tracts are less likely to be logged. In the western U.P., 26% of the private forestland is owned in parcels of 50 or fewer acres. The kind of management private landowners are willing to accept also affects timber supplies. Of those who have logged, very few use clearcutting, which is the most efficient way of harvesting pulpwood.

### MARKET COMPETITION

**Pulpwood.** Pulpwood production in the U.P. increased 71% between 1982 and 1988. Since 1981, Mead at Escanaba and Stone at Ontonagon have expanded, and Champion opened its Quinnesec mill. The impact of this expansion has only begun to be felt on the region's forests.

**Fuelwood.** The same types of trees desired for pulpwood are those wanted for fuelwood. The two markets would compete directly. An estimated 220,000 cords of residential fuelwood were produced in the U.P. in 1985.

**Sawtimber & Veneer.** Sawtimber management is not compatible with producing large amounts of pulpwood. Some authors feel that the greatest opportunity for Great Lakes regional forestry is to increase production of hardwood lumber to meet rising demand. (This is indicated by rising prices: Sugar maple stumpage prices rose 145% in the Baraga State Forest Area between 1985 and 1989.) Reorienting the U.P.'s forests to produce pulpwood for mills may conflict with this opportunity.

### CONCLUSION

Kudray concluded that "There is certainly much less timberland available to support a new mill than assumed by existing resource analyses. Moreover, the timberland base will continue to shrink with increasing future demands for wildlife habitat, commercial and residential development, recreation, and other nontimber uses. It is imperative that a more realistic estimate of timber supply be developed. . . ."

The Upper Peninsula  
Environmental Coalition  
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and maintenance of the  
unique environmental quality  
of the Upper Peninsula*

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  - 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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*Dave Harmon, editor*

## Your Turn

Mead Corporation has declared itself willing to do an Environmental Impact Study and to build a state-of-the-art facility in Ontonagon County. An Environmental Impact Study is, of course, imperative, but will most likely not answer fundamental questions about the paper industry itself which must be addressed if we are serious about building a sustainable economy.

One of those fundamental questions has simply to do with the kind of paper that the industry continues to produce and what that paper is used for. At a recent meeting with UPEC, a Mead representative indicated that the paper to be produced at this new mill would be the coated, glossy white kind (primarily used in the advertising and mail-order industries and printed with toxic, colored inks). In other words, Mead would use its "state-of-the-art mill" to churn out junk mail that fills our mail boxes and then our trash cans. An industry using live trees to make fiber for junk mail has no place in a sustainable economy. Whether or not Mead (or any other paper company) can demonstrate that they can make this product in an environmentally compatible way is beside the point. There is simply no way to justify cutting down more trees for such a wasteful and ecologically irresponsible product.

A second and just as crucial issue has to do with global responsibility. As much as we did not want a pulp mill in our backyard [Keweenaw Bay], we must understand that our backyard does not end at our property line. If we don't want a pulp mill in our backyard, then we should not be producing and using the kinds of paper products that are not and cannot be recycled, products that encourage us to use more. We may keep James River or Mead from building here, but that does not mean they will stop looking for a site for a new mill. We have to work toward cultural changes which keep these kind of industries out of other people's backyards as well.

Somehow, we have to change from a culture based on consumption and accumulation to one based on conservation and a respect for the land. Such a change would call for maximum conservation, a serious commitment to convenient recycling efforts, zero toxic discharge, and moderation of consumption. Today, we have an economic system that strives to turn as many natural resources as possible into as many consumer goods as possible; a culture based on accumulation of more and more wealth. That has to change.

*—Chuck Harris, Hancock*

*(Abridged from the September/October FOLK Newsletter (FOLK, Box 168, L'Anse 49946). The comments in "Your Turn" are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of UPEC.)*

## News & Notes

**Mill Fever Spreads** A depressingly familiar scene is unfolding in Iron County, Wisconsin (on the south shore of Superior, adjacent to Gogebic County). There, pro-mill local officials have set up a "referendum" for November on whether to try to get a big paper mill to come to the county. Unlike the more subtly worded Baraga County initiative, the Iron County wording is absurdly biased, talking about "state-of-the-art" facilities which will provide "better job opportunities" and an "enhanced quality of life." Luckily, yet another local grassroots group of dedicated activists has sprung up to oppose this sham. Called Save Our Superior, the group sponsored an anti-mill public forum in Hurley on October 18 to counter a pro-mill session in September. For more info, contact S.O.S., c/o Greg Le Gault, HC1, Box 778, Saxon, WI 54559.

**November, December Meetings** November: Portage Lake United Church, Houghton (opposite MTU), Sunday the 11th, 1 pm. December: L'Anse Town Hall, downtown L'Anse, Sunday the 9th, 11 am. Note that we have switched to our winter weekend meeting schedule.

**FOLK, Bay de Noc ASNC Join UPEC** Two more groups have joined UPEC as Supporting Organizations. FOLK is the L'Anse-based grassroots group which successfully blocked a paper mill on Keweenaw Bay (and which recently received a well-deserved commendation for doing so from the National Wildlife Federation). The Bay de Noc Audubon Society and Naturalists' Club (of the Escanaba area) is a former UPEC organizational member that is rejoining us after

# The great UPEC t-shirt: Order now or live out your life tormented by pangs of regret!

Swept away by a boldly original marketing brainstorm, at the October meeting the board authorized printing up UPEC t-shirts. The object is not so much to make money (we'll pretty much break even), but to instill a little enviro-pride in our members. It's a good way to show your colors as a UPECer. In this case, the color you get to show is forest green with the UPEC logo (see front page) on the front. Plus, if you didn't know it already, the holidays are coming up and a t-shirt makes a perfect low-impact gift.

The UPEC t-shirt is a quality 100% cotton garment. There may not be a choice of colors, but you do get to choose from sizes L and XL. You also get to pick the color of the logo: specify blue or white. The cost is \$8 per shirt. Add \$2.00 per shirt if you want it mailed to you; otherwise you can pick yours up at the December meeting in L'Anse or by contacting Becky Bach (Houghton area) at 482-6543 or Sue Schenk Drobny (Marquette area) at 249-3753 (eves). To order, send your name, mailing address, phone, number of shirts w/ size(s), color of logo, and check or money order made out to UPEC, P.O. Box 34, Houghton 49931. Please note: orders must be in before November 20!

a hiatus. We welcome them to UPEC and look forward to working with their members.

**UPECers on the Move** In October UPEC board members fanned out to meet with fellow environmental activists. We had representatives at a meeting in Thunder Bay, Ontario, October 13-14, designed to bring people interested in Lake Superior issues together. We also made it to a Michigan Environmental Council strategy conference in downstate Clare the weekend of October 20-21. At the same time, we sent members to the Northwoods Alliance session in Watersmeet on October 20. This is in addition to the usual running about in the U.P. to meet with other grassrootsers.

**Escanaba "Lakeshop" a Success** UPEC head Gayle Coyer reports that the September 8 lake workshop in Escanaba—co-sponsored by the Lake Michigan Federation and UPEC—was a valuable gathering. LMF has sponsored a series of these "lakeshops" around Lake Michigan to get public comments on clean-ups and pollution controls. At Escanaba, participants agreed that EPA should pay more attention to toxic waste reduction, not just controlling pollution.

**UPEC Takes Over Grand Island** Well . . . sort of. An energetic group of 43 UPEC members spent the last weekend in September on the island hiking the new National Recreation Area, learning about management issues and options, and kicking things around with the Forest Service. Munising District Ranger Jim Bruce and his staff were

our hosts for the outing. Everyone was impressed by their enthusiasm and the well-balanced approach they are taking to gathering input from interested parties. If you have any ideas on Grand Island's management, send them to Hiawatha National Forest, Munising District Office, 400 E. Munising, Munising 49862.

## Help us protect the U.P.!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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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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