



Upcoming Events

April 24 - 4:30 PM FOLK highway cleanup. Meet at Arnheim. The steering committee meeting will follow at Soldans' home.

Huron River Monitoring

by Catherine Andrews

For those who fish, the opportunity for observation and contemplation may be as meaningful as "hooking a keeper." That may have been the case when Dave Cella arrived home after a day of fishing and mentioned to his wife, Marcy, that he had observed changes on the Huron River that is located in Baraga and Marquette counties. Marcy's response was, "If you are concerned, then do something about it!" After more than two years of inquiry and research, a non-profit group, The Lake Superior's Huron River Restoration, Inc. was created.

The Cellas' concern and effort led them to DNR Fisheries Supervisor, George Madison, who in turn scheduled the first meeting of the Huron River Watershed Partnership in Alberta on February 21, 2008. The thirty-nine participants, including state and local agency representatives, corporate and conservation representatives, and stakeholders, initiated a plan to compile baseline data on the Huron River between July 7 and August 8, 2008 and to continue volunteer assessments annually. The mission of the Partnership is to "...cultivate sustained stakeholder involvement with the protection, education and enhancement of Lake Superior's Huron River. In partnership with landowners, interested citizens, government agencies and private enterprise, we work to foster education, understanding sustainable land management, along with ecosystem and water quality restoration and conservation."

Madison, and Bill Wellenkamp, Fisheries Technician, with assistance from Plum Creek and Forestland Group, the majority landowners in the river basin, have mapped 24 survey stations on the 87-mile long river system. Wellenkamp will be leading training sessions in late April and again in June for the volunteer assessment teams he has assigned to each site. Survey kits will be loaned to teams or they may be purchased if a team or group wishes to do so.

(Continued on back page)

2000 Acres to be Added to Ottawa National Forest

by Doug Welker

It's always nice when good environmental news comes along. Some land purchases were made within the past year that will help assure protection and public access for several great places in the western U.P.

On September 26, 2007, 1800 acres of Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness was purchased by the Trust For Public Land (TPL), with the intent of an eventual sale to the United States Forest Service. Thanks to the efforts of many private citizens, environmental groups, and our federal congressional delegation, this property, which was formerly owned by Wisconsin Electric Power has been saved. Wisconsin Electric originally purchased the land with the goal of potential hydroelectric development, which would have involved a dam at Sturgeon Falls. With the exception of about 60 acres in remote sections of the wilderness, the entire wilderness will be owned and managed by the Ottawa National Forest when final purchase is made. The Trust for Public Land will manage the area as wilderness until that time. The most spectacular and heavily visited part of the gorge, which includes Sturgeon Falls, was included in the purchase. Two hundred acres of additional land on the east side of the Wilderness was also purchased, and will provide a buffer where the wilderness boundary is only 15 feet from the edge of the gorge.

TPL purchased the 2000 acres for \$4 million, and so far Congress has only appropriated \$1.5 million to pay TPL. More funds from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund will be needed in the future.

Not all the good news involves federal land. In December 2007 the Michigan DNR's Natural Resources Trust Fund Board recommended that the State purchase four parcels of land in the western U.P. These include 85 acres at the confluence of the Paint and Hemlock Rivers and two parcels totaling 288 acres near the junction of the Menominee and Brule Rivers, all in Iron County. These parcels have been purchased and are now State Forest land. The fourth, and largest parcel recommended is a 681-acre piece on the north side of the Sturgeon River and at the south end of Baraga Plains in Baraga County. This parcel includes two miles of the North Country National Scenic Trail, several miles of river frontage, Tibbets Falls, and the Oren Krumm memorial backpacking shelter, which was rebuilt in July 2007 after burning in the Baraga Bump Fire of late April of that year.

The Conservation Fund purchased these lands from We Energies in preparation for their sale to the state. The Fund still owns the Baraga County parcel, which will be purchased by the state in the second phase of the purchase process.



FOLK

FOLK, formed in 1989, was established to oppose the siting of any paper/pulp mill in Keweenaw Bay. FOLK continues to promote a healthy environment in the Keweenaw Peninsula and the Lake Superior Watershed. By joining FOLK, you support this goal.

(Please Print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Date _____

- Individual (Annual Membership) - \$10 \$ _____
 - Senior Citizen, Unemployed, Student (Annual) - \$5 \$ _____
 - Organization (Annual) - \$35 \$ _____
 - I would like to contribute to FOLK's Educational Fund. \$ _____
 - Additional Contributions: \$ _____
- Total enclosed:** \$ _____

Send to: FOLK · PO Box 213 · L'Anse, Michigan 49946

Huron River (continued)

FOLK is pleased to be a part of the volunteer assessment survey and is looking forward to working with the other partners to monitor this relatively pristine river. This opportunity represents what can be accomplished when one or two people care about a river or any other area that is special to them.

If you missed out on the chance to adopt a survey station, there is still time to volunteer for a macro-invertebrate study that will also be conducted on the Huron River this summer. Training and supplies will also be provided for this project. For more information, please contact Bill Wellenkamp at 353-6651 or wellenk@michigan.gov.

UPPCO Impoundments Update

In a surprise move, Naterra Land, Inc., has filed a federal lawsuit against UPPCO alleging fraud, breach of contract, and breach of duty of good faith and fair dealing. Paragraph 22 of the lawsuit says that Naterra was told by UPPCO that "FERC does not have to approve the license for the shoreline easements." The lawsuit alleges that these and other statements were made in order to pressure Naterra to close the land deal with UPPCO.

One can only speculate as to the reasons for this turn of events. The result may be that development around these wilderness impoundments will be postponed or cancelled. We're watching for developments, and will do our best to keep you posted.

Steering Com. Meets MTU SES

Steering committee members Connie Sherry and Ted Soldan met with the MTU student group Students for Environmental Sustainability on March 31. The intent of the meeting was to reestablish ties between the two groups.

Editor's Note: The following article was submitted by longtime FOLK member and local activist Vern Simula. Vern can be reached via email at vsimula @pasty.net, and the url for the Keweenaw sustainability web page is www.keweenawsustainability.org

I write this as an open letter to the membership of FOLK. With the price of gasoline recently hitting \$3.69 a gallon, I think this is a wake-up call for harder times ahead. Not only will the cost of commuting to work increase, but so will the cost of food, clothing, home heating, and other necessities.

Moreover, I can't even guess how other global forces will interact and impact our future, forces like climate change, a shaky world economy, finite resources, food scarcity, loss of species, loss of diversity, and loss of pollinators like honeybees. The trends and effects of these forces are becoming more and more evident by the day.

My plea is that we must begin addressing more directly the issues of community sustainability, more forcefully, more systematically. We must begin finding ways to strengthen our communities!

Many of us as environmentalists, both individually and as members of this activist organization, have already engaged in numerous ways to reduce our carbon footprints, to recycle more, to consume less. But I argue that while all these personal efforts are important, they are not enough to ensure long-term sustainability for our communities as a whole. As environmentalists, we must also realize that the very dynamic of environmental activism is changing. The new dynamic is no longer as simple as dealing with an "end-of pipe, single point discharge" in that era when we were able to resolve the problems by raising the awareness of the local public and by petitioning the applicable regulatory agency.

Thus, I'm making this plea to the membership of FOLK to identify its niche in this new agenda for environmental activists: community sustainability. I do wish to acknowledge that FOLK was the first in the area to even tackle the issue of sustainability as they published the *Sustainable Development for the Keweenaw* report back in 1990. But that effort focused more narrowly on *economic renewal*. The issue now, however, is much broader, more complex, and more urgent.

We need to begin examining community-wide energy conservation measures (not just focusing on alternative technological solutions for individual homes); we need to develop food security and produce marketing systems that focus on local food production; and, perhaps most importantly, we need to instill a community-wide *sustainability ethic* whereby people from all values orientations and political persuasions can find ways to work together to build a stronger local community, to make this, the Keweenaw, a better place to live, come what may.

Over the past several years, the Keweenaw Sustainability Project has made a start to raise awareness in the "Land of the Keweenaw" for the need for individuals, households, businesses, and units of government to begin planning for a very different and uncertain future. However, much more needs to be done — by many more.

