



Upcoming Events

March 19th – 20th UPEC Celebrate the UP in downtown Marquette. See upenvironment.org for more details.

March 23rd - Steering Committee meeting location to be determined. Call 334-2553 for more information.

UPEC Celebrate the U.P. II Event

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition will hold its second annual *Celebrate the U.P.* event on March 19th and 20th in downtown Marquette. The celebration, which is free and open to the public, will once again feature speakers, films, a reception, and a panel discussion. For details, check the UPEC website (www.upenvironment.org.)

NCT Shelter in Baraga County

Last fall, the latest addition to a series of backpacking shelters on the North Country National Scenic Trail was constructed along the upper reaches of the Sturgeon River in Baraga County, five miles southeast of Herman. The shelter, overlooking a beautiful open wetland, is 0.8 miles by trail from a gated road, on land owned by Bill Lynch. It was built by volunteers as a memorial shelter for Matt Manger-Lynch, the son of Bill and his wife Barb Manger. The trail and shelter are available for use by the general public at no charge. With wooden bunks and a fire ring, the shelter makes an excellent spot to spend the night, or as the destination for an out-and-back day hike.

Contact Doug Welker (338-2680, dwelker@up.net) for access info. Since the road is gated, a 6.6 mile round-trip (longer in winter!) is usually required, via the gated road and the trail. However, those involved in volunteer work projects at the shelter site or on the trail can use the gated road while on work trips, which can include an overnight stay, making the round-trip to the shelter only 1.6 miles by trail.

Bete Grise Wetlands Adds Acreage

The Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District has been awarded a 2010 Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) grant from NOAA for the acquisition of an additional 1,475 acres to the existing Bete Grise Preserve, increasing the preserve size to 3,200 acres.

DEQ Grants Kennecott Mining Permits

Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm recently announced that the Michigan DNR and DEQ will merge in a cost-cutting measure. Some of us in the environmental movement saw some potential in this decision for the issuance of the mining permits to be examined with fresh eyes. In a stunning move on January 14, the day before the merger took place, the DEQ made its final decision to issue the permits for Kennecott's Eagle Mine on the Yellow Dog plains near Marquette.

An earlier Proposal for Decision (PFD) issued by Administrative Law Judge Patterson requiring the portal for the mine be located somewhere other than Eagle Rock, which is sacred to the Ojibwa native peoples, also appears in jeopardy. The DEQ remanded the PFD back to the judge for clarification.

A paragraph from the press release on the new DNRE (the new name for the merged DNR and DEQ) web page says, "The signed order is the DEQ's final action on Kennecott's application, and culminates a long and extensive review and public participation process conducted by the DEQ. That process included extensive review of all materials by a multi-disciplinary mining review team, technical review by national mining experts, and multiple public hearings." Numerous FOLK members participated extensively in this public review, and feel a strong sense of frustration. Yes we had input in that we were able to air our views, but feel none of our concerns were addressed much less answered.

Michelle Halley, attorney for the National Wildlife Federation, has said this decision will be challenged in the courts. While many of us are discouraged, others are declaring this far from over. May we live in interesting times.

Michigan Waters Ballot Initiative

FOLK devoted its December newsletter to an informational brochure and fundraiser for the MIWater ballot initiative (miwater.org.) The leaders of the initiative, Duncan and Maura Campbell, recently sent a heartfelt email to their supporters bringing us up to date. The MIWater campaign raised \$125,000. While this is a lot of money, it fell about \$9,000 short of campaign expenditures. These included \$66,000 for legal fees getting the ballot language right, a \$25,000 retainer to secure the services of a (Continued on next page)



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.

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- Individual (Annual Membership) - \$10 \$ _____
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 - Check here if you do **NOT** want your free (one per family) FOLK tote bag
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petition management firm to manage the gathering of signatures, and other expenses. Duncan and Maura spent 2 years on the project and about \$9,000 of their personal money. In the end, they had to throw in the towel, and announce there were not enough funds to mount a successful campaign for the 2010 ballot.

The initiative is not dead, however. While Duncan and Maura will no longer lead the effort, sights are now being set on the 2012 ballot year. Dick Huey, Cynthia Pryor and Babette Welsh among many others will be leading the charge to 2012.

While two years seems like a long time, we'll need to work hard to have our ducks in a row in time for the 2012 ballot. The challenge will be in the heavily populated southern lower peninsula. Kennecott has reportedly been sending representatives to downstate governmental meetings explaining their side of the story. While we have nothing like the resources they do to talk about the issue, we have something they don't have... the conviction that "There is No Pure Michigan Without Pure Water" (the motto of the MiWater campaign.)

It is important for all of us to use our grassroots connections to explain this to everyone that will listen. Here are some talking points to consider:

- Most Michiganders are opposed to selling Great Lakes water.
- Every sulfide mine of the type being proposed on the Yellow Dog has polluted.
- Michigan does **not** have the strongest mining regulations in the USA.
- Uranium prospecting is ongoing in the UP, and the new mining laws do not address this dangerous form of mining.

With effort on our part, we can see to it that the weakness in the recently passed mining regulations can be strengthened in order to protect Michigan's most precious resource, our clean water.

Woodlands Road

Kennecott Minerals has proposed construction of a road from the Eagle Mine site on the Yellow Dog to their processing facility near Humboldt. (See www.eagle-project.com/woodland.php for a map) Currently known as the Woodland Road, this 22.3 mile road is proposed to be gravel/paved with a drivable roadway of 32 feet. To achieve this width on top, construction will actually take up more than 70' in some instances, which includes shoulders, berms, culverts and ditches.

Concerns about this road include:

- This road bisects one of the most remote and wild areas of the UP.
- Plans call for wetlands fill of 30.1 acres, which equals 24,965 linear feet of filled wetlands.
- Fill width will vary from 7' to 139'.
- 172 wetland sites will be filled, which equals 4.7 linear miles or 21% of the 22.3 mile long roadway.
- The road will cross 23 streams and rivers with 6 new concrete bridges varying in width from 34 – 56'.
- It could impact wildlife including wolves, moose, and various endangered plants.
- Dust from truck traffic and from truck cargo could coat miles of pristine habitat depending on wind direction and strength.

Public hearings have been held with FOLK representatives in attendance. The Michigan DNRE (the new acronym for the combined DNR and DEQ) accepted written comments until February 20th. Mike Smolinski (Michigan DNRE 420 Fifth Street Gwinn, MI 49841) is the wetlands permitting agent and will be the decision maker. Letters could also be directed to DNRE head Rebecca Humphries and Governor Jennifer Granholm.

Still Some FOLK Tote Bags For Sale

If you'd like extra FOLK tote bags, we still have some left for \$5 each plus shipping (\$2.41 for up to 5 bags, and \$5.15 for 6-10) If you'd like more, please contact us for a shipping quote. Please allow 6 weeks for delivery.

[Printed on 100% post consumer recycled paper](#)

Friends of the Land of Keweenaw

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