



Upcoming Events

July 13th - Steering Committee meeting and highway pickup. Call 334-2553 for more information.

UPPCO Impoundment News

by Nancy Warren

It has been nearly two years since the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission requested comments on UPPCO's proposed plans at the six U.P. flowages and since that time, much has happened.

As a result of a lawsuit filed by Naterra, UPPCO was forced to purchase back all lands sold to Naterra at Bond, Cataract and Boney Falls.

UPPCO has received approval from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to transfer the license and ownership of the AuTrain dam and power plant to U.P. Hydro LLC., a subsidiary of North American Hydro. The new owners have no plans to develop the lands.

Efforts are underway to secure funding for critical land acquisitions at Prickett Lake and Lake Victoria. We are waiting for the House and Senate to begin working on the appropriations bills for this year. This could happen in the House in the next few weeks and then similar action will follow in the Senate. At this point, it is unclear when subcommittee action will begin on the Interior appropriations bill, which will contain the funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) projects and will, hopefully, include funding for the Ottawa and Hiawatha National Forests. The request is for \$4.8 million to acquire about 3500 acres in total. If less than the full amount is appropriated for this year, the funding will first go to finish the Prickett Lake acquisition of 584 acres, then the Victoria Lake funding of 370 acres, and then begin a Hiawatha National Forest acquisition of scattered holdings of 2500 acres.

Prickett Lake, located in the Kenton Ranger District of the Ottawa NF, was the highest ranked priority last year for the entire Eastern Region of the Forest Service and received partial funding through the LWCF in Fiscal Year 2010. This year, Fiscal Year 2011, the project needs \$1.3 million to be completed. The Victoria Lake tracts lie along the south and eastern shores of Victoria Reservoir and the West Branch Ontonagon Wild and Scenic River. In FY 2011, \$1 million is needed to protect these lands.

It is important for Senators Levin and Stabenow, and Rep. Stupak, to continue to hear from us asking for support of this funding. Although they each supported the full \$4.8 million request in their submissions to (Continued on next page)

News from the Yellow Dog

On April 20 Cynthia Pryor, director of the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve was arrested for trespassing on Kennecott property. Cynthia was walking her dog as she often does near the proposed mine site, when she encountered a bulldozer that was stopped. She struck up a cordial conversation with the driver, who said he was waiting for some plans so he could continue his work. This was puzzling since as far as anyone following these events knew, the EPA had still not issued the final permit that would give Kennecott the go ahead to start clearing land. According to Cynthia, the driver left the area of his bulldozer at the end of the conversation, so Cynthia and her dog rested at a nearby stump. Kennecott security guards soon confronted Cynthia and asked her to leave the area. She refused and was soon arrested by Marquette police and taken to jail. There are several clips of Cynthia explaining the situation at youtube.com (search for "cynthia pryor.")

Cynthia refused to post bond and spent 3 days in the Marquette County Jail; intending to stay in jail until her court date, which was set for May 6. After about 3 days in jail, however, a judge released her.

FOLK board members attended the monthly coalition meeting shortly after her release, and heard Cynthia's story. She introduced several members of the Native American community that had since encamped at the Eagle Rock site. We learned they needed food, water, and especially firewood for their sacred fire. FOLK members answered the call and made several trips to the encampment to provide material and moral support to the protestors.

On May 27, 20 squad cars pulled up to Eagle Rock and arrested Charlotte Loonsfoot and Chris Chosa. The large police presence was presumably due to fears that there might be a riot.

On June 1, Chris and Charlotte were arraigned, pled not guilty and posted bond. Their court date is set for early August.

On June 3 a rally was held on the Lansing Capitol steps. An "Environmental Justice Petition" was read aloud, and then delivered to the Governor's office. FOLK member Marj Krumm and her sister Jeanne Simpson attended this rally. (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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(Yellow Dog News continued from front)

In early July, the EPA ruled favorably on Kennecott's permit request, essentially telling them their new design for waste water management did not require a federal permit, thus allowing them to proceed with construction.

As things stand now, Eagle Rock is fenced off and access is controlled by Kennecott Minerals. Construction is proceeding.

(UPPCO News continued from front)

the appropriations subcommittee, we should thank them for this support for funding and urge them to keep working to get those funds included in the final bill.

Call or email today:

Senator Levin (906) 789-0052 or <http://levin.senate.gov/contact/>

Senator Stabenow (906) 228-8756 or

<http://stabenow.senate.gov/email.cfm>

Cong. Stupak (906) 482-1371 or

<http://www.house.gov/stupak/IMA/issue2.htm>

A New Mining Economy for the UP? A Summary of FOLK's involvement in the grass root struggles by Linda Rulison

It has been almost seven years since FOLK started informing its membership about mining giant Rio Tinto's subsidiary, Kennecott Mining, and its Eagle Project on the Yellow Dog Plains. Cynthia Pryor of the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve was the guest speaker at FOLK's November 6, 2003 General Membership Meeting on at the Ojibwa Seniors Building in Baraga. This was the first time many of us had heard of the potential threat to our land and waters from the mining of a sulfide-containing ore body.

Over the course of seven to ten years, Kennecott hopes to extract copper and nickel from the ore body which is situated under the Salmon Trout River; home of the threatened Coaster Brook Trout, and in the Lake Superior Watershed. One of the greatest threats from this type of mining is Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) which occurs when sulfide-containing rocks are exposed to water and air, forming sulfuric acid (battery acid is concentrated sulfuric acid.) This type of mining can also introduce toxic heavy metals into the water which could destroy aquatic life and contaminate drinking water for centuries. Exposure to heavy metals has been shown to cause cancer, birth defects, neurological disorders, and other health problems. The Eagle Project is on state-owned land which has been leased to Kennecott Minerals.

The area is also on ceded land where the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and other Ojibwa bands retain rights to hunt fish and gather. It is also where the spiritually important, *Eagle Rock*, is located.

In our March 2005 newsletter, FOLK put out a "call to Action," asking our members to support the effort to keep this type of mining out of the Yellow Dog Plains area and the entire Upper Peninsula. Many have donated to the cause and voiced their support as FOLK joined with the variety of groups to fight this mining proposal.

FOLK and the Copper Country League of Women Voters co-sponsored two educational forums on Sulfide Mining at Michigan Technological University between 2005 and 2008.

In 2008 FOLK again held their general membership meeting in Baraga at the Ojibwa Seniors Building. Two representatives from *Save the Wild UP* addressed the question, "Who owns the minerals rights on their property and how they can find out?"

Over the course of the last few years Kennecott has secured all of its needed permits from the State of Michigan in spite of all that has been done both in and out of court to demonstrate this project's lack of safety and its infringement on both native and non-native people's rights to use the land. The only permit that was not secured was one from the EPA for ground water injection.

After changing their waste water plans slightly from underground piping to above ground, Kennecott withdrew their permit request saying that they no longer needed EPA approval. On July 2, 2010 the EPA agreed with Kennecott that a federal permit was not necessary.

The cry of "drill baby drill" and "jobs, jobs, jobs" at any cost are mantas that need to be re-evaluated. BP's oil disaster in the gulf has taught us that "state of the art" technology does not necessarily ensure environmentally safe extraction. We have used many of the minerals that are easy and safe to extract. As Elliott Gue writes in his article, *The End of 'Easy Oil'*, "the world isn't running out of crude oil but it is running out of "easy" oil. That is, the massive, technically easy and cheap-to-produce onshore oilfields that have been the bastion of global production for decades are reaching maturity. The same is increasingly true of other minerals that are extracted. We already know that once pollutants are released into the environment, whether it is oil in BP's case or acid mine drainage in Kennecott/Rio Tinto's case, it is nearly impossible to correct the problem. Time to change the manta!

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