

Upper Peninsula
Environmental Coalition
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www.upenvironment.org



Protecting and maintaining the unique environmental qualities of Michigan's Upper Peninsula by educating the public and acting as a watchdog to industry and government.

Register for 'No Child Left Inside' Summit in Midland June 16-17

Registration for Michigan's No Child Left Inside Summit on June 16-17 is now open. This year's summit will be held at Northwoods University in Midland. The registration fee has been kept as low as possible (\$65) for the two days. Registration at: http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3308_3333_4169-252474--,00.html

During the summit you will hear about exciting pro-

Caring & ListeningContinued from Page 9
dencies to short-circuit the pervasive politics of resentment. We must care about and listen to our human sisters and brothers as deeply and calmly as when we listen to an evening grosbeak as the wind whispers through the pines. We have to love one another as much as we "enjoy" slogging through a cloud of black flies in a McCormick Tract swamp. We have to translate our presence and engagement with the non-human into an antidote for the detachment and disgust we too often feel for humanity.

A lot of us are wounded and seek solace in non-human "nature," yet we must engage ourselves as wounded healers to reach out to all wounded humanity which is also part of a cosmos seeking to learn a better way forward. We must believe that the majority of people only appear to trust the transnational corporations and their political servants more than they trust the wisdom of a sustainable future -- that it is merely a matter of opening space for people's longings for something better to

grams taking place in Michigan and across the Midwest. You can also participate in facilitated workgroup sessions that will help decide "No Child Left Inside" priorities for Michigan and how to pursue them.

Please pass this on to others you think would be interested. Contact Ray Rustem at rustemr@michigan.gov with questions and for additional information.

begin emerging. There may seem to be a lot of powerlessness, but life is incredibly powerful. . .and it is life that we share with other people and all the creatures. Life will prevail! Will we?

Jon Saari elsewhere in this newsletter makes a compelling case for the need for us to exercise "soft power." I submit that getting our own house in better order would involve an important exercise in claiming and manifesting our soft power -- our compassion for each other that we may be more compassionate toward those who seem clueless, hopeless, and beyond the pale. For me, it is a hopeful sign that we can engage these issues right here in UPEC's newsletter. Self-examination and change aren't easy, but I have begun this effort and invite you to begin yours.

Visit Children and Nature Network

Here's a great website for outdoor and environmental education ideas for working with children:

www.childrenandnature.org

UP Environment



Summer 2011 *The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition's quarterly newsletter.*
UPEC is the UP's oldest grassroots environmental organization.

Challenges to our public lands

Proposal to sell state forest campgrounds a cause for concern

Both articles by Robert Evans

State Senator Tom Casperson, who chairs the Senate Natural Resources, Environment, and Great Lakes Committee, is proposing two bills that pose serious long-term implications for the environment of Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. Casperson, along with eleven Republican state senators, is proposing that 23 state forest campgrounds under consideration for closure by the DNR be offered to local units of government for \$1 each. The local governmental units would presumably be required to operate the properties as campgrounds (for now, anyway), although there are no other details available. Casperson is also proposing legislation to establish a "no-net-gain" policy for land owned by Michigan's Department of Natural Resources (see story below).

Here is what Casperson says on his website about this campground sale proposal:

The closure of these campgrounds is a prime example of the DNR not being able to manage the property that it currently owns. It is time to look at strategies to make sure the land is owned by someone who can care for it, increase recreation opportunities, and help revitalize Michigan's economy.

UPEC has several concerns with Casperson's proposal. First, Casperson is well aware that the DNR proposes to close these campgrounds because funding from Michigan's General Fund to help the DNR operate these campgrounds has drastically decreased over the past decade. As a result, the DNR *Campgrounds.See Page 6*



Luce County would lose five campgrounds under the proposal to reduce the number of Michigan State Forest campgrounds by 23 to 110 from over 140 three years ago, reducing access to lakes like this. The UP would lose 15 campgrounds. Senator Tom Casperson proposes selling them to local governmental units that are strapped for cash, making possible their privatization. (Photo by Bob Evans)

Agema, Casperson undermining Natural Resources Trust Fund?

In related proposal, Senator Tom Casperson is proposing legislation to establish a "no-net-gain" policy for land owned by Michigan's Department of Natural Resources. Senate Bill 248 would cap the amount of land that the DNR can own at the current level, roughly 4.5 million acres or 12% of Michigan's land base. The legislation would allow the DNR to continue to purchase land, such as parcels for connecting trails or property that may be landlocked by state owned land; however, an equal amount would need to be sold and put back into private ownership. Here is what Casperson says about the bill:

Given the challenges facing both our state economy and the state budget, we should not be in the business of buying more land. It affects local governments and services, and it also hurts local school districts. Before proceeding with more land purchases, the DNR must have a

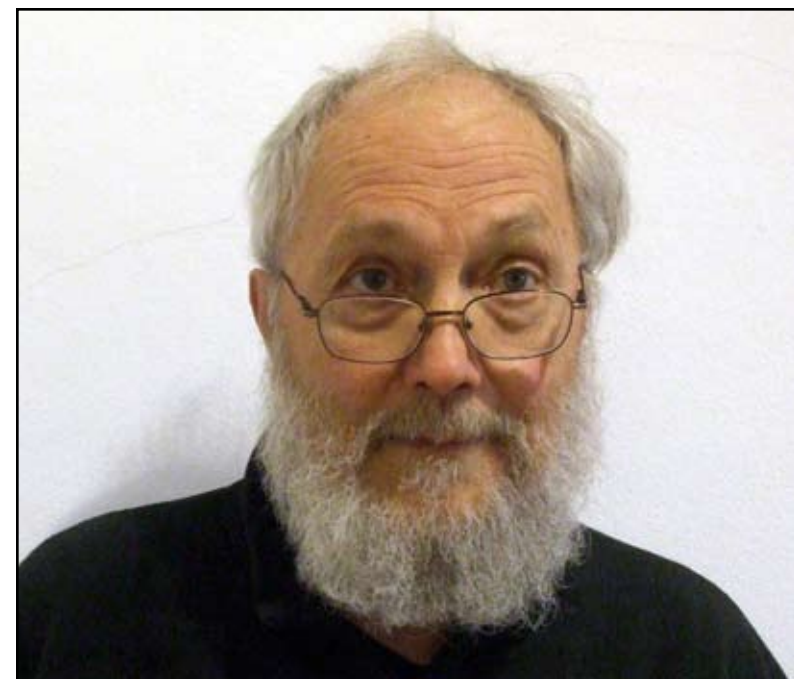
Trust Fund.See Page 6

Saari shares perspectives on UPEC's history, present focus, and future

Former board member George Desort recently interviewed Jon Saari, past UPEC president (2001-2010) and long-time board member

GD: Why was UPEC created?

JS: UPEC goes back to the 1970's when the new federal environmental laws were created and groups that had a bio-regional focus started to appear around the country. The main thrust back in the early years was to prevent a relapse into the Great Cutover that was still a haunting memory for many,



Jon Saari

not for me personally, from back in the 1920's. We had all read about the cutover, we knew about it, and we knew the UP was a recovering landscape. We knew we had to be very careful about what happened to the UP, in terms of degradation, through mining and logging practices, and other threats of chemical contamination.

The region needed a watchdog and that is what UPEC was in the early days, a watchdog of industry and government. It was a coalition that even involved some industrial groups. It was quite a different organization than it is today, because those groups, outside of FOLK and the Sierra Club, are no longer part of the UPEC coalition. So we have become more of an environmental voice and less a coalition trying to hammer out compromises and public policies.

UPEC today is made up of a band of activists. We have Nancy Warren involved with wolves, Doug Welker on trails, and others with special interests that they pursue themselves and then bring those issues to the board so that we can track them.

Sometimes crises come along, most recently the sulfide mining threat, a new wave across the UP, in fact across the Upper Midwest. Every time you have a crisis you have a whole new set of organizations that are born, like Save the Wild UP and WAVE, which often have an intense political focus. That's normal, but those organizations grow up with the crisis and then very often disappear when it's past. UPEC has had a steady influence in the environmental community because we have been around a long time, 35 years.

Saari Reflects. See Page 3

About UPEC...

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition has more than a 35-year track record of protecting and seeking to maintain the unique environmental qualities of the UP 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 *UP Environment*, is published four times a year and available online to share with family & friends.

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 upec@upenvironment.org. For more information about UPEC, visit us at www.upenvironment.org

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North Woods Native Plant Society offers free botany trips

The North Woods Native Plant Society is a group of professional and amateur botanists interested in learning about and protecting the native plants and plant communities of the western UP and northern Wisconsin. We schedule free botany hikes to special places during the summer. To access the schedule of hikes and to sign up for email reminders, visit our website at www.northwoodsnativeplantsociety.org

2011 Schedule of Hikes

Saturday, June 11 - Ontonagon River near Rockland, Michigan. Spring Flora with Steve Garske.

Saturday, June 25 - Bog trip (tentative and location to be announced) with Quita Sheehan.

Saturday, July 16 - Little Tamarack flowage near Conover, Wisconsin. Aquatics with Susan Knight and Quita Sheehan.

Saturday, August 13 - Sunday Lake, Wakefield, Michigan. Shoreline and adjacent habitats with Ian Shackelford.

Sunday, August 21 - Baraga Plains meeting area near Baraga, Michigan with Doug Welker and Sue Trull.

Saturday, September 10 - Sturgeon River south of Alston, Michigan. Spring-fed hillside with Doug Welker and Steve Garske (rated strenuous).

Saturday, September 17 - in or near the Keweenaw Peninsula. Mushrooms with Dana Richter

Saturday, September 24 - National Public Lands Day. Find a volunteer work project near you at: www.publiclandsday.org. Or watch for the Ottawa National Forest project TBA.

Hikes earlier in the season included:

- Wolf Mountain, near Marenisco, Michigan. Botany/geology/leeks - Rod Sharka, Quita Sheehan, and Paul Ehlers (geology instructor at Nicolet College) - May 14.
- Nesbit Lake, south of Sidnaw, Michigan. Stream paddle or bog trip with Doug Welker and Colleen Matula (June 4).

'The thought of growing old with ancient white pines & cedars is really a beautiful one'

Saari Reflects Continued from Page 3

maps and see where these special areas are and how we as a human community can both satisfy our needs and work around those special places so they are not degraded in the process.

GD: What does the UP mean to you?

JS: I moved up here in 1971. I had been a Boy Scout and grew up in downstate Wisconsin. I used to camp out a lot in Northern Wisconsin and had been on the shores of Lake Superior because my father was from the Ironwood-Hurley area in the Western UP I had uncles up there and used to come up and sauna and to see them occasionally. So when I finished my graduate work out east and was looking for work, I was interested when this job at Northern Michigan University came up. I had some feeling for the region, but I did not have a full sense of what living in the UP entailed. The local landscape and culture grew on me and my wife and it did not hurt I had some Finnish-American relatives up here in Alger County. It became clear to both of us that this place was right for us. We know colleagues at the University who never have bonded with the people and the landscape up here the way we have.

In the 1990's we got into camp life and it has been exciting to look for special pieces of land where we can put down some roots, and get to know a spot of earth more intimately. The solitude is here at hand. I love the sheer beauty of landscapes that are allowed to be themselves, that are self-determined. Walking on a carpet of mosses and seeing what nature does when left alone is very powerful for me. The thought of growing old with ancient white pines and cedars is really a beautiful one. Winter is the defining season for me. I love the black-and-white sparseness of the snow, and the darkness and silence of the woods. The UP has simply captivated us as a place.

[Editor's note: Jon Saari's monthly op-eds in *Marquette's Mining Journal* from 2010/2011 are available on the UPEC website under *Hot Topics*]

Check out UPEC environmental op-eds in MMJ and online

UPEC board member and past president Jon Saari has been writing monthly op-eds in *The Mining Journal* (Marquette) the past year. This stint has ended, but Saari will begin a new relationship with *Headwaters News* writing environmental history pieces. Saari's past op-eds and future essays are available on UPEC's website www.upenvironment.org.

Don't forget those Econo Foods slips -- a slow & steady way to support UPEC!

Thanks to you and Econo Foods, UPEC has earned several hundred dollars over the past few years by submitting grocery receipts collected by UPEC members. That amount represents 1% of total gross receipts from all the slips.

That may not seem like a lot, but when you're a non-profit organization every little bit helps. Of course, that amount could be even higher this year if more of us were to save our slips and send them in! For a family that spends \$100/week

on groceries at Econo, this would translate into \$50 of annual support for UPEC.

Either save receipts throughout the year and mail them to us (PO Box 673; Houghton, MI 49931), or give them to a UPEC board member -- whichever is more convenient. It's one of the easier low-cost ways you can offer your support.

Also consider a direction financial contribution to UPEC using the form at the bottom of this page. Thanks!

Consider EarthShare payroll deduction to support UPEC

UPEC is a proud member of EarthShare of Michigan, an organization that allows working people to donate to environmental organizations through workplace giving campaigns. Each year EarthShare 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 to participate in the EarthShare of Michigan giving option at your workplace through the annual payroll deduction plan. For more information, please call 1-800-386-3326 or visit www.earthsharemichigan.org



Yes! I Want to Help UPEC Make a Difference!

(Please complete and give this to a UPEC board member or mail to UPEC, Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931)

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Zip _____

Phone: _____

I'd like to make an additional contribution to the following fund (s):

\$ _____ UPEC Land Acquisition/Protection

\$ _____ UPEC Environmental Education

\$ _____ UPEC Outreach Fund

\$ _____ UPEC Endowment Fund*

I'd like to support the goals of UPEC by enclosing a contribution for (please check one):

_____ Regular Membership (\$20)

_____ Supporting Membership (\$50)

_____ Student/Low Income Membership (\$15)

_____ Other

*If you make out your check to the Marquette Community Foundation and put **UPEC Fund** on the memo line, you can take a 50% tax credit on your Michigan tax return (up to \$200 for individuals, \$400 for couples). **OR** you can make your contribution directly to UPEC. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and your contributions are tax deductible. THANKS!

Doing right by the landscape: UPEC's long-haul approach spans 5 decades

Saari ReflectsContinued from Page 2

We keep a long-term focus. We do not have the militancy of the new groups that come along, but we have a steadier gaze on long-term land protection and I think that is appreciated among the environmental groups. They know we have some old fellows in there who have stayed the course for decades. Not too many groups have members like Bill Malmstem, Doug Welker, Dave Allen or myself who have been active for so long in the UP in these struggles.

GD: How does UPEC differ from other organizations?

JS: I make the distinction in a couple of ways. One is the long-term vision and stableness versus crisis mobilization that I just mentioned. Crisis mobilization is very intense and usually burns out a lot of activists. If you get a couple of years out of someone that is a lot, but if you keep that long-term gaze it gives an organization staying power. The other distinction that we have seen in the last ten years is the difference between soft power and hard power. Hard power is the legal and political battles and although we have fought them, that's been a weakness overall in the environmental movement up here.

We have a small population and little clout in Lansing and among corporations that are increasingly transnational. The soft power is the broad climate and awareness about what is happening to the land and it's our sense in UPEC that soft power and public opinion are ultimately determinative. This doesn't preclude needing to do the legal and political battles, but soft power gives you the people power at your back to actually win those battles. So it does matter in our newsletter that we encourage people to look at the careful visions of artists doing natural landscapes and poets capturing special moments. Artists have a sensibility that needs to be widely shared. We have tried to embrace that power and our best example of that was the traveling art show "Celebrating the UP as Home" which ran between 2005 and 2007.

I am more of a thinker and cogitator than one who gets up and rushes off to take action and that's just maybe my personality. But I am also a historian by training and tend to see things in a broader picture. From that perspective I look for the historical frame within which we operate as a society, a framework that can inform the broader community discussion of where we are going and how the landscape fits into



Canyon Falls in the Alberta area between L'Anse and the Covington Junction on US-41 is just one among myriad special places in our region. The area's large amount of public lands makes these places available for anyone who desires to experience them.
(Photo by Doug Welker)

that. That's ultimately the strength I may have and the role that I would like to play in UPEC or outside of it, because this understanding is important to our whole region.

GD: What is the future for the UP and UPEC?

JS: That is not just an historical or political question. That is a moral question. We want to do right by the landscape.

Take for example one of the issues connected to sulfide mining in northern Marquette County, namely the road that will connect the mine and the mill, variously called the Woodland Road or County Road 595. The road issue has really obsessed me the last year, and I've written four or five op-eds about it. It's a 23-mile road, but the upper ten miles of it are projected to run a ninety-foot corridor right through an undeveloped, wild headwaters area. It would be a tremendous change to that intact landscape which only has recreational snowmobile use in the winter time. We want to work with the DEQ, the DNR, the EPA and others to protect the wetlands there and it remains to be seen if the agencies will have the will to force the company and our local politicians to pursue less harmful alternatives.

That is what I mean by getting it right. Looking hard at our landscape, and not just saying, "well Marquette County is 28 percent wetlands, so we can destroy these few for a road." We need a more subtle way, we need to look at lots of

Help our pollinator friends, the monarchs

Creative hints to enhance habitat

In Da Woods

*By Melanie B. Fullman, Bessemer District Ranger,
US Forest Service, Ottawa National Forest*

Walking about the office the other day during lunch, I stumbled upon a group of coworkers huddled over seed packets, baggies, slips of instructions, and an array of homemade dips, relishes, and spreads - their annual "seed exchange"!

These proficient gardeners meet once in the spring to trade herb, flower, and vegetable seeds, along with planting tips, and recipes for snacky treats made from last year's crop. As I munched my way through the pesto and pickled products, I thought of a recent, and somewhat depressing, email I had received regarding Monarch butterflies.

The number of monarch butterflies is at the lowest ever recorded in winter. The total area occupied by monarchs at



Monarchs depend on plants that aren't always highly valued such as thistles and milkweed. The key is to establish and maintain plants like these in areas that are compatible with other land use goals. The benefit will be the presence of monarchs as pollinators for vegetables, flowers, and fruit trees.

their wintering grounds is also the lowest ever, along with the total number of observed colonies. Unfortunately, many factors have contributed to this decline, including loss of habitat in the US.

Restoring and sustaining forest landscapes is part of the secretary of agriculture's vision for American forests. Since monarch butterflies migrate from Canada and the US to Mexico and back every year, the secretary of agriculture has asked the Forest Service to take an "all lands" approach to helping sustain monarch populations. For us, this means working with other federal agencies, state, tribes, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and citizens like

you to increase the quality and amount of monarch butterfly habitat.

Awareness of the monarch's life cycle and habitat requirements is essential for their survival. Their annual migration has been described as the most spectacular insect journey in the world. But because of its path, monarchs are dependent on habitat conservation in three North American countries: Canada, the US, and Mexico.

What Can We Do in the North Woods?

The monarch butterfly is one of the most easily recognized insects in North America. These are the ones with brightly colored orange wings with black veins. Adult males have thinner veins than females and a larger dot on the hind wing. The dot is a scent gland; the males use pheromones produced by this gland to make themselves attractive to females. Monarch caterpillars have horizontal black, white, and yellow stripes. The cocoon, or chrysalis, is a vivid jade green with little gold bumps. In the final day or two before emergence, the chrysalis becomes transparent, which can allow one to see the developing orange and black wings inside.

Milkweed is the only thing monarch caterpillars eat. The plant contains a potent poison that is stored in the body of the butterfly. This, in turn, makes the insect poisonous or at the very least, foul-tasting, which helps deter predators. Their dependence on just one type of plant, however, means monarch butterflies need a LOT of milkweed!

In the US and Canada, milkweed is so widespread and abundant that it is sometimes considered a "real" weed. Instead of killing milkweed, and thus reducing monarch habitat and food, homeowners are encouraged to plant/grow milkweed in open, sunny, meadow-like locales. The plant is tall and blooms an attractive plum-color.

In addition, local gardeners might want to consider planting several other types of native plants to provide food or habitat for a variety of pollinators, including monarchs. Plant in clumps, rather than single plants, to make them more noticeable. Avoid modern hybrid flowers too, especially those with "doubled" flowers. Bred specifically for their flowering characteristics, many of these plants have been genetically modified to have no pollen, nectar, or fragrance.

Eliminate pesticides whenever possible. If you must use a pesticide, use the least-toxic material possible. Read labels carefully before purchasing, as many pesticides are dangerous for bees. Use the product properly. And spray at night when bees and other pollinators are not active.

Help the Monarchs See Page 8

Greater compassion will yield soft power

By David Clanaugh, UP Environment Editor

Environmental advocacy can be grueling work, yet yields poignant moments. One such moment emerged during a recent meeting about regrouping and re-strategizing for the next round in the sulfide mining struggles in the UP and the Upper Lakes. As we pondered how to better engage the general citizenry with our concerns over mining and our efforts to envision and enact an environmentally sustainable future, one person admitted, "It's so hard to make connections with most people. It seems at times like most people just don't like us." This comment quieted the room, and there was a sense of serious sadness in the air. I wondered if there were suspicions in the room that at times we didn't like each other that much either.

It's indeed difficult making headway against what seems to be an intractable corporate-governmental-media alliance pushing mines such as the Eagle Project into our region. People just don't seem to take seriously the threats from the core drilling that is turning the region into a geological pincushion; should multiple mines begin operation there could be an unprecedented homogenization and contamination of our aquifers and surface waters in a triangle encompassing Marquette, Ladysmith, WI, and points north of Duluth. And my heart breaks over what seems to be the latest chapter of spiritual and cultural disrespect through Eagle Rock's desecration.

We're witnessing the consolidation of the global economic-political system seeming to overwhelm people's ability to envision anything other than "more of the same." We're seeing this with regard to mining and also with regard to management of public lands, protection of critical species, and on and on. There is a massive sense of vulnerability, isolation, and powerlessness among a high percentage of us that reinforces the tendency to meekly accept crumbs for today and hope tomorrow is somehow a bit better.

It's downright scary for most of us to confront cynical abuses of power when that power threatens to crush us. The collective imagination is largely bogged down in fear and mythology. In our region it's easier to sleepwalk forward with dreams that our history of resource extraction holds the keys to the future -- even though a close look at the landscape reveals many significant wounds and scars from past and current environmental errors.

All this helps explain why environmentalists are not very popular right now. We have unearthed much evidence about the follies of making our region a sulfide mining district, yet we have done a much lesser job of articulating and beginning to embody a tangible, inspiring future vision. There's a leap of trust and faith involved in feeling our way toward a better future, which is

why it has been so easy to co-opt and divert "sustainability."

We have reached a point where we need to reinvent a large percentage of human feelings, attitudes, thinking, and behaviors. It's hard stepping into the unknown! Cynicism, apathy, and resentment can seem safer. Seizing our power involves letting go of the familiar and comfortable. Yet we have more power than



Respectful, attentive interactions among people from different cultural and economic backgrounds was an encouraging aspect of the encampment at Eagle Rock.

(Photo by David Clanaugh)

we often think, and perhaps that's why we shrink from seizing it.

We also need to ask ourselves hard questions about the kind of attitudes and behaviors we project toward those with whom we disagree -- within environmentalist quarters as well as without. This hard look can begin through examining how we treat each other as environmentalists. Could we treat each other with greater appreciation, respect, fairness, and compassion? I think the answer is a definite, "Yes!" Putting a more compassionate and tender approach into action would make us concrete and specific role models to consider

for those unconvinced about the perils of sulfide mining and the hopes for an alternate future.

If we want to argue that there is a better way of living based on an environmentally sustainable economy, we need individually and collectively to provide more glimpses of what that might look like in terms of our interactions with and support of each other. We will have to leave our comfort zones by reaching out to our neighbors who are strangers . . . and we will encounter compassion and tenderness among these neighbors! Digital media such as the Lake Superior News (lakesuperiornews.net) and Headwater News (headwaternews.net) are great resources, but there is nothing that can replace tangible human outreach, interaction, and connections with our immediate neighbors.

Part of this will involve closely examining how we are privileged, comfortable, and out-of-touch, and thus prone to judge those who don't "see the light." Even though our sense of superiority and over-entitlement may be mild compared with those who hold vast wealth and power, we must disarm those ten-
Caring & Listening See Back Page

Join the fun as an Ottawa National Forest volunteer!

Help the OttawaContinued from Page 5

appealing. We can always use help indoors too, greeting customers, organizing files, entering data, or working with one of our resource specialists (archeology, engineering, hydrology, botany, biology). Plentiful opportunities for retired folks or students considering a natural resource career.



Plenty of indoor volunteering opportunities exist in the Ottawa for folks who would rather keep dry while getting their feet wet. (Photo courtesy of USFS)

Monarch's unique migratory habits harbor mysteries!

Help the MonarchsContinued from Page 4

Create a damp salt lick for butterflies and bees. Use a dripping hose, drip irrigation line, or place your bird bath on bare soil to create a damp area. Mix a small bit of table salt (sea salt is better!) or wood ashes into the mud.

Some butterflies are attracted to rotting fruits. Try putting out slices of overripe bananas, oranges and other fruits.

Why Help the Monarchs?

Monarchs are unique in that they migrate to a specific site every year, just like many birds. Every fall, thousands fly to spend the winter in California and Mexico (I can't even imagine flying that far on such tiny, thin wings!). Monarchs older than one year do not live to return the following spring, so their offspring must find their summer breeding grounds without any elder to show them the way. Despite years of research, scientists still don't know how.

Perhaps, most importantly, pollinators such as monarchs, other butterflies, bees, wasps, etc. transfer pollen from one plant to another. Over 80% of the plants on which we depend to produce fruits, grains, and vegetables are pollinated by insects. Without pollinators, the supply of human food would diminish.

Hours are typically "standard" (8 AM – 4 PM) but you can be present for whatever schedule works best. Regular commitments of at least a couple hours per week are most efficient but we can accommodate shorter, even single day, volunteers with a bit of advanced notice.

What do you get for all this? Incredible satisfaction, new or improved friendships, greater physical fitness, fresh air, and sometimes, a free lunch. There is no cost to volunteer and the forms are simple to complete. As mentioned above, we supply everything you'll need with the exception of basic footwear and clothing. Most volunteers bring their own water, snacks, sunscreen, and bug dope. Transportation to/from the work site may be included.

In case you're wondering, I volunteer on the Ottawa National Forest, too, so I'm not asking you to do something I don't. Along the way, I've met some of the finest people on the planet, like Bessemer resident Paul Johnson. Paul has been dropping by every week for the past six months. In that short time, he's already repainted dozens of signs, re-decked a trailer, helped clean storage bays in our garage, and worked on other tasks. Thank you Paul for such excellent work.

Finally, we certainly welcome you as just a visitor to your National Forest. Rest, relax, and enjoy. There's a lot happening on the Ottawa. See you here?

Gardening for monarchs is easy and beautiful. For more information, go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/monarchbutterfly/dol/index.shtml> and <http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/index.shtml>

See YOU in the woods!

Different ways to support UPEC

Consider contributing to UPEC in honor or memory of a special friend or loved one.

When you make a gift on behalf of another person, we will send an acknowledgement of the gift to that person or his/her family, so enclose mailing information. When you contribute on behalf of someone else, encourage them to become a UPEC member through your gift.

Do you or someone you know have a wedding in the future? Consider making it a "green wedding" by designating UPEC as a recipient of honor gifts. UPEC has a PayPal link at its website that you can use to do this.

Enjoy the outdoors & make the world a better place: Volunteer and help the Ottawa National Forest!

In Da Woods

*By Melanie B. Fullman, Bessemer District Ranger,
US Forest Service, Ottawa National Forest*

Uncle Sam Wants YOU!

Realizing that term probably means many different things to different readers, I should probably explain: the arrival of "field season" [finally?!] in the North Woods means the Ottawa National Forest would love to have your help. The following are just a few of the outstanding, and outdoor, volunteer activities that might be of interest:

Wood Turtle Surveys

Clearly, you needn't be fast on your feet for this one! Easy hikes, usually in the early evenings or early mornings to look for wood turtles, and hopefully, wood turtle nests. As the name implies, they live in the woods, but move to sandy beaches along rivers and streams to lay eggs. Simple data collection lasts about a month. GREAT opportunity to bond with a kid or grandkid. Several routes to pick from, including a few in Gogebic County.

Contact Jeff Soltesz at the Bessemer RD for more information at 906-932-1330 x513. Training and all equipment is provided. (If your preference runs more to frogs, we count those too!)

Loon Rangers

Being loony helps, but isn't a requirement. Living on or near a lake provides the best opportunity to see, and report on, loons. Many local lakes traditionally have loons so baseline information on their occurrence tends to be fairly good. Simple data collection, mostly though routine observations most of the summer, tracks the success rate of chick rearing.

Training is provided; contact Lauren Hildebrandt at the Watersmeet RD office at 906-358-4025.

Trail Maintenance

Lots of choices here: short trails, long trails, adopt-a-trail for the whole summer, or just volunteer for a day or two. For those interested in long-term trail work, Doug Welker from the North Country Association is the person to contact - vis-

UPEC board meeting July 22

UPEC's next quarterly board meeting is Friday, July 22 at 4 p.m. at the Ford Forestry Center in Alberta in the main building. The Ford Forestry Center is between L'Anse and the Covington Junction on US-41.

UPEC holds board meetings in January, March, July, and October. Citizens interested in participating in UPEC's environmental work are welcome to attend; check the website for time and location.

it the Peter Wolfe Chapter website. Trail marking, trail sign installation, minor trail maintenance – like simple ditches to drain water off a trail, or trail scouting -- there's something for everyone. Or, sign-up to build a bridge or replace



Participating in a fish survey is a great way to get your feet wet as a volunteer in the Ottawa National Forest, although may not appeal to everyone. There are a wide range of opportunities to help out, from indoor work to trail maintenance.

(Photo courtesy of USFS)

culverts. Projects of all levels of complexity and duration. Tools, hardhat, other safety gear, and training is provided; work/hiking boots are required.

Many folks prefer to work with others, like on the annual National Trails Day. The local 2011 Trails Day event will be a section of the North Country Trail and will be held Saturday, June 4. Contact me (Melanie Fullman) for more information at 906-932-1330 x539 or mfullman@fs.fed.us

Other Maintenance

Fix or maintain boat launches, day use areas, Black River Harbor, grouse hunter trails, etc. Build nest boxes, install nesting platforms, fix railings, paint signs or bathrooms, fix picnic tables, wash boats, and more!

If you've got at least a half a day, we've got a project. Volunteer once or on a regular basis. Whether you're an experienced carpenter or a novice that would like to learn new skills, we can help. You can pick the day(s), times, and location.

We provide the tools, training, gear, and welcome new ideas.

Other & Miscellaneous

Perhaps being outdoors amongst bugs and dirt isn't so

Inform legislators about need to respect intent of Natural Resources Trust Fund

Casperson & Agema's agenda could reduce citizens' access to public land recreational opportunities



Kakabika Falls west of Watersmeet is just one of the jewels found on the UP's public lands. In our current context, there are disturbing efforts underway to reduce the region's public land base for current and future generations to enjoy and steward together. (Photo by Bob Evans)

Trust Fund. Continued from Page 1
clear land strategy in place and be able to afford to manage the land it owns.

At first glance, this proposal may seem reasonable enough to some. However, upon closer examination, many questions arise as to how it would work if put in practice. Even more importantly, how would this measure affect the constitutionally protected Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF)? For those not familiar, the MNRTF was created in 1976 during moderate Republican Governor William Milliken's administration to collect revenues from oil and gas extraction on state lands and to use this money to fund public recreation and land acquisition projects across the state. Michigan was the first state to establish a trust fund with bipartisan support for the progressive vision of protecting natural resources.

Land acquisition is a primary MNRTF purpose. By law, no more than 25% of MNRTF revenues available for appropriation each year can be used for development and enhancement of recreational

opportunities with the majority of funding allocated for acquisition projects. The fund helps mitigate the effects of oil and gas development on public lands by putting the money back into public recreation and land conservation for the good of all residents. The state allows oil companies to exploit public-owned lands, and on behalf of the citizens requires payment for this privilege that then supports acquisition or development of other places where all people can recreate outdoors. In its essence, the law encourages responsible corporate citizenship that supports the common good.

This January, Representative David Agema (R-Grandville) introduced three bills that would divert MNRTF funds from their intended purpose and designate them for other uses. The package calls for diverting 80% of annual MNRTF revenues to the state transportation and aeronautics funds. The money would go to roads and airports rather than parks, boat launches, disability access, natural areas, and state parks.

Agema believes the state already owns too much land and claims, "It's getting to the point where the state of Michigan will own the state and the people won't." Agema's bills, HB 4021, 4028 and HJR-B, would change funding formulas. They also call for a public referendum to change the Michigan Constitution because the trust fund is constitutionally protected. Altering where the money goes requires voter approval.

Here is a breakdown of Rep. Agema's proposal:

- **HJR-B calls for a constitutional amendment to allow MNRTF funds to be re-allocated. In order for a constitutional amendment to pass, the resolution must first pass with two-thirds support of the Michigan House and Senate. If this occurred, the matter would be presented to Michigan voters as a referendum at the next general election.**
- **HB 4021 would allocate 20% of oil and gas royalties to the MNRTF, 60% to the State Transportation Fund and 20% to the State Aeronautics Fund. This bill is "tie-barred" to HJR B, which means that it cannot become law unless HJR B does.**
- **HB 4028 would facilitate funneling of NRTF dollars to the State Transportation Fund.**

The legislation has been referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation.

The MNRTF is expected to hit its \$500 million cap this year, due to booming natural gas development on state-owned

lands, mostly in the Lower Peninsula. Clearly, there is a large amount of money available for natural resource improvement projects in coming years, especially land acquisition.

So what is the connection between Casperson and Agema's proposals? The MNRTF clearly has a lot of money available for state land acquisition in coming years (assuming Agema's raid on the fund fails). If Casperson's bill passes, however, it appears that the state would have to sell off a significant amount of land each year to comply with the "no net gain" rule -- whether or not it makes sense to sell that land.

In our assessment, Casperson and Agema's agenda is simply wrong because it would reduce citizens' access to public recreation opportunities. We acknowledge the state sometimes owns scattered parcels of land with minimal recreational value that should be sold. The state already does this, but who would ultimately benefit from selling off large blocks of valuable recreational land just to comply with an arbitrary "no net gain" requirement in Casperson's bill? UPEC believes that would be a very serious mistake, indeed.

As for Agema's bill that would raid the MNRTF, the DNR and Michigan United Conservation Clubs have both stated formal opposition. UPEC is strongly opposed as well. Readers of this article may wish to contact Casperson and other regional legislators and tell them what you think (Contact information available below). UPEC is also opposed to any changes to Michigan's Constitution that would allow diversion of funds from the MNRTF for purposes unrelated to those specified in the current law -- land acquisition and enhancement of public recreation opportunities across our state.

Legislators need constructive approach to DNR

Campgrounds. Continued from Page 1
 already closed nine campgrounds in 2009.

To put it into perspective, from FY2000 to FY2011, funding the DNR has received from Michigan's general fund has decreased by over 75% from \$174 million to \$41.3 million. This decrease is for all DNR programs, not just management of campgrounds. As a state senator and committee chair, Casperson clearly has the ability to influence the amount of funding DNR receives from the general fund; however, he has done nothing to help maintain or restore any of these funds. Casperson knows very well that the DNR cannot continue to operate all 133 state forest campgrounds solely on the user fees they collect. His statement criticizing DNR for "not being able to manage property that it currently owns" therefore is misleading at best, and disingenuous at worst.

Second, if DNR is unable to operate these campgrounds only from the fees received from campers, what makes Casperson think that local governmental units will be able to do better? Are local units of government going to somehow magically come up with funds to manage and maintain the campgrounds in a better (and more profitable) fashion than the DNR and thus keep them open for the public to enjoy? The answer in most cases is, "Not likely." What is more like-

ly is that most local governmental units, short on operating funds themselves, will realize they don't have the funds to operate another campground, and it is very possible that some will then seek to sell the land to raise revenue. Casperson has been silent about whether anything in his proposal would prevent such potential future land dispositions.

Third, and perhaps our most fundamental objection, is that state lands were purchased long ago to benefit all of Michigan citizens, not only this generation but future generations as well. Selling off state lands, whether they have campgrounds on them or not, because of budget issues that exist right now, is simply shortsighted, a very bad idea, and has an undemocratic quality. Once this land is sold, it is likely to never again be in public ownership.

UPEC therefore strongly opposes this proposal. We encourage you, the reader, to write to Casperson and other regional legislators to express your views (Contact information available on Page 7). If the proposal does go forward, we strongly advocate that it be strengthened to require 1) that local governmental units are not permitted to sell the land, and 2) if local governmental units are ever unable to continue to operate sites as public campgrounds, the land shall revert to the State of Michigan as the public's steward.

Contact Information for State Legislators

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Go to www.legislature.mi.gov to contact other reps.



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