

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.

Environmental Education Grants due January 6

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (UPEC) has a grant opportunity for educators and youth workers who provide quality environmental education programs to regional children from preschool to high school. The UPEC Environmental Education Fund offers grants of up to \$1,000 for the 2012 calendar year, with applications due Friday, Jan. 6, 2012. Once again, special consideration will be given to quality grant projects that address the potential impacts of sulfide mining on human and natural communities.

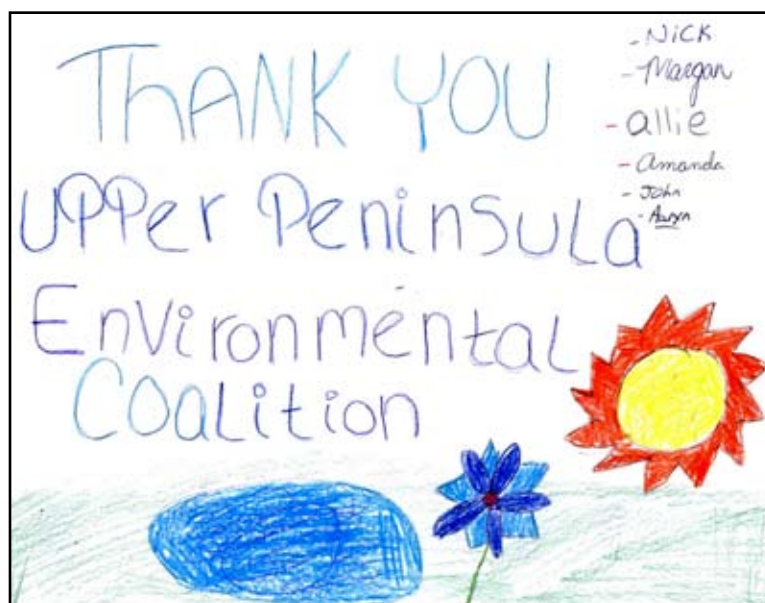
Teachers, 4-H leaders, Scout leaders, museum staff members, youth service workers – anyone who wishes to start or maintain an environmental project involving preschool through high school age children – are eligible for funding which may be used for all program expenses other than salaries.

And partnerships among applicants are welcome!

UPEC has funded everything from middle school students cleaning up and monitoring the chemical composition of water bodies, to elementary students creating community

gardens, to high school students testing soil samples on snowmobile trails, to a high school-college partnership exploring the literature of place and stewardship. As the UP's oldest grassroots environmental organization, UPEC is equally willing to fund outstanding projects inside and outside of formal school settings.

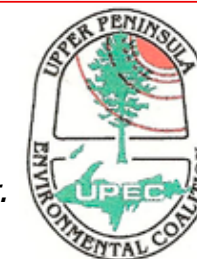
To learn more about the program, download a grant application, and obtain mailing information, go to UPEC's website at upenvironment.org. Completed applications must be postmarked or emailed no later than Jan. 6, 2012.



A note of appreciation from some students who participated in environmental education activities last year because of UPEC support.

UP Environment

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



Ottawa seeking comments on Sylvania boat launch options to reduce invasives

By Robert Evans

Anyone who has spent time in the 18,000-acre Sylvania Wilderness near Watersmeet is likely familiar with Crooked Lake. This scenic 400-acre lake is one of the two main water access points (the other being Clark Lake) to Sylvania which is known for its pristine lakes and old-growth hardwood forests.

Back in the 1960s, prior to Sylvania's designation as wilderness (which occurred in 1987), the U.S. Forest Service constructed boat launches on Crooked Lake and many other lakes within the Ottawa National Forest. The Crooked Lake boat launch was designed to accommodate boats launched into the lake with trailers, like many other boat launches across the Ottawa.

When Congress designated Sylvania as wilderness in 1987, it placed the wilderness boundary line across the mouth of Crooked Lake's north bay, leaving the 40-acre north bay outside the wilderness. The Forest Service subsequently prohibited using gas motorboats within Crooked Lake's wilderness portion, except for a few resorts owners on the north bay, and their guests (only one small resort still retains this right). At that time, as Forest Service officials now admit, the boat launch's design became inconsistent with Crooked Lake's primary role as an access point for kayakers and canoeists entering the wilderness.

Unfortunately, the Forest Service never modified the boat launch, allowing motorboat owners with trailers the Crooked Lake. See Page 6



Motorboat access on Crooked Lake and into the Sylvania Wilderness has been an issue since the late 1980s, but recent developments have given hope that this motorized launch could be converted to a carry-down launch. Such a move would reduce the exposure of the wilderness to invasive exotic species such as Eurasian watermilfoil.

Photos by Bob Evans

FOLK launches education & empowerment project to examine UP mining proposals

By Scott Rutherford

FOLK (Friends of the Land of Keweenaw) has begun a grassroots mining education and empowerment project to address the threats a new wave of mining projects poses to the western UP and the Upper Great Lakes watershed. The project will provide our citizens and elected officials with the capacity to make well-informed and effective responses to mining proposals. We are particularly concerned that human disturbances of reactive sulfide ore bodies create a very high likelihood of acid mine drainage (AMD) and heavy metals contamination.

Corporate and governmental officials are considering new mines in Menominee and Gogebic counties. And transnational companies are conducting extensive Education & Empowerment Project. See Page 2

FOLK's Education & Empowerment Project aims to help rekindle democratic process

Education & Empowerment Project.Continued from Page 1

exploration in Baraga, Houghton, Gogebic, Ontonagon and Keweenaw counties. The western UP could again become a mining district, but with potentially greater negative environmental impacts than from the first era of copper mining.

FOLK's two-phase project will employ action research. In an action research project, citizens, often joined by their government officials, conduct research that examines, questions, and improves public policies and programs that impact their communities and lives. The research, grounded in social scientific methods, is empowering. Citizens acquire knowledge and authority comparable (and sometimes superior) to that of institutional experts. Moreover, the research's participatory nature, which relies on consensus decision-making, unifies citizens and produces a high degree of cohesiveness. The process empowers citizens to speak with one voice in presenting the fruits of their research and their public policy proposals.

The project's first phase is preparatory. FOLK will organize an educational program to address key facets of a mining project, including the potential impacts on water resources, human health, the economy and the environment, and the DNR/DEQ review process. FOLK will conduct this phase through educational events, such as well-publicized workshops (to which our public officials will be invited), interviews with experts, attendance at conferences, and so forth. The research efforts will produce well-documented, authoritative, and accountable information that we will share with our fellow citizens, our elected representatives, governmental institutions, and others.

The second phase will have an action focus. Educated

and empowered citizens will evaluate new mining proposals, arrive at their own conclusions about each proposed mine's risks and benefits, and decide whether each project is in the best interests of their community.

State, federal, and global processes promoting mining and other increasingly deregulated resource extraction activities threaten local control and self-government in the UP and elsewhere. The State of Michigan, in its eagerness to promote new mining, is undermining the authority of local governmental units and preventing them from acting in the best interests of their constituents. Unless we change this situation, the voices of our citizens and local governments will become less and less effective in decisions about mining (and other issues) in the UP.

We believe that our action research project can create public spaces within which citizens become participants and shapers, not mere spectators and protestors, in the process of considering new mines. Among other things, we will be able to speak for a healthy measure of self-government for the UP that will have positive impacts on our region's future.

For more information, please contact Scott Rutherford at hancockscott@charter.net. You can also engage with this project through www.folkup.org, as well as access the latest information on Orvana's proposed project in Gogebic County.



FOLK has been a long-term organizational member of UPEC.

About UPEC...

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition has over a 35-year track record of protecting and seeking to enhance the unique environmental qualities of the UP through public education and 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.

UP Environment is published four times a year and available online to share with family & friends. 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. You can also visit us at www.upenvironment.org

Applied learning yields environmental advocacy

Outdoor Learning.Continued from Page 3
and writing. It's about expressing your opinions and learning how public speaking has made such a huge impact on our environment. In History, you won't find out how hard it is to make a dugout canoe just by reading about it in a book. Instead, you will stand in front of a huge log, axe in hand, trying to chop away as fast as you can -- and this really connects us with the hardships in the book we read about the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Since my arrival at Conserve, I have used a Pulaski to build single track trail, learned the secrets behind a healthy forest, hiked 35 miles of the beautiful trails in the Porcupine Mountains, made friends that will last a lifetime, and most importantly fallen in love with nature. We always hear about "going green" and protecting the environment. But few of us actually spend time outdoors.

Here we spend lots of time outdoors, including a full week of exploration. Students either go backpacking in the Porkies or canoeing in Sylvania, and they live outdoors for the whole week. I chose to go backpacking in the Porkies because I have been on canoe trips with my family before, but have never gone backpacking. One adventure happened when our group decided to go on a day hike to Presque Isle to see the waterfalls. Round trip, it was about a 12-mile hike and it seemed like a nice break from packing, unpacking, and then packing again. The morning started out cloudy and cool, but after leaving camp it started to drizzle. We had brought our rain gear just to be safe, but little did we know how much it would come in handy. All of a sudden the drizzle turned into rain, light at first but then a downpour. Now, if you have

ever been to Presque Isle, you would probably remember the steep, rocky hills and how rain makes the trail quite slippery to walk on. Halfway into the hike our group stopped for a gorp (like trail mix but with even more stuff in it) and water break. I then realized that my raincoat was soaked through. We eventually made it to the falls, and they were just beautiful. There were moments when it seemed like a miserable trip, but looking back I would do it again in a heartbeat. The

accomplished feeling when we got back to camp was overwhelming, and the joy of telling people about the hike is something I'll always cherish.

I'm not going to tell you that you will walk out your last day from Conserve completely changed, but you will grow and come just that much closer to finding out who you really are and what you want to be. That's

the beauty of it. You don't have to be the best hiker and canoeist, or want to major in things such as environmental science or forestry. You just have to be ready to try new things. I admit, there are some days when I don't want to go outside.

But once I get out there with all of my friends, I forget about the wind or the cold -- and sometimes even the fact that I'm at school. I'm outside enjoying the fresh air, and the love of Conserve and Lowenwood and, like James Lowenstine, I find myself thinking, "Every time I leave Lowenwood, I die a little with the fear that I may never return."

To learn more about the Conserve School semester program, open to high school juniors, visit the website at www.conserveschool.org or call Admissions Director Phil DeLong at 715-547-1300 or toll free at 877-547-1300.



UPEC holds its next board meeting at Conserve on Thursday, Jan. 19 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. CST, which includes a chance to learn about this non-profit environmental education school at the UP's southwestern gateway. If you're interested in attending, please email upec@upenvironment.org

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



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USFS considers converting Crooked Lake boat launch to carry down; seeks public comments about three options

Crooked Lake. Continued from Page 1
ability to continue launching into Crooked Lake. Most of these motorboat owners (other than resort guests) could not legally use their watercraft outside the 40-acre north bay. As you can imagine, however, the temptation to use the whole lake was just too great for many boaters. As a result, the Forest Service continues to have problems enforcing the motorboat restrictions and preventing motorized activity on the Crooked Lake's wilderness portion.

In 2002, an aquatic invasive species, Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM), was discovered in Crooked Lake. This invasive plant is present in many other Upper Peninsula lakes. Boaters typically move it from lake to lake by launching boats from trailers. Even a small EWM fragment attached to a trailer, propeller, or other boat part can be transported to another lake and start a new infestation. Apparently, that is how the Crooked Lake infestation began. Since 2002, the Forest Service has monitored this infestation and attempted to remove EWM by hand and through applying herbicides. Despite their best efforts, a small infestation remains, apparently still confined to the north bay of the lake.

Many organizations, including UPEC and the Friends of Sylvania, have urged the Forest Service for years to modify the boat launch at Crooked Lake to make it "carry-down" access. With a "carry-down" design, small boats could be carried a short distance to the lake and launched by hand, but boaters with trailers would be blocked from backing their trailers into the lake. A "carry-down" launch would be consistent with Crooked Lake's primary use as a wilderness entry point for canoeists, kayakers, and people with other lightweight boats that do not need to be trailered. It would also greatly reduce the threat of new introductions of aquatic invasive species because small watercraft carried to the lake have much less potential to harbor EWM fragments (and other invasives) than boats launched into the lake from trailers.

This September the Forest Service issued a proposal to

deal with this situation. The five-page Forest Service document (and related information) can be viewed at: www.friendsofsylvania.org/news.html The proposal includes three options for reducing the further introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species into Crooked Lake.

Option One would entail no new action or changes from the current situation (just continue to monitor the existing EWM infestation).

Option Two would treat the existing EWM infestation with a species of weevil that feeds on it. Even if successful (which is questionable), Option Two would not reduce the threat of additional introductions of EWM and other invasives such as zebra mussel into Crooked Lake and the rest of Sylvania.

Option Three would modify the Crooked Lake boat launch to make it a "carry-down" launch. This would by far be the most effective option for reducing the threat of additional introductions of invasive species into Crooked Lake. Option Three would also reduce, if not eliminate, the enforcement issue at Crooked Lake involving the unauthorized use of gas motorboats in the lake's wilderness portion.

UPEC and many other organizations have written the Ottawa National Forest supervisor expressing strong support for Option Three and urging its implementation by the 2012 boating season. We also urge the Forest Service to allow no "exceptions" to the carry-down regulation, as making exceptions for some boaters to launch boats with trailers would be difficult or impossible to enforce, and would lead to many others wanting the same privilege.

The Forest Service is now accepting public comments on its proposal. For anyone who wishes to comment, please send your correspondence to

Mr. Anthony Scardina, Supervisor
Ottawa National Forest -- Supervisors Office
E6248 US-2
Ironwood, MI 49938



A great long-term outcome of converting the Crooked Lake boat ramp to carry-down could be the elimination of Eurasian watermilfoil from these waters. Photo by Bob Evans

Next generation of environmental leaders learns at Conserve

HS junior shares experiences at semester school

By Mari Clanaugh

I start my day like many teenagers. I wake up at 6:30, take a shower, get dressed, and walk to school. However, I'm not destined to a typical high school. I'm off to class at Conserve School with its 16-week program designed for juniors who hope to enhance their knowledge about the environment. What once was a four-year school changed to a semester program in the year 2007, with the motto, "One semester can make a world of difference."

Conserve School is located in Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin on the family summer home of its benefactor James Lowenstine. Over his lifetime Lowenstine spent countless hours wandering the woods on the Wisconsin-Michigan border just south of what would become the Sylvania Wilderness Area. He, like most people who visit Conserve (also known as Lowenwood), fell instantly in love with the land and its beauty. When Lowenstine died, he left his money, land, and passion to start Conserve.

When I first heard about Conserve School, I didn't think I would be able to leave home and explore a new place I had never been before. But now that our semester is winding down to its final weeks, I will never regret my decision to go.

There are many ways to fit a Conserve School semester into your normal high school schedule. For math, they offer Algebra 2, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus. For any other required classes there are open blocks to fit online courses if need be. Every student is required to take English, History, Environmental Science and Field Instruction.

But these are not your typical classes! English, for example, is not all about grammar



Mari atop the Porkies

Outdoor Learning. Continued on Page 7

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: _____

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

Email: _____

Address: _____

\$ _____ UPEC Land Acquisition/Protection

City/State: _____

\$ _____ UPEC Environmental Education

Zip _____

\$ _____ UPEC Outreach Fund

Phone: _____

\$ _____ UPEC Endowment Fund*

(Email & Phone are optional)

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

Consider enclosing a note with feedback about this newsletter & UPEC's work.

*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!

County Road 595 puts Mulligan Valley at risk: A 30-year update on disturbances & troubled dreams

By Jon Saari

The Great Kashube Project was conceived in the 1980s: a wealthy Californian and his UP manager had a hold on 13,000 acres around Silver Lake, some 18 miles north of Ishpeming in Marquette County. They hoped to turn it into a protected wild area to rival the McCormick Tract to the west and the Huron Mountain Club to the north. They had paper agreements to purchase industrial forest lands in the area, then owned by Mead, Champion, and Longyear, but they needed partners and money.

It never came fully together in the 1980s or 1990s although the name the Great Kashube appeared on various land parcels in plat books as late as 2006. The name evokes a fabled region of lakes, forests, hills, and streams in northern Poland, a region settled by an ethnic minority called Kashubes and perhaps idealized by their Canadian and American descendants in diaspora. The name lends the magic of a hidden treasure to the valley of the Mulligan Creek. The creek starts high up in wetlands near the McCormick Tract, tumbles down for miles through rugged hills onto an enclosed plain, and then flows for five miles along the base of a 400-foot high rocky escarpment before emptying into the Dead River.

While the beauty of the creek was, and still is, apparent, the reality is that the surrounding lands in the watershed are dominated by industrial forest owners, and a few private homesteaders and camp owners. Public land is scarce: The State of Michigan owns 240 acres that encompass most of the Rocking Chair Lakes, a state wilderness area nestled high up within the escarpment itself. Road access is limited: Unimproved dirt roads provide about three miles of access from the south; in winter, one needs skis, snowshoes, or a snowmobile.

During the fall of 2011 the section of the valley along the Mulligan Truck Trail had been logged very hard, leaving only a few white pines standing sentinel-like as seed trees. According to a Plum Creek forester, their lands will be converted to red pine plantations, already dominant in the southern

Take advantage of Michigan Tax Credit before 2011 tax year ends

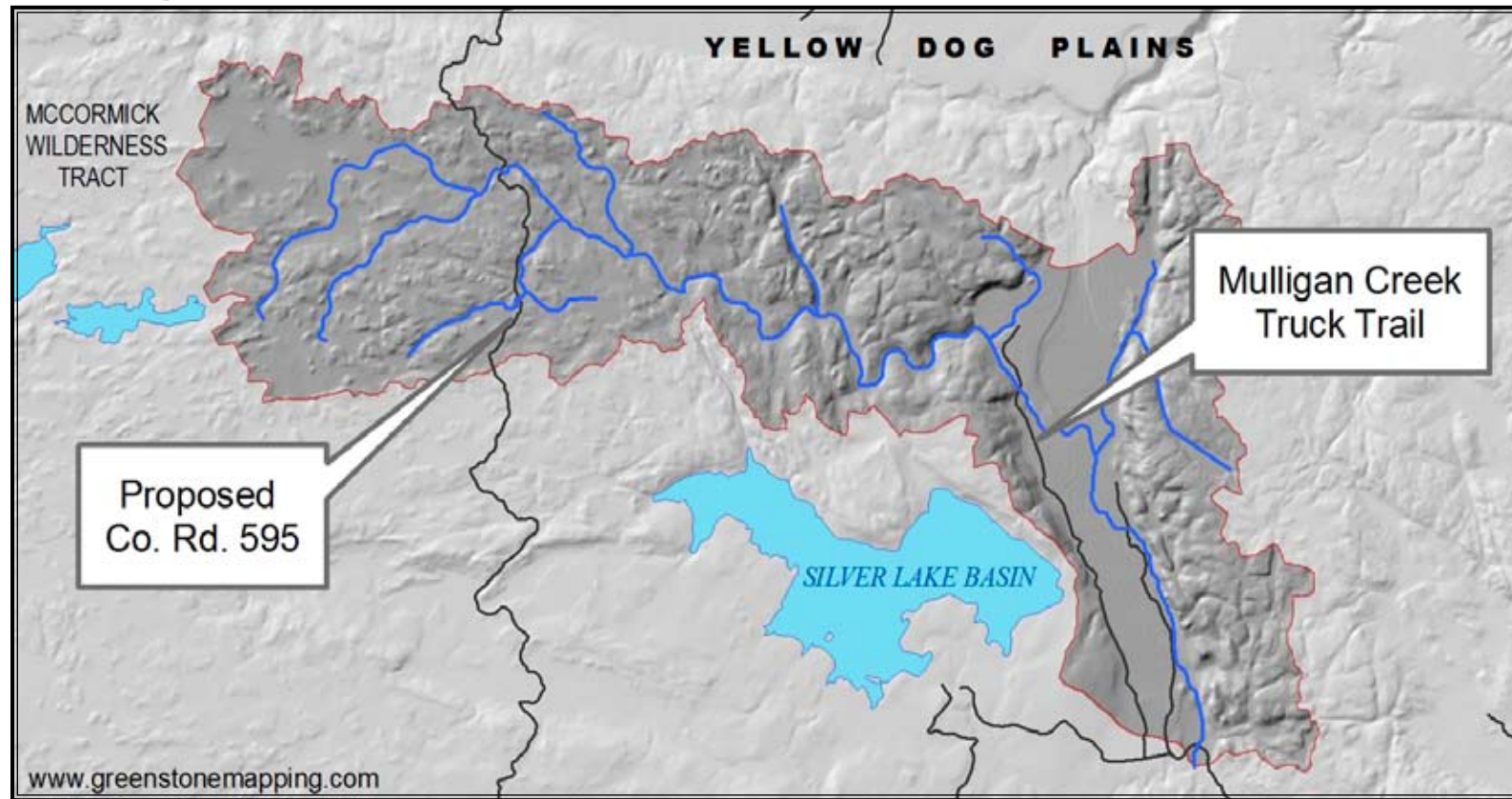
Michigan's tax credit for contributions to community foundations expires with the 2011 tax year. As a result, this year is your last chance to claim the credit by making a contribution to the Marquette County Community Foundation (MCCF) on behalf of UPEC. Many UPEC supporters already take advantage of this opportunity, and UPEC invites you to consider participating as part of your end-of-year charitable giving. Send your check made out to MCCF to UPEC: we will record your contribution and membership and then will forward it to the foundation (see donor form on page 3). What better holiday gift than supporting a healthy environment and public access to special natural places?

Contributions to UPEC through MCCF qualify for a 50% credit on your Michigan income tax. The credit is up to \$200 for joint filers (based on a \$400 contribution) or \$100 for a single filer (based on a \$200 contribution). Michigan was the first state to offer this tax credit beginning in 1989 which helped our community foundations develop their resource bases that in turn support the state's nonprofit sector in its services and economic impact. If you believe the credit should be restored because it supports investment in the nonprofit sector, consider contacting your state representative and state senator.

Winter 2011

-- 4 --

UP Environment



Mulligan Creek Watershed (in darker gray) highlighting the proposed Kennecott mine haul road as well as a potential alternative route along the Mulligan Creek Truck Trail. A major new county road along either route would severely impact an area marked by remoteness and small unimproved roads.

part of the valley. The creek itself is buffered by a riparian strip along the eastern fringe, but the valley floor has lost its magic.

The adjacent areas to the north and east remain unroaded and wild, dotted by lakes and streams and patches of old-growth forest, mostly in private non-industrial ownership. One large 2000-acre ownership, the A L Matthews LLC, represents a partial realization of the Great Kashube dream, for this land is protected by a conservation easement. Through a mutual agreement the owner donated certain rights, such as subdividing, timbering, and road-building, to a land conser-

vancy. The land is to remain undisturbed in perpetuity.

But disturbances are hard to keep at bay these days. It is not only the logging companies that will log their timber and

Cross-country skiing & snowshoeing in some special UP places

By Doug Welker

Many of the UP's wild and special places provide great potential for non-motorized winter adventure. The places suggested here and on-line (the McCormick and Sylvania Wilderness Areas) don't have groomed trails. They may not even have trail signs or blazes. What they often have, though, are quiet, remoteness, and scenic beauty. Described below are only two such places; there are too many to include in one article. Future newsletter and on-line articles will feature more.

McCormick Wilderness

Access: From US 41 / M-28 between Champion and Michigamme, go north on Marquette County Road 607 about 10.5 miles to a plowed parking area on the right. The trailhead has a vault toilet, but since this area often receives heavy snowfall, opening the door in mid-winter may not be easy! CR 607 and the lot may not be plowed for a while after a snowstorm. Carry a shovel in your car in case you get plowed in. Please register at the registration station just before the bridge. Trails in McCormick are not blazed.

Places to go: The routes most commonly skied or snowshoed start at this lot. Cross the bridge over the Peshekee River and continue on the old road. The road is growing in in spots, but is usually easy to follow, especially if others have been there earlier in the winter.

The main route leads to White Deer Lake, a seven-mile round trip. Don't attempt this in fresh deep snow unless you are in very good shape and have lots of time. Expect plenty of old forest, rock bluffs, and wetlands. The terrain on the trail is easy for snowshoeing, but skiers should use caution on some hills. There is no bridge where the trail crosses Camp 11 Creek, about a mile from the trailhead. *For the entire article and accompanying photos, go to www.upenvironment.org*

UP Environment

-- 5 --

Winter 2011