

NWNPS botany hikes explore diverse destinations

Traversing a beaver dam, wading through grasses in knee-deep water, swimming in a cove on Lake Superior, finding a rare plant in roadside weeds, viewing a drained Victoria reser-



Botany hike participants examine a plant specimen in the Divide Sands Special Interest Area near Trout Creek, Michigan.

Photo by Sherry Zoars

Thinking community beyond artificial, 'proper' boundaries

Community From Page 4
this trail will one day circumnavigate and embrace the Sylvania Wilderness!

So many of us feel a kinship to Sylvania and its stewards; for me, this centers on honeymooning there with my life partner, Tracie, in 2000. This sense of connection deepened when our oldest daughter, Mari, spent a semester at Conserve School just across the artificial border between Michigan and Wisconsin.

I say "artificial" because these physical distinctions we imagine and fixate upon can really counteract a spirit of community. These boundaries – including the boundaries we presume around and among our human bodies – can work against the humble awareness that all of us are part of one cosmic community – our lives are linked whether or not we have physically met. All of us breathe the same air, drink the same water, and circulate the same molecules.

This reality is not just horizontal in the here-and-now, but is vertical through eons past and yet to come. Although some folks brazenly dream of immortality, their bodies will inevitably

return to our earth home to mingle with all bodies past, present, and future. What an amazing dance of shared life and shared mortality nourishing this mysterious creation that sustains us all. So when Bob Evans uses the term "environmental community," I can't help but believe that this community is ultimately rooted in grateful awareness of the shared gift of life that flows through each and every one of us, human and nonhuman alike. This gift, however we imagine and understand its source, is not property. It confounds privatization, patents, and profit-taking. This gift is on loan to each of us; in the most basic sense we do not own it because it really owns and animates us. True community is not based in shared territory or imagined identities that exclude others, and it is certainly not something we seize through force and appropriation. This gift of community – as an uncontrollable surplus of life's force – cannot be circumscribed and enclosed by the artificial boundaries erected by the prevailing culture and ideology. This force of desire for relation inevitably overflows those boundaries. And this gift places each of us in relation to one another with a sense of mutual indebtedness and obligation to giving back – even as we realize we can never totally repay such an amazing, infinite gift. When we paddle the Brule, our paddles and hands touch water molecules that are circulating through innumerable bodies, human and other-than-human. When we walk through the Trap Hills, the sweat on our brows continues to circulate this water though the air and land to which we belong. These are core truths that folks tragically intent on ill-gained power, quick profits, and a false sense of security wish to overlook – to their peril as much as anyone's. The future that the rest of life seeks is based on common embodiment, shared community, and intermingled destiny in the global world. May more and more of human life honor this reality so that the life of our species of misfits may heal, continue, and flourish. Tom's enduring presence and the presence of countless others who have gone before us will help us together find our way forward.

voir, watching non-native worms crawl out of the forest duff – all the while learning about native plants in the Lake Superior watershed. These were some of the experiences participants encountered on North Woods Native Plant Society botany hikes this summer. From a brand new national tribal park in Red Cliff, Wisconsin to the Keweenaw Shores Michigan Nature Association preserve in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, participants explored diverse native plant communities and ecosystems in the western UP and northern Wisconsin. Professional and amateur botanists such as Nancy Leonard, Dana Richter, Susan Trull, Steve Garske, Quita Sheehan, Colleen and Erin Matula, Michael DeFoe, and Ian Shackelford guided participants through the six very different destinations. 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. Photos of previous trips may be found at northwoodsnativeplantsociety.org and you can sign up for email notices about upcoming activities at nwnpsociety@gmail.com

Upper Peninsula
Environmental Coalition
P.O. Box 673
Houghton, MI 49931

www.upenvironment.org

Look for UPEC on Facebook!



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.

Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT
US POSTAGE PAID
DULUTH, MN
PERMIT NO 1003

Public lands provide sense of gratitude in fast-paced world

Paddling the Brule From Page 1
the Nicolet National Forest in Florence and Forest Counties. Several good campsites are available for overnight travelers along the river.

As I steer myself around several large rocks at the beginning of a rapids, I wonder how much the scene has changed from the time of the early European explorers. There is no clear evidence that Brule was actually in this particular area.

. I am thankful for our public lands that enable me to find seclusion in a fast-paced and otherwise crowded world, and I am grateful that I can live in a place where I can enjoy them.

The life and travels of Étienne Brûlé are shrouded in mystery and only recorded by his employer Samuel de Champlain and through the works of Sagard and Brébeuf. It is widely agreed that Champlain sent Brûlé to live among the Hurons and learn their language. He was first and foremost an explorer and scout who paddled up the St. Mary's River and into Lake Superior. Brûlé seems to have had quite an interesting life and was probably the first European to see Lake Erie and



A nice set of riffles on a peaceful, secluded stretch of the Brule.
Photo by Connie Sherry.

Lake Michigan. It is generally agreed that Brûlé was killed in 1643 by the Bear Clan of the Hurons in what is now Ontario.

Tired and happy at the end of my own journey, I wait at the takeout place at US-2 for my companions. I am thankful for our public lands that enable me to find seclusion in a fast-paced and otherwise crowded world, and I am grateful that I can live in a place where I can enjoy them.

UP Environment



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

UPEC's next board meeting: Friday, Sept. 20
at the Ford Forestry Center in Alberta from 3-6 p.m.



Immersion in Brule's beauty inspires and renews

By Connie Sherry

I push my kayak into the current. In just a few paddle strokes I round the first bend of my trip down the Brule. I can feel weeks of stress fall from my shoulders and my eyes are flooded with a thousand shades of midsummer green. There is no sound but that of the birds and the ever-changing river.

Almost the entire length of the Brule forms the boundary between Michigan's Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin. Starting at Brule Lake in Iron County, Michigan it flows south-

east for about 50 miles before joining the waters of the Paint at Paint River Pond above the Brule Dam.

Most of the river offers great canoeing or kayaking water with many access

points in Michigan and Wisconsin making it easy to plan the length of your trip. Check water levels locally in the summer.



Ralph Horvath navigates a strainer on the Brule with the help of a friend and a strategic saw cut.
Photo by Connie Sherry

The section from south of Iron River at the M-189 bridge to the US-2 bridge between Crystal Falls and Florence, Wisconsin can be paddled almost any time. Most of this stretch is designed

for a blue ribbon trout stream and the Iron River increases the flow partway downstream. Although the class one and class two rapids can be run by even inexperienced paddlers, spring runoff can make some of the usually quiet channels more challenging. I have often had to make a decision which way to go (sometimes quickly) where the river breaks up into several leads. A few years ago I had just enough time to bring my kayak into the deeper and faster current in the channel to the right only to find a tree all the way across the river as I was swept around the next curve. Kayaking in slower water can give one a chance to enjoy the beautiful country along the Brule. Eagles, osprey, many kinds of ducks, otter, deer, and moose are all plentiful here. On the Michigan side much of the land is owned by the state while on the Wisconsin side most of the land lies in

Paddling the Brule . . . See Back Page

Tom Church's death saddens environmental community

By Robert Evans

The environmental community lost a long-time friend and ally on June 25 when Thomas Church of Watersmeet, Michigan suddenly passed away at the young age of 58. Tom was an active supporter and proponent of many environmental protection and enhancement projects and causes in the Western Upper Peninsula over the last few decades, but he was perhaps most passionate about protecting the Sylvania Wilderness in the Ottawa National Forest.

Tom grew up in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. He first visited Sylvania as a young teenager and immediately fell in love with the place. As an adult, he worked relentlessly to keep Sylvania. Remembering Tom Church See Page 4



Tom Church paddles Crooked Lake in the Sylvania Wilderness last summer. He and Ian Shackelford were looking for aquatic invasive plants and also checking on the wild rice beds.

Photo by Ian Shackelford

Bergland event signals SWUP's interest in the Trap Hills

By Doug Welker

On Sunday, Aug. 18, Save the Wild UP (SWUP) and the Trap Hills Conservation Alliance hosted an event to celebrate Ontonagon County's Trap Hills. The event featured two hikes, a great lunch, Wisconsin folksinger Skip Jones, and conversations among folks interested in protecting the Trap Hills.

SWUP Executive Director Alexandra Thebert said that her organization's position is that an area as special as the Trap Hills needs protection. UPEC board member Doug Welker echoed those comments. Welker provided the history of how



Ryne Rutherford (above) examines a male fern during a Trap Hills outing. Steve Garske (right) surveys a beaver pond.

Photos by Ron Eckstein

many groups came together over a decade ago to look at ways to protect special areas in the Trap Hills and to enhance the area's recreational opportunities.

As Welker noted, the Trap Hills are perhaps the most spectacular and fascinating of Michigan's largely-undiscovered secrets. With high rock bluffs, seemingly endless views, remote and relatively pristine areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, 50 miles of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT), numerous other trails including the Pioneer Multi-use Motorized Trail, and a long historic and prehistoric copper mining histo-

About UPEC...

For four decades the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition has been 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 on-line 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

ry (interpreted at Old Victoria and in area museums), it's hard to find such a concentration of special places and recreational opportunities anywhere.

"That's why some of us are working to get the Trap Hills designated as a federal National Recreation Area (NRA), to protect special areas, increase and promote recreational opportunities, and bring more recreation-related dollars into the local economy," Welker said. "Done right, it could be a win-win opportunity for the variety of diverse groups who would have a stake in both developing and protecting this area."

Steve Garske, local botanist and SWUP board member, said, "A Trap Hills National Recreation Area would help protect the beautiful western UP and contribute to a sustainable economy for the region as well."

SWUP and the Peter Wolfe Chapter of the North Country Trail Association are planning more events in the Trap Hills this fall. Contact Margaret Comfort of SWUP (president@savethewildup.org) or Doug Welker of NCTA (dwelker@up.net) for more information.



UPEC Officers, Board and Staff

President: William Malmsten
 Vice President: Nancy Warren
 Secretary: Sherry Zoars
 Treasurer: Jon Saari

Board Members:

David Allen Teresa Bertossi
 Robert Evans Connie Julien (Webmaster)
 Connie Sherry Doug Welker

Staff: David Clanaugh, Newsletter Editor & Business/Communications Manager

Yes! I Want to Partner with UPEC in Making a Difference!

Please complete and give this to a UPEC board member or mail to UPEC; PO Box 673; Houghton, MI 49931
 Or you can contribute on-line through justgive.org at UPEC's website at www.upenvironment.org

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
 Gift Membership (please provide person's name and mailing address on reverse side of this form)
 In Honor or Memory (please circle) of _____
 (please provide person's or family's name and mailing address on reverse side of this form)

UPEC is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization; your contribution is tax-deductible. Your support helps us work together to protect and enhance the UP's unique natural environment. Please consider making a gift membership to help us expand our circle of people working together. You may also contribute in **Memory** or **Honor** of a family member or friend.

Also consider enclosing a note with your contribution with feedback about this newsletter and UPEC's work.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

I'm already a member, but I'd like to make additional contributions to these funds:

- Environmental Education
 Land Acquisition/Protection
 Community Outreach
 Unrestricted
 Marquette County Community Foundation Fund

Phone & Email information is optional - Thanks for your Support!

How to Contact Your State Legislators

38th District Senator Tom Casperson
 517-373-7840; SenTCasperson@senate.mi.gov
107th District Rep. Frank Foster
 517-373-2629; FrankFoster@house.mi.gov
108th District Rep. Ed McBroom
 517-373-0156; EdMcBroom@house.mi.gov
109th District Rep. John Kivela
 517-373-0498; JohnKivela@house.mi.gov
110th District Rep. Scott Dianda
 517-373-0850; ScottDianda@house.mi.gov

Consider making 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 UPEC receive more funding, 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 1-800-875-3863 or visit www.earthsharemichigan.org



UP Environment is printed with soy-based ink on chlorine-free, FSC-certified, 50% post-consumer recycled paper. Cascades Papers uses biogas to produce this paper. UPEC's printer, ProPrint of Duluth, is a member of Printing Industry Midwest's Great Printer Environmental Initiative.

Taking heart in environmental community of misfits

By David Clanaugh, Editor

As environmentalists, we can feel disheartened encountering the various forces oblivious and even hostile to a dynamic, sustainable world community hospitable toward all of life. Watching the TV "news" recently - much of it banal and focused on celebrity antics - one story emerged as relevant: school was canceled across much of the nation's midsection because of the late-summer heat wave. Surely more evidence of on-going global climate change even as efforts to extract fossil fuels intensify: corporatism and consumerism run rampant while "our" government and media seem increasingly indented to those values and interests of biodegradation.

Yet, I take heart and strength in Bob Evans' use of the term "environmental community" in his Page One tribute to Tom Church. May we together find comfort when confronted with the loss of someone like Tom - and may we feel encouraged and strengthened as we continue our efforts.

I also took heart when a friend I encountered recently described herself and us who work for environmental sanity in our region and world as "misfits." Yes, I thought, let us

embrace each other as misfits as we stumble forward! Thus, I'd like to reflect at this time of loss on how we might understand the environmental community as a coming together and relating of inextricably linked misfits who share the fragile, yet tenacious, gift of life.

I never met Tom, but working with him via email earlier this year gave me a sense of connectedness. Although written and digital communication do not substitute for in-the-flesh interactions, they can provide a measure of connection that only makes us thirst for meeting the person, sharing stories, breaking bread, and mutually enacting a vision for a healthier and more vibrant world. So I feel a double loss knowing this thirst will remain unquenched. This is because Tom's helpful, conscientious, and flexible spirit deeply touched me. The article he submitted to the Spring 2013 *UP Environment* had such a respectful and inclusive tone as it chronicled how a wide range of people from the Watersmeet/Land o' Lakes area are creating common cause through the Agonikak. What wonderful work folks like Tom have been doing to deepen relationships so that *Community* See Page 5

Teen's love of Sylvania translated into relentless advocacy

Remembering Church . . . From Page 1
 a pristine wilderness: combining efforts with UPEC and other organizations to reduce the use of gas motorboats on the wilderness portion of Crooked Lake; assisting the Friends of Sylvania (FOS) and others



Photo by Alan Piel

A cyclist enjoys the Agonikak near Watersmeet, one of Tom Church's legacies.

participated in a program led by the Michigan Sierra Club to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the passage of the Michigan Wilderness Act. Because of Tom's efforts, many threats to Sylvania Wilderness have been reduced over the years, moving it closer to the true wilderness he imagined it could eventually be.

Tom was a believer in managing land and natural resources wisely and for the long-term so that future generations could enjoy many of the same things he experienced when he saw Sylvania for the first time as a young boy. He was also a strong proponent of non-motorized recreation, including hiking, biking, canoeing, and cross-country skiing.

Tom worked diligently to help plan and acquire funding for the newly-constructed Agonikak Bike Trail on the Ottawa National Forest. This trail currently extends from Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin to Watersmeet, Michigan and will eventually form a large loop around Sylvania and back down to the Wisconsin border.

Tom felt strongly about land conservation and was a driving force behind efforts to purchase and protect several large parcels of high-value forested land

that were at great risk for subdivision and development. Tom and others organized the Watersmeet Lakeguards group several years ago. The group's purpose is to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive plants in the Western Upper Peninsula and help eradicate these invasives from lakes that are already infested. The Lakeguards have since become one of the most effective local organizations in Michigan at combating the threat of invasive plants and animals.

Tom will be sorely missed by many of us who respected him for his impeccable character, his integrity, and his tireless devotion to important conservation causes. But for those of us who also knew him as a dear friend, Tom left us far too soon.

For those who knew Tom, or if you did not know him but would like to support the causes he felt strongly about, Tom's family has asked that memorial contributions be made to the Friends of Sylvania. Visit friendsofsylvania.org for information on how to make a donation, or to offer your time as a FOS volunteer. Memorials may also be made to wildernesslakestrails.org (the organization working to build the Agonikak Trail).