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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.

Warden Plant From Page 8 continue to observe black dust. Polkky attributes the blasts to removing ash from the furnace.

The most recent inspection of the chipper was April 12, 2012 after a complaint had been filed. Tom Maki of the DEQ Air Quality Division performed a Method 9 Visible Emissions Evaluation (VEE) for six minutes, which indicated compliance with the 20% opacity limitation of Rule 301. The VEE does not address emissions of substances that are not visible. It is unclear to what

extent problems, if any, result from improper plant operations or from inadequate state monitoring requirements.

Water quality issues were also addressed at the CAP meeting. Monitoring wells are not required, but Richardson explained that the CertainTeed monitoring wells downhill from the site would probably identify any migrating groundwater contamination. The operation also creates a thermal plume in L'Anse Bay near the L'Anse Waterfront Park as warm water is discharged back into the lake near the Falls River. A barrier protects the river from temperature fluctuations.

During the meeting Walsh and Richardson emphasized that LWEC wants to be a good citizen and know from community members whether it is meeting their expectations and needs. The next CAP meeting will be June 18 at 5 p.m. at the White Pine Electric Power office. In this community 65 miles west of L'Anse, Traxys operates a 40-megawatt coal-fired plant



Railroad tie chipper in operation at LWEC. Photo from Michigan DEQ

(with potential conversion to low-grade biomass). For more information, contact the White Pine office at 906-885-7100.

Regardless of any environmental impacts the LWEC plant itself may have, the debate is growing whether the plant is a "green" facility. Much of the plant's fuel comes from chipped forest biomass. Forest biomass harvesting can have significant ecological and sustainability implications, as addressed by another article in this newsletter (See Front Page).

A group with representation on UPEC's board, The Friends of the Land of Keweenaw (FOLK), has written a letter supporting Mr. Loman's petition to ATSDR. FOLK board members agree that there is sufficient reason that Loman's concerns must be investigated and addressed. The UPEC Board also sent a letter of support for Loman's petition to ATSDR. The *L'Anse Sentinel* had an informative article about LWEC in its February 27, 2013 edition.

UP Environment



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

Summer 2013

UPEC's next board meeting: Tuesday, June 25

at the Ford Forestry Center in Alberta from 4-7 p.m.



Fuel stock at Warden poses public health concerns

By Catherine Andrews

Questions and concerns about occupational and public exposure to toxic substances allegedly emitted by the Warden biomass facility in L'Anse have prompted Keweenaw Bay Indian Community member Jeffery Loman to file a petition with the federal Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry (ATSDR). Loman has requested a public health assessment, and ATSDR has one year to consider his petition. ATSDR (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov>) is one of 11 agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and works closely with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).



Stockpiled railroad ties provide fuel for the L'Anse Warden biomass facility.

Photo courtesy of the L'Anse Sentinel

Between U.S. 41 and L'Anse Bay, the L'Anse Warden Electric Company power plant (LWEC) burns about 550 tons of biomass daily to power a once coal-fired steam generator. The fuel stock consists of 340 tons of wood chips (provided by area loggers and some obtained through whole-tree harvesting) and 180 tons of railroad ties, including six tons of pentachlorophenol (PCP)-treated ties

that are chipped on site. About 10 tons of tire-derived fuel are added to the mix to make it burn hotter. Thousands of creosote and PCP-treated ties lie on the ground at the plant with no apparent way to keep wood treatment chemicals from reaching the soil, ground water, and Lake Superior's surface waters.

Warden Plant See Page 8

The biomass dilemma: How to avoid organized irresponsibility?

UPEC panel ponders 'green' energy perils

By Connie Sherry

Five panelists discussed biomass and forest health during the final event in UPEC's "Celebrate The UP" earlier this year in Marquette. After each panelist presented, UPEC Board Member David Allen facilitated questions and comments from the audience.

Chris Burnett of Chocolay Township has an educational background in forest biology and a lifetime of experience working as an environmental consultant, public service forester and in many other related positions. Currently *Biomass* See Page 11



A 2009 Plum Creek clearcut in Ontonagon County between Old Victoria and the Victoria Reservoir. Photo by Ian Shackelford

Systems & thinking environmental risk

By Editor David Clanaugh

Our society extols personal responsibility at a time increasingly characterized by what risk researcher Ulrich Beck terms "organized irresponsibility." We often think that organization travels alongside responsibility, yet history too often supports Beck's juxtaposition of organization and *irresponsibility* – especially when systems are closed to environmental feedback and merely interacting with instead of truly communicating with other systems.

Niklas Luhmann, offers compelling accounts of how contemporary systems *Systems & Risk* See Page 10

We are given gifts . . . and they aren't always pretty

By Michele Burian

I believe we are given gifts – and they aren't always all wrapped up nice and pretty. In fact when they come disguised as cruelty or senseless suffering of an animal at the hand of man it is particularly heartbreaking for me. I can't just look away.

In the fall of 2001 I was up in Marquette County on the Yellow Dog Plains. I had been to a Greg Brown concert/fundraiser the evening before to preserve Pinnacle Falls on the Yellow Dog River. Now I was set out on the twisty two tracks with vague directions and the gazetteer to find the falls. It was a crisp, sunny morning-after-the-first-snow kind of fall day.

Driving and singing along with Greg on the radio, we rounded a turn and were met head-on by a wolf . . . with her hind leg caught in a leg trap. It was horrifying. It was one of those moments you never forget. You know, that at once breaks your heart and blows it wide open too. Helpless and panicked to see us, she tried even harder to free her back leg by chewing feverishly at it and snarling and growling. She looked exhausted, crazed, scared. If I had a gun that day I would have used it. We had no choice but to drive away.

My call to the DNR was answered by a mostly disinterested voice who informed me that leg traps were legal and only required by law to be checked every 72 hours (what?), and that I was most certainly mistaken- it was probably only a coyote. He was mistaken. She was a wolf. It took me a long time to recover from that beautiful/horrible day. I see this image in my mind and tears still well up in my eyes; my heart literally hurts even now some 11-plus years later as I write this. And honestly I'm glad I haven't fully recovered.

Back then I channeled that energy right into starting a



Wolves have made an encouraging comeback in the Upper Lakes Region. They now face new threats from scientifically and ethically questionable efforts to hunt them.

local group, Northern Michigan People for Peace. At that time the war drum was beating for Iraq and we had local peace rallies and marches. I went to Washington twice. Once with a bus load of high school students to rally on the National Mall.

It was all I could do.

I believe, to this day, that the wolf's medicine walks with me. She opened my heart and whispered me a little more out of my slumber. Her gift to me was not delivered in a pretty way. My gift to her all these years has been an ever deeper relationship with the compass of my heart.

Recently my gift to her is to be a voice to her suffering as I have gathered signatures on her behalf this past winter *Honoring Gifts Continued on Page 3*

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

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Panel: Can biomass demand be met sustainably?

Biomass From Page 1
he is on the board of the Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy. As the UP increasingly uses biofuels, Burnett listed priorities to consider. Energy conservation is the first, Burnett said, but he also spoke about the need for public energy policies, residential wood energy applications, and commercial-industrial applications of biofuel technologies.

Marvin Roberson, a long-time UP resident, has been the Sierra Club's forest ecologist for many years. Educated in philosophy and forest ecology, Marvin is an environmental advocate and avid outdoorsman. Roberson spoke about what a healthy forest is and how species distribution is important to a healthy forest. He described how aspen root suckers take over clearcuts though we do not know how often aspen can regenerate from one root system. There are more aspen stands since the 1930's because they tend to be the first species to regenerate in a clearcut. Biofuels create a demand for large quantities of green wood as fuel, but we do not know yet if that demand can be met sustainably, Roberson said.

Lauri LaBumbard received a B.S. in forestry from Michigan Tech, and has worked many years as a forester, currently with the Hiawatha. LaBumbard defined sustainable forest management through a presentation containing much information about Michigan forests. Fifty percent of the forests in Michigan are privately owned. More landowners may be interested in managing their forests for biofuel as demand for it grows in Michigan. Much of the information LaBumbard presented came from the Michigan Woody Biomass Harvesting Guidance available online at www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/WGBH_321271_7.pdf and published by the Michigan DNRE. This publication is helpful for landowners who wish to learn more about managing their land for biomass.

Allen Saberniak is a consulting forester serving landowners in the central UP helping them to meet their management objectives. He remains active in his field after retiring from the U.S. Forest Service, having served 36 years in the Hiawatha National Forest. Saberniak described himself as a "numbers guy" tracking how much biomass is available for harvesting. He urged people to visit the USFS website for information about the harvesting and use of biofuels and to learn what kind of forest site is suited for biomass production and other kinds of forest product production. Saberniak emphasized that site-specific decisions are important.

Doug Welker is a board member with UPEC, the North Country Trail Association, the Northwoods Native Plant Society, and other groups. He has led trail crews for years to maintain and build trails and bridges on the North Country Trail and has worked as a geologist, wilderness ranger and in education. Welker spoke of forest health and pointed out that a tree is only part of a forest ecosystem. He expressed



Repeated clearcuts of aspen stands pose questions about long-term site productivity and the ability of suckers to regenerate.

Photo by Rod Sharka

concern at the loss of forest structure by poor logging practices and forest mismanagement leading to the loss of a variety of trees of different ages, species and sizes in a woodlot.

Some audience members commented on the danger of using railroad ties saturated with creosote in biofuel plants. People in the communities where that is happening are questioning the possible contamination of the air and water surrounding these sites. Tires are burned in some biofuel plants.

A proposed ethanol plant in Kinross in the eastern UP south of Sault Ste. Marie would compete with other existing forest products industries and would draw on forest resources from a 150-mile radius surrounding the proposed plant. Concerns were expressed that removing all biomass from the forest floor would leave little to form the layer of "duff" in a healthy forest that provides shade to seedlings, helps keep moisture in the ground and is the home of small mammals, salamanders, and other animal species.

A core conclusion from the panel is that we must all take a hard look at what is being sold as "green energy". In a new book by Ozzie Zehner, *Green Illusions: The Dirty Secrets of Clean Energy and the Future of Environmentalism*, Zehner argues for a change of perspective. He points out that alternative energies come with their own side effects and limitations. For example solar panels and wind turbines and electric cars still depend on the mining of metals for their manufacture.

His premise that "alternative energy is not a free ride, just a different ride" is food for thought for environmentalists. As more humans compete for a finite number of natural resources, care must be taken to conserve our forests and keep them healthy along with the air and water that sustain all of us. In addition, it will be necessary to rethink the equation of high levels of consumption with a high quality of life.

Systems & Risk From Page 1 manage and simultaneously increase environmental complexity by closing in upon themselves. And Roberto Esposito examines how systems, in their mania to immunize themselves from perceived external threats, ironically develop autoimmune reactions that can destroy community and the commons. Environmental groups aren't exempt from these dynamics; it behooves us to monitor and adapt our systems.

Folks in government, corporations, and nonprofits are typically sincere and competent, yet society's problem-solving abilities seem to be rapidly dissolving to the detriment of most people and the common to which we infinitely owe our current and future existence. Cults of the heroic individual, creatively destructive entrepreneur, and corporate "person" further marginalize understandings of community as the process of co-accountability and co-responsibility. Reactionary and exclusionary notions of "community" buttressed by rigid political, economic, and religious ideologies, tragically reinforce this larger dynamic.

"Organized irresponsibility" has resonated with me a lot this past month. In mid-May I again facilitated a Michigan Department of Community Health Torch Lake Superfund forum. Three things merit mention. First, (too?) much energy went into planning how to forestall conflict so we could have productive community conversations about the core health and environmental issues. Second, despite thorough research, the toxicologists again couldn't consistently provide clear-cut assessments and related recommendations because of significant gaps in data from other regulatory agencies. Third, there has been much talk among citizens and regulators about delisting these sites, which seems premature given the gaps in data, not to mention evidence that more remediation is needed. In sum, there have been many highly organized entities involved in this lengthy Superfund process, yet how they com-

municate with each to solve problems is unclear and poses questions like, "Who or what is responsible to see this Superfund process through to sufficient resolution? How do we need to change our thinking?"

In this newsletter are articles raising issues that might merit thinking through the lens of organized systemic irresponsibility. The lead story about the Warden plant points to how risk can go beyond the external hazards associated with toxic substances. Are greater risks lurking where community, corporate, and regulatory systems intersect—a place where people feel vulnerable, dependent, and disempowered, and apparently struggle to communicate their concerns with systems that seem intermingled to the point that exemptions occur to burn highly toxic materials? Reading the articles about wolf issues, I also wonder how humans think, communicate, and behave toward wolves can magnify existing hazards and create additional risks. Deeply engrained cultural beliefs about wolves animate our reptilian brains!

The third story about biomass reminds me of a scene from the classic movie *The Graduate* when Mr. McGuire tells the young Dustin Hoffman, "I just want to say one word to you . . . Plastic. . . There's a great future in plastic." In this future when vortexes of plastic junk swirl in the world's oceans and entrepreneurs are busy planning various biomass schemes, might it be that we need to slow down and together discern what really qualifies as "green" energy production before embarking on a potential path of organized irresponsibility?

Within this newsletter you will find glimmers of an alternate path. The compelling voices of the young, the elderly, and the frustrated but determined are infused with perceptiveness, respect, wisdom, and hope. Perhaps their message is, "The systems of the future will have cores of gratitude, respect, and prudence. This common future's currency will be organized, yet flexible, adaptive, and accountable co-responsibility."

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)

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.

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

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!

State must heed citizen voices speaking for wolves

Honoring Gifts From Page 2 to let the voters decide if there should be a wolf hunt in Michigan. Just thirteen days after 253,000 signatures were turned into the Secretary of State for certification, Senator Tom Casperson introduced SB288.

The bill allows the NRC, as well as the legislature, the power to designate any species a game animal, not just wolves. SB288 not only threatens our recently delisted wolves but threatens our democratic rights by rendering our referendum initiative meaningless. The governor signed the bill into law on May 8. A very fast track indeed!

On May 9 the NRC met to decide the fate of the 658 wolves in our state. I attended and spoke on behalf of the

wolf. I encouraged them to seek an abundance of sound science before making a decision. I encouraged them to acknowledge that 253,700 people signed their names and allow, through due process, a vote on the issue. My comments, as well as everyone else who spoke in opposition from experts to concerned citizens to Native Americans, fell on deaf ears. The NRC ruled 43 Michigan gray wolves to be randomly killed in three UP zones. They allowed baiting, predator calls and, yes, even steel jaw leg traps on public lands.

Gathering signatures. Speaking out. Educating. These things, I believe, are the least I can do to honor the life and the suffering of that one beautiful wolf. On that one horrible day.

Key dates in struggle to protect gray wolves from hunt

- Jan. 27, 2012:** Wolves of the Great Lakes Region were federally delisted, giving states the authority to manage wolves.
- Aug. 15, 2012:** House Bill 5834 introduced by Representative Matt Huuki (R-Atlantic Mine) to designate the wolf a game species and authorize a hunting season.
- Oct. 17, 2012:** Senate Bill 1350 introduced by Senator Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba) designates the wolf in Michigan as a game animal and authorizes the Natural Resources Commission to establish a hunting season.
- Nov. 2012:** 413 wolves were killed in Minnesota and 117 were killed in Wisconsin as a result of inaugural wolf hunting/trapping seasons. These figures exclude wolves killed by wildlife services to resolve conflicts, landowner permits, and other mortalities such as car collisions, natural mortality, or those wolves injured by traps or shot but not recovered by hunters.
- Dec. 28, 2012:** Senate Bill 1350 was signed into law by Michigan Governor Rick Snyder as Public Act 520 of 2012.
- Jan. 14, 2013:** A coalition of groups, led by Keep Wolves Protected, launched a Michigan ballot campaign to overturn Public Act 520. More than 2000 volunteers rally to gather 161,305 valid signatures which must be collected within 67 days.
- March 27, 2013:** 253,705 signatures, representing every county, were submitted to the Secretary of State's office, that, when certified, would allow voters to decide the issue at the ballot box in November 2014.
- April 9, 2013:** Senate Bill 288 introduced by Senator Tom Casperson extends the legislative authority to designate any species as game animals to the Natural Resources Commission (NRC). NRC decisions cannot be challenged through the veto referendum process. This bill renders the challenge to Public Act 520 meaningless.
- April 11, 2013:** The Michigan DNR reports the wolf population has declined from 687 animals to 658 animals.
- May 8, 2013:** Senate Bill 288 was signed into law by Governor Snyder as Public Act 21 of 2013.
- May 9, 2013:** The Natural Resources Commission approves regulations governing Michigan's first wolf hunting/trapping season in recent history. The regulations establish a quota of 43 wolves within three zones, allow trapping on public and private lands, and define a season that runs Nov. 15 through Dec. 31 or until the quota is filled. Wolves will also be killed to resolve conflicts either by wildlife services or through landowner permits
- May 22, 2013:** State Board of Canvasses rules that implementation of Public Act 520 designating the wolf a game species be suspended. The DNR announced that the NRC will meet June 13 to discuss Public Act 21 authorizing the NRC to designate the wolf a game species, then vote at the July NRC meeting so licenses to hunt wolves could be sold beginning Aug. 3.
- Update:** As of press time, wolves had killed three dogs this spring in separate instances in rural Houghton County (Stanton Township). This tragic situation is unusual because last year eight of the nine dogs killed by wolves were pursuing game. Three wolves have already been killed, and the DNR is acting to trap and kill other wolves in the area. Media coverage cited a DNR report that the third dog was killed while chained in a fenced yard. We have now verified with the DNR that the dog was not in a fenced yard, and thank ABC-10 for its correct follow-up coverage. So far, the DNR has not issued a corrected press release. The online newsblog, *Keweenaw Now*, also has quality coverage of these issues.

—Compiled by Nancy Warren

Sense of interconnection sustains conservation ethic

By Cheryl St. Martin

The question I address is one I have not contemplated before in my life. I am sixty-six years old and was raised in the beautiful environs of the Upper Peninsula. Although I have never contemplated the question of my community, I have always known in the deepest part of me that everything comprises my community. It is the family and friends I was raised with. It is the deer, bear, rabbits, ducks, geese, game birds, fish, wild cats, wolves, coyotes, beaver, otter, turtles, and many other animals. It is the connection to the forest as a whole and each species of tree in the forest. The forest that produces the pure, invigorating healthy air we breathe and the sweet, succulent nectar from the tree saps and the beehives it houses. The forest that is sustained by the ancient soils which provided purchase for the footprints of the first peoples to populate it, the aboriginal tribes who first hunted and fished here. It is the past, the present and the future.

I was raised by a father and mother who were conservationists. My father was that way because he was born and raised here, in the early 1900s, on a farm in Munising. He

cherished his family's great love of the natural beauty, flora, fauna, and magnificent waterways we live with. His family needed little currency as they lived off the land.

My mother and her family moved here from Cleveland, Ohio. Because the large city life they lived restrained them to city ways, life for her family was vastly different from the rural life of my dad's UP. While my dad lived on a farm and always had healthy and bountiful food and fresh Lake Superior water, my mom's family suffered during the Great Depression from scarce supplies for daily living, limited income because of job loss and, eventually, unaffordable living accommodations. My grandfather put what meager belongings they had onto the top of his car and headed out with the family towards the north country. The family stopped on the way to find work harvesting crops to sustain themselves. They lived out of doors in campgrounds and alongside farmer's fields as they traveled northward. Eventually they arrived in Munising to pick blueberries, strawberries and raspberries. For her whole life, my mother recycled everything possible.

For her whole life, my mother recycled everything possible. *Daily Conservation See Page 5*

Conservation as a way of life

Students in my Introduction to Environmental Science class (taught through NMU's Earth, Environmental & Geographical Sciences Department) read Aldo Leopold's A Sand County Almanac this past semester. In the book's Forward, Leopold challenges readers to consider how they define "land"—as a commodity or as part of our community? I asked students to consider this question and write an essay defining what community means to them.

Cheryl's essay stood out among the many thoughtful essays. Against a backdrop of a very fast-paced modern society, Cheryl takes us back to her childhood, a time when conservation wasn't some hip fad hijacked by consumption—packaged, painted green, and sold on a shelf—but a part of everyday life when we inherently wasted less.

Cheryl's story is a reminder to turn off our gadgets for a little while, slow down, and make sure that our youth have the same opportunities to maintain healthy ties to the land.

-- UPEC Board Member Teresa Bertossi

Volunteers invited to help develop North Country Trail segment September 21-28

The Peter Wolfe Chapter of the North Country Trail Association will hold a multi-day, chapter-funded Volunteer Adventure in the western UP from September 21-28. We'll camp on an 80-acre private lake and be building trail east from the Matt Manger-Lynch Shelter in Baraga County. The area is rugged, with rock bluffs and northern forests. The event is free and food is provided.

Expect hard work, plenty of fun, and fall color at or near peak. Keep checking www.northcountrytrail.org/pwf/va2013 for details.

Sidehill tread work to control erosion on the NCT.



Power Report: Resumption of mining threatens economic diversification gains in western UP

In September, 2012 FOLK (Friends of the Land of Keweenaw) entered into a contract with Power Consulting, Inc. to prepare a study to examine the economic impact of a possible resumption of mining in the Western UP. The study was funded by grants from the Western Mining Action Network, Indigenous Environmental Network, Freshwater Future, and with funds provided by FOLK's member-donors. The study's principal findings and conclusions are summarized below.

The study is one of a series of action research projects that FOLK is sponsoring under its grassroots Mining Education and Citizen Empowerment Campaign. The Campaign's focus is an assessment of the risks and benefits of a renewal of mining in our region in which our citizens will be full participants. More information about the campaign and assessment can be found at the FOLK mining education website, where the full report will be available soon at www.folkminingeducation.info

Principal Findings and Conclusion

The Power report documents all of the following:

1. There are significant costs associated with mining activities that tend to offset the positive impacts of the high pay associated with mining jobs.
2. The economies of the Western Upper Peninsula have been successfully transitioning away from past reliance on unstable land-based, extraction-oriented economic activities.
3. The attractiveness of the Western Upper Peninsula's social and natural amenities is an important part of its economic base and future economic vitality. Economic activities that damage those attractive local characteristics are incompatible with the current sources of economic vitality.
4. If mining is allowed to resume, it will displace other important economic activities in the region.
5. The Upper Peninsula has begun to develop a cluster of entrepreneurial manufacturing firms and other supporting firms built around social and cultural assets, high-tech knowledge workers, attractive small urban areas, and high quality recreational amenities.

The Power report concludes that a return to reliance on metal ore mining and processing in the Western Upper Peninsula would damage, not improve, regional economic well-being and vitality. Instead, the economic development focus should continue to be on local "economic gardening" and further developing the positive economic trends already under way.

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

Remembering & honoring dear ones who share our stewardship values

UP Environment provides a place to remember and honor people dear to us in the name of environmental protection and stewardship. Your gift in **Memory** or **Honor** of others enables them to continue participating in UPEC's work. If you want to honor or remember someone, please provide relevant information in the Page 10 form.

In Honor of Catherine Parker by Jack Parker

In Memory of Oren Krumm by Marj & Ray Krumm

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 during recent years from grocery receipts collected by UPEC members. 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, 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. Thanks!



DEQ exemption allows PCP combustion at Warden

Warden Plant From Page 1

PCP is a synthetic chlorinated organic compound once widely used as a biocide and wood preservative for utility poles, railroad ties, and wharf pilings. It has been banned from public use in the U.S. since 1984. The EPA classifies it as a “probable human carcinogen.” Information about PCP is available at <http://www.epa.gov/ttnatw01/hlthef/pentachl.html>

Owned by Traxys, LWEC currently generates power at the rate of 16–17 megawatts, with some of that power being used by the nearby CertainTeed Ceiling plant and the remainder of the electricity going on the Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator wholesale market. One megawatt is enough energy to serve about 1000 homes. Traxys has Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approval to set market-based rates in the transmission-constrained area of the UP.

A global company involved in financing, marketing, distribution, and financial services for the mining, metals and mineral industries, Traxys is using LWEC to fulfill a 20-year contract with Detroit Edison (DTE). DTE is Michigan’s largest electric utility and is legally mandated to produce a certain percentage of its total energy output from renewable sources. DTE generates 80% of its power from aging coal-fired plants, one of the highest percentages from coal in the U.S. DTE also generates electricity from its outdated Fermi II nuclear power plant on the shore of Lake Erie in southeastern Michigan.

According to the Sierra Club’s magazine *The Mackinac*, “DTE has been outspoken in its refusal to pursue more energy efficiency and renewable energy sources beyond those required by law, even though these clean energy options would help hold down costs to their ratepayers and make Michigan companies more competitive.”

LWEC has generated concern among citizens of L’Anse and surrounding areas. Plant workers have experienced health problems, which they believe may be related to the chipping operation at the site, and other local residents have reported respiratory issues. There also are reports of soot on vehicles and boats in proximity to the plant. Immediately downwind are the BHK Head Start Center and the Sacred Heart Elementary School. L’Anse Area Schools are also nearby.

In the summer of 2012, I requested a meeting, through a liaison, with company officials to address concerns of local residents. In the meantime, Loman moved back to the Baraga County after retiring as a senior special advisor for the newly-created Bureau of Ocean Energy Management in Anchorage, Alaska. Loman subsequently initiated his own investigation into LWEC’s potential health, safety, and environmental impacts. On the EPA website at epa-sites.fndthedata.org he found LWEC listed in “Violation/Non-compliance” for about half the calendar quarters from April 2009 to May 2012.

As a result of his research and conversations with community members, Loman filed a petition with ATSDR in

February 2013. If ATSDR concurs with Loman’s petition, it has the option of delegating the public health assessment to the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) under its State Cooperative Agreement Program. Whether by ATSDR or MDCH, the assessment process would involve collecting and analyzing environmental and public health data from sources like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Michigan DNR, and Michigan DEQ in order to develop recommendations as well as identify any need for additional data collection. MDCH toxicologist Chris Bush confirmed that staff members at her agency are aware of the petition and are waiting to hear from ATSDR about any next steps.

The official Traxys response to Loman’s petition came from Chief Restructuring Officer and Power Group CEO Steve Walsh in New York. “The plant operates in compliance with terms and conditions of a recently renewed operating permit issued by the Michigan DEQ,” Walsh said. “The permit contains conditions established by the department to assure protection of the public health and the environment, including potential toxicological effects. Monitoring has shown that the LWEC is within all state, local and federal regulations and requirements for air and water quality.” This statement apparently conflicts with Loman’s findings from EPA documents.

Less than two months after Loman filed the petition, LWEC invited potential stakeholders to attend a quarterly Citizens Advisory Panel (CAP) meeting on April 15. Steve Walsh, who now resides in Hancock, conducted a presentation after which questions were fielded by himself, Technical Manager J.R. Richardson (who chairs the Michigan Natural Resources Commission), Operations Manager Darryl Koski, and Fuel and Plant Supply Supervisor John Polkky.

Polkky told CAP attendees that although LWEC has an exemption (because the DEQ exempts scrap wood) to burn PCP-treated ties, it is working to phase out that fuel source. He also noted that residue from the ties, including fragmented pieces and contaminated dirt and gravel are shipped to a landfill in Delta County. Ash from the electrostatic precipitator is also shipped to the Delta County landfill and spread in a thin layer on top of the landfill. Storing, chipping and burning of creosote and PCP-treated ties is a complicated issue because a subcontractor, MA Resources of Overland Park, Kansas, handles and manages the fuels stored in the yard. The chipping facility is subcontracted out to RPR Contractors and Equipment LLC of Baraga and, according to the DEQ, is not included in the LWEC air quality permit. The DEQ refers to the absence of an air quality permit for the chipping operation as an unresolved issue.

In the meantime, local residents, including children at three schools within close proximity to the facility, continue to be exposed to strong odors, loud blasts from the furnace and

LSYS inspires!

Nine Hannahville Indian School students, along with teacher Loretta Cox, attended the Lake Superior Youth Symposium at Michigan Tech in mid-May with support through a UPEC Environmental Education Grant. They joined over 200 students and teachers from 26 schools in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Ontario.

The symposium is designed to teach students and teachers about Lake Superior and the Great Lakes watersheds through hands-on activities and field trips. A key goal is to prepare participants to bring their experiences back to their classrooms and communities.

“This was my first time attending the Lake Superior Youth Symposium,



Hannahville students applying mulch at the Ransom Farm. Photo by Loretta Cox

Cox said. “Any teacher that would like to take kids...I say do not hesitate as it was great for us all! It was a great bonding experience too.”

Cox added that her students came away inspired to pursue related opportunities and many have begun talking about wanting to attend college.

Ingredients for respecting the world:

Grounded experience, connection, love & appreciation

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sible. Not a scrap of paper was allowed to be wasted, not a morsel of food or pan of water was wasted. All leftovers from the dinner table were saved and eaten later. When the dishes were done, the water was used to flush the toilet. Although her motivation was different than my father’s for taking care of her environment, she was the ultimate micro-conservationist. We produced very little trash.

So, my role models were people who interacted fully with the people and natural world surrounding them. We took what we needed and no more. We gave back where it was called for. Not unlike Leopold, we viewed our natural world as a gift to be nurtured and cared for. My parents began the local community support for the Seney National Wildlife Refuge. They solicited funds to build the visitor’s center and then volunteered in that center for several decades. They educated locals and visitors about the flora and fauna of the refuge and explained how and why the refuge was vital.

As a young kid, I spent a lot of time on the refuge working with my parents and the refuge employees, even babysitting the refuge workers’ children. Deer and bear were often on the doorstep and baby goslings’ meanderings caused us to tread very carefully. I did not know city ways.

Because we lived close to the refuge and I attended a two-room schoolhouse in Seney, woodland activities were our learning centers, our recreation centers, and the means by which we interacted with nature and each other. It was a thrill to find the first arbutus in spring, or Lily of the Val-

ley. We learned the cause-and-effect relationships in the real and living environment. We didn’t take small fish or small deer for the dinner table. We watched out for the widows in town, and took up collections of money when families needed help. We didn’t pollute the land, the earth, or the sky and didn’t tolerate others doing so.

As so many children discovered as they grew up in the Upper Peninsula, it was not easy to find work. We had to leave home to go to the cities to work and raise families – always with the thought in the back of our minds to return some day when we retired. But I think somewhere along the way we forgot what we had learned while we were growing up, as we gradually became city dwellers and numbed ourselves to the way the worst of people emerges when we are all sharing such a small area of real estate.

I lost the best part of my upbringing there in the city and did not return home until my parents were in their eighties. I’d raised a family of three girls who expected to run to the mall every weekend instead of donning snowshoes and visiting the snowy woodlands. My girls were very active, but they never got to toboggan down a hill and watch the rabbit tracks in the snow or hear the night conversations of the timber wolves.

But, some of my stories must have stuck in their minds. My girls love to come here to visit and “do the farm thing” with me and the goats and the ducks. They love to look out my kitchen window and see bear and deer and bunnies and hummingbirds. As long as they love and appreciate nature I have faith they will respect it also.

As partnership restores *man-o-manoomin*, the 'good berry' restores sense of place

By Rod Sharka

Although as I write this it is currently snowing and our northern waters are trapped under a thick layer of ice, after having just finished a hardy breakfast of wild rice and fruit sweetened with maple sugar, my thoughts wander back to last fall when I harvested the wild rice I just ate. If you have



Gathering rice on the Ontonagon River (above) and (below right) dancing on freshly harvested man-o-manoomin to remove hulls. All photos by Rod Sharka

never experienced harvesting and processing your own wild rice, you are missing out on one of life's simple pleasures and natural rewards.

What a better way to spend a sunny September afternoon than by poling a canoe through a stand of wild rice, literally immersed in nature. Imagine being surrounded by scores of acres of ripening rice plants standing taller than your head, your intrusion gently scaring up dozens if not hundreds of assorted waterfowl and songbirds that are sharing in the bounty. Imagine sharing your canoe not only with your ricing partner but also with hundreds if not thousands of spiders, flea beetles, and rice worm larvae that make the accumulating rice grain appear to quiver around your legs. (Not to fear. All of these critters are completely harmless and add to the experience of being at one with nature.)

And the best part, of course, is coming home with the satisfaction of having well exercised muscles and an abundance of wonderful, nutritious, healthy grain to enjoy through the coming winter. Of course, before your harvest can be eaten, it must be processed. Doing this the traditional Ojibwa way involves sun drying, parching (to toast), dancing on the rice (to remove the hulls), and winnowing to remove the chaff. Yes, it is a lot of work, but doing this one's self makes the final

product much more meaningful and satisfying.

Wild rice (*Zizania palustris* L.) is native to North America and grows predominantly in the Great Lakes region. This large-seeded aquatic species, one of four species of wild rice, is in the grass family (Poaceae) and has been eaten by people since prehistoric times. Early North American inhabitants, especially the Ojibway, Menominee, and Cree tribes in the North Central region of the continent, used the grain as a staple food and introduced European fur traders to wild rice.

Many consumers confuse paddy-grown wild rice with the true wild rice, hand-harvested from northern lakes and rivers. The "wild rice" offered for sale in local grocery stores or at roadside markets is paddy-grown rice – a different product than the true wild rice harvested from naturally growing stands. Paddy grown rice is a domesticated version of true wild rice. It has been genetically bred to be grown commercially and mechanically harvested and processed. It has larger, darker (almost black) kernels, takes longer to cook and lacks the distinguishing nutty flavor and fragrance found in native wild rice.

If you are a northern Wisconsin resident as I am, the number of lakes and streams containing stands of wild rice seem almost endless (over 20 for Vilas County alone), and the most

successful harvester must spend many preseason days scouting to locate the best rice beds to harvest each season. This present

abundance is thanks to the Wisconsin DNR as well as the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) and their joint efforts since 1984 to re-establish and re-plant the many historic wild rice populations that were mostly lost since European settlement due to various human-induced alterations to the landscape. The damming of lakes and rivers and the artificial control of water levels has likely led to the greatest losses, but pollution, heavy boat traffic, the introduction of exotic species, and other factors have all contributed to the decline.

These losses accentuate the need for rice restoration efforts and strict ricing regulations. For example, only Wisconsin residents may purchase a ricing permit and harvest in Wisconsin waters. And harvest dates and times, as well as permitted



harvesting equipment, are strictly regulated to protect the rice beds. Even with these strict regulations in place, some important rice beds (such as those on the Bad River Reservation) are in jeopardy if Gogebic Taconite, with state support, creates a taconite iron mine in the Penoque Hills of Wisconsin's Iron and Ashland Counties. The sulfate-containing overburden rock that would be removed to access the taconite ore at the proposed mine site would release large quantities of sulfate into the Bad River watershed that flows directly into these important rice beds in Kakagon Slough on Lake Superior. Research by Dr. John Moyle, an expert on natural wild rice, has shown that wild rice is extremely sensitive to sulfate levels and cannot tolerate sulfate concentrations greater than 10 mg/L, a concentration that will undoubtedly be exceeded many times over



if this mine comes to pass. Two states west of the UP, many Minnesota watersheds that historically hosted wild rice beds have seen those beds degraded by that state's taconite industry.

For UP residents, current ricing options are more limited because the Michigan DNR only recently recognized the cultural and ecological importance of historic rice beds. Unlike in Wisconsin and Minnesota, ricing continues to remain unregulated in Michigan, and the handful of UP rice beds that have been re-established receive no protection. However, thanks especially to Lac Vieux Desert tribal member Roger Labine and his family, efforts have been underway to re-establish historic wild rice beds on Lac Vieux Desert and other local waters. Roger's passion to educate the general public about the cultural and ecological importance of wild rice will hopefully bring needed change.

GLIFWC, the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Ojibwa, the Ottawa National Forest Service (including UPEC board member and retired USFS biologist Bob Evans), and the Wisconsin Valley Improvement Company (WVIC) have partnered to

restore traditional wild rice beds on Lac Vieux Desert. WVIC initially granted the LVD tribe a ten-year trial period to attempt to restore a minimum of 100 acres of wild rice. This



Lac Vieux Desert tribal member Roger Labine has spearheaded efforts to restore rice beds along the Michigan-Wisconsin border and also to restore cultural awareness of this traditional food. Labine (above) demonstrates winnowing at a ricing camp while a young ricer (left) parches the grass seed.

required lowering the Lac Vieux Desert's water level, which is controlled by the WVIC-owned dam. Despite successful restoration, the resulting bed acreage fell a bit shy of the required 100 acres and WVIC is considering not renewing the agreement, which would return lake water to the pre-agreement level. Hopefully, this will not happen as it will destroy all restoration results that have occurred in the last 10 years.

If you are interested in learning more about wild rice, consider attending Roger's Wild Rice Camp held mid-September at the Lac Vieux Desert Sacred Pow Wow Grounds just northeast of Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin. This GLIFWC-sponsored camp, which is open to anyone, provides a four-day immersion into traditional wild rice harvesting and processing methods and also the cultural and spiritual practices of the Ojibwa people. More information will be available later this summer at the Lac Vieux Desert tribal website.

You can also visit GLIFWC's website at www.glifwc.org and query "Wild Rice (Manoomin)". Here you will find an abundance of literature about wild rice and ricing, as well as a lengthy list of wild rice waters found throughout the ceded territories in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan.

A good future harvest to all. And, please remember to treat this fragile resource with the respect that it deserves!