

UP Environment

UPEC: THE UP'S OLDEST GRASSROOTS ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

Join us for UPEC's next Board meeting: Saturday, Jan 16 - Dickinson County Library in Iron Mountain, MI - 12:00 to 3 p.m. (Central)

Winter 2015



UPEC Announces New Community Conservation Grant Program

"Scratch a Yooper and you will find a conservation ethic" - Jon Saari

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition announces a new Community Conservation Grant Program with a call for proposals due by January 10, 2016. The program is in honor of UPEC member Tom Church (Watersmeet) whose bequest in 2013 made this new fund possible. Tom had a deep love for the U.P., and devoted much of his adult life to conserving the U.P. environment, and strengthening local communities. He passed away in June, 2013, at the young age of 58. Tom is particularly remembered for his activities to foster thoughtful management of the Sylvania Wilderness and as one of the prime coordinators for the Agonikak National Recreation (hiking/biking) Trail on the Ottawa National Forest.

"It is an honor for UPEC to be able to continue Tom's notable conservation legacy with this new fund" remarked Acting UPEC President Nancy Warren.

The Community Conservation Grant Program is designed to challenge U.P. communities to promote conservation values within their watershed or local area. In the past short-sighted actions by corporate or individual landowners often degraded the U.P. landscape. Today state and federal environmental regulations as well as the private conservancy movement work to protect natural areas for public benefit and to safeguard significant populations of wildlife, and the ecosystem processes which support them.

"Environmental problems sometimes seem overwhelming," observed UPEC's Nancy Warren, "but if we break them down into opportunities in our local area we discover there are always things that we can do."

In the new grant program, the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition is doing just that. The Community



Tom Church

Conservation Grants initiative focuses on communities that want to step up the protection of conservation values in their locality.

"Stepping up means finding ways to enhance native plant and animal life and the systems that support them," said UPEC Board member and past President Jon Saari. "It can be starting a community forest or preserve, or restoring a stream or wetland, or putting on a program about local medicinal plants, rare frogs or top predators. These are only examples. Local stakeholders can come up with their own ideas."

UPEC has been around since 1976, acting as a self-styled watchdog of industry and government. "The watchdog role is important," said Saari, "but it is often reactive and exhausting, with little to show for the effort. We wanted to be more proactive with this new grant program, finding community conservationists who want to improve wildlife habitat, as well as a greater public understanding of how natural systems function in their home communities."

"New Community Grant Program" continued on page 2

“New Community Grant Program” from page 1

The grants, up to \$10,000 each, are for planning or implementing local conservation projects that engage a variety of stakeholders within a community, from recreational and sportsmen’s groups to naturalists, township officials, churches, and schools. The UPEC Board anticipates the program will stimulate grassroots conservation activity in localities throughout the U.P.

“Scratch a Yooper,” said Saari, “and you will find a conservation ethic. Most who live here have a close tie to the outdoors, and want to protect this extraordinary

place we call home.” While many U.P. communities have a mix of public and private protected lands surrounding them, UPEC feels there is a crucial need to continue to enhance this landscape we all hold dear.

Those desiring more detailed information about the new Community Conservation Grants program are asked to go to the UPEC website, upenvironment.org/community_grants. The deadline for the first round of competitive grants is January 10, 2016. Awards will be announced by February 20, 2016.

The Collapse of the Wolf Population at Isle Royale Continues

By Rolf Peterson, Michigan Technological University



Rolf Peterson photo

While the wheels of the National Park Service continue to slowly turn, the wolf population that is now the subject of agency deliberation has all but vanished. There were only three wolves counted in February, 2015, after a dramatic decline from nine wolves in 2014. During the year that passed, the one remaining radio-collared wolf died, along with many others, before the 2015 count, a victim of wolf attack himself. His death may have been the result of vying with another male for the one female remaining in the primary pack. He may have perished a couple weeks after being wounded.

In September 2015 there were still at least two wolves left on the island. These wolves would be middle-aged or older, in addition to being very closely related. Without the arrival of new wolves – which is unlikely to occur without human intervention – the two remaining wolves probably cannot produce viable offspring. They evidently produced one pup that survived to the age of eight months, one of the three counted in 2015, but this animal was visibly deformed. This winter we will not be

surprised to discover that this third wolf did not survive.

Wolf predation has been virtually absent since 2012, and both prey species that the wolves depend on have responded with rapid population growth. The number of moose has doubled – to 1,250 in 2015 - in the past four years, and the number of active beaver colonies also doubled during 2010 – 2014.

The fact that moose are thriving on Isle Royale while moose on the mainland have declined, sometimes alarmingly, suggests that new trends on the mainland are threatening moose populations across the region. Mainland moose populations have always dealt with predators, both black bears and wolves, and climatic warming is not appreciably

“Wolf Population Collapse” continued on page 7

Hello From New Staff Member Gregg Bruff

Greetings! Allow me to introduce myself as your new UPEC Business and Communications Manager. I am delighted to work with UPEC and be able to contribute to the good work they, and what each of you do on behalf of the natural and cultural environment of the Upper Peninsula.



Mimi Klotz photo

I'd like to share a couple of things that I hope will provide a useful background to this new contracted person. I retired from the National Park Service after 37 years of working with the federal government, including the NPS and the U.S. Forest Service. Most recently, I worked 25 years as the Chief of Heritage Education at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. While there, I had detail opportunities to assist with management of the Arthur Carhart Wilderness Training Center in Montana, as well as several NPS management plans. These included team membership with the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Michigan, Fort Knox II, Indiana, John Muir Boyhood Home, Wisconsin, Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, Missouri, Tallgrass Prairie National Prairie and Preserve, Kansas, and Al Balid Archeology Site, Sultanate of Oman management plans. I have written and managed large grants from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

My wife Mimi and I live in Escanaba where we enjoy sailing, motorcycling, hiking, kayaking, camping, winter camping, reading, cooking, music, and the arts.

I have recently taken the place of David Clanaugh, who was in this position for five years. His are certainly big shoes to fill but I am looking forward to mastering the information that is his legacy. If, at any time, you would like to suggest changes to the UPEC newsletter or business operations, please contact me at 906-202-1329 or UPEC@upenvironment.org. I look forward to working with you!

Education Grant Deadline January 4

By David Clanaugh

UPEC reminds educators that a grant opportunity exists for teachers 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 \$500 for the 2016 calendar year, with applications due Monday, Jan. 4, 2016. Please share word of this opportunity with potential participants.

Teachers, 4-H and Scout leaders, museum staff members, youth service workers, or anyone wishing 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 except salaries.

As the UP's oldest grassroots environmental organization, UPEC is equally willing to fund outstanding projects inside and outside of formal school settings. Opportunities continue this year for projects that blend environmental awareness with the arts, thanks to the Bonnie Miljour Memorial Fund established by Chester Sermak.



2015 Photo Contest Entry by Phil Bellfy

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 received by mail or emailed no later than Jan. 4, 2016. Funding for successful proposals will be announced by the end of January.

Next UPEC Board Meeting: Saturday, January 16, Dickinson County Library, 401 Iron Mountain St, Iron Mountain, MI. 12:00 noon to 3 pm Central time.

Youth Explore Bat Ecology Through New Clear Lake "Vespers" Program



Gregg Bruff photo

Thanks to a generous grant from UPEC, Clear Lake Education Center students enjoyed learning about Michigan bats in a program titled "Vespers." All Upper Peninsula bats belong to the family Vespertilionidae or evening bats, so what better title for the program than that?

During spring and fall programs, 251 Clear Lake students (12% of total programs) learned about bat ecology, distribution, nomenclature, facts and fiction, and how scientists study bats using mist nets and other scientific instruments. In one activity, "felt bats" were "captured" in a mist net strung near a water source in the forest. The pretend critters were then measured to determine species using wingspan, forearm, weight, body length, and fur color data.



Brent Saeli photo

This information allowed students to consult a key so genus and species could be determined. Whereas the Upper

Peninsula only has seven, the state of Michigan has nine native bat species including the threatened Northern long-eared bat *Myotis septentrionalis* and the endangered Indiana bat *Myotis sodalis*.

U.P.E.C. funding enabled Clear Lake to purchase a mist net, two delicate scales, bats and skeletons encased in acrylic, books, field guides, and felt bat construction materials. The program was the second most presented by staff at Clear Lake this year.

Perhaps one of the most important facets of the programs was working with students to dispel old myths about these interesting night flyers: "Are they really flying rats?" Are all bats "vampire" bats? "Do all bats carry rabies? Do bats often get stuck in people's hair?" Students also learned what threats exist to their numbers, including white-nose syndrome, agricultural chemicals and loss of habitat. Fabric models showed sizes of the smallest bumblebee bat to the largest flying fox bat.

With these exciting UPEC-funded materials and curricula, Clear Lake and other students will enjoy "Vespers" for years to come!

Clear Lake Education Center is located on the Hiawatha National Forest between Shingleton and Manistique and is a partnership between the Forest, Delta Schoolcraft ISD, and Marquette Regional Educational Service Agency. The camp was originally constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1938.

Ways to Support UPEC

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

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

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

Thank You!



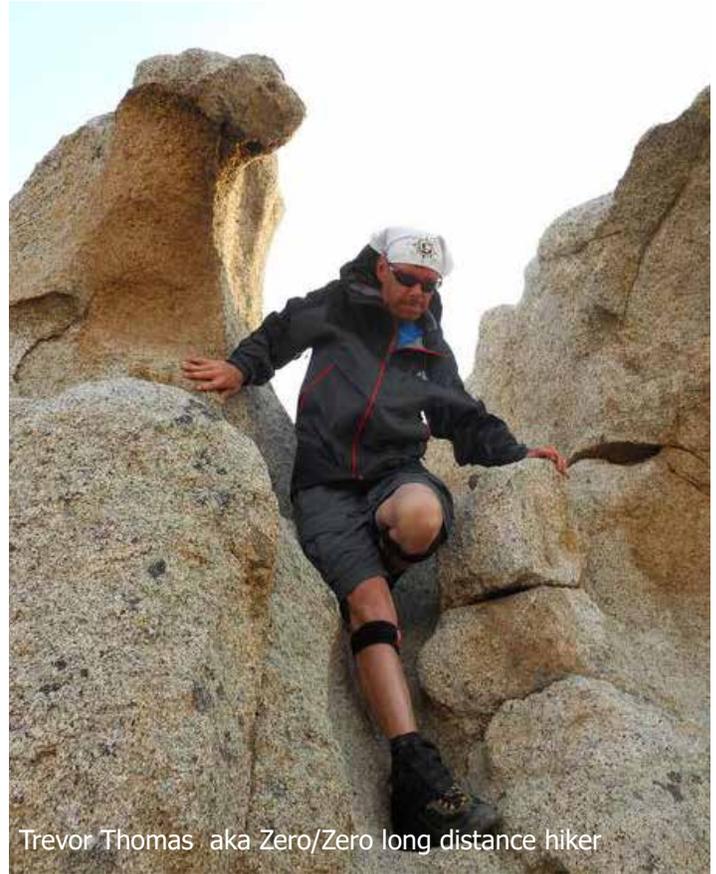
Mark Your Calendar NOW for Celebrate the UP! 2016

Plan to join us for the annual Celebrate the UP! at the Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College in Baraga, March 19. This is the first time Celebrate has been held in Baraga, affording northwestern UP residents the opportunity to enjoy the fellowship of conservation-minded people, art, workshops, and more.

Celebrate the UP! 2016 will be modified to a one day event on Saturday instead of two days, as has been the case in the past.

Our featured keynote speaker is **Trevor Thomas**, aka **Zero/Zero**, an accomplished long distance hiker. Trevor became the first blind person in history to complete an unassisted, solo end-to-end thru-hike of the entire 2175 mile Appalachian Trail from Springer Mountain, GA to Katahdin, ME (2008). During that trek he received his trail name, Zero/Zero -- given to him by some of his hiking companions. In keeping with tradition, he has kept his trail name, which refers to his blindness.

Since then, he has gone on to hike more than 18,000 miles on many of the most rugged, remote trails in North America. In 2010, he completed a thru hike of the Pacific Crest Trail, a 2,654 mile trek from Mexico to Canada and a thru hike of the John Muir Trail along with members of his hiking team, Team FarSight. He has climbed to the summit of Mt. Whitney, the tallest mountain in the contiguous US and in doing so, became the first blind person to stand on top. We anticipate a thought-provoking talk by this talented motivational speaker.



Trevor Thomas aka Zero/Zero long distance hiker

About UPEC...

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition has a five-decade 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 to promote sound planning and management decisions for all the region's natural resources.

UP Environment is published quarterly and available online to share with family & friends. Send comments or contributions to UPEC by standard mail at P.O. Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931. E-mail us at:

upec@upenvironment.org.

Website: www.upenvironment.org and [Facebook](#).

UPEC Officers, Board and Staff

Acting President: Nancy Warren

Secretary: Sherry Zoars

Treasurer: Jon Saari

Board Members:

Dave Aho	David Allen	Nick Baumgart
Grant Fenner	Robert Evans	Horst Schmidt
Margaret Scheffer	Connie Sherry	Doug Welker
Connie Julien, webmaster		

Staff: Gregg Bruff, Communication & Business Manager

Photography Contest Winners Announced

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition announces winners in the 2015 first Annual Photograph Contest. The purpose of the contest is to highlight “the best of” the Upper Peninsula’s scenes and activities. Photographs will be used in print and on-line publications, and exhibited at the annual “Celebrate the UP!” to be held March 19th at the Ojibwa Community College in Baraga.

We received entrees from seven individuals from across the U.P. The UPEC Board of Directors had a difficult time selecting the very best of the group.

The contest included four categories: 1 - Nature panoramas, wildlife, and landscapes, 2 – Humans engaged within the natural world, 3 – Close-ups of hidden or overlooked beauty, and 4 – Wonderful fluid water.

Thank you to all of you who entered, and NOW is a good time for each of you to begin collecting photographs for next year’s contest. Happy shooting!

Drum roll.....and the winners are:

**Conservation is a state of harmony
between men and land...**

Aldo Leopold



Human Engaged - 1st Place
Tall Iceberg by Dean Juntunen



Overlooked Beauty - 1st Place
Spider Web by Christopher Burnett



Nature Panorama - 1st Place
Bridge over Peshekee River by Christopher Burnett



Wonderful Fluid Water - 1st Place
Leatherby Falls by K. Kautto

“Wolf Population Collapse” from page 2

different between Isle Royale and the mainland. What is different is that white-tailed deer do not inhabit Isle Royale, and it is well-known that deer in the Midwest harbor an endemic parasite known as the brainworm (*Paraelaphostrongylus tenuis*) that is fatal to moose. Fully one-third of the adult moose radiocollared by the Lake Superior Band of Chippewa on their reservation at Grand Portage, Minnesota, have died of brainworm. With moose not doing well in the upper Midwest (there is a petition for federal listing of moose as Threatened), Isle Royale may be an important reservoir for a brainworm free population of moose. Of course, if Isle Royale is a last reservoir for moose in the Great Lakes region, then it will be critical that the population stay healthy. The best way assurance of health in a moose population is the presence of wolves.



Even though moose have doubled in number in the past four years, park visitors do not report seeing more moose. What they have reported, however, were local areas with many moose beds – vegetation flattened by a single bedded moose. Those observations may reflect a behavioral response to the disappearance of wolf predation, reducing their movement and their previous tendency to escape attention from wolves by gravitating to areas with ample human presence.

The NPS announced in July that the agency would conduct an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) under the provisions of the National Environmental Protection Act. A public comment period closed at the end of August. There will be no agency actions prior to completion of the EIS, expected to take at least two more years.



Overall Photography Contest Winner
Milky Way over Copper Harbor by Scott Pearson

Engaging Youth in Bird Feeding

by Nick Baumgart

Winter is here and birds can use some supplemental feed to help them through the cold and snow. Plus, they are fun to watch from the comforts of your warm home. Now is the time to prepare your feeders to make the most of this experience. Having youth help will introduce them to bird watching and feeding. This can lead to a variety of activities youth can enjoy for years to come.

Feeding birds is easy, which lends itself well to getting youth involved. Begin by having youth investigate what kinds of birds are in your area. Based on this knowledge, they can decide what type of seed is best and ultimately what type of feeders to use. Have youth create a budget and then shop for the correct seed and feeder style.

There are some specialty stores and garden centers that sell bird feeders. Many large retail stores also sell bird feeders. Have youth review the various choices and don't hesitate to have them ask questions. Keep in mind important considerations such as cost, size, functionality and durability.

Another great option is to spend some time building your own feeders. Multiple bird feeder kits and plans are available online. Youth enjoy making things, particularly items that are put to good use. New materials make nice feeders and are easy to work with. Reusing otherwise discarded items is an option that gives new life to an old item. If you are using previously used bird feeders, make sure they are clean and free from any harmful bacteria. Let youth make their decisions and then collect materials they need.

Once feeders are assembled and seed is available, it is time to mount or hang a feeder. Ask youth where they think is the best location. Consider nearby hiding places for birds, viewing options from inside, protection from the elements and ease of filling. What may be good for an adult may not be best for youth. Also, be mindful of squirrels. They like an easy meal!

Let the observations begin. Have youth identify the various birds that visit and keep track of the number of each specie. Youth can record what time birds arrive at feeders and when is the most activity occurring. Youth should try to monitor how much seed is being used on a monthly basis to help with budgeting. Creating a chart



to record observations and make notes is advisable and another good skill for youth.

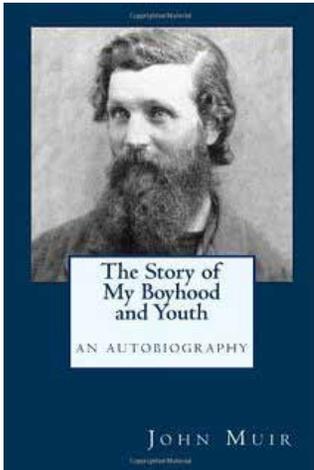
A variety of other skills can be incorporated as well, like creating and maintaining a bird feeding station. Research, budgeting, wise consumerism, shopping, entrepreneurship and record keeping are just some of the skills that can be developed in youth. These are valuable life skills that are hands-on, which fits well with the 4-H motto, "learn by doing."

Bird feeding lasts five to six months depending on location, costs and environmental conditions. Make the most of it with youth and have fun! Visit the Michigan State University Extension website to read "Winter is bird feeder time!," a previous article about bird feeder type, placement, preparation and seed type.

This article was published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>.

John Muir's Legacy Close to Home

by Gregg Bruff



These long winter nights are great for reading literature that has given rise to today's environmental movement. Though there are literally hundreds of titles to choose from, a few are worthy of returning to now and then. Leopold's "Sand County Almanac" is one, Henry Beston's "The Outermost House" is another, and Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" a third.

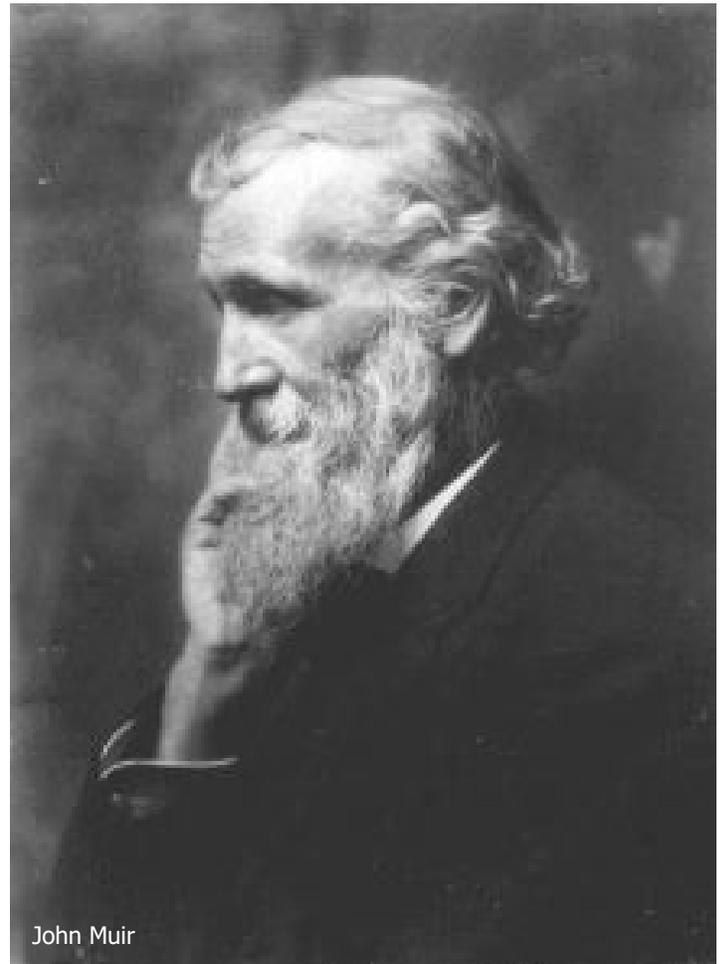
One that is particularly close to us in the UP, however, is John Muir's "The Story of My Boyhood and Youth", written in 1912 about his experiences in south central Wisconsin. It is between these covers that we glimpse the origins of Muir's life spent observing and appreciating nature, writing about it, and serving as a guide to others who would follow in his footsteps.

It is particularly fulfilling to walk the land where Muir grew up. Recently, I had a chance to once again experience the Wisconsin countryside where he lived as a kid near Ennis (Fountain) Lake in Marquette County. Muir Park contains a variety of upland and wetland communities surrounding the 30-acre lake, which is a spring-fed kettle lake occupying a marshy pocket in ground moraine. The surrounding vegetation is diverse and includes a rich fen that lies along the outlet stream, a sedge meadow and open bog, northern wet forest of tamarack, southern dry forest with oak openings, and wet-mesic prairie. The park was designated a Wisconsin State Natural Area in 1972.

The land has been preserved as a county park with a small parking lot, boat ramp for non-motorized fishing, picnic shelter and ball field, and restrooms. To the north side of the parking lot a large exhibit structure portrays Muir's life and the ecology of the area. A granite marker stands by itself overlooking the sunsets to the west with the inscription: ***"JOHN MUIR – Foster Son of Wisconsin, Born in Scotland, April 21, 1838. He came to America as a lad of eleven, spent his 'teen years in hard work clearing the farm across this lake, carving out a home in the wilderness. In the 'sunny woods, overlooking a flowery glacial meadow and a lake rimmed with water lilies,' he found an environment that fanned the fire of his zeal and love for all nature, which, as a man, drove him to study, afoot, alone and unafraid, the forests, mountains and glaciers of the west, to become the most rugged, fervent naturalist America has produced, and the father of the national parks of our country."***

The site includes a short section of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, which meanders through restored tallgrass prairie.

Walking that trail, my eyes scanned the high ground as I wondered where Muir was forced by his father to hand dig a well for his family – a task that took most of one summer and in which Muir nearly died from a lack of oxygen deep in the hole. You can see where John wandered and wondered about the landscape and its creatures as he went about his daily toil of living on a homestead farm. He swam in the lake and must have



John Muir



Ennis Lake - Gregg Bruff photo

fished there as young people continue to do today. “We were great admirers of the little black water-bugs. Their whole lives seemed to be play, skimming, swimming, swirling, and waltzing together in little groups on the edge of the lake and in the meadow springs, dancing to music we never could hear. The long-legged skaters, too, seemed wonderful fellows, shuffling about on top of the water, with air-bubbles like little bladders tangled under their hairy feet; and we often wished that we also might be shod in the same way to enable us to skate on the lake in summer as well as in icy winter. Not less wonderful were the boatmen, swimming on their backs, pulling themselves along with a pair of oar-like legs.”

It was there that young Muir became acquainted with all sorts of wildlife: “We discovered the copperhead when we were ploughing, and we saw and felt at the first long, fixed, half-charmed, admiring stare at him that he was an awfully dangerous fellow. Every fiber of his strong, lithe, quivering body, his burnished copper-colored head, and above all his fierce, able eyes, seemed to be overflowing full of deadly power, and bade us beware.... We watched the habits of the swift-darting dragonflies, wild bees, butterflies, wasps, beetles, etc., and soon learned to discriminate between those that might be safely handled and the pinching or stinging species. But of all our wild neighbors the mosquitoes were the first with which we became very intimately acquainted.”

Several years ago, I was fortunate to have served on a team of National Park Service planners that was convened to research and write management options for the Muir homestead. The team made recommendations for the county park and the large exhibit panel and trail are the outcomes of that plan.

Today we enjoy working to continue the conservation legacy of John Muir. In part because of his philosophy and writing, people have appreciated and protected the Upper Peninsula’s landscapes, flora and fauna that thrive here. Should you one day find yourself driving north of Madison, WI, on County Road F, stop by for a visit with the heritage of John Muir.

Muir Bibliography

- Studies in the Sierra: (reprint of serials from 1874)
- Picturesque California: 1888
- The Mountains of California: 1894
- Our National Parks. Boston: 1901
- Stickeen: The Story of a Dog. 1909
- My First Summer in the Sierra: 1911
- The Yosemite: 1912
- The Story of My Boyhood and Youth: 1913
- Travels in Alaska: 1915
- Letters to a Friend: 1915
- A Thousand-mile Walk to the Gulf: 1916
- The Cruise of the Corwin: 1917
- Steep Trails: 1918

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Please complete, attach a check, and give to a UPEC board member or mail to UPEC: PO Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931

Or you can contribute on-line through justgive on UPEC's website: www.upenvironment.org/join-donate/

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

- Regular Membership (\$20)**
- Supporting or Organizational Membership (\$50)**
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- Contact me - I want to volunteer!**
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- In Honor or Memory of _____**
(Please circle correct category, and provide person's or family's name and mailing address on separate sheet of paper)

I would like to contribute to these UPEC funds (indicate amount of donation):

- Environmental Education
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- (Make check to MCCC with UPEC in memo line)

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Check your newsletter's mailing label for your membership status. Phone and E-mail information is optional - UPEC does not share members' contact information with any other organizations. Thank You for your support!

Remembering & Honoring UPEC's 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 **Honor** or **Memory** of others enables them to continue to participate in UPEC's work. Please use the form above to designate an Honor or Memorial gift.*

In Memory of Mary Kranker by the Clanaugh Family

Don't forget those **econofoods** slips!

Thanks to you and Econo Foods, UPEC recently earned several hundred dollars from grocery receipts. 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 if more of us save our slips and send them in! 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!





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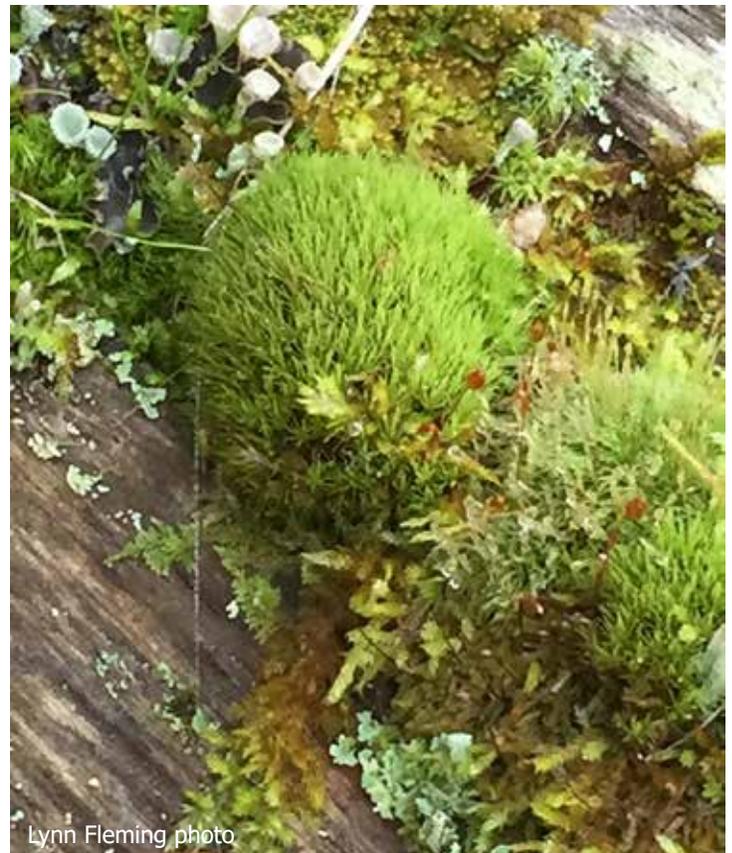
*Protecting and maintaining the
unique environmental qualities
of Michigan's Upper Peninsula
by educating the public and
acting as a watchdog to
industry and government*

How to Contact Your State Legislators

37th District Senator Wayne Schmidt
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107th District Rep. Lee Chatfield
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Please review your membership status

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Lynn Fleming photo