

Save the Wild U.P. officially merges with UPEC on December 31, 2016

Success! As many of you know, Save the Wild U.P. (SWUP) has joined with the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (UPEC) to create within UPEC the Mining Action Group (MAG). **MAG is a 100% volunteer, grassroots effort defending the clean water and wild places of Michigan's Upper Peninsula from the dangers of sulfide mining.** MAG is a new semi-autonomous arm of UPEC; the leadership team includes Alexandra Maxwell, Kathleen Heideman, Jon Saari, and Steve Garske.

September 2016:

EXCITING NEWS FOR UPEC AND SWUP!!

NEW ERA OF COOPERATION AS UPEC AND SWUP COMBINE FORCES

Marquette - September 2016 - The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (UPEC) and Save the Wild U.P. (SWUP) have joined forces to create a far-reaching, inclusive environmental advocacy group for the Upper Peninsula. Effective immediately, SWUP will become a part of UPEC, allowing the strengths of both groups to be highlighted in their cooperative work to protect clean water and wild places. UPEC will maintain its focus on environmental education and advocacy for U.P. wild lands. While SWUP, with its new partner's support, will continue its activism as the *Mining Action Group*. Horst Schmidt, UPEC President, said "We've done it! UPEC and SWUP are One Voice. With five decades of combined leadership and effort, the merger leads to a strengthened organization reaching out to the citizens of the Upper Peninsula. We could not have done it without the dedication of board members of both groups. "

The leaders of SWUP, Kathleen Heideman and Alexandra Maxwell, will be joining the UPEC board, adding greater depth and knowledge. SWUP's strength lies in its social media contacts and in its hard-hitting public commentary on sulfide mining-related permits, most recently on the proposed zinc-copper mine targeting the Menominee River and the proposed expansion of the Eagle Mine in Marquette County.

"UPEC's perspective is broader and more historical," said Jon Saari, who has served in leadership roles in both organizations. "The U.P.'s extensive public lands provide a core area for nature's story to unfold. If we can enhance the quality of these wild lands and contain the threats to them, the U.P. has a rare chance to demonstrate what it means to be a sustainable place in the 21st century."

UPEC's activities have focused on community outreach through its quarterly newsletter, its annual Celebration of the U.P., and its grant programs in environmental education and community conservation. "We awarded \$34,000 in grants in 2016 in these two programs," said President Schmidt, "and going forward we want to enhance our presence and partnerships U.P. wide."

SWUP has gone through several transformations in its 12-year history, but has always maintained a presence as think tank for citizens concerned about the environmental and social threats brought by sulfide mining. SWUP has a long list of accomplishments from the last 12 years, from gathering impressive public participation in the permitting processes, to providing college level fellowship programs, leading one of a kind outdoor excursions to threatened wild places in Marquette County, to providing intelligent analysis on mining permits, and all for the purpose of protecting clean water and wild places.

UPEC and SWUP complement each other, with one group focused on the quality and adequacy of wild lands and waters to support all of life, the other more narrowly focused on the threat of sulfide mining to our water rich region. Joining forces will allow SWUP to overcome some of the stress of fundraising and maintaining its own organization.

"This organizational transformation will enable members of the Mining Action Group, now organized under the larger tent of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, to refocus on their grassroots work – defending Upper Michigan's clean water and wild places from the threat of sulfide mining," said Kathleen Heideman, SWUP president. "We're not getting bigger as a result of the merger, we're getting better."

As the groups join and navigate the path ahead, they will speak with "ONE VOICE" for the environment of the U.P. Founded in 2004, Save the Wild U.P. is a grassroots environmental organization dedicated to defending wild places and clean water of Michigan's Upper Peninsula from the dangers of sulfide mining.

Founded in 1976, UPEC's purpose has remained unchanged: to protect and maintain the unique environmental qualities of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan by educating the public and acting as a watchdog to industry and government. UPEC is a charter member of the Michigan Environmental Council, a statewide network of groups. UPEC is a non profit, registered 501(c)(3) organization. For more information visit our website: www.upenvironment.org, visit our Facebook page, or contact: upec@upenvironment.org. Phone [906-201-1949](tel:906-201-1949).