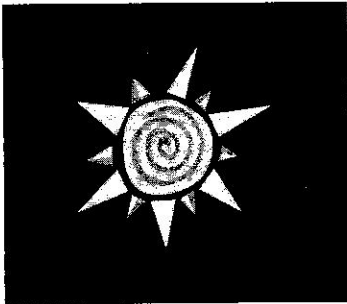


UPEC Takes Action



UPPER PENINSULA ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION

U.P. Environment

This spring and summer has been a busy time for UPEC! Our board members have been working hard behind the scenes, reviewing everything from dam safety reports to forest management plans, to requests for mini-grants from deserving K-12 teachers. Here are just a few of the activities our board has worked on over the spring and summer of 2004:

UPEC collaborated with the Eagle Alliance to sponsor a public forum in the Copper Country regarding the potential impact of sulfide mining on the Yellow Dog Plains. About 70 local residents attended to hear presentations by Cynthia Pryor (Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve), Alex Mayer (MTU Hydrologist), Jon Saari (UPEC President), and Dave Allen (UPEC Board Member). Eagle Alliance has sponsored forums for residents in Marquette, Big Bay, L'Anse, and Michigamme, as well as a landowner seminar in Negaunee Township. *See p. 6 & 7 for more sulfide mining information.*

UPEC has reviewed and responded to citizen concerns about the safety of the White Pine Mine Dam, including its current construction and the Remediation Action Plan. President Jon Saari has followed up with MDNR officials who are responsible for monitoring the safety of this large dam complex a few miles from Lake Superior.

UPEC Board Members Bill Malmsten and Jon Saari, along with local resident Tom Church, applied for and won a grant from the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council to conduct an educational awareness campaign about the hazards of exotic aquatic species in the Sylvania Wilderness Area. *See back cover of newsletter, "UPEC Conducts Exotic"*
(Continued on page 3)

Keweenaw Point Advisory Committee Nears Deadline

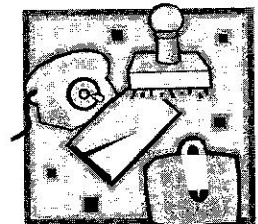
By Suzanne Van Dam

Ed Note: In our last newsletter, we explained that the Michigan DNR had formed the Keweenaw Point Advisory Committee (KPAC) to solicit a broad spectrum of citizen perspectives on managing the State's recently acquired land at the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula.

The 6,275 acres were originally bought from International Paper by The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Chapter, which held the land in trust until it could be purchased by the State of Michigan.

The KPAC advisory is comprised of over 15 groups representing

various stakeholders from motorized sportsmen to the



(Continued on page 3)

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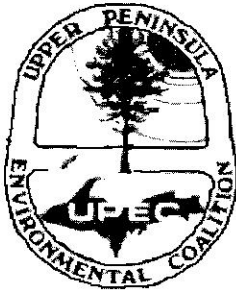
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UPEC Action...

- UPEC conducts Exotic Species Project
- UPEC awards 3 Environmental Education Mini-Grants
- UPEC continues pressure on State to monitor impact of communications towers on bird populations

Newsletter Editor: Suzanne Van Dam

About UPEC...



The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition has a 27-year track record of protecting and seeking to maintain the unique environmental qualities of the U.P. through public education and watchful 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.

The *Upper Peninsula Environment* is published four times per year. Contributions and correspondence should be sent to: P.O. Box 673, Houghton, MI 49931 or e-mailed to: svandam@chartermi.net.

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Earth Share of Michigan allows working people to donate to environmental organizations through workplace giving campaigns.

Each year Earth Share provides UPEC with critically-needed funding for environmental education, and program operation.

If you would like to help us earn more funding for UPEC, consider letting your employer know you want the Earth Share of Michigan giving option at your workplace and give to the annual payroll deduction plan.

For more information, please call: 1 (800) 386-3326 or view the website at: www.earthsharenichigan.org



Send a Letter to Your Legislators

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Rep. Tom Casperson: (517) 373-0156

Rep. Stephen Adamini: (517) 373-0498

Rep. Richard Brown: (888) 663-4031

Wondering if your membership is current? Your expiration date is written on your mailing label on the cover of this newsletter!

UPEC Takes Action

(Continued from page 1)
Species Project in Sylvania Wilderness.”

☑ UPEC Board Member Friederike Greuer is representing UPEC and acting as secretary for the Keweenaw Point Citizen’s Advisory Committee. KPAC is making recommendations to the DNR regarding land use and management of the 6,275 acres the State acquired.

☑ UPEC Board Members Doug Welker, Jon Saari, and Dave Allen have helped draft a map of the Trap Hills area.

suggesting appropriate land-uses, including wilderness, within this part of the Ottawa National Forest. See p. 6 “Trap Hills Conservation Alliance...”

☑ UPEC Board Member Doug Welker participated in a panel discussion organized by Michigan Tech for K-12 teachers regarding the role of citizen input in the National/State forest planning process.

☑ UPEC Board Members awarded educational grants to three school

projects: Chuck Delpier from Negaunee Middle School received \$500 for his “Tents “R” Us Environmental Adventures Program; Nicole Filzetti from Burt Township School in Grand Marais received \$500 for a peer-tutoring day camp at the Clear Lake Education Center; and Lynn Dunham and her Student Teacher Gene Wicks from Sault Area High School received \$500 for a water quality sampling project. *These projects to be addressed in next newsletter.*

Keweenaw Point Advisory Committee



(Continued from page 1)
Michigan Nature Association, to Trout Unlimited. Friederike Greuer represents UPEC on the committee, with Doug Welker acting as alternate.

According to Bill Deephouse, an active member of the committee, the group has studied topo maps, hiked into specific areas to get a clear idea of the terrain, and has had lengthy discussions about best management practices. He said that 14 of the original 15 members are still on board, even though members frequently disagree about best uses for the land

The DNR has set an ambitious September deadline, and has asked the committee to come up with broad recommendations for the following eight priorities:

- 1) **Road System**—including the opening of new roads and the closing, improvement, or re-routing of existing roads
- 2) **Motorized Usage**—including recommendations on which areas are

suitable for ATV’s, 4-wheelers, and snowmobiles

- 3) **Non-Motorized Usage**—including strategies on separating different user groups so that silent sporters can hike to places without being disturbed by motors
- 4) **Public Access**—including trail construction and the identification of key areas which should be accessible to the public, year round or seasonally
- 5) **Forest and Timber Management** including areas earmarked for timber sales.
- 6) **Day Use Areas**—including picnic areas, scenic turn-outs, and restroom facilities
- 7) **Camping Areas**—including the location, type, and size of new campsites
- 8) **Minimum Impact Zones**— including areas to be surveyed for rare plants; developments such as

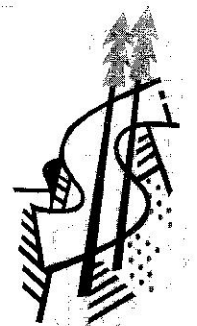
campgrounds and roads should be planned to limit impact on these ecologically sensitive areas.

For a listing of all the KPAC members and their affiliations, and for a copy of the minutes and public comments, please see the excellent coverage provided by Michele Anderson in her on-line newspaper. *Keweenaw Now* at: www.keweenawnow.com.

UPEC members and the general public can still offer input by attending a KPAC meeting held in the Allouez Community Building the first Tuesdays of the month or by contacting the UPEC Representative:

Friederike Greuer
Phone: 906-523-4429
E-mail: lilli@up.net.

All meetings are open to the public and include a public comment period.



Trap Hills Conservation Alliance Drafts New Management Proposal

The Trap Hills Conservation Alliance, of which UPFC is a member, has created a draft proposal to protect the Trap Hills and surrounding area in Ontonagon County.

The proposal involves Wilderness Designation for ecologically-significant regions, within a much larger area designated as a National Recreation Area (NRA). Details of the proposal will not be released until it is closer to its final form.

Concurrently, plans are being made to gain support for wilderness designation from local groups and local, state, and national political leaders. Beginning this summer or fall, the group expects to get involved even more intensively with the Ottawa National Forest's Forest Plan Revision process.

Campaigns for wilderness or other forms of land protection often last many years. This campaign is barely

out of its infancy, but energy levels are high and veterans of previous wilderness campaigns are providing critically needed guidance. It's a long, uphill battle and volunteers are still needed!



Contact Doug Welker at dwelker@up.net for information on how you can get involved!

Local Activists Plan March at Proposed Sulfide Mine Site Camp-out: Friday, August 13 & March Saturday, August 14



The Eagle Alliance and some local residents are planning a march in opposition to sulfide mining on the Yellow Dog Plains for Saturday the 14th of August on County Road AAA in Marquette County.

Marching and activities will not take place on private property without permission.

The plan is to get as many people as possible marching from the L'Anse side and as many people as possible from the Big Bay side to converge at the proposed Eagle Mine site at the Salmon Trout River. Those coming from the L'Anse area should plan on meeting at Anderson's Corner at 9:00 a.m. to walk the 4.4 miles to the site; those from the Big Bay side will

meet at the top of Camp 6 Hill also at 9:00 a.m. and hike 4.9 miles to the site. March organizers estimate the walk should take about two hours from both starting points, and have offered transportation back to the start. People may drive all the way to the proposed sulfide mining site or walk only portions of it.

Baraga Coordinator:
Don Carlson: (906) 353-7510

Directions to Anderson's Corner from Baraga/L'Anse :

- U.S. 41 to L'Anse - take exit to downtown L'Anse
- From downtown L'Anse head east on Skanee Rd
- Approx 18 miles from L'Anse - Stop Sign
- Turn right on Big Bay Road - over Big Eric's Bridge (Dirt Road)
- Follow Big Bay Road (via Ford Rd) to Anderson's Corner on Triple AAA, Approx. 10 miles.

Big Bay Coordinator:
Cynthia Pryor: (906) 360-2414 or (906) 345-9223

Directions to Camp 6 Hill from Marquette/ Big Bay

- County Road 550 to County Road 510 - Dirt (one mile south of Big Bay). Big Bay is 25 miles north of Marquette.
- West on CR 510 three miles to Triple AAA - Turn west
- Stay left on AAA up the Camp 6 Hill - Approx five miles from 510

There will be signs from both ends starting at Skanee Road/Big Bay Road and from CR 550/CR 510. Activists also plan to camp on State Land at the base of the big rock where the proposed entry of the mine will be. Festivities, ceremonies, and public discussions will begin at noon on Saturday. The event is open to the public.

Hydrology Study Needed: Environmentalists Petition for Complete USGS Study in Yellow Dog

— According to Cynthia Pryor, spokesperson for the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve, Inc., the Kennecott Corporation's current hydrology study of the Yellow Dog Plains is too limited to provide adequate, independently verifiable information regarding the potential impacts of sulfide mining on the ground and surface waters of the Yellow Dog Watershed and Lake Superior Basin.

A group calling itself "Concerned Citizens of Big Bay, Michigan"

is circulating a petition to the State of Michigan and other units of government requesting that a full baseline Hydrology Study be performed by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in the area of the proposed sulfide mine on the Yellow Dog Plains.

The Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve Inc. obtained funding last year to perform a literature-based hydrologic study of the Yellow Dog and Salmon-Trout River watersheds. The funding

was provided by the Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network & Fund. The study examined available information to document the water flows and water quality of the region, and identified areas where additional information was needed. The study was led by Dr. Alex Mayer, a hydrologist at Michigan Technological University. It concluded that the current hydrologic data on the watershed is extremely limited and is insufficient to assess

the impacts of future development in the watersheds, such as the proposed Kennecott mine. The report, completed in June 2004, has been passed on to the Michigan DEQ and the USGS.

The findings bolster the argument that a thorough hydrologic study must be conducted before permits for sulfide mining operation can be issued, if at all.

Knowing that Michigan has extremely

limited funding to enforce pollution standards once a project is in operation, many environmentalists wish to see this thorough study completed **before** sulfide mining operation permits are issued, and certainly before sulfide mining operations take place. The USGS (U. S. Geological Survey) is considered a neutral party and their data is

accepted by most experts in the field and in courts of law.

According to Pryor, "Kennecott has indicated that they are not interested in participating in a USGS study. I have forwarded this proposal to the Deputy Director of the DEQ and now we need the people of the state to express their will in this matter... it is time for heightened awareness, time to take action regarding the planned [sulfide mining] initiatives that Kennecott wishes to start in our community." Pryor estimates that the study will take five years to complete and will cost approximately \$1.5 million.

Concerned Citizens of Big Bay are asking residents to sign and distribute the petition to supporters, returning the petition by August 15th to: Yellow Dog Office at P.O. Box 5, Big Bay, MI 49808. Copies of the petition may be downloaded from the Eagle Alliance website: www.ydeaglescry.com

Signature gatherers also are encouraged to print out the talking points about sulfide mining on the Eagle Alliance website.



Lessons From Lopez: UPEC's Meeting & Presentation

By Suzanne Van Dam



Rather than hosting our own speaker for this year's annual meeting, UPEC decided to take advantage of an event sponsored by Finlandia University, inviting our members to attend the public lecture by Barry Lopez. Lopez is a naturalist, international traveler, and award-winning author of *Arctic Dreams*, for which he won the National Book Award.

On April 3rd, 2004 he addressed a standing-room only crowd, speaking about the "Wisdom of Local Knowledge," and reading the complete essay "The American Geographies" recently reprinted in *Vintage Lopez*, a collection of essays and fiction excerpts. A Lake Linden high school teacher who heard him speak commented, "I'm as impressed with the man as I am with his writing."

So was I. As the faculty member at Finlandia responsible for arranging Barry Lopez's schedule, I had many opportunities to see him interact with students, teachers and local residents. On each of these occasions, Lopez spoke with authority, conviction and compassion for the people struggling to make a living and for those struggling to find their place on the land. He pointed out the dangers of condensing nature into pretty or exotic images that conveniently fit our expectation of what nature ought to be.

"As Americans," he writes, "we profess a sincere and fierce love for the American landscape, for our rolling prairies, free-flowing rivers, and 'purple mountains' majesty"; but it is hard to imagine, actually, where this particular landscape is. It is not just that a nostalgic landscape has passed away... in the attenuated form in which it is presented on television today, in magazine articles and in calendar photographs, the essential wildness of the American landscape is

reduced to attractive scenery. We look out on a familiar, memorized landscape that portends adventure and promises enrichment. There are no distracting people in it and few artifacts of human life. The animals are all beautiful, diligent, one might even say well behaved. Nature's unruliness, the power of rivers and skies to intimidate, and any evidence of disastrous human land management practices are all but invisible."

The danger in this imaginary landscape is that people begin to view land as a commodity with interchangeable parts. UPEC, along with many long-time U.P. residents, have observed this unfortunate pattern again and again. Wetlands mitigation in Houghton is a prime example. Local politicians and engineers

"It is through the power of observation, the gifts of eye and ear, of tongue and nose and finger, that a place first rises in our mind; afterward it is memory that carries the place."

for Wal-Mart argued that the destruction of the old, forested wetlands behind the Houghton Wal-Mart would be replaced by a "constructed" wetlands. The last "constructed" wetlands built for Wal-Mart was situated on a stamp-sand inlet, with a few cattails added for wetlands foliage. And though the general public may be convinced that the lost land has been "replaced" acre for acre, anyone who hiked that land or caught frogs there as a child knows instinctively that what was committed there was a loss, not a deal.

Lopez argued that individuals who have an intimate understanding of and relationship to the land are our best defense against political manipulation, environmental degradation, and spiritual estrangement. This expertise "resides with men and women more or less sworn to a place, who abide there, who have a feel for the soil and history, for the turn of leaves and night sounds," he says. UPEC has a number of those individuals who have made this place their home, and

whose concrete knowledge of the land has led them to fiercely defend it, be it the bogs and rivulets of the Yellow Dog Plains, the silence of the Sylvania Wilderness, or the craggy outcroppings of the Keweenaw.

Lopez takes heart in such "geographical geniuses," and so should we, for we will need leaders who can speak with the authority of experience as we face a formidable struggle in the U.P. against development pressures, aggressive sulfide mining operations, unsustainable logging, and fragmentation of our vast tracks of forest.

As Lopez points out, "it is through the power of observation, the gifts of eye and ear, of tongue and nose and finger, that a place first rises in our mind; afterward it is memory that carries the place, that allows it to grow in depth and complexity." Lopez's conclusion, both for himself and for those in the audience that night, is to take

in an intimate knowledge of the land, learn the human and natural history, the bogs where orchids bloom wild and the thimbleberry patches where bears bed down. If you don't have the knowledge, Lopez suggests, borrow it from someone who does, as there are many of these men and women around who are willing to share their wisdom. As Lopez says, "we have held these two things dear, landscape and memory. Each infuses us with a different kind of life. The one feeds us, figuratively and literally. The other protects us from lies and tyranny." Lopez shed light, or to use his word "limned" the need for an intimate experience of our own geography. It is up to us to take the time to achieve that intimacy—and to remember.

Suzanne Van Dam is the UPEC Business Manager and Newsletter editor. She is also the coordinator of the ACE Program at Finlandia University which sponsored Barry Lopez's visit.



Yes! I Want to Help UPEC Make a Difference!

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

\$ The Land Fund is used to purchase or protect ecologically significant areas of the U.P.



\$\$ The Education Fund helps teachers implement environmental education and outreach in K-12 school districts throughout the U.P.

I would like to support the goals of UPEC by enclosing a contribution for: (Please check one)

- Regular Membership (\$20)
 Supporting Membership (\$50)
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 Other

\$\$\$The Endowment Fund helps ensure the long-term viability of UPEC. If you make your check out to the Marquette Community Foundation (MCF) and put UPEC FUND on the memo line, you can take a 50% tax credit on your Michigan state income tax (up to \$200 for individuals, \$400 for couples). OR, you can make a contribution directly to UPEC. As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, dues & contributions are tax deductible.

UPEC appreciates your generous and timely response!
 I'm already a Member! Here is an additional contribution for:

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 \$\$ UPEC Environmental Education Fund.
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Mail All Contributions To:
UPEC
P.O. Box 673
Houghton, MI 49931

Northwoods Native Plant Society Field Trips



Anyone interested in plants, ecology, or just getting out in the woods is invited to attend upcoming activities of the North Woods Native Plant Society (NWNPS). The NWNPS is a group of both professional and amateur botanists with an interest in

learning about and conserving native plants and ecosystems in the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan and northern Wisconsin. You don't need to know much about plants to attend; just come along and learn from the experts!

Upcoming NWNPS Activities:
August 28: (tentative date pending seasonal variations) - wild rice & aquatics;

Colleen Matula & Quita Sheehan
September 18: National Public Lands Work Day on the Ottawa; Ian Shackelford
Late September: male fern site near Alston, Michigan; Doug Welker
 To get on the list to receive e-mails with details on these trips, and to get field trip announcements next year, e-mail Sherry Zoars at: thezoars@excite.com.

Help Build The North Country Trail in the Porkies: August 15-21

By Doug Welker

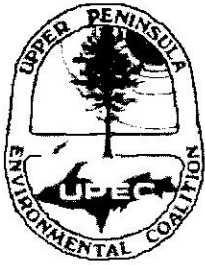


Join us for a trail building outing and camping trip sponsored by the North Country Trail Association (NCT) and Sierra Club from August 15-21 in the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. This year we will build a new trail in virgin forest in the southern part of the park and install several short bridges. If there is enough time and volunteers, we might move east to the Trap Hills, where work is needed on the NCT. We have been of-

fered free campsites at Presque Isle Campground at the west end of the Porkies on Lake Superior, with a spectacular view.

Volunteers can sign up for one or more days or a whole week. Costs include \$10 plus \$10 for food for each day you sign up. Locals may show up just for the day at no charge and provide their own food, but you will miss the excellent meals prepared by Nelson Meade. Although there will be plenty of work to keep us busy,

there will be time off to explore some of the many natural features in this scenic part of Michigan. Doug Welker will coordinate the trail work for this project and has many years of experience in constructing trail and building up the Peter Wolfe Chapter in the western U.P.
For More Info, Contact:
Ann Arbor: Ralph Powell
 (734-971-9013) rpowell6@cmich.edu or
Pelkie/U.P.: Doug Welker,
 (906-338-2680) dwelker@up.net.



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www.upenvironment.org

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



UPEC Conducts Exotic Species Project in Sylvania Wilderness

By Bill Malmsten

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure! This expression seems especially true when it comes to dealing with some unwanted guests - Aquatic Nuisance Species like Eurasian Watermilfoil, Zebra Mussels, Rusty Crayfish and others. UPEC has been awarded a grant from the Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network and Fund, a project of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council with funding made available by the Office of the Great Lakes and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The funding will help UPEC conduct long-term efforts to help prevent the introduction of harmful, exotic, aquatic species into lakes within the Sylvania Wilderness.

The Sylvania Wilderness, a spectacular area with pristine forests and lakes, is located in the Ottawa National Forest near Watersmeet, Michigan. At 18,327 acres, it is the largest federal wilderness in Michigan. The goal of the UPEC Sylvania Project is to help implement

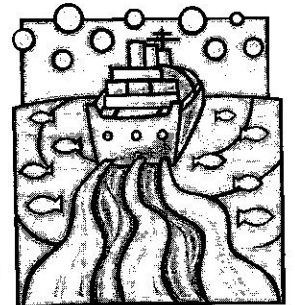
Michigan's Aquatic Nuisance Species State Management plan through educational efforts with watercraft users. The project will involve the production and distribution of an informational pamphlet, and direct educational contact with boaters at the Sylvania entrance station by UPEC paid and volunteer personnel. A free boat wash facility will be provided to help remove exotic species contamination that could result in introduction of exotic species into Sylvania lakes. The free boat wash is provided courtesy of Nordines Store at the intersection of Highways 2 and 45 in Watersmeet.

Eurasian water milfoil has been found near the boat launch site on Sylvania's Crooked Lake, the only lake in Sylvania where motorboat use is still allowed. Crooked Lake is a large meandering connection of several small lakes that extends from outside the wilderness to deep within the center of Sylvania. UPEC

continues its long-standing legal battle for the removal of non-electric motors from Crooked Lake.

The project is a coordinated effort between local business owners, the US Forest Service - Watersmeet District and UPEC. A special thanks goes out to our funding organizations, Dave Nordine of Nordines Store, the staff at the Watersmeet District of the Forest Service, as well as Bill Malmsten and Jon Saari of UPEC. Tom Church, a resident living near the Sylvania Wilderness, will be the Project Coordinator.

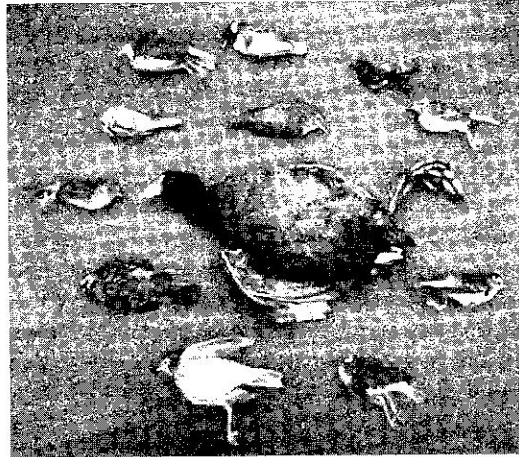
To volunteer, please call 906-358-4171.



State Police Monitor Towers' Impact on Bird Populations

By Suzanne Van Dam

Last spring, UPEC expressed concern about possible risks posed to migratory birds from the State Police's construction of six 450-foot high communications towers in the Keweenaw Peninsula. Despite mounting evidence that communications towers pose a deadly risk to birds, killing between 5-50 million nationwide each year, the State Police through their contractor, Motorola, did not conduct an environmental impact assessment on any of the 181 towers constructed in the State of Michigan from the late 1990s through 2001.



These birds were collected from 6 different towers in the Keweenaw Peninsula on 13 May, 2004. The photo shows: vireos (red-eyed and blue-headed), sparrows (swamp, white-crowned, savannah), warblers (bay-breasted, ovenbird, chestnut-sided), a ruby-crowned kiglet, two Swainson's thrushes, and an American coot (the big one in the middle). Several other dead birds were collected that day but were unidentifiable because scavengers had already gotten to them—scavengers can clear out a field of bird carcasses in a matter of hours near dawn; if they do so before an observer surveys the site, bird kills can be seriously underreported. (Photo: Joe Kaplan)

Tower lights attract night-flying passerines (migrating birds): as the flocks circle the tower to investigate the

lights, birds crash into the wires that support these towers and sometimes even into the towers themselves, which are invisible at night and during foggy weather. The Keweenaw, because it is a landmass pointing north, acts as a funnel, concentrating birds on their trek northwards. They stop at the peninsula to feed and rest before flying over Lake Superior to Canada and beyond. Positioning towers along important migratory flight paths like those in the Keweenaw could prove particularly damaging to bird populations.

UPEC, along with Copper Country Audubon, helped provide "local standing" for the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) in 2001 as they sought a cease and desist order against the state police. The NWF claimed the State Police did not comply with federal regulations requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

At the very least, NEPA requires an environmental assessment, and if warranted, a more thorough environmental impact study before issuing construction permits in environmentally sensitive areas. The

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) agreed and issued a "cease and desist order" but only *after* all the towers were erected; the FCC then rescinded the order when the State agreed with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct an environmental study.

The State Police have now engaged in a monitoring program statewide to determine what effects the towers are having on migratory birds. Ornithologist Joe Kaplan is one of the local bird enthusiasts who championed the cause persistently enough to get national attention focused on the Keweenaw Towers. He has walked the guy wires under several towers in the Keweenaw and has found as many as 15 dead birds on a single morning. That may not sound like a particularly heavy blow to bird populations, but as Kaplan points out, "If you multiply 15 birds times tens of thousands of towers nationwide, that could indicate a significant impact each year."

In the past, naturalists have reported hundreds, even thousands of bird kills in a single night (See www.towerkill.com for more information and bird stud-

ies). These dramatic single-evening kill numbers have diminished, but the decline may not be cause for celebration. Bird populations and flock sizes have declined significantly worldwide. With cell phone towers spreading faster than kudzu in Georgia, it could be that the death toll from towers is actually increasing. With fewer large flocks of migrating birds, and with many more towers, it is likely that their deaths are simply distributed over a larger geographical area.

Where do we (and more importantly--the birds) stand today? We are waiting for the FCC to rule on our petition requesting that the Michigan towers go through the FIS

process with the possibility of retro-fitting particularly deadly towers to be free-standing, rather than supported with deadly guy-wires.

Though the FCC has no deadline for issuing a ruling, they continue to license new towers. The FCC's hesitation to enforce environmental protection measures is particularly troublesome because current technology and construction methods exist that would minimize the impact on birds. Companies can construct self-standing towers without the deadly guy wires, especially in known migratory bird corridors such as the Keweenaw. And they can use lighting systems less likely to attract and confuse the birds. The technology exists to protect the thrushes, vireos and sparrows that grace our woods each spring; it is up to us to ensure the political will is there too.

Information for this article was provided by Joe Kaplan and Michelle Halley, an attorney for the National Wildlife Federation.

Mercury Emissions Standards: Little Progress at State & Federal Level



The Public Interest Research Group in Michigan (PIRGIM), has opposed the Bush Administration's December 30th proposal regarding the monitoring and control of mercury emissions from power

plants. PIRGIM's Kate Madigan argues, "Not only is the proposal far too weak and far too slow, the Bush administration even had the audacity to recommend that we stop categorizing mercury as a toxic substance.... That change would allow some power plants that emit this dangerous chemical off the hook entirely."

As UPEC has reported in previous issues of the *UP Environment*, mercury is a dangerous by-product of coal-fired power plants and of great concern in the proposed plant in Hannahville, which is situated near Lake Michigan and other fisheries. The mercury emitted from the power plant smokestacks eventually falls back to earth, contaminating lakes, rivers

and streams. Mercury bio-accumulates in the food chain, meaning that it intensifies in larger organisms such as fish.

Because young children and those still in the early stages of gestation are still developing their neurological systems, they are particularly at-risk of suffering severe neurological damage from mercury exposure, such as mental retardation and developmental delays.

PIRGIM points out the EPA's double standard: on the one hand, government environmental regulators "do almost nothing" to decrease the largest emitters of mercury (power plants), yet on the other hand, they issue stern warnings to avoid or limit eating fish because of mercury contamination.

According to PIRGIM, "In 2002, the EPA issued 85 fish consumption advisories for the 2,198 miles of Great Lakes coastline, 887,019 acres of Michigan's inland lakes and 508 miles of rivers." Why the double standard? PIRGIM argues that power plant lobbyists have effectively blocked or delayed legislation limiting

mercury emissions for more than 13 years. Now that mercury regulations are finally being proposed, "powerful industries succeeded in securing a weak proposal."

Again according to PIRGIM, "Two years ago the EPA's own scientists said that power plants could reduce mercury pollution by 90 percent using technologies that are currently on the market, but now the White House wants to allow five to six times more mercury than that. Children's health must come first—not polluters' bottom-lines."

For more information: see www.pirgim.org and click on "Mercury-Free Michigan." The site contains current legislation related to reducing power plant mercury emissions.

PIRGIM also suggests contacting Governor Granholm, who has pledged to eliminate mercury pollution in our state. You can register your concern to Governor Granholm by visiting: <http://pirg.org/alerts/route.asp?id=747&id4=ES>

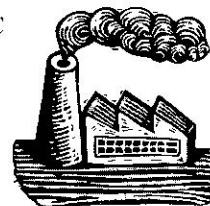
Hannahville Power Plant Update By Marcel Potvin

UPEC continues to monitor the progress of a proposed industrial park including four 250 megawatt coal-fired power plants on lands of the Hannahville Indian Community. In the two years since the plans for the industrial park were announced, construction has not begun, nor

have any new developments been announced to the public.

The "Hannahville Times," a tribal newspaper, reported that the Tribal Council was not "pushing as hard" for development of the power plant. However, tribal chairper-

son Ken Meshigaud recently assured UPEC that the fate of the power plants will not be decided until the economic feasibility studies are finished.



Take Action on Tower Regulations



Take Action!

Contact the FCC in Washington. Ask that they do the right thing—insist that companies spend the extra money

on constructing self-standing towers and that they implement the best available knowledge about lighting, guy wires, and positioning away from migratory bird corridors.

Contact:

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Phone: (202) 418-1000