



November, 2018

Dear friend,

As valuable supporters you last received a special update from the UPEC Board two years ago. We were then on the cusp of change, having just endorsed a merger with the sulfide mining focused group Save the Wild U.P., as well as having elected a new President in Horst Schmidt.

So, how does the UPEC Board see the environmental struggle in the U.P. two years later?

We have a long institutional memory and perspective. UPEC was born in the 1970s along with the environmental laws and institutions that govern our public land policies, from wilderness and clean air and water to endangered species. UPEC seeks to uphold the regulatory framework and standards that these federal and state laws provide. It is a lonely battle at present. Public leadership is not fully engaged on environmental issues, even climate change, and "regulatory capture" at the federal and state levels has put the deregulators in charge.

This situation was vividly demonstrated recently in the struggle over the wetland permit for the Aquila Back Forty Mine on the Menominee River: despite DEQ water staff objections and over-whelming opposition from Wisconsin and Michigan residents and Native Americans, we were un-able to stop the permit. The 85-page commentary written by UPEC's Mining Action Group re-mains a powerful testimony to a process gone awry, at least for now.

Winning or learning lessons in defeat, UPEC is fighting the battles that need to be fought. The mining and energy companies as well as the state agencies know they are being watched and held accountable. Despite doing this on a small budget with an all-volunteer Board, we have been recognized by our statewide peers for outstanding work. Nancy Warren won the prestigious Petoskey Prize from the Michigan Environmental Council for her work on wolf protection. Fresh-water Future recognized Kathleen Heideman of our Mining Action Group as a Freshwater Hero for her tireless work in challenging inappropriate industrial development of the U.P.

Why do we persist in these uphill battles, you might wonder. No mystery: we have all bonded with this place we call home, the U.P. We care about the integrity of its lands and waters, and worry about demographic trends as well as the incremental degradation of its remaining wild lands. The Michigamme Highlands is a case in point: is its best and highest use to turn it into a new mining district? We think not. The Eagle Mine has transformed the eastern end with a modern highway and electricity; they are seeking new mineral deposits to extend the life of the mine beyond 2023. On the west end a global energy company is planning an industrial wind farm, with up to fifty 500' towers dominating one of the U.P.'s most valuable northern hardwood forests.

We hope our actions have earned your attention and your support. Please do not think of support only in dollar terms; we also need your arms, legs and brains! Consider joining the Board, writing letters to the editor, or initiating a community conservation project. The reverse side holds options for how you may help. Thank you!

Horst Schmidt  
President

Jon Saari  
Treasurer

