



Upcoming Events

March 23 - Steering Committee meets at 6:30 pm at the Rulison's. Call 334-2553

March 28 - UPEC Celebrate the UP in Marquette. See article in this newsletter for more information.

**Bear Management**

by Catherine Andrews

A couple of years ago a young bear destroyed my beehive. A DNR officer brought up a trap but, after a couple of days of having the trap here, I had a change of heart and asked him to remove it. Having had several close encounters with bears over the years, I have developed a great sense of awe and respect for them. What right do I have to disrupt a bear's quality of life for my own selfish reasons? If I don't want a bear in my beehives, it's up to me to put up a better electric fence. My fence was rather inadequate and there were times when I didn't even have it plugged in... so whose fault was that? Surely not the bear's...

Every fall I have a friend who comes up to my place, often with his grandsons and various other friends, to track his bear dogs and pursue bears. Their tracking devices show the incredible range a bear can cover when being threatened. I see the excitement of the hunt on the part of the hunters. I see the skill of the hunters and sense the survival skills of the bear. I see both sides but I'm always rooting for the bear. I'd rather see my friends take a picture than kill the bear.

As far as "management" goes, I think it is incredibly naive for human beings to assume that we can "manage" much of anything. Just look around, we pretty much mess up everything we come in contact with. Every time a "compromise" is proposed, it seems that Nature is that which is compromised. We ought to be very concerned about the preservation and protection of the natural world beginning with large mammals like bears. Protecting large tracts of land connected by corridors to other tracts so that Nature can thrive is a beginning and will enhance our survival as well. If anything needs to be "managed," it is we humans and our insatiable appetites.

**Baraga Plains/Sturgeon River Land Preserved**

by Doug Welker

It's official! Lands along the Sturgeon River at the southern end of the Baraga Plains are now publicly owned.

The recent transfer of 681 acres from the Conservation Fund to the State of Michigan means that a wild and spectacular section of the Sturgeon River, including Tibbets Falls, is now protected from private development. The purchase also protects several miles of the North Country National Scenic

(Land Preserved Continued from page 1)

**Yellow Dog Eagle Mining Project Deferred**

*The news:* Rio Tinto, parent company of Kennecott, has decided to defer work on the Eagle Project sulfide mine on the Yellow Dog Plains. In a recent lengthy press release, one line was devoted to this news. As reported in a previous FOLK newsletter, Kennecott Minerals decided to reduce its capital spending from \$9 billion to \$4 billion this year.

According to the Marquette Mining Journal, Eagle Project Manager Jon Cherry stated the news will not change the company's immediate plans for the mine. Cherry said the office will stay open and permit and litigation issues will continue to be worked on.

While deferring \$5 billion in capital spending will help Rio Tinto's bottom line, they are far from being out of the woods. It was recently announced that the Chinese consolidated mining company Chinalco has made a \$20 billion dollar bid to increase its holdings in Rio Tinto to about 20%. This deal would infuse some badly needed cash into Rio, possibly allowing it to weather an additional couple of years if the economic downturn continues.

Assuming the deal with Chinalco receives the go ahead from regulators, Rio shareholders could vote on this purchase as early as mid-2009. Shareholders appear to be becoming wary of Rio CEO Tom Albanese's deal making skills. First, he outbid Alcoa to purchase Canada's Alcan for \$38 billion. Then he spent Rio resources fighting off a takeover bid from rival BHP Billiton. Chinalco's original stake in Rio stems from this time in the company's history. They (and American aluminum producer Alcoa) paid \$14 billion for a 9% stake in Rio.

*The editorial:* Why should we care about the dealings of penthouse CEOs and their multi-billion-dollar bets on future commodity prices? Many of us live where we do because we value the clean air and water, and the slower pace of life. If we wanted to worry about billion dollar deals, wouldn't we be living and working on Wall Street?

The point is we do need to care. The economic system we are all a part of handsomely rewards companies like Rio Tinto to drill their holes, exhume the contents, and spend as few resources as possible preventing future environmental catastrophes. We are a small force individually, but can make a huge difference if we work collectively. Kennecott/Rio has been forced back to the drawing board in order to revamp mining plans that citizenry suggested were unworkable and even dangerous. This postponement drew out the project until the price for the commodities made it foolish for them to continue developing this project at this time. Some sense of pride should be felt by all of us that have actively opposed this project. The situation is far from any resolution, but no one can argue that we have been ineffective in our opposition.



**FOLK**

FOLK, formed in 1989, was established to oppose the siting of any paper/pulp mill in Keweenaw Bay. FOLK continues to promote a healthy environment in the Keweenaw Peninsula and the Lake Superior Watershed.

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Trail (NCT), as well as the Oren Krumm Shelter, built in memory of Oren Krumm, son of FOLK members Marj and Ray Krumm.

Prior to Conservation Fund ownership, the land was held by We Energies, formerly Wisconsin Electric Power Company. They were good stewards of the land, but the risk of future private development was always there.

The only downside is that land on the south side of the Sturgeon, across from what is now State land, was purchased from We Energies by private interests. To totally protect the river corridor, that land would need to come into public ownership as well, or would need to be managed under a conservation easement.

For photos of the area and a map of the NCT there, visit <http://www/northcountrytrail.org/pwf/>.

## U.P. Celebration in Marquette

By Doug Welker

The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition, of which FOLK is a member, will hold an all-day event in downtown Marquette on Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, to celebrate what's great about the U.P. Featured will be 13 presentations, including slide shows with scenes of special places, talks about great non-motorized recreational opportunities, reflections on U.P. history, and much more. In addition, there will be a panel discussion on *Prioritizing the U.P. Landscape*, and a wine and cheese reception with a tribute to former UPEC board member and wildlife biologist Bill Robinson.

The event is free and open to the public. For more information, including a schedule of events, visit <http://www.upenvironment.org>.

## Is Hope Healthy?

Do you find yourself discouraged when all your best efforts to live sustainably seem to show little results toward solving our environmental problems? You are probably not alone in feeling this way, but the culprit may surprise you... **Hope.**

According to an article entitled, *Abandon Hope* in the March 2009 issue of *The Ecologist*, Michael P. Nelson from Michigan State University and FOLK member John Vucetich from Michigan Tech argue that "Hope may...deteriorate motivation to live sustainably."

We've recently heard the word HOPE used during the 2008 presidential election until we've become somewhat desensitized to it. Many of us base serious life decisions on whether the outcome is good for the environment; for example what sort of car to drive, the efficiency of appliances, how many children to have, etc. As we look back at a lifetime of such decisions, and

weigh that effort against the indisputable fact that the environment is continuing to deteriorate, it is no surprise that some of us just throw up our hands and say, "What's the use?"

The authors suggest substituting hope with "reasons that are rational and effective." We should make efforts to live sustainably because it is the right thing to do. As the collective bad decisions of millions of people continue to propel the world into an ecological cataclysm, our efforts might just be shining a beacon for those that are hungry for a more sustainable way to live. Or as the authors say, "We need to lift up examples of sustainable living motivated by virtue more than by a dubious belief that such actions will avert environmental disaster."

Our young people will face great challenges. Perhaps a background in sustainable living backed up by a healthy outlook is the most positive contribution our generation can give. The human population of the planet was around three and a third billion in 1965. Just 43 years later in 2008, the human population had doubled. Many experts suggest we are now at peak petroleum, that ocean and lake fisheries are at or past their peak production. Grain harvests are currently limited to a handful of varieties that experts worry could be susceptible to a catastrophic attack by pests. With our population at such high levels, and such global problems facing us, the prospect for a hopeful future seems dim. Leading a principled life because it is the right thing to do makes more and more sense.

## Sustainability Event Planned

FOLK is proud to join with others groups in supporting the Keweenaw Sustainability Project (KSP) in hosting a community-wide conference on May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> on the theme "Strengthening the Communities of the Copper Country in these Difficult Times." The KSP is a local citizens' group that has hosted at least six well-attended town hall forums in Hancock, Houghton and Calumet on a variety of topics of local interest relating to community sustainability.

This conference will explore ways the various sectors of our communities (retail/service/commercial, industrial, governmental and institutional) can reduce their budgets, reduce energy use, and save and create jobs in the emerging new green economy. There will be many implications for individuals and households as well.

Two speakers from the Ashland/Washburn/Bayfield area of Wisconsin will be featured. One is a city councilor in Ashland; the other a former mayor of Washburn. They will describe how their twelve-year effort has successfully organized a broad-spectrum of local people to revitalize the economic conditions of their communities. Their experience is based on the Swedish "Natural Step" model. FOLK's *Sustainability Development Report for the Keweenaw* is available at <http://www.folkup.org/KewSusDev.pdf>

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## Friends of the Land of Keweenaw

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