



FOLK Friends of the Land of Keweenaw Grassroots Stewards of the Western Upper Peninsula

FOLK is a regional grassroots organization which advocates greater awareness of the interrelationships of environmental, economic and social concerns to protect and preserve the ecological integrity of the Lake Superior watershed.

AUTUMN 2021 FOLK NEWSLETTER

FOLK dedicates this issue of our newsletter to Doug Welker our long-time Vice-President and newsletter editor

The quote below was found on a trailhead sign in Crystal Falls, Michigan and shared by John Pepin of Michigan DNR in the *Northwoods Forest Conservation: Managing Forestlands for the Future* magazine.

“Our earth is a very forgiving planet to a point. Many of us know more about 'surfing the net' than we do of the natural resources that sustain our lives, yet we go on pretending that technology will always quench our thirst, fill our bellies and run our cars, while retaining our quality of life. As you walk this trail, use all your senses to see, hear, smell, taste and feel life, and think about in which direction you would like to see mankind travel. What can you do to make this happen?”

As I was reading this quote, I couldn't help but think of Doug Welker. He was a person who answered that question. As one of the founding members of FOLK, he lived his life showing what one can do to help ensure that natural resources, wilderness areas and biodiversity are protected. This spring Doug, Jon Saari, Horst Schmidt and others completed a comprehensive proposal to have an additional 51,000 acres of land within the Ottawa National Forest designated as Federal Wilderness. He died tragically on August 16th while guiding a film crew in the Sturgeon Gorge Wilderness Area. It is an area he loved and lobbied to have designated as a Federal Wilderness Area in 1987.

Our heartfelt condolences go out to Doug's wife, Marjory. We celebrate Doug's legacy of enthusiastically enjoying and protecting the wild places we all love. We will miss his stories, his astute editing ability and his irreplaceable contributions to FOLK and the larger Upper Peninsula environmental community.

By Linda Rulison, FOLK president, on behalf of the board.



Doug and his wife Marjory on a visit to the Cape of Good Hope, and on the right, Doug and his beloved dog Happy



Keep the U.P. Wild by Horst Schmidt

Through the collaboration between a coalition of over 100 state and regional groups, including FOLK, UPEC, and the Environmental Policy & Law Center, the proposals for wilderness designation of 49,000 acres in the Ottawa National Forest have been established. This includes the Trap Hills, Ehlico, Norwich Pines, plus an additional proposal to add 2,000 more acres of Ottawa National Forest land to the 16,744-acre Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness, which has been under wilderness designation since 1987. Federally designated Wilderness focuses on non-motorized recreation, natural resource protection and opportunities for solitude.

With Doug's assistance, the coalition came up with three almost contiguous areas located in Ontonagon County plus one in Houghton County in the western UP. As part of the public relations campaign, Doug volunteered to take individuals and groups into those areas to gain further support.

Doug will be remembered for the prominent role he played in protecting these very special wilderness areas of the Upper Peninsula. It is our hope to have Congress approve legislation that adds this portion of the UP to our many wilderness areas around Michigan and the U.S.

For more information go to: keeptheupwild.com

Line 5 - Where are We Now? by Rosemary Grier

A timeline of 2021 events regarding Line 5:

January 2021 – Governor Gretchen Whitmer received a letter from Enbridge stating it will not obey the shutdown order. Later in January Governor Whitmer gets pressured by the Canadian government and businesses, urged on by Enbridge, to reverse the Line 5 shutdown order.

March 2021 – A Grand Rapids U.S. District Judge is notified by the State and Enbridge to make a plan to enter into mediation to find a potential resolution to the shutdown order. Enbridge will be trespassing and in violation of the state law if it refuses to shut down by May 12, 2021; also Governor Whitmer stated MI will go after Enbridge's profits from Great Lakes oil if the company violates her order to shut it down.

April 2021 - The Michigan Public Service Commissioners (MPSC) ruled to include the impacts of climate change in their review of Enbridge's proposed oil tunnel.

June - The US Army Corp of Engineers is ordered to conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on Enbridge's proposed tunnel around Line 5. This step could slow down Enbridge's plans and should result in significant new information about the dangerous climate effects of this proposed tunnel project.

July – Another accident threatened a potential oil leak when an anchor detached from its cable and fell in the Straits within hundreds of feet from the twin pipelines. The owner, and Enbridge contractor, left the 7.5-ton anchor unsecured on the bottomlands. The State ordered Enbridge to remove it immediately.

September – Four expert witnesses weighed in with the Michigan Public Service Commission and presented their evidence using climate data to study the project's environmental impact, a first under the Michigan Environmental Protection Act. Their findings were clear and undeniable: *allowing this oil tunnel to be built will exacerbate the climate crisis, result in an estimated 27 million metric tons of CO2 emitted every year, and will cost tens, if not hundreds of billions of dollars in net climate impacts as a result of the added emissions.*

For more information about Line 5, please go to these links: oilandwaterdontmix.org and forloveofwater.org



The twin Line 5 pipeline runs under the Straits parallel with the Mackinac Bridge

A Great Lakes Pipeline Disaster Would Dwarf Huntington Beach Spill

Aging oil pipelines in Huntington Beach, California and the Straits of Mackinac are beyond their expected safe lifetimes. Both are run by companies with histories of safety breaches, and both have anchor strikes occurring from the busy shipping lanes above the pipelines. Enbridge's deteriorating Line 5 in the Straits of Mackinac that transports Canadian oil across Michigan to Canada has recently experienced at least three anchor strikes. Anchor strikes on Line 5 are more likely now that the pipe is suspended above the lake bottom. In fact, this is the most serious threat to the double pipes of Line 5.

Line 5 extends far beyond the open water of the Straits across streams and wetlands that feed the Great Lakes. The 2010 Enbridge Kalamazoo, Michigan oil spill occurred in a stream and leaked for 17 hours, spilling 840,000 gallons of crude oil into the river. Investigators suspect the Huntington Beach pipeline was dislodged and damaged by an anchor strike that leaked for at least three hours, spilling an estimated 144,000 gallons of oil. Pipelines are an efficient way to transport oil but in waterways, they create disasters.

Pacific communities can push the oil down the coast to dilute the damage, but we can't push spilled oil away. Clean up in the Great Lakes is nearly impossible. Depending on currents, winds, and ice cover, 700 miles of coastline could be ruined. Since Line 5 pumps under pressure, the oil leak will continue to flow from the break after the valve is off. A team at Michigan Tech estimated a spill could be 2.5 million gallons. Line 5 threatens our economy, quality of life, and 20% of the world's fresh surface water. The State of Michigan terminated the 1953 easement for Line 5 in May, but Enbridge has disregarded this legal action.

Enbridge may value its oil over our water, but we cannot afford to. We have access to a huge network of oil pipelines that can supply the oil we currently use, but we depend on the Great Lakes water being clean and usable. If that water is contaminated, we cannot replace it. Line 5 must go without further delays.

by U.P. Propane Research Team: Gene Champagne, Marge Forslin, Rosemary Grier, Mary Pelton Cooper, Horst Schmidt, Gary Street

UPDATE: STOP THE ROCKET by Dennis Ferraro, Citizens for a Safe & Clean Lake Superior (CSCLS)

In the Upper Peninsula, our deep connection to Lake Superior, its coastal habitat, shoreline, and fresh water, grows ever stronger as we witness climate driven devastation elsewhere.

Adapting to climate changes here in the UP and accommodating

the already reported influx of so-called “climate refugees” from other parts of the country, will require careful community planning for sustainable growth to preserve these increasingly valuable resources that make our Peninsula so desirable, and livable.

And yet, a Detroit lobbyist, the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association (MAMA), continues its efforts to destroy and squander these precious resources by promoting a plan to construct a heavy industrial, vertical rocket launch site on a pristine stretch of Lake Superior shoreline near Thoney Point at Granot Loma, in Powell Township, just ten miles north of Marquette.

We now know that this will be an intense industrial zone:

- built on 2800 acres of wetlands near the lakeshore, with extensive clear cutting of plant and animal habitat, erosion causing harmful impact to groundwater and streams, and the risk of coastal runoff of toxic wastewater from fuel propellants, as well as contamination of the Lake by rocket debris,



- with a risk of explosion at launch requiring evacuation of 6 to 11 nearby residences, and closure of county roads; and where, even with successful launches, rocket parts will fall below,

- where lightning and water towers will pollute the view, and where extreme launch noise will be heard for miles around,

- near popular recreational areas like the Hiawatha Water Trail, trout fishing on the Little Garlic River at the Donnelly Trailhead and preserve, the North Country Trail, the Noquemanon Trails at Saux Head Lake, the Eagles Nest Coastal Community Forest, the Echo Lake Nature Preserve, and the popular granite overlook at Harlow Lake,
- where multiple companies will launch rockets as large as the 95 ft., 119,000 lb., rocket which recently exploded on launch in California,
- and which, combined with the lower peninsula’s Oscoda-Wurtsmith horizontal launch site, on Lake Huron, 95 miles north of Saginaw above Saginaw Bay, will launch as many as 100 rockets per year.

What you can do:

1. Contact Powell Township officials, thank them for their history of good stewardship of the environment, tell them you oppose the Granot Loma launch plan, and ask them to deny any future request to rezone that area for a rocket launch site. You can also write to Governor Whitmer and your state legislator to voice your opposition. For help with addresses and messaging ideas, visit our “Take Action” menu at stoptherocket.com, or inquire at contactcscls@gmail.com.
2. Write letters to the editors of newspapers, email local TV and radio stations, post on social media.
3. Get acquainted and involved with CSCLS at stoptherocket.com & on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Citizens-for-a-Safe-Clean-Lake-Superior-101326901764542>

*Left: Aerial view of Thoney Point, north of Marquette - proposed vertical spaceport launch site.
Above: Shoreline waves at Thoney Point
Photos courtesy Dennis Ferraro*



Industrial Wind Turbine Project in the Keweenaw is Non-Sustainable

by James Mihelcic

You have most likely seen the “no wind turbine” signs along local Copper Country roads. These signs were placed by residents fighting a proposal to construct 575-foot wind turbines in the Keweenaw.

The nonprofit Guardians of the Keweenaw Ridge (guardiansofthekeweenawridge.org) organized in June. Over the summer the Guardians educated themselves, residents, and elected officials about the project. One public event discussed the unique bats and birds that inhabit and migrate along, and over, the Keweenaw Ridge.

The Guardians worked with elected officials to establish 6- and 9-month moratoriums on industrial wind projects in Adams and Stanton Townships, respectively. Both townships also initiated the process of creating and/or re-established planning commissions. The Guardians are supportive of regulations that allows residents to maintain their current way of land use but emphasizes local decision making over harmful projects such as industrial wind factories.

Why the Project is not sustainable: The Guardian website documents many social and economic issues that make the project non-sustainable. Regarding the project’s environmental sustainability, the project’s physical footprint is enormous because of extensive concrete foundations and 60-foot-wide industrial roads. End-of-life waste issues and use of already depleted metals and minerals for a technology with a 10–30 year lifetime are ignored, along with the ecological damage and unjust working conditions associated with metal extraction (often in the southern hemisphere). A 2016 piece published in the magazine of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics (IEEE) written by a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada stated wind turbines “are pure embodiments of fossil fuels.” This is not only because the gearbox requires lubricant

that needs regular replacement but also, because the steel alone in a 5-MW turbine averages 150 metric tons for the reinforced concrete foundations, 250 metric tons for the rotor hubs and nacelles, and 500 metric tons for the towers” (each metric ton of steel used for turbine construction embodies about 35 gigajoules of fossil based energy). Residents who recreate near the proposed locations report seeing wolf, moose, fisher, and bear and the Keweenaw is a spring migration highway for tens of thousands of raptors (including bald and golden eagles). Scientific studies document wildlife leaving industrial wind areas because of noise and ecosystem fragmentation.

What did EGLE Conclude? On July 30, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) denied the developer’s environmental permit for reasons including the project: 1) would have significant adverse effects on fish and wildlife, and 2) was not in the public interest and any benefits would not balance the reasonably foreseeable detriments. The U.S. EPA provided a letter on the project’s inappropriateness and we learned U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) had repeatedly informed wind developers (documented as far back as 2017) that they re-site the project due to wildlife concerns. One reason is because federal guidelines on siting wind projects recommend avoiding critical areas of wildlife congregation.



Northern long-eared bat (Photo by NY Dept. of Environmental Conservation; Al Hicks)

Both EGLE and FWS noted the project’s proximity to former copper mines will endanger local bat populations (northern long-eared bats listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act as well as tricolored and little brown bats (FWS is currently considering a 2016 petition to list tricolored bats as endangered or threatened). Up to 95% of our local bat population has been killed by white nose syndrome, bats reproduce slowly, and industrial wind turbines are now the second largest killer of bats in the U.S.

The Future. In early October we learned that 83% of Stanton Township registered voters who submitted surveys oppose industrial wind turbines. Stanton Township understands the developer may circle back to them later and is planning accordingly. Adams Township is now the immediate target, with Circle Power stating they plan to place all 12 turbines there.

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Illustration of the materials contained in a 3 MW wind turbine. (from World Bank’s *Climate-Smart Mining: Minerals for Climate Action*)

*Industrial Wind Turbine Project continued.....***Ensuring renewable projects don't cause major environmental problems is a matter of proper siting.** A recent article on the impact of poorly sited wind turbines in greater sage grouse habitat said the following "if policymakers were to shift the focus to building distributed renewables projects instead – like solar arrays on rooftops and parking-lot shade awnings – the vast majority of energy production could occur in developed areas which lack any remaining natural values. That's a win for the climate, a win for biodiversity, and could be a win for social justice as well. "

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2021/09/17/americas-largest-windfarm-an-environmental-disaster/>

The FOLK board made a financial donation to Guardians of the Keweenaw Ridge to develop and distribute quality education and interpretative materials to support their current project, which is to stop placement of industrial wind turbine factories along the Keweenaw Ridge.

U.P. Energy Task Force Committee Recommendations: Part 2 – Energy Supply 3.21.21

This report follows the Task Force's Part 1 report, submitted to the Governor in April 2020, which made recommendations on propane availability in the UP (covered in a previous newsletter).

U.P. families and businesses pay some of the highest electricity rates in the nation and experience energy supply vulnerabilities, partly due to challenging geography that hinders infrastructure development and market dynamics. The U.P. Energy Task Force submitted to Governor Gretchen Whitmer 16 recommendations that would improve affordability, enhance reliability and promote energy security for residents of the Upper Peninsula. This includes suggestions the Governor, State Legislature and state agencies can take to alter the status quo of the region's energy landscape.

"There are distinct challenges to making sure U.P. residents and businesses have access to affordable, reliable and environmentally sound energy as industry dynamics change and the state moves toward reaching a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050," said Liesl Clark, director of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and the Task Force's chair. "I appreciate the hard work and insight that the Task Force members and others provided to

help refine these recommendations which address the region's unique circumstances."

Phase 2 Recommendations (partial list)

- Encourage electric providers to participate in an Upper Peninsula-wide electric plan.
- Modernize the electrical grid to allow wider use of advanced meter technology.
- Promote energy waste reduction and broadband expansion.
- Offer residential programs for energy upgrade grants and early purchase of propane.
- Develop renewable energy, energy storage and electric vehicle charging.
- Examine the rate disparity between customer classes.
- Create brownfield and state land inventory for energy infrastructure development.

The report also discusses energy use characteristics, how the region gets its energy, natural gas and electric service providers, rates by provider and how they compare to state and national averages, and energy use by sectors.

The full reports on Phase 1 & Phase 2 Recommendations can be found at: www.michigan.gov/upetf

Wolf Management Advisory Council Holding Monthly Meetings in the UP and Gaylord

Now that wolves have been delisted from the Federal Endangered Species List, a Wolf Management Advisory Council (WMAC) has been established to provide non-binding recommendations to the DNR with respect to proper management of wolves in Michigan. FOLK attended and presented comments at meetings in Ishpeming and Ironwood and will continue to do so when possible. Meetings will be held well into 2022.

We encourage FOLK members to visit [Michigan.gov/DNR-Wolf Management Advisory Council](http://Michigan.gov/DNR-Wolf-Management-Advisory-Council) to see some presentations and check out the schedule for upcoming meetings. Wolves are an important keystone species on the UP landscape and contribute to ecosystem health and productivity. They also have great historic and cultural significance to those of us who live here with them. Wolves know how to live within the carrying capacity of the land and that is a useful lesson for humans. Maybe we should be thinking more about managing ourselves rather than "managing" wolves.

Catherine Andrews



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*Your
 support is
 appreciated!*

Membership Form
 FOLK Friends of the Land of Keweenaw
 PO Box 671 Houghton MI 49931

Please print: Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone (____) _____ Date _____

- Individual (Annual Membership/Jan-Dec): \$10
- Senior Citizen, Unemployed, Student (Annual): \$5
- Contribute to FOLK’s mission to protect the integrity of Lake Superior’s Watershed \$ _____
- I want to get involved with FOLK! Please contact me by: (circle one) email or phone.
- Total enclosed: \$ _____

FOLK Adopt-A-Highway – During the 2021 season, FOLK volunteers picked up over 18 bags of trash along our two mile stretch along US 41 near the Houghton/Baraga County line. Thanks to all who helped.



Earlier photo of volunteers with FOLK’s Adopt-A-Highway program. Left to right: Catherine Paavola, Connie Sherry, Rosemary Grier, Dave Rulison, Scott Rutherford, Linda Rulison and Doug Welker

BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED - Please consider volunteering to be a FOLK board member. Contact us here: keweenawfolk@gmail.com