



# 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.

### WINTER – SPRING 2023 FOLK NEWSLETTER

#### Ma'iingan: A Moral Perspective by Catherine Andrews

The Ojibwe respect Ma'iingan (Wolf) as a non-human person, a holder of ecological relationships, and as a relative to humans. They tolerate infrequent conflicts as a natural occurrence and fair exchange for living with your relative, who also benefits you in other ways. "This familiarity allows us to empathize, which is the first step toward morality." (Philosopher, Mary Midgely)



*Courtesy of U of Museum of Zoology*

Science is and always will be at the service of the worldviews that motivate it. The Ojibwe worldview does not require research on how many wolves can be killed sustainably or what the most effective lethal methods to reduce populations are.

The foundational discussion with regard to our relationship with other non-human beings must be informed by the worldview of the people who have a storied history with them. Only by acknowledging the intrinsic value of non-human animals can we hope to save them, and ourselves in the process.

As of February 10, 2022, gray wolves in the contiguous 48 states and Mexico – with the exception of the Northern Rocky Mountain population – are now protected under the Endangered Species Act as **threatened** in Minnesota and **endangered** in the remaining states. **Endangered** holds the greatest protection. Currently, Michigan and Wisconsin are in the process of finalizing their Wolf Management Plans which will automatically go into effect whenever the Federal protections might be dropped.

For more information on Ma'iingan and the Ojibwe Creation Story please read [The Mishomis \(Grandfather\) Book](#) by Edward Benton-Banai, a member of the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation in Wisconsin. It's a wonderful story for youth and elders alike but is on the [Banned Book List](#) in some states. For an even deeper dive, check out the [Ma'iingan Relationship Plan of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Tribe of Chippewa Indians](#) which can be found on line.

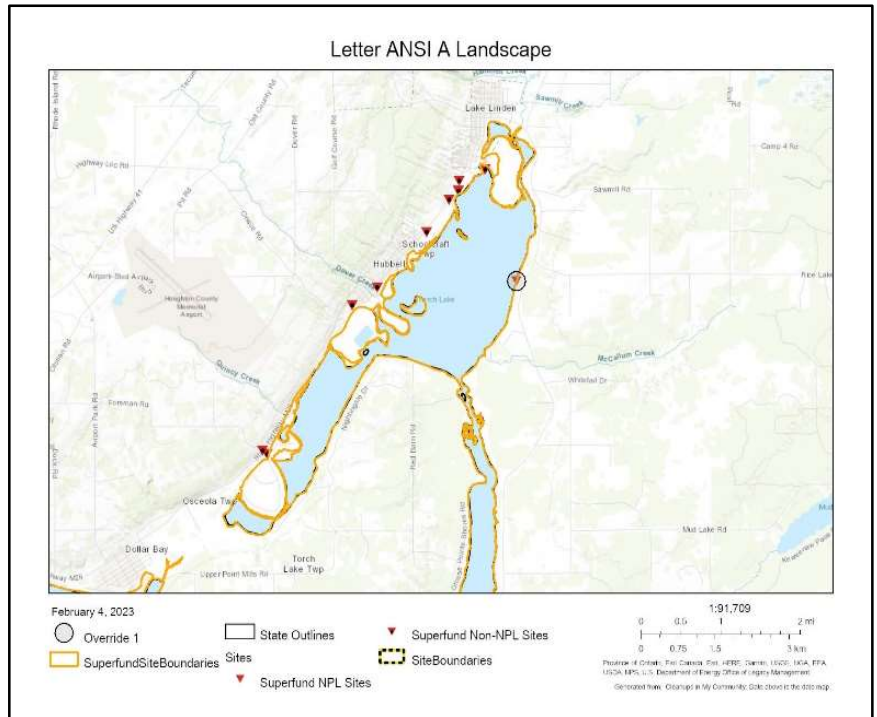
For the Michigan DNR 2022 Draft Wolf Management Plan see:  
<https://www.michigan.gov/dnr/education/michigan-species/mammals/wolves-in-michigan>

To read Wisconsin's Draft Wolf Management Plan and make a public comment:  
<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/wildlifehabitat/wolfmanagementplan>

## TORCH LAKE Remediation Proposed Plans by Horst Schmidt, Torch Lake Advisory Committee Member

Torch Lake is designated as an Area of Concern, another term for a highly polluted body of water. It's the result of dumping stamp sands in the lake by two mining companies until 1969 when operations ceased. In addition to the tailings, chemicals directly and indirectly also entered the lake, such as arsenic and PBCs. Previously, no cleanup plan was initiated until four years ago when a conference of scientists and engineers convened to look at possible solutions. The conferees, after a few days of discussion realized there was insufficient data to determine what clean up methods would be most efficacious. Four test plots were chosen in the lake and on the shoreline. The methods were capping the sediments, dredging them, no remediation or wetland filtration. Test plots were in installed in the spring of 2021, delayed one year due to the covid pandemic.

The test plot data was collected for the last two years by engineering consultants. After the 2023 collection, the data from all three years will be analyzed to see how each plot changed. Whether there will be one or more ways to remediate the pollution is to be determined after consultation with the Torch Lake Advisory Committee and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community under its treaty rights. Most likely the cleanup process will not start until 2024.



*Courtesy of the EPA*

A separate cleanup is being conducted by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Lake Linden where one of the mining companies had its processing facilities that dumped large amounts of polluted sediments at the north apex of the lake. The current owner of the polluted property has been held partly liable for the cleanup. As such, they have financially contributed by hiring contractors to do the work. The EPA liaison told our committee the cleanup is ongoing and they will continue to participate for the indefinite future as new contaminated sediments continue to surface.

Annual visits to Houghton County by the State's Superfund Supervisor to check the remediation done in previous years, also includes Torch Lake remains intact. Intact means stamp sands

above the lake level which were covered by soil and vegetation show no signs of erosion or illegal open excavations. The state is responsible in perpetuity for monitoring the condition of these former mining sites. A 2022 visit resulted in improvements to previously remediated areas.

Separate from these three projects, the Torch Lake Area Sewage Authority's engineering consultant is seeking approval to build two new sewage lagoons for the communities of Lake Linden, Hubbell and Tamarack City on the west side of the lake. At the present time, these communities are not code compliant. By constructing these lagoons, they will properly contain sewage throughout future winter months, bringing them into compliance. The Authority hopes to receive approval for the 2023 construction season.

## Holding Pattern for Line 5

by Rosemary Grier

Line 5 is owned and operated by Enbridge, the same Canadian corporation responsible for the 2010 spill of more than 1.2 million gallons of heavy tar sands oil into the Kalamazoo River watershed near Marshall, Michigan. Line 5 was built in 1953, designed to last 50 years and is part of the Enbridge Lakehead system. The 70-year-old pipeline sends crude oil from western Canada to eastern Canada by way of the Great Lakes states. Line 5 passes under the environmentally sensitive Straits of Mackinac.

Enbridge is proposing to bore and blast a 20-foot diameter oil tunnel under the Straits of Mackinac to house a new Line 5 pipeline. The Canadian company's

goal is to continue for another 99 years carrying up to 23 million gallons of oil and natural gas liquids a day through Line 5 and the public trust bottomlands where Lake Michigan meets Lake Huron. In June 2021, the Acting Army assistant secretary announced the decision to require the US Army Corps to conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement on Enbridge's proposed tunnel around Line 5. This action has the potential to slow down Enbridge's plans and should result in significant

new information about the dangerous climate effects of this proposed project. A decision by the US Army Corps whether to approve or not approve permits for the tunnel project isn't expected until the fall of 2024.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC), which regulates petroleum pipelines, is considering whether Enbridge's proposed tunnel in the Straits of Mackinac is necessary and in the public interest of the people of Michigan. Especially in light of the

risk to the Great Lakes, global climate crisis, and rapid transition to renewables. MPSC is expected to make a decision in May of this year.

Grand Rapids  
U.S. District



*Courtesy of Oil and Water Don't Mix*

Court Judge Janet Neff's decision on Aug. 18, 2022, maintained federal jurisdiction over the lawsuit Attorney General Dana Nessel filed against Enbridge seeking to force the closure of Line 5. The case being heard in federal court gives a clear advantage to the Canadian oil company, whereas a judgement remanding the case back to state court would have lent favor to the state's arguments. In late December 2022, AG Dana Nessel confirmed that her office is working on next steps to appeal the jurisdictional ruling that a federal judge made in August 2022.

**FOLK's Adopt-A-Highway Program** has been going strong, since 1990, which is when Michigan started this effort to keep our highways beautiful. During the 2022 trash pick-up, FOLK volunteers filled 20 bags of carelessly tossed garbage. Contact Rosemary at [keweenawfolk@gmail.com](mailto:keweenawfolk@gmail.com) if you want to help.



## The Short-Term Future of Industrial Wind in Michigan

Michigan residents have defeated Industrial Wind proposals in 28 out of 28 Township referendums in Michigan which may be part of the reason for developers shifting their focus to solar projects. According to [Bridge Michigan](#), experts hope solar parks will spark less resistance than 600-foot wind turbines. With huge



*A 250 acre industrial solar installation in Virginia*

federal subsidies on the table, the State and its utilities companies are scrambling to increase “renewable energy” resources making solar the primary investment strategy in the next decade. Another important factor is that solar projects are now cheaper than wind and can be spread over less land. The downside to this is that the land can no longer be used for effective farming. Another downside is that solar (and wind) require massive increases in global resource extraction but that doesn’t appear to be part of the conversation.

The State claims that renewable energy now provides 11% of Michigan’s net electricity generation. Governor Whitmer’s goal is to produce 60% by 2030, while phasing out coal-fired plants. In the meantime, policy reform will be on the docket in Lansing this year to remove local township authority that has enabled local citizens to have a voice in this process. Similar reforms were enacted in the past to prevent local input related to cell towers.

---

### Dioxin: Then and Now by Catherine Andrews

**THEN:** FOLK was created in 1989 to prevent the siting of a Bleached-Kraft Pulp Mill on Keweenaw Bay. If built, it would have dumped dioxin-laden effluent directly into Lake Superior. We knew then that dioxins belong to a category of chemicals called Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) which remain intact in the environment for exceptionally long periods of time and accumulate in living organisms. Because of these properties, dioxins can be found all over the world and have been measured in the tissue of people and wildlife on every continent. Exposure is linked to cancer, type-2 diabetes, ischemic heart disease, infertility, impairment of the immune system and skin lesions.

**NOW:** Shockingly, according to the [Center for Health, Environment and Justice](#), after all these

years, Environmental Protection Agency is unwilling to release their analysis of the cancer risk posed by the average exposure to dioxins. One might reasonably conclude that there is no “acceptable risk level” of dioxin exposure to humans and non-humans and the environment we call home.

Polluting industries love regulations because it gives them a curtain to hide behind. When they are found to be violating the regulations, they simply pay the fines and continue polluting. Captured and frail regulatory agencies require grassroots groups, like FOLK, to prevent disastrous, polluting industries from being built in the first place and monitor those which are near us. Thank you for your support!

## Youth as Lake Superior Stewards by Linda Rulison

A few years ago, FOLK looked for ways to reach out to young "folks" in hopes of helping to cultivate environmental awareness and love for the land and lakes we live on. The board looked no further than the Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative (LSSI) to make that connection. Their mission statement is: ***"LSSI seeks to prepare K-12 students to become knowledgeable citizens engaged in activities that enhance their school, community, and the Lake Superior watershed."*** For the 2022-23 school year, LSSI anticipates at least 1,662 Western U.P. students from 13 schools will engage in Place-based stewardship projects.



*Courtesy of LSSI*

LSSI is part of the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative Hub, launched by the Great Lakes Fishery Trust. The Copper Country Intermediate School District acts as its fiscal agent. Since 2007, LSSI has provided mini-grants to school community teams in the Western UP. FOLK supports LSSI's mission through monetary donations and donated time volunteering on the board that reviews teacher Grant Applications. If you want to learn more about LSSI's work, go to: <http://lakesuperiorstewardship.org/>

---

## Honoring Doug Welker and the UP by Catherine Andrews

Longtime FOLK board member and scrupulous editor, Doug Welker, spent a decade collaborating with UPEC's Jon Saari and others to map a 52,000 acre, **Keep the UP Wild** federal wilderness proposal in the Ottawa National Forest. Tragically, Doug suffered a fatal accident in the very forest he worked so hard to protect.

In honor of Doug, we urge our readers to contact Senator Debbie Stabenow (contact info below) and request that she sponsor a **"Keep the UP Wild"** Bill that would add these 52,000 acres to the **1964 Wilderness Act**. A bill supporting this proposal would bring the total amount of Federally designated wilderness areas in Michigan to approximately 346,000 acres, a mere .935% of all Michigan land.

Please consider including some of the following points along with any personal stories you may have of the proposed area:

- **Keep the UP Wild** is in line with President Biden's 30 by 30 Initiative.
- US Forest Service revenues to local governments do not change when land is protected, as this new wilderness would be under the 1964 Wilderness Act.
- Public non-motorized activities such as hunting, fishing, backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, camping and hiking are permitted in Wilderness Areas.
- There are no ORV or snowmobile trails in the proposed plan areas.

For more information and a short video, go to <[keeptheupwild.com](http://keeptheupwild.com)>

**Senator Debbie Stabenow**

1901 W. Ridge, Suite 7, Marquette, MI 49855

Email: <[stabenow.senate.gov](mailto:stabenow.senate.gov)>

*\*Include MI postal address on all emails (no attachments)*

## 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: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

### FOLK Board

Linda Rulison – President  
Catherine Andrews - Vice President  
Horst Schmidt – Treasurer  
Rosemary Grier -Secretary  
Dave Rulison - Member-at-large  
Board Openings – this could be you



PO Box 671  
Houghton MI 49931  
[www.keweenawfolk.org](http://www.keweenawfolk.org)  
[keweenawfolk@gmail.com](mailto:keweenawfolk@gmail.com)  
[www.facebook.com/folkorg](http://www.facebook.com/folkorg)



**Earth Day** is an annual celebration that honors the achievements of the environmental movement and raises awareness of the need to protect Earth's natural resources for future generations. Earth Day is celebrated on April 22 in the US and on either April 22 or the day of the spring equinox throughout the rest of the world. See [earthday.org](http://earthday.org).

Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson and graduate student Denis Hayes organized the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970, educating participants in the importance of environmental conservation.

### Earth Day Activities – Invest in Our Planet

- MTU Sustainability Demonstration House (SDH) is offering another Waste Reduction Drive April 15<sup>th</sup> at the SDC from 9-3pm. More information can be found at MTU SDH website.
- Check local listings for more information or go to [EarthDay.org](http://EarthDay.org) for national & international events