



# FOLK Friends of the Land of Keweenaw

## Grassroots Stewards of the Western Upper Peninsula

### DECEMBER 2020 FOLK NEWSLETTER

#### GOVERNOR WHITMER ORDERS ENBRIDGE TO SHUT DOWN LINE 5 Rosemary Grier

Governor Gretchen Whitmer made an historic announcement on November 13, 2020. She took action to permanently revoke Enbridge's Line 5 easement as she puts Michigan on a legal footing to end the threat of a catastrophic oil pipeline failure in the Great Lakes. The Governor sent a notice of violation, termination and revocation of the 1953 easement that made Line 5's existence possible to Enbridge, its owner. She then submitted a court filing to force that termination.

This represents a tremendous shift in the fight against the Line 5 pipeline and tunnel. The announcement stated that Enbridge has committed "persistent and incurable" easement violations, prompting Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to notify Enbridge to permanently stop operating the dual-span pipeline within 180 days. Separately, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has filed a lawsuit asking the Ingham County Circuit Court to terminate the easement.

The notice requires Enbridge to cease operations of the dual pipelines in the Straits by May of 2021, allowing for an orderly transition that protects Michigan's energy needs over the coming months. Find more details [mi.gov/whitmer/pressreleases](https://mi.gov/whitmer/pressreleases).

For additional information with comments from various Michigan groups: <https://keweenawnow.blogspot.com/2020/11/governor-whitmer-dnr-take-action-to.html> Or go to [forloveofwater.org](https://forloveofwater.org) & [oilandwaterdontmix.org](https://oilandwaterdontmix.org).



*Line 5 pipeline, which crosses the Straits of Mackinac as it transports petroleum products from Wisconsin to Ontario. Tunnel opponents have long called for a shutdown, warning that a rupture would cause a catastrophic oil spill in the straits.*

#### The Warden Plant – same old, same old Doug Welker

The L'Anse Warden Electric Company has applied for State approval of a revised Renewable Operation Permit (ROP) for its electrical generating plant (the "Warden Plant") on the west edge of L'Anse. The current ROP expired in **2015** but thanks to a loophole in State requirements it has been allowed to remain in operation since then without a current permit. Previous newsletter articles have detailed the pollution-related issues that this plant has had (none of which the State seems to think warrant shutting down the plant), whether the plant is actually using renewable fuels (plastic pellets, railroad ties, etc.), and so on. Those issues aren't being addressed in this article, though, which focuses on this fall's events related to the Draft ROP, which were held in L'Anse by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). A Public Information Session was held on 9/29 and a Public Hearing on 10/21. Several FOLK members attended, and in some cases commented, at these sessions.

Recordings of these events are available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei\\_YTAoxClw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei_YTAoxClw) (9/29) and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6mZF\\_hHFAo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6mZF_hHFAo) (10/21).

There is a feeling of déjà vu each time I (and many others, I'm sure) attend events related to this plant. All too often one leaves feeling that little new was learned, that the State favors corporations over the public, and that indifference and "rigged" rules and regulations will keep the plant operating (and polluting) regardless of public concerns and the efforts of some dedicated State employees. Sometimes one wonders, though, how seriously the State is taking its oversight of the plant. At the 9/29 session someone asked who now owns the plant (LWEC is the operator). State representatives were clueless. Before the session ended I was able to, with little effort, find the answer online.

#### Marquette Area Spaceport Project

Citizens for a Safe & Clean Lake Superior (CSCLS), a newly formed Michigan non-profit, is a broad coalition of Marquette County and U.P. citizens united against a proposal to construct a commercial rocket site on Lake Superior's shoreline at Granot Loma in Powell Township. For further information go to facebook and type in *Citizens for a Safe & Clean Lake Superior*.

***"Developing a sense of place while learning through outdoor education how to protect and enhance the natural world forward to the seventh generation"*** is one of the four tenets listed on the opening page of the FOLK website.

In the past FOLK has supported local outdoor education by financially supporting local students to attend the *Lake Superior Youth Symposium* which has provided students with an opportunity to meet up with other students around Lake Superior for a weekend of outdoor educational activities. This excursion will probably not happen this school year due to Covid-19 restrictions.

However, we as individuals and as an organization, can help support outdoor education in our local natural environment by assisting the *Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative* (LSSI) and their *Place-Based Education program*. Our LSSI teachers, who have been creating "outdoor classrooms" and getting their students out and into the community to work on real projects to create new outdoor learning activities, need our support. These are programs that can

happen even during this Covid-19 challenge because they can often be outdoors and in small groups, but only if they are funded.

Right now, The Great Lakes Fishery Trust (GLFT) recently issued a big challenge to our U.P. community. If this local initiative can raise \$20,000, the GLFT will match it dollar for dollar which would provide \$40,000.00 to area schools. For those teachers and classrooms that have been providing *Place-Based education* for their students over the years, this is a great opportunity. If the \$20,000 is not raised our local program gets nothing. This is also a great opportunity for FOLK and "other folks" to help students, teachers and school districts who have been stressed trying to figure how to successfully teach and keep students and teachers safely engaged. FOLK just donated \$1000.00 to support this program.

If you would like more information on this great opportunity for "Connecting Schools and Communities," or would like to donate online, please go to the LSSI website: <http://lakesuperiorstewardship.org/> or mail a check to *Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative*, 809 Hecla St. Hancock, MI 49930.



*High school students researching local waters using Remotely-Operated Vehicles (ROVs) they designed & built to conduct research below the water's surface.*



*Dollar Bay HS students demonstrate the ROV they designed to families attending the Western UP Science Fair & STEM Festival conducted annually at the Michigan Tech MUB Commons..*

## Michigan's Healthy Climate Plan Rosemary Grier

Governor Gretchen Whitmer took executive action that aims to put Michigan on a path towards becoming fully carbon-neutral by 2050. To create steady progress, it sets a goal of 28% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2025. According to the governor, her plan protects public health and the environment, while helping to develop new clean energy jobs. The Governor has established several new Offices to address our energy future.

**Michigan Office of Future Mobility and Electrification** (Oct. 2020) – The office will work with state government, academia and private industry to enhance Michigan's mobility ecosystem, including developing dynamic mobility and electrification policies and supporting the startup and scale up of emerging technologies and businesses.

**Catalyst Communities** (Sept. 2020) – This community program is a comprehensive initiative to provide education, training, planning, and technical resources to local public officials as they prepare for climate impacts on emergency response and public health. "Michigan has seen and continues to experience the lasting effects of climate change and we have a responsibility to do everything in our power to protect Michigan families, environment, and economy," said Governor Whitmer. For more details on Michigan's Healthy Climate Plan go to: <https://www.michigan.gov/climateandenergy>.



*Cascade Creek in the foreground with the highest sheer cliff in Michigan, located in the Trap Hills, one of the four proposed Wilderness Areas. See article next page.*

## FOLK Supports Designating four new National Wilderness Areas on the Ottawa Doug Welker

FOLK and Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (UPEC) have been working with the Environmental Law and Policy Center (ELPC) of Chicago to create a proposal advocating federal designation for four new National Wilderness Areas in the Ottawa National Forest. All would be located in Ontonagon County. The four are Ehlco, Trap Hills, Norwich Plains, and the Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness Addition. Each has special attributes that would complement those currently found in areas designated as Michigan Wilderness.

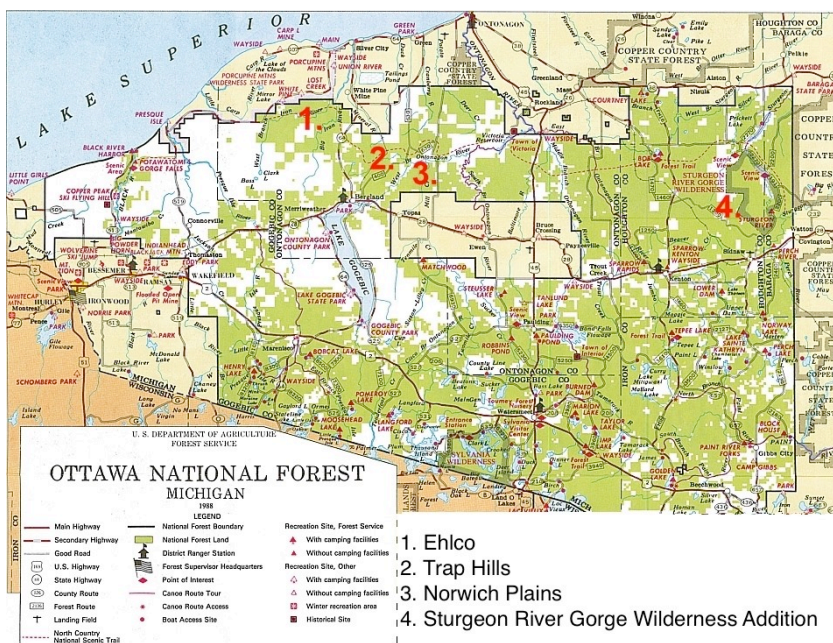
**Ehlco** (16,000 acres) has maturing forests and is immediately south of the Porkies, which is already managed largely as Wilderness. Designation of Ehlco would create a total area of around 76,000 acres of land that would remain unlogged, ecologically-protected, and available for primitive recreation.

The **Trap Hills** (25,000 acres) is probably the most spectacular area in Michigan that has no permanent protection. Found there are a number of rare species of plants and animals, and incredible scenery, including the highest (at 350') sheer cliff in Michigan. Many miles of the North Country National Scenic Trail run through the Trap Hills.

**Norwich Plains** (8,000 acres) is an area dominated by aspen, which will gradually transition to a mixed aspen/hardwood/conifer forest with numerous streams and wetlands.

**Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness Addition** (2,000 acres) is adjacent to the existing Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness. With the addition, the total area of Wilderness would be almost 19,000 acres. What makes the addition special is that it is about 50% wetlands with an isolated moose population frequenting the area.

Along with ELPC, FOLK and UPEC will be working to gain support from environmental and conservation organizations in Michigan while ELPC is working with Congressional representatives for designation as Wilderness areas.



## The UP Energy Task Force Update Rosemary Grier

The UP Energy Task Force (UPETF) was created by Governor Whitmer's Executive Order with the charge to: 1. Assess the UP's overall energy needs and how they are currently being met, 2. Formulate alternative solutions for meeting the UP's energy needs, and 3. Identify and evaluate potential changes to energy supply and distribution in the UP.

**Phase I** focused on propane availability, storage, and suppliers, and was completed April 2020. Refer to FOLK's Summer 2020 newsletter for the recommendations. <https://www.keweenawfolk.org/>.

**Phase II** is to be completed by April 2021 with a focus on electricity, looking at differences in both the electricity supply and in providers.

Meetings during the summer and fall considered the various utilities that service the UP: Mike Furmanski, Electric Superintendent for the City of Escanaba and member of the UPETF, presented an overview on municipal electric utilities in the U.P. Other utility companies presented were Marquette Board of Light & Power, UPPCO, and Cloverland Electric Cooperative.

Douglas Jester, Managing Partner of Five Lakes Energy and a UPETF member, gave an overview of UP energy including an analysis of electrification for the UP with suggestions for task force priorities in preparation for the final report.

The task force suggested the following priorities:

- Explore comparative cost structures of U.P. electric utilities, use of time and use of rates
- Renewable energy siting
- Transport electrification - Work on charging infrastructure
- Building electrification - Work on electricity rate design
- Deep energy savings in buildings - Financing and workforce/business development
- Additional items the task force would like to discuss include cost impact and feasibility of fuel switching

For more information regarding the UP Energy Task Force, future meetings, presentations, videos, and meeting materials go to [Michigan.gov/UPEnergyTaskforce](https://Michigan.gov/UPEnergyTaskforce).



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[www.facebook.com/folkorg](https://www.facebook.com/folkorg)

***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: \$\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Actions by FOLK board members:**

- Completed the final Adopt-A-Highway cleanup in October.
- Attended UPETF virtual meetings in July, Sept, Oct, Nov, & Dec.
- Attended L'Anse Warden Plant/EGLE ROP virtual public hearing in October.
- Attended virtual UP Energy Conference in November.
- Donated \$1000 to the Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative for environmental education.
- Worked to designate four new National Wilderness Areas on the Ottawa (see article).

#### **Announcements**

- UPEC monthly livestreams – check schedule at <https://www.upenvironment.org/livestreams>
- UPETF monthly Zoom – check <https://www.mi.gov/upenergytaskforce/>
- UP Energy Clean Energy Conference Series in 2021 – check <https://www.upcleanenergy.org/> This conference series will build awareness and interest among opinion leaders in the U.P. about opportunities for clean energy solutions that will work in the U.P. and mobilize that enthusiasm to call on the U.P. Energy Task Force for policies and programs that will support a faster and more beneficial transition in the U.P.