



# 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.

## SPRING 2021 FOLK NEWSLETTER

### Wolves and FOLK! Join us on April 15, 2021



Grayson is an arctic gray wolf, part of the Exhibit Pack at the Wolf Center

The FOLK Annual General Membership Meeting is coming up this spring and you are all invited!. Mark your calendar now for **Thursday April 15<sup>th</sup> 2021, 7-8:30 p.m.** Yes, it's another zoom meeting but *this* one will be FUN and informative. We will be meeting with

the **International Wolf Center in Ely, Minnesota.** Beginning at 7 pm with informal greetings---a chance to introduce our board members and activities with a very short business meeting\*---the program, **"How to live with Wolves"** will be presented by an educational specialist who will share the wolves of Ely with us and discuss the challenges facing wolves and humans in today's world. A question & answer period will follow.



FOLK believes that as the state of Michigan gears up for a potential wolf hunt it would behoove all of us to know as much as possible about these animals that live among us but are rarely seen. So we invite all of you to join us in learning how these family-oriented wolf packs operate and contribute to the ecosystem and how we, as humans, can learn to live with them.

\*The minutes from FOLK's last general meeting and the financial report will be posted on FOLK's website: [www.keweenawfolk.org](http://www.keweenawfolk.org).

#### Industrial-scale Wind Turbine Development in Adams & Stanton Townships

A request for "Determination of No Hazard" has been made to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regarding 12 sites in Houghton County. This is a required preliminary step for a 38-Megawatt Industrial Wind Development Proposal for four sites in Adams Township and eight sites in Stanton Township. The proposed wind turbines would stand 575 feet high.

UPPCO entered into a Power Purchase Agreement with Circle Power, a financial investment company and potential developer of the proposed Industrial Wind Project. Concerned citizens anticipate a public hearing, to be announced, that was delayed due to COVID restrictions.

#### Local Earth Day Activity

To celebrate **Earth Day** locally, take advantage of MTU's second waste reduction Drive on April 17th. Check out their website for a list of plastic items that can be recycled and for a list of drop off locations. The really great thing about this recycling drive is that the small and weird plastic items that one can't usually recycle is welcomed by this drive. A group of students from MTU's Sustainability Demonstration House (SDH) have worked to find sources for these hard to recycle plastic items. <https://mtulode.com/4511/pulse/waste-reduction-drive-returns-how-you-can-participate>



National/international Earthday activities: <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2021>

## Line 5: Where it stands now

by Rosemary Grier

**Brief history** - Line 5 is a 30" diameter, 645-mile pipeline that carries oil and gas from Superior, Wisconsin to Sarnia, Ontario, extending across the Upper Peninsula before splitting into two 20-inch diameter parallel pipelines that cross 4.6 miles on the lake floor in the Straits of Mackinac just west of the Mackinac Bridge.

In 1953, the state of Michigan granted a right-of-way to Enbridge, a Canadian oil-transport company. Today, nearly 23 million gallons of oil flow through the aging 67 year-old pipeline daily. Much of the oil flowing through this system comes from western Canada, takes a shortcut through Michigan and under the Straits of Mackinac before crossing under the St Clair River to return to Canada for refining.

**Permit Approval** - The Department of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy (EGLE) has agreed with the Department of Natural Resources that the current pipeline violates the Public Trust Doctrine by posing an unacceptable risk to the Great Lakes. However, at the same time, EGLE also announced its approval of permits to build a replacement tunnel, determining that the tunnel project would have minimal impact on water quality and wetlands. "Our review showed construction of the proposed tunnel could comply with state environmental laws," said EGLE Director Liesl Clark. Whitmer spokesperson Chelsea Parisio said EGLE's decision "in no way lessens the pressing need for a shutdown of the existing pipelines by mid-May and Enbridge's legal obligation to comply with that deadline." Further permitting must be approved through the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) and MI Public Service Commission (MPSC).

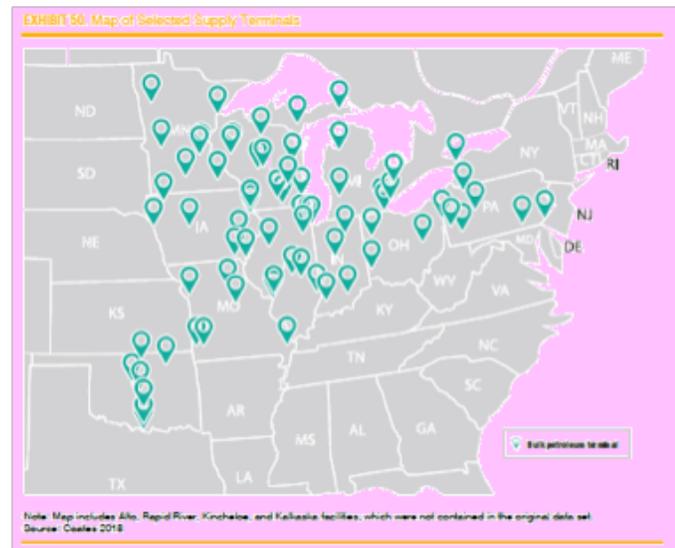
Environmental groups, Native American tribes and some Northern Michigan hospitality businesses support shutting down Line 5, while construction trades, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and oil industry groups favor the tunnel. FOLK submitted a statement to the ACE to request a denial of Enbridge's application to build a tunnel under the Straits until a full environmental assessment by the Corps is completed. FOLK also sent a statement to the MPSC to deny Enbridge's request for declaratory ruling on whether a new siting authority from MPSC is needed to construct the new tunnel segment, and also to close Line 5 based on environmental and safety concerns.

## Propane Availability in Michigan – Ready for Change

*The following article was written by the UP Propane Research Team, UP residents who between them have attended every UP Energy Task Force meeting. Several of them use propane daily: Gene Champagne, Marge Forslin, Rosemary Grier, Mary Pelton-Cooper, Horst Schmidt and Jeff Towner.*

Propane supply to the Upper Peninsula has been a flashpoint in the debate about Line 5 (see above). The public deserves to have a realistic, clear understanding of whether the U.P. will have an adequate propane supply, or available alternatives, following the planned shut-down of Line 5 in May 2021.

The pipeline owner argues Line 5 is an irreplaceable source of propane for U.P. homes, but is it? Since the propane industry is unregulated, the best we can do is follow what they say. The propane industry has consistently said, both in the news and during UP Energy Task Force (UPETF) meetings, that they have enough supply.



### 86 Potential Sources near Michigan

The Rapid River facility has provided propane for 25 years. But it is by no means the only location. This map, prepared by Public Sector Consultants, shows the 86 potential sources of propane that can be reached by rail or truck "within close proximity to Michigan" according to [the report](#) published by the UPETF in April 2020.

Propane retailer Kristopher Bowman, also a member of the UP Energy Task Force, commented on available supplies during the January 2021 UP Energy Task Force meeting: "The retailers in the UP have diverse sources and plenty of supply." Rail is both a way to transport propane and to store it for up to a month. Derek Dalling, Executive Director of Michigan Propane Gas Association, noted in a [Bridge Magazine article](#) that two of his organization's

*Propane availability continued on top of next page*

members are adding rail to their facilities in the Upper Peninsula. This action is a pre-emptive move by the industry to ensure access to supply. In addition, the [UPETF Propane Recommendations](#) included conducting an analysis of all of the UP rail options for propane. Supported by state funding, Michigan Tech researchers will issue this report in 2021.

### Lesson learned from 2013-14 Polar Vortex – Store more propane in Michigan

[UPETF Propane Recommendations](#) state “With more than nine million gallons of customer storage, and 1.5 million gallons of commercial storage in the Upper Peninsula, simply having all residential and commercial tanks filled at the beginning of the heating season would significantly increase the Upper Peninsula’s reserve margins and buffer it against potential disruptions.”

During the [August 2019 UP Energy Task Force meeting](#), Dalling acknowledged past problems: “We do not want to have a repeat of [the shortage of propane] during [polar vortex] in the 2013-14 winter.” He reported that propane retailers have worked together to provide product during shortages to meet customer needs:

*“Since that time, ...we stress, more than ever, to our [Michigan Propane Gas Association] members about keeping adequate supply [and] making sure they stress to their customers about ordering in advance.*

*...pre-buying and pre-planning is absolutely a necessity and is something that the industry has stressed. The Michigan industry is very proud of the fact we learned our lesson from that vortex and have not had a repeat, not even close. It is very much in our minds that we don’t have that happen again.”*

At the following UPETF meeting, a representative from the company that owns the oil and natural gas liquids flowing in Line 5, High Plains Marketing, presented an overview of the propane industry in North America and his company’s role as a wholesaler. [His presentation](#) showed **the almost doubling in storage capacity in Michigan** following the 2013-14 vortex, from 2,000,000 million barrels to nearly 4,000,000.

The weekly data from the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) shows this trend very clearly. The [Winter Propane Market Update](#) is published every Wednesday October to March. **Michigan’s supply is well above the five-year average so far in 2021.** The UPETF recommendations also cover consumer protection, energy efficiency and financial assistance programs that would support those reliant on propane as the supply system changes. Multiple actors have stated that they are ready for what comes next, after Line 5. It’s time to gain clarity by acknowledging the facts presented by the industry.

## L’Anse Warden Electric: Another time around by Catherine Andrews

FOLK was fortunate to have had expert legal counsel from the Environmental Integrity Project, attorneys Keri Powell and Patrick Anderson of Powell Environmental Law in Decatur, GA on permits for the L’Anse Warden Electric Company in 2017 and 2020. Partnership for Policy Integrity Director Mary Booth, also collaborated on comments. To read comments go to [Warden Plant permit comments 11/4/2020](#)

The conclusion to the Environmental Integrity Project’s 24 pages of comments on the 2020 Renewable Operating Permit (ROP) states:

“EGLE (Environment, Great Lakes & Energy) must make substantial revisions to the draft permit before issuance and reissue the draft permit for additional public notice and comment. Most significantly, because the 2019 addition of fuel pellets was a major modification, EGLE must include a schedule of compliance requiring the L’Anse Warden Electric Company to apply for major source Prevention of Significant Deterioration permit and

implement Best Available Control Technology limits that significantly reduce Nitrogen Oxides emissions. Additionally, EGLE must either require compliance with major source Maximum Achievable Control Technology, implement significant operating limits to restrict Hazardous Air Pollutants emissions to area source levels, or provide adequate justification for why L’Anse Warden Electric Company is actually an area source. Finally, EGLE must address the deficient monitoring, record-keeping, and reporting requirements that fail to assure compliance with applicable requirements, as required under Title V.”

On March 1, 2021, Joe Scanlan, Air Quality Division specialist reported that a new draft ROP is circulating around the department, which will be sent to L’Anse Warden Electric Company for a 30-day review. After that the ROP will be released to the public, perhaps some time in April, and the process of public review will begin all over again. Let’s hope our concerns are adequately addressed this time around.

## Carbon-neutral. Just another enviro buzzword? by Doug Welker

For many years, “environmental” words and expressions have been tossed around by environmentalists, the media, and business interests. *Green, environmentally-friendly, sustainable, renewable, eco-whatever*, and many more have made their way into public discourse without having specific definitions. Their lack of specificity has made it easier for interests on all sides to try to convince others of their points of view or to sell their products. The latest such term is *carbon-neutral*, but it differs from the others on the list because it has at least one very specific definition.

*Carbon-neutrality*, according to the European Parliament, means *having a balance between emitting carbon and absorbing carbon from the atmosphere in carbon sinks* (such as forests, soil, and oceans). Removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and then storing it in the natural environment is known as carbon sequestration. (Carbon may also be stored in non-natural locations, such as abandoned coal mines.) In order to achieve net zero emissions, all greenhouse gas emissions will have to be counterbalanced by carbon sequestration or another form of storage.

Will simply removing fossil fuels from the mix of fuels that we use achieve carbon neutrality? Does this mean that generating electricity from solar or wind energy is carbon-neutral? While solar and wind are, in a sense, carbon-neutral *fuels*, **their use is not a carbon-neutral activity**

unless there are no fossil fuels used to manufacture and transport photovoltaic panels or wind turbines, or in the maintenance of, and to provide back up energy for, intermittent “renewable” energy sources. Planned carbon sequestration needs to be involved.



It’s easy to find claims of carbon neutrality, or goals to be “carbon-neutral by 20xx,” but they are meaningless unless carbon sequestration is involved. As an example, consider Governor Whitmer’s Executive Direction 2020-10, *Building a Carbon-Neutral Michigan*. The goal is laudable, but it lacks the specificity needed to actually achieve carbon neutrality. The minor carbon sequestration measures mentioned are incapable of offsetting the fossil fuel use needed to manufacture and operate solar and wind farms, or even to operate the State’s motor vehicle fleet, provide heating and lighting for State buildings, etc.

Environmentalists need to be cautious and not be seduced by *carbon-neutral* when simply used as a buzzword expression, but instead need to put the feet of governments, institutions, and corporations to the fire by pressuring them to provide documentation of true carbon neutrality through specific carbon sequestration measures.

## A Spaceport? Where? by Rosemary Grier



Our December issue highlighted a new vertical spaceport project proposal in northern Marquette at the historic Granot Loma Resort on Lake Superior. Another UP location was recently named at the

Chippewa County International Airport near Sault St. Marie, former Kincheloe Air Force Base that closed in 1977. A third named location is in northern lower MI for a horizontal launch site at Oscoda-Wurthsmith Airport in Oscoda along Lake Huron.

These spaceport projects are a result of the MI Launch Initiative, a public-private partnership organized by MI Aerospace Manufacturers Association (MAMA) and are expected to bring an estimated 40,000 jobs and aims to solidify the state’s place as a premier commercial aerospace destination. The function and purpose for these new spaceport projects is to be a command and control center to

provide classified and unclassified capabilities for the Department of Defense and other interested commercial space organizations, including satellites needed for 5G and the auto industry to provide constant communications for the growing electric vehicle market.

**There is growing opposition for the Marquette based spaceport** because of environmental impact concerns to a sensitive coastal area, including air-water quality, threatened and endangered species, and migratory patterns for animals, including moose. Some local residents wonder why this pristine forested Lake Superior shoreline was selected over a more suitable rocket launch site at the old K.I. Sawyer air force base south of Marquette. *Citizens for a Safe & Clean Lake Superior* (CSCLS), a coalition of local and UP citizens have united against this proposal for the Marquette spaceport location in Powell township. <https://citizensforasafeandcleanlakesuperior.org/>

CLK elementary students prepare their garden beds for planting (above) and observe the sunflowers that they've grown (middle). Hancock middle school students engaged in long-term data collection project at Paavola Wetlands (bottom)



## ***"Developing a sense of place while learning through outdoor education"***

Great News! The December 2020 Newsletter highlighted the above FOLK tenet which supports outdoor education. **The Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative (LSSI)** was challenged to match a \$20,000 grant from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust. The \$20,000 goal was met. So, the Great News is that area youth will greatly benefit from the \$40,000 that LSSI will receive to help fund the continuation of their outdoor educational programs.

To ALL of you who donated we "THANK YOU VERY MUCH!"

### Recent activities undertaken by your FOLK board:

- Submitted a letter to the Houghton City Commissioners regarding Ordinance 2020-314, a residential rezoning to business status, located on Canal Rd near the Houghton and Hancock beach parks. FOLK is concerned about commercial excavation and development on this contaminated delisted Superfund site having the potential to expose toxic and cancerous chemicals that could drain or seep into the canal.
- Submitted a letter of support on behalf of FOLK regarding the MI DNR application for funds to create a new state scenic site and for necessary improvements at the Douglass Houghton Falls in Calumet Township, Michigan.
- Signed on to a RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO A MICHIGAN WOLF HUNTING/TRAPPING SEASON from Nancy Warren to the MI DNR & Natural Resources Commission. The gray wolf has been removed from the Federal Endangered Species List as of January 4, 2021 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. BE IT RESOLVED, that we oppose any attempts to establish Michigan Wolf hunting/trapping season.
- Signed onto a letter urging President Joe Biden to immediately withdraw the recently issued Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Resolution Copper Project that would facilitate a land exchange and construction of the Resolution Copper mine, resulting in the destruction of Oak Flat. It is located in the Tonto National Forest in Arizona, and is a sacred recreational and ecological haven.



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

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- FOLK GMM April 15<sup>th</sup> 7-8:30 pm, featuring The International Wolf Center program, *How Humans and Wolves can live together*"
- UP Clean Energy Zoom Conference, April 16<sup>th</sup> – Task Force Report & Legislative Policy Update. Moderators & Presenters TBD. See [www.upcleanenergy.org](http://www.upcleanenergy.org)
- Earth Day Activities: Celebrate locally and take advantage of MTU's second waste reduction drive April 17<sup>th</sup>. <https://mtulode.com/4511/pulse/waste-reduction-drive-returns-how-you-can-participate>
- UP Energy Task Force has their last meeting on March 16<sup>th</sup>. The final recommendations for Phase II, focused on electricity supply and providers, is due to Governor Whitmer in April 2021.
- 2021 MTU Sustainability Film & Discussions Series – 7-8pm, 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month through May. To see film choices and sign up go to: [lakesuperiorstewardship.org/news-view.php?target=219](https://lakesuperiorstewardship.org/news-view.php?target=219)
- Time for the 2021 Adopt-A-Highway season! Consider helping with our first trash pick-up during May 1 - 9<sup>th</sup>. Contact Rosemary at [KeweenawFolk@gmail.com](mailto:KeweenawFolk@gmail.com)