

**Musician Ben Weaver** is circumnavigating Lake Superior by bicycle, with a vision to unify communities through song, poetry, discussion, and storytelling.

**JOIN US!**  
**Sunday, July 12**  
**6:30pm at the**  
**Portage Lake**  
**District Library,**  
**Houghton,**  
**Michigan**

**FOLK**  
 Friends of the Land of Keweenaw  
 PO Box 473  
 Houghton MI 49931

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**JUNE 2015 NEWSLETTER**

Editors: Horst Schmidt and Betsy O'Leary  
 www.folkup.org • www.folkminingeducation.info  
 Email: info@folkup.org  
 PO Box 473 • Houghton, MI 49931

**FOLK'S Adopt-A-Highway Program**

*Rosemary Grier*

**Did you know Michigan's Adopt-A-Highway (AAH) program turns 25 this year?** For those 25 years, FOLK has been cleaning up trash along a two-mile stretch of US 41 from the Baraga/Houghton County line south. This major milestone celebrates the many volunteers who help keep Michigan state highway roadsides clean and attractive. FOLK is a charter AAH member, joining the first groups in 1990!

For our first pick-up in late April this year, we collected eight bags of litter along our two-mile stretch. We always look for lost money. For beer can collectors, this is an opportunity to add to your trophies.

*FOLK needs your volunteer help for our next clean-up events, during the weeks of July 11–19 and Sept. 26–Oct. 4.* We provide safety training, vests, bags, and the opportunity to contribute your efforts for our community. Please contact Rosemary Grier for details: 906-334-2660. ❖

**Message from Linda Rulison, FOLK President**

*Lake Superior, the coldest, clearest and cleanest of the Great Lakes,* is our home. Sometimes we take it for granted that it will always be there to rely on and enjoy. But like anything else, the Lake needs our attention and care to be kept cold, clear and clean. While Lake Superior has the least amount of toxic pollution when compared to the other Great Lakes, it also has the longest retention or outflow time of 191 years. Even with less pollution, Lake Superior still suffers from toxins such as mercury, dioxin and PCBs, just to name a few, and that pollution sticks around for a long time.



The First Earth of 1970 inspired "the People," who subsequently inspired the political leaders to put environmental protections in place with the Clean Water and Air Acts in the early '70s. Because of these regulations, people like Verna Mize were able to achieve a new level of protection for Lake Superior by stopping mining companies from dumping their tailings into the Lake. The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1978 further empowered the work between the U.S. and Canada through the International Joint Commission.

We ALL need to help ensure that these protective regulations stay in place for the sake of our home and the entire Lake Superior Watershed. So – how do we stay inspired like Vera Mize in the '70s, and how do we help to inspire the next generation?

**Part of the answer is to join FOLK, UPEC and Ben Weaver in a celebration of our Great Lakes.** Ben has embarked on a three-week circumnavigation of Lake Superior by bicycle, with the theme *Surrounding Water: In the support of the land, the water, and the song.* Ben will be in Houghton on **Sunday, July 12, at 6:30pm at the Portage Lake District Library,** to share his passion for Lake Superior through song and poetry. He will challenge us to think about how we can change our stories about water, teach our children that our water, communities and ecosystems are interdependent, and our access to clean water is truly a gift. Learn about the Great Lakes Common Charter that inspires Ben: <http://www.benweaver.net>

**Join us for this entertaining and informative family event! ❖**

**Membership Form**

**FOLK**  
 Friends of the Land of Keweenaw  
 PO Box 473  
 Houghton MI 49931

**Board of Directors**  
 Linda Rulison – President  
 Doug Welker – Vice President  
 Rosemary Grier • Dave Rulison  
 Horst Schmidt • Chris Alquist

(Please print) Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Individual (Annual Membership / Jan-Dec): \$10 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Senior Citizen, Unemployed, Student (Annual): \$5 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Organization (Annual): \$35 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 I would like to contribute to FOLK's legal defense fund. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 I cannot afford the annual membership fee but would still like to be listed as a member.  
 Check here if you want acknowledgment of renewal.  
 I am not a member but I would like to receive the newsletter.  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

## BE A PATRIOT! BE GREEN!

As our annual commemorations of independence, of labor, and of wars come around again, it's important to remember that as environmentalists, we are also patriots. Too often we hide our dedication to conservation and sustainability from neighbors and friends, yet we are fighting to keep the human race from becoming extinct.

The growth paradigm retains its luster for most. This is normal, people say. And sadly, it is, if you accept the premise of greater extraction of resources, more consumption, ever higher energy usage, and the same environment having to handle it all.

When you recycle, reduce energy usage, drive less, you're a patriot. A patriot knows its more important to breathe clean air, eat unpoisoned food and drink safe water. Your behavior makes the world safer now and in the future. ***So put some green in the red, white and blue this year!*** ❖

## Things are Getting Better... in a Small Way

Environmental news is pessimistic, alarmist and depressing. Sign this petition. Write your legislator. Attend this rally. Who wants to hear how bad it is every day? Are you getting numb?

Fortunately, positive changes are on the horizon. Solar power is catching on fast. Coal-fired power plants are being retired in record numbers. The CEO of Shell Oil admits continued use of fossil fuels is bad for the environment. People are driving fewer miles in more efficient cars. Wind turbines are popping up on a large scale. The mining industry is told by its trade press that they need to be pro-environmental when closing mines.

The great awakening? Not likely, but climate change garners regular news coverage and more people are aware of it. The green movement has surges of activism! ❖

## FOLK Facebook Revived!

If you haven't viewed our Facebook page in the last three months, you're in for a surprise. Articles on all aspects of the environment are posted daily from around the world, drawn from the mining industry press, newspapers, newsletters, blogs, and environmental organizations. Mining companies, development plans, protests, disasters, legislative issues, community conflicts, and research are some of the variety of topics we share on social media. When the Graymont/DNR issue came up, we posted news of the ongoing changes.

Facebook tells us how many people view an article, and it's always interesting to see what catches fire. For example, our most popular post so far was about Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, with several hundred views. We're always happy when a post goes "viral."

FOLK strives to inform supporters and interested individuals about the many aspects of life that are affected daily across the planet, from the awful toll mining has taken on the environment in Mongolia, to how the Guardian newspaper is pushing their board and others to divest their investments in fossil fuel stocks, and how a French woman lives in New York City on \$5,000 a year by dumpster diving, to what corporations are up to – from bribing to mining to CEO pay to legal battles to causing environmental problems, and, sometimes solving them.

We encourage you, our supporters and future supporters, to visit our Facebook page every day, and share it with friends, encourage them to *Like* it. It can discourage, inform, excite or incite you. You'll love the variety, from deep-sea mining to zero emissions. Stay informed. Stay tuned: [www.facebook.com/folkorg](http://www.facebook.com/folkorg). ❖



**Highland Copper is on the move,** quietly getting ready to apply for permitting the White Pine mine in 2016. They continue to monitor the limits of ore bodies in Copperwood (Gogebic County), White Pine (Ontonagon County) and an area near Gratiot Lake in Keweenaw County. They are drilling in these areas now. Copperwood is already permitted, according to Highland, who purchased it from Orvana.

The state legislature in recent years has taken a pro-mining stance and promulgated anti-community control legislation, all in the name of economic development. Torch Lake, our "Area of Concern," still does not have an effective clean-up plan due to local and state politics.

As always, there is much concern about water pollution. Promises are abundant during the initial sales job and to DEQ. They say jobs will be plentiful with a high percentage of local hires. The company asserts it will follow state regulations. But state regulations are not adequate; state regulators are pro-mining and anti-people. The company can come back to DEQ after permitting and ask for changes, usually wanting lower standards because it's inconvenient or too expensive to follow the rules.

***What can you do?*** Right now we need contributions to help us garner the resources to carry on the fight. It will be a long, hard-fought battle and we need the necessary expertise to challenge the company and the state. We will also seek out allies to support this cause. ❖



## North Country Trail Provides Great Hiking Opportunities

Doug Welker

There are many great places to hike on the North Country Trail (NCT) in the western U.P. FOLK maintains several miles of the NCT southwest of Alston, Segment 34, with easy access points on South Laird Road and Forest Road 1500: [northcountrytrail.org/pwfttrail\\_segment\\_34.htm](http://northcountrytrail.org/pwfttrail_segment_34.htm)

This link shows FOLK's portion of the trail, with a link to the detailed trail map and photos from past hikes. A popular hike is a moderate 4.9-mile round trip from South Laird Road to a beaver pond complex where a boardwalk crosses the headwaters of the west branch of the Sturgeon River. Hiking the entire trail segment (5.55 miles) is a wonderful and invigorating challenge.

The Peter Wolfe Chapter (PWF) of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA), not only maintains much of the trail in the western U.P., but is involved with the Ottawa National Forest, National Park Service, NCTA headquarters, and many private landowners in several exciting projects to improve the trail. A dry, accessible trail from US 45 to popular Okun-de-Kun Falls is in the works, to replace what is now a wet, muddy trail. A route has been flagged to bypass a dangerous ford of the East Branch of the Ontonagon River. Two new bridges may be installed a short distance east of the FOLK section. Finally, the same partners are working to create a hikeable route from Canyon Falls roadside park east to Craig Lake State Park.

To help us maintain the FOLK section, contact Doug Welker, [dwelker@up.net](mailto:dwelker@up.net) or 906.338.2680.

For a complete list of trail segments, map links and segment descriptions, visit: [northcountrytrail.org/pwfttrail\\_segment\\_link.s.htm](http://northcountrytrail.org/pwfttrail_segment_link.s.htm) ❖



## JOIN FOLK!

**FOLK is an active, all-volunteer organization** located in the western Upper Peninsula of Michigan, working with local, regional and national organizations to protect and preserve the ecological integrity of the Lake Superior Watershed.

**Reverence, Gratitude, Stewardship:** Loving life; honoring its gifts. Securing a healthy environment, vibrant community, and vital economy for people of all ages, walks of life, and social groups. We owe this to generations past, present, and future.

**Education:** Developing a sense of place while learning through outdoor education how to protect and enhance the natural world forward to the seventh generation.

**Community:** Promoting a place where all people are valued, where all voices are heard and included, and where everyone can contribute to our shared life in this special place.

**Democracy:** Empowering citizen participation. In the late 1980s FOLK began engaging citizens in learning about, discussing, and participating in decision-making processes about our region's future. This has remained a core element of our values and mission.

***Join FOLK today and support our efforts with your donation or your time. All donations are tax deductible [501(c)(3) organization]. Memberships are \$10 per calendar year. Mail your check to FOLK, PO Box 473, Houghton MI 49931.*** ❖

## Some Activities of your FOLK Board Members in 2015:

- Wrote Letter of Support and dedicated time for the newly formed Recycling Initiative 2015
- January 12, March 16 & May 18 // Attended Western Upper Peninsula Citizens Advisory Council meetings as a council member
- February // Met with activists in Minnesota and Wisconsin to discuss possible formation of a multi-state coalition for a unified front against mining interests
- March // Prepared joint press release with Alexandra Maxwell, director of *Save the Wild UP*, condemning the decision by the MDNR Director to sell land to Graymont
- March 20 & May 26 // Torch Lake Watershed Project meetings
- April 22 // Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District Annual Meeting
- April 23 // Annual UPEC Celebration in Marquette; met with their board to discuss possible collaboration
- May 13 // DEQ, Abandoned Mining Wastes (including PCBs) Project – Torch Lake
- June 2 // KBNRD Environmental Forum "Weaving a Sustainable Future"
- June 15 // Submitted a grant application to the Western Mining Action Network
- June 19 // Humboldt Mill Tour (part of Eagle Mine operations) ❖