



FOLK

Friends of the Land of Keweenaw
October, 2012

Newsletter

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Plan to Attend the FOLK Annual Meeting!

FOLK will hold its 2012 Annual Meeting at the Orpheum Theater / Studio Pizza in Hancock (across from Finlandia Heritage Center) on Wednesday, October 24 at 6:00 PM.

- 6:00 Gathering
- 6:30 Keynote Address (open to public)
- 7:45 Business Meeting

The keynote address will be given by Michelle Halley, National Wildlife Federation UP representative. She will address the question:

Metallic sulfide mining laws and regulations in the Upper Great Lakes—Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ontario: Do they provide adequate protection for our environment and our citizen's health and well-being?

Michelle is an attorney and Lake Superior Project Manager for the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). She also has her own law practice. She has represented NWF and other clients in litigation and law-making procedures at the Michigan Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, including complex litigation regarding the Rio Tinto/Kennecott Eagle Mine.

She also provided oversight of the important NWF study, *Sulfide Mining Regulation in the Great Lakes: A Comparative Analysis of Sulfide Mining Regulation in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ontario.*

Seven Mile Point Needs Support

In 2001 Seven Mile Point was about to be sold, developed and forever put off limits to the public, so Northwoods Conservancy, a local non-profit group, raised a down payment and found people to co-sign a loan and thus began purchasing SMP. A big mortgage remains. The Conservancy suggests that if 400 people were to donate \$10/month over a period of time, it would ensure that SMP would be protected in perpetuity. Would you like to help?

For more information, stop by the visitor center in the Ahmeek street-car station, email northwoodsconservancy@gmail.com, or call 906-370-90222 or 906-337-0782



A Message from Linda Rulison, FOLK President

Our newsletter is back! One of my priorities when I took office was to expand our communication with our members and with the community. But then along came the Mining Education and Empowerment Campaign and a number of us found ourselves for the past few months engaged in laying a solid foundation for the Campaign. So the newsletter was placed on hold. Now that job is finished. With your help we will soon have the campaign up and running.

Here's where our preparations for the campaign stand today:

- We have prepared a strategy for carrying out the campaign which we have already begun to implement. We have more to say about it in this newsletter, and you can read it in its entirety on the mining education website. Visit the website and click on "Campaign."
- We have remodeled our FOLK website (www.folkup.org.) and created a brand new website to support the Campaign (www.folkminingeducation.info.) Both websites—one with a blog and the other with a forum—will allow the FOLK Board, its members, and the community to engage in a dialogue about mining and other issues that are of concern to us. You will find a great deal of helpful information on both websites. Our challenge will be to keep them up-dated and user friendly.
- We have contracted with a consulting firm to study the economic impact of new mining on our community. Power Consulting, headed by Dr. Thomas Michael Power, has begun work on the study. Dr. Power is professor emeritus and former chair of the Department of Economics at the University of Montana. He has is considered one the country's leading authorities on mining's impact on economic and community development. You will find the scope of work for the study on our mining education website. Go to the homepage and click "Mining's Economic Implications" in the left hand column.

We are very grateful to the Western Mining Action Network and its partner the Indigenous Environmental Network and Freshwater Future for, respectively providing \$3,000 and \$2,200 toward the \$15,000 cost of the study. FOLK provided the balance of \$9,800 from its own funds thanks to the generosity of our members.

FOLK would like to welcome two new Board members: David Clanaugh and Catherine Paavola. They familiar faces to FOLK. They both have been active in FOLK prior to their current tenure on the board and are very familiar with our local issues.

We still have room for more board members and a need for more committee members interested in working on current projects, especially the mining education and empowerment campaign. If you are interested in learning more about the committee work or participating in FOLK's community projects such as Highway pick-up and maintaining FOLK's section of the North Country trail, please feel free to contact us at: our email address.

The FOLK Board looks forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your continuing support.

Proposed Mineral Exploration could impact Trap Hills and North Country Trail

By Doug Welker

The Ottawa National Forest has indicated that the Canadian mining company Bitterroot Resources Ltd., through its wholly-owned subsidiary Trans Superior Resources, Inc., has applied to investigate the mineral potential beneath Forest Service lands in the Trap Hills of Ontonagon County. Should they find deposits of economic value, a permit to mine might be applied for.

Exploration would involve drilling and possibly various geophysical exploration techniques. Usually short access routes from existing roads are created to desired drilling sites. If a company does this responsibly, little environmental impact may result. However, the exploration would take place in the Trap Hills, one of the most spectacular and rugged parts of the Ottawa National Forest. It would also take place in close proximity to the North Country National Scenic Trail, the Cascade Falls Trail, and the Pioneer Multiple Use Trail.

Trans Superior is seeking gold, nickel, cobalt, and platinum group metals. In the western U.P. these metals are usually found in the sulfide form. The mining of sulfide minerals has a high likelihood of creating acid mine drainage, which could seriously impact streams, wildlife, and potentially human health.

To learn more about the proposed drilling, the concerns it evokes, and to address comments to the Ottawa National Forest, visit our mining education website and click on "Newsletter Supplement" in the left hand column.

FOLK Mining Education and Empowerment Campaign: Takeouts from Our Strategy *

Goals

The campaign has four basic goals:

- To empower our citizens to participate knowledgeably and effectively in the permitting process for the exploration and development of new mines in the western U.P..
- To enable our citizens, community leaders and private and public institutions to make informed and responsible choices about whether or not to support proposed mineral extraction projects in our region.
- To facilitate the introduction of a mining policy in our region supported by citizens, key private and public institutions, and the state of Michigan that requires that new resource extraction projects will (1) preserve, not degrade, our region's natural and social environment and (2) strengthen, not harm, our economy.
- To ensure that if new mining projects are proposed, they (1) will preserve, not degrade, our region's natural and social environment; and (2) will strengthen, not harm, our economy.

Programs

Action Research

The Campaign's action research program will offer an opportunity for our citizens to participate in research that addresses the many issues that confront our region as it considers the resumption of mining. Here are some of our projects:

- *A Future Vision for the U.P.*. We will engage our citizens in visualizing a western U.P. in which (1) the natural and social environment is protected and enhanced and (2) the economy is diversified and sustainable and provides jobs to all who need them. We are just getting this study organized.
- *Mineral Rights and Property Rights*. Our first project, it explains how mineral rights are severed from property rights and what the implications of this are for property owners. Visit the FOLK mining education website homepage. In the left-hand column click on "Mineral Rights and Property Rights."
- *Economic Implications of new mining: The Power Consulting Economic Study*. (See President's message.)

Among other projects we are undertaking are: *Mining's Implications for Our Water Resources; Mining Laws and Regulations; and Lessons from our Mining Past*.

Outreach and Education

In carrying out our outreach and education program, we will engage in three kinds of activities: (1) public events to help the public grow in its awareness of the risks mining poses; (2) face-to-face meetings with citizens to deepen their understanding of the issue; and (3) interaction with governmental and non-governmental bodies to help them to address the risk of new mining.

We wish to be clear that we are concerned both with the substance of the risks and with the intimate involvement of our citizens in addressing them.

In carrying out this program, we will utilize our website, newsletter, public media and signage. We will hold house parties, forums and other public meetings. We will engage in letter-writing to public officials and the media.

As indicated, an important facet of the program is dialogue with our public bodies about their position on new mining in our region. The dialogue will be carried out by the public body's constituents and other interested citizens supported by FOLK.

Carrying Out the Campaign

The process, as it unfolds, will create an ever-widening circle of informed and empowered citizens who will come to share broadly a common understanding of the risks and benefits of new mining in our region. They will join together to apply their newfound knowledge and power systematically and comprehensively to address the risks and benefits of proposed new mining. They will join together to apply their newfound knowledge and power systematically and comprehensively to address the risks and benefits of proposed new mining.

An important aspect of the process is that, as it empowers and draws more citizens into the circle, it will cause a fundamental alteration in the relationship of the citizens to the political and economic structure of the western U.P..

FOLK will coordinate and facilitate the campaign, and serve as a catalyst for the evolving process.

* To read the strategy in its entirety, including a more extensive discussion of action research, and to learn about our concerns, visit the FOLK mining education homepage and click "Campaign."

The Need for the Campaign

A resumption of mining in our region has many ramifications—for the environment, our economy, and our health, indeed, our region's whole way of life. We believe that an objective and scientifically grounded assessment of these ramifications, in which our citizens are involved, is urgently needed.

It would seem most appropriate for our townships and county governments to make the assessment, because they have a mandated responsibility to protect our citizens' health and well-being. But they have not done so. While there may be many reasons for this—inadequate resources, the political fragmentation of the region—they don't preclude the need for one.

FOLK has undertaken its education and empowerment campaign in order to work with our public institutions and our fellow citizens to assure that just such an assessment is made.

"Legacy is not destiny..."

An excerpt from Jon Saari's remarks on the occasion of receiving the Binational Forum's 2012 Environmental Stewardship Award

...But legacy is not destiny. Our task is to reimagine the highest and best uses of this landscape within the constraints of past use and future potential. The U.P. is mineral rich, but the battle over the incomparable worth of the riches on the surface and those underground are just beginning. In a warming world water becomes even more precious as a resource. What are Lake Superior and its tributaries worth? A populist movement needs once again to challenge the entangling of corporate and state power; it is not a question of more or less government but who is using government for what ends.

We do not know, yet, how much of the landscape needs to be better and differently managed in order to sustain the full community of life. Short term thinking never gets to this question. Each decision about a mine, a road, a forest conversion, a new subdivision can degrade or enhance this community, depending on the balances we humans strike.

So let us err on the side of enhancement, for the sake of all.

Folk Board

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