



FOLK

Friends of the Land
of Keweenaw

OCTOBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

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**Claudia Schmidt Live!
Saturday, October 25 at the
Orpheum Theater, Hancock, MI**

Join us for an evening of camaraderie and music with Claudia Schmidt on **Saturday, October 25** at Hancock's Orpheum Theater, 426 Quincy Street. **Happy Hour 6:30pm, concert starts at 8.** Tickets \$15 at the door, or credit card purchase at 906.482.5100. *This event is co-sponsored by FOLK and Save the Wild U.P. See flyer at www.folkup.org.*

**FOLK Annual Meeting
Portage Lake District Library**

Tuesday, November 19 at 6pm. Keynote Speaker is Dr. Nancy Langston, Environmental Historian and Binational Forum member, who will present the Forum's work on responsible mining in the Lake Superior Watershed. *The event is free and open to the public.*

New FOLK Initiative: The FOLK Mining Education Project

FOLK Board of Directors

For the past three years, FOLK, through its Mining Education and Empowerment Campaign, has sought to involve our citizens in shaping a mining policy for our region. This policy would ensure new mining projects (1) preserve, not degrade, the region's natural and social environment, and (2) strengthen, not harm, our economy.

Among the Campaign's accomplishments is an economic report prepared by Dr. Thomas Power that addresses issues raised by the resumption of mining in the western U.P., and proposes an alternative and more sustainable model of economic development. The report and a video lecture Dr. Power gave at Michigan Technological University are available on our mining education website:

www.folkminingeducation.info/toward-a-sustainable-economy-power-economic-report/

Now FOLK will pursue the Campaign's goals through a new initiative, the **FOLK Mining Education Project.** The project will address the imminent threat to our region's ecological and economic health posed by mining projects that Canadian mining company, Highland Copper, is undertaking. Highland is developing two mines on the Keweenaw Peninsula, has acquired the Copperwood mining project, and is exploring development of a new mine at White Pine. Highland is also performing a study to determine the feasibility of developing a processing complex at White Pine.

FOLK is carefully monitoring Highland's activity. We've prepared a fact sheet that provides important background information for Highland's current activities, and we prepare periodic activity updates, which are emailed to FOLK members and supporters. The fact sheet and activity updates are posted at www.folkminingeducation.info.

In addition to our Highland Copper efforts, FOLK supports the EPA/DEQ in addressing persisting legacy mining issues and clean-up efforts on Torch Lake, and in the formation of a Torch Lake Watershed public advisory committee. For more information, visit www.folkminingeducation.info/torch-lake-remediation/ ❖

A Message from Linda Rulison, FOLK President

FOLK invites members and friends to two amazing events, noted above. First, we welcome world-renowned musician Claudia Schmidt to the Orpheum Theater on October 25 for a cabaret-style show of folk and blues: www.claudiaschmidt.com. The proceeds from this fundraiser will support the efforts of FOLK and Save the Wild U.P.

The second event is our annual membership meeting, featuring Dr. Nancy Langston, MTU

Environmental Historian and Lake Superior Binational Forum member. She will discuss her December 2013 Binational Forum report, *Responsible Mining in the Lake Superior Basin.*

FOLK bids farewell to three long-time board members: Catherine Paavola, Don Watson and Scott Rutherford. Catherine now goes south for winter and Don moved to Duluth; both have resigned as active members. Scott will remain an active area member and continue to assist with newsletter production, but he is giving up his board duties. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to all three for their time and support, and for inspiring us with their tireless dedication to environmental and social causes. *(continued on back)*



(Please print) Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Date _____

Individual (Annual Membership)– \$10 \$ _____

Senior Citizen, Unemployed, Student (Annual)– \$5 \$ _____

I currently cannot afford the annual membership fee but I would still like to be listed as a member.

Organization (Annual)– \$35 \$ _____

Check here if you want acknowledgement of renewal.

I would like to contribute to FOLK's legal defense fund. \$ _____

I am not a member but I would like to receive the newsletter.

Other _____

Total enclosed: \$ _____

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

Cleaning UP Gay's Stamp Sands

The summer of 2014 brought a flurry of several proposed projects south of Gay, MI, down to Traverse Bay on Lake Superior. A former stamp mill processed copper ore and dumped millions of tons of "stamp sand" which created a new and sterile shoreline south of Gay more than 80 years ago. The sand has been migrating southward, negatively effecting the shoreline and underwater flora and fauna.

One proposal from Torch Lake Industries of Hillsdale, IL, plans to remove 2.15 million tons of stamp sand over five years from the shoreline and ship it to Chicago, where it would be used in the manufacture of shingles.

On June 24, the Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) held a hearing in Schoolcraft Township, attended by more than 50 people, mostly property owners concerned about damage to their properties. Torch Lake Industries explained that removal of the sand would improve the quality of the environment. This assertion was buttressed by scientific studies conducted by MTU researchers. Another company, GreenSands Inc., wants to pursue a similar course as Torch Lake Industries, but their proposal is still in its early stages. One troubling aspect is that it entails trucking stamp sand to L'Anse.

A second proposal pursues a project by the Army Corps of Engineers and DEQ to stop the spread of stamp sands onto Buffalo Reef, a major spawning area for lake trout. Regional Native Americans and other citizens are concerned about the loss of this spawning habitat and potential effects on the fishery.

A third proposal project calls for dredging the entrance to Traverse Bay Harbor, deluged by the stamp sands from Gay, over topping the breakwater and the original beach sand. Dredging would allow boat access under normal conditions and a safe haven during storms.

If the sand removal and Buffalo Reef projects become reality, one small part of the Keweenaw may be partially restored and saved while alleviating the problems of Traverse Bay. ❖ – *Horst Schmidt*

FOLK President's Message *(continued from front)*

FOLK is excited to welcome two new board members: Horst Schmidt and Chris Alquist, active community members who bring great talent and experience to the organization. We eagerly anticipate the fresh voices and input of our two new members. Thank you!

We invite YOU to share your time and talent with us as well. ❖



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Minnesotans paddle to DC to expose sulfide mining threats near Boundary Waters

Dave and Amy Freeman are on a mission, and a very long trip. They've traveled by foot, dogsled, canoe, and kayaks from Washington State to the Arctic to Minnesota, and down the Great Lakes and East Coast to Washington, DC, spreading their message along the way. They will present their case against sulfide mining in northern MN to members of Congress and others in DC later this fall.

On September 11, Amy and Olivia Ridge, Project Coordinator for Paddle to DC, spoke at Portage Lake District Library at an event co-sponsored by FOLK. Amy chronicled their adventures thus far, discussed their plans for the rest of their trip, and invited us to sign their canoe. Olivia focused on current mining threats in the Ely, MN, area and south into the Minnesota Iron Range.

Like here, mines are proposed there that threaten the environment and tourism. Also like here, residents are familiar with relatively "benign" mines – native copper mines here and iron mines in MN. But new mines would be different. Massive sulfide deposits would be mined in MN for heavy metals. Such mines are particularly prone to acid mine drainage and associated negative impacts to health and ecosystems. Both open pit and underground operations are planned.

Proposed mines near Ely are close to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and the headwaters of several drainage basins. Not only is pollution a risk, but the tourism economy could suffer as well. Boundary Waters tourism generates \$100 million annually for the northeast MN economy, and most of those dollars stay in the area. In contrast, only a small percentage of the value of a mineral deposit stays in the area.

Another predicted economic impact, based on studies of mines and wilderness areas elsewhere, is loss of property values near mines. After a mine opened in South Carolina, property values within five miles of the mine dropped 13 to 20 percent. However, another study of property values shows that such values near wilderness areas average 18.7 percent higher than in areas not near wilderness.

Clearly, Ely area residents have a lot of work to do to combat the proposed sulfide mines. We have similar concerns here. ❖

For more information about Paddle to DC, visit PaddletDC.org and nmworg.org.

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