

Protecting the River

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Marquette County is, and hopefully always will be full of natural beauty. A majority of the area involves water, and water is the blood of everything around us. If we don't start taking action, and start protecting our rivers, we will end up losing everything. The Yellow Dog River is a wonderful example of beauty, and it's not an area we want to lose. Easy steps can be taken to preserve the river and land surrounding it. Even little things you do each day can change the outcome over time, and can help preserve the river for future generations.

Littering can be detrimental to our rivers and lakes. Marquette is a lucky area to have fresh water. If people continue with littering, even if it's not near the river, our water could be ruined. Litter even as small as cigarette butts can create a significant impact on the river; these butts are a toxic threat to aquatic animals. Other littering problems include left over fishing line and bait containers. The Yellow Dog River is a great fishing place, but it will not continue to be, if people don't start picking up their leftovers from their trips. Sources along the river say that birds and other small animals have been tangled in the fishing line and have died. When plastic bags are left at the river from fishermen or campers, other animals can misinterpret this as food and ingest toxic materials that will result in their death and the disruption of the ecosystem.

Winter in this area comes with the price of an abundance of snow. If we use sand instead of salt on icy sidewalks, roads, and highways we will reduce the amount of it going into the river. Salt is

actually a toxin to plants and water. By using sand we are preventing these toxins from impacting the river. The water from here is some of the cleanest water in the area, but it will only remain so if we take care of it.

“Say nah to da sulfide mining, eh?” This is a very common bumper sticker in the area protesting the use of sulfide mining. This is currently one of the biggest threats to the



Photograph taken By: Chelsea Nottle

river. You may be asking “What is sulfide mining?” Sulfide mining extracts copper, nickel, and other metals from sulfide ores. When it rains, the water falls on the ore waste and creates sulfuric acid; it then may run off into the river thus contaminating it. This damages the fresh water available and creates a threat to our health and the animal life surrounding the river. As many locals say, just say “Nah” and protest sulfide mining.

Actions have already been taken to protect the river. The Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve is a group of very dedicated people who feel very close to the area. They take care of the river and show others more about it by bringing groups out to the river. In support of the programs provided by the group, people have made generous donations over the past few years. If you are interested or would like more information about the preserve go to: <http://www.yellowdogwatershed.org/blog/>