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11/25/12  
word count: 502

## The Beautiful Yellow Dog River

Our freshman composition class followed a long twisty trail in our assortment of cars and trucks until the trail ended, forcing us to continue on foot. Standing on the top of the hill we could all see the Yellow Dog River at the bottom.

Eventually, we made our way down the slippery, mud covered slope and ended up at the first waterfall. Every student had a different response once we reached the waterfall. The pouring rain came down on us and could have caused some to have unfortunate thoughts about our trip. Others found tranquility in the rain and felt it only enhanced the river's beauty.



picture by: Brook Mize

The Yellow Dog River is approximately fifty-one miles and stretches from the Huron Mountains to Lake Superior. Along the river are numerous beautiful scenic trails that hikers enjoy for long nature walks. During the warm summers, camping and trout fishing are popular. Though tourism is at a high in the summer, it's important to remember to respect the wild life and plants surrounding the area.

There are a number of different native species such as moose, white-tailed deer, bobcats, black bears, grey wolves, and many others that rely on a pure, uninhabited environment. The oak fern, jack pine, and spruce grouse are just a few of the native plants that also rely on a clean habitat. The Yellow Dog is known for its water purity, being one of the cleanest rivers in the Upper Peninsula. It's important to keep this area under strict regulations to maintain the quality of water so it can support a healthy wildlife population.

Why though is the Yellow Dog worth preserving? Dr. Alec Lindsay, a biology professor here at Northern Michigan University said, "It's an interesting watershed. It starts at the Huron Mountains. Starts there and makes its way to Lake Superior. From the rustling little stream to a larger, sandier area, it has a large diversity and supports a diverse plant life." The Kirtland's warbler, for instance, has a very specific nesting requirement. They will only nest in a dense area full of young jack pine trees. This species was added to the endangered species list in 1967, when they were only known to nest in the northern part of Lower Michigan (U.S Fish & Wildlife Service). Thankfully, the environment surrounding the Yellow Dog River can fully support the growth of jack pine trees, making it possible for the native Kirtland's warbler to reside there.

The river has an important wild factor. The environment and land are undeveloped and this is rare. The river also supports old growth forests that in turn provide habitat for specific plant and animal species. These old growth forests are not only important for the wildlife, but also important study grounds for scientists, wildlife biologists, and foresters. Keeping the Yellow Dog free from development is



picture by: Brook Mize

necessary to keep the beauty that tourists and local enjoy so much, and the purity of the environment for the survival of the native plants and wildlife.