

Vito Giannola, Brett Maday

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### Threats to the Yellow Dog River

As the leaves change and the weather chills I find myself settling in alongside the Yellow Dog River, relaxing by the camp after a day of hiking. The wind is a calm breeze rustling against the vibrant colors of fall. The water on the other hand is never calm, rushing and plunging down the boulders that are stacked perfectly to create the awe inspiring drop of the waterfall. The rocks gleam and sparkle in the sunlight peaking through the canopies. The wildlife is out to play before they rest for the night: chipmunks, squirrels, birds of all sorts, not to mention the fish and frogs that swim through the river. This place is full of action, yet it goes unnoticed, blind to society. This solitude is welcoming only to the ones who seek it.

From the spectacular scenes that the trees and waterfalls display to the water quality and biodiversity, the Yellow Dog River, located in upper Marquette County, is a natural beauty. Approximately 51 miles make up the stretch of the river starting at Bulldog Lake in Ottawa National Forest. Filled with an abundance of waterfalls and life, the flow finally ends in Lake Superior. There is an array of animal species in and around the river that survive off its many resources. Yet, most of this land is unprotected.

We wandered through campus this week to ask people if they knew about the Yellow Dog River and if they did, were they aware of any threats. "I love the Yellow Dog River..... I am aware that there is a big thing going on with mining that I don't know much about." said Rachel a junior at NMU.

Extraction of minerals is a big threat; currently sulfide mining threatens the watershed with point source pollution. Sulfuric acid will be the byproduct of any ore or mineral extraction. Though the mining companies claim new and safe methods of extraction, there is no guarantee. Extraction of these lumber and mineral resources poses many threats that include potential pollution, new human traffic and deforestation. Awareness of the potential danger to the river needs to be shared.

Many lumber companies follow a contract call SFI (Sustainable Forest Initiative), which states cutting cannot be done in unsafe or unsuitable areas for the sake of the environment, yet proof of these action is scarce do to lack of monitoring. These companies threaten the area around the river by disrupting the ecosystem from surviving off the necessities the river provides. Monoculture is also a huge threat that lumber companies create. Monoculture wipes out plant and animal life by not sustaining a suitable ecosystem with the right nourishment and shelter. These monoculture trees do not have the resilience to fight off disease on a big scale, potentially leaving acres of bare land.

Residential and commercial development in another threat, selling and buying land leads to many bad factors. This includes fragmentation, development of roads and building, and renovation of land. All of these things which inevitably causes unsuitable conditions for plant and wildlife due to extremely drastic changes

The last but most threatening thing is politics. With the lack of awareness from the community and local leaders, politics and economy are prioritized over the environment. Michigan Resources royalty funds which are money raised revenues from Michigan's natural resources are being used on things that aren't included in environmental affairs. In the end it is up to the people to claim the responsibility of the land and protect something more important than money, even if it means a little extra sacrifice.