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LAND PURCHASE
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THQ



HOWL

Spring/Summer 2024

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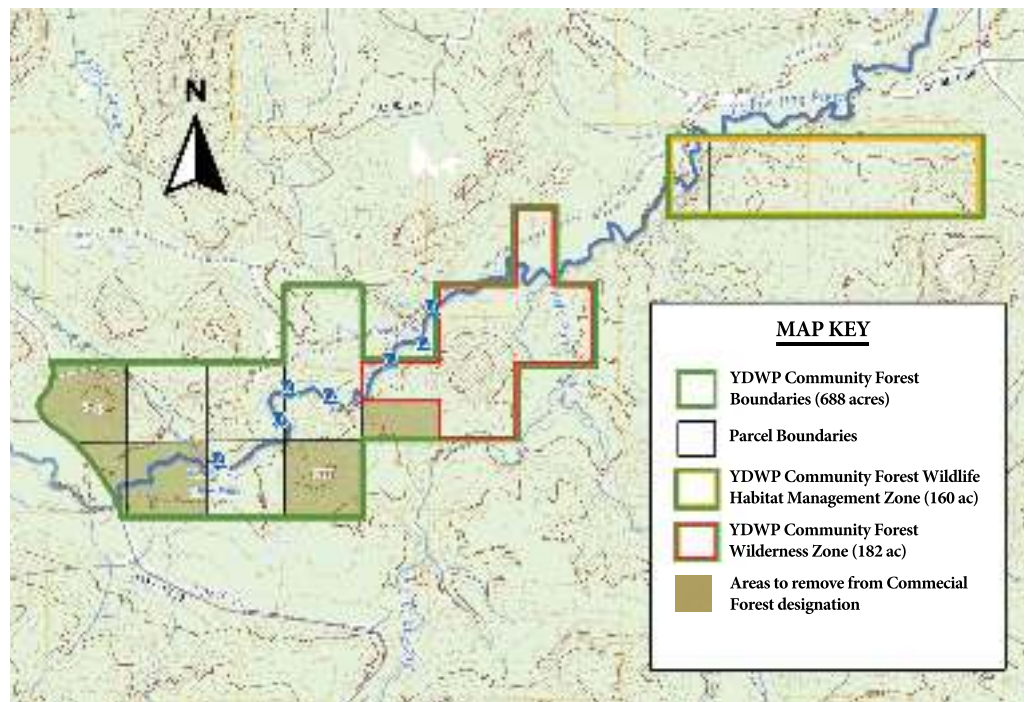
Preserving the Yellow Dog Watershed in its most natural state for the use of the public, now, and for the benefit of future generations.

YELLOW DOG RIVER COMMUNITY FOREST UPDATE & SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

By Rochelle Dale, Executive Director

Four hundred ninety-four of the 688-acre Yellow Dog River Community Forest are still registered with the State of Michigan as commercial forest. However, YDWP hopes to remove 150 acres from the program within the next year, thereby removing any obligation to cut trees on those lands.

The YDR Community Forest in Ishpeming Township stretches from the main access site on County Road 510 for approximately 2.25 miles on both sides of the river, encompassing more than a handful of waterfalls, swimming holes, trout hideouts, and feeder streams. When we purchased the land in 2016, most of these acres were enrolled in Michigan's Commercial Forest program (CF). When land is enrolled in CF, the owner pays considerably less in property taxes, and in return must file a professional forestry plan with the state. The Forest Resources Division then sees to it that the forests are harvested according to the agreed upon schedule. To remove land from CF and thus avoid the requirement to harvest trees, one must pay a penalty to the township. Currently, the penalty rate is approximately \$140 per acre.



Topographical map of the Yellow Dog River Community Forest. Areas shaded in green need to be removed from commercial forest designation within the year. Map by Sarah Heuer.

After the initial purchase in 2016, YDWP was able to remove nearly 200 acres from CF. This became the wilderness zone of the Community Forest. For the remainder, a new forestry plan was created that addressed wildlife habitat while keeping with the state's minimum requirements on harvesting. Today, some of those sections are due for cutting. While harvesting may not be inherently bad, and often can promote growth of targeted tree species for wildlife habitat, some areas really should remain untouched. Areas slated for cutting in the next few years encompass the lands on both sides of the river at the access site off County Road 510 and along the trail to the main falls. This is an area of mature hardwoods and conifer mix that has become the showcase of the Community Forest, rivaling the McCormick Wilderness Area in its majestic quality.

To ensure that this area remains pristine (no new roads) and free of the invasive species that come with them, we need to remove 150 acres from the CF program. However, this comes with a \$21,328 price tag. Recently, though, we received the welcome news that the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition has awarded us a \$10,000 conservation grant to go towards this removal project! That leaves \$11,328 to reach our goal.

We are creating a campaign to make up the difference. Please help if you can by supporting our community forest with a monetary gift. A \$70 donation sponsors the removal of one-half acre from CF. \$140 sponsors an acre, and \$700 sponsors 5 acres, but any donation is welcome. Simply write "Community Forest" on your check, or on our website, click "Give," "Make a Donation," and under Contribution Detail, write in "Community Forest." You will receive our special edition "Forests for Grandchildren" T-shirt, designed to remind us that our work here is not just for people now, but for generations to come.

(continued on next page)

COMMUNITY FOREST UPDATE

(continued from first page)



With sketch pad in hand, Nancy Moran strolls the Community Forest trail in search of bird life and artistic inspiration. Photo by Chauncey Moran.

While we work for the future of our grandchildren, we also look to the future of wildlife. In another 160-acre section of the Community Forest, YDWP is hoping to enhance wildlife habitat through a DNR wildlife grant, which was submitted in March. If awarded, we will be able to create habitat for the golden winged warbler, listed on Michigan's Wildlife Action Plan as a species of greatest concern because of its severe decline over the past few years. We will also be able to enhance deer habitat in a critical break-out area where deer leaving their wintering complex can find food and shelter in the early spring. Keep checking with us on this project. As a primary component, we will be planting a variety of mast producing trees, fruit trees and shrubs, and pollinator plants. We will need volunteers!



Golden-winged warbler in the Upper Peninsula's Hiawatha National Forest. Photo by Thomas Ingram. For more of his work, visit www.tomingramphotography.com

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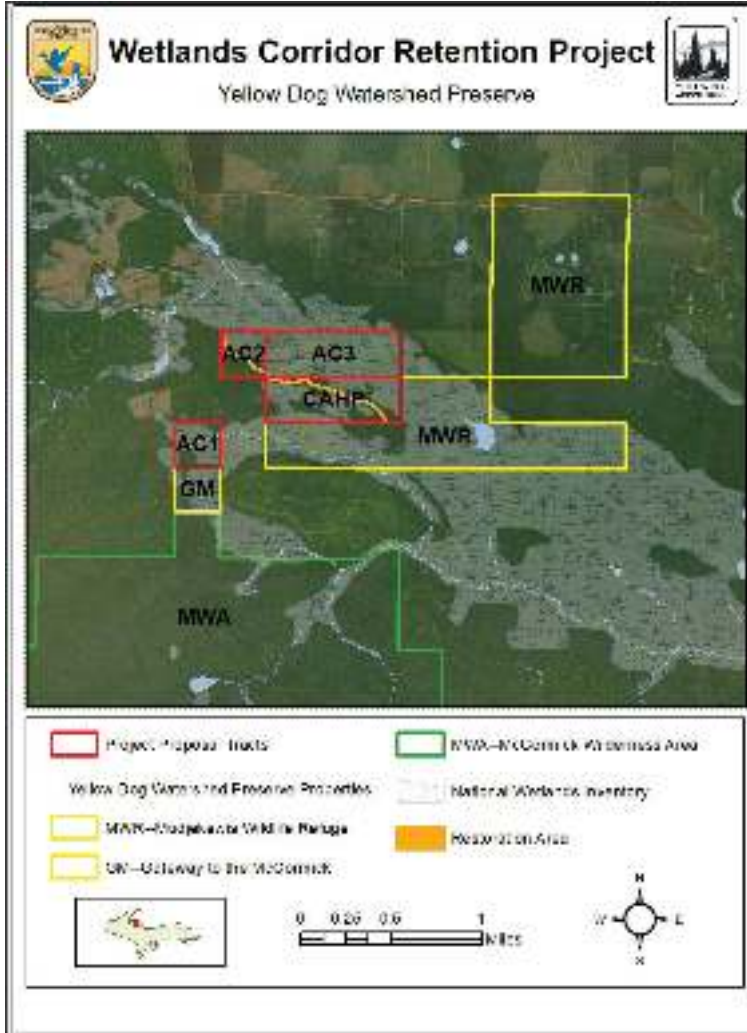
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- Brian Noell, *Communications Director*



YDWP RECEIVES NAWCA GRANT TO PRESERVE 200 ACRES OF WETLANDS

By Rochelle Dale



It's official: YDWP's North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant proposal submitted last fall has been approved! The \$111,694 award will allow us to preserve and protect 200 acres of wetlands, which will expand the corridor between the McCormick Wilderness Area and the Mudjewis Wildlife Refuge and ensure public access to the Christ Andersen Headwaters Preserve. As you study the project map, keep in mind that the parcels in yellow are already YDWP properties. While the Christ Andersen Headwaters Preserve (CAHP) was acquired two years ago, it is outlined in red as part of the current project because we were able to claim it as matching expenses for the grant proposal. AC1, AC2, and AC3 constitute the 200 acres that will be acquired through grant funding, which will also be used to develop and implement an invasive plant survey and treatment program.

We are excited to get back out on these lands: we have much to learn about the vast array of plant and animal species that thrive in this rare and beautiful ecosystem. During a walkthrough last fall with the appraiser, we were delighted by the appearance of a moose wandering north through AC3. We know the American bittern prefers the pond on CAHP. In addition, data collected in 2023 through the North American Bat Monitoring Program suggests the presence of little brown bats that are currently under consideration for federal designation as an endangered species. What might we find this season? If anyone is interested in participating in bird surveys or with invasive plant removal along the access road this spring/summer/fall, be sure to let us know. We are always thankful for additional hands, ears, and eyes.

This project was truly a team effort that included all our staff, several board members, the Laughing Whitefish Bird Alliance, and the seller. Thank you everyone!

WMAN GRANT FOR PUBLIC OUTREACH REGARDING MINERAL RIGHTS

In March, the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve received a mini grant from the Western Mining Action Network and Indigenous Environmental Network to engage in public outreach regarding mineral rights. In the State of Michigan, mineral rights are severable, meaning that property owners do not necessarily control the metals lying below the surface of their lands. With the help of this grant, we will contact landowners within the watershed who are eligible to claim mineral rights as well as those who might not be aware that someone else owns these rights on their property. Our goal is to build public awareness of mineral rights law as well as to open a dialogue with landowners as prospecting once again ramps up in our region.



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PUSH FOR UP MINERALS ACCELERATES WITH STATE GRANT FOR COPPERWOOD MINE

By Brian Noell, Communications Director

The political dimensions of the push to accelerate the pace of mining in the Upper Peninsula are coming into clearer view in the wake of the vote by the Michigan Strategic Fund on March 26 to approve a \$50 million grant to Canadian-owned Highland Copper to aid in development of a sulfide mine adjacent to Lake Superior and Porcupine Mountain State Park.

The vote and the accompanying PR spin reveal that there is remarkable unanimity across the mainstream political and media spectrum regarding mining projects. We have known for some time that it is a major priority of the Biden administration to establish a domestic supply chain for metals deemed of vital importance to the so-called green economy and that monies allocated under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act of 2021 and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 are all flowing toward mining companies as well as to industrial production facilities processing ore into batteries for a variety of commercial and military uses.

Before the Copperwood vote we did not know the extent to which the State of Michigan would throw its own weight behind the federal government's mining push. Now we can see that the state is fully onboard and shares the goal of putting every facet of the domestic electric vehicle economy, from mining to battery manufacturing to vehicle assembly, on a strong footing before the next election cycle. This all makes political sense for the governor and her allies, as historical identification with, if not robust infrastructure for, mining exists in the UP, while automobile manufacturing capacity and a trained workforce are already in place or being prepared downstate. Put simply, mines and factories in Michigan mean abundant, high-paying jobs for potential voters, and the new construction or enhancement of accompanying infrastructure adds even more employment in the shorter term. The Michigan Strategic Fund has itself been a part of this campaign; this year alone, in addition to Copperwood, it has directed tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to a battery plant in Detroit and an EV manufacturing facility in Auburn Hills.



Stream diversion around future site infrastructure at Copperwood. Photo by Highland Copper.

Thanks to the efforts of the grassroots coalition assembled in opposition to the Copperwood grant, the members of which spoke eloquently at the March 26 and February 27 meetings as well as in writing, the MSF board attached significant conditions to the award. The money is to be paid out as a reimbursement, not an outright gift, and only applies to Highland Copper itself (unless MSF gives its consent), ensuring that the company does not pocket the money and abandon the project to another entity. Moreover, there is an infrastructure construction requirement and an obligation to create jobs (yet to be determined, though press releases are touting 380 as the number). Both provide a level of accountability to the local community that might not have existed had activists not pointed out the speculative nature and generally negative net economic effects of mining development in rural America.

Most importantly, MSF is requiring Highland Copper to raise \$150 million before the state money is disbursed, a significant hurdle for a company who-

se valuation is presently less than the \$50 million grant itself. Indeed, the company has owned Copperwood for 10 years and already has successively pushed back construction timetables because of undercapitalization.

Also instructive is the public relations exercise that followed the grant announcement. The unanimity of business groups, Northern Michigan University, local government, state representatives, and the governor herself, was touted in press releases. Job creation, infrastructure improvement, economic development, and securing resources for electric vehicles and other technologies (ideally to be built in Michigan) were in the forefront. Although there will be an undeniable short-term economic impact if the project clears all the monetary and regulatory hurdles it faces and manages to produce ore, one can question the actual number of jobs for locals the mine will create as well as the sustainability of the development an operation predicted to produce only for 11 years will bring. And what about the market for copper itself, which is notoriously volatile and will largely determine the level of ore production, a common phenomenon that results in the type of "flickering" that keeps traditional mining communities in perpetual want?

Official press releases and local media coverage of the grant announcement were unquestioningly cheery and, even when mentioning opposition, omitted the substance of those objections. Extraction beneath Porcupine Mountain Wilderness State Park and potentially within 100 feet of Lake Superior itself, for example, as well as construction of a 323-acre tailings facility perched on a slope leading to the big lake and in view of the North Country Trail, Lake of the Clouds Overlook, and Copper Peak were passed over in silence.



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The roll-out of the MSF grant is illustrative of a crossroads being approached in the environmental movement, when destruction of wild lands adjacent to a lake containing 10% of the world's fresh water and an iconic state park is justified in the name of green energy, central to keeping the economy humming in the age of climate change. Political coalition-building underpins the project, which dovetails nicely with conservative priorities to rebuild extractive industries and provide jobs in a region suffering economic hardship and decades of population decline.

From a political perspective, this is a winning strategy for both sides and even seems like a path out of our climate dilemma. But what are the costs? Green energy is not green if the result is the fouling of the world's largest body of fresh water, which also is vital to addressing the effects of climate change. And what of the more sustainable recreation economy that the MSF's own bosses, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, are also pushing in their "Pure Michigan" campaign?

Perhaps most importantly, the mainstream narrative that celebrates sustainability, prosperity, and green energy in connection with the development of Copperwood ignores the burden future generations will bear from mineral extraction on the banks of our largest great lake. Maintaining decaying infrastructure and preventing the release of the accumulated waste into Lake Superior will be this project's longest legacy, adding more than 30 million tons of toxic material to the already steep bill of climate change itself.

Green energy, it turns out, is fraught with trade-offs. For now, however, state and corporate PR apparatus have the information advantage, working hand-in-glove with a local media lacking the resources and perhaps inclination to question the rosy picture being painted for them of "environmentally friendly" industrial projects.

It appears to fall to our organization, and others like us, to put these questions before our supporters and to do some tough thinking about the costs of the "green" economy's rapid growth. If we begin to see the problem in a multi-faceted way, perhaps a path forward will emerge that includes in the calculus even the effects of actions taken out of concern for a warming planet.



Design by Sara Smith.



The tailings facility at Copperwood Mine, measuring 244 football fields in area and reaching higher than the Statue of Liberty, would be located on a slope rich in watercourses descending to Lake Superior. The company proposes to mine up to 100 feet from the lakeshore. Map courtesy Protect the Porkies.com. Visit their website for more information or to get involved.

FROM THE CHAIR

By Chauncey Moran

The Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve will soon celebrate its 30th year of sustaining our mission "to preserve the Yellow Dog Watershed in its most natural state for the use of the public now, and for the benefit of future generations." We wish to honor those many folks who continue to support us in our work, whether by volunteering, generous financial gifts, or spreading the word. Recently, our staff has dedicated many hours to writing and rewriting grants that enable an abundance of special projects to come to fruition. You will read about some of these in this issue of *The Howl*. I hope you will find inspiration to support or participate in activities stemming from these efforts and help us sustain the natural way of a river. Truly, the Yellow Dog is like no other.



YDWP board and staff during a special meeting, February 2024. Photo by Nancy Moran.

YDWP HOSTS FILM AND DISCUSSION ON ALDO LEOPOLD'S LAND ETHIC

By Brian Noell

Readers of *The Howl* might recall Rochelle Dale's article last fall on environmental pioneer Aldo Leopold's legacy, not only nationally, but locally as the author of a 1938 forestry plan for the Huron Mountain Club. Although he spent his career in positions of considerable public influence, Leopold was also a tinkerer on his own land and an advocate for conservation as a community value. It was in this spirit that the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve presented *Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and A Land Ethic for Our Time*, on March 20 at the Thunder Bay Inn in Big Bay. Produced by the Leopold Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin, the hour-long documentary uses Leopold's life-story to chronicle the growth and maturation of his most enduring idea: the land ethic.

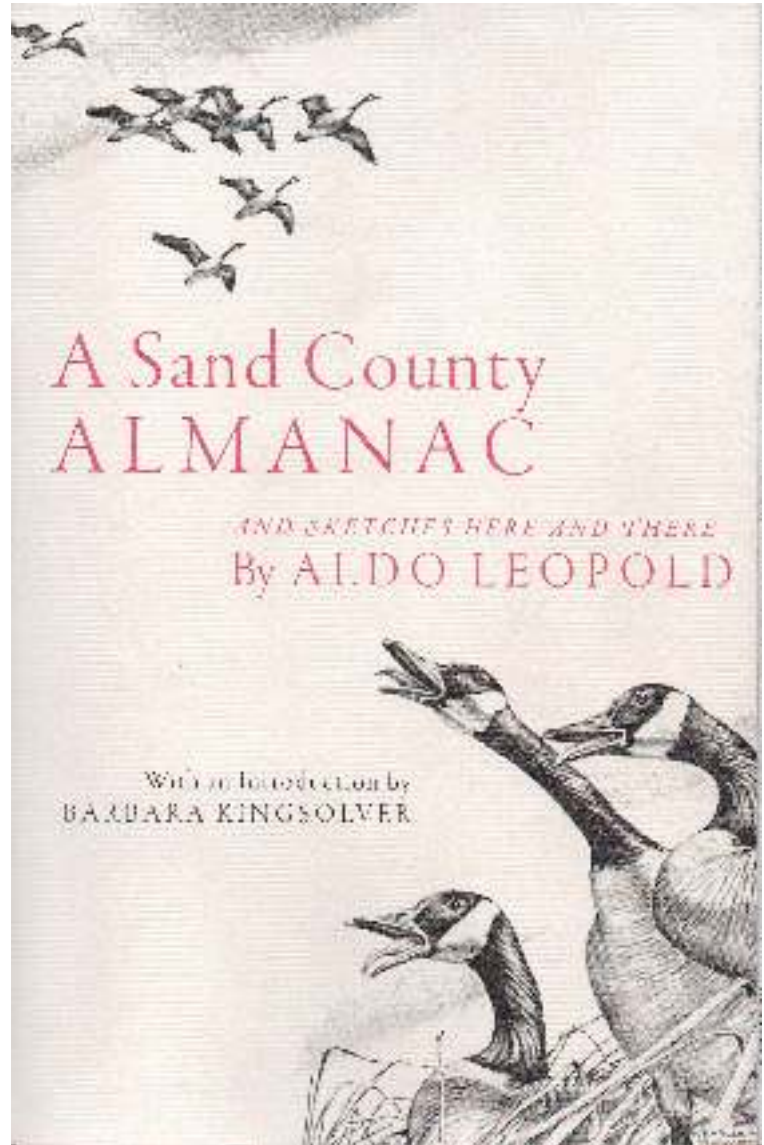
The land ethic finds its full expression in the last chapter of Leopold's final written work, *A Sand County Almanac*, published posthumously a year after his death in 1948. He argues that, although humanity has long acknowledged the value of ethics in its social, political, and economic enterprises, we have not recognized our obligations to the larger biotic community of which we are a part. By virtue of the scale and complexity of our civilization, the responsibility to steward the biome falls to us, yet, in absence of a "land ethic," we have no reliable means to carry it out.

Leopold argues that, although an ethical conscience is dawning (in his day the Dust Bowl, the extinction of the passenger pigeon, and the near extirpation of such iconic species as the grey wolf and American bison loomed large), it still has not transcended the profit motive. That is, conservation is presented by its acolytes as economically desirable, not as a moral imperative involving sacrifice for the greater good. The problem is that humans tend to privilege only the elements of the biome that are valuable to us (popular game, sport fish, harvestable trees, iconic wildlife species, and photogenic vistas), and not those lacking economic or social cachet. Moreover, the federal and state agencies directing conservation efforts appeal to the profit motive to win public adherence, offering subsidies to citizens, for example, to prevent soil loss, cultivate preferred tree species, or provide deer habitat. What is missing in all this is the understanding that one must act altruistically for true conservation to take place. He points out that humans willingly do this for "roads, schools, churches, and baseball teams," but we have yet to acknowledge a community that embraces not just ourselves and the species we particularly like, but those with lesser status as well, not to mention the soils and waters on which we all depend.

How do we bring about the emergence of a land ethic in human communities? Leopold observes curtly, "Quit thinking about decent land-use as solely an economic problem. Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and esthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

Discussion among the nearly 50 attendees at the film event was animated, in keeping with Leopold's own dictum that "nothing so important as an ethic is ever 'written.'" Rather, it evolves without end in the minds of community members themselves as they discuss their hopes, fears, and beliefs with one another.

Interestingly, the stature of Leopold himself as a pivotal figure in the history of environmentalism was a major topic of debate. More than one speaker argued that Leopold's position as a wealthy white male gave him an outsized influence, and that his ideas were hardly new. They were restatements, if not outright appropriations, of values common to native peoples across the American landscape, voices that have gone unheard until very recently. These points are certainly valid, but it also is arguable that what makes Leopold distinctive (and even novel) is that he was a professional participant in the project of modernity, a contributor even to the biotic catastrophe wrought by

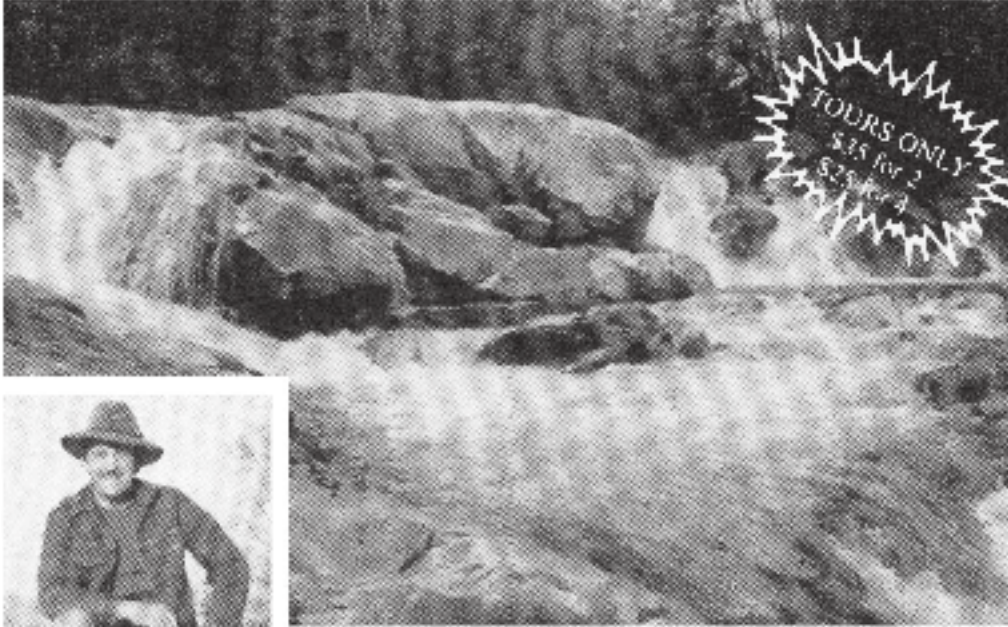


the application of Euro-American forestry, farming, and hunting techniques and their associated technologies. The knowledge of what was being lost as well as the accompanying sense of sorrow and complicity was the starting point for his environmental consciousness, as it is for most of his readers.

As he states so eloquently in the Forward to *A Sand County Almanac*, "Like winds and sunsets, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them. Now we face the question whether a still higher 'standard of living' is worth its cost in things natural, wild, and free." It is a question that looms as large today as it did in 1948. As we pivot toward so-called green technologies to save our way of life from the effects of climate change, how much of a sacrifice are we willing to make to preserve natural systems themselves? Are our choices rooted in a deeply felt land ethic, or are we merely dressing up our economic motives in environmentalist language to make further exploitation palatable? Perhaps, as Leopold also suggests, we are allowing others (experts and agencies in particular) to dictate the terms of our commitment. Whatever the case may be, one thing is certain: *A Sand County Almanac* remains a reliable guide for interacting with the patch of earth on which we stand and drawing our own conclusions about what is right and what is wrong.

BACK IN THE DAY: BEFORE GOOGLE MAPS...THERE WAS JEFF TENEYCK

By Sarah Heuer, Programs Director



*Oh to take the wings of flight and soar where eagles go
To leave the woods of troubled souls behind me far below
I'd listen to the songs of birds and sail in endless flight
And chase the sun through cloudy patches and play with stars at night
The boundless heaven for my home, the breeze to lift me high
To raise above my mortal bonds, to never have to die
Knowing that I found the trail where angels trod
And when my wings could fly no more I'd take the hand of God.*

-Jeff TenEyck

In a 1991 *U.S. News & World Report* article, Erica Goode writes about a guided tour she took in Marquette County with wilderness guide Jeff TenEyck. She describes Jeff as “a genial, bearish man” who led her on a three-hour excursion in search of moose. “The moose eluded us,” she says, “but it didn’t really matter. Atop Gobbler’s Knob, a small peak a short drive from Big Bay, we watched the sun go down. Jeff recited a poem about the forest – corny but somehow fitting in the fading light – and asked me to hug a tree. I did.”

Four years later, TenEyck’s tours were voted in *U.S. News* as one of the nation’s twelve best. Always ready with a witty rejoinder, Jeff says today with a chuckle, “I would consider myself number one.”

Jeff was born in Big Bay in 1949, the third youngest of George and Agnes TenEyck’s seven children. His father ran the Reish Sawmill in Marquette, and his mother stayed home, caring for the children, but in later years, worked at the Huron Mountain Club. Jeff attended Northern Michigan University’s criminal-justice program, which landed him in a career as a guard and counselor in the United States prison system. He worked in Arizona and California, before returning home to serve 11 years for the Michigan Department of Corrections, counseling inmates at the Marquette State Prison.

In a 1989 *Encore Magazine* feature about his touring business Jeff said, “That job was part of the reason I do what I am doing now. Call it stressed out or burned out, but I got out because of the daily peril. Each day I went to work, there was a chance that I might have to fight with somebody.” Jeff was stabbed twice in the line of duty and claimed that leaving the prison profession saved his life, averring that if the cold steel didn’t kill him, the stress would.

Jeff’s aspiration to become a wilderness guide was abetted by legendary Big Bay figure, Norman “Buck” Gotschall. Their relationship lit a spark that turned into a steady flame that burned for many years in a little community not widely known, but full of character, marching to the beat of its own drum. Gotschall and his wife Marilyn purchased the Big Bay Point Lighthouse in the 1980s and converted it into a B&B in 1986. Buck and Jeff decided to join forces and “share visitors back and forth,” he says, to give them the ultimate Big Bay experience. The historic charm, scenic view, food, and comfortable accommodatio-

ns of the lighthouse went hand in hand with Jeff’s energetic, charismatic personality that got people out into the wilderness for a truly unforgettable excursion. His business, appropriately titled Huron Mountain Outfitters, included hiking and backpacking tours, mountain bike outings, hunting excursions and waterfall van tours.

As Jeff puts it, “folks staying at the lighthouse didn’t have anything to do,” so it was an easy sell. Jeff met them at the lighthouse at 10 a.m. after their morning breakfast, and they piled into his 1985 Isuzu Trooper. As word spread and enthusiasm built, Jeff slowly had to adopt bigger rigs, eventually settling into a white 1-ton, 15-passenger van. A very robust bloodhound named Beauregard, shoelace slobber hanging from his jowls, was the first of several dogs to lead trips with Jeff through the years. His most faithful later companion was Hunter, a yellow lab, who equally lavished the esteem of guiding.

Jeff recruited help as needed from Big Bay locals. Friends Mark Tallio, Kristi Mills, and Les Milligan served as drivers and prep cooks for afternoon lunch. Jeff took his guests to various waterfalls along the Yellow Dog River and Alder Creek, sometimes visiting others nearby as well. He was an avid fan of Robert W. Service, a Canadian poet and writer, and Jeff often recited his poetry at unexpected moments near a body of water or on a mountain top while gazing at panoramic views. A good friend and local musician, Billy Alberts, occasionally accompanied Jeff and would sing “Amazing Grace” a cappella on top of Bear Mountain. Jeff says, “It was so wonderful, it’d make you cry.”



Jeff, in front, with Marilyn and Buck Gotschall.

It's hard not to feel uplifted in Jeff's presence. In the *Encore Magazine* article "A Guide in God's Country," the author asks, "Have you hugged a pine tree today?" before commenting,

Jeff TenEyck highly recommends it. "Pine trees, and waterfalls too," he says, "emit negative ions. There are studies that say that being in an environment full of negative ions makes you feel less depressed, gives you a better attitude and makes you more creative. Big corporations believe that and expose their employees to negative ions. There is even a special light that generates negative ions. Instead of buying an expensive light, I just hug a pine tree. I never get depressed anymore."



Tree hugging on a Jeff tour, October 1996.

Jeff was a proponent of keeping Marquette County clean and untainted, and he was a role model for his guests. In a 1991 article published in *Miami Valley Sunday*, author James Morris writes, "I watched (Jeff) pick up beer and pop cans, cigarette butts and all sorts of assorted trash left by thoughtless human beings who enjoyed the wilderness and left it a little dirtier than they found it." And in Marquette's *Mining Journal*, staff writer Dave Schneider attested, "He doesn't only preach wise conservation practices either. TenEyck takes groups of area youngsters out several times in the spring and summer to pick up litter at local points of interest. 'There's nothing that ruins a walk in the woods more than a bunch of litter left all over the place,' TenEyck said."

A helpful tool Jeff provided for his clients were walking sticks, handmade from the American hornbeam (ironwood). Jeff says, "I taught them how to use walking sticks. It's a method I developed, and the stick should be up to their shoulder height." Jeff and Les Milligan would carve symbolic images of natural features and animals into



Bicycle tour guests on the Huron Mountain Club Road. Pine Mountain can be seen in the distance.

them, making them more personal. "If a person used a particular one throughout the day and they really liked it, I would carve their name into it and sell it to them," Jeff says.

Jeff's bicycle tours were recognized in several newspapers as well. Waterfalls were the premier destinations on these excursions. Jeff boasted to *Ann Arbor News* reporter Ken Tabacsko, who, along with his 12-year-old son, joined TenEyck on a bike tour, "There are 24 waterfalls within 10 miles – some that you can bike to. I can design bike tours where you never have to backtrack." Most tours lasted 4-5 hours, covering approximately 25 miles and cost \$25, including lunch.

A frequent stop, known to many locals as the "Keebler Tree," was a large cedar, hollow at its base. Jeff put a door on it to conceal the opening, and he would stash cookies in an old army ammunition box (bear-proof) inside the tree. It was a nice treat for his clients on the tour. I asked Jeff if they were actually Keebler cookies he kept in the box, he said, "Yes of course! The Keebler elf double fudge stuffed ones."



The fabled Keebler Tree. July 1992.



A pastie lunch. October, 1989.

Jeff created other novelties as well, such as his “Knock on Wood” cookies, made from ironwood. “It’s a round slice of wood, about an inch and a half in diameter. I would carve ‘Knock on Wood,’ on them.” That saying was derived from the Norwegian loggers, Jeff says. “They would go into the forest to log, and they would knock on a tree. If an elf lived in that tree, they wouldn’t cut it. Therefore, the elf would then grant them three wishes. And so that’s how that term came to be,” he says. “And personally, I have them in all my vehicles, even on my bicycle and in my golf bag.”

During his tenure as Big Bay’s primary wilderness guide, Jeff always tried to support other businesses, encouraging his clientele to frequent local establishments by creating “Jeff Money.” He says, “I’d give out coupons for \$6 off their meal at the Thunder Bay Inn, or the Lumberjack Tavern...and I would later go into the establishments and pay them the money. The Jeff Money had my picture on it!”

His notoriety only increased when Jeff was ordained through the Universal Life Church. This gave him the authority to marry couples wherever they chose. “Since people couldn’t get a minister to come to a waterfall or a mountain top, I was happy to accommodate them,” Jeff says.

As time went on, Jeff became a local celebrity. He was featured several times on TV6’s *Discovering*, hosted by Buck Levasseur, as well as Dick Evans’ program *On the Michigan Road* on Wood TV8. Word spread beyond the region as well. The author of a 1989 article in *The Chicago Tribune* observed, “If a call had gone out from central casting for a ruggedly handsome, charming, Clark Gable-of-the-woods, Jeff would get the part.” In 1992, the same paper praised his wilderness tours as lively, entertaining adventures and dubbed TenEyck “a self-styled Crocodile Fundee.” The moniker was a reference both to the then-popular Australian movie character and to the Big Bay “Fun Club,” of which Jeff was president. Yellow Dog board member and fellow Fun Club alum, Kristi Mills, remembers, “It was a club for all the cool people in Big Bay,” whose rules were memorable enough to be printed on T-shirts:

- Members can work no more than 20 hours per week.
- No calluses on the hands – one callus and you are out!
- You can’t refuse to play tennis if asked by another member.
- You can’t refuse to join a member in a beer if he/she needs one.
- Your one duty is to promote fun activities.
- You don’t have to do anything you don’t want to.

Among his many distinctions, Jeff was the last elected constable of Powell Township. “I busted crime so well that they never needed another town constable again,” he says. “They paid me \$101 a month, plus they gave me a gun with one bullet and a badge.” Jeff recalls running against a good friend for the position. In defeat, his friend observed, “Well, I figured I’d get twelve votes, because I have twelve relatives here,” and Jeff got the rest. Jeff says, “I got to holler at people for speeding through town. I never wrote anybody a ticket, although we had a ticket book. Like if a kid was speeding through town, I’d tell him I’m going to go tell your parents, and I would! And that usually rectified the situation.”

Jeff’s enterprising spirit and infectious good humor made an indelible mark on the community. Ask a local of a certain age, and they probably will have a story or two about him. Even today in Big Bay, Jeff’s brainchildren, the Honey Bear Classic and the Cracked Court Tennis Tournament, remain active. And Charlie Drury (friend and co-conspirator of old) uses Jeff’s business name, Huron Mountain Outfitters, for his bait and tackle, rental, and gift shop.

Jeff now resides in South Carolina with his wife, Linda, who runs the Pickled Palate Food Wagon in Mt. Pleasant. He still frequently visits the Big Bay area, staying in touch with his friends and family in the community. His youngest brother, Pete TenEyck, recently retired from Powell Township after serving 33 years as their custodian/cemetery sexton.

Jeff aspires to return in season to lead tours in his old stomping grounds. When I met him in 2023 on one of his summer UP visits, he still embodied the intrepid, flamboyant wilderness guide. Exiting his Chevy Suburban, he sported a khaki-mesh cargo vest full of personal trinkets and a safari hat whose turquoise stone-beaded band was garnished with hawk feathers. His bear-paw hands were adorned with an abundance of silver and turquoise rings.

The time I spent with Jeff and the stories he shared was the inspiration for me to tell his story. Departing, he gave me a big hug. I know he’s not a 74-year-old white pine, but I swear I could sense the negative ions emitting from a man who’s hugged a lot of trees in his lifetime. I felt happy.



A portrait of Jeff.



TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS: DASH FOR TRASH 2024

By Sarah Heuer

On May 4, YDWP participated in the second annual Dash for Trash, hosted by the Big Bay Stewardship Council (BBSC). The BBSC collaborated with the Superior Watershed Partnership to facilitate tire removal this time around, which generated much excitement for the event.

At 10 a.m. a team of staff, board members, and 7 volunteers gathered near the Community Forest to devise a plan to cover as much territory within the watershed as possible. We covered many sites, including the Jean Farwell Wilderness Area, The Pine Sanctuary, Pinnacle Falls, The Bob Lake Crossing, The Clowry Bridge, The Community Forest (including campsites along the river), Big Pup Creek, Bushy Creek Truck Trail, Remington Bridge, and The Hairpin. We even found time to scour the sides of County Road 510 from the Yellow Dog Bridge to the AAA.

We collected unretrieved geotextile fabric, tires and tubes, lots of beer and pop cans, glass bottles, metal scrap, a bag of meat hanging in a tree, ORV and car parts jostled from vehicles, drain tile, a discarded tennis net, a dented construction barrel that fell into a creek, a pesticide sprayer, old fencing, a deserted washing machine, an abandoned



Team Yellow Dog at the Big Bay transfer station. Photo by Marcia Gonstead.

cupid angel garden sculpture, and, regrettably, our own sign from the Pinnacle Falls trailhead that had been hit by a vehicle and dragged off into the woods.

We converged at the Big Bay dump just as it was about to close to unload our loot. Our efforts (and the lobbying of our younger volunteers) paid off when prizes were announced and we won in the “Biggest Haul” category. Thank you to everyone who helped clean up Big Bay and our watershed!



Sarah Heuer and Caden Reed unloading tires and trash. Photo by Kristi Mills.



YELLOW DOG MAGIC

By John Highlen, Conservation Chair, Fred Waara Chapter of Trout Unlimited



John Highlen fly-fishing along the Yellow Dog River. Photo by Jim Jenkin.

This article is excerpted from Highlen's new book, Chasing Traver's Magic. John Voelker (aka Robert Traver), author of Anatomy of a Murder, also wrote two classics about fishing. The title of Highlen's book has its roots in Trout Magic, a work well-known to literary-minded fly fishers. Chasing Traver's Magic is available for purchase at Snowbound Books and Superior Outfitters in Marquette as well as online through Amazon, IngramSpark, and Barnes & Noble.

My introduction to the Yellow Dog River was one of those spur-of-the-moment visits to a place that I previously didn't even know existed. My wife and I were spending a few days in Big Bay to celebrate our fifteenth wedding anniversary. It's hard for me to believe it was more than twenty years ago that we spent that long weekend at the Big Bay Lighthouse Bed & Breakfast. As with most excursions like that, our days consisted of leisurely exploring the surrounding area. One of those explorations included Hills Falls (or Yellow Dog Falls as some people refer to them), which is now part of the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve. Somehow, in that relatively brief visit something about the Yellow Dog connected with me. I wasn't sure what or why, but there was a definite bond. I had a feeling that our flows would cross again. I hadn't started fly fishing at that point, but I've always had a fascination for moving water. I didn't know anything about the river's origin, its history, or the tragic source of its name, but for some unknown reason, I was enamored with its flow.

Roughly ten years later, when I began dabbling with fly fishing, I would think about the Yellow Dog now and then as I was planning outings and making mental lists of where I wanted to fish. Being that it was a good nine-hour drive from my home at that time, and I would have had to pass numerous other trout streams during the trip, I never made the venture.

After my wife and I moved to the Upper Peninsula several years ago, fishing the Yellow Dog moved higher on my list of things to do. Still, there were plenty of other activities and opportunities vying for my time, including a good selection of unexplored trout water that was closer to home.

Once I finally did venture up to the Yellow Dog to chase trout, I realized that I should have done it much sooner. The Yellow Dog is one of those streams that tends to wrap itself around you. I've since enjoyed the blessings of fishing the Yellow Dog on a number of occasions, sometimes catching and releasing some beautiful works of art and other times just sightseeing with a fly rod in my hand.

One of my favorite Yellow Dog adventures that involved catching and releasing several feisty brook trout was with Jim Jenkin, a Trout Unlimited buddy of mine. We stepped out of the water for the last time as daylight began to retreat and an evening chill settled in. Walking the gravel road through the forest back to Jim's vehicle, it felt like something was missing. Then I realized that mosquitoes were almost non-existent, which was a pleasant surprise for July. The lack of their constant hum and harassment allowed my mind to wander. As we walked, I thought back to our tour of potential Yellow Dog conservation projects a few weeks earlier. Somewhere in the mix of those discussions, I had overheard Jim asking Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve Board President, Chauncey Moran, where he grew up. With a smile, Chauncey replied through his bushy white beard, "I haven't grown up anywhere, yet."

The wisdom of that reply kept scrolling through my brain. In some ways, we should all hope to not grow up. To not lose our youthful sense of wonder and adventure. To never quit dreaming of things that ignite our imagination and keep us ever excited about the possibilities of tomorrow. That's one of the benefits of trout fishing, particularly fly fishing for trout. It's a youthful quest. There's always more to learn, not only about the art of fishing, but about trout and where they live, and everything that makes up that environment. There are always things to be excited about and look forward to. There are always adventures to be found in moving water, whether you're fishing and exploring an unnamed hop-across-width creek or a blue-ribbon trout stream.

The Yellow Dog is probably somewhere in the middle. Even though it's much more than a small creek, the Yellow Dog isn't considered a blue-ribbon trout stream either. In fact, I've heard some people refer to it as marginal, as far as trout water goes. As is the case with most Michigan rivers, the Yellow Dog certainly suffered its share of abuse during the logging of the area's virgin timber, but most of those wounds have long since healed. It still has its scars and blemishes for sure, as most of us do. Some of its tributaries contain perched culverts that need replacing, and there are a few stretches where sandy banks are eroding and caving in. There's some mining in the area that people are keeping an eye on, and a few tracts of private land where the owners don't necessarily have the best conservation practices in mind. Although they're not good, those situations don't tarnish the river's appeal in my mind.

The fact that the Yellow Dog originates within the nearly-seventeen-thousand-acre McCormick Wilderness and that it empties into Lake Superior are endearing qualities to start with. Knowing that there was a time when it was known as The River Where Yellow Dog Was Killed, because of a massacre that occurred near its mouth, also adds a bit of wild mystique, even though it has nothing to do with the quality of fishing—blue-ribbon or not.

I don't usually search out and fish blue-ribbon trout streams anyway. Not that I have anything against blue-ribbon streams. In many cases, those streams just require more extensive travel than I typically invest in a day of fishing. They also tend to be fanfare destinations that include blue-ribbon dining and blue-ribbon lodging, which are typically above my means. Those streams are certainly aesthetically appealing and tend to be prolific trout producers. They also serve an important role in concentrating fishing pressure in a few key waters, leaving most other streams more open for people like me. Part of my aversion to those high-profile streams may just be because I'm not exactly a blue-ribbon fly fisher, so in a way, maybe I have a subconscious concern that blue-ribbon trout are

more educated and sophisticated than my abilities can handle. I like to think that it's simply because blue-ribbon streams are usually busier and more crowded than I like, so I tend to gravitate toward less glamorous water. I say less glamorous not meaning anything denigrating about the streams. I'm simply referring to streams that don't necessarily have high popularity rankings amongst trout fishing circles because they're not known for high densities of large fish. That term also applies to streams whose names you're not apt to find peppered throughout popular fishing literature. Mentioning their names won't likely silence nearby conversations and turn heads to casually eavesdrop on your discussion.

Popularity aside, the Yellow Dog is more than just a river. More than a watershed even. It's water and soil, gravel and rocks for certain; a vast collection of trees, grasses, wildflowers, moss, and lichens; it's the interdependence of creatures like deer, bears, moose, fishers, squirrels and mice; the blending of songbirds, bald eagles, hawks, and owls; it's local people living close to the land and water; distant people yearning for reconnection; lives of all kinds intertwined with its flow.

On a cool morning, with a faint mist rising from the murmuring water, herbal scents of the forest drifting on invisible currents, and the soothing sounds of a living landscape greeting the day, it's a present glimpse of the beginning of time. When life was a matter of simply living. When industry and urbanization, competition and greed, even monetary value, had not yet even become distant thoughts. Like many rivers, the Yellow Dog is a connector, binding what appears to be individual and separate pieces into the whole of life. It's a community.

I envision that if every river was part of a community, and every community was blessed to be part of a river, maybe happiness and contentment wouldn't seem so difficult to attain. Maybe there wouldn't be so much turmoil in the world. Everyone would understand the importance of caring for our land and water. Resources would be more appreciated and less exploited. There would be more bonding and fewer battles. Life may not be any easier, but it would probably be a little less complicated. We wouldn't need to travel to the river to unwind and sort things out. We'd already be there.

One of the blessings of a community like the Yellow Dog is that even if you don't actually live within its geographic footprint, you can still be a part of it and feel like you belong. With community comes connection and commitment. It's not a formal requirement. It just naturally happens. In my case, things were just a little out of order and the connection came first, years before I even realized what I was connecting with. Now that our flows have more thoroughly intermingled, community and commitment are finally settling into place.

I can't say that I would call any of that marginal. You could readily call it engaging, enriching, or maybe even enchanting. Fulfilling comes to mind, too. But most people simply call it The Yellow Dog.



Brook trout caught and released in the Yellow Dog River. Photo by John Highlen.

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SPRING BIRDING AT CHRIST ANDERSEN HEADWATERS PRESERVE

By Nancy Moran, YDWP member

As we celebrate the addition of another 200 acres to our holdings on the Yellow Dog Plains, much of it spruce/tamarack bog adjacent to the Christ Andersen Headwaters Preserve, we present a description of this unique environment as it appeared to a YDWP member early last June. As readers will see, we have much to look forward to during this spring migration and for generations to come!

A morning of birding at the Christ Anderson Headwaters Preserve begins, and we are greeted with a chorus of song echoing across the black spruce bog stretching out before us. A spruce grouse hen scuttles across the sandy trail and stops to watch us from pink lady slippers and thick alders. It is a warm morning, with a pleasant southern breeze, just enough to keep most of the mosquitoes at bay.

Bug nets in place, we park and emerge from the truck, walking and listening. The trail takes a gentle rise between an incredible black spruce bog and marshy ponds, with islands of white pine and birch. We cross the tracks of moose, deer, and grouse. From floating mats of moss among the swaying spruce arrowheads emerge succulent pitcher plants in patches of sunlight. Cotton grass, unfurling fern, and here and there breeze-blown pink bog laurel line the edges of black water.

The bog is covered with acres of blooming white spikes of bog buckbean, shrubby bog rosemary, and sedges. Joining in the birdsong are dozens of green frogs, all belching their call.

The varied habitat is home to many species, so our list of birds grows quickly: American redstart, black throated green warbler, black and white war-



Hermit thrush in buckbean. Graphite and watercolor wash by Nancy Moran.

bler, blue-headed vireo, black throated blue warbler, Blackburnian warbler, pine warbler, veery, and of course, chickadees. Mating calls of robins resound, bluejays and cedar waxwings, rose breasted grosbeak, and sparrows: white throated, song, chipping, and junco. A prehistoric call from the sky, and a pair of sandhill cranes effortlessly skim the horizon. Ravens fly into the sun.

We reach the culvert where the stream runs under the road, and we scan the bulrushes for the elusive American bittern. I have a feeling of being watched and catch the dark eye of a foraging hermit thrush, poised on the edge of the bog. It feasts on the abundant insects, hopping from branch to moss and rustling the dead leaves. He pays no attention to us and disappears into the uncurling ferns and lichen.

We settle into the landscape and another hermit thrush breezes into his melodious song- long do we wait through winter to hear this call! The myriad of notes, complex and flutelike drift across the ponds. We have counted three this morning. An iridescent blue-green beetle lands on my sleeve. A yellow shafted flicker dives into the branches of white pine.

The wind shifts, and clouds roll in, covering the sunny sky. The mosquitoes emerge, and we retreat to the truck. As we slowly roll down the two-track, another opera star, the tiny winter wren, leaves us in awe of his impossibly complex song. More birds to count: rose breasted nuthatch, scarlet tanager, goldfinch, hairy woodpecker...and so the list grows for a morning well spent, breathing in life and finding the wild in this unusual habitat. The morning seems to glow as a precious jewel: the mossy nest of the wildest bird, shining in the new and fairest green, tinged with the pale purple of violets.



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MARQUETTE HOMESCHOOLERS EXPLORE WATER QUALITY

By Brian Noell

Programs Director, Sarah Heuer, and I had the good fortune this spring to meet and work with a homeschool group from Knotwork Studio, who gather once a week in South Marquette to create art and explore issues of the day. On April 25 we followed hand-drawn signs and wound our way through the converted stone industrial building to find their open-plan, light-filled studio. The kids' curiosity and creativity were apparent in their engagement with our scale model of the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve, which they examined with artists' eyes. Presenting a lesson on watershed function, we engaged their help to illustrate the way pollutants reach our watershed and end up in Lake Independence and, finally, Lake Superior.

We invited them to complete the circle by participating in spring stream monitoring, and, on May 10, twelve Knotwork learners and their families journeyed to the Community Forest to evaluate water quality for themselves. Sarah and I split the group into two teams, one in the water and one on-shore, and we worked our way upstream, starting 150 feet from the 510 bridge. The students grasped the sampling techniques with little guidance and boldly ventured forth to net macroinvertebrates in as many habitats as they could find within the protocol's time constraints.

Then we swapped waders, bringing the onshore team into the river to collect on the other side of the bridge. The current was strong and the rocks slick, but the children worked mindfully. Only one student's waders got swamped, entering the water from a steep bank.



Around the Yellow Dog Watershed model at Knotwork Studio in South Marquette. Photo by Sarah Heuer.

As we turned to bug identification, kids and adults alike were surprised by the abundance and variety of life in the sorting trays. At the end of the session, after the tally was done, our site score was "excellent." In our classroom watershed model activity, we had illustrated all the ways in which human activities foul our waters, so it was nice to show students what an actual healthy stream looks like.

Thanks to co-directors Lane Clark and Jamie Kitchel as well as all the Knotwork learners and parents for sharing their time and enthusiasm with us and for helping us inaugurate our spring 2024 water monitoring season. We hope everyone had as much fun as we did!



Knotwork students and parents (and Sergey) on the banks of the Yellow Dog. Photo by Sarah Heuer.



Identifying and counting macroinvertebrates. Photo by Jamie Kitchel.

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Please contact Brian at (906)345-9223 or email brian@yellowdogwatershed.org so we can make it right.



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A group of people riding bicycles on a paved path. The path is lined with trees and a building in the background. The people are wearing helmets and casual clothing. The image is framed by a black border with the text "TREK" on the left and "TRAVELLER" on the right.

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