

COMMUNITY
FOREST
EXPANSION
PROJECT
UPDATE
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THQ



**UPCOMING CF
FUNDRAISING
EVENTS!** *see page 8*

HOWL

Spring/Summer 2026

yellowdogwatershed.org

Bi-annual Newsletter
Volume 30, Issue 1

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

A CELEBRATION! - AND AN INVITATION!
RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ENDURING LIFE ON THE YELLOW DOG PLAINS
By Chauncey Moran, Chairman

Bless members and friends who read these words. I offer these reflections that they may inspire a passion for right action to sustain the natural lands as found - so that future generations may bask in the aura discovered here many decades ago. My observations are recounted from my sojourns on the land and in the skies over the U.P. landscape; over watersheds flowing into Lake Superior. Over the last 31-plus years I have spent countless blissful hours monitoring and recording activity through sight and sound. Photography has been my primary tool to record and document my experiences while forging relationships that endure to the present day.

My earliest encounters occurred while visiting the ancestral home of those who came in 1870 to harvest the mighty pine forests that built cities, farms, and wooden ships. Later on iron ore supplied steel for industrial machinery, transportation, and items for the home. My ancestors worked in the logging camps in winter and sailed the Great Lakes during shipping season. My father attended schools in Big Bay and Marquette while spending summers working at the Ives Lake Lodge. In my youth he brought me here to discover the wild U.P.

In the 1970s I returned to visit relatives who had relocated here in Big Bay. I returned often in the 1980s. By the 1990s a plan to relocate was determined. In 1994 I moved closer to Big Bay, believing I was called for a purpose. Each day in 1994 brought new adventure in the deep woods of the McCormick Tract and my search for the elusive Bentley Trail. With map and compass in hand (I had no GPS) I found many sections of the Trail as well as parts of the Yellow Dog River that netted some excellent catches of native brook trout. Later that year I met folks who were interested in protecting the natural shoreline and watershed corridor of the Yellow Dog River. I also began testing water temperature and pH to chart the presence of fish.

In 1995 the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve (YDWP) was officially created along with its 501(c)(3) non-profit status. Lifelong friendships were established among those dedicated to the preservation of the watershed. The initial focus was on the County Road 510 and 550 corridors. However, after some discussion and mapping from all four USGS sectionals it was decided that the entire river - including the Iron, Lake Independence, the Big Pup and Little Pup - should be the focal points of the YDWP. The mission was to preserve and maintain these pristine areas in their most natural state for future generations. Guidance and opportunity led to our first acquisition: a 12-acre parcel on the Yellow Dog River. After a slow start, our first major benefactor, Tom Rososco, bought the land in trust and deeded it to us at a greatly reduced cost.



*Chauncey Moran on footbridge in the McCormick Wilderness Area.
Photo by Nancy Moran.*

Thus began a collaboration between Federal (the Natural Resources Conservation Service), State (DEQ and DNR), and local townships that touched on the Yellow Dog Watershed, including Powell, Ishpeming, Champion, and Michigamme Townships. Over time these partnerships - along with that of corporate and private landowners - fostered the implementation of widely-recognized best management practices to protect the water from the destructive effects of timber harvesting and forest road building.

While this was happening, contact was made with the fisheries division of the MDNR to help with the assessment of failing riverbank conditions and fish planting operations. Meetings with township officials emphasized building setbacks and more sensitive development practices. Collaboration with corporate landowners produced collegial non-adversarial relationships that resulted in enhancements over time to support expectations for the future. Over the decades those relationships bore fruit in the form of investments of time and attention that have earned valuable trust. Federal and State collaboration have strengthened and extended that trust community-wide.

As conservation-minded individuals saw our dedication, they stepped up to increase our holdings through a variety of land gifts and trusts. New and creative ideas for land acquisition came to us through the U.S. Forest Service. In 1999 a generous gift of 160 acres was named in honor of long-time supporter

IN MEMORIAM
GEORGE GIROD: TINKERING TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

By Brian Noell, Communications Director

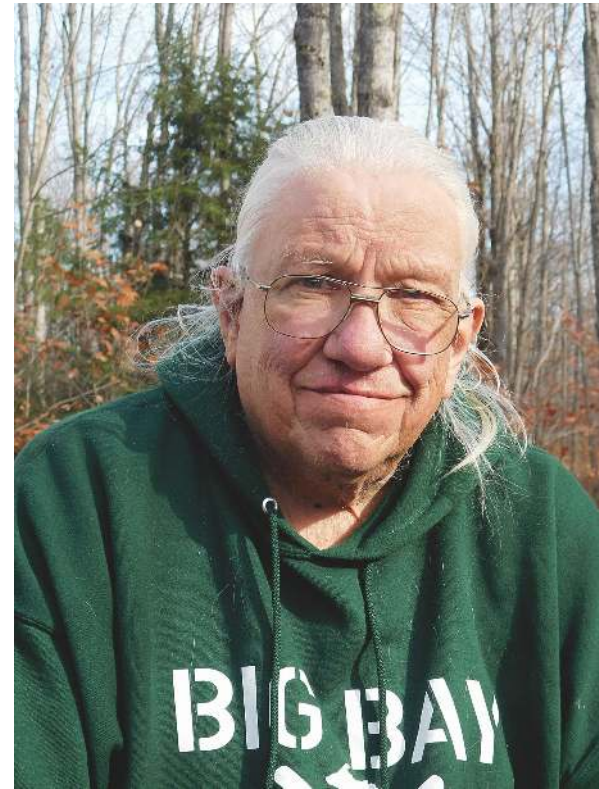
We learned with regret that former Board member and YDWP Treasurer, George Girod passed away at 77 years of age on April 1, 2026. Coming to the UP in 2005 after a long career in IT, George joined the Board in 2011 and stewarded our organization's finances through the initial Community Forest land acquisition in 2016. Resigning from the Treasurer's position in 2019, he continued to serve on the Board until the fall of 2021.

In an interview I conducted upon the completion of his YDWP service, George emphasized how important it was for citizens, particularly children, to discover for themselves the wonders of nature and embark on their own journey of conservation. Experience, he said, was the only pathway to environmental action, adding, "If they fall in love with it, they will want to protect it."

George did not confine his volunteer work to our organization. He was involved in multiple UP grassroots and community groups. As member of the Powell Township Parks and Recreation Committee, George advocated Leave No Trace principles as well as cultivation of native fruit trees and bushes along the planned Big Bay interpretive trail. He also worked with Transition Marquette County, which promoted gardening, water protection, and sustainable energy as means for citizens to act in the face of climate change and peak oil.

This same philosophy of sustainability and self-sufficiency underpinned his foundation of the Marquette chapter of the international Repair Café network, which provided opportunities for community members to fix broken items with the assistance of volunteer experts. Repair Café's mission to educate and empower local folks to revitalize rather than discard electronics, clothing, and furniture was dear to George's heart. After dissolving during the Covid pandemic, Repair Café is now up and running again, with YDWP Board member, Jane Fitkin as its coordinator. She recalls George's passion for grassroots work and his satisfaction at "holding someone's hand as they rewired an old lamp or repaired a broken toaster."

A lifelong tinkerer, George began to support himself in high school by repairing TVs. He also worked at radio stations in his hometown of Winona, Minnesota as an electrical troubleshooter. He was an early adopter of computers and spent much of his career doing IT for the Michigan network of Ford dealers. Retiring to his small camp in the woods near the Yellow Dog allowed him to live out his convictions about conservation, sustainability, and stewardship and to share his expertise with the community groups espousing similar values. Thanks, old friend!



REPAIR CAFE TOSS IT? NO WAY!

Bring in broken household goods such as appliances and clothing, and skilled fixers will assist you in repairing them, free of charge. Both summer repair cafes will offer bike maintenance. Save money, learn valuable repair skills, and reduce your environmental impact!

Summer 2026 dates:
July 15, 5-8pm
 @Downtown Marquette Farmers Market
 Washington Street
August 1, 9am-1pm
 @Downtown Marquette Farmers Market
 Marquette Commons
 → Bike Maintenance Workshop, 11am!



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- Rochelle Dale, *Executive Director*
- Sarah Heuer, *Programs Director*
- Brian Noell, *Communications Director*

CONSERVATION ETHICS FOR YOUTH: SALMON IN THE CLASSROOM

By Brian Noell

On Thursday, May 7, YDWP Programs Coordinator Sarah Heuer and volunteer Chris Weber offered instruction on macroinvertebrate biology as part of Bothwell Middle School's salmon release day at Presque Isle Park in Marquette. Bothwell is one of 15 Upper Peninsula schools participating in the State of Michigan "Salmon in the Classroom" program, which enables third through twelfth graders to raise Chinook Salmon from eggs to fingerlings before releasing them into approved waterways.

The Presque Isle program was facilitated by our friends at the Fred Waara Chapter of Trout Unlimited. In addition to the fish release, 4 local organizations taught approximately 250 students about local ecology. YDWP contributed to the proceedings by illustrating our method for measuring water quality and explaining the importance of aquatic insects as a dietary staple for river-dwelling fish. Sarah Heuer started her day early, collecting bugs from the Yellow Dog and transporting them to Marquette for the students to view. Volunteer Chris Weber, an avid fly-fisherman, explained the macroinvertebrate lifecycle using his collection of homemade flies.

While one set of groups of students shuttled between learning stations, the other released fish at the kayak launch on the Dead River near its outlet into Lake Superior. Although the colder than normal temperatures chilled students and presenters alike, it enabled our bugs to survive their ordeal and return in the afternoon to their Yellow Dog homes.

Below: Chris Weber presenting to Bothwell students at Presque Isle in Marquette. Bottom right: After releasing fish, students proceeded to the mouth of the Dead River to wish them a bon voyage. Photos by Brian Noell.



Powell Township is another school participating in SIC. Photo by Sarah Heuer.



Students acclimating salmon fingerlings before releasing them into the Iron River. Photo by Sarah Heuer.



YDR COMMUNITY FOREST EXPANSION PROJECT UPDATE

By Rochelle Dale, Executive Director

I would love to live
Like a river flows
Carried by the surprise
Of its own unfolding --John O'Donohue

It's spring here on the Yellow Dog, even though as I write this piece, we still have 2 feet of snow in the woods. Water is flowing under the snow and ice, and I can tell by the sound that the river is racing. It's a little ahead of us humans, but soon we'll be racing too: planting gardens, flowers, and trees, water monitoring, fishing, and fundraising!

You may remember from the last issue of the *Howl*, that we were about to purchase 557 acres of river corridor upstream from and adjacent to our already existing YD River Community Forest. With the generous donation of \$1 million and a \$400,000 loan, we closed on the new acquisition this past January. The next few months will be a challenge to fulfill our loan obligations, but we have good news. The Carls Foundation of Lower Michigan, has awarded YDWP a \$200,000 challenge grant, which means they will match donations dollar-for-dollar up to \$200,000. Individual donations will be doubled! This challenge runs through February 2027, but we're hoping to make significant headway this summer and fall.

We kicked off the campaign this past winter with the annual YDWP ski and snowshoe, and we will host several additional events this summer. On May 28 we will meet guests at the Treehouse (part of Donkers and the Delft) in Marquette for hors d'oeuvres, beverages, beer and wine, raffle, and a presentation. On June 6 we welcome Val Stromquist and Peter Berbee, who will take us on a backcountry bike ride through the Yellow Dog Plains, followed by pizza and a presentation by Val at the Thunder Bay Inn in Big Bay. Val rode her bike 180 miles through the countryside of Mongolia last summer, and her pictures and story will be sure to tantalize us. In August, YDWP will again host our annual meeting on the river: a day of hiking, music, and food. A fall hike on the new land is also in the works.

Project Fundraising Campaign



Remember, any funds raised at these events will be doubled, so bring a friend or two. Since the fall issue of the *Howl*, we have raised \$50,000, a quarter of the way to our \$200,000 goal. Thank you to all who have contributed so far. This is a significant amount in a short time, so let's keep the momentum flowing.

This new section of land and the river miles running through it are special, and I'm looking forward to spending time there this coming snow-free season. I remember one warm summer day some time back, fishing, when I rounded a corner and surprised hundreds of tiger swallowtail butterflies who then flew up from their perch on the sunny sand to swarm and flutter all around me for several minutes while I stood motionless in amazement. Another day, I watched a garter snake dance on the river shore, then stretch her body horizontally above the water before dropping in and swimming across. I could say more, but it's enough to know that the river is magic in many ways.

Most of us are aware of the importance of spending time in Nature, feeling her healing and rejuvenating effects. I encountered a new idiom in the spring issue of *National Wildlife*: "touch grass". Evidently, it's a suggestion one video gamer might make to another when he or she thinks that the fellow player has spent too much time online and has lost touch with reality. Collin O'Mara, President of the National Wildlife Federation believes that nature can "help heal our fractured nation" and suggests: "as we celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary, let's recommit to conservation as a unifying national priority by 'touching grass'—turning away from our screens, stepping outside and exploring our natural wonders, together."

The newly expanded Yellow Dog River Community Forest is the perfect place for that. There is a force or spirit that creates flow, grace and ease in the world. For me, it's the River. Connecting with living water is connecting to the eternal, ever-changing and full of surprise.

Come visit us, the river, and the surrounding forest this season, touch grass, and be a part of the fundraising efforts to pay back our loan so that we may continue our conservation endeavors into the future. In our current chaotic world, conservation is up to each one of us.

For up-to-date information on how close we are to our goal, or to donate, visit the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve website.

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COZY, REMOTE, BACKCOUNTRY RETREAT, SLEEPS 4 (+2)

PRIME LOCATION FOR HIKING, BIKING, SKIING, CANOING
NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL, DEAD RIVER, SILVER LAKE AND DEAD RIVER BASINS NEARBY

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COMMUNITY FOREST EXPANSION: DONORS & SUPPORTERS

as of May 11, 2026

Donors

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Lizabeth Binns
Jamie Campbell & Peggy Garties
Mary Campbell & John Larch
Elizabeth Caruthers
John & Patricia Case
Kent Clow
Steve Cobb
Karen & Paul Cox
Chris Crouse
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Mark Delcourt
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Darlene & Dan Walch
Cathy Waller
Michael Wellman & Tayla Ealom
Johanna Worley & Richard Ekstrom

Honor Gifts

Nancy Bailey
In memory of Walt Loop

Andrea Fredin
In memory of William Rory Boyle

Vickie Goethals
In memory of Mark Goethals

Aaron Peterson
In memory of Josiah Peterson

Lynn Suits
In memory of Kathy Jean Suits



Scenes from the 2026 ski/snowshoe fundraiser, held in the new acquisition. Photos by Alex Kralova-Zender.



EXPLORATORY DRILL SITE MONITORING: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

By Brian Noell

YDWP supporters are probably aware of the ongoing saga of the proposed Copperwood Mine, which would sit next to Porcupine Mountain State Park and whose waste-rock piles and holding pond would be located directly uphill from Lake Superior. The fight over Copperwood has been public and abundantly covered in the media. Less known are other projects that also may bring new mines to the UP, some potentially located in places as vulnerable and ecologically sensitive, if not as well-visited, as the Porkies.

Mining projects begin as discrete drilling operations conducted by companies the industry calls “juniors”. Their operations tend to be invisible to the public until the companies announce promising findings to investors. The company playing this role in our area at present is the Canadian-based Talon Metals. Talon has leased hundreds of thousands of acres of mineral rights in our region and is actively drilling at its Boulderdash sites in the Huron River Watershed, not far from L’Anse, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, and the Huron Mountain Club.

However, Talon has bigger ambitions as well. In December 2025 Talon acquired Eagle Mine and appears to be using that project, now well past its peak, to leverage future ventures. Before acquiring Eagle, Talon had never developed or run a mine. This turnkey opportunity provides the company with personnel and expertise, not to mention much-needed credibility, as it clears the regulatory hurdles required to garner investment and break ground on its next project in Tamarack, Minnesota. That endeavor, in turn, would provide momentum to develop Boulderdash, should the exploration campaign be as successful as Talon’s press releases assert.



Talon Metals acquired Humbolt Mill in Champion, MI as part of the purchase of Eagle Mine in late 2025.

“Major” or “senior” mining companies might partner with a “junior” like Talon to push forward a project or, if promising enough, acquire it outright. Lundin, former owner of Eagle, plays this role in the North-central UP. Though the branding has changed, Lundin retains a significant stake in Eagle because of the Talon shares it acquired from the stock-only sale of the mine. The company is also invested in Talon’s exploratory drilling in the UP and is in a position either to continue that partnership or acquire the project if market conditions seem favorable to develop a mine.

In short, the “major” Lundin is bankrolling the “junior” Talon’s operations at Eagle and development of the slated Tamarack Mine. It has also provided much-needed cash flow for the drilling Talon is doing in Northwest Marquette County through its subsidiary company, Houghton Battery Minerals. This allows Lundin to profit from Talon’s UP operations without bearing the financial burden for post-closure mine cleanup and gives them the option to acquire a new project like Boulderdash once exploration concludes.

Although not as damaging as mine development itself, the activities associated with mineral prospecting (excavation, road building, forest clearing, and drilling itself) have a significant impact on the landscape. Most importantly, clearing forests and road construction create erosion and runoff. Companies apply for permits from the County and/or Michigan EGLE if their activities affect aquatic resources, but we don’t really know how active regulators are in enforcement.

An independent monitoring program can alert regulators to permit violations in drilling projects, and this is a primary reason why, using a grant from Freshwater Future, YDWP inaugurated one in 2025. Our monitoring program also establishes a baseline of data in case violations occur further down the road. If we reevaluate sites on a regular basis, starting early in the exploration process, we can document environmental degradation as it progresses, providing evidence for regulators to consider in their response to problems. Finally, keeping abreast of mining exploration in the region allows us to alert communities and interested parties so that they can plan for a potential response, should an actual mine eventually be proposed.

The YDWP monitoring program has three components. Satellite imagery is one way we are monitoring mining activity. However, remote monitoring is affordable and effective only once we have identified a suspected site, which is why citizen reporting is so important. In the first phase of the project, we mounted a report form on our website. The primary purpose of this article, as well as presentations we are giving in the community throughout 2026, is to increase public awareness of the form and build a network of citizens looking out for suspected mine sites as they traverse the back country.



Environmental impact permits like this one at Boulderdash are posted on trees at mining exploration sites. Photo by Brian Noell.

We conduct follow-up assessments of suspected or verified mining sites using a land conservation software product called Landscape. The software includes a mobile app for remote monitoring that geo-tracks the steps taken by investigators on site and geo-tags photographs taken for documentation. Team members also use Landscape to complete an assessment form at the conclusion of their visit.

In May 2025, we conducted a test assessment of Landscape at Boulderdash as well as at Talon’s Roland Lake exploration site, and in July we made a follow-up visit, documenting drilling activity at Boulderdash. In 2026 we will expand our program, using new permit applications and State of Michigan announcements regarding mineral leases, as well as tips from citizens.

The time is right to develop a robust, independent mine monitoring program in Marquette County. Talon has vowed to extend the life of Eagle Mine and seems to be betting that the cash flow from the facility will help float not only the development of Tamarack, but also explorations here in the UP. They have the support of Lundin, which will continue to subsidize Talon’s exploration as long as Boulderdash or some other deposit continues to be promising.

The Talon press release following the Eagle acquisition emphasized plans for an enhanced drilling campaign in 2026. In response, we plan to keep a close eye on the rest of the ore body stretching from Eagle Mine to Boulderdash and to inform YDWP supporters as well as the public at large of the company’s activity in the back country. We welcome volunteers to help with monitoring, and please do not hesitate to fill out the suspected mine site form on the YDWP website if you have information to share.

**ANNUAL MEETING
AUGUST 8**

**A MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA!
FEATURING:**

Raymond Little

CLOVERLAND

THE ROCK SHAMAN

Michael Waite

&



AUDIOSCAPE BY:



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"The Best Sound Around"



View of the Yellow Dog from the Reinthal property, where we return for our 31st annual meeting. Photo by Emily Whittaker.

ALSO:

MEETING
3PM

GUIDED HIKE & MUSIC
4PM

POTLUCK
5:30PM

BUCKET RAFFLE

CAMP FIRE

**The Yellow Dog Plains
to Mongolia**

Bike the dirt and gravel of YD Plains backcountry
Pizza at Thunder Bay Inn
Presentation on biking Mongolia
June 6, 2026

In support of the YDR Community Forest Expansion Project



With Valerie Stromquist and Peter Berbee

Register for the day (\$50) / Presentation only (\$25)
yellowdogwatershed.org/events/
Bike: Meet 12:30 Drury's General Store in Big Bay
Presentation: 7:00 at TBI
Info: (906)362-8521



THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2026 5:30 - 7:30PM

**YDR COMMUNITY FOREST EXPANSION
Benefit & Social**

A fundraiser for YDWP's new 557-acre acquisition.
Come learn about our newest project!



Evergreen Treehouse Lounge / Delft Bistro / 139 W. Washington St. Mt.

SOCIAL HOUR:

WINE, BEER, BEVERAGES

ASSORTED APPETIZERS

DESSERTS & DONKERS CHOCOLATES

REQUESTED DONATION \$50

REGISTRATION:
yellowdogwatershed.org/events/

INFORMATION: rochelle@yellowdogwatershed.org

raffle & project
presentation



RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ENDURING LIFE ON THE YELLOW DOG PLAINS (continued from page 1)

Jean Farwell. A recharge of the Yellow Dog River into Lake Independence, the parcel was leveraged as a match for 160 acres on the Yellow Dog Plains. This is an untouched primeval estuary for wildlife and freshwater species. It encompasses the headwaters and cold water recharge systems of the Salmon Trout (West Branch) and the Yellow Dog, which feed the warmer waters at the west end of the Yellow Dog Plains (south of Eagle Mine).

In 2001, a water monitoring program was started at random sites. Around this time, a grant was sought from MDEQ to fund 20 sites identified from ground-proofing, aerial surveillance, and mapping. Collaboration came from MDNR fisheries, the MDEQ Water Resource Division, and corporate and individual land owners. In 2003, a study was implemented with volunteer staffing that yielded a complete detailed report written for 3 years as required. That report is still referenced to this day. Sites chosen in the beginning are still visited, with data collected as recently as 2025.



Alexandra Kralova-Zender sorting macroinvertebrates during a stream monitoring event. Photo by Chauncey Moran.

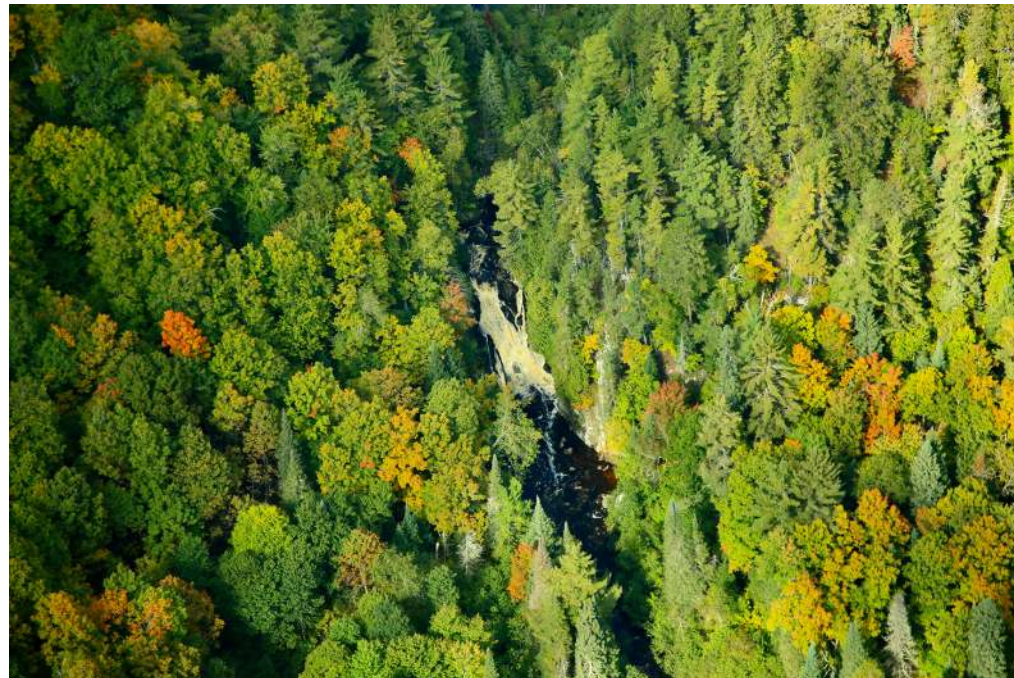
The year 2002 was pivotal for land acquisitions. That year YDWP-supporters Lon and Lyn Emerick contributed \$30,000 in seed money to purchase the Pinnacle Falls and surrounding 40 acres from C. Fred Rydholm and his partner from St. Ignace, Prentiss "Moe" Brown, Jr. Later the Kidder Foundation donated the contiguous 240 acres upstream to identify that entrustment as "Pinnacle Falls Gorge." The falls was placed into a conservation easement with The Nature Conservancy after the purchase was finalized. Our increased land holdings underscored the importance of renewed monitoring, including water quality to a stepped-up degree using more sophisticated equipment. The increase in logging activity, mining exploration, and fragmentation of land holdings in smaller parcels threatened to expose the Yellow Dog River, along with the four branches of the Salmon Trout originating downstream from the proposed mining operation.

About this time, a prior relationship with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community bore fruit - with members working under the aegis of one of the earliest Tribal natural resource departments,



Salmon Trout Headwaters Preserve, purchased in 2003. Photo by Chauncey Moran.

including a governing commission, which later became pivotal in strengthening our relationships. The major policies were directed at water quality standards - while at the same time objecting to the mining of sulfide ore on tribal lands. These same lands would be impacted by pre-mining activities such as exploration and drilling. This position was expanded at a KBIC Tribal meeting attended by Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve board members to include all ceded territory from the 1842 Treaty. As the resolution included lands which crossed Tribal boundaries, this felt like attempting a treaty with a sovereign nation. Although this was not the case, KBIC's passion and commitment for a just cause was a considerable morale booster of solidarity. Their degree of commitment became a rallying point as the mining proposal gathered steam. Demonstrations took place on the Yellow Dog Plains in solidarity with members of the Marquette County and Keweenaw Bay Tribal communities.



Aerial view of Pinnacle Falls. Photo by Chauncey Moran.

In 1996 a massive 40-acre landslide downstream from the Pinnacle Falls underscored the destructive effects of logging and road construction practices. Damage to the hydrology of the headwater springs of the Salmon Trout branches - which were in a direct path with the mine - might be similarly catastrophic as these potable cold water streams flowed directly into Lake Superior. Years before it was already established that mine waste polluted the waters flowing into Lake Superior from mining in the western UP.

Due to this concern, an action plan was created to identify and monitor actual flowing springs. Out of over 400 springs, sites were chosen that were most likely, possible, and least likely to be susceptible to groundwater contamination. A variety of springs along the Salmon Trout branches were identified at sites chosen by USGS and GLIFWC (Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife), with input from an MDEQ study by White Water Associates of Amasa. Some sites at the Salmon Trout road crossings were previously collected and tested by the NMU Chemistry Department, GLIFWC, and YDWP volunteers. Parts of this study continued into 2025. The Sierra Club of Michigan also monitored crossings on the Northwest Road. Many other sites identified in a proposal by the YDWP Executive Director cover nearly 100 square miles of the watershed. Many of these sites are still being monitored today with funding provided by the Huron Mountain Club.



John Coleman (GLIFWC) checks one of his water monitoring stations on the Salmon Trout River. Photo by Chauncey Moran.

Around 2007 in the early years of mining activity, inspiration and guidance came from the work of Roscoe Churchill and Laura Furtman. Their seminal book, *The Buzzards Have Landed: The Real Story of the Flambeau Mine* documents the construction and efforts to resist a gold, copper and silver mine on the banks of the Flambeau River in Wisconsin.

In 2003 Michigan's Governor, Jennifer Granholm, was encouraged to establish a committee to develop legislation to regulate underground nonferrous mining. Ore that contains sulfide creates sulfuric acid in contact with water. When not properly controlled, the ore will cause hazardous long-term effects on down-slope aquifers. Proposed regulation was not just about the Yellow Dog Plains, but every mine throughout the state. Twenty-five members were selected from the communities of mining, corporate landowners, legislators, YDWP, MDEQ, MDNR, NWF, GLIFWC, KBIC, Kennecott, the Sierra Club, UP Front 40, and legal counsel for opposing sides of the issue. Meetings were held in Lansing, St Ignace, and Marquette for two years to develop regulations for mining designated as Part 632 of Act 451 of Michigan Natural Resources. The regulations directed that water, air, and soil quality be maintained during stages of development, operations, as well as transportation. Part 625 governing exploration was also revamped during this time. Public meetings were held as the process to develop the mine continued. Rallying

around the cause were Students Against Sulfide Mining from NMU. SASM members made frequent trips to the Yellow Dog Plains in support of the clean waters flowing from the ground as well as the headwaters located over the orebody location. A relic from that period was SASM's protest calendar featuring students posing *au naturel* against the backdrop of the Yellow Dog wilderness.

As the years from 2000 to 2008 advanced, meetings with mining personnel and entities representing Federal, State, local agencies, township governments, and other core groups supported the work of the YDWP in its leadership role of disseminating information. A delegation was even formed which attended a stockholder meeting of Kennecott and Rio Tinto at its London headquarters. The delegates were supported by HMC, NWF, and anonymous donors. Although the outcome may have seemed insignificant to outsiders, the story of the hazards of sulfide mining gained notoriety among scientific communities who supported our efforts. The Montana-based Center for Science in Public Participation even sent its own delegation to observe first-hand the proposed site on the Yellow Dog Plains. The mining site happened to be the very spot where First Nations once gathered for over 100 years - as documented by tribal elders.

One Anishnabee Faith Healer, Harlan Downwind, led a group in prayer on the Eagle Rock site. Participants at this event reported seeing visions and apparitions, inspiring all in attendance. The same year, the Director of the Michigan DNR, Becky Humphries, conducted a site visit to learn what was actually happening. Despite this, Governor Granholm and members of the legislature were lobbied aggressively to proceed without further delay. In a last-ditch effort, executive board members of the YDWP staged an overnight protest as the lease documents were signed - clearing the path to begin construction. Even though a court case and site visit were pending to halt the destruction of a place considered sacred by multiple First Nations groups, the mining company blasted an entrance and tunnel under the west face of the rock, followed by an underground dogleg to the orebody. Before the site could be fenced and secured, however, ceremonies continued for the next two years.



Eagle Rock, Yellow Dog Plains. Photo by Chauncey Moran.

(continued on next page)

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ENDURING LIFE ON THE YELLOW DOG PLAINS
(continued from previous page)

In April of 2009, the passing into eternity of one of YDWP's most ardent and vocal supporters, C. Fred Rydholm, sparked a resurgence of opposition with increased monitoring on the ground and in the air. Fred spoke at every hearing with great passion and sensitivity to the natural environment. While conceding to the inevitable, he reminded all that cooling ponds and tailing piles reaching higher than the highest point in Michigan were easily seen from orbital space. His words inspired a wider audience to become more active and engaged. Strenuous objections were raised to the proposed truck route through the backcountry to the processing location in Humboldt Township 22 miles south. The road designated 595 was located less than a mile from the mining operation site. With activity on many fronts, supporters were weary but undaunted.

In August of 2009 a sense of renewal came in the form of a celebration of C. Fred Rydholm's life, including a tribal water ceremony, drumming, open-mic story reflections, mission declarations, and a collective passion for pursuing right action. Memories were shared in those precious hours - a sure sign that commitment was very much alive through the camaraderie and bonding of hearts that day. Songs lead by Fred's wife, June, invigorated the attendees.

Throughout that year, the leased land was cleared. Overflights were increased to monitor construction. Ceremonies were held honoring the gifts of Creation as well as the Creator. Almost daily someone was present at the rock called Eagle. Almost as a sign, there were eagle migrations coming and going south of the rock - over the upper valley and down along the path of the Yellow Dog River. A gathering of dedicated folks came to the Rock in early April of 2010, passing around a local stone as an act of solidarity for those in attendance and those present in spirit. Knowing the area was soon to be off limits, an overflight was scheduled before completion within a few short weeks. Since the perimeter had been surveyed to protect plantation pines, the pace of construction would be reduced, allowing more opportunity for moments to reflect on the past, present, and future.

That same day, a woman came to Eagle Rock who, when asked, declined to leave. She was arrested and placed in the Marquette County Jail. The arrest and incarceration triggered a reaction from Keweenaw Bay Tribal members who began to occupy a point at the western base of the rock. Several supporters brought food and prayed each night for their safety and welfare. During their vigil, a contingency of mining officials told the occupiers to leave peacefully. They declined. While the occupation lasted through an early-May snowstorm, law enforcement from several agencies ultimately led the occupiers away. Two who refused to leave were arrested. A group from KBIC arrived and engaged in a ceremony of solidarity before the site was finally surrendered. These acts of resistance will always be recalled as peaceful - as well as time spent in reverence. After a fence topped with barbed wire was completed, Kennecott Mining Company was mandated to grant access to Keweenaw tribal officials to begin a period of water and other ceremonial visits which continue to this day.



Keepers of the Water. By Liana & Sheri Loonsfoot.



Protest encampment below Eagle Rock. Photo by Chauncey Moran.

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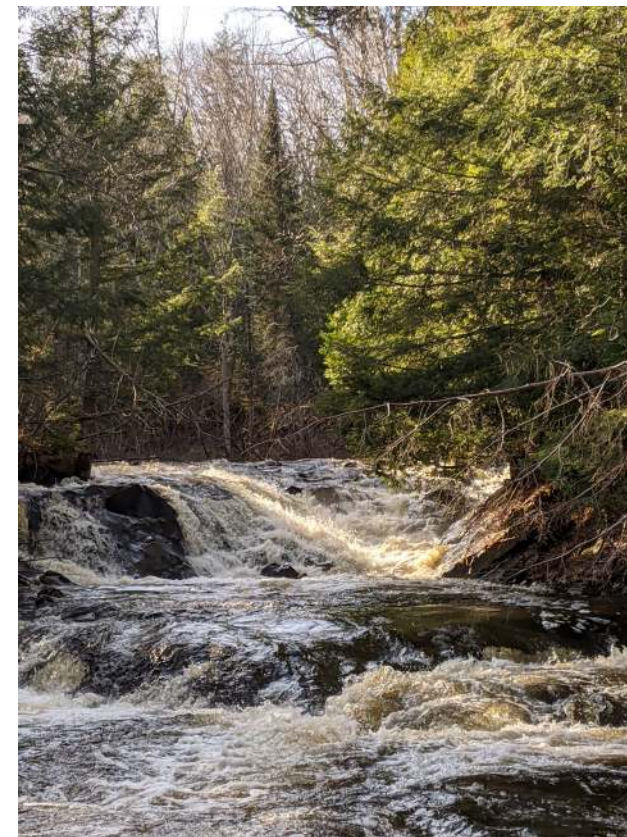
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As construction progressed, YDWP continued to monitor activity near the mine as well as efforts to widen exploration. YDWP attended forums of road transportation and public meetings to voice concerns about proposed routes: from crossing the Red Road along the Dead River to 573 through Ishpeming; AAA to 510 South through Negaunee; various routes off the Red Road off 573 to Grapevine Road; and the AAA to 550 to Beagle Road circumventing Wright St. The straightest route, dubbed 595, was on Snowmobile Trail 5 to Wolf Lake Road to Humboldt Mill. At the end of the day, the EPA decided that questions of mineral rights ownership prevented potential mining in sensitive areas in the Michigamme Highlands. The determination was made to upgrade the 550 and the AAA to Class A Commercial road (paved) to handle the loads. The Yellow Dog River and its tributaries were not directly affected by the rock hauling. The scenic country road of 510 remained rural gravel and was not developed.

The refurbishing of the historic AAA into a mining haul road had its own issues. Routing through McQuestion Gorge interrupted natural ground water springs flowing toward the temporarily polluted Salmon Trout East Branch. After spending tens of thousands of dollars to redesign and fill with appropriate materials, that construction was completed successfully.

Around this time, the Longyear Realty Company contacted YDWP with an offer to sell several thousand acres of forest, including river frontage. As a grassroots organization, YDWP did not have the funds to purchase more than downstream of the 510 bridge - and not much more than the \$50,000 down payment. After fits and starts, a \$400,000 grant was secured for a slingshot to more than half the requisite amount - with accumulated matching funds. Through the generosity of eleventh-hour donors as well as the tireless dedication of our project coordinator, we did meet our goal - with funding left over for acreage removal from the Commercial Forest Program. That particular accomplishment placed us on the radar of a select group of folks who have given and pledged much ever since. Not long after, additional staff members guided the organization to deeper involvement in grant writing and fundraising from previous sources: WMAN, Freshwater Future, EGLE, USFS, and private donor members.

(continued on next page)



Yellow Dog River in Community Forest. Photo by Kathy Binoniemi.



Salmon Trout River headwaters at bottom left, 2007, before mine construction. Photo by Chauncey Moran.



Eagle Mine, southwest view. Photo by Chauncey Moran.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ENDURING LIFE ON THE YELLOW DOG PLAINS
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In 2017 C. Fred Rydholm's wife, June, approached the YDWP with the desire to execute a gift subject to a conservation agreement of 1000 acres to be called the Mudjeweew Wildlife Refuge - managed and stewarded for education and outreach for future generations. Eighty acres contain archival buildings consisting of Fred's fabled log cabins which he started in 1949 on the site of Cyrus McCormick and Cyrus Bentley's Arbutus Lodge. The Lodge was the halfway point on the Bentley Trail between White Deer Lake and the Huron Mountain Club. The aim of this land gift is to facilitate educational gatherings and guided outings of skiing and hiking. Another feature of the covenant agreement is to highlight and maintain the historic Bentley Trail which passes through the properties. Since that time the YDWP was gifted, purchased, and obtained grants for an additional 440 acres.

A development in 2025-26 is another riverfront acquisition to manage and steward in its natural state. This new 560-acre parcel is directly upstream from and adjacent to the already existing YDR Community Forest. This once-in-a-lifetime acquisition was made possible by the generosity of a family foundation, who provided a \$1 million grant and a \$400,000 loan to complete the purchase. Recently, the Carls Foundation has pledged a \$200,000 matching grant to help raise the funds to pay off the loan. This means that they will match any donation dollar-for-dollar up to \$200,000. Your contribution would be doubled! We have less than a year to meet this challenge, so the clock is ticking.

The YDWP is grateful for the support of those who have gone before, who continue, and those who are newly aware of these remarkable achievements - this remarkable journey. All are invited to join us for the next chapter - in community with those who are rejuvenated by outback adventure - and those who prefer quiet moments of tranquility under a forest canopy. They are moments not easily attained in our fragmented world - but not easily forgotten. They touch our primal connection with nature. They fire our innermost souls to pursue actions to protect and preserve these fragile pristine landscapes. We bow to the spirits of the ancestors that give us a reverence for these gifts of the Creator. They bring us to the trailhead of a joyous and peaceful end.



River bend on the Yellow Dog in the new 557-acre parcel.
Photo by John Anderson.



Mudjeweew Wildlife Refuge. Aerial view of Bentley Ponds and Rydholm cabins.
Photo by Chauncey Moran.



Michelle Halley, Chauncey Moran, and Dan Rydholm at the Mudjeweew land gift closing, 2017.

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Prof. Bill Reinthal and students from Ashland University in Ohio helped us with our on-going forestry-for-wildlife project this spring, planting walnuts, plums, chokecherries, and elderberries in a seldom-visited section of the Community Forest. Photos by Brian Noell.