

**MEETING MINUTES
WESTERN REGION RC&D COUNCIL
KENTON, MICHIGAN
FRIDAY, JANUARY 5, 2007**

IN ATTENDANCE: Bruce Peterson-NRCS; Sandy Lahtinen-Gogebic CD; Don Keith-Keweenaw Co Bd of Comm, Steve Albee-Houghton/Keweenaw CD; Bob Larson-Baraga CD; Bill Menge-Baraga Co Bd of Comm; Rich Miskovich-Ontonagon CD; John Pelkola, Ontonagon Co Bd of Comm; Paul Luoma-Houghton Co Bd of Comm; Ralph Miller-Ottawa National Forest; Ken Marshall-WUPPDR; Marilyn Shy-UP RC&D Coordinator; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Bob Larson at 10 am. The agenda was approved (Keith/Albee).

MINUTES: The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved (Pelkola/Miskovich) with the following correction: Baraga Co./Houghton Co. Report-Change "Seneca Creek" to "Seneca Mine".

TREASURER'S REPORT: Darcy Rutkowski presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved (Menge/Albee). As of 11/30/06 the balance is \$675.55. The only activity in the past three months was interest payments totaling \$1.22.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Newsletter Feedback: Members present had positive comments regarding the new newsletter format and content. Darcy requested ideas for projects to be featured in future newsletters.

Update on the re-establishment of the Forestry Committee: Marilyn reported that all three regions were in favor of re-establishing a forestry committee. A small working group (Bernie Huetter, Ralph Miller, Ernie Houghton, Steve Albee and Dave Andersen) has been invited to develop a mission statement and goals for the committee. It has already been suggested to Marilyn that the forestry committee (once re-established) might organize information meeting(s) on the new forestry bill and how it impacts private landowners. Gary Willis was suggested as a speaker for such an informational meeting. Ralph Miller mentioned that the Forest Supervisor on the Ottawa is in favor of re-establishing this committee. Scott Robbins from Smurfit-Stone was mentioned as a good resource person to be involved early in the forestry committee. It was clarified that this committee would not be in competition with the Conservation Districts for forestry grant dollars.

Area Plan Process/Input: The UP RC&D Council is currently in the process of updating its Area Plan. The new plan will be in effect beginning in 2008. The council is seeking input from partners and stakeholders regarding their views on the most important resource needs and opportunities facing the Upper Peninsula now and in the next 5 years. As a starting point, the Council is reviewing the current Resource Assessment documents from all 13 UP Conservation Districts and summarizing the resource conservation and development issues that they have identified. A preliminary summary (including 6 of the 13 districts) was presented. Members

present were asked to pass along their ideas regarding the best ways to gather input from stakeholders.

Election of Officers: Bob Larson, Chairperson of the Western Regional RC&D Council, announced that the next item of business would be the election of officers whose terms of office would cover the next two years, 2007 and 2008. To avoid any conflict of interest or perception of such, he said he would temporarily vacate the chair and appoint, Darcy Rutkowski, the UPRC&D Council's Executive Assistant to conduct the election. Ms. Rutkowski called for nominations to the offices of chair, vice-chair and secretary/treasurer. Bob Larson was nominated for the office of Chairperson by Miskovich, supported by Menge. Paul Luoma was nominated for the office of Vice-Chairperson by Pelkola, supported by Miskovich. Frank Wardynski was nominated for the office of Secretary/Treasurer by Miskovich, supported by Pelkola. Ms. Rutkowski then called for further nominations from the floor three times for each office, there being no further nominations Albee moved that the nominations be closed and the clerk be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for the slate of nominees. The motion was supported by Keith. *Motion Carried.*

REPORTS:

NPS – Steve Albee reported that Frank Fiala retired officially on January 3rd, 2007 as superintendent of KNHP. Until a new superintendent is selected the park will be directed by a series of acting superintendents which will include current staffers and individuals from other park units. Currently Abby Sue Fisher is acting superintendent, but she will be replaced on January 14th by Andrew Ferguson, on temporary assignment from the Perry Memorial located on Lake Erie. In other park news both KNHP and the KNHP Advisory Commission will be inaugurating a new Heritage Sites Program for the park at the Commission's quarterly meeting on January 23rd. This new program will initially be made up of 15 former cooperating sites and three new sites with the objective of initiating a stronger interpretative effort in telling the copper story of the Keweenaw

Baraga County/Houghton County: Bruce Petersen gave updates on the following projects: Houghton/Keweenaw CD submitted a CELP grant application for Bete Gris land acquisition which was one of the two applications to continue in the process out of all Michigan applications. If awarded (approximately \$3.4 million), the CD will hold the deed for more than 2600 acres in the preserve with the Keweenaw Land Trust holding an easement.

Inland Stamp Sands Project – The MDEQ is in the process of trying to secure funding for 2 of the 3 sites (Winona and Eagle River). Marilyn is working on a grant to secure funding for the third site (Hills Creek). If the funding comes through, the plan is to do design work in 2007 and remediation in 2008.

Chassell Flood Protection – Houghton Co. and MDOT are working together. The portion of the inlet and outlet on MDOT right-of-way has been excavated and a large cottonwood tree removed. The MDOT public affairs person is trying to raise awareness of the problem and generate funding interest.

New Forester at H/K CD – Rachel Tarpey is the new forester at the H/K CD, she has an MS from MTU.

Huron River Watershed – The Baraga and Marquette CD's are working on completing a 319 planning grant application. As a side note – the Lake Superior Watershed Partnership may be studying the Sturgeon River if money becomes available. This is a huge, complicated watershed which is affected by UPPCO controlled water releases.

Sand Point – 38 acres have been covered and fenced, WHIP grant (\$20,000) will provide funding for shrubs and tall plantings and create a barrier between the newly remediated stamp sand area and an adjacent pristine wetland/wild rice plantings.

Walleye Rearing Facility – It appears that this project may be moving forward with DEQ grant funds.

Gogebic County: Sandy Lahtinen reported that there had recently been a huge turnover on the county board due to a health insurance issue. LeRoy Kangas, the new chairperson, will appoint a person to the CD and they will attend the RC&D meetings.

Ontonagon County: Richard Miskovich reported that the new forester is active and doing outreach. Some of the priority issues are the loss of farms, and water levels in the harbor. The cause of the low water levels in the harbor was determined to be lack of precipitation and greater evaporation, not sedimentation and water diversion.

Keweenaw County: Don Keith reported that the county recently found out that they received very little revenue from the transfer of approximately 60% of the land there. The Lake Superior Land Co (IP) sold the land to a company named GMO based in Boston which local folks have very little knowledge of. The county anticipated approximately \$130,000 in transfer taxes and in reality received only about \$30,000 due to “loopholes” in the laws regarding these land transfers. The project to winterize/remodel the county-owned Keweenaw Mt. Lodge is moving ahead of schedule due to the mild weather and better than anticipated results in burying utility lines. The lodge will be able to accommodate 150 guests and a newly created Parks and Rec Commission will oversee the lodge and trails in the county.

USFS: Ralph Miller reported that the current Forest Supervisor on the Ottawa is retiring and this will be a great loss to the Ottawa. Their revised forest plan received 5 appeals and also 5 interveners (groups that intervened on behalf of the FS). This raised the question as to “how many people in the Ottawa work on appeals?” Ralph reported that 3 forest service employees work full-time on appeals and it represents a significant cost to the forest. He also reported that the Ottawa has been one of the most successful national forests in the Eastern US in regards to having their plans/decisions upheld under appeal.

WUUPDR – Ken Marshall, the new GIS specialist who replaced Justin Murawski, comes to WUUPDR with 7 years of GIS experience, most recently in Wisconsin. He has been working with Keweenaw Co. to map multi-purpose trails and determine the GMO holdings and how that impacts the snowmobile trail system there, in Iron Co. on the Bike Path Feasibility study, with

the City Wakefield on a flood mitigation plan and with MTU on an emergency plan. He received a \$26,000 USGS contract for upgrades to the server and software which will allow WUUPDR to become the GIS portal for the whole western UP. All available data and updating will be done by them and the available information should be very useful. This is the first in the state and Ken believes that the initial data will be available in late spring 2007. He hopes to be able to do outreach/education for all counties and townships within 5-10 years so they have the knowledge to access these free resources. He's working to secure additional funding and a motion passed (Luoma/Pelkola) that the UP RC&D write a letter of support for his grant application.

RC&D Coordinator Report: Marilyn distributed a written report with updates on several projects. She is working toward having an active project in all 15 counties. Current Western UP projects she has been working on include Little Girl's Point (working on an \$80,000 grant), Inland Stamp Sands/Hills Creek site (trying to secure \$100,000 in conjunction with the MNA), and Twin Lakes Berm project (received \$3000, looking for an additional \$5000).

NEW MEASURES:

Huron River 319 Planning Grant: No project application has been submitted, however, Marilyn has been asked to help with the submission of a grant application with an impending deadline to support this project. This new project was approved (Albee/Luoma) pending the submission of a completed project application.

MEETING ATTENDANCE ISSUE: It was noted that several stakeholders that attended RC&D meetings in the past have not been in attendance for quite some time. The group feels it is important to re-establish contact with representatives from MSU Extension, Rural Development, FSA, KBIC, DNR and Iron County. It was suggested that our next Western meeting be held in Iron County and Darcy will attempt to reserve a meeting space there.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, April 19, 2007 at 10 am – in Iron County.

MEETING MINUTES - WESTERN REGION RC&D COUNCIL
Iron County Courthouse – April 19, 2007

IN ATTENDANCE: Jim Sweeting-NRCS; Dennis Jacobson-Gogebic Co Bd of Comm; Don Keith-Keweenaw Co Bd of Comm, Steve Albee-Houghton/Keweenaw CD; Bob Larson-Baraga CD; Paul Luoma-Houghton Co Bd of Comm; Bob Black-Iron Co Bd of Comm; Marilyn Shy-UP RC&D Coordinator; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Bob Larson at 10 am. The agenda was approved (Luoma/Albee).

MINUTES: The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved (Luoma/Albee) as written.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Darcy Rutkowski presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved (Albee/Jacobson). As of 3/30/07 the balance is \$677.78. The only activity in the past three months was interest payments totaling \$2.23.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Legislative Update: Darcy reported that the UP RC&D Council sent letters to Rep. Stupak, and Senators Levin and Stabenow urging them to support full funding for the RC&D program (flat funding). The president's budget had recommended cutting the funding from \$56 million to \$14 million and eliminating all but one Coordinator in each state.

Update on Re-establishment of the Forest Resources Committee: The first meeting of the newly re-established Forest Resources Committee will take place at the UP RC&D office on May 15, 2007. Meeting notices have been sent to all former Forestry Committee Members and several others who have expressed an interest in attending. The Mission Statement which was approved at the last UP Council meeting was distributed. This first meeting will help establish priorities for the new committee which will work closely with the UP Council.

Area Plan Survey: The UP RC&D Council is in the process of formulating a new 5-year Area Plan which will become effective in 2008. As part of the process they are seeking input from all partners and have developed a survey which was distributed to members present for completion.

REPORTS:

NRCS: Jim Sweeting was covering for Bruce Petersen who could not attend the meeting. He reported that the DEQ is considering funding remediation of 2 additional stamp sand sites in the Copper Country (Central and Winona). \$800,000 has been requested and has a good chance of being funded. The plan calls for design in 2007, remediation work in 2008 to cover mine tailings with soil. The Superior National Bank has agreed to provide the 25% local match for the grant application which has been submitted for the Chassell Flood Protection project and a large cottonwood has been removed upstream. He reported that Louisiana Pacific is in the process of donating 40 acres to Keweenaw Co. at the site of Seneca #3 (bat enclosure). This project is funded 75% by WHIP and 25% by Bat Conservation International and will serve as an educational site. On the Twin Lakes Berm project a grant has been submitted to Plum Creek

Foundation requesting \$5,000 funding (\$3,000 has already been received from another source). The township will do the earthwork.

Keweenaw County: Don Keith reported that the Keweenaw Mt. Lodge (the original section) will open May 11, with the new convention center which will accommodate 250 people opening in early July. They have applied for a management plan grant from the Michigan Trust Fund which requires a 25% match. Another issue they are dealing with in Keweenaw County is sewage disposal/treatment. Currently Copper Harbor is the only municipality which has waste treatment capabilities. Consequently most waste is shipped to Houghton County and Keweenaw County has asked the DEQ to open a site at Mt. Horace Greeley for seepage (which is projected to be at a lower cost than they are currently paying Houghton County).

Iron County: Bob Black, newly appointed by the Iron Co. Commission to represent them at RC&D meetings, reported that the county has a new EDC Director and some grants are coming in. They also have a new Call Center in Iron River which will provide 80 part-time jobs. Bob also serves on the Planning Commission. Their transfer station is only open 3 days a week which is not really sufficient and they charge for recycling. He also reported that Kennecott Mining Co. is looking at opportunities in Iron County and that they are clear-cutting jack pine on US 2 about 7 miles south of Crystal Falls to stop insect infestation.

Gogebic County: Dennis Jacobson reported that the recent turnover on the county board was due in part to a health insurance issue, but that wasn't the entire reason for the turnover. He reported on a logger's convention with equipment demonstration in Wakefield and that the sportfishing community is requesting more fish plantings. The CD tree sale is now in progress with pickup on May 12. A mine inspector was recently hired by the county and a heritage trail system is in the works.

Houghton County: Paul Luoma reported that the county is concerned about the management of UPPCO shoreline property around Prickett Dam (secure a channel, limits on property owner rights, and property sales upstream from the dam). There was also some discussion of low lake levels and fire danger. With funding cuts volunteer fire depts. Who accept grant funds are under obligation to respond to local wildfires and many departments don't have the resources. Steve Albee reported that on June 10 Jim Corless will assume the superintendency of Keweenaw National Historic Park (KNHP), and he is impressed with his credentials. Steve explained that there are 15-17 "cooperating sites" within the KNHP with natural and cultural resources and stories that complement the Park. In order to standardize the visitor experience at these various sites they are under the Heritage Site Program and have a formal memorandum of understanding with the NPS and the Advisory Commission. One goal of the Commission is to re-establish a relationship with state and local governments.

UP RC&D Council: Bob Larson reported on the North Central RC&D meeting which was held in Frankenmuth, Michigan in March. He attended the conference as well as Judy Pomeroy from the UP Council and Darcy and Marilyn also attended. There were several educational workshops available to attendees and he heard Mike Doyle (Bay Mills) speak on alternative fuels which was very informative.

WUUPDR – Ken Marshall, the new GIS specialist who replaced Justin Murawski, was not able to attend this meeting but sent a written report. He wanted to let folks know that he received the grant (the UP Council sent a letter of support for his grant application) for web mapping and outreach. Only 4 of 28 proposals were funded nationwide and this will provide an opportunity for the whole region to view GIS data via the internet. He hopes to have the web mapping program up and running on their website within 3 months.

RC&D Coordinator Report: Marilyn distributed a written report and highlighted a few projects. There are grant applications submitted for Little Girls Point (\$80,000), Chassell Flood Control (\$80,000) and Hills Creek Stamp Sand Remediation (\$100,000). The UP RC&D Council was awarded \$14,000 MiCorp Grant for a volunteer stream monitoring on the Dead River in Marquette County and the Anna River in Alger County. The Council will administer the grant and the Marquette and Alger Conservation Districts will do much of the work. She also reported that the conservation districts had funding cut by \$9,000 this fiscal year with more probable cuts for the next fiscal year. The state budget woes are really affecting counties and conservation districts negatively.

NEW MEASURES: None

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, July 19 at 10 am—at the Keweenaw Mt. Lodge (back-up site Kenton)

MEETING MINUTES - WESTERN REGION RC&D COUNCIL
Keweenaw Mt. Lodge – July 19, 2007

IN ATTENDANCE: Bruce Petersen-NRCS; Dennis Jacobson-Gogebic Co Bd of Comm; Don Keith, Frank Stubenrauch and Randy Eckloff-Keweenaw Co Bd of Comm, Steve Albee, Rachel Tarpey, Sue Haralson and Gina Nicholas-Houghton/Keweenaw CD; Bob Larson-Baraga CD; Bob Black-Iron Co Bd of Comm; Sam Raymond-Keweenaw County Parks & Rec/CHIA; Aaron Rogers-Keweenaw County EDC/Copper Harbor Trails Club; Ken Marshall-WUPPDR; Dennis Rich-Northern Environmental; Mike Schira-Houghton/Keweenaw MSUE; Evan McDonald-Keweenaw Land Trust; Jim Corless-KNHP; Marilyn Shy-UP RC&D Coordinator; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Bob Larson at 10 am. The agenda was approved (Albee/Black).

MINUTES: The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved (Albee/Jacobson) as written.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Darcy Rutkowski presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved (Albee/Jacobson). As of 6/30/07 the balance is \$679.47. The only activity in the past three months was interest payments totaling \$1.69. Western Regional dues have not been requested from the Conservation Districts for 2007 and a motion was approved (Jacobson/Nicholas) to temporarily suspend the request for dues until the next meeting when the financial status of the conservation districts for the next fiscal year was more well-defined.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

Update on County Dues Payments: Darcy reported that the UP RC&D Council has received 2007 dues payments from all but 4 counties (Keweenaw, Gogebic, Delta and Dickinson). The Keweenaw County Commissioners present all agreed that they had approved the payment of dues a few months ago, and Don Keith will follow up on this with their county clerk.

Update on Forest Resources Committee: The committee has convened twice for meetings and a completed project application will be submitted at the next UP RC&D meeting in September. Copies of the project application were distributed to those in attendance. The project deals with woody biomass utilization by schools and other interested institutions in the UP and a USFS grant has been applied for. North Dickinson schools currently have a system in place that uses wood pellets. One aspect of the project is to determine the amount of biomass that can sustainably be removed from various site types and the State of Michigan currently has a working group that is looking at Best Management Practices for various sites.

Area Plan Survey: The UP RC&D Council is in the process of formulating a new 5-year Area Plan which will become effective in 2008. As part of the process they are seeking input from all partners and have developed a survey which was distributed to members present who had not previously completed a survey. A summary of survey results to date was distributed and more input was gathered from those present concerning the priorities which have been identified thus far.

REPORTS:

NPS: Jim Corless, the new Superintendent at the Keweenaw National Historic Park, reported that he has been on the job only 32 days after transferring from Skagway, Alaska. He has been busy meeting folks, getting oriented, working with the advisory committee on the next phase of the general management plan, and working on facility use.

Baraga and Houghton Counties: Bruce Petersen reported that the \$800,000 requested for remediation work to cover mine tailings at the Central and Winona sites is likely to be funded soon. Rob Aho is now working on the Eagle River Watershed (under contract with the CD). A lakeshore erosion project is now underway to repair storm damage to fencing, shoreline and parking areas at the North Entry. The \$250,000 KBIC walleye rearing project is moving ahead now that all permits have been approved. Bruce has been busy with implementing 6 new WRP contracts on private lands which were funded when money was released from other states. The Chassell Flood Protection project grant application to the Great Lakes Basin Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Program was not funded as that program was zeroed out in the federal budget for this fiscal year. The KBIC will be taking on a Rapid Watershed Assessment (RWA) in the near future for all watersheds that originate or cross their reservation lands. Another mine adit closure is being funded with WHIP funds – this one at the Bumblebee Mine in Ontonagon County. And finally, MDOT will be starting some engineering work shortly on the Dault's Creek Project.

Keweenaw County: Don Keith reported that Keweenaw County received a \$30,000 grant from WUPPDR for planning. The site at Mt. Horace Greeley for a seepage facility is now accepting sewage with the hope that it will be financially profitable. They are still working out some security and maintenance issues there.

Iron County: Bob Black reported the Iron Co. Planning Commission has asked the County Board of Comm. to speed up the timeline for the forest plan. They are currently dealing with jack pine insect infestation which has caused a fire hazard. The bike trail is progressing nicely. Bob mentioned that his county is more than 50% federal or state land, which is very different from Keweenaw County which has the least public land of any county in the UP.

Gogebic County: Dennis Jacobson reported that he attended the forum regarding the impacts of corporate forestland ownership change which was held in Houghton as part of the UP RC&D NWF-PAL project recently and was very pleased with the forum. He reported on the forum to his county board and also sent press releases to local newspapers to help inform the public about the issue. He also reported that the Gogebic CD tree sale had been a success. Marilyn informed him that the grant application for work at Little Girls Point had not been funded because the Great Lakes Basin Soil Erosion and Sediment Program had been zeroed out in the federal budget for this fiscal year.

MSU Extension: Mike Schira reported that declining budgets are an issue for his agency with fewer people doing more and more all the time. Extension agents have UP-wide responsibilities (his being logger education) as well as their local responsibilities. He mentioned that there is some interest by the Iron Co. Road Commission in establishing a road from an area south of Kenton to an area south of Covington, but they don't currently have the funding to do that. There are large parts of Iron County without good road access. He reported that Extension is

doing quite a bit of research on biofuels (switchgrass at the Chatham research center) in conjunction with MSU and MTU.

WUPPDR: Ken Marshall reported that Jim Stingle resigned as director of WUPPDR and Kim Stoker was filling in temporarily. He thanked the group for their letter of support for his grant application for the USGS grant which he received to promote the National Map throughout the region. He plans to have the web-based program up and running within a month and will be working with 30-35 entities to obtain any digital data they have that he can include – which will all eventually be available to the public. He will be speaking to county commissions in the near future to inform them about this capability. He has been doing some outreach with an interested teacher and class at Calumet High School and WUPPDR has a grant from the state to collect information regarding the inventory of emergency supplies/equipment that is available from all entities across the UP. He also mentioned that he has experience with community wildfire protection plans and could assist folks in that capacity.

RC&D Coordinator Report: Marilyn will be sending via e-mail (or mail for those who do not have e-mail capability) her report. She has updated the Council Annual Plan which gives the current status of all projects. She also reported on the 3 community forums which recently took place in Newberry, Houghton and Marquette on the effects of corporate timberland ownership change. About 160 people attended the forums in total and they brought together people from various interest groups and backgrounds that might not normally be networking. A final report will be completed in the next few months and posted on the project website along with some ideas on “next steps”. She also reviewed the function of the UP RC&D Council and reminded folks that great ideas will only come to fruition if a project application is submitted to the regional council and approved and subsequently approved by the UP Council. At that point, she can start to work on the project.

Keweenaw Land Trust: Evan McDonald, Executive Director of the Keweenaw Land Trust reported on a project they are involved in to preserve 1,000 acres (a 2 mile river corridor) in the Pilgrim River Watershed. They are working with the Forestland Group, as well as other partners, to try to secure conservation easements that would keep the land in sustainable forestry and also assure public access for perpetuity. They will likely apply for a Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund Grant at some time in the future.

NEW MEASURES: None

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, October 18 at 10 am—in Watersmeet (if possible) with Kenton as a back-up location.

MEETING MINUTES - WESTERN REGION RC&D COUNCIL
USFS Watersmeet Ranger District Office – October 18, 2007

IN ATTENDANCE: Bruce Petersen-NRCS; Dennis Jacobson-Gogebic Co Bd of Comm; Don Keith-Keweenaw Co Bd of Comm, Steve Albee-Houghton/Keweenaw CD; Bob Larson-Baraga CD; Bob Black-Iron Co Bd of Comm; Ken Marshall-WUPPDR; John Pelkola-Ontonagon Co Bd of Comm; Ralph Miller-Ottawa National Forest; Dave Cella-Lake Superior's Huron River Restoration; Marilyn Shy-UP RC&D Coordinator; Darcy Rutkowski-UP RC&D

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Bob Larson at 10 am. The agenda was approved (Pelkola/Jacobson).

MINUTES: The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved (Jacobson/Black) as written.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Darcy Rutkowski presented the Treasurer's Report, which was approved (Black/Jacobson). As of 9/30/07 the balance is \$462.53. Activity in the past three months consisted of interest payments totaling \$1.50, bank maintenance fees totaling \$10.12 (which will be reversed by the bank) and one check for \$208.32 to pay for the lunch at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge at the last meeting.

BUSINESS ITEMS:

County Dues Set for 2008: Darcy reported that all but 1 county (Delta) have paid their dues for the 2007 fiscal year. The UP Council voted to leave the 2008 county dues amount at \$300, noting that the dues have not increased for several years.

Update on Forest Resources Committee: Marilyn reported that Dave Andersen resigned as the chairman of the Forest Resources Committee at the last meeting which was held in Escanaba on October 4, 2007 and that no one was interested in taking on that responsibility – so at this point the committee is “chairless”. Two groups already exist in the UP which have similar goals to this committee (EUPPEM and WUPPEM), and Marilyn will attend meetings of both to see if they have any interest in serving in the same capacity as the Forest Resources Committee in providing a networking opportunity and bringing projects/ideas to the UP Council in return for the UP RC&D Council providing organizational assistance to them. The committee developed a project entitled B.U.R.N. U.P. (Biomass Utilization & Restoration Network in the Upper Peninsula) which is being sponsored by the Marquette Conservation District and has been approved by the UP Council. The project has been funded in the amount of \$99,450 through a Forest Stewardship Grant. This is a UP-wide project and Chris Burnett (former forester with the Mqt and Alger CD's) is the project leader under contract with the UP RC&D Council. A steering committee meeting for this project was also held on Oct. 4th and several forest resource committee members were in attendance and will be serving on other committees for the BURN UP project.

Area Plan Update: The UP RC&D Council is in the process of formulating a new 5-year Area Plan which will become effective in 2008. Marilyn is working with the UP Council to incorporate input from the three regional councils and other partners into the draft Area Plan. Bob Larson suggested that there should be something in the Plan regarding groundwater and the potential for groundwater contamination from all those who “dig in the ground”. There is a need

for statewide standards. The UP Council worked on modifying their vision and mission statements at their last meeting in September. The final version of these statements will be included in the new Area Plan.

REPORTS:

Baraga, Ontonagon and Houghton Counties: Bruce Petersen reported that there will be a Rapid Watershed Assessment taking place for all watersheds that originate in or pass through the KBIC tribal lands. A grant from NRCS has been received (by the UP RC&D) to fund the project. He described the RWA as an “abridged version of the old 319 grants” with the narrative replaced by GIS imagery. He hopes that a RWA can be completed on the Huron River at some point. Progress on the KBIC aquaculture pond project has been hampered by rain. He will be working to secure funding for the Chassell Flood Protection (Hamar Creek) project from a new source since the Great Lakes Commission grant they applied for was not funded. The Inland Stamp Sand Project has been funded for \$800,000 for two sites (Eagle River (Central) and Winona). Marilyn is still working on funding sources for the other three sites in that project. The Twin Lakes Berm project is on hold until a little additional funding can be secured. The Ontonagon CD annual meeting was cancelled due to a funding shortfall.

Keweenaw County: Don Keith reported that Keweenaw County has had a Master Plan for several years. A big issue is public access for trails (motorized and non-motorized) because the economy is so dependent on tourism. They have 135 miles of snowmobile trails and the Fat Tire Festival and the Trail Running Festival have a huge economic impact. There is also a need for horseback riding trails (abandoned RR’s have potential).

Iron County: Bob Black reported that 13 twp. and local officials are taking the Citizen Planner course at this time through MSU Extension. The cost is \$380/person and it is also available online. The Pine River Lumber Mill will be expanding in Amasa from 5 employees to 40 over the next 2 yrs.

Gogebic County: Dennis Jacobson reported that the ranger station in Bessemer will be turned over to the County (they bought it) on Nov. 1 and it will become the Natural Resources Building. The county has applied for a grant from the state to purchase railroad grades from Ironwood to Wakefield Twp for snowmobiles, ORV’s and biking/walking. Many UP counties including Gogebic are concerned that the state of Michigan is purchasing additional lands without the ability to fund payments in lieu of taxes to the counties. Rep. Mike Lahti has indicated that if hunting and fishing license fees increase it will be done gradually. Alternative fuel development continues to be important to the county.

WUPPDR: Ken Marshall reported that his work on the National Map is behind schedule. He is concerned that several counties have contracted a company from out of state for their plat books because the information is not available to the public. Some of the counties have also been having problems with the product they are receiving. GPS work has been completed on the Gogebic Lake Loop. In Houghton Co. they are trying to complete a map of all trails and overlay that with a parcel map to see where access problems exist. Don Keith expressed concerns about maps of potential trails being released giving the impression that the trail already exists

(sometimes through private lands). This has caused concern among landowners. WUPPDR is doing the GIS analysis for the KBIC RWA under contract with the UP RC&D Council.

USFS: Ralph Miller reported that the FS will be hosting a series of public meetings regarding their ATV policy, hoping to add some connecting roads to link existing trail segments. The USFS is aware of the need to get additional roads open for ATV use because of the economic impacts for counties. They need to establish “dual use” roads and mitigate any safety concerns. Public meetings will be held at all district offices (Iron River 11/13, Watersmeet 11/17, Kenton 11/1). Multiple use issues are important – the Pioneer Trail is multi-use.

RC&D Coordinator Report: Marilyn reported on an upcoming meeting for all the RC&D Councils in Michigan (the Michigan Association of RC&D Councils) in St. Ignace for strategic planning which will hopefully lead to more networking and speaking with one voice to elected officials. The UP Council hopes to improve communication amongst the MI councils.

Other Partners-Lake Superior’s Huron River Restoration: Dave Cella reported that Chad Kolke (DEQ) surveyed the Huron River. The last grant application for work on the Huron was refused because the river did not have 303D status. There are concerns about land division and mining in the watershed. Dave reported that the DEQ conducted water quality testing in 2006-07 and found high concentrations of copper. Their group has attained 501 © (3) status. They would like to see a RWA done in the Huron River watershed (the current KBIC RWA does not cover the Huron River).

NEW MEASURES: KBIC RWA was approved (Albee/Jacobson). Marilyn reported that the KBIC is very engaged in the project but they are not interested being the recipient of the grant funds due to the short amount of time to complete the project and the amount of time required for them to get the approval to receive these monies. Therefore, WUPPDR will receive the contract to do the GIS work.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Marilyn reported on BURN UP – Chris Burnett met with the people at the Calumet school district who currently utilize wood chips to heat their facility. He will be making a presentation to all the UP superintendents in early December and all districts will be asked to complete a survey of their current heating system and interest in converting their system to wood chip utilization. She provided information about a statewide study of boilers which was done by the SE Michigan RC&D Council. Most facilities that have converted their boilers to wood chip utilization are using boilers manufactured by Messersmith Manufacturing. The project will also include tours to facilities that use wood chips and harvesting demonstrations. Some of the folks who are serving on the steering committee for this project will also be working with the DNR to develop guidance for harvesting woody biomass in the state. A website will be developed to provide information to the public.

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, January 17, 2008 at 10 am–in L’Anse (check on village hall or twp hall).

The meeting was followed by a very interesting tour of the Toumey Nursery.