

# Upper Peninsula RC&D Council 2009 Annual Report



## The Year in Review—Highlights from 2009

Working with partners from the Upper Peninsula conservation districts, local government, state and federal agencies, non-profits, and numerous volunteers, the UP Resource Conservation and Development Council has been part of the successful completion of several projects during 2009. Many of these projects are highlighted in this report, as well as several projects which are still in progress. The UP RC&D Council has projects in all 15 U.P. Counties and several multi-county projects. All these projects fall broadly under four categories: land conservation, land management, community development, or water management, with the priorities being determined by the specific needs of the local community at any particular time. Thanks to the collaboration and hard work of all of our partners, we have many successful projects accomplishments to report on for 2009. For a complete list of council projects, visit our website at [www.uprcd.org](http://www.uprcd.org).



*Garry Lee, NRCS State Conservationist, left, and Don Howlett, right, of the Hiawatha National Forest, present Bob Larson, Chairman of the U.P. RC & D Council with a plaque in recognition of receiving the Two Chiefs' Partnership Award.*

### BURN-UP Project Receives Two Chiefs' Award

The UP RC&D Council's BURN-UP (**B**iomass **U**tilization and **R**estoration **N**etwork for the **U**pper **P**eninsula) Project whose purpose is to stimulate the development of a sustainable woody biomass industry in Michigan's Upper Peninsula has received the Two Chiefs' Award from the USDA Forest Service and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Two Chiefs' Partnership Awards recognize outstanding partnerships in forest conservation work among Conservation Districts, State Foresters, the Forest Service, and NRCS. Garry Lee, NRCS State Conservationist, and Don Howlett, Partnership Coordinator for the Hiawatha National Forest, presented plaques to the eighteen partners in Project BURN-UP in April. Representatives from many of these partner organizations are serving on a steering committee which provides expertise and technical support for the project. Some of these partners have been assisting the Michigan DNR Forest Management Advisory

Committee to create guidelines for sustainable forest management for harvesting woody biomass. The overall purpose of the BURN-UP Project is to stimulate the development of a sustainable woody biomass industry in Michigan's Upper Peninsula via a dual approach. One approach is by promoting increased use of wood as a fuel for a wide variety of applications because of its many economic and environmental advantages over non-renewable fossil fuels. The other approach is by providing information about the environmental risks of excessive or poorly located biomass harvesting. Phase I of Project BURN-UP was completed in 2009 and Phase II will be complete in early 2010. Some of the project accomplishments include:

- Educating school districts, conservation districts, and others about the benefits of utilizing woody biomass
- Funding 10 engineering pre-feasibility studies at Upper Peninsula educational institutions
- Providing a second, more-detailed engineering study to the St. Ignace School District
- Identifying clusters of buildings/users that have an interest in a district woody biomass heating facility
- Sponsoring 4 demonstrations of biomass harvesting equipment and techniques
- Creating an online woody biomass information website [www.upwoodybiomass.org](http://www.upwoodybiomass.org)

We realize that financial concerns are one of the biggest barriers preventing schools and other institutions from seriously considering the conversion of their heating systems to woody biomass systems. We are always on the lookout for more grant funding opportunities, especially grants that will pay for the implementation and installation of systems that utilize renewable fuels like woody biomass.

**Visit the BURN-UP Project Website: [www.upwoodybiomass.org](http://www.upwoodybiomass.org)**

## Project Highlights—Completed Projects

### *Scrap Tire Cleanup in Menominee County*

A pile of over 4,142 scrap tires in Menominee County was removed, thanks to Holly Wendrick, Groundwater Technician with the Delta Conservation District. The Upper Peninsula RC&D Council assisted the District with the preparation of a grant proposal that was accepted by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The amount of the grant was \$11, 236. U.P. Environmental Services of Bark River hauled the tires down to CM Rubber Technologies in Coleman, Michigan. The total weight of the scrap tires removed was 41.42 tons! In addition, 220 rims were removed and recycled.



### *Central U P Volunteer Stream Monitoring Project*

Over thirty volunteers monitored five watersheds located in the counties of Alger, Marquette, Luce, Baraga and Mackinac. The project far exceeded the goals for the number of volunteers to be trained and the number of sites and watersheds monitored, expanding from the original two watershed (Dead River in Marquette Co. and Anna River in Alger Co.) to five watersheds and from six to over twenty sites monitored during the grant period. Volunteer recruitment was most successful for watersheds where the desire to monitor is stakeholder driven, which happened to be some of the most remote watersheds in the UP. In general, most sites have rated good to excellent.

### *Les Cheneaux Watershed Implementation Project*

In early 2007, the Chippewa/East Mackinac Conservation District began work on the Les Cheneaux Watershed Implementation Project. The Les Cheneaux watershed is located in the northwest corner of Lake Huron and consists of a 36-island archipelago characterized by an intricate complex of channels, shallow bays, and rock-studded peninsulas. The quality of life and the economy of the entire region are dependent on a healthy watershed. The Les Cheneaux Watershed Council and the Chippewa East Mackinac Conservation have joined forces through the Les Cheneaux Watershed Project to restore threatened water quality, create awareness of how to protect it, and put in motion a plan to guarantee the nature-based community livelihood.

#### **Les Cheneaux Watershed Project—Summary of Accomplishments**

Three road and stream crossings improved ~ 200' of streambank stabilized ~ Three hazardous waste collection events ~ 3,800' of shoreline permanently protected ~ 1,300' of creek permanently protected ~ Assisted in Master Plan and Ordinance Update ~ Six public workshops ~ Surveys ~ Web site and resource library

#### **Reductions**

179 tons sediment reduced annually ~ 176 lbs phosphorus reduced annually ~ 352 lbs nitrogen reduced annually ~ 25,000 pounds of hazardous waste collected



*Road crossing in Cedarville—before and after remediation.*

**Visit the Les Cheneaux Watershed Website: [www.lescheneauxwatershed.org](http://www.lescheneauxwatershed.org)**

## Project Highlights—Completed Projects



### *KBIC Aquaculture Ponds*

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) completed two walleye rearing ponds. The ponds are drainable and the water source is an upstream spring. Production is expected to be approximately 50,000 fingerlings annually. Total cost of the project was \$340,000, with \$113,288 from the Natural Resources Conservation Service; \$50,000 from Rural Development; \$50,000 from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; and \$115,000 from tribal funds. The Ottawa Sportsmen were also a partner in the project.

### *Inland Stamp Sands Remediation—Central Mine Site*

The goal of the Inland Stamp Sands Remediation Project is to stabilize several historic eroding stamp sand sites in the Copper Country. The Central site is located in the Eagle River watershed and was contributing sediment and high levels of copper to the nearby stream. Funding for the remediation was provided by the EPA and passed through the Michigan DEQ to the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District which contracted with NRCS for design, engineering and construction oversight. Photo at right was taken prior to remediation.



## Highlights—Projects Still in Progress



### *Gladstone Nature Preserve/Outdoor Classroom*

This 52 acre natural wetland area is uniquely located within the city limits of Gladstone. The wetland area consists of 4 separate ponds, including several water springs, and approximately a mile long small creek that drains into Little Bay de Noc. The City of Gladstone has received grant funding in the amount of \$25,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for control of invasive species and restoration of native species at the preserve. They have been using some of the funds to mechanically control glossy buckthorn which is a real problem at the site. This is a delicate wetland area that must be protected for future water quality and can serve as excellent educational opportunity for residents and students.

### *Chassell Flood Protection*

Sediment is totally blocking the 4' x 5' box culvert where Hamar Creek used to flow under US-41. Not only does this pose a flood danger, it has severely impacted the native brook trout population in Hamar Creek. Some of the partners in the project include MDOT, MDNR, Houghton County, Chassell Township, Superior National Bank, UP Engineers & Architects (in-kind engineering services), and NRCS. They continue to seek funding for remediation.

### *Superior Shores Trail Project*

Partners are working to develop a safe pathway from Brimley State Park to Point Iroquois Lighthouse. The nine mile pathway will provide a safe non-motorized pathway for all season traffic to bring people back to the wilderness and will promote health, fitness, and outdoor activities. The group is receiving assistance from the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RCTA) Program—the community assistance arm of the National Park Service (NPS). RCTA will be hiring an NPS student intern for a full-time summer position who will compile resource information and maps, and help with a public engagement process to determine community support goals and priorities for the trail.



## More Highlights—Projects Still in Progress

### *Operation Windbreak*

The UP RC&D Council is working with the Chippewa East Mackinac Conservation District (CEMCD) which conducted a pilot project in the spring of 2008. With the help of volunteers, 1500 trees were planted along nine miles of high risk areas on the right-of-ways of both I-75 and M-129. They planted two rows of white spruce which adapted well to the heavy clay soils and local climate. Over the winter, more priority planting areas were identified. In spring 2009 another 1800 trees were planted along I-75 and M-28. Survival rates for the trees planted in 2008 were excellent, with only about 100 trees having to be replaced. They also planted 300 trees at the airport.



### *Garden Village/Township Flood Control Project*

This project is a joint effort of both the Village and Township of Garden, Delta County and Road Commission, the Delta Conservation District, MDOT, NRCS and adjacent landowners. The project addresses a long term problem of spring flooding that has caused a great deal of property damage to homes and roads within the village. Partners are hoping to secure engineering assistance from NRCS in the near future.



### *Hamilton Lake Nature Area*

This county-owned 52 acre unique natural area is located approximately one mile from the Village of Newberry. The area is home to natural, undisturbed ecosystems such as Hamilton Lake, wetlands, open meadows and four different forest stands all within less than a half square mile area. A trail system has already been developed with educational signage. Local organizers are working to install a paved parking lot and handicap accessible bathroom, a wood handicap access ramp from the parking lot to the water's edge, a wood stairway and canoe launch, handicap accessible observation, fishing and picnic decks, and more erosion control practices. Donated wood for the projects has already been secured.

### *Tahquamenon Area Civic Center*

The Tahquamenon Area Civic Center project was identified as a top priority for improving the community and quality of life in the Newberry area over 15 years ago. In 2009, two grant proposals were submitted: a Community Resource Grant for the project director position, and a Kresge Foundation grant for green building design. Although both grants were denied, a project director was hired, and a preliminary design was completed by UP Engineers & Architects. Recently, a brownfield site in the Village of Newberry is being discussed. The Village has developed a Brownfield Redevelopment Site Ad Hoc Committee that is meeting twice monthly. The Tahquamenon Area Recreational Authority has reviewed potential costs, and may apply for a \$250,000 Pepsi Refresh grant in the near future.

### *Munising Bay Watershed I & E Project*

Alger Conservation District's Munising Bay Watershed Restoration Project, is funded by a \$325,000 three-year grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Clean Michigan Initiative. The project deliverables are to reduce sediment at four priority road stream crossings, rehabilitate 300 feet of stream habitat, complete a road/stream crossing inventory of Alger Co. roads and a detailed implementation strategy for I&E and monitoring, and update the watershed management plan for Munising Bay. Remediating the critically-eroding Kolbus Racetrack was a top priority which has been completed. Three construction projects will be completed in 2010.



Visit our website: [www.uprcd.org](http://www.uprcd.org)

### *Vision*

*The Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation & Development Council will promote the conservation of the natural resources of the Upper Peninsula for the benefit of its current and future residents. The Council will strive for a balance between the management of natural resources to protect the environment, and the implementation of economic development activities in order to sustain economy for the region. We will identify resource conservation and land use issues, and work with local communities to address these concerns.*

### ***Council Capacity Building Activities***

During 2009, the UP RC&D Council has undertaken a number of activities aimed at increasing the capacity of the Council to assist our partners. We are working toward achieving membership in the National Association of RC&D Council's Circle of Diamonds Program. Membership in the Circle of Diamonds requires that a Council take steps to demonstrate that they are complying with the requirements of the RC&D statute and that our volunteer board members are adhering to the legal responsibilities required of all non-profit boards. Several board members have participated in capacity building training offered by the Michigan Association of RC&D Councils and the National Association of RC&D Councils to increase their knowledge of these standards. The UP Council also modified and updated their bylaws during the past year. All RC&D Councils across the country are participating in a Performance Improvement Process and undergoing an assessment to determine if each is in compliance with the criteria that have been established by NRCS and the National Association of RC&D Councils. The UP RC&D Council is in compliance with all those criteria.

### ***Assisting the Michigan Association of RC&D Councils***

The UP RC&D Council is one of eight Resource Conservation & Development Councils in the state of Michigan. Each Council has its own specialty areas, tackling issues such as agriculture, water quality, energy, or forestry, depending on the specific needs of the local communities in its region. The Michigan Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils helps these eight organizations come together to learn from each others' experiences, share ideas, build capacity, and speak for the RC&D program as a whole. UP RC&D Council Chairman, Bob Larson also serves as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Michigan Association. The UP Council has played a significant role in helping increase the effectiveness of the Michigan Association by coordinating the Quarterly Partner Reports of the organization and also co-chairing the development of a new website for the organization which enhanced the outreach and educational capacity of the organization. Check out the new website and view the Quarterly Partner Reports and Project Spotlights of all eight councils in Michigan!

[www.rcdmichigan.org](http://www.rcdmichigan.org)

### ***New Projects for 2010***

The Upper Peninsula RC&D Council was recently awarded a Community Grant for \$150,000 to fund work on their RRIP-IT-UP (Rapid Response Invasive Plant Intervention Team of the Upper Peninsula) Project. Over the next 18 months the project will bring together volunteers and professionals from many of the organizations, and agencies that have expressed a desire to collaborate to identify and control invasive plants in the region. The grant will provide funding for the establishment of Local Rapid Response Teams by Conservation Districts and other partners. A second major component of the project is to provide educational training and networking opportunities for the individuals and organizations across the UP that are tackling the invasive plant problem. Partners working with the UP RC&D Council in the RRIP-IT-UP Project are The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Forest Service, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, the Conservation Districts, Lake Superior State University, the Michigan DNRE, MDOT, the Michigan Natural Features Inventory, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and all five tribes in the Upper Peninsula.

***Other Recently Approved Projects*** ~ Escanaba River Clean-Up ~ Pioneer Park Trail Renovation ~ Iron County Multi-Recreational Facility Expansion ~ Defending the Upper Peninsula of MI, "Know It, Don't Grow It" Invasive Species Mass Media Education Campaign ~ Sault Area Watershed Plan/Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant ~ Falls River Erosion Project

***Mission: To foster partnerships among diverse stakeholders that support a healthy environment and economy for the Upper Peninsula.***

**2009 UP RC&D Council Members**

Robert Larson—Chairman  
 Ernie Hoholik—Vice Chairman  
 Dave Andersen—Secretary/Treasurer  
 Bob Black-Iron County  
 Ken Marshall-Keweenaw Bay Indian  
 Community  
 Howard Haulotte-Delta CD  
 Dick Timmer-Chippewa County  
 Jill Maki-Luce County  
 Aaron Hopper-Chippewa County

**Eastern RC&D Council**

Calvin McFee-Mackinac Co. Commission  
 Pat Carr-Chippewa East Mackinac CD  
 Dick Timmer-Chippewa Co. Commission  
 Jill Maki-Luce Co. Commission  
 Dave Mitchell-Luce West Mackinac CD  
 Nathan Fazer-EUPRPDC

**Central RC&D Council**

Ernie Hoholik-Schoolcraft Co. Commission  
 Ernie Karvelis-Schoolcraft CD  
 Dave Schultz-Delta Co. Commission  
 Benny Herioux-Delta CD  
 Jerry Doucette-Alger Co. Commission  
 Hampton Waring-Alger CD  
 Gerald Corkin-Marquette Co. Commission  
 Renee Leow-Marquette CD  
 Frank Smith-Dickinson Co. Commission  
 Chuck Harris-Dickinson CD  
 Gary Eichhorn-Menominee Co Commission  
 Jason Thoune-Menominee CD

**Western RC&D Council**

Bill Rolof-Baraga Co. Commission  
 Bob Larson-Baraga CD  
 Bob Black-Iron Co. Commission  
 Jim Stewart-Iron CD  
 Dennis Jacobsen-Gogebic Co. Commission  
 Dave Harmon-Gogebic CD  
 John Pelkola-Ontonagon Co. Commission  
 Rick Miskovich-Ontonagon CD  
 Anton Pintar-Houghton Co. Commission  
 Mark Klemp-Houghton Keweenaw CD  
 Carol Rose Fouts-Keweenaw Co. Commiss.  
 Nels Anderson-WUPPDR

**Other Partners**

Dean Reid-Mackinac Co. Planning Comm.  
 Dave Andersen-MSUE, Schoolcraft Co.  
 Ken Marshall-Keweenaw Bay Indian  
 Community  
 Don Howlett-Hiawatha National Forest  
 Barbara VanAlstine & Darla Lenz-Ottawa  
 National Forest  
 Frank Wardynski-MSUE, Ontonagon Co.

**UP RC&D Council Organizational Structure**

The Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development (UP RC&D) Council is comprised of representatives of the fifteen county commissions and thirteen conservation districts located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. With such a large geographic area to serve, the UP RC&D Council is organized into three regional councils which follow the boundaries of the three UP Planning and Development regions. The Eastern Regional Council serves Mackinac, Chippewa and Luce counties and the Chippewa/East Mackinac and Luce/West Mackinac Conservation Districts. The Central Regional Council serves 6 counties: Alger, Schoolcraft, Delta, Marquette, Dickinson and Menominee, and the corresponding five conservation districts. The Western Regional Council serves the 6 western counties of Iron, Baraga, Gogebic, Ontonagon, Houghton, and Keweenaw and also five conservation districts. Each county and each conservation district appoint one of their board members to represent them on these regional councils which meet quarterly. The three regional planning and development regions also have an appointee on each regional council. Project applications are brought by partners to the regional council meetings, and upon receiving approval they are then forwarded to the full UP Council. Each regional council nominates three members to represent them on the full UP Council which meets bi-monthly and oversees the administration and operation of the organization, as well as the final decision on which projects to accept for implementation. This organizational scheme is unique among RC&D Councils nationwide, but has been working quite well since the UP RC&D Council was authorized in 1973.

**Council Budget and Finances**

Support for the work of the UP RC&D Council in 2009 came from dues paid by each of the fifteen counties in the Upper Peninsula, interest, a cooperative agreement grant with NRCS, and grants. These grants funded specific projects—primarily two grants from the USFS which funded work on the BURN-UP Project Phases I & II. Council funds provided a half-time executive assistant position for council and grant administration, and covered office expenses, and travel and training expenses for staff and volunteer board members. A large proportion of the budget was devoted to accomplishing project deliverables.

**UP RC&D Council Profit & Loss  
January Through December 2009**

<b>INCOME</b>	
County Dues	4,200
NRCS Support	7,000
Grants	56,830
Interest	1,950
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$69,980</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Council Administration	21,785
Meetings, Travel & Training	4,354
Office, Insurance, Dues	2,850
Project Accomplishments	37,354
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$66,343</b>