



THE WESTERLY VIEW

NEWS & HAPPENINGS FROM THE WESTERN REGION

WESTERN UPPER PENINSULA PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGION

Volume 6, Issue 1

Fall 2012

WUPPDR STAFF

KIM STOKER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LORI HAUSWIRTH
AICP
ASSOCIATE PLANNER

MEG PACHMAYER
PLANNER

COURTNEY ARCHAMBEAU
HOUSING AGENT

JERALD WUORENMAA
ASSISTANT PLANNER

STEVE ROUSER
GIS TECHNICIAN

MARY TADDEUCCI
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

SUE HARTER
FINANCIAL SECRETARY

AMY SPAHN
PROGRAM SPECIALIST

ASHLEY CURTIS
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

MARY ELLEN HYTTINEN
HOUSING SPECIALIST

WUPPDR
393 E. LAKESHORE DR.
HOUGHTON, MI 49931

906.482.7205

U.P. BioFuel Workshop Update

Approximately 100 landowners from Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, and Ontonagon Counties attended the UP BioFuel Workshop on June 19 in the Memorial Union Building on the Michigan Technological University (Michigan Tech) campus.

The workshop, organized by the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR), focused on the opportunities for area landowners to turn their idle land into income-producing

biofuel cropland based on research provided by Robert Froese, Michigan Tech School of Forestry. In addition, Roger Woods from the Michigan Tech School of Business and Economics educated landowners on the benefits of forming a cooperative in the five-county focus area. Zach Halkola from Traxys Power was also on hand to present the successes of the L'Anse Warden Electric Company and White Pine Electric Power.

Sponsors of the workshop included the Michigan Energy Office of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, WUPPDR, Michigan Tech, White Pine Electric Power, L'Anse Warden Electric Company, Traxys, U.P. Power Company, MTEC SmartZone, and funding provided through the Community Adjustment and Investment Program.

To further encourage landowner participation, WUPPDR hired Spencer Townsend, forestry technician, to conduct land consultations for interested landowners. Throughout the summer, Townsend generated assessments to help develop a cost estimate to clear, plant, and maintain the land for biofuel crops. Following the assessments, Townsend created a personalized report for each landowner. In total, he has completed approximately 30 assessments.

Landowners who were unable to attend the workshop can watch the presentations online at www.upbiofuel.com. WUPPDR, along with the help of Woods, also hosted road shows in Gogebic, Iron, and Ontonagon Counties for landowners who did not travel to Houghton for the workshop. USDA Rural Development Director, Jim Turner, was present at the county road show in Ontonagon to witness landowner commitment and discuss project potential.

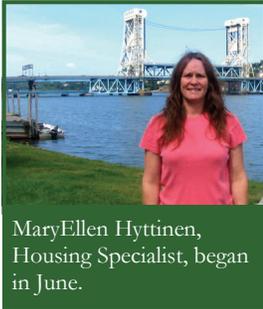


100 landowners attended the UP Bio-Fuel Workshop at Michigan Tech.

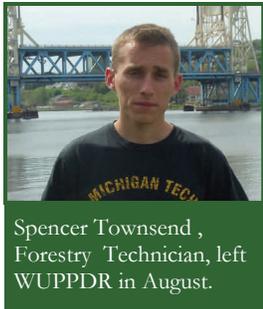
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Staff Comings and Goings



MaryEllen Hyttinen, Housing Specialist, began in June.



Spencer Townsend, Forestry Technician, left WUPPDR in August.



Meg Pachmayer, Planner, & Pasi Lautala welcomed Olavi Frank into their family on July 10.

MaryEllen Hyttinen, Housing Specialist, joined WUPPDR in June 2012. MaryEllen is a born and raised Yooper, originally from Liming. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, boating, and camping. She has three children and nine grandchildren. MaryEllen is currently assisting with all MSHDA voucher related mailings, copying, filing, and data entry in the Elite Computer System. She can be contacted at (906) 482-6402, ext. 3, or by email at mhyttinen@wuppdr.org.

Spencer Townsend, Forestry Technician, left the WUPPDR staff in late August to complete his final semester at Michigan Technological University. He began working at WUPPDR in May to assist with the U.P. BioFuel Workshop and to conduct free land consultations with interested landowners in Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, and Ontonagon Counties. Spencer also assisted on the Pellet Team by seeking sample business plans. Thank you, Spencer, for your work on

the U.P. BioFuel project this summer and best of luck in your final semester!

WUPPDR staff would like to welcome **Olavi Frank Lautala**. Olavi is the son of WUPPDR Planner Meg Pachmayer and husband, Pasi Lautala. He was born on July 10 at 5:51 p.m., weighing 7 pounds, 15.5 ounces. Olavi was 19.25 inches long but on his last visit measured in at 23 inches! Congratulations Meg and Pasi on the new addition to your family!

Baraga County Strategic Plan

In today's difficult rural economy, communities can no longer depend on the stability of long-term major employers. Baraga County has suffered from high unemployment for a quite some time, but the 2009 closure of Terex Handlers, with its 90 employees, worsened the situation. Beginning with the recent economic recession and continuing into the present, the County's unemployment rate has wavered between the highest and second-highest in Michigan.

When EDA funding became available earlier this year to address such issues, WUPPDR recognized and seized the opportunity to address Baraga County's pre-

dicament. It was determined that a strategic plan to establish direction and leadership in the county might be the answer to turn its situation around. Project funds of \$50,000 (including a 30 percent in-kind local match) were awarded to Baraga County and WUPPDR in August of this year.

The strategic planning process will be a grassroots effort relying heavily on public participation in forums, focus groups, and surveys. The goal is to come up with solid, implemental strategies to better utilize existing assets and develop new ones. Is there an opportunity to better capitalize on tourism? Would local units of govern-

ment and business organizations benefit from improved communication and collaboration? These are questions the planning process is hoping to answer.

Not all is bleak. A lot is happening in Baraga County right now—discussion of the return of mining, a renewed focus on entrepreneurship, and efforts by the Chamber of Commerce to get residents excited about what their county has to offer. WUPPDR hopes to supplement these processes by forming an all-encompassing guiding document to help each initiative live up to its full potential.

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Lift Bridge Plan Coming to Fruition

Imagine living in the upper Keweenaw Peninsula and suddenly being cut off from everything south of the Portage Lake Lift Bridge. Several years ago, WUPPDR received MDOT funding to plan for how to respond to a failure of the Bridge—that is, an inability to raise it up or down.

The beginning of the planning process was focused on the immediate aftermath of a bridge outage, including such elements as chains of command for emergency respond-

ers. The third and final phase of planning, which is now coming to an end, will lead to a living document which broadens that focus to a long-term outage. The plan will document, for example, how many days' worth of groceries are available to residents north of the bridge and how schools will feed and supervise students whose parents are stuck south of the bridge.

A committee of emergency responders and other stakeholders has been meeting

monthly during the development of this plan and will continue to meet after its completion. WUPPDR serves on this committee, taking minutes and documenting meetings, and will continue to do so. All of those involved hope that plans for a future bridge failure will never need to be used, but Houghton County and surrounding areas will be prepared if such an event does occur.

Brockway Mountain Drive Project Update

The Brockway Mountain Drive Enhancement project will soon be coming to a close on the Copper Country Trail National Scenic Byway.

Funding for the Brockway Mountain Drive project was awarded in February 2010 by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for acquisition of the Copper Harbor Overlook, overlook and turn out improvements, rock wall

restoration, and interpretive signage. Because of the project's unique nature, the Copper Country Trail National Byway Committee (Committee), MDOT, and the FHWA worked together to develop the bidding process. In November 2011, the bid was awarded to Bacco Construction of Iron Mountain for the overlook and restoration portion of the project. Work began on Brockway Mountain Drive in

May 2012 and is expected to be done by September 2012.

In June, the Committee also solicited bids for interpretive signage for Brockway Mountain. The signage project has been awarded to Conservation By Design of Silver City, New Mexico. The interpretive signage project will begin in August 2012 and will be complete with the installation of the signs by June 2013.

WUPPDR Commission Meeting Schedule

September	17	2012	Full Commission (Annual Meeting-Baraga County)
October	15	2012	Executive Committee
December	17	2012	Full Commission
January	21	2013	Full Commission
February	18	2013	Executive Committee
March	18	2013	Full Commission
May	20	2013	Executive Committee
June	17	2013	Full Commission
August	19	2013	Executive Committee
September	16	2013	Full Commission (Annual Meeting-Tentative-Gogebic County)

ALL MEETINGS ARE HELD AT TWILLY'S SPORTS BAR & GRILL IN BRUCE CROSSING, MI, EXCEPT THE SEPTEMBER ANNUAL MEETING.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND FULL COMMISSION MEET AT 5:00 PM (EST).

MINUTES & RECORDS ARE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION AT THE WUPPDR OFFICE.



WUPPDR
PO BOX 365
HOUGHTON, MI 49931
906.482.7205
info@wuppdr.org

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Baraga County to Host WUPPDR Annual Meeting - September 17



American Legion in Baraga, located at 505 S. Superior Avenue

Baraga County will host WUPPDR's 44th Annual Meeting on Monday, September 17, 2012 at the American Legion at 505 S. Superior Avenue in Baraga. We hope you will be able to join us. Please see the schedule of events for a list of Annual Meeting activities. This year's keynote speaker is Simon Nish, Director of Community & External Relations for Rio Tinto. Nish will talk about the Rio Tinto Eagle Project in the Marquette area.

We look forward to seeing you and your spouse/guest there. Please RSVP to Mary at mtaddeucci@wuppdr.org or 906.482.7205, ext. 310, by September 10,

2012 if you are interested in attending. We hope to see you there!

Directions to American Legion: From US41 North, turn right onto M-38 and take the second left onto Superior Avenue. The American Legion will be on the left.

Schedule of Events

- Business Meeting:** 5:00 PM EST
(4:00 CST)
- Social Hour:** 5:00-6:00 PM EST
(4:00-5:00 CST)
- Buffet Dinner:** 6:00 PM EST
(5:00 CST)

Program to Follow Dinner :

- Welcome and Introduction of Guests
Introduction of WUPPDR Officers
WUPPDR Annual Report
Keynote Speaker: Simon Nish
(Director of Community Relations, Rio Tinto)
Oreste Chiantello Award Presentation

Dinner: \$20/person
WUPPDR Commissioners receive a complimentary dinner

You still have time to RSVP!
Call the office at 906.482.7205, ext. 310
by September 10, 2012