Master Planning Underway

What is our community’s future? What types of development should we seek, and to what areas should we direct it? What are we trying to accomplish with these decisions? These are questions community leaders might ask themselves in preparing a new master plan. A master plan is a process and document that guides and promotes orderly development in a county, city, village, or township. Goals and objectives are set to be implemented through tangible action items within the scope of community resources and funding.

In November, WUPPDR contracted with the City of Iron River to develop the City’s first plan in several decades. Iron River has significant historic and economic assets but also faces problems such as blight that can benefit from a new outlook. We expect planning in the City to be an interesting and rewarding experience. Iron River’s plan is expected to be completed in spring 2015. This time will ensure that the plan accounts thoroughly for public input and direct involvement of the planning commission and other stakeholders.

The best plans are made by the community – not for it. That does not mean that communities need to research and write the plans themselves! WUPPDR has the skilled staff and resources needed to create and analyze surveys, guide conversations with the community, write the body of the plan, create maps and figures, and, most importantly, ensure that all legal requirements are met, making the plan the sound document it is intended to be.

WUPPDR seeks and welcomes all requests for assistance with master planning. To discuss specific needs and/or request a quote, please contact Kim Stoker at kstoker@wuppdr.org or (906) 482-7205, ext. 316.
WUPPDR’s 45th Annual Meeting: Koskinen Honored

WUPPDR held its 45th Annual Meeting in Gogebic County at Taccinelli’s Restaurant in Ironwood on September 30, 2013. Carl Lind, Iron County Board Chairman and WUPPDR Commission Chair, welcomed approximately 50 attendees to the meeting. WUPPDR Executive Director, Kim Stoker, introduced attending political representatives and guests, including Amy Bergland (Senator Levin), Thom Hadfield (U.S. Congressman Dan Benishek), Dr. Kirk Schott (Senator Casperson), J.R. Richardson (Chairman, Natural Resources Commission), and Don Helsel (President, Michigan Trails and Recreation Alliance of the Keweenaw Eco-Regional Prosperity Initiative). Throughout the past year, the State’s Recreation Advisory Council (via video) received a grant from the Community Adjustment and Reinvestment Program (CAIP) to develop a biofuel cooperative in Gogebic and Ontonagon Counties. This past year, WUPPDR contracted with Roger Woods, Senior Lecturer in Operations Management at Michigan Technological University School of Business & Economics, to develop a U.P. Biofuels Cooperative Strategy. This strategy outlined the best methods and practices for establishing and operating a biofuel cooperative and described how it could operate financially.

Broker Mountain Drive Interpretive Panels Installed

Over the past several years, the Copper Country Trail National Byway (CCTBN) has led a revitalization effort of Broker Mountain Drive in Keweenaw County. With funding from the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, the Copper Harbor Overlook was acquired, the rock walls were preserved, scenic turnouts were surfaced, and interpretive signage was developed and fabricated. The final phase of the project, installation of the interpretive panels, occurred this past fall. Six panels were installed that describe and illustrate the history, present conditions, and possible future of wolf hunting in Michigan. The second keynote speaker was Don Helsel. He described what the MI-TRALE was, what they advocate for, and present and future projects they are involved in concerning trails in the Western U.P.

Chip Chiantello Award Recipient

Mike Koskinen, recipient of the 2013 Oreste “Chip” Chiantello Public Service Award, is a lifelong resident of Baraga County. Koskinen and his wife Blanche have three children who all reside in Baraga County. Additionally, they have six grandchildren.

Koskinen first ran for public office in 1974 and served on the Baraga County Board of Commissioners for 10 years. After a respire from 1984 until 1990, he was elected again and has served ever since. Presently, he is Chairman of the Board. In addition to his Board of Commissioners duties, Koskinen also serves on the Western U.P. Health Department Board, Copper Country Mental Health Board, and WUPPDR commission, where he is currently 1st Vice-Chair. He has served on all of these boards since 1993.

Throughout his years of service, Koskinen has demonstrated dedication and leadership not only to Baraga County, but to the entire Western U.P. Both WUPPDR and Michigan Works! are pleased to present the 2013 Oreste “Chip” Chiantello Public Service Award to such a deserving individual. Congratulations and thank you for your years of service, Mike!