

2A. IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES

Among the natural resource issues categorized below, how would you rate the impact each of these issues will have on Houghton and Keweenaw counties in the near future? Please place an "X" in the appropriate block next to each concern listed.

NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion
WATER QUALITY CONCERNS				
Soil Erosion with resulting sedimentation of lakes and streams 31/35	18 ***** *****	13 ***** ***	2 **	2 **
Protection of Lake Superior water quality 34/35	30 ***** ***** *****	4 ****		1 *
LAND USE CONCERNS				
Impact of residential building along the Lake Superior shoreline 34/35	20 ***** *****	14 ***** *****	1 *	
The breakup of large blocks of forested land-fragmentation 31/35	23 ***** ***** ***	8 *****	2 **	2 **
Maintaining public access to lakes and streams 34/35	20 ***** *****	14 ***** ****	1 *	
FOREST MANAGEMENT & WILDLIFE CONCERNS				
Timber harvesting methods 30/35	20 ***** *****	10 *****	1 *	4 ****
Gradual decline of young forests (such as aspen) as a component of our forest landscape 19/35	8 *****	11 ***** *	7 *****	9 *****
The impact of white tailed deer population on forest regeneration & plant diversity 27/35	6 *****	21 ***** ***** *	3 ***	5 *****
The spread of non-native (exotic) plant and animal species 27/35	17 ***** *****	10 *****	2 **	4 ****
The loss of grassland areas due to decreasing agriculture and the resulting loss of bird species diversity 25/35	12 ***** **	13 ***** ***	6 *****	4 ****

1. DEFINING THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

What do you believe is the purpose of the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District?

18 or 51% response to this question

17 or 49% no response

Responses Included:

- 38% responders said that our purpose was to promote, educate and advocate for sound conservation practices in our district.
- 16% responders said our purpose is to provide Natural resource information and technical assistance to landowners.

Other responses included the following:

- Help people manage their land
- Improve our natural resources
- Promote Best Management Practices in logging and development
- Maintain and protect our natural resources
- Provide an agenda and leadership to address natural resource issues in our district
- It's not clear but I would say protection of land and water resources
- Promote minimal impact development
- Protect our natural resources
- Provide trees at reasonable prices

2B. IDENTIFYING THE ISSUES

Please feel free to elaborate on you concerns regarding the above natural resource issues (in chart).

20 or 57% response to this question

15 or 43% no response

There were no predominant responses to this question but rather a wide variety

Responses Included:

- 10% responders said that the availability of quality water sources such as the great lakes and worldwide is the most important issue facing the world today
- Better regulation of deer populations
- Preserve native animal and plant species
- Increase agricultural production
- It's difficult to get people involved and committed to working on natural resource issues long term
- Design shoreline development to be more aesthetically pleasing through color and building material choices
- Fragmentation of large blocks of land adversely impacts public access for recreation
- More education of the issues is needed
- Relative turn over in ownership of small parcels/tracts among private fee holders
- Difficulty in making contact with new landowners and bringing them into the natural resource information network
- Difficulty in accepting change and different attitudes by local landowners of new urban oriented landowners
- The continuous shift in professional resources personnel versus the need for a stable interface with landowners
- Federal and state natural resource programs which are encumbered with too much minute detail which scares off landowners

3. What other natural resource issues do you think need to be addressed in Houghton Keweenaw counties?

29 or 83% response

6 or 17% no response

Responses Included:

- 25% of responders stated that maintaining public access to land in Houghton and Keweenaw counties continues to be a natural resource issue that needs to be addressed
 - Maintenance of public access for hunting, fishing, hiking and camping
 - The counties need assistance in seeking funding to purchase lands for public access
- 17% of responders stated that land use planning is another natural resource issue that needs to be addressed
- Although our survey addressed the issue in 2A. - 17% of responders stated that land fragmentation was another issue needing to be addressed
- 10% of responders were concerned about the need for better waste management i.e. disposal of hazardous waste, disposal of junk items, better recycling efforts/opportunities, and better enforcement of no dumping laws
- 10% of responders state that timber harvesting methods are an issue.
 - Only selective cutting of timber should be practiced
 - A forum is needed on the issue of clear cutting
 - Too much haphazard clear cutting

Other responses include:

- Protection of wetlands
- Water table levels/water quality
- Control of pestilence without the use of harsh chemicals i.e. controlled burns
- Education of methods of controlling insects/pests in our area
- Control development that is done at the expense of historical resources and landmarks
- The public and natural resource agencies need to take a stand against International Paper's sale of fragmented parcels of land throughout the Keweenaw
- Invasive plant problems
- Protection of viewscapes – no development along Lake Superior shoreline
- Conversion of abandoned farm fields to grazing lands for sheep and cattle farmers

4. What type of future plans are you presently making as a citizen/landowner in response to the natural resource issues identified in question #2 and #3 above?

27 or 77% response

8 or 23% no response

Responses included:

- 15% of responders stated that they were involved on a land use planning or township planning committee
- 20% stated they were implementing conservation practices on their own properties
 - Implementing a land stewardship plan
 - Reforestation efforts and improving quality of forest growth
 - Clear cutting for aspen regeneration
 - Designed a new home with shoreline erosion on waterfront in mind – did not seed or fertilize a lawn along shoreline
 - Eradicating invasive species on property
 - Making wildlife plantings on property

Other responses include:

- People purchased more land around them to protect from development

- Exploring conservation easement
- Monitoring ground water quality
- Educating myself on the issues
- Allowing public access to my land
- Have not made any plans

5. If you are a representative of a natural resource organization in the area, how is your organization responding to these natural resource issues?

16 or 46% response

12 or 34% no response

7 or 20% N/A not applicable to them

Basically, half of our responders represented various organizations throughout our District. The organizations identified were:

Copper Country Trout Unlimited - several responses from members

Responses included:

- Conducting projects that directly effect local streams and rivers
- Stream habitat restoration
- Partnering with other agencies on projects

Western U.P. Center for Science, Mathematics & Environmental Education, MTU – Director, Joan Schumaker-Chadde

- Student education – classroom presentations, field trips
- Teacher workshops – forestry, water waste management, land use, watersheds, stream monitoring

Keweenaw Land Trust – several members responded

Response included:

- Encouraging conservation easements
- Wise land use planning
- Selective timber harvesting
- Developing land use planning documents and zoning ordinances

Torch Lake Project Advisory Committee – one member responded

- The PAC is cleaning up the environment for future utilization

Calumet Township Planning Committee Member – one member responded

- That the township is very concerned about the natural resource issues, but collectively feels inadequately prepared in terms of time and resources for the tasks at hand

Natural Resource Conservation Service – several staff responded

- They are providing sound technical advice and working in cooperation with the local conservation districts
- The conservation district's support of the Torch Lake Project has been very helpful

MI Audubon Society

Gratiot Lake Conservancy – Bonnie Hay

- Public education and outreach utilizing their own on-site educational center

MSU Extension Advisory Council – Ralph Duffek, MSUE Director

- Need for more educational programs around the identified issues
- Land use planning directly connected to assessment of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water systems, sanitation, electrical systems, etc.

6. How effective do you think the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District is in addressing natural resource issues in Houghton Keweenaw counties?

29 or 83% response

6 or 17% no response

Responses included:

- 31% of responders said “I don’t know what you are doing…”
- 10% stated that they would give us a good rating considering the limited resources/funding the District has

Other responses include:

- Keep up the good work
- Impressed with what I have heard
- Good
- Work on watersheds is good
- Good Newsletter
- Tree sale has been very beneficial to landowners
- Most effective through direct landowner contacts that Sweeting, Petersen, Bubolz provide
- Most people don’t know who you are
- HKCD is invisible or thought to be a part of NRCS
- Want to know more
- Need to improve your image
- Don’t know, but glad you’re working on these natural resource issues
- Improving
- Moderately effective
- Pretty lame

7. In what ways do you think the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District could become a more effective and active participant in addressing natural resource issues in our area?

29 or 83% response

6 or 17% no response

Responses included:

- 31% of responders specifically stated that the District needs to become more visible, it needs more publicity
- 17% responders stated the District should continue to publish its newsletter and use it as an avenue for informing and educating the public
- 10% stated the District should provide information/education on natural resource issues via various media
- 10% also stated the District need to become more vocal on the issues

Other responses include:

- Continue seeking watershed funding
- Promote public access
- Host a non-politicized forum – offer different ideas to be expressed
- Need more field staff to assist landownersj
- Need more funding
- Speak to and be a resource to land use planning committees
- Communicate with Sportsmen’s Clubs
- Partner with other agencies, i.e. the Nature Conservancy, Keweenaw Land Trust, Trout Unlimited
- Increase tree sale
- Promote tree buffer zones
- Develop a game plan with goals & objectives
- Assist enforcement agencies on observed Be more proactive in supporting natural resource issuesviolations/abuses
- Address issues such as land use planning, public access, farming and logging access

8. In your viewpoint, what current trends in government regulation/policy at the federal, state, and local levels (permitting policies, game management, funding levels, etc) will have an impact on resource management in the future?

26 or 74% response

9 or 26% no response

This question brought a wide variance in responses. Only one comment was echoed by several responders:

- Declining budgets of state and federal agencies will force communities to rely on local groups/organizations to do the work that needs to be done.

Other responses include:

- Need to have greater protection of natural resources
- Regulations should benefit the animals/wildlife
- More regulation on everything
- Less regulations
- More local control
- Landfill for junk is needed (non-garbage waste)
- DNR has too much power
- More funding directly to landowners
- Great lakes drilling
- WRP has had a positive impact
- More emphasis on watershed protection
- Avoid management extremes such as “no access” or “no logging”
- Regulations slow down the permitting process – not enough help to people going through the permitting process
- Loss of diverse habitat
- Zoning enforcement
- Controlling of exotic species of plants and fish
- Unreasonable DNR and DEQ regulations & permitting processes
- Recycling
- Locally monitored protection

9. In response to these trends in governmental policy/regulation, what activities would you suggest the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District plan for in the future?

25 or 71% response

10 or 29% no response

This question brought the widest variance in responses. The only responses that was echoed by a significant number of responders (10% or more):

- 17% stated that the District should become more visible
- 12% responders stated that the district should engage all levels of local government in effective land use planning

Other responses include:

- The HKCD should whenever possible work with state agencies to insure public access for everyone to lakes and public recreation areas
- Work with other groups/agencies on the issues
- Seek watershed grant funding
- Preserve the quality bio-diversity of the area, i.e. deer management
- Educate the public on lobbying efforts they can make to legislatures
- Seek funding sources for land acquisition
- Provide more technical support to landowners

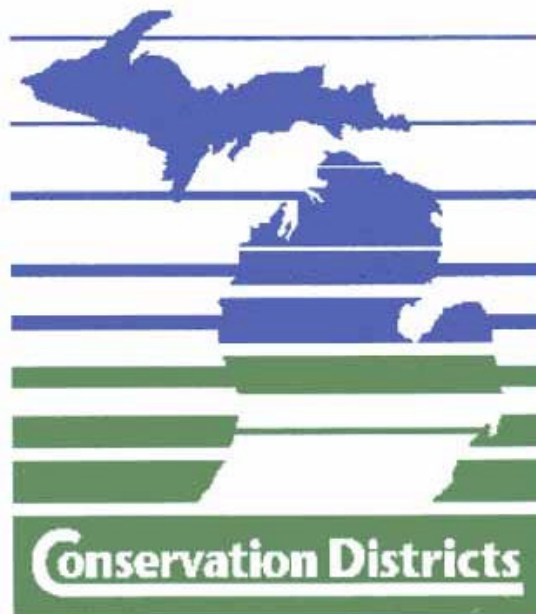
- Resist over-regulation
- inform the public of the issues
- Promote education and facilitate rational discussion of the issues
- Avoid political controversy
- Land improvement
- Developing a set of goals & objectives to work toward
- Promote reforestation of clear cut areas
- Promote and develop programs to aid in keeping deserted agricultural lands free of bush growth
- Educational programs, i.e. city landscaping and tree sale information

HOUGHTON KEWEENAW CONSERVATION DISTRICT
RESOURCE ASSESSMENT
SURVEY RESULTS

A
SUMMARY
OF FINDINGS

September 27, 2001

(The enclosed information is one of several tools to be used by the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District to assess the natural resource concerns of the area and thereby develop a long term strategic plan to respond to local issues the District is best prepared to address.)



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