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U.P. climate change worth learning about

February 13, 2013
The Mining Journal

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There's little doubt that weather patterns surrounding the Upper Peninsula and adjacent Lake Superior are shifting.

These changes can be seen in a shorter winter season, longer summers, less snowfall and rain and the rising temperature and lowering level of Lake Superior.

Regardless of whether these are short-term shifts or are part of a longer, permanent transition is open to debate, but there are climate researchers working to identify these changes and looking ahead to what they could mean to the area in the future.

Included in the effort to map the region's climate and what the impacts will be is one coordinated by the Superior Watershed Partnership, which recently released a study on the subject.

Lake Superior Climate Adaptation, Mitigation and Implementation Plan is the study, and it will be the focus of a community meeting this evening. The meeting is at 6:30 p.m. at Lakeview Arena.

The SWP and city of Marquette plan to introduce the study to the public and obtain input on it at the meeting. It can be found on the partnership website at www.superiorwatersheds.org.

The comprehensive 78-page document was developed with assistance from Climate Solutions University, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, Headwaters Economics, the U.S. Forest Service and Great Lakes Integrated Science Assessments.

Included in areas looked at in the SWP document are changes and impacts to lake Superior, wetlands, forests, infrastructure, human health and services and the economy.

In the forest category, for example, it states how many of the common trees and plants in the U.P. could be stressed by warming temperatures and changing precipitation. This could also have a negative impact on the region's economy because of the huge forestry industry in the U.P.

Other aspects of climate change could have a mixed impact on local economies, particularly the tourism industry. For example, while milder winters and longer, warmer summers would hurt snow-related businesses, business relying on summer tourism could experience significant increases in revenues.

The SWP plan breaks down the various aspects of climate change much further and for those with an interest in the subject, this evening's meeting should provide the perfect opportunity to learn more about it.

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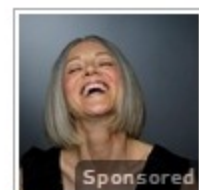
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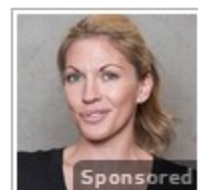
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