

Northern
HORIZONS

SPRING/SUMMER 2005

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



The background of the cover features a close-up, shallow depth-of-field photograph of a green leaf and a stem. A single, large, glistening water droplet hangs from the tip of a thin, vertical stem. The leaf has prominent veins and a slightly serrated edge. The lighting is soft, creating highlights on the water droplet and the edges of the leaves.

The Nature
of Things

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Have a drink, save a tree

What does quenching your thirst have to do with environmental responsibility? If you ask members of the NMU recycling committee, they might rattle off a number of facts. Maybe the fact that it takes 500 years for an aluminum soda can to break down and one million years for a glass bottle to break down. They might mention that recycling that same glass bottle saves enough energy to power a 100-watt light bulb for four hours or that recycling aluminum takes only 5 percent of the energy needed to manufacture it from raw materials. Or perhaps they would simply hand you a cup.

That's what they do for every incoming NMU freshman. Along with a university-issued notebook computer, each incoming student receives—free of charge—a reusable cup that he or she can use in lieu of a disposable, grab-and-go cup at any university dining establishment to purchase hot and cold beverages.

The NMU recycling committee was formed a decade ago and is comprised of NMU faculty, staff, and students who are committed to developing a comprehensive campus recycling program. The reusable cup initiative is just one of many spearheaded by the group. Thanks to the committee's ongoing efforts, NMU has a long-standing mixed paper recycling program in all departments and offices as well as recycling programs for paper, glass, and plastic in the residence halls and university apartments. Departments now recycle everything from copy machine and laser printer toner cartridges to antifreeze and vehicle batteries. The university grounds crew composts grass clippings, leaves, and other materials, and, of course, the university encourages the use of recycled paper and paper products.

These efforts have not only saved the university money, they have lessened the amount of trash going into the Marquette County landfill. For example, during the 2003-2004 academic year, NMU recycled more than 500 tons of paper, cardboard, scrap metal, and toner cartridges, which translated into a savings of \$10,500 in landfill costs.

Northern's sustained conservation efforts date back to 1973, when the university began an energy conservation program. Early projects included installing energy-efficient windows and individual heating controls in residence halls. Current efforts include installing energy-efficient heating and lighting in the Seaborg Science Complex, replacing the steam/condensate lines on campus, and upgrading the Ripley Heating Plant. Combined, current energy-saving efforts have helped the university avoid energy costs of nearly \$200,000 per year. Since the inception of the energy program, the university has saved an estimated \$20 million in energy costs.

NMU is now stepping up its efforts by working to make entire buildings "green." Northern recently registered with the U.S. Green Building Council, which calls for the development of high performance, sustainable, and environmentally friendly buildings. The renovation of Magers Hall back into a residence hall will be the first building to comply with the green building initiative (see story on page 2).

A big part of why many students, faculty, and staff choose to come to Northern is because of the beauty of its natural surroundings. While the cost savings and environmental impacts associated with Northern's recycling and conservation efforts are truly inspiring, what is even more inspirational is learning how those same people, along with generations of active alumni, are investing their lives in making sure that this little corner of the world—as well as many other corners out there—remain as untouched as humanly possible.

—KW



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6 Hunting the Exotic

The wildlife black market is one of the most profitable transnational crimes today, and one of the most difficult to track and punish. NMU criminal justice professor Gregory Warchol has spent the last several years studying the bush meat trade, traditional medicines market, and illegal plant and wildlife poaching to help educate people about the importance of protecting the world's rare and endangered animal and plant resources.

10 Unearthing Presque Isle's Past

The serene beauty of Presque Isle Park has been drawing visitors inside its gates for as long as many people can remember. But for NMU geography professor **John Anderton '87 BS**, the park is much more than a place to watch the waves of Lake Superior crash over the breakwater or hike through the forest. In the process of documenting Presque Isle's cultural and geologic history, Anderton has uncovered five millennia of human activity.

14 Permafrost Paradox

Evidence shows that permafrost temperatures have increased over the past twenty years. While some believe that global warming is to blame for the increase, University of Delaware geography professor **Frederick Nelson '73 BS** says researchers do not yet have enough data to form such conclusions. In order to increase the observational record, Nelson and other scientists have established a program to model and track changes in permafrost thickness and temperature.

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Trees during late fall at Presque Isle Park. Photograph by Bill Sampson.