

2025 CATF Year-End Report

Membership and Organizational Summary

- Christy Foye (Marquette County Conservation District), Caroline LaPorte (previously NMU), Kelsey Wermager (Big Bay Stewardship Council), Chloe Ravenscraft (NMU), Amy Stephens (Marquette County Planning Department), Claire Christen (Keweenaw Bay Indian Community), and Cera Shelaphoe (Keweenaw Bay Indian Community) were selected to join CATF.
- The Marquette 2049 Learning Circle Series Summary Report was completed and shared on CATF's website and with partners. You can see the full version [here](#).
- Krystle Baeker, Paola Rivera, Anna Solberg, and Nico Vermaat completed their fellowship with the MI Healthy Climate Fellowship program through CEDAM. The 2026 cohort will bring Grace Freed and Jenny Kalejs to Marquette County and the UP Land Conservancy respectively.
- Marquette County finalized the Climate Action Plan.
- Chloe Ravenscraft joined SHINE as a Climate Education Intern.

2025 CATF Members:

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| • Krystle Baecker | • Emily Leach | • Cera Shelafoe |
| • Priscilla Burnham | • Michael Larson | • Anna Solberg |
| • Claire Christen | • Carl Lindquist | • Dave Stensaas |
| • Zosia Eppensteiner | • Jerry Messana | • Amy Stephens |
| • Jane Fitkin | • Brad Neumann | • Ryan Stock |
| • Christy Foye | • Ali O'Neal | • Jes Thompson |
| • Jenn Hill | • Tyler Penrod | • Nico Vermaat |
| • Isabelle Honkomp | • Erik Powers | • Abby Wallace |
| • Brian Hummel | • Chloe Ravenscraft | • Darlene Walch |
| • Robert Kulishek | • Paola Rivera | • Kelsey Wermager |
| • Caroline LaPorte | • Karen Schmitt | • Johanna Worley |
| • Michael Larson | • Greg Seppanen | |

2025 Steering Committee Members:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Brian Hummel | • Emily Leach | • Dave Stensaas |
| • Bob Kulisheck – Vice
Chair | • Brad Neumann | • Jes Thompson –
Chair |
| | • Anna Solberg –
Coordinator | |

2025 Membership Committee Members:

- Zosia Eppensteiner
- Brad Neumann – Chair
- Greg Seppanen

2025 Outreach Committee Members:

- Jenn Hill
- Emily Leach
- Anna Solberg
- Isabelle Honkomp
- Greg Seppanen

2025 CATF Supported Accomplishments Overview

- Marquette County adopted its countywide Climate Action Plan, establishing long-term emissions reduction and climate resilience strategies and advancing hazard mitigation, wildfire protection, and materials management planning efforts.
- City of Marquette secured a post-graduate Rural Leadership Fellowship to launch development of a municipal Climate Action Plan and advance future low-carbon transportation planning.
- Community Foundation of Marquette County awarded \$2.4 million in community grants, including nearly \$500,000 supporting environmental and sustainability initiatives, and renewed long-term Community Environmental Monitoring Program agreements.
- Northern Michigan University secured a \$100,000 state grant for rooftop solar, advanced major campus sustainability initiatives through Michigan Healthy Climate Corps projects, and continued measurable progress toward institutional carbon reduction goals.
- Superior Watershed Partnership implemented multi-million-dollar climate and resilience initiatives, including a \$2.5 million living shoreline restoration project, expanded regional energy efficiency and assistance programs, and deployment of Great Lakes Climate Corps conservation crews.
- Michigan State University Extension advanced statewide renewable energy planning and climate adaptation initiatives through major federal and state grant partnerships, including development of new planning tools and technical assistance programs.
- Marquette County Conservation District led large-scale climate resilience and habitat restoration efforts, including planting over 225,000 climate-resilient native trees and shrubs and implementing countywide invasive species and forestry resilience programs.
- Sands Township and Superior Watershed Partnership expanded regional waste reduction and electrification initiatives, including large-scale e-waste recycling programs and continued development of major solar energy projects.

2025 Project Summaries

Big Bay Stewardship Council

In 2025, the Big Bay Stewardship Council (BBSC) contributed to the Climate Adaptation Task Force's work by advancing community-led approaches to sustainable tourism, place-based stewardship, and long-term resilience in Marquette County, specifically in Powell Township.

BBSC's efforts focused on fostering conversations about how climate change, recreation and tourism pressure, and economic development intersect in rural places and how communities can respond in ways that protect ecological integrity while honoring local values and lived experience.

Through public programs and storytelling-based engagement, BBSC emphasized the philosophical and practical dimensions of climate adaptation: slowing down decision-making, practicing reciprocity with the land, and cultivating a shared sense of responsibility for place. This work supported CATF's broader goals by strengthening community awareness, encouraging stewardship-oriented planning, and reinforcing the idea that climate adaptation is not only a technical challenge, but a cultural one that is rooted in how people relate to where they live, work, and visit.

City of Marquette

The City of Marquette has been seeking a post-grad fellow from various grant opportunities to help it develop a climate action plan using its Guide to Climate Action Planning framework report from its Community Master Plan. In late December, our staff received confirmation from Northern Michigan University that its application for a post-graduate "fellow" was successful! In early 2026, the City will kick off the Climate Action Plan project with the help of a graduate student fellow from the Rural Leadership Fellowship Program at NMU. During a late 2025 joint work session, the City's Planning Commission also recommended that the City Commission become more active in stalled efforts to help MarqTran to establish an intra-city transit route between NMU and downtown destinations, including the City and County campuses and the hospital. This is an aspirational project that should be a high priority of the coming Climate Action Plan.

Community Foundation of Marquette County (CFMC)

The Community Foundation continued to strengthen Marquette County by connecting donors with community priorities and supporting local organizations through grants, scholarships, and collaborative leadership. In 2025, CFMC awarded \$2.4 million across its funds, supporting needs ranging from education and the arts to emerging challenges. Nearly \$500,000 of this funding powered environmental organizations and programs, highlighting a strong commitment to conservation, sustainability, and a healthy future for our community. New endowed funds were established to support NTN and Iron Ore Heritage Trail. Community Environmental Monitoring Program agreements were renewed in December 2025 between CFMC, Superior Watershed Partnership, Eagle Mine and Keweenaw Bay Indian Community. The program continues the 10+ year commitment to community environmental monitoring and stewardship in Marquette County.

Marquette County

Marquette County adopted a Climate Action Plan in March of 2025. The plan will serve as a strategic roadmap to use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change in Marquette County. It outlines the county's goals and strategies for the community as well as

county-specific operations. Community goals focus on the protection of natural resources and human health while facing a changing climate while also working to reduce emissions and increase solid waste diversion opportunities. The County operational goal is to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and outlines a variety of strategies to reach those goals. The initial steps in this process included a full Marquette County facilities analysis and a fleet analysis. Plan development was supported by MI Healthy Climate Fellow Nico Vermaat as well as a volunteer subcommittee. <https://www.mqtcoflan.org/climateactionplan>

Marquette County Housing Rehabilitation Program completed projects on 15 Marquette County homes from funds received from the Michigan State Housing and Development Authority (MSHDA), aimed to preserve existing housing stock throughout the county. These projects included almost \$50,000 of emergency home repair projects and over \$340,000 of home repair projects with MSHDA CDBG Housing Improving Local Livability funding. Since 1994, this program has distributed over \$5 million in assistance to low and moderate-income homeowners maintain their residence as safe, sanitary dwellings that meet local housing codes.

Marquette County representatives have been a part of a Central UP Materials Management Planning Committee for the creation of the Materials Management Plan. Plan creation will continue through 2026 to outline plans and strategies for regulating solid waste disposal, recycling, and composting activities within the six county region.

The Marquette County Community Wildfire Protection Plan was adopted in 2025 to prepare for the growing threat of wildfires and the worsening condition of forest health in the United States. This plan identifies wildfire risks in the community and outlines reduction strategies to improve the safety of Marquette County residents and their homes.

Additionally, Marquette County applied for HMPG 4757 grant program to support the development of the five-year update to the multi-jurisdictional Marquette County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Marquette County closed out a Community Energy Management grant which allowed for the purchase of an electric utility vehicle for Perkins Park and new, higher efficiency, variable speed water pumps for the Courthouse.

Marquette County was certified as a Gold Community by the MI Green Communities Challenge.

Marquette County got another Fellow as a host for the third MI Healthy Climate Fellows cohort with CEDAM and the Department of the Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy (EGLE) Office of Climate and Energy (OCE).

Marquette County Conservation District

The Marquette County Conservation District held our Annual Spring Tree Sale and Spring and Fall Native Wildflower Sales. Over 225,000 native trees and shrubs were planted, and 5,900 native wildflowers and grasses were put in the ground through this fundraiser and local projects! Some tree and shrub seedlings offered through this fundraiser included native species known to be resilient to stressors caused by climate change as well as climate adaptive species that are native to lower Michigan.

The MCCD also partnered with Let's Grow MI and Marquette County for the MI Sawyer Sustainable Forest & Community Orchard Project. This project is funded by the USDA Forest Service, Urban and Community Forestry Program in partnership with the Michigan DNR Urban & Community Forestry Program with goals that include improving the community's resilience to climate change. The MCCD is assisting with tree selection and procurement, site prep and planting as well as educational workshops.

The Lake to Lake CISMA treated invasive species at over 70 locations throughout the County and surveyed 1,200 acres for priority invasive species. We also installed native restoration plantings at two locations, spanning roughly 5 acres of native habitat restoration efforts supporting native species and healthy climate.

Climate change is proving to present new and exacerbated food safety issues in regard to changing trends in precipitation. MCCD's Produce Safety Technician has worked with dozens of farmers across the UP on water quality and access to help mitigate the effects of unpredictable rainfall, including prolonged periods of summer drought and intense rainfall and flooding in the shoulder seasons.

MCCD's forester has worked with hundreds of private landowners across Marquette County to assist them in mitigating the effects of climate change in their forests. Proper forest management can maintain tree vigor in the face of stressors (such as climate change), and careful selection of species can ensure that the next generation of Marquette County's forests are being planted with the best possible chance of success. Science backs all recommendations given to the public and informs management decisions as MCCD's forester stays up to date with research and trainings regarding climate change.

Michigan State University Extension (MSUE)

In 2025, MSU Extension in collaboration with the MSU School of Planning, Design, and Construction, and the MI Department of Health and Human Services - MI Climate and Health Adaptation Program have been providing technical assistance to three communities - Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, City of Sterling Heights, and Washtenaw County. The technical assistance follows a planning process to envision climate-health adaptations to select sites throughout the communities (similar to the processes in Marquette Township and City of Negaunee from 2019-2020).

MSU Extension is also a partner in the Michigan Reliable Energy Siting through Technical Engagement and Planning (R-STEP) grant from the U.S. Department of Energy administered by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. Deliverables include Planning & Zoning for Solar Energy Systems: A Guide for Michigan Local Governments, 2025 Ed. (Updated); Planning & Zoning for Wind Energy Systems Guide (New); Identifying barriers to Tribal renewable energy planning, siting, and permitting; Renewable Energy Academy for Local Officials; Creation of a Clean Energy Information Bureau; and additional specific educational modules for landowners and related decision-makers.

MSUE also continues to engage Michigan communities with education and outreach on the topics of green infrastructure, stormwater management, sustainable agriculture, sustainable

living, renewable energy, harmful algal blooms, financial disaster preparedness and recovery, and more.

Northern Climate Network (NCN)

The Northern Climate Network hosted 7 Climate@Noon seminars including:

January 17 – Policy & Energy Siting

Dr. Jongeun You, NMU Department of Political Science & Public Administration

February 7 – Ceremony and Storywork: How to decolonize contemporary climate narratives

Dr. April Lindala, NMU Center for Native American Studies

March 14 – Your Brain on Nature

Dr. Jon Barch, NMU Department of Psychology

April 18 - The Classroom at the End of the World

High school students from Norway, MI

September 5 – MI Healthy Climate Corps: UP Partners

Dr. Anna Solberg, Paola Rivera Gonzalez, Nico Vermaat, Krystle Baecker, Lucas Roff: Michigan Healthy Climate Corps

October 3 – Climate-Smart Construction: Mass Timber @ MSU

Calista Rockwell, Michigan State University

November 7 – From Mine to Shine: Republic Solar

Dan Freeborn, Gradon Haehnel, Jason Brynick: Upper Peninsula Power Company

NCN Website: <https://nmu.edu/northernclimatenetwork/>

NCN Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188899098115459/>

NCN YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCES8I7AnzWqL8yd2TVs5wnw>

Northern Michigan University (NMU)

- NMU was selected to be a host site for the 2024-2025 Michigan Healthy Climate Corps, and Dr. Anna Solberg spent 11 months with us helping to develop and implement dozens of campus and community sustainability projects.
- NMU received a \$100,000 grant from the state of Michigan to install rooftop solar on the WellBeing Center in 2026, which will help us advance our carbon neutrality goals (we're at 27,412 metric tons of CO2E and dropping!)
- We upgraded lighting fixtures in Cohodas and Weston Hall and installed efficient systems in the renovated Harden Hall in hopes of cutting energy use by half.
- Students conducted a comprehensive campus-wide waste audit of trash and recycling.
- More than 80 people attended the Campus Sustainability Summit in February; 100+ people attended Climate@ Noon seminars in 2025.

- The Campus Native Plant Nursery has more than 30 species of native trees and plants; nearly 200 trees and plants were planted in 2025.
- The University's 2025 GHG emissions were 27,412MT CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent), less than 2,500 tons away from our 2030 goal.
- The Compost Crew at Northern Lights continues to capture 1-2 tons of food waste each week, sending it to our community partner, Partridge Creek Compost, mitigating just over 50 tons of CO₂e in 2025 alone.
- With support from the Michigan Swipe Out Hunger - Hunger Free Campus Pilot Program, dozens of departments, donors, and NMU's Green Fund helped to construct a sustainability demonstration area with two large greenhouses behind Woodland Park apartments.

Sands Township

- Held monthly e-waste collections, supported by an EGLE grant, which netted 11.2 tons of e-waste being shipped to a recycling facility.
- Promoted recycling and waste reduction to residents (newsletter, website) and staffed our Recycling & Transfer Station three days per week for residents to drop off recycling.
- Collaborated with MQT County Landfill and MCSWMA board to fund an NMU intern who helped prepare documents promoting recycling, especially battery and e-waste.
- Continued to work on the Savion Solar Project to be constructed on the Sands Plains. Transitioned to Invenergy as the project owner, reviewed pre-construction permits, and developed a revised project timeline.

Superior Watershed Partnership (SWP)

- Since the new SWP Climate Office opened last year, SWP has collected and recycled 60 tons of e-waste from 850 households. This program is free to the public with collections every Wednesday from noon until 4:00 p.m. and several additional public events hosted throughout the Upper Peninsula.
- SWP has expanded energy assistance services to now include the ALICE population (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed) with \$1.5 million from the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity (LEO). SWP's Energy Office continues to provide thousands of income qualified Upper Peninsula residents with free emergency assistance to pay energy bills, financial literacy classes, energy efficiency upgrades, and residential solar installations. In-home energy efficiency services are expanding with new funding from the Michigan Public Service Commission's Renewable Energy and Electrification Infrastructure Enhancement grant program. Through this program SWP will implement an additional 25 home energy assessments, five income qualified home solar installations, and one public high-speed electric vehicle charging station.
- SWP and the City of Marquette are nearing completion of phase 2 of the Lakeshore Boulevard project broke ground funded by a \$2.5 million grant from NFWF to implement a living shoreline along nearly 1 mile of Lake Superior shoreline and build new trails through restored dune/swale and coastal wetland ecosystems. Site grading and installation of the living cobble beach continued through the fall until winter weather paused the project. GLCC crews and volunteers will help plant beach grass and other native species throughout the project area.

- The Great Lakes Climate Corps (GLCC) wrapped up another successful field season. SWP hired, trained, and deployed more than 30 GLCC members across the Upper Peninsula to work alongside project partners on conservation, restoration, and recreation projects. The crews made progress on SWP's 100,000 tree initiative, built and maintained dozens of miles of trail, restored wildlife habitat, supported KBIC's Natural Resource Department priorities, performed wildfire fuels reduction work around dozens of U.P. homes, and much more. GLCC members and 8 year-round SWP staff received emergency response training and are prepared to assist county emergency managers when disaster strikes.
 - Buoys were deployed in the spring providing real-time weather data including wind speed, water temperature, and wave height to recreational and commercial boaters. This data is used by NWS, NOAA, and Environment Canada for climate research. You can view this weather data on the GLOS Seagull website: <https://glos.org/priorities/seagull/>
- SWP's Website: <https://superiorwatersheds.org/>
- GLCC Video: <https://youtu.be/E6OtMqUsXG0>
- SWP Energy Program Website: <https://superiorwatersheds.org/energy-conservation>
- Community Environmental Monitoring Program (CEMP) Website: <https://swpcemp.org/>
- GLOS Seagull Great Lakes Buoy Data Viewing Website:
<https://seagull.glos.org/map?coords=-87.4177022%2C46.4933952%2C7.7>

Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy

We exceeded 1,000 volunteer hours in 2025. UPLC worked with Noquemanon Trail Network to build 0.75 miles of new trail (the equivalent of 11 football fields!), removed invasive species, and planted 1,500 trees, shrubs and wildflowers!

In 2025 we hosted 21 events, including Life of the Dead River, Nibowaagaming, an arts-based collaboration with the City of Marquette Office of Arts and Culture that invited community members to reflect on the Dead River watershed through poetry, visual art, movement, and quiet observation, as well as a Forest Forensics hike at Tory's Woods where participants discovered how to interpret the landscape through the lens of an ecological detective.

UPLC is proud to announce the permanent protection of the 80-acre Mulligan Pines Preserve in Champion Township, a place where old-growth forests, wetlands, and cultural history come together –made possible by the generous land donation of Jon and Christine Saari and in collaboration with North Country Trail Association (NCTA) and Lyme Great Lakes Timberlands.