

Seney, which is staffed only for fire control and recreation. The border stretches northward to Grand Marais, on the shore of Lake Superior, and southward to Summer Island, which lies in Lake Michigan off the tip of the Garden Peninsula. The Shingleton Unit's ownership is very contiguous in the north with large blocks of state land. The southern portion of the Unit is more fragmented with private ownership.

### **U.S. Forest Service**

The Forest Service, a division of the Department of Agriculture, maintains a District Ranger Station at 400 East Munising Avenue in the City of Munising. The Munising District is one of three within the western section of the Hiawatha National Forest. Forest Service personnel are responsible for management and maintenance of national forest lands and facilities. Shop facilities for repair work and equipment storage are located 601 Cedar Street. Visitor information is available at the District Ranger Station. Chapter 6 deals with the recreational facilities and opportunities available nearby in the Hiawatha National Forest.

### **U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service**

National Park Service personnel manage and maintain the lands and facilities of the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, a unit of the National Park Service. Park headquarters is located in the former Coast Guard station on Sand Point. Information is available at the barrier-free Munising Falls Interpretive Center or at the year-round information center operated in conjunction with the Forest Service at the District Ranger Station. Facilities and types of recreation available within the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore are described in Chapter 6.

### **Post Office**

Au Train Township residents are served by three post office locations; Arbutus Street in Au Train, 9714 M-28 in Wetmore and 220 Elm Avenue in Munising.

### **Au Train Hydroelectric Project**

The Au Train Dam and Power Plant are located along M-94 at Forest Lake in Au Train Township; the reservoir is visible from the road. The hydroelectric project was constructed in 1910 by the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company. The purpose was to provide power to the Munising paper mill, which is still in operation. Hydro power plants harness the energy of falling water to make electricity. A dam backs up the water, creating a deep reservoir and a higher fall of water. In other words, the reservoir is a form of stored energy. When the water is released, its force turns a turbine. The turbine turns a generator, where electricity is produced.

The reservoir is unique; is not formed by damming one single river. There are actually two dams, one at either end of the reservoir. The water comes from three sources: Slapneck Creek, Johnson Creek, and Joe Creek. First built in 1910 as a wooden structure, the AuTrain Dam was upgraded to a 38-foot-high concrete and earthen dam in 1930. The dam has a 1,500 foot-long earthen embankment, which includes a 100-foot-long concrete spillway mid-section.

The AuTrain Basin has a surface area of 1,557 acres and at normal pool high level has an elevation of 780 feet above sea level. In September, the dam water elevation was at 775 feet and was previously dropped to a mud lake at 762 feet during a recent draw-down for repairs. The basin saddles a peninsular divide with some of the water run-off draining north to Lake Superior and the rest draining south to Lake Michigan. A 4,500-foot-long earthen levy, 15 feet high, was built at the south end of the basin in 1930. Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO) is now the former owner of the power plant and dam and had sought to divest itself of the dam after it was determined the capacity of the reservoir and spillways could not withstand a "probable maximum flood" event on the AuTrain River. Costs to make suitable repairs to the dam were estimated at between \$8 and \$12 million, a figure UPPCO officials said would outstrip the value of the electricity produced by the relatively small facility. New study results have indicated that repair costs may be lower.

Several meetings were held with local residents, many of whom wanted to keep the dam intact. UPPCO has reached an agreement with North American Hydro to transfer ownership of the dam and power plant, along with the corresponding Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) operating license. The agreement has received FERC approval. The transfer agreement states that UPPCO will buy back the power produced from North American Hydro for ten years, with UPPCO receiving renewable energy credits for the electricity produced. Included in the sale are the dam itself, the Basin and lands immediately surrounding it, the penstock, the powerhouse and the transfer of the FERC operating license. The hydroelectric project manages inflow and sustains water levels; proper maintenance of the project greatly affects land use and recreation opportunities for residents of Au Train Township. UPPCO still owns about 1,900 acres of non-project land just out side of the Au Train Dam project boundaries which it is seeking to divest.

## 5.5 Issues and Opportunities

- The Au Train Township Hall is fully accessible and provides space for meetings and functions as a polling place and community center for Township residents.