



2021 Issue 2

Wolf's Eye

Newsletter for the Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association

Missing In the Copper Country?

We're pleased to be in the final stages of the development of a new book called *Missing in the Copper Country*, by Keweenaw NHP Ranger Lynette Webber. This fascinating book highlights the changes in the Copper Country's streetscapes and landscapes, by transposing historic images over modern-day scenes from the same location.

Missing in the Copper Country started out as a multi-faceted program of social media posts, temporary exhibits, ranger-guided programs, and interactive youth programming. By popular demand, IRKPA has decided to make it available in book format, with expanded text and maps.

Annual Meeting

This year's annual membership meeting will, once again, be held virtually. Our board members are collaborating with representatives from both Isle Royale NP and Michigan Tech University, so it's bound to be worth tuning in. We'll send out more details, including how to participate virtually, as the time nears. We hope you'll join us!



Gulls on a Rock, S. Trynoski

Students Improve Public Access to Trails

By Steve DeLong, Landscape Architect

In 2020, as many people hunkered down indoors to telework and connect with others virtually, a youth crew working at Keweenaw National Historical Park spent their summer working outdoors. Four high school students and a college student crew leader cleared brush and vegetation from nearly 2.8 miles of historic railroad grades at the Quincy Mine Site.

This work opened several trail corridors for visitors to explore the surface workings of the historic copper mining site. By reclaiming the historic rail grades, pedestrians can more easily access and explore wooded and remote parts of the site for enjoyment and understanding.



Students removed vegetation to improve trail access. (NPS Photo)

Continued pedestrian use on these trails is anticipated and encouraged. Future improvements will include accessible, crushed stone surfacing and interpretive signs and/or media, as funds permit.

This year we anticipate the youth crew will return to the Quincy Mine for a couple of weeks to help with landscape preservation. The work will include removal of debris and non-historic items, removal of volunteer vegetation from the interior of the blacksmith shop ruin, other vegetation removal at selected areas, and lawn improvements near the Quincy Mine facility identification sign.

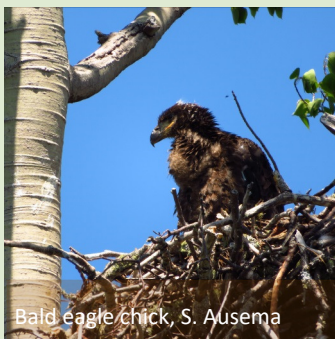
(Continued on page 7)

“Wild” Life on Isle Royale in 2020

For many of us, an encounter with a wild animal on Isle Royale is the highlight of our trip. Some lucky folks actually get to study the island’s wildlife as their job, and thanks to Park Ecologist Lynette Potvin, who passed the data along to us, we can share in the excitement of their research.

In a typical year, the island hosts about 200 researchers, but in 2020, due to COVID precautions, only 40 were permitted to work on the island. Considering this limitation and the six week delayed start, the following research results are quite impressive.

- ◆ 16 bald eagle nests were occupied, with 16 chicks confirmed and 16 successfully fledged, the highest ever recorded on Isle Royale
- ◆ 36th year of loon surveys on Isle Royale; 208 adults documented (long-term average is 220), 44 chicks fledged (higher than average)



Bald eagle chick, S. Ausema



Loon with chicks, S. Ausema

- ◆ 3 sites were monitored for potential peregrine falcon nests, but only 1 juvenile was confirmed. The nest at Passage Island was not successful for the first time since 2012.

- ◆ As of April 14, 2020 there were 5 uncollared and 9 GPS-collared wolves on Isle Royale.

- ◆ 2020 was the first year of an alternative approach to the long-term moose census carried out by Michigan Tech. Park staff, in partnership with Grand Portage and SUNY-ESF, used a double-count distance sampling framework from a helicopter and es-

timated a population of 584 moose.



Beaver, S. Ausema

- ◆ 34 beavers were caught in live traps in the Rock Harbor Channel and Tobin Harbor; researchers gathered data including body measurements, collected samples relating to diet and genetics, and inserted tags to mark beavers for recapture in future surveys.

Grants Supporting Local Heritage

by Sean M. Gohman, PhD

This February, the Keweenaw NHP Advisory Commission kicked off its annual Keweenaw Heritage Grant program. Since 2008, this annual program has helped local partners preserve and interpret resources and stories related to the Keweenaw’s nationally significant copper mining history, from preserving buildings and landscapes to interpretation and museum collections. The Advisory Commission will be offering up to \$125,000 this year to qualified applicants. The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has caused significant disruption to the heritage industry of the Copper Country, with many Heritage Sites unable to open for visitors last year. In 2021, it is anticipated that most sites will be open for the summer season, with some modifications to meet safe capacity and distancing guidelines.

Last year’s Heritage Grant Program pumped nearly \$125,000 into the local heritage industry, and helped several sites and organizations plan for Covid-related restrictions on visitation, conduct maintenance of buildings and resources, and design non-personal, self-guided interpretation services that work around some of those restrictions. The Commission is pleased to know this year’s grant program will continue to deliver these much-needed funds to help the local heritage industry succeed in these challenging times.

*Sean Gohman is the Executive Director of the Keweenaw NHP Advisory Commission

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*2020 additional donation
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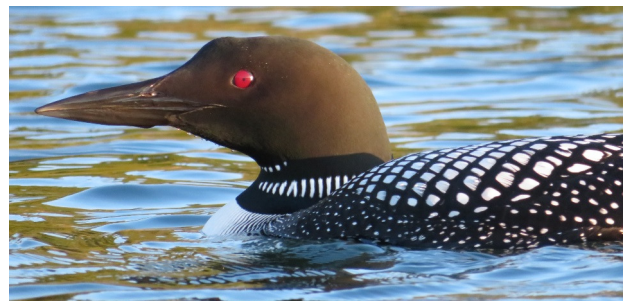
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THANK YOU to each of our members!

We apologize for any errors or omissions in this list. Please let us know if there's a discrepancy and we'll correct it in the next edition.

2020 Annual Report, prepared by IRKPA Treasurer Darcy Rutkowski

Despite a world-wide pandemic in 2020, the Isle Royale and Keweenaw Parks Association came through the year in pretty good shape, due to the generosity of our members, our collaborative relationship with our NPS partners, and the dedication and extra effort put forth by board members and our fantastic staff.

After record-breaking sales of \$203,228 in 2019, our gross sales in 2020 were only \$65,516. This was understandable, given the extensive closures at our park visitor centers. Isle Royale NP and Keweenaw NHP both operated at a much-reduced capacity. All commercial ferry service was cancelled, limiting transportation options to private boat or seaplane. Both island visitor centers operated under reduced hours with limited capacity for browsing. Consequently, IRKPA chose to focus our efforts on providing our “top 50” best-sellers in those locations.

In order to offset the lack of income from sales, IRKPA made a special “Covid Appeal” to our members on Giving Tuesday, and you responded generously! Although the pandemic created financial anxiety for many people, we were fortunate that our annual donations and membership dues were quite close to the 2019 levels.

IRKPA’s botany and night sky photography workshops, which had been reserved at maximum capacity, had to be cancelled. This was not only disappointing to the participants, but also further affected our bottom line.


While our income was down considerably from the previous year, our expenses were also down a proportionate amount. Our staff was careful to order only the items they were certain would sell and worked much-reduced hours. We postponed our search for an Executive Director, with board members and staff covering the additional responsibilities.

One of the highlights of our (virtual) annual meeting was a presentation on the new Minecraft Project that Keweenaw NHP initiated in 2020, which is the first

project of its kind in the NPS system. IRKPA helped facilitate the purchase of the specialized computers that the project required, and we are excited about the small role we were able to play in this groundbreaking project. Another highlight was an update on *Missing in the Copper Country*, a book that IRKPA is in the process of publishing. We received a \$4,000 Keweenaw Heritage Grant from the Keweenaw NHP Advisory Commission, which will support the book’s printing. Several board members have been working closely with the author, Interpretive Ranger Lynette Webber, and staff from Keweenaw NHP to complete the final layout, editing, and printing of this new publication, which will be available for sale this year.

IRKPA supported Isle Royale NP by paying for the publication of the *Greenstone* newspaper and funding the purchase of a remote camera for the wolf reintroduction work. We also provided funding to Isle Royale to expand and support the monitoring of rare plants of the island’s rocky shoreline community. This new botanical survey work is a follow-up to surveys that were done in the early 2000’s and in 2016. This project was to take place in 2020, but had to be postponed to 2021. Both the remote camera and botanical survey were funded by a generous donation from an IRKPA member.

We look forward to returning to the level of support that we have provided both parks over the past few years, and we anticipate that there will be a lot of pent up demand by our members and other visitors to visit both of our awesome parks in 2021.



	2020	2019
Donations and Grants	\$31,831	\$40,313
Membership Dues	\$17,965	\$18,690
Net Workshop Income	\$0*	\$11,100
Sweepstakes	\$ 1,895	\$ 1,470

*Workshops cancelled in 2020

Where on Isle Royale?



Do you know Isle Royale well enough to identify this location? If so, email susanna@irkpa.org and include a personal story or memory about the place. We'll print our favorite responses in the next edition of the *Wolf's Eye*!

(Continued from page 1)

We are appreciative of the work these students have accomplished and the improved conditions they are leaving behind.

If this type of work interests you as a volunteer, please contact Steve DeLong at steve_delong@nps.gov to discuss potential landscape service projects at Keweenaw National Historical Park.

"Weather" or Not?

Do you ever wonder what the weather is like on Isle Royale? Here are some interesting statistics taken from the Ojibway Weather Station in 2020:

Strongest wind gust: 64 mph
Hottest temperature: 88° F
Coldest temperature: -11° F



Ojibway Tower

"Where in Keweenaw NHP?" Winner

IRKPA life member Marshall Plumer accurately identified Fort Wilkins Historic State Park, one of KNHP's Heritage Sites, as the location of the mystery photo.

Marshall said, *"I performed 1st Person Living History there in the summer of 1986, portraying a post-civil war sergeant. On one particular day in the mess hall, I brought an elderly woman to tears, and then she nearly brought me to tears as I portrayed my role. Turned out she was a cook in the turn of the century logging camps. I never came out of character."*



Located in the northern Keweenaw Peninsula near Copper Harbor, Fort Wilkins Historic State Park features a restored 1844 army military outpost, which was built to keep law and order during the Copper Rush of the 1840s. The lighthouse below, built in 1866, is also part of the state park. The fort will be open for visitation from early June through September. Living history programs are offered most days in and around the fort, through mid-August.



Copper Harbor Lighthouse (Photo: Steve Trynoski)

Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association

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IRKPA is the membership-based nonprofit partner of Isle Royale National Park and Keweenaw National Historical Park. Gifts, bequests, memorials, and membership dues are U.S. tax deductible.

Membership Categories

Individual \$25	Household \$35	Supporting \$50
Sustaining \$100	Patron \$250	Life \$1,200

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Wolf's Eye editor

Check 'Em Out!

Our retail sales are on the rebound after being highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Check out these great new sales items! Shop at: **www.irkpa.org/shop**



New sticker!



New holiday ornament highlighting Michigan's National Park sites!



Brand new, 2-sided collector's token!

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