



Foundation Document Overview

Keweenaw National Historical Park

Michigan



Contact Information

For more information about the *Keweenaw National Historical Park Foundation Document*, contact: kewe_superintendent@nps.gov or (906) 337-3168 or write to:
Superintendent, Keweenaw National Historical Park, 25970 Red Jacket Road, Calumet, MI 49913

Purpose



The purpose of KEWEENAW NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK is, in partnership with public and private entities, to preserve the nationally significant historical and cultural sites, structures, and districts of the Keweenaw Peninsula and interpret the historical, geological, archeological, cultural, technological, and corporate forces that relate the story of copper on the Keweenaw Peninsula.



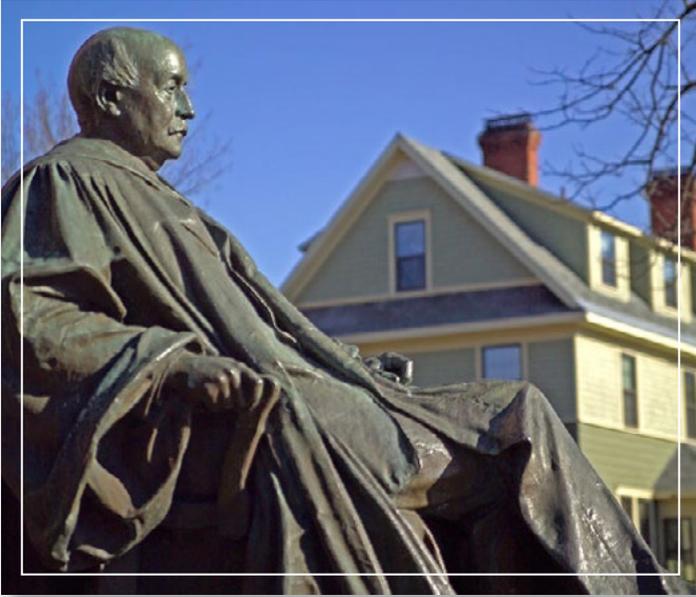
Significance

Significance statements express why Keweenaw National Historical Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- **Geology.** The geology of the Keweenaw area includes the oldest and largest lava flow known on Earth and is the only place where large-scale economically recoverable, nearly pure native copper is found.
- **American Indian Mining and Trading.** The Keweenaw Peninsula is internationally significant as the oldest site in the country where prehistoric, American Indian extraction of copper occurred; the copper was widely traded across the continent. Together with Isle Royale, copper extraction has occurred in this area for more than 7,000 years.
- **Copper Production.** The Keweenaw Peninsula was the location of one of the nation's earliest mining rushes and was the most productive copper mining region in the United States from 1845–87. It continued to be a nationally important source of copper through the 1920s. Quincy Mine is the most complete mining company landscape remaining in the Keweenaw Peninsula.



Significance



- **Company Paternalism.** Large-scale company paternalism provided a foundation for immigration, ethnic settlement, company locations/towns, and influenced the development of associated commercial and residential districts. This is reflected across the peninsula's cultural landscapes.
- **Immigration and Ethnicity.** Keweenaw's copper mining communities became a principal destination for European immigrants beginning in the mid-1800s, and the cultural heritage of these varied nationalities is still preserved in this remarkable ethnic conglomerate. Keweenaw flourished as a copper frontier only because of an immigrant workforce that constituted up to 80% of the labor pool. Michigan's Copper Country accelerated the development of the American industrial frontier.
- **Labor Relations.** After years of comparatively peaceful labor and management relations in the Keweenaw, a major strike occurred in 1913–14; this strike elicited national attention and crippled the famed Western Federation of Miners union. The majority of Keweenaw copper workers did not organize again until the World War II era.
- **Technology.** Advancements in copper mining on the Keweenaw Peninsula refined deep shaft, hard rock mining, milling, and smelting technology. Keweenaw copper mines sustained deep shaft mining for over 100 years, resulting in some of the deepest mines in the world.

Resources, Values, and Interpretive Themes

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Quincy Mining Company Cultural Landscape**
- **Calumet & Hecla Mining Company Cultural Landscape**
- **Village of Calumet Cultural Landscape**
- **Museum Collections**
- **Collaboration, Community Engagement, and Stewardship**

Related resources are not owned by the park. They may be part of the broader context or setting in which park resources exist, represent a thematic connection that would enhance the experience of visitors, or have close associations with park fundamental resources and the purpose of the park.

- **Keweenaw Heritage Sites**
- **Other Sites Related to the Purpose of Keweenaw National Historical Park**
- **Non-NPS Collections Related to the Purpose of Keweenaw National Historical Park**

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- **Natural Resources**
- **Mining Processes and Technology**
- **People's Lives and Immigration**
- **Labor, Management, and Economics**

Description

Keweenaw National Historical Park is on the Keweenaw Peninsula, which extends for about 100 miles northward into Lake Superior from Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Together with 21 non-federal affiliated heritage sites, the park, established on October 27, 1992, preserves and interprets the natural and cultural history and prehistory of the region's copper mining industry and its larger role in American history. The Keweenaw region once held vast deposits of almost pure elemental copper, and mines, communities, and transportation routes were developed to extract, process, and transport the metal to market.

The two units of Keweenaw National Historical Park—Quincy and Calumet—are near the center of the peninsula. The Quincy unit includes remnant structures and mine shafts of the Quincy Mining Company and the associated historic landscape. The Calumet unit centers on the historic mining community of Calumet and includes remnant administrative structures, mine buildings, the associated historic landscape of the Calumet & Hecla Mining Company, and the supporting commercial and residential areas of the Village of Calumet and Calumet Township. The Union Building in Calumet is now the park's visitor center.

Unlike most national parks, the park owns only 8% of the land and less than 0.5% of the historic structures within its boundaries, and the National Park Service leverages its resources by working with partners to fulfill the park's mission. The park's primary partner is its legislated partner, the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission.

The U.S. Congress authorized the National Park Service and the Advisory Commission to partner with state and local governments and nonprofit and private organizations to achieve the park's mission. The Keweenaw Heritage Sites program is one aspect of this partnership. Heritage sites, located throughout the historic mining district along the length of the Keweenaw Peninsula, collaborate with the National Park Service and the Advisory Commission but are independently owned and operated. Park staff regularly provide technical assistance to the heritage sites as they work to conserve and interpret significant cultural and natural resources, thus contributing to the preservation and interpretation of historic copper mining in Michigan. Embodying hardship, ingenuity, struggle, and success, the sites broaden the impact of the park and allow visitors to explore varied facets of the role mining played in the lives and fortunes of Keweenaw residents.

