



2020 Issue 3

Wolf's Eye

Newsletter for the Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association

Using Minecraft to Re-Create History

Is it possible to engage hundreds of thousands of people with history and the National Park Service by using an online game platform? This is exactly what Keweenaw NHP (KNHP) is attempting to do over the next three years. Staff at KNHP are using Minecraft and primary source documents to re-create aspects of a National Historic Landmark District.



Screen shot of KNHP's Minecraft Site

But what is Minecraft? Developed in 2011 by a Swedish game publisher, Minecraft is one of the world's most popular online games. Players use Minecraft to build and create environments or worlds out of square blocks. The game is also popular with educators as a way to engage students in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) content.

One of the great benefits to using Minecraft as a digital platform is that it is enjoyed by people of all ages, including middle and high school students. Linking history with this popular game facilitates KNHP's connection with potential youth visitors

(continued on page 4)

Welcome Denice Swanke, Isle Royale's New Superintendent

Isle Royale's new Superintendent, Denice Swanke, has had a multi-faceted career that includes the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the National Park Service (NPS).

Denice grew up in Tillamook, Oregon. Even though she had never even visited a national park, on a whim, she decided to look for a summer job at Crater Lake NP. She was hired instead at Zion NP, where, in March of 1991, she started her first NPS job in the fee program. In 1993, she began working for the BLM in Moab, Utah, as a dispatcher in an interagency fire center, and several years later, transitioned into a position as a physical scientist doing compliance work for oil and gas sales, permitting for sand and gravel sales, and abandoned mine reclamation.

While working in Moab, she met her husband, Steve, who was a district ranger in Canyonlands National Park. When she was first introduced to him by a mutual friend, she took one look at his truck, full of gear for biking, whitewater kayaking and rock climbing, and thought, "Here's a guy who might be able to keep up with me!" And indeed he was, throughout their dual careers in the National Park Service. Steve retired as a deputy chief ranger at Yellowstone over a decade ago, and now has a home business making outdoor gear.



Denice and Steve near Monument Rock, Isle Royale

While Denice was creating an environmental impact statement for winter use in Yellowstone in the early 2000s, she was invited to be

(continued on page 5)

Wolves and Moose of Isle Royale

We've all been waiting with bated breath for an update on the status of Isle Royale's wolf and moose populations, and the results of a comprehensive report have recently been published. As you may recall, in 2018-19, nineteen wolves were captured in Michigan, Minnesota, and Ontario and translocated to Isle Royale. Researchers estimated that 12-14 wolves remained on the island on April 14, 2020. The most common cause of death among those that died was aggression between wolves as they established their territories and social structure.

Multiple wolves have successfully reproduced on Isle Royale since the translocation. A female wolf from Ontario was possibly pregnant at the time of translocation and reared two pups in the spring of 2019. At least one other wolf reproduced in Spring 2020. Researchers are using location data from GPS collars, images from remote cameras, acoustic recordings, and genetic analysis of scat samples to determine which wolves have reproduced and how many pups have been reared.



NPS webcam photo of two pups born on Isle Royale

The population of moose has declined, due to poor nutrition and predation by wolves.

A comprehensive report about the results of the wolf translocation project, prepared by the National Park Service and the State University of New York, is available online at www.globalwildlifec.org ("Research" link, then "Species Recovery"). Michigan Tech University's report is available at <https://isleroyalewolf.org>.

Welcome, Beth Barrie!

After a competitive search, the IRKPA hiring committee has invited Beth Barrie to serve as the next executive director of our association. She's looking forward to working with IRKPA's board, staff, members, our parks and other key stakeholders on strategic planning for the various scenarios that may emerge in a post-pandemic world.



Beth Barrie, backpacking on Isle Royale

Beth has worked with multiple federal agencies and their friends groups to develop an engaged citizenry committed to environmental stewardship. She understands the importance of balancing agency mandates, various spending authorities and budget timelines in order to co-create community engagement programs to benefit all public lands. Since 2016 she has been the director of the office of online education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She sees her role as executive director as an opportunity to apply the skills she's gathered from public land and university project management to the two places she loves most.

Beth's connection to Isle Royale and the Keweenaw started early. From 1972-75 she lived on the island while her dad created the post-glacial fire maps. They moved from the Keweenaw when she was 10 but her heart never left. She eventually came back to work as a seasonal interpreter at Isle Royale, and a few years later she became the first interpretation ranger for the newly formed Keweenaw National Historical Park.

All of us at IRKPA extend a heartfelt welcome to Beth, and look forward to working together in support of our parks.

Where on Isle Royale?



Do you know Isle Royale NP well enough to identify this location?

If so, send an email to 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* AND send our winners a prize!

Winning Answer to “Where in Keweenaw NHP?”

Not many folks knew the answer to this question, but longtime member Bruce Weber recognized the location. He said, “This is one of the outbuildings at Hanka Homestead, a Keweenaw Heritage site and a historic gem. This farm is located south of Houghton, at Pelkie, and is a wonderful place to step back in time to see a 1920s-era farm settled by Finnish immigrants.” Bruce continued, “In the middle of a vast hardwood forest, the Hankas carved out a clearing for their log farmhouse, smoke sauna, log barn and root house. It's all still there. Settled by the family originally in 1896, their son Jalmer lived at the homestead for 70 years before his death in 1966. It's a great place for kids to discover an example of early life in the U.P. I had a terrific tour guide the day I visited.”



If you'd like to visit, the Hanka Homestead Finnish Museum will be open for guided tours, Saturday and Sunday, 12:00 to 4:00, continuing throughout the color season. The Homestead will be open for self guided tours at all times; however, some buildings will be locked. See hankahomesteadmuseum.org for more information.

October Board Meeting

You're invited to attend IRKPA's first-ever Virtual Membership Meeting, on October 24th from 1:00-4:30 EST. This exciting program, planned by the hardworking folks at Keweenaw National Historical Park (KNHP), will highlight three ongoing park projects. First, James Schwaderer will discuss a new program that KNHP is developing to engage youth in the study of heritage through the use of “Minecraft,” a popular, interactive online game for students. The second presentation, by park ranger and author Lynette Webber, will highlight an award-winning project and book currently under publication by IRKPA, called *Missing in the Copper Country*. Our third presentation, by KNHP historian Jo Holt, will discuss an exhibit and book called *Ethnographic Overview and Indigenous Treaties*.

Many thanks to Kathleen Harter, Program Director for Interpretation and Education, and KNHP Superintendent Wyndeth Davis, for their help in setting up this program.

An electronic invitation will be sent out with details for logging in to the presentation. ***Please plan on joining us!***

("Minecraft" continued from pg 1)

where they already are: in their homes.

With so many games available, what makes Minecraft so well suited to KNHP? Minecraft's flexible nature and composition of player-placed digital "blocks" makes it the perfect setting to build and explore digital re-creations such as one of historic Calumet, Michigan! The ability to share Minecraft buildings and worlds online connects to a niche within communities based around "edutainment"—the fusion of education and entertainment.

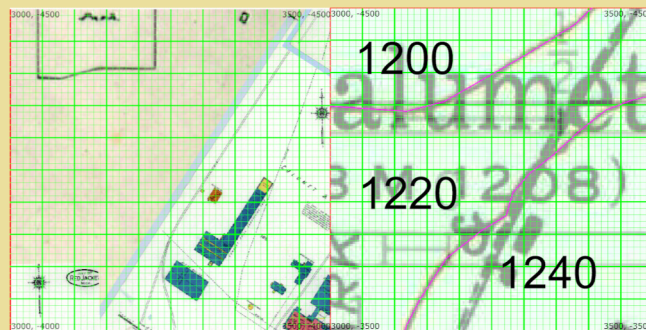


An image from within KNHP's Minecraft town.

Keweenaw NHP's Minecraft Project began with extensive background research using primary sources such as historical and topographic maps and photographs. Most of these sources dated from 1915-1917 and became the project time period. A Minecraft world starts much like a plain canvas, a blank space on which things may be created. A scaled map of the Calumet area was created from these historical sources to provide building reference. The project team chose to use a one block to two foot scale to provide enough detail in the re-creation. The scale also allowed the team to divide the large map into smaller quadrants for the builders to work on. The project build began by laying out a grid of 500 by 500 block quadrants. A space was also created to transport the builders from the area where they enter the map to

their assigned spaces within Minecraft.

Currently, the team is working on two major pieces of the project. One is placing the topographic contour lines, the location where the ground changes elevation. This is being done so the builders can focus on constructing buildings and roads. The second is working with the builders to answer any questions they have and provide technical support.



Topographic contour lines within Minecraft

The Keweenaw NHP Minecraft Project is made possible with the support and assistance of the Isle Royale and Keweenaw Parks Association. Through technical and financial assistance, IRKPA helped launch the project a year ahead of schedule, enabling park staff to work on it while teleworking and connecting with youth who are homeschooling or doing e-learning. Many opportunities have presented themselves during this unprecedented time and the park is grateful for IRKPA's assistance and ongoing support.

As with any large-scale project, there is a great deal of background work to be done before one sees results. This highly collaborative project will take months to develop and the end results will be a product of numerous builders. To learn more about the project, visit the park's Facebook page and #MinecraftMondays at <https://www.facebook.com/KeweenawNHP/>

~Article and images provided by Keweenaw NHP Staff

("Superintendent" continued from page 1)

a judge in the "Clean Snowmobile Challenge" in Houghton, MI. That was her first time visiting this area, and she felt charmed by the local communities. Now that she's back (after working in many other National Parks across the country), she and Steve look forward to discovering their favorite local cross country and backcountry ski trails.

Denice is anticipating a lot of adventures on Isle Royale. Her skills in whitewater kayaking will be put to good use as she and Steve explore the island in their new sea kayaks. They also love hiking, so the island's 165 miles of trails will provide challenges and inspiration for them in the coming years.



Denice and Steve on a Denali NP ski tour this spring

Denice says, "***The energy that comes out of civic engagement opportunities is mind-blowing. We have the privilege of working in these beautiful parks, so when we ask the public for suggestions, advice, and input, the passion that people put into those conversations is some of the most rewarding work I've ever done.***"

Please join us in welcoming Denice and Steve to Isle Royale!

Memberships are expiring soon!

Memberships run through the calendar year, expiring December 31. Please be on the lookout for a renewal form in your mailbox. *We appreciate your membership!*



Fall colors in Malone Bay, Isle Royale. M. Ausema



Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association

800 E Lakeshore Dr
Houghton, MI 49931-1869
906-482-7860 (Quincy) or 906-483-8877 (Houghton)
irkpa@irkpa.org, www.irkpa.org

 Facebook.com/IRKPA
www.paypal.com/fundraiser/charity/1916032

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

Membership Categories

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

Board of Directors

Marilyn Cooper, Emily Fiala, Sonia Goltz, Kay Pusakulich (President), Dan Rogalla, Darcy Rutkowski, Steve Trynoski, Alan West, Sandy Wilhoit

Staff

Beth Barrie, Executive Director
Alison Pontynen, Sales & Visitor Services Manager
Susanna Ausema, Membership Outreach Manager & *Wolf's Eye* Editor
Pam Heide, Office Manager & Inventory Specialist



The IRKPA Board of Directors announces the creation of a new scholarship fund, in addition to the existing Bob Linn Isle Royale Scholarship. The new fund will be used exclusively to fund research related to Keweenaw National Historical Park, and will be administered in parallel with the Bob Linn fund. IRKPA is

seeking donations to help establish the new fund and also strengthen the Linn Scholarship, with the ultimate goal of underwriting important, park-supported research that will provide meaningful benefits consistent with IRKPA's mission.

Ideally, these awards will provide significant monetary benefit to fund meaningful research, possibly graduate-level awards in the \$2,000+ range. IRKPA's board members have stepped up to provide several hundred dollars in donations to kick off both funds. Are you interested in contributing or would you like to be involved in managing and administering these funds? If so, please email susanna@irkpa.org to be put in touch with a board member. We'd love your support in getting these scholarships off the ground.

Printed on recycled paper



800 E Lakeshore Dr
Houghton, MI 49931-1869

Forwarding Service Requested