

New staff at IRKPA!

The Isle Royale and Keweenaw Parks Association began the new year with two new faces in key administrative positions.



Sharon Kisiel

Sharon Kisiel assumed the duties of retail sales manager in September. She replaces Alison Pontynen who retired after five years in the position. A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Sharon visited the Upper Peninsula as a teen and was hooked. "I was introduced to 'the Northwoods' by a friend when I was 18," she said. "I fell in love with the area." She graduated from Northern Michigan University with a degree in biology. Sharon moved to the Copper Country in 1998 and for the past 20 years served as a IT/technical support person for local communications and IT companies. She lives in Chasell with her husband Dan and daughters Robin and Molly.

Veteran Upper Peninsula journalist Mark Wilcox became IRKPA's executive director on November 1. He is a former managing editor of the Houghton Daily Mining Gazette.

Read more from Wilcox on Page 2.

Taking Isle Royale into the classroom

First graders in Houghton County were recently introduced to a very special National Park. A park that many were surprised to learn is located in their own back yard.

In November, former IRKPA Membership Outreach Manager Susanna Ausema, author of the children's book "I Spy ... Isle Royale," visited the area's first-grade classrooms, taking along plenty of copies of her award-winning book.



Susanna Ausema with first graders at Dollar Bay .

Ausema said the purpose of the project was to reach out to Isle Royale's gateway communities and develop a sense of curiosity among the youth and a sense of stewardship for the park among adult family members.

"The outreach was aimed at the first-grade level primarily because 'I Spy ... Isle Royale' is an appropriate book for that reading level," Ausema said. She adds that the book would most likely be shared with and read by the adult members of each household.

The presentations began with an interactive PowerPoint presentation focusing on some of the animals of Isle Royale. Ausema then read her book along with the students, showing what she was reading on a large video screen. "I wanted the students to be able to immerse themselves in the pictures while listening to the rhyming flow of the story," she said.

At the end of her 30-minute presentation, each student received their very own copy of "I Spy ... Isle Royale," an act that went over well with the students. Ausema said "Many of them asked 'Can I really bring this home? Can I show my mom and Dad?'" Additionally, a copy of the book was donated to each school's library by IRKPA.

Create a Culture of Philanthropy

As a member of IRKPA, you have shown commitment to help our local National Parks with projects and priorities that are not funded through their regular budgets. Now you can leave a lasting legacy for our national parks with a planned gift either directly to IRKPA or through the Keweenaw Community Foundation. Donations may be in the form of cash, a gift of a life insurance policy or the designation of IRKPA as the beneficiary upon your passing, a bequest in your will, donation of all or part of your tax-deferred retirement plan, real estate, securities, and more.

Find out how you can help ensure the future of our parks by emailing executivedirector@IRKPA.org



Volunteers Needed!

IRKPA is committed to spreading the word about our amazing National Parks to as large an audience as we can. You'll continue to see IRKPA represented at events throughout the region ... and we're planning to expand our reach.

To accomplish this, we need you. We are in the process of assembling a core of volunteers, who can be called on for special projects or with assistance at IRKPA facilities on a day-to-day basis during the summer season.

Volunteers may help out at any of the participating location of Keweenaw National Historical Park, at our retail gift shops and more. You don't have to be an IRKPA member to volunteer. Find out how you can help by emailing executivedirector@irkpa.org.

Meet Executive Director Mark Wilcox



Let me start by saying how honored I am to be executive director of the Isle Royale and Keweenaw Parks Association. To some of you who live and work in the Upper Peninsula,

my name may be familiar because of my long career in Upper Peninsula media, including years at the Houghton Daily Mining Gazette and Minnesota Public Radio.

Growing up I was aware, as most "Yoopers" are, not only of the existence of Isle Royale but of its significance. It was and continues to be a tremendous source of pride. Speaking of pride, I was blessed to call the late Senator Carl Levin a friend and am well aware of his hard work and subsequent pride in the creation of Keweenaw National Historical Park.

I share these thoughts to illustrate that I do not take this position lightly. I have long been aware of the economic, societal, educational and scientific significance of both of our parks.

In the three months I have been on the job, I am overwhelmed by the graciousness and support of the IRKPA Board of Directors. I have also been deeply impressed by the passion our hundreds of members have demonstrated through their membership.

I arrived here just as the results of the fall membership drive started to come in. I was blown away, not only by the sheer number of responses, but by many of the accompanying notes expressing their love for and support of OUR national parks.

I expect we will do exciting things together.

Spots Available for Night Sky Photography Workshop July 26-30

Beginning and intermediate photographers are invited to join Lake Superior Photo's Shawn Malone for this nature photography workshop with particular emphasis on capturing images of the night sky over Isle Royale. Workshop activities will include instruction and photography excursions around Rock Harbor.

The price is \$829. For registration information and to register, visit irkpa.org/workshop-registration



Applications Now Accepted for Keweenaw Heritage Grants

This year's Keweenaw Heritage Grants cycle is now open. The Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission will award up to \$120,000 in grants this year to owners and operators of historic properties and providers of history programs in support of projects that further the preservation and interpretation of the story of copper on the



Keweenaw Peninsula.

Applicants must be a designated Keweenaw Heritage Site, a non-profit organization, a local or regional government, an academic institution or a federally recognized Indian Tribe. Prior Heritage Grant recipients must submit project completion reports in order to be eligible to re-apply.

For the 2022 grant program, the proposed project or program must be located within the boundaries of KNHP, affiliated with an existing Keweenaw Heritage Site or located at the Cliff Mine along Torch Lake or within the community of Painesdale.

The purpose of the grant program is to provide enhancement funds for a broad range of projects and programs including, but not limited to, Historic Preservation, History and Archeology, Interpretation and Education, Museum Collections and Organization/Program Sustainability.

For more information, email Sean Gohman at sean_gohman@partner.nps.gov

Thank You Susanna and Good Luck



In December, IRKPA's Membership Outreach Manager Susanna Ausema moved to Maine where her husband Mike accepted a job as a ranger at Acadia National Park. During her time with us, Susanna was responsible for coordinating membership efforts, publishing The Wolf's Eye, assisting in fundraising and marketing and much more. In addition to everything else she's done at IRKPA, Susanna is the author of the award-winning "I Spy ... Isle Royale" (see page one).

We thank Susanna for her years with us and wish her, Mike and their son Jasper all the best on their new adventure.



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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 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), Steve Trynoski, Alan West, Sandy Wilhoit, Elizabeth Barrie, Vic Foerster

Staff

Mark Wilcox, Executive Director
Sharon Kisiel, Retail Sales Manager

We'd like to hear from YOU!

We're continually striving to make this newsletter as beneficial and interesting as possible to our members. **If you have ideas or suggestions, please email executivedirector@irkpa.org**

Would you like to see:

- ∞ More articles about Isle Royale (topic suggestions?)
- ∞ More articles about Keweenaw NHP (topic suggestions?)
- ∞ More photos of the parks?
- ∞ More stories of in-park experiences from fellow members?
- ∞ More about IRKPA-sponsored projects/results?
- ∞ Something else? (please specify!)

Thank You: We offer our sincere thanks to Dan Rogalla and Darcy Rutkowski whose terms on our Board of Directors have expired. Thank you for your years of service to our Board!