

A look back at an IRKPA Summer



IRKPA Annual Meeting attendees gathered for a picnic lunch at Rock Harbor



Candy & Rolf Peterson leading a talk at the Rock Harbor Auditorium

IRKPA had a busy summer. The Isle Royale National Park (IRNP) Houghton Visitor Center, where we operate one of our four educational stores, had steady traffic all season, with a general uptick in sales. At Keweenaw National Historical Park (KNHP), visitation was robust, with our overall sales at the Calumet Visitor Center up by as much as 20%. I engaged visitors during a weekly shift at the Calumet Visitor Center. I enjoyed talking to tourists and locals who visit KNHP to learn more about the history of the Copper Country, receive assistance with genealogy queries, and plan their visits to Heritage Sites.

We had our Annual Meeting on IRNP at the end of July. We were delighted to host Candy & Rolf Peterson for an evening program in the Rock Harbor Auditorium, discussing the wolf-moose project and the relationship between humans and nature, and what we owe each other. Over 80 visitors joined us, many running through an intense rain storm to join the conversation.

We also welcomed new and returning MTU students at the Afternoon on the Town, where we greeted students with lighthouse posters, stickers, and interpretive items loaned to us from the IRNP Houghton Visitor Center. IRKPA also had a booth at Pasty Fest, helping visitors from near and far enjoy pasties, artisan crafts, music, and an all-around great time.

IRKPA will once again be at various late fall art and craft shows, so please stop by and get a gift for that IRNP and KNHP fan in your life. As always, you can shop online at www.irkpa.org. Thank you for your continued support. Our organization can do the work we do because of members like you!

Upcoming Events

- **Board meeting:** Saturday, October 25, 1 pm, via Zoom
- **Keweenaw Art Affair,** Saturday, November 8, 9-3, Houghton High School
- **Home for the Holidays Gift Market:** Saturday, November 29, 10-3, Rozsa Center
- **Poor Artists Sale,** Saturday, December 6, 11-4, CLK Gym, Calumet



Photo credit: NPS/A.Kraft

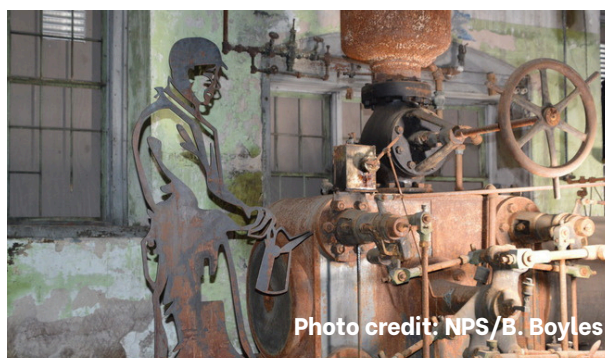


Photo credit: NPS/B. Boyles

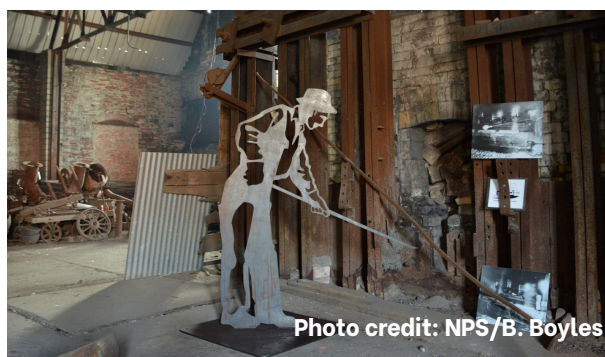


Photo credit: NPS/B. Boyles

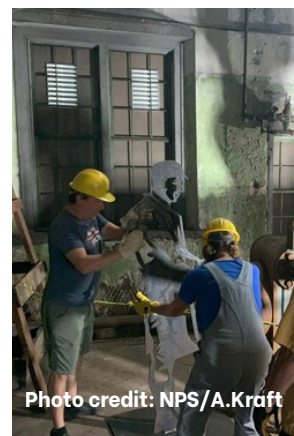


Photo credit: NPS/A.Kraft



Photo credit: NPS/B. Boyles

New Art from Kasey Koski

On July 30th, 2025, additional pieces of commissioned art work from Kasey Koski were unveiled at the Quincy Smelter, part of a project started in 2024. In total, there are now nine metal silhouettes installed with the goal of using “art to return the presence of people to these historic landscapes.” Pieces are located at the Quincy Mine, the Dryhouse Ruins, and the Quincy Smelter. The new pieces at the Quincy Mine and Quincy Smelter were designed with the object of representing the roles of workers within the industrial landscape. Once again, IRKPA partnered with the Keweenaw NHP, Keweenaw NHP’s Advisory Commission, and the Quincy Mine Hoist Association to support this unique interpretative mission.

Kasey, an artist currently based out of Wenatchee, Washington, has strong ties to the Keweenaw Peninsula. She was born and raised in the area and attended Finlandia University.

You can view more photos of the pieces, as well as get a behind-the-scenes peak of the installation, on the KNHP website: <https://www.nps.gov/kewe/getinvolved/commissioned-artist-program-photo-gallery.htm>. You can also check out Kasey’s online portfolio: <https://www.kaseykoskiart.com/keweenaw-national-historical-park>.

We are working to create unique merchandise featuring these pieces, so stay tuned to our online store!

Thank you to our volunteers for helping to install new shelving!

With the help of volunteers (and our trusty rangers for transport assistance), IRKPA installed two new shelving units at both the Rock Harbor and Windigo/Ozaagaateng Visitor Centers. This allows us to better display our popular t-shirts. We sold approximately 1,000 t-shirts this year! All proceeds of these sales go directly to support our parks! Thank you to Art Pontynen for his dedicated craftsmanship and time.



Photo credit: A. Pontynen



Photo credit S. Kisiel



Photo credit S. Kisiel

New Initiative: Emerging Artist Program



Photo credit: P. Lewandowski

Paige, with her K9 partner, Paavo, a registered therapy and crisis response dog in her classroom

IRKPA is working with Isle Royale National Park and Paige Lewandowski to launch a new “Emerging Artist Program” for 2026. The program will consist of a one-week immersive experience for 5 early-career artists (aged 22–35) who have developed a focused creative practice but are not yet ready for a full artist-in-residence opportunity. This program will act as a bridge between the Teen Artist Exploration and the Artist-in-Residence program, while offering space, mentorship, and meaningful time in nature to artists still shaping their voice.

Paige, with IRKPA’s support, has begun applying for grants and community sponsorship opportunities. Public engagement plans for the program may include a cohort art show, a post-residency public workshop, and a print or postcard available for sale in our educational stores to help fund the future of the Program.

If you have questions or wish to support the program, please reach out to emergingartist@irkpa.org or executivedirector@irkpa.org.

Two UW-EC Public History Fellows at KNHP this summer

IRKPA helped fund two interns from the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire's Public History Department: E Thompson and Sy Neville. E and Sy spent their summer conducting original research in the area's archives and collections. Sy's focus is on identity in the Copper Country. Sy explores how identity is important, and how identity shapes community through the lens of church, society, and the neighborhoods of mining families in the area. Sy also looked at how historians learn about community and identity by reviewing historical records. E spent time researching the purpose of local parks such as Agassiz Park, as well as what they represent, and how they have changed over time.



Photo credit: NPS/A. Kraft

Both E and Sy also spent time in visitor engagement at the Calumet Visitor Center, creating and sharing pop-up programs in their areas of research.

Interns Sy Neville and E Thomson at an excursion at Adventure Mine

The KEWE-UWEC Research & Intern Fellowship is a partnership providing funding for two undergraduate and/or graduate students to conduct research and complete hands-on public history field work. IRKPA is proud to fund these students in the unique historical context of Calumet and the Keweenaw Peninsula.



Photo credit: NPS/A. Kraft

Calumet Celebrates Sesquicentennial

Calumet celebrates its 150th year in 2025, and there have been festivities all year long, including CroFest in August and a block party in September. There is still time to celebrate, with a Halloween Party on October 31st and the Red Jacket Ball on December 13th. Keweenaw NHP is celebrating by hosting an exhibit on display on the third floor through the end of the year (pictured left).

Visit <https://www.villageofcalumet.com/calumet-150th.html> for full details on upcoming events.

Robert M. Linn: A Reintroduction

When I started as Executive Director of IRKPA in April, I didn't know about Bob Linn. IRKPA shares an office with the George Wright Society (GWS), which Bob co-founded in 1980. Through the GWS, and IRKPA Board members, I learned about who he was, what he represents to IRKPA, and the evolving role of scientific inquiry within the Park Service. The Park Service's relationship with scientific research has fluctuated throughout the years, leading to a push and pull as the Park Service deals with funding constraints and the ever-present duality of the Park Service mandate to protect natural and cultural resources while providing the public opportunities to use and enjoy these same resources.

Bob Linn, a biologist, served as Chief Naturalist at Isle Royale National Park and eventually Chief Scientist for the Park Service until 1973. In many ways, he helped continue the legacy of George Meléndez Wright, author of *Fauna of the National Parks of the United States*, a *Preliminary Survey of Faunal Relations in National Parks*, the first significant attempt to survey wildlife and issues facing wildlife within the Parks. Wright's untimely death in 1936 meant that it would take decades for the Park Service to balance its position between those who envisioned the parks as places of recreation, tourism, and public access, and wildlife biologists, who wanted to preserve the parks' ecological integrity. This interplay is nuanced and much has been written about it. I recommend reading *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* by Richard West Sellars, available through the NPS website, as well as a piece celebrating Bob Linn's life from *The George Wright Forum* in Volume 21, Number 4.

Bob Linn loved Isle Royale National Park. We honor Bob Linn and his vision for ecological research by awarding a research grant that investigates historical, cultural, ecological, or biological issues that address the management priorities of Isle Royale National Park.

This year we awarded the research grant to Chase Jensen, a graduate student at Northern Michigan University. Chase spent 31 days on Isle Royale this summer, conducting field work for his research. Chase and his team measured vegetation cover and moose browsing intensity within 7 open canopy "savannas" on the southwestern end of Isle Royale. As Chase summarized: "The main objective of this research was to describe ecosystem change in these areas as a result of moose herbivory. The research trip was successful and I am currently back at my university preparing the final publication of our research."



Photo credit: Milt Stenlund/GWS

Bob Linn at Isle Royale National Park



Photo credit: C. Jensen

From left to right: Jacquelin Stankowicz, Chase Jensen, Parker Schleuning, Stefon Hoyle-Groa Scout Nebor

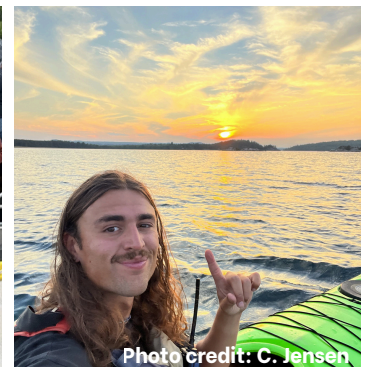


Photo credit: C. Jensen

Chase Jensen at Isle Royale National Park



P.O. Box 233
Houghton, MI 49931-0233

Forwarding Service Requested

Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association

P.O. Box 233, Houghton, MI 49931-0233
906-482-7860
www.irkpa.org

IRKPA is the membership-based non-profit 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



facebook.com/IRKPA



isro_kewe_org

Board of Directors

Elizabeth Barrie, Marilyn Cooper, Emily Dekker-Fiala (Secretary/Treasurer), Michael George, Alison Pontynen, Richard Marsh, Kris Schourek, Alan West, Sandy Wilhoit (President)

Staff

Adrienne Detanico (Executive Director)
Sharon Kisiel (Retail Sales Manager)



photo credit: A. Detanico