

From the Desk of Robert Strittmatter,

Fort Wilkins Historic State Park Supervisor....

2013 was a terrific year at Fort Wilkins Historic State Park. We accomplished several cultural stewardship goals and provided dozens of educational and recreational opportunities for the public.

Last year the fort saw its second highest attendance totals in a decade. This is in large part due to the programs and events sponsored by the Fort Wilkins Natural History Association (FWNHA). I can't thank the FWNHA enough for their continued support. I would also like to thank all of the individuals and groups who volunteered their time and resources to do programs. Their expertise and passion show. Their efforts help to make Fort Wilkins the special place it is.

FWNHA SPONSORED PROGRAMS IN 2013

- Memorial Day Program
- Living History Program (Role Players)
- Battery D
- Children Nature & History Programs (New Outreach Program in 2013)
- Fall Festival and Geocaching
- 34 Evening Programs
- 2 Meteor & S'mores Events

In 2013 the FWNHA launched a pilot outreach program intended to introduce children to fun history and natural resource based education programs. Programs varied from historic dress and games to bugs and mammals. There is nothing more rewarding then watching children have fun and accidently learning at the same time.

Photos from Children's Insect and Mammals Programs



Photo of Battery “D” Early Sunday Morning Cannon Firing-there is a hint of frost on the grass-July



It was also a very busy year for preservation and restoration work at Fort Wilkins. A wide variety of projects were accomplished ranging in scale from painting projects to replacing an entire cedar shingle roof. I am very fortunate to be working with such a dedicated and skilled staff that cares very deeply for the preservation of “Old Fort Wilkins”.

Some of the restoration projects completed in 2013 were:

- Completed interior restoration of the West Mess Hall
- Emergency Foundation Repair under East Officer Quarter Kitchen
- Restoration of the entire north exterior wall of the Hospital
- Restoration/residing of the west wall of the West Mess Hall
- Log replacement on the east wall of the Bakery
- Exterior restoration of the entire Sutler’s store (repair and refinish existing siding).
- Exterior restoration of the entire Quartermaster’s building (repair and refinish existing siding)
- Plaster repair in the old Copper Harbor Light Keepers Dwelling
- New cedar shingle roof on the West Mess Hall
- Interior restoration of the east room in Married Enlisted Men’s cabin #3
- Repair chinking and repainting of the Black Smith Shop
- Repair chinking and repainting of the Bakery
- New energy efficient exhibit lighting in the Garrison Life Exhibit and the Red Metal Exhibit
- Emergency stabilization of the roof at the Eagle Harbor Life Saving Station Boathouse

Bakery log replacement Before



After



West Mess Hall Interior Restoration



New Roof on West Mess Hall



Bakery & Blacksmith Shop Exterior Restoration



**West Mess Hall Siding Replacement
With Unsalvageable Siding Removed**



With New Siding



North Hospital Wall Restoration



Sutler's Store Restoration



Quartermasters Restoration



E.H. Boathouse Emergency Roof Repair



In 2013 A Phase One Cultural Resource Survey was completed on 498+ acres located on the south side of Lake Fanny Hooe. This survey was conducted to identify and locate cultural resources associated with the earliest organized copper mining in the Keweenaw. This survey was funded by a donation from the Fort Wilkins Natural History Association, a Keweenaw Heritage Grant (KNHP Advisory Commission), and from Recreation Passport sales. The Department of Social Sciences at Michigan Technological University (MTU) conducted the survey. The excerpt below is from the introduction of the survey completed by MTU.

Excerpt from the Introduction of the Phase One Survey:

During the spring and summer of 2013, archaeologists from the Department of Social Sciences at Michigan Technological University (MTU) conducted a Phase One archaeological and historical survey of lands in the possession of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and incorporated within Fort Wilkins Historic State Park. The survey's objective was to determine the presence of archaeological sites and cultural resources within a 498-acre parcel of land acquired by the State in 1998. This parcel lies on the south shore of Lake Fanny Hooe (in T59N, R28W) and includes lands surrounding Lake Manganese (in T58N, R28W), located one half mile southwest of Lake Fanny Hooe.

These lands were once part of General Land Office Mining Lease #4, issued in 1844 at the outset of organized copper mining in the Lake Superior Mining District (Lake District). This makes these some of the first lands impacted by American settlement in the western portion of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. For much of the historic record of the area, interest in these lands was concerned primarily with their mineral potential, followed by their timber resources.

In the last few decades, that interest shifted towards its recreational potential. For Fort Wilkins Historic State Park, the greatest interest is in preserving the natural landscape (an admittedly altered one through historic industrial exploitation) surrounding Lake Fanny Hooe and the historic fort complex. Recently the construction of a footbridge across Manganese Falls damaged portions of an historic industrial structure associated with the longest tenured mining operation in the immediate area. It was determined that a survey was required to identify sites and prevent further potential damage to the property's historic fabric.

Beginning in April 2013, MTU examined mine company records, personal accounts, historic aerial photography, archival images (including maps), and other primary and secondary sources for information regarding potential cultural resources and impacts to the lands in question. Fieldwork at the location took place intermittently from May 14 to August 3, 2013, and was led by MTU graduate student Sean M. Gohman under the direction of Professor Patrick E. Martin. MTU graduate students Alfonso Tinoco and John Baeten assisted in the fieldwork, as well as in report preparation.

The report provides a summary of the history of the lands in question with a focus on: the activities of the Pittsburgh & Boston Copper Harbor Mining Company, the French Mining Company, and other mining interests that owned and or controlled the lands, field methods employed during the survey, and the results of that fieldwork. Also included are historic images, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps, and field photographs to provide a visual context to the decisions made regarding field methods. This report concludes with recommendations for Fort Wilkins Historic State Park regarding future archaeological investigations and any listed site's potential interpretive value.

Within the area surveyed were found historic mine workings, a mining location/company town, the remains of two industrial structures, and evidence of dams used to generate waterpower. MTU did an outstanding job throughout the entire process. I would like to personally thank MTU

graduate student Sean M. Gohman and Professor Patrick E. Martin for their work on this project. The phase I Cultural Resource Survey will greatly enhance our ability to manage and preserve these cultural resources moving forward.

The photo, caption, & citation below are from the completed survey and shows the Manganese Location; the remains of which are located in the surveyed area.



Photo Courtesy Michigan Tech Archives

Photograph taken in 1909 of Manganese Location. The structures at center form a rough line along an historic roadway, and date from the early 1860s. The larger structure in the

background is off this road, and dates from a later period (most likely 1870s). It may in fact be the location of Leon Lauvaux's store. From the Reeder Photograph Collection, MTU Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, MI. Image #: MS042-062-999-Z-476.

We accomplished a lot in 2013 working together and 2014 is shaping up to be just as exciting. We have two major roofing projects planned for this summer. In early June Fort Wilkins staff will begin replacing the cedar shingle roof on the West Barracks. Unfortunately this means that we will not be able to use the building for programs until August. We will also be replacing the entire roof on the Eagle Harbor Life Saving Station Boathouse. We have currently contracted a Historic Architect for design services on the boathouse and will be bidding out the construction soon. A Historic Structures Report is underway for the Copper Harbor Range Light Station. This important planning document will help to guide the restoration, preservation, and use of the range light station. The Michigan Historical Center and the Parks and Recreation Divisions of the Department of Natural Resources are currently planning on having an archaeological investigation of the Pittsburgh and Boston Copper Harbor Mining Company site (1844-1847) conducted this summer. The information gathered during this investigation will be used for preservation and public interpretation of the sites.

As another summer at Fort Wilkins Historic State Park approaches I look forward to working together to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead. I want to take one last opportunity to thank the FWNHA for their efforts to promote the area, preserve our history, and share the Fort Wilkins story. If you have any questions or ideas, please contact me at 906-289-4215.

Sincerely,

Robert Strittmatter, Park Supervisor
Fort Wilkins Historic State Park
Parks & Recreation Division
906-289-4215