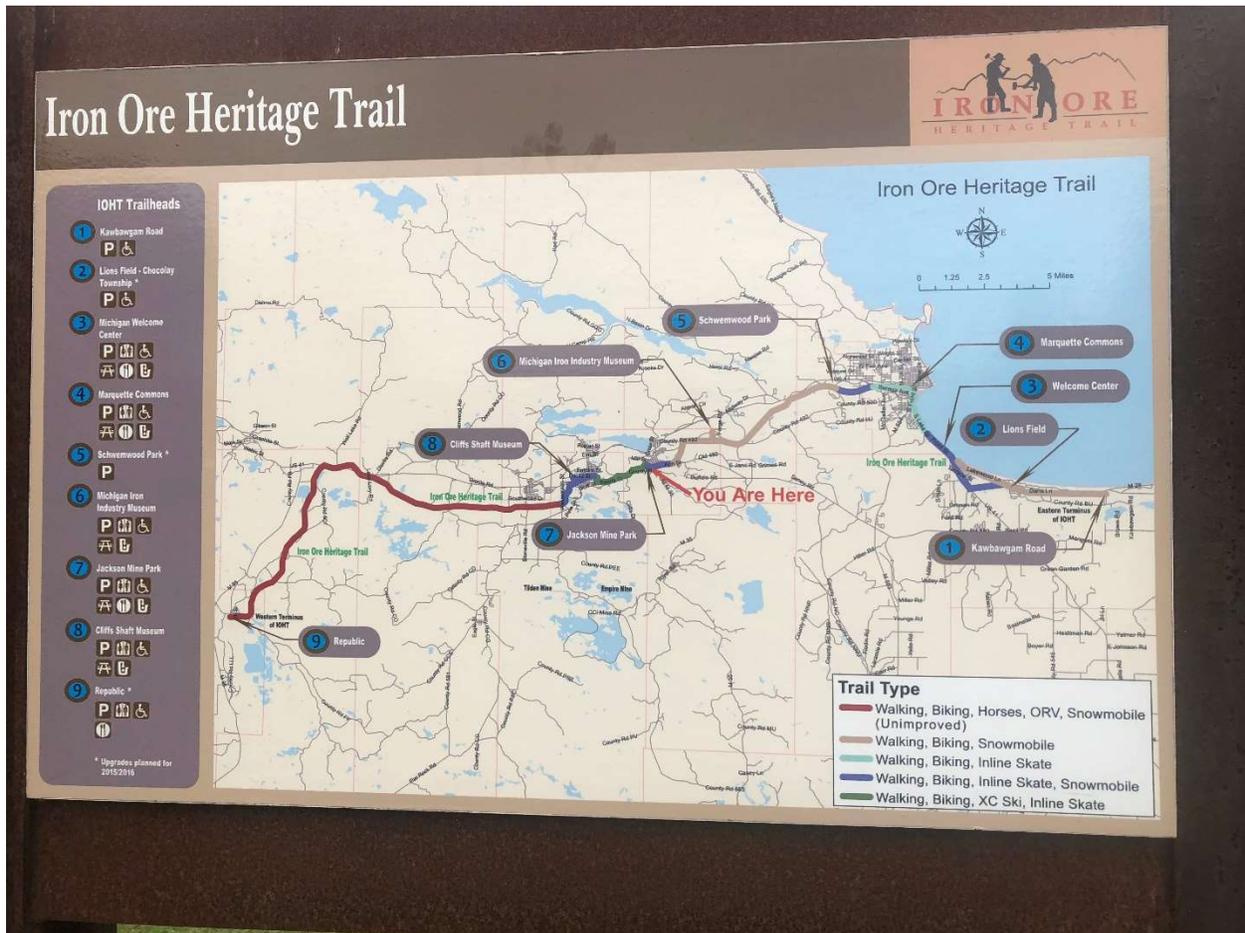


URL: <https://ironoreheritage.com>



NOMINEE AND PROJECT DETAILS

1) Give a brief summary of the Phoenix nominee. If the nominee involves a project, include the date of completion

Extending 47 miles from the shores of Lake Superior in Marquette, Michigan, to the source of iron ore first mined in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, the Iron Ore Heritage Trail is a National Recreation Trail that connects the major communities in the region—three cities and seven townships—while interpreting the rich history of iron mining in the region. It is a multi-use, year-round trail.

The effort to create the trail began in 2007. We saw the corridor in 1997, 2009, and 2018, by which point the Iron Ore Heritage Trail met its initial community-connecting and interpretive goals. Additional restoration of historic sites along the route as well as infrastructure needs such as new trailheads and erosion control continues.

2) Explain why the nominee merits a Phoenix Award for contribution to preservation, conservation, beautification, or environmental efforts as well as how it encourages sustainable and responsible tourism for the future of travel to the area involved. If possible, include significant document details.

Industrial sites are often difficult targets for restoration because of the inherent hazards of age and materials. What the Iron Ore Heritage Trail did was take a landscape and waterfront deeply affected by human activity and turn it into a scenic recreation destination while restoring key elements of the industrial past that shaped the region. Early iron mining was a messy business, leaving open pits and heaps of waste rock around processing areas. This trails project reimagined the long-abandoned mines as a tourism asset, paralleling creation of a recreation corridor with interpretation of the history of mining along the route. The trail provides access to restored historic sites, connects the historic mining communities, and offers destinations along its route for related outdoor recreation such as fishing, birding, mountain biking. Community involvement—from trail easements to local volunteers to artisans working on installations along the trail—makes the trail itself sustainable.

As the entire trail can be traversed by foot or bike, it's a green way to sightsee both inside and outside the city of Marquette, the largest city in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Each of the cities along the route has its own museums that relate to the core theme of mining in the region where it first began in Michigan.

3) Did the nominee involve the community? If so, give details and list other agencies, resources or organizations that assisted. If not, please enter n/a.

NOMINATOR NOTE: these project details provided by request from Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Area administrator and may have been summarized by nominator in the final Phoenix Award application.

The following community agencies lent their support to the imagining, development, and completion of the trail. In addition, local businesses were involved in visioning sessions, and continue to support the trail through project-specific funding and sponsorships.

Lake Superior Community Partnership, a private/public partnership that oversees economic development and Chamber functions in Marquette County back in early 2000's. – Provided a paid staff member to shepherd the project. Hosted visioning sessions, brought in experts, provided printed materials.

Ten municipalities, including the cities of Ishpeming, Negaunee and Marquette plus townships of Marquette, Chocolay, Negaunee, Tilden, Ely, Humboldt and Republic – Approved forming the Iron Ore Recreation Authority (via a public Act passed by the State of Michigan to provide 2 or more municipalities to work on recreation projects and get funding through a property tax increase and/or bonding.) Community involvement was instrumental in the beginning stages, providing start-up grants as well as leases/easements on land for the trail so signage and mile markers could be installed. Each member municipality appoints a voting citizen of their city/township to serve on the Board of the Recreation Authority.

Noquemanon Trail Network – A non-motorized trail non-profit building cross country ski and mountain bike trails. Provided the idea of connecting the major cities of the region with a non-motorized trail.

Marquette County – Provided their planning person to help with the project and provided funding, as well as wellness funding through their Health Department. The Health Department is a big proponent of the trail and promotes it through their office, letters to the editor, etc.

Michigan Department of Natural Resources – Owned much of the rail grades used to operate snowmobile trails from December 1 to March 31 each year. Instrumental in allowing us to use their rails, provided information on new rail/grades, provided funding through grant programs, provided Directors orders to keep trails non-motorized in summer on some parts of the trail, provided details on how to obtain funding, aggregate types, pros/cons, etc., provided point people on trail development. Provided the conduit between trail users, including non-motorized, ORV groups, snowmobile groups, hiking groups.

National Park Service - Rivers, Trails and Conservation – Assisted with outreach to community members so the public could provide input on the project. Sessions held in municipality with a map of their particular city/township and how the proposed trail would go through their area. Attendees asked to help map the cultural, historical, natural and tourism assets of their area. Those, in turn, led to interpretive signage placement.

Community Foundations – Provided funding for various projects, backing for the trail. Partnered on major grants.

Local museums/historical societies – Provided information on the stories for interpretation including photos. Were part of community visioning sessions.

Michigan Department of Transportation – Transportation Enhancement grant provided one of the largest funding sources for building the trail: \$777,000.

Michigan Trails and Greenways – Michigan non-profit for trail development. Provided expertise and funding.

Moose Country Snowmobile Club – Provided maintenance along trails. Upgraded bridges. Partnered on grants to rebuild bridges that were burned or washed out.

Superior View Studios – Provides historical photos for signage at no cost.

Michigan Iron Industry Museum (MIIM) , Cliffs Shaft Museum, Marquette Regional History Museum, Republic Historical Society, Negaunee Historical Society, Ishpeming Historical Society – Provides historic expertise and images to help with interpretation.

Travel Marquette/CVB – Housed the offices of the Iron Ore Recreation Authority for several years. Provides marketing.

Adopt-A-Milers – Include Marquette Rotary, UPHS Bell Hospital, Brett Conklin and Family, Marquette Community Foundation Youth Committee, U of M Alumni, Ishpeming and Negaunee Lions Clubs

Michigan Representatives and Senators - Came to visioning sessions. Provided letters of support for grant funding. In the early years, they worked with Senator Stupak (U.S. Representative on

Heritage Area legislation) and visited various offices in Washington to gain expertise on various funding sources.

Michigan Economic Development Corporation/Patronicity – Provided funding for resurrecting a historic charcoal burning kiln that collapsed and placing it in a new park along the trail. Crowdfunding through Patronicity was matched by MEDC up to \$25K.

4) Explain the impact the nominee has had on the local community. Include relevant details on promoting sustainability and/or discouraging over-tourism.

NOMINATOR NOTE: these project details provided by request from Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Area administrator and may have been summarized by nominator in the final Phoenix Award application.

The Iron Ore Heritage Trail has become one of the county's most beloved recreational assets. In a 2019/2020 County recreation plan survey, the trail was listed most often as one of the county's best assets. The trail connects its major cities and goes right through them so it brings people to tourism destinations and goods and services in each community, while offering an alternate, green transportation corridor to highway travel. Museums along the route offer trailheads, given their ample parking areas. This encourages trail users to learn more about the iron mining industry and local region.

The trail goes past most of the region's major iron ore relics: the huge ore dock in Marquette's harbor, the towering obelisk mine shafts in Ishpeming, the historic mine pits in Ishpeming and Negaunee, the original mine discovery site, the original neighborhoods of Ishpeming and Negaunee, and historic buildings associated with mining and/or mining money. In doing so, it ties regional history together through an outdoor corridor and provides a source of pride of the people of this region for the hard work of their ancestors, as well as pride for those still employed in the mining industry. The trail helps residents rediscover historical and natural features. It also showcases what mining meant to the growth of the area, which speaks to the immigrant story of the region—large numbers of Finns and Italians emigrated to the Upper Peninsula to work these mines.

Rail and iron form a theme. A local artist and fabricating team took on the idea of using the discarded rail--pulled up when the railroad line was decommissioned, and in need of being removed from the trail surface—to develop mile markers and interpretive signage. Those rails were once used to bring the ore to the harbor, so it has been recycled into the trail. The same team found a way to keep iron ore pellets from sliding from a hill onto the trail by creating watercolor artwork in a steel frame, telling the story of transportation through the ages on this particular corridor. This art installation is one of many. The variety of visual elements along the trail gives residents and visitors a lot to see and learn in addition to their immersion in natural habitats.

5) List the challenges or obstacles the nominee overcame to meet the objectives of the project. This may include funding, politics, development issues, etc.

NOMINATOR NOTE: these project details provided by request from Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Area administrator and may have been summarized by nominator in the final Phoenix Award application.

Funding. A political football at first, including small townships worried about bigger cities taking their money, everyone worried about their recreation budgets being raided for a new project, and a new organization being formed.

Oversight. Motorized users didn't want a non-motorized non-profit to do it and vice versa. Small townships didn't want the Lake Superior Community Partnership to do it as they felt there was a bias. After many meetings and the use of an out of town group hired to reach out to all municipalities, it was decided to form the Recreation Authority with each member getting one board member appointment and funding to come through a new property tax increase that would have to be approved by the majority of voters in each participating municipality.

Stakeholder Representation. Marquette and its surrounding area are more attuned to non-motorized users while the smaller cities and townships with more open space wanted motorized use. The Recreation Authority compromised, allowing motorized use on the west end of the trail. On the eastern end, non-motorized use in warm weather with snowmobile use in winter. Inside the city of Marquette the trail is totally non-motorized all year round.

Property issues. While the State of Michigan owned about 65% of the rail grade, the remainder of the corridor had to be acquired through purchases, swaps, and long term easements, with some unwilling sellers in the mix. A large chunk of land between Negaunee and Marquette was under private property ownership. A land exchange between the private property owner and the State was commenced. Appraisals were paid for, parcels were discussed for equal value, and title searches were done. After 1.5 years, the State refused to swap due to potential land contamination of what was once mining property. However, the State gifted the Recreation Authority land to swap directly with the private property owner-- the Authority was permitted to own possibly contaminated land but the State could not. A railroad owner with a small railroad refused to sell, in case of future possible use. The trail route had to be directed around this section, which meant crossing a body of water, dealing with steeper hills, and coming up with \$200,000. A grant from a local mining company foundation saved the day. In addition, an at-grade crossing of an active line of the Canadian National Railroad had to be negotiated, costing an additional \$40,000 to meet their specifications. One overpass in Marquette--a critical connection over a very busy highway--took negotiations between the city and the state Transportation Department to ensure the bridge would be preserved for trail use.

6) List chronologically the schedule of major activities undertaken to complete this project

NOMINATOR NOTE: timeline provided by request by Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Area administrator. May have been summarized by nominator in the final Phoenix Award application.

May 2007. 10 governments sign on to the Articles of Incorporation of Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Authority, forming a management group for the 47-mile, multi-use, year round, interpretive trail across the Marquette Iron Range. The Authority uses the Lake Superior Community Partnership's staff to shepherd projects.

2007 – City of Negaunee (through legwork down by Authority) uses Transportation Enhancement Grant to build a 2.5 mile section of new trail through newly public owned lands (once mining lands) to connect Ishpeming and Negaunee

Summer 2008 – Ishpeming/Negaunee connecting trail opens to public in 2008 and is greeted with cheers all around. First time the two communities are able to be connected for non-motorized use without using highway and County road shoulders.

2008 – Authority works with City of Ishpeming to apply for two grants: Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund and Transportation Enhancement to build another 2.5 mile trail through Ishpeming. Authority does legwork on grants and getting needed property easements.

November 2008 – Millage vote goes to voters in 10 municipalities. Fails in 2 of them and therefore does not get approved.

2009 – Work with municipalities to continue to the Authority toward a second vote in 2010. Three municipalities (most western) drop off the Authority. Work continues on Ishpeming trail project

2010 – Ishpeming trail opens offering another 2.5 miles of paved trail.

August 2010 – Voters in 7 municipalities approve the millage increase and Authority now has funding.

2011 – Begin work on the 12-mile section of trail between Marquette and Negaunee. This project has the land swap, railroad crossing, highway overpass, ledgeway problems. We apply for Trust Fund monies and use the Marquette County Road Commission to apply for Transportation Enhancement grant. Awarded both, one for \$400,000 and the other for \$777,000. Project comes in at 1.5 million and we need to look for extra funding.

2011 – Republic Township votes to rejoin the Authority and votes in a millage increase

2012 – Project begins late in 2012 after all the problems sorted out.

2013 – Negaunee to Marquette section finishes and trail opens with visit by Governor Snyder and many legislators in attendance. (Marquette already has a trail built earlier in the 2000's through a land purchase of the lower harbor and rail corridor.)

2014 – Republic gets a 2.5 mile trail opened up in their community with bike path aggregate.

Private foundation funding helps us place kiosks at 9 trailheads.

2015 – Tilden Township 2.5 mile trail gets upgraded and opened to public with bike path aggregate.

Funding for pellet protection artwork. Chocolay and Marquette Township trailheads get funded for connecting trails from parking to main IOHT

2016 – Seven municipalities vote for renewal of millage

Four trailheads get upgrades including bike racks, bike fixing stations, benches, landscaping

2016 - 2-mile Negaunee section gets upgraded from bike aggregate to pavement

2017 – Republic voters approve millage renewal

Negaunee Mine Memorial site developed with artwork, signage and walking path

2018 – Grants approved for Negaunee and Ishpeming indoor trailhead structures

Grant approved to build several weather shelters and fishing piers along Negaunee to Marquette section

2019/2020 – Carp River Kiln restoration project begins. Funding is lined up. Architect plans drawn up, plans approved by Marquette Planning Commission and project begins late in 2019. Project finished in June 2020 with small opening ceremony due to COVID. New historical spot becomes a big hit for trail users.

2019/2020 – Major restoration project along Lake Superior shoreline due to high water/big storm erosion. Bids go out for fishing piers/weather shelter project and awarded too late in 2019 to start.

2020 – Negaunee Township trailhead development grant awarded.

Ishpeming opens up its new trailhead building.

2020 – One mile section of trail gets upgraded from aggregate to pavement in heavily used section in Marquette Township. New underpass is also developed to bring IOHT users safely from south side of US 41 to north side businesses and non-motorized and motorized trails.

2021 – One weather shelter, one bird watching platform, and three accessible fishing piers project begins with projected June 30 finish date.

2021 – Negaunee Township trailhead plans being developed with bids to go out this summer and hopes that we finish by end of year. Includes paved parking, pit toilet, signage, benches, bike racks, landscaping at major corner of M35/CR492, half way between Negaunee and Marquette.

2021 – Applied for two grants: One to purchase property for more non-motorized trail development and one for a boardwalk development within marshlands owned by the IOHT.

IMAGES

Please list the people/organizations who should be receiving photo credit for each photo submitted. Please include a title for each photo and the photographer



Lower Harbor Ore Dock, downtown Marquette - Sandra Friend



Hilly terrain north of Marquette - John Keatley



Neguanee Mine Memorial interpretive stop - John Keatley



Iron Ore Heritage Trail park in Neguanee - Sandra Friend



Jackson Mine Historic Site, Negunee - John Keatley



Wooded corridor between Negunee and Ishpeming - Sandra Friend

NOMINATOR

When did you last visit the destination for the nomination project (include month and year)?

August 2018

Did the project destination host or financially subsidize all or any part of the visit?

The local CVB (Travel Marquette) worked with a small motor lodge to provide us two nights of accommodations near the trail. One lunch meal was provided by the trail administrator, who accompanied us on our first ride on the trail. All other expenses, including a return visit / lodging to bike more of the trail, and our visits to museums along the trail, were on our own.

Did you visit the area after the site was preserved, conserved and/or beautified?

Yes. Sandra first visited the Marquette waterfront in 1997, prior to any cleanup of the historic ore-loading docks and associated warehouses. A subsequent visit in 2009 during an SATW Central Chapter post-trip introduced her to the project via a visit to the Michigan Iron Industry Museum and the Marquette waterfront, where cleanup of industrial sites was underway and a paved segment of trail (now incorporated into the Iron Ore Heritage Trail) was completed.

In 2018, on a self-directed bike trail research trip through the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Sandra and John saw the results of what a decade's worth of local effort created—a destination-worthy bike trail that, through its routing and interpretation, tells the story of iron mining in Michigan.

If yes - what were your observations?

Befitting the intent of telling the region's story, interpretive information along the Iron Ore Heritage Trail is some of the richest we've seen along a linear corridor. The logo used for the trail markers incorporates both iron and miners. Maps on interpretive panels ground you in where things "used to be," since most of the old industrial sites are laid to rest under a thick cloak of forest. Special exhibits, such as that at Jackson Mine, incorporate art, historic artifacts, and interpretive panels to tell the story of the region's first iron mine. The Neguanee Mine Memorial relates the sad story of a mine collapse through a series of signs incorporating historic photos and artwork. A small park in Neguanee includes a pioneer log cabin that serves as a museum. Large boulders of minerals extracted from the mines are interpreted. The "attractive hazards" of fenced mine pits are offset by the wooded setting, artifacts, and interpretation. Local artisans crafted native materials—stone and wood—into rest stops.

Since the trail corridor connects the region's communities, it allows riders and hikers to stop for a meal or just to poke around the towns. The Iron Ore Heritage Trail shares the Lake Superior waterfront with the North Country National Scenic Trail, as well, providing recreational users direct access to restaurants, hotels, shops, parks, and museums in downtown Marquette. To the west of the lake, certain unpaved portions of the trail are open not just to cyclists and hikers but also to equestrians, snowmobilers, and cross country skiers, enabling year-round use. We found it very easy to get off the trail and see museums along the route, visiting the Marquette Maritime Museum, the Michigan Iron Industry Museum, and the Cliffs Mine Museum via the trail. There were others we didn't have the time to visit.

One of the delightful surprises of the trail was not just its historic sites but lots of related outdoor recreation along the route. Local mountain biking clubs maintain two separate, scenic, and

challenging sets of loop trails, the Noquemanon Trail Network (<https://noquetrails.org>) and the Ramba Trails (<https://www.rambatrails.com>), both of which we had an opportunity to sample. Sandra hiked a portion of the North Country Trail north from Marquette as well.

Additional Comments

Having grown up in an early Colonial iron mining village that never took an initiative to showcase its historic sites other than during the Bicentennial, Sandra is particularly impressed by not just the historic interpretation along the Iron Ore Heritage Trail but the effort taken by recreational groups to tie into the iron mining heritage theme. For instance, signage for interconnecting offroad trails around the historic iron pits use a mine ore cart as their main design and the graphic "load" in the cart is an elevation profile of the trail. Length, climb, and descent are provided along with more traditional markers for trail difficulty.

PLAQUE

Please type the full name of the nominee as it should appear on an award plaque.

Iron Ore Heritage Trail

Please type the name of the nominator as it should appear on an award plaque

Sandra Friend & John Keatley

To whom should the plaque be mailed if the nominee is selected as a winner?

Iron Ore Heritage Recreation Area

Attn: Carol Fulsher, Administrator

102 W. Washington Street, Suite 232

Marquette, MI 49855