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## Fort Wilkins Natural History Association

P.O. Box 104  
Copper Harbor, MI 49918

November 2011

Greetings from the Fort Wilkins Natural History Association.

The purpose of this communication is to share with you the 2011 FWNHA points of pride and share 2012 goals.

As always, it was a busy summer at Fort Wilkins Historic State Park. The following is a list of events and programs sponsored by the FWNHA. These annual activities provided education and enjoyment for this season's park visitors. Monies to fund the programs were raised from park store sales, pop and laundry vending machines, as well as memberships and donations.

- Memorial Day Program
- Fort Wilkins by Candlelight
- Star Gazing Event - Partnered with the Gratiot Lake Conservancy & MTU
- 33 Summer Evening Programs attended by 1,000+ visitors
- Battery D – 1<sup>st</sup> Michigan Light Artillery Civil War Encampment
- Geocaching Event
- Local Authors Meet and Great Book Signings
- Installation of Wi-Fi Equipment – Phase I East Campground and Park Store
- Website Update
- Extension of Sutler Exhibit Store Sales at the FWNHA Park Store

As the FWNHA looks forward to 2012, additional goals include installation of Wi-Fi in the West Campground, provide a housing subsidy for the role players, support the annual Battery D event as well as evening programs, Memorial Day Ceremony, geocaching and many more happenings.

In closing, it is your involvement that continues to provide the activities and events that make Fort Wilkins Historic State Park a very special place. Whether you volunteer your time, renew a membership, make a donation or purchase items at the park store, **you** help Fort Wilkins Historic State Park.

Thank you for being a friend of Fort Wilkins by your continued support of the FWNHA.

### FWNHA Board Members

Melvin Jones, Chairman  
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Miranda Davis  
Barb Foley  
Carol Jones

Patrick Martin  
Susan Martin  
Sharon Powers  
Sandi Siegmeier  
Dave Thomas

# FORT WILKINS HISTORIC STATE PARK

## 2012 Events

### Memorial Day Celebration

**May 28**

The Memorial Day Program will be held on the Fort Wilkins Parade Grounds. There will be a Copper Harbor School program, Memorial Day address, and the presentation of colors; refreshments will be provided. For more details contact the park at (906) 289-4215.

### Battery D

**July 27-29**

History comes alive at Fort Wilkins! Battery D, the 1st Michigan Light Artillery, and a Civil War era living history group returns to Fort Wilkins for its annual weekend encampment. The weekend event will be open to park visitors from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM on Friday and Saturday and 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Sunday. Battery D will interpret army life of the period, demonstrating artillery and small arms drills, period cooking and soldiers' pastimes. For more details contact the park at (906) 289-4215.

### Copperman Triathlon

**August 4**

This event begins at 9:00am at the Lake Fanny Hooe boating access site. Participants will swim tranquil Lake Fanny Hooe, bike the rocky shores of Lake Superior and run through wilderness on shady roads. The swim is 1/2 mile (cap mandatory and provided), bike is 23 miles (helmet mandatory – not provided), and run is 5 miles. Visitors may observe all three stages of the event from Lake Fanny Hooe boating access site. Register at [www.keweenawcopperman.org](http://www.keweenawcopperman.org) or phone Terry Smythe at (906) 482-8201 for more information. Sponsored by Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital. Participants must preregister. Registration is limited to 195 individuals and 50 teams. All registrations are final. No refunds. Entry Fees: Individuals: \$50.00 Teams: \$126.00. For more details contact the park at (906) 289-4215.

### Geocaching 101

**September 22**

What is Geocaching? It is a family-friendly activity that combines technology with the outdoors; if you don't know how to Geocache, don't worry, we will teach you how! Spend the day exploring the beautiful Keweenaw Peninsula during the fall color season at our Geocaching event. The event begins at 9:00 AM in the West Barracks of the Fort. A treasure hunt for the kids will be held at 3:00 PM before the evening cookout at 4:00PM. Following the event, the evening cookout will be a bonfire with provided hot dogs and snacks. For more details contact the park at (906) 289-4215.

## FWNHA Park Store Hours



May 24 to June 26 10:00 AM -6:00 PM  
June 27 to September 2 10:00 AM -8:00 PM  
Labor Day to October 14 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM



*From the Desk of Robert Strittmatter,*  
Fort Wilkins Historic State Park Supervisor....

Fort Wilkins Historic State Park saw 108,503 visitors this year, up 2.7% compared to 2010. Your support of our programs positively impacts our use. This year nearly 1,000 visitors attended the evening programs. I had the opportunity to participate in many of the events that are held at Fort Wilkins for the first time. I can't tell you enough how much I enjoyed the events. The West Barracks were filled to capacity for the Memorial Day program. Mel Jones, the school children, and the Keweenaw Detachment #1016, Marine Corp League did a wonderful job.

This was the 27<sup>th</sup> year that Battery "D" has visited Fort Wilkins. It is amazing how the fort comes to life. This year the event was held in August because of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War. This actually helped us gauge the impact the event has on the park. Use was up over 30% compared to the same week in 2010.



Fort Wilkins by Candlelight and Geocaching in the Keweenaw had between 150-200 participants each. This was the best attended Geocaching event to date. This year Fort Wilkins by Candlelight featured a melodrama performance that moved throughout the historic complex. A violinist played between scenes. It was very well received by all who attended.



The wireless internet provided by the Fort Wilkins Natural History Association in the East Campground was a huge hit with our visitors. The feedback we received was nothing but positive. We had numerous campers switch from the West Campground to the East when they found out about the internet service. We also had campers extend stays because they could stay connected. We even had a few weeks when the East Campground had higher use numbers than the west. The FWNHA has agreed to support wireless service into the West Campground for 2012.

The Michigan Historical Center also continued its efforts in providing interpretation and education at Fort Wilkins in 2011. The Living History Program, Future Historian Programs, and school group overnights bring history to life. There is nothing more fun than watching a bare foot child pushing a hoop through the parade grounds with a stick.



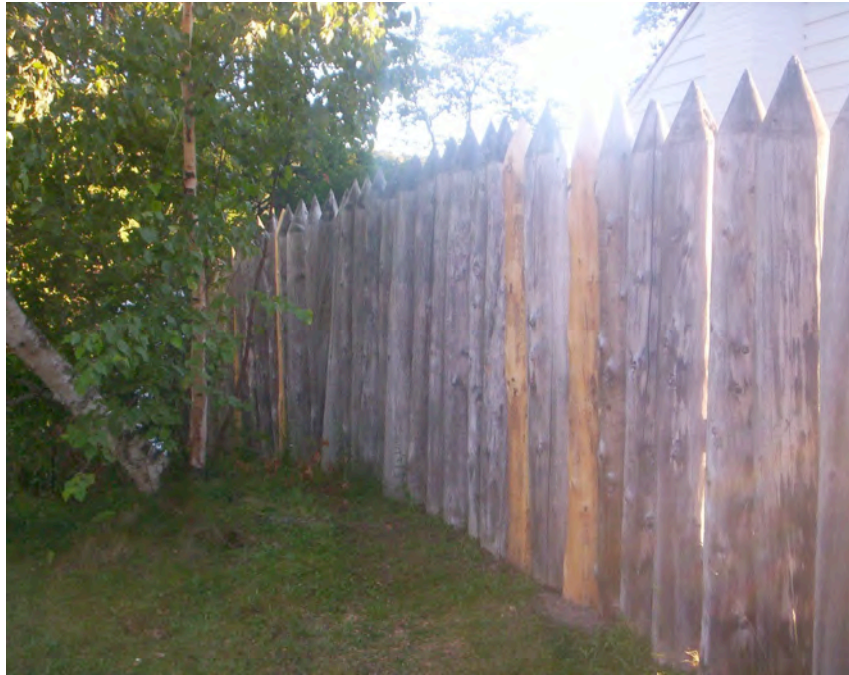
Overnight 2011

It has been a busy year for restoration and preservation projects at Fort Wilkins Historic State Park. The fort tends to generate a very long to-do list. Some of the restoration/preservation projects completed in 2011 include:

- New cedar shingle roofs on two married enlisted men's cabins



- Replaced missing and rotted stockade post and removed stabilization post



- Restored two period privies
- Restored and re-glazed 4 officer quarters windows and 4 married enlisted men's cabin windows
- Restored & repainted siding on the large south facing wall on the west officer's quarters and the north wall on the west barracks



- Numerous interior painting projects
- Numerous interior small plaster repair projects
- Re-painted the interior floors in the east mess hall and east barracks

This year we were successful in getting a Keweenaw Heritage Grant for \$7,500 awarded by the Keweenaw National Historic Park and the Advisory Commission. This grant will allow us to re-do the

married enlisted men's cabins exhibits. All 4 cabins will be open to the public. The old book store will become the new orientation cabin. There will also be new exhibits added. The staff at Fort Wilkins has been very busy restoring all of the cabins to period. We've put a lot of work into this project, but it's been very rewarding. The Michigan Historical Center will be building the new exhibit pieces and installing them in the spring when we have the buildings ready. The new exhibits will open in June 2012.



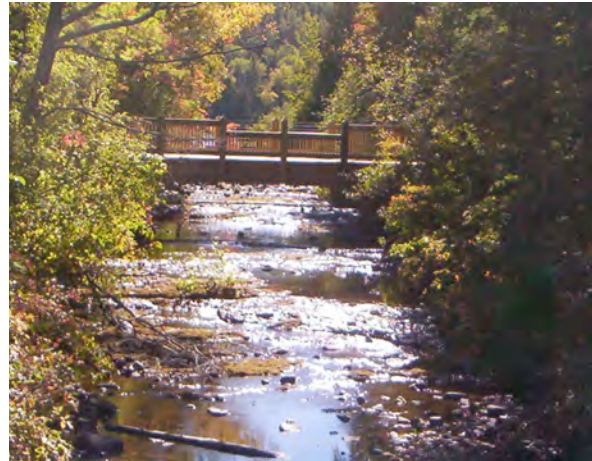
I am excited to announce that a contractor is currently working on resolving the bat issues in the range keepers dwelling. We've also purchased materials for exterior restoration of the building. Barry James, DNR Historical Center, has recently submitted a proposal to have a paint analysis completed for the historic district, and Brenda Laakso, DNR Historical Center, is working on a grant to have a Historic Structures Report done on the range light keepers dwelling. The grant is through the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (administered by the State Historic Preservation Office). The Historic Structures Report will provide detailed guidelines for the structure's exterior and interior restoration needs including proposed plans for adaptive reuse. The Historical Center and Parks & Recreation Division are excited to be moving forward on preserving this piece of history and sharing the story.

We've also been working on several other projects aimed at improving our visitor's experience. New colored hiking trail maps were placed at the intersections of the park hiking trails on the north side of Lake Fanny Hooe. These have been very popular.



This spring we started remodeling the interior of the campground office. This winter we will complete this project when we install an accessible counter. We've also made some accessibility upgrades to our camper cabin. We extended the accessible pathway from the ramp around to the front of the cabin and around the fire ring. An accessible picnic table was also placed on site.

Two new accessible pedestrian bridges have been installed in Fort Wilkins Historic State Park. One bridge is located on the south side of Lake Fanny Hooe on the Kamikaze Trail and the other bridge crosses over Fanny Hooe Creek into the fort. The old bridge crossing into Fort Wilkins will be replaced. The new bridge connects to the main pedestrian trail along 41 and will cross into the fort and exit at the stockade gate. The stockade will remain open. Bikers and hikers will no longer have to travel on 41 to cross the creek. The trail inside of the fort was designed with a vegetative buffer to separate it from the historic complex. This will also provide us with a barrier free entrance into the historic complex from the lighthouse overlook parking lot. Now that the plantings are in, I encourage you to come out and look it over.



As this year comes to an end, it's already time to start thinking about next year. Here are a few projects we have on schedule for 2012:

- Install energy efficient lighting in the Park Store and Park Shop
- Install accessible and water efficient faucets in the west and old east toilet/shower buildings
- Install lighting timers in the day use restrooms
- Install new bulletin boards and message centers in the park store breezeway
- Finish Married Enlisted Men's cabins restoration and exhibit install
- New roofs on two married enlisted men's cabins and repair 3 chimneys (all 4 will be done)
- Continue Stockade repairs
- Finish exterior restoration on Powder Magazine
- Try to put new roof on West Mess Hall if time permits
- Continue to work on fort building siding restoration

I have only been at the park a short time, but I can already see what all of you love about Fort Wilkins. I look forward to our continued relationship and common goal of promoting the area, preserving our history, and sharing the Fort Wilkins story. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any ideas for improving Fort Wilkins Historic State Park, please contact me at 906-289-4400.

Sincerely,

Robert Strittmatter, Park Supervisor  
Fort Wilkins Historic State Park  
Parks & Recreation Division  
906-289-4400



## FWNHA Membership

Please apply or renew a membership today.

Visit [www.fortwilkinsnha.org](http://www.fortwilkinsnha.org)


Click on the "Join" Tab Today!

Or Use our QR code below



**OPENING RECEPTION**  
**THURS. NOV. 17**  
**6:00 - 7:30 PM**

**"We Have To Go Out"**  
A History of the  
**Life-Saving Service of the Keweenaw**  
An exhibit by the Keweenaw County Historical Society



Watercolor painting of 1913 Waldo rescue. By John Brown.

**CARNEGIE MUSEUM**  
**DOWNTOWN HOUGHTON**  
**NOV. 2011 - MAY 2012**  
**TUE & THU 12 - 5 SAT 12 - 4**

You are Invited.....

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**Fort Wilkins Natural History Association  
PO Box 104  
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Complete the information below and mail a check to the address above payable to the FWNHA

or

Visit [www.fortwilkinsnha.org](http://www.fortwilkinsnha.org)  
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