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## Original Article

# Spatial boundaries and industrial landscapes at Keweenaw National Historical Park

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#### ABSTRACT

The geographies of dormant mining districts create preservation and interpretation challenges. Keweenaw National Historical Park (KNHP) is one of a relatively recent ensemble of United States National Park Service (NPS) sites designed to partner the federal government with state and local agencies and businesses. Building upon cultural landscape studies and park management issues, this paper is a case study of how a local community understands spatial boundaries of a public–private partnership park. Collectively, the park and its partners interpret and preserve dormant copper industry landscapes. Given that almost all of the land within park boundaries is privately owned through preexisting settlement, local residents often do not know where park boundaries are located. Ethnographic data reveal that local groups hold contrasting conceptions of which industrial landscapes are within KNHP. Scholars may use this case study to inform their investigations into parks and protected areas commemorating extractive industry heritage.

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### 1. Introduction

How do stakeholders perceive boundaries of privatized parks focused on preserving and interpreting geographically scattered extractive industries? Globally, national park formats vary in preservation and interpretation goals, spatial extent, land ownership, and management priorities. Amongst 401 sites, the United States National Park Service [hereafter NPS] preserves and interprets a broader ensemble of stories and landscapes than ever before (National Park Service, 2014b). Despite other countries emulating the NPS traditional park format, Keweenaw National Historical Park [hereafter KNHP] and other newly-created parks bring the agency options integrating ideas from many European national park systems where many national parks are heavily privatized with the intent of protecting landscapes. Local residents are seen as key stakeholders for collaborative park management (Hamin, 2001).

In addition to diversifying its focus outward from parks containing pastoral landscapes, the agency also finds itself in a neoliberal political climate where new parks are increasingly privatized (Stanton, 2006). Even before the NPS was created, private interests have sought to benefit from parkmaking

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2014.08.007 2214-790X/© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved. (Shaffer, 2001; Walker, 2009). These "partnership parks" include a mixture of federal, state, and local ownership and management of a given park (Hamin, 2001). As the NPS grows, KNHP is a prime example of a privatized park format showcasing extractive industry. The park is headquartered in Calumet, a former copper mining town located 675 km north of Chicago in Michigan's rural Upper Peninsula.

Prior to Congress' 1992 creation of the park, local community groups strove to create KNHP during a period of austerity and political unfeasibility of widespread federal land acquisition. Park boosters insisted that KNHP's high degree of privatization was the best model for managing the scattered spaces of the dormant copper industry without a large federal takeover of residents' neighborhoods. KNHP and other recent park creations have forced the NPS to rethink the role of park boundaries in the pursuit of collaborative management between the NPS and local interest groups.

In suggesting future directions for cultural landscape preservation, scholar of historic landscape preservation Robert Melnick concludes that rich empirical studies need to fill the "gaping lack of knowledge about landscape preservation management and maintenance" (Melnick, 2008, p. 206). Building upon this, Melnick argues for deepened collaborations between community participants and preservationists as a prerequisite for maximizing future levels of preservation ethics (Melnick, 2008). By categorizing four major groupings of perceptions of boundaries at KNHP, I offer

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M. Liesch/The Extractive Industries and Society xxx (2014) xxx-xxx

scholars a case study for examining boundaries of extractive industry-based parks and protected areas. KNHP is a publicprivate partnership containing sites scattered throughout Michigan's "Copper Country," a vernacular region whose cities and towns owe their existence to the copper mining industry. Investors from Boston and the northeastern United States funded one of the United States' earliest mining booms (Thurner, 1994; Lankton, 1999). Michigan's Copper Country has the world's largest concentration of pure copper; for over a century, its deep deposits been mined through a variety of technological advancements. Calumet consists both of a privatized downtown business district which stands in contrast to formerly-company owned industrial social, and residential spaces. Calumet is notable in United States labor history for its longstanding corporate paternalism and efforts to resist it (Alanen, 2000). By 1848, the Copper Country provided approximately 95 percent of copper used in the United States, and it remained the country's leader during the early industrial revolution. However, extraction costs grew costly compared to national and global competitors, and the region's last operating copper mine closed in 1968. Thereafter, the Copper Country

struggled with regional economic development issues common to

postextractive areas (Liesch, 2011; Anderson, 2014). KNHP

management aims to narrate and sustain the geographical spaces of copper extraction and the social dimensions of life in a town

saturated with corporate paternalism. To fulfill this goal, the park has two legally-defined units, plus an ensemble of 19 Keweenaw

Heritage Sites. The Calumet Unit, in and around the vicinity of

Calumet, Michigan, covers Calumet and Hecla Mining Company's

primary role of extraction fostered through corporate paternalism in order to ensure profitable extraction. The Calumet Unit is the heart of the park. Twelve miles to the south, the Quincy Mine best represents themes of copper extraction and refining (Public Law 102-543). The NPS owns 135.35 of Calumet and Quincy Units' total of 1870.32 acres (National Park Service, 2009). Keweenaw Heritage Sites are private and public, for-profit and non-profit. Fig. 1 shows the locations of these 19 sites that collectively showcase differences in copper deposits, mining methods, settlement patterns, and living conditions of management, labor, and the community (Alanen, 2000; National Park Service, 2014b). As shown in Figs. 2 and 3, the park's boundary is designed to encapsulate industrial, commercial, and residential neighborhoods containing significant cultural resources to manage. For instance, property owners within park boundaries are eligible for monies. Also, the visitor experience may be complicated by uncertainty regarding restricted activities within park boundaries. The park provides technical advice and a broader marketing platform to the Keweenaw Heritage Sites, but cannot directly spend money on nonfederal property. A citizen-led Advisory Commission acts as an intermediary between the NPS and local stakeholders, namely Keweenaw Heritage Sites, local governments, and citizens.

#### 2. Landscapes of extractive industry

Cultural landscape scholars use the metaphor of "reading the landscape" to recognize that the landscape is an ephemeral "text" that holds meanings, analogous to how writings on a chalkboard



Fig. 1. Official KNHP map of the peninsula containing Calumet and Quincy Mine Units, with locations of each of the park's Keweenaw Heritage Site participants.

2

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