



# KEWEENAW

## YOUR GUIDE TO EXPLORING MOHAWK AREA

**Author:** Kayleigh White on July 13, 2023

Dominated by the Cliff Range, the community of Mohawk can be found in the far north of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. During the early 1900's, it was the site of the Mohawk Mining Company and is believed to be the only place where the rare mineral, Mohawkite, was ever found. While mining operations ceased many years ago, Mohawk still holds onto its rich history and offers visitors the chance to dine with locals and explore the great outdoors. Here are our favorite things to do in (and around) Mohawk, Michigan.

### BREAKFAST AT SLIM'S CAFÉ

Any good adventure starts with a hearty breakfast, and Slim's Café has you covered! This local café has been serving both residents and visitors alike since 1957. Whether you seek a classic breakfast of eggs, meat, and toast, a spicy skillet, or an omelet - one thing is for sure... you won't leave feeling hungry. If you stop by on a Thursday, we highly recommend trying one of their award-winning pasties. Slim's has been the winner of Pasty Fest for the past two years! And make sure to grab a cinnamon roll on your way out because Slim's baked goods are hard to beat!

### MOHAWK SUPERETTE

Time to pack a lunch! After a few hours of outdoor adventure, you are bound to get hungry... so stop by the Mohawk Superette to fill your cooler full of cold drinks and yummy food. The Superette offers a fantastic selection of grab-n-go deli foods that are made in house. They also serve hot, ready-to-eat pasties on Tuesdays and Fridays. And these aren't just any old pasties... these are award-winning Mohawk Superette pasties! Not only that, but the Superette features locally sourced smoked and fresh fish from Keweenaw Fish Company, as well as a nice selection of local meats. This is *the* one-stop-shop if you plan on grilling at the beach later. Just don't forget to pick up some charcoal while you're there!

### SENECA NO. 3 MINE & BAT HOUSE

Once you have a picnic packed, head north on US-41 for about a mile and you will see an odd-looking metal cage to the right. This is a bat cage over the Seneca No. 3 Mine. Not only does this cage serve as a proper cap over the mine to prevent accidents, but it also serves as an entry point for bats going in and out of the old mine. During the winter, four different species of Michigan bats hibernate in this mine, and this method of capping the mine preserves essential habitat for these species. Please respect any wildlife you see and use caution when exploring old mine sites.

### SNOW GAUGE

Your next destination is the iconic Keweenaw Snow Gauge. This life-sized snow meter can be found on the right side of US-41 as you are driving north and is the tallest snow gauge in the world! The record high snowfall displayed on this massive snow meter was set during the winter of 1978-79, when the Keweenaw received 390.4 inches of snow. During that winter, the Keweenaw received 49.2 inches of snow in November, 116.4" in December, 111.4" in January, 53" in February, 52.6" in March, and 7.8" in April. Each spring, a marker is attached to indicate the latest season snowfall.

### CLIFF MINE & CLIFTON MINING COMMUNITY

Our next destination is the site of Cliff Mine on Cliff Drive. Please note that this road is partially gravel and may be a bit bumpy in some areas. Despite the occasional bump, this drive is arguably one of the most scenic in the Keweenaw, as it runs along the ancient Cliff Ridge that was created by the Keweenaw Fault. This massive cliff ridge stands tall and is a prominent natural landmark as you drive through the Keweenaw Peninsula.

There are a few historical markers along Cliff Drive that will give you more insight into the operations of Cliff Mine and the Clifton Mining Community. The Cliff Mine was established in 1844 when large masses of solid copper were found ranging from 100 to 1,000 tons. The mine paid its stockholders \$1,269,000 in dividends and was the first profitable mine in the Keweenaw Peninsula region. At its peak, an entire community clustered around the base of the cliff, where the original cemetery still stands across the west branch of the Eagle River. Today, rockhounds often use metal detectors to search for chunks of copper in the Cliff Mine tailing piles.

## SENECA LAKE

Continue driving on Cliff Drive, and you will find Seneca Lake. There is a small picnic area and a dock available if you wish to launch your kayak or canoe. Otherwise, explore the Seneca Lake Trail. This 1.4-mile loop trail circumnavigates the lake and takes about half an hour to complete. The lake and cedar forest make this the perfect place to see a variety of wildlife, birds, and wildflowers.

**Pro Tip:** Don't forget the bug spray and consider wearing rubber boots to help navigate muddy areas of the marsh.

## ICE CREAM PIT-STOP

The end of Cliff Drive will land you in the town of Ahmeek. Like most of the towns in the Keweenaw, Ahmeek was also a mining town. Stop by the historic Ahmeek Streetcar Station and get yourself a scoop or two of Jilbert's Ice Cream. This adorable ice cream pit stop offers everything from sundaes and malts to classic cones and dishes. In 1900, this building served as a rail station and belonged to the Houghton County Traction Company. During the peak of the copper mining boom, this station had tracks running to Calumet, north of Mohawk, Boston, as well as spur trails running to Lake Linden and Hubbell. An ice cream window has been in place since the 1950's to treat people of the Keweenaw on hot summer days.

If you are looking for a shady spot to enjoy your ice cream, head to the Gabriel Chopp Park just across the street. This beautiful park hosts community celebrations, live music, and can be a great place for a family picnic. Exciting upgrades are happening this summer, which include new pavilions, a bandstand, and restroom facilities.

## GRATIOT RIVER COUNTY PARK

Close to the entrance of the Calvary Cemetery, you will see the entrance of a dirt road that will take you to Gratiot River County Park. The road sometimes gets rough due to the volume of traffic and rain, but if you don't mind a little dust on your car, most vehicles have no problem with the terrain. Please drive slowly on this 3.5-mile journey to the park, as there will likely be other cars travelling in the opposite direction. The park itself sits at the mouth of the Gratiot River on Lake Superior. It's a popular destination for fishing, picnics, sunbathing, and watching the sunset. Pit toilets, picnic tables, BBQ stations (bring your own charcoal), and trash bins are available at the park, as well as ample parking. Remember to throw away your trash and keep the park clean!

## GOLF AT SANDY PEBBLES

Continue north on 5-mile Point Road for just a little ways, and you will see signs for Sandy Pebbles Golf Course. A pay-in-a-can style golf course, Sandy Pebbles is a rustic and casual 9-hole course. Sandy Pebbles was designed in 2002 by Neil and Dale Isaacson, and it offers a quiet and relaxed atmosphere tucked away in the forest. Don't be surprised if you run into sandhill cranes, turkey, or other wildlife during your round of golf.

## CONGLOMERATE FALLS

To get to Conglomerate Falls from 5-Mile Point Road, you will want to turn left on South Farmers Block Road and drive for about one mile. Continue onto the two-track wooded trail where the paved road makes a 90-degree right turn, and drive for about 0.4 miles to the parking area near the falls. The easiest way to get to the river is by following the trail upstream until it dissipates and then drop down to the riverbed. Be aware that the trail may be difficult to traverse in some areas.

Conglomerate Falls is a Keweenaw Natural Areas (KNA) site along the Gratiot River and features rapid river water that slips over rugged conglomerate rock riverbed. The falls are part of a larger conservancy managed by KNA in the Gratiot River area.

## GO GIFT SHOPPING

If you feel up to doing a little shopping, Mohawk has some nice gift shops to explore. Check out Bird's Eye Creations Woodshop and Showroom for some of the finest wood creations made from rare bird's eye wood grain. Bird's eye wood grain has a distinctive pattern that looks like tiny, swirling eyes and is a form of figured hard maple. The figures are supposedly caused by unfavorable growing conditions for the tree and are actually a number of tiny knots in the grain. Bird's Eye Creations does an excellent job of using this rare wood to create beautiful products like cutting boards and cribbage boards.

In addition to great food and ice cream, Mohawk's Sundae in the Park has recently expanded their business to include a wonderful gift shop. Their gift shop features a ton of locally made art, as well as apparel, books about local history, and Upper Peninsula & Keweenaw themed souvenirs.

Of course, don't forget to stop by the Wood'n Spoon to pick up some local preserves. The owners of the Wood'n Spoon grow their own berries and pick wild berries to make delicious jams, jellies, and berry syrups. Their gift store also includes many local specialties like native copper, agates, datolite, books about the Upper Peninsula, and baked goods.

## **VISIT PHILLIPSVILLE**

Phillipsville is a small community located about 2.5 miles south of Mohawk on US-41. The most popular attraction in this community is Prospector's Paradise - the Rock Walmart of the Keweenaw. Here you will find gems, minerals, and fossils from the Great Lakes region and around the world.

This unique destination is also home to the Keweenaw's "Area 51," a mysterious "vortex" located near a purported Native American burial ground. Some claim that the area is bursting with healing energy. The property includes a spiral-like tree covered in knots and a "supernatural" underground vortex created by two adjoining rivers. Near Prospector's Paradise is an iconic red brick building that reads "Last Place on Earth." This historic building dates back to 1880 and is now home to Kuusi Modern Mercantile.

Stop by and explore a beautiful collection of housewares and provisions handpicked for their beauty, utility, and quality. The name Kuusi means spruce in Finnish and the products in this store are inspired by Finnish design. Stop by and explore the beautiful products offered in this bright and inviting atmosphere.

## **DINNER AT GLACIA TAVERN**

Plan on having dinner at Glacia Tavern in Mohawk. This restaurant and bar is a local favorite and offers coffee, cocktails, craft beer, and creative cuisine. The team at Glacia works hard to create delicious special menu items, and you never know what's coming next! Whether it's a Big Boss Spicy Chicken Sammy or Bourbon Glazed Pork Flat Iron, we bet that you will love it! Check out Glacia's Facebook or Instagram page to see their latest and greatest dinner specials.

### ***Author***

Kayleigh White

Kayleigh is a U.P. native with a passion for the outdoors. Some of her favorite outdoor hobbies are rock collecting on the shores of Lake Superior, springtime foraging, and hiking. She is also passionate about flow arts and can be found recording technical double hula-hooping videos throughout the scenic Keweenaw Peninsula. If you are interested in seeing her latest flow arts videos, you can follow her work here: <https://www.instagram.com/waywardkay/>

**Please Recycle!**