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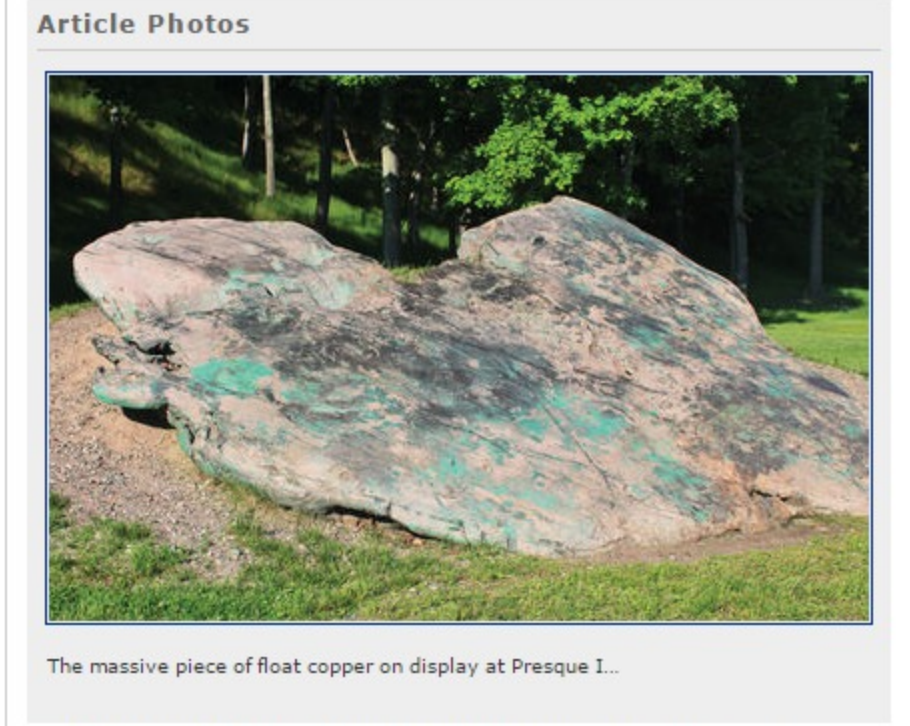
Donations needed to keep float copper in Marquette

June 29, 2014
By JACKIE STARK - Journal Staff Writer (jstark@miningjournal.net) , Mining Journal

MARQUETTE - The Ancient Artifact Preservation Society has pledged a \$10,000 donation to a fundraiser to keep a massive piece of float copper on display in Marquette's Presque Isle Park.

An account established by the Marquette County Community Foundation has been collecting donations all year.

"We've seen some steady, albeit not large, amounts come in," said Chuck DuCharme, a member of the AAPS' fundraising committee for the "Fred Rydholm Save the Copper Fund." "It's a definite sign of the enthusiasm that is building in the community. It just seems we're rolling the ball uphill."



And that uphill battle gets steeper with each passing day, as a deadline at the end of the summer approaches to pay the current owners of the copper.

If the group doesn't reach its fundraising goal of \$245,000 the copper could be gone for good.

Found in 1997 on a piece of property in the Copper Country by two men using a handheld metal detector, the world's largest piece of glacial float copper has, in essence, been on loan to the citizens of Marquette since it was brought here in 2011, with the two men retaining their original ownership and extending the deadline for payment in full several times.

- Article Links**
- www.marquettecountycommunityfoundation.org

The effort to keep the copper in Marquette is being done in honor of the late Upper Peninsula historian Fred Rydholm, who was instrumental in getting the specimen to Marquette, working with the original owners before his death in 2009.

"A lot of people in this community know that Fred devoted his whole life to preserve the cultural heritage and natural beauty of the Upper Peninsula," DuCharme. "This was his baby. He got the AAPS to put a down payment on it. He said, 'This has got to be preserved for future generations.' Its presence here would be his memorial."

DuCharme said the float copper also adds a stunning visual tribute to the rich mining heritage of the U.P.

"It is physical evidence of the mineral wealth of the Western Lake Superior region that brought man to the region," DuCharme said.

According to the Superior Watershed Partnership, the Smithsonian Institute has confirmed the giant chunk of copper is the largest piece of glacial float copper in the world, dwarfing the famous Ontonagon Boulder, which weighs in at less than two tons and is currently on display at the Smithsonian.

The 28.2-ton piece of float copper is naturally formed and was carried or "floated" along by the last glacier.

DuCharme said anyone reluctant to send a cash donation now can offer a pledge instead.

To donate, contact the foundation at 226-7666 or visit www.marquettecountycommunityfoundation.org.

Jackie Stark can be reached at 906-228-2500, ext. 242. Her email address is jstark@miningjournal.net.

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