

Keweenaw Mineral Days

Recommendations to help you have an enjoyable experience.

Safety is always first!

All collecting requires safe practices and use of common sense. At all times maintain awareness of yourself and your physical surroundings. Stay off the steep slopes and loose rock. Follow instructions of the trip guides. Be mindful of others collecting in your area.

Eye protection of some kind is required!! Rock chips can fly a long way so you are just as likely to be struck with a chip from another person as you are from your own activities.

Full-length jeans and supportive footwear are strongly recommended. Work gloves can be useful.

Sun should be a concern to all as most rock piles have no shade!! Sunglasses, a head covering, and sunblock are recommended.

A rock hammer and 5 gallon plastic bucket are essential items. In addition, to the rock hammer a chisel, trowel, and rock rake come in handy too. The bucket is an easy way to carry your specimens, but an old backpack will work too.

Water for cleaning specimens is a good idea as newly exposed rocks are coated with “muck.” A small spray-bottle of water and/or a container of water will work.

A metal detector for finding native copper is a valuable tool. The museum will have a small number of metal detectors that can be rented. It may be possible for you to rent a metal detector from a vendor in your area. The newly exposed rock is very dirty. However, there is no substitute for your eyes and some find equal success without a metal detector. Metal detectors are of NO value if you are looking for a nonmetallic mineral such as datolite.

Bring or plan on purchasing packing materials to get your treasures home intact. Paper, paper towels, toilet paper or dry cleaning (plastic) bags work well for padding. Newspaper is good for larger specimens. Plan on boxes to store your specimens.

Carry drinking water with you. Plan your water containers before you leave home. Bring more than you think you will need, as rock piles can be quite hot.

Bring a variety of clothing. Field trips proceed as scheduled, rain or shine. In the past, we've had weather with sun and near perfect temps around 75 degrees to sunny with extremely hot temps from 90-105 degrees, with fog and rain, and with cold temps of 40-50 degrees. Weather is affected by Lake Superior and is less predictable than elsewhere. If it does rain, at least it will wash muck off of the newly exposed rocks.

Causal dress is appropriate for everything.

Black flies and mosquitoes are usually not too bad by August on the rock piles, but a can or bottle of insect repellent in your vehicle is recommended. Bug nets are usually not needed but can be purchased locally.

There are NO toilets at the collecting sites. You will need to drive to a nearby toilet or plan ahead to use the natural facilities among the trees.

If you attend and have more tips please do let us know so we can make this list better.