

# Site History as an Asset in Preserve Management

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## **Abstract**

The experience of the Michigan Karst Conservancy's Fiborn History Project shows the possible long term contributions of site history to the primary management goals of karst protection at the Michigan Karst Conservancy's Fiborn Karst Preserve (480 acres) in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Research, including recording interviews, archive searches, and record examinations, contributes to improved site understanding by managers, as well as former and current inhabitants of the Preserve region.

The Preserve site, including the caves and karst features, has been known and visited since at least the 1890s, with a discovered record of near continuous use since then. The site now contains an abandoned quarry and remnant structures. However, the existing published history of the site was barely more than two paragraphs. The investigation found strong, long term local ties to a site which by appearance had been abandoned for more than 40 years. Information uncovered by the Project should contribute to an increased chance of long term viability of the Preserve. By example, it shows the significance of investigation and distribution of general historical information about preserve sites.