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Map of abandoned mines in michigan

This web page provides information on recent and ongoing investigations into historic mining-related industrial operations along the western shoreline of Torch Lake in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The EGLE Remediation and Redevelopment Division's office is conducting these activities, which present a complex setting for environmental investigation and risk management. The region has a rich history of copper mining dating back to the mid-1800s, with extensive ore milling and smelting operations taking place from the 1860s to the 1960s. Unfortunately, this led to significant environmental degradation, including the dumping of toxic waste products such as tailings and chemicals into Torch Lake. As a result, the lake's western shoreline was designated as a Superfund site by the US EPA in 2014, with an estimated 20% of its volume filled with mining-related waste. The Great Lakes Area of Concern also recognizes the region's environmental issues. The current EGLE project aims to address some of the remaining concerns not addressed by previous cleanup efforts. This includes historical contamination from polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), uncharacterized waste deposits, and industrial ruins. In addition to environmental remediation, the project also highlights the region's rich history through abandoned towns such as Fayette Historic State Park. Visitors can explore the remains of this former industrial town, which was once home to nearly 500 people, and gain a glimpse into the past. As you stand in the midst of buildings, a visitors center stands out, featuring a scale model of the original town, offering context for self-guided walking tours along historic 19 structures; maps are available. A scenic drive along M-183, with Big Bay de Noc as its backdrop, is particularly breathtaking during peak autumn colors. The area's picturesque setting belies a complex history involving iron smelting. Fayette's site was chosen for its proximity to limestone, hardwood forests, and water sources, essential for producing pig iron for shipping to steel companies via the nearby Snail Shell Harbor. The remnants of Central Mine, which closed in 1898 after 44 years of operation, bear witness to a once-thriving town. The population dwindled from 1,300 in 1887 to just two residents today. A drive along US-41 takes you to the site's remains, where about a dozen homes remain, and descendants of miners gather at the Central Mine Methodist Church. The Keweenaw County Historical Society has spent over a quarter-century restoring these homes, relying on donations and volunteers. Visitors can explore three original homes open daily, including the doctor's residence with an early intercom system, for free. After hours, someone would yell into a lead pipe to reach the doctor in an upstairs bedroom. The site also features restored log cabins at the Old Victoria Historical Site, now part of the Keweenaw National Historical Park. Walking the grounds is free, but an inside guided tour requires a fee and is available until October 8.

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