HISTORIC LIGHTHOUSES OF MICHIGAN

GULL ROCK LIGHT STATION

SAVE OUR LIGHTS

2025

Michigan has more lighthouses than any other state and these unique structures are synonymous with the Great Lakes State's shorelines. You can help preserve these historic places by purchasing a **Save Our Lights** license plate for your vehicle. A portion of the fee funds the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP), administered by the State Historic Preservation Office. Since 2001, the MLAP has awarded more than $3 million in grants to lighthouse stewards for the rehabilitation of these historic icons. **Get the plate, Save a Light!**

To purchase your Save Our Lights license plate and support lighthouse preservation, visit **www.michigan.gov/sos**

For more information about the Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program, visit **www.michigan.gov/savaeourlights**

MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

MICHIGAN SHPO STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

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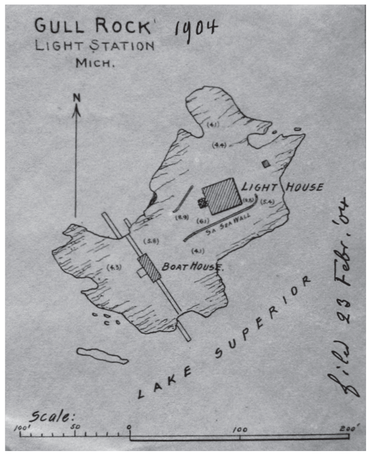


1904 Map

Lake Superior Sunrise

Gull Rock Light Station in 1908

Gull Rock Light Station in 2017

Gull Rock Light Station

Gull Rock islet is in Lake Superior 2 ½ miles east of the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula and fourteen miles east of Copper Harbor in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The islet is a small but dangerous rocky outcropping located between Manitou Island and the eastern shore of the Keweenaw Peninsula. In 2025, the existing 1867 structures on Gull Rock include the lighthouse – a combined keeper's dwelling with attached light tower – and a privy. The original boat landings and boathouse are no longer extant. The privy was constructed northeast of the keepers' dwelling, near the water's edge. It incorporated a unique design feature; two openings in the foundation allowed for waves to wash out the privy pit. A former Coastguardsman who did maintenance work at the station in the 1970s commented that, "Every time a storm came up the waves washed the toilet clean." No need to actually clean the toilet!

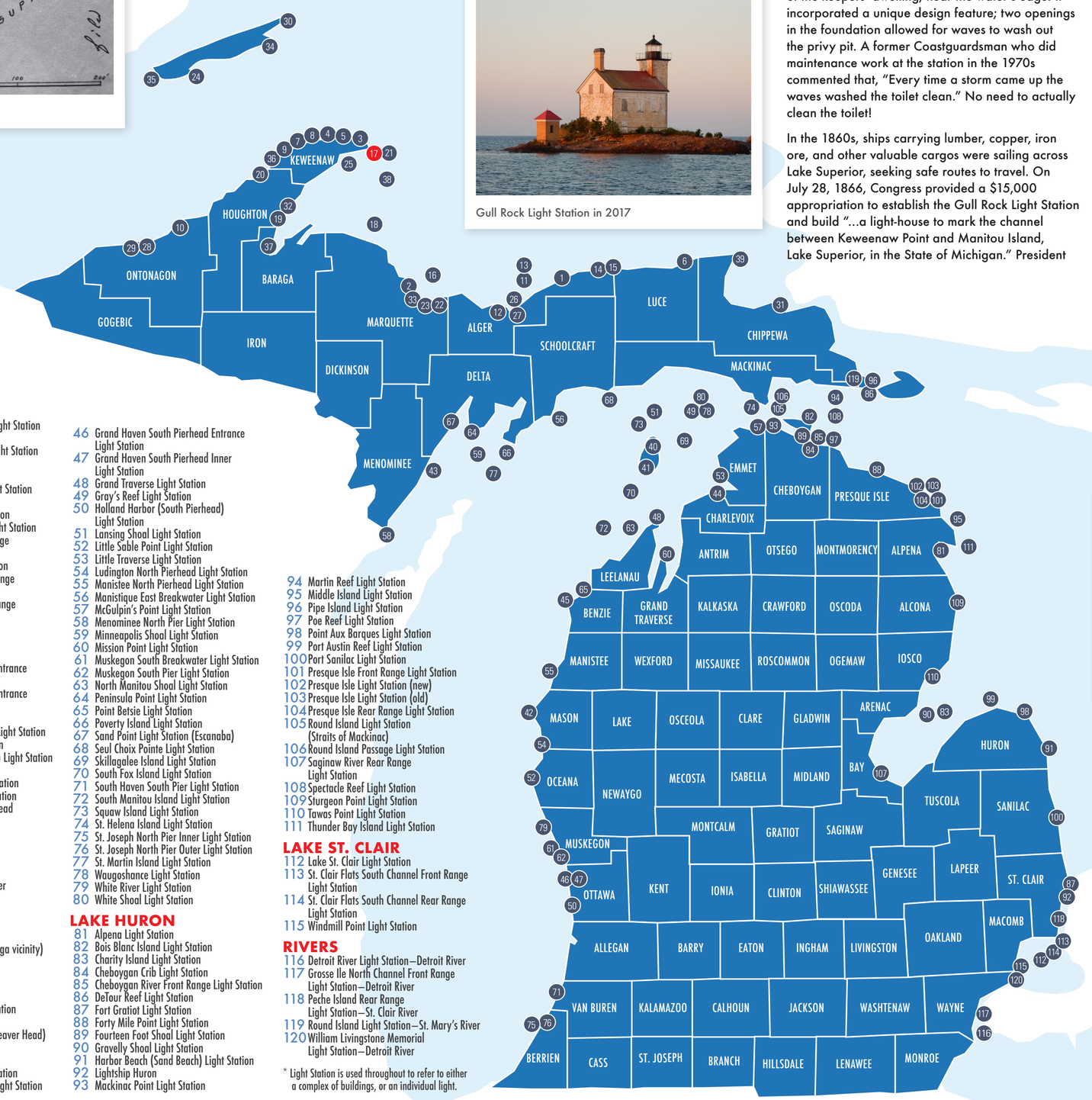
In the 1860s, ships carrying lumber, copper, iron ore, and other valuable cargos were sailing across Lake Superior, seeking safe routes to travel. On July 28, 1866, Congress provided a $15,000 appropriation to establish the Gull Rock Light Station and build "...a light-house to mark the channel between Keweenaw Point and Manitou Island, Lake Superior, in the State of Michigan." President Andrew Johnson issued an executive order on October 16, 1866, reserving the land for lighthouse purposes. This was just one year after the end of the Civil War.

Life on Gull Rock was noted as quite mundane. With the primitive living conditions and the limited space afforded by life on the rock, this was considered one of the most isolated and difficult stations to work on the Great Lakes. With no fog signal to tend there was little to do beyond the mandatory morning lens, lantern and lamp maintenance. Both a keeper and assistant were assigned to the station, likely more to provide companionship than to share the small workload. Even so, the turnover rate for assistant keepers was unusually high. To help ease the situation, in several instances district inspectors approved the appointment of a keeper's wife to the position of assistant. In this manner, Keeper James Corgan's wife Mary served as his assistant for all six years during which Corgan was keeper at Gull Rock from 1877 through 1883.

Initially run by the U.S. Lighthouse Establishment, the station was manned by a lighthouse keeper and assistant keeper for 46 years. It was never equipped with electricity, indoor plumbing, or phone service. Given its remote location, the station was among the earliest to be automated in 1913. Although the light itself was maintained, the lighthouse building eventually fell into disrepair. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) assumed ownership and operation in 1939. Gull Rock Light Station was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. The station is currently owned by the non-profit Gull Rock Lightkeepers, while the light remains an active USCG aid to navigation.

GULL ROCK LIGHT MLAP GRANTS

The Gull Rock Light Station off the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula has received five Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program (MLAP) grants from the State of Michigan since 2006, totaling $127,000 for planning and rehabilitation work. Matched by local dollars, these grant awards have reconstructed the roof, stabilized the privy, repaired interior floors and joists, and sealed and repainted the lantern. When you upgrade to a Save Our Lights fundraising license plate for your Michigan-registered vehicle, you help fund critical lighthouse repair projects such as these. **Get the Plate, Save a Light!** You can upgrade at any time on the Michigan Secretary of State website: www.michigan.gov/sos



LAKE SUPERIOR

1 Au Sable Light Station
2 Big Bay Point Light Station
3 Copper Harbor Front Range Light Station
4 Copper Harbor Light Station
5 Copper Harbor Rear Range Light Station
6 Crisp Point Light Station
7 Eagle Harbor Light Station
8 Eagle Harbor Rear Range Light Station
9 Eagle River Light Station
10 Fourteen Mile Point Light Station
11 Grand Island East Channel Light Station
12 Grand Island Harbor Rear Range Light Station
13 Grand Island North Light Station
14 Grand Marais Harbor Inner Range Light Station
15 Grand Marais Harbor Outer Range Light Station
16 Granite Island Light Station
17 Gull Rock Light Station
18 Huron Island Light Station
19 Keweenaw Waterway Lower Entrance Light Station
20 Keweenaw Waterway Upper Entrance Light Station
21 Manitou Island Light Station
22 Marquette Breakwater Outer Light Station
23 Marquette Harbor Light Station
24 Menagerie Island (Isle Royale) Light Station
25 Mendota Light Station
26 Munising Front Range Light Station
27 Munising Rear Range Light Station
28 Ontonagon Harbor West Pierhead Light Station
29 Ontonagon Light Station
30 Passage Island Light Station
31 Point Iroquois Light Station
32 Portage River Light Station
33 Presque Isle Harbor Breakwater Light Station
34 Rock Harbor Light Station
35 Rock of Ages Light Station
36 Sand Hills Light Station
37 Sand Point Light Station (Baraga vicinity)
38 Stannard Rock Light Station
39 Whitefish Point Light Station

LAKE MICHIGAN

40 Beaver Island Harbor Light Station (St. James)
41 Beaver Island Light Station (Beaver Head)
42 Big Sable Point Light Station
43 Cedar River Light Station
44 Charlevoix South Pier Light Station
45 Frankfort North Breakwater Light Station
46 Grand Haven South Pierhead Entrance Light Station
47 Grand Haven South Pierhead Inner Light Station
48 Grand Traverse Light Station
49 Gray's Reef Light Station
50 Holland Harbor (South Pierhead) Light Station
51 Lansing Shoal Light Station
52 Little Sable Point Light Station
53 Little Traverse Light Station
54 Ludington North Pierhead Light Station
55 Manistee North Pierhead Light Station
56 Manistique East Breakwater Light Station
57 McGulpin's Point Light Station
58 Menominee North Pier Light Station
59 Minneapolis Shoal Light Station
60 Mission Point Light Station
61 Muskegon South Breakwater Light Station
62 Muskegon South Pier Light Station
63 North Manitou Shoal Light Station
64 Peninsula Point Light Station
65 Point Betsie Light Station
66 Poverty Island Light Station
67 Sand Point Light Station (Escanaba)
68 Seul Choix Pointe Light Station
69 Skillagalee Island Light Station
70 South Fox Island Light Station
71 South Haven South Pier Light Station
72 South Manitou Island Light Station
73 Squaw Island Light Station
74 St. Helena Island Light Station
75 St. Joseph North Pier Inner Light Station
76 St. Joseph North Pier Outer Light Station
77 St. Martin Island Light Station
78 Waugoshance Light Station
79 White River Light Station
80 White Shoal Light Station

LAKE HURON

81 Alpena Light Station
82 Bois Blanc Island Light Station
83 Charity Island Light Station
84 Cheboygan Crib Light Station
85 Cheboygan River Front Range Light Station
86 DeTour Reef Light Station
87 Fort Gratiot Light Station
88 Forty Mile Point Light Station
89 Fourteen Foot Shoal Light Station
90 Gravelly Shoal Light Station
91 Harbor Beach (Sand Beach) Light Station
92 Lightship Huron
93 Mackinac Point Light Station
94 Martin Reef Light Station
95 Middle Island Light Station
96 Pipe Island Light Station
97 Poe Reef Light Station
98 Point Aux Barques Light Station
99 Port Austin Reef Light Station
100 Port Sanilac Light Station
101 Presque Isle Front Range Light Station
102 Presque Isle Light Station (new)
103 Presque Isle Light Station (old)
104 Presque Isle Rear Range Light Station
105 Round Island Light Station (Straits of Mackinac)
106 Round Island Passage Light Station
107 Saginaw River Rear Range Light Station
108 Spectacle Reef Light Station
109 Sturgeon Point Light Station
110 Tawas Point Light Station
111 Thunder Bay Island Light Station

LAKE ST. CLAIR

112 Lake St. Clair Light Station
113 St. Clair Flats South Channel Front Range Light Station
114 St. Clair Flats South Channel Rear Range Light Station
115 Windmill Point Light Station

RIVERS

116 Detroit River Light Station—Detroit River
117 Grosse Ile North Channel Front Range Light Station—Detroit River
118 Peche Island Rear Range Light Station—St. Clair River
119 Round Island Light Station—St. Mary's River
120 William Livingstone Memorial Light Station—Detroit River

* Light Station is used throughout to refer to either a complex of buildings, or an individual light.