

Mountain Biking and Hiking 2022 Season Recap

written by Chris Guibert | January 6, 2023

The OAC team and guests of the Lodge had a fulfilling and educational year of hiking and biking. One of the Lodge's visions is to provide and foster outdoor activities on the Keweenaw. Everyday we continue building the metaphorical and physical paths to create opportunities for guests to experience the wilderness on the Peninsula. In the Spring of 2022 the Lodge was asked to acquire the neighboring land from Keweenaw County. This 380 acre parcel had 11 miles of long established trails built by the Copper Harbor Trails Club. The Lodge spent a considerable amount of time negotiating with the [Michigan DNR](#), [Keweenaw County](#), the [Copper Harbor Trails Club](#) and [KORC](#) to draft the terms of the sale. When the [sale was completed](#) both a [conservation easement](#) on 310 acres of the land and a separate [trail easement](#) for the 11 miles of trails were added to the new KML property. This left 70 acres for a future development envelope. [The acquisition](#) brings the Lodge property close to 560 total acres and ensures the trails and the wilderness will be here for generations to come.

After receiving 325 inches of snow during the [2021-2022 winter season](#) we were not sure when the trails were open. Mount Bohemia had their lifts running until May. Fortunately we had a relatively warm May and the snow was melting quickly. We were able to open the bike wash and trails were rideable on May 22nd. Our first bike rentals happened on May 29th. Hikers and trail runners were eager to hit the trails for the [Back 9 Trail Run](#). This 12/24-hour endurance run brings runners from across the region. For 2002 [thirty three runners came out](#) to enjoy the trails and challenge themselves in this all-night runathon!



The Lodge is a four-season historic resort at the top of the Keweenaw, focused on outdoor activities, rustic worldly food, and education. For the summer of 2022 we wanted to bring an educational component to the [Morning Miles](#) hikes. *Tuesdays with Tom* were interpretive hikes led by Tom Oliver, the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge's Naturalist and also the Lodge's Education and Events Specialist. Tom led 2-4 mile long hikes with discussions about plant and animal identifications, local geology, weather, and the use of nature apps. Tom's most frequent hike was down the Dancing Bear Trail and up the historic Red Trail. This 3 mile loop has some fascinating geology as it runs under some bedrock cliffs and along two different ridges. We also began to incorporate [Leave No Trace](#) ethics into the talks and pushed for guests to be mindful of their surroundings and other guests. These nature hikes are a good opportunity to practice mindful quiet moments and to listen for birds and animals. OAC team member Naya Mueller added another educational component by creating a nature guide for our Morning Miles hikes. This is currently used internally as a reference for our hike leaders but we hope to make this public pamphlet for 2023.

MORNING MILES - TUESDAYS WITH TOM

Join the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge's naturalist, Tom Oliver for an interpretive hike Tuesday Mornings at 10am.



These hikes are open to people of all ages. Discussions include plant and animal identifications, local geology, weather, and the use of nature apps.

KEWEENAW MOUNTAIN LODGE



Hikes are 2-4 miles and last 2-3 Hours
Tuesdays 9:45 am - Meet at the OAC
Bring water, snacks & appropriate clothing



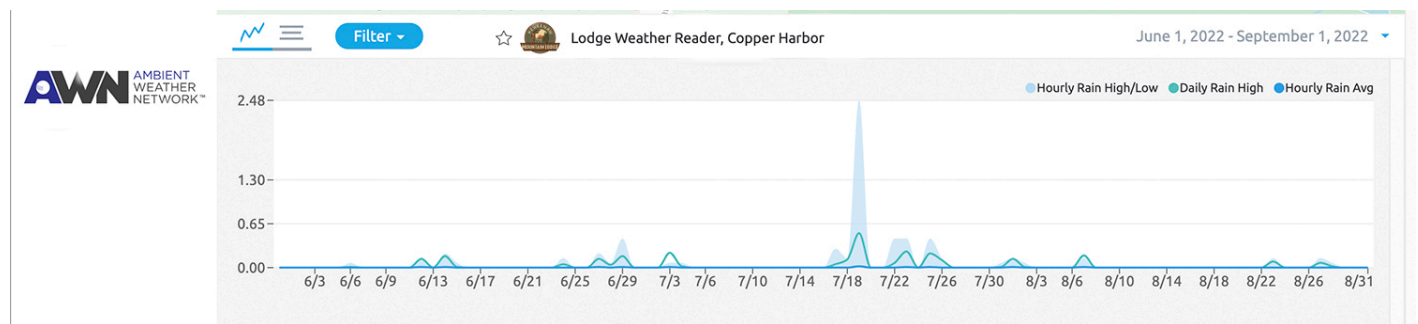
KEWEENAWMOUNTAINLODGE.COM

The [Group Bike Rides](#) were offered on Friday evenings and Saturdays during the day.. The Saturday beginner rides were also focused on mountain bike fundamentals from the [PMBIA](#) teaching methods. Each week Coach Chris chose a fundamental such as body position or braking and would spend the first part of the ride demonstrating the proper technique. Guests would then have a chance to practice throughout the ride. The Lodge continues to strive to become a destination mountain biking learning center. We spent some time working and planning a mountain biking [pump track and skills loop](#) with [Rock Solid Trail Contracting](#). After months of going back and forth we decided we wanted to work on the project ourselves. The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge has a dedicated team that maintains 25 cabins, a grand historic lodge and a acre golf course. *Be fearless and persistent in learning on a daily basis* is one of our core values and our team decided we wanted to learn the skills to build our own mountain biking trails. We shelved the project until 2023 when we hope to purchase a mini excavator and begin the gratifying process of building our own trails.

Supply chain issues in the bike industry finally leveled out and we were able to round out our fleet of full suspension [Trek Fuel Ex 8s](#), we added an extra small, another small and another extra large bike to our quiver. We feel this is an ideal bike for guests to explore the rocky and rooty trails of the [Copper Harbor Trail System](#). For kids bikes we added another two Roscoes 24 bringing our total to six Trek Roscoes 24s and 2 Trek Precalibers. Our first bike rental was on May 29th and the last was on October 7th.



The summer of 2022 was a dry one. From June 1st to September 1st the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge received only [2.77 inches of rain](#). This led to the trails being much drier than normal. This was a factor with three major trail rebuilds on the schedule for 2022. The Daisy Dukes Trail which is on Grant Township's property was able to be completed on June 17th. Overflow Trail which is on both the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Property and Grant township was opened on July 28th was extremely dusty making it extra challenging. The rebuild of Flying Squirrel Trail, which is solely on the KML property, had the trail closed for the whole season. The dry summer along with Rock Solid Contracting and the Copper Harbor Trails Club's priorities focused elsewhere; the trail didn't open until November 4th. We look forward to riding this new and improved gravity trail in 2023.



The first big mountain biking event that took place at the Lodge was the [Big Boy Clinic](#) on June 3rd, 4th and 5th. A group of over 50 men and multiple instructors come together to improve their mountain biking skills. On Friday June 3rd the group met at the Lodge and based their learning sessions around the trails on the Lodge property.



This is the little brother event to the [Women's Weekend](#) which took place at the end of July with 82 participants and 24 staff. Similar to the Big Boys, the Women's Weekend started their weekend utilizing the Lodge property and the surrounding trails to work on fundamental mountain biking skills.



[Run the Keweenaw](#) is a multi day event that took place on July 10th and brought runners to different trail systems on the Keweenaw Peninsula. Events included a 6k Mt. Baldy Summit Run, 10K Copper Harbor Trails Challenge, 10K Copper Harbor Trails Non-Competitive Run/Hike, 2K Junior Trail Run, 25K Carl Olson Memorial Adventure Run, and 50k Keweenaw Trail Ultra. The runs in Copper Harbor used parts of the KML property and we were happy to help host this fun event.

The biggest silent sports event in Copper Harbor is [Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest](#) held over the Labor Day weekend. In 2022 the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge was the title sponsor again for the second year. This was the 29th year of Trails Fest and it felt like old times. The weather was great, the races went off almost flawlessly and the music was rocking. Oh yeah, did I mention the northern lights loomed over the bands

each night during the festival? This year the The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge hosted the kids mtb races and a new addition to the event, KML Learning Experiences. Before Trails Fest started we worked with Copper Harbor Trails Club to bring more non-competitive and educational opportunities to the event. The events at Trails Fest are mainly races yet there are 100's of people in town with no desire to race, we saw this as an opening to offer something different.





SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, September 2, 2022

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Registration & Check-in Open in Donny Kilpela Memorial Park

Saturday, September 3, 2022

8:00 - 9:30 AM Registration & Check-in Open in Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
9:00 - 11:00 AM KML Learning Experience: Mini Mountain Biking Skills Clinic
10:00 AM XC Race Start in Downtown Copper Harbor
12:00 - 2:00 PM Registration Open in Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
12:00 - 1:45 PM KML Learning Experience: Interpretive Hike #1
2:00 - 3:15 PM KML Learning Experience: Interpretive Hike #2
2:00 - 11:00 PM Beer served at Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
3:00 PM Downhill Race on Overflow
4:00 PM Junior MTB races at the Back 9 Trails (KML)
4:00 PM Pasties served at the Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
6:00 PM Awards Ceremony in Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
6:45 PM ArtBike Opening in Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
7:00 - 11:00 PM **Terrapin Flyer** plays at the Donny Kilpela Memorial Park

Sunday, September 4, 2022

8:00 - 10:00 AM Registration & Check-in Open in Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
9:00 AM 10K Trail Run starting at Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
10:00 AM - 12:05 PM* Enduro Race – Beginner classes *depending on wave
10:00 AM - 1:15 PM* Enduro Race – Sport class *depending on wave
10:30 AM - 3:30 PM* Enduro Race – Expert class *depending on wave
2:00 - 4:30 PM KML Learning Experience: Interpretive Hike
2:00 - 11:00 PM Beer served at the Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
4:00 PM Pasties served at the Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
6:00 PM Awards Ceremony in Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
7:00 - 11:00 PM **4onthefloor** plays at the Donny Kilpela Memorial Park
8:30 PM Raffle Drawing in between sets; ArtBike auction ends

Oliver. He chose an interesting route hiking down the Dancing Bear Trail across the historic golf course and up the Blue Trail. Discussion topics included geology, plant and animal life and history of the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. After the hike, many people expressed gratitude about the learning opportunities that these experiences provided.



Kelly Raber and Jared Hlavac of [Revolve MTB Coaching](#) handled the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Learning – Mini Mountain Biking Skills Clinic during the festival. They provided a group of 8 enthusiastic beginners a two hour clinic covering a few of the fundamental mountain biking skills. They started on the KML tennis courts and quickly moved the class to the Cabin Life trail where they had participants practiced cornering around berms and how to roll over rocks. Once again, the students were thankful to have an opportunity for a learning experience at Trails Fest.



After the excitement of Trails Fest ended we rolled into the Fall Season at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. This is some of the nicest times to come and hike and ride on the trails that surround the Lodge. The fall colors peaked out in early October and the Keweenaw Peninsula slowly became a quieter and quieter place. This allows people to get in touch with nature and have peaceful experience getting out into the woods. We closed the bike wash and tool tree on November 13th and started to prepare the winter trails for the upcoming season of cross country skiing and snowshoeing. First snow should be upon us soon....

[[to read the 2021 recap](#)]



[Chris Guibert](#)

Chris Guibert: I have a strong passion for all things outdoors and have worked as a tour guide and professional photographer for the last twenty five years. As the Lead of Outdoor

Activities at the Mountain Lodge I want make sure you and your family have a great experience while staying and playing. Please feel free to ask me any questions about the trails, regional activities and local secrets.