

# February 9, 2024: Northern Lights Photography Workshop Recap

written by John Mueller | February 19, 2024

The [February 9, 2024 Northern Lights Photography Workshop](#) was the first workshop this year, as the [January photo workshop was cancelled](#) due to a snowstorm. We were excited about the first workshop of the year, and to continue with our [educational initiatives](#) at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge in association with being the headquarters of the [Keweenaw Dark Sky Park](#).









# NIGHT SKY PHOTO WORKSHOP

JOIN PHOTOGRAPHER NATE BETT FOR A DARK SKY PHOTO WORKSHOP  
IN THE KEWEENAW DARK SKY PARK



KEWEENAW MOUNTAIN LODGE

FEBRUARY 9, 2024 - 7:00 PM



LODGING GUESTS FREE • \$75 PUBLIC • LIMITED AVAILABILITY

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We had five attendees for the workshop, all of which were staying at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. With the workshop being our monthly [Lights Out!](#), the guests were able to better experience and understand how to see the stars (even when it is snowing outside, which it was during the workshop).

[Nate Bett](#) was the instructor for the class. He has a diverse background in photography including attaining an MFA from [Parsons The New School For Design](#) in 2012, working for [Canon cameras](#) at trade shows and teaching photo classes at [Northern Michigan University \(NMU\)](#).



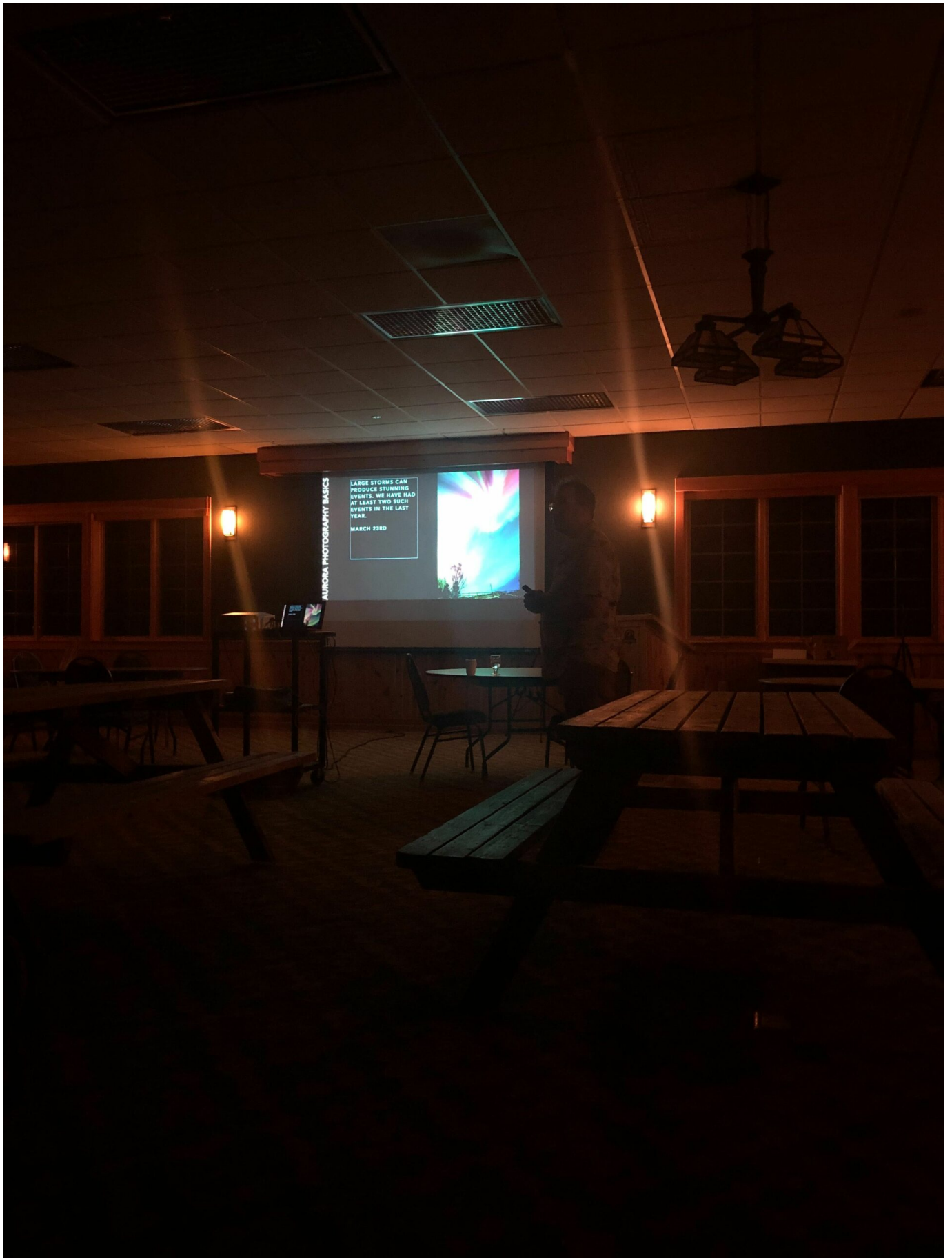
To reiterate how the night sky photo workshops are structured: The Night Sky Photo Workshops are broken into two segments: an



inside presentation and an outside, hands-on portion. This night's class started at 7:00pm and Nate launched into a digital slideshow covering topics like: preparations for a night sky photo shoot, Aurora basics, camera settings, and picking good locations.











Friday during the day was clear, which gave hope to the workshop attendees being able to get out and take pictures. However, as the workshop began, Mother Nature decided to have snowflakes come down from the sky.







So the attendees and Nate were not able to spend time outside after the inside lecture. Rather, attendees were able to spend time with Nate asking specific questions about cameras and night-time photography – specific to taking photos of the beautiful Northern Lights. The attendees brought their cameras with them, so they were able to get hands on instruction from Nate.













Our next photo workshop will be held during the new moon in March, on March 9th:

- [Stargazing: Northern Lights Photography Workshop, March 9, 2024](#)

And don't forget about the [2024 Upper Peninsula Dark Sky Festival](#) in April.

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[John Mueller](#)

founder, golfer, runner, professor, entrepreneurship

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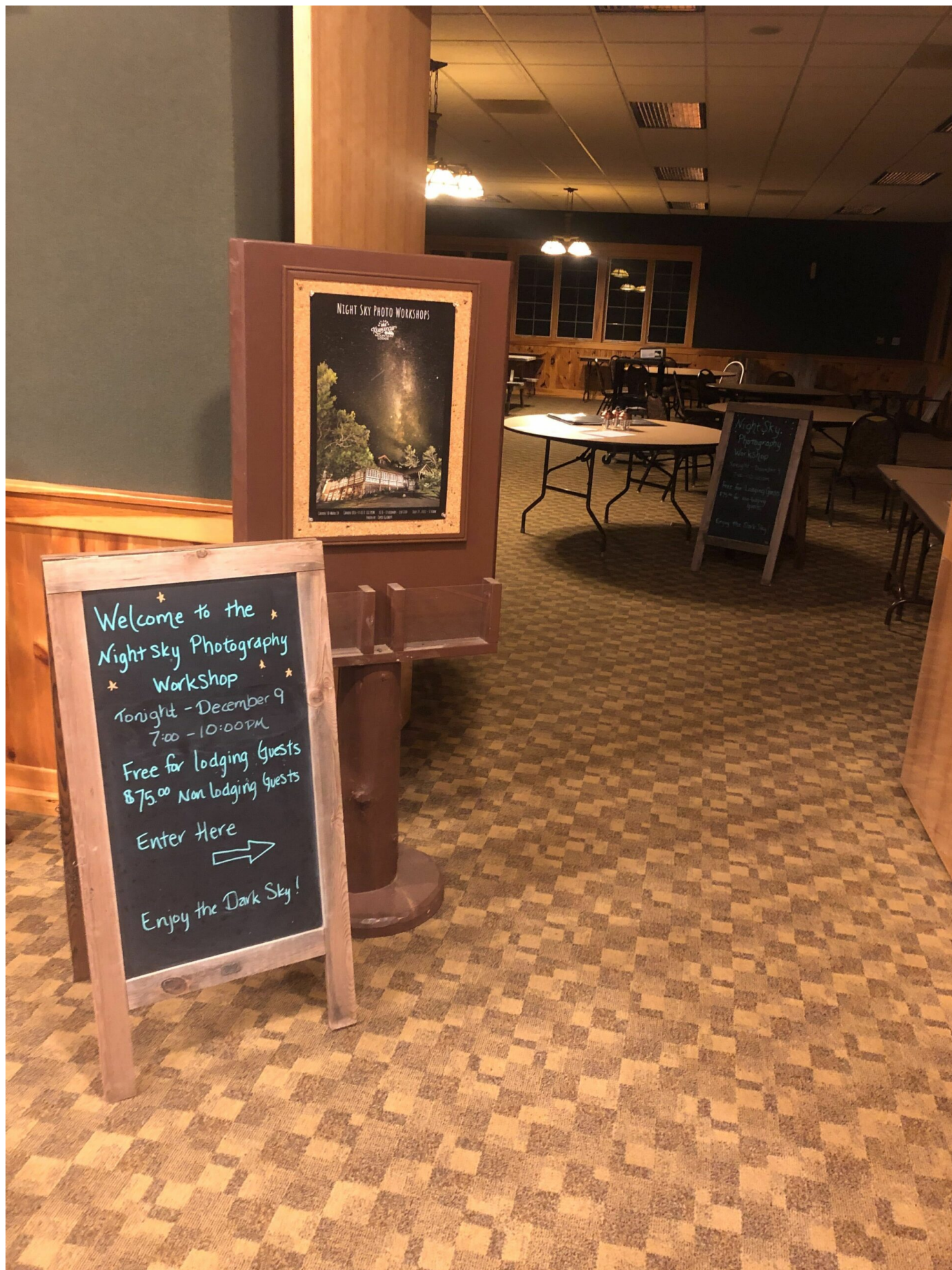
# December 9, 2023: Northern Lights Photography Workshop Recap

written by John Mueller | February 19, 2024

The [December 9, 2023 Aurora Photography Workshop](#) was the twelfth workshop of 2023 at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. Throughout the



year we held night sky photo workshops every month as part of our [educational initiatives](#) at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge in association with being the headquarters of the [Keweenaw Dark Sky Park](#).



Welcome to the  
Night Sky Photography  
Workshop

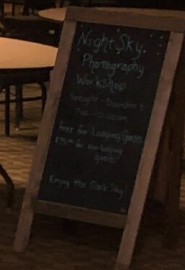
Tonight - December 9  
7:00 - 10:00 PM

Free for lodging guests  
\$75.00 Non lodging guests

Enter Here



Enjoy the Dark Sky!





# NORTHERN LIGHTS PHOTO WORKSHOP

JOIN PHOTOGRAPHER NATE BETT FOR A DARK SKY PHOTO WORKSHOP  
IN THE KEWEENAW DARK SKY PARK



KEWEENAW MOUNTAIN LODGE

DECEMBER 9, 2023 - 7:00 PM



LODGING GUESTS FREE • \$75 PUBLIC • LIMITED AVAILABILITY

[KEWEENAWMOUNTAINLODGE.COM](http://KEWEENAWMOUNTAINLODGE.COM) FOR DETAILS

Four guests attended the workshop, all of which were staying at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. We have noticed over the past year that guests are booking their stay to attend the workshop and take advantage of the [Lights Out!](#) The Lights Out event at the Lodge is a three-to-seven day event where the Lodge turns off all the street lights and other lights to increase one's stargazing experience.

[Nate Bett](#) was the instructor for the class. Nate has a diverse background in photography including attaining an MFA from [Parsons The New School For Design](#) in 2012, working for [Canon cameras](#) at trade shows and teaching photo classes at [NMU](#).

The Night Sky Photo Workshops are broken into two segments: an inside presentation and an outside, hands-on portion. This night's class started at 7:00pm and Nate launched into a digital slideshow covering topics like: preparations for a night sky photo shoot, Aurora basics, camera settings, and picking good locations.

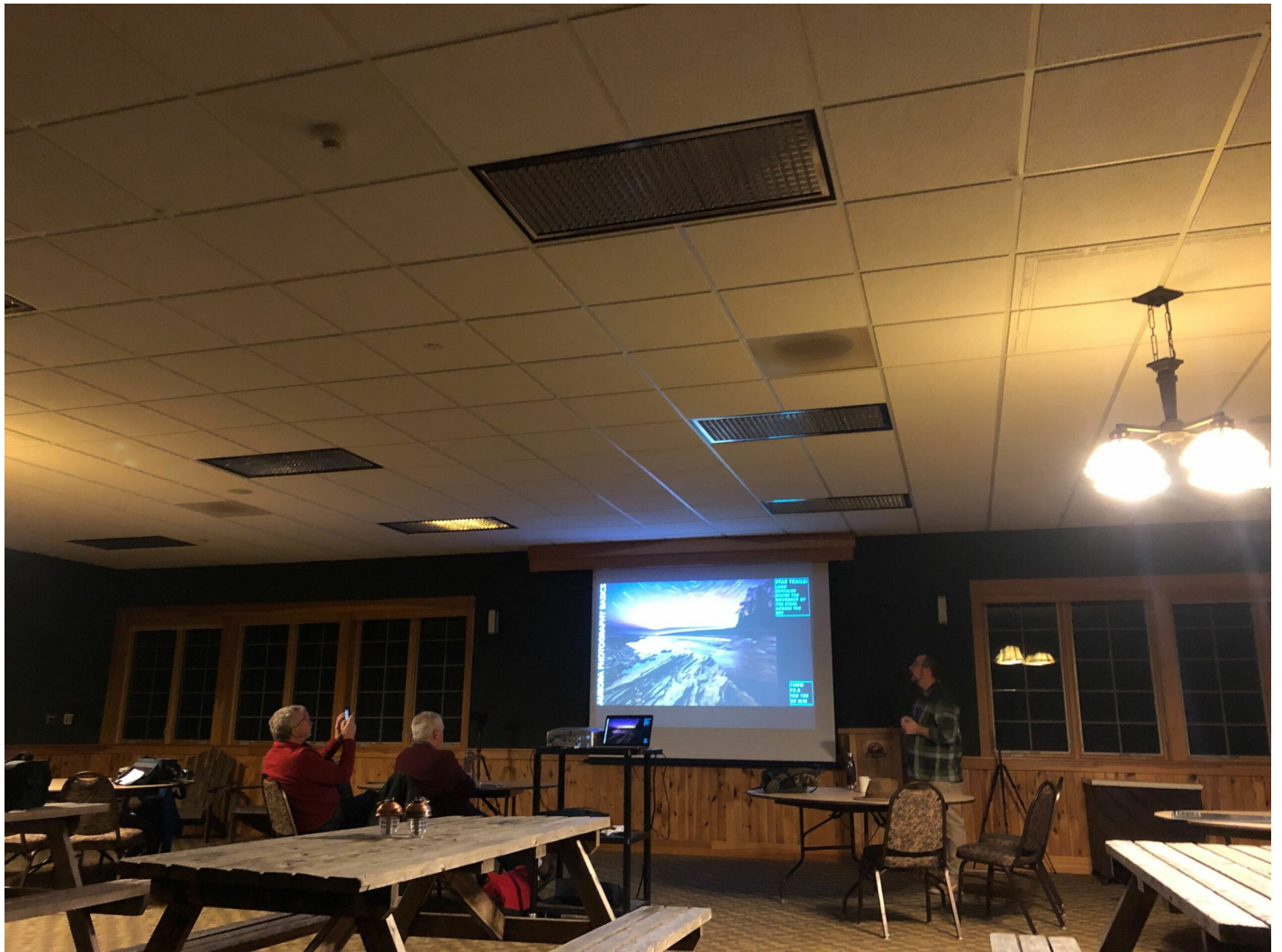




Saturday was an interesting day in terms of weather in December at the Lodge, as the temperatures were near 50 degrees. As well, it was overcast throughout the day with rain mixed into the activities. The evening cooled off, offering some snow, but no open skies for stargazing and night time photography. So the attendees and Nate were not able to spend time outside after the inside lecture. However, attendees were able to spend time with Nate asking specific questions about cameras and night-time photography – specific to taking photos of the beautiful Northern Lights.







Our next photo workshop will be held during the new moon in January, on January 12th:

- [Stargazing: Northern Lights Photography Workshop, January 12, 2024](#)
- 



[John Mueller](#)

founder, golfer, runner, professor, entrepreneurship

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# Golf 2023 Season Recap

written by John Mueller | February 19, 2024

Saturday, October 15th was the last day of the 2023 golf season, our standard day for ending a golf season each year. We started the golf season on June 1st and ended October 15th as planned.

We had another wonderful golf season, with outdoor enthusiasts



enjoying the [fun.joyous.adventuresome](#) atmosphere of a resort course in the wilderness – along with further education of how the golf course now plays a role in the Lodge's dark sky activities. Individuals can play the historic golf course during the day, taking in the nature in the wilderness. And in the evening be able to stargazing. The new design of the [scorecard](#) highlights this.

The Outdoor Activity Center (OAC) and golf course maintenance crews did an excellent job providing a unique experience for people playing this historic course throughout the season.

We continue to focus on being a resort-oriented golf course, focused on lodging guests as a priority, while also allowing the general public to play the course. In 2023 we continued to refine our uniqueness, with this year understanding better how to be a historic wilderness golf course which gets people closer to nature while playing golf. This entailed encouraging walking the course, testing a new flag stick (wooden), testing various mowing strategies, and testing new organic fertilizers and fungicide for snow mold and dollar spots.

## Outdoor Activity Center (OAC)

As a reminder, we do not have a pro shop, but rather an **outdoor activity center** since we offer multiple outdoor activities at the resort – not just golf (e.g., [biking](#) and [hiking](#)). The [Outdoor Activity Center](#) (OAC) was staffed every day of the season, utilizing the historic cabin structure next to hole 1 tee box during the golf season – a transition made in 2020.

The golf course opened on June 1st, with the OAC operating 9am – 5pm for the entire season. Tee times were also from 9am to 5pm. This was the same as the previous season. However, we did add an additional guideline in 2023, where golfers had to be off the

golf course by 7pm. This is so guests can walk the golf course during the evening daylight hours, and scout for where they will stargaze when darkness falls – playing golf during the day and stargazing at night.

The [OAC staff](#) catered to our qualities in being a [historic wilderness resort](#) that focuses on providing an [outdoor experience](#). We have incorporated being [fun, joyous, and adventuresome](#) by introducing alternative forms of golf to the Keweenaw (e.g. [FlingGolf](#) and [Disc Golf](#)).

## **New Score Card Design**

In 2023, we redesigned the scorecard. In the new design, we used more recent pictures of the golf course and integrate pictures and information about how the golf course is also part of the dark sky park.

In addition, we changed the par of hole 4 from a par 5 to a par 4. The hole is less than 400 yards, and most par 5s are 500+ yards.





The new scorecard design – front -back

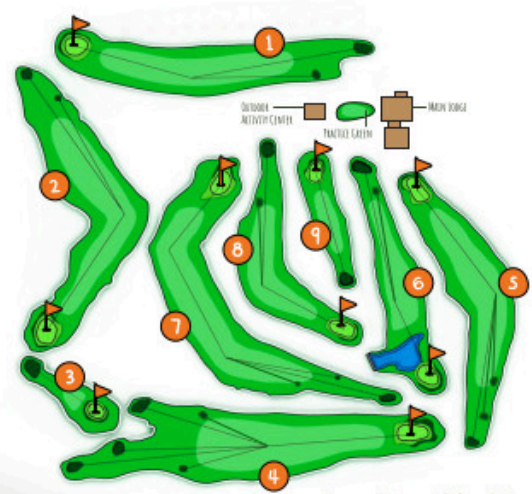


USGA rules shall govern all play except  
where modified by the local rules  
(see website)

Date:

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out
Iron	394	395	119	395	372	313	485	318	177	2,968
Copper	341	329	108	295	275	280	407	263	163	2,461
Par	4	4	3	4	4	4	5	4	3	35
Handicap	5	1	9	2	3	6	4	7	8	

Scorer:  Attestor:



Course Designer: Ochoa Potter



For more details on each hole, scan the QR code.

The new scorecard design – inside

## Tee Time Intervals and a Limit to Daily Rounds

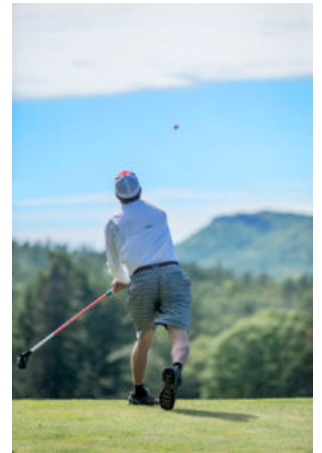
In 2022 we went from 10-minute tee-time intervals to 15-minute tee-time intervals. This year, as we limited the daily rounds to 44 rounds a day to ensure that golfers felt they were in the wilderness, we decided to move to 20-minute tee-time intervals.

This is different than other golf courses. Golf courses in urban areas work off of 7-8-minute tee-time intervals. So 20-minute tee-time intervals and a limit of 44 rounds a day is something counter to most golf courses. We feel the tee-time intervals and the limit of 44 rounds is necessary to ensure guests understand



and feel the wilderness aspect of the historic wilderness golf course at the Lodge. This also means that individuals are not rushed, and have no anxiety when playing the course – ensuring a fun.joyous.adventuresome experience.

## **Fling Golf**



This season we continued to offer guests the opportunity to play [FlingGolf](#) – think golf, but using a Lacrosse stick to throw the ball instead of hitting it with a club. We had an array of FlingSticks available for rent at the OAC. Not only was FlingGolf fun and family friendly, it allowed for a unique alternative to golf, broadening our options to guests. We received regular, positive feedback from guests as well as staff on how much fun FlingGolf is at the Lodge.

## **Electric Golf Carts – Quiet**

The E-Z-GO RXV ELiTE carts continue to be a strong addition to the quietness at the resort, and providing golfers a new experience for getting around the course at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. These carts are powered with Samsung SDI Lithium Technology batteries, providing golfers excellent mobility without sacrificing the wilderness golfing experience. Each EZ-GO ELiTE was also equipped with GPS technology which allowed us

to prevent the carts from driving on greens, tee boxes, or through the rough, which helped us maintain the condition of those sensitive areas, as well as the carts themselves. [\[read more about our fleet, here\]](#)

But we encouraged walking first this season.

## Tempo Walks

Last season, we brought in a new technology to focus on how the sport was started – walking a round of golf. However, this year we had technical difficulties with the Tempo Walks (Club Car's robotic caddie), and they did not go out on the golf course (we are working with Club Car on getting this back on the golf course in



2023 so that golfers can enjoy the Lodge golf course while walking the wilderness of the Keweenaw. [ [read more about our Tempo Walks, here](#) ] – last year we didn't have the tempo walks working. And this year we did. We led with walking, and had more walkers than in any of the previous 4 years. Walking activity continues to increase.

Using the [CaddyTek](#) EZ-Fold Pushcarts.

## Rental Golf Clubs



And our Callaway club rentals continued to be a solid addition to providing golfers the ability to play quality clubs. And a good relationship with Callaway.



In 2024 we are looking to add to our rental clubs along the theme of our historical nature. We are looking having a set or two of hickory sticks available for rent.

## Two Tee Markers

We moved away from a four-tee system to a two-tee system: Iron and Copper. This makes the course simpler and more straight forward for golfers and for the maintenance crew.





# Flags

We moved away from color-coated flags (blue, white, and red) to a rustic & wilderness oriented flag embroidered with the main KML logo – which is representative of the brand and image of the Lodge. [ These flags are made by [Prestige Flags](#) ]





# Wooden Flagsticks

We tested out the wooden flag sticks on holes 1 (5-foot) and 9 (7 foot) greens. And then bought all of them. In 2024, we will have all wooden flag sticks, 5-feet high on the greens. 5-foot flagsticks is what the golf course had when it originally opened (history). [ These flagsticks are made by [Cheesebrough](#) ]









## Golf Course Maintenance

Our golf course maintenance crew did an exceptional job this season keeping the course in great shape, especially since we had staff members leave before and during the season, and we had a limited amount of rain during most of our playing season (approximately 3 inches of rain from June 1st to September 15th). The core crew worked exceptionally hard to irrigate and mow the turf keep the turf in good shape.

Long-time golf course superintendent, Bill Albend, retired at the end of the 2021 season. However, he was willing to help out in 2022 on a part-time basis this season (marking his 27th year working at the Lodge). This was very important for the golf course maintenance crew as the person that was hired to fill Bill's shoes left before the golf course opened for the season. This meant that Bill spent the summer teaching John Mueller the ins-and-outs of nuances for maintaining the Lodge course (*i.e. co-superintendents*). Long-time Lodge team member, Ron Koski, sadly passed away in April. He loved being out on the golf course and working the mowers – fairways and rough mowing. This season, Mason Codre returned for a 2nd year and helped to fill the void of Catman's passing. He stepped up to handle more of the prep work in May, and focused on tees and rough mowing. Naya Mueller stepped into a new role at the Lodge and mowed the fairways. Mowing fairways became an evening job, as we were able to do that once the golf course were finished playing for the evening by 7pm.

## Snow Mold

Snow mold was prevalent in May, with the interesting weather we had over winter – where experienced rain at least once a month, which traps moisture under the snow. With a week of 60 degree weather in mid-April, snow mold took hold. When all the snow had



melted after a late snow fall May 1st, we saw 30-40% of each green scarred with snow mold. We let nature do it's job, and the last day of May saw 90 degree weather to encourage growth. Even with a good healthy growth on the green the last 10 days of May, we still saw a scarring on the greens when we opened June 1st. It took another 3-4 weeks before we saw the greens back to the quality putting surface that we wanted to see for the season.

Bruce Williams visit in May to inspect the course. This was his 2nd year to visit and provide advice on how to improve the playing surface on the Lodge course.

Craig Moore, from Marquette Golf Club, also helped out this season. He provided advice on fungicide applications, and helped apply several applications of a test fungicide in the fall (October and November).

During the summer / fall, we did several sprays with fungicides (for snow mold, dollar spots, and moss). We also did several granular applications of fungicides and insecticides (for cut worms).

We strive to have the greens in excellent shape, good tee boxes, and decent fairways. We were able to accomplish that with the golf course maintenance crew. Especially, with the snow mold experience when the snow melted in April / May.

## **Aerating and Topdressing the Greens**

The team was able to aerate the greens in one day. We closed the course on [Sunday, September 17th](#), and we aerated all 10 greens. We then spent the following week top dressing the greens to fill in the aerated holes with sand. The aerating of the greens in September is to improve the probability the greens will be good next season (in 2024).

# AERATING AND TOPDRESSING THE GREENS

The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge aerates and top dresses the greens every September when the weather is appropriate.



Aeration is a long-term strategy which ensures the greens are in good health and playing well for the 2024 season and beyond.



- Controls organic matter.
- Relieves soil compaction.
- Stimulates root growth.
- Improves drainage.



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## Resources

We improved our resources for golf course maintenance in 2023. We purchased a Foley reel grinder and a Foley bedknife grinder to be able to keep our mowing units in better shape. Having mowing units that are sharp helps keep the grass healthy when cutting blades of grass. As well, we purchased a Bobcat mini-excavator to do special projects around the Lodge, including on the golf course.

Now that the season has come to a close, the grounds crew is preparing for the upcoming winter in order to prevent snow mold and other casualties that could possibly harm the course in the future.

## Island in the Pond on Hole 6 Removed

Started to removed the island on hole 6 in November – no snow in November – Martin, and John. [ Updated 2023-12-24: Chris and John finished removing the island ]

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## Wildlife and Nature on the Golf Course

An aspect of the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge's golf course that is regularly commented on by guests is the likelihood of seeing wildlife on and around the course. Whether it be crows sounding a "wake-up alarm" around the cabins, painted lady butterflies feeding on nectar from the viburnum planted in front of the lodge, deer eating apples from the apple tree along the Hole 4 fairway, or the occasional black bear that strolls through our campus, one-on-one encounters with wildlife really emphasize for people the surrounding wilderness landscape and connect them personally with our environment. These are just a couple of the

many examples of wildlife encounters around and on the golf course this past season.

A pair of Sandhill Cranes nested on the course again this year. Their nest was not successful; however, they remained on the course throughout the season until they migrated south.

We recognize the value of maintaining healthy ecosystems and getting the chance to encounter wildlife in such ways. To help protect our environment while preserving the natural heritage of the game of golf, the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge is a member of the [Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf \(ASCP-Golf\)](#). ASCP-Golf is an education and certification program developed by Audubon International to help enhance the valuable natural areas and wildlife habitats that golf courses provide, improve efficiency, and minimize potentially harmful impacts of golf course operations. The ASCP-Golf program takes stock of and then develops a plan for improvement around six key environmental components:

- Environmental Planning
- Wildlife and Habitat Management
- Chemical Use Reduction and Safety
- Water Conservation
- Water Quality Management
- Outreach and Education

Much of our effort to gain this certification will occur without much notice by guests. However, when you visit us over the next several years there are some aspects you might see. For instance, an effort to convert some of the areas of rough to help local pollinators and aid in Monarch butterfly migration by planting native wildflowers and grasses and bee population.

If you see work being done on the course and are not sure what it is, please ask. We are very excited to talk about the future



of the ASCP-Golf at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge.

[ [Learn more about the application](#) ]

[ [Read the 2022 Golf Season Recap](#) ]

## Looking Forward: The 2024 Season

Looking forward to the next season, here are several items we will be focusing on in 2023:

- Continue to promote exercise / walking, by carrying one's bag, using a pull cart, or using a Tempo Walk
- Continue to improve the historic nature of the golf course
- Continue to improve the wilderness nature of the golf course
- Increase the awareness of the wildlife and nature associated with the golf course
- Moving through the process of [becoming a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Golf Course](#)
- Wooden flag sticks (5-feet)
- New tee markers, made by our team

Until June 1st, 2024, the golf course is now closed and has been put to sleep for the winter.

**[ a historic wilderness golf course ]**

*– not a golf course in the wilderness –*

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### UPDATE December 24, 2024

With no snow on Christmas Eve Day, Chris and John finished up removing the island in the pond on hole 6.



[John Mueller](#)

founder, golfer, runner, professor, entrepreneurship

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# November 10, 2023: Fostering the Keweenaw Dark Skies Seminar Recap

written by John Mueller | February 19, 2024

We held [our annual light management workshop](#) for the 3rd year in a row. This time we incorporated the workshop into a seminar with [Visit Keweenaw](#) as part of their [Sustainable Tourism Seminar Series](#). This seminar, held November 10th in a lunch-n-learn format, was the kickoff session for seminar series.



In [2022](#) and [2021](#) the light management workshops that we held were at the Lodge. This year, with the partnership with Visit Keweenaw, the event was held in Hancock at the [Keweenaw Community Foundation](#) office (236 Quincy St). There were 13 attendees, including the guests, speakers, and organizers.

By being incorporated in the Sustainable Tourism series we expanded the topic of the seminar. In addition to including info about becoming a designated dark sky park ([Keweenaw Dark Sky Park](#)) and light management, we had a worldly-focused guest that talked about light pollution and how that affects stargazing, our everyday health, and the health of wildlife and ecology.



[Brad Barnett](#) kicked off the seminar by showing a video about the Keweenaw Dark Sky Park and then introducing [John Barentine](#) and

[John Mueller](#) (me). John Barentine joined virtually via Zoom from Tucson, Arizona, where [Dark Sky International](#) (fka, International Dark Association) is located. [ Dark Sky International is the governing body of the international dark sky park program and designation. ]

**[John Barentine](#) is the founder of [Dark Sky Consulting, LLC](#).** He is an Arizona native and comes from the “dark side” of science – professional astronomy. He grew up in Phoenix and was involved in amateur astronomy there from grade school. He obtained a master’s degree in physics at Colorado State University and a master’s and Ph.D. in astronomy at the University of Texas at Austin. Throughout his career, he has been involved in education and outreach efforts to help increase the public understanding of science.

His presentation focused on conserving the wilderness of the night sky. He provided data to showing that [light pollution](#) has increased throughout the world, and how special the Keweenaw is in terms of low light pollution. He discussed several examples of how other areas are addressing light pollution, and what the science is behind better lighting. More specifically his talk was organized around:

- Why the wilderness of the night sky is important
- What is light pollution
- What are the effects of light pollution
- What is the solution

Interesting points he made:

- Studies show that street lights do not offer more benefit in visibility to the driver when traveling less than 35 mph. The vehicle’s headlights is sufficient.

Below is a link to the slide deck he used during his



presentation.



[ [Download John Barentine's Presentation Slide Deck](#) ]

The Keweenaw is home to some of the darkest skies in the Midwest. This provides visitors and residents access to incredible stargazing opportunities and even the chance to experience the Northern Lights. During the seminar a discussion on ways to foster the Keweenaw's dark skies and the science behind light pollution prevention. We touched on actions we have been taking to establish the [Keweenaw Dark Sky Park](#) in Copper Harbor and why fostering dark skies are important to the region.

[John Mueller](#) from the [Keweenaw Mountain Lodge](#) & [Keweenaw Dark Sky Park](#) filled in gaps from John Barentine's talk and connected John B's talk with the Keweenaw by providing examples of what the Lodge has been doing the past 2-3 years in terms of minimizing light pollution.



The connection between John B. and John M. is that John B. was the initial Program Manager for the Lodge when the Lodge was going through the [International Dark Sky Places](#) nomination. At the time, John B. was the Director of Public Policy and Director of Conservation for the [International Dark-Sky Association \(IDA\)](#) in Tucson, Arizona.



[ [Download John Mueller's Presentation Slide Deck](#) ]



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Below are pictures from the event.





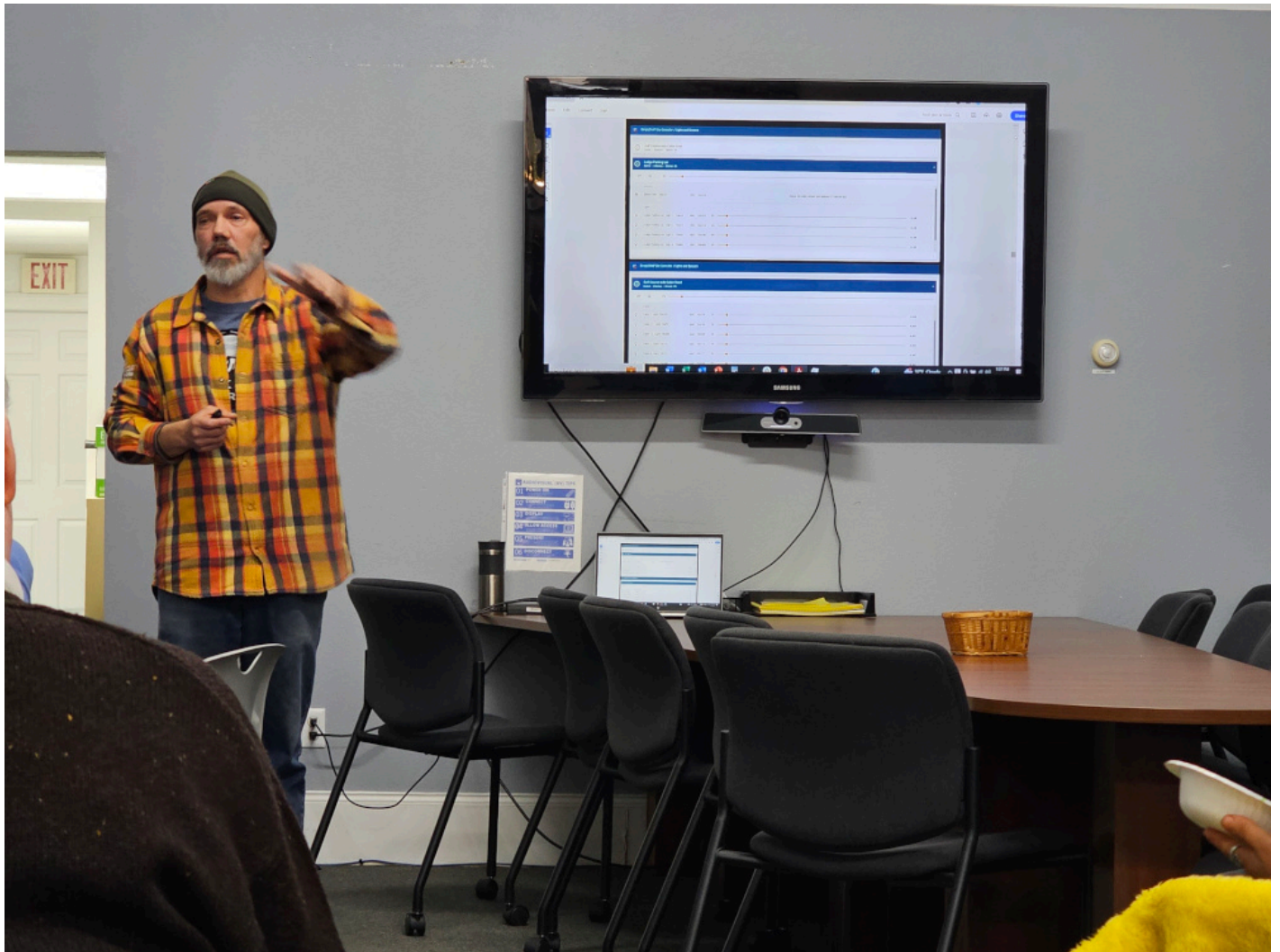












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# November 11, 2023: Northern Lights Photography Workshop Recap

written by John Mueller | February 19, 2024

The November 11, 2023 Aurora Photography Workshop was the third photo workshop of the fall at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge and the eleventh workshop of 2023. Throughout the year we offer night sky photo workshops every month as part of our [educational](#)

[initiatives](#) at the Keweenaw Mountain in association with being the headquarters of the [Keweenaw Dark Sky Park](#).





It was a calm fall day and a peaceful evening at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. When reviewing data from [our weather station](#) after the workshop, the temperature only fluctuated 4 degrees in a 24 hour period. One of the good things ( or bad things, depending whom you ask) about being on the [Keweenaw Peninsula](#) is that the weather can change quickly. The old statement, "If you don't like the weather, just wait an hour" resonates with the Keweenaw residents (but is said by many around the country – Keweenaw residents fully grasp that we are surrounded by Mother Superior on 3 of our sides).



# NORTHERN LIGHTS PHOTO WORKSHOP

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IN THE KEWEENAW DARK SKY PARK



KEWEENAW MOUNTAIN LODGE

NOVEMBER 11, 2023 - 7:00 PM

LODGING GUESTS FREE • \$75 PUBLIC • LIMITED AVAILABILITY

[KEWEENAWMOUNTAINLODGE.COM](http://KEWEENAWMOUNTAINLODGE.COM) FOR DETAILS





Five guests attended the workshop, all of which were staying at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. We have noticed over the past year that guests are booking their stay to attend the workshop and take advantage of the [Lights Out!](#) The Lights Out event at the Lodge is a three-to-seven day event where the Lodge turns off all the street lights and other lights to increase one's stargazing experience.

[Nate Bett](#) was the instructor for the class. Nate has a diverse background in photography including attaining an MFA from [Parsons The New School For Design](#) in 2012, working for [Canon cameras](#) at trade shows and teaching photo classes at [NMU](#).

The Night Sky Photo Workshops are broken into two segments: an inside presentation and an outside, hands-on portion. This night's class started at 7:00pm and Nate launched into a digital slideshow covering topics like: preparations for a night sky photo shoot, Aurora basics, camera settings, and picking good locations.



The weather stayed mostly agreeable for the outside portion of the class. Nate gathered the group and they headed to Hole 5 of the golf course. Nate did a demonstration with his camera and helped a participant to focus her camera.





The clouds started to move in quickly and some light was reflecting off of them from the town of Copper Harbor. I frantically set up my camera to show the group my process. I was able to take this image of Jupiter framed between the trees before the clouds rolled in and the class ended.

Our next photo workshop will be held during the new moon in December, on December 9th:

- [Stargazing: Northern Lights Photography Workshop, December 9, 2023](#)
-



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[johnmueller.co](#)





# Upper Peninsula Dark Sky Park Festival Recap

written by John Mueller | February 19, 2024

The [inaugural Upper Peninsula Dark Sky Park Festival](#) was held by the [Keweenaw Mountain Lodge](#), in partnership with Visit Keweenaw, April 21st and 22nd, 2023. This is exciting times for the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge as the headquarters of the [Keweenaw Dark Sky Park](#). It signals the importance of the dark skies in the Keweenaw and to human and wildlife.

The festival was 1.5 days of activities focused on dark skies, and enjoying [stargazing](#) and the [Northern Lights](#). The speakers at the festival were (*shown in alphabetical order*):

- Nate Bett, Dark Sky / Northern Lights Photographer
- Chris Guibert, Keweenaw Mountain Lodge / Keweenaw Dark Sky Park
- Amber Harrison, International Dark-Sky Association
- Andrew Johnson, Headlands Dark Sky Park
- Melissa Kaelin, Author, Below the 45th Parallel
- MaryBeth Kiczenski, Dark Sky / Northern Lights Photographer
- “Astro” Bob King, Astronomy Author
- John Mueller, Keweenaw Mountain Lodge / Keweenaw Dark Sky Park
- Amy Oestreich, Keweenaw Mountain Lodge / Keweenaw Dark Sky Park
- Tom Oliver, Michigan Tech University Center for Environmental Science and Outreach
- Robert Parrish, Dr. T.K. Lawless Dark Sky Park
- Jamie Westfall, Headlands Dark Sky Park

The festival was held during [2023 Earth Day](#), which is inline

with the theme of [dark skies](#) and the [values of the Lodge](#).

During the festival, it was announced the Lights Out! program at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge / Keweenaw Dark Sky Park. Installed light switches for each of the street lights, and turned off all the street lights during the festival.

As part of the operations philosophy of the Lodge, we had a maximum number of people that could attend the festival. This is an optimal number of visitors in order to ensure that the desired experience is experienced by the guests. That number was 50 officially registered guests, which was sold out 2 weeks before the event.

This is an annual event, with the 2024 Upper Peninsula Dark Sky Festival to be held sometime in April.

- [Stargazing: 2024 Upper Peninsula Dark Sky Festival](#)
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## Photo Gallery

Below are images from the 2023 Upper Peninsula Dark Sky Festival.

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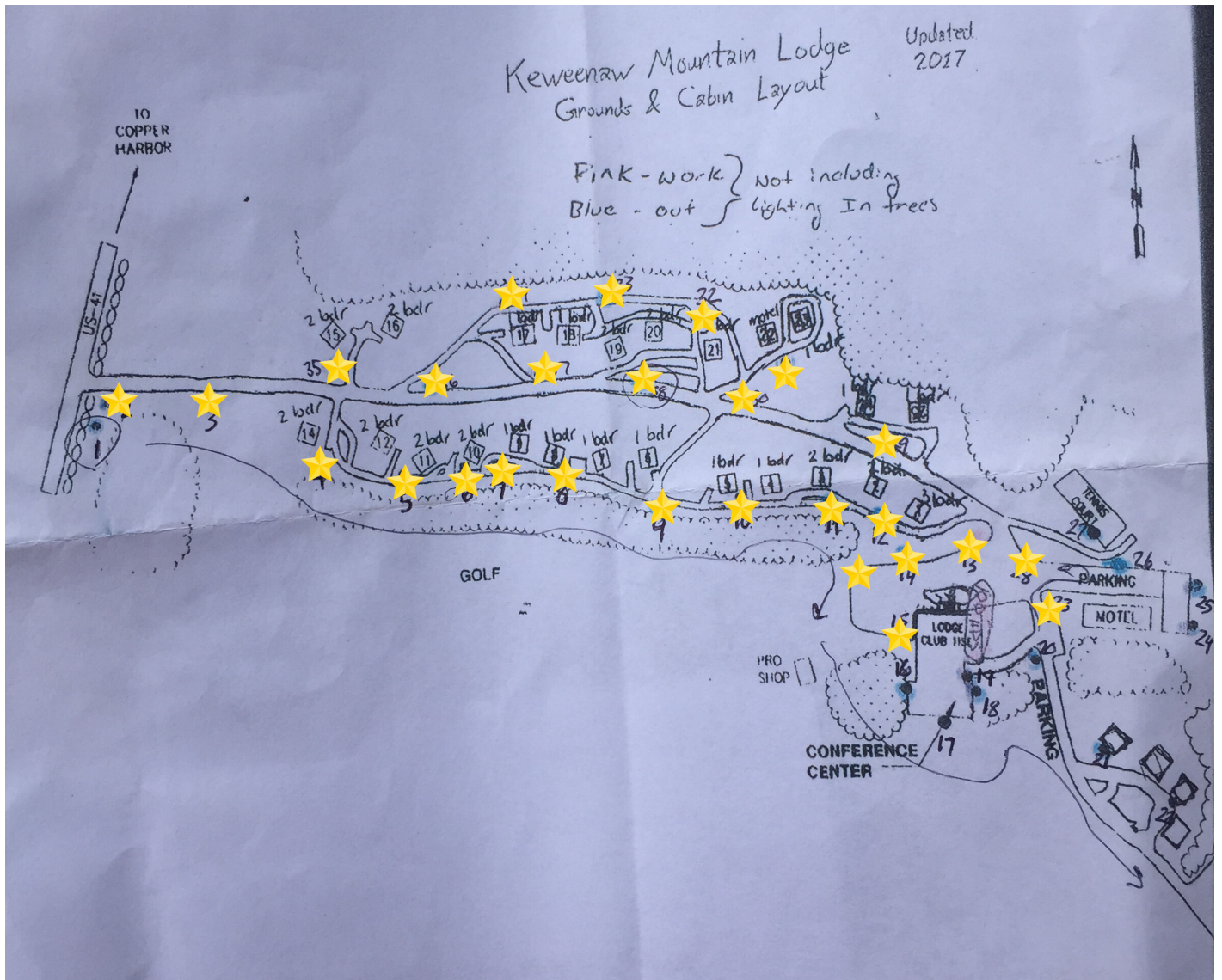
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# **Lighting Improvements: Individual Controls of Street Lights**

written by John Mueller | February 19, 2024

This week we installed individual “light switches” on each of

our dark-sky compliant street lights. This is 28 street lights, which are the [Truly Green Solutions Cobrahead RWL G2 model](#) light fixtures ([installed February 2021](#)).



[Keweenaw Power and Lite](#) was able to work through 2 days of late winter storms (ice, snow, wind, and falling limbs), and then 2 clear days, to get the light switches installed before the 2023 Upper Peninsula Dark Sky Festival.









In addition, we installed a light switch for our wallpack on the back part of the Lodge (which is a dark sky compliant light fixture). This allows us to turn on and off, as well as dim, the wallpack light. This is important as we want to lower the light to have less light trespassing when people are enjoying the dark sky park and taking night time pictures of the Lodge.









This improvement is part of our [light management plan](#) for the resort, which is a designated international dark sky park – the [Keweenaw Dark Sky Park](#).



More research on how light affects humans and wildlife can be found on the IDA's website at:

- <https://www.darksky.org/our-work/grassroots-advocacy/resources/research/>
- 



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# Winter Trail Grooming Report – 2023-02-05

written by John Mueller | February 19, 2024

We groomed the trails yesterday afternoon to freshen them up. Overnight we received a dusting of snow. It was calm, but we have seen a slight increase in the wind this morning so there will be some drifting on the trails this morning. The winter activities continue on the trails today.

Status as of 8:30am

## **Trail Status**

- **Perimeter Loop:** Groomed Flat , Feb 4th
- **Inner Loop:** Classic Tracked, Feb 4th
- **In There Loop:** Classic Tracked, Feb 4th
- **Outer Loop:** Classic Tracked, Feb 4th
- **Out There Loop:** Classic Tracked, Feb 4th
- **North Eastern Loop:** Classic Tracked, Feb 4th
- **Adventurer Snowshoe Route :** Packed, Feb 4th
- **Explorer Snowshoe Route :** Packed, January 21st

Keweenaw County has received [158" of snow](#) as of 2/3/2023.

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**UPDATE: 2023-02-05 3pm**

We groomed the trails around noon today to freshen them up as it continues snow lightly (fluffy flakes) – with the 2017 Gator, which hadn't been in action since last April (it is good to see

it back in action). The trails are in good shape for the rest of the day, with a lite layer of snowflakes laying on the classic tracks. The winter activities continue on the trails today.

### ***Trail Status***

- ***Perimeter Loop:*** Groomed Flat , Feb 5th
- ***Inner Loop:*** Classic Tracked, Feb 5th
- ***In There Loop:*** Classic Tracked, Feb 5th
- ***Outer Loop:*** Classic Tracked, Feb 5th
- ***Out There Loop:*** Classic Tracked, Feb 5th
- ***North Eastern Loop:*** Classic Tracked, Feb 5th
- ***Adventurer Snowshoe Route :*** Packed, Feb 4th
- ***Explorer Snowshoe Route :*** Packed, January 21st

***Trailing Grooming Pictures from February 5, 2023***

















[ [Keweenaw County Snowfall](#) ]

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# **Social Media – Scaled Back the Activity the Last Quarter of 2022**

written by John Mueller | February 19, 2024

Some of you might have noticed that we have not been as active on social media recently. We have made less than 3 posts in each

of the last three months (September, October, and November – and this month, December) [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) as opposed to posting each day.

This has been intentional, as we feel that social media is creating a lot of unnecessary noise in people's lives and we do not want to get in the middle of that noise. We want to be value added for people, not take away from their experiences in life. We strive to get people closer to nature. We do that by providing a quiet place in the wilderness, a dark sky at night, and more. It also means a **quiet mind**. Social media has gotten to the point where it is very much a distraction and is full of unauthentic messaging – leading to a noisy mind. We want individuals that are paying attention to our activities at the lodge to have a quiet mind, not a noisy mind.

As a reminder, we want to be clear with our message and not use social media as a marketing tool – rather, we use social media as an informational tool to direct people to the website and learn about the KML – where there is less noise and more authentic messaging.

Many social media channels these days are about marketing, which has caused people to become overwhelmed with information. As well, the social media channels are becoming more about saying “look at me” and making people look good (or look bad, which is an indication of poor intentions). We do not want to be associated with that crowd.

The amount of judgement that people are exhibiting on social media these days is immense. We do not want to be associated with judgement either. Judgement can be in the form of likes and dislikes, positive and negative comments. If you review our values, issuing judgment (be it good or bad judgment) does not align with our values. To live by [our values](#), we should not



exhibit judgment on anyone or anything. **We should just “be”, and just “enjoy”.** That leads to a **fun.jouyous.adventuresome outcome** – for our team, for our guests, for our community, and for our environment.

Thus, I pulled us back in terms of our social media posts over the past several months, and have posted only occasionally rather than each day. I feel that is the best thing for us to do at this point in time to stay true to what we want to be known for (our brand / image), and staying true to [our values](#). This is against the trend of the current day, where many organizations and individuals are falling over themselves to post and post and post via their social media feeds. Thus, this decision is contrary to advice that people will give us, which is just fine – as we do not use people’s judgment to make decisions, but use [our team’s values](#) as our guiding light.

Over the next month or two, I will be looking into setting us up an account with a social media management tool (eg. [Buffer](#), [Hootsuite](#), [Sprout Social](#), etc) to make it easier on us to manage our messaging on social media. Then we might ease back into an increase in social media activity again. Or choose to stay quieter.

[ [follow updates of our social media strategy](#) ]

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# Golf 2022 Season Recap

written by John Mueller | February 19, 2024

Saturday, October 15th was the last day of the 2022 golf season. We had a wonderful golf season, with outdoor enthusiasts enjoying the fun. joyous. adventuresome atmosphere of a resort course in the wilderness. A dry summer with little rain had our team working the irrigation system to keep the course in great shape. The golf course approximately 3 inches of rain from June 1st to September 15. We finally had some late seasonal rains brought the whole course back to lush green in October. The

Outdoor Activity Center (OAC) and golf course maintenance crews did an excellent job providing a unique experience for people playing this historic course.

As with [2021](#), there were multiple reports that *“the course is in the best condition they I’ve ever seen” have been common all season.*

The [Outdoor Activity Center](#) (OAC), was staffed every day of the season, utilizing the historic cabin structure next to hole 1 tee box. Our rounds were down from previous years; however, our revenue was around the same as previous years for golf – while providing 15-minute tee-time intervals so that individuals do not feel rushed. Our goal is not to increase the number of rounds, but to provide a fun, joyous, and adventuresome experience for golfers. Thus, we are happy when we are seeing that one of our biggest compliments from golfers is that they are able to enjoy a quality wilderness experience at the top of the Keweenaw. Wonderful! We are trying to get people closer to nature, including when they are walking and playing the golf course.

The golf course opened on June 1st, with the OAC operating 9am – 5pm for the entire season. We scaled back the hours (previous year was 8am – 6pm), and this change had a positive result with maintaining the golf course and providing golfers with a quality experience. Golfers were still able to check in for their tee times at the OAC and make tee times via our online tee time system (provided by [Lightspeed Golf](#)).

We managed the operations throughout the season so we could provide optimum customer service. With our first tee time each day being 9am, and our last tee time 5pm, we were able to staff the activity center with team members that could answer questions about the golf activities, as well other activities



(e.g., [biking](#) and [hiking](#)).

The [OAC staff](#) catered to our qualities in being a [historic wilderness resort](#) that focuses on providing an [outdoor experience](#). We have incorporated being [fun, joyous, and adventuresome](#) by introducing alternative forms of golf to the Keweenaw (e.g. [FlingGolf](#) and [Disc Golf](#)), we have freshened up our merchandise offerings, and enhanced the experience for our customers overall.

Starting in the [2020 season](#), we made the decision to be a resort-oriented golf course. This meant no longer holding tournaments, having memberships available, or golf cart storage. This decision was made so we did not have resources being diverted from our primary reason of operations – being a resort (as opposed to a country club). This allowed us to focus on our primary target market – the guests that stay at the resort.

As with the previous two years (2020 and 2021), this year we continued to see people stay in cabins, and have both their golf clubs and their bikes with them. They would ride in the morning, and play 9-holes in the afternoon. Or they would play golf one day, and ride and/or hike the next day. Having biking and hiking trail access from the property, and a golf course out their cabin door, allows Lodge guests to easily take advantage of what the Keweenaw and the Lodge have to offer without having to use their cars.

The E-Z-GO RXV ELiTE carts continue to be a strong addition to the quietness at the resort, and providing golfers a new experience for getting around the course at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. These carts are powered with Samsung SDI Lithium Technology batteries, providing golfers excellent mobility without sacrificing the wilderness golfing experience. Each EZ-GO ELiTE was also equipped with GPS technology which allowed us

to prevent the carts from driving on greens, tee boxes, or through the rough, which helped us maintain the condition of those sensitive areas, as well as the carts themselves. [\[read more about our fleet, here\]](#)

Last season, we brought in a new technology to focus on how the sport was started – walking a round of golf. However, this year we had technical difficulties with the Tempo Walks (Club Car's robotic caddie), and they did not go out on the golf course (we are working with Club Car on getting this back on the golf course in 2023 so that golfers can enjoy the Lodge golf course while walking the wilderness of the Keweenaw. [ [read more about our Tempo Walks, here](#) ]

Even though the Tempo Walks did not work for us this season, we did see an increase in people walking the golf course and using the [CaddyTek](#) EZ-Fold Pushcarts.

And our Callaway club rentals continued to be a solid addition to providing golfers the ability to play quality clubs.



Our golf course maintenance crew did an exceptional job this season keeping the course in great shape, especially since we had staff members leave before and during the season, and we had a limited amount of rain during most of our playing season (approximately 3 inches of rain from June 1st to September 15th). The core crew worked exceptionally hard to irrigate and mow the turf keep the turf in good shape.

Long-time golf course superintendent, Bill Alband, retired at the end of the 2021 season. However, he was willing to help out in 2022 on a part-time basis this season (marking his 27th year working at the Lodge). This was very important for the golf course maintenance crew as the person that was hired to fill Bill's shoes left before the golf course opened for the season. This meant that Bill spent the summer teaching John Mueller the ins-and-outs of nuances for maintaining the Lodge course (*i.e.*



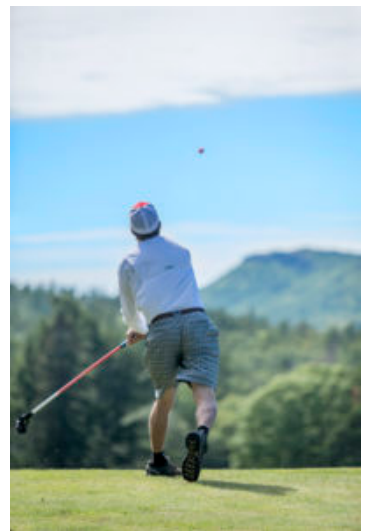
*co-superintendents*). Long-time Lodge team member, Ron Koski, did a wonderful job keeping the grass mowed, with the help of seasonal help (Aidan and Mason).

We strive to have the greens in excellent shape, good tee boxes, and decent fairways. We were able to accomplish that with the golf course maintenance crew. This is evident in the positive responses we received from golfers.

Now that the season has come to a close, the grounds crew is preparing for the upcoming winter in order to prevent snow mold and other casualties that could possibly harm the course in the future.

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## Fling Golf



This season we continued to offer guests the opportunity to play [FlingGolf](#) – think golf, but using a Lacrosse stick to throw the ball instead of hitting it with a club. We had an array of FlingSticks available for rent at the OAC. Not only was FlingGolf fun and family friendly, it allowed for a unique alternative to golf, broadening our options to guests. We received regular, positive feedback from guests as well as staff on how much fun FlingGolf is at the Lodge.

## Wildlife and Nature on the Golf Course

An aspect of the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge's golf course that is regularly commented on by guests is the likelihood of seeing wildlife on and around the course. Whether it be crows sounding a "wake-up alarm" around the cabins, painted lady butterflies feeding on nectar from the viburnum planted in front of the lodge, deer eating apples from the apple tree along the Hole 4 fairway, or the occasional black bear that strolls through our campus, one-on-one encounters with wildlife really emphasize for people the surrounding wilderness landscape and connect them personally with our environment. These are just a couple of the many examples of wildlife encounters around and on the golf course this past season.

A pair of Sandhill Cranes nested on the course again this year. Their nest was not successful; however, they remained on the course throughout the season until they migrated south. They became very accustomed to the golfers and golf carts and provided some great opportunities for photos.

A pair of Merlins (a type of small falcon), nested in a pine tree between Holes 8 and 9 this season. They successfully fledged three young. A windstorm in early September forced them out of their nest because a large branch fell through it. Fortunately, the young were developed enough to fly and all survived.

As usual, there continues to be a healthy population of squirrels and chipmunks on the property. Near the end of the summer, an immature red-tailed hawk discovered this fact and took up temporary residence near the OAC. It was, on multiple occasions, seen gliding low among the trees, then snagging an unsuspecting chipmunk or squirrel for its meal.

We recognize the value of maintaining healthy ecosystems and

getting the chance to encounter wildlife in such ways. To help protect our environment while preserving the natural heritage of the game of golf, the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge has joined the [Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf \(ASCP-Golf\)](#). ASCP-Golf is an education and certification program developed by Audubon International to help enhance the valuable natural areas and wildlife habitats that golf courses provide, improve efficiency, and minimize potentially harmful impacts of golf course operations. The ASCP-Golf program takes stock of and then develops a plan for improvement around six key environmental components: Environmental Planning, Wildlife and Habitat Management, Chemical Use Reduction and Safety, Water Conservation, Water Quality Management, and Outreach and Education.

While much of our effort to gain this certification will occur without much notice by guests. When you visit us over the next year there are some aspects you might see. For instance, we have already started an effort to convert some of the areas of rough to help local pollinators and aid in Monarch butterfly migration by planting native wildflowers and grasses. If you see work being done on the course and are not sure what it is, please ask. We are very excited to talk about the future of the ASCP-Golf at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge.

## **Looking Forward: The 2023 Season**

Looking forward to the next season, here are several items we will be focusing on in 2023:

- Continue to promote exercise / walking, by carrying one's bag, using a pull cart, or using a Tempo Walk
- Increase the awareness and activity of Speed golf on our golf course
- Evaluate, design, and implement a Foot Golf course



- Increase the awareness of the wildlife and nature associated with the golf course
- Moving through the process of [becoming a certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Golf Course](#)

Until June 1st next year, the golf course is now closed and being put to sleep for the winter.





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