

2023 Back 9 Endurance Run Recap

written by Chris Guibert | June 11, 2023

Memorial Day Weekend brought runners from across the region to Copper Harbor to challenge themselves on the wilderness trails that surround the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge. The weather was nearly perfect for the endurance runners that participated in the 3rd annual Back 9 Endurance Run. Capped at 40 runners in order to provide a quality experience, we have 39 individuals participate this year.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing glasses, a bright orange jacket, and dark blue leggings, is running on a dirt trail through a forest. She is smiling and has a race bib with the number 51 on her waist. The background is filled with tall trees and green foliage.

BACK 9 ENDURANCE

Just One More Round

MAY 27-28, 2023

KEWEENAW MOUNTAIN LODGE

COPPER HARBOR, MICHIGAN

BACK9ENDURANCERUN.COM

Everything came together smoothly the last few days with the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge team marking the course and getting the staging area set up. The course was well marked with reflective flags every 40 feet. We plan on keeping the course the same so the race times can be compared year to year. However, we did make a few minor adjustments including not using glow sticks as part of the course markings for the nighttime part of the run. Using the plastic, disposable glow-sticks didn't align with our [core value](#) of *Value our Environment*. Instead we spent our lighting budget on some solar lights which we were able to put out on the course every 100 feet. Glow-sticks and solar lights like these aren't powerful enough to have participants run without lights but they are more of a reassurance that you are on the right track, as one runner described them, "friendly beacons of the night."



The new solar lights on the racecourse.

Another issue we wanted to address was the exact distance of the race course. Over the last few years there had been some debate; Strava was stating one distance while other gps units were saying another. This year our team was able to get out and measure the racecourse with an analog measuring wheel and we determined the course is 3.68 miles. I am sure that varies a little bit with where people run on the trail, however we now have an official number to calculate the total distances of people's accomplishments.



Measuring the course with the “analog” measuring wheel.

The race format stayed the same where individual runners or teams chose to run for either 12 or 24 hours. In that time, they run as many laps as they can. Each lap started and ended at the gazebo next to the historic Lodge building. As runners completed each lap, they recorded their lap time, and then either headed out for another lap or X out on the board and called it a race! This race is designed to let individual runners and teams push their limits and see how many laps they can go around the course. This is where our slogan for the race ***“Just One More Round”*** comes from.



Near the start and finish line, the timer was set up to reflect the actual time and as runners completed a lap, they recorded the lap and time on the white board. It's cool to see the board progress through the day and into the night, watching lap after lap recorded with dry erase markers. An indication that this was an endurance run, the handwriting became sloppier throughout the race!



The Gazebo (where the race board is located), the timer and the moon around midnight.

The race started right on time at 8:00 AM on 27 May 2023. The sun was shining and spirits were high. Most of the group stayed together for the first part of the first lap, but with each stride from each runner the group slowly broke apart and the runners were soon on their own.



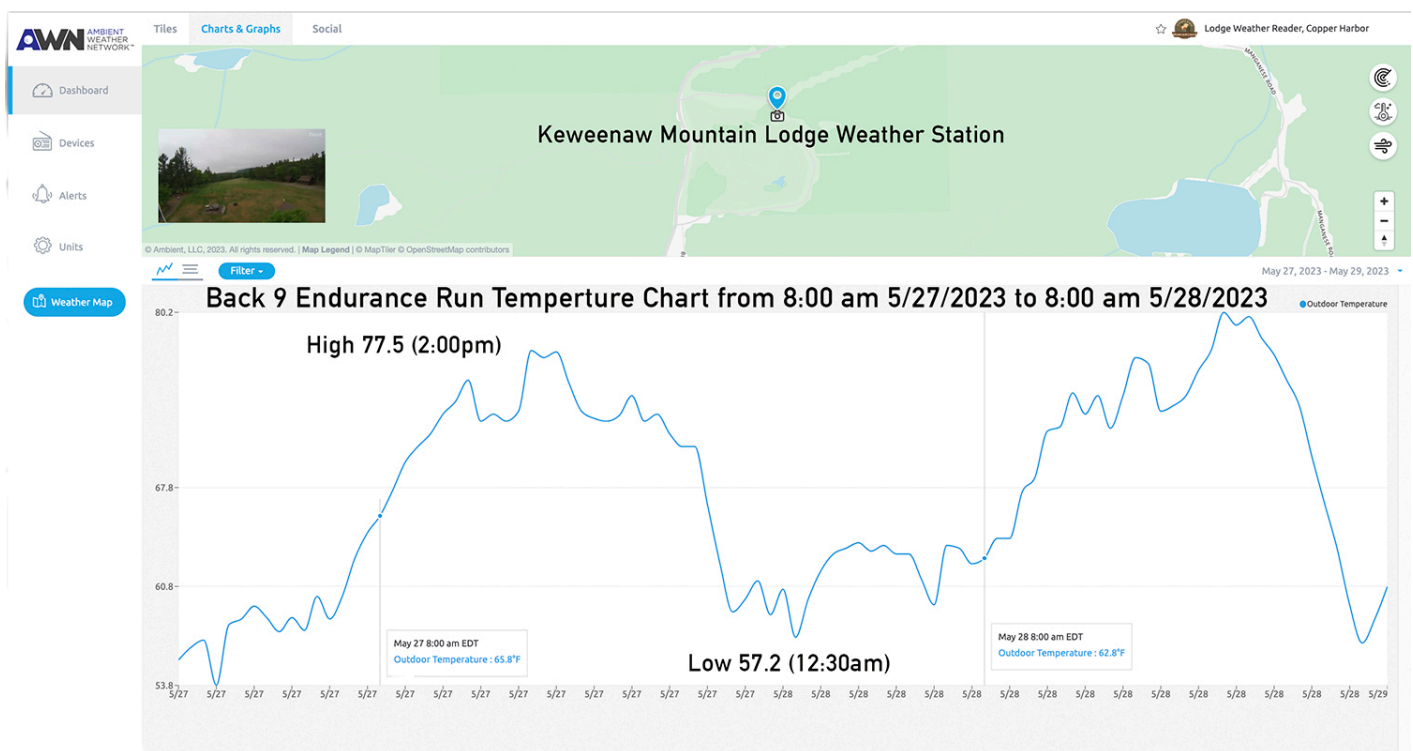
The start of the 2023 Back 9 Endurance Run with the historic Lodge in the background.

Throughout the day, as the runners worked their way around the course, the temperature continued to rise. Temps briefly reached into the mid 70's in the afternoon, which had everybody monitoring their hydration, but then dropped into 50's as night approached.



Runner Isaac Kangas feeling strong!

A few years ago the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge installed an [Ambient Weather Station](#) so our team and guests could have accurate weather information. This is a great resource for individuals planning on visiting the Lodge to check what the current conditions have been. Memorial Day weekend has been nice the last few years but you never know what kind of weather the Keweenaw can have during this transitional month. In fact [Keweenaw County](#) received a foot of snow on May 1st and 2nd, just 25 days before the start of the race.



"I can't wait for the good food items – the anticipation keeps me going," I overheard one runner say to another. At the Lodge we are working to build a culinary experience for our guests that is built around a [Rustic Worldly Food](#) concept. We apply this food concept to all of our offerings and events. The day started with mini quiches baked in cups and a sweet muffin with zucchini, nuts and dried cranberries. In the afternoon runners replenished calories with a turkey wrap and a pasta salad (made

with roasted sweet potatoes, beans, corn and feta) and finally in the evening a warm soup (made from chicken, vegetables and pasta in a tomato broth) and served with a homemade, herbed naan bread. Throughout the day and night the kitchen team replenished the food table to the delight of the runners. “We wouldn’t have been as successful without all this good food”.



Some of the delicious food served throughout the event.



Runners making laps in the late afternoon.

Between 7:00pm and 8:00pm runners of the 12 hour race finished up their final lap and headed to the finish line. I could see the look of accomplishment on their faces as they examined the lap board and discussed the results. Yes there is a winner of each race category but these types of events are more about personal accomplishments. These individuals and teams rose to the top for 2023:

- 12-hour solo: **Austin Gongos** (bib 106) – **14 laps – 51.5 miles**
- 12 Hour 2-Person Relay: **COVID Cavaliers: Nicole Justa** (bib 97), **Kristen Peterson** (bib 98) – **12 laps – 44.16 miles**
- 12 Hour 4-Person Relay: **Snow Dancers: Craig Hughes** (bib 102), **Lis Wilson** (bib 104), **Tom Wood** (bib 105), **Bobbi Wood** (bib 110) – **20 laps – 73.6 miles**



12-hour solo winner: Austin Gongos

[[see the results](#)]

When you are as far north as the Keweenaw Peninsula nighttime comes late in the early summer. At 10:30pm the blue of twilight hour engulfed the Lodge with the moon high in the sky.



A crystal clear night – The moon above the Lodge around 10:30pm.

Our team frantically was out on the course getting the rechargeable lights hung in the trees and the solar lights on the ground. The air was calm and the forest was quiet except for the gentle sound of runners' feet hitting the dirt. As darkness settled in, runners got out their lights and started another time around the course. On this clear night the moon offered an additional light source.



A runners headlight lights up the bridge crossing.

Morning came quickly with the sound of birds singing in the morning sun. Around 7:00am runners are deciding if their tired bodies can handle another quick lap. When the 8:00am end comes all runners are off the course. Partial laps do not count so that is always part of the last decision of whether you and your team can make it another time around. These individuals and teams rose to the top for 2023:

- This year the 24 solo course record was set by **Ryan Modders** (bib 74) with **23 laps for a total of 84.6 miles!**
- The 24 hour 4 person relay was won by the **Keweenaw Running Club: Shannon Handler** (bib 88), **Cory McDonald** (bib 81), **Robert Handler** (bib 83), **Ana Dyreson** (87) – **33 laps – 121.44**

[[see the results](#)]



Ryan Modders was this years winner of the 24 hour solo event.

More detailed results and pictures from the race can be found on the [Back 9 Endurance website](#).

It was wonderful to see the runners meeting and exceeding their goals, running their farthest distance yet, cheering each other on, and having fun.

We are looking forward to the [2024 Back 9 Endurance Run](#), and hope you are able to join us!



Runners sticking together in the late afternoon sun.



[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.

Winter Outdoor Activities Update for the KML: 2022-2023

written by Chris Guibert | June 11, 2023

The winter season of 2022-2023 was the third season of winter operations for the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge since new ownership took over in the fall of 2018 (and the 5th winter since the Lodge opened in 1934; when the county owned and operated the lodge, they had the resort open the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 winter seasons).

The resort in the winter time is a wonderful place for guests to come and enjoy the winter wonderland of the Keweenaw. This winter guests were able to stay in the historic rustic cabins near the cross country ski trails and the historic lodge building was open everyday for adventurers to congregate around the warm fire to share their plans and daily adventures. The [Little Cabin Cafe](#) offered breakfast, lunch, and warm beverages throughout the day; while the Tasting Post provided a slow dining experience where couples and families were able to enjoy the atmosphere of a WPA-era Lodge and learn about the rustic worldly food that Chef Wi created and served to them.

The 2022-23 winter season was an interesting and learning experience for the KML team and especially for the outdoor activities crew. Winter came early to the Keweenaw with 108" falling before December 31, 2022. A multi-day storm in November provided enough snow to get outside for some early adventures but a warming spell that happened during the last week of the month melted most of this early base. This trend continued throughout the winter with periods of heavy snowfall followed by warming spells. [Keweenaw County](#) received 275.75 inches of snow for the season including 12" in May; on average, the Keweenaw Peninsula receives 270 inches of snow each winter. The biggest snow event of the year was Winter Storm Elliot which hit the Keweenaw from 12/23-12/26. The Lodge's winter trail system was majorly impacted due to heavy winds with snow drifts 4+ feet in places. It took us two days to dig out the trail system, with our grooming equipment getting stuck too many times to count.



The team started prepping the trails in November by using a newly acquired stump grinder. Over the last few seasons our John Deere Gator suffered damages to its axles and tracks by hitting stumps buried in the snow. This year we were proactive and the team started to grind the culprit stumps across our cross country ski trails. Team members from both the OAC team and the Facilities team took turns trying to master this machine. Let us just say persistence and tenacity were needed on the hard wood stumps found here in the North Country.





Another lesson learned from the previous years is that we needed to have redundancy in our equipment. We have two John Deere Gators, a 2016 and a 2017, in our fleet. These hardy UTVs are shared by multiple departments, both the housekeeping team and the OAC team use them in their day-by-day operations. In the past, only the 2017 machine had tracks installed on it, so for this season we ordered another set of tracks and had both machines up and running. This made a huge difference because we had no down days due to equipment failure, a big change from the previous season.



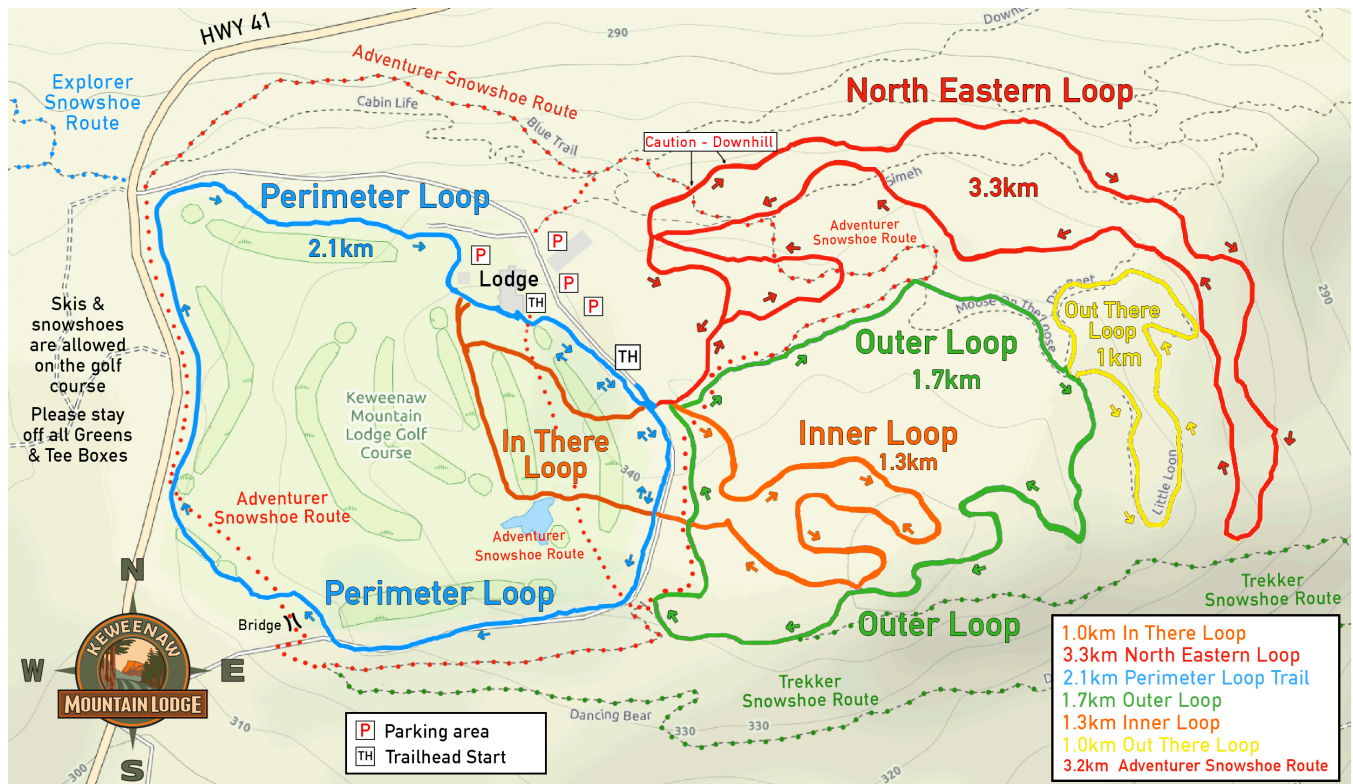
We also assessed and modified all of our cross country ski grooming equipment. We fixed the baffles on our 60" [Ginzu Groomer](#) from [YTS Track Systems](#) and added two [wings](#) to help eliminate the tracks left from the Gators and to provide a smoother skiing surface. Our team also uses a compact drag made by [ABR](#) that had a surface actuator motor that wasn't operating properly which was fixed and modified. And finally we added some cross bars to our roller that was bending after hitting many trees on our narrow trails. These projects were executed by the Facilities team and our new mechanic Adam Bory who joined the KML team in December.



Over the last few years we learned that having a set opening and closing dates for our winter trails gives our lodging guests the ability to plan when they want to come to enjoy the Keweenaw winter wonderland. Our goal is to open the trails on December

15th and close them on April 15th, we communicate this information and the daily conditions on our [Winter Trail Conditions](#) page on our website. This season we were able to open our snowshoe trails on December 15th and our cross country ski trails on December 23rd.

Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Winter Trail Map



Some of the great things about our cross country ski trails is that they are narrow, hilly and surrounded by the wilderness. For the 2022-23 season we wanted to add an easier trail that would be a first step for skiers getting used to our style ski trails. This season we added the *In There Loop* that is relatively flat and open as it cuts across holes 5, 6 and 9 of the golf course. This brought our total amount of ski trails on the property to almost 11km.



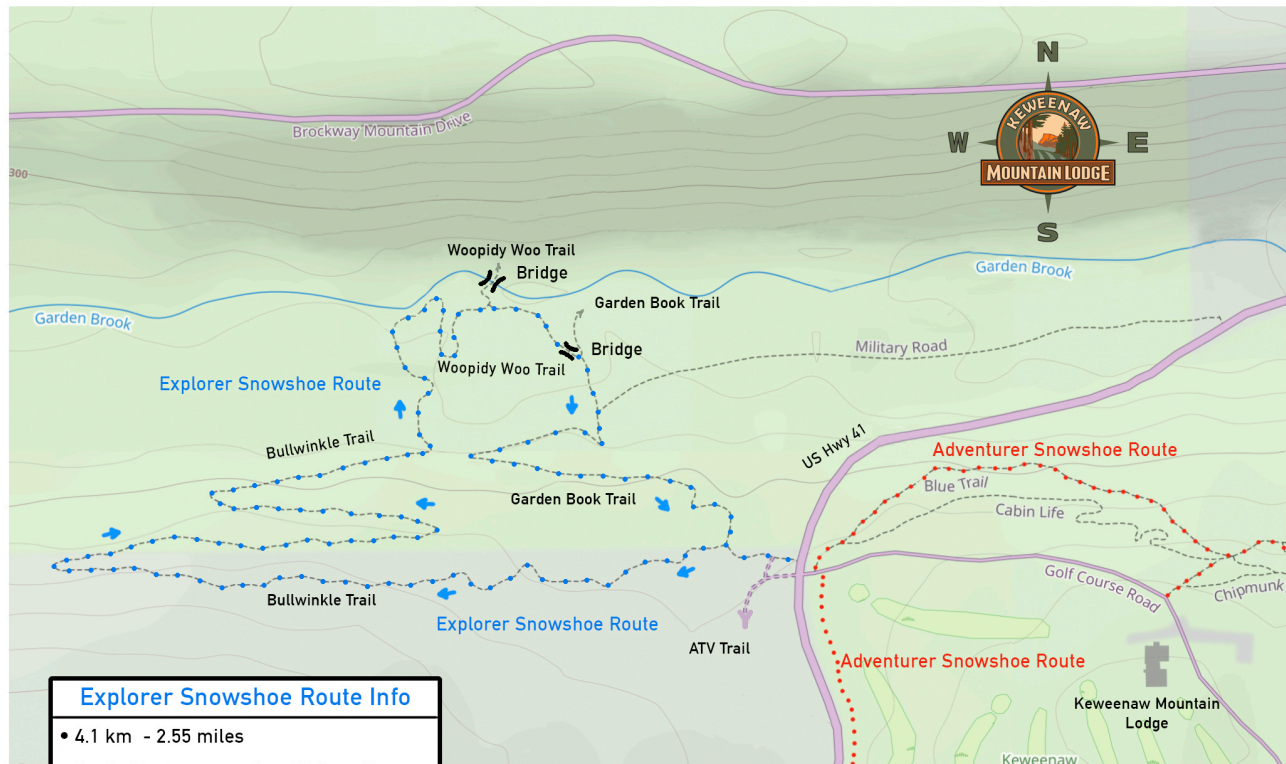
Overall the quality of our cross country ski trails was a significant improvement over the previous season with the biggest component being the consistency in grooming. Many factors contributed to this including: the addition of Adam the mechanic, having two Gators available which allowed one to be worked on while the other was grooming and the constant maintenance of the grooming equipment. But the single biggest component was the commitment of our lead groomer, KML team member John. Groomer John and I constantly talked about snow quality and grooming strategies, both of us on a long-term learning-mission to understand the nuances of laying good classic tracks and smooth corduroy at the tip of the Keweenaw. His pre-dawn-commitment and relentless around-the-clock dedication to the cross country ski trails at the KML created a consistent ski experience. Having an individual that lives on property with the willingness to make the trails great, yielded some of the best skiing since we started grooming in the 2020-2021 season.




[Snowshoeing](#) is probably the most approachable winter sport at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge and again for this season' [snowshoe rentals](#) were included as an amenity for all lodging guests. The OAC team was on an early mission to expand the snowshoe routes available to visitors. We changed the name of the existing snowshoe trail to the Adventurer Snowshoe Route because we realized that our main snowshoe route involved multiple trails and using the term "route" described it better. This opened the door to creating new signed *routes*, the first one was the Explorer Snowshoe Route located across Hwy 41 in the Garden Brook watershed. This 2.5 mile route offers views of the Brockway Mountain ridge line, a cedar forest and some large white pines along the valley floor. It has a remote feel that brings you closer to nature.

KML Explorer Snowshoe Route

4.1 km - 2.55 miles



Explorer Snowshoe Route Info

- 4.1 km - 2.55 miles
- Route Starts across Hwy 41 from the main entrance to the Lodge
- Follow blue arrow markers on trees 
- Elevation Gain/Loss from the Lodge

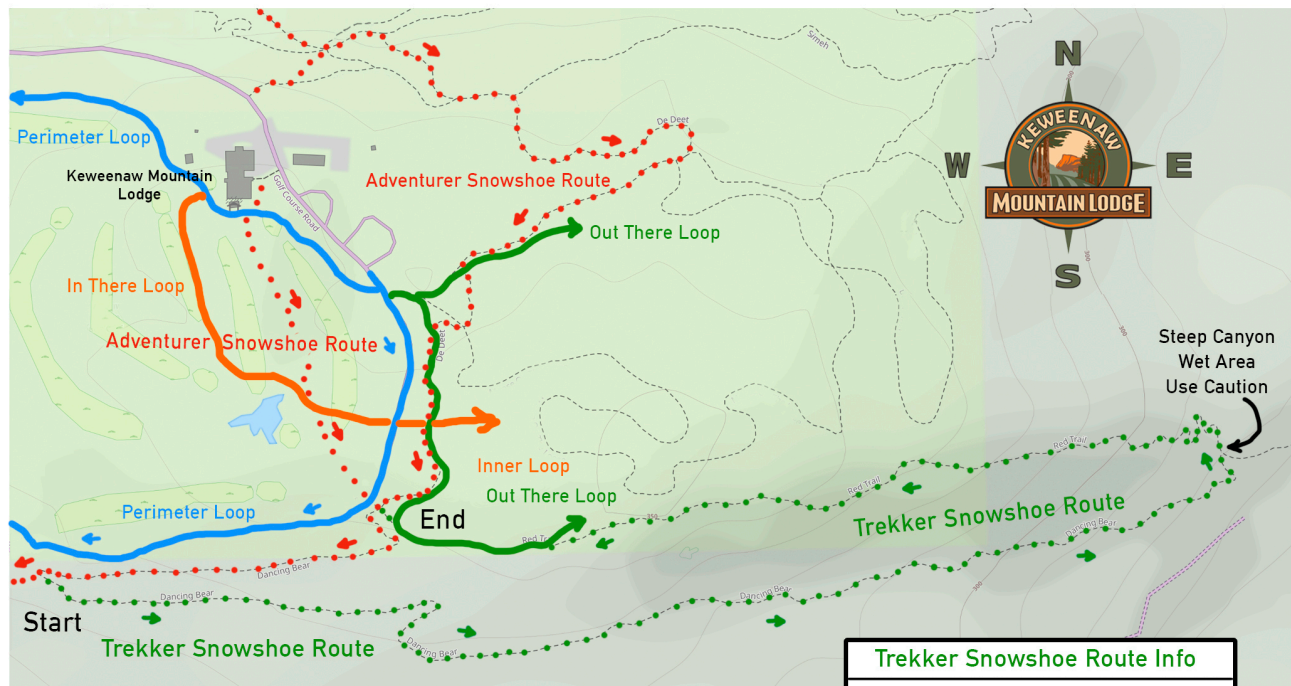
A backcountry snowshoe route with views of Brockway Mountain. This route features a cedar forest, multiple bridges and some giant white pines along the valley floor.



The second addition was the Trekker Snowshoe Route, which takes off from the Adventurer Snowshoe Route. This two mile route follows the Dancing Bear Trail under conglomerate cliff faces and connects with the Red Trail Ridge. The Trekker Route provides snowshoers a remote wilderness experience with views of Lake Manganese, East Bluff, and the Keweenaw Ridge.


KML Trekker Snowshoe Route

3.2 km - 2.0 miles



A backcountry snowshoe route with views of Lake Manganese, East Bluff and the Keweenaw Ridge.

Trekker Snowshoe Route Info

- 3.2 km - 2.0 miles From Start to End
- Starts on the Adventurer Snowshoe Route
- Follow green arrow markers on trees 
- 260' Elevation Gain/Loss from the Lodge



Our monthly, [moonlit snowshoe hikes](#) were popular again this year. We offered them four times, once a month in [January](#), February, [March](#) and April. With over 20 adventuresome snowshoers on the first three offerings we learned more about what is the right number of participants to keep these events personable and allow the guests to be able to get in touch with nature(if you are wondering, we think that number is around 15 participants). OAC team member Amy Oestreich took over as the lead guide and brought her passion for the sport and the Keweenaw wilderness and wove them into talking points on these interpretive excursions.



Another winter event that saw some transformation was the [Snowshoe Hare](#). The [2nd Annual Snowshoe Hare](#) event received a makeover with a new logo. It took place at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge on February 4, 2023 with a slightly overcast sky and temperatures holding steady at 9 degrees for most of the day. This fun, joyous and adventuresome day celebrates snowshoeing in the Keweenaw and consists of a race, guided hikes and interpretive discussions. Similar to the event in 2022 there was

little participation in the race. One of the highlights of the day was the presentation “History of Snowshoeing” by [Iverson Snowshoe](#) owners, Jim and Victoria Baker. This informative talk almost brought tears to Jim’s eyes as he discussed his passion for snowshoeing. The Bakers also brought a large selection of snowshoes for guests to demo. As we look forward to 2024 the event will continue to evolve and focus on the [educational components](#) associated with snowshoeing, so people will leave the event with more knowledge than they came with.



[Dawg Daze](#), a fundraiser for the [Copper Country Humane Society](#), is an annual event that celebrates winter, trails and dogs. [This years event](#) took place on March 4th and was officially added to the [Cooper Dog](#) event schedule. The weather for the event was sunny and unseasonably warm with temperatures in the mid-30’s. The Perimeter Dog Derby offered a smooth race course for the skijoring teams and the costume contest brought smiles and wagging tails.



Another project the OAC team has been working on is revitalizing the [Snow Terrain Park](#). In the fall our team cleared the underbrush from the slopes to open up the terrain. The park is located behind cabin 23 and to our surprise most of the park lights were still working when we flipped on the switch. This gentle sloping area was first cleared sometime in 2009 and operated from January 2010 – March 2011 (at least this is our best estimation) as the Ocho Potter Terrain Park. Our team rode sleds, snowboards and [snow skates](#) to try to figure out what the best usage of this area might be. We haven't settled on a master plan but we hope to come up with a vision for next season and open up this area for lodging guests to play in the snow.

[Picture of Snow Terrain Park]

This was also the first winter that the [Keweenaw Dark Sky Park](#) was open to the public. The Lodge's property is open every night for stargazing and aurora hunting. Winters can be a great time to view the night sky with our long nights, in December and January we can have almost 13 hours of darkness. We do get socked in frequently with lake effect snow storms that form over Lake Superior, but when the night is clear the stars shine bright overhead unlike anywhere else in Michigan. There were two major northern lights events that happened this season. On [February 26th a G4 solar storm](#) lit up the sky above the lodge in a spectacular display of colors.



Then on March 23-24 the solar storm of the season hit a KP of 8 and rocked the whole night unlike anything I've ever seen before. This event was seen across the country and was a mesmerizing display of celestial colors.



The winter season of 2022-2023 was filled with challenges, learning, and joy. The KML team is starting to settle into a groove with running a four season historic resort. This winter season we got better at planning for the challenges of operating in a remote area that receives on average 280" of snow a year; this is a far better strategy than operating in a reactionary way. Since the new ownership took over the Lodge we continue to work on our goal of helping individuals get closer to nature. We do this through our [lodging services](#), [outdoor activities](#), [dining services](#), and [event and education offerings](#). At the Lodge, our [core values](#) are like a pyramid, we build from the bottom up and this winter season was another building block of the Lodge's transformation into a destination wilderness resort.

FUN.JOYOUS.ADVENTURESOME.

[[getting people closer to nature](#)]



[Chris Guibert](#)

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Upper Peninsula Dark Sky Park Festival Recap

written by John Mueller | June 11, 2023

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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[Chris Guibert](#)

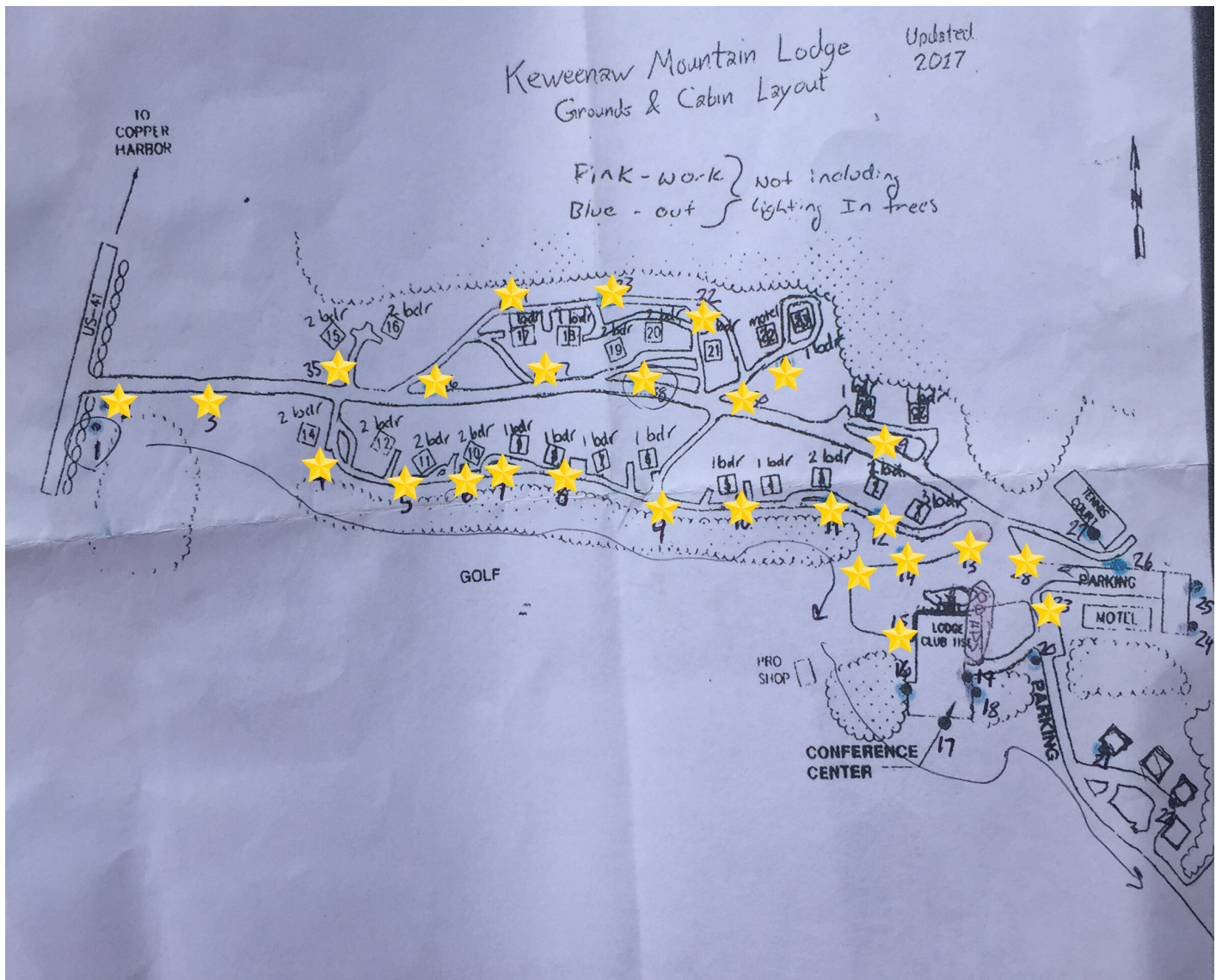
Chris Guibert: I have a strong passion for all things outdoors and have worked as a tour guide and professional photographer for the last twenty five years. As the Lead of Outdoor Activities at the Mountain Lodge I want make sure you and your family have a great experience while staying and playing. Please feel free to ask me any questions about the trails, regional activities and local secrets.

Lighting Improvements: Individual Controls of Street Lights

written by John Mueller | June 11, 2023

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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International Dark Sky Week – 2023 Proclamation by the Governor

written by admin | June 11, 2023

The [International Dark-Sky Association](#) (IDA) holds the International Dark Sky Week each year to put focus on minimizing light pollution, and for people to understand the beauty and the benefit of the dark skies. This year [International Dark Sky Week](#)

[is April 15-22, 2023.](#)

In the state of Michigan, the governor has made a proclamation this year that April 15-22, 2023 is DARK SKY WEEK in Michigan.

STATE OF MICHIGAN



CERTIFICATE OF PROCLAMATION

ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF MICHIGAN,
I, Gretchen Whitmer, governor of Michigan, do hereby proclaim

APRIL 15-22, 2023
as
DARK SKY WEEK

WHEREAS, empirical evidence shows the negative effects light pollution has on both the human population and environmental health; and,

WHEREAS, using inefficient outdoor lighting causes light pollution and obstructs the full view of the amazing Michigan sky and its surrounding environment; and,

WHEREAS, we can take steps to minimize the issues associated with light pollution, and preserve the beauty of our environment and night sky; and,

WHEREAS, there are nine dedicated land areas in Michigan, three of which are internationally designated dark sky parks and six of which are designated dark sky preserves in Michigan state parks; and,

WHEREAS, because Michigan is dedicated to the preservation of dark skies, dark sky preserves have been dedicated at: Lake Hudson Recreation Area, Lenawee County; Negwegon State Park, Alcona County; Port Crescent State Park, Huron County; Rockport Recreation Area, Presque Isle County; Thompson's Harbor State Park, Presque Isle County; and Wilderness State Park, Emmet County; and,

WHEREAS, our state is known for three internationally designated dark sky parks, Headlands International Sky Park in Mackinaw City, Dr. T.K Lawless Park in Vandalia and Keweenaw Dark Sky Park in Copper Harbor; and,

WHEREAS, these parks are designated areas that allow for thousands of Michiganders and tourists to experience the true beauty of the Michigan night sky and observe the wonder of meteorological events such as the Northern Lights; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Gretchen Whitmer, governor of Michigan, do hereby proclaim April 15-22, 2023, as Dark Sky Week in Michigan.


Gretchen Whitmer
Governor



And the [resolution SR-30](#) offered by Senators Lindsey and Bayer and adopted on April 13, 2023. [[pdf](#)]

As part of International Dark Sky Week, we will be holding the [2023 Upper Peninsula Dark Sky Festival](#), April 21st and 22nd, 2023.

2023 UPPER PENINSULA DARK SKY FESTIVAL



KEWEENAW MOUNTAIN LODGE

FRIDAY - APRIL 21, 2023

ALL TIMES ARE EASTERN STANDARD TIME

5:00 PM - SOCIAL HOUR - MEET AND GREET
IN THE HISTORIC LODGE

6:00 PM - EVOLUTION OF THE KEWEENAW DARK SKY PARK
BY JOHN MUELLER

8:45 PM - STARGAZING ON SNOWSHOES
BY THE OAC TEAM

SATURDAY - APRIL 22, 2023

12:30 PM - RUSTIC - WORLDLY LUNCH

2:00 PM - CHASING THE NORTHERN LIGHTS IN MICHIGAN
BY MELISSA KAELEN

3:30 PM - THE STORY BEHIND THE IMAGES
BY MARY BETH KICZENSKI

8:00 PM - NORTHERN LIGHTS PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
BY NATE BETT



For more information visit: keweenawdarksky.com

Offered in partnership with Visit Keweenaw



March 19, 2023: Northern Lights Photography Workshop Recap

written by admin | June 11, 2023

[Nate Bett](#), professional landscape photographer and Cannon expert, once again delivered an excellent Northern Lights presentation during the [March 2023 Photo Workshop](#) at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge.



March 19, 2023 had a KP of just 0.38% and the sky was slightly overcast with clouds rolling in from the south. Chances of spotting the northern lights or a bright starry night sky were low, but the two guests that came for the workshop were still able to step out onto the golf course in [Keweenaw's International Dark Sky Park](#) and practice their night sky photo techniques under Nate's tutelage. This month's participants used i-phones and a tripod to capture some great images of the western sky and the lodge with stars reflecting out from some clouds with the lodge and tree silhouetted against the skyline.



The photo workshops held at the Lodge take place each month and are available to members of the public as well as Lodge guests. During the workshop, Nate Bett delivers a presentation on the phenomenon of the Auroras and explains the optimal camera settings and techniques required to capture beautiful images of the night sky and all its wonder. Although Nate's specialty lies with Cannon devices, he is also very knowledgeable with the camera settings on smart phones, Nikon, Sony, and other high tech cameras and equipment. Nate also touches on other photography techniques such as light painting, moving subject images, photoshop, and layering. He also provides guests with advice on the types of equipment that can be used to enhance the shots that they're working toward capturing.



When guests come into the lodge for a workshop or another educational event, and they can step out into the world a couple hours later, and apply the knowledge they acquired, I know that we've done a great job. Every opportunity to refine their skills after that point is a personal endeavor. It feels good to be able to help plant the seed that allows people to grow closer to becoming who and what they want to become.



If you are interested in future photo workshops or other educational opportunities offered by the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge, check out our calendar under the Events section of the website.

[Visit the KML calendar for the 2023 Photo Workshop dates.](#)



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2023 Dawg Daze Recap

written by admin | June 11, 2023

The [3rd Annual Dawg Daze](#) took place at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge on March 4, 2023. [Dawg Daze](#) is an event that celebrates winter, trails, and dogs and is associated with the annual [Copper Dog](#) Festival. Dawg Daze also takes the opportunity to support the [Copper Country Humane Society](#) by accepting monetary and supply donations.

In keeping with the traditions of past Dawg Daze, three main

events were held for dogs who brought their humans out to celebrate the day. The Perimeter Dog Derby, The Dog Costume Contest, and the Best Trick were open to the public. The winners were awarded a certificate and a Pooch Pouch containing 6 dog biscuits made in house by [KML chef, Widad Mueller](#). The 2022 Perimeter Dog Derby champion team Bobbi and Thor held on to their winning streak again this year with a skijoring time of 6 minutes and 25 seconds. Second place went to Kay and Milford with a time of 8 minutes and 45 seconds. Terry and Goose came in for third place with a time of 10 minutes and 40 seconds. Roomba and Wesson, two canine brothers, won first place in the costume contest sporting matching cowboy costumes. Second place in the costume contest went to Bug, a pug dressed as a beanie baby. Third place went to Bugs and Monica who were dressed as Mickey and Minnie. The most impressive trick was done by Wesson who was able to spin in circles for a delicious treat. All the contestants were very good dogs and everyone walked away with treats for coming out to celebrate.

The weather for the event was sunny and unseasonably warm with temperatures in the mid-30's. The trails were well groomed and offered a smooth race course for the skijoring teams. Seven dog/human teams came out to enjoy a beautiful day on the trails. The race is meant to be a light hearted competition for dog/human teams of all athletic abilities. The rules are simple and few:

1. The race runs from 11 AM-1 PM. Any teams on the course before or after those times will not have official times kept.
2. Only one dog and one human at a time are allowed to make up a team.
3. Dogs must be on a leash or harness tethered to their human at all times.
4. A team is not permitted to leave the course during the

timed event.

A team can complete the course as many times as they'd like. The best time is the one kept for score.

At 2:00 PM, everyone gathered at the front of the building under the porch for an awards ceremony. Everyone was smiles and drools as awards and treats were presented and photos were taken.

The Copper Country Humane Society donation table is set up in the [Little Cabin Cafe](#) area all week. Anyone wishing to donate items or money or to learn more about how the Humane Society helps animals, can stop by the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge until Friday, March 10, 2023.

We look forward to seeing our human and dog friends again next year for the Fourth Annual Dawg Daze in 2024. Keep an eye on our calendar for future events.



[Chris Guibert](#)

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March 4, 2023: Moonlit Snowshoe Hike Recap

written by Amy Oestreich | June 11, 2023

"Find Joy in the Unexpected" – Amy Oestreich





This year, the month of March is presenting early signs of Spring for the Keweenaw. The day skies have been sunny, the temperatures warm and the snow has been crunchy. Of course In other parts of the Northern Hemisphere that enjoy the winter season, new grass is already appearing between melting snow piles, bright yellow daffodils are poking through compressed decomposing leaves and Robins are feasting on worms. On [Saturday, March 4th, 2023](#), adventurous participants gathered at the [Outdoor Activity Center](#). Under the light of the near full moon, Chris Guibert, OAC Lead, and myself, guided these folks on our 3rd Moonlit Snowshoe hike of the season; letting our eyes adjust to the “Worm Moon” of the Spring.



As I settled into the pace and comfort of nature, my mind wandered. I began to think of change: the changing temperatures, the changing climate and the changes or “advances” in technology. I appreciate time in this serene atmosphere; it is conducive for creative thinking. I always seem to ponder the past while maintaining my concerns of the present; how do we adapt to such changes? How do we adjust? How do we weave our past with our future? When I am traveling by snowshoes, especially under the moonlight, I feel a strong connection to our ancestors. This connection gives me a sense of security that we will continue to evolve with the changes. And how could I not?

Snowshoeing is an ancient mode of transportation that originated thousands of years ago among indigenous peoples in the Arctic regions of North America and Eurasia. The earliest evidence of snowshoes dates back to 4000 BC, when people in Central Asia used them for hunting and travel. I admire that not much has changed with this technology. Sure, snowshoes were originally made from materials such as animal hide and wood, and the basic design involved a frame made of wood or bone that was laced with more animal hide or sinew. It wasn't until the 20th century, with the introduction of new materials such as aluminum and synthetic fabrics, that the snowshoe evolved. And even then, the basic shape and concept prevailed.



While we may not be hunting or traveling in the traditional sense, we are definitely enjoying the evolution of snowshoes as a recreational activity. There is something magical that happens when we allow our minds to disengage from technology and draw our bodies closer to nature. The light of the moon seems to act as a catalyst for this. The thrill of the visual hunt propels our legs forward to experience memories.



We gathered tonight with hopes of hiking under a blanket of stars, clear skies, a bright full moon and perhaps even a display of Northern Lights. As expectations were built, one may have been let down by the cloudy night and blurred moon. Thankfully our mental adjustments have allowed us to adapt our attitude to enjoy the beauty the hazy sky has offered. The stars were not bright, The Northern Lights did not dance for us, but we did stop and reflect on the beauty of the unexpected. The cold, damp, foggy night air offered us an amazing ring around the moon!



A lunar halo is a ring of light that appears around the moon at night. It is caused by the reflection, refraction, and dispersion of moonlight by ice crystals in the Earth's atmosphere.

The ice crystals in the atmosphere act like tiny prisms, bending the light and separating it into different colors. The angle of the light passing through the ice crystals determines the size of the halo, with larger halos appearing when the angle is smaller.

Lunar halos are usually white, but they can also display a range of colors depending on the angle of the moonlight and the size and shape of the ice crystals. The colors can range from red on the inside of the halo to blue on the outside.

In awe, we stop for photos; we are not let down! We are delighted with our chance viewing of the beautiful lunar halo. As we continue our snowshoe hike back to the Lodge. I enjoy listening to the guests laugh with each other, compare experiences and share their stories. I noticed a common theme: "find Joy in the unexpected".



Life can be challenging at times. Change can also be challenging. This challenge may force us to try new things, adapt, adjust, evolve and embrace the advances in technology. Just know, if it ever gets to be a bit much; you can always connect with nature and find joy...maybe even in something unexpected.



[Chris Guibert](#)

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A G3 Storm – The Northern Lights on February 26, 2023 in the Keweenaw

written by Chris Guibert | June 11, 2023

Chasing northern lights is a fun and exciting hobby that I have become passionate about in the last few years. When I first moved to the [Keweenaw](#), I met [night sky photographer Jeremy Rowe](#) who has been taking aurora photos for over a decade on the Keweenaw Peninsula. His images were both stunning and intriguing to me, seeing his images made me want to learn how to capture the beauty of this celestial phenomenon.

Over the last few years I have been honing my night sky photography skills. I have read plenty of online articles about the subject, taken multiple workshops with [Nate Bett](#) at the [Keweenaw Mountain Lodge](#) (his next [Stargazing: Northern Lights Photography Workshop is on March 19, 2023](#)), and even attended the [Aurora Summit](#) last fall to learn more about using a tracker and space weather. My “chasing northern lights skills set” is slowly expanding – lets just say I might check the [Aurora Forecast app](#) daily. However, my main tool has become checking the [Michigan Aurora Chasers Facebook Group](#). When the group administrator, [Melissa F. Kaelin](#), posted a G3 Storm warning for Sunday, February 26, my heart began to beat fast.



Melissa F. Kaelin

Admin 3d · 🌐

Outdated: G3 Storm Watch! Pay attention to the skies after sunset tonight, and into Monday evening and night!

WATCH: Geomagnetic Storm Category G3 Predicted

Space Weather Message Code: 0050
 Serial Number: 70
 Issue Time: 2023 Feb 26 1636 UTC

PCN: Geomagnetic Storm Category Predicted

g3 Storm Level Predicted by 71
 G1: G3 (Strong) Feb 26:
 (Moderate) Mar 01: None
 below G1)

IS SUPERSEDES ANY/ALL PRIOR PCNS IN EFFECT

Comment: Combined impacts from a current negative-polarity CME, the anticipated arrival of a 24 Feb CME, and the addition of the 24 Feb CME warrant an elevated Geomagnetic Watch warning to the G3 level.

All Space Weather Scale descriptions can be found at <https://www.noaa.gov/rock-avalanche-planation>

ial Impacts: Area of ily poleward of 50 de netic Latitude.

d Currents - Power sy e irregularities poss. alarms may be trigger; protection devices.

raft - Systems may once surface charging sed drag on low Earth. ites and orientation as may occur.

tion - Intermittent ite navigation (GPS) as, including loss-of- creased range error as

- HF (high frequency) intermittent.

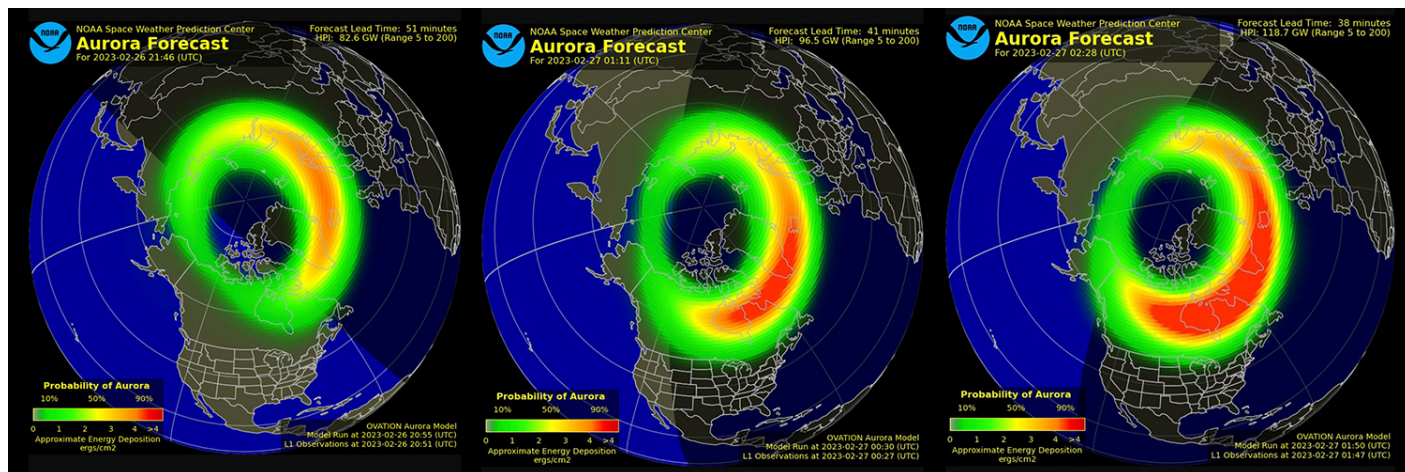
- Aurora may be seen Pennsylvania to Iowa



20 comments



Throughout the afternoon I watched the aurora global map on the Aurora Forecast app. I could see the aurora map showing strong activity above Northern Europe and watched its progression as it moved around the globe towards North America!



I checked the Michigan Aurora Chasers group and saw this post, my mouth began to water like Pavlov's Dog.

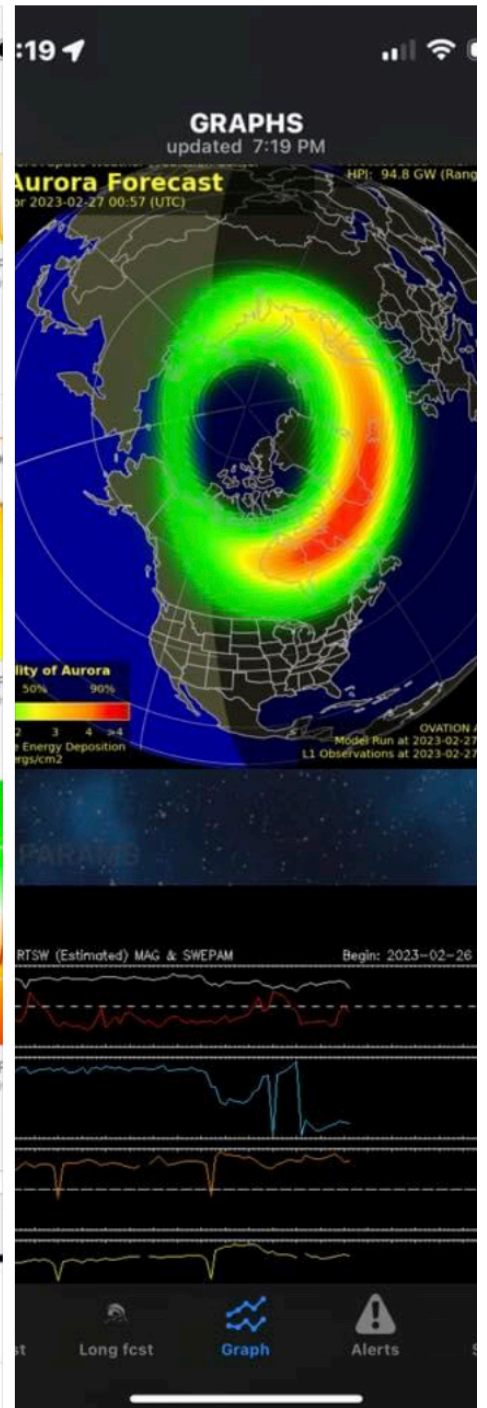
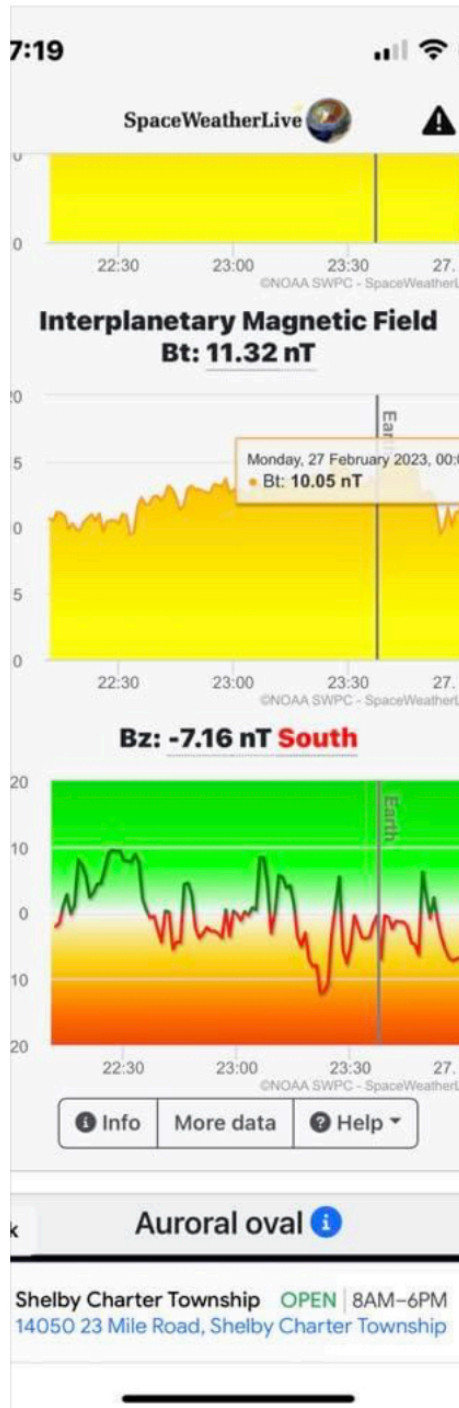


Rose Gianino-Fournier

2d · 🧑🏻



This data is crazy! Anyone seeing anything yet?



At 9:30 pm I headed to the Lodge to see if the activity was strong enough to be seen above the ridge of Brockway Mountain. I

parked the car and headed to one of the stargazing viewing areas [by hole 1](#) of the golf course. To my delight I could see the Auroras above [the cabins](#) and the ridge, and I quickly began taking photos!!!

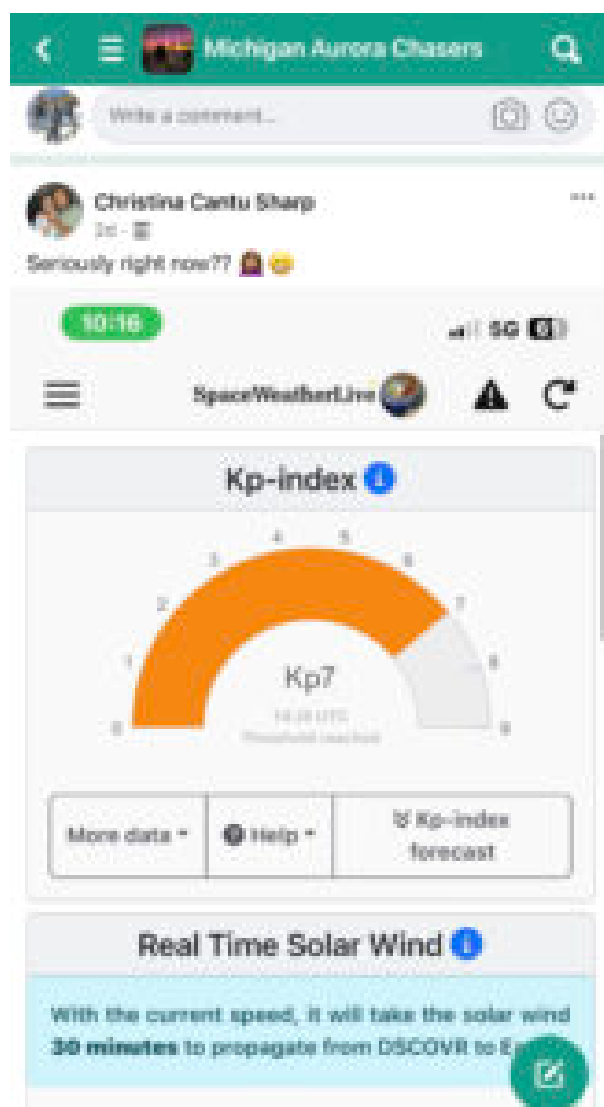


Equipment: Canon 5D Mark IV on a tripod, manually focused.
Settings: f2.8 – 4 seconds – ISO 3200 – 2 second timer to prevent camera shake



Equipment: Canon 5D Mark IV on a tripod, manually focused.
Settings: f2.8 – 8 seconds – ISO 3200- 2 second timer to prevent camera shake

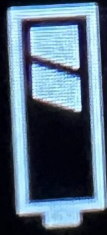
After taking a few test images I was excited to see the northern lights on the back of my [Canon 5D Mark IV](#). I took multiple compositions and grabbed my phone to check the Michigan Aurora Chasers group again. I could see images pouring in across the state! Experts in the group were excited with the space data that was being reported.



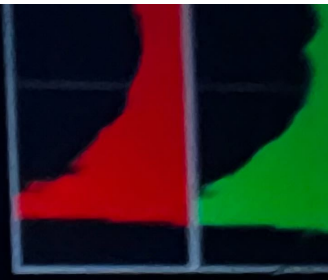
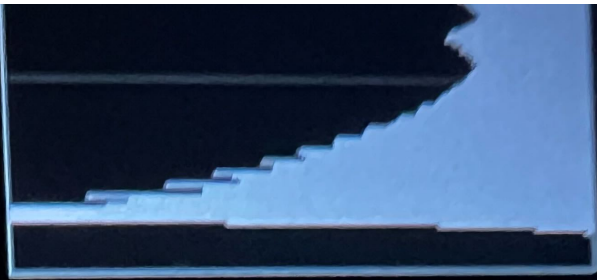
I knew I had a chance for an image that I have been thinking about for the last couple years – a photo of the northern lights above the Lodge. I moved locations

and set my camera up on the East Steps of the main Lodge building and snapped an image. I waited for the image to appear on the back of the camera. YES!

OFF

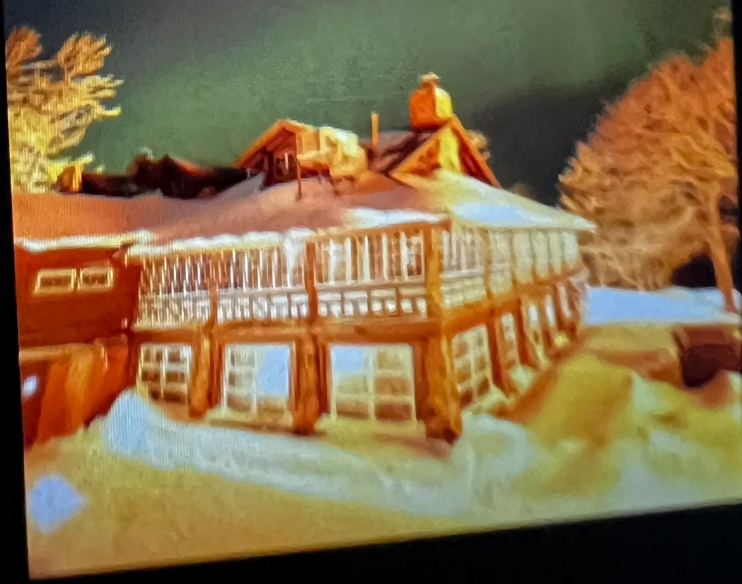


02/26



R

G



EF16-35mm f/2.8L

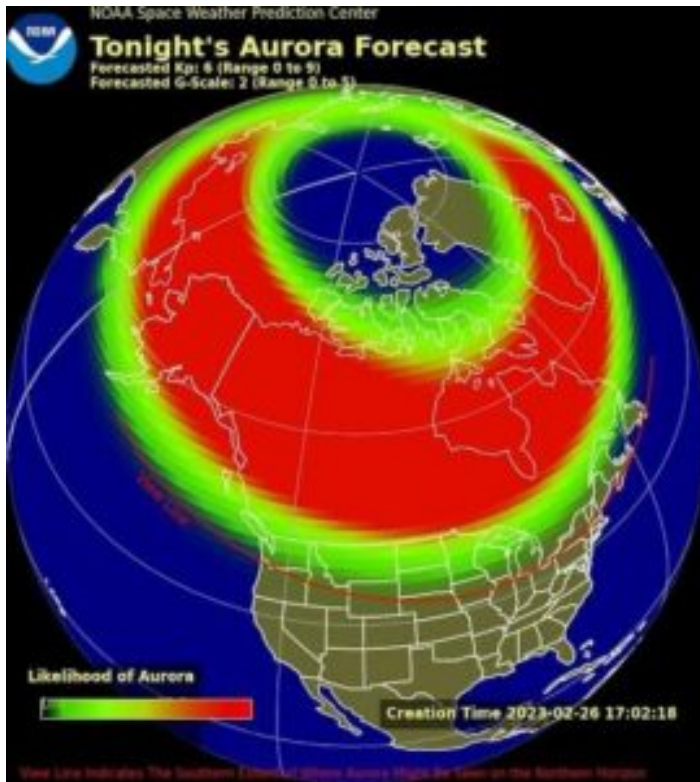
III USM

The image looked in focus and I could see the lights above the Lodge. This was the shot I had pre visualized and it had finally come into fruition. I knew I had to make a color adjustment in Photoshop to the external lights of the Lodge itself, but I captured the Raw data in the camera and looked forward to seeing it on the computer later that night. I used the natural light setting for the sky and adjusted the color temperature of the building. I did not increase the saturation of the colors at all, the long exposure of the shooting process richly captured the vivid colors of the northern lights above the Lodge.



Equipment: Canon 5D Mark IV on a tripod, manually focused.
Settings: f2.8 – 5 seconds – ISO 1000 – 2 second timer to prevent camera shake

I checked the app again and the earth diagram was exploding with color. I ran to my car and headed to another spot I have been wanting to capture.



I arrived at the parking lot and quickly made my way to the Lake Superior Shoreline. The lights colorfully danced above the lake as I watched in awe. I set up the camera and took some of the best northern lights photos I have ever shot!



Equipment: Canon 5D Mark IV on a tripod, manually focused.
Settings: f2.8 – 4 seconds – ISO 3200 – 2 second timer to prevent camera shake



Equipment: Canon 5D Mark IV on a tripod, manually focused.
Settings: f2.8 -20 seconds – ISO 1250 – 2 second timer to prevent camera shake



Equipment: Canon 5D Mark IV on a tripod, manually focused. Canon L 16-35mm set at 16mm. Settings: f2.8 -15 seconds – ISO 3200 – 2 second timer to prevent camera shake

The night was cold (single digit temps) and I was getting tired after working all day then shooting half the night. I packed up my gear and headed home to Lac la Belle completely stimulated and exhausted at the same time. The next day I watched hundreds of magnificent images pour in from across the state. [OAC](#) Team member Amy O pointed out that we all shared a collective experience that enriched our lives. I dug inward and realized that people from across the globe witnessed this celestial event, and for one night this group of individuals put aside our

differences and shared in the beauty that our universe creates.

If chasing northern lights is something you are interested in learning more about please join [Melissa F. Kaelin](#) [[her book](#)] and others presenters at the [2023 Upper Peninsula Dark Sky Festival](#) in April during the International Dark Sky Week at the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge.

2023 UPPER PENINSULA DARK SKY FESTIVAL



KEWEENAW MOUNTAIN LODGE

FRIDAY - APRIL 21, 2023

ALL TIMES ARE EASTERN STANDARD TIME

5:00 PM - SOCIAL HOUR - MEET AND GREET
IN THE HISTORIC LODGE

6:00 PM - EVOLUTION OF THE KEWEENAW DARK SKY PARK
BY JOHN MUELLER

8:45 PM - STARGAZING ON SNOWSHOES
BY THE OAC TEAM

SATURDAY - APRIL 22, 2023

12:30 PM - RUSTIC - WORLDLY LUNCH

2:00 PM - CHASING THE NORTHERN LIGHTS IN MICHIGAN
BY MELISSA KAELEN

3:30 PM - THE STORY BEHIND THE IMAGES
BY MARY BETH KICZENSKI

8:00 PM - NORTHERN LIGHTS PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP
BY NATE BETT



For more information visit: kweenawdarksky.com

Offered in partnership with Visit Keweenaw



FUN.JOYOUS.ADVENTURESOME.



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14th Copper Dog 150 is this weekend

written by admin | June 11, 2023

This weekend the [14th Copper Dog 150](#) is being held.

The race starts in downtown Calumet on the evening of Friday, March 3, 2023. The dog sled teams will get to Eagle Harbor in the evening. Then on Saturday, March 4, 2023, the teams will race from Eagle Harbor to Copper Harbor. And on Sunday, March 5,

2023, from Copper Harbor to Eagle Harbor. This is for the 150-race. The event also has 3 other races this year, the 80, 30, and new this year, the 15.

Dates: March 3-5, 2023



Dog Sled Sponsor

You can watch the CopperDog starts and finishes live using Zoom (new this year) or [Facebook Live](#).

We are one of the [supporting partners of the event](#), as we believe in what the event stands for, and that it supports outdoor activities in the Keweenaw.