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## **Copper Harbor Trails Club and Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Work Together to Ensure Trails are Open for 2022 Season**

*CHTC, KML, Keweenaw County, and the Michigan DNR worked together to continue the improvement of the national-ranked trail system at the top of the Keweenaw*

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Copper Harbor, Michigan

For the past year and half, the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge and Copper Harbor Trails Club (CHTC) have been working together with the Keweenaw County and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to ensure that the heart of the Copper Harbor Trails System is on stable footing for years to come. This entailed the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge purchasing property adjacent to the Lodge, property that was part of the Lodge property before the Lodge building, cabins, and golf course were carved out to be sold in 2018. This purchase pulls the property together again with the resort – a resort that has a strong focus on outdoor activities. One of the primary outdoor activities for the resort is mountain biking, a vision strongly aligned with the Copper Harbor Trails Club’s vision.



*A group of riders stops for a break near the entrance to Flying Squirrel.*

The end result was that the Copper Harbor Trails Club now has legal easements that clearly identify the trails on the property, which legally provides clear responsibilities and accessibility for mountain bikers and hikers for the trails at the heart of the world-renowned trails in Copper Harbor. This trails easement on the property includes over 12 miles of trail that is at the heart of the Copper Harbor Trails system, and ensures that the heart of the trails is on solid footing for years to come. The trails include Blue Trail, Bullwinkle, Cabin Life, Danimal, Dza Beet, Garden Brook, Flying Squirrel, On the Edge, Overflow, Raptor Ridge, Simeh, The Flow, and Woopidy Woo.

In 2021, several trails were closed on this property due to liability concerns from the landowner, Keweenaw County. The county did not want to place undue burden on the taxpayers of the county, and it was recommended by their insurance advisor to have the CHTC's insurance coverage increased. The insurance policy was not easy to change due to the current insurance market and additional costs. Thus, the "high-flying" trails on the county property were not open to the general public during the 2021 season. The trails that were closed in 2021 that were on the property included Danimal, Flying Squirrel, and Overflow – trails that are popular and renowned trails in the Copper Harbor Trails system.



*Copper Harbor Trail map highlighting the property that was acquired by KML (orange outlines). Boundaries are approximate and for general reference only.*

Now that the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge has successfully worked with the Keweenaw County and Michigan Department of Natural Resources to purchase the property from the Keweenaw County, the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge has donated a trails easement to the Copper Harbor Trails Club. This allows the Copper Harbor Trails Club to reopen two previously closed trails within the Copper Harbor Trail system. The large-jump trails Danimal and Flying Squirrel will be available to mountain bikers again for the 2022 season.

“We can’t wait to reopen these trails for our community,” says CHTC Executive Director Nathan Miller. “‘When are the trails going to reopen?’ has been the most frequent question we’ve received over the past year and being able to work with the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge to make it happen has been huge. We appreciate their support and look forward to working with them in the coming years.”

Danimal and Flying Squirrel were originally built in 2012 and have grown to become some of the most popular mountain bike trails in the system. Danimal was updated in 2020 while Flying Squirrel is slated to be completely overhauled in the summer of 2022. Regular maintenance keeps the trails safe and exciting for users.

The top half of the Copper Harbor Trails Club’s most well-known expert-level trail, Overflow, also lies on the newly purchased property and it is hoped it will reopen in time for the upcoming ride season. The lower half of Overflow lies on Grant Township property, and a license agreement between the Copper Harbor Trails Club and Grant Township is nearing completion to be able to open Overflow. The license agreement will formalize the relationship between Grant Township and the Copper Harbor Trails Club to ensure liability and maintenance concerns are addressed for trails on Grant Township property. Once access to Overflow has been secured, CHTC plans to update the Overflow trail during the 2022 summer season.



The Copper Harbor Trails Club anticipates opening its trails for the 2022 season by Memorial Day weekend to coincide with the **Ride the Keweenaw** group rides and Enduro race. Once the snow melts, volunteers assist with removing fallen trees and limbs, repairing erosion, leaf blowing, and inspecting built features before they are deemed safe to use by the public. More information on volunteer workdays and trail opening dates can be found on the Copper Harbor Trails Club’s website: [www.copperharbortrails.org](http://www.copperharbortrails.org) The Copper Harbor Trails are available to all non-motorized, human-powered users, including mountain bikers, trail runners, and hikers.

Also part of this property transaction included donating a conservation easement on 310 acres of the property to the Keweenaw Outdoor Recreation Coalition (KORC). The conservation easement will foster the natural environment on the property and at the top of the Keweenaw.

More information can be found on the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge and Copper Harbor Trails Club websites.

Photo Credits: The first photo, of Flying Squirrel, was taken by Nathan Miller. The second photo, of a rider clearing a large jump on the Danimal trail, was taken by Chris Guibert.

## FUN. JOYOUS. ADVENTURESOME.

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For Immediate Release. Contact: KML Public Relations, [pr@keweenawresort.com](mailto:pr@keweenawresort.com) | Nathan Miller, [nathan@copperharbortrails.org](mailto:nathan@copperharbortrails.org)

About the Keweenaw Mountain Lodge: The Keweenaw Mountain Lodge is a historic wilderness resort at the top of the Keweenaw, focused on outdoor activities, rustic worldly food, and education. The year-round resort consists of log cabins, a lodge, dining services, access to mountain biking, running, and hiking trails, and a 9-hole golf course. The resort has been a fixture in the Keweenaw since breaking ground on the project in 1934 as part of a WPA program, providing guests with the opportunity to enjoy a fun, joyous, and adventuresome experience among the pristine natural beauty of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Guests can play a round of golf, ride the mountain biking trails, hike through the woods, and take a leisurely stroll to/from the cabins and the Lodge. At the end of the day, one can relax in the Lodge by enjoying quality food and drink.



Web Site: <https://keweenawmountainlodge.com>

About the Copper Harbor Trails Club: The mission of the Copper Harbor Trails Club (CHTC) is to advocate for, develop, and maintain trails and land for human-powered activities in and connecting to Copper Harbor. Put more simply, we build and maintain incredible trails near Michigan's northernmost town. The trails are sustainably built and optimized for mountain bikes. However, that is not to say that other trail users are not allowed. With the exception of a few dedicated downhill rippers, all of our singletrack trails are multi-use for all non-motorized pursuits. That means hikers, birdwatchers, berry pickers, rockhounds, backpackers, trail runners, dog walkers, photographers, and basically anyone propelling themselves with their own two feet can use the trails alongside our mountain biking brethren.



Web Site: <https://copperharbortrails.org>