

2022 Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest Recap

September 26, 2022

The 29th Annual Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest was a resounding success. By nearly every metric, the Copper Harbor Trails Club improved the event and everyone we talked to had an excellent experience. The following summary highlights the main data points we are able to measure and shows how successful the event was for our organization and community.

2022 was our second biggest event ever, with 638 unique registered participants across all of our events. This is a dramatic leap from 2021's 508 unique participants, and just under our 2019 record of 669. Participants ranged in age from 2-71 years old, and visited from 21 different states (primarily the upper Midwest). We consider our 2022 numbers to be exceptionally healthy and back on track from where our momentum left off in 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event still has some room to grow, but as many of our races fill to capacity we will be unable to grow much further without significantly altering the overall format of Trails Fest.

Our biggest success this year was selling out two of our primary races, the Downhill and Enduro. Our Enduro sold out of both the Expert and Sport classes by mid-August. The Beginner class eventually would fill up as well. After shifting our schedule slightly, we added an additional 50 slots combined for the Expert and Sport classes for a total of 350 racers across all three classes, all of which sold out by race day. Demand for Enduro races is high as trends move in that direction across the industry.

Our Downhill race also sold out of all 100 slots by late-August (for the first time ever). Over race weekend, there was quite a bit of bartering between registered racers who became injured and those waiting to get in. We accommodated this as best we could to ensure as many people who wanted to race could. Both the Downhill and Enduro were limited in size by the time duration to host that many people, as well as the number of ankle timing chips available to us. Growth for both of these races could be partly attributed to the success of the Lake Superior Gravity Series, which became more unified and organized across all of its partner races this season. Both Trails Fest and CHTC's Ride the Keweenaw Enduro are LSGS partner events.

Our XC race had a total of 248 racers, which is nearly where we were in 2019 (257) and 22% higher than in 2021 (203). We changed our race course this year to avoid crossing Manganese Road, cutting out many potential confusing turns and eliminating several volunteer needs. Instead, racers enjoyed additional trail time on Highlands and the East Bluff trails. We did not hear any complaints about the course. As additional new trails are added, we look forward to integrating those into our XC race to showcase the best that Copper Harbor has to offer.

The 10k Trail Run grew to 70 participants from last year's 56. This is still down a bit from 2019's 86 participants, but is trending back in that direction. We used the same course as last year, which featured nearly every chunky, challenging trail between the KML and Paul's Plunge. Racers appear to enjoy the difficulty, even if it dashed the chances of our local Beast Mode competitor who twisted his ankle two miles in (yet still finished on the podium!). Many racers told us that it was among the best-marked trail runs they'd ever completed.

Lastly, our Junior XC race was the only race to not grow in attendance, remaining steady at 57 participants for both 2021 and 2022. Many of our youngest participants are aging out into the Beginner Enduro or short XC races, while attracting new youth racers is challenging. For the past several years we have not had anyone 'take ownership' of this event to brainstorm and enact changes to improve the event on a grander scale. We hope to find someone this offseason who has a passion for the race as much as others have found their passion organizing each of the primary events. We do not want to give up on this part of Trails Fest, but it is clear that more than minor tweaks may be needed to bring it up to the standard that our other elements have reached.

A total of 32 people attended the guided nature hikes with outgoing naturalist Tom Oliver. Two filled completely and a third was close to full. Many of the hikers were not from our usual audience, or were visiting Copper Harbor alongside someone who was racing. We imagined this would be the case. Ten people attended the mini skills clinic with Revolve, just enough so that we broke even on the event. With additional planning and coordination ahead of time we likely would have filled this clinic. We look forward to working with Kelly Raber on this element directly in the future. Participants in the clinic were a mix of prior CHTC followers and those new to Trails Fest.

Our evening entertainment was a blast this year and went off as perfectly as we could have imagined. Saturday evening featured music from Terrapin Flyer, who attracted an entirely new cohort of people to the event (Deadheads). It was clear they were only there for the music. Sunday's music was by 4onthefloor for the second straight year. Their rock-heavy music is a great way to close out the event. We estimate **another 300+ people** attended just the music, based on revenue from the gate. Volunteers and racers were able to enter for free. Both nights of music were graced by northern lights after each show, adding extra-special memories to an otherwise perfect weekend.

Pasties were more popular this year thanks to additional advertising both before and during the event. We had a better plan this year going into the event after being unable to convince any food trucks to make the journey north to join us again. Fortunately, nobody can complain about a hot pasty, particularly one that is as highly rated as those from the Mohawk Superette. We sold nearly 1,000 throughout the weekend.

Beer sales also were strong in 2022 and improved from 2021. We added wine and non-alcoholic beer options this time around to broaden our reach. Even then, we realized that with a lack of food vendors nobody was selling soda (water and gatorade were available in 5-gallon coolers). Next year we will truly have something for everyone.

Well over 150 volunteers assisted with the event, from helping with registration to selling pasties and everything in between. Over 100 people signed up ahead of time, while the rest were day-of volunteers put into service to cover gaps, chief organizers in key roles, or bike patrollers who were organized separately. We would not have been able to host the event without the help of so many amazing volunteers.

On the swag and merch front, we ordered 255 shirts this year and sold out of most of them. This is close to what we have ordered previously. Shirts were only made available the weekend of the event,

with extras sold online this fall (no pre-orders for simplicity sake). Each shirt had the 2022 CHTF graphic on the front and the KML and CHTC logos on the reverse neckline.

A total of 432 stainless steel pint glasses were also ordered, with the 2022 CHTF graphic on one side and a KML logo on the other. This was as many as we could obtain through all of Superior Graphics' suppliers this summer due to supply chain issues. The glasses were given to racers at check-in and helped drive our busiest Friday evening check-in and registration period ever. People who missed out on this year's pint glasses received a leftover 2021 or 2020 cup. Participants were made aware of the supply issues ahead of time, hence the mad dash on Friday.

A total of eleven emails were sent to CHTC's email list with information that specifically mentioned the phrase "Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest." Ten were before the event between May and September, while one came after the event. A total of 31,761 emails were sent, of which 50.4%, or 16,012 were opened. This is higher than our recent average and highlights the effectiveness of CHTC's outreach to our most dedicated followers. Other emails mentioned Trails Fest without getting into any specific details. Those emails were not included in these metrics.

A total of 25 Facebook posts that included the full phrase "Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest" were posted between May 1, 2022 and mid-September after the event. These posts had a total reach of 92,200 with 7,242 reactions, likes, etc. An additional four ads were run on Facebook for 27,500 in total reach and 3,512 reactions. Other posts that only included the shorthand phrase Trails Fest (usually in reference to other CHTC initiatives that overlapped with the event) also were posted but not included in these metrics.

We look forward to building on this year's experience to continue to improve the Copper Harbor Trails Club's signature event. All comments regarding the event were positive and everyone seemed to have a great time.

-Nathan Miller, Executive Director
Copper Harbor Trails Club



Above: the front and back of both the 2022 event shirt and pint glass, showing the KML logo & name.



Above: The main event banner behind the stage during each evening's music featured the KML logo front and center. Our printer finished the main banner the day of the event and got the name wrong along the top, despite my repeated warnings (I was not shown a proof due to their tardiness). Fortunately, another welcome banner was printed that included the full name of the event. Another correct banner was included at the entrance to the park.

Below: A proof of a race bib shows the KML logo and tagline along the bottom of each bib. Each race had its own color and every racer received at least one depending on how much they raced. The Enduro and Downhill events had the LSGS logo included, while all others had a duplicate KML logo instead.




Two examples of emails sent to our followers with information about Trails Fest.

TRAILS CLUB

Enjoy those long summer days.

If you haven't been to Copper Harbor yet this season, you're missing out on some of the best days of the year. Hot summer temps are making Lake Superior almost tolerable! The berries are fast approaching! Ice cream shops are bustling! And most importantly (for us), the trails are as fun as ever. Whether your next visit north is scheduled for this weekend, in a month, or later this fall, we hope you're excited for your best trip of the year.



Trails Fest prices increase August 1st!

If you want the best rates for the [Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest](#), be sure to register **before August 1st**. Prices go up that day which is about a month out from our Labor Day weekend race extravaganza. There's still plenty of space in our XC, Downhill, and 10k Trail Run events. Our Enduro is almost half full though, so get your name on the list if you want to race the burliest Copper Harbor Enduro there's ever been! We're anticipating 5-6 stages for the Expert class and up to four for the Sport class.* Exact format and trails TBD but rest assured, it'll be exciting. [Register today!](#)

**Beginners will still have it easier, so no worries if you're not up for a huge day quite yet!*

Register for Trails Fest!

COPPER HARBOR TRAILS CLUB

One week until go time.

The 29th Annual [Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest](#) is truly right around the corner! As bummed as we are that summer is suddenly nearing its end, Labor Day weekend is the best weekend of them all and we're excited to share it with you. Next Friday evening we'll start checking people in for our races, readying our volunteers, and putting the final touches on our evening activities in the park. Check out our [Participant Guide](#) for all the most up-to-date details or read on below for select highlights!



**KEWEENAW MOUNTAIN LODGE
COPPER HARBOR TRAILS FEST**

TERRAPIN FLYER **4ONTHEFLOOR**
SEPTEMBER 3, 7:00PM **SEPTEMBER 4, 7:00PM**
JAMBAND / GRATEFUL DEAD *4/4 ROCK + ROLL*

TWO NIGHTS OF MUSIC: \$20
RACE OR VOLUNTEER FOR FREE ENTRY!

DONNY KILPELA PARK: COPPER HARBOR, MI
PASTIES. BEER. MUSIC. RAFFLE. RACES + MORE
WWW.COPPERHARBORTRAILS.ORG

Live Music On Labor Day Weekend!

We're excited to welcome Terrapin Flyer and 4onthefloor to the [Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest](#) this year! Several Board members advocated bringing the acclaimed

Copper Harbor Trails Club
Published by [Nathan Invincible Miller](#) · June 2 · 🌐

Got weekend plans? It's time to start planning for the 2022 [Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest](#)! Get your crew together and head north this Labor Day weekend to celebrate the trails with us. There's a race for everyone and we hope you can make it. Register today at <https://runsignup.com/copperharbortrailsfest>! 🙌👓



[RUNSIGNUP.COM](https://runsignup.com)

Copper Harbor Trails Fest
The Copper Harbor Trails Fest is on Saturday Se...


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Copper Harbor Trails Club
Published by [Nathan Invincible Miller](#) · July 31 · 🌐

Final chance for the best rates! Prices go up for the [Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest](#) tonight at midnight. Come hang out with us for a truly bonkers weekend. If you're not all smiles by the time you hit an unofficial official aid oasis with licorice and shots, you will be soon after. Register today! <http://runsignup.com/copperharbortrailsfest>

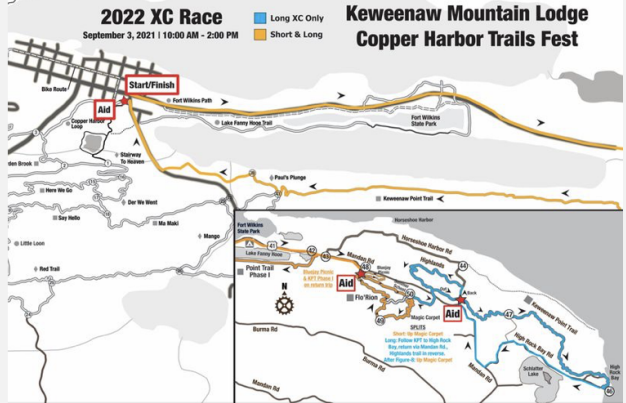


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Copper Harbor Trails Club
Published by [Nathan Invincible Miller](#) · August 11 · 🌐

Rise and shine! Time to start doing some practice laps on our XC course for the [Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest](#). Long course racers will get a trip out to High Rock and up both the Highlands and East Bluff climbs. We're trading time on Red Trail this year for a loop around Bluejay Picnic as well. Find out more in our Participant Guide and register online today! <https://copperharbortrails.org/.../copper-harbor-trails-fest>



2022 XC Race
September 3, 2021 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Long XC Only
Short & Long

Keweenaw Mountain Lodge Copper Harbor Trails Fest

[See insights and ads](#) [Boost post](#)

78 1 Comment 7 Shares

On this page: three examples of Facebook posts that included the event name and information about races over Trails Fest weekend.