

What's New for this Season?

Continuous trail improvement is a key goal for Swedetown Trails. Swedetown Trails Club Board sets long range plans based on member feedback. Each season, we determine what is feasible given our resources of volunteer time and funding. We have been busy this fall!

Trail Improvements - Valley Trail and Greenstone Loop

These popular trails are now even better and more enjoyable for all skiers, including new skiers. With slight widening of some segments of Valley Trail and Greenstone Loop we will be able to have side-by-side classic tracks for portions of both trails. Skiers can companionably ski together or an experienced skier can ski alongside a new skier. We have tested this layout so we know many skiers will enjoy it. There will still be another set of classic tracks on the other side of the trail and a wide skate lane.

Next take a look at the starting point onto Valley Trail - we've changed the first downhill giving it a gentler slope. This helps first time and new skiers make a smoother entry into our trail



system. Also, Greenstone Loop had some low spots so early season grooming had to wait for sufficient snow depth and a hard freeze-over. Now these low sections are improved and leveled, making for smoother skiing and safer conditions for our groomer operators. These changes were prepared by volunteers from Swedetown Trails Club with the help of the Sigma Pi fraternity at Michigan Tech. Support of \$7300 from a grant from Portage Health Foundation



Community Wellness and Outdoor Recreation Fund was instrumental in paying for the needed contracted work and materials.

Let us know how you like the changes!

More Trail Improvements - Len's Loop and Powderhouse

Hills - yes we have some fun hills! We've made some changes to improve the flow of the trails. Len's Loop is a fun loop starting at the main trailhead, often used for instruction because it has some ups and downs just right for skill development. A short section near the end was widened to make it conform to our standard 17 foot trail width. This is one of Swedetown's trails which is lighted for evening skiing. Speaking of lights - all new energy efficient lights have been installed on Len's.

Powderhouse Loop is Swedetown's most challenging ski trail but it is not to be missed, as it is beautiful and scenic. It has been improved by widening a downhill hairpin turn. We have widened the uphill to enable passing during both the Great Bear Chase and day-to-day skiing. The greater width allows a skier to herringbone up a hill without having to change rhythm when a faster skier wants to pass.

Selective tree removal was carried out by volunteers, followed by contracted bulldozing. Support for these improvements came from trail fees, fundraisers and a grant from the Keweenaw Community Foundation Cross Country Skiing Endowment, which has helped with many other Swedetown projects.



Great Bear Chase 2020

The 2020 race on March 7th will be the 40th year of the Great Bear Chase! To help celebrate 40 years of chasing that elusive bear, we are giving special 40th anniversary ski ties, a high tech 40th anniversary T-shirt and are featuring an improved skiathlon exchange area.



Over 800 participants enjoyed fantastic conditions and weather during the 2019 Great Bear Chase. Top skiers from the midwest competed. The fastest pace for any of the 50K events was a burning time of 2 hours 24 minutes by Nikolai Anikin of Duluth - that's over 12 miles per hour for 31 miles! Houghton native Dan Wood was only 43 seconds back to take 6th place, while Hancock legend Joan Rundman was 2nd overall in the 25km classic race with a time of 1:53. We thank the local community for all the ways they help - whether it is representing our area with their skiing skills and endurance, volunteering at the race, or hosting and welcoming visiting racers.

Chalet Improvements

We've been busy getting the Chalet spiffed up and will open the upper level in December.



Improvements for this year include a rebuilt entryway and outdoor signboard display, carried out by dedicated club volunteers. Upstairs has a new paint job along with a refinished floor. Other recent improvements are all new energy efficient lights, a new kitchen floor plus a hand-washing sink. The kitchen is licensed for food service by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The Chalet has a woodstove and a comfy corner with couch and chairs. Bring your lunch or buy a pasty or snacks - there's a microwave to use. We added a long counter for visitors to use for food preparation or as a buffet layout. Thank you to Calumet Township for supplementing the funding of these improvements for the community. Reservations are needed for parties and for visits by large groups, to avoid schedule conflicts.

New Groomer Year Four!

This is Year Four for our large groomer, a Prinroth Husky with a wide and powerful tiller. Our head groomer Tom Wright says having this machine has reduced daily grooming time and allows us to enjoy a longer ski season while also producing a higher quality trail. For

the last two winters we have had plenty of snow to ski from November until April. This heavy groomer is ideal for

packing down those big dumps of snow we receive and making the trails just right - we get many good comments about Swedetown's trail quality. If you are out on the trails and you see something nine feet tall out there, say hi!



We purchased this groomer with the help of many donations, grants and a five-year loan. We hope to pay off the remaining \$17,000 on this loan in 2020.

Snow Bike Trails Year Two!

Swedetown now has 10 miles of trails just for fat-tire snow bikes, starting near the Chalet. A new loop for 2019-2020 adds four more miles while other improvements include a reduced number of ski trail crossings. Swedetown Snow Bike Trails are twisty, turny and go through a variety of terrain to make them interesting and fun. Trails are packed to keep them nice for riding. Last year there were snow bikers out every day enjoying this growing sport.

The multi-use trails with separate trail head on

Woodland Road also allow snow bikes - these trails are open for all uses including snowshoeing, walking and dogs are allowed.



Swedetown 2019-20 Season Memberships Available

Swedetown season membership cost is \$120 for a family (two adults) and \$80 for an individual. Considering our long season and the quality of trails and grooming, this is a true bargain. We have not raised the rate in more than five years because our goal is to keep cross country skiing and other trail sports affordable for everyone in the community. Youth 18 and under receive free memberships, as always. We have a long winter and we want to see people outside - it's good for mental health as well as physical health. We hope you get out on the trails lots of times this winter!

Calumet Township has set aside the Swedetown Recreation Area for outdoor recreation. As a partner with the Township, Swedetown Trails Club develops and maintains the summer and winter trails. Membership fees, donations, grants and our major fundraiser the Great Bear Chase are how we pay for grooming equipment, groomer operator wages, fuel, building utilities, insurance and trail improvements. When the Chalet upper level opens in December, stop in and purchase your annual membership. Season and one-day memberships can also be purchased at Cross Country Sports in Calumet, Downwind Sports in Houghton, Michigan Tech Ticket Office and on-line with a credit card. Combination passes including MTU, Chassell, and Maasto Hiihto are available

Trail Conditions

www.keweenawtrails.org - www.swedetowntrails.org

Event Websites

www.GreatBearChase.org - www.GreatDeerChase.org

Donate Online
at
PHFgive.org

Please indicate that your donation is for the Swedetown Trails Club

Support the Trails on Giving Tuesday

Donations to Swedetown can be doubled this year as part of **#GivingTuesday!** During the 2019 **Giving Tuesday** initiative, Portage Health Foundation will match donations supporting Swedetown Trails Club. For this year, the foundation has committed \$100,000 to match donations to any of fifteen local nonprofit organizations.

PHF's reason for promoting Giving Tuesday is to inspire people to collaborate in improving their local communities and to give back in impactful ways. This is an opportunity for your money to mean twice as much so we hope you will consider making a donation. The trails are supported by your membership but also depend on donations to keep memberships affordable and make trail improvements.

Donate online by choosing Giving Tuesday on PHF web site: PHFgive.org. Or use the mail-in form here.

#GIVINGTUESDAY
— DECEMBER 3, 2019 —



MAIL IN FORM

YES! I would like to support the Swedetown Trails!
Portage Health Foundation will match donations to the Swedetown Trails Club postmarked before December 3, 2019
Enclosed is my contribution of:

\$100 \$50 \$25 \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Make checks payable to "Portage Health Foundation" and mail to:

Portage Health Foundation • PO Box 299 • Hancock, MI 49930

The Portage Health Foundation & Swedetown Trails Club are 501(c)(3) non-profit corporations and contributions are tax-deductible

Summer Trails Update

Great Deer Chase

The Great Deer Chase will be held on August 15, 2020. It will feature the U.P. Single Speed Championships as well as cross country races for every member of the family. Courses will be 2.5 miles for youth 10 and under, 4 miles for youth 14 and under, 15 miles and 30 miles. As usual they will consist of numerous sections of single track with some two track thrown in for passing.

If you don't feel up to racing you can volunteer and help keep the Deer Chase Great! After January 1st you'll be able to secure your volunteer task by following the

volunteer link on the GreatDeerChase.org website which will transfer you to the list of tasks at runsignup.com

Trail Maintenance

There are no paid staff to "groom" the summer trails. It's all a labor of love by dedicated volunteers who adopt a section of trail for the summer. Typically it takes a commitment of 18-24 elf-hours per season to adequately maintain a mile and a half section of singletrack. This involves lopping back the encroaching brush and weed whacking the ferns and grass that grow into the trail corridor 2 or 3 times.

Please consider adopting a trail this coming summer and enlist some friends to help. Many hands make light work! You can contact Gail Neufeld, Summer Trails Coordinator, to sign up for a section of trail by sending her an email to the trailelves@googlegroups.com list.

Equipment availability and training can be coordinated with Marc Norton by emailing him at trailelf@charter.net



The Great Deer Chase offers something for the serious racer to the beginner.



Armoring some of the muddy spots on the Burly Trail



Above: Using the CHTC Mini-Ex to work on road drainage.



Left: Yes, we have the world's first Roundabout on a mountain bike trail.