



HAPPENINGS

November 2022

swedetowntrails.org — (906) 337-1170 — Trail Conditions: keweenawtrails.org

Things are Happening at Swedetown, and You Can Help!

A lot of good things have happened at Swedetown in the past year. We've held several successful events and have seen many smiling faces out on the trails. A goal of the Swedetown Trails Club is to make your next visit even better than the last one, and as you read this newsletter, you will see that a lot has been accomplished in the form of improvements to the Swedetown trails and infrastructure.

None of these things could have happened without the efforts of our dedicated staff and volunteers, our partners in the community, and the generous financial support provided by our members and other organizations. We are always looking for more volunteers with various skills and interests. As you read this newsletter, please think about how you might contribute to the kinds of projects that we plan and execute. Thank you, and see you on the trails!

Please Support Swedetown Trails on Giving Tuesday

Donations you make to Swedetown can be augmented this year as part of #GivingTuesday! During the 2022 Giving Tuesday initiative, Portage Health Foundation will match up to \$200,000 of donations made to Swedetown Trails Club and other participating organizations. So, if you are able to make a donation to support Swedetown Trails this year, between now and November 29th is the time! You may donate online at: phfgive.org/givingtuesday or mail in the enclosed card.

STC plans to use some of the donations to improve and develop summer trails so there is a variety for all skill levels. Also, there is a chance to acquire an 18 acre parcel of land on Spruce Street in the near future to be a future trailhead close to town and provide space for big events and races. STC has a dedicated fund set aside for the land purchase but there is still need for donations to get to the amount that will be

needed in January. Your contributions can ensure areas we have been using will be accessible for future generations.

We thank everyone who donated during Giving Tuesday last year. What incredible generosity - the trails received over \$30,000 in donations when the Portage Health Foundation matching funds were added in! Some of the projects you are reading about in this newsletter are the result. STC used the donations to make the required match for land acquisition (see "Swedetown Recreation Area Addition at Birch Loop"). Another big project was improving the rutted driveway and expanding the parking lot (see "Parking Lot and Driveway Improvements").

How to Donate on Giving Tuesday

Swedetown Trails Club has been chosen by the Portage Health Foundation as one of 26 non-profit organizations in their 2022 Giving Tuesday campaign. PHF will be matching up to \$200,000 among all organizations participating.

Now is the time to donate to Swedetown Trails while the Giving Tuesday event can multiply your donation with a match and really make it count for Swedetown projects! To get your donation matched by PHF, it must be received or postmarked by the DEADLINE of November 29, 2022.

You can donate online until November 29th at 11 p.m. Be sure to designate Swedetown Trails Club as the organization you are supporting. Visit: www.phfgive.org/givingtuesday

If you prefer, you may mail your donation. Checks need to be made out to "**Portage Health Foundation**". They will not accept checks made out to Swedetown Trails Club. **Be sure to write Swedetown Trails on the memo line.** Mail to: Portage Health Foundation, PO Box 299, Hancock, MI 49930

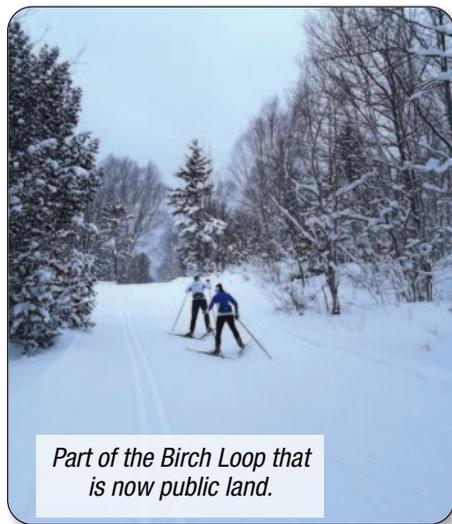
Or you may drop off your donation at the PHF office located at 400 Quincy Street, Hancock, by **4:00 pm on Tuesday, November 29th.**



Swedetown Recreation Area Addition at Birch Loop

Wonderful news! Swedetown Trails Club and Calumet Township announce an addition to the Swedetown Recreation Area of 17 acres of hilly wooded land. The parcel adjoins the northeast corner of Swedetown and incorporates most of the Birch Loop ski trail. Expert skiers and intermediates alike appreciate this hilly terrain! Having a variety of trails to suit all styles and abilities is one of the goals of Swedetown Trails Club. The Bull Toad mountain bike trail uses a segment of the terrain as well and it is a pretty hiking area in summer and fall.

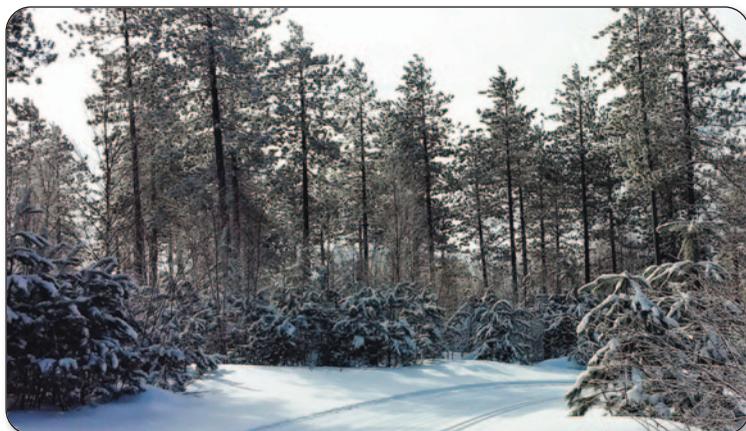
This private land had been used for many years by permission of the land owners, who are now pleased to sell their land so it can be permanently set aside for recreational use and public benefit. The owners expressed their history with the trails “Our intent was to ensure undeveloped access to the trails and with this grant we know this part of the trail system will be preserved for use by others in the community as well.



Part of the Birch Loop that is now public land.

Many thanks to the Swedetown Trails Club, especially Pat Toczydlowski, and Calumet and Osceola Townships for making this happen.”

Support for the purchase came from a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant. It requires a local fund match of 25% to show that the community values the project. And everyone helped! We had many generous donors during the Giving Tuesday 2021 fundraising event co-sponsored by the Portage Health Foundation to benefit Swedetown Trails. Thank you everyone! We will enjoy this beautiful area for many years.



Parking Lot and Driveway Improvements

Major improvements were made to two trailhead parking lots at Swedetown this year. The Swedetown Chalet parking lot at our main trailhead on Osceola Road was increased in size by about 50%. This will allow at least 30 more cars to park near the Chalet. Swedetown Trails Club and Calumet Township express their appreciation to B&B Contracting and the Houghton County Road Commission for the parking lot fill.



As part of this project, 6” of AMD gravel was added to the driveway. What is AMD? It is fill made in part from recycled blacktop and it should greatly reduce the formation of potholes. A post-and-rope fence was also added along the south side of the driveway and parking lot, which will stop ATV’s from causing so much erosion on the sledding hill. Here’s an amazing fact - the rope had a prior life as a ski hill tow rope. How many people know there was once a downhill ski area with a motorized rope tow near the water towers?

As part of the chalet parking lot expansion, a storage shed was removed to make more parking spaces. Thanks to a dedicated crew of volunteers, a few floor jacks, a trailer, and an early morning drive, the shed was relocated near the groomer barn. This places our three maintenance/storage buildings all within close proximity of each other. Fun fact: In the 1980s this shed housed the one-and-only trail maintenance machine belonging to Swedetown, a snowmobile. Today we own three snowmobiles, the Prinoth Husky groomer, a tractor and a mini-excavator. We’ve come a long way!

Finally, the parking lot on Woodland Road, which serves the Multi-Use Trail, was more than doubled in size! You’ll find more parking here in the larger lot when you enjoy the groomed trail here. Bring your dog along, too. This is a dog-friendly trail!

Landscaping at Swedetown

The Swedetown Trails Club (STC) has long hoped that some group would take on the job of sprucing up the areas near the chalet and driveway. This year things came together for this to begin to happen. Real People Media (RPM), a non-profit that operates the Keweenaw Storytelling Center in Calumet, was awarded a \$6,000 grant by the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition to purchase native plants and barriers and to engage the public in conservation efforts.



Another partner in the project was Trio Upward Bound, hosted by Finlandia University. Students in this organization participate in community service projects as a way to broaden their horizons in preparation for college. The students came to Swedetown for four summer planting sessions during which they hauled rocks, removed the invasive spotted knapweed, dug holes, and planted and watered plant plugs. Thus far, most of the nearly 1,000 plant plugs have survived! The students also learned about another invasive, common buckthorn.

Marcia Goodrich, an expert on native plants, came to one of the work days to provide an in-depth perspective on the importance of conservation and how planting native species helps with this. STC also got some advice from landscape architect Tom Nordloh, who believes we are on the right track and that with some amenities to the soil and water, we would accomplish our goals.

Many hours of volunteer work went into the project, and the machinery STC has accumulated for trail work was put to good use, such as for hauling rocks from other locations at Swedetown to form the edge of the garden by the chalet. A video will be produced by RPM to tell the story of the project.

Look Up - It's a New Roof!

The Chalet has a new roof and added insulation, thanks to the Calumet Township Building and Maintenance Fund. The Chalet was built in 1992 at the main trailhead off of Osceola Road. It's right next to the popular sledding hill and a good place to warm up after winter activities of all types.



The Calumet Township Supervisor would like to thank the STC for all the hard work they do throughout the year to keep the Swedetown Recreation Area a year round recreation destination.

As long as the trails are open, the lower level is open daylight hours for restroom access and the water bottle filling station. In December watch for our opening date for the upper level lounge and sales counter. See you then!

PHF Provides AED for Swedetown

Sudden cardiac arrest is a leading cause of death in the United States. More than 350,000 cardiac arrests occur outside of hospitals each year. In our community there are automated external defibrillators (AEDs) at the airport, in schools and at some businesses and recreational facilities.

Portage Health Foundation (PHF) recognized that procuring additional AEDs and distributing them in the community would help address the foundation's long-term goal of building safer communities. PHF invited proposals from the community for new AED locations. The Swedetown Chalet was recognized as such a location and will have the new wall-mounted AED ready soon.

The model provided by PHF is designed to be used by any bystander. Still, familiarization is useful, so Swedetown Trails Club is arranging for CPR training to include AED use. This training will be offered in January to Swedetown volunteers and to anyone else who is interested. This is good timing for a New Year's Resolution to get training to be ready to help if you were present in an emergency! Watch for a posting and sign-up sheet at the Chalet.

Winter Trail Improvements

Several improvements were made to the winter trail system this year! Improvements have been made to Greenstone and Powderhouse Loops. On Greenstone, near Bob's Stop and Rest Hill, a gate was moved, ruts were filled and the trail was widened. This will allow two sets of tracks on one side of the trail and a single set track on the other. These changes will also provide better early season conditions for skiers and safer conditions for our groomer operators.

On Powderhouse, we made some fixes to parts of the trail that had been rerouted last year. A tight corner was smoothed and some side slopes on hills were fixed. Now you will find smooth tracks throughout and a fun, fast, flowing downhill.

Other changes were fixing a sharp corner on Pine Ridge Loop and adjusting a curve on Valley Trail for smoother classic tracks. With our tractor and a group of volunteers, we smoothed out bumps and ruts on the Multi-Use (MUT) loops so they can be groomed earlier in winter.



The MUT (multi-use) trails on Woodland Road were used as part of the course for both the Great Deer Chase and the Keweenaw Chain Drive for the first time and will continue to evolve through more use. Now there's a summer/fall connection from Woodland to the rest of the bike/hike trail system, with the trail smoothed and the parking lot on Woodland expanded.

Throughout the system we repaired drainages and rebuilt trails for better riding flow and sustainability. Our team of volunteers, the Trail Elves, crushed the spring clean up and got the trails open with great riding prior to Ride the Keweenaw weekend in May. The Elves continued to do a great job all summer, providing a long season of premium riding conditions.

Behind the scenes a lot of work was done to lay groundwork for future projects - new trail riding, improved signage, increased family-friendly amenities etc. Future plans include more multi-use type trail, more bridge replacements, pump track and skills loops and a new flow trail to replace an aging section of expert trail, all with a focus on family-friendly growth.



Summer Trails

Swedetown's summer trails owe their existence to volunteers. Over 800 hours and a lot of donated funding went into improvements this year. Thanks go out to everyone who came out to work or donated money. We were able to continue to evolve our trail system towards our long-term goals.

Calumet Township provided picnic tables for the Chalet trailhead and we set boundaries to better define the parking area. Two bridges were replaced with wider bridges with beautiful cedar decking on the bike trail that begins at the main trailhead. The new bridges allow for a 2 mile true beginner and kid-friendly loop which we will continue to improve into 2023 and beyond. Hand painted animal cutouts were added to the last mile of the loop. An instant hit!

Great Deer Chase

The 2022 Great Deer Chase was incredible. There were so many smiling faces out enjoying our trails and the great weather. We utilized a completely different path through our system than previous race iterations, highlighting the Woodland Road trailhead as a point of entry. This change enabled a two-way aid station and more balance between climbing and descending throughout the course.

The race for all fields of competition highlighted our beautiful new beginner friendly bridges built late spring. We are working to attract more younger riders and plan to add both middle and high school race categories in 2023. The event raised record funds, nearly \$12,000! These funds will supercharge more similar improvements into the future. We plan to debut some new trail at next year's Great Deer Chase on August 5th!

Trail Running and Mosquito Chase

A group of trail runners has been active this summer. Our trails have always been available for running in summer with many runners out there and we want to continue to embrace that usage. The running committee created and mapped 2, 5 and 10 mile running routes. They plan to add these to our summer/fall maps and create signage for next season.

We held a 5 mile running race in September - The Mosquito Chase. Everyone had a great time and no mosquitos were around on race day - the name is just for fun. Proceeds will go towards creating new signage for running routes. We plan to hold the Mosquito Chase again next summer!

Snowbike Trails are Super Fun

Swedetown has 10 miles of snow bike trails which are very beautiful and fun. We are working on navigation signs and a map showing ski trail crossings, in order to orient our riders. The trails are groomed when there is significant new snowfall or drifting. For this coming season we have an additional groomer operator and as always, we aim for high quality trails. To see trail conditions, visit the Swedetown web site (www.SwedetownTrails.org).



Some expectations for riders - helmet required and at least 3.8 inch tire width. Reduce tire pressure if leaving ruts when riding or come back another day. Wherever you have to walk your bike, walk only on the outer edge of the packed trail, so you don't posthole the center where it's hard to groom out the damage.

2022 Great Bear Chase

The 2022 Great Bear Chase featured cold and windy conditions for the 789 individuals registered for the race. This represented a return to normal race size, after organizers limited the number of racers to 550 in 2021. As a comparison, 2020 was a record year with 888 registering for the race. As in 2021, the 2022 registration and pasty lunch were drive-through operations, but we look forward to returning to the CLK High School gym and a more normal year in 2023. As always, racers commented on the friendly atmosphere and cordial volunteers.



Registration is open for the 2023 Great Bear Chase (March 11, 2023), as is on-line sign-up for volunteers. See greatbearchase.org for details.

2022 Easter Bunny Hoppet

Things were hopping at the Swedetown Ski Trails on Saturday, April 9! The Third-but-not-Annual Easter Bunny Hoppet pop-up race was held under beautiful sunny skies, with ideal spring conditions. A total of 53 racers participated in the 20km freestyle event, with Skylar Patterson winning the men's category in 52:43, and Henriette Semb leading the women with a time of 1:01:40.

Thanks go out to our sponsors (Cross Country Sports, Studio 13, and Swedetown Trails), as well as to all the volunteers and racers. \$700 was raised through a \$20 suggested donation. This money was used to help offset the cost of extended spring grooming.

Who knows when the furry little harbinger of perfect spring skiing will appear again?

2022 Swedetown Season Opener Ski Race

For anyone who misses the Season Opener race that used to be held on the Swedetown trails, and anyone interested in getting a low-key, early season event under their belt, we have great news! The Swedetown Season Opener Ski Race is scheduled for Saturday, December 10, 2022! This will be a 7.5km, interval-start race, with a 10:30 am start time. The exact course will be determined once we see what the snow cover will allow. A \$20 donation is recommended to defray event costs. Any extra proceeds will be used for trail grooming expenses.

Watch for more information about this event as the date draws closer. In the meantime, please do your Heikki Lunta dance!

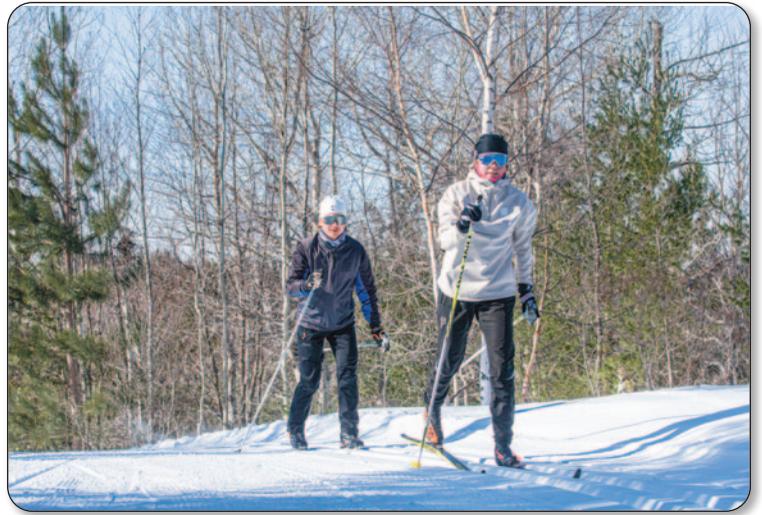
Swedetown Memberships

With more options than ever for enjoying the trails at Swedetown, we have made some changes to the types of memberships offered to best meet the needs of an increasingly diverse group of trail users. The following types of memberships are now offered:

- An annual All Trails Membership, which includes year-round use of all trails.
- A winter “Narrow Trails” membership, which includes use of the snowshoe, backcountry, fat bike, and multi-use trails. Previously, separate memberships had been offered for each type of narrow trail.
- A summer-only membership for biking, trail running and hiking.

Daily memberships are also offered for all of the above.

Rates and additional information are available at swedetowntrails.org/membership. Memberships can be purchased online at keweenawtrails.org, or in person at the Swedetown Chalet and Cross Country Sports. As has



always been our policy, youth under age 18 are welcome to use all of our trails at no charge.

The Keweenaw Trails Alliance plan offers discounts to those purchasing memberships for multiple trail systems within the network (Swedetown, Michigan Tech, Chassell Trails and Maasto Hiihto). The Swedetown Trails Club currently has over 700 members, many of which have memberships for all four areas at a 15% discount.

STC Board Members

Craig Hughes, *President*; Larry Zurawski, *Vice-President*;
Jan Haase, *Treasurer*; Cynthia MacDonald, *Secretary*;
John Galbraith, *Groomer Liason*; Pat Toczydlowski
Bookkeeper;

Lois Blau, Mark Jindrich, Pat Szubielak, Drew Wilson;
Kim Wilson

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