

# CHEQUAMEGON CHAPTER NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2024

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The Group Shot. Pictured left to right: Joan Cervenka, Rhiannon Harmon, Don Quick, Tom Matthiae, Jackie Kruse, and Ellie Williams. Not pictured and photo by Kevin Schram.

## Chequamegon Chapter Staffs Informational Table

On Saturday April 6, 2024, the Chequamegon Chapter of the North Country Trail Association set up an informational table at the Flat Creek Lodge conference center in Hayward. Trout Unlimited invited the Chapter to set up the



Ellie Williams.

informational table at the Fly-Fishing Expo. Ellie Williams had this to say about the event: "Don Quick (Chapter Member/Trail Adopter) came to help work our table ...so we "snagged" him for a quick photo op receiving his Chapter Honor Award for 2023. Rhiannon Harmon and Jackie Kruse had a good time meeting and greeting folks."

Don Quick (left) receives a third part of his NCTA Chapter Honor Award for 2023, a leather engraved photo frame presented by Kevin Schram, Chapter President. Photo by

## Chapter Volunteers Clear Anderson Grade

By Mel Baughman

On May 5, 2024, a crew of seven volunteers cleared the entire four-mile length of Anderson Grade through the Rainbow Lake Wilderness. While about 1.5 miles of Anderson Grade west of the North Country Trail was mostly cleared last year, on this trip we cleared even the step-over trees west of the NCT and cleared the trail east of the NCT leaving just a few step-over logs. We gave our saws, axes, and loppers a good workout. Mel Baughman led the crew of Don Quick and Tom Piikkila from the West and

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Derrick Passe led the crew of Rhiannon Harmon, Derek Ogle and Linnea Weyandt from the East. The two crews met for a trailside lunch at the junction of Anderson Grade and the NCT. This was Linnea Weyandt's first workday on the trail. Derek Ogle is a new trail adopter along with Derrick Passe at the north end of the Rainbow Lake Wilderness. It was a beautiful, warm, sun shiny day with no mosquitos, but there were a few ticks.

Anderson Grade is a railroad bed—a remnant of the area's early 1900s logging era. When cleared of trees it provides a very level walk across the wilderness through a forest now around 100 years old. Photos by Derek Ogle, Rhiannon Harmon, and Derrick Passe.



**Photos**

clockwise top to bottom: 1). The group photo, pictured in Back row from left to right: Mel Baughman, Tom Piikkila, Rhiannon Harmon, Derek Ogle, Linnea Weyandt; Seated: Derrick Passe and Don Quick. 2.) 3 people cutting a downed oak tree on the trail, top back - Derek Ogle and sawing with a one man converted crosscut saw, from left to right - Linnea Weyandt and Derrick Passe. 3.) Derrick uses wedges to keep the saw from binding while removing a large tree. 4.) Front to back: Rhiannon, Derek and Linnea lopping along the trail.



**NCT Navigators  
Maintain Section of  
Chequamegon  
Chapter NCT**

On May 13, 2024, a dozen NCT Navigators helped Beth Murphy with beat-the-bugs trail maintenance (spring cleanup) on her section of adopted North Country National Scenic Trail in Delta. Jackie Kruse had this to say about the event: "Beautiful

morning on a lovely section of trail! You've got to love women with tools!." Photo by Jackie Kruse



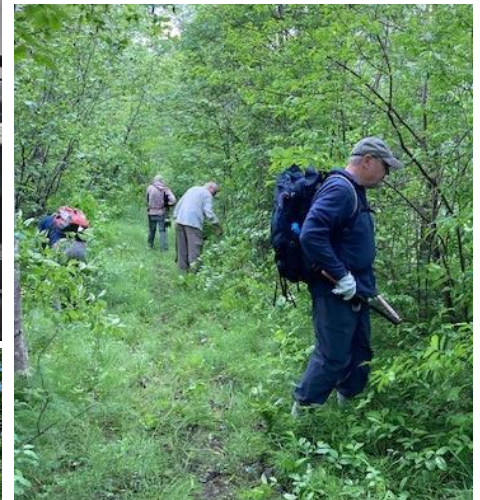
## Chequamegon Chapter Holds First Official Trail Maintenance of the Season

On Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup> the Chequamegon Chapter of the North Country Trail Association held their first official trail maintenance of 2024. This event was held after the annual Spring Cleanup was completed by Volunteers and Trail Adopters on our sections of North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) on various dates.

The goal of Saturday's trail maintenance was to assist Rose Wooley and Mike Thewis with general maintenance and repairs on their adopted section of the North Country National Scenic Trail between the ballfield in Mellen and Loon Lake. Mike Thewis and Mike Trieschmann (Eastern Trail Manager) co-lead this workday. Completed at this event was brush mowing of the NCT, repair of a small bridge and aggressively cutting back encroaching alder trees. Kevin Schram, the President of the Chapter, planned the event and Kevin, Mike Thewis, and Mike Trieschmann looked at a need for a small bridge where a culvert has partially washed out. Photos by Julia Waggoner unless otherwise stated.



Volunteers enjoyed a late, delicious lunch at the Oasis in Highbridge.



Photos clockwise, top to bottom: 1.) Chequamegon Chapter Volunteers assemble at the beginning

location at the Copper Falls State Park entry lot. Left to right: Mark Belknap, Jim Fridsma, Julia Waggoner,



Mark James, Don Quick, Bob Lind, Mike Trieschmann, and Marty Swank. Not pictured: Rhiannon Harmon, Ed Ronkowski and Mike Thewis. Photo

by Ed Ronkowski. 2.) Some of what we were up against. The DR Brush Mower was also in use but some of the hangover brush and branches are just out of reach for the mower! 3.) The lopping crew meets up with the bridge repair crew and thankfully reaches where only the brush mower is needed. 4.) The main lopping crew left to right: Bob Lind, Rhiannon Harmon, Ed Ronkowski, Mark James, Kevin Schram (Chapter President) and Marty Swank. Not pictured and photo by Julia Waggoner. 5.) Way too much sun along this power line! Everything tries to compete for the sunlight that the trail and power line offer.



## ACE Crew Builds Boardwalks and Steps on Chequamegon Chapter NCT

By Mel Baughman

Katie LeMoine from the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest lined up a crew of young men from the American Conservation Experience (an affiliate of Americorps) to work on the North Country Trail from June 2 through 5. Mel Baughman provided technical guidance. ACE crew leader Walker Hoskins and assistant crew leader Elijah Gabel were assisted by Cassidy Ivey, Conor Lackner, and Ryan Winter.

Work began on June 27 when Mel Baughman and Natalie Osowski from the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest spent half a day at the Great Divide Ranger District sawing lumber into the desired lengths. All wood and screws were provided by the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest— Thank You!

On June 30 Natalie and Mel hauled wood to three roadside locations north of Drummond. They were met by Bob Lind, Derek Ogle, and Clair Morud from the Chequamegon Chapter who hand-carried wood to the Overby Lake site and to the shore of Esox Lake. Mel then transported lumber in his canoe across Esox Lake, depositing it near a step construction site. Next Mel and Natalie unloaded wood at Reynard Lake. From there Mel and Derek Ogle transported lumber by canoe across Reynard Lake to a boardwalk construction site.

On July 2 Mel and Katie met the ACE crew at the Perch Lake Campground on the Delta-Drummond Road to begin their work. Our first project was to remove a 17-foot long section of decaying boardwalk that crossed an old beaver dam near Reynard Lake in the Rainbow Lake Wilderness. Then we replaced it with a new boardwalk consisting of four 6" x 6" sleepers covered with side-by-side 3" x 12" deck boards providing a 24"-wide walkway. It's very stable and easy to walk over. An ACE crew member also cleaned out several surface drains on a slope leading down to the new boardwalk.

Where the NCT passes by Overby Lake, beavers built dams flooding part of the trail. An existing boardwalk that crossed an outflow channel was not long enough to bridge the flowing water. Before our work began to extend the boardwalk, Bob Lind cut a notch in a beaver dam allowing water to drain out and lower the pond so that we could work on relatively dry ground. We moved the old section of boardwalk north about 12' and installed a new, 12' section of boardwalk with 6" x 6" sleepers, 4" x 6" x 12' stringers, and full-sized 2" x 6" deck boards. Then we matched up the old boardwalk to the end of the new boardwalk and rested its stringers on sleepers to create a continuous 22' boardwalk.

Sixty feet north of that boardwalk there was another 10' boardwalk with no sleepers under the stringers. One corner was unsupported causing the whole boardwalk to tilt downhill. We moved the boardwalk over about two feet onto level ground and placed sleepers beneath the stringers.

Kaelin Hall from the USFS Washburn District of the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest joined us on July 3. She helped finish the boardwalks near Overby Lake and assisted with installing steps near Esox Lake.



**The crew is proud of the steps they built on a steep slope near Esox Lake. L – R: ACE members Conor Lackner, Walker Hoskins, Ryan Winter, Cassidy Ivey, Elijah Gabel, and USFS staff Kaelin Hall.**



**Finished steps with earthen fill near Esox Lake.**



Our last construction project took place near a new footbridge over the Esox Lake outlet channel. A steep, 15'-long hill covered with loose gravel led down to the footbridge. We built a set of steps 36" wide by 15' long to create a much safer route down the slippery hill. Mel designed the steps based on his observations and photographs of similar steps in other locations, but he had never actually constructed them before. It was an interesting experience, but the finished steps were aesthetically pleasing and very functional. The steps consist of two stringers spaced 3' apart. Every 2' down the hill there is a 2" x 8" x 36" riser connecting the stringers. The tread is packed dirt hauled from a nearby hand-dug borrow pit. While we had ordered full-sized 2" thick lumber for the steps, we received 1 1/2" thick lumber so the life of these steps will be a little less than desired, but hopefully will last a couple of decades.

While half of the crew built steps, the other half started improving the trail tread on a long hill nearby. The tread was compacted and cupped, allowing water to run down the tread. The crew began removing a raised berm on the outer edge of the tread so water would run off. We ran out of time to finish this work.

During the ACE crew's final day, we cleared fallen logs in the Rainbow Lake Wilderness on Anderson Grade from the Delta-Drummond Road west to the NCT. We left a few fallen logs that were too large or risky to cut, but the trail is very walkable.

While sawing a log with the 2-person crosscut saw, one ACE crew member strained his back causing great pain. He walked two miles to the road with help from other crew members, but an ambulance was called to transport him to the hospital in Hayward. Fortunately, he was released later that day with the aid of a muscle relaxant. Some members of the ACE crew spent a couple of hours enjoying shops and a street festival in Hayward, then the whole crew relaxed at a big farewell dinner at Mel's house. Katie provided ice cream!

I was very impressed by the ACE crew's skill with a 2-person crosscut saw and other tools. The medical emergency was well-managed by the ACE team leaders. In all respects the crew members worked safely and industriously on all the projects. This was the best trained and hardest working youth group I have had the pleasure to work with. Most photos by Mel Baughman.



Photos clockwise top to bottom:  
1.) ACE crew members level the tread on a steep hill near Esox Lake.  
2.) A new 12' boardwalk was joined to an old 10' boardwalk to cross flooded land near Overby Lake.  
3.) Mel Baughman carries his canoe to Reynard Lake where lumber for a boardwalk will be loaded and paddled across the lake. Photo by Derek Ogle.  
4.) New 17' boardwalk over a beaver dam near Reynard Lake.



## Chequamegon Chapter Hosts Rainbow Lake Wilderness Hike

By Ellie Williams

On Wednesday, July 3, the Chequamegon Chapter of the North Country Trail Association held its first fun hike for the 2024 season. The out-and-back hike started at the Reynard Lake trailhead and went 2 miles north into the Rainbow Lake Wilderness, ending at the junction with the Anderson Grade, a logging era railroad grade. Participants included chapter members from both the Chequamegon Chapter and the Brule, St. Croix Chapter. All enjoyed views of Reynard Lake, a campsite/picnic area on the north end of Reynard Lake, several new reroutes and a view of Bufo Lake. Blue skies,



moderate temperatures, and a few mosquitos were icing on the cake for this hike through one of the very first eastern wilderness areas designated by Congress in 1975. The hike leader was Chapter Volunteer and Trail Adopter, Don Quick.

**Photo Caption: Hikers gather at the starting point for the fun hike! The Trail Dog in front: Winston; pictured sitting, Kevin, Joyce, and hike leader, Don; standing back row: Clair, Ellen, Bob, Jack, and Al. Photo by Ellie Williams.**

## Chequamegon Volunteers Maintain North Country National Scenic Trail

By Kevin Schram



Volunteers from the Chequamegon Chapter of the North Country Trail Association worked on the North Country National Scenic Trail between Canthook Lake Road and West Delta Road on Thursday, July 18, 2024. Kevin Schram, Chapter President, said, "It was a perfect day for trail work, sunny and relatively cool, and the volunteers completed the work before noon, so they had time for fellowship and ice cream in Delta. Everybody had fun."

The crew was divided in half. Kevin, Mark and Mike, saw team one, started on West Delta Road and worked their way west, with Chris brush mowing, Chris and Sandy blazing the trail with blue paint, and Don and Clair clearing the trail with loppers and hand saws. Tom and Colleen comprised saw team two. They started on Canthook Lake Road and worked their way east, with Ellie and Alan blazing the trail, and Bryan and Bob clearing the brush. Crew one was accompanied by Winston, Kevin and Ellie's foster dog. Crew two was accompanied by Bryan's dog, Callie. Both dogs were treated to ice cream at the end of the day.

According to Kevin, "The trail was in fairly good shape, thanks to the hard work of trail adopters Rob and Barb, and we were all happy to lend a helping hand."



# Chequamegon Chapter Holds Fun Hike on Heritage Chapter North Country National Scenic Trail

By Ellie Williams

The Chequamegon Chapter of the North Country Trail Association held a fun hike starting at Wrens Falls and the Bill Thomas Memorial Bridge. This group of 17 hikers then headed east to the famous gold mine site that is close to Casey Sag Road. We were treated to the vast knowledge and experience of Colleen Matula, retired forest ecologist, Tom Piikkila, retired forest specialist, and Mel Baughman, Emeritus forestry professor. Their comments, perspectives, and cultural history facts, along with knowledge of the natural world increased our knowledge and understanding of forestry practices we encountered along the trail. Hiking in the forest will never be the same now!

Folks in the picture taken on the bridge included members of all three Wisconsin Chapters: Chequamegon Chapter, Heritage Chapter and Brule St. Croix Chapter. Thanks also to Clair Morud, Bob Lind, and Kevin Schram for making this another interesting hike in our summer series.



Photos, left to right: 1.) It was hard to get everyone's face in this picture taken by Ellie Williams of hikers lining up on the Bill Thomas Bridge. Of course, "Tail on The Trail" dog, Winston, had to take center stage. 2.) Participants stop for one of many interpretive moments to listen and learn. Mel Baughman led this trail interpretation, in a heavily harvested area. Photo by Colleen Matula.

## NCT Navigators Photos – April and May 2024





## NCT Navigators Photos (Continued)



## Volunteers Promote the Trail at the Ashland Farmer's Market

By Mary Stenberg

One Saturday per month, from June through September, Chequamegon Chapter volunteers set up a booth at the Ashland Farmer's Market to promote the North Country National Scenic Trail. Maps and brochures are distributed, contact information is collected from those interested in trail activities, and information about the trail is shared with all who stop by. Many of the people who stop by the NCT booth have not heard about the trail, so increasing awareness has been a very good thing. This is the third-year volunteers have been promoting the trail at the Ashland Farmer's Market. **Pictured left to right: Linda Calhan, Mary Stenberg, and Ellie Willams.**



## President's Notes

There have been fewer workdays this year because of the heat and unexpected help from a crew of young workers. Mel Baughman, our Vice President, has done an exceptional job leading almost all of the workdays. I am grateful for his help. I would be sorely missing the camaraderie of my coworkers were it not for a series of fun and informative hikes planned by Clair Morud, Don Quick and Bob Lind. The last hike was on August 14<sup>th</sup> and it will probably be mentioned in the next newsletter. Katie LeMoine and Don Quick led as we bushwhacked our way over the proposed Canthook Reroute. The first half of the hike, from Musky Lake Road to Canthook Lake Road, was easy. The second half, from Canthook Lake Road to North Delta Road, included a difficult trek through thick brush, but we all survived. The new trail will feature several scenic wilderness lakes. It will be a wonderful addition to the NCT in Wisconsin and I am hoping that the reroute will be approved by the USFS sometime this Fall.

There have not been many Saturday workdays, but our dedicated trail adopters have been busy making sure that our trail continues to offer a premier hiking experience. And our volunteers at the Ashland Farmers Market and shuttle providers are making sure that all their hard work does not go unnoticed. I thank them all.