

# CHEQUAMEGON CHAPTER NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2024

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## First Day Hike Held at Copper Falls State Park

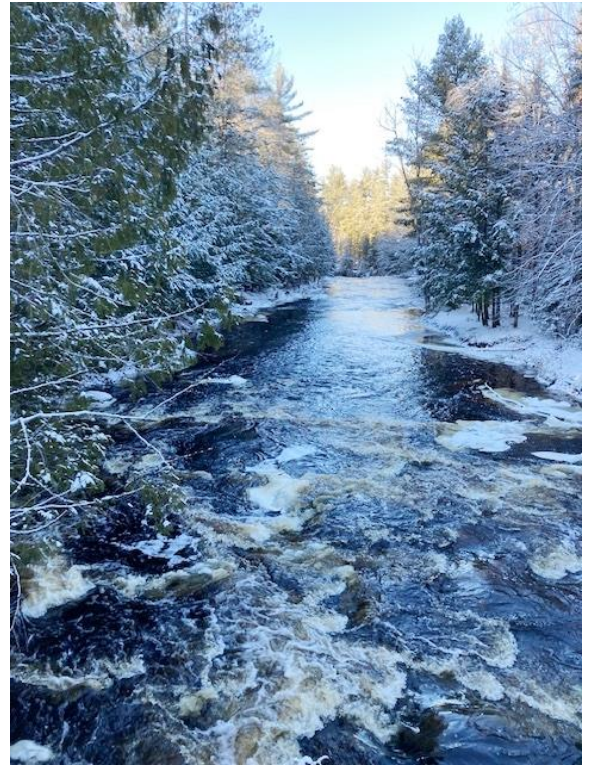
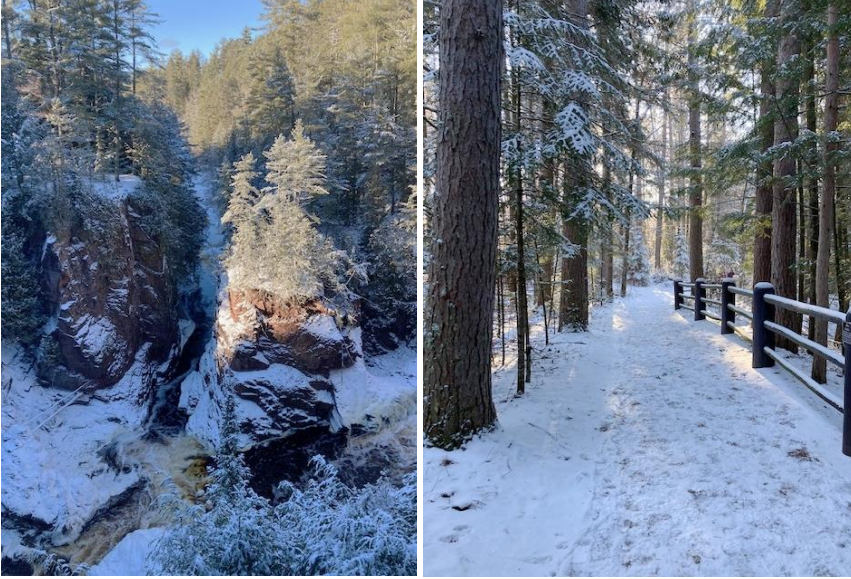
The Annual First Day Hike was held at Copper Falls State Park on January 1, 2024, and was organized by the Friends of Copper Falls. Hikers meet initially at the Loon Lake Beach parking area and hiked on North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) thru the park to the new connecting trail with Tyler Forks Community Forest. Many NCT Volunteers joined in on the hike.

Julia Waggoner had this to say about the hike: "Finally, a little snow. Yesterday's outing at Copper Falls was amazing: there was a huge crowd (not everyone made it in the photo), and the hike was lovely. Ellie started us off with a reading of "Ring Out, Wild Bells" by Lord Alfred Tennyson; unfortunately, my photo did not capture her expressive reading. Pancake ice on the river was cool and the sun (woo-hoo!) dappling through the trees was breathtaking! An awesome outing." Photos by Julia Waggoner.



Photos left to right: 1. Participants start the hike on the North Country National Scenic Trail in Copper Falls State Park. 2. Ellie Williams does an expressive reading of "Ring Out, Wild Bells" .

## First Day Hike (continued)



Photos left to right: 1. Sun and shadows in the Bad River valley. 2. North Country National Scenic Trail above the Bad River. 3. Bad River Rapids with a little ice. Photos by Julia Waggoner.



## Chequamegon Chapter Holds Annual Midwinter Meeting

The Chequamegon Chapter of the North Country Trail Association held their Annual Midwinter Meeting on Saturday, February 3, 2024, at the Drummond Civic Center in Drummond, WI. The well attended meeting had a long agenda and a lot of matters were discussed along with membership and financial reports.

Kevin Schram, Chapter President led the meeting with conversations of Chapter North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) proposed projects for 2024, ways of promoting the NCT including fun hikes, Canoeopia, Farmers Markets, and a possible Tails on the Trail event again this year. Training opportunities for our Volunteers were also discussed, including chainsaw certification.

Chequamegon Chapter partners also had input sessions during the meeting. Matt Davis, the Regional Trail Coordinator for the North Country Trail Association gave a presentation via Google Meet to participants. The US Forest Service of the Chequamegon Nicolet National Forest gave a presentation with the major news that the proposed Cant Hook Lake trail reroute is moving forward. A formal proposal was initially received by the Forest Service in 2010. Katie LeMoine and Connie Rasmussen were present to represent the USFS at the meeting.

The meeting ended with featured speaker Shane Peltonen who had roots in Ashland, Wisconsin. Shane entertained the crowd with his adventures in the wilderness during the last decade backpacking 24,000+ miles on America's premier long trails, with his top favorite being the local North Country National Scenic Trail.

## Annual Midwinter Meeting (continued)



Photos top to bottom clockwise:

1. Pictured left to right: Jean Brandes, Larry Beckel, Julia Waggoner, Mark Belknap, Cindy Wollschlager, and Ellie Williams. 2. Mary Stenberg, Chapter Secretary, gave a Membership Report and took meeting minutes. 3. Ed Ronkowski, Chapter Treasurer gave a Financial Report. 4. Ellie Williams monitored participants attending the meeting by Google Meet and a discussion about reporting Volunteer hours. Attending by Google Meet were Kris Wegerson, Rhiannon Harmon, and Deb Vomhof. Also participating in the Google Meet was NCTA Regional Trail Coordinator, Matt Davis with NCTA input. 5. Pictured Left to right behind Kevin Schram, Chapter President, leader of the meeting: Ed Ronkowski, Jackie Kruse, Roxanne Bartsh, Carolyn Peltonen, Sara Balbin, Penny Allwr, Diane Vornbrock, Shane Peltonen, Mary Jean Fenske, Bob Lind, Joe Rapacz, and Derek Ogle. (Jackie, Roxanne, Sara, Diane, and Mary Jean are all NCT Navigators!) 6. Katie LeMoine gave a USFS presentation. 7. Pictured left to right: Mic Pelech, Joyce Cielecki, and Marty Swank. 8. Also representing the USFS was Connie Rasmussen. 9. Meeting Participants listen intently to Shane Peltonen. Left to right: Clair Morud, Shane, Sheila Mitchell, Jim Crandall, Tom Matthiae, Kevin Schram, and Katie LeMoine (USFS). Not pictured and all photos by Vickie Swank.



## NEW CHAPTER BROCHURE!

The Chequamegon Chapter now has a new Chapter Brochure to use as a promotional tool in addition to our Pocket-Sized Map. The brochure is less expensive than our pocket-sized maps to print and will be perfect for events like Canoeconia, the Ashland Farmers Market and for display throughout the area and at other events. You can view the new brochure by doing “control + click” on the following link:

<https://northcountrytrail.org/files/chapters/che/Chequamegon%20Chapter%20Brochure.pdf>.

## NCT Navigators Host Numerous Fun Hikes in Early 2024



Photos left to right clockwise:  
1. Cindy Conger 100 Mile Pole Salute. 2. NCT Navigators line up on the Porcupine Lake Wilderness NCT 3. Navigators cross over Porcupine Creek on the two log bridge. 4. Swans on 18 Mile Spring Pond. 5. Navigators fun



hike in the Lake Owen area. 6. Navigators line up on the Drummond North Country National Scenic Trail. All photos by the NCT Navigators.

## NCT Navigators Complete Spring Cleanup

On Monday March 18, 2024, the NCT Navigators did Spring Cleanup on their adopted section of North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) in the Rainbow Lake Wilderness in the Chequamegon National Forest. This is one of two wilderness sections of NCT in the Chequamegon Chapters trail responsibilities where mechanical device usage is not allowed (including chainsaws).

Sara Balbin had this to say about the accomplishment: "This past Monday the Navigators worked hard clearing trees and cutting brush from our adopted Rainbow Lake Trailhead path. The teamwork was great fun! Lots of problem solving regarding the cutting of the trees and moving them off the path. Only a couple larger trees were left for cutting by the Sawyers. Even though I took the photos (except the group shot), I still managed to use my Silky Saw on several of the trees."



Photos left to right, clockwise top to bottom:  
1 Starting a cut while assistant uses lever to keep saw from binding.  
2. Teamwork in moving trees off NCT. 3. Lever being used on another tree. 4. The Trail God approves of the Navigators trail maintenance with a big smile (tree with lichen).  
5. The group shot (4 Navigators missing from



picture)  
6. Teamwork in removing another tree from the NCT.

All photos by the NCT Navigators.

# 2023 Chequamegon Chapter Awards

## 2023 NCTA Sweep Award



**Ellie Williams**

## 2023 NCTA Chapter Honor Award



**Don Quick**



## 2023 Chequamegon Chapter VIP Award

**Mark James**



**Kevin Scham**  
*2500 Hours*



**Don Quick**  
*200 Hours*



**Mark Belknap**  
*100 Hours*

## 2023 NPS Hour Awards



## Chapter and Affiliate Year-End Report 2023 – By Kevin Schram

### 2023 Accomplishments and Reflections

- How many miles of the NCT did your Chapter/Affiliate organization maintain this year?
- 70
- How many miles of new Trail or reroutes did you construct?
- .25
- Did you install or repair any trail structures? If so, please describe, and include amount, type(s), and linear feet. e.g. bridges, puncheon, boardwalks, etc.
- We built a 64-foot single plank bog walk.
- We built a 40-foot double plank bog walk.



Photo by: Ed Ronkowski

#### Double plank bog walk.

- Did you meet with any agency partners this year? If so, which, and please describe the circumstances.
- We have ongoing meetings with the USFS.
- We had several meetings with the Wisconsin DNR regarding the DNR's plan to make part of the NCT in Copper Falls State Park a multi-use (hike and bike) trail.
  - Describe any events or meetings you have hosted or attended this year to promote the NCT. Virtual and/or in-person.
  - We had a booth at Canoecopia in Madison, Wisconsin in March.
- We had a display at the Ashland Coop Market in June – we were the beneficiaries of the round-up program that month.
- We had a booth at the Ashland Farmers Market in May, June, July, and August.
- We created three hikes for the AllTrails App (which we would like the NCTA to submit so they have the best chance to be accepted as “curated” hikes.)
- We printed new pocket-sized maps.
- We had nine fun hikes, including a hike with shelter dogs that set our FB record for likes, loves and shares.
- Did you lead any group hikes this year? If so, how many people attended/participated (in each)?
- Yes, nine hikes with 22, 8, 6, 6, 8, 9, 22, 17, 10 people.
- Did you provide or participate in any trainings this year?
- Yes. We hosted a trail tool demonstration in May.
- Did you recruit new members this year or have any significant changes in leadership?
- We had a net gain of 23 memberships, a 14% gain over the previous year.

- We repaired three bridges, each approximately 20 feet long.
- Did you do any significant blazing projects? If so, please describe.
- We re-blazed about 2 miles of trail.
- What Trail Protection successes would you like to highlight? Did you work on new trail use agreements? Did you make contact with new landowners or with landowners who currently host the Trail? Did you work with NCTA staff to permanently protect the NCNST on private land?
- We solicited an easement from the City of Mellen [previously drafted by Kevin Schram (Me).]



Photo by: Julia Waggoner

Pictured left to right: Mitchell and Stone; Mary and Winston; Colleen and Bean; Tom and Rocky.

## 2024 Priorities

- What are your top priorities for 2024? e.g. training, trail maintenance, trail construction, trail protection, volunteer outreach, etc.
- We need to finalize a plan to build campsites on four lakes as part of a 6.2 mile reroute.
- We plan to build and expand two parking areas.
- We plan to continue our fun hikes.
- We plan to build two more short bog walks.
- We need to repair two old bog walks.
- We plan to bench steps into a steep section of trail.
- Please attach 1-2 photos that best highlight your work in 2023. Including photo credit (first and last name), if known, in the file name(s) and/or the following field.

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## 2024 Proposed Chequamegon Calendar of Events

02/03/24 Saturday Mid-Winter Meeting (Google Meet) at 10:00 AM

03/08/24 to 03/10/24 Canoecopia in Madison

04/06/24 Saturday Flyfishing Expo, Flat Creek Lodge, Hayward, WI

05/04/24 Saturday USFS Saw Class

05/11/24 Saturday Workday (Spring Clean Up)

06/08/24 Saturday June Workday

07/13/24 Saturday July Workday

08/10/24 Saturday August Workday

08/21/24 - 08/25/24 NCTA Celebration, St. Ignace, Michigan

09/14/24 Saturday September Workday

09/28/24 Saturday Fun Hike, Chapter-Wide Picnic, NCT Day

10/12/24 Saturday October Workday

11/02/24 Saturday Annual Business Meeting

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## President's Notes

It is late March in northern Wisconsin, Winter has finally arrived, just in time for Easter, and I feel like I'm falling behind. I have already received reports from some volunteers that "spring cleanup" has been completed or is well underway, and I suspect that many of you are well on your way to completing the NCTA's Hike 100 Challenge. (Check it out: <https://northcountrytrail.org/hike-100-challenge/>) Ellie and I are looking forward to completing another project, a move, so we can spend more time on the trail. I appreciate the help I have received from others who have taken on the administrative burdens of organizing our activities in 2024, particularly our plans to improve the trail and promote it through a series of hikes. Thank you!

Kevin Schram