

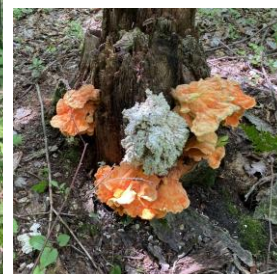
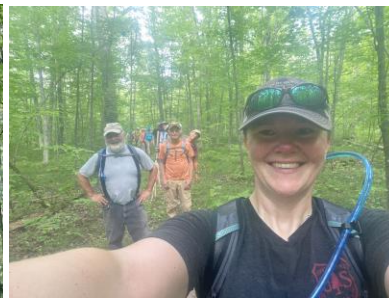
CHEQUAMEGON CHAPTER NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2024

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Chequamegon Chapter Holds Fun Hike On Proposed Future North Country National Scenic Trail

On Wednesday, August 14, 2024, the Chequamegon Chapter held a fun hike over the proposed Canthook Trail Reroute. Katie LeMoine (USFS) and Don Quick led as they bushwhacked their way on the proposed future North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT). Kevin Schram, Chapter President, had this to say about the hike: “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 future trail will reroute the NCT around a dry section of the trail and past five lakes and will be a wonderful addition to the North Country National Scenic Trail in Wisconsin. The Chapter is hoping that the reroute will be approved by the USFS sometime in early 2025.



Photos clockwise top to bottom: 1. The group before the start of the hike. (Notice

no one looks tired!) Photo by Ellie Williams. 2. Katie does a selfie with participants in the background. Awesome smile! Photo by Katie

LeMoine. 3. Fungus amongus artwork with dazing colors. Photo by Katie LeMoine. 4. Don Quick leading the hikers on future North Country National Scenic Trail. Photo by Katie LeMoine.

Trail Work at Copper Falls State Park

By Mel Baughman

On August 17 five volunteers from the Chequamegon Chapter and Friends of Copper Falls State Park made improvements to a new, one-mile-long hike and bike section of the NCT. Led by Mel Baughman, the crew included Mike Trieschmann, Terry Shaughnessy, Mark James, and Jim Brennan. The crew removed roots and sticks from the recently bulldozed tread and smoothed the backslope above the trail.

This project began last winter when Friends of Copper Falls State Park secured a large grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to convert a one-mile-long part of the NCT from a 5'-wide hiking trail to an 8'-wide trail suitable for hikers and bicyclists. Its purpose was to improve safety. Too many hikers and bicyclists were traveling on the main park road between the lake and the campgrounds. This winding, hilly road has no shoulders and many blind corners that put hikers and bicyclists at risk from vehicles that often exceeded the posted speed limit. Widening a one-mile section of the NCT which parallels the road will enable hikers and bikers to travel more safely.

DNR Forestry staff recently completed bulldozing this one-mile segment to widen the tread to 8 feet. Additional work is being done by Park staff to level the tread and improve water drainage. Handwork accomplished on Saturday by our volunteers improved conditions to lay down crushed gravel for the tread. When compacted, the gravel tread will be durable for hikers and bicyclists. Two boardwalks will be constructed to pass over wetlands and a viewpoint toward Murphy Lake will be cleared. New signs will be installed next spring to further improve safety on this dual-use trail.

Mel Baughman has provided planning assistance on this project including construction standards, boardwalk designs, and a signage plan.

While some members of the NCTA are not thrilled to share the NCT with bicyclists, this is a one-mile segment of a 4,800-mile trail. We are thankful our NCT passes through such beautiful landscape on public land, and we acknowledge the imperative to support improved safety for all trail users.

There will be other opportunities for NCTA volunteers to fine-tune this segment of trail in the coming months. We have the knowledge, skills, and tools to make this a showcase trail.

Photo: Mel Baughman and the bulldozer also named "Mel" that was used to widen the original trail.



The Brule St. Croix and Chequamegon Chapter Hold Joint NCNST Celebration

More than 25 paddlers, hikers, and picnickers were part of the joint BSC/CHE celebration of North Country National Scenic Trail Day and National Public Lands Day on Saturday, September 28, 2024.

Elie Williams of the Chequamegon Chapter had this to say about the event: "It was a perfect autumn day....great day for a paddle on the Upper St. Croix Lake. Thanks to Scott and the wonderful service, Canoes on Wheels, which serves to educate all of us on this very interesting watershed.

Thank you to Teresa Nelson for her organizational skills in

bringing us all together....and....for reminding us about the very interesting history, going

(Joint NCNST Celebration Cont.)



back to glacial times, regarding the people who paddled and portaged through this area. Mel Baughman's and Tom Matthiae's presentations were icing on the cake as they broadened our knowledge of plant and animal communities found along the NCT in this historic venue." Theresa Nelson of the Brule St. Croix had this to add: "How much fun it is to get a big group of folks together who share in the joy hiking and the outdoors can bring." Photos by Teresa Nelson.



Photos Clockwise top to bottom: 1. The food table is prepared with canoes on trailer in

right of picture. 2. Time to dig into the huge selection of food. 3. Tom Matthiae gives a nature interpretation presentation. 4. Mel gives another nature interpretation presentation.

Constructing Bridges and a Boardwalk in Copper Falls State Park

By Mel Baughman

Copper Falls State Park (CFSP) sustained considerable storm damage several years ago and this year FEMA and the Wisconsin DNR finalized funding and site analysis to reconstruct several trail structures in the Park. Due to the large amount of work needed before the funding deadline expired, Park Supervisor Robert Skalitzky sought assistance from the Chequamegon Chapter to help design and construct two bridges and a boardwalk located on the NCT and on a spur trail to the sandstone ledges backpacking campsite. Prior to construction, CFSP staff utilized a UTV to haul lumber to the top of a hill near the first construction site. Thereafter lumber was sawn to the desired lengths, then carried by volunteers down a steep hill, including a wooden stairway, to the various construction sites.

September 13, 14, 15

Chapter members Mel Baughman, Mary Jo Gingras, Mark James, Rhiannon Harmon, and Don Quick assisted by James Enigl from CFSP built a 20' bridge following plans produced by NCTA member Bill Menke and modified slightly on-site. Work first entailed demolishing the old bridge that was partially displaced by the flood. The

new, longer and higher bridge was built at the same location. To facilitate transporting lumber, the girders were laminated from smaller pieces of lumber that were easier to carry. End abutments were 4" x 4" posts rising vertically from steel "swamp" pans. Mel Baughman, who had previously constructed similar bridges with the Wisconsin Roving Trail Crew, guided the crew, but each of us learned some new techniques in bridge construction.

September 29

Mike Trieschmann began the morning by building box steps on each end of the 20' bridge constructed earlier. Meanwhile Mel Baughman and Mark James constructed 12' of new trail from the 20' bridge to the main NCT, then they improved 30' of tread on a steep slope along the spur trail leading to the sandstone ledges backpacking campsite. Further along that spur trail, Mel, Mike and James demolished part of an old 16' bridge to salvage two stringers, then demolished an old boardwalk made from poles laid on the ground.



October 6

Chapter members Mel Baughman, Carol Hegland, and Tom Shaffer, along with CFSP staff member James Enigl, constructed about 30' of a 42' boardwalk on the spur trail leading to the sandstone ledges backpacking campsite. This was constructed along a hillside where water continuously seeped over the trail. Built at the site of a boardwalk demolished last week, the new boardwalk rested on 6" x 6" x 5' sleepers. 4" x 6" stringers were laid on top of the sleepers, then full-sized 2" x 6" boards were placed on the stringers to serve as decking. This was Carol and Tom's first workday with the Chequamegon Chapter. At first they were a little timid about getting their boots muddy, but soon were sloshing around in the muck like veteran trail builders!

Later October

CFSP staff member James Enigl completed the 42' boardwalk on the spur trail to the sandstone ledges backpacking campsite. Besides adding more stringers and decking, James added a curb on the downhill edge of the boardwalk.

On another day, Chapter member Mike Trieschmann along with James Enigl built a new 16' bridge on that same spur trail. This bridge replaced one that washed out in a flood. Construction wood was salvaged from the old bridge and re-used to save the labor of hauling a lot of new wood down a long, steep hill to the new bridge site.



Chequamegon Chapter Holds Annual Business/Planning Meeting

On Saturday, November 2, 2024, the Chequamegon Chapter of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA) held their Annual Business/Planning Meeting. The meeting started at 10:00 a.m. at the Drummond Civic Center in Drummond, WI. This is the first meeting under the direction of the Chapter's new president, Mel Baughman. President Kevin Schram handed off the presidential duties to Vice President Mel on October 2, 2024.

Various reports were given by Chapter Officers with additional input from Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest personnel, and the NCTA Regional Trail Director. Highlights of the reports included an increased chapter

membership and greater contributed volunteer hours for 2024. Mel noted that the Chequamegon Chapter is near the top of NCTA Chapters in size, nationwide!



Chequamegon Chapter Meeting Attendees, left to right kneeling: Ellie Williams, Katie LeMoine (USFS), Natalie Osowski (USFS), Mel Baughman, Don Quick, Mary Stenberg, Tom Matthiae, and Marty Swank. Back rows standing, left to right: Derek Ogle, Allon Bostwick, Mark Belknap, Jenifer Brasch (USFS), Ed Ronkowski, Kevin Schram, Mike Trieschmann, Jeff Dahl, Kris Dahl, Mike Thewis, Sheila Mitchell, Clair Morud, Jim Fridsma, Julia Waggoner, Jim Crandall, Bob Lind, and Roxanne Bartsh. Not pictured and all photos by Vickie Swank.

There was a conversation about the NCTA and NPS awards presented to Chequamegon Chapter Members and Katie LeMoine (USFS) at the North Country National Scenic Trail National Celebration held in St. Ignace, MI. this year. In addition, Rhiannon Harmon will be receiving the NCTA Chapter Honor Award at the Chapters Annual Midwinter Meeting in February and Kevin Schram received the Chequamegon Chapter's highly coveted Major Contributor Award at this Annual Business/Planning Meeting. An award presentation page with all these awards will be created and included in the next Chapter newsletter.

It was noted that the Chequamegon Chapter Board of Directors need to meet to temporarily appoint a replacement Vice President, Western Trail Manager and Co-Secretary until elections are held at the next Annual Business/Planning Meeting in October of 2025.

The many accomplishments of the Chequamegon Chapter Volunteers in 2024 were discussed along with possible future plans for trail maintenance and fun hikes in 2025.

Saturday, February 8, 2025, was approved for the Chapter's Annual Midwinter Meeting.

Following the meeting adjournment there was a very informative presentation on the health benefits of hiking and being outdoors presented by Chapter Members/Trail Adopters Clair Morud and Sheila Mitchell.



Photos left to right: 1. Julia Waggoner takes the meeting minutes as new Chapter President Mel Baughman runs the meeting. 2. The USFS table at the meeting: Left to right, Jenifer, Natalie and with a big smile, Katie.

(Annual Business/Planning Meeting Cont.)



Exercise Benefits

- Cardiovascular Disease
- Hypertension
- Diabetes
- Bowel and Breast Cancer
- Sleep
- Fall Risk
- Osteoarthritis symptoms
- Osteoporosis?



Photos left to right: 1. Sheila Mitchell and Clair Morud gave a Health "Benefits of Hiking and Being Outdoors" presentation. 2. Mel

presents the Chequamegon Chapters highly prestigious Major Contributor Award to past president Kevin Schram. A part of the award was a gift certificate (that Kevin handed over to his wife, Ellie).

New Newsletter Feature!

Volunteer/Trail Adopter Accomplishments: Ed Ronkowski

(Editor's Note: Most of these pictures are from Ed's efforts to improve his section of the adopted North Country National Scenic Trail along Lake Owen and promote the trail in 2024.)



Photos left to right: 1. Ed leading hike on the North Country Trail 2. April 2024: Ed's first built punchons on his



adopted section of the NCT that runs along the shore of Lake Owen 3. Ed's second built punchon in April 2024 on his adopted section. 4. Ed's 3rd built punchon in April 2024. Bottom Photo: NCTA

sponsored hike on the reroute of the NCT through the recently acquired deer farm property by the NFS (Canthook Trail Reroute). Ed had a lot to do with the early efforts of making this trail reroute a reality. All photos by Ed Ronkowski.

NCT Navigators at A Glance – 9/20/24 thru 10/28/24



President's Notes

As I step into the role of Chapter President, I am honored to follow Kevin Schram who led our Chapter for the last seven years. Kevin passed on a rock-solid Chapter. I especially note his leadership to build new campsites, accelerate our hiking schedule, organize trail maintenance and construction projects, co-ordinate with the US Forest Service, and recognize our outstanding volunteers with awards. He motivated all of us.

I expect the next year to yield continued maintenance and construction, more hikes, more campsites, and improved safety planning on hikes and workdays.

My one wish is for someone to step up to Vice President so that I may delegate a few tasks—to be negotiated, of course.



Mel Baughman

A HUGE Thank You to The Chapter's Membership and Volunteers That Made All of This Happen In 2024!!! May the Holidays find you with numerous blessings!

2024 Chequamegon Chapter Awards

**2024 NCTA
Distinguished
Service Award**



Mel Baughman

**2024 NCTA Chapter
Honor Award**



Rhiannon Harmon

**2024 NCTA Friend
of the Trail Award**



Katie LeMoine



**2024
Chequamegon
Chapter Major
Contributor
Award
Kevin Schram**

**2024
National Park
Service
Hourly
Awards**



**Derrick Passe
2500 Hours**



**Linda Hobbs
100 Hours**



**Tom Matthiae
100 Hours**



**Tom Piikkila
100 Hours**