

Press Release: Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund board recommends \$297,000 for Keweenaw Point Trail Phase III Construction

December 14, 2018

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) board this week recommended \$26 million in grant awards for outdoor recreation development and land acquisition projects to the state Legislature. Included in their recommendations is a \$297,000 award to Grant Township in Keweenaw County for the construction of a 15.6-mile addition to the multi-use, non-motorized Keweenaw Point Trail.

“Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grants make a long-lasting impact in communities across Michigan, providing a positive impact on the lifestyles of Michiganders through better public access to outdoor recreation opportunities, while giving a boost to regional economies,” said Gov. Rick Snyder. “The Trust Fund is a unique Michigan model that is working to yield benefits around the state.”

Development of the Keweenaw Point Trail has been spearheaded by the Copper Harbor Trails Club (CHTC), a non-profit organization that advocates for, develops, and maintains trails and land for human-powered activities in and connecting to Copper Harbor. In partnership with Grant Township and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), CHTC has been advancing this important project for several years. 8.6 miles of singletrack has been completed to date, allowing mountain bikers, hikers, backcountry skiers, and other trail users access to High Rock Bay from Copper Harbor.

Phase III of the Keweenaw Point Trail will nearly complete the 30-mile loop trail originally envisioned in 2005 by the Keweenaw Point Citizen Advisory Committee. Picking up at High Rock Bay, the trail will follow the rugged Lake Superior shoreline clockwise past Keweenaw Point, Keystone Bay, and Montreal Falls before following the Montreal River corridor north and returning to Copper Harbor. The trail will primarily lie on Michigan DNR land acquired in 2003 with assistance from The Nature Conservancy.

“This monumental addition to the trail will bring visitors to some of the most remote and scenic terrain the Keweenaw has to offer,” says CHTC Executive Director Nathan Miller. “It’s going to be a blast to share these special places with our community, whether they’re local riders up for an afternoon exploration or out-of-town visitors coming up for a weekend of Keweenaw adventuring.”

With an estimated budget of \$497,000, CHTC and Grant Township tapped into several funding sources to get the project off the ground. \$125,000 in match funding was secured through the Recreational Trail Program, as well as \$15,000 from the Keweenaw Community Foundation’s PHF Community Wellness and Outdoor Recreation Fund. The remaining match is being raised through private donors and trail users.

The Keweenaw Point Trail is open to the public free of charge for human powered, non-motorized activities. Development of this project would not have been possible without the vision of trail advocate Lori Hauswirth (now with the Marquette-based Noquemanon Trail Network), CHTC Board President Ben Ciavola, Grant Twp. Supervisor Ken Stigers, and countless volunteers and donors who contributed to this application.