



**Help wanted!**

If you enjoy Maasto Hiihto & Churning Rapids trails year round, please consider volunteering for any of the jobs that keep our trails beautiful. Or, how about a donation when you buy your pass?

and thanks in advance!

## Middle Bridge Replacement Summer 2015

By Mark Roberts  
 KNSC Vice President

As most of you know, the Middle Bridge crossing Swedetown Creek has served a long and useful life but has been slowly failing due to old age. In the spring of 2013, we had to shore up the downstream side because it had washed away with the heavy spring runoff, and in the summer of 2014 we replaced one of the main beams that had rotted away and collapsed. It is now time to replace the whole bridge, and with your generous support matched by contributions from the City of Hancock, we purchased a steel replacement bridge late last fall. The bridge is designed to span the creek without a mid support and to DEQ load and safety standards. This will be a big project involving the following: excavating holes for new footings, building forms, pouring concrete, transporting the new bridge to the site, installing it, purchasing and installing decking, grading the approaches, and removing the old bridge. We have arranged for the use of some machinery to help with these tasks, but due to the remote and inaccessible location, heavy machinery use is limited. Transporting materials into Swedetown Gorge is being done with a smaller trailer and the UTV because of the narrow trail and



**2 more! June - Aug**

Over summer we're building forms and pouring concrete two more times. If you can help, keep an eye out on K-trails for the announcement.



**Did you know...?**

For the second pour, we'll use 100 bags of pre-mix concrete, each bag weighing 80 lbs.



Middle Bridge (cont.)

because the other bridges cannot handle heavy loads. Having acquired the necessary permits and with spring finally here, we began the installation process. For example, during the last weekend of May, we completed the first concrete pour into the first footing. Since it is impossible to have a cement truck deliver ready mix concrete to make the footings, we had to haul in 51 bags of pre-mix concrete to prepare on site for the first pour, and another 100 bags for second one.

**this bridge project involves excavating holes for new footings, building forms, pouring concrete, transporting in the new bridge, installing decking, grading approaches, and removing the old bridge**

So, there will be many opportunities for everyone to lend a hand with this project. Even a few hours can be very helpful, and this is a great project to spend some time outdoors in a very pleasant setting, ensuring that the Gorge trail will be usable for many, many years. There will be tasks for every level of talent, from digging, to building forms, mixing and pouring more concrete (rest assured, we do have mixers), to guiding the new bridge into place and cutting out the old one. We could use donations of food and snacks for our larger work days, plus help to deliver, set up, and serve. It's always good to have a photographer. If you can't help out on the project, you can help by recruiting others. Please contribute a little or a lot of your time, whatever you can, toward this project. Once this is finished, this bridge will last for decades. Now that the project is underway, we'll have specific work days when significant amounts of help will be needed and other days where smaller work crews would be helpful. Contact Mark Roberts at [mroberts@mtu.edu](mailto:mroberts@mtu.edu) or 482-3092 to let me know your interest. Keep in mind, no job is too small!

**Don't miss the chance to be a part of this unique and wonderful project to sustain one of our most popular trails!**

## big job, big bucks

### what the bridge costs:

- steel bridge = \$15,000  
installed in three sections  
each weighing 2,500 lbs.
- concrete for footings = \$1,500  
500 80lb bags of pre-mix
- forms, rebar, and other footing  
supplies = \$500
- wood decking = \$4,000  
504 sq. ft. of 4" decking,  
weighing 10,000 lbs.
- railings = \$3,500  
for safety's sake, we're  
adding side railings to our  
bridges
- approach ramps = \$2,500
- fasteners & misc. = \$1,500  
just to attach the deck will  
require the installation of 600  
structural screws
- pumps & misc. equipment =  
\$1,000

**Total: \$29,550  
for materials alone,  
no labor included**

Good news: KNSC plans to reuse tools and equipment to replace the Sisu bridge when it's time.







## News from the Chief of Trails and Bottle Washing

-Aryln Aronson (& Gromit)



It was another great year of grooming with various equipment failures mixed in for excitement. As you may recall, over the winter we didn't receive any large dumps of snow which is unusual for us, but much easier to deal with. With no major storms we were able to stay ahead of the snowfall and keep things nice...at least until we had multiple tow machine failures. At one point, all 3 of them were in the shop! The Rhino utility task vehicle (UTV), which we've been using beyond its scheduled replacement date, broke down twice last season which totaled a month out of commission. This is one reason we have redundant towing capable machines. Because of your continued support, we'll retire the Rhino this summer and replace it with a more powerful machine. The new UTV will immediately be put to use on the bridge replacement project, trail maintenance, and of course grooming next winter. You can see how valuable the UTV is: it is our year-round trail machine. It cannot be emphasized enough how important your support is, as KNSC could not purchase this mandatory but expensive equipment without your help. Today we wonder how we ever did trail work before we had a UTV!

### Accomplishments this past season:

- ❖ Hired Sam Singler, who had just moved here from below the bridge, started working with fall trail maintenance and worked all the way into spring grooming. Thanks Sam!
- ❖ Shored up Sisu Bridge to prevent its collapse and extend its service life until it is replaced, hopefully very soon.
- ❖ Reinforced the Middle Bridge to keep it serviceable until it can be replaced this summer.
- ❖ Replaced boards on ¾ of the deck on the next bridge upstream (formerly known as "The National Guard Bridge").
- ❖ Trail brushing, ditch digging, tree cutting, bridge repairs, mowing and the like was completed via 462 hours of KNSC financed labor plus 390 hours donated by KNSC volunteers.
- ❖ Re-opened the Vista Trail to provide another scenic option along the gorge edge.
- ❖ Purchased a used 10' enclosed trailer; modified it to hold tools and supplies, and immediately put it to use for the bridge repair projects. This trailer stayed in the gorge for storage and winter events.

### Arlyn & Gromit (cont.)

- \* Made many repairs and improvements to grooming implements and associated equipment last fall and spring; this was made possible thanks to the generous support of Gary Mishica and the Hancock High School metals shop.
- \* Made lemonade out of lemons when the “Pine Loop Decent” trail was re-opened because of Tomasi Road being closed for logging most of the season.

### In the works for summer, fall, and ski season:

- \* Purchase and modify a heavy duty ATV trailer for hauling wood and supplies into upcoming construction projects; this same trailer will also be fit with skis for use during wintertime events.
- \* The Middle Bridge replacement work is underway. Mark Roberts is heading up this 1000+ hour project – see his story in this newsletter to contact him if you can help.
- \* Trail brushing will be spread out to start in the spring and early summer, and resume again in the fall.
- \* Mud Lake Loop trail(s) will be re-established and greatly improved on.
- \* The “Pine Loop Bypass” pedestrian bridge will be made wider and stronger plus a railing added to provide safe passage for winter users.
- \* Can-Am Commander UTV to be purchased and prepped for summer construction use. Once the snow flies it will be readied for winter towing.



### Skating experiment

Due to requests from some trail users, KNSC is considering opening a few trails on the city-side of Maasto for skate skiing. The trails will not be widened, and will not be groomed differently, as we do not have the resources for either. However, the idea is not to prohibit skate skiing. Clearly, this situation will be a compromise for all skiers, but KNSC would like to allow any skier who buys a pass to use our trails. We will be seeking your input on this important issue. Watch the Keweenaw Trails list for an e-survey this summer.

## A great year in review

from our president – Jay Green

Ever since the end of the 2013-14 season, we've been keeping busy with ongoing projects in support of the trails. Last spring, board member Adam Wellstead created an e-survey which provided trail user feedback to help guide upcoming priorities. Thanks to all who took the time to respond. As summer arrived we continued preparations for the Middle Bridge replacement. Steve Wright at OHM drew up a bridge design for us, and the winning bid came from Van Stratton of Baraga in July. Since the DEQ permit process was not completed until October, plans to install the bridge were delayed until this summer.

The 2014-15 season started as always in the fall, with jobs both large and small to get the trails ready for winter. We were fortunate to host MTU's Sigma Pi Fraternity for Make A Difference Day, where the fine young gents cleaned out the ditches on and below Sidwinder hill plus in the Hog Wallow. Various people helped with over 870 hours of trail work this fall! To showcase our amazing trails, we updated our

maps, printed new tri-folds, and printed large format maps and signs for our trailheads. We also created the Maasto Hiihto and Churning Rapids Trails blog. Groomers can now post updated conditions with photos, and skiers can post first hand reports. Trail news throughout the year is blogged, so visit it often to see the progress on the Middle Bridge project! This startup saw 2000 views in its first season and received many compliments, especially regarding trail photos.

This winter, ongoing logging operations kept Tomasi Road closed for most of the season. This spurred our grooming team to re-open the “Pine Loop Bypass” to allow skiers safe access to the gorge while the road was plowed. This trail had not been groomed for the past 10 years and was a welcomed resumption. Mud Lake Loop also was closed, but late in the season our groomers were able to pack a trail on the east side of Mud Lake, connecting the Maasto to the south west side.



## A great year (cont.)



of Churning Rapids. We look forward to full use of each of these trails this season.

The 2014-15 season was also busy with fundraising. Many folks showed up to support our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Music Jam at the Orpheum, organized by Jim Hertel and featuring Realtime Jazz Band, Keweenaw Brewgrass, and the PasiCats. A great time was had by all, and \$1600 was donated to support the bridge project. The club was fortunate enough to receive two grants, one from Shopko and another from Michigan Tech Employees Federal Credit Union, which enabled KNSC to purchase and modify a used trail drag to support the Barkell Elementary “Learn To Ski” program. A previous grant from Keweenaw Community Foundation provided funds for the kids’ skis. KNSC grooms a trail for Hancock’s youngest skiers at the school, and volunteers from KNSC and Sons of Norway assist the kids in getting their “ski legs”. Our end-of-the-year fundraising appeal letter successfully raised over \$1300 thanks to the generosity of our trail users. Another Shopko grant this spring purchased the utility trailer needed for the bridge project, which already has hauled countless loads of supplies.

We had lots of successful and fun events over the season. The Candle Luminary Ski brought out about 80 kids of all ages to enjoy a magical evening by the glow of luminaries, as well as delicious sweet treats that awaited skiers in the chalet. The Nordic Ski Club of Milwaukee made its annual Copper Country visit and generously donated \$500. January’s moon light ski was a fun and hassle-free evening thanks to having supplies



conveniently stored in the tool trailer. The board will consider a new location for this event this winter, to allow an easy ski in/out for beginner skiers – stay tuned. February was again our busiest month, with the Retro Ski Fest, the Heikenpaiva parade, and the KNSC/Sons of Norway Barnelopet children’s ski. March brought the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Glide N Gorge. Thanks to Candi Silvola’s ongoing leadership, the GNG was once again a success, raising \$1600 and ensuring that the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual will be on the calendar in 2016.



When one ski season ends, planning for the next begins right on its heels. The KNSC board is pitching in to prepare for the big bridge project this summer, for trail maintenance this summer and fall, and to continue improving on our trails in whatever way possible.



Next season, we’ll start our homework to replace Sisu Bridge. In five years, we hope to secure funding to build a dedicated equipment building at the DPW. Other very exciting projects of community-wide significance are in the works. Please get involved to learn more.

Having multiple large projects calls for increased fundraising. We welcome any of our members to assist with this task, or with any other KNSC activity of interest. On tap for the near future are more grant applications and a business membership program. We will continue our annual end-of-the-year appeal to provide an easy way for our supporters to help more.

Here’s to another fantastic year enjoying the trails – See you out there!

## To our supporters: many, many thanks!



In December, KNSC mailed out an appeal for donations to our membership as the kick off to a more concerted fund raising effort. Nineteen of you responded and chipped in to give \$1,370. We appreciate your generosity!

### \$200

Jay & Phyllis Green  
John & Jeannie Diebel

Joseph & Kathleen Marino  
Craig & Jeanne Kurtz  
Greg & Kathleen Waite  
Kathy Halvorsen

### \$100

Don Savera  
Terry Kinzel & Sue Ellen Kingsley  
Frann Grossman

Mark & Haley Fredrickson  
Julie Filpus  
Kelly Luck  
Alex Mayer & Susanne Van Dam

### \$50 - \$75

Dr. Kim Barna  
Joyce Koskenmaki  
Beatrice Smith

### Under \$50

Allison Slavick  
Kirk & Ann Klemme  
Carol Grafford



We now have a blog for grooming and ski reports, plus photos and all club news, including the bridge project updates.

Follow us @  
[keweenawnordicskiclub.blogspot.com](http://keweenawnordicskiclub.blogspot.com)