

Chapter 6: Biking

UP Mountain Biking

In recent years mountain biking has exploded across the UP. There are now about 20 different stores in the UP that sell and service mountain bikes. There are about 12 different regional clubs across the UP that work on trails, events, and races in their area.

It's not uncommon for each one of these regions to have hundreds of miles of trails. These clubs are doing amazing work creating trails, building rest areas, and even erecting outhouses where needed.

It's sad to still sometimes see the old school thinking that all tourism revolves around ATVs and snowmobiles. I have nothing against either, and have many friends and relatives that are snowmobile enthusiasts. However, keep in mind that a snowmobile is expensive, requires a trailer and a place to store it.

The mountain bike costs a small fraction as much, can be carried with an economy car, and can be stored in an apartment. It can also be used for a much greater period during the year. The point is, mountain biking is available to far more people.

There are many places where you could rent a bike if you wanted.

Probably the biggest area for mountain biking is the Houghton area (Keweenaw peninsula) with Marquette not far behind.

Mountain biking is taking off almost everywhere as communities see how much tourism potential it has.

There are now so many mountain bike events across the UP it's hard to keep track of them. The UP is now attracting tens of thousands of people to go mountain biking or attend related events.

The best source I have found for the mountain biking scene is UPMTB.com which is up to date on all aspects of Upper Michigan mountain biking.

Conventional Road Biking

It's understandable that the huge mountain biking scene in the UP has attracted most of the media attention. After all, it's more exciting to

show videos of crazy people biking down mountains or riding bikes through snow covered woods trails.

What a lot of people don't realize is that the Upper Peninsula has some of the best paved roads for biking in the country. This is sad because I frequently see tourists struggling to find conventional biking up here. They try to bike within some limited park area or they venture out on some busy narrow highway and have a poor experience.

If they knew the area a little better they would discover that there are thousands of miles of paved roads with little or no car traffic.

Using the Atlas/Field Guide, it's not too hard to figure out a few bike routes of your own. If you are new to the area I would recommend the website TourDaYoopEh.com

Here they map a variety of bike routes you can take on lesser used paved roads. Many are designed on a loop. You can arrive back where you started so you don't need two vehicles.

There are shorter routes that explore a local area, all the way to the 1200 mile Tour Da Yoop. If biking comradery is what you enjoy, the group holds numerous events of varying distance. Connecting with other bikers is not only a good way to learn about the best bike routes, but also a great way to learn about a lot of other things going on in the UP.

Fabulous road biking, one more reason to love the UP.



Brockway Mountain, West of Copper Harbor