

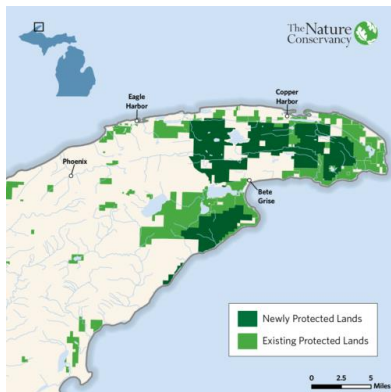
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The October 28, 2022 headline of *The Daily Mining Gazette* read:

## Heartlands changing hands

### Nature Conservancy announces major land acquisition in Keweenaw County

Because of the numerous requests for more information and details on the purchase, Helen Taylor of *The Nature Conservancy (TNC)* sent the following information:



- *TNC* will close and acquire the final parcel, *the Alpine*, by December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- *TNC* will hire two people, who will be based locally in the Keweenaw peninsula. One will oversee the land management and any contracts involved in managing the properties. The other will focus on working with the *Conservancy's* planning committee and activities over the next 3-5 years to transition the properties to appropriate long-term owners.
- Transitioning land to the State, County or Township will happen as public funding becomes available and enable future owners to acquire the properties from *TNC*.
- *TNC* is working with agencies and elected officials to secure the necessary funding, which will take time. The earliest that any land would be transferred is late 2023 to the State. It is more likely to be 2024.
- *The Conservancy Planning Committee*, made up of the appropriate jurisdictions, users and land management interested parties will resume meeting in January, now that the land is secured. John Molinaro and *Rural Economic Success (RES) Associates* will continue to lead that effort, sponsored by *TNC* and the State.
- *TNC* will likely contract some of the land management work necessary during the time *TNC* owns the properties. Any contract of this sort will be put out to bid.
- *TNC* plans to hold another public meeting for interested community members the evening of January 25<sup>th</sup>, at the *Keweenaw Mountain Lodge*. Details will be posted on the Keweenaw Area Community Foundation website: [keweenawcommunityfoundation.org](http://keweenawcommunityfoundation.org)
- *TNC* has no plans to close any existing motorized and non-motorized trails on the property. No new trails are planned in the near term.
- *TNC* will be conducting a natural and cultural resources assessment. **No new trails or infrastructure will be considered until that assessment is completed.**
- While in *TNC* ownership, the lands will remain enrolled in the *Commercial Forest Act*.



Since most of the purchase is in Grant Township, new Township Supervisor Scott Ochodnicki wrote that it has the potential to impact the Township in several different ways, especially longer term.

First, any future increase in economic activity in or associated with these properties could increase the tax base substantially.

Secondly, if the Township were to try and buy any of the properties, there would be either a tax increase or some other cost for taxpayers.

An example would be having the *5-year Township Recreation Plan*

*Steering Committee* restart meetings to try and move forward with some of the 9 projects listed on the *Rec Plan*, then go to the Board with a presentation to have the Township Board consider applying for grants. For example, an *MNRTF* grant would require a 25% Township match for any land that the Township wants to acquire, which would cost taxpayers.

Ochodnicki adds, "I'm sure there are any number of possible scenarios that could play out. It's not something I would be spending a ton of time on, but I'm very much interested in seeing the *Rec Plan Committee* meet regularly throughout the 5 years and bring these projects to fruition."

In related news, Mt. Bohemia did have surveyors out around its properties earlier this year but is not commenting on whether it will purchase the mountain (which is on a 99-year lease). The only immediate activity for the mountain in 2023 will be construction of another chair lift and terminal. Long term plans still include a lakeside dining establishment.

