

# Overlanding in the Midwest: Michigan's Upper Peninsula

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July/August 2019

# COOL Tears™

and tiny campers  
MAGAZINE

GOLD RUSH TRAIL IN  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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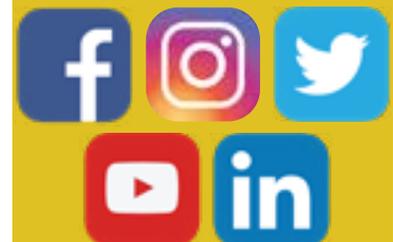
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# Letter from the Editor:

## We're Back!



I'm happy to be the first to tell you that Cool Tears and Tiny Camper Magazine is back! I want to continue to share your builds, stories and experiences; to share wonderful campfire recipes; to keep you up to date with teardrop, squaredrop, or other tiny camper news and events; to give you ideas on what places you may want to explore; and to share your tips, tricks, and equipment hacks with our little corner of the world.

Cool Tears and Tiny Camper Magazine started in the spring of 2013 and had a solid run under two previous publishers/editors. Like you, I was saddened to read in a Facebook post in January 2020, that Sarah Tucker was hanging up her proverbial publisher hat.

Over the years, Kevin Cross and Sarah worked hard to share their love for teardrop campers. Like many of you, I've read most of the back issues and loved that there was a magazine devoted to the tiny campers we all love, no matter if it's a tear, square, or other small camper shape. It's because of Kevin and Sarah that I dreamt of building my own teardrop, then reality set in. I have a day job, a small farm, and we were in the middle of a major farmhouse renovation, planning for our parents to move in. I realized that building my own would not be in the cards anytime soon. But I wanted to be a teardropper now, not in a few years! The magazine turned me on to several different manufacturers of tiny campers. A little over a year ago, I contacted several manufacturers before I finally placed an order. Last summer, I made a four day 2700 mile round trip to pick up our little blue Pika manufactured by Timberleaf Trailers in Grand Junction, CO. So now, our family is officially a teardropping family and we couldn't be happier.

Again, thank you to Kevin and Sarah for starting and keeping up this great publication dedicated to the campers we love. Thank you for interacting with me on our Facebook page and for the kind emails and messages that you have sent since I have begun to take over the reins from Sarah. Your support is greatly appreciated and is helping to make this transition easier. It's because of you, that I know I made the right decision to jump in to be your next publisher/editor of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or article ideas. I welcome reader generated articles, photos, etc and am happy to share them with our corner of the world.

Lisa Adams  
Editor  
Cool Tears Magazine™  
[Lisa@cooltears.com](mailto:Lisa@cooltears.com)

# The Teardrop Kitchen

**A**romas that waft through campgrounds can turn anyone into a foodie. Food, be it the simplest meal or an elaborate feast, can be such an integral part of camping experience. The beauty of food while camping is that it's your choice on how much or how little your trip will center around preparation, cooking, eating, and cleaning up. Taste does NOT have to suffer when away from home. Everything tastes better while camping anyway, doesn't it?

I have been on weekend trips with friends where some meals were completely social events. In these cases, each person brought a dish to pass around the campfire. Sometimes, the food was prepared at home and kept in the cooler until meal time. In other cases, some friends prepared everything at the campground so their fare took up more of their camping time. Both scenarios have produced mouthwatering dishes. I've also been on camping trips where there was very little focus on food, eating nothing more than leftovers that were brought from home or doctored-up packets of noodles.

In early April, we asked what type of food related articles you would enjoy seeing in future issues. You responded and we are delivering. We received a lot of feedback that you'd like to see more of the same types of articles as the magazine has offered in the past but would like to learn more about alternative cooking methods, new recipes and gear to suit your cooking needs. Because of this feedback, future issues of Cool Tears and Tiny Campers Magazine will continue to feature great recipes/articles from Marilyn McCray, the published author of "Canning, Pickling, and Freezing with Irma Harding." We'll also begin having regular feature articles specifically on cast iron or dutch oven cooking and two forms of campfire cooking: "In the Fire" and "On a Stick." This issue will highlight a mouthwatering recipe in "On a Stick" - Grilled Caprese Kabobs. It's simple, but elegant and tastes like summer!

Be sure to let us know if there are other types of cooking that you would like to see more information on. We'd love your comments! Tell us what you must have at the campsite and what did you think you needed and never used?

# GRILLED CAPRESE KABOBS

## ON A STICK



Our ancient human ancestors have been cooking with fire for over one million years. This new magazine feature will take us back to our primal beginnings, but with better ingredients and more ingenuity. Cooking "On a Stick" isn't just for the campsite though. The backyard firepit is the perfect place to brandish the skewers and roasting sticks...no running allowed! We are going to bring you ideas beyond the hot dog for fun and delicious food. Caprese Salad, the classic tomato, mozzarella and basil trio, a simple but sure to please combination, done with a twist that brings out even more flavor is our tried and tested recipe of the month.

Serves: 6  
Preparation time: 5 minutes  
Cooking time: 5 minutes

These are incredibly simple to make and taste like a fresh, summer caprese salad. Plus, this issue should line up nicely with when tomatoes are in season for most readers. Enjoy! But what makes this dish better than a salad? It's cooked on a stick over a bed of hot coals so the cheese gets gooey and the tomatoes roast so they burst with their summer flavor.

These are so easy to prepare ahead of time and then you can cook them over the fire when you're ready. I recommend making the balsamic glaze at home and bringing it with you. But if you want to do it all at the campsite, that's possible too - you'll just need a pan to reduce the balsamic vinegar. The instructions are below.

Ingredients: Balsamic glaze  
Balsamic vinegar 2 cups  
Honey or brown sugar ½ cup

Instructions for the balsamic glaze (recommend to do at home for ease)

1. Mix balsamic vinegar with brown sugar in a saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly until sugar has dissolved. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer until glaze is reduced by half, about 20 minutes. Glaze should coat the back of a spoon. Let cool and pour into a jar with a lid; store in the refrigerator.

2. Substitute any other flavored balsamic vinegar to suit your taste. Instead of brown sugar, substitute molasses, honey, maple syrup or agave nectar. The flavor is intense and should be used as a drizzle

only. Some of my favorite ways to serve are with gorgonzola cheese and green onions on pasta or portobello mushrooms, on grilled beets and carrots, with salmon or pork, or as a dressing on salad.

Instructions for making the Grilled Caprese

Ingredients: Caprese Kabobs  
20 small tomatoes  
20 medium fresh mozzarella balls  
30 fresh basil leaves (tear or fold large leaves)  
6 kebabs/sticks  
olive oil  
kosher salt and black pepper

1. Take your skewers or stick and thread 2 tomatoes and 2 mozzarella balls and 3 basil leaves on each kebab (alternating).
2. Drizzle the kebabs with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
3. Cook each side for about 2-3 minutes over your hot coals until the tomatoes get soft and slightly charred and the cheese is melting. Turn frequently so your cheese doesn't melt off!
4. Place the kebabs immediately on a platter to serve and drizzle with balsamic glaze.



Above: Ready to go on the grill!



Left: Hot off the grill! The tomatoes are blistered and the mozzarella is oozy. These are finished off with a balsamic glaze drizzled on top!



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# THE GOLD RUSH TRAIL IN BEAUTIFUL BRITISH COLUMBIA

By **Elizabeth Vezina**

**T**raveling is a bit of an addiction for us and in the summer months, it is always a delight to take on a more local focus and head out in search of new adventures with our T@G in tow. This past summer, we hooked up and set our destination as the Coast Mountain Circle Route running through the coastal mountain range of south-west British Columbia ([campingrvbc.com](http://campingrvbc.com)). The entire loop is approximately 700 km (435 miles) and takes about 11 hours to drive non-stop.

This secondary route that winds its way through spectacular mountain vistas and alongside pristine glacial fed lakes is not only popular with locals, but also is a sought after road trip for visiting Europeans in their RV rentals, particularly with the USD and European currencies currently being so strong against the Canadian dollar. So in addition to exploring this breathtaking part of BC, you will be able to meet fellow campers from around the globe who are also taking full advantage of this beautiful area of Canada. We are very fortunate to call Vancouver Island our home; however, it can be an expensive proposition to bring our trailer, even as small as the T@G is, because the cost of taking the ferry can be quite significant. If you do decide to visit Vancouver





Island as part of your time in BC, be sure to try and benefit from a regular sale that is advertised by BC Ferries called the Extra Length Vehicles Promotion, which will afford you half price savings for every foot over 22 feet of length. For longer rigs this can be a substantial savings, but be sure to reserve your spot as many RV'ers and trucks will take advantage of these sale priced sailings when they are available ([bcferries.com](http://bcferries.com)).

Opportunities for camping and exploring abound along the route. One of the highlights of the road trip is the relatively short distance between available overnight stops, which allows more time for discovery and exploration both while enroute and while base camped out of one of the many excellent provincial or private campgrounds arrayed along the route.

Given the increasing popularity of this route, and the myriad of hiking opportunities that exist along the route, it is highly recommended to book early ([discovercamping.ca](http://discovercamping.ca)) and if it is possible, a visit in the shoulder seasons during June or September will ensure you are still getting good weather and the route and the attractions will definitely be less crowded than in the summer months. As we plod along on these local adventures, we always try to spend a minimum of 2 or 3 nights in each location, allowing for a proper camp set up and maximising our time in each of the locations to strike out from our base camp and thoroughly explore the new location. We are very grateful in this regard for our T@G, the setup is always quick and easy, and with more than 150 nights under our belts in the last 4 camping seasons, we've mastered the art of establishing and breaking camp,

and we have a very comfortable and effective setup that allows us to enjoy every minute of it. With the T@G, simplicity and comfort are hallmarks of the camping experience, and the little trailer really suits our style, a warm dry comfortable night's sleep, with the day spent outdoors enjoying all that this great country has to offer.

As you begin the loop, the last major town you will pass after having escaped the clutches of Vancouver traffic is the scenic town of Squamish. I don't know how many times in the past we've driven through Squamish allowing



for a quick stop for refuelling or a java stop, but having spent more time there on this trip, it was surprising just how much there is to see and do if you have time to leave the main highway strip and delve in a bit deeper. We spent 3 nights at Alice Lake Provincial Park situated only a few minutes north of the town site on this trip. The Provincial Park itself is spectacular, powered sites and flush toilets, and an excellent base camp with easy access to a web of trails for hikers and bikers alike. While at the Park, we explored much of the local area, including a morning spent on the 4 lakes trail

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as well as a visit to the awe inspiring Shannon Falls. Hosted by a friend in town for lunch, we were introduced to the quaint Watershed Grill ([thewatershedgrill.com](http://thewatershedgrill.com)), a riverside café where both locals and many Golden and Bald eagles hang out above the salmon filled river below. Squamish was a great first stop to our loop and offers many options to resupply for the next legs of the voyage. On our way north after leaving Squamish, we could not resist a stop for a picnic lunch in the Whistler Olympic Village park. There is ample parking available for RVs proximate to the village itself, and everything is easily walkable. This pit stop would not have been complete without a delicious visit to the Pure Bread Bakery where an unlimited choice of delicious goods is always ready to fuel you up for the next leg of your journey.

Our next camping location was Nairn Falls, where we also spent 3 nights. As we all know, all camp sites are not created equal so a bit of research will always be of benefit to find those with the best views and privacy, something made simpler on the BC Parks site ([discovercamping.ca](http://discovercamping.ca)) as each site includes a few pictures of the sites themselves to aid you in making your selection. In our case, a bit of research paid off with a beautiful riverfront site (#93) tucked away in the corner of the campground right next to the roaring Green river. It was during our stay at Nairn Falls that I had my Coup de Coeur of the trip, which was our day hike to Joffre Lakes. The trailhead sits about 30 minutes north of Nairn Falls, it is a very popular hike, and the views at the highest of the 3 glacier lakes make all the work to get up there well worth it. One important piece of advice, go early and avoid weekends. We departed for the trip hike around 8h00 and by the time we got back to the parking lot after 12h, it was packed and the trail up was swarming with hikers struggling up the big inclines. Avoid the crowds and work hard on the 4 hr round climbs and the payoff will all be worth it, some of the most spectacular scenery we've ever

experienced!

After 3 days spent exploring the Pemberton area from our base camp of Nairn Falls, we completed the Duffy Lake Highway summit drive down into the Fraser Canyon and our next stop, Lillooet BC. If you like it hot, Lillooet is definitely the place to be, as it is usually one of the hottest places in Canada every summer. We set up our T@G this time at Fraser Cove Campground ([frasercove.com](http://frasercove.com)) and after a cheerful greeting from the owner himself, we were fortunate to get a site right alongside the immense and roaring Fraser river for our two nights in Lillooet. The campground is located directly across the river from Lillooet, a small town clinging to its gold rush heritage perched on an arid ledge above the mighty Fraser. The campground is just upstream from the old wooden bridge that used to provide access for the camel caravans and ox carts that came to supply the town with the supplies and trappings of the Gold

Rush of 1858. The bridge is now home to several Fish Eagle (Osprey) nests, and the banks are full of curious groundhogs that will come out to greet you as you approach the now pedestrian only bridge. In addition to exploring the history of this small town, the highlight of the stop was watching the fisherman below our campsite reeling in 7 to 11 foot long Sturgeon fish, survivors of the dinosaur era that populate the Fraser river. It's all catch and release, but watching these gents battle these prehistoric monsters for 2 hours at a time was a sight to behold.

Our final stop of the gold rush loop was to head to Cache Creek, a winding and twisting driver of a road that follows the Fraser River to this small hamlet, that shares Lillooet's history as a Gold Rush town and now serves as the jump off point into the Fraser Canyon and Trans Canada Highway 1 as it winds its way south towards Vancouver. We once again stayed at a Provincial Park, this time it was





Juniper Beach Provincial Park, located 19km East of Cache Creek on highway 1, nestled in a valley below the main highway, an oasis of green in an arid sea of browns and reds, tucked up against the blue waters of the Thompson River. The campground has power and showers, but only pit toilets are available. It is also recommended that you be somewhat of a train buff when staying here, as the two main lines for the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Canadian National Railway pass on either side of the park. So there is a lot of train traffic through all hours of the day, adding a certain ambience to the campground. This display of heavy machinery is tempered by the ever present wildlife, including some excellent campsite front action of a bald eagle diving and snapping up salmon from the river.

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The final leg of our loop brought us through the Fraser Canyon on highway 1, back into the Lower Mainland of BC and the hustle and bustle of Vancouver and its surrounding cities before hopping the ferry back to the peace and tranquility of our Island and home in Victoria. The scenery we experienced throughout this trip was diverse and ever changing, but the one thing all our stops had in common is the attention and curiosity of folks towards our T@G. Folks are always impressed on how compact, well-appointed, and well-constructed it is. Throughout the journey we inevitably ended up hosting several impromptu open houses and distributed a plethora of Nu Camp T@G-T@B flyers. I think we should be getting some sort of commission out of this!

Another successful adventure in our super little T@G, exploring our backyard, and the best part: NO PASSPORT required! A breathtaking loop on secondary highways



through the panoramic scenery and history of our beautiful British Columbia. Hopefully one day soon you too can experience this spectacular part of our home province.





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# KEWEENAW OVERLAND ADVENTURE RETREAT IN MICHIGAN'S UPPER PENINSULA

By CINDY POPE

**T**he apprehension was washing over me like a wave. I had spent the last six months preparing, planning, plotting, sometimes crying but here I was with my crew, precious friends who had come together to help launch the first Keweenaw Overland Adventure Retreat. Jack, Chris, Taylor, Mandy, Jake, Carly I were getting ready, nervously doing some last minute prep before check-in

was scheduled to start and the rigs were already lining up!

The idea for an overland basecamp gathering started when I visited Rob Ozarawicz at Northwinds. He and I had become acquainted in some Facebook groups and he mentioned that he would like to host a bunch of fancy car campers there sometime. I was down with that, I tell ya! I stopped in on him on a cold, rainy October night on my way up to Copper Harbor with



*Trail ride to Gay Sands, near Gay, MI - photo by Cindy Pope*

## KOAR

a friend. I could almost physically see his love of the Keweenaw and the outdoors pouring out of him as he gave us a three hour tour of the facility the next morning. I think I knew that day that I wanted to be involved with this idea. Rob sent us off for the rest of the weekend with maps and suggestions for places to hike, mines to explore and secret, sandy beaches and rocky coves. My mind could not stop thinking about the possibilities for hosting an event there as we rode our bikes and combed the beaches for treasures.

After returning home, Rob and I engaged in a flurry of messages with ideas and questions and what-ifs. We had to make this idea of an upper midwest overland basecamp event a reality. Within a few weeks, we met again at Northwinds with Todd & Carol Mowrer of TC Teardrops and my friend Chris Offenwanager of XJP Overland to start planning for the gathering. We were all in agreement that this event would be about community first. I mean, all we really wanted to do was connect with the overlanders, offroaders and adventure types just like us. We knew they were out there exploring and playing in the woods. You can see small convoys of

overland outfitted adventure rigs rolling through Marquette, Munising and Houghton if you're in the right place at the right time, but organized gatherings that cater to that type of outdoors enthusiasts don't happen anywhere near here. The overland expos and rendezvous are mostly in the southwest or southeast, but we thought - why not here? Why not in our own backyard? Why not bring these explorers together? And why not invite those who have never been here? Why not do this in the most beautiful place in the upper midwest? Why not on this boreal peninsula surrounded by the greatest lake in the world? Why not explore the deep forest and high cliffs and the history? There was no reason not to, and we set forth to make this plan a reality.

And so here we stood in the shade of Chris's XJ's awning as the first vehicles rolled up at basecamp on that very first day. I don't honestly remember who was first in line, but I do remember the apprehension turning to excitement as rig after rig rolled into the check in. Jeeps Wranglers with mountain bikes on the back, Toyota FJ Cruisers towing TC Teardrop campers, Ford trucks with

*TC Teardrop  
- photo by  
Steve  
Botsford*



Xventure trailers, Toyota 4Runners with kayaks on top, and Nissan Xterras with smiling kids and happy dogs poking their heads out the windows. And one big, giant Global Expedition Vehicle that left us gasping in awe. We saw license plates from Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Iowa and Arizona. We exchanged giddy glances and smiles as we greeted each vehicle and handed out the goody bags, "we did it, this is awesome, can you believe this?" were the silent messages of each grin from my team.

The result was a weekend of friendship and fun. Northwinds was spacious enough to accommodate all of us with plenty of elbow room for all the rigs,

tents, teardrop campers, expedition trailers and that huge GXV. We spent the days on two-track and forest roads driving to beautiful views and the afternoon and evenings with some down time, clinics, demos and vendor-sponsored giveaways at the evening community campfire. Campers rode their bikes, hiked, paddled canoes and swam in Love Lake at basecamp. Kids and adults alike played on the low ropes course. We toasted new friends over the fire until late into the night and stood together in awe as the northern lights danced above our heads. At that moment in time, I could not have been more happy. The work and stress had been worth it just to gaze at that night sky with new friends and old.



*Mandy's Commanche and homebuilt trailer by Taylor Kosky - photo by Cindy Pope*

Not everything went smoothly or according to plan but the smiles and questions about “next year” as the event came to a close told us all we needed to know. “Success is not perfection,” a wise friend told me, but we were perfectly successful in creating an experience that brought this community together in this amazing place, the Keweenaw Peninsula.

Side note: TC Teardrops is the title sponsor of this year’s event and is welcoming every TC Teardrop to camp with them in the TC Teardrop KOAR Camp Community inside our new basecamp at Trail’s End Campground in Copper Harbor.



***Clockwise from top right: Ryan & Cristy's Global Expedition Vehicle - Cindy Pope. Under the awning - Todd Mowrer. Cindy's Jeep with Chris Offenwager's homebuilt teardrop trailer - Cindy Pope. The KOAR Crew, Taylor, Chris, Cindy, Mandy, Jack, Carly, and Jake. Todd Mowrer, owner of TC Teardrops - Cindy Pope***

# DIY TEARDROP CAMPER COMMUNITY EVENT

**WRITTEN BY: MELODY MILLER**

**A**t the beginning of 2018, Jay Poore created a Facebook group, DIY Teardrop Camper Community. While there were many camping groups on Facebook, none were specifically targeted for the DIY crowd. It quickly grew into a safe place to discuss different aspects of homebuilt tiny campers. There are those there to get ideas and gather information, as well as those who are in the process of building and having completed their campers. Many have built several teardrops. All are unique and designed with the individual owners' needs.

The first year a gathering was planned in Michigan with a turnout of 2 and another who showed up for a day visit. The following year, at Port Crescent State Park, in Port Austin, MI, there were about 8 teardrops, 1 tent, and 1 vehicle in attendance. Recently, at the beginning of June, the 3rd annual gathering took place. Discussion started in the fall of 2019 for a date and place. The group chose Cumberland Mountain State Park in Crossville, TN, and reservations quickly started being booked. Within the first week of announcement the entire area 4 loop was reserved. At the peak of interest, 36 sites were reserved.

DIYTCC has rules that there are to be no political posts or other controversial topics. It is strictly to discuss, advise, ask questions,

and share all things helpful to building tiny campers. The health crisis was no exception. However, it did greatly impact the gathering, of course. The actual numbers at the gathering were 19 homebuilt, 2 vehicles, 1 tent, 1 manufactured, and 1 big rig, for a total of 24 sites. People from at least 12 states attended. A teenage young woman who attended with her family, now has an interest to build one of her own. With worldwide membership, the annual gatherings in the future are planned to move to try to give many the opportunity to attend. Next year the decision has been made to have the 4th annual event a little westward in Arkansas.

The true spirit of community is very apparent with one of those that made the trip and slept in a vehicle. The founder, Jay, fell on hard times, like many through all of this. He made a last minute decision to cancel his reservation. Once he posted his intentions, members of the group weren't going to let his troubles stop him. Many joined together and sent in donations, which allowed him to be able to rent a car with enough spare money for fuel and other traveling costs.

Micheal Foster has a YouTube channel, Camp and Camera. He interviewed every person who built their own teardrops there. They will be aired in installments, the first which was

was posted on June 10th. In the first few days after airing, membership has risen 200+, bringing the group to a community of over 7700.





**These are some**



**Check out  
these great  
homebuilt  
teardrops!**







## Beginning of the Season Maintenance



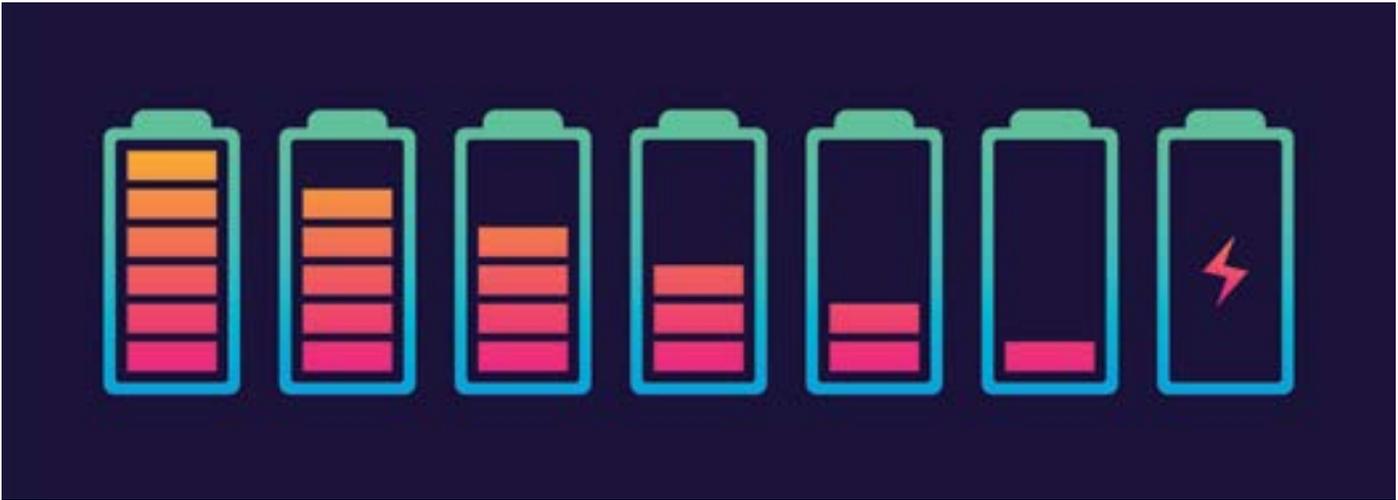
For many people, the camping season had a delayed start. And for some, it's just beginning. Just like your car or truck, your tiny camper was a major investment in either time, money, or both. You'll want to properly take care of it so your home away from home remains safe and comfortable. We may need to take special care since many of us go off the beaten path (aka "road") and the vibrations caused by poor roads can wreak havoc on our tiny campers.

So, just as you prepare your car for a vacation, it is equally important to keep your tiny camper maintained to avoid any costly repairs or any major problems while you are on the road. The key to maintaining your tiny camper is to create a regular maintenance schedule that can be followed throughout the year. One effective way to determine what kind of maintenance and repairs your tiny camper needs, in addition to general maintenance, is to take a short trip or "practice run" before your planned vacation. Make a list of frequently used equipment during your trip and make sure you have each part repaired or adjusted before your big trip. This helps to make sure that nothing is overlooked, and you can focus on enjoying your trip. But just in case, do carry a small tool set with you at all times so you can make emergency repairs, if necessary.

**Before every trip:**

- Check your campers lug nuts to make sure they haven't loosened up. Tighten if necessary. Driving with loose lug nuts is dangerous and could lead to losing a wheel on the road. Years ago, a friend had a front tire come off his car while he was driving about 50 mph because the lug nuts were not tightened when he put his snow tires on for the season. Don't let that happen to your tiny camper!
- Check your tiny camper's tire pressure and adjust as needed. It is important to have the tire pressure right for your camper. Check your tire pressure by finding the correct pressure on the sidewall of the tire by using a hand-held pressure gauge. Otherwise, take your trailer to your local tire dealer and have them professionally checked. This will be highlighted in a future issue.
- Confirm that all of your outside trailer lights are working correctly, i.e., brake lights, reverse lights, and turn signals. The connection from your tiny camper to your tow-vehicle is critical. We all know that when we're on the road, people may drive closer to get a good look at our unique tiny campers! So making sure this connection works correctly helps you to be seen by other drivers. In some cases, this connection may also help charge your tiny camper's battery while you're driving.
- Clean, if needed and properly grease your major towing components. There are a few components to inspect, but the main ones are: trailer hitch and trailer coupler. Over time, towing your tiny camper can cause road/dirt grime to work it's way into these components and cause issues. To avoid towing issues, it is essential all the hitching and towing parts are well-maintained.
- If you are in a larger, tiny camper, such as a T@B or larger square drop check your holding tanks to make sure they are functioning properly. You may have three holding tanks: fresh water, gray water, and black water.
- Wash your tiny camper, especially if you've recently towed it near the ocean because the salt can corrode the metal of your trailer. Usually, a mild detergent with a large sponge is sufficient for cleaning most tiny camper exteriors. I don't recommend taking them through a car wash or using high-pressure hoses, because they can damage the finish and loosen fittings. Make sure you rinse the undercarriage of the trailer, because this is where a lot of the dirt and grime can build up, but be gentle near any electrical wires if they are visible underneath.





**Before the season starts:**

- Check your tiny camper for leaks frequently. Water leaks can happen through any seam in your camper. Check the roof edges, around vents, windows and doors, etc.
- Check your battery. You don't want to find the most amazing boondocking site for miles around only to find out you have zero juice in the battery! Usually, after about three years, your deep cycle battery starts to lose capacity.
- Clean your awnings, side tents, or other extra coverings. Keep your awnings clean so you don't get mold and mildew buildup. By inspecting them on a regular basis, you may also catch any possible tears early on so you can fix them before they become larger issues. Make sure your awning is completely dry before storing, otherwise it may become moldy and mildewed. Leaves, sticks and grime can also build up on awnings, so it is important to properly clean your awning before packing it away when possible. If you have to put these items away wet, be sure to air them out and clean them on the next dry day to avoid future problems.

**Ready to Go!**

Tiny campers are a great way to spend time with family and friends and to explore hidden gems near and far. Make the most of your investment by keeping your tiny camper well-maintained and ready to go at a moment's notice!

An advertisement banner for Helinox. On the left is a black and grey folding chair. In the center is a blue and black folding table. To the right is the Helinox logo, a diamond shape with a smaller diamond inside, followed by the brand name "Helinox".

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# CAMPING



# WITH KIDS

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By **Bryan Smith**

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**C**amping with kids is definitely a memorable experience. There's something alluring about creating those memories you know will stay with them for a lifetime. Even if you're an inexperienced outdoorsman, there's no reason not to partake in an adventure like this. Camping under the stars, around a fire, singing songs, playing games and telling stories are some of the many things you can enjoy on an excursion. There's nature to be explored and a wealth of skills everyone can learn. All it takes is the willingness to let go of a few modern comforts.

### TAKING YOUR KIDS CAMPING AND A FEW REASONS TO DO IT

If you've ever asked children what they've done over the weekend or during their last school vacation, it's a rarity that you'll hear camping as an answer. There's an assortment of reasons why they probably haven't, but here are some reasons why you all should give camping a try for your next family getaway.



### ***Camping Teaches Survival Skills Everyone Should Know***

If you don't know these skills, that is perfectly okay because there's an abundance of resources and tutorials to teach you about camping outdoors. Learning the basics of which plants are poisonous, how to remain safe while hiking through the woods, starting a fire, putting one out and how to stay hydrated will be skills that stick forever. They'll learn how to cook just about anything over an open flame and how a pinch of sage burning in the fire keeps the mosquitoes at bay.

### ***It Can Build Independence***

I remember camping with my family as a kid. I'd wake up at the crack of dawn ready to get the fire going to start breakfast. When I was finally old enough, I was taught how to collect firewood, start a fire safely and keep the embers going until Mom or Pop was ready to start cooking. You can give your kids this kind of independence to go out and be productive to the experience. Even if they decide to venture off on their own to explore the woods nearby, camping and all of its activities present an opportunity to build the independent spirit within them. Learning to let go and let them find their way is a lesson to be learned by adults and kids.



### ***Every Vacation Doesn't Have To Break The Bank***

Going camping isn't always the cheapest option, but with its minimalistic approach, you won't have to empty out the savings either. A few groceries and renting a campsite for a few nights can come in under 200 bucks for a weekend getaway with the family. Most campsites have electrical and water hookups too. All you have to bring is a tent, your brood and a few necessities to get your camping getaway started.

### ***Get Those Creative Juices Flowing***

Encourage a trip where screen time is minimal to get everyone engaged with each other. One of the fondest memories you can create is playing a silly game of charades by campfire light. Bring along board games, card games and even make up your own as a group to create fun times without having to worry about a battery dying.

### ***Facing Fears Is A Good Thing***

For those that are scared of the dark or afraid to go swimming because they can't see through



the water around them, camping is a great way to face those fears. As a matter of fact, there are a few things to spark unintentional growth in the great outdoors. Learning to respect and navigate nature around them is a great way for kids to show their strength rather than shrink behind the things that frighten them.

### ***They Don't Need All Of That Stuff***

Camping has a great way of showing kids exactly what's important to them. Once that phone battery dies and they get absorbed into the amazing experience around them, they'll realize that all of the amenities they've lived with aren't always necessary. They can make do falling asleep in a hammock under the stars or in a tent snuggled close to Mom in a sleeping bag on an air mattress. Being away from the constant bombardment of the mindless entertainment gives them a chance to detox and recharge their internal batteries.



### ***Get The Kids Excited About Camping***

Now that you have a few reasons why you should go camping with kids, it's time to get them excited about going. Aside from the memories, you're looking forward to capturing with the flash of a camera, telling them about

the great activities waiting for them in the great outdoors. Talk about the songs you can sing around the fire, what it will be like to pitch a tent together and hiking around the campsite to what nature has to offer.

### ***Finding The Right Campsite***

It's always good to get the kids involved when deciding on a campsite. They can research the activities at different places helping you narrow down the choice of where to stay and which spot would be best for everyone to have a good time. If you're all beginners, you may want to practice pitching your tent in the living room or backyard. When you get to the campsite, if things still don't go as planned, try booking a place where you can rent cabins or trailers if necessary. It will be good for kids to see adults try and fail at things. Showing them it's okay when things don't go according to plan is the best way to teach them how to adapt to their surroundings. Also factor in what the kids like to do when looking up the right campsite. For instance, if they like to rollerblade or go swimming, book a place with access to waterparks and bike paths.



## ***Plan For Popularity***

Traveling around in an RV is far more popular than you may expect. During the peak season, it's often difficult to just pop-up and snag a campsite. Some parks and camping grounds are major tourist attractions and require you to make a reservation prior to your arrival. For those spots that don't allow you to make reservations for weekend days, try arriving on a weekday and staying through the weekend.

## ***Schedule Activities & Properly Plan For Them***

Make a list with the kids about their favorite activities and throw in a few you can surprise them with. Perhaps the site you're booking allows for canoe rentals or they offer daily hikes with a guide. Make sure you have the proper clothing for the season along with the gear you need to do all of the activities your family's planned to do. The campground websites and tourism websites have the bulk of the information you'll need to find out what's in season near the campsite.

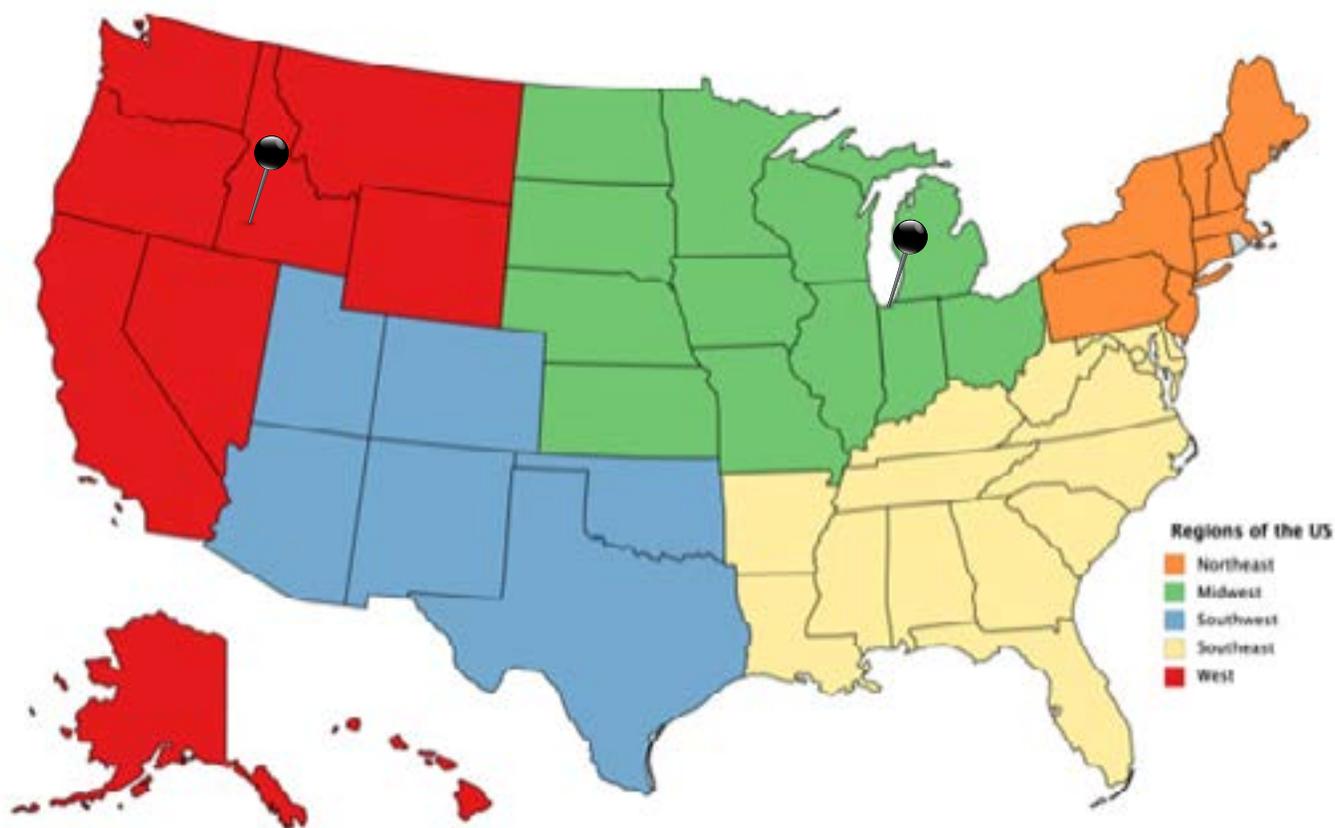
***Stay tuned to future issues for more tips on Camping with Kids!***



***About the author: Brian Smith is a digital nomad. When he is not camping or adventuring outdoors, you'll find him behind the screen grinding hard on his keyboard to put up some awesome content on his blog. He aims to help people get started with the world of RV traveling, camping, and survival. He wants to help those with a love of the outdoors become united, and to ensure that if you enjoy outdoor pursuits, you can learn more!***

[www.outsidehow.com](http://www.outsidehow.com)

# REGIONAL CAMPING SPOTLIGHT



Many people think of the ocean and crashing waves when thinking about walking or playing in the sand. There are many places throughout the United States that have sand and a lot of it! This issue will highlight two great camping locations that are both nearly twelve hour drives from the Pacific or Atlantic Oceans.

One location is completely landlocked, while the other at least looks like an ocean, but the water contains no salt.

**Location:** Bruneau Dunes State Park  
27608 Bruneau Sand Dunes Road  
Bruneau, ID 83604

**Getting There:**

GPS Info (Latitude, Longitude):

42.9113 N, -115.715 W

42°54'36"N 115°42'35"W

Bruneau Dunes State Park boasts the tallest single structured sand dune in North America with a peak rising to 470 feet about the desert floor. The sand dunes are believed to be caused by the Bonneville Lake flood nearly 15,000 years ago. You can explore the dunes on foot, on horseback, or rent a sandboard from the Visitor Center. Off road vehicles are only permitted on the main road.

This park consists of 4800 acres of diverse land that includes desert, dunes, prairie, two lakes, and marsh habitat. Desert wildlife is prominent along with waterfowl and birds of prey. In the lakes, fishing for bass and bluegill is common, but the water is too warm to support a trout population. Only non-motorized watercraft are allowed in the lakes.

Unlike the sand dunes in Indiana Dunes State Park, the dunes in Bruneau are fairly stable, they do not drift very far due to the prevailing winds blowing from the southeast 28 percent of the time and from the northwest 32 percent of the time. I live in the western Great Lakes region and our dunes move. There is a village near me that was swallowed by the dunes of Lake Michigan within the last 150 years.



*Observatory photo  
courtesy of:  
**Doug Stoneback***

Number of Sites: 113

Pets: yes, there is a dog park within walking distance too

Water: yes

Electric: yes

Price per night: \$ - \$\$ (\$12 - \$29)

Fire Rings: yes

Picnic Tables: yes

Restrooms/Shower: yes

**Primary activities within the park:** hiking, sandboarding, fishing, observatory tours and star gazing

**Pro Tip 1:** Observatory nights are Friday and Saturday only from late March through early October (weather permitting). This starts one hour before sunset and is free!

**Pro Tip 2:** If you want to sand board, go in the AM. The park staff will stop sandboard rentals when the air temperature reaches 80F because the sand temperature is much hotter and poses a risk for burns. It is also recommended to wear shoes and socks! This is not your typical surfing experience.



Photo courtesy of: **Kim Durr**

**Location: Indiana Dunes State Park**  
**1600 North 25 East**  
**Chesterton, IN 46304**

**Getting There:**

GPS Info (Latitude, Longitude):

41.65592, -87.06209

41°39'21"N, 87°3'44"W

The park is north of I-94 and toll road I 80/90. Note that there is a South Shore Rail Station (the Chicago mass transit system) within walking distance of the park, so the park can be busy!

Indiana Dunes State Park was established in 1925, after early 1900's scientists and nature enthusiasts recognized the value of this area and fought to have the region preserved. This park consists of nearly 2200 acres of protected land that features towering sand dunes, primitive landscapes, and more than three miles of beautiful sand beach along the southern shore of Lake Michigan. The large sand dunes, which are located along the entire shoreline, have taken thousands of years to form and most tower nearly 200 feet above Lake Michigan. This park also boasts sixteen miles of hiking trails that will take you through thick woods, marshes, sand dunes, and beaches. This park provides a wide range of habitats and plant species, which can make this an excellent location for birdwatching during the spring and fall migrations. There is even a small bird observatory in the park's Nature Center.

Do you have what it takes to climb the three highest sand dunes in Indiana?

If so, then the 3 Dune Challenge is for you. To complete the 3 Dune Challenge, a person must hike a special 1.5 mile course at Indiana Dunes State Park, climbing Mount Jackson (elevation 176 feet), Mount Holden (184 feet), and Mount Tom (192 feet). Some parts of the trail feature 40-degree slopes, making each step challenging. In the sandy vertical climbs, it's common to take two steps forward and slide one step back. Good luck!

Those who conquer the 3 Dune Challenge are invited to stop by the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, located just one mile south of the park, to buy a shirt and pick up a free commemorative sticker or decal.

Indiana Dunes State Park is adjacent to the Indiana Dunes National Park, which is one of the countries' newest national parks. The national park comprises more than 15,000 acres of oak savannas, swamps, bogs, marshes, prairies, forests, and of course sand dunes. Together the national park and state park have 25 miles of sandy beaches along the southern shore of Lake Michigan, all offering views of Chicago. Between the two parks, there are more than 70 miles of trails.

Please note, due to the proximity of Chicago (45 minute drive), this area attracts a lot of visitors, nearly four million per year, so if you plan to camp at Indiana Dunes State Park, it's best to make advanced reservations.

**Number of sites:** 140

**Pets:** yes, but dogs are not allowed on the beach

**Water:** yes

**Electric:** 50amp

**Price per night:** \$\$\$ (\$31- \$39)

**Fire Rings:** yes

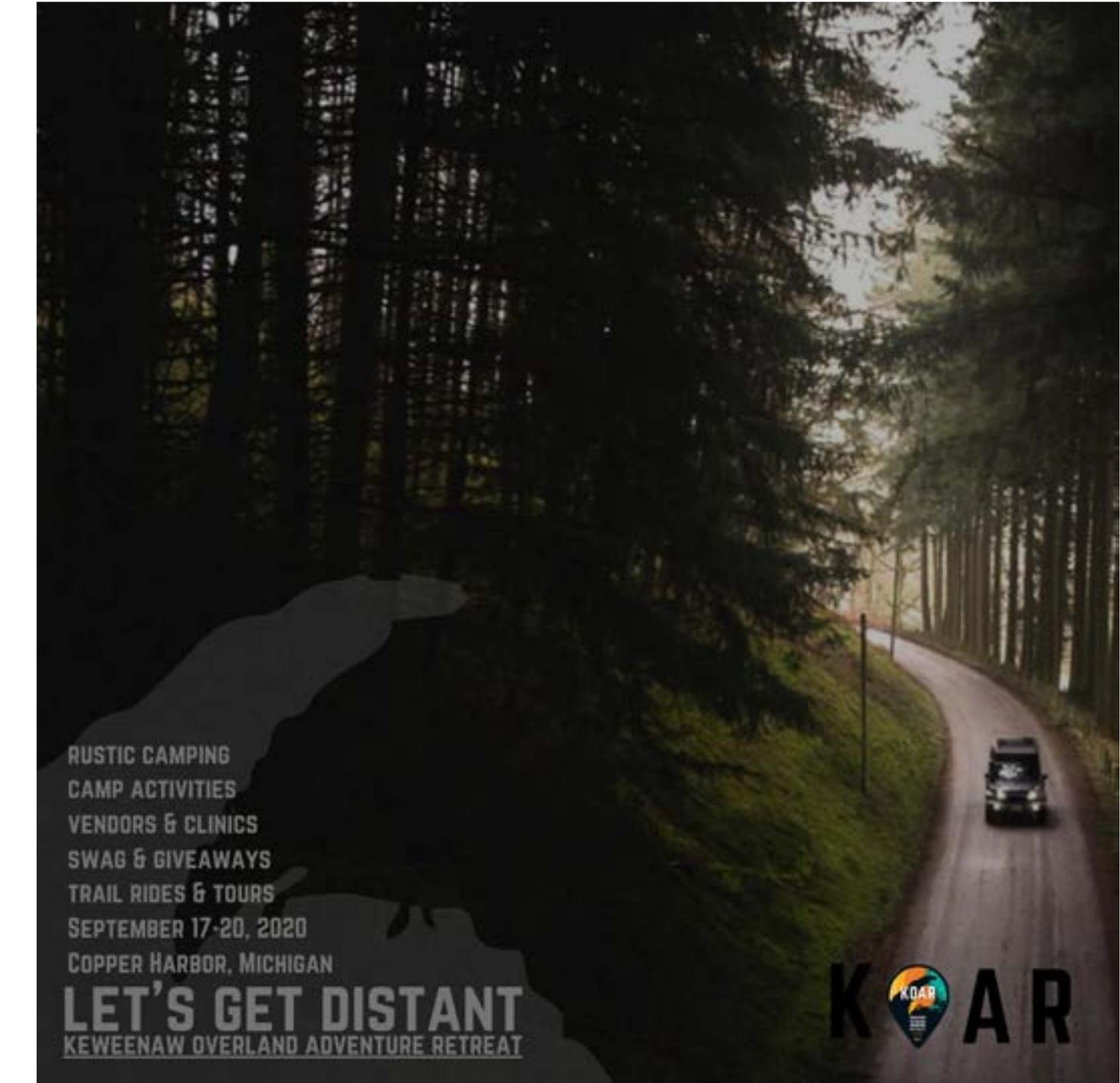
**Picnic Tables:** yes

**Restrooms/Showers:** yes

**Primary activities within the park:** nature center, hiking, 3 dune challenge, swimming/beach, birdwatching, cultural sites/exhibits

**Pro Tip:** I recommend watching the sunset from the beach as the Chicago skyline begins to light up the western sky.





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