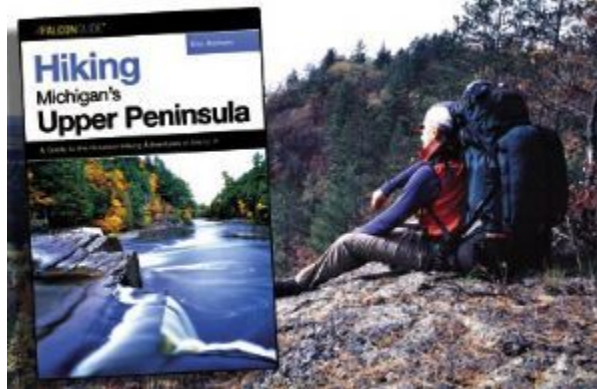


Take a hike! Author will walk through adventures



CAPTION: Author and hiker Eric Hansen on a rock outcropping in the Trap Hills area of the Upper Peninsula.

MARQUETTE — Anyone who has ever once discovered first-hand the spectacular beauty of the Upper Peninsula's backcountry hiking trails has likely pledged a personal oath to do more hiking.

Exploring this spectacular landscape, both rugged and sublime, is something capable of inspiring a hiker immeasurably.

This is something Eric Hansen knows well.

Hansen, 57, rambled over more than 900 miles of the U.P.'s trails in researching "Hiking Michigan's Upper Peninsula: A Guide to the Greatest Hiking Adventures in the U.P."

Hansen's exploration, and the genesis of the book, began in the wilds of Ontonagon County a few years back, when the Milwaukee-based hiker and author was on a magazine article writing trip.

"In the fall of 2001, on assignment from Backpacker Magazine to search out one of 'The Best Mountains Nobody Knows,' I hiked the twenty-eight-mile length of Ontonagon County's Trap Hills. I was stunned by what I saw there," Hansen said. "The views, solitude and beautiful older forest were compelling evidence that there were many inspiring landscapes in the U.P. that were still new to me — and unknown to the general public. That experience led to the idea of a U.P.-focused hiking guidebook."

This weekend, Hansen will visit Marquette to present a slide tour of the U.P.'s best hikes and offer his thoughts on "the land, its compelling themes and its almost mythic place in the imagination of people throughout the Midwest."

Hansen will be the guest speaker of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition in a free program open to the public at 7:30 p.m. Saturday in the Embers Room of the Northwoods Supper Club.

"Eric Hansen, in his hiking book and in person, is an unusual mix of practicality and poetry. He helps hikers to stay on elusive trails and he prompts all of us to think about the larger meaning of the traversed landscape," said UPEC President Jon Saari. "What exactly is special about the U.P.?"

What is the power of this landscape? I look forward to an evening of practical advice and thoughtful reflection, all presented with great photos.”

Hansen, who was born in New York, has highlighted the U.P.'s natural heritage in adventure features in Backpacker Magazine, the op-ed pages of the Chicago Tribune and in interviews on Wisconsin Public Radio.

He's also the author of a similar hiking guide to Wisconsin trails, has made 22 trips to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and successful climbs to most of the major peaks at Glacier National Park.

“As I was working on ‘Hiking Michigan’s Upper Peninsula,’ two themes emerged. First, the Grand Canyon is neither better nor worse than Lake Superior. Both are magnificent in their own right,” Hansen said. “Second, the U.P. is one of the truly great, and iconic, landscapes of the lower forty-eight states.”

The 208-page paperback book Hansen created, published by Falcon Publishing, offers easy access to information for those wanting to explore. Included are detailed directions, detailed maps, photographs and descriptive text and a hike-finder section grouping the walks into categories.

Evidence that Hansen has truly discovered the essence of the landscape from Horseshoe Harbor to Miners Beach, is found in the introduction to the book.

“The Upper Peninsula is a mighty land. Wild and off-the-beaten track, it has a long history as the backwoods retreat of the Upper Midwest—a 300-mile-long swath of quiet forests; sparkling, pristine water; remote shorelines; and eye-catching vistas,” Hansen wrote. “Better yet is the sheer mystery of the place. The U.P. has a well-deserved reputation for rewarding explorers who invest the time to explore its nooks and crannies.”

For more information on his presentation, contact UPEC Business Manager Susan Rasch at 524-7899.