



Be equipped to have fun in great outdoors

By SHEILA GARRETT
Special to the Record-Eagle

There are a lot of ways to get around in the great outdoors of northern lower Michigan.

Recreational Vehicles

Whether it's going cycling or RV traveling, camping or backpacking, you have a chance to be your own boss. You can pick your own destination, leave when you feel like it and change your itinerary at any time.

Recreational vehicles are an increasingly popular choice. A University of Michigan Survey Research Center study has found that one out of every 10 vehicle-owning families owns a recreation vehicle (RV).

Many RV owners are empty-nesters aged 55 and up who

enjoy the freedom of frequent retirement travel. Others are 35- to 54-year-old couples with families who cite the convenience and economy of RV travel.

Today's RVs have complete living, cooking, dining, sleeping and bathroom facilities with all the amenities of hotels and motels. Many travelers appreciate the fact that there is no need to pack and unpack bulky suitcases.

According to the Recreation Vehicle Industries Association, RVs can be used for many other purposes, such as for hunting and fishing, general transportation and serving as a spare bedroom. Tailgating, too, is popular at football games, car races and other events.

Jeff Belanger, manager of TC-RV in Traverse City, said, "I sold a \$150,000 bus a couple of

years ago, just so this fella could carry his buddies to the U of M game."

RV types include folding camping trailers, truck campers, travel trailers and motor homes. The Trail-Lite Bantam, a camping trailer with wing beds, offers an aluminum frame and laminated construction, and is designed with fold-out beds at either end to increase sleeping area.

Equipment includes a refrigerator, range top and range hood, water heater, furnace and air conditioner. It has a large galley window, Armstrong flooring, and many safety features.

Trail-Lite Super Lite Weight travel trailers are built for fuel-efficient towing. They are available in seven and eight foot widths, and are designed to be towed by downsized tow vehicles and smaller engines. The Super Lite Weight 8-foot



The I-Drive DHI bike is a hot choice for downhill racing.

wide Fifth Wheel is described as "a true candidate for light duty pick-up trucks." It features an extra-low center of gravity for stability and safety.

Also "new, small, light and easy to handle" said Belanger, is the Trail-Lite Class-A motorhome. Equipped inside with bedroom privacy drapes, bedspread, pillows and shams, and a bathroom with a shower or tub with curtain, this motor home sells for about \$42,000.

The Coleman 2002 Memory Makers by Fleetwood are "the big guys in popup camping," said Belanger.

Interesting features are the Ultra Glide-Out dinette, which expands living space, the easy-to-reach waist-level crank location and the BackSaver bed support system. New this year is separate drinking water filter and tap.

TC RV carries a wide range of vehicles and rentals are also available, in small size vehicles of 25 feet for \$600 per week, to luxury style coaches at 34 feet and including two slide-outs for \$1,000 per week.

Bikes

GT Cycles of Traverse City manager Matt Klingelsmith said he carries a full line of Yakima car racks for carrying bikes. GT Cycle features Bell

and Giro helmets worn by world champions, Shimano shoes and a line of cycling

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On the cover:
Sunset at Sleeping Bear, photo courtesy of Rob Karner.

Outdoor Living is an annual publication of the Traverse City Record-Eagle. For information, write: *Outdoor Living* Record-Eagle P.O. Box 632 Traverse City, MI 49685

Editor & Designer: Rick Gould 933-1407 rgould@record-eagle.com Advertising: 933-1465 Circulation: 946-2187

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