

- [Eric R Wieczorek](#)

My 2013 Mount Bohemia Experience/Trip Report.

It was a last minute decision, but I decided to go at it alone and started my drive up to Mount Bohemia Thursday afternoon. It is an extremely long drive to make by yourself, or with anyone for that matter, and bad weather is always a concern. Because of that I tried to hit the road as early as possible. About 10 or 15 miles past Houghton/Hancock you drive by the last cell tower you will see, and from there cell reception is hit or miss. Although I hear that by the end of next year they will have joined the 21st Century and cell towers will be in place. I stayed at the Brockway Inn (Not Recommended) the 1st night which is 11 miles past Mount Bohemia, and the most scenic section of the drive. With its snow filled trees arching over the hilly winding two lane road it truly gives you the feeling that you are in the middle of nowhere, which you are.

The next day I take the scenic drive back towards Bohemia. It's even better in the morning when your mind is fresh. I get there and I'm so excited to ski that I start walking away from my car without my ski boots, it's a bit of a walk so I decided I'll just dump my gear off at the ticket area and go back for them. Good thing too, it was only 10:00 and they didn't open until 10:30 anyway. Mount Bohemia has added a few amenities since my 1st visit. Its original design had a bathroom yurt without plumbing and a ticket yurt with a few benches, a few candy bars, and a couple microwaveable soups. Now they have a fully plumbed bathroom yurt, 3 additional nicely furnished yurts, 1 with a bar, 4 flat screen TVs, WiFi, and a kitchen which serves \$8 hamburgers. The skiing on the other hand has remained exactly the same.

Ungroomed poorly marked trails and hazards, with 2 fixed chairlifts and a shuttle bus. This is why I come here, and if they ever change that, I will not be back. Two turns into my first run I realize that I'm on skinny skis, and I don't have rocker. If you haven't tried rocker, you're missing out. It has turned the skiing world upside down, literally and figuratively. It has changed what is possible in the world of skiing. Four turns into my first run I realize that I'm incredibly out of shape and already exhausted, I have to stop. On my second stop of my first run I take a moment to swallow my pride. Without 100mm underfoot and reverse camber my cape is gone and I'm not the skier I thought I was. They rent enormous rockered skis at Bohemia now, but part of me wants to prove to myself that at 40 years old I can still ski well on a cambered toothpick. By the third stop on my first run the Hootin & Hollerin has begun. I've got it dialed in on my 9 year old skis. Unfortunately the weather wasn't good, and a consistent sleet rendered my goggles useless. Then, attempting to remove the sleet with my gloves I somehow scratched the lens, ruining them completely. Do I go back to the car and get my spare pair? No way. Hardship is all part of a good Midwestern experience. I can't even remember the last time I skied without goggles, and for good reason. I have an unusual style of skiing, if I don't have any reason to turn, I don't. This creates a lot of speed and requires goggles to see. Now I need a reason to turn and slow down so I head for the trees. As I'm skiing through the trees a branch grazes my cheek and just misses my eye. Now I remember the other reason why I wear goggles. Even though the weather wasn't great the day was. At 3:15 my left knee decided that the day was over. My exhausted body and mind was in compliance. In my exhausted state I foolishly pulled my cell phone out of my pocket, fumbled it, and watched it with an eagle eye as it fell off the chairlift and buried itself in the snow. Well, I guess I am going to take another run after all. Miraculously I dug through the snow and found it, and immediately shut it down. Thank you Otter Box for the added protection. From

where my phone had fallen I had three choices of runs to finish the day. I chose a run aptly named the Beast. The first half of it finished me off, and the second half made me hate life. As the shuttle bus opened its doors it appeared to have an aura around it, please take me safely far away from this place.

That night I stayed in the Pines which was a much nicer establishment. I would recommend it, unless you cannot live without WiFi. They have the worst WiFi I've ever experienced. I started to write this in the 10 square feet of usable WiFi I found in the corner of the bar when I met the three craziest snowmobilers I've ever met. I put the computer away when they started buying me shots.

The next day was a struggle. When I arrived at Bohemia I didn't even want to get out of the car. My body was beaten and exhausted plus I never sleep well the first night in a new hotel. Also the dozen Captain & Cokes I had with those snowmobilers might have had something to do with it. But my day was immediately brightened by a group of guys doing donuts in the parking lot. Now I'm ready. The weather was almost the same - Sleet, with a teaser of sunshine every now and then. I brought my goggles just to wear on the chairlift. The first run went good. I only stopped once to uncross my tips and avoid crashing into a tree. Halfway down I skied out into the open and decided to let'em run. This helped me think up a new term, "Quad Lock". Having my quadriceps seize up on me made for an interesting ride. I caught air off of every contour the rest of the way down because I couldn't bend my knees. I wish I would have turned on my Alpine Replay App to see how much airtime it would have registered. The sleet on top of powder has made the skiing incredibly challenging. Trying to plow through the untracked snow on a cambered toothpick with the flex of an oak tree was beyond my ability. I spent the rest of my day skiing in the tracks of others, which at Mount Bohemia is still incredible. Never once have I landed a top to bottom run at Bohemia without stopping. I don't know where the strength and precision came from but I landed two flawless top to bottom runs consecutively. This was my cue to leave, and possibly my season ender. I had a long drive ahead of me and there was nowhere to go but down from there. Another great day, and another great season.

What surprised me the most about Mount Bohemia was its demographic change. When I had first come up there years ago it was mainly college kids, and a handful of guys around my age. Now half the people there are men and women my age and older. There are a combination of reasons that have lead to this. Ticket prices have increased from \$38 to \$54, they have trailside lodging available, and wider skis - with reverse camber has made difficult terrain easier to ski. So the question is, could Mount Bohemia be on the list next year for the Red Eye Ski Club's bus trips? Answer, NO. But it could make for a great micro trip involving a caravan of cars and a desire for a challenge. Hopefully this ramble has inspired a few to consider this. It was a great experience.