

We seem to ask that question every year. Maybe that's because summer is so packed with activities, we're always trying to catch up, there is so much going on, the weather's so nice, we always have someplace to go, something to do ...

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And suddenly it's over. Once the fair closes its gates and the carnival rides head off to other places, the big rush is over. No big rush of weekend events any more. What we have ahead of us is the start of school, fall high school sports, Labor Day weekend and watching the leaves change color.

This year, the change was mirrored by the weather. Again this summer, Iron County enjoyed warm, sunny weather for the most part. It was great for our plants, especially because the drought conditions that much of the Midwest has suffered through never came here.

We had a few dry spells, but for the most part rain has come when needed, and the drought index that painted much of the country in shades of yellow, orange, red and dark red has left Iron County plain white.

The drought was bad enough. The intense heat that also plagued much of the Midwest is something else the summer of 2012 will be remembered for. Around the start of July, we took a camping trip to southern Wisconsin, only to be greeted by 100-degree temperatures and high heat index readings. It was hot in the U.P., too (by U.P. standards), but coming home has rarely been more enjoyable.

The weather has cooled off a little lately—in fact, we had lows in the mid 30s over the weekend—but it was a very nice summer. We can't help but pity all the people in the heat wave zone and in the South and Northeast who had to cope with torrid temperatures for weeks on end. Later, they had to cope again, as the electric bills arrived and they saw how much it costs to run air-conditioners 24/7.

Fall isn't far away now, and of course fall is followed by winter. But still we think the people in charge of U.P. tourism would be well advised to better promote our area's mild summer weather—much milder and easier to bear than many parts of the country, especially in a time of climate change.

Our suggestion: Turn Florida's siren song to local snowbirds around 180 degrees. Wouldn't you like to spend summers in a place where the local TV news reporters don't fry eggs or cookies inside cars? Where jumping in the lake can actually cool you off? Where you may want to take along a light sweater for a nighttime stroll?

We saw first-hand in July what some parts of the Midwest had to deal in the heat of summer. And brother, they can have it! The U.P. has something better than that. We should be spreading the word.

--Peter Nocerini