

BROKER SPOTLIGHT

Bear Island Land Co.



After years of working as a land surveyor for the U.S. Forest Service, Charlie Chernak knew what he wanted to do: start a real estate company. He already dabbled in real estate, so he figured why not focus on selling property to other northeastern Minnesota folks who share his passions for hunting, fishing and the outdoors?



Charlie Chernak

Now, 18 years later, Chernak’s company, Bear Island Land Co., is a thriving real estate operation in Ely, Minnesota. Bear Island’s 12 real estate professionals sell many types of property, with a special focus on meeting the needs of the recreational buyer.

So what has changed over the years? The answer is simple, he says: technology.

“We used to just run ads in newspapers and real estate guides, and people would come visit a property, and that’s how it worked,” Charlie says.

“Now most everything is done through the internet, which helps people narrow their choices before they come to visit.”

Bear Island’s recreational buyers tend to be Minnesotans who have a tie to the area. Many are folks who grew up locally and then left, but now want to reconnect by purchasing a recreational property for their families.

Ely is a 4 ½-hour drive from Minneapolis, making it convenient for outdoor enthusiasts who want to come up for a few days and enjoy their properties. Deer hunting is a big draw, followed by grouse hunting, and the area also offers a variety of other recreational activities.

Bear Island is the largest real estate company in the Ely area, with over 500 listings, and takes pride in how it combines a personal touch with skill in technology. In addition to running a top-notch website, the company connects with buyers through such social media channels as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

But no technology replaces the need for a personal relationship with a buyer – one that is centered on trust.

“It is up to us to understand everything involved in how someone wants to use a property, and then be ready to help,” Charlie says. “They may want to know who to talk to about financing, or to understand a municipality’s rules. If we don’t know the answer, we get the buyer quickly to someone who does.”

Bear Island has enjoyed a longtime, successful relationship with Potlatch and is currently showing approximately 150 Potlatch listings.

“We can always tell a buyer with confidence that Potlatch property has been cared for, and that there won’t be any surprises,” Charlie says. “The quality of the experience is shown by how many Potlatch buyers later buy adjoining properties.”

Chernak and his staff never stop learning, always thinking about ways they can help buyers.

“While I loved doing surveying work, real estate has proven to be even more rewarding.” Charlie says. “There is nothing better than helping people buy Potlatch property that will become a legacy for their family.”

For more information about Bear Island Land Co. or its Potlatch land listings

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