

# FRESHWATER REPORTER



A fresh approach to storytelling in Manistee and Mason counties...and a bit beyond.

Vol II, No. 10

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**FREE**

# Camping!



Orchard Beach State Park, Manistee. Photo by Mark Videan.

In this issue, our writers share their most memorable camping adventures and describe what they like best about camping. As you read their stories, you may recall your own fun or ill-fated camping trips. From the high you get in the thin mountain air to the mosquito-filled, swamp-thing campsite that you either survive or run from ... your camping trips, like them or not, will lodge themselves in your memory banks.

Camping is so much more than a location. It's an experience that teaches you what you are capable of achieving – solo or with others – in the outdoors, whether that's pitching a tent, tending a campfire, finding water, navigating to a pit toilet in complete darkness, or sniffing out berries hiding just beyond a well-worn trail.

If you are charmed, you might stumble on a bear, hear a beaver slap its tail, see shooting stars or Northern Lights, swim in an uninhabited

lake or catch and cook a tasty fish that didn't get away.

In these coronavirus days, we're forced to look beyond the obvious to satisfy our travel bug. Shops and restaurants may close, beach parking lots may fill, but there are always lesser-known paths to follow. In these pages, we guide you to places to visit and things to see that may be unfamiliar to you. We take you through checkpoints of one of Mason County's six cultural trails, this one known as the Maritime Heritage Trail. You will discover a mind-boggling number of places to visit along the Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Trail. We introduce you to geocaching, so you can search for caches in Manistee and Mason counties. Finally, we'll tell you how to spot one of the year's busiest meteor showers in the mid-August night sky. Pack your gear and get to it! – Pat Stinson

What's Going On??

Check out our Events Calendar on Page 2.

## NOW SHOWING: Perseid Meteor Shower

By MARK VIDEAN

After the s'mores have been eaten and the campfire has burned to embers, douse the coals and take the family to see the most spectacular meteor shower of the year.

The Perseids, named for the constellation Perseus, where the meteors appear to originate, are visible July 17-Aug. 24. They can appear all over the night sky. The number of meteors per hour (50-75) will peak Aug. 11-13, when the moon will be at or slightly past last-quarter phase. Prime, moon-free viewing (clouds permitting) will be after Aug. 17, though there are fewer meteors per hour.

Find the darkest place you can to observe the largest possible expanse of sky: a lakeshore, meadow or hilltop far from ground lights and overhead trees. Plan to spend at least an hour observing, as 20 minutes or more are needed for your eyes to fully adjust to the dark. You will observe for a longer time if you're comfortable, so dress for the temperature and bring a blanket, reclining chair and bug spray.

Best viewing times are between 10 p.m. and dawn. The number of meteors visible per hour will increase the later you watch. Early viewing can be rewarding too. Although there are fewer meteors, they appear to make a longer streak in the sky due to our angle of view.

### What are the Perseids?

Meteor showers occur when the earth, in its orbit, passes through the trail of a comet's debris. The Perseid meteors are bits of comet Swift-Tuttle, named for its two independent discoverers in 1862. Swift-Tuttle is the largest known object to

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## Cache 'Em If You Can

Story and photos by MARK VIDEAN



Stash from a geocache.

Seeking adventure, beautiful scenery and maybe even some hidden treasure? Geocaching may be just the pastime for you. It's a great way, if you're camping, to learn about the area and see sights you might not otherwise. You can motivate the kids to go hiking with the possibility of finding a secret stash of goodies.

### What's the cache?

Geocaching (pronounced "geo-cashing") is a real-world outdoor treasure-hunting game using GPS-enabled devices, including most smart phones. To get started, you can download the Geocaching app from the Apple store or Google Play and register for a free, basic membership. With location services activated on your phone, you can use the app to show you all the geocaches in your vicinity.

You may be surprised to see how many caches are hidden nearby. There are hundreds of caches in Mason and Manistee counties, in all sorts of locales. Geocaches are weather-proof containers hidden by

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# Fun & Fabulous Community Events - Manistee & Mason Counties

Due to weather, schedules and COVID-19, some events may change or be canceled. **Always call ahead.**

## August

- 5 Classic Film Series – The Blues Brothers (1980)**  
10am, \$2, Vogue Theatre, 383 River St., Manistee
- 5 Fun Fish Competition, Portage Lake**  
Manistee Co. Sport Fishing Association 6-9pm, \$5 for members, \$10 for nonmembers, \$30 for annual membership for Fun Fish. **For more info: mcsfa.org**
- 5 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jim Hawley**  
7-9pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville
- 6 First Person Stories & Songs with Donvan Reynolds**  
"Jung's Story and Our Story", 10am, free Old Kirke Museum, 300 Walnut St., Manistee
- 6 Garden Tours at Crystal Mountain**  
10am, \$10, free for houseguests. 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville. Reservations required. 888-968-7686 ext. 7000
- 6 Live in the Plaza – acoustic music with Fremont John**  
5-8pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington
- 7 Joseph Works – Exhibit of Paintings by Phil and Susan Joseph**  
Noon-3pm, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee. Reservations required
- 7 Ludington Farmer's Market**  
3-7pm, N. James St. Plaza, downtown Ludington
- 7 FNL Unplugged – acoustic music with Brad Lee**  
6-9pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington
- 7 Live Music in the Tap Room: Lynn Callihan & Abe Kuzer**  
6-9pm, Ludington Bay Brewing Co., 515 S. James St., Ludington
- 7 Live Music at the Level Four Rooftop Bar with John Pomeroy**  
7-9pm, bar is open 5-10pm, Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville
- 7 Bluegrass Music Series with Birds of Prey**  
7-10pm, Northern Natural, 7220 Chief Rd., Kaleva
- 8 Manistee Farmer's Market**  
9am-12pm, Memorial Dr. and Washington St., Manistee
- 8 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jesse Jefferson**  
7-9pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville
- 11 Talks, Tunes and Tours with Susan Wild Barnard**  
"Textures and Textiles from Viet Nam and Laos" 10am, free, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee
- 11 Leonardo 500 – documentary film**  
examining Leonardo da Vinci's continuing impact on the world 500 years after his death. 2pm, \$15, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee
- 11 Manistee Shoreline Showcase with Robert Pace and Nature's Brew**  
(funk, R&B and soul), 7pm, free, 1st Street Beach Rotary Gazebo, 100-122 S. Lakeshore Dr., Manistee
- 12 Classic Film Series – Blue Hawaii (1961)**  
10am, \$2, Vogue Theatre, 383 River St., Manistee
- 12 Fun Fish Competition, Manistee Lake**  
Manistee Co. Sport Fishing Association 6-9pm, \$5 for members, \$10 for nonmembers, \$30 for annual membership for Fun Fish  
**For more info: mcsfa.org**
- 12 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jesse Jefferson**  
7-9pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville
- 13 First Person Stories & Songs with Marty Yapple, Jeremy Engwall and Ken Cooper**  
"Music in our Lives" 10am, free, Old Kirke Museum, 300 Walnut St., Manistee
- 13 Garden Tours at Crystal Mountain**  
10am, \$10, free for houseguests. 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville. Reservations required. 888-968-7686 ext. 7000
- 13 Live in the Plaza – acoustic music with Brad Lee**  
5-8pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington
- 14 Joseph Works – Exhibit of Paintings by Phil and Susan Joseph**  
Noon-3pm, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee. Reservations required
- 14 Onekama Farmers Market**  
1-4pm, Across the street from Honor Onekama Building Supply, 4847 N. Main St., Onekama
- 14 Ludington Farmer's Market**  
3-7pm, N. James St. Plaza, downtown Ludington
- 14 FNL Unplugged – acoustic music with Guitars of Dutch Henry**  
6-9pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington
- 14 Live Music at the Level Four Rooftop Bar with Meg Gunia**  
7-9pm, bar is open 5-10pm, Crystal Mtn, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville
- 14 Bluegrass Music Series with Hawks and Owls**  
7-10pm, Northern Natural, 7220 Chief Rd., Kaleva
- 15 Manistee Farmer's Market**  
8am-1pm, Memorial Dr. and Washington St., Manistee
- 15 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jesse Jefferson**  
7-9pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville
- 15 Earthwork Music presents Steve Leaf and the Ex-Pats**  
7-10pm, Northern Natural, 7220 Chief Rd., Kaleva
- 17 Barefoot Gypsies outdoor concert**  
8-11pm, Chopo's Northside Bar, 132 Monroe St., Manistee
- 18 Talks, Tunes and Tours with Shelley Doyen**  
owner of Ideal Kitchen. "Easy Entertaining", 10am, Free, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee
- 18 Bernini – documentary film**  
showcasing the artist's indelible works in Rome, 2pm, \$15, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee
- 18 Manistee Shoreline Showcase with U'Neek Soul**  
(R&B, pop, Motown and soul), 7pm, free, 1st Street Beach Rotary Gazebo, 100-122 S. Lakeshore Dr., Manistee
- 18 Live Music at the Level Four Rooftop Bar with Mike Youker**  
7-9pm, bar is open 5-10pm, Crystal Mtn, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville
- 19 Classic Film Series – Raging Bull (1980)**  
10am, \$2, Vogue Theatre, 383 River St., Manistee
- 19 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jim Hawley**  
6-8pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville
- 19 Fun Fish Competition, Portage Lake**  
Manistee Co. Sport Fishing Association 6-9pm, \$5 for members, \$10 for nonmembers, \$30 for annual membership for Fun Fish. **For more info: mcsfa.org**
- 20 First Person Stories & Songs with Barb Skurdall and Ann Srehle**  
of Mobility Now for Life "Move Better and Feel Better" 10am, free, Old Kirke Museum, 300 Walnut St., Manistee
- 20 Live in the Plaza - acoustic music with Patty Pershaya**  
5-8pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington
- 21 Joseph Works – Exhibit of Paintings by Phil and Susan Joseph**  
Noon-3pm, Ramsdell Regional Center for the Arts, 101 Maple St., Manistee. Reservations required
- 21 Onekama Farmers Market**  
1-4pm, Across the street from Honor Onekama Building Supply, 4847 N. Main St., Onekama
- 21 Ludington Farmer's Market**  
3-7pm, N. James St. Plaza, downtown Ludington
- 21 FNL Unplugged – acoustic music with Fremont John**  
6-9pm, free, N. James St. Plaza Stage, downtown Ludington
- 21 Live Music at the Level Four Rooftop Bar with Luke Woltanski**  
7-9pm, bar is open 5-10pm, Crystal Mtn, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville
- 21 Bluegrass Music Series with Laurel Premo**  
7-10pm, Northern Natural, 7220 Chief Rd., Kaleva
- 22 Manistee Farmer's Market**  
8am-1pm, Memorial Dr. and Washington St., Manistee
- 22 Chairlift Rides and Top of the Mountain Entertainment with Jesse Jefferson**  
6-8pm, weather permitting, \$9, 8 and under free with paying adult, houseguests free. Crystal Mountain, 12500 Crystal Mountain Road, Thompsonville
- 22 Earthwork Music presents The Go Rounds**  
7-10pm, Northern Natural, 7220 Chief Rd., Kaleva

## AUGUST 7-9: ONEKAMA DAYS LITE

- 7-10 Special Sales**  
various Onekama area retailers
- 7-8 Onekama Parks and Recreation Scavenger Hunt**  
All day, free, all ages. Smart phone required. Register your team at parks@onekamatwp.org or at the Parks and Recreation tent in the Village Park. Map and instructions will be emailed.
- 7 Kids Fun Fish Competition**  
7:30-10:30am, free, registration and rules meeting at 7am at Village of Onekama's boat launch. All DNR rules apply, participants must be 16 or under and accompanied by an adult.
- 7 Guided Adventure in Glen Park**  
4th Ave., Onekama, 10am, free, with Forester/Wildlife Biologist Josh Shields, Ph.D. For questions or reservations call 231-889-9666 OR go to parks@OnekamaTwp.org
- 7 Onekama Farmers Market**  
1-4pm, Across the street from Honor Onekama Building Supply, 4847 N. Main St., Onekama
- 8 Pop Up Art Market, Onekama**  
10am-2pm, porch, garden and parking area of Patina, 4850 N. Main St., Onekama, and parking lot of Honor Onekama Building Supply, 4847 N. Main St., Onekama
- 8 BBQ Rib Dinner, Onekama Village Park**  
5-8pm, \$12/meal, \$6/hotdog meal kids under 12. Curbside ordering/pickup in west parking lot near pavilion. Credit cards accepted. To benefit Onekama Athletic Boosters
- 8 Silent Auction and Bake Sale**  
5-8pm, during BBQ Rib Dinner, Onekama Village Park
- 8 Fireworks over Portage Lake**  
at dusk. **Rain date August 9.**





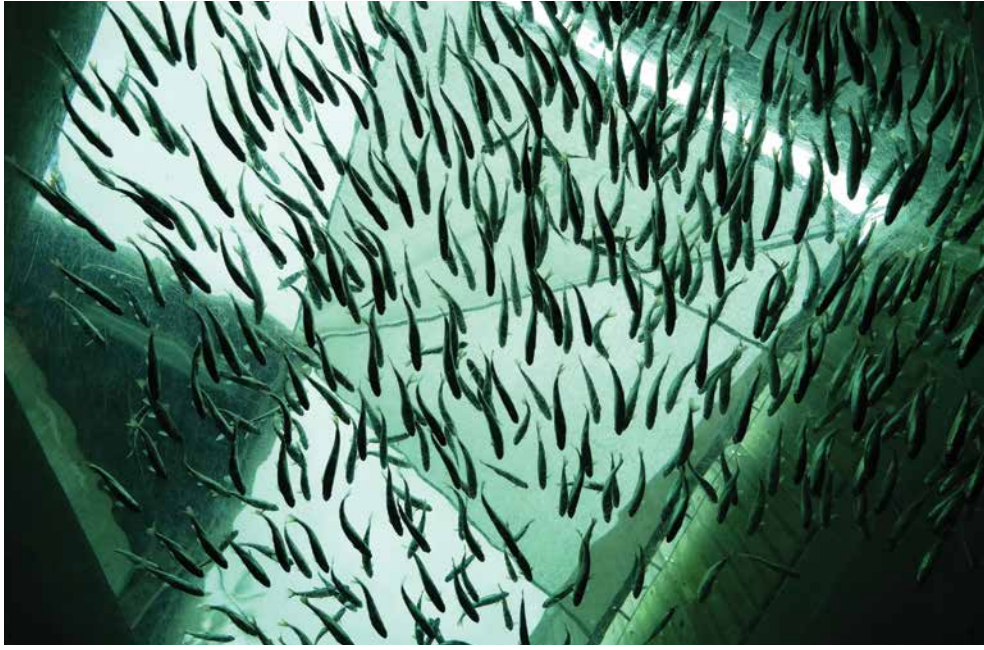


Photo by Bruce Warrington, Unsplash.

# Fisheries Heritage Trail offers surprises: Actual and Virtual

Story by STEWART A. MCFERRAN

*When you set foot on a trail, the destination is known but what you will find along the way is unknown. That is the case with the Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Trail.*

The trail winds around the five Great Lakes and connects sites linked by a common heritage. The website, [greatlakesfisheriestrail.org](http://greatlakesfisheriestrail.org), serves as a trailhead that allows you to begin from where you are. If you live within the Great Lakes Basin, fisheries' heritage is all around you.

The heritage trail is both virtual and actual. It's possible to spend hours online exploring things to do and places to visit, reading trail stories – such as the life of a commercial fisherman – and learning about fisheries' history and research. A trip planner allows you to search for a list of those activities or attractions that interest you most, and maps point the way to them.

Stops on the trail include museums and active fisheries, charter fishing businesses, tour boats, fish markets, and restaurants serving fresh Great Lakes fish.

Turns out that trail sites have a lot in common. That is because they share a common heritage and explore similar themes. One theme that emerges as you follow the trail, either online or in person – fishing practices have changed over time and are still changing. People of the eight states surrounding the Great Lakes face fluctuating fish populations. Trail exhibits make those changes apparent and guideposts inform the way forward. This is important as we look to the future of fishing in the Great Lakes.

One thing that has not changed is the reliance on aquaculture. The Oden State Fish Hatchery, near Alanson, is just one of Michigan's DNR hatcheries. It opened in 1920. In 2002 it was replaced by a brand-new facility, according to DNR's Dan

Sampson.

State efforts to stock the Great Lakes with fish have been ongoing for over 100 years. Decisions about which fish to raise in the hatcheries and release into the water have shaped the fishery and been controversial. Take the "German Brown" trout. It was released into streams before World War II. During the war with Germany the name was changed to just "brown trout." Though not native, brown trout can still be caught in some lakes as well as streams.

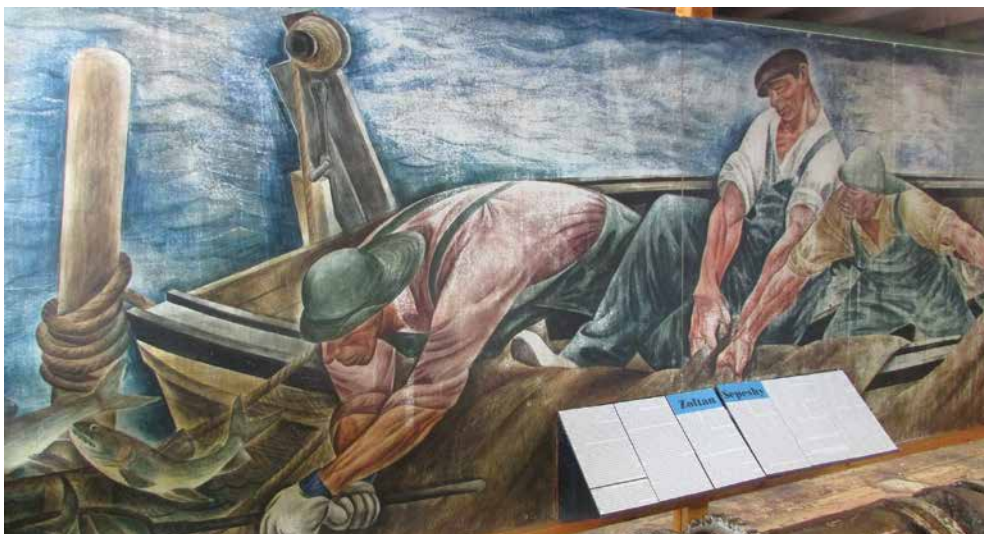
With the negotiations regarding fisheries resources up in the air, (see "What will happen to the fish of many names?," Freshwater Reporter, July 8, 2020), the guideposts along the trail will be important. The knowledge the State of Michigan has gained over a century of raising and releasing fish into the wild is, in itself, an important resource.

The Great Lakes Aquaculture Collaborative has just received a multimillion-dollar grant to educate the public that aquaculture can be "sustainable and environmentally friendly."

Locally, the Port of Ludington Maritime Museum, (see "All Hands on Deck," Freshwater Reporter, May 21, 2020), while not an official stop along the trail, includes important information and interesting exhibits about the history of local commercial and recreational fisheries. It is in the former U.S. Coast Guard Station, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (See our "Maritime Trail" story in this issue.)

Listed on the fisheries' trail are two other

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Mural at the Beaver Island Marine Museum. Photo by S.A. McFerran.

## Camping locally? Yes, please.

This region offers two beautiful state campgrounds, **Orchard Beach State Park in Manistee** and **Ludington State Park in Ludington**, as well as the **Huron-Manistee National Forest campgrounds**. The "All Stays" smartphone app can point you to others. More camping-related resources are: [MichCampgrounds.com](http://MichCampgrounds.com), [RVParky.com](http://RVParky.com), [FlyingJ.com](http://FlyingJ.com), [RVLife.com](http://RVLife.com)

**Others:** Mich. wheelchair accessible trails: [traillink.com](http://traillink.com) and Michigan WiFi Hotspots: <http://cngis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer>  
**To make reservations at the state parks:** <https://midnrreservations.com/>

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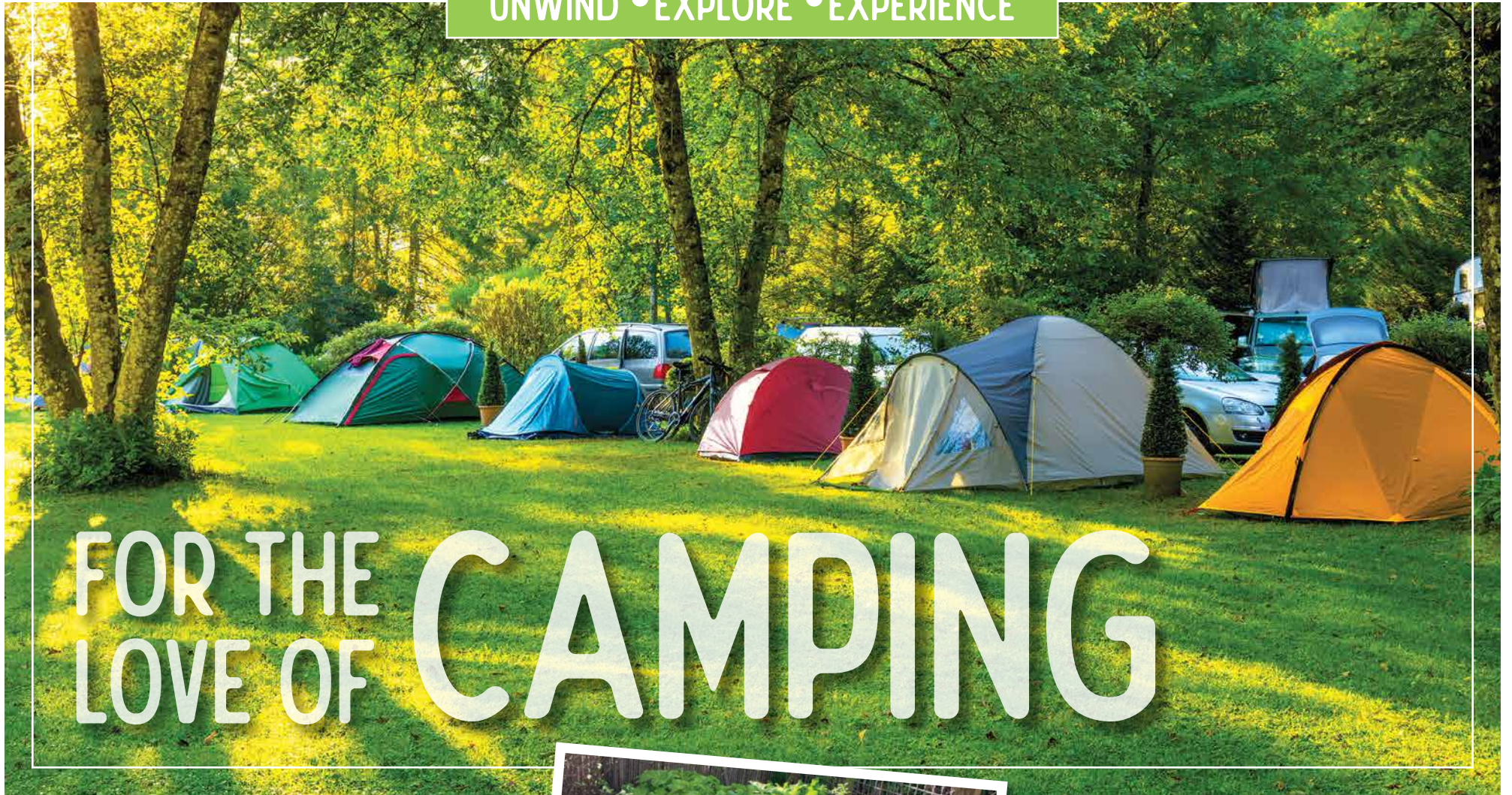
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ABC: A BOX CAMP

Camping is cool, no matter what your age or how much money you have to spend for the experience. You do not need more than a big cardboard box, if you are a little guy or gal, to enjoy many happy camping hours.

I was reminded of this when my daughter Chelsea got a new piece of furniture delivered and her 4-year-old son Liam adopted the empty box as his own camp. With some scissors to cut doors and windows, crayons for decorating, and a pillow and blanket, he has made it his home away from home.

I did the same thing when I was about 4 and my folks got a new refrigerator. I used the box for my own first camping fun. I took many naps in our front yard with my pet farm cat. I was really excited to be outdoors – feeling the wind moving the sides of the box in and out, and hearing leaves fall and skitter across my roof. I could hear the birds singing their hearts out right above the maple tree and me. What happiness that was.

Your little kids or grandkids can do this, too, and have many hours of joy. Get them a big cardboard box and let them go to town customizing their own first camp. –RON SCHMIDT



HOME IS WHERE YOU PITCH IT

My favorite way to arrive at any campsite is hungry and exhausted from an entire day of pedaling my loaded touring bike. I prefer to have aching wrists and wobbly legs when I dismount. I want dirty sunscreen dripping down my shins. I will have sticky helmet hair and sweaty riding clothes.

It won't matter what season it is, because I know my tent will protect me.

I feel the safest in my lightweight, one-person tent. It's simple to set up, especially when the stakes slide easily into the moss. There is just enough room for me and my gear. My bike stays outside on night watch, handwashed socks and underwear dangling on its handlebars. If I don't set an alarm, I could sleep for 14 hours. Since the "hiker biker" sites attract a specific crowd – the quiet, tired bike touring crowd – I trust that I won't be disturbed by human noise.

Food tastes better when you're bike camping. I'll sit at a picnic table, if there is one, or I'll enjoy a headlamp-lit dinner from inside my tent. Some evenings I'll have a view of the setting sun, and other evenings the only priorities are feeding myself and warming up in my sleeping bag.

I journal to remember the details of the day: the awful headwinds, the steep climbs that I thought would never end, and the straight and lonely highways. I recall kind people I met at the local food marts, animals I encountered, and the strength and pride I feel from traveling like this, solo.

Everything I need to survive is strapped to my bike, and my home is where I pitch it. I write until my heart slows down, preparing for my deep, deserved slumber. I feel the sleepest, but the most alive. I am right where I'm supposed to be.

–ROBYN SCHMIDT



RACCOON SUPERSTAR

I was building my house here in the North and didn't go camping until the end of August. I packed my tent and drove one morning to the Sleeping Bear Dunes Platte River Campground to get a permit for the backcountry camping sites nearby.

The permission center was behind a forest of people. I went up to the door to get my permit, but the Valkyries guarding it wouldn't let me in.

"Go to end of the line."

I told her I just wanted the backcountry camping spot.

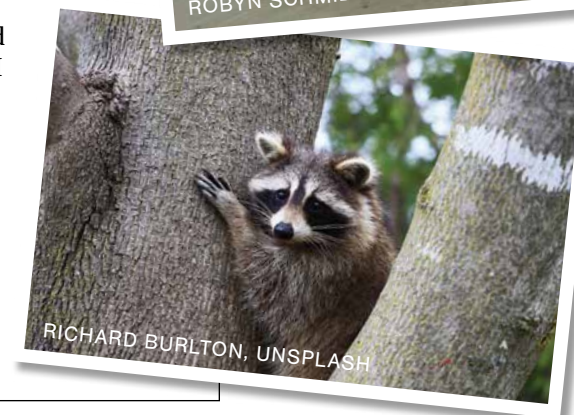
"Go to the end of the line."

I rolled my eyes and left, then came back an hour later and got my permit. I strapped my backpack on and set off. The forest was beautiful, that dark green color just before the colors turn in the fall.

I set my tent up in the sand. Then I ran out to the beach and watched the sunset. I ate my cheese sandwich for dinner. I curled up and read for a while then went to sleep. In the middle of the night, yup, I heard a raccoon in my pack. I got up and threw my book at him and then my shoes.

The next day, I hiked back to the parking lot, got in my car, and bought some rope. I wasn't going let that raccoon spoil my fun! I hiked back to my campsite in a thunderstorm, with lightning striking all over. I tied the rope as high as I could between two trees, then tied a rope in the middle that hung down and attached my pack to this rope. Aha! No raccoon can get that.

In the middle of the night, I heard a noise in the trees. I grabbed my flashlight and pointed it toward the noise. The raccoon was on the rope between the trees, bringing my pack up with his little paws. It was August. He had been practicing all summer. I couldn't win! –P.G. MISTY SHEEHAN



NOTHING BETTER THAN BUTTERSVILLE

Buttersville Campground, south of Ludington, is on the high bluffs on Lake Michigan. It's owned by Pere Marquette Township. You simply can't find a prettier spot. –JUDY COOLS



## INDEPENDENCE AT D.H. DAY

And the rain held off  
 And we were the center of the circle  
 And everything in it chimed  
 Our tears belied our joy  
 Reverent to the spreading of the early morning sun  
 Bicycles glistening with droplets of dew  
 Morning tangled in our sleep mangled locks  
 Sweaters tucked tightly under chins  
 The whiiiiirrrrr and the whiiiizzzz of your spokes  
 clamoring to be contained  
 While our furloughed friends wrestle slowly from their slumber  
 Our brown knees sneaking out from summer skirts  
 We turn toward the narrow trail  
 Over thirsty roots and mossy pebbles  
 We wind our way up the sandy slope  
 For a moment we rest in silent awe--  
 two spotted fawns and their gentle mother  
 We nod, our eyes whisper,  
 "Stay quiet & perhaps they will linger longer"  
 But a red squirrel skitters & the deer move along,  
 the elders' eyes darting protectively between us and her nurslings.  
 I see now, sweet girl, that you screeched to such a halt to witness their splendor,  
 that you have churned your inaugural break torque!  
 Here, among the whispering breezes, you who have been tirelessly listening and practicing,  
 trying to master your "bicicleta",  
 braving your way, undaunted, trusting only two wheels and your own will to keep up with your  
 older cousin,  
 You who only moments ago were still slightly wobbly, unsure you could stop  
 as our wide passage gave way to this narrow footpath, toward the dune and beyond it, our  
 destination--  
 The Big Lake, in all her morning glory--  
 Then right here, squinting under the kaleidoscope of leaf twinkle and sun sprinkle,  
 our smiles lit from within,  
 both fully present at this moment of your ephemera--  
 you toss your head back  
 and then as sure as you are alive  
 you ask me if i want to race...

- CHRISTINA RYAN-STOLTZ

## STONE LINGUISTICS

I don't speak 'Superior.'	But I apologize, Superior.
She repeats over and over	I still can't quite make it out,
A phrase to the shore.	Your guttural, epiglottal
Spoken by water over rocks,	responses
Liquid as Portuguese.	To the question I asked of
I walk along the cobbles,	your stones.
Trying to understand.	Where are the agates?

Now, I can understand	Superior waves won't say.
A few snippets of 'Michigan'.	Yet they offer a soliloquy
Her soothing lullaby words,	of surf.
Washing onto sandy beaches.	A teasing rhythmic tumble,
She shares fossil rocks with me.	Washing other pretty rocks at my feet.

- RAMONA DEGEORGIO-VENEGAS



## POP'S POP-UP

Dad always said when he had a family, he would take them on vacations.

In the 1940s his parents likely had no money or time for vacations with their seven kids.

The first camping trip I recall was when I was 11, the oldest of five siblings at the time.

My dad, a schoolteacher, planned a two-week trip for spring break. He borrowed a pop-up camper from our neighbors, put a hitch on the station wagon and reserved a Florida campsite. We each were given an empty Carlings Black Label beer box for our belongings. I thought this a bit unfair and slipped a couple books and a flashlight into my 3-year-old sister Sally's box - she

certainly didn't need all her space.

First stop: Mammoth Cave, cold and dark, with colorful stalagmites. We were enchanted. The next day we headed out. About an hour into the trip, Sally put a small stone up her nose. As she started to sob, she sucked the stone in deeper. Dad hollered and weaved across the road before pulling over. Mom pulled the stone out with tweezers. Whew!

It poured when we reached the Florida campground, which was dirty and a little scary. Dad and I struggled with the pop-up. Two hours later it developed a sizeable leak over the table. The next day was too windy and stormy to go to the beach. My parents tried to make the best of it by taking us to see alligators and big fish. About that time my 1-year-old brother Matt started crying and was inconsolable. He got sick and developed a fever. My parents took him to the E.R., leaving me in charge of my other three siblings and strict instructions to stay inside. I'm sure Mom was horrified to leave us at that campground alone. When they returned, my brother was feeling better on his medications.

The next day Dad found a beautiful KOA campground near the beach. We packed up the camper and the next 10 days of our vacation were as glorious as they could be for a girl of 11. My Dad was so happy he bought us a pop-up, and we had many years of happy trips and adventures. - CHRISTINE STAPLETON

## GRAYLING RETREAT

The large sign near the entrance should have been a sign. But, no. We had chosen this campground as our destination. We wanted to find a nice site to set up camp before dark and hopefully, 1. near the lake, 2. with a flat place for the tent, and 3. under trees for ambiance.

Campers know you're likely to find one of those three items, maybe two if the camp gods are with you. Locating all three - lake, flat and trees - before the sun drops is a rare occurrence.

This time, we won the trifecta! There weren't other campers around. Hmm. I was just too relieved to wonder or even worry. We even had all the tent poles! The tent door opening faced the lake for a nice breeze. We'd remembered all the pillows and equipment for a good night's sleep.

The boys collected firewood while the tent was being set up. Camp ready, we wandered down to the lake to look for critters and to skip rocks. We were rewarded with some minnows in the shallows and a marvelous sunset. Back at camp we roasted marshmallows over a small campfire, watching as the embers died.

After a final trip to an outhouse, we saw the moon come up and crawled into our sleeping bags. Later that night, I woke up scared and confused. The noise was loud and close by. What the heck was happening? We unzipped the tent door and looked outside.

"BOOM! Ratta-ratta-ratta, BOOM!"

Then came the explosive stars and tracers, like fireworks over the lake. We were in a mock combat zone.

"Cool, Mom!" our sons both said, peeking over my shoulders from the tent.

It was 4 a.m.

Suddenly, camouflaged people were running through the woods nearby.

Sleep was definitely done.

At daylight, as we retreated from our makeshift home, the signs now made sense. "No Tanks Beyond This Point." Camp Grayling was the campground's neighbor. It was a trip to remember! - RAMONA DEGEORGIO-VENEGAS

# Reservations required

By PAT STINSON

WELLSTON - Eleven National Forest campsites above Tippy Dam, along the Upper Manistee River, are so popular, many campers never have the chance to use them. By changing those campsites from first-come, first-served to reservation only, and limiting the number of nights the sites can be reserved, U.S. Forest Service personnel hope to free them up for more campers, according to Joseph Raspotnik, Natural Resource Recreation Specialist.

"There is limited space, and this gives everyone equal opportunity," Raspotnik said, explaining that some campers would occupy a site for 14 days, leave for two days, then return to the same site.

"That's not fair," he said.

The new system allows more campers to enjoy the most-popular Upper Manistee River campsites: 4 at Red Bridge River Access Campground and 7 at Government Landing/Government Island.

The maximum stay at those sites is now three nights, Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend.

"People love it," Raspotnik said, of the new reservation system, "because they have

a spot when they get here."

Forest Service employee Wes Tavegia echoed Raspotnik.

"It helps people driving four hours from Detroit or four hours from Chicago," he said.

Campers make reservations online at [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov), a vendor-provided reservation system used by government-owned campgrounds across the country. There is no camping fee, however, an \$8 per-reservation service fee is charged by [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov).

Tavegia said campers finding their favorite campsite occupied may take advantage of numerous dispersed camping opportunities in the National Forest.

"You can't put your finger on a (Huron-Manistee National Forest) map without hitting a Forest Service road," he said. "We encourage folks who fly by the seat of their pants to do dispersed camping."

Motor vehicle maps, recreation maps and dispersed camping rules may be obtained at ranger stations or download them at: [fs.usda.gov/detail/hmnm/maps](http://fs.usda.gov/detail/hmnm/maps).

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## DON'T SCARE THE KIDS

About eight miles southwest of Manistee, in the section of the Manistee National Forest that extends to the shore of Lake Michigan, there's an ideal campground. Most people in Manistee call it "Federal Park," and it's labeled Lake Michigan Campground on the sign on Forest Trail Road at US-31. This was our favorite place to camp with the kids and we asked my brother-in-law Tim and sister-in-law Nan if they'd like to join us there. Our kids were close in age, and we always enjoyed their company when they came up from Ohio to visit Michigan.

At Federal Park we not only had one of the best beaches around, with a stream emptying into the big lake that the kids loved to play in, but there was also a hard-packed, two-mile trail for safely biking through the forest. The campsites were nicely spread out and miles of hiking trails extended into Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness. I could get up early before everyone was awake and search for rare Prairie Warblers that used to nest in the dunes there.

One evening when the kids had finished supper and were all tucked out from biking, hiking and swimming, we gathered around the campfire to burn marshmallows and eat chocolate. The kids loved to hear the grownups tell stories. Tim began with his adventures of living on a farm: daring escapes from bulls and battles with giant pigs, armed only with a shovel. The kids were enthralled. Next, Nan told her somewhat infamous "Black Dot Story." Nan went to parochial school and, although hard to believe now, had gotten into trouble with her teacher. The students were forbidden to slide on the ice in the parking lot, and she did just that with her friend. When the teacher confronted the students, Nan's best friend confessed her own crime. Nan couldn't get away with a sin, so she also confessed and suffered the humiliation of having a "black dot" (demerit) placed on the behavior poster in front of the class.

It was my turn next. The scene was set. The trees were dimly lit by the campfire's glow and dark hills surrounded us. This was to be the first night the kids dared to sleep in their own tents, without grownups. As usual, I wanted to tell a story that would get the kids interested in the creatures of the outdoors. I talked about Lake Michigan's great depth, the little fish that lived in the shallows and the huge salmon that ranged miles out into the deep waters. My wife warned me not to make it scary, but I was getting carried away.

"You know," I said, "there is an even larger fish in the lake not many have seen that sometimes comes up on land, called a land shark."

My wife gave me a warning glance.

Our boys Luke and Andy and Tim and Nan's son Christopher were light sleepers, notoriously difficult to get to bed at night. I neglected that as I carried on.

"These land sharks could crawl up on the beach when everyone was asleep," I continued, "and that's why no one saw them and there was no warning."

The kids huddled closer with wide eyes.

"The land sharks were dark and blended into the night, and they loved peanut butter."

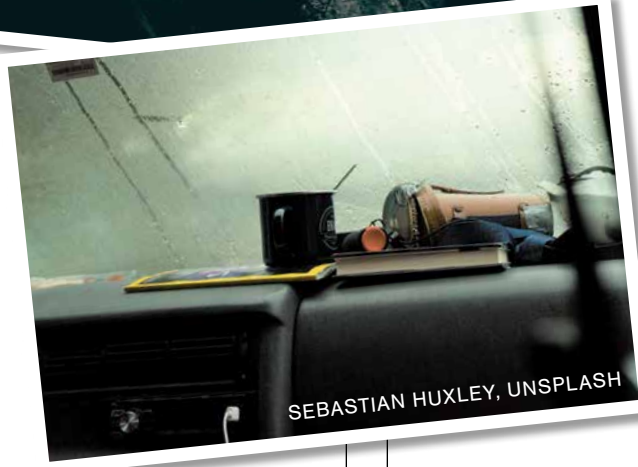
"Ahhhhh!" Andy screamed, and ran up to his mom, soon joined by his brother Luke, as Christopher hugged his dad.

"That's it, Brian," my wife said. Her sister agreed. The kids wanted to sleep in our tents now, except for Tim and Nan's brave little Carolyn who was upset that no one wanted to sleep in the kids' tents anymore.

I had to then explain that, sorry, there really are no land sharks coming out of Lake Michigan, and the campground was protected by the strong guardian trees of the forest.

It didn't work.

The kids slept in our tent that night. It was a long time until I told scary campfire stories again, and we continued to camp at and enjoy Federal Park and, later, many campgrounds across the state. Funny thing, my kids hardly remembered that story, but my wife never forgot it. -BRIAN ALLEN



## EUCHRED!

August 23, 1986. It was the weekend that my husband and I were going to meet up with his sister and her husband at Young State Park in Charlevoix. The plan was for them to arrive earlier in the day to secure our sites, and we would make the trip north after work.

We loaded up the Honda Accord and were on our way. Rain soon began to hit the windshield. The closer we got, the heavier the rain became. By the time we arrived at the campground, we were in a severe thunderstorm. We pulled into the campsite and there, peering out at us from their tent, were Barb and Vince. They looked like drowned rats! They, and all their bedding, were completely soaked.

We stayed in the car as my beloved engineer-of-a-man plotted how we were going to set up our tent, regardless of the elements. Once we had our plan - and rehearsed the details - it was game on. Despite our well-orchestrated and rehearsed plan, our erect tent was more wet on the inside than the outside. Mother Nature had won.

We retreated to the car, our new accommodations for the night. Our moisture-rich attire quickly fogged the windows and provided that nice "wet" aroma. We were harbored from the rain, but lightning illuminated the car throughout the night and made

a good night's rest (for me, anyway) impossible. Thankfully, morning brought dry skies. After the four of us disassembled our quarters and hung them over the clothesline to dry, we embarked on a competitive game of euchre. After the final point, we took a short hike as the camping gear dried. On our return, we found the campers to one side of us had left. Our euchre commotion must have been too much for them.

The rest of the weekend went off without a hitch, and we vowed to camp each year around the same time. Unfortunately, the rain gods must have made the same pact, and we dissolved our annual camping adventure in 1988. -SUSAN HINTZ



## WHITewater. RED EARTH

We were camped way down a long two-track on the Chattooga River, which runs along the border of Georgia and South Carolina. The big 12-passenger van was parked, and the crew of determined boys had found camping spots along the river.

Our guide Steve Scarborough had done a great job teaching the kids canoeing skills as they guided their tandem canoes through the class II and III rapids of the Chattooga. I had even bought a Dagger paddle from Steve, who was in the process of starting a canoe company called Dagger.

We liked to think the campers had learned some life skills as they worked together to paddle their tough plastic boats around rocks and over the ledges of that most classic Southern stream. Some even attempted the Bull Sluice, a class IV+ rapid that drops 14 feet and was featured in the

film Deliverance.

It had been raining all night and the two-track had turned muddy. We finished breakfast and packed up the van for the trip back to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where the Appalachian School of Experience was based. I was at the wheel as we started up the two-track. After we got about halfway, the tires began to spin and forward progress stalled. My co-leader Tom Hen told the kids to get out and push. They did as I spun the tires. That red Georgia mud flew everywhere as we topped out and gained the hard stuff.

I had never seen such a muddy bunch as they piled back into the van. We were all happy to be headed home. -STEWART A. MCFERRAN

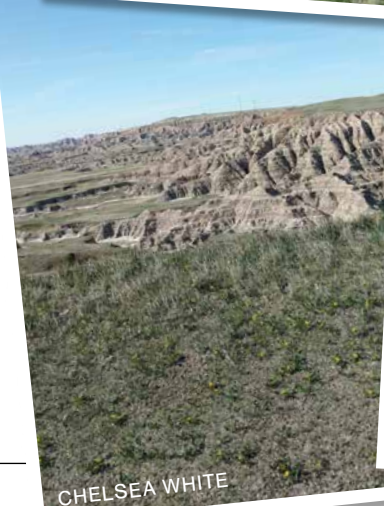
## OUR YEAR OF COMPROMISE

I grew up camping in tents. We liked camping so much that I got a two-bedroom tent for Christmas as a child. This resulted in an ill-fated January camping attempt, but after that the tent got plenty of use. As an adult, I obsessed over hammock camping and learned of all my ultralight options for long hikes into rarely explored areas. The minimalist appeal of hiking into a place not well known sounded solitary and peaceful, therefore immensely appealing to a working mom with two kids.

All of this was not my ultimate camping experience.

I'm going to attempt to make a long story short. Haven't succeeded yet, but there's always a first time. I moved away from Northern Michigan to ride horses professionally. I regretted it almost instantly and turned myself into a pretzel trying to talk my husband into moving back home from Central Florida. He finally agreed. The compromise? We buy a travel trailer and travel the country first.

I know a travel trailer doesn't sound like camping. Ours specifically had two bedrooms and plenty of space.



It was truly a little home on wheels. But we did things a little differently. We strayed a lot. We did this little thing called "boondocking," which consists of finding national land that you can just park on. I came face-to-face with a bobcat in the desert. I almost fell into a fire when

a javelina shuffled through our site. I watched dust tornadoes that flung our belongings a football field away. I parked at the absolute edge of the Badlands in South Dakota and watched buffalo move along the striations of an ancient ocean.

The bottom line here, the ultimate takeaway (I hope) is that camping is subjective. There is no right way to do it. As long as it makes your soul move and your heart flutter, and you're grateful for the experience, it will be worth every second. -CHELSEA WHITE





The Ludington Maritime Museum is the former Coast Guard station built in 1934. Its replacement in the background was built in 2003 near the mouth of Ludington Harbor.



The North Breakwater Light on the Maritime Heritage Trail is busy with visitors making the half-mile walk along the breakwater. The light tower has a slight list to the northwest.

# Navigating the Maritime Heritage Trail

Story and photos by KEVIN HOWELL with JEAN HOWELL

Editor's note: This is the first in a series of stories about Mason County's Cultural Heritage Trails.

*After years of visiting Michigan, my wife Jean and I moved here from Indiana a little more than a year ago because we love the scenery and the "big" lakeshore. But, like we always do when we travel, we wanted to learn about the place, its culture and its history.*

I looked over a website describing trails developed by the Cultural Economic Task Force of Mason County and decided it might be a fun way to learn more about our new, adopted home. Six trails are listed – Agricultural Trail, Barn Quilt Trail, Music Heritage Trail, Lumber Heritage Trail, Sculpture Trail and Maritime Heritage Trail – and I decided to attack the list from the bottom and hit the Maritime Heritage Trail first.

Armed with cell phones – the trails are totally technological, though you can print maps as well – my wife, as navigator, and I headed toward Ludington. Traveling west on US-10, toward the lakeshore, I was reminded that it was National Hot Dog Day, which has nothing to do with this story other than I took note of the hotdog food truck. For fellow chowhounds, I'll explain that it and other food trucks stand near the highway, in a parking lot near the corner of Nelson Road.

I refrained from stopping for a Ludington Dog, a Chicago Dog or one of the other tasty dogs and encouraged my truck to keep heading downtown. Passing clothing,

souvenir and curio shops, restaurants and bars – and plenty of masked-up tourists – we headed to Ludington Beach at Stearns Park. It's always worth a cruise through the beach parking area, even on a cloudy day, as it provides a good look at the lake. During our visit the water was fairly calm, with the wind up just enough to see crews unfurl their sails as their sailboats left the harbor.

Stearns Park is also the entry to the North Breakwater walkway that runs about a half mile to the North Breakwater Light, number 512 on the Maritime Trail. According to the trail's short audio description, Congress set aside funds in 1923 to replace a lighthouse on the south pier constantly damaged by stormy weather. In 1994, after reconfiguration of the concrete pier, the light settled slightly – leaving a noticeable list to the northwest. The light is owned by the City of Ludington and managed by the Sable Points Lighthouse Keepers Association and is open to the public. The breakwater, often awash with wave action, was busy with visitors traversing its length.

Passing through Stearns Park, we turned back onto Lakeshore Drive and followed

it a few blocks until it dead ended at the Ludington Maritime Museum. The museum is not listed in the tour guide, but many points of interest along the trail are highlighted inside it, in more detail. Google Ludington Maritime Museum for hours of operation and details. Since we had visited the museum previously, we skirted around the east side of the building and along a walkway behind it for a view of the harbor entrance and the new Coast Guard Station. The museum is the former 1934 Coast Guard Station, number 509 in the guide. According to the two-minute audio clip, funding for the station was made available to help stop liquor coming into the country during Prohibition. Despite years of upgrades, the station was deemed outdated by 2003. A new station was built next door. The old station was handed over to the city and eventually to the Mason County Historical Society.

After watching a few more sailboats and yachts at the mouth of the harbor, we headed east on Loomis Street toward Ludington's Municipal Marina. This is where all watercraft dock: Police and DNR patrol craft, sailboats, ocean-faring-sized yachts and sportfishing charter boats. It's a place for daydreams, as we idled by and picked out the boat of our dreams. Sigh.

We headed to William Street then turned right and drove a couple blocks to Waterfront Park, a scenic spot on the harbor and Pere Marquette Lake. Here, you can stroll past sculptures interpreting the history and culture of Ludington. A well-made play structure entices youngsters, and this is a pleasant place for adults to watch

boats cruise by. The S.S. Badger car ferry may be docked nearby, if it's not heading into or out of the harbor on a trip across the big lake to Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The park is also the location of numerous stops along the Maritime Trail, including the Badger's sister vessel, the S.S. Spartan.

Number 402 on the trail, Kristin Kokkin's "Spirit of Ludington" sculpture, honors the memory of Charles Conrad, a Ludington native. The piece embodies the city's maritime culture, art, commerce and significant people and is a tribute to the Ludington spirit. Conrad's story and eight more park sculptures await your discovery.

At this point, Navigator Jean reminded me that we had missed a couple of interpretive points near the museum, so back we went. Two more sculptures can be found on walkways near the harbor entrance to Lake Michigan, on the west side of the Coast Guard Station at the south end of the Ludington public boat ramp. The sculptures pay tribute to an 1886 schooner that sank near Onekama and to the popular sportfishing charter industry. Check out the interpretive sign that explains how the harbor was developed, another interesting story, and enjoy the view as it is today.

In total, there are 22 interpretive points along the Maritime Heritage Trail highlighting the area's ghost towns and industries: salt, lumber, shipbuilding and commercial fishing, among others.

Hmmm, I wonder if I still have time to get that hotdog?

For information, visit [masoncountyculture.com/trails](http://masoncountyculture.com/trails). Click "Online Trails App," on the left, to find the trail sites.

Kevin Howell is a transplanted freelance writer from Indiana currently residing in Mason County. He loves the Michigan woods, lakes, people, and especially Michigan craft beers - not necessarily in that order! Kevin can be contacted at [kevin@ytc.com](mailto:kevin@ytc.com).

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# Cache 'Em

continued from page 1

other “cachers” for you to find. Their coordinates, names, descriptions and other pertinent information are registered with [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com), the site that keeps track of all the caches and makes it possible for you to search for them. The caches are rated in terms of difficulty to find, terrain challenges and size, making it easy for you to decide what level of challenge you're up for.

In 2000, the U.S. government made it possible for civilians to use its Global Positioning System with the precision that was previously available only to the military. To test the accuracy of the system, Dave Ulmer, a computer consultant, stashed a black bucket with a logbook and other goodies in the woods near Beavercreek, Oregon. He shared the coordinates of the stash online for others to find. Within three days, two people found the cache and shared their experiences online.

The idea spread quickly, and many others began searching for and placing caches. To make the hobby more accessible to nontechnical folks and to keep track of the growing number of caches, Geocaching.com was officially launched in September, 2000, when there were just 75 known geocaches in the world. Today there are over 3 million active caches in 191 countries on all 7 continents. Starting in early 2021, if all goes according to plan, there will be a geocache on Mars! NASA is sending a trackable cache on its Perseverance Mars Rover. The mission launched on July 30 and will land on Mars in February.

### Cache phrase

Geo refers to the Earth and describes the global nature of the sport. Cache has two appropriate definitions. A French word coined in 1797, cache means a hiding



Geocache, found between a rock and a hard place.

place used to temporarily store items and conjures up stories of pirates, pioneers and gold miners. Cache is also used in computer terminology, referring to storage that can be used to quickly recall frequently used information. Earth, hiding, and technology combine to make geocaching the perfect term for the hobby.

### Five basic rules

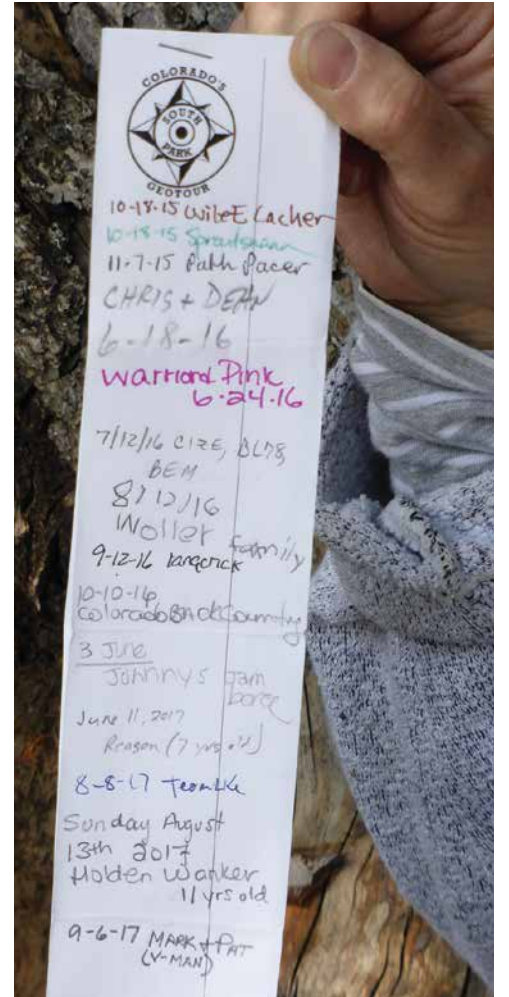
1) If you take a piece of swag from a geocache, leave something of equal or greater value, 2) CITO – cache in, trash out – clean up any trash you may find while searching for a cache, 3) write about your find in the cache logbook, 4) cache and release by replacing the cache exactly where you found it, and 5) log your experience at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com).

Caches are maintained by the folks who hide them, so it is important that they receive feedback on the condition of the cache. If the logbook is full and needs replacing, or if there are too many DNFs (did not find) they

need to know. A lot of DNFs may mean that the cache was moved or is hidden too well.

Once you have used your GPS device and made it to the area of the cache, use any clues given to locate it. Caches vary in size from Nano, (about the size of a pencil eraser), to Large, (think bread box or five-gallon bucket). If you are just starting out geocaching, larger caches are easier to find. After successfully finding some, try moving on to smaller ones. Kids can be particularly adept at spotting caches that are close to the ground, underneath something, or hidden in trees. Some caches are camouflaged or made to look like other objects, like rocks or large bolts. Some are magnetic and can be hidden on metal surfaces.

Cachers have their own vocabulary used to describe caches and make short notes in logbooks. Some examples include TNLNSL – took nothing, left nothing, signed logbook, BYOP – bring your own pen, and TFTC – thanks for the cache. A complete list can be found at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com).



Add your name to the list of geocachers.

If you find you really enjoy geocaching, you can purchase a premier membership for an annual fee of \$29.99, which will allow you to hunt for many more advanced caches. You can also try hiding a few caches of your own. Joining the 3,500-plus members of Michigan Geocaching Organization, [www.migeocaching.org](http://www.migeocaching.org), comes with many benefits and family-friendly events. They are a close-knit community of folks who are willing to help you learn even more about the fun sport of geocaching.

# Fisheries Heritage Trail

continued from page 3



Charter fishing boats, Manistee. Photo by Mark Videan.

brick-and-mortar museums: the Besser Museum of Northeast Michigan, in Alpena, and the Beaver Island Marine Museum, located in Charlevoix County. The Bob S. and Katherine V. are fishing tugs that have

been restored by staff at those institutions. Besser Museum volunteer Tuffy Cross has brought the Katherine V's Kolenburg engine back to life. The high-decked fishing tug has played a big role in Michigan's fishing

past. That is why the Alpena museum has preserved the Katherine V as an example of the gill-net fishing technique that was used throughout Michigan and the Great Lakes for centuries. The Besser Museum is currently open, and tours are offered.

The Oden State Fish Hatchery has an outside walking trail that is open to the public. Oden Creek is the site of the original hatchery. Along the trail walkers will find an “underwater viewing chamber,” where fish in the stream can be seen from below. The wild fish that swim by at eye level are not quarantined, unlike the grayling kept in tanks within buildings.

Visit the heritage trail's website at [greatlakesfisheriestrail.org](http://greatlakesfisheriestrail.org) and plan a trip. You can find a place for a prepared fish dinner, buy fish to cook or smoke at home, plan a boat ride or schedule a fishing trip. The site is searchable and will yield results that might surprise you.

The Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Trail includes 34 trail partners – from public schools to Michigan Fish Producers Association and the Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority. Funding sources include Michigan Coastal Zone Management Program, DEQ Office of the Great Lakes, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Dept. of Commerce, with support from Michigan Sea Grant College Program.

Stewart A. McFerran illuminates current environmental issues in an historic context. As with his investigations into earthen dams, sand dunes and fisheries, he hopes readers will gain an understanding of and insight into ways people interact with their environment.

# Perseids

continued from page 1



repeatedly pass by the earth. Its nucleus is about 16 miles in diameter. The comet's orbit is extremely elliptical, taking it from inside Earth's orbit to out beyond Pluto's. It came closest to Earth in December, 1992, and will be nearest to us again in July, 2126, on its 133-year-long orbit around the sun.

Comets are thought to be leftovers from the formation of our solar system, about 4.6 billion years ago. They are composed of ice, dust, rock, gases, and dark, organic materials. When a comet's orbit takes it close to the sun, melting ice boils off with particles of dust, making a cloud around its nucleus called a coma. This cloud or coma is pushed by the solar wind away from the sun and glows in sunlight, making the comet's tail.

Sling a hammock and take a siesta, if you can, on a hot August afternoon. Then stay up late to watch one of nature's most awesome light displays happening in the coolness of night.

Mark Videan is interested in space and astronomy. He was co-director of the first Midwest Space Fest in Traverse City. He lives among night owls in Manistee.

## FRESHWATER REPORTER

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