



quiet adventures symposium

2026



Adventures for All!

Feb. 28th • Farm Bureau Pavilion at MSU

The 31st Annual



quiet adventures symposium

Made possible by our 2026
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SHOW SPONSORS



Main Stage Auditorium



Grand Prizes



Demonstration Stage Grand River Room Red Cedar Room



Betsie River Room Au Sable River Room



Show Bag Sponsor Volunteer Bandanas



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Vieth Consulting



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Welcome from the President

Welcome Friends!



Welcome to our 31st annual Quiet Adventures Symposium (QAS), organized by the Quiet Adventures Society and thank you for joining us. Since 1996, we have gathered to celebrate non-motorized outdoor recreation and resource conservation. Starting as the Quiet Water Society and Symposium in 1996, we are now officially the Quiet Adventures Society and Symposium, matching an overall mission of promoting quiet outdoor activities of all kinds.

In this year of 2026, we have new speakers and exhibitors, as well as many trusted experts. Responding to requests from families to make the event more affordable, we have lowered admission prices and now admission is free for youth under 18 and students with ID.

We have many new speakers this year, featuring talks designed for novices such as what to consider when getting into kayaking, hammock camping, or bike touring. Our Verlen Kruger Award winner this year is Capt. Peter Frank, who paddled the Great Loop in 488 days! Talk to him about what that entailed and all the friends he made.

There will be books for sale, maps and information materials for all, and everyone gets a Door Raffle ticket to win the prizes donated by our exhibitors, speakers, and sponsors. The Grand Prize Surf and Turf Raffle will send two lucky people home with a bike, a kayak, or vouchers towards their choice, courtesy of Denny's Central Park Bicycles and the Power of Water.

The exhibit floor is packed with exhibits that will help you get connected, learn about opportunities, and plan your next outdoor adventure! There are various boat builders around, so check them out and be inspired. In the Arena there are big boats, traditional ropes and rolling. And more. Learn to tie a flyfishing fly and try out casting in the Arena! Pick an activity, a river, a trail, a park, or a conservation concern, and we will have someone who can tell you more; check the signboards for booth locations for each of our exhibitors.

Our Youth Area this year is special, as BOAT Bus: The Bus for Outdoor Adventure and Teaching (the Big Red Bus) has activities scheduled during the day. More activities for younger adventurers as well, including souvenir paddles and canoes to paint.

The Symposium relies heavily on all our sponsors, especially show sponsors Tri—County Bicycle Association and DALMAC. Thanks to all our QAS supporters, advertising and room sponsors.

Cynthia Donovan, President
Quiet Adventures Society



Greetings to all attendees of the 2026 Quiet Adventures Symposium. On behalf of our 1,000 members, The Tri-County Bicycle Association, (TCBA), is proud to be a primary sponsor of this event and its focus on outdoor recreation.

Thank you to all of the volunteer organizers & the one-day volunteers that create this great event. Your hard work is appreciated. The TCBA itself is also all volunteer run and is proud to be involved in "Promoting Safe & Social Bicycling Since 1972".

Stop by our booths to learn more about the extensive daily rides we lead and the economical organized tours we operate – like DALMAC, SummerTour, NorthWest Tour, The Jeaneen Reynolds JOY Ride or our Youth Cycling Club, and our other advocacy work in the community.

The Dick Allen Lansing to MACKinaw, (DALMAC), annual bike ride is proud to have recently surpassed over \$ 2 Million in grant distributions through The DALMAC Fund and invites you to join us on one of the 7 route options this coming Labor Day weekend.

Enjoy Your Day !!



DALMAC 2026

MICHIGAN'S
EPIC
BIKE TOUR

Labor Day Weekend 2026

September 2 - 6

SAG Supported | All Riders Welcome | Meals Included

ROAD, GRAVEL & TRAIL | 2 - 5 DAY ROUTES



DALMAC.ORG



Dick Allen Lansing to MACkinaw Bike Tour



TRI-COUNTY BICYCLE ASSOCIATION YOUTH CYCLING CLUB

SUMMER BIKING CAMP

FALL FUN RIDE

PARK LAKE FAMILY RIDE

WEEKLY FAMILY RIDES



FUN

LEARN

TRANSFORM



JOIN US



[HTTPS://BIKETCBA.ORG](https://biketcba.org)

ABOUT US

Our mission is to transform a young person's life through the bicycle as we are the club for the future.



JOIN US TODAY!



[HTTPS://BIKETCBA.ORG](https://biketcba.org)



JOIN THE YOUTH CYCLING CLUB AT QUIET ADVENTURES SYMPOSIUM FOR A FUN BIKE RODEO WITH PRIZES!



Society Mission Statement:

To educate the public and to encourage participation in non-motorized outdoor recreation; to promote public concern for the water resources of the Great Lakes Region; to support the environmental stewardship and conservation of natural resources; and to plan and execute annual and special events for any or all of these purposes.



**Thank you
Half Moon Outfitters
for the QAS shopping bags!**

We will carry them proudly!

Thank you to our Exhibitors!

The **2026 Quiet Adventures Symposium** is made possible by the generous contributions and presence of more than 100 exhibitors and their teams. The continued support of both longtime and first-time exhibitors is essential to the Symposium's growth and success. The Quiet Adventures Society sincerely thanks each of you for the time, energy, and resources you share to help make this event welcoming, educational, and inspiring for all.

We are grateful to the many businesses that support the Symposium by sharing their craft, expertise, and passion with our community. From outdoor gear makers and paddlesmiths to artisans and small businesses, your exceptional products and engagement make the exhibitor hall a vibrant and meaningful part of the day.

We also extend our thanks to the conservation and environmental stewardship organizations participating in the **2026 Quiet Adventures Symposium**, including river advocacy groups and local, regional, and statewide partners. Your dedication to protecting natural resources and promoting responsible outdoor recreation is central to the Symposium's mission, and we are honored to help amplify your important work. This community would not continue to grow and thrive without you. A special thank-you to Michigan 4-H at MSU who has coordinated the Youth Area in the Arena for years. Much of that role is now turned over to the Bus for Outdoor Access and Teaching (the BOAT Bus). There are many educational and outreach organizations that help expand the possibilities of outdoor adventure at the Symposium with displays and activities. Your commitment to learning, inclusion, and engagement is a key reason the Symposium has such a strong and lasting educational impact.

Finally, thank you to all of the exhibitors, sponsors, volunteers, and visitors who make the **2026 Quiet Adventures Symposium** possible. You contribute to our door raffle, which is always a success, as people take home new books, equipment, and memories. Wonderful. Every individual and organization plays a vital role in creating a welcoming and meaningful experience, and we are grateful for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you again next year.

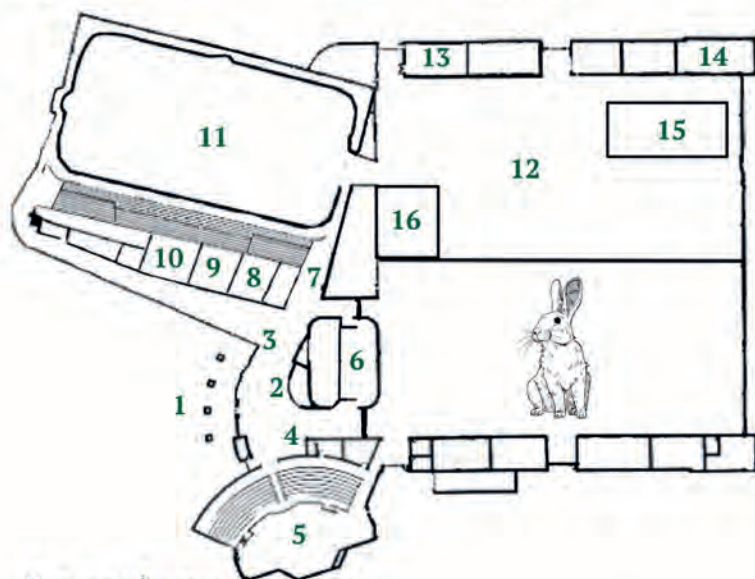
Be sure to enter for a chance to win one of today's door prizes or raffle items, generously donated by our exhibitors and sponsors. Again, a special thank-you to those who contributed prizes—please visit their booths to learn more about their work and to show your appreciation.

Event Map



quiet
adventures
symposium

MSU Pavilion Map



Locations

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Pavilion Entrance | 9. Betsie River Room |
| 2. Concessions | 10. Au Sable River Room |
| 3. Admissions Gate | 11. Exhibitor Arena |
| 4. Volunteer Check-In | 12. Exhibitor Hall |
| 5. Main Stage Auditorium | 13. Restrooms |
| 6. Restrooms | 14. Grand River Room |
| 7. Symposium Entrance | 15. Demonstration Area |
| 8. Red Cedar River Room | 16. Raffle Area |



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Visit the QAS Raffle Table in the Exhibit hall and check out our

Door Prizes!

First Ticket free with entry. Additional
tickets 6 for \$5.

Thank you to our exhibitors and sponsors for their door prize donations!

Exhibitor

906 Adventure Team	Garage Adventures
Adventure Credit Union	GiantMouse
American Canoe Association-Michigan	Gladwin Conservation District
American Packrafting Association	Girl Scout Troop 30477
Beaver Island	Grass River Natural Area
Bengel Wildlife Center	Great North Real Estate
Bike Tour Vacations LLC	Greater Lansing Regional Comm. for
Black to the Land Coalition	Stormwater Mgmt. (GLRC)/Tri-County
Bridge Michigan	Groundwater Management Board
Bus for Outdoor Access & Teaching	Harris Nature Center Foundation
Capital Area Friends of the Environment	Huron River Water Trail
Chicago Adventure Therapy	Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association
Chippewa Nature Center	Isle Royale Wolf-Moose Project
Chippewa Watershed Conservancy	Jay's & Webber Wildlife & Education
Clark Lake Yacht Club	Center
Clinton River Watershed Council	John Coats Memorial Youth Cycling
Copper Learning Academy	Kalamazoo College- Outdoor Leadership
DALMAC	Training Center
Dave Wermuth Canoe Shop	Lansing Oar and Paddle Club
Daylight Brand	Lansing Rowing Club
Denny's Central Park Bicycles	League of Michigan Bicyclists
Detroit Outdoors	LeValley Outdoors
DeVries Nature Conservancy	Marine Trades Institute
Dragonflyers of Michigan	MDHHS Environmental Health Bureau
Drift and Roam Events	Michigan Backcountry Alliance
Experience Jackson	Michigan DNR
Falcon Sails	Michigan DNR Outdoor Adventure Center
Flat River Watershed Council	Michigan Scholastic Cycling Association
Flint River Watershed Coalition	Michigan Sea Grant
Friends of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area	Michigan State University
Friends of the Lansing Regional Trails	Michigan State University Dept. of Fisheries
Friends of the Rouge	and Wildlife

Listing

Michigan State University Adventure

Recreation and Sailing Center

Michigan State University Press

Michiganders for Money Out of Politics

MiCorps: Michigan Clean Water Corps

Mid-Michigan CISMA

Mid-Michigan Mountain Biking Association

Middle Grand River Organization of

Watersheds

Mike's Canoes

Motor City Paddle Club Kayak Rentals

MSU Bikes Service Center

MSU Extension Center for Lakes and Streams

MSU Extension, Ingham County 4-H

Native Fish Coalition

North Country Trail Association

NORTH SHORE PHOTO ART

Northern Forest Canoe Trail

Northway Unlimited

Old Mustache Canoe Paddles

Opportunities Unlimited for the Blind

Paddle Antrim

Paddling the Blue

Pedal Across Lower Michigan

Qajaq Training Camp/Qajaq USA

Red Cedar Fly Fishers

Red Cedar River Water Trail

Saginaw Voyageurs

Shiawassee River Water Trail Coalition

Sierra Club Michigan Chapter

Southern Michigan Orienteering Club

State YMCA of Michigan Hayo-Went-Ha Camps

Synthia Marsh Jewelry

Team River Runner Veterans Adaptive

Paddling Organization

TerraTrike / GreenSpeed

The Connected Paddler

The Power of Water

West Virginia University/Thunder Bay

National Marine Sanctuary

Tri-County Bicycle Association

Trout Unlimited Fly Fishing School

Tulip City Paddle Tours

U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary

Upper Grand River Watershed

Alliance/G.R.E.A.T.

Verlen Kruger Legacy

Vic Foerster

Wander Beyond

Wee Bata Canoe Shop

Women's Center of Greater Lansing

Woods & Waters



Take to the Trails

From kayaking, canoeing and stand-up paddle boarding to hiking, biking and equestrian riding, Michigan offers thousands of miles of opportunities to explore – whether on the Great Lakes and our inland lakes and rivers, or on urban routes, rail trails and wooded pathways. Plan your next adventure today by visiting **Michigan.gov/DNRTrails**.



*Photo credit- Michigan State Parks Photo Ambassadors:
Morgan Liskey (top), Danielle Granholm (middle left),
Kevin Roberts (middle right), Kari Carr (bottom)*





quiet adventures symposium



**Main Stage
Auditorium**



**Adventure
Credit Union
Grand River
Room**



**Adventure
Credit Union
Red Cedar
River Room**



**Giant
Au Sable
River Room**



**Betsie River
Room**



**Quiet Adventures
Society
Demo Stage
Exhibit Hall
South End**

9:30 - 10:30

Vic Foerster: Isle Royale Stories

Stacie & Vince Sadowski:
Introduction to Hammocks: Hanging Out in the Woods

Not Available

Greg & Max Marten:
The ABC's of Planning your first Canoe-Camping Trip (BWCA)

Gary & Linda De Kock: The Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes by Tandem Trike

John Chase: Power to Paddle: Exercises to Improve Your Paddling

10:45 - 11:45

Peter Frank:
Circumnavigating Eastern United States by Canoe

Jess Rasmussen & Shawn Towsley:
Building Memories Through Cycling

Not Available

Erik Binder: Lake Powell Stand UP Paddleboard Adventure

James Dake & Jenn Wright:
Boardwalks for All: Michigan's Next Great Accessible Wetland Adventure

Jon Le Valley:
Outdoor Stoves 101

12:00 - 12:45

Andrea Graham & Gary De Kock: Verlen Kruger Award Presented to Peter Frank, plus more from Verlen Kruger Legacy

John Chase: Sand Dunes, Lighthouses, and Cherry Pie: Kayaking Grand Traverse Bay

Rudi Hargeshelmer:
Superior Trails: A Photo Tour - Hiking Lake Superior's Best! Packrafting, Too

Tim Gallaway:
Navigation for Those Who Get Lost

Carl Calille & Keith Buchele: Bicycle Touring vs. Bikepacking - Which is for You?

Lunch
(No Demonstrations)

1:00 - 2:00

Laura Herberg:
Panel Session: Learning the Hard Way - Lessons from Misadventures.

Jeffery Holden:
Dead Moose - The Citizen-Scientists of the Wolf-Moose Project

George Stockman: Team Paddling in Big Boats

Micah Leinbach:
Bridging the Adventure Gap: Great Lakes Adventures for All

Marci Larsen:
Finding Courage Outdoors: Building a Backpacking Community at 40+

LouAnn Stark-Dykema: Learn the Basics of Paddling a Dragon Boat!

2:15 - 3:00

John Chase: Five Things I Wish I Had Been Told About Kayaking

Gary & Linda De Kock: Suwannee River Wilderness Trail by Canoe

Jerry Vandiver and Caitlin Evanson:
Songs About Paddling, Camping and all things Outdoors!

James Dake:
Bikepacking to Touring, and Everything Between: A Beginner's Guide

Jaime Welch & Sarah Keyeser-Brown: Adventures for All: Empowering Independence through Adaptive Paddling

Qayaq USA Team:
Land Rolling in Your Kayak

3:15 - 4:00

Jay Fowler: Grand Rapids to Washington D.C. or Bust!

Noah Viner & C.A.T. Team:
Paddle, Empower, Repeat: Building Equity Through Adventure Sports

Jennifer Reynolds: Group Trip Planning: How to Create an Epic Adventure!

Anna Green:
Orienteering at the Junior World Orienteering Championships: Italy, 2025

Eric Renshaw:
Why Wood Boats? Sustainability & Environmental Impacts

John Chase:
Perfectly Pack Your Kayak for a Multi-Day Trip

4:15 - 5:00

Michael George:
Paddling In and Around the Keweenaw Peninsula

Sue Bakkila: Turn Right: Adventures in Eastern UP

Jess Rasmussen & Shawn Towsley: Cycling Adventures for ALL Abilities

Bruce Umpstead:
A Bungler's Guide to Backpacking the Grand Canyon

Tim Gallaway:
Make the Time - A Backcountry Canoe Film

Charlie Gabriel & Jeff Stieve:
Building a 17' Dory: A design Buildable in Your Garage

ALL DAY

Demonstration Schedule

Demonstration Name	Time & Location
Power to the Paddle: Exercises to Improve Your Paddling	9:30AM - 10:30AM Demonstration Stage
Outdoor Stoves 101	10:45AM - 11:45AM Demonstration Stage
Learn the Basics of Paddling a Dragon Boat!	1:00PM - 2:00PM Demonstration Stage
Land Rolling in Your Kayak	2:15PM - 3:00PM Demonstration Stage
Perfectly Pack your Kayak for a Multi-Day Trip	3:15PM - 4:00PM Demonstration Stage
Building a 17' Dory: A Design Buildable in Your Garage	All Day Garage Adventures Booth (near stage)

DNR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CENTER

FAMILY CAMPOUTS



Eager to camp, but not sure how to get started?!

Let the OAC be your guide! Check out these great summer adventures:

OAC Family Campout, Aug. 7-8

Pitch a tent on our front lawn and enjoy fishing, archery, games and more. We'll end the night with a campfire and s'mores and wake up to a pancake breakfast inside the OAC.

\$35 per site, max. 6 people per site

Family Campout at Maybury S.P, Aug. 21-22

Ready for a camping adventure? Join the OAC team as we travel to Maybury State Park in Northville for a campout! Pitch a tent under the stars and enjoy a night hike, games and more. We'll end the night with a campfire and s'mores.

\$45 per site, max. 6 people per site



DNR-OAC@Michigan.gov
1801 ATWATER ST. DETROIT, MI

DNR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CENTER

TRAILS EXPO



April 25, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

In honor of Celebrate Trails Day, an annual event from the Rail to Trails Conservancy, the OAC is celebrating our very own neighborhood rail trail! Join us for our Trails Expo on the Dequindre Cut, which was once a line on the Grand Trunk Railroad.

This outdoor adventure features local experts in hiking, biking, paddling and more.

Included with the price of admission



DNR-OAC@Michigan.gov
1801 ATWATER ST. DETROIT, MI

VISIT OUR YOUTH AREA!



- **Smokey the Bear Bounce House!**
- **Wooden Paddle Painting!**
- **Owl Pellet Dissections!**
- **Temporary Tattoos!**

Great Activities for Kids!

Located in the Show Arena!



All Day Outdoor Learning

*Come find the
bright colored bus!*



Come find the Kid Zone in the Show Arena for all-day activities, and a series of workshops on camping basics good for all ages.

**Workshops, all-day crafts
and activities, and
support for planning
your own camping trips!**

Today's Workshops

Get Warm, Stay Warm (and Cool) | 10:30 – 10:50

Staying comfortable outside starts with understanding how your body works. This fast-paced session breaks down how we gain and lose heat, with practical tips for staying cool in hot weather and warm in cold, wet, or windy conditions.

The 10 Essentials: What You Really Need Outside | 11:00 – 11:20

What do you actually need to carry to stay safe and prepared outside? This session introduces the classic 10 Essentials, explaining what each item (or system) does and why it matters. We focus on flexibility, helping families adapt the list without overpacking or buying unnecessary gear.

Gear Guru: Field Repairs & Fix-It Skills | 11:30 – 12:30

Outdoor gear breaks — often at the worst time. In this in-depth demonstration, BOAT instructors use real, damaged camping equipment to show how common failures happen and how to fix them in the field. Feel free to bring requests for demonstrations, and learn what's in our repair kits!

1 - 2 PM

Look at the Quiet Adventures Symposium brochure to
join our team and hear about our work directly!

Find Your Spot: Digital Trip Planning & Public Lands | 2:25 – 2:45

Where can you actually go outside, and how do you find it? This session walks through digital tools you can use to locate public lands, trails, and campsites. We'll explain how different public lands are managed, and help you find destinations that match your time, energy, and goals.

Squiggles Made Simple: How to Read a Topographic Map | 3:00 – 3:30

Those squiggly lines on maps tell a powerful story. This session teaches the basics of reading a topographic map, including elevation, terrain, and distance. Participants will learn how to picture the landscape before they arrive and how maps can support safer, more confident outdoor travel.

Classy Camps: Setting Up a Camp That Works | 3:45 – 4:15

A well-set campsite makes everything better. This quick session covers campsite selection, tent placement, wind and water considerations, food storage, and small details that improve comfort and safety. We'll focus on simple choices that turn a campsite into a place you'll really enjoy spending time.





ADVENTURE

CREDIT UNION

*Proud to sponsor the
Quiet Adventures Symposium*

10 Michigan locations

800.323.2129

adventurecu.org

Speaker Information

Vic Foerster

Isle Royale Stories



Main Stage Auditorium - 9:30 - 10:30

For forty-five years, Vic has journeyed to Isle Royale National Park, immersing himself in this wild and untouched island. This expert storyteller shares his passion for the natural world, bringing you up close and personal to experiencing this Great Lakes wilderness island, which many consider the gem of National Parks.

Vic Foerster's passion for the natural world and for all things "Isle Royale" is contagious and conveyed through his two award winning books: "Naked in the Stream, Isle Royale Stories" and "Hidden in the Trees, an Isle Royale Sojourn." Vic works as a consulting arborist who serves clients throughout Southwest Michigan. He is a past chairman to the Michigan DNR's urban forestry advisory council and a long-time adviser for the Urban Forestry Project for the City of Grand Rapids.

Stacie Longwell Sadowski and Vince Sadowski

Introduction to Hammocks:
Hanging Out in the Woods



Grand River Room - 9:30 -10:30

If you've been curious about hammock camping, this is for you! We explore advantages/disadvantages of hammock camping, types of hammocks, DIY equipment, safety tips, and Leave No Trace principles. Avoid common mistakes and misconceptions about hammocks. Learn about different sleeping positions, two-person sleeping, or with pets! Get a good night's sleep on your next adventure!

Vince and Stacie Sadowski have three decades of experience with backcountry camping, backpacking, canoeing, and kayaking. Vince is a DIY gear enthusiast, trip planner and navigator. Stacie is an outdoor writer, naturalist and published historian. They are co-creators of Two Weeks in a Hammock, an educational initiative to inspire regular folks to get out into nature. As two middle-aged people with average fitness levels and income, they model an active lifestyle of adventure.

Greg Marten and Max Marten

The ABCs of BWCA: Planning Your First Canoe-Camping Trip



Au Sable Room - 9:30 - 10:30

A canoe camping trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness can be an exciting, life-changing experience, but where to begin? This session will provide helpful information on trip-planning procedures including researching possible routes, securing entry permits, bringing your own gear vs renting, and tips on getting to your first campsite.

Greg Marten is a public educator with skill at breaking down complex concepts into bite-sized steps. He has extensive experience canoe camping and backpacking in BWCAW/Quetico region and beyond. He is also the author of several magazine articles on fishing, hunting, backpacking, and snowshoeing.

Max Marten has been camping, fishing, hiking, and exploring the outdoors since childhood. He's also a seasoned international traveler, confident in trip planning, packing light, and navigating complex and unfamiliar situations.

Gary and Linda De Kock

The Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes by Tandem Trike



Betsie River Room - 9:30 - 10:30

Cyclists riding east on the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes can start in Plummer, Idaho at the bronze statue of a Native American warrior. At Mile 7, riders will cross Lake Coeur d'Alene on the non-motorized, 3,178 ft. Chatcolet Bridge. At Mile 73, the trail ends in Mullan, near the East Portal Trailhead of the Hiawatha Trail System. The Hiawatha features 10 tunnels and 7 high trestles in just 15 miles, all downhill!

Gary and Linda De Kock have ridden their tandem trike on sections of the Katy Trail (Missouri, 2022), the Sparta-Elroy Trail (Wisconsin, 2023), and the Great Allegheny Passage (Pennsylvania, 2025). In 2024, they cycled 1,074 miles on Michigan trails to raise funds for charity. Linda bought Gary his first ten speed bicycle in 1972.

Peter Frank

Circumnavigation of the Eastern United States by Canoe



Main Stage Auditorium - 10:45 - 11:45

Last October, Peter Frank completed circumnavigation of the eastern United States by canoe. The journey, spanning 4,853 miles, over 480 days, was performed without a support crew. He set out to learn something about himself; to face life's complexities in a simpler way. He slept most nights in a tent, made his own clothes, preserved his own food, and recreated what life might have been like for early explorers. Truly an unforgettable tale.

Peter Frank is a professional writer and skilled storyteller. He is the 7th person to circumnavigate the eastern US by paddle, and youngest person to do so. The journey was completed in a Kruger 17' Sawyer Loon decked canoe, and was performed clockwise, including over 2,000 miles of upstream paddling and 267 miles of portages.

Jess Rasmussen and Shawn Towsley

Building Memories Through Cycling



Grand River Room - 10:45 -11:45

Your New Year's resolution was to try a bicycle tour? Now what? Join us in learning how to research, condition and prepare for riding your first supported bicycle tour.

Jess Rasmussen is a special education teacher with 36 years' experience cycling with diverse abilities. She is a bicycle educator, family advocate, mom, and member of several disabled cyclist groups. It is her great honor to work with families to help them find the joy of adapted cycling.

Shawn Towsley is a retired educator, experienced with students of various ages and abilities. She is also an experienced cyclist, and the mom/grandma of a differently abled cyclist. She has long been a bicycle enthusiast, cycling advocate, ride leader, and avid promoter of cycling adventures for all.

Erik Binder

Lake Powell Stand-Up Paddleboard Adventure



Au Sable Room - 10:45 - 11:45

Erik will share his personal journey of growth and community, both as a paddler and as a human. Join him as he walks through his Stand-Up Paddleboard adventure, surrounded by the beauty of Lake Powell within the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

Erik Binder has been paddling with intention for nearly 12 years. He has earned Level 4 Certifications as a Coastal Sea Kayak Instructor and as a Whitewater Kayak Instructor. He continues to further enhance his coaching and teaching roles as a full-time instructor for The Power of Water. However, when it comes to stand-up paddle boarding, he considers himself to be an “educated beginner.”

James Dake and Jenn Wright

Boardwalks for All: Michigan's Next Great Accessible Wetland Adventure



Betsie River Room - 10:45 - 11:45

Grass River Natural Area will soon offer one of Michigan's longest accessible wetland boardwalks; winding through cedar swamp and northern fen, crossing creeks, to arrive at the Grass River itself. Learn how thoughtful design, environmental stewardship, and accessibility came together to create this quiet adventure for people of all abilities.

James Dake, Education Director at Grass River Natural Area, oversees various endeavors including school programs, camps, kayak tours, and interpretive exhibits. He authored the Grass River's Field Guide to Northwest Michigan and is a Certified Interpretive Guide.

Jenn Wright, Executive Director at Grass River Natural Area, grew up in northern Michigan, developing a life-long love of nature. She holds a B.S. in and spent 17 years at the Kalamazoo Nature Center, most recently as Chief Operating Officer.

Verlen Kruger Award: Gary De Rock and Andrea Graham

Verlen Kruger Award plus more
from the Verlen Kruger Legacy



Main Stage Auditorium - 12:00 - 12:45

Peter Frank, from Escanaba, Michigan, has won the 2026 Verlen Kruger Award (VKA). In 2024, Peter began a circumnavigation of the eastern United States in a Sawyer Loon designed by Verlen Kruger. In 2025, he became the youngest person to complete the 6,000-mile Great Loop water route.

The presentation will look back at prior winners of the VKA which began in 2003. Any past winners present in the audience will be recognized. The award is a custom crafted paddle which will be presented to Peter along with an engraved paver that will be placed at the Kruger Memorial in Portland.

The Verlen Kruger Legacy will end the session with stories to remind us of why Verlen can still inspire generations of paddlers to dream it and do it.

John Chase

Sand Dunes, Lighthouses, and
Cherry Pie: Kayaking Grand
Traverse Bay



Grand River Room - 12:00 - 12:45

Discover the best sea kayaking destinations in Michigan's Grand Traverse region, where stunning landscapes meet the open waters of Lake Michigan. This presentation will highlight iconic routes, including the towering dunes of Sleeping Bear Bay and the pristine shoreline of Power Island. Join us to discover why this region is a must-visit for coastal exploration.

John Chase combines his love for the outdoors with a dedication to helping others make the most of their time on the water. John is the host of the Paddling the Blue podcast, author of 'Power to the Paddle: Exercises to Improve your Canoe and Kayak Paddling', and an ACA Coastal Kayak/River Kayak/SUP Instructor and Instructor Trainer, and NASM Certified Personal Trainer.

Rudi Hargesheimer

Superior Trails: A Photo Tour -
Hiking Lake Superior's Best!
Packrafting, Too



Red Cedar Room - 12:00 - 12:45

Did you know there are twenty backpacking trails on the Lake Superior perimeter? Are you aware of packrafting as a fun twist on the backpacking theme? Maybe you are just looking for a short day-hike. This presentation will show many of the 320 photos in his newly printed (December 2025) "Superior Trails: A Photo Tour of Lake Superior's Best Hiking Trails." Images will rival anything you will find in far-off locales around the world. Rudi will have his \$25 book for sale. His enthusiasm for Lake Superior will be absolutely FREE at the symposium.

Rudi Hamersheimer is an award-winning nature photographer and super trail enthusiast. He was instrumental in the early development of the 300-mile Superior Hiking Trail in Minnesota. He has circled Lake Superior 15 times.

Tim Gallaway

Navigation for Those Who Get
Lost



Au Sable River Room - 12:00 - 12:45

Aimed at the new explorer, we'll cover big-picture navigation topics like "What is a map, really?" and "Which way should I go?" The presentation will be simple and intuitive, leaving the complex math at home. We'll think about how we move through the world, and how we gather information from all around us, so we know where we are and where we want to go.

Tim Gallaway is an expedition kayaker and Greenland Style instructor based in southwest Michigan, specializing in traditional Arctic paddling skills and equipment, including Greenland paddles and skin-on-frame kayaks. He has competed in the National Qajaq Championships in Greenland, bringing home several gold medals. He has undertaken numerous wilderness kayak and canoe trips and has created an award-winning film titled "Make the Time."

Carl Calille and Keith Buchele

Bicycle Touring vs Bikepacking -
Which is for you?



Betsie River Room - 12:00 - 12:45

This presentation will consider the differences between two methods of multi-day bicycle travel: bike touring vs. bikepacking. We will discuss a range of topics from equipment to travel surfaces to what to bring, in order to help you choose between being pampered or traveling the back-country.

Carl Calille is the director of DALMAC and has over 40 years of experience in self-contained bicycle touring.

Keith Buchele is a 30+ year hospitality veteran with a passion for any and all outdoor pursuits. Cycling, hiking, back country camping and reading rule his off hours. If he's not at work he's likely outside!

Laura Herberg with Stacie
Sadowski, Jennifer Reynolds,
Bruce Umpstead & Vic Foerster

Panel Session: Learning the Hard
Way - Lessons from Misadventures.



Main Auditorium - 1:00 - 2:00

In this panel discussion, seasoned adventurers will share their stories of successes, failures, and fun along the way. Learning the hard way is a time honored tradition in outdoor recreation, and you can take advantage of this knowledge and learn from the experiences of others. Panelists include a mix of folks, for a wide variety of expertise and trip types - from backcountry excursions to day hikes, and more.

Laura Herberg is a journalist with Bridge MI, an online nonpartisan news source. As the Outdoor Life reporter she travels throughout Michigan to find interesting stories and destinations. **Stacie Sadowski** has decades of experience with backcountry camping, backpacking, canoeing, and kayaking. **Jennifer Reynolds** is a retired high school teacher who grew up sailing and cross-country skiing, and developed a passion for hiking, backpacking, and paddling. **Bruce Umpstead** is a seasoned adventurer whose "Bungler's Guides" help everyday people step confidently into the outdoors, with laughter as their trailhead. **Vic Foerster** is an author and arborist with a love for Isle Royale.

Jeffrey Holden

Dead Moose - The Citizen-Scientists of the Wolf-Moose Project

Grand River Room - 1:00 - 2:00

Go off-trail with the citizen-scientist of the Isle Royale Wolf-Moose Project, the most famous carnivore study in the world. Holden, a seasoned hiker and Isle Royale enthusiast, takes us on a rare journey through nature, science, and the ways we learn about the natural world.

Jeffrey Holden, author of "Dead Moose on Isle Royale," first volunteered to look for dead moose for the Wolf-Moose Project in 2002. He soon became a group leader and has led at least one group annually since 2005. He is the president of the Wolf-Moose Foundation, a nonprofit whose mission is to advance research and education, promoting conservation of predators and their prey, especially the wolves and moose of Isle Royale.



George Stockman

Team Paddling in Big Boats

Red Cedar Room - 1:00 - 2:00

Big canoes and catamarans have been used for millennia for travel, war, trade, recreation, and competition. Big boat travel is safer and often faster than solo travel. A team of paddlers can have different skills and roles -- captain, stroker, passenger, sleeper. History of the fur trade and Lewis and Clark Expedition is discussed, as well as some recent personal experiences in racing and in teaching canoeing to beginners and the blind.

George Stockman, a former whitewater paddler and racer, was over 60 when he began multi-day paddling expeditions, having now completed several trips across the U.S. and Canada. He has studied the old canoe routes in the US and Canada, and has coached the MSU Concrete Canoe Team and worked with the MSU Outdoor Club.



Micah Leinbach

Bridging the Adventure Gap: Great
Lakes Adventures for All



Au Sable River Room - 1:00 - 2:00

“Big Red” and “Michiganme” are not just buses, they are mobile adventure programs on wheels. They carry all the food and equipment needed to run a camping trip; helping close the adventure gap - the racial and economic disparity in who gets to go outside. Through partnerships with youth-serving organizations, they have helped 2,400 people experience the joys and challenges of camping. A panel of students who have attended these programs will share inspiring stories of their own experiences and what helped them get outside.

Micah Leinbach has worked as a wilderness guide for over a decade, running outdoor programs in collaboration with a variety of organizations. He has led multiple teams in conducting custom-built outdoor education programs. He is a nationally recognized and awarded outdoor educator, and a Wilderness EMT.

Marci Larsen

Finding Courage Outdoors:
Building a Backpacking
Community at 40+



Betsie River Room - 1:00 - 2:00

It takes courage to try new things. Join Marci as she shares her story of getting more women into backpacking by starting a mission-driven outdoor business in her forties. Get inspired to follow your own passion or try a new outdoor adventure!

Marci Larsen is the founder of Wander Beyond - an organization that takes women on backcountry camping adventures. She's a guide, artist, forager, solo backpacker and community builder. She has lived on both U.S. coasts, Mexico and Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and with her husband, hand-built their off-grid cabin in the Keweenaw.

John Chase

Five Things I Wish I Had Been Told About Kayaking



Main Auditorium - 2:15 - 3:00

It sounds easy: buy a boat, put it in the water, start paddling. We'll talk about what else you really need, what you don't, and ways to assure your first or 50th day on the water will be full of smiles. Come to this safe space where we'll explore all those questions that you've been afraid to ask but need to know.

John Chase combines his love for the outdoors with a dedication to helping others make the most of their time on the water. John is the host of the Paddling the Blue podcast, author of 'Power to the Paddle: Exercises to Improve your Canoe and Kayak Paddling', and an ACA Coastal Kayak/River Kayak/SUP Instructor and Instructor Trainer, and NASM Certified Personal Trainer.

Gary and Linda De Kock

Suwannee River Wilderness Trail by Canoe



Grand River Room - 2:15 - 3:00

In 2023, Gary and Linda canoed 150 miles on Florida's Suwannee River Wilderness Trail. They enjoyed the paddle-in campsites so much they stopped at them all, even when making for short days. The highlight of the trip was floating over a group of manatees at the final take out.

With thirteen canoes and kayaks, **Gary and Linda De Kock** clearly believe there is no such thing as 'too many' boats! Their adventures include paddling a tandem kayak from source-to-sea on the Mississippi River and canoeing 2,341 miles on the Missouri River. Both trips raised funds for worldwide communities lacking safe water and sanitation. In 2023, they were honored to receive the Verlen Kruger Award for this work and their other contributions to paddle sports.

Jerry Vandiver and Caitlin Evanson

Songs About Paddling, Camping
and All Things Outdoors!



Red Cedar Room - 2:15 - 3:00

Back again, Jerry and Caitlin team up to present an entertaining afternoon of fun and heartfelt songs about life, love and paddling! This set will make you laugh, cry, tap your toes and maybe even sing along. They will be debuting several new songs along with favorites from his previous CDs.

Jerry Vandiver, an award-winning songwriter, has song credits on over 15 million records and 40 years paddling credits on countless rivers, streams, and lakes across North America. He has more boats than his wife thinks he needs.

Caitlin Evanson, an avid hiker and paddler, is a prolific songwriter with an angelic voice. She has toured with Ringo Starr, Taylor Swift and Shakira and played iconic stages including the Academy Awards, the Grammys, CMA Awards and Saturday Night Live.

James Dake

Bikepacking to Touring, and
Everything Between: A Beginner's
Guide



Au Sable River Room - 2:15 - 3:00

From rugged backcountry routes to cross-country epics, city tours, and relaxed paved rides with his family, James has experienced nearly every style of bicycle travel. In this interactive, adventure-filled presentation, he'll share stories, practical tips, and lessons learned to help you get started. Whether you're dreaming of a months-long journey or planning a simple weekend getaway, you'll leave knowing the right gear and with gumption for your next ride.

James Dake is Education Director at Grass River Natural Area, overseeing various programs including school programs, camps, kayak tours, interpretive exhibits, signage, and publications. He is the author of Grass River's Field Guide to Northwest Michigan and is also a Certified Interpretive Guide through the National Association for Interpretation.

Jaime Welch and Sarah Keyser-Brown

Adventures for All: Empowering Independence Through Adaptive Kayaking



Betsie River Room - 2:15 - 3:00

An adaptive kayaking program has a simple goal: make kayaking accessible to everyone. We discuss the program's start, and how it emphasizes safety, independence, and participant choice; empowering participants to explore waterways safely and independently. Adaptive kayaking builds confidence, fosters connection and proves that the river belongs to everyone, regardless of age or ability.

Jaime Welch, Associate Director of Programs & Operations, Flint River Watershed Coalition. She is an ACA Level 2 Instructor with an Adaptive Endorsement. She leads educational kayaking trips and teaches instructional kayaking with a focus on seniors and those needing adaptation. She developed iKayak in partnership with The Disability Network.

Sarah Keyser-Brown, Program Assistant, Flint River Watershed Coalition, works in youth programming and assists in managing kayaking and water monitoring programs.

Jay Fowler

GR to DC or Bust! Epic Biking Through History



Main Stage Auditorium - 3:15 - 4:00

In September 2025, Jay and Emmy Fowler embarked on a 976-mile bike trip from Grand Rapids to Washington DC, traversing eighteen different trails, in five states and one province; a route that included six tunnels, and three ferry boats. Jay will discuss planning this journey, and the amazing scenery, rich history, and memorable people they discovered along the way.

Jay Fowler had his first bike touring experience at the age of 16, when he rode from Grand Rapids to Mackinaw City for a summer job on Mackinaw Island. More bicycle adventures followed, but other responsibilities and interests interfered with his bicycle wanderlust. Always in the back of his mind was the desire for more bicycle travel. Now retired, he is in the process of rekindling this fire.

Noah Viner, Zorbari Nwidor, Tiara Coats, and Christina Clay

Paddle. Empower. Repeat: Building Equity Through Adventure Sports



Grand River Room - 3:15 -4:00

Chicago Adventure Therapy (CAT) has demonstrated that access to paddling can increase equity in our communities. This presentation explores how this program breaks down barriers, builds leadership and fosters healing and empowerment in underrepresented communities.

Noah Viner, a CAT staff member holds multiple instructor certifications including from ACA, CWI and CWA. He works to expand access to the outdoors and amplify the voices of those too often left out of the conversation.

Zorbari Nwidor, Executive Director of CAT, holds multiple instructor certifications including from ACA, SUP WFR and CWI and is passionate about promoting equity, justice, and access for marginalized communities.

Tiara Coats, known as Tia, is the Development Coordinator for CAT. She has been with CAT since 2014 and enjoys her role as a paddlesport coach with a very bright personality.

Christina Clay, apprentice at CAT, is CPR, EMD, First Aid, and Belay certified, and is committed to providing inclusive spaces for all to experience the healing power of nature.

Jennifer Reynolds

Group Trip Planning: How to Create an Epic Adventure!



Red Cedar Room - 3:15 - 4:00

Have you ever seen a picture of an amazing location and thought, "I want to go there," but didn't because you were worried about logistics? This presentation will help you understand trip planning and preparation, and to troubleshoot common problems. We'll consider rules of dispersed camping and how to make reservations when required, as well as navigational apps for beginners, gear testing, establishing group expectations, and where to find other people who want to recreate outdoors.

Jennifer Reynolds, a retired high school teacher, grew up sailing and cross-country skiing, and developed a passion for hiking, backpacking, and paddling. She has worked as a wilderness guide for Camp Daggett in Petoskey, and as a volunteer trip planner for Outdoor Book Club and for West Michigan Hiking & Backpacking.

Anna Green

Orienteering at the Junior World
Orienteering Championships:
Italy, 2025



Au Sable River Room - 3:15 - 4:00

Anna Green is a member of Team Orienteering USA, a national team of athletes selected to represent the United States at international orienteering events around the world. Orienteering, for those unfamiliar, requires athletes to navigate through terrain using a map and compass. Anna will share her experiences racing at the 2025 Junior World Orienteering Championships in the Trentino Region of northern Italy, as well as traveling and training for the event.

Anna Green has been orienteering since her early childhood with the Southern Michigan Orienteering Club. She has competed across the country in national events and raced and trained in Italy and Sweden this past summer. Her passion for navigation sports also extends to Adventure Racing.

Eric Renshaw

Why Wood Boats? Sustainability
and Environmental Impacts



Betsie River Room - 3:15 - 4:00

Wood boats have been around since the dawn of time. Even in our modern age of light, high-strength composites, wood is still a very viable option; especially when we consider rising environmental awareness and the impacts of modern materials. Join me for a discussion of why the oldest may still be the best.

Eric Renshaw has been fascinated by boats since childhood. He founded Prestige Wooden Yachts and later, Traditional Marine Services. He has built and restored almost 300 wood boats. Eric is an instructor in the Comprehensive Career Boat Building program at the Marine Trades Institute. He enjoys passing his knowledge along to fellow instructors and students as well as learning from them.

Michael George

Paddling In and Around the Keweenaw Peninsula



Main Stage Auditorium - 4:15 - 5:00

Paddling in and around the Keweenaw Peninsula offers a grand yet accessible adventure for all ages. Whether you are a novice paddler or an experienced adventurer, the Keweenaw provides stunning landscapes and secluded places, all with a backdrop of history and culture to explore. Michael will share his experiences canoeing in the Keweenaw Peninsula, to help you plan your trip to the Keweenaw and beyond.

Michael George, Chief Naturalist of Huron-Clinton Metroparks (Retired), has worked in wildlife biology and historical interpretation for more than 40 years. He has broad experience designing and conducting educational programs and has served on the board of directors of the Isle Royale and Keweenaw Parks Association. He maintains a special interest in the natural and cultural history of the Keweenaw and of Isle Royale.

Sue Bakkila

Turn Right: Adventures in the Eastern UP



Grand River Room - 4:15 - 5:00

Sue and others from Woods and Waters will talk about what there is to do in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. There are a myriad of both on the water and land-based options in the area for paddlers, bikers, birders, and hikers. This regional overview will include both self-led and guided trip options such as local nature preserves, birding hotspots, the new Peek-A-Boo multi-use trail, and guided paddling trips such as the 4-hour Bigger Dipper, Sunset, and multi-day WOW! (Women On Water) trip. The Les Cheneaux area and the eastern UP are often overlooked as a quiet adventure destination but offer many adventures of varying skills and interests and different seasons.

Sue Bakkila is the owner of Woods & Waters in Hessel, Michigan and guides paddlers of all levels throughout Les Cheneaux Islands. She also works professionally in both graphic design and photography.

Jess Rasmussen and Shawn Towsley

Cycling Adventures for ALL Abilities



Red Cedar Room - 4:15 - 5:00

Having a disability or different ability shouldn't be a barrier to cycling. Join us as we review ways you can accommodate riders with diverse needs when planning your next cycling adventure.

Jess Rasmussen is a special education teacher with 36 years experience cycling with diverse abilities. She is a bicycle educator, family advocate, mom, and member of several disabled cyclist groups. It is her great honor to work with families to help them find the joy of adapted cycling.

Shawn Towsley is a retired educator, experienced with students of various ages and abilities. She is also an experienced cyclist, and the mom/grandma of a differently abled cyclist. She has long been a bicycle enthusiast, cycling advocate, ride leader, and avid promoter of cycling adventures for all.

Bruce Umpstead

A Bungler's Guide to Backpacking the Grand Canyon



Au Sable River Room - 4:15 - 5:00

Storyteller and adventurer Bruce Umpstead backpacked the Grand Canyon in 2022—and again in 2025—because once clearly wasn't enough. In this session, he shares what it's really like to prepare for a Grand Canyon adventure of a lifetime. Whether you're dreaming of hiking to the Colorado River and back, planning a rim-to-rim, or flirting with the idea of a rim-to-rim-to-rim, Bruce will point you in the right direction.

Drawing on firsthand experience, he breaks down common first-timer mistakes, permits and planning, smart packing, and the physical and mental challenges you'll face—along with hard-earned lessons, practical tips, encouragement, and a few well-placed laughs.

Bruce Umpstead is a seasoned adventurer who started backpacking later in life. He has since explored the Grand Canyon, the Smoky Mountains, the Rockies, the Alps, and the Wonderland Trail around Mt. Rainier. His "Bungler's Guides" help everyday people step confidently into the outdoors, with laughter as their trailhead.

Tim Gallaway and Danielle Steffey

Make the Time - A Backcountry
Canoe Film



Betsie River Room - 4:15 - 5:00

Accompany two friends on a canoe journey through Canada's backcountry, filled with stunning landscapes, laughter, and personal challenge. Enjoy this heartfelt reminder to make time for adventure, friendship, and what truly matters.

Tim Gallaway, a kayak coach and expedition paddler, has taught kayaking around the U.S.A and in Canada. Tim is a regular coach at Qajaq USA events around the country. In 2018 he competed in the Greenland National Kayaking Championships where he brought home many golds. Tim has completed expedition paddling trips across Ontario, Quebec, Lake Superior, Lake Huron, the Missinaibi, and Maine.

Danielle Steffey is a long-time avid paddler and an active mentor at Qajaq USA events nationwide. She is also an instructor with Michigan DNR's Becoming an Outdoor Woman program. She uses filmmaking to connect and to inspire others to explore the outdoors. She loves exploring the unknown – both of landscapes and of personal growth.

“Study nature, love nature, stay close to
nature. It will never fail you.”

–Frank Lloyd Wright



PRESENTS

2026 WORLD TOUR

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Demonstration Information

John Chase

Power to the Paddle: Exercises to Improve Your Paddling

9:30 - 10:30 - Demonstration Stage



Get ready to move in this fun, hands-on session where you'll learn and practice functional exercises to help you paddle longer, faster, and stronger. Learn simple exercises requiring little or no equipment that will make you a better paddler, build endurance, and prevent injury. Join us to improve your outdoor experience and become the best paddler you can be.

John Chase combines his love for the outdoors with a dedication to helping others make the most of their time on the water. John is the host of the Paddling the Blue podcast, author of 'Power to the Paddle: Exercises to Improve your Canoe and Kayak Paddling', and an ACA Coastal Kayak/River Kayak/SUP Instructor and Instructor Trainer, and NASM Certified Personal Trainer.

Jon Le Valley

Outdoor Stoves 101

10:45 - 11:45 - Demonstration Stage

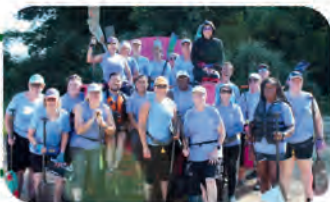


From Alcohol to White Gas, the variety of outdoor stoves on the market can make selecting the right one for your outdoor adventure a daunting task. This presentation reviews the pros and cons of many of the available options to help you select one for anything from car camping to an ultralight thru-hike.

Jon Le Valley has extensive experience in the outdoors, and in outdoor retailing, Jon has spent ample time cooking under the open sky. From modern titanium stoves to restored antiques to homemade options, he has used, abused and torture-tested many, often well beyond what any manufacturer ever intended. From boiling noodles in a cup to cooking multi-course meals, he has tried just about everything and learned from more than a few culinary mistakes along the way.

LouAnn Stark-Dykemma, Julie Sinclair, Laura Reems and Alyona Troitsky

Learn the Basics of Paddling a Dragon Boat!



1:00 - 2:00 - Demonstration Stage

We'll share the history of dragon boating where 20 people race a 40-foot-long boat. Learn the basics of paddling a dragon boat; a sport for everyone over age 14. Meet some paddlers and try your hand at paddling.

LouAnn Stark-Dykema, a board member of Dragonflyers of Michigan Club, she teaches healthy lifestyle through nutrition and exercise.

Julie Sinclair, a board member of Dragonflyers of Michigan Club, works for MSU's Office of International Studies in Education.

Laura Reems, a new member of the Dragonflyers team and a breast cancer survivor, finds dragon boating helps her stay active, meet new people, and manage side effects.

Alyona Troitsky, a 7th grade teacher, has been dragon boating for 15 years, racing and coaching, and hopes to continue 'till her last day on earth.

Qajaq USA team

Land Rolling in Your Kayak



2:15 - 3:00 - Demonstration Stage

At Qajaq events, we start teaching how to roll a kayak on land. We will demonstrate this using both a traditional skin-on-frame qajaq as well as a modern kayak. We will teach proper body position to bring a kayak upright from a capsize and will help support and rotate the kayak.

Tim Gallaway, a nationally touring Qajaq USA kayak coach and expedition paddler, specializes in Greenland and Traditional kayaking. He has completed many paddling expeditions in Canada and the U.S.

Kyle Wills is involved in numerous kayaking clubs and organizations. He loves kayaking both for fitness and to leave his stress on shore.

Tony Pascuzzi taught himself to roll, and continues working on rolling and sculling. He loves playing in rough water and exploring by kayak.

John Chase

Perfectly Pack your Kayak for a Multi-Day Trip



3:15 - 4:00 - Demonstration Stage

Loading your personal and group gear in your boat is both art and science. This hands-on workshop will equip you with tips and tricks to pack your kit for a dry, safe and enjoyable multi-day journey without having to cut the handle off your toothbrush.

John Chase combines his love for the outdoors with a dedication to helping others make the most of their time on the water. John is the host of the Paddling the Blue podcast, author of 'Power to the Paddle: Exercises to Improve your Canoe and Kayak Paddling', and an ACA Coastal Kayak/River Kayak/SUP Instructor and Instructor Trainer, and NASM Certified Personal Trainer.

Charlie Gabriel and Jeff Stieve

Building a 17' Dory: A Design Buildable in Your Garage



All Day - Garage Adventures Booth (near stage)

Learn the process of building a Great Lakes capable rowing Dory, suitable for a family of four. It has an 800-pound capacity and takes roughly 700 hours to complete. The boat will be on display for viewing and questions, a Power Point will also be shown with a detailed description of wood types, epoxy process, screws, sandpaper, etc.

Charlie Gabriel has had extensive stitch-glue-epoxy experience in boat-making and extensive experience paddling the Great Lakes. He also has 30 years of law enforcement experience.

Jeff Stieve is a physician who has completed numerous adventures on the Great Lakes, and who helped his neighbor, Charlie, build the dory.



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2026 Quiet Adventures Symposium Planning Committee

The Quiet Adventures Society is deeply grateful to return for the **31st Annual Quiet Adventures Symposium**. This event would not be possible without the dedication and leadership of the **2026 Planning Committee**, whose months of planning helped shape, coordinate, and bring this year's Symposium to life. From early preparation through final execution, their commitment ensured a thoughtful, welcoming, and well-organized experience for all who attended.

Beyond formal meetings, Planning Committee volunteers contributed countless hours behind the scenes. Their work—coordinating speakers and exhibitors, managing logistics and communications, and supporting day-of operations—was essential to the Symposium's smooth and successful delivery.

The **2026 Planning Committee** comprises volunteers with diverse skills, perspectives, and experience. Their collaboration and leadership were central to the success of this year's Symposium, and we are grateful for their service.

Special thanks to **Emma Knapp** for designing the **2026 Quiet Adventures Symposium** program—her creativity and attention to detail helped bring the Symposium's spirit to life. We are also grateful to **Haley Andrus** for all her marketing expertise and efforts. New members Clint and Alex Adams and Bruce Umpstead all stepped in when they saw a need and provided expertise and imagination in bringing new ideas to the Symposium, including the Paddling Film Festival.



This was in 2024 when we all got together. Many of the same people are involved for QAS 2026. A shot from a Zoom call got rejected as just was not adequate!

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The Quiet Adventures society would like to thank Thom Bell of BPS Video for the excellent work filming and producing videos for Quiet Adventures Symposium. He captures the spirit and content on the event and presented us with a beautiful video last year to honor the 30th Anniversary. Please check out his work on our website or at our YouTube channel: @quietadventuressymposium3141.



Thank you Thom!

Thank You Volunteers!

Our volunteers—both longtime and new—are the heart of the Quiet Adventures Symposium. We honor the traditions that have shaped this event while welcoming fresh ideas and new energy each year. Bringing the Symposium to life requires months of planning, coordination, and attention to detail behind the scenes, all made possible by people who care deeply about this community. As lives and availability change, we are always grateful to welcome new volunteers who want to help ensure the 2026 Quiet Adventures Symposium's success.



Volunteers are always needed!

Are more people needed on the Board of Directors?

Yes! The Board is a talented group of fun and dedicated people. They'd love to talk with you.

Are more people needed for the QAS Planning Committee?

Yes! This is where creative and problem-solving people excel. The committee meets and works together from May until the next QAS day.

Can you live outside the Lansing-area and still help?

Yes! Contact any of the QAS Board members to learn more.

Many exhibitors—especially nonprofit organizations—also volunteer, generously sharing their time, knowledge, and passion for outdoor recreation and conservation. They bring experience, personal stories, and hands-on expertise to the Symposium. Commercial exhibitors likewise devote their weekend to supporting the event through their booths and participation in sessions. Please take a moment to thank our volunteers, speakers, and exhibitors—your appreciation truly makes a difference.

History of Quiet Adventures Society

The Quiet Adventures Society, as it is known today, is a 501(c)(3) organization that has existed since 2007. However, the first Symposium started in 1996 and was called the Quiet Water Symposium. The event was started by a loosely organized group of about 11 volunteers and friends who were led by Janet Gross and David McCune. Along with sponsorship from Raupp's Campfitters, the crew launched the first Symposium to bring together paddlers and boat builders for a day of showcasing their boats, knowledge, and adventures.

In 2007, the group formally organized into the Quiet Water Society, gaining status as a 501(c)(3) non-profit. As times changed and the event grew, the Society saw the need to expand into non-motorized outdoor communities that were not primarily water-based, such as cycling, hiking, camping, and more. In 2020, the 25th year of the Symposium, the Quiet Water Society and Symposium formally rebranded to the Quiet Adventures Society and Symposium in an effort to grow the inclusivity of the organization and event to further reach out to these other outdoor communities.

Today we are excited to continue to welcome people and organizations from all different outdoor backgrounds into our community. While many of the original wooden boat builders have retired, bicycle organizations and vendors have joined us to enrich the offerings to all. We weathered the COVID crisis using virtual presentations. Each year brings about innovations and changes, with 2026 including the Paddling Film Festival, a joint activity with Drift and Roam Events. Given the enthusiasm for QAS, we have worked with Daylight Brand, one of our exhibitors, to have a branded t-shirt available for sale.

Without the support of the organizations, individuals, and businesses that are a part of the Symposium, the Quiet Adventures Society would not be able to bring such a special event to life. As a 100% volunteer-run organization, we strive to bring the Symposium back year after year, regardless of the challenges that may appear.

Thank you to every individual and organization that has been a part of the Symposium through the years, and thank you to all those who support us in the years to come. Now, let's go have some quiet adventures!



Quiet Water Society

QAS Board of Directors



The Quiet Adventures Society is led by a Board of Directors, all volunteers. Without the work of our dedicated Board of Directors, this event and the Quiet Adventures Society as a whole could not run. They put in an immense amount of work year-round to maintain the function of the Society and Symposium. From maintaining our budget, creating social media posts, all the way to organizing the yearly Symposium, everything is done by our amazing team.

Board positions are available and we are always looking for candidates with a variety of skills to join the team. Please visit QuietAdventures.org to learn how to join!



**Visit us at
Qajaqtc.org**



A FUN AND FRIENDLY EVENT FOR PADDLERS OF ALL SKILL LEVELS AND INTERESTS FOCUSING ON GREENLANDIC PADDLING, ROPES, AND ROLLS.

“The environment is where we all meet;
where we all have a mutual interest; it is the
one thing all of us share.”

- Lady Bird Johnson

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Find Your Path, Share the Trail

Single-track. Switchback. Rail trail. O -road. Backcountry. Water. Equestrian. Multi-use. Looped. Out-and-back. Smooth and paved. Everyone has a favorite kind of trail – and likely more than just one! Michigan trail users appreciate the beauty of our state pathways, and they recognize the importance of protecting our natural landscapes and respecting their fellow trail users.

Plan your next adventure and brush up on trail etiquette by visiting Michigan.gov/DNRTrails.







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Quiet Adventures Society Board of Directors



President: Cynthia Donovan

Cynthia has been the President of the Board of Directors since 2021. She is an avid kayaker and hiker, as well as skier and snowshoer, when the snow is good. She spends part of the year encircled by water on an island in the northern Great Lakes region. She retired from Michigan State University in 2019, where she was on the faculty of the Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics, engaged for over 20 years in development and training projects in Africa and elsewhere. Among her responsibilities at MSU, she was the Deputy Director of the Legume Innovation Lab. Her interest in the Society began with the Quiet Water Symposium as a volunteer and speaker. She loves being able to bring people together to connect and is always looking for new adventures and learning among the friends, old and new, at QAS.



Vice President: Lauren Smith

Lauren joined the Quiet Adventures board in 2022 after several years representing various organizations as exhibitors at the annual symposium. Lauren brings more than a decade of event planning, outreach, and fundraising experience to the Quiet Adventures Society. An enthusiastic outdoorsperson, Lauren enjoys hiking, backpacking, kayaking, snowshoeing, snowboarding, and hammocking. Her adventures have taken her from the mountains of the west coast of the U.S. to the beaches of Cape Town, South Africa and beyond; but her favorite place in the world is the shores of Lake Superior. Lauren is grateful for the opportunity to help others explore and enjoy the outdoors through her service with the Quiet Adventures Society and Quiet Adventures Symposium.



Treasurer: Emma Ruth Bailey

Emma joined the QAS Board of Directors in 2023 after many years of involvement with the symposium as a volunteer, volunteer coordinator, planning committee member, speaker and exhibitor. She is an avid paddler, backpacker and lover of all things outdoors. Self titled "A Freak FOR Nature". Emma has always had a passion for experiencing those hard to get places. Emma was raised in the Lansing area and is passionate about supporting, growing and enjoying the unique outdoor community in the Mid-Michigan area. She is excited to offer her skills, knowledge and insight to support the Quiet Adventures Symposium and connect people to outdoor resources, education and ideas.



Director: Gary De Kock

Gary served as chair of the Quiet Water/Adventures Society Board of Directors from 2014 to 2022. He presented the River Guardian Award to Verlen Kruger at QWS 2003 and made a presentation on kayaking in the Great Lakes at QWS 1996. In 2014, he and Linda De Kock paddled a tandem kayak from source to sea on the Mississippi River (2,291 miles in 70 days). In 2018, they canoed the Missouri River from Three Forks, Montana to St. Louis (2,341 miles in 86 days). These and other trips have been used to raise funds for communities worldwide that lack safe drinking water and adequate sanitation. In 2023, they were honored to receive the annual Verlen Kruger Award for these and other contributions to paddlesport.



Director: Pat Harrington

Pat has been active on non-motor transportation since hit by a school bus while commuting in 1976. Having participated in 40 DALMAC bicycle tours, with 20 as a volunteer organizer for Tri-County Bicycle Association, Pat also has been active in recreational paddling volunteerism for over 20 years and co-organized such events as The 2010 Grand River Expedition and MGROW.org's Hugh Heward Challenge. Pat has a collection of Sawyer solo canoes and has been involved with Lansing Oar & Paddle Club since the mid 1990's. Actively participating in Quiet Adventures Society activities, Pat's voice is commonly heard from the rafters of The Symposium's speaker system and can be found with his wife Robin helping out in whatever way we let them. They are known as "The Dynamic Duo" of Patman & Robin or Flipper & Sweep and received the Stacy Smith Volunteerism Award in 2021 from The Quiet Adventures Society.



Director: Emma Knapp

Emma is an enthusiastic outdoorswoman and lover of all things nature. With a background in the arts & education, Emma is passionate about combining her creativity with her love of the outdoors. Emma now works in outdoor retail, helping to bring outdoor products and opportunity to Mackinac Island. Helping people of all backgrounds and experience levels get outdoors is a great passion of hers. Emma began volunteering with the Quiet Adventures Society for the 2024 Symposium and joined the Board of Directors shortly thereafter.



Director: Haley Andrus

For Haley, getting outside and experiencing nature, be it a walk in the park around the corner here in Lansing or a 6-month backpacking trip, is a key piece of the puzzle in our desire to protect, preserve, and care for the natural spaces of this world. As she noted in joining the Board, the experiences you have in the outdoors and the relationship you make with the things around you are what drive your connection to these spaces. Your connection to these places drives a desire to ensure spaces are taken care of. She brings professional experience and personal strengths in a key aspects of project management, team leadership, with a customer service background, and excellent organizational skills. Using these skills to partner with other passionate individuals in helping to further the mission of QAS is why she joined the QAS Board. Like many of us at QAS, she enjoys helping people of all backgrounds and experience levels get outdoors, explore new lands, and meet new friends.



TRI-COUNTY BICYCLE ASSOCIATION **SAFE, SOCIAL BICYCLING SINCE 1972**

Club Supported Activities:

- Events and day rides (many days of the week)
- Funding over \$ 2 Mill in bicycling projects in Michigan through The DALMAC Fund
- Promotes use of bicycles for healthful recreation & transportation
- Provides education & promotion of cyclists rights & responsibilities
- All skill levels & interest: road, commuters, fat tire, mountain, gravel, recumbents
- Terrific ride incentives each year - Join for fun, friendship & health in every season

TCBA Youth Cycling Club

- Weekly Family Fun Rides, Summer Bicycle Camp, Free Fall Fun Ride
- A club of kids, by kids and for kids. Operated under TCBA rules and guidelines

TCBA Invitational Tours: Each year TCBA offers multi-day low-cost tours to bicyclists with camping accommodations, meals, restrooms - showers, maps & SAG support - Come join us!

NORTHWEST TOUR 2026: 5-day tour in and around Traverse City and Northwest Michigan
Route options are 30, 60 and 60+ each day. June 9-14

SUMMERTOUR 2026: 5-day tour annually in Michigan - Child-friendly activities July 22 - 26

DALMAC 2026: 2 to 5-day bicycle tour from East Lansing (or further north) to Mackinaw City.
7 routes to choose from, including a gravel route. Don't let anyone tell you it cannot be done.

JEANEEN REYNOLDS JOY RIDE: Multiple distances : paved road & gravel road options are offered
Grand Ledge, MI May 30, 2026

**TCBA IS ALL VOLUNTEER RUN & PROUD TO BE THIS YEAR'S
QAS SHOW & VOLUNTEER BANDANA SPONSOR**

The Quiet Adventures Society Thanks Our Grand Prize Raffle Sponsors for their generous donations!



Enter the Grand Prize Raffles Saturday, February 28

at the Farm Bureau Pavilion at MSU East Lansing
9:00 am - 5:30 pm.

**1 TICKET FOR \$10
3 TICKETS FOR \$25**

... Grand Prize Raffle ...

The Power of Water

Pyranha Fusion 2 Kayak or voucher*



or

Denny's Central Park Bicycles

Voucher towards a bicycle*



*Full raffle details, rules, & tickets available at the event.

Grand Prize Raffle tickets will be sold on the day of the event at the Grand Prize Raffle Table. Drawings will take place at 5PM the day of the symposium. You need not be present to win. Winners must be able to claim prize within 24 hrs of drawing. Vouchers do not have cash value. The QAS Raffle License and House Rules will be displayed at the event as required by the Michigan Lottery Charitable Gaming Division.



QuietAdventures.org



The Verlen Kruger Award



Verlen Kruger (June 30, 1922 – August 2, 2004), a world record canoeist from Delta Mills, Michigan, was named “The River Guardian” at the 2003 Quiet Water Symposium. This was a heartfelt honor from the mid-Michigan paddling community. Verlen was recognized for his outstanding achievements and records in paddle sports, for bringing international awareness to our environmentally sensitive waterways, and for fostering stewardship of our treasured water resources. Each year, the Quiet Adventures Society recognizes others who embody his spirit.

On February 28, 2026, during a ceremony in the Main Stage Auditorium during the 31st Quiet Adventures Symposium, the 2026 Verlen Kruger Award will be presented to Peter Frank. Peter has completed an impressive number of major non-motorized expeditions which include:

2021 - Unicycle Expedition (solo and unsupported)

The ride started in Appleton, Wisconsin and was completed 99 days later in Phoenix, Arizona. The entire expedition covered 2,400 miles. The expedition raised over \$30,000 for the Beacon House, a private, non-profit organization that offers compassionate hospitality to those seeking specialty medical care.

2022 - Mississippi River Expedition (solo and unsupported)

The voyage by canoe started at Lake Itasca, the headwaters of the Mississippi River, and ended at the Gulf of Mexico after 2,400 miles and 144 blistering days.

2022/2023 - Bikepacking Expedition (solo and unsupported)

During this expedition, Peter cycled through Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and part of Florida over the course of 65 days for a total distance of over 700 miles.

2023 - Headwaters expedition (duo and unsupported)

Returning to Lake Itasca, Minnesota, the headwaters of the Mississippi River, Peter and a friend traveled 456 miles on the river in a voyage of 28 days.

2024/2025 – Great Loop Project (solo and unsupported)

The Great Loop is a 6,000-mile cruising route that circumnavigates the eastern United States. Peter used a 1982 Sawyer Loon, a decked canoe designed and built by Verlen Kruger. Verlen completed the Great Loop with Steve Landick as part of the 28,043-mile Ultimate Canoe Challenge in 1980-1983. Part of Peter's expedition was to honor Verlen's legacy and to see if it was still possible to complete the loop in the same challenging clockwise direction.

Peter joins the ranks of the previous Verlen Kruger Award winners, all recognized for significant contributions to paddle sport. He will receive a paddle plaque and a paver on which the award date and his name are engraved. A duplicate paver will be added to the walkway around the Verlen Kruger Memorial, located by the Grand River in Portland, Michigan. Peter's name will also be engraved on a perpetual plaque, where it will join the names of the prior 30 Verlen Kruger Award winners.

With this award, the Quiet Adventures Society celebrates the many ways in which Peter Frank embodies the spirit of Verlen Kruger. Clearly Peter has a kinship with Verlen and with all canoeists who dream it and do it.



Past Recipients

VERLEN KRUGER AWARD WINNERS

2003	2004	2005	2006
Verlen Kruger	James C. Woodruff	Janet Gross & Dave McCune	Gloria Miller
2007	2008	2009	2010
Albert Schultz	Dan Smith & Mike Smith	Karl Pearson	Charlie Parmalee
2011	2012	2013	2014
Doug Carter	Jay Hanks	Russ Hicks	Jean Kinnear
2015	2016	2017	2018
Ron Sell	Tiffany & Patrick Van DeHey	Dean Sandell	Tom & Connie Cannon
2019	2020	2021	2022
Hugh Walton	Andrea Knepper	Deana Jerdee	Todd Leigh Linda Savage Nancy Uschold
2023	2024	2025	2026
Linda & Gary De Kock	John Bollman	Wendy Ogilvie	Peter Frank

Stacy Smith Outstanding Volunteer Award

On February 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke to his congregation saying, "Everybody can be great, because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love". In 2018, the Quiet Water Society (now Quiet Adventures Society) made a commitment to honoring the service of individuals volunteering with us with hearts full of grace and souls full of love. Through the Symposium each year, hundreds of selfless individuals donate countless hours, talents, and monies to causes that actively make our world a better place, and all of them are deserving of recognition for their contributions. While every volunteer is invaluable, each year the Society selects one volunteer who stands out among the rest for their commitment, service, grace, and love.

Through the Symposium each year, hundreds of selfless individuals donate countless hours, talents, and monies to causes that actively make our world a better place, and all of them are deserving of recognition for their contributions. Since 2018, The Quiet Adventures Society selects one volunteer who stands out among the rest for their commitment, service, grace, and love to receive The Stacy Smith Outstanding Volunteer Award.

The award was designed to be given annually to a volunteer deserving of recognition for the qualities that Stacy Smith exemplified, and this year the Society is pleased to present this award to Cynthia Donovan.

For the past 5 years, Cynthia Donovan has actively volunteered as President of The Quiet Adventures Society and has been the lead manager of The Quiet Adventures Symposium. With her upcoming move to Minnesota, she will be pursuing other endeavors.

It is with great honor that the Quiet Adventures Society selects Cynthia Donovan as this year's Stacy Smith Outstanding Volunteer Award recipient & expresses deep gratitude to Cynthia for these many years of holding all of this together and making it happen so well.

Past Award Winners:

2025 - Emma Ruth Bailey

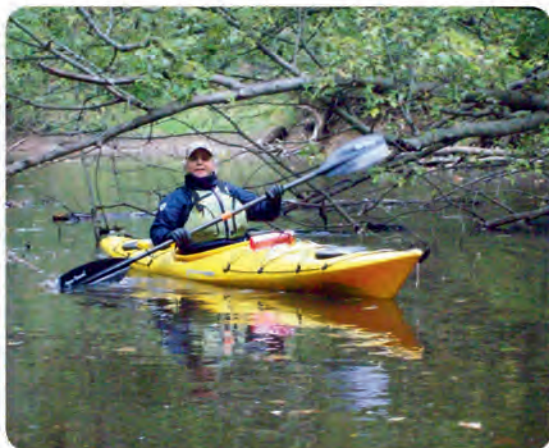
2024 - Kate Lederle

2023 - Joe Lessard

2020 - Pat Harrington and Robin Barfoot

2019 - Rich Bailey

2018 - Family of Stacy Smith



Denny's

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Specialized Turbo Vado e-bike

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Professional bike repairs and tune-ups

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***Large in-store selection of comfort bikes,
gravel/adventure bikes, hybrid bikes, mountain bikes,
road bikes, and youth bikes.***

**We carry E-bikes: class 1 and class 3 – pedal assist
class 2 – pedal assist and throttle**

The Quiet Adventures Symposium Code of Conduct

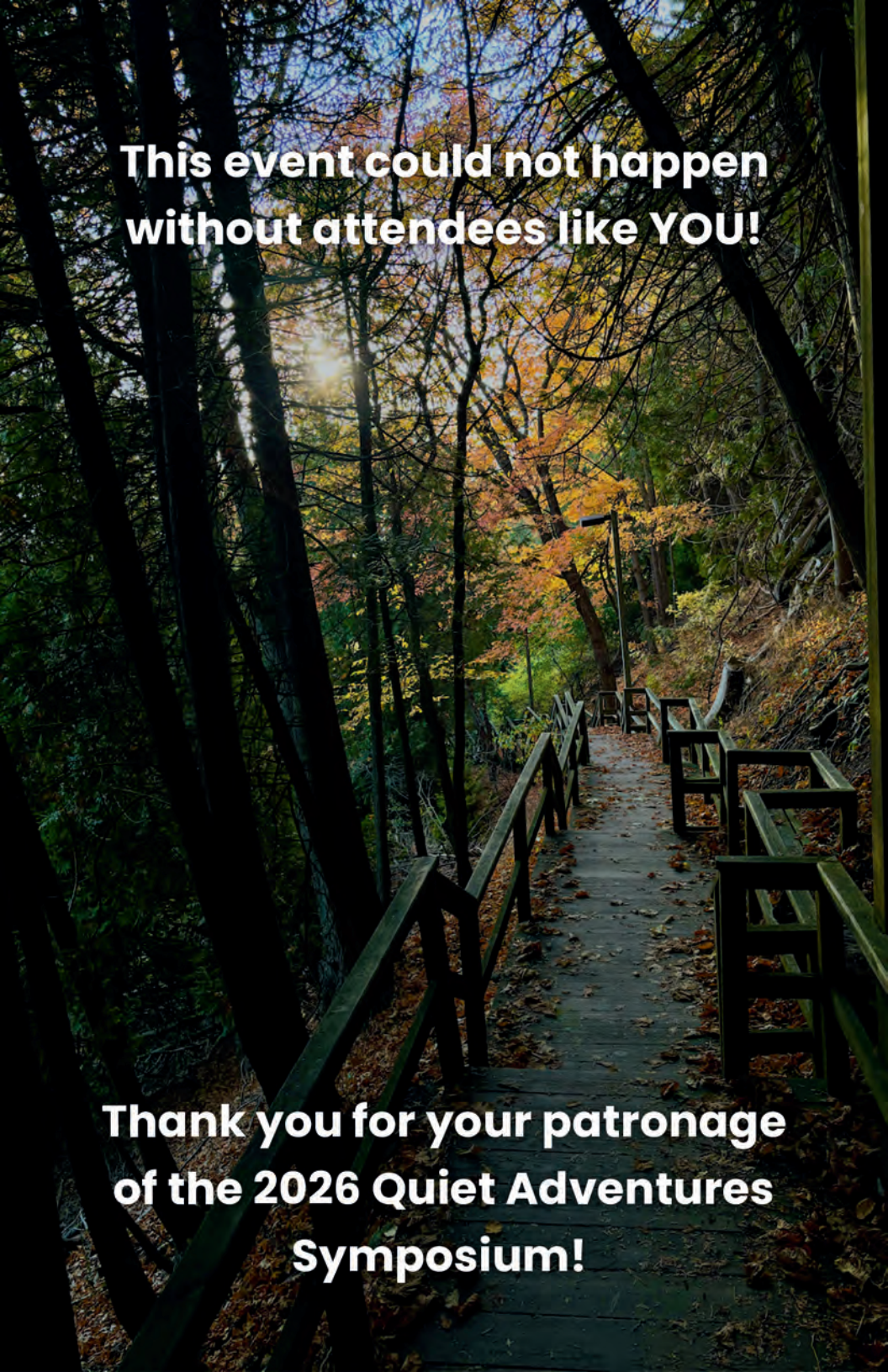
The Quiet Adventures Symposium (QAS) serves as a platform for education, discussion, and the presentation of ideas that promote human powered outdoor recreation and help conserve our Great Lakes resources. In pursuit of these goals, the Quiet Adventures Symposium embraces the right to free speech while also being aware that there may be many sides to every issue and many possible solutions. The viewpoints of our many guests, exhibitors, speakers, and demonstrators are their own, and may not necessarily represent the views of the Quiet Adventures Symposium, its board members, or its many volunteers. Therefore, the Quiet Adventures Symposium requires that:

- Exhibitors, speakers, and demonstrators must keep their activities and the activities of their group, employees, and volunteers confined within the area assigned to them by the QAS Planning Committee.
- Interactions with event staff, guests, exhibitors, speakers, and demonstrators must be held in a civil and professional manner.
- Conduct or behavior must not be disruptive to the event.

If members of the QAS Planning Committee find that any action of guests, exhibitors, speakers, or demonstrators violates these requirements, event staff will attempt to resolve the situation. In cases where agreement on a solution cannot be found, parties may be asked to leave the site. In the most extreme cases, parties may be restricted from future participation in the event.

The QAS Code of Conduct is included as a part of exhibitor registration. Submission of the exhibitor form indicates acceptance of the Code of Conduct.

This will help make it possible for all parties to interact in a positive way.



**This event could not happen
without attendees like YOU!**

**Thank you for your patronage
of the 2026 Quiet Adventures
Symposium!**



We provide science-based education and resources to help you understand, enjoy, and protect Michigan's fresh water.

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- Get into the classroom with our courses on lakes, landscaping, aquatic plants and more.
- Protect your favorite waterway from invasive species with our grants and resources.
- Volunteer to monitor lakes and streams in the Michigan Clean Water Corps.
- Share our books, fact sheets, and stickers.

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