Michigan is rich in nearly 4,000 miles of Great Lakes shoreline. This amazing coastline provides outstanding scenery, diverse shoreline habitats, and recreational access to one of the world’s greatest system of freshwater seas. Sandy beaches and ranging dunes intermingled with vegetated coastal wetlands, rocky cobble shorelines, and other rare and unique habitats. Lighthouses and shipwrecks, harbor towns and bustling waterfront communities awaiting a visit.

Great Lakes Bluewater trails throughout Michigan offer residents and visitors a unique opportunity to explore and experience these coastal natural, historical and cultural resources from the waters of our Great Lakes.

Journey by water, visit one today!

SEE WATER TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS ON BACK PAGE
Michigan Coastal Water Trails

LAKE SUPERIOR

1. Isle Royale National Park Water Trails. Experienced paddlers can explore dozens of small islands, coves, creeks and inland lakes left by the glaciers and volcanoes that formed Isle Royale. The park allows visitors to see an astounding variety of wildlife in a relatively undisturbed habitat. (906) 482-0984 or www.nps.gov/iro/planyourvisit/canoe-and-kayak.htm

2. Keweenaw Water Trail. This trail gives paddlers an opportunity to experience the grandeur of Lake Superior while circling the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula. Traveling along the peninsula provides not only a ruggedly beautiful view, but also an extended margin of safety, allowing paddlers to move to the nearby shore when the winds and waves of Superior threaten. The trail is a good mix of seclusion interspersed with small, charming towns — great for paddlers seeking wildlife viewing and fishing opportunities with the option to stop in town for a hot meal and shower when needed. (906) 337-4579 or www.kwta.org

3. Hiawatha Water Trail. Running 120 miles from Big Bay to Grand Marais Michigan on Lake Superior's south shore, the Hiawatha Water Trail follows a shoreline paddled by Native Americans, Voyageurs and early European explorers. Experience some of the most scenic paddling available in the Midwest at places such as Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Grand Island National Recreation Area, and Hiawatha National Forest. (800) 544-4321 or www.hiawathawattertrail.org

LAKE HURON

4. Great Waters. Paddling is just one of the great outdoor experiences to be had here. Visit places like the Tahquamenon River, a National Wild and Scenic River, and the Au Train River Trail, a 10-mile route in the Hiawatha National Forest that leads to Lake Superior. (906) 226-1680 or www.thegreatwaters.com/paddle

5. Les Cheneaux Water Trail. This trail spans over 75 miles of the northern-most shores of Lake Huron, from the Carp River near St. Ignace through the Les Cheneaux Islands, continuing to DeTour Village at the mouth of the St. Marys River. (888) 364-7526 or www.lescheneaux.org/ThingsToDo/canoe_kayak.html

6. Huron Shores Coastal Water Trail. This trail traverses the Lake Huron coastal waters, connecting the communities of Mackinaw City, Cheboygan, Rogers City, Presque Isle Harbor, Alpena, Oscineke, Black River, Harrisville, Greenbush, Oscoda, East Tawas, Tawas City and Au Gres. Nine State Parks, 10 marinas, and numerous parks, offer a wide variety of access points to Lake Huron. (989) 705-3730 or www.us23heritageroute.org

7. Tip of the Thumb Water Trail. Experience the beauty, variety and challenges of paddling the 103-mile Lake Huron trail tracing the edge of Huron and Tuscola counties. Half the fun is stopping to visit the towns and villages along the route. Paddlers will find shops, restaurants and community events that will keep them coming back for more of the close-to-home "Up North" experience. (877) 404-7447 or www.thumbtrails.com

LAKE ERIE, DETROIT RIVER, AND ST. CLAIR CORRIDOR

8. Blueways of St. Clair. Variety is the hallmark of the St. Clair River Blueways trail. There are 16 different paddling routes through eight different bodies of water. The trail runs along the St. Clair River corridor, from Anchor Bay to the northern border of St. Clair county on the Lake Huron coast. Maps are available to print and bring along on your paddling adventure through the blueways website. (810) 989-6950 or www.bluewaysofstclair.org

9. Lake St. Clair Coastal Water Trail. Since the explorer Cadillac arrived by canoe in 1701, Lake St. Clair has remained a recreational attraction. This trail is great for paddlers interested in carrying on that exploration. It features historic sites, launches and landings, routes and points of interest along the Lake St. Clair coast. (313) 410-9431 or www.miseagrant.com/product_p/michu-11-726.htm or www.tourlakesclair.org

10. Detroit Heritage River Water Trail. See Detroit from a whole new vantage point! This water route is made up of a network of recreational trails along the Detroit, Huron, Raisin, and Rouge rivers. It is designed to encourage small boaters to enjoy the natural, cultural and historical resources offered along these routes. (313) 961-2270 or www.mac-web.org/Projects/HeritageWaterTrail.htm

LAKE MICHIGAN

11. Lake Michigan Water Trail Segment. Lake Michigan is particularly friendly to paddlers and non-motorized watercraft because the majority of the shore has some sort of beach available for easy refuge. While this trail is still under construction, more than 75 miles is complete and open on the southern shore of the lake. The current segment goes from New Buffalo to Chicago. Eventually, the trail will circle the entire lake, a 1,200 mile route. www.lmwt.org

STATEWIDE

The Michigan Heritage Water Trails provides information on river, lake and canal water trails designed and implemented to foster an interactive historical education experience. (269) 387-3408 or www.wmich.edu/glcms/waterratrails