To experience the best of northern Lake Huron’s amazing coastal resources and shoreline scenery, visitors might consider grabbing a paddle and taking to the water. This amazing stretch of northeast Michigan coastline has been recently detailed, mapped, and made available to visitors through the collaborative Huron Shores Coastal Water Trail project. Paddling these coastal waters offers an amazing reflection of sustainable coastal tourism opportunities and investments developed across northeast Michigan.

Michigan is home to more than 3,200 miles of Great Lakes coastline. Enhancing opportunities to explore these coastlines by way of water offers unique coastal tourism development possibilities for communities, while also enhancing quality of life — by increasing recreational options — for local residents. In collaboration with the DEQ NOAA Coastal Management Program (CMP) and Land Information Access Association, Michigan Sea Grant and Michigan State University Extension helped facilitate the statewide coordination of Great Lakes water trails. Locally, to northeast Michigan, this collaborative provided previous support for the regional Huron Blueways water trail project, led by the Northeast Michigan Council of Governments and also supported by the DEQ and NOAA CMP.

This five-county Huron Shores Coastal Water Trail complements, and is promoted in parallel with, the shore-side U.S. 23 Heritage Route corridor. It serves to accomplish tourism development priorities identified during multiple Northeast Michigan coastal tourism research and planning efforts with local partners and communities. These priorities are centered on the natural and heritage-based assets of Lake Huron and promoting sustainable coastal tourism across this region.

Plan your trip: www.us23heritageroute.org
If paddling sounds like the adventure of your trip to northeast Michigan, take a peek at the Huron Blueways website and enjoy some natural, cultural and historical attractions awaiting your exploration:

- Paddle the Presque Isle Township and Thompson Harbor State Park stretch of coastline, enjoying scenic lighthouses surrounded by coastal dunes, wetlands, wildlife and limestone cobble shorelines along the scenic coastline of Thompson's Harbor State Park. These diverse coastal habitats offer richness in biodiversity, and are home to many rare, threatened and endangered species.

- Near shore coastal waters of Lake Huron offer an abundance of great fishing opportunities — accented by the amazing smallmouth bass and walleye fishing — to be experienced among the bays and rocky shoals found along the length of this coastline.

- Historical Thunder Bay is home of the NOAA Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary — or the ‘Alpena Blueway’ — that offers a great ‘start-in-town’ paddle to experience a number of shipwrecks visible from kayak. The Alpena Blueways offers paddlers an opportunity to visit the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center and explore an urban waterfront with interesting industries.

- Enjoy coastal camping on the Lake Huron shores of Alcona County and at the coastal backcountry camping spots at Negwegon State Park. Sturgeon Point Lighthouse, to the south, is a great place to launch, and you can paddle north into the Negwegon-Black River stretch of the Huron Blueways to discover diverse coastal habitats found in Negwegon State Park.

- If you are looking for a downtown wetland experience, paddle the City of Alpena's Wildlife Sanctuary on the Thunder Bay River for a more inland (in town) wetland experience. Rent a canoe or kayak from Adventureland Sports at Duck Park.

The U.S. 23 Heritage Route partnership has also recently launched a smart phone version of the website for access to this information while on the water, including access to maps of the northern Lake Huron Blueways and Greenways.

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