



Explore the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

The Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center is a great place to begin your paddle or snorkel expedition. The Center features immersive maritime heritage exhibits, an HD theater, a wooden boatbuilding workshop, a gift shop and exciting programs and events throughout the year. Bring your friends and family and dive into our Great Lakes past!

Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center
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Paddle & Snorkel Guide



Bulk Freighter *Joseph S. Fay*



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Shipwrecks for Everyone

Located in northwestern Lake Huron, Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary protects one of America's best-preserved and nationally significant collections of shipwrecks. To date, more than 50 shipwrecks have been discovered within the sanctuary and an additional 30 wrecks have been located immediately outside of the sanctuary boundaries. Through research, education and resource protection, the sanctuary works to ensure that these underwater treasures are preserved for future generations.

Readily accessible by paddlers, snorkelers, and divers of all abilities, many shipwrecks in the sanctuary are marked with seasonal mooring buoys anchored to the lake bottom. Buoys make the sites easier to locate, improve safety, and protect shipwrecks. Buoys feature attachment lines that are available on a first come, first serve basis.

Shipwreck sites are located at a wide range of depths, from just a few inches to more than 200 feet beneath the surface of Lake Huron. Whether by paddling, snorkeling, or swimming, any sanctuary visitor can dive into Thunder Bay's rich maritime heritage.

Paddle into Maritime Heritage

A number of convenient access points along the shores of Lake Huron make Thunder Bay shipwreck paddling fun and feasible recreation. Excursions can vary from a one-hour paddle to multi-day trips along the coast.

Although the sheer number of shipwrecks in the sanctuary is impressive, it is the range of vessel types that makes the collection nationally significant. From an 1844 sidewheel steamer to a modern 500-foot-long German freighter, the shipwrecks of Thunder Bay represent a microcosm of maritime commerce and travel on the Great Lakes.

With lighthouses and lifesaving stations, commercial fishing camps and working ports, northeastern Michigan enjoys a rich maritime landscape that truly makes paddling Thunder Bay a complete experience.



Schooner Portland



Schooner John F. Warner

Schooner *John F. Warner* (1855 - 1890)

GPS Coordinates: N45° 03.050' W83° 26.128'

Depth: 9 feet

Distance from the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center: 1 mile

Description: Head to Alpena's Starlight Beach to explore some of the shallow shipwrecks just outside Alpena's Small Boat Harbor. The *Warner* and the *Shamrock* are two of five shipwrecks in the area that are buoyed, making them easy to locate. Nearshore shifting sands and murky water may make these wrecks difficult to see at certain times of the year, but a paddle along the downtown shoreline is always worth it!

The *John F. Warner* spent several years trading between the Great Lakes and European ports. After 1860, it stayed closer to home, engaged in the booming Great Lakes lumber trade. Anchored off the mouth of the Thunder Bay River in 1890, heavy seas drove the vessel ashore south of the harbor.

Steamer *Shamrock* (1875 - 1905)

GPS Coordinates: N45° 03.077' W83° 26.052'

Depth: 11 feet

Distance from the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center: 1 mile

Description: The *Shamrock* was built as a schooner barge and reconstructed as a steam lumber carrier. It was bound from Ontario to Toledo with a cargo of lath when it encountered a furious gale on the open lake. The ship sprung a leak and became waterlogged, but the lath cargo kept it afloat until it was beached at Black River. The abandoned vessel was later towed to Alpena and sunk. Many interesting structural features can still be seen on the wreck.

Tug *Loretta* (1892 - 1896)

GPS Coordinates: N44° 48.903' W83° 16.955'

Depth: 7 feet

Distance from Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center: 23 miles

Description: The tug *Loretta* can be accessed from the public launch at Alcona Township Huron Park. Head straight out of the mouth of Black River and paddle 3/4 of a mile east. Visibility is generally excellent at this site.

Towing and tugging for four years, the *Loretta* enjoyed a short life for working conditions on the Great Lakes. Hauling a cargo of chain, it broke its propeller on a reef coming into the Black River. The tug was brought up river and tied up at the docks when it suddenly caught fire. Another tug came to its rescue and towed it out into the lake where it burned to the waterline and sank.

Schooner *Ishpeming* (1872 - 1903)

GPS Coordinates: N44° 48.589' W83° 16.650'

Depth: 12 feet

Distance from Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center: 23 miles

Description: The wreck of the schooner *Ishpeming* can be accessed from the public launch at Alcona Township Huron Park. Follow the directions for the tug *Loretta* and then head south another 1/2 mile. Visibility is generally excellent at this site.

Launched in 1872, the schooner *Ishpeming* met with a number of disasters throughout its career. The three-masted canaler collided with a steam barge, struck a reef, and suffered severe storm damage before finally running aground near the mouth of Black River. At the time of the grounding, the schooner was heading north with a cargo of coal and salvage crews from Alpena attempted to refloat it. After unsuccessful attempts, the *Ishpeming* was stripped of its salvageable parts and abandoned.



Mooring Buoy and Diver



Tug Loretta

Steamer *Joseph S. Fay* (1871 - 1905)

GPS Coordinates: N45°29.317' W83° 54.600'

Depth: 18 feet

Paddling Distance From Shore: 1/2 mile

Distance from Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center: 45 miles

Description: The shipwreck of the *Joseph S. Fay* is located at 40-Mile Point Lighthouse just off US 23 north of Rogers City. Parking is available at the lighthouse and you can launch your kayak at the beach and paddle out to the submerged portion of the wreck located approximately 300 yards offshore. One of the sides of the *Fay's* hull is located on the beach just west of the lighthouse.

The *Joseph S. Fay* was a 216-foot bulk freighter built in Cleveland, Ohio for the Bradley Transportation Co. The vessel wrecked just in front of the 40-Mile Point Lighthouse in October 1905 in a fierce storm that claimed a dozen ships in the area and smashed the aging ship to pieces after running it aground. Visitors to the site can see parts of the engine, the propeller shaft and some of the boat's final cargo of iron ore. Visibility is usually excellent at this site.

Schooner *American Union* (1862 - 1894)

GPS Coordinates: N45°21.411' W83°35.368'

Depth: 4-10 feet

Paddling Distance: About 2 miles

Distance from Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center: 26.5 miles

Description: The *American Union* lies in the bay at Thompson's Harbor State Park. Travel north from Alpena on US 23 to reach the park entrance and follow to the boat launch. To reach the wreck, paddle west from the boat launch until you reach the end of the peninsula. Paddle straight to the west from the end of the peninsula and you will move over a patch of deeper water before coming over a very shallow reef. The main body of wreckage is on the western edge of this reef.

The *American Union* was a 185-foot schooner built in Cleveland, Ohio in 1862. It carried bulk cargoes on the upper lakes for over 30 years before stranding in a storm on May 6th, 1894. Visitors to the site can see the bottom of the ship and the remains of one of the sides. Large iron shrouds that once held the masts lie scattered at the stern of the wreck and the centerboard trunk lies on its side near the bilge.

Schooner *Portland* (1863 - 1877)

GPS Coordinates: N45°14.929' W83°24.450'

Depth: 6 feet

Paddling Distance: 1/2 mile

Distance from Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center: 15 miles

Description: The Schooner *Portland* is wrecked near the Besser State Natural Area. Take US 23 North from Alpena to Grand Lake Road, then to Besser Natural Areas and follow the foot trail to the beach. Paddle northeast along the coast for 1/4 mile. The wreck is located 250 feet offshore.

The *Portland* was a 2-masted schooner built in Pillar Point, New York in 1863 to carry bulk cargoes. The ship was driven ashore and broken to pieces by a storm in October 1877 while carrying a load of salt. The ship's wreckage includes the bottom of the hull and starboard side.

Sidewheel Steamer *Albany* (1846 - 1853)

GPS Coordinates: N45°19.396' W83°27.508'

Depth: 4 feet

Paddling Distance: 3/4 mile with 3/4 mile portage

Distance from Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center: 18 miles

Description: The steamer *Albany* is located in a bay to the south of Presque Isle Harbor. The trailhead behind the Presque Isle Cemetery leads you to the beach on the northwestern edge of the bay after hiking approximately 3/4 of a mile. There is a small island in the middle of the bay, the wreckage lies to the south-southeast of the island approximately 300 yards offshore and 75 yards from the island's southwestern edge. The *Albany* lies in 4 feet of water and visibility is usually excellent in the bay.

The sidewheel steamer *Albany* was constructed in Detroit, Michigan in 1846 for the passenger trade. The ship encountered a gale while upbound with passengers on November 26th, 1853 and was driven ashore in Albany Bay while attempting to take refuge in Presque Isle Harbor. Following the stranding, the passengers were forced to spend the night on the boat before being rescued by local small craft. The ship was broken to pieces by subsequent storms and salvage efforts and all that remains of the wreck today are large sections of the bottom of the vessel's hull.

Inland Paddling Near Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary

Fletcher Pond

Just 27 miles from the Sanctuary's Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center is one of Michigan's largest inland lakes. The pond, famous for excellent fishing, is home to northern pike, large mouth bass, and pan fish. Wildlife viewing is also a favorite activity at Fletcher pond, and you may see loons, osprey, herons, eagles, deer, and more. There are an array of lodging, camping, and services in the area, as well as a public boat access.

Thunder Bay River

Paddle over 80 miles of beautiful, scenic canoe water along the Thunder Bay River winding between Alpena and Atlanta. The river offers a variety of depths and is bounded by a series of dams. There are a variety of public access areas or hire a local guide for anything from a day trip to a week long adventure!

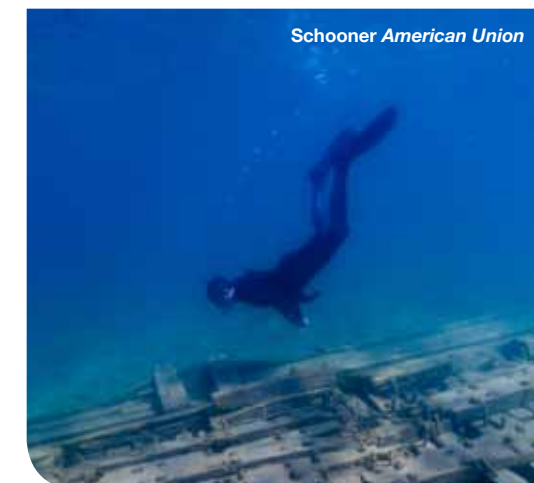
Island Park and Wildlife Sanctuary

Just minutes from the Sanctuary's Heritage Center in Alpena paddle 500 acres of back waters and low islands filled with waterfowl. Kayaks can be launched from the parking area along US 23. Take a hike through the varied ecosystem that includes sand dunes, meadows, woodlands, and marsh areas on the 17 acre island in the wildlife sanctuary.

Negwegon State Park

Distance From Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center: 20 miles

Description: Take US 23 south from Alpena to Black River Road and Negwegon State Park. Follow the foot trail to the beach. Negwegon State Park is a rustic, undeveloped natural area with beautiful undeveloped sandy beaches along Lake Huron. Please use caution when visiting Negwegon as the roads into the park are often so sandy that a four-wheel drive vehicle is needed. There are several shipwrecks to explore along the shores of Negwegon State Park near Black River and Bird Island.



Schooner American Union