

# Women's Outdoor Weekend in Northern Michigan

Friday, August 4<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023

*Join Sarett Naturalists for a women's weekend exploring the parks and rivers in northern lower Michigan around the Grayling area. During this fun and active weekend, we will kayak sections of the Manistee River and the Au Sable River, day hike in Hartwick Pines State Park and trails in the Huron National Forest, and enjoy lodging and food at the Ralph A. MacMullan Center, a Michigan DNR conference center located right on North Higgins Lake!*

## Friday, August 4

We will leave the Nature Center at 8:00 am and travel about four hours to Wakeley Lake trails in the Huron National Forest. Lunch will be at a fast food stop along the way. After hiking along beautiful Wakeley Lake for a few miles in the Huron National Forest, we will drive up to the State Park. At Hartwick Pines, we'll stop in at the visitor center and book store and hike along the Old-Growth Trail and Au Sable River Trail, passing through virgin white pine forest. After hiking, we will drive to our accommodations at the RAM Center, about 20 minutes from the State Park. Dinner will be at 5:30 provided by the RAM Center. After dinner you will have the option to do an evening paddle with a naturalist on North Higgins Lake or relax at the beach and play games at the center. We will have a bonfire tonight if the weather permits.

## Saturday, August 5

We will start our day with breakfast at the RAM Center, then travel to our put-in on the Manistee River at the Lower Sharon Bridge, about a 25-minute drive away. We will paddle 9.5 miles through lowlands of cedars, alders, and elm trees to the take out at the M-66 bridge. We will stop along the way to eat our lunches. The paddle should take about four and a half hours. Dinner will be at the RAM Center. If time permits before, and after dinner, we will do an optional hike of some of the trails around the center and North Higgins Lake State Park.

## Sunday, August 6

We will start our day with breakfast at the RAM Center and pack up our bags. On our way back to the Nature Center we will kayak a stretch of the Au Sable River, starting just east of Grayling at Burton's Landing State Forest Campground. We will paddle about three hours down to our take-out at Wakeley Bridge. This stretch has remarkably clear water, with a sand and gravel bottom. We will head back to the nature center after our paddle and should be back around five or six.

**Cost:** \$545.00/ person based on double occupancy.

This includes:

- \*2 nights lodging
- \*Transportation
- \*2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, & 2 dinners
- \*Naturalist services
- \*Use of equipment



Sarett paddlers on the Au Sable River

**Deposit:** \$50.00 This deposit is non-refundable. You can pay by check, (made out to Sarett Nature Center, and mail to Sarett Nature Center, 2300 Benton Center Rd., Benton Harbor MI 49022) pay in person at the Nature Center, over the phone (269-927-4832) with a credit card, or through our online payment portal on our website.

**Final Payment Due Date:** July 15, 2023

**Cancellation Policy:** Every attempt will be made to refund any recoverable costs if you must cancel.

**Group size:** There will be room for fourteen travelers and two leaders.

**Equipment:** The Nature Center can provide you with a kayak, paddle, and floatation vest or you may bring your own. You must let us know if you need any of these. Bring a dry bag to keep valuables dry (we do not recommend leaving money or credit cards in the vans) and for storing a change of clothing. You will also want the dry bag or another container to store your lunch food. Rain or tip overs will drench everything placed on the bottom of a kayak. Also make sure to bring a refillable water bottle, sunscreen, bug repellent, a good set of hiking/walking shoes, and water shoes or sandals for kayaking.

**Accommodations:** The Ralph A. MacMullan (RAM) Conference Center is located on the shores of North Higgins Lake in Roscommon, just south of Grayling. Lodging is in dorm style buildings with each room having two twin beds. These buildings feature community style bathrooms with showers. Towels and linens are provided. Dining takes place in the rustic lodge building. Dinner is served at 5:30 p.m. and breakfast is served 7:15 a.m. The RAM center is in a wooded setting right on the shore of North Higgins Lake and offers a beach with paddling access, a fire-pit, various indoor and outdoor games, and eight miles of hiking trails.

**Food:** Dinners at the conference center are served family style. Breakfasts are buffet affairs. The staff will pack up a boxed lunch for us on Saturday and Sunday for our kayak trips. The conference center meals are included in the price of the trip. Feel free to bring any snacks or drinks you might want during your stay. There will be a refrigerator, microwave, and coffee pot available to us in the lounge area.

**Responsibility:** Sarett Nature Center reserves the right, at their sole discretion, to make changes in the itinerary should that become necessary, and is not responsible to any person for expenses, loss of time, money, or happenings resulting from a change of tour scheduling. Sarett Nature Center reserves the right to accept, decline, or retain any person as a member of the tour, and is not responsible for any losses or damages of personal property, injuries, expenses, or damages incurred or claimed by any tour member.

#### **About the Natural Areas:**

**Hartwick Pines State Park** – This state park is one of the largest in the Lower Peninsula, with 9,672 acres. The park features rolling hills overlooking the Au Sable River, small lakes, and timber lands. The park's most interesting feature may be the 49-acre old growth pine forest, the largest contiguous stand of white pine in the lower peninsula. We will keep our eyes out for wildlife like porcupines and pine martens.

**Rivers** – The Manistee River is wide and scenic with hillsides of maple, cedar, birch, and aspen. The Manistee stretches 175 miles from Otsego County all the way to Lake Michigan. The Au Sable is one of America's legendary trout streams, with cool, clear waters and a mostly forested shoreline. The section we are doing is a popular spot for kayaking and fly-fishing. Both sections of river we will be paddling are rated as easy paddling, but experience paddling, especially on rivers, is recommended.