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MICHIGAN'S LAKESTYLE MAGAZINE



TRAVEL & ADVENTURE ISSUE

Seeking shipwrecks

Diving deep into Great Lakes adventures

TIN CAN TOURISTS AND THEIR WONDERFUL RETRO TRAILERS
SMALL TOWN AFTERNOONS | TALL-SHIP CRUISES | HIKING THE ART PARK
GREAT LAKES SURF FESTIVAL | UPSCALE SOUTHERN DINING IN LUDINGTON

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FESTIVAL OF FRESH WATER

Muskegon hosts the first Great Lakes Surf Festival with beach camping, yoga and lessons on the water.

Great Lakes surf culture is “tribal,” people embracing the cold, fresh waters of this region, riding swells and waiting for perfect conditions. The camaraderie of that culture and the feeling of family it creates is what Joe Bidawid said he hopes people will discover at the first inaugural Great Lakes Surf Festival scheduled for Aug. 18 at Pere Marquette Beach in Muskegon.

Bidawid, a sponsored surf athlete who has been riding the Great Lakes for 30 years, created the festival to connect people with the region’s beauty and accessibility. A Grand Haven resident who spends much of the year in the water, he says, “Being in the surf is healing. It’s also challenging.”

Bidawid expects 1,000 people on-site and another 1,000 daily visitors. The festival features activities and vendors, including yoga and a limited amount of beach camping. It is also hosting an elite 5-mile, downwind Pro-Am Paddle Race for paddleboarders and kayakers. Bidawid said he aims to bring people into the mix, providing lessons and clinics to encourage everyone to dip a toe in the water of Great Lakes wave sports.

It’s harder, he said, than surfing the ocean and perhaps more rewarding, given the intimacy of the community. “It’s pure, tribal, there are still new conditions and spots to be found; there’s a level of purity that I can’t find (in the) ocean.”

Jackson Riegler is looking forward to the festival, which will be staged just minutes from his home, on waters where he paddleboards and surfs. A Muskegon Catholic Central graduate and soon-to-be University of Michigan freshman, Riegler will be a vendor, representing his year-old startup, Oshki, which is Ojibwe for fresh. The apparel company donates 5 percent of profits to Great Lakes preservation efforts.

“This festival is an amazing opportunity for the Great Lakes surf community,” he said. “Super excited,” he said he hopes the gathering will ignite passion in more people for the possibilities and peace they can find on the Great Lakes.

For more information or to register, visit greatlakessurffestival.com.

— Lynne Golodner



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