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Summer Visitor's Guide 2026

A publication of the Crawford County Avalanche
in partnership with the Grayling Visitors Bureau



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Grayling Welcomes You

Whatever you are looking for, Grayling has it. From outdoor recreation opportunities to special events to the world-famous AuSable River Canoe Marathon, there is plenty planned this summer in Grayling.

We have lakes and rivers to swim, fish and paddle. We have trails for hiking and bicycling. We have Hartwick Pines State Park, North Higgins Lake State Park, Wellington Farm USA, the Grayling Fish Hatchery and Hanson Hills Recreation Area. We have disc golf courses. We have museums, art galleries and playgrounds. We have canoe races, bike races and foot races. We even have a Fred Bear statue.

And, don't forget our hotels, motels and campgrounds. Come enjoy meals at our restaurants. Enjoy drinks at our bars and breweries. Shop at our stores and galleries.

Grayling has a lot to offer and we hope you enjoy your time here.

Please use this Summer Visitor's Guide, a publication of the Crawford County Avalanche in partnership with the Grayling Visitors Bureau, as your guide to a wealth of information about things to do during your visit to the Grayling area this summer.

Welcome!

Grayling

Summer Visitor's Guide 2026

A publication of the Crawford County Avalanche

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ABOUT THE CRAWFORD COUNTY AVALANCHE
The Crawford County Avalanche, Grayling's hometown newspaper, has been publishing since 1879.

The Avalanche is a weekly newspaper that provides information on local news and sports in Grayling and Crawford County in print and online editions.

CONTACT US

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Call the Avalanche at 989.348.6811 or email reine@crawfordcountyavalanche.com

Next Publication October 2026

Calendar of Events

April 25

Opening Day of Trout Season

April 25

Leaky Waders 1k
Lovells Arts & Crafts Fair
@ Lovells Township

May 2

Kentucky Derby Gala
@ Camp Grayling

June 6

Hanson Hills Challenge 5-Mile
Trail Run
@ Hanson Hills Recreation Area

June 19-20

Ragnar Trail Relay
@ Hanson Hills Recreation Area

July 4

Fourth of July Parade
on Michigan Avenue

July 11

Black Bear Gran Fondo
@ Hanson Hills Recreation Area

July 17-26

AuSable River Festival

July 18

Classic Car & Truck Show
on Michigan Avenue

July 21

AuSable River Festival Kids Day
@ Grayling City Park

July 22-24

AuSable River Canoe Marathon
Time Trials

July 22

HUP Race
@ Grayling City Park

July 24-25

Arts & Craft Show
@ Grayling City Park

July 25

Duck Derby
@ Grayling City Park

July 25

AuSable River Canoe Marathon
Parade

July 25

AuSable River Festival 5k & 10k
@ Hanson Hills Recreation Area

July 25-26

AuSable River Canoe Marathon

August 8

Forest Fest
@ Hartwick Pines State Park

August 15

Lovells Bridge Walk

August 22-23

Black Iron Days
@ Hartwick Pines State Park

August 21-Sept. 6

Great Northern Art Explosion
@ AuSable Artisan Village

August 21

Fall Block Party
on Michigan Avenue



Visit www.crawfordcountyavalanche.com
or scan the QR code to
learn more about what's
happening in Grayling.

For information on upcoming events in Crawford County, visit:

Crawford County Avalanche | crawfordcountyavalanche.com

Grayling Chamber of Commerce | graylingchamber.com

Grayling Visitors Bureau | graylingmichigan.org

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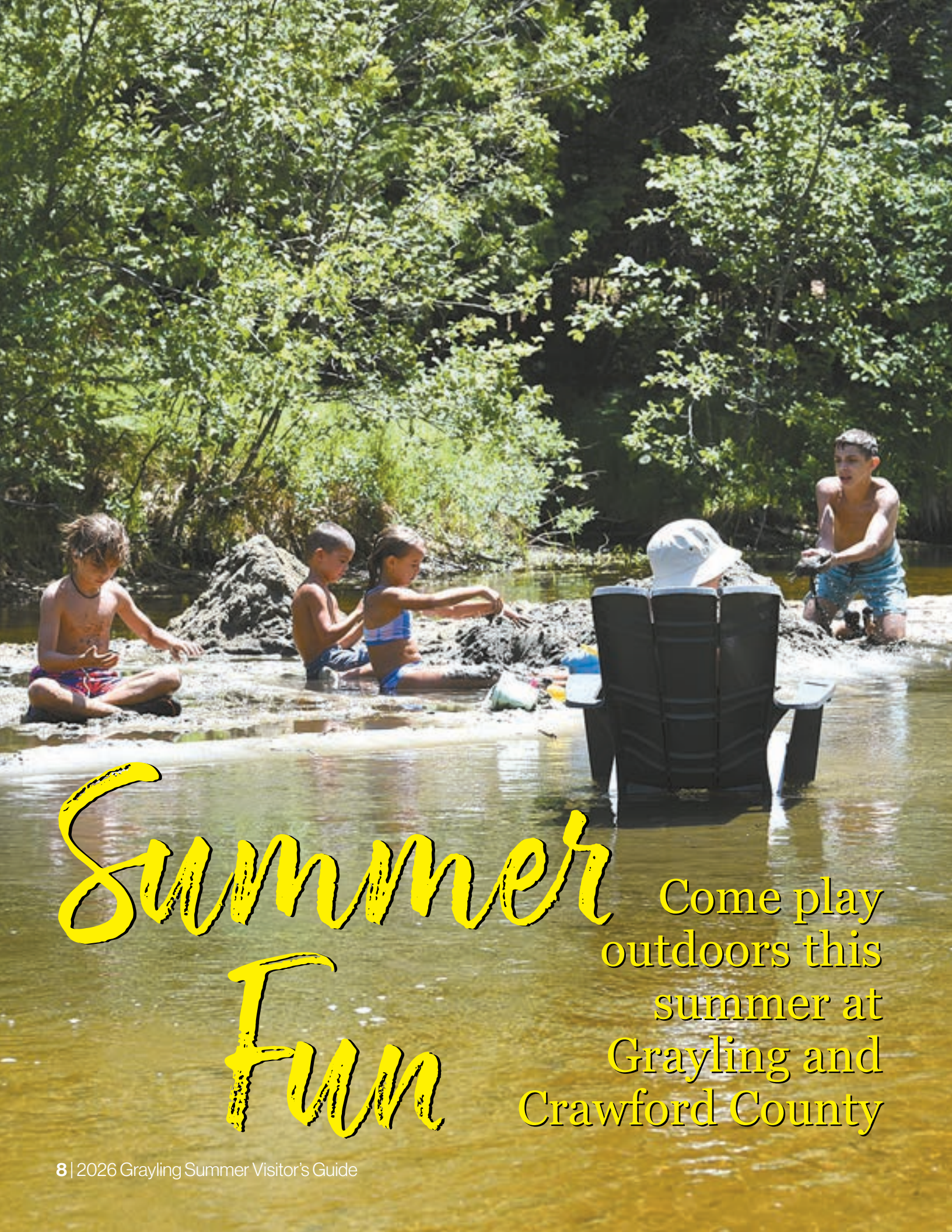
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Welcome to Summertime in Grayling

Biking and Hiking Connecting Grayling with Grayling High School and Hartwick Pines State Park, the Grayling Bicycle Turnpike is a paved trail that is separated from the road in most areas. The trail is used for walking, jogging and bicycling. Leading to the AuSable River, the Rayburn Estate Trail includes a picnic spot and a foot bridge. Hanson Hills Recreation Area also provides a variety of trails for hiking and biking.

Canoeing and Kayaking Quiet water sports like canoeing and kayaking can be enjoyed on not only the AuSable River, but also Lake Margrethe, KP Lake, Shupac Lake and Jones Lake.

Disc Golf Disc golfers have two course options at Hanson Hills Recreation Area. One course is a mostly flat, shorter course, while the other is longer and includes a hilly terrain.

Horseback Riding A spur of the Shore-to-Shore Riding and Hiking Trail goes from the Frederic/Grayling area into the Pigeon River State Forest near Indian River and Mullet Lake.

Playgrounds Spots to picnic and play include:
Beaver Creek Township Park - picnic tables, restrooms
Frederic Township Park - picnic tables
Grayling City Park - located on the AuSable River, it includes picnic tables, pavilion, restrooms
Grayling Township Park - located across from the Grayling Fish Hatchery, it includes hiking, biking, playscape, playground and picnic tables
Hartwick Pines State Park - picnic tables, pavilion and restrooms

Skateboarding The Grayling Skate Park is a 20,000 sq. ft. facility located next to Grayling City Hall, 1020 City Blvd.



Swimming Crawford County offers a variety of swimming and beach options. Lake Margrethe, at the State Forest Campground, offers swimming and beach areas, as does Higgins Lake, located in the southern end of the county. Smaller public beaches are located at Jones Lake, Kneff Lake and Shupac Lake.

Trail Riding Off-road vehicle riders have several options within Crawford County, including the 29-mile long Frederic Loop ORV Trail. The Frederic trail system connects into the Kalkaska system with more than 100 miles available to riders. ORVs can also ride on the shoulder of many county roads.

Find information on these activities and more at GraylingMichigan.org

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On River Time

There are few better ways of enjoying a warm summer day than floating down a river in a kayak, canoe or tube, immersed in nature.

Paddlers in Grayling – whether alone or with family and friends – have a choice of two rivers, the AuSable and Manistee, both known as “Class I” rivers; both have few obstructions and have small waves.

According to the Grayling Visitors Bureau (graylingmichigan.org), “Canoeing or kayaking through beautiful forests of pine, birch and cedar on rivers perfect for beginners, couples, families or large groups is the ideal way to enjoy a warm summer day or to view magnificent fall colors. Catch an occasional glimpse of deer, mink, blue heron, several species of ducks, and other birds and wildlife.”

Justin Davis, who owns Borchers AuSable Canoe and Kayak and Riverside Bed and Breakfast with his wife, Abigail,

said wildlife is abundant on the AuSable River.

“It’s not unusual to see ducks, geese, cranes, river otters, a plethora of different small and medium sized birds, turtles and the occasional beaver,” he said. “In the past, spotting a bald eagle was rare, but as the species is making a comeback, paddlers are seeing more and more of them as they often follow the river.”

When preparing for a river trip, paddlers should bring sunscreen, sunglasses and weather-appropriate clothing, as well as snacks and some water (glass is discouraged), said Jim Humes, owner of Penrod’s Canoe Rental.

“Some people bring a bottle of water and a granola bar and they’re good to go,” Humes said.

Paddlers should also wear a life jacket or have a personal flotation device on hand.

Besides the necessities, paddlers should bring with them “a smile,” Humes said, and “a sense of adventure.”

Summer weekends can get busy

on the rivers, so reservations are recommended. Some liveries operate year-round. Overnight camping at state forest campgrounds is also an option.

A public launch for canoes and kayaks is available at Grayling City Park, located on South James Street (I-75 Business Loop), Grayling, across from the Michigan State Police Forensic Lab. Visit ausableaccess.com.

There are also several canoe liveries in the Grayling area.

AuSable River

Humes at Penrod’s said Grayling has a good reputation when it comes to its rivers, and he started taking reservations in early-April.

“It does start early,” he said. “It’s nice.”

Penrod’s typically opens mid-May, he said, adding that he also offers cabins, which are located directly on the river and opened in time for trout season.

“We’re actually pretty lucky,” he said, because the AuSable River does not have much fluctuation,

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as the area's conditions are primarily sandy.

Humes said he markets a "family-friendly type of adventure." He has a staff of about 15, who keep busy in the office, the yard and picking up paddlers.

Trip lengths vary, but the two and a half-hour trip is recommended. There are picnic tables and restrooms about one hour down the river. An extra hour is promoted, Humes said, so people can stop and fish.

A state forest campground is located two hours down the river, he said.

"We do a map run-through," he said, and pickup times can be adjusted by calling the office.

Davis at Borchers said the AuSable River Homeowners Association, in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources, "do an excellent job keeping the rivers as clear as they can" and there is typically a clear path through.

He said the area is also a popular fly fishing stretch, so clearing things completely out is not the goal.

"They leave what some paddlers may feel like are obstructions, but they provide shade for the fish," he said. "However, paddlers are very rarely put in a position where they would have to portage over anything."

He noted that paddlers can bring their own equipment, too, and use the Borchers' car-spotting service.

Carlisle Canoe Livery owner Janice Stevenson said, while she offers day trips like other

canoe liveries, "We're experts at overnight excursions."

Paddlers should do their research in advance, she said, adding, "I can help them in charting their course."

Stevenson said trips can take paddlers all the way to Oscoda.

There are state campgrounds, such as AuSable Canoe Camp, Burton's Landing and Keystone Landing. There are also national forest campgrounds along the way.

"They camp along the way," she said. "People go for days and take their gear with them."

Manistee River

Jodie Tompkins, who owns Shel-Haven Canoe Rental with her husband, Todd, said they offer canoe, kayak and "luxury" tube rentals. They also offer four vacation houses.

Tompkins said one trip on the Manistee River is offered. Paddlers are taken up river and can then take their time getting back to where they parked.

Built in 1964, Shel-Haven Canoe Livery has been owned by the Tompkins' family for more than 30 years. Jodie Tompkins said the Tompkins children and grandchildren help them out.

According to the Shel-Haven Canoe Rental website, www.shel-haven.com, the livery is "Your gateway to the North on the beautiful Manistee River." Last-minute items and souvenirs are available in the uniquely decorated store. The livery is open from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend.

Borchers Canoe & Kayak

101 Maple St., Grayling
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canoeborchers.com

Penrod's Canoe Rental

100 Maple St., Grayling
1-888-467-4837
penrodscanoe.com

Shel-Haven Canoe Rental

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shel-haven.com

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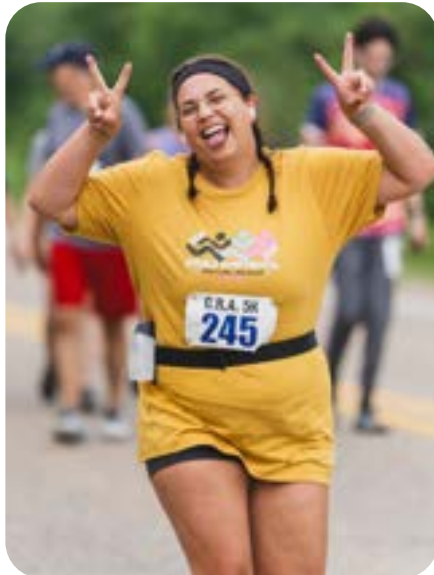
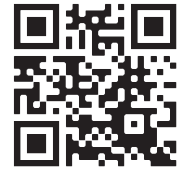


2026 SPRING/SUMMER EVENTS

JUNE 6: Hanson Hills Challenge Trail Run
JUNE 19-20: Ragnar Relays
JULY 11: Black Bear Gran Fondo (Cycling Event)
JULY 12: Hanson Hills Challenge Mt. Bike Race
JULY 25: AuSable River Festival 10K & 5K



For more information on any of these events, visit our website or follow us on Facebook!



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Black Bear Gran Fondo in 25th year

Celebrating its 25th year, the 2026 Black Bear Gran Fondo is scheduled for July 11.

There are 100-mile, 62-mile and 45-mile chip-timed loops that start and finish in Grayling at Hanson Hills Recreation Area. Helmets are required.

Bike your way through the beautiful AuSable River Valley and enjoy nutrition and hydration along the way. There are five rest stations set up that offer refreshments and restrooms. A celebration meal awaits riders at the finish line under the Rotary Pavilion.

“It’s a great event,” said Rotarian Brad Scheer, route coordinator. “It’s our biggest fundraiser.”

Riders receive a police escort in Grayling, he said, and the routes are marked. A SAG (support and gear) truck follows along to help with repairs, and a “sweep rider” makes sure the last rider returns.

Scheer said the Black Bear Gran Fondo was con-



ceived by Wayne Koppa of Grayling as an event that tied in with the AuSable River Canoe Marathon. Initially, the event took riders to Oscoda, along with the canoe marathoners, Scheer said, and it was later moved to its own date and changed to a loop ride.

“A gran fondo is a mass participation cycling event that got its start in Italy in the early 1900s,” according to hansonhills.org/. “Loosely translated, it means everything from ‘great foundation,’ ‘great distance’ or ‘great endurance.’ Some cyclists ride for the satisfaction and pride of just making it to the finish line. Others want to improve upon their previous times and to challenge themselves, their friends, their teammates. Some ride to win.”

Online registration and information for the 2026 Black Bear Gran Fondo can be found at hansonhills.org/summer-activities, under “events.”



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Tee Time



Northern Michigan – Crawford County included – offers a wide variety of opportunities for playing golf. Crawford County has three public golf courses within its limits: The Patriot, Grayling Country Club and Forest Dunes Golf Club.

“Grayling is located in the heart of Northern Michigan and is easily accessible by freeways, earning it the nickname, ‘Gateway to the North.’ For golfers, it is also considered the gateway to Northern Michigan’s golfing. With three of the top-rated, award-winning courses in the United States, and located within an hour’s drive of another 30 courses, Grayling is unsurpassed in providing the ultimate in golfing adventures that will please even the most serious golfers,” according to the Grayling Visitors Bureau.

The Patriot (formerly Fox Run Country Club), Grayling Country Club and Forest Dunes Golf Club contain golf courses which are playable for all levels of golfers.

The three golf courses also have some challenging hazards to make each round interesting. Grayling Country Club features standard bunkers and water. The Patriot’s hazards include marshes and ponds. Forest Dunes’ courses are edged by pine forest on several holes and include exposed sand and underbrush.

The Patriot

(989) 348-4343

thepatriotgolfcourse.com

Grayling Country Club

(989) 348-5618

graylingcountryclub.com

Forest Dunes Golf Club

(989) 275-0700

forestdunesgolf.com



WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO...

We are a group of energetic volunteers with a common interest – Promoting and making Grayling and the surrounding area a wonderful place to live, work and play! We host events and fundraisers throughout the year to raise funds to be put directly back into the community through visible enhancements and community wide support.



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Come Cast Here

With the AuSable River and Manistee River, as well as several lakes in the area, Crawford County offers ample opportunity for fishing, including world-class trout fishing. Each river offers brook, brown and rainbow trout and has numerous public access points.

Fishing regulations vary between sections on the rivers with some areas designated as “flies only” and several miles of the AuSable River being “catch and release.”

The majority of the waters, however, are open to any type of fishing, including flies, hardware and bait.

Hatch activity generally begins in early-March with the onset of spring and the emerging blackstones. Hendricksons are usually hatching by the opening day of trout season, which is April 25 this spring.

Afternoon hatches make early- to mid-May a popular time for many fly fishers. By mid-May, most hatches and spinner falls occur in the late-afternoon. The sulfur hatch begins in late-May and lasts about two weeks. The

first week of June is a popular time on area streams with the brown drake hatch.

Hatches continue through May and June, generally culminating with the “Hex” hatch, which is the big Michigan mayfly, the *Hexagenia Limbata*. The hatch brings fly fishers in large numbers as it is the time when trophy fish regularly surface feed.

August brings the terrestrials, including grasshoppers, ants and crickets. The warm sunny days are an ideal time to fish brown trout lying along the grass banks waiting for grasshoppers. As fall approaches, anglers can enjoy the solitude of a quiet day and cool evening with brown and brook trout becoming active.

Crawford County also has numerous lakes, which offer excellent fishing. Lake Margrethe and Higgins Lake offer a variety of fishing. North of Grayling and west of Lovells, lie smaller lakes like KP Lake, Jones Lake and Hargrove Lake.

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Grayling Fish Hatchery

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The hatchery is where people not only have the opportunity to view more than 1,000 rainbow trout, they can also enjoy nature in a variety of ways.

The trout, which are provided by the Department of Natural Resources, can be fed in the hatchery's raceways and people can visit the marsh raceway which is home to several turtles and frogs.

The hatchery is also home to a Kid's Fishing Pond, a pollinator garden and picnic area. Visitors can also take self-guided tours, visit the Bug Spot to learn about insects at the hatchery, take photos at three photo stations and view various species of waterfowl.

History

Rasmus Hanson founded the hatchery in 1914 and the Grayling Fish Hatchery Club was formed in 1916 to reinforce natural trout reproduction in the AuSable River. At that time, the goal was to hatch and grow fish in ponds for restocking the river and also save the near-extinct grayling. The effort to save the grayling failed, however, brook and brown trout were planted in the river.



We got to see a whole lot of ducks



We even got to feed the fish



There are lots of beautiful flowers

In 1926, the hatchery was sold to the State of Michigan, however, operation ceased in the late-1960s and remained inactive until the early-1980s. Around 1983, the Grayling Fish Hatchery committee restarted the operation.

Then, about six years ago, the Anglers of the AuSable leased the hatchery from Crawford County.

The hatchery is currently operated by Grayling Fish Hatchery, Inc., a volunteer board that works in cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources, as well as with Crawford County and other groups.

During the summer months, from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, the hatchery is open Friday through Sunday, as well as holiday Mondays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Entry to the hatchery is free, however, fish food can be purchased for a minimal fee.

The hatchery is located at 4890 W. North Down River Rd., Grayling.



Trying to catch a whopper

North Higgins Lake

On a hot summer day, the blue waters of Higgins Lake can be a welcoming place to relax, but the area can also be a place to learn about Michigan's deep conservation history.

Located on the southern end of Crawford County, North Higgins Lake State Park and the Civilian Conservation Corps Museum offer recreational and historical opportunities for visitors.

With 449 acres on the shore of Higgins Lake, the state park offers biking on the Iron Belle Trail, paddle sport opportunities, fishing, hiking, swimming and pet-friendly areas. There are also several facilities at the state park including a beach house, boat launch, mini cabins, modern restrooms, a picnic area and a shelter, a playground, campsites with 50-amp service and water access.

The trail system includes the 6.5-mile North Higgins-Beaver Creek Trail, the 3.8-mile North Higgins-Bosom Pines Trail and the 1.6-mile North Higgins-Upland Nature Trail.

Just across North Higgins Lake Drive from North

Higgins Lake State Park are the historical Higgins Lake Nursery and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Museum.

The Higgins Lake Nursery, which was operated from 1903 to 1965, became one of the world's largest pine nurseries. As part of the federal Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, more than 100,000 Michigan men performed conservation and reforestation projects around the state.

By the time the CCC program ended in 1942, 484 million trees had been planted by CCC workers.

Now, the Higgins Lake Nursery and CCC Museum is a place to see how CCC workers lived and worked as there are many personal items from CCC men on display. The grounds also have several historical buildings, as well as trails for recreation.

A Department of Natural Resources Recreation Passport is required for entry into North Higgins Lake State Park and CCC Museum. North Higgins Lake State Park is located at 11747 N. Higgins Lake Dr., Roscommon.



Hartwick Pines State Park

Hartwick Pines State Park, 3612 State Park Dr., Grayling, is named for its 49 acres of majestic, old-growth pine forest – some of the last remaining in the state.

Miles of trails offer hikers of all ages and abilities the chance to explore the diverse wildlife and forest landscapes. The Old-Growth Forest Trail is paved, but does have two steep grades.

The Visitor Center and the Logging Museum are open daily May 1 through Labor Day, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Visitors Center

The Hartwick Pines Visitor Center, located within the state park, draws thousands of visitors, campers and school children each year to see old-growth pine forest. The year-round, accessible visitor center is a gateway to the towering pine forest and the Hartwick Pines Logging Museum.

The first phase of the Visitor Center renovations was completed in January. It has reopened to the public with its normal seasonal hours.

“We will return to being open seven days a week on May 1,” Northern Lower Peninsula Historian Hillary Pine said.



Nature surrounds you

Phase Two, which will include a complete overhaul of the Visitor Center's exhibit hall, is scheduled to begin in July, she said, and, at this time, construction work should not impact Visitor Center operations.

"Most importantly, we shouldn't have to close to the public like we did in 2025," she said.

Pine said the Phase Two work was funded by the Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Logging Museum

Nestled among towering trees, the Hartwick Pines Logging Museum depicts Michigan's 19th-century logging era.

According to www.michigan.gov/mhc/museums/hp, "Built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps, the two museum buildings recreate original logging camp structures of the 1890s. A bunkhouse, cook's shack, mess hall and blacksmith shop are just some of the exhibits that visitors can explore. Also, on site are equipment used to haul logs and build logging roads and a 1914 steam engine and sawmill."

Events

- Kirtland's warbler tours are available May 23-June 30. For times and registration, visit michigan.audubon.org.

- Hartwick Pines State Park's Forest Festival is scheduled for Aug. 8, when visitors can celebrate and learn about the beauty and serenity of Michigan's forests, meet Smokey Bear, engage in activities and make

some cool crafts.

This fun-filled day for people of all ages takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- Black Iron Days is scheduled for Aug. 22-23.

Featuring traditional blacksmithing, artisan demonstrations and historic logging era interpretations, the event is hosted by the Friends of Hartwick Pines.

The event runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with free admission.

Join blacksmiths, including members of the Michigan Artist Blacksmith Association (MABA) and other artisans as they demonstrate how they make their crafts. Visitors can also observe the steam-powered sawmill in operation. Vendors will be on site selling various merchandise.

All activities will take place at the Logging Museum. Limited parking is available – additional parking will be at the Hartwick Pines Day Use Area.

Programs may be canceled or relocated due to pending Visitor Center renovations. Hartwick Pines State Park is located at 3612 State Park Dr., Grayling. Call the Visitor Center at (989) 348-2537 or email KasmerC@Michigan.gov.

A Recreation Passport is required for vehicle entry into Michigan state parks. Reservations may be made for campsites, overnight lodging, harbors and picnic shelters at MiDNRReservations.com or by calling 1-800-44-PARKS (1-800-447-2757).

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Hanson Hills

A place to recreate

Hanson Hills Recreation Area, operated by Grayling Recreation Authority, offers recreational opportunities during the spring and summer months, in addition to its skiing events in the winter.

Visitors to the area can explore mountain biking and hiking trails, or play a round of disc golf on the Pine Knoll course or the PDGA Course (The Hill).

Families can enjoy the Fin and Feather Storybook Trail, a half-mile of fun and learning that starts and finishes at the playground. The trail features 20 display boards that showcase pages of a beloved children's storybook. Each month through the spring and summer, Hanson Hills will feature a new book for families to enjoy as they walk the trail.

Hanson Hills has a pavilion for picnics, a kids' fishing pond and a 30-target 3-D archery course. Several events are hosted during the spring and summer months, including bicycle and foot races on scenic trails.

Hanson Hills Recreation Area, 7601 Old Lake Rd., Grayling, can be reached at (989) 348-9266.

Hanson Hills Challenge 5-Mile Trail Run, June 6

The Hanson Hills Challenge offers a three-mile-ish trail run, which features two-track trails on relatively flat ground with one uphill climb. It also offers a five-mile trail run featuring two-track trails on a hilly course.

Ragnar Trail Relay, June 19-20

In its seventh year, the race starts and finishes at the Ragnar Village, located at Hanson Hills. According to runragnar.com, the Ragnar Trail event takes place in a natural outdoor setting, which is part of what makes the experience memorable. Over the course of two days and one night, teams will run a relay-style race on three smooth, single-track trails. Participants will run through trees and over hills and at night under the stars with a headlamp lighting their way.

Black Bear Gran Fondo, July 11

In its 25th year, the Black Bear Gran Fondo is a cycling event that offers a 100-mile loop, as well as a 62-mile and 45-mile loop. All three

options begin and end at Hanson Hills. The event serves as a fundraiser for the Rotary Club of Grayling.

Hanson Hills Challenge Mountain Bike Race July 12

This cross country MTB race is part of the MORC (Michigan Off Road Championship) series. The trail is approximately 8.5 miles per lap of single and double track trails. Elite and Expert classes have a separate start time than All Sports and All Beginner classes (in a two-start format).

AuSable River Festival 5k & 10k, July 25

As part of the AuSable River Festival, Hanson Hills will offer the AuSable River Festival 5k & 10k races. Awards will be given to overall male and female winners, participation medals will be given, as well as custom T-shirts to the first 250 registered participants.

For information or to register for any events, visit hansonhills.org/summer-activities.

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Lovells Township Historical Society



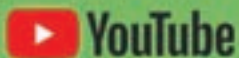
The Lovells Township Historical Society operates two museums. The Lone Pine Schoolhouse, which showcases our local history, and The Museum of Trout Fishing History. We are home to Michigan's only Trout Fishing Museum.



Trout Fishing Museum—MI DNR Fisheries Management
Lone Pine Schoolhouse—Living in Lovells 1900-1945
Saturday April 25 Leaky Wader 1K Fun Run with Arts & Craft Fair



Saturday October 17 Fall Upland Dinner
Winter Hot Stove Series



YouTube—Life in Lovells, Fly Fishing Greats

Visit Lovellshistory.org for more information, latest news and event details.

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hansonhouse-grayling.com

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An aerial photograph of three canoeists racing on a river. The canoeists are in a line, moving from the top left towards the bottom right. The lead canoe is blue and has two people on board. The middle canoe is red and has one person on board. The rear canoe is black and has two people on board. The water is dark blue with white wakes from the canoes. The text 'A race like no other' is overlaid in a white, cursive font in the upper right quadrant. The text 'The AuSable River Canoe Marathon' is overlaid in a white, cursive font in the lower left quadrant. The page number '30' and the text '2026 Grayling Summer Visitor's Guide' are at the bottom left.

*A race like
no other*

*The AuSable
River Canoe
Marathon*

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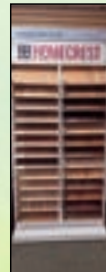
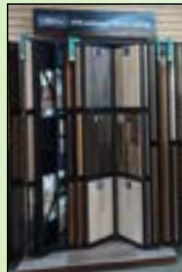
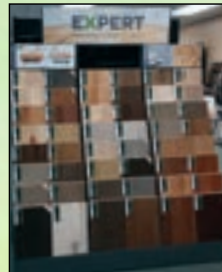
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Grayling, a hotbed for professional paddling, becomes the mecca of the sport in July as people from around the United States, as well as the world, gather on the AuSable River to watch the 120-mile marathon.

Last year's marathon attracted a record number of teams that hailed from not only Michigan, but 21 states, as well as Canada, Great Britain and Belize.

The 78th Annual Consumers Energy AuSable River Canoe Marathon, will kick off at 9 p.m., Saturday, July 25, in Grayling and end approximately 14 hours later in Oscoda.

AuSable River Canoe Marathon Race Week Events

DA\$H For CA\$H
Tuesday, July 21

Time Trial Sprints Day 2
C-1 Express Race
Thursday, July 23

Time Trial Sprints Day 3
AuSable River Challenge 120
Friday, July 24

Time Trial Sprints Day 1
Wednesday, July 22

AuSable River Canoe Marathon
Start - Saturday, July 25 | Finish - Sunday, July 26



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The start of the marathon is nothing short of excitement. With paddlers entering the AuSable River in a LeMans-style start as the sun begins to set, the large crowd waits with intensity as the first team jumps into the river.

From there, it's nothing but chaos, as more than 100 two-person teams run, jump and jockey for position in their canoes.

A test of skill, physical conditioning, strategy and endurance, the C-2 (two-paddlers) race, which has been described as “grueling,” challenges paddlers to tackle the 120-miles route that goes through the night hours along with several portages before reaching Oscoda.

The 2025 marathon was won by Grayling’s Travis Mecklenburg and Weston Willoughby of Traverse City with a time of 14:17:07. The duo completed the marathon after leading the race the entire way. Coming in second place last summer was Chris Issen-



dorf and Christophe Proulx with a time of 14:20:43.

Known as "The World's Toughest Spectator Race," thousands of people will follow the marathon through the night to watch the paddlers race from Grayling to Oscoda.

The AuSable River Canoe Marathon is the middle leg of the Triple Crown of Canoe Racing. The Triple Crown also features the General Clinton Canoe Regatta on New York's Susquehanna River and La Clas-sique Internationale de Canots de la Mau-ricie, which is held on Quebec, Canada's Saint-Maurice River.

For information on the AuSable River Canoe Marathon, visit www.ausablecanoe-marathon.org.

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Downtown Grayling transforms into a celebration of all things river and paddling related for the annual AuSable River Festival, which will take place July 17-26.

Held in conjunction with the AuSable River Canoe Marathon, the AuSable River Festival is hosted by the Grayling Regional Chamber

of Commerce and is in its 78th year.

Kicking off the festival July 17 will be the Annual Car Show Cruise Night. Then, July 18, classic vehicles will be lined up along Michigan Avenue for the Classic Car & Truck Show.

Kids will be the focus July 21 for Kid's Day and July 22 the AuSable River Canoe Mara-



AuSable River Festival

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May 15-17

May 15 Opening day, park opens at 9 a.m.
June 12, 13, 19, 20 Let's go Fly a Kite! Youth kite day.
June 26, 27 Sticky Buns Day
July 10, 11, 12 Quilt & Craft Show
July 18 Christmas in July Visitors Center Store Sale
Check our Facebook page for updates & more events.
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SUMMER HOURS: Wed.-Sat. 9am-5pm | Sun. 10am-4pm



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thon time trials will kick off at Penrod's Canoe Livery beginning at 4 p.m.

Will it sink? Will it float? Those are the questions for the 2026 HUP (Hurry Up and Paddle) Race, which will be held July 22 at Grayling City Park. As part of the HUP Race, teams will test their engineering skills to see if their homemade boats will make it down the AuSable River.

AuSable River Canoe Marathon time trials will continue July 23 beginning at 3 p.m. and the Business Relay canoe race will be held at 4:20 p.m. at Penrod's Canoe Livery. Later in the evening, the Miss AuSable River Festival Scholarship Program will be held and a new Miss AuSable River Festival Queen will be announced.

The final day of AuSable River Canoe Marathon time trials will be July 24, beginning at 2 p.m., and the annual Special Olympics Canoe Races will be held at Penrod's Canoe Livery at 2:45 p.m.

Saturday, July 25, means it's race day. Prior to the 9 p.m. start of the AuSable River Canoe Marathon, a full day of events has been scheduled.

The day will start off with a Lumberjack Breakfast at Grayling Restaurant beginning at 8 a.m. and Hanson Hills Recreation Area will host the Grayling Recreation Authority's 10k/5k race at 9 a.m.

Prior to the AuSable River Canoe Marathon, the AuSable River Festival Parade, which will feature a celebration of the Grayling community, will take place July 25 at 4 p.m. The parade will be followed by the AuSable River Canoe Marathon pre-race program and introduction of the paddlers, which will begin at 6 p.m.

The AuSable River Canoe Marathon will then begin at 9 p.m. and will conclude at the finish line Sunday morning in Oscoda.

For information on the AuSable River Festival, visit www.ausableriverfest.com.

Church Service Directory

Bear Lake Christian Church

221 E. Bear Lake Rd. NE, Kalkaska | 231-258-6107
Sun. Bible Class 9 a.m., Service 10 a.m.
Wed. Prayer Meeting 5:30 p.m., Adult Bible Study 6:45 p.m.

Calvary Baptist Church

6504 W. M-72 Hwy., Grayling | 989-348-9220
Sun. School 9:45 a.m., Service 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Wed. Service 6 p.m., The Rock 6-7:30pm

First Baptist Church of Frederic

6536 Manistee St., Frederic | 989-348-8126
Sun. School 9:45 a.m., Service 11 a.m.
Wed. Service 3 p.m.

Grayling Assembly of God

701 S. I-75 Business Loop, Grayling | 989-348-8885
Sun. Service 10:30 a.m. | Wed. Service 7 p.m.

Grayling Baptist Church

705 Madsen St., Grayling | 989-745-6551
Sun. School 10 a.m., Service 11 a.m.
Wed. Bible Study 6 p.m.

Grayling Church of Christ

7540 S. Old 27, Grayling | 330-428-4916
Sun. Bible Class 10 a.m., Service 11 a.m.
Tues. Bible Class 6 p.m.

Grayling Community of Christ

1030 Glenn Rd., Grayling | 989-348-8362
Sun. Service 11 a.m.

Grayling Evangelical Free Church

1636 Hartwick Pines Rd., Grayling | 989-390-5078
Sun. Service 10 a.m.

Grayling Free Methodist Church

6352 W. M-72 Hwy., Grayling | 989-348-9093
Sun. School 9:15 a.m., Service 10:30 a.m.

Grayling Lighthouse of Hope

501 E. Michign Ave., Grayling | 989-348-1278
Sun. Service 11 a.m. | Wed. Bible Study & Prayer 6-8 p.m.

Grayling Seventh-day Adventist Church

2470 Camp Au Sable Dr., Grayling | 989-348-2501
Sun. Sabbath School 9:45 a.m., Service 11:00 a.m.
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

Heritage Baptist Church

1841 Hartwick Pines Rd., Grayling | 989-348-5558
Sun. School 9:45 a.m., Service 11 a.m. & 1 p.m.
Wed. Prayer & Bible Study 6 p.m.

Higgins Lake Baptist Church

7461 W. Higgins Lake Dr., Roscommon | 989-821-5464
Sun. School 10 a.m., Service 11 a.m. & 6 p.m.
Wed. Prayer & Bible Study 6 p.m.

Lovells Community Chapel

8133 Bald Hill Rd., Grayling | 989-348-2701
Sun. Bible Study 9:30 a.m., Service 11 a.m.
Wed. Prayer & Bible Study 7 p.m.

Michelson United Methodist Church

400 E. Michigan Ave., Grayling | 989-348-2974
Sun. Traditional 9 a.m., Praise & Worship 10:30 a.m.

Mt. Hope Lutheran Church

905 N. I-75 Business Loop, Grayling | 989-348-5921
Sun. Service 11 a.m.

Resurrection Life Center

2640 W. M-72 Hwy., Grayling | 989-348-1000
Sun. Service 10:30 a.m.

St. Francis Episcopal Church

6441 W. M-72 Hwy., Grayling | 989-348-5850
Sun. Service 9:30 a.m.

St. John Lutheran Church

710 Spruce St., Grayling | 989-348-5224
Sun. Service 10:30 a.m.

St. Mary Catholic Church

707 Spruce St., Grayling | 989-348-7657
Sat. Service 4 p.m. | Sun. Service 8:30 a.m.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

324 Meadows Dr., Grayling | 989-350-5595
Sun. Service 10 a.m.

Sponsored by the Crawford County Avalanche

A fun time at the Lovells Bridge Walk



Crossing the AuSable River

Take a stroll for a good cause at the 35th Annual Lovells Bridge Walk.

The event, which will take place Aug. 15 this year, is a fundraiser for the Lovells Fire and EMS Department. Hundreds turn out to walk over the AuSable River each year and help raise money for the township's first responders. Last year's event raised \$17,763.

Fire trucks, police cars, tractors and decorated vehicles lead the walkers across the bridge. The walk begins at noon, starting at the corner of F-97, traversing down County Road 612, across the bridge and back to the township hall.

Though it is a short walk, the event lasts all day, beginning with a pancake breakfast in the morning, served by firefighters. Lunch follows the walk and is provided by local restaurants, like Lovells Riverside Tavern and Dead Bear Brewing Co.

Live music, a 50/50 raffle, silent auction and local crafters, artisans and organizations are also present at the event, making for a festive day of fundraising.

The Lovells Township Historical Society buildings, including the Museum of Trout Fishing History, are open during the day for visitors.

For information, visit lovellsmi.org.



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Lovells Museum

The Lovells Township Historical Society (LTHS) operates two museums, located at 8405 Twin Bridge Rd., Lovells Township.

The museums are open Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., starting April 25 (the opening of Trout Season), through the last Saturday in September.

The LTHS was founded in August, 1990, at the Heritage Days Celebration. According to the group's website, the mission of the historical society is "preserving and celebrating the heritage of Lovells and northern Michigan."

The Lovells Museum is housed in the Lone Pine Schoolhouse, which was built in 1907 as one of two schools in the district, and donated to the historical society in 1991. The museum features exhibits about local and natural history.

Lovells is also home to Michigan's only trout fishing museum, the Lovells Museum of Trout Fishing History.

Operated by the LTHS, it is dedicated to the sport of fly fishing.

The museum has new themed exhibits every year in addition to permanent exhibits that include a fly fishing library, a tribute to the Unsung Heroes of the AuSable and a reproduction of Art Neumann's Wanigas rod shop.

The 2026 season kicks off April 25 at 9 a.m. at the Lovells Township Hall with the 16th annual Leaky Waders 1K and Lovells Arts and Crafts Fair.

Artists, crafters and vendors will have their creations available for purchase in the township hall beginning at 10 a.m. The event will also include a 50/50 raffle and refreshments.

The Leaky Waders 1K begins at 11 a.m. Participants wear chest waders and run or walk from the corner of Lovells Road and County Road 612 to the township hall. Prizes are awarded to division winners and first-place winners earn recognition on the winners' plaque, on display in the Museum of Trout Fishing History.

For information on the museums or the historical society, email LTHSMuseums@gmail.com, visit lthsmuseums.org or find them on social media.





Crawford County Historical Museum

Near the end of Michigan Ave., along the railroad tracks, lies the Crawford County Historical Museum and its village of historical buildings, maintained by the Crawford County Historical Society.

The main museum is housed in the original train depot and showcases the history of Grayling and Crawford County. Guests can explore the history of the area through the displays of artifacts, photos and printed materials.

Topics of the exhibits include the logging industry, the railroad, the AuSable River and life throughout the decades in the county. This last topic includes a display on Pere Cheney, a famed ghost town in Crawford County that was struck with diphtheria outbreaks, though there are rumors of witchcraft as well. The museum also features a Fred Bear room and a Native American room.

Adjacent to the depot are additional buildings with more history awaiting visitors inside. A bright red train caboose, retired in 1929, provides a glimpse into the lives of train workers as they traveled back and forth from Detroit to Mackinaw in the days of the steam engine. The Military Annex commemorates Crawford County veterans all the way back to the Civil War.

The Trapper's Cabin, originally built in the 1800s, received a facelift this past fall. The outside walls were

restored, with rotted logs replaced, new chinking and a water seal to preserve the building. Further updates to the building are expected this spring.

The museum buildings also include a fire hall, complete with two historical fire engines from 1922 and 1937. A display of farming equipment and tools is also located on the property.

Gail Thomas, president of the Crawford County Historical Society, said new items have been donated to the museum and added to displays. She added that the museum will be partnering on events throughout the summer, including a walk through Elmwood Cemetery May 25 at 10:30 a.m. to honor and recognize veterans for Memorial Day with the American Legion.

A screening of the documentary "Pere Cheney: Plague in the Pines," which was made with the help of the CCHS, will take place June 20 at the AuSable Artisan Village Performing Arts Center.

The museum will be open Fridays and Saturdays from April 24 until Memorial Day, after which it will be open weekly, Tuesday through Saturday. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission to the museum is free, though donations are appreciated, and it is pet friendly.

For information, call the Crawford County Historical Society at (989) 745-3493 or visit www.crawfordcountyhistoricalsociety.com.



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The artistic and cultural hub of Grayling is the AuSable Artisan Village, which is home to galleries, exhibitions, art classes, a pottery studio and a performing arts center, in two downtown locations.

The original gallery showcases the work of more than 40 artists from Michigan and beyond, featuring a variety of mediums, from pottery and jewelry to paintings and photography, with many pieces for sale.

Over at the Mud Room and Performing Arts Center, artists can be seen throwing on a pottery wheel or rehearsing onstage. The AuSable Community Theatre performs multiple shows each year, bringing local talent into the spotlight. Concerts are also held at the Performing Arts Center, providing a variety of musical entertainment, from rock to reggae to Celtic music.

The AuSable Artisan Village also offers classes for all ages, in all mediums, including watercolor, drawing, photography, pottery and mixed media.

Art exhibitions like The Great Northern Art Explosion bring even more art to the community. The international juried art exhibition, held at the AuSable Artisan Village, showcases works from both artists local to Grayling and those around the world, with prizes given through a juried competition and people's choice voting. This year's Art Explosion will take place Aug. 21 through Sept. 6.

For lovers and collectors of music, Rotten Princess Records offers new and used vinyl, cassettes and CDs from across genres. The shop also includes releases from independent local and regional musicians and hosts monthly concerts to highlight area artists.

On a rainy day or to beat the heat during the summer, head to the Rialto Theater to catch a movie. The historic theater has been in operation for more than 100 years and is one of the oldest family-owned movie theaters in the U.S., with screenings every day.



Art for all

AuSable Artisan Village
Original Art Gallery
219 Michigan Ave., Grayling

Performing Arts Center and Mud Room
122 Michigan Ave., Grayling

www.artisanvillage.org

Main Branch Gallery, LLC
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www.mainbranchgallery.com

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The Frederic Music Festival is set to light up Eagle Park once again Friday, June 26, and Saturday, June 27.

The annual festival will feature 11 exciting live performances, including four acts making their Frederic debut.

Admission is \$10 per day or \$15 for a two-day pass, with free entry for attendees 17 and under. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

Randy Richardson, who co-chairs the festival with Butch Weaver, said the Steve Cat Band, Pearl, Vertigo and Ready to Play Band are new to the event and Ground Zero is returning after years away from the festival stage. Pearl is a high school band from Gaylord, he said.

“It’s a laid-back, pretty chill event,” Richardson said.

Bring a lawn chair, relax and enjoy a variety of music.

All alcohol must be purchased and consumed at the event. There will also be food trucks and an arts and crafts show.

For arts and crafts booth information, contact Brandon Gabriel at (989) 350-5150 or fredericmusicfest.org.

The Frederic Music Festival is conveniently located at Eagle Park, next to the Frederic Township Offices, 6470 Manistee St., Frederic. The festival is a fundraiser for Friends of Frederic, a nonprofit organization that benefits the community.

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Experience History

Wellington Farm USA

Wellington Farm USA is a Rural Heritage Museum, depicting life as it was lived in a farming community of mid-Northern Michigan prior to and during the Great Depression. The year depicted at the 60-acre complex is 1932.

Wellington Farm also depicts and protects Crawford County history, with 10 structures on the site either being significant in their own right or depicting activities that were prevalent in a farming community during the represented time period.

Among the buildings on site are a Blacksmith Shop, Grist Mill, Carpenter Shop, Saw Mill, Machine Shed, Barnyard, Farmstead, Summer Kitchen and Basket Weaver's Shop.

The Wellington Farm USA Museum in itself is an artifact. The building was built in the 1930s by the men of the Civilian Conservation Corps as the first building for the Higgins Lake Nursery.

Events at Wellington

The historic complex is open to the

public from mid-May until Halloween. During that period of time, several special events are presented to the community.

During opening weekend, a reenactment of the American Civil War, complete with military camps, military training, artillery firing and the recreation of a Civil War battle will be held.

The Civil War reenactment will be followed by Sticky Buns Weekend.

This year, a "Happy Birthday America" celebration will take place in early-July, followed by a quilt show later in the month. August will feature special presentations of corn and potatoes, followed by an Old Iron Antique Show and Sale in September.

Late-September will feature Sawmill Days, which will depict the lumbering era. The season will end in October with the popular corn maze, Pumpkin Chunkin' and Halloween hayrides.

In addition to the special presentations, the park also presents special events for children. Weekdays during

the spring and fall are dedicated to day-long group tours for elementary school classes and homeschool groups.

These tours are specialized to enhance children's learning and spark a bit of curiosity of both American and local history.

In addition to preserving the history of Northern Michigan, Wellington Farm can serve as a venue for weddings, family reunions and picnics. The park provides options for locations, seating and photography to meet the needs of any event.

Wellington is typically open Thursday through Sunday. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$10 for veterans (with military ID), \$8 for seniors 60 years and older, \$7 for students and children under five years old get in free.

Wellington Farm is located at 6944 S. Military Rd., Grayling, near the 4 Mile Road exit off of I-75, and can be reached by calling (989) 348-5187. Visit the website at www.wellingtonfarmusa.com.



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Our Town Coffee & Treats

Start your summer day on a high note with a refreshing iced coffee or a sweet, freshly-baked treat from Our Town Coffee & Treats.

Tucked into a corner of the AuSable Artisan Village's Original Gallery in downtown Grayling, Our Town offers a variety of espresso drinks, teas, brewed coffee and homemade baked goods. While enjoying a drink or a sweet treat, guests can sit and chat in the relaxed coffeehouse atmosphere or browse the art in the gallery.

Just about everything at Our Town, except the coffee beans, is made from scratch by co-owner and baker Mary

Bobenmoyer. An ever-changing array of cookies, scones, muffins and biscotti fill the display case each day for fresh, flavorful options made from high-quality ingredients.

Bobenmoyer said iced drinks are popular in the summer, like caramel lattes, chai and vanilla

matchas. She said cold foam, which she makes herself, tops many of those iced drinks.

"Lavender is huge in the summer," she added. Her homemade syrups, including the lavender, can be added to any drink.

Bobenmoyer said she has two regular customers in the summer who come in every day for the same drink: an iced vanilla lavender matcha with cold foam.

Our Town also offers a wide variety of dried teas and people can mix and match to create



their own blend. "We have a plethora of teas," said Bobenmoyer.

When it comes to baked goods, lemon and orange bring a bright, citrusy flavor to cookies and muffins. Bobenmoyer said her scones sell well in the summer, particularly the salted butterscotch flavor.

During the summer, Bobenmoyer says business doubles and she gets a "50/50 split" between new and returning customers.

Our Town Coffee & Treats is located at 219 Michigan Ave., Grayling, inside the AAV Original Gallery. The shop is open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., every day but Tuesdays.



From pasta to pints to paninnis, Grayling offers great places to grab a bite

For a complete list of area restaurants, visit graylingmichigan.org/food-and-drink

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