



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Citizens Explore Michigan's Grand River

Registration is now open for Grand River Expedition 2010, a journey of discovery down mid-Michigan's Grand River, from its source south of Jackson to its mouth at Lake Michigan. The event begins July 14 and continues through July 26.

Before roads, canals, and railroads, the Grand River was an important navigational route through the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, used for centuries by various Native American tribes and later by explorers and settlers.

The expedition is made up of a broad coalition of organizations, individuals, and communities traveling downriver to identify, study and enjoy the values, challenges and opportunities of the Grand River and its 5,570 square mile watershed. This effort will contribute to the public's knowledge, awareness and appreciation of the Grand River and how it connects communities across the region for present and future generations.

"All members of the public are invited to join us in this endeavor, whether it's for the entire trip or for just a day or two," says noted Michigan paddler Charlie Parmelee of Leslie. As expedition rivermaster, Parmelee will lead the group of canoeists, kayakers and others down the river. "This will be a trip to remember. It will be family-friendly, combining recreation and learning."

Governor Granholm and Lt. Governor Cherry issued a joint Certificate of Tribute in April to the Expedition and its participants. Grand River Expedition 2010 has been recognized as a quality physical activity event by the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Health and Sports and is sponsored by the Timberland Resource, Conservation and Development Council of Grand Rapids.

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Grand River Expedition 2010 is designed to maintain the momentum gained from similar expeditions in 1990 and 2000. "I am excited to see such a large and diverse coalition come together to conduct Grand River Expedition 2010," says Doug Carter of Grand Ledge, nationally recognized river manager and educator, and the expedition's chair. "These leaders of government, agriculture, education, business, industry, and non-profit organizations, working together, will be responsible for the future health, integrity and vitality of the Grand River watershed and its citizens. I encourage everyone to participate in this special observance to learn more about the river and watershed, and about how to become more responsible stewards of this treasure."

The watershed analysis and teaching team conducts studies and explains results as it moves downstream. The expedition offers presentations, displays and demonstrations to communities along the river in an attempt to interact with the river, its tributaries, and its people throughout the watershed. This team includes scientists and students from Michigan State and Grand Valley State universities, local conservation districts and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Noted canoeist Mike Smith of Portland will be on the river again this year after having paddled the full length in 2000. He also once paddled over 3,000 miles solo down the Missouri River, following the route of the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-1806. Smith said, "I will have a GPS unit mounted on my canoe, so everyone can see on the internet how the expedition is proceeding." Just before the event, the web address to track Smith's progress will be posted on the general expedition website listed below.

Registration for multi-day trips are being accepted until June 15. For information on the trip and to register, you may visit <http://tiny.cc/grandriverexpedition2010>. A Yahoo Group <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GRE2010> has been set up for anyone interested in the Grand River Expedition 2010, or you may contact expedition leaders at grandriverexpedition2010@gmail.com.

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