



Lighthouses

- 1 - 40-Mile Point Lighthouse
- 2 - New Presque Isle Lighthouse
- 3 - Old Presque Isle Lighthouse
- 4 - Middle Island Lighthouse
- 5 - Alpena's Little Red Harbor Light
- 6 - Thunder Bay Island Lighthouse
- 7 - Sturgeon Point Lighthouse

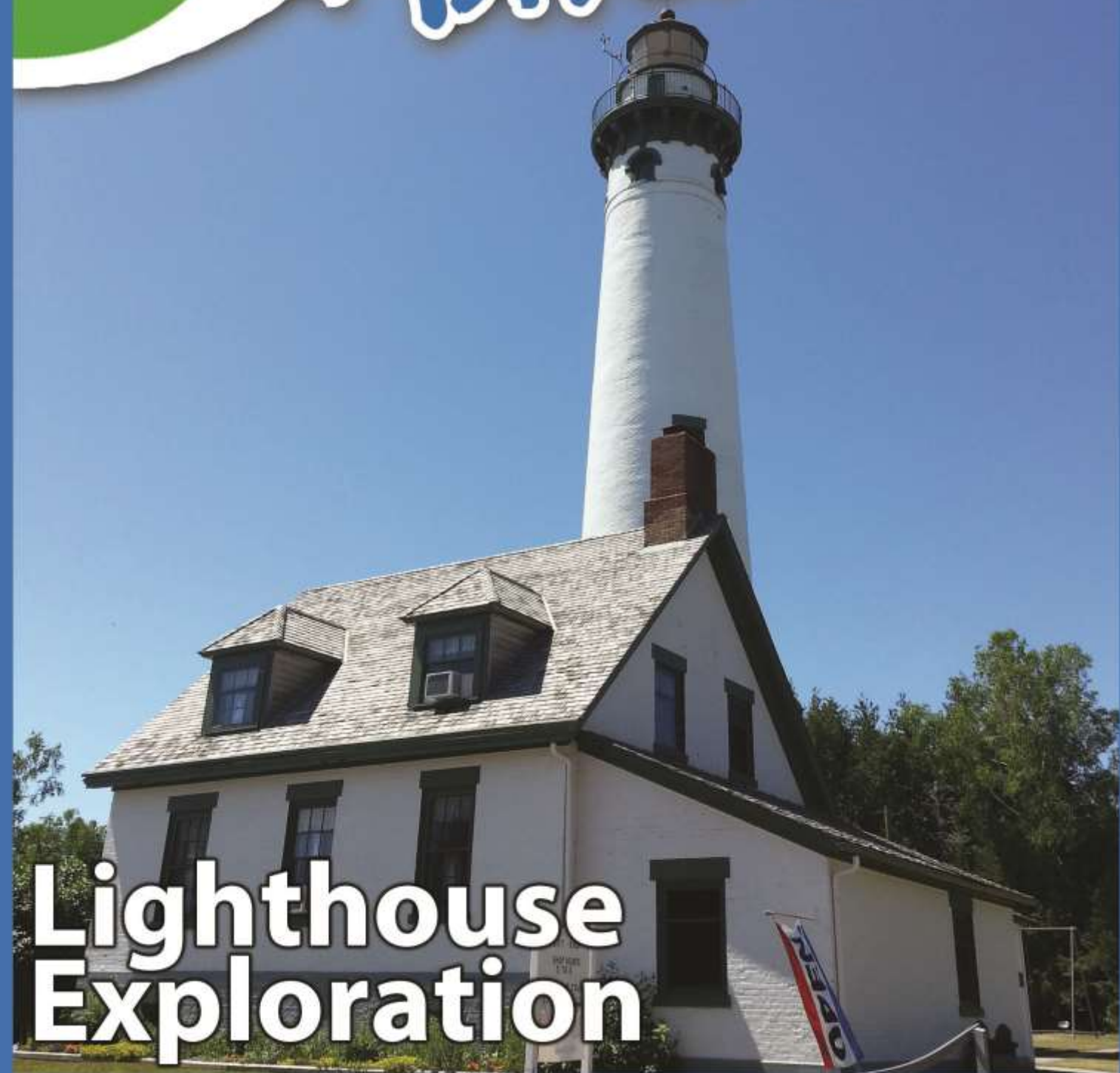


Left photo: Middle Island Light (courtesy April Srebnik); Top Right photo: Bollards at the Old Presque Isle Lighthouse; Bottom Right photo: New Presque Isle Light staircase.



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Sanctuary of the Great Lakes Adventure



Lighthouse Exploration



Clockwise from left: New Presque Isle Lighthouse, Alpena's "Little Red" Beacon, Middle Island Light, Old Presque Isle Lighthouse, 40-Mile Point Lighthouse, Sturgeon Point Lighthouse, Thunder Bay Island Light (middle).

Michigan is home to 155 historic lighthouses; that's more than any other state! We are fortunate to have seven of these historic sentinels of safety in Northeast Michigan. Step back in time and explore life on the lakes through the eyes of a lighthouse keeper as you climb the towers and survey the majestic Lake Huron shoreline.



Old Presque Isle Lighthouse "The Haunted Light," courtesy Angela Soltysiak.

Sentinels of Safety

Sturgeon Point Lighthouse GPS: 44.712475, -83.273013

Point Road, Harrisville

Until the early 20th Century, northern Michigan was almost completely dependent on waterborne commerce for all of its needs. Thousands of sailing vessels and early steamers plied the Great Lakes at a time when there were almost no aids of navigation to guide them along the dangerous coastline with its treacherous rocks, shoals and reefs. One such reef extends 1-12/miles out into Lake Huron at Sturgeon Point, just north of Harrisville. In 1869, the Lighthouse Service began construction of the lighthouse at Sturgeon Point to mark this hazard. Sturgeon Point Lighthouse became operational in the spring of 1870. The keeper's house is now a maritime museum which is open to the public seven days a week from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Alpena's Little Red GPS: 45.060384, -83.423029

Little Red is the only lighthouse within the City of Alpena. The steel skeletal-style lighthouse is viewable from Alpena's boat harbor and breakwall. Built in 1914, it replaced earlier wooden structures which guided ships to safe port since the late 1800's. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2006.

New Presque Isle Lighthouse GPS: 45.356005, -83.491838

4500 E. Grand Lake Rd., Presque Isle, (989) 595-9917

The Presque Isle Light Station includes three historic buildings. The light tower, which connects to a keeper's dwelling, was built in 1870 and is the tallest lighthouse tower accessible by the public on the Great Lakes. An unattached, fully-restored keeper's residence, constructed in 1905, serves as a museum. Buildings are situated on a 99-acre township park featuring playground, picnic area, pavilion and trails. Buildings & grounds are open mid-May through mid-October. Climb the tower for a small fee.

Old Presque Isle Lighthouse GPS: 45.342071, -83.478363

5295 E. Grand Lake Rd., Presque Isle, (989) 595-6979

The Old Presque Isle Lighthouse is one of the oldest surviving accessible lighthouses on the Great Lakes and local legend believes it to be haunted. Built in 1840 by Jeremiah Moors of Detroit, the harbor light operated until 1871 when the keeper transferred to a new, taller, lighthouse a mile to the north (the New Presque Isle Lighthouse). The keeper's dwelling serves as a hands-on museum. Here, visitors can blow foghorns and examine other interesting artifacts. They can also ring the bell from the Lansing City Hall clock tower and pose for the perfect photo opportunity with head and hands in an old set of stocks. The buildings and park grounds are open to the public daily mid-May through mid-October. A nominal fee is charged for tower climbs.

40-Mile Point Lighthouse GPS: 45.486008, -83.913862

County Park Road, Rogers City

Unlike many Great Lakes lighthouses, Forty Mile Point Light does not mark a significant port, but was built so ships would never be out of viewing range of a lighthouse. The light is 40 miles sailing distance from Mackinaw Point. Follow "Shipwreck Trail" to see what's left of the Joseph S. Fay, one of 27 wooden ships that sank during a fierce storm in 1905; about 150' of her side is resting on the beach near the lighthouse. Other features include the steamer Calcite pilot house, picnic area, beach and hiking trails.

Thunder Bay Island Lighthouse GPS: 45.037295, -83.194207

Thunder Bay Island is situated in the center of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary in Lake Huron. In 1846, the first store in Alpena County was built on the island to support a fishing community, which harvested twelve thousand barrels of fish. At this time, 160 inhabitants called the island home, and operated a fleet of 31 fishing boats. The first light tower established on the island was constructed in 1832, making it the second oldest light tower still standing on Lake Huron. The station was placed on the National Historic Register in 1984. The lighthouse is not open to the public but can be viewed via boat from the water.

Middle Island Lighthouse GPS: 45.193688, -83.321167

Middle Island Light Station is located in Lake Huron, halfway between Thunder Bay Island and Presque Isle. There are 7 buildings on the island, including a light tower, Keepers Quarters, an Oil House, Tool Garage, a Fog Horn building and two brick privies. The light is 78 feet above water and can be seen for 17 miles. Visitors can take a day tour of the island or even spend a private night on the island in a rustic lodge. Call Middle Island Keepers Lodge (989) 884-2722 for overnight opportunities. For tours call Middle Island Light Station Tours (989) 884-2722.