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On Board

July's calm winds and warm water make it an ideal time to try standup paddle-boarding.

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY DANIEL SHEPLER

In July it feels amazing and joyous to be alive in Northern Michigan. We are blessed to be surrounded by one of nature's most precious resources—water—and paddle-boarding is a perfect way to actively soak it up.

Paddle-boarding is a peaceful way to exercise and is a special way to experience nature and see wildlife. I went out for an evening on the water with Jala Wharton, a Traverse City-based certified paddle-board instructor. We met at West End Beach, one of her favorite spots, because it is fairly shallow, making it the perfect place to learn, play and try new tricks. We paddled around for an hour or so, taking in the sounds of summer, the warm evening, the stillness of the water and the stunning sunset.

Cedar Lake is another place Jala highly recommends. Just a couple of miles from downtown Traverse City, the lake is very serene, the boaters are considerate, and it delivers a big dose of natural beauty. On occasion, a seaplane will take off or land during a paddle outing—a fun addition to the experience.

Yen Yoga, in downtown Traverse City, offers SUP yoga classes during summer. Yoga strengthens your stabilizing muscles and can help you feel more comfortable on the board, all while giving you a good stretch and workout. Call or visit the studio for more information.

If you are interested in booking a paddle-board lesson, the best way to reach Jala this time of year is through social media. @fitnessmodelmom on Instagram and Jala Wharton on Facebook. ▶





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GEAR TIPS!

Jala shared some of her gear recommendations for people wanting to get started paddling. First, always have warm clothes in your car in case you get cold or wet. Even though it is warm this time of year, you never know when a cool breeze will come in and chill your wet skin. She likes NRS for clothing on the water. Their HydroSkin line is perfect for the water. Some practical gear to take with you out on the water: Zinc (as in sun screen), water, and an energy snack. Jala recommends the Beach Nut surf shop in Frankfort to get the gear you need. They are near the water and let you test the boards before purchasing, so you can find the right style for you. 📍