

more in the outdoors

Shoreviewer promotes nature tourism

The Superior Watershed Partnership (SWP) recently completed the Web-based Shoreviewer, which provides professional color photography for more than 600 miles of Lake Superior coastline in Michigan. This unique, easy-to-use, free program can be accessed at www.superiorwatersheds.org

Shoreviewer also includes multiple layers of Geographic Information System (GIS) maps, including soils, wetlands, slope and more. SWP developed Shoreviewer as a Great Lakes coastal protection tool with funding provided by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Coastal Management Program and the Joyce Foundation. Shoreviewer was designed to provide local units of government with important information to make more informed land use decisions regarding coastal areas.

Many local units of government do not have land-use planning staff or current natural feature information. In addition, many townships and counties rely on volunteer planning commissions to make important land-use decisions regarding Great Lakes coastlines. Often, these volunteer commissions have not seen a proposed site or do not have adequate information to make an informed land-use decision. Shoreviewer provides that information in a user-friendly format. The SWP mailed a free DVD of Shoreviewer to every Lake Superior



coastal unit of government in the Upper Peninsula, including townships, cities and counties.

To use Shoreviewer, simply click the mouse and move your cursor anywhere on Lake Superior's Michigan shoreline. Scroll back and forth to view oblique angle color photography for the entire coastline, from Ironwood to Sault Ste. Marie, including many of the larger islands. Then click to view maps showing soils, wetlands, slopes and other important planning information.

Shoreviewer also is proving to be an important tool to help promote sustainable economic development in the Upper Peninsula, especially nature-based tourism. Kayakers, hikers and campers are using Shoreviewer to plan their next outing or vacation. SWP, in cooperation with Northern Initiatives (a regional economic development organization), is incorporating Shoreviewer into the Great Waters Campaign to promote Great Lakes nature tourism in the Upper Peninsula (www.greatwaters.net). The Great Waters program helps communities and businesses promote Great Lakes-based, nature tourism opportunities.

Lastly, several agencies and organizations, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have applauded Shoreviewer as an asset in planning habitat protection and wildlife restoration projects.

SWP is planning to replicate Shoreviewer for Lake Michigan and Lake Huron coastlines in the Upper Peninsula. For details, call SWP at 228-6095.

—Carl Lindquist

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