

NWS Weather Forecast Office Marquette
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Negaunee, Michigan 49866
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OFFICE LOCATION:

WFO Marquette is situated eight miles west of downtown Marquette in Negaunee Township. The area is hilly, forested, and rises abruptly above the Lake Superior shoreline eight miles to the east, increasing in elevation by roughly 750 feet.



OFFICE PROGRAM:

WFO Marquette has one of the most challenging forecast and warning programs in the National Weather Service--public (inland zones, which are heavily influenced by the surrounding Great Lakes), marine (Lake Superior open waters, the adjacent nearshore zones of Lake Superior and Lake Michigan, as well as the recreational forecast for Isle Royale), aviation, fire weather, hydrology, beach, and cooperative observing.

WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE:

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan (the UP), home of the Yoopers, is surrounded on 3 sides by the Great Lakes (Superior, Michigan, and Huron). Lake Superior is the largest freshwater lake in the world and arguably the most beautiful and most hazardous! It influences our weather in all 365 days of the year: moderating our summer and winter temperatures and bringing roughly 200 inches of snow each year to the forecast office (319.8 inches in the winter of 2001-2002). Upper Michigan's record seasonal snowfall is 392 inches in the Keweenaw Peninsula, AKA Copper Country!



We may not have hurricanes here in the UP, but our infamous "Gales of November" can rival them. National and state forests and campgrounds, hundreds of miles of backpacking trails (including the North Country National Scenic Trail), cross country skiing, snowmobiling, biking trails, alpine skiing and snowboarding, ski jumping, snowshoeing, and the U.S.'s largest natural luge course...are just a few of recreational opportunities the UP has to offer. Upper Michigan also has 4,000 inland lakes, countless rivers, both gentle and white water, 12,000 miles of trout streams, 1,700 miles of shoreline along the Great Lakes of Superior, Michigan, and Huron, pristine sand beaches and 200-foot sandstone cliffs, 150 major waterfalls (Tahquamenon Falls is famous in Longfellow's "The Song of Hiawatha"), and two nationally recognized birding locations (Seney National Wildlife Refuge and Whitefish Point) make our home a paradise for all-season recreation!



Top this off with Marquette's Northern Michigan University academic, cultural, and athletic programs, the U.S. Olympic Education Center, a symphony orchestra, two marinas, Great Lakes Freighters, a 200-mile sled dog race, and the greatest scenery in the Great Lakes region! We have clean air, clean lakes and streams, and ZERO traffic jams! Our rich heritage includes Native Americans, French-Canadian voyageurs, and English, Finnish, Swedish, Italian, Greek, and Chinese immigrants--lumberjacks, miners, fishermen, sailors, and farmers. Our forecast area includes the 50-mile long Isle Royale National Park, which is the largest island in the largest lake in the world!

Lake Superior and the inland lakes offer scenic beauty in addition to great kayaking, canoeing, swimming, and sunbathing. Crystal clear waters and pristine, unspoiled beaches provide great summer fun opportunities for locals and tourists alike. Summers are extraordinary; pleasantly warm with low humidity and frequent sunny days.



If solitude is your thing, check out our inland lakes! Many of our lakes are undeveloped, great for bass, walleye, and northern pike anglers, wilderness camping, and for viewing eagles and loons. Craig Lake State Park, about an hour's drive west of Marquette, comprises four wilderness lakes interconnected by waterways, portage trails, and backpacking trails. This "hidden" State Park is such a special treasure that there are no highway signs marking the 6-mile jeep trail leading to it! A two-hour drive from Marquette takes the canoe trekker to dozens of interconnected wilderness lakes south of Munising and the Sylvania Wilderness Area south of Watersmeet.

It stays light until almost 11PM during the longest summer days, allowing people to take full advantage of outdoor activities. Hiking trails, camping, four golf courses, and lakeside paths for running and biking make for a wide variety of fun things to do in summertime.



Isle Royale National Park is a unique part of WFO Marquette's forecast area. Located in Lake Superior 50 miles from mainland Upper Michigan, Isle Royale is roughly 50 miles long and nine miles wide. Lacking roads and telephones and accessible only by float plane or boat (an adventurous five-hour trip), Isle Royale is the perfect getaway! Isle Royale offers 165 miles of hiking trails and 36 primitive campgrounds for backpackers, recreational boaters, and kayakers. There are historic lighthouses, shipwrecks, and ancient copper mining sites. The topography is astounding, with cliffs, beaches, bogs, streams, inland lakes, and ridges 500 feet above Lake Superior. Isle Royale is a living laboratory and United States Biosphere Reserve featuring hundreds of moose and several wolf packs. We enjoy a special relationship with the Park Service and Coast Guard, providing twice daily forecasts for both the island itself and marine zones surrounding the island.

Few areas of the country rival Upper Michigan's spectacular fall colors. Sugar maple, birch, and aspen adorn our forests against a backdrop of pine, spruce, and fir. Pictured are the fall colors at the McClure Basin, about 7 miles west northwest of Marquette, which later in the winter is not far from one of the best cross country ski trails in the Great Lakes region, the Noquemanon.



There are no dull seasonal weather regimes at WFO Marquette as each season has its own set of challenges. Most folks move to Marquette to enjoy the wonderfully delightful snow season. On the average, snow is on the ground from around Thanksgiving right into April. During that time, the area is a winter playground for both locals and tourists alike. Marquette Mountain is located just 10 minutes from downtown Marquette with a dozen more alpine ski areas within a two-hour drive. Cross country ski opportunities are abundant with 12 groomed ski areas within the county, offering some of the most challenging terrain in North America. An extensive network of groomed snowmobile trails crisscross the UP, allowing access to scenic regions otherwise inaccessible during the winter. Opportunities for ice hockey and ice skating are many, both indoor and out, and sledding and snowshoeing offer winter fun for all ages.



LOCAL AREA FEATURES:

The area hosts several major national events during the winter...the 220 mile U.P. 200 Sled Dog Championships are held every February, marking one of the largest sled dog races in North America. The whole town turns out to cheer the racers on as they debark from Marquette on a Friday evening and is there to greet them on their return midday Sunday. WFO staff volunteer along with the community in making the U.P. 200 a huge success.

Nearby Ishpeming hosts the Continental International Ski Jump Cup annually at Suicide Hill. The US Ski National Hall of Fame is even located in Ishpeming! The Noquenamon Ski Marathon, the fastest growing cross country ski race in North America, runs a very scenic and challenging 53km course starting in Ishpeming and ending in Marquette. We generally have one or two WFO folks, past and present, in the race!



The town of Negaunee, where the Weather Forecast Office is located, is home to several events at the Lucy Hill Luge Track at Naturbahn Hill, where Olympic Silver Medalist Chris Thorpe trained early in his career. Marquette is also home to the U.S. Olympic Education Training Center, specializing in training and teaching America's brightest young short track speed skating and boxing athletes.

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION:

Marquette is the largest city in the UP and is located on Lake Superior near the center of all the Upper Peninsula's recreational areas. The principal employers in the Marquette area include Northern Michigan University (NMU), UP Health System, tourism including area motels and restaurants, and the Port of Marquette. Marquette's "Presque Isle" city park, nearly surrounded by Lake Superior, is noted for its beauty and recreational opportunities, in every season. This Fall scene captures Presque Isle's rugged east side cliffs. The west side has a gorgeous beach, a favorite launching spot for kayakers.



Nearby mines support the communities of Negaunee and Ishpeming. The 750-1000 foot Great Lakes freighters dock at Marquette to load taconite iron concentrate and transport it across Lake Superior and down Lakes Michigan or Huron to support the nation's steel industry.



The population of Marquette is about 21,000 with another 7500 students at NMU. Population of Marquette County approaches 67,000. All major churches are represented, and while some minority populations are only a small percentage of the total, nearly all ethnic peoples and races are represented with the University presence.

Marquette's symphony orchestra, choral society, community concert series, and local theater productions are not only close by and inexpensive, but professional in every sense of the word.

For indoor exercise and sports, the Physical Education Instructional Facility (PEIF) on the campus of Northern Michigan University is unequalled. The PEIF has indoor tennis courts, volleyball, racquetball, indoor running track, swimming pool, ice skating rink, basketball courts, climbing wall, and a complete fitness center. The PEIF has a food court and lounge area with large screen TVs. WFO Marquette staff are fans of Northern Michigan University Wildcat Hockey, attending the games every winter.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

WFO Marquette, and its staff, volunteer their time in many ways for the community. Twice a year, the office cleans up a 2-mile section of M-28, just east of Marquette, along beautiful Lake Superior. Many of the staff volunteer at the "Room at the Inn", a warming center in town that serves 1600+ meals each month and provides free laundry, shower, phone, and mail service to the community. With several veterans on our staff, we also donate money to provide gifts to those currently serving, or to help their families back home. WFO Marquette staff have also contributed thousands of pounds of food to local food shelves in part of the NWS's Week of Service Food Drive, having contributed more than any other office in agency 5 years running from 2015 through 2019, and 3rd in 2020! The staff also donates 100s of items and supplies to local schools each summer. To top it all off, each winter many staff members at the WFO "Adopt a child" from nearby homes, purchasing them gifts off their wish lists for the holiday season!

CLIMATE:

Summers are warm, dry, and pleasant. The normal July maximum and minimum temperatures range from 76 to 55 and normal temperatures in January, modified by Lake Superior, range from 21 to 5 degrees. Average precipitation is ~32 inches of liquid equivalent and 125 inches of snowfall in the city of Marquette. These amounts increase closer to 200 inches over the higher terrain west of town, in the cities of Negaunee and Ishpeming.

EDUCATION:

The city of Marquette has 12 K-5 schools, 5 middle schools, and 3 high schools. Northern Michigan University, within the city limits of Marquette, offers a variety of undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Nearby communities of Gwinn, Negaunee, and Ishpeming have 5 K-5, 4 middle, and 4 high schools.

TRANSPORTATION:

Sawyer International Airport serves the north-central portion of the area, and is located at the old K.I. Sawyer AFB in Gwinn. It is roughly 25 minutes southeast of the WFO. There is public transportation in the area but for round the clock shift workers an automobile is a necessity. A bus service connects to other Upper Peninsula cities and there is an AMTRAK bus connection to Chicago for train connections east, west, and south.

Upper Michigan is someplace special! Nowhere else in the country will you find such a rich variety of scenery, topography, and recreation in such a clean, hassle-free environment with such fine, practical people as in the UP.

