



Ludington Daily News

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Mother Earth Water Walk

Begins Saturday in Manistee

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MANISTEE — Mother Earth Water Walk 2008 is scheduled to begin in Manistee Saturday and reach Ludington later that day or the next. Participants are scheduled to finish the walk — about halfway around Lake Michigan — May 11 or 12 in Escanaba. Volunteer walkers are taking part to draw attention to the lake and water issues and this year's walk will complete a journey around the lake begun in 2004, when the route was from Manistee north to Escanaba. There have been similar walks around Lake Superior in 2003, Lake Huron in 2005, Lake Ontario in 2006 and Lake Erie in 2007.

“Once the lower half (of Lake Michigan) is completed, then the waterwalkers can say we have walked around all the Great Lakes,” said Linda Cypret-Kilourne, who stated her title as grandmother and water walk warrior.

“We are doing this walk ... our own beliefs within our own aboriginal culture and values of the importance of our waters is very precise and sacred to our being, as it is one of the basic elements needed for all life to exist,” Cypret-Kilourne stated. “It is important to keep our waters clean to ensure the everlasting use for our grandchildren. Our water is not for sale. This message will be carried this spring.”

Elizabeth Caldwell-Bissell, who is assisting with this year's project, said volunteers will take turns walking the route, which follows roads and not the lakeshore, while others rest in an accompanying van.

She also said walkers will carry a copper kettle of Lake Michigan water, because copper kettles were traditional among Native Americans.

“Our theme is, ‘our water is not for sale,’” she said.

Caldwell-Bissell said the walkers will have the need for food and shelter during their journey and she is hoping people can provide those, as well as places to hold daily feasts. She said people wishing to attend feasts should bring a dish to pass.

Saturday's walk is scheduled to begin with a 9 a.m. ceremony at the Little River Casino Resort in Manistee Township. A feast for the walkers is also scheduled for noon at the casino, which is owned by the Manistee-based Little River Band of Ottawa Indians.

Another ceremony is scheduled for after the feast at First Street Beach in Manistee and the walkers will then begin their journey. Caldwell-Bissell said they are expected to reach Ludington Sunday.

She said people are welcome to join the walkers and they should remember it is a ceremonial occasion for Native Americans.

“Women should still wear skirts or skirts over their pants,” she said. “Good walking shoes are a must. Go for comfort not for looks.”
Men should wear long pants and shirts, she said.

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