

Mother Earth Walk 2008

A trek around Lake Michigan

Kevin Braciszkeski - Daily News Staff Writer

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A group of volunteers plans to complete a walk around Lake Michigan this year to draw attention to the lake and water issues.

Mother Earth Water Walk 2008 is scheduled to begin in Manistee April 26 and reach Ludington later that day or the next. Participants are scheduled to finish the walk May 11 or 12 in Escanaba.

That trek 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,” Linda Cypret-Kilourne, who stated her title as grandmother and water walk warrior, said in a press release about the upcoming event.

“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.

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. Caldwell-Bissell said she would like to hear from people who can provide lodging at motels or campgrounds, at least providing discount rates.

She said people wishing to attend feasts should bring a dish to pass.

According to Cypret-Kilourne, plans for the Lake Michigan water walk call for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians to hold a ceremony April 26 to start the walk.

“At sunrise, the plan is to offer feast foods to the water, pipe and tobacco and then start walking after the petitioned water and pail has been filled,” she stated.

The walk through Ludington is expected to include 25 women walkers, Caldwell-Bissell said, and she said she’s contacted AFFEW about participating in the event.

To help contact Caldwell-Bissell at 845-1951.

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

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