



Three Stand-up Guys to Cross Lake Erie on Paddle Boards in June

Group plans fundraising \$10,000 for the Cooperative Institute for Great Lakes Research

Detroit, MI – This June three men, Joe Lorenz, Kwin Morris and Jeff Guy, plan to paddleboard across Lake Erie, traversing international waters, rough waves, and dodging toxic algae blooms, all in an effort to raise awareness of Great Lakes environmental issues. They'll begin their adventure at Belle Isle State Park, home of the Dossin Great Lakes Museum and end it at Sandusky, Ohio. The 80-mile trip is expected to take about 24 hours.

In 2018 the trio crossed Lake Superior on paddleboards and raised \$15,000 for the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum in the process. That trip challenged the men with cold waters and waves from passing freighters.

While Erie isn't reputed to be as cold or treacherous as Superior, it still has dangers.

"You'll have a current in the Detroit River of eight to ten knots," says Kwin Morris, "and we have to stay away from the Livingston Channel. There are some big rapids in there and it can get really rough."

Waves on Lake Erie have been known to reach eight to ten feet during storm surges, but the guys are planning carefully and have a weather window of June 15-22nd.

"We're comfortable in 2-3 foot waves, but we want to avoid larger waves as much as possible," says Morris.

They have successfully paddled across three of the five Great Lakes. The idea of paddling across Lake Michigan first struck the guys when Kwin and Jeff were doing a standup paddle together. They later met Joe Lorenz at a Christmas party, who had a similar idea. He said, "Let's do it!" So, they put together the team and a plan, formed a non-profit and from that point forward worked to make it a reality.

"They were originally going to try it alone and that wouldn't have been a good idea," says Corey Adkins, who will video record their event. "Then they talked to seasoned boat captain Ryan Matuzak. Ryan suggested they wait a year. They researched and became much better organized."

Their first crossing was Lake Michigan in 2015, a 60 mile and just under 25-hour journey in 38-degree water. They raised \$10,000 for the Great Lakes Alliance. In June 2017 they crossed Lake Huron and raised \$7,000 for Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Their 90-mile paddle journey took over 28 hours to complete. Last summer they paddled across Lake Superior in 21 hours. Their 60-mile trip began at Sinclair Cove, Ontario and ended at Whitefish Point, Michigan and raised \$15,000 for the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum.

Each paddle boarder carries all of his supplies on his own paddleboard: food, extra clothes, and straws that filter drinking water from the lake. There are many dangers they'll face, aside from hypothermia and fatigue. High winds can crop up, leading to big waves, and they will pass through shipping lanes in the dark.

To give their families peace of mind, they have taken precautions, such as having two safety boats follow them with an emergency medical technician on it. They are also bringing Photojournalist Corey Adkins with them to capture the event.

“Corey is our master storyteller, so it’s great he’ll be there with us again,” says Guy.

The men researched Lake Erie to decide where to donate the money they will raise. They spoke with Duane Gossiaux, a biologist at Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, who specializes in studying Lake Erie’s harmful algal blooms (HABs), and he directed them to the Cooperative Institute for Great Lakes Research ([CIGLR](#)).

“CIGLR is a non-profit housed in the University of Michigan. They are doing spectacular work with algal bloom research and their efforts to safeguard the Great Lakes ecosystem. They are experts in Great Lakes issues, and we are thrilled to have them on board our team,” says Lorenz.

Algal blooms, (also called algae blooms) usually caused by runoff pollution, can impact both marine and human health, and are an annual threat to more than 11 million people through their drinking water and recreational boating, fishing and swimming. The paddleboarders hope to raise \$10,000 for CIGLR and their continuing research and protection of Lake Erie.

“Our overall goal is to help keep the Great Lakes awesome,” says Jeff Guy. “Our hope is that people will join us in donating to this great cause.”

For more information or to make a donation, visit StandUpForGreatLakes.com and follow the team on Facebook.com/StandUpForGreatLakes and on Instagram.com/StandUpForGreatLakes. Watch the award-winning documentary about their Lake Superior Crossing [here](#).

About Jeff Guy: Guy, 33, is a financial advisor with Merrill Lynch. He also enjoys golf, hockey and fishing. He lives in downtown Traverse City, MI.

About Joe Lorenz: Lorenz, 33, is a personal trainer in Traverse City. When he’s not helping people achieve their fitness goals, he’s up for almost anything involving water, travel, adventure, fitness, or beer.

About Kwin Morris: Morris, 31, was born and raised in northern Michigan, making him a keen waterman, traveler, and adventurer. He is a middle school science teacher in the Elk Rapids School District.

About Corey Adkins: Adkins is the Special Projects Executive Director for 9&10 News based in Cadillac, Michigan. A gifted storyteller, Adkins has won several awards for the 'Crossing Superior' documentary which was recently nominated for 2 Emmys. In 2018 he won "Best Documentary" from the Associated Press and Best News Special and Special Interest Programming for his filming of the Huron crossing, which can be seen [here](#). He also won a 2015 award on a commemorative Edmund Fitzgerald production.

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