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JEANNE BARBER PHOTO

# RAINBOW OVER PENTWATER leads to thankful moment

**BY DAVID L. BARBER**  
PTW COLUMNIST

My deadline was missed. My editor was kind. Jeanne and I were on the road early, May 4, when she read me an email that I'd just received from my editor who was wondering about the whereabouts of my column for PTW, and Jeanne's photo essay, too. Did I tell you I forgot to tell Jeanne about her deadline? Oh well. I asked Jeanne to email Lois back to see if we might have a one-day extension to get her my column and Jeanne's photo essay, the following day. Just like that, Lois got back with us. No problem, she said. So, Jeanne and I went to Pentwater to see what we might cook up. Trouble was, we were on our way to Traverse City, first. And then we wanted to make our way down to Grand Rapids so we could watch our grandson, Vin play baseball.

With a bit of luck, we might get back to Pentwater about sunset to help Jeanne with her photo essay, though it would still be a headscratcher for me as to what to write about. So here I am at this minute, writing about missing deadlines and being on the road for 12 hours and 350 miles, until finally getting back to Pentwater to see that sunset that we hoped to see. Well, we saw that sunset, and an added bonus - a magnificent rainbow.

And when we saw the latter I pulled over and Jeanne jumped out of the car to get her photos, which are included in her photo essay in this issue of PTW.

While she did that, I sat there, and sat there, and I watched Jeanne doing her thing, and I looked at that rainbow that was in full arc over the Centenary United Methodist Church, and I became aware of how lucky we

are - Jeanne and me - to be doing what we are in our retirement.

Deadlines? They crushed me for 50 years. No longer. I forget 'em - literally. And what about all those miles we traveled in one day, especially with the price of gas being what it is? Again, I'll use those two words that explain things best for me - oh well. But think of the timing here, folks. The reminder I had failed, again, to make a deadline. All those miles. Traveling from Manistee to Pentwater, via Traverse City, Tustin, Big Rapids, Grand Rapids and Coopersville - we made stops in all those communities, for one reason or another - only to arrive in Pentwater the very second God took His finger and with one life-affirming motion, created a rainbow over the tiny Oceana County hamlet that rests along the lakeshore.

For those who believe in such miracles, those heavenward-bent colors remind us that there are rainbows to be found at the end of every tough, long, grueling day, if you just stop and look. No doubt there were other rainbows over other communities, what with the weather being what it was that day.

But this one was over Pentwater, where such wonders go to vacation.

And though it disappeared into the clouds all-too-quickly, no doubt it'll return, soon enough. My guess it'll be back, in all its sparkling glory - the next time I miss deadline.

You're welcome, Pentwater.

**Editor's note:** David L. Barber is a retired journalist living in Manistee. He will provide occasional feature stories and columns for various Shoreline Media publications, including the Ludington Daily News, Oceana Herald-Journal, LakeStyle Magazine and PTW Magazine. He can be reached at [dllbarber1006@gmail.com](mailto:dllbarber1006@gmail.com)

# Pentwater Historical Society Museum Expansion



BY CRISTINA JUSKA  
SHORELINE MEDIA STAFF WRITER

In September 2025, the Pentwater Historical Society unveiled plans to expand its museum building and create an outdoor exhibit and event space. The updated museum design aims to incorporate a fresh, bright and welcoming look while preserving its historical character. An elevator is planned to improve ADA accessibility.

Shortly after the announcement, the historical society launched fundraising efforts to support the expansion. In January 2026, Beth Russell, membership services director for the organization, said the campaign was nearing the \$1 million milestone.

With capital costs for the structure within reach, the group began moving forward with village meetings and securing approvals to begin construction on phase one. Russell said the final project scope will depend on donations received, noting the society will not take out a mortgage. They would break ground once donations or pledges reach 80% of the \$1.5 million goal.

In the meantime, a generous donor provided funds for the society to pur-

chase the lot adjacent to the museum. After a professional evaluation, it was determined the house on the property could not be salvaged. The lot will instead be incorporated into the museum campus to create a welcoming green space for the community.

Fast forward just a few months, and the groundbreaking ceremony took place April 27, 2026. Ken Adams Construction began digging the new foundation that day and soon after demolished the neighboring red house.

"We have raised over a million dollars so far, all thanks to the generosity of our community," Russell said following the groundbreaking. The amount is enough to complete phase one, which includes construction of an addition behind the current museum, doubling the exhibit space and adding a research area. The historical society hopes to complete this phase and open the new building by June 2027.

Planned interactive exhibits include opportunities for multigenerational engagement, such as:

- Journeys to Pentwater: Holographic train conductors narrate stories of early settlers.
- Voices in the Storm: Talking portraits

recount the Veterans Day Storm.

- Hancock Walk: A scale model of Pentwater's Main Street memories.
- Time Capsules: Visitors can create and store personal capsules to revisit in the future.
- Living Memory Bank: A space to record and preserve personal stories for future generations.

The historical society will continue fundraising to support phase two (development of outdoor museum displays) and phase three (creation of a courtyard event space).

Russell said the outdoor exhibit area will display large artifacts that are difficult to house indoors, such as the museum's 500-pound scale model of the U.S.S. Sequoia. The society hopes the courtyard will serve as a beautiful space for small gatherings and community events.

The Pentwater Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. Donations can be made by check to the Oceana Community Foundation, with "PHS Expansion Fund" in the memo line. Mail to: PHS, P.O. Box 54, Pentwater, MI 49449. Pledge forms and online donations are available at [pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org](http://pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org).

## Groundbreaking





# Pentwater Lake Association explores watershed plan, outlines summer priorities

## Early discussions focus on funding opportunities, dam removal and lake health efforts

**SUBMITTED BY RICHARD PUGSLEY**

PENTWATER — The Pentwater Lake Association is exploring the development of a comprehensive watershed management plan as it continues expanding efforts to monitor water quality and address environmental concerns across the lake and its tributaries, according to its May newsletter.

Association President Patrick Hooyman said the group has increased its focus on understanding sources of bacteria and overall lake health, noting that conditions are influenced not just along the shoreline but throughout the broader watershed.

Early discussions among board members have centered on creating a formal plan that would consolidate existing data, identify key environmental challenges and guide future priorities, Hooyman wrote in the newsletter. Such a plan could also improve eligibility for state and federal funding.

The proposal has not yet been formally presented to the full board.

Watershed, dam projects highlighted The association's Watershed Committee is prioritizing support for the potential removal of the Crystal Valley Dam, one of about 30 dams within the Pentwater River watershed, according to the newsletter.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has approved the dam's removal, and local partners are working on surveys, restoration

planning and grant funding.

Additional projects include restoration work at Sandy Bend to reduce sediment entering the river and ongoing monitoring of bacteria levels in tributaries.

The newsletter also highlighted a completed regional project restoring Stony Creek at Marshville Dam Park, where a failed dam was removed and the stream channel rebuilt to improve fish habitat and water flow. The \$2.37 million effort included federal, state and private funding, according to the association.

Channel dredging planned

The Village of Pentwater has secured bids for channel dredging in 2026 and 2027, with funding sources including federal appropriations and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers support, according to the newsletter.

Dredging for 2026 is tentatively targeted for completion by late July.

A recent study cited in the newsletter suggests the channel mouth is not a fish breeding habitat, which could allow alternative sand management methods in the future.

Invasive species remain concern

Invasive aquatic plants continue to be an issue, particularly starry stonewort, which requires mechanical harvesting rather than herbicide treatment.

The Pentwater Lake Improvement Board

manages invasive and nuisance species, while lakefront property owners may remove vegetation within state guidelines, according to the newsletter. The association is also offering shared equipment to assist residents.

Community events, outreach planned

The association's annual meeting and dinner is scheduled for June 26, with an aquatic biology specialist from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy expected to speak, according to the newsletter.

Volunteer opportunities include a July 11 "Clean Boats, Clean Water" event aimed at preventing the spread of invasive species, as well as other summer activities and educational programs.

Other local updates

The newsletter also notes the retirement of longtime First Baptist Church pastor Mark Lillie after 45 years in ministry, including 23 years in Pentwater.

Village officials are also urging residents not to flush wipes, citing repeated sewer system blockages, according to the newsletter.

In addition, the Pentwater Police Department has launched a podcast series focused on community safety and local issues.

**Editor's note:** This article is a summary of the Pentwater Lake Association's May 2026 newsletter.



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# PENTWATER PAINTED IN LIGHT AND COLOR

PHOTO ESSAY BY  
JEANNE BARBER



A Monday evening in May was a quiet one in Pentwater, delivering a spectacular end of the day calmness that saw Mother Nature paint a magnificent rainbow over the city – a colorful creation that barely seemed to arch its way over the hushed Centenary United Methodist Church, and that also saw a puffy blanket of mammatus clouds hanging over the northern horizon of the Charles Mears State Park; a flash-bulb sunset that was playing hide-in-seek behind the clouds over Pentwater Lake; a rain-soaked Lake Michigan beach and playground shoreline; bright daffodils springing skyward along Hancock Street; and streets lights that were being called into their nighttime service. No matter the date or time of year, it's always a good day to be in Pentwater



# Where SUMMER and the ARTS meet



**LOIS TOMASZEWSKI**  
SHORELINE MEDIA EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Pentwater's charm attracts people from all over in the busiest time of the year - summer. It is no wonder that the arts play such an important role in this harbor town's identity as there are picturesque and photo worthy moments all around.

Boats begin filling marina slips. Sculptures are scattered about. Galleries display creative treasures and what about

the natural scenes that play out along the river walk, the beach and the surrounding areas. Among the clearest signs of that art is part of the heart of Pentwater is the return of outdoor arts and crafts festivals.

At the center of the June festival season is the annual Spring Fest Arts, Crafts & Antique Fair, held on the Village Green in downtown Pentwater. Organized by the Pentwater Chamber of Commerce, the two-day event regularly brings more than 100 vendors to the village offering

handmade arts, crafts, antiques and specialty items.

The 2026 Spring Fest is scheduled for Saturday, June 20, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, June 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the Village Green.

According to the Chamber event listing, this year's festival will again feature artist booths, live music, food vendors and a wide range of handcrafted and vintage items, including jewelry, home décor, collectibles and seasonal merchandise.



While the festival has become one of Pentwater's signature early-summer traditions, its roots are relatively recent compared to some of the village's older summer events. A 2019 announcement described the event as the "17th annual Spring Fest," placing its beginnings around 2003.

Throughout the weekend, the Village Green fills with artist booths, food vendors, live music and visitors moving between downtown shops, galleries and the nearby harbor area. The event's setting — within walking distance of the channel, marina and Charles Mears State Park — helps blend Pentwater's arts culture with the village's beach and boating atmosphere.

Pentwater's connection to organized outdoor arts festivals stretches back decades through the Pentwater Junior Women's Club Juried Fine Arts & Crafts Fair, which dates to 1964 and remains

one of the community's most established summer traditions. The 61st annual fair is scheduled for July 11 on the Village Green.

Over the decades, that event helped build Pentwater's reputation as a destination for regional artists, handcrafted goods and seasonal outdoor festivals.

The growth of Spring Fest in the early 2000s also coincided with the rise of the Pentwater Artisan Learning Center, commonly known as PALC, which helped expand the village's modern artisan and maker culture through classes, workshops and artist programming.

Together, the festivals, galleries and artisan organizations reflect how closely art and tourism have become intertwined in the harbor community.

Visitors attending June events often spend the day moving between the Village Green, downtown boutiques, galleries, restaurants and waterfront walk-

ways, creating the kind of pedestrian activity that has long defined summer in Pentwater.

For generations, Pentwater's economy was closely tied to lumbering, shipping and commercial fishing. Today, while the harbor remains central to the village's identity, the summer season increasingly revolves around tourism, recreation, arts and community events.

By late June, the shift is unmistakable.

Tents spread across the Green. Music drifts through downtown. Ice cream lines form along Hancock Street. Visitors browse artwork beneath shade trees while boat traffic moves steadily through the channel nearby.

In Pentwater, the return of the arts festival season has become more than a weekend event — it has become part of the annual rhythm marking the arrival of summer itself.

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# PENTWATER COMMUNITY

# CALENDAR

**Editor's note:** This calendar reflects the best available information at publication deadline. Some organizations finalize summer event dates later in the spring. For updates, readers should check with the sponsoring organization.

## JUNE

**Beginning June 1, 2026**

### **Pentwater Farmers Market**

Village Green • Mondays & Thursdays

10 a.m.–1 p.m.

Seasonal market featuring regional produce, baked goods, flowers, honey, crafts and artisan products.



**June 7, 2026**

### **Start of Summer Party**

Village Green • 5–7 p.m.

Community potluck celebration hosted by the Pentwater Service Club with support from the village and Downtown Development Authority. Attendees bring a dish to share while organizers provide hot dogs and bottled water.

**Mid-June (date varies)**

### **Pentwater Public Schools**

#### **Graduation**

Pentwater High School

Annual commencement ceremony for graduating seniors of Pentwater Public Schools.



**June 20–21, 2026**

### **Spring Fest Arts, Crafts & Antiques Fair**

Village Green

More than 100 artists and vendors display handmade crafts, artwork and antiques during the annual

early-summer festival sponsored by the Pentwater Chamber of Commerce.

Saturday: 10 a.m.–5 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

**June (late month – summer series begins)**

### **Pentwater Civic Band Summer Concerts**

Village Green Bandshell • Thursdays • 7:30

p.m. - The long-running community band performs weekly concerts throughout the summer.

**June 24, 2026**

### **Women's Pentwater Tennis Mixer**

Pentwater Tennis & Pickleball Club • 9

a.m.–1 p.m.



Friendly round-robin tennis event bringing together regional club players.

## *ONGOING SUMMER ACTIVITIES*

### **Pentwater Historical Society Programs**

Pentwater Historical Museum

Rotating exhibits, historical displays and occasional walking tours exploring the village's history.

### **Pentwater Yacht Club Sailing Season**

Pentwater Yacht Club • Pentwater Lake

Seasonal sailing activities, youth instruction and social events for members.

### **Charter Fishing Season**

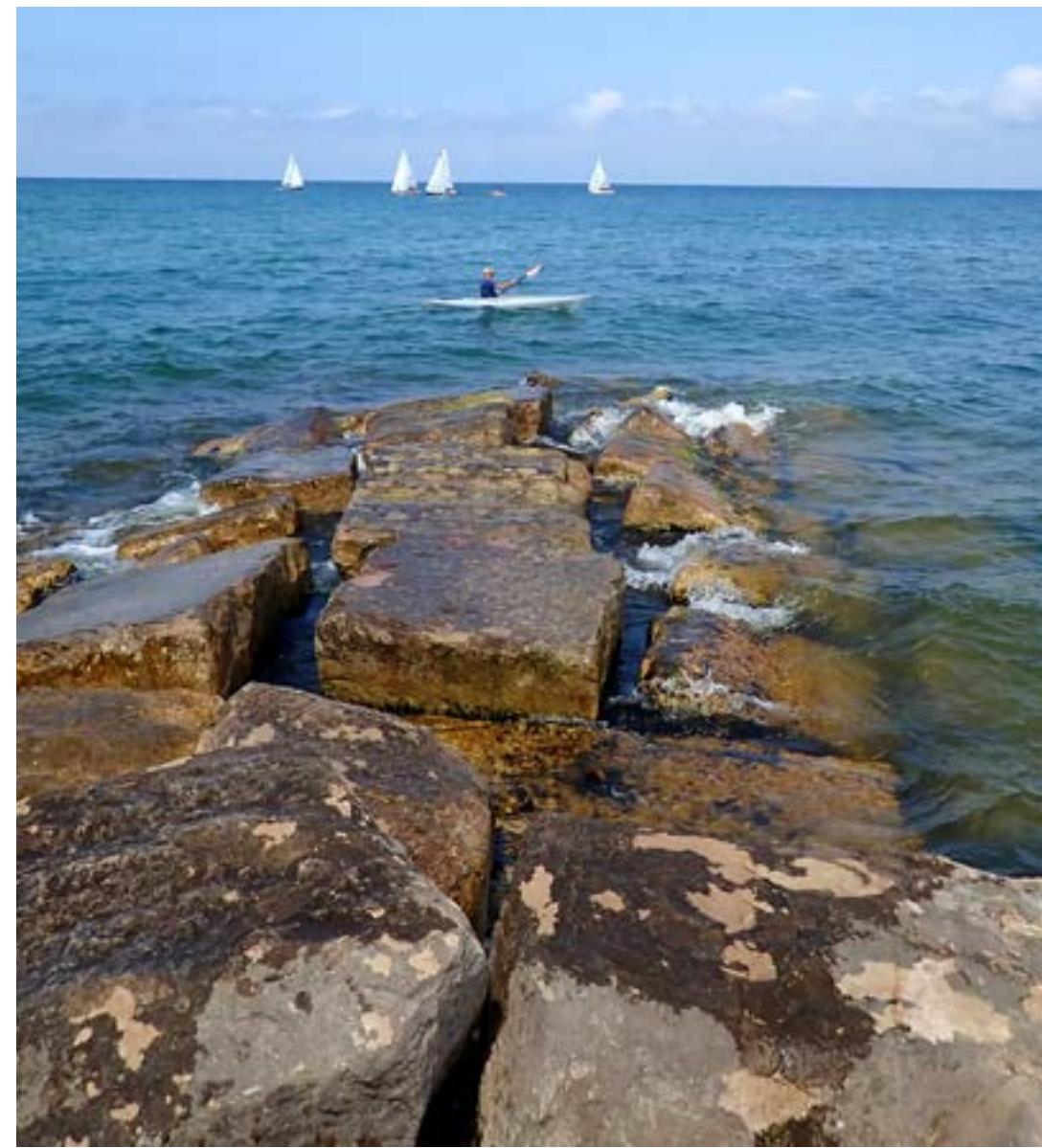
Pentwater Harbor / Lake Michigan

Charter boats operate throughout spring and summer targeting salmon and trout.

### **Charles Mears State Park Beach Season**

Pentwater shoreline

Swimming, boating and outdoor recreation increase as summer visitors arrive.



# Friends of Pentwater Hart Trail to host Tacos and 5 K Trek for Trail on Saturday, June 27 in Pentwater

On Saturday, June 27, 2026 the non-profit organization Friends of the Pentwater Hart Trail will hold its annual fun-filled Taco luncheon and guided 5k ride/run/walk through Pentwater known as Tacos & Trek for the Trail.

This will be the eighth such fundraiser for the Trail to be held on Pentwater's Village Green, with the 5k ride/walk/run beginning at 11:30 a.m. Registration for the event may be completed online at [Pentwaterharttrail.com](http://Pentwaterharttrail.com) or at 10:45 a.m. the day of the event.

A donation of \$35 per person includes participation in the 5k ride/walk/run, two tacos and a t-shirt (with pre-registration link online at: [\[trail.com\]\(http://trail.com\)\) A two-taco lunch will be available to the public from 11:30 - 1 p.m. for a minimum \\$15 donation.](http://Pentwaterhart-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

The groups of bikers, runners and walkers, will depart from Second Street on the North side of the Village Green, following their group's leader through the Village.

In addition to the "Trek" through the Village, raffle tickets for a Trek Verve 2, 9-speed bicycle will be available for \$5 each or five for \$20. Additional tickets will be available at other summer events and the last chance to purchase raffle tickets will be during Pentwater's Fall Fest in September.

"Tacos and Trek is a very fun, family-

friendly event and an easy way to support the trail," said Claudia Ressel-Hodan, president, Friends of the Pentwater Hart Trail board of directors.

All proceeds from the event and raffle ticket sales go toward future maintenance of the Pentwater Hart Trail (PHT). The PHT begins at Carroll Street at Sixth Street in Pentwater on the paved shoulders, continues along Monroe Road to Longbridge Road, then along Longbridge Road to Wayne Road. At that location, the proposed 10-foot wide trail will be constructed in right-of-way along Wayne Road to Harrison, Harrison east to 72nd Avenue and 72nd to Tyler, where the Safe Route to School Section begins



and then connects with the Hart-Montague Rail Trail on Water Street.

The effort to create a trail from Pentwater to Hart, to connect with the rail trail, began in 2015. In 2020, the committee formally became a 501C3 nonprofit organization called the "Friends of the Pentwater Hart Trail." Of the total cost, \$5.2 million is still needed for construction of the trail. The FPHT is working to raise most of this goal through state and federal grants, but private donations are also critical to the trail's completion. In 2018, an allocation of \$1.4 million for trail construction was made by former Michigan Senator Goeff Hansen. Volunteer members of the FPHT currently work on the creation of the trail and in the future, will work to maintain the trail to the safety standards of the appropriate government agencies. Funds raised in excess of the goal shall be placed in a reserve fund and shall be used solely for trail maintenance.

Anyone interested donating to the trail and/or becoming a "Friend of the Pentwater Hart Trail" may find more information at [Pentwaterharttrail.com](http://Pentwaterharttrail.com)





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