

## Biological Station

### Beaver Island: CMU's Lake Michigan jewel

Beaver Island is located 32 miles northwest of Charlevoix in northern Lake Michigan amid an archipelago of 10 islands. The largest of these islands, Beaver Island, is 13 miles long and six miles wide, with an area of about 58 square miles.

Central Michigan University has enjoyed a long association with Beaver Island, beginning in 1942 with the purchase of 48 acres along the sandy eastern shore for \$1 from the state of Michigan.

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### The biological station

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CMU's biological station is unique among North American biological stations because its insular location on Beaver Island provides access to truly exceptional freshwater ecosystems within the Great Lakes basin. CMU is the only Michigan university with a facility located on an island in Lake Michigan.

The station supports research activities throughout the year and a great variety of academic courses during the spring, summer and fall. Facilities include the James C. Gillingham Academic Center, faculty and student housing, a campground, a dining room, and a lodge with an enormous fireplace. Two research buildings and a permanent weather station help support environmental and ecological research and education.

In 1996, with the help of generous benefactors, CMU acquired the Miller's Marsh Natural Area, a 230-acre tract of land on Beaver Island's southwest side. This site provides a highly diverse environment for field trips and research.

### Researcher's paradise

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The station is unmatched in its opportunities for the study of aquatic and terrestrial environments and its potential for promoting understanding and conservation of freshwater ecosystems. Beaver Island attracts researchers from numerous universities because of its:

- ▶ Abundant cedar swamps
- ▶ Upland and lowland coniferous forests
- ▶ Beech-maple climax forest associations
- ▶ Sand dunes
- ▶ Marshes
- ▶ Beaver ponds

### Community relations

#### Providing education and resources for the entire island

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CMU's biological station enjoys a wonderful relationship with the island community, hosting special tours, luncheons and lectures for the islanders. CMU faculty, staff and students participate in local activities - including a float in the island's Fourth of July parade - and invade the entire island community for their annual "station closing weekend" every November.

The station is an excellent resource for elementary and secondary school biology and environmental science classes. It has hosted groups of inner-city ninth and tenth graders and, annually, several high schools make use of the biological station for field camp activities. Civic and community organizations such as Elderhostel use the station for special activities. Tourists often visit and are given tours highlighting the work of the station and the ecosystems in the area.