



The Big 400 Maple Festival

Saturday, March 21, 2015

CONTACT: Katie McGlashen, Park Interpreter, Eddy Discovery Center, Waterloo Recreation Area, (734)475-3170 or Heather Price, Executive Director, Sandhill Crane Vineyards, (517)764-0679

JACKSON MI, FEBRUARY 21, 2015 - It's maple syrup time! The communities of **The Big 400** are teaming up to celebrate maple syruping in southern Michigan with a festival on **Saturday, March 21, 2015**. The festival includes pancake breakfasts, tours of tapping areas and the syruping process, the release of a local maple wine, and lots of good things to eat.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Chelsea Alehouse (Chelsea) - The menu includes pancakes, and bacon... with real maple syrup. 8:00 - 11:30 am
420 N Main St #100, Chelsea, MI 48118 734.433.5500

Proceeds from the breakfast go to support The Big 400 in guiding tourists to our region.

MAPLE TOURS AND INTERPRETATION

Eddy Discovery Center (Waterloo), 10 am to 4 pm Old-time Maple Sugar Festival. It's time for that traditional rite of spring – tapping maple trees. Enjoy a pancake breakfast at the Chelsea Alehouse, and then come on over to the Discovery Center to learn how maple syrup is made. Guided walks will show various methods of collecting sap and how it is boiled down to make syrup. Watch a film about the process and see actual tools for making syrup on display from the Waterloo Farm Museum. Maple

products will be available for purchase. Contact the Center at (734) 475-3170 for more information.
Cost: Free.

17030 Bush Rd, Chelsea, MI 48118, 734.475.3170

Dahlem Environmental Education Center, (Jackson), It's spring and that means maple! It's time to tap the trees and boil the sap down to those sweet confections we love so well! Bring the family out to learn the history of sugaring and how maple syrup is made. Hands-on activities make this a great program for young children. FEE: \$3/member; \$5/non-member. Guided walks head out every 20 minutes. Call to reserve your spot.

What are the hands-on activities? Here are just a few:

- Kids get to try drilling tap holes with an old-fashioned hand drill;
- visitors learn how to ID the right tree(s) to tap;
- participants see all the different types of tapping through history and get to taste maple sap;
- visitors visit the sugar shack where sap is being boiled down - this is where they get to taste real syrup;
- indoors, visitors can take the maple syrup challenge - can they tell which syrup is the real stuff in our blind taste test.

7117 South Jackson Road, Jackson, MI, 49201 517.782.3453

McLennan Maple Syrup, (Manchester), Tours on Saturdays in March, 2015: every two hours beginning at 9 am - take a look at the sugar shack process, handle tools and supplies, learn about tapping the trees, and take part in maple-related activities such as coloring and crafts. Taste testing of maple candy and McLennan maple syrup on ice cream. Local maple syrup is available for purchase. Tours: \$5 per person.

10950 M-52, Manchester, MI 48158, 734.428.7005

Hudson Mills Metropark, Hudson Mills Metropark Activity Center near Dexter, Saturdays and Sundays, February 22 and 23 and throughout March at 10 a.m., 11 a.m. and noon. See how to tap trees, collect sap and boil it into maple syrup. Reservations are required for guided tours at \$3/child and \$5/adult. Beginning on March 8, an all-you-can-eat pancake and sausage breakfast, with real maple syrup, will be served at the Activity Center on the days the tours are offered. Pancake breakfast is \$3.50/child \$5.50/adult. Tap your own tree at the park and collect your own sap by renting a seasonal tree for \$5. Weekday programs (Tuesday through Friday) are available by appointment to schools and organized groups, during which an interpreter presents "Maple's Sweet History." For more information/reservations, call Hudson Mills Metropark at 734-426-8211.

8801 N. Territorial Road, Dexter MI 48130 734.426.8211

MAPLE WINE RELEASE

Sandhill Crane Vineyards, (Jackson), 11 am – 6 pm, A highlight of the Maple Festival is the release of the current vintage Sandhill Crane Vineyards' limited edition dessert wine made with local maple sap and syrup. This year the winery has done something very special – aged the current maple wine vintage in bourbon barrels from the Grand Traverse Distillery. The result is a rich fortified wine with hints of oak and bourbon. This limited-edition wine carries its own special name, **Annie's Mapleshine**. Light and not too sweet, **Annie's Mapleshine** pairs beautifully with light desserts, sweet cheeses, and the winery's famous Bacon Chocolate Chip Cookies. Free admission; wine tasting: \$5
4724 Walz Road, Jackson, MI 49201, 517.764.0679

WINE & CHOCOLATE PAIRING WORKSHOP

Sandhill Crane Vineyards, 1:30 pm, As part of the Maple Festival, Sandhill Crane Vineyards is teaming up with local chocolate producer, **Mindo Chocolate** for a wine & chocolate pairing workshop. A representative from Mindo Chocolate will talk about their farms in South America and their processing facility in Dexter, MI. You'll see raw cocoa beans, cocoa pods, cocoa fruit syrup, and a metate (traditional stone grinder) to show the entire process from farm to chocolate bar.

A highlight of the pairing workshop will be the newly released maple wine (**Annie's Mapleshine**) paired with Mindo's special Salted Maple & Pecan chocolate bar. The pairing workshop includes 5 different Mindo chocolate and Sandhill wine tastings. A range of Mindo products will be available for purchase that day. Cost: \$20 per person. Seating is limited; reservations recommended. Call 517-764-0679.
4724 Walz Road, Jackson, MI 49201, 517.764.0679

MAPLE DISHES AT LOCAL RESTAURANTS

A number of local restaurants will be featuring dishes (and beverages) made with real maple syrup:

Dexter

Terry B's Restaurant and Bar
7954 Ann Arbor Street, Dexter, Michigan 48130. 734.426.3727

redbrick kitchen & bar
8093 Main Street, Dexter, MI 48130 734.424.0420

The Dexter Mill has maple syrup for sale
3515 Central St, Dexter, MI 48130 734.426.4621

Chelsea

Cleary's Pub - Maple-Glazed Georgian Bay Ruby Red Trout & Spiced Maple Bourbon Martini
133 S. Main St, Chelsea, MI 48118 734.475.1922

Common Grill – Maple Glazed Pork Tenderloin
112 S Main St, Chelsea, MI 48118 734.475.0470

Chelsea Alehouse - Maple Porter
420 N Main St #100, Chelsea, MI 48118 734.433.5500

The Garden Mill – offering discounts on maple-related products
110 South Main Street, Chelsea, MI 48118 734.475.3539

Brooklyn

Theresa's Angels Coffee & Tea House – Maple Latte, Maple Frosted Sugar Cookies, Maple Cinnamon Muffins
132 North Main Street, Brooklyn, MI 49230 517.592.6246

Jackson

Sandhill Crane Vineyards - a wide range of maple entrees, salads, maple wine cocktails, maple coffee drinks, and desserts
4724 Walz Rd, Jackson, MI 49201 517.764.0679

OTHER MAPLE EVENTS DURING MARCH

March 8, 10:30 am – 1:00 pm

2nd Sunday Jazz Brunch, Sandhill Crane Vineyards

This month's 2nd Sunday Jazz Brunch will serve as a kick-off for the Maple Festival later in the month. The March brunch menu features dishes made with local maple syrup: Brown Sugar Pancakes with Maple-Bacon Butter, Charcuterie Board with Maple-Bacon Jam, Maple Pecan Sticky Buns, Maple Latte, and two maple wine cocktails: *Sunday Nap* & *Hibernation*. Music by Brandon Marceal (soul/rock flute). Call 517.764.0679 to make reservations.

4724 Walz Rd, Jackson, MI 49201 517.764.0679

March 13, 7:00-9:30 pm

March is for Maple Lovers – Cocktail Class, Zingerman's Cornman Farms

The days are getting longer, the temperature is slowly rising, and the maple sap is flowing. This is maple syrup season in Michigan, and that means winter is almost over and spring is just around the corner! This month, we'll feature delicious Michigan maple syrup in our cocktail creations. Settle in at the barn, help yourself to some fabulous food prepared by Cornman Farms talented chefs, and get ready to create three custom-crafted cocktails that celebrate Michigan maple syrup. We'll begin with the sweet and spicy **Noreaster**; try a new take on the classic tequila cocktail with a brunch-appropriate **Maple-rita**; and finish up with a hearty **Maple Bourbon Smash**. Guests will leave with recipes and instructions for the cocktails featured in this class. Join us as we celebrate the sweet beginning of spring! \$65 per person
8540 Island Lake Rd, Dexter, MI 734.619.8100

March 29, 12:00-4:00 pm

Sugaring & Shearing Festival, Ella Sharp Museum

Welcome Spring's arrival at the Ella Sharp Museum's annual Sugaring & Shearing Festival Sunday, March 29, from noon to 4 p.m. Rain or shine, there is plenty to do indoors and out! Farm Lane will be bustling with activities such as Puddingstone Farm's petting zoo, sheep shearing, traditional craftsmanship, and

docents in all of the historical buildings. Don't miss the "sap-to-syrup" demonstrations at the sugar bush, and Haigh's Maple Syrup will be back in the Country Store selling their delicious products.
3225 Fourth St, Jackson, MI 517.787.2320

A TASTE OF THE IRISH HILLS

Saturday, March 14 - Sunday, March 15

Tickets may be purchased for \$25 online at IrishHills.com, at the Brooklyn-Irish Hills chamber office, Clark Lake Golf Course, ERA Reardon Realty, Captain Chuck's Sandbar & Grill, Salvaged Decor or the Brooklyn Moose Lodge. The first 300 tickets receive a pub glass filled with goodies. There are 23 participating businesses this year, so sample some of the best cuisine in the Irish Hills over two days...that means no cooking for two days straight, for only \$25! New this year, there will be the *AfterTaste* at the Brooklyn Moose Lodge from 7 to 11 pm presented by the Old Irish Mill featuring food, Irish themed fireworks, live music and lots of fun. Taste ticket holders get in free, otherwise its \$10 per person. Call 592-8907 for more info or visit IrishHills.com for a list of participants.

About The Big 400

The mission of the Big 400 is to prepare and execute plans which stimulate commerce in the communities sharing a common border local and state public lands, while concurrently partnering with the stewards of these public lands to promote and encourage their use and preservation.

History

The Big 400 began as a project spearheaded by the Chelsea Area Chamber of Commerce seeking to establish an economic development strategy that linked the Waterloo Recreation Area to the business community of Chelsea, Michigan. A working committee was formed that included representatives from 7 key stakeholder organizations:

Chelsea Area Chamber of Commerce, Chelsea Public Schools, City of Chelsea, Waterloo Recreation Area, Chelsea Center for the Arts, Legacy Land Conservancy, and The Conservation Fund.

A program developed by The Conservation Fund, "Balancing Nature and Commerce in Communities that Neighbor Public Lands" became the strategic road map for this endeavor. Once the Chelsea team completed the training, they understood the success of this project demanded expansion to other regional partners and organizations.

Neighboring communities of Dexter, Manchester, Stockbridge, Pinckney and East Jackson County were invited to join the team along with the Pinckney Recreation Area. Additionally, the Convention and Visitors Bureaus of Jackson County, Ann Arbor Area, and Ypsilanti joined the effort. The committee currently represents 4 counties, 4 municipalities, 3 Convention and Visitors Bureaus, 2 State Recreation Areas, land and nature conservancies.

It encompasses a 20 mile by 20 mile area, hence the term "Big 400."