



# WCMU *now*

## News of the Week

From the WCMU Newsroom



Shipping near the US-Canada border in the eastern Upper Peninsula remains at a standstill for the second day in a row. The Coast Guard halted traffic on the St. Mary's River, as [it investigates damage to a ship that struck a light tower early Thursday morning](#). The accident comes just days after an early start for the Great Lakes shipping season.

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A Michigan Congressman is introducing legislation that would ensure the future of the state's lake sturgeon season. The Michigan Sturgeon Protected and Exempt from Absurd Regulations Act — or Michigan SPEAR Act — would exempt lake sturgeon in Michigan from being listed as federally endangered. [The U.S. Fish and Wildlife](#)

[Service is expected to make a decision on lake sturgeon's federal status later this year.](#)

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An Alpena wood panel factory that seemingly closed overnight last month is being viewed by several buyers. According to the Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce, the buyers expressed concern about not having the former workers at the facility. An estimated 200 people were laid off. [The fear is that the factory won't be able to operate as efficiently.](#)

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Plans to dissolve a Mackinac County veterans affairs committee have been put on hold. As WCMU's Renae King tells us, [the pause comes after an injunction was served to the Board of Commissioners](#), challenging its closed door meeting.

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MyMichigan Health has signed an agreement with Ascension Medical Group to absorb their hospitals in Saginaw, Tawas, and Standish. Financial details of the acquisition have not been disclosed. [The deal is expected to be finalized in June.](#)

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The maple season began early this year, due to a record warm winter that caused sap to flow last month. But some Michigan tribes are holding off on tapping trees this year to let the maples rest. [The Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe called off their maple syrup season](#) and held a ceremony to pray for nature's recovery, amid weather-related stress.

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Cloudy skies, flecks of snow and temperatures slowly rising with bouts of cold are all common features of spring weather in Michigan. Coming off a warm winter, Joseph Delizio, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Gaylord, said much of [northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula is still in a drought.](#)

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ICYMI: Since the Soo locks first opened in 1855, they've been the gateway for Great Lakes carriers. These ships crossing between Lake Huron and Lake Superior are essential to the nation's economy and support hundreds of thousands of jobs throughout the Midwest. [WCMU's Teresa Homsy was at the opening of the locks to see how it all worked](#) and brings us this behind-the-scenes audio postcard of the first day of the Great Lakes shipping season.

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**From our Capitol Correspondents**



Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer was joined Thursday by U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra to warn that the stakes in the November elections include reproductive rights adopted two years ago by voters. Abortion rights groups are pressing for repealing the state's parental rights abortion law, but [Whitmer said she is more focused on protecting recent gains.](#)

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A federal court this week approved a new plan for Michigan's state House districts around metro-Detroit. That's after judges declared seven districts in [the old map unconstitutional because they were drawn predominantly based on race](#), in violation of the 14th Amendment.

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Michigan's governor appeared alongside Biden Administration officials this week to announce new guidelines for a federal training program for electric vehicle battery workers. That's as the state aggressively pursues investment from EV battery manufacturers. [The new "Battery Workforce Initiative" standards would guide registered apprenticeships for battery machine operators.](#)

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A new website from the Michigan Attorney General's office aims to consolidate information regarding the state's multiple opioid lawsuit settlements. It includes a tracker of all the money each county and municipality in the state stands to receive. Attorney General Dana Nessel says [that'll help local governments and service providers make better use of their resources.](#)

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## From our partners at Harvest Public Media



The gray fox is a unique animal. It's the only canine in North America that can climb trees. Yet while it can be found across much of the U.S., gray fox populations have plummeted in parts of the Midwest. As Rachel Cramer reports, [researchers in several states are trying to find out why.](#)

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Honeybees across the United States produced more honey last year than in previous years. It's the [first time production has risen in three years](#), according to a new USDA report.

*Harvest Public Media is a collaboration of public media newsrooms in the Midwest and Great Plains - including WCMU Public Media.*

## From NPR & PBS



Marine traffic around the Port of Baltimore is at a standstill after the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed on Tuesday from the collision of a big container ship with a support pillar. Market analysts are looking at the [impact the accident could have on an important auto imports hub.](#)

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Ukraine's Kharkiv is taking the drastic step of moving classrooms for primary and secondary education underground. With Russia's war on Ukraine in its third year, and Russian troops on the offensive, it's a [realistic long-term solution for families who want to stay in Kharkiv,](#) says mayor Ihor Terekhov.

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The Supreme Court heard arguments in a major case that could further limit when and how women in America can get an abortion. The case centers on access to the most widely used abortion pill mifepristone. [It's the latest in the ongoing legal battle over reproductive rights.](#)

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## Weekend Listening



For years, Washington state regulators were foiled time and again by a renegade moving company, run by a man who legally changed his name to Mike the Mover. On the next Planet Money and How I Built This: The story of Mike the Mover's battle against an obscure state regulation. Listen today, March 30 at 1 p.m. on WCMU.

## Extra: Behind-the-scenes with Teresa





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