



## **AuSable River Canoe Marathon**

*Since 1947, One of the Greatest Canoe Races on Earth!*

Grayling to Oscoda, Michigan \* 120 Miles Non-Stop

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Grayling, Michigan - July 18, 2017

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### **Rabaska / Voyager Canoe Racing Returns to the AuSable Canoe Marathon**

#### **Racing action in Mio, Michigan July 29 and Five-Channels Dam to Oscoda July 30**

Editor Note – Photos to accompany this release and other media resources can be down-loaded at AuSable Marathon Google Drive <http://drive.google.com/open?id=0BxvIk0oi7oiuTTdHSzNfNm5INkU>

For the second consecutive year, the exciting racing of big voyager canoes with multiple-person teams is taking place in conjunction with the AuSable River Canoe Marathon, July 29-30. Voyager canoes, known in Quebec as *Rabaskas*, are “freighter canoes” - 25 feet long and 4 feet wide – and were originally utilized in the upper Great Lakes region by traders and settlers as early as the 1600’s.

For more than 30 years, Rabaska racing has been a fixture on the St-Maurice River in Quebec, the setting for *la Classique Internationale de canots de la Mauricie – The Classic* – the third stage of the *Triple Crown of Canoe Racing*. In the early 1990’s, Rabaska racing was integrated into the festivities of *la Classique*, which is staged over the three-day Labor Day weekend in September and has been a fan favorite ever since.

Nowadays, Rabaska canoes have evolved to be more adapted to racing. They are made of light carbon fiber and its shape above water level changed to become more aerodynamic. Despite their big size, Rabaska canoes can move as fast as the C-2 pro canoes in deep water. This sport is accessible to all kinds of people and can be practiced with a minimum of training.

For the second consecutive year, Rabaska racing will be part of the AuSable River Canoe Marathon. And, for the very first time, a Michigan team will be part of the race! In 2016, four competitors from Michigan (Calvin A. Hoogerhyde, Justin Griffith, Susan Williams and Peggy English) had the chance to be a part of the *La Classique* Rabaska race with Quebec teams. They loved their experience so much that Calvin, of Roscommon, Michigan, decided to buy a Rabaska from Quebec to assemble a team and grow the sport in Michigan.

Rabaska competitors from Quebec will again be travel to Michigan with their canoes this year. Started as a “demonstration project” in 2016, the spectacle of Rabaska racing easily convinced the fans, sponsors and the Marathon committee that it was great add-on to the Marathon’s 69-

year tradition. Three Rabaska teams were part of the inaugural race and the organizers are expecting more teams this year.

Rabaska racing during the AuSable Marathon is a very important first step to grow the sport in Michigan. Mr. Martin Gervais, president of the ACRQ – Quebec Rabaska Racing Association – observed: “We are very thrilled about racing at the Marathon again this year. We had a great first experience last year. Everybody loved it and they are very anxious to come back to Michigan.”

Martin Gervais continued, “The Quebec Rabaska Racing Association is working hard to grow our sport in Quebec and we are willing to help grow the sport in Michigan as well. The first step is done and now, we must keep on moving forward. We are going to support Michigan paddlers who want to assemble their own teams in the future. Participation in Rabaska racing is a great way to learn competitive paddling and the sport of canoe racing will only benefit from the growth of Rabaska in Michigan.”

Consumers Energy has also been very supportive of the addition of Rabaska racing to the AuSable River Canoe Marathon. They have made their facilities available to the public for these events.

New for 2017, "The Rabaska Experience" - Saturday, July 29 from 8:00-9:30 AM at the Mio Dam Spillway – offers the opportunity for the public to get in and paddle a Rabaska with experienced paddlers! (\$5 donation to Oscoda County Park Campground is requested) This will be followed at 10:00 a.m. by the start at Mio Dam of Stage 1 of the 2017 Rabaska Race Rabaska Race. There are race viewing locations at Camp Ten Bridge and Oscoda County Park. This stage will last about 2 1/2 hours.

Stage 2 of the the 2017 Rabaska Race will start at 6:00 a.m., Sunday morning, July 30th, at Consumers Energy's Five Channels Dam (south of Glennie on M-65). Following the start, in the Five Channels dam pond, the big canoes will paddle one long buoy-turn loop in the pond before portaging the dam and heading downstream to Oscoda. Fans will also have excellent viewing opportunities at Consumer Energy's Cooke and Foote Dams and at the Oscoda Finish Line, where the Rabaskas are expected to arrive at approximately 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

- Start Five Channels Dam 6:00 a.m.
- Portage Five Channels Dam approx. 6:30 AM
- Portage Cooke Dam approx. 7:30 AM
- Portage Foote Dam approx. 8:45 AM
- Finish - Oscoda AuSable Finish Line Park - Approx. 10:30 AM

For more information about the AuSable River Canoe Marathon and the Rabaska/Voyager race at the AuSable Marathon, visit the AuSable Marathon Facebook Page and website.

- [Facebook.com/ausablecanoemarathon.org](https://www.facebook.com/ausablecanoemarathon.org)
- [www.ausablecanoemarathon.org](http://www.ausablecanoemarathon.org)

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