

New AmeriCorps members start at sanctuary

By NICOLE GRULKE
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ALPENA — The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary has two new Huron Pines AmeriCorps members servicing educational outreach at the sanctuary, Danielle Fegan and Michael Ekenstedt. Both new service members arrived Monday, and will be at the sanctuary until the beginning of November.

Fegan will take the post as the Northeast Michigan Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative education coordinator through November, working with educators to get students participating in place-based educational activities.

"Right now I'm trying to get acquainted with the different partners and projects that are currently going on," Fegan said. "We have talked about doing several different new projects this year, and I'm excited to learn more about what's available and how I can add to the opportunities for students in the area."

Fegan dual majored at Michigan State University in plant biology and the ecology of evolutionary biology and behavior. Fegan is originally from Sault Ste. Marie, and is excited to be back in northern Michigan and serving closer to home.

"I have experience working with K-12 students from when I was a grad student, but it wasn't so focused on getting students involved in the landscapes right outside their door, like I will be doing here," Fegan said. "Everyone here at the sanctuary has been really great and helpful. It feels great to be here and I'm excited to get started. I hope to work to expand some of the programs and relationships that have been established in the past."

Ekenstedt is originally from Chippawa Falls, Wis., and is pursuing his master's in public maritime archaeology in Southern Denmark. Ekenstedt is excited to be in Alpena and serving at the sanctuary as the educational outreach specialist.



Danielle Fegan, left, and Michael Ekenstedt are the new Huron Pines AmeriCorps members serving at the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary through November.

News Photo by Nicole Grulke

"I spent six years in the education system before deciding I wanted to pursue archaeology," Ekenstedt said. "When I found out that you can do both at the same time by studying public archaeology, I was excited. I saw an AmeriCorps posting for the position here and it was exactly what I wanted to do."

Ekenstedt said he already is

working on the curriculum for the free Great Kids, Great Films event during the Thunder Bay International Film Festival Sunday from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.

"I'm ready to get into the classroom again and start working with the public to share the national history of Lake Huron and the area with people," Ekenstedt said. "I'd like to get more familiar with the

(remotely operated vehicle) program and am just happy to be here and serving in this capacity at Thunder Bay. I really like Alpena. It's a delightful city and the people have been very nice. Everyone at the sanctuary has been great and very supportive and it feels good to be here and talking with people about archaeology."

Both members will be housed at

the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary through November, working with students and educators, as well as the public to enhance outreach and education throughout the area.

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