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Swimmers to Complete Edmund Fitzgerald's Tragic Journey

411-mile relay swim to commemorate 50th anniversary of shipwreck



S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald – St. Marys River, 1975. Photo: Bob Campbell

(Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan) To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the sinking of the [Edmund Fitzgerald](#) in 2025, open water swimmers will have an opportunity to participate in a 17-stage, 411-mile relay swim from Lake Superior, where the shipwreck lies, to Detroit, the ship's intended destination. The [Edmund Fitzgerald Memorial Swim](#), is scheduled to begin on July 26, 2025, and will be the subject of a documentary film.

[Registration](#) for the swim opens at 9:00 a.m. EDT on June 10, 2024.

The 729-foot *Edmund Fitzgerald* was bound for Detroit carrying over 26,000 long tons of iron ore when the ship went down in a violent Lake Superior storm on November 10, 1975, taking the lives of all 29 crew members aboard. The ship lies in Canadian waters, 17 miles north-northwest of Whitefish Point, Michigan.

Seventeen teams of 4 relay swimmers will symbolically complete the intended route and cargo delivery that the *Edmund Fitzgerald* was tragically unable to complete on that fateful night 50 years ago, by passing between them iron ore pellets from the same dock in Superior, Wisconsin, where the ship took on its last load.

The event is being organized by [Jim Dreyer](#), who has himself swam across all five Great Lakes.

"The *Edmund Fitzgerald Memorial Swim* presents epic, [once-in-a-lifetime experiences](#) for up to 68 swimmers to be part of history, play a role in a documentary film, and swim where no one has ever swum before and may never swim again," Dreyer said.

Dreyer outlined the following event highlights:

- **"The swim is tentatively planned to start in Lake Superior from above the *Edmund Fitzgerald* wreck**, subject to permit approval. Here, the swimmers will leave a memorial to the crew resting below in a very moving ceremony. Then, participants will swim to shore at Whitefish Point, the site of the [Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum](#)."
- **"The swim will finish at Belle Isle Beach in Detroit** where our delivery of iron ore is presented to receiving dignitaries. Then, a **march from the finish line to the *Mariners' Church of Detroit*** is tentatively planned, pending approval of permits. In a memorial service, the church bell will be rung 29 times for each crew member of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, just as it was 50 years ago."

"In between Lake Superior and Detroit, there are many other incredible adventures," Dreyer added.

- **"Participants will swim the St. Marys River to Sault Ste. Marie**, which may allow them the chance to safely get up close and personal with giant freighters on either side of the **Soo Locks**."
- **"Participants will ride the currents and swim the entire length of the St. Clair River."**

- “There will be significant open water crossings of Whitefish Bay, Lake Huron between Michigan’s upper and lower peninsulas, across the mouth of Saginaw Bay, and across Lake St. Clair to Detroit.”

Swimmers will raise funds for the [Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society \(GLSHS\)](#) to preserve the [Whitefish Point Light Station](#).

“The *Edmund Fitzgerald*, has come to represent, in many ways, shipwrecks in general on the Great Lakes, and the *Whitefish Point Light* is the most important beacon for all vessels entering or leaving Lake Superior,” said **Bruce Lynn, GLSHS Executive Director**. “Preserving the legacy of the 29 men who lost their lives in this historic maritime tragedy and helping to preserve a lighthouse that safeguards mariners along Lake Superior’s ‘Shipwreck Coast,’ are causes the swimmers can really rally around while they are themselves making history.”

To learn more about the *Edmund Fitzgerald Memorial Swim* and to register, go online to www.EdmundFitzgeraldSwim.org.

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