Nature’s Kennel, Michigan's premier dog sledding destination, is owned by Michigan State alums Ed Stielstra ‘91, Lyman Briggs College and Tasha Stielstra ‘98, College of Education. Nature’s Kennel is located in the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan and is home to 160 magnificent Alaskan Huskies. Both Ed and Tasha are well-accomplished mushers and Ed has completed eight Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Races.

This unique winter adventure offers you the opportunity to drive your own dog team or to take a ride with the sled dogs of Nature’s Kennel. Also included is a presentation about Nature’s Kennel and how Ed and Tasha went from MSU graduates to business owners. You will go behind the scenes as you learn about this extremely unique business. You will also have the opportunity to enjoy a bit of Upper Peninsula winter splendor with a trip to Tahquamenon Falls State Park where Park Naturalist and MSU alum Theresa Neal ‘03 will lead you on a private snowshoe hike. You will also learn about the Eben Ice Caves and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore from MSU alum Steve Tchozeski ‘77 of Great Lakes Geoscience.

For reservations or further information, call Nature’s Kennel at 906-748-0513
Trip Itinerary:

Wednesday, January 9th

6:00 pm Welcome reception at Chamberlin’s Ole Forest Inn
Appetizers and wine will be served around the lobby fireplace followed by dinner in the private dining area.

6:30 pm Dinner at Chamberlin’s Ole Forest Inn
Following dinner, you will get an introduction to Nature’s Kennel Sled Dog Adventures and Racing Team with owner Tasha Stielstra. Tasha will give a short presentation about Nature’s Kennel Sled Dogs and her and Ed’s participation in sled dog races around the world.

Thursday, January 10th

7:30 am Breakfast at Chamberlin’s Ole Forest Inn
9:00 am Dog Sledding at Nature’s Kennel
Try your hand at mushing your own team or take a ride in the dog sled. The dog sledding trip is designed for beginners. You will meet our fabulous guides (and sled dogs) and learn the instructions necessary to mush your own five-dog team on the scenic ten mile trail. Or, if you prefer, you can ride in the sled with the guide. Please let Tasha know your preference for participating as a rider or driver when you make your reservation.

1:00 pm Lunch at Tahquamenon Falls Brewery, Tahquamenon Falls State Park
There will be a limited menu to choose from. Beer will also be available at an additional cost.

2:00 pm Snowshoe Hike with Tahquamenon Falls State Park Naturalist
Enjoy a scenic snowshoe hike at Tahquamenon Falls State Park (snowshoes and instruction provided). The park naturalist will talk about the park’s history, winter in the Upper Peninsula and will answer your questions about Tahquamenon Falls. You will also have time to explore the Upper Falls of Tahquamenon Falls on your own or as part of a guided hike.

6:00 pm Dinner at Chamberlin’s Ole Forest Inn
Enjoy a fantastic dinner and relax in front of the giant fireplace after a great day of winter activities. Following dinner, you will have a brief introduction to the unique geologic features of the Eastern Upper Peninsula in preparation for touring the Munising area on Friday.

Friday, January 11th

8:00 am Breakfast at Chamberlin’s Ole Forest Inn.

9:00 am departure to Munising/Eben Ice Caves/ Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
Steve Tchozeski of Great Lakes Geoscience will accompany this portion of our tour as we explore the beautiful frozen waterfalls and sandstone outcroppings of the Munising area. Weather permitting and ice-pack permitting, we will spend the day exploring the Eben Ice Caves, Munising Falls, and/or the ice caves of Grand Island National Recreation Area. All hikes will be guided by both Steve and Tasha. We will have lunch at the Falling Rock Café in Munising before heading out on a short afternoon hike. A visit to the Alger County Historical Society is an option for those who do not wish to participate in the afternoon hike. We will return to Chamberlin’s Old Forest Inn at approximately 6 pm. Please note that the hiking for this day is mildly strenuous but does not require any special climbing equipment or snowshoes. We will do our best to select hikes that are scenic, safe, and within the capabilities of the group.

6:00 pm Dinner at Chamberlin’s Ole Forest Inn
Enjoy a fantastic dinner and relax in front of the giant fireplace after another great day of winter activities. We will have a slide show to highlight the week’s activities and share our stories.

Saturday, January 12th

8 am-11 am Breakfast at Chamberlin’s Ole Forest Inn
Departure at your leisure.

For reservations or further information, call Nature’s Kennel at 906-748-0513
Accommodations: Enjoy three nights of lodging at Chamberlin's Ole Forest Inn in Curtis. Chamberlin's is nestled high on a bluff overlooking Big Manistique Lake in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. This incredible lakeside country inn offers charming accommodations and casual fine dining. Rich in history, this gracious 7500 square ft., 19th century-style lakeside dwelling was built by a railroad company to serve as a passenger hotel near the Curtis train station. More than one hundred years later the inn continues to embrace travelers with warmth, comfortable lodging and stunning views.

Included meals: There will be a private welcome dinner and program at Chamberlin's on Wednesday night, dinner on Thursday and Friday evenings and full breakfasts on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Thursday lunch will be at the Tahquamenon Falls Brewery and Friday lunch will be at Falling Rock Cafe in Munising. If you have special dietary needs, please let Tasha know.

Getting there: Air transportation is available to Marquette, MI (Sawyer International Airport) or Sault Ste. Marie (Chippewa County Airport). Ground transportation can be provided from local airports with advance notice. Please let Tasha know if you will need transportation to/from the airport. Both airports have rental cars available if you wish to explore the area on your own.

Transportation during the tour: Transportation is provided to and from all locations (Chamberlin’s, Nature’s Kennel, Tahquamenon Falls, and Munising).

Cost: $1,095 per person, single occupancy or $1,980 per couple, double occupancy. Gratuities included.

Payment: A 50% deposit is required at the time of reservation. The balance of the trip is due on January 9th when you come for your adventure. Payment may be made via all major credit cards or personal check.

Cancellation policy: In the unlikely event the trip is canceled due to weather conditions, a full refund will be issued. If participant(s) request a cancellation, the deposit will be refunded if request is made more than three weeks before the start of the trip.

Reservations: To make your reservation, contact Tasha Stielstra, Nature’s Kennel 906-748-0513 or info@natureskennel.com. Please note this trip is limited to 10 participants. The trip must have a minimum of 6 participants. If the minimum is not met by December 28th, deposits will be refunded.

Gear: Bring warm gear for the dog sledding trip as there is a constant breeze when the sled is moving. Insulated/snow pants, a warm parka/jacket, winter boots, mittens and lightweight gloves (gloves are nice when hooking up the dogs), are all suggested. If riding in the sled, blankets will be provided. Warm winter boots are available for loan if needed at no charge. The same gear can be worn for snowshoeing and hiking to the caves but it is highly suggested you bring along a pair of YakTrax for walking along the trail and into the caves (these snow/ice cleats are available at most outdoor stores, https://www.yaktrax.com/).

For reservations or further information, call Nature's Kennel at 906-748-0513
The Michigan State Alumni Association and Michigan State University, their respective employees, officers, agents, servants and representatives (hereinafter collectively referred to as “Michigan State”) are acting only as agents for the tour participants with respect to travel services and shall not be responsible or liable for changes of flight times, fare changes, dishonor of airline, hotel or other reservations, damage, injury (including death), loss of baggage, accidents, delays, inconveniences, cessation of operations, airline or tour operator bankruptcies or insolvency's, acts of God, acts or omissions of any person or entity engaged in conveying participants or carrying out any other arrangements in connection with the tour, or any other event or occurrence beyond Michigan State’s control. Further, Michigan State shall not be responsible or liable for losses or additional expenses incurred by any participant due to sickness, disease, weather, strike, civil unrest, acts of terrorism, quarantine, acts of God or any other cause or occurrence beyond its control. Michigan State shall not be responsible or liable for alterations or changes in the itinerary deemed necessary for carrying out the tour. Michigan State reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure. In such an event, participant’s entire payment may be refunded without further obligation or liability of any kind on the part of Michigan State. Michigan State also reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure. In such an event, participant’s entire payment may be refunded without further obligation or liability of any kind on the part of Michigan State. Michigan State also reserves the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour should the person’s health, actions or general deportment impede the operation of the tour or the rights or welfare of any tour participant. In such an event, no refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour. Applicants for participation in this tour accept all of the terms and conditions set forth above.

Contact information:
- Chamberlin’s Ole Forest Inn, 906-586-6000, www.chamberlinsinn.com
- Tahquamenon Falls State Park, www.mi.gov/tfallseducation
- Eben Ice Caves

Suggested Marquette hotels if flying into Sawyer International airport:

Additional activities in the area include:
- Snowmobile Rentals are available in Curtis, MI and cross country skiing and snowshoeing are available at various area locations.

For reservations or further information, call Nature’s Kennel at 906-748-0513