

Pitching Points North

[Points North](#) is a biweekly podcast about the land, water and inhabitants of the Great Lakes.

The show connects listeners to life in the region through carefully crafted journalism and sound-rich storytelling. We want people to be entertained, informed, and surprised by this place they love.

Our episodes have been featured on other podcasts like [Snap Judgment](#), [Atlas Obscura](#), [The Dirtbag Diaries](#), [Sidedoor](#), [Milk Street Radio](#), and more...

What we're looking for in a pitch:

- There's a character (or characters) in some sort of situation, and usually some tension or conflict. Also, you're clear in your pitch about who the character is and what's happening – the sequence of events.
- There are clear stakes
- Something deeper comes to light - whether it's a question or an issue
- There's some sort of resolution
- Finally, Points North stories usually have a connection to the natural world in the Great Lakes region and include vivid scenes
- Please keep your pitch concise – a few paragraphs should do. And if you're new to us, include a 1-2 sentence bio and point us toward some work samples.

The length is flexible, but we typically aim for stories around 15 minutes.

What we're not looking for in a pitch:

- A topic (e.g. quagga muscles are hurting the Great Lakes; there's a ski event that's happening, and I'll go cover it)
- Obvious conclusions (e.g. if more people know about the Kirtland Warbler, maybe they'll help protect it.)
- A tired angle on a story that's been told many times
- A story that reads more like a news report. News reports are incredibly valuable, but not what we're doing here. What we're *really* trying to avoid is an episode that primarily delivers information but doesn't take us on a narrative journey. (And, by the way, plenty of news reports can have a narrative arc, but hopefully you take our point.)
- A bunch of questions. Please don't just pose questions about the resolution/conclusion in your pitch. Identify the answer or possible answers you've found in your initial reporting.

How to pitch:

If you have a story idea we'd like to hear from you!

Send an email with the subject line "PITCH [story subject]" to the show's executive producer Dan Wanschura (daniel.wanschura@interlochen.org) and cc editor Morgan Springer (springer.mmk@gmail.com).

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Rates:

We pay a sliding scale between \$1,000 – \$2,500. The payment rate is determined by the executive producer and depends on the level of difficulty, producer's experience and story length. Points North rates take into account NPR rates and [AIR Media](#)'s guidelines.

Examples of our stories: For a better sense of what we're looking for and the variety of stories we bring our audience, listen to this episode about how [archaeologists are using AI to find artifacts in Lake Huron](#), a story about how a renewable energy transition needs copper, [but no one can agree if mining it is worth it](#), or why [some of your favorite beaches squeak](#) when you walk on them.

Working with us:

If your pitch is accepted, you can expect the production process to go something like this:

- Storyboarding session
- First draft edit: this is a live read
- Second draft edit: also a live read and often a group edit with the Points North team
- Repeat above as necessary
- Line edit of the entire script
- Tracking & mixing
- A mix edit
- The option to write web copy