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On Campus: Apostle Islands kayakers get real-time view of caves from shore



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On Campus



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Kayakers venturing out on a thrilling but potentially dangerous paddle to the Apostle Islands sea caves on Lake Superior can now check conditions from shore on a kiosk developed by UW-Madison researchers with the Sea Grant Institute.

The kiosk is an update to an online monitoring system, seacaveswatch.org, developed two years ago. The online site proved useful from afar but not as much close by because paddlers didn't always have mobile devices with them. If they did, the signal could be weak.

Now, they don't need a device or a signal to get answers to pressing questions: How high are the waves? What's the water temperature? How about the wind speed? The kiosk is installed at Meyers Beach, the launch site for the caves,

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which are about 1½ miles away.

"They can check conditions right before they go on the water," said Chin Wu, a UW engineering professor who developed the kiosk with Gene Clark, a coastal engineering specialist with the Sea Grant Institute, and Josh Anderson, a UW graduate student.

Conditions matter in the caves because kayakers can get stuck and be forced overboard into sometimes chilly waters. Two paddlers died in recent years.

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