



Door County

Door County Crossing (DCC) is our most approachable “out of sight of land” CPC route—and it can still challenge you in all the right ways. The passage begins with a Traverse City departure and a clear go/no-go decision based on weather, visibility, and crew readiness. As we run out of Grand Traverse Bay, students complete the first watch-change rotation and settle into night-running procedures before darkness fully takes over. When the sweeping beam of the Grand Traverse Light drops astern, we commit to Lake Michigan, plot a course toward Fayette, and work within the edges of the Manitou Passage shipping lanes—building real situational awareness for upbound commercial traffic and disciplined use of AIS, radar, and VHF protocols.

The overnight crossing is purposeful, not dramatic: steady navigation, speed management, and crew coordination. Landfall typically comes after a 5–6 hour run, giving students a full cycle of passage-making in a single leg planning, watch standing, fatigue management, and a clean arrival at first light. Once secured at historic Fayette State Park, the training shifts to harbor operations, debrief what we saw, what we missed, and what we’ll tighten up the next day with leg planning. The day is yours to explore the parks great historical buildings.

From Fayette we continue through protected water legs with memorable ports that keep the days achievable while still reinforcing skipper-level fundamentals. The route works down to Cedar River, continues to Sturgeon Bay for a Door County stopover, then finishes with a crossing back to Leland before returning to Traverse City. It’s an ideal itinerary for sharpening passage planning, weather strategy, fuel-and-distance management, and arrival/departure discipline, especially for anyone ready to make their first open-water passage with structure, coaching, and a real watch rotation.



The shortest open water crossing with a potential overnight run, DCC will challenge you before the decision is made to go into the night. The run out Grand Traverse Bay will be the first watch change rotation as darkness descends. As the Grand Traverse light comes into view with its sweeping light, your headed into Lake Michigan for Fayette and into the main shipping channel for upbound traffic coming out of the Manitou Passage. The crossing until dawn and landfall is 5-6 hours total. When tied up in the historic Fayette State Park,

A classic multi-day training passage that blends protected water cruising with an open-water crossing. Depart Traverse City for Cedar River, continue to Sturgeon Bay for a Door County stopover, then cross to Leland before returning to Traverse City. Ideal for sharpening passage planning, weather strategy, and fuel-and-distance management while keeping the days achievable and the ports memorable. For those looking for their first out of sight of land passage, the Door County route is ideal.