

## August-October 2025 Northern Michigan Search Interest Forecast

Author: Dan Shaffer

=====

Below are the search interest forecasts for the combined Northern Lower and combined Upper Pensinsula places for August, September, and October 2025. Note that the possible range for historical search interest is normalized to a maximum of 100 and a minimum of 0, but forecasts outside this range are permissible as these values are forecasted to be outside the historical range.

For July, actuals were higher than last year for both peninsulas, especially for the Upper Pensinsula. Actuals were lower for both pensinsulas than last year, but not as much lower as the previous months' trends would have suggested. Both Peninsulas have trended downward in search interest over the past few years. It's possible that this shows that the downward trend in search interest is slowing. However, we can't conclude too much from a single month, especially given that this observation did not occur for June.

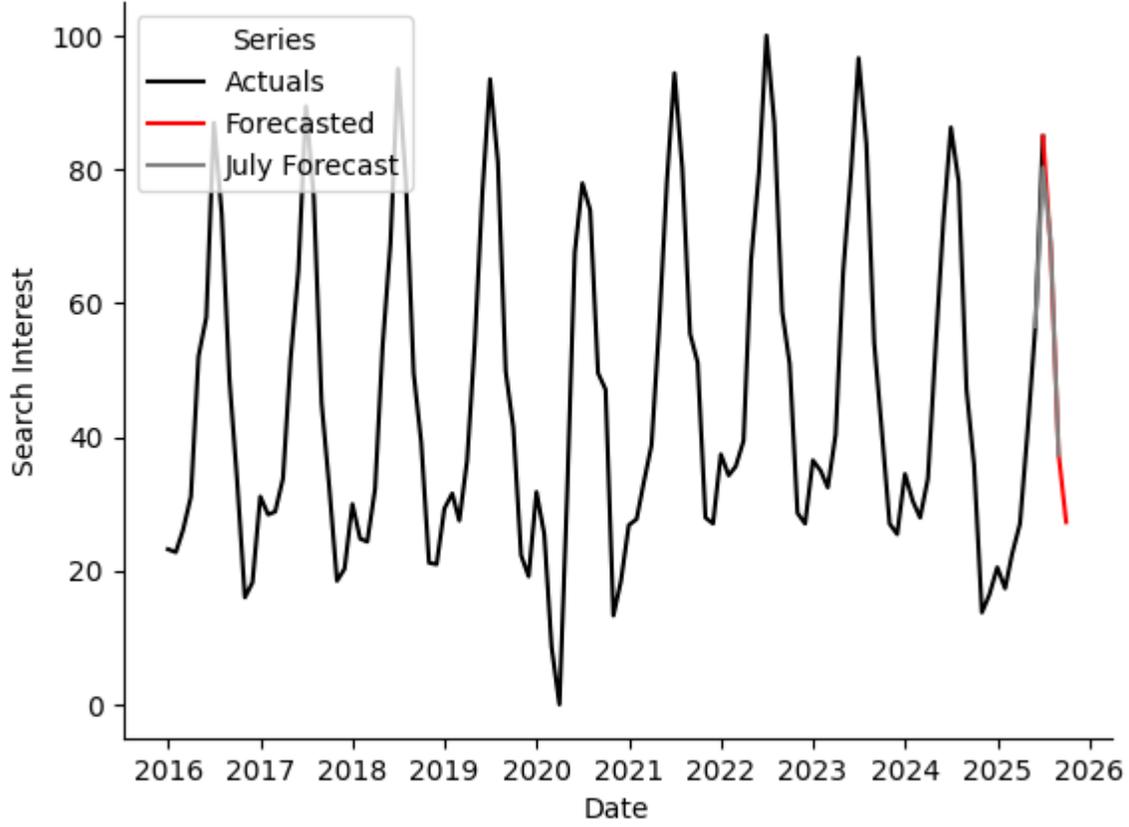
During the original analysis for this project, I found that many places were growing in search interest from other places also in Northern Michigan. This was likely due to renewed interest in outdoor recreation after the pandemic, residents of more populated Northern Michigan areas looking for less congested areas for outdoor recreation and, to a lesser extent, remote workers relocating to Northern Michigan. This trend has seemingly reversed itself starting in 2023/2024. That doesn't mean that many people who gained an interest in Northern Michigan during this period didn't retain it, but they are, at least, acclimated to the area and not actively searching for place names as much as previously.

In response to these trends I have performed adjustments essentially using the last 12 months time trend instead of the average trend over the entire time period since 2017. (Of course, I still retain adjustments due to weather forecasts.) This change was first performed in the February 2025 forecast. In the March 2025 forecast, I have also changed my method to average all place and aggregate level data pulls using my saved data pulls starting in April 2024. This is due to variation in the values reported by Google trends from data pull to data pull. This averaging will reduce this variation.

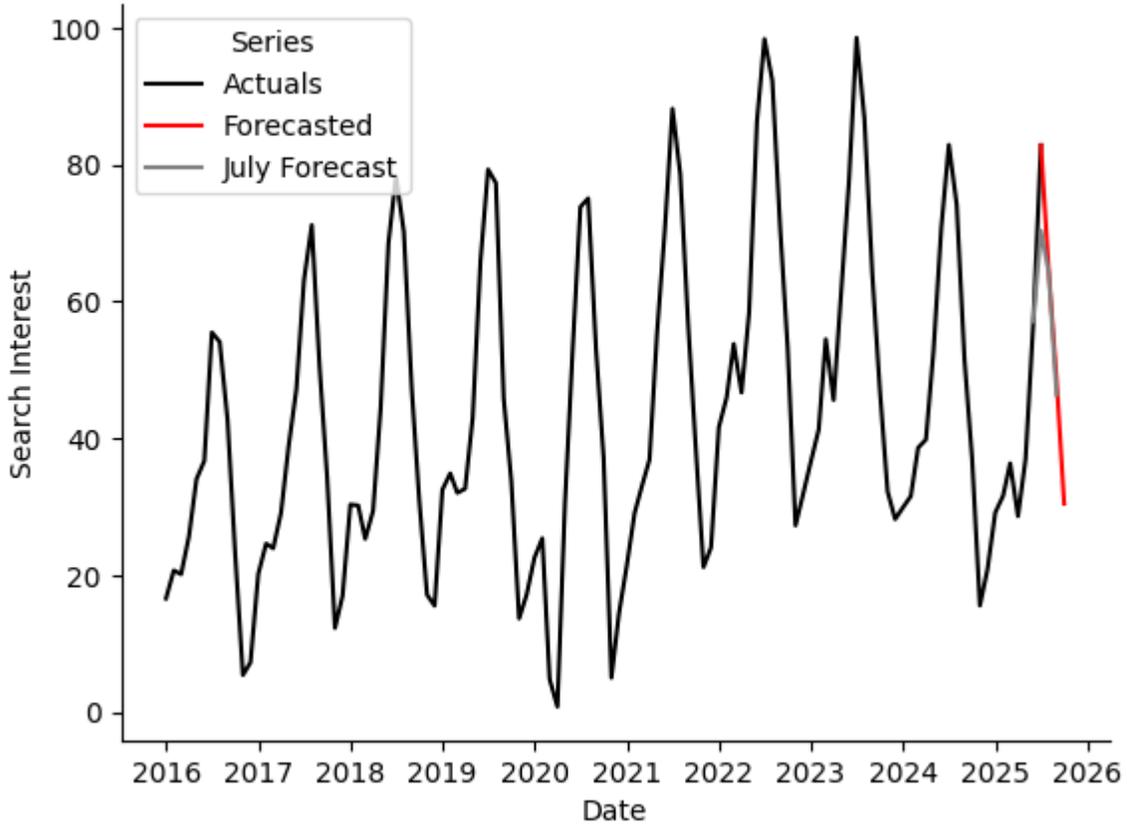
The charts below provide the current forecast and last month's forecast compared to actuals. For both peninsulas, July's forecast is in grey and the current August forecast is in red. These forecasts are very similar to each other.

Also provided are barcharts comparing the average search interest for the forecast months (August, September, October) to the same months in previous years. The forecast is lower this year for both peninsulas. This is reasonable given the downward trend for both pensinsulas. The drop for the Upper Pensinsula is smaller year over year than it was in 2024.

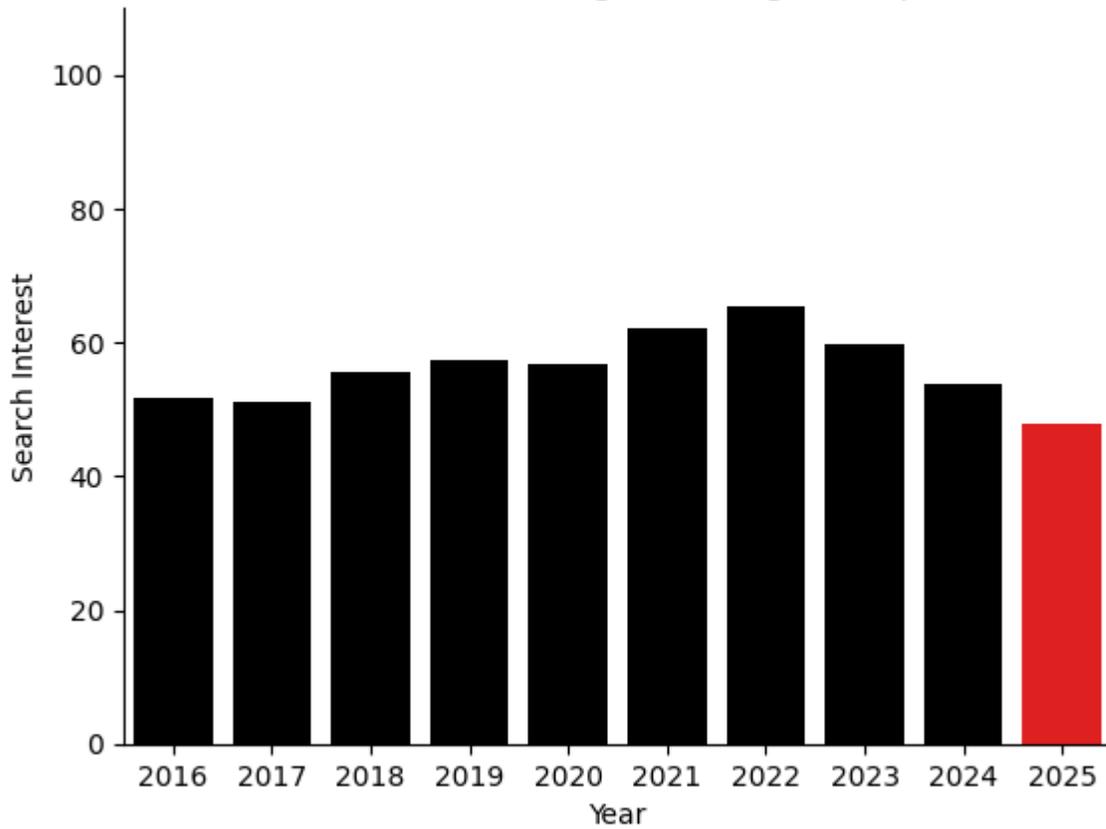
Northern Lower Places Google Search Interest Forecast



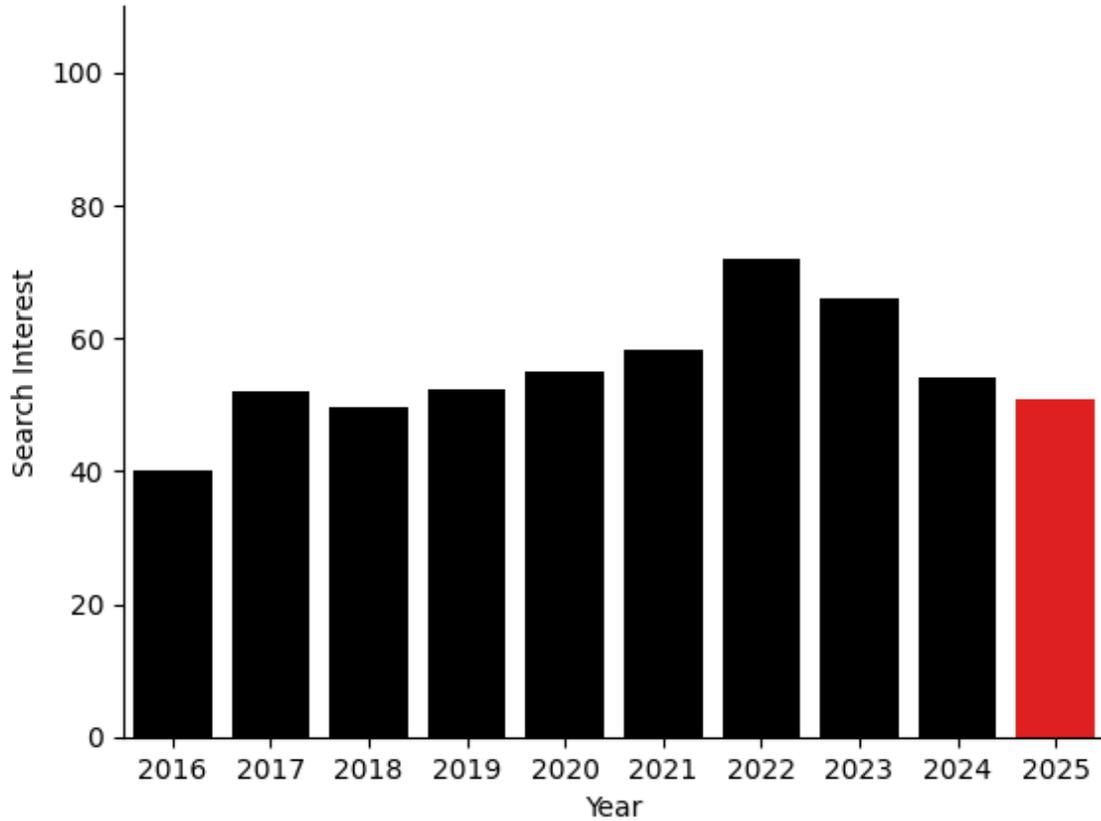
### Upper Pensinsula Places Google Search Interest Forecast



### Northern Lower Search Interest Averaged for August, September, and October



## Upper Peninsula Search Interest Averaged for August, September, and October



The following table shows the top five places that are forecasted to have the highest search interest compared to the same time period in 2024. It's probable that searches for Greenland have been less related to the place in Michigan but rather recent popular press surrounding the territory of Greenland. Two of the remaining places are in the Upper Peninsula. Lewiston is the Northeast lower. My belief is that 'free soil' may also include people looking for free soil in construction or gardening tasks.

	Place	Peninsula	Difference
0	Rapid River	Upper	25.3
1	Atlantic Mine	Upper	19.0
2	Greenland	Upper	15.0
3	Lewiston	Lower	13.6
4	Free Soil	Lower	9.9

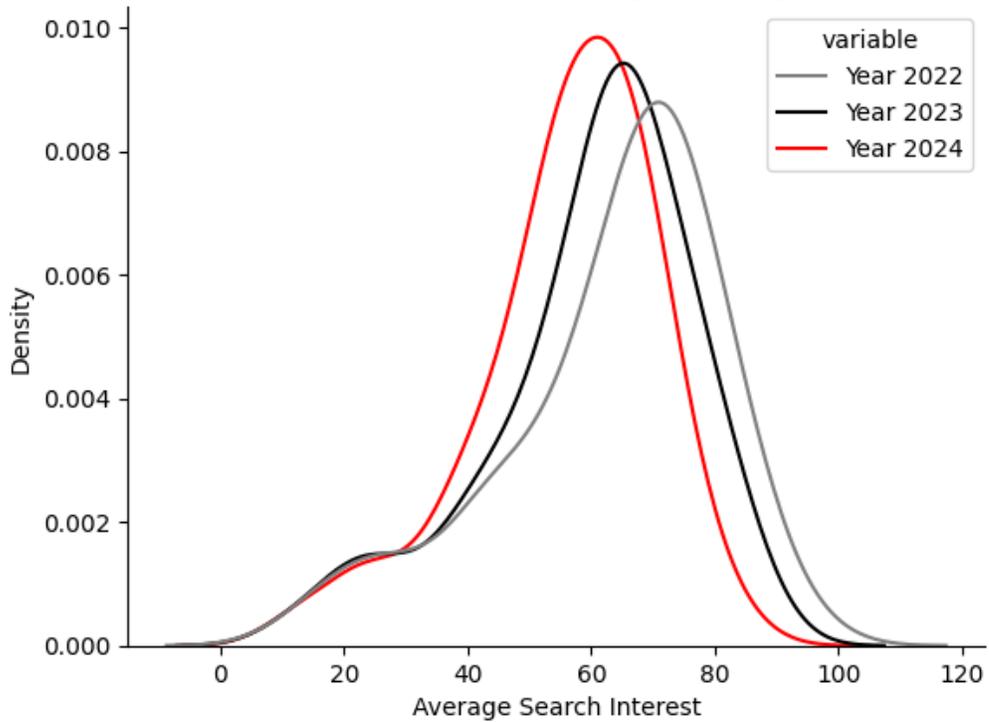
Three things impact the value of the search interest forecasts for each place.

1. The previous year's monthly value for each individual place.
2. While not directly impacting the model forecast, seasonal (12 mo) differencing accounts for the fact that search interest is higher in some portions of the year than others (so previous year actual is impacted).

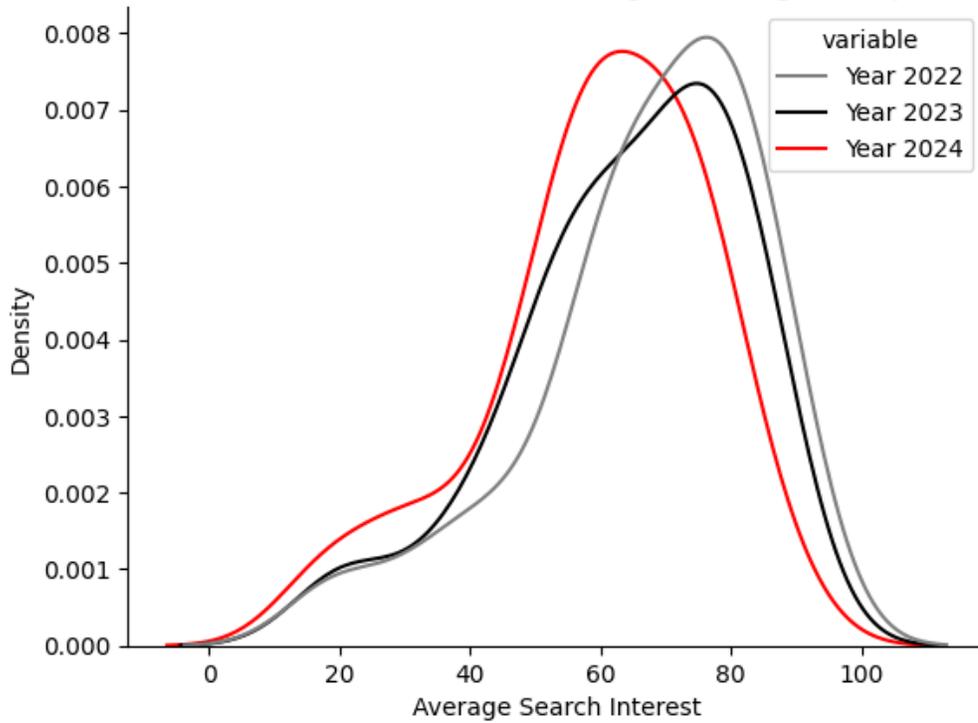
3. Model difference: based on forecasted weather and gas price changes, the model will predict 12 mo changes from the previous year for each individual place. These levels are adjusted for the previous 12 month trend. Then these new levels are aggregated via regression to the peninsula level series.

The two KDE plots below plot the distributions of the individual place actual values for the months of August, September, and October for the previous three years. Note that the values for 2024 serve as the last actual values for 2025. For both peninsulas, the last actuals for 2024 are lower than 2023 and 2022. I believe this shows the impact the downward trend in search interest since 2023/2024.

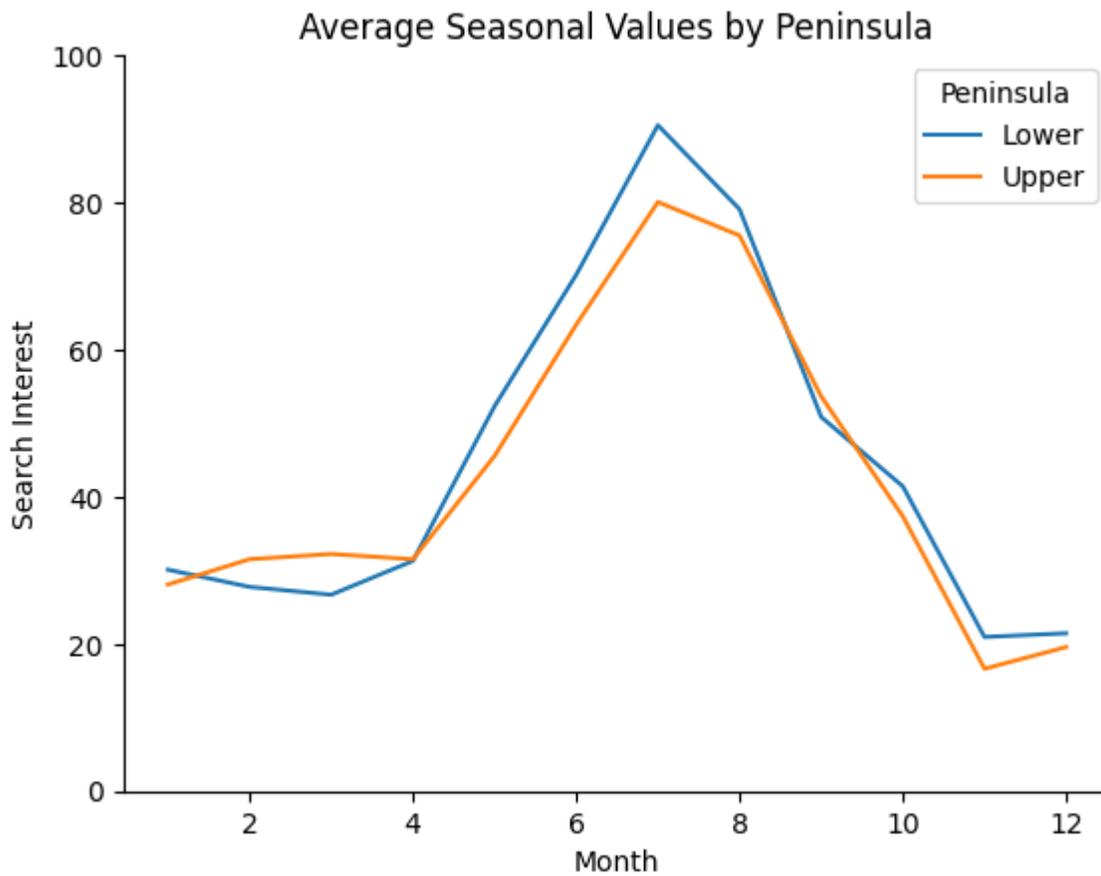
Lower Peninsula Place Level Search Interest Averaged for August, September, and October



### Upper Peninsula Place Level Search Interest Averaged for August, September, and October

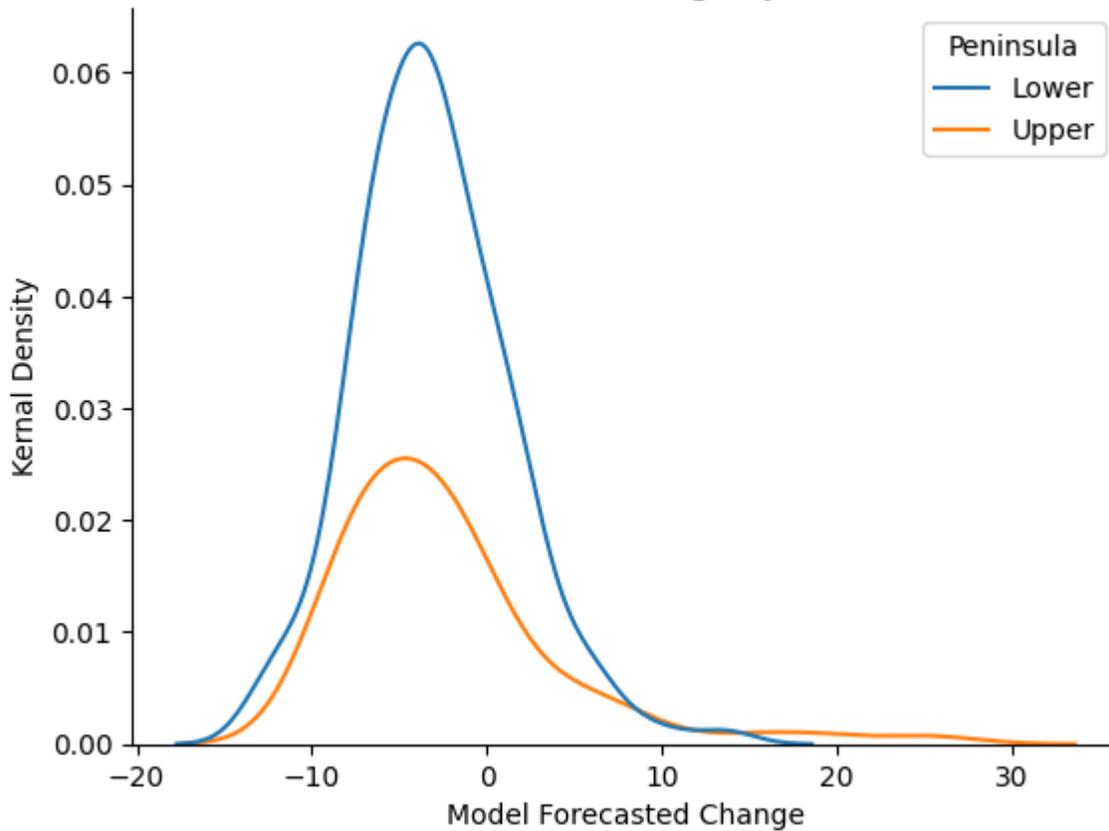


The following figure shows the aggregate average search interest for each calendar month. Both the Upper and Lower Peninsulas have a seasonal peak in July/August with the Lower Peninsula peak solidly in July. The Upper Peninsula has higher values for January-March likely due to winter snow sports like snowmobiling. For the August-October forecast period, we should see search interest in dropping from summer peak levels proceeding into fall.



Finally, forecasts are determined by the forecasted place level change from the previous year based on weather and gasoline prices and are adjusted based on the last 12 months of trends for each individual place. For both peninsulas, the most likely forecasted change from the previous year is now negative, because we are now adjusting for the aggregate negative trends during the last 12 months. (Note, however, that the final forecast numbers by peninsula are weighted by the size of the contribution of the place to total search interest.)

## Model Forecasted Change by Peninsula



---

### Places Impacted by Weather and Gas Prices

In addition to the above more aggregated analysis, I will now look at places that are impacted by weather and gasoline prices. (Many places are not impacted by these factors in the model and instead have an average increase or decrease year over year.) After identifying the places impacted by weather or gas prices, I then divide these places projected to have higher or lower search interest (on average) during the forecast months from the previous year. This is due to both the impact of weather and gasoline prices and the average trend year over year.

For the Northern Lower Peninsula, 61 of 142 places are impacted by weather or gasoline prices in the model. Of these, 18 are forecasted to have higher search interest during these three months than last year. The remaining are forecasted to have lower search interest than last year. These places are listed and the chart shows their yearly average search interest values for the three forecast months. Here, the vertical line signifies the start of the forecast period.

#### Northern Lower Places with Weather Impact Higher Interest than Last Year

---

```
['caberfae', 'leland', 'luther', 'bellaire', 'charlevoix', 'lake city', 'bay view',  
'fountain', 'arcadia', 'lewiston', 'eastport', 'pellston', 'buckley', 'lakes of the n  
orth', 'levering', 'maple grove', 'boon', 'copemish']
```

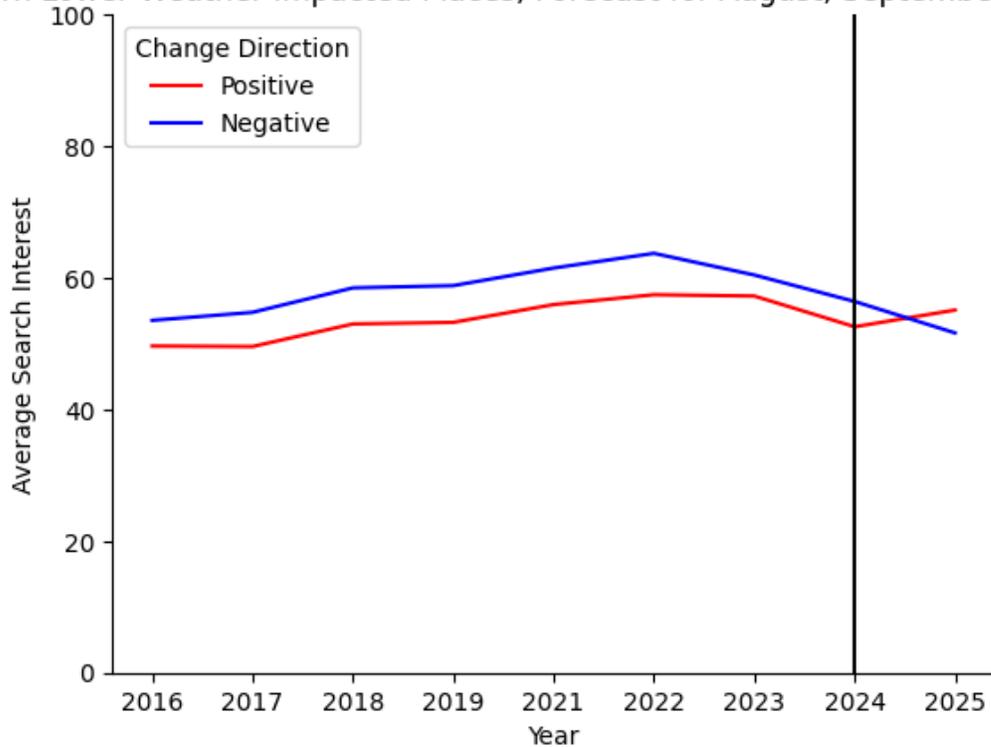
---

Northern Lower Places with Weather Impact Lower Interest than Last Year

---

['sand lake', 'mackinac', 'crystal mountain', 'bear lake', 'traverse city', 'lake ann', 'walloon lake', 'manistee lake', 'tawas city', 'custer', 'hubbard lake', 'harrisville', 'onaway', 'cedar', 'cross village', 'rogers city', 'saint helen', 'cheboygan', 'omer', 'west branch', 'bay shore', 'harrison', 'scottville', 'thompsonville', 'evart', 'gladwin', 'manton', 'brethren', 'boyne falls', 'ellsworth', 'kaleva', 'kingsley', 'central lake', 'mcbain', 'mancelona', 'south boardman', 'oak hill', 'pilgrim', 'lincoln', 'norwood', 'falmouth', 'turner', 'honor']

**Northern Lower Weather Impacted Places, Forecast for August, September, and October**



For the Upper Peninsula, 27 of 72 places are impacted by weather or gasoline prices in the model. Of these, 8 are forecasted to have higher search interest during these three months than last year. The remaining are forecasted to have lower search interest than last year. These places are listed and the chart shows their yearly average search interest values for the three forecast months. Here, the vertical line signifies the start of the forecast period.

---

Upper Peninsula Places with Weather Impact Higher Interest than Last Year

---

['big bay', 'chassell', 'rapid river', 'norway', 'atlantic mine', 'rockland', 'caspiann', 'south range']

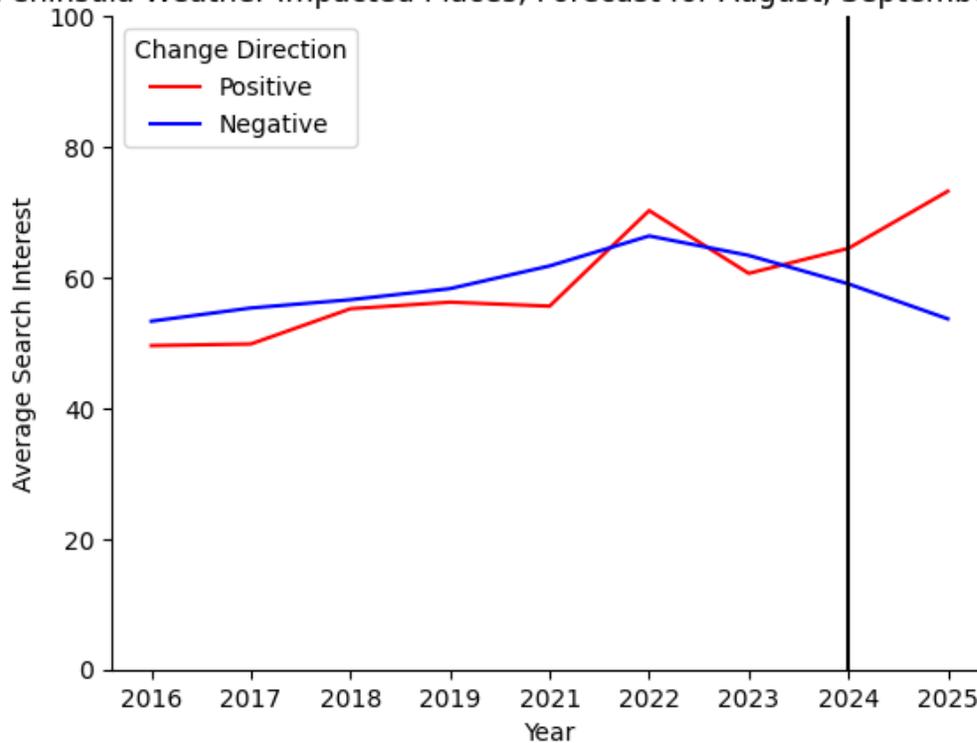
---

Upper Peninsula Places with Weather Impact Lower Interest than Last Year

---

['newberry', 'eagle harbor', 'fulton', 'white pine', 'mohawk', 'bergland', 'l'anse', 'crystal falls', 'menominee', 'iron river', 'iron mountain', 'dollar bay', 'hubbell', 'republic', 'three lakes', 'daggett', 'stephenson', 'covington', 'ewen']

## Upper Peninsula Weather Impacted Places, Forecast for August, September, and October

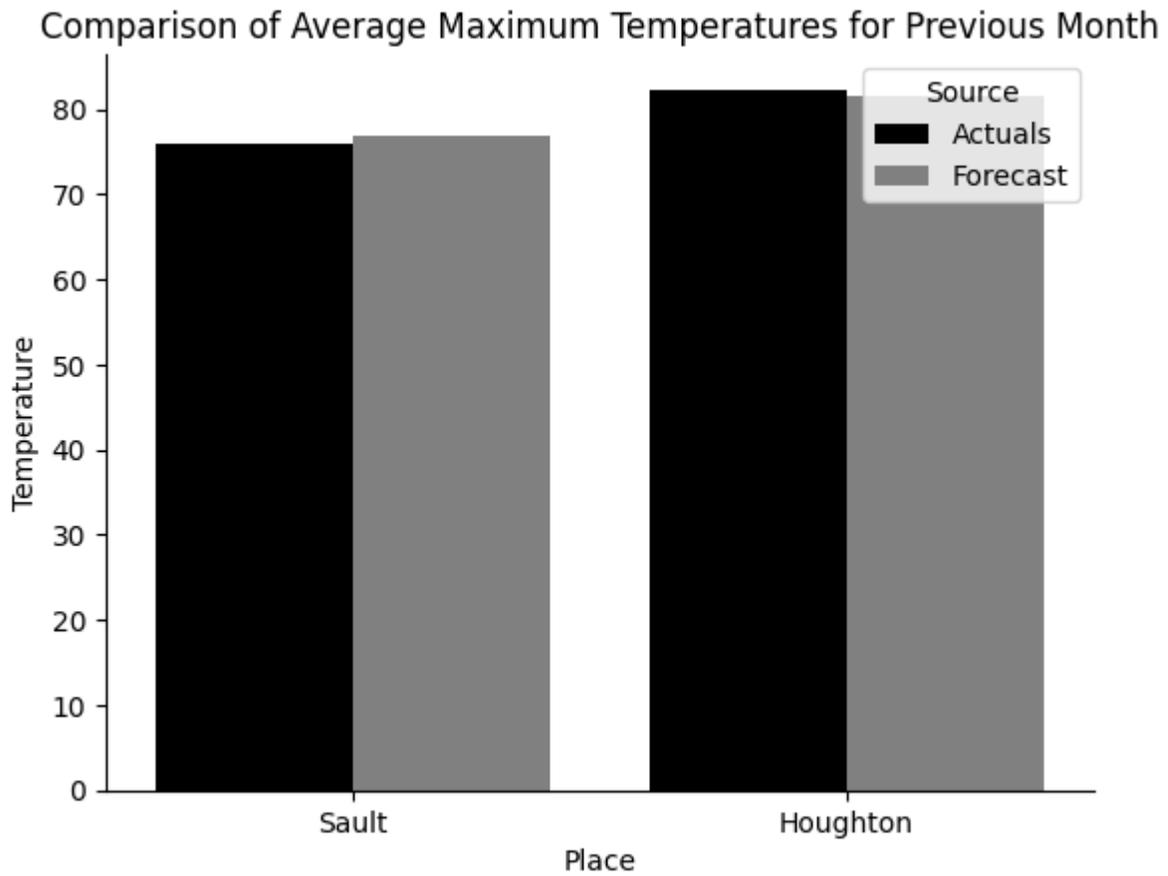


One last factor to consider is my source for weather forecasts, with a focus on temperature. All of my historical weather data used to train my models is from weather.gov. However, I source temperature forecasts from both weather.gov (average of averages) and accuweather (average maximums and average minimums). To some degree, it's difficult to compare these sources because average, maximum, and minimum temperatures are different statistics. Nonetheless, throughout this project, I've found that weather.gov usually forecasts above normal temperatures. To some extent I wonder if forecasts from a government agency are more likely to be high given politics surrounding issues like global warming.

Therefore, I will roughly track the one month forward predictive performance of the weather.gov and accuweather forecasts. First, I will look at the previous month's average temperature and determine if it actually was above historical normals. Next, I will compare the previous month's forecasted accuweather average max and min temperatures to actual values.

For July, the normal average temperature is 67.8 degrees for Houghton Lake and 65.2 degrees for Sault St Marie. The actual average temperature values were Houghton Lake 70.8 and Sault St Marie 66.3. So actual temperatures were somewhat higher than normal for July.

Based on the accuweather forecasts, actual maximums were very similar to forecasted. Minimums were lower than forecasted for Sault Ste Marie and higher than forecasted for Houghton Lake.



Comparison of Average Minimum Temperatures for Previous Month

