

August-October 2026 Northern Michigan Search Interest Forecast

Author: Dan Shaffer

=====

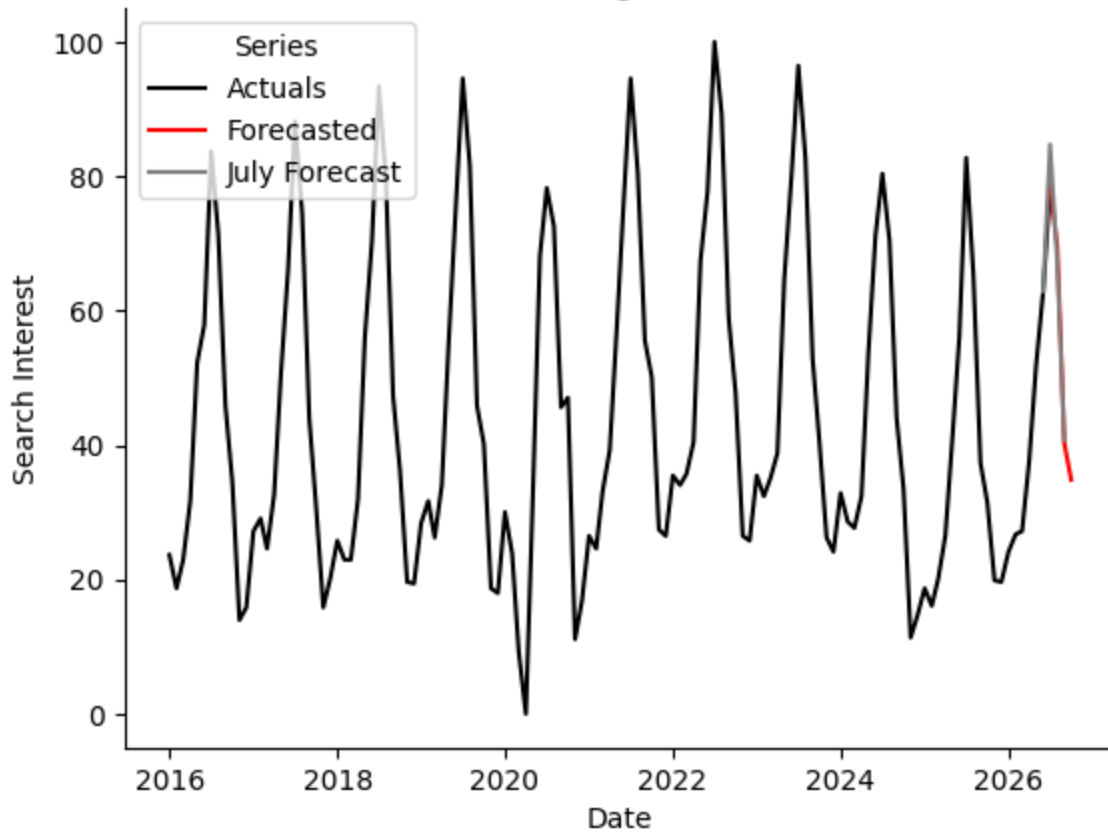
Below are my search interest forecasts for the combined Northern Lower and combined Upper Pensinsula places for August, September, and October 2026. Note that the possible range for historical search interest is normalized to a maximum of 100 and a minimum of 0, but forecasts outside this range are permissible as these values are forecasted to be outside the historical range.

July was the seasonal peak for the Lower Peninsula. Usually, August levels are more similar to July for the Upper Peninsula. Suprisingly, the Lower Peninsula July actual values were a bit lower than last year and forecasted, despite other months this year coming in higher. However, it's clear that the downward trend in search interest is over. The Upper Peninsula somewhat exceeded forecasts with an all time high of search interest.

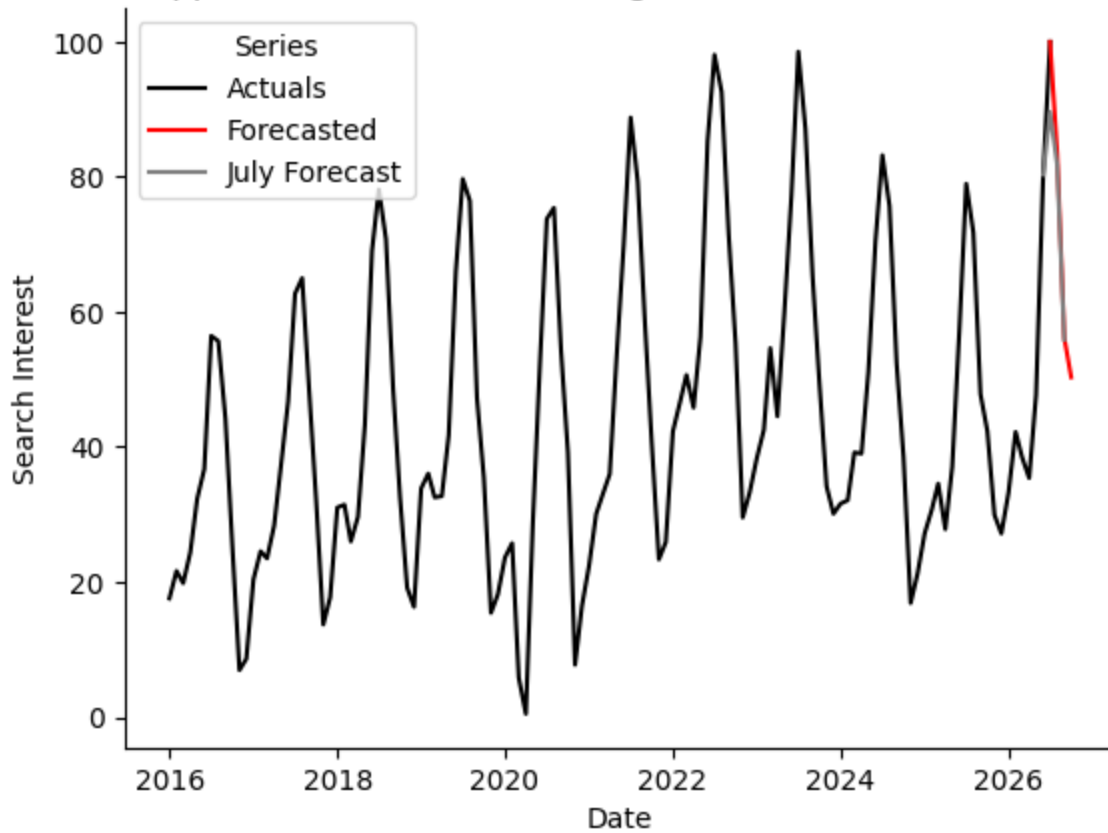
One may wonder how gas prices may affect search interest for Northern Michigan and the summer travel and tourism season. My models do account for gas prices; however, I would note that, during the original project analysis, gas prices had less of an impact on search interest than you might think.

I provide barcharts comparing the average search interest for the forecast months to the same months in previous years. Forecasts for search interest are higher than last year, especially for the Upper Peninsula.

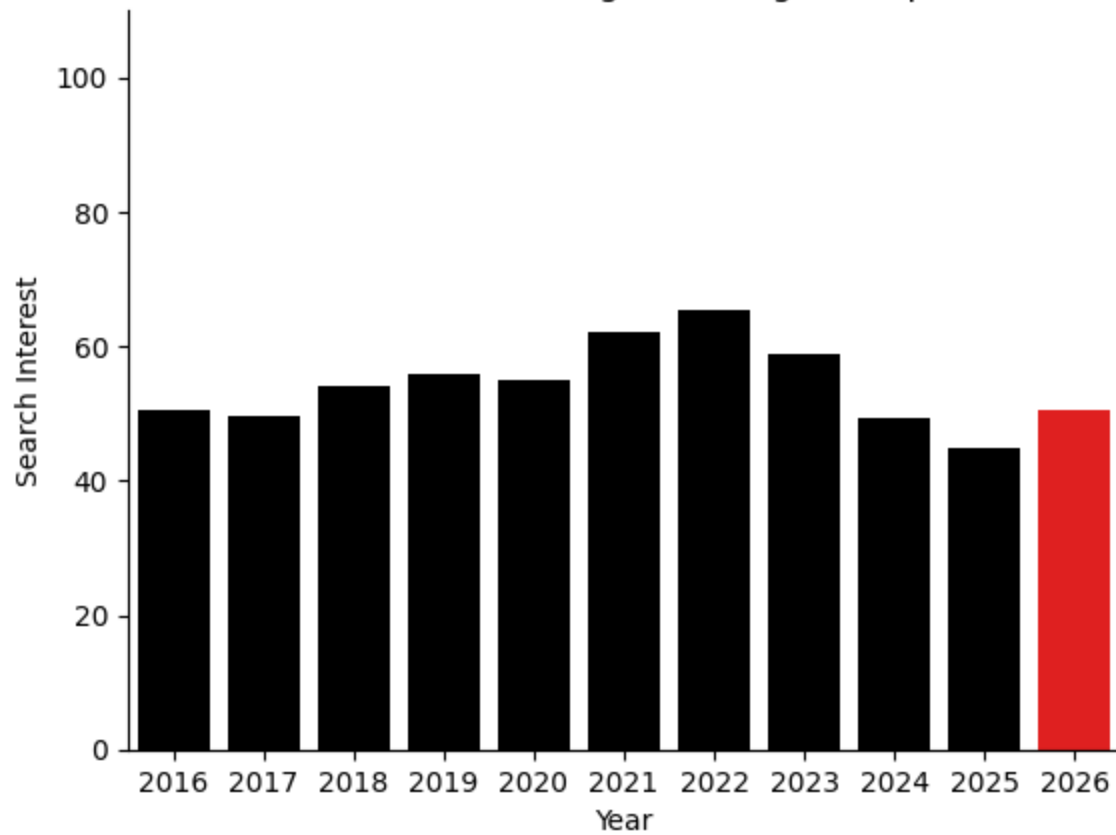
Northern Lower Places Google Search Interest Forecast



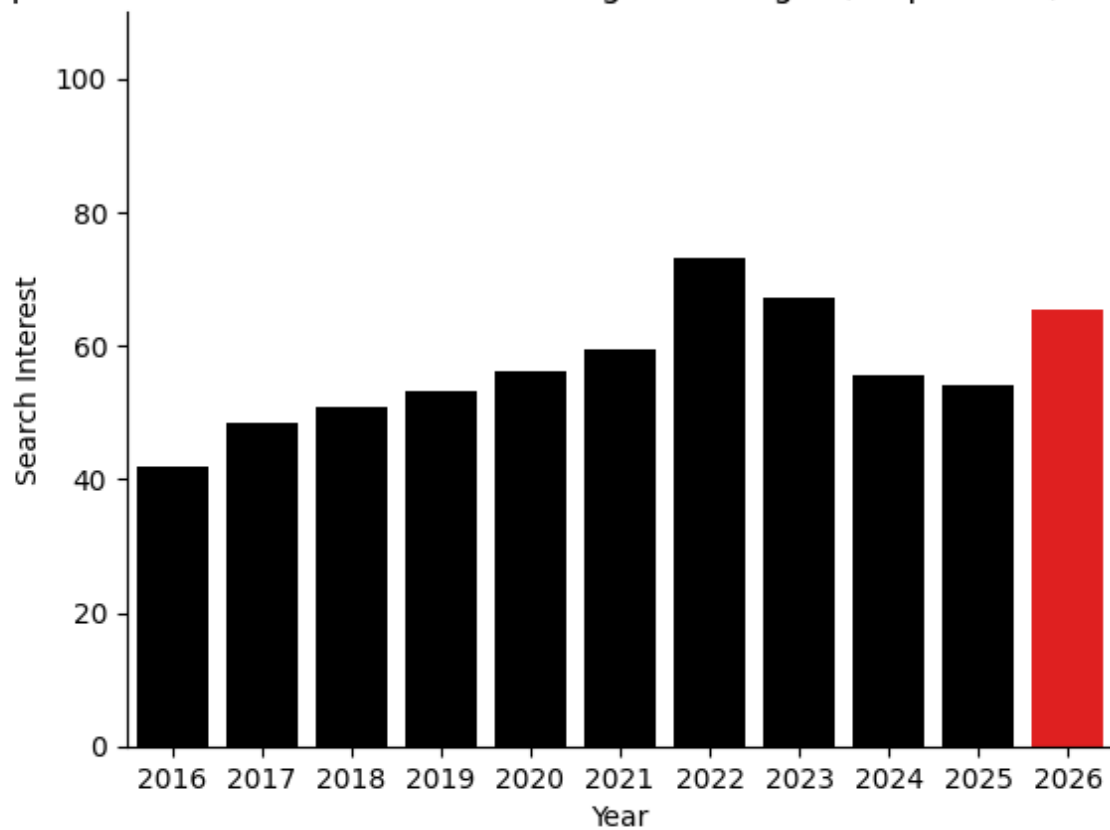
Upper Pensinsula Places Google Search Interest Forecast



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 2025.

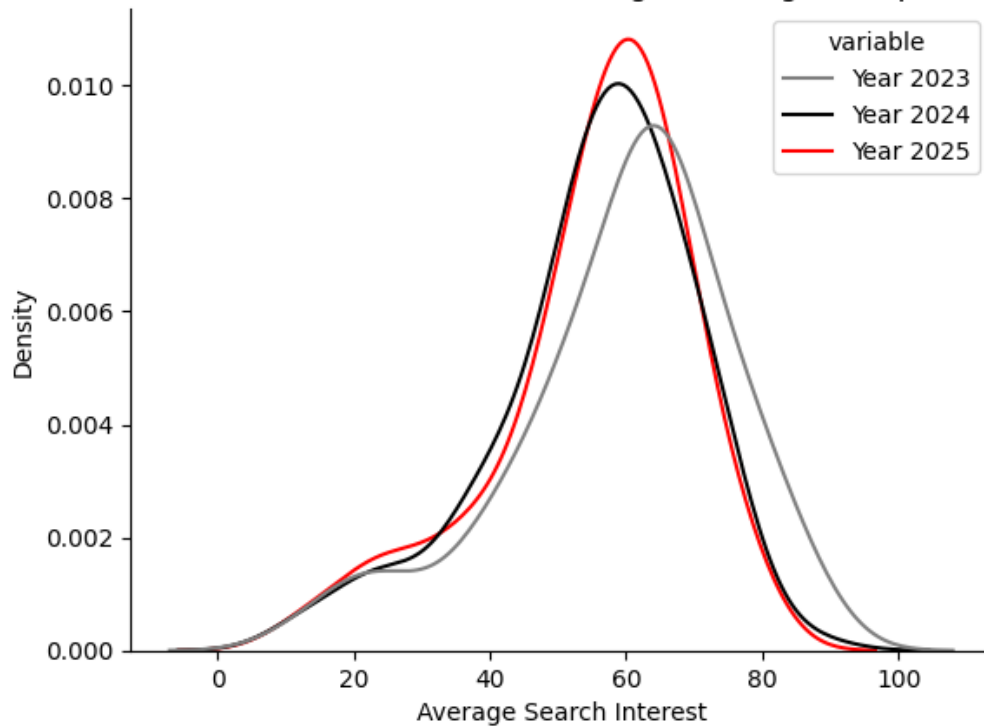
	Place	Peninsula	Difference
0	Copper City	Upper	22.8
1	Lakes Of The North	Lower	20.4
2	Bruce Crossing	Upper	17.5
3	South Range	Upper	16.0
4	Norwood	Lower	12.9

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

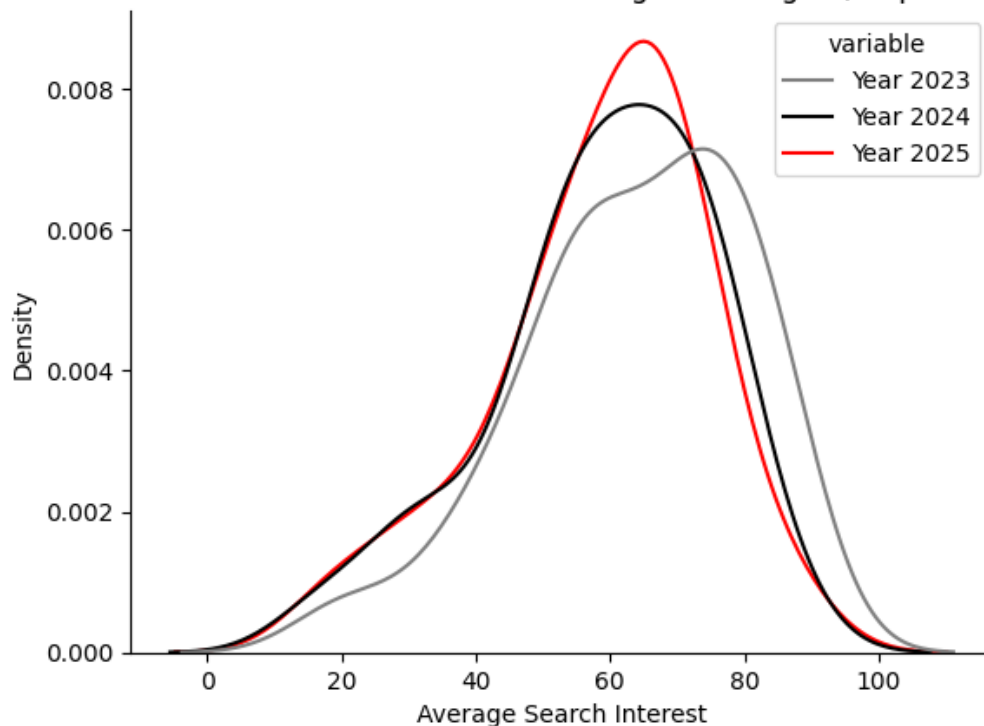
1. The previous year's monthly value for each individual place.
2. While not directly impacting the model forecast, seasonal (12 mo) differencing accounts for the fact that search interest is higher in some portions of the year than others (so previous year actual is impacted).
3. Model difference: based 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 2025 serve as the last actual values for 2026. For both peninsulas, the values for 2024/2025 are lower than 2023. I believe this shows the impact the downward trend in search interest since 2023 which started to reverse itself during the summer peak last year.

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

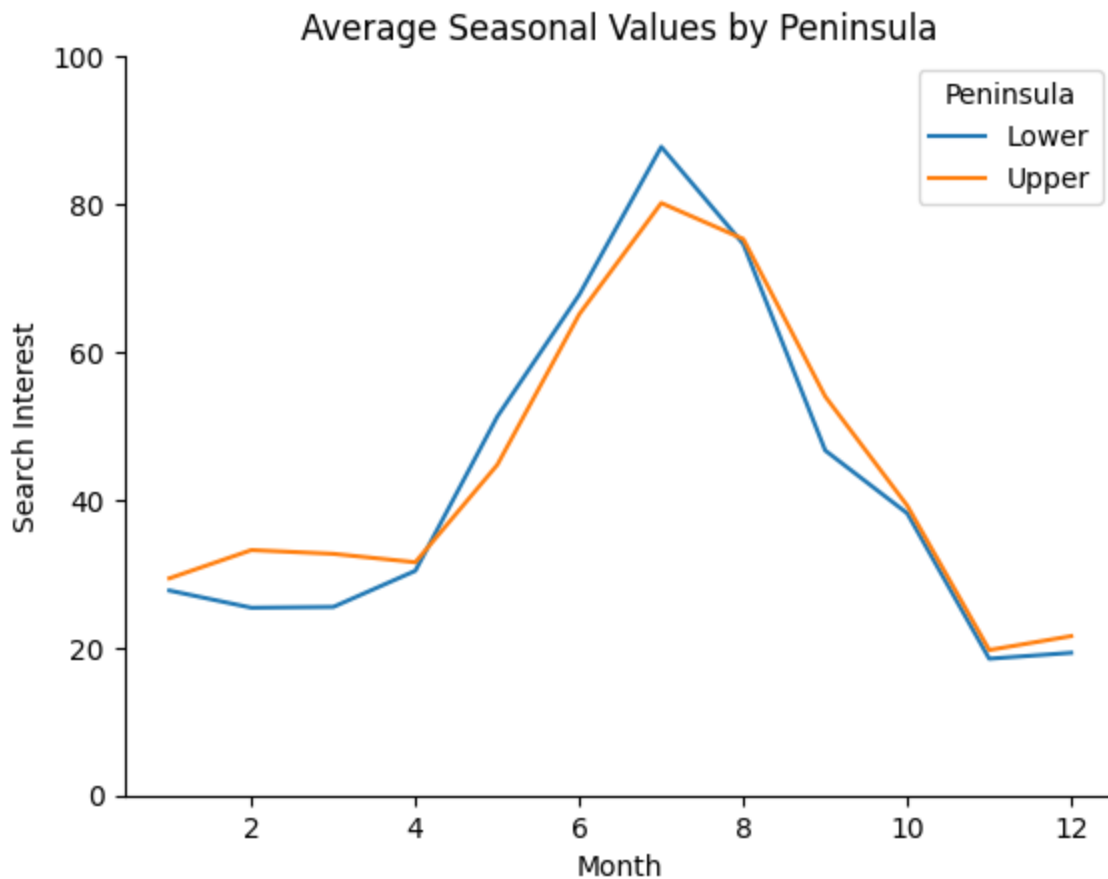


Upper Peninsula Place Level Search Interest Averaged for August, September, and October

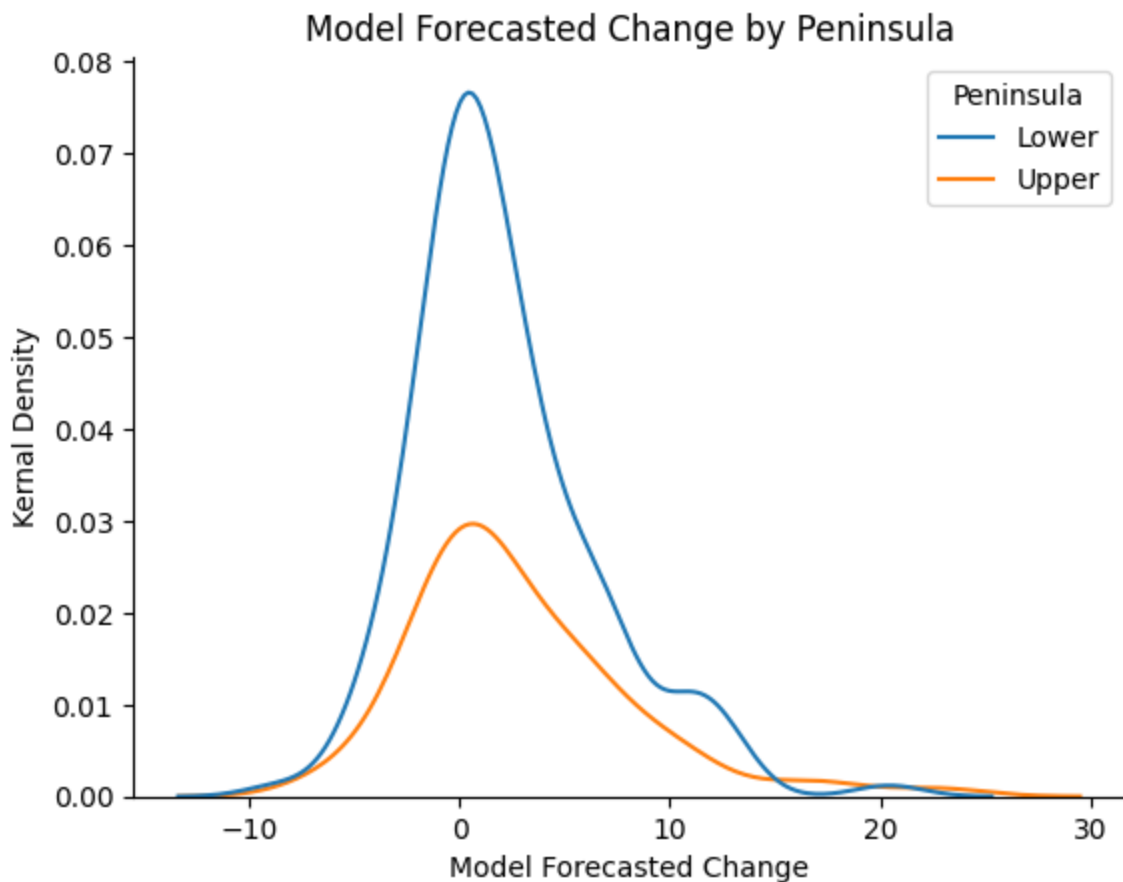


The following figure shows the aggregate average search interest for each calendar month. Both the Upper and Lower Pensinsulas have a seasonal peak in July/August with the Lower Peninsula peak solidly in July. The Upper Peninsula has higher values for January-March

likely due to winter snow sports like snowmobiling. For the August-October period, we should see post-peak search interest.



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 near zero, though the distribution is definitely right skewed. (Note, however, that the final forecast numbers by peninsula are weighted by the size of the contribution of the place to total search interest.)



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, 63 of 142 places are impacted by weather or gasoline prices in the model. Of these, 43 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.

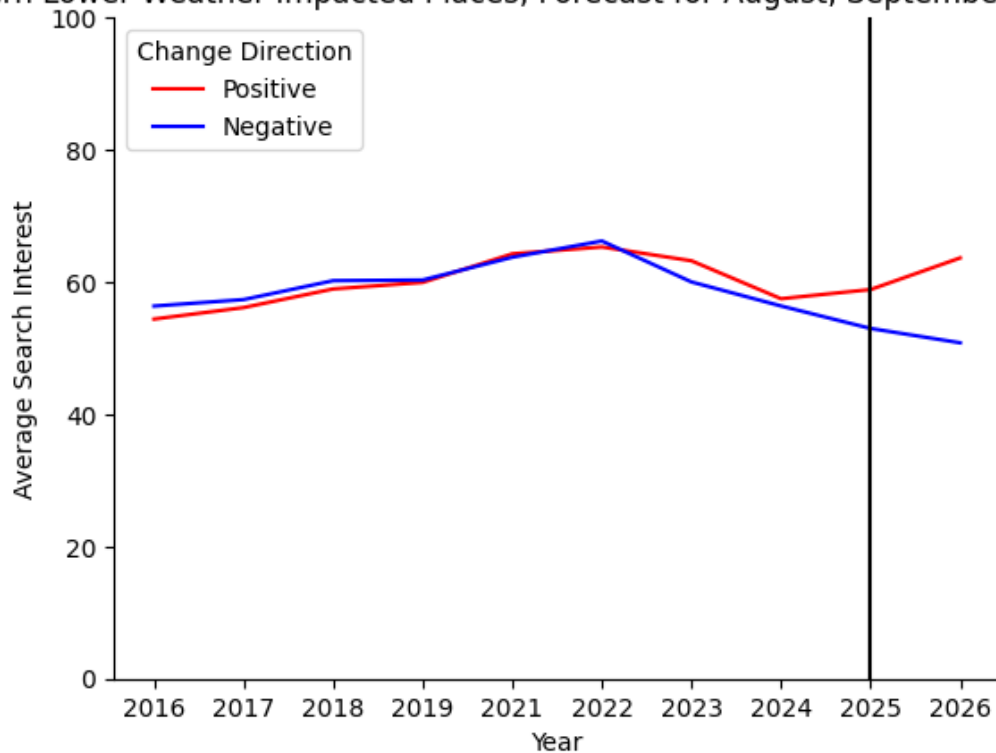
Northern Lower Places with Weather Impact Higher Interest than Last Year

['leland', 'mackinac', 'bear lake', 'bellaire', 'lake leelanau', 'lake city', 'indian river', 'bay view', 'fountain', 'hubbard lake', 'cedar', 'rogers city', 'lewiston', 'cheboygan', 'eastport', 'omer', 'west branch', 'pellston', 'scottville', 'thompsonville', 'evart', 'buckley', 'manton', 'prudenville', 'lakes of the north', 'levering', 'skidway lake', 'brethren', 'ellsworth', 'kingsley', 'central lake', 'wedgewood', 'south boardman', 'hersey', 'pilgrim', 'parkdale', 'lincoln', 'haring', 'tower', 'atlanta', 'twining', 'chums corner', 'honor']

Northern Lower Places with Weather Impact Lower Interest than Last Year

['sand lake', 'northport', 'traverse city', 'walloon lake', 'manistee lake', 'tawas city', 'custer', 'onaway', 'au gres', 'cross village', 'wellston', 'standish', 'harrison', 'kalkaska', 'kaleva', 'maple grove', 'gaylord', 'mcbain', 'falmouth']

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



For the Upper Peninsula, 22 of 72 places are impacted by weather or gasoline prices in the model. Of these, 13 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.

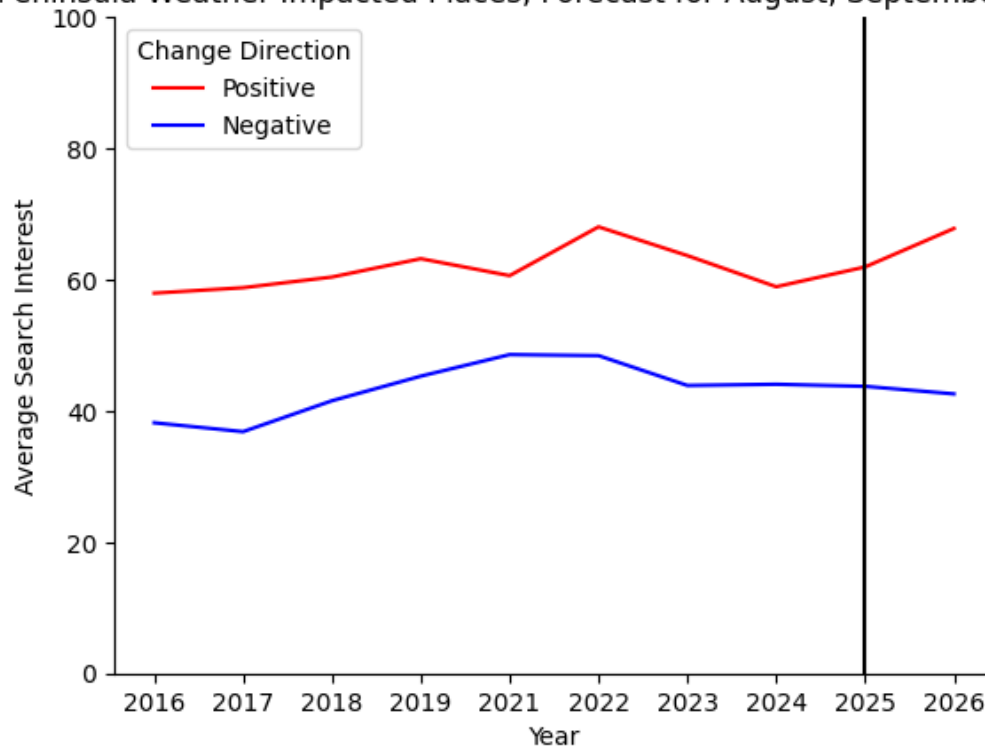
Upper Peninsula Places with Weather Impact Higher Interest than Last Year

['sault', 'big bay', 'fulton', 'mohawk', 'rapid river', 'alpha', 'calumet', 'dollar bay', 'three lakes', 'kincheloe', 'stephenson', 'south range', 'carney']

Upper Peninsula Places with Weather Impact Lower Interest than Last Year

['ignace', 'michigamme', 'chassell', 'atlantic mine', 'laurium', 'ramsay', 'daggett', 'covington', 'ewen']

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



Normally, now I compare last month's min and max temperatures to actuals. However, this month the last several days of July haven't been updated in weather.gov so I wouldn't consider this comparison reliable.