



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
9922 Front St. (Hwy M-72)
Empire, Michigan 49630-9797

D18(SLBE)

April 7, 2008

Dear Friends and Neighbors of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore:

In early 2006, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore began the process of developing a new General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement for the National Lakeshore. We did so knowing the previous attempt at developing such a plan had been halted in 2002 after public opposition arose to possible changes in motorized access to key visitor use areas, particularly beaches.

This time, we made a more thorough effort to reach out to the public, including people in the local communities, to listen to your thoughts and ideas and incorporate them into the plan. We held public workshops and meetings. We consulted with Indian tribes, and federal, state, and local agencies. We met with a variety of interest groups and non-governmental organizations. We sent a series of newsletters and news releases. We started a web forum. We talked with many of you by phone and in person. Basically, we met with anyone who showed interest! Thus far, we have held 61 different meetings with 1,785 people. At each step, we incorporated what you and others told us into the planning.

We are pleased to present the most recent result of all of that input and effort. With this letter, we are once again asking you to tell us what you think about how best to protect this special place for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

In the enclosed *Draft General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, we have provided five alternative scenarios for the future of the National Lakeshore:

- The “no action” alternative reflects current conditions and activities at the National Lakeshore. It is provided as a baseline against which to compare the other alternatives and includes the 30,903 acres in the National Lakeshore currently managed to maintain their existing wilderness character, including several developed county roads.
- The “preferred alternative” values the National Lakeshore primarily for preservation of its natural resources, and for the opportunities it provides for visitor enjoyment of the natural, cultural, and recreational resources in a scenic outdoor setting. Lands proposed for wilderness designation include 32,200 acres, but no developed county roads.
- Alternative A values the National Lakeshore primarily for conservation of its natural resources. Lands proposed for wilderness designation include 33,600 acres, but no developed county roads.

- Alternative B values the National Lakeshore primarily for its recreational opportunities in scenic outdoor settings. Lands proposed for wilderness designation include 14,400 acres, but no county roads.
- Alternative C manages the National Lakeshore so that most visitor use is concentrated in selected areas, with more natural, primitive conditions promoted in the rest of the Lakeshore. Lands proposed for wilderness designation include 23,200 acres, but no developed county roads.

The five alternatives are summarized in table 2. The key impacts of implementing these alternatives are summarized in table 4 and detailed in chapter 5.

This *Draft General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* will be available for public review and comment through June 13, 2008. We strongly encourage you to submit your comments via the internet (follow instructions and link from the park website at www.nps.gov/slbe). Of course, you may also submit your comments via conventional mail. Copies of the plan will be available for review at:

- Libraries: Benzie Shores District Library, Darcy Library of Beulah, Glen Lake Community Library, Leelanau Township Library, Leland Township Library, Library of Michigan, Suttons Bay Bingham District Library, and Traverse City District Library
- On the Internet (follow instructions and link from the park website at www.nps.gov/slbe)
- Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Visitor Center

We look forward to hearing your thoughts and opinions concerning the *Draft General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement*. Comments should be received no later than June 13, 2008. Written comments may be sent to: Superintendent, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 9922 Front Street, Empire, Michigan 49630-9797.

Sincerely,



Dusty Shultz
Superintendent