



Summary of NPS Preferred Alternative

The major focus would be on continuing the park's current management direction. Some minor changes would be made to improve access to developed areas on the mainland and a few of the inner islands, and add new visitor opportunities such as new trails or access to historic sites in nonwilderness areas.

The park would continue to look and feel much the way it does today. A new visitor center would be built on the Bayfield waterfront, if suitable property were available.



Outer Island Lighthouse

Lighthouses – At least two additional light stations (choosing from the Sand, Outer, and Michigan lights) would be rehabilitated and the rest would continue to be preserved at current levels. NPS would continue to provide professional staff interpretation at Raspberry and add staff at one or more of the additional rehabilitated light stations.

Life Estates and Former Use & Occupancy Properties – These structures are currently owned by the NPS, though current residents enjoy exclusive rights to their use under special one-time, non-renewable legal arrangements. If a life estate on Sand Island or Rocky Island expires within the life of this plan, the properties would be made available for public use and access as follows:

- **Rocky Island** – Historically-significant structures associated with fish camps in the Rocky Island Historic District would be preserved and interpreted via waysides or brochures. One or more of the associated docks may be rehabilitated and opened for day use.
- **West Bay Club (Sand Island)** – The main structure would be preserved and interpreted via waysides or brochures. A trail joining the West Bay Club with East Bay would be reestablished. The dock would be rehabilitated and would be available for day and overnight use by the public. If economically feasible, the West Bay Club may be rehabilitated for use as an overnight facility, replicating its historic use. If that is not feasible, camping would be permitted near West Bay.
- **Shaw Point (Sand Island)** – Historically-significant structures would be preserved and interpreted using a combination of park staff and waysides/brochures. The historic road between Shaw Point and East Bay would be reestablished as a hiking trail. One or more deep-water docks may be rehabilitated and used for day and overnight use by the public. If economically feasible, Camp Stella may be adaptively rehabilitated for overnight use by the public, replicating its historic use.



Rocky Island Historic Area



West Bay Club on Sand Island



Sevona Cabin, Sand Island (Shaw Point)



Stockton Presque Isle dock



Hokenson dock at Little Sand Bay



Meyers Beach

The Hansen Farm (Sand Island), which came under NPS management recently, is being rehabilitated. Historically-significant structures will be preserved and the surrounding agricultural landscape will be partially rehabilitated and interpreted using a combination of park staff and waysides/brochures. A new trail will connect the farm to the existing trail network.

Nonwilderness Lands on the Islands – The NPS would explore new ways to encourage inexpensive public transportation to some of the inner islands – such as Basswood or Sand. If successful, a small amount of basic infrastructure (e.g. toilets and a picnic shelter) would be added to accommodate small or large groups who visit these islands. While no new docks would be added, existing docks might be improved, expanded, or relocated to provide better public access. Additional individual and group campsites would be added on Sand, Basswood, and the nonwilderness portion of Oak, provided there was adequate demand and resource conditions on the ground were favorable. Nonwilderness areas on islands outside the inner island range would maintain the current numbers of campsites. To fix serious erosion damage, reduce the potential for bear conflicts, and decrease maintenance costs, the Stockton Island campground would be relocated to Presque Isle, south of the dock complex.

Wilderness – The 80% of the park's land that is in the Congressionally-designated Gaylord Nelson Wilderness would continue to be managed as it is now. There would be no net change in the number of individual campsites or trail miles, but individual campsites or trails may be relocated if needed to protect resources. The Oak Island group campsite on the sand spit would be relocated to the nonwilderness area near the dock.

Mainland Unit – For the most part, the mainland unit from Little Sand Bay to Meyers Beach would be managed as it has been, with a few minor exceptions. A ramp would be constructed at Meyers Beach to improve handicap accessibility to the beach. A trail would be added from Little Sand Bay to the Sand River. A day use area for large groups would be added at Little Sand Bay to provide a place for educational activities. In addition, a small loop trail would be created in the Little Sand Bay area.

NPS Visitor Centers – Provided suitable property were available from a willing seller, a new sustainable-design park visitor center would be built on, or near, the Bayfield waterfront, possibly in partnership with the City of Bayfield and/or the Bayfield Chamber of Commerce. (Park headquarters would remain in the old Bayfield County courthouse.) A centrally-located and accessible facility will provide opportunities for increased contact with visitors to the area, encouraging more people to experience the Apostle Islands. More people will learn about the natural and cultural heritage of the park and its gateway communities, even if they don't get out to the islands. (Architecture of the facility could complement the historic waterfront industrial use of the area.) The Little Sand Bay visitor center would be replaced with a small visitor contact station. The existing structure has reached the end of its useful life and would not be cost-effective to rehabilitate to modern standards. The NPS would continue to be a partner in the operation of the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center.

NPS Operational Facilities – Apostle Islands National Lakeshore is one of the few national parks which leases its primary administrative and operational facilities. Under the preferred alternative, the park headquarters will remain in the old Bayfield County courthouse (leased from the City of Bayfield). Space on the main floor currently occupied by the visitor center would be renovated for administrative use. In anticipation of the expiration of the current lease on the park's operational facility at Roys Point (which includes maintenance shops, dock space for NPS boats, storage, and some offices), NPS would seek to obtain land to build a new facility to provide for the park's long-term needs with lower operational costs and higher sustainability. If possible, the location would be adjacent to the new visitor center on the Bayfield waterfront, providing a consolidated facility. The small number of ranger offices at Little Sand Bay would be moved either to park headquarters or to the new visitor center/operational center in Bayfield. A new (small) ranger station would be constructed at Meyers Beach to improve visitor services (i.e. orientation, interpretation, permits, search and rescue, law enforcement, maintenance) at this increasingly popular part of the park in both summer and winter high seasons.



Apostle Islands National Lakeshore Headquarters and Visitor Center in Bayfield



NPS Operations Center at Roys Point

Comparison of the Key Differences in the Alternatives

| Topic | Alternative 1 (No Action) | Alternative 2 (Preferred) | Alternative 3 | Alternative 4 |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| CONCEPT | Park would continue to be managed as it is currently, with no substantial changes in facilities, visitor experience opportunities, or programs | Focus on providing opportunities for more visitors to have an island experience, while continuing to protect and maintain park resources | Focus on providing primitive, lake-oriented recreation/ education opportunities unique to the Apostle Islands, while continuing to protect and maintain park resources | Emphasis on providing a greater variety of structured recreation opportunities for visitors, especially on the mainland, while continuing to protect and maintain park resources |
| LIGHT STATIONS | Continue existing management, striving to maintain current resource preservation efforts and visitor experience opportunities to the extent possible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two light stations would be restored or rehabilitated, similar to the Raspberry Island light • Part of the Long Island light station would be rehabilitated for NPS staff housing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus would continue on maintaining the Raspberry Island light station • Same as alternative 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as alternative 3 • Same as alternative 3 |
| FORMER USE & OCCUPANCY/ CURRENT LIFE ESTATES (These actions would occur only if the exclusive use rights expire during the life of this plan.) | Decisions on the future of the properties would be made on a case-by-case basis when each life estate is extinguished or expires; structures that are not historically significant would be allowed to molder or be removed; there would be no public use of the interiors of the structures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Rocky Island</u>: the historically-significant properties would be preserved and interpreted; one or more docks may be rehabilitated for public use • <u>West Bay Club</u>: the structure would be preserved and interpreted; if feasible, the club would be adaptively reused for public overnight use; the dock would be rehabilitated for public use; the historic road between the club and East Bay would be reestablished as a trail • <u>Shaw Point</u>: the historically-significant properties would be preserved and interpreted; if feasible, some of the Camp Stella structures would be adaptively reused for overnight use by permitted groups; one or more docks would be rehabilitated for public use; the historic road between Shaw Point and East Bay would be reestablished as a trail • <u>Hansen farm</u>: historically-significant properties would be preserved and stabilized, the cultural landscape would be partially restored, and the area would be interpreted; a new trail would connect the farm to the island trail network and provide access to the shoreline | <p><u>Rocky Island</u>: same as alternative 2 except no interpretation would be provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>West Bay Club</u>: the structure would be preserved and interpreted; no overnight use of the area; the dock would be rehabilitated for public use; no new trail would be established • <u>Shaw Point</u>: the contributing structures would be preserved and interpreted; no overnight use of the area; one or more docks would be rehabilitated for public use; no new trail would be established • <u>Hansen farm</u>: same as alternative 2 | <p><u>Rocky Island</u>: same as alternative 2 but with more interpretation provided</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>West Bay Club</u>: the structure would be preserved and interpreted; camping would be permitted in the West Bay area; the dock would be rehabilitated for public use; the historic road between the club and East Bay would be reestablished as a trail • <u>Shaw Point</u>: same as alternative 2 except no overnight use of the area • <u>Hansen farm</u>: same as alternative 2, except the homestead building would be restored |

| Topic | Alternative 1 (No Action) | Alternative 2 (Preferred) | Alternative 3 | Alternative 4 |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| NONWILDERNESS (ISLANDS) | Continue existing management, striving to maintain current resource conditions and visitor experience opportunities to the extent possible; no major changes to the island facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New transportation opportunities would be sought to encourage visitors to come to selected islands • New visitor facilities would be provided, including day use areas, new trails, and individual and group campsites, on Sand, Basswood, and Oak islands • No change in the number of public docks, but some docks would be relocated, improved, or expanded for boaters (e.g., Michigan Island dock) • The Stockton Island campground would be relocated to Presque Isle • The Manitou fish camp would be preserved and stabilized, the cultural landscape would be partially rehabilitated, and the area would be interpreted • No mooring buoys would be provided | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing transportation opportunities would be maintained; no new transportation opportunities • A few new visitor facilities would be provided on Sand, Basswood, and Oak islands including interpretive trails and new group campsites, but no day-use facilities • No change in the public docks with the exception of improvements to the Michigan Island dock • Same as alternative 2 • Same as alternative 2 • Same as alternative 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as alternative 3 • Same as alternative 2 • Some docks would be improved or expanded for boaters, including the Michigan Island dock, and possibly more docks could be installed • Same as alternative 2, except 3-4 campsites on the north end of the campground would not be relocated • The Manitou fish camp would be rehabilitated, the cultural landscape would be partially rehabilitated, and the area would be interpreted • Mooring buoys may be provided at selected high use bays |
| WILDERNESS AREA | Strive to maintain current resource conditions and visitor experience opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No net gain in number of campsites, although sites may be reconfigured and relocated • Oak group campsite relocated to nonwilderness area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as alternative 2 • Oak group campsite removed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be an increase in the number of dispersed campsites • Oak group campsite remains within the wilderness area |

| Topic | Alternative 1 (No Action) | Alternative 2 (Preferred) | Alternative 3 | Alternative 4 |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| MAINLAND UNIT | Strive to maintain current resource conditions and visitor experience opportunities; no changes in visitor or administrative facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new trail would be developed from Little Sand Bay to Sand River • A small loop trail would be developed in Little Sand Bay • An access ramp would be provided for visitors with disabilities at Meyers Beach • Day use area for large groups provided at Little Sand Bay • Lakeshore Trail not expanded | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional recreational opportunities provided for visitors, such as water trails, water-access campsites; more interpretive opportunities provided • Build a new hiking trail from Little Sand Bay to the east end of the Sand River • No access ramp provided at Meyers Beach • No day use area provided at Little Sand Bay • Lakeshore Trail not expanded | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as alternative 3 • Same as alternative 2 • Same as alternative 2 • Lakeshore Trail extended to Little Sand Bay (possibly including construction of a ~1-mile boardwalk, but no bridge across Sand River) |
| MAINLAND VISITOR CENTERS/ CONTACT STATIONS | No change in existing visitor centers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Bayfield Visitor Center would be built in a central location on the Bayfield waterfront and combined with operations center • Little Sand Bay Visitor Center replaced with smaller visitor contact station • No change at Meyers Beach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bayfield Visitor Center expanded and improved at current location • Little Sand Bay Visitor Center replaced with unstaffed kiosk • No change at Meyers Beach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Bayfield Visitor Center would be built in a central location on the Bayfield waterfront and combined with operations center • Same as alternative 2 • Ranger/visitor contact station developed at Meyers Beach |
| OPERATIONAL FACILITIES | No change in existing operational facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park headquarters would remain at the courthouse, which would be renovated • Operations center would be collocated with the Bayfield Visitor Center on the waterfront • Ranger station would be developed at Meyers Beach, but no visitor facilities would be included. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park headquarters would remain at the courthouse • Operations center would be moved to a new waterfront location to be determined • Same as alternative 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as alternative 3 • Same as alternative 3 • Ranger/visitor contact station developed at Meyers Beach |



Cat Island sandspit panorama



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