



Summary of NPS Preferred Alternative Draft General Management Plan/Wilderness Management Plan

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.

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.

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.