



March 2007

PURPOSE, SIGNIFICANCE, AND FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES & VALUES Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

LAKESHORE PURPOSE



- Preserve outstanding natural features, including forests, beaches, dune formations, and ancient glacial phenomena in their natural setting, and protect them from developments and uses that would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area, for the benefit, inspiration, education, recreation, and enjoyment of the public.

LAKESHORE SIGNIFICANCE

- The National Lakeshore contains compactly grouped features of continental glaciation, including post glacial shoreline adjustment, ridge/swale complex, wind formed dunes, perched dunes, and examples of associated plant succession. These features are of global importance due to their relatively unimpacted state, the variety of features present, and their proximity to one another.
- The National Lakeshore preserves outstanding scenic and publicly accessible resources. Its massive glacial headlands, expansive Lake Michigan beaches, diverse habitats, superb water resources, and rich human history offer an exceptional range of recreational, educational, and inspirational opportunities.
- The collection of historic landscapes--maritime, agricultural, and recreational--within the National Lakeshore is of a size and quality unsurpassed on the Great Lakes and rare elsewhere on the United States coastline.



- The National Lakeshore's native plant and animal communities, especially the northern hardwoods, coastal forests, dune communities, and interdunal wetlands, are of a scale and quality rare on the Great Lakes shoreline. These relatively intact communities afford an opportunity for continuation of the ecological processes that have shaped them.

LAKESHORE FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

Geologic Processes

- Ridge and swale topography resulting from old shorelines (e.g., along the Crystal River and the Boekeloo area)
- Perched dunes (e.g., Sleeping Bear Plateau/dune complex)
- Bow lakes (kettle lakes—glacial origin)

Visitor Opportunities and Scenery

- Dune Climb
- Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive
- Scenic views of inland lakes, Lake Michigan shoreline (Empire Bluffs, Sleeping Bear Plateau, Pyramid Point), emergence from dense canopy to open dunes, to/from the shoreline of Manitou Islands
- Lake Michigan beaches
- North and South Manitou Island experience
- Opportunities for quiet, solitude, naturalness
- Platte River and Crystal River experiences
- Learning about the natural and cultural heritage of the area (glacial phenomena, diverse habitats, human history)
- The opportunity for visitors to understand the complex and rapidly disappearing natural history of the ecosystems that evolved along the Great Lakes shoreline.



Cultural Resources and History

- Three U.S. Life Saving Service Stations/ South Manitou Island Light Station
- Port Oneida Rural Historic District
- Glen Haven area



Ecological Communities

- Excellent examples of plant succession transition from shoreline edge to climax hardwood forest (e.g., Esch Road and Good Harbor areas)
- Extensive intact tracts of northern hardwood forest
- Sleeping Bear Plateau dune community complex
- Interdunal wetlands (e.g. Boekeloo marsh, Crystal River area)

