

**SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE
RESTORATION OF MILL POND AND LITTLE GLEN LAKE CONNECTION
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT SUMMARY**

The National Park Service (NPS) at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (National Lakeshore) proposes to restore, to the fullest extent possible, the hydrologic connection between the Mill Pond and Little Glen Lake.

The Mill Pond is a 5-acre pond with a maximum depth of 6 feet located at the northwest end of Little Glen Lake. It is separated from Little Glen Lake by Highway M-109 with the Mill Pond being on the west side of M-109. Circulation between the Mill Pond and Little Glen Lake used to occur via a small stream and wetland complex. The current connection is via a single corrugated metal pipe culvert (CMP). This 36-inch CMP extends 90 feet under the road and discharges into a small stream that flows into Little Glen Lake. Currently, the CMP is blocked by mud, weeds and debris and little circulation between the water bodies occurs. Wetlands on the east side of M-109 were filled during the 1960s or 70s.

The NPS will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA) with the following objectives: 1) achieving a hydrological connection and wetland habitat that closely approximates natural conditions; 2) maintaining public access through the area via M-109, and 3) retaining public access to Little Glen Lake at the adjacent picnic area.

On August 15, 2013, a letter was mailed to 76 federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, elected officials, groups, and interested individuals asking for ideas on what issues and concerns should be considered in this planning effort. Simultaneously, the letter was placed on the park's website (nps.gov/slbe) with a link to the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website, which allowed the public to comment electronically. On August 30, 2013, a press release was distributed electronically to the 58 media outlets in the National Lakeshore's media database. The official comment period ended on September 30, 2013.

As a result, we received a total of ten comments: two comments from the PEPC website and eight handwritten or typed letters. These comments will help to set the stage for the topics that the EA will address. Public input will continue to be invaluable in developing a plan that will make a lasting difference for the project. We thank all who commented and look forward to your comments on the EA that is expected to be available for public review this winter.

The topics addressed by these comments have been organized into three subject areas that broadly describe the nature of the contents:

Historic and Archeological Resources: The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) indicated that this project may potentially affect historic and archeological resources within the Glen Haven Village Historic District.

Natural Resources: One commenter questioned whether the Mill Pond provides habitat for spawning fish at its current depths or if additional dredging should be considered.

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) indicated the wetland restoration projects (which replace uplands with wetlands where wetlands once existed) are more beneficial than wetland

conversion projects (where one type of wetland is replaced with another type of wetland). They suggested that impacts of wetland conversion on existing wetlands should be considered. Additionally, the MDEQ suggested that any proposed changes to the shoreline under the proposed alternatives should include consideration of impacts from erosion factors such as prevailing winds, fetch and ice push.

Other Comments:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had no objections and commented that Alternative B would provide the greatest benefits to wildlife. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources indicated support for the reconnection of the water bodies and all wetland restoration proposals (i.e., Alternative B) since the Mill Pond provides optimal spawning habitat and the proposed actions correspond well with specific recommendations for the area they offered in 2010.

Several other commenters generally supported a restored connection between Mill Pond and Little Glen Lake. Several commenters specifically indicated a preference replacing the existing culvert with a clear-span bridge or bottomless arch or box culvert, but one commenter opposed “a million dollar bridge.” Several commenters supported one or more of the wetland restoration alternatives. One commenter preferred maintaining the status quo and allowing the wetlands in Mill Pond to develop on their own. No other comments opposing reconnecting the bodies of water or opposing restoring wetlands were received. One commenter suggested that additional pull-off areas on the west side of M109 for safer wildlife watching be added to the proposal.

The MDEQ also indicated that the action alternatives would require various state permits to implement.