

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sleeping Bear Dunes National  
Lakeshore



## Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

### Platte River Mouth Restoration and Access Plan Environmental Assessment



Please join us  
October 15, 2015 for a  
Public Scoping Meeting  
6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Philip A. Hart Auditorium  
9922 Front Street  
Empire, MI

Dear Friends,

*The National Park Service (NPS), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), plans to develop a Restoration and Access Plan / Environmental Assessment (EA) for the mouth of the Platte River in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.*

*The purpose of this brochure is to provide you with information about the project, and ask for your help. This project is important and your input is invaluable. We are seeking your comments on the draft purpose, need, objectives, and alternatives developed for this project, which will be included in the EA.*

*Scoping is the first step to involve the public in the management strategy for the mouth of the Platte River. The NPS needs your comments to ensure that it is considering all issues or concerns and a full range of alternatives for the management of the Platte River. The purpose of the public scoping meeting is to provide the public with information on the planning process and explain how to provide input on development of the plan. Next year, after the impact analysis is completed and the EA is distributed for public review, the NPS will again seek your comments.*

*We look forward to seeing you at the public meeting and hearing your input on this important project.*

Sincerely,

**Dusty Shultz**  
Superintendent  
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

## Background

The Platte River is located in the southern portion of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and discharges into Lake Michigan. Benzie County owns a recreational boat launch located at Platte River Point, approximately 900 feet from the river mouth, at the end of Lake Michigan Road. It is most heavily used in the autumn by salmon fishermen to get their boats into Platte Bay and greater Lake Michigan. Dredging between the boat launch and river mouth has been performed regularly since 1968 by the NPS or the State of Michigan. Dredging occurs after Labor Day, primarily at the sand bars at the mouth. In 2013, budget constraints led the NPS to stop dredging and instead, the State dredged that year. Due to high lake levels and economic constraints, dredging has not occurred since then. A large quantity of stockpiled dredge spoils (sand and gravel removed from the river mouth) is located near the mouth of the river, on the eastern side. Dredging of the river and the continued deposition of spoils on the shore causes negative environmental impacts.



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# Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of this project is to restore the mouth of the Platte River and provide recreational boat access to Platte Bay in a manner that is in the best interest of the Park's resources (such as habitat, wildlife, and protected species) and the visiting public.

Action is needed at this time to restore, to the fullest extent practical, the river and its adjacent shorelines to a natural condition, while at the same time providing recreational boat access to Lake Michigan. A sustainable plan is needed that is economically feasible and conforms to applicable laws and NPS policies.

## Objectives

- Restore natural conditions and processes to the river mouth and beaches to the greatest extent possible.
- Reduce impacts to the Platte River due to dredging and improve dredge spoil management, should dredging continue.
- Identify, minimize and mitigate effects on federally endangered and other sensitive species.
- Provide recreational access to Platte Bay.



## Alternatives

Initial planning identified the following alternatives proposed for consideration in the EA:

- **Alternative 1** – Recreational boat access via the Platte River by continuing or allowing dredging and placement of the spoils on the eastern river bank. This is called the “No Action” alternative.
- **Alternative 2** – Recreational boat access via the Platte River without dredging; removal of the existing dredge spoil pile and restoration of the eastern river bank.
- **Alternative 3** – New recreational boat access at Platte River Point east of the river mouth; removal of the existing dredge spoil pile and restoration of the eastern riverbank.
- **Alternative 4** – New recreational boat access at Illinois Drive; removal of the existing dredge spoil pile and restoration of the eastern riverbank.
- **Alternative 5** – New recreational boat access at Tiesma Road; removal of the existing dredge spoil pile and restoration of the eastern riverbank.

## Anticipated Timeline

2015	Fall	Public Scoping (closes November 15, 2015)
2016	Winter - Summer	Preparation of Restoration and Access Plan EA
	Fall	Public Review of EA
2017	Winter	Preparation of Decision Document
	Early Spring	Decision/Final Plan



Project information can be found at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/platte>

# Meeting and Location

Thursday, October 15, 2015  
6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Philip A. Hart Visitor Center Auditorium  
9922 Front Street  
Empire, MI 49630

A presentation will be made at the start of the meeting and NPS staff will be available to answer questions about the project. All comments must be submitted in writing using one of the methods below.

## How to Comment

Please comment before November 15 by:

- Submitting comments electronically at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/platte>
- Submitting comments in writing to:  
Superintendent  
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore  
9922 Front Street  
Empire, MI 49630

Please be sure to **include your full name and address** with the comments so we may add you to our mailing list for information on future items in this project.

*Please note: Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment - including your personal identifying information - may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*