



General Management Plan/Wilderness Study



Dear Friends,

Over the last several months, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore has been reviewing and taking into consideration what we've heard from you to date on the National Lakeshore's new General Management Plan and Wilderness Study. We've refined existing information and developed new information, and we want to share it with you. In this newsletter you will find a summary of what we've heard, "New Frequently Asked Questions," a clarification on the purpose of the General Management Plan, key elements of the National Lakeshore's draft foundation for planning and management statements, the planning schedule, and an invitation to join us at the public planning workshops on June 20th and June 21st (details are included in this newsletter).

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in the public open houses during February and March 2006 and your comments on Newsletter #1. About 150 people attended the public open houses and we received over 300 written comments on Newsletter #1. We have reviewed the public comments received by mail and at the open houses, and are now moving on to Activity #2 – Developing Preliminary Alternative Concepts.

We encourage you to read this newsletter and let us know if you have comments. You may comment online through a link from the park's website (www.nps.gov/slbe) or you can write to us at the address below:

Superintendent
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
9922 Front Street
Empire, MI 49630

Your input will continue to play an important role in the direction of the General Management Plan and Wilderness Study, and the future of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Please check the park website often for updates. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dusty Shultz
Superintendent
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

INVITATION TO THE PUBLIC PLANNING WORKSHOPS

Please join us on June 20-21, 2006 for public planning workshops at Traverse City West High School. You will have the opportunity to provide the planning team with your ideas for the National Lakeshore's future. We have scheduled three identical workshops and you need only attend one workshop. All workshops will be held in the commons area at the high school, which is located at 5376 North Long Lake Road, Traverse City, MI 49684: (<http://www.mapquest.com>)

Tuesday	Wednesday	Wednesday
June 20, 2006	June 21, 2006	June 21, 2006
6:00 –9:00 PM	1:00 –4:00 PM	6:00 –9:00 PM

Each of the three workshops will begin with a brief presentation describing this step in the planning process, and the expectations and outcomes from the workshop. Following the presentation, the public will work in small groups to craft alternative concepts for how the National Lakeshore could be managed. Afterwards, each of the small groups will have the opportunity to share their ideas with the rest of the workshop participants. We hope to see you there. However, if you are unable to attend the workshops, you can still provide input. See the "We Want to Hear from You" section at the end of the newsletter. And, as always, check the park's website (www.nps.gov/slbe) for more information.

WHAT WE HAVE HEARD FROM YOU

Over 300 written comment documents were received in response to Newsletter #1, which was issued in January 2006, and at open houses in Empire (February 14th), Traverse City (February 15th) and Benzonia (March 2nd). The comments received were reflective of a public that is passionate about the future of the area and its uses. Many of those who commented provided detailed recommendations on how areas in the National Lakeshore should be managed, what resources they thought were most important to protect or preserve, and what they would like to see for the future of the National Lakeshore. Visit our park website at www.nps.gov/slbe for a link to the comprehensive comment summary.

Public comments were categorized into the following topic areas:

- **WHAT THE PUBLIC VALUES ABOUT THE PARK:**

The majority of the commenters expressed what they valued about the National Lakeshore. Many respondents expressed appreciation for the beauty and serenity offered at the National Lakeshore and its natural resources such as the beaches and dunes. Others appreciate and value the historic structures and landscapes. Many responses indicated that the commenters valued the accessibility to the National Lakeshore's resources and the ability to experience and enjoy a variety of recreational activities such as the dune climb, hiking, biking, fishing, and hunting.



- **ISSUE-SPECIFIC STATEMENTS REGARDING THE CURRENT OR FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE PARK WERE GROUPED BY THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:**

- **Access**— The access comments ranged from being broad in terms of desiring more or less access, to more specific relating to a particular beach, trail, boat, or road access points.

- **Wilderness**— The wilderness comments fell into the following categories: general support or opposition, defining wilderness, how wilderness relates to access, conservation, and specific wilderness boundary suggestions.

- **Conservation and preservation of resources**— Resource comments focused on natural resource protection, historical resource preservation, and impacts of visitor use.

- **Development**— Comments ranged from broad statements about overall park development or lack thereof, and specific requests for, or concerns about facilities.

- **Management of new areas, future land acquisitions**— There were concerns about portions of the park being sold or traded, and comments either seeking, or wanting to prevent, expansion of the park.

- **Operations and management**— There were general concerns about management of the park, lack of facilities, and enforcement of regulations, and specific comments about boat use, campfires, trail maintenance, litter and human waste, and lack of fee collection in some areas.

- **Visitor use**— Concerns included effects of motorized use on visitor experience and overuse of the park. Some suggested developing carrying capacities for visitor use.

- **SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO THE DRAFT PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENTS:**

Comments generally agreed with the draft purpose and significance statements as provided in the newsletter. Some comments were received that disagreed with them. Most people supported the statements saying they were comprehensive and well articulated. A number of commenters recognized the difficulty in balancing preservation of resources with recreational use of the National Lakeshore. A few commenters opposed the statements because they were not the exact wording used in the law establishing the National Lakeshore and questioned the National Park Service (NPS) authority to prepare statements beyond simply quoting that law.

- **SUGGESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC ON MANAGEMENT OPTIONS THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED IN THE *GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/WILDERNESS STUDY*:**

Some commenters suggested specific actions, with hopes that the NPS would include these actions or projects as components of the *General Management Plan/Wilderness Study* planning effort. The majority of suggestions focused on access to the National Lakeshore and developments that would support this access, such as keeping roads open and providing more

parking. Suggestions were made regarding recreational activities and areas within the National Lakeshore where activities could be increased or reduced. Comments were also received regarding the protection of specific natural and cultural resources. Many respondents indicated they like the park essentially the way it is now.

• **COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS ON THE *GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/WILDERNESS STUDY* PROCESS:**

There were a number of comments received concerning the planning process. Some of these expressed concern over the length of time to complete the General Management Plan and for the NPS to implement an action. Others expressed concern over including the *Wilderness Study (WS)* as part of the *General Management Plan (GMP)* process. A few commenters requested that members of the local community or specific organizations be added to the planning team. Some wrote requesting that the NPS select a preferred alternative for wilderness that is supported by public consensus.

• **SUGGESTIONS OF ACTIONS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE *GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN/WILDERNESS STUDY*:**

A number of comments were received on topics that the public is concerned about, but that are either beyond the scope of NPS management or are too detailed for the *General Management Plan/Wilderness Study* and would be better addressed under a more specific resource or action plan. The comments will be taken into account by the National Park Service for future consideration but will not be addressed by the *General Management Plan/Wilderness Study* alternatives. Examples of these topics include tribal hunting regulations, fees, pets, and invasive species.

NEW FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following questions were asked by a number of commenters. These questions and many more are in our “Frequently Asked Questions” section that may be accessed on the park’s website: www.nps.gov/slbe

• **How did the National Lakeshore become involved with wilderness?** The 1970 legislation that authorized creation of the National Lakeshore (P.L. 91-479) stated that “Within four years...the Secretary of the Interior shall...report to the President...his recommendation as to the suitability or nonsuitability of any area within the lakeshore for preservation as wilderness...” In response to this legislation, a 1975 *Wilderness Recommendation* was prepared by the NPS, which included 35,060 acres in six areas as “potential” wilderness. It did not recommend any lands for full wilderness status at that

time because of nonconforming uses and the lack of federal ownership. No detailed maps of the acreage were produced. The 1975 *Wilderness Recommendation* was forwarded through the Department of the Interior but was never officially transmitted from the President to Congress.

The 1975 *Wilderness Recommendation* was reviewed in the late 1970s as part of the 1979 *General Management Plan*. The 1979 *General Management Plan* recommended excluding the Sleeping Bear plateau unit because of vehicle use on the



Hart Nature Trail (Stocking Scenic Drive). It also excluded a “public transportation” corridor on South Manitou Island and several areas of private land on the mainland and road access to them. Based on the 1979 *General Management Plan*, a 1981 *Wilderness Recommendation* proposed 7,128 acres of recommended wilderness and 23,775 acres of “potential” wilderness in five areas. Best available information suggests that the 1981 *Wilderness Recommendation* was approved by the NPS Director, but never transmitted from the Assistant Secretary to the Secretary of the Interior.

In 1982 Congress passed an amendment to the park enabling legislation (P.L. 97-361), stating that the President was to, no later than June 1, 1983, recommend wilderness suitability to the Congress. In May of 1983, the Director transmitted the 1981 *Wilderness Recommendation* again, through the Assistant Secretary to the Department Legislative Counsel. It appears that it was never formally transmitted to the President. In the 1982 amendment, Congress also required that areas described in the 1981 *Wilderness Recommendation* be administered to maintain their presently existing wilderness character “until Congress determines otherwise.” *NPS Management Policies* in place then and since that time also require such management, which has now been occurring for 25 years.

As part of this *General Management Plan/Wilderness Study* process, the National Park Service will develop a range of wilderness boundary alternatives. The lands proposed for wilderness in the 1981 *Wilderness Recommendation* and addressed by Congress in the 1982 amendment will be included in the *General Management Plan/Wilderness Study* in the “No Action” alternative (current management) as a baseline for comparison. Other alternatives will present options for varying amounts of wilderness. Ultimately, whatever area is proposed for wilderness in the selected alternative will be transmitted to the Secretary of the Interior for recommendation to the President, through the process described below.

It is important to note, however, that the 1982 amendment requires that areas proposed in the 1981 *Wilderness Recommendation* be administered to maintain their presently existing wilderness character “until Congress determines otherwise.” So, regardless of the alternative selected in the *General Management Plan*, all lands included in the proposed wilderness area referenced by the 1982 amendment (P.L. 97-361) will continue to be managed to maintain their wilderness character “until Congress determines otherwise.”

• **What is the process for conducting a wilderness study?**

A wilderness study is a formal, thorough analysis of lands eligible for wilderness consideration. The study evaluates which lands should be managed for wilderness values, describing various alternatives for wilderness and examining what the impacts of each would be. A wilderness study may identify lands that do not qualify for immediate designation as wilderness due to temporary, non-conforming, or incompatible conditions, but that would eventually become wilderness when these conditions are removed. These lands are described as “potential” wilderness.



A wilderness study results in a proposal by the National Park Service that the Secretary of the Interior transmit a wilderness recommendation to the President. This proposal may be for some, all, or none of the eligible areas to be recommended as wilderness or potential wilderness. During the *Wilderness Study*, the National Park Service invites full public participation, studies different wilderness alternatives, publishes notices in the *Federal Register*, conducts a public hearing, and prepares an *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)*, as required by National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement must contain a range of wilderness alternatives, including a preferred alternative. Once comments on the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement* are considered, the *Final Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* is produced and a Record of Decision issued. Then the *Final Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* and Record of Decision are transmitted to the Secretary of the Interior, who then recommends it to the President, for submittal to Congress.

• **Why does the planning process take so long?**

General management plans typically take three to five years to prepare, depending on the complexity of the park. The process includes numerous public involvement steps; data gathering; environmental impact analysis; writing, editing and formatting; NPS document reviews; and printing. This current *GMP* process also includes a *Wilderness Study*, which makes the three-year schedule more ambitious for this complex park.

• **Are you going to be closing any roads?** Benzie and Leelanau Counties control almost all of the road rights-of way in the park and closure of those roads is beyond NPS authority. No county roads could be closed unless Benzie and Leelanau Counties decided to abandon them. We intend to closely involve the road commissions from both counties in the planning process. The majority of road-related comments received in response to Newsletter #1 supported maintaining existing road access, though several that suggested closing roads. The *General Management Plan* will address these comments by examining how roads support or impact park resources and visitor experiences, and determining which roads are needed to serve NPS visitor or administrative purposes. This information will: 1) provide management direction for NPS-owned roads, and 2) provide information for the counties to consider in their road management and maintenance programs.

• **How did you develop the purpose and significance statements?** The purpose statement conveys the reasons for which the National Lakeshore was set aside as part of the national park system. It is grounded in a thorough analysis of National Lakeshore legislation and legislative history. Significance statements capture the essence of the National Lakeshore’s importance to the nation’s natural and cultural

heritage. They describe the National Lakeshore's distinctiveness and describe why an area is important within regional, national, and global contexts. Significance statements help managers focus their efforts and limited funding on protection and enjoyment of attributes that are directly related to the purpose of the National Lakeshore, the mission of the National Park Service, and the will of Congress. The planning team considered comments received during scoping and again reviewed the 1970 park enabling legislation (P.L. 91-479) and legislative history to develop the purpose and significance statements included in this newsletter. The planning team believes that the revised purpose statement reflects Congress' intent when it established the National Lakeshore.

• **Are there other laws and regulations that direct park management, other than the law that created the National Lakeshore?** All park units are required by the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, which created the National Park Service, to manage park resources so as to leave them "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." Park units are also required to meet the provisions of many other federal laws such as the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act. In addition, there are a number of "special mandates," which are laws or regulations that are more specific to the National Lakeshore. These are addressed more fully later in the newsletter.

WHAT IS A GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN?

THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN WILL:

- Provide general direction and management philosophy
- Identify facility needs, functions, and general locations
- Define NPS roles and responsibilities
- Satisfy statutory and NPS policy requirements
- Identify costs and staffing needs

THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN WILL NOT:

- Develop detailed design plans for specific areas
- Guarantee funding for future actions and proposed developments
- Resolve all park issues

Park planning is an ongoing process, and general management planning is the broadest level of decision making for national parks. General management plans are required for all units in the national park system and are intended to set management direction for 20+ years.

The General Management Plan for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is being developed by park staff and NPS planning professionals with participation by park partners, neighbors, and the general public to address the following questions:

1. **What actions must we take to ensure that the park's resources are protected and preserved in good condition?**
2. **What actions can we take to increase visitor understanding and enjoyment of the park's resources?**
3. **What levels and types of visitor use are appropriate for various areas of the park?**
4. **How can we work effectively with partners (other interested groups and individuals) to protect the resources and increase support for the park?**

Several possible visions for the park's future (called management alternatives) will be developed and analyzed before a preferred management alternative is identified. Evaluating a set of management alternatives enables the planning team to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the various courses of action.

As a long-term vision for management of the park, the General Management Plan will provide "big picture" guidance. The plan will not include specific facility designs, resolve all issues, or guarantee funding for actions being proposed. Future action plans will be needed to address specific activities, actions, and/or areas.

DRAFT FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Every park in the national park system needs a formal statement of its core mission to provide basic guidance for all the decisions to be made about the park. Increasing emphasis on government accountability and restrained federal spending make it imperative that the National Lakeshore staff and the public have a shared understanding of the National Lakeshore's purpose, significance, fundamental resources and values, primary interpretive themes, and special mandates. This planning foundation helps to ensure that the most important things get done before turning to those things that are also important but are not directly related to the National Lakeshore's mission. The following purpose and significance statements have been revised based on comments received.

PURPOSE

Purpose statements convey the reasons for which the National Lakeshore was set aside as part of the national park system.

Congress established Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore to:

- 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.

SIGNIFICANCE AND FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES

Significance statements capture the essence of the National Lakeshore's importance to the nation's natural and cultural heritage. *Fundamental resources and values*, associated with each significance statement, are systems, processes, features, visitor experiences, stories, scenes, etc. that warrant primary consideration during planning and management because they are critical to achieving the National Lakeshore's purpose and maintaining its significance.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT #1:

• **The National Lakeshore contains compactly grouped features of continental glaciation, including post glacial shore-line 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.**

Associated Fundamental Resources and Values:

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

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT #2:

• **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.**

Associated Fundamental Resources and Values (Visitor Opportunities):

- 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.

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT #3:

• **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.**

Associated Fundamental Resources and Values:

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

SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT #4:

• **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.**

Associated Fundamental Resources and Values:

- 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)

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The following Primary Interpretive Themes are the most important ideas or concepts to be communicated to the public about the National Lakeshore:

- The tall dunes and dramatic sweep of Lake Michigan shoreline at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, along with other, more subtle glacial features, provide outstanding illustration of glaciation, and help people to discover and understand the continually evolving surface of the Earth and how it influences the environment in which we live today.
- The spectacular yet accessible terrain and sublime beauty of the landscapes at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore beckon to all who seek opportunities for exploration, discovery, recreation, and solitude that fulfill the human need for inspiration and renewal through connection to the land.
- The diversity of landscapes and structures at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore illustrates the rich maritime, agricultural, and recreational history of the area and provides an opportunity to understand and appreciate the struggles, resourcefulness, and heroism of an optimistic people as they expanded the nation westward by utilizing abundant natural resources.
- The diverse, post-glacial landscapes protected by Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore support relatively intact, but fragile, native plant and animal communities that continue to survive and be shaped by complex natural ecological processes, affording people the opportunities to understand, cherish, and help to save the rapidly vanishing natural heritage of the Great Lakes shoreline.

SPECIAL MANDATES

Special mandates are laws or regulations that are more specific to the National Lakeshore. They are summarized here. More detailed descriptions may be found at a link on the park's website at www.nps.gov/slbe.

1836 Treaty – Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is in the area ceded by the *Treaty with the Ottawa, etc. March 28, 1836* between the United States and regional Ottawa and Chipewewa peoples. Five federally recognized tribes are located in this area. A court case, *U.S. vs. Michigan*, is pending to determine the extent of the rights allowed by this treaty.

Water Issues – The National Park Service owns the surface water of Lake Michigan within the quarter-mile boundary of the mainland and the two islands. The state retains ownership of the water surface area of rivers and inland lakes in the park. The federal government (as any riparian owner) owns the bottom lands of rivers or inland lakes within the park to the center of that water body.

National Historic Landmark – North Manitou Island

Life-Saving Service Complex – The National Lakeshore includes one National Historic Landmark, the North Manitou Island Life-Saving Complex, which is the highest designation afforded to a cultural resource.

Piping Plover Critical Habitat – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated shoreline areas of Leelanau and Benzie Counties as critical habitat for the Great Lakes Piping Plover (a shorebird) on June 6, 2001. This designation, which affects part of North Manitou Island, the Platte River Point, and Glen Haven, refers to specific geographic areas that are essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species. Critical habitat is a term used in the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.



Wetlands Protection – The National Park Service is directed to consult with appropriate state and local officials to ensure protection of the Bow Lakes area (Goemaere Anderson Wetland Protection Act; referred to in the 1982 park legislation).

Hang Gliding – The National Lakeshore has a special regulation allowing hang gliding by permit in certain areas.

Land Ownership – The National Lakeshore contains a number of properties where the previous owner sold the property to the federal government but reserved the right to remain on the property for a specified number of years or for the life of the owner. Certain other private property owners within the boundary signed an Agreement restricting use and development on the property. Lands added to the National Lakeshore as a result of the 1982 amendment (Bow Lakes and Miller Hill) provided the federal government acquisition by donation, willing seller, or with the “right of first refusal” when lands within these areas were offered for sale.

Proposed Wilderness – Wilderness issues are central to this planning effort and are addressed in this newsletter in the “New Frequently Asked Questions” section. In essence, the 1970 park enabling legislation required a review of wilderness suitability/eligibility, which resulted in a 1975 Wilderness Recommendation, which was reviewed in the 1979 General Management Plan, which resulted in a 1981 Wilderness Recommendation, which was followed by the 1982 amendment to the park’s 1970 enabling legislation.

Michigan Sand Dune Legislation (Critical Dunes) – Certain sand dune areas within the National Lakeshore are protected by the State of Michigan from indiscriminant development (Sand Dunes Protection and Management Program, Part 353 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection act, 1994 PA 451). Some of the designated areas are forested and extend some distance inland from the Lake Michigan shoreline.

Minerals – The National Park Service is authorized to restrict removal of sand and gravel if these activities would detract from the National Lakeshore’s scenery (1970 park enabling legislation).

Outstanding State Resource Waters – Certain waters within the National Lakeshore have been identified by the State of Michigan as “Outstanding State Resource Waters” (Michigan Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act of 1994, PA 451). These waters are protected by the state so as to preserve their special qualities.

Road Rights-of-Way – In accordance with the park’s enabling legislation, Public Law 91-479, dated October 21, 1970, Section 8 (b) states “Any property or interests therein, owned by the State of Michigan or any political subdivisions thereof, may be acquired only by donation.” This applies to all road rights-of-way, including those managed by the county road commissions.



Scenic Road Corridors – The National Park Service is authorized to construct and administer, as part of the National Lakeshore, scenic roads within a specified zone (“Crystal Ridge”) in Benzie County. It is also authorized to acquire, by donation or purchase, limited lands for these purposes (1970 park enabling legislation).

Trapping, Hunting, and Fishing – Hunting and fishing are permitted in the National Lakeshore (1970 park enabling legislation). Trapping is not allowed in the park (1991 decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals).

SERVICE-WIDE LEGAL AND POLICY REQUIREMENTS

All park units are required by the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, which created the National Park Service, to manage park resources so as to leave them “unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” Park units are also required to meet the provisions of many other federal laws such as the National Historic Preservation Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act, and to follow NPS regulations and policy.

PLANNING TIMETABLE

We expect this planning process to be a three-year effort, to be completed in late fall of 2008. The following table identifies the general planning activities, general dates, and public involvement opportunities:

	Planning Activity	Dates	Public Involvement Opportunities
1	Set the stage for planning: Review draft purpose and significance, determine issues and concerns.	February 14-15 and March 2, 2006	150 persons attended the three open houses, learned about the planning process, and offered ideas using the options described in the "Public Involvement Strategy" section of Newsletter #1. Over 300 comment documents were received and reviewed.
2	Develop Preliminary Alternatives: (we are at this stage) Identify a wide range of alternatives for the park's future and assess their effects.	Spring 2006 to Late Winter 2007	Attend public workshops to help craft the preliminary alternatives. Provide comments on the preliminary set of alternatives, which will be described in future newsletters.
3	Refine Preliminary Alternatives: Confirm the preliminary alternatives and consolidate alternatives, where possible, to get a set of alternatives from which to select the preferred alternative.	Spring 2007 to Summer 2007	Attend public workshops to refine alternatives. Provide feedback on ways to improve the alternatives (or a combination of alternatives), and suggestions for the preferred alternative.
4	Prepare Draft General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement: Prepare draft describing the management alternatives and impacts; distribute to the public.	Fall 2007 to Spring 2008	Provide written comments on the draft document. Attend public meetings/hearings and provide comments.
5	Revise and prepare Final General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement: Analyze comments, prepare responses to comments, revise draft document, distribute to the public.	Summer 2008 to Fall 2008	
6	Implement the approved plan: Prepare and issue Record of Decision and implement plan as funding allows.	Winter 2008 and beyond	Stay involved throughout the implementation of the approved plan. Let the park know what you think.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

In this phase of the process (step 2 in the above timetable), we are asking you to help us begin developing preliminary alternative concepts for how the National Lakeshore may be managed during the next 20+ years. We are also asking you to review the draft Foundation Statement (purpose, significance, fundamental resources, primary interpretive themes, and special mandates).

We encourage you to review documents and comment electronically. If you have accessed this newsletter through a link from the park's website at www.nps.gov/slbe, you may comment at that site. If you have received a paper copy of this newsletter, you are welcome to mail comments directly to the park or use the park's website and link to the document. Our mailing address is: Superintendent, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 9922 Front Street, Empire, MI 49630. Include your email address if you wish to be notified by email of future documents. Your comments via mail or email would be most helpful if received by us no later than **July 7, 2006**.

The next newsletter (Newsletter #3) is planned for winter 2006-2007. The park website will continue to include "Frequently Asked Questions" and other information about the planning effort. Please continue to check the park website for updated information on the planning process.

It is the practice of the National Park Service to make all comments, including names and addresses of respondents who provide that information, available for public review following the conclusion of the National Environmental Policy Act compliance process. Individuals may request that the National Park Service withhold their name and/or address from public disclosure. If you wish to do this, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. Commenters using the website can make this request by checking the box "keep my contact information private." The National Park Service will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law, but you should be aware that the National Park Service may still be required to disclose your name and address pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.



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