

Environmental Assessment Finding of No Significant Impact June 30, 2008



National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior



Port Oneida
Rural Historic District

Sleeping Bear Dunes
National Lakeshore - Michigan

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**



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Empire, Michigan

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June 24, 2008

BACKGROUND

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (Sleeping Bear Dunes) is located in Michigan's northwestern Lower Peninsula, in Leelanau and Benzie Counties. Situated 25 miles west of Traverse City, Sleeping Bear Dunes encompasses 35 miles of Lake Michigan's eastern coastline, as well as North and South Manitou Islands. Sleeping Bear Dunes can be accessed by US-31, M-72, and M-22.

Sleeping Bear Dunes was established by Public Law 91-479 on October 21, 1970, which states that "Congress finds that certain outstanding natural features, including forests, beaches, dune formations, and ancient glacial phenomena, exist along the mainland shore of Lake Michigan and on certain nearby islands in Benzie and Leelanau Counties, Michigan." In addition to the natural features, Sleeping Bear Dunes is home to many cultural features, including an 1871 lighthouse, three former Life-Saving Service/Coast Guard Stations and Port Oneida, an extensive rural farm district.

Port Oneida Rural Historic District is representative of late 19th and early 20th century farms of the Midwest. This area is the largest intact agricultural district in the National Park System and the largest historic agricultural district in public ownership in the country. Port Oneida was added to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1997 at the state level of significance. In 1999, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) indicated their concurrence that Port Oneida met the national level of significance. NRHP sites are determined to be significant at either the local, state, or national level. The level of significance is related to the geographic level or "scale" of the property's historic context.

Port Oneida includes 19 farms, 14 of which are owned by the National Park Service (NPS), and over 3,400 acres of land. Port Oneida presents an excellent opportunity to preserve a rapidly disappearing landscape associated with the heartland of America. The potential exists for visitors to be immersed in an American farm landscape for both recreation- and resource-based educational activities. This experience would provide an opportunity to understand and appreciate a landscape and lifestyle at the heart of rural life and cultural heritage.

Completion of this project would upgrade the condition of selected structures and selected landscape features so they can be utilized by the NPS or partners for operations. It would provide additional interpretive activities to enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of the area through the addition of a visitor contact station. Selected historic structures and landscape features would be stabilized, visitor use needs met, and natural resources protected.

The need for the proposed project is driven by the deterioration of cultural resources within the Port Oneida Rural Historic District. Further deterioration would create health and safety hazards and result

in the eventual loss of these cultural resources. Approximately 35 of the 110 historic structures in Port Oneida are in poor to fair condition and require immediate work. Cultural landscapes in this historic district are being invaded with exotic plant species. Vegetative features such as windbreaks, orchards and garden areas are deteriorating.

Additionally, Port Oneida is experiencing increased visitation and currently lacks visitor support services. Basic facilities such as public restrooms, a visitor contact station, picnic shelters or adequate parking areas are non-existent. Social trails created between farms and the beach areas are causing natural and cultural resource damage and beach erosion. Visitors frequently park along road shoulders, creating a safety hazard to motorists and pedestrians.

The following objectives were identified by NPS staff in initial project planning phases and must be achieved for the project to be considered a success.

1. Stabilize and rehabilitate selected historic structures and cultural landscapes.
2. Provide a visitor contact station to enhance visitor access, recreational opportunities and improved circulation (parking, pull-offs, trails).
3. Provide employee housing within Port Oneida.

SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

In the Environmental Assessment, Alternative 5 was determined to be both the Environmentally Preferable and the NPS Preferred Alternative. This alternative involved the use of the Kelderhouse farm for the visitor contact station and the Carsten Burfiend farm for staff housing. Following the public comment period, the alternatives were reviewed and evaluated based on the comments received. The project team evaluated all the alternatives for the visitor contact station and the staff housing. It was confirmed that using the Kelderhouse farm for a visitor contact station would have the fewest impacts and still provide the greatest benefits to Sleeping Bear Dunes and its visitors. However, the additional parking and beach access being provided at the Carsten Burfiend farm would create a lack privacy for the employees, consequently it was determined that the staff housing should be located at the Goffar farm. The residence on the Goffar farm would meet the capacity needs, but would also provide privacy for employees.

Therefore, under the Selected Alternative, a new visitor contact station will be provided at the Kelderhouse farm, as identified in Alternative 5, but with staff housing now at the Goffar farm. The Kelderhouse farm, located on the east side of Port Oneida Road just north of M-22, consists of a home and four outbuildings: chicken coop, two sheds, and a privy. The visitor contact station site would include parking for 10 to 20 cars, restrooms, an outside gathering place for small groups, and a picnic area. The visitor contact station would be located in the house and would include internal and external interpretive graphics, a staff desk, and storage. Informational and orientation materials would also be provided. Restrooms would be located in one of the outbuildings.

The Kelderhouse residence would be rehabilitated for its intended new use. Implementation of the selected alternative at the visitor contact station would include rehabilitation of exterior and interior features and spaces; historically sensitive modifications to meet functional requirements; modern mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems; and accessibility for disabled individuals, as needed.

Landscape work at the visitor contact station site includes the restoration of orchards, ornamental shrub plantings, sugar maple rows, and windbreaks. Other work includes rehabilitation of fence rows, paths, drives, and sidewalks.

Circulation within Port Oneida would be enhanced by providing additional parking, roadside pull-offs, and an improved trail system. New parking for six to eight cars would be provided in the vicinity of

the Eckhert and Ole Olsen farms on Basch Road and at the Carsten Burfiend farm on Port Oneida Road.

Staff housing would be located at the Goffar farm. This home is currently under a reservation of use and occupancy that will expire in 2011. This 2,100 square foot house has four bedrooms and two baths. The house would be rehabilitated for its new use as staff housing. Rehabilitation would include exterior and interior rehabilitation and historically sensitive interior modifications to accommodate tenants; and modern mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems to permit year-round occupancy, as needed.

Additional structures within Port Oneida would be stabilized as part of this alternative. The selection of structures for stabilization would be determined based on need at the time of project funding.

Landscape stabilization work in Port Oneida would include the maintenance of open field areas along the M-22 (Werner, Charles Olsen, Dechow, and Lawr farms) and Port Oneida Road (Kelderhouse and Carsten Burfiend farms) corridors by the clearing of invasive trees and shrubs from landscape features, windbreaks and pine plantations. Field edges and boundaries that are important to the character of Port Oneida have been determined through the study of aerial photographs and field verification. This treatment is intended to reestablish and preserve the overall pattern of open fields and woodlands, and preserve prominent views.

MITIGATION MEASURES FOR THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE

Mitigation measures or conditions are presented as part of the Selected Alternative and have been developed to lessen the adverse effects. The following mitigation measures will be implemented for the Selected Alternative.

The Selected Alternative would predominantly result in beneficial effects. In areas where there is potential for adverse effects, the following mitigation measures are proposed.

- In areas of new grading, including mowing areas, roadside pull offs and parking lots, restoration would occur with appropriate species.
- In areas of new grading, including mowing areas, roadside pull offs and parking lots, monitoring would occur for invasive vegetation or exotic species.
- If previously unknown archeological resources are discovered during construction, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery would be halted until the resources could be identified and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed, if necessary, in consultation with SHPO. In the unlikely event that human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 USC 3001) of 1990 would be followed. All human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony would be left in situ until the culturally affiliated tribe(s) was consulted and an appropriate mitigation or recovery strategy developed.

Practices to Minimize Effects on Natural Resources

Under the Selected Alternative, mowed trails and new roadside pull-offs would be provided. These elements, along with construction of parking lots, provide the opportunity for introduction of invasive species through improved visitor access. These areas would be monitored to ensure that invasive species do not become established.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Five alternatives were considered; the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1) and four action alternatives (Alternatives 2, 3, 4, 5).

The No Action Alternative (Alternative 1) would involve the continuation of management actions and existing facility use in Port Oneida. Currently, the house at the Dechow farmstead is used for employee housing. No visitor contact station exists within Port Oneida. Currently, visitors can obtain information at the Visitor Center in Empire or from Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear at the Charles Olsen farm.

No changes to circulation would occur within Port Oneida under the No Action Alternative; existing conditions would be maintained. Parking facilities are currently provided at the trailheads, one at Basch Road for Pyramid Point and a second along Thoreson Road for the Bayview Trail. No new pull-offs would be provided. One existing roadside pull-off, which is operated by the county, is located along Basch Road overlooking Vacation Valley. The existing trail system would be maintained under current management, with no new connections or trailheads being provided. Landscape stabilization and restoration, and structure stabilization would continue under current management plans.

The following program elements are common to each action alternative. A house at one of the publicly owned farms would be adaptively rehabilitated for use as a visitor contact station. The visitor contact station site would include parking for 10 to 20 cars, restrooms, an outside gathering place for small groups, and a picnic area. The visitor contact station would include internal and external interpretive graphics, a staff desk, and storage. Informational and orientation materials would also be provided. A second house, also at a publicly owned farmstead, would be adaptively rehabilitated for use as staff housing.

Another common element is the rehabilitation that would occur at the visitor contact station. This would include rehabilitation of exterior and interior features and spaces; historically sensitive modifications to meet functional requirements; modern mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems; and accessibility for disabled individuals, as needed. At the house to be rehabilitated for use as park staff housing, work would include exterior and interior rehabilitation and historically sensitive interior modifications to accommodate tenants; and modern mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems to permit year-round occupancy, as needed.

Also common to all action alternatives is the improvements to circulation. Circulation throughout Port Oneida would be enhanced by providing (1) multiple locations for additional parking for 6 to 8 cars, (2) roadside pull-offs that would be located overlooking the Thoreson farm on Thoreson Road, on the north and south side of M-22 between Port Oneida Road and Wheeler Road, and at the existing county roadside pull-off on Basch Road, and (3) an improved trail system. The location for the parking areas vary based on the location of the visitor contact station.

A final common element is the landscape stabilization work in Port Oneida. This includes the maintenance of open field areas along the M-22 (Werner, Charles Olsen, Dechow and Lawr farms) and Port Oneida Road (Kelderhouse and Carsten Burfiend farms) corridors by the clearing of invasive trees and shrubs from open fields, windbreaks and pine plantations. Field edges and boundaries that are important to the character of Port Oneida have been determined through the study of aerial photographs and field verification. This treatment is intended to reestablish and preserve the overall patterns of open fields and woodlands, and preserve prominent views.

Under Alternative 2, a visitor contact station would be located at the Carsten Burfiend farm and employee housing would be located at the Peter Burfiend farm. Two homes exist at the farmstead on

the west side of Port Oneida Road along with a garage and a privy. Several outbuildings are located on the east side of the road, including a chicken coop, machine shed, granary/corn crib, and butchering shed. The visitor contact station would be located in the north house and restrooms would likely be located in the garage. Staff housing would be located at the Peter Burfiend farm located on Basch Road. The Peter Burfiend house totals 1,660 square feet and has three bedrooms and one bath. The house would be adaptively rehabilitated as a housing site for park staff. Circulation within Port Oneida would be enhanced by providing additional parking for 6 to 8 cars in the vicinity of the Eckhert and Ole Olsen farms on Basch Road and at the Kelderhouse farm on Port Oneida Road.

Alternative 3 would involve a visitor contact station at the Charles Olsen farm with employee housing at the Goffar farm. The Charles Olsen farmstead consists of a home and a barn. Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear, a non-profit organization, has rehabilitated the home and is using it for their offices. Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear has installed basic exhibits, and has developed plans and secured partial funding for additional exhibits, to interpret the history of Port Oneida. The visitor contact station would be located in the house and restrooms would likely be located in the lean-to at the south end of the barn. The Goffar home is currently under a reservation of use and occupancy that will expire in 2011. This 2,100 square foot house has four bedrooms and two baths. The house would be adaptively rehabilitated for its new use as staff housing. New parking (6 to 8 cars) would be provided in the vicinity of the Eckhert and Ole Olsen farms on Basch Road, at the Kelderhouse farm on Port Oneida Road, and at the Carsten Burfiend farm on Port Oneida Road.

Alternative 4 would use the Dechow farm for a visitor contact station and the Peter Burfiend farm for employee housing. The Dechow farmstead consists of a house, barn, garage, granary, brooder house, and chicken coop. Currently, the house at the Dechow farmstead is being used for employee housing. The visitor contact station would be located in the house and restrooms would likely be located in the garage located adjacent to the dairy barn. Staff housing would be located at the Peter Burfiend farmstead. This 1,660 square foot house has 3 bedrooms and one bath. The house would be adapted to serve as housing for park staff. New parking (6 to 8 cars) would be provided in the vicinity of the Eckhert and Ole Olsen farms on Basch Road, at the Kelderhouse farm on Port Oneida Road, and at Carsten Burfiend farm on Port Oneida Road.

Alternative 5 would place a visitor contact station at the Kelderhouse farm with employee housing at the Carsten Burfiend farm. The Kelderhouse farmstead consists of a home and several outbuildings: chicken coop, two sheds, and a privy. The visitor contact station would be located in the house and restrooms would be located in one of the outbuildings. Staff housing would be located at the Carsten Burfiend farmstead in the southern house. This home is 2,700 square feet with 5 bedrooms and one bath. The house would be adapted to serve as housing for park staff. New parking (6 to 8 cars) would be provided in the vicinity of the Eckhert and Ole Olsen farms on Basch Road and at Carsten Burfiend farm on Port Oneida Road.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

As stated in Section 2.7D of Director's Order #12 and Handbook (NPS 2001), the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that would promote the national environmental policy expressed in the National Environmental Policy Act.

Section 101(b) of the National Environmental Policy Act identifies six criteria to help determine the environmentally preferable alternative. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) provides additional direction in its guidance *Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations* (1981). The environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in NEPA's Section 101. Ordinarily, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical

environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources.

Continuing the current conditions under Alternative 1, the No Action Alternative, the NPS would fail to preserve several historic resources. Structure and landscape stabilization would only minimally occur as needed. Historic structures in Port Oneida would continue to be at risk from deterioration due to lack of maintenance and stabilization. The cultural landscapes would also be at risk from invasive species and vegetation encroachment.

Alternative 2 would provide a visitor contact station at the Carsten Burfiend farm with housing at the Peter Burfiend farm. Alternative 2 would require a higher level of operations and maintenance than the other alternatives because of the security requirements from the combination of a visitor contact station and beach access at the same site.

Alternative 3 would provide a visitor contact station at the Charles Olsen farm and housing at the Goffar farm. This alternative would place the visitor contact station at a farm where the house has already been rehabilitated for a partner site. Placing a 10 to 20 car parking lot at a highly visible location along M-22 would be a minor adverse impact to visual quality in Port Oneida.

Alternative 4 would provide a visitor contact station at the Dechow farm and housing at the Peter Burfiend farm. The residence at the Dechow farmstead is currently being used for housing and has already undergone rehabilitation for these purposes. Placing a 10 to 20 car parking lot at a highly visible location along M-22 would be a minor adverse impact to visual quality in Port Oneida.

Alternative 5 fully addresses the six criteria and meets the park's objectives to stabilize historic structures and cultural landscapes, enhance visitor access to interpretive and recreational opportunities, and be consistent with current park planning documents. This alternative would provide a visitor contact station at the Kelderhouse farm and housing at the Carsten Burfiend farm. This alternative would rehabilitate structures at two of the predominant farms in Port Oneida.

Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5 would all provide for a new visitor contact station, new employee housing, improved circulation, rehabilitation of historic structures, and the stabilization of cultural landscapes. However, Alternative 5 would result in beneficial effects as a result of rehabilitating structures at two predominant farms. Overall, Alternative 5 provides the highest level of enhancement of cultural resources with the least damage to resources in Port Oneida and is the environmentally preferable alternative.

THE SELECTED ALTERNATIVE AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

As defined in 40 CFR § 1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

1. Impacts that may have both beneficial and adverse aspects and which on balance may be beneficial, but that may still have significant adverse impacts which require analysis in an EIS.

No long-term major adverse or beneficial impacts were identified that require analysis in an environmental impact statement.

The implementation of the Selected Alternative would result in localized long-term minor adverse impacts to ecological resources due to the potential for introduction of invasive species along mowed trails and roadside pull-offs and from improved visitor access. These areas would need to be monitored to ensure that invasive species do not become established. The Kelderhouse farm contains no noteworthy vegetation, wildlife habitat, or threatened and endangered species. There would be no impacts to ecological resources as a result of locating staff housing at the Goffar farm.

The Selected Alternative would have an overall long-term negligible adverse impact on cultural landscapes. The preservation and rehabilitation of ornamental plantings and the vegetation management of the old fields would have a beneficial effect. These actions would preserve Port Oneida's historic setting and re-establish significant visual connections to adjacent farms. The rehabilitation of the Goffar house for staff housing would have a beneficial effect as it would rehabilitate a historic structure and provide a compatible use.

The addition of new elements to the district, parking lots and roadside pull-offs, would have an adverse effect, but would be mitigated by the modest size of each element and by the location. The parking lots would be sited to be compatible with the historic patterns on each farmstead.

The Selected Alternative would result in localized long-term moderate beneficial impacts to historic structures, which contribute to the character of Port Oneida. The Kelderhouse residence would be rehabilitated for use as a visitor contact station and the Goffar residence would be rehabilitated for use as park staff housing. Additional structures would be stabilized as part of this alternative. The selection of structures would be at the discretion of Sleeping Bear Dunes staff and would occur as funds for this project permit. The stabilization of structures prolong their life and provide a level of protection that would help preserve the historic fabric.

Long-term moderate beneficial effects to visitor experience would occur as a result of the new visitor resources within Port Oneida. A visitor contact station, including restrooms, picnic area, interpretive graphics, and informational and orientation materials, would be provided at the Kelderhouse farm. The experience for visitors would be enhanced by the increase in amenities and interpretive opportunities, as well as stabilized historic structures and cultural landscapes.

The demand on park staff would be increased based on a need to maintain the new facilities. Park employees or volunteers may be needed to staff the visitor contact station during peak visitation. The landscape stabilization that would occur would result in an increased demand on staff to maintain these conditions. Overall, the demand on park staff and volunteers would be increased, resulting in a park-wide long-term minor to moderate adverse effect.

2. Degree of effect on public health or safety.

Public health and safety would be improved as a result of the stabilization and rehabilitation of buildings in Port Oneida. If the existing conditions continue, some buildings would be at risk and would be in a gradual state of decline. Further deterioration would create health and safety hazards and result in the eventual loss of these cultural resources. As the structures are stabilized, public health and safety would improve.

Two new pull-offs would be provided along the north and south side of M-22. Currently, visitors often stop and use the shoulder along M-22 to take photos and enjoy the view of Port Oneida. These locations are informal and are not marked. These new pull-offs will provide visitors with two safe locations to observe and enjoy Port Oneida, improving public health and safety.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

There are no wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas within Port Oneida.

Port Oneida is a Rural Historic District. Port Oneida was added to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1997 at the state level of significance. In 1999, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) indicated their concurrence that Port Oneida met the national level of significance.

This area is the largest intact agricultural district in the National Park System and the largest historic agricultural district in public ownership in the country. The Selected Alternative would benefit the historic district and cultural resources by preserving and rehabilitating ornamental plantings and implementing vegetation management. The Kelderhouse and Goffar residences would be adaptively rehabilitated and other structures throughout Port Oneida would be stabilized.

The addition of new elements to the district, parking lots and roadside pull-offs, would have an adverse effect, but would be mitigated by the modest size of each element and by the location. The parking lots would be sited to be compatible with the historic patterns on each farmstead.

Prime farmland soils and soils of local importance are present within Port Oneida; however, the land owned by the NPS is not currently farmed and is not intended for farming in the future. Furthermore, construction activities would result in minimal alterations to the land; therefore, these activities would not impact their classification as prime or unique.

There is a large wetland central to the Port Oneida area. There are no construction activities occurring near this wetland.

4. Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

There were no highly controversial effects identified during either preparation of the environmental assessment or during the public review period.

5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

There were no highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks identified during either preparation of the environmental assessment or during the public comment period.

6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The Selected Alternative neither establishes a National Park Service precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

Other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future management activities at the Lakeshore and in the surrounding region include: the designation of M-22 as a Scenic Heritage Route, future creation of the Leelanau Scenic Heritage Trailway from the Benzie/Leelanau County line to County Road 651, and the stabilization and rehabilitation of buildings in Glen Haven Village Historic District.

Long-term adverse effects will occur to ecological resources; cultural resources (landscapes); and park facilities and operations. Other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions are expected to contribute to adverse effects to cultural resources landscapes (negligible); park facilities and operation (minor). The long-term beneficial effects of the Selected Alternative include moderate effects to cultural resources (structures) and moderate effects to visitor use and experience. Other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions are expected to contribute to beneficial effects to ecological resources (negligible); cultural resources structures (moderate); and, visitor use (minor).

These long-term effects in conjunction with the effects of the other management activities within the park will not result in cumulatively significant impacts.

8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

The National Park Service determined that the Selected Alternative will not adversely affect historic properties. The Michigan Office of the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) was consulted and concurred with this finding.

9. Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat.

The NPS has determined that there are no species or critical habitat affected in or near the project area. A determination was sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the form of the Environmental Assessment on September 17, 2007. We did not receive an objection to that determination.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

The Selected Alternative will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

IMPAIRMENT OF PARK RESOURCES OR VALUES

In addition to reviewing the list of significance criteria, the National Park Service has determined that implementation of the Selected Alternative will not constitute an impairment to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore's resources and values. This conclusion is based on a thorough analysis of the impacts described in the environmental assessment, the agency and public comments received, and the professional judgment of the decision-maker in accordance with the National Park Service's *Management Policies 2006*. As described in the environmental assessment, implementation of the Selected Alternative will not result in major, adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the Lakeshore; or (3) identified as a goal in the park's general management plan or other relevant National Park Service planning documents.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Internal and external scoping was conducted as part of the environmental assessment process. Internal scoping involved an interdisciplinary process to identify issues, alternatives, and data needs. The primary goals of the project are to stabilize and rehabilitate selected historic structures and cultural landscapes, provide a visitor contact station to enhance visitor access, recreational opportunities, and improved circulation (parking, pull-offs, trails), and provide employee housing within Port Oneida.

External scoping included coordination with interested federal and state agencies along with associated Indian tribes. Scoping letters were sent to associated Indian tribes, resource and regulatory agencies, Michigan Department of Transportation, interest groups, and the public.

The public was also given opportunities to comment and provide feedback throughout development of the environmental assessment. A booth was set up during the Port Oneida Fair in August 2005. Representatives from Sleeping Bear Dunes were available to answer questions. Maps and a list of possible future activities/developments were provided for review. A mailing list sign-up sheet was

also provided. Scoping letters were sent in August 2005 to local, state, and federal regulatory and resource agencies; interested citizens; tribes; and organizations. A press release was issued in April 2006 describing the project and announcing the May 2006 public workshops. Project information was also posted on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website, which was accessible via a link in the park's web site (www.nps.gov/slbe). The public was invited to provide preliminary comments from April 11 to May 8, 2006, via a press release, the website, and the workshops held at the Port Oneida Schoolhouse on May 3, 2006.

The environmental assessment was made available for public review and comment from September 17 through October 19, 2007. During that time, an open house was held at the visitor center in Empire on October 3, 2007 to allow the public to discuss the plan with the project team and park staff, and to comment on the alternatives.

A total of twenty-three comments were received from the general public. One partner group, Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear, submitted a comment letter. Overall, the majority of the comments received recognized a need for improvements within Port Oneida. The two visitor contact station sites that received the most support were the Charles Olsen farm and the Kelderhouse farm; however, not every comment indicated support for a particular alternative.

CONCLUSION

The Selected Alternative does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS). The Selected Alternative will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Negative environment impacts that could occur are minor or moderate in intensity. There are no significant impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, or other unique characteristics of the region. There are no unmitigated adverse impacts on sites or districts listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. No uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an EIS is not required for this project and thus will not be prepared.

Recommended:  6/24/2008
Dusty Shultz Date
Superintendent, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

Approved:  6-30-2008
Ernest Quintana Date
Midwest Regional Director

Errata

The following errors were detected during the public review; please consider this correct information.

The Kelderhouse farm was built by William Kelderhouse, not his father, Thomas, as indicated in the narrative.

The table on page 18 should contain dots indicating pull-offs on M-22 & Basch Road and Vacation Valley.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summary

Port Oneida Rural Historic District (Port Oneida) is representative of late 19th and early 20th century farm landscapes of the upper Midwest. This area is the largest intact agricultural district in the National Park System and one of the largest historic agricultural district in public ownership in the country. The Port Oneida Rural Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1997.

Port Oneida includes 19 farms and over 3,400 acres of land. Port Oneida presents an excellent opportunity to preserve a rapidly disappearing landscape associated with the heartland of America. The potential exists for visitors to be immersed in an American farm landscape for both recreation- and resource-based educational activities. This experience would provide an opportunity to understand and appreciate a landscape and lifestyle at the heart of rural life and our cultural heritage.

The need for the proposed project is driven by the deterioration of cultural resources within the Port Oneida Rural Historic District. Further deterioration would create health and safety hazards and result in the eventual loss of these cultural resources. Approximately 35 of the 110 historic structures in Port Oneida are in poor to fair condition and require immediate work. Exotic plant species are invading the cultural landscapes. Vegetative features such as windbreaks, orchards and garden areas are deteriorating.

Port Oneida is experiencing increased visitation and currently lacks visitor support services. Basic facilities such as public restrooms, a visitor contact station, picnic shelters or adequate parking areas are non-existent. Social trails created between farms and the beach areas are causing natural and cultural resource damage and beach erosion. Visitors frequently park along road shoulders, creating a safety hazard to motorists and pedestrians.

Several action alternatives were developed to provide for a new visitor contact station, new employee housing, improved circulation, rehabilitation and stabilization of historic structures, and the stabilization of cultural landscapes. Four action alternatives are being considered. These alternatives are listed based on location of the visitor contact station and employee housing, respectively: Carsten Burfiend/Peter Burfiend, Charles Olsen/Goffar, Dechow/Peter Burfiend, and Kelderhouse/Carsten Burfiend.

These alternatives were compared to a No Action Alternative. The action alternatives would provide physical improvements to Port Oneida by creating visitor amenities, rehabilitating or stabilizing historic structures, and restoring or stabilizing historic landscape features.

Public Comment

If you wish to comment on the environmental assessment, you may mail comments to the name and address below. This environmental assessment will be on public review for 30 days. We encourage you to submit comments online using the Port Oneida Environmental Assessment link on the park's website (www.nps.gov/slbe). Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware 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 your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

A public meeting will be announced in the near future, which will provide you with another forum to comment.

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

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service (NPS) at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore proposes improvements to the Port Oneida Rural Historic District (Port Oneida). This environmental assessment (EA) analyzes the proposed action alternatives and their impacts on the environment and has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9).

The proposed project would involve the creation of a new visitor contact station, rehabilitation and stabilization of selected historic structures, the stabilization of selected cultural landscapes, improved pedestrian and vehicular circulation, and the rehabilitation of an existing structure for employee housing.

1.1. DESCRIPTION OF THE PARK

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (Sleeping Bear Dunes) is located in Michigan's northwestern Lower Peninsula, in Leelanau and Benzie Counties (Figure 1-1). Situated 25 miles west of Traverse City, Sleeping Bear Dunes encompasses 35 miles of Lake Michigan's eastern coastline, as well as North and South Manitou Islands. Sleeping Bear Dunes can be accessed by US-31, M-72, and M-22.

Sleeping Bear Dunes was established by Public Law 91-479 on October 21, 1970, which states that "Congress finds that certain outstanding natural features, including forests, beaches, dune formations, and ancient glacial phenomena, exist along the mainland shore of Lake Michigan and on certain nearby islands in Benzie and Leelanau Counties, Michigan." In addition to the natural features, Sleeping Bear Dunes is home to many cultural features, including an 1871 lighthouse, three former Life-Saving Service/Coast Guard Stations and Port Oneida, an extensive rural farm district.

1.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT AREA

Port Oneida is a 3,400-acre historic agricultural landscape within the boundary of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Port Oneida includes 110 contributing structures on 25 sites, with an additional 59 structures associated with the rural historic district. Sites include NPS-owned farms (14), NPS owned barns (4), privately owned farms (5), and schools (2). These sites are illustrated on Figure 1-2, excluding the privately owned farms.

Presently, there are 19 farms, five of which are privately owned (Figure 1-2). The landscape includes inactive farm fields, orchards, cemeteries, sugar maple groves, pine plantations, forested hills, wetlands, beaches, an intact road system, former dock site, and two schoolhouses. The NPS has spent the last ten years researching and developing a regional historic context for agriculture in Sleeping Bear Dunes including a detailed site survey and resource documentation, and has listed Port Oneida in the NRHP. These

Figure 1-1: Vicinity and Location Map

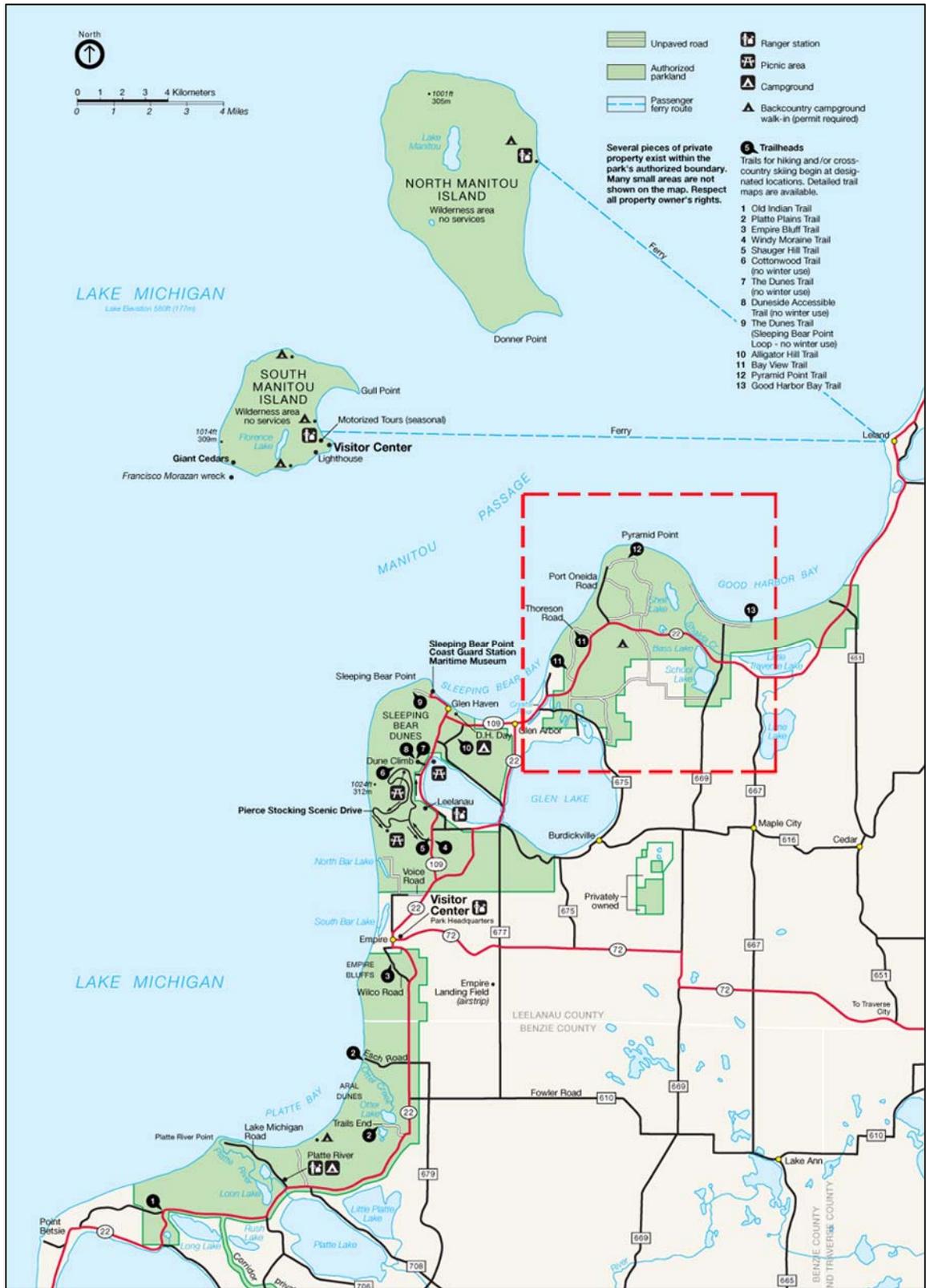
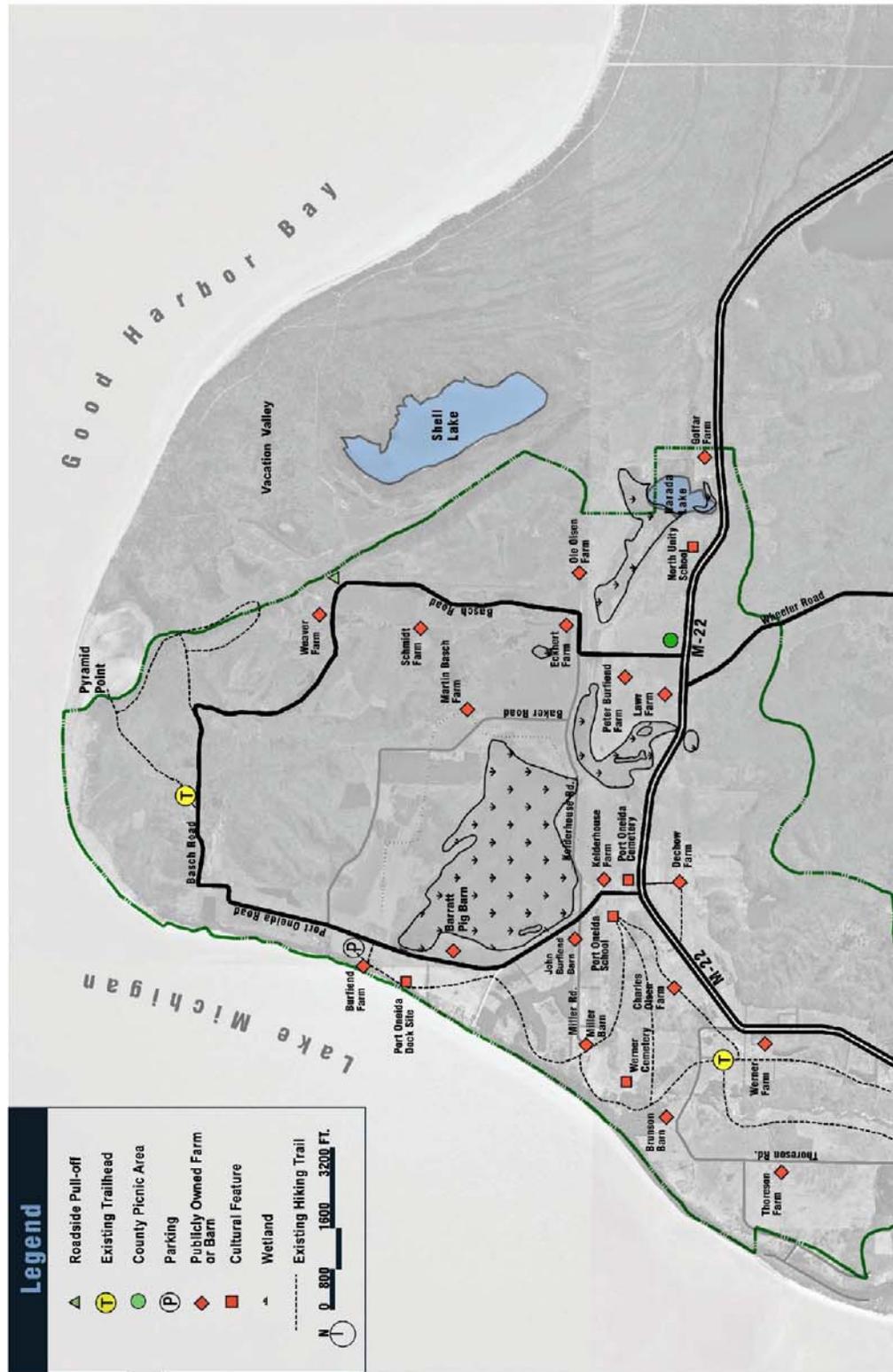


Figure 1-2: Port Oneida Map



efforts have indicated that Port Oneida is the largest and most complete historic agricultural landscape in public ownership in the country.

Port Oneida is located along state highway M-22, which in this location is designated as a Scenic Heritage Route by the Michigan Department of Transportation. The community was first settled during the 1860s, and the farms within Port Oneida are typical of turn-of-the-century farms throughout the Midwest. Port Oneida is historically significant because it conveys the land use practices, architecture, and evolution of agriculture and of agricultural technology common to subsistence farms of the upper Great Lakes region.

1.3. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Port Oneida Rural Historic District is representative of late 19th and early 20th century farms of the Midwest. This area is the largest intact agricultural district in the National Park System and the largest historic agricultural district in public ownership in the country. Port Oneida was added to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1997 at the state level of significance. In 1999, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) indicated their concurrence that Port Oneida met the national level of significance. NRHP sites are determined to be significant at either the local, state, or national level. The level of significance is related to the geographic level or “scale” of the property’s historic context.

Port Oneida includes 19 farms, 14 of which are owned by the NPS, and over 3,400 acres of land. Port Oneida presents an excellent opportunity to preserve a rapidly disappearing landscape associated with the heartland of America. The potential exists for visitors to be immersed in an American farm landscape for both recreation- and resource-based educational activities. This experience would provide an opportunity to understand and appreciate a landscape and lifestyle at the heart of rural life and cultural heritage.

Completion of this project would upgrade the condition of selected structures and selected landscape features so they can be utilized by the NPS or partners for operations. It would provide additional interpretive activities to enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of the area through the addition of a visitor contact station. Selected historic structures and landscape features would be stabilized, visitor use needs met and natural resources protected.

The need for the proposed project is driven by the deterioration of cultural resources within the Port Oneida Rural Historic District. Further deterioration would create health and safety hazards and result in the eventual loss of these cultural resources. Approximately 35 of the 110 historic structures in Port Oneida are in poor to fair condition and require immediate work. Cultural landscapes in this historic district are being invaded with exotic plant species. Vegetative features such as windbreaks, orchards and garden areas are deteriorating.

Additionally, Port Oneida is experiencing increased visitation and currently lacks visitor support services. Basic facilities such as public restrooms, a visitor contact station, picnic

shelters or adequate parking areas are non-existent. Social trails created between farms and the beach areas are causing natural and cultural resource damage and beach erosion. Visitors frequently park along road shoulders, creating a safety hazard to motorists and pedestrians.

The following objectives were identified by NPS staff in initial project planning phases and must be achieved for the project to be considered a success.

1. Stabilize and rehabilitate selected historic structures and cultural landscapes.
2. Provide a visitor contact station to enhance visitor access, recreational opportunities and improved circulation (parking, pull-offs, trails).
3. Provide employee housing within Port Oneida.

1.4. PLANNING CONTEXT

The *General Management Plan* (NPS, 1979) provides a general framework to guide management decisions over a 20-year period. Sleeping Bear Dunes is currently in the process of developing a new General Management Plan. The draft *Landscape Management Plan: Port Oneida Rural Historic District* (NPS, 1999b) outlines a standardized approach to managing the historic agricultural landscape features found within Port Oneida, but has not yet been finalized. The draft *Landscape Management Plan* was used as a foundation for developing specific treatment approaches and establishing priorities for the historic landscapes and agricultural fields within Port Oneida.

The project to stabilize and rehabilitate historic structures and cultural landscapes, and enhance visitor access to interpretive and recreational opportunities within Port Oneida Rural Historic District represents a continued commitment to preserve significant park resources. The proposed action alternatives would not conflict with any ongoing or planned management activities within Sleeping Bear Dunes (Table 1-1).

1.5. SCOPING

Scoping is the effort to involve federal and state agencies, local government and interests, and the public in determining the issues to be addressed in the environmental assessment. Among other tasks, scoping identifies important issues and eliminates issues that are ultimately unimportant; allocates assignments among the interdisciplinary team members and other participating agencies; identifies related projects and associated documents; identifies permits, surveys, or consultations required by other agencies; and creates a schedule that allows adequate time to prepare and distribute the environmental document for public review and comment before a final decision is made.

Table 1-1: Project’s Relationship to Other Plans

Management Activities	Relationship to Proposed Action
M-22 from the Benzie/Leelanau County line (Manning Road) to the junction with M-72 northwest of Traverse City was designated as a Scenic Heritage Route.	The <i>M-22 Scenic Heritage Corridor Management Plan</i> (Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route Committee) has five goals. The improvements to Port Oneida are consistent with these goals.
Creation of the Leelanau Scenic Heritage Trailway.	A 10-foot wide multi-use trailway that would parallel M-22 is being proposed from the Benzie/Leelanau County line to Lake Michigan Road – County Road 651. Improvements within Port Oneida will be considered along with this future project.
Stabilize and rehabilitate buildings in Glen Haven Village Historic District.	Glen Haven is approximately 4 miles west of Port Oneida. The goal is to stabilize and rehabilitate historic buildings within the Glen Haven District and provide visitor services.
General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/EIS	This document will provide long-term management guidance for Sleeping Bear Dunes for the next 20 plus years. The document will develop management “zones” for all areas of the park, which will define the desired future conditions (resource, use, and development) for each zone. This document will also determine the location and amount of lands to be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation. It is scheduled for completion in December 2008.

Internal and external scoping occurred prior to preparation of this environmental assessment. Internal scoping involved an interdisciplinary process to identify issues, alternatives, and data needs. The project planning team held an internal scoping meeting at the park in October 2005.

External scoping included coordination with interested federal and state agencies along with associated Indian tribes. Scoping letters were sent to associated Indian tribes, resource and regulatory agencies, MDOT, interest groups, and the public. Appendix A contains a copy of the scoping letter.

The public was also given opportunities to comment and provide feedback throughout development of the environmental assessment. A booth was set up during the Port Oneida Fair in August 2005. Representatives from Sleeping Bear Dunes were available to answer questions. Maps and a list of possible future activities/developments were provided for review. A mailing list sign-up sheet was also provided. Scoping letters were sent in August 2005 to local, state, and federal regulatory and resource agencies; interested citizens; tribes; and organizations. A press release was issued in April 2006 describing the project and announcing the May 2006 public workshops. Project information was also posted on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website, which was accessible via a link in the park’s web site (www.nps.gov/slbe). The public was invited to provide preliminary comments from April 11 to May 8, 2006, via a press release, the website, and the workshops.

1.6. ISSUES

The planning team identified the following issues during scoping, regarding the need to stabilize and enhance the Port Oneida Rural Historic District.

- Historic structures within Port Oneida are currently boarded up and inaccessible to the public; 35 of 110 structures are in poor to fair condition.
- Further deterioration would create health and safety hazards and result in the eventual loss of historically significant cultural resources.
- Open fields in Port Oneida are being overtaken by vegetative growth, including invasive species such as black locust (*Robina pseudoacacia*), and spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*). The open fields are in fair condition and require intervention to maintain historic field/forest patterns. These invasive plants threaten native plant and animal communities.
- Landscape features such as windbreaks, orchards and garden areas are deteriorated, overgrown, or are being overcrowded by vegetation.
- No organized beach access is available, and visitors descending down the bluff are creating hillside paths and causing slope erosion.
- Port Oneida is experiencing increased visitation and currently lacks visitor support services.
- Employee housing is currently located at one of the most intact and complete farms in Port Oneida. This use at this location should be evaluated within the context of the proposed improvements.
- Provide housing for employees at a farm within Port Oneida.

1.7. IMPACT TOPICS

Impact topics are the resources of concern that could be affected by the range of alternatives. Specific impact topics were developed to ensure that alternatives were compared on the basis of the most relevant topics. Impact topics were identified on the basis of federal laws, regulations, and executive orders, and NPS *Management Policies 2006* (2006b), as well as agency and public input during scoping. A brief rationale for the selection of each impact topic is given below, as well as the rationale for dismissing specific topics from further consideration.

1.7.1. Impact Topics Selected for Detailed Analysis

Each of the following impact topics would be impacted by one or more of the alternatives and, consequently, they have been retained for detailed analysis.

Ecological Resources

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 calls for an examination of the impacts on all components of affected ecosystems. According to NPS *Management Policies 2006* (2006b), the National Park Service strives to maintain all components and processes of naturally evolving park unit ecosystems, including the natural abundance, diversity, and ecological integrity of plants and animals.

The former agricultural fields within Port Oneida serve as habitat for meadow wildlife, especially grassland nesting birds (NPS, 1999a). Open fields in Port Oneida are being overtaken by exotic plants, such as black locust and spotted knapweed. These exotics threaten wildlife habitat and disrupt the integrity of the cultural landscape. The open fields are in fair condition and require intervention to maintain historic field/forest patterns.

Cultural Resources

Port Oneida was listed on the NRHP at the state level of significance in 1997. In 1999, the SHPO indicated their concurrence that Port Oneida Rural Historic District met the national level of significance. The National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (16 USC 470 *et seq.*); the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; and the NPS Director's Order 28, *Cultural Resource Management* (1998b), NPS *Management Policies 2006* (2006b), and Director's Order 12, *Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making* (2001) require the consideration of potential impacts on archeological resources, historic structures, and cultural landscapes listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP.

Cultural Landscapes and Historic Structures

According to the National Park Service's *Cultural Resource Management* (DO 28) (1998b), a cultural landscape is

...a reflection of human adaptation and use of natural resources and is often expressed in the way land is organized and divided, patterns of settlement, land use, systems of circulation, and the types of structures that are built. The character of a cultural landscape is defined both by physical materials, such as roads, buildings, walls, and vegetation, and by use reflecting cultural values and traditions.

Thus, cultural landscapes are the result of the long interaction between people and the land – the influence of human beliefs and actions over time upon the natural landscape. Shaped through time by historical land-use and management practices, as well as politics and property laws, levels of technology, and economic conditions, cultural landscapes provide a living record of an area's past and a visual chronicle of its history. The dynamic nature of modern human life, however, contributes to the continual reshaping of cultural landscapes, making them a good source of information about specific times and places, while at the same time, rendering their long-term preservation a challenge. The Port Oneida Rural Historic District is representative of late 19th and early 20th century farm landscapes of the upper Midwest. Port Oneida includes 19 farms, four NPS-owned barns, two schools, and over 3,400 acres of land.

The purpose of the project is to stabilize historic structures and cultural landscapes. The action alternatives would impact NRHP eligible or listed cultural landscapes and historic structures; however, the character of the structures and the cultural landscape would be maintained.

Park Operations

New facilities within Port Oneida would need to be maintained, including the visitor contact station and restroom facilities. Park operations would be impacted by the need for additional patrolling of these new facilities along with a potential need for additional park staff for visitor assistance. Minimal maintenance and clearing would occur during the winter to maintain access for emergency vehicles.

Visitor Use and Experience

Visitor use in Port Oneida is likely to increase as a result of the proposed improvements within Port Oneida. The action alternatives would improve visitor use and experience through a new visitor contact station, parking facilities, comfort stations, trails, and vehicle pull-offs.

1.7.2. Impact Topics Dismissed from Detailed Analysis

The following impact topics would not be affected by the proposed alternatives, resulting in their dismissal from detailed analysis.

Soils

A limited area of soils would be impacted by all action alternatives due to the construction of new parking areas and vehicle pull-offs within Port Oneida. Additional impacts would occur during the construction of septic tanks and leach fields at the visitor contact station and employee housing sites. However, the area of these construction activities would be confined and isolated, and impacts would be negligible.

Floodplains and Wetlands

Executive Order 11990, *Protection of Wetlands*, requires federal agencies to avoid, where possible, adversely impacting wetlands. The goal of NPS wetlands management is to strive to achieve no net loss of wetlands as defined by both acreage and function. Proposed actions that have the potential to adversely impact wetlands must be addressed in a statement of findings. Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management*, requires all federal agencies to avoid construction within the 100-year floodplain unless no other practicable alternative exists. Certain construction within a 100-year floodplain requires preparation of a statement of findings.

There is a large wetland central to the Port Oneida area. None of the alternatives propose construction activities near this wetland. Consequently, the proposed alternatives do not impact any designated or functional wetlands as described in the Clean Water Act Section 404, Executive Order 11990, or by NPS Director's Order 77-1: *Wetland Protection*. Implementation of the proposed alternatives would not adversely affect the natural values and functions of any floodplain or increase flood risks. Therefore, floodplains and wetlands are dismissed as an impact topic and statements of findings for floodplains or wetlands will not be prepared.

Water Quality (Surface Water Quality)

NPS *Management Policies 2006* (2006b) require protection of water quality consistent with the Clean Water Act. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to prohibit or regulate, through a permitting process, discharge of dredged or fill material or excavation in U.S. waters.

No estuarine resources are present within the project area, and no drains or streams are adjacent to the project areas for the action alternatives; therefore, there would be no impacts to water quality as a result of the proposed alternatives. No discharge of dredged or fill material, or excavation in waters would occur; therefore, a 404 permit is not required. The large wetland within the project area, north of Kelderhouse Road and east of Port Oneida Road, has a groundwater connection; however, this wetland would not be affected by any of the proposed alternatives. For these reasons, water quality was dismissed as an impact topic.

Threatened and Endangered Species, and Species of Special Concern

The Endangered Species Act (1973) requires an examination of impacts on all federally-listed threatened or endangered species. NPS policy also requires examination of potential impacts on state-listed threatened, endangered, candidate, rare, declining, and sensitive species that are known collectively as species of concern.

The NPS must conference or informally consult with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and/or National Marine Fisheries Service pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act to (1) clarify whether and what listed, proposed, and candidate species or designated or proposed critical habitats may be in the project area; (2) determine what effect proposed actions may have on these species or critical habitats; and (3) determine the need to enter into formal consultation for listed species or designated critical habitats, or conference for proposed species or proposed critical habitats. On March 14, 2007, the USFWS provided a list of threatened or endangered species, candidate species, and species of special concern that may be potentially found in the vicinity of Sleeping Bear Dunes. The following species were identified, bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), Michigan monkey-flower (*Mimulus glabratus* var. *michiganensis*), and pitcher's thistle (*Cirsium pitcheri*). It was also stated that the breeding range of the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) occurs within the southern half and western coastal counties of the Lower Peninsula, including Benzie and Leelanau Counties, however, Indiana bat has not been confirmed within Sleeping Bear Dunes. Critical habitat for the piping plover does occur within Sleeping Bear Dunes, but would not be impacted by the proposed project. Staff at Sleeping Bear Dunes have determined that neither the bald eagle, the Michigan monkey-flower, nor Pitcher's thistle are present in the Port Oneida area. Therefore, threatened and endangered species, and species of special concern was dismissed as an impact topic.

Air Quality

The Clean Air Act, as amended (42 USC 7401 *et. seq.*) and Section 118 of the Clean Air Act requires all federal facilities to comply with existing federal, state, and local air pollution control laws and regulations. Section 118 of the Clean Air Act requires a

national park unit to meet all federal, state, and local air pollution standards. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is a Class II air quality area under the Clean Air Act, as amended. A Class II designation indicates the maximum allowable increase in concentrations of pollutants over baseline concentrations of sulfur dioxide and particulate matter as specified in Section 163 of the Clean Air Act. Further, the Clean Air Act provides that the federal land manager has an affirmative responsibility to protect air quality related values (including visibility, plants, animals, soils, water quality, cultural resources, and visitor health) from adverse pollution impacts.

Construction activities, including equipment operation and the hauling of material, could result in temporarily increased vehicle exhaust and emissions, as well as inhalable particulate matter. Construction dust associated with exposed soils would be controlled, if necessary, with the application of water or other approved dust palliatives. In addition, any hydrocarbons, nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂) emissions, as well as airborne particulates created by fugitive dust plumes would be rapidly dissipated because the location of the park and prevailing winds allows for good air circulation. Overall, there could be a local, short-term, negligible degradation of local air quality during construction activities; however, no measurable effects outside of the immediate construction site would be anticipated. Any construction-related, adverse effects to air quality would be temporary, lasting only as long as construction. Therefore, air quality was dismissed as an impact topic.

Ethnographic Resources

Ethnographic resources are defined by the NPS as any “site, structure, object, landscape, or natural resource feature assigned traditional legendary, religious, subsistence, or other significance in the cultural system of a group traditionally associated with it” (NPS, 1998b). There are no known ethnographic resources or traditional cultural properties in the vicinity of the Port Oneida Rural Historic District. Copies of the environmental assessment will be forwarded to each tribe traditionally associated with park lands for review and comment. If the tribes subsequently identify the presence of ethnographic resources, appropriate mitigation measures would be undertaken in consultation with the tribes. The location of ethnographic sites would not be made public. In the unlikely event that human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (25 USC 3001) of 1990 would be followed. Because there are no known ethnographic resources within the area of potential effects, ethnographic resources was dismissed as an impact topic.

Archeological Resources

Archeological resources are the material remains or physical evidence of past human life or activities. An archeological survey was completed for the Port Oneida Rural Historic District in late summer 2006. Intensive inventories were completed for the Kelderhouse, Dechow, Peter Burfiend, Eckhert, and Werner farms that focused on the residential farmstead components and any specific areas where ground disturbance might occur as part of the action alternatives. The surveys included shovel testing. No significant archeological resources were encountered during the surveys; therefore, archeological

resources has been dismissed as an impact topic. If during construction previously undiscovered archeological resources are discovered, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery will be halted until the resources can be identified and documented, and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed, if necessary, in consultation with the Michigan SHPO.

Museum Collections

The NPS *Management Policies 2006* (2006b) and Director's Order 28, *Cultural Resource Management* (1998b) require the consideration of impacts on museum collections (historic artifacts, natural specimens, and archival and manuscript material). Because the park's museum collections would be unaffected by any of the action alternatives, museum collections was dismissed as an impact topic.

Land Use

Port Oneida is comprised of a mix of open fields, natural areas, residences, cemeteries, two youth camps, transportation corridors, and hiking trails. In addition, there are several farms and two schools, one of which is unoccupied. The majority of the land is open to the public and maintained as part of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. A few of the residences are privately owned, along with two youth camps, Camp Leelanau/Kohahna and the AIR Foundation. The Port Oneida schoolhouse is owned by Glen Lake school district.

The largest current land use within Port Oneida is open space characterized by former agricultural fields that are now predominately grasslands. Many of the fields have not been cultivated in recent years.

Most of the structures being considered for use as a visitor contact station for the action alternatives are currently unoccupied. The overall use and purpose of Port Oneida would not change; therefore, land use was dismissed as an impact topic.

Socioeconomics

Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act requires economic analyses of federal actions that would affect local or regional economy. The local and regional economies of this area are strongly influenced by tourism. By implementing improvements within Port Oneida, it is expected that the number of visitors within Port Oneida would increase. These improvements, however, would not draw a significant number of new visitors to the park, but would likely encourage existing park visitors to increase the number of trips to Port Oneida.

Should the proposed actions be implemented, short-term benefits from project-related expenditures and employment would include economic gains for some local businesses and individuals. While there may be slight short-term benefits to local economies, local and regional businesses would not be appreciably affected in the long term. Therefore, socioeconomics was dismissed as an impact topic.

Environmental Justice

Presidential Executive Order 12898, *General Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, requires all federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions by identifying and addressing the disproportionately high and/or adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs and policies on minorities and low-income populations and communities. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, environmental justice is the

...fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including a racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies.

The goal of 'fair treatment' is not to shift risks among populations, but to identify potentially disproportionately high and adverse effects and identify alternatives that may mitigate these impacts.

The general vicinity of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore contains both minority and low-income populations; however, environmental justice was dismissed as an impact topic for the following reasons:

- The staff and planning team at Sleeping Bear Dunes solicited public participation as part of the planning process and gave equal consideration to all input from persons regardless of age, race, income status, or other socioeconomic or demographic factors.
- Implementation of the preferred alternative would not result in any identifiable adverse human health effects. Therefore, there would be no direct or indirect adverse effects on any minority or low-income population.
- The impacts associated with implementation of the preferred alternative would not disproportionately affect any minority or low-income population or community.
- Implementation of the preferred alternative would not result in any identified effects that would be specific to any minority or low-income community.
- The park staff and planning team do not anticipate any impacts on the socioeconomic environment to appreciably alter the physical and social structure of the nearby communities.

Prime and Unique Farmland

Prime farmlands are identified as land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, forage, fiber and oilseed crops (USDA, 1983). Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that has special characteristics,

such as unique soil types and topographic features, which make it suitable for the production of specific high value crops.

Prime farmland soils and soils of local importance are present within Port Oneida; however, the land owned by the NPS is not currently farmed and is not intended for farming in the future. Furthermore, minimal alterations from construction activities would occur to the land that would impact the soils and their classification as prime or unique. Therefore, prime and unique farmland was dismissed as an impact topic.

Lightscape Management

The NPS *Management Policies 2006, Section 4.10* (NPS, 2006b), directs the NPS to “preserve to the greatest extent possible, the natural lightscapes of the parks, which are natural resources and values that exist in the absence of human-cause light.” The NPS is currently developing the Night Sky Initiative to formulate a policy to protect views of the stars and planets in our national parks.

To meet this directive, overnight lighting shall not be used. The actions proposed in this environmental assessment would restrict the use of lighting to those areas where security and safety are required. Low-impact techniques would be used and shields would be installed to prevent degradation of the night sky view and avoid disruption of the physiological processes of plants and animals. The action alternatives would not be likely to affect appreciation of the night sky or interfere with activities of nocturnal creatures. For these reasons, night sky was dismissed as an impact topic for further consideration.

Natural Soundscapes

NPS Director’s Order 47, *Soundscape Preservation and Noise Management* (NPS, 2000) and NPS *Management Policies 2006* (NPS, 2006b) direct NPS managers to protect, maintain, or restore natural soundscapes unimpaired by inappropriate or excessive noise. Under this directive, noise is defined as appropriate or inappropriate relative to the purpose of the park, the level of visitor services available, and to activities pursued by visitors.

Neither the No Action nor any of the action alternatives addressed in this analysis would introduce long-term inappropriate noise levels to the park. The proposed actions would largely occur in areas with an existing level of development, including highways, roads, private use, and park facilities. The temporary noise produced during construction and restoration activities would result in negligible short-term localized adverse impacts. This temporary increase in noise levels would occur primarily within existing developed areas. Therefore, natural soundscapes was dismissed as an impact topic.

Indian Trust Resources

Indian trust assets are owned by American Indians, but are held in trust by the United States. Requirements are included in the Secretary of the Interior’s Secretarial Order 3206, American Indian Tribal Rites, Federal – Tribal Trust Responsibilities, the Endangered Species Act, and Secretarial Order 3175, Departmental Responsibilities for Indian Trust Resources. Secretarial Order 3175 requires that any anticipated impacts to

Indian Trust Resources from a proposed project or action by Department of Interior agencies be explicitly addressed in environmental documents. The federal Indian Trust responsibility is a legally enforceable fiduciary obligation on the part of the United States to protect tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights, and it represents a duty to carry out the mandates of federal law with respect to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

No Indian Trust Resources are in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The lands within Sleeping Bear Dunes are not held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the benefit of Indians due to their status as Indians. Therefore, Indian Trust Resources was dismissed as an impact topic.

Waste Management

Within Port Oneida, solid waste is generated by visitors to Port Oneida, employees that use the staff housing, private land owners, and by users at the partner sites. Under the action alternatives, the amount of solid waste generated would increase as a result of increased visitation to Port Oneida. Appropriate waste disposal receptacles would be provided at the visitor contact station. Programming of activities at Port Oneida is of a limited scope and would not attract a significant increase in visitors. The increase in trash would be negligible as a result of implementing the alternatives; therefore, waste management was dismissed as an impact topic.

Energy Requirements and Conservation Potential

The Council on Environmental Quality guidelines for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act require examination of energy requirements and conservation potential as a possible impact topic in environmental impact statements.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore strives to incorporate the principles of sustainable design and development into all facilities and park operations. Sustainability can be described as the result achieved by doing things in ways that do not compromise the environment or its capacity to provide for present and future generations. Sustainable practices minimize the short- and long-term environmental impacts of developments and other activities through resource conservation, recycling, waste minimization, and the use of energy efficient and ecologically responsible materials and techniques.

The NPS *Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design* (1993) provide a basis for achieving sustainability in facility planning and design, emphasizes the importance of bio-diversity, and encourages responsible decisions. The guidebook describes principles to be used in the design and management of visitor facilities that emphasize environmental sensitivity in construction, use of nontoxic materials, resource conservation, recycling, and integration of visitors with natural and cultural settings. The park would reduce energy costs, eliminate waste, and conserve energy resources by using energy efficient and cost effective technology wherever possible. Energy efficiency would also be incorporated into any decision-making process during the design or acquisition of facilities, as well as all decisions affecting park operations. The use of value analysis and value engineering, including a life cycle cost analysis, would be performed to examine energy, environmental, and economic implications of proposed development. Suppliers,

permittees, and contractors would be encouraged to follow sustainable practices and address sustainable park and non-park practices in interpretive programs. Consequently, any adverse impacts relating to energy use, availability, or conservation would be negligible. Therefore, energy requirements and conservation potential is an impact topic dismissed from further consideration.