



Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore



**Final
General Management Plan
Wilderness Study
Environmental Impact Statement**

October, 2008





IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
9922 Front St. (Hwy M-71)
Empire, Michigan 49630-9797

D18 (SLBE)

October, 2008

Dear Friends and Neighbors of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore:

We are very pleased to present to you the *Final General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (National Lakeshore). The completion of this document depended on the participation of all of you and reflects your valued input.

The planning process for this *Final General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* began in 2006. Throughout the process National Lakeshore staff conducted an extensive public involvement and outreach program. As we go to press with the final document, National Park Service (NPS) staff have met with more than 2,500 people in more than 90 informational meetings held throughout the planning process.

We want to express our gratitude to the many of you who provided comments on the *Draft General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement*. The draft plan was made available for public review between April 7 and June 15, 2008. Public hearings were held in Honor, Traverse City, and Glen Arbor, Michigan, on June 3, 4, and 5, 2008, respectively, with a total of 196 people attending. A total of 292 comments were received via letters, electronic mail messages, Web responses, and comments transcribed from the public hearings.

The *Final General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/Environmental Impact Statement* was crafted from the valuable input we received on the draft plan, and we have revised the preferred alternative based upon your input. Perhaps the most significant changes are that the Cottonwood Trail into the dunes from the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive has been removed from proposed wilderness, and electric motors will be allowed on Otter, Tucker, and Bass (Leelanau County) lakes. To see all the significant changes to the preferred alternative, and for information on the wide range of comments received and our responses to those comments, please refer to the "Comments on, Changes to, and Responses to Comments on the Draft Plan" section in chapter 6 of this plan.

Copies of the plan will be available at:

- Libraries: Benzie Shores District Library, Darcy Library of Beulah, Glen Lake Community Library, Leelanau Township Library, Leland Township Library, Library of Michigan, Suttons Bay Bingham District Library, and Traverse City District Library

- On the Internet (follow instructions and link from the park website at www.nps.gov/slbe)
- Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Visitor Center

Following distribution of the final plan and a 30-day no-action period, a “Record of Decision” will be signed by the National Lakeshore superintendent and the NPS regional director documenting the selection of the alternative to be implemented.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for your continued interest in this very special place. Working together, we have developed a final plan that maintains a variety of recreational opportunities while continuing to preserve and protect the natural and cultural resources of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. We could not have done this without you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dusty Shultz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Dusty Shultz
Superintendent

Final
General Management Plan / Wilderness Study / Environmental Impact Statement
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
Benzie and Leelanau Counties, Michigan

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore was established by the U.S. Congress in 1970 by Public Law 91-479. Part of the national park system, the National Lakeshore, which consists of a mainland portion plus North Manitou and South Manitou islands (71,291 acres total), is in the northwestern portion of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The mainland portion straddles Benzie and Leelanau counties. The Manitou Islands, entirely in Leelanau County, are located about 7 miles to the northwest in Lake Michigan.

The National Lakeshore's last *General Management Plan* was completed in 1979. Since 1970, most of the 71,291 acres in the National Lakeshore's boundary have come into federal management. Private development adjacent to and near the National Lakeshore is continuing to increase. The National Lakeshore faces new resource and other management challenges as a result of these changes. In 1982 a boundary revision was authorized, in a legislative amendment, to include the Bow Lakes and Miller Hill areas, and more recently, lands along the Crystal River were added to the National Lakeshore. This current *General Management Plan* will provide management direction for these new lands. Recent studies have enhanced the National Park Service's understanding of the resources in the National Lakeshore. Desired conditions and general (conceptual) direction for management of these resources need to be defined.

The *Wilderness Study* considerations in this plan provide a public forum for evaluating lands within the National Lakeshore for possible recommendation to Congress for inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system. The *Wilderness Study* is included because of public interest and because inclusion saves time and money. Wilderness, which can be designated only by Congress, provides for permanent protection of lands in their natural condition, providing outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

The document examines five alternatives for managing the National Lakeshore for the next 20 or more years. It also analyzes the impacts of implementing each of the alternatives. The **no-action alternative** reflects current conditions and activities at the Lakeshore. It is provided as a baseline against which to compare the other alternatives and includes 30,903 acres managed to maintain their existing wilderness character. In the **preferred alternative**, the Lakeshore is valued primarily for preservation of its natural resources, and for the opportunities it provides for visitor enjoyment of the natural, cultural, and recreational resources in a scenic outdoor setting. Lands proposed for wilderness designation include 32,100 acres and no developed county roads. In **alternative A**, the Lakeshore is valued primarily for conservation of its natural resources. Lands proposed for wilderness designation include 33,600 acres and no developed county roads. In **alternative B**, the Lakeshore is valued primarily for its recreational opportunities in scenic outdoor settings. Lands proposed for wilderness designation include 14,400 acres and no county roads. In **alternative C**, the Lakeshore is managed so that most visitor use is concentrated in selected areas, with more natural, primitive conditions promoted in the rest of the Lakeshore. Lands proposed for wilderness designation include 23,200 acres and no developed county roads. The five alternatives are summarized in table 2 (in the pocket at the end of the document). The key impacts of implementing these alternatives are summarized in table 4 and detailed in chapter 5.

This document has been distributed to other agencies and interested organizations and individuals for their review. Following distribution of the final plan and a 30-day no-action period, a "Record of Decision" will be signed by the National Lakeshore superintendent and the NPS regional director documenting the NPS selection of an alternative for implementation.

SUMMARY

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATIONAL LAKESHORE

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (hereafter referred to as National Lakeshore, Lakeshore, or park) was established by the U.S. Congress in 1970. Part of the national park system, the National Lakeshore consists of a mainland portion located in Michigan's lower peninsula plus North Manitou and South Manitou islands (71,291 acres total).

PURPOSE FOR THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN / WILDERNESS STUDY / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

General management plans are required for all units of the national park system and are intended to establish the future management direction of a park unit. General management plans look 20 or more years into the future and consider the park system unit holistically, in its full ecological and cultural context and as part of a surrounding region. This *General Management Plan* will provide comprehensive guidance for perpetuating natural systems, preserving cultural resources, and providing opportunities for quality visitor experiences at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The purpose of this plan is to decide how the National Park Service (NPS) can best fulfill the National Lakeshore's purpose, maintain its significance, and protect its resources unimpaired for the enjoyment of present and future generations. The plan does not provide specific and detailed answers to every issue facing the park, but rather is a framework to assist NPS managers in making decisions today and in the future. The National Lakeshore's last *General Management Plan*, completed in 1979, is outdated. New areas have been added to the Lakeshore at Bow Lakes, Miller Hill, and the Crystal River, and

many individual parcels within the original boundary have been acquired. New information about the significance of natural and cultural resources in the Lakeshore has been recognized. Private development adjacent to and near the National Lakeshore has increased, and this trend has accelerated in recent years. The National Lakeshore faces new management challenges as a result of all these changes. This new *General Management Plan* will update the management framework for the National Lakeshore, address changing issues and conditions, incorporate new resource information, and provide management direction for these new park lands.

The *Wilderness Study* element of this new *General Management Plan* evaluates lands within Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore for possible recommendation to Congress for inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system. The *Wilderness Study* is needed because of public interest in developing a proposal that improves upon the 1981 "Wilderness Recommendation." Including the *Wilderness Study* in the *General Management Plan* saves time and money because the two processes have similar environmental compliance and public involvement needs. Wilderness, which can be designated only by Congress, provides for permanent protection of lands in their natural condition that provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

Wilderness studies typically result in a recommendation to Congress to designate all, some, or none of the lands possessing wilderness character as part of the national wilderness preservation system. Based on the *Wilderness Study* included in this document, the National Park Service anticipates preparing a proposal for such a recommendation to forward to the U.S. Department of the Interior at the conclusion of this planning effort. However, by law,

areas proposed as wilderness in the 1981 recommendation for the National Lakeshore will be managed as wilderness until Congress acts on a new wilderness recommendation.

MANAGEMENT ZONES

Management zones prescribe how different areas of the National Lakeshore would be managed. Four management zones have been developed for the National Lakeshore — the high use zone, the experience history zone, the recreation zone, and the experience nature zone. The high use zone provides for visitor orientation, education, and other structured activities (such as ranger-led tours). High numbers of visitors enjoy and learn about the National Lakeshore. The experience history zone is managed primarily to preserve historic structures and landscapes. Moderate to high numbers of visitors enjoy and learn about significant historic activities, buildings, and landscapes. The recreation zone provides a wide range of recreational opportunities for moderate numbers of visitors. The active Lake Michigan beach area is within this zone, as is the 0.25 mile of Lake Michigan waters within the National Lakeshore boundary. The experience nature zone is the wildest, most natural management zone. Low numbers of visitors enjoy primitive recreation on foot or in nonmotorized watercraft. This is the only management zone in which wilderness may occur.

The alternatives presented in this document each propose a different configuration of the management zones within the National Lakeshore based on the overall concept for each action alternative. (The no-action alternative, which describes existing conditions, has no management zoning.) In every management zone, the Lakeshore intends to preserve and protect natural and cultural resources to the greatest extent possible given available funds.

THE ALTERNATIVES

Five alternatives, including the preferred alternative, for future management of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore are presented in this document. The alternatives were developed through a lengthy public involvement process, described in detail in the “Public Involvement, Including Scoping” section in chapter 6. Each alternative is consistent with maintaining the National Lakeshore’s purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values; the alternatives present different choices for how to manage resources, visitor use, and facilities within the Lakeshore. The alternatives are the no-action (“business as usual”) alternative, the preferred alternative, alternative A, alternative B, and alternative C. Each alternative includes a wilderness proposal. Note that the acreage figures for the various wilderness proposals are estimates based on small-scale maps. Maps of the alternatives are provided in the back pocket on the inside back cover.

The No-Action Alternative

The no-action alternative primarily reflects current conditions and activities at the National Lakeshore. This alternative is provided as a baseline against which to compare the “action” alternatives. As directed by Congress in 1982, the National Park Service would continue to manage lands proposed for wilderness in the 1981 “Wilderness Recommendation” (30,903 acres or 43% of the National Lakeshore) to maintain their existing wilderness character. Natural resource management programs would continue to emphasize protection of natural resources and processes. Efforts to preserve as many historic structures and landscapes as possible would continue.

Visitor orientation services, interpretive activities, visitor access and facilities, and recreational opportunities would remain much as they are now.

The National Park Service would continue to acquire lands within the Benzie Corridor on a willing-seller basis (subject to available funding) for future development of a scenic road, which would include bike lanes/trail. (However, the road and bike lanes/trail would not be expected to be built within the life of this plan.)

The key impacts associated with implementing this alternative would be in the areas of visitor opportunities and use and wilderness character. Visitors seem satisfied overall with most current opportunities in the Lakeshore. Maintaining the current access, scenic resources, range of visitor opportunities, experiences, and recreation-oriented facilities would have a long-term, minor to moderate beneficial impact on visitor opportunities and use. Some visitors would prefer some additional improvements in recreation-oriented facilities, a few additional visitor opportunities, or a reduction of crowding on the Platte River, and the lack of these would result in a long-term, minor adverse impact on these visitors. As the result of ongoing management of nearly 31,000 acres to maintain its existing wilderness character, as directed by Congress, the National Lakeshore would continue to include extensive, largely natural undeveloped areas where outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive, unconfined recreation would continue to be available. Impacts of the no-action alternative would continue to be mostly beneficial, moderate, and long term — but there would also be some continuing localized, minor adverse impacts on wilderness character. Impacts on historic resources, natural resources, regional socioeconomics, and NPS operations would not differ substantially among the alternatives.

Preferred Alternative

Under the preferred alternative, the Lakeshore would be valued primarily for preservation of its natural resources, and for the opportunities it provides for visitor

enjoyment of natural, cultural, and recreational resources in a scenic outdoor setting. About 32,100 acres (45% of the National Lakeshore) in the north, central, south, and island areas of the Lakeshore would be proposed as wilderness. No developed county roads are within areas proposed for wilderness.

Based on the emphasis placed on natural resource conditions and experiences in this alternative, the experience nature zone would extend across much of the Lakeshore. Some selected areas would be zoned high use or recreation to allow for possible future recreational opportunities.

Based on the emphasis placed on opportunities for enjoyment of cultural resources in this alternative, the experience history zone would encompass most of the National Lakeshore's historic resources. Historic structures and landscapes would be preserved at a minimum and managed as specified for the management zone in which they lie.

Visitor orientation services, interpretive activities, visitor access and facilities, and recreational opportunities would remain much as they are now except that a few trails and backcountry campgrounds would be added and new designated campgrounds would be provided on North Manitou Island; Valley View campground would be removed; parking at the end of Esch Road (and possibly at Platte River Point) would be improved; the possibility of improved boat access near Platte River Point could be studied; motorized boats would not be allowed on North Bar Lake; electric motors would be allowed on Bass Lake (Leelanau County), Tucker Lake, and Otter Lake; there would be improved access at some inland lakes; the Glen Lake picnic area would be upgraded; occasional ferry service for day trips to North Manitou Island would be allowed; concession auto tours to near the Giant Cedars area would be considered; and the Crystal River access area would be upgraded or relocated.

SUMMARY

The National Park Service would continue to acquire lands within the Benzie Corridor on a willing-seller basis (subject to available funding) for future development of a scenic road and/or a bike/hike trail (determined and evaluated via a future study). The road/trail would not be expected to be built within the life of this plan.

The key impacts associated with implementing this alternative would be in the areas of visitor opportunities and use and wilderness character. Increased access and visitor opportunities related to additional recreation-oriented facilities would have a long-term, moderate beneficial impact on visitor opportunities and use. Implementation of user capacity management strategies would have a long-term, minor beneficial impact on visitor opportunities, but potentially long-term minor adverse effects on use. The removal of Valley View campground and disallowing gas-powered motorboats on two inland lakes would have long-term, minor, adverse impacts on visitor opportunities and use. The increased visitor opportunities and facilities would have a long-term, minor, adverse impact on natural sound and the night sky. Establishment of 32,100 acres of designated wilderness in all three portions of the mainland and on both islands would permanently protect wilderness values (naturalness and opportunities for solitude or primitive, unconfined recreation). Impacts of the preferred alternative on wilderness character would be mostly beneficial, moderate, and long term (permanent), but there would also be some localized, minor adverse impacts. Impacts on historic resources, natural resources, regional socio-economics, and NPS operations would not differ substantially among the alternatives.

Alternative A

Under alternative A, the Lakeshore would be valued primarily for conservation of its natural resources. About 33,600 acres (47% of the

National Lakeshore) in the north, central, south, and island areas of the National Lakeshore would be proposed as wilderness. No developed county roads are within areas proposed for wilderness. Based on the emphasis on natural resources conditions and experiences in this alternative, the experience nature zone would extend across most of the Lakeshore. Historic structures and landscapes would be managed as specified for the management zone in which they lie.

Visitor orientation services, interpretive activities, visitor access and facilities, and recreational opportunities would remain much as they are now. However, interpretive opportunities relating to natural resource themes would be emphasized. On South Manitou Island, concession-operated farm tours would stop at the west end of Chicago Road and continue on foot from there, a few trails and campgrounds would be added and Valley View campground would be removed, NPS-owned Tiesma Road would be closed, motor boats would no longer be allowed on Bass Lake (Leelanau County), and the Glen Lake picnic area would be removed.

The National Park Service would cease acquisition of lands within the Benzie Corridor. No scenic roadway or trail would be developed. The National Park Service would recommend that the Lakeshore's enabling legislation be amended to remove the Benzie Corridor from the boundary. This would require congressional action.

The key impacts associated with implementing this alternative would be in the areas of visitor opportunities and use and wilderness character. Increased access and visitor opportunities related to modest additional recreation-oriented facilities would have a long-term, minor to moderate beneficial impact on visitor opportunities and use. Implementation of user capacity management strategies would have a long-term, minor beneficial impact on the visitor experience, but potentially long-term minor adverse

effects on visitor use. The loss of some vehicle access, visitor opportunities, and recreation-oriented facilities (e.g., Tiesma Road and Glen Lake picnic area) would have long-term, moderate adverse impacts on visitor opportunities and use. The removal of the Benzie Corridor from the Lakeshore boundary would have long-term, minor to moderate adverse impacts on visitor access and opportunities, scenic resources, natural soundscapes, and the night sky. Establishment of 33,600 acres of designated wilderness (the most of any alternative) in all three portions of the mainland and on both islands would permanently protect naturalness and opportunities for solitude or primitive, unconfined recreation. Impacts of alternative A on wilderness character would be mostly beneficial, moderate, and long term (permanent), but there would also be some localized minor adverse impacts on wilderness character. Impacts on historic resources, natural resources, regional socioeconomics, and NPS operations would not differ substantially among the alternatives.

Alternative B

Under alternative B the National Lakeshore would be valued primarily for its recreational opportunities in scenic outdoor settings. About 14,400 acres (20% of the National Lakeshore), all on North Manitou Island, would be proposed as wilderness. No county roads are within areas proposed for wilderness. Based on the large extent of the recreation zone in this alternative, natural resources might be modified to provide for a variety of recreational activities. Historic structures and landscapes would be managed as specified for the management zone in which they lie.

Visitor orientation services, interpretive activities, visitor access and facilities, and recreational opportunities would remain much as they are now except that a few trails and campgrounds would be added and some new campgrounds would be designated (to replace dispersed camping on North Manitou

Island), parking would be improved at Peterson Road and the end of Esch Road, facilities would be expanded and improved boat access could be studied at Platte River Point, motorized boats would be allowed on Shell and Tucker lakes, access would be improved at a few inland lakes, a few picnic areas would be upgraded, occasional ferry service for day trips to North Manitou Island would be allowed, concession auto tours to near the Giant Cedars area would be considered, and the Crystal River access area would be upgraded or relocated.

The National Park Service would continue to acquire lands within the Benzie Corridor on a willing-seller basis (subject to available funding) for future development of a scenic road. The scenic road would include bike lanes (or in some stretches a separate bike trail, as appropriate). For cost and impact comparison purposes, the scenic road was assumed to be built in year 25 of the plan.

The key impacts associated with implementing this alternative would be in the areas of visitor opportunities and use and wilderness character. Increased access and visitor opportunities related to additional recreation-oriented facilities would have a long-term, minor to moderate beneficial impact on visitor opportunities and use. Implementation of user capacity management strategies would have a long-term, minor beneficial impact on visitor experiences but potentially long-term minor adverse effects on visitor use. The removal of dispersed camping on North Manitou Island would have long-term minor adverse impacts on visitor opportunities and use. The increased visitor opportunities and facilities would have a long-term minor adverse impact on scenic resources, natural sound, and the night sky. Establishment of 14,400 acres of designated wilderness on North Manitou Island would permanently protect wilderness values therein. However, there would be no wilderness protection on the mainland or South Manitou Island, so naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive

SUMMARY

recreation would be substantially reduced there. Alternative B would have long-term (some permanent), minor beneficial and minor to major adverse impacts on wilderness character. Impacts on historic resources, natural resources, regional socioeconomics, and NPS operations would not differ substantially among the alternatives.

Alternative C

Under alternative C the Lakeshore would be managed so that most visitor use is concentrated in selected areas, with more natural, primitive conditions promoted in the rest of the Lakeshore. About 23,200 acres (32% of the National Lakeshore) in the central, south, and island areas of the Lakeshore would be proposed as wilderness. No developed county roads are within areas proposed for wilderness. Within the high use and experience history zones there would be less emphasis on managing the Lakeshore for natural conditions. Outside those concentrated use areas, the Lakeshore would be managed for more natural conditions. Historic structures and landscapes would be managed as specified for the management zone in which they lie.

Visitor orientation services, interpretive activities, visitor access and facilities, and recreational opportunities would remain much as they are now. However, more structured interpretive opportunities would be offered in concentrated use areas and more self-guided opportunities would be offered elsewhere. A few trails would be added; the D. H. Day campground would be upgraded and/or expanded; there would be new designated campgrounds on North Manitou Island; concession auto tours to near the Giant Cedars would be considered; facilities at the ends of County Road 669, Esch Road, and Platte River Point would be expanded; access to a few inland lakes would be improved; the Glen Lake picnic area would be upgraded or expanded; and the Dune Climb facilities would be upgraded.

The National Park Service would continue to acquire lands within the Benzie Corridor on a willing-seller basis (subject to available funding) for future development of a scenic nonmotorized hike/bike trail. For cost and impact comparison purposes, the scenic trail was assumed to be built in year 25 of the plan.

The key impacts associated with implementing this alternative would be in the areas of visitor opportunities and use and wilderness character. Increased access and visitor opportunities related to additional recreation-oriented facilities would have a long-term, minor to moderate beneficial impact on visitor opportunities and use. Implementation of user capacity management strategies would have a long-term, minor, beneficial impact on the visitor experience, but potentially long-term minor, adverse effects on visitor use. The increased visitor opportunities and facilities in the high-use zones would have a long-term, minor, adverse impact on scenic resources, natural sounds, and the night sky. Establishment of 23,200 acres of designated wilderness in the central and south portions of the mainland and on both islands would permanently protect wilderness values (naturalness and opportunities for solitude or primitive unconfined recreation). However, wilderness values in several areas (north portion of the mainland, Otter Creek area, and southeast portion of South Manitou Island) would no longer have wilderness protection. Impacts of alternative C on wilderness character would be long term (some permanent), minor, and adverse and beneficial. Impacts on historic resources, natural resources, regional socioeconomics, and NPS operations would not differ substantially among the alternatives.

THE NEXT STEPS

This Final General Management Plan / Wilderness Study / Environmental Impact Statement includes letters from governmental agencies, substantive comments on the draft

document, and NPS responses to those comments. Following distribution of the final plan and a 30-day no-action period, a “Record of Decision” will be signed by the National Lakeshore superintendent and the NPS regional director documenting the NPS selection of an alternative for implementation.

Although this *Final General Management Plan / Wilderness Study / Environmental Impact Statement* provides the analysis and justification for future National Lakeshore funding proposals, this plan does not guarantee future NPS funding. Many actions would be necessary to achieve the desired conditions for natural resources, cultural resources, recreational opportunities, and facilities as envisioned in this plan. The National Park Service will seek funding to

achieve these desired conditions; although the National Lakeshore hopes to secure this funding and will prepare itself accordingly, the Lakeshore may not receive enough funding to achieve all desired conditions. National Lakeshore managers will need to continue to pursue other options, including expanding the service of volunteers, drawing upon existing or new partnerships, and seeking alternative funding sources, including the philanthropic community. Even with assistance from supplemental sources, Lakeshore managers may be faced with difficult choices when setting priorities. The *General Management Plan / Wilderness Study / Environmental Impact Statement* provides the framework within which to make these choices.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

<i>A GUIDE TO THIS DOCUMENT</i>	2
<i>OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL LAKESHORE</i>	3
<i>BACKGROUND</i>	4
PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN	4
PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE WILDERNESS STUDY	7
PLANNING ISSUES AND CONCERNS	9
Wilderness	9
Access and Management of Roads within the Park	9
Protecting Fundamental Resources and Values	9
Benzie Corridor and Crystal Ridge	10
Crowding and Overuse	10
Management of Newly Acquired Park Lands	10
<i>FOUNDATION FOR PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT</i>	11
PURPOSE	11
SIGNIFICANCE	11
FUNDAMENTAL RESOURCES AND VALUES	11
PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES	12
SPECIAL MANDATES	13
Proposed Wilderness	13
Road Rights-of-Way	13
Scenic Road Corridors	13
Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping	13
National Historic Landmark — North Manitou Island Life-Saving Service Complex	14
1836 Treaty	14
SERVICEWIDE LAWS AND POLICIES	14
<i>DESIRED CONDITIONS AND STRATEGIES</i>	16
ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT	16
NATURAL RESOURCES (GENERAL) AND DIVERSITY	17
AIR QUALITY	18
WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY	18
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT	18
CULTURAL RESOURCES (GENERAL)	19
HISTORIC STRUCTURES	20
CULTURAL LANDSCAPES	20
ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES	20
ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES	21
VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE	21
VISITOR INFORMATION, INTERPRETATION, AND EDUCATION	22
VIEWSHEDS	22
NIGHT SKY	23
NATURAL SOUNDS	23
FACILITIES AND SERVICES	23
ACCESSIBILITY TO THE NATIONAL LAKESHORE	24

CONTENTS

RELATIONS WITH PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS, ADJACENT
LANDOWNERS, AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES 24

RELATIONS WITH AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES 25

WILDERNESS 25

LAND PROTECTION 26

RESEARCH 26

BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS 27

**RELATIONSHIP OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN TO OTHER PLANNING
EFFORTS 28**

NPS MANAGEMENT PLANS AND STUDIES 28

 Scenic Road Feasibility Study 28

 Platte River Management Plan 28

 Fire Management Plan 28

 Strategic Plan 29

 Port Oneida Rural Historic District Environmental Assessment 29

COUNTY AND REGIONAL PLANS 29

 Leelanau General Plan 29

 Benzie County 2020 Comprehensive Plan 30

 Benzie County Open Space and Natural Resources Protection Plan 30

COOPERATIVE PLANS 30

 Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route Trailway 30

ONGOING NPS PROJECTS AND PROJECTS PLANNED FOR THE NEAR FUTURE 32

BEACH ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS — ENDS OF LEELANAU COUNTY ROADS 651
AND 669 32

GLEN HAVEN VILLAGE IMPROVEMENTS 32

LAKE MICHIGAN OVERLOOKS IMPROVEMENTS—PIERCE STOCKING SCENIC
DRIVE 32

RESTORE THE FORMER WATER WHEEL AND CASEY’S CANOE LIVERIES —
PLATTE RIVER 32

RESTORATION OF DISTURBED AREAS WITHIN THE NATIONAL LAKESHORE 33

SOUTH MANITOU LIGHTHOUSE COMPLEX — EXTERIOR RESTORATION AND
INTERIOR REHABILITATION 33

DUNE CLIMB PARKING AREA—PAVING AND OTHER MINOR IMPROVEMENTS
33

CHAPTER 2: ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

INTRODUCTION 37

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 38

IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING 38

KEY IMPLEMENTATION PLANS TO FOLLOW THIS GENERAL MANAGEMENT
PLAN / WILDERNESS STUDY / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT 38

 Wilderness Management 38

 Asset Management 38

 Ethnographic Resources Study/Assessment 39

MANAGEMENT ZONES 40

USER CAPACITY (CARRYING CAPACITY) 44

OVERVIEW 44

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT AND POTENTIAL USE-RELATED IMPACTS 45
 POTENTIAL USER CAPACITY INDICATORS AND RELATED MANAGEMENT
 ACTIONS 46
 AREAS FOR SPECIAL MONITORING ATTENTION 47
ALTERNATIVES 48
NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE 49
 OVERALL VISION 49
 WILDERNESS 49
 NATURAL RESOURCES 49
 CULTURAL RESOURCES 49
 VISITOR ORIENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND EDUCATION 50
 VISITOR FACILITIES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND ACTIVITIES 50
 Benzie Corridor 50
 Bow Lakes 51
 BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS 51
 STAFFING AND COSTS 51
PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 52
 OVERALL VISION 52
 WILDERNESS 52
 NATURAL RESOURCES 52
 CULTURAL RESOURCES 52
 VISITOR ORIENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND EDUCATION 53
 VISITOR FACILITIES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND ACTIVITIES 53
 Benzie Corridor 55
 Bow Lakes 55
 BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS 55
 STAFFING AND COSTS 55
ALTERNATIVE A 56
 OVERALL VISION 56
 WILDERNESS 56
 NATURAL RESOURCES 56
 CULTURAL RESOURCES 56
 VISITOR ORIENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND EDUCATION 57
 VISITOR FACILITIES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND ACTIVITIES 57
 Benzie Corridor 58
 Bow Lakes 58
 BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS 58
 STAFFING AND COSTS 59
ALTERNATIVE B 60
 OVERALL VISION 60
 WILDERNESS 60
 NATURAL RESOURCES 60
 CULTURAL RESOURCES 60
 VISITOR ORIENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND EDUCATION 61
 VISITOR FACILITIES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND ACTIVITIES 61
 Benzie Corridor 62
 Bow Lakes 62
 BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS 62
 STAFFING AND COSTS 63

CONTENTS

ALTERNATIVE C 64
OVERALL VISION 64
WILDERNESS 64
NATURAL RESOURCES 64
CULTURAL RESOURCES 64
VISITOR ORIENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND EDUCATION 65
VISITOR FACILITIES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND ACTIVITIES 65
 Benzie Corridor 66
 Bow Lakes 67
BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS 67
STAFFING AND COSTS 67
MITIGATIVE MEASURES FOR THE ACTION ALTERNATIVES 68
GENERAL 68
CULTURAL RESOURCES 68
 Archeological Resources 68
 Human Remains 69
 Ethnographic Resources 69
 Historic Structures and Landscapes 69
NATURAL RESOURCES 69
 General 69
 Wetlands 69
 Geology and Soils 70
 Vegetation and Wildlife 70
 Threatened and Endangered Species 70
THE ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE 71

CHAPTER 3: WILDERNESS STUDY AND PROPOSAL

INTRODUCTION 83
WILDERNESS DEFINITION 83
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA 83
WILDERNESS STUDY AND PROPOSAL 84
WILDERNESS ELIGIBILITY 84
OPTIONS ANALYZED IN THIS WILDERNESS STUDY 84
PUBLIC COMMENT ON WILDERNESS 86
WILDERNESS PROPOSAL 87
IMPLICATIONS OF MANAGING LANDS PROPOSED FOR WILDERNESS 89
PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT 89
PRIVATE RIGHTS 89
RECREATIONAL USE 89
EMERGENCY SERVICES 90
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND RESEARCH 90

CHAPTER 4: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION 93
IMPACT TOPICS CONSIDERED AND ANALYZED IN DETAIL 94

HISTORIC RESOURCES	94
Historic Property Definitions	94
Properties Listed in the National Register of Historic Places	98
Properties Determined Eligible for Inclusion on the National Register and Possible New National Register Districts	100
NATURAL RESOURCES	101
Soils and Geologic Resources	101
Vegetation	102
Wildlife	107
Federal Threatened and Endangered Species	109
Michigan State-Listed Species	118
Wetlands	126
Water Quality	126
VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES	128
Fundamental Resources and Values	128
Primary Interpretive Themes	129
Information, Interpretation, and Education	129
Recreational Activities	130
Natural Soundscapes and Night Sky	131
VISITOR USE	131
Origin of Visitors and Length of Stay	131
Primary Destinations within Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore	133
WILDERNESS CHARACTER	133
Current Management of Areas Proposed for Wilderness	133
Natural and Undeveloped	134
Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude	135
Outstanding Opportunities for Primitive, Unconfined Recreation	135
REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMICS	135
Population	136
Economic Overview	136
Commercial and Noncommercial Services Provided at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore	139
Income and Poverty	139
Demographics	140
Housing	142
Highway Traffic and Emergency Services	143
Land Use and Landownership	144
Economic Contributions of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore	145
Attitudes and Lifestyle Issues Associated with the National Lakeshore	146
NPS OPERATIONS	147
Operations and Management	147
Interpretation and Visitor Services Division	147
Resource and Visitor Protection Division	147
Facility Maintenance Division	147
Natural Resources Management Division	148
Administration Division	148
Volunteers and Partners	148
Facilities and Infrastructure	148
<i>IMPACT TOPICS CONSIDERED BUT NOT ANALYZED IN DETAIL</i>	153

CONTENTS

MUSEUM COLLECTIONS 153
ETHNOGRAPHIC RESOURCES 153
ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES 154
INDIAN TRUST RESOURCES 154
AIR QUALITY 155
MICHIGAN STATE-LISTED SPECIES 155
 Northern Goshawk 155
 Grasshopper Sparrow 156
 Least Bittern 156
 Calypso or Fairy-slipper 156
 Beauty Sedge 157
 Broad-leaved Sedge 157
FLOODPLAINS 157
COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT 158
WATER QUANTITY 158
PRIME OR UNIQUE FARMLAND 158
ENERGY REQUIREMENTS AND CONSERVATION POTENTIAL 158
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE 158
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS 159

CHAPTER 5: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

INTRODUCTION 163
TERMS AND ASSUMPTIONS 163
CUMULATIVE IMPACTS 163
 Fire Management Plan (2005a) 164
 Dredging of the Platte River Mouth (Past, Ongoing) 164
IMPAIRMENT OF NATIONAL LAKESHORE RESOURCES 164
IMPACTS TO CULTURAL RESOURCES AND SECTION 106 OF THE NATIONAL
 HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT 165
METHODS AND ASSUMPTIONS FOR ANALYZING IMPACTS 167
HISTORIC RESOURCES 167
SOILS AND GEOLOGIC RESOURCES 167
VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE 168
FEDERAL THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES 170
MICHIGAN STATE-LISTED SPECIES 171
WETLANDS AND WATER QUALITY 173
VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES AND USE 175
 Visitor Opportunities 175
 Visitor Use 175
WILDERNESS CHARACTER 177
REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMICS 178
 Impact Thresholds and Characterization 179
NPS OPERATIONS 180
 Impact Intensity Definitions 181
IMPACTS OF THE NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE 182
HISTORIC RESOURCES 182
 Cumulative Impacts 183

Conclusion	183
NATURAL RESOURCES	184
Soils and Geologic Resources	184
Vegetation and Wildlife	185
Federal Threatened and Endangered Species	186
Michigan State-Listed Species	188
Wetlands and Water Quality	190
VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES AND USE	190
Visitor Opportunities	190
Visitor Use	192
Cumulative Effects	192
Conclusion	192
WILDERNESS CHARACTER	192
Natural and Undeveloped	192
Opportunities for Solitude	193
Opportunities for Primitive, Unconfined Recreation	193
Cumulative Impacts	193
Conclusion	193
REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMICS	194
Visitor-Related Economic Impacts	194
Economic Impacts Related to Implementation and NPS Operations	194
Effects on Regional Population	195
Community Services	195
Traffic and Emergency Services	196
Attitudes and Lifestyles	196
Cumulative Impacts	197
Conclusion	197
NPS OPERATIONS	197
Cumulative Impacts	197
Conclusion	198
UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS	198
IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES	198
RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY	198
IMPACTS OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE	199
HISTORIC RESOURCES	199
Cumulative Impacts	200
Conclusion	200
NATURAL RESOURCES	201
Soils and Geologic Resources	201
Vegetation and Wildlife	202
Federal Threatened and Endangered Species	204
Michigan State-Listed Species	206
Wetlands and Water Quality	208
VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES AND USE	210
Visitor Opportunities	210
Visitor Use	211
Cumulative Impacts	212
Conclusion	212
WILDERNESS CHARACTER	213

CONTENTS

Natural and Undeveloped	213
Opportunities for Solitude	213
Opportunities for Primitive, Unconfined Recreation	213
Cumulative Impacts	213
Conclusion	214
REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMICS	214
Visitor-Related Economic Impacts	214
Economic Impacts Related to Implementation and NPS Operations	215
Effects on Regional Population	216
Community Services	216
Traffic and Emergency Services	216
Attitudes and Lifestyles	217
Cumulative Impacts	217
Conclusion	218
NPS OPERATIONS	218
Cumulative Impacts	218
Conclusion	219
UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS	219
IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES	219
RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY	219
<i>IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE A</i>	<i>220</i>
HISTORIC RESOURCES	220
Cumulative Impacts	221
Conclusion	221
NATURAL RESOURCES	222
Soils and Geologic Resources	222
Vegetation and Wildlife	223
Federal Threatened and Endangered Species	224
Michigan State-Listed Species	227
Wetlands and Water Quality	229
VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES AND USE	230
Visitor Opportunities	230
Visitor Use	231
Cumulative Impacts	232
Conclusion	232
WILDERNESS CHARACTER	232
Natural and Undeveloped	232
Opportunities for Solitude	233
Opportunities for Primitive, Unconfined Recreation	233
Cumulative Impacts	233
Conclusion	233
REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMICS	234
Visitor-Related Economic Impacts	234
Economic Impacts Related to Implementation and NPS Operations	234
Effects on Regional Population	235
Community Services	235
Traffic and Emergency Services	235
Attitudes and Lifestyles	236
Cumulative Impacts	236

Conclusion	237
NPS OPERATIONS	237
Cumulative Impacts	237
Conclusion	237
UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS	237
IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES	237
RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY	238
IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE B	239
HISTORIC RESOURCES	239
Cumulative Impacts	240
Conclusion	240
NATURAL RESOURCES	241
Soils and Geologic Resources	241
Vegetation and Wildlife	242
Federal Threatened and Endangered Species	244
Michigan State-Listed Species	247
Wetlands and Water Quality	249
VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES AND USE	250
Visitor Opportunities	250
Visitor Use	252
Cumulative Impacts	252
Conclusion	252
WILDERNESS CHARACTER	253
Natural and Undeveloped	253
Opportunities for Solitude	253
Opportunities for Primitive, Unconfined Recreation	253
Cumulative Impacts	253
Conclusion	254
REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMICS	254
Visitor-Related Economic Impacts	254
Economic Impacts Related to Implementation and NPS Operations	255
Effects on Regional Population	256
Community Services	256
Traffic and Emergency Services	256
Attitudes and Lifestyles	256
Cumulative Impacts	257
Conclusion	257
NPS OPERATIONS	257
Cumulative Impacts	258
Conclusion	258
UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS	258
IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES	258
RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY	258
IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE C	260
HISTORIC RESOURCES	260
Cumulative Impacts	261
Conclusion	261
NATURAL RESOURCES	262
Soils and Geologic Resources	262

CONTENTS

Vegetation and Wildlife 263
Federal Threatened and Endangered Species 265
Michigan State-Listed Species 268
Wetlands and Water Quality 269
VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES AND USE 271
Visitor Opportunities 271
Visitor Use 272
Cumulative Impacts 273
Conclusion 273
WILDERNESS CHARACTER 273
Natural and Undeveloped 273
Opportunities for Solitude 274
Opportunities for Primitive, Unconfined Recreation 274
Cumulative Impacts 274
Conclusion 274
REGIONAL SOCIOECONOMICS 274
Visitor-Related Economic Impacts 275
Economic Impacts Related to Implementation and NPS Operations 275
Effects on Regional Population 276
Community Services 276
Traffic and Emergency Services 276
Attitudes and Lifestyles 277
Cumulative Impacts 278
Conclusion 278
NPS OPERATIONS 278
Cumulative Impacts 279
Conclusion 279
UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS 279
IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES 279
RELATIONSHIP OF SHORT-TERM USES AND LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY 279

CHAPTER 6: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, INCLUDING SCOPING 283
*CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION TO DATE WITH OTHER AGENCIES, OFFICES,
AND TRIBES 287*
FEDERAL AGENCIES 287
STATE AGENCIES 288
AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES 289
LIST OF AGENCIES OR ENTITIES RECEIVING A COPY OF THIS PLAN 290
*COMMENTS ON, CHANGES TO, AND RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT
PLAN 295*
COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT PLAN 295
KEY CHANGES TO THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 295
RESPONSES TO COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT PLAN 296
COMMENT LETTERS AND RESPONSES 309

**APPENDIXES, SELECTED REFERENCES, PREPARERS AND CONSULTANTS, AND
INDEX**

APPENDIX A: LEGISLATION 331
APPENDIX B: ANALYSIS OF BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS 345
APPENDIX C: COST SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES 348
APPENDIX D: DEVELOPMENT OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE 350
APPENDIX E: WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS 355
APPENDIX F: INITIAL CONSULTATION LETTERS 357

SELECTED REFERENCES 362

PREPARERS AND CONSULTANTS 369

INDEX 371

Tables

Table 1: Management Zones 42
 Table 2: Comparison of Alternatives back pocket
 Table 3: Range of Treatment for Historic Properties under the Alternatives 74
 Table 4: Summary of the Impacts of the Alternatives 76
 Table 5: Wilderness Options Evaluated in this Wilderness Study 85
 Table 6: Existing Listed Properties 100
 Table 7: Bird Species Associated with Cultural Open Lands in Sleeping Bear Dunes National
 Lakeshore That Are Designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as Species of
 Conservation Concern 108
 Table 8: Special Status Plant and Animal Species 111
 Table 9: Population Growth Trends, 1990 to 2006 136
 Table 10: Employment by Major Category, 2005 137
 Table 11: Unemployment Rates, 2000 to 2006 138
 Table 12: Overview of Agricultural Operations in the Region, 2002 138
 Table 13: Total Personal Income 141
 Table 14: Composition of Total Personal Income, 2005 (in millions) 141
 Table 15: Per Capita Personal Income, 2000 and 2005 141
 Table 16: Median Household Income and Incidence of Poverty — 2004 141
 Table 17: Selected Demographic Characteristics, 2000 142
 Table 18: Selected Housing Characteristics 142
 Table 19: Traffic Volumes 2005/06, Selected Locations near the National Lakeshore 143
 Table 20: Trails and Trail Systems at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore 150
 Table 21: Summary of Past, Present, and Ongoing (Future) Actions and Their Impacts on
 Threatened and Endangered Species 172
 Table 22: Projected Long-Term Increases in Annual Visitor Use Associated with Implementation
 of the General Management Plan (Roughly 20 Years) 176

CONTENTS

Figures

- Figure 1: Recreation Visits by Year at the National Lakeshore 132
Figure 2: Average Monthly Recreation Visitation at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1990 to 2006 132
Figure 3: Types of Use at the National Lakeshore 133
Figure 4: Monthly Visitation at Selected Locations, August 2005 134
Figure 5: Total Employment in the Region, 1990 to 2005 137
Figure 6: Comparison of Long-Term Increases in Average Annual Visitor Use to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore under the Action Alternatives 212

Maps

- Region 5
No-action Alternative back pocket
Preferred Alternative back pocket
Alternative A back pocket
Alternative B back pocket
Alternative C back pocket
Prominent Historical Resources Base Map 95
Natural Resources Base Map 103