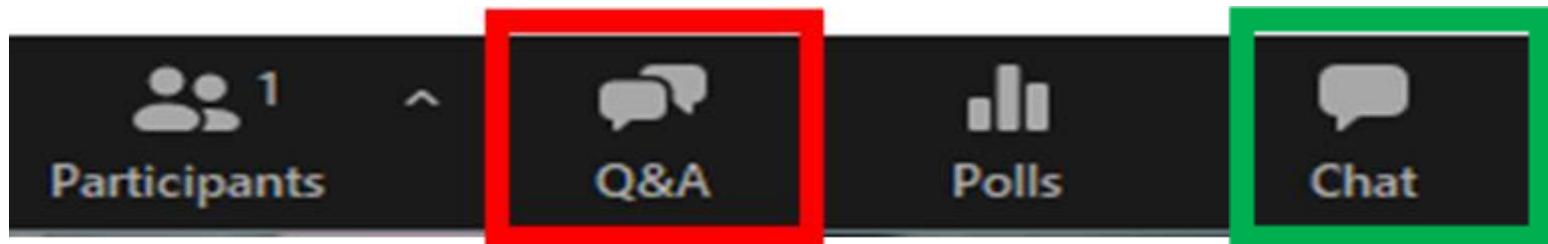


Welcome to the Virtual Meeting

- **This meeting is being recorded**
- Only presenters will be on video
- All attendees will be muted
- Please use respectful language
- Add project-related questions in the Q&A dialogue box
- The chat can be used to provide comments or for technical support





ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK
WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP PLAN AND EIS
PUBLIC MEETING



Welcome!

Agenda:

- Project Background
- Purpose and Need
- Alternatives
- Issues and Impacts
- Ways to Comment
- NEPA Process and Schedule

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ISLE ROYALE NATIONAL PARK



Project Background



Project Background

- Consists of one large island, Isle Royale, traditionally called Minong, and roughly 450 smaller islands
- Park boundary extends 4.5 miles into Lake Superior from the outermost land area, but this effort does not include any management actions in the water
- The project area includes only those portions of land designated as wilderness and potential wilderness additions (PWAs)





Project Background Continued

1931

Isle Royale authorized by Congress as a national park.

1976

99% of park lands designated as wilderness by Public Law 94-567 to be administered under the Wilderness Act of 1964. 231 acres designated as potential wilderness additions (PWAs).

1983

138 acres of PWAs converted to wilderness following the removal of a powerline.

2022

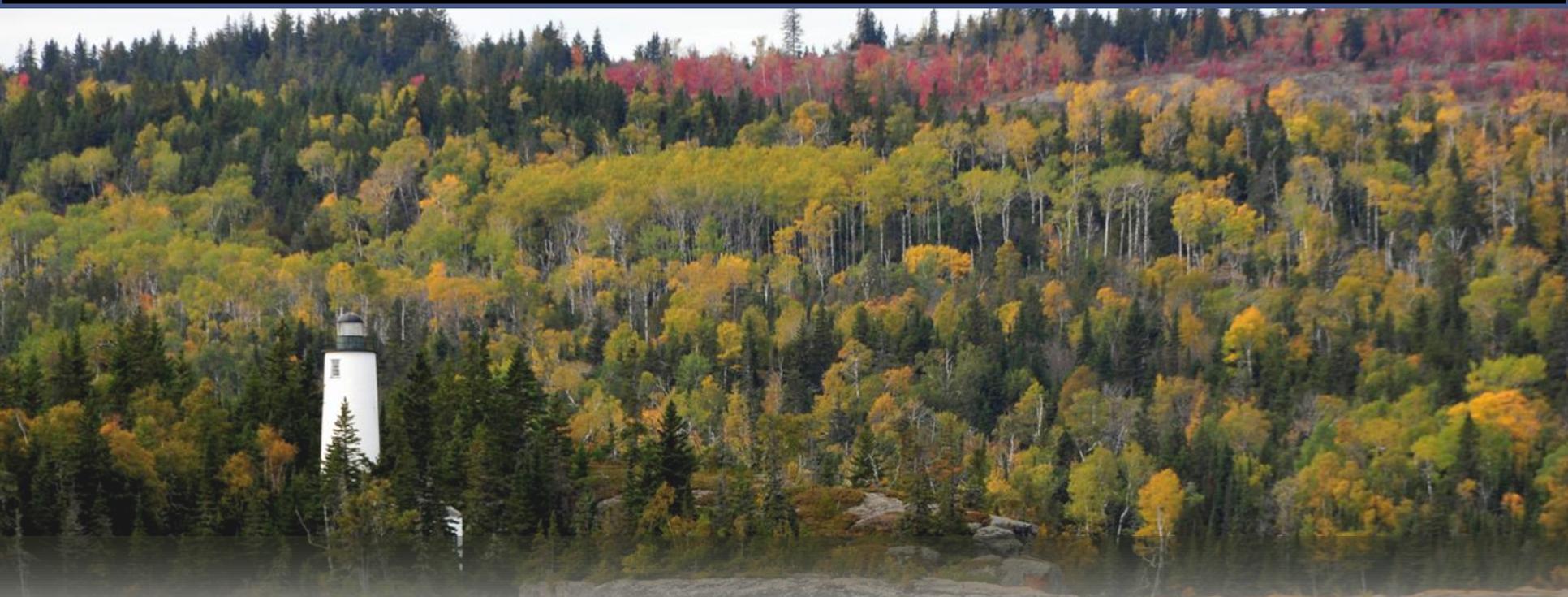
Notice of Intent published by the NPS to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for a **Wilderness Stewardship Plan**.

Today

93 acres within the park remain as PWAs. Only 1,677 acres of the 133,768-acre island is non-wilderness. Isle Royale is seasonally used for wilderness recreation and scientific endeavors.

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Purpose and Need

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Purpose

The **purpose** is to outline strategies for preserving wilderness character, while also providing for the use and enjoyment of the park by current and future generations.



Need

- The NPS has identified the following reasons the plan is **needed**:
 - The General Management Plan (1998) specified the need for a wilderness and backcountry management plan to guide management of wilderness resources and ensure consistency.
 - NPS Management policies (2006) directs that each park containing wilderness must maintain an up-to-date and approved wilderness management plan to guide the preservation, management, and use of wilderness resources.
 - Changes in wilderness use, management actions, increasing visitation, and associated human-caused adverse impacts suggest an underlying need to more proactively manage human activities that directly or indirectly affect wilderness character.
 - The park currently lacks a management strategy for the treatment and use of historic structures and installations in potential and designated wilderness.
 - As nonconforming uses (e.g., occupancy of cabins through life-leases) end in potential wilderness additions (PWA), management planning is essential to ensure these lands met the qualification required for conversion to full wilderness designation.

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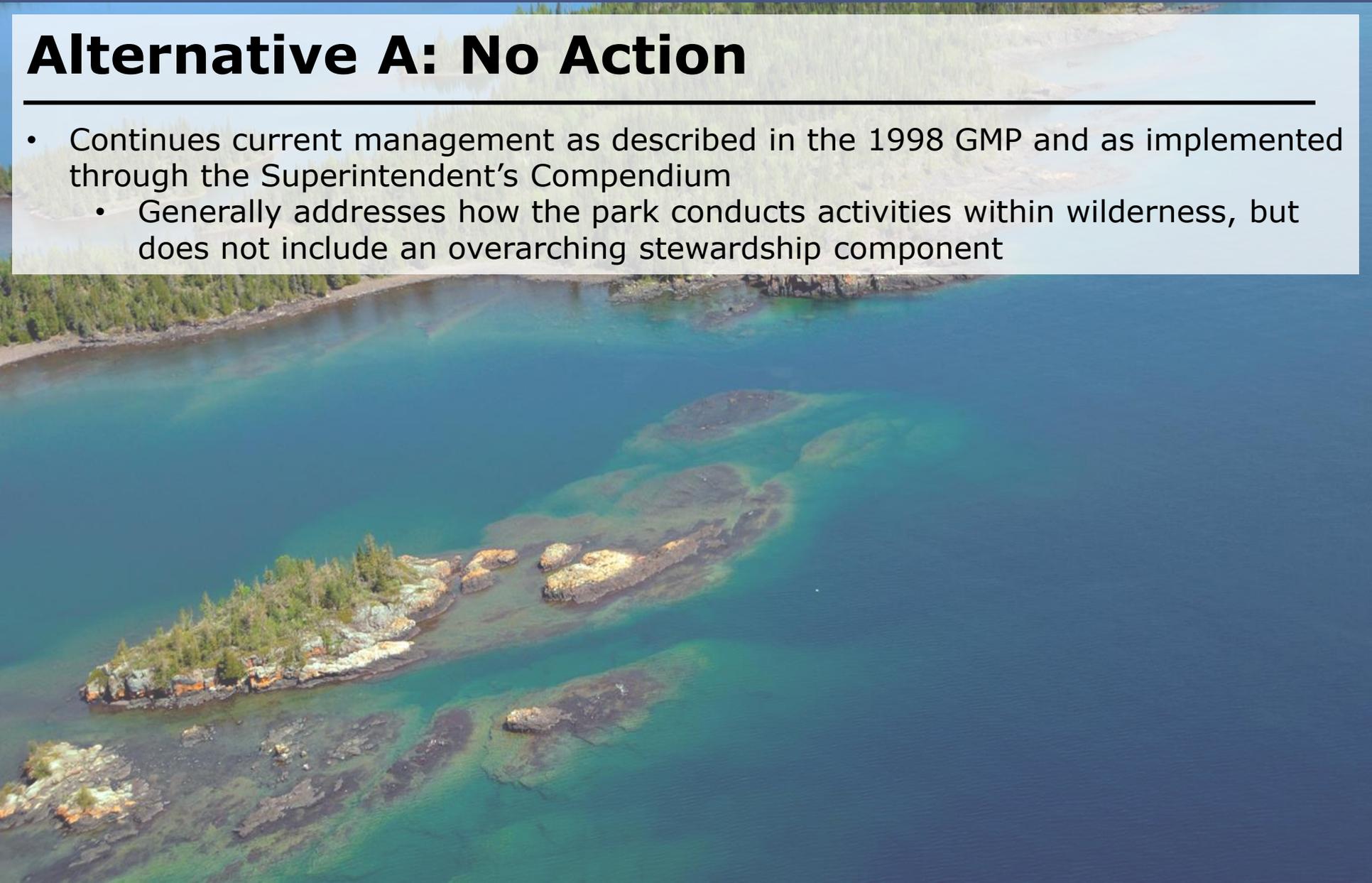
Alternatives and Key Differences





Alternative A: No Action

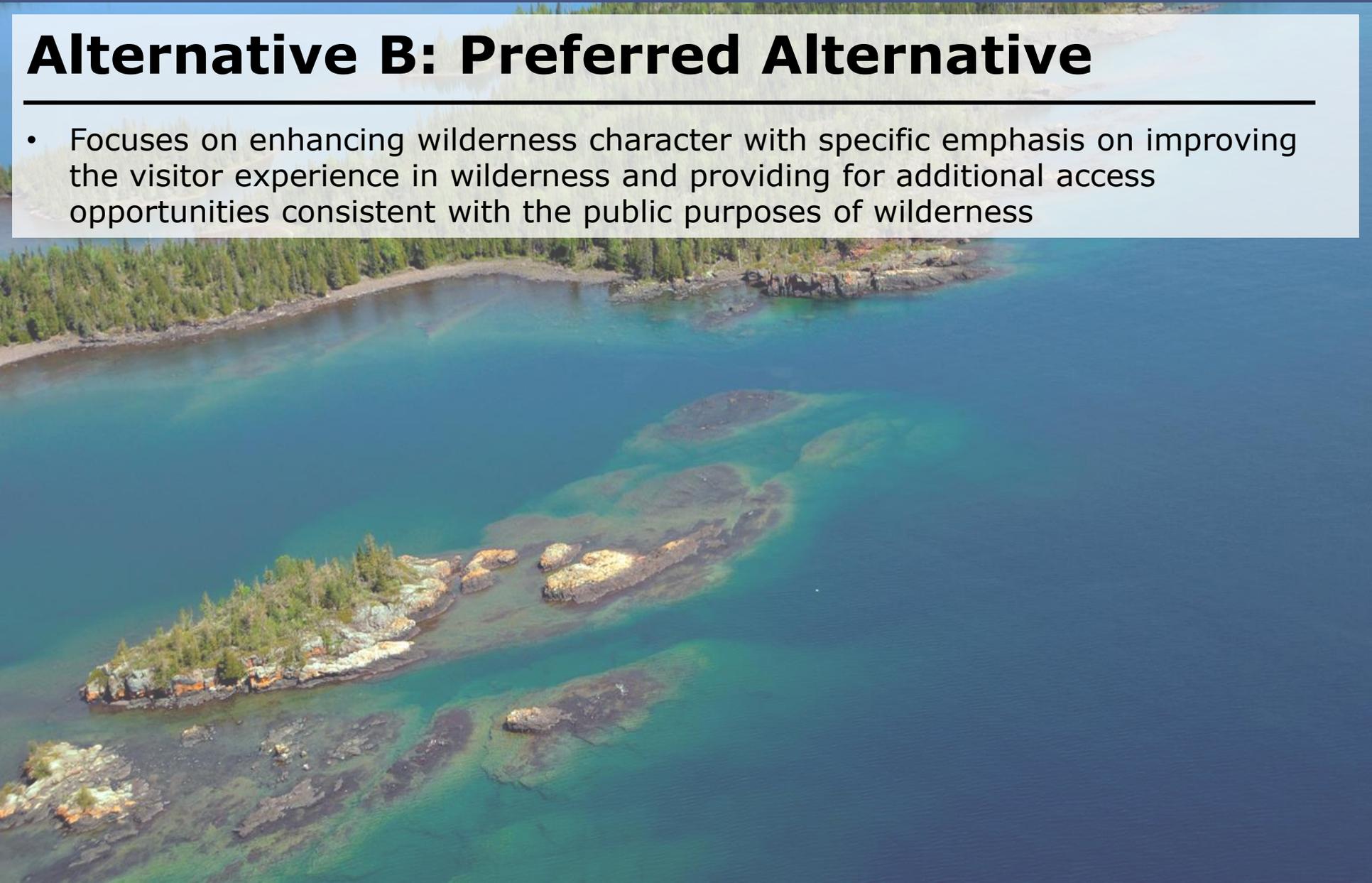
- Continues current management as described in the 1998 GMP and as implemented through the Superintendent's Compendium
 - Generally addresses how the park conducts activities within wilderness, but does not include an overarching stewardship component





Alternative B: Preferred Alternative

- Focuses on enhancing wilderness character with specific emphasis on improving the visitor experience in wilderness and providing for additional access opportunities consistent with the public purposes of wilderness





Alternative C

- Focuses on enhancing wilderness character with specific emphasis on improving solitude
 - Solitude is generally preserved or improved by management actions that reduce visitor encounters, signs of modern civilization inside wilderness, facilities, and management restrictions on visitor behavior
- Proposes elimination of commercial use within Isle Royale wilderness



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Key Differences

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
Overnight Group Size	Existing group size is 7 to a maximum of 10. Organizations may not have more than 20 people camping on the island at one time.	Increases group size to 9 to a maximum of 12. Organizations may not have more than 24 people camping on the island at one time.	Same group size as alternative A. The park would implement monitoring to determine when changes to the group size limits would be adjusted.
Wilderness Permitting System	No change to existing permit system and no limit on total number of permits issued.	Visitors would be required to obtain backcountry permits in advance of their trip. A new permitting system and monitoring program would be established and campgrounds would be booked up to 85% of capacity in advance. The remaining 15% of campsites would not be booked in advance to allow for flexible itineraries.	A reservation system would be established allowing visitors to make night-by-night reservations of campsites for specific dates, and all itineraries would be fixed.

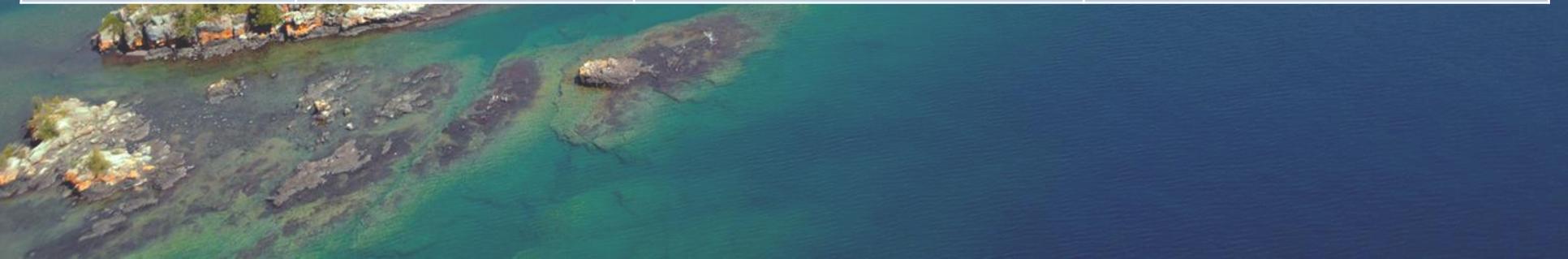
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Key Differences Continued

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
Campground Management	No change to existing campground locations or configurations.	No campground would be established at Fisherman's Home or Crystal Cove. Two new wilderness campgrounds would be established, one on Wright Island and another on Johns Island to provide more opportunities for boaters, kayakers, and canoers.	All existing campgrounds would remain. Over time, the NPS would consider eliminating or relocating individual campsites within campgrounds to increase separation between campsites and promote solitude. Non-motorized campgrounds would be considered. 20 shelters would be removed from wilderness and converted to campsites where possible.
General Management Plan Zones	No change to Zones established in the 1998 GMP.	Various areas of the island would be rezoned to reflect current and proposed uses, including hiking trails and administrative uses.	Amygdaloid Ranger Station would be rezoned from backcountry to wilderness portal zone to reflect current and proposed ongoing use of the area for administrative use.



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Key Differences Continued

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
Winter Closure	No change to existing management, park would be closed during the winter.	The winter closure would remain in effect but would be reevaluated if open water existed during 100% of the winter season for at least five consecutive years.	The park would remain open to public visitation during the winter season, without visitor services.
Treatments for Historic Properties in Wilderness	The park would continue to minimally preserve and maintain these structures. Preservation activities are done opportunistically when funding, partnerships, and resources are available.	52 structures and installations in wilderness would be preserved, 23 structures would be stabilized, 7 structures would be removed, and 18 structures and installations would be allowed to molder in place.	40 structures and installations would be preserved, 34 structures and installations would be stabilized, 7 structures would be removed, and 19 structures and installations would be allowed to molder in place.

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Key Differences Continued

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
Concessions and Commercial Services	Various concessions and commercial services provided to park visitors would continue, subject to extent necessary determinations.	Guided hiking, backpacking, canoe/kayak trips, interpretive tours and education programs would be allowed in wilderness, pending an extent necessary determination.	No guided backpacking or guided canoe/kayak trips that use wilderness campsites would be permitted.
Conversion of Potential Wilderness Additions and Nonconforming Uses	All existing PWAs would remain potential wilderness.	All existing PWAs would be converted to designated wilderness except Davidson Island and Amygdaloid Island. Existing nonconforming uses would be evaluated for continuation or elimination under a MRA as part of this conversion.	All existing PWAs would be converted to designated wilderness. Existing nonconforming uses would be evaluated for continuation or elimination under a MRA as part of this conversion.

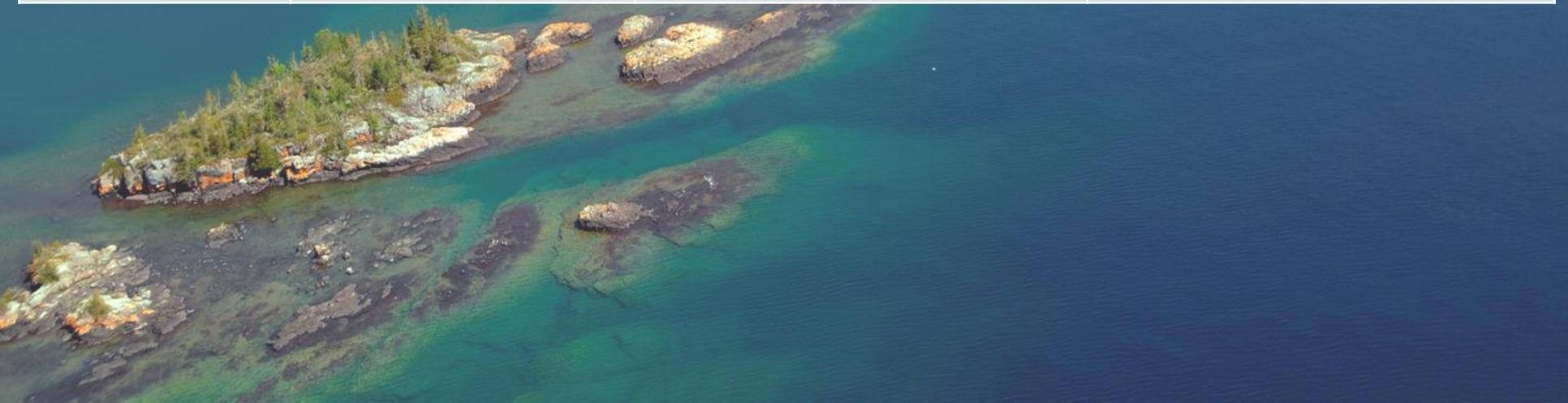
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Key Differences Continued

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C
Day Use Group Size Requirements	<p>Day use group sizes generally are based on the capacity of excursion vessels or ferries. The NPS would control group sizes through the appropriate permitting mechanism with group tour providers.</p>	<p><u>Frontcountry zone</u>: Group size limit of 40.</p> <p><u>Wilderness portal, backcountry, and primitive zones</u>: Group size limit of 24 (two groups of 12 or fewer). Hidden Lake and Lookout Louise would be exceptions, with group sizes of up to 40 people accepted.</p> <p><u>Wilderness immersion zone (Off-trail)</u>: Group size limit 8.</p>	<p><u>Frontcountry zone</u>: Group size limit of 20.</p> <p><u>Wilderness portal, backcountry, and primitive zones</u>: Group size limit of 10. Hidden Lake, Lookout Louise, McCargoe Cove, and the Minong Mine would be exceptions, with group sizes of up to 20 people accepted.</p> <p><u>Wilderness immersion zone (Off-trail)</u>: Group size limit of 6.</p>



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A scenic photograph of a rocky coastline. In the foreground, there is a large, light-colored, textured rock formation. The middle ground shows a rocky shore with a dense forest of green trees. The water is a clear, vibrant blue. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

Issues and Environmental Consequences



Wilderness Character and Cultural Resources

The EIS assesses issues and potential impacts related to wilderness character and cultural resources. The NPS manages five qualities of wilderness character which are derived from the definition of wilderness established in the Wilderness Act, Section 2(c). The EIS considered potential impacts for four of those five. Potential impacts to three types of cultural resources are analyzed in the EIS: historic structures and installations, historic districts, and cultural landscapes.





Wilderness Character

Natural Quality

- Trail and campground management could result in loss of ground cover, compaction of soils and erosion, and disturbance of vegetation and wildlife.
- Campground management could also result in revegetation and other habitat improvements.
- These human actions could alter ecological processes and have the potential to result in impacts to this quality.

Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation

- Campgrounds, trails, group size limits, permits, commercial guiding, closures and public use limits, the presence of facilities that decrease self-reliant recreation, and other management actions may impact solitude and unconfined recreation.
- Actions outside wilderness, including the use of generators, may affect opportunities for solitude. These actions may impact visitor self-reliance and self-discovery.



Wilderness Character

Undeveloped Quality

- Removal, preservation, or use of historic and administrative structures and installations in wilderness may impact the undeveloped quality of wilderness.

Other Features of Value: Historic Features

- Preservation, stabilization, moldering, or removal of historic structures and installations in wilderness are impacts to historic features in wilderness. Preservation, stabilization and limited use of historic structures or installations in wilderness are sometimes necessary for management purposes.
- This plan proposes such actions, consistent with the Wilderness Act, Section 2(c), including (4), where features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value exist in the park.



Cultural Resources

Historic Structures

- Defined as “constructed work[s]... consciously created to serve some human activity”
- Installations include “anything made by humans that is not intended for human occupation and is left unattended or left behind when the installer leaves the wilderness”
- They are usually immovable
- Examples: Structures, nautical vessels, bridges, fences, ruins

Historic Districts

- A group of structures, properties, or sites that have been designated in, or are considered eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places
- Historic and architecturally significant areas
- Example: Tobin Harbor

Cultural Landscapes

- Distinctive features of the human-built environment or natural environment, or both, and represent aspects of a way of life of a people, group, or family
- Cultural landscapes addressed in the plan: Fisherman’s Home, Crystal Cove, Captain Kidd Island, and Bangsund Research Station

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How to Comment

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How to Comment

Please provide comments back by September 26, 2023.

When making public comments, please consider the following questions:

1. What other alternatives, alternative elements, or management tools should be considered?
2. What do you like and dislike about the alternatives, and why?
3. What additional issues or data should be considered in the existing environment or impact analyses?

Get additional information and submit comments electronically at:

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/ISROWilderness>

Mail or hand-deliver hard copy comments to:

Isle Royale National Park
800 East Lakeshore Drive
Houghton, Michigan 49931

Comments will **not** be accepted by fax, e-mail, or any other way than through the website and mailing address provided above. Bulk comments in any format (hard copy or electronic) submitted on behalf of others will **not** be accepted. Before including your address, phone number, email 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.

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NEPA Process and EIS Schedule

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EIS Schedule

Fall 2022	Publication of the Notice of Intent; public comment period and preparation of public comment analysis report
Winter 2022/2023	Preparation of the draft plan and EIS
July 28, 2023	Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS published in the Federal Register
July 28 – September 26, 2023	Public review and comment period with ongoing consultation **WE ARE HERE**
August 3 & September 7, 2023	Virtual Public Meetings
Winter 2023/2024	Final plan/EIS and newsletter released
Winter/Spring 2024	Prepare and finalize Record of Decision



Thank you!