



# Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

## What's New / What's Cool in 2014

### Special Anniversaries

- September 3, 2014 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of the Wilderness Act. The 1964 law established the National Wilderness Preservation System and set aside an initial 9.1 million acres of wildlands. Since that time over 100 million acres have been added to this unique land preservation system, including the Gaylord Nelson Wilderness within Apostle Islands NL. Our own Wilderness area has a special anniversary of its own, being ten years old on December 8, 2014.

### Major Projects Scheduled for 2014

#### Light Stations

- Major lighthouse preservation efforts for Michigan, Devils, Outer, Sand, and Long Islands continue this year. Work began in late May and is expected to be completed in 2014. The work includes extensive interior and exterior repairs, and re-opening of the historic clearings around several of the lights. Sandblasting and repainting the towers at Devils and Outer Islands will entail close coordination with the Coast Guard and NOAA to assure that disruptions to navigation and weather instruments will be as short as possible. Temporary closures will be needed at:
  - Michigan Island light station and dock
  - Devils Island light station
  - Outer Island light station and dock
  - Long Island light station and dock
  - Sand Island light station

Updated closure information will be posted at: <http://www.nps.gov/apis/historyculture/please-pardon-our-mess.htm>

More details on this project are available at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=29408>.

- The Raspberry Island boathouse will get some tender loving care. Restoration will be done on both the foundation and the building, thanks to funding from the Friends of the Apostle Islands (<http://www.friendsoftheapostleislands.org>) and the NPS.
- Exhibits will be installed in the first floor of the old Michigan Island Lighthouse this fall. The theme for these exhibits is: *The lighthouse on Michigan Island serves as an icon that represents changing times and how these changes impacted people in the region*. In 2015, an audio description component will be added to provide access to these exhibits to a wide range of visitors.
- At the Long Island light station, removal of vegetation near the building will continue in 2014 to increase air circulation and improve mold/moisture mitigation at the Keepers Quarters Triplex.

#### Dock and Marina Work

- Dredging will be done, as needed, at Little Sand Bay and Stockton Presque Isle.
- Little Sand Bay Marina – in 2013, work began to replace finger piers and continued through the winter as workers decked the finger piers while working off of the ice. Five finger piers have been completed, with the shoreward one built consistent with accessibility standards. The final step is lowering the main dock to provide easier access to the finger piers and to adapt to climate change. This is scheduled to be completed this summer.
- The park is working with the Town of Russell to make needed repairs to the boat launch at Little Sand Bay.

#### Other Infrastructure Projects

- Park staff, along with help from the Minnesota Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps, and volunteers, will be doing a lot of work on the Mainland trail this year. The boardwalk from Meyers Beach to Mawikwe Road will be completed and boardwalk added to muddy areas east of Mawikwe Road. Rustic bridges will also be built across larger stream crossings.
- Much needed work will be done at Quarry Bay this year. An accessible boardwalk will be installed, one outhouse relocated, and features of accessibility added to two group sites. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding is making this project possible. In 2015, plant restoration of disturbed areas at Quarry Bay will be completed and, if funding is available, a second outhouse will be relocated and a picnic area established.
- The Little Sand Bay Visitor Center is getting a new roof this year to fix persistent leaking problems.
- Three culverts on Highway 13 will be replaced by the WisDOT this summer. Two are west of Meyers Beach at Saxine Creek and require a road closure of approximately two months, with an official detour on County C and a local access route on Happy Hollow, Star Route, and Mountain Roads. At the Sand River, one lane will remain open during culvert replacement. Info is available at <http://www.dot.state.wi.us/projects/nwregion/13/index.htm>.

### Sustainability and Climate Change

- The Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center is hosting numerous school groups in 2014 as part of the curriculum component of the exhibit “*Changing Climate... Changing Cultures.*” The curriculum is entitled “*Gikinoo’wizhiwe Onji Waaban (Guiding for Tomorrow), or G’WOW.*” This program integrates climate science with place-based evidence relating to climate change’s effects on culture, specifically the Ojibwe culture. This is the third year for the teacher/educator institute, which is cosponsored by Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. The purpose of the institute is to increase climate literacy by learning about and applying



# Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

## What's New / What's Cool in 2014

place-based cultural evidence of climate change in our area. In 2014 the institute is funded by Wisconsin Coastal Management. In addition, 2014 will mark the first year for a Coastal Climate Day Camp within the Apostle Islands.

- Two climate change research projects will provide the park with information needed to assist with adaptation planning. Dr. Ron Moen (UMn-Duluth), Dr. Lee Frelich (UMn), and Dr. Steve Windels (Voyaguers NP) will lead a project that focuses on climate change adaptation in northern forest ecosystems and research by Dr. Ricky Rood (UMich) is designed to accelerate the incorporation of climate change knowledge into adaptation planning. The former project is funded by the NPS; the latter by the Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessments Center (<http://glisa.umich.edu>).
- The park is working toward converting propane water heaters with solar water heaters and the use of propane powered push mowers and weed eaters.

### Park Plans

- The park's Harvestable Species Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) has been completed. The plan/EA, as well as the plan (without the EA) and related information is posted at: <http://www.nps.gov/apis/parkmgmt/hwp>
- A Sand Island Campsite and Day-Use Plan and EA is being developed. The plan's primary focus is on improving campsites, trails and docking for visitors, including increasing accessibility for all visitors. Scoping was completed last December and public review of the draft plan is planned for late summer.

### Natural Resources

- This is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the colonial bird survey conducted throughout the park and along Wisconsin's Lake Superior coastline. Gull and Eagle Islands provide the vast majority of nesting habitat in the state for herring gulls along the Lake Superior coastline. Preliminary results compared to 2009 indicate a small decrease in nesting herring gulls, a large decrease in nesting double-crested cormorants, and no activity this year in the great blue heron rookery.
- A cooperative project with Northland College will study the park's sandspits to try to determine why plants, such as juniper and beach grass, are declining and the potential impacts of climate change.
- A cooperative project with the University of Wisconsin in Madison will use trail cameras to study wildlife species such as coyotes, bears, fisher, bobcat, and weasels on Stockton Island. This project will begin during late summer.
- A cooperative project with the NPS Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network (GLKN) will monitor amphibians throughout the park.
- The GLKN will be also conducting eagle surveys and contaminant testing, monitoring water quality, and mapping coastal areas.
- The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative continues to assist the park with funding for invasive species management, including surveys and control, and interpretation to help communicate the threat of invasive species. A series of different media has been developed to help communicate the threat that invasive species present to the Great Lakes ecosystems.

### Partnership Activities

- In 2014, *Apostle Islands School*, an environmental education program for regional 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders, hosted nearly 150 students from five schools, including the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This program is a partnership between Apostle Islands NL and Northland College. The students were unable to get to Stockton Island this year, due to ice on the lake. The program was held instead at Little Sand Bay. The Friends of the Apostle Islands provided a generous transportation grant that made it possible for many of these students to participate.
- For the fourth year, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore will receive a *Park Stewards Grant* from the National Park Foundation to support efforts to connect high school teachers and students to the park and inspire the next generation of park stewards.
- The winter of 2014 created an environment that allowed the mainland ice caves to be accessible to the public for two months. The park and the community welcomed over 138,000 visitors from around the world to this spectacular event. The increased visitation to the area brought in a welcomed \$10-12 million in revenue to the local economy. The entire community, many partners and organizations, and NPS staff from around the region came together to make this a successful event.
- The US Coast Guard Auxiliary will again provide volunteers to contact paddlers at Meyers Beach and at Little Sand Bay on Fridays and Saturdays this summer to discuss equipment and procedures to facilitate safe paddling in the park.
- Piping plover monitors will once again be stationed out at Long Island to monitor and protect these endangered birds, as well as provide information to visitors. The monitors will work closely with the NPS, but will be Bad River employees, funded through the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program. This project is only possible through a partnership with the Wisconsin DNR, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bad River Tribe, The Nature Conservancy, and the Johnson Foundation.
- The Real-Time Wave Observation System (RTWOS) at the Mainland Sea Caves will continue to provide wave heights and wave pictures this season via the internet at: <http://wavesatseacaves.cce.wisc.edu/index.htm>. A digital display at Meyers Beach was installed in 2013 to allow visitors to check conditions before they paddle to the caves. RTWOS has been developed by the University of Wisconsin and UW Sea Grant. Wisconsin Coastal Management and the Friends of the Apostle Islands (<http://www.friendsoftheapostleislands.org>) have been important supporters and contributors to this project.