

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

Business Plan *Fiscal Year 2003*





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US Department of the Interior
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
Empire, Michigan

Introduction

The purpose of business planning in the National Park Service is to improve the abilities of parks to more clearly communicate their financial status with principal stakeholders. A business plan answers such questions as: What is the business of this park unit? How much money does this park need to operate within appropriate standards? This plan demonstrates the functional responsibilities, operational standards, and financial picture of the park.

The business planning process is undertaken to accomplish three main tasks. First, it provides the park with a synopsis of its funding history. Second, it presents a clear, detailed picture of the state of current park operations and funding. Finally, it outlines park priorities and funding strategies.

A common methodology is applied by all parks developing business plans. Park activities are organized into five functional areas, which describe all areas of business for which a park is responsible. The functional areas are then further broken down into 35 programs. This allows the park to move beyond the traditional National Park Service method of reporting expenditures in terms of fund sources, and instead report expenditures in terms of activities. As a result, the park can communicate its financial situation more clearly to external audiences. Furthermore, using the same 35-program structure for all parks provides a needed measure of comparability across park units.

This process is aided by the use of an Electronic Performance Support System, a web-based application that allows parks to complete the data collection, analysis, and document production with step-by-step instruction.

Completing the business plan process not only enables a park to produce a powerful communication tool, but also provides park management with financial and operational baseline knowledge for future decision-making.

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Superintendent's Foreword



Greetings! It is indeed an honor and privilege to serve as Superintendent of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore! I remain in awe of the natural beauty, magnificent vistas, and valuable resources of this very special place. I believe deeply in the National Park Service mission of preserving our nation's natural and cultural treasures for future generations. It is a joy for me to share my thoughts regarding this business plan.

In 1998 the National Park Service, in partnership with a nonprofit organization, developed the Business Plan Initiative to improve park management by providing an accounting of financial and human resources. We enthusiastically took on the task of developing a business plan to formally document the costs of operating the park and examine more deeply how we might address our funding shortfalls. Through this process, we gained valuable information and insight that will help us preserve and protect the park's resources and communicate our operations, goals, and priorities.

As we began preparing our business plan, it became apparent that operating Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is all about connections. It is connections among our staff, volunteers, partners, and the surrounding communities that allow us to preserve and protect the resources and values of this special place and to welcome and offer programs and events to visitors from Michigan, the country, and around the world. From my perspective as Superintendent, we have done an admirable job meeting our commitments to preserve and maintain the resources entrusted to our care despite the challenges of limited operating funds. These accomplishments are due to the tireless dedication and talent of the National Park Service employees and volunteers who proudly serve the American people at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has worked so hard to frame the future of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore by contributing to this plan. Special thanks are extended to Administrative Officer Dan Kriebler and the other members of our Management Team who graciously found the time and dedication to complete yet another assignment on top of their existing workload. Special thanks are also extended to our excellent Business Plan Consultants Pauny Rezaei and Katie Armstrong. We were impressed by Pauny and Katie's professionalism, outstanding abilities, and enthusiasm to get involved in all levels of park operations to complete this plan. On behalf of your park family, please accept our appreciation for a project well done!

In many ways, much has changed since the Lakeshore was established in 1970. What has not changed is the need for us to share our passion to preserve and protect this special place assigned to our care with our fellow citizens. We hope to develop stronger ties with the community, our partners, and other groups by finding common goals and values. The Lakeshore belongs to you, the American public. As stewards of this special place, the park staff is committed to preserving and protecting it to the best of our abilities. The business plan is a useful tool in helping us fulfill those obligations and expectations. It has helped us to identify our shortfalls and to recognize ways to leverage our strengths. I look forward to the years ahead and to our continued ability to provide the best in resources preservation and protection, visitor services, and effective partnership activities. We welcome your comments and participation as we move forward together.

Dusty Shultz, Superintendent

Executive Summary

This business plan captures the financial condition of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore within a 3-5 year context. By undertaking this comprehensive review and planning process, the park now has a solid understanding of its primary strengths and unmet needs. The **five key findings** discussed below summarize the Lakeshore's most significant challenges and opportunities.

Current funding is not sufficient to cover the park's operations. In fiscal year (FY) 2003, while the Lakeshore received \$4.2 million, it needed \$5.8 million to fully cover operational costs. Since 1980 the Lakeshore's base budget has risen 37% after adjusting for inflation, an increase which barely covers the growth in park operations over that time. Appropriated base funds contributed \$3.2 million to day-to-day operations in FY2003; most of the remaining budget came from project funds that are competitively obtained and vary greatly from year to year. Increasingly, the Lakeshore is depending on these variable funds to pay for basic operating needs.

The functional areas with the greatest shortfalls are Resource Protection and Visitor Experience and Enjoyment. In FY2003 funding was available to support 54% and 72% of required resources, respectively. The operational shortfall in Resource Protection jeopardizes the Lakeshore's ability to carry out its primary mission to preserve its outstanding natural features. Adequate protection of natural resources is necessary both for the continued health of Lakeshore ecosystems and to ensure the enjoyment of future generations of visitors. The funding gap in Visitor Experience and Enjoyment limits the Lakeshore's capacity to provide opportunities for visitors to gain understanding and appreciation which lead to further protection of these resources as well as meet the visitors' needs and expectations for an enjoyable and safe visit.

The Lakeshore pursues efficient use of its resources.

While facing the shortfalls discussed above, the park has worked to maintain quality services. For example, installing photovoltaic cells has reduced utility costs and fuel spill potential on North Manitou Island. To lessen the impact of deer on that island's vegetation, the Lakeshore instituted a special hunt that has reduced the size of the herd from over 2,000 in 1985 to fewer than 200 in 2003. Through the volunteer program, the park harnessed abundant enthusiasm and talent to offer enhanced interpretive services at the Maritime Museum, the Cannery Boathouse, and the Blacksmith Shop in Glen Haven

Parkwide planning is a fundamental investment need for the Lakeshore. Without clear and comprehensive planning documents, the Lakeshore's management team lacks the necessary framework within which to define priorities and make decisions. The existing 1979 General Management Plan does not adequately address current operational issues including management of cultural resources, protection of natural resources and visitor experience from increasing area development, and management of significant areas added to the Lakeshore in 1982.

Strong community relationships are a critical component of Lakeshore management. Recognizing that it cannot fully achieve its mission without the support of the public, the Lakeshore has established agreements with several partner organizations and meets regularly with other stakeholder groups. By focusing on these relationships, the Lakeshore hopes to better engage the public in its planning and decision-making processes and to solicit direct support of its mission through mutually beneficial partnerships.



The sand bluffs at Sleeping Bear Point tower 450 feet over Lake Michigan.

Park Overview

Park at a glance



The US Lifesaving Service operated stations at Glen Haven, North Manitou Island, and South Manitou Island until the mid-1900s.

Legend of the Sleeping Bear

A forest fire forced a mother bear and her two cubs to flee Wisconsin across the great lake to Michigan. As they approached the shore, one cub after the other began to falter and soon drowned. Reaching the beach alone and heartbroken, the mother bear crawled to a resting place. As she gazed at the waters that had claimed her two cubs, two beautiful islands, created by the Great Spirit Manitou, rose to mark their graves. Saddened and exhausted, the mother bear closed her eyes for the last time. Where she lay, a large dune arose to commemorate her devotion and courage.

– Ojibwe Legend

Located on the northwestern shore of Michigan's Lower Peninsula, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is one of America's most stunning landscapes. Named after a series of coastal sand dunes, the park features rugged bluffs that tower as high as 450 feet above Lake Michigan, splendid white sand beaches, thick maple and beech forests, and clear inland lakes. In addition to its natural treasures, the Lakeshore's historic maritime and agricultural landscapes are of a size and quality that are unique on the Great Lakes and rare elsewhere in the country.

The Lakeshore's most notable features – the ancient glacially formed sand dunes – demonstrate the effects of wind, ice, and water over thousands of years. During the Ice Age, continental glaciers spread southward from Canada repeatedly burying this area under sheets of ice. These massive glaciers enlarged river valleys, carving out the wide deep basins of the Great Lakes, and left behind an ideal setting for sand dune formation. Over the years, prevailing winds blown across the lake built beach dunes on low-lying shores and perched dunes on high plateaus. Pushed by the wind, these delicate landscapes are constantly changing. Active dunes shift and advance over time, sometimes burying trees and creating "ghost forests" of stark, bleached trunks. Beachgrass and sand cherry are among the first plants to grow on newly built dunes as their roots hold sand in place and stabilize these developments.

The contrast between the open and sunny environment of the dunes and the lush world of the forest is startling. The dominant trees here are sugar maple and American beech because both are able to survive in the shade. The rich flora and fauna of the Lakeshore include several endangered, threatened, or rare species in the Great Lakes ecosystem such as Piping Plover and Michigan Monkey Flower.

For over one million visitors each year, the Lakeshore offers a wealth of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Many come to savor the endless supply of beaches, climb the dunes, or hike through breathtaking forests, while others who prefer a more secluded experience visit the North and South Manitou Islands. These islands, which have purposely remained less developed, offer outdoor enthusiasts solitude and encourage self-reliance. The Lakeshore also provides opportunities to swim, canoe, or fish along Lake Michigan or in one of the numerous inland lakes and rivers. In winter, cross-country skiers and snowshoers have access to a number of trails where they can tour the woodlands. Many of the Lakeshore's sites reflect the rich history of northwestern Michigan. As befitting a park located near one of the busiest shipping channels on the inland seas, the Lakeshore boasts a wide variety of maritime cultural resources. Behind the beaches and dunes, the park embraces a landscape marked by former farmsteads, affording the opportunity to interpret this vanishing American lifestyle.

Long before it became a National Lakeshore, this land was tied to the lives of many American Indians, lumbermen, merchant sailors, and farmers. Archeological evidence dates back to prehistoric Indians about 3,000 years ago. During the 17th century, the Ottawa and Ojibwe tribes migrated to the area to hunt, fish, and collect maple sap. The first white settlers known to have visited were French who came in the mid-1600s as fur traders, missionaries, and explorers. Soon thereafter, other settler groups arrived and shipping on the Great Lakes increased along with the region's population and commerce. Abundant forests were soon cleared to supply lumber for construction and fuel for ships that sailed the Great Lakes in the 1800s.

Areas such as Glen Haven and the Manitou Islands became busy communities in the late 1800s. Since South Manitou Island supplied fuel for wood-burning steamers,

and boasted a protected harbor, it became an essential destination for many ship captains. Today, visitors to the island can climb the 100-foot lighthouse built in 1871 that guided ships through Lake Michigan. The US Lifesaving Service Station in Glen Haven built in 1901 is the centerpiece of the rich heritage of the Manitou Passage, the narrowest channel in Lake Michigan between Chicago and the Straits of Mackinac. Remains of the many ships that did not survive the journey surround the islands and include some of the most storied wrecks of the Lakes.

Agricultural activity began with the arrival of early settlers. In the 1920s, as the supply of hardwood dwindled, lumbering subsided and subsistence homesteads evolved into a number of cash crop farms. The period from 1900 to 1920 was the golden era as the agricultural economy thrived with a growing demand for fruits, grain, and dairy products. Today the Port Oneida Rural Historic District offers a glimpse into this rich lifestyle.

In 1958 the National Park Service surveyed the Great Lakes shorelines to determine areas that merited preservation for their scenic, natural, or recreational value. Three areas, including the Sleeping Bear Dunes, were recommended for consideration. Senator Philip Hart began attempts to

Enabling Legislation

On October 21, 1970, President Richard Nixon signed legislation that established the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore along the northeastern shore of Lake Michigan to preserve the “outstanding natural features, including forests, beaches, dune formations, and ancient glacial phenomena ... for the benefit, inspiration, education, recreation, and enjoyment of the public.”

establish the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in 1959. Over a lengthy period of time hearings were held, views exchanged, compromises made, and finally in 1970, Congress designated the area as a National Lakeshore. Since that time, most of the 71,199 acres within the park’s boundary have been compiled through the purchase of over 1,700 tracts of private property and land donations from the state of Michigan.

In many ways, the issues that challenged the establishment of the Lakeshore persist to this day. Some property owners were forced to sell their lands, which led to bitterness and resentment over the creation of the park. As such, land use has always been and will continue to be one of the most important management issues at the Lakeshore. However, rapid development in the surrounding areas has dramatically increased the community’s appreciation for the park’s preservation and protection efforts. Because of the Lakeshore’s achievements, much of this landscape has remained pristine and available for public enjoyment. Such goodwill is critical to the future of the region because the Lakeshore must actively cooperate with the community to address issues that threaten its natural and cultural resources.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is to preserve the outstanding natural features along 65 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, in order to perpetuate the natural setting for the benefit and enjoyment of the public, and to protect the natural and historic features from developments and inappropriate uses that would destroy their scenic, scientific, historic, and recreational value.

Lakeshore Inventory

General

1,143,857 annual visits
130 total employees (46 permanent, 84 seasonal)
26,568 annual volunteer hours

Natural and Cultural Resources

71,199 acres
65 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline
26 inland lakes
12 miles of rivers and streams
908 terrestrial plant species
246 bird species
4 federally threatened or endangered species
369 historic structures on List of Classified Structures
8 sites on National Register of Historic Places
9 cultural landscapes (4,500 acres)
150 identified prehistoric archeological sites
24 historic boats
1 lighthouse
2,500 historic artifacts
500 archived documents

Infrastructure

370 buildings
28 employee housing units
9 campgrounds (357 sites)
5 picnic areas
2 visitor centers
2 outdoor amphitheatres
23 miles of roads
1 covered bridge
105 miles of trails
9 lake access ramps
596 signs and wayside exhibits
2 major photovoltaic systems
63 motor vehicles in fleet
4 large boats

Park Map

