

A NATIONALIZED LAKESHORE:

**The Creation and Administration of
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
By**

Theodore J. Karamanski



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About the Author



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First published by the Midwest Regional Office, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Omaha NE ~ 2000

HTML version published online at http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/slbe/adhi_1c.htm January 2001
eBook version published ~ November 2002

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Introduction



Located on the northwestern shore of Michigan's Lower Peninsula Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is one of the most beautiful places in the American heartland. Named after a series of towering coastal sand dunes, the national park features rugged four hundred-foot bluffs, splendid sugar sand Lake Michigan beaches, and cool, dark forests. The lakeshore's mainland beaches and dunes are often crowded with summer vacationers, while two islands, North Manitou and South Manitou, offer backpackers and day-trippers a more secluded natural experience. The lakeshore's splendid natural setting is enhanced by an array of cultural resources. As befitting a park located astride one of the busiest ship channels on the inland seas, the lakeshore boasts a wide variety of maritime cultural resources including shipwreck sites, a lakeshore ghost town, three Coast Guard Stations, a lighthouse, and an impressive collection of small boats and nautical artifacts. Behind the beaches and dunes the lakeshore embraces a landscape marked by former farmsteads, offering the National Park Service the opportunity to interpret the vernacular expression of a vanishing American lifestyle. This rich mixture of historic and natural assets, together with the lakeshore's location amid rapidly developing resort communities, makes Sleeping Bear Dunes an immensely complex park unit to administer.

Beginning in 1919 a small portion of what is now the national lakeshore was set aside as a state park. The idea of a national park in northwestern Michigan did not surface until the National Park Service's Great Lakes Shoreline Survey visited the area in 1958. Between 1959 and 1970 there was a continuous and controversial effort in Congress to create a park unit around the Sleeping Bear Dune. The legislative leader of the Sleeping Bear park proposal was United States Senator Philip A. Hart. The senator's persistence and patience in the end led to the creation of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore on October 21, 1970.

Opposition to the creation of the lakeshore was very strong among local summer homeowners. More than 1,400 tracts of private land had to be acquired to create the lakeshore. A heavy-handed, poorly planned land acquisition program reinforced the bitterness that surfaced during the decade of struggle that preceded authorization. The legacy of those actions has been

two fold. On one hand the National Park Service has been vilified by many local property owners and the park staff have had to work in an environment that is unnecessarily confrontational. On the other hand, the presence of an organized local populace wary of National Park Service policy has influenced for the better the development of the national lakeshore. Local sentiments played an important role toning-down the agency's initial plans to intensively develop the area's recreational assets. More recently local sentiment has influenced the agency's approach to the lakeshore's rural cultural landscapes. Unfortunately, resistance to the National Park Service in the region has also hindered opportunities to bring more land under protection and to develop scenic drives for park visitors.

The National Park Service conceived the Sleeping Bear Dunes lakeshore at a time when the shores of Lake Michigan were rapidly undergoing privatization. Subdivisions of vacation and year round homes threatened to keep ordinary citizens from enjoying Michigan's broad, sandy shoreline. A nationalized lakeshore along the beaches and bluffs of the Sleeping Bear made available for all what might have been enjoyed only by a select few. The cost was millions of dollars of federal funds and the hopes and dreams of hundreds of small property owners. Sleeping Bear Dunes was a tragedy for the latter and a wise investment of the former.

In addition to trying to reconcile its national mandate with an aggrieved local community, the National Park Service, within its own ranks has often been challenged and divided over policy toward the shifting sand dunes. Congress conceived the national lakeshore parks of the Great Lakes region as experiments in public recreation management. The requirements of managing small, often non-contiguous parks carved out of private holdings required adjustments by administrators whose primary experience had been earned in large, isolated western national parks. The managers of Sleeping Bear have been further challenged by the dynamic evolution of the environmental movement during the 1970s and 1980s. The requirements of wilderness, environmental protection, endangered species, and historic preservation have meant that even within the lakeshore staff decision making can be contentious and time consuming, with a variety of resource management issues in direct competition with values of public recreation and visitor safety.

The administrative history of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is the story of one park unit's attempt to meet its congressional mandate in an era of expanding responsibilities and often uncertain financial means, in a beautiful but often hostile place.

Acknowledgements

The beauty of the landscape of Sleeping Bear Dunes and the charm of towns and farms of northwestern Michigan made researching this history a genuine pleasure. Part of the joy of working in the region was the friendship and cooperation of the people who live and work in the area. Their assistance made this study possible. Oral history informants made the most important contribution. I thank them for their patience and their willingness, in many cases, to go back over complicated and painful memories. Of particular help to me in locating documentary sources at the lakeshore headquarters were William Herd and Neal Bullington. Jacqueline Fine was particularly gracious during my research trips to the park. Superintendent Ivan Miller was very generous with his time and facilitated my work at Sleeping Bear Dunes. In the Regional Office Donald L. Stevens, Jr., Senior Historian, Cultural Resources, Midwest Region, was particularly helpful. I am especially indebted to the many people who reviewed the draft report. Their comments and corrections greatly strengthened the final text.

Historians and archivists at the Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan and the Clark Historical Library at Central Michigan University were very helpful with my research and photocopy requests. Laura Quakenbush of the Leelanau County Historical Society was particularly gracious directing me to manuscript collections and oral sources in Leelanau County. I wish to thank the Traverse City Record-Eagle and the Grand Rapids Press for their gracious permission to reprint political cartoons from their newspapers. At Loyola University I wish to thank Lorna Newman for her help with inter-library loan requests. The history department chairpersons, Dr. Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Dr. Anthony Cardoza, helped to facilitate my work through conscientious scheduling. Graduate public history student Jennifer Bridge helped with bibliographic research and Melanie Wood provided very efficient assistance with the bibliography and the index.

This history is dedicated to the people who devoted their careers to making the national lakeshore and to those who sacrificed their private property for an enduring public benefit. Because of them the broad beaches and sandy bluffs are open to all.

Chapter One

"National Parks Are Where You Find Them"

The Origins of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

The First Tourists

"Its lake front was very steep," recalled fur trader Gurdon S. Hubbard, "and it was with great difficulty and exertion that it could be ascended; the loose sand into which one sank several inches at each step, slid downward carrying one with it, so that progress was slow and tedious." Hubbard, at the head of an American Fur Company fur brigade, visited Sleeping Bear Dunes in the summer of 1823. Although he was charged with escorting down the lake shore the supplies required for the maintenance of a score of trading posts, the young fur trader could not resist the impulse to play tourist. After climbing the face of Sleeping Bear and enjoying the lake vistas afforded by the great perched dune, Hubbard and a companion started down the sandy slope to their boats. "I went down by quick jumps, but before reaching the bottom heard the shouts of the *voyageurs*, and though I could not look back, I knew full well the cause. When I had arrived at the bottom, I looked back and saw my companion struggling and rolling, while the sand flew in every direction. He landed close to my feet pale and frightened, but otherwise unharmed... the men screamed with laughter."¹

Hubbard's companion, an unnamed gentleman sarcastically nicknamed "La Beaute" by the *voyageurs*, was not a fur trader, but instead a mere traveler. As such he likely qualifies as the first tourist to visit Sleeping Bear Dunes. Like so many visitors since, he yielded to the impulse to both climb and descend the giant sand dune. And like so many others, he enjoyed the view, but perhaps regretted the effort.

Sleeping Bear Dunes is one of the most imposing natural landmarks on the shore of Lake Michigan. From the space shuttle *Columbia*, orbiting the earth some 250 miles above, the dunes stand out against the blue border of the lake. Yet, strange to say, Sleeping Bear failed to elicit a sense of wonder from most of the early travelers along the east shore of the lake. As early as 1688 the dunes appeared on French maps of the region, but neither the French explorers nor the pioneer Jesuit missionaries lavished much attention on Sleeping Bear. Even Hubbard's contemporaries, American explorers Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and David Bates Douglas, were more taken with the Indian legend behind the place name of the dunes than with the majesty of the massive sand bluffs. This is unusual for an area destined to become a national park. Yellowstone and Zion, the Shenandoah and the Great Smokies all were early esteemed for their visual grandeur. The Pictured Rocks and Isle Royale, two Michigan landscapes on Lake Superior destined to become national parks inspired effusive outpourings from the pens of Schoolcraft and early government explorers. Although the scale of Sleeping Bear Dunes makes it exceptional, its uniqueness is a matter of relative degree. Virtually the entire east coast of Lake Michigan, more than three hundred miles, is given over to a landscape of lake, dune, and forest. Indiana Dune, Warren Dune, Grand Mere Dune, Saugatuck Dune, and Nordhouse Dune form a

¹ Gurdon S. Hubbard, *The Autobiography of Gurdon Saltonstall Hubbard*, Introduction by Caroline M. McIlvaine, (New York: Citadel Press, 1969), 135.

magnificent string of silica strands which left travelers and explorers jaded to sand dunes by the time they reached Sleeping Bear. Appreciation for the landscape that would become the national lakeshore developed slowly, only as the Lake Michigan frontier was gradually bent and reshaped to fit the needs of the national economy were its scenic values appreciated as an asset as tangible as furs, lumber, or grain.²

Lake Passage: The Settlement of the Sleeping Bear Area

The same forces of wind, water, and soil, which created the Sleeping Bear Dune also shaped the human history of northeastern Michigan. Of these Lake Michigan was the most persistent and powerful influence. Ottawa fur trappers, Irish fisherfolk, and Scandinavian lumberjacks all used the lake to bring their products to market. Lake Michigan's 1,180 cubic miles of freshwater were a vast blue-water frontier owned by no one, open to anyone hardy enough to paddle a canoe or skilled enough to pilot a schooner. The lakeshore was a threshold, a door open to the markets of Chicago and Detroit, or via the Erie Canal, to New York and the world, as well as a pathway to the wealth of the forested interior.

It was through this threshold that Ottawa and Chippewa hunters came each fall to conduct their winter hunts in the interior. Missionary settlements at Northport, Omena, and Eagletown helped to guarantee a permanent Native American presence in the lakeshore region by helping the Indians to both adapt to the growing market economy and protect their land holdings from white encroachment. Sawmill hamlets were the first wedge of European-American settlement. Glen Arbor, Glen Haven, and Empire began as small lumber towns, as did the now vanished ghost towns of Good Harbor, Port Oneida, and Aral. The nearby Manitou Passage, one of the busiest navigation channels on the Great Lakes, ensured a steady demand for cordwood. Passing steamers came to rely on the small ports of the Leelanau Peninsula and the Manitou Islands to keep them supplied with fuel. Lumber schooners bound for the crowded lumber market of Chicago also made frequent stops at the piers built out into the lake at each of the saw mill settlements. While never prime logging country the Sleeping Bear area was the scene of several significant logging ventures during the period between the 1880s and 1920s. Most notable was the Empire Lumber Company, which grew into a formidable forest products operation. Founded by the T. Wilce Company, a leading manufacturer of hardwood flooring. Empire was linked to the forested interior by its own logging branch line, the Empire and Southeastern Railroad. Two docks served Chicago-bound ships and a channel was dug through the beach to South Bar Lake to create an inner harbor for the thriving lumber port. The D.H. Day lumber operation at Glen Haven was of a more modest scale. Most of Day's lumber was harvested in the vicinity of Glen Lake and Little Glen Lake. A tramway, and later a true logging railroad, linked Day's interior operations with the lakeshore. At Leland and Frankfort commercial fishing became the chief economic activity. For both the logging towns and the fishing settlements access to the lake was the principal geographic asset.³

² Ibid, 133-4; George Weeks, *Sleeping Bear, Yesterday and Today* (Franklin, Mich.: Attwerger and Mandel Publishing, 1990), xiii.

³ Ibid, 38-80.

The lake also had a determining impact on the agricultural prospects of northwestern Michigan. Its vast expanse acts as a great solar heat collector, moderating inland temperatures and extending the growing season. Unfortunately, the glacial soils of the Sleeping Bear region were generally not conducive to agriculture. Grain farms, which thrived elsewhere in Michigan, were hardscrabble operations at best along the lakeshore. Dairy farming was a more appropriate adaptation to the landscape. The Port Oneida farming community is an example of a series of backwoods farms which evolved from subsistence homesteads emphasizing potatoes and grain, to dairy farms. Orchards of apples and later, cherries, were an even more successful adaptation. Fruit growing made maximum use of the region's weather and soil conditions. By the 1930s, northwestern Michigan was one of the leading cherry producing regions in North America.⁴

The period from 1900 to 1920 was in many ways a golden era for the communities of the Sleeping Bear area. The agricultural economy thrived with a growing demand for both grain and dairy products. Fruit growing was successfully established as a new economic opportunity. The lake fishery remained strong during these years with the annual haul on Lake Michigan averaging between 1-3 million pounds. Most important of all the lumber industry continued strong during these years. Although the cordwood trade with steamers had ended, as the boats switched to coal fired engines, and the prime pine and cedar stands had long since been cut, saw mills kept busy in the Sleeping Bear area harvesting hardwood timber for a variety of special uses. Logging was critical to the viability of many of the small towns and forest farms of the area. Wages from logging and saw mill jobs circulated throughout the area providing businesses with their thin margin of profit and affording families on marginal land with both a local market for their produce and a source of supplementary wage employment. When the supply of hardwood trees began to slow in the early 1920s the Sleeping Bear area began to feel the chill of a cold wind that blew over the barren cut-over lands across the north country of northern Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.⁵

At the time of World War I it was clear that Michigan's lumber industry in the Lower Peninsula was near collapse. Yet, there was little public concern over this because of confidence that agriculture would take over as the principal economic activity on the cutover lands. But the forest soils of the north country were generally not suited to agriculture, a fact made abundantly clear when the end of the war brought a steep decline in farm prices. By 1920 41% of all of Michigan's cutover lands had been transformed into farms, but in the decade that followed farming collapsed in the north country as the state lost more than 12,000 farms. Hundreds of thousands of acres of private property reverted to government control through tax delinquency. To manage these vast new holdings of devastated lands and to staunch the flow of population from the north country the state of Michigan embraced the banner of conservation. In the 1920s and 1930s, northern Michigan was reconceived, from a raw resource frontier with ninety percent of the land in private hands, to a carefully managed landscape based on a sustainable forest products industry and tourism, with the bulk of the land controlled by public agencies. Across the north woods of the lake states 8.8 million acres of state forests and parks were created

⁴ Milo M. Quaife, *Lake Michigan* (New York: Bobbs-Memml, 1944), 280-8; John and Ann Mahan, *Wild Lake Michigan* (Stillwater, Minn.: Voyageur Press, 1991), 21; Marla J. McEnaney, William H. Tishler, Arnold R. Alanen, *Farming at the Water's Edge: An Assessment of Agricultural and Cultural Landscape Resources in the Proposed Port Oneida Rural Historic District at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan* (Omaha, Neb.: Midwest Region, National Park Service, 1995), 24-31.

⁵ Ron Cockrell, *D.H. Day's Kingdom: A Special History Study of Glen Haven Village Historic District* (Omaha, Neb.: Midwest Region, National Park Service, 1984), 4-14;

between 1920 and 1945. During the 1920s Michigan established twelve state forests and by 1930 the Conservation Department was annually planting 16 million trees. The Fife Lake State Forest rehabilitated lands within the future lakeshore and throughout the Platte and Betsie river valleys. The federal government played its role in stabilizing the region through the creation of seven national forests, totaling 6.9 million acres, and a network of fish and wildlife reserves totaling an additional half million acres.⁶

Tourism: A New Way in the Woods

The career of D.H. Day illustrates the change in the Sleeping Bear area. Day was a lumberman whose company harvested hardwood and cordwood. But unlike so many lumbermen, whose interest was in short-term profits, Day was committed to the future of the little towns of Glen Haven and Glen Arbor. During the 1880s he introduced the tourist industry to the area by operating two passenger and freight steamers between northern Michigan and Milwaukee and Chicago. Although the venture was not a success, it did serve to make the Sleeping Bear area better known in the cities along the southern rim of Lake Michigan. A medical doctor from Chicago who visited the area in the wake of World War I argued: "The great charm of Glen Lake is its natural beauty which to date is largely unspoiled. There is no spot in Michigan, nor for that matter anywhere in the middle west, that can compare with it." While lumber was the core of his business activities, Day was also an early proponent of fruit growing. His farm boasted 5,000 acres of apple and cherry trees as well as a large dairy. When his logging operation declined, he tried to transition his business and the community into fruit growing and tourism. To develop the former he established the Glen Haven Canning Company and for the later the Sleeping Bear Inn. The inn was a holdover from the nineteenth century, which was thoroughly remodeled in 1928 to take advantage of the growing number of automobile tourists. He founded a local tourist council that later developed into the Western Michigan Resort Association. Day's biggest bet on tourism was Day Forest Estates, a subdivision of his private second-growth forest. He promoted the area as the "Adirondacks of Michigan." At the time the elite of Chicago and Detroit were building "Great Camp-like" personal estates in northern Michigan. One brochure for the promotion even speculated that the area was "deemed fit for the permanent Summer White House" as well as the site "for homes of the residents of the Gold Coast of Chicago or Millionaire's' Row of New York." But the expected millionaires did not come to Sleeping Bear as fast as Day's failing fortunes required. Even an eighteen-hole golf course could not attract enough buyers to keep the venture from failing in the Depression. Day's heirs, following his death in 1929, continued to promote tourism by operating the Inn and a fleet of "dunesmobiles," cars that transported excursionists over the sand hills.⁷

⁶ Tom Ruchenberg, *Reflections in a Tarnished Mirror: The Use and Abuse of the Great Lakes* (Sturgeon Bay, Wisc.: Golden Glow Publishing, 1978), 36-7. ⁶ Norman John Schmaltz, *Cutover Land Crusade: The Michigan Forest Conservation Movement, 1899-1931*, Ph.D. dissertation University of Michigan, 1972, p.247; Raleigh Barlowe, "Changing Land Use and Policies: The Lake States," *The Great Lakes Forests: An Environmental and Social History*, edited by Susan B. Flader, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 172-3.

⁷ Christopher Parnall to Arthur S. Huey, March 28, 1949, D.H. Day State Park file, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Allen T. Edmunds Library, Administrative History Collection, Empire, Michigan. Hereafter this collection will be referred to as SBDL Records; Cockrell, D.H. *Day's Kingdom*, 11-24; Weeks, *Sleeping Bear: Yesterday and Today*, 58-80; Leelanau Tribune (Leland, Mich.), August 8, 1958; J.W. Hannen, "David H. Day, Distinguished Citizen, Passes," *Michigan Roads and Pavements*, April 19, 1928, p.8.

Day's work in the field of conservation had more of a lasting, if delayed, impact on the development of a recreation industry in the area than his real estate endeavors. A dedicated and important member of the Democratic Party in Michigan, Day served as the chairman of Michigan's first State Park Commission. In 1919, Day set an outstanding example by donating thirty-two acres on the shore of Lake Michigan. This area was named D.H. Day State Park, and it was the first commitment of public lands to recreation in the Sleeping Bear Area. The area included only just over thirty-two acres and 708 feet of frontage on Lake Michigan. The Commission established a campground, log cabin pavilion, and access road at the park. Unfortunately, public conservation developed very slowly after Day's grant. The single other park project in the Sleeping Bear area was Benzie State Park, created in 1923, which included 180 acres near the mouth of the Platte River. These two small state parks were the germ from which grew Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.⁸

Lumbermen like David Day played a role in developing a recreation industry in northern Michigan. Throughout the region men with investments in land and buildings tried to adjust to the altered economic landscape. The bunkhouse of the Glen Arbor Lumber Company was converted into the Sylvan Inn and opened to tourists. But more significant than lumbermen's efforts to attract tourists was the unlikely alliance between hay fever, religion, and the railroads. Before the development of antihistamines thousands of Midwesterners suffered through the spring and early summer from wind-blown pollen. Most suffered through the season, short of breath and with tear-blurred vision. The middle class, however, had the option of seeking relief in a hay fever-free environment like northern Michigan. Colonies of hay fever exiles began to form during the 1880s. Informally they were known as "Achoo Clubs." Mackinac Island was a favorite retreat, although in 1882, the Western Hay Fever Association named Petoskey, Michigan its headquarters. That village was deemed the "most favorable resort for hay fever sufferers." Another spur to tourism was religious retreat camps. The biggest of these in northern Michigan was the Bay View Association, founded by the Methodists in 1875. What started out as an informal gathering of like-minded Methodists on vacation in the Little Traverse Bay area, developed into a major Chautauqua-like summer resort, complete with religious and educational programs and a resort village of private summer cottages quaintly styled with Victorian gingerbread detail. The Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad recognized a good thing and offered financial assistance to develop Bay View. Railroad access was critical in determining which locations in northern Michigan succeeded in attracting tourists. As lumber declined in the region, transportation companies came to rely on tourism more and more to sustain their operations.⁹

Early recreational developments in the Sleeping Bear area reflect these same trends. At the mouth of the Crystal River the site of John LaRue's 1847 trading post was utilized by William Beals, a Missouri school teacher who fell in love with the area, as the spot for Camp Leelanau, a summer boy's camp. Camp Leelanau offered boys a rustic experience with army-style dormitory tents set-up right on the beach and the only real structure the Beals' frame summer house, the Homestead. Founded in 1921, Camp Leelanau had two purposes: education

⁸ State Park Commission Minute Book, 1920-1921, State Park Files, Box 35, Record Group 94-260, State Archives of Michigan, Lansing, Michigan. Hereafter referred to as State Archives of Michigan.

⁹ Russell Carpenter, "The Development of a Tourist Industry in the Little Traverse Bay Region," unpublished M.A. Essay, Loyola University, Public History Program, Chicago, 111., 1994; Russell McKee, "It Was a Very Stylish Age," Mackinac: The Gathering Place, edited by Russell McKee (Lansing: Michigan Natural Resources Magazine, 1981), 19-23; Margaret Beattie Bouge, *Around the Shores of Lake Michigan: A Guide to Sites* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 289-91.

and recreation. In later years the educational mission developed into the Leelanau School, a private college preparatory school, while the recreational function matured into the prosperous Homestead Resort. Spurred by a major investment by the Toledo, Ann Arbor, and Northern Michigan Railroad, Frankfort also bid to develop as a recreational center. In the 1880s, the railroad chose the town as the eastern terminus of its Lake Michigan car ferry to Kewanee, Wisconsin. By 1928, there were six boats on regular runs across the lake. An 1898 traveler's guide praised Frankfort's "quiet beauty" and noted "it is always left with a little sigh of regret." In 1901, to induce visitors to make Frankfort a destination the Ann Arbor Railroad built a major resort hotel in the town. The Royal Frontenac was an imposing 500-foot long wood frame hotel in the tradition of the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island or the railroad lodges in the American West. Elegant and popular, the Royal Frontenac attracted tourists from across the Midwest. Frankfort's bid, however, to become a resort city was short-circuited when the Frontenac burned to the ground in 1912. Railroad access, however, did succeed in making the Crystal Lake area a popular place for summer homes. Cottagers from Ohio, Indiana, and other points south took advantage of "resort special" trains replete with Pullman cars. They would disembark in Frankfort and board a little shuttle train that took people along the shores of Crystal Lake to Beulah.¹⁰

By the turn of the century a pattern began to emerge in Michigan's developing recreation industry. Close to the major urban centers weekend or day trip destinations developed. For Detroit these were located along Lake St. Clair and the accessible shore of Lake Huron. Chicagoans via steamers and trains had colonized southeastern Michigan with a string of resort towns between the Indiana Dunes and Saugatuck. There were elite resort communities and those with a more egalitarian atmosphere. There were communities which specifically catered to Methodists or to Jews, who were often excluded at elite resorts. Towns like Grand Haven and Benton Harbor promoted their mineral springs while Harbor Springs and Petoskey emphasized their pollen-free cool lake breezes. Those interested in boating and fishing, with all the comforts of home, might favor the Les Cheneaux Islands while those looking to rough it might settle for a tent or shanty in the Upper Peninsula. Mackinac Island, of course, was the premier resort destination in the Midwest, followed closely by the Little Traverse Bay communities of Petoskey, Harbor Springs, and Charlevoix. Here elegant fall-service hotels catered to long-standing, long-staying, and discriminating customers. On Grand Traverse Bay a more complex picture presented itself. More than most of the towns in northwestern Michigan, Traverse City had developed an industrial character, yet northward along the bay were a string of resorts which clearly fancied themselves as a slightly more rustic extension of genteel Charlevoix. Leelanau County was influenced by these developments. While Frankfort and Benzie County failed to make the most of then-opportunity to utilize their railroad connections to attract an elite, out-of-state, tourist clientele when the Frontenac Hotel burned down, Leelanau County was picking up the spill-over from its successful resort neighbors to the north.

As late as 1884 Leelanau County was dismissed with the observation: "There is not a single village of any commercial importance, and not a railroad in the county." But by 1900 tourism had begun to shape the county's growth. Steam launches were put to work on Lake

¹⁰ Weeks, *Sleeping Bear: Yesterday and Today*, 39-40, 46-9; Margaret Beattie Bogue, *Around the Shores of Lake Michigan*, p.308-9; James Gale Inglis, *Northern Michigan Handbook for Travelers* (Petoskey, Mich.: Geo. Spring, 1898), 51; Leonard Case, *Benzie County: A Bicentennial Reader* (Benzonia, Mich.: Benzie County Bi-Centennial Commission, 1976), 77-84.

Leelanau which allowed vacationers traveling north by rail from Traverse City to comfortably reach the area. Large hotels were built in Leland in 1901 and 1908, while summer homes were built along Lake Leelanau's extensive shores. In 1903, a branch line was built from Traverse City to Northport and the tourist industry thrived. As elsewhere in Michigan Leelanau County developed a distinct pattern of recreation.

Resorts did best along the shore of Grand Traverse Bay, particularly at Suttons Bay and Northport, while summer homes dominated the shore of Lake Leelanau. Transportation connections determined who came to build those summer homes. People from Illinois, especially the Chicago area, and Indiana, mostly Fort Wayne and Muncie, dominated summer home ownership in the Leland area. The Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad gave the Hoosiers direct access to Traverse City and Northport. The railroad also had a summer policy of attaching Pullman cars originating in Chicago to the trains as they went through Grand Rapids. Chicagoans also had the opportunity of availing themselves of the regular steamer routes to the Sleeping Bear area. A review of a resort directory for the Leland area in 1937 indicates that about ten percent of summer cottage owners were local residents of Leelanau or Grand Traverse counties while more than half of the summer residents were from Indiana and Illinois. These "summer neighbors," as they styled themselves were an economically and socially distinguished group: numerous industrialists (including F.E. Ball of Muncie), the expected large number of lawyers and physicians, as well as a surprising number of scientists and academicians. The yacht and country clubs were the gathering place for evening or afternoon socializing in a setting that was both congenial and controlled.¹¹

The little towns of Glen Haven and Glen Arbor, at the extreme southwestern corner of Leelanau County, were on the fringe of the county's developing tourist industry. Glen Haven could boast excellent steamer connections to Chicago and that made it the point-of-entry for many of the first vacationers in the area. The first resorts were rough affairs run by local cherry growers or city folks charmed by the gentle pace of life into relocating in the Glen Lake area for the season. The Tonawathya Resort was purchased in 1906 by a burned-out Chicago businessman and run by his wife for several decades. The resort enjoyed a faithful clientele, largely from the Windy City. Meals were served family-style and featured locally grown fresh produce. Boating was a prominent feature of the recreation scene at Tonawathya. Over time, each of the resorts along the lake developed its own character, reflecting the interests and personality of its owner. George Grady's Sylvan Inn was noted for its good food, Dunn's Resort catered to guests from Detroit, the Glen Eden Hotel, located near Fishers Point was run by a homeopathic doctor and functioned as something of a health resort. The resorts served to introduce to the region many urbanites who eventually purchased lakeside summer homes of their own. Not infrequently they purchased lots near the resorts at which they stayed during their first few summers in the Glen Lake area. Most visitors arrived by lake steamer. During the period between 1910 and 1931 crowds would gather at the Glen Haven docks on Saturdays and Sundays. Motorcoaches awaited newly arriving resort guests while many summer home residents rode to the docks to meet husbands or fathers arriving from the city. "They leave

¹¹ The Grand Traverse Region, Historical and Descriptive (Chicago: H.R. Pace & Co., 1884), 249; Lawrence and Lucille Wakefield, *Sail & Rail: A Narrative History of Transportation in the Grand Traverse City Region* (Traverse City, Mich.: By the author, 1980), p.46-8; Edmund M. Littell, *100 Years in Leelanau* (Leland, Mich.: The Print Shop, 1965), 41-43; *Golf and Yacht Clubs, Resort Directory of Leland and Surrounding Region* (Leland, Mich.: Leelanau Enterprise, 1937).

Chicago Friday night," explained a tourist publication, "and get here the next morning; first stop. They're with their families until Sunday night when the boat takes 'em back again, ready for the job. Great for 'em!"¹²

But such gloss could not obscure the fact that the lack of good rail connections, which were the backbone of most successful vacation spots, retarded the growth of a recreation industry in the Sleeping Bear area. A Chicagoan who purchased 170 acres of wooded land on the shore of Glen Lake in 1919 credited himself with having "discovered" the area: "I say I 'discovered' it," he wrote a friend, "because it was readily accessible only by boat from Chicago, the main roads being little more than sand trails." David Day understood the importance of improving road access to the Glen Lake area. As president of the Western Michigan Development Bureau he was one of the early leaders of the "good roads movement" in Michigan. In 1910, Day joined the Western Michigan Pike Association, and for a decade he served as county road commissioner. It was with the rise of automobile travel that the Glen Lake area of the lakeshore began to really experience the tourist boom.¹³

Just as the fur trade had transformed land use and population distribution in seventeenth century Michigan and the logging industry had radically altered the state's landscape during the nineteenth century, tourism and conservation reordered land ownership patterns and public attitudes toward the north country during the twentieth century. The tourist industry had begun in Michigan via steamers and railroads but the industry drove to prominence in the state on the wheels of the automobile. America in 1920 was for the first time in its history a largely urban nation. The automobile, which did so much to expand Michigan's industrial cities, was also responsible for providing average working people with a new flexible means of accessing the countryside. Michigan became a case study in the linkage between transportation and recreation. It is no accident that state park development began in the 1920s, a decade when automobile ownership became a part of the American Dream. In 1920, there were 8 million cars on American roads. Of those, an estimated 5 million were used for camping trips to the countryside. Unfortunately, there were literally no facilities available for these visitors. Not only were there no camp grounds, there were no roadside public restrooms. The first public roadside rest area was established in Iron County, Michigan in 1919. Before that time car campers put up tents where they pleased on private land, utilized farmers' out houses, and disposed of their trash as they saw fit. County and state parks were a way to preserve public access to attractive camping and picnicking grounds but they also were a needed step to channel the unregulated flow of campers away from private property. State action in promotion of tourism was essential on two fronts: the acquisition and management of recreation lands and in the establishment and maintenance of surfaced roads to expand urbanites' range of access to the countryside.¹⁴

The opening of M-22 in Leelanau County was one of the most important developments in the spread of tourism in the Sleeping Bear area. Quick to cash in on this more mobile tourist trade, the Leelanau County Association of Commerce produced a glossy color promotional

¹² Robert Dwight Rader, et al *Beautiful Glen Arbor Township: Facts Fantasy & Fotos* (Leland, Mich.: The Glen Arbor History Group, 1977), 58-65; Leelanau County Association of Commerce, *The Captives: Being the Story of a Family's Vacation in Leelanau County (Michigan), The Land of Delight* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Leelanau County Association of Commerce, 1924).

¹³ Christopher Parnall to Arthur Huey, March 28, 1949, SBDL Records; Cockrell, D.H. *Day's Kingdom*, 29-32.

¹⁴ Eileen Patricia Walsh, *The Last Resort: Northern Minnesota Tourism and the Integration of Rural and Urban Worlds, 1900-1950*. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn., 1994, 42-3, 136-7; Allan D. Wallis, *Wheel Estate: The Rise and Decline of Mobile Homes*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 30-5;

booklet in 1924: *The Captives: Being the Story of a Family's Vacation in Leelanau County (Michigan), The Land of Delight*. The narrative told of a fictitious all-American family's discovery of Leelanau County's many attractions and reveals the way tourist promoters of that era wished to present the area. The father, a iron-bottomed, hard-driver, is determined to push down the highway to Mackinac, but wife and children persuade him to turn off the main road and take M-22's "Seventy-five miles of Lake all the Way." With stops at Empire, Glen Lake, and Glen Haven the father is gradually seduced by the gracious people, charming accommodations, and landscape so striking, that when he looks down from the vista at Miller Hill "there were no exclamations, no cries of delight. It was too tremendously beautiful for that." The family enjoyed meals such as "they had not tasted in months" swam at beaches so level and pure that there was "no chance of accident or disease," caught creels of trout, played golf, camped, and canoed. The moral of the tale was summed up by a kindly local who, after recounting the history of the area, says: "Folks 've been comin' ever since to settle and now city folks 've found out that we've got better roads, that we're off the beaten trail and they've come to find contentment... like you have, friend."¹⁵

Despite the egalitarian tone of such an appeal, there is no doubt that during the 1920s and 1930s the Glen Lake area aspired to the elevated social standing of Petoskey and Mackinac. Day Forest Estates billed itself as "America's Premier Exclusive Summer Community" and agents for the subdivision pitched lots to some of the most wealthy and influential men in the nation. The inclusion of an air-strip and golf course in the initial plans for the project reflected this orientation as did the 1929 brochure which promised readers: "Estates ideally restricted." The Glen Lake Country Club was more blunt. It specified "Gentiles Only" on its 1931 program. The Crystal Downs golf course had a large rock outside its entrance emblazoned with the same anti-Semitic sentiment. At the time, such restrictions were common at the watering holes of the well-to-do all across America. Such policies reflect summer residents desire to control the social interactions. Not infrequently lake lots would be sold only to friends, cousins, or acquaintances from the city. Strangers lacking such personal connections often found it hard to purchase property on Glen Lake or Lake Leelanau.¹⁶

The automobile created two new types of outdoor recreation in America that would shape the development of the tourist industry in twentieth century Michigan. The middle class summer cottage owner were the first of these, while the institution of the "vacation" and the "weekend" were the second. The automobile democratized access to the countryside. Rural retreats were long a symbol of the status of the wealthy. Beginning in the 1920s, a cabin on a lakeside lot gradually became both desirable and attainable for a broader range of the population. Collective bargaining agreements won by organized labor in the automotive and steel industries during the 1930s gave an even large circle of Midwesterners both the time and the money to acquire their own piece of the north woods. The ritual of going "up north" begun by the working class in the 1920s as a male-only recreation became, with the acquisition of a family car and paid vacation, an annual family ritual. A ring of development pressure radiated outward from the major cities of

¹⁵ Herbert F. Larson, *BE-WA-BIC Country: The Story of the Menominee Iron Range in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan* (New York: Carlton Press, 1963), 334-5. ¹⁵ Leelanau County Association of Commerce, *The Captives: Being the Story of a Family's Vacation in Leelanau County (Michigan), the Land of Delight* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Leelanau County Association of Commerce, 1924).

¹⁶ Cockrell, D.H. *Day's Kingdom*, 34; *Traverse City Record*, April 17, 1928; Glen Lake Country Club, Glen Lake, Leelanau Co. Michigan (Traverse City, Mich.: L.R. Henderson, 1931); Mary Ellen Hadjsky, Personal Communication, July 15, 1998.

Michigan, planting summer cottages with increasing density along the shores of all available lakes. The Sleeping Bear area, due to its location was not as severely affected by this trend as popular downstate resort lakes such as Paw Paw, Kent, Gull, and, of course, Lake St. Clair. Nonetheless, during the 1930s and 1940s the shores of Crystal, Platte, and Glen lakes all saw an expansion of summer cottages.

The other type of outdoor recreation created by the automobile was, of course, the car camper. This group grew dramatically from its beginnings in the 1920s. By the eve of World War II car campers had clearly exceeded the capacity of public facilities in southeastern Michigan and even remote parks in northwestern Michigan began to overflow with campers on holiday weekends. The Michigan Department of Conservation, the largest single landowner in northern Michigan, became the vehicle through which the ordinary citizens attempted to influence the direction of Michigan's recreational boom. This multiple-use agency was called upon to balance the needs of outdoor recreation with timber production, the growing demand for summer homes with the obvious need for more state parks, and calls for game stocking with the need for habitat protection. A National Park Service study of outdoor recreation planning in Michigan, done as part of the 1941 *A Study of the Park and Recreation Problem of the United States* predicted that the future of the tourist industry in the northern part of the state "will depend upon proper land use, the proper distribution of public areas and private holdings, and enough control over private developments to protect community interests." Yet, the dependence of the recreation industry in its early years on government expenditures was problematical because there were few established revenue streams to fund the infrastructural investment needed. Public officials were forced to choose between competing goals and often, competing communities.¹⁷

A Sleeping Bear State Park

In 1941, residents of Benzie County were interested in protecting their own recreational opportunities from the increasing privatization of lake shore lands as well as attracting a larger share of the automobile camper trade. They prevailed upon the Department of Conservation to survey their area for a potential new state park. There was a very popular, but very small, 180-acre state facility, Benzie State Park, near the mouth of the Platte River. The park had been created in 1923 through donations and exchanges between the State and J.W. Dye. Frankfort lobbied for that park to be expanded or for a second park to be created in the dune country between Point Betsie and the west end of Crystal Lake. At the same time Leelanau County, just to the north, also coveted a state park. Three members of that county's board pitched their area to the director of the agency. Diplomatically he agreed to extend the Conservation Department's survey of potential parklands to the entire Lake Michigan shoreline between Frankfort and Leland.¹⁸

¹⁷ Arthur C. Elmer, "Parks and Recreation Division," Department of Conservation, Thirteenth Biennial Report, 1945-1946 (Lansing: State of Michigan, 1946), p.165-7; United States Department of the Interior, *A Study of the Park and Recreation Problem of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941), 186-9.

¹⁸ John I. Rogers, Report on Field Inspection and Study of Proposed State Park Areas: Benzie and Leelanau Counties, File 8, Box 19, Record Group 78-102, State Archives of Michigan; Arthur C. Elmer to Director and Conservation Commission, May 14, 1946, SLBD Records.

John Rogers, the Assistant Chief of the Division of Parks and Recreation, headed the survey and evaluation of the region. He was dismayed by the crowded and inadequate size of Benzie State Park, but was skeptical of the possibility of expanding the park to ease congestion there. Rogers' evaluation was strongly influenced by his interpretation of the mission of state parks as scenes of active recreation. The attractiveness and safety of the beaches, the suitability of back areas for campgrounds, the type of activities which could be promoted to visitors, were all critical considerations that inclined him to discount the Benzie County sites. Rather it was the Glen Lake area which he felt offered the "greatest attraction."

The first recommendation I would make is that if the state was to have only one state park in the Leelanau Peninsula (Benzie and Leelanau Counties) that it be located in the vicinity of Glen Lake and the Sleeping Bear Dunes...this possible area...in the writers opinion, is the outstanding area in the lower peninsula. We have here in Michigan our Tahquamenon Falls, our Huron and Porcupine Mountains, our Copper Country, etc. which we proclaim to the vacationer that he should see because of their grandeur. In the writer's opinion this possible park area at Glen Lake is the equal of any of those places and is entirely different. Michigan would have a park that very few states in the nation could boast an equal.

The area Rogers recommended for park status was composed of the Sleeping Bear Dunes, the D.H. Day Forest Estates, and a small portion (1,000 feet) of the north shore of Glen Lake, a total of 5,800 acres. Rogers recognized that the Sleeping Bear Dunes had the grand scale that could attract visitors from around the Midwest, while Glen Lake offered protected water recreation, and the Day Forest Estates provided the vistas to appreciate each. The uniting of the dunes, backlands, and interior lakes into a single park plan made objective sense to a veteran recreation planner like Rogers, yet it laid the seed for the controversy in which the National Park Service was embroiled almost a generation later.¹⁹

Rogers' report was received enthusiastically in Lansing. Unfortunately, the Department of Conservation would face years of frustration before his recommendations could be acted upon. World War II was the first roadblock. As most public resources were focused on winning the war no action was taken on state park expansion during the conflict. Five years later, in May of 1946, Rogers revisited the area and found that save for some commercial logging within the Day forest, the proposed park area was little changed. In short order the Conservation Commission voted to approve the Sleeping Bear Park Project. This action set the boundaries for the future state park but did not provide the land acquisition money to make the project a reality. The Conservation Department opened negotiations with the Grand Rapids Trust Company, which took over supervision of the failed Day Forest Estates project, and negotiated an option to purchase a large portion of the trust lands for \$100,000. There the project stalled. The independent Conservation Commission refused to approve further land acquisitions until the legislature agreed to approve larger regular appropriations for site development and maintenance at the existing state parks. The Sleeping Bear—Glen Lake park plan was caught in the middle and the option lapsed.²⁰

The close-knit Glen Lake community supported the state park proposal, which only included 1,000 feet of frontage on Glen Lake. They took deep pride in the scenic lake and for

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Dr. C.G. Parnall, et al to Those Interested in the Day Forest Estate, August 31,1949, SLBD Records.

years they boasted that *National Geographic Magazine* had declared it was "among the five most beautiful lakes in the world." When a genuine *National Geographic* representative visited the area in 1934 he disputed the validity of the statement, but did agree "I have never seen a lake more beautiful." Christopher G. Parnall, a shoreline property owner from Ann Arbor, had boosted state park status for a portion of the lake as early as 1924. When the state let its option lapse Parnall attempted to rally Glen Lake property owners to purchase the land themselves. Parnall was deeply concerned that an outside private owner intent on aggressive development might purchase the Day Estates. On May 8, 1949 about fifty interested people gathered in Glen Arbor and pledged subscriptions to a fund for the purchase of the Day Forest Estate. An escrow account was established. For every \$1,000 subscribed toward the purchase of the whole property each contributor would be entitled to one hundred feet of frontage on Glen Lake or Lake Michigan and a pro rata share of the remaining back lands. Parnall's effort, however, fell short. Although more than \$70,000 was initially pledged; only \$50,000 was actually placed in the escrow account. An attempt to pool the funds of the Glen Lake owners and the Department of Conservation also failed and the plan had to be abandoned. The effort was another manifestation of the Glen Lake owners desire to control conditions around their beloved lake and indication of the financial resources at then-disposal.²¹

Lacking acquisition funds the Department of Conservation was forced into a patient, catch-as-catch-can development approach. Existing state lands in the area, which included most of the Sleeping Bear Dunes, were consolidated under state park administration and over the years small additions to the park project were made by gift and purchase using fish and game funds or modest appropriations. Nonetheless, considerable lands within the boundary of the park remained in private hands. By 1963, the state owned only 2,044 acres of the proposed 5,800-acre park. Realization of the dream of a Sleeping Bear Dunes—Glen Lake park had to wait until the creation of the national lakeshore.²²

The failure of the Conservation Department to realize its vision for a Sleeping Bear state park was not unique. The famed Pictured Rocks region of the Upper Peninsula was similarly created as a state park project in 1953, only to falter for lack of acquisition and development funds. The Grand Sable Dunes on Lake Superior had been declared a state park in 1931, but a generation later the park consisted of little more than an inaccessible and unmanaged collection of tax delinquent lands. The fact was that Michigan's state parks were in a state of crisis in the wake of a boom in outdoor recreation following the end of World War II. By 1948 attendance at Michigan state parks was approximately twice that of the population of the entire state. With that heavy use came the demand for modern conveniences such as flush toilets and paved roads. But flat budgets meant that the agency was barely able to maintain Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration era improvements, which were beginning to suffer deterioration, let alone sponsor extensive new development. In 1953, when the existing system was swamped with more than 14 million visitors, the legislature appropriated little more than ten cents per visitor to pay not only for maintenance but to fund new facilities as well. The state tried to solve the revenue crisis in recreation by instituting an annual two dollar state park automobile admission sticker. The millions brought in from this source, however, proved only a temporary

²¹ Ibid; Christopher Parnall to Ralph Mueller, May 4, 1949, SLBD Records.

²² J.D. Stephansky, Chief, Lands Division to Messrs. MacMullan, Walker, Harris, et al, March 2, 1966, SLBD Records.

solution as ever-increasing usage increased the demand for expensive new developments. The funding crisis was part of a general cash shortfall that effected the entire state government and resulted in a \$100 million dollar budget deficit by 1959. Democratic Governor G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams rather unrealistically proposed a corporate profits tax as a way to reinvigorate state agencies. The Michigan Republican party, not to mention the giant automotive manufacturers in the state, did not take kindly to this solution, and countered with a proposal to increase the sales tax. The dispute that followed paralyzed Michigan and left it in such financial shambles that people bitterly joked that the favorite drink in the state capital of Lansing was "Michigan on the rocks."²³

During the late 1950s the Department of Conservation consolidated their holdings in the Sleeping Bear region into a unit named D.H. Day State Park but which included that portion of the Sleeping Bear-Glen Lake park which had been acquired as well as Benzie State Park. The consolidation was in many ways an admission of failure. In 1954, Charles F. Boehler a planning consultant to the Conservation Department, had recommended that the state double the size of Benzie State Park to include both banks of the Platte River, a portion of the Platte Plains, and the Empire Dunes. The Michigan Natural Areas Council, a group of scientists and conservationists who represented the Nature Conservancy in Michigan, enthusiastically seconded this plan. But the initiative at Benzie, like the development of the Sleeping Bear Park, was stymied by the state's fiscal crisis. The park superintendent at D.H. Day State Park had to sit frustrated on the sidelines while the land at the mouth of the Platte and along the shore of Glen Lake was subdivided and sold.²⁴

A major loss to the state park project was the purchase of the Day Forest Estate by Pierce Stocking, a Cadillac, Michigan, lumberman. On the surface Stocking was just the type of purchaser both the state and the Glen Lake summer homeowners had tried prevent from taking possession of the scenic tract. He was a small-scale independent lumberman, a by-the-seat-of-his-pants entrepreneur, leveraged to the hilt and in need of a quick turnaround on his investment. The state guaranteed that Michigan's first private forest reservation and the land once set aside as the playground for millionaires would be immediately brought under the bite of the chainsaw. Stocking had made his first purchases in the Sleeping Bear area in the late 1940s. He also made extensive purchases on South Manitou Island. The fogging operation there nearly bankrupted him due to high transportation costs and the challenge of bringing logs across the Manitou Passage. Whatever Stocking made in his ventures he returned to extending his operations, either through equipment purchases or the acquisition of new real estate in the area. Like many a previous sojourner to the Sleeping Bear, Stocking fell in love with the area. Against his wife's objections he built his home on the Day tract, high on a hill overlooking duned lakeshore. At his own expense he built and maintained a nearby scenic overlook and picnic area to share the

²³ Department of Conservation, Fourteenth Biennial Report, 1947-1948 (Lansing: State of Michigan, 1948), 229-3; Holland (Michigan) Evening Sentinel, December 5, 1953; Adrian (Michigan) Telegram, December 4, 1953; Marquette (Michigan) Mining Journal, September 12, 1956; Neal R. Pierce and John Keefe, *The Great Lakes States: People, Politics and Power in the Five Great Lakes States* (New York: Norton, 1980), 186-7; Helen Washburn Berthelot, *Win Some, Lose Some: G. Mennen Williams and the New Democrats* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 199-201.

²⁴ Charles F. Boehler, *Benzie State Park Potential Expansion, Benzie and Leelanau Counties*, June 17, 1954; Paul W. Thompson, *Platte River Plains and Its Relation to Lake Michigan History*, Michigan Natural Areas Council, 1954, Legislative History Files, SLBD Records.

dramatic vistas with others. Stockings' attempts to develop other tourist facilities on his portion of the dunes brought him into conflict with the Department of Conservation.²⁵

The Sleeping Bear—Glen Lake park area was a patchwork of property lines with the State of Michigan, Pierce Stocking, and Louis Warnes being the largest owners. Warnes was the son-in-law of David Day and with his wife Marion, Day's youngest daughter, he inherited much of the Glen Haven property of the old lumberman. For years they operated the Day store in Glen Haven, until by chance, they discovered a way to profit from their proximity to the dunes. In 1934 and 1935 the Frankfort Glider Club used the high perched dunes at Sleeping Bear to launch their sail planes. To get the cumbersome gliders to the top of the dune one club member equipped his Ford with oversized balloon tires. The car worked so well on the sand slopes that Louis Warnes, who cooperated with the club, decided to fit-out his own vehicle the same way and offer tours of the dune country. For the next forty-three years motorized dune tours were a principal way visitors to Sleeping Bear saw the sites. Warnes was a supporter of the state park and he made several significant land sales to the Department of Conservation. The dunesmobile rides continued under a state concession license. Business was so good in 1956 that Warnes, backed by a new ten-year concession agreement, purchased ten brand-new Oldsmobile 88's. A second concession, a lunch counter at the foot of the dune climb area, was also granted to Warnes. Competitors, however, were beginning to encroach on his trade. Francis Harrigan, a Saginaw businessman, opened his own dune ride using a modified pick-up truck and following a route partially across state parklands. Warnes naturally appealed to the Department of Conservation to stop Harrigan's operation. More of a challenge was Pierce Stocking's request to use a portion of state land to operate his own dune ride and his critique that Warnes ride was both harmful to the environment and too expensive for the average citizen to enjoy. Out of what appears to have been a mixture of genuine concern and personal cussedness, Stocking tried to get the state to either allow his plans to go forward or to agree to limit further tourist development within the state park. Stocking's leverage for such a request was that the patchwork of ownership in the area was such that while he needed state permission to reach some of his lands, the state operated areas like the dune climb which gave visitors access to dune lands owned by Stocking. To complicate things further there were tracts within the park project area in which the Department of Conservation and Stocking shared an ownership interest. Throughout the 1950s the state and Pierce Stocking each continued to make land purchases in the Glen Lake area, their contentious relationship a constant reminder of Michigan's botched opportunity to develop a Sleeping Bear park.²⁶

The Great Lakes Shoreline Survey

The problems experienced by Michigan in attempting to meet the expanding public demand for recreational lands were by no means unique. The number of Americans engaged in camping, fishing, hiking, and boating grew every year during the 1950s. Annually the

²⁵ Kathleen Stocking, Personal Communication, July 22, 1998.

²⁶ Cockrell, D.H. Day's Kingdom, 35-6; Louis Warnes to Arthur Elmer, Chief of the Parks Division, June 25, 1956; Pierce Stocking to Directors, Michigan Department of Conservation, October 10, 1956; R.O. Dodge, Regional Supervisor, Parks & Recreation, to Arthur Elmer, March 8, 1957, Legislative History Files, SLBD Records.

Department of Conservation brought new recreational lands under state management—state park acreage actually doubled between 1948 and 1972, but the rate of growth was too slow to stay ahead of the demand curve. "Never before in the history of recreation and wildlife conservation," observed a federal report, "have the Great Lakes been faced with the magnitude of recreational uses that has roared into the parks, game areas, fishing sites." Those diverse uses created a competition among users for the vital commodity demanded by all outdoor enthusiasts—water recreation sites. In 1945, *Michigan Conservation Magazine* predicted the boom:

"When the war's over I'll trade this foxhole for a boat livery on some lake back home"—
"We're saving our bonds for a cottage on a lake."—When there're tires and gas again we're going to find a little home on a lake and enjoy life."—Today's dreams, tomorrows realities."

The silence following the final burst of gunfire in this terrible conflict will be counterbalanced by a swelling sound a hemisphere away as once again the hum of wild-ward bound traffic resumes over now deserted highways. War weary soldiers and work-weary stayers will respond alike to the call of nature's tranquility, and Michigan's outdoor playground will be visited by increasing thousands—some to return and stay.

Summer homes, already common in Michigan before World War II, spread at an even more rapid rate in the 1950s. On popular southern Michigan lakes such as Paw Paw Lake cottages were planted on increasingly smaller lots, giving portions of the lakeshore an urban-like appearance of density. Although there are 8,000 named lakes in Michigan, those lakes accessible to Chicago, Toledo, and the cities of southern Michigan bore the brunt of this deluge. Savvy buyers looked farther north where less money bought more frontage. A *Michigan Conservation Magazine* writer encouraged this strategy: "great improvements in travel facilities is probable in the near postwar future and mileage distances may represent shorter and shorter travel time. Scores of beautiful lakes in the state have not been developed simply because of their remoteness." The Department of Conservation's aborted plans to expand Benzie and D.H. Day state parks were part of a conscious effort to get ahead of the rising tide of recreational use and secure public access to the most favorable locations.²⁷

Michigan actually did a better job than many other state's both anticipating and adjusting to the postwar recreation boom, but in the end the national trend required a national response. While little was done to expand the size of federal recreational holdings during the 1950s, the administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower did lay the foundation for more aggressive action later through its strong support for upgrading current facilities and planning for future growth. Mission 66, a ten-year program begun in 1956 to improve visitor facilities at all national parks, was an example of the former. The establishment of the National Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission in 1958 made expanding recreational opportunities a high priority for the Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, even the Army Corps of Engineers. A new federal agency, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, was eventually created to spearhead the development of new recreation areas. But before that agency was in place the National Park Service accomplished the most important recreational planning initiative of the postwar period, the national shoreline survey.²⁸

²⁷ National Park Service, *Our Fourth Shore: Great Lakes Recreation Area Survey* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 1959), 21; Norman F. Billings, "Exercise Caution When Selecting Location On Lake," *Michigan Conservation Magazine* (April 1945) 2,10.

²⁸ Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 281-4.

During the New Deal era, the National Park Service, supported by relief funds and inspired by the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration's fascination with regional planning, undertook a study of seashore conservation. Survey teams were sent along the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf coasts. Out of this fieldwork came the recommendation that fifteen select coastal areas be added to the national park system. One of these sites, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, was actually pushed through Congress and became a reality. The outbreak of World War II brought war to America's shores and the momentum that had been built to create additional seaside units was lost. Conrad Wirth, the National Park Service director in 1956, had worked on the 1930s shoreline survey and felt it was "one of the most interesting and worthwhile of the New Deal conservation programs." Even before "Mission 66" was adopted Wirth made sure that shoreline conservation was an agency priority. In 1954, Wirth ordered the a second set of shoreline surveys, as the New Deal era data was nearly twenty years old. The park service director had an "angel" who shared his commitment to the nation's seashores, Paul Mellon. Along with his sister, Alisa Bruce, Paul Mellon was the heir to the Mellon bank fortune. Over the years the Mellon heirs used their wealth and influence to support conservation programs. Over time they would fund the establishment of the White House Rose Garden, the landscaping of Lafayette Park, and the purchase of Cumberland Island, Georgia. Their most important contribution to the American landscape, however, was the decision to recommend that their Old Dominion Foundation and Avalon Foundation fund the second shoreline survey.²⁹

The survey, which began with the Atlantic Coast, was directed by a twenty-year veteran of the National Park Service, Allen T. Edmunds. The lanky former Navy Lieutenant Commander was a native of Battle Creek, Michigan, and a graduate of Michigan State University. His specialty within the park service was planning and he had considerable experience working with state and local conservation organizations. Managing the survey proved to be the greatest challenge of his career. Donor relations was a unique (for a government employee) and important part of the job. Paul Mellon had a strong personal interest in the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. He met frequently with Edmunds and occasionally accompanied him or other team members into the field. The successful completion of the survey of the east and southern shores of the nation won Mellon's confidence in the proposal to fund the survey of the Pacific and Great Lakes— areas with which he had less personal interest. In October 1956, the Mellon foundations awarded an additional \$120,000 to the National Park Service. The Pacific coast study was budgeted at \$60,000 and scheduled for one year, while the Great Lakes study, which was the first undertaking of its kind in the region, was budgeted at \$80,000 and scheduled for two years. As Edmunds began the Great Lakes survey Director Wirth reminded him that it had taken fifteen years to get a single new national park out of the 1934-35 shoreline survey. If nothing came of the Great Lakes effort, "don't be discouraged."³⁰

The Great Lakes survey began in June of 1957 with an aerial reconnaissance of the entire American shore of the lakes. A United States Coast Guard UF-1G Albatross took Edmunds and his survey team from the St. Lawrence River, along the shores of the lakes. The flight took the

²⁹ Ibid, 192-3; George B. Hartzog, Jr., *Battling for the National Parks* (Mt. Kisco, NY: MoyerBell, 1988), 197-9.

³⁰ Allen T. Edmunds to Herb Evison, January 28, 1978, Dick Russell Papers, Archives and Graphic Research, Harpers Ferry Center, Harpers Ferry, Virginia; Allen T. Edmunds Obituary, *Courier* (May 1985); Ernest Brooks to Conrad L. Wirth, October 31, 1956, Accounting Files, Great Lakes Shoreline Survey Records, P-435575, National Archives, Mid-Atlantic Regional Branch, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Hereafter this source will be cited as NARA-Mid-Atlantic Region.

better part of five days and twenty-eight hours of time in the air. On June 17th the team was over northwestern Michigan. Even at 600 feet and at 150 miles-per-hour they were struck by the "fine possibilities" offered by the region's undeveloped shore of beaches, dunes, and bluffs and it was immediately marked for closer on-the-ground evaluation. The flight made clear that the bulk of the areas of potential national significance were to be found on Lakes Superior and Michigan. Flying along the shore of Lake Erie Edmunds thought of a statement recently made by Henry T. Heald, President of Ford Motor Company. In twenty years he predicted the shores of the Great Lakes would be "unrelieved urban areas," from Milwaukee to Buffalo. The flight was followed by a series of informational meetings with state conservation officials in the states along the Great Lakes. Ownership maps were obtained and the park service team was briefed on the development plans and pressures at work in each state. Field studies began immediately afterward and in the 1957 season were limited to the Upper Great Lakes (Superior, Michigan, and Huron). Careful coordination by Allen Edmunds resulted in outstanding inter-agency cooperation. The Coast Guard provided boats and helicopters, the Wisconsin and Michigan Conservation departments gave the field team access to their planes. The Upper Peninsula of Michigan presented the greatest challenge to the survey. Large portions of its shore were inaccessible by land, yet its wild nature—ninety percent undeveloped—made much of the shore a prime candidate for close inspection. In the end the Upper Peninsula yielded what the survey team regarded as the two most outstanding natural areas on the Great Lakes—the Pictured Rocks area and the Huron Mountains.³¹

The field team during 1957 was composed strictly of planners. E. Winton Perkins, reassigned at the last minute from the Lower Colorado River Survey, was the chief-of-the-party. Edmund B. Rogers, Assistant to the Rocky Mountain Regional director, was loaned to the survey for a portion of the summer while Howard Chapman, a recreation specialist, was a member of the peripatetic team from the beginning to the end of the project. "Since the first of June," Perkins wrote, "I've traveled 25,000 miles by plane, train, car, bus and boat which left very little time for lounging on those Great Lakes beaches." Although the team worked hard, recreation was their principle interest. Prime undeveloped country in their view was land which, in addition to having outstanding scenic values, could be utilized for a variety of outdoor recreation pursuits. Their instructions, however, cautioned them to consider recreation "in its broad sense" and to look for areas of "scenic, scientific and historical interest as well as those chiefly valuable for active recreation." This broader emphasis to include historic and scientific values differentiated the Great Lakes survey from the narrower Atlantic and Gulf surveys. To meet this goal the survey added a historian, James Sullivan, and a biologist, Donald Humphrey, during the second season to aid in evaluation of the areas of prime interest. Early on the survey attempted to create a point classification to aid in comparative evaluation, but the effort was abandoned as too arbitrary. In the end what proved the most reliable index for comparing values was the fact that the survey covered every foot of Great Lakes shoreline on the United States side of the lake. This allowed them, in Edmunds's words, to "think in terms of genuine superlatives." The ultimate

³¹ E. Winton Perkins to Regional Director, July 8, 1957; Allen T. Edmunds to Birt Darling, Lansing State Journal, April 24, 1958; Great Lakes Shoreline Survey Progress Report, September 30, 1957; E. Winton Perkins to George Thompson, August 11, 1957, Great Lakes Shoreline Survey Records, NARA-Mid-Atlantic Region.

goal of the effort was to select areas "that should be properly included in a well-rounded and adequate National Park System."³²

The second field season of the survey began with another set of comprehensive overflights, this time by helicopter. The ground team then worked their way west from the St. Lawrence. Their findings along the Erie and Ontario shores confirmed the aerial observations that the prime park prospects were in Michigan and that is where the bulk of the 1958 field season was spent, closely examining those areas that had been identified as having a high potential. The Sleeping Bear area was intensively explored in July. The dunes at Empire and Sleeping Bear drew close inspection as did the Platte River plains and Point Betsie. South Manitou Island received the most enthusiastic comments: "There is something about South Manitou Island that is very charming: in its gently sloping terrain, its mixed forests, the old settlement, the lighthouse, combined with the gull colony on the tip, giving it an other worldly quality." In view of the firestorm of grief it would later cause the park service. Glen Lake was treated in the field-notes very matter-of-factly. There was no hyperbole about it being one of the most beautiful lakes in the world, only the observation that although there was "considerable resort development all along its shore" the combination of the inland lakes and the dunes made for "an extremely well-balanced park area." The reconnaissance was made by the entire survey team, some of the time escorted by the staff of the Michigan Department of Conservation. This commitment of time and staff indicates the seriousness of the survey's interest in the area but also that, as one of the survey members confided to a supporter, "they had been a little hesitant about Sleeping Bear."³³

The survey teams tried to be thorough as well as discreet. Follow-up visits to promising sites always included a careful review of the land ownership pattern, including ascertaining how much land was in public hands, the scale of subdivisions or resort developments, and the per-foot cost of waterfront and backlands real estate. The results of such economic analysis were balanced with recreational and natural values in assessing the potential of an area. Discretion was important in order to get accurate information and to avoid precipitating a speculative wave in a high potential area. Genevieve E. Gillette, President of the Michigan Parks Association, later a strong supporter of the survey's recommendations, tried to hunt-up the park service team when they were working in the Sleeping Bear area. At the Park Hotel in Traverse City, however, she could not, even with the help of an obliging desk clerk, find any registered guests from Philadelphia or Washington, D.C., let alone from the Department of the Interior. Only by recognizing several Michigan conservation representatives on the hotel porch was she able to link-up with the survey team.³⁴

The survey was completed by the end of the 1958 field season and Edmunds directed his staff in the production of a final report of their findings. The report, *Remaining Shoreline*, was a

³² E. Winton Perkins to Lewis D. Brown, U.S.G.S., September 19, 1957; Daniel Tobin, Regional Director to Edmund B. Rogers, July 29, 1957; Prospectus: Great Lakes Region and Pacific Coast Recreation Area Surveys, December 28, 1956, Allen T. Edmunds to Thomas Owen, Utah State University, May 4, 1960; NARA-Mid-Atlantic Region.

³³ Great Lakes Shoreline Survey Helicopter Flight Notes, March 28, 1958 to May 9, 1958; Great Lakes Shoreline Survey Reconnaissance Reports: Betsie Point, Platte River Plains, South Manitou Island, Empire Dunes, Sleeping Bear Extension, North End of Sleeping Bear, and Good Harbor Bay, July 9-14, 1958, NARA-Mid-Atlantic Region.

³⁴ "Tawas Point Study Area," Michigan-Individual Areas file. Great Lakes Shoreline Survey Records, NARA-Mid-Atlantic Region; E. Genevieve Gillette, Oral History Transcripts, transcript 23A, p.2, E. Genevieve Gillette Papers [hereafter referred to as the Gillette Papers], Bentley Historical Library, Michigan Historical Collections, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Hereafter this depository will be referred to as the Bentley Library.

vital step in the expansion of the National Park Service into the Great Lakes region. At the time it was released there were only three existing national park units in the region: Isle Royale National Park, Grand Portage National Monument, and Perry's Victory National Monument. In the wake of Edmunds's visionary report six major national parks were established in the Great Lakes region, thereby giving the National Park Service a much greater opportunity to directly serve the 40 million residents of the region.

The Great Lakes Shoreline Survey made thirteen specific recommendations:

1. A minimum of fifteen percent of the shoreline of the Great Lakes should be in public ownership, around urban areas the figure should be twenty percent.
2. Marshes and swamps may not be scenic but they require protection as a wildlife area.
3. As natural areas gradually disappear, examples of outstanding biotic communities become more important for preservation and study.
4. Historic sites along the shoreline also deserve to be protected and interpreted.
5. When military or Coast Guard facilities are decommissioned they should be dedicated to public recreation.
6. Great Lakes islands need to be protected as "unspoiled settings and biotic laboratories for the future."
7. Facilities for boat dockage on the Great Lakes should be a major public concern.
8. Except for a few outstanding, outlying sites recreation resources should be concentrated near major cities such as Detroit, Chicago, and Cleveland.
9. Near urban areas consideration should be given for creation of additional shoreline recreation sites via landfills.
10. Port sites should not be developed in conflict with recreational values.
11. Development of existing highways "should receive careful planning and controls to prevent unrestricted development which could adversely affect or destroy existing intrinsic values. Alignment of any future lakeshore highways should be carefully planned so as not to restrict ultimate development of existing and proposed recreation areas.
12. Water pollution threatens recreation and biotic values. Legislation and enforcement are required.
13. In view of their possible national significance, further study should be given to Pigeon Point, the Huron Mountains, the Pictured Rocks, Sleeping Bear, and Indiana Dunes to determine the best plan for their preservation.

In retrospect these recommendations seem a mixture of the visionary and the time-bound concerns of another generation. The report recognized the importance of wetlands as a means of preserving biodiversity, but did not appreciate the role of wetlands in fighting water pollution and flooding. They acknowledged the growing problem of water pollution in the Great Lakes area, but did not foresee how it might negatively impact the demand for outdoor recreation on the lakes. Like so many planning documents, then and now, it tended to project unchanged the trends of the moment. In their view recreational demand would continue to grow unchecked, leisure time would continue to grow, and the urban populations of Chicago, Detroit, and

Cleveland would continue to grow. Like so many of the other government observers of the period Edmunds's team over-projected the significance of the St. Lawrence Seaway, an enlarged set of canals designed to offer larger ocean vessels access from the lakes to the oceans. Although the seaway did trigger harbor construction, which horribly scarred the Indiana Dunes, that process was not repeated elsewhere. The seaway was hamstrung by east and gulf coast congressman who only agreed to the project after it was amended to ensure that it would prove no long-term threat to their own regions. The expected maritime revival of the seaway turned out to be an economic blip, not a boom.³⁵

In many ways the survey report was a conservative document. The recommendation that fifteen percent of the Great Lakes shoreline should be in public ownership was not as bold as it sounded, since the park projects they recommended were in areas such as northern Michigan where up to forty percent of the shoreline was already publicly owned. Fred A. Seaton, Secretary of the Interior, had expressed the opinion that the National Park Service should recommend no more than three sites for potential park status out of the combined surveys of the Atlantic, Gulf; Pacific, and Great Lakes shorelines. This type of pressure, the experience of the long struggle to create Cape Hatteras National Seashore, and, of course, the known shortage of land acquisition funds combined to constrain the survey's conclusions. Edmunds clearly exceeded Secretary Seaton's recommendation when he recommended four areas from the Great Lakes alone as potential national parks. Left out of the report was any federal role in urban recreation, clearly one of the great needs in the region, save perhaps for the recommendation to preserve the Indiana Dunes. Only that latter site was located anywhere near the region's population centers. The other recommended sites. Sleeping Bear, Pictured Rocks, the Huron Mountains, and Pigeon Point, were all remote from the cities. Even in the thinly populated Lake Superior region the survey team moved deliberately. Conspicuously absent from the shoreline survey report is the recommendation that Wisconsin's Apostle Islands be made a national park. Local boosters had urged such an action consistently since the 1920s. A park service representative at that time decried that as a park project the cutover islands and shoreline there did not "amount to a hill of beans." The Great Lakes Shoreline Survey a generation later viewed the landscape of the Apostle Islands more positively. They urged the state of Wisconsin to preserve the beaches along Lake Superior and suggested one of the Apostle Islands might make a good state park. The Apostle Islands, today a successful national lakeshore, were not viewed by Edmunds and his team as one of the region's outstanding recreational resources.³⁶

It was the political pressure of Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson that forced the National Park Service to look again at the Apostle Islands. Clout also played a role in the demise of the Huron Mountains as a potential national park. Allen Edmunds's team were more impressed by this area than any other part of the entire Great Lakes region. Located on the shore of Lake Superior just west of Marquette, Michigan, the Huron Mountains were unknown to most residents of the Upper Peninsula, let alone most Midwesterners. After their first look at the area the survey team noted: "There is practically no development, its scenic qualities are superior and

³⁵ Our Fourth Shore: Great Lakes Shoreline Recreation Area Survey (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1960), 7-9.

³⁶ Our Fourth Shore, 2, 6-9; Ron Cockrell, *A Signature of Time and Eternity: The Administrative History of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore*, Indiana (Omaha, Neb.: National Park Service, 1988), 48; *Great Lake Shoreline Survey, Remaining Shoreline Opportunities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 1959), 17,19, 55.

its variety of features is unequalled. Its shoreline consists of 50' - 100' red rock, sheer cliffs, granite outcroppings, and white sand beaches. There are interesting offshore islands and beautiful inland lakes." Closer inspection of the area by boat, helicopter and foot backed up these original conclusions but also presented a problem. The Huron Mountains were almost entirely privately owned, largely by the forest products company Celotex and by the elite Huron Mountain Club. Founded in 1889, the Huron Mountain Club, was a unique Midwestern expression of the same outdoor impulse that led east coast industrialists and financiers to build elaborate, rustic summer retreats in the Adirondack Mountains. Fifty families, for almost five generations controlled 22,000 acres of mountains, lakes, and canyons. Lumber and land magnet John Longyear was one of the original members, others were manufacturing or steel tycoons, attorneys and physicians. Henry Ford was left dangling on a waiting list for seven years before his membership was accepted. Some of the summer homes were beautiful log structures in the style of the Adirondack "Great Camps," others simple summer cottages, and some, in the words of the survey team, were little more than "glorified shacks." Locked gates, fences, and guards assured the members of their privacy and kept the area all but unknown. Since the club's creation the logged-over Huron Mountains had regrown its forest cover and the entire area appeared to be a splendid near-wilderness.³⁷

As much as the survey team was intrigued with the Huron Mountains contact with the leadership of the club seems to have inclined them to back off from recommending the area as a potential national park. A 1957 progress report concluded: "no active program or pressure for state acquisition is recommended for this area. However, continued contact with the present organization is suggested in order to be in on the ground floor should an opportunity for acquisition arise." This diffident evaluation, however, did not stand. In July 1959 National Park Service Director Conrad L. Wirth inspected for himself the highlight areas identified by the shoreline survey. He was "very much impressed" by the Huron Mountains area and ordered that it be included among the sites to be recommended for consideration as potential parks. Alarmed by this decision the Huron Mountain Club made its case for continued private ownership in the press while remaining constructively, if not fully cooperatively engaged with the park service. Requests by park planners to enter club lands were fended-off while contacts and informal visits by high level National Park Service officials were courted. An *Outdoor America* article posed the issue as a choice between a noisy, crowded public park and "a private wilderness for those who own it—and who have faithfully preserved it." The park service also sought high level discussions with the club, hoping to sell them on the idea that a Huron Mountain park might be developed which would include the club owners summer homes as an in-holding. For its part the club pointed out their existing policy of allowing accredited naturalists access to their lands. An April 1960 meeting between club President Kent Chandler and Conrad Wirth brought an end to the prospect of a Huron Mountain national park. At that time Chandler likely revealed his political hand to Director Wirth, for the latter immediately changed his tune. The "frontier is gone," the park service director wrote shortly afterward, and the National Park Service had a huge job trying to preserve what was left of the American environment, therefore "I am not worrying about the relatively few remaining natural areas managed like the Huron Mountain

³⁷ Great Lakes Shoreline Survey, Preliminary Progress Report, September 30, 1957, n.p.; Shirley DeLongchamp, "Henry Ford's Upper Peninsula," *A Most Superior Land: Life in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan*, edited by Russell McKee, (Lansing: Michigan Natural Resources Magazine, 1983), 77-83.

Club property, so long as they are in the hands of the present owners." The extent of the clout the club brought to bear is suggested by the fact that unlike the Pictured Rocks and Sleeping Bear Dunes, the much more promising Huron Mountains were never proposed for national park status by a single Michigan senator or congressional representative. The fifty well-heeled owners of the Huron Mountains accomplished what the hundreds of less well-connected cottage owners in the Sleeping Bear area could not do—stop a national park.³⁸

The Great Lakes Shoreline Survey, however, did succeed in bringing the National Park Service into the Great Lakes region in a major way. For years the agency had fended off requests from the residents of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan to create a national park in their area by disparaging the region's second growth forests and its lack of monumental grandeur similar to the great parks of the mountain west. The demand for outdoor recreation that followed World War II had changed that by forcing the agency to look at the region in a new way. In the process the National Park Service found in the Pictured Rocks and Sleeping Bear Dunes sites that possessed both the water recreation areas so typical of the north woods and landscapes with scenic assets which compared favorably with the best of America's national parks.

"National Parks are where you find them," a park planner advised a summer homeowner critical of the recommendation to federalize the dunes. What he meant was that in the late 1950s the Sleeping Bear area fit perfectly the blend of recreational, natural, and esthetic requirements required by the shoreline survey. Sleeping Bear Dunes, although it was not as close to major urban areas as the Indiana Dunes, nor as scenic as the Pictured Rocks, nor as unspoiled as the Huron Mountains, probably possessed better than any other area the blend of features sought by park planners. It was more unspoiled than Indiana Dunes, more spectacular than anything offered by the Apostle Islands, and much closer to major population centers than the Pictured Rocks. Sleeping Bear was a recreation area on the cusp of change when it was discovered by the shoreline survey. For nearly twenty years the Michigan Department of Conservation had tried with limited means and limited success to shape the development of Sleeping Bear toward public access and resource preservation. Now the National Park Service saw in the Sleeping Bear and Pictured Rocks a chance to create a new type of national park. But if from a park planner's point-of-view parks "are where you find them", from a political perspective national parks are created in the stow, imperfect give-and-take of the legislative arena. By no means would the park envisioned by Allen T. Edmunds and his planners be the park that emerged from the legislative process. The best the park service could hope was to avoid, as they could not with the Huron Mountains proposal, a complete shipwreck of their work. E. Winton Perkins, head of the Great Lakes Survey field team, understood what was at stake. "As this is being written," he concluded his report, "surveyors are subdividing some of the remaining beach areas and bulldozers are opening new access roads. Time is of the essence....."³⁹

³⁸ George A. Palmer, Assistant Regional Director to Regional Director, July 28, 1959, Great Lakes Shoreline Survey Records, NARA-Mid-Atlantic Region; Outdoor America (April 1960), 10-12; Detroit News, August 7, 1960; Conrad Wirth, Director National Park Service to Kent Chandler, April 12, 1960, Great Lakes Shoreline Survey Records, NARA-Mid-Atlantic Region.

³⁹ E. Winton Perkins, Great Lakes Survey Progress Report, September 30, 1957, Great Lakes Shoreline Survey Records, NARA-Mid-Atlantic Region.

Chapter Two
"We're Going For The Right Thing"
The Legislative Struggle to Create Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
1971- 1977

It was both an end and a beginning. For Allen T. Edmunds, the Michigan man near the end of a long career in the National Park Service, being invited to address a joint session of the Michigan State legislature on the findings of the Great Lakes Shoreline Survey was a culminating honor. For the National Park Service the evening session in 1960 was the beginning of the political fight to ensure that the recommendations of the survey would become public policy. A few legislators, in studied disregard of Edmunds, read newspapers at their desks as he began his presentation. But the breathtaking pictures of Michigan's shoreline beauty soon riveted the entire legislature. The presentation went on for nearly an hour and introduced many of the politicians to the splendors of the Huron Mountains, the Pictured Rocks, and Sleeping Bear Dunes. Afterward, at an evening reception, park advocates and politicians shared their enthusiasms for what they had seen. Ronald Lee, representing the Northeast Regional Office, gushed to the other park service staff that the evening would be something to "write down in their history book" because he "didn't think it would ever happen in any other state." If the effort to create a national park can be likened to a courtship ritual between park advocates and politicians, the first date had gone very well. Yet it certainly would have taken the edge of triumph off the evening if Allen Edmunds and Ronald Lee had known that it would take ten difficult years to finally tie-the-knot on a Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The presentation to the Michigan legislators was only the start of a long and divisive political fight.¹

A quarter century after the creation of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore pockets of deep resentment to the lakeshore continue in Benzie and Leelanau counties. Some of this is the fault of National Park Service planners, such as Allen T. Edmunds, who in the rush to present five Great Lakes areas as shoreline national parks, did not thoroughly examine the assets required to make an effective Sleeping Bear park. The frequent fluctuation in the size and boundaries of the proposed park during the initial stages of the legislative process weakened the public creditability of the National Park Service. The agency was also guilty of failing to anticipate and bring into the planning process local stake-holders, so that the polarization that occurred during the struggle to create the park was more bitter and lasting than need have been. The early 1960s were an era of "top-down" federal leadership, an era when in both domestic and international affairs bureaucrats had considerable freedom of action. The later 1960s were a period of growing distrust of government and federal initiatives. The attempt to create Sleeping Bear Dunes took place in the midst of these contradictory political currents and the clash over

¹ E. Genevieve Gillette, Oral History Tape Transcripts, Tape 21B, pp. 12-15, Gillette Papers, Bentley Historical Library. This chapter will make use of three unpublished studies of the controversy over making a national park at Sleeping Bear Dunes: Brian Charles Kalt, "Sixties Sandstorm: The Fight Over Establishment of a Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1961-1970," undergraduate seminar paper, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1994; Stephen J. Maddock, "An Analysis Of Local Opposition To The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1971; Jonathan P. Hawley, "The Politics of National Park System Expansion: A Comparative Study of the Authorization of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways in Missouri and The Proposed Authorization of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1968. Of these the Kalt study has been particularly helpful because of its extremely thorough research.

the lakeshore was in part shaped by this tension. In the end, however, the vision of a publicly owned and accessible Sleeping Bear was at odds with the pattern of private recreation, which had taken root in northwestern Michigan since 1900. Property owners with deep personal attachments to their holdings were never going to yield without a fight.

SOS The First Sleeping Bear Bill

The first step in fashioning a national park out of the work of the Great Lakes Shoreline Survey was boldly taken by four members of the United States Senate in the summer of 1959. Richard L. Neuberger of Oregon, James E. Murray of Montana, Clinton P. Anderson of New Mexico, and Paul H. Douglas of Illinois, jointly sponsored S.2460, an omnibus shoreline preservation bill. They cobbled the best areas identified by the National Park Service from all of the shoreline surveys into a single bill. Behind the catchy title “Save Our Shorelines,” or simply “S.O.S.,” they grandiosely proposed a \$50 million appropriation to create ten shoreline recreation areas. Their sites included Cape Cod, Massachusetts, Padre Island, Texas, the Oregon Dunes, Indiana Dunes, Point Reyes, California, Cumberland Island, Georgia, the Channel Islands, California, and the Huron Mountains, the Pictured Rocks, and the Sleeping Bear Dunes in Michigan. “Nearly all of the great National Parks of the United States are in mountain ranges,” Richard Neuberger told the *New York Times*. “In the process of setting aside these magnificent upland reserves, the nation has neglected another realm which is equally alluring to the tourist and the seeker of outdoor recreation. This realm consists of the seacoasts and shorelines of the United States which are among the most beautiful on earth.” Like Senator Neuberger’s rhetoric, the S.O.S. bill was more designed to inspire future action than to be a serious proposal. Not only was S.O.S. opposed by the Eisenhower administration, it had only modest support from legislators actually representing the states effected by the bill, although Philip A. Hart, Michigan’s junior Democratic senator did step forward as a co-sponsor. Neuberger’s real concern was to promote the prospect of an Oregon Dunes and Sea-Lion Caves National Recreation Area. While he promoted S.O.S. in the national press he also sponsored a much less ambitious \$15 million bill to create three new shoreline parks at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior. Senate Bill 2460 succeeded in its initial purpose of putting shoreline parks on the legislative table. Individual bills were introduced for the creation of new park units at Cape Cod, Oregon Dunes, Padre Island, Point Reyes, and Indiana Dunes and the general issue of shoreline preservation was brought before the public through local and national media. But Senate Bill 2460 and House Resolution 8445, the companion bill sponsored by John Dingell, a Democratic congressman from lower Michigan, had a very negative impact on the prospect of realizing Michigan’s new proposed national parks.²

The “Save Our Shoreline” bill came at an unfortunate time for the National Park Service in Michigan. In July 1959, the agency had just begun its specialized studies of Sleeping Bear,

² Richard L. Neuberger, “Plan For Shoreline Parks: U.S. Senate Bills Would Set Aside Recreation Areas On the Seacoast and in the Great Lakes Region,” *New York Times*, August 30, 1959; Senate Bill 2460, United States Senate, A Bill to Save and Preserve for the Public Use and Benefit, Certain Portions of the Shoreline of the United States, and for Other Purposes, 86th Congress, 1st Session, 1959; Stephen J. Maddock, “An Analysis Of Local Opposition To The Sleeping Bear Dune National Lakeshore,” Ph.D. dissertation, 1971, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 14-15.

Pictured Rocks, and the Huron Mountains. Unlike Cape Cod, where the park service was well along in its plans for a park, the Michigan sites were known only through the recommendations of the Great Lakes Shoreline Survey. Casting those general recommendations into the form of a legal proposal exposed the budding park projects to premature public scrutiny. The greatest damage was done to the Huron Mountain proposal. While the National Park Service was still trying to negotiate access to the private preserve, critics were able to blast the prospect of a significant taking of well-managed private conservation lands. The Huron Mountain Club was able to frame the public debate strictly in its own terms. They were the “wise” husbands of the area and the government was uninformed about the recreational potential of the area. “We know very well,” said Renville Wheat, a club director, that “casual visitors or tourists unaccustomed to such conditions (wilderness) would generally speaking, not enjoy these woods.” Concepts only in the discussion stage at the Northeast Region Office, of trying to preserve individual club members’ holdings while opening the lakes and mountains to the public, of working in partnership with the Huron Mountain Club, were too raw to be floated publicly. Before the park service even knew the battle had been joined, the club engineered a resolution in the Michigan State Senate to condemn a Huron Mountain National Park.³

While most of the attention generated by “Save Our Shorelines” in Michigan was focused on the Huron Mountain proposal, the well-meaning omnibus bill did negatively impact the Sleeping Bear area’s park prospects. Senate Bill 2460 called for a 26,000 acre recreation area at Sleeping Bear. This figure was based on a one-page description of the area in the report of the shoreline survey. It did not grow out of a detailed local investigation and consultation with state officials and local conservationists. The bill did not even set any boundaries for the proposed park, leaving that to the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior. The prospect of a 26,000 acre park at Sleeping Bear did not draw a lot of attention, but when the agency after completing its detailed study of the Sleeping Bear area recommend a 77,000 acre park, the fact that a much smaller amount of land had been earlier endorsed was used to question the creditability of park planners and bolster opposition calls for a smaller dune park. Senator Philip Hart, who was on record as endorsing the 26,000 acre park, learned his lesson from the “Save Our Shorelines” bill. His office thereafter attempted to work closely with the National Park Service, he patiently avoided premature legislation, urged park supporters to be circumspect, least they arouse “local opposition,” and he waited until the official proposal was ready for public scrutiny.⁴

The National Park Service Proposal: Sleeping Bear Seashore

That official proposal marked a major departure from the work of the shoreline survey, even though both reports shared several of the same authors. The reasons for this departure are more difficult to understand than to narrate. As late as the summer of 1960 the park service planners had in mind a modest recreation area of about 30,000 acres which included very little of the private lands around the shores of the inland lakes. This conservative view likely reflects the novelty in 1959 of carving national park units out of private holdings and a realistic

³ Grand Rapids Press, August 7, 1960; “Huron Mountains: Should This Superb Region Be a Shoreline Recreation Area,” *Outdoor America* (April 1960), 10-12; Senate Resolution 46, Michigan State Senate, April 7, 1960.

⁴ Remaining Shoreline Opportunities, 93; Kalt, *Sixties Sandstorm*, 12.

understanding of the budget limitations traditionally placed on park projects. The shoreline proposals, particularly the Cape Cod seashore and the development of new streams of revenue dedicated to park projects, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, were about to effect a revolution in park expansion. But those developments were still in the future. It was only after local conservationists expressed a lack of enthusiasm for the National Park Service's modest plans for Sleeping Bear did the proposed park become large and controversial. The person most responsible for that change was E. Genevieve Gillette, the President of the Michigan Parks Association.

Genevieve Gillette was the grand dame of conservation in Michigan. In 1920, she had been the first woman to graduate from Michigan State University's School of Landscape Architecture. She went on to work for several years in Chicago as an assistant to the dean of American landscape architects, Jens Jensen. Returning to Michigan she set-up her own practice. In addition to consulting on landscape design she became a vigorous proponent of the establishment of public preserves and recreation areas. Her former Michigan State classmate and life-long friend, P.J. Hoffmaster, became the first head of Michigan's budding state park system. His work with the Conservation Commission and her work as a tireless lobbyist played a major role in transforming the Michigan state park system into one of the best in America. In 1959, she founded the Michigan Parks Association to bring under one organization all of the naturalists, sportsmen, and tourism promoters she had previously rallied to sponsor park projects. That organization's support would be vital to the National Park Service if their Sleeping Bear proposal was going to be successful.

In the fall of 1959, the planners from the Northeast Region Office briefed the leaders of the Michigan Parks Association on their recommendations for Pictured Rocks and Sleeping Bear.⁵ The response to the Pictured Rocks proposal was unequivocally supportive. But the briefing on a Sleeping Bear park by Regional Director Ronald F. Lee left Genevieve Gillette cool. "Mr. Lee, one thing you'll have to explain to me," Gillette said. "I have the understanding.....that our National Parks are examples of great natural architecture and that they are great pieces of natural scenery that we must all protect them, and while they are to be used by the people, the over-riding thing is that they are so unusual they should be protected for the generations to come....It didn't seem to me that a sand dune compared in any way with such a thing as Rocky Mountain National Park. It seemed to be, while I didn't like to admit it, that it was probably second-rate." Gillette frankly thought that the park service must be so pushed to find recreational lands that it was "lowering its standards." Lee defended the park plan by arguing Sleeping Bear's unique geological origin as a perched dune created solely by the action of wind and water. Gillette countered that if it was the geological story that made Sleeping Bear of national significance than the 26,000 acre area set aside in the park service proposal was too small to "really tell the story of what happened before Sleeping Bear." "The greatest part of that story is quite a bit farther south and you're not even talking about it," argued Gillette. She went to a map of the area and traced out Platte Lake and the Platte River and contended that they were

⁵ Throughout the fight to create Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore the proposal was supported by the National Park Service's Northeast Regional Office, in Philadelphia. In 1973-74 there was a reorganization and Sleeping Bear was placed under the Midwest Regional Office in Omaha, Nebraska.

crucial to telling the “natural history of this region.” She concluded by flatly stating, “I am not going to work ten years for a bill, unless it’s a better thing than this bill is.”⁶

Gillette had used a complex geological argument, about the Platte River area illustrating how the creation of the dune changed the topography of the area to the south of Sleeping Bear to justify adding the Platte River, Platte Lake, and Platte Plains to the park proposal. It was an old argument that she had long used to try and persuade the State of Michigan to expand Benzie State Park. Since the early 1940’s, Gillette had worked with the Michigan Botanical Club and the Cranbrook Institute of Science to have the Platte Plains protected in a park. It was Gillette’s involvement, her insistence that “we’re going for the right thing,” that sent the National Park Service planners back to the Sleeping Bear area to reconsider their plan and to inspect the Platte River country. In the summer of 1960, the agency again met with Gillette and presented a greatly expanded park proposal.⁷

The new proposal was vastly different than the draft Sleeping Bear proposal. In place of a 26,000 acre park it called for 77,000 acres. While the earlier plan had emphasized the recreational resources of the area this final proposal put an equal emphasis on scenic and scientific values. “The most striking scenic landscape on Lake Michigan is found in the Sleeping Bear region,” the proposal claimed. It aimed to preserve a “Land of Vistas,” the bays and bluffs of the dunes, the morainal plateau, and the stunning views of the inland lakes. To do so it included within the park boundaries the entirety of eleven inland lakes including Glen Lake, Platte Lake, Little Traverse Lake, Long Lake, and Little Platte Lake. Also included were portions of the Crystal Lake Moraine, which afforded spectacular views of the gorgeous lake, but at the expense of taking out three holes from the elite Crystal Downs Country Club. The proposal had within it a contradiction which was later skillfully exploited by opponents to the park and which has bedeviled subsequent management of the lakeshore. On one hand the report clearly stated that “The mission of the National Park Service, if a National Seashore is created at Sleeping Bear, will be to protect and preserve the natural features and bring to the public an understanding of these phenomena through a program of interpretation.” Yet the report also predicted that within the first five years of establishment the lakeshore would have a major and favorable economic development impact on the area by attracting an additional 1.2 million visitors. Clearly economic development was the sugar coating that the park service hoped to offer the local communities for the bitter pill of land acquisition with its prospect of loss of tax base and dislocation of families. The linkage of economic revival and conservation would become the principal strategy for selling the Pictured Rocks and Apostle Islands proposals to the residents of the Lake Superior region. Benzie County with only 8,500 permanent residents and chronic sixteen percent unemployment, was not immune to the lure of jobs and a rise in property values, but the incentive was much less attractive than in the beleaguered Upper Peninsula. At Sleeping Bear the unlikely blending of development and preservation caused many to question the thoroughness of federal planning or to suspect an ulterior motive behind the park proposal. The published version of the proposal had an additional weakness, it was extremely vague. The boundaries were imprecisely laid out on a large-scale map. Large numbers of summer homes

⁶ E. Genevieve Gillette, Oral History Transcripts, transcript 23A, p.7-10, Gillette Papers.

⁷ Ibid, transcript 31A, p.1-5.

were included within the park but the proposal promised to “keep to a minimum the disruption of economic and private life.”⁸

S.2153 Senator Hart's Sleeping Bear Bill

The politician most responsible for the eventual establishment of Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore was Philip A. Hart, Michigan’s Democratic senator from 1958 to 1976. Hart was, in the words of a long-time activist in Michigan politics, “a genuine humanitarian.” Naturally quiet, reserved in manner, he was anything but a typical politician. His experience in World War II as an officer in the D-Day invasion left him severely wounded, and after a long recovery, anxious to do something positive with his life. His marriage to a daughter of the powerful and wealthy Briggs family in Detroit gave him an entrée into Michigan politics. He was unphotogenic, modest to the point of being apologetic about running, scrupulous about campaign contributions, and intellectual in appearance and actual behavior. He was neither eloquent on the campaign trail or decisive in office. “He debated every possible angle to the solution before he would tell you his decision,” recalled a former aide. “Often, if you didn’t press him hard, he would never tell you what he decided.” Yet as deliberate as Hart was about taking a stand he was dogged in maintaining his position, regardless of the pressure. “Once he made up his mind,” a supporter recalled, “nothing could get him to change it.”⁹

It was this later quality which would have a critical impact on the fate of the park service’s Sleeping Bear shoreline proposal. Hart became the champion of the Sleeping Bear park in 1961 and he never backed down in the long fight that followed. Hart’s commitment to the lakeshore grew-out of his belief that it was a project in the interest of the majority of his Michigan constituents and that it would serve the long-term needs of the American people. He personally had a summer house on Mackinac Island. He knew the popularity of the northern lakes region and the limitations of living within a publicly administered park area. Although the creation of National Lakeshores at Pictured Rocks and Sleeping Bear are a lasting legacy of his Senate career, Hart was not an enthusiastic conservationist in the mold of his fellow Democrats Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin or Frank Church of Idaho. The issues closest to Hart were civil rights and consumer affairs. “He was tolerant of everyone’s right to follow his or her own conscience,” a colleague recalled. In time he became known as the “conscience of the Senate” for his consistent support of civil rights legislation. His greatest moment came when Lyndon Johnson hand-picked Hart to shepherd the Voting Rights Act through the teeth of a Senate southern filibuster. While Hart was steadfast in his support for the Sleeping Bear proposal, he was seldom involved personally with the drafting or negotiations necessary to make the bill a reality. Hart had a reputation for having brought together an efficient staff and it was to that staff that he, by-and-large, delegated the Sleeping Bear issue.¹⁰

Hart’s proxies in the Sleeping Bear fight were Muriel Ferris and William Welsh. The latter was the Senator’s Administrative Assistant and a long-time Democratic Party--Washington

⁸ National Park Service, *A Proposal: Sleeping Bear National Seashore* (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 1961).

⁹ Pierce and Keefe, *The Great Lakes States*, 232; Berthelot, *Win Some, Lose Some*, 141-3.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

operator. Welsh worked his way from positions in organized labor to Executive Secretary of the Democratic National Committee, to Hart's staff, and eventually served on the staff of Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey. Welsh was reputed to have "a keen political mind—and a sharp eye." He was very experienced with legislative matters and often represented the Senator in vital negotiations concerning the lakeshore proposals. Muriel Ferris was the staff member most intimately engaged with the Sleeping Bear issue. She attended meetings, organized supporters, and absorbed the flak of opponents from the beginning of the process in 1961 until the creation of the lakeshore in 1971. More than any other member of the Senator's staff she was interested in environmental issues. Her close and personal association with conservation groups like the Michigan Parks Association helped to keep alive support for the lakeshore plan during the decade long struggle.¹¹

Hart's first Sleeping Bear bill, S.2153 was introduced jointly with S.2152, the bill to create Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore on June 27, 1961. Both bills were strongly influenced by the National Park Service proposals and by the legislation, then near final passage, to create Cape Cod National Seashore. The Cape Cod bill had broken new conservation ground through its attempt to harmonize existing private developments with long-term conservation and by its revolutionary procedure of authorizing federal funds to purchase those private lands vital to public recreation and resource protection. Hart's bill had five vital provisions: It called for a 77,000 acre recreation area in Leland and Benzie counties;

- i. It gave the Secretary of the Interior the power to purchase or condemn all private land within the park;
- ii. Owners of residences could negotiate for 25 year leases;
- iii. Owners of residences might also be able to retain ownership in the park provided local zoning was in place;
- iv. Contrary to usual National Park Service Policy, hunting would be permitted.

Hart had worked closely with the National Park Service on the bill and he felt confident that the legislation would meet with the support of his constituents.¹²

At first, there was little indication of a controversy over the bill. When the Michigan Park Association arranged an informational meeting on the proposal in Lansing, although notices had been sent to the Traverse City and Frankfort newspapers, only two people outside of the association bothered to attend. Such a response, however, was misleading. Around the Platte Lakes and in Glen Arbor word of Hart's bill spread like spilt milk. In the hot summer sun dismay soured into anger. Through neighbor talking to neighbor, summer residents to locals, a series of community meetings were organized. In a short time the Citizens' Council of the Sleeping Bear was formed as an organized expression of local concern. Senator Hart's office began to receive bundles of letters protesting his bill. Publicly he nursed the fiction that the public response to the Sleeping Bear park had been favorable, while behind the scenes his staff scrambled to come-up with a response that would calm the rising negative response. The solution, arrived at in

¹¹ Berthelot, *Win Some, Lose Some*, 254-5; E. Genevieve Gillette Oral History, Tape 23A, p.26, Gillette Papers.

¹² Senate Bill 2153, A Bill to Establish in the State of Michigan the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Recreation Area and for Other Purposes, 87th Congress, 1st Session.

conjunction with the National Park Service, was to have Conrad Wirth, the Director of the National Park Service travel to the area and calm things down.¹³

Senator Hart's staff, the National Park Service, and the Michigan Parks Association were all guilty of believing their own public pronouncements. The feeling was that people in northwestern Michigan simply were operating in an information vacuum: they did not understand the bill. What was needed was an official spokesman who could separate the facts from the misapprehensions. Conrad Wirth, who was warned by a local supporter, "its going to be rugged," merely joked "I never get called unless there's really fireworks." But the fact was neither he nor Muriel Ferris, who also had journeyed from Washington, D.C., anticipated the traumatic evening. Wirth spent the day of the meeting getting his first close-up inspection of the park area. "I don't know much about this project," he told Genevieve Gillette, but "I am sold on it." The trouble was Gillette was just about the only person in the audience who agreed with him.¹⁴

August 30, 1961, the day of Director Wirth's appearance at the public meeting in the Glen Lake Community High School, was the day the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore proposal nearly died. It was a hot, humid evening. The little school gymnasium, set-up like an auditorium, was packed with people. It was the end of the summer season and 1,500 to 2,000 angry summer and year-around residents had gathered. As Wirth and his park service staff came into the building they found the hallways leading to the gym packed with an overflow crowd. On the stage was a Michigan highway map with all state and federal forest and park lands highlighted in green to make the point that more recreation land was not needed. The moderator of the meeting was Ove F. Jensen, a long-time summer home owner who had retired to Glen Lake. As chairman of the Citizens' Council of the Sleeping Bear Dunes Area he was anything but a neutral voice. Director Wirth began with a slide presentation on the park service plan for Sleeping Bear. The rest of the meeting was to be devoted to questions. Rather than rely on spontaneous questions from the floor, the Citizens' Council had very cleverly prepared a long list of very detailed and antagonistically worded questions. Jensen put the questions to the Director and insisted that each be answered. Had Wirth been better informed regarding the proposal he would have made a stronger showing. At one point he described the area around Sleeping Bear as "undeveloped." Jensen shot back at him that the park service's own study allowed there were more than a thousand residences in the project area. Press accounts noted that he was "at times ill-prepared to explain the proposal," but the fact was that many of the questions were not fully answerable at that early stage of the project.¹⁵

The audience, hot and uncomfortable in the packed room, was restless and rude. Catcalls, jeers, and "humorless laughter" greeted many of Wirth's remarks. He emphasized that a federally approved zoning ordinance would allow most summer home owners to remain within the proposed recreation area, not realizing how hollow that sounded to his audience because all previous attempts at zoning in the area had been popularly defeated. Lamely the Director tried to emphasize the long-term beneficial aspects of the plan, such as the protection of the dunes and the increase of annual local revenues by a projected \$10 million. Exacerbated members of the

¹³ Genevieve Gillette, Oral History Tape, Tape 23A, p.12-17.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Questions Used At August 30, 1961 Meeting, an attachment to William Welsh to Allen T. Edmunds, October 13, 1961, SLBD Records; Record-Eagle (Traverse City, Mich.), August 31, 1961.

audience shouted back that they had moved to Leelanau County to avoid the crowds of visitors conjured by Wirth. The breaking point came when the Director, a second-generation park service employee and a veteran of more than thirty years of federal service, tried to defend the objectivity and competence of the team that put-together the Sleeping Bear plan. The crowd, however, would have none of it and complaints about not wanting to turn over the fate of their homes “to the bureaucrats” were voiced. Wirth, his dander up, proclaimed: “I’m a bureaucrat and proud of it.” The meeting degenerated from there. The Director alternated his responses from the terse, “I expect you will disagree, so there is little point in answering,” to the combative, as when he told Citizens’ Council representatives “You have made a good showing, but we will vote you down.” The meeting ended with Ove Jensen again demonstrating his deft handling of the situation. He asked all people opposed to the project to stand up. Virtually the entire room rose as one, save for four chairs in the front row where Muriel Ferris, Genevieve Gillette, and two representatives of the Michigan Conservation Commission sat. “People around us tried to pull us up by the arms,” Gillette later recalled. “No, not me,” shouted the feisty conservationist, “I’m Miss Genevieve Gillette, I’m President of the Michigan Parks Association, and I’m for this Park 100%.” But it was clear that she was nearly the only person in the hall so inclined.¹⁶

For supporters of the Sleeping Bear bill the evening had gone about as bad as it could have. Senator Hart’s hope that the meeting would generate “more light than heat” was dashed. Conrad Wirth felt that he had been ambushed. The blame, however, had to be shared by Hart and the park service. The latter sent the Director in without properly exploring local sentiment or fully briefing him on the plan. Hart was guilty of deferring to Wirth a job he should have done himself, explain why he was asking the Sleeping Bear homeowners to bear a burden for the good of all of Michigan. Not only did Hart beg-off that job but he left the planning of the meeting to the opposition Citizens’ Council. Wirth compounded these errors by losing his composure. He latter admitted to an Iowa congressman, “it was a real bad night, sir.”¹⁷

For the opponents of S.2153 the meeting was a defining and exhilarating moment. They had stood up, toe-to-toe with the experts from Washington and carried the day. The meeting had helped to forge a group of anxious and bewildered property-owners into a defiant and assertive organization. Many people heard and reported that Wirth threatened to take their homes. The image of the National Park Service they took away from the meeting was one of an arrogant, elitist, out-of-control agency. The *Record-Eagle* (Traverse City, Michigan) editorialized that Wirth’s performance was “an appalling and almost unbelievable demonstration of how far bureaucratic planners in Washington can go in disregarding the people’s rights.” Donations began to flood into the Glen Arbor-based Citizens’ Council of the Sleeping Bear Dunes Area. In little more than two weeks after the meeting they had received more than \$16,000 in pledges and donations. Similar associations were formed in the Platte Lakes and Little Traverse Lake-Good Harbor areas. The tragedy of the Glen Lake meeting was that it had such an extreme polarizing effect on the prospect of a Sleeping Bear park. The opposition became rigid. The language used to describe the bill became combative. “A federal land grab” became the mantra in Leelanau County towns. With their dander up and war chests filled, the opposition left the Glen Lake

¹⁶ Ibid; Grand Rapids Press, September 23, 1961; Ann Arbor (Michigan) News, November 16, 1961; Detroit Free Press, September 13, 1961; Notes, Sleeping Bear Meeting, Glen Lake Community School, Glen Arbor Michigan, August 30, 1961, SLBD Records.

¹⁷ Detroit News, October 18, 1963; Kalt, Sixties Sandstorm, 28-9.

meeting ready to hire a battery of lawyers and prepared to launch a public relations offensive of their own. The battle for the dunes had begun.¹⁸

Traverse City was the next engagement in the struggle. Senator Hart had arranged for a Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs field hearing to be held November 13, 1961. The hearing had the benefit of bringing Hart to northwest Michigan to speak directly about the bill. In his testimony before the subcommittee Hart argued that S.2153 was only a draft of a Sleeping Bear bill and that he fully expected to make changes. Introducing legislation he lamely contended was, in his opinion, the best way to spark “discussion.” In fact the hearings were a good way to find out how angry and determined people could be when a “discussion” is started with a threat to take their homes. The opposition was able to turn out an audience of 850 people and dominate the hearing with twenty-six of the thirty-five witnesses speaking out against the Hart bill. The most important of these was Congressman Robert P. Griffin. Practically speaking there could be no Sleeping Bear recreation area without his support. Griffin had been among the minority of Republicans who had voted to create the Cape Cod National Seashore and like most members of the Michigan G.O.P. he was a supporter of conservation measures. He was, however, more impressed by the sincerity and strength of the popular out-cry against the bill than by the actual legislation drafted by Hart and the park service. Responding to the often-made charge that opponents of S.2153 simply did not understand what Hart was trying to do, Griffin testified: “I would suggest to the subcommittee that the problem you are having is because these people do understand the bill.” That line brought down the house. “My goodness!” exclaimed Senator Moss as he tried to have his gavel heard amid the storm of applause. Griffin said he favored a recreation area that avoided the large inland lakes and the numerous property owners. Hart proposed to take too much land, in the congressman’s opinion.¹⁹

Probably the most important development to come out of the hearing flowed from the testimony of Secretary of the Interior, Stewart L. Udall. The former congressman from Arizona was the most aggressive conservationist to ever occupy that office. Typical of his optimistic and grand vision was his statement that he intended to double the size of the National Park System in the next eight years. Udall thought big and acted aggressively. In keeping with that style he told the Senate subcommittee that the only thing wrong with Senator Hart’s proposal was that it did not go far enough. Hart’s 77,000 acre recreation area was too small in Udall’s opinion. The Secretary outlined to the subcommittee a Sleeping Bear park 92,172 acres in size. New areas to be added included, for the first time in any proposal, North Manitou Island and Sugarloaf Mountain. Udall’s mention of North Manitou Island had a significant impact on all subsequent Sleeping Bear proposals. That island, which failed to impress the Great Lakes Shoreline Survey and the subsequent park service study teams, thereafter was destined to become part of the park. At the time, however, Udall’s testimony had a strongly negative impact. His contention that a Sleeping Bear park needed to be bigger in the face of strong public opposition made the bureaucracy seem insensitive to the popular will. Furthermore, for the Department of the Interior to move from recommending first a 26,000 acre park, to a 77,000 acre area, to now a 92,172 area

¹⁸ To All Supporters from Ove Jensen, Chairman of the Citizens' Council, September 18, 1963, Sleeping Bear Dunes Collection, Leelanau County Historical Society, Leland, Michigan. Hereafter this collection is referred to as LCHS; Record-Eagle (Traverse City, Michigan), August 31, 1961.

¹⁹ United States Senate, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Hearing on S.2153, 1961, p.45-6, 72-81; Detroit Free Press, November 14, 1961.

gave the impression of a capricious planning process. For his contribution Udall had the honor of joining Philip Hart in being hung in effigy in Traverse City.²⁰

The Traverse City hearing marked an effective end to S.2153. It was a poor bill—vague and imprecise—very poorly presented. Neither the National Park Service nor Senator Philip Hart had done the research in Leelanau and Benzie counties necessary to anticipate the needs and concerns of the local community. The partnership also had floundered with S.2152, their attempt to create a Pictured Rocks National Recreation Area. There the local community was supportive of the park plan but the bill ran into the buzz saw of corporate timber interests. Both bills were a product of haste and good intentions. For Sleeping Bear Dunes the legacy of these mistakes was lasting divisions, bad feelings, and a decade of delay.

New Approaches, Old Problems

Senator Hart's characteristic doggedness, his unwillingness to surrender a principled point was demonstrated by his willingness to follow S.2153 with a new bill in July 1962. The legislative initiatives which followed that ill-fated first bill all were the result of a much higher degree of personal involvement, if not by the Senator himself, then by Hart's staff. The Senator was much less inclined to trust the National Park Service. He told the press that he was "as much on the side of the original bill's critics as a defender of the Park Service." Hart wanted less involvement by Conrad Wirth and Stewart Udall and more by William Welsh, his highly respected principal aide.²¹

But like it or not Hart and the park service were joined at the hip and warily they worked together to make another attempt at creating a park. Hart's staff, understandably, was concerned with finding a formula to mollify the inland lake property owners. While the park service was open to doing this they were constantly concerned about setting a precedent that might affect other national seashore projects such as Point Reyes and Padre Island. Neither the agency or Hart's office wanted to swap land for peace, by reducing the acreage of the proposed lakeshore. But William Welsh did propose creating a narrow zone composed of the built-up sections of shoreline which would be fully exempt from the park so long as adequate zoning was in force. People in these zones would be totally outside the control of the Secretary of the Interior. In Welsh's view such a provision might have the effect of "cracking off" a portion of the solid phalanx of opposition arrayed before them, by "causing jealousy and resentment on the part of homeowners not included in one of the zones." The concept of a private exclusionary zone within the park, in effect, promised most inland lakeshore property owners there would be no condemnation acquisitions. Hart also added to the bill a twenty-five year moratorium on public access to the inland lakes from lands acquired from willing sellers. With these provisions they hoped to remove the image of Glen Lake crowded with unwashed urban masses as well as the unpopular specter of a federal land grab.²²

²⁰ Senate, Committee on Interior, Hearing on S.2153, p.193.

²¹ Kalt, *Sixties Sandstorm*, 35-6.

²² John M. Kaufman to Ben H. Thompson, Chief, Division of Recreational Resource Planning, March 27, 1962, SLBD Records.

The fruit of their cooperation was Senate Bill 3528, but before Senator Hart introduced the bill in July 1962, his office and the park service's Allen Edmunds embarked on a careful campaign of preparing the people in the local area. Edmunds in particular was heartened by the first signs of popular support for the park he found budding beneath the winter snows. With the majority of their influential "summer neighbors" back home in the cities to the south a number of influential people in northwest Michigan began to emerge as supporters of a Sleeping Bear park. All of them agreed that the original bill had been badly bungled but that the basic idea was one that could attract local support. Organizations like the Motel Association of Traverse City naturally were open in their support of the project, but Edmunds found that the Traverse City Chamber of Commerce was not immune to the lure of national park dollars either. Judge Ormond S. Danford, well-connected in Traverse City political circles, assured Edmunds in February 1961, that if a "referendum were held today 95% of the people of the Grand Traverse region would favor a park—not necessarily this proposal, but some form of park." In Benzie County Edmunds found the same signs of an emerging pro-park leadership. Max Goin, chair of the Benzie County Board, told Edmunds that he had voted to reject the park plan out of sensitivity to his constituents, but that he was personally in favor of a dunes park and was sure that a better bill would win the support of the majority of the board. John Peterson, editor of the *Benzie County Patriot*, offered his support in the up-coming struggle. The strongest thing in favor of the park proposal, all supporters agreed, was the fact that most people felt that some type of federal dunes park was now inevitable. This sentiment became all the stronger in March 1962 when President John F. Kennedy delivered a special conservation message. Sleeping Bear Dunes was one of ten new park areas specifically named by the President as necessary to the nations' "increased need for additional recreation areas."²³

The changes proposed by Senator Hart in S. 3528 were designed to throw the opposition Citizens' Council off-balance and feed the encouraging signs of growing local support. But Ove Jensen and the other home owners groups were not so easily outflanked. During the winter Jensen and his group had worked to promote township zoning in the areas proposed for park status. It was a divisive, thorny issue that split the community on economic lines, but by beginning the issue themselves the Citizens' Council was able to effectively make the point to the folks at home that this was not an issue they would want to defer to the Secretary of the Interior. At the same time, Jensen could argue to the press that there was no need to have the federal government come into the Sleeping Bear to save it, because the local people were already acting to preserve the area. Also, just as Hart's changes to the bill were beginning to be circulated, the Citizens' Council launched their own public relations drive. Don Gordon, a savvy publicist and a veteran Republican party activist, authored a scathing article for the March issue of *Michigan Challenge* magazine: "Sleeping Bear, A Big Idea with Little Merit." He used the forum to attack Hart's amendments to the original bill before they could be formally introduced. Those changes, he argued, "would soften the language of the bill to some extent, but it still would have sharp teeth and still would take the same 77,000 acre bite." Even before S.3528 was introduced it was painted with the same brush as the earlier bill and the Citizens' Council vowed to fight it "every step of the way."²⁴

²³ Allen T. Edmunds to Ronald Lee, Regional Director, February 28, 1962, SLBD Records; New York Times, March 25, 1962.

²⁴ Ibid; Don Gordon, "Sleeping Bear, A Big Idea with Little Merit," *Michigan Challenge* (March, 1962), 12-14.

Even though the opposition had announced that the new bill was dead on arrival Allen Edmunds and two Hart staffers lobbied their way through Leelanau and Benzie counties. People in the area were still badly uninformed as to the provisions of the original bill, let alone Senator Hart's revisions. At public meetings Edmunds demonstrated patience and willingness to listen that had been sadly lacking in Wirth and Udall's previous attempts to impress local residents. Raised on a Michigan farm, Edmunds conveyed genuine sympathy for property owners swept-up in the park controversy. Yet he had personally seen almost every foot of shoreline on the Great Lakes, and he passionately believed in the importance of the park. In Edmunds the park service had at last found an effective advocate in northwest Michigan. But no matter how effective Edmunds and William Welsh were, opposition to the park remained high. In fact, based on a survey taken at the time, it was clear that the more people knew even about the revised bill, the stronger they were in opposition. Public meetings and private consultations had the effect of lowering the decibel level of the dispute, but they could not mute the opposition.²⁵

A small, but significant change made in this second Hart proposal was the substitution of the phrase "National Seashore" for "National Recreation Area." The recreation area tag had been applied to both Sleeping Bear and Pictured Rocks because they had been identified by the Shoreline Survey, whose purpose had been, in part, to identify prime shoreline recreation areas. To the homeowners in the Sleeping Bear area the term connoted a heavily developed area overrun by swarms of Chicagoans and Detroiters—the summer-homeless working class some long-time residents dismissed with the term "fudgies." Nor was this characterization far from what many park service staff thought of as recreation areas. Northeast Regional Director Ronald Lee admitted, in 1961, that the term "carries an implication of use development which would increase the activity use pressures on any area under such a category." Lee favored the status of "National Monument" for Sleeping Bear but felt that in the early 1960s there was too much development within the park area to meet such a standard. The term "National Seashore" was borrowed from successful ocean-front parks at Cape Hatteras and Cape Cod. These parks embodied a compromise between recreational development and the preservation of the natural landscape. The incongruity of referring to the eastern shore of Lake Michigan as a "Seashore" prompted the coining in 1963 of a new label for the mixed use shoreline parks of the Great Lakes: "National Lakeshore." Defining just what a National Lakeshore was remained a work-in-progress for the next two decades as legislation creating such entities in Indiana, Wisconsin, as well as Michigan sought to devise formulas which balanced the needs of local communities and unique environments.²⁶

Further contributing to the confusion of terms was the introduction of a bill to create a Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park by Congressman Robert P. Griffin in January 1963. Up for reelection, the Republican congressman needed a way to gain the initiative on the park controversy in his district. House Resolution 2400 was well calculated to demonstrate the congressman's support for a federal park in his district and still make clear his solidarity with aggrieved property owners. Griffin dusted off the original park service plan for Sleeping Bear, a dunes park that omitted the inland lakes and uplands. With 54,000 acres less than Hart had called for the plan looked a little light. Griffin solved that ingeniously by adding in his bill the 14,000

²⁵ Maddock, *Analysis of Local Opposition to the Sleeping Bear Lakeshore*, 141.

²⁶ Ronald F. Lee, Northeast Region Director to Conrad Wirth, Director, National Park Service, July 24, 1961, SLBD Records.

acre North Manitou Island, which Secretary Udall had earlier advocated. That increased the size of Griffin's proposed park to 37,000 acres. As a salve to the homeowners in the area Griffin's bill specified that none of the nearly one hundred improved properties within his proposed boundary would be subject to condemnation. Griffin claimed that his reason for introducing the bill was to bring "this prolonged Sleeping Bear controversy" to a head during "this session of Congress."²⁷

But bringing the issue to a head was the last thing that came from his new park bill. Hart put up a brave front, saying he was "delighted" to have Griffin become a Sleeping Bear park supporter. "The remaining issue is the size of the park," Hart asserted. But no matter how the Senator tried to spin the rival bill there were deep ideological issues dividing his conception of Sleeping Bear from Griffin's. While Hart liked to describe his plan as a "moderate alternative" to the large park proposed by Stewart Udall, the fact was that he envisioned a major park service presence in northwest Michigan. As he indicated in a latter press release, "A national park development should include scenic overlooks, scenic drives, trails, campsites, and unspoiled, timbered countryside." Hart was a classic Democratic liberal, unafraid of a large public expenditure to produce a result of lasting value to Michigan and the nation. Griffin was a young Republican who was open to innovative conservation projects but suspicious of federal efforts to override local autonomy with a massive influx of federal dollars. In the classic mode of a mainstreet, Midwestern Republican he was a fiscal conservative conscious of budget deficits. Unabashedly he lashed out at Hart's proposal at the Traverse City hearing by saying it would "contribute needlessly to a weakening of the Nation's economic strength at a very critical time in history when we need every ounce of strength we can muster." Griffin, who would later work on behalf of President Richard Nixon's abortive "New Federalism" which was designed to return both decision making and money from the federal to state and local governments, favored a park in which the Department of the Interior worked cooperatively with the Michigan Department of Conservation. The idea that Secretary Udall would have control over local zoning and that a large number of citizens would have their property rights circumscribed was ideologically abhorrent to Griffin. The liberal spirit of the 1960s was on Hart's side, while Griffin's position resonated only in northwest Michigan. But the legislative traditions of the United States Congress lent significance to the young minority congressman's opposition because parks generally were not created over the objections of dissenting representatives. If Sleeping Bear was going to become a park Hart would have to compromise his vision of the type of area it would become and Griffin would have to yield at least a little on his conservative principles.²⁸

Congressman Griffin's proposal was the first Sleeping Bear bill to propose the addition of North Manitou Island to the lakeshore park. Although Secretary Udall had earlier recommended its inclusion neither the National Park Service nor its supporters in Michigan, such as Genevieve Gillette, thought the island merited inclusion. "There wasn't the scenery on North Manitou—it was largely big woods," she later recalled. Nonetheless, North Manitou was pushed by Congressman Griffin and even more aggressively by local politicians in northwest Michigan. When Gillette tried to press Traverse City's state senator, William G. Milliken as to why he

²⁷ United States House of Representatives, A Bill to Establish in the State of Michigan the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, and for other Purposes, House Resolution 4201, 88th Congress, 1st session, 1963.

²⁸ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, January 25, 1963; Detroit Free Press, January 22, 1963; Kalt, Sixties Sandstorm, 25; Senate, Committee on Interior, Hearing on S.2153, 47.

advocated the island's inclusion he coyly answered, "Well, maybe we need it for wilderness." North Manitou did offer 14,000 acres of wilderness, but it also was an opportunity for the island's owners to exchange a burdensome responsibility for a large federal buy-out. The island was owned by the Angell Foundation, the trustees for the estate of William R. Angell, former President of Continental Motors Corporation. Angell had operated the island as a retreat and game preserve, but it was an expensive drain on financial resources. With both Udall and the Michigan legislators pushing for the inclusion of the island, the National Park Service sponsored a fly-over for members of the Michigan Parks Association and representatives of the National Wildlife Foundation, Audubon Society, and the Wilderness Society. In spite of low clouds Stewart Brendborg of the Wilderness Society "was impressed by North Manitou as a wilderness addition to the proposed Lakeshore." From that time on North Manitou became part of the park planned and advocated by the park service, although it did not wish its additional acreage to come into the plan at the expense of mainland tracts.²⁹

Senator Hart showed no willingness to compromise on the size of the mainland unit when in February of 1963 he introduced S.792. The new bill was roughly identical to S.3528, save for some minor modifications designed to reduce the period of uncertainty faced by property-owners should a park be created: all residential owners could obtain twenty-five-year leases and hardship sellers would have to be accommodated within one year of authorization. The most important features of Hart's plan, however, its 77,000 acres and the inclusion of the inland lakes remained unchanged. In lieu of Congressman Griffin's support Hart could point to a companion bill to S.792 introduced by Neil Staebler. Congressman Staebler was a long-time Democratic party activist from Ann Arbor. Due to its growing population Michigan was awarded another congressional seat in 1962, but because the state legislature could not come up with a redistricting plan before the congressional election it was decided to elect a one-term congressman-at-large. Staebler won the seat. He could speak for all of Michigan in the House of Representatives, but he had the liability of being a lame-duck from the day he arrived since redistricting would take his seat in two years. Rather than resolve the differences between his and Griffin's approaches, Hart grasped at Staebler's temporary support and tried to push ahead. The Senator's influence was such that he was able to prevail upon the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs to hold new hearings on Sleeping Bear, in Washington, D.C. in March and in the field in July 1963.³⁰

The Washington, D.C. hearings were on Senator Hart's turf and were an effective platform from which to demonstrate the progress he had made toward resolving the vexing Sleeping Bear issue. Both local citizens and politicians wrote or spoke in favor of S.792. One resort owner on Crystal Lake wrote that the new bill "gives us the protection we must have for our natural resources, yet sacrifices none of the fundamental property rights we have always enjoyed." Hart could also point to local newspaper editorials and county-wide public officials who were now in favor of a Sleeping Bear park. In contrast the opposition looked uninspired, and impertinent. They were most effective when counteracting the park service funded economic projections for the park, with much more realistic data from their own studies. They were least

²⁹ Donald W. Humphrey to Allen Edmunds, April 24, 1963, SLBD Papers; Rita Hadra Rusco, *North Manitou Island: Between Sunrise and Sunset* (n.p.: BookCrafters, 1995), .9-15; Genevieve Gillette Oral History, Tape 23, side B, p.15-19.

³⁰ United States Senate, *A Bill to Establish in the State of Michigan the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and for Other Purposes*, S.792, 88th Congress, 1st Session, 1963; Berthelot, *Win Some, Lose Some*, 242.

effective when their attacks became personal. Senator Alan Bible, (D) Nevada, twice interrupted the testimony of W.F. Meinhard of Maple City, Michigan, finally saying: “I am sure Senator Hart is acting from the highest possible motives. I do not see where you accomplish one bit in coming before a committee and impugning his motives.” The hearing closed with a promise by Senator Bible to visit the Sleeping Bear area that summer.³¹

That visit took place July 3-4, 1963. Senator Bible and three other members of his subcommittee were on grueling tour that included field hearings and tours of proposed parks in Oregon, Kansas, Utah, and Missouri. They flew over the entire proposed lakeshore and enjoyed a driving tour of the mainland scenic sites. Late in the afternoon of the Fourth of July a brief field hearing was held in the auditorium of the Frankfort High School. In spite of the holiday the school was packed with 1,500 spectators. The legislators entered under a sign that read: “Welcome Senators—Let Sleeping Bears Sleep.”³²

As the sign indicated, the Frankfort hearing was a well-staged pep-rally for the park proposal opposition. The efforts of Hart’s office and the involvement of Allen T. Edmunds had lowered rhetoric of the dispute over the course of the year. There was genuine optimism among park boosters that the tide of local popular opinion was starting to turn in their direction. The Frankfort hearing dispelled that delusion and demonstrated that Ove Jensen and the Citizens’ Council were still a skilled and formidable force. Jensen had pressed Senator Alan Bible to visit the area and when the invitation was accepted the former made sure that the itinerary was not left completely in the hands of the National Park Service. Jensen personally took the senators out on Glen Lake in his boat and showed them the summer homes threatened by the Hart bill. The area was carefully manicured for the visit. Along the roads obnoxious signs were removed and all trash picked-up. At the hearings they presented a petition, supported by better than 18,000 signatures, condemning S.792. Organized by a housewife from Birmingham, Michigan, the petition resonated more in the red, white, and blue atmosphere of the hearing than Genevieve Gillette’s presentation of letters of support from conservation groups representing 750,000 members. The most heartening moment for the opposition came at the end of the hearing when Senator Milward Simpson fired a withering concluding broadside at S.792. Simpson was a colorful and rare species in American politics—an unabashed 1930s Republican. The former governor of Wyoming was dedicated to opposing big government on all fronts. In another generation he would have been honored as a sagebrush rebel, but in the 1960s he was simply a throw-back to a discredited era. “I want to say to you that I’ve read this bill backwards and forwards,” he proclaimed. “It shrieks with condemnation, it shrieks with authority....once the Park Service gets into the area, they’ll take over....I think it’s a violation of individual freedom. I think the thing should be stopped. I’m hoping that Senators Hart and McNamara will withdraw their bill.” A storm of applause swept over the auditorium.³³

The 1963 hearings were a critical moment in the fight to make a Sleeping Bear park. The fact-finding and site visit had convinced the majority of the subcommittee, Senator Simpson notwithstanding, that the time had come to move forward. The marked-up bill that was reported out of the committee contained many features that are part of the lakeshore today. The inland lake

³¹ James Rogers to Philip Hart, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, United States Senate, Eighty-eighth Congress, First Session, On S.792 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963), 67.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid, 369-435; Ann Arbor News, July 8, 1963.

areas were removed from the park, eliminating more than 25,000 acres, all but 288 private structures from the plan, and ending the need for Senator Hart's complicated lakeshore zones. To maintain the viability of the park service's upland scenic vistas and the park road system, two scenic highway corridors were cobbled together from the remaining inland acreage. In deference to people who had improved property in the area since the original Hart bill, the cut off date for approved structures was advanced to December 31, 1962. Thus modified S.792 was approved by the full Senate in December 1963. A solid, reasonable Sleeping Bear bill had received the strong support of the upper house but because of Congressman Griffin's opposition and that of Representative Charlotte Reid (R—Illinois), who had a home on Crystal Lake, it did not have a chance to win approval in the lower house. The Sleeping Bear bill was sent to the over-burdened House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, of which Reid was a member, where it languished, without a hearing, without a reading, without any consideration whatsoever. Senate Bill 792 lapsed when the Eighty-eighth Congress adjourned at the end of 1964.³⁴

The unwillingness of Representative Robert Griffin to either support Hart's compromises or advance his own still-born park proposal delayed the creation of a Sleeping Bear Park (which could, perhaps should, have taken place in 1964-1965) for an unnecessary additional five years. Those five years, to paraphrase Senator Hart, produced very little light and a great deal of heat. In northwest Michigan the Frankfort hearing served to re-ignite the bitter and vitriolic atmosphere of the original Hart bill. As Genevieve Gillette left the Frankfort High School auditorium she was confronted by a group of friends with homes in the park area. They looked her in the eye and then without saying a word, as a group, turned their backs on her. Ted Carland, who operated a lumber and building supply business, suffered an immediate fall in business when he publicly supported the park bill at the Frankfort hearing. Such was the climate of opinion that even customers who stuck with him occasionally requested that when he delivered building materials that he use an unmarked truck, so that neighbors would not know they were doing business with a park supporter. Edward Bradley, a Standard Oil distributor in Benzie County, supported the park because he thought it would be a shot-in-the-arm for local business. Then he received a call from the corporate headquarters. "What's going on up there," they asked after having received a flood of cancelled Standard Oil credit cards from irate former customers. Bradley, like others, had been put on an "enemy list" by the opposition.³⁵

The bitterness and persistence of this opposition stemmed from the simple and obvious fact that some year-round residents and some summer home owners would lose their property to the proposed national park. As the park plans became clearer and less intrusive that threat was greatly reduced in fact, but not in perception. People chose sides on the issue at a very early date and did not change their minds as Senator Hart's proposals evolved. The Senator and the National Park Service did not have credibility in their eyes. Political ideology had a modest impact on how people perceived the issue. Democrats and Republicans were on both sides of the dispute. John Daugherty, Benzie County's Republican prosecutor, like other younger men was instinctively in favor of the park, which he saw as a solution to the area's chronic sixteen per cent unemployment. The fact that northwest Michigan was overwhelmingly Republican and Michigan's two Democratic senators were sponsoring the legislation, however, made the fight

³⁴ Hawley, *The Politics of National Park Expansion*, 96-8; Kalt, *Sixties Sandstorm*, 43-5.

³⁵ E. Genevieve Gillette Oral History, Tape 23B, p.13, Gillette Papers; John Daugherty, Oral History Interview, August 14, 1998.

seem partisan. An attitudinal survey conducted in the area during the summer and fall of 1962 revealed that eighty-four percent of Republicans were strongly opposed to the park, while only forty-six percent of Democrats were strongly opposed. Geography and class also shaped the conflict. Senators Hart and McNamara were strongly identified with Democratic dominated Detroit and the influence of the United Auto Workers (UAW). The powerful union, then at the peak of its influence in local and national politics, was an enthusiastic supporter of the expansion of the National Park Service. The UAW tended to see Sleeping Bear, as a *Detroit News* editorial characterized the issue, as a choice: “For All, or a Few?” Summer home owners from Detroit and Chicago, who tended to be professionals or white-collar workers, sometimes quipped that the intent of Hart’s bill was to create a “UAW park.”³⁶

To Promote or to Preserve?

An important factor in the development of local support for national park projects at Pictured Rocks, in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, and at Apostle Islands, in northern Wisconsin, was the desire of local communities to profit from the increased tourist traffic that a national park would draw to their area. The Upper Great Lakes Region (northern Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota) did not share in the general prosperity that swept over the United States in the early 1960s. The poverty and unemployment rates in the region rivaled those of Appalachia, although the misery of that region was more celebrated in the national media. Orville L. Freeman, a Minnesota progressive and President John F. Kennedy’s Secretary of Agriculture, was anxious to highlight the problems of the region and develop strategies to improve its economic prospects. In September 1963 he organized a regional convocation, the “Land and People: Northern Great Lakes Regional Conference,” with the aim of encouraging the people of the region to decide for themselves how to “restore and sustain a healthy regional economy.” At the same time President Kennedy was being pressured by Secretary of the Interior Udall to jump-start the latter’s plan to double the size of the National Park System by undertaking a national conservation tour. The initiatives of the two ambitious cabinet members came together with the President’s decision to visit the proposed Apostle Islands National Lakeshore and to open the “Land and People” conference. Out of the President’s speech, and through the cooperation of local and national leaders to find a way to immediately help the area emerged the contradictory conservation strategy to promote the region through its preservation.³⁷

Greeted by 50,000 enthusiastic citizens in the streets of Duluth, Minnesota, President Kennedy injected his personal blend of energy and optimism into the delegates to the “Land and People” conference. He announced that he was turning the attention of his administration to the problem of a region whose beautiful shorelines reminded him of his own beloved Cape Cod. “The economy of a region that should be prospering,” he said, “has reflected instead a series of economic setbacks as mines and mills shut down.” What was needed was the “full employment of both the natural and human resources which this area still possess in abundance.” To do that

³⁶ Maddock, *An Analysis of Local Opposition to the Sleeping Bear Lakeshore*, 115-122; John Daugherty Oral History, August 14, 1998; *Detroit News*, November 20, 1961.

³⁷ *Land and People: Northern Great Lakes Regional Conference, Springboard for Action: Brief of Proceedings*, September 24-26, 1963, Duluth, Minnesota (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Agriculture, 1963), 1,5.

Kennedy proposed linking economic development initiatives to conservation proposals, “this Region is more and more a major recreation area within easy access of tens of millions of Americans.” Kennedy advocated new national park projects in the area and a regional approach to planning.³⁸

The Upper Great Lakes Regional Commission was eventually created to provide the latter, while new park projects sprouted in the form of the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway, the Ice Age Trail, Voyageurs National Park, and Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Each of those initiatives were at least in part supported by Wisconsin and Minnesota communities to foster a stronger tourist industry as well as to preserve treasured recreational resources. In the Upper Peninsula Kennedy’s call to promote and preserve was received like a lifeline by a drowning man. The completion of the Mackinac Bridge in November, 1957 had not caused quite the tourist renaissance hoped for by northern Michigan communities, in part because of the opening of a scenic highway along the north shore of Lake Superior by the Province of Ontario, which tended to draw tourists farther north. The towns along Michigan’s Superior shore were anxious for a potential tourist attractor like the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Lower Michigan, however, was cool to the call to preserve and promote. The result of the “Land and People” conference was to give greater impetus to the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore as opposed to the stalled Sleeping Bear proposal. “I certainly didn’t feel that Pictured Rocks was in as much danger of disappearing as Sleeping Bear,” recalled Genevieve Gillette, who had been a delegate at the conference. “I presume most people in the Park Association, thought that Sleeping Bear was much more of a project and much more important to push strongly than Pictured Rocks.” That perception changed due to the conference and Pictured Rocks was seen in light of the new regional strategy. Both Gillette and Senator Hart’s staff devoted more attention to Pictured Rocks and in 1966 it was made the first national lakeshore.³⁹

The strong local opposition to Sleeping Bear, both among the summer home owners, but also among business operators in the area prevented that project from fitting into the economic development push of the Kennedy—Johnson years. A considerable liability in trying to build support for the lakeshore’s economic development potential was the economic feasibility study prepared for the park service by Michigan State University. Funded with the last of the Mellon money from the Great Lakes Shoreline Survey, the report was rushed to completion in 1961 to support the first Hart bill. The report began by noting that 20 million people lived within “an easy day’s drive of the area,” then went on to predict that within five years of the establishment of the park it would attract “an additional 1.2 million people” to the area each year. That figure would have given Sleeping Bear greater attendance than either Grand Canyon or Yosemite. The report allowed that park land purchases would take valuable land off the property tax rolls and cost the local school districts a combined \$114,124, but the Institute for Community and Development Services at Michigan State, which wrote the report, blithely concluded that the increased sales tax in the area from the million plus visitors would offset these loses. From a statewide perspective that was true, but it was little consolation to the local community because sales tax revenues were distributed throughout Michigan and would not be available for the local schools. The report particularly angered fruit farmers in the area by disparaging the prospects for

³⁸ Duluth News Tribune, September 25, 1963.

³⁹ Genevieve Gillette, Oral History, Tape 27, side A, p.1-12.

cherry growing, even though the county agricultural agents (also employed by Michigan State University) had been telling farmers the opposite for more than fifteen years. Predictions about how much money a Sleeping Bear lakeshore would generate were based on studies done at much larger and celebrated parks such as Grand Teton and Smokey Mountains. The hastily assembled study was less a scientific evaluation than it was a studied effort to boost the National Park Service's plans for the area.⁴⁰

"That economic feasibility study almost cost the whole park proposal all creditability," recalled John Daugherty, a Benzie County park supporter. The Citizens' Council hammered away at the wild predictions of the study during the Washington and Frankfort hearings. They commissioned a Chicago consulting firm to conduct an independent study and used its findings to refute the government study point-by-point. The economic feasibility study was another misstep by the park service caused by the rush to advance a wide range of park projects, in too short a time, with a limited staff to manage the effort.⁴¹

Once the National Park Service lost creditability in the Sleeping Bear area, the agency became the object of vilification, and the project was subjected to a scrutiny that was always close and probing, that sometimes bordered on paranoia. Most park opponents regarded the project as an example of a federal bureaucracy out of control and overstepping its legitimate mandate. In Ove Jensen's words, it was "a fight between small people and a big government." Others ascribed deep and dark designs to unseen forces behind the Hart bill. One story, faithfully told with seemingly genuine quotes and eyewitness verification, had Lawrence Rockefeller as the power behind the plan. Supposedly, Rockefeller's sister, while attending a wedding on Long Lake, fell in love with Glen Lake. "I have seen all the beautiful lakes in the world, and Glen Lake is the most beautiful of them all," she is reported to have exclaimed. Several years later Lawrence Rockefeller was reported as having personally inspected the area. The millionaire heir then promised to put up the money for the National Park Service to buy it. The story obviously conflated the Rockefeller's well-known philanthropy at Grand Teton National Park and Virgin Islands National Park with the support of Paul Mellon for the Great Lakes Shoreline Survey. "They don't want the Sand Dune," charged Nan Helm, a lakeshore property owner, "what the Rockefellers want is 'our lovely Glen Lake'." Such stories reveal the deep attachment people had to the area and their conviction that it was a special place. They also indicate the bewilderment that people who long regarded themselves as patriotic citizens felt when they suddenly found themselves at odds with their government. "I just can't understand why Mr. Udall wouldn't want me to go on growing my petunias," an elderly woman asked at the time of the Senate subcommittee visit to Glen Lake.⁴²

Inflated arguments by federal officials predicting Sleeping Bear would be a major tourist attractor only stiffened the opposition by conjuring images of hordes of tourists and lines of cars jammed in traffic. People in northwest Michigan enjoyed its seclusion and slow pace. Some local businessmen, turning the economic development argument on its head, grouchy complained that more visitors to the area would force them to hire more staff and expand their operations.

⁴⁰ Institute for Community Development & Services, *Economic Feasibility of the Proposed Sleeping Bear Dunes National Seashore* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1961); Statement of Charles Miller, Hearings on S.792, 223-230.

⁴¹ John Daugherty, Oral History Interview, August 14, 1998; Statement of C.N. Hooesteger, Hearings on S.792, 208-214.

⁴² Maddock, *Analysis of Local Opposition to Sleeping Bear*, p.184-196; Nan Helm, *Footprints Where Once They Walked* (n.p: privately printed, n.d.), 46-49; Genevieve Gillette, Oral History, Tape 23, Side A, p.29.

The prospect of “honk-tonk strips” as were found in Gatlinburg and other communities at national park gateways was repellent to many residents. When the House of Representatives finally held its own hearing on Sleeping Bear in 1965 Congressman Griffin argued that if a national lakeshore was ever going to be established it needed to be more committed to preserving the natural beauty and character of the area, than to its promotion. Griffin went so far as to propose a buffer zone around the park to restrain ugly commercialization.⁴³

In August 1965, the Senate passed S.936, another Hart Sleeping Bear bill. This action keyed supporters of the park to lobby for congressional action. Genevieve Gillette met with Wayne Aspinall (D-Colorado) the powerful chair of the House Interior Committee and Republican attorney John Daugherty lobbied Representative Gerald Ford (R-Michigan). The passage of the Land and Water Conservation fund in 1964 had made all congressmen more receptive of park projects. The fund applied monies raised by selling leases for off-shore oil drilling to federal and state conservation projects. The bill made Sleeping Bear’s multimillion dollar price tag much more palatable to representatives concerned with the growing federal budget deficit. Another event which gave the Sleeping Bear bill momentum in the House was the removal of Congressman Robert P. Griffin. Senator Patrick V. McNamara (D-Michigan), Hart’s silent co-sponsor of the park bills, died in April of 1966. Michigan’s Republican governor, George Romney, appointed Griffin to the vacant seat in the Senate. For the remainder of 1966 northwest Michigan had no congressional representative and park supporters sought to push the bill through in the vacuum.⁴⁴

The Sleeping Bear bill nearly made it out of the House that summer. Chairman Aspinall aggressively pushed the bill forward in his committee. It fell to Representative Charlotte Reid (R-Illinois) the Crystal Lake cottage owner, to try and derail the bill. On August 6, 1966, Reid took advantage of the fact that thirty-two members, including most of the bill’s supporters, were absent from the committee. She pressed for consideration of the bill and would have succeeded in killing it save for the astute maneuvering of John P. Saylor (R-Pennsylvania). A strong conservationist, Saylor pretended to oppose the bill because by voting “no” he would be permitted to have the full committee reconsider the bill at a more favorable time. That occasion came three days latter when the full committee voted to create a Sleeping Bear lakeshore. The amended bill differed from the Senate bill by its inclusion of North Manitou Island and a buffer zone along M-22. The bill now only needed to be considered by the full house to be law. But the 89th Congress was one of the most activist in American history. President Lyndon B. Johnson’s landslide victory in 1964 had sent scores of liberal Democrats to the House on his coattails and they had spent their terms advancing an avalanche of legislation. It was the discipline and organization of the House which advanced Sleeping Bear lakeshore to the brink, even without a local representative as an advocate, but then the success of the 89th Congress caught up with the lakeshore plan. There were so many bills reported out of committee that the House Rules Committee had a formidable task trying to arrange the schedule for presentation on the floor of the House. It did not help that the Chairman of the Rules Committee, Howard W. Smith (D-Virginia), was a lame-duck bitter over his recent defeat in a primary by the liberal wing of his own party. Smith resisted appeals by Democrats and Republicans to have the bill advanced to the

⁴³ John Daugherty, Oral History, August 14, 1998; Hawley, *The Politics of National Park Expansion*, 100-101.

⁴⁴ Genevieve Gillette, Oral History Tape, 28, Side B, p.7; John Daugherty, Oral History Interview, August 14, 1998; Hawley, *The Politics of National Park Expansion*, 101.

floor of the House. But Smith favored other bills with a place on the calendar, and the Sleeping Bear compromise, on the brink of passage, expired buried in the Rules Committee when Congress adjourned in the fall of 1966.⁴⁵

From Economic Necessity to Environmental Amenities

As the Eighty-ninth Congress became history the Sleeping Bear compromise became a dead bill. Senator Hart could console himself that the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore had succeed in becoming law. Pictured Rocks was created out of the Kennedy-era emphasis on pairing conservation and economic development. That ambivalent, if not contradictory, approach to the environment had been successful in pushing a host of new park programs through a Congress committed to waging a “War on Poverty” and creating a “Great Society.” During the two-year run of the Eighty-ninth Congress, twenty-two new areas were added to the National Park System, including three shoreline parks, three major new recreation areas, and a large number of new historic sites and national monuments. But the dubious linkage of conservation to economic development had outlasted its usefulness by the late 1960s. A fresh green wave was sweeping across the country that would transform the old conservation alliance of sportsman, nature lovers, and the recreation industry, and give birth to a more aggressive, alarmist environmental movement.⁴⁶

The new environmentalism was born in an era of social and political conflict. Late 1960s America was a society wracked by social, racial, generational, and political conflict. The liberal orthodoxy of the early 1960s was followed by a deeply critical, often cynical, analysis of America. Taking its initial inspiration from Rachel Carson’s *The Silent Spring*, this new environmentalism focused more on air and water pollution than public lands. Where older conservationists were concerned about the number of campsites at shoreline line parks, the new environmentalists recognized that pollution, some of it caused by recreation users, was degrading the waterways, in some places past the point of recovery. In the Great Lakes region sensational stories aroused the public. Giant algae blooms washed ashore at Chicago and Milwaukee, rendering beaches unswimable. The spring die-off of alewives, a small silver fish that invaded the Great Lakes from the Atlantic in the late 1940s, made it impossible to even walk along those beaches. The stench from the thousands of dead fish that washed ashore each day drove people from the lakefront. Lake Erie was even worse than Lake Michigan. Scientists testifying at Public Health Service hearings claimed that Erie was “dying.” As if to punctuate that point emphatically, in 1969, the heavily polluted Cuyahoga River at Cleveland caught fire. Waters stinking, lakes dying, and rivers burning were clear signs to environmentalists that America had put too much emphasis on economic development and not enough on natural resource protection.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Ibid; Benzie County (Michigan) Patriot; October 20, 1966.

⁴⁶ Wirth, Parks, Politics and the People, 326.

⁴⁷ Samuel P. Hays, Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 171; William Ashworth, The Late Great Lakes: An Environmental History (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 142; also see Terrence Kehoe, Cleaning Up the Great Lakes: From Cooperation to Confrontation (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1997).

The new environmentalists borrowed some of their tactics from the civil rights and anti-war movements. They took an aggressive and confrontational approach to the problems of the region. There was a counter-cultural tone to some of their rhetoric, particularly as it applied to business. Corporate polluters were the first to feel the weight of the new movement. If housewives had to give up their favorite dishwashing detergent to reduce phosphate pollution in the Great Lakes, ordinary citizens had no pity on corporate polluters. This sentiment spread out from the suburban subdivisions to elected officials in Washington, D.C. and Lansing. The hard-edged activism of the new environmentalism was best exemplified by the Sierra Club, which by 1968 had thrown-off its amateurish, if earnest, origins along with its not-for-profit status and became an active and effective political action organization. While involving itself full-time in legislative activities in Washington, D.C., the Sierra Club also began to build local chapters all across the country to be prepared to fight environmental battles in the hinterland. Nationally strict restrictions on air and water pollution were achieved in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Locally in northern Michigan, concern over what business, unrestrained, might do to Sleeping Bear attracted the interest of the newly organized Mackinac Chapter of the Sierra Club.⁴⁸

The building of subdivisions and summer homes in the Sleeping Bear area was initially hurt by Senator Hart's attempt to create a national lakeshore. But as each of the Senator's bills, year after year, met with a stonewall in the House, people in northwest Michigan went back to the business of development. In 1965, Senator Hart's proposal, as modified by the Senate Interior Committee, included 266 private homes. That number swelled to 436 by 1970. The opposition said that a National Park was not needed to take care of the area, but as more and more of the frontage on Glen and Platte lakes came under development, as neighbors became crowded on the edges of busy lakes and roads, that claim began to sound a bit hollow. At North Bar Lake, a secluded pristine embayment set among the dunes just north of the town of Empire, developers began to lower the level of this popular swimming area in order to create more frontage to sell. Another disquieting sign of unrestrained development was the chaos that descended on the Platte River each fall. In 1965, in an effort to control alewife populations in the Lake Michigan, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources had planted Coho Salmon in the Platte. In 1967, the mature fish returned to the river to spawn. Larger than anything most Midwestern fisherman had ever caught, the salmon ignited an acute case of angling fever. The press dubbed the result "coho madness." To the manager of Benzie State Park the rush of hundreds of vehicles and the swarm of anxious anglers did indeed look like madness. An unsightly concrete block motel, a gas station, and a hastily installed boat ramp marred the once beautiful mouth of the Platte. A swimming and picnic area enjoyed by generations of area residents and visitors had been transformed, almost overnight, into an example of the inability of local controls to preserve the area.⁴⁹

It was, however, the development of a privately owned park on the dunes that drew the most attention. The park was the work of Pierce Stocking, a flannel-shirted lumberman of the old do-it-yourself school. He was already a considerable property owner in the area when the National Park Service first nominated the dunes for park status. Stocking sensed a big payday when the legislation finally passed and he increased his holdings in the area. What he did not

⁴⁸ Hays, Beauty, Health, and Permanence, 459-460.

⁴⁹ Kalt, Sixties Sandstorm, 84-85; Korn, Yesterday Through Tomorrow, 115.

expect was a decade delay in the authorization of the lakeshore. With most of his assets tied-up in Sleeping Bear real estate, the failure of Congress to act on Hart's proposals left Pierce Stocking economically stymied. But he was not a man who was temperamentally or financially able to sit and wait for the folks in Washington to sort things out. He developed a trout pond on one piece of property and operated a motel on another. Finally, in 1968, he decided if the park service was not going to open a dunes park, Stocking intended to open one for himself. He had in the past sought the cooperation of the Michigan State Parks to operate a dune tour on state land, but in 1968 he opened his own dune scenic drive park. To the uninitiated visitor Stocking's "Sleeping Bear Dunes Park" had the look of a well-designed, if small, state or even federal park. From the attractive entrance sign to the "park headquarters building," to ten miles of scenic roads—complete with lookouts and picnic areas—Stocking's park was an impressive accomplishment considering it was constructed in six months. Even the National Park Service team that visited the park in 1968 offered a "favorable response." What troubled people was that in developing his park Stocking closed-off a large area in the middle of the dunes. Visitors had the option of paying a reasonable fee of five dollars per car to enter the park, but his effort was a blunt reminder that the fate of the dunes was, in part, in private hands. "Keep out" signs could just as easily be placed in the sand as a picnic area.⁵⁰

In the end it was a curious alliance of environmental activists and business people in favor of economic development that formed the local impetus for the Sleeping Bear Lakeshore. Northwest Michigan began a slow but steady population growth in the 1960s. The terrible riot that rocked Detroit in July 1967 engendered in many middle-class Michiganders revulsion with the violence and racial tension of urban living. A pristine environment and access to nature were amenities that new residents and summer home owners expected in Leelanau and Benzie counties. Far-sighted business people realized that controlling the pace of development was critical to maintaining the quality of life that attracted residents and businesses to the area in the first place. A good example of the way in which the pro-development and pro-environment forces cooperated to promote the park plan was the "Save the Bear Day."

The Birth of a National Lakeshore

On June 16, 1969, the car ferry *City of Green Bay* departed Frankfort harbor for a cruise up the shore to Sleeping Bear. Aboard the ship were Senator Philip Hart, James Kellogg, the official representative of William Milliken, the Governor of Michigan, and various representatives of state and federal agencies. Jostled together in uneasy association on the crowded ship were hundreds of people evenly divided between chamber of commerce members and Sierra Club supporters, the latter led by their national president. But the beauty of the scenery and the splendid weather made the media event a huge success. Television, radio, and newspaper coverage of the four-hour cruise publicized the growing popularity of the Sleeping Bear proposal, while the "Save the Bear" slogan lent an air of urgency to their call for action—as if dump trucks were ready to haul the dunes away to a glass works. In the midst of the voyage

⁵⁰ Kathleen Stocking, *Letters From Leelanau: Essays of People and Place* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 159-166; Kathleen Stocking, Personal Communication, July 9, 1998; "Sleeping Bear Dunes Park" brochure, SLBD papers.

local Republicans telephoned Congressman Guy Vander Jagt (R-Michigan) to let him know that the event was a big success and admonishing him “not to miss the boat” on Sleeping Bear.⁵¹

By 1969, Congressman Vander Jagt was scrambling to catch up “with the boat.” The Republican from Luther, Michigan, had gone from being one of the bitterest opponents of the Sleeping Bear proposal to a late, but vital proponent. He began his journey in 1965 when as a state senator he testified against both the Hart and the Griffin bills. He was so against the prospect of a national lakeshore that a year later he secured passage of a bill that, against all precedent, required the State of Michigan to sell rather than donate all of its Sleeping Bear lands in event of federal park. Later he tried to secure federal funds to expand D.H. Day State Park, thereby removing the need for a national lakeshore. But even fellow Republicans were cool to this idea. Vander Jagt, however, began to waiver in his opposition in 1968. Richard M. Nixon’s victory in the presidential election returned the executive branch to Republican control for the first time in eight years. Nixon was a pragmatist determined to direct domestic policy from the center of the political spectrum. In 1968, it was clear that environmentalism was an issue with broad public support. Neither Nixon nor key Republican conservationists in the House, such as John Saylor (R—Pennsylvania), were going to be caught unprepared on the issue. While the White House staff focused the bulk of its environmental energy on the Task Force which paved the way for the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior continued to support the scores of park proposals generated during the Udall years. On the local level, Vander Jagt also saw the GOP getting greener. In 1968, party faithful packed the meeting of the Benzie County Republican Committee at the Crystal Lake Township Hall and resolved to support a national lakeshore. These shifts in the dynamics of environmental politics as well as a new set of economic incentives forced Vander Jagt to move toward a Sleeping Bear compromise.⁵²

The new economic incentive which stirred Vander Jagt was the prospect of a four-lane limited access highway. Michigan’s Ninth Congressional District embraced a long stretch of Lake Michigan’s east shore, from Holland, Michigan, north to near Traverse City. In 1967, the Michigan U.S. 31 Corridor Association, an alliance of every chamber of commerce from the Indiana border to Mackinac, began to push for such a road in order to attract Michigan-bound Chicagoans to their part of the state. By dramatically reducing travel times such a road would greatly increase the rate of development and tourist spending in the Ninth District. But communities east of the U.S. 31 corridor were not going to sit by and idly wait for the stream of tourists to be diverted away from them. By 1968, the business community of Vander Jagt’s hometown of Cadillac, Michigan, realized that the creation of a Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore could be a powerful argument that the freeway should indeed be built through their town and not farther to the east. There were more voters in Cadillac than Leelanau County, so it did not take long for their congressman to move from the status of opponent to supporter of Sleeping Bear lakeshore. As one businessman put it: “We need the highway, we need the park. Anyone in business opposed to the park must have rocks in their head.”⁵³

⁵¹ John Daugherty, Oral History Interview, August 14, 1998.

⁵² Statement of Guy Vander Jagt, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-first Congress, Second Session on H.R. 11829 and Related bills (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), 130-1; Kehoe, *Cleaning Up the Great Lakes*, 106-7; John Daugherty, Oral History Interview, August 14, 1998.

⁵³ Statement of Larry H. Olson, Hearings on H.R. 11829 and Related bills, p.291-294; John Daugherty, Oral History Interview, August 14, 1998; Minutes of the U.S. 31 Corridor Association, November 12, 1968, SLBD Papers.

While Congressman Vander Jagt did not have “rocks in his head,” he did try to make a final effort to protect his constituents in the Sleeping Bear area. In September 1968, Vander Jagt announced that he would support a Sleeping Bear bill if two issues could be resolved: 1) The local school districts would be reimbursed for the land withdrawn from the tax base, and; 2) That the rights of the owners of unimproved property within the proposed lakeshore, including their right to a speedy sale, be protected. Although these were not issues the Department of Interior could itself immediately solve, they were not deal breakers. From the time Vander Jagt first raised the issue, the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee made it abundantly clear that they would not countenance a provision for the federal government to make compensatory payments to the Leelanau County public schools. The committee did alert their colleague to the precedent in some park areas for the state government to commit itself to take up the burden. At Vander Jagt’s instigation Governor George Romney and key members of the state house and senate pledged to make such payments, if they were needed. The second issue, securing the rights of the owners of unimproved property proved a bit more complicated. Vander Jagt proposed setting up a strict time limit in which all land acquisitions had to take place, so that owners of isolated tracts of land would not be surrounded by federal holdings and left for years with little more than the right to pay taxes on land that could not be developed, until such time as the government decided to make them an offer for their tract. The National Park Service rejected the very concept of a strict time limit because it would leave lands unpurchased by the deadline lost to the park forever, regardless of their importance for recreation or preservation purposes. Practically Vander Jagt’s proposal would put the Sleeping Bear land acquisition priorities, ahead of all other park development projects in the system, something neither the agency nor the other members of Congress, with parks in their own districts, would tolerate. The solution was to place all lands within the proposed lakeshore into three land-use categories: 1) Public Use and Development, lands owned outright by the National Park Service; 2) Environmental Conservation lands, some of these Category II lands might be owned in fee by the government but others could remain in private hands subject to a scenic easement; 3) Private Use and Development, included all private lands within the lakeshore which were protected from condemnation. Vander Jagt also extracted a promise from the park service that at least fifty percent of the land acquisition funds would be expended within two years of authorization.⁵⁴

A howl of protest was let loose from the Sleeping Bear area when word of Congressman Vander Jagt’s change of policy was received. The concessions achieved by their representative were of no consolation to the core of an opposition that was unilaterally opposed to any type of national park in their area. But by June of 1969 there were four separate Sleeping Bear bills before the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee and every member of the Michigan congressional delegation, Republican and Democrat alike, had signed on to the project. The days when Citizens’ Council could stop a Sleeping Bear park were at an end. Nonetheless, Muriel Ferris who had handled Sleeping Bear for Senator Hart’s office for nine years confided to a friend, “we are all treading as though on eggs until we see the bill through the House.”⁵⁵

At a final hearing on the proposed lakeshore, held in Washington, D.C. in June of 1970, the Council was clearly dispirited and on the defensive. “Now I feel sort of like the Indians felt

⁵⁴ Statement of Vander Jagt, Hearings on H.R. 11829 and Related bills, 131-2.

⁵⁵ Muriel Ferris to Genevieve Gillette, May 27, 1970, Box 4, Gillette Papers.

100 years ago,” their spokesman observed. Stanley Ball, the Citizens’ Council’s Executive Secretary, tried to outline how state and private initiatives alone were sufficient to preserve the area and that a federalization of the area was “just plain wrong.” Congressman John Saylor’s (R—Pennsylvania) heated response to that sentiment indicated how far the pendulum had swung since the evening when Conrad Wirth was assailed eight years before. “I can tell you that you are like a good many other people,” Saylor lectured. “It is all right to establish a national park as long as it does not affect you. This seems to be the attitude of a good many people in that area. They would like a national park in Wyoming, they would like a national park in California, they would like a national park in Key Biscayne in Florida, in Texas, but they do not want one in Sleeping Bear, Mich. In other words, ‘because that is my home.’” Other members of the committee joined in to push Ball to explain why it was “plain wrong” to condemn land for national parks, when Leelanau County itself condemned land for schools and roads and benefited from the practice of condemning land to create parks in other parts of the country. Ball finally shook his head and resignedly said, “I am not too sure now what I did mean, after you fellows get through with me.” Congressman Saylor concluded the exchange by declaring: “what I have an inclination to do right now, I will introduce a bill instead of taking 77,000 acres it will probably take about 277,000 acres up in that area, and then I will compromise it down to 177,000 acres, and those who oppose it will think they have won a great victory and I would have won a bigger one, and the American people a few generations from now will look around and say, ‘Gee, we are sorry Saylor was not able to get 277,000 acres instead of 177,000.’”⁵⁶

In spite of such contentious exchanges the hearing did establish a broad common ground concerning the Sleeping Bear area. The testimony of the Citizens’ Council, the Sierra Club’s endorsement, and the advocacy of the chamber of commerce boosters all shared a concern about maintaining the area in its current condition. Dayton Willard, who chaired the Platte Lakes Area Association, concluded his testimony before the House committee by putting new lyrics to the then popular “Hamm’s” northwoods beer jingle:

A beer is a beer, is a beer.
A bear is a bear, is a bear,
Until you have seen our Sleeping Bear
Preserve our Bear, yes
Protect our Bear, yes,
Save our Bear, save our Bear, save our Bear from what?
Federal exploitation as a national recreation area,
A glorified camp ground,
Don’t fence her in with bottles and rubbish cans,
Just let her stay there,
Majestic, silent, serene.
We who live in the area do care.

⁵⁶ Statement of Stanley Ball, Hearings on H.R. 11829 and Related bills, 268-74.

James Dorsey of Empire, Michigan, was one of those local people who cared. “Every man of good conscience agrees this should be done,” he wrote, “the quarrel is over the method whereby it is achieved.” To many people in northwest Michigan the issue had come down to “either turning our backs and going home and watching the area go to pot, or making sure that steps are taken to curtail development in the area with a view to preserving it in a manner consistent with the interests and needs of those residing in the area, those owning property in the area, those using the area and those visiting the area, both now and in the foreseeable future.” Put in those terms the difference between the supporters and the opposition to the lakeshore seemed less one of principle and more one merely of degree. With every member of the Michigan congressional delegation in favor of a Sleeping Bear lakeshore, the House committee chose to accept those areas of agreement at face value and ignore the very real differences of method between the two sides.⁵⁷

While the hearings in June of 1970 may have established the desirability of a federal lakeshore in northwest Michigan, Interior Committee Chair Wayne Aspinall was faced with two competing bills to protect Sleeping Bear. House Democrats supported the bill introduced by James G. O’Hara of Michigan’s Twelfth Congressional District. O’Hara had been a tireless advocate of the Sleeping Bear bill and a close ally of Senator Philip Hart. Since 1967 he had championed the lakeshore in the House. Michigan’s Republican representatives had signed on to Congressman Vander Jagt’s bill. The differences between the two bills were slight, and Chairman Aspinall requested a consolidated bill that everyone was prepared to support. Since Vander Jagt’s support had been the critical breakthrough, it made sense for his bill to be the basis of the consolidation. For Congressman O’Hara, who had carried the torch for Sleeping Bear for so long, it was a bitter pill to be deprived of authorship of the final bill. The wisdom of the compromise was made manifest, however, when the bill moved to the Rules Committee. Charlotte Reid (R—Illinois), the Crystal Lake cottage owner who made herself the champion of the local property owners, used her influence to stymie the bill in that committee. Only when Vander Jagt came before the committee and in secret session argued his right to speak as the genuine representative of the people of northwest Michigan was Reid’s influence overcome. The Sleeping Bear bill, H.R. 18776 then went to the House floor where it passed via a voice vote on September 22, 1970.⁵⁸

A final attempt to trap the bear was sprung in the Senate. Senator Robert Griffin had never been reconciled to Philip Hart’s vision of a Sleeping Bear lakeshore that embraced inland as well as shoreline acreage. In a last minute attempt to monkey-wrench the compromise Senator Griffin attempted to replace his own Sleeping Bear bill, one based on his 1963 bill for a 37,000 acre park, for Senator Hart’s 60, 600 acre bill. Senator Griffin had communicated his support for the compromise to the Senate subcommittee in June 1970, yet he had also remained largely aloof of the issue during his Senate career. To try and destroy Hart’s bill at this point seems a contradictory and gratuitous gesture. Perhaps it was merely a play to the disgruntled property owners in Leelanau and Benzie counties. Robert Griffin argued his was the “better” bill, yet in seven years in the Congress he had done nothing to advance it toward passage. The majority, however, were with Senator Hart. He was one of the most respected members of the majority

⁵⁷ Statement of Dayton Willard, Hearings on H.R. 11829 and Related bills, p.220; Statement of John B. Daugherty, Hearings on H.R. 11829 and Related bills, 288-9.

⁵⁸ Kalt, Sixties Sandstorm, 110-11.

party. Griffin's maneuver, that would have robbed Hart of the fruits of victory after the latter had labored with such determination for so long, did not have a chance. After a brief debate the Sleeping Bear bill was approved by acclamation. President Richard M. Nixon signed the lakeshore into law on October 21, 1970.

At the conclusion of the long divisive legislative incubation Senator Philip A. Hart was justly hailed as the "father" of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. "Stick to your guns, & remember you've got millions of us little guys on your side," a supporter of the lakeshore wrote him back in 1962. Hart did stick to his guns and the fact that a large portion of the Lake Michigan shore in northwest Michigan is now open to use by people who could not afford the price of lake frontage is the result of his effort. That property owners on Glen and Platte lakes do not today enjoy the privacy or serenity of a generation ago is the cost they pay for the exclusion of the inland lakes from the national lakeshore. The long fight to secure Sleeping Bear exacted its price in the development of the area. In 1970, Genevieve Gillette lamented "its already pretty late.... Sleeping Bear was already being eroded beyond sensible thinking." Yet if it had not been for the less than perfect bill that was finally passed in 1970 there would be even less of a wonderful landscape left to enjoy today.⁵⁹

If Philip Hart was the "father" of the Sleeping Bear Dunes then Muriel Ferris and E. Genevieve Gillette were the midwives. They crafted the basic concept and made the necessary compromises to make the lakeshore possible. Gillette not only built the coalition of environmentalists and state officials who made up the backbone of the bill's Michigan support, she was single handedly responsible for the inclusion of a significant portion of the lower end of the park within the original proposal. In the later years of the fight her role was less prominent in part because of her heavy involvement on several White House commissions as well as her role securing the Sylvania National Recreation Area, the McCormick Experimental Forest, and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. By 1970 travel became more difficult for the seventy-two year old dynamo but she still contributed her "know-how and energy." After passage Hart sent Gillette a copy of that day's account in the Congressional Record along with the sentiment, "You deserve these historic pages." Muriel Ferris was Gillette's friend and associate during the long struggle. As Hart's legislative assistant it was she, not the Senator, who arranged the testimony for each of the hearings and attended the meetings and negotiations that made the lakeshore a reality.⁶⁰

"Phil Hart is the father of the park; I might be the uncle or something like that," joked Guy Vander Jagt. The congressman from Cadillac, Michigan, had to make the hardest decisions regarding the Sleeping Bear proposal. His heart was with the people trying to keep the federal government out of their backyard. His proposal for federal funding of a state managed "Sleeping Bear Dunes U.S.A." recreation area was literally laughed out of Congress in 1968, fifteen years later amid the "Reagan Revolution" the Department of the Interior was itself making such proposals. In a climate of rising concern with environmental abuse, with opportunities for economic development at stake, Vander Jagt made the pragmatic decision to get the best deal he could for all of his constituents. It was fitting that when all of the rhetoric concerning the constitutional rights of property owners and the need to save the environment for future

⁵⁹ Joe (Small Potatoes) Taxpayer to Philip A. Hart, March 8, 1962, Box 15, Hart Papers; Genevieve Gillette to Muriel Ferris, May 20, 1970, Box 4, Gillette Papers.

⁶⁰ Philip A. Hart to Genevieve Gillette, September 25, 1970, Box 4, Gillette Papers.

generations had been spent, the Sleeping Bear Lakeshore came into existence the same way most bills are born, swaddled in a blanket shorn from high principle and bundled in the basket of compromise.

Chapter Three
Changes on the Land
The Early Management of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
1977-1983

On a blustery March night in 1971 the Sleeping Bear Dunes were remade—not by congressional mandate or according to a developer’s scheme—but by natural action. Twenty-acres at the northern end of the bluff tumbled without warning into Lake Michigan. It was only the second time in the century that such a major shift occurred in the face of the great sand plateau. Environmentalists tried to use the incident to make the point that the dunes were a mysterious and fragile resources that required careful management and protection. Those who had opposed the creation of the lakeshore, with equal validity, drew an opposite lesson: no amount of federal regulation can control nature. Yet the remarkable thing about the incident was that on the eve of a controversial change in the way land was owned and managed in the Sleeping Bear country, nature gave its own object lesson. The sands which had been piled on the east shore of Lake Michigan since the Pleistocene were no more permanent than the hunting grounds of the Ottawa, a Homesteader’s certificate, a summer home owner’s deed, or a congressional mandate. In time the sands will shift and the dune will consult no management plan or seek no easement. In human affairs and in nature’s order change is the only constant.¹

The National Park Service came to the Sleeping Bear not to stop change but to try and manage it. In itself that was an audacious assignment. It was made manageable only to the extent Public Law 91-479, which created the national lakeshore, and the established procedures and traditions of the National Park Service provided guidance for the women and men who would take up the challenge. The administrative history of Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore is the story of the actions and decisions those people undertook, within the parameters of public law, bureaucratic procedure, and in interaction with a dynamic natural environment. It is a story of a remorseless yet farsighted policy, of foibles familiar and human, of creativity under constraint, and failures balanced by successes. It is a story that will continue as long as there is a will to manage environmental interactions in the Sleeping Bear country. It is a story that begins in 1971 with Julius Martinek.

Starting From Scratch

“So far we have not had one cent of federal money to buy land,” Julius Martinek said one year after the creation of the national lakeshore, “and yet we have had people coming from all over the country who have heard that Congress created a new park here and expect it to be ready for use—instantly and magically, I presume.” Martinek was the first superintendent of Sleeping Bear Dunes and like the head of any new entity he had more problems than staff, higher public expectations than budget lines, as well as the added burden of a local population that was, in

¹ Benzie County Patriot, March 16, 1971.

large part, committed to opposing the lakeshore. Nothing came easy in the early years at Sleeping Bear Dunes.²

Allen T. Edmunds carefully chose Julius A. Martinek for the difficult assignment. Although Martinek had been born in Cleveland in 1922, he had grown up in Traverse City, Michigan. His family had a cottage on Long Lake and his first experiences hiking and camping were in the forests in and around the Sleeping Bear Dunes. Edmunds had attended the World Congress on Conservation with Martinek and had taken to the latter's straightforward style. Edmunds also liked Martinek's broad experience within the agency. The forty-nine year old had started with the park service in 1949 after military service in the Navy during World War II and college at Michigan State University. The forestry graduate put in stints as a back country ranger at Mount Rainier National Park and Sequoia National Park before moving to Washington, D.C. and working as a planner in the office of the director. Martinek was on the "fast-track" within the agency. In 1967, he headed a National Park Service team seconded to the United Republic of Tanzania to plan Mount Kilimanjaro National Park. His administrative experience included serving as Assistant Superintendent at Yellowstone National Park and, just prior to coming to Sleeping Bear, as Director of the National Capital Parks. Martinek had followed Philip Hart's tortuous attempt to create a Sleeping Bear park and he had long desired to take on the challenge of building a new park "from scratch."³

Martinek was well suited to the inevitable challenge of trying to build a new park with few resources. He had a "hands-on" style of leadership and a flair for "do-it-yourself" solutions. When he was a ranger at Mount Rainier, he once resolved his frustration with budget cuts that removed funding for a picnic area near a backcountry trail by building the site himself, tables, outhouses and all, with little more than a chainsaw. Many times during the lakeshore's early days Martinek would grab a shovel or hammer or saw and pitch-in to whatever job needed to be done. Conversely, Martinek could also be a good listener. This was critical for the first superintendent because there was a real need for property owners in the area to vent their frustration with the federal government in the early 1970s. A lot of people who opposed the park had never had a chance to participate in the congressional hearings and the superintendent was the one on whom they "unloaded." A considerable portion of Martinek's time that first year was spent at meetings to explain what was going to happen to local stakeholders. No other member of the National Park Service, save perhaps Allen Edmunds, exerted as much influence over the type of park Sleeping Bear evolved into than Julius Martinek. This was not only because he was the first superintendent but because of his particular energy and vision. Twenty years after his term as superintendent ended Martinek's stamp was clearly visible on the lakeshore.⁴

The first lakeshore headquarters was in Frankfort, Michigan, at the site of the former State Savings Bank, a terra cotta trimmed commercial building located on Main Street. Martinek, a former Traverse City resident, would have preferred that location as a temporary headquarters. But the park service had already committed itself to Frankfort, besides, Benzie County had a number of long-time supporters of the project and Martinek was informed they were offering space in the bank for free. The space had to be thoroughly renovated, teller cages removed and carpets put in, and ended up costing the agency \$700 dollars a month in rent. Of greater

² Grand Rapids Press, September 5, 1971.

³ Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998; Benzie County Patriot, May 6, 1971.

⁴ Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998, Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, March 9, 1972.

assistance to the lakeshore was Ted Carland's offer to the superintendent to publish in the Benzie County Patriot a series of columns (eventually titled "Bear Facts") to explain park service policy and give readers an update on the development of the lakeshore. Some Leelanau County residents resented the headquarters location in Frankfort because the lakeshore "directly affects the affairs and property of far more Leelanau County residents than Benzie County residents." Martinek was appointed in May and by early summer he was at work in the lakeshore. The bulk of the park service staff in Frankfort that first year were land acquisition specialists who did not report to the superintendent. Martinek spent the bulk of his time familiarizing himself with the park resources and developing liaison with local governments, organizations, and meeting property owners. Although he had next-to-nothing as a budget and little land to manage, the problems immediately placed before him were intimidating. The gull nesting ground on South Manitou island was reported to be suffering a sudden and severe population decline, the Coast Guard station at Sleeping Bear Bay was suffering structural damage from years of neglect, and the State of Michigan proposed to build a modern boat harbor at the mouth of the Platte River. On top of that throngs of tourists anxious to see the newly legislated park had so packed D.H. Day State Park on Memorial Day as to back-up traffic on Highway 109, and last but not least, his office was packed with landowners, some anxious to sell their land, others making it clear that the park service would have it only over their dead bodies.⁵

Land Acquisition

For the majority of the new national parks created in the 1960s and 1970s the process of land acquisition was a bitter, often protracted, prelude to the agency's normal job of presenting and protecting natural and cultural resources to the public. Historically Americans have loved their national parks. The National Park Service, as the protectors and presenters of the parks historically enjoyed public esteem. But unlike the western parks carved out of the public domain during the early years of the century, condemnation of private property was necessary to create all of the national lakeshores. It was the land acquisition officer, not a friendly ranger in a "Smokey the Bear" hat that provided many local people with their first exposure to the personnel of the National Park Service. At Sleeping Bear the inevitable sense of loss experienced by people moved out of the park area was unfortunately underscored with a feeling of resentment based on the perception that they had not been dealt with fairly. The reasons for the lingering atmosphere of resentment, which is still palpable a generation after the creation of the lakeshore, are a combination of procedure, personality, and circumstance.

Land Acquisition Officers came into an unenviable situation in 1971. Ten years of opposition to the concept of a national park had resulted in the demonization of federal employees. New federal procedures for land acquisition restricted the freedom of action of federal employees in real estate negotiations. The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 was designed to ensure uniform and fair treatment of people forced to leave their homes due to federal projects. On the positive side it provided for moving costs and replacement housing. It also mandated that the government would not pay less

⁵ Ibid; Benzie County Patriot, July 15, 1971.

than the fair market value of a property, as determined by an independent appraisal. The effect of the law was to remove flexibility and discretion from the acquisition officer and make the independent appraisal all-important. Because of the law sellers found government buyers almost totally unwilling to negotiate and they felt they were left with “like it or lump it offers” for their property. This accentuated the personal dynamics of the acquisition program. None of the land acquisition staff had long experience with the National Park Service and most were not committed to living in the project area. The tone set by James E. Williamson; the chief Land Acquisition Officer was unsympathetic, unsmiling, and unrelenting.⁶

Williamson was a large, gruff, bear of a man. He dominated a room by his physical presence and his aggressively blunt manner. He came to the National Park Service, like most of the men involved in the Sleeping Bear Dunes land acquisition program, from the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Immediately before coming to Frankfort he had been stationed at the Apostle Islands. Land acquisition is a difficult business under any circumstances. As John F. Pattie, one of Williamson’s assistants, joked “I’ve been cussed at, kicked downstairs, and had dogs sicked on me, but I have never been insulted!” Being thick-skinned was a necessary characteristic for a lands officer. Yet the men who came to Sleeping Bear Dunes from the Corps of Engineers brought with them a tough, uncompromising style. John Pattie recalled that Williamson and his staff were “hard riding, hard shooting kind of people.” Williamson was particularly efficient at his job, “but he did not care about making a good impression.” The original chief of land acquisition for the project had been Donald Campbell who bought a home in Frankfurt and settled his family in the community. But Campbell was summarily removed from the project after less than a year because he took too deliberate an approach to the project. Where Campbell had been open and friendly, Williamson was terse and uncommunicative, but the latter style got results. A former bomber pilot, Williamson spoke with a slight southern drawl that marked him as an outsider in northern Michigan. He expected to be resented by people and he was. “You can see from history,” he told a journalist, “the great lengths people will go to get land. So when you take their land you touch a sensitive nerve.” He steeled himself to complaints with the consolation, “I’m just carrying out Congressional orders.”⁷

After setting up the office, acquiring the necessary title information, and mapping the project area the lands program began the process of appraisal. All appraisals were done on a contract basis by independent Michigan-based real estate specialists. The first purchases, as was legislatively mandated, were the “hardship” cases. These were owners who due to their financial or personal circumstances needed to immediately know what they were going to be offered by the government for their land. Some of these were willing sellers, others were elderly people, or the executors of the estate of deceased individuals. Originally the number of “hardship” cases was about fifty. By summer of 1971 it climbed to 100 and by January 1972 over 150 tracts claimed “hardship” status. The effect of this was to slow up the overall program and to fragment into widely dispersed tracts the land that came into park service control. Williamson and the land acquisition staff would have preferred to have moved to acquire whole subdivisions at one time. That way, mapping, acquisition of title evidence, and appraisal could have been done jointly for all tracts in the area. Superintendent Martinek’s job was rendered more difficult because he

⁶ John F. Pattie, Oral History Interview, November 2, 1998; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, August 5, 1971.

⁷ Ibid; John F. Pattie, Personal Communication, November 5, 1991; Kathleen Stocking, Letters From The Leelanau: Essays of People and Place (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990) 102-5

became responsible for the management of non-contiguous tracts often time-consuming to locate and always difficult to protect.⁸

Uncertainty on the part of property owners increased public anxiety over land acquisition issues. Although all owners of property within the lakeshore boundaries were notified of the existence of the park project immediately after the passage of Public Law 91-479, they were generally at sea concerning how it would affect them. Property owners had to come down to Frankfort and discover what classification their tracts had been assigned. If their land was projected for public use it was rated "Category I" and it was doomed to be lost to the government. These lands included all Lake Michigan beaches and their accessways. "Category II" lands, so-called "environmental conservation areas," were a new category to the park service and the source of considerable confusion to everyone concerned. These lands were seen as a backdrop to the public use areas. They had scenic values that needed to be protected but no public access to them was planned. Some of the Category II lands were earmarked for fee simple purchase, while others, less environmentally sensitive, were eligible to remain in private hands, subject to easements or use and development restrictions. Just what those restrictions might be even Superintendent Martinek did not know for more than a year. Owners of such property found themselves in limbo. They were unsure whether they could build on their tracts, and they were inhibited from selling because the value of the land was uncertain. Category III lands, "private use and development area," were more clearly destined to remain open to businesses and vacation homes, although they also were notified that they needed to obtain the National Park Service's approval before they undertook any improvements or modifications to their property. Finally, in November 1972 the National Park Service's Northeast Regional Office, after a review of the lakeshore's legislative history, determined that all Category II lands would be closed to new construction. Owners who objected to such restrictions could sell scenic easements to the government. Of course, once the opportunity to build a vacation house on many of those lands was removed, few tracts retained much value. The cost of such an easement would be so near the price of full value that from a management point-of-view it made more sense to simply undertake fee acquisition. This in turn gave the public the impression that while the park service talked about cooperation with landowners all they were really interested in was acquisition.⁹

Another source of uncertainty was the scenic corridors. Until the exact route of those proposed park drives were laid out several hundred land owners would not know if their land was going to be classified Category I or Category III. Superintendent Martinek made the completion of a centerline survey of the roadway an early priority, but delays in funding dragged out the process. Even more tenuous was the status of people who owned property developed after the December 31, 1964 cut-off date for improved properties to avoid condemnation. Some of these people deserved little sympathy. They had gambled that the lakeshore would never be authorized or that if it were they would be "grandfathered" in through another extension of the cut-off date. There were, however, people who were caught unawares by the prospect of condemnation. Some real estate agents and developers in the area sold property developed after 1964 without ever informing the buyer of the risk they might lose their new summer home.

⁸ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, July 24, 1972, SBDNL Records.

⁹ Benzie County Patriot, August 26, 1971; Chester L. Brooks to Julius Martinek, January 18, 1973, SBDNL Records.

These unfortunates joined the hundreds of other lakeshore property owners, in the words of the Grand Rapids Press, “on pins and needles waiting to see if their land will be needed, or if they can remain.” Under the land acquisition plan such owners were offered the option of a five-year retention of use and occupancy. The idea was to give a little time to enjoy their property and the opportunity to make “a transition to a new location.”¹⁰

According to the lakeshore’s organic act owners of improved property built before the 1964 cut-off date were not required to sell their holdings during their lifetime. Land acquisition staff, however, did approach these property-owners with the option to sell their land and retain either a twenty-five year lease or a lifetime lease on the holding. In such cases a normal purchase price was arrived at, \$50,000 for example, which would then be reduced by one percent per year of the total price for twenty-five years, (\$12,500) to pay for the leaseback. Many cottage owners leapt at these offers that gave them a large cash payment up front (\$37,500 in the above example) and still left them twenty-five years to enjoy their summer homes tax-free. In the case of a lifetime lease the terms were based on an estimate of the individual’s life expectancy. The deal, however, did not look as good in 1998 or 1999 when the leases expired. In the 1970s waterfront property had a market value of between \$250 and \$300 per lakefront foot, twenty-five years later the value had climbed to between \$2,500 and \$3,000 per foot. The early purchase and leaseback properties were the best buy the land acquisition program made. That alone was reason enough for many property owners who did not want to sell in the first place to resent the program.¹¹

In a situation beset by suspicion and uncertainty the dissemination of accurate information was the best way for the park service to calm property owners and begin to build local confidence in the agency. Superintendent Martinek tried to fulfill that role through newspaper columns, participation in public meetings, and one-on-one meetings with land owners. His efforts were, however, undermined to some extent by the almost secretive approach to land acquisition undertaken by James C. Williamson. The chief of land acquisition was close-mouthed about his management of the Sleeping Bear Project. Even the lands specialists working directly under him were kept in the dark as to the overall direction of the program. They were left having to compare notes with each other, or on more than one occasion, going through their boss’s desk after hours. Julius Martinek was more than content to remain aloof to the unpleasant details of the land acquisition program, but he did need to have periodic updates as to how much land was nearing acquisition so as to plan site clearance and land protection. As superintendent he needed to provide the public with accurate information on how much land remained to be bought. In May 1973, Martinek tried to improve communication between park operations and land acquisition. After several informal attempts were rebuffed he was forced to send a formal memo to Williamson, even though they worked in offices only a few feet apart. But Williamson was not disposed to communicate with anyone but Eugene Little, who supervised National Park Service land purchases in the Great Lakes region from a field office in Duluth. At Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore the necessary division of authority between land buyers and management was in place, but the superintendent, Hugh Beattie and the chief of acquisition, Brooks Hamilton, liked and respected each other and worked together to avoid “checkerboard-

¹⁰ Grand Rapids Press, September 5, 1971; J.A. Martinek to Congressman William S. Broomfield, November 11, 1972, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records.

¹¹ J.A. Martinek to Pam Dow, January 18, 1974, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records.

mishmashes land acquisition.” The absence of such rapport led to occasional but bitter clashes between Williamson and Martinek. The loser in such exchanges was the overall land protection program as well as the relationship between the agency and the landowners.¹²

Chief Land Acquisition Officer Williamson was not on the job more than a few weeks before his tight-lipped approach and icy disposition was the subject of public controversy. In January 1972, at his first appearance before the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Citizens Advisory Commission Williamson angered commission members by refusing to tell them the number of tracts which his staff had purchased to date. He reported that a total of 1400 tracts were going to be bought and that he hoped to have between 600 and 700 acquired by the fall of 1973 and that he hoped to close on the remaining number by the end of 1974. Aside from those projections, however, Williamson stonewalled virtually every question from the commission. Some commission members took Williamson’s studied silence as an expression of thinly veiled contempt. In reaction they resolved that at every future meeting an exact accounting of the number of tracts purchased be made public. Williamson responded by rarely ever attending another Commission meeting. The fallout from the confrontation eventually made its way to Washington, D.C. Senator Philip A. Hart complained directly to Secretary of the Interior Rogers B. Morton that Williamson was “non-cooperative.” “It is indeed unfortunate that this situation has to arise,” commented a commission member. “We are all living in a particularly sensitive area as far as the lakeshore is concerned and it seems to me we need every bit of cooperation, credibility and good public and personal relations we can possibly muster up.”¹³

The distrust engendered by Williamson’s manner did nothing to inspire landowner’s confidence in the probity of the process he headed. By contracting out all appraisals to independent, non-government real estate specialists the park service hoped to demonstrate the fairness of the process. Yet the large number of different appraisers produced widely different evaluations of similarly situated properties. There was an internal check on this problem. An appraiser in the Frankfort office reviewed all independent appraisals. If he thought an appraisal was incorrect, it was reviewed at the regional field office in Duluth. Only if that appraiser agreed that the initial valuation was wrong would a second independent appraisal be ordered. By the winter of 1972-1973 property owners were complaining in the press and to each other that the government was frequently undervaluing their land. John Stanz, a Glen Arbor resident appointed as one of Leelanau County’s representatives on the advisory commission, complained that on one 2,000-foot stretch of Lake Michigan appraisals varied between \$132 per foot to \$158 per foot, in spite of the fact the tracts were nearly identical to one another. Charges were also made that park service land acquisition staff were using “high pressure tactics to force quick acceptance of their appraisals.” Property owners countered that they “are entitled to a reasonable time to check comparables after you receive the government appraisal.” The fact was, however, Williamson did not care what comparables property owners came up with. Federal law said he could not pay less than the price set by an independent appraisal, but once that official appraisal was done he did not intend to pay more than that value. “As it is now, the park service makes an offer based on one appraiser’s opinion which may differ with the opinion of another appraiser—

¹² J.A. Martinek to J.E. Williamson, May 10, 1973, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records; Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998; Hugh Beattie, Oral History Interview, September 28, 1994; John F. Pattie, Oral History Interview, November 2, 1998.

¹³ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission Meeting, April 21, 1972; Philip A. Hart to Rogers B. Morton, May 30, 1972, 92nd Congress File, SLBD Records; Benzie County Patriot, January 27, 1972.

and won't even discuss it," complained John Stanz in 1973. "That's probably the biggest problem—the 'take-it-or-leave-it' attitude of the land acquisition program."¹⁴

The inflexibility of the federal land acquisition guidelines was exasperated by the rapid rise in real estate values in the Sleeping Bear area during the early and mid 1970s. Improved property soared in value as the "halo" of national park status raised the profile of the dune country and the prospect of the lakeshore froze development to those sites built upon by December 1964. "Some land values have gone up 300 to 400 per cent since we've been here," commented Superintendent Martinek in late 1975. There were several results of such an explosive increase in value—all of them negative for the park service. Because the real estate market was volatile the lag between appraisal and purchase often led to disputes between the agency and landowners over the true value of the property. Even people who were willing sellers to the agency, or hardship cases who sold early, later adopted the position that they had been cheated out of their land because of the sharp increase in land values during the 1970s. People complained that the park service had picked up a lot of its early lands on the cheap. In reality the agency was in the unenviable position of inflating the very market in which it conducted land acquisitions. The farther the program advanced toward completion the dearer and dearer recreational property within the Sleeping Bear Lakeshore became. The general inflationary condition of the United States economy in the 1970s, when the rapid rise in oil prices and deficit spending spurred by the war in Vietnam caused sharp annual increases in the overall cost-of-living, further distorted estimated land values.¹⁵

Soaring land values soon outstripped the \$19.8 million dollars authorized for Sleeping Bear by Congress. By July 1974, the agency had acquired only 639 tracts of the more than 1,400 needed to complete land acquisition. A new congressional authorization was required before the program could go forward. Two months later Senator Philip Hart continued his strong support for the park by pushing through the Senate Interior Committee a whopping \$38 million dollar increase in the Sleeping Bear land acquisition ceiling. Unfortunately, funding efforts stalled at the authorization stage. The receipt of actual land acquisition funds was held up in the U.S. House Appropriations Committee. Here the vast expansion of the park service in the late 1960s and the runaway inflation of the 1970s created a log jam of new park areas all requiring more funds to continue land acquisition. At a September 1974 meeting of the Midwest Regional Advisory Committee, appointed by the Secretary of the Interior to counsel the park service in the ten state heartland, one of the members complained that the delayed land acquisition programs in the region had "severely damaged" the credibility of the agency "and ridicule is evident." The lakeshore's old enemies were revived by the difficulties. "Hart's Fiasco should have been discarded as a waste of taxpayers money years ago," the Leelanau Enterprise editorialized. Hope was even rekindled that the whole project might be abandoned. Superintendent Martinek advised the regional office "many people think we are folding up."¹⁶

The shortage of land acquisition funds definitely hurt the lakeshore, but far from "folding up" there was serious consideration in late 1973 and early 1974 of expanding the Sleeping Bear

¹⁴ J.A. Martinek to Senator Philip Hart, April 12, 1973, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records; Leelanau County Enterprise-Tribune, April 13, 1972, February 1, 1973.

¹⁵ Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Clipping File 1970-1973, undated newspaper clipping, c.1975; Jack Pattie, Oral History Interview, November 2, 1998.

¹⁶ J.A. Martinek to Regional Director, Midwest Region, July 10, 1974, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records.

park. In June 1973, Lynn Dillin the sole private landowner on South Fox Island was killed while attempting to land a plane on that island. At the time Dillin was involved in discussions with Congressman Vander Jagt and the State of Michigan regarding the sale of his island. South Fox Island is located twenty miles north of North Manitou Island and was never considered for inclusion in the lakeshore by Allen Edmunds' Great Lakes Shoreline Survey. Yet the island possessed the same combination of wild dunes and isolated beaches that made the Manitous a recreation asset. Sleeping Bear Advisory Board members Louis Twardzik and Mrs. Peter Williams proposed that the Nature Conservancy be enlisted to buy the island from Dillin's estate. Following an amendment of the Sleeping Bear organic act, the National Park Service could then repurchase the island for the lakeshore. From a long-term environmental perspective the plan was highly desirable. The problem, however, was the short-run problem that the National Park Service did not have money enough to buy lands within the existing park. Bold leadership within the agency might have seen an opportunity, not an obstacle in that the lakeshore would have to go to Congress to have its acquisition ceiling increased. But bold thinking was lacking. Superintendent Martinek was cool to the idea due to the potential management problems of operating another island. The Northeast Region Office recommended that the South Fox Island proposal not be encouraged by the park service because of the existing shortage of acquisition funds throughout the agency.¹⁷

The first hope of ending the budget impasse came in the spring of 1975, when President Gerald Ford included a \$5.4 million dollar appropriation request in his 1976 budget. That plus some supplemental monies jump-started the stalled land acquisition program late in 1975. By that time frustration was running very high among landowners in the lakeshore area. Particularly disgusted were people who owned undeveloped property in portions of the park designated for public use. Many had purchased their tracts to build vacation or retirement homes. The creation of the lakeshore foreclosed that possibility. But their assets, in some cases life savings, were frozen in the unusable property until the park service could buy the land. They were locked in a position of paying increasingly high taxes on land they could neither use nor sell. In desperation, thirty-one property owners launched a class action suit to win a refund on their property taxes. Five years after the lakeshore had been created over their strenuous objections the worst fears of many landowners had been realized.¹⁸

The shortcomings of the lands program directly affected the land that was destined to become part of the lakeshore. People upset about the park service's non-negotiable offers or the delays in actual acquisition often reacted by opening their lands to logging. For some it was an economic necessity, for others a final gesture of defiance. Superintendent Martinek warned the public that clear-cut tracts would be purchased at a lower price than forested holdings. In June of 1972 the Advisory Commission debated the subject and requested supporting information from land acquisition so that Martinek could dissuade people from denuding their holdings. Not until a year later did Williamson bother to inform the superintendent that because of the small second growth timber on Benzie and Leelanau tracts, real estate in the lakeshore area had too little timber value to effect the final sale price. Of course, this determination undermined Martinek's

¹⁷ Eugene Parisho to Deputy Director, December 18, 1973, Project Correspondence File, SLBD Records; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), October 30, 1973.

¹⁸ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, October 24, 1975; Leelanau Enterprise, November 21, 1974; Detroit Free Press March 31, 1975; Traverse City Record-Eagle September 21, 1971, October 7, 1974, February 7, 1975, April 17, 1975.

public creditability. It was also another example of how the federal government's no negotiation acquisition policy worked to the long-term detriment of the lakeshore by actually encouraging people to have their lands clear-cut for pulpwood before accepting a park service offer. Local residents concerned with the beauty of the Sleeping Bear landscape could justly complain that park service policies were having a negative impact. Many denuded tracts came under lakeshore control littered with the slashings of a hasty logging job, devoid of aesthetic value and real fire hazards.¹⁹

Typical of the frustrations sparked by the land acquisition process were the negotiations with Pierce Stocking. The former lumberman owned one of the largest and most important tracts of private land within the lakeshore. Unlike many small property owners Stocking was in favor of the lakeshore. He even had made many of his purchases with the view of eventually selling to the National Park Service. What he had not bargained on was the protracted battle to create the lakeshore. The long legislative fight had prompted Stocking to seek alternate means to profit from his land, so in 1967 he opened his own dunes park. Sleeping Bear Dunes Park was popular with visitors. His scenic road offered people the only drive-up access to the dunes. Stocking had no intention of standing in the way of the lakeshore but he had made improvements on the land and wanted to be compensated for them. He had waited since 1961 to sell to the government, now that they were willing to buy he intended to get his price—after all, they could not have a viable lakeshore without his property. When the land acquisition staff approached Stocking with a take it, or leave it, offer of \$2.8 million he was angered and dismayed. “The government is taking advantage of every possible hardship,” the gray-haired, lumberman in his late sixties complained, “including the strain of years in order to pick up land at discount prices.” Unlike ordinary summer homeowners Stocking had the clout to arrange a personal meeting with National Park Service Director Hartzog, but the solution they arrived at, to arrange alternate appraisals, fell through. The National Park Service took the veteran lumberman into federal court where he insisted his 2,976 acres were worth \$4.3 million. The case incensed many people who wanted to sell their lands to the government but who were told that acquisition funds had run out. For better part of a year the issue was in the hands of the U.S. District Court of Judge Noel Fox. Finally, a settlement was reached in the fall of 1976. Stocking received about \$3 million for his lands, the day after the payment was delivered he died of a heart attack.²⁰

Nothing came easy at Sleeping Bear, not even the transfer of state lands to the new lakeshore. From the beginning the Michigan Department of Natural Resources had supported the establishment of the park. But during the legislative fight the issue of state park lands and the fears of Sleeping Bear communities about the loss of a tax base for public education had become merged. To help break the log jam that prevented action on the lakeshore issue the Michigan state legislature broke with precedent and pledged to provide temporary payments to the effected communities, beginning when the state park lands were transferred to the park service. While the legislature was nearly unanimous when the tax reimbursements were purely hypothetical, opposition arose in 1973 and 1974 when attempts were made to transfer state lands to the lakeshore. Governor William G. Milliken refused to let the legislature back-out of its

¹⁹ Dean C. Einwalter to Superintendent, May 10, 1973; J.A. Martinek to Director, Northeast Region, May 2, 1973, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records.

²⁰ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, October 24, 1975, SLBD Records; Leelanau Enterprise, October 21, 1976; Detroit Free Press, March 31, 1975; J.A. Martinek to John F. Toepp, Michigan Senate, December 26, 1973, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records; Kathleen Stocking, Letters from Leelanau (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 164.

commitment to the dune communities and he opposed any land transfer until the tax reimbursement was granted. Finally, in December 1974 the state Senate passed a bill providing a total payment of \$2.5 million, to be portioned out over a ten-year period. But no sooner was that problem removed than another issue arose. The original grant of land for the creation of D.H. Day State Park had contained a reversionary clause returning the lands to Day's heirs if the State ever ceased to use them for a state park. Fortunately a suit by the Citizens Council and Leelanau County to trigger the reversion clause was rejected by Federal District Court as well as the Court of Appeals. A last ditch suit to permanently enjoin the State of Michigan from transferring the state park was thrown out by Leelanau County District Court in December 1974. Nonetheless, a suit by the heirs of D.H. Day remained active until 1981. Another issue that had to be settled was oil and mineral rights. To guarantee no future offshore oil drilling the Michigan Department of Natural Resources also agreed to turn over 10,360 acres of bottomlands to the National Park Service. With that final stumbling block removed the State of Michigan, fittingly on April 1, 1975, formally deeded its dune park lands to the national lakeshore. The acquisition brought the size of the lakeshore to over 20,000 acres, about one third of the lands mandated by Congress.²¹

The slow pace of land acquisition at Sleeping Bear Dunes was shared by scores of other national park units planned or created during Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall's expansive administration. Udall had wanted to double the size of the National Park system during his time in office, fifteen years later there were nearly a hundred more park units than when he had taken office. Although Udall's tenure ended in 1968 the park expansion machinery he set in motion kept on running. Between 1973 and 1976 alone there were twenty-three new national park units created. Congress, however, displayed less alacrity when it came to appropriating the funds to allow the parks to actually be established. In 1976, National Park Service Director Gary Everhardt complained that the agency suffered from a land acquisition backlog, which approached the \$500 million mark. While Sleeping Bear had been granted permission to spend an additional \$38 million on lands, it received actual appropriations in annual drips of \$3 million or \$5 million, funds which were exhausted in three or four months. At almost any time in the mid-1970s Jim Williamson's land acquisition staff had more than a million dollars worth of transactions ready to go but for the actual funds to seal the deal. When the lakeshore had been created, the National Park Service promised local stakeholders that they would be dealt with fairly and promptly. "Well, here it is six years later," Superintendent Martinek ruefully observed to a Herald Washington reporter, "and we're still promising them the same things we were then."²²

The obvious solution to the crisis was for Congress to find more funds for the National Park Service. In 1976 both the House and the Senate passed separate bills designed to increase the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Federal off-shore oil leases, which provided the bulk of the money for the fund had burgeoned in value following the OPEC oil embargo in 1973. Since the oil embargo had been a prime catalyst in the national fourteen percent inflation rate that was playing havoc with land acquisition planning, it made sense to many legislators to increase the amount of federal revenues dedicated to conservation. President Gerald Ford, however, understood that runaway federal deficits were a spur to inflation and he insisted that off-shore oil

²¹ State Journal (Lansing), November 20, 1974; Benzie County Patriot, December 11, 1974; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), February 20, 1975, March 21, 1975.

²² Miami Herald, June 1, 1976.

revenues be directed to push the budget more in balance. Fortunately for the National Park Service 1976 was an election year. A compromise was reached between Ford's Office of Management and Budget and the Congress to expand the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The former Eagle Scout and the first President from Michigan, announced the Bicentennial Land Heritage Act in September of 1976, which proposed increasing the fund. The agreement buoyed hopes among the land acquisition staff that they would be able to complete their purchases by the end of 1978. Like every other expression of optimism about land acquisition it was far from accurate.²³

North Manitou Island was a microcosm of the protracted land acquisition program. North Manitou Island was not purchased until 1984, when it could have and probably should have been purchased a decade sooner. The island had been somewhat reluctantly accepted as part of the lakeshore by conservationists and the park service during the highly politicized legislative process. It was largely owned by the William R. Angell Foundation which donated revenues generated from its management of the island's forest and game to a number of small Michigan colleges. The management of the foundation would have been vastly simplified if their title to the remote island could have been turned into several million dollars of endowment investments. Yet like other willing sellers the foundation directors held a much higher estimate of the value of the island than did the National Park Service's contract appraisers. In 1977, the land acquisition staff offered \$4.5 million for the 15,000-acre island, an offer the directors termed an "insult." Like many other land owners the director's assumed that since "the park service made its first offer of purchase," it would be a "matter of negotiations" to close the deal. But no negotiations followed and the purchase hung in abeyance until condemnation proceedings were initiated. A three-judge federal land commission heard testimony from Angell Foundation witnesses that the island was worth as much as \$20 million. When the commission finally presented its report to Judge Noel Fox it was clear that the park service appraisers had under-valued the island. In 1979, the National Park Service agreed to an interim settlement with the Angell Foundation in which the foundation ceased their activities on the island in exchange for a \$3.2 million down payment on their holdings. A final settlement was expected shortly. Instead it was six more years before the purchase was finalized. During that time North Manitou was managed as what one former island resident called a "no man's land." Most private dwellings on the island were closed, it was off-limits to lakeshore visitors and, save for the foundation's caretakers, devoid of human activity. Finally in August of 1984, the Angell Foundation and the park service came to terms and the island was sold for \$12.5 million.²⁴

A generation after the bulk of the land acquisition took place a blanket of bitterness still covers the Sleeping Bear area. Stories of people being forced off their land linger in the conversations of those who continue to live, work, or vacation in the area. These stories are a very real part of the National Park Service's legacy in northwest Michigan. "If you do not come forward and sell us your meadows," a land acquisition officer is reported to have said to an elderly school teacher, "we're going to take all of your property and you're not going to have a place to go to. And your going to take very little money for it because we're going to take what we feel when we get you in condemnation court." The woman in question, Leone Adair stood

²³ Ibid; Benzie County Ad-Visor, September 15, 1976; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), September 28, 1976.

²⁴ Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Clipping File, 1977, undated Detroit News article, SLBD; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), September 10, 1977; Rita Hadra Rusco, North Manitou Island: Between Sunrise and Sunset (n.p.: Bookcrafters, 1991), 140-145.

her ground and retained a portion of her land. Others were intimidated by the government land buyers and accepted offers that later seemed criminally low, especially in light of the escalation of property values.²⁵

The fate of the Joanne and Everett Kittendorf's Lake Michigan summer home is an example of the combination of motives that drove previously satisfied cottage owners to sell to the National Park Service. "A big tall man did come to the door, with a dark suit and sunglasses," Joanne Kittendorf remembered. The acquisition officer threatened, "We'll get your land one way or the other." That demeanor intimidated the couple. "Then we read an article in the paper that said 300,000 people would come up here for the summer. We decided that if the park developed there...it wouldn't be a good place to stay. So we sold to the government." They sold the house they had built in 1959 and 400 feet of Lake Michigan beach land for \$60,000.²⁶

Fear was an important factor which drove Sleeping Bear land acquisition. Williamson and his buyers used the threat of condemnation to "buffalo" some buyers into accepting the government's price. But the climate of fear in which the land sales took place was not all of Williamson's making. The scare tactics of those who opposed the creation of the lakeshore worked so well that hundreds of property owners convinced themselves that they did not want to stay in the area after the establishment of the park. The protections for property owners within the lakeshore so carefully planned by Senator Philip Hart were ignored by some land owners who feared the "feds" were going to take their land one way or another. Fear that their lands were going to be overrun by millions of tourists from Detroit griped some cottage owners. Fear that the park would lead to a rapid escalation in property taxes drove some farmers to sell. Most of the fear-mongers were sincere in their dire predictions for local property owners, although in any real-estate panic unscrupulous dealers can profit from hastily sold assets. One fear easily forgotten today was the fear of losing your summer home to Lake Michigan. The period from the late 1960s to the late 1980s was one of high water levels on the Great Lakes. Scores of lakefront homes literally tumbled into the lake during the 1970s. One antidote to fear of the future was a guaranteed government check. For elderly people or farmers in a marginal situation uncertainty about the future was a constant factor. To sell your property to the government was an alternative that walked right up to the door and made itself available.²⁷

In the popular memory of the Sleeping Bear country the park service looms large as an agent of dispossession, an alien force severing people's roots in the land. Yet the truth of that memory must be balanced by the fact that hundreds of property owners were willing sellers. National Park Service personnel have their own selective memory of land acquisition that requires balance. "It seems that some of the land-acquisition people never understood the principles behind the Park Service," a lakeshore official explained to a journalist in 1990. The lands staff are usually described as "a breed apart" not of the "real park service,"—as if by disassociating the people who made the land purchases from the national lakeshore, the park could be spared the divisiveness of its origins. Yet, the fuzzy and warm park service that gives fireside nature talks and protects bald eagle nestings exists because the Jim Williamsons of the agency acquired the resource. The essence of Sleeping Bear lakeshore is the happy tourists who gather to enjoy spectacular sunsets along Pierce Stocking Drive and the solitary backpackers

²⁵ Elizabeth Edwards, "The Battle for the Bear: An Update," *The Small-Towner* (April, 1986), 42-43.

²⁶ *Detroit Free Press*, December 12, 1995.

²⁷ Elizabeth T. Edwards, "Port Oneida: A Community Slips Away," *Traverse, the Magazine* (March, 1990), 22.

exploring North Manitou Island's dunes and forests. But just as surely it is also a nationalized landscape made available to the many through the sacrifice of the sacred property rights of an unfortunate few. Taking the land is as much a part of what the National Park Service is as is managing the land.²⁸

By the spring of 1977 lakeshore land buyers had managed to secure the bulk of the small private land holdings within the park. Closings had been made on 27,000 acres of land. These acquisitions and the transfer of state holdings brought the total of lakeshore lands to more than half of the 70,000 acres mandated by Congress. This threshold marked a major turning point in the lakeshore's history. With half of the land base under park service administration the way was cleared for the official dedication of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in October 1977. Jim Williamson's name was not mentioned at the dedication ceremony, let alone were he or any of his staff formally thanked or invited to sit with the dignitaries on the stage. No sooner was the dedication completed than the land acquisition officers went back to their tract books and appraisals, the dirty job of making a park continued .

A Sense of Place: The Beginning of Historic Site Management

When Superintendent Martinek first arrived at Sleeping Bear Dunes, the only resource he had to manage were the United States Coast Guard Station buildings at Glen Haven. The buildings had gone surplus after World War II. During the long legislative wrangle over the lakeshore, Martinek would often visit the site while on summer vacation. The picturesque buildings, the glorious swimming beach, and the broad sweep of Sleeping Bear Bay were the images he held of the lakeshore while working at Yellowstone and in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately, by the time the park was created in 1970 the station buildings were in serious disrepair. With no caretaker the grounds had become overgrown and the structures were ravaged by vandals, scroungers, and beer-blasting teenagers. In the fall of 1971, when the lakeshore received its first park ranger, thirty-one year old Dean C. Einwalter, Martinek settled him and his family into a house adjacent to the station, and the ranger began the demanding task of restoring the run-down complex. The station became the lakeshore's interim contact station for visitors to the new area in part because it was picturesque, in part because it was situated in a highly visible location, but also because it was one of the few buildings owned by the park service at Sleeping Bear.²⁹

At an early date historical resources took on a significant role at Sleeping Bear Dunes for the same blend of reasons, timing and circumstance, that had led to the Coast Guard station being selected as the first visitor contact station. Like all of the seashores and lakeshores created in 1960s and 1970s Sleeping Bear fell heir to the lighthouses, life-saving stations, and coast guard facilities that had constituted the first federal presence on the nation's coastal waterways. Unlike other more remote national lakeshores such as Pictured Rocks and Apostle Islands, Sleeping Bear was located astride what was historically one of the busiest marine passage ways in the United States. During the nineteenth century the majority of vessels bound out of, or into,

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998; Benzie County Patriot, December 9, 1971; Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, April 2, 1972.

Lake Michigan had to make their way through the channel between Sleeping Bear Dune and the Manitou Islands. It was not unusual to have more than 100 schooners or steam propellers pass through the Manitou Passage in the course of a day. This legacy, with its tangible remnants of shipwreck sites and lighthouses, was barely alluded to in the early 1960s studies that recommend the creation of the lakeshore. The interim master plan for the lakeshore, however, did at least call for a maritime museum. By the time the lakeshore had been created by Congress in 1970, however, both the public and the National Park Service were more attuned to cultural resources. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which evolved out of the same national desire to save what was best of the American landscape as the lakeshore parks, gave the National Park Service an important new leadership role in the preservation of historic sites. Superintendent Martinek's personality also played a role. He was a hands-on manager with little to manage in the first years of land acquisition. He was a doer, sensitive to criticism that the park service was moving too slow in developing the lakeshore. Martinek was familiar with the outstanding job of preservation and interpretation that had been done with lighthouses and life-saving stations at the first national seashore, Cape Hatteras. He grasped the opportunities for historical interpretation offered by the park's setting and the National Historic Preservation Act and made a long-term commitment to historical resources.³⁰

Martinek's inclination to make an early commitment to historical resources in part emanated from the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission. Preservation, historic and otherwise, was on the minds of the men appointed to represent Leelanau and Benzie counties on the commission. The greatest fear of local residents was that a national park would leave their roads clogged with out-of-state cars and the landscape transformed into tourist honky-tonk strips. One of the first substantive motions passed by the new advisory commission reflected their desire for the park service to use historic preservation to maintain the character of the landscape. At a June 1971 meeting commission members pressed Superintendent Martinek concerning the fate of the buildings on lands purchased for inclusion in the lakeshore. "There are some of the loveliest old barns up in this part of the world that you've ever seen in your life," advised Charles A. Boyer of Manistee. "To me it would be a catastrophe to bulldoze those things down or burn them down." Boyer advocated at least saving the boards from some of the old structures as they were made with planks cut from the hearts of old growth trees, the size of which no longer existed in Michigan. He also encouraged the superintendent to solicit local citizens for artifacts that might be used to interpret the history of the area. Others commented on the value of saving the old Coast Guard and lighthouse structures. At the urging of Leelanau County's Noble Travis the Commission fashioned a motion "that all areas of historic value be preserved such as a farm." The Commission Chair, Carl T. Johnson of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, clarified the motion for the members: "It means to protect all or as much as is possible of the historical value of the Sleeping Bear." When the motion carried on a voice vote Johnson commented: "That's one of the first motions this commission has passed."³¹

Superintendent Martinek wasted little time in acting upon the motion. He enlisted Gordon Charles a writer for the Traverse City Record-Eagle to help encourage the donation of

³⁰ Julius Martinek to Director, Northeast Region, June 27, 1972, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records; Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998.

³¹ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, June 17, 1971.

artifacts and funds for historical exhibits. Funds and materials came in slowly, but it was not the amount or volume which mattered most. In undertaking the effort the lakeshore was carrying out the suggestions of the Advisory Commission and it was for the first time developing a positive relationship with the communities which had so bitterly opposed the park, yet with whom the National Park Service was inextricably bound. The effort struck gold when Martinek identified the Frederickson collection. This was a very large assemblage of photographs, documents, and artifacts largely collected in the Manitou Passage area by Arthur Frederickson, a Frankfort resident. For several years he and his wife exhibited the materials locally in a converted barn. After Arthur Frederickson died the upkeep of the collection became too much for his widow who sold the entire inventory to the Great Lakes Research Center at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Many people committed to the local history regretted the loss of the collection to an out of state institution. Martinek discovered that Professor Richard C. Wright, Director of the Center, was more interested in the photographs and printed materials than he was in the artifacts, which soon became a storage problem for the university. Wright offered to sell the artifact collection to the lakeshore for \$12,000. The Frederickson artifacts were outstanding, including the nameplates of ships renowned in Lake Michigan history, navigation equipment, and life-saving technology indispensable in interpreting the history of the lakeshore's historic maritime buildings. Although the National Park Service had four new national lakeshores in the region, each of which had to interpret the Great Lake's maritime history, they would not come up with the acquisition funds. Public donations, although encouraging, were not enough to make an offer for the collection. Fortunately, in September of 1972 the Spencer family of Traverse City, in memory of their father who had grown up near Point Betsie, presented Martinek with a check for the full amount. Within a matter of months a portion of the collection was on display within the renovated Glen Haven Coast Guard station visitor's center.³²

Nor did Martinek stop there. He successfully solicited the donation of a reconstruction of a nineteenth century U.S. Life Saving Service surf boat. Then, while perusing a list of surplus federal equipment, he discovered a thirty-two foot, self-bailing, motorized Coast Guard lifeboat. At first the regional office was cool to the idea allowing Martinek to put a claim on the boat. "We got two Coast Guard stations, one on the island and one on the mainland," Martinek reasoned. "There is nothing but old ladders and boxes in there. Wouldn't it be great if someone peeked on the window and saw a boat?" That logic secured permission to claim the boat but the lakeshore had no budget to transport it from the surplus depot in Toledo to Grand Haven. Again fortune favored the lakeshore. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources also tried to put a claim on the boat, but all they wanted was its motor. Martinek promised to give them the motor if they would deliver the boat to the lakeshore. In this manner with donations from the public and artifacts salvaged from the scrap heap the lakeshore, at a very early date in its development, built an outstanding maritime history collection.³³

Although only open a portion of the season, the Glen Haven Visitor Center recorded over 7,000 visitors in 1972. The early efforts to preserve and restore for use the Coast Guard stations at Glen Haven and South Manitou Island gave the park service a positive presence in the area. The aggressive collection of maritime history artifacts in a small but significant way helped to

³² Ibid; John D. Spencer to J.H. Martinek, September 25, 1972, "Pinks" files, SLBD Records.

³³ Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998; Charles Parkinson, Oral History Interview, March 2, 1998. Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998; Charles Parkinson, Oral History Interview, March 2, 1998.

bond the intruding federal agency to the isolated communities of northwest Michigan. At the October 27, 1972 meeting of the advisory commission members endorsed Martinek's actions and called for an even more extensive history program. Citing the legislative mandate for the lakeshore to protect "scenic, scientific, and historic features contributing to public enjoyment," two Leelanau County commission members proposed a motion that "money be made available to acquire tools, equipment, buildings and such other facilities as may be needed to set up within the confines of the Lakeshore, an old time farm, a sugar bush, an old saw mill, a lumber camp, and fishing boats and gear for public display and education. The motion carried and the lakeshore collected, as donations were made, items that related to those eras. Among the most significant of these were a personal collection of farm equipment and personal items documenting the early history of South Manitou Island. William Herd, a seasonal interpreter, provided what momentum remained after 1973 in the historical collection effort with a background in environmental education and a passion for history. Herd devoted considerable attention to maintaining and expanding the small boat collection begun by Martinek.³⁴

During the first two years of the lakeshore's existence historic preservation and interpretation played a large role in management activities. Superintendent Martinek's commitment to the lakeshore's maritime history resources laid the foundation for a major outlay of financial resources to maintain a collection of buildings suffering from a generation of neglect and deferred maintenance. The acquisition of the Frederickson collection determined the emphasis of the interpretation program for years to come. Yet while there was a desire among local residents for an even more expansive history program within the lakeshore, the fact was that during the remainder of the decade of the 1970s the National Park Service was strained to meet its most basic land management responsibilities. Dreams of historical and environmental education centers remained just that, and awaited another day.

Interpreting and Managing the Lakeshore

The man who was given the task of preparing the Frederickson collection for public display was Charles R. Parkinson. The New Jersey native was a mid-career park naturalist who in June of 1972 began from scratch the lakeshore's interpretation program. Parkinson had a Master's degree in Geology, which proved useful in interpreting the park's complex glacial history. More important, Parkinson was a resourceful and independent worker. After joining the park in May 1972 he immediately set to work readying the Glen Haven station as an interim visitors center. Pretty much on their own he and Paul "Pete" LaValley, the lakeshore's first seasonal maintenance staff, swept out the decades of bird dung and broken glass to make the building useful. Then they improvised a small set of exhibits, utilizing a small part of the Frederickson collection. So crude was the contact station that when it first opened it even lacked toilet facilities. For two seasons the Glen Haven visitor's center was manned by the first of the lakeshore's seasonal interpreters, Joseph Jackson, a retired public relations man from Empire, Michigan.³⁵

³⁴ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, October 27, 1972.

³⁵ Charles Parkinson, Oral History Interview, March 2, 1998; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, August 8, 1974.

During that first off-season Parkinson began the lakeshore's environmental education programs with local schools. Yet hostility toward the lakeshore still ran high among the teachers, who felt that the park service threatened the overall quality of their schools by compromising the area tax base. It took years of frustrating work to build a network of teachers who would be involved with the park on a continuing basis. He also expanded the historical program by initiating a series of oral history interviews with individuals knowledgeable of the local history and began a collection of historical photographs of the park area.³⁶

The quality of the interpretation program picked up considerably in 1973 when Parkinson was able to open a new visitor's center in a two-story house overlooking Glen Lake. The house had been acquired as part of the lands program and with minor alterations it was made into a very serviceable visitor center. Parkinson and Martinek purchased a stock of defective hollow-core doors and used them as highly effective exhibit panels. The first floor exhibits presented visitors with a view of the kind of park the lakeshore was planned to be as well as with an introduction to the area's glacial history. The second floor was devoted to the Frederickson collection and included the best of the ship name boards and a stunning Fresnel lighthouse lens. Visitation at the new center more than doubled what the interim Glen Haven facility had been able to handle. One of the nicest features of the new center was that it was surrounded by lakeshore land, which allowed Parkinson to make use of a closed road to lay out a one-mile nature trail. During the winter the trail was converted into a popular cross-country ski trail. This made the visitor center a busy location not only during the summer months but also during any weekend during ski season.³⁷

The location of the park's interim headquarters in Frankfort, well south of the lakeshore, was a source of frustration to all of the early employees. While Martinek, of necessity, made his home in Frankfort, he advocated the settlement of the other full-time park staff closer to the resource. There was, nonetheless, a lot of time wasted by the staff "dead-heading" from Frankfort to the more remote Leelanau portions of the park. Dean Einwalter, the first park ranger, particularly felt the logistical problems and isolation. Settled in a rental house near the Glen Haven Coast Guard station, Einwalter and his family were viewed by many locals as unwanted outsiders. His two daughters bore the brunt of hostility at the Glen Arbor school while he had the unenviable task of trying to head-off conflicts between lakefront property owners and visitors asserting the right to stroll on "public" beaches. As more and more properties were purchased Einwalter had to develop a regular inspection patrol to protect against vandalism and unlawful entry. While Einwalter functioned for a time as a Ranger Division of one, he also served as the first maintenance supervisor. Sometimes trying to do too much too fast came at a high cost. With the help of seasonal staff Einwalter took on the task of personally reinstalling over 400 broken window panes at the Coast Guard station. The job was completed, but not before Einwalter had to be hospitalized for inhaling toxic fumes from the torch he used to strip paint from the old windows.³⁸

The anger of many local residents toward park personnel blighted the early years of the lakeshore. Petty harassment in the form of graffiti or intemperate letters was frequent. "The animosity was fierce," recalled Toni Perfect of Leelanau County, "People were just terrified."

³⁶ Charles Parkinson, March 2, 1998; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974, SLBD Records.

³⁷ Ibid; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), July 2, 1973; William Herd, Oral History Interview, August 13, 1998.

³⁸ Superintendent's Annual Report, 1973, 1974, SLBD Records.

For some, acceptance of the lakeshore developed quickly after they understood they would not be overwhelmed by thousands of tourists. Others stoked the fires of resentment for years. Raymond Kimpel, the lakeshore's first Chief Ranger, witnessed an extreme example of this bitterness. He and another park employee stopped to admire a tree on the property of an elderly resident. The man rushed to his garage, took out a chainsaw and cut down the tree. Fortunately, most local people adopted the attitude of a Glen Arbor store owner, "You can't carry bitterness and rancor forever. It's here [the lakeshore], so the best thing to do is build upon it and not make it an albatross upon our necks."³⁹

One of the nagging problems facing Superintendent Martinek and his staff was the lack of development funds for historic preservation, transportation, interpretation, and resource protection. In 1972 some \$242,000 of planning and development money earmarked for Sleeping Bear was lost through across-the-board budget cuts. Martinek's solution was "bootstrapping," a determination to go forward regardless of the lack of staff or budget. The renovation of the Coast Guard station was a case in point. Martinek had no maintenance staff to order to clean out the buildings or clear away some small cedar trees and brush that had grown up between the structures. Instead Martinek grabbed a chainsaw and with the volunteered help of a land acquisition officer he cut down the brush himself. He kept up pressure on the agency to properly fund the lakeshore, but the scores of new parks in the region made each request a hard fight. In 1972, Martinek asked the regional office for a full-time maintenance man, only to be greeted with the question: "What do you need a maintenance man for?" The superintendent, who knew how to make a point emphatically, shot back: "What the hell—what do you need a maintenance man for?" At first the park suffered from a lack of equipment. The lakeshore office had a single typewriter mounted on a borrowed typing stand. When the Frankfort Chamber-of-Commerce needed their typing stand back, the lakeshore had no where to put their only piece of office equipment. For more than a year the park staff had to use their personal vehicles for much of the lakeshore business. Tired of the lack of cooperation he received from the General Services Administration Motor Pool, Martinek set up his own motor pool. He combed the inventories of federal surplus centers in southern Michigan and Ohio. Army surplus jeeps became a temporary means of transportation. Martinek regularly led Parkinson and Einwalter on foraging expeditions to the surplus warehouses and returning with trailers filled with desks, office equipment, shovels, and tents—"anything you could possibly need in setting-up a park"—pulled by a surplus jeep or truck. So successful was Martinek at building his park with surplus equipment that superintendents at Apostle Islands and Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway sought his advice on how to fill their needs.⁴⁰

Day-to-day operations in the early days of the lakeshore were dominated by the delicate job of managing a transition from private to public ownership. All structures which were purchased through land acquisition had to be boarded up. A small number were converted to temporary staff housing, while most were sold to the highest bidder for removal or salvage. Access roads to such properties as well as many of the "two-track" roads improvised over the years by hunters or fisherman had to be closed off to regulate access to park holdings. Off-road vehicles, especially dirt-bikes and snowmobiles, were particularly hard to stop. In December

³⁹ Detroit Free Press, August 10, 1981.

⁴⁰ J.A. Martinek to Mr. Johnson, Interagency Motor Pool, March 3, 1972, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records; Charles Parkinson, Oral History Interview, March 2, 1998; Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998; Jack Pattie, Oral History Interview, November 3, 1998.

1974, Superintendent Martinek, citing the Congressional mandate to “preserve” the area, banned snowmobiles from the lakeshore completely. Signage was the best way to warn users of the restriction as well as to deter visitors from camping on private land or driving up to private residences. Some local residents were quite prickly about tourists who strayed on to private land. One fellow planted his own sign at the head of his drive: “Caution! This farm does not belong to the Federal Gov’t yet, it is privately owned. Anyone caught trespassin’ will be shot! Try me & see.”⁴¹

One example of the lakeshore trying to do too much too soon was the establishment of a branch of the International Youth Hostel at Sleeping Bear in 1974. Superintendent Martinek issued a special use permit to the American Youth Hostel in November of 1973 for their use of an almost new six unit motel near Glen Lake. The relationship, however, got off to a rocky start. Both the Grand Rapids and Detroit chapters alternated between trying to “take charge” of the facility and ignoring it. Further problems were encountered do to the unsatisfactory management of the hostel’s initial managers or “house parents.” Card carrying members of the International Youth Hostel were denied access to the facility in favor of friends of the local managers. Nor was the hostel well received in Leelanau County. Martinek received numerous complaints that the American Youth Hostel was being favored with use of an excellent facility over other groups, more locally based involved with promoting outdoor recreation. Over time, through the involvement of the National Hostel Director, the Sleeping Bear Hostel was placed on a solid footing. Nonetheless, it continued to be a source of problems to the lakeshore management. The hostel was surrounded by large tracks of private land. The Sleeping Bear hostel was popular with cross-country skiers who regularly ignored posted warnings and skied on to private holdings. Pierce Stocking became particularly angry at the way his lands were seemingly being used as a public recreation area at the very time the government was fighting him in court over the true value of his holdings. The fact was the lakeshore had too small a staff and too small of a land base to accommodate the hostel in the mid-1970s. In 1976, the permit of the American Youth Hostel expired and was not renewed.⁴²

The first resource management crisis for the lakeshore was the status of the gull colony on South Manitou Island. The nesting grounds of the herring and ring-billed gulls had been noted in the original Great Lakes Shoreline Survey as one of the reasons for including South Manitou Island in the lakeshore proposal. The colony was believed to have been created in the 1920s with its population swelling in the early 1960s. By the time the lakeshore was created gull populations throughout the Great Lakes region were in decline. Nonetheless, the initial Sleeping Bear Dunes master plan called for the Sea Gull Point area of the island to be a “public use and development area,” which alarmed knowledgeable people that the nesting area might be over-run by tourists. Closer inspection of the problem revealed there was a particularly high mortality rate among juvenile gulls. Initially this was blamed on the presence of motorized vehicles in the area of the nesting grounds. An inspection of the area by the Regional Biologist Max Holden led to an end of the use of cannon nets to capture gull chicks for banding, and a less intrusive approach even by scientists. After acquiring the property at Sea Gull Point in the summer of 1973, the lakeshore

⁴¹ Superintendent's Annual Report, 1974, SLBD Records; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, December 26, 1974; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), July 2, 1977.

⁴² J.A. Martinek to George B. Tiedeman, February 20, 1974; J.A. Martinek to Acting Regional Director, Midwest Region, April 22, 1974; Dean Einwalter to Superintendent Martinek, March 15, 1976, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records.

commissioned a multi-year study of the nesting grounds. The study, conducted by Professor William E. Southern of Northern Illinois University, did lead to plans to provide more isolation from visitors for the colony. The study also indicated that a large part of the colony's decline was from natural predator action. Nocturnal raids by the island's foxes devastated the gull chick population. The study indicated the complexity managing the isolated islands and that management decisions needed to be based on broad based scientific knowledge.⁴³

While natural forces were at work on the Gull colony, there was no doubt, however, that human action was at the heart of the major resource management crisis on North Manitou Island. The Angell Foundation had managed the island as a fishing and hunting preserve for years. As many as 1,500 deer browsed on the island. The only way the 15,000 acre island could support such a heavy population was through the maintenance of feed lots. The foundation's gamekeepers spent over \$20,000 annually to bring in eighty tons of deer feed. The result was a phenomenal hunting ground with as many as 500 deer harvested each fall. Trouble arose in 1979 when the Angell Foundation accepted a down-payment from the park service for the island and suspended all management activities. The National Park Service was under the impression that the foundation had gradually reduced the deer herd through increased hunting and reduced feeding. That was a course of action agreed to by the foundation managers but whereas the park service thought there were only a hundred or so deer on the island there may have been ten times that number. Between 1978 and 1984, when the island's purchase hung in limbo, the deer herd was left to fend for itself. The result was a severe reduction in all understory plant life as the starving animals desperately searched for any source of nutrition. Each year hundreds perished from starvation. "There were dead deer everywhere," commented a 1978 visitor to the island. Critics complained that the National Park Service would have been more humane and less wasteful if they had allowed a special hunt to reduce the herd. But the agency had been down that road at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in 1977. The attempt to organize a special hunt in the former Beaver Basin game preserve had led to lawsuits, confrontations with local hunters, a legacy of bitterness with the community, and a raft of bad publicity. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore printed permits for a special hunt on the island in 1980 but at the last minute the foundation refused permission. After that the lakeshore had to content itself with monitoring the situation. A National Park Service contract with the University of Michigan studied the herd between 1980 and 1983, but there was no intervention. The pathetic details of their report which included finding dead deer in abandoned cottages, where in their last extremities they sought refuge from the winter, and starving deer foraging on piles of dead alewives, were not broadly publicized. Doing nothing on North Manitou became the policy because technically the agency did yet own the island and the plight of the animals was less visible than at Pictured Rocks because the island was all but closed to human intrusion. The result, however, was the same in each instance for the deer—starvation.⁴⁴

What the park service called "letting nature take its course," critics sneered was a policy of doing nothing. A prominent example of this dynamic in action was seen between 1972 and 1974, when abnormally high water levels in the Great Lakes caused an alarming amount of shoreline erosion. Warm winters and strong storms combined with the high water to threaten the

⁴³ Superintendent's Annual Report, 1975, SLBD Records; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, July 3, 1975.

⁴⁴ Rusco, North Manitou Island, 144-5; Theodore J. Karamanski, *The Pictured Rocks: An Administrative History of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore* (Omaha, Nebraska: National Park Service, Midwest Region, 1995), 73-5; Max Holden, Oral History Interview, August 12, 1998.

Sleeping Bear shore by reducing the ice barriers that naturally fortified the base of the dunes. By 1973 the level of Lake Michigan was on an average five feet higher than in 1964. One particularly strong winter storm drove a family from their Sleeping Bear Point home when the waves surged over one hundred feet of beach and washed around the house. “We used to like to lie here at night and listen to the lake pounding on the beach,” one Empire resident remarked, “but when there’s no beach, it’s a horse of a different color.” All along the shore of the park property owners scrambled to devise means to hold back the water. One desperate homeowner in Arcadia, Michigan (outside the lakeshore) dumped several junk cars over the face of the dune to buffer the waves. Superintendent Martinek made clear that such actions would not be tolerated within the park. “We feel that the highs and lows in the Great Lakes water levels are natural and are part of what originally formed the dune country,” he advised land owners. The lakeshore allowed people to take limited protective action. Temporary wooden breakwaters, known as groins, were allowed. The lakeshore itself repaired groins built by the Coast Guard to protect the severely threatened lighthouse on South Manitou Island. By the late 1970s the high water levels had begun to abate and calls for breakwaters and house relocations within the lakeshore receded as well.⁴⁵

The two most important and persistent resource management questions to bedevil the lakeshore in its early years were the Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ plan to modify the mouth of the Platte River and the attempt to determine which lakeshore lands should be managed as wilderness.

The Platte River Controversy

The chain of events which led to the controversy over the mouth of the Platte River, was set in motion during the mid-1960s when thousands of small, shiny fish called alewives began to wash-up on the shores of Lake Michigan. Originally a salt-water fish, the alewife is subject to periodic die-offs on the Great Lakes. Such die-offs were extreme during the 1960s. Lakefront property owners either avoided the shoreline because of the stench of decaying fish or they took on the laborious task of raking the alewives into large piles and burning them with kerosene. The Michigan Department of Conservation’s solution was to introduce a predator voracious enough to eliminate the alewives before they could become a nuisance. Pacific Salmon, particularly Coho and Chinook were the answer. Beginning in March of 1966 Coho Salmon fingerlings were annually placed in the upper Platte River at Honor, Michigan. Unlike other fish introduced into the lakes the salmon could not explode out-of-control because it was difficult for them to breed naturally in Michigan streams. More than 10 million salmon fingerlings were introduced into Michigan waters between 1966 and 1970. In 1969, the Department of Conservation opened the Platte River Anadromous Fish Hatchery at Honor. The location of the hatchery determined that the Platte River would be one of the best fishing spots in Michigan when the salmon matured and returned to the river to try and spawn. Beginning in 1967 “Coho fever” swarmed over the mouth of the little Platte River. The Coho planting program was a great

⁴⁵ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), January 31, 1973, April 18, 1973, July 18, 1973.

success. It helped to stem the tide of dead alewives and it produced an exciting new sports fishing attraction.⁴⁶

The Coho program was undertaken at the same time that the Sleeping Bear Dunes lakeshore plan was twisting in the congressional wind. The unsightly scene of unplanned development and mobs of fishermen at the Platte helped to convince many Benzie County residents that the lakeshore might be a necessary means to control the pace of change. The need for someone to take firm control was established when seven fishermen participating in the 1967 Coho run drowned in Platte Bay when their boat overturned in heavy seas. National Park Service Director George B. Hartzog agreed with the Michigan Department of Conservation that it was “imperative that a facility be made available to fishermen and boaters.” When the lakeshore was created in 1970, the State of Michigan was granted the right to retain a 300 acre tract near the mouth of the Platte in order to develop facilities to manage the sport fishery. By the time Martinek arrived at the newly created lakeshore the Michigan Waterways Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had developed a \$2 million plan to create a major sport fishing marina on the Platte. The river would be straitened and dredged more than a half mile inland and a breakwater would extend 1,000 feet into the lake. The rolling dunes and pine trees at the mouth were to be replaced by a huge paved parking lot.⁴⁷

Environmentalists watched apprehensively but patiently while the harbor plans were being made. They did not want to do anything that would disrupt the coalition in favor of the Sleeping Bear lakeshore bill, so they held their peace until after 1970. Nor was there universal support for the large-scale project within the newly created Department of Natural Resources, which had been formed out of a merger of the Department of Conservation with a number of smaller agencies, including the Michigan Waterways Commission. The staff of the old Conservation Department who opposed the Platte project, however, had to proceed cautiously to avoid setting off a civil war within the newly created agency. Superintendent Martinek also proceeded cautiously. Cooperation with the Department of Natural Resources, which inherited D.H. Day and Benzie state parks, was essential to a smooth transition at Sleeping Bear. The sport fishing and visitor safety issues the harbor proposal sought to address were legitimate concerns for the new lakeshore and had been specifically supported by Director Hartzog. Yet, since the Director had made his comments the lakeshore’s mandate, as reflected in the bill passed by Congress, had changed from being a recreation oriented park to one with a greater emphasis on preservation. The lakeshore’s draft master plan called for the Platte to be managed as a natural area. The Platte River was one of the few natural river mouths on the entire Lake Michigan shore. The action of river current, lake waves, and sand at the Platte was an example in miniature of what the Chicago River and the Kalamazoo River and the Grand River looked like before harbor improvements prepared the way for urban development. The lakeshore had been created in the first place to preserve what was unique and special about the dune country and the Platte River mouth was clearly one of those features. The new superintendent, however, was caught between Director Hartzog’s commitment of the agency to some type of harbor and the

⁴⁶ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, July 6, 1967; Robert Doherty, *Disputed Waters: Native Americans and the Great Lakes Fishery* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 61-2; Bogue, *Around the Shores of Lake Michigan*, 310-11.

⁴⁷ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), July 24, 1971; Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, June 17, 1971, SLBD Records.

congressional mandate to protect the landscape. Little wonder Martinek took a position, which was guarded, but cooperative toward the plans of the Michigan Waterways Commission.⁴⁸

It was the Sierra Club which took the first decisive stand against the Platte River project. While the National Park Service appeared to be waffling on both sides of the issue, the Mackinac Chapter of the Sierra Club, in December 1970, testified before the Michigan Natural Resources Commission that the Platte Harbor proposal threatened the integrity of the new lakeshore. Some of the groups that in the past had been supporters of a strong Sleeping Bear park showed much less resolve. The Michigan United Conservation Clubs was initially split among those who saw the harbor as a boon to sportsmen and those who saw it as an environmental disaster. Ironically, the Sierra Club found itself in unintended alliance with many of the same people who had opposed the creation of the lakeshore and who now wanted to control its development. In June 1971, John Stanz, a Leelanau County representative on the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore Advisory Commission pointedly challenged his fellow commission members to “stand up for something.” Those members representing the Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan Waterways Commission must have squirmed in their seats when he said “if we’re going to have a National Park, let’s have a National Park.” What he did not understand was how “the first thing you are going to do is turn around and make a development in the heart of it.”⁴⁹

The hopeless division over the Platte River harbor between overlapping state and federal agencies made a decisive stand by the National Park Service all the more important to the resolution of the controversy. State officials hoped that the National Park Service, with its national prestige in recreation planning would serve as a “catalyst” to bring the disparate interest groups--boaters, fishermen, and environmentalists--together. A hearing by Michigan’s Environmental Quality Council blasted the harbor plan and chided the National Park Service’s “demonstrated evasiveness, fluctuating thought of mind, timidity of public reaction and lack of dedication to the current concept at this public meeting.” In June 1971, Governor William G. Milliken, who had serious reservations concerning the harbor, wrote to Secretary of the Interior Rogers B. Morton requesting that the park service take a clear stand, for or against the Platte project. Northeast Regional Director Chester L. Brooks drafted a response for the Secretary which expressed the sentiment that it would be “regrettable” to destroy the natural mouth of the Platte when a less sensitive site could be selected in Good Harbor or Sleeping Bear bays. This tepid response did allow Superintendent Martinek to formally express reservations regarding the proposed harbor. Following Martinek’s objections to the waterways commission plan, the focus temporarily shifted to the study of an alternate Platte Bay site, away from the mouth of the river. That seemed to be the solution to a controversy that had already dragged on for four years.⁵⁰

But the Platte harbor plan would simply not go away. Keith E. Wilson, the Director of the Waterways Commission, was an absolute bulldog when it came to the project. The opposition of the Secretary of the Interior and the Governor of Michigan did not deter him. In July 1973, he advised the Michigan Natural Resources Commission that after studying alternate sites his engineers concluded that they must “either build the harbor and marina in the mouth of

⁴⁸ E. Genevieve Gillette, Oral History Interview, Tape 22-24A, Gillette Papers; Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998.

⁴⁹ Daniel Weber to Carl Johnson, January 2, 1972, Minutes of the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, January 18, 1972 and June 17, 1971, SLBD Records.

⁵⁰ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, October 27, 1972; J.A. Martinek to Director, Northeast Region, August 30, 1972; National Park Service Policy Statement Relative to the Proposed Platte River Harbor of Refuge Development, January 21, 1974, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records.

the Platte or not build it at all.” There was no support from the Washington, D.C. office of the park service for stopping the project. The Acting Director, Raymond L. Freeman warned the Northeast Regional Office that while the agency was not pleased with the harbor proposal, there would be no official action against it, “the State has decisions to make, and that if the State decides to complete its development at the site we will accept it.” On the local level, however, the need for park service leadership was acute. The reaction of Noble Travis, an Advisory Commission member from Leland, was typical of many people involved with the Sleeping Bear project. “Let’s stop piddling around with this Platte River harbor thing... We have already gone on record as opposing it at the mouth of the Platte.”⁵¹

The Platte River harbor controversy was a case study of the way issues became entwined and positions entrenched in the Sleeping Bear Country. At its heart it was a conflict between the old style of conservation based on outdoor sports and the new environmentalism focused on slow growth and ecological quality. Either the National Park Service or the Department of Natural Resources could have completely killed the ill-advised scheme. The environmental review process and the waterways commission’s need for federal funds gave the park service a virtual veto, even if it did not control all the land at the mouth of the river; nor was the Department of Natural Resources going to stand up to Governor Milliken’s opposition. Yet, both agencies were also on the record as in favor of some type of facility for public safety and to provide access to the lakeshore’s island units. The 1969 Master Plan for the lakeshore called for a marina/boat launch facility near or within the park. Before the creation of the lakeshore the commercial boats that took visitors and mail to North and South Manitou were based in Leland harbor. But at a public meeting in the summer of 1971 residents of Leland “emphatically” made it clear that they did not want the congestion the ferry service would bring to their town. Wilson and the waterways commission were also in conflict with the village of Leland. In 1969, the waterways commission expanded Leland’s little river mouth port into a formal harbor of refuge by adding a large stone breakwater. Over the years they added a paved parking lot and a boat ramp for sport fishermen. By the time the Platte River controversy was reaching its climax, a number of Leland residents took the waterways commission to court to stop any further expansion of the Leland harbor. Faced with this road block Keith Wilson’s temporary stop-gap was to plan a boat launch at Good Harbor Bay, an area the park service had planned as a roadless, walk-in beach. The Platte River issue drove the Leland harbor issue, and vice versa. The result was probably the best that could be expected, nothing was done at Platte River, within the lakeshore, or in Leland.⁵²

The Michigan Waterways Commission was loathe to give up the ghost of the Platte marina and their plans continued to be debated in public into the mid-1970s. Long before that, however, Superintendent Martinek and the Department of Conservation had worked out a temporary management solution to the issues at the Platte. A drag-line was brought in each fall during the salmon run to keep the mouth of the Platte deep enough for the launching of small fishing boats. Toilet facilities and parking conditions were gradually improved by the National Park Service and through cooperation between the state and township authorities. The National Park Service bought out and closed a restaurant, motel, and hot dog stand located on lakeshore lands adjacent to the Platte. The *ad hoc* solution became permanent when “Coho fever”

⁵¹ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, October 27, 1972.

⁵² Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, October 4, 1973

slackened in the 1980s. Salmon and Steelhead runs became popular all along the Lake Michigan shore as the hatcheries expanded their release locations. Although the mouth of the Platte remained one of the busiest locations in the lakeshore, it was also one of the most beautiful.⁵³

Planning a Wilderness

Like the controversy over the Platte River harbor the issue of wilderness designation at Sleeping Bear Dunes was another case of the National Park Service lagging behind the public's environmental consciousness. The wilderness designation process at the lakeshore presents a history similar to that which took place at scores of other park service units during the early 1970s, with the agency taking a timid approach to designating lands as "wilderness" and the public forcing the park service to greatly expand its initial proposals to nearly double the protected acreage. The wilderness designation process also became another line of battle in the struggle between the National Park Service and a core of local stakeholders. Having failed to stop the creation of the lakeshore, opposition groups looked to wilderness restrictions as a way to control the pace of change brought by the new lakeshore.⁵⁴

In 1964, after a generation of agitation by a progressive coalition of conservationists, Congress passed the Wilderness Act. This act created a means to designate and protect from intrusion large tracts of roadless land. It specifically ordered the Secretary of the Interior, within ten years of the act, to review every roadless area in the National Park System of at least 5,000 acres in size for possible inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Public Law 91-479, which created the lakeshore park, specifically set a four-year deadline for the Secretary to evaluate the Sleeping Bear area for eligible wilderness areas. Undertaking that review was one of the first and most important planning initiatives of the new lakeshore park.

The wilderness review took place within the context of a preliminary effort to revise the lakeshore's master plan. In 1968, when passage of a bill authorizing a Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore was still very much in doubt, the National Park Service prepared a master plan for the proposed project. The goal of the plan was to "preserve this portion of Lake Michigan shoreline for the inspiration, education, recreational use and enjoyment of the public, while at the same time stabilizing private development within the area." The plan was a throwback to the "can-do" Kennedy-era with large campgrounds and a wide variety of recreational developments to facilitate: "touring or driving for pleasure, bicycling, hiking, riding, nature walks, dunemobile riding, canoeing, and snowmobiling." Environmentalists in favor of the proposed lakeshore were very concerned that the "heavy use" called for in the plan would threaten "fragile land like sand dunes." "Well, let's be still about it," counseled Genevieve Gillette, "and see how we come out." Heedless of such concerns park planners went on and designed beach facilities at Good Harbor Bay and Glen Haven that would have included bathhouses, locker rooms, and food concessions. There was no mention of wilderness areas within the lakeshore, save perhaps for the plan to encourage "primitive camping" on North Manitou Island. But even in the case of that island the plan was heavy handed with the provision

⁵³ J.A. Martinek to Director of the Northeast Region, August 30, 1972, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records.

⁵⁴ Richard West Sellers, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 192-5.

to improve the island's landing strip to accommodate small commercial aircraft. "Many points noted in the plan are still valid," Superintendent Martinek noted in 1976, "but experience and events have changed some of the original thinking." More than anything else the wilderness review revealed the shortcomings of the master plan.⁵⁵

Superintendent Martinek began the wilderness review in 1972. Initially he was dubious of the process. Like most National Park Service staff, Martinek's understanding of wilderness was shaped by his years of working in the vast open spaces of the mountain west. "As we see it we have no area that will qualify as wilderness," he confided to the Northeast Regional Office. "Both the islands and the mainland have been extensively logged by man." Also discouraging to the Sleeping Bear staff were the wilderness planning guidelines prepared by Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel Reed. He warned the park service not to create wilderness areas "at the expense of losing the essential management prerogatives that are necessary to fulfill the purposes for which the areas were originally intended." This caused a bit of a dilemma for the lakeshore, for although it had originally been envisioned as a recreational park, the final bill that passed Congress placed a greater emphasis on preservation of the Sleeping Bear Dunes area. Wilderness designation was a clear-cut way to try to prevent large areas of the lakeshore from being changed by recreational use. The risk that park planners feared, however, was that if too large a portion of the park was managed as an undeveloped wilderness then the thousands of peak-season visitors to the lakeshore would all be funneled into the few remaining non-wilderness areas, creating congestion and a heavy impact on a small area. In the end the lakeshore staff, with help from the Denver Service Center, sorted out the proper way to define wilderness and how to envision a low-impact park. The lakeshore's wilderness study team identified six areas, North and South Manitou Islands, the Platte River area, the Otter Creek area, the Sleeping Bear Plateau, and the Pyramid Point—Good Harbor Bay area, as all having a high potential of being wilderness units.⁵⁶

The potential wilderness areas totaled more than 35,000 acres, better than half of the lakeshore. Within the agency it was debated that this might be too much wilderness for such a high-traffic area. When the preliminary recommendations were made the proposal was pared down to three areas, North and South Manitou Island and Otter Creek, a total of 26,060 acres. As mandated under the Wilderness Act a public hearing was held to solicit a public response to the preliminary recommendation. The hearing was held on July 12, 1974 at the Beulah Veterans of Foreign Wars hall. John C. Preston, a veteran National Park Service manager, served as the hearing officer. Better than 200 people attended the hearing and, not unexpectedly, the overwhelming majority was in favor of including a much larger proportion of the lakeshore in the wilderness proposal. What was surprising at the hearing, however, was the way in which the antagonists in the long fight over the creation of the lakeshore found themselves in reversed roles. The Citizens Council, which had for nearly a decade argued that no federal protections were needed in the Sleeping Bear area, put forth a plan for all six of the potential wilderness areas to be recommended to Congress for designation. On the other hand E. Genevieve Gillette,

⁵⁵ National Park Service, *A Master Plan For Proposed Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* (Philadelphia: Northeast Regional Office, National Park Service, 1968), 37-8; E. Genevieve Gillette, Oral History Interview, Gillette Papers, Tape 24, B-11; J.A. Martinek to B.A. Honor, November 18, 1976, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records.

⁵⁶ J.A. Martinek to Director, Northeast Region, December 7, 1972, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records; National Park Service, *Wilderness Recommendations: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan* (Denver: National Park Service, 1974), n.p.

the emeritus President of the Michigan Parks Association and the tireless crusader for federal protection of the dunes since 1961, opposed the inclusion of the Platte River area as wilderness. Instead she favored a nature center at the mouth of the river and the use of the area for environmental education. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, also consistent supporters of National Park Service management of the Sleeping Bear, opposed the wilderness plan. Instead they supported designating only South Manitou Island as wilderness. Among other things, they were concerned that wilderness status would prevent the artificial maintenance of the deer herd on North Manitou Island. These old-line conservationists were, however, out of step with the majority of individuals and organizations responding to the wilderness proposal. Out of 479 total responses 419 called for more, not less wilderness protection.⁵⁷

In spite of the overwhelming response at the public hearing the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission voted to recommend only three areas for wilderness designation: the Manitou islands and the Otter Creek area. Particularly incensed by this rejection of the popular will was Mrs. Peter Williams of Traverse City, the only woman on the commission. She strongly favored all six potential wilderness areas be designated. Williams took the fight to the Michigan Natural Resources Commission, which was scheduled to hold a public meeting in August 1974 adjacent to the lakeshore at the Sugar Loaf Resort. The meeting was a chance for environmentalists, led by the Sierra Club, to lambaste the Department of Natural Resources recommendation that only South Manitou Island be designated a wilderness. “Frankly we were dumfounded that DNR would recommend less wilderness than the National Park Service,” complained the Sierra Club’s spokesperson. Expressing the fervor for wilderness that was typical at the meeting was an Ann Arbor man who predicted that “those areas designated wilderness now may well be the only such shorelines in Michigan open to the public by the year 2000.”⁵⁸

Behind the boom for a largely wilderness park was a conscious desire on the part of Leelanau County residents to constrain the development of a lakeshore recreation area. The Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune encouraged support for a broader wilderness designation by reminding its readers “the main idea behind additional wilderness area [sic] is to preserve some of the most lovely and fragile areas of the Lakeshore against recreational use and use by campers.” Mrs. Williams blatantly based her support for more wilderness on the grounds of preventing a “huge mass of visitors” from ruining the area. What was not appreciated by these pragmatic supporters of wilderness was that in order for some of the mainland wilderness areas, such as the Pyramid Point-Good Harbor unit, to be designated wilderness the National Park Service’s condemnation authority would have to be extended to purchase the non-federal lands within the units. Only with a solid block of federal land ownership would it be possible to close private access two-tracks and make the area truly roadless. With this proviso the National Park Service recommended to Congress that six wilderness units, totaling 35,060 acres be designated at Sleeping Bear. The process ended more in a whimper than a clear-cut result because at the time the National Park Service did not yet own most of the land in question and neither the executive nor the legislative branch was disposed to move quickly on the recommendation.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, July 19, 1974; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), August 10, 1974.

Nonetheless, the most important and far-reaching management decision that would ever be made at Sleeping Bear had taken place.⁵⁹

Master Plan Revisions

“I believe that decisions on wilderness designation should not be made in isolation,” wrote Congressman Guy Vander Jagt, “but should reflect the overall management plan and development program for the Lakeshore.” The congressman very succinctly summarized the lesson that Superintendent Martinek drew from the controversy over the mouth of the Platte and the wilderness designation process. The Sleeping Bear master plan was badly in need of revision. Instead of acting as a guide to important long-range policy decisions it was largely superfluous because it did not reflect the type of park the public wanted and Congress authorized. South Manitou Island was a good example of how out of touch the 1968 report seemed in the mid-1970s. During the wilderness debate all parties agreed on only one part of the lakeshore being designated a wilderness, South Manitou Island. Yet, the master plan called for a lodge to be built there and visitors to be carted about the island on roving minibuses. At the Michigan Natural Resources Commission hearing on wilderness Commissioner Carl T. Johnson (also a member of the lakeshore Advisory Commission) called for the outdated plan to be changed. In the autumn of 1974 the lakeshore began the process of revising its master plan.⁶⁰

A master plan development contract was established with the National Park Service’s Denver Service Center to spearhead the creation of a new document. On September 20, 1974 lakeshore staff and representatives of the Denver Service Center held a public meeting at the Beulah VFW hall. The goal of the meeting was to gather public responses prior to drafting a planning directive for a new plan. “The original Master Plan needs to be scrapped entirely,” was a common refrain from the public. Three issues dominated the discussion, the stalled land acquisition program, the wilderness proposal, and the location of the legislatively mandated “scenic parkway.” Wilderness continued to be touted as a way to prevent “a high density recreation area.” But it was the scenic parkway proposal that clearly emerged as the most important unresolved issue. Objections were raised as to both the need for the parkway as well as its proposed location.⁶¹

The scenic parkway had been added to the Sleeping Bear proposal in the wake of Senator Hart’s initial proposal to include large portions of the inland lake district adjacent and south of the dunes in the national lakeshore. The idea of the parkway was to provide vistas and corridors from which the natural history of the area could be interpreted to visitors, as well as to control the anticipated flood of summer visitors to the lakeshore. The exact right-of-way of the scenic roadway was not made clear for several years after the authorization of the lakeshore. Finally, in August of 1973 the Federal Highway Administration began an on the ground survey to stake-out the center line for the new road. Unfortunately, before the surveyors could complete the northern portion of the parkway they exhausted the survey budget. It was several years before the exact

⁵⁹ Ibid; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, August 8, 1974; Wilderness Recommendation: Sleeping Bear Dunes, n.p.

⁶⁰ Congressman Guy Vander Jagt to Noble Travis, April 16, 1976, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records; A Master Plan For Sleeping Bear Dunes, Proposed National Lakeshore, 37; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), August 10, 1974.

⁶¹ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), September 21, 1974; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, September 26, 1974.

route of the parkway was determined but even then there were no land acquisition funds allocated to bring the right-of-way into federal ownership. For years the scenic road existed as a question mark, in the worried minds of landowners along its right-of-way and on the optimistic planning maps of the National Park Service.⁶²

The scenic parkway was one of several proposed lakeshore developments which promised a major impact on the nearby Benzie and Leelanau County communities. In 1972, those counties' planning commissions contracted with Chicago-based consulting firm Wilbur Smith & Associates to prepare a report to help local governments develop the zoning and planning necessary to absorb the environmental and economic impacts of the new lakeshore. The National Park Service contributed \$25,000 to the study and while not bound by its findings, neither could the lakeshore easily ignore the results. The heart of the Wilbur Smith study, which was completed in April of 1974, was zoning recommendations for the neighboring communities. The report did, however, critique several features of the lakeshore master plan, especially the location of the visitor center off the scenic parkway in the highlands south of Glen Lake. The Wilbur Smith study also questioned the desirability of undertaking major road building effort like the new parkway, with all of its attended damage to the environment, until it was clear that lakeshore traffic patterns necessitated a new circulation system. The consultants also advised that if the traffic became heavy it might make better sense to adopt a mass transit solution to lakeshore circulation. These recommendations had an important long-range impact on the lakeshore. In the short run the Wilbur Smith study gave momentum to calls for a heavily revised master plan and the need for some new thinking at Sleeping Bear.⁶³

The promise of a new master plan conditioned almost every policy statement made by Superintendent Martinek between 1974 and 1977. Questions about the scenic road, the fate of South Manitou Island, the wilderness recommendations, the location of the permanent visitor's center all were qualified with the statement that those issues were being "reviewed and reconsidered" by the National Park Service. The fact was, however, that for three years the master plan revision was stuck on "hold" by a shortage of funds. The scores of new national parks created in the 1960s and 1970s were all competing for scarce development funds. At Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore their revised master plan gathered dust because of an almost complete absence of funds to carry out its grand designs. The Sleeping Bear master plan did not advance beyond the very preliminary Planning Directive stage. Part of the problem was that the lakeshore's much delayed land acquisition program had still not completed its work and Superintendent Martinek was constrained by the small amount of actual acreage under his control from leveraging planning and development funds. Those requests he did send to Philadelphia encountered another problem. As the nation prepared to celebrate the Bicentennial of American Independence the Northeast Region of the National Park Service naturally had to undertake significant capital expenditures to prepare its large number of historic parks for the anticipated surge of visitors. Even though Sleeping Bear Dunes had been shifted to the Midwest Region in 1974 it and other newly created lakeshores had to wait for additional resources and a

⁶² "U.S. to Begin Flagging for Scenic Road," undated newspaper clipping, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore clipping file, c.1973; Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, July 19, 1974, SLBD Records.

⁶³ Richard Miller, et al, Environmental and Economic Impact of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (Chicago: Wilbur Smith & Associates, 1974); J.A. Martinek to Regional Director, Mid-Atlantic Region, January 21, 1974, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records.

change of priorities. "I do not really hold too much hope that a new master plan will be done soon," confided Fred Kass, the chief of the park service's Planning and Development Division.⁶⁴

The very public slowdown in lakeshore planning and development, coming on the heels of the protracted land acquisition process dealt another blow to the National Park Service's tarnished image in northwestern Michigan. Yet behind the scenes Superintendent Martinek did a very good job keeping the lakeshore moving forward by putting together several of the internal documents that would form the foundation for a new master plan. In February of 1976, the lakeshore completed its new Statement For Management, a summary of the objectives, planning requirements, legal constraints and influences on the management of the lakeshore. Charles Parkinson completed an Interpretive Prospectus, which laid out a visitor use plan for the lakeshore. This document recommended several important changes in visitor planning including removing the location of the proposed Maritime Museum from South Manitou Island to the Glen Haven Coast Guard Station. Yet such draft documents were no substitute for having an approved plan that managers could use as a blueprint for actions which effected the entire lakeshore. Besides, by 1975 the Sleeping Bear staff was fully engaged with the day-to-day challenges of trying to meet the needs of more than 700,000 annual visitors.

Taking Charge

The pace of the National Park Service's management of Sleeping Bear Dunes picked up appreciably between 1975 and 1976. The transfer of state park holdings in April of 1975 and the acquisition of the Stocking lands in the fall of 1976 at last gave to the lakeshore staff large blocks of recreational land to manage. Emergency development funds allowed the park service to undertake some modest improvements to the campgrounds at D.H. Day and Platte River. But the shortage of regular development monies and the lack of a viable master plan ensured that any improvements were minimal. Even picnic tables had to be borrowed from the state for the first season of park service ownership. The Stocking tract posed several problems, the most persistent of which was controlling vehicle access. The old lumberman's lands were crisscrossed with dirt two-track trails favored by hunters and off-road vehicle users. The closing of these roads and the park service's attempt to restrict access to unofficial camping grounds near Aral and Good Harbor Bay were unpopular with some local residents. Complaints also arose from campers when the park service, in keeping with system-wide standards, removed the electric outlets at the lakeshore campgrounds. Holiday weekends, particularly Memorial Day, found the lakeshore unprepared for the flood of visitors and the frequency of incidents related to alcohol, drugs, and attendant disorderly conduct. It was several years before the ranger division was able to manage the campgrounds without the assistance of local sheriff's departments. The inadequate size of the lakeshore staff and development budget irked local residents already opposed to the lakeshore. In May 1977, Congressmen Elford A. Cederberg and Guy Vander Jagt prodded Assistant Secretary

⁶⁴ J.A. Martinek to Pam Dow, January 18, 1974, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records; Karamanski, *The Pictured Rocks*, 66-8; *Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune*, October 21, 1976.

of the Interior Robert Herbst to accelerate the flow of resources to Sleeping Bear. Within a week \$150,000 was found to improve the roads at the Platte River campground.⁶⁵

When the agency acquired the state and Stocking lands it also acquired several popular visitor service concessions. With no viable master plan and little in the way of a development budget Martinek was loath to eliminate any existing visitor services. The most longstanding of these park businesses was the Dunesmobile Ride, which had been offered to visitors continuously since 1935. Louis Warnes, son-in-law to D.H. Day, the grand patriarch of Glen Haven, had founded the business. His thirteen Ford pickup trucks had been modified to carry fourteen passengers on a thirty-five minute tour from Glen Haven to the crest of the dunes. Between 50,000 and 55,000 visitors annually availed themselves of the ride. The problem with the dunesmobile ride was the clay and gravel road, which Warnes had designed and maintained to get his vehicles across the deep sand of the dune. The dune vehicles were also a visual intrusion for hikers. Martinek liked Warnes and felt he ran a "class operation." From 1975 through 1978 Warnes continued the dunesmobiles as a concession on a special use permit. Also continued on that basis was a snack shop and souvenir store at the base of the dune climb operated by the Warnes family. "We are quite certain that long-range planning will not include the dune climb concession," Martinek confided to the regional office, but this site was also continued on a special use permit with only a slight reduction in the scale of the souvenir shop. The dunesmobile ride and the concession stand were popular and profitable businesses and were long an established part of the Sleeping Bear summer season experience. Many of the junior members of the lakeshore staff wanted the National Park Service to move decisively to close the ride. Martinek, however, moved cautiously, so as to avoid "rocking the boat" and causing "local area and public relations problems for the National Park Service."⁶⁶

The concession on South Manitou Island was both less profitable and less visible than those at the mainland dunes. It was a small commercial marina with a restaurant and a small grocery store. A commercial vehicle tour also operated on the island. In 1974, the lakeshore acquired the marina property. For several years the shadow of uncertainty hung over the future of the marina. If the master plan was going to be implemented as it was originally conceived, with a lodge and motorized tours on South Manitou then the marina development was a long-term asset. On the other hand, if Congress accepted the wilderness proposal then a commercial marina might not be needed in the long term. While these issues were undecided Superintendent Martinek attempted to keep the marina concession operating on a special use permit. The marina on the remote island was a marginal operation at best and attempts on the part of the contractor to expand the range of their operations were met by the superintendent's reminder "the island is scheduled for wilderness, therefore we do not desire to build up the public usage." In 1976, because it looked likely that the wilderness plan would prevail and Martinek granted what he anticipated would be a final three-year extension of the special use permit. However, in 1979, the lakeshore management elected not only to issue another permit but also to rehabilitate the entire

⁶⁵ Superintendent's Annual Report For 1975: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, SLBD Records; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, May 12, 19, 1977.

⁶⁶ J.A. Martinek to Regional Director, Midwest Region, August 1, 1975 and February 19, 1976, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records.

marina-restaurant complex for use by day trippers to the island. Even the motorized island tour was expanded through the use of dunesmobiles from the defunct Warnes concession.⁶⁷

Pierce Stocking's Sleeping Bear Park presented another type of management challenge. The scenic drive that Stocking had laid out through the woods and out to the top of the dune was very popular with visitors. Initially Superintendent Martinek opposed keeping the Stocking road open after the lakeshore acquired the tract in the fall of 1976. At public hearings environmental groups had persuaded the park service to include this land in a wilderness zone, which of course meant the road had to be closed. When the ramifications of the wilderness policy were announced to the Sleeping Bear Advisory Commission the local members exploded in outrage. They thought Stocking's park had been one of the highlights of the area and a "key to the future." It was the easiest way for senior citizens and others unable to get out and hike on the dune to and see the best views of both Sleeping Bear and Glen Lake. Commissioner John Stahlin, speaking with great emotion, accused the park service of once more "throwing the people out." Superintendent Martinek, however, was critical of the Stocking's road, which he thought was too steep and laid out over fragile dune terrain. Martinek eventually settled for a compromise. He closed several portions of the road, including a loop, which went out over the dune. The blacktop road was then patched and opened to the public. The lakeshore was influenced in this decision by the desire of the Washington office of the National Park Service to have a marquee feature of the park named in memorial of Sleeping Bear's legislative founder. That political imperative settled the future of the scenic drive that was then opened to the public as the Philip A. Hart Trail. The opening of the road without Stocking's former \$5.00 per car charge was a huge boost to the park service's image in northwestern Michigan.⁶⁸

Another image boost, as well as a much needed helping hand to the lakeshore's strained maintenance staff, was the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC). The program was a Great Society throwback to the New Deal's renowned Civilian Conservation Corps. Operated on a much more modest budget and administered through colleges and universities rather than the Department of Defense, the YCC played a quiet but important role in the new national parks of the 1960s and 1970s. At a time when staffing and development were severely constrained the YCC undertook vital, if mundane, tasks at parks like Pictured Rocks, Cuyahoga Valley, Indiana Dunes, and Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway. Superintendent Martinek, whose youth on the streets of Cleveland was turned around by summers in the Sleeping Bear area, was especially supportive of the YCC concept. In the summer of 1976 the YCC program at Sleeping Bear was initiated by moving a contingent of fourteen enrollees into the former motel that had been used as the American Youth Hostel. A second YCC camp was operated on South Manitou Island where a former warehouse had been converted into a dormitory. The YCC program was responsible for a variety of important tasks, not the least of which was the assembly of 400 picnic tables and the scraping of the lakeshore's historic Coast Guard lifeboat. On South Manitou Island the YCC rebuilt an historic boardwalk, removed barbed wire and fence posts from abandoned farms, and cleared the old settlers cemetery of overgrown vegetation. Among the least pleasant tasks performed by the YCC was the cleanup of beaches fouled by alewives. An added bonus of the

⁶⁷ Minutes of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Staff Meeting, January 28, 1976, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1979, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, SLBD Records.

⁶⁸ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, October 24, 1975, SLBD Records; William Herd, personal communication, November 29, 1999; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), June 4, 1977.

YCC program was to boost the image of the lakeshore in Benzie and Leelanau counties. The program enrolled exclusively boys and girls from northwestern Michigan.⁶⁹

The Advisory Commission

Public Law 91-479, the lakeshore's organic act, specified the formation of a citizen's advisory commission to counsel the National Park Service on the management of Sleeping Bear Dunes. The first such advisory commission was created in 1961 as part of the Cape Cod National Seashore, and citizen's commissions became a feature of all of the shoreline recreation areas created during the 1960s and 1970s. Like these other commissions the Sleeping Bear Advisory Commission was a purely consultative body and had no decision-making authority. It was composed of individuals appointed by the State of Michigan, Leelanau County, and Benzie County. There was no compensation for service on the commission. The commission met for the first time with National Park Service Director George Hartzog on March 9, 1971 in Washington, D.C. After that virtually all meetings were held near the lakeshore on a quarterly basis.⁷⁰

The most important function of the commission was to serve as a forum to inform the public of issues before the lakeshore management team, and to allow for comment on park service actions by individuals with roots in Michigan and the communities adjacent to the park. The commission fulfilled this function well on an issue like the preservation of the Sleeping Bear area. The commission usually advised the National Park Service to move forcefully to protect the lakeshore from outside intrusions such as the Platte River harbor, which the commission strongly opposed. The commission offered very farsighted advice to Superintendent Martinek regarding historic agricultural resources within the lakeshore. With inholders like John D. Stanz and Frank C. MacFarlane among the original commission members, the park service was guaranteed that the commission would serve as a vehicle by which the land acquisition program would be critiqued and monitored. In 1974 and 1975, when the lakeshore had run out of land acquisition funds, the commission played a substantive role by lobbying the Michigan congressional delegation to raise the acquisition ceiling and to shake loose appropriations. Again in 1977, direct lobbying by commission members led to a critical increase in development funds for the lakeshore.⁷¹

Although no Sleeping Bear superintendent ever said as much, the Advisory Commission could occasionally be a thorn in the side. At the October 24, 1975 meeting of the commission Superintendent Martinek was forced, for better than two hours, into the familiar bureaucratic posture of "flak-catcher." Noble Travis of Leland served as chair of the commission at the time. The lack of action on land acquisition had strained relations between the lakeshore and the commission. Chairman Travis repeatedly "rebuked" Martinek, demanding a date when the new acquisition funds would be released and threatening "if they had to pull the information out of him, they would do it." At one point, "Chairman Travis told Mr. Martinek he had done a lousy

⁶⁹ Charles Parkinson, Oral History Interview, March 2, 1998; Superintendent's Annual Report, 1976, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, SLBD Records; Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998.

⁷⁰ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, March 9, 1971, SLBD Records.

⁷¹ John B. Daugherty to Guy Vander Jagt, April 30, 1974, Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, April 26, 1974, SLBD Records; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, May 19, 1977.

job of management.” Several commission members congratulated Travis for his “great speeches.” The tenor of the meeting changed completely, however, when Carl T. Johnson, a member of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission, arrived late. While no rubber stamp, Johnson understood the practical problems with managing a conservation project. He advised the commission that “now was not the time to irritate the situation anymore than it already was” and he announced that he had recently been in contact with Congressman Vander Jagt and that the funds would be arriving soon.⁷²

Most meetings of the commission were not so confrontational and the mere existence of the forum provided a means by which disagreements and irritations with the lakeshore could be voiced in a cordial and cooperative setting. The Frankfort and Leland press covered the meetings so that the announcements and debates of the commission meetings were shared with the people of northwestern Michigan. During the 1970s the Advisory Commission helped to shape the lakeshore that exists today by its attention and advocacy on issues such as the Platte River, the scenic parkway, land acquisition, and wilderness designation. While many of the members made a distinct contribution to the lakeshore Carl T. Johnson of Cadillac played a special role. As a member of the Natural Resources Commission he acted as a very effective liaison between the lakeshore and the Department of Natural Resources. Johnson was also respected throughout the state as the leading advocate of sportsmen’s interests. An enthusiastic hunter himself, Johnson knew how to bring the fish and game community’s considerable political clout to bear. In 1979, he used that influence on the lakeshore area’s congressional representatives to secure funding to improve park campgrounds. He was an important asset to both Superintendent Martinek and his successor, Donald R. Brown.

Martinek Retires

In 1976, the lakeshore’s permanent staff doubled with the addition of five new full time positions; a Chief Ranger, a District Ranger, Facility Manager, Administrative Clerk, and a Maintenance Mechanic. The park looked like it was finally coming together. The land acquisition program had finally given the lakeshore staff a resource they could protect and interpret. Plans were underway for the formal dedication of the lakeshore in 1977. But despite these optimistic developments 1977 was a year of frustration and disappointment for Superintendent Martinek.⁷³

In the spring of 1977, Julius Martinek was relieved of his responsibilities as lakeshore superintendent. Martinek was suffering from high-blood pressure. His doctor ordered him to “get away from the office for awhile.” A hands-on superintendent, Martinek had been working especially hard in the two years following the turn-over of state park lands. He liked his staff to show initiative and he could be an “in your face” administrator if he did not think the results measured up to his high expectations. He himself had to take considerable abuse in his dealings with local residents, the Advisory Commission, and the press. That after getting Sleeping Bear

⁷² Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, October 24, 1975, SLBD Records.

⁷³ Superintendent's Annual Report, 1976, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, SLBD Records.

up, off the ground and nearly thirty years with the agency, Martinek needed a medical leave was not surprising.⁷⁴

Unfortunately, Martinek also left Sleeping Bear under the cloud of an Inspector General's Office investigation. The roots of this problem were firmly set in the very "bootstrapping" style that allowed Martinek to be so successful in establishing Sleeping Bear Lakeshore. Over the years the lakeshore had acquired a bewildering array of surplus federal equipment: trucks, jeeps, tents, hand tools, etc. On one occasion Martinek acquired ten aluminum aircraft wing tanks on the expectation that someday they might be useful building a floating dock. In addition to acquiring odd bits of surplus equipment, Martinek was a master of using the material as trade or barter with non-federal agencies. With this in mind he sometimes acquired items for which the lakeshore had no immediate need. In addition to the government surplus there were also a lot of items salvaged from lakeshore properties acquired and slated for demolition. Furnaces, refrigerators, and stoves, while generally removed by previous owners or sold at bid, were sometimes left for use by the lakeshore to prepare quarters for seasonal employees. Around the park, in barns, garages, and most especially at the Empire Air Force base the lakeshore had a large inventory of surplus items in storage. At the other Great Lakes parks and in the Regional Office the word went out with a nod or a wink, that when you visit Sleeping Bear make sure you get a tour of "all the neat stuff Marty's got up in storage." Martinek's interest in this material menagerie was both professional and personal. Unfortunately, over the years of "bootstrapping" and using his own vehicles, the line between items he had acquired on his own and those he acquired through or for the lakeshore became blurred. In the spring of 1976, a disgruntled member of the lakeshore staff filed a formal complaint against the Martinek with the Regional Office charging him with misappropriation of government equipment.⁷⁵

Superintendent Martinek was veteran employee of the park service with an outstanding leadership record. He had a lot of friends and colleagues in the leadership of the agency, however, the staff of the lakeshore sometimes blanched under the paternalism of his "old park service" administrative style. The charges against Martinek took on greater gravity when the issue was referred to the Inspector General's office in the Department of the Interior. After being left to make do as best he could for so many years, Martinek was aggravated by all of the sudden attention from Omaha and Washington, D.C. In disgust over the handling of the issue, depressed by personal matters, and beset with health problems Martinek retired from the National Park Service. Not for the first time in the history of Sleeping Bear, that which began in optimism and confidence ended in bitterness.⁷⁶

At Long Last: The Dedication of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

On a blustery but sun-kissed Saturday morning, October 22, 1977, Sleeping Bear Dunes was formally dedicated as the nation's newest national lakeshore. To the strains of patriotic

⁷⁴ Leelanau Enterprise Tribune, May 5, 1977; Charles Parkinson, Oral History Interview, March 2, 1998.

⁷⁵ Julius Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998; J.A. Martinek to Purchasing Agent, City of Dearborn, October 17, 1973, "Pinks" Files, SLBD Records; Charles Parkinson, March 2, 1998; Peter LaValley, Oral History Interview, August 14, 1998; Raymond Kimpel, Oral History Interview, February 26, 1999.

⁷⁶ Ibid; John Kawamoto, Personal Communication, March 9, 1999.

marches played by the Frankfort High School Marching Band, dignitaries from Washington, D.C. and Lansing gathered on a platform at the base of the Dune Climb. They had come to celebrate a day in the making since 1959, when Congress first proposed a federal Sleeping Bear park. Typical of the way things had gone, the Sleeping Bear dedication took place under a cloud of litigation. The United States District Court had to brush aside a final attempt to block the transfer of D.H. Day State Park to the national park. Even a 1976 federal law designed to compensate local governments for federal land acquisitions in each state, which should have returned more than \$120,000 to Leelanau County, was challenged in court by township officials who wanted to have the money disbursed to them instead. No restraining order, however, prevented Merrill D. Beal, Midwest Regional Director, from taking the podium as the master-of-ceremonies. William G. Milliken, Michigan's popular Republican Governor, gave the principal address.⁷⁷

The dedication was as much about closing a chapter in the history of Sleeping Bear as it was honoring the opening of the new lakeshore. For the property owners who had lost the long fight to prevent the national lakeshore the dedication was not a day of celebration. Also missing at the ceremony were two of the people most responsible for the creation of the lakeshore, Philip A. Hart and Genevieve Gillette. Gillette had made her last contribution to the lakeshore during the wilderness hearings. At that time the old warrior for Michigan conservation found herself in opposition to the Sierra Club's proposal to designate the Platte River area as wilderness. Her plan that the area be managed for natural history education was seen as too "pro-development" by the new style environmentalists and it was rejected. She had fought long enough and successfully enough to suffer the fate of most long-lived activists—to be passed by their own movements. Senator Hart's name was mentioned frequently during the dedication. Less than a year before he had died of cancer. Governor Milliken, in his address honored Phil Hart and stated that the creation of the lakeshore was one of the "two most gratifying projects of his long governmental career." Hart rather naively took on the Sleeping Bear project with little inkling of the difficulties before him. To his credit, however, he had the perseverance and commitment to stay his course during the long legislative fight. The dedication ceremony also marked an end to the work of Allen T. Edmunds. The retired park service planner had played a crucial role in creating lakeshore parks at Indiana Dunes, Sleeping Bear, Pictured Rocks, and Apostle Islands. The dedication ceremony marked the end of a process of expanding the role of the National Park Service in the Great Lakes region begun in 1958 with Edmunds's Great Lakes Shoreline Survey. Edmunds had the great satisfaction during his retirement of watching his new parks grow.⁷⁸

At the dedication "Marty" Martinek wore his National Park Service dress uniform for the last time. The autumn wind tousled his thick hair as he summarized the difficulties encountered in establishing the lakeshore. Had the park not been created "in 1970 it may never have been," he recounted. All the right pieces came to together at that last moment and the lakeshore was authorized. That moment was now past and with it an impressive, perhaps even in environmental history terms, a "heroic" period of national park expansion came to a close. The land of the Sleeping Bear remained, but the people who had done much to shape it and who had come to love it now had to leave the dune country to the stewardship of others.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), October 24, 1977.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid; Julius A. Martinek, Oral History Interview, March 1, 1998.

Chapter Four

Plans, Programs and Controversy

The Reassessment of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore 1977-1983

“Many of our lakes are already overly-developed,” complained a Michigan DNR spokesman in 1973. “There are just too many people now threatening this beautiful resource of our state, and we can no longer ignore it.” It was fear of just such a scenario that triggered the long and bitter fight to create Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Even before the dedication of the lakeshore in 1977 the need for the lakeshore was becoming increasingly clear to all but the staunchest opponents of federal management. At hundreds of resort communities in the Upper Great Lakes region increasingly intensive development and the eutrophication of lake waters threatened treasured scenic areas. While the national lakeshore helped to spare Sleeping Bear Dunes from those concerns, those same development forces helped to ensure that the park continued to be the focus of a conflict over how to make federal environmental management work.¹

The period of the late 1970s and early 1980s was one in which the National Park Service, the Congress, and the people of northwestern Michigan reassessed the lakeshore. The preparation of a general management plan for Sleeping Bear was the occasion for old battles to be fought anew between property owners and the lakeshore. But it was also an opportunity for the residents and summer users of the dune country to finally accept the presence of the National Park Service as an established part of the regional landscape. “The park is here,” commented Arthur Huey, a prominent Leelanau County landowner, “Now I want to see this become the best national park in the country.” While not all of the opponents shared Huey’s sense of good will, the late 1970s and early 1980s was a period when the promise of cooperation began to emerge from the clatter of land acquisition conflict. It was also a time when the growing size of the lakeshore’s budget and staff allowed it to begin to meet the promise of the 1970 congressional act which established the lakeshore.

The New Superintendent: Part Ranger, Part Academic

“I just met your new superintendent,” said a sprightly seasonal employee from the University of Michigan. “He’s a professor at Ann Arbor.” The small group of full-time staff gathered in conversation just laughed at her remark and then patiently explained that whoever was chosen as superintendent would come from within the National Park Service, certainly not from a university. “Whenever the selection is made,” the seasonal intern was assured, “we’ll let you know who it is.” Several days later it was announced that Donald R. Brown, an adjunct professor at the University of Michigan, would be the lakeshore’s second superintendent. The appointment was not, however, as unlikely as it first appeared to be. Brown was a career park ranger with experience at Rocky Mountain National Park, Sequoia, Olympic, and Blue Ridge

¹ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), October 17, 1973.

Parkway. During his nineteen years in the park service Brown had shown a flair for planning and education. He served for a time at the Albright Training Center before becoming the director of the University of Michigan's International Seminar on National Parks, part of the School of Natural Resources. The forty-four year old was a native of Michigan and a graduate of Michigan State University.²

Brown first came to Sleeping Bear as the acting superintendent in June 1977. He officially became the superintendent in October of that year, after Martinek elected to retire. The two men were in stark contrast. Martinek was a traditional park ranger, tested through years of self-sufficient backcountry management. One former colleague described him as "an old Smokey the Bear type, in the very best sense of that style." Brown was more of a team player, anxious to hear from everyone, open to ideas from outside the service. While his predecessor was a "take charge guy," Brown was more low key and deliberative. The new superintendent was comfortable with ideas and concepts, disposed to deliberation. He was well-suited to a park that had a rapidly growing staff and which was about to embark on a critical strategic planning process.³

While Brown had the academician's love of the give-and-take of ideas, he was in his own way a thorough park ranger. He loved the outdoors and was determined not to let the demands of the job to keep him locked in the office. He loved to ski and he personally worked with his staff to lay out more cross-country trails throughout the lakeshore. "We have to know how to use this park under all conditions," he announced to the staff his first winter at Sleeping Bear. He then led the entire group on a weekend winter camping exercise. "We thought it was great," recalled one of the rangers. The outing taught basic winter survival skills, oriented the staff to how year-round use of the lakeshore could be promoted, but most important of all, it quickly drew the staff and the superintendent together as a team—a vital concern as a crucial and trying planning process was underway.⁴

The General Management Plan Process

Less than a month after the dedication of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore the park was able to begin the long delayed development of a new master plan, or to use the new terminology, a general management plan. Superintendent Brown was optimistic that the plan would evolve very quickly, in part because there had been considerable planning underway at the lakeshore. The wilderness study was completed in 1975. A year later "Marty" Martinek and Charles Parkinson completed, respectively, the Statement of Management and Statement of Interpretation which constituted crucial parts of the general management plan. With the help of the Federal Highway Administration a scenic road study was also in hand. To pull together these reports and shape a unified comprehensive plan for the dune park the regional office enlisted a five man Denver Service Center team: Frederick K. Babb, Project Manager; James L. Massey, interpretive planner; Richard G. Schneider, Recreation Planner; John N. Albright, historian; and

² Bill Herd, Oral History Interview, August 13, 1998; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), October 19, 1977.

³ Peter LaValley, Oral History Interview, August 14, 1998; John Dougherty, Oral History Interview, August 14, 1998.

⁴ Raymond Kimpel, Oral History Interview, March 8, 1999.

John W. Hoesterey, writer/editor. The effort to complete the general management plan began in November 1977 with a two informational public meetings, one in Beulah and the other in Glen Arbor.⁵

Aside from some brief remarks at the celebratory dedication of the lakeshore a few weeks earlier the public meeting at Glen Arbor on November 2, 1977 was Superintendent Brown's first opportunity to represent the lakeshore before the public. It was a baptism of fire. A "sometimes unruly audience of about 300" gathered in the Glen Arbor Township Hall for a session that served to put the agency on notice of the strong opposition to the scenic road plan, as well as to provide a much needed-opportunity for local residents to vent their dissatisfaction with the National Park Service. "The entire Sleeping Bear project was born in secrecy," complained Arthur Huey, the founder of the Leelanau School. "There has never been a mutual understanding between us." Huey went on to accuse the park service of underestimating "the intelligence and sincerity of our residents." But there was little understanding of the lakeshore's position when Superintendent Brown clearly stated he was "firmly committed" to the scenic road corridor. "It was in the original act of 1970 and we are responsible for its acquisition." That drew complaints that the agency had already made up its mind and the whole public process was a farce. "The jeers and catcalls grew louder and more frequent," one resident recalled. "The boys in green uniforms were starting to take on a granite hue." Less critical observers granted that Brown "knows how to keep his cool." Like so many public meetings before the principal result was to draw a line in the sand between the "bureaucrats" and the "people."⁶

The scenic road plan was easily the most controversial issue before the general management planning team. The road was integral to the concept of the lakeshore adopted by Congress in 1970. The vistas offered from the Glen Lake highlands were featured prominently in the prospectuses developed by the park service to promote the lakeshore bill. Once local opposition shot down the prospect of including Glen, Platte, and Little Traverse lakes within the lakeshore the scenic road was included. The public, which was all but walled off from those lakes by private ownership, could at least look down on those beautiful blue lochs. Since park planners projected 3 million visitors annually the roads were also seen as vital to relieving traffic strain on local roads. "The 30-mile scenic road," Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel declared in 1970, "will unify the lakeshore physically and provide public access to scenic overlooks." Although these were all important planning concerns the proposal also reflected the spirit of 1960s park developments. Scenic drives were popular with the public and planners alike in a country encouraged by advertisers to "See the USA in your Chevrolet!" Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore's organic act also contained a provision for a scenic road. Although the concept had much to recommend it, it would also be fair to say that the provision was also a hold over of "Mission-66" infrastructure oriented thinking.⁷

The construction plan proposed by the Federal Highway Administration reinforced the impression the road would be a heavy-handed intrusion into the bucolic dune country landscape. Particularly controversial was a plan to bypass the town of Glen Arbor. Influential local residents

⁵ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), June 20, 1977, October 19, 1977; National Park Service, Midwest Regional Office, Task Directive, General Management Plan, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, November 22, 1977, GNP File, SLBD Records.

⁶ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), November 3, 1977; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, November 10, 17, 1977.

⁷ National Park Service, "Secretary Hickel Hails President's Action on New Parks," Press release, November 1, 1970, Division of Legislative Coordination and Support, General Correspondence, SLBD Records.

had long opposed any attempt to widen the right-of-way of M-22. Large and beautiful pine trees hemmed in the approach to the town from the south. Rather than bring lakeshore visitors up that road and into the confines of the town the federal highway planners proposed skirting south of Glen Arbor. The four-mile bypass would extend from M-109 to a spot on M-22 northeast of Glen Arbor. This would entail filling in a small marsh north of Glen Lake and building an overpass over the intersection of several existing roads, as well as bridging the Crystal River. Almost the entire bypass would be an elevated roadway constructed on fill at a cost of \$4.3 million. Less intrusive were the plans to run the scenic road around Glen Lake, through the uplands, almost a mile east of the lake. Nonetheless, both segments were unanimously rejected in an informal show of hands at the Glen Arbor meeting. Much less controversial was the southern approach to the lakeshore, which would lead along the Crystal highlands, affording wonderful views of the Crystal Lake embayment, Platte Lake, and Lake Michigan.⁸

Benzie County officials strongly supported the southern portion of the scenic road, as a means of controlling traffic and as a tourist asset for their area. The problem, not surprisingly, was with the Leelanau County portions of the proposed road. The idea that the scenic road would encircle Glen Lake engendered fear in many owners of lake lots. They worried that having park property on all sides of them—even if it was several miles away—would bring them under National Park Service control; perhaps even set the stage for the eventual federal acquisition of the whole of Glen Lake. Of course, there were landowners in the highland area that simply did not want to lose their property to the 150-foot federal right-of-way. They looked for any argument to build public support for their cause of stopping “another grab by big government of private property.” Filling in the wetland south of Glen Arbor was the very legitimate stick with which to attack the scenic road plan. “That would be an environmental catastrophe,” declared a member of the Glen Arbor Township planning committee. Business owners in the town, faced with seeing thousands of potential customers shunted around their town responded by proposing parking plans and road improvements to allow the park drive to proceed through the town.⁹

Even before the highway study was completed the scenic road had been a lightning rod for the discontented. In 1977, property owners in the proposed road corridor took the National Park Service to court. They alleged that the government had subjected them to an undue hardship when it formally notified them their lands would be within the scenic corridor, but then took no action to acquire the property. Quite rightly, they wanted “the cloud” lifted from their titles with a clear-cut decision by the government to buy or not buy their lands. Judge Noel P. Fox of the Western District of Michigan specifically ordered the National Park Service to “make up its mind whether it wanted property within a corridor for a proposed scenic road.” The agency responded by speeding the road study to completion and committing themselves to acquiring the right-of-way.¹⁰

For his part Superintendent Brown was by no means wedded to the Federal Highway Administration plan. The litigation before Judge Fox had forced an affirmative decision on acquisition, Congress had authorized scenic corridors for the lakeshore and Brown meant to see

⁸ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), February 28, 1978; National Park Service, Master Plan: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, (Philadelphia: Northeast Regional Office, 1970), p.28.

⁹ Detroit News, August 13, 1978.

¹⁰ David Hales, Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks to Assistant Secretary for Policy, Budget and Administration, January 20, 1978, Washington Office Correspondence File, SLBD Records.

that they were acquired. He was open however, to considering whether the corridors should be motor roads or recreation trails for hiking, bikes or horseback. Recreational uses of the corridors were part of all park plans for the scenic road right-of-way. The scenic highway report recommended that however the scenic corridors were defined during the general management plan, the National Park Service should immediately begin to make purchases along the right-of-way in order to forestall private development and escalating prices. After several months of articulating this position, Superintendent Brown was forced into an embarrassing flip-flop. An opinion rendered by the National Park Service's legal counsel warned the lakeshore that a strict reading of the Sleeping Bear organic act indicated that the corridors were meant for a scenic road and that if an automobile road was not going to be built, then the agency lacked the authority to purchase private land along the right-of-way. The Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune noted the progression in Brown's pronouncements from "must" to "will" to "may" and complained that the whole process was being conducted "at a bureaucrat's whim." Only several months into the general management plan process it was clear that the scenic road issue would make the effort a long and difficult ordeal.¹¹

Paranoia over a "government land grab" was exacerbated by an ill-timed effort to politically reshuffle the membership of the Sleeping Bear Dunes Advisory Council. In February 1978, Secretary of the Interior Cecil B. Andrus selected Walter B. Hart for a place on the commission. Hart was the twenty-seven year-old son of the late Philip A. Hart. At the time young Hart was serving as the chairman of the committee to elect Democrat Dudley Buffa to the Senate seat held by Robert Griffin of Traverse City. The appointment to the unpaid commission was an understandable recognition of Senator Hart's crucial role in the creation of the lakeshore, but dark motives were read into the action because of its timing during the planning controversy and because of Walter Hart's partisan activities. The Record-Eagle in Traverse City broadly hinted that the appointment of young Hart, who favored gun control, was part of a liberal Democratic effort to ban hunting in the lakeshore. The Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune saw the action as a classic example of "Tammany Hall politics" by the administration of President Jimmy Carter. These charges resonated in heavily Republican northwest Michigan because the inexperienced young Democrat was tapped to replace Professor Louis F. Twardzik, Chairman of the Park and Recreation Resources Department at Michigan State University, the single most experienced member of the commission. There was, however, no conspiracy behind the appointment. The Secretary of the Interior had the right to name two members to the commission. He solicited two names from the Republican Senator Robert Griffin, and selected one for the commission. Andrus also solicited two names from Democratic Senator Donald Riegler, and selected one: Walter Hart. Far from being a political operative, Walter Hart was like many baby-boomers and only just then getting over the 1960s. He had recently enrolled as a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania. The young Democrat served faithfully on the commission for two years, then lost interest in making the journey four times a year from his home in Philadelphia. The commission may have missed Twardzik's experience, otherwise the Hart appointment had no real impact. The whole flap revealed that degree to which every action related to the lakeshore underwent careful scrutiny.¹²

¹¹ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, April 6, 1978, July 6, 1978; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), February 28, 1978.

¹² Record-Eagle (Traverse City), February 14, 18, 1978, March 4, 1978; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, February 16, 23, 1978.

While the general management plan process was underway a second area of controversy regarding the lakeshore emerged. In June 1978, the Citizens Council of the Sleeping Bear once more demonstrated its astute sense of timing and helped to organize a legal challenge to the 1964 cutoff date for individuals with property developed after that date. Public Law 91-479 was perfectly clear that these summer homes were not eligible for the twenty-five year or life tenancies Congress allowed to protect the rights of established property owners within the lakeshore. In 1977, the park service as a matter of convenience had granted post-1964 property owners five years to enjoy their summer homes and make a transition to new sites. After 1982 the purchase of the bulk of the post 1964 properties would be completed and those sites could be returned to their natural state and opened to public use. The Citizens Council had long been critical of the federal government's use of the 1964 date because the lakeshore had not even been created until 1970. Eventually thirty-six property owners joined together to file suit in Federal District Court that the Sleeping Bear organic act deprived them of their constitutional right to equal protection under the law. They claimed that all property owners of post-1964 structures were not treated alike and that the 1964 date was arbitrarily selected.¹³

The charge of special treatment for some landowners hung by a slender thread of validity. The National Park Service granted one owner of a post-1964 home on Glen Lake a life tenancy instead of the mere five years other post-1964 owners were granted. The exception, however, was granted only because it offered federal taxpayers a considerable savings. The property in question was a choice twelve-acre tract on the south shore of Glen Lake. The owner offered to donate eleven acres of his land to the lakeshore if upon selling the remaining acre and a half, (which contained the permanent dwelling) he could use the residence for the rest of his life. By agreeing to the deal the National Park Service acquired a tract appraised at \$230,000 for \$71,030. Yet in the language of the suit brought by the other post-1964 owners the deal was characterized as "purposefully giving special treatment to those property owners who express a willingness to waive their constitutional rights to just compensation....and who make a gift of their property."¹⁴

On the heels of the announced lawsuit Charles S. Cushman swept into town. The Citizens Council invited him to Glen Arbor for their annual meeting. The thirty-four-year-old Lake Tahoe resident was not yet the national political figure he would be in the 1980s, but he was well on his way to making himself a thorn in the side of the Department of the Interior. He was the son of a park ranger and the owner of a small piece of property in Yosemite National Park. Cushman resented what he felt was the high-handed treatment of the National Park Service toward inholders. Only six months before his visit to Sleeping Bear Cushman had founded the National Park Landholders' Association to provide a check on bureaucratic power in the parks and he quickly recruited more than 2,000 members. "They have leaned over backwards to accommodate the environmentalists," he told the Glen Arbor audience, "and have become arrogant and cavalier in their dealings with the inholders." Cushman praised the Citizens Council for doing "a bang-up job."¹⁵

¹³ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), June 28, 1978, December 19, 1978.

¹⁴ Robert Herbst, Assistant Secretary of the Interior to Senator Robert P. Griffin, November 23, 1978, General Management Plan File, SLBD Records; Stocking, Letters from the Leelanau, 105.

¹⁵ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), July 18, 1978.

The lawsuit of the post-1964 property owners and the Cushman visit were signals of a sea change in public attitudes toward federal land management. In the western United States ranchers, loggers, and mining companies launched a concerted attack on the regulation of commercial leases on National Forest and Bureau of Land Management holdings. A well-intentioned, but ill-advised attempt by the Carter administration to eliminate all inholders in the National Parks brought the park service into the bull's eye of the discontent. The agency quickly tried to backtrack from this position and in 1978 National Park Service Director William J. Whelan ordered a public review of all agency land acquisition procedures. By 1980 these embers had been fanned into what became known as the Sagebrush Rebellion. The Presidential Campaign of Ronald Reagan popularized the anti-government rhetoric of Cushman and the Sagebrush rebels. In 1981, on the heels of Reagan's victory, Cushman was appointed to the National Park System Advisory Board. In Michigan the growing distrust of federal land managers surfaced in widespread opposition to the Department of Defense's plan for a vast, secret submarine communication system in the northern part of the state. Even worthy projects such as the North Country Trail, a hiking corridor from North Dakota to New England, drew critical scrutiny. That Sleeping Bear Dunes, long a controversial project, became the focus of property rights advocates and "wise-use" proponents was no surprise to the lakeshore staff, but it did not make the job of trying to prepare a general management plan with public input any easier.¹⁶

That point was made emphatically clear when an order from Federal District Court brought the planning process to a sudden and dramatic halt. The Sleeping Bear staff and the Denver Service Center planning team had focused their initial efforts on preparing a series of management options or scenarios for the future management and development of the park. To draw the public into the process of determining which options offered the best future for the lakeshore they had planned a series of public workshops for July 1978. The workshops were to be held in Frankfort, Glen Lake, Glen Arbor, Traverse City, and East Lansing. The small group discussions of the workshop were designed not only to give people a chance to comment on the options envisioned by the National Park Service but to afford individuals a chance to provide their own options. But just the day before the first of the workshops were to be held Federal Judge Noel Fox issued a temporary restraining order blocking the public meetings. Just as stunning as that thunderbolt was the source of the complaint, Mary Anne Williams of Traverse City, a long-time member of the Sleeping Bear Advisory Council. It was, in fact, Williams's long familiarity with the management of the lakeshore that prompted her legal action. She was one of the strongest voices on the advisory council in favor of declaring the bulk of the lakeshore as wilderness. Beginning in March 1978 she had been concerned about the relationship between the final wilderness recommendations and the general management planning process. For several months Superintendent Brown refused to make available to her a copy of the final recommendations on wilderness, even though former Superintendent Martinek had twice let her review the report in his office. Brown reasoned that these were internal proposals until approved by the President and Congress. The Director of the National Park Service actually turned away her Freedom of Information Act request for the recommendations, claiming they were confidential recommendations to the President. It was only after threatening legal action that she

¹⁶ Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 104-8.

was given a copy of the recommendations. By then she was more determined than ever to see that those proposals were not diluted by some of the new alternatives under discussion as part of the general management plan. “It appears that someone in the park service decided to change the size and boundaries of the proposed acreage, and the whole wilderness plan was to be started over again at public expense as a result of the workshops,” she told the press. Mary Anne Williams called for a complete judicial review of the process.¹⁷

For all of the park service’s good intentions toward involving the public in the planning process, the whole embroilment was a case study in how big the gap was between rhetoric and genuine cooperation. There was no reason for the wilderness proposals to be kept secret from the public, let alone from an advisory commission member. The wilderness recommendations emerged from a very public series of meetings in 1974. The drafting of those recommendations had been mandated in the lakeshore’s organic act. The same act required the National Park Service to protect the dune country from “developments and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area.” Yet the general management plan team still saw fit to propose alternatives that were substantially at odds with the wilderness recommendations already made to the Secretary of the Interior. After the Williams suit was initiated Secretary of the Interior Cecil B. Andrus and the National Park Service sought to have the wilderness recommendations removed as an obstacle. After languishing in Washington, D.C. for four years the proposal was suddenly dusted off in July 1978 by the Office of Management and Budget, reviewed and rejected as incomplete. The sorry chain of events was finally broken by two actions. In early August the Midwest Region called Superintendent Brown and the Denver Service Center team to Omaha to review the situation. A frank discussion of what everyone involved personally thought would be best for the future of Sleeping Bear revealed that there was virtual unanimity supporting the basic thrust of the wilderness recommendations. It was decided to change the management alternatives to conform to the wilderness proposal. The Superintendent then met with Mary Ann Williams and arranged an out-of-court settlement of her suit. They agreed that the planning workshops could be used to refine those elements of the wilderness plan that had been altered in the past four years. After a month the restraining order was lifted and the workshops were rescheduled.¹⁸

By the summer of 1978 the planning process that Superintendent Brown began so optimistically nine months before appeared to be in shreds. This appearance was not lost on the critics of the lakeshore or the press. In July an Ann Arbor News editorial charged “National park policy failing in Michigan.” Superintendent Brown was personally chastised for opposing the wilderness recommendations and “misguidedly” promoting a “diversity of uses.” Taking a strong environmentalist position the lakeshore was also criticized by the newspaper for allowing the Warnes Dunemoobiles to operate and for the old Stocking drive, both of which allowed cars to traverse portions of the dunes. “The only way to see the dunes the way they really are...is to climb the dunes and walk the crest and/or walk up to them on the Lake Michigan shoreline.” Brown was stung by the attack from environmentalists in the very city in which he had so recently lived. Less temperate criticism cascaded into the park headquarters. Using the soap-box

¹⁷ Benzie County-Record-Patriot, July 12, 1978; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, July 27, 1978; Daniel J. Tobin, Jr., Acting Director of the National Park Service to Mary Anne Williams, April 21, 1978, GNP File, SLBD Records.

¹⁸ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), August 7, 16, 1978; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, July 27, 1978; Ann Arbor News, July 25, 1978; Superintendent’s Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1978, SLBD Records.

of the Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune one of the more extreme critics charged, “Underneath every green park service uniform lurks at least a spot of red....we still know a Commie when we see one.”¹⁹

The battered planning process got back on track in November 1978. More than 900 planning alternative workbooks were distributed. The troublesome issues of wilderness and the scenic road were joined by a third major concern: should a harbor be built within the lakeshore to enhance boating opportunities on Lake Michigan and provide access to the island units of the park. The original master plan had called for the building of a boat launch and marina on Platte Bay, although it envisioned the larger boats needed to take visitors to North and South Manitou would be based at existing harbors in Frankfort and Leland. In September the Leelanau County Board voted to “remind” the National Park Service they were on record as opposing the extra traffic and congestion brought to Leland by having the island ferry based at their harbor.²⁰

The heart of the planning workshops was a discussion of planning alternatives for each of the major divisions of the lakeshore. These alternatives were presented in a workbook that included maps of the lakeshore and a space for participants to make comments on the alternatives presented. The North Manitou Island unit was proposed to be managed largely as a wilderness. One alternative offered a very rustic experience with no buildings, roads, or trails maintained on the island as well as no designated camping or landing areas. The second alternative was to maintain a small number of buildings for visitor orientation and support. This plan would also support maintenance of the deer herd and the building of an all-weather dock. The South Manitou alternatives posed a similar set of choices. On one hand the island could be a wilderness camping preserve or some of its historic buildings could be preserved and interpreted and camping could be controlled in several designated campgrounds. The Good Harbor Planning Unit included alternatives, which allowed for the maintenance of agricultural scenes on the lands south of M-22, hang-gliding at Pyramid Point, and the building of a nature center on School Lake. The Empire Unit alternatives contrasted a future of minimal developments with one that included a nature center at Otter Creek, the interpretation of agricultural scenes along M-22, and the building a full-scale harbor at the town of Empire. The widest range of alternatives was offered for the Glen Lake Unit. The most nature-friendly proposal called for the abandonment of the scenic road proposal, the allowance of natural succession to reclaim farmlands, and the closing of the Hart Nature Trail to automobile traffic. Other options offered the utilization of the historic buildings in Glen Haven for interpretation purposes and the maintenance of agricultural fields, and the building of a harbor in Sleeping Bear Bay.²¹

The first of the workshops was held in Glen Arbor. Fifty people assembled at the Leelanau School to review the alternatives presented in the planning workbooks. After a few general remarks by Superintendent Brown the audience was divided into small groups for issue oriented discussion. As one group spokesperson said of her group’s conclusion, “There was a feeling they wanted to leave what’s here, now.” This included leaving the dune ride concession open and opposing the tearing down of homes within the lakeshore. Another group asked that the historic values of South Manitou be preserved along with the island’s natural setting. The scenic

¹⁹ Ann Arbor News, July 26, 1978; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, August 3, 1978.

²⁰ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, September 14, 1978.

²¹ Denver Service Center, Planning Alternatives Workbook: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore/Michigan (Denver: National Park Service, 1978), n.p.

drive was singled out as the biggest single threat to “what’s here, now.” Among the few new construction projects endorsed by the workshop group was the building of a harbor at Glen Haven, although one participant joked that maybe the ferries should stay at Leland “so they get a chance to share some of our troubles.” In a more serious vein, some of the groups called for a new Glen Haven harbor to provide a base for trailered boats as well as a commercial tour boat that could give visitors a view of the dunes from the lake.²²

The Benzie County workshop was held at Benzie Central High School. Surprisingly the people who participated in the small group discussions disagreed with the county planners who generally supported the scenic road through the Crystal Highlands. While some liked the idea that even if the road was not built the corridor might make an excellent hiking or biking trail, others complained that “visitors could not be trusted to stay within the boundaries of the corridor but would likely stray onto private property.” The Benzie audience also responded very favorably to the alternative of building a new harbor at Glen Haven.²³

The best attended of the workshops was that held in Lansing, Michigan, which offered summer residents and environmentalists an opportunity to comment on the alternatives. If there was a common theme that emerged from all of the workshops, it was the genuine public concern to preserve what was best about the Sleeping Bear environment. The scenic corridor was roundly disparaged. One participant noted: “It is unthinkable to me that the National Park Service, which I always thought was dedicated to preserving the beauty of the country, would plan and promote a project which would cut a mammoth scar across the beautiful hills on the north shore of Crystal Lake.” On the other hand, there were those who saw the acquisition of the corridor, without building the road as “beneficial for resource protection and recreation.” Workshop participants tried to find the right balance between development and preservation. For the island units the public did not favor the alternatives which offered sparse or no development, rather they wanted the bulk of the islands to be managed as wilderness but for the park service to promote visitor access via trails, docks, and camping controls. At Glen Lake, where existing recreational developments were most intense, the public favored the least development-oriented alternatives. Similarly the public opposed turning the Platte River into a haven for large motorized boats. There were, of course, contradictions in the public’s choice of alternatives. The majority of people addressing the issue of access to the islands favored moving the transportation docks to a new location, in deference to Leland’s complaints of congestion. Yet the respondents also opposed increasing visitor activities in the already crowded Glen Arbor-Glen Haven area—the most logical site of an alternative harbor. Also ambiguous was the public response to motorized access to the dunes. Outright removal of Warnes’s dune ride was advocated by forty-seven percent of the respondents, while another forty-seven percent favored keeping, perhaps in a reduced fashion, the ride. The Hart Nature Trail, the only scenic drive in the lakeshore, was overwhelming favored for retention by the very same workshop attendees who opposed building the Glen Lake Highlands scenic drive. Nonetheless, the workshops were a success. They were a rare occasion for the National Park Service to engage with stakeholders in a non-confrontational

²² Grand Rapids Press, November 19, 1978.

²³ Benzie County Record-Patriot, November 29, 1978.

manner; providing a much-needed chance for a genuine exchange of ideas about the future of the Sleeping Bear country.²⁴

An offshoot of the planning process was a groundswell of local support to change the name of the Hart Nature Trail. The idea first surfaced at a public meeting in Glen Arbor, perhaps as a backlash to the appointment of young Walter Hart to the Sleeping Bear Advisory Council. Certainly there was no love of the memory of Senator Philip A. Hart in the hearts of many Sleeping Bear property owners. Kathleen Stocking, the daughter of Pierce Stocking and a respected regional author, put a more positive spin on the issue by suggesting that the change would be a matter of “giving credit where credit is due.” She suggested that “Since my father designed and made those scenic trails and lookouts, it would seem only right that they be named after him.” Superintendent Brown approached the family of the late Senator concerning the issue. The family graciously and unanimously approved the name change, with Walter Hart himself making a formal resolution to that effect through the advisory commission. “Our family does understand the many sacrifices people have made for this park,” commented Walter Hart. The name change was a well-timed olive branch to the people of Leelanau County.²⁵

Through the winter and spring of 1978-1979 the planning team reviewed the results of the workshops and drafted the general management plan. That plan was strongly influenced by the workshop process. The balance between public access and wilderness requested by the public for the islands and mainland units was well incorporated into the plan. The vexing issue of establishing a harbor for recreational boaters and the island ferry was deferred to a special study to be given the lakeshore’s “highest priority” and to be completed within three years. Most important of all, however, was the decision to abandon the scenic road in Leelanau County. The draft plan did continue to call for the acquisition of 1,125 acres of land in Benzie County to make possible a scenic drive along the Crystal Highlands as well as the purchase of 2,140 acres in the Miller Hill and Bow Lakes area of Leelanau County. The plan called for legislative action to allow the lakeshore to make the latter purchase in order to: “protect the significant natural features and scenic vistas and backdrops for Glen Lake.” Bold plans were presented for the lakeshore’s historic resources with “as many structures as feasible” preserved and interpreted on South Manitou Island and in the Port Oneida area, and the village of Glen Haven was to be closed off from automobile traffic and adaptively reused for visitor services. Empire was selected as the site of a combined park headquarters and “interpretive facility.”²⁶

“The Park Service has responded clearly and creatively to the public input received during the recent planning process,” was Mary Anne Williams’s response to the draft. The lakeshore critic who had to file suit in federal court to stall the beginning of the planning greeted the draft with “relief and pleasure.” The plan committed the lakeshore to maintaining five areas in the park as wilderness zones. A sixth zone, part of the original wilderness proposal sent to Washington, D.C. in 1975, was dropped from wilderness consideration with the concurrence of environmentalists. The Sleeping Bear Plateau could not be considered a wilderness area once it was determined that the Pierce Stocking/Hart Scenic Road would remain in place and open to

²⁴ Public Involvement Summary For Planning Alternatives Workbook, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore/Michigan, n.d., General Management Plan File, SLBD Records.

²⁵ Kathleen Stocking, Personal Communication, July 22, 1998; Record-Eagle (Traverse City) November 21, 1978.

²⁶ National Park Service, Draft General Management Plan, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore/Michigan, (Denver: Denver Service Center, 1979).

vehicle use. The draft general management plan had the solid backing to Michigan's environmental community, but it was not as well-received by the landowners of Leelanau County.²⁷

During the summer of 1979 the draft plan was distributed to the public and a series of hearings were scheduled to air comments and critiques. The later were quick in coming at the Glen Arbor hearing. The Citizens Council of the Sleeping Bear Area denounced the called for acquisition of Miller Hill and Bow Lakes lands as "a complete surprise and blatant land grab." Fortunately the mood at the hearing lacked the confrontational tone of previous public meetings, but Robert Knowles, leader of the Citizens Council, made clear that his group would strongly oppose any effort to change the lakeshore's legislation to in order to allow it to acquire more land. County and township officials supported this position. With great suspicion the Council regarded the effort to preserve sensitive lands as a covert park service scheme to encircle Glen Lake. Having failed to get the scenic drive approved as a unit the agency was seen as trying to acquire the highlands on the installment plan, piece by piece. At the August 14th meeting at Glen Arbor Superintendent Brown and planning team leader Fred Babb attempted to defuse such paranoia by responding favorably to Citizens Council suggestions that zoning be encouraged to protect vulnerable upland tracts. Brown and Babb also agreed that Section 12 of the lakeshore's organic act be changed to forever remove the authorization for the scenic road in Leelanau County. Further they agreed that there would be "no authority to condemn lands for any purpose outside the existing National Lakeshore boundaries." "This is no land grab," Brown contended and he pledged himself to work with the Citizens Council "to make the scenic corridor issue one of the past."²⁸

But Superintendent Brown's support of the Citizens Council's objections to the draft plan was premature. Neither he nor Fred Babb had cleared such a change with the regional office in Omaha. What appeared like an agreement on the plan in August, fell to the ground like an autumn leaf that fall. Insulated from local complaints and anxious to protect the validity of planning process, James L. Dunning, Director of the Midwest Regional Office, refused to back away from the proposed acquisition of Miller Hill lands and the Bow Lakes. The General Management Plan approved by Director Dunning included the acquisition of new lands. It was an embarrassing flip-flop for the park superintendent. It seemed to validate the quip of one critic, "he talks a good game, but when you come right down to it he's a puppet." Furious, the Citizens Council accused Dunning of ignoring the "opposing voices of the public, their elected township and county officials, and your own Lakeshore Advisory Commission. You even overruled your own Project Manager and your Park Superintendent." In a full-page public letter printed in the Traverse City Record-Eagle the park critics predicted "We successfully fought your effort to encircle Glen Lake in one huge corridor bite. We will continue to fight any effort to encircle us by a series of little bites, acre by acre, year by year."²⁹

Meanwhile, back in Omaha the Sleeping Bear General Management Plan was accepted. On November 12, 1980, Regional Director Dunning announced that the plan would move to the

²⁷ Northwoods Call, August 22, 1979.

²⁸ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, August 16, 1979; Chicago Tribune, December 23, 1979; Planning Alternative For General Management Plan, August 15, 1979, Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, August 17, 1979, SLBD Records.

²⁹ Labon Vandenhooft quoted in, Stocking, Letters from the Leelanau, p.101; Citizens Council to James L. Dunning, Record-Eagle (Traverse City), December 18, 1979.

implementation stage. Due to the extensive public involvement in the preparation of the plan it was decided that no environmental impact statement would be required. Sleeping Bear finally had a blueprint for its future, even if major issues, such as the location of the harbor and the fate of the post-1964 inholders remained an open question. Superintendent Brown, the planning team, and the lakeshore staff were successful at bringing the dune country's stakeholders into the process. In the areas of wilderness designation and the scenic road corridor the public had a decisive impact on the new general management plan. Nonetheless, the new plan left the park service in the familiar position of remaining locked in disagreement about the issue of land acquisition. Rather than serving as a vehicle for ending conflict with the local community the planning process served to muffle and transmute those disputes. The tone became more civil but it would take congressional action to resolve the impasse over land acquisitions.³⁰

New Bosses, In Frankfort and In Washington, D.C.

Superintendent Brown, in the words of one associate, “thrived on the tension, the give and take of the public meetings.” While he had made several missteps during the general management planning process, notably offering a compromise over the Miller Hill and Bow Lakes acquisitions before clearing such a policy with Omaha, every one involved agreed he had done a good job. Even his opponents granted that he “made an effort to be more responsive to the needs of the community.” In July 1980, Brown was rewarded with the position of Superintendent of Isle Royale National Park by the regional office. He had played an important transitional role at Sleeping Bear. “He brought us into the National Park Service,” recalled one staff member after the hardscrabble, under-funded days of the lakeshore's beginning. In addition to good morale and a new management plan, Brown left behind one other legacy.³¹

As visitors approaches the entrance to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore they are greeted by a sky blue and sandy brown sign accented with weathered nautical mooring posts. This design became the official signage for the lakeshore, repeated at every park attraction or facility. Superintendent Brown understood the importance of such design features in setting the right tone for visitors and he devoted considerable time to choosing the arrangement and color scheme. When the colors of the sky, water, and sand were finally chosen he insisted that they be used uniformly. So common was the use of the sandy brown paint at the lakeshore that years after the superintendent had left the paint was still known to the maintenance crew as “Brown brown.”³²

The new superintendent was Richard R. Peterson, a thirty-seven year old career ranger who came to the lakeshore after only a year as the Assistant Superintendent at the new Cuyahoga National Recreation Area. It would be Peterson's responsibility to execute the plans made during the Brown years.

Richard Peterson came to Sleeping Bear when the park at last seemed to have a clear sense of its future direction. He told the Advisory Commission he was excited to be at the

³⁰ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), November 29, 1980.

³¹ Bill Herd, Oral History Interview, August 13, 1998; Arthur Huey quoted in, Stocking, Letters from the Leelanau, 106.

³² Peter LaValley, Oral History Interview, August 13, 1998.

lakeshore at that time because the park was clearly “ready to go forward.” Land Acquisition was nearly complete and a new master plan was in place. But no sooner was that plan approved than the money needed to implement it began to dry up. In 1980 Congress had the first of what became for almost twenty years, an annual fight with the executive branch over the federal budget. For a large part of the year the lakeshore operated on the basis of a continuing resolution because Congress was unable to agree on an appropriations bill for 1981. During the Martinek and Brown years the lakeshore had enjoyed annual budget increases which allowed the park to gradually add staff and increase its programs of protection and interpretation. After 1980 the growth of the lakeshore’s budget would be much more uneven and financial austerity became a management necessity. Typical of the times was National Park Service Director William J. Whelan’s plan to raise private capital to fund long delayed improvements at Yosemite and other “crown jewel” parks.³³

National economic and social trends effected the lakeshore in important ways during the early 1980s. Slow growth and high inflation beset the national economy during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The Arab oil embargo in 1973 and the stranglehold of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on oil production led to a sudden and severe increase in energy costs in the United States. This combined with high federal spending levels led to a debilitating inflation problem. “The silent thief,” as inflation was known, shot up from six percent in 1976 to fourteen percent in 1979. Michigan was particularly hard hit as inflation spurred high interest rates, which made the purchase of automobiles difficult for average citizens. The high cost of gasoline led to decreases in motor tourism. Nationally, family incomes, which rose steadily through the 1960s, stagnated and declined during the 1970s. Visitation to the lakeshore declined three percent in 1979 and six percent in 1980. In that year Ronald Reagan was elected to the presidency on a platform of “getting government off the back of the American people.” He vowed to fight inflation by curbing government spending and stimulate the economy by deregulating business and cutting taxes.³⁴

The election of Ronald Reagan brought the “sagebrush rebellion” to Washington, D.C. In 1981, developers, timber companies, and ranchers who opposed federal land management restrictions were overjoyed by the appointment of James G. Watt to the post of Secretary of the Interior. Reagan eschewed the advice of conservative environmentalists who had helped him during his campaign, such as Nathaniel Reed, former Assistant Secretary for National Parks, and appointed people committed to changing policy. James Watt fit that bill. He had been the director of the Mountain States Legal Foundation, an organization dedicated to mounting court challenges to federal land management regulations. He proudly told reporters at his confirmation hearing that he found the Grand Canyon boring and had no interest in outdoor activities such as hiking or paddling. Bright, brash, and outspoken to a fault, Watt had a brief but stormy two years as Secretary of the Interior. Sleeping Bear Dunes would feel the heat from Secretary Watt’s administration in the form of budget cuts and investigations.³⁵

³³ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, November 21, 1980, SLBD Records.

³⁴ Ibid; James West Davidson, William E. Gienapp, Christine Leigh Heyeman, Mark H. Lytle, and Michael Be. Stoff, *Nation of Nations: A Narrative History of the American Republic* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 1256-7, 1274-5.

³⁵ Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States*, 494.

Land Acquisition

In 1980, the Land Acquisition Office in Frankfort was closed. Out of more than 1,400 tracts the National Park Service had succeeded in purchasing all but 143. By the fall of 1980 most of those 143 were on the way to being settled, including ninety-nine that were under condemnation. The biggest block of unpurchased land lay within the Crystal Highlands corridor. With the closing of the Frankfort lands office all acquisitions for the lakeshore were assigned to the lands office of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.³⁶

James Williamson, the lakeshore's controversial land buyer, retired in 1980. Unfortunately the wounds caused by the building of the lakeshore park remained behind—open and raw. Three land acquisition questions dominated the attention of the park staff during the early 1980s: 1) The future of the canoe livery businesses within the lakeshore; 2) The future of the properties within the lakeshore that were developed after 1964; and 3) The proposed acquisition of environmentally sensitive areas within the Glen Lake Highlands scenic corridor.

Secretary Watt, however, called into question the lakeshore's ability to deal fairly with each of these issues. On May 13, 1981 Secretary Watt announced that he was ordering an investigation into alleged improprieties in land acquisition at Sleeping Bear Dunes. According to an Associated Press account Watt wanted "to see why park boundaries have been drawn the way they have been, to see whose properties have been protected and whose have been taken." Among the other parks under investigation were Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, Fire Island National Seashore, and Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The announcement had particularly ominous implications because only a week earlier an in-house memorandum had been leaked from the Department of the Interior to the press which listed Sleeping Bear and the above-mentioned parks for federal deauthorization. Now it appeared like Watt was looking to build a case for returning the parks to state control. The Secretary's office denied both reports only to have Watt admit to the land acquisition investigation when a New York Times journalist produced an audio tape of an interview. The staff of the lakeshore were caught completely off-guard. Regional Director James Dunning released a statement quoting Watt that "there is no National Park hit list." Dunning admitted, however, that the Secretary of the Interior was opposed to certain types of parks "from a philosophical point of view." All speculation ended on May 19th when agents from the Inspector General's Office appeared to seal the Sleeping Bear land files.³⁷

The investigation, which followed, was predicated on the fallacious assumption that gross mismanagement if not corrupt practice had been rife in the land acquisition office. But even the lakeshore's opponents had never charged such wrongdoing. "We think the boundaries were stupidly drawn," commented Dale Rhoades, a Grand Rapids attorney who represented aggrieved lakeshore property owners, "but I wouldn't say there was fraud or misrepresentation." At a Congressional subcommittee hearing on the investigation Assistant Secretary of the Interior G. Ray Arnett made clear that the probe was the result of "a large volume of complaints," and that he was determined to find out if they were spurred by criminal irregularities or "merely imprudent" policies. The National Park Service spokesman, however, refused to back-up the

³⁶ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, November 21, 1980.

³⁷ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), May 14, 16, 29, 1981; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, May 28, 1981; Detroit Free Press, May 24, 1981

official story. “It puts us in a spot somewhat,” explained John Vosburgh of the Washington, D.C. office, “but we can’t say there are complaints when there aren’t.”³⁸

Driving the probe was the National Inholder Association. Charles Cushman, the organization’s founder, had been appointed by President Reagan to the National Park System Advisory Board. Cushman had kept in close touch with the Citizens Council of the Sleeping Bear Area and even attended its 1980 annual meeting. Cushman’s former assistant Ric Davidge was made a Special Assistant in the office of Assistant Secretary Arnett. Together they had successfully convinced Secretary Watt to freeze all land acquisition funding and place a temporary nation-wide ban on the purchase of inholdings. It was Davidge who drafted the controversial “hit list” memorandum for Watt.³⁹

Federal investigators visited the lakeshore during the summer of 1981. Although there were no charges of illegality leveled, the investigators found no shortage of critics of park service land acquisition policies to interview. In particular investigators were interested in charges of intimidation by Lands Officer James Williamson and his staff. The Inspector General’s investigators, as possible examples of favoritism, closely scrutinized two of the park’s boundaries. A notch of private land west of Little Glen Lake, near M-22 and the dune climb, seemed to have been suspiciously exempted from the park. The other tract was the site of the Homestead Resort, a choice property at the mouth of the Crystal River. This latter tract had been left out of every plan for the proposed park going back to 1961, in part because the site was part of the Leelanau Schools, a private institution that had managed the area sensitively since 1929. Only much later was the land sold and developed into a major resort complex.⁴⁰

In July 1981, the Senate subcommittee on Energy and National Parks held a hearing on public land acquisition issues. Inholders dominated the discussion with Sleeping Bear property owner Kathleen Stocklen playing a prominent role.

The investigation by the Department of the Interior’s Inspector General’s Office was followed by a less widely reported review of the Sleeping Bear land acquisition program by the Government Accounting Office. Neither report found gross irregularities. The Government Accounting Office report, however, was critical of the way in which the Sleeping Bear acquisition was carried out. The National Park Service was admonished for the way James Williamson’s staff threatened property owners with condemnation. The Government Accounting Office also leveled two spurious charges against the park service. First, that the land acquisition team incorrectly had the owners of Category III lands sign, for no compensation, “prohibitive agreements.” This charge referred to the agreements made between the park service and property owners in the “private use and development” zone. Contrary to the General Accounting Office, however, the Department of the Interior Office of the Solicitor ruled that these agreements did not constitute an uncompensated taking. Not only were they valid, they were positively mandated by Congress in Public Law 91-479 (the law which created the lakeshore). The second charge alleged that the National Park Service was managing the lakeshore incorrectly. Congress, the General Accounting Office report claimed, wanted the agency to “stabilize” development in the Sleeping Bear area, not return land to wilderness. This allegation conveniently ignored those provisions of the Sleeping Bear organic act that mandated a wilderness review. That review was

³⁸ Ibid; Flint Journal, June 24, 1981.

³⁹ Ibid; Ron Cockrell, *A Signature of Time and Eternity: The Administrative History of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore*, 304-9.

⁴⁰ Detroit Free Press, May 24, 1981.

a public process, held according to provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act, with local stakeholders prevailing upon the National Park Service to manage more land as wilderness than the agency originally planned. More telling was the criticism that the lakeshore management had not engaged with local officials to establish a zoning regime that might limit the need for fee simple acquisition. Nonetheless, even the most committed opponents of the lakeshore found that the much-publicized investigations yielded a very thin gruel. By the end of his first full year in office Secretary Watt, and by extension Special Assistant Ric Davidge, retreated from their bold talk of “de-authorization.” Sleeping Bear was, in Watt’s words, “a great area—it should be continued.”⁴¹

A more important critique of the land acquisition program emerged from the Federal District Court in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In 1977, sixteen property owners challenged the valuation of their lands by the National Park Service. The case eventually landed in Judge Noel Fox’s Western District court. The property owners were successful in proving the substantially greater value of their land. A compromise settlement resulted in the National Park Service paying \$2.7 million more for the property. Critics of the land acquisition program charged that the settlement clearly proved that the Sleeping Bear acquisition program had been mismanaged. Certainly the property owners had been twice victimized, once by the low government appraisals and again having to wait five years for their just payments. Congressman Vander Jagt complained the case illustrated “one of the most reprehensible aspects of the land acquisition process.”⁴²

Among those most disappointed with the inconclusive results of the federal land acquisition probes were Kathleen and Thomas Stocklen. They were deeply involved with the National Inholders Association and sorely disenchanted with their relationship with the National Park Service. In 1969, the Stocklen’s moved from Florida to Michigan. They purchased Riverside Canoe Livery on the banks of the Platte River. Two other canoe rental operations also were in business on the river. As visitation to the Sleeping Bear area increased in the mid-1970s the number of people renting canoes soared. The Platte River became very congested with watercraft and the area where M-22 crossed the Platte River became snarled with automobiles. There were busy canoe liveries on three of the four corners of the intersection of the river and M-22, as well as unsightly boat storage buildings, cabins, a donut shop, and a miniature golf course. A commercial campground was located nearby. The park service initially regarded the canoe liveries as appropriate business activities to be located in the lakeshore, as they facilitated just the type of recreation activity Sleeping Bear was created to promote. Excessive, unregulated use, however, seemed to threaten the resource. During the General Management Plan process it was determined to consolidate through purchase all three canoe liveries and then operate a single business on the basis of a concession contract. While this plan was based on the National Park Service’s duty to manage recreational opportunities “consistent with the maximum protection of the natural environment within the area,” it was also a change in policy that was regarded by

⁴¹ Albert V. Whitham, Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region to Assistant Solicitor, Parks and Recreation, February 2, 1982; Russell Dickenson, Director, National Park Service to Ric Davidge, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, March 10, 1982, “Stocklen” 46-103 File, SLBD Records.

⁴² Grand Rapids Press, January 12, 1982.

some of the Platte River businesses as a breach of trust. Condemnation proceedings were initiated on all three canoe rental companies.⁴³

The lakeshore's plan to consolidate all three business, however, was stopped in its tracks when Thomas and Kathleen Stocklen produced a "Certificate Prohibiting Condemnation." The certificate was drafted by Stocklen's lawyer, John Daugherty and issued in December 1971. It originated in the spring of that year when the Stocklens were negotiating to purchase Riverside Canoe Livery. They approached the Northeast Regional Office to determine if the Riverside property was designated for acquisition by the lakeshore. They did not want to move from North Carolina and begin a new career if the canoe livery was slated for government purchase only a few years down the line. The regional office, at that early phase of the project could not assure the Stocklens how the property would be rated: Category I, II, or III. Regional Director Henry Schmidt did clearly state that because Riverside Canoe Livery was in operation before 1964 "we cannot acquire it without the owner's consent." The Stocklens, however, wanted more than the regional office's hesitant assurances. Their attorney, John Daugherty, had played a significant role in the creation of the lakeshore and was serving as an inaugural member of the Advisory Commission. Based on his intimate knowledge of Public Law 91-479 and the park service's plans for the lakeshore Daugherty drafted the certificate and Superintendent Martinek, with the concurrence of the initial head of the land acquisition program, Donald C. Campbell, signed it. Campbell and Martinek regarded the document as a "firm commitment" and consistent with pledges they made to a couple of other anxious owners of businesses engaged in performing vital visitor services. By drafting the certificate Daugherty provided his client with a tangible assurance of the park service's intentions toward Riverside, but the certificate was worded carefully to preserve the agency's long-term flexibility. The certificate was subject to "termination" if Riverside Canoe ceased to be a commercial property and "at any time the Secretary of the Interior determines the use of said property would not further the purpose of said Public Law 91-479 or that such use impairs the usefulness and attractiveness of the area."⁴⁴

Because only a handful of such certificates had been granted the park service was surprised when the Stocklens presented their document. In any event, Superintendent Brown, supported by the Regional Solicitor, argued that the certificate allowed condemnation for the purposes of controlling development at a vital recreation site within the lakeshore. While the issue was in the process of being settled, Chief of Land Acquisition James Williamson began condemnation proceedings on Riverside Canoe Livery. "Williamson came in," Kathleen Stocklen told a reporter. "I was waiting on a customer. He threw his briefcase up on the glass counter—I thought it was going to shatter—and demanded to appraise us then or he was going to condemn us. It wasn't a request—it was a threat." Williamson was an intimidating man, but he had threatened the wrong person. A former schoolteacher and a sharp businesswomen, Kathleen Stocklen refused to back down to Williamson, Brown, or the whole National Park Service. She immediately drew the support of Congressman Guy Vander Jagt and Senator Donald W. Riegle. She also initiated legal proceedings against the lakeshore for "breach of promise" and

⁴³ Donald R. Brown to Regional Director, May 31, 1979, Stocklen 46-103 File, SLBD Records; Randall R. Pope, Acting Regional Director, Midwest Region to Congressman Guy Vander Jagt, August 14, 1980, Stocklen 46-103 File, SLBD Records.

⁴⁴ Certificate Prohibiting Condemnation, December 17, 1971, Stocklen 46-103 File, SLBD Records; Henry D. Schmidt, Director, Northeast Regional Office to Tom Stocklen, March 23, 1971, Stocklen 46-103 File, SLBD Records; Julius Martinek, Personal Communication, April 6, 1999.

“intimidation through lack of due process.” In response to this vigorous defense the National Park Service beat a hasty retreat. Condemnation was stopped and Superintendent Brown advised the Stocklens “Please feel confident that no condemnation action involving your property exists at this time and none is contemplated for the future.”⁴⁵

Rather than resolving the issue the park service’s decision to back away from condemning Riverside Canoe Livery only moved the conflict with the Stocklens to a new stage. The National Park Service next attempted to negotiate an agreement with the Stocklens that would ensure that the canoe livery would be operated in a manner “consistent with the maximum protection of the natural environment with in the area.” Such agreements were signed by a large number of lakeshore residents and were clearly mandated in the park organic act. The Stocklen’s believed the park service was operating in bad faith and charged that Superintendent Brown kept to himself for several months the information that condemnation had been dropped on their property in order to force them into signing an agreement. Consistent with the National Inholders Association position the Stocklens regarded the agreement as a taking and demanded compensation before signing anything. More than money motivated this position. They were deeply suspicious of the National Park Service and were loath to sign anything that would leave their business subject to the whims of the federal bureaucracy.⁴⁶

The National Park Service found itself in a quandary over the Riverside Canoe case. Actions were well advanced to acquire the other two canoe liveries on the Platte River. Once the lakeshore had to abandon its plan to purchase the Stocklen’s property, the agency had to give the competing canoe liveries a chance to back away from their decision to sell their businesses. Nonetheless, the eventual outcome of the aborted plan to acquire all three canoe businesses was to remove, within a few years, both of Riverside’s competitors and leave the Stocklen’s in a monopoly position. For Superintendent Richard Peterson, this unintended result raised the importance of having a land-use agreement in place with the Stocklens. “Our objective in the agreement,” wrote Acting Regional Director Randall R. Pope, “is to provide visitor protection and resource management safeguards which, under our original plan, would have been written into a concessions contract.” It was clear that the government’s own actions had resulted in a set of circumstances that greatly enhanced the value of Riverside Canoe. If a land use agreement was not arrived at before the last of the competitors were removed, the agency feared that its only future option in controlling traffic on the Platte would be to proceed to condemnation on the Stocklens at a time when the Riverside’s value was far in excess of its value in 1981 or 1982.⁴⁷

The Stocklen property remained an unresolved issue of contention for more than a decade. In an effort to better protect her property Kathleen Stocklen made numerous and wide-ranging Freedom of Information Act requests for documents relating to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. This personal investigation, along with the Government Accounting Office and Inspector General’s scrutiny meant that the Seeping Bear land acquisition program remained controversial and highly suspect.

⁴⁵ Kathleen Stocking, "Michigan's Dunes & the Sands of Bureaucracy," *Enquirer Magazine* (Cincinnati) August 12, 1979; Randall R. Pope, Acting Regional Director to Congressman Guy Vander Jagt, August 14, 1980; Superintendent Donald R. Brown to Thomas M. Stocklen, March 10, 1980, Stocklen 46-103 File, SLBD Records.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; Richard Peterson, Oral History Interview, April 5, 1999.

The plan to use condemnation to remove or control commercial establishments within the lakeshore was not simply directed against the Platte River canoe liveries. In 1978, the Kalena Excavation & Building Company near School Lake, the Bass Lake Body Shop, and Bob's Grocery near Little Traverse Lake were all acquired on the grounds they were not compatible with the purposes of the lakeshore. Closer in circumstance to the canoe liveries, which were clearly compatible with the lakeshore, if they were properly run, was the commercial ferry service between Leland and South Manitou Island. The Grosvenor family had been operating the marine link to the islands since 1918. They carried mail to the islands and to the formerly manned lighthouse in the Manitou channel. Over time the Grosvenors had acquired the land where their boats were docked, not just at the Fishtown site in Leland but also on South and North Manitou islands. At the same time the Stocklens were fighting off the condemnation of their business, the Grosvenors were locked in a similar fight to convert their business into a park service owned concession.⁴⁸

Whereas the attempt to turn Riverside Canoes into a concession was based on a fear of too many people using the Platte River at any one time, the park service's fear with the ferry business was that there would be too few users to make the service cost-effective. The early 1980s were a period of transition for the Grosvenors and their Manitou Island Ferry Company. The old backbone of their business, goods and commodities for Manitou residents dropped precipitously as the old island families lost their homes to the new lakeshore. The protracted wrangle between the National Park Service and the Angell Foundation over the price of North Manitou Island left that island all but closed to the public for years, at the cost of hundreds of lost customers for the Grosvenors. The gradual phasing out of federal mail contracts was another blow. A National Park Service study described the commercial prospects of the ferry operation as marginal at best. The government's fear was that as free enterprise operators the Grosvenors would be forced to steadily raise the cost of ferry passage to the point where ordinary citizens would not wish to make the trip to the island units of the lakeshore. Operating the ferry under a concession contract was a way to guarantee uninterrupted public access to the islands. Also, the attempt to purchase the holdings of the Manitou Island Ferry Company occurred at the very time the lakeshore was being pressured into building a new ferry harbor at great public expense. The tremendous federal expenditure anticipated in a new harbor inclined planners to public control of the ferry business.⁴⁹

In 1978, the government filed suit against the Manitou Island Transit Company in an attempt to condemn their docking facilities. The Grosvenors strongly objected to the park service's valuation of their properties. Their South Manitou waterfront property was valued at \$33,600 and their North Manitou lands at \$14,000. These figures were based on the fair market price for frontage on Lake Michigan. The Grosvenors countered, however, that their docking sites were the basis of their ferry business and that if the lands were taken from them the family should be compensated for the full value of the ferry business. In 1984 U.S. District Court Judge Benjamin Gibson reversed his own 1981 ruling and agreed that the higher valuation was appropriate. This cleared the way for the purchase of the docks. The park service then continued Grosvenor's ferry service as a lakeshore concession. After two annually renewed commercial-

⁴⁸ Leelanau Enterprise and Tribune, April 27, 1978, April 12, 1979.

⁴⁹ Leelanau Enterprise and Tribune, April 12, 1979, September 23, 1982.

use agreements, the National Park Service and the Grosvenors agreed to a ten-year concession contract in 1986.⁵⁰

The lakeshore's most important land acquisition decisions of the 1980s: the fate of the post 1964 property owners and the fate of environmentally sensitive areas within the abandoned Glen Lake Highlands corridor were both taken under consideration by the United States Congress. In 1982, a major revision of the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore organic act was approved which would have an important impact on the future of land acquisition within the park.

Relegislating the Lakeshore

Public Law 97-361 was an attempt to put into law the decisions that emerged from the general management planning process, as well as to address lingering complaints related to land acquisition. Signed by President Ronald Reagan in October of 1982, Public Law 97-361 was a carefully brokered compromise between public and private interests, environmentalists, and property owners. The three men most responsible for the amendment of the lakeshore's organic act were John Graykowski, James Markwood, and Congressman William S. Broomfield. Markwood was a legislative aide to Congressman Guy Vander Jagt. He took up Congressman Vander Jagt's commitment to introduce legislation to remove from the lakeshore the Glen Lake portion of the scenic highway. Graykowski was an aide to Senator Donald Riegle, a moderate Democrat interested in protecting resources vital to the character of the lakeshore. In HR 4062 Congressman Vander Jagt proposed to delete the Glen Lake corridor from Sleeping Bear lakeshore, disregarding the park service's call for the retention of three vital natural areas. The natural areas were a 160-acre lowland called the Kettle and Kame area, the Bow Lakes and adjacent bog that covered a total of 975 acres, and the scenic upland known as Miller Hill, 1,208 acres. Together these areas represented important elements in the geological history of the Sleeping Bear country. Congressman Broomfield was a "suburban Republican" from Bloomfield, Michigan, a comfortable bedroom community west of Detroit. A moderate ideologically and a fiscal conservative he would normally have hesitated to intrude himself into national park politics. Nonetheless, Broomfield introduced a bill to protect constituents who had summer homes in the area. H.R. 3787 extended use and occupancy rights for up to twenty-five years to people who developed Sleeping Bear property after 1964. Some ninety cottage owners were due to lose their summer homes in February of 1983. Congressman Broomfield proposed to extend their right to their cottages through the remainder of the twentieth century. His arguments in favor of the bill were based on fairness and pragmatism. Most of the post-1964 homes were located adjacent to cottages built before that date and which were going to be allowed to remain in private hands until the late 1990s. Why not, Broomfield argued, give people with the post-1964 homes the same rights as those who built a few years earlier, either way these lands would largely be unavailable for public use anyway.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ibid; Leelanau Enterprise and Tribune, February 28, 1985, May 1, 1986.

⁵¹ James Dunning, Director, Midwest Region to Chief, Office of Legislation, November 14, 1980, Washington Office Correspondence, 1982-present, SLBD Records; "Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore: 3,000 acres in Question," Michigan Audubon (May/June, 1982), 30, 3, 6-7.

Compromise was essential if either the Broomfield or Vander Jagt bills were to get through the Congress. Environmentalists were loathe to let stand Broomfield's extension of use rights for the post 1964 property owners. The Wilderness Society announced that it feared setting a precedent which would destroy the effectiveness of cut-off dates on development in areas proposed for park status. Both bills had to pass muster with Congressman John Seiberling (D-Ohio), an environmentalist and chair of the House Subcommittee on National Parks. In October of 1981 Seiberling and his subcommittee aides visited Sleeping Bear Dunes. He met with Superintendent Richard Peterson as well as homeowners concerned with losing their land. While making clear his support for an effective Sleeping Bear lakeshore Seiberling also felt it was important to work out a deal that would protect local landowners rights. He himself was the owner of property within the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area. "Basically," he told reporters after his visit, "what we're trying to do is reconcile the general public interest with the interests of those who happen to live in the park." But the Citizens' Council was dead set against the inclusion in the lakeshore of the three natural areas from the old scenic corridor. They wanted to see the park service's land acquisition authority reduced as they still feared federal authorities were secretly attempting to take Glen Lake on the installment plan.⁵²

The first step toward a compromise bill was the decision of Congressmen Vander Jagt and Broomfield to combine their proposals under one umbrella bill. Of the two, the Broomfield bill to help post-1964 property owners had more support. Even the Mackinac Chapter of the Sierra Club had come out in favor of the granting these people extensions, provided the park service had discretionary power over properties in environmentally sensitive or high visitor use areas. Congressman Vander Jagt dispatched his aide, James Markwood, to meet with the Citizens' Council and Superintendent Peterson. Meanwhile, Senator Donald Riegle had become involved with the issue in the upper house. His aide John Graykowski also visited Sleeping Bear and toured the Kettle, Bow Lakes, and Miller Hill. The more they became involved with Sleeping Bear, the more Markwood and Graykowski found other problems requiring legislative solution. Into the legislative mix were thrown issues such as wilderness designation, fee collection at the lakeshore, the park service's condemnation authority, and the land acquisition ceiling. A complex round of give-and-take followed with Congressional environmentalists such as Representative Dale Kildee (D-Flint) trying to expand Sleeping Bear's wilderness areas beyond even the General Management Plan guidelines. Senator James McClure (R-Idaho) demanded a provision, which returned all fees collected at Sleeping Bear to the federal treasury. In exchange for this concession McClure, Chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, pledged to support full appropriation of the lakeshore's newly expanded land acquisition ceiling. With the lakeshore's organic act open for complete overhaul, Vander Jagt and Markwood sought to create a mechanism short of condemnation to settle the frequent disputes between land-owners and the park service over property appraisals. Adding to the "let's make a deal" atmosphere was the pending adjournment of Congress and the climax of the legislative election campaigns.⁵³

Like most election eve bills Public Law 97-361 left a smile on the face of all of the interested parties. The Citizens' Council proclaimed victory because the scenic corridor in

⁵² Grand Rapids Press, October 11, 1981.

⁵³ Superintendent's Report, Sleeping bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1982, SLBD Records; Detroit Free Press, September 23, 1982; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), October 4, 1982.

Leelanau County was formally removed from the park plan. “We’re satisfied,” proclaimed a Sierra Club spokesman. The lakeshore received authorization to purchase two of the three remaining environmental areas within the old corridor that had been protected by Congress in the 1970 Act. The Bow Lakes bog and the Miller Hill area were secured, while the glacial depression known as the Kettle was not open to purchase and could only enter the lakeshore through donation. Without this clear direction from Congress it is unlikely the park service had the authority to make new acquisitions within the old scenic corridor. Congressman Broomfield was pleased to be able to extend the leases of most of the post-1964 property owners until 1998. The bill also directed the Department of the Interior to formally submit the lakeshore’s wilderness preservation plan to Congress by 1983. “The net result,” according to the Sierra Club, “is that in the year 2000 the park will be a better place.” The final bill also increased the land acquisition ceiling to \$66 million. Attempts to create a binding arbitration procedure for contested purchases, were turned aside when the Senate amended the final bill. The 1970 bill creating the lakeshore had run some seven pages. The 1982 bill amending the lakeshore was twice as long, even so it left hanging several controversial issues.

Left unaffected by Public Law 97-361 was the proposed six and a half-mile scenic road corridor through the Crystal Highlands in Benzie County. People in the county were divided over the desirability of the corridor. Property owners on Platte Lake generally opposed the project as something that might degrade the quality of water within that lake’s drainage. In 1977, the County Board of Commissioners had enthusiastically approved the proposed scenic road. Some business interests still favored the road as a way to guarantee that Benzie County was seen as the gateway to the Sleeping Bear Dunes. Unlike the politically savvy Citizens’ Council in Leelanau County, the Platte Lake Improvement Association did not act decisively to have the scenic corridor removed from the lakeshore when the issue was before Congress. “Whatever they did, we’ve got to do,” lamely observed a member of their board of directors after the fact. The formal removal of the Leelanau portion of the scenic drive from the lakeshore acted as a prod for Benzie County to bring the issue to a head. An ad hoc committee of the county commission was formed to review the road. That feasibility study established that there would be no serious environmental side effects from the road, that it would, however, be very costly (\$18.7 million), and that based on current park visitation rates the road was not necessary. The park service’s main reason for wanting the road—to maintain the area’s rural character—was turned on its head, with the corridor cited as the main threat to the area’s rural landscape. Finally in August of 1983 the county commissioners met and voted to reverse their earlier support for the park road. Later that year Congressman Vander Jagt introduced H.R. 4242 to delete the Benzie Corridor from the lakeshore. “I’d say it’s dead as a doornail,” one of the Congressman’s aides told the press. “If the local people don’t want it, forget it.” Nonetheless no bill to officially remove the corridor from the lakeshore was ever approved and two decades later it remains part of the Sleeping Bear park plan.⁵⁴

The amendment of the lakeshore’s organic act dictated the dimensions of Sleeping Bear’s land protection plan. The plan was the brainchild of Secretary Watt and was part of a nationwide effort to make the National Park Service’s land acquisition program more efficient and transparent. Land protection plans, it was hoped, would also cut the cost of park expansion by

⁵⁴ Benzie County Weekly Express/Press Box, October 7, 1982; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), August 22, 1983.

asking units to identify alternatives to fee acquisition and by encouraging parks to acquire only the absolute minimum interest in the land needed to meet management needs. The Sleeping Bear plan focused on the remaining 5,012 acres of non-federal land within the revised boundaries of the lakeshore. It proposed how best to use easements and other protection regimes on these lands as well as reviewing the status of the 1,399 acres of private land already under restrictive agreements. The plan also proposed scenic overlooks, parking areas and access roads for the Miller Hill and Bow Lakes preservation areas. The plan largely confirmed what had been enacted in 1982 and this angered many people who expected that the plan would reflect the new local consensus against the Benzie corridor. Public meetings presenting the plan were predictably stormy as old grievances were voiced and threats muttered. Even the proposal to use easements to protect the Bow Lakes drew flak from a property owner who argued he would rather the lakeshore bought the whole tract rather than place restrictions on the use of a portion of it. The sentiment, which drew the largest applause at the public meetings, however, came from State Senator Connie Binsfeld. “Landowners have had to go through turmoil throughout the creation of the park while officials come and go,” she observed. “There is a lot of stress involved on the resident’s part. Enough is enough—I hope there would be no more changes in the plan.”⁵⁵

The lakeshore had to wait before receiving the funds necessary to purchase the Bow Lakes area. In 1987, Congress appropriated \$2 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and a portion of the 725-acre bog area came under lakeshore management.⁵⁶

Managing More With Less: Lakeshore Operations, 1979-1983

With the adoption of a new General Management Plan, ten years of on-site management experience under their belts, and the amendment of the lakeshore’s organic act, the National Park Service had for the first time a clear-cut sense of its mission at Sleeping Bear. Ironically, this clearer sense of mission came at the same time the entire agency was suffering from frustration over budget reductions. During the early 1980s federal-spending priorities changed. The administration of President Ronald Reagan annually proposed budget reductions for the National Park Service and other domestic programs while building the strength of the defense establishment. Reagan’s priorities were at odds with the largely Democratic Congress, which led to annual disputes over budgetary priorities. Programs such as the Youth Conservation Corps, which had undertaken much valuable site development and restoration work at Sleeping Bear, were discontinued. Land acquisition funds were so reduced as to call into question the lakeshore’s ability to even pay for properties under condemnation. The prospect of collecting entrance fees at Sleeping Bear was considered for the first time. Between the President’s attempt to shrink the size of the federal government in the early 1980s and the burden of heavy budget deficits in the late 1980s the entire decade was one of belt-tightening and manpower shortages.

Sleeping Bear Dunes’ development was circumscribed by these national trends. Despite a clear-cut need for the improvement of visitor facilities at the Platte River Campground and the Stocking Scenic Drive, little more than planning took place to improve either site. The slow pace

⁵⁵ Leelanau Enterprise and Tribune, August 4, 1983; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), August 4, 1983.

⁵⁶ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, December 31, 1987.

of development frustrated even a fiscal conservative such as Congressman Guy Vander Jagt. "Each year seems to bring postponements of urgently needed public accommodations," he complained in 1979. Such a complaint loudly voiced and charges that toilet facilities at the lakeshore violated federal health standards shook loose a small increase in funding. New construction activity, however, remained largely stalled. The maintenance division devoted a considerable amount of its time to clearing properties acquired through land acquisition. The park remained headquartered in the old bank building in Frankfurt, far from the actual dunes. The principal visitor contact point remained the refurbished house overlooking Glen Lake. The park's collections and equipment remained scattered throughout the lakeshore in a variety of abandoned buildings.⁵⁷

The opportunity to acquire much-needed storage and maintenance space presented itself in 1980, when the United States Air Force announced its intention to close its Empire base. Since the days of Superintendent Martinek the National Park Service had wished to use the hilltop reservation south of Empire, Michigan. But the lakeshore's claim on the Air Force base was by no means uncontested. The village of Empire wanted the lion's share of the eighty-seven acre base returned to the local tax rolls to make up for revenues lost by the establishment of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. A more serious challenge came from within the U.S. Department of the Interior. The Bureau of Indian Affairs put in a claim for the surplus federal property in the name of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa-Chippewa. The Ottawa-Chippewa wanted the base as a site for a tribal college and a light manufacturing plant. After a year of study, however, the Indians withdrew their request due to the high cost of converting the base to their proposed use. Secretary of the Interior Watt briefly put another obstacle in the way when he threatened to sell the base to the highest bidder, but this scheme fell away before Congressional criticism. It was not until 1983 that the General Service Administration got around to making the transfer official. The lakeshore received the bulk of the base with a small portion reserved for the Air Force and the Federal Aviation Administration to maintain data collection stations.⁵⁸

While the Ottawa and Chippewa peoples did not acquire the Empire Air Force Base site, their visibility within the lakeshore grew during the late 1970s and early 1980s. In May 1979 the United States District Court ruled that the Ottawa and Chippewa had retained their aboriginal right to fish in the waters of Lake Michigan. The decision disrupted the Michigan Department of Natural Resources' delicate balancing of the needs of the commercial fishing industry and the powerful sport-fishing lobby. In the wake of the federal court ruling a third force was introduced into the equation: Indian fishermen who rejected state regulation over their fishing activities. Chippewa fishermen from Sault Ste. Marie and Bay Mills in the Upper Peninsula began to commercially fish in the waters of Grand Traverse Bay. As the Indians whitefish catches increased so to did the level of verbal abuse and physical harassment directed against them by sport fishermen. By August 1979 the Bureau of Indian Affairs approached the Superintendent of Sleeping Bear for sites from which Indian fishermen could launch boats on Platte and Good Harbor bays. The lakeshore cooperated by making access points available, but the park service would allow no formal commercial operations on its beaches. Nonetheless, local fishermen were "disgusted" by the lakeshore's cooperation with the Indian gill-netters. By October Chippewa

⁵⁷ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), May 7, 1979.

⁵⁸ Leelanau Enterprise and Tribune, January 8, 1981; Benzie Ad-Visor, April 4, 1983.

fishermen were operating within the lakeshore at the mouth of Otter Creek. On one occasion forty sport fishermen organized a “beach party” at the end of the Esch Road, blocking the Indian’s access to Platte Bay. The presence of a dozen law enforcement officers and the Indian’s willingness to avoid confrontation and shift their activities to Good Harbor Bay defused the potential for conflict. The crisis atmosphere over fishing in the Sleeping Bear gradually dissipated in the early 1980s as broad protocol was negotiated between the Department of Natural Resources and the Ottawa-Chippewa to regulate commercial and sport fishing.⁵⁹

By that time the National Park Service had its own conflict with sports fishermen. The problem began when the National Park Service issued a series of draft regulations on hunting and fishing within the parks. The new guidelines would have ended trapping with the lakeshore, an activity engaged in between ten and fifteen hunters annually. More explosive was the proposed ban on the use of minnows and spawn as bait. The regulations would have ended smelt dipping within the lakeshore and severely restrict steelhead fishing on the Crystal and Platte rivers. Michigan fishermen, outraged by federal support of Indian fishing were not about to let their rights be further restricted. More than 2,000 complaints flooded into Washington, D.C. The Sleeping Bear Advisory Commission formally protested the new regulations. Not counting on the volume of complaints alone to force a policy retreat, one of the advisory commission members buttonholed Secretary of the Interior James Watt at a fund raising dinner. “This is not right,” Watt was quoted to have said, “Sleeping Bear should not be included in this.” In the end it was determined that since Sleeping Bear’s organic act specifically stated that fishing was to be conducted “in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan and the United States applicable thereto,” the lakeshore could be exempted from the national guidelines as it had an existing legal framework. The ban on trapping, which the federal courts had rather ruled was an activity distinct from hunting, was banned at Sleeping Bear after 1982.⁶⁰

The lakeshore won much needed good-will with the sport fishing community in 1979 when it assumed responsibility for dredging the mouth of the Platte River. Dredging had begun on the Platte in 1968, in the wake of a storm, which drowned seven Platte Bay fishermen. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources started the dredging to provide a way for boats to exit or enter the Platte River, saving sportsmen the long and potentially dangerous open water passage around Point Betsie. Michigan officials saw the operation as a temporary, stopgap measure until a harbor of refuge could be built at the river mouth. After environmentalists blocked the Platte River harbor plan the DNR found themselves with an expensive on-going responsibility to keep the river mouth open during fishing season. “Coho fever” began to abate in the late 1970s and the state authorities announced in 1978 that they would not dredge the Platte the following year. The river mouth, of course, was within the lakeshore so park officials made no plan to continue so invasive a procedure as dredging. However, as the fall of 1979 approached the lakeshore found itself the object of escalating public pressure to keep the Platte open for sport fishermen. Superintendent Brown lacked the funding to pay for the operation alone so he persuaded the Department of Natural Resources to share the cost of the effort. With

⁵⁹ Robert Doherty, *Disputed Waters: Native American and the Great Lakes Fishery* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 122-5; *Record-Eagle* (Traverse City), August 17, 1979; *Benzie County Record-Patriot*, October 3, 1979.

⁶⁰ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, June 18, 1982, SLBD Records; *Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune*, August 19, 1982.

extreme reluctance the state agreed to help with the dredging for one more season. “After this year,” a DNR official said of the lakeshore, “it’s their baby.”⁶¹

The National Park Service wanted no part of an open-ended battle against the natural action of wind, waves, and sand. But as the summer of 1980 approached the pressure to dredge again began to mount. The community of Honor, Michigan, was planning for its fourteenth annual National Coho Salmon Festival. “There was a feeling,” remarked lakeshore facility manager Merline Schlange, “that this dredging operation is absolutely necessary for the economic health of the community and the safety of the fishermen.” The park budget, however, simply could not afford to contract for a dragline. Left up to its own devices the lakeshore would have had to choose between dredging the Platte or keeping South Manitou Island open to visitors. At the last minute the Washington, D.C. office scraped up \$6,000. It was not enough to fully fund the project. Sleeping Bear was told find a way to get the job done anyway. The superintendent elected to dredge only during peak use periods, such as weekends. There was danger in this half-hearted commitment. The power of the sand flow in the Platte was such that without dredging the river’s mouth would be impassable for boats within a matter of days. Park dredging gave the appearance of navigational maintenance, without the full safety benefit of a genuine commitment. By the second week of September tens of thousands of salmon were swarming at the mouth of the river; swarms of anglers responded to the news. On September 18th between twenty and thirty boats were angling for salmon in Platte Bay when a sudden shift in the wind and weather turned Platte Bay into surging sea of white-capped swells. The boats made a dash for the mouth of the river. Chaos ensued when the first boats ran aground on the sandbar. The park service’s dragline was not in operation, since Thursday was not considered a peak period. Boaters were forced to jump into the surf to pull their craft into the safety of the river. In the crashing waves boats banged into one another and fishermen were swept off their feet. The timely arrival of a Coast Guard Boston Whaler saved five of the fishermen, the others got a cold dunking and a bone chilling scare. All talk of letting nature take its course or of saving money ended that day. To Benzie County officials it was an eerily familiar repeat of the deadly 1967 storm and the local tourist economy could afford no further reprise.⁶²

Within three days of the near disaster at the Platte, Sam Eberly, Chairman of the Benzie County Board of Commissioners and a member of the lakeshore advisory commission, had a meeting with Midwest Region Director James Dunning. Congressman Vander Jagt lobbied the Washington, D.C. office. Less than a week after the storm the lakeshore was awarded a special reallocation of funds to continue the dredging until the end of the salmon run. Since that time, in spite of occasional special studies, the National Park Service has made a commitment to maintain an unsightly dragline operation. Although it is a clear interference with a natural process, the dragline is a concession to sport fishermen and a small price to pay for having avoided the construction of a major marina at the Platte.

A New Harbor: To Build or Not to Build?

⁶¹ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), September 4, 1979.

⁶² Record Eagle (Traverse City), September 19, 1980.

During an era beset with budget problems, it should have come as no surprise that the no-build option was deemed the most appropriate for the long smoldering controversy over a site for the lakeshore's ferry service. The single-most expensive recommendation of the General Management Plan had been to build a new harbor within the boundaries of the lakeshore. In 1981 a \$309,000 congressional appropriation funded a study of five potential harbor sites. The project was directed by the National Park Service's Denver Service Center with engineering services contracted from the Ann Arbor firm of McNamee, Porter and Seeley, Inc. The goal was to provide a docking facility for the Manitou islands ferry and to provide recreational boaters with access to the Sleeping Bear shoreline. Such a harbor had long been part of the National Park Service's long-range plans for the lakeshore. Loud and persistent complaints from the village of Leland, the site of the Grosvenors' ferry dock, pushed the harbor study to the front burner. The Sleeping Bear ferry, in the minds of many village residents, contributed to traffic congestion in their scenic community. Five possible sites were part of the initial investigation: Glen Haven, Port Oneida, North Bar Lake, South Bar Lake—Empire, and Leland. The inclusion of the latter was simply as a part of a "no build" option, typical in planning documents. Nonetheless, the park service was excoriated in public for including Leland in the study at all. "I am shocked that this is being considered," complained a member of the advisory commission. "The people of Leland don't want it. Take the proposal back to Denver and tell them that." The Leelanau planning commission and its board of commissioners quickly went on record in opposition of Leland be included in the study in any way.⁶³

The harbor study also drew flak as a fiscal "boondoggle." The Traverse City Record-Eagle called for federal budget director David Stockman to investigate it as a waste of taxpayer dollars. "If the National Park Service wants to give me that \$309,000 for the study I'll take it and retire on what is left over," commented Keith Wilson of the Michigan Waterways Commission. The park service had once sunk his harbor plan for the Platte and now he was quite willing to deride their planning process. "Everything the NPS wants to know about the harbor sites being discussed is already in the files of the Department of Natural Resources in Lansing. All they have to do is ask for it." Benzie County officials also took their shots at the study. Each of the five study sites was located in Leelanau County, which clearly did not want the harbor. Although Benzie County was further from the Manitou islands it wanted ferry docks badly and had the advantage of being able to offer two fully functioning harbors at Frankfurt and Elberta. For years Elberta had been the site of the Ann Arbor Railway's car ferryboats. The demise of that business left officials there anxious to bring another tourist business into the Frankfurt area. Spurned by the Denver Service Center study the Michigan legislature appropriated money for their own study of converting the state-owned car-ferry docks at Elberta to a park service docking site.⁶⁴

Between 1982 and 1984 the separate components of the harbor study, engineering, visitor use, and environmental, were completed. The lakeshore presented the results to the public in a series of public meetings. The study results were sobering, with each potential site carrying a heavy price tag or considerable resource management burdens. South Bar Lake and Leland were not addressed in the final report as neither was in the lakeshore proper. Of the remaining sites Glen Haven was determined the best location from an economic point-of-view. A harbor there

⁶³ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, May 8, 1981, SLBD Records; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, May 14, 1981.

⁶⁴ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), June 6, 1981; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, June 28, 1984.

was projected to cost \$3.4 million, although it was the intrusion of a great breakwater wall in the middle of one of the finest beaches in mid-America that was the true cost of the building at the site. The need to provide parking for several hundred cars and trailers, a ticketing facility, site administration, toilets, and fire protection to support the harbor would also have blighted the historic charm of the hamlet of Glen Haven. The two Port Oneida sites investigated would have had less secondary impacts, but the shallow water of the area would have required higher initial construction costs, between \$4.3 and \$6.8 million. The North Bar Lake site had little to recommend it as it carried the hefty price tag of Port Oneida with environmental damage as bad as Glen Haven. For a park unit charged by Congress to protect the Sleeping Bear area “from developments and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area,” a new harbor proved hard to justify.⁶⁵

The National Park Service had spent hundreds of thousands of dollars and four years of planning to reach a pretty bad set of alternatives. But it was time and money well-spent if only because during the course of those studies and deliberations public sentiment shifted. The image of a five hundred-foot breakwater wall jutting into Sleeping Bear Bay and a five hundred-car parking lot in Glen Haven was more than most Leelanau County residents could abide. Glen Arbor townsfolk railed against the docking facility plan. Their strongest argument, made by an advisory commission member was: “The Park cannot, lawfully or in good conscience, purposefully destroy what it is charged to protect.” The environmental argument joined neatly with the community’s frugal Republicanism. “We can’t understand,” editorialized the Traverse City Record-Eagle, “how the Park Service can seriously consider building a new \$4 million harbor. . . . when good service is already provided from a good harbor just a short distance from the islands.” The very people who in 1981 had criticized the park service for even including Leland as a “no-build” option were by 1984 clamoring, “leave it in Leland.” The Detroit Free Press logically reasoned: “If the ferry slip is being moved because the town found it a nuisance, what impact does the Park Service suppose it is going to have on the dunes?” A new facility within the park the editors argued would be “a real failure of imagination.”⁶⁶

Even within the town of Leland sentiment began to shift in favor of retaining the docking facility. Michael Grosvenor, owner of Manitou Island Transit had worked hard over the years to manage the surge in ferry customers. He developed a series of remote parking lots and connected them to the dock via a shuttle service. The historic Fishtown area still thronged with people just before or after a ferry docking, but the bustling maritime scene was in keeping with the threshold experience of a genuine harbor. Leland merchants were uncomfortable with the sentiment that the docking should be removed because of traffic congestion. If Grosvenor, one of the few merchants to provide parking for his customers was driven from the town, what could other businesses expect in the future? Restaurants in particular were loath to see the ferry relocated from the town. Breakfast at the Bluebird had long been a tradition among visitors waiting to go over to the Manitous. “Like it or not,” a town resident concluded, “Leland cannot and will not be excluded from Michigan's No.1 industry, tourism.” In the end that was the conclusion reached by most observers. The Advisory Commission recommended the “no-build” option and in March

⁶⁵ National Park Service, Environmental Assessment for a Docking Facility, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (Denver: Denver Service Center, 1984).

⁶⁶ Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, September 14, 1984; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), September 3, 1984; Detroit Free Press, September 30, 1984.

1985 Midwest Regional Director Charles Odegaard ordered the lakeshore to forego constructing a new facility.⁶⁷

Conclusion

The period from 1978 to 1983 was a period of planning and controversy in which the most significant decisions were those which recommended taking no action at all. It was a period when the executive branch itself questioned the efficacy of federal environmental leadership. A significant portion of the lakeshore, the scenic highway around Glen Lake was removed from the park plan, but this fell far short of the heady “Reagan Revolution” rhetoric of returning the whole of Sleeping Bear to state control. Four and a half years were spent studying a possible site for a harbor, which upon reflection was not needed after all.

What was produced at Sleeping Bear during this five-year transition period were plans; a General Management Plan, plans for new campgrounds, plans for a new park headquarters, plans to complete the land acquisition program, plans for a harbor that would never be built. The plans laid out the path by which the National Park Service would meet its mandate in northwest Michigan to serve the public’s recreation needs and preserve a special environment. Perhaps more important than the plans themselves was the process by which the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore was reimagined between 1978 and 1983. During these years Sleeping Bear evolved from being a new area to an established entity. The demise of the scenic drives compromised the vision of people like E. Genevieve Gillette who wished to see the lakeshore embody the entire geological history of the region’s unique landscape. Also compromised were the aesthetics of graceful park drives and breathtaking viewsheds that New Deal-influenced planners like Allen T. Edmunds had seen as central to the park plan. These losses were the price for what was gained: a genuine, if always painful, engagement with the people of the Sleeping Bear area. The public turned the direction of National Park Service planning on the issue of the scenic drives. The service won acceptance for the special conservation areas within the defunct corridor. Through the park service’s reluctant operation of a drag-line at the mouth of the Platte and Leland’s wary embrace of the Manitou ferry dock, the habit of consultation and even cooperation was beginning to be learned.

Whether consultation between the local community and the lakeshore could be used to produce a better lakeshore or whether the long-term interests of the nation and the local interests of northwestern Michigan could be harmonized to preserve a treasured landscape, were the questions faced by the park service in the 1980s and 1990s.

⁶⁷ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, September 27, 1984.

Chapter Five
"A Local and National Treasure"
Managing the Sleeping Bear Dunes Park
1984 - 1995

"Time has helped to calm the anger," observed the Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council in 1996, "and the National Lakeshore is now widely regarded as a local and national treasure." By the late 1990s the lakeshore was annually visited by more than a million people. Sleeping Bear Dunes had emerged as the premier recreational attraction in the popular northwest Michigan tourist area. The broad expanse of publicly owned beaches, the roadside agricultural landscapes, and the sparkling hills of wind-blown sand were a striking reminder "of what the region once was, and of the beauty lost." A broad consensus emerged by the 1990s that had the lakeshore not been established when it was, that this most beautiful portion of the Great Lakes region might well have been subdivided and condoized beyond recognition. In the twenty-five years since coming to northwest Michigan the National Park Service had succeeded in meeting the Congressional mandate to protect the Sleeping Bear from "developments and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area."¹

What most visitors to the lakeshore did not appreciate were the conflicts, sacrifices, and choices thrust upon the park service and the people of the dunes country to create the landscape so enjoyed each summer. Sleeping Bear had not been a wilderness for nearly two centuries. Between 1970 when the lakeshore was created and mid-1980s the National Park Service gradually established direct control, or indirect administration in the case of the several hundred lease holders, over the roughly 71,000 acres of the park. In managing all of these lands the Congressional mandate to "preserve" the land had to be balanced with the right of the public to "enjoy" the dune country. During the 1980s and 1990s park managers at Sleeping Bear were continually faced with the nagging question of preservation: what time is this place? Is there a particular moment in vegetation succession, the mythic "climax," that is the goal of preservation? Will the public visit and appreciate a landscape defined strictly by geologic time, or will historical experience be revealed through the land? Whose story will emerge along the beaches, trails, and roadsides of the Sleeping Bear: farmers, mariners, Ottawa Indians, vacation cottagers? For the park service these landscape-shaping decisions have been, by necessity, as much political, economic, and legal as they are aesthetic, ecological, or historical.

For years the Traverse Bay area has promoted itself as "God's Country." Anyone who has known the region's crisp clear mornings or spectacular Lake Michigan sunsets would be inclined to agree. The dunes have been bathed red in the alpine glow of those sunsets for thousands of years, but for the past generation a significant portion of "God's Country" has been a landscape managed by the National Park Service. The sometimes mundane, all too human process by which federal officials and local people make decisions to shape the Sleeping Bear area is the ongoing theme of the lakeshore's history.

¹ Michigan Land Use Institute, *The Homestead Swap: Trading Public Land for Private Grain in the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore* (n.p.: Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council, 1996), 6.

Road Wars

The movement of visitors through the lakeshore was one of the primary and has been one of the most enduring concerns of the National Park Service in the Sleeping Bear area. The original master plan for the lakeshore called for the creation of a scenic road system which would relieve tourist congestion on local roads and provide interesting overlook points. While even in the early plans M-22 and M-109 were planned to be partially used by visitors, the agency hoped, as much as possible, to "separate Lakeshore traffic from local or residential traffic." But that plan, dating from a time when parks were unabashedly designed landscapes, did not survive the more preservation-oriented 1970s. The preparation of a new general management plan for the lakeshore between 1978 and 1980 brought with it two features which would have a great impact on road policy at the Sleeping Bear. The general management plan endorsed the aggressive designation of large areas of the park as wilderness and removed the Leelanau County portion of the scenic road system from the lakeshore. The Benzie County scenic road corridor was effectively rendered defunct by local opposition during the early 1980s. These decisions seriously exacerbated what under any circumstances would have been a thorny relationship between park management and the local government authorities charged with maintaining area roads.

One of the defining features of wilderness is the lack of roads. Roadless character is critical for an area to meet the legal requirements of the 1964 Wilderness Act. When the new general management plan validated the decision to administer more than half of the lakeshore as an official wilderness, the park service was set on a collision course with the Leelanau County Road Commission. As the lakeshore completed more and more of its land acquisition the park service planned to close vehicular access to large portions of the Sleeping Bear landscape. But the roads throughout the park were maintained by the local road commission, whose funding came from local property taxes and state appropriations based upon the amount of road mileage under their jurisdiction. The road commissions in both Leelanau and Benzie counties had already been hurt by the establishment of the national lakeshore because it took more than 40,000 acres off of the local property tax rolls while at the same time attracting thousands more tourists to use the local road system. Wilderness designation and its roadless requirement hit those commissions a second time by threatening road closures that would trigger a drop in state appropriations. The conflict between the interests of the local road commissions and the National Park Service came to a head on North Manitou Island.

During the late nineteenth century North Manitou Island was a microcosm of the rest of northern Michigan. The 14,000-acre island was inhabited by 300 people who either worked for a lumber company cutting Manitou timber or they scratched out a living from forest farms. The people on the island had a school, baseball team, and their own railroad—a narrow gauge logging line. A network of roads linked the remote farms to the logging dock and the U.S. Life Saving Service station. The disastrous crash of the forest economy in the 1920s helped to spur the depopulation of North Manitou. From the 1930s to the creation of the lakeshore North Manitou was largely depopulated, save for a handful of summer homeowners and the sporting activities sponsored by William Angell and later by his foundation. Nonetheless, the Leelanau County Road Commission had kept on their books forty-two miles of roads on North Manitou. By 1984, when the island was formally and finally acquired by the National Park Service, the annual

payments received by the road commission for the all but unused Manitou roads was \$40,000. In return for this large sum all the road commission had to do was retain a part time maintenance worker on the island to occasionally remove a fallen tree with a chain saw. As a New York Times reporter observed North Manitou was used by the Leelanau Road Commission "as a sort of interest-bearing account for years." Wilderness designation threatened to foreclose on that account.²

Both the National Park Service and the road commission anticipated a problem regarding the closing of the island roads. As early as 1972 Leelanau County asserted that roads within the lakeshore would remain under local government control because they had no intention of giving them up and the lakeshore's enabling legislation prevented it from acquiring public land by condemnation. In 1979, Superintendent Donald Brown reviewed with the Leelanau County Road Commission the implications of the new general management plan. Brown believed that the only resolution of the conflict between the wilderness and road revenues was for a new source of funding to be made available for Leelanau County. He recommended that no time be lost exploring new legislation, on both the state and federal level, to make up the difference.

That advice fell on deaf ears. Yet as late as 1983 no legislative action had been taken. Part of the problem was that the local road commissions were unsure how much federal assistance to request. "We know we need assistance in doing the job," a Benzie County Road Commission engineer admitted, "but we don't know how much to ask for." Part of the problem was institutional, in that county road commissions are fairly powerful local entities in Michigan. They are run by pragmatic-problem solvers, jealous of their prerogatives. They found the National Park Service's bureaucratic style of issue resolution plodding and unresponsive. "They are quick to raise objections, but slow with solutions," complained James Gilbo, engineer and manager of the road commission. "If something is not black and white in their plan, they tend to shutdown and say an action is not authorized by Congress."³

Also a problem was Congressman Guy Vander Jagt, who did finally sponsor a bill to provide federal assistance for Sleeping Bear road building in 1984. Vander Jagt was a fiscal and philosophical conservative. He strongly supported President Ronald Reagan's efforts to reduce federal domestic spending programs. In 1986, Vander Jagt even advocated repeal of the Twenty-Second Amendment to the United States Constitution, so that Reagan could be elected to a third term. Failing in that Vander Jagt called for Reagan to run for the House of Representatives, so he could lead the nation as Speaker-of-the-House. The Congressman regularly voted zero funding for the Department of the Interior during House budget debates. His special pleading for extra Interior funds for his district did not win much sympathy among the Democratic majority. Even the Reagan administration testified against Vander Jagt's bill during a House hearing. National Park Service Director Russell Dickinson reminded Vander Jagt that seventy percent of the lakeshore's visitors were Michigan residents and that the federal government already provided the state with millions of dollars from the Highway Trust fund. Part of the problem with obtaining federal funds for local roads within the lakeshore was the fear of establishing an expensive precedent for scores of other parks. Vander Jagt tried to point out that Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore already had been receiving special annual appropriations with which to

² John Holusha, "County Threatens to Cut Timber in National Park," New York Times, n.d., Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Clipping File, 1984, July-December, SLBD Records; Rita Rusco, North Manitou Island: Between Sunrise and Sunset, 150-4.

³ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), December 12, 1983; James C. Gilbo, Personal Communication, May 28, 1999.

improve locally owned roads. The powerful chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Chicago Congressman Sidney Yates had special affection for the sister lakeshore park but an antipathy for Guy Vander Jagt. The latter had lent uncolleageal support to a Republican who had given Yates a tough reelection challenge, which made Yates more than happy to rain on Vander Jagt's lakeshore road initiatives. Another congressman, with less ideological and interpersonal baggage, could have won at least temporary federal assistance for Leelanau and Benzie county.⁴

With no special federal relief in the offing the roads within the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore continued to suffer from neglect. Arthur Clark, the Benzie County Road Commissioner, complained that the roads and bridges in the area were deteriorating faster than he could repair them. "Someone could get killed," he complained. This was only a slight exaggeration. A 1982 Department of the Interior study of M-22 and other highways in the lakeshore described the roads as "heavily impacted" by tourist traffic and "deficient" in design and surfacing. To maintain the roads properly the road commission estimated they needed \$16.7 million in additional revenues over ten years. They would surrender no existing revenue sources until new monies were forthcoming.⁵

North Manitou Island became the symbolic battleground between the park service's determination to follow through with their management plans and the road commissioners insistence on holding on to every financial asset at their disposal. The National Park Service had requested that other roads within the lakeshore be closed, but North Manitou became the battleground because it was a large, insular portion of the park to which the park service could control access and it had forty-two miles of defunct road.⁶

Without receiving federal funds to make up the shortfall the Leelanau County Road Commission refused to surrender the island roads. In August 1984, the Commission voted to explore "all possible commercial uses" of the road rights-of-way, including commercial logging and the operation of motorized scenic tours through the wilderness island. Meanwhile the park service, which had just completed the purchase of the Grosvenor's ferry dock on the island, announced it would not allow the road commission use of the dock, as their actions threatened the island's environment. The road commission, headed by strong willed Glen Noonan, refused to be so easily outflanked. They asserted ownership of an abandoned dock at the end of one of their island roads and notified the park service they would use it to bring road equipment to North Manitou. Superintendent Richard Peterson knew that dock was in severe disrepair so he "authorized" the road commission to conduct operations on the island for one year but placed severe restrictions on their activities, including the provision "no timber may be cut or destroyed from federal property." The road commission dispatched a forester to the island to estimate the value of the timber along the county's road right-of-way. In October 1984, the commission's attorney warned Congressman Vander Jagt, "Something serious" was about to happen between the feuding agencies.⁷

⁴ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), July 21, 1979, December 12, 1983, July 24, 1986, February 26, 1987; Grand Rapids Press, September 12, 1984; Cockrell, *A Signature of Time and Eternity: The Administrative History of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore*, 293-4.

⁵ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), October 17, 1985.

⁶ Gina Guy, Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region to F. Henry Habicht, Assistant Attorney General, March 30, 1987, Road Commission Suit File, SLBD Records.

⁷ Richard R. Peterson to Guy Vander Jagt, October 12, 1984, Road Commission Suit File, SLBD Records. Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, October 4, 1984.

The "something serious" was the enforcement of North Manitou's wilderness status by park rangers. All unauthorized vehicles were ordered removed from the island. In August a private vehicle leased by the road commission was impounded by island rangers. The 1973 Chevrolet Blazer belonged to James M. Munoz, a local schoolteacher and charter boat operator. He had the truck on the island for several years and made it available to the road commission when they needed access to the island's roads. Munoz had ignored a registered letter warning him to have the Blazer removed from the island. "I have been wronged," Munoz complained to the road commission, after the park service shipped the truck to a mainland storage facility. Congressman Vander Jagt expressed "shock" at the rangers' action and offered to intercede in the dispute. The truck was eventually returned to Munoz, but only after he signed an agreement pledging not to leave it overnight anywhere in the lakeshore. The road commission responded to the incident by giving Suttons Bay High School permission to transport a vehicle to the island, use it to give students a tour of North Manitou, and keep the truck on the island indefinitely. The commission also informed hunters preparing to participate in the North Manitou deer hunt that it was all right to bring motorcycles on to the island. Munoz struck his own blow against the lakeshore by proposing to the Leland Board of Education that the one-acre site of a former North Manitou school house be developed for educational or commercial recreational use.⁸

The road commission-park service melodrama took on a tragic dimension on December of 1986. A single engine plane on a training flight from Marquette, Michigan, to Traverse City became caught in a winter storm. With the craft's carburetor icing badly, it began to lose altitude. The flight instructor attempted to make an emergency landing on the partially frozen surface of Lake Manitou, on North Manitou Island. The ice could not hold the plane, which broke through and sank to the bottom of the interior lake. Before that happened one of the men, although badly injured, managed to escape from the wreck and make his way to the shore. Unfortunately he yielded to hypothermia within an hour. The attempt by park rangers and the Leelanau police and firemen to search for survivors and find the lost plane fed local discontent with the National Park Service's plan to manage the island as a wilderness free from motor vehicles. The three-day search took place amid blowing snow and gusty thirty-mile an hour winds. Searchers on the island requested the use of snowmobiles so that they could more quickly reach the priority search areas. Lakeshore officials demurred, but the State Police and the Coast Guard approved the use of snowmobiles. Unfortunately heavy seas prevented their transportation to the island. The parents of the missing student pilot were dismayed to discover that two pairs of cross-country skis were the only equipment available to speed the searcher's efforts, and immediately contacted their congressional representative. Red-hot calls from Washington, D.C. encouraged Superintendent Richard Peterson to belatedly offer the use of the lakeshore's all-terrain vehicles. But by that time the pedestrian patrols discovered the crash victims.⁹

Loudly voiced criticisms to the contrary, nothing the lakeshore did hindered the use of motorized equipment in the search. Weather conditions were simply too rough to transport any equipment to the island. The road commission, which claimed to maintain vehicles and roads on the island, did not look much better. They had offered rescuers the use of their four-wheel drive vehicle ("if they can get it running") and were forced to admit to the State Police that there were

⁸ Detroit News, September 19, 1985; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, September 5, 1985, September 12, 1985, September 19, 1985.

⁹ Mining Journal (Marquette, Michigan), December 12-13, 1986; Grand Rapids Press, December 12, 15, 1986; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, December 18, 1986.

many downed trees blocking the roads. Superintendent Peterson responded to the lessons from the crash by having several snowmobiles prepositioned on the island to aid any future winter rescue. Ironically the lakeshore agreed to allow a heavy flatbed truck on the island to transport the fallen plane from Manitou Lake to the Lake Michigan dock. Still to many people the incident gave the appearance that the National Park Service valued the sanctity of wilderness more than the prospect of saving human lives.¹⁰

The bad blood between Leelanau County and the lakeshore continued into the following year. After the road commission's North Manitou dock was wrecked in an autumn storm, the National Park Service blocked their efforts to obtain a Department of Natural Resources construction permit on the grounds it wanted only one dock on the island. The lakeshore offered the road commission the right to use the new National Park Service dock that was being planned. Rather than greet this offer as an olive branch, the road commissioners saw it as a plot to control Leelanau County's options. The response came in August of 1987 when the park service's own dock required a Department of Natural Resources permit. Officials in Lansing requested Leelanau County's approval for the dock because it would be used for a Leelanau County commercial operation, the island ferry. After sitting on the permit for several months the Leland Township supervisor tore up the park service application. The supervisor, who also blamed the park service for traffic congestion in Leland, had met with Superintendent Peterson and hoped to interest him in a shuttle system from the lakeshore to Leland. Peterson was unwilling to compromise on either North Manitou roads or Leland's traffic woes. "It's like talking with God," the supervisor complained. "They're nothing but a bunch of buck-passers." In disgust he declared "tell them to go suck an egg."¹¹

The war of words between the park service and the county became more heated when a third party to entered the fray. The slow pace at which the lakeshore was implementing the wilderness recommendations in the general management plan dismayed many environmentalists. After six years of waiting for North Manitou to be purchased and another five years for the wilderness plan to be put into effect, the environmentalists were ready for action. In August of 1986, the Sierra Club announced that if the park service did not act to have the road commission removed from the island it would initiate legal action. The Sierra Club lobbied Michigan Governor James Blanchard to investigate the road commissions collection of revenues based on the unused island roads. An investigation by the state attorney general followed. "We don't care whether the county gets any money for the roads or not," declared Anne Woiwode, head of the Sierra Club's Mackinac Chapter, "but we are not going to sit by and watch them degrade this proposed wilderness area." The Sierra Club's threat of a suit brought prompt action from the lakeshore. On April 6, 1987 the National Park Service published a public notice of its wilderness rules for North Manitou in the Federal Register. "Use of vehicles in wilderness areas is prohibited under federal statute," the notice made clear.¹²

By this time the Sierra Club was not the only one threatening legal action. In March of 1987 Leelanau County filed a complaint with the federal district court to force the park service to

¹⁰ Ibid; Daily Press (Ashland, Wisconsin), December 27, 1986.

¹¹ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, August 13, 1987; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), September 20, 1986.

¹² Anne M. Woiwode, Conservation Representative, Sierra Club to Governor James Blanchard, April 30, 1986, Road Commission Suit File, SLBD Records; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), August 18, 1986; Preview, April 6, 1987. For Leelanau County based environmentalists opposed to the Road Commission's position on North Manitou see: June Janis to "Pete" Peterson, March 19, 1985, Road Commission Suit File, SLBD Records.

allow them to maintain the island's roads and to establish that the road commission were the rightful owners of the right-of-way. The Sierra Club then filed suit to be named co-defendant in the suit, with the goal of insuring that environmental considerations would be given strong representation in any negotiated settlement. Leelanau County, however, objected to the Club's involvement and filed a brief in opposition to their joining the case. For its part the court did not seem to anxious to take on the case. Judge Douglas W. Hillman was slow to set deadlines for the pre-trial motions, leaving the lakeshore and the county to find their own way through the issue of road management.¹³

By 1988, it was clear that the fight over the roads on North Manitou Island had spiraled out of control. "I don't understand what this is all about," Lakeshore Assistant Superintendent John Abbett admitted in a moment of candid frustration. The fate of the roads on an offshore wilderness was not really important to Leelanau County. What did matter was money. The county needed more of it to provide appropriate care for heavily used tourist roads. But the old bitterness over the creation of the lakeshore, the land acquisition process, and the general management plan had been allowed to bleed into the road maintenance issue. "The main issue is the public's rights," Glen Noonan told his fellow commissioners. "Are we going to let the National Park Service dictate the final policy of the Road Commission?" Both the lakeshore and the county looked in vain to Congressman Vander Jagt to solve the road commission's problems. Unfortunately, Vander Jagt had tried and failed to even convince his own political allies to provide the county with federal support. That left the road commission with two practical alternatives: a local property tax increase and a larger share of state highway funds. As the prospect of a meaningful legal victory in federal district court faded the county turned to these other solutions. In 1987, Connie Binsfeld, Glen Lake's Republican representative in the Michigan Senate, shepherded a bill through the legislature, which increased the amount of road funding received by Leelanau and Benzie counties from the state. Leelanau's share of \$146,000 for 1988 came with the provision that the funds be "used exclusively" for construction or reconstruction which provided "safe and efficient...access to national parks and lakeshores."¹⁴

The National Park Service also sought creative alternatives to the regular head-butting with the road commission. An out of court settlement was crafted between the lakeshore and the county in which the Nature Conservancy purchased the bulk of the county's rights-of-way on North Manitou for around \$150,000. The National Park Service then purchased the land from the Conservancy, thereby getting around the lakeshore's legislative mandate to acquire public lands only by donation. In the wake of this settlement a more constructive relationship between the road commission and the park service gradually emerged. A turning point came when the road commission sought to make improvements to County Road 616. The hilly road had several dangerous curves the commission had long wanted to have straightened. Glen Lake school buses had to make long detours in winter to avoid its winding, icy surface. Superintendent Peterson made a special effort to accommodate the commission's need to use park land to realign the right-of-way. The lakeshore also worked with the road commission on applications to the Public Land Highway Fund and to the state department of transportation. Such funding requests did not solve Benzie and Leelanau counties escalating transportation costs, but they did help to ease the

¹³ Plaintiffs' First Interrogatories to Defendant, County of Leelanau and Leelanau Road Commission v. United States of America, United States District Court, Western District of Michigan, Case No.G87-211CA; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, April 14, 1988.

¹⁴ Grand Rapids Press, March 1, 1987; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, May 21, 1987, October 15, 1987, May 5, 1988.

local burden. "We'll take anything we can get," became the watchwords of James C. Gilbo, manager of the Leelanau Road Commission. Gilbo could even state publicly that "We're happy the Park Service is willing to explore solutions to the problem."¹⁵

While the lakeshore was in the midst of their dispute with the Leelanau Road Commission, Superintendent Peterson ran head-on into an additional road controversy concerning planned improvements to Pierce Stocking Drive. The seven-mile dune road had become the single most popular attraction in the park. It had long needed to be resurfaced and partially realigned. The National Park Service believed the entrance to the scenic drive, which began and ended with a very steep hill, needed to be relocated and a more gradual approach laid out up the dune. A bike lane on the Scenic Drive and additional parking, especially for recreational vehicles and trailers were further planned. The project, budgeted at \$2.2 million had been placed on the back burner many times due to funding shortfalls. When it looked like the road improvements were finally going to go through in May of 1986, the project hit a snag from an unexpected source.

The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Preservation Committee was the snag. Formed by Marie Scott, a Michigan native and a former lakeshore seasonal interpreter, the committee believed the road improvements as planned by the park service were too intrusive on the environment. The committee, which was largely made up of local people, also objected to the fact that the park service had not held public hearings specifically on the project. Superintendent Peterson contended that the realignment had been part of the general management plan, which was the subject of extensive hearings in 1979. Instead of building a new entrance road to the scenic drive, Scott's group advocated that the lakeshore partially take over the county owned Dune Valley Road. Superintendent Peterson, however, felt this would cause potential traffic problems with regular users of the county road, not to mention further conflict with the road commission which was loathe to lose more road mileage to the park service. Scott's committee expressed objections, which were shared by some lakeshore staff. One ranger, speaking to the press anonymously, complained that the scenic drive was being widened "so much that it doesn't become any different than any of the county roads." The design team from the Denver Service Center, however, had no problem with that criticism since the Stocking Drive had heavier traffic than most county roads. The complaint revealed a split in the ranks of the park service that was becoming increasingly common nationwide. Many younger employees saw the park system as an archipelago of ecological islands, protected from the rest of the world, while more traditional managers still thought of a park as primarily a recreational destination.¹⁶

Marie Scott elicited the support of the office of U.S. Senator Donald Riegle, which pressed Superintendent Peterson to hold hearings on the project. Peterson agreed to delay the start of the project and to entertain individual comment. The lakeshore management was not on firm ground and should have known it. There had not been an environmental assessment of the much tinkered with project. Superintendent Peterson demurred on holding hearings, although he did reluctantly scale back the bike lane and more importantly eliminate a large parking lot near

¹⁵ James C. Gilbo, Personal Communication, May 28, 1999; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, May 18, 1989, September 21, 1989. Ironically this solution to the issue was very similar to a plan proposed by Superintendent Peterson to the regional office in September of 1981; Superintendent of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore to Director, Midwest Regional Office, September 23, 1981, County Roads Issue File, SLBD Records.

¹⁶ Richard Peterson, Oral History Interview, April 5, 1999; Grand Rapids Press, June 8, 1986.

the entrance. The parking lot had been a nonessential late addition to the plan and would have destroyed a large stand of mature hardwood trees. Driving the superintendent to push through objections to the project was the need to reopen the popular road as soon as possible. "We've answered all their questions," a lakeshore spokesman said after meeting with Scott and her group. "They just don't like the answers." One of management's objections to altering the park plan was the argument that the project was actually underway. Construction contracts had been signed and the realignment had been surveyed and flagged. It was, therefore, with grave suspicion of Scott's group that Superintendent Peterson viewed the news that during the first week of June 1986 someone had pulled up between 300 and 500 survey stakes at the construction site. The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Preservation Committee strongly denied association with the "monkey wrenching" incident, which caused more than \$1,000 damage. The group threatened to sue the park service if it went ahead with the construction, but in the end lacked the financial resources to make good that threat. The project was completed in November, a month too late for tourists visiting the park to appreciate the beautiful autumn hardwoods.¹⁷

The incident was at once an illustration of the fact that for the National Park Service nothing ever came easy at Sleeping Bear. It also served as a warning that a transition was taking place in northwest Michigan. The old-style knee-jerk opposition based on the idea of "keeping the park service out," was gradually giving way to new coalitions of citizens who looked to the National Park Service to play a leadership role in preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the Sleeping Bear area. These citizen-activists could be articulate supporters of the lakeshore or vocal opponents. The warning of the Stocking Drive protest was that public participation would be insisted upon in all phases of the planning process.

Fort Empire: A New Headquarters For Sleeping Bear

Both the original master plan for the lakeshore and the revised general management plan called for the headquarters of the park to be located in Empire, Michigan. Yet from 1971 until 1987 the "temporary" offices in the former State Savings Bank Building in Frankfort served as the lakeshore headquarters. The space that Julius Martinek had found cramped and inadequate when the lakeshore was founded continued to serve as the base for twenty headquarters personnel sixteen years later. More so than even the site's space limitations, it was Frankfort's location well south of the lakeshore, that made the site such a frustrating headquarters location. Everyday park staff wasted hours of time driving back and forth from the lakeshore to the headquarters. That ended in January of 1987 when several Bekins moving vans emptied the old bank building of park service equipment, furniture, and records, and drove to the new centrally located headquarters in Empire.¹⁸

The long delayed preliminary plans for the headquarters called for a combined office facility and visitor center. The preferred location of the building was within a half mile of the intersection of M-22 and M-72. During the years when the headquarters was merely a line in an

¹⁷ Detroit News, June 29, 1986; Grand Rapids Press, June 8, 1986; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), June 18, 1986.

¹⁸ Preview (Traverse City), January 19, 1987.

unfunded plan, lakeshore staff frequently speculated on just where the structure would be built. The more cynical would hold "we'll probably just end up in the lot behind Taghon's gas station."¹⁹

It was not until 1984 that funding looked solid enough for planning to move forward. Realty specialists from the General Services Administration were given charge of the project. They issued a request-for-proposals for a 12,000 square-foot office, exhibition building. Although the building would be built to General Services Administration standards, it would not be owned by the government, rather the National Park Service would be a long-term tenant. For the village of Empire this had the advantage of making the structure a private and, therefore, taxable endeavor. For the lakeshore, which had little prospect of receiving a construction budget large enough to build their own facility, the involvement of the General Services Administration was a way to put the bulk of the costs for the new headquarters into the Washington, D.C. office's general facilities rental account. The downside of this creative budget management was that it ensured that the public would continue to pay for the building with rent long after the construction costs had been covered. More than a dozen developers bid on the project. A group called Empire Investments, formed by a group of local investors, won the General Services contract. The project was supported by a tax-free bonds issued through the Leelanau County Economic Development Corporation. The site that was selected was a large open field behind Taghon's gas station.

There had been considerable discussion about using the former Empire Air Force Base site, which already was serving as the maintenance center, as the headquarters site. Certainly there was plenty of space available, much of which could be easily adapted to office use. The general management plan, however, had called for a joint headquarters-visitor center facility. The lakeshore staff believed that the Empire base site, located nearly a mile off of M-22, was too remote from the stream of tourist traffic to function well as a visitor facility. The desire to implement the plan may have blinded lakeshore leadership to the opportunity to use the former base administratively and then upgrade the existing Glen Lake visitor center. Certainly the latter site seriously needed to be expanded, particularly the washroom facilities, which had been little changed from the days when the building had served as a private residence. In fact, the cost of new washrooms at Glen Lake helped to drive lakeshore management to accept the Empire site. By going with the General Services Administration plan the lakeshore's new headquarters was categorized as a "relocation," not a new construction project.²⁰

The Chicago firm of Hammond, Beeby & Babka designed the new headquarters building. James W. Hammond, the principal architect for the building was a long-time summer resident of Glen Lake. Ironically, twenty years before he had been one of the many people worried about losing their homes to the national lakeshore. Two decades later he helped to build the park service's permanent headquarters. Hammond's original design called for a 14,000 foot square box, enclosed by a large cedar shaked hip roof and weathered cedar siding. Cost overruns, however, necessitated a late design change to a flat roof. This gave the building an appearance that at best was bland. In an effort to inject a bit of style Hammond added a tower. At first the idea was that the tower could be fitted with a staircase that would allow visitors to ascend to an

¹⁹ William Herd, Oral History Interview, August 13, 1998; Richard Peterson, Oral History Interview, May 27, 1999.

²⁰ Ibid.

observation deck that allowed at least a glimpse of the dunes and the Lake Michigan shore. Such an overlook would have made up for a principal shortcoming of the Empire site as a visitor center-it was out of view of the lakeshore. But safety and financial considerations prevented the tower from ever being adapted to serve as an observation deck. On the inside, the new headquarters and visitors center was a very functional and pleasant space. To visitors approaching the site, however, the low wood-sided building with the blockhouse-like tower looked a bit like a frontier fort. In fact among some of the local residents the headquarters came to be known as "Fort Empire."²¹

The new visitor center was equipped with an excellent set of exhibits and an auditorium for public programs. It lacked the "lodge-like" feel of the Glen Lake facility, which during the winter was often filled with cross country skiers or hikers warming themselves by the fireplace. That older visitor center was demolished, which cleared the view from M-109 of Glen Lake. The new visitor center offered a much more professional image and superior facilities for large groups of tourists. Within the first year more than 73,000 visitor contacts were made at the new facility. In July of 1984, National Park Service Director William Penn Mott visited Sleeping Bear as part of a swing through Michigan to meet park staff at existing National Parks and to inspect several prospective park projects in the Upper Peninsula. Mott was a crusty career park administrator and a landscape architect by training who was not afraid to speak both bluntly and humorously. After touring the new Empire visitor center the Director addressed the staff of the lakeshore. In what was supposed to be a morale boosting talk, he broke-up his audience by candidly voicing the expert opinion, "You have what must be the ugliest visitor center in the entire National Park System."²²

Plovers, Swans, and Deer: Resource Management, 1984-1995

Probably the least controversial aspect of the history of the National Park Service at Sleeping Bear Dunes has been the management of natural resources within the lakeshore. That is not to say that there have not been challenges, rather the work of protecting and managing the plant and animal communities of the Sleeping Bear has always been less volatile than issues relating to property and people. Like most national park units personalities and chance have shaped the development of the natural resources management at Sleeping Bear. The Sleeping Bear lacked the influential congressional sponsorship that won for a few select parks in the region, like Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, a sizable, independent scientific research staff. At Sleeping Bear the determining factor in the development of its program was continuity. Virtually since the creation of the lakeshore natural resource Max Holden has attended to management issues. A former Wildlife Ranger, Holden initially worked on Sleeping Bear issues as a member of the scientific staff of the Midwest Regional office. In that capacity he helped to prepare the initial wilderness plan for the lakeshore and advised Superintendent Martinek on resource management issues. After 1978 Holden was based at Sleeping Bear as a Resource Management Specialist. While natural resource research at many national parks waxed and

²¹ Richard Peterson, Oral History Interview, May 27, 1998; William Herd, Oral History Interview, August 13, 1998; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, May 27, 1986.

²² Ibid.

waned based on personnel fluctuations, Sleeping Bear has had a consistent, steady program that helped the park to develop a solid environmental record of the national lakeshore area.²³

Managerial continuity was enhanced by the baseline of scientific studies of the Sleeping Bear area inherited by the National Park Service. Large dune complexes were among the earliest and most intensively studied natural phenomena in Michigan. Beginning in the 1880s the study of Lake Michigan dune plant and animal communities by biologist Henry C. Cowles played a significant role in the development of modern ecological science. Studies and publications sponsored by the Cranbrook Institute of Science, the Michigan Academy of Sciences, and state universities continued the investigation of the areas during the period before the creation of the lakeshore. While research questions, to say nothing of methods, have changed considerably over time, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore has benefited from a more rich and varied set of longitudinal data about its geology, flora, and fauna than most new park units.²⁴

The task of utilizing this data and conducting new studies of the Sleeping Bear has been shaped by important institutional strictures common to all national parks. The most important of these has been the movement toward ecological management. Since the 1960s, an overt struggle had been waged within the service between management based upon the principles of scenic preservation and tourist supervision and a management philosophy grounded in the realization that park areas were complex natural systems. With the latter perspective came the recognition that detailed studies were necessary to guide management as well as the will to restore lands transformed by human action. Also important was a new set of federal environmental procedures. The National Environmental Policy Act established a review process to ensure no federally funded or licensed activities would be undertaken without taking into account the impact upon the environment. The act also created the Environmental Protection Agency, which has raised awareness of issues of pollution and toxic contamination throughout the country. Also formative has been the Endangered Species Act, which elevated the importance of identifying, monitoring, and protecting plants and animals in danger of extinction.²⁵

The challenge of ecological management was most visibly seen in the resource management decisions relating to wildlife within the lakeshore. In spring of 1989, for the first time in the twentieth century, there were no seabird nests at South Manitou Island's Gull Point. When Congress created the lakeshore, the gull colony on South Manitou Island numbered in the thousands. The importance of the declining rookery for the threatened ring-billed gull was a significant consideration in the selection of the island for inclusion in the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore proposal. In the past the loss of the rookery while the island was under park service control would have been chalked up as a major failure by park management. Indeed, during the early years of the lakeshore the National Park Service did step in to try and save the gull nesting grounds. It was scientific evidence, gathered by park service sponsored research projects, which changed the agency's view of the decline of the rookery from being a resource management problem to a necessary and inevitable ecological action.

²³ Max Holden, Oral History Interview, August 12, 1998.

²⁴ Henry C. Cowles, "The Ecological Relations of the Vegetation on the Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan," *Botanical Gazette*, 27, 95-177; 167-202; 281-308; 361-9; W.G. Waterman, *Forests and Dunes from Point Betsie to Sleeping Bear* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University, 1922); W.G. Waterman, "Ecology of the Glen Lake and Sleeping Bear Region," *Michigan Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, Vol. 6, 351-75; Robert T. Hatt, *Island Life in Lake Michigan* (Bloomfield Hills, Mich.: Cranbrook Institute of Science, 1948).

²⁵ Richard West Sellers, *Preserving Nature in the National Parks: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 205-19.

Based on long term studies made by Northwestern Michigan College faculty, by a multiyear National Park Service contract conducted by Northern Illinois University scientists, and most important of all, research on the human history of the island, the lakeshore management staff concluded that the decline of the gull nesting grounds was a natural phenomena. During the nineteenth century the gull had chosen as a nesting ground the stony tipped end of South Manitou harbor. At that time the island was near its peak of human activity. Numerous farms dotted the island, small-scale commercial logging took place, as well as commercial fishing. Local farmers all kept broods of chickens for eggs and meat. Predators like the red fox were trapped or poisoned as a threat to livestock. The decimation of natural predators like the fox made Gull Point an ideal location for a rookery, as the young hatchlings could mature in safety. As farming on the island declined and the park service began to administer the island, the fox population rebounded. Crossing over the ice of frozen Manitou Passage, the fox reinhabited the island. As the number of predators increased the gull colony was hit hard. For several years the rangers on the island actually live-trapped red fox to reduce their nocturnal depredations among the baby gulls, helplessly pleating among the rocks. Over time, however, it became clear that what was taking place on the island was natural and that when predatory pressure became too great the gulls would simply relocate their rookery to one of the many small rocky islets that made up the Lake Michigan archipelago. The trapping of the fox was ended, and over the course of the decade of the 1980s the gull population relocated to a less vulnerable site.²⁶

The gulls themselves acted as predators, preying on an endangered species within the lakeshore, the piping plover. The white and sand colored shorebird is known for its darting dashes across the sand and its melodious, whistling song. The piping plover was well on its way to extinction due to the loss of beach habitat when several pairs returned to North Manitou Island in 1980s. Beaver Island and Hat Island further up the archipelago also saw a return of the birds. The lakeshore cooperated with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in forming a Piping Plover Recovery Team. Beaches on North Manitou Island as well as at mainland locations outside the park, particularly Cathead Bay and Waugoshance Point were closed to the public to protect plover nesting sites. Two nests of the rare bird became a fixture on North Manitou while a third nest was established at the mouth of the Platte River beginning in 1994. The latter site posed a greater challenge to lakeshore resource managers because it was one of the busiest recreational beaches in northwestern Michigan. Fortunately, the erection of a barrier around the nesting area and the posting of park rangers in the area allowed the birds to successfully hatch their young at the improbable site. Another endangered bird species to make its way into the lakeshore was the bald eagle. In 1995 a pair of bald eagles built a nest on North Manitou Island. The return of the national bird to the island after an absence of twenty years was an endorsement of the contested decision to manage North Manitou as a wilderness.²⁷

Not all bird species, however, were welcome at Sleeping Bear. In 1919, the mute swan was introduced as a domestic species in Charlevoix County, Michigan. They soon escaped into the wild and spread to fourteen northern Michigan counties. During the late 1970s and early

²⁶ Charles M. Anderson, *Isle of View: A History of South Manitou Island* (Frankfurt, Mich.: privately printed, 1979); Benzie County Advisor, June 20, 1989.

²⁷ Superintendent's Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1995, SLBD Records; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, July 10, 1986.

1980s the mute swan population in the lakeshore dramatically increased. Previously limited solely to the Platte River and the wetlands around Otter Creek, the swans began to inhabit most of the inland lakes within the national lakeshore. The swans were bad neighbors. They frequently attacked native Canada geese, scattering family groups and leaving the young goslings isolated and vulnerable. At first park visitors were thrilled to see the large, graceful birds. Picnickers at Little Glen Lake would often feed the birds pieces of bread, only to be rewarded with a nip as soon as they turned around. Less graceful in flight than when floating majestically on a pond the swans would also occasionally fly into the side of a canoe the birds felt threatened nesting sites. More than a few surprised canoeists capsized, blaming the swans for attacking them. The aggressive birds were even known to harass swimmers. In 1983 park rangers removed several swans that were fouling the beach at Glen Lake. Thereafter, Resource Management Specialist Holden developed a formal management plan to deal with the feral species. The plan, approved by the region in 1984, concluded that the presence of the swans was "inconsistent and incongruous with the management principles of maximum protection of the natural environment." Developed in consultation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the plan called for the removal of thirty swans from the lakeshore. The birds were to be live-trapped, their wings fixed, and then removed to Boardman Lake, where local residents maintained an artificial feeding program. The policy was in keeping with a statewide initiative to limit northern Michigan's swan population to no more than 1,000 birds.²⁸

While the policy was still under review at the regional office, and prior to any formal public comment, a minor controversy erupted when rangers trapped several particularly troublesome swans. Those who enjoyed the presence of the swans and those who were simply suspicious of any park action disputed this action. "Why do they go sneaking around without telling residents what's going on," complained a Glen Lake resident who found park rangers placing a trap near Little Glen Lake. The plan was later released for public comment, which was favorable, and adopted.²⁹

The most high-profile wildlife management issue was the lakeshore's management of the North Manitou Island deer herd. The deer were introduced to the island in 1920 and because of a special winter feeding program, the population soared to more than 1,000. The herd suffered a pathetic crash when the Angell Foundation stopped the feeding program during the protracted condemnation suit to purchase the island. A multiyear study by University of Michigan wildlife biologists indicated that deer were seriously overbrowsing the island. Immature maple and pine trees as well as violets, trilliums, and other wildflowers were all but eliminated from the island by the deer. To restore the island's vegetation the park service in 1985 adopted the goal of reducing the white-tailed deer population to about 300 head, then after the natural vegetation had a chance to recover let the population rise again to a sustainable level of ten deer per square mile. In the fall of 1985, in an effort to bring the deer quickly under control the park service and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources raised the individual limit on deer from one per hunter to three. The news of this bonanza for hunters was widely reported, although it was tempered by the report that all North Manitou hunters would have to obey the strict wilderness guidelines that governed activity on the island. Nonetheless, more than 700 hunters were

²⁸ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, May 24, 1984; Benzie County Advisor, July 29, 1985.

²⁹ Superintendent's Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1984, SLBD Records; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, May 17, 1984.

attracted to the challenge and opportunity of the island. The herd was trimmed by 825 deer. But this was not enough to prevent a large die-off the following winter. Perhaps as many as 200 deer died before the advent of spring. The large fall hunt and the disastrous winter which followed went far to bringing the Manitou deer population under control. Deer hunting continued on the island in subsequent years, with normal bag limits in place. By 1988 Resource Management Specialist Holden could report that the island's vegetation was beginning to make a comeback. At the same time the surviving deer were much healthier. By 1995 the lakeshore superintendent was able to conclude his report on the once grim deer situation by observing that the animals "continue to be large and healthy (the hunters look pretty good too)."³⁰

The management of hunting in the lakeshore became an increasingly sensitive issue during the late 1980s. As recreational developments grew outside the park an increasing number of urbanites began to make their homes in northwest Michigan. Many of these newer residents shared the traditional interest in field sports such as hunting. Others, however, were uneasy with the continued use of high-powered firearms each fall, both in the increasingly densely settled townships of Leelanau and Benzie as well as within the national lakeshore. "I feel like I am living in the suburbs, instead of living in the country," said one resident of Glen Arbor township. Indicative of a rising tension between old traditions and new values was the 1990 clash between a hunter and an animal-rights advocate. On November 14 of that year Larry Hayward was bow-hunting within the lakeshore near Alligator Hill. His opportunity to bag a deer was disrupted, however, by Barbara Anderlik, a retired teacher who was in the area lighting firecrackers to warn deer of the imminent arrival of the firearm-hunting season the next day. Hayward was furious and he "accosted" her in the forest and later brought her up on charges of violating Michigan's hunter harassment statute. Anderlik was found innocent of that charge, but she was found guilty by a district court jury of illegal possession of firecrackers. She fumed as she was slapped with a two-year probation, a week of community service, and a \$150 fine. Anderlik responded with a civil suit against Hayward, which despite the involvement of the National Rifle Association, ended in an abject apology from the hunter and a cash payment to the animal-rights activist.³¹

The issue moved closer to a management concern in 1995 when a group was formed called "People For A Safer Park." Founded by Ananda Bricker, who lived near the Dune Climb, the group's goal was to restrict hunting from the lakeshore's busiest public use areas, a total of about 13,000 acres. Bricker was motivated to launch the effort when she found a rifle slug in the tree next to her house. There had been a couple of incidents of people being accidentally shot within the lakeshore during the deer hunting season, but all of the people involved had been hunters, no casual park visitors or residents had been hurt by hunters. Bricker, with the help of Barbara Anderlik, stunned long-time residents of the area when she was able to collect and present to Congressman Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) a petition in favor of the ban signed by 7,300 people. Hunters responded with a petition drive of their own. The lakeshore responded to the dueling petition drives by reviewing its hunting management policy, which already restricted hunting from several small areas, such as Pierce Stocking Drive. Although additional closures

³⁰ Superintendent's Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1995 SLBD Records; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, March 6, 1986.

³¹ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, November 14, 1991, July 22, 1993.

was a policy that resonated with a portion of the public, the lakeshore determined that there was no indication that visitor safety required further closures.³²

The management of plant species within the lakeshore attracted less public attention but still made significant strides during the late 1980s. In 1981, the lakeshore contracted with the University of Michigan to inventory the area's plant life. That report, completed after seven years of fieldwork, documented over eight hundred species of vascular plants at Sleeping Bear. It became the baseline for vegetation management. Eight threatened species were identified by the botanists, including the calypso orchid and the walking fern. The report gave the park service greater confidence in restoring the numerous dwelling sites it purchased. Following the removal of all structures, selected exotic plant species would be uprooted and when possible natural tree and vegetation cover would be planted. Budgetary limitations prevented a rigorous restoration of the presettlement landscape. Had all exotic species been removed erosion would have occurred because the lakeshore did not have the funds to replant all sites with native species. A top priority were former gravel pit sites, which required heavy equipment to recontour the landscape and replace lost topsoil. At some sites plantations of non-native Douglas Fir and remnants of fruit orchards were cut down to prepare the land for natural plant succession. Of course, orchards were part of the cultural landscape of the area so there was no wholesale campaign to remove them from park lands. The fruit trees challenged resource managers to look at issue of vegetation restoration and preservation in a new light. Sleeping Bear, like many parks created out of former agricultural lands inherited many trees that were of biological/historical significance. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a wide variety of fruit trees were cultivated, each with their own distinctive characteristics. During the last half of the twentieth century, however, the national market in agricultural products enforced a conformity on growers in favor of varieties such as Macintosh apples that retained freshness longer. The identification, and in some cases the protection, of historic varieties of fruit trees became part of the increasingly complex job of managing a landscape both wild and historic.³³

Invasive exotic plant species such as purple loosestrife, baby's breath, and garlic mustard were particularly vexing to resource managers. The purple loosestrife, an attractive flowering plant introduced from Europe, became a problem in the Platte River area in the late 1980s. Favoring wetlands the perennial became established in dense clusters that made it very difficult to eliminate. Park personnel and volunteers initially tried pulling up the plant from areas where it grew in profusion, but this proved impossible because of the thick tangle of roots. Quickly reaching a height of five to six feet, the purple loosestrife would, if left unchecked, eliminate all native plants in its vicinity by overshadowing them and poisoning the ground. Picking the seed heads before they ripened was adopted as a short term control measure. Research contracts sponsored by the Midwest Regional Office were looked to for a long-range solution to what remains a growing problem at Sleeping Bear. Park personnel also removed garlic mustard, spotted knapwood, and baby's breath. The latter, with a root system up to twelve feet in length, was a particular problem on Nature Conservancy lands near the lakeshore. The lakeshore

³² Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, October 19, 1995; Ivan D. Miller, Oral History Interview, March 8, 1999.

³³ Superintendent's Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1990, SLBD Records; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), June 10, 1993; The Blade (Toledo, Ohio), March 10, 1988; Brian Hazlett, et al, The Terrestrial Vegetation and Flora of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1988).

cooperated with the Nature Conservancy's efforts to bring the attractive but fast spreading exotic species under control.³⁴

Baby's breath originated in Turkey, but the plant favored the same sand soil as Pitcher's thistle, a native dune plant unique to the sandy shores of the Great Lakes. By the 1980s the Pitcher's thistle was categorized as a threatened species in the United States. To protect pitcher's thistle habitat the lakeshore nixed proposals to place boat-launching facilities on Platte Bay and at Glen Haven. The National Park Service had a special responsibility to protect the native dune cover because Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore had the largest remaining concentration of the Pitcher's thistle. Yet even at the lakeshore exotic species like the spotted knapwood and baby's breath were making deep inroads. At the nearby Point Betsie Preserve baby's breath established itself as eighty percent of the dune cover. With each of the plants capable of producing 14,000 seeds it spread over the landscape at a rapid rate. Baby's breath's dense root system and attractive flower made some people question if it was a threat. As a dune cover it actually did a superior job of holding the sand in place than did the native Pitcher's thistle, which requires shifting sand to thrive. In combating baby's breath, some people speculated that the National Park Service risking the long-term best interest of the sand dunes to protect a native plant.³⁵

Preserving the dunes from ever-increasing visitor use was an important resource management concern during the early 1990s. In 1991, the lakeshore was the focus of a high visibility attack on its resource protection program by the Michigan United Conservation Clubs. Richard L. Jameson, executive director of the conservation organization, issued a public letter in which he denounced Sleeping Bear as "the worst managed park I have ever seen." He chastised the National Park Service for not better controlling the visitor access to the fragile dune slopes. At any one time Jameson correctly charged "hundreds of people were hiking helter-skelter all over the dunes." The combined effect of this usage, Jameson maintained, was the destruction of plant communities and the erosion of the dune face. The lakeshore's administration was aware of the erosion problem and already had a study underway to better understand the damage done by hikers striking off on their own. On the other hand the lakeshore was reluctant to be too strict in its enforcement of signs requesting hikers to stay on the marked paths. In the face of the critique the lakeshore prepared a dune protection plan which recommended improved signage to better channel visitors along established walkways and to alert them to the damage that could result from unrestrained pedestrian movement. The plan did not, however, recommend severely restricting visitor mobility. As the superintendent commented "walking in the sand is an integral part of the [dune] appeal."³⁶

While the footprints left in the sand by park visitors were the most obvious human impact on the Sleeping Bear environment, atmospheric pollution was the least visible. Beginning in 1981 Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore included the monitoring of acid levels in precipitation as part of the regular resource management program. The results of this program were shared with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan United Conservation Clubs. The shocking findings, after five years of study, indicated that the acidic content of rain in the lakeshore had increased by a factor of twenty-three. The source of this

³⁴ Max Holden, Oral History Interview, August 12, 1998; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), July 31, 1991.

³⁵ Benzie County Record-Patriot, October 20, 1993.

³⁶ Detroit News, September 15, 1991; Max Holden, Oral History Interview, August 12, 1998.

pollution was remote smokestack industries burning high sulfur fuels. Fortunately the glacial soils of the lakeshore counteracted much of the unnatural acidity before it could cause significant damage. Nonetheless, in 1990 the lakeshore initiated an extensive water quality-monitoring program to chart both atmospheric pollution, contamination from run-off, and ground water pollution. While there was nothing save public education lakeshore managers could do to combat airborne pollution, there were other toxic problems at Sleeping Bear that required immediate resource management action.³⁷

The most extensive toxic clean-ups within the lakeshore both revolved around faulty petroleum storage. In 1989, after a drawn-out ten-year condemnation procedure, the National Park Service completed its purchase of Casey's Corners, a canoe livery and gas station located on the Platte River near M-22. In making the purchase the lakeshore got more than they bargained for when it was discovered that underground fuel tanks had leaked into the surrounding soil and ground water. Although the Casey's property was less than an acre in size, the cleanup required the removal of several tons of contaminated soil and thousands of gallons of toxic water. The soil was excavated and thermally treated, in an effort to burn off the hydrocarbons. The polluted water, however, could not be treated onsite and was trucked across Michigan to Saginaw where the municipal wastewater treatment plant could dispose of the contamination. The clean up cost more than \$500,000 and led to a wide-ranging investigation of possible toxic sites within the park. A total of sixty-two possible fuel storage sites were identified, some former gas stations, others farms with fuel storage areas. Dealing with these sites became the major focus of resource management time and dollars during the early 1990s.³⁸

As if the lakeshore did not have enough problems with toxic leak sites, an accident occurred in May of 1989 that added to their difficulties. Carelessness by park personnel and the lack of backup safety features caused several hundred gallons of fuel oil to spill from a storage tank on North Manitou Island. The oil had just been brought to the island to fuel the generator at the ranger station. It was an embarrassing and costly error. Historic buildings were immediately and temporarily relocated from the vicinity of the spill. Ironically only a week before Superintendent Peterson had recommended putting a leak containment wall into the storage building although there were no funds to do the job. For the cleanup, however, the Environmental Protection Agency provided funding for an experimental effort to treat the contaminated soil through bioremediation. Hundreds of thousands of gallons of ground water were treated at the site through the use of carbon filters. Even so, the park service had to pay to have 370 barrels of contaminated soil transported from the island. The cleanup and monitoring of the spill site stretched out over four years before the Michigan Department of Natural Resources removed the North Manitou ranger station from its list of contaminated sites. The incident led the lakeshore to the installation in 1995 of a photovoltaic array to generate electricity from solar power, which greatly reduced the need for fuel oil on the island.³⁹

³⁷ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, May 2, 1985.

³⁸ Superintendent's Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1993, SLBD Records; Detroit News, May 23, 1993.

³⁹ Superintendent's Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1993, SLBD Records; Rusco, North Manitou Island, 154-5.

Historic Resource Management

Although the impetus to create the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore flowed from its impressive natural wonders, the enabling act, Public Law 91-479, clearly authorized the National Park Service to develop a plan to provide "protection of scenic, scientific, and historic features contributing to public enjoyment[emphasis added]." During the twenty-five years of administration since that act was approved the National Park Service has developed the historic resources of the lakeshore into some of the most highly visibility features of the park. Yet the story of historic resource management in the lakeshore has mirrored the general development pattern at Sleeping Bear with maddeningly slow progress in some areas and public controversy over proposed park actions.

The first resources of any kind managed and interpreted by the National Park Service at Sleeping Bear were those related to maritime history. South Manitou Island lighthouse and the Glen Haven Coast Guard Station were the first properties acquired by the National Park Service in the area and the rehabilitation and maintenance of those structures has been an ongoing challenge. The high water levels of the late 1980s were a particular threat to the South Manitou lighthouse, located only fifty feet from shore. Prior to the creation of the lakeshore the site of the North Manitou lighthouse had been washed away by a high water storm. Emergency measures had to be taken to protect the South Manitou light tower and its outbuildings. Typical of the need to balance competing management goals, recommendations to construct a breakwater to protect the lighthouse had to be carefully balanced by the need to protect pitcher's thistle habitat. Superintendent Martinek's acquisition of the Frederickson maritime collection laid the foundation for the lakeshore to become even more deeply involved in presenting the history of the Great Lakes. Martinek had hoped to display the collection in a park maritime museum at a renovated Glen Haven Coast Guard station. But like so many of the development plans at Sleeping Bear and the other Great Lakes national lakeshores, the maritime museum was put on hold for want of funds. After seven years on the shelf the process of structural rehabilitation, restoration, and exhibit design was set in motion. The complex project, which required a sensitive blending of historic architecture and interpretive design, became a tug-of-war between the Denver Service Center and the Harper's Ferry Design Center. Only the active involvement of lakeshore interpreters Charles Parkinson and William Herd kept the project on-track. Finally, in 1984 the project was completed. The maritime museum interpreted the old lifesaving service through restoration of a portion of the historic station as well as the larger story of shipping in the Manitou Passage through the Frederickson collection artifacts. Popular interpretive programs further brought the site to life during the summer through the reenactment of ship-to-shore life saving techniques. By the early 1990s the site, which only open during the summer tourist season was averaging more than 40,000 annual visitors.⁴⁰

The development of the Glen Haven Maritime Museum took place at a time of rising public interest in the maritime history of the Great Lakes. New maritime museums blossomed throughout the region, leading to the creation of the Association of Great Lakes Maritime Museums. Numerous popular histories of shipwrecks, rescues, and lighthouses were written

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[40] Charles Parkinson, Oral History Interview, March 2, 1998; William Herd, Oral History Interview, August 12, 1998.

while folk music about the lakes, in part stimulated by the success of Gordon Lightfoot's 1977 ballad "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," also began to flourish. Lakeshore personal offered professional assistance, on the local level to preservationists attempting to save the historic car ferry at Frankfort, and on the regional level by helping to form in 1983 the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association. The popularization of scuba diving as a sport joined with the rise in regional history to create a new interest in the maritime past, the underwater preserve.⁴¹

The state of Michigan began to promote the idea of underwater shipwreck parks during the mid-1970s. Through the work of Professor Donald Holecek, Michigan State University, and the Michigan Sea Grant program a conscious effort was made to locate and protect sunken ships as a potential recreational asset. It was discovered that many wreck sites were being ruined by professional salvagers interested in the white oak planking of the old schooners or the brass fixtures of sunken steamers, as well as by the less systematic depredations of sport divers collecting souvenirs. In 1980, the state legislature passed a bill that allowed the Department of Natural Resources to create bottomlands preserves in areas of particular significance. Local historian Jed Jaworski, who had founded a maritime museum in Frankfort, led the effort to protect wreck sites within the Manitou Passage. A proposal was drafted to set aside a 282-mile area of bottomlands around the Manitou Islands and the Sleeping Bear mainland. Seventy shipwrecks were located in that area. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore cooperated with the preparation of the preserve plan that culminated in November of 1988 with the creation of the Manitou Passage State Underwater Preserve.⁴²

The Underwater Preserve provided the protection of state law for the wrecks within its boundaries. Limited state funds were available to help mark wreck sites for divers and to support the development of a management plan for the preserve. The task of evaluating those sites and preparing historical information on each wreck for recreational divers was left to local supporters. The National Park Service had considerable experience with such work. At Isle Royale National Park the service had located, mapped, and buoyed shipwrecks within the boundaries of the park. Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore also took an active role in inventorying its underwater resources, even if like Sleeping Bear most of the bottomlands were located outside the lakeshore's boundaries. Sleeping Bear contributed to the Manitou Preserve considerable staff time and the technical support of the National Park Service's Submerged Cultural Resources Unit. The latter, composed of some of the most experienced archeological divers in the nation, undertook an assessment of sites within the preserve. The park service dive team also identified appropriate areas of bottomland for the disposal of spoil from dredging required at the North Manitou dock. In 1990, the local preserve committee was able to place buoys at the sites of seven shipwrecks and several former dock sites.⁴³

Wrecks were not the only boats that were part of the lakeshore's resource management program. Since early in its history, the lakeshore had accepted small watercraft as part of its maritime collection. The task of caring for these vessels, however, more often than not came down to the dedication of the staff more than an adequate institutional commitment. A case in

⁴¹ William Herd, Oral History Interview, August 12, 1998; LuAnne Gaykowski Kozma, *Living at a Lighthouse: Oral Histories from the Great Lakes* (Allen Park, Mich.: Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association, 1987).

⁴² Record-Eagle (Traverse City), January 12, 1987; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, November 10, 1988.

⁴³ Superintendent's Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1990, SLBD Records.

point was the fish tug Aloha. In 1985, James Dura, one of the last gill net fisherman operating out of Milwaukee, offered the lakeshore his boat and rig. A grant from the Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association made the acquisition possible, but afforded no funds to overhaul the fifty-year-old tug, or even position it at Glen Haven, where it could contribute to the maritime museum. The forty-foot long fishing boat was brought to Frankfort, where it was temporally docked. For better than six months park interpreters did minor repairs on the boat and inventoried its contents of historic fishing gear. Like all old wooden boats the Aloha leaked and every day or so the bilge pumps had to be operated to prevent swamping. One day Chief of Interpretation Charles Parkinson went to check the bilges and found the boat gone. The only sign of the Aloha were the mooring lines extending straight down in the water. The Aloha had split a seam and sunk to the bottom of the harbor. The accident had the happy result of releasing emergency funds to raise the boat and have it transported by truck to Glen Haven. Although the lakeshore still lacked the funds to restore the vessel, it was possible to display the tug, identical to the lost fleets of fishing vessels that once operated out of Leland and the Manitowish. The lakeshore eventually was able to house the bulk of the small water craft collection in the historic cannery building in Glen Haven. In 1992, the cannery was opened to the public as an adjunct to the marine museum, although budgetary pressure made it difficult for the lakeshore to staff both facilities.⁴⁴

The historic cannery building was only one component in one of Sleeping Bear Dunes's most important if vexing maritime cultural resources: the historic steamship village and mill town of Glen Haven. Founded in the late 1870s, Glen Haven was typical of the numerous small company towns that dotted the shores of the upper Great Lakes during the heyday of the logging industry. Through the energy of D.H. Day, Glen Haven lingered on into the twentieth century, after the big timber was cut, as an agricultural shipping point and as a port for vacationers heading north via regular steamship lines. Although many critical features of the old town complex were lost over the years, most notably the dock, saw mill, and narrow gauge railroad, the National Park Service acquired a remarkably intact 1920s-era village. The 1979 General Management Plan specified that Glen Haven's village atmosphere was to be maintained and that the buildings of the town were to be adapted to provide visitor services and interpretation. In 1983, the village was successfully nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district.⁴⁵

Although the majority of the village was under direct National Park Service control, occupancy permits for three properties were slated to expire between 1993 and 2005. Beginning in 1983 the lakeshore undertook efforts to stabilize some of the village's historic buildings. An interest in developing a concrete plan for the rest of the buildings naturally followed the decision not to build a new harbor facility at Glen Haven. In 1987, a Development Concept Plan for the village was put together with the help of the Denver Service Center. The purpose of the plan was to suggest ways to preserve the town, protect adjacent natural areas, and enhance the cultural experience of visitors to Glen Haven. The methods suggested to achieve these goals were fairly standard heritage tourism tactics; including, the adaptive reuse of village buildings by commercial operations providing sympathetic visitor services; the rerouting of vehicular traffic

⁴⁴ Charles Parkinson, Oral History Interview, March 2, 1998; Benzie County Advisor, November 11, 1985, July 27, 1992.

⁴⁵ Richard Alesch, et al, Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus/Environmental Assessment, Glen Haven Area, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore/Michigan (Denver: Denver Service Center, National Park Service, 1987), 1-5.

away from the historic village; and the preparation of a series of trails, wayside exhibits, and overlooks to provide visitors with an opportunity to educate themselves about the local history and to enjoy the splendid lakeside setting. But what was a good plan for maintaining a small historic town might not have been appropriate for a small town largely owned by the National Park Service. Many of the lakeshore staff objected to the plan because they felt it offered too much of the village, with too few park service controls, to private users. Unable to influence the Denver Service Center plan lakeshore employees openly disparaged it in public comments.⁴⁶

The public controversy which followed the release of the plan focused largely on the proposal to use commercial contracts managed as park concessions to fund the maintenance of the village's historic buildings. The park had in mind retailers like a bookstore or an arts and crafts shop, a restaurant, as well as a bed-and-breakfast in the old Sleeping Bear Inn. Former residents who had sold their property in the village complained that they had been forced out of Glen Haven in the 1970s because it was considered a fragile natural area. Now other people were being invited in to make a profit there. "I was born and raised in the village of Glen Haven," commented one woman, "and since my home was among those taken by the threat of condemnation I am against the recommercialization of homes and businesses." Owners of businesses operating in the neighboring community of Glen Arbor opposed commercial leases on historic buildings because of the fear of government sponsored competition. "Our tax money would go to subsidize businesses," complained a Leelanau County advisory commission member, "that would not have to pay local taxes and would benefit from all the park promotions." The Citizens' Council of the Sleeping Bear recommended that the park service simply leave Glen Haven as it was. Environmentalists opposed the plan as heavy-handed with Nature, because of the need to develop remote parking sites, and crass due to its commercialization of the historic village. "This is all a Reagan Administration thing, this commercialization that's going on," said Marie Scott, head of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Preservation Committee. "The Park Service are supposed to be caretakers of the land. They're not supposed to be overdeveloping it."⁴⁷

The management of the lakeshore was caught off guard by the strongly negative reaction to the Glen Haven proposal, and the division within its own ranks. "There has been a lot of 'anti' comment," Assistant Superintendent John Abbett admitted to the press. The negative reaction was in part a reflex response by the local community based on decades of mistrust and an ideological reaction by environmentalists to any whiff of commercialization in the parks in the wake of James Watt's tenure in the Department of the Interior. The unfortunate timing of the Glen Haven plan's release, however, was also detrimental to any consideration of its merits. In 1987, Leelanau County was divided over issues of development, commercialization, and the environment. The Homestead golf course proposal[discussed below] sparked a general fear that the Sleeping Bear area needed to be wary of the "Gatlinburg Effect"-referring to the unplanned, tacky Tennessee town outside the boundaries of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Evangeline Stanchik, a Leelanau County member of the Advisory Commission, was widely quoted as saying that Sleeping Bear needed an Opryland-like amusement park to stimulate local job growth. "We could, you know, have rides and maybe bears, and art shows, things like that."

⁴⁶ Ibid, 25-9.

⁴⁷ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), August 1, 12, 28, 1987.

There was a strong feeling that out-of-control growth was right around the corner for northwest Michigan. "Once it really gets discovered it won't take long, it's coming," predicted environmentalist Marie Scott. Her group, the Sleeping Bear Preservation Committee, also opposed the North Manitou Island development plan, which called for continuing the island as a wilderness, because park planners envisioned a small hostel near the dock for people who were unprepared or inexperienced in camping. "Is this a hostel or a hotel," complained Scott, who successfully had the hostel concept removed from the North Manitou plan. In such a climate, the Glen Haven plan, with its reliance on commercial leases and the blending of restoration and reconstruction, was sure to be a lightning rod.⁴⁸

The Glen Haven plan was quietly shelved, or as the Assistant Superintendent put it, public comments caused "a lot of review of the preliminary data and recommendations." In May of 1988, a draft of a revised Glen Haven plan was circulated but it was not until November of 1992 that the final development concept plan and interpretive prospectus for the ghost town was finally approved. In the final plan the interpretation program, the trail system, and the revised parking and circulation system all reflected the thinking of the controversial plan of 1987. The major difference was in the role envisioned for adaptive reuse and commercial leasing. The Sleeping Bear Inn was still projected as a site for a commercial concession and the former D.H. Day store continued to be proposed as an outlet for the Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association site. All other historic buildings in the town were projected to remain vacant, with the lakeshore undertaking basic exterior maintenance as needed. Plans to reconstruct a portion of the village dock, an example of the narrow gauge railroad track, an example of one or two train cars, and a Native American house were dropped. Even so, the cost of the plan (including improvements to D.H. Day Campground) was close to \$3 million. The plan was to be phased in over ten or fifteen years, because little money was available for the National Park Service to carry the burden all on its own.⁴⁹

The rejection of the draft plan for Glen Haven was a disturbing development for cultural resources management at Sleeping Bear. The adaptive reuse of historic structures by appropriate commercial tenants was a standard means of bringing funds from the private sector to protect public assets. While it was perhaps understandable that a concentration of such leases in one location, as the Glen Haven plan called for, was too much commercialization for a natural area, Sleeping Bear was also becoming a historic park and the need to protect those resources required experimentation with new management techniques. The rise of the National Register of Historic Places as a planning tool and the growth of historical programs within the National Park Service had largely taken place since the initial conception of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Far beyond the conception of Philip Hart or Allen Edmunds, park units like the national lakeshores, which were carved out of private land, found themselves managing not just "islands of wilderness" but also time capsules of regional history. That this history was what might be called small "h" history, the story of ordinary people and vernacular buildings, made it less obvious for the public and even park management to appreciate. The unique and the aesthetically pleasing had long dominated historic preservation in the United States. The cultural resources at

⁴⁸ Alesch, et al, Development Concept Plan, Glen Haven, 26-8; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), August 12, 13, 1987; Grand Rapids Press, August 14, 1987.

⁴⁹ Richard Alesch, Nancy Baker, Michele D'Arcy, et al, Development Concept Plan/Interpretive Prospectus, Glen Haven Area, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan (Denver: National Park Service, Denver Service Center, 1992).

Sleeping Bear and her sister lakeshores represented instead broad regional development patterns, which made the task of identifying and managing such properties one of large scale and, for many managers, of frightening proportions. "We've got 300 vacant and abandoned buildings in this park," Superintendent Peterson said in frustration over the rejection of commercial leasing. "What do we do with them?"⁵⁰

Peterson's question was particularly relevant regarding the large number of agricultural and recreational structures that composed the rural landscape of Sleeping Bear park. Initially the National Park Service regarded these structures as obstacles inhibiting the return of the land to its natural, forested condition. During the mid-1970s the buildings on numerous farm and old resort properties were sold for salvage or removal from the site at public auction. Such action was in violation of President Richard M. Nixon's Executive Order 11593, which had specifically charged all federal agencies with the evaluating the eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places of all properties under their control. This policy of ignoring the historic potential of vernacular buildings came to a sudden end in 1977. The reason for the change was in part due to the growing awareness of historic preservation issues in the wake of the 1976 bicentennial, yet like so many policy changes at Sleeping Bear considerable impetus also came from critics outside the park service.

The first resolution of the Sleeping Bear Dunes Advisory Commission called for the preservation and interpretation of some of the lakeshore's historic farms. This resolution was promptly forgotten until five years later when the commission was faced with public complaints regarding park management of South Manitou Island. Sylvia B. Kruger of East Lansing, a summer resident of the island and a local history enthusiast, deserves credit for helping to change the way the lakeshore viewed historic farmsteads. During 1976 and 1977 Kruger questioned the impact of wilderness status on the rural properties on the island. She noticed a gap between the rhetoric of the Midwest Region Director, Merrill D. Beal—who assured her, "there are procedures that we follow that make the destruction of any cultural property quite unlikely"—and the actions of park personnel on South Manitou Island. In July 1976, Superintendent Martinek himself helped to demolish the gates leading to the Anderson house. The Youth Conservation Corps Camp on the island was kept particularly busy that summer removing farm fences all over the island. When Kruger complained about these actions she was told, "we do not believe that the fences of South Manitou Island represent a significant historical resource, and we intend to proceed with their removal." Kruger protested to the advisory commission that these actions, as well as the preparation of several buildings for demolition, were done without appropriate historic preservation surveys. The commission was impressed with the substance and passion of her arguments. She was invited to be an ex officio member of the commission, to provide special advice on South Manitou Island. She continued in that role until 1980 when she became a regular member of the commission.⁵¹

Kruger's complaints brought an end to a lakeshore wide policy of removing agricultural structures from farms bought by the park service. At that same time Donald R. Brown replaced Superintendent Martinek. The former had greater sensitivity to the issue of landscape preservation. In August of 1977, he ordered a moratorium on the removal of any agricultural

⁵⁰ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), August 12, 1987.

⁵¹ Sylvia B. Kruger, Statement on Preserving Historic Importance of South Manitou Island, Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission Meeting, June 17, 1977.

features, both on South Manitou and the mainland. A comprehensive historic site survey of the new park was contracted with Michigan State University. Because of the rapid rate of land acquisition at that time, Brown's order came just in time to save many of the lakeshore's most valuable resources. Scores of Port Oneida buildings were slated for removal. At the Mason farm the lakeshore had actually sold the barn for salvage. "We were going to start tearing the barn down to move it to some property we owned, on Monday," recalled Lorraine Mason, "and on Friday the Park Service called us and said, 'Hold it, we want to buy that back.'"⁵²

The inventory of historically significant properties conducted by the Michigan State University Art Department, together with an earlier archeological overview completed by the Michigan State University Museum, provided a baseline for historic resource planning and action. The Michigan State Historic Preservation Office reacted very proactively to the reports and advised the Director of the Midwest Region of the National Park Service that Sleeping Bear Dunes contained several potential National Register of Historic Places districts, including South Manitou island where the "farming complexes" were specifically cited as requiring management attention. The letter emphasized the importance of looking at "vernacular farm structures, orchards, and fields" as all part of the same agricultural story, a resource in which "human and natural history merge." These recommendations, as well as Kruger's involvement with the advisory commission, ensured that the agricultural historic resources of the lakeshore would be considered during the formation of the general management plan.⁵³

During the public comment phase of the general management plan process, Sylvia Kruger argued for creation of a South Manitou historic district that would include an 1890s-era living history farm site. The official workshop planning books included alternatives that would allow for the continuation of agriculture in the Good Harbor Bay area and the interpretation of agricultural history on park lands in the Empire area. Public reaction to these proposals and others, to preserve Glen Haven as a historic village, was favorable. The final plan incorporated most of these elements along with the general commitment that "Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore will be managed primarily for the perpetuation of the natural environment and the preservation of cultural features..." While those were fine general principles, the plan was short on specific strategies for determining what should be preserved and how it would be funded.⁵⁴

From the beginning of the lakeshore's attempt to deal with its rural cultural resources there was an aesthetic dimension at work. As early as 1970 local people had expressed concern over the loss of the familiar sight of farmhouses and barns tucked among the forested glacial hills, framed by a field of hay. In 1980, Superintendent Brown ordered the mowing of selected agricultural fields in order to preserve such roadside viewsheds and prevent the growth of aspen and other second growth trees. Sylvia Kruger urged the same practice on South Manitou Island, where the fields were rapidly disappearing. Some agricultural lands were maintained during the 1970s and 1980s by leasebacks or cooperative farm agreements between the lakeshore and local

⁵² Superintendent's Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1977, SLBD Records; Elizabeth Edwards, "Port Oneida: A Community Slips Away," *Traverse, the Magazine*, (March, 1990), 23.

⁵³ Martha M. Bigelow, Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer to Merrill D. Beal, Director, Midwest Regional Office, January 4, 1978, Minutes of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission, November 10, 1978, SLBD Records.

⁵⁴ Sylvia B. Kruger, Statement on South Manitou Island for inclusion into the record of the public meetings, November 1 and 2, 1977 for the revision of the General Management Plan for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, South Manitou Island Management Subunit File, SLBD Records; National Park Service, Planning Alternatives Workbook: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan, November 1978; Preserve Sleeping Bear, Mission Statement, July 14, 1998.

farmers. During the general management plan process public sentiment had been strong for the lakeshore to keep some of its agricultural lands in crops. "There are people out there starving and you are locking up vital resources," was a frequently voiced sentiment. Some of the agreements yielded a considerable financial return, but it went into the general federal treasury and was not available for use in the park to pay for the upkeep of farm buildings. Maintaining open fields through cooperative agreements with local farmers, however, was problematical. Fruit growing required considerable pesticide use and the mowing of hay took place during the natural nesting time of several bird species. As cooperative agricultural agreements were phased out during the late 1980s the lakeshore had to come up with its own policy. In 1989, the lakeshore developed a plan to plant its fields in the Port Oneida area with native plants such as blackeyed susan and little bluestem and to undertake an annual mowing after nesting season. With limited resources for both planting and mowing the lakeshore only gradually expanded this practice to the bulk of its potential historic agriculture fields. Eventually, considerable work was done restoring long neglected farm fields on South Manitou Island.⁵⁵

The problem faced by Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore was not unique. Other parks such as the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area and Ozark National Scenic Riverways also had a large number of rural historic sites within their boundaries. In 1984, the Southwest Region Office sponsored a special case study of the Boxey Valley in Arkansas to develop guidelines for identifying and preserving rural districts. Nonetheless, Sleeping Bear was thrust into the spotlight on this issue because of the large number of potential agricultural and recreational historic sites under its direct management. At times during the 1980s and 1990s it appeared that the park would respond to this by assuming a leadership role within the agency on how to deal with vernacular historic sites. In 1985, the lakeshore hosted a four-day seminar "Managing Rural Historic Districts within National Parks." Preservationists and park historians from across the region participated in the program. Historians from the regional office had just completed a special history of the Port Oneida area, so that district served as a case study for the workshop. Practical management alternatives that emerged from the program included leasing farm buildings as bed and breakfasts, professional office buildings, or artist's studios. The lakeshore, however, did not feel it knew enough about its several hundred historic structures to move immediately toward a management plan. The decision was made to study the problem further. In 1987, the Historic American Buildings Survey was contracted to supply a summer research team. Their work focused on South Manitou Island, where they photographed, prepared line drawings and histories of vintage buildings. A year later a second team prepared a study of Glen Haven, and in 1989 the Historic American Buildings Survey team conducted its work on North Manitou Island. In 1990, the Historic American Buildings Survey completed its projects at Sleeping Bear with additional work at Port Oneida and Glen Haven. While this was going on the buildings under park control at Port Oneida and on the islands continued to deteriorate, with only minimal attention from the lakeshore's overtaxed maintenance division. The Historic American Buildings Survey work at Sleeping Bear was more of a distraction than a help. Most valuable in situations where structures face imminent destruction, the survey was not in a position help move the lakeshore closer to a management solution, nor did it undertake research in enough

⁵⁵ Superintendent's Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1989, 1992, SLBD Records; Max Holden, Oral History Interview, August 13, 1998.

depth to make solid recommendations concerning what should be preserved, what should be allowed to deteriorate, and what simply could be removed as surplus.⁵⁶

The large number of structures within the lakeshore eligible for the National Register presented management with a difficult problem. To realize fully the historic preservation potential of Sleeping Bear could easily cost the entire budget of the national lakeshore. The steady increase in importance of cultural resources within the lakeshore interpretation, resource management, and maintenance divisions that occurred between 1970 and 1995 would have surprised the National Park Service planners like Allen T. Edmunds who first conceived of the lakeshore. Yet the accelerating commitment to historic properties has been fully in accord with congressional action and changing public values. Perhaps because it is an issue that has evolved out of the lakeshore's post-1970 growth, park leadership has been hesitant to seek decisive action, unsure of its course. In many ways the issue has the appearance of one that has been massaged more than managed. In 1987, the opportunity to preserve and interpret the historic town of Glen Haven was within reach. Objections from the local community and division within the lakeshore management doomed that opportunity. More than a decade later little more than basic stabilization has taken place there. In 1985, appropriate historical information and effective management alternatives were available for Port Oneida. Again no commitment was made and park owned buildings within the district continued to suffer in a limbo of neglect and creeping decay.

During the 1990s popular interest in the historic buildings of the lakeshore began to increase. Across northern Michigan people were concerned with the loss of farms to recreational developments. The Leelanau County and Grand Traverse County's Old Mission Peninsula were particularly effected by this trend. Magazine articles and photographic essays mourned the loss of the region's rural heritage, while activists and planners sought ways to preserve the rural landscape. Efforts to maintain farms through the sale of their development rights on the Old Mission Peninsula drew national media attention. Faced with this changing climate of opinion the National Park Service took steps to develop a Historic Properties Management Plan. To complete the national register nomination for the Port Oneida district and to inform management concerning potential rural districts on the islands the Midwest Regional Office contracted with the Landscape Architecture program at the University of Wisconsin for a series of special studies on the history of the Sleeping Bear area. The first of these studies reviewed the agricultural history of Benzie and Leelanau counties and established a context for understanding how the Sleeping Bear area fit into the history of farming in the Upper Great Lakes region. The following reports focused very specifically on Port Oneida, South Manitou, and North Manitou islands. The studies united comprehensive research with pragmatic alternative management strategies. In the future they will be invaluable to park interpreters dealing with agricultural sites. Although the resulting reports were models of how to describe and assess rural historic districts, the resources continued to deteriorate while they were under additional investigation for six years. At the same time, lakeshore management's ad hoc approach to the more than one hundred potentially historic building under its control drew increasing flak. A group called the Sleeping

⁵⁶ Robert Z. Melnick, Daniel Spohn, and Emma Jane Saxe, *Cultural Landscapes: Rural Historic Districts in the National Park System* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1984); Ron Cockrell, *A Special History of Port Oneida and the Pyramid Point Agricultural District, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* (Omaha, Nebraska: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, 1984); Benzie County Advisor, July 17, 1989.

Bear Dunes Preservation Committee was formed to lobby for a more proactive lakeshore policy toward cultural resources.⁵⁷

In 1995, the lakeshore proposed to raze a shed on North Manitou Island. The problems encountered illustrated both the complexity of resource management at Sleeping Bear and the opportunities for preservation. The Manitou Island Association as part of their orchard operations had built the 2,400 square foot shed in the 1930s. The shed was located next to a historic barn and along with several other features it constituted a fairly intact farming complex. Members of the Sleeping Bear Preservation Committee were quick to label the plan "a clear case of anticipatory demolition," believing the park service wanted the shed gone before it could be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Actually the lakeshore had been focused on finding a site for its solar electric system that had been designed to reduce the risk of fuel oil spills. Lakeshore management wanted the site to be within the old Manitou village area, as they did not want new construction to intrude on those areas of the island managed as wilderness. Within the village area the location had to be chosen carefully, so as not to mar the historic views of the Coast Guard Station, a potential National Historic Landmark. Initially adaptively reusing the shed for the storage of the solar batteries was deemed as unwise because the old building was said to have deteriorated to the point of being structurally unsound. Lakeshore management worried it simply did not have the funds to bolster the old shed. Preservationists argued that the 1989 management plan for North Manitou needed to be revised to allow greater latitude for historic resource management. In the end that costly and time-consuming prospect was deemed less palatable than trying to adaptively reuse the shed. "I am not sure how we will come up with all the funding for it," Superintendent Ivan Miller told the press. The funding, however, had to be found when the national Advisory Council on Historic Preservation ruled that the lakeshore had not followed the procedures required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The clash between environmental protection, wilderness values, and historic preservation regulations, aggravated by a continuing shortage of construction funds, served to divide the Sleeping Bear staff. On one side was "management," anxious protect wilderness and begin a project before the committed funds were lost and on the other side were resource specialists fighting to establish the importance of historic site values within the park. The resolution was to adaptively reuse the building, although that resulted in the loss of a considerable amount of the building's original exterior.⁵⁸

The Art of the Possible: Managing in an Era of Austerity

For lakeshore managers it was the high cost of rehabilitating and maintaining old buildings that made the issue of historic preservation so intimidating. Had park budgets been

⁵⁷ Elizabeth Edwards, "Port Oneida," *Traverse*; Elizabeth Edwards, "Old Mission Crusade," *Traverse* (September, 1997), 40-7; Susan Olsen Haswell and Arnold R. Alanen, *A Garden Apart: An Agricultural and Settlement History of Michigan's Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Region* (Omaha: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, 1994); Marla J. McEnaney, William H. Tishler, and Arnold R. Alanen, *Farming at the Water's Edge: An Assessment of Agricultural and Cultural Landscape Resources in the Proposed Port Oneida Rural Historic District at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan* (Omaha: Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service, 1995); Brenda Wheeler Williams, Arnold R. Alanen, William H. Tishler, *Coming Through With Rye: An Historic Agricultural Landscape Study of South Manitou Island at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan* (Omaha: Midwest Field Office, National Park Service, 1996).

⁵⁸ *Record-Eagle* (Traverse City), August 28; December 4, 1995.

growing at anything near the pace of park responsibilities Sleeping Bear may have responded more decisively to its emerging historic districts. Instead, between 1980 and 1995 Sleeping Bear Dunes was stymied in the doldrums of flat, if not declining budgets. Nationally the park service was in crisis during these years. Soaring federal budget deficits depressed the growth of the National Park Service's budget at the very time environmental and historic preservation regulations were expanding its mandate and raising its costs. In 1986, Congress passed the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act that instituted across-the-board federal budget cuts. During its first year of operation, Gramm-Rudman-Hollings reduced the entire National Park Service budget by 4.32%. The national director called on all superintendents to "do more with less."⁵⁹

The 1990s brought scant fiscal relief to the lakeshore. Between 1983 and 1993 visitor use of the national park system increased by fifty percent. Federal government shutdowns in 1990 and 1995 were testimony to the partisan contentiousness of the overall budgetary process. The park service budget would have been a problem under the best of circumstances. Stewart Udall's goal of doubling of the national park system during the 1960s, which set off a spurt of expansion that continued well into the 1970s, created a large number of parks like Sleeping Bear Dunes which were all maturing at the same time. That maturation process required ever escalating budgets throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Of course, what happened is that few of these parks met their initial development schedules and a tremendous backlog of projects accumulated throughout the system. Crowded older parks competed with the under-funded new units for insufficient resources. The policies of George B. Hartzog, Jr., one of the most successful of the National Park Service Directors, contributed to the funding crisis. Hartzog believed in the benefit of spreading national park units around the country, in the same way that the military placed bases and defense contracts strategically in key congressional districts around the country, to build a national constituency for the agency within the Congress. By the time Hartzog retired the park service managed an area in every state but Delaware and there was a National Historic Landmark in every congressional district. This was savvy bureaucratic empire-building during the 1960s but it led inevitably to a lessening of standards as to what constituted a national park unit and set the stage for the emergence of "pork parks" during the 1980s. Just as the Department of Defense found itself with redundant bases it could not close or weapon systems it did not need, the National Park Service found its funding crisis exasperated in the 1980s by congressionally initiated new park projects. Through new park units such as Steamtown, U.S.A., the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, and in Michigan, the Keweenaw National Historical Park the National Park Service found itself thrust into the role of helping aging rust-belt communities adjust to deindustrialization through heritage tourism. Yet while Congress's desire to vote money for new parks increased it became less interested in supporting the units that had been created earlier. In 1993, the National Parks and Conservation Association issued a report aptly titled, "National Parks in Crisis." The report's conclusion was that due to years of chronic budgetary austerity "our national parks are in a race against time for survival."⁶⁰

Since personnel costs are the largest element in most park budgets, cuts to the number of seasonal staff was an inevitable management response to austerity. Yet, seasonal staff were the dedicated, under-paid backbone of the lakeshore. During the short summer season more than

⁵⁹ Karamanski, *The Pictured Rocks: Administrative History of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore*, 116-7.

⁶⁰ Randal O'Toole, "The National Pork Service," *Forbes*, November 20, 1995, 160-70; George B. Hartzog, Jr., *Battling for the National Parks*. (Mt. Kisco, N.Y.: Moyer Bell, 1988); *Record-Eagle* (Traverse City), August 27, 1993.

fifty backcountry rangers, interpreters, and maintenance staff were brought into the lakeshore on a temporary basis. Reducing their numbers meant shortening visitor center hours, canceling some interpretation programs, and reducing ranger patrols, all of which came at the expense of visitor education and safety. The use of several hundred volunteers donating thousands of hours of service as campground hosts and as tour guides helped to partially make up the shortfall. Some summers virtually all interpretive programs had to be cancelled. Hurt in ways that would be difficult to quantify were resource management programs such as air and water quality monitoring that had to be cutback as well as efforts to control exotic plants such as baby's breath.⁶¹

No area of park operations was hurt more by the budget crunches of the 1980s and 1990s than was maintenance. Retirees might volunteer to work at the Glen Haven maritime museum but only a dedicated few will volunteer to pickup garbage or clean toilets at D.H. Day campground. Yet such mundane tasks were vital responsibilities at Sleeping Bear. To meet such day-to-day needs long-term maintenance was sacrificed to the great cost of the lakeshore overall. Trail crews were nowhere near as active as they needed to be on the lakeshore's fifty-five-mile network of trails, and in many years no trail maintenance was funded at all. Lack of trail maintenance encouraged people to leave designated hiking corridors and strike out on their own, with the result that fragile dune plant communities would be degraded. A vital area such as maintenance was so vulnerable to fiscal cuts because the annual maintenance fund was never adequate to the park's needs. Sleeping Bear annually assembled a list of its under-funded maintenance priorities and then competed with all other national park units for access to the national maintenance budget.⁶²

Maintenance shortfalls exacerbated the lakeshore's historic resource management program. If a historic house, as one wag put it, is a hole in the ground where a property-owner throws his money, Sleeping Bear had more than a hundred such holes for its maintenance budget. Even high profile buildings such as the Glen Haven cannery had to wait more than two years for painting and roof replacement because of national competition for maintenance funds. Farmhouses and barns within Port Oneida deteriorated more each year. By 1990 the Gordon Basch home, once one of the finest in the district had its roof collapse and its walls buckle. Most of the buildings endured better than the Basch home, yet Ranger William Herd had to admit, "With limited funds and so much to do...all we're doing is putting plywood on the doors and windows and patches on the roofs." Public appeals to stabilize historic old homes on South Manitou Island were brushed aside by Superintendent Ivan Miller's pragmatic observation, "You have to draw the line somewhere...some buildings are just not going to be salvageable." In 1994, Miller estimated that the lakeshore had fallen behind by \$500,000 in its maintenance budget. That shortfall was obvious to anyone who observed the large inventory of old buildings.⁶³

Credibility built up through quality interpretation programs was lost when the public witnessed the backlog of buildings suffering from decay. If the old farm buildings had simply been torn down and the area returned to nature, people would have understood. But to keep the old buildings up because they were "historic" and then not maintain them was sure to frustrate

⁶¹ Neal Bullington, Oral History Interview, August 14, 1998; *The Mining Journal* (Marquette, Mich.), August 29, 1993; Grand Rapids Press, August 29, 1993.

⁶² *Ibid*; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, October 20, 1994.

⁶³ *Ibid*; Elizabeth Edwards, "Port Oneida," *Traverse*, 22-4.

old farm families who prided themselves on the care of their homesteads. "To see the shape of the place would have killed Mom and Dad," complained a great granddaughter of a Port Oneida pioneer. "Everything was always kept up so nicely." Another women lamented, after a visit to her lost farm, "What a shame that the original old homestead was not allowed to die in dignity." Enraged she concluded a letter-to-the-editor of a local paper with a curse. "I, Jo-An put a 3,000-year CURSE OF PESTILENCE on the "ERICKSON ACRES" affecting only the un-loyal towards our beloved land onto those un-sensitive to sacred things!" The holders of leases about to expire argued before Congress that since the park service could not care for the property under its control already, what was the logic of giving them more land? "Many of the homes already vacated have not been cared for or removed by the Park Service and have become serious hazards."⁶⁴

Under a severe budgetary regime construction projects proceeded at a very slow pace. The most important new construction at Sleeping Bear was the redesign of the Platte River Campground, the lakeshore's busiest visitor facility. The new campground had been at the head of Superintendent Martinek's wish list back in the 1970s. Plans for a new facility had been drawn up and approved since 1980, yet getting the construction funds to begin work took another decade. The delay facilitated the study of a major Indian encampment site impacted by the proposed new construction. Extensive archeological excavations were carried out in order to recover valuable cultural resource data regarding prehistoric Indian life in the Sleeping Bear area. Political high-jinks played a role in delaying the project. While lakeshore visitors had to be content with a site little improved from what had been the Benzie State Park Campground, Congress played havoc with the National Park Service's list of new construction priorities by adding pet projects to the head of the list. Projects that had nothing to do with existing national parks such as major funding for Chicago's Navy Pier and Boston's public library received funding ahead of Sleeping Bear Dunes. The lakeshore lacked aggressive support in the House of Representatives and so its projects were frequently bumped down the funding list. When the project finally was funded in 1990, it substantially improved the camper's experience. Thirty-five new sites were added and the spacing between sites was increased to allow greater privacy. New restrooms were added and all were equipped with flush toilets and showers.⁶⁵

Getting the Platte River Campground project finally underway was a relief to Superintendent Peterson. Advancing the lakeshore programmatically with limited resources was an exercise in frustration. In 1990, the task of directing the lakeshore passed from Richard Peterson to Ivan D. Miller. Peterson went west to become the Assistant Superintendent at Glacier National Park. During his ten-year tenure at Sleeping Bear the size of the lakeshore's full-time staff remained static, while the number of part-time employees actually declined substantially. Visitation to the park increased by forty percent, yet the overall budget remained flat. Peterson's most important contribution was enabling the lakeshore to move out of the highly inconvenient Frankfort bank building and into a new headquarters within the lakeshore boundaries.

Ivan D. Miller came to the lakeshore from Pacific Northwest Regional Office. The Minnesota native had been with the park service since 1963 and had experience working at some of the "crown jewels" of the system, including Yosemite, Glacier, and Denali, where he had been

⁶⁴ Ibid; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, September 1, 1983; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), November 27, 1995.

⁶⁵ Benzie-Record Patriot, March 21, 1990; Benzie County Advisor, October 12, 1992; O'Toole, "The National Park Service," Forbes, 166.

Chief Ranger. Miller had a Master's degree in Forestry and extensive experience in park planning, most notably a four-year tour in Saudi Arabia, where he helped to set up their first national park. Miller first came to Sleeping Bear as a tourist in 1975 and had long thought it would be a nice place to work. He returned to the park fifteen years later, warned about "the complex land issues out there at Sleeping Bear."⁶⁶

After negotiating cultural barriers in the Middle East, Miller was well prepared to handle the sometimes stormy public relations of Sleeping Bear. His first test came only weeks after arriving in Empire when the president of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs blasted Sleeping Bear Dunes as "the worst managed park I ever saw." Rather than responding defensively Miller invited conservation club president Richard L. Jameson to review the lakeshore's draft dune management plan and to participate in a dune management workshop. The program included tours of Sleeping Bear and other locally managed dune sites. While Jameson remained adamant that stronger protection measures were needed at Sleeping Bear, he came to realize that public access was more sharply controlled by the National Park Service than at state and county parks. Miller's approach ensured that Jameson's critique was part of a cooperative solution not a public feud.⁶⁷

As Miller began work as superintendent many projects envisioned in the general management plan under Superintendent Brown and planned under Superintendent Peterson were finally being funded. The Platte River Campground was the most important of these in terms of improving the image of the national lakeshore. Less successful at demonstrating park service planning prowess was the installation of a new docking facility at North Manitou Island. Unlike South Manitou the northern island had no natural harbor, which necessitated the building of a large pier, long enough to accommodate fluctuating lake levels and stout enough to withstand the action of ice and gales. A major construction effort was required to build the 200 foot-long facility. The dock was completed in 1987, but within a year a sand bar had formed that made the pier unusable to the Manitou ferry. This was extremely embarrassing since providing a secure docking facility had been one of the reasons behind acquiring the ferry service and making it a park concession. Extensive prework studies had established that the site in front of the Coast Guard Station was prone to sand accumulation. Management, however, went ahead with building at that site in order to keep new construction out of the wilderness areas of the island. It was a bad decision made for a good reason. For more than a year after Miller arrived visitors to North Manitou Island had to be taken to a beach on the southern shore where the ferry could nudge close enough in for the campers to splash ashore. The new superintendent had to order extensive dredging to remove the sand bar. The first dredging was done in November 1992 and has been redone roughly every two years since that time. It is a biannual reminder of a less than successful planning effort.⁶⁸

The management plan for the Platte River corridor was another example of a flawed planning process. The planning had been underway for several years before Miller arrived at Sleeping Bear and pushing that through to completion proved to be no easy matter. The 1979 general management plan had proposed in broad-brush strokes design and policy changes to

⁶⁶ Ivan D. Miller, Oral History Interview, March 8, 1999.

⁶⁷ Max Holden, Oral History Interview, August 12, 1998.

⁶⁸ Rusco, North Manitou Island: Between Sunrise and Sunset, 153-4; Superintendent's Annual Report, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1987, 1993, SLBD Records.

improve the experience of visitors to the naturally diverse area. A specific management plan for the Platte River corridor was deemed desirable as a way to advance the broad goals of the general management plan. John Abbett, lakeshore Assistant Superintendent, spearheaded the task. In 1985, a contract with the consulting firm Environmental Resources Management produced studies of visitor use of the Platte River and the effect of dredging at the mouth of the river. Abbett's small group of lakeshore staff followed this contract with further visitor surveys and consultations with other agencies. The large number of overlapping jurisdictions within the relatively compact, less than 2,000-acre, corridor made planning particularly difficult. The Benzie County Road Commission owned Lake Michigan Road, which provided vehicular access to the area. The Department of Natural Resources owned 161 acres near its fish weir on the river. At the mouth of the river Lake Township owned a 2-acre park and the county controlled the Platte River boat launch ramp area. More than thirty residential properties, some destined to become part of the lakeshore, some not, and the private canoe livery also had to be taken into account in establishing the plan.⁶⁹

Four planning alternatives were completed and available for public comment in the spring of 1991. Among the most controversial options was the proposal favored by fishermen to remove the boat launch from the Platte River and place it at the end of Tiesma Road, where semi-protected direct access to Platte Bay was available. Initially Abbett favored this site until it was discovered that the proposed boat launch would displace a prime pitcher's thistle habitat as well as the Prairie Warble, which had recently been listed as a threatened species. The need to avoid such sensitive areas should have been detected during the initial planning. The Tiesma Road launch was scuttled, but no solution to the annual dredging of the mouth of the Platte was presented. There was strong public support for planning elements which included trail and landing improvements, a pedestrian bridge across the Platte as an alternative to people walking on the M-22 highway bridge, and improved visitor facilities at the busy swimming area at the mouth of the Platte. A plan was approved in 1992 and within two years the lakeshore had completed improvements at several of the downstream public use areas and redesigned the parking lot at the mouth of the river. Also installed were improved comfort stations, changing rooms, and a boat-trailer turn-around. Together with improvements made at the Loon Lake public access and the picnic area along the Platte River, the park service had done much to improve the experience of canoeists on the river while at the same time directing visitor use in such a way as to stabilize the vulnerable river banks.⁷⁰

Planning for the future of the Platte River brought to a head the simmering disagreement between the lakeshore and Kathleen and Thomas Stocklen, the owners of Riverside Canoe Livery. Float and canoe trips on the Platte River were a major visitor activity during the summer months. No commercial activity within the lakeshore had as much impact upon the park as Riverside Canoe. Yet the National Park Service had less control over Riverside than any other piece of private property within the park. The Stocklens refused to sign a National Park Service restrictive use agreement that would give lakeshore management the assurance that the business

⁶⁹ Environmental Resources Management, *Platte River Management Plan, Boat Launch Facility, Sleeping Bear Dunes* (Bloomington, Minn.: Land and Water Management Division, 1985); Environmental Resources Management, *Platte River Corridor Study* (Bloomington, Minn.: Land and Water Management Division, 1985); Superintendent's Annual Report, *Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1985-1992*, SLBD Records.

⁷⁰ Denver Service Center, *Platte River Management Plan: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Michigan* (Denver: National Park Service, 1992); *Benzie Record-Patriot*, June 19, 1991.

would not be operated in such a way as to "impair the usefulness and attractiveness of the area." One hundred and fifteen other property owners within the lakeshore signed such agreements, which were specifically called for in the park's enabling legislation. The Stocklens were motivated partially by business considerations. They did not want what they felt was a capricious national park management process to have leverage over their business. Unlike the other 115 property owners who signed agreements the Stocklens insisted on being paid to accept a limitation on their property use. The possibility of negotiating the issue was further complicated because principle also drove owners of Riverside Canoe. Kathleen Stocklen had become very active in the National Inholders Association. For her defeating the National Park Service at Sleeping Bear was part of a larger struggle to protect individual rights from an overly aggressive bureaucracy. The clash between Riverside Canoe and the national lakeshore rested on core values. For the National Park Service the restrictive use agreement was vital to protect the Platte from a major business on the river, as well as to insist that all property owners be treated equally. For the Stocklens it was the National Park Service that was the threat, not to the river but to people's right to use the river. "It would be easy for us to make a deal and take their money," Kathleen Stocklen told the press. "But we want to be sure the public never gets shut off the Platte River."⁷¹

In October 1990, after attempts to negotiate an agreement broke down, the National Park Service again began condemnation proceedings against Riverside Canoe. The goal was less to take the Stocklens property, which the National Park Service recognized would entail a disruption of vital visitor services, than it was to force the Stocklens to accept a restrictive agreement that would protect the lakeshore from future negative impacts. The Stocklens regarded condemnation as a declaration of war and they launched an immediate counter attack. They turned back federal appraisers' request for access to their property and made an appeal for assistance to Congressman Guy Vander Jagt. Kathleen Stocklen leveled charges of criminal breaches of the public trust against the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and was able to revive the inconclusive, ten-year-old, Inspector General's Office investigation of the park. She insisted that lakeshore officials filed false reports to improve their condemnation case. Backed-up by the Mountain States Legal Foundation, the Stocklens also filed a counter-suit against the National Park Service, requesting a declaratory judgement based on their 1971 certificate prohibiting condemnation. The park service won a key victory when the federal court established the validity of condemnation, in spite of the 1971 certificate. Despite the legal setback Kathleen Stocklen's conservative political connections and the good reputation of her business won her assistance at the highest governmental level. The press dubbed the struggle "David vs. Goliath," but when it came to political pull the Stocklens dwarfed the lakeshore. Senator Malcolm Wallop (R-Wyoming), a national property rights advocate and Vice President Dan Quayle both pressed the Department of the Interior on behalf of Riverside Canoe. In September 1992 the National Inholders Association even planned a demonstration on the steps of the Interior building in support of the Stocklens. It was cancelled, however, when the department bowed to the onslaught of political pressure.⁷²

⁷¹ Benzie County Record-Patriot, December 26, 1990.

⁷² Kathy Stocklen to Dearest File [Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore], January 5, 1991, Stocklen File #12, SLBD Records; Kathy Stocklen to Manuel Lujan, Jr., Secretary of the Interior, January 29, 1991, Stocklen File #12, SLBD Records; Opinion and Orders on Defendants' Motion For Summary Judgement, United States of America v. 0.96 Acres of Land, More or less, Situated in the County of Benzie, State of

On September 14, 1992 Kathleen and Thomas Stocklen met with National Park Service Director James Ridenour. At this level the Stocklens were a problem that Director Ridenour just seemed to want to go away. The park service director had owed his appointment to the influence of Vice President Quayle, which may have disposed him to take a direct personal interest in the case. Ridenour ignored detailed settlement negotiations, which had been underway between the Stocklens and Superintendent Ivan Miller over the content of a restrictive agreement that could resolve the issue out of court. Instead Ridenour drafted with the Stocklens a brief letter of agreement in which the latter promised:

...we will use our property for the purpose of a canoe livery/marina/general store as it has been used for the past 28 years. We have no intention of changing that use in the future. Our use has been and will continue to be consistent with the purpose and intent of the Act that created Sleeping Bear Dunes (Public Law 91-479). Moreover, our use has not and will not impair the usefulness and attractiveness of the Lakeshore.

The National Park Service and the Stocklen's both agreed to drop their suits. Recognizing a complete cave-in when she saw it Kathleen Stocklen further insisted that the legal expenses of Riverside Canoe be fully compensated. "I reminded him eyeball to eyeball that we weren't the ones who started this," Stocklen said. The park service paid the Stocklen's \$26,750 to cover their attorney's fees. By going over the heads of the park service's local and regional officials, and going to the top of the bureaucratic food chain, Kathleen Stocklen won a complete victory. "We are pleased to have reached a settlement on this longstanding issue," Director Ridenour told the press. "God bless America," a relieved Kathy Stocklen wrote to Director Ridenour. "It is a 'Country Worth Saving' and we must all have the courage to do the saving."⁷³

The Homestead Golf Course Saga

A decisive factor in the defeat of the National Park Service's attempt to "save" the Platte River was the power of the national property rights movement. That same political force manifested itself in one of the most long lasting land use disputes in northwest Michigan, the Homestead golf course proposal. The case, which severely fractured the communities of Leelanau County, pitted the desire to develop a modern tourist infrastructure against the need to preserve the environmental amenities that made the Leland Peninsula attractive to tourists in the first place. Like the Riverside Canoe embroilment the Homestead case was a battle about controlling successful, high-quality private businesses from growing in such a way as to do permanent harm to a beautiful and popular public resource.

Michigan, T. M. Stocklen, et al., and Unknown Others, United States District Court, Western District of Michigan, Southern Division; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), September 30, 1992.

⁷³ Tom and Kathy Stocklen to Director James Ridenour, September 10, 1992, Stocklen File #13, SLBD Records; Receipt of Funds, United States of America v. 0.96 Acres.....T.M. Stocklen, et al., U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan, December 19, 1992; Tom and Kathy Stocklen to James Ridenour, December [no day], 1992, Stocklen File #13, SLBD Records; Elizabeth Edwards, "Suit Sunk, Case Closed," Traverse, The Magazine (December, 1992), found in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore clipping file, 1992, SLBD Records; Detroit Free Press, June 11, 1995. For more on the Stocklens see: William Perry Pendley, *It Takes a Hero: The Grassroots Battle Against Environmental Oppression* (Bellvue, Wash.: Free Enterprise Press, 1995).

In retrospect one of the major mistakes made when drawing the boundaries of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore during the 1960s had been the decision to omit the lands around the Leelanau School from the national lakeshore. The private school was seen as a compatible institution as was the small guest inn located near by known as the Homestead. Several hundred acres of land owned by Arthur S. Huey, who was owner and operator of both the school and the resort were included in the lakeshore and were purchased by Kuras in 1979 at the cost of \$1.3 million. The land exempted from condemnation did not long remain a "compatible use." In 1974, Robert A. Kuras, a savvy Harvard business school graduate and a veteran developer bought into the Huey family's interest in the Homestead property. Initially Kuras was their partner but the Huey's soon found themselves on the losing side of a power struggle for control of the resort. With control over the Homestead Kuras began an aggressive expansion program. In 1979, while the people of Glen Lake were railing against the proposed scenic road, the "National Park land grab," and the Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune headlined "Survey shows summer visitors want Glen Lake area as is," local officials approved Kuras's plan to transform the Homestead into a huge, multipurpose resort complex. Few people thought the expansion a more serious threat than the scenic parkway, but the new Homestead was a major departure from the small scale, "local atmosphere" type of accommodations summer visitors had come to expect in Leelanau. When they approved the new Homestead, Glen Lake residents were fooling themselves that they could have both a large-scale resort development and restrained commercialism.⁷⁴

The new Homestead was an impressive facility with five restaurants, two conference centers, retail shops, five swimming pools, eleven downhill ski runs, and seven tennis courts set along the Lake Michigan beach and at the mouth of the Crystal River. Scores of condominium residential buildings containing 400 individual units sprouted throughout the manicured grounds. The resort also included a dozen single-family homes and a hotel. From the beach at Glen Haven the condominium units, which grew steadily throughout the 1980s, looked like a small city carved out of the forested lakeshore. When it first opened visitors to the Homestead enjoyed accommodations and dining superior to that found anywhere else in the county. Kuras's imagination and dynamic personality made him popular with local politicians. Naturally, the author of nearly 700 local jobs was valued, as someone who was bringing needed economic development to Leelanau County.

Throughout northwest Michigan resort-conference center complexes like the Homestead became popular. Orchards and pastures throughout the region were acquired to build combination golf and ski resorts. Golf courses designed by premier links authorities such as Jack Nicholas and Pete Dye became very popular with vacationing downstate businessmen. By the late 1980s the region had joined the Carolinas and California as one of the leading golf destinations in the United States. The Homestead boasted an asset unlike its rivals-it was located adjacent to the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Guests at the Homestead had sandy beaches and dramatic dunes at their fingertips. What they did not have was a golf course. Kuras felt that the ability to offer a championship caliber golf course was essential to the continued success of the Homestead. Unfortunately, his principal asset became his principal obstacle to

⁷⁴ This latter point was effectively made by Jennette Jaross of Sandwich, Illinois in a letter to the editor, Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, August 23, 1979. For background on the Homestead redevelopment see: Michigan Land Use Institute, *The Homestead Swap: Trading Public Land for Private Gain in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore* (Traverse City, Mich.: Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council, 1996), 5-8.

expansion; Homestead was surrounded by the national lakeshore. During the mid-1980s Kuras quietly acquired several non-contiguous parcels of land for potential expansion. In the fall of 1986, Kuras announced that Homestead intended to build a golf course and condominium complex on a 254-acre site along the scenic Crystal River.⁷⁵

From the beginning the plan ran into community opposition. The first salvos were fired at an unexpectedly hostile Leelanau County Planning Commission meeting in November 1986. More than sixty people crammed the township hall, most of them in opposition to the golf course. Within four days the Friends of the Crystal River was formed to stop the golf course. Scott Jones, a retired Chicago public relations specialist became its highly effective president. Kuras went to great expense to put together a good development team to plan the golf and condominium complex. He immediately organized several workshops with the community to explain his plan and receive community input. The plan was modified in light of publicly expressed objections. What Kuras gradually discovered, however, was something that the National Park Service had learned long ago: once people in Leelanau made up their minds about something which effected them public presentations would likely generate more heat than light. Every time Kuras modified his plan, Scott Jones and the Friends of the Crystal River countered with the simple observation, why not put the golf course somewhere else?⁷⁶

What many Leelanau County citizens objected to was the location of the golf and residential development along the banks of the Crystal River. The proposed project site currently was a wetland that would have to be filled in to allow Kuras's golf course. It did not take much imagination for people to worry about the effect of replacing the natural water filter of the wetland with a heavily fertilized fairway. Visions of the clear river waters replaced by algae blooms and breeding salmon and trout lost to septic system runoff mobilized opposition. "We cannot take chances with this precious river system," pleaded a local teacher in a Traverse City newspaper article.⁷⁷

Kuras was further hurt by a negative public perception of his career as a developer. The Hawk's Nest condominiums that he placed on a bulldozed hill top above Lake Michigan were not only a stunning visual intrusion on the national lakeshore, but a carelessly planned source of erosion. During periods of heavy rain mud, small trees, and rocks were washed down the slope to private homes and park land below. The elaborate plan of environmental monitoring Kuras proposed for the Crystal River in order to allay environmentalists sounded hollow in the light of such past results. Kuras further alienated people by the way he seemingly tried to win covertly rezoning of the proposed site. He had kept his golf course plan to himself while he sat on the Glen Arbor township zoning board and participated in drawing up the long-range land-use plan. In fact, he first publicly announced the project at a special meeting of the zoning board. This was later denounced in a public petition as a "clear breach of the public trust." As the controversy heated up, accusations surfaced that support of the golf course proposal was being used as a litmus test for filling job vacancies at the resort. By 1988, Robert A. Kuras was the most controversial figure in Leelanau County. Neighbors quarreled over the issue, friends fell out; the

⁷⁵ Ibid; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, December 4, 1986.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), June 3, 1987.

Homestead expansion joined religion and politics on the forbidden subject list of homes desiring peace and quiet.⁷⁸

Those who favored the project pointed out that Kuras's development accounted for more than \$22 million in local property tax valuation. If Homestead needed a golf course to remain viable, then approval of that plan was vital to the county's economic survival. The golf course proposal revealed fault lines running throughout a community anxious about its future. Like the residents of most resort areas the people of Leelanau County had very ambivalent feelings toward tourists. People from downstate or out of state were the heart of the regional economy, but they were also disparaged as "fudgies," a swarming breed that descended on beaches, shops, and galleries during warm weather and disappeared at the first sign of frost. A stronger hostility was reserved for "fudgies" who sought to stay in the area. "It's not the fudgies who bother us so much, it's the permafudge," Cris Telgard, owner of the Bluebird Restaurant told a Chicago Tribune reporter in 1992. "They come in, build their condos and start taking over." A Glen Arbor resident complained about that new type of visitor to the area, "the lazy rich shopper show off tooling around in the BMW." Such visitors, it was believed, did not really care for the beach combing and hiking offered by the area. "The dilemma is, do we build golf courses to accommodate them or do we send them somewhere else." A former "fudgie" even noticed the difference and complained to the Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, "It is too bad that it looks like you are being turned into a rich man's playground." The rich brought in their wake jobs for the local people, but also a clash of lifestyles, as was seen in the controversy over hunting restrictions. For many embracing the golf course was consciously a devil's bargain in which they surrendered a part of their community to save the rest.⁷⁹

In the end the local people came down in favor of the project. In September 1987, a referendum of Glen Arbor Township voters approved of rezoning the land in favor of the golf course by a margin of 285-209 in an election that saw nearly ninety percent of electorate participate. But local approval merely set Kuras up for a new round of frustration when he sought a necessary wetlands permit from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). After going to great lengths to win the approval of the DNR, Kuras was stunned by the aggressive intervention of the Chicago office of the Environmental Protection Agency. The Environmental Protection Agency effectively stymied the Homestead project for four years. Kuras fought back with political connections. In 1990, State Senator Connie Binsfeld of Glen Arbor was elected Lieutenant Governor. A long-time supporter of Kuras, Binsfeld had previously tried legislative means to speed the environmental review process. Through Binsfeld's liaison Michigan Governor John Engler nudged his political weight behind the golf course plan. Engler met with William Reilly, President George Bush's Environmental Protection Agency administrator. Senator Donald Riegler (D-Michigan), Kuras' friend and former college roommate, was helpful behind the scenes, but after being burned in a notorious savings-and-loan scandal Riegler had to keep a low profile on Homestead. Nonetheless, such high level involvements made the Homestead case a national news story, even earning a spot on NBC's "Today Show." Eventually the Washington, D.C. office of the Environmental Protection Agency pushed aside the Chicago field office and took direct charge of the case. It was to the surprise of no one then,

⁷⁸ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), February 3, 1987, June 17, 1987, June 21, 1989; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, August 9, 1990.

⁷⁹ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, February 5, 1987, October 11, 1990; Chicago Tribune, May 19, 1992.

when the agency withdrew its objections to the project, clearing the way for Kuras to at last receive his wetlands permit.⁸⁰

Outflanked on the political front the Friends of the Crystal River fought back in the courts. With five other environmental groups, including the Sierra Club and the Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council, Scott Jones's group sued the Environmental Protection Agency and the Michigan DNR in federal district court. A restraining order and later a permanent injunction prevented the Environmental Protection Agency and the DNR from issuing the long-sought wetlands permit. Instead, the court argued the review process needed to begin anew with the United States Army Corps of Engineers as the lead agency. By this time the reputations and egos of many powerful people and more than \$1 million of Kuras's money were invested in the Homestead golf course. In August of 1992, the Environmental Protection Agency refused to accept the district court ruling and the case was sent to the federal appeals court. Suddenly, however, in November of that year the political wind temporarily went out of Kuras's sails with the election of William J. Clinton as the first Democratic president in more than a decade. A new administration at the Environmental Protection Agency doomed the Homestead appeal in the federal court.⁸¹

Up to this point the National Park Service had been pretty much on the sidelines in the bitter golf course controversy. In 1988, the Midwest Regional Office provided comment to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which expressed minor reservations about the golf course's potential impact on ground water pollution. Superintendent Richard Peterson consciously dodged efforts to draw the lakeshore into a discussion of Kuras's sensitivity to the environment. "We have a working relationship with the Homestead," he declared. "It's pretty good, actually." In February 1990, Congressman Dale Kildee (D-Flint) drafted a bill to add fourteen Michigan rivers to the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Many environmental groups lobbied for the Crystal River to be added to the list. Scott Jones and the locally based Friends of the Crystal River worked to defeat this idea out of a clearly expressed desire to keep opposition to the golf course free from the inevitable backlash that would follow National Park Service administration of the river. In 1992, however, the national lakeshore was thrown directly into the furor⁸²

On December 12, 1992, at a news conference in Traverse City, representatives of an "independent" citizens group shook hands with attorneys for the Homestead. Together they announced what they promised would be the solution to the long divisive golf course conflict: Kuras would exchange his 267 acres of Crystal River wetlands for 302 acres of forested uplands within the national lakeshore. For several months people in Leelanau County tried to arrange a compromise settlement. Although the Friends of the Crystal River were clearly winning their fight they wanted to end the dispute in a way that would unite, not divide the community. For Kuras who had sunk several million dollars into the project the compromise was a rope thrown to a drowning man. The swap promised to net him more land, which could be more cheaply developed than the Crystal River wetland, with dramatic Lake Michigan vistas as a bonus. The initial reaction to the news was a collective sigh of relief. Local business organizations and the press all endorsed the proposal.⁸³

⁸⁰ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), June 21, 1989; January 5, 1993.

⁸¹ Ibid; Detroit Free Press, June 9, 1992.

⁸² Record-Eagle (Traverse City), June 21, 1989, February 1, 1990.

⁸³ Michigan Land Use Institute, The Homestead Swap, 7-8.

Unconsulted in the spasm of community goodwill was the National Park Service, either in Empire or Washington, D.C. Superintendent Ivan Miller gamely greeted the news noncommittally: "We're evaluating the proposal and giving it close scrutiny." He tried to dampen enthusiasm for the swap by reminding the press that Congress would have to approve the action, something that was rarely done.⁸⁴

Within a few months, however, the bloom began to fade from the rose of compromise. While the local township boards approved of the swap, a solid phalanx of environmental groups were arrayed against it. They feared a precedent unleashing a rash of future park exchanges with private citizens and regretted the loss of a scenic park upland, including a large chunk of the Bay View Trail. Eventually even the Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council and the Friends of the Crystal River, who originally were open to the swap plan, reversed field and joined the opposition. "You don't resolve a problem with another problem," Scott Jones reflected. Nor did the political situation favor the swap. Senator Donald Riegle was too closely associated with Kuras personally and too wounded politically to push the exchange legislation on Capital Hill. Michigan's other Senator, Carl Levin, had a strong environmental record and was loath to move against his allies for so private a cause and so public an issue. After holding his peace for several months Superintendent Miller blasted the swap proposal. "Its like taking a piece out of the Grand Canyon to put in a waterslide," he told the lakeshore advisory commission.⁸⁵

Proponents of the swap, like the Traverse City Record-Eagle, called on the National Park Service to support the compromise and "demonstrate a willingness to be good neighbors to the Homestead." But Kuras hurt his own cause with environmentalists by failing to resolve a faulty septic system at the resort. For more than ten years Kuras boasted of a "state of the art" septic system yet failed to complete his application for a wastewater discharge permit. In 1992, the Department of Natural Resources determined that the sewer system at Homestead was inadequate to serve the resort's 500 condominiums and that leaks from the system were polluting the local ground water supply. "He'd rather spend money on lawyers fighting the DNR," an environmentalist complained, "than on upgrading the system." The park service was already "good neighbor" enough to Kuras who held an easement for a sewage spray field on lakeshore land. In return for that the public received polluted ground water.⁸⁶

By 1995 the land swap deal was hopelessly stalled. Yet like a recurring bad dream the golf course proposal could not be put to rest. In December of that year a second compromise land swap proposal was brokered between the Friends of the Crystal River and the Homestead. In this deal the Homestead would deed to the National Park Service 168 acres of land along the Crystal River for 204 acres of national lakeshore land north of the Homestead. Those involved in the negotiation congratulated themselves on having devised a "local solution" to the controversy. Scott Jones who had led the opposition to the golf course said he was "very happy" with the plan. Every other environmental organization involved, however, were as opposed to this swap as they were the original compromise plan. Superintendent Miller wasted no time in also

⁸⁴ Detroit Free Press, December 12, 1992; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, June 17, 1993.

⁸⁵ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), February 15, 1993, March 20, 1993.

⁸⁶ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), March 29, 1993; Detroit Free Press, June 24, 1993.

rejecting the proposal. "We applaud the efforts that these two groups went through," Miller observed. "But there were not enough people at the table. The American public was not there."⁸⁷

It was perhaps inevitable that the river of community divisiveness flowing from the Homestead golf course case would end up being funneled into the familiar channel of negativity toward the National Park Service. Ill-advised comments by environmentalists contributed to the flow of misdirected anger. In rejecting the idea of a swap, the Sierra Club's local director insisted congressional action should clear the way for the National Park Service to condemn and purchase the Crystal River tract outright. The idea of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore being expanded inflamed Leelanau residents on both sides of the issue. This unlikely prospect appeared even more ominous when local property rights advocates dusted off a 1988 report from the National Parks and Conservation Association. The private environmental advocacy group had drafted a "dream" plan for national park expansion, which included adding an additional 94,000 acres to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Included in the plan were North and South Fox Island, Beaver, Hog, Garden and High islands, and various mainland tracts scattered between Wilderness State Park on the north and Nordhouse Dunes near Ludington on the south. The plan was never given serious consideration when it was new, six years later it was forgotten by everyone but those paranoid about "communist environmental groups." "Connect the dots," Kathleen Stocklen urged the press. The whole fanciful debate about park expansion, excited further by a well timed visit by Charles Cushman to Glen Arbor, was, in the words of one journalist, "akin to ripping the bandage off a wound that has just begun to heal." Twenty-five years after the creation of the lakeshore emotion rather than reason dictated Leelanau County's response to any issue touching on the National Park Service.⁸⁸

At the time this report was being written the Homestead expansion plan and the proposed swap were still unresolved issues. The controversy illustrated in a telling fashion the difference in outlook between the managers of the national lakeshore and the people of northwest Michigan. A large number of people, both those for and against Robert A. Kuras' drive to expand his resort, saw the issue in terms that were pragmatic and parochial. The bitter controversy was a challenge to the local community and in the best traditions of a democratic society they sought to resolve the issue through compromise. Yet the solution proposed by the land swap proposal could at best be characterized as "passing the buck." In 1995, Scott Jones admitted, "both sides as well as the community are tired of the controversy and would like to see it settled." The park service's response to the swap proposal was bureaucratic and national. The plan was taken by the superintendent to the regional director in Omaha, Nebraska, and discussed in light of their combined experience with the policies of the National Park Service. Their perspective was not what was good for the frustrated residents of Glen Arbor Township, but how did the proposal advance the long-term interests of the broad American public. "The trade does not provide a positive return to the park," observed Assistant Superintendent Duane Pearson. "The National Park Service is not a land holder or owner of lands for the purpose of improving the position of a private entrepreneur."⁸⁹

In the end the swap floundered on the same criteria that led to the creation of the national lakeshore twenty-five years before: national interest. In 1970, saving the Sleeping Bear Dunes

⁸⁷ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, December 14, 1995; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), December 14, 1995.

⁸⁸ Deborah Wyatt Fellows, "Editor's Note," Traverse (May 1993), 1; Record-Eagle (Traverse City), March 16, 1993, March 19, 1994.

⁸⁹ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, December 21, 1995.

area for public use was deemed a national priority by representatives of Americans who lived far away from Michigan's beautiful sandy shores. In 1995, there was no "compelling national reason" to change the boundaries of the lakeshore to allow a developer to build a golf course. The fact is, the constraints that national interest placed on the land use options of the self-reliant people of Benzie and Leelanau counties has always been and likely always will be the source of dissatisfaction with the National Park Service.

Conclusion

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore At Twenty-Five

October of 1995 marked Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore's twenty-fifth anniversary. A year earlier the National Parks and Conservation Association, a private environmental advocacy group, undertook a national survey of America's parks with a view of grading each unit and the system as a whole. Sleeping Bear rated a "C," that was consistent with the national average, although hardly flattering. "I think these marks are fair considering our budget," remarked Superintendent Ivan Miller. In 1995, as an anniversary present from the property rights movement Sleeping Bear Dunes was included along with 315 other parks in a Congressional bill that proposed a commission that would be charged with reviewing and "delisting" certain units. In an effort to build support for the bill, one of its co-sponsors, Congressman Don Young (R-Alaska) wrote, he was attempting "to return one of this country's greatest assets—its land—to local control." In the end, however, even a Congress anxious to bring about social and fiscal change rejected as too radical the idea of a "delisting" commission. The two initiatives, each emanating from opposite sides of the political spectrum, revealed two of the most persistent challenges that faced the lakeshore: budget shortfalls and private property rights. At twenty-five Sleeping Bear Dunes was at best a work-in-progress.¹

Private property rights have always been and will always be one the most important management issues at Sleeping Bear. Not only was the park created out of more than 1,600 parcels of private land, ninety tracts will likely remain in private hands in perpetuity. In 1995, the issue flared again when a large group of lessees, whose right to occupy tracts within the park was due to expire in a few years, pressed Congress for an extension. Congressman Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) and Congressman Joe Knollenberg (R-Bloomfield) agreed to sponsor a bill that would grant the 143 leaseholders and their heirs an extension of property rights for ninety-nine years. The lakeshore advisory board strongly endorsed the plan. In testimony before a House hearing on the bill the leaseholders argued for extending their rights by attacking the lakeshore's management of the properties that were already under its control. "Many other homes already vacated have not been cared for or removed by the Park Service and have become serious hazards," complained Margaret Thoms. The Stupak-Knollenberg bill proposed that those granted lease extensions make additional payments which would stay in the park to fund some of the lakeshore's \$10 million deferred maintenance costs. The conspicuous failure of the National Park Service to maintain its inventory of buildings has long been a stick with which private rights advocates could hit the lakeshore.²

Lease extension bill did not win congressional approval. One of the property owners who lost his Good Harbor Bay summer home on New Year's Day 1998 asked the question, "What does it mean when the common good takes precedence over individual existence? Can the two not exist side by side?" That dilemma has been at the heart of the twenty-five year history of the lakeshore and it is the central question the National Park Service will face in northwest Michigan during the twenty-first century. Greater cooperation between the private and public sectors could

¹ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), May 23,1994; Detroit News, October 8,1995. 183

² Detroit News, November 20,1995; Detroit Free Press, December 12,1995; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, November 23,1995.

be the key to resolve the tension between the park that was envisioned by the Great Lakes Shoreline Survey in 1958 and the kind of park into which Sleeping Bear has evolved since 1970.³

Sleeping Bear Dunes was envisioned as a lakefront recreation area and as a depository of glacial history. Yet, due to the rise in popular historical consciousness following the bicentennial of the United States and the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore evolved into a park in which historical resources play an important part in the visitor experience. "Hiking, History, and Heart-Stopping Vistas" was the headline on a 1993 Washington Post article describing a visit to Michigan's national lakeshores. Viewing abandoned farms and cottages, climbing the long spiral staircase of a lighthouse, and witnessing a Lyle gun firing at the restored Glen Haven Coast Guard Station rank high among the memories visitor's bring away from Sleeping Bear. The ghost town of Glen Haven, the Port Oneida Rural Historic District, perhaps even a handful of the recreational cottages can all contribute to a visitor's sense of traveling through time as well as nature. The lakeshore has moved deliberately towards developing a policy by which such properties can be evaluated and managed. But considering the scores of historic structures within the lakeshore and the regular maintenance required for their preservation the National Park Service will require private partnerships to help shoulder the load. The experience of the national lakeshore in its first twenty-five years demonstrates that to rely solely on public funding will be to defer to demolition by neglect. The original development plan for Glen Haven called for preservation through private leases. Local residents shouted down that plan for reasons that were both thoughtful and venal. Is it possible for private use and public purposes to coexist within the structure of a fragile natural national park?⁴

The answer to that question lies, in equal parts with the National Park Service and the people of Leelanau and Benzie counties. There is reason for optimism that a climate open to experimentation can develop at Sleeping Bear. Although old wounds can still be opened unexpectedly, as in the case of the Homestead land swap, appreciation for what the national lakeshore has accomplished has grown each year and should serve as a bridge to further collaborative achievement. "In terms of living here, in many ways the park is an asset," reflected George Schilling in 1983. The former president of the Citizens' Council of the Sleeping Bear Dunes Area admitted that the park service achieved its primary goal. "It has slowed irrational development. Areas of land that were undeveloped will remain that way as part of our national resource." In 1988, when Ellsworth Esch, a cherry grower within the lakeshore, became a willing seller to the agency, he said, "It [the park] has proven to be very good for the area." Even a writer for the Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune expressed the sentiment, "I am glad they put together the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore." Although he quickly qualified the comment by adding, "I'm not saying that the way they did it was right—but I'm glad it's been done." Such goodwill is critical to the future of the lakeshore because cooperation with the community is critical to solving problems within the lakeshore and essential to addressing threats from outside its boundaries. By itself the National Park Service cannot counter air and water pollution dangers such as an asphalt plant proposed for Kasson Township in 1995. By itself the lakeshore cannot

³ Dave Hacker, "Sleeping Bear: The Fairy Tale Ends," world wide web posting, January 1998.

⁴ James T. Yenchel, "Great Lakes, Great Times: Hiking, History, & Heart-Stopping Vistas," Washington Post, July 18, 1993.

mitigate the visual intrusion caused by cellular transmission towers. The people who are lucky enough to live in Leelanau and Benzie county would do well to remember Henry David Thoreau's admonishment: "A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it....Such a town is fitted to raise not only corn and potatoes but, poets and philosophers for the coming ages."⁵

The success of the national lakeshore is best seen by looking at the fate of dune lands outside the park. The encroachment of development on Lake Michigan dune lands was so great during the 1970s and 1980s that a 1988 University of Michigan study predicted half of all privately owned dune land would be developed by 1996. That prospect led to the passage of the Critical Dunes Act by the Michigan State legislature in 1989. The law did not create dune preserves, such as Sleeping Bear, but it did at least provide for controls on dune development. In spite of this law the majestic Elberta dune, originally studied for inclusion in the national lakeshore, was slated in the late 1990s for a one hundred home residential development. The Sleeping Bear park ensured that at least a portion of northwest Michigan remained undeveloped. "They love The County as it is," a Chicago Tribune travel writer wrote of the attraction Chicagoan's feel toward Leelanau. "They love it even better as it used to be." The national lakeshore has ensured that at least 71,000 acres of the old Leelanau and Benzie Counties has survived intact.⁶

The National Park Service has achieved this goal without, as was so direly predicted, destroying the local economy or crippling local government. There is no doubt that the period of the 1980s was a time of adjustment for county and township governments in the Sleeping Bear area, but as was predicted by the park service revenues from tourism and an increase in property values provided an adequate tax base to maintain roads and schools. In Glen Arbor Township the property valuation rose 311% from 1973 to 1985, for the rest of Leelanau County the increase was a robust 282% over twelve years. The Sleeping Bear area was never deluged with the 3 million tourists that the National Park Service predicted. The planners did not anticipate that population growth in the Midwest region would slow from its 1950s pace and that the boom in air travel would offer a wider range of recreational options to people in mid-America. Nonetheless, with more than 1 million annual visitors Sleeping Bear contributes substantially to the golden stream of revenues that flows annually from the "fudgies." In 1990, tourists pumped \$34.4 million into the Leelanau County economy. The lakeshore has also added to Leelanau and Benzie counties its \$2 million operating budget and thirty-eight full-time, and twenty-six seasonal employees.⁷

A strict cost-benefit analysis is not possible for something as subjectively laden as a beautiful national park. The federal government spent \$74 million to buy the lakeshore's land base. What is the value of the recreation provided by the meeting of river and lake at the mouth of the Platte? Without Senator Philip A. Hart's park families would not be able to picnic on the dunes there or float on the river's current until meeting Lake Michigan's breakers. Without the National Park Service that site would be a marina today. Would Sleeping Bear Bay still be one

⁵ Detroit News, September 11,1983; Benzie County Advisor, October 3, 1988; Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, August 5, 1982; Henry David Thoreau, quoted in the Chicago Tribune, May 19, 1992.

⁶ Grand Rapids Press, October 16,1986; Carolyn Faught, "Storm," Traverse, (June, 1998), 38; Chicago Tribune, May 19,1992.

#7 was omitted from the original printing.

⁷ Leelanau Enterprise-Tribune, February 5, 1987, July 13, 1995.

of the most perfect and unspoiled swimming beaches in Michigan if it were not for the national lakeshore? Of course, \$80 million was not the whole cost of the lakeshore. David Hacker, a cottage owner whose twenty-five year lease expired in 1998, asked visitors to the lakeshore to "realize that this precious land may have been purchased at a huge but unseen cost." While the public will now have access to wonderful views of the Manitou Strait, the cost for Hacker was "a strip of beach and a handful of acres that once gave a family identity." The "emotional blood-bonding" that once linked his family and hundreds of other families to the Sleeping Bear was severed to make the national park.⁸

The cost of Sleeping Bear was high in emotional capital, for the property owners and for the park service staff who came to northwest Michigan to make the park a reality. Many like Allen Edmunds, "Marty" Martinek, and Donald Brown were Michigan natives with an abiding love of the North Country. Others came from across the nation to try and make a park and in the process came to love the forests and dunes of the Sleeping Bear. Although often derided as bureaucrats, the personnel of the National Park Service made their own emotional investment in the land of the Sleeping Bear. In ways few visitors or local residents would ever appreciate the lakeshore drew on that account when all too frequently Congress's financial commitments fell short. The payoff for the hundreds of park service personnel who on a day to day basis worked to make the lakeshore a reality, the consolation for those who sold their homes, the anticipated return on the \$80 million spent on land acquisition is a land rich in beauty and history, unspoiled and open." I silently thanked Philip Hart and Congress and everyone else involved for creating Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore," wrote journalist Matt Roush in 1985, after a weekend stay at the Platte River Campground." Whatever excesses there may have been 10 years ago, there is now mile after mile of incredible lakefront that's ours, for good. You don't have to buy a six-figure condo to use it. You don't have to spend \$100 for a night in a fancy hotel. You just have to go there. . . .So go, look, and enjoy."⁹

⁸ Dave Hacker, "Sleeping Bear: The Fairy Tale Ends," worldwide web posting, January, 1998.

⁹ Record-Eagle (Traverse City), August 17, 1985.

APPENDIX ONE
BUDGETARY PROGRESS OF
SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

1976	\$364,700
1977	\$692,600
1990	\$1,814,300
1992	\$2,063,000
1993	\$2,084,500
1994	\$2,157,000
1999	\$2,784,000

APPENDIX TWO
SELECTED PAST AND PRESENT PERSONNEL OF
SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

Founding Staff

1971

Julius A. Martinek, Superintendent, opened Lakeshore office. May, 1971.
Robert C. Evans, Chief Appraiser, May, 1971.
Donald Campbell, Chief Land Acquisition Officer, May, 1971.
Patricia McCash, Secretary, June, 1971.
Carolyn D. Ross, June, 1971.
Elaine P. Howery, Secretary, July, 1971.
Dean Einwalter, Supervisory Park Ranger, December, 1971.

1972

James E. Williamson, Chief Land Acquisition Officer, April, 1972.
Charles R. Parkinson, Park Naturalist, May, 1972.
Judy Huerth, Clerk-Typist.
Marcia Stobie, Clerk-Typist.
Paul LaValley, Seasonal, May, 1972.
Hollis Hill, Seasonal, May, 1972.
Joseph O. Jackson, Interpreter, July, 1972.
Gordon L. Stanley, Park Administrative Officer, October, 1972.

1973

Thomas L. Haywood, Maintenance Supervisor, July, 1973.
John F. Pattie, Land Acquisition Officer.
William Herd, Interpreter.

Selected Full-Time Staff: 1974-1999

Fred Denton, Park Administrative Officer
Donald R. Brown, Superintendent.
Richard R. Peterson, Superintendent.
John P. Abbett, Assistant Superintendent.
Neil Bullington, Chief of Interpretation.
Jacqueline Fine, Secretary.
Michele D'Arcy, Landscape Architect.
Raymond Kimpel, Chief Ranger.
Merline Schlange, Facility Manager.
David Herrera, Management Assistant.
Max Holden Resource Management Specialist.
Daniel Kriebler, Chief of Maintenance.

Vander Tuin.
Chief of Maintenance.
Ivan D. Miller, Superintendent.
Nancy Arkin, Landscape Architect.
John Madden, Park Ranger.
Frank Smith, Maintenance.
James Del Sasso, Park Ranger.
Dale Holmgren, Maintenance.
Todd Morgan, Maintenance.
Tom Mountz, Maintenance.
John Paro, Administrative Officer.
Mary Chandler, Administrative Officer.
Gayle Kunkel-Shields, Administrative Clerk.
Karen Moon, Administrative Clerk.
Larry Hatch, District Ranger.
Michael Duwe, Environmental Protection Specialist.
Chris Johnson, District Ranger.
David Nagel, Maintenance.
Duane Pearson, Assistant Superintendent.
Lany Parrotte, Maintenance.
Mark Presnell, Maintenance.
William Webber, Maintenance.
Rosemary Abbett, Budget Assistant.
Al Haeker, Chief Ranger.
Robert L. Saddler, Park Ranger.
Roger Moder, Park Ranger.
Dawn Webster, Interpreter.
K. Jo Ann Evans, Personnel Assistant.
Leigh Evans, Maintenance.
Paul Collins, Maintenance.
Kimberly Mann, Landscape Architect.
Rick St. Pierre, Purchasing Agent.
Kay Wilcox, Budget Analyst.
Tom VanZoeren, Park Ranger.
Kim Mukavetz, Park Ranger.
Susan Harold, Secretary.
Steven Yancho, Resource Management Specialist.
Calvin Murphy, Maintenance.
George Henderson, Maintenance.
Dennis Schlabach, Telecommunications.
David Wilkins, Maintenance.
Larry Robotham, Maintenance.
Charles Sessoms, Maintenance.
Patrick Shad, Park Ranger.

Jefferey Monroe, Park Ranger.
Agnes Esch, Clerk.
Gregory Mullin, Park Ranger.
Ken Blodick, Park Ranger.
Robert Evener, Park Ranger.
Rebecca Fleis, Dispatcher.
John Fekete, Resource Management Specialist.
Theo Chandler, Maintenance.
Leah Frankel, Park Naturalist

APPENDIX THREE
SELECTED VISITATION STATISTICS

1975	777,000
1976	790,615
1977	838,000
1983	605,760
1984	853,183
1985	897,512
1986	1,309,440
1987	1,320,000
1991	1,246,333
1992	1,237,181
1998	1,298,205

APPENDIX FOUR
Founding Legislation
Public Law 91-479

Public Law 91-479
91st Congress, H.R. 18776
October 21, 1970

An Act

To establish in the State of Michigan
the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore,
and for other purposes.

84 STAT. 1075

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

That

(a) the Congress finds that certain outstanding natural features, including forests, Dunes National beaches, dune formations, and ancient glacial phenomena, exist along the mainland shore of Lake Michigan and on certain nearby islands in Benzie and Leelanau Counties, Michigan, and that such features ought to be preserved in their natural setting and protected from developments and uses which would destroy the scenic beauty and natural character of the area. In order to accomplish this purpose for the benefit, inspiration, education, recreation, and enjoyment of the public, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the "Secretary") is authorized to take appropriate action, as herein provided, to establish in the State of Michigan the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. In carrying out the provisions of this Act, the Secretary shall administer and protect the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in a manner which provides for recreational opportunities consistent with the maximum protection of the natural environment within the area.

(b) In preserving the lakeshore and stabilizing its development, substantial reliance shall be placed on cooperation between Federal, State, and local governments to apply sound principles of land use planning and zoning. In developing the lakeshore, full recognition shall be given to protecting the private properties for the enjoyment of the owners.

SEC. 2

(a) The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (hereinafter referred to as the "lakeshore") shall comprise the land and water area generally depicted on the map entitled "A Proposed Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Boundary Map" numbered NL-SBD-91,000 and dated May 1969, which shall be on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior.

(b) As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act and following the acquisition by the Secretary of those lands owned by the State of Michigan within the boundaries of the area designated for inclusion in the lakeshore (excepting not to exceed three hundred acres in the Platte Bay area) and of such additional lands, if any, as are necessary to provide an area which in his opinion is efficiently administrable for the purposes of this Act, he shall establish the publication in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore by publication of notice thereof in the Federal Register.

SEC. 3

(a) Within thirty days, or as soon as possible thereafter, after the effective date of this Act, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register a map or other description of the lakeshore delineating areas constituting the following categories:

Category I, public use and development areas.

Category II, environmental conservation areas.

Category III, private use and development areas.

(b) Lands and interests therein designated as category I may be acquired by the Secretary in accordance with section 8 of this Act.

(c) Within one hundred and fifty days after the effective date of this Act, the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register an additional map or other description of those lands, if any, designated as within categories II and III for acquisition by him in fee in accordance with section 8 of this Act

(d) Except as provided in subsection (f) of this section, the Secretary may, after the publication provided for in subsection (c), acquire only such interests in lands designated as category II, other than those to be acquired in fee simple, as he deems appropriate to insure the continued conservation and preservation of the environmental quality of the Lakeshore.

(e) Except as provided in subsection (f) of this section, the Secretary may, after the publication provided for in subsection (c), acquire only such interests in lands designated as category III, other than those lands to be acquired in fee simple, as he deems appropriate to protect lands designated for acquisition.

(f) Not later than one hundred and fifty days after the effective date of this Act, the Secretary shall notify owners of real property in categories II and III, other than property designated by him for fee acquisition, of the minimum restrictions on use and development of such property under which such property can be retained in a manner compatible with the purpose for which the lakeshore was established. If the owner of any real property in categories II and III agrees to the use and development of his property in accordance with such restrictions, the Secretary may not acquire, without the consent of such owner, such property or interests therein for so long as the property affected is used in accordance with such restrictions, unless he determines that such property is needed for public use development. The foregoing limitations on acquisition shall also apply to any owners of real property to whom the Secretary did not, within the time set forth, give such a notice, except that if any property owner has not, within ninety days of the notice agreed to use the property in accordance with the notice, then the Secretary may acquire, without limitation, fee or lesser interests in property by any of the methods set forth in section 8 of this Act: *Provided*, That nothing contained in subsections (d)

and (e), and in this subsection, which limits the acquisition of the fee simple title to property within the lakeshore, shall prevent the Secretary from acquiring, without the consent of the owner, the fee simple title whenever in the Secretary's judgment of the estimated cost of acquiring the lesser interest would be & substantial percentage of the estimated cost of acquiring the fee simple title.

SEC 4

(a) There is hereby established a Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Advisory Commission. The Commission shall cease to exist ten years after the establishment of the lakeshore pursuant to section 2 of this Act.

(b) The Commission shall be composed of ten members, each appointed for a term of two years by *the* Secretary, as follows:

- (1) Four members to be appointed from recommendations made by the counties in which the lakeshore is situated, two members to represent each such county;
- (2) Four members to be appointed from recommendations made by the Governor of the State of Michigan; and
- (3) Two members to be designated by the Secretary.

(c) The Secretary shall designate one member to be Chairman. Any vacancy in the Commission shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

(d) A member of the Commission shall serve without compensation as such. The Secretary is authorized to pay the expenses reasonably incurred by the Commission in carrying out its responsibilities under this Act on vouchers signed by the Chairman.

(e) The Secretary or his designee shall consult with the Commission with respect to matters relating to the development of the lakeshore and with respect to the provisions of sections 9,12, and 13 of this Act.

SEC. 5

In administering the lakeshore the Secretary shall permit hunting and fishing on lands and waters under his jurisdiction in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan and the United States applicable thereto. The Secretary, after consultation with the appropriate agency of the State of Michigan, may designate zones and establish periods where and when no hunting shall be permitted for reasons of public safety, administration, or public use and enjoyment and issue regulations, consistent with this section, as he may determine necessary to carry out the purposes of this section,

SEC. 6

(a) The administration, protection, and development of the lakeshore shall be exercised by the Secretary, subject to the provisions of this Act and of the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.), as amended and supplemented, relating to the areas administered and supervised by the Secretary through the National Park Service; except that authority otherwise available to the Secretary for the conservation and management of natural resources may be utilized to the extent he finds such authority will further the purposes of this Act.

(b) In the administration, protection, and development of the area, the Secretary shall prepare and implement a land and water use management plan, which shall include specific provisions for—

- (1) development of facilities to provide the benefits of public recreation
- (2) protection of scenic, scientific, and historic features contributing to public enjoyment; and
- (3) such protection, management, and utilization of renewable natural resources as in the judgment of the Secretary is consistent with, and will further the purpose of, public recreation and protection of scenic, scientific, and historic features contributing to public enjoyment.

(c) Within four years from the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall review the area within the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and shall report to the President, in accordance with subsections 3 (c) and 3 (d) of the Wilderness Act (78 Stat. 890; 16 U.S.C. 1132 (c) and (d), his recommendation as to the suitability or nonsuitability of any area within the lakeshore for preservation as wilderness, and any designation of any such area. as a wilderness shall be accomplished in accordance with said subsections of the Wilderness Act.

(d) In developing the lakeshore the Secretary shall provide public use areas in such places and manner as he determines will not diminish the value or enjoyment for the owner or occupant of any improved property located thereon.

SEC. 7

Nothing in this Act shall be construed as prohibiting any governmental jurisdiction in the State of Michigan from assessing taxes upon any interest in real estate retained under the provisions of section 10 of this Act to the owner of such interest.

SEC. 8

(a) The Secretary is authorized to acquire by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, transfer funds, transfer or exchange. from any Federal agency, or exchange lands and interests therein for the purposes of this Act. When an individual tract of land is only partly within the area designated, the Secretary may acquire the entire tract by any of the above methods to avoid the payment of severance costs. Land so acquired outside the designated area may be exchanged by the Secretary for non-Federal lands within such area, and any portion of the land not utilized for such exchanges may be disposed of in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (63 Stat. 377), as amended (40 U.S.C. 471 et seq.).

(b) In exercising his authority to acquire property under this Act, the Secretary shall give immediate and careful consideration to any offer made by an individual owning property within the lakeshore to sell such property to the Secretary. An individual owning property within the lakeshore may notify the Secretary that the continued ownership by such individual of that property would result in hardship to him, and the Secretary shall immediately consider such evidence and shall within one year following the submission of such notice, subject to the availability of funds, purchase such property offered for a price which does not exceed its fair market value.

(c) Any property or interests therein, owned by the State of Michigan or any political subdivisions thereof, may be acquired only by donation. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any property owned by the United States on the date of enactment of this Act located within such area may, with the concurrence of the agency having custody thereof, be transferred without consideration to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary for use by him in carrying out the provisions of this Act.

(d) With respect to that property which the Secretary is authorized to acquire by condemnation under the terms of this Act, the Secretary shall initiate no condemnation proceedings until after he has made every reasonable effort to acquire such property by negotiation and purchase. The certificate of the determination by the Secretary or his designated representative that there has been compliance with the provisions of this subsection and of subsection (b) of this section shall be prima facie evidence of such compliance.

(e) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to prohibit the use of condemnation as a means of acquiring a clear and marketable title, free of any and all encumbrances.

SEC. 9

(a) The Secretary shall, at the request of any township or county in or adjacent to the lakeshore affected by this Act, assist and consult with the appropriate officers and employees of such township or county in establishing zoning bylaws for the purpose of this Act. Such assistance may include payments to the county or township for technical aid.

(b) No improved property within the area designated for inclusion in the lakeshore shall be acquired by the Secretary by condemnation so long as the affected county or township has in force and applicable thereto a duly adopted, valid zoning bylaw approved by the Secretary in accordance with the provisions of subsection (d) of this section and the use of unproved property is in compliance therewith. In the event that the affected county or township does not have in effect and applicable to any improved property a duly adopted, valid zoning bylaw so approved, the Secretary shall be prohibited from acquiring such property by condemnation, if the owner thereof notifies the Secretary in writing of such owner's agreement to use his property in a manner consistent with the applicable standard set forth in subsection (d) of this section, and such prohibition against condemnation shall remain in effect for so long as such property is so used.

(c) If the Secretary determines that any such property referred to in subsection (b) of this section covered by any such bylaw is being used in a way which is not in substantial compliance with such bylaw, or that any such property referred to in subsection (b) with respect to which an agreement has been made is being used in a manner which is not substantially consistent with such applicable standards, he shall so notify the owner of any such property in writing. Such notice shall contain a detailed statement as to why the Secretary believes that such use is not in substantial compliance with such zoning bylaw or why such use is not substantially consistent with such applicable standards, as the case may be. Any such owner shall have sixty days following the receipt by him of that written notification within which to discontinue the use referred to in such notification. Discontinuance of such use within such sixty-day period shall have the effect of prohibiting the Secretary from acquiring such property by condemnation by reason of such use. In any case in which such use is not discontinued within such sixty-day period, the Secretary may, in his discretion, acquire; such property by condemnation.

(d) Any zoning bylaw or amendment thereto submitted to the Secretary for approval for the purposes of this Act shall be approved by him if such bylaw or amendment contains provisions which—

- (1) contribute to the effect of prohibiting the commercial and industrial use (other than a use for a commercial purpose as authorized under section 13 of this Act) of all property within the boundaries of such area which is situated within the county or township adopting such bylaw or amendment;
- (2) are consistent with the objectives and purposes of this Act so that, to the extent possible under Michigan law, the scenic and scientific values of the lakeshore area will be protected;
- (3) are designed to preserve the lakeshore character of the area by appropriate restrictions upon the burning of cover, cutting of timber (except tracts managed for sustained yield), removal of sand or gravel, and dumping, storage, or piling of refuse and other unsightly objects or other uses which would detract from the natural or traditional lakeshore scene;
- (4) provide that no construction, reconstruction, moving, alteration, or enlargement of any property, including improved property as deemed in this Act, within the lakeshore area shall be permitted, if such construction, reconstruction, moving, alteration, or enlargement would afford less than a fifty-foot setback from all streets measured at a right angle with the street line, and a twenty-five-foot distance from all contiguous properties. Any owner or zoning authority may request the Secretary of the Interior to determine whether a proposed move, alteration, construction, reconstruction, or enlargement of any such property would subject such property to acquisition by condemnation, and the Secretary, within sixty days of the receipt of such request, shall advise the owner or zoning authority in writing whether the intended use will subject the property to acquisition by condemnation; and
- (5) have the effect of providing that the Secretary shall receive notice of any variance granted under, and of any exception made to the application of, such bylaw or amendment.

(e) The approval of any bylaw or amendment pursuant to subsection (d) shall not be withdrawn or revoked by the Secretary for so long as such bylaw or amendment remains in effect as approved. Any such bylaw or amendment so approved shall not be retroactive in its application.

SEC. 10

(a) Any owner or owners of improved property situated within the area designated for inclusion in the lakeshore on the date of its acquisition by the Secretary may, as a condition of

such acquisition, retain, for a term of not to exceed twenty-five years, or for a term ending at the death of such owner or owners, the right of use and occupancy of such property for any residential purpose which is not incompatible with the purposes of this Act or which does not impair the usefulness and attractiveness of the area designated for inclusion. The Secretary shall pay to the owner the value of the property on the date of such acquisition, less the value on such date of the right retained by the owner. Where any such owner retains a right of use and occupancy as herein provided, such right during its existence may be conveyed or leased for noncommercial residential purposes in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(b) Any deed or other instrument used to transfer title to property, with respect to which a right of use and occupancy is retained under this section, shall provide that such property shall not be used for any purpose which is incompatible with purposes of this Act, or which impairs the usefulness and attractiveness of such area and if it should be so used, the Secretary shall have authority to terminate such right. In the event the Secretary exercises his power of termination under this subsection he shall pay to the owner of the right terminated an amount equal to the value of that portion of such right. which remained unexpired on the date of such termination.

SEC. 11

As used in this Act, the term "improved property" means a detached, one-family dwelling, construction of which was begun before December 31, 1964, together with so much of the land on which the dwelling is situated, such land being in the same ownership as the dwelling, as the Secretary shall designate to be reasonably necessary for the enjoyment of the dwelling for the sole purpose of noncommercial residential use, together with any structures accessory to the dwelling which are situated on the lands so designated. The amount of the land so designated shall in every case be at least three acres in area, or all of such lesser acreage as may be held in the same ownership as the dwelling, and in making such designation the Secretary shall take into account the manner of noncommercial residential use in which the dwelling and land have customarily been enjoyed: *Provided however*. That the Secretary may exclude from the land so designated any beach or waters on Lake Michigan, together with so much of the land adjoining any such beach or waters, as the Secretary may deem necessary for public access thereto. If the Secretary makes such exclusion, an appropriate buffer zone shall be provided between any residence and the public access or beach.

SEC. 12

In order to facilitate visitor travel, provide scenic overlooks for public enjoyment and interpretation of the national lakeshore and related features, and in order to enhance recreational opportunities, the Secretary is authorized to construct and administer as a part of the national lakeshore scenic roads of parkway standards generally lying within the parkway zone. designated on the map specified in section 2 (a) of this Act. Such scenic roads shall include necessary connections, bridges, and other structural utilities. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Secretary may procure for this purpose land, or interest therein, by donation, purchase with appropriated or donated funds, or otherwise: *Provided*. That land and interest so procured shall not exceed one hundred and fifty acres per mile of scenic road, except that tracts may be procured in their entirety in order to avoid severances. Property so acquired in

excess of the acreage limitation provided in this section may be exchanged by the Secretary for any land of approximately equal value authorized for acquisition by this Act.

SEC. 13

In any case not otherwise provided for in this Act, the Secretary shall be prohibited from condemning any commercial property used for commercial purposes in existence on December 31, 1964, so long as, in his opinion, the use thereof would further the purpose of this Act, and such use does not impair the usefulness and attractiveness of the area designated for inclusion in the lakeshore. The following uses, among others, shall be considered to be uses compatible with the purposes of this Act: Commercial farms, orchards, motels, rental cottages, camps, craft and art studios, marinas, medical, legal, architectural, and other such professional offices, and tree farms.

SEC. 14

The Secretary shall furnish to any interested person requesting the same a certificate indicating, with respect to any property which the Secretary has been prohibited from acquiring by condemnation in accordance with provisions of this Act, that such authority is prohibited and the reasons therefor.

SEC. 15

There are authorized to be appropriated not more than Appropriation. \$19,800,000 for the acquisition of lands and interests in lands and not more than \$18,769,000 (June 1970 prices) for development, plus or minus such amounts, if any, as may be justified by reason of ordinary fluctuations in construction costs as indicated by engineering cost indices applicable to the type of construction involved herein.

Approved October 21, 1970.



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THE MICHIGAN PARKS ASSOCIATION

A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

OF CITIZENS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO PROMOTE IN MICHIGAN IN EVERY POSSIBLE WAY THE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PARKS WHICH ARE FULLY ADEQUATE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE, BOTH PRESENT AND FUTURE

THERE IS AN URGENT NEED IN MICHIGAN

Today, in Michigan, as elsewhere, there is an increasing interest in outdoor recreation, together with a trend toward greater leisure time on the part of many. These combine with the expansion of population and the growing ease of travel, both into and within the state, to place a mushrooming pressure upon our present recreational facilities.

Within the State of Michigan there exists a great wealth of sweeping shorelines, secluded streams, towering dunes, verdant forests, and picturesque vistas, and of scenes hallowed by over three centuries of history. All of this wealth is ideally suited to the re-creation of the people.

There is an urgent need to ensure NOW the provision of this recreational wealth for the enjoyment of all people for all time. The continuing failures in recent years to provide adequate support has already permitted many invaluable sites to pass by default forever out of public use. Other choice areas are in serious jeopardy from encroaching private developments. And those areas which have been acquired are in too many cases most inadequately developed, if at all.

THE PROMPT ACQUISITION, DEDICATION, AND WISE UTILIZATION OF THESE SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES IS A PARAMOUNT PUBLIC NECESSITY!

The Michigan Parks Association calls alike upon the people of Michigan and upon their elected officials at all levels of government to take immediate and vigorous steps to ensure that the needs for public recreational areas will be adequately met, while there is yet opportunity to do so.

The Association seeks to encourage both the donation of private contributions and the timely expenditure of public funds to meet this need. Its members pledge themselves to work zealously toward this goal, and invite all other interested citizens to join with them.

Figure No. 2: Michigan Parks Association Flyer, 1961.

A Disregard of the People's Rights

(AN EDITORIAL)

An appalling and almost unbelievable demonstration of how far bureaucratic planners in Washington can go in disregarding the people's rights in the name of the public welfare was given by Conrad L. Wirth, director of the National Park Service, at a public meeting on the proposed Sleeping Bear Dunes national recreation area Wednesday night at jam-packed Glen Lake Community high school.

"I'm a bureaucrat and proud of it," Wirth declared as he attempted to describe the professional and non-political atmosphere in which his department operates to reach such "objective" decisions as the one about Sleeping Bear. Obviously, Wirth, whose family has been in the park service for three generations, thinks of bureaucracy as a higher calling in which valid, unemotional, and far-reaching decisions about what is best for America are fashioned.

But to the 1,500 to 2,000 listeners, representing three and four generation families in the disputed area, Wirth and his staff are operating in a vacuum completely out of touch with the human right of Americans to hold property against the capricious whim of seizure by government agencies.

The sociological, cultural, and economic upheaval that would result from swallowing up the area's most highly developed lakes properties was also completely lost in Wirth's thinking. The enormity of the gulf between Wirth's concept of "undeveloped" and that of the residents of this area was graphically shown when Wirth virtually dismissed as trivial his own statistics on the properties within the proposed area: 198 commercial, 272 non-farm residential, 97 farms, and over 1,000 residential. Those who followed Wirth on his tour of the region during the day report that, led by his associates from the parks department, he saw only the woody and backroads sections, and touched very lightly on the highly developed lakes properties. The conclusion is inescapable that Wirth came to see only what he wanted to see, and that if 5,000 or even 10,000 persons had come to the meeting he still would have felt that this region is "undeveloped" and must give way to the federal concept of public welfare.

Wirth further astonished and confused his listeners when after establishing that the Sleeping Bear dunes area is "undeveloped," he took the position that the dunes need to be preserved, against what he did not specify, but apparently against the encroachments of an area he had already defined as undeveloped. The fact that Sleeping Bear is now a state park was dismissed as inadequate. Then in an obvious effort to hold out a carrot, Wirth said that the national park would add \$10,800,000 annual revenue to the area by virtue of the professional and approved development that the federal agency would give it. Most summer residents have no taste for remaining in the "beaten scene" of the transient onslaught that this figure implies.

Whether they could remain if they wanted to is also problematical. A federally approved zoning ordinance, county or township wide in scope, would have to be passed to make this possible. Hopes for such an ordinance in this part of Michigan are dismal in view of the many defeats zoning has suffered in the past. The realistic prospect is that all will be dispossessed, gradually perhaps, but with finality, if this park as proposed is established.

Residents of the Sleeping Bear region are rightfully fighting mad, and nothing they heard Wednesday night changed this feeling. A precedent of unwarranted seizure in the name of the national welfare is at stake, a precedent which if established and strengthened could threaten the rights of resort property holders and disrupt the economics of resort areas all over Michigan and the nation. The fight against such seizure must go on, and it deserves the full support of all of us.

Reprint From Record-Eagle, Traverse City, Michigan, Thursday, August 21, 1961.

Figure No. 3: *Record-Eagle* Editorial Against Proposed Lakeshore, 1961.

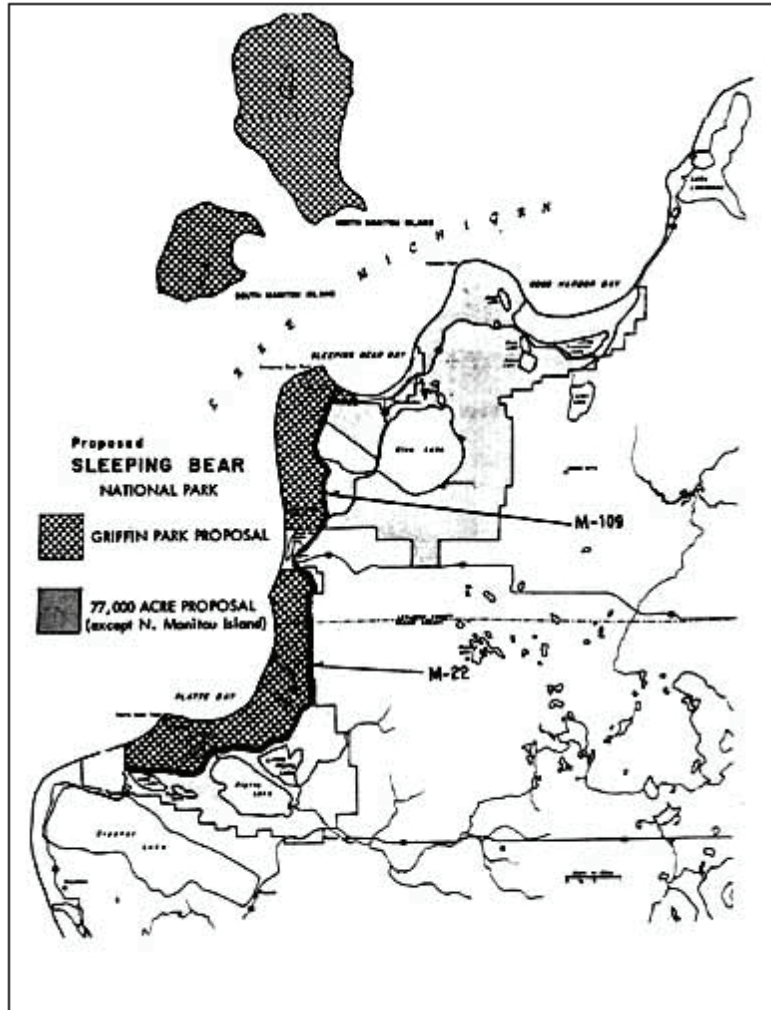


Figure No. 4: Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore Proposals, Griffin Plan, Hart Plan, 1963.

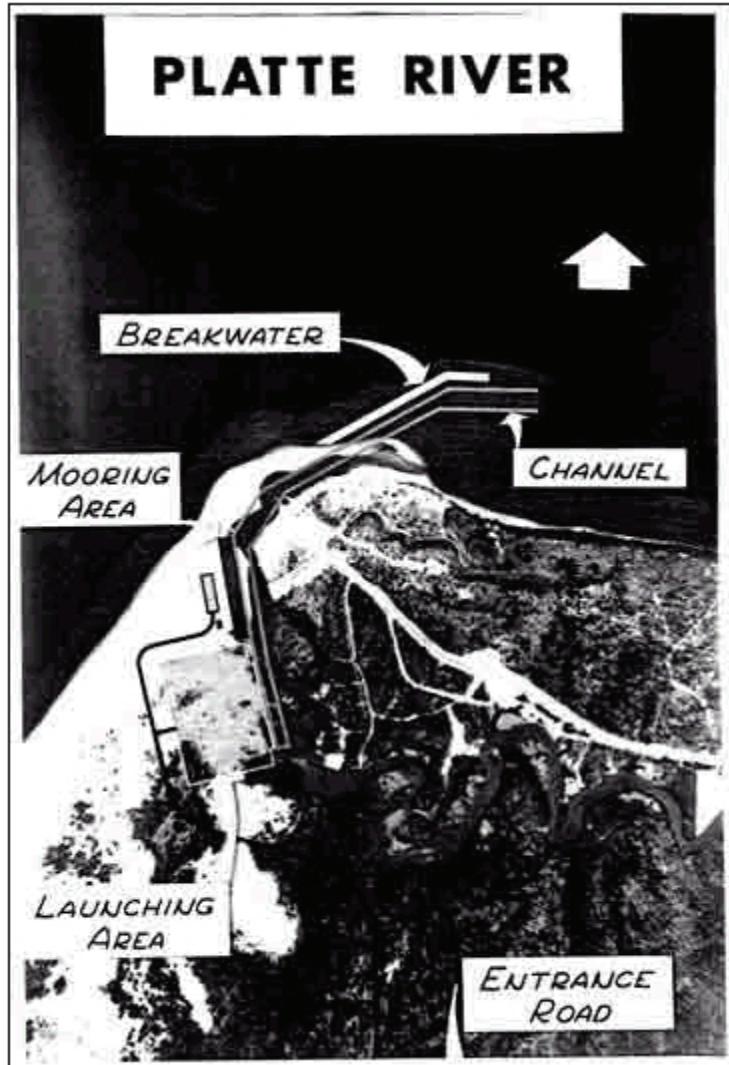


Figure No. 5: Waterways Commission Plan for the Platte, c. 1972.

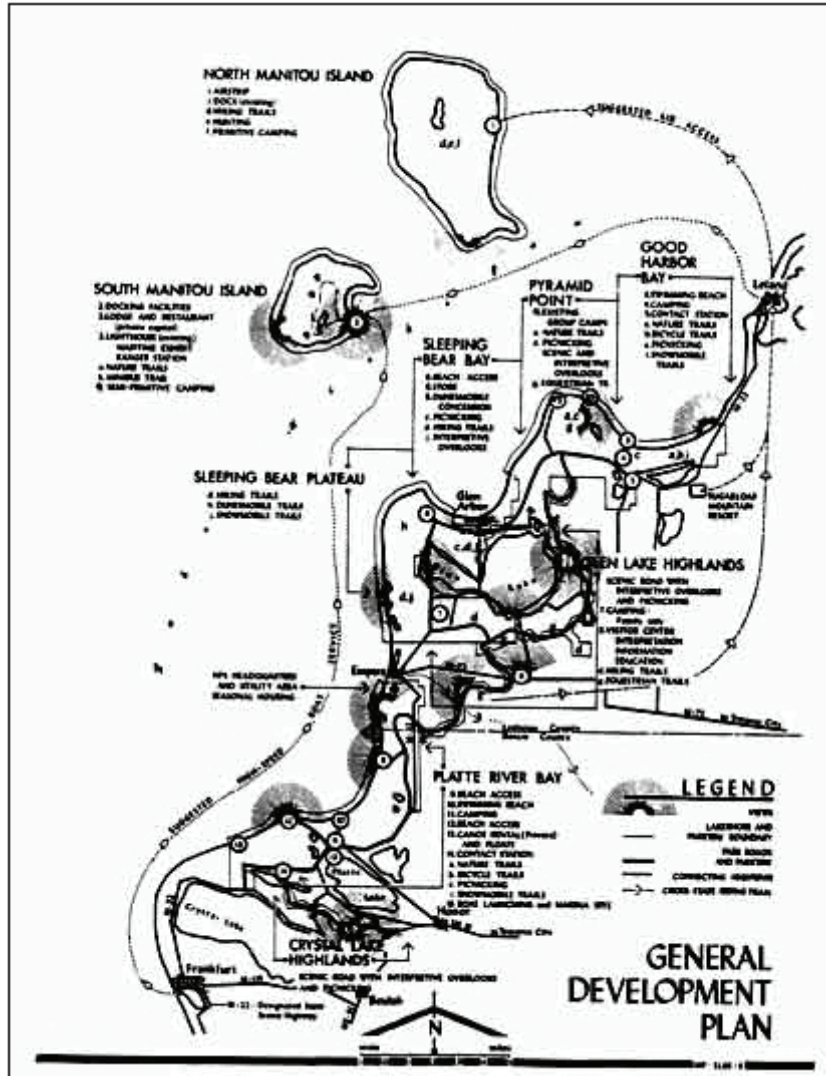


Figure No. 6: Original Sleeping Bear Development Plan, 1969.

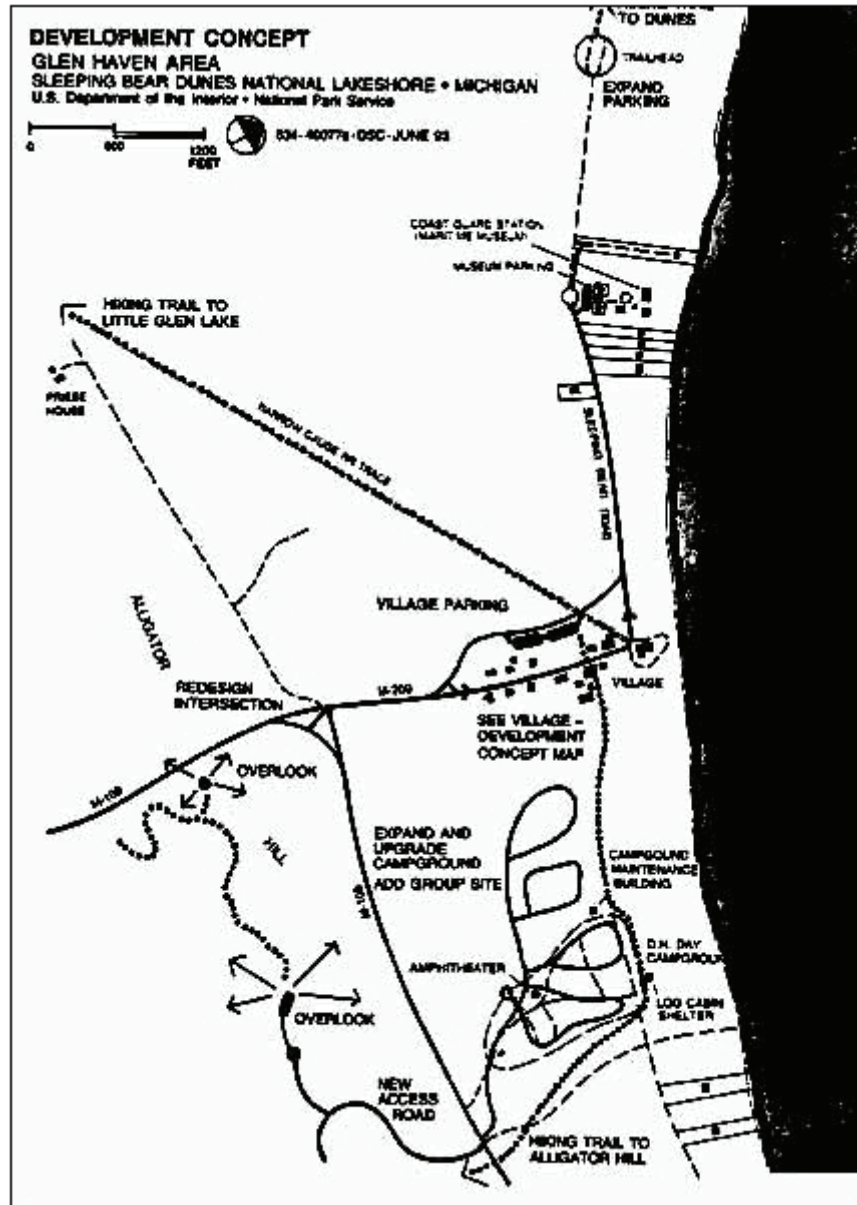


Figure No. 7: Development Concept for Glen Haven Area, 1988.



Figure No. 8: Conflict Between Roads and Wilderness Values
Grand Rapids Press, Sept. 1, 1985.

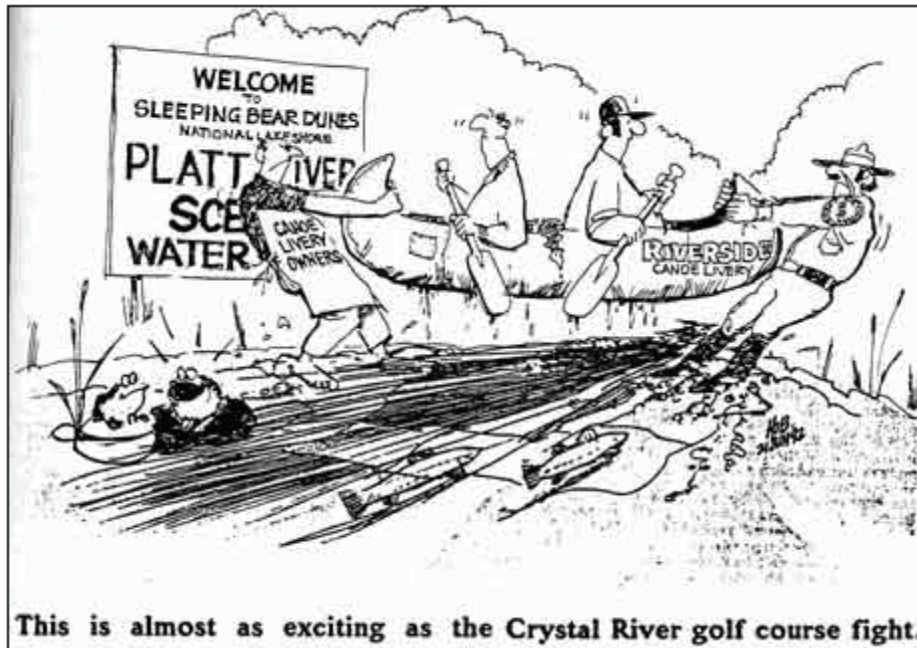


Figure No. 9: Riverside Canoe Case in *Record-Eagle* June 21, 1992.



Figure No. 10: Homestead Golf Course Saga *Record-Eagle* August 31, 1991.

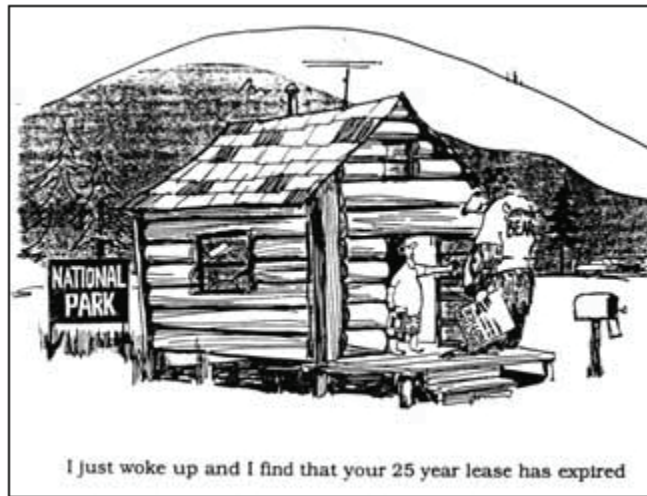
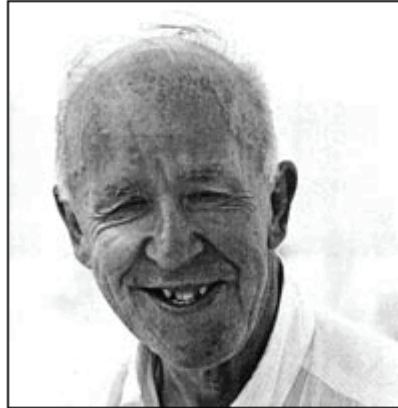


Figure No. 11: Expiration of Twenty-Five Year Leases *Record-Eagle* May 27, 1995.

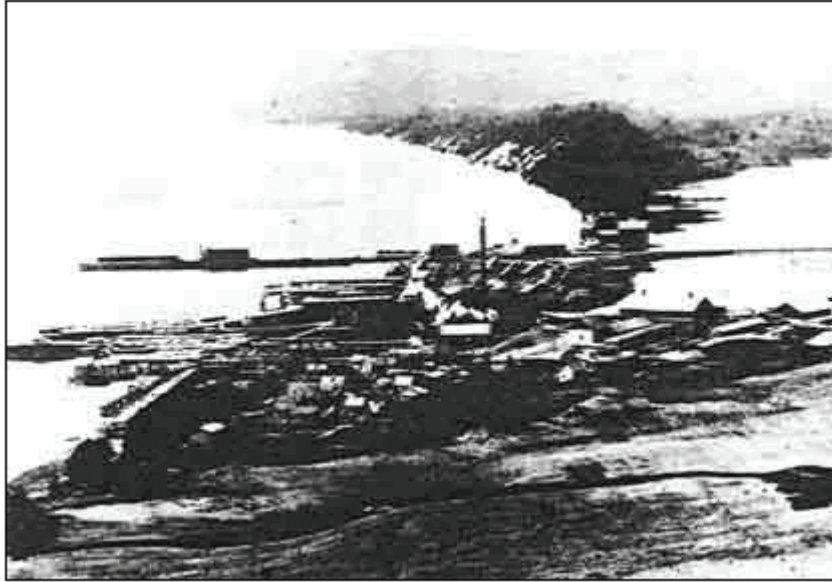
IMAGES



Allen Edmunds, "father" of the Great Lakes National Parks.



Sleeping Bear Dunes, 1958.



Empire Lumber Company plant and dock, Empire, Michigan, c. 1910.



D. H. Day Farm, looking from the dune climb area, c. 1925.



Sleeping Bear Bay in the 1930s.



D. H. Day about 1922.



Promotion for Day Forest Estates from the mid-1920s.



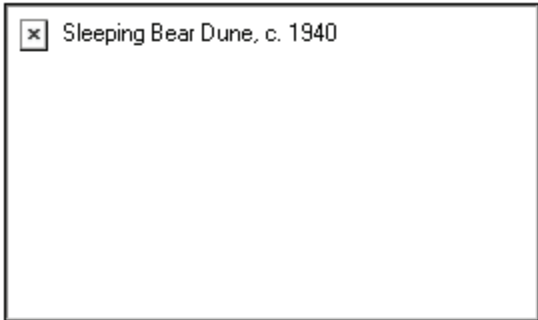
Train on the Day Logging railroad which connected the Glen Haven dock with logging camps in the interior.



Farming near North Bar Lake, c. 1940.



Postcard promoting Glen Haven tourism.



Sleeping Bear Dune c. 1940
(Image missing from original mms.)



1956 Oldsmobile adapted for tours of the dunes.



Dune Climb area, 1958.



Mouth of the Platte River at the time of the Great Lakes Shoreline Survey.



Subdivision on Sleeping Bear Bay.



Park Planners at Empire Bluffs, 1961. Left to right are Conrad Wirth, Ben Thompson, Ronald Lee, Robert Ludden, Elmer Martinson, Allen Edmunds.



Great Lakes Shoreline Survey photography, Pyramid Point, 1957.



Senator Philip A. Hart, the man most responsible for the creation of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.



National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth inspects the proposed Sleeping Bear park area. This photograph was taken just prior to the stormy public meeting in the Glen Lake Community High School. Director Wirth later described the meeting as "a real bad night."



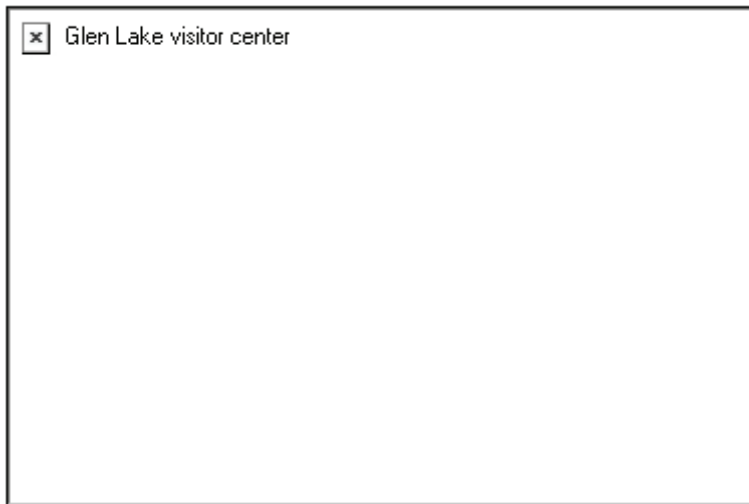
Egenvieve Gillette, founder of the Michigan Parks Association and tireless supporter of the proposed National Lakeshore.



Julius Martinek, first Superintendent of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.



Chief Naturalist Charles Parkinson instructs fifth graders at a winter camp, 1986.



Dedication ceremonies for the Glen Lake visitor center, December 1976.
(Image missing from original mms.)



Thousands of gulls take flight at South Manitou Island's Gull Point colony.



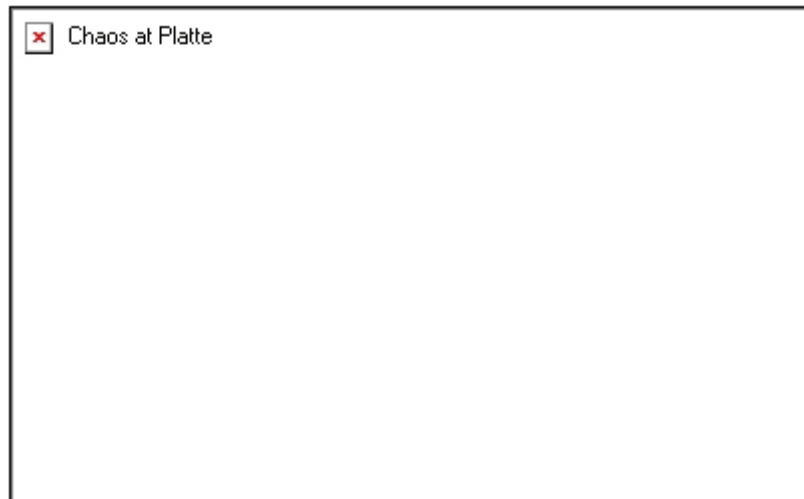
Donald R. Brown,
second Superintendent
of Sleeping Bear Dunes
National Lakeshore.
(Image missing from
original mss.)



The redesigned Pierce Stocking Drive, 1989.
(Image missing from original mss.)



Former Air Force Base at Empire, adapted for use as a maintenance facility, c. 1987.



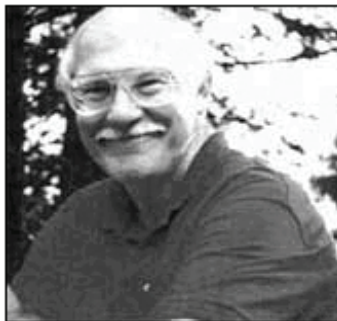
Chaos at the mouth of the Platte Rivier prior to National Park Service administration.
(Image missing from original mss.)



Dedication of the new park, October 22, 1977.



Superintendent Brown at the podium during the dedication ceremony, held at the site of the Dune Climb.



Richard R. Peterson, third Superintendent of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.



In January, 1987 the lakeshore moved into the Empire visitor center and headquarters complex.



Modern comfort station at the expanded and improved Platte River campground, 1992.



The newly constructed National Park Service dock at North Manitou Island, 1988.



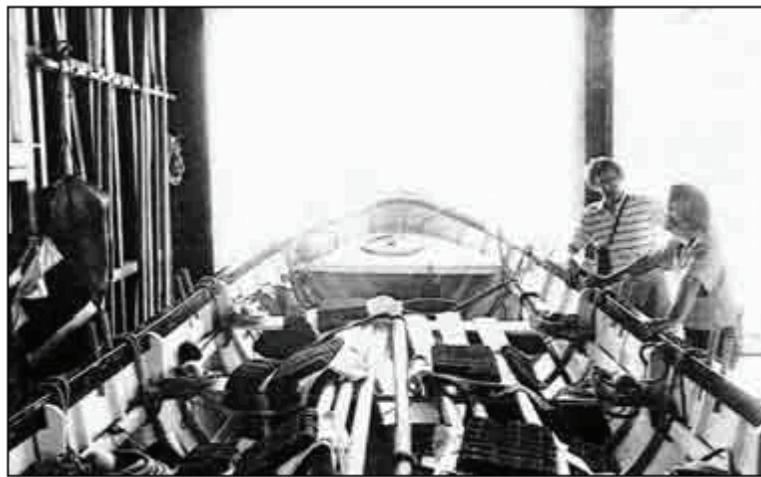
Visitors view exhibits in front of Sleeping Bear Inn. Maritime Heritage Day. 1989.



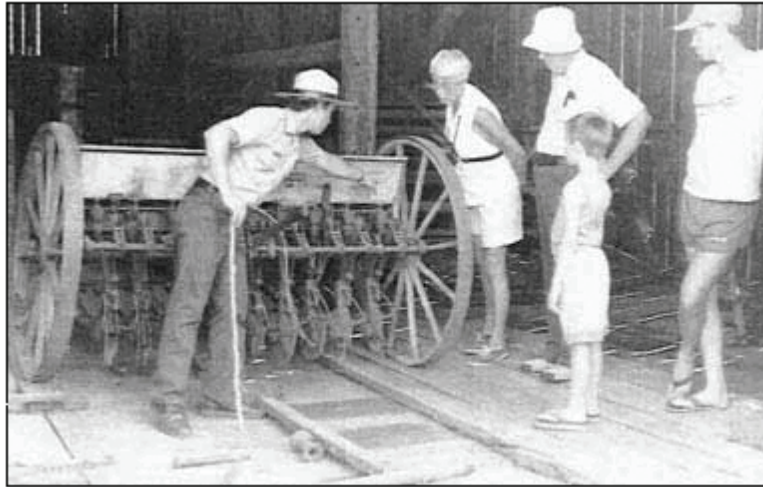
Erosion threatened the South Manitou lighthouse in 1986.



Charles Kruch demonstrates Coast Guard rescue techniques, 1986.



Ranger William Herd explains a Coast Guard surfboat to a visitor, 1984.



Park interpreters lead visitors on a historic farm tour, 1987.



Naturalist, Pam Lea leads visitors on nature walk along Empire Bluff Trail, 1986.



Ivan D. Miller, fourth Superintendent of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, presents an award to Management Assistant and former Chief Ranger Ray Kimpel, 1993.



The Dune Climb remains a popular visitor use site, 1989.



The Dune Climb remains a popular visitor use site, 1989.



The Dune Climb remains a popular visitor use site, 1989.



Allen Edmunds, "father" of the Great Lakes National Parks.

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Neal Bullington, Chief of Interpretation, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
Howard Chapman, retired, Director, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, participated in Great Lakes Shoreline Survey.
John Daugherty, attorney-at-law and former Advisory Commission member.
Jo Ann Evans, Personnel Assistant, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
James C. Gilbo, retired, engineer Leelanau County Road Commission.
Mary Ellen Hadjsky, local historian, Leland, Michigan.
Max Holden, Resource Management Specialist, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
William Herd, Park Ranger, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
Raymond Kimpel, retired Chief Ranger, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
John Kawamoto, retired, Associate Regional Director, Midwest Regional Office, National Park Service.
Peter LaValley, Maintenance Supervisor, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
Julius A. Martinek, retired, Superintendent of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
Ivan D. Miller, Superintendent of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
Charles Parkinson, retired, Chief of Interpretation, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
Jack Pattie, Land Acquisition Officer, Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway, former land acquisition staff of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
Duane Pearson, Assistant Superintendent, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
Richard Peterson, Superintendent Big Thicket National Preserve, former Superintendent Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
Kathleen Stocking, author, daughter of Pierce Stocking, and Leelanau resident.

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