

# Apostle Islands

NATIONAL LAKESHORE • WISCONSIN

## ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Much of the land within the park is still privately owned; check at park headquarters for information on those areas open to the public. Please respect **NO TRESPASSING** signs and the property rights of others.

As you leave, please take your refuse with you so that the beauty of the area is unimpaired for the enjoyment of others.

## ADMINISTRATION

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is 1972 Centennial Dr., Rural Route, Bayfield, WI 54814, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

**National Park Service**  
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**



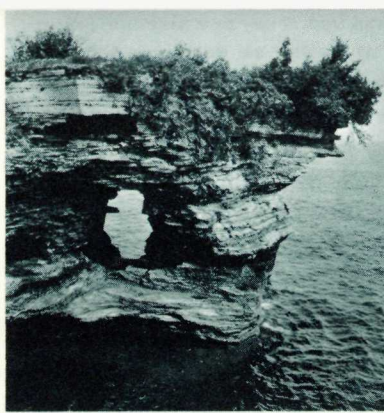
*"By the shores of Gitche Gumee,  
By the shining Big-Sea-Water . . ."*

Here America's northland sings to you of rocky islands in a blue inland sea and of forests where dark spruces contrast with pale birches. It sings a song of the redman, for this is the home of Longfellow's Hiawatha. This is a virginal place, cool and clean, with clear air and pure water.

Land for this new national lakeshore is still being acquired. Eventually, 20 of the 22 islands in the archipelago off the tip of Bayfield Peninsula and 10 miles of the mainland shoreline will be included in the park. The heavily forested islands range in size from tiny 3-acre Gull Island to 10,000-acre Stockton Island. Here in this unspoiled northern Wisconsin country is opportunity for refreshment and re-creation.

#### **WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

There are a few theories on how this group of islands got its name. A fanciful one is that it came from a band of pirates who lived in a cave on one of the outer isles and preyed on Lake Superior shipping. These fellows called themselves "the Apostles." The more generally accepted story is that the name came from a Jesuit missionary who looked out from a high bluff and saw 12 islands. Despite this explanation, none of the islands is individually named for one of Christ's 12 disciples. Some of the names—such as Oak, Otter, or Rasp-berry—are English translations of Indian names. Manitou means Spirit. Hermit Island, on the other



hand, was named for its solitary inhabitant in the late 1800's. For years people have dug in vain for a hoard of gold and silver coins he supposedly buried on the island.

There is an Indian story about the creation of the islands, too. According to Chippewa legend, a Manitou, or Spirit, pursued a great stag and unsuccessfully launched his arrows at it. The deer reached the shore of Lake Superior and plunged in. Becoming very angry, the Manitou fitfully picked up handfuls of rocks and threw them at the escaping animal. These rocks fell into the water and became the Apostle Islands.

Probably the best known of the Indian legends about this territory is the one Henry Wadsworth Longfellow put into poetry in "The Song of Hiawatha." Longfellow learned of the story from the early American ethnologist Henry Schoolcraft,

who explored the area in the 1820's and married the niece of a local Chippewa chief. As a girl, his wife had heard tales around the Chippewa campfires about the great deeds of the demigod Manabozho—whom Schoolcraft and subsequently Longfellow confused with the real Iroquoian Hiawatha.

#### **THE LOOK OF THE LAND**

Most of the Apostle Islands are still wild, though man has been here for a long time. The first inhabitants were the Indians, who lived for centuries in harmony with the land. Then came the lumberjacks, who sheared off the bigger and "better" trees, and quarrymen, who cut sandstone. All that has passed. The commercial fishermen's weathered shacks have tumbled down, the quarries are overgrown, and a luxuriant second growth of trees is spread over the land. Despite

man's intrusions, the Apostle Islands retain a picturesque and peaceful beauty.

In the vastness of Lake Superior, the largest freshwater lake in the world, man's works seem insignificant. One of the great dramas here is the continual interaction of water and earth. For it was water, in the form of glaciers, that created the islands and the lake itself.

Since then, the assault of the elements on rock masses has produced striking patterns in stone. Waves, currents, and winter wedges of ice have cut into the island shores. Stone arches have been hollowed out of sheer sea cliffs. The shores of some islands look like colonnaded cloisters. Sizable caverns extend in and under the ledge rock. During storms, big waves slap into these caves with a thunder-like sound. It was this ominous booming that prompted the Indians to name Devils (Evil Spirit) Island. On the north shore of Devils Island near the lighthouse is a particularly fine display of sculptured rock.

The erosion of the rock cliffs is still going on. As one pillar tumbles or one ledge falls, another is formed; this gives an illusion of permanence to the shoreline conformation. The same deception occurs in the forest above the rocks. In seemingly quiet and peaceful woodlands, plants are sprouting, growing, dying, and decaying; animals—vertebrate and invertebrate—are feeding, being fed upon, and reproducing. Change is the normal order of things.

While man can quickly and drastically alter the environment, nature normally changes the scene in a slow and orderly process called succession. Such has been the case with the plant communities of the Apostle Islands. About 13,000 years ago, the retreating glaciers left a mantle of sand and gravel on the old bedrock. Pioneer plants

took root on the raw soil. The scene was probably similar to that of the arctic tundra today. During centuries upon centuries of life, death, and decay, a layer of organic soil accumulated. This soil now supports a northern hardwood forest of maple, aspen, and birch, with occasional groves of pines. Secluded boggy lakes, hidden by dense encircling stands of spruce, occupy depressions in the landscape.

#### DEER, FLIES, FISH, AND FOWL

Many places across the country today have an "overpopulation" of deer. The large predators that helped nature maintain a healthy dynamic balance between the deer and the vegetation were long ago killed off. Without the culling effect of predation, and with lumbering operations bringing about temporary increases in the supply of browse plants, the deer multiplied rapidly. Soon outstripping their food supply, the deer herds were decimated by starvation.

The cougars and most of the wolves are gone from the north woods. Humans can help fill the gap left by the extermination of these natural predators; hunting will be permitted in the national lakeshore in accordance with State regulations. It is hoped that cycles of population explosion and starvation, and depletion and recovery of food plants will be avoided.

On some of the islands where there are no deer, the forests and thickets have not been browsed, and shrubs such as hazelnut, ground hemlock, mountain-ash, and American yew often attain sizes larger than they normally do on the mainland.

There is no lack of deer flies in the park. Persons who venture out in shorts and sleeveless shirts during parts of July and August may be annoyed by their painful bites.

Fishermen will be looking for bites of a different sort. Deep trolling for lake trout is popular. Rainbow, brown, and brook trout are hooked in the shallower waters as well as the streams. Coho, chinook, and Atlantic salmon are now being introduced to the area and hold fishing promise for the future.

The advent of fall colors signals the annual migrations of waterfowl—and of hunters, bird watchers, and photographers.

#### PARK VISITOR SERVICES

Most of the park development is still in the planning stage and only limited visitor services are provided. Park information offices are operated in Bayfield and Little Sand Bay. A short audiovisual program, exhibits, and personnel are available to orient visitors to the park's recreational opportunities and its interesting human and natural history. During the summer months, evening campfire programs and nature walks are presented. Check the information boards for times and locations of programs.

Group and family campgrounds are located on Stockton Island. For those seeking solitude, primitive camping areas have been designated on many islands. Permits are required for these campsites and can be obtained at no cost from any park information office or ranger station. Feel free to talk to NPS employees; they will be glad to tell you more about this fascinating place.

#### VISITING THE CHIPPEWA TRIBE

The Red Cliff Indian Reservation complements the park and operates a number of visitor services and facilities including primitive and developed campgrounds, boat ramps, charter fishing boats, and a guide service. Cultural exhibits and Chippewa arts and crafts are on display in the Red Cliff Cultural and Arts Center.

#### BOAT TRIPS

For those without their own craft, daily island excursions leave Bayfield in summer. One trip lasts about five hours and includes a swing around Devils Island—weather permitting—for a good look at the sea caverns, pillared rocks, and rugged sandstone cliffs. Two 2-1/2-hour tours are also offered. Boat rental, camper shuttle service, and charter fishing trips are also available from Bayfield and Little Sand Bay.

#### WARNING—DANGEROUS WATERS

Even in summer, Lake Superior's waters are dangerously cold, and sudden storms may break its surface. The temperature of the water a few hundred feet from shore may be 50° or less—cold enough to cause a strong swimmer to drown in 15 minutes.

The lake is large and dangerous, with a long history of violent storms and many shipwrecks. Even on seemingly calm days, boaters should keep an eye on the weather. Before venturing on the lake always get the current weather forecast from the U.S. Coast Guard at Bayfield or park headquarters. For safe navigation, all boaters should refer to Lake Survey Chart 961, which can be obtained at local outlets.

SWIMMING AND USE OF SMALL BOATS  
ARE NOT RECOMMENDED.

