

apostle islands

Lying off the tip of the northern Wisconsin mainland in the sparkling blue water of Lake Superior are the 22 Apostle Islands, ranging in size from tiny 1-hectare (3-acre) Gull Island to 5,700-hectare (14,000-acre) Madeline. The islands and surrounding waters provide a variety of recreational opportunities amid an everchanging panorama of scenic beauty. Twenty of the 22 islands and a 19-kilometer (12-mile) section of mainland shoreland have been set aside for the enjoyment of all as the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

Here, where the interaction of water and earth have created a picturesque panorama of rugged green islands and waveswept, rocky shores, is Gitchee Gumee, the land of Longfellow's Hiawatha. Its wooded shores and beaches invite you to take time for exploration and renewal of the spirit.

The Apostle Islands are products of the Ice Age—that million-year period during which ice intermittently covered this land. The bedrock was scoured by glacial ice, which gouged deep channels through 500-million-year-old sandstone. Ice of the last or Wisconsinan stage of glaciation dumped piles of glacial debris—rocks and dirt—atop the sandstone. Later, during the glacial retreat, a lake much larger than present-day Lake Superior covered the area. As the lake receded, sand beaches and cliffs were exposed. Today, remnants of these ancient beaches and water-worked cliffs can be found on the islands and mainland, high above the present shoreline.

The Apostle Islands have been used by Man for many centuries. Prehistoric Man may have visited this area at the retreat of the last stages of glaciation some 12,000 years ago. Archeological evidence indicates that Indians were in the area as early as 4000 B.C.

The glaciers had created a gentle, rolling landscape marked by myriad lakes and streams. A rich cover of diverse vegetation had evolved, providing food and shelter for many animals. From the lakes and streams man caught fish; but perhaps more importantly, he found the waterways more convenient than paths through the dense forest for travel in this country.

The first Europeans arrived via the water routes of the Indians. At the Apostle Islands they found shelter from lake storms, waters teeming with huge fish, and a rich supply of furbearing animals.

For the next 200 years, the Apostle Islands became the center for commercial activity on Lake Superior. An extensive shipping industry developed as French, British, and American fur-trading posts operated on Madeline Island from 1693 until 1847. Commercial fishing began in 1830 and the discovery of copper in 1840 led to greatly expanded shipping activity on Lake Superior.

In 1856, the city of Bayfield was established on the mainland opposite Madeline Island. Like many cities in the north, Bayfield grew with the lumbering industry that was fed by vast forests of pine and hemlock. To aid the growing ship commerce on Lake Superior, seven lighthouses were built on the Apostle Islands. For approximately 40 years (beginning in 1869) sandstone quarries on the mainland and islands supplied the building industry with fashionable Brownstone.

About 1890, wealthy city people began building elaborate summer homes to enjoy the beauty of the islands and lake. Trains and excursion boats brought tourists during the summer. During the early 1900s Bayfield, Cornucopia, and LaPointe were bustling communities serving the needs of loggers, shippers, fishermen, and tourists.

By the time of the Great Depression, the Apostle Islands and surrounding mainland, laid bare by loggers' axes and by fire, were no longer attractive to vacationers.

Today's islands are nearly as wild as those visited by Indians in birch canoes. Vegetation has reclaimed the islands and hides most signs of man's activities. Fish camps, lighthouses, and quarries now stand abandoned.

The islands and mainland contain elements of the deciduous forest to the south and the boreal forest to the north of Lake Superior. The forest is best called a "mixed forest." Sugar maple, yellow birch, hemlock, red pine, white birch, white cedar, balsam fir, and black spruce are common trees.



The understory of some islands is dense yew. Trembling aspen is found in disturbed areas, while red pine may be found on drier sandy soil. The forest floor is varied, with abundant wildflowers, mosses, and ferns.

A splendid array of wildflowers is found from early May to October. Violet, trillium, starflower, and Canada dogwood greet early season visitors. As summer progresses, the pale pinks and whites of spring are replaced by more brilliant reds and yellows. Late summer brings the golds and purples of goldenrod, thistle, and asters.

Nearly 20 species of orchids can be found growing within the Lakeshore. Some plants have evolved in special habitats and can only be found there. In the sphagnum bogs, pitcher plants, bog laurel, swamp pink, and sundew are found, while growing a few yards away on the dry sand of a dune or beach are bearberry, beach heath, sand cherry, and earthstar fungus.

Wildlife

Island wildlife populations differ from those of the mainland and often vary between islands. While large animals like deer, bear, and coyotes can swim between the islands or cross on the ice, smaller animals such as mice and voles were probably carried to the islands aboard canoes, boats, or drifting debris.

Changes in habitat since major logging operations ended about 1930 have caused dramatic changes in some bird and mammal populations. The thick brush and young trees of the regrowing forest produced ideal habitat for deer. On many islands, the herds grew so large that special hunting seasons were permitted in an attempt to control them. Hunting, harsh winters, and maturing forests have reduced their numbers, so that now few are left on most islands. Hunting and trapping are permitted in accordance with Lakeshore and State of Wisconsin regulations.

Most mammals are wary of people and are seldom seen. One exception is the red squirrel, which often chatters loudly upon the approach of humans. Sightings of black bear have increased in recent years, especially on Stockton and Oak Islands. Elsewhere, tracks of fox and coyote can often be found along beaches.

Toads, frogs, garter snakes, and turtles are frequently seen during summer. Salamanders are common, but because of their secretive habits they are often not observed. No poisonous snakes are found here.

Bird life is abundant in the Apostle Islands. The physical topography of the Bayfield Peninsula and the Apostle Islands acts to funnel birds on their spring and fall migrations. The islands are also in the transition zone of many northern and southern species. Because of the "mixed forest" type of this area, the Apostle Islands also support a mixture of breeding bird species that is as rich as that in any other area in the northern United States.

Probably the most commonly seen bird is the "seagull"—more correctly, the herring and ring-billed gulls. The Apostle Islands are one of the primary breeding grounds for gulls on Lake Superior. In fact, Gull and Eagle Islands support

more than three-fourths of all breeding pairs of herring gulls in the Wisconsin portion of Lake Superior. Eagle and Cat Islands have the only great blue heron rookeries within the Lakeshore. The rock ledges of Hermit and Otter Islands are also important gull-nesting sites.

The nesting season for gulls and terns is from May to August. During this time, boaters should not operate within 90 meters (100 yards) of nest sites as disturbances may cause gulls to abandon their nests and young. Hikers should also take care not to disturb nesting or young birds.

Fishing

The Apostle Islands area is one of the best fish-producing habitats in Lake Superior. Commercial fishing for lake trout, white-fish, herring, and smelt is important to the area's economy. Sport fishing for lake, brown, and rainbow trout and for introduced species of salmon is also good.

Many streams on the Peninsula are popular with fishermen seeking rainbow and brown trout. A valid State of Wisconsin license is required for all fishing.

Insects—Prevalent Pests

Abundant water and warm summers provide ideal breeding conditions for a variety of insects. The fragile beauty and graceful flight of most insects is forgotten when swarms of annoying insects surround your head.

Biting insects are common from early June to mid-September. When hiking, camping, or docking, be prepared. Insect repellents are useful, but clothing that covers exposed skin is the best protection.

Winter Activities

Winter is a beautiful time, and each year it brings more visitors to the park. Common shoreline objects are disguised beneath glistening coats of ice while winds sculpture snowdrifts into interesting shapes. But this harsh season poses extreme dangers to the unwary.

Winter temperatures of -35 degrees C (-30 degrees F) and wind chill factors of -50 degrees C (-60 degrees F) are not uncommon. As much as 250 centimeters (100 inches) of snow falls each year.

Winter ice conditions vary with temperature, snowfall, and wind. Extreme caution is required for travel across ice, as shifting winds may cause cracks and floes.

Freezeup normally occurs in January and continues into March, with ice forming first (and remaining latest) between Madeline Island and the mainland.

Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and winter camping are gaining in popularity. Park hiking trails may be used for skiing and snowshoeing, and campsites may be used for camping. All winter campers are required to register at Park Headquarters.

Snowmobiles are not permitted within the Lakeshore and over-ice travel is not recommended because of hazardous conditions. Snowmobilers can enjoy more than 560 kilometers (350 miles) of marked snowmobile trails on the Bayfield County mainland.

Visitor Services

The Park Headquarters in Bayfield is open daily; during the winter months it may be closed on weekends. Hours of operation vary. Interpretive exhibits and audiovisual programs are available, and Lake Survey charts and interpretive literature are on sale.

Exhibits at Little Sand Bay Information Center explain some of the area's natural and human history and recreation opportunities, and personnel provide boating and marine weather information.

In summer, evening programs and nature walks are presented on Stockton Island and the mainland. (Check information boards for time and locations.)

Ranger stations on Rocky, Stockton, Sand, Devils, Outer, Raspberry, and Michigan Islands are open in summer. Rangers are in frequent radio contact with the mainland. Park patrol boats are equipped with marine radios; rangers on patrol monitor Channel 16.

Islands for Adventure

That indefinable fascination of small islands makes the picturesque Apostles especially alluring to the venturesome in spirit. Either by exploring their wooded, rocky shores on foot or by scanning them from the deck of a boat, one can enjoy the unspoiled beauty of this cluster of islets in the World's largest freshwater lake. Services to make the islands accessible, facilities for comfort and safety, and interpretive programs to enhance your experience are being provided with minimal effect on the natural environment.

Island Camping

Campsites have been designated on many islands and camping is permitted at these designated sites or in the backcountry. Camping permits are required at all sites except the individual and group campgrounds on Stockton Island. Permits are available at no cost from either the Little Sand Bay or the Bayfield Information Office, from the Rocky, Stockton, Sand, Devils, Outer, Raspberry, and Michigan Islands Ranger Stations, or from any patrol ranger. Pets must be leashed and under physical control at all times.

Fires are permitted only in designated grills, pits, or rings located at each site or while in the backcountry. Trash should be discarded in receptacles (when provided) or carried back to the mainland. *Do not bury refuse on the islands.*

Lake Superior provides good drinking water, but treat it with purifying tablets or boil it 5 minutes before drinking. Don't pollute the lake with soap, fish entrails, human waste, etc.

Pumping of holding tanks and bilges into the lake is a violation of State and Federal regulations and is strictly enforced by the U.S. Coast Guard, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the National Park Service.

Hiking

Hiking opportunities vary on the islands. Stockton Island has 10 kilometers (six miles) of maintained trails in the vicinity of Quarry Bay and Presque Isle Point. Many kilometers of old logging trails and railroads remain on other islands. Most are overgrown with underbrush and difficult to follow. Hikers should use a compass and a U.S. Geological Survey topographic sheet. **Hiking near cliffs can be dangerous!** Wet rocks are slippery and loose rocks may cause falls.

Backcountry hikers and campers should advise a ranger or other party of their plans. Overdue parties or missing persons should be reported to park personnel. Lost persons should stay near the water's edge and signal for help.

Many cabins and docks are still privately owned. Please respect the property rights of individuals and do not trespass.

Accommodations and Services

Island campsites are the only overnight facilities within the Lakeshore.

Motels and restaurants, supplies, and fuel are available in the surrounding communities of Bayfield, Washburn, Cornucopia, Ashland, and Madeline Island. A variety of campgrounds, with services ranging from primitive to modern (with water, sewage, and electrical hookups) are located in surrounding communities and the nearby Chequamegon National Forest.

Red Cliff Indian Reservation

About 5 kilometers (3 miles) north of Bayfield is the Red Cliff Indian Reservation, the home of approximately 700 Chippewa Indians. The Red Cliff Center for Arts and Crafts is open year-round. Exhibits and artifacts help tell the history of the Chippewa Nation. Handcrafted items are offered for sale.

Adjacent to the Center for Arts and Crafts are a modern campground, a boat launching ramp, and a marina. The Reservation also maintains a new campground adjacent to the Lakeshore boundary at Point Detour.

Swimming

Lake Superior water seldom warms enough for swimming except in shallow, protected bays. Extreme caution should be observed when swimming: **no lifeguards are on duty** within the National Lakeshore.

Boating

The relatively sheltered waters of the Apostle Islands are enjoyed by hundreds of boaters each year. Boat launching facilities are located in Red Cliff, Bayfield, La Pointe, Port Superior, Cornucopia, and Little Sand Bay. The four marinas in the Bayfield-Madeline Island area have a wide selection of equipment, gear, and fuel. Mooring and storage for boats up to 18 meters (60 feet) is also available.

Public docks are located at Rocky, Stockton, Sand, Raspberry, Basswood, Oak, Devils, South Twin, Otter, and Manitou Islands and at Little Sand Bay. Please obey posted regulations and informational signs.

Small boats, canoes, and kayaks should be used with extreme caution, if at all, on the waters of Lake Superior.

Warning—Dangerous Waters

Even in summer, Lake Superior's waters are dangerously cold, and sudden storms may break the surface. The temperature of the water a meter or so from shore may be 10°C (50°F) 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. Always, before venturing onto the lake, get the current weather forecast from the U.S. Coast Guard Station at Bayfield, island ranger stations, or the marine weather frequency 162.55 MHz on your marine radio. For safe navigation, all boaters should refer to Lake Survey Chart #14966 or #14973, which can be obtained from the park information offices or local outlets.

Boat Trips

For those without boats for getting to the islands, daily excursion trips leave from Bayfield and Little Sand Bay in summer. In Bayfield, the Apostle Islands Cruise Service features long and short excursion trips in addition to a camper shuttle to Stockton Island. The long trip stops for lunch and—weather permitting—swings around Devils Island for a close look at the rugged sandstone cliffs, arches, and caves.

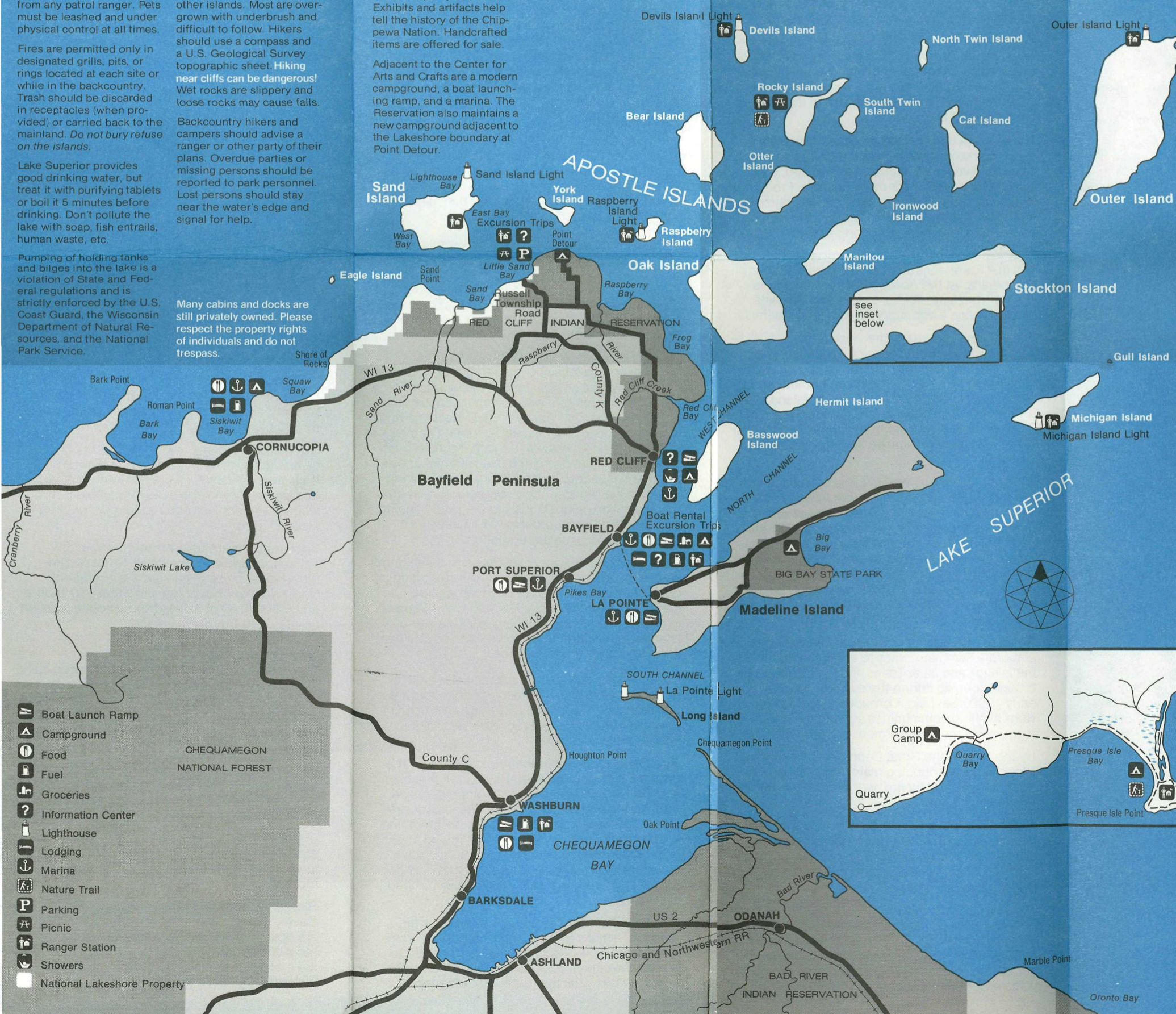
At Little Sand Bay, the park concessioner provides camper shuttle service to many islands. Excursion trips which pass the historic lighthouses on Raspberry and Sand Islands are offered. These excursions also provide a waterlevel view of the beautiful Shore of Rocks cliffs on the mainland near Squaw Bay.

Bayfield is also the center for rental boats and chartered fishing trips. Power and sail boats are available for rent from the local marinas. The Bayfield Trolling Association offers full- and half-day trolling trips for trout and salmon.

Regularly scheduled car ferries run between Bayfield and Madeline Island from spring breakup to winter freeze. Big Bay State Park and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin Museum are major attractions on Madeline Island.

Stockton Island

Stockton, the largest island within the National Lakeshore, has developed trails, docks, and campsites. Individual campsites, a dock, and Ranger Station are located at Presque Isle Point. Quarry Bay has a group campground and a dock. A 4.2-kilometer (2.6-mile) trail connects both areas and passes through a variety of plant communities. A 3-kilometer (2-mile) trail encircles Presque Isle Point, which was once a separate island; this trail allows easy access to the 2.4-kilometer (1.5-mile) long sand beach, bog, and sand dunes at Julian Bay. From Quarry Bay, a 3-kilometer (1.9-mile) trail leads to the abandoned Ashland Brownstone Company quarry.



Please report all accidents, injuries, vandalism, and lost or found items to the nearest ranger station, information office, or patrol ranger.

Administration

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is P.O. Box 729, Old Courthouse Building, Bayfield, WI 54814, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**