

Apostle Islands

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore
Wisconsin



Long Island - An Island Apart



Long Island is unlike any of the other Apostle Islands. It was the last island added to the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Most of the park was established in 1970, but a 1986 act of Congress authorized the inclusion of “approximately 200 acres of land at the mouth of Chequamegon Bay known as Long Island” into the park. The island is composed almost entirely of sand and has no obvious bedrock pedestal beneath it. Perhaps most importantly, Long Island (at least for now) is not an island at all!



Island or Peninsula?

In his 1930 book “The Lake Superior Country in History and Story”, Guy Burnham wrote, “Long Island, the remarkable island four miles in length which forms a part of the natural breakwater at the entrance to Chequamegon Bay, is an island no longer, but simply a very long and narrow peninsula, extending out from the mainland. No one can guarantee its present status very long, for within the

memory of the present generation at least, Long Island has been quite fickle.” Long Island has apparently changed from an island to a continuous part of a peninsula many times, usually persisting in one form or the other for a few decades. It is presently part of a peninsula, and has been since the mid 1970s.

One Island...Two Lights

Long Island is the only Apostle Island to have two active navigational lights. In 1858, the LaPointe lighthouse, a one and one-half story wood frame dwelling with a short square tower on the roof, was built on the north shore of Long Island as the second lighthouse in the Apostles. In 1897, the U.S. Lighthouse Board replaced the original lighthouse with two new towers, one to the east and one at the end of Chequamegon Point to the west of the first lighthouse. The new LaPointe light tower was a 67 foot tall cast iron cylinder, while a 42 foot pyramidal skeletal tower was built at Chequamegon Point. By 1987, beach erosion near the foundations of the Chequamegon Point light tower forced the U. S. Coast Guard to move the tower about 100 feet back from the shore. The tower was damaged in the move and the beacon was placed on a modern cylindrical structure nearby.



Top photo: LaPointe light tower and dock.
Middle photo: Aerial photo by William Cronon
Bottom photo: Chequamegon Point Lights, old and new.

Unique Habitat



Piping plover

The wide undisturbed beaches on Long Island are not only attractive to people, but are the only places in the state where a small endangered bird has successfully nested in recent years. Piping plovers are sand-colored shorebirds that arrive on Long Island in late April to early May. They lay four eggs in nests that are shallow scrapes in the sand lined with pebbles and driftwood. The eggs hatch after about 28 days, and the downy young soon follow their parents and pluck insects and spiders from the sand. Both the eggs and young are so well camouflaged that they may go unnoticed.

Several factors threaten Long Island's plovers:

- Human disturbance (e.g., beach-walking, fireworks, ORV use, etc.) may cause the parents to desert the nest, exposing eggs or chicks to the summer sun and predators.
- Pets, especially dogs, may harass or kill the birds.
- Predators such as gulls, merlins, crows, foxes, and coyotes eat plover eggs and young.

FYI



Piping plover nest enclosure

Island visitors must be aware of the following:

Closures

Fencing is used to protect piping plover nests from predators and human activity. When you arrive at an area that is closed due to piping plover nesting activity you may see a metal fence enclosure (approximately 12 feet across) surrounded by signs and a twine fence (approximately 100 feet across).

Poison Ivy and Deer Ticks

Long Island is the one place in the national lakeshore where poison ivy is common. The short plant with the clusters of three leaflets is scattered across many of the vegetated dunes on the island.

The ticks that transmit Lyme disease and Ehrlichiosis are also common on the island. If you notice a rash, flu-like symptoms, or pain in the joints following a tick bite, call your physician.

Park Rules



Long Island visitors are subject to the same National Park Service rules and regulations that apply in the rest of the national lakeshore. Pay particular note of the following:

- **Respect all areas fenced or posted for protection of wildlife.**
- **Dogs must be on a leash that is six feet or shorter at all times - 36 CFR 2.15 (a) (2).**
- **Permits are required for camping - 36 CFR 1.6 (g) (1).**
- **Visitors must pack out all trash.**

Getting There

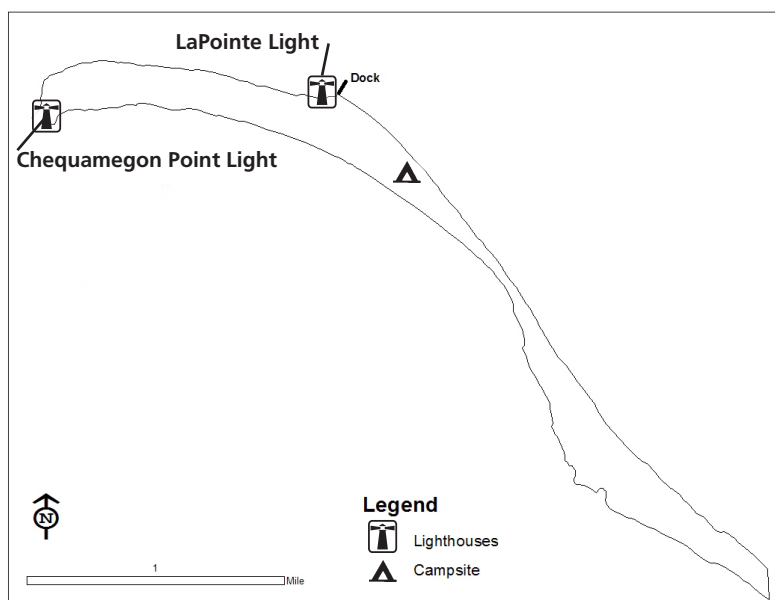


Public access to Long Island is by private boat, water taxi, or kayak. The land on the peninsula east of the park boundary is part of the Bad River Reservation. The tribe controls and limits use of their lands. A public dock is located near the LaPointe light tower on the north side of the island. Water depths are very shallow at the dock, and on virtually all approaches to the island. Most visitors beach their boats.

There are no maintained trails on the island. In spite of challenging access and lack of facilities, the island is still a popular place for summer activities like swimming, sun bathing, picnicking, and walking on the beach.

The island has one designated campsite located about one half mile southeast of the LaPointe light station. The site has a picnic table, a bearproof food locker, a fire ring and a privy. A permit is required for camping.

Long Island



Island Dimensions

Length - 3.5 miles
Width - 0.25 miles
Size - 500 acres