



Capture our Context: New Walkway and Archaeological Survey

Past and Future

Prehistoric remnants teach us about the past ways of life among the shores of Lake Superior. Encapsulated in these archaeological sites lie the stories of struggle and prosperity from yesteryear. Most prehistoric sites in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore are situated upon coastal areas that supported a variety of resources: shelter from winds, land and water sourced food, and culturally significant places. As coastal locations disappear forever, remains from that past leave with them.

On Sand Island, an accessible boardwalk is being installed that will provide a path from a new dock to accessible campsites in East Bay. The boardwalk will sit upon the ground, protecting the surface while increasing access and enjoyment of the area.



Flags show Archaeological tests before building a walkway uphill



Learning our Past

Archaeologists investigated the surrounding area to make sure our modern activities don't impact our ability to learn in the future. By excavating sub-surface tests and carefully examining the context of soils and prehistoric artifacts, we can model aspects of the past. These and prior tests showed that over 80% of a nearby site had been impacted, and more visitors would cause further loss.

Sub-surface soil structures showed three separate episodes of erosional and stable periods between now as the past 5000 years. The prehistoric artifacts found were tiny quartzite remains from stone tool sharpening; magnification analyses showed these had been slightly water-rounded. Shifting sands had moved artifacts *out of context*, which hampers our ability to describe and accordingly date these artifacts.

Lithic flake from making tools



Management Implications

Walking off trail has small but incrementally powerful effects on archaeological sites. Dynamic coastlines are constantly shifting, and it is futile to stop a natural process. Mitigation measures help, and while staff at the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore have engineered techniques to slow the natural process of losing our archaeological sites, Visitors can help too!





Context is *everything* when learning from the past. As artifacts are moved around by nature and by people, we lose much of our ability to learn from them. You can help artifacts and sites tell their story, by staying on established trails. Please explore our Park, but if you do happen to see something from the past, please leave it where it is.



Archaeological Survey for Public Walkway



KEY

-  Walkway Route
-  Survey Zone
-  Archaeological Test: No Finds
-  Positive Finds

