



Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

What's New / What's Cool in 2015

National Park Centennial and Find Your Park

- 2016 will be the National Park Service's Centennial – events related to the Centennial will take place in 2015 and 2016.
- The park's first Centennial related Find Your Park event engaged youth by working with local teachers to help students learn about cultural traditions and science. Local Bayfield High School students as well as 3-5 year olds from the Red Cliff Early Childhood program participated in the tradition of the Sugar Bush, collecting sap and making their own syrup.
- A Bioblitz was held in May during the *Apostle Islands School*. Regional students were involved in an effort to inventory plant and animal species on Stockton Island (see below).
- The park will participate in the Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light centennial celebration in July, recognizing the addition of the light to the park.
- The park will participate in the October Bayfield Apple Festival in 2015 and there will be a special NPS-focus associated with the Bayfield Apple Festival in 2016.
- Other projects include a natural resource focused mural in Ashland and a video featuring historic island orchards.

Park Planning

- A Sand Island Campsite and Day-Use Plan and Environmental Assessment has been completed and portions of it will be implemented this year. The plan's primary focus is on improving campsites, trails and docking for visitors, including increasing accessibility for all visitors. The plan/EA and related information is posted at: www.nps.gov/apis/learn/management/sand-island-plan-ea.htm
- A cultural landscape study will take place at Sand Island, documenting surviving cultural landscape resources at East Bay (with a focus on Hansen Farm). Recommendations for landscape management will be developed from this study.

Major Projects Scheduled for 2015

Light Stations

- Lighthouse preservation efforts continue this year at Sand Island, with minor wrap-up work occurring at Michigan, Devils, and Outer islands. Work began in May and will continue throughout the summer. The work includes sandblasting and repainting the tower lantern at Sand Island. Temporary closures will be needed at:
 - Michigan Island dock (May-June)
 - Outer Island light station (June)
 - Sand Island light station (July-September)

Updated closure information will be posted at: <http://www.nps.gov/apis/historyculture/please-pardon-our-mess.htm>

More details on this project are available at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=29408>.

- Exhibits will be installed in the first floor of the old Michigan Island Lighthouse this summer. The theme for these exhibits is: *The lighthouse on Michigan Island serves as an icon that represents changing times and how these changes impacted people in the region*. In 2016, an audio description component will be added to provide access to these exhibits to a wide range of visitors.
- At the Long Island light station, North College students helped plant over 5,000 native plants to restore areas that were disturbed during the historic preservation efforts on the light tower and Keepers Quarters Triplex.
- The Raspberry Island boathouse restoration project is 75% complete and is planned to be completed this year. It has a new foundation, stringers and siding and in 2015 the structure will be painted along with installation of new windows. The boat tram will be rebuilt and the surrounding boardwalk replaced. Funding for this project is provided by the Friends of the Apostle Islands (<http://www.friendsoftheapostleislands.org>) and the NPS.

Dock and Marina Work

- Little Sand Bay Marina – work at the marina was completed in 2014. The dock has been lowered and there are 5 new finger piers, including one built consistent with accessibility standards.
- The public dock at Sand Island, East Bay is being replaced. The current public dock has been closed due to unsafe conditions and the NPS dock is in very poor condition. The dock replacement is a two-year project and is scheduled to be completed in 2016.
- The park is working with the Town of Russell to make needed repairs to the boat launch at Little Sand Bay. The repairs are scheduled for this fall.

Other Infrastructure Projects

- In addition to the dock replacement at East Bay on Sand Island, accessible boardwalk will be installed, campsites relocated and improved and an accessible group site developed.
- Park staff, along with help from the Minnesota Conservation Corps, will be doing work on the Stockton Island trails this year. In addition, park staff will install a bridge across the largest stream crossing on the Mainland trail.
- In 2014, an accessible boardwalk and two group sites were built on Stockton Island at Quarry Bay. In May (2015), Northland College students helped plant over 6,400 native plants to restore disturbed areas at Quarry Bay. In addition, in 2015, an accessible picnic area will be built and relocation of outhouses completed. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding is making this project possible.



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- NPS roads, including Little Sand Bay and Meyers Road, as well as parking lots in these areas will be chip-sealed this year. The work is planned to be completed during June, prior to the main visitor season. If there are unanticipated delays, the work will be completed in the fall, after the main visitor season.

Sustainability and Climate Change

- The Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center is hosting numerous school groups in 2015 as part of the curriculum component of the exhibit “*Changing Climate...Changing Cultures.*” The curriculum is entitled “*Gikinoo 'wizhiwe Onji Waaban (Guiding for Tomorrow)*”, or *G'WOW*. This program integrates climate science with place-based evidence relating to climate change's effects on culture, specifically the Ojibwe culture. The fourth annual G'WOW teacher/educator institute, which is cosponsored by Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, is scheduled for July 13-16. The purpose of the institute is to increase climate literacy by learning about and applying place-based cultural evidence of climate change in our area. In 2015 the institute is funded by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program.
- Climate change scientists and experts in the area's natural and cultural resources joined park staff and community leaders in developing a better understanding of plausible future climate conditions in the park and area, and what that could mean for resources, visitors and infrastructure. The goal was to identify steps the NPS and others can take to improve our ability to adapt to changing conditions. Funding for the April workshop came from the NPS Climate Change Response Program.
- The park has several energy conservation projects planned for buildings at Little Sand Bay.

Natural Resources

- A cooperative project with Northland College will study the effects of fire on Canada yew.
- The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative continues to assist the park with funding for invasive species management, including surveys and control, and interpretation to help communicate the threat of invasive species.
- Surveys to determine the impacts of deer browse in the park will be expanded. Surveys on Sand and York Islands have shown that Canada yew has begun to recover now that deer numbers have been significantly lowered.
- A cooperative project with the University of Wisconsin in Madison is underway using trail cameras to study wildlife species such as coyotes, bears, fisher, bobcat, and weasels on Stockton Island. This project has revealed the occurrence of State endangered American marten, coyote, fisher, bobcat, bears, and deer on Stockton Island.
- A multi-park project to monitor bats and survey for white-nosed syndrome will begin this year.
- Cooperative projects with the NPS Great Lakes Inventory and Monitoring Network include: amphibian monitoring; breeding bird surveys; eagle surveys and contaminant testing; monitoring water quality; and mapping coastal areas.
- The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology is collecting field data to update the state bird atlas starting in 2015 and ending in 2019. The park is designated as an Important Bird Area and several islands will be surveyed over this time to provide data for this effort.

Partnership Activities

- In May, Apostle Island's National Lakeshore hosted a limited schedule of the *Apostle Islands School*, an environmental education program for regional middle school students. Students from two schools camped on Stockton Island during the week of May 18 and participated in a “Bioblitz” to help inventory species of plants and animals found on the island. Park staff and a variety of volunteer scientific experts coordinated the effort and lead student participation in the program. The Friends of the Apostle Islands provided a generous transportation grant that will make it possible for many of these students to participate.
- For the fourth year, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore received a *Park Stewards* grant from the National Park Foundation to support efforts to connect Bayfield high school teachers and students to the park and inspire the next generation of park stewards.
- In 2015, the ice caves were only open for nine days, but in the brief time nearly 38,000 visitors took advantage of this wonderful event. The increased visitation to the area brought a boost in revenue to the local economy. The entire community, many partners and organizations, and NPS staff from around the region came together to make this a successful event.
- The US Coast Guard Auxiliary will again provide volunteers to contact paddlers at Meyers Beach on Fridays and Saturdays this summer to discuss equipment and procedures to facilitate safe paddling in the park.
- Piping plover monitors will once again be stationed out at Long Island to monitor and protect these endangered birds, as well as provide information to visitors. The monitors will work closely with the NPS, but will be Bad River employees, funded through the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program. This project is only possible through a partnership with the Wisconsin DNR, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bad River Tribe, The Nature Conservancy, and the Johnson Foundation.
- The Real-Time Wave Observation System (RTWOS) at the Mainland Sea Caves will continue to provide wave heights and wave pictures this season via the internet at: <http://wavesatseacaves.cee.wisc.edu/index.htm>. A digital display at Meyers Beach allows visitors to check conditions before they paddle to the caves. RTWOS has been developed by the University of Wisconsin and UW Sea Grant. Wisconsin Coastal Management, and the Friends of the Apostle Islands <http://www.friendsoftheapostleislands.org> have been important supporters and contributors to this project.