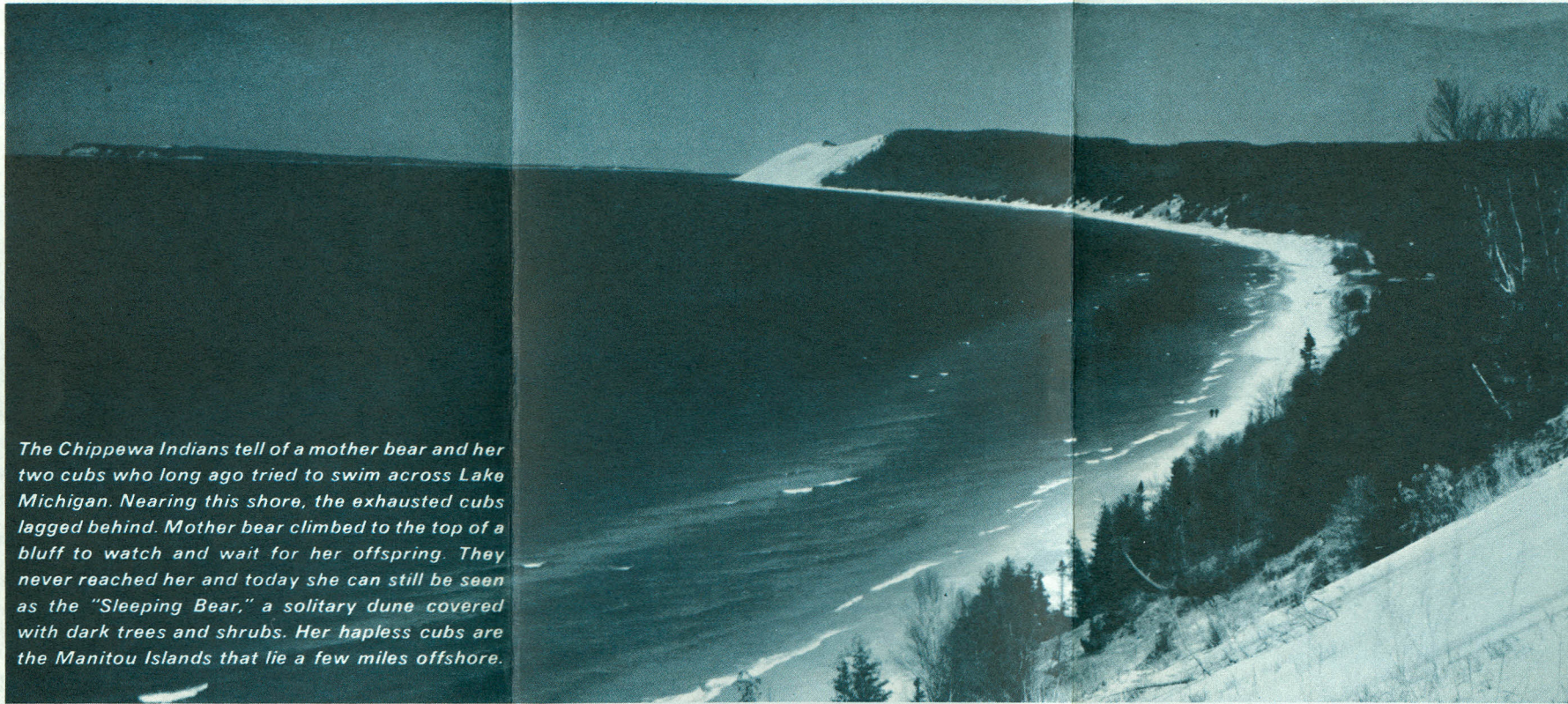


# Sleeping Bear Dunes

NATIONAL LAKESHORE • MICHIGAN



Sleeping Bear Dune and South Manitou Island from the south.

*The Chippewa Indians tell of a mother bear and her two cubs who long ago tried to swim across Lake Michigan. Nearing this shore, the exhausted cubs lagged behind. Mother bear climbed to the top of a bluff to watch and wait for her offspring. They never reached her and today she can still be seen as the "Sleeping Bear," a solitary dune covered with dark trees and shrubs. Her hapless cubs are the Manitou Islands that lie a few miles offshore.*



## FOOTPRINTS OF THE GLACIERS

What the scientific explanation for the origin of these dunes lacks in legendary charm, it more than makes up in awesome drama. Four times continental glaciers assaulted this area, conquered and burdened it with millions of tons of ice, in vast sheets perhaps a mile thick. They made and unmade three huge lakes—first Lake Algonquin, then Lake Nipissing, and finally Lake Algoma. These are the ancestors of our Great Lakes. Upon this Michigan lakeshore, the glaciers left their footprints, now seen in the varying levels of those ancient lakes, clearly identified by the wave erosion on rock ledges along the lake. All this happened between 20,000 and 11,000 years ago—only yesterday in the earth's history.

The earth's atmosphere continued to warm up, and the glacier to melt. As the ice disappeared northward during the great thaw, which is still in progress, a tremendous quantity of rock, sand, and silt was deposited by the glacier or sluiced by its melt water to create the ridges and hills, the lowlands and lakes of the present park landscape. Pick a pebble off the beach and you may hold a fragment plucked from the Canadian highlands, far to the north, and carried tediously south by the advancing glacier. It is a reminder that they may come back again. Other glacial marks and depositional features make this park an excellent outdoor museum.

Old shorelines of the stages of the ancestral lakes can be recognized miles inland and higher than the present beaches. Notice on the map how the present shore consists of rounded headlands, such as Platte River, Sleeping Bear, and Pyramid Points. Separating these points are long sweeping embayments, such as Platte, Sleeping Bear, and Good Harbor Bays. This sinuous shoreline traces the



rough outline of the glacier as it paused temporarily in its retreat northward. The edge of the ice sheet was scalloped and consisted of a series of lobes. A great amount of rock material accumulated between lobes and became today's ridges. Where the ridges run into the lake they form points faceted with steep sandy bluffs. These high headlands are the battleground of the continuous struggle between land and water. The action of waves against the masses of sand can be spectacular. In 1971 wave action caused tons upon tons of sand to slump off the end of Sleeping Bear Dune into the lake.

The wind is also an agent of change. It continually blows sand off the beaches and up the sides of the bluffs, forming dunes perched high above the lake. Walk along the edge of a bluff when a stiff breeze is blowing. The stinging sand thrown in your face by the wind shows the ability of air to lift sand some 450 feet. A climb to the top of Sleeping Bear Dune puts you in a desert of sand dunes of all kinds and shapes. Here and there sparse clumps of cottonwoods punctuate the scene. High up you

will discover ghost forests of bleached wood where trees buried by shifting sand have subsequently been re-exposed.

## A LIVING LANDSCAPE

The variety of landforms—dunes, ridges, valleys, plains, streams, and lakes—supports a rich diversity of interrelated plant habitats. The sand dune deserts contrast strikingly with the hardwood forests. In autumn a glowing tapestry unfolds the yellows of beech and basswood, the bronze of oaks, and the flaming scarlet of maples. Elsewhere are stands of green and aromatic pines, dense cedar swamps, and even a few secluded quaking bogs of sphagnum moss. Against this green background are stands of chalk-white birches.

## VALLEY OF GIANTS

This valley on South Manitou Island is a special attraction, for secluded here is a forest treasure, a remnant of the region's virgin forests that escaped the smokestacks of the early lake freighters. Here you will find tall white cedars, some more





than 500 years old, common and redberry elder, mountain and sugar maple, white ash, and basswood. Here too are native understory shrubs and flowers typical of the once vast northern forests.

#### **A VARIETY OF WILDLIFE**

The park's diverse habitats, in a natural and healthy condition, can support life of many different kinds. More than 220 species of birds can be seen here.

Where there are trees, there are apt to be porcupines, and with a little luck you may come across one eating the green inner bark of a young tree. You may also startle a deer in an aspen thicket, or catch the scent of skunk on the breeze. Bobcats seldom show themselves, but after a snowfall you can often track them.

#### **A FISHERMAN'S PARADISE**

Fishing is good. Beginners are soon rewarded with panfish like rock bass, bluegill, or perch. Bass, pike, and rainbow trout test the skill of those in search of gamefish. It is during the autumn coho salmon run, however, that fishing fervor reaches a peak. The coho is an aggressive saltwater species introduced into Lake Michigan in the 1960s. Lake trout, steelhead, and brown trout also provide a challenge. A Michigan fishing license is required.

#### **CAMPING**

The Platte River and D.H. Day campgrounds are operated by the National Park Service. Camping is limited to 14 days and campgrounds are usually filled to capacity during the summer. Primitive camping is limited to designated areas on South Manitou Island. Wood gathering on South Manitou is prohibited. If you don't care to bring wood with you, firewood can be purchased on the island.

## **INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS**

These programs, scheduled from mid-June through Labor Day, offer you the opportunity to enjoy and better understand the park. There are conducted walks, self-guiding trails, evening campfire programs, and publications dealing with the natural and cultural history of the area. Schedules of all activities are available at campground ranger stations, the Visitor Contact Station, and park headquarters in Frankfort.

## **THE PRESENT-DAY PARK**

Before exploring the area's many land and water features, stop at the Visitor Contact Station for information and exhibits about the many land and water features in the region. Then begin your visit, perhaps by climbing the 400-foot high Sleeping Bear Dunes. From the top, you can see a magnificent panorama of Glen Lake and the surrounding countryside or you can hike the two miles across rolling sand to the high overlooks above Lake Michigan. The dunes and overlooks can also be seen by riding in a commercially operated dunemobile or by driving your own car over a privately owned toll road on a portion of the dunes.

A quiet, more intimate look at the countryside is yours if you drift down the Platte River in a canoe, rented locally. As you slip along on the smooth current past several miles of undeveloped riverbank, the natural wilderness, now mostly gone, is seen again for the span of 2 to 3 hours.

Within your reach, too, are the essentials for many moments of quiet reflection. Crush some hemlock needles and smell their north woods fragrance. Let the crystalline sand sift through your fingers. Dangle your feet in cool flowing streams. Peer down through 10 feet of clear, sunlit water at the pattern of the sandy bottom below. Breathe deeply of the clean air.

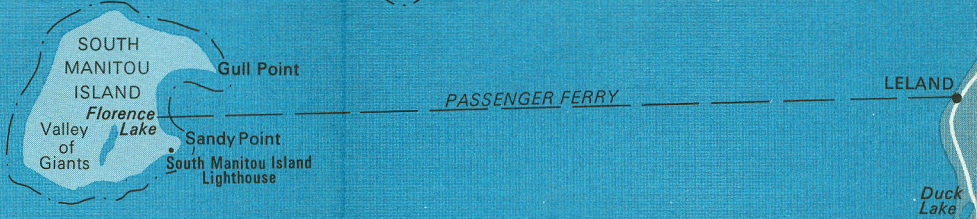
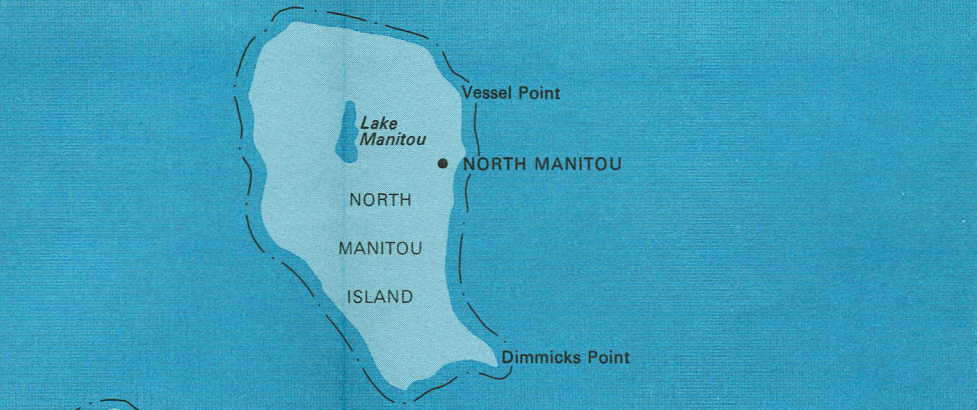
## **A LARGE ESTATE FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE**

When all authorized lands have been acquired, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore will contain some 60,000 acres. Of this, the Manitou Islands comprise about one-third. The park will include 30 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. About 20,000 acres of land have been acquired in scattered tracts. Accordingly, considerable land is still in private ownership. **RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF THE PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS.**

A special 30-mile scenic parkway running north and south from Little Traverse Lake to Honor will tie the park together. This limited-access, slow-speed road will offer spectacular views from the high glacial ridges. The road will be separated as much as possible from local and residential traffic. Overlooks, trails, campgrounds, picnic areas, visitor centers, and beach facilities will also be developed. Provision will be made for hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, snowmobiling, canoeing, sailing, and motorboating. The National Park Service recognizes the important recreational value of existing private resorts and cottages. This value, largely dependent on the natural charm of the region, will be enhanced by the existence of the park.



**SLEEPING BEAR DUNES  
NATIONAL LAKESHORE**



PASSENGER FERRY

LELAND

Duck Lake

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Dune Climb

Dunes Mobile Concession  
Sleeping Bear Point  
GLEN HAVEN  
SLEEPING BEAR BAY  
DAY

Pyramid Point  
Shell Lake  
Narada Lake  
Bass Lake  
School Lake  
Tucker Lake  
GLEN ARBOR  
Lime Lake  
GOOD HARBOR BAY  
Little Traverse Lake

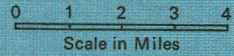
VISITOR CONTACT STATION

GLEN LAKE  
BURDICKVILLE  
MAPLE CITY

North Bar Lake  
South Bar Lake  
EMPIRE

TO TRAVERSE CITY

- Campground
- Ranger Station
- Authorized Park Area
- Future Scenic Parkway



**A SAFETY NOTE**  
High Lake Michigan water levels have created unstable shoreline conditions. Steep lakeshore bluffs are hazardous to climb and descend due to landslides and slumpage. On Lake Michigan, weather conditions can change drastically in a short time. If you are boating, be aware of the weather forecast and carry appropriate safety equipment.

PLATTE RIVER  
Platte River Point  
PLATTE BAY  
Otter Cr.  
Bass Lake  
Deer Lake  
Mud Lake

Point Betsie  
CRYSTALIA  
FRANKFORT  
LAKESHORE HEADQUARTERS (Information)  
ELBERTA  
BEULAH  
BENZONIA  
HONOR

TO ARCADIA & MANISTEE

TO BEAR LAKE & MANISTEE



**Much of the park is still privately owned. PLEASE RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF THE PROPERTY OWNERS. DON'T TRESPASS ON PRIVATE LANDS.**

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, authorized on October 21, 1970 is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is 400½ Main Street, Frankfort, MI 49635, 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**