



Citizens for Access to the Lakeshore (CAL)

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Newsletter Editor: Jeannette Feeheley, President

May, 2008

Right on schedule, the National Park Service (NPS) has recently published its "Preferred Alternative" for its proposed *General Management Plan* for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, along with an extensive *Environmental Assessment and Wilderness Study*. Public input is being taken until June 13th at www.nps.gov/slbe.

CAL urges interested members to attend one of the **NPS Public Meetings** on this subject:

Tuesday, June 3, Platte River Elementary, 1134 Main, Honor MI

Wednesday, June 4, Hagerty Center, Northwestern Michigan College, Traverse City

Thursday, June 5, Glen Arbor Township Hall, 6394 W. Western Ave, Glen Arbor

Schedule identical each evening: 5:30-6 pm - Open House; 6:00-6:30 pm - Formal Presentation;

6:30-7:00 pm - Questions/Answers; 7:00-8:30 - Public Comments/Wilderness Hearing

Also, Members, please put on your calendars to attend the

CAL Annual Membership Meeting

7 pm, Thursday, July 17, 2008, Lake Township Hall

(on M-22 south of Esch Road and just north of Riverside Canoe Livery)

Below are some photos from last year's fun, well attended and informative meeting!



NPS Superintendent Dusty Shultz and Assistant Superintendent Tom Ulrich give CAL members a slide presentation at the 2007 Annual Membership Meeting.

2007 brought CAL the addition of two new Board members: Charley Kinzel (back row center) and Dana Roman (not in photo but at the meeting).



CAL Board: Back row left to right: Adrian Denhaan, Bob Michalak, Charley Kinzel, Jack Feeheley, Dan DeGood; Front row: John Harkins, Mary Miron, Jeannette Feeheley, Joanne Appelhof. Not available for the picture but at the meeting were Board members Dana Roman and Phyllis Crowell-Van Hammen.



Dear Members and Friends,

Great News for Access! Great News for CAL!

The Park Service's recently published, new "Preferred Alternative" for its upcoming 20-year General Management Plan is now chock full of access-friendly provisions, cultural and historical preservation, and in a manner keeping with preservation of the natural setting we all love. What a turn-around since 2002!

CAL is grateful to NPS Superintendent Dusty Shultz and Assistant Superintendent Tom Ulrich for responding to CAL's concerns over these many years leading to development of their new "Preferred Alternative". CAL also is very grateful to Congressmen Pete Hoekstra and Dave Camp and Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow for their continued help to CAL during the multi-year process.

We are also grateful for the generosity of our many donors and members over the years. Because of such, the CAL Treasury is sufficient to handle CAL mailings/expenses for the time being. The Board of Directors voted not to collect dues last summer. We may defer dues collection again this summer – so hold onto your hard-earned money until the Board has a chance to review CAL's future revenue needs.

Sincerely,
Jeannette Feeheley, President, Board of Directors

Access-Friendly "Preferred Alternative"

The Park Service has responded positively to all CAL's major requests in its recently published, April 2008 "Preferred Alternative" for its Draft General Management Plan. Although proposing 32,200 acres for "wilderness" management, county roads are protected and reasonable access for everyone is well provided. Additional campgrounds and trails are also proposed.

Purpose: CAL had asked the NPS to stop attempting to revise the Park's purpose through bureaucratic planning documents, and return to and reiterate the 1970 Congressionally-established statutory purpose of this Park. **Done!!** The "Purpose" of the Park in this GMP repeats the exact language of the Congressional purpose. ("Purpose", page 11, GMP)!

Over-all Vision: CAL had asked the NPS not to revise through the back door the Park's purpose when constructing an "Overall Vision" for this GMP. **Done!!!** The GMP "Overall Vision" reflects statutory purpose. ("Overall Vision", page 52, GMP)

County Roads: CAL had asked the NPS to stop attempting to acquire our county road rights of way and acknowledge Benzie and Leelanau Counties' jurisdiction. **Done!**

"Roads would remain essentially the same as now. All developed county roads would be zoned compatible with motor vehicle and bicycle use." ("Visitor Facilities, Opportunities, and Activities, page 53, GMP)

Beach Access: CAL was concerned about county-road beach access and also asked that NPS-owned Tiesma Road be kept open. **Done!!!** ***"The following beach access points that are accessible to motor vehicles would remain essentially the same: Lake Michigan Road (Leelanau County), Glen Haven, North Bar Lake, Peterson Road, and Tiesma Road. Parking at the end of Esch Road would be improved. The beach access area at the end of Lake Michigan Road near the mouth of the Platte River would be zoned high use to allow for parking improvements; a separate study would examine the appropriateness of these developments in more detail."*** ("Lake Michigan Beach Access", page 54, GMP)

Dune Climb: CAL had asked that the Dune Climb remain. **Done!!!** In addition, the NPS plans to **pave the "parking area and make other minor improvements to alleviate vehicular circulation and drainage problems and improve access for the disabled."** ("Dune Climb", pages 33 and 54, GMP)

Preserve our History: CAL had asked that the cultural history and viewscapes of Port Oneida, and on North and South Manitou Islands be preserved for visitor enjoyment. **Done!!!** "Experience History" Management Zones were created to protect these areas and allow for visitation. ("Cultural Resources", pages 52 & 53, GMP)

Boekelodge: CAL had asked that Boekelodge be preserved for visitor enjoyment. **Although the Boekelodge property is not designated as an "Historic Zone", the Preferred Alternative does promise that "All properties on or determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places would, at a minimum, undergo stabilization (where that action has not already occurred) or maintenance in the current condition where some preservation treatment has already been implemented..... it is the National Park Service's intent that no action proposed be adverse. All actions affecting these historic structures and landscapes would be undertaken in consultation with the Michigan state historic preservation officer."** (Historic Resources", page 200, GMP)

Giant Cedars: CAL had asked that the concessionaire tour be allowed to transport visitors to the Giant Cedars. **Done!!!** ***"On South Manitou Island, concession-operated farm loop tours would continue. Concession auto tours to near the Giant Cedars would be allowed, provided there is demand and the service is economically feasible."*** ("Visitor Orientation, Interpretation, & Education", page 53, GMP)

In Conclusion: There is much for CAL members to support in the NPS' Preferred Alternative.

Benzie Corridor

CAL Board members appeared several times in 2007 at meetings of the Benzie County Board of Commissioners to appraise Commissioners on proposals by the NPS regarding development or abandonment of the not yet fully acquired Benzie Corridor on the ridge between Platte and Crystal Lakes.



Several CAL Board members attended Superintendent Dusty Shultz's presentation on the proposed GMP last summer (2007) to the Benzie County Board of Commissioners. Presenting to the Commissioners above is NPS Assistant Superintendent Tom Ulrich.



CAL gave a presentation as well. Shown above speaking to Commissioners is CAL Board Secretary Dan DeGood. Other CAL Board members and NPS Assistant Superintendent Tom Ulrich are shown in the audience.

In the NPS March 2007 Newsletter 4, the NPS had proposed a number of alternatives: continuing acquisition in order to develop a scenic road or trail, or ceasing acquisition and asking Congress to take the Benzie Corridor out of the Park's boundaries.

In its new April 2008 "Preferred Alternative", the NPS has decided its preference is that "The National Park Service would continue to purchase lands within the Benzie Corridor on a willing-seller basis (subject to available funding) for future development of a scenic road and/or a bike/hike trail (determined and evaluated via a future study). The road/trail would not be expected to be built within the life of this plan. Land acquisition costs are not included in the cost estimates below. Merely stating that the National Lakeshore would continue to purchase lands within the Benzie Corridor would not immediately make funds available for acquisition. It might be several years before funds are actually available to implement the plan." (Benzie Corridor, page 55, GMP)

To view the subject property, on October 21, 2007, Benzie County Administrator Chuck Clarke, County Planning Department Director Dave Neiger, County Commissioner Anne Damm, Stacey Daniels of the Crystal Lake Watershed Association (CLWA) and others led a hike of about twenty CLWA members and two CAL Board members into the very steep, densely forested area. Although this area sits outside the main boundaries of the National Lakeshore, it was nevertheless included as part of the Park at the time of the 1970 enabling legislation, but the private property within this Corridor has not yet been acquired by the NPS as extensively as property within the main Lakeshore boundaries.

The following three photos from atop the Corridor ridge are courtesy of Dave Neiger, Department of Planning, Benzie County Government, who took the photos on the Oct. 21, 2007 hike:



Autumn 2007 view from the Benzie Ridge where an NPS Benzie Corridor would go.



The Benzie Corridor ridge is densely wooded and extremely steep.



Autumn leaves, Benzie Corridor. Trees and vegetation currently block most access to scenic views.

Port Oneida Rural Historic District

Last fall CAL submitted comments applauding the NPS for undertaking an environmental assessment (EA) of the Port Oneida Rural Historic District with the purpose of preserving the cultural history and improving visitor access and the visitor experience. CAL found the entire EA a remarkable testament to a substantive NPS change of direction from previous, now withdrawn, 2002 NPS GMP proposals to “molder” cultural landscapes in order to “restore pre-European settlement ecosystem components.” CAL leaves to other organizations who are physically engaged in restoration work (such as Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear) to comment on details of the EA’s proposed Alternatives. Several CAL Board members attended a fall NPS Open House on the Port Oneida proposals and listened to comments of those in the audience most directly involved. While continuing preservation and visitation were seen as admirable goals, some at the meeting expressed concern that the area could become over-developed. The location of additional parking lots, visitor facilities, additional NPS employee housing in the area, and funding were issues of concern to some in attendance.

NPS Plans to Restore “Disturbed” Lands

On November 16, 2007, the NPS sent out a scoping letter announcing the continuation of “preparing detailed action plans for restoring non-historic lands throughout Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore that have been disturbed from their natural state by past use.” The letter stated that the “disturbed lands” will be “separated into three principal management areas including: 1) Non-native weed infestations and threats...; 2) Formerly developed sites and sites disturbed by heavy public use...; 3) Conifer plantations and windbreaks.” This planning process is separate from the General Management Plan (GMP), and, according to the NPS letter, will be made available for further public review and comment in 2008.

Improved Platte River Boat Launch Expected

A project outside but adjacent to the National Lakeshore is scheduled for completion in early summer. Plans are underway for improvements to the boat launch facility at the mouth of the Platter River where it empties into Lake Michigan at the road-end of Lake Michigan Drive. Jim Sheets, Chair, Benzie County Parks and Recreation Commission, told CAL April 14th that he expects to be able to let out bids soon and hopes construction to be completed by fall 2008. According to a December 12, 2007 article in the Benzie County Record Patriot, the project is being funded by a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Grand Traverse Band of Objway, the Benzie County Sportfishermen, the Benzie Area Steelheaders, Riverside Canoes, the Benzie Fishing Coalition, Honor State Bank, individual contributors, plus engineering work contributed by retired engineer Dave Kester.

Glen Haven Boat Launch Effort Scrapped

After much effort and investigation last year, the Glen Arbor Township Board decided to end their consideration of relocating the town boat launch to the Glen Haven area. The Board voted unanimously last February to abandon further investigation into moving the town boat launch from its current location at the end of Lake Street in Glen Arbor to the old, abandoned dock area in Glen Haven. NPS officials and others had opposed relocating the boat launch to Glen Haven.

CAL Board of Directors

- Joanne Appelhof, Beulah 231.882.4772 (May-Dec)
- Dan DeGood, Honor 231.882.9594
- Adrian DenHaan, Jr., Beulah 231.510.3853
- John Harkins, Benzonia 231.882.4905 or 386.986.2255 (winter)
- Charlie Kinzel, Beulah, 231.882.0156; Jack & Jeannette Feeheley, Frankfort, 231.352.6295 or 239.430.2329 (winter)
- Bob Michalak, Honor 231.325.2189; Mary Miron, Honor 231.325.6931; Dana Roman, Empire 231.334.4590
- Phyllis Crowell VanHammen, Beulah 231.325.2170