

Modification #: H6000A100A
Funding Agency: National Park Service

Project Title: Meaning and Values Associated with Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

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Abstract: This project identified values, reflected in language use and protection priorities, of various Apostle Islands National Lakeshore (APIS) constituents. Key terms and protection priorities were assessed among several audiences with a mixed methods approach. Specific project objectives were to: identify and compare key term definitions by audience, identify and compare protection priorities by audience, and conduct a camper survey.

A mixed methods approach identified terms, identified protection priorities, and surveyed campers. During summer 2001, a series of 13 focus groups and 13 personal interviews provided an initial list of terms and protection priorities. These lists were refined and descriptively analyzed. Then, the most frequently identified definitional descriptors and protection priorities were presented in back to focus group and interview participants for refined importance ratings and rankings through surveys (either mail or electronic). Similarly, these most frequently identified definitional descriptors and protection priorities were presented to campers in a mail survey in fall 2001 that included sections on their visit, trip satisfaction, environmental attitudes, and demographics (n=207, response rate 78 percent).

Project results suggest three sets of recommendations, based on project objectives. Concerning key term definitions, recommendations include 1) adjusting communication patterns in recognition of term definition differences, 2) realigning staff and public definitions with legislative definitions, 3) defining uncertain terms in all communications, and 4) educating public and staff regarding the term definitions. Related to protection priorities, to enhance planning and communication efforts, managers can build on the protection priority commonalities and seek to better understand priority divergence. Specifically, managers can 1) consider using the commonly identified protection priorities as superordinate goals from which to build consensus efforts, 2) publicize the common priority of legal and safe access, particularly with respect to the ongoing wilderness suitability plan, 3) explore APIS and public protection priority differences with respect to lighthouses, cultural resources, and scenic quality, 4) consider enhanced public education efforts regarding the essence of the lighthouses and cultural resources to the park mission, 5) attend to the importance afforded to scenic quality by visitors in appropriate planning and management efforts, and 6) extend this research through mapping and essay analysis. Visitor survey results suggest APIS camping permit survey applicants were satisfied with their 2001 experience. However, visitor characteristic changes since 1990 suggest management opportunities exist to ensure this satisfaction trend continues. Specific recommendations include: 1) acknowledge the increase in kayak usage and the implications for resource impacts and assessments to sustain both

the resource and satisfactory experiences, 2) provide adequate and timely visitor information about cultural resource experience opportunities and insect challenges to distribute use and align visitor expectations, 3) continue visitor monitoring to enhance APIS management and client understanding while subsequently contributing to visitor satisfaction.