



Isle Royale National Park © NPS

FACT SHEET

National Parks in Michigan

Father Marquette National Memorial • Isle Royale National Park • Keweenaw National Historical Park • North Country National Scenic Trail • Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore • Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

Michigan's expansive lakeshores have provided recreational opportunities for generations of Americans and will continue to do so as part of the National Park System. Michigan also contributes historic sites, like the state's earliest European settlements, to the park system.

Father Marquette National Memorial - Father Jacques Marquette, a French Jesuit missionary, established Michigan's earliest European settlements at Sault Ste. Marie and St. Ignace in 1668 and 1671. He lived among the Great Lakes Indians from 1666 to his death in 1675. During these nine years, Father Marquette mastered several native languages and helped Louis Jolliet map the Mississippi River.

Isle Royale National Park - Authorized in 1931. Wolves and moose, the wild North Woods forest, ever-changing weather and a cool climate, and the crystal clear waters and rugged shoreline of Lake Superior characterize Isle Royale National Park. This wilderness archipelago is 45 miles long and nine

miles wide at its widest point. The park encompasses a total area of 850 square miles including submerged lands which extends four and a half miles out into Lake Superior. The archipelago is composed of many parallel ridges resulting from ancient lava flows which were tilted and glaciated.

Keweenaw National Historical Park - Established in 1992. Established to commemorate the rich history of copper mining on the Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan - the only place in the world where commercially abundant quantities of elemental copper occurred. It has the oldest metal mining heritage in the western hemisphere - one which dates back 7,000 years.

North Country National Scenic Trail - Links scenic, natural, historic, and cultural areas in seven northern states. The approximately four thousand mile long trail includes a variety of hikes from easy walking to challenging treks. When completed the trail will become the longest continuous hiking trail in the United States.

Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore - Authorized in 1966. Multicolored sandstone cliffs, beaches, sand dunes, waterfalls, inland lakes, wildlife and the forest of the Lake Superior shore-



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line beckon visitors to explore this 73,000+ acre park. Attractions include a lighthouse and former Coast Guard life-saving stations along with old farmsteads and former logging trails. This was the first National Lakeshore.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore - Authorized in 1970. Encompasses a 60 km (35 mi.) stretch of Lake Michigan's eastern coastline, as well as North and South Manitou Islands. The park was established primarily for its outstanding natural features, including forests, beaches, dune formations, and ancient glacial phenomena. The Lakeshore also contains many cultural features including a 1871 lighthouse, three former Life-Saving Service/Coast Guard Stations and an extensive rural historic farm district.

Key Issues Facing National Parks in Michigan

Taking care of America's national parks should be a national priority. With the 100th birthday of the National Park System approaching in 2016, it is more important than ever to address the ongoing problems that our parks are facing. The National Park Service is suffering from an operations funding shortfall now exceeding \$800 million annually. In addition, several billion dollars are needed to protect archaeological sites and historic buildings, and repair the extensive backlog of maintenance projects. Many park friends in Congress have spent years highlighting the fiscal crisis in America's national parks. The Administration has responded with a budget request for 2008 that would increase the National Park Service operating budget by \$258 million -- a strong step in restoring our parks and improving the experiences of visitors. This budget also launches the National Park Centennial Challenge, which if properly framed and enacted could help restore the parks for their 100th birthday and for generations to come. In addition to the operational shortfall, the National Park Service has a \$1.9 billion land acquisition backlog consisting of over 11,000 tracts of land and covering more than 1.8 million acres. In many instances, failure to acquire these lands makes operating the parks more complex and costly. Unfortunately, funding for national park federal land acquisition has declined dramatically in recent years, from \$130 million five years ago, to only \$23 million in the FY2008 request.

- In the 2003-2005 period, the moose population of Isle Royale was cut in half due to a plague of ticks and two consecutive hard winters. During that same period, the wolf population, the only predator of moose on the island, nearly doubled. The downward trend of the moose population is likely to continue until wolf numbers decline.
- At Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, several large infestations of invasive non-native plants are spreading and altering native plant communities. It is an ongoing struggle to remove these plants that threaten rare and endangered native plant species.
- The Strategic Plan Report at Keweenaw National Historical Park sets out long term goals to be accomplished by late 2008. These goals include having 1 out of 10 historic structures in good condition, with the rest merely inventoried, not up to standards, by the end of the given time-frame.
- At Sleeping Bear Dunes, an increasing number of driving off-road incidents have been detected and documented. However, few of these are solved. There has also been an increase in natural resources violations.

Park Visitation in Michigan

In fiscal year 2005, the national parks in Michigan welcomed 1,229,783 visitors.

Budget Information

In fiscal year 2006, the operations funding for the six national parks in Michigan was \$10.5 million. For fiscal year 2008, the Administration is proposing a 14.4 percent increase, which would bring operations funding to \$12 million.

Contact Information

For more information on the national parks in Michigan, please contact NPCA Legislative Director Blake Selzer at 202-223-6722, ext. 250.



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