



Apostle Islands National Lakeshore © NPS

FACT SHEET

National Parks in Wisconsin

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore • Ice Age National Scenic Trail • North Country National Scenic Trail • Saint Croix National Scenic River

Wisconsin's national parks have something for everyone. There is hiking along the North Country Trail, kayaking along the Saint Croix Riverway, camping on the Apostle Islands, and much more waiting to be discovered.

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore - The ancestral home of the Ojibwe people offers wild landscapes in the greatest of lakes and the nation's finest collection of historic lighthouses. It is a paradise for campers, boaters, and kayakers.

Ice Age National Scenic Trail - A mere 15,000 years ago, two-thirds of what is today Wisconsin lay under the grip of colossal ice sheets. The climate warmed and the ice began to melt back. In its wake, the ice left an impressive glacial landscape of fascinating landforms - moraines, drumlins, kames, kettles, eskers, outwash plains, erratics, meltwater channels, potholes, driftless (unglaciated) topography, glacial lake beds and islands, and more. The Ice Age National Scenic Trail helps preserve this scenic beauty and provides a way to explore and appreciate this landscape, from expansive moraines to delicate marsh marigolds.

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.

Saint Croix National Scenic River - Calm waters surrounded by shades of green, the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway provides 252 miles of recreational opportunities. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 created a narrow corridor of protection for the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers. This corridor provides scenic views and a haven for wildlife.

Key Issues Facing National Parks in Wisconsin

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



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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 fiscal year 2008 request.

- Apostle Islands National Lakeshore is implementing new recreational user fees to help fund its maintenance backlog and to begin much needed repairs of campsites and campgrounds, the Oak Island access trail, and the historic Hokenson dock.
- At St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, the National Park Service and local organizations are attempting to restore the region's natural habitat. Human activities such as farming, logging, and fire suppression have led to exotic

plants overtaking natural vegetation. The process to reverse this cycle will take several years of initial research, which can only be maintained if funding is available.

- Fifteen highways that cross the Ice Age Trail will be upgraded by the year 2020. These upgrades will likely result in more high-speed traffic at trail crossings and at many of these sites no bridge or underpass yet exists to allow visitors to continue along the trail.

Park Visitation in Wisconsin

In fiscal year 2005, the national parks in Wisconsin welcomed 720,349 visitors.

Budget Information

In fiscal year 2006, the operations funding for the four national parks in Wisconsin was \$6 million. For fiscal year 2008, the Administration is proposing a 20.9 percent increase, which would bring operations funding to \$7.2 million.

Contact Information

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

NPS Unit	FY03 En-acted	FY04 Enacted	FY05 Enacted	FY06 Enacted	FY07 Estimate	FY08 Re-quested	Change FY06-FY08	% Change FY06-FY08
Apostle Islands	2,444	2,435	2,501	2,561	2,617	3,257	696	27.2
Saint Croix NSR & Lower Saint Croix NSR	2,979	2,920	3,334	3,399	3,464	3,951	552	16.2
All Wisconsin Parks				5,960		7,208	1,248	20.9

All dollar amounts in thousands

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