

BRIEFING PAPER  
on the  
RESOURCE PRESERVATION AREAS

SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE

January 1980

## THE PLAN

The General Management Plan for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore calls for the preservation of three principle environmental areas in the Glen Lake area. These three areas lie generally in the scenic corridor portion of the National Lakeshore authorized by congress in 1970 and include Miller Hill, the Bow Lakes Valley, the bog and the deep glacial kettle north of M-72.

The legislation authorizing the scenic corridor also authorized a scenic road to connect these natural areas and scenic views.

During the lengthy public review process of formulating a General Management Plan for the National Lakeshore, the National Park Service considered numerous alternatives for development. One alternative proposed the elimination of the scenic road proposal. Many local property owners, summer resort residents and local governments also requested that the concept of a road corridor encircling Glen Lake, be deleted. Numerous concerns were cited among which was a fear this encirclement would permit the National Park Service to acquire property between the road corridor and the shore of Glen Lake.

The public involvement process also highlighted a public

demand to preserve the significant natural history features found in the scenic corridor.

In formulating the General Management Plan, all of these requests were carefully considered. The key examples of glacial land formation, significant botanical features and the most outstanding viewing areas along the scenic corridor, were retained. All other portions of the corridor were deleted. The boundaries around the three natural areas left were trimmed in the final plan so that residences and developed areas were not included. Only the minimum amount of land needed to insure protection of these natural features, was retained.

The Draft General Management Plan, with these modifications, received wide support in the public review process. That plan is now approved and the National Park Service is moving ahead to protect these resource preservation areas by the best means possible. This protection will require legislative action in order to insure long-range preservation of the resource and public access. Access will be limited to environmental education, nature interpretation and scientific research groups that will be closely controlled.

#### REDUCTION IN PARK ACREAGE

In deleting portions of the existing scenic corridor which do not provide the environmental education values or scenic vista opportunities of the retained resource preservation

areas, the General Management Plan reduces the overall size of the National Lakeshore by 1344 acres. The Miller Hill portion will contain 900 acres. The Bow Lakes and bog will contain 975 acres. The Glacial Kettle will contain 240 acres. In planning for the deletion of the corridor, the boundaries of these resource preservation areas were drawn to insure continued isolation and high visual quality. This meant squaring out the properties to provide for parking and trails and to insure the slopes surrounding these areas remain undeveloped. Following are figures showing acreages in the final plan.

|                                               |                    |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Authorized scenic corridor (1970 legislation) | 3459 acres         |
| Deleted by the General<br>Management Plan     | -2369              |
| Added by the General<br>Management Plan       | +1025              |
| Net reduction in area                         | <u>-1344</u> acres |
| Total resource preservation (new legislation) | 2115 acres         |

#### QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE PRESERVATION AREAS

The natural features in the preservation areas have long been recognized as special examples of the glaciation and resulting land forms and vegetation of this region. Statements of eminent natural scientists support this contention:

Dr. William Farrand, Geologist from the University of Michigan states that these environmental areas "...are eminently worthy of preservation as examples of land forms

produced by glaciation. All of them are of such a size and scale that they can be readily comprehended by park visitors, and they would constitute educationally valuable adjuncts to other glacial features already found in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore property."

Dr. Richard Pippen of the Biology Department of Western Michigan University states "...the acquisition of these areas to the park would provide unique natural areas for preservation of typical northern vegetation and unique geologic features and also provide worthy additions to the educational value of the park through the development of nature study and interpretive trails through these areas."

Dr. Donald Tilton, Matthaei, Botanical Gardens, University of Michigan, a noted wetlands specialist, refers to the Bow Lakes Valley, "...moreover, the interpretive value of the aquatic sites would be one of the few opportunities in Michigan where the public could be educated about wetland ecology."

Paul Thompson, Research Associate in Ecology, Cranbrook Institute of Science, says of these natural areas, "... (they) possess several unique glacial geological features found nowhere else in the park and are very rare in any area. These include a deep narrow glacial outwash valley two miles in length; a giant kettle; a very deep, steep-sided ice block valley with a wide variety of wetland areas and an extremely rugged complex of kames and kettles. Nowhere else in the park is there a vantage ridge that offers the quality and quantity of outstanding scenic vistas

As Miller Ridge. These overlooks and the above mentioned natural features are very valuable interpretive facilities that cannot be duplicated elsewhere."

Dr. Warren H. Wagner, Department of Botany, University of Michigan, gives this consideration of these natural history areas, "...each of the sites has its own special features. It is my understanding that none of them has its match within the present boundaries of the park, so that each of them stands to augment what is presently held and expand the offerings."

Because of their outstanding natural quality, they are supported for inclusion and protection in the Lakeshore by natural scientists as well as local environmentalists. These small areas are significant in representing so well, the remarkable glaciation of this region.

#### PUBLIC ACCESS

It is the intent of the National Park Service to provide public access to these resource preservation areas for the purpose of environmental education and appreciation of nature. There is a need to protect these areas from over-use and it is anticipated that visitation will be in small groups, such as, school classes; scientific study groups; or interpretive tours, all lead by knowledgeable guides.

#### LAND ACQUISITION

The method by which land acquisition will be accomplished

in the protection of these areas, is of special importance and has been a concern to many. This issue was resolved by public input into the General Management Plan. The National Park Service recognizes that several landowners in the resource preservation areas, have expressed a desire to sell their land to the government to insure preservation of these special natural resources. Several others have expressed a desire to continue to own the land and to keep it in a natural state. In the first case, the National Park Service would be a willing buyer for any willing seller. In the second case, the National Park Service would not propose acquiring land from owners who wanted to continue to own the land and protect the natural features and scenic views and provide for public access. If the natural features or the view should be threatened by development, the National Park Service would purchase the land through condemnation. Condemnation would be necessary only if the natural values or public access were threatened.

#### SUMMARY

The issue of protection for the resource preservation areas that are located generally on the scenic corridor, must be resolved before the General Management Plan for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore can be fully implemented. The plan is clear in calling for amended legislation which would permit the deletion of sections

of the corridor which did not provide environmental education opportunities or scenic vista values and the retention of those sections that do provide for those opportunities and values. The plan also recognizes the need for the amended legislation to include authority for the National Park Service to add new acreage to the resource preservation areas in order to make them viable management units.

The General Management Plan, in draft form, was subjected to wide public review in August 1979. The result of this review was strong support for the plan, including the resource preservation areas. Now that the plan has been approved, there appears to be some local organized opposition to the retention of these resource preservation areas and their new additions in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. In evaluating the validity of this opposition, it will be necessary to recall the following points:

- ☐ The scenic corridor is a part of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore authorized in 1970.
- ☐ Amended legislation will be necessary to delete the scenic corridor and provide protection for special natural features and views found along the corridor.
- ☐ The natural features formerly protected by the scenic corridor have been blocked out in 3 units called resource preservation areas.



- ☐ The protection of the resource preservation areas is part of the approved General Management Plan which was conceived and developed with full public involvement.
- ☐ Land acquisition would be on a willing seller/willing buyer basis with condemnation being used only when resources were threatened by development.
- ☐ No residences would be acquired.
- ☐ Access across privately owned land would be by easement or special agreement with the owner.
- ☐ The deletion of the scenic corridor and the creation of the resource preservation areas results in a net loss to the presently authorized National Lakeshore of 1344 acres.

### Conclusions

The above areas possess several unique glacial geological features found not only no where in the park but are very rare in any area. These include a deep, narrow glacial outwash valley two miles in length; a giant kettle; a very deep, steep-sided ice-block valley with a wide variety of wetland areas and an extremely rugged complex of kames and kettles. No where else in the park is there a vantage ridge that offers the quality and quantity of outstanding scenic vistas as Miller Ridge. These overlooks and the above mentioned natural features are very valuable interpretive facilities that can not be duplicated elsewhere. It is clear from the bill establishing Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore that Congress intended that these unusual areas be acquired and preserved for the use of the public.

Some of these features would be of significant value for research studies. The Bow Lake sector, because of its wilderness qualities, would serve as a distinctive wildlife preserve for both plants and animals. Actually, the important values of the above areas can not be fully realized until a more complete biological study is made.

Failure to acquire privately-owned areas along Miller Ridge may result in the development of subdivisions along the bluffs that could change the scenic character of these areas that would be viewed from many points within the park. Private overlooks would be an attraction to the public and might lead to trespass problems. The logical answer appears to be the acquisition of these unique natural and ecological features so that they can be protected and preserved;- otherwise they may be destroyed!

*Paul W. Thompson*

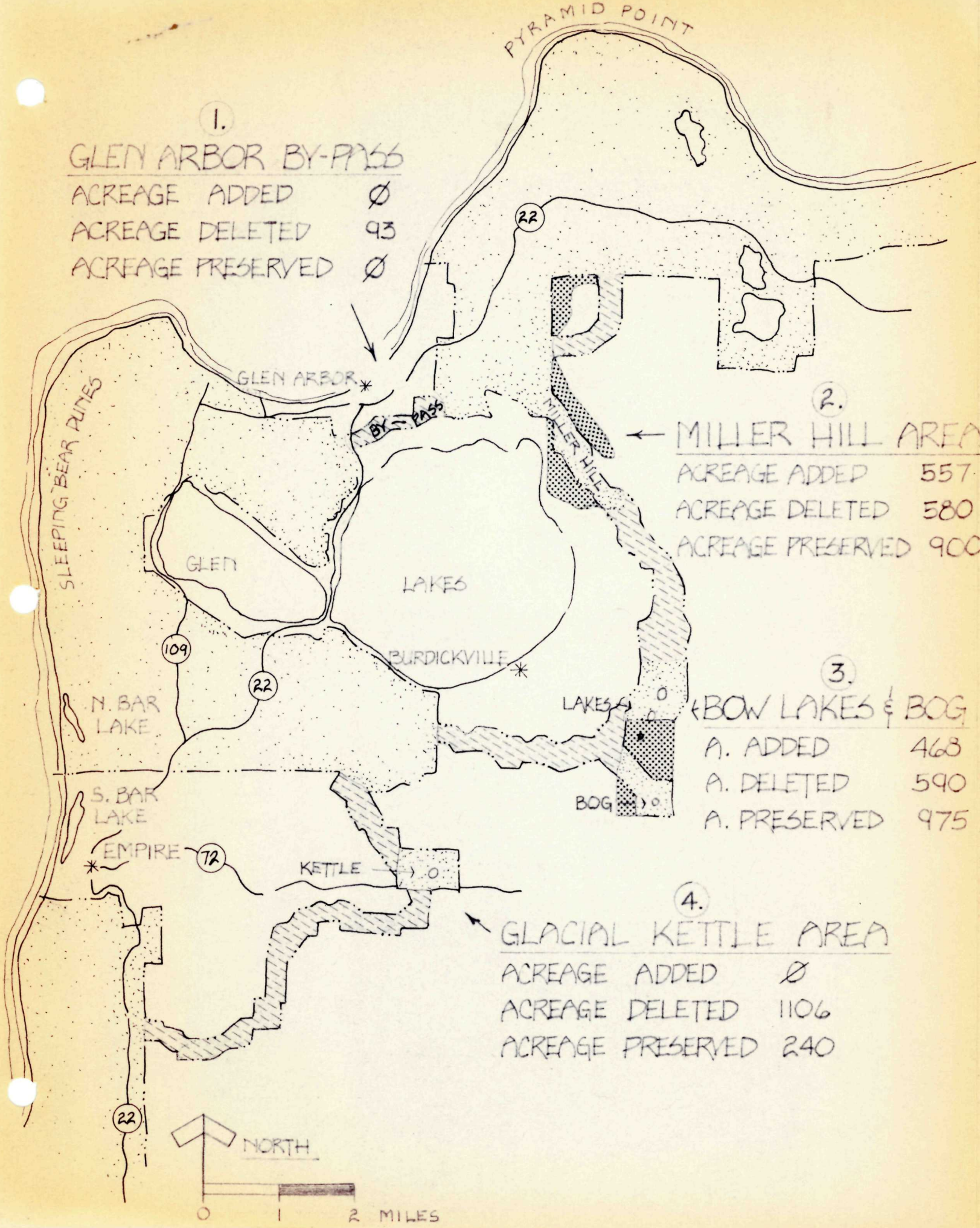
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1. GLEN ARBOR BY-PASS

ACREAGE ADDED 0  
ACREAGE DELETED 93  
ACREAGE PRESERVED 0



2. MILLER HILL AREA

ACREAGE ADDED 557  
ACREAGE DELETED 580  
ACREAGE PRESERVED 900

3. BOW LAKES & BOG

A. ADDED 468  
A. DELETED 590  
A. PRESERVED 975

4. GLACIAL KETTLE AREA

ACREAGE ADDED 0  
ACREAGE DELETED 1106  
ACREAGE PRESERVED 240

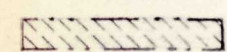
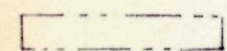
CONCERNED AREA ACREAGE

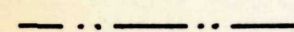
ORIGINAL AUTHORIZATION + 3459  
TOTAL ACREAGE OF THE FOUR AREAS

ACREAGE ADDED + 1025  
ACREAGE DELETED - 2369  
NET ACREAGE FOR LAKE SHORE - 1344

PROPOSED AUTHORIZATION + 2115  
TOTAL ACREAGE OF THE FOUR AREAS

LEGEND

 ACREAGE ADDED  
 ACREAGE DELETED  
 ACREAGE PRESERVED

 ORIGINALLY AUTHORIZED LAKE SHORE BOUNDARY