

A black and white photograph of a forested landscape. The background is filled with a dense forest of tall, dark evergreen trees. In the foreground, there is a rocky, uneven terrain with some low-lying vegetation and patches of light-colored ground. The overall tone is somber and naturalistic.

Development Concept Plan

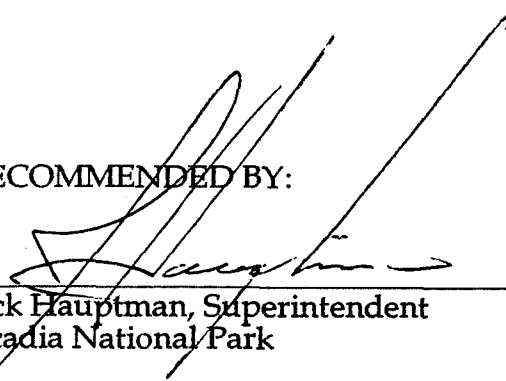
**Isle Au Haut
Acadia National Park
August 1990**

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN

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Acadia National Park

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RECOMMENDED BY:

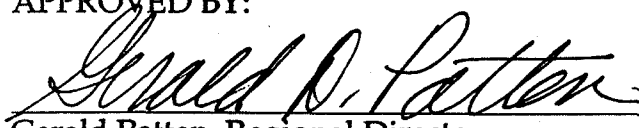


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APPROVED BY:



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SUMMARY

The Development Concept Plan for the Isle au Haut portion of Acadia National Park in Isle au Haut, Maine, represents the culmination of a planning effort which began in 1985. During the process, the need for park housing, a ranger office, and a maintenance facility was defined. Then, several locations for siting the necessary facilities were evaluated. Considerations included operational efficiency, cooperation with the community, effects on the visitor experience and resource impacts.

Four alternatives were developed and evaluated for the site in the Draft Development Concept Plan / Environmental Assessment of June 1989. The alternatives were titled: I - "Minimum Requirements", II - "Concentrate Services at Duck Harbor", III - "Services on Northern Strip", and IV - "Primitive Facility for Seasonal Use". This plan defines the chosen development concept alternative which meets park needs, management objectives and NPS policy.

Based on current park policies and management needs and input from the public, the plan is to undertake Alternative IV: Primitive Facility for Seasonal Use; this entails construction of new housing and operations facilities near the town and the campground. Two new housing units, a ranger office and maintenance facilities would be constructed on the strip of park land at the northern boundary. Additionally, one primitive shelter for seasonal staff would be built closer to the area of most intensive use by day visitors and overnight campers, Shark Point.

The selected alternative differs minimally from the Alternative III concept which was the preferred alternative in the draft plan; Alternative III instructed that all three new housing units as well as the ranger office and maintenance facilities would be constructed on the northern boundary site. In Alternative II construction of similar facilities was to occur near the campground in Duck Harbor; a primitive housing facility as envisioned in Alternative IV would be less intrusive on the campground and dock area than a permanent dwelling structure. There would be no replacement of deteriorated facilities under Alternative I.

The actions proposed serve the needs of park visitors and staff, and are consistent with Town of Isle au Haut desires. Continuing to locate operational facilities in the Town will enable park staff to maintain contact with the community; this is supported by both parties. Park staff will be accessible near both the town and park docks, the access points to the park. In-town facilities will be particularly useful when the boat does not go to the park dock due to the seasonal schedule or bad weather. Locating a staff residence near the campground and park dock will facilitate interpretation and emergency response activities there.

ISLE AU HAUT DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT PLAN
July 1990

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I. INTRODUCTION

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

This document presents the development concept plan for the Isle au Haut portion of Acadia National Park. A development concept plan builds on the management and development decisions made in the Assessment of Management Alternatives, and specifies the concepts which direct the siting and design of facilities in comprehensive design drawings.

The management objectives on which the plan is based were established in the general management planning process and in park legislation are:

1. To preserve the natural remote island environment of the Isle au Haut portion of Acadia National Park.
2. To provide the park visitor with a high quality experience of this remote island environment.
3. To minimize or eliminate those adverse impacts that park visitation has on park resources and the local community.
4. To cooperate with the Town of Isle au Haut in its efforts to maintain the character and viability of the local island community.

The legislation specifically states the mandate that "to the maximum extent practicable, no development or plan for the convenience of park visitors shall be undertaken which would be incompatible with the preservation of the flora, fauna, or the physiographic conditions now prevailing...".

This plan defines the chosen development concept alternative which meets park needs, management objectives and NPS policy. It also carries the support of the surrounding community.

BACKGROUND

Isle au Haut is situated 15 miles southwest of Mount Desert Island (see Figure 1). The island is approximately six miles long and three miles wide, with its long axis trending in an almost due north-south direction. It encompasses nearly 6,700 acres and is surrounded by numerous small islands, particularly around its northern shoreline. A median ridge runs most of the length of the island's long axis, with the highest point being the summit of Mt. Champlain, 543 feet above sea level. The NPS manages some 3,241 acres of the island comprises the Isle au Haut unit of Acadia National Park. Most of the park land is located on the southern half of the island.

About 55 individuals presently reside on Isle au Haut on a year round basis. During the summer, approximately 300 summer residents spend part or all of the season on the island. Visitation to the Isle au Haut unit of Acadia NP occurs from May through October, with the greatest visitation occurring during July and August.

The only access to Isle au Haut is by boat. Public transportation to the island is provided by mail boat from Stonington -- a fishing port located six miles northwest of Isle au Haut on the southern end of Deer Isle, some 36 miles south of Ellsworth. The island terminus of the mail boat is the Village of Isle au Haut, the most concentrated residential area on the island. In addition, during the summer months the boat takes passengers to Duck Harbor which is located on the western shore of the island within the Park. Service to Duck Harbor is available twice daily from mid-June to mid-September, except when bad weather forces cancellation of any trip.

Visitors to the island arrive either at the town dock in the Village of Isle au Haut or on the south shore of Duck Harbor. The park campground is immediately adjacent to the Duck Harbor dock facility. When the boat does not run to Duck Harbor, it leaves visitors at the town landing, and overnight visitors must be prepared to hike

four and one-half miles from the town landing to Duck Harbor Campground. During the summer, park staff attempt to monitor each mailboat arrival at the town dock and to explain to each park visitor how to reach the park and the campground. Also, a park ranger boards the mail boat at the town landing for the run to Duck Harbor in order to answer questions and advise visitors about the remote island experience on Isle au Haut.

Guided interpretive hikes are offered by the park staff member who accompanies the noon Duck Harbor arrival. Visitors are provided with an orientation brochure describing park trails and other places of interest. Information is also available to the public at the ranger station, located in the village proper.

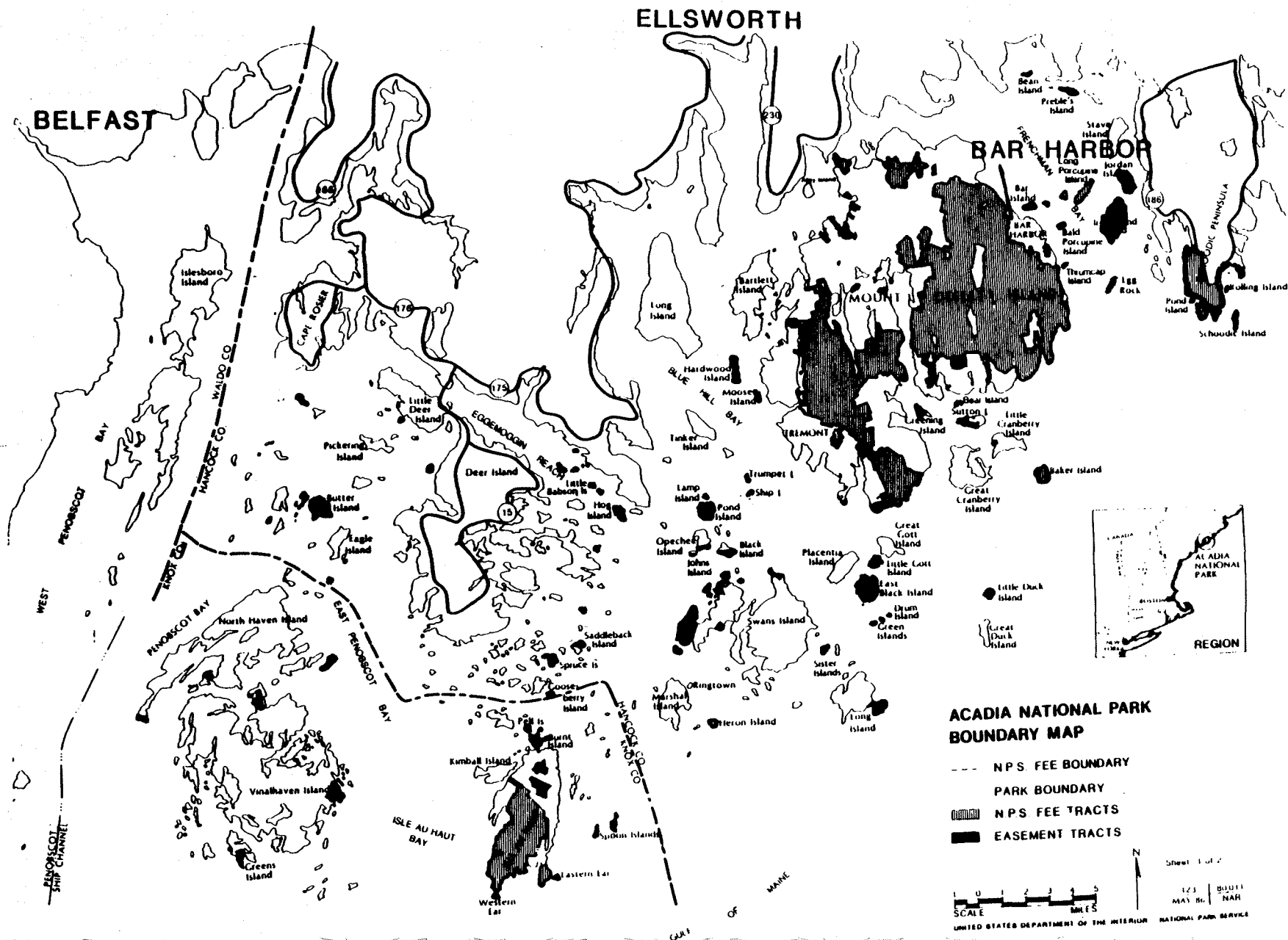
Day use is limited at the Isle au Haut portion of the Park with a fifty person limit per day in effect since 1983. Twenty-five day use visitors are allowed during the spring and fall. The limitation on access is designed to maintain a sense of a remoteness to protect natural resources, and to reduce interaction of park visitors with the local community.

The remote camping experience on Isle au Haut is highly valued since this type of experience is scarce in the northeastern region of the country. Compatible development as determined by the Assessment of Alternatives (1977) includes five campsites with shelter. Each shelter accommodates a maximum of 6 overnight visitors, for a total of thirty campers, although this limit is rarely met. Overnight camping is handled on a reservation basis from Park Headquarters on Mount Desert Island.

PLANNING HISTORY

Land on Isle au Haut was first donated to Acadia National Park in 1943, but little was done by the National Park Service in the way of specific planning for Isle au Haut until a proposed master plan for Acadia was made available in 1972. The plan recommended an exchange of Park lands for private lands in order to consolidate Park acreage on Isle au Haut and to release non-contiguous Park land for private use.

Figure 1: LOCATOR MAP



An Assessment of Management Alternatives for the Isle au Haut unit was prepared by the North Atlantic Regional Office in 1977, which addressed options for boundary adjustments and day vs. overnight uses. Three public meetings on the assessment were conducted during August 1977.

After careful consideration, the Park Service in 1980 finalized a decision document and an environmental review/negative declaration based on a combination of day and overnight use with Park holdings consolidated in the southern half of the island.

Legislation to implement this strategy was enacted on October 15, 1982. This legislation, Public Law 97-335:

1. Established a permanent boundary for the Park on Isle au Haut including appropriate acquisition authority.
2. Required the Secretary of the Interior to establish visitor use limits to assure negligible adverse resource impacts.

The legislation also included the mandate to manage this portion of Acadia for limited entry, low intensity use.

The establishment of a new permanent boundary delineated the area within which future fee acquisitions would be confined (see Figure 2). Because of aesthetic considerations regarding some of the lands proposed for exchange with the Town of Isle au Haut, restrictions precluding development were placed on deletion tracts with acreage above 300 feet in elevation. Conservation easements on lands outside the boundary were authorized to be held by an Isle au Haut Land Conservation Trust (not yet established) with the Park Service as a co-member of the land trust.

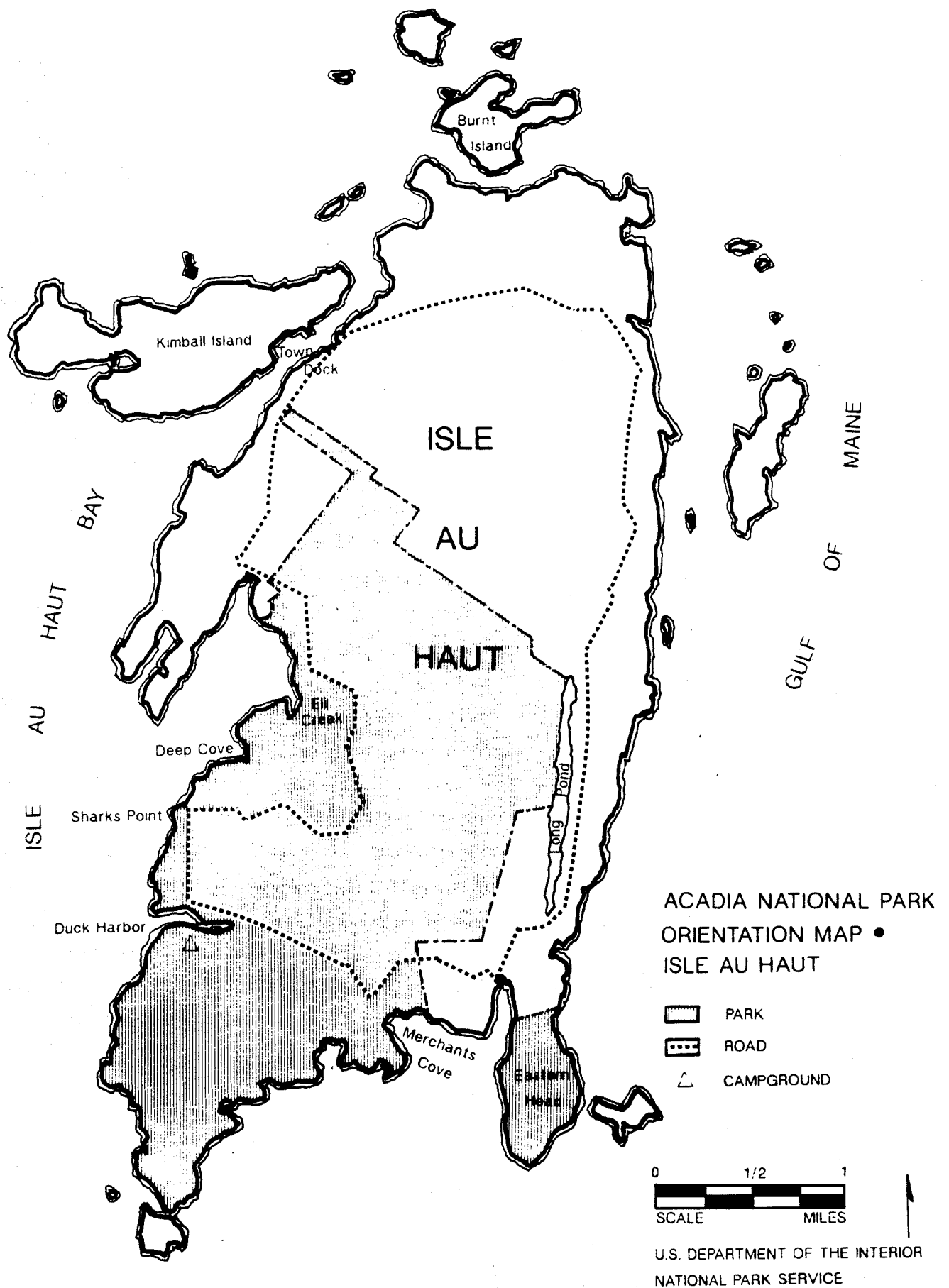


Figure 2: ORIENTATION MAP - ISLE AU HAUT

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN - NEED FOR ACTION

In keeping with the general atmosphere of the entire island -- one of remoteness and scattered residences -- the Isle au Haut unit of Acadia National Park is to be left in a generally undeveloped state. This management objective is supported in the 1977 Assessment of Alternatives and in the boundary legislation of 1982. Park development is restricted to the maintenance of the perimeter road, a boat dock at Duck Harbor, a park operations area, ranger housing, the system of trails within the Park boundaries, and limited camping facilities.

As a result of the 1982 boundary legislation, the Park housing and maintenance site and a small portion of the trail system were on town property and needed to be relocated. The structures were moved to the new site in the fall of 1989.

Continued presence of park staff on Isle au Haut is necessary for proper site management and fire prevention and protection. A ranger station and seasonal employee quarters are necessary for the management of Park functions.

Two travel trailers had been serving as seasonal housing which severely restricted hiring options. In November 1987 the trailers were destroyed by fire further complicating and restricting housing for Park employees.

The office and storage space, and maintenance and storage facilities are deteriorating and inadequate; this curtails the efficiency of park operations. A small plywood storage building which contains paint and flammables should be removed due to carpenter ant and weather damage.

Currently, maintenance of trucks and fire suppression equipment occurs out of doors. An enclosed garage would permit staff to conduct these projects during inclement weather when they are unable to perform other outdoor work. The structure could also house vehicles and equipment now being stored outdoors.

Problems have arisen with deterioration of the park dock facility, and the park roads and trails. Some of these issues were addressed while preparing this development concept plan. Problems, present conditions, and solutions are presented to thoroughly update the physical planning needs and actions.

A significant safety hazard and ongoing maintenance problem posed by the floating dock system at Duck Harbor was corrected. It was replaced with a safer, more cost-effective dock designed to fit into the surrounding environment.

The one gravel road which traverses the Park deteriorated to the point that it was barely passable with a four-wheel drive vehicle. It was rehabilitated to permit passage; improvements were made to the road surface and drainage ditches.

A trail study conducted by the Appalachian Mountain Club for NPS highlighted a number of problems which currently exist. Trail work will be undertaken as funding permits to improve trail markings, trail erosion, and reroute sections of trails to take advantage of views which are potentially available.

Installation of a radio phone for emergency preparedness and siting concerns at the Duck Harbor Campground was assessed and rejected.

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

HOUSING AND OPERATIONS FACILITIES

As a result of the 1982 boundary legislation, park facilities were located on land now owned by the Town. At the present time park service facilities have been moved to temporary locations at the northern park boundary. A fire cache, a small wooden storage structure, an office, a chemical toilet and a bulletin board for visitor information are located here. Two travel trailers were located similarly, but were lost due to fire damage and removed. A small primitive cabin is available for park staff use at Eli Creek.

Several issues were addressed regarding employee housing, ranger office and maintenance facilities. The appropriate type of facilities and replacement buildings were assessed. The siting of these facilities was an important consideration as it effects safety, accessibility, and the visitor experience on the island.

Due to the destruction of the two trailers by fire, there are now no housing facilities available for the three seasonal staff. The loss of the travel trailers limits ability to staff the site, and to hire personnel. Fortunately some staff are local residents, but this situation can not be counted on into the future.

The siting and aesthetics of replacement housing facilities need to be carefully designed. The use of trailers for park housing is not compatible as an introduction to the relatively pristine environment that is to be experienced. In addition, long term use of trailers for housing is incompatible with National Park Service housing policy.

The ranger office facility is a 12' x 12' shed constructed with rough cut lumber. The building is infested with carpenter ants. The size of this office is totally inadequate. Although minimal information dissemination and other office functions can be

accomplished in the structure, other services such as provisions for emergency medical treatment or interpretive information are not possible. One-third of the available floor space is assigned to radio and water system equipment which further restricts use of the facility. The structure would be more appropriately used for storage of equipment and supplies.

There is a need for additional storage space for equipment. Presently larger equipment must be stored outdoors under tarps. A small plywood storage building which contains paint and flammables is deteriorating, due in part to carpenter ants, and should be removed. There is a relatively new 12' x 12' fire cache structure constructed of rough cut lumber. It contains the park's fire fighting equipment and various tools.

Maintenance activities are very constricted. The fire cache structure does not provide needed work space. Maintenance of larger equipment and trucks must be performed outdoors and cannot be done during inclement weather; this is inefficient because weather limitations decrease visitor demands and ability to do trail work which frees up time for equipment maintenance. An enclosed garage / work space is needed.

IV. THE PLAN

An NPS presence on the island is necessary to provide minimal but essential resource management and visitor services, such as resource and fire protection, campground management, visitor orientation and interpretation, law enforcement, and emergency medical services. Costs for present operations and staffing are minimal. This plan proposes no increased services, and no significant increase in operation and maintenance costs are anticipated. Staff increases would not be necessary. The provision of residences for rangers and interpreters on site would improve efficiency of the operations and maintenance.

Primary housing and administrative facilities will be located at the northern boundary. New housing, ranger office and maintenance facilities would be constructed. A primitive facility will be maintained for housing one NPS staff at Shark Point. This is closer to the area of most intensive use by day visitors and overnight campers, and will provide for increased supervision, emergency and fire safety needs. Visitor information and emergency services will be available near both the town and park docks.

The Shark Point site is approximately 1 mile from the campground at Duck Harbor, therefore, park staff presence should not impact the back country camping experiences of overnight visitors. Increased supervision of the campground during periods of peak visitation and/or peak fire danger would be facilitated, improving response time in the case of fire or emergency. Presently, campers must walk the four and half miles to the northern park boundary to contact park staff in the event of an emergency.

The northern park boundary site has road frontage and access to electric lines (see Figures 3 and 4), which will be more economical for construction of primary facilities. The primitive shelter will require minimal disturbance for construction, but will allow for essential fire, medical and law enforcement purposes.



Figure 3 : NORTHERN BOUNDARY SITE CHARACTERISTICS



Figure 4 : FRONTAGE OF NORTHERN BOUNDARY SITE

Continuing to locate operational facilities in the town will enable park staff to maintain contact with the community and provide informal orientation for park visitors. This position is supported by the local community; the Town is interested in maintaining access to and communication with park staff, as is the National Park Service.

Currently, there is neither employee housing, nor adequate maintenance facilities on the island. In developing priorities for implementation, the housing and operations facilities should be developed concurrently. The scope of the development is small, and it would be most cost-effective to complete construction concurrently. If this cannot be done, priority should be given to employee housing. In summary, the priorities are: 1) site preparation, 2) employee housing, 3) maintenance/operations, and 4) trail connection.

SITE DESIGN CONCEPTS

Facility construction will include a primitive housing unit at Shark Point and permanent structures at the northern boundary site.

Primitive housing at Shark Point

A small, seasonal facility constructed of natural materials with a small attached or detached shed for fire tools is needed. A 20' x 20' log cabin with a chemical toilet would be adequate. A stove, refrigerator and lights could be powered with propane gas.

An open area (possibly a former building site) on the western side of the road has been identified as a potential site for the cabin. This site lies 300 to 500 feet or more from the shoreline. A small cabin could be easily sited so as not to detract from the natural scene.

Facilities at northern boundary site

Preliminary investigations of the new administrative/housing site indicates that approximately 0.8 acre immediately adjacent to the road is buildable. An adjacent wetland area constrains further development. The facilities have been sited close to the town road to reduce construction costs and site disturbances, and so as not to require alteration of the inland wetlands. The concept proposes that much of the vegetation will be retained (and supplemented where necessary) to provide screening of the housing and operations facilities. The following facilities would be constructed on this site:

Housing - A passive solar housing structure will be constructed. Care should be taken to blend this building with the island vernacular - i.e. wooden clapboard or shingle siding with a gable roof. Two two-bedroom apartments would be built; one would be sufficiently large to house a park ranger and family (2 bedrooms with combined living/dining/kitchen area and bathroom).

The residences would be designed to adapt to the size of family or number of staff; that is, the rooms would be configured such that an extra room in one unit could be utilized in the adjacent unit when needed. For example, a system of double doors could be opened to make one apartment into a three bedroom unit and reduce the adjoining unit to one bedroom. This would provide a variety of housing alternatives to accommodate staff changes over time.

An extra room for short-term use by NPS consultants and researchers or maintenance crews would also be needed. This could possibly be accommodated by finishing the second floor of the structure.

Ranger Office Facility - A new office facility would be constructed in conjunction with new ranger housing. The office space would adjoin one of the housing units. Public restrooms would be an integral part of this facility. The combined space requirements are approximately 600 square feet.

Maintenance and Storage Facility - A maintenance and storage facility would be built on this site as well. The character of the structure should be compatible with similar facilities in the Town of Isle au Haut. It would include a 2 bay garage with a concrete floor for vehicle maintenance. The facility would have adequate work space for equipment maintenance and be capable of housing three vehicles. The existing fire cache structure could be utilized for storage.

Trails and road - The relocated trailhead (see Figure 5) would begin at the edge of the wetlands and it would skirt the wetland area to reduce the need for boardwalks to keep maintenance needs low. A new section of the trail, approximately 1/2 mile, must be cleared to connect with the existing trail network. The office and restroom facilities for the park visitors would be located close to the trailhead. An unpaved road of approximately 250 linear feet would provide driveway access to the housing and operations area.

Further site investigation - A survey to establish the legal boundary at the northern edge of this site is required before construction can begin. The soil test map (see Figure 6) indicates the locations where percolation tests for the installation of a septic system and soil borings for foundation footings should be taken. A well would also need to be sited. An archeological survey would need to be undertaken in advance of site construction in consultation with NPS archeologists and the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Figures 5 and 6 are design concept plans for the structures at the northern boundary site and landscape treatments are design concepts proposed for use in preparation of construction drawings.

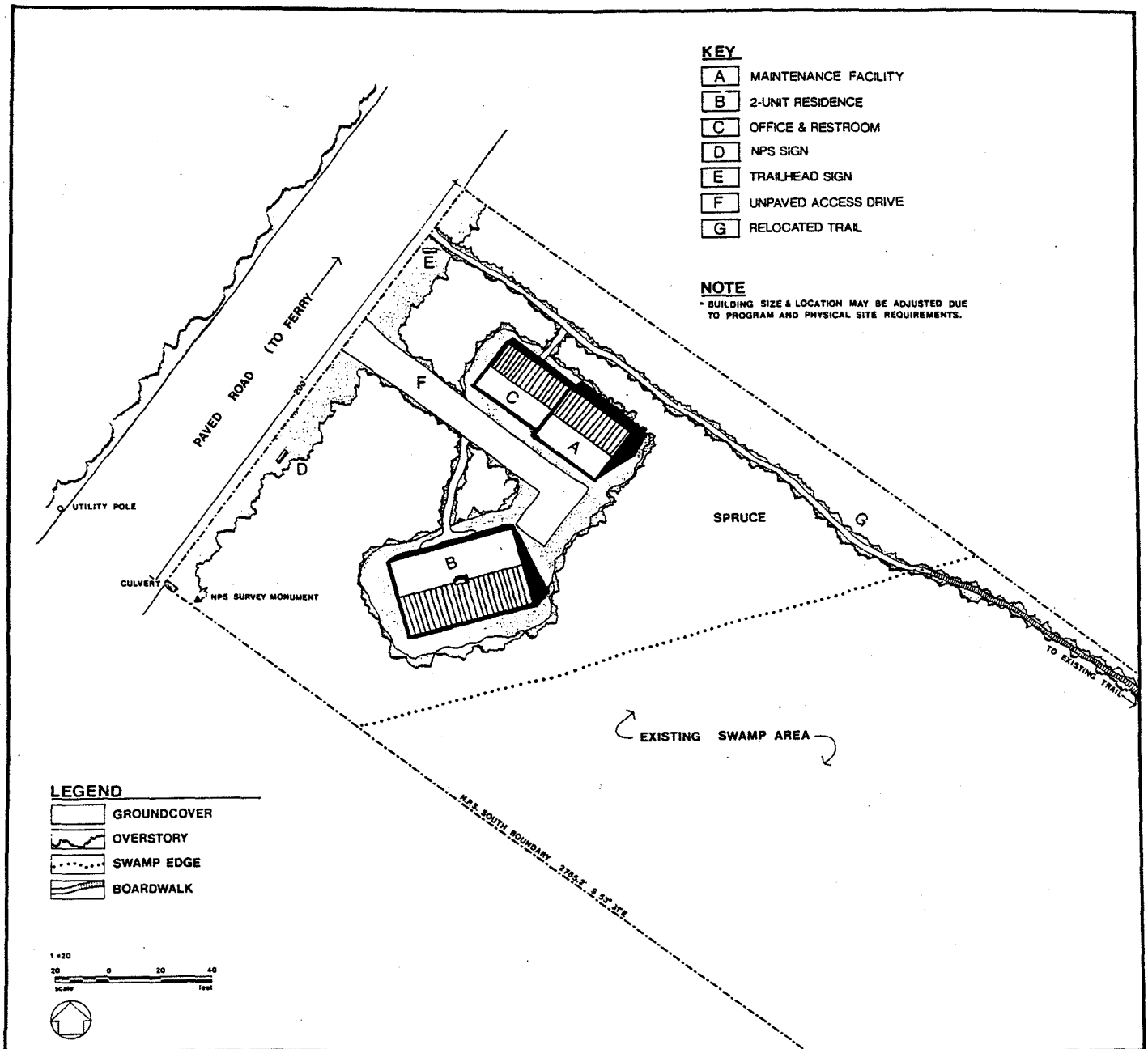


Figure 5: PROPOSED SITE PLAN FOR FACILITIES AT NORTHERN BOUNDARY
 (from NPS Drawing #123/81462, Design Concept Plan)

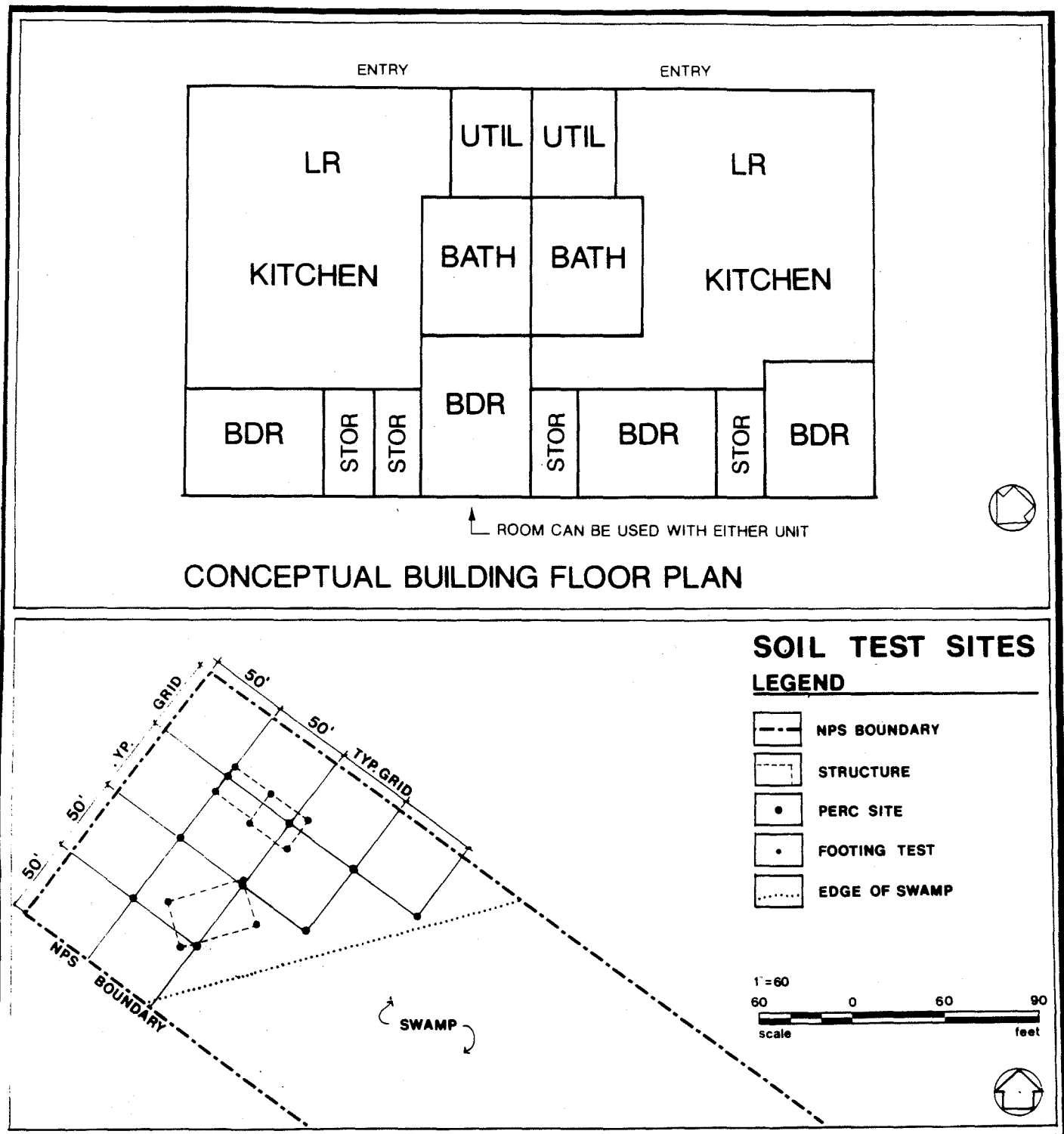


Figure 6: DESIGN CONCEPT PLAN AND SOIL TEST MAP
(from NPS Drawing #123/81462)

V. ASSOCIATED FACILITIES AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

PARK DOCK FACILITY

The former dock used by visitors arriving at Duck Harbor was constructed of eight wooden floating platforms anchored to the shore. In the winter of 1986-1987 a spruce tree fell on the floats as they lay in winter storage, seriously damaging two of the floats, which were already in poor condition. A decision had to be made to rebuild or to construct a new permanent dock.

The options of a replacement temporary dock and a permanent dock were presented and discussed at public meetings held on the island in 1985. It was decided that a permanent docking facility would be constructed at the current dock location on the southern shore of Duck Harbor.

The new dock constructed in the summer of 1988 is supported by cut granite piers with an aluminum ramp down to an anchored floating scow, or dock platform. The dock extends 175' into the cove to allow for tide fluctuation. The floating scow is oriented east-west upcove of the outermost pier to permit docking into the wind and seas for further stability and safety. It allows accessibility via the ramp to the permanent dock.

Relocating the floating dock to Deep Cove was also considered. Deep Cove is located approximately one mile north of the campground, and is presently undeveloped. Using this location would necessitate a one mile hike to the campground. Since any facility located at Deep Cove would be unprotected from prevailing summer west winds, this alternative was not judged to be adequate.

The environmental impacts of the new dock on visitor safety, visual quality and the physical environment were analyzed. It was determined that a permanent dock

would significantly improve visitor safety because of its stability under adverse weather conditions. Problems of visitors negotiating separate floating dock segments were eliminated. The steep incline of the ramp at low tide may still pose difficulties for some visitors.

The permanent dock is a more visible than the previous dock because it is a permanent structure with a higher profile. It blends, however, with the design vernacular of docks along the Maine coast (as shown in Figure 7). The piers were constructed with local granite which is harmonious with the granite coastline.

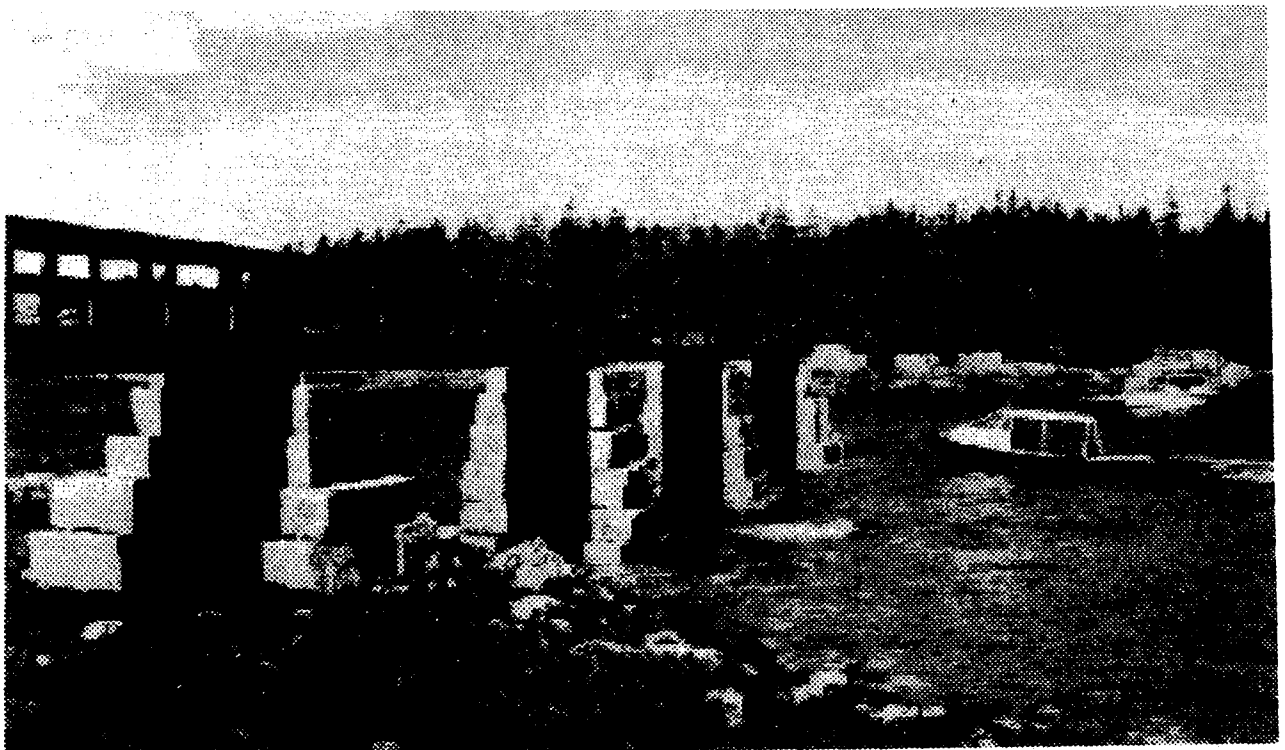


Figure 7: DUCK HARBOR DOCK

ROADWAY

The National Park Service owns the roadway beginning at the northern park boundary on the western shore and roughly paralleling the shore in a southerly and easterly direction to Merchant's Cove. The roadway was until recently marginally passable by 4-wheel drive vehicles, deteriorating with seasonal rains and frost action.

Major problems were caused by lack of effective drainage. The road had lost its crown and surface material in many places. Drainage ditches on the road sides had filled, and some drainage culverts collapsed or deteriorated. Granite ledge was exposed and ruts were plentiful.

Work necessary to keep the roadway passable was beyond the capabilities of park maintenance crews. Corrective actions were made in 1989 due to the availability of emergency funds. New culverts were installed, drainage ditches cleaned, and material regraded to improve the road surface. However, due to very limited services of gravel on the island low standard results will necessitate a cyclic maintenance schedule in order to keep the road passable.

An alternative was considered of closing the road from Moore's Harbor to Duck Harbor, and salvaging materials to rehabilitate the section of the road from Duck Harbor to Merchant's Cove. The roadway provides the only Park access for fire and emergency vehicles. It also serves the local community at Head Harbor if and when the town's portion of the loop road becomes impassable. The maintenance of the entire road was, therefore, decided to be most prudent.

The possibility of utilizing a small rock crusher on site by a two person maintenance crew was also considered and has the potential to alleviate at least some of the problem. Unfortunately costs are prohibitive at this time, although this option should be reconsidered if funding for road maintenance is increased.

TRAILS

Seventeen miles of trails are maintained on the Isle au Haut portion of the Park. Trails follow the coastline, traverse wooded uplands, marshes, bogs and the western shore of Long Pond. The trails on Isle au Haut are generally in good condition due to good location, moderate slopes, and relatively light use. There are some signs of deterioration, however, due to hiker traffic and runoff erosion. Trail relocation and proper maintenance can mitigate this degradation. Trails should be further assessed to address specific needs such as trail marking, erosion control, the quality of the hiking experience, and resource protection. Additionally, monitoring of archeological resources is necessary where shell middens are known or found.

Ongoing trail system improvements should be undertaken to improve the opportunities for visitors to experience the scenic, educational, natural and cultural resources of the island. The Appalachian Mountain Club made the following observations and recommendations for the trail system at the Park's request:

- 1) Drainage and erosion control measures need to be added or improved on a number of trails. A few sections of the trail system are poorly located in wet areas or on steep slopes. In this instance it is more safe and economical in the long run to relocate these trail segments.
- 2) There are three problems with trail marking. First, the trail system should be standardized. Second, the distance between trail markers should be more consistent, and finally, on some trails old and faded markers should be replaced. The present trailhead sign system is appropriate and adequate.
- 3) Other problems noted include the lack of half day loop trails in areas other than the southwestern portion of the island. It has been noted that if other parts of the

trail system were made more available, it is likely that visitor use could be more disbursed. This would reduce the trail wear that is occurring on Western Head and improve the visitors' opportunity for solitude. A combination of managing the vistas from existing trails and creating new connectors and loops would make the whole system more functional and aesthetic.

4) The present trail access from the ranger station should be relocated to connect the Park land at the northern park boundary with the existing parkwide trail network.

A significant outgrowth of AMC involvement has been the organization of a trail improvement demonstration project. In the Summers of 1986 and 1987 groups of 15 volunteers organized by AMC performed trail maintenance for two week periods. During these demonstration projects the volunteers relocated several sections of trail, and brushed and constructed erosion control devices on other trails. It is hoped that these endeavors will continue at least until trails are in manageable condition to be maintained by available Park staff.

CAMPGROUND SITING

The siting of adirondack shelters, the trail, and toilets at the Duck Harbor Campground were also evaluated. Camping facilities can be improved by: 1) establishing a new trail network designed to improve circulation within the campground and to diminish trampling of vegetation; and, 2) moving the composting toilets to the edge of the campground and screening them with vegetation, or turning them on their foundations to reduce their visibility from several of the shelters.

RADIO PHONE INSTALLATION

During the public meetings held on the island, there was a suggestion to install a radio phone at Duck Harbor. An unmanned radio phone installed for emergency use near the existing campground was evaluated.

The research concluded that a solar powered, easy-to-use radio, cased in a weatherproof box, could be installed at Duck Harbor. If needed, repeaters could be set up on one or two of the hills on the island to insure good communication with installations elsewhere on Isle au Haut or on the mainland. Base units could be equipped with alarm systems which would sound when the radio was used, or not working. A system with these features was estimated to cost between \$10,000-15,000.

Installing an unmanned radio phone at Duck Harbor would improve communications at and near the Duck Harbor area. Fire hazards are particularly high in certain areas of the southern portion of the park. A radio phone, well-publicized to all visitors, could greatly reduce response time in the event of a fire or medical emergency. Those campers seeking a true back country experience may find the presence of the radio phone an intrusion on their camping experience. The conditions at Duck Harbor are not significantly different from those at other remote backcountry campgrounds. Regularly scheduled night patrols at present and the planned primitive ranger facility also mitigate the need for a radio phone. For these reasons the radio phone option was not recommended.

VI. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Four issues of the newsletter, "Park Update", were prepared to inform the visitors and residents of Isle au Haut about this planning process. They included the alternative development concepts and information concerning public meetings.

Two public meetings were held on Isle au Haut on July 16 and August 19, 1985 to discuss the planning concerns and alternative solutions. Approximately 70 attendees participated in these meetings. Park resource managers and planners presented initial planning objectives, and received strong support for the retention of the ranger office and staff housing facilities in town.

The draft plan was circulated for a 30 day public review period from June 21 through July 21, 1989. The plan was sent to over 300 people on the mailing list, and a news release was distributed to regional newspapers and radio stations. The availability of the plan for public review was also announced in the Federal Register. The State Historic Preservation Officer was also sent an informational copy.

A public meeting was held in the Town of Isle au Haut on July 19, 1989. The meeting was attended by fourteen permanent and three seasonal residents. Overall, the Plan was well received by the island residents, and the Park was complimented on the road improvement project and efforts to comply with the Legislation. Concerns over the DCP that were raised included: the high cost of development improvements; degree of development proposed for a small building site; and, agreement that a ranger presence is needed near Duck Harbor as well as near town during the visitor use season. In addition, five letters were received during the public review period. The letters addressed various issues, but there was general support for in-town facilities, town-park cooperation, and upkeep of the road, and criticism of project costs.

This final plan will be made available to the public for thirty days. Then, a Record of Decision will be prepared to document the choice of alternative development strategy. A determination of the significance of the proposal on the environment will be made in that document, and a synthesis of public involvement will be attached.

STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Descriptions and maps (documented in the park's resource management plan) of the registered State of Maine Critical Areas were consulted to identify possible impacts. None of the proposed development actions were found to be in proximity to the three Critical Areas on Isle au Haut. Also, except for transient individuals, no known federally or state listed (rare, threatened or endangered) species would be affected by the plan.

Inland wetlands will not be impacted as a result of the plan. The building site would be in close proximity to wetlands, however, Maine Department of Environmental Protection permitting is required only for dredging, draining or filling on or over a freshwater wetland larger than 10 acres.

Development of the facilities at the northern boundary and Shark Point sites will not affect the coastal zone. The areas are inland of the buffer protected by the state coastal zone management program and the town shoreland protection bylaw.

A building permit is generally required for building construction. Prior to construction, application will be made to the Town of Isle au Haut Planning Board to obtain a permit. NPS standards will be met, and plans will be reviewed by the NPS Housing Unit Design Assistance Team.

Cultural and archeological resources may be present at the housing and operations development site, and primitive housing site. The proximity of saltwater and marsh resources for human exploitation makes these areas prime for prehistoric occupation. An archeological survey, and salvage if necessary, would be done in advance of any construction. Duck Harbor development actions are carefully sited to avoid the known prehistoric shell middens in that area.

VII. APPENDICES

A.

LEGISLATION

PUBLIC LAW 97-335—OCT. 15, 1982

96 STAT. 1627

Public Law 97-335
97th Congress

An Act

Relating to the establishment of a permanent boundary for that portion of the Acadia National Park as lies within the town of Isle au Haut, Maine.

Oct. 15, 1982
(S. 1777)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Congress finds that—

Acadia National
Park, Maine,
boundary
establishment.
16 USC 341 note

- (1) there are significant scenic, educational, natural, and cultural resources in the town of Isle au Haut, Maine;
- (2) due to the isolated location and traditional resource-based economy of the town's island community, these resources are fragile and deserving of conservation and protection through both public and private efforts; and
- (3) both residents of the town and visitors to the Acadia National Park will benefit from the establishment of a permanent boundary for the park and the management of parklands on a limited entry, low intensity basis.

SEC. 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the permanent boundary of Acadia National Park lying within the town of Isle au Haut, Maine, is hereby established to include only those lands and interests therein as are depicted on the map entitled "Boundary Map, Acadia National Park, Town of Isle au Haut, Maine", numbered 123-10003 and dated October 1981, which map is on file and available for public inspection in the offices of the Department of the Interior and at the Registry of Deeds for Hancock and Knox Counties, Maine.

Public
inspection
16 USC 341 note

SEC. 3. (a) Within the boundary established by section 2, and as indicated on the map referenced therein, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as "the Secretary") is authorized to acquire lands and interests therein by donation or exchange. The Secretary is authorized and directed to acquire by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange the tract known as the Hamilton lot in Duck Harbor. No later than one hundred and eighty days from enactment hereof, the Secretary shall convey to the town of Isle au Haut all right, title and interest of the United States in and to those lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary which lie outside the boundary established by section 2 and within the town of Isle au Haut, subject only to such covenants running with the land as the Secretary and the town agree are necessary to preserve the general character of such lands, which shall include covenants to maintain forever in their natural condition (excepting the cutting of fire trails and the extinguishment of fires) lands above three hundred feet above the mean high water level: *Provided, however,* That such covenants with respect to lands above three hundred feet and below four hundred feet shall permit the gathering and removal of dead and fallen timber.

Land acquisition.
16 USC 341 note

Land
conveyance

(b) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act, the Secretary is also authorized to accept by donation, as a coholder for enforcement purposes only, a limited enforcement interest in con-

Enforcement.

servation easements on lands outside the boundary established by section 2 hereof and within the town of Isle au Haut which may from time to time be donated to the Isle au Haut Land Conservation Trust, a trust established under the laws of the State of Maine. The Superintendent of Acadia National Park is hereby authorized to serve as an ex officio trustee of such trust.

Parkland
preservation
in USC note

SEC. 4. (a) The management and use of parklands on Isle au Haut shall not interfere with the maintenance of a viable local community with a traditional resource-based economy outside the boundary of the park. To the maximum extent practicable, no development or plan for the convenience of park visitors shall be undertaken which would be incompatible with the preservation of the flora and fauna or the physiographic conditions now prevailing, and every effort shall be exerted to maintain and preserve this portion of the park in as nearly its present state and condition as possible. In recognition of the special fragility and sensitivity of the park's resources, visitation shall be strictly limited to assure negligible adverse impact on such resources, to conserve the character of the town and to protect the quality of the visitor experience.

Report

(b) In furtherance of the purpose of subsection (a) of this section, the Secretary shall prepare a report establishing carrying capacities for the Isle au Haut portion of Acadia National Park. The report shall be prepared and the carrying capacities established with public participation and in consultation with the town of Isle au Haut and other interested parties.

Report to
congressional
committees

(c) The Secretary shall transmit the report to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee of the Senate and the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives no later than six months from the date of enactment of this Act. The Secretary shall begin implementing the carrying capacities contained in the report sixty days after the report has been transmitted to the committees.

Review and
revision

(d) Carrying capacities established pursuant to this section shall be reviewed, and if necessary revised, every five years. Any revision in such carrying capacity shall be made in accordance with the procedures set forth in subsections (b) and (c) of this section.

(e) Until such time as a carrying capacity limitation is established and implemented pursuant to subsections (b) and (c) of this section, the Secretary shall take such temporary measures as are necessary to assure that visitation does not exceed the average annual visitation for the period 1979 to 1981.

B. COST ESTIMATES (in Order of Priority)

CONSTRUCTION COSTS	GROSS CONSTRUCTION <u>COSTS</u>	Advanced & Project <u>Planning</u>	TOTAL CONSTRUCTION <u>COSTS</u>
<u>Site preparation</u>			
Boundary line survey (approx. 1/2 mile)	\$ 10,000	\$ ---	\$ 10,000
Construct unpaved access road to housing and operations site (approx. 200 linear feet)	\$ 25,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 30,000
Install well, water and septic system (incl. soil perc and soil borings tests)	\$ 85,000	\$15,000	\$100,000
Extend electric utility lines to site (approx. 500 feet)	\$ 20,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 24,000
<u>Employee housing</u>			
Construct 2 housing units (2-two bedroom apartments, 750 square feet each)	\$245,000	\$50,000	\$295,000
Construct 1 primitive cabin for housing (400 square feet)	\$ 40,000	\$10,000	\$ 50,000

Maintenance/operations

Construct ranger office station, (600 square feet) including restroom facilities)	\$ 98,000	\$19,000	\$117,000
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Construct maintenance facility (720 square feet)	\$118,000	\$23,000	\$141,000
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Miscellaneous site development and landscaping	\$113,000	\$22,000	\$135,000
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Trail connection

Relocate approx. 1/2 mile trail to Park land (dirt trail and some boardwalk construction)	\$ 20,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 24,000
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Trail signs and bulletin board	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 7,000
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TOTAL	\$779,000	\$154,000	\$933,000
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Additional Operations and Maintenance Costs

Maintenance Cost increase	N/A
Operations / Staffing Cost increase	N/A

C. PLANNING TEAM

Isabel Mancinelli, Park Planner, North Atlantic Regional Office
Lauren McKean, Park Planner, North Atlantic Regional Office
Carol Whipple, former Landscape Architect, North Atlantic Regional Office
Jack Hauptman, Superintendent, Acadia National Park

CONSULTANTS

Joe Abrell, former Chief of Operations, Acadia National Park
Len Bobinchock, Chief of Operations, Acadia National Park
Ray Borrás, Estimator, Denver Service Center
Charles Clapper, Associate Regional Director, Planning & Resource
Preservation, North Atlantic Regional Office
Dave Clark, Chief of Environmental Compliance, North Atlantic Regional Office
Norm Dodge, Chief of Ranger Division, Acadia National Park
Nadine Gerds, former Landscape Architect, North Atlantic Regional Office
Dick Hsu, Regional Archeologist, North Atlantic Regional Office
Matthew Lynaugh, Designer/Illustrator, North Atlantic Regional Office
Kent Mattingly, Park Ranger, Isle au Haut Unit of Acadia National Park
Curt Mossestad, Chief of Maintenance, Acadia National Park
Terry Savage, Chief of Planning & Design, North Atlantic Regional Office
Carroll Schell, former Chief of Resource Management, Acadia National Park

D. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Acadia National Park

P.O. Box 177

Bar Harbor, Maine 04609

207-288-3338

IN REPLY REFER TO:

December 11, 1989

D18(ACAD)

(x)L7617

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, North Atlantic Region

From: Superintendent, Acadia National Park

Subject: Finding of No Significant Impact, Isle au Haut Development
Concept Plan, Acadia National Park

Background

The Development Concept Plan for the Isle au Haut portion of Acadia National Park in Isle au Haut, Maine, represents the culmination of a planning effort which began in 1985. It defines the chosen development concept alternative which meets park needs, management objectives and NPS policy. During the process, the need for park housing, a ranger office, and a maintenance facility was defined. Then, several locations for siting the necessary facilities were evaluated. Considerations included operational efficiency, cooperation with the community, effects on the visitor experience and resource impacts.

Four alternatives were developed and evaluated for the site in the Draft Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment of June 1989. The alternatives were titled: I - "Minimum Requirements;" II - "Concentrate Services at Duck Harbor;" III - Services on Northern Strip;" and IV - Primitive Facility for Seasonal Use."

Four issues of the newsletter, "Park Update," were prepared to inform the visitors and residents of Isle au Haut about this planning process. They discussed the alternative development concepts and information concerning public meetings.

Two public meetings were held on Isle au Haut on July 16 and August 19, 1985, to discuss the planning concerns and alternative solutions. Approximately seventy residents of Isle au Haut, campers, and other interested parties participated in these meetings. Park resource managers and planners presented initial planning objectives and received strong

support for the retention of the ranger office and staff housing facilities near the town center. The planning process was delayed by staffing and funding shortages.

The draft plan was circulated for a thirty-day public review period from June 21 through July 21, 1989. The plan was mailed to over 300 people, and a news release was distributed to regional newspapers and radio stations.

A public meeting was held in the Town of Isle au Haut on July 19, 1989. The meeting was attended by fourteen permanent and three seasonal residents. Overall, the draft plan was well received by the island residents, and the park was complimented on the road improvement project and efforts to comply with the legislation. Concerns over the DCP that were raised included: construction costs; the degree of development proposed for a small building site in Alternative III; and agreement that a ranger presence is needed near Duck Harbor as well as near town during the visitor use season. In addition, five letters were received during the public review period. The letters addressed support for in-town facilities, town-park cooperation, and upkeep of the road, and criticism of cost estimates.

Statement of Selected Alternative

Based on current park policies and management needs and input from the public, the plan is to undertake Alternative IV: Primitive Facility for Seasonal Use; this entails construction of new housing and operations facilities near the town and the campground. Two new housing units, a ranger office and maintenance facilities would be constructed on the strip of park land at the northern boundary. Additionally, one primitive shelter for seasonal staff would be built closer to the area of most intensive use by day visitors and overnight campers, Shark Point. This will enable improved supervision, emergency medical treatment and fire safety.

Summary of Alternatives Considered

Alternative I: Minimum Requirements

Under the minimum requirements alternative, minor changes to the management operations would occur. The present facilities, a ranger office and a maintenance/storage (fire cache) structure would be utilized to provide all NPS operations and maintenance needs. Since planned facility replacement would not be envisioned in this alternative, the services provided by the park would be terminated as structures wore out. Housing would not be provided. The existing trail segment from the ranger station to the main trail system would be relocated onto park land.

Staff hiring would continue to be restricted due to lack of park housing. The ranger office and maintenance and storage facilities would provide inadequate work space to provide for emergency medical treatment, visitor comfort and information needs, and equipment storage and maintenance.

Alternative II: Concentrate Services at Duck Harbor

Alternative II involved the consolidation of all services, park staff, equipment, and park visitors at Duck Harbor. All park orientation would be concentrated at this site. The strip of park land on northern park boundary would remain undeveloped except for a new trail connecting the park trail system to the town road in the village.

This alternative required the construction of new housing, office and maintenance facilities in a pristine area that is remote, hard to get to, and undeveloped. Substantial road improvements and construction would be required to accommodate the increase of transporting materials over four and one-half miles of the deteriorated dirt road from town.

The ability to contact help in case of fire or medical emergency was a major reason for considering locating facilities at Duck Harbor. NPS staff would more easily patrol problem areas and be available in the event of fire/emergency. Conversely, greater visibility and accessibility of park staff and facilities would be viewed negatively by some visitors seeking solitude. The present Isle au Haut Ferry Company schedule does not provide service to Duck Harbor in the early spring or late fall. Unless the schedule changed, park staff would be required to travel via the road to the village at these times to contact visitors.

Alternative III: Services on Northern Strip

This was the preferred alternative of the NPS in the draft plan. Under this alternative park facilities would be replaced with new facilities at the existing northern boundary site. New facilities would include housing, a ranger office, and a maintenance and storage facility. Utilities would need to be provided. These buildings would be constructed on a 8/10-acre site.

This alternative would enable the park staff to maintain contact with the town for mutual aid and other purposes. A new trail connecting the new facilities to the remainder of park lands would need to be constructed. Careful site considerations would be necessary as this is the northern access point to the park from the village of Isle au Haut, where visitors entering or leaving the park via the town must first pass. New permanent housing facilities would be provided for three park staff.

Hiring and efficiency of park operations would be improved. The park's problems of inadequate storage and maintenance needs would be remedied. This would also enable park staff to retain the current system for meeting Isle au Haut Ferry Company boats in town to accommodate park visitors to the Duck Harbor dock.

Alternative IV: Primitive Facility for Seasonal Use

As in Alternative III, new housing, ranger office and maintenance facilities would be constructed on the strip of park land at the northern

boundary. A new cabin would be built at Sharks Point to house seasonal staff in proximity to the campsite. Utilities would not be required.

The cost of building a second housing facility would be eliminated if the Eli Creek cabin was maintained for seasonal staff use. Eli Creek cabin was, however, previously considered too primitive and inaccessible to the public.

These sites are approximately one mile and two miles from the campground at Duck Harbor; Sharks Point is closer to the use concentration than Eli Creek and is sited along the gravel road. A small cabin should not impact the back country camping experiences of overnight visitors. The staff could increase the frequency of campground supervision during period of peak visitation and/or peak fire danger from this location. Presently, campers must walk the four and one-half miles to the northern park boundary to contact park staff in the event of an emergency.

Reasoning

The selected alternative, Alternative IV, differs minimally from the Alternative III concept which was the preferred alternative in the draft plan. The actions proposed serve the needs of park visitors and staff and are consistent with Town of Isle au Haut desires. Continuing to locate operational facilities in the town will enable park staff to maintain contact with the community; this is supported by both parties. Park staff will be accessible near the docks in the town and the park so that emergency needs as well as visitor orientation can be accomplished efficiently. In-town facilities will be particularly useful when the boat does not go to the park dock due to the seasonal schedule or bad weather. Locating a staff residence at Shark's Point will facilitate interpretation and emergency response activities.

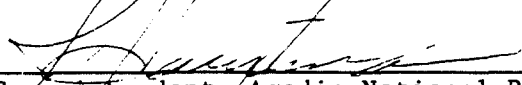
The provision of adequate work space and residences for rangers and interpreters on-site would improve efficiency of the operations and maintenance. An NPS presence on the island is necessary to provide minimal but essential resource management and visitor services, such as resource and fire protection, campground management, visitor orientation and interpretation, law enforcement, and emergency medical services. For this reason, Alternative I was not chosen.

It was determined that ranger presence at both access points to the park was desirable, therefore neither Alternative II or III were also not selected. Additionally, the primitive housing facility as proposed in Alternative IV would be less intrusive on the campground and dock area than a permanent dwelling structure as envisioned in Alternative II. the proposed development on the northern boundary site will be less crowded than as proposed in Alternative III.

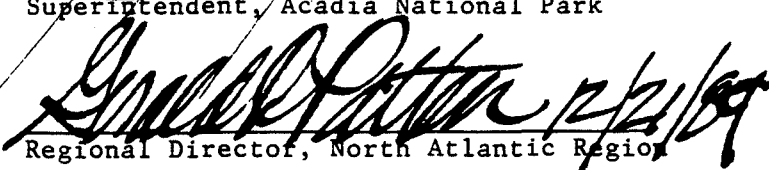
Finding of No Significant Impact

The selected alternative, as stated above, is a management action which does not constitute a major federal action that would have significant impact on the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Recommended:


Superintendent, Acadia National Park

Concurred:


Regional Director, North Atlantic Region

Enclosures: Draft Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment
Record of Public Involvement