

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT RESOURCE NETWORK

c/o East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
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March 10, 2014

Mr. John Bacon
8135 White Cliff Rd.
Egg Harbor, WI 54209

RE: SUPPORT FOR GRAND TRAVERSE ISLANDS NATIONAL LAKESHORE PROPOSAL

Dear Mr. Bacon,

Please accept this letter of support for the proposed Grand Traverse Islands National Lakeshore proposal which would link Wisconsin with Michigan through this chain of islands.

The Niagara Escarpment Resource Network (NERN) is a specific program of the Lakeshore Natural Resource Partnership and pledges its full support for this project as it will help us in achieving our mission and goals. These goals primarily focus on building awareness and appreciation for the Niagara Escarpment, a prominent ridge of cliffs that extends through Wisconsin, Upper Michigan, Ontario and New York. The Grand Traverse Island chain lies along that corridor, and hence, are comprised of the same geologic materials as the Niagara Escarpment.

In Wisconsin, the Niagara Escarpment has been formally recognized as a unique resource in several ways: by virtue of a Legislative proclamation that made 2010 The Year of the Niagara Escarpment; by the State of Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources as a "Land Legacy" area; and, by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco Tax and Trade (TTB) through the 2012 "Wisconsin Ledge American Viticultural Area" designation. With its myriad of State and County Parks, publicly owned natural areas, and scenic highways, the Niagara Escarpment corridor offers significant opportunities for land conservation and the growth of eco-tourism/geo-tourism, which the National Lakeshore designation would enhance.

Furthermore, NERN's efforts extend beyond Wisconsin, as collaborations amongst academic staff and conservation planners in Michigan, Ontario and New York have resulted in the development of "The Great Arc Initiative". This initiative seeks to further connect this enormous geologic feature through its relationship with the Great Lakes. In fact, NERN and other collaborators intend to seek a UNESCO GeoPark designation for this corridor in the near future so as to further build a stewardship ethic that aligns well with geo-tourism promotion efforts. The addition of the Grand Traverse Island National Lakeshore to this mix would undoubtedly help reinforce the Niagara Escarpment as a globally unique and worthwhile tourism destination.

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In summary, the National Park Service's designation of the Grand Traverse Islands as a National Lakeshore would not only complement NERN's efforts, but other resource based programs and activities in Door County as well. Furthermore, it would also serve as a vehicle to further engage people on Great Lakes conservation issues at the State, National and bi-National levels.

We look forward to working with you on this effort and stand ready to provide further support and assistance where needed. Should any questions arise about NERN's support of this project, please do not hesitate to contact me at niagara@escarpmentnetwork.org or via phone at 920-751-4770.

Sincerely,



Eric W. Fowle, Co-Chair
Niagara Escarpment Resource Network

c (via e-mail): NERN Steering Committee