



UNITED STATES LIGHTHOUSE SOCIETY

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To Whom It May Concern:

10 February 2014

This letter is in support of The Friends of Grand Traverse Island's proposal for a new National Lakeshore along the western shore of Lake Michigan.

Our Society is particularly interested in the proposal as the envisioned park includes four significant and historic light stations as well as a rare Life Saving Service station.

From the 1960s through 1980s, as the Coast Guard automated our manned light stations, vandals and weather began to take their toll. In recent years efforts by non-profit groups have stepped in to preserve many light stations, especially those in or near civilization. However, those in very remote areas are at risk of being lost.

Life Saving Stations, as a category, are in a far worse situation as most of have already been lost to history.

Light stations and life saving stations are an important part of our maritime heritage, they both aided immeasurably to the growth and development of this country. They should be preserved for future generations to help tell the story of our maritime past.

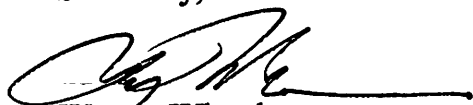
The Pilot Island Light Station dates from 1858, a very early station in the Great Lakes, and the St. Martin Station includes an exoskeleton tower which, I believe, is one of the only towers of that type in the United States.

The Friends of Grand Traverse Island's proposal would not only help preserve five historic properties, but a scenic and pristine stretch of the Lake Michigan shore. It would set aside a beautiful area where citizens might walk nature trails, experience wildlife via boats, canoes and kayaks and

view those historic structures that were so very important to our maritime past.

Merely listing a light stations or life saving stations on the National Register will not ensure their safety and preservation. A National Park or Seashore would provide a buffer zone to preserve the structures until a qualified group can provide restoration and preservation. Such a park would also focus attention on the sites and, perhaps, assist with access.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Wheeler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Wayne Wheeler

President

U.S. Lighthouse Society