

Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park General Management Plan



Summary of Stakeholder Input Workshop

To gather targeted input from governmental, non-profit, and business/tourism entities, the planning team invited over 80 stakeholders, both individuals and community groups, to participate in a facilitated input workshop held on April 16, 2019, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at the Ontonagon High School in Ontonagon, Michigan. Representatives of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provided the stakeholders with a brief overview of Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, including its natural features, cultural resources, and recreational offerings. The stakeholders were also presented the general management plan process, timeline, and an explanation of the plan elements that their input would inform: the statements of significance, the management zone map, and a draft list of action goals intended to be accomplished over the next ten years.

The stakeholders were divided into small-table discussion groups, which completed a series of exercises describing the park (both now and in the future), opportunities for partnerships, the park's potential benefit to the larger community, and the stakeholders' vision for the park's future. Each table then reported out to the larger group. The following is a tabulation and brief explanation of the table exercise results. This input will be considered by the planning team when creating a ten-year action plan.



Stakeholders listen to a presentation about the general management plan process

PLANNING TEAM ATTENDEES	
Name	Representing
Debbie Jensen	DNR: Management Plan Administrator
Dustin Farley	DNR
Eric Cadeau	DNR: Regional Planner
George Madison	DNR: Fisheries Biologist
Jeff Kakuk	DNR: Western UP Trails Specialist
Lisa Gamero	DNR: Cultural Resources Analyst
Matt Lincoln	DNR: Lands Liaison
Mike Knack	DNR: Unit Manager
Ray Fahlsing	DNR: Stewardship Unit Manager
Bob Wild	DNR: Former Park Interpreter
Christy Summers	Planning Consultant
Caitlin Jackson	Planning Consultant

STAKEHOLDER INPUT WORKSHOP ATTENDEES	
Name	Representing
Carol Maass	Friends of the Porkies
Kim Perryman	Friends of the Porkies
Sally Berman	Friends of the Porkies
Mary Brownell	Friends of the Porkies - Folk School
William Perrin	GCC Ski Hill
Greg Ryskey	Gogebic County Forests & Park Commission
Chris Wirtanen	Lake Gogebic Improvement Association
Jim Vigness	Lake Gogebic Improvement Association
Phil Wirtanen	Lake Gogebic Improvement Association
Don Harris	Lake Superior Sportsmans Club
Rick Tessmer	Lake Superior Sportsmans Club
Jim Bradley	Michigan State Park Advisory Committee
Dave Bishop	Michigan Trails and Recreation Alliance of Land and the Environment
Donald Helsel	Michigan Trails and Recreation Alliance of Land and the Environment
Karl Jensen	Ni-Miikanaake Chapter - North Country Trail
Ric Olson	North Country Trail
Jim Bobula	Ontonagon Area Schools
John Wilmas	Ontonagon County
Marlene Broemer	Ontonagon County Board of Commissioners
Dale Rantala	Ontonagon County Sheriff
Steve Store	Ontonagon Township
Bruce Perkins	Porcupine Mountains Convention and Visitors Bureau
Tom Nemacheck	U.P. Travel
James Sharkoy	Upper Peninsula Sport Fisherman's Association
JR Richards	Upper Peninsula Sport Fisherman's Association
Marlanea French Pombier	US Forest Service
Anglea Yu	Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region
Rachel Pressley	Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Region
Bob Brownell	
Daniel Wells	
Kirk Schott	
Randy Myhrea	
Tom Hawley	

Icebreaker Question

When the stakeholders introduced themselves, they were asked to describe what matters most to them about Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park. Their responses are below.

What matters most to me about Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park is...
"Trail maintenance. New Sportsmans club!!!"
"Keeping another wilderness area in the Upper Peninsula to complement those offered on Federal land. Preserving intact forested areas, like the Porkies, provides a special experience for recreational opportunities as well as ecosystem benefits."
"Stays a wilderness state park in perpetuity."
"That it stays a wilderness state park."
"The natural beauty without human development. The wilderness quiet isolation that is still attainable with limited effort. Outdoor Classroom."
"It will always be open to all."
"It's history and traditions"
"Maintaining the wilderness experience while at the same increasing the activities available"
"Preservation of wilderness for future generations"
"Continued stewardship and preservation for future generations"
"Protect shoreline. Erosion Control within park. Preserve wilderness."
"Preserving the trees & animals. Making it more easier to get to the sites. More publicity."
"I would like to see Mirror Lake continued to be planted with splake and brook trout with 4x4 not helicopters and snowmobiles. Like to see a zip line for summer business opportunities. Increased accessibility for special needs and handicapped individuals.
"Keep it the way it is. Update the cabins. Plant more fish."
"That we are able to fish and hunt seasonally and do wilderness backcountry camping year around. I am also happy for those that enjoy the ski hill and Union Bay beach access."
"Cooperation with Park Employees. Fishing/hunting inside Porkies. -Lighting at boat launch: 1) Safety for law personnel responding to search and reserve; ease of finding dock when returning. 2) Safety to Fisherman. -Fish cleaning station if possible."
"Expanding park uses and available activities. Keeping Mirror Lake as a traditional trout lake. Spring, fall and summer activities and maintenance."
"That it's there...Access to Lake Superior. New boat landing is wonderful!"
"North Country Trail related bridge over Little Iron River."
"Maintain the wilderness!"
"It is a semi-well known destination for people who enjoy the outdoors and want (need) to stay in motels and inns."
"The trails and ski hill within the forests. People are passionate about it."
"Avoid any significant alteration in the Porkies traditional strengths; a true wilderness experience, great trail system, good steelhead fishing, Lake Superior access, skiing of both types, etc. Make incremental improvement but keep basic program intact."
"Keep the open natural spaces for all to enjoy! More Park Programs for visitors to enjoy."

Exercise 1: Say one word or phrase that describes the state park right now.

When asked what words or phrases they might use to describe the park right now, the majority of phrases were positive in nature, describing the expansive and beautiful nature of the park. Only a few negative aspects were mentioned, such as overcrowded, overused, under-staffed, under-developed, and under-utilized.

Items	Mentioned at Table #
Beautiful; awesome beauty	1, 2, 4
Remote; remote areas for those seeking it	1, 2, 5
Rugged	3, 4
Accessibility	5
Accessible Wilderness	4
Always more to see	3
Ancient Forest	2
Cabin access to Little Carp Rivers	4
Capacity/density	3
Colorful	3
Diverse	5
Educational	2
Enlightening	1
Expansive	3
Forest primeval	2
Fragile	4
Geology	2
Great	4
Habitat	3
Historic landscape	3
Incredible	5
Legacy forest	1
Limited parking	4
Low cost	5
Nature	2
No boundaries	3
Ojibway culture	2
Overcrowded	5
Overused	1
Scenic	4
Snapshot in time	3
Solitude	2
Spectacular	4
Spirits	2
Stewardship	1
Under-Developed	1
Under-Staffed	1
Under-Utilized	1
Unforgettable	3
Unique interface with Lake Superior	1
Unknown	3
Waterfalls	3
Well-Managed	1
Wilderness	3

Exercise 2: Say one word or phrase that you want to describe the state park in the future.

Stakeholders were asked what words or phrases they would like to describe the state park in the future. Two items were mentioned at more than one table: maintain wilderness/wilderness values, and more backcountry cabins/camps/(many) yurts. Other phrases were wide-ranging, suggesting various improvements, but also suggesting the park stay preserved and pristine.

Items	Mentioned at Table #
Maintain wilderness/wilderness values	3, 5
More backcountry cabins/camps/(many) yurts	4, 5
Additional recreational activities at ski hill	3
Another triple chair lift	4
Better access (ADA, etc)	5
Better cell service for safety	3
Carp River cabin policy changed	4
Dark sky at night	1
Deforestation (Solutions)	2
Different levels of accessibility	1
Emergency access	5
Expanded parking	4
Fewer bugs	2
Fish cleaning station	5
Fully staffed	1
Healthy trees	2
Healthy wildlife habitat	1
Improve winter access (backcountry)	4
Improvement in ADA-compliant sites	3
Increase awareness of the park	3
Increase bike trails	3
Keep cabins	1
Light at boat launch	5
Maintain access	3
Maintain tradition	1
Make snow at ski hill	3
Monitor for HWA	3
More bats	2
More handicapped accessibility	4
More interp. + educational programs w. facilities	1
More overnight destination friendly	4
No change	3
Open accommodations earlier	3
Preserved	1
Pristine	1
Respect the resource	3
Restrict usage	3
Same	2
Secure water	2
Still have hemlock groves	1
Trout fishing	1
Update cabins	5
Utilized	1
Zip Line	5

Exercise 3: How can the state park benefit the wider community, now or in the future?

The groups considered the benefits the park can provide to the wider community, either now or in the future. Ideas that were mentioned at more than one table include improved accessibility and more educational opportunities.

Items	Mentioned at Table #
ADA compliance; improved handicapped access	2, 3
More educational opportunities	1, 3
Additional local partners	3
Ancient forest survey	2
Better outreach + marketing	1
Brings in more tourists + revenue	1
Collaboration with surrounding municipalities	4
Connecting Gogebic + Ontonagon communities	1
Continue outdoor recreation	1
Determine who is missing from "local" community	3
Develop ancient forest indicators	2
Don't try to make this park for all opportunities - > keep it "the porkies"	3
Erosion control on M507	4
Free access for all	2
Hire locally	3
Historic legacy for the community	1
Improve sportsman club facilities	5
Improve surface roads (S. Boundary)	5
Increase lodging in park	4
Increase marketing reach/public awareness	3
Increase seasonal activities	3
Keep contiguous forested areas	3
Lower fees for residents	2
Maintaining wilderness	3
More access	5
More community partners, fishing clubs	5
More events	5
More fish plants with partners	5
More flexible rentals (lodge)	2
More summer activities - zip line, bike trails	5
National Park scale lodging	4
Ojibway culture	2
Outdoor classroom (natural, cultural, mining, etc.)	1
Partnerships between park + community	1
Promote other attractions in the area	1
Replace South Boundary Rd.	4
South boundary access year-round	3
Trail connections - N. country, etc.	1

Exercise 4: How can local groups and stakeholders collaborate and partner with the park?

Stakeholders were also asked to consider what other opportunities existed for outside groups to partner with the park. Some of the ideas presented include further programs for the Friends of the Porkies, for the Gogebic Community College to provide a zipline and other summer activities, and for the Ottawa National Forest to assist with monitoring for invasive species. The stakeholders thought of several groups that could help with trail maintenance and other labor tasks, such as the Conserve School, Friends of the Porkies, Gogebic Community College (ski trails), the National Guard, the North Country Trail Association, and the North Country Snowmobile Club (snowmobile trails).

Group or Stakeholder Name	Collaboration or Partnership Opportunity	Mentioned at Table #
Area Schools	Educational and vocational opportunities	5
Camp Josh, other access. Groups	Accessible camp and cabin sites	5
Carp Lake Township Planning	Bike trail to park	2
Conserve School	Manual labor - various activities	5
Downtown Development Authority	Advertise park outside of area	1
Fish Club	Fish cleaning, stocking, light at boat launch	5
Friends of Porkies	Pollinators gardens/ films/ other programs	1
Friends of Porkies	Connect park with community	1
Friends of Porkies	trails	5
Gogebic Community College	grooming ski trails	3
Gogebic Community College	Zip Line, other summer activities	5
Iron Belle Trail/North Country Trail	Hiking, biking	1
Lake Superior Sportsman's Club		2
Local Government	Website links	1
Local Political Leaders	Enhance economic opportunities	4
WUPPDR	Website link	1
Michigan Trails and Recreation Alliance of Land and the Environment	Support NCT in park	3
National Guard	Trail development and maintenance, bridges	5
North Country Trail Association	Work on trail reroutes, maintenance, etc.	3
North Country Snowmobile Club	groom snowmobile trails	3
Ojibway Nation		2
Ontonagon County Historical Society	Helping preserve/interpret historic aspects	3
Ontonagon Residents	Liaison with public - better communications	2
Ontonagon County	MGA - MIDF Bike trail to park	2
Ontonagon Rd. Commission	Improve road access to/within park	4
Ottawa National Forest	monitoring (pests/pathogens/non-native invasive plant species)	3
Porcupine Mountain Convention and Visitors Bureau	Market the park	3
Partners for Watershed Resources	Conducting restorative hydrological projects	3
Schools	Education opportunities (increase + diversify)	1
Snowmobile Club	Trail grooming	1

Exercise 5: What improvements or changes would you like to see at the state park?

What things should stay the same?

The items for desired improvements or changes at Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park that received the most votes include cabin improvements, lengthen the season for cabin reservations, a new entrance road to replace M-107, and trail maintenance.

Some items that the stakeholders would like to stay the same include the wilderness character and the fishery at Mirror Lake.

Stay the Same		
Items	Mentioned at Table #	Total Votes
Wilderness - character; opportunities	2, 3, 5	9
Mirror Lake (lake stocking program)	4	5
Activities stay the same in wilderness (hatched area)	3	1
Backcountry camping	2	1
Educational programs	2	1
Number of cabins	1	1
Old growth forest	3	1
Bob wild	1, 5	0
DNR/GCC partnership	5	0
Music festival	5	0
Number of campsites	1	0
Ojibway culture	2	0
Positive attitude of staff	5	0
Restricted access	3	0
Trees continue to grow	4	0

Improvements or Changes		
Items	Mentioned at Table #	Total Votes
Cabin upgrade/improvement; boats, too	1, 5	5
Increase timeframe (longer use) for cabin reservation (year-round)	4	5
New entrance road to replace HWY. 107	1	5
Trail maintenance	2	5
Developed day use area at Union Bay	1	4
Fish plants	5	4
Additional funding (\$/staff/resources)	3	3
Additional lodging (motel/hotel) lodge	4	3
New boat launch facility	2	3
Provide for "through hikers" on NCT	3	3
Shoreline protection	5	3
Trout planting (expanded)	1	3
ADA trails; ADA compliant for Presque Isle trail (easier/improved steps)	3, 5	2
Better publicity	2	2
Bike trails; multi-level bike trail system	1, 5	2
Equipment for trail maintenance	4	2
Expand mountain biking trails with lift service	4	2
Improve cell service (safety-search + leisure)	3	2
More outpost camps - S. Boundary	5	2
More yurts/cabins/campgrounds	2, 4	2
Shuttle service (i.e., visitor center to other sites)	3	2
Another ski lift	4	1
Better understanding: Ojibway culture	2	1
Budget priority	2	1
Expanded motorcoach parking	4	1
Fish cleaning station with light	5	1
Keep M107 open longer in fall	2	1
Rental kayaks/boats	1	1
Union Bay campground - move away from L. Superior	1	1
V.C. Right size for number of visitors	1	1
Zip Line; zip line at ski hill	3, 5	1
Bikes (allow in ski hill area)	3	0
Free access	2	0
More staff	5	0
Presque Isle full service campground	4	0

Final Exercise: Collective Priorities

Each table's top three highest voted items from the previous exercise were transferred onto the collective priorities exercise. These items were posted for stakeholders from any table to vote on as they left the session. This way, an attendee could vote for an idea from another table, even if it was not discussed within their small group. The ideas that received more than ten votes were additional funding for staff and resources, trail maintenance, and maintain the wilderness character.

Priority	Votes
Additional funding: Staff/\$/resources	14
Trail maintenance	14
Maintain wilderness character	12
Shoreline protection	9
Cabin improvements (boats, too)	8
Maintain Mirror Lake - Lake stocking program	7
Provide accommodations for thru hikers on N. Country trail	5
New/improved boat launch	5
ADD'L lodging options (motel/hotel/lodge)	3
Develop day use area at Union Bay	3
Expanded trout planting	3
New entry road to replace HWY 107	3
Increased time for cabin reservations (longer use/year-round use)	1



Stakeholders report the results of the exercises back to the large group.