



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore  
Bayfield, Wisconsin



## The Gaylord Nelson Wilderness

*“This is a unique collection of islands...there is not another collection of islands of this significance within the continental boundaries of the United States. I think it is tremendously important that this collection of islands be preserved.”*

Former Wisconsin Governor and U. S. Senator Gaylord Nelson



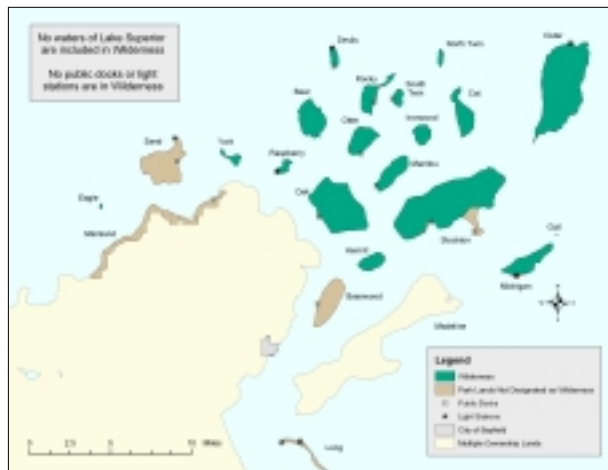
Gaylord Nelson at Stockton Island (2003)

### **Forever Wild**

On December 8, 2004, President George W. Bush signed legislation designating 80% of the land area of Wisconsin's Apostle Islands National Lakeshore as federally protected wilderness. The new wilderness area – Wisconsin's largest by far – honors Gaylord Nelson, the “founding father” of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. The designation guarantees that the present management style of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore will be maintained in the future - emphasizing continued motorized boat access to the mostly-wild islands, but no motorized travel on the islands themselves.

*We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than (go) to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope.*

Wallace Stegner



### “Wilderness” in the Apostle Islands?

The 1964 Wilderness Act defines wilderness as “...an area of undeveloped Federal land...without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature; and has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation...” After being altered by centuries of human use, the Apostle Islands ecosystem is “re-wilding” and once again has these wilderness characteristics.

### Why honor Gaylord Nelson?

Visionary conservationist Gaylord Nelson fought to protect the Apostle Islands while serving as Wisconsin’s governor (1958-1962) and U. S. Senator (1963 to 1980). That effort culminated in the establishment of Apostle Islands National Lakeshore as a unit of the National Park System in 1970. After leaving the Senate, Nelson served as a Counselor to The Wilderness Society. He may be best known as the founder of Earth Day.

### What will “Wilderness” mean for the Apostle Islands?

Thousands of public comments gathered from 2001 to 2004 clearly indicated that 1) people like the Apostle Islands as they are and 2) people support wilderness designation in the Apostle Islands. Most expressed the feeling that these islands were meant to be visited and enjoyed, but that they should never lose the wild and primitive character that brings people here in the first place. Wilderness designation for most of the park guarantees that future generations will be able to experience the islands in essentially the same way we can today.

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