

**Linking Great Lakes Public Access and Natural Heritage Tourism  
to Promote Vibrant and Sustainable Coastal Economies**

**Wisconsin Coastal Management Program  
Wisconsin Department of Administration**

**Proposal for the  
NOAA Coastal Management Fellowship  
NOAA Office for Coastal Management**

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Wisconsin Department of Administration  
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## **Background and Introduction:**

Wisconsin has a unique opportunity to promote more vibrant and sustainable economies in coastal communities through linking a comprehensive and current inventory of Great Lakes public access with the application of geospatial technologies to encourage natural heritage tourism.

### Coastal Public Access Inventory

The Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (WCMP) would benefit from a comprehensive and up-to-date inventory of public access to the Great Lakes. Recent initiatives have inventoried public access facilities for specific coastal and water-based uses, such as water trails for kayaks, and marinas for motorized recreational boats. State-owned recreation or conservation lands are generally well-inventoried, but this information is incomplete for local public lands. Further, there is no inventory of the facilities or amenities provided, and the types of public access available, across all public lands (WCMP 2010). A comprehensive coastal public access inventory would include detailed classification of recreational activities and environmental characteristics at each site along with maps showing parcel boundaries with public lands designated. The inventory could potentially also provide information about conservation easements that allow public access along the Great Lakes.

A recently started initiative of the Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIP) is integrating local government land records to create a statewide parcel map. During Summer 2015, an initial version of the statewide parcel map was completed with a minimal set of tax assessment attributes that allows limited analysis of coastal land characteristics. An enhanced understanding of public access would result from a detailed classification of public lands associated with the statewide parcel map and creation of a detailed public access inventory.

A comprehensive inventory would leverage existing resources such as the Wisconsin Great Lakes Public Access Guide – a hard copy publication from the early 1990s (WDOD et al. circa 1992); public access studies completed by two coastal Regional Planning Commissions (BLRPC 2005, 2009, 2011; NWRPC 2008); and maps and studies supporting water trails for sea kayaking (WDNR et al. 2011; Inland Sea Society 2009; NOAA et al. no date). It would also be useful for NOAA's implementation of the proposed National Marine Sanctuary in Lake Michigan, and would contribute data to the Digital Coast data catalogue. Additionally, the inventory project would intersect with proposed digitization of state lakebed lease and grant data (which are areas subject to the State's Public Trust Doctrine and must be used for public purposes), and an ongoing effort to digitize Depression-era Wisconsin Land Economic Inventory maps. Finally, the public lands data will enable the State to incorporate a broader inventory of public lands into long-term wildlife habitat planning, such as the five-year Wildlife Action Plan.

### Deep Travel and Coastal Heritage Tourism

An improved inventory of coastal public lands and public access sites would enhance development and promotion of the coastal tourism economy. Providing better information about where visitors can access the Great Lakes will encourage more visits to coastal communities, especially in areas that are not as well known. There are opportunities to implement new

technologies such as mobile apps and optimized websites to get this information to tourists and recreational users.

Deep Travel is defined by author Tony Hiss as "an exhilarating state of mind that travel can evoke, when everything seems suddenly fresh, vivid, intensely interesting, and memorable" (Hiss 2010). It is the type of travel that can both sustain local economies and promote stewardship of scenic and cultural resources. The Wisconsin Coastal Guide (<http://wisconsincoastalguide.org/>) is an interactive Web mapping site funded by the WCMP that promotes coastal heritage tourism along the Great Lakes Circle Tour route. The Wisconsin Harbor Towns Association has expressed interest in local versions of the Wisconsin Coastal Guide. This could be accomplished with emerging technologies such as Esri Story Maps (<http://storymaps.arcgis.com/>), the Esri App Studio (<https://appstudio.arcgis.com/>), or appropriate open source technologies. The local coastal heritage apps could include features such as place-based learning activities and heritage tours that encourage people to slow down and become travelers over tourists. Greater promotion of the Wisconsin Coastal Guide and local coastal heritage tourism apps by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism and local tourism officials would support the growth of more vibrant and sustainable coastal economies, while also increasing opportunities for the public to experience, understand and appreciate coastal resources.

**Goals and Objectives:**

- Utilization of the new statewide parcel map for Wisconsin to better understand public and private ownership along the coast.
- Enhancement of the statewide parcel map by adding a classification of public lands in coastal counties.
- Development of methods for inventory of conservation easements along the coast.
- Completion of a current and comprehensive public access inventory, including a matrix of recreational activities and environmental characteristics for each public access site.
- Development of mobile websites and apps to promote coastal heritage tourism and deep travel that can be shared and hosted by local governments on the coast.

**Milestones and Outcomes:**

Activities	Duration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation to the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, Wisconsin Land Information Program, and the Division of Intergovernmental Relations at the Wisconsin Department of Administration.</li> <li>• Orientation to the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.</li> <li>• Introduction to project partners at the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, Gathering Waters Conservancy, Wisconsin State Cartographer’s Office, and the Wisconsin Harbor Towns Association.</li> <li>• Tour the Lake Michigan and Lake Superior coasts of Wisconsin.</li> <li>• Attend the September meeting of the Wisconsin Coastal Management Council.</li> <li>• Review information on the statewide parcel mapping initiative, public lands, conservation easements and coastal heritage tourism.</li> </ul>	<p>Aug. 1, 2016 to Sept. 30, 2016</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct phase 1 of public lands classification of statewide parcel map for the Lake Superior coast.</li> <li>• Develop classification system for recreational activities and environmental characteristics of coastal public access sites.</li> <li>• Attend the fall meeting of the Wisconsin Land Information Association.</li> <li>• Attend Wisconsin Harbor Towns Association annual meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>Oct. 1, 2016 to Dec. 31, 2016</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct phase 2 of public lands classification of statewide parcel map for the northern Lake Michigan coast.</li> <li>• Conduct phase 1 of coastal public access inventory for the Lake Superior coast.</li> <li>• Review and training on Esri technologies for developing mobile websites and apps.</li> <li>• Attend Wisconsin Land Information Association annual conference.</li> <li>• Attend Wisconsin Governor’s Conference on Tourism.</li> </ul>	<p>Jan. 1, 2017 to Mar. 31, 2017</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend Coastal GeoTools conference.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct phase 3 of public lands classification of statewide parcel map for the southern Lake Michigan coast.</li> <li>• Conduct phase 2 of coastal public access inventory for the northern Lake Michigan coast.</li> <li>• Attend the spring meeting of the Wisconsin Land Information Association.</li> </ul>	Apr. 1, 2017 to Jun 30, 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct phase 3 of coastal public access inventory for the southern Lake Michigan coast.</li> <li>• Build first prototype of mobile website/app for local coastal heritage tourism.</li> </ul>	Jul. 1, 2017 to Sept. 30, 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete first operational mobile website/app for local coastal heritage tourism.</li> <li>• Build second prototype of mobile website/app for local coastal heritage tourism.</li> <li>• Attend the fall meeting of the Wisconsin Land Information Association.</li> <li>• Attend Wisconsin Harbor Towns Association meeting.</li> </ul>	Oct. 1, 2017 to Dec. 31, 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete second operational mobile website/app for local coastal heritage tourism.</li> <li>• Build third prototype of mobile website/app for local coastal heritage tourism.</li> <li>• Conduct a workshop on mobile technologies at the Wisconsin Land Information Association annual conference.</li> <li>• Present at the NOAA Social Coast Forum</li> <li>• Attend Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism.</li> </ul>	Jan. 1, 2018 to Mar. 31, 2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete third operational mobile website/app for local coastal heritage tourism.</li> </ul>	Apr. 1, 2018 to Jun. 30, 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project wrap-up and evaluation</li> </ul>	Jul. 1, 2018 to Jul. 31, 2018

Specific outcomes anticipated from this project include:

- Methods to include classification of public lands in statewide parcel map. This is of interest to the WLIP and the Wisconsin Land Information Association.
- Methods to inventory conservation easements in collaboration with land trusts. Increased use of easements to promote public access is of interest to the WCMP and Gathering Waters Conservancy, an umbrella organization of land trusts in Wisconsin.
- Completion of a comprehensive inventory of coastal public access. This will help meet public access objectives of the WCMP needs assessment, facilitate better reporting on public access to NOAA, and increase local knowledge of coastal public access.
- Enhance the Wisconsin Coastal Guide by adding a specific public access layer to the interactive map.
- Create local coastal heritage tourism apps. This could result in an increase in tourism, as well as greater sense of place in coastal communities. A recent keynote presentation by Natalie Springuel, Coastal Community Development Extension Associate with Maine Sea Grant at

the Fisheries Heritage Conference in Marinette, WI in September 2015 on the Downeast Fisheries Trail (<http://www.seagrant.umaine.edu/downeast-fisheries-trail>) showed that local community sense of place impact associated with creation of the fisheries heritage trail was more important than the increase in visitation to individual sites.

### **Project Description:**

Conduct an inventory of coastal public access

- Create a current, comprehensive public access inventory (build from sources including the 1990s Wisconsin Great Lakes Public Access Guide, coastal access studies funded by WCMP to Northwest and Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commissions, the Lake Michigan Water Trail inventory by BLRPC and WDNR, Wisconsin's Lake Superior Water Trail map by the Inland Sea Society, panorama photos in the Wisconsin Coastal Guide, statewide parcel map, etc.). The inventory will support WCMP reporting for public access in its five-year Section 309 Needs Assessment.
- Develop a matrix of recreational activities and environmental characteristics for each public access site. Include a map for each site that utilizes current orthophotos and parcels to show the extent of public property. Where possible, include links to local park maps (e.g. Milwaukee County Parks – example for Bender Park <http://county.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/cntyParks/maps/Bender1.pdf>).
- Collaborate with Gathering Waters Conservancy to inventory coastal land trust conservation easements that allow public access.

Develop coastal heritage tourism mobile websites/apps

- Utilize technology such as Esri Story Maps (<http://storymaps.arcgis.com/>) and the new Esri AppStudio (<https://appstudio.arcgis.com/>) to build custom coastal heritage tourism mobile websites and apps for Harbor Towns and coastal counties. Building local websites from content in the Wisconsin Coastal Guide was suggested at a Wisconsin Harbor Towns Association meeting last year.
- Include products on county Land Information Officer website/local tourism websites. Collaborate with the Wisconsin Department of Tourism to promote the Wisconsin Coastal Guide and local websites/apps.
- Add place-based learning content from the Wisconsin Coastal Guide to be developed by Undergraduate Research Scholars working with Wisconsin Sea Grant this academic year. Examples include the maritime history geocaches developed by the Wisconsin Historical Society (<http://www.wisconsinmaritime.org/special-events/geocaching-maritime-history/>) and the GeoQuests included in the St. Louis River Estuary – Stories and Science website (<http://stlouisriverestuary.org/geoquests.php>).

Explore deep travel concepts to promote Great Lakes tourism

- The concept of deep travel describes the unique, heightened feeling of awareness we experience when we travel. Community planning activities can build deep travel experiences that promote vibrant and sustainable coastal economies. Identify best practices for encouraging deep travel from “In Motion: The Experience of Travel” by author Tony Hiss.

### **Fellow Mentoring:**

The Coastal Management Fellow will be considered part of the Resource Policy Team within the Division of Intergovernmental Relations at the Wisconsin Department of Administration, and will have the opportunity to learn about all aspects of coastal management as applied to the Great Lakes. The Fellow will be mentored by Travis Olson, Wetland Protection and Habitat Restoration Coordinator at the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, with assistance from David Hart, Assistant Director for Extension at Wisconsin Sea Grant.

The Fellow will participate in staff meetings, and will be provided opportunities to participate in site visits, intra- and inter-agency meetings, regional events such as the Great Lakes Regional Meeting of Coastal Management Programs, and meetings of the Wisconsin Coastal Management Council. The Coastal Management Fellow will be expected to work closely with the WCMP staff, land information program staff, and the comprehensive planning program staff.

The Fellow will also have access to the staff and facilities of the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. This includes office space with a computer that includes a wide variety of GIS software. This arrangement allows the Fellow all the resources of state government, in addition to the resources available on campus (technical expertise, lectures, libraries, computer software training, etc.).

### **Project Partners:**

The project will require coordination with various state, regional, and local communities. In addition to working closely with the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, the Wisconsin Land Information Program, the Wisconsin Geographic Information Officer, and the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, the Fellow and mentors will coordinate with the following agencies and organizations:

Wisconsin Harbor Towns Association  
Wisconsin Department of Tourism  
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Gathering Waters Conservancy  
Wisconsin State Cartographer's Office  
Wisconsin Land Information Association  
Northwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission  
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
County and municipal governments

## **Cost Share Description:**

The funding for cost sharing (\$7,500 per year for two years) will be provided by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Wisconsin Land Information Program which has state funding allocated through the fellowship period.

## **Thematic Areas:**

This proposal addresses elements of two strategic focus areas identified by the NOAA Office for Coastal Management for the 2016-18 coastal management fellowship program, including:

- *Vibrant and Sustainable Coastal Economies: 1) Build capacity of coastal states and communities to foster ecologically sustainable economic development and activities; 2) Assist coastal decision-makers in conserving active and passive recreational uses by providing socioeconomic data, visualizations, technical assistance, funding and tools; 3) Understand, quantify, visualize, and communicate ecosystem services of key natural areas along the coasts to inform decision-making.*

The project will develop mobile websites and apps that promote coastal heritage tourism and increased visitation of Great Lakes public access sites. The Fellow will share lessons learned through this process with state, regional and national audiences.

- *Healthy Coastal Ecosystems: 1) Increase and enhance opportunities for the public, students, and teachers to experience, understand and appreciate coastal resources and make informed environmental decisions.*

The project will create a public access layer to include in the Wisconsin Coastal Guide, as well as identify and share place-based learning activities that promote deeper appreciation of Great Lakes coastal resources.

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