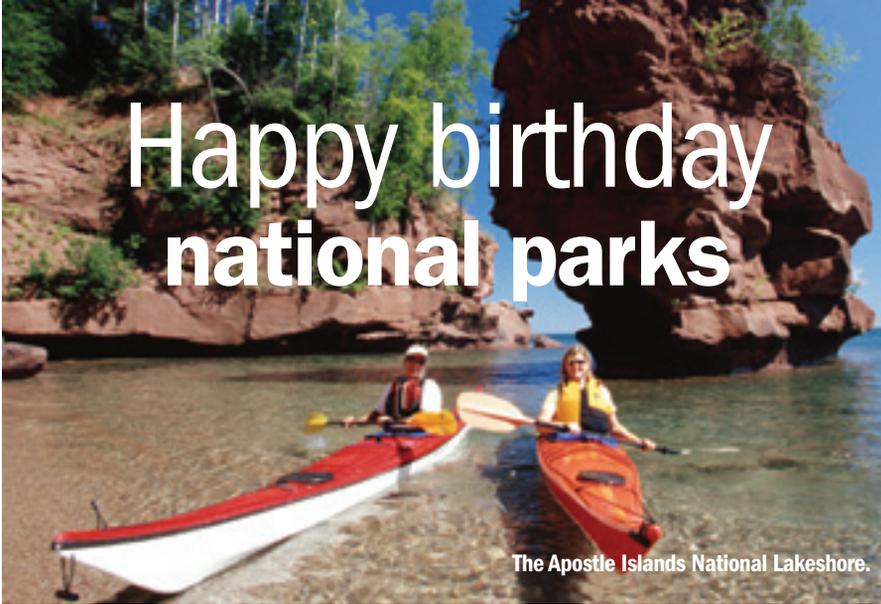


# Happy birthday national parks



The Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

LET'S GET OUTDOORS AND CELEBRATE AMERICA'S BEST IDEA.

Joseph C. Warren

## The National Park Service turns 100 this year. But the story of our national parks begins well more than a century ago.

In 1872, Yellowstone National Park was established as America's first national park in Wyoming and parts of Idaho and Montana. Yellowstone was also the first of its kind in the world and the founding of Yellowstone began a worldwide national park movement.

After the establishment of Yellowstone, several other U.S. national parks and monuments were established, mostly in the western states. However, no single agency provided management of all the different federal park properties.

Because of this, many individuals recognized a need to consolidate management of a national system of parks for the preservation of existing parklands and for lands that had yet to be protected.

"...I have done the best I could to show forth the beauty, grandeur, and all-embracing usefulness of our wild

mountain forest reservations and parks, with a view to inciting the people to come and enjoy them, and get them into their hearts, that so at length their preservation and right use might be made sure," wrote John Muir in the preface to *Our National Parks* in 1901. Muir, who emigrated from Scotland, but grew up in Wisconsin, was one of the most influential voices for the preservation of America's wild places.

It wasn't until 1916 that the National Park Service was officially created. In the act that established the agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior, the purpose of the National Park Service was identified to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life" and to leave the land and resources "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

The National Park Service still works to meet these goals, while also working with communities and partners across the country to create local recreation opportunities. Even from the beginning, Stephen Mather, the first director of the National Park Service, recognized that the states and the federal government needed to work together to develop a great national system of parks.

Today, the National Park System consists of more than 400 areas in all 50 states, including national parks, monuments, lakeshores, seashores, rivers, recreation areas and trails, protecting some of the most beautiful and ecologically diverse places in the country.

Wisconsin is home to several National Park System properties: Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, the Ice Age and North Country National Scenic Trails, the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, as well as the Ice Age National Scientific Reserve. The Ice Age Reserve is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and was created to protect, preserve and interpret outstanding examples of glaciation in Wisconsin. The reserve consists of nine units, including Interstate, Mill Bluff and Devil's Lake state parks and the Northern Kettle Moraine State Forest.

In this centennial year, let's celebrate what Muir, Mather and so many visionaries understood — that the value of parks cannot be quantified. Whether it's a national, state or local park — get out to the parks and they'll get in your heart.

Kayak to the Apostles. Paddle the St. Croix. Navigate the North Country. Discover the Ice Age. Camp. Hike. Learn. Explore. Enjoy. It's why these special places have been set aside for us and for generations to come. 

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The St. Croix National Scenic Riverway.

COURTESY NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



GET OUTDOORS IN 2016

- National parks centennial events are planned throughout 2016. For more information, see: [nps.gov/iatr/planyourvisit/calendar.htm](http://nps.gov/iatr/planyourvisit/calendar.htm).
- For a list of events and nature programs at Wisconsin's State Parks, go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search "get outdoors."