

Just and Sustainable Transitions for Isle Royale National Park

By

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Abstract

Under the Biden Administration, the US National Park Service (NPS) has renewed their commitment to building healthy collaborative partnerships with Indigenous communities. As a premier site for NPS-Tribal collaboration, joint activities at Isle Royale National Park have implications for a new wave of co-stewardship plans and influence regional ecological and social conditions. Evaluation of recent land management decisions, like that of wolf reintroduction in 2019, shows that Indigenous perspectives are marginalized in the planning process at Isle Royale. This practicum creates recommendations for potential sustainability and justice transitions at Isle Royale National Park regarding NPS-Tribal collaboration. The recommendations are supported by literature on recent co-stewardship cases, interviews with regional community members, and application of justice theory, summarized in Report 1. Report 2 covers an inclusive history of Isle Royale's main island, Minong, analyzing how varying frames of conservation inform contrasting narratives on land protection, and unpacking how conservation efforts contributed to Ojibwe dispossession of Minong. Pluralistic frames of conservation can improve NPS historical interpretation and support Indigenous participation in co-stewardship. Report 3 recommends that Isle Royale National Park (1) establish a formal co-management structure for NPS-Tribal decision-making, (2) develop a site on Minong for flexible Tribal access and shared land management authority, and (3) deepen collaboration on conservation, science, and education programming with Tribal communities and Grand Portage National Monument. Finally, Report 4 details how sustainability transitions at the NPS are driven by conservation frames acting as cumulative forces. The wilderness ideal, scientific expertise, and relational values represent systems of nature valuation that direct NPS policy and practice, with implications for how expert knowledge is created and recognized in the conservation space.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	1
Report 1: Executive Summary, Just and Sustainable Transitions for Isle Royale	2
Report 2: Conservation History of Minong.....	13
Report 3: Recommendations for Isle Royale National Park	24
Report 4: Epistemic Implications of the Isle Royale Case	37
Bibliography	44

Report 1:
Executive Summary, Just and Sustainable Transitions for Isle Royale National Park

This report is created in the understanding that

- In the pursuit of justice and equity, natural resource management, and sustainability goals, the US National Park Service (NPS) has renewed their commitment to building healthy collaborative partnerships with Indigenous communities (DOI and DOA 2021; DOI 2022).
- Indigenous communities in North America maintain deep cultural, spiritual connections to land, including practicing relationships of interdependency and reciprocal obligation. US National Parks are often located in areas with high levels of cultural and spiritual significance to Indigenous communities. When developing NPS-Tribal land management partnerships, federal representatives must recognize the unique relationships held by Indigenous people, and seek to accommodate how perspectives built on these relationships affect land management decisions (Jacobs et al. 2022; Fox et al. 2017; Simpson 2008).
- European settler policies and practices led to the widespread dispossession of Indigenous lands, obstructing Indigenous self-determination of land relationships and bringing harm to Indigenous communities. When developing NPS-Tribal land management partnerships, federal personnel must recognize Indigenous historical records and consider how contemporary societal positions affect land management perspectives (Farrell et al. 2021; Cochrane 2009).
- The NPS is directed to fulfill its obligations, including decision-making on natural resource conservation, historical preservation, wilderness protection, and visitor experience. The NPS must find ways to navigate potentially divergent goals and contrasting perspectives in order to fulfill its trust obligation to Indigenous sovereign nations without violating other agency requirements (NPS 2006; DOI 2022).
- As a premier US organization engaged in natural resource conservation and historical interpretation, NPS policy and practice has significant implications for international sustainability. Through scientific and historical interpretation, the NPS plays an integral role shaping societal attitudes around nature, resource conservation, and wilderness (Rose et al. 2022; Tang et al. 2022).
- NPS policy and practice has the potential to assist or undermine justice and equity efforts. NPS practices can evolve to accommodate greater degrees of Indigenous participation in the management of protected areas, but must overcome mistrust built from continual marginalization, exploitation and

tokenization of Indigenous perspectives. NPS interpretive materials shape narratives on Indigenous historical perspectives and influence societal attitudes towards Indigenous peoples and their land relations (Washburn and Hines 2022; Mills and Nie 2021).

Isle Royale National Park

- Isle Royale National Park (IRNP) is highly valued for its wilderness qualities, historical significance, recreational appeal, and natural characteristics. Isle Royale National Park is listed, in conjunction with the nearby Grand Portage National Monument, as premier cases for NPS collaboration with Tribal groups. With this status, IRNP policy and practice have implications for the emerging wave of NPS-Tribal co-stewardship and co-management arrangements. Future collaborative partnerships can benefit from knowledge gained in an analysis of IRNP-Tribal collaboration (NPS 2016; DOI 2022).
- Isle Royale National Park covers an archipelago of more than 400 islands. The main island is over 200 square miles, containing boreal forests, rocky ridges, inland lakes, and resident populations of wolves and moose. The island is commonly known as Isle Royale, though the Ojibwe call it Minong, “the good place”. It is approximately 15 miles southeast of Grand Portage, Minnesota, and about 55 miles northwest of Copper Harbor, Michigan. The administrative offices for IRNP are in Houghton, Michigan, 40 miles southwest of Copper Harbor (NPS 2016; Cochrane 2009).
- Ojibwe communities from the northern and southern shores of Lake Superior (Anishinaabewi-gichigami) continuously practice fishing, harvesting, and spiritual ceremonies on Minong. Today, these communities include the Grand Portage Band of the Chippewa, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, the Red Cliff Band, among others. The communities living along the shores of Lake Superior continue to assert their rights to use Minong (NPS 2022; Cochrane 2009).
- European colonization brought periods of destabilization to the Lake Superior region and its Indigenous communities. Through violence, economic instability, and unjust policies, Ojibwe relationships with Minong were obstructed, supplanted by settler activities. Despite this, Ojibwe people continued to interact with Minong, working in fishing and logging industries, providing guiding and transport services, and maintaining cultural practices. For most of its history, IRNP perpetuated the false narrative that Minong was a wilderness untouched by humans for thousands of years (Cochrane 2009).
- The US Federal Government purchased all of the islands in Lake Superior as part of the Treaty of 1842. Treaty rights to hunt on Minong and fish in IRNP are held by Tribes descended from signatories of the Treaty of 1842, including the

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, the Red Cliff Band, and the Bad River Band. However, the Grand Portage Band was left out of the proceedings. Though this North Shore community has hunting and fishing rights to other areas through the Treaty of 1854, they possess no formal treaty rights to Minong. Efforts to rectify this injustice with the 1844 Isle Royale Compact were inadequate. While issues with these Treaties complicate Lake Superior co-management, the Treaties today serve as a vital tool for Indigenous communities seeking to protect their land relationships. Future NPS-Tribal collaborations must consider the conditions presented by this unique treaty history (GLIFWC et al. 2017; Cochrane 2009).

- In the 1930s, the US Government moved to conserve Minong and the surrounding archipelago, creating Isle Royale National Park. Most of Minong's land was designated as protected Wilderness in the 1960s. The wilderness qualities and natural resources found on Minong inform the Park's cherished status (Little 1978).
- Institutionalized ecological research on wolf and moose predator-prey dynamics plays an important role in the identity of IRNP. Since 1958, researchers have performed continuous observational studies on the interactions of wolf and moose populations, making foundational contributions to the field of ecological science. Management decisions on Minong have implications for wolf and moose research, and may limit the number of interventions available to Tribal partners. Wolves and moose play an integral role in the recreational appeal and wilderness narratives at IRNP, but growing evidence suggests that wolves and moose were relatively recent additions to the island's ecology. Less frequent ice bridge formation stemming from regional climate disturbances prevents wolf and moose populations from freely traveling to and from Minong (Nelson et al. 2011; Hoy et al. 2023; Fisichelli 2013).
- Grand Portage National Monument and IRNP are fundamentally linked, as Park development at Grand Portage, Minnesota was originally considered when planners were looking for a secondary headquarters for the newly authorized IRNP. GPNM is located on the part of United States coastline closest to Minong. In addition, the plan for GPNM was originally created by the Grand Portage Band of the Chippewa, a Tribe greatly dispossessed from Minong. No other NPS unit was created with legislation so expressly aimed at cooperative management with Tribal groups as GPNM. GPNM has developed a wealth of experience in co-management policy and practice over the last 60 years. For these reasons, GPNM and its administrators are great assets with the potential to aid robust Tribal-NPS collaborations (Catton and Krahe 2023; NPS 2016).

Conservation

- Isle Royale's history is shaped by conservation efforts, but there are a variety of ways to frame and define "conservation" and "preservation". This report analyzes IRNP's history in the context of a diverse conservation frames, including how different frames define conservation, how they are used to inform policies and practices, how they direct actions towards diverging goals, and how their usage impacts Indigenous communities. In the report, the application of different conservation frames reveals contrasting perspectives on whether conservation actions had positive or negative eco-social outcomes. Therefore, it is preferable to utilize a pluralistic understanding of conservation when assessing historical conservation narratives, in order to include previously marginalized perspectives, and provide additional context into the function and role of conservation forces (Sandbrook 2015).
- Dominant forces in conservation typically use an instrumental/intrinsic value dichotomy to define and assess which resources and landscapes are deserving of protection. Instrumental value is a tool used to quantify resources or assign market value to ecosystem services. Intrinsic value is generally based on the inherent value of pristine and untrammelled wilderness spaces. The instrumental/intrinsic value dichotomy is inadequate for framing the relationships that Indigenous people have with nature. Relational value is a strong conceptual option for demonstrating how Indigenous nature valuations contrast with dominant conservation frames. (Himes and Muraca 2018; Chan et al. 2018).
- Historic preservation is an important goal at IRNP. Historic preservation goals are intertwined with other conservation efforts, and can denote a variety of activities. Historic preservation seeks "to retain diverse elements of the past" and "to perpetuate the distinctive identities of places", which can involve protecting human-made structures, restoring traditional practices, or protecting historically significant landscapes and resources. Historic preservation efforts can align with the goals of Indigenous communities. However, historic preservation conflicts with Indigenous goals when efforts to crystallize a fixed representation of the past undermine Indigenous attempts to create self-determined futures and adapt their relationships with land (NPS 2019; NPS 2016; Washburn and Hines 2022).
- Throughout Minong's history, settler actions built on conservation frames negatively impacted Ojibwe communities, obstructing their efforts to maintain cultural and practical connections to Minong. European trappers, fishers, and loggers engaged in unsustainable resource extraction, destabilizing Indigenous harvesting patterns. Seeking instrumental value provided by copper, the US Federal Government moved to purchase lands including Minong from the Ojibwe with the Treaty of 1842. IRNP is founded on Minong's intrinsic wilderness qualities, but Park guidelines make harvesting and access more difficult and subject to additional oversight. These conservation frames contribute to the

dispossession of Ojibwe people from Minong, especially with regards the Grand Portage Band. (Cochrane 2009; Little 1978)

- Throughout Minong's history, Indigenous communities use relational values to inform activities that include conservation. Before settler arrival, Ojibwe communities maintained respectful, reciprocal, and sustainable relationships with human and non-human (moose, paper birch, water) kin. Indigenous protocols supported the robust populations of beaver, caribou, and fish valued by settlers, and contributed to shaping the natural beauty cherished by wilderness advocates. Settler conservation policies limit the ability of Ojibwe communities to maintain these relationships, preempting positive conservation contributions, marginalizing Traditional Knowledge, and perpetuating damage dealt to Indigenous populations (Cochrane 2009).
- At IRNP today, leading conservation frames include the wilderness ideal and scientifically-informed ecological conservation. Land managers making decisions based on these frames use intrinsic and instrumental systems of value to inform choices. Relational value systems can generate different conclusions than the aforementioned frames when making land management decisions. For example, when considering wolf reintroduction to Minong in 2019, relational value systems underscored the Ojibwe recommendation to wait a decade before deciding whether or not to reintroduce wolves to the island in order to respect both their will and autonomy. However, wolves were reintroduced to the island, a decision supported by arguments built on systems of instrumental and intrinsic value (Larsen 2017).
- Land managers at IRNP should consider pluralistic conservation frames when developing Tribal-NPS partnerships, making land management decisions, and interpreting and communicating Minong's history. Using limited frames built on the instrumental/intrinsic value dichotomy will further marginalize the Indigenous perspective, perpetuating dispossession, reducing collective management capacity, and holding back Tribal-NPS relationships.

In order to assist in healthy NPS-Tribal collaboration, this practicum is created to provide recommendations on potential equity and sustainability transitions for Isle Royale National Park.

- This report presents and evaluates three recommendations for implementation by IRNP. These recommendations are (1) to establish a formal co-management structure for decision-making between Isle Royale National Park and regional Tribal groups, (2) to strengthen Tribal-Park relationships as a foundation for the long-term goal of establishing a site on Minong for flexible Tribal access and shared land management authority, and (3) to deepen collaboration on

conservation, science, and education programming with Tribal communities and Grand Portage National Monument.

1. Formal co-management structure

- The NPS defines co-management as a type of co-stewardship where a Federal agency legally delegates or shares decision-making and management authority with an outside entity. Co-management agreements require additional legal scrutiny to determine whether they violate or comply with the sub-delegation doctrine (DOI 2022; DOI and OSG 2022).
- The NPS defines 'co-stewardship' as a broad term referring to a wide variety of cooperative and collaborative engagements existing between the NPS land managers and Tribal entities related to conserving and preserving natural and cultural resources, including sharing and incorporating Tribal knowledge, combining management activities for increased capacity, and entering into Annual Funding Agreements under the Tribal Self-Governance Act (DOI 2022).
- Co-management agreements can be more burdensome than other types of co-stewardship arrangements. Recent NPS statements focus on co-stewardship developments that avoid legal complications. However, co-management arrangements provide an additional level of support for equitable Federal-Tribal collaboration because they affirm tribal sovereignty and create legitimization structures. Recent legal reviews on this subject conclude that the sub-delegation doctrine is more flexible when dealing with sovereign entities, and argue that these arrangements extend an additional degree of recognition to Tribal groups (NPS 2022; Lazerwitz 2020; Franz 2021).
- Ed Goodman's definition of co-management is better suited than the Federal definition for ensuring fair Indigenous representation in co-stewardship agreements. They argue that co-management occurs when six grounded principles are fulfilled: (a) Recognition of tribes as sovereign governments, (b) Incorporation of the federal government's trust responsibilities to tribes, (c) Legitimation structures for tribal involvement, (d) Meaningful integration of tribes early and often in the decision-making process, (e) Recognition and incorporation of tribal expertise, and (f) Dispute resolution mechanisms, aimed towards helping Indigenous people, rather than determining Federal limitations. The recommendations in this report seek to fulfill these grounded principles, and (a)-(f) notation is used to indicate where principles are fulfilled (Goodman 2000; Mills and Nie 2021).
- This report finds numerous benefits to establishing a formal co-management structure for IRNP and Tribal leaders to collaborate on land management partnerships. A co-management organization provides a legitimization structure (c)

- that recognizes Tribes as sovereign governments (a), and provides a space to solicit Tribal expertise (e). The formal structure can ensure that Tribal leaders will be involved early and often (d) and can be developed to include dispute resolution mechanisms (f). NPS leaders could develop a formal co-stewardship arrangement that would fulfill most of these principles, but it may fall short of recognizing Tribal sovereignty.
- A formal co-management structure will allow space for Ojibwe Tribes like the Grand Portage Band and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community to consistently meet directly with the NPS, as the Tribal-NPS relationship requires unique support compared to other stakeholder relationships. It opens space for Tribes to come together to discuss land management as it relates to Minong, overcoming separations imposed by the Treaties of 1842 and 1854. For some Tribal members, it is unclear how and to what extent the Park enforces Treaty rights, and this could provide clarity to the matter. Tribal representatives are interested in more participation in moose population management, and there is widespread support for increased cultural and educational trips for Tribal youth. Traditional ecological knowledge shared in this space could enhance Park interpretive materials and support IRNP decision-making by incorporating a pluralistic conservation frame. Lessons gained from this partnership can be recorded to add institutional experience for the NPS to draw on when pursuing future co-management arrangements. Finally, this structure supports the healthy relationships necessary to approach Recommendation #2. In their official reply to the 2019 wolf reintroduction, the Grand Portage Band suggested establishing a science advisory committee, demonstrating interest in establishing a similar structure (KBIC 2023; Larsen 2017).
2. Indigenous cultural camp
- Considering the dispossession of Minong from the Ojibwe people, reconciliatory measures should likely include designating a physical area on the island for Tribal members to fulfill cultural practices. In an ideal justice scenario, Indigenous people would be granted access to and usage of some portion of Minong with minimal oversight or restrictions imposed by IRNP. Indigenous people might use this space to host ceremonies, lead cultural educational programs, collect resources, and support ease of access for Indigenous people traveling to Minong. It is important for Indigenous people to be able to self-determine the purpose and function of this 'cultural camp'.
 - There are currently obstacles preventing the development of a cultural camp of this nature. A cultural camp includes certain amounts of Indigenous land management decision-making. Park administration would have to decide what degree of autonomy they can extend to Tribal groups without violating the sub-delegation doctrine and while maintaining other land management

obligations. Tribal activities may affect wolf and moose populations, impacting scientific research and recreational value. A co-management structure would help NPS land managers and Tribal representatives navigate the balance of offering flexibility, privacy, and equal partnership to Indigenous groups while maintaining agency requirements.

- Researchers associated with the Park have already identified specific areas as strong choices for a cultural camp. Options are preferable when they include areas located outside of Wilderness land, away from recreation and camping hotspots, with clear access from Lake Superior. The choices include Fisherman's Home at Siskiwit Bay and other sites in Malone Bay (Cochrane 2023).

3. Educational partnerships and informal relationships

- IRNP, GPNM, and Ojibwe communities could benefit from mutual training and educational programs. IRNP staff will gain additional ecological and historical perspectives from training opportunities with Ojibwe communities and at Grand Portage National Monument. Lessons learned can be used to incorporate the Indigenous perspective into interpretive materials. Tribal members can gain practical experience in land management while fulfilling traditional cultural practices on Minong. IRNP and Tribal partners can create a more resilient, more productive coalition by developing a greater density of formal and informal relationships. GPNM and IRNP have co-managed the Gichi Onigaming Conservation Crew since 2017, a positive starting point for developing additional partnerships. Programming of this nature can be funded through the GPNM Annual Funding Agreement (Catton and Krahe 2023; NPS 2022).
- IRNP can take additional steps to support informal relationships with Ojibwe communities. IRNP staff should demonstrate commitment to relationships and learn about Indigenous cultures by attending summer Powwows. IRNP could also develop additional plans to host Indigenous communities on Minong. The Wendigo flag raising ceremony is a positive example of IRNP welcoming Ojibwe communities to the island for a culturally significant event. Informal relationship building at Tribal events and on Minong will be most successful in tandem with a formal co-management structure. IRNP could invite Indigenous representatives to Minong specifically to participate in a co-management structure.
- The IRNP-GPNM Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) is a strong option for legitimizing, planning, and funding the activities listed in Recommendations 1-3. AFAs are a flexible tool for funding NPS-Tribal partnerships, as they can be continually updated to fulfill a wide range of functions. The NPS considers AFAs to be a co-stewardship arrangement, which avoids the additional legal oversight triggered in co-management cases. However, the IRNP-GPNM AFA is already connected to an approved co-management plan, a rare situation for NPS

properties. NPS and Tribal leadership have repeatedly used the IRNP-GPNM AFA to develop successful projects relating to building maintenance, youth education, and historical interpretation. The GPNM-IRNP AFA has the potential to be used in a wider variety of programs relating to Indigenous justice and co-stewardship, and could set an example as a positive co-management case for other NPS-Tribal collaborations (NPS 2022; Cochrane 2023)

Discussion

- It is useful to consider conservation frames as ‘cumulative forces’ in the way that they inform land management policy and practice. Individuals hold unique, personalized, and often opaque beliefs about nature and its value, influenced by preferences, upbringing, experiences, and relationships. Cultures center specific conservation frames, such as American settler interest in wilderness ideals, mainstream subscription to scientifically-informed conservation, and Indigenous support of reciprocal nature relations, but the use and assigned importance of conservation frames are not uniform across cultures. Individual and group beliefs on nature and conservation accumulate through communities and ultimately have a significant impact on the policy and practical choices made by conservation organizations.
- Analysis of recent IRNP activity demonstrates that different conservation frames inform diverging conclusions on how land should be defined, valued, and managed. For example, the 2019 wolf reintroduction decision was justified with conservation frames centering both scientific and ecological value and contribution to wilderness qualities. Ojibwe representatives participating in the decision-making process recommended waiting ten years before deciding if wolves should be reintroduced. The Indigenous recommendation used a conservation frame built on relational values, which considers aspects outside of those centered by dominant conservation frames, including wolves self-determined interests, human responsibility to wolves, wolves responsibility to other living and non-living kin, and continued interdependency with wolves.
- Cumulative forces can assist researchers in understanding how conservation frames lead to decisions in land management cases. In the wolf reintroduction case and others like it, individual stakeholders hold conservation beliefs that cross categorical boundaries set by conservation frames, making it difficult to pinpoint when and how individuals use conservation frames to inform their arguments. Despite the nuance found in individuals’ nature beliefs, tertiary land management decisions are heavily informed by the cumulative impact of conservation frames.
- When offering justice to Tribal collaborators, the NPS can utilize delineations of recognitional, participatory, and distributional justice to better understand the

importance of considering a pluralism of diverse conservation frames. Recognitional justice refers to adequate recognition and inclusion of cultural perspectives, participatory justice refers to fair participation in planning processes, and distributional justice refers to fair distribution of resources. In the wolf reintroduction case, the NPS attempted to offer participatory justice to Tribal groups, but their perspective was marginalized among the many stakeholders promoting dominant conservation frames. The process failed to recognize Indigenous historical relationships with Minong, the Indigenous political position, or Indigenous conceptions of land value and conservation, so a lack of recognitional justice undermined equitable participation (Leach et al. 2018).

- The NPS should incorporate recognitional and participatory justice into its DEI efforts to maximize positive outcomes and avoid unintended consequences for Indigenous people. The NPS risks inflicting violence and injustice on Indigenous people and other marginalized communities if they attempt to distribute conservation education experiences to those communities without first achieving recognitional and participatory justice. One troubling example for distribution without recognition or participation is the tragedy of Indigenous indoctrination in early 20th century North American boarding schools. Through the attempt to distribute settler cultural ideals to Indigenous communities, Indigenous families were divided, Indigenous children were harmed, and Indigenous cultures and languages were erased in lieu of Western programming. The NPS must avoid this pitfall when distributing programming to diverse audiences by soliciting Tribal participation and incorporating Tribal perspectives on conservation and nature (Newland 2022).
- As a premier case for healthy NPS-Tribal co-management, IRNP should place additional focus on the role that pluralistic conservation frames play in land management decisions. Continued study of IRNP co-management efforts will provide insights on how the NPS can offer multi-faceted justice to Indigenous collaborators, including which decision-making structures engender positive relationships, and how relational value frames inform land management choices. Doing so improves the likelihood of positive eco-social outcomes, supporting marginalized communities, widening available conservation strategies, and fulfilling NPS DEI goals.
- The incorporation of Tribal knowledge in NPS land management decisions raises questions on how ecologists and land managers validate knowledge and expertise. Indigenous knowledge is created outside of the Western scientific method, and some supporters of the latter tradition believe the former is inadequate for creating sound recommendations based on objective truth. By evaluating NPS-Tribal co-management cases, justice advocates can determine if Tribal knowledge is given fair consideration. NPS-Tribal co-management cases are also ideal situations for practitioners to compare how Western knowledge and

Indigenous knowledge inform land management decisions. Further research following NPS-Tribal co-stewardship cases may reveal additional insights into how different knowledge traditions can be reconciled to maximize pro-ecosocial outcomes.

Report 2:

Conservation History of Minong

Background

The United States National Park System (NPS) is a leading institution defining human-nature relationships and communicating American land histories. As the Department of the Interior seeks to extend environmental justice to American Tribal communities, National Park administrators must contend with a variety of challenges in their efforts to develop healthy institutional relationships and support effective collaboration with Tribal groups. Decision makers guide changes in the historical narratives that National Parks communicate, seeking to incorporate diverse perspectives and recognize the NPS's role in Indigenous displacement.

As part of this effort, this report traces the island of Minong's history in the context of conservation frames. The island has been impacted by humans acting in support of conservation and preservation goals in a multitude of ways throughout its history. Importantly, using different conservation frames leads to contrasting results on whether particular actions led to positive outcomes, meaning that some actions are considered to support conservation in one frame, while detracting from conservation in another. This case demonstrates the importance of using a pluralism of cross-cultural paradigms when approaching conservation topics. In addition, recognition of problematic conservation paradigms helps ensure that future conservation efforts do not unintentionally perpetuate injustice that prioritizes the worldviews and values of the dominant settler society at further expense of Indigenous peoples.

Minong is located in northwest Lake Superior, the largest landmass in an archipelago of more than 400 islands. The thin sliver of land runs southwest to northeast, 45 miles long by 8 miles wide (NPS 2022). Minong is an Ojibwe word meaning "the good place", but the island is now more commonly known as Isle Royale, the centerpiece of IRNP. Land cover on Minong ranges from rocky to forested, with the main island hosting numerous inland lakes (W&M of Isle Royale 2018). The island is renowned for its remote wilderness qualities and for resident populations of wolves and moose. Research on wolf and moose populations have inspired significant contributions to the ecological field on the subject of predator-prey dynamics.

In North American conservation cases, it is especially important to consider historical narratives of Indigenous displacement and cultural erasure. Conservation programs continue to be drivers of Indigenous displacement by preventing Tribal resettlement, so we must assess the impact of varying conservation policies and paradigms on Tribal communities and their rights to ceded lands (Tauli-Corpuz 2018). If they do not recognize and seek to amend the historical injustice and violence that the US government brought upon American Indigenous communities, organizations like the National Park System will fall short in their attempts to engender diversity, equity, and inclusion (Jacobs et al. 2022). In addition to undermining US-Tribal reconciliation efforts and threatening Indigenous self-determination, continually privileging dominant paradigms will further alienate Indigenous perspectives from US land conservation

efforts, weakening the diversity of our solutions and our ability to adapt to growing environmental concerns.

Minong lies approximately 15 miles southeast of Grand Portage, Minnesota and Thunder Bay, Ontario, where the Grand Portage Band of the Chippewa and the Fort William First Nation Ojibway call home. The Grand Portage Band is the American-recognized Tribal group geographically closest to Minong. The GBP have a history of cultural practices and relationships with the island. Settler incursion and United States land management policy separated the Grand Portage Band from Minong, and for most of the 20th century, Isle Royale National Park communicated the narrative that no Tribal groups had used the island for thousands of years. Today, both the NPS and Tribal leaders are seeking to support the development of Indigenous relationships with Minong. The NPS praises Grand Portage National Monument and Isle Royale National Park as a premier example of Tribal co-management, yet the participating organizations face challenges in their attempts to build collaboration. The Grand Portage Band has no formal Treaty Rights to Minong. The American government recognized these rights for south shore Ojibwe through an earlier Treaty, including the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, the Bad River Tribe, and the Red Cliff Band. These Tribal communities also possess historical relationships with Minong and have an ongoing interest in Isle Royale land management practices. The complex history underlying these relationships necessitates historical analysis. Organizing this history in terms of the influence of diverse conservation perspectives on ecosocial outcomes ensures that justice considerations will play a part in future Isle Royale management choices. Isle Royale National Park is a prominent American conservation space, and its policy and practice contains ramifications for conservation organizations' sustainability transitions overall.

Conservation Frames

Conservation definitions are conceptual and dynamic, and can vary based on the social and cultural perspectives of the practitioner (Sandbrook 2015). It is helpful to organize conservation frames by differences in their underlying axiologies. Western conservation generally centers an instrumental/intrinsic value dichotomy (Muraca 2016; Vucetich 2015). Conservation efforts frequently focus on nature's instrumental value, values that can be quantified and compared, as in the calculation of biodiversity, tree cover amount, and ecosystem services. Alternatively, intrinsic values are irreducible and tend to be opaque. Though we can calculate a number of different species in a plot of land, society generally believes that each one of those species as a whole has an intrinsic right to exist. In addition to considerations of rights, intrinsic value is often applied to wilderness, wildness, and concomitant concepts like the 'pristine' and 'sublime' (Cronen 1996).

Through a series of workshops, researchers at the United Nations' Intergovernmental Policy Platform for Biological and Ecological Services (IPBES) concluded that the instrumental/intrinsic value dichotomy inadequately explained all the ways that people derive value from nature (Chan et al. 2018). A main problem was that intrinsic value, value unto itself, did little to represent many of the relationships people

have with nature, especially those of cultural and spiritual significance. Meanwhile, instrumental values refer to substitutable values, while ongoing human-nature relations have their own non-substitutable value to the participants. They proposed relational values as an alternative, and incorporated it into their ‘Nature’s Contributions to People’ framework (Diaz et al. 2018).

Development in the field of conservation axiology have led to frames where values are considered to be ‘instrumental’ or ‘non-instrumental’. This understanding can be effective for isolating the instrumental quality of some values. However, this paper seeks to differentiate between specific types of non-instrumental value, and recognizes that some value frames are dominant while others are marginalized. With this goal, the intrinsic-instrumental value dichotomy is presented as the dominant structure, while relational value is presented as a leading ‘non-instrumental’ alternative with justice benefits. Many Indigenous communities, including American Tribal entities, hold cultural practices and beliefs that align with this understanding of relational value (Gould et al. 2019; Sheremata 2018).

It is beneficial to consider relational values when analyzing how conservation frames impact Indigenous lifeways. In Anishinaabeg tradition, *akiing* literally means, “the land to which we belong” (Akiing 2023, Hausdoerffer 2017). It is incorrect to categorize *akiing* as merely a conservation frame since the term holds cultural significance of far greater scope, but it can be useful as a foil for dominant understandings of conservation. Akiing denotes mutual interdependence and reciprocity with human and non-human kin, asking the questions: “How do we rely on the land?” and “How does the land rely on us?”. This aspect of *akiing* can be considered a form of relational value. When assessing Minong’s history, asking questions related to *akiing* reveals different perspectives on the effectiveness of conservation actions.

Finally, it is important to clarify how conservation frames overlap with definitions of preservation. As used by the US Federal government, conservation is generally thought to relate to natural resources, while preservation denotes human influence. This understanding aligns with precedent set by the National Historic Preservation Act. This type of preservation, historic preservation, seeks “to retain diverse elements of the past” and “to perpetuate the distinctive identities of places” (Datel 1985). Though instrumental value may be used as a tool to assess the worth of such preservation, the qualities being preserved are based on intrinsic values. It is useful to consider preservation in relation to the progression of time: preservation seeks to suspend or crystallize a landscape or culture based on a nostalgic sense of the past. This sense of the past holds the intrinsic value.

Historical preservation differs in its axiological underpinnings from relational preservation, the preservation of deep cultural and land relationships. Indigenous understandings of preservation refer more closely to the continuation of interdependent, self-determined communities. Participants seek to preserve adaptable relationships, even if the exact content of those relationships changes over time. For example, historical preservation narratives might center a traditional Indigenous bow-hunting practice, while many contemporary Tribes support firearms as a way to minimize harm and hunt efficiently (Reo and Whyte 2012). While mainstream definitions typically

categorize natural resources into conservation and human landmarks into preservation, relational preservation includes both natural and cultural elements through the focus on interdependent relationships with the greater goal of ensuring future survival.

The differences between these two understandings can create difficulties when historic preservation directives discourage Indigenous forms of adaptive land management and community development. Assessing Minong's conservation history reinforces the idea that historic preservation and relational preservation forces can hold conflicting goals. Having deconstructed various definitions of conservation, we can now assess different eras in Isle Royale's history, considering when and if human actions aided or detracted from conservation, and if conservation efforts were in conflict with other overarching goals.

Historical Analysis

The following analysis is possible thanks to a historical record collected by Timothy Cochrane. Arriving at Minong as a park ranger in 1976, Cochrane spent four decades collecting Ojibwe historical records in order to disprove narratives that Isle Royale was an "uninhabited wilderness", with no recent Indigenous habitation. While serving as Superintendent of Grand Portage National Monument, Cochrane oversaw one of the first successful usages of the Tribal Self Governance Agreement of 1994 (Robyn 2010). Ten years later, he published *Minong: The Good Place*. The ethnohistory successfully demonstrates Ojibwe usage of the island up to the present, while unpacking the events that erased Ojibwe narratives. In the foreword, late Grand Portage Chairman Norman Deschampe states, "Isle Royale is part of our territory, part of our history, and part of our families".

Copper tools found on Minong date to over 5000 years before present, and carbon testing of associated wood remains suggest that some of the artifacts are more than 6500 years old (Pompeani 2015, Clark 2017). While the quantity of evidence fluctuates throughout the historical record, findings show that Indigenous groups consistently inhabited Minong up to the arrival of European settlers. The island is featured in multiple stories in the North Shore Ojibwe oral tradition, solidifying its role as an aspect of their cultural and territorial landscape (Cochrane 2009). While the harsh winter conditions made year-round habitation less likely, Ojibwe communities used and continue to use Minong as a site for summer fishing and foraging. In addition, Ojibwe cultural rites and ceremonies were held on the island.

It is beyond the scope of this report to determine whether Ojibwe communities were 'successful' in their conservation of nature during the pre-colonial period. Ecological characteristics certainly fluctuated, and early settlers reported bountiful resources in the area. However, we can say that conservation did occur in the relational sense, in that Ojibwe lifeways were maintained through conserving intertwined nature relations. These relationships changed over time, diverging from the concept of fixed historic preservation, while good interaction with land and kin were protected through adaptive Indigenous cultural traditions.

Through their conservation knowledge, the Ojibwe utilized early settler economic activity to support their self-determination in some capacities. French and English fur traders relied on Indigenous knowledge of beaver behavior and travel corridors, resulting in the Grand Portage becoming a regional economic trading hub. Ojibwe narratives and settler perspectives during this time period agree that fair trade supported and enriched Indigenous communities. In terms of relational preservation, Indigenous communities were able to protect their traditions, while incorporating new economic activities. Historical preservation enacted by the NPS at Grand Portage National Monument seeks to capture the spirit of this time. However, contemporary efforts to recognize this time period are confronted with the reality that subsequent settler activity would severely disrupt regional Ojibwe communities. Efforts to promote that past era of healthy relations must recognize how that period relates to the goals of contemporary Ojibwe groups.

European colonization would bring periods of repeated destabilization to the Lake Superior region and its Indigenous communities. Through violence and injustice, Ojibwe relationships with Minong were undone, supplanted by settler actions. Settler exploitation of beaver, caribou, and fish populations led to resource scarcity, and the economic gravity of the fur trade interfered with traditional cultural practices. The fur trade declined from the 18th to the 19th century, and the resulting economic vacuum would begin a period known by Grand Portage Ojibwe as “the hungry years”, lasting until the mid-20th century. Conflicting conservation paradigms and contrasting relationships to the land often played a key role in these events.

Early settler maps of the region sparked significant inaccuracies about the shape, size, and habitation of Minong. While the first European maps named Minong correctly, distinguished French mapmaker Jacques Bellin would introduce the name ‘Isle Royale’ in his 1755 rendition of Lake Superior (Cochrane 2009). In this map, Minong is inaccurately placed, and multiple imaginary islands are added to Lake Superior. Contemporary scholars conclude that these mythical islands were incorrectly introduced to be a gift to the French monarchy, with “Isle Royale” named for the king. With this act, Bellin initiated cultural erasure of North Shore Ojibwe names, while introducing geographic inaccuracies that made subsequent mapping and travel more difficult. Thus, by contemporary standards, the introduction of the name Isle Royale undermined conservation goals. It marginalized Ojibwe narratives, undoing valuable relationships built over generations. In addition, by popularizing factual inaccuracies, Bellin would make any theoretical ecosystem conservation more difficult.

Throughout the hungry years of the late 18th and 19th centuries, settler activity in the Lake Superior region altered Ojibwe lifeways in detrimental ways. Overharvesting of beaver populations meant that some North Shore Ojibwe would migrate further west, while those that stayed behind were forced to alter their livelihoods. Of the latter, many chose to earn money working for settler fishing and trapping companies as a substitute. Those that took this path found themselves caught between competing French and American companies. Traditional fur clothing and blankets were replaced with imported wool, and foreign foodstuffs like flour and sugar became staples of a shifting diet. Since Indigenous workers became more economically and materially reliant on settler

companies, traditional farming and fishing techniques began to erode, deepening the Indigenous reliance on settler business. As most settler records from those times focused on the accounts of men, the traditional ecological knowledge held by Ojibwe women in this period is an especially unknown area.

In this time period, conservation was not achieved by any measure. Settler land ethics were focused on extracting instrumental value with little consideration of resource conservation, damaging ecosystem health. Beaver and caribou populations were greatly reduced, and Lake Superior fish stocks began to decline. In terms of historic preservation, the unraveling of Ojibwe land relationships was a negative change, as much traditional knowledge and property was lost. However, the damage to the preservation of Ojibwe land relations is a far better frame by which to understand the plight of Indigenous communities during the period. The problem was not simply that culture changed over time. Rather, North Shore Ojibwe were forced to alter their lifeways without their consent, so deeply that many healthy relationships were eradicated.

In the 1840s, reports of rich mineral deposits in the region incited a 'copper rush', requiring oversight from the United States government. Indigenous land claims were an obstacle to new business ventures, so the Federal government moved quickly to remove them. The United States took ownership of Minong through the Treaty of 1842. Treaty negotiations were supervised by newly-appointed Indian Affairs Superintendent Robert Stuart, who had recently replaced longtime Indian Agent Henry Schoolcraft. In "*Minong*", Timothy Cochrane frames Robert Stuart as a bad actor responsible for the unjust treaties to follow.

In September 1842, between three and four thousand Ojibwe gathered at La Pointe for treaty negotiations. La Pointe is along the southeastern shore of Lake Superior, and due to the distance and the lateness of the season, no delegation from the Grand Portage Band attended. Cochrane suggests that Stuart misled attending Indigenous communities on the content of the Treaty. Verbal reports of his proposition during the event differ from those submitted to Federal record. The Treaty language is vague on the transfer of Minong, reading in parentheses, the sale "(including all the islands in said lake)". Fond du Lac Chief Balsom is quoted at the 1844 Isle Royale Compact, saying, "We did not sell Isle Royale; we only sold the islands close to the mainland on this shore". Buffalo, chief of La Pointe, similarly remarked, "We did not give away Isle Royale...we only sold the islands round this place", at the same event. An interpreter speaking for the Keweenaw chief relayed, "We deny selling Isle Royale...The island belongs to the Indians living nearest to it." Despite protest from Tribal leaders, the Treaty of 1842 marks the beginning of American ownership of Minong, continuing to this day (Cochrane 2009).

Grand Portage leaders Attikons, Shawgawnawsheence, and Joseph Peau du Chat became aware that Minong had been sold without their consent. The leaders scrambled to derive some value for their land, petitioning the Federal government for a price of \$75,000, which would be about \$2.7 million today after adjusting for inflation. When new Indian subagent Alfred Brunson arrived at La Pointe in January 1843, he quickly discovered that Stuart had "stripped his offices of all maps, copies of treaties, and correspondence." Quickly recognizing problems with the Treaty, Brunson echoed the

Grand Portage leaders' requests for fair compensation. Brunson's supervisor took issue with the insinuation of incompetence, removing Brunson and reinstating Robert Stuart.

Stuart and Grand Portage leaders convened in 1843 at La Pointe for a meeting that would become the Isle Royale Compact. Shawgawnawsheence and Attikons were among the signing Grand Portage chiefs. Peau du Chat, seen as a shrewd negotiator and resolute advocate, was unable to attend due to illness. The Grand Portage delegation agreed to sell Minong, and received \$500 in gunpowder and beef for the return trip. The amount was so much less than the requested amount that it is reasonable to conclude the delegation believed the goods to be gifts, given merely for showing up. Not until the Treaty of 1854 would the Grand Portage Band receive any compensation or Treaty Rights for any of their lands. By this time, Minong was established as part of Michigan, while the Grand Portage Band was split between Minnesota and the Canadian province of Ontario.

The different Treaty parties displayed their conflicting land valuations during these negotiations. The US Government primarily considered the instrumental value of copper mining. Since the Ojibwe did not mine copper industriously, Federal agents argued that they were non-users of Minong. Through the property laws used by the US Government, ownership of these lands could be purchased for instrumental value, in the form of cash payments. However, this valuation of land was markedly different from the way that Indigenous communities valued their relationship with the land. Indigenous advocates involved with treaty delegations fought to maintain their land rights, seeking to preserve relationships through gathering, hunting, and fishing. The Indigenous request was that settlers also honor these relationships, treating the land with respect and harvesting prudently. In terms of *akiing*, the treaties would hopefully assist in preserving interdependent relationships at a fundamental level, regardless of Federal claims of property ownership. These Treaty Rights are valuable tools for Tribal communities today. Unfortunately, through the rest of the 19th century, exploitation would continue to undermine Ojibwe efforts to conserve their cultural resources and preserve their way of life. Settler actions were justified in their own instrumental value frame, as they paid the agreed upon amount to own the resources. However, from the Indigenous perspective, subsequent settler actions would violate expectations to maintain and develop respectful and reciprocal relationships with land.

Federal policy and settler practices continued to destabilize Indigenous lifeways. The Dawes Act brought allotment policy in 1887, but settler farming practices were a poor fit for soil conditions in the region. In the early decades of the 20th century, Minong was transitioning from the settler logging industry to a growing recreational tourism industry. Some Grand Portage members earned money guiding people to and from Minong, but most instrumental value was captured by the settler industry. During this time period, a growing narrative claimed that Minong was a pristine, primitive wilderness, unknown to local Ojibwe. This narrative would be used to lay the foundation for the argument supporting the creation of a National Park (Cochrane 2009).

The early decades of the 20th century would see growing romanticism of the intrinsic value of wilderness. Advocates for landscape preservation like John Muir and

Stephen Mather argued for the development of a national system of protected areas. In most cases, the US Government had to purchase future protected areas from private landholders. Arguments for the creation of a national park on Minong grew in the 1920s, but the advent of the Great Depression meant that the Federal funding for the project was scarce (Little 1978). In order to raise interest for protection of the island, conservation advocates spoke of Minong's unique wilderness qualities. This narrative carried the false message that Isle Royale was untouched by humans for thousands of years, including by Ojibwe.

When Isle Royale National Park received approval from President Roosevelt in 1939, it was partially because he viewed it as an ideal location for a Civilian Conservation Corps retreat. The frame through which the CCC actually engages in conservation is largely instrumental, seeking to conserve natural resource stocks while generating economic value. On Isle Royale, the CCC developed a trail network to support the instrumental value of the growing recreation industry. Isle Royale's wilderness advocates took offense, claiming that this development damaged Minong wilderness qualities undermining the purpose for the park (Little 1978). If the Park's intrinsic value was based on the lack of human interaction, then trail maintenance would undermine that value. Isle Royale's creation did include additional considerations of historic preservation compared to other National Parks. The plan's architects strove to preserve traditional fishing buildings on the island. The historic fishing camps still existing today are highly valued for their intrinsic value and for their potential to aid in future adaptive management plans.

In this fashion, 20th century debates on the function of Isle Royale National Park fall into two camps, on either side of the intrinsic/instrumental value dichotomy. When the park was created, the intrinsic value of wilderness and the instrumental value of nature recreation were weighed against the instrumental value of logging, fishing, and mineral extraction. When the Wilderness Act passed in 1964, Isle Royale National Park was one of the first properties considered for application. Again, arguments fell across the intrinsic/instrumental dichotomy. The main issue was regarding the level of managerial oversight allowed to the Park Service leaders. Advocates on the intrinsic side fought for stricter regulation to discourage intervention, while others argued that Park management needed more control to effectively conserve resources. The final decision leaned in the wilderness advocates' favor: management requirements were spelled out in the committee report but not included in the bill. 99% of the Park's land was designated as wilderness. Today, less than 2000 acres are excluded from the Wilderness area, allowing for a greater range of usage.

Regulated tourism increased access and safety to Minong, paving the way for larger visitation numbers. The leading conservation narrative of Isle Royale National Park would gradually shift from that of uninhabited wilderness to one of scientific fascination. In the early 20th century, Minong came to host populations of wolves and moose. In the 1950s, ecologists recognized that the island's isolation would provide ideal conditions to control for observational predator-prey studies. Research on Minong's wolves and moose would prove to be pivotal to the field of wildlife ecology research, and

would grow to represent an increasing portion of the Park's identity (Nelson 2011). Today, wolves and moose interactions are a key part of the advertised Isle Royale experience, and the predator-prey research is the longest continual study of its kind.

The protection of Minong as Isle Royale National Park was a victory for mainstream conservation goals. The island and its natural resources are certainly better protected today because a National Park exists, as conservation policies have protected both instrumental value and intrinsic value of the land. Tourism provides significant economic value in the form of recreation. Wilderness policies are upheld, maintaining, if not an untouched landscape, then at least one of tranquility and beauty. The scientific studies provide value to the field of wildlife ecology, and educational experience radiates into the populace through citizen science programs. However, over time these practices have solidified the erasure of the Ojibwe perspective. Relational values to the island developed over many generations are threatened, and in practice, far fewer Grand Portage Ojibwe use the island. The Park is under access restrictions due to federal policy, and, because of the problematic treaties, North Shore Ojibwe have no treaty rights to fish in the waters around Minong. Thus, while the 20th century is a success story for Isle Royale in both ecosystem and wilderness conservation, the focus on these frames obscures the damage done to Ojibwe culture. In terms of relational preservation, Ojibwe connections to Minong were obstructed during the 20th century.

Another troubling narrative underscores the historical perspectives justifying the National Park. While wolf and moose were originally thought to be a core part of the Isle Royale ecosystem, closer inquiry reveals that their tenure on the island is relatively recent. There is little mention of wolf or moose habitation in the Ojibwe narratives that include Minong. Instead, traditional stories suggest that populations of beaver and caribou were more prevalent. There is growing evidence that wolves and moose were transported to the island in the early 20th century by settler outdoor enthusiasts, because they had over-hunted and exhausted the original game stocks on the mainland. Using this understanding, preservation of intrinsic qualities of pristine wilderness is not a valid argument for supporting Minong's wolf and moose populations.

Modern Era

In the 21st century, the National Park System has turned towards supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion programming, seeking to represent greater diversity in the Park experience. This includes the incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge into management decisions, and the preservation of American Indigenous histories. In 2019, Isle Royale was added to the National Register of Historic Places Act as the Minong Traditional Cultural Property (Freedman 2019). Under the National Historic Preservation Act, efforts have been taken to preserve both Indigenous and settler history in the region. However, preservation of reciprocal relationships is not always centered in conceptions of historic preservation. The contrast is framed effectively by the story of John and Helen Linklater. The Linklater's were the last Ojibwe to hold permanent residences on Minong. Well versed in traditional practices, John and Helen served as guides and teachers of Ojibwe craft until their passing in the 1930s. CCC men would

later use the Linklater cabins as a base to fight forest fires. Tragically, in the 1970s the cabins were burned to the ground in the name of preserving the wilderness quality of Minong (Cochrane 2009). In this example, relational preservation and historic landscape preservation are directly opposed. In future conservation efforts, those seeking to offer historic preservation to Tribal groups are wise to consider the relations through which Tribal communities sustain their quality of life and cultural traditions, as difference in the two frames may preclude successful collaboration.

Modern Treaty Rights fail to recognize the Grand Portage Band's historical ties to Minong. However, the Treaties are an important tool for Tribal groups seeking to preserve their relationships with nature. The Treaty of 1842 served as the basis for multiple court cases affirming the validity of Indigenous hunting and fishing rights. The Grand Portage Band holds their own Treaty Rights through the Treaty of 1854, rights that should not be destabilized by attempts to offer more access to Minong. Furthermore, in the Treaty of 1842, Indian Affairs Agents did not bother to assign hunting and fishing rights on specific lands to specific tribes, instead opening the whole area to all the participating tribes. These conditions introduce additional challenges for Indigenous communities attempting to exercise Lake Superior Treaty Rights, as one Tribe could technically extract from another Tribe's fishing grounds. The Treaties are a powerful tool for preserving Tribal relationships with land, but some confusion exists over resource-taking allowances at Isle Royale National Park. When seeking to offer justice to Tribal communities, Isle Royale National Park must seek intervention structures that overcome the complexities presented by the Treaty history.

The Grand Portage Band faced challenges in their attempts to preserve relationships with Minong, but they were successful in preservation efforts with the creation of Grand Portage National Monument. In 1999, Grand Portage gained co-management of the property through the Tribal Self-Governance Act, and a Heritage Center was built in 2007. Through an Annual Funding Agreement, Grand Portage Band can formulate and enact programs with significant flexibility. Isle Royale National Park and the Grand Portage National Monument collaborated to create the Grand Portage Conservation Corps program in 2018, where Tribal youth take an active role in natural resource management on both islands. Through its programming, the Grand Portage National Monument supports historic preservation, relational preservation, and resource conservation, and could be a valuable ally for easing collaboration between the Grand Portage Band and Isle Royale National Park.

Conservation frames centering intrinsic and instrumental value have recently acted as obstacles to the reinstatement of Ojibwe relations, undermining chances to form pluralistic conservation coalitions. When attempting to collaborate with the Grand Portage Band, Isle Royale National Park leaders must be careful to abide by Wilderness Policy directives, and have an interest in supporting wolf and moose research. When the wolf population sank to critical levels in the 2010s, Isle Royale administration drafted an Environmental Impact Statement. Invited tribal leaders recommended that researchers should wait a decade to see if wolves would return to the island on their own accord. However, a lack of wolves on Minong would upend the uninterrupted ecological study, as

well as throw the marketing narrative of Isle Royale into question (Larsen 2017). Numerous stakeholders debated over conservation best practices, and the Indigenous perspective, based in relational values, was pushed to the margins. New wolves were introduced to the island, fulfilling the demands to ensure instrumental value provided by the study and the intrinsic value of a wilderness landscape that includes wolves.

The NPS is working to support the reformation of Indigenous land relations to Minong. It is important to consider if the modern usage of Minong upholds conditions of *akiing*, denoting reciprocal interdependence with land. Contemporary tourism practices bring visitors from far-flung locations, and necessary transportation and production of outdoor gear carries a carbon load. Groups like the National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation are spearheading a plan to make the five regional parks carbon neutral, including Isle Royale. However, carbon neutrality plans tend to focus on immediate operational costs, excluding costs incurred by tourists on their way to the island. Consider *akiing*, it does not appear that tourists identify as ‘belonging’ to Minong, in that their futures directly rely on its continued existence. This contrasts with the experience of Lake Superior Ojibwe, who hold a perspective that their existence is fundamentally intertwined with the health of lifeforms and landscapes in the region. In the future, Isle Royale leadership should identify how their activities denote a mutual reciprocity between tourists and land. Without this reciprocity, it will be difficult for Isle Royale to develop institutional sustainability of resource use on a localized scale.

Current Isle Royale National Park administration is tasked with conserving the instrumental value of the island’s natural resources, protecting the intrinsic wilderness quality of the island, preserving historical conditions, and supporting the return of Indigenous land relationships, all at the same time. These missions can lead to conflicting goals, and decision-makers must navigate these tensions to make strong management choices. This report finds that NPS leaders should provide a larger platform to the Ojibwe perspectives that have previously been marginalized. A central part of this effort includes changing Isle Royale educational programming to reflect Ojibwe historical narratives. To this end, this report identifies how these different narratives interact throughout Minong’s history, assisting NPS leadership in making changes to their interpretive materials, and supporting the pluralistic view of conservation that the National Park System seeks to develop. Any attempts to develop further NPS-Tribal collaboration must consider how relational values can be included in NPS policy and practice. The conservation history recounted above can be utilized to develop practical solutions for Isle Royale National Park’s management future, covered in the next report.

Report 3:

Recommendations for Isle Royale National Park

Introduction

In the pursuit of justice and equity, natural resource management, and sustainability goals, the US National Park Service (NPS) has renewed their commitment to building healthy collaborative partnerships with Indigenous communities. Isle Royale National Park (IRNP) is considered a premier site for collaboration with Tribal groups, but more can be done to foster healthy partnerships. Current social, political, and ecological conditions indicate the need and opportunity for IRNP to deepen their collaboration with nearby Indigenous communities. Policy and practice choices at IRNP have implications for nearby Tribal communities, for future Park land management practices, and for the emerging wave of NPS-Tribal co-stewardship and co-management arrangements.

The Biden administration has taken meaningful steps to promote Tribal collaboration in executive agencies. In November 2021, the Departments of Agriculture and Interior released Order 3404, on “Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters” (DOA & DOI 2021). The NPS released an associated policy guidance memorandum in September 2022, and the Department of the Interior published their “First Annual Report on Tribal Co-Stewardship” in November 2022 (NPS 2022; DOI 2022). In the latter document, “Grand Portage National Monument and Isle Royale National Park” is highlighted as a noteworthy collaborative agreement with “a unique relationship”. The Isle Royale-Tribal partnership is especially storied and involved, so lessons from this case can provide insights for other Tribal representatives and Federal land managers hoping to catalyze similar collaborations (Cochrane 2009). Federal support for Tribal-DOI collaboration is at a high point under the Biden Administration, presenting timely opportunities for projects and programming.

Lake Superior Ojibwe Tribes like the Grand Portage Band (GPB) and the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) are already engaged with Isle Royale in ongoing discussions on building relationships around shared land management and conservation goals. However, as the Report 2 explains, Indigenous access to Minong today is far reduced from historic levels. Furthermore, historic injustices, differences in perspective and priorities, and imbalances in power represent potential pitfalls in sustainability transitions. Therefore, it is important to consider the scope, scale, and content of proposed Isle Royale-Grand Portage collaboration projects in order to make policy recommendations that are both inclusive and practical. In order to present informed recommendations, this report uses context provided by regional climate and development trends, and explores literature on recent co-management arrangements that can provide perspectives for the IRNP case.

This report presents and evaluates three recommendations for implementation by IRNP. These recommendations are (1) to establish a formal co-management structure for decision-making between Isle Royale National Park and regional Tribal groups, (2) to strengthen Tribal-Park relationships as a foundation for the long-term goal of

establishing a site on Minong for flexible Tribal access and shared land management authority, and (3) to deepen collaboration on conservation, science, and education programming with Tribal communities and Grand Portage National Monument. The first recommendation represents the establishment of a structure for the NPS to best fulfill their DEI obligations to Tribal groups in the immediate future. The second recommendation is aimed towards the medium-term goal of returning Federal land and protecting land rights for American Indigenous communities. On Isle Royale, an Indigenous-run culture camp is likely out of reach until deeper relationships are built between the Park and regional Tribal entities. The third recommendation suggests developing conservation, science, and education programming in a way that supports formal and non-formal NPS-Tribal collaboration. It builds on the successful programming already established between Isle Royale administration and Tribal leaders.

Regional Trends

The availability of certain sustainability transitional paths depends on regional factors including the limitations and opportunities present through climate and development trends. Regions are considered in terms of levels of exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity, in terms of communities and in terms of landscapes (Smit and Wandel 2006). Studies show that Lake Superior is a uniquely climate resilient area, with large inland lakes moderating temperature changes and providing ample moisture (Keenan 2019). While regional exposure to climate disturbance is relatively low, there are still troubling changes for Isle Royale, including rising temperatures, shifting vegetation patterns, increased likelihood for forest fires, and water level changes (Fisichelli et al. 2013). In addition, ice bridges form periodically between Isle Royale and the Minnesota shore, but these are becoming less frequent, and soon they may not form at all.

Though exposure to climate disturbances is not yet severe, communities and organizations in the Lake Superior region are affected by adaptive capacity limitations. The north shore of Lake Superior is relatively remote and Isle Royale is only accessible by boat or plane, making it difficult to travel to and from the Park. These remote conditions inspired Minong's designation as a 'wilderness' island (Cochrane 2009). Now, this remote quality makes it more difficult for land management and conservation groups to convene and collaborate. The area is sparsely populated, and Isle Royale National Park does not function as a tourist destination in a year-round capacity. The administrative network for Isle Royale is much smaller than major parks like Yellowstone and Yosemite. A small handful of individuals do live year-round on Minong, but the administrative offices are in Houghton, MI, sixty miles away from the Park. Therefore, practical solutions for Isle Royale must seek to build adaptive capacity without adding large resource requirements.

Regional economic development adds another forcing mechanism. The NPS has seen significant increases in visitation in recent years, heralding cultural shifts that outpace the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The region's climate stability combined with the cherished human-nature interface indicates that migration to the

region will rise in the coming decades. Intensifying tourism and immigration present risks for communities in the area, including habitat degradation and economic disturbance. Without proper planning, tourism development may lead to exploitative economic structures that tokenize and marginalize Indigenous communities as part of the 'attraction', keeping Tribal leaders out of the decision-making process, and extracting wealth for distant investors (Wondirad 2020). Increased visitation and habitation may also lead to habitat degradation, impacting Indigenous hunting and fishing rights secured through Treaties.

Both economic development and climate disturbances threaten Lake Superior communities and landscapes. Currently, the threats are not so immediate and severe as to require deleterious adaptation. Therefore, Isle Royale National Park currently has an ideal window to plan and execute equitable and sustainable transitions, despite limitations in adaptive capacity. If this opportunity is not realized now, future disturbances may force land managers to make less favorable choices, sacrificing ecological and justice sacrifices. As time passes, more sustainability transition paths will close.

Recommendations must consider the importance of the ongoing wolf and moose predator-prey research. The scientific study led by the wolf and moose research team impacts the land management choices available to Tribal land managers. When the National Park was created, preservation narratives focused on the pristine wilderness quality of the island (Little 1978). Around 99% of the Park's land is designated as wilderness through the Wilderness Act, one of the highest proportions of any National Park. During the 20th century, Isle Royale's wilderness narratives gradually subsided due to advances in recreational access and nature philosophy. This fading identity was supplanted by the value provided through scientific study. Ecologists recognized the remote island as an ideal location to monitor predator-prey interactions in a controlled setting. Considerable value has been provided to the field of ecology through decades of ongoing research; it is the longest continually running ecology study of its kind (Nelson et al. 2011).

In recent decades, the island's wolf population declined to the point where it could no longer support itself. Wolves were key to the identity of Isle Royale National Park, but critics worried that reintroducing wolves might interfere with the study and could conflict with Wilderness Act principles. Ultimately, wolves were reintroduced in 2019, opening up potential for scientific research to play more of an adaptive management role in the Park's future. Luckily, Isle Royale's ongoing research is not a rigidly designed experiment. The research has gone through numerous changes in practice and focus throughout the decades, indicating high potential to provide value under new land management practices (Nelson 2011). Still, Indigenous activities could impact wolf and moose populations, affecting the results and potentially the validity of research.

Collaboration plans must also recognize the historic injustice of the Treaty of 1842 and the 1844 Isle Royale Compact, covered in Report 2. The Grand Portage Band is the closest community with the most significant relationship with Minong, but they were not included in the sale of Isle Royale in the Treaty of 1842 (Cochrane 2009). Instead, the Treaty of 1842 ensures Lake Superior hunting and fishing rights to south

shore Ojibwe, including the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the Red Cliff Band. These treaty rights are unique in that they do not specify which Tribe has access to which areas. Instead, the Federal officers found it simpler to offer all the rights to all of the participating Tribes. This system provides less security to individual Tribes than a more rigid plan, but the additional flexibility can be conducive to flexible sharing practices. Despite the confusion, Treaty Rights in the Lake Superior have functioned as a powerful tool to protect and further Tribal interests, as in the *People v. Jondreau* case of 1971 (GLIFWC et al. 2017). The 1844 Isle Royale Compact was created to offer fair compensation to the Grand Portage Band for the sale of Minong, but the compensation provided to the Grand Portage Band was drastically inadequate, deepening the injustice. Recommendations for Isle Royale National Park must consider these complications when seeking to engage Tribal groups in an empowering way.

Co-managment and co-stewardship

In this report, recommendations for Isle Royale National Park are focused on a type of Tribal-federal collaborative agreement called ‘co-management’. Co-management and a similar term ‘co-stewardship’ have seen increased usage in recent federal policy and academic research, but sources differ on the terms’ definitions. In a 2022 DOI Office of the Solicitor report on the subject, co-stewardship is broadly defined as referring to “shared interests in managing, conserving, and preserving Federal lands and waters...in a wide variety of forms”. Meanwhile, co-management is narrowly defined as a specific type of co-stewardship, one “that requires the delegation of some aspect of Federal decision-making”, implying a greater level of legal requirements (DOI Office of the Solicitor 2022).

With these definitions, the DOI Office of the Solicitor frames co-management in the context of the subdelegation doctrine. The subdelegation doctrine can make Tribal-federal collaboration more difficult, as the doctrine limits the authority that the executive branch agencies can delegate to outside entities. In cases of delegation, the subdelegation doctrine requires first, that the agency is not impacted in its fulfillment of statutory obligations, and second, that the agency retains final review authority. These stipulations appear to limit the potential management options available to Tribal groups on federal property (Goska 2021). National Parks leadership is expected to fulfill a litany of ‘Minimum Requirements’, which range from land protection to visitor experience, and are especially stringent among DOI agencies. However, legal disputes in 2016 over the authority delegated to the Bear’s Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition sparked renewed scrutiny into the historical context of the subdelegation doctrine (Franz 2021). A publication in the *Stanford Law Review* demonstrates that delegations of a ‘sovereignty-affirming’ nature are reviewed more permissively in courts, and subject to relaxed restrictions (Lazerwitz 2020). Sovereignty-affirming delegations are a desirable justice option, as they are in accordance with Tribes seeking recognition as sovereign entities. Still, recommendations for Isle Royale National Park must be conscious of limitations imposed by the subdelegation doctrine.

In their report on co-management, professors Mills and Nie argue that categorical definitions of co-stewardship and co-management are limited in the way that they center and protect federal interests. They contend that co-management is only a beneficial tool for ensuring Tribal interests if it adheres to grounded principles, regardless of the term used to describe the relationship (Mills and Nie 2021). They cite attorney Ed Goodman, who breaks down co-management into six core principles. These six principles are: (a) Recognition of tribes as sovereign governments, (b) Incorporation of the federal government's trust responsibilities to tribes, (c) Legitimation structures for tribal involvement, (d) Meaningful integration of tribes early and often in the decision-making process, (e) Recognition and incorporation of tribal expertise, and (f) Dispute resolution mechanisms (Goodman 2000). Mills and Nie's reasoning concludes that if co-management does not adhere to these principles, then it is inadequate in securing equitable partnerships, regardless of the legal status applied by the federal courts. Evaluating co-management programs through these tangible principles can help decision-makers avoid empty policy, improving the likelihood of positive justice outcomes.

This report relies on Goodman's six principles as the primary structure for evaluating potential co-management recommendations, using the above labeling structure to identify instances where recommendations achieve the six principles. However, the text still refers to co-management and co-stewardship using the categories defined by recent NPS legislation for clarity. Co-management, as defined by the DOI, is a strong option for achieving some of the principles outlined by Goodman. The legally-binding nature of co-management calls for legitimation structures (c), and co-management policy is positioned to include sovereignty-affirming delegations (a). Thus, official co-management that does not violate the subdelegation doctrine warrants further exploration as a tool for the DOI to ensure justice in the immediate future. IRNP leaders could develop a formal co-stewardship arrangement that would fulfill most of these principles, but it may fall short of recognizing Tribal sovereignty.

Preceding Cases

Envisioning future co-management on Isle Royale is enhanced by incorporating perspectives from other relevant NPS-Tribal co-management cases. It is important to note that research that attempts to draw best practices across different cases can overgeneralize the diverse cultures and unique histories held by American Indigenous groups. These examples should not be used as prognostication of the Tribal position as it pertains to Isle Royale. However, they can provide a good starting point for Federal representatives hoping to engage in Tribal co-management on Isle Royale. In order for the starting point to lead to healthy partnerships, Federal representatives should seek Tribal feedback early and often (d) in order to learn more about unique aspects of the Tribal experience with Isle Royale.

Potential Isle Royale-Tribal formal collaboration can be informed by the Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition, a co-management body designed and proposed by the Hopi

Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, and Ute Indian Tribe (Franz 2021). The Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition was developed in accordance with a new protected area, Bears Ears National Monument, made of formerly BLM, USFS and privately owned land. The initial proposal and the Obama administration's subsequent Proclamation both fulfill the six requirements for meaningful co-management. The Coalition was a legitimization structure (c), integrating tribes into the decision-making process early and often (d), with recognition of tribal expertise (e). The Coalition was diligent in developing dispute resolution mechanisms (f) that conferred the Tribes' status as sovereign governments (a). Mills and Nie view the establishment of Bear's Ears National Monument as "a truly collaborative and innovative framework of governance." Unfortunately, the Trump Administration severely undermined the Coalition's scope and authority, and Bears Ears Intertribal Coalition remains an unfulfilled vision. The Trump Administration was able to falsely claim that co-management was achieved under their new plan, though Tribal representatives found it to be inadequate. Mills and Nie recommend using grounded principles in evaluations of co-management plans to avoid this type of misuse.

There are some consistent elements between the Bears Ears Intertribal coalition and the Isle Royale case. Both require input and participation from multiple Tribal groups, so the representative, decision making structures, and meeting structures at Bears Ears may serve as models for an Isle Royale Coalition. While there are similarities, one key difference is that the Bears Ears proposal sought to establish a new conservation area for management out of BLM and USFS land. In contrast, IRNP has a long-established decision making structure and a series of unique conservation and preservation obligations. In addition, the Park's island quality presents geographic challenges for holding meetings. Most of Isle Royale's land is designated as Wilderness, presenting limitations for what forms of management would be permissible under co-management. Despite these differences, there are relatively few Tribal-DOI co-management cases that provide the same level of legal legitimization structure as the Bears Ears Coalition with any similarity in quality to the Isle Royale case. For more examples, we can assess the few co-management cases already established between Tribal groups and the NPS.

In a March 2022 public release on Tribal co-management, NPS Director Charles Sams III states that while the NPS maintains over eighty collaborative agreements with Tribal Nations, only four fit the legal criteria for co-management (Sams III 2022). First, the Navajo Nation has engaged in collaborative management with the federal government at Canyon de Chelly since the 1930s. The site attracts less federal scrutiny because it is already on the Navajo Reservation, rather than a DOI property. A revised Joint Management Plan was introduced in 1989, and has since gone through extensive rounds of consultation and community involvement. Sams states that "Development of a joint/co-management plan is anticipated to begin in FY2023", with the proposed model reflecting the recent success at Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia. This proposed Canyon de Chelly model could serve as an example for IRNP to emulate.

The second co-management case is between Big Cypress National Reserve and Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes of Florida. Tribal members retain customary rights and hold the right to refuse to provide visitor services. There is no formal co-management agreement in place, but the case can provide some context for Tribal access and resource use on Minong. The third instance is at Glacier Bay National Park, where the NPS and the Hoonah Indian Association have long collaborated on a range of programs designed to support cultural activities, including harvesting gull eggs (Sam III 2022). The NPS started restricting gull egg harvesting in the 1960s with the goal of bird conservation, but this restriction obstructed traditional Indigenous harvest practices. In 2014, the Hoonah Indian Association and the NPS worked together to move Congress to pass legislation authorizing the harvest, leading to cooperatively developed sustainable harvest plans. This might provide a template for authorizing GPB fishing around Isle Royale, but there will likely be key cultural and political differences that limit the relevance of the example.

The final co-management agreement has particular relevance for this case, because it pertains directly to the Grand Portage Band. The Band has worked with wilderness recreation developers since the beginning of IRNP. GPNM exists in part because early planners for IRNP proposed Grand Portage as a location for a secondary headquarters, leading the Bureau of Indian Affairs to treat the area like a Park (Catton and Krahe 2023). Early promises from settler developers failed to bear fruit, so the GPB moved in 1951 to establish their own site. The resulting Grand Portage National Monument is perhaps the only NPS property created with this degree of Tribal participation in the original purpose. When the Tribal Self-Governance Act was amended in 1994 to allow for Tribal groups to take over Federal managed programs, the GPNM was one of the first properties considered.

Through the TGSA, an Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) was developed in 1999 for the GPB to have more flexibility and oversight when initiating projects at GPNM (King 2007). Today, the Grand Portage Band participates in maintenance, interpretation, and resource management, choosing their desired degree of involvement depending on the project. The AFA especially represents a flexible tool with the potential to adapt to fulfill a wide variety of Grand Portage Band projects. Isle Royale was included in the GPNM AFA in 2011. The inclusion has led to a handful of promising collaborative projects, but GPNM leadership believes that the AFA could be utilized to a greater extent and for a wider variety of projects at IRNP. The Grand Portage Band and GPNM administrators have worked in close partnership for over 60 years, building ample valuable experience on co-management that may assist IRNP efforts.

Recent Activity

In the modern era, IRNP has engaged in renewed efforts to develop meaningful collaboration supporting Tribal heritage on Minong. The Band and IRNP partnered to create the Grand Portage Conservation Crew using the GPNM AFA in 2018. Through the program, Grand Portage youth participate in maintenance and other natural resource projects on Isle Royale (NPS 2022). In recent years, multiple Tribal-affiliated

organizations have carried out cultural trips to Isle Royale for Tribal youth education and relationship building, including the GPB, the KBIC, the 1854 Treaty Authority Outreach and Education division, and the Isle Royale Institute.

In 2019, the Isle Royale archipelago and the traditional fishing waters surrounding the island were added to the National Register of Historic Places as a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP). This TCP designation recognizes the lasting relationship between the Grand Portage Band and Minong (Brown and Cochrane 2016). In 2021, the Grand Portage Band led a flag-raising ceremony on the island, and the flag still flies over the Windigo Visitor Center as a sign of reconnection with the island and new relationships with Isle Royale (Lovrien 2023). This is an encouraging trend for Tribal-NPS relations at IRNP, but some obstacles have disrupted the relationship-building process.

There have been challenges for Grand Portage Band and the Park administration in their efforts to build a healthy collaboration. When Minong's wolf population dwindled in 2016 to two remaining wolves, the Park drafted an Environmental Impact Statement considering options for wolf reintroduction. Grand Portage submitted a formal reply to the park, recommending "no immediate action, until the following criteria have been met: 1) 10 years post natural wolf extinction; 2) measureable metrics of ecosystem change have been met; 3) a scientifically designed management plan has been developed by a science advisory committee" (Larsen 2017). The formal EIS process attracted a chorus of dissonant perspectives, and the Tribal perspective was pushed to the side. Wolves were eventually introduced in 2019, and because of the unilateral decision-making structure of the NPS, Tribes had no power to challenge the Park's decision. This issue signals the need to include legitimization structures for tribal involvement (c) with tangible dispute resolution mechanisms (f). Tribal-Park relationships were negatively influenced by the procedural aspects of the 2019 wolf reintroduction.

The contrast between the positive forward steps and the problematic wolf introduction process indicates limits to the amount and type of managerial oversight that the Park has been willing to extend to the Grand Portage Band. The TCP designation and the flag-raising ceremony are both meaningful accomplishments, but they lack the tangibility of direct decision-making authority on matters of wildlife management. Increased Indigenous management activity on Minong could risk violating the subdelegation doctrine and Wilderness Act requirements, and would certainly impact the ongoing predator-prey research. However, a well-designed scientific advisory committee, like the one proposed in the Grand Portage Band's EIS response, could provide a balanced way for NPS and Tribal leaders to work together. A committee with this purpose would need to hold some power of decision-making authority (c), and should incorporate tribal expertise (e) and include clear dispute resolution mechanisms (f).

In addition to the obstacles exposed by wolf reintroduction, progress between Isle Royale and Grand Portage can appear to move slowly, suggesting delay from resource limitations and lack of forcing mechanisms. Washburn and Hines assess a case study on Grand Portage National Monument, concluding that "It is difficult to imagine a monument or park with circumstances more ideal for a robust tribal role" (Washburn 2022). But the Grand Portage Band still only represents about one quarter of the Monument's annual

budget, leading the scholars to lament, “the ‘staged’ approach has not proceeded very far beyond Stage 1.” IRNP-Tribal collaboration also appears to move slowly from an outside perspective. Logistical challenges make consistent meetings more difficult, and it may appear that progress is languishing.

There are some benefits to approaching these collaborations with a slower pace. The remote and rural qualities of Lake Superior’s North Shore mean that resources must be used sparingly, and relationships are formed with patience and care. Lake Superior Tribes should be allowed to develop collaborations at their own self-determined pace. Allowing for this self-determination is a key part of recognizing Tribal sovereignty in practice (a), including the role of tribal expertise (e). The slower pace of development is also part of Isle Royale National Park’s appeal as a remote wilderness island. Rushed programming would go against the character of the area and its communities. Therefore, well-designed recommendations should recognize locally preferred pacing and scale, while offering next steps for Isle Royale to move forward to equitable sustainability transitions.

Recommendations

This report recommends that Isle Royale National Park works (1) to establish a formal co-management structure for problem clarification and shared decision-making between Isle Royale National Park and regional Tribal groups, (2) to establish a site on Minong for flexible Tribal access and shared land management authority, and (3) to deepen conservation, science, and education programming with Tribal input and leadership.

Formal co-management structure

Conditions suggest that a formal structure would support Tribal-Isle Royale collaboration by establishing clear, consistent lines of communication between the Park and multiple Tribal groups, creating spaces to navigate and record differences in perspectives, and fostering shared understandings of goals and expectations. IRNP administration has already released policy committing to recognizing Tribal sovereign authority (a) while seeking Tribal integration early and often (d). Adding formal decision-making capabilities would legitimize the structure (c), which could also include mechanisms to resolve disputes (f). Relevant Tribal groups, including the Grand Portage Band, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, the Bad River Tribe, and the Red Cliff Band would decide to what extent they are willing to partner with the Park to create and approve this structure, and IRNP can actively solicit Tribal feedback to improve the design. Potential decision-making structures could be based on examples like the Bears Ears Inter-tribal Coalition. GPNM’s connection to IRNP through the AFA, plus their decades of experience developing a successful co-management program, suggests that Monument staff could provide significant support to a successful co-management plan. The AFA is an effective platform to organize and legitimize collaboration (c).

There are considerable immediate uses for a collaborative structure of this nature. First, the Treaties of 1842 and 1854 create a unique situation where one deserving tribe in Minnesota, the GPB, has no rights to use Minong, while other deserving bands in Michigan do have rights. The Minnesota DNR handles most issues along the North Shore of Lake Superior, but the Michigan DNR manages fishing on and around Minong. There is confusion among Tribal communities about who has Rights and how to demonstrate those Rights to authority figures if asked. The Intertribal Council of Michigan is a formidable structure for Tribes seeking to organize and create political actions, but the GPB is in Minnesota, and an organization of this caliber with the goal of bringing Tribes together over Minong does not exist. If all of the historical conditions are considered, justice would likely include also returning access to Ontario's Ft. William First Nation, but that would significantly increase the complexity of the collaboration. As National Parks have precedent as spaces for international collaboration, IRNP could represent a foundation to support these political challenges.

Second, tribes including the GPB and the KBIC have concerns about moose carcasses left rotting on Minong, as the waste is a violation of their spiritual obligations to the moose. Tribal leaders have suggested a regulated moose hunt and harvest to rectify the issue, but a hunt could violate IRNP management requirements. The harvest would also impact the bone collection portion of the wolf-moose study, which relies on pinpointing rotting moose carcasses through the winter in order to collect bone samples in the summer. A collaborative structure could help navigate the different value systems underlying the different perspectives.

Third, a collaborative partnership would bolster the quality and scope of science, history, and education programming by creating a space for Indigenous historical perspectives to be integrated in Park interpretive materials. As the NPS attempts to fulfill its DEI obligations, the impetus grows for Isle Royale to embrace Indigenous perspectives, but form and content of this reconciliation depends on culturally sensitive nuances and requires oversight and evaluation. This structure represents a pathway for IRNP to accept Tribal conservation expertise (e) in support of an inclusive, pluralistic form of land management, in which the NPS admits that Tribal priorities can exist outside of their current comprehension. The humility is much needed after decades of patronizing NPS consultation structures minimized Indigenous understandings of environmental problems as unscientific.

It would be important to determine the scope of the content falling under the structure's authority. In their EIS Response to wolf reintroduction, Grand Portage suggested a joint science advisory committee, which could be a strong option. However, there is also a need to collaborate on historic and cultural programming, and align with adaptive management goals. Relationships with landscapes and lifeforms are core to Indigenous cultural and spiritual practices, so a decision-making structure cannot offer authority on historic and cultural matters without also offering access to landscape management. Therefore, it is preferable to create a decision-making structure that can attend to intertwined historic, cultural, and ecological matters as they pertain to the Grand Portage Band and other Tribal entities.

The potential formal partnership would also hinge on the frequency and location of meetings. The IRNP planning season is in the winter months, when Park activity is negligent. It can be difficult for Tribal representatives to convene in Houghton, Michigan during the winter season, but IRNP administration is busy with high visitation during the summer when Tribal communities could be more available. Online video-conferencing could make quarterly or bi-annual meetings more feasible, but access issues can arise, and some Tribal representatives prefer more personal meeting styles. Another option could be to have Tribal representatives convene on Isle Royale during the summer, which could be developed into a larger reconciliation event. However, this option would strain IRNP summer resources and present additional logistical hurdles.

Indigenous cultural camp

Solely considering reconciliation and equity goals, it would be ideal for Isle Royale National Park to offer land to the Grand Portage Band with full management authority, unrestricted access, and no oversight. However, this total return of land would certainly raise subdelegation issues, and could impact ongoing ecological research. Park administration may be reluctant to extend this level of authority to the Band, which could exacerbate tensions. Despite the challenges, stakeholders have already discussed the possibility of the Grand Portage Band managing a designated area on Minong. Proposed sites include Fisherman's Home at Siskiwit Bay and sites in Malone Bay and are mostly located outside the designated wilderness area.

The potential benefits of this type of collaboration are significant, though certain aspects present complications. A Indigenous cultural camp on Isle Royale would offer freedom of access to the Band, especially if they could travel to and from the camp at their discretion. The camp would assist Grand Portage in their fulfillment of land relationships, and could make fishing around Minong easier and safer. The camp would also function as a site to maintain and teach cultural practices. Cultural teaching and practice would primarily be internal for the Tribal community, but there is also the possibility of extending demonstrations to other Isle Royale visitors. This may elevate the cultural recreational value of the National Park, and help Tribal groups teach their practices to interested guests. However, this plan must recognize the risk of tokenizing Indigenous culture for economic interests. A multi-purpose Indigenous camp on Minong is an attractive option, but any equitable camp must center Grand Portage interests and goals, while allowing the Indigenous community the ability to act without oppressive levels of federal oversight. The development of this kind of camp would require significant planning and input from Tribal and Park leadership, so a formal decision-making structure would be a useful tool for collaborating here.

Educational partnerships and informal relationships

Finally, this report recommends that Isle Royale National Park enrich practices with Tribal input, including science and conservation education and outreach, mutual staff training and nonformal relationship building. Isle Royale's administration has

already engaged in these practices to some extent. The Gichi Onigaming Conservation Crew is an officially co-managed program that offers conservation experiences to Tribal youth, operating since 2017. (NPS 2022). This program could be evaluated to determine whether Indigenous land perspectives are included in its design.

There is an opportunity to develop an employee swap or joint training program between IRNP and GPNM, for mutual training opportunities and for longer assignments. An employee swap program could offer Isle Royale experience to Grand Portage Band employees working for the Monument, and could improve IRNP's staff capacity for including and interpreting Tribal perspectives. This type of program represents a low-cost method to improve interpretive materials, build informal relationships, and offer experiences to interested Tribal members. A training partnership of this nature could be extended to other Tribal communities if initial trials were promising.

There is also the possibility for increased collaboration on fishery management. Local fishers of European heritage had performed assessment fishing with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, a mutually beneficial system where fishing restrictions are relaxed while the harvester collects and transmits data on the catch. The partnership ended in 2018, but it could be renewed to support Indigenous fishery management and improve Tribal fishing access. Supporting Tribal conservation programming like this allows for more incorporation of Tribal expertise (e), and can support meaningful integration of Tribes (d) by extending opportunities for participation to a greater proportion of the Grand Portage community. These programs vary in size, scope, and content, and it will be beneficial to support them with a legitimization structure like a shared-decision making authority (c).

In the pursuit of a healthy partnership, Isle Royale should work to balance formal discussions with informal relation building. There is value to the development of a formal collaborative group, but informal relations between Isle Royale staff community and Grand Portage Band communities are key to developing adaptive capacity while creating systems of reciprocity and mutual dependence. Isle Royale National Park can help build these relationships by incorporating contemporary Indigenous perspectives in their staff training. Park educators should partner with Indigenous educators to share respective curriculums, including accurate historical records and respective ecological knowledge. GPNM and GPB host a large Rendezvous/Pow Wow gathering each summer, and attendance is growing each year. Isle Royale National Park staff could attend this event to deepen their relationships with the GPB. Relationship-building activities like these will help support meaningful and productive partnerships.

Isle Royale National Park can fund the projects listed above in a variety of ways. Biden Administration policy and congressional legislation has opened new funding opportunities in conservation, collaboration, and environmental justice. The National Park could directly apply for funding, or they could provide support for applications from the Grand Portage Band or other institutions. In 2023 the Grand Portage Band's Tribal Historic Preservation Office received \$110,000 through an NPS Tribal Heritage program (Boreal 2023). With the recent creation of the Minong Traditional Cultural Property, there is a good foundation to apply for Tribal Heritage funding to develop additional

programming. Decision-makers might also consider EPA Environmental Justice (EJ) funds (US EPA 2023). The EJ Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program may be appropriate due to the collaborative nature of this case, and the EJ Small Grants Program could assist the process at numerous junctures. In addition, there are multiple sources of funding under the EJ for Tribes and Indigenous People. Finally, funding may be procured from the DOI's Tribal Climate Resilience Program, or other programs geared towards climate resiliency (BIA 2023). The North Shore of Lake Superior is not immediately threatened by climate disaster, but the potential to lead by example with equitable and collaborative resiliency means that the potential positive impact on climate resiliency is high. Practitioners seeking to implement new funding will do well to protect equitable legitimization structures and integrate tribal feedback early and often.

The IRNP-GPNM Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) is a strong option for legitimizing, planning, and funding the activities listed in Recommendations 1-3. AFAs are a flexible tool for funding NPS-Tribal partnerships, as they can be continually updated to fulfill a wide range of functions. The NPS considers AFAs to be a co-stewardship arrangement, which avoids the additional legal oversight triggered in co-management cases. However, the IRNP-GPNM AFA is already connected to an approved co-management plan, a rare situation for NPS properties. NPS and Tribal leadership have repeatedly used the IRNP-GPNM AFA to develop successful projects relating to building maintenance, youth education, and historical interpretation. The GPNM-IRNP AFA has the potential to be used in a wider variety of programs relating to Indigenous justice and co-stewardship, and could set an example as a positive co-management case for other NPS-Tribal collaborations.

This report recommends that Isle Royale National Park works (1) to establish a formal decision-making structure for co-management partnership between Isle Royale National Park and regional Tribal groups, (2) to establish a site on Minong for flexible Tribal access and shared land management authority, and (3) to deepen conservation, science, and education programming with Tribal input and leadership. Potential sustainability transitions must consider historical context, resource capabilities, and organizational goals and values. When values conflict and goals are not clear, organizational inertia can create tension and delay positive change. The different programming options covered in this paper represent conservation goals that sometimes contrast, as they hold conflicting underlying value structure and identities. Engaging in sustainability transitions could involve an identity shift for Isle Royale National Park.

Report 4:

Epistemic Implications of the Isle Royale Case

Isle Royale National Park (IRNP) faces decisions on potential equity and sustainability transitions. Successful choices must recognize and address the diverse perspectives held by Park employees, nearby communities, and other stakeholders. These perspectives are built on participants' ethical, axiological, and epistemic views towards nature. Among participants, there is encouraging potential for overlap in perspective, but there are also key differences. Attending to these differences can improve the likelihood of success for future IRNP-Tribal land management collaborations. In addition, the perspectives held by participants in the IRNP case represent an ongoing system-wide transition in the function and scope of the US National Park Service (NPS), as the NPS attempts to develop a new wave of co-stewardship arrangements with Tribal groups (NPS 2022). The philosophical views informing the NPS impacts conservation policy and practice, influences diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, and informs narratives on nature, conservation, and history, as they are communicated to the public. The NPS has considerable power as an institution located at a justice and sustainability transition leverage point, so its management decisions are of concern to a wide scope of justice, conservation, and sustainability leaders (Chan et al. 2020).

At IRNP in 2023, a handful of leading perspectives on land management goals direct policy and practice. This report organizes perspectives into three cumulative forces: the wilderness ideal, quantitative science, and relational values. Each one of these forces drive conservation decision-making and behavior in land management cases. Individuals hold nature relationships that are complex, unique, sometimes opaque, and that interact with any or all of the above categories to some degree. Because of this, there is a risk to over-categorize individuals and communities into exclusive boxes. While individuals hold a panoply of nature philosophies, these different perspectives culminate to impact land management practice and policy in ways that can be described using the above categories.

Western Wilderness Ideal

The first major perspective centers around subscription to the Western wilderness ideal. The NPS was founded in part with the goal of preserving wilderness for qualities including the “pristine”, the “sublime”, and the “untrammeled” (Wolfley 2016). Wilderness value is generally understood as an intrinsic value, difficult to quantify in instrumental terms (Muraca 2016; Vucetich et al. 2015). Governing legislation like the National Park Organic Act of 1916 and the Wilderness Act of 1964 support the management of National Park land to this wilderness ideal (NPS 2006). The Park service attracts important visitation and funding through the public's appreciation of wilderness.

Scholarship on wilderness philosophy changed drastically when William Cronen noted logical problems in the underpinnings of wilderness philosophy (Cronen 1996). Carbon dating research shows that humans have already impacted all of Earth's land, leaving no environment technically ‘pristine’. In addition, valuing land for its untrammeled quality reinforces a problematic nature/culture divide (Uggla 2010). Subscription to the

nature/culture divide has several negative outcomes, but one of the most direct examples is the removal of Indigenous populations to preserve an area's wild qualities. These problems have sparked ongoing discussions around the justice and equity implications of the outdoor recreation, tourism, and conservation industries (Treuer 2021). Contemporary scholars have worked to unpack the wilderness concept into more specific phenomena, finding value in concepts like wildness, tranquility, freedom, and personal challenge (Horn and Hausdoerffer 2017). However, the sublime wilderness philosophy championed by nature advocates like John Muir and Stephen Mather still functions as the basis for National Park management today. At National Parks visitors, staff, benefactors, and members of nearby communities can hold vague, unexplored, or non-specific notions of their personal nature philosophies, but they still inform personal behavior. These wilderness values accumulate through society to drive NPS policy and practice. Through these connections, wilderness narratives influence the role that the NPS plays in conservation and sustainability efforts.

Management Expertise

The second major perspective informing IRNP land management decisions is centered around the importance of analytic science for supporting expertly-informed management decisions. Institutions following this perspective employ quantitative analysis using instrumental value metrics as a basis for management decisions. Quantitative analysis is a hugely useful tool for ecologists to inform land managers with a wide array of applications, including calculating population biomass, carbon sequestration rates, biodiversity levels, and more. Nature value can also be expressed quantitatively using monetary terms, like when researchers use housing costs as a way of approximating how much people value proximity to nature spaces.

Studies on IRNP emulating the second major perspective made and continue to make lasting contributions to the field of ecological science. In the mid-20th century, scientists noted the healthy wolf and moose populations interacting in a simplified predator-prey relationship. As an isolated landmass, Isle Royale was identified as an ideal location to perform controlled observational research to demonstrate quantifiable predator-prey dynamics. Research continued for sixty years without interruption, contributing a range of findings from ever-evolving techniques (Nelson 2010).

In the 2010s it became clear that the wolf population had shrunk to an unsustainable genetic bottleneck, threatening the study's future (Robinson 2019). IRNP worked with stakeholders to draft an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) considering reintroducing wolves to the Park. In the EIS, the Park reasoned that as the sole apex predator on Isle Royale, wolves were key to overall ecosystem health (IRNP 2016). However, reintroduction would impact the quality of the scientific observations by explicitly influencing the populations being tested. In addition, reintroduction would challenge the narrative of the park as a wilderness landscape by interfering with an ecosystem purported to be pristine. The wilderness narrative would seem to clearly support the non-interference argument, but some contributors noted how wolves were a core quality of this specific wilderness. With dissenting opinions emerging along lines of both wilderness ideology and scientific expertise, Isle Royale's leadership made the tough decision to reintroduce wolves in 2019.

It is possible that the contrasting dynamic between wilderness narratives and analytical land management will lead to further management challenges as climate change disturbances increase in magnitude and frequency. Advocates of wilderness policy prefer management activities that have minimal impact on the pristine qualities of landscape. Climate change analysis tends to indicate the need for greater degrees of influence and control on landscapes, especially where disturbances create dangerous and unstable conditions (Acyrigg et al. 2022). NPS policy and management leaders work hard to navigate this conundrum, often finding ways to preserve wilderness quality while allowing for effective land management interventions. At Isle Royale, predicted vegetation shift and forest fire increase may necessitate more direct interventions. Isle Royale management has the tools to balance these narratives, but the situation becomes more complex when considering perspectives that challenge or fall outside of the first two categories.

Relational Values, A Third Perspective for the National Parks

Perspectives outside of the wilderness ideal and quantitative management vary in their origin and content, and so it can be difficult, and potentially assumptive, to categorize them. However, describing relational values with an organizational frame can provide legitimacy to previously marginalized perspectives, supporting positive justice transitions. Land managers subscribing to this third perspective have different ways of defining knowledge and expertise, utilize relational value when framing nature, and are often from marginalized populations (Whyte 2020). One example is found in “Reimagining U.S. Federal Land Management through Decolonization and Indigenous Value Systems”, which lays out the values underlying Indigenous land management in 4 R’s: relationship, responsibility, reciprocity, and redistribution (Jacobs et al. 2022). These values express a system of land management based on principles independent from both of the dominant land management narratives.

Researchers at the IPBES came to a similar conclusion when categorizing the value structures underlying Nature’s Contributions to People (Chan et al. 2018). They found that the traditional intrinsic-instrumental value dichotomy was insufficient in explaining the types of value experienced between nature and Indigenous groups, describing the new category as ‘relational value’. In this understanding, the value is not held intrinsically within and unto the wilderness landscape, but instead grows from an intertwined system of mutualism, reciprocity, and historical cultural narratives. In this perspective, Minong’s value does not come primarily from the absence of humans, it stems from the many ongoing relationships involving humans and non-human kin. Within relational values, practitioners can still use instrumental value as a tool to maximize efficiency. However, relational values include ends that are distinct from the ends of mainstream conservation biology.

We can demonstrate how these three perspectives lead to different conservation recommendations within the wolf reintroduction case. When Isle Royale opened their EIS for public comment, the Grand Portage Band of the Chippewa took the time to write a formal reply. Located at the nearest point to IRNP on the north shore of Lake Superior, the Grand Portage Band has long-standing spiritual and cultural ties to Minong (Cochrane 2009). Though their traditional relationships with Minong were threatened by colonial erasure and

other settler actions, the Grand Portage Band has maintained its claim to perform traditional cultural practices on the island and defends the right to influence land management decisions at the Park. In response to the wolf introduction question, Grand Portage recommended that no action be taken on wolves for at least 10 years, barring the creation of a joint science action committee or the influence of other significant ecological change (Larsen 2017). The Grand Portage reply and similar comments from other Ojibwe Tribes were marginalized in the eventual decision, while considerations of the wilderness ideal and ecological health took precedence. Tribes participating in the wolf reintroduction conversation left feeling unheard, and the NPS assertion that the EIS had no impact on NPS-Tribal relations proved false (IRNP 2016).

When the Grand Portage Band recommended that Isle Royale delay wolf reintroduction, it was not to protect the island's pristine quality, nor a statement in support of ecological consistency. Instead, the consideration was primarily for the rights and interests of the wolves themselves, as individuals and as a community of animal kin. The recommendation to delay reintroduction stems from a desire to better understand and recognize the wolves' perspectives and interests. The goal of building relationships with wolves falls outside the goals set out by the wilderness ideal, which are to better *preserve* the wolves, or the goals of scientific management, to better *analyze and manage* the wolves. Individuals hold beliefs that fall in all three cumulative forces outlined in this report. Quantitative researchers and relational practitioners both use careful observation to gain knowledge and make responsible decisions regarding animals like wolves. Yet, when it came to action, the three conservation perspectives generated diverging conclusions.

Decision-makers at the NPS must determine if including Indigenous perspectives like the one marginalized in the IRNP wolf reintroduction case is central to their DEI goals. Frameworks defining and evaluating different types of justice demonstrate that the NPS should do more to include Indigenous' perspectives in this type of land management decision, or risk offering shallow justice in a way that further damages relationships. To this end, this report considers justice in three interdependent types: recognitional, procedural, and distributional (Leach et al. 2018). Recognitional justice refers to the recognition of diverse cultural perspectives, views based on cultural and spiritual practices and influenced by historic conditionality. Procedural justice refers to fair participation in leadership, management, and other power-conferring actions. Distributional justice indicates the fair distribution of resources and rights. It is vital to support justice in all three types, and there can be problematic outcomes when some forms are offered without others.

When government agencies attempt to distribute resources equitably to marginalized communities, without recognizing the context of their struggles or offering a fair platform for participation, there can be unintended negative consequences. At worst, assumptive distributions can lead to tragedy, like when Indigenous youth were forced to attend boarding school in North America in the early 20th century (Newland 2022). While the intent was to offer Western education to Indigenous youth, the resulting practice tore Indigenous families apart and erased Indigenous cultural practices, while enabling the harm of individual students. In this case, distribution without recognitional or procedural justice caused suffering and perpetuated suffering. Modern attempts to distribute wilderness experiences to diverse youth are supported by better ethical oversight and improved education practices,

but the specter of assumptive distributions should give DEI practitioners pause when creating future programming. It is not enough to distribute wilderness ideals and scientific principles to a wider variety of American children through outdoor experiences. Inclusive practices must seek out and support a pluralism of nature valuations, with the goal of embedding recognitional diversity into curriculum.

When managing the wolf reintroduction process, the NPS attempted to offer procedural justice to Tribal groups by requesting their participation at multiple junctures. Yet, the Tribal perspective was overpowered in a formal vote, damaging healthy relationships between the Park and the Grand Portage Band. Though they were offered procedural influence by participating in the vote, the Tribal groups still felt that the process was inadequate, as it did not require unanimous consent. In this case, the procedural justice offered by the Park did not confer recognitional justice for the decision-making preferences of the participating Tribal leaders. Because of federal requirements and organizational structure, Park leaders are limited in their ability to offer unanimous consent based decisions. When offering management recommendations, this report considers differences in land philosophy between the NPS, science groups, and Tribal communities, in order to avoid the pitfall of recommending procedural justice within a pre-existing system that only recognizes one dominant worldview. When seeking to organize inclusive management decisions in the future, the NPS must seek to offer justice in distributive, procedural, and recognitional ways, and that means finding ways to incorporate a relational perspective in land management decisions.

Discussion

The NPS is interested in developing a new wave of collaborative partnerships with Tribal groups, and has committed to fulfilling DEI goals at an organization-wide scale. The quality of NPS-Tribal relationships depends in part on the type of justice offered, whether it be recognitional, procedural, or distributional. When attempting to recognize Indigenous perspectives on land management and nature valuation, the NPS may have to change the way that Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is incorporated into the decision-making process. One issue lies with the way that Western science defines knowledge and expertise. The scientific tradition uses experimental design and quantitative value analysis, along with other methods, to create information that is considered by researchers to be objectively true. The scientific tradition denotes exclusivity in its creation of knowledge, meaning that Western science holds the belief that if information is created outside of their preferred methods, then it is not necessarily valid or true. TEK is created with methods outside of the Western scientific tradition, and can be viewed as suspect by those used to the dominant frame.

To what extent TEK is incorporated into land management decisions is a matter of recognitional justice. The NPS communicates how they want to recognize TEK compared to Western knowledge through tangible decisions like the 2019 wolf reintroduction. The NPS may commit in written policy to developing healthy collaborations with Tribal groups, but whether those relationships are equitable will depend on the extent to which the NPS is willing to recognize TEK as equal in importance to knowledge created using the Western

scientific method. As NPS co-stewardship agreements continue to develop, it will be important to track the interactions between these two knowledge traditions. NPS DEI outcomes depend on the recognition of Indigenous expertise. It will be especially interesting to see cases where TEK and Western science led to contrasting recommendations with significantly different practical outcomes. Researchers could identify areas where TEK is especially conducive to pro-ecosocial outcomes, or vice versa.

As social, economic, and climatic conditions change, the NPS will have to consider greater degrees of adaptive management for the Parks. On Isle Royale, it is likely that conditions for wolves and moose will continue to get worse. In addition to temperature changes and increased forest fire risk, the ice bridges providing periodic travel to and from Minong are getting less frequent. These disturbances increase the likelihood that more interventions will be needed to protect Isle Royale wolf and moose populations in the future. If interventions are required, Park management will benefit from strong regional relationships and more diverse choices among their tools. Relational values are aligned with adaptive management in areas where the wilderness ideal and scientific expertise are limited. Relational values allow for a greater degree of interaction with natural resources, unbound by requirements of pristineness or objectivity. In addition, relational values support collaboration with regional community organizations, while expertise-based logics may restrict participation to a limited number of individuals with proper credentials.

In the spirit of conservation pluralism, it is counterproductive to consider relational values as the replacement for the wilderness ideal or for scientific expertise. This report suggests that an ideal management future for Isle Royale incorporates elements from all three cumulative forces. Quantitative analysis is an invaluable tool for land management. Conservation leaders should strive to incorporate sound data and logic in all of their decisions. Meanwhile, many of the values contained in the wilderness ideal are better understood using relational value than using intrinsic value. When reconciling the wilderness ideal, we must attempt to isolate and remove the problematic aspects, while supporting the more benign, personalized nature relations that drive pro-ecosocial behavior.

This strategy will support the National Parks as they strive to achieve a greater degree of DEI. At Isle Royale, conservation coalitions will function best while including many groups with different backgrounds. Love of the wilderness drives Park identity and recreation, and serves as a guide for many staff members. Quantitative analysis supports sound decision-making, and should be utilized to achieve wilderness and relationally based objectives. While relational values should not supplant the two mainstream conservation perspectives, there needs to be greater effort to incorporate relational values into land management at Isle Royale. By incorporating relational values, Isle Royale can achieve their DEI goals, while avoiding pitfalls presented by shortcomings in recognition justice. This will build healthy conservation relationships and bring new perspectives into their available strategies, improving adaptive capacity for the future. Isle Royale can preserve the natural value held in the archipelago, while righting past injustices and healing severed relationships.

While each National Park comes with its own complex history, landscapes, and challenges, incorporating and encouraging relational valuation of nature is likely a strong choice across the NPS institution as a whole. By encouraging this shift, the NPS will support

a greater degree of recognitional justice. Ensuring recognitional justice improves the quality of subsequent procedural and distributional justice efforts, leading to better DEI outcomes overall. In addition, incorporating a pluralism of perspectives in their conservation toolbox will improve the land management options available for the NPS in the future. Finally, supporting Indigenous perspectives on land management is a core part of rectifying the historical injustices perpetrated on their communities. For these reasons and more, this report finds that the NPS should solicit and incorporate relational values in the future in the pursuit of improved equity and sustainability transitions.

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