

Conflict Over the Establishment of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore

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Overarching Research Questions and Claim

Claim:

- To truly understand the establishment of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, it is crucial to understand why the conflict existed and how it was navigated.

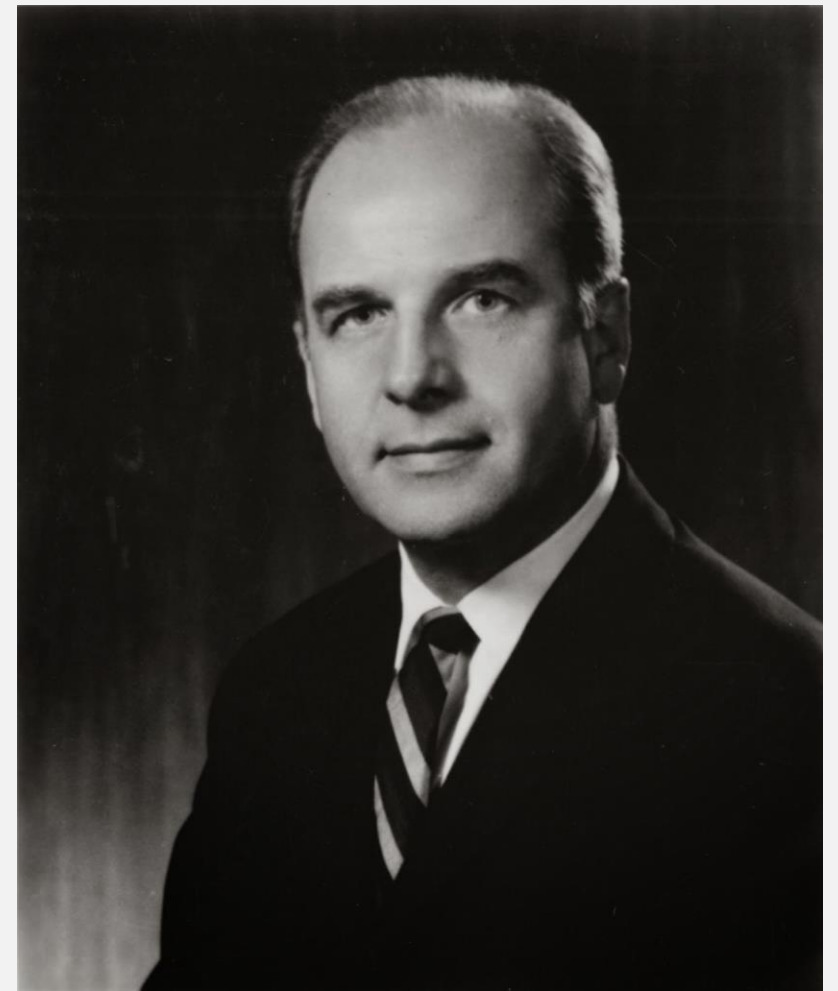
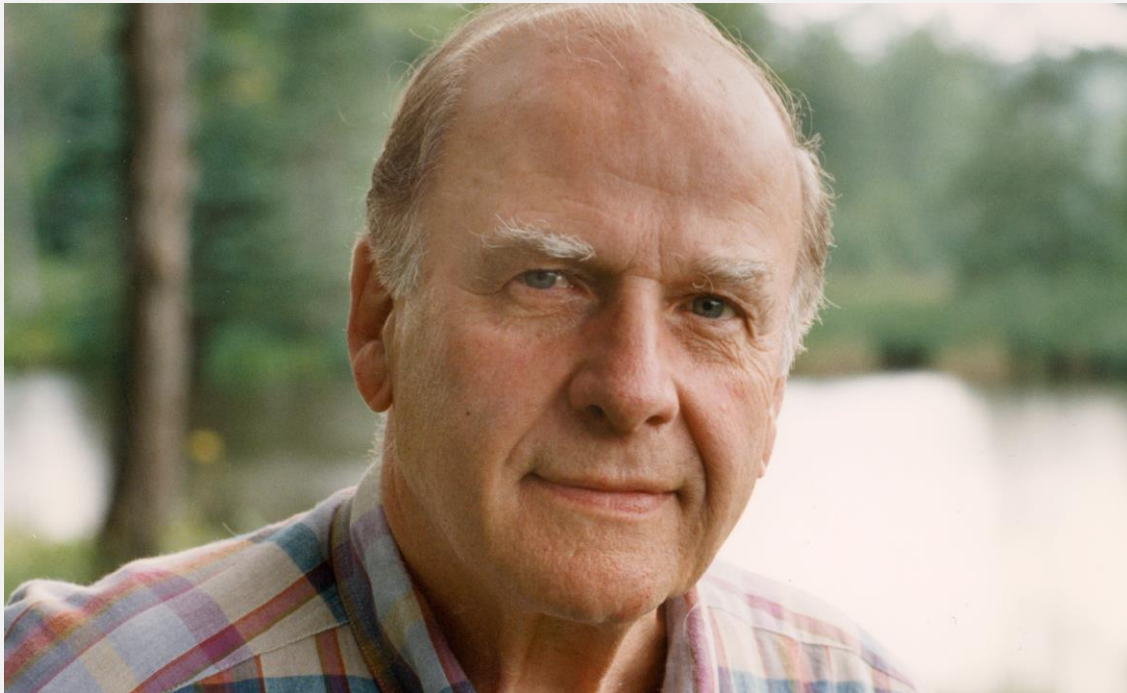
Research questions:

- Why were people for the establishment?
- Why were people against the establishment?
- How was this conflict managed and what were the results in the larger scope of society?



Primary Sources I Consulted:

- Gaylord Nelson (1916-2005)
- From Clear Lake, WI
- Democrat, WI governor, US senator, WI state senator
- Founder of Earth Day
- Creator of the Lakeshore

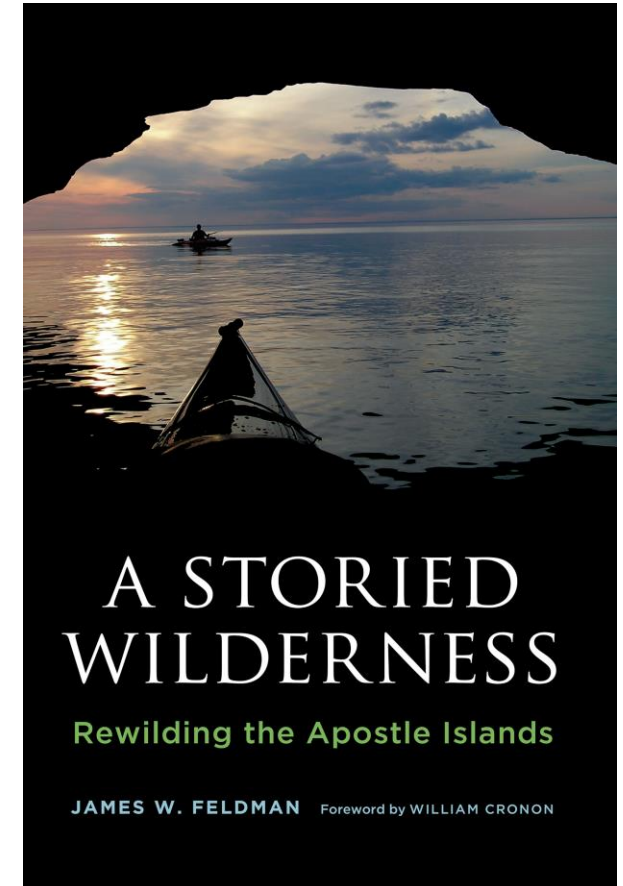
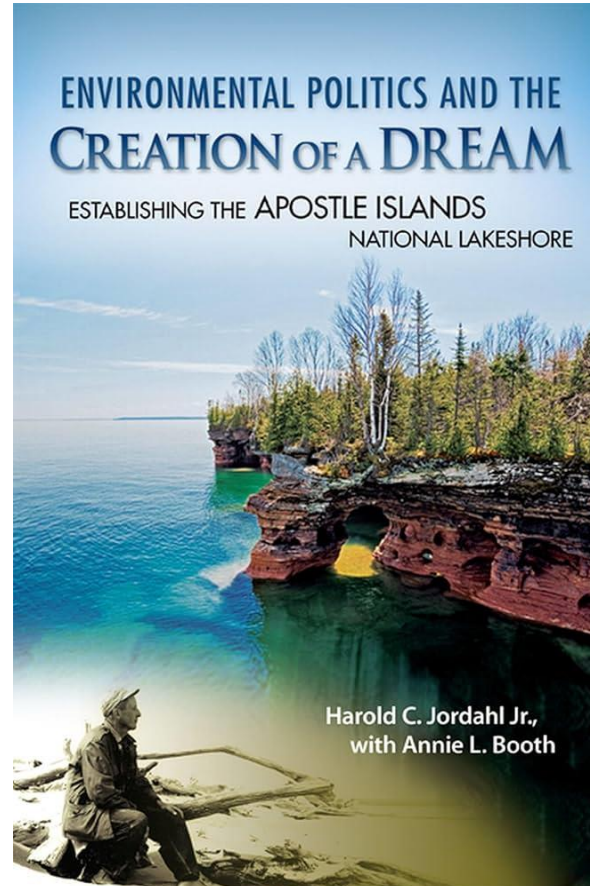


Gaylord Nelson Papers, 1959-2005, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, Boxes 123-125.

Collection included newspapers, letters from citizens, photographs, maps, budgets, tribal correspondence, etc.

Secondary Sources I Consulted:

- **James Feldman**- Environmental historian, professor at UW Oshkosh.
- **William Cronon**- Environmental historian.
- **Katrina Phillips**- Wrote about how her Ojibwe grandmother went to Washington to protest Gaylord Nelson's proposal.
- **Harold C. Jordahl Jr.** - Worked alongside Gaylord Nelson and helped pioneer conservation political policies.
- **Steven Silvern**- Wrote about treaty rights controversies.





Findings

For the Establishment	Against the Establishment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Businesses<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Tourism, economic benefits○ 180+ Apostle Backers• Conservationists<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Protecting the land and species• Many citizens<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Nelson would write back!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red Cliff band of the Ojibwe<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Acquiring reservation land• Private landowners<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Private property ownership○ NPS court battles

- **Land rights** seemed to dominate the conflict and created the most emotional responses.
 - Every conflict led back to who should control the land and why.
- Both sides could agree that the immense beauty of these islands need to be protected for future generations.

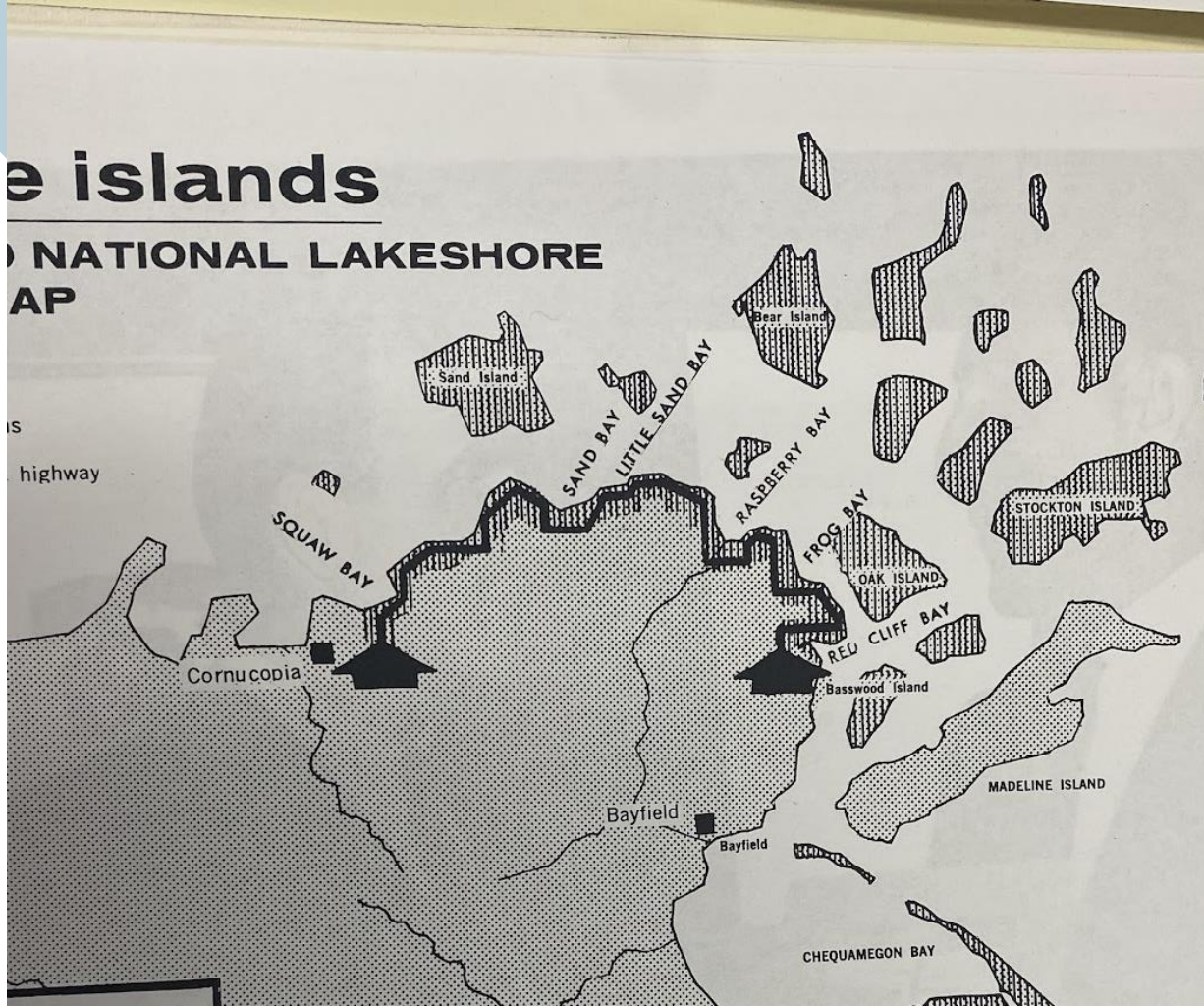
Compromises:

Nelson never feared discourse and he was even compared to being a badger. He would face conflict by thoroughly discussing the disagreements and making compromises so that everyone felt heard. He truly was a personable politician.

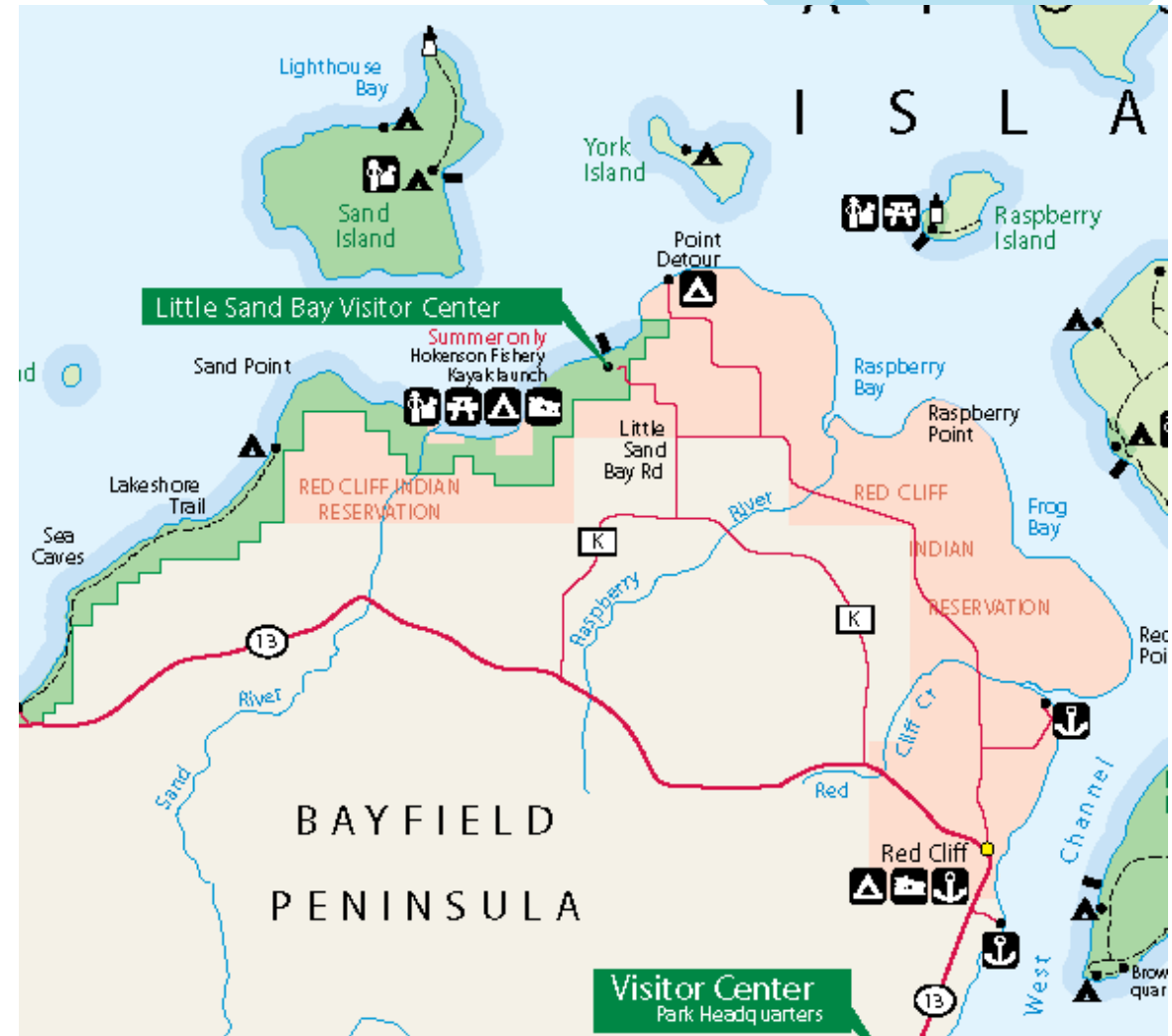
Compromises:

- Private landowners could...
 - Sell their land to the government
 - Keep it until they pass away
 - Loophole= Put house deed in the infant's name to retain it for more years.
- Not all Red Cliff lakeshore reservation land would be taken.
 - Nowadays, they have historical museums that share and honor the Ojibwe history on Madeline Island.

Before: Nelsons proposal



After: Compromise





Why Do These Findings Matter?

Conflict shapes societies each and every day and has the power to transform societies for the better or worse.

Conflict, in this case, was a force of change amidst continuity.

- The lands status' were changed so that they could be preserved for the future.

To truly understand events, understanding all perspectives is necessary to paint a full picture of why stances exist.

Society is doomed to repeat itself if the past is not understood.

- Currently, the conflict is reemerging with debates over making the Apostle Islands a National Park. Those for and against are aligned with the 1970's conflict.
- New concerns over lack of housing, lack of staff, overpopulation, and environmental concerns.



Conclusion

I hope that you were able to take away insights on this natural beauty and its lesser-known conflict.

As Gaylord Nelson said, “For a very modest investment, we can preserve in perpetuity a remarkable natural resource whose greatest meaning will be for future generations of Americans to whom we have a responsibility to pass on a legacy of wilderness and recreation resources.”

-“Apostle Islands, passage of bill, 1970”, Gaylord Nelson Papers 1959-2005, folder 1, box 125, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives.

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Images used that were not my own:

Disclaimer- These are cited to the best of my ability since not every image gave the needed citation information.

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