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National Park Service and National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation advance efforts to combat climate change in Lake Superior's National Parks

ST. PAUL, MN— From the unique ecosystem of Isle Royale to the historic lighthouses of the Apostle Islands, Lake Superior's five national parks boast natural and cultural resources cherished by generations. Starting in 2023, the parks began modeling how to reduce carbon emissions through net-zero strategies.

"In January 2023 we announced a first-in the-nation comprehensive plan to decarbonize the operations of Lake Superior's national parks, and I am pleased to say that the parks are now beginning implementation," said Tom Irvine, Executive Director of the National Parks of Lake Superior Foundation (NPLSF), which initiated the project with the National Park Service (NPS). "Visitors will hear fewer gas-powered chain saws, see more park equipment powered with clean electricity, and notice super-efficient air source heat pumps heating and cooling some park buildings."

These efforts support the NPS' ambitious Green Parks Plan to advance sustainable operations in national parks across the country.

"The Green Parks Plan is a bold vision to pursue net-zero status in America's national parks in response to climate change, and we are pleased that NPLSF is a partner to help Lake Superior's five national parks achieve this goal in the near term," stated National Park Service Regional Director Bert Frost.

Decarbonization, or strategies to slow climate change, in Lake Superior's parks is starting thanks to planning conducted by NPLSF and NPS with support from a private donor. It will be a multi-year endeavor to move all five parks off fossil fuel by improving energy efficiency and switching to clean electricity as the primary power source.

"Lake Superior's five national parks are proud to be early movers in achieving the National Park Service's Green Parks Plan goals, thanks to our exciting collaboration with NPLSF and others," said Isle Royale National Park Superintendent Denice Swanke. "Each park is moving forward based on its needs, budget, and capacity."

Actions underway include:

- Apostle Islands National Lakeshore is beginning to transition away from fossil-fuel-powered heating and cooling systems and appliances to those that operate with renewable electricity;
- Grand Portage National Monument is working to connect the park with available renewable grid options;

- more -

- Isle Royale National Park is piloting installation of air source heat pumps in staff housing and administrative areas. A cold-climate heat pump can reduce energy use by up to 55 percent;
- Keweenaw National Historical Park is identifying potential solar options, green practices, and programs across the Calumet and Quincy Units of the park;
- Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore developed a pilot project for electric trail and grounds maintenance equipment including mowers, trimmers, and chainsaws.

“These national parks will use off-the-shelf proven technologies that people can adopt in their own homes or businesses,” said Irvine. “Ultimately, the goal is to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions at Lake Superior’s five national parks and do it in a way that inspires visitors to take their own actions.”

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NPLSF is a philanthropic partner of the five national parks of Lake Superior. For more information and updates on progress, visit [Decarbonize the National Parks of Lake Superior \(nplsf.org\)](https://nplsf.org)