

SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND

South Manitou Island, T30 and J1W, R 15W is part of Glen Arbor Township, Leelanau County, and has an area of 5,262 acres, of which approximately 1,800 acres is State owned. The dock at the Coast Guard Station is 16.3 miles westerly from Leland and 8 miles northwest of Glen Haven.

The eastern half of the Island is a sand outwash and lake plain lying from 10 to 30 feet above lake level with a narrow band of sand dunes across the north end. The western half of the Island is a moraine from 50 to 100 feet at least higher than the outwash plain but the extreme western 1/4 of the Island is made up of sand dunes overlying the moraine where the two formations join, and rising in places to 200 or more feet above Lake Michigan.

There was settlement on the Island prior to 1847 when the General Land Office Survey was made. At present there are about 30 people on the Island, the number varying with the number stationed at the Coast Guard Station. There are about 18 permanent residents.

There are three farms operated at present. The principle crops are rye and beans for certified seed trade, oats, corn, hay, tree fruits and beef. Tree fruits were formerly more important than now. Cattle graze over most of the Island.

The occupied farm dwellings are painted and well kept houses from medium to medium large size and the outbuildings consist of several barns and sheds generally not painted. There is one set of fairly good vacant buildings, but it is located on sand soil hardly worth farming under present conditions. The buildings on the other unoccupied farms are in too bad condition for habitation without extensive repairs or complete rebuilding.

There are approximately 16 houses other than government owned coast guard and light house buildings all within 200 yards of the Coast Guard Station. These buildings are small 4 to 7 room size generally suitable for year around use. About forty acres of hardwood timber was logged off within the past 3 or 4 years but there is no current logging operation on the Island. There is one commercial fisherman operating from the Island. His boat is for hire during summer months to take tourists and business people to and from the Island between fishing trips. This boat is laid up during winter months.

The chief means of communication is by mail boat which makes two trips weekly, weather permitting, and submarine cable maintained by the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard also carries passengers and supplies on some of their trips to the mainland for supplies. The mail and fishing boats used are small, and harbor facilities are sufficiently poor that travel schedules are uncertain at the best during days of high wind. At present there are neither dock facilities or boat capacity to carry automobiles or trucks to and from the Island.

There are no regularly operated stores on the Island where utilities may be either bought or sold. There is no post office at present.

Cottontail rabbits and fox squirrel were observed on the Island and definite signs of fox were seen. Snowshoe rabbits are reported. Pheasants were introduced but the planting was not permanent. Muskrats were reported to have been introduced but these furbearers are not present now. It is reported that raccoon are not present. Deer are not present on this Island.

There is one inland lake covering about 80 acres - Lake Florence, or also called South Manitou Lake, in which black bass, pike, and perch fishing is reported to be fair to good. There is no resort development on this lake though it has a nice sand gravel beach over much of its margin and is reported to be over 30 feet deep in places. Five ducks were observed on its surface, two of which were black ducks. The total length of shore line of this lake is 1.8 miles or 9,680 feet. This entire frontage can be considered as suitable for bathing and play beach. Some improvement might be necessary on small portions of this frontage but of an inextensive nature. Of this frontage the State now owns about 2600 feet.

The shore line of the entire island is about 12.8 miles or 67,760 feet. Along the Bay on the east side of this island for $2 \frac{2}{3}$ miles or 14,080 feet the sand and gravel beach drops off abruptly within 8 feet of shore to depths of 3 to 4 or more feet and grades to 40 or more feet deep less than 100 feet from shore. Around the rest of the island the drop off is from 300 to 1,000 feet off shore making beach conditions for the most part safe for small children or non-swimmers.

There are some stretches of beach where boulders are under water along the beach but it is not thought that they are in such numbers to detract seriously from the standpoint of bathing.

Along the south side of the island extending westward from the Coast Guard Station for 2.8 miles or 14,960 feet is desirable beach with no escarpment above for the first $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, then grading upwards to nearly 100 foot high escarpment. This portion of beach is either now accessible due to existing roads or roads can be comparatively cheaply built to all parts.

The remainder of the beach has a strip of dunes ranging from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile wide between the beach and soil and topography over which roads or trails can be cheaply built.

The state now owns 5,720 feet of frontage along the Bay Shore on the east side of the Island where water depths are well adapted to boat landings and poorly to swimming. There is 13,200 feet of State owned frontage along the north shore of the island where some roads and trails need to be constructed through dunes in order to make this rather desirable beach accessible to the public from good boat landings.

Thus the total State owned frontage is 18,920 feet of lake Michigan frontage, while the Federal government owns an additional 7,000 feet of frontage largely along the west coast of the Island.

There are no streams on the Island.

The dominant timber cover of the Island was originally and still remains hardwood - maple, beech, ash, birch, hemlock, etc. At present 46% of the area is well stocked with these species with cedar scattered around the lake shore. Around the bay along the east side of the Island is an area of about 500 acres or 9.5% of the total Island covered dominantly with balsam, spruce and cedar with scattered swamp hardwood and pine species. 1,125 acres or 21.5% has been cleared and cropped at one time but at present 290 acres or 5.5% is cropped and the rest or 16% is abandoned, though cattle grass over much of it.

Approximately 1,000 acres or 19% of the Island is drifting or blowing sand and an additional 1,000 acres is timbered dunes, not now drifting but liable to future drifting if improperly handled. About 3% of the Island is coastal beach or open comparatively bare sand adjoining Lake Michigan.

Of the cleared land probably 120 acres not now farmed is good enough to farm, while 50 to 60 acres now farmed is poor enough so that special care need be used to maintain it in marginal or better state of productivity.

There is no significant acreage still in timber worth clearing for farming purposes.

The soil and cover of the State-owned descriptions are indicated on attached soil and cover maps. None of the State-owned land is worth clearing for farming purposes, neither should the already cleared state descriptions be considered as valuable for farming purposes. A sizeable part of this ownership consists of shifting sand dunes or now stabilized dunes that would be easily started into shifting again if carelessly cleared or cut over.

It would seem that any future expansion on this Island is limited to resort or summer home business, expansion of commercial fishing, some development of lumbering and possibly some very small enlargement of the cattle business. Development in any of these lines depends upon improvement of transportation facilities to and from the Island. It hardly seems that improvement in transportation is possible without development in resort business and vice versa.

I would strongly recommend that the State retain title to the south $\frac{1}{2}$ of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 9 which has frontage on the inland lake for a park and/or public seaplane base and access and also that some land that is now cleared and also fairly level be retained for a landing strip both for future Departmental use as well as the public. Land in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 4 or South $\frac{1}{2}$ Sec. 34 should be suitable for such purpose.

It also might be well to retain title to all areas of Bridgman fine sand and dune sand now in State Ownership so that control can be maintained over lumbering practices, so that the stabilized dunes (Bridgman fine sand) will be kept from becoming active again as far as possible.

I see no reason why the Department should not encourage the erection of summer homes on the Island to the extent of leasing or outright sale of moderate sized lots along the north side of the Island as well as adjoining the Bay as long as control over practices that might start sand drifting again on the bulk of present state ownership is continued.

On the other hand perhaps the county would take over this responsibility.

There seems little indication that the Island would serve as a worth while public hunting ground. Deer are not present and are not wanted, especially by the farmers. Ruffed Grouse are not reported, it seems doubtful that the Island is well adapted to them, and even if present they would hardly furnish sufficient sport to warrant the long boat trip to and from the Island.

It seems that the best possible new development for the Island would be for summer home sites and public summer recreational uses.

Gash Wanser

GW:cb
11/6/45

Maps attached -
soil, cover and ownership.

August 31, 1944. South Manitou

"Some of Cedar area said to be owned by State; nearby sanddunes mostly by U. S. Biggest cedars belong to Wissner Estate (A daughter, Mrs. Robin, now resident on Island). In 80 acres N. of line owned by State much cedar blew down.

"A few of the largest cedars have fallen in the storm of November 11, 1940, but most yet stand. The largest measure 4' in diameter. I saw about 50 trees scaling over 2 feet. In the stand there are also very large maple, striped maple, climbing bittersweet, maidenhair fern, baneberry, etc."

Extract from field notes
R. T. H.

Send this
with Hatcher's original
letter to game so he
included in their report.
JTH

RECEIVED

JUL 27 1945

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

James

CRANBROOK INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MICHIGAN

July 25th, 1945

File

Mr. P. J. Hoffmaster, Director
Michigan Department of Conservation
Lansing, Michigan

My dear Mr. Hoffmaster:

I enclose a map of the south end of South Manitou Island which will show the position of the large cedars. This is traced from the aerial photographs whose numbers are given on the sheet. The distance to these can be covered easily by car but it is also a pleasant walk. If one of your men would be going over during the month of August I would like to have them inquire for me at Leland to find if I might not go over with him.

I also enclose an extract from my notebook of 1944 and a photograph made of the edge of the cedar grove in 1940. I have no adequate photograph of the largest specimens of cedar.

Sincerely yours,

R. T. Hatt
Robert T. Hatt
Director

RTH:blh

RECEIVED

JUL 27 1945

GAME DIVISION

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Large Cedars of S. Manitowish
Ref to air photos

BEA -1-11

BEA -1-2

of 7-15-38

high bluffs

Big
cedars

Sand dunes

Road blocked
here by fallen
cedars



L. Mich

Coast
Road