

Subject: Press Release - Real-Time Wave Information for Kayakers in the Apostle Islands

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Real-Time Wave Information for Kayakers in the Apostle Islands

August 2, 2011-- Kayaking in the Apostle Islands is a popular, affordable adventure for many people. But it can be dangerous. Kayakers can leave from the Meyers Beach launch site in calm conditions, but when they reach the mainland sea caves a mile-and-a-half away, the waves can be treacherous.

Now, however, kayakers can find out the wave height at the mainland sea caves before they go. Using a smart phone or the Web, they can check the live conditions report at SeaCavesWatch.org. The website lists the wave height for the previous six hours, in 30-minute increments. The site also displays water temperature and photos of the waves at the sea caves, and it relays wind speed and direction recorded at Devil's Island.

"Kayaking is very popular here, and we're glad to see it getting even safer with this system," said Larry MacDonald, mayor of Bayfield and a member of the Wisconsin Sea Grant Advisory Board. "We hope it gets more people out on the water."

The site was developed by the department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with advice from local kayaking groups.

"We hope kayakers will use this system to make good decisions before venturing out onto the lake," said Bob Krumenaker, superintendent of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. "We hope it will save lives." Waves at the mainland sea caves can be particularly dangerous because of the bowl-like rock cliffs that reflect and amplify waves. Wave height is additive, and two large waves can combine to form an extremely large wave. Since 2004, four people have drowned or died of hypothermia in kayaking accidents in the Apostle Islands area, two at the sea caves. Wave conditions and cold water were a factor in each of these tragedies. The project was funded by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and **Friends of the Apostle Islands**. Other project partners include the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, the University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, the City of Bayfield, and Living Adventure, Inc.

Conceived in 1966, Sea Grant is a national network of 32 university-based programs of research, outreach, and education for enhancing the practical use and conservation of coastal, ocean and Great Lakes resources to create a sustainable economy and environment. The National Sea Grant Network is a partnership of participating coastal states, private industry, and the National Sea Grant College Program, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.