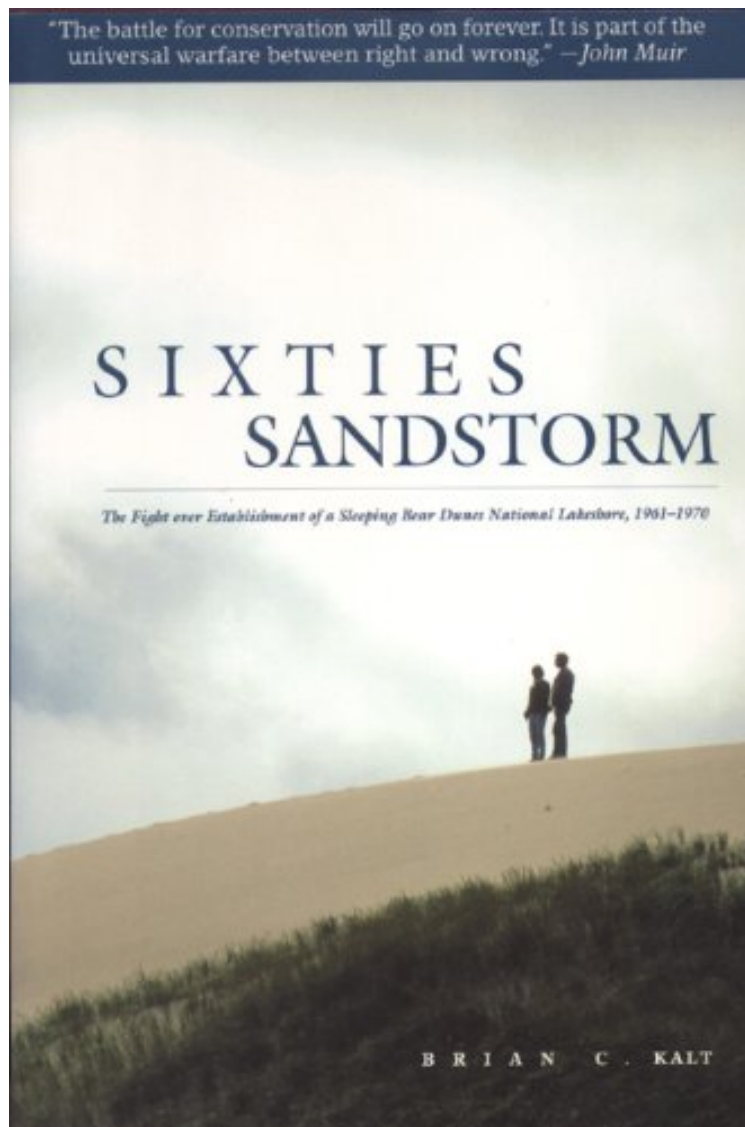


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Sixties Sandstorm: The Fight over Establishment of a Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1961-1970

Brian C. Kalt

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Brian C. Kalt : Sixties Sandstorm: The Fight over Establishment of a Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1961-1970 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sixties Sandstorm: The Fight over Establishment of a Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, 1961-1970:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The best (only) history of the fight over Sleeping Bear DunesBy

Arthur Digbee To my knowledge, this is the only publicly-available history of the battle to establish Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan. It provides a valuable secondary source for this story, as Kalt scoured archives and newspapers, and interviewed politicians and locals, to write this book. He's given us a good foundation for histories that will carry the story forward. Though the bulk of the book tells the story chronologically, there are chapter-length diversions into the legislative process or the green movement. These didn't fit well into the overall flow of the book, and I think I would structure the material differently. There are some other odd organizational choices; for example, NPS Director Conrad Wirth's disastrous meeting with locals pops up in at least three places. The main story is clear but not entirely satisfactory because Kalt never quite nails down the political forces here. Senator Philip Hart was a persistent advocate, and the locals persistent opponents. Public opinion in Michigan and the nation favored conservation of the Dunes. Politicians had interested that varied with their constituency and over time. But Kalt's overall story is that, eventually, advocates gained enough public opinion to win. That's a pretty post hoc conclusion, and impossible to verify (or reject). The book also never really gets a good grip on what motivated the opposition, except for the homeowners who stood to have their properties condemned. Still, it's the only history of the battle, and that makes it the best. If you're interested in the topic, it's a quick read at only 100 pages and it covers the battles well.

In 1961, Senator Philip Hart of Michigan introduced legislation to add Michigan's Sleeping Bear Dunes and 77,000 surrounding acres to America's National Park system. The 1,600 people who lived in the proposed park area feared not only that the federal government would confiscate their homes, but that a wave of tourists would ensue and destroy their beloved and fragile lands. In response, they organized citizen action groups and fought a nine-year battle against the legislation. *Sixties Sandstorm* is not a book about dunes as much as it is a book about people and their government. It chronicles the public meetings, bills, protests, and congressional interactions that led to the signing of the Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes Act in 1970. The Dunes park fight is a case study of the politics, the legislative process, citizen response to the expanded role of government in the 1960s, and the rise of the environmental movement in America during that decade. Since Hart's legislation was made law, millions of Americans have traveled to the Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes National Lakeshore. Few imagine what the area would look like today if not for the efforts of people like Senator Hart. On the other hand, few appreciate the sacrifice of the landowners who--not always willingly--gave up their property in this place where, as one resident put it, "stars are closer to the earth than anywhere else in the world."

About the Author Brian C. Kalt is an Associate Professor of Law at Michigan State University College of Law. He was recognized as one of the best legal writers of 2005 by *The Green Bag*, an entertaining journal of law, which recognizes scholarly creative thought and publishes exemplary legal writing. Kalt was previously an editor on the *Yale Law Journal* and also served as a law clerk for the Honorable Danny J. Boggs, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit.