

Four more Michigan lighthouses to be transferred from federal ownership

TRAVERSE CITY (AP) — Four more Michigan lighthouses are being transferred from federal ownership to public agencies and private groups, federal officials announced Friday.

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton announced the move at the Great Lakes Lighthouse Conference at Northwestern Michigan College. The lighthouses are: Manitou Island Lighthouse, Sturgeon Point Light, Cheboygan River Front Light Station and Point Betsie Lighthouse.

The lighthouses, along with one in Washington, are being transferred from the U.S. Coast Guard to nonprofit groups or state and

county agencies that have agreed to see to their cultural, educational and historic preservation.

"Michigan has the most lighthouses of any state," Norton said. "Michigan has responded strongly to the challenge to help find responsible caretakers for the many surplus historic lights likely to become available over the next five to ten years."

In 2000, federal legislation created a mechanism for transferring some 300 lighthouses from federal ownership to agencies or groups that would agree to preserve them.

They included 77 of the 120 lighthouses that dot Michigan's 3,200 miles of coastline. The other 43 already had been assigned new

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owners.

But including the four announced Friday, new ownership has been found for less than a

dozen of the Michigan lighthouses. State and federal officials have said they hope to speed up the process.