



Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes, Inc.

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2012 Projects List

Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail – This 27-mile non-motorized multi-use trail will generally follow M-22 and M-109 from the northern border of the Lakeshore (CR-651) to the Benzie/ Leelanau county line (Manning Rd. a couple of miles south of Empire). The trail will be built in the state and county right-of-ways and in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The first segment of the SBHT was opened June 20, 2012. The Trail Maintenance Crew and Trail Ambassador program have been put in place to keep the trail in good condition. Forty people volunteer their time to ride or walk the SBHT on a regular basis as Trail Ambassadors, and 10 of these folks are members of the Trail Crew to do heavy maintenance. The trail will be groomed for cross-country skiing this winter.

A Trail Use survey done in August indicated about 500 people use the trail per day during weekends and 400/day during the week through the summer. Over 35,000 people enjoyed the trail this summer. Official signs were installed this fall. Funds are being raised to build the second segment of the trail from the Dune Climb to Empire. We anticipate that this segment will be built in the fall of 2013. The Friends are responsible for trail signs and maintenance and have purchased tools to keep the trail clear: chainsaw, blower, hand tools, John Deere Gator, and ski groomer.

Friends spent \$ 34,000 on this equipment, \$4,525 to set up the trail maintenance program, and \$8,700 on signs for the first segment of the trail for a total of **\$ 47,225**.

Port Oneida Cultural Fair – The 11th annual celebration of the agricultural heritage of northern Michigan is coordinated in conjunction with the National Park Service and several local groups including the Friends and Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear. The fair had over 100 demonstrators and artists and served about 4,400 visitors during the two day event. This year, the Friends donated **\$8,812** to cover Fair expenses.

Visitor Booklets – We've worked with Park Staff to develop inexpensive guide books to provide visitors with more information about Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. There are now 13 booklets. Almost 30,000 booklets have been distributed since beginning in 2006. We added a new booklet this year **Hiking Trails**, which describes each official trail in the Park. Over 1,400 of these books were distributed this year. The books are now available at the Visitor Center, Platte River Campground, DH Day Campground, Cannery, and Maritime Museum. Booklets are available for a donation of \$2 each. They are also available at the Empire Museum and Cottage Book Shop. The Friends spent **\$9,950** to publish the booklets this year. A new booklet about Piping Plovers is being prepared for distribution in 2013.

Adopt-A-Beach – Over 60 volunteers pick up trash and report safety and maintenance issues along 35 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline on the mainland as well as a few volunteers who walk the beaches on South Manitou Island in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The volunteers record the trash they pick up and report it to our partner, the Alliance for the Great Lakes. Beach Patrol is at least once per month on the individual's schedule. Many of our volunteers are on the beach each week. Our volunteers picked up 1,823 pounds of trash from Sleeping Bear Dunes beaches this year.

Adopt-A-Garden – The gardens at the Lawr farm on M-22 were maintained throughout the summer for visitors to enjoy as they drive by or stop in for a picnic. There are six planting islands at intersections on the first segment of the **Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail (SBHT)**. These islands will be planted with native grasses and flowers and will be used to educate trail users about native, non-native, and invasive plants in our region. We will be working with a group of students from TC-West Middle School to plant these areas in the spring of 2013.

Adopt-An-Orchard – Several old orchards exist in historic areas of the park. For several years, the National Park Service has conducted pruning workshops to teach members of the public how to care for old apple and pear trees. This year some of the workshop attendees offered to “adopt” an orchard to keep the trees pruned and grass mowed to help keep these orchards alive. We have just two orchards adopted, and we are looking for more volunteers. This year the Friends provided new pruning tools for the Annual Pruning Workshop and the Adopt-An-Orchard program. **Donation: \$762**

Adopt-A-River – This is the second year for this program to have volunteers kayak the Crystal River and pick up trash along the way. River Patrol is on the individual’s schedule, and they patrol at least once per month. This year we also have a group of volunteers cleaning up the Platte River on a weekly basis during the summer. We also worked with the Traverse Area Paddling Club to do a couple of clean-ups on the Platte River.

Adopt-A-Trail – Over 35 volunteers pick up down branches and report to Park Roads & Trails crew any large trees down or erosion problems. Over 100 miles of trails are monitored. Volunteers walk their trail once a month on their own schedule. A group of volunteers is assessing hiking trails for handicap accessibility. This project is in the early stage of development.

Historic Landscape Maintenance – Many of the historic farm fields in the Park, especially in the Port Oneida Rural Historic District, are being overrun by trees, degrading the historic agricultural landscapes. The Friends manage volunteers who clear these fields by pulling trees and mowing the fields. The National Park Service management has completed a Landscape Management Plan for Port Oneida Rural Historic District this year. This plan provides guidance on which fields and the mowing boundaries. Over 800 acres of historic fields are in the mowing plan. In 2012, over 70% of the fields were mowed and an additional 106 acres is being cleared of trees by NPS crews to prepare them for being mowed. With the increased acreage, we are applying for grants and raising funds to purchase a larger tractor and mower for the large open fields.

Orchard Pruning Workshop – Each year the Park’s Historic Architect, Kim Mann organizes a workshop to teach people how to care for historic orchards. Most farms in what is now Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore – especially in the Port Oneida Rural Historic District – had orchards. Most of these orchards haven’t been managed for many years. This year the Friends bought a variety of hand tools to be used in the workshop and by volunteers who care for gardens and orchards within the Park. **\$762**

Barn Workshop – Each year the Park’s Historic Architect, Kim Mann organizes a Barn Restoration Workshop to rebuild a historic structure and teach area craftsmen and volunteers rehabilitation techniques. This year, the group worked on the August Beck Farm on South Manitou Island. The Friends provided materials for the workshop. **Donation: \$890**

Trail Trekker Challenge – Two students from Glen Lake Schools worked with the Interpretive Division of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore to develop a new hiking program. The challenge is to hike all 100 miles of mainland trails in one season. They developed a brochure/record book to describe the program and keep track of trails hiked. The Friends printed 200 color copies for the program in 2011 and another 1,000 copies in 2012. **Donation: \$254**

Oral History – Tom Van Zoeren has been collecting interviews with people who lived in the Port Oneida Rural Historic District and around the Glen Lake area. In addition, SLBE Historical Architect, Kim Mann, hired an intern to conduct oral history interviews this summer. Friends helped pay for her housing. These interviews need to be transcribed and indexed to make them more accessible for researchers and Park Interpretive Rangers. **Donation: \$2,500**

Wetland Restoration – A permanent deer enclosure fence was built around the perimeter of an artificial wetland used to remove excess nutrients from effluent generated from a closed-loop fish cleaning station the park maintains for visitor use at the Platte River Picnic Area. In addition to construction of the fence, this project involves re-establishing targeted wetland plant species in the wetland. This project was made possible through a grant from the National Parks Foundation. **Donation: \$9,450**

Port Oneida Lake MI Access Stairs – Volunteers from Cherry Republic and the Friends worked in support of a construction team from the Roads and Trails staff from the park to build these access stairs at the end of the access road about a mile north of Lane Road in Port Oneida. The new stairs provide safe access to Lake Michigan and dramatically reduce erosion of the bank. This project was made possible through a donation from Cherry Republic. **Donation: \$2,689**

Crystal River Signs – Signs were fabricated and installed at the four primary Crystal River access points, including two liveries, to indicate current water levels and associated boating precautions to protect the river environment. The signs characterize the effects and experience of floating the river at different water levels, guide use toward lower draft boats at low levels, and discourage use at critically low levels. **Donation: \$763**

Platte Point Cell Phone Booster – Cell phone coverage is poor at the Platte River Point parking lot. Due to the large number of visitors at this point during the summer, Park Management felt providing a booster signal would provide an improved safety capability for their staff and visitors. **Donation: \$700**

Food Storage Lockers (Bear and Raccoon Resistant) – Campers who do not have adequate food storage facilities invite late night visits from wild animals. This is especially true in the Platte River Campground. Park Staff requested the Friends purchase additional animal-resistant food storage lockers for the campground. **Donation: \$1,963**

Old Engine Restoration – Several old engines were brought off South Manitou Island in 2011. One of our volunteers is working to restore a running model from the salvaged parts and some replacement parts. We have also purchased a working engine, which was on display at the Port Oneida Fair along with an exhibit showing how the engines worked and what they were used for on the Islands and on farms in Port Oneida. **Donation: \$876**

Aloha Platform Viewing Scope – A new viewing deck was built around the Lake Michigan fishing tug **Aloha** near the Cannery Boat Museum in Glen Haven. Standing on the deck offers a good view inside the boat but also a beautiful view of Sleeping Bear Bay. In response to a request by Park Management, the Friends purchased a viewing scope for visitors to watch passing ships, look at the lighthouses (South Manitou Island and North Manitou Island Shoal), and look for birds on the beach or Lake Michigan. The scope has been purchased and will be installed on the deck in the spring of 2013. **Donation: \$2,300**

Proposed Projects for 2013

Bow Lakes Trail – The Bow Lakes Area was added to the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore boundary in the early 1980s because the area contains unique geological formations and conditions that create unique habitats not found in other parts of the Park. The geological characteristics of the area include a variety of glacial landforms and features such as kettles, moraines, drainage channels, erratics, and bogs, all the result of melting glaciers about 10,000 years ago. Some of the kettles, deep depressions surrounded by ridges, have trapped water and become ponds or lakes, creating unique habitats for a variety of plants.

The Bow Lakes Area contains 975 acres, of which, about 540 acres are currently owned by the National Lakeshore. Most of the Lakeshore-owned land is in the southern portion of the Area – south of Lanham Road. The southern portion of the Area contains several good examples of glacial kettles, steep valleys, and a bog. The northern portion of the Area, most of which is still privately owned, contains the Bow Lakes and ponds.

The proposed “Kettle Trail” will be an earthen hiking trail which will take visitors into this pristine natural area to observe glacial kettles, swales, and bogs. Accessibility for disabled visitors will be considered in the design of this trail. Information about the trail conditions will allow visitors to determine the parts of the trail that are suitable for them. The first step of the trail development process will be to solicit public

comment and conduct an Environmental Assessment, which we hope to complete in 2013. We hope to complete the trail, interpretive signs, and a parking area in 2014. We are presently raising funds and applying for grants to fund this project.

Bay to Bay Trail – This trail will be a water trail and backpacking trail near the shore of Lake Michigan within Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. It will run from Platte River Point to Good Harbor Bay and will require a few new backcountry campgrounds accessible to backpackers and kayakers. This trail will be part of the Lake Michigan Water Trail being created along the entire Lake Michigan shoreline. We are working with the NPS Roads, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program to begin planning for this trail in 2013.

Glen Haven Electric Generator – Refinish the inside of the generator building and develop an exhibit explaining how electricity was supplied to Glen Haven. Move the original Edison generator into the exhibit.

Trail Accessibility Guides – Develop information and brochures that provide additional guidance for visitors with disabilities to assess the difficulty of hiking trails.

Smart Phone Interpretive System – We have applied for a grant to deploy a GeLo mobile application for Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore that will include a custom interpretive tour and electronic tags affixed to signs and facilities that will enhance the park experience for millions of visitors and assist park staff in educating an increasing number of visitors to the park.