

FRIENDS OF SLEEPING BEAR DUNES

P.O. Box 545
Empire, MI 49630

*Protecting resources and heightening visitor experiences
in partnership with Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore*

friendsofsleepingbear.org



Perspective

From the Chairman

By Chuck Schaeffer



Most of this issue is devoted to accomplishments visible to the park's visitors, but a lot more has been going on behind the scenes.

Two years ago, our Board undertook a major project to look inward, taking an inventory of past strengths and weaknesses, then devising a plan to build infrastructure in order to support future growth. I am happy to report the success of this Capacity-Building Project. We are fortunate to have a diverse and talented Board of Directors who have stepped forward to assume additional responsibilities.

This year, we started some stretch projects, which are larger in scope than those we have traditionally attempted. Two of these projects—Bay to Bay Trail and the Bow Lakes Area Kettles Trail—are detailed on page 4.

Without the vision and commitment of our leadership team to complete the Capacity-Building effort, we would not have had the ability to consider projects of this magnitude.

My sincere thanks go to all our members who have made contributions that allow us to better serve the Park and its visitors. Your efforts demonstrate a true commitment to living our mission statement.

Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail

The headline picture shows a team of Friends volunteers installing signs along the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail (SBHT) this fall.

The Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail is the biggest recreational project supported by the Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes. The first segment of the trail officially opened June 20. Before that, there were no trails in the National Lakeshore where bicycles could be ridden. This trail provides a wonderful new recreational opportunity for families and individuals to experience the Park. We hope people will leave their cars and walk or ride bikes to many of the popular destinations in the Park. When the snow flies, we will be grooming the trail for cross-country skiing. The grooming equipment and our crew of groomers is ready!



Fundraising activities continue to raise private donations to match federal and state grants to complete the construction. The next stage to be built is from the Dune Climb to Voice Road north of Empire. Construction of this section is planned for the fall of 2013. We need your help! If you would like to make a donation to extend the trail, go to the web site: sleepingbeartrail.org.

Building the trail is one thing, but maintaining it is quite another! The Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes is responsible for all maintenance of the trail. This is a 100% volunteer effort managed by the Friends. We have 40 Trail Ambassador volunteers who walk or ride the trail on a regular basis to keep the trail clear, pick up trash, report major maintenance issues, and answer visitor questions. Twelve Ambassadors are on our Trail Crew to do major maintenance.

Join our team! E-mail us at info@friendsofsleepingbear.org or call Kathy Tuckerman 231-947-3251.

Maintenance of the trail requires purchase of materials, fuel, and tools. Consider contributing to the SBHT Maintenance Fund on our web site: friendsofsleepingbear.org.

FRIENDS OF SLEEPING BEAR DUNES

Ongoing Programs

Adopt-A-Beach

About 60 volunteers patrol their Lake Michigan beaches on their own schedule throughout the summer picking up trash and reporting safety and maintenance issues. About 35 miles of mainland beaches are covered with occasional patrols on North and South Manitou Islands. Volunteers report the type and amount of trash to our partner, the Alliance for the Great Lakes, who maintains a database for all Great Lakes beaches. This year, our volunteers picked up 1,823 pounds of trash.



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. In 2013 we will be planting native plants in the 6 planting islands at intersections in the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail. These will be used by NPS interpretive staff to talk about native and non-native plants. We will be working

with the NPS Natural Resources group to identify the native plants and transplant them into these islands, and Traverse City West Intermediate School "Greenagers" will prepare the islands for planting.

Adopt-An-Orchard

Several old orchards exist in historic areas of the National Lakeshore. For several years, NPS staff has conducted Pruning workshops to teach members of the public how to care for old fruit trees. In 2011, some workshop attendees offered to "adopt" an orchard to keep the trees pruned and grass mowed to maintain these orchards. At this time only two orchards have been adopted, but we are looking for volunteers to care for other orchards. This year, the Friends provided \$762 to purchase new pruning tools for Adopt-An-Orchard and the pruning workshop.

Adopt-A-River

In its second year, this program has six volunteers who kayak the Crystal River and two who kayak the Platte River to pick up trash and report safety or maintenance issues. We also worked with the Traverse Area Paddling Club to do a couple of cleanups on the Platte River this summer.



Adopt-A-Trail

Thirty five volunteers patrol over 100 miles of hiking trails. They hike their trail at least once a month on their own schedule and remove down branches and report larger maintenance issues to the NPS Roads and Trails crew.

Historic Field Landscape Maintenance

Many of the old farm fields in the Park are being overrun by trees, degrading the historic agricultural landscapes. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore has been clearing these fields to reclaim the farm landscapes of the early 1900s. Once the fields are cleared of woody vegetation, the Friends volunteers maintain them by annual mowing.



We currently have a used tractor and 8-foot Bush Hog mower. With the increased acreage that we are asked to mow, a larger tractor and mower have become necessary. In addition, mowing these fields is done after the meadow-nesting birds fledge, so the mowing season is shortened requiring a more efficient mowing system. We are looking for more volunteers to mow next summer, and we need to raise \$50,000 to purchase this equipment.

Port Oneida Fair

The Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes works with Park staff and Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear to plan and implement this event each year. The Fair is always on the second weekend of August. In 2013, it will be Aug 9 & 10, so mark your calendar.

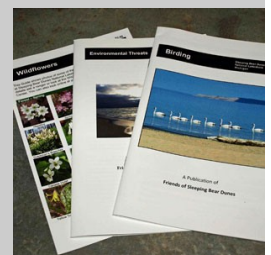
2012 marked the 11th Annual Fair and it was the largest event yet! Over 4,400 visitors attended and saw over 100 demonstrators, musicians, and artists at work at six historic sites in Port Oneida. Hands-on activities and one-on-one interaction with experts and artists is what we aim for. It's a great event for the whole family.



Enjoy live music while you talk with artists and visit with Civil War enactors. Ride the horse-drawn wagon from one site to another or take a free shuttle bus.

Visitor Booklets

Since 2006, we have worked with Park staff to develop inexpensive visitor guide booklets on a wide variety of topics. There are now 13 booklets (and a new one on Piping Plovers that will be ready in 2013). Over 30,000 of these little books have been distributed in the past 6 years. The new book for 2012 was "Hiking Trails" which has maps of all the Park trails. Books are available at the Visitor Center, Cannery, Maritime Museum, and both campgrounds for a \$2 donation.



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Beach Access Stairs in Port Oneida

In the Port Oneida Rural Historic District, there are several gravel roads that lead to a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan beaches.



Lane Road Stairs Construction 2009

For years, these beach access sites have been used by visitors scrambling down the steep bluff to the beach below. Over time these bluffs have eroded to the point that deep gullies had formed and trees were falling, making these areas dangerous.

In 2009, the NPS Roads and Trails Crew with support from volunteers from the Friends and Cherry Republic built beach access stairs at the end of Lane Road.

In 2012, another beach access stairway was built at the end of a gravel road about a mile north of Lane Road. Both of these

new stairs were made possible through a grant from Cherry Republic.



Roads & Trails Crew on Stairs 2012

2012 Grant Projects

Each year, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore management presents a list of projects they would like us to fund. These are typically grant requests to pay for equipment or materials. Here is a list of some 2012 projects funded by the Friends.

Crystal River Signs—\$763

Signs were fabricated and installed at the four primary Crystal River access points, including two liveries. The signs indicate current water levels and associated boating precautions to protect the river habitat and environment by guiding use of lower draft boats at low water levels.

Platte Point Cell Phone Booster—\$700

Cell phone coverage is poor at the Platte River Point parking lot. Due to the large number of visitors during the summer, providing a booster signal provides improved safety for visitors and staff.

Food Storage Lockers—\$1,963

Campers who do not have adequate food storage facilities invite late night visits from wild animals. These lockers provide a place to safely store food.



Aloha Platform Viewing Scope—\$2,300

A new viewing deck was built around the Lake Michigan Tugboat, **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 and the Manitou Islands. There will actually be two scopes: one mounted for standing adults and one for children or wheelchair height. The scopes will be installed in the May, 2013.

Barn Restoration Workshop \$890

Pruning Workshop Tools \$762

Water Treatment Wetland

The fish-cleaning station at the Platte River Picnic Area at the intersection of M-22 and Lake Michigan Road where the Platte River crosses, has a water treatment system to remove excess nutrients from the



wash water. The waste goes through a grinder and then through a series of holding tanks which digest the waste and ultimately the water goes into a lagoon to absorb the nutrients before the water seeps away. This lagoon was planted with native plants, and a high fence was built around it to keep the deer from eating the plants.

This project was coordinated by the NPS Natural Resources group, and SEEDS youth corp. built the fence. This project was funded by a grant from the National Parks Foundation. The fish-cleaning station was heavily used this fall during salmon season.

Project Cost: \$9,450

JOIN US!

With limited budget, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is unable to do all the projects that need to be done. We are here to help and make the Park an even better place to enjoy. You can be part of our team by volunteering or donating toward one of the projects you see described here. We hope you will find something that piques your interest in this varied list of projects.

Visit our web site:

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Future Projects

Bow Lakes Area—Kettles Trail

The Bow Lakes Area was added to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in the early 1980s because of the unique geological formations and conditions that create unique habitats not found in other parts of the Park. The geological characteristics include glacial landforms like kettles, drainage channels, erratics, and bogs, all the result of melting glaciers some 10,000 years ago.

The Bow Lakes Area contains 975 acres, of which about 540 acres are currently owned by the National Lakeshore. The area has not been developed for visitor use and the 2009 General Management Plan included “loop hiking trails” in this area.

This project will develop an earthen hiking trail which will take visitors into this pristine natural area to observe kettles, swales, and bogs. We need to raise \$10,000 to initiate an Environmental Assessment.

Bay to Bay Trail

This trail will be a water trail and back-packing trail near the shore of Lake Michigan within Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. It will run from Platte Bay to Good Harbor Bay. The water trail will be part of the Lake Michigan Water Trail system. The trail will include some new backcountry campgrounds. Planning and fundraising will begin in 2013. One of the first steps will be to do an Environmental Assessment with alternative routes and campground locations.



Trail Accessibility Guides

We are working with NPS staff and the Disabilities Network to develop guides for each of our hiking trails that describe the trail surface and levels of difficulty for hikers. These will be created in 2013 and made available on our web site and the Park web site to assist visitors in selecting the trail or portion of trail that they want to hike.

Smart Phone Interpretive System

We have applied for a grant to deploy a GeLo mobile app for the Park that will include a custom interpretive tour and electronic tags affixed to signs and facilities that can provide self-guided interpretation of historic or natural resources throughout the Park.

Glen Haven Electric Generator

We hope to restore the original Edison electric generator used to power the village of Glen Haven as an interpretive exhibit.

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