

# 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  
April, 2014



"Greenagers" TC West  
8th Grade students  
work on the SBHT

## Perspective

### *From the Chairman*

By Kerry Kelly



The **Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes** is an all-volunteer organization. We depend on people from all walks of life with a wide variety of skills and life experiences. Over 150 of you volunteered to work on projects described in this newsletter and much more.

As you read, you will learn about some of the projects we worked on in 2013. Some are completed and others are ongoing. Each spring, Park management brings us a list of project needs to consider, so we know there will be even more opportunities that we aren't aware of yet. As you read, I hope you "connect" with something that drives you to get involved.

If you are not already a volunteer, please consider joining the many men, women, and youth working with us to make a difference at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. You will have a good time working on projects that will make the National Lakeshore cleaner, safer, and more enjoyable for our visitors and leave a legacy for generations.

Of course, we also need financial support. If you donate to any specific project, 100% of your donation will be used for that project. Donations not specified for a particular project allow us the flexibility to do projects that we had not anticipated.

## Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail

The Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail is a large community project, broadly supported by numerous organizations, local businesses, governmental units, and many individuals. The **Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes** is proud to be part of this cooperative effort. Our role in this project is to lead the effort to design and install signs, manage the construction of the main trailhead at the Dune Climb, and to operate and maintain the trail.



About 70,000 people have used the first 4.25 mile segment of the trail from the Dune Climb to Glen Arbor since it was opened 2012. Most folks walked or road bikes with a group of friends or family.



The trail is universally accessible, making it easier for people with disabilities to enjoy a trail experience. Providing universal access to trails and other areas of the park is a high priority for the **Friends**, and we strive to make the SBHT accessible to people of all ability levels.

The trail from the Dune Climb to the corner of Voice and Bar Lake Roads just north of Empire will be open by July. In 2015, the segment from Glen Arbor to Port Oneida Road will be done, and in 2016 the segment to CR-669 will be open.

Over 60 SBHT Trail Ambassadors (volunteers) bike, ski or walk the trail on a regular basis to be available for visitor's questions and to look for maintenance problems. A Trail Crew of 25 volunteers do heavy maintenance and grooming. Combined, they provided over 3,000 hours.



The Trail Crew groomed the trail for classic cross country skiing and skate skiing every week starting early December through early March.

Consider becoming a Trail Ambassador or contributing to building or maintaining the trail: [friendsofsleepingbear.org](http://friendsofsleepingbear.org). Pam Darling and Julie Clark from TART have done a fantastic job of leading the effort to raise over \$2 million in private funds for this project working with a committee of community leaders with Brad Anderson & Carol Quarderer as co-chairs.



# FRIENDS OF SLEEPING BEAR DUNES

## The Kettles Trail in the Bow Lakes Area

The Bow Lakes Area was added to the boundary of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in the mid-1980s because of the unique geological formations (kettles, moraines, drainage channels, erratics) and natural habitats found there. Erratics are boulders dropped by the melting glacier and kettles are deep depressions in the ground surrounded on all sides by ridges. Some kettles have trapped water and become ponds or bogs.



The Bow Lakes Area contains 975 acres, of which about 540 acres are currently owned by the National Lakeshore. The land owned by the Park is mostly south of Lanhams Road and north of Baatz Road near Fritz Road. The General Management Plan calls for "a looped hiking trail" in this area, but the area has not been developed for visitor use. Snowshoeing is outstanding here because of the large amount of snow. Birding is especially good because of the water sources and tree cover.

Volunteers spent many hours walking the area with Park staff, evaluating possible trail routes and features of interest. These were all recorded with GPS equipment and entered into the Park GIS system. Possible areas where the trail can be made universally accessible to allow people with disabilities to use the trail were identified. The proposed trail will provide a view of a bog and several kettles.



The National Lakeshore determined that an Environmental Assessment is the appropriate planning process, so the **Friends** raised funds to hire a consultant to facilitate and document the Environmental Assessment process with Park staff and volunteers. Much of the data has been collected and we anticipate a second public input phase for this project this spring. If the decision is to build the trail, it could begin later in 2014.

## The Bay to Bay Backpacking & Paddling Trail

The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore General Management Plan calls for "a bay-to-bay trail for hikers and Lake Michigan paddlers to parallel the mainland shoreline within the Lakeshore. On land this trail will make use of active beach areas or existing disturbed areas and corridors to the extent possible". In 2013, the **Friends** applied for NPS Roads, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) to lead early stage scoping for this project.

RTCA helped us obtain the assistance of a group of five Masters Degree students from the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources. The students worked to

document all Lake Michigan access points. This information will be available as part of the Lake Michigan Water Trail web site. In addition, the team worked with Park staff and volunteers to GPS and collect data on many possible hiking routes that might be-



come part of the trail. Additional backcountry campgrounds near Lake Michigan will be needed to make multi-day kayaking or backpacking trips possible. Several possible locations for these campgrounds are being evaluated. This data will be used by Park staff in their Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project.

The **Friends** raised funds to pay for student housing and to hire a consultant to facilitate and document the Environmental Assessment, which will be conducted by Park staff and volunteers. The EA began in the fall of 2013 and will continue throughout 2014. Initial public input will be sought this Spring.

## Echo Valley Mountain Bike Trail

Since the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore General Management Plan was published in 2009, a number of people in the community have expressed interest in exploring the possibility of developing a mountain bike trail within the park. The GMP states, "The wooded area ("Burnham Woods") south of the Glen Lakes and east of M-22 is zoned recreation to allow consideration for a possible future designated mountain bike trail system."

An initial meeting was held in December and the **Friends** received approval to work with Park staff to begin early stage scoping of this project. We are researching other mountain bike trails recently built in the local region and have made contact with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). They have a list of trail designers who can work with us in developing a number of trail concepts to be used to frame a future Park planning process.

Scoping will continue in 2014 as we collect data on soil type, topography, plant and animal populations, etc. in the study area.

In addition, we will meet with other local organizations that manage mountain bike trails to learn best practices in design, building, operations, and maintenance of such a trail. Funds are needed to retain a consultant to facilitate and document the Park planning process for this project.

# FRIENDS OF SLEEPING BEAR DUNES

## Historic and Cultural Projects

Through our strategic planning process, it became clear that we could be more effective by reducing overlap with the mission of other Park Partners who focus on historic and cultural projects.

Some of the Historic and Cultural projects we have worked on in the past will be completed in 2014. We will investigate the possibility of transferring ongoing projects to another Park Partner - Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear (PHSB). Here is a list of our 2013 Historic & Cultural projects.

### Port Oneida Fair

The 12th annual celebration of agricultural heritage was held in August. The **Friends** have been a member of the planning committee and the fiduciary for the Fair for several years. About 4,000 visitors enjoyed meeting over 100 demonstrators at the fair.



### Historic Field Landscape Maintenance

Many of the old farm fields in the Port Oneida Rural Historic District were being over-run by trees, degrading the historic agricultural landscapes. The Park staff, PHSB,



and **Friends** have been clearing these fields to reclaim the farm fields of the early 1900s. Once the fields are cleared of woody vegetation, the Friends volunteers maintain them by mowing.

We currently have a used tractor and 8-foot Bush Hog mower. In 2013, we mowed about 400 acres. With the increased acreage that we are asked to mow, a larger tractor and mower have become necessary. Mowing 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 \$60,000 to purchase the new equipment.

### Adopt-An-Orchard

Several old orchards exist in historic areas of the Park. NPS staff conducts Pruning Workshops to teach members of the public how to care for old fruit trees. Attendees may volunteer to adopt an historic orchard and prune the trees on their own schedule.

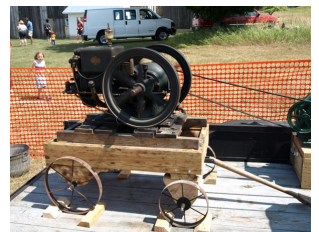
### Barn Workshop

Each year the Park hosts a Barn Restoration Workshop to rebuild a historic structure and teach area craftsmen and volunteers rehabilitation techniques. The Friends purchased construction materials.

### Old Engine Restoration

Several old engines were brought off South Manitou Island where they were used on farms and docks in the late 1800s and early 1900s. One of our volunteers spent many hours

restoring these engines so they could be demonstrated at events like the Port Oneida Fair. This project will be completed in 2014.



### South Manitou Island Lead-based Paint

Lead-based paint was removed from the Fog Whistle Building and School on SMI last summer so they could be re-painted. Friends paid SEEDS Youth Corp \$3,000 to have their trained crew do the job.

### South Manitou Island Mower

A group of volunteers who have been mowing the grass in the village and farms of SMI requested **Friends** purchase a new riding mower. They worked with Park staff to determine what mower to purchase. Then they and their Friends contributed toward the purchase and the **Friends** kicked in a little to make it happen.

## Educational Projects

### Aloha Platform Viewing Scope Glen Haven Beach

A viewing deck was built by NPS staff around the Lake Michigan fishing tug, Aloha. Standing on the deck offers a good view inside the boat and of Sleeping Bear Bay. The **Friends** purchased a new viewing



scope for the deck. It has 2 scopes one at adult height and one at kid height (wheelchair height).

### Visitor Booklets

Thirteen inexpensive booklets give visitors a quick way to learn historic or scientific information about Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. **Friends** published over 7,000 books in 2013 and have distributed over 40,000 since we began in 2006.

### School Canoe Trip

For the past 7 years, the 6th grade class at Platte River Elementary has taken an environmental education canoe trip on the Platte River. One of their sponsors was not able to support the trip in 2013, so **Friends** helped pay transportation fees.

## Become a Member!

With limited budget, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is unable to do all the projects that need to be done. Be part of the **Friends** team by volunteering or donating funds toward one of the projects you see here or a new project request that came in after this newsletter goes to press.

Visit our web site & click on the Projects tab [friendsofsleepingbear.org](http://friendsofsleepingbear.org)

### Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes

P.O. Box 545

Empire, MI 49630

[info@friendsofsleepingbear.org](mailto:info@friendsofsleepingbear.org)



# FRIENDS OF SLEEPING BEAR DUNES

## We Need Your Help — Volunteer

### **Adopt-A-Beach**

Over 80 volunteers patrol 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 and we share the data with our partner, the Alliance for the Great Lakes, who maintains a database for all Great Lakes beaches. This year, our volunteers worked over 1,100 hours and picked up over 2,000 pounds of trash.



### **Adopt-A-River**

In its third 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 clean-ups on the Platte River last summer.

### **Adopt-A-Trail**

Thirty five volunteers patrol over 100 miles of hiking trails at least once a month on their own schedule. They remove down branches and report larger issues.

### **Trail Accessibility**

Many of our visitors would like to use our hiking trails, but some have physical limitations. Many Park visitors are older and need to choose less physically challenging alternatives. By providing information about the difficulty or condition of trails allows individuals to decide which trail or section of trail to choose. In 2013, we did initial training of staff and volunteers. In 2014, we received a grant to do more training and trail assessment and make the information available to visitors.



## ***Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes***

P.O. Box 545

Empire, MI 49630

[www.friendsofsleepingbear.org](http://www.friendsofsleepingbear.org)