



**Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes
Adopt-A-Trail Program Information and
Training Guide
December 2018**

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Adopt-A-Trail Program Program Information and Training Guide

Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes, Inc. Mission Statement

“Protecting resources and heightening visitor experiences in partnership with Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.”

Adopt-A-Trail Program Description

Within this overall mission, the goals and objectives of the Adopt-A-Trail Program will be to promote the safe, responsible and enjoyable use of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore rustic trail system with an emphasis on:

- Minor trail maintenance and hazard or damage reporting
- Informing, assisting, and educating Park visitors
- Practicing and exemplifying trail etiquette
- Having fun on the trails

The Adopt-A-Trail Program is a volunteer-driven program of outdoor enthusiasts who wish to contribute to the community and to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

By contributing volunteer hours each fiscal year, you automatically become a Friends member. If you also wish to contribute financially to the Friends, you may do so on our website: <http://friendsofsleepingbear.org/donate/>

This program includes all of the mainland “rustic” hiking trails, but does not include the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail. The Heritage Trail has an “Ambassador” program with training and guidelines separate from, but similar to the Adopt-A-Trail program.

What is a Trail Crew Volunteer?

A Trail Crew Volunteer supports the observation and reporting on the 16 “rustic” hiking trails, covering nearly 60 miles on the mainland area of the Park. It does not include the trails on the Manitou Islands. The Volunteer also actively participates in educating Park visitors in order to make their visit more safe and enjoyable.

Qualifications and Abilities

- Complete Trail Volunteer training
- Possess positive, effective, enthusiastic interpersonal skills
- Enjoy being on the trail
- Possess physical conditioning good enough to permit walking moderate distances.

This position asks that the Volunteer will commit to patrolling their assigned trail at least once per month, during the season of April thru October. However, there is no formal, required minimum time commitment. You may patrol more than the minimum and, in fact, you are encouraged to do so. This position works closely with the Roads, Trails, Grounds Division.

Volunteer Rules, Rights and Privileges

Since the Trail Crew Volunteers represent the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and The Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes, it is of the utmost importance that all Volunteers treat all Park visitors with courtesy and respect, and attempt to use the Volunteer's knowledge and skills to assist trail users in the following ways: providing information about proper use of the Park trails, regulations and layout, local services and points of interest, and trail conditions.

Volunteer Rules of Conduct – Adopt-A-Trail

While volunteering and wearing some form of Volunteer identification, Volunteers:

- Shall not accept any form of compensation from Park visitors including donations. Visitors wishing to make a donation should be offered a membership brochure and/or directed to the Friends' donation boxes at the Visitor Center, campground offices, and other places around the Park.
- Shall not use profane language.
- Shall maintain a neat appearance, and wear Park-issued Volunteer identification at all times when performing official Volunteer duties.
- Shall not be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- Shall observe all required safety precautions, Park rules, rules governing Volunteers to the National Park Service, instructions and trail guidelines by Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes.
- Shall speak respectfully to visitors and Park trail users.

Volunteer Rights and Privileges

As a Volunteer, you have the following rights and privileges:

- The National Park Services protects/indemnifies registered Volunteers while providing services to the Park.
- Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes will send updated information about events, programs, projects and will maintain a Frequently Asked Questions document so that you may do your job effectively.
- The Park will provide the Volunteer a free annual Park pass which will enable you to perform your Volunteer duties without paying the Park entrance fee.

Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes Responsibilities

By participating as a Volunteer any of the programs of the Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes, the Friends has the responsibility to:

- Provide effective training to the Volunteer.
- Provide necessary forms, literature, and policy statements.
- Provide periodic communications to the Volunteers, via mail, email, and/or website, to keep them apprised of changes in the program.

TRAIL VOLUNTEER TRAINING OVERVIEW

Volunteer Information Program (VIP) Application (NPS Form 301A)

This form may be obtained from the Park Volunteer Coordinator. It is required by the National Park Service for anyone providing volunteer services within the Park.

Preparing for your Patrol

Become Informed – There are many ways available to find out what’s going on in the Park on the day of your patrol. Please try to be informed of these events and programs so that you might share them with visitors you encounter on your patrol. (More on this in the section on Interacting with Visitors.) This could include doings at the Visitor Center, Ranger-led hikes and programs, Lyle Gun firing, campground evening programs, Glen Haven Days, the Port Oneida Fair, Star Parties, etc.

Proper Dress Please dress neatly, remembering you are representing the National Park and Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes. Wear the provided Volunteer identification vest, so that Park visitors will recognize you as a Volunteer. Ticks have become an issue in this region, therefore take appropriate precautions before and especially after your patrol to make sure you do not attract the ticks.

Here is a list of items to consider taking on your patrol. Four of these items are required.

Trail Map & SLBE Map (Required) - You are required to carry a map for your specific trail and a map of the SLBE park. You will use these maps for helping visitors to navigate throughout the park and on the specific trail you are monitoring. You will also use the trail map to record the location of maintenance issues that need to be addressed by Park personnel. You may get copies of the trail maps at the trailhead or at the Park Visitor Center desk. You can pick up additional trail maps to restock the map box at the trailhead. Tell the Ranger at the desk that you are an Adopt-A-Trail Volunteer. You may also print out the maps for all of the trails. This page <https://www.nps.gov/slbe/planyourvisit/trails.htm> contains an index to each map.

Tree Reporting/Emergency Contact Card (Required) - This will be provided by the Park.

Official Park Volunteer Vest (Required) - This is provided by the Park.

Pen or Pencil and Paper

Bottled Water

Personal First Aid Kit - This kit is for personal use. Volunteers are encouraged, but not required, to obtain First Aid/CPR training. If the visitor is injured or you think may require professional treatment, call 911. Do NOT provide any type of medication.

Nitrile Gloves and Plastic Bag

Insect Repellant

Cell Phone The area in and around the Park has fairly good reception, except in some of the trails at the southern end of the park. Also for taking pictures of any maintenance issues.

Small Pruning Shears

GPS

Compass

Tape Measure

Binoculars

Toilet Tissue

On the Trail

While on patrol there are several phases or activities that you will perform:

- Observing Safety
- Checking In & Out
- Trailhead Inspection
- Performing Minor Maintenance
- Documenting Maintenance and Safety Issues
- Litter
- Signage
- Interacting with Visitors
- Wilderness Designated Portions of the Park
- Handling Park Rules Violations
- Handling Emergencies

Observing Safety

Your personal safety and the safety of visitors is priority one. Watch the trail for obstacles. Keep hydrated. Mind the sun and exposed skin. Don't attempt rough terrain if you are not in proper physical condition for the environment. Be careful with matches, lighters, etc. For a more complete list, see the section in the Appendix called "Trail Safety Information."

Checking In & Out

Always let someone know where you are going, when you expect to return, and the number in your party. At the end of your patrol, remember to check back with anyone you notified of your patrol. Let them know you are safe and leaving the area. It is strongly suggested that you leave a message on the dashboard of your car with the following information:

- A statement that you are a Volunteer conducting a trail patrol
- Your name
- The number in your party
- The time and date you departed and the time you expect to return

Trailhead Inspection

- Parking Area – When you arrive at the parking area, take a quick circuit around the lot looking for litter.
- Fee Pipe (if applicable) – If there is a Fee Pipe at the trailhead, (not all have one) check to see that the pipe and lock are secure and undamaged. If you find a condition that needs addressing, at the conclusion of your patrol, try to contact someone at the Visitor Center and let them know of the situation. Otherwise provide it in your after-patrol report.
- Bulletin Board and Trail Map Box - Each trailhead has a glass enclosed bulletin board. Check the board for any needed repairs or vandalism. If necessary report any problems when you enter your after-patrol report. Check to see if there are maps in the map box.
- Restroom (if applicable) – If the trailhead has a restroom, check for reasonable cleanliness, toilet paper and hand sanitizer. Report needed maintenance on your after patrol report. If you are comfortable with doing clean up, please do so. Use nitrile gloves.

Performing Minor Maintenance

A Trail Crew Volunteer should remove limbs or branches and small downed trees that block the trail, and also pick up litter. The use of tools like a saw are prohibited unless the volunteer has completed the 3 hour training course on hand tools and the 5 hour First Aid/CPR course provided by the park. Exception would be hand held pruning shears.

Documenting Maintenance and Safety Issues

If you encounter a maintenance issue or a downed or leaning tree that you cannot correct, you will need to note various items of information and report them in the Adopt-a-Trail online reporting form. If you aren't able to use the online form, please call the Park Maintenance contact, Jesse Thomas at 231-326-4783. Your instructions in the comments section will go directly to the Roads and Trails Maintenance Team. Please be specific in your instructions. Specific information helps the maintenance team assess what's needed to correct the issue.

In your report, be sure to include the following information:

- Location – SLBE prefers the following in order of preference. 1. GPS coordinates in degrees and decimal minutes. 2. A picture of the trail map with an "X" marking the location of the issue. Use the link on the form. 3. Describe the location using distance from a landmark, trail sign, trail junction, or other similar identifier.
- Description of problem – Describe the issue concisely but completely. If you have a camera, take pictures. Pictures are very helpful to the Park maintenance team when planning on how to respond to the issue, especially downed trees. There is a link at the top of the reporting form for pictures. If there is a tree blocking the trail, please estimate the diameter at the largest point, and the length of the tree for your report. Indicate if the tree is completely down or is a leaner. If a leaner, indicate how likely you think it is that the tree might unexpectedly fall. Also, indicate if any part of the trail surface has less than 7 feet of clearance. All of this information gets added in the comments section of the reporting form.
- OAK WILT WARNING - If you are reporting a maintenance issue involving an Oak tree, please include a note that this is (or you believe it is) an Oak tree.
- Contact information - When you are submitting a report with an issue, include your phone number in the comments section and email address in case the Park needs to contact you for more information.

Litter

Please pick up all litter you are comfortable with. Wear nitrile gloves as the material might contain body fluids or waste. At the end of your patrol, place the material in any Park waste container.

Signage

Some trails have directional signs along the route. Most are marked on the official Park trail map. If you find a sign that has been damaged or defaced, please note that in your after-patrol report. If the map shows a sign and you cannot locate it, or there are indications that the sign has been stolen, please report that as well in your after-patrol report.

Interacting with Visitors

One of the main objectives in the Mission of the Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes is to, "enhance the visitors' experience." To accomplish this:

- Look for opportunities to engage visitors in friendly, informative conversation. Because you are properly attired with your Volunteer vest, your intent to help the visitor should be positively received.
- If visitors have questions or comments that you don't feel comfortable addressing, refer them to the comment cards that can be found at Ranger stations, campgrounds, fee booths or the Visitor Center in Empire.
- Try to learn about the Park's history and general layout. Also, be aware of current events and programs being conducted.

- Be prepared to answer some general questions. A list of FAQ is found at the beginning of the Appendix. If you don't know the answers, please attempt to find out. One good place to start is the Park website (<http://nps.gov/slbe/>).
- Park Volunteers are not allowed to give the names of specific businesses, since it might be construed as a recommendation. Do not mention names of specific businesses. You can indicate that there is/are (type of business) in Empire, Glen Arbor, etc.

Wilderness Designated Portions of the Park

In 1964, with the Wilderness Act, the American people set aside wilderness areas to let nature prevail. The Wilderness Act also established the national Wilderness Preservation System to "secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness". The National Park Service along with the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Forest Service strive to ensure that wilderness remains wild for future generations. In 2014, 32,000 of the 71,000 total acres in the park were designated as "Wilderness" under the U.S. Wilderness Act. As a trail Volunteer you may get questions on the special rules and regulations associated with "Wilderness" areas. The Wilderness Act established the highest level of concentration protection of federal lands. Wilderness areas generally do not allow motorized vehicles or equipment, mechanical transport, roads, permanent structures or installations. Visitors can engage in non-motorized recreational activities such as hiking, fishing, camping and hunting. Trails that are partially or entirely in "Wilderness" are: Old Indian, Platte Plains, Dunes trail, Sleeping Bear Point, Pyramid Point and Good Harbor.

For more information visit: <https://www.nps.gov/slbe/learn/news/sleeping-bear-dunes-wilderness.htm>

Handling Park Rules Violations

If you see a visitor not observing a Park rule, tactfully inform them of the rule violation, and ask that they please follow the rules. If the visitor becomes agitated or argumentative, simply say that part of your job is to educate visitors of the rules, and you are not there as an enforcement officer. Be polite and courteous and avoid arguments and debates, disengage politely. See the Appendix topic "Park Regulations and Safety" for more information.

Emergencies

For all emergencies, call 911 on your cell phone if you have one. Otherwise, send someone else, while you stay at the emergency. If you are the only person there, you will have to seek help yourself. If this is a medical emergency, be prepared to communicate the following to emergency responders as much of the following as you can:

- Sex and age of the victim.
- Any known medical conditions that the victim can tell you.
- Is the victim conscious? If so, are they coherent and aware of their surroundings?
- Are there any obvious signs of injury – bleeding, broken bone, burn, etc.?
- Is the victim breathing?
- Is the victim bleeding uncontrollably?
- Is the victim's heart beating? Fast, normal, or slowly?
- Does the victim's speech seem normal?

After Patrol Reporting

The Volunteer provides a report consisting of first/last name, date, total hours (including travel time), trail name, maps in map box (Y/N), and any maintenance or safety issues that require work by Park Maintenance Staff, such as hazardous trees, drainage problems, erosion, vandalism, and litter. As soon as possible at the end of your patrol, please submit your report via our online

reporting system. Please review “Documenting Maintenance and Safety Issues” on page 8, and the instructions on “How to fill out the Trail Report” on page 13. When Adopt-A-Trail Volunteers hike on trails other than their assigned trails, they should also fill out a report for that trail as well. While on patrol, if you see a safety issue, be sure to report it on the Safety Report form. Explain why you feel this is a safety concern. After you submit your time report, at the bottom of the page you will see an option to report the issue to the Friends Safety Committee. Click the link to get to the form. Your report will be reviewed to spot trends in safety needs, and to follow up with the Park, when necessary.

Appendix

Frequently Asked Visitor Questions

- Why and where do I need to have a Park Pass?
- How much is a Park Pass?
- Where can I obtain a Park Pass?
- Where can I get brochures and literature?
- Where’s a good place to eat?
- When does the Park (and Visitor Center) close?
- Where are dogs permitted on Beaches? Trails?
- What are the requirements for pet leashes?
- Where’s the best place to watch the sunset?
- Can I visit the Islands? How?
- What accommodations and supplies are available on the Islands?
- How can I contribute to the Friends and Park
- How do I join the Friends? What are the dues?
- Are fires allowed on the beach?
- What wildflowers may I pick?
- How many fruits and nuts may I pick?

Superintendent’s Compendium

Sleeping Bear Dunes Supervisor’s Compendium is the summary of park specific rules. It serves as public notice, identifies areas closed for public use, provides a list of activities requiring either a Special Use Permit or reservation, and elaborates on public use and resource protection regulations pertaining specifically to the administration of the park.

<https://www.nps.gov/slbe/learn/management/superintendent-compendium.htm>

Many of the questions in the previous section are found in the Compendium. It is highly suggested that you look over the Compendium so that you are aware of all rules that apply specifically to our Park, and are able to answer visitors’ questions.

Trail Regulations and Safety

Use the following two sections as a reference when speaking with visitors about Park rules that apply to trails, and advising them on trail safety.

Regulations for Mainland Trails

Reference: <http://www.nps.gov/slbe/planyourvisit/trailregs.htm>

- Please stay on designated trails. This will help prevent erosion and damage to vegetation. Off-trail hikers can quickly produce paths that take years to recover.

- Avoid disturbing plants and animals: threatened and endangered species occur in the park.
- A Park Pass is required for all trail use within the national lakeshore.
- Vehicles, including bicycles, are permitted only on roads. Bicycles are permitted the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail, but not off the paved surface.
- Snowmobiling is prohibited except on rights-of-way along state and county roads.
- Collecting plants and other natural, historical, and archeological items is not permitted. Exception: Certain edible fruits and mushrooms may be collected in limited quantities for personal use. See Superintendent's Compendium for complete list.
- Pets on trails must be kept on a 6-foot leash. Pets are prohibited on ski trails December 1 - March 31 and at the Dune Climb throughout the year.
- Glass is banned on all park beaches.
- Fires are permitted only in campground and picnic area fireplaces and fire rings and on areas of bare beach sand between the water and the first dune.

Trail Safety Information

- Choose a trail appropriate to your ability.
- Travel with a companion and notify someone of your route and expected return time.
- Deer rifle season is November 15-30. Other hunting seasons occur throughout the year. Bright-colored clothing is recommended during these times.
- Stay off steep bluffs to avoid falls and dislodging rocks that can injure people below.
- Snow avalanche or sand slide danger is present year-round on steep dunes and bluffs.
- Be careful of your footing. Trails include uneven ground, exposed roots, etc. Wear sturdy hiking shoes.
- Carry drinking water.
- Poison ivy is common. Learn to recognize it. Remember: Leaflets three, let it be.
- Be prepared for mosquitoes.
- Skiers: be aware of changing snow conditions. Alternate freeze/thaw can turn gentle slopes into icy, advanced hills.
- Darkness comes early in winter. Allow plenty of time to return to your vehicle before dark.
- Dress for the weather. In winter carry extra clothing and emergency supplies.

Forms and Supplemental Information – See Trail Manager for Copies

- Volunteer Services Agreement for Natural Resources Agencies – Form 301A – (PDF copy available here: <https://friendsofsleepingbear.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/VSA.pdf>)
- Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes Volunteer Application - Apply online here: <https://friendsofsleepingbear.org/volunteer-registration/>
- Hiking Trails Brochure (PDF download available here: <https://friendsofsleepingbear.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Trails-20181224a.pdf>)
- Handbook for Volunteers in Parks - Sleeping Bear Dunes
- Pet Information and Rules <http://www.nps.gov/slbe/planyourvisit/pets.htm> (visit this page and print your own copy)

Contacts

FOR ALL EMERGENCIES DIAL 911

National Park Service

Matt Mohrman
Volunteer Coordinator
9922 Front St.
Empire, MI 49630
231-326-4729 (Tu-Sat)
matthew_mohrman@nps.gov
(Matt's office is located at the
Warner House in Glen Haven)

National Park Service

Dan Owstrowski
Supervisor of Maintenance
9922 Front St.
Empire, MI 49630
231-326-4770

Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes

Jeff Brown
Adopt-A-Trail Manager
317-217-0916
jbrown@friendsofsleepingbear.org

SLBE and Law Enforcement Tele Numbers

Main Number – Headquarters	231-326-4700
Park Visitor Center	231-326-4700 Xt. 5011
Park Dispatch (8:00-4:30 M-F)	231-326-4742
DH Day Campground	231-326-4700 Xt. 5037
Platte River Campground	231-326-4700 Xt. 5029
Leelanau Co. Sheriff (non-emerg)	231-256-8800
Benzie Co. Sheriff (non-emerg)	231-882-4484
Poisoning Emergency	800-222-1222
Roads and Trail Supervisor	231-326-4781

How to Fill Out the Online Reporting Form

Some of the fields are required. If you miss a required field, you will be prompted.

Each report you file can be for only one day on one trail or trail segment.

You must report each day volunteered on each trail separately. No monthly totals on one report. The Park's reporting system requires us to track hours separately for each trail or trail segment.

1. First and Last Names (Required). Please observe the standard rules of capitalization for consistency.

2. Date (Required). mm/dd/yyyy

3. Trail or Segment being Reported (Required). This is a drop-down list of all of the reporting units of all the trails. Some of the longer trails are broken down into smaller, more manageable units.

You may report for only one trail or trail segment with each report.

4. Are there maps in the map box (Y/N).

5. Volunteer Hours (Required). This includes your travel time.

6. Actionable Comments for Park Maintenance (Not Required).

Refer to the sections on Documenting Maintenance and Safety Issues on page 8, and After Patrol Reporting on page 10.

7. Email Address (Required). After you hit the "Submit" button, a copy of the report you submitted will be sent to you. If you are submitting a report with actionable comments for the Maintenance Crew, it is important that you add your email address so that a member of the crew can contact you if they need further information. They would also like you to include your phone number in the comments section.

8. Click the Submit button.

After submitting your report, you can then go back down to the bottom of the page to fill out a Safety Report if needed. The process for filling out the Safety Report is very similar to the Rustic Trail report.