



2018-2019 Accomplishments

The Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes (Friends) is an all-volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to protecting resources and heightening visitor experiences in partnership with Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (SLBE). The Friends has 574 household members, defined as volunteers or donors. The number of individual members is 811, because there is often more than one individual in a household,.

Our members provided over 13,689 volunteer hours to projects managed by the Friends in FY 2019, and many members volunteer for a wide variety of other projects managed by Park staff or by other non-profit organizations, like Historic Sleeping Bear.

The Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes provided financial support to the park in the amount of \$122,581 for FY 2019. Some of our accomplishments are described below.

Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail (SBHT)

The Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail is about 17 miles long and trail users can ride about 20 miles from Empire to Bohemian Road (CR-669) including the on-road trail routes through Empire and Glen Arbor. About 68,000 people used the SBHT between October 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019. Seven automated trail counters installed at various points along the trail provide accurate trail use data, which we use to prioritize volunteer projects and set maintenance schedules. The busiest section of the trail is between Glen Arbor and the Dune Climb, which accounts for about 50% of the trail use.

The Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes operates and maintains the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail. We have 70 Trail Ambassadors who reported 1,593 volunteer hours in 2019. Our Trail Ambassadors walk, ride, or ski the trail to assist trail users, answer questions, and report any trail maintenance issues. The Trail Crew volunteers are Trail Ambassadors who also do maintenance on the trail by installing signs, mowing and trimming grass along trail edges, blowing leaves and tree debris off the trail, and grooming for cross-country skiing among many other tasks. The 28 Trail Crew volunteers reported 1,214 hours in FY 2019.

The Trail Crew used blowers to keep the leaves and tree debris off the trail each week between March and December. They also groomed the trail for cross-country skiing between Glen Arbor and Empire from December through March. The Friends had an agreement with the Leelanau Conservancy to assist them in grooming their Palmer Woods property for cross-country skiing in 2019. The Leelanau Conservancy awarded Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes with their "Volunteer of the Year" award for our work in ski grooming their Palmer Woods trails. The Conservancy purchased a grooming roller and track-setter that was stored near the Crystal View trailhead, which allowed us to groom a portion of the trail between Crystal View trailhead and Port Oneida Road.



This year we installed 8 new benches, which were built by Ken Rosiek, one of our volunteers and installed by YouthWork youth corps. That makes a total of 14 benches along the SBHT. Ken Rosiek and some of the volunteer blacksmiths built 3 new bike racks, making a total of 10. Donors can donate toward these trail furniture items. Several local businesses in Empire and Glen Arbor support the trail through donations. Their logos are printed on the paper trail map, and they have a presence on our online Interactive Trail Map.

Our volunteers conducted over 400 trail user surveys developed and analyzed by the University of Florida to estimate the economic impact of the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail on the local economy. Results of that study will be available by the end of 2019.

Overall, Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes spent \$14,247 to maintain and operate the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail in FY 2019.

Accessibility Projects

Accessibility at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore means making it easy for everyone (people of all abilities) to be able to get to a beach, experience a trail, launch a kayak, etc. Improving accessibility is a major focus of Sleeping Bear Dunes management and of our organization.

In 2019, we helped Park staff install a hardened surface beach walkway and deck with some benches at the Cannery Beach in Glen Haven, and established a volunteer program to maintain the beach deck. We purchased enough boardwalk sections to build a beach deck at the Maritime Museum in 2020. This allows visitors with mobility issues to get from the parking lot to an area closer to the water's edge. We learned that visitors of all abilities were using the beach deck and that it was very much appreciated.

Some trails and beaches at Sleeping Bear Dunes cannot be made accessible without damage to the natural resource due to either sandy soil or steep inclines. To make it possible for people with limited mobility to experience some of these places, we purchased a Track Chair in 2018. It is an electric wheelchair with tracks instead of wheels to allow it to be used in soft sand and snow and on steep slopes. The chair is very stable and has enough power to take an adult on a hike for several hours without recharging the batteries.

The Track Chair was available for FREE to visitors with mobility issues starting in May of 2019. Advanced reservation through our web site was developed and the Track Chair was available for use on the Bay View trail and at selected Park events. Volunteers trained visitors using the Track Chair and went along with the Track Chair user and their party to assure safety and a good visitor experience. This program is the first of its kind in a National Park, and we had such a good response from the public that we purchased a second, smaller Track Chair at the end of 2019. Twenty volunteers assisted 70 visitors with Track Chair experiences and volunteers provided 746 hours of work on this project.



The Friends worked with Lake Township and the Park to request a grant from the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians to replace the fishing dock at Bass Lake. We purchased dock materials at the end of 2018 and the dock and accessible trail were built in FY 2019. Some additional work on the accessible trail will be done in October of 2019.

Overall, Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes had 25 volunteers provide 768 hours of service and the organization spent \$24,586 on Accessibility programs in FY 2019.

Kettles Trail

The Kettles Trail will give visitors access to this pristine natural area to observe glacial kettles, swales, and bogs. A portion of the trail from the parking lot to an overlook on top of a geologic kettle is hardened and wide enough to make it universally accessible.

It is not often that a national park creates a new trail, and we are privileged to be part of this process. Construction of the trail began in 2018. The entire 3.0 miles of hiking trail has been completed. The first part of the trail from the parking lot is a 4-foot wide accessible trail made of gravel and topped with diamond dust to create a hardened surface. A rustic observation pad was built at the end of the accessible part of the trail, and an interpretive sign describing geological kettles and a bench will be installed in 2020.

The parking lot and driveway were built in the spring of 2019. Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore staff from the Roads, Trails, and Grounds team led this project. Most of the trail work was done with hand tools. We had one volunteer work bee on June 1, 2019 as part of National Trails Day. Volunteers did finish grading and seeding around the new parking lot and driveway.

We contracted with YouthWork to work on building the trail. YouthWork is a division of Traverse City Child and Family Services, which employs at risk youth to provide them with training and work experience. They worked 4 weeks in August of 2019.

The Kettles Trail will officially open with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Sunday, October 20.

Interpretive signs and a couple of benches will be installed in 2020. Total expenditures in 2019 were \$46,347.

Snowshoe Program

Over 1,100 elementary school students and their chaperones came to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore last winter to learn how to snowshoe and to explore trees and wildlife in wintertime. This program included an optional school visit by Park Rangers before the field trip and classroom follow-up activities. The Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes paid transportation costs for the school groups and



purchased new snowshoes and repair parts. The total cost was \$8,090. The National Park Foundation provided a grant for the 2020 winter snowshoe program so we can keep this successful program going.

Visitor Booklets

The Friends worked with park staff to develop inexpensive guidebooks to provide visitors with more information about the Park's cultural and natural resources. The books are available at the Visitor Center, Platte River Campground, D. H. Day Campground, Cannery Boat Museum, and Maritime Museum. The Friends spent \$10,669 to publish the booklets this year. Donations from this program amounted to \$21,309.

Book – “The Life of the Sleeping Bear”

Several years ago, Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes funded the creation of interpretive artwork to be used in educational signs at 11 places along the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive. The art created by Oliver Uberti, described much more than just the Scenic Drive. It really told the story of the Sleeping Bear Dunes area through description of natural resources, history, and culture.

The Friends initiated a project to pull together additional information and photos in addition to the new artwork to create a book that could be sold to Park visitors that gives a more detailed story about the Park and introduces visitors to aspects of the Park that they may want to explore beyond the Scenic Drive and Dune Climb. Most of the content (photos and text) was provided by volunteers.

We plan to make the book available for sale in November of 2019. Friends spent \$3,466 in support of this project in FY 2019.

PSAR – Preventative Search and Rescue

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore handles a significant number of Search and Rescue (SAR) events each year. Most of these occur at the Dune Climb or Peirce Stocking Scenic Drive #9 Lake Michigan Overlook. The Friends supported Park Law Enforcement staff with volunteers to provide informational contacts with visitors to help them be prepared for the rigors of these hikes and climbs. This program had a significant impact on reducing emergency responses in the Park this summer, and we hope to expand the number of volunteers in the program next year, so we can expand the time we can cover these areas and potentially expand the program to other areas in the Park. Sixteen PSAR Volunteers provided 475 hours of service and made 11,879 visitor contacts.

Historic Agricultural Landscape Maintenance – Collaboration with Historic Sleeping Bear



Field clearing and maintenance to maintain historic agricultural landscape is led by Historic Sleeping Bear Dunes. The Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes assist by coordinating volunteers in the mowing activity. About 900 acres were mowed by 7 volunteers, who provided over 300 volunteer hours of labor.

Adopt-A-Trail – 70 volunteers signed up to walk their assigned hiking trail, perform minor maintenance like clearing down branches and report maintenance issues like down trees and erosion. One of the most rewarding aspects of being an Adopt-A-Trail volunteer is interacting with park visitors on the trail – answering questions and providing insight about the area, the park, and the trail they are on. Over 53 miles of trails were monitored. Volunteers walked their trail at least once a month on their own schedule. Volunteers logged 2,001 hours.

Adopt-A-Beach – Eighty-eight volunteers contributed over 1,466 hours picking up 1,688 pounds of trash. This year, we had an area on Good Harbor Bay beach where a significant amount of broken glass was discovered. Our volunteers reported picking up 5,171 pieces of broken glass. In addition, we find many small pieces of unidentified plastic pieces. Our volunteers picked up 25,863 pieces of plastic. Volunteers report safety and maintenance issues along 35 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline on the mainland. The volunteers record the trash they pick up and report it to the Alliance for the Great Lakes. Volunteers conduct at a minimum, one Beach Patrol at least once per month on the individual's schedule.

Adopt-A-River – A river clean-up was conducted on June 4 on the Crystal River coordinated by our Adopt-A-River team and Crystal River Outfitters. Eight people participated. The Platte River clean-up was held June 11 was coordinated by our Adopt-A-River team and Riverside Canoes. We had 20 people participated. Volunteers also paddle the rivers on their own schedule and accounted for 114 hours.

Adopt-A-Highway - MDOT has assigned the Friends a section of M-109 from Glen Haven to 0.25 miles south of the Dune Climb to "Adopt." We are required to clean the roadsides of trash in this section of highway three times per year. Six volunteers conduct these cleanups amounting to 40 hours.

Park Partner Assistance Grants - Each year Park management provides us with a list of intern positions and equipment that they would like us to fund. Requests included Social Media intern, equipment to support the PSAR program, traffic counters, autoclave for water quality lab, table saw, etc. This year, we provided \$14,556 in support of these items.



Summary of Financial Support to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

Friends of Sleeping Bear, Inc.

SUPPORT FOR SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE -- FY2019

Program	Amount	Notes
Kettles Trail	\$46,347	
Trail Accessibility	\$24,586	Includes 2nd track chair \$6,500, which is a capital expense
Educational Publications	\$10,669	
SBHT Operations	\$14,247	Includes \$4,439 for Walking Program. Excludes SBHT fundraising expense of \$1,791
Snowshoe Program (transportation)	\$8,090	
Book Publication: <i>The Life of the Sleeping Bear</i>	\$3,466	
Park Partner Projects		
52" Saw Stop Table Saw	\$5,226	
Autoclave for Water Quality Lab	\$4,275	
Traffic Counters	\$1,819	
Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Program	\$1,350	
PSAR Supplies	\$528	
Museum Vacuum	\$350	This was a mid-year add to the project list
Lyle Gun Demonstration (black powder)	\$75	
Wilderness Ambassador Youth Program	\$446	



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Anisinaabek Interpretation Program	\$269	Friends purchased food in support of these programs
Community Parade Support	\$218	
Total Park Partner Projects	\$14,556	
Miscellaneous	\$620	
Total Support	\$122,581	



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