

Friends of Whitefish Dunes, Inc.
3275 Clark Lake Rd., Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Minutes of Friends Annual Meeting, December 9, 2022

Present: John Swanson, Dick Weidman, Julia Stoneman, Susan Cubar, Liz Story, Rich Dirks, Adele Douglass, Jim Perry, Doug Otopalik, Lynn Zawojski, Don Gustafson, Max Martin, Sarah Stepanik, and Erin Brown Stender

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President John Swanson at 10:20 a.m.

Agenda: Motion to approve the Agenda: Dick; second, Jim. All in favor.

Minutes: Motion to approve Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting: Dick; second, Max. All in favor.

Treasurer's Report (Julia):

Julia presented both the 2021-22 Year End Report and the 2022-23 Budget.

Year End Report:

- As we were coming out of COVID, we weren't sure how sales would go. In light of this, we budgeted conservatively. As it turned out, we had a great year in sales.
- We received a number of grants and donations.
- We had a very good year with the Kayak concession (Door County Adventure Center).
- Expenditures included a tractor, Naturalist Fund, ADA Parking Lot, and Brachiopod Trail improvements.
- We increased our purchasing for the Nature Center sales.
- We took in more than we spent, so we ended up with a budget surplus.

2022-23 Budget:

- We did 2019-20 and 2020-21 budget comparisons, as well as looking at our 2021 Year End Report to help plan for this year. We increased our numbers, but were still conservative in planning.
- Julia detailed the expenditures of some of our major projects.

Motion to approve the Year End Report and the 2022-23 Budget: Rich; second, Don. All in favor.

Park Report (Sarah):

- November saw about 4,500 visitors, which is about 1,000 less than last November, but still above average.
- We expect to have about 197,00 visitors in 2022, which is about 57,000 less than last year, but still trending upward.
- Outdoor water systems are shut down for the season.
- Outdoor bathrooms will remain open year round.
- Trail grooming waiting on snow. Trail signage has been changed over to reflect the winter trail map.

Projects:

- 1st Beach Access: With high lake levels, 1st beach access was undermined and was closed. Last fall contractors came in and stabilized the area and added riprap. Erosion in this area was more extensive than previously thought, so additional funding will be needed for repair. We will wait for next grant cycle to apply for extra funds.
- Trail mulching: We acquired a spreader that has made mulch spreading more efficient.
- Naturalist: Brynna has been here for 3 seasons and we hope to have her back. It's been hard to find people for that role. We are moving toward a hiring process that will allow us to utilize interns from the UW system.
- The Friends donated a bobcat tractor to the Park this year, which has made work easier and faster.
- Max and Dee Martin donated their time in building the kiosk located near the Nature Center by the Red Trail. This serves as an informational center for park visitors.
- Ski Trail Grooming: We are lucky to have a dedicated and experienced group of volunteers to take care of our ski trails.

- Trail Ambassador Program: This is an idea the Friends had been talking about. Doug got this program off the ground. He continues to provide learning opportunities for the Ambassadors, and he remains passionate about outdoor education. Volunteers are always welcome.
- Trail Maintenance and Work Days: We always have both a Spring and Fall Work Day. Volunteers help with clean up and trail work.
- Events: We hosted both a winter and summer Candlelight Event this year, and both were well attended. Volunteers are always appreciated.
- Pollinator Garden: Don is in charge of this garden, and continues to add new plants. It is an attraction for both visitors and pollinators.
- Park Signage that Friends have helped purchase:
 - Erosion interpretive signage along 1st Beach access helps bring awareness to dune erosion and plant loss.
 - Updated signs for the Park entrance loop help direct traffic.
 - Trail etiquette signs for bike riders help with trail safety.
- ADA Parking Lot: The lot is located off North Cave Point Dr. We expect it to be finished by the end of December. There will be two handicapped spaces and will provide closer access to the Brachiopod Boardwalk.
- Brachiopod Reroute: We are working with an engineer to create a handicapped accessible trail from the ADA parking area.
- Beach warning flags: Buoys were old and not functional, as well as confusing to some. Our new beach warning flag system is consistent with the system that is used nationally.
- Carl Scholz Memorial Fund: This endowment fund has been set up through the Door County Community Foundation.

Future Projects:

- Picnic Shelter: Sliding glass doors will be replaced with non-functional picture windows. The electrical system will also be upgraded.
- Brachiopod signage: Our goal is to upgrade the signage along the Brachiopod Trail. Wendy Wagner is providing design concepts for these educational signs, which will also include some tactile features.
- Brachiopod Trail accessibility: The trail needs regrading to accommodate wheelchair access from the ADA Parking Lot.
- Old Baldy stairs and railing: Current stairs and observation platform need repair/replacement. A railing would also be added along stairs. The dune and dune plants require protection in this area, and a fence and some educational signage are needed to deter people from walking in dune area. The contractor needs engineering drawings to proceed, which has increased our cost. We will look at other ways to fund this project when we have final costs.
- EV Charging Station: Rich has been working to make this a reality at the Park. The number of EV vehicles is increasing, but there are no charging stations at the state parks. Rich has written a proposal that he will submit to the DNR. Rich and others met with an installer to discuss possible locations for charging stations at the Park. The DNR will likely dictate types of chargers.
- Native American Village: The Village has deteriorated over time and needs to be repaired. Sarah has contacted some tribal representatives to get input on the accuracy of our structures before we repair. We would also like to upgrade the fencing around the Village. Mike Madden discovered an authentic dugout canoe in back of one of the structures. A sample of the canoe has been sent to Milwaukee for carbon dating and wood typing.
- Cave Point Trail: We would like to get a formal trail between Cave Point and the Brachiopod Trail to help take foot traffic away from the roots and rocks of the volunteer trail along the shore. The reroute of the trail is possible, but would first need an archaeological study of the area to be completed.
- Nature Center: At some point we would like get someone with a museum design background to update the interpretive area and make it more interactive.

Election of Directors:

- Adele, Doug, and John are up for election. All have agreed to serve another 3 year term.
- Unanimous motion for approval of the three directors: Don; second, Max. All in favor of the unanimous approval.

Volunteer Years of Service:

- Service pins awarded:
 - Charlotte Lukes: 32 years
 - Chuck Berringer: 11 years
 - Doug Otopolik: 5 years
 - Edee Madsen: 7 years
 - Jim Perry: 5 years
 - Joel Hadfield: 1 year (100 hours this year!)
 - Julia Stoneman: 1 year
 - Liz Story: 1 year
 - Mike Madden: 37 years
 - Sue Meredith: 7 years
- Volunteer of the Year Award: John Craig and Joel Hadfield shared this award. They will each receive a park pass.

Upcoming Events:

- 1st Day Hike: January 1 from 9:30-noon. Medallions will be presented to kids.
- Candlelight Event: January 28 from 5:00-8:00. Volunteers needed.
- Spring Work Day: Will be held in April. Date to be determined.

Presentation:

Sarah shared her archaeological background with an informative presentation, *The Archaeology of the Dunes*.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:43. The next meeting will be January 18, 2023 at 4:00

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Story
Secretary