

Friends of Whitefish Dunes State Park

Minutes, November 19, 2015

Present: Brian Penchoff, Susan Cubar, Dale and Mary Goodner, Carl Scholz, John Rock, Don Gustafson, Rich Dirks, Chuck Birringer, Lynn Zawojski, Adele Douglass, Fred Viste (park manager)

The agenda was approved: (Dale/Don)

Minutes from October were approved: (Chuck/Mary)

The treasurer's report showed a cash balance of \$34,842.92, of which \$9,028.24 are in reserved accounts (including the grant from the Raibrook Foundation). Funds available for general expenses are \$25,814.68. For the past month, expenses were \$2,482.06; income was \$3,627.73. Chuck also produced data showing income from various categories during the first 10 months of the years 2014 and 2015. Beverage sales are roughly the same; clothing sales are considerably higher; book sales are less than the previous years. The treasurer's report was approved. (Unfortunately it was not noted who made and seconded this motion.)

Chuck then described a chip-ready terminal that could be used to manage credit card transactions. The price of the model he saw was \$336, but he will also explore other options. A motion was made and passed (Mary/Brian) allocating up to \$400 for this device and other necessary parts to the package.

A bill has been received from the taxidermist for \$350 to complete the mounting of a white pelican to be hung in the exhibit hall. \$450 has already been paid for him to begin the process. A motion was passed (Brian/John R) to complete this mounting. Fred will be in contact with the taxidermist to talk about other animals (including a bear!) which he has in his possession and for which the authorization is unclear.

The Park Report (Fred) consisted of the following: 1) October park attendance was up about 1,500 over the previous year. Sticker sales are also up about 33%, and Friends' merchandise sales are up over 90%, with clothing selling especially

well. As of this date, November visitation is also up over the previous year. 2) The new DNR supervisor of parks for Northeastern Wisconsin is Erin Brown, it is hoped that she can come to the next meeting. 3) A master plan for state parks in the area will be developed started in early 2016, with hearings to be held in various parts of the county. Each of the five parks will have a separate section and Friends groups will be invited to participate. 4) Hunting and trapping seasons are continuing in the park. The necessary signage changes have been made. 5) Painting at the shop continues. 6) Informational signs are being redone. 7) Interpretive pieces are being hung in the exhibit room. 8) The park office will be closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and Day, and New Years Day, but the park itself will be open. 9) Fred reported that the kayak concession earned \$2400 during 2015 and inquired whether the Friends Group might revisit the decision about sponsoring this activity. Chuck offered to explore the insurance liability of doing so. The present contract with the state runs through 2017, so this is not an immediate concern.

Old Business:

Raibrook Grant: Lynn has filled out the necessary monthly report, explaining that we were still considering our options as to how to raise the necessary matching funds to purchase the UTV machine (grant is 5K, total cost is about 12K.) She reminded us that we cannot stall indefinitely; we need to decide as a board if we will begin serious fund raising.

Ski grooming report: Fred needs to finish mowing, a project Rich describes as urgent before the snow. At least one tree has fallen over the trail, and a stump needs to be removed. Maintenance on the shed has been done. A headlight on the snow machine is not working and will need replacement. During January a trail donation canister will be set out to solicit help in paying for the trail grooming and other jobs undertaken by the Friends. Rick will see to this.

Natural Landmark Status: Carl reported he has been in contact with the National Park Service in Colorado to achieve national natural landmark status for the entire park, due to the significance of the highest dunes on Lake Michigan.

New Business: There was some brief discussion about acquiring a seasonal naturalist for the park. Perhaps this could be shared with Newport Park. The cost might be about \$7,000 for a half-time person for a summer. More discussion needed about this.

Newsletter: In view of the experience of the newest board member, Susan, this topic is being revisited. She has experience in generating e-newsletters. She will work with a few others to generate a communication plan. There will be more discussion about this at the Christmas event.

Adjourned at 6:30pm.