

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

### **Minutes of Friends Annual Board Meeting 12/9/21**

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

Guests: Edee Madsen, Deanna Swanson, Max and Dee Martin, Mary and Dale Goodner

Guest Speaker: Mike Bergum (Regional Director of Wisconsin State Parks)

**Absent:** Adele Douglass

**Call to Order:** The Zoom meeting was called to order by John Swanson at 10:05 a.m.

**Agenda:** Motion to approve the agenda: Susan; second, Don. All in favor.

**Minutes of Annual Meeting held 11/19/20 (Adele/Liz):** Motion to approve the minutes of the 11-19-20 annual meeting with corrections: Don; second, Doug. All in favor.

#### **Treasurer's Report (Julia):**

Julia presented the 2020-21 fiscal year end report.

A temporary budget was used during COVID, since it was uncertain what the budget should look like with the Nature Center closed.

- Income was \$15,324.22 (in the form of sales, grants, dues, donations)
- Expenses were \$8,861.75

Overall a good year despite COVID

Next she presented the budget for the 2021-22 fiscal year, which she modeled using the 2019-2020 budget as a better comparison.

John gave a visual presentation highlighting finished and ongoing projects, including:

- The new Brachiopod boardwalk
- New kiosks by Brachiopod Trail and Nature Center
- Memorial benches
- New signage
- Pollinator garden
- Naturalist program
- Trail maintenance, including new shared trails for hikers and skiers
- Trail Ambassador program. Doug spoke briefly about the ongoing development and successes of the program.
- Ongoing events (such as our Candlelight events)

#### Future Projects:

- New signage for Brachiopod Trail being designed by Wendy Wagner of Ethologys
- Brachiopod ADA parking lot
- Native American Village improvements (update from Sarah: windstorms blew roof off one of the structures)
- Old Baldy: Repair stairs, add step railings, add railings along fragile dune areas
- New trail between Whitefish Dunes and Cave Point
- Tractor to help with Park maintenance
- EV charging station

### **Park Report (Sarah):**

- November saw 5,243 visitors, which is 20,000 less than October, but still 1,200 above average for November.
- Sarah estimates that we will have had about 252,000 visitors in 2021, which is about 5,000 less than 2020, but up about 60,000 from typical visitation
- Seasonal trail changes: reroutes have been made to accommodate snowshoers/hikers. There is now about a 50/50 split for skiers and hikers.
- Water fountains are now shut down, but outdoor restrooms will remain open.

### COVID updates:

- DNR not allowing use of indoor spaces for events. Therefore, no public access to picnic shelter for winter events. Concessions for First Day Hike and Candlelight Event would need to be moved outside of shelter.
- Exception to above is that Nature Center will be open for bathroom use and park pass purchases.
- Volunteers must be masked if working indoors around other people. No mask necessary when working outdoors, unless social distancing cannot be maintained.
- No indoor meetings on DNR property.
- DNR staff will not be allowed to participate in any in-person meetings

### Project Updates:

- 1st Beach access: Repairs have been made to stabilize dune. Access is closed for the winter due to safety concerns. The second phase of the project is about 1.5 years out. Amy Moore (engineer) will apply for coastal restoration grants in the meantime.
- While there has been no resolution on the S. Cave Point Drive turnaround repairs, Sarah happened to be out there and noticed that some potholes were filled. She is trying to find out who might have taken care of this.
- Brachiopod ADA Parking Lot: No update at this time. Waiting to find out about endangered plants.
- (Late update): Sarah had an anonymous donor offer to cover the cost of the sliding doors in the picnic shelter, with the stipulation that they be replaced with picture windows.

### **Announcements (Sarah):**

- The DNR awarded the Friends group *The Friends Group of the Year* award, which is given to only one Friends Group a year to recognize extraordinary service and dedication in enhancing the park property and visitor experience.
- Pins were awarded to commemorate years of service:
  - 100 hours: Doug Otopalik and Jim Perry
  - 5 years: Susan Cubar, Don Gustafson, John Swanson
  - 10 years: John Craig, Adele Douglass, Lynn Zawojski
  - 15 years: Joe Jarosh
  - 20 years: Rich Dirks
  - 30 years: Max Martin, Carl Scholz, Dick Weidman
- Sarah was awarded the *Parks and Recreation Management Internal Partnership Award* for 2021. This award goes to one full-time employee who exemplifies working with an external partner or partners on providing traditional or non-traditional recreational opportunities on state park properties.

### **Nomination of Board Members:**

Susan Cubar's and Jim Perry's terms are up this year. They have agreed to run for another 3 year term. Motion to nominate Susan and Jim: John; second, Dick. All in favor of their election.

### **Volunteer of Year Award (John):**

Max and Dee Martin were elected to be Volunteers of the Year. They received a park sticker.

Mike Bergum offered his congratulations and thanks to all. Members of the Park and Recreation Management Team plan to attend at least one meeting of each Friends Group in 2022.

Representative Kitchens postponed his visit until next year when he could meet in person.

**Future Events:**

- First Day Hike: January 1 from 9:30-noon. Will have a fire in fire pit and offer hot chocolate and hot cider.
- Candlelight Event: We will talk more about this event going forward to see if restrictions might be eased to allow us to use the Picnic Shelter indoors.

Motion to adjourn: Dick; second, Susan. All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned by John Swanson at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Story

Secretary