

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

Minutes of Friends Board Meeting 1-22-25

Present: John Swanson, Dick Weidman, Julia Stoneman, Susan Cubar, Liz Story, Rich Dirks, Adele Douglass, Doug Otopalik, Don Gustafson, Lana Pray, Sarah Gehrke, and Erin Brown Stender

Absent: Lynn Zawojski, Max Martin

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 4:00

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

Minutes: Motion to approve the Minutes of 11-20-24: Dick; second, Doug. All in favor.

Treasurer's Report (Lana):

Income: \$716.69

- Clothing and book sales have slowed.

- Dues

- Donations

Expenses: \$1,369.62

- Quickbooks

- Amy Phillips

- 1st Day Hike supplies

Park Report (Sarah):

- December saw 3,728 visitors, which is 556 less than 2023, but 1,226 more than average.

- 2024 Annual Attendance was 209,297, which was 356 less than 2023, but 17,028 above average.

- First Day Hike: We had 284 attendees, and 21 participated in the guided tour. We sold \$654.50 in Park Passes. This was a much larger crowd than the previous years, and we will have to plan for this in the future.

Seasonal Changes:

- Hunting and Trapping closed January 5.

Staff Changes:

- Carolyn Morgen is our new District Supervisor, taking over for retired Mike Bergum. She previously worked in the Southwest District before being transferred to our East Central District.

Park Manager Projects:

- Native American Village/Indoor Museum Renovations: Still waiting to hear from our Tribal partners.

- First Beach Access: Construction scheduled to begin by April 1, 2025 and be completed by June 1. This will be ADA compliant.

- Kids Don't Float Kiosk: No updates. Hoping new sign will be ready by spring.

- Nature Center Storage Closet: Still waiting for Mike Laaksonen to schedule.

Knowles-Nelson Projects:

- Sent closeout paperwork for Brachiopod Trail 1/5/24. Waiting on final check to Friends.

- Old Baldy: Waiting on estimate from Peil.

- Cave Point Trail: Lily Bay completed construction in early January. As soon as ground thaws we can begin installing new trail signs. We are working on getting some interpretive signs for the trail. John has been talking with Vacker.

2023 Enhancement Grant: New trails signs will be installed as weather allows.

Beach Warning Sign Pilot Program: IT details are getting finished. Looking to May for the three automated signs to be ready, which will alert to both beach hazard and water quality. Information will be updated throughout the day and display the higher risk situation.

Grant Funded Projects:

- Raibrook: We have a balance from our Old Baldy project, which we will use for interpretive signage, sign posts, and replacement fence roping. John is in contact with Vacker Sign about designing interpretive signage.
- Knowles-Nelson: We have a balance from our Cave Point Trail grant, which will be used for interpretive signage, 4x4 posts, and gravel.
- Options for Independent Living and Raibrook: These grants funded our Grit Freedom Chair, which will be available for check out.
- Friends of Wisconsin State Parks Incentive Grant for Naturalist: We will apply for this grant again this year, with a 50/50 match from the Friends.
- Destination Door County Investment Grant: We are considering applying for this grant to cover the Old Baldy project.
- Taxidermy still pending.

Old Business:

- 2025 marks the Wisconsin State Parks 125th anniversary.
- Website: After further consideration, we decided against going with WordPress, as it looked to be more complex than we had anticipated. John had a conversation with Quantum Technologies, and for a slightly higher annual cost they would host both the domain name and website. We need to further explore the cost for website setup. Motion to approve \$360/year to Quantum Technologies to host website and up to \$500 for website design (initial setup): Dick; second, Adele. All in favor.
- We discussed the importance of reaching out to our legislators about funding our state parks and fully funding Knowles-Nelson prior to state budget discussions.
- Naturalist: We have enough money to fund our Naturalist for this year.

New Business:

- Motion to renominate Julia to the board: Rich; second, Susan. All in favor.
- We have an opening on the Board, as Jim Perry has ended his term. John had some suggestions for potential candidates.
- Election of Officers: Everyone who is up for election has agreed to serve another term. Motion that nominations close and the secretary cast a unanimous ballot: Rich; second, Adele. All in favor.
- We received a renewal notice from Talking Trails for \$1,200/year. With Door County Historical Society also implementing this service, that could mean the cost could be shared and each entity would pay \$600/year.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn: Dick; second, Don. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 5:23.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 26 at 4:00.

Respectfully submitted,
Liz Story
Secretary