

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

**Minutes of Friends Board Annual Meeting 12-6-24**

**Present:** John Swanson, Dick Weidman, Susan Cubar, Liz Story, Rich Dirks, Doug Otopalik, Lynn Zawojski, Don Gustafson, Lana Pray, Sarah Gehrke, and Erin Brown Stender, Jake Glass (Conservation Warden from Potawatomi State Park), John Bagnall, and Amy Philips

**Attendees:** Mary Ripp, Ann Miller, Lisa Hartl, Greg Hartl, Victoria Dirst, Jerry Lemere, Lorie Bittof, Mary Goodner, Dale Goodner, Sandra Dirks, Gerrit DeJonge, Lonnie DeJonge, Larry Leporte, Elfrieda Leporte, Tim Wick, Charlotte Lukes, Jim Perry, Edee Madsen, Michaela Kraft, Dave Story, David Raben.

**Absent:** Julia Stoneman, Max Martin, Adele Douglass

**Call to Order:** President John Swanson called the meeting to order at 10:59 a.m.

**Agenda:** Motion to approve the Agenda: Don Gustafson; second, Rich Dirks. All in favor.

**Minutes:** Motion to approve the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of 12-8-23: Don Gustafson; second, Dick Weidman. All in favor.

**Treasurer's Report** (Presented by Susan Cubar in Julia's absence):

- Susan began by giving a thank you to Julia for all the work she's put in during her role as Treasurer, and to Lana Pray for taking on the Treasurer's role. She explained the complexity of the position as the role has evolved. We have hired Amy Philips as bookkeeper. Her role will be overseeing larger grants and keeping track of bigger projects, thereby easing the Treasurer's responsibility. She and Lana will be working together to make sure that everything is accounted for.
- Susan then presented a summary of the Year End Financial Report and the 2024-25 Budget, which the Board has already reviewed and approved (our fiscal year is July 1 - June 30).

**Income:**

- Clothing
- Books
- Miscellaneous sales and pop machine
- Memorial and honorary benches
- Member dues
- Kayak concession
- Miscellaneous donations and grants

**Expenses:**

- Our largest expense is funding the Naturalist position.
- Picnic Shelter repairs and upgrades
- Purchases of clothing, books, etc.
- Purchases for events
- Park signage
- Taxidermy
- Old Baldy handrails and signage
- Talking Trail signage
- Canvas for Ho-Chunk Ciiporoke
- Cave Point Trail
- Matching grant money

**Treasurer's Report** (cont'd):

- 2024-2025 Budget: The budget is worked on in the latter part of the fiscal year to be approved by the Board in July.
- Motion to approve the Year End Treasurer's Report and Budget: Don; second, Rich. All in favor.

**Special Presentation** (Erin):

Erin announced the dedication of the Nature Center Auditorium in memory of Allen Dewey Miller, who was the first Park Manager of Whitefish Dunes State Park. Erin gave a brief history of Allen's role at the Park. A memorial plaque will be mounted in his honor.

**Volunteer Recognition** (John):

- John spoke about the important role of volunteers, especially in light of the budget and staff cuts at the DNR.
- Volunteer of the Year award goes to Julia Stoneman

**Friends Projects** (John):

John talked about some of the projects that the Friends have supported.

- Our wonderful Naturalist, Jess Poppie, provided many programs to visitors sponsored by the Friends, including:
  - Boys and Girls Club visit
  - YMCA visit
  - Sunshine House visit
- Great Lakes Exhibit from Wisconsin Historical Society
- First Day Hike
- Candlelight Events
- Work Day Events
- Ambassador Program
- Rope fencing on Old Baldy
- Cave Point Trail

**Park Report** (Sarah):

Sarah began by recognizing the volunteers, including Susan Cubar (10 years) and Lynn Zawojski (15 years). She also recognized the exceptional work and accomplishments of our Naturalist, Jess Poppie.

Seasonal Changes:

- Sarah and John Bagnall will be the two staff members on duty for the winter season.
- Outdoor water is shut down
- All 3 bathrooms will be open for winter
- Trail grooming has begun in preparation for the season

Park Manager Projects:

- Installed new entrance gate
- Renovations made to employee housing
- Installed rope fence on Old Baldy
- 1st Beach permanent ramp to be installed
- 1st Beach bathrooms will be replaced
- Nature Center storage closet to be constructed
- Kids Don't Float kiosk to be installed
- Working toward a Beach Warning Flag Pilot Program
- A group has been working with Tribal partners on Native Village/Indoor Museum Renovations.

Doug spoke in more detail about the Park's history of recognizing Native communities. With the removal of the former outdoor display, we feel the need to update the outdoor Native Village display, as well as the Indoor Museum, to better

reflect Native cultural history. He spoke about fundraising opportunities for this project, as this will be an expensive and long-term project.

**Guest Speaker:**

Michaela Kraft, Curator and Interpretation Coordinator from the Door County Historical Society, spoke on the First Peoples of Door County.

**Election of Board Members:**

- Susan Cubar has agreed to be renominated as a Director to the Board.

Motion to elect Susan Cubar to a 3 year term as Director to the Board of the Friends of Whitefish Dunes: Doug; second, Don. All in favor.

**Contacting Our Legislators:**

- John asked everyone to reach out to our legislators to increase State Park funding. Funding from general revenue budgets is needed for all the State Parks, as there is \$1 billion of unfunded construction across the State Parks system.

- Knowles-Nelson: They have helped fund many of our large projects, and they are also instrumental in land preservation in our state. The State Finance Committee is talking about cutting its funding. We need to let our representatives know that we support continued funding for Knowles-Nelson.

More information will be sent out in January.

**Adjournment:** Motions to adjourn: Dick; second, Doug. All in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Story

Secretary