

Friends of Whitefish Dunes State Park

Minutes December 12, 2013

Meeting held in the Nature Center, called to order at 10:50 am. Present: Carl S., Brian P., Dale and Mary G., Rich D., Max M., Judy and Pat F., Lynn Z., Don M., Chuck B., Carolyn R., Adele D.

Guests: Jerry Leiterman (DNR Supervisor Northeast area), John and Anne Rock, Steve Walker, Joy and Don Gustefson, Bob Hawley, Mike Madden

Lynn gave the treasurer's report showing a balance of \$27,631.31. Some of the funds are unrestricted. The Raibrook grant application has been wrapped up for the new grooming equipment. Lynn still needs some clarification, but basically it's finished. The Treasurer's report was approved (Max/Mary).

Don's report contained the following. (1) With respect to the procedure to bring a manager to the site, the interviews were to occur the week of Dec. 16 in Oshkosh with a decision to be made shortly following. (2) Beach bark disease continues to advance with foresters marking trees for a timber harvest to occur in the spring. Any trees presenting a potential safety issue to the trails or road will be removed. The disease causes trees to snap at about 20 feet above the ground. The estimate is that about 95% of the trees of this species will die in the next 10 to 15 years. The debris from dead trees will be left on the ground for wildlife habitat and to encourage new growth. (3) During the recent gun season, Don estimates that 7-8 deer were taken in the park. Actually there weren't many hunters in the park and he has heard of no trappers to date. Muzzle loading season will continue until Dec. 15. This will be followed by an archery season and a turkey hunt in April. (4) The response to the Friends' letter to the DNR requesting an exemption to Act 168 (permitting hunting in state parks) was noncommittal, "thanks for your thoughts, your ideas will be considered." With respect to hunting, Don reported that warning signs have been mounted and orange vests are available for hikers. He was asked how park visitation may have

been impacted during the hunting period, but no studies have been made on this topic.

Carl stressed that the atmosphere of the park had been negatively impacted by the hunting, destroying the park's "Numenon." This is a term many of us had not heard, but ever the teacher, he explained that the term comes from Aldo Leopold's Sand County Almanac and refers to an undisturbed state before an intrusion occurs. In this case, the intruding activity is the noise of gun shots where there has been none in the past.

More from Don: (5) A \$500 donation has been received by the park from the Whitefish Bay Homeowners Association to purchase snowshoes for use by those who may wish to borrow them, but especially for school groups. This donation will be augmented by interpretive fee money from the state of Wisconsin to purchase 30 pairs of snowshoes.

Shipwreck Exhibit: Update by Carolyn: \$5,000 will probably be returned to the Stewardship Fund as it hasn't been used.

Brian reported that the website has not yet been established and suggested we start fresh since the previous creator is no longer working on the project. A motion passed (Brian/Carl) to spend up to \$120 to get the site operational. Brian has been in contact with an individual who will manage the site at no cost.

Max reported that he has been working on various memorial benches and there have been two recent requests, one for a wedding.

Rich gave a detailed report on the status of ski grooming equipment, especially with the need to handle a wide variety of snow conditions. Several donations have been noted: about \$1,000 from skiers and \$1,000 from Tom Parsons. Recently it became necessary to purchase a new charger. In addition to Rich, there are two stand-by groomers (Dick Weidman and John Swanson). A log for ski groomers will be maintained showing odometer readings, snow conditions, operator and other data. A motion was made (Mary/Brian) to reimburse Rich for expenses he has incurred in maintaining the grooming equipment (\$204.32 + \$26.99 + \$166.53 for a total of \$397.84).

After the discussion of snow grooming equipment, Max proposed that should funds be needed for maintenance, Rich be able to pay up to \$500 so that the equipment repairs could be made when needed, after the president had checked with other executive members of the board. This was approved (Max/Dale).

A "First Day" hike has been scheduled for 2 pm on Jan. 1, 2014. There was some discussion about waiving the entrance fee, but the general consensus was that it could be better used later in the year to encourage more attendance at events sponsored by Friends.

The Candlelight Ski has been scheduled for January 25, 2014. The area for skiing has been somewhat extended and will include a walking and snowshoeing area. Dale, Mary, Max, and Don will work on planning the event.

There is a continuing need to update the bi-laws. Chuck agreed to head up a group to work on this.

The next meeting will be Thursday Jan 16, 2014 at 4:30 pm. The meeting was adjourned at 12:05.

The meeting was followed by a holiday potluck luncheon which featured a wide variety of dishes and was enjoyed by board members and many extra guests. During the luncheon memorial benches were presented to Carl Scholz and Dick Weidman in recognition of their long and valuable contributions to the Friends group. Another bench is in honor of Ray Stonecipher (another long-time board member) who was not present due to recent knee surgery.

Submitted 1/10/14

ASD