I hope everyone is enjoying this mild winter and finding time to get outdoors! Our winter has been moving at a much slower pace than last year’s, with less snowplowing and project prepping, giving our staff more time to work on hazard tree removal instead. Most of the large-scale (and some smaller scale) projects were completed by the 2020 summer season including: a new sanitary dump station and restoration of the old site, electrification of 23 campsites in South Nicolet, 11 new vault toilets, a new toilet/shower building in South Nicolet, renovation of two toilet/shower buildings in South Nicolet and Weborg, repairs and reconstruction of our waste water treatment facilities, a new office roof and doors, new maintenance building doors and garage doors, re-graveling of over 400 campsite driveways and tent pads, replacement of toilets in all Tennison Bay campground buildings, and dredging at Nicolet Boat Launch.

As Friends members, you may also be aware of the other two large projects still ongoing. The first being the new Eagle Tower and canopy walk/accessible ramp, which we are hoping will be able to open to the public for the 2021 season. Minor work is still in progress or will be when spring arrives, including finishing installation of the railings and gates, a new information kiosk, benches, the WI Tourism selfie stand, the 7 new interpretive signs and spotting scope. The second project is the White Cedar Nature Center renovations. The building renovations were completed, but reorganization of the interior is still in the works replacing old lighting with new LED, refreshing the displays and adding new ones. The next phase in progress is the renovation of existing parking lots, the addition of more parking and a new outdoor amphitheater overlooking the prairie/garden (which we are all excited for). Now, we just need to get the visitors back in here and a seasonal Natural Resources Educator on staff!

Our other partners were working just as hard to improve the park and still are. Your newly acquired partner, Nicolet Beach Concessions (Jake) has been hard at work renovating the beach concession buildings inside and out. Northern Sky Theater added a new flush toilet building and are planning their next phase of work, with upgrades and additions to many buildings and a new concession building. The Peninsula Golf Course is planning on some landscaping work around the clubhouse and the Eagle Bluff Lighthouse group is currently fundraising for millions in renovations to the lighthouse and outbuildings.

What about 2021 and beyond? We are still on schedule for resurfacing Sunset Trail this fall, adding a fresh new layer of hard-packed gravel from Nelson’s Point to Nicolet Bay Trail via Hidden Bluff. We will also be reconstructing new trail crossings at the Middle/Skyline Roads and Sunset Trail intersection that will make it safer for all visitors. Plans are also still moving along to mill and overlay Shore Road from the Fish Creek entrance to the Ephraim entrance via Bluff Road in 2022. Some smaller but just as important projects include, reconstruction of the Fish
Creek office and information kiosk approach area, fireplace/chimney renovations in Weborg and Welcker’s shelters, asphalting our 4 handicap accessible campsites, installation of over 35 new drinking fountains, and replacing more fire rings in campgrounds (thanks to your kind donors). Other large projects we are hoping to complete in the coming years include, renovations of additional campground toilet and toilet/shower buildings, replacement of waterlines, parking lot expansion at the Terrace Day Use area, and many others on our wish list!

Jennifer Birkholz, Assistant Superintendent

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Superintendent’s Report

**WELCOME ERIC HYDE**

**New Superintendent Joins Peninsula from the Washington County Park System**

Hello Friends of Peninsula State Park! It’s been a pleasure getting to know and working with the board and all the partners and volunteers since I joined the DNR in November of 2020. I look forward to meeting everyone outside of this temporary virtual world and seeing more than the upper half of everyone’s faces at some point. Making career and life changes is always a difficult decision, especially during a global pandemic, but there’s no way I could pass up an opportunity to be a part of one of the greatest state parks in the country.

I previously worked for Washington County, WI for the last decade as a Conservation Technician and then took on the role of Parks and Trails Manager for the Washington County Park System. I graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 2010 with a degree in Natural Resources Management. I was born and raised in Grafton, WI about 30 miles north of the home of the Milwaukee Brewers, formerly known as Miller Park (don’t get me started). I’m a big Wisconsin sports fan and love just about every outdoor recreational activity there is.

My fiancé Natalie and my dog Ace joined me here in Door County and we’ve loved every minute; enjoying all the open spaces and ordering to-go food and beverages from many of the great establishments that make this area a tourism destination. I very much look forward to immersing myself in all aspects of Peninsula and being a great steward of this Wisconsin state treasure for years to come.

Eric Hyde, Superintendent
President’s Message

Hi to all Peninsula Park Friends and Volunteers.

Thank you again for all of your continued interest and support. As we all know, 2020 was a year like no other we have known, involving so many challenges for all of us. One thing that didn’t change, is the beauty of the park we all love so much. This year, I feel, it further enhanced our lives as a safe place of respite, reflection, and renewal with more people coming than ever before. Some hiked along the beautiful trails. Some meditated in their cars looking at beautiful scenery or ate a peaceful lunch on a picnic bench. In our time of need, our park was there for us.

What a wonderous gift, nature is. As 2021 progresses, we hope to see the opening of Eagle Tower. Thank you for helping us accomplish this goal. We look forward to everyone who wishes to access this beautiful view.

Friends of Peninsula State Park was awarded two awards this year. The 2020 Gold Seal Award for Best State Park System Property for Sledding from the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks.

We also received the 2019-20 Friends Partnership Award from the Bureau of Parks and Recreation of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

We, will be following DNR and COVID guidelines again this year but have not heard what they will be. If the buildings are not accessible, we hope you will continue to support us by purchasing online merchandise.

Please, also consider a donation to the Park, in any way that speaks to you.

A final way you can help is to make purchases at the Nicolet Bay Beach Store and Concessions. Last summer, our Friend’s group entered into a partnership with Nicolet Bay Concession. As a result, we will be receiving a percentage of sales from the Camp Store, snack bar, and equipment rental each year. Please stop by this summer and check it out. Your purchases will help support future projects at the park.

What we do

Your generous donations help us find a wide variety of programs and projects that benefit Peninsula State Park. Here are some of the things we were able to accomplish with your support in 2020:

· Provided $360,000 in funding to complete an addition to the Nature Center and updating of the existing facility
· Provided funding and volunteers for the planting of trees and flowers at the park entrance in partnership with the help of Wisconsin State Parks.
· Provided grants for research projects at the Park.
· Provided volunteers for ski trail grooming.
· Sold merchandise online to fund programs and provide new equipment for the Park.
· Entered into a partnership with Nicolet Bay Concessions to receive a percentage of sales which will be used for park projects.
· Maintained long-term funds at the Door County Community Foundation to support current and future programs at the Park.
Your gifts ensure that the work of the Friends of Peninsula State Park continues. To donate easily and securely, visit PeninsulaFriends.org/donate. Thank you so much for your support!

We, as a Friend’s Group are so grateful for your support, past, present, and future. We wish you all, happiness and health, wherever this year’s journey takes you.

Chris Holicek, President of Friends of Peninsula State Park

Merchandise Report

As you all certainly know, 2020 was a catastrophe for business like Friends of Peninsula State Park merchandise sales. The sale of doo-dads and thingamabobs contributes a lot to our long list of projects supporting the functions of our favorite State Park! But not in 2020!

There was a little activity in December, thanks to our manager, Steve Strucely’s, tech savvy and quick thinking. He was able to set up a way to present and sell items from our Facebook page and our website with the help of Kyle Hansen, a high school student volunteer. This really helped give the Christmas season sales a boost!

We still have no idea how long the Headquarters Building and the newly expanded Nature Center are going to remain closed. The DNR has to treat all the Parks the same, or some of them get a little testy, so we are waiting for the OK to open!

Fortunately for us, Megan O’Meara, of O’Meara’s Irish House, has offered us a place to sell a few items. It is outside the park – but not too far away!

She will be displaying our “Like To Hike” pins, there are two designs this year, summer and winter, $6.00 each. Last year’s pin, featuring a very cute Raccoon, will be for sale at half price. She will also carry our Friends of the Park pin, two different patches, a large and small PSP bumper sticker and four different designs of our popular PSP mugs.

Please visit her shop and let her know how much this is helping us weather the storm!! You might find some other items you didn’t know you needed!!

David Lea, Merchandise Chairman Friends of Peninsula State Park
Nature Center Update

The Friends launched a campaign last September to raise funds for Phase II of improvements to the Nature Center. This phase will include construction of an amphitheater, additional walkways, and increased parking to provide accessibility for people of all ages and physical abilities. The improvements will allow us to expand outdoor educational, recreational, and historical programs for a variety of audiences.

About $60,000 has already been committed towards our goal of $200,000.

Bill Pennoyer, Friend’s member and retired architect, is serving as our project advisor. He has developed plans and is working with prospective contractors to obtain bids. Here is a conceptual drawing of our proposed amphitheater layout and a picture of a similar one:

Please consider donating towards this important effort to enhance the park! Visit PeninsulaFriends.org/nature-center for more information.

Steve Strucely, Business Manager Friends of Peninsula State Park

Honor and Remember Your Loved Ones

The Friends offer several ways to honor your loved ones and capture your personal connection to the park. One option is to donate a commemorative brick to be placed at the Nature Center or Eagle Tower. Bricks are available in two sizes and different donation levels, depending on the location:

- 4” x 8” brick - $250 at Nature Center, $350 at Eagle Tower
- 8” x 8” brick - $450 at Nature Center, $600 at Eagle Tower

Visit PeninsulaFriends.org/engraved-bricks to find out more about purchasing a brick.
Another option is donating a named bench to be located near the new Eagle Tower. Gift levels are $5,000, $10,000, and $20,000. Very few benches remain to be named and they are available on a first come, first served basis. Visit PeninsulaFriends.org/et-benches for more information.

100+ WOMEN WHO CARE

We were nominated by Bev Schulze and then received a grant of $4,675 which was increased to 4,775 by one of the members. This Grant will go toward Phase II of the Nature Center Project. Thank you, Bev and the 100+ Women Who Care.

BECOME A FRIEND’S MEMBER

Our members are an integral part of everything we do. They provide financial support, serve as volunteers, and help to get the word out about the Friends and Peninsula State Park. We have a total of 258 active members, which includes 36 individuals, 80 families, 14 businesses, and 128 life members.

Our membership year runs from May 1-April 30. If you are currently a member, you should have just received a renewal letter by mail. You may also renew online (or become a member) at PeninsulaFriends.org/join. Friend’s members receive our newsletter by email.

Meet Our Board

Editor: Judy Ortiz