

Minutes

Save the Dunes Annual Membership Meeting & Holiday Celebration

December 12, 2019

Location: Barker House

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Board Attendees: Sophia Arshad, Vern Beck, Scott Bozik, Dorreen Carey, Lynn Duttlinger, Melli Hoppe, Scott Kosik, Paul Labus, Eve Wierzbicki.

Staff: Natalie Johnson, Executive Director; Katie Hobgood, Program Director; Victoria Wittig, Senior Program Specialist; Myra Cseke, Director of Development; Vicky Plath, Bookkeeper; Amber Seiler, Office Manager.

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions

Melli Hoppe, Board President, called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm, welcomed the Board and attendees, and introduced Natalie Johnson, Executive Director. Natalie introduced the staff including two new members that joined the staff in 2019, Katie Hobgood, Program Director (replacing Cathy Martin), and Myra Cseke, Director of Development (new position).

2. Celebrating 2019: Staff Presentation on Project Work and Partnerships

Victoria Wittig, Senior Program Specialist:

- Save the Dunes participated in the Indiana legislature ceremony recognizing the Indiana Dunes National Park.
- Septic System Clean Water Ambassador Program. Working with the DNR Lake Michigan Coastal Program Save the Dunes trained over 20 neighborhood ambassadors to engage and educate local residents on septic system management and maintenance for healthy communities and safe water utilizing neighborhood meetings, educational brochures, and yard signs throughout Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties.
- Save the Dunes developed a dune protection and beach access program working with the National Park, local governments and shoreline residents of Gary and Michigan City to identify and discourage use of “social” trails through the dunes. Educational meetings were held and comments solicited from participants to create local educational maps that were widely distributed.
- Worked with the Student Conservation Association on restoration and land management best practices at the Pedicord site, Trail Creek Fen, and Stockwell Woods.
- Engaged with community members at the East Chicago Monarch Festival linking cultural heritage and natural history.
- Working with an Advisory Committee developed the 2nd iteration of Living in the Dunes focusing on using pollinator plants in home and community gardens.

Katie Hobgood, Program Director:

- Working with Gary and National Park to complete the Panne restoration project started in 2017.

- Constructed a Kayak launch, parking lot, and benches at Pedicord site.
- Constructed an accessible kayak launch at Howe Road on the East Branch of the Little Calumet River near the Dunes Learning Center.
- Will meet with municipalities to address developing best practices to address the increase of visitors and accessibility resulting from the South Shore Double track project.

Natalie Johnson, Executive Director:

- Save the Dunes provided information to the public on the Steel Mill spills into Burns Waterway/Lake Michigan and developed comments to regulators recommending plant improvements, upgraded employee training, and a better public notification system. Recognizing that industry and our dune environment must co-exist, Save the Dunes seeks to be a bridge between agencies, industry, and community to achieve the highest level of protection for communities, Lake Michigan, and the National Park.
- Save the Dunes received the Organization of the Year Award from the Hoosier Environmental Council.
- Save the Dunes continues the work to defend the Public Trust and unimpeded access to the Indiana shores of Lake Michigan and will be providing members and the public with updates on relevant lawsuits and legislative actions.
- As members of the Healing our Waters Coalition, STD has provided advocacy training on Great Lakes issues and is soliciting recruits from NW Indiana to go to Washington DC to address legislators.

Myra Cseke, Director of Development:

- The Director of Development is a new position to help enhance communication with members and public, to raise funds and solicit donations, and to get more people engaged in Save the Dunes activities.
- STD introduced a new online “unselfie” program beginning Nov 1 for volunteers and donors to share their support of Save the Dunes.
- In partnership with Humane Indiana STD organized a Roxanna Marsh “Trash Bash” clean up.
- STD received an anonymous matching donation of \$5,000. in honor of Charlotte Read and Lee Botts for Giving Tuesday which boosted total donations received to \$11, 108.

Amber Seiler, Office Manager and Vicky Plath, Bookkeeper:

- Sponsorship and in-kind donations made it possible for STD’s biggest fundraiser, “Jammin’” to meet the fundraising goal set for 2019 despite the bad weather. The 10th Annual Jammin’ is scheduled for June 6, 2020.

3. Board of Directors Business

- a) Approval of 2018 Annual Membership Meeting Minutes - Motion to approve by Scott Kosik. Second by Scott Bozik. Motion carried.
- b) Approval of 2019 Treasurer’s Report – Motion to approve by Vern Beck. Second by Paul Labus. Motion Carried.

4. Board Member Re-Election & Membership Vote.

Melli Hoppe, Board President, recognized Scott Kosik whose final term is expiring. Melli

went over the process of voting and informed the members that each term is two years and each board member can serve three consecutive terms. Melli presented the board members nominated for re-election: Sophia Arshad, Eve Wierzbicki, and Dorreen Carey. Jeanette Neague made a motion from the floor to re-elect. Nancy Moldenhauer seconded the motion from the floor. Motion carried.

5. Presentation of New Board Nominees & Membership Vote.

Melli Hoppe introduced the new board nominees: Ryan Metz, Carol Sue Angarola, and Susan Kirt Alterio. A motion was made and seconded from the floor to elect the new board Nominees. Motion carried.

6. Presentation of the Paul H. Douglas Award for Outstanding Service

Natalie Johnson, Executive Director, informed the members that Congressman Pete Visclosky will receive the Paul H. Douglas Award for his long-standing support of the Indiana Dunes and his successful efforts to establish the Indiana Dunes Lakeshore as a National Park. Mark Lopez, accepted on behalf of the Congressman. Mr. Lopez relayed the Congressman's thanks for allowing him to represent us in Congress for 36 years and the collective effort that resulted in the establishment of the Indiana Dunes National Park. As he retires he further conveys that we should continue to be demanding of our next representative to preserve and protect the Dunes, Lake Michigan, and remaining wetlands.

7. Adjourn to Celebrate at 7:04 pm.

Submitted by
Dorreen Carey, Secretary