



Sleeping Bear Gateways Council

2022 Annual Meeting

August 25, 2022



Agenda

- **Welcome and Introduction**
- **Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Update**
- **Organizational Update since Prior Annual Meeting**
- **Current Projects and Status**
- **Future Projects**
- **Financial Review**
- **Question and Answer Opportunity**
- **Adjourn**



Introductions

Board Members

Judy Cheney

Elizabeth Christoforetti

Shawn Denton

Jim Dutmers

Ed Hoogterp

Ingemar Johannson

Clyde McKenzie

Linda Peppler

Kurt Rivard

Mike Rivard

Jim Shook

Vik Theiss

Larry Widmayer

Bill Witle



Introductions

Mission and Vision Statements

Vision

The unique character of our gateway communities and regional natural resources remain undiminished for the benefit of its citizens, visitors, economy, and environment.

Mission

Facilitate stakeholder collaboration to enhance sustainable gateway communities.

Website and Communications Portal

www.sleepingbeargateways.org



Organizational Update

Leadership Changes of July 1, 2022

- **Bill Witler succeeds Mike Rivard as President for a two-year term**
- **Jim Shook Jr succeeds Bill as Chair of the Workforce Housing Committee and will serve as president at the end of Bill's term.**



Project Review – Benzie Visitors Center

Mission

Striving for greater/more equitable and strategic distribution of visitorship and economic opportunity across Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (SBDNL) adjacent communities in Benzie County through a physical presence in an increasingly digital world that positively enhances the visitor experience by providing connectivity, access, historical and cultural awareness.

Vision

Visitors patronize, in significant numbers, a physical presence in Benzie County recognized as the southern gateway to SBDNL. This gateway serves as a distribution point for visitation to the region’s natural and cultural resources, connecting visitors to trails, places, and experiences in the southern portion of the Lakeshore area. The visitor center is a point of entry that blends physical and digital access by providing a compelling and human-centric visitor experience with an introduction to digital resources that can enhance and enrich the lakeshore journey and guide visitors throughout their wider experience of the region.

Visitors are able to chat with knowledgeable conservation and cultural staff, download essential guides and trail maps, learn about the natural and cultural history of the area through a small but engaging exhibition program before walking, biking, or driving away from the center on a network of connected trails and roadways.



Project Review – Benzie Visitors Center

- Develop leadership team and working group Completed
- Engage Benzie County key stakeholders By November 2022
- Complete feasibility study By June 2023
- Roadmap to completion By November 2023
- Site plan of visitor center By December 2024



Project Review – Workforce Housing Mission

- **Evolving Mission**

- **The SBGC Workforce Housing Committee has been and remains a 501©3 entity, working under the direction of the SBGC, to improve the quantity and quality of existing workforce housing inventory in support of our service and tourism industries.**
- **The Workforce Housing Committee is evolving its mission to evaluate and facilitate the provision of several types of new housing product across the counties for our seasonal and permanent workforce.**
- **We do not seek to develop, rather we seek to collaborate with local government to plan and entitle development sites for qualified, properly financed developers to then create housing opportunities consistent with our vision and the community’s needs.**



Project Review – Workforce Housing

- **SBGC Workforce Housing Committee is focused in FOUR areas:**
 - **Housing Exchange in both counties**
 - **Work Camper opportunities at campgrounds in both counties**
 - **Employer Engagement from all sectors across the counties**
 - **Housing Development opportunities at key locations**



Project Review – Workforce Housing

- **Housing Exchange Progress**
 - **Launched Housing Exchange in Spring 2022**
 - **4 employers enrolled; 7 hosts submitted properties**
 - **2 seasonal employees placed with hosts**
 - **Takeaways: launch earlier, play matchmaker between employer-host for most likely placement**
- **Housing Exchange Goals**
 - **Launch for 2023 season by January 1**
 - **Expand enrollment to 6 participating employers and 20 hosts**



Project Review – Workforce Housing

- **Work-Camper Program Progress**
 - **Working with local area campgrounds to make space available for work campers interested in seasonal employment in Benzie and Leelanau Counties**
 - **Researching best practices around attracting Work-Campers, supporting Employers in hiring Work-Campers,**
- **Work-Camper Program Goals**
 - **Identify 3 "pads" in Benzie County and 3 "pads" in Leelanau County to test Work-Camper use in 2023 season**



Project Review – Workforce Housing

- **Employer Engagement Progress**
 - **Continued to meet and engage Benzie and Leelanau employers.**
 - **Have working group of a ~dozen employers providing feedback, time, and staff resources to support our work. This is a big deal—these folks are busy and supportive!**
 - **We are learning that the need for year-round workforce housing is becoming as much of an issue as seasonal workforce housing.**
- **Employer Engagement Goals**
 - **Continue to meet one-on-one with employers as available.**
 - **Host employer roundtable to update on our progress and re-confirm needs and opportunities.**



Project Review – Workforce Housing

- **New Development Progress**

- Meeting with investors, developers, land owners, and financing providers to identify and support potential development models that include a mix of seasonal workforce housing, long-term workforce housing, and related uses.
- Current opportunities in progress in Thompsonville/Frankfort and Empire

- **New Development Goals**

- Continue facilitating development connections within Benzie and Leelanau.
- Development requires lots of moving pieces, but namely land, design, infrastructure, product, financing, and long-term management. Know of an individual/organization who we should meet with? We want to connect!



Project Review – Municipal Engagement

- **Overarching objective of the committee is for NPS and elected officials in Benzie and Leelanau County to proactively address challenges and opportunities accompanying anticipated visitor growth in gateway communities**
- **Successful first meeting between above referenced stakeholders in April 2022 in Benzie County**
- **Second meeting scheduled for October in Leelanau County**
- **Meeting will inform attendees of potential USDA funding sources for initiatives as well as potential projects of interest anticipated by gateway communities and NPS**
- **April 2023 meeting will explore opportunities to benefit from other gateway communities across the country**



Future Projects

Transportation

Branding our Gateway Communities

Long Term Infrastructure Needs



Financial Review

Sleeping Bear Gateways Council

Statement of Revenues and Expenses

Year Ended June 30, 2022

REVENUE AND SUPPORT

Donations	\$ 40,305
Housing Exchange Grant	25,998
Interest	<u>54</u>

Total Revenue and Support 66,356

Expense

Administration	4,327
Program Expenses	47,588

Total Expense 51,916

Change In Net Assets \$ 14,440

Net Assets Beginning of Year 33,271

Net Assets End of Year \$ 47,711



Question and Answer Session



Adjourn

Thank you for your support!