

Superintendents Corner

Greetings to all Friends;

The Lapham Peak Friends once again have risen up to meet a challenge head on and accomplish things that benefit the park visitors.

In 2012, a project that has been in the works since 1998 finally came to fruition and was finished with excellent results. Most of you probably realize I am talking about the Nature Center facility that was created by remodeling the former residence of Dr. Paul and Bernice Hausmann. Stop by and see it when you have an opportunity.

I would like to highlight a few key things that happened which allowed the remodeling project to be completed. As is often the case at Lapham Peak, the Friends were an integral part of the project.

In order to proceed with the project, the Department of Natural Resources Bureau of Parks required a couple things take place.

1. With no operating dollars budgeted for the Nature Center after the construction work was done, the Bureau asked that a partner be identified to operate the facility.
2. An endowment fund be started to ultimately provide some funds to help with the operations of the nature center. As the fund grows and generates some income, one use for those funds will be assisting with the Nature Center operation.

Finding a partner ended up being an easy task. The facility is now operated through a 3 way partnership involving Milwaukee Public Schools, the Friends of Lapham Peak and the Department of Natural Resources.

The Recreation program for the Milwaukee Public Schools is leasing the facility and is the primary operator of it. The building will be used by school groups from Milwaukee as well as any other school in the area. Additionally, the building or rooms within the building can be rented by outside groups. Some anticipated uses include meetings, social gatherings, family outings, corporate training programs and DNR safety programs. All rental fees collected for the use of the building are used to offset the operating expenses of the building.

In 2010, the Friends Group created an Endowment fund with one of the purposes to be for assisting with funding the operations of the facility or a naturalist staff person.

Even more importantly, the Friends group has created a group of volunteers to staff the building on weekends so that the facility can be used by all visitors that come to the park.

Additionally, the Friends have funded the construction of high quality exhibits. Friends of Lapham Peak members have been responsible for researching and designing the exhibits, and the group has paid for the exhibits to be professionally produced. They are high quality and give the visitor a very positive impression of the facility. The Friends also have created a gift shop for the sale of nature books, t-shirts and kid friendly items.

Somehow, somehow, the Friends took this project on while also continuing the large snowmaking fundraising effort and offering its normal menu of special events.

In honor of this effort – Friends President Louise Borzynski received the statewide Friends Group “Hero” award for “Outstanding Friends Member”.

The Friends of Lapham Peak are truly an asset to Lapham Peak, the park visitors and the State Parks program.

In other news, Brett Johansen completed his 2nd year as the property manager and a third permanent ranger position was filled.

The third ranger is a new position for Lapham and was filled by Brian Jacquette who joined the Lapham Peak team in June of this year. Previously Brian worked at Point Beach State Forest near Manitowoc/Two Rivers. His positive attitude and customer service skills make a good addition to the team.

Jay Abts continues as the glue that holds everything together as he is finishing his 18th year at Lapham Peak.

Other part time staff making up the Lapham Peak team includes Brian Fitzpatrick, Sarah Imp, Deb Lox, Randy Sonnenberg and Lori Willacker.

All of the Lapham Peak team greatly appreciate the Friends and its members and realize that many amenities enjoyed by the park visitors are a direct result of the Friends of Lapham Peak.

We all wish to “Thank you” for making these things happen.

Submitted by

Paul Sandgren
Forest Superintendent