



Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.

Where History and Nature Meet at the Door!

Founded in 2007

Forum: Fall 2025

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FOPPI *Forum* back issues can be found at the Washington Island Archives, WI Marine Historical Society, Wisconsin Maritime Museum, Egg Harbor Public Library, Sturgeon Bay Public Library, and the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives.

Hello, Friends and Supporters,

As I write this message, our U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service friends are anxiously awaiting Congress to pass the funding bill so they may return to the work they so passionately do at our refuges. The visitor centers of refuges across the country are closed, and all projects, except for those that are vital to their mission, are put on hold.

The shutdown and the work on Plum Island boathouse pilings prevented guests from climbing the range light during the fall Lighthouse Passport Days event, but we offered guests a narrated tour of the area shipwrecks in Hedgehog Harbor and those around Plum and Pilot Islands to make up for it. Our three trips were packed, the weather was great, and our guests all enjoyed viewing the islands from the water.

Thankfully, the roofing contractor was able to complete the Pilot Island lighthouse roof repair after the birds had left the island for their winter migration and before the shutdown. The project was funded in part by the Raibrook Foundation and FOPPI donations. Thank you for supporting this project! While on the roof the contractor checked on the rubber membrane that was installed earlier in the light tower, and we're happy to report that it is continuing to protect the tower from water leakage. Plans to do a formal restoration of the light tower are in our historic preservation project matrix at a future date.

Once the shutdown has ended, we will pick up where we left off on the Plum Island Boathouse roof restoration. We are requesting approval to substitute the original sawn cedar shingles with a composite material, as the same quality material is no longer available. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Historic Preservation team and the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office both need to approve our request before we can begin our capital campaign. Wish us luck as we go through the preservation process!

I recently attended the Wisconsin Historical Society's annual local history and historic preservation conference, which began with an update on the new Wisconsin History Center that is slated to open in 2027 ([History Center Project - Wisconsin Historical Museum](#)). The museum will feature a video of what Wisconsin is all about and begins with the sun rising over the **rear range light on Plum Island!** Imagine my delight when I saw an excerpt of the video and bragged to the folks at my table that she's OUR light. Of the 48 lighthouses in Wisconsin, ours was chosen to represent Wisconsin life. This recognition is mainly due to your patience and resolve, and for this *I thank you!*

—Mary Beth

The Discovery of the *F.J. King* by Stiles Meredith

My name is Stiles Meredith, *The Shoreline* Director and Captain for Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands (FOPPI). The following is the account of the planning and discovery of the ghost ship *F.J. King*, which was lost in Lake Michigan on September 15, 1886, during a storm off Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin.

Preliminary Planning: January 2025

Our adventure began in the middle of a cold Wisconsin winter on January 13, 2025. I received an email from Mary Beth Volmer, President FOPPI, asking if I would contact Brian Bangert. Brian is with the Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association (WUAA), and he had sent an email to Jim “Captain Robbo” Robinson asking if his “Old Boat” was still around. I called Brian and told him that *The Shoreline* was still in Gills Rock and now owned by FOPPI. He was glad to hear this news and said he would let Brendon Baillod, President of WUAA, know.

About a month later, Brendon contacted me with some preliminary information as to why they were interested in *The Shoreline*. They were looking for a ghost ship in Lake Michigan and believed *The Shoreline* would be the perfect boat for the search. He didn’t want to share a lot of details but emphasized that this needed to be kept confidential. We agreed to meet at the Ghost Ship Festival in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, on March 1 to discuss the search in more detail.

Ghost Ship Festival Meeting

The Ghost Ship Festival is a gathering of maritime shipwreck enthusiasts, shipwreck hunters, SCUBA divers, maritime book authors, and history buffs, and offers many presentations about past shipwrecks. The discussion that Mary Beth, Scotty Nelson, and I had with Brendon and the WUAA members was truly exciting. They spoke of a ghost ship, the *F.J. King*, which was lost in 1886 off Baileys Harbor and was never found. Many searches over the years had yielded no results, so finding this wreck seemed an almost impossible challenge. Brendon, however, had been researching this wreck for many years by referring to archived newspaper articles, written firsthand accounts, and books. One account he was particularly interested in was that of the lighthouse keeper on Cana Island. Brendon wanted to charter *The Shoreline* to search for this wreck for two days, June 28 and 29, and each day bring ten “citizen scientists” from the WUAA membership to experience this search and, hopefully, discovery.

Final Planning

In the months leading up to June 28 and 29, we met over several Zoom calls to discuss logistics of the trip, electronics on board, room for passengers and their equipment, and safety. WUAA has two sonar devices they wanted to pull behind *The Shoreline*: a towfish with 600 feet of cable and a wreck sniffer with 150 feet of cable. They also wanted space to mount a 28-inch flat-screen TV to connect to their laptop to show the sonar images in a larger format. In addition, they wanted to launch remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) to explore promising targets on the lake bottom. Based on all the equipment on board and having to release and reel in the cable for both sonars, I stressed that safety of all those on board was very important. Also, if wind or weather became an issue, we would need to retrieve the gear and head back into the Baileys Harbor promptly.



L-R: Captain Scott Nelson, crew member Dawn Nelson, WUAA president Brendon Baillod, and *The Shoreline* director Captain Stiles Meredith next to *The Shoreline*.

Scotty and I wanted another crew member for the trip so he asked his wife, Dawn, to go along. As it turns out they knew about this ship from commercial fishermen in the vicinity of the search area from years earlier. They were excited to be part of this search and their background as “coasties” was right in their wheelhouse, so to speak.

Day 1

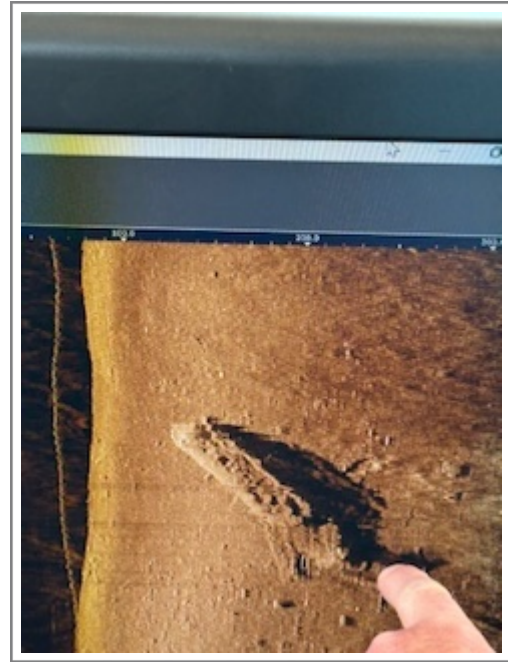
Dawn dropped Scotty off in Gills Rock at 6:30 AM on June 28. It was a beautiful sunny morning, 68 degrees, with a light SW breeze and calm conditions. Perfect for our search. It took 1.5 hours to get down to Baileys Harbor. When we arrived, Dawn met us along with Brendon and the

The Discovery of the F.J. King by Stiles Meredith

other citizen scientists. There was already excitement among everyone about the search we were going to begin. We all introduced ourselves, loaded backpacks, coolers, sonar gear, other equipment, and topped off the fuel tanks. In addition, we programmed six GPS coordinates of a 2 x 2 mile search grid into our Ray Marine GPS. After a short introduction of the *F.J. King* by Brendon and our day's tentative plan, I performed a safety briefing and we were off to the search area. We tracked toward the south center GPS waypoint to start our search. If you haven't been in Baileys Harbor before, it is very important to follow the navigation charts and aids for the harbor. In order to get into Lake Michigan on a northbound heading, we went due south for 2 miles, then east for 2 miles, and then back on a north heading to our coordinates. There are many shallow areas and shoals around Baileys Harbor that make it a dangerous harbor. That is the main reason there are front and rear range lights to aid in safely navigating the harbor. Fortunately, Scotty had been on a commercial fishing boat out of there for many years and knew the waters very well.

Fish in the Water

Once we were about a half mile from the south center GPS waypoint of the grid area, we dropped the two sonars in the water. The first sonar was the wreck sniffer with about 60 feet of cable let out, and the second was the towfish with a total of 600 feet of cable. These were both connected to laptops, and the towfish had a 28-inch flat-screen hooked up for a better visual of the bottom. Both of these sonars were tubes of 3 to 4 feet in length and 3 inches in diameter, with fins to stabilize them as they were pulled through the water. We began tracking toward the grid on the south center waypoint heading at about 3 to 4 mph. We adjusted the speed and scanning distance as we came close to the start of the grid. We crossed the bottom of the grid and headed north to the north center waypoint two miles away. We monitored our speed, depth, and computer screens but there was not much to see except a few rocks and different gradations of the lake bottom. As we passed the top of the grid, we made a 180-degree teardrop turn to come back south and parallel the northern track with a slight overlap. We needed to maintain our speed in the turn because if we slowed too much the towfish would sink and hit the bottom. This could be disastrous as it could get damaged or caught on bottom debris. We started



Moment the crew first saw the *F.J. King* on the sonar.

on our southerly track and kept a close watch on the bottom. Still nothing.

Target on the Screen

After about 30 minutes tracking in a southerly direction a target appeared on the screen and, with Captain Scotty at the helm, we decided to take a closer look. Could this be the *F.J. King*? We came about 180-degrees back over the target. It was definitely a ship and showed up incredibly clear with open hatches and timbers across the deck. We saw the damage to the starboard bow when it hit the bottom and the iron ore cargo spilled out the bow. Based on the scale on the towfish screen, it appeared that it was the exact length of the *F.J. King* at 140 feet. It was in 137 feet of water, which was the approximate depth reported at the time it sank. Brendon felt that this was likely the *F.J. King*, and it was finally found. What a sight this was on the bottom! We all were really excited and gave each other high fives because we were reasonably sure this was, in fact, the *F.J. King*. We found it in about two hours of searching, which was amazing!

The *F.J. King* from Different Angles and ROV Deployment

During the next few hours, we dropped a marker over the wreck so we could easily identify the location of the wreck as we traversed back and

The Discovery of the *F.J. King* by Stiles Meredith

forth over the site. We saw the wreck from different angles, and it was spectacular to see the wreck sides and the debris field. It was remarkably intact for having been on the bottom for 139 years. We then decided to deploy the two ROVs, so we anchored upwind from the wreck and drifted over the site. Once in the water, both ROVs began descending the 137 feet to the bottom to get a camera on the wreck. It took a few minutes to get to the bottom, and there it was. How incredible was that? It was exciting being the first to see the wreck since September 15, 1886. We were able to make out rigging, timbers, the main deck, open hatches, ship's wheel, anchor, and iron ore lying in front of the bow. It was quite a sight! The ROVs spent the next hour exploring the wreck from side to side and bow to stern. The batteries were running low, so we decided to retrieve the ROVs, weigh anchor, and head back to Baileys Harbor.

Debrief from Day 1

After we returned to Baileys Harbor, we met at a local establishment to debrief the day's events. The question on everyone's mind was what will we tell family and friends about the day's exploration? Brendon suggested that we say, "We were able to gather some interesting data from today's exploration." We could not tell anyone of our find since we had another group to take out in the morning.

Day 2: June 29

The next day began with rain in the early morning, 68 degrees, windy conditions, waves building, and chance of thunderstorms in the afternoon. Not ideal. Brendon told the second group of citizen scientists that we would be going out to look at a target that was promising, not wanting to spill the beans before the day started. We arrived at the search grid and found the wreck target quickly from our marked position the previous day. We deployed the towfish and wreck sniffer to begin looking at the wreck. The group was excited to see the wreck on the bottom, so we spent several hours traversing back and forth to give the group different views of the wreck. Once everyone was satisfied that they had seen the *F.J. King* from several different directions, we decided to pull in our sonars.

Heading Back

We decided to head back early, as Dawn had been watching weather radar and there was a thunderstorm to the SW that was moving in our



Cloverleaf pattern tracked to gain different perspectives of the *F.J. King*.

direction, and the wind and waves were picking up. We felt it was best to return to Baileys Harbor to avoid getting caught in a fast-moving storm. Back at the dock, we offloaded the equipment, took pictures, refueled, and headed to Gills Rock. We pulled into Gills Rock just as the rain began. Hard to believe the adventure was over after six months of planning—what a great adventure it was for all involved. But we weren't done yet.

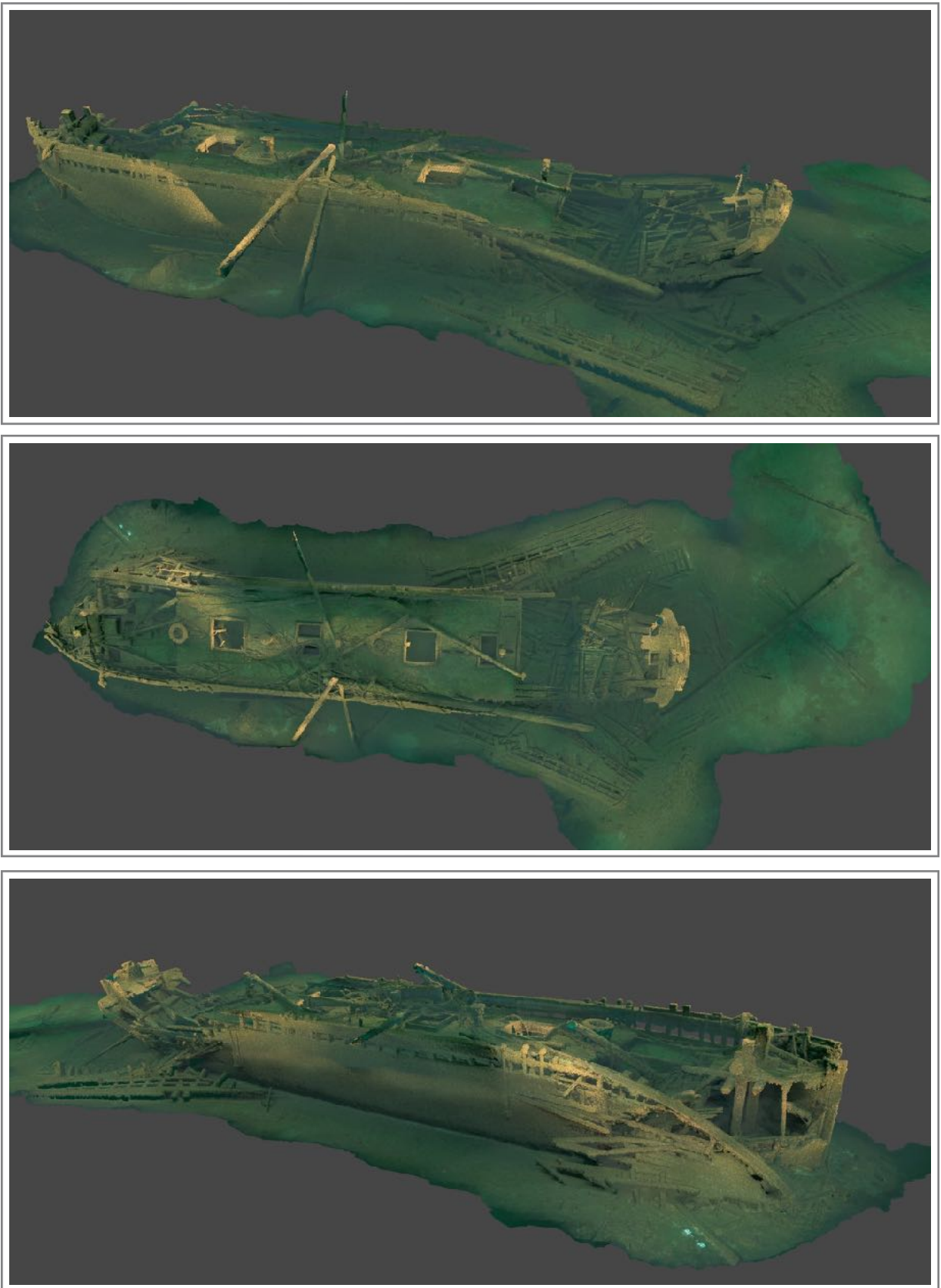
Divers on the *F.J. King*

The next step was to get SCUBA divers out on the wreck to take photos. Tamara Thomsen, from the Wisconsin Historical Society, organized a trip out to the site and about 5,000 pictures were taken of the wreck to make a positive confirmation that it was the *F.J. King*. This was done in early August. Based on these pictures, a photogrammetry model was produced by Zach Whitrock. This shows a 3D rendition of what the ship looks like on the bottom and is amazing technology.

Press Conference and the *F.J. King* Reveal

On September 15, 2025, WUAA and FOPPI held a press conference to reveal the *F.J. King* discovery to the media. Brendon provided most of the detail, and I spoke about the involvement of FOPPI and *The Shoreline*. Ironically, this was 139 years to the day that the *F.J. King* went beneath the waves. Another press event was held at the Door County Maritime Museum on September 24, 2025, where we discussed the find and held interviews with local news outlets. It was quite an exciting week, and Scotty and I were thrilled to be able to participate on behalf of FOPPI.

The Discovery of the *F.J. King* by Stiles Meredith



Photogrammetry model (3D rendition) of the *F.J. King* produced by Zach Whitrock from the 5,000 photos taken of the wreck by the team from Wisconsin Historical Society. All images on this page were approved for publication.

The Discovery of the *F.J. King* by Stiles Meredith

National Register of Historic Places

The application has been made for the wreck to be included on the State and National Register of Historic Places. This process takes about six months to complete. Until that time, the coordinates for the *F.J. King* will remain confidential to protect the site. Once it is on the Register, the GPS coordinates will be released and recreational divers will be able to dive the wreck. The National Register will protect the King from removal of artifacts from the site and to maintain the historical significance of the *F.J. King*.

On behalf of FOPPI and *The Shoreline* crew—Dawn, Scotty, and myself—we thank WUAA for the opportunity to participate in this historic discovery of the *F.J. King*. See you at the Ghost Ship Festival in Manitowoc on March 6-7, 2026!

To learn more about this exciting discovery and other Wisconsin shipwrecks, visit these websites:

www.wuaa.org/index.php/projects/citizen-science-group-finds-elusive-wisconsin-ghost-ship

www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/this-shipwreck-eluded-searchers-for-139-years-a-group-of-historians-and-citizen-scientists-found-it-in-two-hours-180987362/

wisconsinshipwrecks.org

www.wisconsinhistory.org/records/article/CS4070

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain



Plum Island: 1897



Learn more or sign up for the
Heritage Trail Pass here!

Scan the QR code to download your
Heritage Trail Pass.

Door County Heritage Trail Pass

The Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands are proud to be a part of the Heritage Trail Pass, sponsored by Destination Door County. The Door County Heritage Trail consists of 28 historic and cultural sites across the peninsula—from iconic lighthouses and maritime museums to local history centers, churches, and preserved homes.

As you travel the trail and check in at each stop using your mobile pass, you'll earn fun rewards along the way. Visit **7 sites** to receive a custom Door County history sticker and **14 sites** to claim a branded canvas tote bag.

Whether you explore over a weekend or throughout the year, the Heritage Trail Pass is a meaningful way to connect with the people, places, and moments that shaped this beloved destination.

Start your journey today and discover the heritage behind the scenery. Download your pass at:

www.doorcounty.com/experience/heritage-trail.

I've always been amazed by visitors to Plum Island who can identify birds by their call, flight pattern, or color. I'm only able to recognize the call of a robin, cardinal, and mourning dove. Yes, it is embarrassing, so I decided to do something about that—continuous learning is a great thing!

I reached out to our partner The Ridges Sanctuary, and they loaned us one of their birding experts, “Dr. Dan the Bird Man” for our Birding 101 Field Day, held on August 15. Dan Scheiman, PhD, works as The Ridges’ Visitor Engagement Specialist and formerly worked at the state office of the National Audubon Society for 18 years in Little Rock, Arkansas, as their Bird Conservation Director. Something in the cosmos certainly aligned for him to be assigned to guide us!



Caspian tern. Photo by Gary Kramer, USFWS.

Dan had never been to Plum Island and was already birding before *The Shoreline* left the dock in Gills Rock. He spotted a bald eagle, American herring gull (pink legs), and a ring-necked gull (yellow legs).

While on the water, he spotted a flock of cormorants and a common loon, which was probably just passing through, as loons normally don't breed in Door County. Dan said that this time of year we should see various waterbirds such as gulls, pelicans, cormorants, and Caspian terns.



Eastern wood-pewee. Photo by Smith and Grayson, USFWS.

When we arrived on Plum Island, Dan readied his binoculars and pointed out a family of hooded mergansers. Walking into the deciduous forest, we saw a cedar waxwing flit by, heard the Eastern wood-pewee, and recognized a downy woodpecker knocking on the bark of a dead tree trunk.

We listened carefully and a robin sang... I felt so proud of being able to recognize her call! She soon flew away, and her melody was replaced by that of a red-eyed vireo, which prompted us to lift our binoculars in unison and look in the trees to find her. She was holding court with four others; we watched as they bounced from branch to branch in a game that reminded me of “catch me if you can.” They are a small, graceful bird that kept us entertained for about an hour.

While watching the vireos, Dan used a technique called *pishing*, which is a generic sound used to attract attention to birds scuttling about in the brush. To pish, put your finger up to your lips and give a forceful ‘shhhh’. Purse your lips a little and turn it onto a longer sound as you force the air out through the teeth of your closed mouth. It kind of sounds like *pish*. We could see the vireos moving to locate the sound. Dan suggested that we get familiar with the free Merlin Birding App, in which you can record the bird song, and the app searches its database to help identify the bird. Once identified, the app will display a picture of the bird and its habitat. If it's a match to what you have seen, you can record it on your phone to build your library with immense satisfaction. Learn more about the app at merlin.allaboutbirds.org.



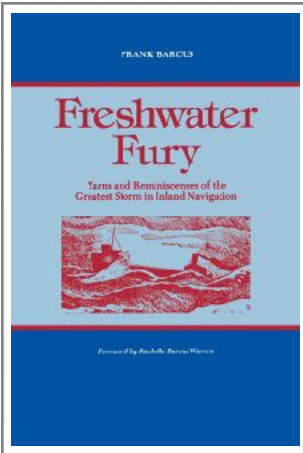
Red-eyed vireo. Photo by N. Lewis, National Park Service.

We've invited Dan to come back out in 2026. Cross your fingers that he's able to join us on Plum Island again!

If you'd like to learn more about birding, sign up to receive the Ridges Sanctuary e-newsletter at ridgessanctuary.org/focus.

Everyone likes birds. What wild creature is more accessible to our eyes and ears, as close to us and everyone in the world, as universal as a bird?

—Sir David Attenborough



The Great Lakes Storm of 1913

While the Plum Island Station's life-saving crew weren't surprised by the intensity of winter storms across the lake, nothing prepared them for the storm that hit the Great Lakes November 7 through November 10, 1913. The storm was the deadliest and most destructive natural disaster to hit the Great

Lakes in recorded history. More than 250 people were killed. It produced wind gusts of 90 mph, waves estimated at over 35 feet high, and whiteout snowsqualls.

Before the wire went down, the Plum Island crew received the message "LOUISIANA WRECKED ON WASHINGTON ISLAND...." The *Louisiana*, bound from Milwaukee for Alpena [running] light was blown into Green Bay by the storm.

First mate, Finley McLean reported, "At 12:15 A.M. Sunday, the brisk wind died out almost completely; yet in less than half an hour we were fighting for our lives in a 55-mile gale that tore upon us from the nor'west. We tried to drop the anchor to escape being blown on the beach, but the wind was too much for us. It blew us back faster and faster and all this time the engines were going full steam ahead. By 1:00 A.M., the wind had increased to 70 mph and we were really



Aerial view of the *Louisiana*. Photo used with permission and courtesy of Dan Eggert.

scared. We were fighting helplessly to keep off the beach. We just couldn't do a damn thing. At 2:00 A.M. we struck the shore on Washington Island.

"Our situation then was even more terrible. The wind and seas were breaking over the entire ship. Six hours we finally managed to get a man ashore to take the news of the wreck to the lifesavers at Plum Island.

"Before he even reached there, we were placed in deadly peril and were forced to face the icy breakers. How it happened we never knew for certain, but the old *Louisiana* caught fire. Probably the wrecked engines started it, but we never had a chance to find out. The old craft was made of wood and burned like tinder.

"Fighting the blaze was hopeless. We launched a lifeboat as fast as possible into the roaring breakers and floundered through them safely to shore, half drowned, two-thirds frozen, and just blamed scared. We were smart to start so promptly. In fifteen minutes from the start of the blaze, the whole ship was wrapped in flames. She burned clear to the water as we watched. There was nothing left of her but her red-hot engines, which hissed like a volcano and sent off clouds of steam as the seas rushed over them.

"We turned away from the *Louisiana* graveyard and started to make our way to shelter. The nearest house, we found out later, was five miles away on the other side of miles of snowdrifts, many of which were over our heads. We discovered a novel but very effective way of getting through the drifts. Since I was the smallest man in the crew, they chose me for the trail-breaker. The big men would pick me up, then after a good swing would throw me against a snowbank, and crawl in after me. I didn't like this chilly trick any too well, you can bet. But in the manner we finally made our way to a snow-hidden farmer's house, where we got dry clothes and food and chance to thaw out."

As the Plum Island lifesavers were hurrying overland with their boat, they learned of the *Louisiana's* burning and that the crew had escaped. When they returned to the station, they received a report that the *Halstead* was in a dangerous position only a hundred yards or so from the very spot where the *Louisiana's* men had landed shortly before. Tired as the lifesavers were, they did what must be done and pressed on through the snowdrifts to the aid of the *Halstead*. They found her battling the waves about three-



The *Halstead*. Photo used with permission and courtesy of Rick Heineman (admin, Washington Island History Facebook group).

quarters of a mile from the harbor entrance, dragging her anchors. The gale was blowing so hard that there was nothing they could do until she was near enough shore to be reached with a lifeline.

For 20 hours, the Plum Island lifesavers kept their frozen watch on the rocky reefs, and inch by inch

the *Halstead* worked steadily on to her destruction. When the ship struck a huge rock, the lifesavers immediately went into action. Working in the bitter cold, they soon got a whip line aboard with the help of the seven crewmen. Everything was in the proper position for the use of the breeches buoy. However, as they were about to send the canvas breeches to the stranded and frozen seamen for the first rescue, the sea suddenly lifted the *Halstead* lightly from the rocks and brought her crashing down so close to the land that her crew was able to climb down a rope ladder to the top of a large flat rock.

Those who read this incident may picture the disappointed lifesavers returning dejected from what they had fondly hoped would be a thrilling rescue, complete with medals. There were many thrilling rescues made during this storm, but the Life Saving Service wasn't paid to be glamorous. It was there when needed and most of its work was hard and dangerous. The Service was built on what most of its men did and not on the spectacular achievements of a few, no matter how proudly the Service itself and the rest of the world may look upon its most thrilling and glorious moments.

In Memory

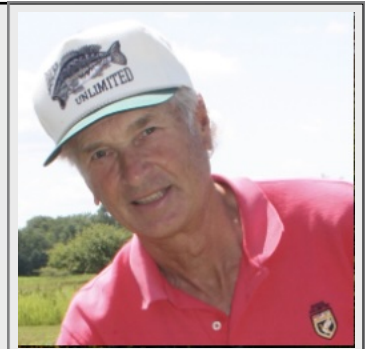
Daniel G. Olson, age 84, passed away on a beautiful fall morning, October 7, 2025.

Born to the late George and Rose Olson in Mayville, Wisconsin, Dan graduated from Mayville High School in 1959. He went on to earn a bachelor's degree in Natural Resources from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and a master's degree in Wildlife Management from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. As he often said, he got his schooling at the universities, but his real education was at Clark's Greenhouse and the Mayville Canning Factory.

Dan dedicated 20 years to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources as a Wildlife Manager. Among his many accomplishments, he was proud to have played a significant role in removing the cormorant from the Endangered Species list. He was also the 1972 Wisconsin State Duck Calling Champion—an achievement that reflected his lifelong passion for waterfowl.

Following his time with the DNR, Dan spent 17 years with Ducks Unlimited in various roles. His deep love for birds inspired his efforts to raise funds for wetland conservation. His favorite playgrounds were the Horicon Marsh and Rush Lake, where he spent countless days hunting—first alongside his father and brothers, and later with his own children. After retirement, Dan gave generously of his time as a board member for the Oconto Electric Community Change Board, the Oconto Area Humane Shelter, and the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands group.

He is survived by his three children, Kiar (Tina) Olson, Tyra (Tim) Stoehr, and Kjell (Leah) Olson; his brothers, George Olson and James (Marge) Olson; and his six grandchildren, Annika, Bergin, Halden, Anders, Parker, and Mason as well as many other relatives and friends.



Our Volunteers Make a Difference by Sally Dery and Roxy Jungwirth

Door County Maritime Museum Classic and Wooden Boat Show
Jim Schwartz and Sally Dery greeted FOPPI friends, old and new, August 2 and 3, on the grounds of the Door County Maritime Museum in Sturgeon Bay.

The Classic and Wooden Boat show is a fabulous opportunity for FOPPI to showcase our accomplishments while creating awareness of our mission and promoting the volunteer and educational activities we offer.

2025 Native Plant Sale

Thank you FOPPI supporters and plant lovers who attended the native plant sale on August 9 at Stone Silo Prairie Gardens in DePere, Wisconsin. FOPPI's 4th annual plant sale was a great success, raising over \$800.00 to support our mission!



FOPPI volunteers Jim Schwartz and Sally Dery at the Classic and Wooden Boat Show.



FOPPI volunteer Dawn Nelson and Stone Silo owner Justin talk plants.

FOPPI volunteers Dawn Nelson, Patti Zarling, Jack Grundmeier, and Sally Dery helped our guests select the perfect native plants for their landscape with help from Stone Silo's owner Justin and his team of expert plant people. Save the date for next year, August 22, 2026!



FOPPI volunteers Jack Grundmeier and Patti Zarling at the 2025 Native Plant Sale.

Fine Art and Antiques at the Barn in Egg Harbor

One of the things that makes Fine Art and Antiques at the Barn so special is the commitment to giving back to the people and places they care about.



FOPPI volunteer Roxy Jungwirth at the Fine Art and Antiques Show in Egg Harbor.

This year, we are grateful they chose to support Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands and our mission: To partner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to support the preservation, restoration, maintenance, and contemporary use of the historic resources on Plum and Pilot Islands, and to conserve and protect wildlife resources, while providing opportunities for quality wildlife-dependent recreation.



Caroline Moes, co-creator of the event, and a Sister Bay volunteer fireman.

*Thank you to ALL
our volunteers!*

Someday Is Today!

Volunteer with FOPPI and Learn from New Experiences, Grow from Different Challenges, and Make Wonderful Friends

Marketing Guru

We are looking for someone to work on our marketing team. In this role you would:

- Write and update social media content on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and BlueSky
- Assist with updates to the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands website
- Write press releases to promote FOPPI's mission, projects and events
- Learn about the importance of historical preservation and restoration
- Work alongside some of the most dedicated and passionate volunteers on the planet
- Walk among the spirits of giants and preserve the history of those who served on the islands with the U.S. Life Saving Service and Coast Guard

This is a virtual volunteer position. Perks include behind-the-scenes tours of the Green Bay and Horicon National Wildlife Refuges along with the opportunity to represent FOPPI in community outreach events, programs, and projects.

Membership Assistant

We are looking for someone to assist our membership team leader. In this role you would:

- Record new memberships
- Follow up on renewals
- Update our mass mailing program (MailChimp)
- Launch new membership campaigns
- Report membership numbers to board members
- Learn about the importance of historical preservation and restoration
- Work alongside some of the most dedicated and passionate volunteers on the planet
- Walk among the spirits and preserve the history of those who served on the islands with the U.S. Life Saving Service and Coast Guard

This is a virtual volunteer position. Perks include behind-the-scenes tours of the Green Bay and Horicon National Wildlife Refuges along with the opportunity to represent FOPPI in community outreach events, programs, and projects.

Crew for *The Shoreline*

The Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands owns and operates the 17-passenger tour boat *The Shoreline* out of Gills Rock. The profits from the operation of *The Shoreline* directly support the preservation of the historic maritime structures on Plum and Pilot Islands.

We need **several** volunteer crew members for *The Shoreline*. We are looking for anyone who loves being on the water, and **we will train you!** Duties include assisting with docking and departing, answering guests' questions, doing light cleanup of the boat, and understanding and conveying safety procedures. There are no set hours. As cruises are booked, you will be asked if you are available for that cruise. Advance notice of a cruise might be as short as a day or two or as long as several weeks. As a volunteer on a Coast Guard-regulated boat, you will be required to have a drug test.

There is some task to do for everyone who is willing and able, no matter your background or experience. Please reach out to us with your interest or questions at friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com. Thank you for your consideration!

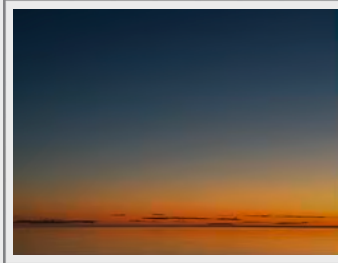
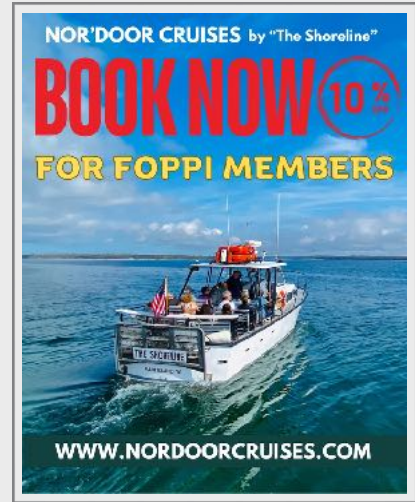


That's me, your volunteer newsletter editor, (very briefly) at the helm of *The Shoreline*. When you volunteer with FOPPI, the opportunities are as many—or as few—as you'd like!

**WAVEring about what to give for the holidays?
Make memories with a gift from FOPPI!**

Cruises aboard *M/V The Shoreline*

Book a cruise on *The Shoreline* before May 15, 2026, and receive a 10% discount. (After that date, only members will enjoy 10% off.) All profits generated from the trips will be put into the continued restoration and preservation of the historic maritime structures found on Plum and Pilot Islands. Visit fareharbor.com/embeds/book/plumandpilot/items/ to purchase the gift that is sure to make waves! Private tour options available!



Enter code **NorDoor2025** at checkout to get your 10%



Plum-colored bandana featuring map of Plum Island designed by FOPPI Board Secretary, Karen Ellery.

Merch Alert!

Visit foppistore.square.site/s/shop to check out these awesome new additions to our FOPPI shop and to view our selection of tee shirts, glasses, hats, and so much more!



Plum Island mug.



Note card featuring photo by Joe Suchy.



Plum Island d'Light candle by Door County Candle Company.



Full-zip hoodie with embroidered FOPPI logo.

Supporting FOPPI

Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands welcomes these new members:

- ♦ Gretchen Dominowski, New London, WI
- ♦ Roy Korte, Ellison Bay, WI
- ♦ Doug & Jenn Vermillion, Aurora, OH
- ♦ Adam White, River Hills, WI

To view FOPPI's financial records,
scan the QR code below.



Follow FOPPI on social media!
Download our audio tours at
www.plumandpilot.org/audio-tour.

Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc. (FOPPI) was established in 2007 to preserve the unique island ecosystems and foster partnerships to preserve their heritage for future generations.

Your membership dues and charitable gifts help to restore and preserve the historical maritime structures on these island and support education in the areas of conservation, natural history, and environmental protection.

Members who receive our quarterly newsletter, *FOPPI Forum*, are invited to attend the annual meeting and to join us seasonal cleanup, trail maintenance, invasive species removal, and light repair work.

Whatever your interest, there are events and projects that will benefit from your talent and support! Visit www.plumandpilot.org/foppi-volunteer to learn more.

It's always "that time of year" to consider your charitable distributions! Are you dealing with your Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA? Tax-Free Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) can benefit you and Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands' work.

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs), also called IRA charitable distributions, enable individuals to fulfill their required minimum distribution by a direct transfer to support a charity/charities, as long as the sum of the distributions is within the \$100,000 limit. And because QCDs don't increase taxable income, they can help you avoid higher tax rates. You can use this strategy if:

- You are 70½ or older at the time of the gift.
- You direct distributions in the amount of your choosing, up to an annual limit set by the IRS from your traditional or Roth IRA to Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands (other types of retirement plans are not covered by the law).
- To count for the current tax year, QCDs distribution must be made before December 31.

Contact your IRA custodian and ask them to send the check for a "qualified charitable distribution" to: Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, EIN 74-3226051.

Delicious autumn! My very soul is wedded to it, and if I were a bird I would fly about the earth seeking the successive autumns.

—George Eliot

Is your organization or nonprofit hosting a community event? Let us know if you would like FOPPI to come share our story! Email us as friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com, and we will arrange for one (or more!) of our knowledgeable and passionate volunteers to attend.

Supporting FOPPI

FOPPI is an affiliate of the Wisconsin State Historical Society (wisconsinhistory.org), members of Washington Island Chamber of Commerce (washingtonisland.com), Door County Historical Society (doorcountyhistoricalsociety.org), U.S. Life-Saving Service Heritage Association (uslife-savingservice.org), Door County Visitor Bureau (doorcounty.com), and a partner with Wisconsin Marine Historical Society (wmhs.org).

FOPPI thanks its distinguished
community and business associates!



Thank you, Donors!

The work done on the Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge is funded in part by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands. The projects and programs we have worked on would not be possible without your financial support. Your donations and inspiration help us to preserve and restore this important part of our heritage within the Green Bay and Gravel Island National Wildlife Refuge. Our gratitude is great.

Thrivent Grant
Elizabeth Kohl
Deb & Stiles Meredith
Colleen Pilat
Jim Robinson
Robert Rose
Hans Shin
Jack Travis & Diane Morgan
Mary Beth Volmer
Washington Island Ferry Line

And all who donated on a cruise, at the plant sale, or at one of the many other events where FOPPI was represented!

Thanks to Jeff Heal of Washington Island
for assisting with FOPPI's mail pickup!



NorDoor Cruises

Docent-led Lighthouse and Death's Door Cruises
and Private Charters



"To Death's Door and Back with FOPPI!"

www.NorDoorCruises.com

*"Where History
and Nature meet
at The Door."*



www.PlumandPilot.org



Sunrise over Plum Island on a June morning, 2025.
Photo by Stiles Meredith, taken on the charter with
Wisconsin Historical Society.

If you have enjoyed a cruise on *The Shoreline*, we would love to hear from you!
Please share your experience and your photos
with us at friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com.

Membership Form



FOPPI Membership/Donation Form

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Email _____
Phone _____
Name as I wish it to appear in your appreciation materials _____
☐ Please do not list my name in your materials.
Do you have a connection to the islands? _____

Where History and Nature Meet at the Door!

Please choose a Membership to join us in our mission to preserve and protect Plum and Pilot Islands!

- ☐ \$30 Individual
☐ \$50 Family - 2 or more family members
☐ \$75 Patron
☐ \$100 Keeper
☐ \$1000 Lifetime

Circle one: NEW RENEWAL

****Gift Memberships are available as well!**

☐ Gift Membership for:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

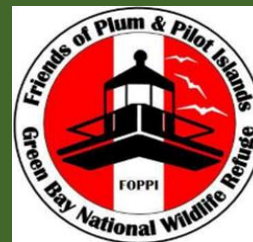
Email: _____

If you would like to donate to a certain FOPPI cause, please let us know by filling out the section below. Thank you!

Your support is critical to the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands (FOPPI). Restoration and preservation of these beautiful WI islands and their buildings takes a group like FOPPI to make it happen. **Fun Fact:** Plum Island is home to the only Duluth-style Life Saving Station on the Great Lakes!

- ☐ Environmental Education \$ _____
☐ Historic Preservation \$ _____
☐ "Float the Boat" Shoreline Donation \$ _____
☐ Special Events \$ _____
☐ Other Expenses as Needed \$ _____
☐ Gift Membership \$30 \$ _____
☐ TOTAL AMOUNT: \$ _____

The Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands is a 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization. Your gift is tax deductible as provided by law.



FOPPI Members receive:

- ❖ The FOPPI Forum Newsletter
- ❖ An invitation to the FOPPI Annual Meeting
- ❖ 10% off in-person merchandise sales
- ❖ 10% discount on cruises booked on FOPPI's boat, *The Shoreline*
- ❖ Opportunities to volunteer on the wildlife refuge!

MAIL TO:

FRIENDS OF PLUM & PILOT ISLANDS

PO Box 61
Washington Island, WI
54246

OR GO ONLINE TO:

www.plumandpilot.org/membership

ip

We also have a QR code!



Friends of Plum & Pilot Islands/Membership

Is it time to renew your membership?

Mailing label includes membership expiration date above your name. If membership has expired, please renew using the form on page 15. Mail it along with your payment to: FOPPI, P.O. Box 61, Washington Island, WI 54246. If you receive the *Forum* electronically, watch for an email that tells you it's time to renew. For membership questions call Mary Beth Volmer: (262) 613-4680.



Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.
P.O. Box 61
Washington Island, WI 54246

Help Us Be Green!

To help save paper, printing, and postage expenses, please consider receiving your newsletter via email. Just contact Laura Chappell at coastiegai1@yahoo.com.

Previous issues of the *Forum* are available on our website to download or read.



The mission of Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands is to partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to support the preservation, restoration, maintenance, and contemporary use of the historic resources on Plum and Pilot Islands, and to conserve and protect wildlife resources while providing opportunities for quality wildlife-dependent recreation.

Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.

President: Mary Beth Volmer, 2026
The Shoreline Director: Stiles Meredith, 2028
Treasurer: Kimberly Wells, 2026
Secretary: Karen Ellery, 2026

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Historic Preservation & Restoration: Open
Membership: Laura Chappell, 2026
Merchandising: Sally Dery, 2026
Volunteer Coordinator: Jim Schwartz, 2028

Emeritus Directors

Mike Brodd
Lew Clarke
Eric Greenfeldt
Jude Kuenn
Chuck Scheckel
Paul Schumacher
Tim Sweet
Gary Wilson

Volunteer Team Members

Environmental Education: Jack Grundmeier, Ginnie Harney*, Dawn Nelson
Fundraising: Karen Ellery*, Jim Schwartz, Tim Sweet, Mary Beth Volmer
Governance: Open
Historic Preservation & Restoration: Dallas Greetham, Jude Kuenn, Paul Kuenn, Paul Schumacher, Tim Sweet, Louis Wegner, Kimberly Wells
Marketing: Jake Heffernan*, Colleen Pilat
Membership: Laura Chappell*, Bob and Sue Griem, Cheryl Lenz
Merchandising: Sally Dery*
Newsletter: Nancy Hoefs Leisgang*, Sally Dery, Roxy Jungwirth, Jude Kuenn, Stiles Meredith, Tim Sweet, Mary Beth Volmer
Outreach: Sally Dery, Ginnie Harney, Jude Kuenn, Dawn and Scott Nelson, Jim Schwartz, Mary Beth Volmer
The Shoreline Captains: Jason Albertson, Al Hunsader, Stiles Meredith, Scott Nelson, Jim Robinson, Doug Smith, Ben Young
Crew: Emily Campbell, Sally Dery, Ginnie Harney, Barb Jacobs, Nancy Hoefs Leisgang, Pete LeMere, Deb Meredith, Dawn Nelson, Mike Repp, Jim Robinson, Jim Schwartz, Jon Wall
Volunteer Coordinators: Sally Dery, Bob and Sue Griem, Jim Schwartz*