



**The Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands
2019 Annual Report**

Where History and Nature Meet at the Door!

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A Message from the President

When I tell other Friends groups about the work that the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands (FOPPI) have done on the Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge, they're impressed ... when I tell them that the Refuge is only open from Memorial Day to Labor Day, they're amazed and wonder how we do it. I tell them that it is completely due to our passion-driven volunteers and supporters like you. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you – 2019 was a momentous year and set the bar rather high for 2020!

One of the most visible accomplishments on the Refuge was the Life Saving Station's lead paint abatement and a fresh coat of paint. The building now shines with glory as she so well

deserves. This step brought us just a bit closer to opening the building to the public. There are quite a few tasks that need to be ticked off our 'To Do' list before that happens, but the US Fish & Wildlife gave us the go ahead in the eagerly anticipated Visitor Services Plan (VSP) ¹. The VSP guides USFWS and FOPPI on the future development of the Refuge and supports continued preservation of the Plum Island



boathouse, Life Saving Station (LSS), Lighthouse Keepers Quarters, Fog Signal building, Paint House, Front and Rear Range lights, the Pilot Island lighthouse exterior stabilization and restoration of the lower level of the LSS for interpretation.

In anticipation of opening the LSS to the public, we launched a project to document the interior to the 1939-1969 period of significance, focusing on 1939 to 1957. This Historic Furnishings Report (HPR) will guide us to the restoration of the building, and will include floor plans, room use and furnishings to provide the visitor with an accurate representation of the life of a coastie during that time period.

Water levels on the Great Lakes continued to rise in 2019 which presented much stress and strain to our historic dock, requiring us to rebuild a section for safe docking for our tour and volunteer transport boats. Volunteers removed the decking and reinforced the stringers to repair the section that ice shoves damaged. Many volunteers tried their hand at hammering the long spikes into the wood with hopes that the predicted additional rise in lake levels won't require us to repair the dock again this Spring.

During the off-season, we focused on strengthening our infrastructure by participating in the USFWS Friends Mentor Program. This competitively awarded program partners Friends groups with specially trained Friends and Service employees for an intensive two-day mentoring

¹ Visitor Services Plan <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Gn86RyemLY7txdqeOplbduRwTDAnVAg>

session and follow-up coaching. The outcome was a comprehensive strategic plan which focuses on four major areas to strengthen our organization: Board Sustainability, Fiscal Development, USFWS Partnership and Volunteerism.

Through this program we identified a need to be better community ambassadors. We decided that one way to do this is to attend area festivals and special events. At our first event, Canoecopia (the world's largest paddling expo) we were fortunately assigned a table near the entrance and had the opportunity to talk to hundreds of people that weren't familiar with Plum or Pilot Islands. We also manned a booth at the Door County Maritime Museum's Wooden Boat Festival, Washington Island Fair, Death's Door BBQ, Door County Sea Kayak Symposium and the Egg Harbor Earth Day Festival. We gathered names, began a potential member roster and increased our new member registrations.

This experience drew us to invite the Washington Island School District students to a day on Plum Island to assist with Monarch butterfly tagging. The students were coached by volunteers on the gentlest way to catch, tag and release the butterflies and they quickly became experts. They recorded the tags in the Monarch Watch database and formed a friendship with a school in Mexico that experiences the mass migration. Their excitement and enthusiasm encouraged us to make this an annual event.

The winters in northern Door County are rather challenging. The Washington Island Community and suffered from the Great Lakes' intensity in 2018 when their underwater submarine cable failed. The Washington Island Electric Coop made a temporary fix and reached out to the US Fish & Wildlife Service for assistance to secure a better solution to power the Island. Together they agreed that the best approach would be to bring the cable under Plum Island. The new cable was wired to bring better internet service to the island in the future and provide Plum Island to tap into the electric grid. While the Coop was ferrying huge trucks across the island, we were showing up with a huge barge and crane to repair the dock that was rearranged by one of the winter storms. I can only imagine what the deer thought of all the commotion on the Island!



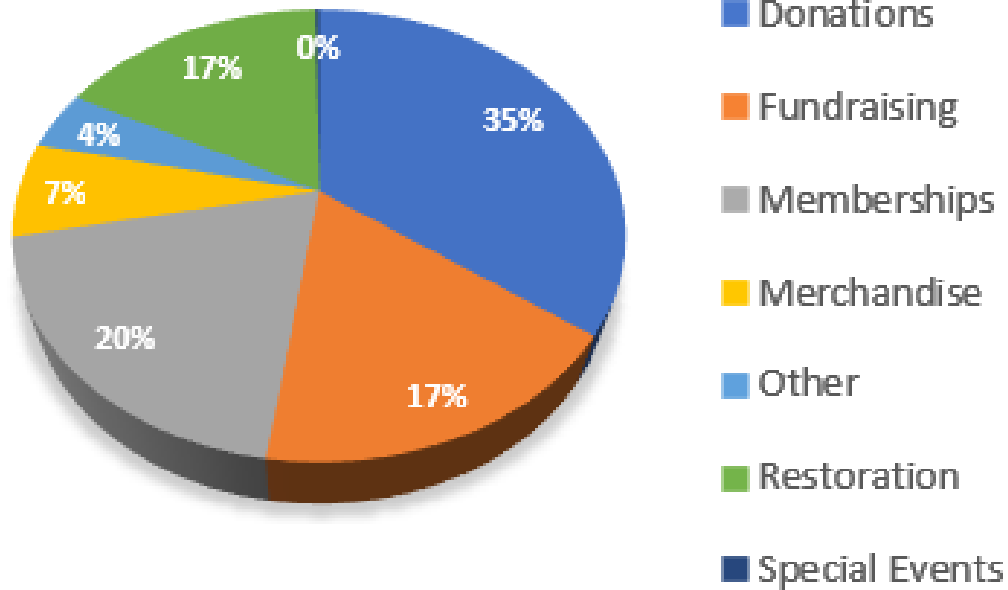
And so my friends, read on to learn about all the awesome things we've been doing in 2019 and come see us in 2020!



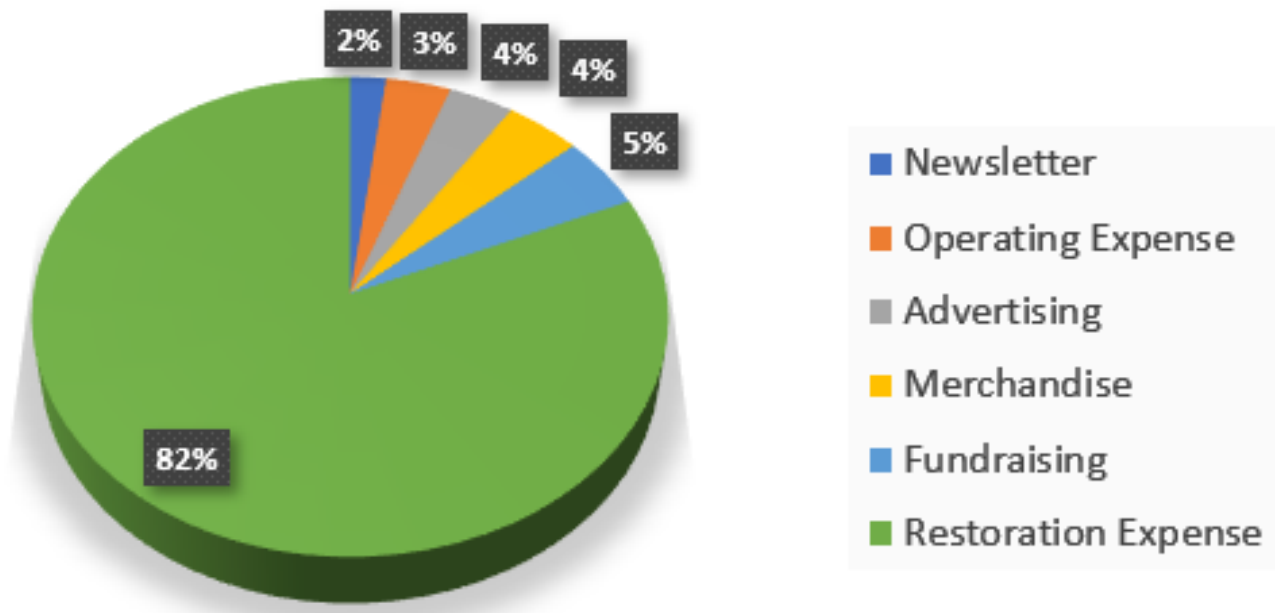
Mary Beth Volmer

President, Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands

2019 Income



2019 Expenses



Donors

In 2019 the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands' preservation and restoration projects were solely supported by donations, memberships and merchandise sales. It is by folks like these that we can do our restoration work.

Businesses:

- Shoreline Charters
- Door County Maritime Museum
- Washington Island Yacht Club (dissolution)
- Steve & Majorie Karges Foundation
- CoBank
- The Benevity Community
- US Life Saving Heritage Association

Private Donations:

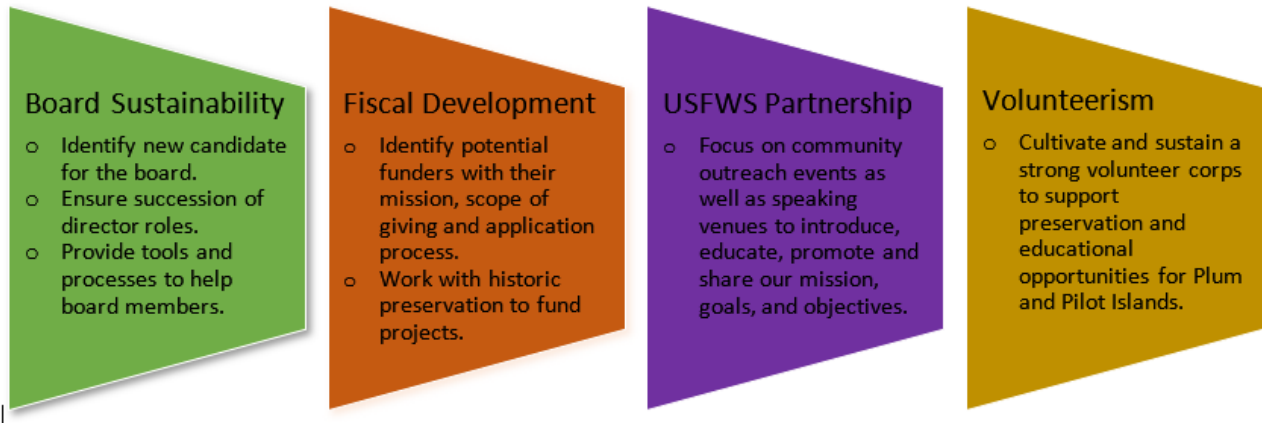
- Frank & Jan Forkert
- Robert Lindahl
- Allen & Judith Wittenberg
- Roxanne Jungwirth
- Kimberly Wells
- Laurel Braatz
- Tim Sweet
- David Golner
- Thor Waage
- Orv & Dee Langohr
- Sandy and Ed Miller
- Gary & Cindy Wilson
- Jack Kelly
- Steve and Loretta Lambert
- Paul Schumacher
- Elizabeth Kohl
- Michael Repp
- Merlin & Carol Lang
- Christine Anderson
- John and Amy Becker
- Dr. Ralph & Beverly Laurel
- Sharon Daines
- Lana & Paul Roberts
- Mary Wojcik
- Archie & Kathe Budzak
- Charles Boutell
- Gerald F. Harris
- William and Cheryl Surbaugh

Miscellaneous:

- Amazon Smile
- PayPal Giving Fund
- Thrivent Financial
- Twin Cities United Way
- Cash Donations

Strategic Planning - Pillars for Success

The Friends Mentor Program guided each team to develop key objectives that detailed tactics, measurements, accountability, timeline and estimated cost to create our Strategic Plan². The teams provided their progress during our monthly UPDATES conference calls with the intention of completing their tasks by the end of 2020 and then choosing three to four other initiatives to focus on in the following years.



Within six weeks of focusing on these pillars we began noticing positive changes in our communication between the Friends and our partner, US Fish & Wildlife Service. We applied process to our task list and saw that our events went more smoothly, and volunteers were more engaged. Not surprisingly, we uncovered a collaboration element that was earlier hidden by our rush to 'just get it done.' Visitors also commented about how organized that we were. Sometimes it takes someone that's on the outside looking in to point us in the right direction.

We set out to identify our core belief standards and identified that:

1. We believe that preserving and restoring the historic maritime structures on Plum and Pilot Islands is important to Door County to preserve this community's culture and heritage.
2. We support US Fish & Wildlife's BIG SIX priority public uses: Hunting, Fishing, Wildlife Photography, Wildlife Observation, Environmental Interpretation and Environmental Education.
3. We believe that volunteering is important to improve community life, to give back, to learn, to get connected to other people, and enhance the human spirit of giving.
4. We believe it is vital to sustain the unique ecosystem of the Islands through conservation and educational efforts.
5. We value our members, donors and volunteers and strive to use these resources responsibly.

What will the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands look like when our desired outcomes have been achieved? We believe that we will be a more vibrant, mature organization that is positioned to respond to an ever-changing landscape of challenges and opportunities with the unwavering commitment of volunteers, donors, and partners who will sustain the memories for the next generation of Plum and Pilot Islands.

²FOPPI Strategic Plan: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1yVJb4OjbsKy1DN7fz7gy49Lvco6o7ayg>

Historic Preservation and Restoration



Sections of the dock popped out in a winter storm. Section rebuilt by *Iron Works Construction*.



Gutters and downspouts installed on the Life Saving Station by *Moore Quality Exteriors*.



Temporary roofing material applied by volunteer, Paul Kuenn.

Boat bumpers for safe docking..

Community Outreach

We participated in quite a few community events in 2019: Canoecopia, Death's Door BBQ, Door County Maritime Museum's Wooden Boat Festival, Every Day is Earth Day, Rutabaga Kayak Symposium and the Washington Island Fair. Volunteers met with potential visitors and volunteers and spread the word of the amazing work that we're doing on Plum and Pilot Islands!



Canoecopia



DCMM Wooden Boat Festival



DCMM Wooden Boat Festival



Death's Door BBQ



Every Day is Earth Day



Washington Island Fair

Women in Preservation

The Women in Preservation (WIP) program was established in 2014 with the goal of teaching women preservation skills and providing them an opportunity to be part of this amazing project. To date has built Aldo Leopold Benches, Boot Brushes, Signage, Toolboxes and the Visitors Kiosk. In 2019 we built our first in a series of picnic tables. New WIP groupies joined the tribe and were excited to get their hands on power tools and see the fruits of their efforts.



Women in Preservation

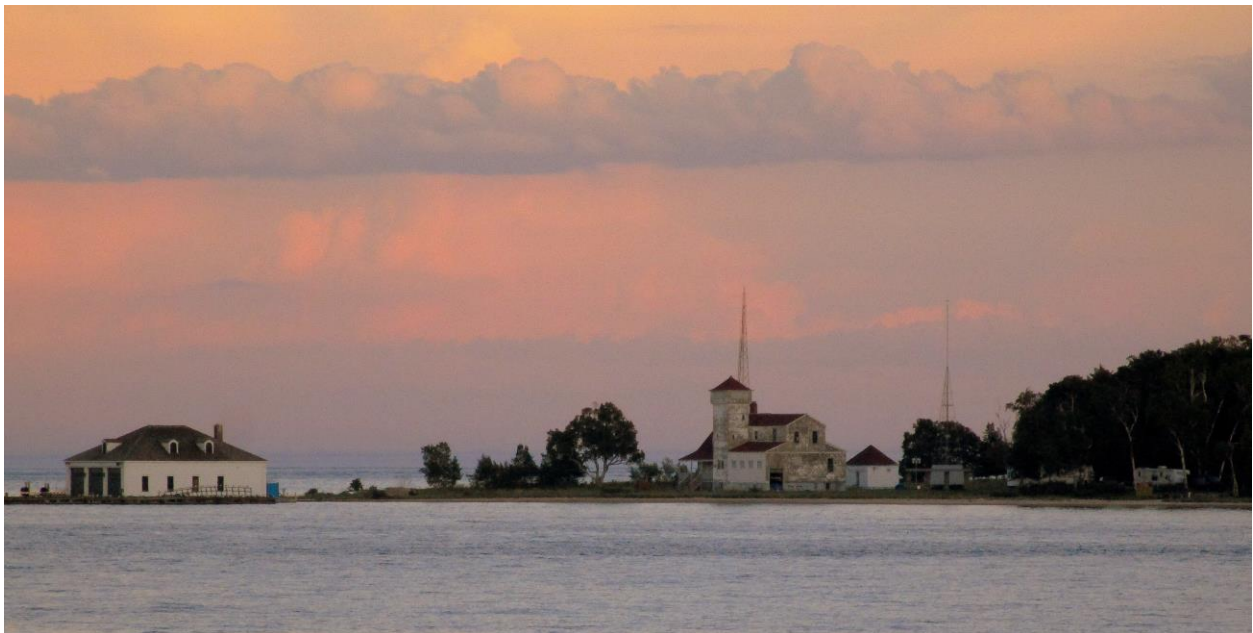
No one leaves the island
without dirt under their fingernails
and knowledge within their soul.

Special Events

Special Events are ways to get folks to learn more about the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands and the Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge by experiencing the beauty of the Islands. We host our Annual Membership Meeting and Sunset Cruise in July, Explore Plum Island in August and in 2019 we hosted our first annual Monarch Tagging event. We also partner with the Washington Islands Birding Festival, the Ridges and the Door County Maritime Museum for their annual birding, nature and lighthouse festivals.



EXPLORE PLUM ISLAND offers guests the opportunity to kayak, hike, bird watch, gather beach glass, snorkel the *Grape Shot* shipwreck, tour the historic maritime buildings or just relax and listen to the waves hitting the shore.



Our fourth annual SUNSET CRUISE took guests on a 3-hour cruise to watch the sun set on Plum Island. The first year we managed to convince our resident eagles to fly by just as we were coming close to the island. On the second year we placed a rainbow over the rear range light. The third year we figured out how to get Venus to appear and on the fourth year we treated guests to the turbulent waters of Death's Door – unintentionally of course! Guests are wined and dined to the music of Door County's finest musicians and served delicacies from restaurants such as Jackson Harbor Soup. We raise between 6 and \$8,000 each year through ticket and raffle basket sales.

In 2019 we had the opportunity to introduce children who attend the Washington Island Elementary School to a day on Plum Island. They learned about monarch butterflies and helped us to tag and track them on their migration south. The children loved the experience and the school district is working to bring Plum Island's natural resources into their curriculum.



Unless we are willing to encourage our children to reconnect with
and appreciate the natural world,
we can't expect them to help protect and care for it. ~ David Suzuki

Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.

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The mission of the 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.