



Photo by Joe Suchy

**The 2024 Annual Report
for the
Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.**



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A Message from our President

Hello Friends,

This year we celebrated a major milestone – the completion of the Plum Island Rear Range Light restoration! In 2021 we restored the lantern room and watch deck/watch room level which included interior and exterior painting. Phase II focused on the structural components of the light. The total cost of this project, \$405K, was funded by grants and private donations from people like yourself. Thank you!

We celebrated our 16th Annual Membership Meeting on Plum Island this year. It was wonderful to meet new people and catch up with our old friends. In my introductory speed, I talked about that feeling I, and other Friends, get when they step foot on Plum Island. Researchers have coined it a *sense of place* ... a deep connection or emotional attachment to a specific location; a rootedness. It's like that feeling you might get when you visit your childhood home or school, or the place where you met your partner. Plum Island is where I cast my worries to the waters and try and figure out what to do with my life; often she answers back, sending thoughts that fill me with hope and inspiration. I hope that you catch that feeling and that it never goes away.

In May two of our Horicon National Wildlife Refuge leaders, Bill Peterson and Joel Vos moved onto new positions within the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Bill transferred to the Sherburne NWR in Zimmerman, MN. Much like the Horicon NWR, Sherburne is complexed with Crane Meadows, Rice Lake and Mille Lacs National Wildlife Refuges. Joel transferred to the US Fish and Wildlife Services' Mountain/Prairie Region (Denver, CO) as the Regional Program Coordinator. In this role he works with the national team on service-wide efforts, bringing together regional programs and partnerships for interns and fellows and establishes new processes to support career discovery and recruitment efforts. We learned a great deal from these fine men and wish them well in their future endeavors.

Replacing these two isn't going to be an easy task. We were told that it might take 10-12 months, or more, to find folks to fill their shoes. With that in mind, it was decided that we would cancel our volunteer workdays and focus on our special events, outreach and planning for the 2025 season.

The season flew by quickly, but we accomplished a great deal and set our sights on the future.



Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish.

- John Quincy Adams

Thank you for supporting FOPPI!

Mary Beth Volmer
President, Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands
friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com



We are The Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands

The Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands has grown and achieved success through the support of our members, donors, and supporters like you. Our business framework is built upon the foundation of our Mission, Vision, Core Values, and the Impact to our community.

Our Mission

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.

Our Vision

Preserving the memories of those who came before us.

Our Core Values

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 to enhance the human spirit of giving.
4. We believe it is vital to sustain the unique ecosystem of the island through conservation and educational efforts.
5. We value our members, donors and volunteers and strive to use these resources responsibly.

Our Impact

Our mission goes beyond the work that we do on the islands. We are a member of the greater Door County community and do our part to protect the environment and be a responsible member of this fine community.

We advocate for environmental sustainability by:

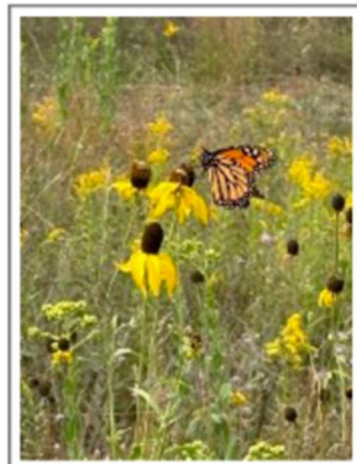
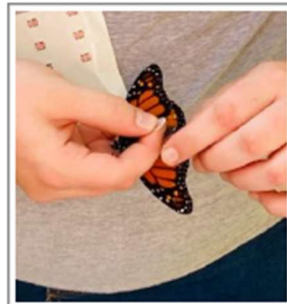
- Following the 'Leave no Trace' principles (<https://Int.org/>).
- Shopping locally whenever necessary for our merchandise.
- Valuing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Protecting our water by using special paint on the *Shoreline's* boat hull to prevent the attachment and spread of aquatic organisms, including invasive species.

- Conducting regular Beach Patrol hikes to collect and properly dispose of flotsam that washes up along the shoreline.
- Stationing boot brush stands at areas of contact to raise awareness about invasive species and to reduce the spread and establishment of new infestations of invasive species.
- Planting a pollinator plot to enhance our pollinator friendly habitat on Plum Island.

We value our community by being a part of these events:

- Canoecopia
- Door County Festival of Nature
- Door County Maritime Museum’s Lighthouse Festivals
- Door County Maritime Museum’s Wooden Boat Festival
- Fine Art & Antiques at the Barn Show

We are invested in the future of our community by working with the Washington Island School as they develop their STEM program, by bringing the children to Plum Island to learn about the Monarch butterfly migration.



A Special Donor Thank You!

As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization we can only accomplish the things that you will read about in this report through the continued generous support of our members, volunteers, foundations, donors and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). We deeply appreciate the support we receive. Your support directly allows us to achieve our mission of supporting the Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge (GBNWR).

A special thank you to these donors:

Donations from Festival of Nature, Steven Hintz, Merlin Lang, Shoreline Tips, Karen Ellery, Jim Robinson, George D. Smith, Stiles Meredith, Sally Dery, Thrivent, Carson & Lisa Mettel, PayPal Giving Fund, Allan D. King, Jack Grundmeier, Twin Cities United Way, Wagon Trail Inc. dba Rowleys Bay Resort, Merlin Lang, Janet Lordahl, Doug & Renea Heinrich, Washington Island Ferry Line, Marty Wickersheim, Richard and Mary Smythe, Caroline Moes, Rosemary Stine, Dan and Karen Wieske, Jean Fox, Peter & Marion LeMere, Robert Davis, Steve & Marjorie Karges, Rodney Waage, Tom & Judy Vonck, GERAL F. HARRIS, Gil and Joyce Carlson Charitable Fund, John & Joni Pagel, Colleen Pilat, Tidy Landscapes LLC, Jane Sonetti, Great Lakes Foundation, Roxanne Jungwirth, Carlson Erickson Builders Inc., Mary Beth Volmer, Laura Chappell, Paul Schumacher & Deb Logerquist, Elizabeth Kohl, Detroit Harbor Ladies Aid

Thank you for making this all happen!



Advocacy

As a Friends group, we are encouraged to advocate to meet our mission of support for the Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge and the 500+ refuges across the nation. We do this by monitoring and speaking out on both local and national concerns that impact our refuge and the refuge system.

This year I had the opportunity to meet with Wisconsin Senator Dan Knodl's staff and State Representative Paul Melotik in Madison as part of the Wisconsin Historical Society's (WHS) History Advocacy Day at the Madison Capitol. While Knodl and Melotik do not represent Door County (they represent Waukesha County, where I live), they do advocate for and align with the same goals and objectives as FOPPI does.

I told them about the flotsam that washes ashore on Plum Island (Styrofoam, plastic bottles, balloons, plastic bags) and asked that they continue to voice their concerns for our environment. I also talked to them about the importance of supporting historic preservation training in the trades. I left them with a copy of our newsletter and brochures and felt confident that my voice was heard.

The immediate goal of advocacy is to secure funding and competitive grant opportunities. Additionally, advocacy helps our decision-makers understand the importance of museums, local history organizations, and historic sites throughout Wisconsin while endorsing the unique way WHS and affiliates inspire and engage guests throughout Wisconsin and beyond.



'You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own, that they must protect them.' ~ Wangari Maathai

Environmental Education

Our Monarch tagging program with the Washington Island School students continues to be met with enthusiasm. The school has developed a curriculum to support the program, and the students are excited to participate and learn about Monarch Butterflies and their migration.

Over the past two decades, Monarch numbers in North America have declined, prompting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to join state agencies, tribes, other federal agencies, and non-government groups to identify threats to the monarch and take steps to conserve monarchs throughout their range.

The primary drivers affecting the health of the migratory populations are changes in breeding, migratory, and overwintering habitat (due to conversion of grasslands to agriculture, urban development, widespread use of herbicides, logging/thinning at overwintering sites in Mexico, and drought), continued exposure to insecticides, and effects of climate change.

The Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands are doing our part to help the Monarchs and other pollinators.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Detroit Harbor Ladies Aid Society, we have developed a wildflower plot to enhance our pollinator friendly habitat on Plum Island.

You can help too by planting native wildflowers in your backyard or a container on your porch. Come to our native plant sale in August and we'll help you choose the best plants to attract pollinators!



Financial Picture

Unfortunately, this was not a stellar year for the organization. General donations were down from previous years. In talking to other area organizations, they felt the squeeze too.

The following are basic statements and visuals to help you see where your donations are going:

Profit & Loss

Total Revenue	74,645.70
Total Expenditures	<u>- 232,188.42</u>
Net Income/Loss	-157,542.72

Balance Sheet

Total Assets	90,088.45
Total Liabilities	<u>- 0.00</u>
Total Equity	90,088.45



Click on this QR Code to view our financial statements at your leisure.

While our Net Income shows a loss, we do have a strong Fund Balance in which to plan our special events, annual meeting and restoration projects.

Fund Balance as of 1/1/2025

Porch (no recent activity)	\$ 120.00
Benches (no recent activity)	\$ 115.00
Special Events (Annual Meeting)	\$ 840.80
Interpretive Signage	\$ 11,286.46
Rear Range Lights	\$ 1,036.29
Pilot Island	\$ 991.72
General Restoration	\$ 1,473.53
Boathouse Roof	\$ 25,017.00
Pollinator Project	\$ 530.17
Environmental Education	\$ 90.00
The Shoreline	\$ (313.50)
Unassigned Savings	\$ 48,900.98
	<u>\$ 90,088.45</u>

Fiscal Development / Fundraising

Fundraising activities we worked on this year included:

- Lambeau Field (home of the Green Bay Packers), assisting with clean-up after football games
- Stone Silo Prairie Gardens native plant sale
- Baileys Harbor Community Association concessions
- Summer photography workshop on Plum Island
- Butterfly Cruise
- Outreach Events donations

We were once again gifted with a donation from the Detroit Harbor Ladies Aid Society for our Pollinator Plot.



Governance

We amended our Emeritus status to remove the ambiguous language that awarded this status:

Section 3.8. A former board member may be awarded Emeritus status. Emeritus status will be approved by the Board of Directors for a former board member who has completed one or more full terms on the FOPPI board and continues to support the missions of US Fish & Wildlife Service and FOPPI. Each person awarded such emeritus status shall become a “Director Emeritus” at the next Board Meeting. After completing their full term of Emeritus status (as recognized at the July Annual Membership Meeting), they may request to keep their Director Emeritus status or may resign by providing their resignation to the Board of Directors in writing. Emeritus Directors must retain active membership status. If membership is not maintained, the Emeritus Director will be dismissed from this role.

All Directors Emeriti shall receive notice of meetings of the Board of Directors during their term (including meetings by conference call), together with copies of all business materials for the noticed meeting. Directors Emeriti may attend any or all meetings of the Board of Directors during their term and participate in discussions during such meetings of the Board of Directors. Directors Emeriti may also attend and participate at any committee meeting.

We continue to meet monthly with USFWS to discuss our current and future projects. Each quarter we meet in person for training, team building and bonding.

We extend our invitation to you to attend any of these meetings, just reach out to us via email for the agenda.



Historic Preservation and Restoration

Restoring the historic maritime structures on Plum and Pilot Islands that are on the National Register of Historic Places takes a lot of planning. Any restoration that we do must be approved by USFWS and the Wisconsin Historical Society - State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to assure that the restoration complies with their rules and regulations.

This year we completed the restoration of the Plum Island Rear Range Light and worked on creating the text for the Interpretive Signage project. We also completed painting the Crews' Quarters front porch. Other projects on the 5-year matrix were put on hold due to the change in staffing at the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge.

Before



After



Before



After



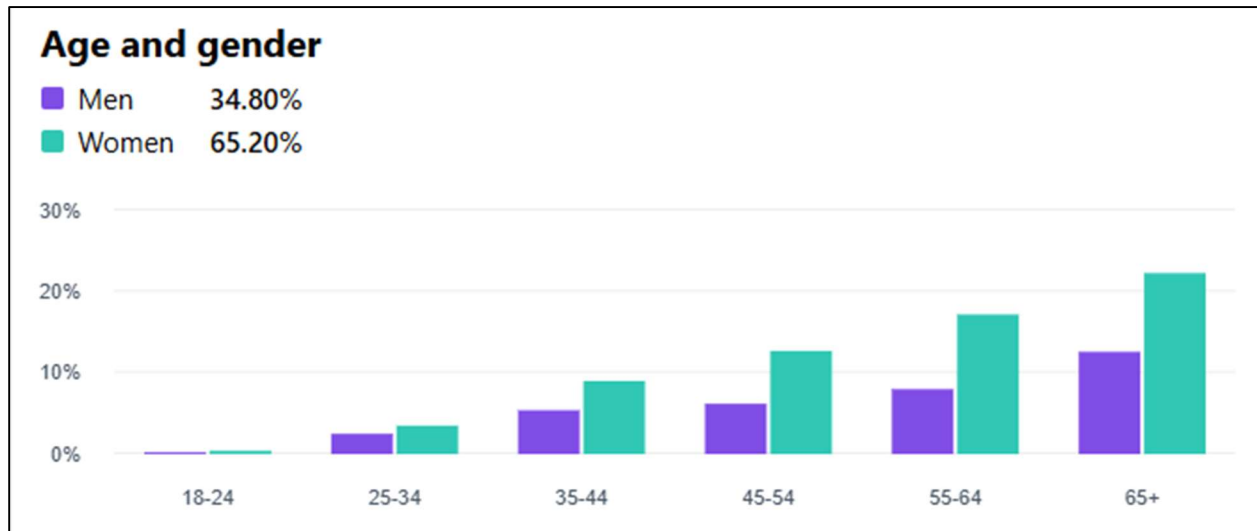
This project was completed by Mihm Enterprises of Michigan. They have done restoration work on several other Great Lakes lighthouses, including South Manitou Island and North Manitou Island Shoal in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. They do a very professional job, and they take great pride in their work.

We plan to begin a capital campaign in 2025 to raise funds for the Plum Island boathouse roof replacement. This project is estimated to cost around \$350K. We have already received a large donation from an anonymous donor to begin this project.

Marketing

We continued posting 'On This Day in History' to social media and created a daily post of gratitude for the month of November. At the end of the year, we had over around 4000 followers!

Our audience is mainly (older) women from Door County, Green Bay, Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago.



Website: www.plumandpilot.org/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/plumandpilot.org

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/plumandpilot/>

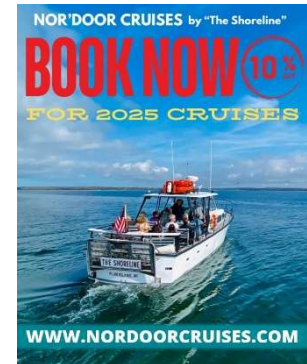
We began a rebranding campaign for *The Shoreline* as 'NorDoor Cruises by The Shoreline' to reduce the confusion guests were experiencing with the various organizations using 'shoreline' in their name.

We created [Facebook](#), [Threads](#) and [Instagram](#) social media presence and are slowly, but surely, gaining a following. To boost our signal we registered on the [BringFido](#), [Yelp](#), and [TripAdvisor](#) apps.

We offered a 10% discount for guests to pre-book their charter cruise from October 15th to May 15, 2025, which helps with our cash flow in the slow season.

Additionally, we redid our website, making it more user-friendly and less costly. We quickly increased our impressions to 4.3K, which has resulted in more charter cruise bookings and new memberships.

We joined the Historical Alliance of Door County, which provides us with the opportunity to network with other historical groups in Door County. This group hosts the annual 'Door County History Days' which is a weeklong celebration of history and heritage in Door County at various locations.



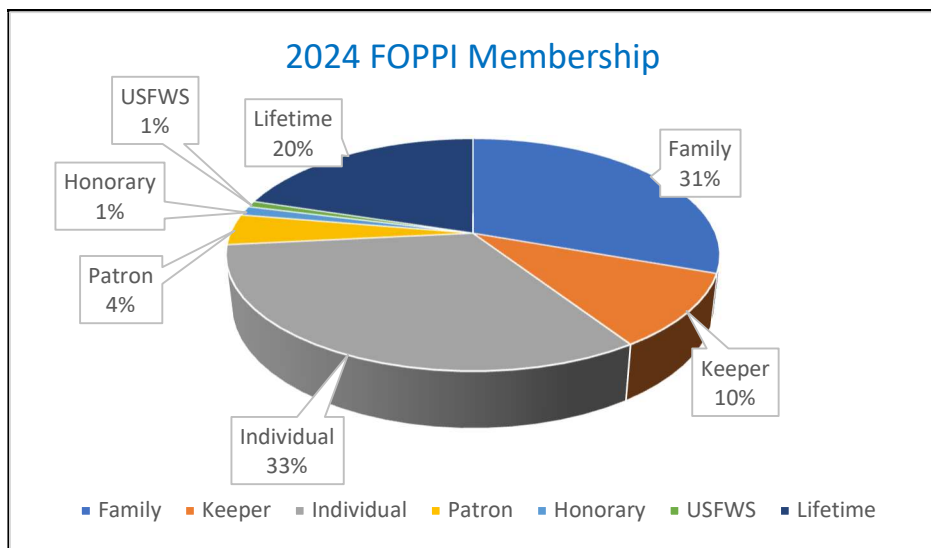
Membership

What does it mean to be a Friend of Plum and Pilot Islands (FOPPI)? Individual members and supporters of FOPPI are the very foundation on which our organization is built upon to pursue FOPPI's mission, "to partner with the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to support the preservation, restoration maintenance and contemporary use of the historic resource on Plum and Pilot Islands, and to conserve and protect wildlife resources, while providing opportunities for quality wildlife-dependent recreation."

This year we added a 10% discount for in-person merchandise sales to our list of membership perks, which has increased merchandise sales and membership renewals.

Reminders to renew membership are sent by email three times during the year (a month apart). Those who do not have email receive their notice by USPS mail (twice if needed).

2024 Total number of FOPPI Members = 233.



2024 Annual Membership Meeting

Merchandising

FOPPI's merchandise team introduced many new products for 2024, including stickers, patches, field notebooks, notecards and prints from a new artist, and new books. We have ample inventory of these products for future sales.

We also replenished the inventory of FOPPI T-shirts, hats, stoneware mugs, and Lighthouse passports.

Merchandise sales were significantly less than in 2023 due to decreased opportunities to market at events and workdays. Our best sales occur at in-person events.

The online holiday promotion did have a positive result in boosting end-of-year sales.

Total FOPPI merchandise sales 2024	\$1,396.75
Total spent on merchandise 2024	<u>\$3,641.94</u>
Profit toward FOPPI's mission	\$2,245.19



Newsletter

Our newsletter continues to be a membership benefit that folks look forward to receiving. Many times members want to meet the editor to give them a bit of praise.

Two hundred printed newsletters are sent through the US Postal Service. Most of these newsletters are sent to members and institutions that archive the newsletter; the remainder are sent to volunteers who provide them to potential members during our outreach events. This is to maintain the bulk mailing cost of \$.06 per newsletter.



Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.

Where History and Nature Meet at the Door!
Founded in 2007

Forum: Winter 2025

Hello, Friends and Supporters,

Happy New year to you! We are looking forward to a great season on Plum Island, and I hope you'll be able to join us.

This year we're once again offering our Photography Workshops and Butterfly Cruise. As these events have been so successful, we've added more opportunities for you to come to the island through our "Field Days." Field Days will introduce you to more of the natural beauty and history of Plum Island. So far we have booked programs on the Niagara Escarpment and the Native American presence on the island. I am working on another one that I know you'll be excited to attend as well. More good news—volunteer work days are returning! Once we have all the logistics ironed out, we'll send you an invite so you can save the

In this issue...

Feature Articles

- ♦ My First Case: June 1985
- ♦ Women's History Month: Women in Conservation
- ♦ Pilot Island & Her Keepers (Blog Post)
- ♦ Winter Scenes
- ♦ Cruises on *The Shoreline*

The Shoreline

After careful consideration, our Vice President / Shoreline Director, Mike Repp regretfully resigned his post to devote more time to his family. FOPPI promotes striking a balance between volunteering and one's personal life; I fully recognized and supported Mike's noble decision.



Together we came up with some solutions to ease the burden, which worked out quite well for all concerned. We gathered suggestions and comments from the other captains and updated the Shoreline Business Plan, which can be viewed [here](#). This living document will help to better support and transition leaders going forward.

A new captain, Ben Young, came onboard and long-time volunteer and former Plum Island Station Coastguardsman, Scott Nelson, achieved his Master Captain's License and began working with captains Stiles Meredith and Jim Robinson.



Ben Young

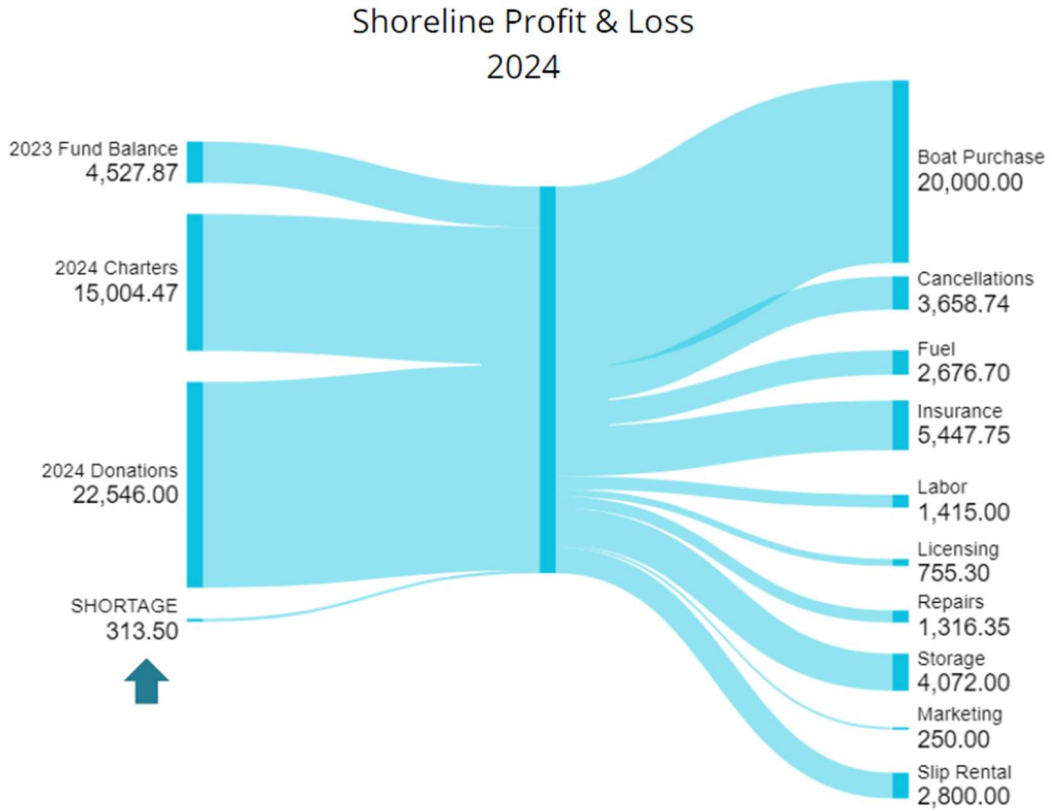


Scott Nelson

We gathered the data collected since FOPPI acquired *The Shoreline* and learned that guests heard from us most often by an internet search, repeat customer and friends. Other data points were Google, Facebook, Word of Mouth and Brochures. Collecting the data is the first step, analyzing it and making decisions based on the data is next on the agenda.

We'll be working on setting up a supply inventory, maintenance and inspection schedule for the 2025 season.

Weather and charter cancellations caused us to eat into our fund balance, but we feel that we're in a better position to turn this around in 2024 with the planned special events.



Volunteer Coordination

One of the greatest benefits of being a member of the FOPPI community is the opportunity to volunteer our time, treasure, and talents to support the FOPPI and USFWS mission. We had an exciting 2024! Our Volunteer Coordinator worked to fill volunteer spots for several events and projects - including the crew for *The Shoreline*.

Our volunteers donated a total of 3,822 hours of their time! Kudos to all who volunteered to help make our mission a reality!

Year	Total Hours
2022	4,920.50
2023	4,742.25
2024	3,822.00

We continued our work with PMI Entertainment who provide clean-up and ticket scanning, seat rental, and recycling services to Lambeau Field, home of the Green Bay Packers. This year the team earned \$897.50.



Pictured: Pete LeMere, Jack Miron, Sally Dery, Dallas Greetham, and Jim Schwartz

Dallas Greetham was recognized as the Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge's 2023-2024 Volunteer of the Year. Dallas discovered FOPPI about 5 years ago and eagerly jumps at the chance to do whatever task is needed, from restoring crumbling pilasters on the boathouse in 90-degree weather (while wearing a Tyvek suit) to joining in on a bat count. We are very thankful for volunteers like Dallas.



Dallas and Frank Gercz (USFWS)

This year we presented several volunteers with the President’s Volunteer Service Award at our annual membership meeting. This program is administered by AmeriCorps and Points of Light. The President’s Volunteer Service Award is an opportunity for FOPPI to recognize our most outstanding volunteers. The program provides bronze, silver, and gold awards based on the service benchmarks outlined below:

Award Level	Hours	Awardees
Bronze	100-249 Hours	Karen Ellery, Colleen Pilat, Jude Kuenn, Paul Kuenn, Scott Nelson, Kimberly Wells, Tim Sweet, Mike Repp, Chuck Scheckel
Silver	250-499 Hours	Mary Beth Volmer, Jim Schwartz, Nancy Leisgang
Gold	500+ Hours	Sally Dery, Jim Robinson



Jim Schwartz



Nancy Leisgang & Sally Dery



Mary Beth Volmer



Jim Robinson

The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.
 –Coretta Scott King

2024 Board of Directors, Volunteer Leaders, and Shoreline Crew

President: Mary Beth Volmer

Vice President / Shoreline Director: Mike Repp

Treasurer: Kimberly Wells

Secretary: Karen Ellery

Board of Members:

Laura Chappell, Membership

Sally Dery, Merchandising

Chuck Scheckel, Historic Preservation & Restoration

Jim Schwartz, Volunteer Coordinator

Emeritus Directors:

Gary Wilson

Paul Schumacher

Tim Sweet

Mike Brodd

Eric Greenfeldt

Lew Clarke

Volunteer Leaders:

Dallas Greetham Cheryl Lenz

Sue Scheckel Bob & Sue Griem

Jake Heffernan Ginnie Harney

Colleen Pilat Nancy Hoefs Leisgang

Jude Kuenn Paul Kuenn (PK)

The Shoreline Captains* and Crew:

Sally Dery Pete LeMere Jon Wall

Todd Harris Deb Meredith Scott Nelson*

Barb Jacobs Stiles Meredith* Doug Smith*

Kim Krueger Jim Robinson* Jason Albertson*

Ben Young*