



Newport Wilderness Society, Inc.

2024 Annual Report

A Not-for-Profit Friends Group

for

Newport State Park

Door County, Wisconsin

<https://friendsofnewport.org>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DATE OF INCORPORATION	3
MISSION OF THE SOCIETY	3
GOALS OF THE SOCIETY	3
BOARD OF DIRECTORS	4
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS	7
PRESIDENT'S REPORT	8
TREASURER'S REPORT	9
NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT	11
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT	12
NATURE INTERPRETATION & STEWARDSHIP REPORT	13
MERCHANDISE COMMITTEE REPORT	14
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT	14
VOLUNTEER SERVICES COMMITTEE REPORT	15
LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT	16
LEGACY GIVING	16
2023 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES	17



Date of Incorporation: August 26, 1985

Mission of the Society:

To work with the management of Newport State Park, Door County, Wisconsin, to help preserve the natural beauty of the Park's forest, meadow and shore areas for appropriate public use.

Goals of the Society:

- Help preserve Newport State Park as a minimal development natural park;
- Encourage the individual study and the preservation of wilderness and nature in Newport State Park and elsewhere in the county;
- Seek volunteers to help the Newport State Park management with projects to maintain the Park and facilitate its proper use;
- Develop other projects and programs appropriate for the Park as may be determined by the Board of Directors working with the Park management.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Note: the date in paranthesis is when the Board Member's term expires.

Carol Ash (2025)

Carol Ash grew up just a few miles from Newport State Park. After returning to Door County, she made many family memories hiking the trails at Newport State Park with her four children. The Ash Family runs Kick Ash Coffee and Door County Love Granola in Ellison Bay.

Jim Black (2025)

Jim Black retired as an attorney after 34 years. Prior to being an attorney, he was an outdoor leader for six years leading backpacking, canoeing, skiing, and natural adventures. He and his family have spent many hours at Newport camping, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing and simply enjoying Newport.

Deb Ford (2025)

Deb retired from nursing and moved to Ellison Bay from northern California in 2019. She is an avid birder and recreational photographer. She enjoys exploring Newport in all seasons and is very happy to help support the work of NWS.

Maureen Flatley (2026)

Maureen is a Wisconsin native. She practiced as a small animal veterinarian in the Fox Valley of Wisconsin for 36 years including the last 16 years as a small business owner. She and her husband Tom became full time residents of Ellison Bay in 2020. Maureen has been a long time active member of the Sierra Club Fox Valley Chapter, and Wild Ones Fox Valley Chapter. Maureen was treasurer for Wild Ones Fox Valley from 1995-2000. Maureen currently volunteers at The Clearing in Ellison Bay, works with Citizen Science programs at the Ridges, volunteers at Newport State Park, as well as Door County Humane Society. Maureen is a recent graduate of the Master Naturalist program.

Rick Foster (2026)

Rick Foster is a retired attorney who lives with his wife Mary in Ellison Bay. He is an avid fisherman and kayak enthusiast.

Larry Gales (2026)

Larry Gales moved to Ellison Bay in 2020 after retiring from the University of Cincinnati, Lindner College of Business, where he taught undergraduate and graduate courses in Management, Human Resources, and International Business for 31 years, and for the last 20 years of his career, he was responsible for leadership in study abroad programs, international partnerships, and international student recruiting. Larry continues to teach online courses in cross-cultural management for the University of Cincinnati. Larry enjoys hiking, biking, and kayaking in Door County, as well as gardening and woodworking. Along with board and volunteer work with the Newport Wilderness Society, he volunteers regularly at the Clearing.

Mark Glasser (2026)

Mark is an avid hiker and backpacker with a passion for maintaining trails and experiencing wilderness environments. Mark is a certified sawyer and volunteers with organizations including the Ice Age Trail Alliance, The Clearing, Door County Land Trust, the Nature Conservancy, and Habitat for Humanity.

Kari Hagenow (2026)

Kari fell in love with Newport while spending time in the Park conducting surveys for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II. She currently works for The Nature Conservancy as the Northeast WI Land Steward, where she does conservation planning and manages lands that include the Mink River Estuary adjacent to Newport. From 2012-2018, Kari was also the coordinator for the Door County Invasive Species Team. In her free time, she enjoys running, hiking, birding and camping with her husband, Tyler, and son, Edwin.

Sheryl Honig (2024)

A teacher and teacher educator, Dr. Honig is thoroughly enjoying her position at The Ridges Sanctuary as Environmental Educator. Recently transplanted to Door County, she is grateful for all the time and space to be in the woods and on Lake Michigan! She is committed to supporting Newport State Park.

Gene Kenny (2026)

Gene retired from the University of Wisconsin as a Physician Assistant in pediatric cardiac surgery in 2016 after 32 years. He and his wife Helen moved to Door County full time and live on Europe Lake. Gene is an avid woodworker and volunteers with Habitat for Humanity, The Clearing and Newport State Park.

Julia Keepper (2025)

Julia Keepper and her husband Les, moved to Ellison Bay from Mt. Pleasant, Michigan in 2017. Julia worked as an Exercise Physiologist at McClaren Central Michigan Hospital in Cardiopulmonary Rehab and subsequently as Manager of the Fitness and Wellness Center there. Julia loves everything about being outdoors in Door County and has been a frequent visitor to Newport State Park since childhood.

Jann Kostecke (2024)

Jann is originally from Kansas City but has lived in Appleton, Wisconsin for many years. She has worked as an accountant for over 40 years, mostly at large companies, and has been happily self-employed most recently. She and her husband Keith own a home in Liberty Grove and spend every minute they can in Door County. Jann enjoys spending time at Newport State Park hiking or snowshoeing in the woods and listening to the birds.

Sherry Seubert (2026)

Sherry Seubert moved to Door County in 2019 from Winneconne, Wisconsin. She is an avid hiker, enjoys snowshoeing, camping, traveling, canoeing and outdoor adventures with her children and grandchildren. She has spent many hours hiking and enjoying Newport. Her professional background includes a 10-year healthcare career in occupational therapy, 20 years of business ownership in real estate rental property, and 12 years of entrepreneurship with her health and wellness business. Sherry is a certified nature and forest therapy guide and certified yoga teacher.

Dave Vermillion (2024)

Dave has lived north of Ellison Bay since 2000. Before retirement, he worked for Continental Can, Schlitz, and Carnation in the manufacture of tin cans. He did volunteer naturalist training at Riveredge and Retzer nature centers and held several board positions with the DC Unitarian Fellowship, including president.

NEWPORT WILDERNESS SOCIETY Committee Assignments

2023-2024 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mark Glasser - President
Maureen Flatley - Vice President
Kari Hagenow - Secretary
Jann Kostecke - Treasurer
Deb Ford - Member

NOMINATING – Executive Committee

FINANCE, MEMBERSHIP & FUND RAISING – Jim Black, Sheryl Honig, Jann Kostecke

NATURE INTERPRETATION & STEWARDSHIP – Kari Hagenow, Rick Foster, Julia Keepper, Maureen Flatley, Sheryl Honig, Beth Bartoli

MERCHANDISING – Sherry Seubert, Dave Vermillion, Helen Kenny, Beth Bartoli

COMMUNICATIONS – Deb Ford, Julia Keepper, Carol Ash, Beth Bartoli

VOLUNTEER SERVICES – Mark Glasser

LONG RANGE PLANNING - Gene Kenny, Larry Gales

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Mark Glasser



Thank you for reading our Annual Report and for your support of the Newport Wilderness Society as we celebrate 60 years of Newport State Park. Without you and the many others who donate their time and resources, we would not be able to accomplish our mission.

Recently, I was meeting a group of volunteers at Parking Lot 3 when I stopped to talk with four people who had just finished their hike. I asked them how it went and they said “great”. They elaborated by commenting on how there

was not as much water on the trail as in past years. They recalled having to wade through deep pools or sometimes turn around because the trail was impassable. So, I said to them, it looks like you just finished walking the Fern Trail and they said, yes. I explained to them about our new boardwalk and how that eliminated the water problems on the trail. They said, oh, that makes sense and then asked where did the money come from to build such a beautiful boardwalk? I was proud to say that the NWS raised the money for the materials and that the volunteers did all the construction. It’s a great feeling to know that our work is making a difference in how people can enjoy Newport State Park.

Looking ahead, we are in the initial stages of improving the visitor experience in the Dark Sky viewing area. With a most generous grant from Destination Door County, we will begin work on this in the upcoming year. As we finalize those plans, we will be sharing them in more detail with all our supporters.

Additionally, the Newport Wilderness Society is planning to advocate on behalf of the Wisconsin State Park system in advance of the legislative budget process for 2025 to 2027. Currently, there is a real need for more funding for maintenance and operations across all the state parks in Wisconsin. Please stay tuned for more information on how you can be of help.

If you have not visited the Park recently, I encourage you to stop by and see the improvements we have made to the trails and the visitor center and experience the wide range of naturalist programs. Come and enjoy the beauty of Newport State Park.

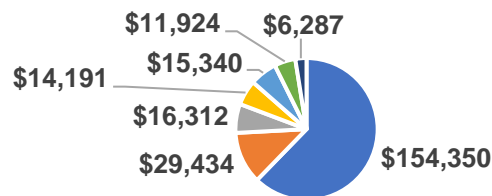
TREASURER'S REPORT

Jann Kostecke, Treasurer

The financial position of Newport Wilderness Society remains strong. Accomplishments for the 2023-24 fiscal year included the following:

- Over \$80,000 total in contributions and grants were received this year. That is down from \$86,000 last year.
- Knowles-Nelson grants are very important to the financing of large projects at Wisconsin State Parks. The Fern Trail project received \$40,000 from these grants over the past two years. \$30,000 was received in the 2022-23 fiscal year, and \$10,000 in the 2023-24 fiscal year.
- Private contributions and grants were over \$70,000 in the 2023-24 fiscal year, up from \$56,000 in the 2022-23 fiscal year, or an increase of 25.5%. The park benefits from your generosity. Thank you!
- The Fern Trail Project was completed this spring. The costs this year of \$154,350 were funded with current and prior year donations and grants.
- The Naturalist program was funded , including the position, a few guest speakers, continuing education, park events, and updated AV equipment. Total cost \$31,590.
- Transformation of the Nature Center room began with new murals and displays for flora and fauna. There are other phases of this project that are planned for future years. Total cost this year: \$16,312.
- The rest of the Park Office building was spruced up on the inside with new paint and floor coating. Total cost \$14,191.
- A new snowmobile was purchased for the park. Cost paid this year was \$15,340.
- There were several smaller dollar projects with high impact, including the pollinator garden, replacing the poetry trail frames, a track chair trial to enhance accessibility, and new boot brushes to reduce spread of invasive species. Total cost, \$9,769.

What Does Your Donation Pay For?



- The Fern Trail
- Naturalist Program - Guided Hikes, Presentations, Events, etc.
- Nature Center Improvements - Murals, Displays, etc.
- Office and Park Store Improvements - Floors, painting, etc.
- Snowmobile - Final Payment
- Other - Events, Pollinator Garden, Track Chair, Poetry Trail, etc.
- Less Interesting Yet Necessary Things - Software, Postage, Supplies, Insurance

TREASURER'S REPORT, cont.

BALANCE SHEET SUMMARY NEWPORT WILDERNESS SOCIETY

	June-20	June-21	June-22	June-23	June-24
Cash and Savings	\$ 44,864	\$ 71,193	\$ 170,839	\$ 136,436	\$ 79,926
Investments	199,488	250,895	232,717	261,858	170,740
Inventory and Other	18,389	10,547	9,916	12,944	25,145
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 262,741	\$ 332,635	\$ 413,472	\$ 411,238	\$ 275,811
TOTAL LIABILITIES	-	-	-	2,289	2,565
TOTAL NET WORTH	\$ 262,741	\$ 332,635	\$ 413,472	\$ 408,949	\$ 273,246

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

by Mark Glasser



The following Board Member is up for re-election to another 3-year term at the Annual Meeting:

Jann Kostecke

We have two new Board members that are nominated for a 3-year term and a vote at the Annual Meeting:

Keith Lemburg: Keith retired to Door County from northeastern Illinois in 2019 after a 40-year career in landscape contracting, in communities on the north shore of Chicago. Additionally, he has been working with a Sturgeon Bay landscape company. Keith's educational background is in landscape horticulture and design, and he is a member of the International Society of Arboriculture. Keith recently completed the Wisconsin Master Naturalist Program and is a volunteer steward for Door County Land Trust at the Three Springs Reserve.

Stacey McKendry: Stacey had a lifetime career in education both as a classroom teacher and administrator. She moved to Door County on the day she retired in 2020. In 2022, she became a certified Master Naturalist through the Wisconsin State Program. Since then, she has logged over 300 volunteer hours supporting Newport State Park, The Clearing, and The Ridges Sanctuary in various ways.

Sheryl Honig and Dave Vermillion will be leaving the Board and we thank them for their many years of service.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Mark Glasser



Nothing speaks to the health of an organization as much as membership. Currently we have 287 active members in the Newport Wilderness Society. We are grateful for this support and work hard to see that we continue to serve the needs of Newport State Park.

We are also very fortunate to have a loyal and committed group of businesses who support Newport State Park and the Newport Wilderness Society. These businesses are listed below.

Al Johnsons Restaurant & Butik, Sister Bay, WI
Blue Dolphin House, Ephraim, WI
Champeau Flooring, Sister Bay, WI
Door County North, Ellison Bay, WI
Ecology Sports, Sister Bay, WI
Ellison Bay Service Club, Ellison Bay, WI
Grasse's Grill, Sister Bay, WI
Hammersmith TV & Electronics, Sister Bay, WI
Henriksen Fisheries, Ellison Bay, WI
Husby's Food & Spirits, Sister Bay, WI
Innovative Printing, Sister Bay, WI
Island Orchard Cider, Ellison Bay, WI
Jerry's Flowers, Sister Bay, WI
Kick Ash Coffee, Ellison Bay, WI
Nicolet National Bank, Sturgeon Bay, WI
Pirate's Cove Adventure Golf, Sister Bay, WI
Sister Bay Advancement Associates, Sister Bay, WI
Sister Bay Bowl, Sister Bay, WI
Timothy Tischler, DDS, Sister Bay, WI
Twisted Tree at the Pharm, Sister Bay, WI
Wagon Trail Campground, Ellison Bay, WI
Washington Island Ferry, Washington Island, WI
Wolfe Horticulture, Fish Creek, WI

Please continue to support the organizations who have invested in our park.

NATURE INTERPRETATION AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

By Kari Hagenow

Our committee supports Newport's Naturalist, Beth Bartoli, and helps facilitate this programming. Programs and events at Newport were well attended in 2023. A variety of programs were offered, with a number of them led by NWS members that are Master Naturalist volunteers. We are fortunate to have these volunteers to lend their expertise about pollinators and their habitat, invasive species, astronomy, park history and habitats, and more. In all, there were 76 programs offered, most during the busy tourist season, with about 3,200 people in attendance. Dark sky programs are as popular as ever, accounting for almost half of our program attendance. Newport also had the pleasure of hosting a solar eclipse viewing event on April 8th under perfect viewing conditions after a cloudy morning!

This winter, a subset of our committee embarked on an effort to better address invasive species issues within the park. We began an inventory of what invasive species are present and where they are prevalent, and we are working with WDNR staff to set up a protocol for mapping populations of invasive plants utilizing smartphones or tablets. Several garlic mustard workdays were held this spring and were focused around the Lynd Point Trail. Our sub-committee also recognized the need to replace and update boot brushes within the park to help stop the continued spread of invasive plants. We are working to assess where boot brush stations currently are in the park and their condition. We are also moving forward with the replacement of several small boot brush stations going into campsites. In the future we will replace or add larger boot brush stations at several trailheads as well. Small hand-held brushes are being supplied to those leading volunteer work parties as well so that boots can be cleaned before and after working anywhere within the park.

As we move forward with our invasive species projects in the coming year, keep an eye out for opportunities to learn more about invasive plants in the park and to volunteer. We will be looking for help scouting for and documenting invasive species in the park and to manage them through organized workdays.

MERCHANDISE COMMITTEE REPORT

by Sherry Seubert

Total sales for the first eleven months of fiscal year 2023-2024 at Newport were \$26,889.77 (net of fees) compared to fiscal year 2022-2023 of \$14,789.74 (net of fees) showing an increase of 81.8%. This was a significant increase in merchandise sales. Kick Ash sales continue to be steady compared to the previous year. Our committee will be looking into a new system for accepting credit cards at the park due to problems and limitations with our current system.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

By Deb Ford

The NWS Communications Committee (Julia Keepper, Deb Ford, Carol Ash, and Beth Bartoli) utilize a variety of media to publicize information about park programs, volunteer opportunities, and NWS projects at Newport.

The NWS website is found at <https://friendsofnewport.org>. It features an event calendar and secure pages to join NWS, to renew memberships, or to make a donation. It is packed with articles and information about park resources, park history, and about NWS and the work we do at Newport.

The NWS monthly e-newsletter, North Star News, continues to grow. It reaches over 500 subscribers, providing information about park programs, NWS projects, and educational articles about the natural world at Newport. The NWS Facebook page has over 2,600 followers. We also rely on our local newspapers to help get the word out about naturalist-led programs and NWS events at the park.

Our Newport Friends and Volunteers email group was created to help us organize and communicate volunteer needs at the park. It can be found at: <https://newportfriendsandvolunteers.groups.io/g/main>. We now reach 110 enthusiastic people for help with a variety of projects and events.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES COMMITTEE

by Mark Glasser



Volunteering at Newport State Park is a great way to give back to the community, meet new friends and have fun outdoors during all 4 seasons. There are many ways to be involved and getting started requires joining our internet-based communication tool, groups.io. This is the way we communicate volunteer opportunities to everyone and share thoughts on what work needs to be done. To indicate your interest in becoming a volunteer, please go to our website, friendsofnewport.org, and click on “volunteer”.

Looking back on the last year, our volunteers completed the Fern Trail Boardwalk. Over the three years it took to finish the project, we had over 45 volunteers who lent their time to the deconstruction of the “old on the ground boards” and built the new above-ground boardwalk. Last year alone, these volunteers contributed over 1200 hours.

Looking ahead, here are some of the volunteer opportunities where you can help enhance the Park:

- Candlelight Ski
- Perseid Meteor Shower event
- Newport Wilderness Days
- Fall and spring workdays in the Park
- Serving on the board of the Newport Wilderness Society
- Hikes and presentations on Newport’s flora and fauna
- Every Day is Earth Day conference
- Trail work, clearing brush, removing invasive plants, etc.
- Working in the office
- Cross-country ski trail grooming
- Monitoring birds and butterflies

We look forward to having you join us as a volunteer. You will have a good time, make new friends, and make a difference as we support the Park!

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

by Gene Kenny

During this fiscal year, Newport Wilderness Society volunteers completed the primary construction of the Fern Trail Boardwalk. The last 1200 feet of this 1800-foot ADA compliant boardwalk was finished in October 2023. Several sitting areas are scheduled to be built this year along with replacement of the interpretive signs removed during construction. Once the water recedes, we will start building the sitting areas. In early December, a local landscape company distributed and compacted 112 tons of stone along the southern portion of the trail to Lot #3. This provides a wheelchair passible surface.

We sincerely appreciated the more than 50 volunteers who helped complete this project and the financial generosity of many donors, foundations, and the Knowles-Nelson grant program.

Many volunteers have asked 'what is the next NWS volunteer project'? The Long Range Planning Committee is focusing on our next project at Newport State Park. We are currently working with an engineering firm that will provide a site survey and development plan to improve the dark sky viewing area.

LEGACY GIVING

By Jim Black

By adding Newport Wilderness Society to your estate planning, you help maintain Newport State Park for future generations. Your bequest to Newport Wilderness Society will provide the means to ensure Newport State Park remains a place of awe, where the night's dark sky can be seen in all its wonder, where campers can wake up to the sounds of waves and birds at remote campsites, and where nature will be preserved.

When you include the Newport Wilderness Society in a charitable provision in your estate plan you can touch the future. You will be leaving as part of your legacy the protection of the pristine beauty of Newport State Park. Contact your estate planner and include a charitable provision that gives a gift to the Newport Wilderness Society. Let us know when you do this. There may be a tax advantage for doing so. For information about including the Newport Wilderness Society in your planned giving through your will, bequest, trust, insurance, or other planned giving please contact: Newport Wilderness Society P.O. Box 187, Ellison Bay, WI 54210, or your financial planner or estate attorney.

Newport Wilderness Society Annual Meeting Minutes

July 29, 2023

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by President Mark Glasser at 9:10am.

President's Remarks: Mark welcomed members to the 38th Annual Meeting and shared that the Newport Wilderness Society is in an excellent position and that much work has been done in the past year including upgrades to the nature center, mural by Holly Smith, new perennial garden, kiosk updates, Leopold benches, spring and fall clean-ups, and 700 native trees planted at the Park entrance. Mark shared thanks to the Board of Directors, volunteers and many others who have supported NWS this past year. Excitement for the year ahead was shared with remarks about funding and fundraising opportunities through Destination Door County. Finally, Mark recognized Harvey Stahl, past superintendent at Potawatomi and Newport State Parks, who passed away in late 2022.

Fern Trail Update: Gene Kenny shared the following updates:

- We've started the second phase and have had three build days thus far with 18-20 volunteers.
- We are currently at the 900' mark of a planned 1800' project – halfway there!
- Thank you to Julia Keepper who nominated NWS for funding from the 100 Plus Women Who Care, and thanks to that group for donating \$700 to the Fern Trail effort. An additional thank you to Chris Carlson, who wrote a Rotary Grant that ultimately provided \$12,000 to the effort.
- Workdays will continue through October 2023.

Treasurer's Report: Jann Kostecke was not able to attend the annual meeting – see the report provided in the 2023 Annual Report. Overall, NWS is in great financial shape, and looking ahead we'll have future project funding from Destination Door County.

Nominating Committee and New Board Member Elections: Four new board members – Rick Foster, Larry Gales, Maureen Flatley, and Sherry Seubert were up for election to the NWS Board. All four were unanimously approved by membership present at the Annual Meeting.

Recognition for Departing Board Members: Mark Glasser recognized outgoing board members for their years of service - Greg Wilde (past Co-President, Membership Committee Chair), Jeanne Rabel (past Treasurer), and Terry Heidenreiter (Merchandising Committee Chair).

Park Managers Report (Brian Grube): Newport has been very busy this past year and visitation continues to increase. Brian sends his thanks to all the staff at the park. Newport was fortunate to have seasonal staff on a regular basis this summer, which helped brushing trails and the beach area, cleaning bathrooms, and covering little details like sign painting. Over the winter the Park plans for all new fire rings and two sturdy benches (20 new benches) in every campsite. They will also be removing hazard trees near the visitor center. Brian is looking forward to collaborating with NWS on grant funding from Destination Door County.

Closing Remarks and Adjournment: Mark thanked everyone for coming and for their support of NWS. There was a question from member about setting a maximum attendance limit at the park and DNR staff responded that they can limit if they see that parking is at capacity within the park. Meeting was adjourned at 9:55am by President Mark Glasser.

Respectfully submitted August 4, 2023 by Kari Hagenow, Secretary