



Newport Wilderness Society, Inc.

2025 Annual Report

A Not-for-Profit Friends Group

for

Newport State Park

Door County, Wisconsin

<https://friendsofnewport.org>

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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. 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. 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.

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 being outdoors in Door County and has been a frequent visitor to Newport State Park since childhood.

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.
Jann Kostecke (2027)	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.
Keith Lemburg (2027)	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. 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 Three Springs Reserve.
Stacey McKendry (2027)	Stacey had a 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.

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.

NEWPORT WILDERNESS SOCIETY Committee Assignments

2024-2025 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mark Glasser - President
Maureen Flatley - Vice President
Kari Hagenow - Secretary
Jann Kostecke - Treasurer
Stacey McKendry - Member

NOMINATING – Executive Committee

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

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

MERCHANDISING – Sherry Seubert, Helen Kenny, Beth Bartoli

VOLUNTEER SERVICES – Mark Glasser

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

LONG RANGE PLANNING - Gene Kenny, Larry Gales

President's Report (Happy 40th!)

By Mark Glasser



Thank you for reading our Annual Report and for your support of the Newport Wilderness Society. This is a significant year for us – the 40th anniversary of our friends' group at Newport State Park.

The Newport Wilderness Society was founded in 1985 and the tradition of caring for our beautiful park continues. There have been many people that have come before us and paved the way for the work we do today. In particular, Bill and Rolliana Scheckler were instrumental in forming our

friends' group and Bill served as our first Board President for many years.

Much of the work we currently do to maintain Newport Park has been done since the founding of the Newport Wilderness Society. This includes holding events like the Candlelight Hike and Ski, cleaning the campsites, maintaining the trails, repairing and replacing picnic tables, and removing invasives species like garlic mustard. In addition, we have completed major projects like the building of the Visitor Center and the Fern Trail boardwalk. Looking ahead, we are in the beginning stages of another project, improving the accessibility of the Dark Sky viewing area and enhancing the programs we present there. The initial construction is not far away and as that approaches, we will be keeping our valued supporters updated.

If you have not visited the Park recently, I encourage you to stop by and see the improvements we have made to the trails, the gardens at the visitor center, and the displays inside 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 2024-25 fiscal year included the following:

- Over \$83,000 in contributions and grants were received this year, which is up from \$80,000 last year. Contributions, memberships, and private grants were a little over \$60,000 and grants from Knowles-Nelson funds and Destination Door County were \$23,000.

- The Dark Sky project received \$10,000 in Knowles-Nelson grant money this fiscal year, and another \$10,000 will be received when the project is completed. The total project is estimated to be \$204,775.

- We thank you for the \$60,000 in 2024-25 in contributions and memberships we received from you and other individuals, local businesses, and foundations. The park benefits from every one of your donations! Here are a few ways we used your contributions and purchases to improve the park:

- Transformation of the Nature Center continued with new murals and displays for the History Wall and the Dark Sky Wall. Total cost this year: \$17,909, which was a slight increase over last year's cost.

- The Naturalist program was funded, including paying for the part-time salaried position, as well as other costs and materials used to provide visitors excellent presentations about the natural world. The cost was \$27,403 but the value is much higher.

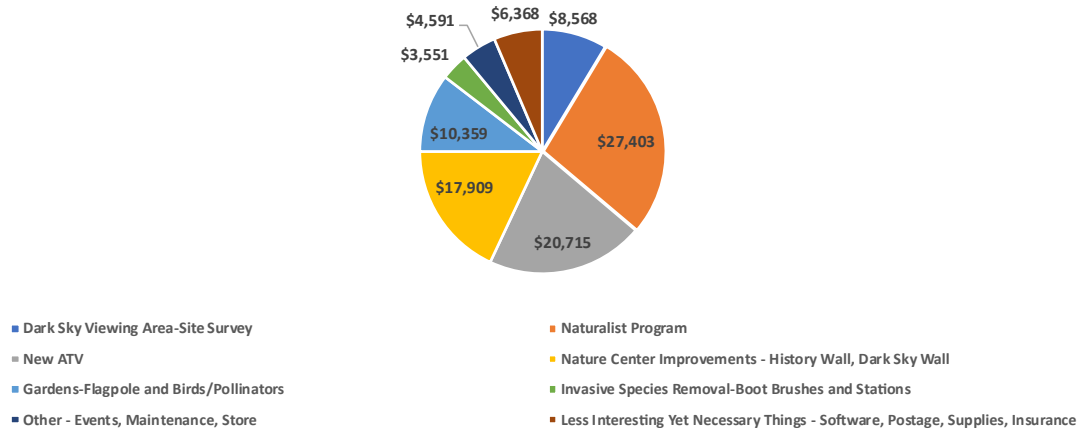
- An ATV was purchased (2024 Polaris Ranger Crew SP570 Premium) for the park to replace an older one for \$20,715. The DNR will be responsible for maintaining this vehicle.

- Please take a look at the new flagpole garden and the Bird/Pollinator Garden that now has a small picnic area. These beautiful gardens involved many hours of volunteer work, and \$10,359 for native plants, bird seed, and other materials.

- Another great volunteer effort which started up last year was the Invasive Species project. Volunteers worked to remove invasives such as garlic mustard and spotted knapweed, which improves the environment for native species. The expenses of \$3,551 were for boot brush replacements and new stations so that hikers can avoid tracking in seeds of invasive plants and stop the spread.

- The Park Store installed a new credit card processor. This results in lower credit card payment processing fees and is working well.

What Does Your Donation Pay For?



BALANCE SHEET SUMMARY NEWPORT WILDERNESS SOCIETY

	June-21	June-22	June-23	June-24	June-25
Cash and Savings	\$ 71,193	\$ 170,839	\$ 136,436	\$ 79,927	\$ 76,985
Investments	250,895	232,717	261,858	170,740	186,054
Inventory and Other	10,547	9,916	12,944	25,145	28,213
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 332,635	\$ 413,472	\$ 411,238	\$ 275,812	\$ 291,252
TOTAL LIABILITIES	-	-	2,289	4,680	5,103
TOTAL NET WORTH	\$ 332,635	\$ 413,472	\$ 408,949	\$ 271,132	\$ 286,149

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

by Mark Glasser



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

Deb Ford

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

Francis Osorno: Francis retired in 2022 after working for over 37 years at Procter & Gamble, the last 15 years as the global technical lead for Manufacturing Execution Systems. He and his wife moved to Ellison Bay in 2022, to complete their house and start to enjoy retirement. They have enjoyed Door County for over 25 years prior to their move with many camping trips and other activities. Francis enjoys volunteering at Newport where he and his wife are trail stewards. Francis is also certified as a sawyer at the park.

Dave Petersen: As full-time residents of northern Door County, Dave and his wife, Carol have thoroughly enjoyed exploring Newport State Park and much of its offerings. By contributing to and actively participating in the Newport Wilderness Park Friends Group, he is eager to channel his energies and ideas towards creating opportunities for visitors to immerse themselves in a wilderness environment and fully appreciate and learn about its unique qualities.

Mary Ellen Sullivan: A resident of Sister Bay since September 2019, Mary Ellen was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. She raised her twins, James and Madeline, in a rural southern Illinois community called St. Jacob. She has worked in many different environments as a secretary/executive, secretary/administrative assistant, and as third grade teacher. As a Board Member, Mary Ellen will be focused on helping with future preservation endeavors.

Carol Ash, Jim Black, and Julia Keepper 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 339 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.

Included in our memberships totals are a loyal and committed group of businesses who support the Newport Wilderness Society. These businesses are listed below:

Al Johnsons Restaurant & Butik, Sister Bay, WI
Blue Dolphin House, Ephraim, WI
CellCom, Green Bay, WI
Custom Manufacturing, Clinton, 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
Husby's Food and Spirits, Sister Bay, WI
Island Orchard Cider, Ellison Bay, WI
Jerry's Flowers, Sister Bay, WI
Kick Ash Coffee, Ellison 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
Wild Tomato, Sister Bay, WI
Wolfe Horticulture, Fish Creek, WI

Please continue to support the organizations who have invested in our park through the Newport Wilderness Society.

NATURE INTERPRETATION AND STEWARDSHIP

Nature and Interpretation Report

By Beth Bartoli

It was a busy year at our beautiful park, with programs running the gamut from wildflower, tree, mammal and plant ID, discovering their habitats, invasive species, cultural and historical programs, trail hikes and more. Preparing for and facilitating Dark Sky viewing nights are always big endeavors, so it is especially exciting to be part of the team planning our new natural seating area.

Last year, there were 68 naturalist (and Master Naturalist) led programs with over 2400 in attendance.

It is a pleasure to facilitate and monitor the many citizen science volunteers who help with research projects at the park.

The Nature Center updates continue with new interpretive displays, as all facets of the park are being addressed: Lake Michigan, park cultural and natural history, flora and fauna, geology of Newport and the peninsula and our International Dark Sky Park.

Invasive Species Report

by Maureen Flatley

In the spring of 2024, the Invasive Species Committee was formed, with the goal of starting to locate, monitor, and initiate control of the invasive plants at Newport State Park. Deb Ford, Rick Foster and Maureen Flatley became co-chairpersons for this new committee. Several days in May of 2024, groups of volunteers removed garlic mustard around Campsites 1 and 2, as well as along the Lynd Point Trail.

In July, Matt Wollrath from the Wisconsin First Detectors Network spoke to volunteers and trail stewards, educating us about the resources available thru the WFDN, including identification and tracking resources. This speaker was sponsored by NWS.

In August, volunteers started the removal of spotted knapweed plants along the beach at Lot 3. The Invasive Species Committee also initiated the task of updating and installing new boot brushes around the campsites and at major trailheads to help control the spread of invasive plants. At the end of 2024, 6 new boot brushes were in place, with plans to add more in 2025.

MERCHANDISE COMMITTEE REPORT

by Sherry Seubert

Total sales for the first eleven months of the fiscal year 2024-2025 at Newport were \$27,569.22 compared to the first eleven months of fiscal year 2023-2024 of \$26,889.77. Kick Ash sales continue to be steady and we are grateful for their support. We are adding a lot of new merchandise items this year with some related to astronomy. People seem very interested in our merchandise. Our new credit card system with hot spot is working out beautifully.

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, we established a Trail Steward program so that all of our trails have a dedicated person or group of people assigned to monitor and maintain it. We have more trained sawyers to help with this work. We also established our regularly Wednesday workdays at the Park, meeting at 9 AM and working until noon.

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

- Candlelight Hike and Ski

- Perseid Meteor Shower event and other dark sky events
- Newport Wilderness Days
- Wednesday workdays
- 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
- 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!

Communications Committee Report

By Deb Ford

The NWS Communications Committee utilizes 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 625 subscribers, providing information about park programs, NWS projects, and educational articles about the natural world at Newport. The NWS Facebook page has over 2,900 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 134 enthusiastic people for help with a variety of projects and events.

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT

by Larry Gales

After significant community dialogue, discussion, and a presentation Q&A session in December, the DNR approved the variance for the Dark Sky Viewing Area project. On May 9, we met with representatives from Stantec to discuss specific locations for the viewing area, shed, beachfront platform, and paths as well as requirements for solar power for track-chair charging and any equipment for the Dark Sky Viewing Area. Stantec is currently working on a refined and detailed plan. We expect to see the completed plan sometime in early summer. Once that work is completed, we will need to go back to the DNR for engineering and administrative approvals. Additionally, we have received a \$20,000 Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Friends Grant Award to go along with the \$100,000 grant from Destination Door County.

Finally, look for the completion of the built in benches on the Fern Trail this summer. This will be the last construction phase of this multi-year project.

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.

2023-2024 Newport Wilderness Society Annual Meeting Minutes

July 27, 2024

Newport State Park Shelter

Call to order: President Mark Glasser called the meeting to order at 9:11am.

President's Introductory Remarks: Mark recognized the current NWS board members and dedicated volunteers, and reiterated the goals of NWS. He highlighted projects this year including the Fern Trail completion. Looking ahead in the coming year, Mark highlighted improvements to the Dark Sky Viewing Area utilizing funding from Destination Door County and NWS fundraising. Work is expected to start next year but will depend on timing of final design and drawings and approval by the WDNR.

Mark mentioned the funding of the parks – no tax dollars go to fund the maintenance and operation of the State Parks. They are funded by the purchase of parks passes and revenue generated within the parks. The backlog of work in the State Parks is enormous. There are opportunities to contact your state legislators to allow for funding to be used or more to be raised for maintenance and operation of the parks and NWS will be providing more information about this.

Treasurers Report: Jann Kostecke's report is provided in annual report. We have good standing and have been successful in fundraising and bringing in other monies this year and in past years. The strong support means we have been able to save some money to use for significant projects this year – Fern Trail (\$150,000), new snowmobile purchase, upgrades to the nature center exhibits, and new flooring and paint in the park office. Jann also recognized the amount of money saved and our accomplishments because we have so many volunteers willing to donate their time and talents.

Board Member Nominations:

Nominated for another 3-year term – Jann Kostecke
Jann was elected unanimously to another three-year term on the board.

Nominated to join the Board: Stacey McKendry, Keith Lemburg
Stacy and Keith were elected unanimously by the membership of NWS.

Park Manager's Report: Brian gave thanks the NWS board, members, and volunteers – without those resources Newport wouldn't be what it is. Brian also thanked his staff at the park, Beth and David joining us at the meeting. Brian recognized that the NWS purchased a new screen, AV equipment, and projector for presentations this year to improve programs in the park.

Brian reports that the WDNR will be supplying staff with two new vehicles, a Ford Maverick and a Ford F-250 with a plow kit. WDNR in the last year has shifted the way they do projects – at one time there were more than 20,000 individual projects backlogged in their capital projects

system. They have now shifted that to bundle like projects so that the roof of the shelter will be done along with other roofs in the park, roof replacement at Peninsula, etc. This also includes the replacement of the road into Newport that is being packaged with projects in Peninsula, so it will likely be funded and completed more quickly.

Newport has also been working with the forestry division at the WDNR to create a Newport-Rock Island channel so that staff can communicate between each other at both parks, as well as the Sheriff's Department, via radio, as cell service has been a huge challenge. This is a huge improvement to staff and visitor safety in the park.

Beth said a few words as well reiterating that NWS fully supports the Naturalist salary at Newport. Last year, programming included 80 programs and 3,200 people in attendance – this is within the top 10 in all WI State Parks. A note that Newport will also be celebrating its 60th anniversary this fall during Wilderness Days – more info to come. Attendance at the park has been trending average with 6,000 visitors in April, 15,500 in May, and 16,400 in June.

Recognition for Departing Board Members: Mark Glasser recognized Dave Vermillion (past Secretary) and Sheryl Honig as NWS outgoing board members.

Motion to Dispense with the reading of the 2022-2023 NWS Annual Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve minutes of the 2023 annual meeting as presented in the annual report. Motion approved.

Motion to Dispense with Other Committee Reports: Maureen shared that there will be an August presentation being sponsored by NWS. Matt Wallrath from the Wisconsin First Detector Network, an invasive species specialist, will be joining us to learn about how to report and document invasive species. Presentation will be Friday, August 16th at 10am at the Nature Center.

Closing Remarks from President Mark Glasser and thanks to everyone for attending. Mark adjourned the meeting at 9:59am.

Respectfully submitted by Kari Hagenow, Secretary

Additional Member Comments: Thank you to Mark and folks that keep trails clear for grooming in the winter and for the purchase of the new snowmobile ("the beast").

Bill Scheckler shared that the first meeting of NWS was 38 years ago today. He shared that it's been a privilege to join these meetings and be a part of NWS for so long, and it's great to see how well everything has developed. Bill is profoundly grateful of this society.