

Media Release
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Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail Receives \$1.62 Million

Empire, MI - The Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route Committee, Michigan Department of Transportation, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (National Lakeshore), Traverse Area Recreation and Transportation (TART) Trails, and Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes are proud to announce that the Federal Department of Transportation 2012 Public Lands Highway Discretionary (PLHD) program has awarded \$1.62 million for the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail (SBHT). The PLHD funds will be used to construct 3.17 miles of the trail starting at Port Oneida Road and ending at Leelanau County Road 669/Bohemian Road.

The SBHT will be a hard-surfaced, multi-use trail paralleling state highways M-22 and M-109 for 27 miles through the National Lakeshore. It will provide a safe, non-motorized, multi-use transportation alternative connecting the National Lakeshore's main visitor destinations with the neighboring communities of Glen Arbor and Empire.

"The trail partners and supporters are very thankful for this grant award to continue towards expanding the trail," said Patty O'Donnell of the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, project manager for the SBHT. "The award recognizes that the SBHT will provide a meaningful transportation alternative for residents and visitors, as well as an outstanding recreational opportunity for all users, that is being demonstrated on the first completed section from the National Lakeshore's Dune Climb to Glen Arbor."

(MORE)

National Lakeshore Superintendent Dusty Shultz noted that the grant award will help to extend the already popular trail to more areas of the park as planned. "So many visitors have complimented us on the SBHT between the Dune Climb and Glen Arbor," said Shultz. "A concern we do hear often is that the trail is too short; however, thanks to this grant, visitors will be provided the added opportunity for a longer visit on the trail, to new and interesting areas of the park."

The PLHD program provides funding for transportation planning, research, and engineering and construction of highways, roads, parkways, and transit facilities that are within, adjacent to, or provide access to federal public lands which includes national parks, refuges, forests, recreation areas, and grasslands.

The SBHT is a project of the Leelanau Scenic Heritage Route Committee. Trail development is a partnership between the Heritage Route Committee, the Michigan Department of Transportation, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes, and TART Trails. Funding for trail development comes from federal and state grants, foundations, and individual donations.

For more information on the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail, please contact Patty O'Donnell at 231-929-5039 or National Lakeshore Deputy Superintendent Tom Ulrich at 231-326-5134. For information on how to support the SBHT, contact TART Trails at 231-941-4300, or visit sleepingbeartrail.org.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Tom White at tomwhite@nwm.com.mi.us and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5044. Check our online Media Room at: nwm.org/media

Founded in 1974, the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments (NWMCOG) facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10 county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, YouthBuild, Small Business & Technology Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to our communities' requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business and community services NWMCOG offers if you visit our web site, nwm.org

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About the National Park Service: More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 397 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.