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Wilderness State Park Receives Interpretive Project Grant from the National Association for Interpretation - Region 4

The National Association for Interpretation Region 4 recently announced its Interpretive Project Grant Award Winners, and is pleased to report Wilderness State Park is among the 2020 recipients.

The Interpretive Project Grants (IPG) program is designed to provide a source of funding for small projects by Association members within the Great Lakes region including Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Ontario. Projects may include exhibitry, signage, programs, or other ideas that enhance visitors' interpretive experience. Applications are submitted annually, and reviewed by the IPG Committee consisting of members of NAI Region 4 who guide the grant process and make recommendations to the Region 4 Board of Directors.

Wilderness State Park's project – *Don't Tread on Me: Piping Plover Nest Diorama* – will add a new model of a plover nest including an artist created adult plover and faux eggs to the trailhead at Waugoshance Point. This exhibit is expected to be displayed outside from April 15th through August 1st, 2021 and will also be used inside the Wilderness State Park Nature Center during school visitations. According to grant applicant Maureen Stine of Wilderness State Park, this project "show[s] visitors what to look for before trekking onto the beach so that visitors can play a critical role in protecting this shoreline specialist species...[Waugoshance Point] was the one remaining hotspot of nesting at the time of listing [Piping plovers] as federally endangered and many local volunteers and conservation resource managers worked together to support the critical habitat on the peninsula..." making this an ideal location for an exhibit of its kind.

IPG funds will add financial support for the project, including funding the artist to create the adult plover and nest as well as the purchase of a plexiglass case for exhibit protection.

"It is always interesting and enlightening for the Committee to see all of the wonderful projects underway in Region 4 - we have very passionate and creative members in our region," said Victoria Zablocki, Acting Chair of the Interpretive Project Grants Committee. "Congratulations to Wilderness State Park on their work to develop an outdoor exhibit with such a site-specific conservation message."

Applicants receiving funding this year along with Wilderness State Park include: Grass River Natural Area (MI) and Medina County Park District (OH).

The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the profession of heritage interpretation, currently serving about 5,000 members in the United States, Canada, and over thirty other nations. Individual members include those who work at parks, museums, nature centers, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, historical and cultural sites, commercial tour companies, and theme parks. Commercial and institutional members include those who provide services to the heritage interpretation industry.

The Association is divided into ten geographical regions to help members network with others who work near them through periodical newsletters and activities. Region 4, the Great Lakes Region, includes Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario.

NAI's Mission is to inspire leadership and excellence to advance heritage interpretation as a profession.
