### **NEWS FEATURE**

From: Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PARK PRESERVATION PARTNER WORKS ON NORTH MANITOU**

The Katie Shepard Hotel peaks through the trees as the park boat approaches the beach on North Manitou Island. This is the 13th year that national park partner, Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear (PHSB) and its volunteers have come to the island to repair historic structures. Their main focus has been restoring the Katie Shepard Hotel constructed in 1895 and operated as a hotel from 1908 to 1932. “Cottage Row”, a string of cottages built for summer tourists from Chicago between 1893 and 1924 is in the Island’s village not far from the dock. At the end of the row on the edge of wooded wilderness, sits the hotel - “Katie” as the group affectionately calls it.

From window restoration on the island’s cottages, stabilization of the Boardman Cottage porch, and providing a Historic Structures Report to the park for the Boardman (potentially Frank Lloyd Wright cottage), to the restoration of the hotel, the non-profit has brought their skills and expertise to the island that they apply annually to their park-approved project list on the mainland. This August, eight volunteers stayed on the island over a work week restoring all five exterior doors, completely sanding decades-old finish and restoring the beauty of the doors with a protective finish. The upstairs floor of varying wood types and widths were sanded of dirt and grime. A final finish coat applied on a second trip, added dramatically to the restoration, appearance, and protection of the floor for use.

A PHSB Concept Proposal toward the goal of an historic lease for the hotel, was approved in 2018 by Sleeping Bear Dunes Management based on first-floor only occupancy with egress, until a fire suppression system could be determined. A business plan was the next step, submitted by PHSB in 2021 to the park. Requirements have since changed, and the challenge now is how to equip the entire structure with fire suppression.

There are additional volunteer opportunities with PHSB this month on the mainland. Volunteers can help with a community painting work bee to paint the exterior of the Olsen Farmhouse with tentative dates of September 18-25; and building a horizontal fence around the old foundation of the Goffar Barn that was moved out of Narada Lake last year by the group. To learn more or sign up, email [phsbpark@gmail.com](mailto:phsbpark@gmail.com), or call 231-640-0148.

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