



MICHIGAN CARES FOR TOURISM RECEIVES PRESIDENT'S AWARD

America's State Parks Group honors Michigan Cares for Tourism with statewide organization award

French Lick, IN (September 8, 2016) - The National Association of State Park Directors today announced honorees for contributions and support of state parks and state park systems across the United States including Michigan Cares for Tourism. Honored with the President's Award, Michigan Cares for Tourism is a 100% volunteer, 100% give-back partnership created by Patty Janes, PhD, a professor at Grand Valley State University, and forged between Michigan tourism organizations Travel Michigan, Indian Trails, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

The mission of Michigan Care for Tourism is to unite groups to help restore Michigan's historic attractions, learn about the tourism destinations throughout the state, and network across industry segments, ultimately to enhance visitors' experience, and to be more involved professionals.

Next week the group will head to West Michigan to work on the Felt Mansion in Saugatuck Dunes State Park. The 98-year old mansion and carriage house are popular tourist destinations in need of the extra care that Michigan Cares for Tourism volunteers can provide.

Since 2014, nearly 900 tourism professionals from Destination Marketing Organizations, attractions, lodging properties, transportation organizations, parks and recreation sites, professional associations, universities and others have volunteered time and talents to support Michigan cares for Tourism "voluntourism" events. These efforts provide \$307,000 in labor and supply savings for Michigan's Department of Natural Resources at four historical locations, including Waterloo Recreation Areas' Historic Mill Lake, Belle Isle Park, the Sturgeon Point Lighthouse, and Fayette Historic State Park.

Indian Trails' motor coaches with stops along routes from the four corners of Michigan provide travel to and from the event at no charge to riders. When they arrive, participants enjoy the food and hospitality of the most unique places in the region, all planned by the host community, most often the Convention & Visitor Bureau, as a way to show off what makes their place special. In the past, this has included trout farm and glass bottom boat tours, a Detroit Tigers game, visits to museums and a Maple Syrup farm, and pace car rides at Michigan International Speedway.

After a busy day of adventure in Michigan's hidden tourism gems, the participants stay at the host lodging option, which provides a special Michigan Cares for Tourism rate.

The next morning, teams are randomly assigned and given their project for the day. Each host venue is responsible for creating the scope of work for the project, as well as the associated materials list and total volunteer capacity. This plan determines what each team will do for the day, and what MC4T needs to be donated prior to the event, as well as how many participants can register. The last two events have been sold out, with waiting lists.

Volunteer work may include basic manual labor tasks, such as brush clearing, painting and staining, but has also offered hand-on experience in plastering, archaeology and invasive species identification and eradication.

For additional information about Michigan Cares for Tourism visit www.MichiganCaresforTourism.com or icare@michigancaresfortourism.com.

Michigan Cares for Tourism is a volunteer partnership between Michigan tourism organizations. The goal is to breathe life into historic sites through volunteer clean-up efforts throughout Michigan, to help sustain Michigan's tourism industry for the future.

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Editor's Note: Images are available upon request.

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