

# CURIOSITIES

VOLUME XXXIX



2020 ISSUE 1

## THANK YOU JEFF DYKEHOUSE

As you chat with Jeff Dykehouse, Mackinac State Historic Parks' Curator of Natural History, he'll mention how lucky he's been. Lucky to have known the right people in the early 1980s when Old Mill Creek was being established. Lucky that Dave Armour, MSHP's deputy director at the time, didn't know any better naturalists. Lucky to have stuck around with the parks and raise a family in the Straits of Mackinac.

However, as the tens of thousands of school kids he's visited in classrooms since the early 1990s will tell you, and the few hundred staff he's supervised over the years will tell you, and the 4,063,771 people who have paid admission to visit a site managed by Dykehouse will tell you, it's Mackinac State Historic Parks who's been lucky to have him.

Dykehouse, who joined the permanent staff of MSHP in 1984, retired from the organization effective January 10, 2020. In his nearly 36 years with the organization he has held the titles of Unit Supervisor and Park Naturalist, Natural History Program Manager, Interpretive Specialist, Interpretation Supervisor and Chief Naturalist, and, finally, Curator of Natural History since 2007. He's also had his own education outreach program, "Water, Woods, and Wildlife," funded by Mackinac Associates, since 1992 that he's presented every winter.

"It's been a privilege. I've been lucky," Dykehouse said in his typically humble manner. "I always loved this area but didn't think I'd find full-time work here. I thought I'd be here a few years then end up with a school district downstate. It was such a great opportunity to live up here and raise a family here. It was a dream come true."

He managed Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park, first known as Old Mill Creek and later Historic Mill Creek, since its inception.



Jeff Dykehouse is retiring after nearly 36 years with the Mackinac State Historic Parks.

From 1989–2003 he managed Mill Creek and Colonial Michilimackinac, adding Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse to the list in 2004, and managed all three until 2007. He also oversaw staffing at the British Landing Nature Center on Mackinac Island for 14 years, managed the staff at the Mackinac Island State Park Visitor's Center for a season, and oversaw the final year of operation for the *Welcome*, in 1989.

Plans had begun in the mid-2000s to add the Adventure Tour, a high ropes course funded in part by Mackinac Associates that would require additional supervision, to Historic Mill Creek. Dykehouse made the decision to focus his attention on that site, was given the title of Curator of Natural History, and created a nice bookend to his career that saw him start and finish at Mill Creek.

The thing Dykehouse may be most proud of, though, is his education outreach program. Dykehouse brings Michigan's diverse ecosystem to the classroom while teaching the natural

history of the MSHP parks and spinning a web of life for students with taxidermy mounts, stories and activities. He's been to hundreds of classrooms in the past 27 years and has seen tens of thousands of students.

"I was jealous of Dennis (Havlena) and Jim Evans' program, when they tell me how much fun they'd have," Dykehouse said of "Historic Mackinac on Tour," another education program offered by MSHP and funded by Mackinac Associates. "Laurie (Jeff's wife) was teaching third grade at the time, and I asked her if I could experiment with her class. I tried it out, did one program, and the kids seemed to appreciate it. It's the most fun thing I do. It's really fun to sit down with kids and share my story.

"I can't thank Mackinac Associates enough. I couldn't have done the education programs without them," Dykehouse continued. "I am very grateful."

"Jeff's enthusiasm for the natural world was infectious. He not only has the knowledge,

Continued on page 2



The cocktail hour for the G. Mennen Williams Mackinac Celebration will be held at the Michigan Governor's Summer Residence.

## 2020 MEMBERS-ONLY EVENTS

An exciting calendar of members-only events is on tap for the 2020 season. The kick-off to the season, as usual, is the G. Mennen Williams Mackinac Celebration, scheduled for Saturday, June 20. As a special treat, the cocktail hour will be held at the Michigan Governor's Summer Residence in conjunction with the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mackinac Island State Park. Dinner will follow outside the Commanding Officer's Home at Fort Mackinac.

The annual Red, White & Blue Celebration will take place July 4 at the new Huron Road Rest Area and Pavilion next to Fort Mackinac. This patriotic celebration is free for members and a great way to kick off the holiday evening.

Finally, the 2020 annual meeting will be on Mackinac Island on Saturday, August 15. The location is still being determined, so watch [mackinacassociates.com](http://mackinacassociates.com) or check the monthly e-newsletter for more information.

# JEFF DYKEHOUSE

Continued from page 1

but is able to communicate it in an exciting and understandable way, to both his staff and our visitors,” said Steve Brisson, Mackinac State Historic Parks Deputy Director. “He is a star example of what a natural history interpreter should be and we were blessed to have him in charge of these programs.”

Dykehouse graduated from Hope College in 1974 and earned additional credit hours from Central Michigan University in biology. He worked at various parks around Michigan in the early ‘80s, and it was a stop at the Gillette Nature Center at P.J. Hoffmaster State Park in Muskegon that proved especially valuable.

“I had a connection there, a couple of naturalists near my home, near my high school,” Dykehouse said. “I was working on AV programs, and Dave Armour approached them about an AV program for a new park MSHP was developing, and Sandy (one of the naturalists) asked if I would help.”

“I met with Phil Porter and Dave in September of 1983 at Kenville’s Restaurant in Mackinaw City,” Dykehouse continued. “I started part-time in October of 1983 and full time in February, and Mill Creek opened on June 15, 1984. We had a ribbon cutting, and the Visitor’s Center and mill were constructed, and bagpipes led us down to the mill.”

As he’s overseen the site since the very beginning, Dykehouse has a special fondness



Jeff on site at Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park with a visiting Cub Scout group.

for Mill Creek. He was there on opening day, watched the construction of the British workshop and American Millwright’s Home in the 1980s and 1990s, watched active archaeology at the site, developed the interpretive nature trails, and dedicated his time fully to the site with the opening of the Adventure Tour.

“I’m proud I was there as long as I was,” Dykehouse says of Mill Creek. “We didn’t know at the time it would develop into what it became, and hopefully I’ve helped encourage the history of the site while also highlighting the natural history aspects of it.”

“The Adventure Tour changed the site as it emphasized natural history more than we had been,” Dykehouse said. “We had the trails, we had displays, we had a naturalist, but the Adventure Tour became a major attraction, a way to get people in the door. We were the first zip line in northern Michigan, and ours was unique. It’s a hike that emphasizes the layers of the forest. I’m proud of the fact it’s a nature hike. It stays true to our mission.”

With his connection to the natural history of northern Michigan and his years at Mill Creek, it’s almost easy to forget that Dykehouse spent nearly 20 years managing Colonial Michilimackinac and that he oversaw the reopening of Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse in 2004.

“We had a lot of interesting projects at Colonial Michilimackinac, and I was lucky

enough to be here for the reopening of the lighthouse,” Dykehouse said. “To reopen it authentically was cool, and we developed a lot of neat projects for kids.”

“When the Adventure Tour came, I needed to be there,” Dykehouse said. “I missed Colonial Michilimackinac and Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, and I missed the visitors and staff there. But, I said to myself, ‘I get to begin and end my career with Mill Creek, and I’m happy with that.’”

Looking back at a career that spans nearly four decades and choosing favorites, or things he’ll miss, is difficult. As he mentioned, he’s proud of his education outreach work and what’s been accomplished at Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park. He can’t believe that he was paid to go out and share his love of the outdoors and history with people who paid to be there. He’ll miss the daily interaction with guests. But there was one thing he kept circling back to when looking back at his career.

“I want to thank all of the staff I’ve worked with. I’ll miss these people,” Dykehouse said with a tear forming in his eye. “And I’m sure they’ll miss me, too.”

***Editor’s Note:** The board and staff of Mackinac Associates would like to say thank you to Jeff for always being a great advocate and supporter of Mackinac Associates, and we wish him well in his retirement. We look forward to seeing him around as a visitor and member!*



Jeff doing one of things he is most proud of – presenting his “Water, Woods, and Wildlife” program in a classroom.

## 2020 SPONSORSHIP INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE

Mackinac Associates is excited to introduce our new business sponsorship packages. We look forward to providing an opportunity for the business community to become more involved in what we do in a more coordinated way.

A variety of sponsorship levels and opportunities are available, which will be available on an annual basis. For 2020, the Mackinac Island State Park Commission and Mackinac Island State Park will be celebrating 125 years and the sponsorship package includes a few extra special events to commemorate this anniversary.

We look forward to your business joining us in protecting, preserving and presenting the rich historic and natural resources of the Straits of Mackinac.

Sponsorship information can be found at [mackinacassociates.com/sponsorship.htm](http://mackinacassociates.com/sponsorship.htm). If you have questions, or to discuss other giving or sponsorship options, please contact Michelle Walk, Membership and Grants Coordinator, at [walkm1@michigan.gov](mailto:walkm1@michigan.gov) or (231) 436-4100.

Deadline to be guaranteed to be included on all items listed in the sponsorship package for a given level is March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

## LEAVE A LEGACY

“Erin and I have been members of Mackinac Associates since our children were young. Our love of history has been passed on to our children and the family memories we have enjoyed are incalculable. The opportunity to serve on the board was one way to give back. Having the ability to pass on funds through our trust is a way to preserve the Straits Areas historical legacy for future generations. We are thrilled to join the Legacy Society and thank the staff and Board of Trustees of Mackinac Associates for creating this new opportunity to give.”

– *Feb and Erin Burns*



# DIRECTOR'S OUTLOOK

Every winter the Mackinac Island Airport serves as a crucial transportation link between the island and the mainland. During that uneasy time of the year when the ice is too thick for ferry boats and not strong enough for snowmobiles, flying is the only option. Today a well-equipped and modern facility, the Mackinac Island Airport began as a humble public works project during the Great Depression.

Aviation became increasingly popular in the 1920s. Technological advances in equipment and a growing interest in both military and civilian flying gave rise to new aircraft companies as more and more Americans took to the skies. Charles Lindberg thrilled the nation when he successfully completed his solo trans-Atlantic flight in May 1927 and demonstrated the powerful potential of air flight.

In the same year as Lindberg's flight, Mackinac Island State Park Commission superintendent Frank Kenyon recommended constructing an "airplane landing field" on Mackinac Island. Kenyon wanted a permanent facility to accommodate the airplanes that were occasionally landing on Haldimand Bay, Mission Point, and the Grand Hotel Golf Course.

Commission Chairman G.A. Hendricks supported the idea of an island landing field and, in 1928, suggested using a portion of the recently-purchased Early Farm. Kenyon visited the Grand Rapids Airport to get an idea of what it would take to construct such a facility and soon realized that building anything more than a grass field would be too expensive for the cash-strapped commission. Ironically, the Great Depression, which seriously diminished the commission's financial resources, provided the catalyst for the project.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) in 1933 to help alleviate the country's profound unemployment problem. Over the next two years FERA gave states and local governments over \$3 billion to develop public facilities. In Michigan, this provided funding for more than 50 new landing fields to accommodate air traffic across the state including Mackinac Island.

The Mackinac Island landing field was

a cooperative project between FERA and the Michigan State Board of Aeronautics. The location chosen for the field was generally flat and already partially cleared for an early 20<sup>th</sup> century landfill. The field, which measured 2,400 feet long by 400 feet wide, was dedicated on July 2 as part of Mackinac Island's "Tercentennial Celebration," commemorating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jean Nicolet passing through the Straits of Mackinac. Dedication ceremonies included an appearance by Governor William Comstock and a "flying exhibition of U.S. Army planes."

After the initial construction, little was done to improve the facility over the next several decades. However, the prosperity that Mackinac Island experienced in the 1950s and 60s set the stage for the eventual expansion and improvement of the airport. In April 1964, the



**"EVERY WINTER THE MACKINAC ISLAND AIRPORT SERVES AS A CRUCIAL TRANSPORTATION LINK BETWEEN THE ISLAND AND THE MAINLAND."**

– PHIL PORTER, DIRECTOR

state legislature authorized the commission to "acquire, construct, develop, improve, repair, maintain, and operate" a runway not to extend beyond 3,600 feet. Plans were finalized and construction of the new \$134,000 airport commenced in the summer of 1964 and the completed facility was dedicated in August 1965.

With financial support from state and federal partners, the Mackinac Island State Park Commission made significant improvements to the airport over the years. The terminal building was built in 1969, replacing the tiny, one-room shack with an oversized pot-bellied stove that served as the airport's waiting room. Runway lights were added in the 1970s to facilitate night operations, a parallel taxiway was constructed in 1988, and the Automated Weather Observing

System was installed two years later.

In 2011–12 the runway was entirely rebuilt in order to resolve multiple problems. The \$4.6 million project eliminated a view-blocking hump in the middle of the runway, permanently filled sinkholes caused by the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century landfill, and added a topcoat of asphalt known as a "porous friction course" which helped drain water from the landing surface.

Mackinac Island is one of the few state parks in the country that owns and operates a General Utility airport. While the operation of the airport provides a unique set of challenges, the facility has become an important resource that provides significant service to travelers and a valuable transportation service to island residents.



## PHOTO ALBUM

Snowmobiles had not yet taken over the island and horses were still king in the winter in the 1960s, as documented in this February 1965 view of Market Street. At the reins of the one-horse sledge is Harold Sack with Otto Lang and John Blowski as passengers. To the far left is the corner of the old Medical Center with Fort Mackinac in the distance.

## OPENING DAYS

Opening Day will be here before we know it. Mackinac State Historic Parks will be staggering the opening of its historic sites, and we hope to see many members on one or more of our opening days!

- **May 1** – Fort Mackinac, 9:00 a.m.
- **May 4** – The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, 10:00 a.m.
- **May 5** – Biddle House, featuring the Mackinac Island Native American Museum, 11:00 a.m.
- **May 6** – Colonial Michilimackinac, 9:00 a.m.
- **May 7** – Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, 9:00 a.m.
- **May 8** – Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park, 9:00 a.m.
- **June 6** – Historic Downtown Mackinac, 11:00 a.m.

## MACKINAC ASSOCIATES BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Peter Pellerito	President
Harriet McGraw	Vice President
Tom Lockwood	Secretary/Treasurer
Phil Porter	Administrative Agent
Michelle Walk	Membership Coordinator
Dominick Miller	Editor

• Jack Barnwell	• Ann Parrish
• Jeb Burns	• Todd Petersen
• Kathy Lieder	• Nancy Porter
• Wes Maurer	• Sheldon Smith
• Stephen Murray	• Skip Young

For membership information,  
call 231-436-4100

*Published by Mackinac Associates. Subscription is a membership benefit. Membership levels include Friend, \$70; Mackinac Heritage, \$85; Voyageur, \$95; Sentinel, \$200; Explorer, \$400; Commandant's Circle, \$650; Steward, \$1,000; Guardian, \$2,500; Patron, \$5,000; Benefactor, \$10,000. Other membership benefits include unlimited free admission to Colonial Michilmackinac, Fort Mackinac, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse and The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum; 15 percent merchandise and publications discount at the six Mackinac State Historic Parks' museum stores; invitation to Mackinac Associates special events; and discounted admission for member's guests (excluding Heritage level).*

MackinacAssociates.com



Mackinac Associates  
P.O. Box 567  
Mackinaw City, MI 49701

NON-Profit  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Lansing, MI  
Permit No. 1176

## THANK YOU TO THE GENEROUS DONORS THAT SUPPORTED US THIS FALL

### 2019 Fall Appeal - Kids'

#### Quarters at Fort Mackinac

Patrick Alguire  
Grace Armour  
Chris and Gretchen Bachman  
Kristen Baggott and Michael O'Brien  
David and Janet Bell  
Michael and Beth Benjamin  
Larry and Mary Kay Berke  
Peggy Bertok  
Russell and Darlene Boice  
Steve and Lisa Brisson  
Joseph and Karen Broski  
George Burrows  
Marlee Brown and Dan Musser  
Jeb and Erin Burns  
The Callewaert Family  
Dennis and Cynthia Cawthorne  
John and Sheryl Childs  
John and Barbara Chrisman  
Joe and Nancy Chrzanowski  
Richard W. Coble  
Stephanie Crane  
Katie Darrow  
Veronica Dobrowolski  
Craig Druskins  
Brian and Christina Findley  
Stan and Kelli Flory  
Mara Goetz-Froeschke and Steve Froeschke  
Wayne and Margo Gagnon  
John and Anne Gault  
Jeffrey and Melissa Gembis  
Gary and Gwen Gilmer  
Stephen G. and Mary Anna Harper  
Dan and Brenda Harvey  
Michael and Sharon Hegarty  
Ron and Brenda Hershberger  
Kristin Hildebrandt  
Burt and Debra Hirons  
Janis Holle  
Ted and Brenda Horton  
William and Elaine Horwath  
John and Robyn Iacoangeli  
Richard Jaeschke  
Robert and Marian Jaeschke  
Edgar and Audrey Jaggi  
Patrick and Robin Keeney

Frank J. Kelley  
Mary Kurzynowski  
Mike and Dawn Lapham  
Joann P. Leal  
Leonard and Nancy Litteral  
Tom and Annie Lockwood  
Peggy Lodholtz  
John and Barbara Lloyd  
Mackinac Island Butterfly House  
Walter and Renee Martin  
Bill and Danna Marvin  
Wes and Mary Maurer  
David and Margaret McCormick  
Vaughn and Harriet McGraw  
John and Joyce McKnight  
Pat and Vivian McTigue  
Blythe Metternich-Smith  
Neil Michaels  
Norman and Barbara Mieras  
David and Cynthia Monaghan  
Steve and Patti Moskwa  
Karen Murphy  
Stephen and Anne Murray  
Peter and Marta Olson  
Peter Pellerito and Lisa Brock  
Nancy Porter  
Phil and Valerie Porter  
Will and Steffanie Porter  
Charles and Cordelia Puttkammer  
Steven Radecki and Lauren Walsh  
Robert and Susan Raisch  
Scott Rausch  
Douglas and Carol Rearick  
Richard and Vicki Riel  
Daniel and Joann Root  
Bradley Simmons  
Sheldon and Sue Smith  
Gayle and Patricia Steele  
Perrin and Alice Stifel  
Michelle Stuck  
Bart and Laurie Stupak  
James Swan  
Dennis and Barbara Thomas  
Scott and Amy Vitek  
Michelle Walk  
Harold G. Warp  
Matthew and Ruth West  
Shannon Westblade

### Other Donations

Jeff and Barbara Arnold  
Karen Beauchemin  
Tom and Maryellen Byrum  
Gaspere and LuAnn Caledrino  
John and Sheryl Childs  
Crary Foundation  
Moirra Croghan  
Jeff and Laurie Dykehouse  
James and Lynn Evans  
Ruth Fitzgerald  
Daniel and Elizabeth Friedhoff  
Robert and Nancy Gleffe  
Patricia Grodecki  
David and Dottie Gubow  
Craig Harris and Meredith McLellan  
Ron and Brenda Hershberger  
HopkinsBurns Design Studio  
Richard Jaeschke  
Martin and Patricia Jahn  
Scott and Sandra Johnson  
Sherry Kammer  
Thom and Martha Lustik  
Mackinac State Historic Parks  
Staff Reunion Committee  
Michael and Mary Mabry  
Michael and Dorothy Madden  
Lisa Patrell  
Ken and Maria Phillips  
Paul and Diane Richards  
Joan Scheel  
Bradley Simmons  
Matthew and Ruth West  
Susan Wilder  
Kyle and Tisha Zelter

### 2019 Collections Donors

Clark Blosswick  
Steven Brisson  
George Burrows  
Gill Chamberlain  
John Donnelly Jr.  
David Doss  
Dr. Lynn Evans  
Tom Farnquist  
Steve Harold  
Lorraine Hartley  
Kay Hoppenrath  
Brian Jaeschke  
Harold Kriesche  
Jennifer Maples  
Linda Mastin  
Pam Misch-Silliman  
Deborah O'Donnell  
Deborah Orr  
Scott Rausch  
Richard and Victoria Riel  
Donna Sinks  
Dr. Keith Widder  
Tom Wille  
Craig Wilson  
Stanley D. Young

Visit us online at [MackinacAssociates.com](http://MackinacAssociates.com)