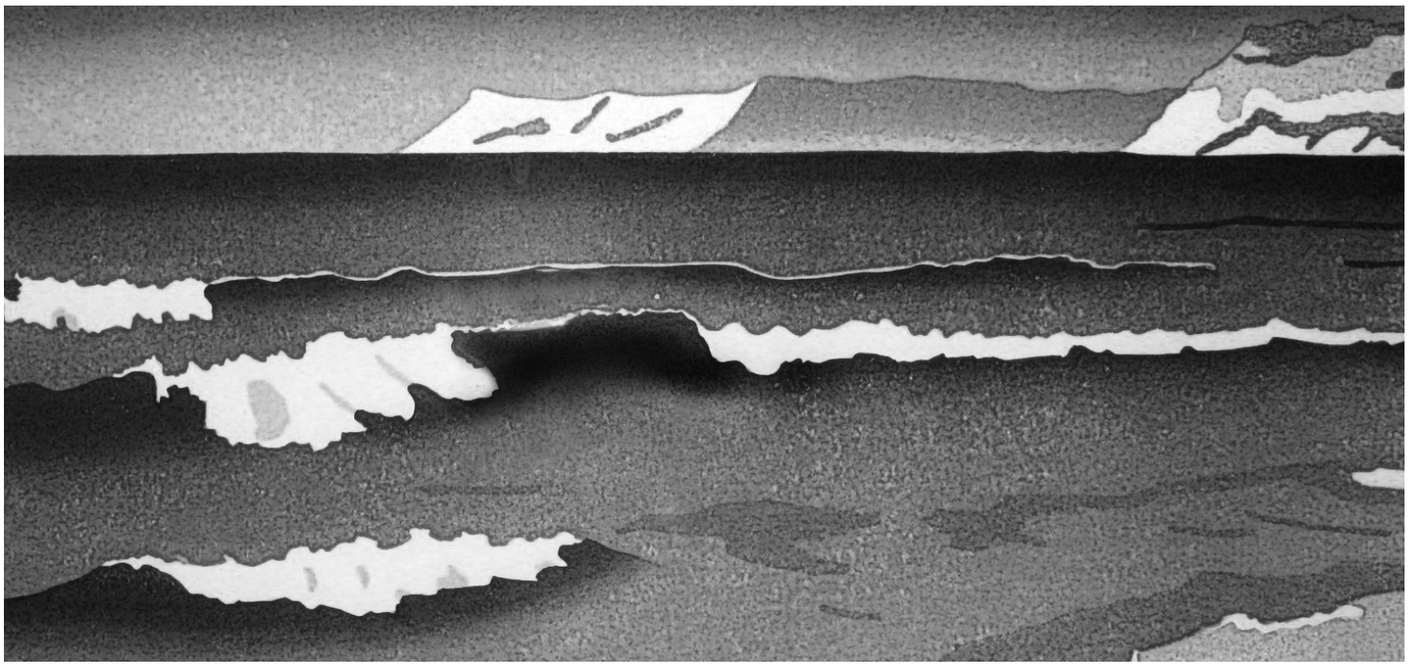
Sleeping Bear Dunes

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sleeping Bear Dunes
National Lakeshore



Artist-in-Residence Program

Since 1993, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore has hosted an Artist-in-Residence program. Artists have had a long-standing influence on the formation, expansion, and direction of our national parks. By painting landscapes of the American West, 19th century artists publicized many of the natural wonders of a land little known to eastern residents. This body of work helped to stimulate the establishment of many of our national parks and to foster a continuing appreciation of them. Today's artists continue to document the resources of the National Park System with contemporary approaches and techniques, drawing upon the scenic, historic, and cultural elements of the parks for inspiration. These artists translate the parks' purpose as places of pleasure and preservation into images that bring other people new insights, enjoyment, and understanding.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is located in the northwest corner of Michigan's lower peninsula. It stretches 35 miles along Lake Michigan's east coast between the towns of Frankfort and Leland. Traverse City lies 25 miles to the east. North and South Manitou Islands which lie a few miles offshore are included within the Lakeshore's boundaries. The picturesque National Lakeshore is ideally suited for an Artist-in-Residence program. It is a hilly region fringed with massive coastal plateaus and sand dunes, and dotted with clear lakes. It is a diverse landscape, with many features derived from the glacial times when vast ice sheets covered the land. It embraces quiet, tree-lined streams, imposing beech-maple forests, and rugged bluffs towering as high as 400 feet above Lake Michigan. The National Lakeshore's cultural history includes prehistoric use by American Indians, lake steamer fueling stations, logging, farming, commercial fishing, lighthouses, U.S. Life-Saving Stations, and other maritime activities. Because the National Lakeshore offers so many varied cultural and natural resources, it is an ideal location for creative endeavor. The beauty and serenity of the land and water are inspiring.

Anita Belmore Skehen, 2006

The Program

The Artist-in-Residence program is open to professional American writers, composers and visual artists, whose work can be influenced and enhanced by this superb Michigan scene. It provides resident artists the opportunity to capture the moods of Sleeping Bear Dunes in their particular media. The program provides rent-free use of either a campsite, or house. Two 3-week time blocks are available each year: one in September and one in October. The artist is asked to donate an original piece of work (it must be framed or mounted), representative of their media, produced during the residency, and to contribute to the advancement of the park's mission. This is done by sharing knowledge with the public during the final week of the residency through a demonstration, reading, slide talk, etc. In addition, the artist must be willing to interact with park visitors when contacts are made in the field while working. Donated works will be displayed in the park or shared with the public through other appropriate means and these works will characterize the Lakeshore for present and future generations. Offering the public an opportunity to experience our national heritage through the eyes, ears, and talents of the contributing artists fulfills one of the program's main purposes.

Accommodations

The resident artist may choose between two housing options. The first is a park house, with modern amenities, including water and heat. Stove, refrigerator, microwave, and cooking/eating utensils are provided, but phone, television or washer/dryer are not. The second option is a campsite in one of our mainland campgrounds.

Weather in September and October can range from sunny and 75° to cold, wet, and windy.

Artists need to provide transportation, personal gear, bedding, food, and art supplies. Food is available in stores in Empire and other nearby towns. Art, photo and other supplies are available in Traverse City (25 miles). Artists are expected to leave the accommodations neat and clean and to comply with all park regulations and standards governing employees and visitors.

Artists should be in good health, and self-sufficient.

Selection Process

A jury of park representatives and local subject-matter experts will select from the pool of applicants. Selections will be made solely on the basis of merit, how their work can advance the mission of the National Park Service and Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, and without regard to race, religion, sex, marital status, age or national origin. Winners are announced by the beginning of June.

Lucille Nawara, 1998

How to Apply

Applications for the program must be postmarked or delivered to the park no later than April 15. The selections will be made and all applicants notified of the outcome by early June.

An application must include the following items, contained in a single envelope or padded mailer:

1. Resume of no more than two pages (4 copies).
2. Appropriate sample of recent work:

   For visual artists–eight 35mm slides in standard mounts or eight images on a CD or DVD (PC compatible) which must be labeled. Label slides with your name, medium, image size, and indicate the top of the slide please.

   For composers - a cassette, CD, or DVD (PC compatible) recording.

   For writers and journalists–4 copies of a brief (6-page maximum) manuscript excerpt, short story, essay, poem, or other work.
3. Statement of what you hope to gain from a residency at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, your willingness to present a program for the public, and your ability to interact with visitors while at work in the field (4 copies).
4. Preference for period of residence (September or October) and accommodation (house or campsite).

PLEASE NOTE: No submissions sent to the park will be returned to the artist.

For further information, you may visit our website at www.nps.gov/slbe/parkmgmt/artistinresidence.htm, or call us at (231) 326-5134.

To submit an application, send your materials to

Artist-in-Residence Program
Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore
9922 Front St., Empire, Michigan 49630

Artist Susan Henshaw during her residency in 2005.

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