



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE GRAND TRAVERSE ISLANDS NEXT UP IN SPEAKER SERIES

The Door County Maritime Museum's Maritime Speaker Series continues Thursday, Feb. 4, with a presentation on recent efforts to encourage the creation of a national park in the Grand Traverse Islands. The program will be presented by John Bacon, chairman of the Friends of the Grand Traverse Islands, at the Sturgeon Bay museum beginning at 7 p.m.

The islands, stretching from Northern Door County to Upper Michigan's Garden Peninsula are perhaps, as Bacon puts it, "Door County's best kept secret." They are not only home to five 19th century lighthouses and a U.S. Life Saving Service station, but they provide a critical habitat for many rare plants and animals and comprise the most striking example of the Niagara Escarpment in the United States.

The area is so unique, in fact, that the idea of a national park there is not new. In 1970, the U.S. Department of the Interior recommended the area for protection and recreational enjoyment in its landmark "Islands of America" report. But early efforts to protect the area lost steam in the 1980s.

Now, over three decades later, the idea of a national park in the Grand Traverse Islands is back in the spotlight and starting to regain momentum. "No project of this scale is ever going to happen overnight," said Bacon. "But the need is there - now more than ever. And so are the reasons. This is the right path forward for the Grand Traverse Islands and if we can show our representatives that we care and keep the conversation alive it can really happen!"

The Maritime Speaker Series continues Thursday, March 3, when author Joan Forsberg will delve into one of the great mysteries of the Great Lakes with a talk related to her new book "The Wreck of the Griffon," Robert LaSalle's 17-century sailing ship that disappeared following a voyage to the Grand Traverse Islands.

Also, a program has been added for April. Bruce Lynn, Executive Director of the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society, and Chris Winters will present "The Legend Lives On," based on their book on the remarkable legacy of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*. The presentation is Thursday, April 7, and will help close out the museum's tribute exhibit to the Great Lakes' most famous shipwreck later in the month.

Maritime Speaker Series programs are free of charge with a nonperishable food donation requested. Call (920) 743-5958 or visit www.dcomm.org for more information.

Photo Caption: Pottawatomie Lighthouse, Rock Island by Mark Lee

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