

Dear Massachusetts Forest & Parks Friend's Network,

I would like to thank you, and all of the friends of Scusset beach who voted for me, that allowed me to be chosen the DCR friend of the year. I consider it a great honor. I also would like to apologize for not being able to be here today to accept this award, but I had a previous commitment that I needed to be at.

I would first like to congratulate Paul Loiselle on his award as volunteer of the year. Paul is a great sounding board for me on friend's projects and dedicates numerous unseen hours to the Friends of Scusset Beach and the reservation itself. Congratulations Paul.

When I came to Scusset Beach as supervisor in 2004, one of the first things I noticed was how many people were connected to this beautiful reservation. As we started to renew the facility, I had so many people come to me, to not only recognize the work the new staff was putting in, but to ask how they could help. I knew I need a way to channel all this energy. When the idea of a friends group was brought up one New Years Eve, by Shawme Crowell supervisor Les Perry and several dedicated winter campers, I knew we had found that channel. I have not been disappointed.

The Friends of Scusset Beach seem to have boundless energy. From creating the group, to establishing a website, to fund raising, and to our two major projects so far, this group has worked tirelessly and unselfishly to improve Scusset Beach for the hundreds of thousands of people who visit every year.

They are just a tremendous group of people, who have not only become Friends of the reservation, but have become my friends. They continue to inspire me as the work of renewing the reservation goes on. I want to thank them all for their dedication.

In closing, I urge all the friends groups and the network to continue their hard work on behalf of our facilities. In these uncertain economic and budgetary times, when more people than ever are visiting our special places, your support and help are invaluable to the department and to supervisors like myself, as we strive to deliver first class service to the patrons of Massachusetts state parks. Thank you.

John DeCosta

(Sent to the Friends Network by Linda Porazzo 10/16/2011)