THE INDIANA DUNES

Visitors can enjoy Indiana Dunes State Park in a wide variety of ways. From campsites and picnic shelters and picnic areas, more than 16 miles of hiking trails, a swimming beach, and the Nature Center are available for visitors’ use and are operated with visitor safety in mind. During the summer season, a beach pavilion provides shelter, restrooms with outside showers only, a snack bar, and gift shop. Dunes Nature Preserve, encompassing 1,530 acres and located within the boundaries of the state park, provides visitors with an opportunity to explore pristine and unique landscapes.

Indiana Dunes State Park features a wide variety of habitats, including beach, sand dunes, black oak forest, wetlands, and dune grass. Together, these areas contain some of the most diverse flora and fauna in the Midwest. Botanists from across the country enjoy studying the unusual collection of plant life. In fact, it was here that Henry Cowles, known to many as the “father of ecology,” defined the dune climax communities in the early 1900s. As a result of his work, Indiana Dunes became known as “the birtheplace of ecology.”

The dunes provide an opportunity to explore an exciting and ever-changing landscape. In several areas, huge “living” or “moving” dunes are slowly being blown inland, burying forests as they go. A prime example can be seen from Trail 9.

Other interesting features include “tree graveyards” (places where forests have been buried by sand and then, more recently, re-exposed by wind erosion). “Tree graveyards” can be seen near Big Blowout, near Trail 10. The Indiana Dunes area is also renowned throughout the Midwest for its birding. Visit the Nature Center to ask about good birding locations.

Indiana Dunes State Park is surrounded by Indiana Dunes National Park, a federally administered park comprising approximately 15,000 acres. For more information about the National Park, write: Indiana Dunes National Park, 1100 N. Mineral Springs Rd., Porter, IN 46304; or call (219) 926-7561.

This is your park

Visitors shall observe the following rules, which are designed to fulfill the purpose for which state parks were established, namely, to preserve a primitive landscape in its natural condition for the public’s use and enjoyment.

Please let wild animals remain wild. Feeding is prohibited. Feeding of wild animals can result in harm to both animals and people. Animals who depend on handouts become a nuisance to visitors and a danger to themselves. Please lock up all food and coolers inside cars or campers. Roll up car windows tightly.

ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES

ACTIVITIES FOR MORE INFORMATION

stateparks.IN.gov

For a complete list of rules and regulations, inquire at park office.

Birding—Excellent spring and fall migration opportunities. See Nature Center for current sightings.

Camping—Campground has two comfort stations that are equipped with flush toilets, hot water and showers. 140 campsites with 50 amp. service can accommodate camping structures up to 50 feet long. Occasional fire limits are limited to 14 consecutive nights. Reservations are available through the Central Reservation System.

Concession & Campground Grocery—Open summer months. Wood, ice, picnic supplies and groceries available.

Cross-country Ski Trails—Ski trails are provided for people with their own equipment. Ski rentals are not available.

Interpretive Naturalist Service—Explore the world of natural resources while enjoying interpretive and recreational programs. Program schedules are available at InterpretiveServices.IN.gov or by calling (219) 926-1390.

Nature Center—Natural and cultural history displays, wildlife observation room, library and audio visual presentations are available.

Picnic Areas—Tables, grills, toilet facilities, playground equipment and shelters. Reservations for shelters available through the Central Reservation System.

Refreshment Facilities—Restuarant, rooftop bar and grill, concession stand, and gift shop are available at the beach pavilion.

Swimming—Swimming permitted in designated area when lifeguard on duty. Free beach. Restrooms and beach open from Saturday before Memorial Day to no later than Labor Day. Clothing is required.

Youth Tent Camping—For organized youth groups under adult supervision in designated areas. Advance reservations necessary. Reservations available through the Central Reservation System.

Dnr Properties NearbY

• Potato Creek State Park--boating, boat ramp, bridle trails, fishing, ice fishing, interpretive service, interpretive center, hiking trails, mountain bike, playground, camping, bike and boat rental, swimming, wildlife watching

• Hoosier Prairie Nature Preserve—1 mile hike trail and parking

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The programs, services, facilities, and activities of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources are available to everyone. DNR prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information please write to: Department of Natural Resources, 100 N. Kerr Bldg., Indianapolis, IN 46204; or call (317) 233-3046.

The Indiana Dunes State Park has to offer at stateparks.IN.gov. Subscribe to Outdoor Indiana magazine today, visit www.outdoorindiana.com for more information.

Indiana Dunes State Park is one of the great state parks in the Midwest for its birding. Visit the Nature Center to ask about good birding locations. The best trail for early spring flowers and ferns. Climax forest is used for cross-country skiing during the winter season.

Trail 3

0.75 miles Moderate

Provides an opportunity to view succession in dunes area. Excellent for late spring wildflowers, including prickly pear cactus.

Trail 4

0.75 miles Moderate

Through dunes area covered with black oak forest.

Trail 7

1.1 miles Moderate

Similar to Trail 4. Most direct route from nature center to beach.

Trail 8

1.5 miles rugged

Doesn’t include the top of the three highest dunes of the Indiana Dunes.

Trail 9

3.75 miles rugged

Provides best representative view of the dunes. Good view of lake.

Trail 10

5.5 miles moderate

Hikers are rewarded by stands of white pine and a “free graveyard” in Big Blowout. A good morning hike.

Please stay on marked trails. Always bring enough water.

Calumet Trail

The Calumet Trail is a 9.2-mile trail designed for bicycling, jogging, hiking and cross-country skiing. It lies adjacent to Indiana Dunes State Park and passes through Indiana Dunes National Park, providing a link to several points of interest. The Calumet Trail was developed on land leased from the Northern Indiana Public Service Company. It lies within the company’s utility corridor, and was developed with the assistance of the Northern Indiana Public Service Company and the National Park Service.

For a list of park events, visit interpretservices.IN.gov

Indiana Dunes State Park

Indiana Dunes State Park means primitive, beautiful, historic and amazing landscape, unique in the Hoosier state. With more than 3 miles of beautiful beach along Lake Michigan’s southern shore, the park’s 2,182 acres are located at the north end of State Road 49 in Porter County. In the early 1900s, scientists, conservationists, and nature enthusiasts, recognizing the value and potential of the area, fought to have the region preserved. As a result, in 1925, the state park was established. This is a special place. We hope you’ll take the time to explore its many fascinating features.

All alcoholic beverages are prohibited within the boundaries of Indiana Dunes State Park except in designated areas. Fines or arrest could occur for violations.

Please carry out all trash you produce in order to keep your park clean and beautiful for others to enjoy!