

Indiana Dunes State Park

2017/2018 School Program Planning Guide

Indiana Dunes State Park, established in 1925 as Indiana's fourth State Park, is located in Porter County. It consists of 2,182 acres of primitive, historical, and amazingly unique Hoosier landscape. Some of the most diverse flora and fauna of the Midwest reside in its sand dunes, beaches, marshes, swamps, savannas, and woodlands. Three miles of beach afford spectacular views of Lake Michigan and more than 16 miles of hiking trails are available year-round and lead visitors through a variety of habitats. Trails range in difficulty from easy to rugged. Picnic areas are located throughout the park with tables, charcoal grills, toilet facilities, playground equipment, shelters, and play fields.

Picnic shelters can be reserved for a fee by calling **1-866-6-CAMP-IN** or online at **camp.in.gov**. Otherwise, they are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Tent camping is available for organized youth groups under adult supervision.

The Interpretive Naturalist Service of the park has been introducing visitors to the dunes since 1931. Naturalists currently operate out of the park's Nature Center, where a spacious auditorium, updated exhibits, live animals, and wildlife observation area delight visitors year-round. The following programs can be reserved for your group. Additional programs on other topics can often be designed to meet your specific needs and the needs of your students. All times are for one class; groups with more than 25 usually require splitting up into more than one group. More information can be found by calling the Nature Center at **219-926-1390** or by visiting **stateparks.in.gov**.

Sense-ational Journey

Goal: To increase student awareness of the dunes environment by encouraging utilization of multiple senses.

Students will learn to hone their senses and how to use them to their advantage. They will also discover how animals use senses to help them survive in this discovery nature hike.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: Preschool- 2nd grade

Min./Max. group size: 10/30 per hike

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 60 minutes per group.

Fee: \$1.00 per student

Note: Reservations can be made between six months and two weeks of your planned visit. In lieu of paying a standard gate to enter the park, scheduled groups simply pay a per person program fee the day of the program. Groups arriving 20 minutes or more late must call the Interpretive Services or reservation will be cancelled.

Who Goes Where?

Goal: To help students learn about park wildlife, habitats, and food chains.

Like pieces of a puzzle, many plants and animals come together to make one perfect picture. Students see this demonstrated by exploring the parts of various park habitats and food chains. Live animals are used in this program. Weather permitting, an exploratory hike through different habitats can be offered for an additional \$1.00 per person fee. This is our most popular program!

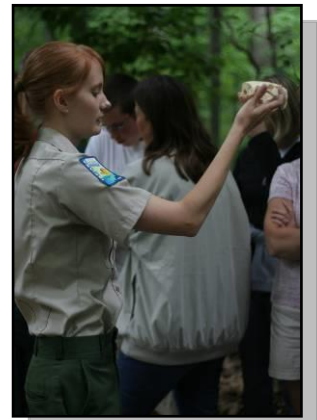
Program availability: Year-round

Age group: Kindergarten – 7th grade

Min./Max. group size: 10/50 indoors (30 on hike)

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 60 minutes per group

Fee: \$1.00 per student includes the indoor presentation only.



Birds of the Indiana Dunes

Goal: To introduce students to the magnitude of bird migration along the Indiana Dunes and our connection to our winged friends.

Students will be introduced to bird watching along with discovering the characteristics of birds. Students will learn to identify birds through interactive activities. Emphasis on the importance of the dunes area to breeding and migratory birds is given. Bird banding is demonstrated and allows students up close looks at live, wild birds. This program is done in collaboration with Indiana Audubon Society staff.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: First – 12th grade

Min./Max. group size: 10/40

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

Fee: \$2.00 per student



Cold-Blooded Animals

Goal: To help student recognize the difference between cold-blooded and warm-blooded animals that live in the dunes.

Students will learn the difference between amphibians and reptiles. Students will get a chance to look at different types of cold-blooded animals and discover what adaptations these animals have to survive.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: Kindergarten – 7th grade

Min./Max. group size: 10/50 indoors

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

Fee: \$1.00 per student

Discover Wetlands

Goal: Students will discover the importance of both living and non-living components of a wetland ecosystem.

Students will explore the depths of the wetland and identify macro-invertebrates to determine the quality of the water. Students will learn the importance of wetlands and discover what makes them such a great place for both plants and animals.

Program availability: April-September

Age group: 3rd grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/30

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

Fee: \$1.00 per student

Winter Alive!

Goal: Students will experience and learn about the beauty and ecology of the dunes winter landscape and how animals prepare for the long dune winter.

Explore the beauty of the winter woods during a nature hike after viewing an indoor slide show focusing on animal adaptations. Learn how plants and animals adapt to winter. Weather permitting; we will end with a short hike.

Program availability: Fall/Winter

Age group: Kindergarten and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/50 indoors (30 on hike)

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

Fee: \$1.00 per student

Lost on Lake Michigan!

Goal: Students are introduced to Indiana's often unknown maritime history and our cultural ties to Lake Michigan.

Through this interactive program, students learn about the tragedy of the J.D. Marshall and our dependence on Great Lakes shipping yesterday and today. Students end with a memorial bell ringing to remember the lives lost.



Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 3th grade and up (great 4th grade history topic!)

Min./Max. group size: 10/50 (indoors)

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

Fee: \$1.00 per student

A Walk through Ecologic Time

Goal: To help students explore the concept of ecological succession and learn to identify different stages of succession based on the presence of different plants and animals.

This hike is based on Professor Henry Cowles' work with succession in the late 1800's at the dunes. Students will hike inland, watching the landscape change before their eyes, from open beach to thick forests, and everything in between!

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 5th grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/30

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Pavilion/Trail #3, 60 minutes per group. 60 minutes.

Fee: \$1.00 per student

Fire on the Prairie!

Goal: To introduce students to the significance of natural resources management and tools used by park staff to preserve the park's ecosystems.

Natural areas such as those in the park take a lot to maintain their ecological integrity. Students discover the challenges of maintaining healthy ecosystems and the tools we use to do it during this illustrated program and activity. If weather permits, a demonstration prescribed fire is shown for students.



Program availability: Spring/Fall

Age group: 4th grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/50 (indoors)

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group

Fee: \$1.00 per student



High Dunes or Bust!

Goal: Students are introduced firsthand to the highest sand dunes in Indiana and the habitats supported on top.

Strap on your hiking shoes for this rugged hike to the top of the highest sand dune in Indiana, Mt. Tom! We'll explore the special plants and animals along the way, as well as the creation of these Midwest marvels.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 3th grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/30

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 60-70 minutes per group

Fee: \$1.00 per student

Scatology 101

Goal: Students learn first hand some of the branches of biology that researchers use to study the animals of the dunes.

Don't stick up your nose! Explore the science of animal scat and tracks during this hands on hour of fun! An optional hike is also offered after the program.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 3th grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/40 (indoors)

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group indoors.

Fee: \$1.00 per student.

Just a Few Furs

Goal: Students learn the diversity of mammals that make the dunes their home.

Mammals make up one unique group of animals that live in the dunes. Learn about their characteristics as well as the ID of several species of fur bearing animals that make this place home.

Program availability: Year-round

Age group: 2nd grade and up

Min./Max. group size: 10/40 (indoors)

Location & length: Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center, 45-60 minutes per group indoors.

Fee: \$1.00 per student.

