

Sleeping Bear Dunes

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sleeping Bear Dunes
National Lakeshore



Winter Activities

www.nps.gov/slbe

Nature transforms Sleeping Bear Dunes from season to season, and winter provides the opportunity to experience this wonderful landscape with fresh eyes. The trails, scenic views and popular destinations are all still here, just embellished with a new look. The days are shorter, the pace is slower and crowds are never an issue during the winter months. Yet, activities are abundant and the Lakeshore remains a wonderful place to explore.

The **Philip A. Hart Visitor Center** in Empire is a great place to start your visit and to find out more about the park's features and facilities. Rangers provide information and Park Entrance Passes and brochures are available. Accessible parking is provided to the exhibits, auditorium, and bookstore, and a captioned multimedia presentation introduces visitors to the park. Facilities including restrooms, water fountain, and telephone are all accessible, and an assistive listening system is available. The Visitor Center is open seven days a week, year-round, and winter hours are 8:15-4:00. It is located on M-72 just east of the intersection with M-22.

Please exercise caution! The lakeshore offers fascinating winter activities, but freezing temperatures, as well as slippery and unstable surfaces, create hazards. Ice formations along the Lake Michigan shoreline may be tempting to explore but are dangerous. Do not cross steep snow-covered dunes. Avalanche is possible.

- **Snowshoeing** is permitted on all snow-covered dunes, fields, and forests in the Lakeshore, although it is recommended that you stay on well-marked pathways. If you are snowshoeing along a cross-country ski trail, please stay off to the side of the skiers' tracks.
- **Guided Snowshoe Hikes** with a ranger are offered during the winter holidays and Saturdays during January and February. Hikes start at the Philip A. Hart Visitor Center at 1:00 pm. Bring your own snowshoes or try out those available for use on the hikes. Rangers will first provide basic snowshoeing instructions and then everyone will drive to the trailhead. During the snowshoe hike, rangers will share interesting facts about the park's unique features. Dress in layers and plan to be outside until about 3:00 pm, then return borrowed snowshoes to the Visitor Center. Not only is snowshoeing easy, fun, and good exercise, it is also an activity that can be enjoyed by all ages. The ranger-led hikes are mildly strenuous, yet they proceed at a leisurely pace for approximately one and a half miles. This allows visitors an opportunity to look for signs of wildlife or evidence of ancient glaciers or to simply experience a winter wonderland. The National Lakeshore has a limited supply of snowshoes and will provide them free of charge. Participants need only purchase the Park Entrance Pass to join in the fun. Space is limited, so please call **231-326-5134**, extension 328 for more details and to make reservations.
- **Cross Country Skiing** opportunities are plentiful as popular hiking trails turn into snow-covered paths. Designated trails for cross country skiing include Old Indian, Platte Plains, the Shauger Hill portion of the Scenic Drive Ski Trail, Windy Moraine, Alligator Hill, Bay View, and Good Harbor Bay. Maps are available at the Visitor Center in Empire and at the trailheads. Please note that these trails are not groomed, and for safety purposes it is always recommended that you ski with another person.
- **Pets** are not allowed on designated ski trails from December 1 through March 31. Pets on a 6' leash are allowed on Empire Bluff, Pyramid Point, and Duneside Accessible trails throughout the year. Pets on a 6' leash are also allowed on the roadway portion (but not on the Shauger Hill Trail portion) of the Scenic Drive Ski Trail.
- **Sledding** is permitted only at the Dune Climb in the designated area when it is covered with snow. Sleds, toboggans, saucer sleds, inflatable tubes or similar equipment as well as downhill skis and ski boards are prohibited at all other sand dunes in the National Lakeshore.
- **Camping** is available at the Platte River Campground. Snowshoe and ski access is also available to the White Pine and Valley View backcountry campsites.
- **Ice fishing** in compliance with State of Michigan regulations is permitted.

Snowmobiling is not permitted on park lands or waters.

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Trail Information

Trail	Total Distance	Hiking Trail Description	Designated X-Country Ski Trail	Leashed Pets Allowed?
1. Old Indian Trail	3.5 Miles Two loops	Easy. Woods. View of Lake Michigan.	Yes	No Pets 12/1– 3/31
2. Platte Plains Trail	14.7 Miles Several loops	Easy Longer hikes. Near small lakes. Fairly flat, woods, low dunes.	Yes	No Pets 12/1– 3/31
3. Empire Bluff Trail	1.5 Miles Round trip	Moderate. Short hike up hill to Lake Michigan overlook.	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
4. Windy Moraine Trail	1.5 Miles One Loop	Moderate. Hilly, views of Glen Lake and surrounding hills.	Yes	No Pets 12/1– 3/31
5. Scenic Drive Ski Trail (Includes Shauger Hill)	8.0 Miles Several Loops	Moderate. Hilly, woods.	Shauger Hill Trail Section <u>is</u> Designated. Scenic Drive Section <u>is not</u> Designated.	No Pets 12/1– 3/31 on Shauger Hill Trail
6. Cottonwood Trail	1.4 Miles One Loop	Moderate. Some hills, some loose sand, scenic overlook.	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
7. The Dunes Trail	3.5 Miles Round trip	Extremely strenuous. Long difficult hike in loose sand to Lake Michigan. Very hilly, no shade, no water.	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year No Pets on Dune Climb
8. Duneside Accessible Trail	0.9 Miles Round trip	Accessible to visual, hearing, mobility impaired. Hard packed surface, benches. Flat, wooded, pond. Nature information.	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
9. Sleeping Bear Point Trail	2.8 Miles One Loop	Strenuous. Hilly, loose sand to Lake Michigan View and Access.	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
10. Alligator Hill Trail	9.0 Miles Several loops	Strenuous. Uphill, woods. Lake Michigan & Glen Lake overlooks.	Yes	No Pets 12/1– 3/31
11. Bay View Trail	8.0 Miles Three loops	Moderate. Hilly, woods, fields, Lake Michigan views.	Yes	No Pets 12/1– 3/31
12. Pyramid Point Trail	2.7 Miles Round Trip	Moderate. Hilly, woods. Overlooks Manitou Islands.	Not Designated	Leashed Pets Allowed All Year
13. Good Harbor Bay Trail	2.8 Miles One Loop	Easy. Flat, woods, wet in places. Near Lake Michigan.	Yes	No Pets 12/1– 3/31

Park Pass required for all uses of park lands and waters. The Scenic Drive is closed to vehicle traffic in the winter to allow cross country skiing; parking is at the Shauger Hill trailhead. Pets are permitted on trails on 6' held leash, except on designated ski trails December 1 through March 31.