



Dunes Echo

Summer 2020 (June, July and August) ~ Vol. XIV, #2

Enhancing the Visitor Experience Today and Tomorrow

Spring - Challenging Yet Productive

By Angel Gochee-Goins, Chair

Is it really Summer? Hard to believe it with all that has happened in the last three months. Winter brought little snow and mild temperatures, thus no shelf ice. Spring brought heavy northern winds and rainstorms. A deadly combination for the southern shores of Lake Michigan. The result - numerous beach areas in both parks experiencing considerable shoreline erosion.

The Covid-19 pandemic closed Indiana Dunes National and State Parks, halted environmental education camps at the Dunes Learning Center (DLC) and produced the most unusual Native Plant Sale in its 24-year history. However, through it all, your Friends Board has been fluid and has kept very busy.

This year, the Native Plant Sale was offered as orders only with no day of sale purchasing. Our loyal customers gladly adapted to the numerous changes and emails of “plants not available so please change your order”, “the pick-up date being moved two weeks later to work within the State guidelines”, and “schedule your plant pick-up time to keep the number of customers doing curb side to fewer than ten”. We dealt with face masks, gloves, new pick-up location (thanks goodness we have the Friends new house/office) and not a single complaint. In fact, many of our customers donated their refund checks back to us and sent thank you’s for a job well done. A huge cheer of appreciation to our members who volunteered to help with the Native Plant Sale. Our treasurer Zella Olson says our profit is comparable to last year – amazing!!!

The Friends Board has been working regularly in small groups at the house/office. The old carpeting was removed, the walls repaired and painted, toilet replaced, and the new water-resistant laminate floors are being installed this week. The National Park, the DLC and several Board members have donated office furniture and supplies. However, we are sad to report that the Friends house was broken into last week and the two computers donated to us from the DLC were stolen. The National Park’s Visitor and Resource Protection rangers are investigating. Our secretary Kathy Wilder had just left and then returned shortly to find the front door standing open. The good news was no one was harmed and besides the theft only a window was broken.

Our newsletter editor Cliff Goins, has volunteered to take on our social media presence. With help from Geof Benson of the DLC, the Friends have updated our website (dunefriends.org) and revamped our Facebook page. Please take a few moments to look at all the improvements. During the order period for the plant sale, we posted a Plant of the Day and now have a Take a Hike Tuesday event on our Facebook page. Followers have increased by 25%. This is also a great way to share what our partners are doing as well as inform the public of all the wonderful things the Friends are sponsoring. Some of our most shared posts have been items we have purchased to help the National and State Parks’ enhance the visitor experience. The State Park is now able to offer virtual programs on their Facebook page since the Friends purchased a GoPro action camera for their use.

The Friends partnered with the National Park’s Resource Management staff to write and submit a NIPSCO Environmental Action Grant. The requested funds will be used to develop pollinators gardens at the Headquarters complex and the Douglas Center. The goals are to create local genotype seed beds as well increase the number of native pollinators in the Indiana dunes area. Volunteers from the Friends and NIPSCO will help the National Park plant and maintain these pollinator gardens. The Friends were pleased to hear that NIPSCO approved our grant request and \$5,000 was awarded to fund this vital project.

The Friends may have experienced a few challenges these past few months but continue to look to the future and know that with your help we will continue to supply both financial and volunteer support to our fabulous partners – the Indiana Dunes National Park, the Indiana Dunes State Park and the Dunes Learning Center.

The view from the Friends house/office front porch.



Photo taken by Cliff Goins, Editor

Help Us Help You – Friends need your Email information

One of the things we have learned from the many changes that occurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic is that it would be helpful to have an email database to communicate with our members about cancelled or rescheduled events. The Friends have created a members’ exclusive support account. Just send a quick message to members@dunefriends.org with your name if you are interested in receiving updates and/or information on future programs as they are scheduled at the National and State Parks.

Our mission is to enhance and foster understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the Indiana Dunes through financial and volunteer support of the state and national parks.

Summer Programs Information

Currently, there is no information on specific programs. Our partners continue to operate within the State of Indiana's "Getting Back on Track" and the CDC guidelines. Covid-19 is a fluid situation and new information may come available at any time. Program information may be forthcoming. Until then, please go to our partner's Facebook and/or their webpages. Go to Indiana Dunes National Park (nps.gov/indu), Indiana Dunes State Park (in.gov/dnr/parklake/2980.htm) and the Dunes Learning Center (duneslearningcenter.org) for the most updated information.



Indiana Dunes National Park will not offer any traditional ranger-led programs or special events this summer due to the difficulty of social distancing during them. Instead, we plan to set up interpretive stations throughout the national park at parking lots and other areas, where rangers, can interact with smaller groups of people and still maintain social distancing. There will be a tent and table, or other barrier, to create space between the staff and visitors. We will continue to offer virtual ranger-led programs on our social media. The campground is currently closed and any plans to open it are still uncertain. In addition, the Dorothy Buell Memorial Visitor Center and Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education will not be open before June 14th. When they do open, operations will be modified to promote social distancing. Submitted by Bruce Rowe, Supervisory Park Ranger



Indiana Dunes State Park is currently open for self-directed day uses such as hiking, picnicking and birding. Our campground opened on May 24th. Please go to indianastateparks.reserveamerica.com to make your camping reservations. All special events that do not meet our state's gathering guidelines through July 4th have been cancelled. Details can be found on our Facebook page. The Nature Center is open daily from 10am – 4pm CST with limited capacity of no more than 25 persons in the building at one time. Interpretive Naturalists will be stationed to conduct informal programs on our trails, our beach, and outside our Nature Center throughout the summer. Be sure to check out our state park's "virtual" interpretive programs by visiting interpretiveservices.in.gov or following the State Park on Facebook. Submitted by Marie Laudeman, Interpretive Naturalist



Dunes Learning Center is saddened to announce the cancelling of all 2020 summer camps due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. The safety of our campers and staff is our highest priority. The annual Summer Open house has also been cancelled. On a happier note, we have three current virtual offerings. (1) The Search for Sandsquatch: Follow along with Chief Naturalist Anthony through this goofy serial documentary at DunesLearningCenter.org/sandsquatch. (2) Nature in Your Neighborhood: Great tips for outdoor adventure and discovery with Naturalist Nate at DunesLearningCenter.org/neighborhood.

(3) Artisan Nature: Look at nature through an artistic lens with step-by-step project ideas from Naturalist Kayla at DunesLearningCenter.org/artisan_nature. Submitted by Heather Hahn Sullivan, Development and Marketing Director

Getting outdoors is more important than ever in these unimaginable times.

If you plan to visit either the National or the State Park this summer, remember that restrooms are limited. Practice social distancing keeping a minimum of 6 feet always, particularly as you hike or picnic. Keep your group size small – fewer than 25 individuals is ideal. Bring your own drinking water and hand sanitizer. Please carry out your own trash. If you picnic, bring and use a covering for your picnic table and take it with you when you leave. If a parking lot is full, move to another location and please do not park along the sides of our roads. If you feel sick or are running a temperature, plan a visit for a different day for the safety of other guests.

Friends Board Members

Chair: Angel Goins	Vice-Chair: Roz Potter	
Secretary: Kathy Wilder	Treasurer: Zella Olson	
Pat Carlisle	Andrea Huntington	
Dorothy Meyers	Bonnie Miller	Roy Olson
Tracey Stevens	Paul Stofko	Lori Weed
Newsletter Editor: Cliff Goins		
www.dunefriends.org 219-707-3617		

Since 1982, our Friends organization has supported the interpretive and resource management programs of the Indiana Dunes. The Friends sponsor the kind of interpretive programs that make a visit to the Indiana Dunes informative and fun. Membership in the Friends is vital to creating this positive impact. Please support the Indiana Dunes by joining the Friends today. Your financial contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Your support will make a difference and assure that our important work continues.

Current Friends Members will receive a renewal form in the mail when your renewal is due.

New, Friends Membership Application

P. O. Box 166 ~ Beverly Shores, IN 46301-0166

- Senior Citizen \$ 15
- Individual/Family \$ 20
- Sustaining Family \$ 40
- Business/Corporation \$100

Mail completed form to the address above.

Additional Contribution \$ _____

Interested in Volunteering _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____