



Dunes Echo

Winter 2020/21 (Dec, Jan and Feb) ~ Vol. XIV, #4

Enhancing the Visitor Experience Today and Tomorrow

Friends Update

by Angel Gochee-Goins, Chair

The year 2020 has been challenging for all including the Friends. However, with social distancing and mask wearing the Board Members have stayed busy working on the rehab of the Friends house/office. With its location on the northwest corner of Mineral Springs and Oak Hill roads, there is a great view of the Chellberg Farm. Starting in January 2021, the house/office will be open for you to visit and enjoy on Wednesday afternoons from 1-4pm and on the first Saturday of each month from 9am to Noon. A Board Member will be there to give you a tour, offer you a beverage, and answer any questions you might have about the Friends or one of our three partners. Hope to see you there but be sure to bring your mask!

The Friends continue to provide financial and volunteer support to the Indiana Dunes National Park, Indiana Dunes State Park and Dunes Learning Center. Due to the Covid restrictions only a limited number of face-to-face programs have occurred with most being at the State Park. The Friends purchased three accessible all-terrain vehicles for the State Park thereby making most of their trails accessible to all. We purchased a Freedom Trax for the National Park to allow wheelchair using visitors better access to the Bailly/Chellberg historic area. The Friends provided unrestricted funding to Dunes Learning Center this year to help keep their naturalist staff employed at least part-time.



Our Social Media and Newsletter Coordinator, Cliff Goins, has been very busy this year. Hopefully, you have seen some of his regular Facebook features: Plant of the Day, Take A Hike Tuesday, Wayback Wednesday, Turkey Trot Thursday, Flutterby Friday, Fall Color Friday, and his upcoming Winter Wonderland Weekends. We continue to share Facebook posts from our partners and have increased the number of Friends followers by over 200%. Cliff created a Covid Update Page on our website that gives visitors the most recent information on our partners' safety procedures and regulations. Remember to always Recreate Responsibly, Play Safe and Stay Healthy. Our website is ever changing with photos to match the season. By the time you receive this newsletter, Cliff will have added a year in photos page to our website (dunefriends.org) for you to enjoy!

The Membership Committee is collecting email addresses for our members. If you have not yet emailed your information to them at members@dunefriends.org, please do so as soon as possible. This database will be used to send messages of important Covid changes to programs offered by our partners and to alert you to any new programs that are being offered as the pandemic becomes better controlled.



Please mark your calendars as the Friends still plan to offer our 25th Annual Native Plant Sale on April 24th, 2021 even if the pandemic continues to prevent an open sale. We managed and succeeded this year with pre-orders only and curb side delivery. Look for the pre-order form on the Friends website in mid-February. Hard to believe it has been 25 years, I still remember the first sale in the snow, under a tent, outside the old National Lakeshore Visitor Center on Kemil Road with hundreds waiting to hear Floyd Swink talk about native plants. We sold mostly bare root stock and now we have those beautiful plants supplied by Possibility Place.

A special thanks goes to Porter Bank who supplied the enclosed 2021 calendar full of photos taken by Herb Read. The calendar is dedicated to the memory of Herb and Charlotte and all their efforts to preserve the Indiana Dunes. We want to also recognize Zella Olson for her many years of leadership and dedication to the Friends as past President and Treasurer. Zella has agreed to remain on the Friends Board and mentor our new treasurer.

Please know that your Friends of Indiana Dunes Board Members hope that 2021 will be better year for all our members, partners and the many visitors to our precious and beautiful Indiana Dunes.

National Park Programs

For more information contact the Dorothy Buell Memorial Visitor Center at 219-395-1882 or www.nps.gov/indu



With Covid-19 infection numbers spiking, we have no immediate plans to resume regular public programming at Indiana Dunes National Park. However, we have completed an analysis of all programs to determine which ones can be modified that will allow them to be safely presented when the infection is under better control. These modifications include reservations to control group size, the wearing of masks, and using outdoor locations and trails where adequate social distancing is possible. We have not yet determined a way to safely present indoor programs and large special events.



We have experimented with allowing a monthly Drop-in Volunteering activity each month. These outdoor projects involve a small number of volunteers who are working outside and who can easily physically distance from others while working. For more information, contact the Park Connection Office at (219) 221-7098 or parkconnection@gmail.com.

Our park's education program is offering several virtual programs for schools and youth organizations and include: "Park Explorers", a "Climate Change Curriculum", an "Invasive Carp Challenge", a "Beginning Birdwatching" lesson, "Story Maps of Mt. Baldy and Chellberg Farm", along with video and lessons on both "Octave Chanute" and the award-winning film, "Shifting Sands: On the Path to Sustainability." These offerings can be found on the park website: nps.gov/indu/learn/education/virtualllearningandactivities.htm.



The onset of cold weather has reduced visitation, so we have moved our visitor center information desk operation from a tent to back inside the building. Plexiglas has been installed in front of information desks, UV cleaners have been built into the center's heating and cooling system and mandatory mask wearing and social distancing is required inside the visitor center.

The placement of 45,000 cubic yards of sand was completed in October at Portage Lakefront to repair erosion damage to the beach. A similar project is just beginning at Central Avenue where the beach has been closed all season due to erosion. Both projects are being done under contract by the Army Corps of Engineers. Erosion control structures are also being completed in front of two Century of Progress Houses – Rostone and the Florida Tropical.



Dunes Learning Center Programs

For more information, please go to: <https://duneslearningcenter.org/>



Throughout the pandemic, Dunes Learning Center has transitioned many programs to an online venue. From Zoom conferences with teachers to online demonstrations for hybrid classes, our naturalists have adapted in countless ways. At the moment, we're developing lessons to complement our flagship "Frog In the Bog" program - something that will be useful now but can also help future classes once we are able to re-open campus.

Getting outdoors is more important than ever in these unimaginable times. We hope all will be inspired to continue to get outdoors with activities found in our Distance Learning Collection (duneslearningcenter.org/activities).

Dunes Learning Center hosted a successful series of webinars in November, National Native American Heritage Month. The series, titled "Indigenous Perspectives for a Sustainable Environment," covered various topics relating to Indigenous Science: the language we use to talk about nature, indigenous food systems, gardening, and more.

In the coming months, Dunes Learning Center will offer more programs for adults and teachers. Watch their website and social media for announcements!

State Park Programs

For more information contact the Nature Center at 219-926-1390 or www.interpretiveservices.in.gov



Happy OWL-idays - December 19, 2020 from 2 to 2:40 and 2:50 to 3:30pm CST

Join state park naturalist staff at the Nature Center's Outdoor Fire Ring for some OWL-iday cheer with Humane Indiana Wildlife's live owl ambassadors. Education Director, Nicole Harmon, will introduce these native owls of our Indiana Dunes and talk about their interesting adaptations and characteristics. Visitors will be able to enjoy up-close views of these nocturnal creatures.

This program is free of charge after paying our park's gate fee and sponsored by the Friends of Indiana Dunes. Prepare for the weather as this program is being held completely outdoors. If inclement weather the program will move right next door to the North Orchard Shelter. There is limited capacity for this program. Please register by calling the Nature Center at 219-926-1390.

Christmas Eve Morning Stroll - December 24, 2020 from 10am to 2pm CST

Bring the whole family for a self-guided Christmas Eve walk through the dune forests to relax and enjoy the spirit of the season! Naturalists will lay out a scavenger hunt along a 1-hour walk to explore the winter life and beauty of the dunes.

January 1, 2021 - 3-Dunes Challenge First Day Hike

As part of a 50-state initiative, America's State Parks First Day Hikes offer individuals and families an opportunity to begin the New Year with a rejuvenating healthy hike connecting with the outdoors. Strap on your hiking boots to start this adventure at the Nature Center. Visitors will be invited to complete the rugged 3-Dune Challenge Trail covering 1.5-miles. Along the way you will be able to explore the beautiful park landscapes and learn some history about the 3 tallest dunes along the whole Indiana Dunes lakeshore during this 1-hour jaunt.



January 16, 2021: Dunes Geocache Adventure 2021

This is a fun annual geocaching event that lets any level of geocachers come together to compete and enjoy the beauty of our Indiana Dunes region. If you are a beginner or advanced geocacher, this program will not disappoint with its fun prizes and challenges. All you need is a GPS unit or the geocaching app on your cell phone along with a sense of adventure. Full details are located at www.geocaching.com, Search zipcode 46304 for the event page.



Full Moon Hikes: January 29 & February 27, 2021 - 7pm CST

Enjoy the beautiful full moon and night sky on these special night hikes from the Nature Center to Lake Michigan and back. Stories about our moon, up-close views, and "stellar" treats will be shared thanks to the Friends of the Indiana Dunes. This hike has limited capacity. Please call the Nature Center at 219-926-1390 to register.

Check out www.interpretiveservices.in.gov to see the listing of dates for other 2021 Special Events and other park programs! Nature Center's Winter Hours: Wed - Sun from 10-4pm CST. Closed on Mon and Tues and state holidays.

Snowshoeing the Dunes

Weather permitting – need a 6-inch snow base

The Indiana Dunes State Park Nature Center will offer Snowshoe rentals every Wednesday thru Sunday, from mid-December to mid-March between 9:30am and 4:30pm. A driver's license is required for the rental and the cost is \$5 per pair for the entire day. Reservations cannot be made. Call the Nature Center at 219-926-1390 for questions on the snow conditions.



Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing can be enjoyed on most Indiana Dunes National Park Trails if there is a minimum of six inches of snow on the ground. If you don't have your own equipment, there are a limited number of snowshoes available for loan at no cost for use on the Miller Woods Trail at the Paul H. Douglas Center for Environmental Education. Call 219-395-1824 for snow conditions and snowshoe availability.

Snowshoes provided by Friends of Indiana Dunes

**FRIENDS OF
INDIANA DUNES**

P.O. Box 166
Beverly Shores, IN 46301

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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.

Friends Board Members

Chair: Angel Goins **Secretary:** Kathy Wilder
Vice-Chair: Roz Potter **Treasurer:** Tracey Stevens
Dan Barriball Dorothy Meyers
Bonnie Miller Rudy Moyado Zella Olson
Paul Stofko Lori Weed
Social Media & Newsletter Coordinator: 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 _____