



QUICK FACTS & FAQs

SUSTAINING INDIANA'S BEACHES

BACKGROUND

The scenic beaches of Indiana Dunes National and State Parks annually draw between 4.5 and 5 million people from around the world to Indiana—they are the most visited place in the state and among the top 10 most visited national park areas in the nation. The beaches serve as the cornerstone of a tourism economy that generates \$679 million in economic impacts, supports over 6,500 jobs, and provides \$90 million in revenue to state and local governments.

Top: The beaches of Indiana Dunes are eroding into Lake Michigan. ©Susan Kirt

Access to the dunes and Lake Michigan are key to residents' quality of life and are factors in attracting business and talent to the state.

However, Indiana's beaches are eroding. Without a solution in place, these beaches will continue to erode, putting Indiana's most visited place at risk.

THE SOLUTION

In order to sustain this critical asset to Indiana's economy and quality of life, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must conduct a federal damage mitigation feasibility study.

This required feasibility study, which will identify possible long-term solutions, must have a local match.

While long-term solutions are developed through the study, there is a need to pursue short-term sand nourishment for the most affected sites.

With a state of Indiana funding appropriation of **\$1 million**, the state can complete the local match for the study and support short-term beach nourishment.

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THE ECONOMICS

Indiana Dunes National and State Parks are economic drivers for the state of Indiana and assets for the quality of life of Indiana residents.

* Indiana Dunes Tourism
2021 Economic Impact Study

4.5 to 5 million visitors annually

6,588 jobs supported

\$679 million in economic impact

\$90 million in state and local revenue*

FAQs

What is happening to Indiana's beaches? The natural movement of sand along Indiana's shoreline is being interrupted by manmade structures that extend into Lake Michigan, starving beaches of sand. Combined with more frequent storms and near-record high lake levels, Indiana's beaches are disappearing.

What is at risk? The continual erosion of Indiana's beaches is a risk to Northwest Indiana's tourism economy and quality of life, as beaches that people frequent are no longer there. At Portage Lakefront, one of the most visited sites within Indiana Dunes National Park, erosion has claimed more than 30 feet of beach, destroyed access trails, and led to the collapse of an overlook point. Over time, this will affect the region's \$679 million tourism economy.

How do we fix the problem? The first step is the completion of an Army Corps of Engineers study that will determine an array of possibilities so we can move forward on a long-term solution. The study will bring people together to find the right solution and unlock federal funds to implement it. Without the study, Indiana's beaches will continue to erode and access points will close.

How do we get the study underway? The Army Corps requires that state and local governments put forth funding for 50 percent of the study's expected cost. With the State of Indiana providing the remaining funding for the local match, the study can move forward and begin the job of fixing our valued shoreline.

Top Right: Beachgoers at Portage Lakefront in 2011, three years after it opened to the public. ©Indiana Dunes Tourism **Bottom Right:** Portage Lakefront in 2018 with its beaches all but gone. ©Indiana Dunes Tourism

VANISHING BEACHES IN THE NEWS

Why Indiana's Lake Michigan waterfront is seeing its worst erosion in decades

— *Indianapolis Star*, June 29, 2021

Disappearing beaches, crumbling roads: Lake Michigan cities face 'heartbreaking' erosion

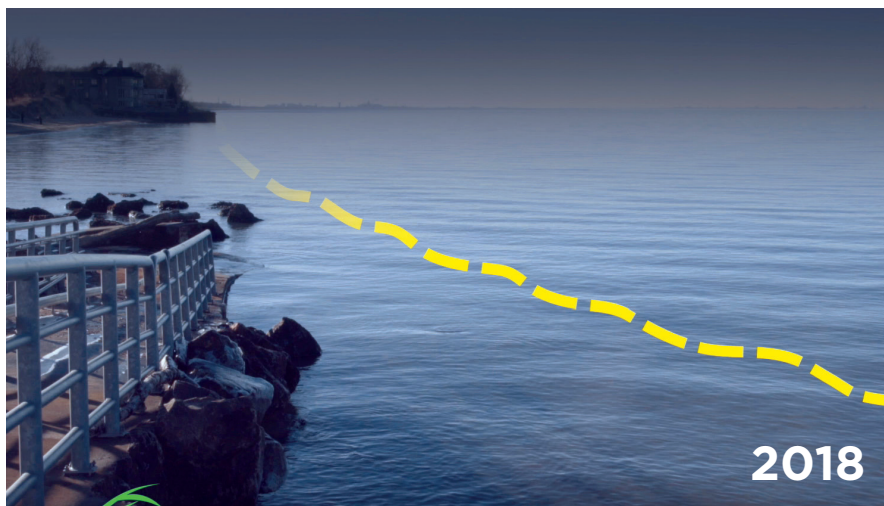
— *Indianapolis Star*, March 24, 2020

As the shoreline erodes, one national park tries to adapt

— *PBS NewsHour*, September 4, 2021

Erosion closes Portage beach access at Indiana Dunes

— *Associated Press*, November 3, 2018



**For more information on Indiana's beach erosion,
please contact Tim Koenning at tkoenning@npca.org.**

